

The City Boundary in Late Antique Rome

Volume 1 of 1

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Abstract

This thesis examines the changing meaning and conceptualisation of the city boundary of Rome, from the late republic and imperial periods into late antiquity.

It is my aim in this study to present a range of archaeological and historical material from three areas of interest: the historical development of the city boundary, from the *pomerium* to the Aurelian wall, change and continuity in the ritual activities associated with the border, and the reasons for the shift in burial topography in the fifth century AD. I propose that each of these three subject areas will demonstrate the wide range of restrictions and associations made with the city boundary of Rome, and will note in particular instances of continuity into late antiquity. It is demonstrated that there is a great degree of continuity in the behaviours of the inhabitants of Rome with regard to the conceptualisation of their city boundary. The wider proposal made during the course of this study, is that the fifth century was significant in the development of Rome – archaeologically, historically, and conceptually – but not for the reasons that are traditionally given. I have pushed back against the idea that this era was defined by its turbulence, and have constructed an argument that highlights the vast inheritance of the city of Rome that is so often ignored in discussions of the fifth century.

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Bibliographical abbreviations

- CAR* 1962-1976. *Carta Archeologica di Roma*. Florence.
- CBCR* Krautheimer, R., S. Corbett & W. Frankl. 1937-1977. *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae*. 5 vols. Città del Vaticano.
- CIL* 1863-. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin.
- CSEL* Guenther, O. 1895. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*. Berlin.
- ICUR* De Rossi, G. B. 1857-1858. *Inscriptiones Christianae urbis Romae*. Rome.
- ILS* Dessau, H. 1892-1916. *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*. Berlin.
- LTUR* Steinby, M. 1993-2000. *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*. 4 vols. Rome.

Abbreviations of ancient authors and texts follow the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, and abbreviations of journal titles follow the *American Journal of Archaeology*.

Chapter one: introduction

...once having found the Wall I could not forget it, or be unaware of its continuity. Its re-emergences into view, out of covering buildings, never are not dramatic: whether in view or not it is there, and shapes one's sense of the city. Once contained, in essence Rome is so still.

Elizabeth Bowen, *A Time in Rome* (1959)

It is often said that there are many Romes: the ancient *caput mundi* and the *urbs sacra*, the Rome of the dark ages, of the popes and the renaissance, the treasure-filled Grand Tour destination, and the head of a unified Italy, *Roma Capitale*. It is the Eternal City, the ultimate palimpsest in which almost every conceivable layer is bordered by the same monument: the colossal Aurelian Wall.

The fortification wall of Rome, named after the emperor who began its construction in the late third century AD, is the largest surviving Roman monument and arguably the most famous city boundary on the planet. To this day, its 19 kilometre circuit delineates the *Centro Storico*, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the heart of an ancient and venerated place, and contains almost every major site of popular interest in the city. It is an impressive and famous monument that has long attracted the attention of archaeologists, but one that is almost exclusively studied in isolation from its environment. During this research I study the city boundary in late antiquity - the vast Aurelian Wall - not as a monument divorced from the history of the city it demarcated, but as a descendant of the *pomerium*, an heir to the boundary that had delineated Rome for a millennium.

The structure of this introduction is as follows: first, I will set out the research questions to be answered in each chapter and the overall aims of the

study, followed by the research context for the thesis, examining scholarship on the subject of late antiquity. The purpose of this is to place the subject of the research within the wider context of scholarship and highlight the ways in which it will contribute to the existing corpus of work. Particular choices in relevant terminology will then be explained, as will the methodology and approach. As part of the methodology sources of evidence will be discussed, and finally I will set out a general structure and outline of the chapters.

1.1 Research questions and aims

In this thesis I will examine Rome's city boundary in two forms: the republican and imperial *pomerium* and the late antique Aurelian Wall. From its initial construction the wall reinstated a continuous physical form to the boundaries of the city, which had been absent since the late first century BC; this represents a significant change in the urban topography from what had once been an 'open city' to a closed and largely inaccessible one. One of my key avenues of interest is the degree to which this intervention in Rome's peripheral landscape changed the relationship between its inhabitants and the city boundary, and how this can be seen in both their behaviour and in their conceptualisation of the border. It appears that there was a significant degree of continuity in this relationship in the century following the building of the wall, with notable changes taking place in ritual activity and funerary behaviours only in the fifth and sixth centuries. Thus, my focus is primarily on these later centuries, though there will be some inevitable discussion of the late Republic, imperial and earlier late antique periods in order to present the proposals in their proper historical contexts. Geographically, the primary area of interest examined in this thesis is Rome and its immediate periphery, although there will be some reference to provincial cities for comparison.

In each chapter of this research I propose an answer to the following key question, using the particular areas of historical development, ritual activity, and burial topography as vehicles for the discussion of the city boundary:

What were the associations and restrictions attached to Rome's city boundary, and how did these change over time?

In doing so, I will, in the course of this thesis, set out an interpretation that provides an answer to a much wider question:

Why was the fifth century a significant time for the development of Rome's city boundary and its associated meaning, and how does this reflect the development of the city as a whole?

The proposals I make in this research project in answer to the questions above aim to fill a particular gap in current scholarship, that is, the lack of studies that take a diachronic approach to Rome's city boundary. The wider relevance of the study can be found in the contribution to the discussion about how the fifth century AD is read in the context of Rome's long development.

1.2 Research context

Several different academic fields of study are relevant for the subject under discussion in this thesis. Given the wide chronological span, many areas of scholarship are important and must be addressed here to fully set out the context for the discussion that will follow. The broader scholarly fields of late antique urbanism, narratives of decline and transformation in the late Roman and Gothic west, and, more specifically, the history and archaeology of the city boundary of Rome are all related to the interpretations and discussions presented here. These particular areas will be discussed in more depth in the current section, and major debates will be addressed. Additionally, within each of the chapters to follow, the specific relevant research context will be outlined, especially the narrower fields

that relate to the particular evidence that is focussed on in each section: the history and material culture of the boundary itself, of certain religious and military rituals in Rome, and funerary archaeology in late antique and early medieval Rome. It should be noted at this time that there are few studies that explicitly discuss the long development of Rome's city boundary (at present, there are fewer than five monographs that touch upon the subject) and none that focusses precisely on the fifth century AD or the subjects contained within this thesis, and thus in the absence of such works the wider research context will be presented here to correctly frame the research and make clear the place it will occupy in scholarship.

There has, since the 1970s, been a significant increase in the interest in and the number of publications dedicated to late antiquity, and it has been a progression characterised in many ways by internal conflicts and debates, many of which are still unresolved and continue to divide scholars working in the present day.¹ These are not simply general debates or squabbles over details, but disagreements over the very fundamentals of the field. More discussion of the contentious terminology and periodisation of this particular chronological time span can be found later in the present chapter, but to set the scene, I would first like to briefly address the following: the growth of the field and the development of late antique studies; fall, transformation, and decline; late antique urbanism; the current state of scholarship; and their relevance to the current research. Discussion of scholarship pertaining to the history and archaeology of the city

¹ Articles published in the first volume of the *Journal of Late Antiquity* (2008) provide an excellent overview of the field, especially those of Marcone, Ando, and James. See also the contributions of Mayer, Leyser, Ando, and Humphries in the *Companion to Late Antiquity* (2009), and the numerous valuable contributions in the *Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity* (2012).

boundary of Rome will be spread throughout the thesis as it has continuing relevance for the present study.

Though the study of late antiquity has a long history, it is only in the past fifty years that the field has grown to a significant size and become a staple subject in the study of both ancient history and the medieval period, rather than an overlooked intermediate era. The first major interventions in the English-speaking field were made by A. H. M. Jones in his landmark publication, *The later Roman empire: AD 284-602: a social, economic, and administrative survey* and later, through his contribution to the *Prosopography of the later Roman empire*, published between 1971-1992.² His work was characterised by a narrative, traditional style of history and choice of subjects which covered the economy, institutional change, and formal Roman administration, alongside the accepted belief that late antiquity was characterised by 'decline and fall', which had been popular since Gibbon.³ This interpretation was challenged by Peter Brown's *The world of late antiquity* in the early 1970s, which favoured a focus on cultural and social history and had a significant influence on successive generations of late antique scholars, most notably those in north America.⁴ Beyond this notable diverging of viewpoints, there has been a shift in recent decades towards more thematic studies, especially those that focus on ethnography and conceptions of identity, migration, communication, and memory.⁵ It has been noted by Averil Cameron that these changes have largely taken place in the decades following the fall of Soviet regimes in Eastern Europe, and that the work produced by generations of scholars is so often a reflection, in some way, of the circumstances

² Jones, 1964.

³ Gibbon, 1776-88; see also MacMullen, 1988, and Schiavone, 2000.

⁴ Brown, 1971; Cameron, Av. 2006: 166. For Brown's influence on North American scholarship, see the many volumes of the *Transformation of the Classical Heritage* series.

⁵ For example, Miles, 1999; Mitchell & Greatrex, 2000; Hughes, 2014.

of their lives.⁶ This seems especially true of English-speaking studies of late antiquity since the early 1990s, which almost unanimously moved away from the traditional perception of the period as one of a violent and catastrophic rupture that caused the fall of the western empire, and towards a belief that there was a process of numerous small changes that led to transformation in the communities of late antique Europe and which created new dominant models in the medieval period.⁷ The focus on cultural and social elements persisted, but the traditional emphasis of structural change through the economy and the State waned in prominence. The influence of a post-colonial or post-imperial approach was evident in many ways, especially when considering the literature produced on the breakup of the western empire after the deposition of the last Roman emperor in the west (AD 476, Romulus Augustulus).⁸

However, the debate remains very much unresolved, and the most recent contributions demand closer attention for the purposes of this research. There has since been a reaction to the reaction of the 1990s in Anglo-American scholarship that has been published in (and since) the 2000s, with the re-introduction of the ideas of structural change, terminal 'decline', and repeated violence between the fourth and seventh centuries spearheaded by Ward-Perkins and his work on late Roman and post-Roman Italy.⁹ Ward-Perkins, in his monograph *The Fall of Rome: and the end of civilization* has highlighted the importance of the economy and particularly the accumulation of revenue from taxable wealth in ensuring the overall security and prosperity of the empire, harking back to more old-fashioned interpretations of the late antique world.¹⁰

⁶ Cameron, Av. 2006: 172-179.

⁷ Bowerstock, 1996: 29-43; Giardina, 1999: 157-80. On transformation: Ando, 2008: 31-60.

⁸ Cameron, Av. 2006: 175-176, esp. fn. 44-6.

⁹ Brogiolo & Ward-Perkins, 1999; Ward-Perkins, 1984, 2005, 2012. See also Leibeschuetz, 2001b: 233-8.

¹⁰ Ward-Perkins, 2005: 41.

The proposition that the “key internal element” in the fate of the Roman Empire was the “economic well-being of its tax-payers” is a familiar one.¹¹ Ward-Perkins’ argument relied heavily on the traditional assertion that the survival (and downfall) of the empire was based, in large part, on the successes of its military in defending the frontiers. A significant military presence throughout the empire was efficiently maintained through a system of taxes that provided funds for payment, ensuring that Roman territory was sufficiently garrisoned against invading and threatening peoples. In the fourth century (and later), this base of taxable wealth and thus, revenue, is seen to have been diminished owing to the ‘economic instability’ of the empire, resulting in a restriction of the flow of money to the frontiers and thus to the army. The subsequent retrenchment of military forces to focus on high-risk territories and the inevitable shrinking of empire put pressure on the frontiers of certain areas, leaving whole provinces vulnerable such as North Africa, which was lost to the Vandals from AD 429. Indeed, large portions of the territory lost in this period were never returned to the empire.¹² Ward-Perkins ultimately attributed the downfall of the West to such vulnerability and its origin in the economic weaknesses of the Late Roman Empire. The cataclysmic downfall, with its roots in the ailing economy and poor administrative measures to mediate such a financial crisis could, perhaps, be convincing if it were not for the lack of evidence for economic changes of this kind. This is one of the primary criticisms of traditional, structural, ‘decline’-based theories. Examining the trends in coinage and epigraphy can (and has) been used to support economic theories such as this one, but it remains almost impossible to distinguish between coincidental and causal links in economic change. It is inherently problematic to

¹¹ Ward-Perkins, 2005: 41.

¹² Ward-Perkins, 2005: 43.

assume that overall patterns of change in urbanism, such as those that occur in the late Roman Empire, can be conclusively proven with only one small part of the evidence available. The evidence available for economic change is simply not sufficient to make such secure conclusions – and this is, arguably, a criticism that could be applied to any of the approaches discussed in this chapter. In my opinion it is in fact one of the strongest arguments in favour of an interdisciplinary methodology in the field of late antique studies as a whole, one that has been carefully considered when selecting evidence for study in this research.

The focus on administrative and structural decline has also reappeared in the work of Liebeschuetz. His significant contribution to the field has been largely focused on structural administrative and political change, more specifically the transition from traditional city-government to looser, more oligarchical forms of administration.¹³ Engaging with narratives of ‘decline and fall’, and somewhat echoing the proposals of Ward-Perkins, he characterised the period under discussion (AD 400 – 650) as the empire during “a process of simplification,” in which the politics, economy, culture and physical appearance of cities changed.¹⁴ He also favoured the notion that this was a strong indicator that the post-Roman west entered a period of decay after the sack of AD 410. The interpretation that the late- and post-Roman west was ‘simpler’ than its imperial predecessor and subsequently the poorer for it is a pervasive idea that has long hindered any attempt at objectivity when considering late antiquity. It has, for many decades, been rare to find a study of Roman art or literature, of *domus* decoration or tomb-building, of material or cultural evidence of any kind that survives from antiquity that doesn’t in some way judge the late antique material against the imperial. In

¹³ Liebeschuetz, 2001a: 4.

¹⁴ Liebeschuetz, 2001a: 5.

many cases the late antique material is found wanting. Observe, for example, the discussion of the famous Arch of Constantine in Rome, which has for centuries been deemed a poorer quality imperial monument for its use of *spolia* and non-traditional relief sculpture.¹⁵ It has been suggested that the craftsmen who worked on the arch were artisans more used to sculpting sarcophagi than imperial friezes, in an attempt to demonstrate their inability to match earlier monuments.¹⁶ It has been suggested that *spolia* were used out of necessity, rather than choice (in spite of evidence to the contrary).¹⁷ Our perception of late antiquity as a period of decline and hardship affects, wholesale, our appreciation and understanding of the texts, monuments, and material culture that survives, and as an interpretation it must be treated with caution.

Some scholars have attempted to find the middle ground between transformation and decline, and at present this unfortunately remains an under-developed idea. Luke Lavan proposed the interpretation that 'decline' as it has been recognised by other scholars was neither present nor absent in late antiquity, rather that the processes of change that were evident in late antiquity were beyond the conscious choices made by cultures, and that there is room for both decline and continuity in the chronology as the result of this.¹⁸ In addition, he offered the idea that continuity on a smaller scale does not necessarily indicate a single cultural development or the same society in different phases of its existence, but rather the continued use of a particular object (of any kind) in an elite context can simply reflect the desire to use objects of value, regardless of

¹⁵ See, for example, comments on the monument by Vasari, 1568: 224-5; Gibbon, 1776-88: 1.14.425; Berenson, 1954; and Deichmann, 1974: 95. Arguments in response have been made by Brenk, 1987; Elsner, 1998 & 2000; Kinney, 1997; and Kinney & Brilliant, 2011.

¹⁶ Berenson, 1954: 35.

¹⁷ Brenk, 1987.

¹⁸ Lavan, 2001: 243-4.

their cultural significance.¹⁹ This interpretation is too poorly evidenced at present and leaves much to be desired (for instance, specific examples of this would be helpful), though it is useful in highlighting the care required when dealing with material culture in late antiquity. The ancient perception of decline will be returned to later in the chapter.

This particular debate – between those that favour decline and fall and those that champion transformation – is of crucial importance for this research, as it directly affects how the evidence from fifth century Rome should be interpreted and how any conclusions should fit into the wider understanding of the period and chosen geography. As will become clearer as the thesis progresses, much of the archaeological research undertaken in Rome is done by Italian academics and archaeologists, and a large proportion of this particular group of scholars is still very much bound to the idea that the post-Roman west entered terminal decline after a period of devastating violence in the fifth century, and many if not all of the big, developmental changes that the city experienced subsequently can be thus attributed. Several of the interpretations I propose in this thesis push back against this idea and frame the fifth century as a period of great, but non-linear change, seeking to acknowledge but not overstate the lasting impact of the violence experienced by the city, nor to ascribe too many of the notable changes that the city underwent to the conflicts that have been used to characterise the period as turbulent (the sack of Rome in AD 410, again in 455, and the Gothic War in the sixth century). A middle ground is suggested: somewhere in between dramatic catastrophe and gradual change is an interpretation that can satisfactorily provide explanation for the changes to the city's boundary and its meaning in society between the beginning of the fifth and

¹⁹ Lavan, 2001: 245.

the end of the sixth century in Rome. Some work to this effect has been completed on the so-called 'Third Century Crisis', in which it has been proposed that an era previously defined by its chaos may instead be read as a period of relative continuum, pierced by events that did not fundamentally alter the status quo, but which may have accelerated existing processes of change.²⁰ This is an argument that will become increasingly significant when considering burial topography in chapter four, and which has interesting implications for the understanding of the fifth century as a whole.

The sub-field of late antique research that most acutely demonstrates this debate is that of urbanism, which encompasses historical and literature-based studies but also makes good use of archaeological material that is, since the 1980s, better-recorded, more available, and more frequently examined than ever before. Since the shift in practice towards multi-period stratigraphic assessment that took place in the 1980s (particularly the excavation and subsequent remarkable publication of the Crypta Balbi in Rome),²¹ late antique and medieval material culture has been increasingly recorded and preserved. Considering that a century ago early medieval material from Rome was routinely ignored during excavation and often completely destroyed, the existence of large-scale, funded projects designed to examine sites from the fourth century onwards represents a significant and welcome change in perception of the importance of the field.²² The amount of material from sites of this period opens up new avenues of discussion,

²⁰ Witschel, 2004.

²¹ Manacorda, 1990; Arena, *et al.* 2000.

²² For example, the investigation into public space at Rome's port, Ostia, run by the University of Kent's 'Centre for Late Antique Archaeology' (project website: lateantiqueostia.wordpress.com, accessed: 08/18), and the numerous excavation seasons at late antique Aphrodisias, run by R. R. Smith and the University of Oxford (aphrodisias.classics.ox.ac.uk, accessed: 08/18).

and academics focussing on urbanism (not just in Italy but elsewhere) have made notable progress in this way.

The scope of archaeological studies on late antique urbanism varies greatly; many studies focus on a single city or settlement site (such as those focusing on Rome or Antioch)²³ while others are regional surveys (e.g. Ward-Perkins's study of north and central Italy), with only a few attempting to provide general approaches to the entire geographical and chronological spread.²⁴ Chronological parameters vary slightly according to the focus of the author, but begin approximately with the Tetrarchy and extend to the beginning of the seventh century. The geographical parameters of a study depend on the chosen time period, as the size of the empire changed significantly during late antiquity.

That said, large-scale, primarily archaeological studies are still the most underrepresented type of approach in modern late antique scholarship. Few studies adopt a principally archaeological approach, with the majority instead favouring other methodologies that rely heavily on literature or historical narrative and which use archaeology inconsistently as additional, illustrative evidence. This superficial approach has become marginally less common in recent years as the number of studies primarily concerned with late antique archaeological material has steadily increased,²⁵ but they remain the minority type in the field.²⁶ The traditional neglect of material culture in scholarship can be largely attributed to the previously-mentioned incomplete archaeological record in many places of interest, coupled with the fact that publication of excavations is spread across a number of periodicals in a variety of languages, which can prove a daunting

²³ For example, Curran, 2000 and Casana, 2001.

²⁴ Ward-Perkins, 1984.

²⁵ Brandt, 2009: 156-170.

²⁶ For example: Boin, 2013; Leone, 2013; Kulikowski, 2010; Dey, 2011; Coates-Stephens, 2012.

prospect for scholars and students attempting to include material culture in their work.²⁷ For example, although he prioritised the political aspects of urbanism in late antiquity, Liebeschuetz acknowledged gaps in his own research. These were attributed to a dearth of available evidence (concerning the economy), and a wealth of evidence but lack of existing research (in the case of archaeology): both valid concerns, but ones which have been successfully overcome in other works which focus on economic and archaeological aspects of the late empire.²⁸ Liebeschuetz's political approach relied primarily on law codes, literature, and official records as evidence. The main part of the discussion focused on these types of evidence, and as such was lacking in physical evidence for the changes in urban development, infrastructure, and appearance (as a result of the decline in civic munificence) that are part of the central thesis. Other works that favoured a similar approach are similarly narrow in their use of available evidence; MacMullen referred to archaeological evidence in only one introductory section of his entire monograph.²⁹ This is not simply an oversight or an inherent difficulty in the study of late antique urbanism, but a neglect of archaeological evidence; Kulikowski's *Late Roman Spain and its cities* makes plentiful use of archaeological material in relation to the political developments of late antique Spain.³⁰

Elsewhere in studies of urbanism, attention has been paid to provincial cities in North Africa and Spain (the contributions of Kulikowski and Leone, respectively) which has shed light on the development of cities that were not central or as symbolically significant as Rome. Similarly, the site- and region-

²⁷ Liebeschuetz, 2001a: 29.

²⁸ Liebeschuetz, 2001a: 25.

²⁹ MacMullen, 1988: 1-57.

³⁰ Kulikowski, 2010.

specific work completed by Loseby and Lepelley has contributed greatly to our understanding of the development of cities in Gaul and North Africa respectively.³¹ It is interesting perhaps to note that neither Kulikowski nor Leone supports the interpretation that privileges decline over transformation, instead both favour a more measured approach that takes into account a variety of types of evidence and fields of interest, both traditional (administrative, economic, institutional) and more Brownian (cultural, socio-political history). These can help shed light on aspects of life in Rome that there is little surviving evidence for, or for which the surviving dataset is incomplete.

The subject of late antique urbanism no doubt calls for an interdisciplinary approach; current work on the subject has not succeeded in providing comprehensive analysis, instead focusing on certain aspects and inevitably leaving gaps. While I cannot claim to address all types of evidence in this thesis, it is my aim to fill important gaps in scholarship by constructing a primarily archaeological and historical study, focusing on the changes to the urban landscape of Rome between the building of the Aurelian Wall and the end of the sixth century. This will engage with the approaches outlined above, and in doing so will demonstrate the relevance of the chosen evidence to the wider field. As Leone states, it is important to understand “why some traditions continued, and some others were lost,” and this will be an integral part of the following research: which traditional Roman boundaries can be traced into the Christian city of late antiquity, and which disappeared.³² My aim is to understand why certain boundaries continued into the late Roman city, whether the meaning of these

³¹ Loseby, 2006; Lepelley, 1992.

³² Leone, 2013: 1.

boundaries changed, and how far it is possible to trace the overall development of the city in these reflections of the definition of space.

1.3 Terminology

Terminology, particularly when writing about Rome in late antiquity, can be a minefield. Specific terminology related to ritual activity and burial topography will be explained at the beginning of each chapter where relevant, but broader terms that are used throughout the thesis need to be covered here. This section will define contested terms, and present reasoning for particular choices.

Strict periodisation in ancient history is a contentious subject.³³ It is my view that it creates artificial boundaries between periods of time that often show no distinct differences or moments of change. Drawing chronological boundaries encourages scholars to focus attention on one era without acknowledging the inheritances from previous centuries, leading to studies that cannot determine the long-development of certain trends or their importance (or which can overlook significant details because of a lack of attention to what came previously). The result of strict periodisation in ancient history and archaeological fields is that suggested eras are often presented as distinct and unconnected, with little interdisciplinary or multi-field cooperation, which results in one-dimensional studies and creates gaps in our knowledge. More conversation is taking place now, but it remains a problem particularly for late antiquity as few scholars include discussion of the imperial period in their work. This has created the false sense that these two eras were separate and culturally distinct, when in fact they were inherently intertwined, the same area at different points in its development, and of crucial importance to one another. The Rome of late antiquity was the same

³³ Marcone, 2008: 4-19.

city that had existed for a millennium, and to approach it as new and different is misleading. For this reason 'late antiquity' is not capitalised in this thesis. I believe it leads to false perceptions of the later Roman and post-Roman west as culturally distinct from what had come before, divorced from it, when in fact it was its direct descendant and heir.

That said, though in this thesis 'late antiquity' is not intended to reflect a distinctly different period of history, there must be some nuance in discussion, and thus in order to distinguish between earlier chronology and later developments, 'late antiquity' will be seen as the years from AD 271 and the construction of the Aurelian Wall, until the end of the sixth century, the aftermath of the Gothic Wars and the papacy of Gregory the Great.

Defining 'the city' is not as straightforward as it may seem: scholarship which attempts to define Greco-Roman cities largely exists under the shadow of De Polignac's influential discussion of the development of Greek cities, which has come to dominate the field of urbanism (in all periods) in the decades since its publication.³⁴ His central thesis was focused on the unity of city state and territory, with the city acting as administrative centre in control of the country. In addition, his work highlighted the importance of the relationship between secular and religious spheres in the forming of urban space; cities were often associated with sanctuaries or areas of religious significance that, over time, became politically charged as city-states grew and fought for dominance in Greece (one of the examples given was Argos and its dominance of the Argive Heraion, which was important in both religious and political spheres as it occupied significant territory). This approach – deeming the city to be fundamentally defined by its

³⁴ De Polignac, 1995.

role as administrator of territory – has persisted in scholarship and little has been done to challenge this view, even in late antiquity when patterns of urbanism had changed significantly from anything the empire had seen previously (see Ward-Perkins). The criteria set out by De Polignac were initially only applied to the Greek polis, and though they have been used since by other scholars to discuss cities outside the Greek world, they are not suitable for late antique Rome. An alternative model of the city must be sought.

In antiquity, Rome itself was most often approached in one of two ways: it is either an increasingly irrelevant backwater after the founding of Constantinople in the 320s, or it continues to be the symbol of the empire in a very widespread way. These views are not simply found in the ancient literature, although both originate there. After the founding of Constantinople in the early decades of the fourth century and the subsequent departure of the emperor to the Bosphorus, it has been suggested that a “power vacuum” existed in Rome.³⁵ Indeed, certain sources reflect this interpretation, for example Claudian’s panegyric to Honorius, in which the poet implores the young emperor to return to Rome from Ravenna, where the imperial residence was located in the early fifth century (*VI Cons. Hon.* 28.13). It has been suggested that a shortage of building materials in the city may also reflect the change of focus in the empire toward the new capital (see Cantino Wataghin’s proposed interpretation of burial topography and its connection to the practice of spoliation in chapter four), but though this may be a valid claim for the fifth and sixth centuries AD, it cannot be evidenced in the fourth. The second view, that Rome continued to represent the empire, is echoed in the writings of Jerome after the sack in AD 410, who famously penned the line “the whole world has died within one city” (*Comm. In Ezek.* 1. 3). To Ammianus, Rome remained

³⁵ Krautheimer, 1980: 33.

the *urbs venerabilis* (14. 6. 5), described as *domina et regina* (15. 6. 6). Indeed, the fact that the city was sacked so repeatedly over such a number of years (by the Visigoths under Alaric and the Vandals under Genseric in the fifth century, and the Ostrogoths under Totila in the sixth century) implies that the city was still considered to be a significant place, which could suggest that it remained the cultural symbol of the late empire, even though it was no longer the capital.³⁶ This interpretation will be discussed further in relation to Rome's more enduring rituals, which it can be argued are preserved for so long in a Christian world in part because of their celebration of the city itself, rather than its gods.

The definition of the city that will be used in this work is much simpler: it is the area included within the relevant city boundary at any given time (either the Servian Wall, the *pomerium*, or the Aurelian Wall). The built-up space outside the city boundary will be referred to as 'suburban' (or outside the *continentia aedificia*) and will, for the purposes of this research, be considered the 'periphery', not the core city. It is unhelpful to make value-judgements about Rome in late antiquity and thus the city will be treated neither as a backwater nor as the glorious symbol of the Empire.

1.4 Methodology and approach

For this research, I have adopted an evidence-based methodology. The focus is primarily on ancient architectural and archaeological material, art, and epigraphy, supplemented by literary sources and law codes. I have made an effort to avoid largely theoretical discussions or frameworks, and have attempted to stick with proposals that can be evidenced and corroborated. Overall, it is an empirical approach that I do not intend to be merely descriptive, but one which will lead to

³⁶ Lançon, 2000: 35.

a historical assessment of the changes in development that the city boundary of Rome underwent between the imperial period and late antiquity. These assessments can then be integrated into the wider context of scholarship on the city of Rome as a whole in late antiquity, and implications can be outlined for our understanding of the development of the early medieval west.

The use of evidence is as consistent as possible across media, including literature. This means that value judgements have largely been avoided, and only where necessary has one text or author been deemed more or less useful than another. It is my firm belief that any part of a text is valuable for this discussion provided it can be corroborated by other evidence; this is the same standard to which all evidence is held. This is the primary reason for the interdisciplinary approach; I will be looking across media to collect evidence that strengthens the support (or dismissal) of a particular proposal.

The key primary material can be found in Appendices A and B. Appendix A comprises a catalogue of extant boundary and *pomerium cippi* from Rome, organised by date and including details of all the verifiable surviving stones (those of Lucius Sentius, Claudius, Vespasian, and Hadrian). Photographs of each *cippus* have been included in the Figures, in all cases where the location of the stone is currently known and accessible. Appendix A is particularly relevant for the discussions in chapter two, concerning the early development of the *pomerium* and its meaning as the city boundary in the imperial period. Appendix B contains a reproduction of the catalogue of intramural burials from Rome, dating to between the fifth and seventh centuries AD, produced by Meneghini and Santangeli in their 1993 and 1995 publications. I have collated entries and amendments from both articles into one document, correcting formatting and any typographical errors. A reproduction of the distribution map resulting from the

earlier of the two original studies has been included in the Figures (fig. 4.4). Appendix B is especially useful for the discussions of shifting burial topography that can be found in chapter four, where there are frequent references to specific cemetery and burial sites in the late antique city. Other types of evidence, such as sculptural reliefs, coinage, and standing remains are also discussed in the course of this study, not as simply illustrative examples but as key parts of the central foundation of the argument.

In addition to being evidence-based, the approach is diachronic, intended to make specific proposals in each chapter that form part of a larger interpretation of Rome in the fifth century, and which contribute to our understanding of the long development of trends in the city's history. I will now set out an outline of the arguments to be put forward in each chapter, and highlight the overall contribution to the field that I hope to make in this study.

1.5 Structure and outline

In this thesis I will cover three main topics in order to answer the research questions set out above: firstly, the long history and development of the city boundary of Rome from the late republic to the fifth century AD; secondly, change and continuity in the religious festivals and military rituals associated with the boundary, and how these behaviours can inform us about the conceptualisation of the boundary; and finally, the reasons behind Rome's shifting burial topography, including its implication for our understanding of the meaning of the boundary in the late antique city.

Chapter two will provide a discussion of the historical and political development of Rome's city boundary, from the *pomerium* to the Aurelian Wall. Beginning with a definition of the *pomerium*, the chapter will then chart the

repeated extension of the boundary by successive emperors until the building of the Aurelian Wall in the late third century. After a short introduction to the wall, including its line and appearance, there will be a discussion of the changes made to the fortification up until the sixth century, and the ramifications of these interventions. In sum, chapter two will set out the groundwork for the two chapters that will follow, and clear up any outstanding debates on the two city boundaries to be discussed. It will chart changes to the treatment and conceptualisation of the city boundary over time, providing (where possible) explanation for such alterations in meaning. In particular, the material presented in chapter two begins my examination of a possible conceptual distinction between the *pomerium* and the Aurelian Wall, and the relationship between Rome's inhabitants and immaterial or physical boundaries. I propose that the intersection of these two avenues of study can chart changes to the city boundary's development over time.

In chapter three there will be a discussion of boundary rituals in Rome, focussing on religious festivals and military rituals. Both the imperial and late antique incarnations of these rituals will be examined, with any changes to format or meaning accounted for. I will focus on why these rituals are significant for our understanding of the city boundary, with a particular focus on the *Parilia*, the *Amburbium*, and the *Lupercalia*. There is an extended discussion of the Roman *adventus* and its depiction in art and text during the imperial and late antique periods. I propose that the depiction of the city boundary in the context of *adventus* scenes demonstrates how the boundary was conceptualised in late antiquity, and also shows surprising evidence of continuity from the imperial period. A new type of boundary ritual that appeared in the sixth century will also be discussed, namely Christian ambulatory rituals that appear to have shared a

conceptual foundation with their predecessors, and whose descendant rituals are still in practice today. Overall, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that there was a significant degree of continuity between the early imperial period and the fifth century in ritual behaviours associated with the wall and its wider conceptualisation as part of the city, after which it can be seen that certain practices ceased and thereafter, the inhabitants of Rome took a less ritualistic approach to their city boundary.

Funerary material is our most plentiful and significant type of evidence for the changing city boundary of Rome, and thus it makes up the largest single chapter of this thesis. Chapter four will tackle the subject of burial customs and boundaries, focussing initially on the role of the *pomerium* in restricting burial to extra-urban spaces during the republic and imperial period. There will be some discussion of the efficacy of this rule, before turning to the subsequent change in practice that occurred in the fifth century, when the first intramural burials can be found inside the city walls. In the second half of this chapter I will examine existing interpretations of late antique funerary material from Rome, and will contribute a new interpretation of the late antique shift in location of burials. Using the evidence provided in Appendix B, I will argue that the rise in intramural burial that took place in the fifth and sixth centuries AD, and which directly contravened pomerial law, was tied to several important factors: the overall changing meaning and concept of the city boundary in the fifth century, wider patterns in urban maintenance, changing definitions of pollution, and waning State control.

Finally, the conclusions in chapter five will summarise the findings and the interpretations from each chapter, drawing together each proposal to present a larger interpretation of the significance of the fifth century in the development of Rome as a whole. I conclude that the period of time from the first sack of the city

until the beginning of the sixth century was indeed a watershed moment for the Eternal City, albeit not for the reasons that have traditionally been given.

In the course of this thesis, I hope to make two key original contributions to the interpretation of Rome in late antiquity: one specific and one broad. The first is that Rome's burial topography changed significantly in the fifth century because of a set of circumstances that had not previously existed in the city, including the gradual withdrawal of the hand of the State and the slow degradation of taboos which had previously prevented the co-existence of living people alongside the corpses and graves of the deceased. This is the first time this interpretation has been set out in this field, and it is one that draws together many aspects of Rome's archaeological and historical past. The second, broader, original contribution makes use of the three chosen topics (historical context, ritual activity, and funerary practices) to present a wider reading of the importance of the fifth century for the city of Rome as a whole, noting the trends discussed in chapters two and three especially and touching upon the remarkable continuity in many of the boundary practices in Rome until the early decades of the fifth century. It will be suggested that this was a particularly crucial century for the development of Rome and for its transition away from more imperial and classical forms and towards a much more recognisably medieval urban character. In past studies, the fifth century has been characterised by violence and turbulence, and it has been deemed significant for these reasons. It is proposed in this thesis that, contrary to traditional thinking, the city of Rome in the fifth century was engaged in a process of change, of the degradation of old forms and creation of the new. Crucially, it is my interpretation that this process of change stemmed from a long process of small shifts in conceptualisation that stretched back to the second century and which reached their zenith in the fifth, rather than those confined to

the late antique era. The changing definition of the city boundary, border rituals, and Rome's burial topography have all been used in this research as vehicles for the discussion of the city as a whole, as so many of its details and changes are reflected in the understanding of its limits and its dead. The long fifth century saw great changes take place in Rome and its periphery, and the specific inheritances of this unusual chronological moment combined with the events and pressures of its environment coalesced to create a complex and fascinating moment in world history.

Chapter two: Rome's city boundary in context

For much of antiquity, Rome was without an effective defensive circuit of city walls. From at least the first century BC when it was recorded that the sprawl of the city overtook the line of the Servian Wall (Livy, 1. 44), to the late third century AD and the construction of the Aurelian Wall (*SHA Aurel.* 21. 9), there was no physical border to the capital of the Empire. However Rome was bounded by more than walls, and the lack of easily defensible fortifications did not reflect the absence of a functioning city boundary. There was a great network of boundaries in existence throughout Rome's history which aided in the governance and regulation of both its internal and peripheral spaces, including Augustus' fourteen regions, the thirty-seven gates of the customs boundary created by Commodus and Marcus Aurelius (Pliny, *NH* 3. 5. 65), the concept of the *continentia aedificia*, and the series of shrines lining roads that led from the city which formed a ritual boundary through the archaic territory of Rome.³⁷ Out of this complex peripheral topography, I propose that it was the movable *pomerium* that became the *de facto* city boundary when Rome was without functioning city walls, and from which the Aurelian Wall inherited many of its associations upon its construction in the late third century AD.

This chapter will examine first the *pomerium* and then the Aurelian Wall, and in doing so will chart the political and historical context of Rome's city boundary from the Republic until the sixth century AD. The subject of the earliest city walls and their precise locations and role in Rome, dating to the sixth and fourth centuries and largely ceremonial by the late Republic, is a complex topic and will only be touched upon briefly here.³⁸ As such, this chapter will begin with

³⁷ For further discussion of this network of boundaries and how they interacted with each other, see Patterson, 2000: 89. On archaic shrines and boundaries in the *campagna*, see Dubbini, 2015.

³⁸ Further discussion can be found in Cifani, & Fogagnolo, 1998; Coarelli, 1995.

the *pomerium*: there will be a definition of the boundary followed by a discussion of its origins (including etymology), its representation in art and text, changes to its line and political interventions by the emperor, and its meaning in the city. Focussing on the primary material, I will argue that the *pomerium* occupied a more significant role in Rome than has traditionally been accepted and that it formed the replacement city boundary after the Servian Wall was rendered redundant by the growing urban sprawl. In addition, I will draw attention to the important historical and political context for the boundary's development. The second part of the chapter will focus on the Aurelian Wall and how the new city boundary inherited associations from its predecessor. This will include a brief summary of the details of its construction and subsequent modifications, its location and correspondence to pre-existing boundaries, and the overall impact of the wall on the city and its inhabitants. There will then be a concluding discussion that will draw together continuities and note changes in the management and conceptualisation of the city boundary, before setting out questions to be answered in chapters three and four.

2.1 Research context (the *pomerium*)³⁹

There has long been an interest in the Roman *pomerium*, though few large scale studies have ever been completed on the subject and much of the extant work takes the form of journal articles and essays, or passing discussion in works devoted to other topics.⁴⁰ Attention has primarily been focused on the precise

³⁹ I became aware of Saskia Stevens' book, *City Boundaries and Urban Development in Roman Italy* (published in June 2017) in September 2017. At this time my research on the *pomerium* and the writing up of this chapter (and relevant sections in chapters 3 and 4) was complete. In order to submit my thesis on time, I have ignored the contents of her book, but will include it in any future publications resulting from my PhD.

⁴⁰ A selection of key publications that discuss the *pomerium*: Mignone, 2016; De Sanctis, 2007; Goodman, 2007; Gros, 2007; Graham, 2006; Bodel, 2000; 1994; Hope, 2000; Lindsay, 2000; Beard, North & Price, 1998; Andreussi, 1988; 1993-2000; Sordi, 1987; Rodriguez Almeida, 1978-1980; Magdelain, 1976; Robinson, 1975; Labrousse, 1937; Oliver, 1932; Lanciani, 1893-1901; Mommsen, 1888.

location of the boundary over time and how this changed as a result of imperial interventions in the city's sacred geography. The field has largely been dominated by archaeologists and Roman historians (such as Coates-Stephens, Coarelli, and Lugli; Simonelli, Patterson and Syme, respectively),⁴¹ although there has been some interest in the boundary by etymologists (the work of Antaya and Kent)⁴² and scholars concerned with the literary accounts (Boatwright)⁴³ and limited religious or military implications (Orlin, Drogula and Koortbojian).⁴⁴ The field is populated in large part by English-speaking and Italian scholars. The wider importance of the boundary has seldom been discussed, and the city's inhabitants' interactions with it even more rarely. I will argue in the chapters to follow that it is precisely these things – the wider context of the *pomerium* and its relationship to the city – that are crucial to the development of the city boundary and to understanding the changing nature of the urban periphery into late antiquity.

2.2 What was the Roman *pomerium*?

The Roman *pomerium* can be defined, at its most basic level, as the city's sacred boundary, though after the first century BC it was commonly treated as the city boundary in a more general sense (it can be shown, for example, that references to 'the city' often meant 'the space inside the *pomerium*' and not the edge of the built-up space). The boundary in Rome can be explicitly evidenced from the early second century BC until the third century AD in literary sources and epigraphy, and indirectly from the fifth century BC until the fifth century AD, archaeologically, and through implicit references in literature, epigraphy, coinage and art. The

⁴¹ Coates-Stephens, 2004; Simonelli, 2001; Coarelli, 2000; 1997; Patterson, 2000; Syme, 1978; Lugli, 1952.

⁴² Antaya, 1980; Kent, 1913.

⁴³ Boatwright, 1986; 1984.

⁴⁴ Koortbojian, 2010; Orlin, 2008; 2002; Drogula, 2007.

pomerium was not a physical boundary but an immaterial one that was indicated in different ways at different times (*cippi* or city walls), though the underlying concept appears to have remained consistent. Its position changed repeatedly over time, and can in places be difficult to ascertain owing to a lack of surviving *cippi* (and of those that do survive, few have been found *in situ*) or literary accounts of its location. While there is not a great quantity of evidence for the Roman *pomerium*, there is remarkable longevity in the threads of evidence that survive. The continued interest in the boundary in antiquity, coupled with the wide-ranging nature of its recorded associations and meaning, makes this a worthwhile subject for study. It is important to note at this time that the *pomerium* is not unique to Rome; the characteristics of this particular boundary can be observed in numerous other urban centres, and from which it can be accepted that many towns and cities were also bordered by a *pomerium*.⁴⁵

The actual appearance of the *pomerium* in Rome in antiquity has been the subject of a great deal of debate amongst scholars since the early twentieth century, largely owing to the confusion in the ancient sources about the details. As previously mentioned, the *pomerium* was not a material boundary but an immaterial and conceptual one that was marked in at least two known ways during its existence (walls and boundary stones, *cippi*). Identifying how this conceptual and immaterial boundary was located spatially has proven problematic, and is tied up with ancient authors' considerations about what the *pomerium* actually was. Varro (*Ling.* 5.143) and Plutarch (*Rom.* 11.1-4) stated that the *pomerium* was the space behind the city wall (hence *post-murum*, *pomerium*), while Festus (in his *Lexicon*) insisted it was the area in front of the

⁴⁵ For example, towns in Italy such as Pompeii and Capua demonstrate strong evidence of pomerial law, see discussion in Senatore, 1999, particularly pages 100-112.

wall (*pro-moerium*). Livy (1.44) stated it was both the spaces in front and behind the wall or furrow, a sacred area which was to be left unploughed and uncluttered by buildings, although archaeological evidence from the late republican city suggests the latter requirement was not routinely honoured. Other authors tell us it was not associated with a wall at all (Tac. *Ann.* 12.23-34). In reality, the *pomerium* was marked out by two different physical systems during its existence: boundary stones known as *cippi*, and physical fortifications such as sections of the Servian and Aurelian walls, with both systems employed at different times (fig. 2.1). Interestingly, the disagreement in the sources about the form of the *pomerium* (whether it was space associated with the wall or the *cippus*, and where in relation to the marker it could be found) is in all likelihood related to the appearance of the boundary at the time the text in question was written, rather than an overarching and timeless definition of the *pomerium*; Tacitus recorded a boundary marked by *cippi* because the second century AD boundary was marked in this way. Livy claimed it was the space associated with a wall, because in the late first century BC, the boundary was largely coterminous with the Servian Wall. It must be noted that whichever way the *pomerium* was realised in antiquity, the *cippi* and walls only ever acted as indicators to the location of the conceptualised space of the “boundary”, and were not physical manifestations of the line of the *pomerium*. With this in mind then, it is possible to read Livy as the most comprehensive description of the spatial manifestation of the boundary: that it was both in front of and behind the wall, and that the wall was simply the demarcating monument (as the *cippi* were later) that ran through the tract of land in which the *pomerium* could be found.

2.2.1 Origins

The *pomerium* of Rome is believed to have been created through a ploughing ritual. In antiquity it was commonly accepted that this ritual was based on an Etruscan rite that was adopted for the creation of the city, thus the ritual and boundary were important parts of the legendary story of Romulus and the foundation of Rome.

The connection between the *pomerium* and the Etruscans was first recorded by Varro in the first century BC,

Many founded towns in Latium by the Etruscan ritual; that is, with a team of cattle, a bull and a cow on the inside, they ran a furrow around with a plough (for reasons of religion they did this on an auspicious day), that they might be fortified by a ditch and a wall (*Ling.* 5. 143).⁴⁶

It was further echoed by his contemporary, Livy:

This word [*pomerium*] is interpreted by those who look only at its etymology as meaning “the tract behind the wall,” but it signifies rather “the tract on both sides of the wall,” the space which the Etruscans used formerly to consecrate with augural ceremonies when they proposed to erect their wall (1. 44).

Cicero however, writing at roughly the same time as the above authors, claimed that knowledge of the tradition of the *pomerium* was not the exclusive privilege of the Etruscans (this is a reading that could also be applied to Varro):

For what could the Etruscan soothsayers have known, either as to whether the *tabernaculum* had been properly placed, or as to whether the regulations pertaining to the *pomerium* had been observed? (*Div.* 2. 35. 75).

⁴⁶ All translations of ancient texts are from the Loeb editions, unless otherwise stated.

In spite of this, Cicero's statements on the matter are often discounted, and few scholars take issue with the assumed Etruscan root of the practice. Many religious practices common in the Roman period were borrowed from other cultures, and so it is not beyond the realm of belief that the foundation rite adopted by Rome was initially practised by their neighbours. Cornell accepted this origin for the ritual, but went on to dismiss the connection between the creation of the foundation ritual as a practice and the Etruscan cities, attributing the practice of ritualised city-foundation (and therefore the implications of the origins of the *pomerium* on the wider context of the creation of urban boundaries) to the Hellenising *koinē* in Italy in the archaic period.⁴⁷ Alternatively it has been suggested, although largely discredited in recent decades, that the Roman *pomerium* and its creation ritual may have originated from Indo-European practices.⁴⁸

According to aetiological tradition then, the ploughing ritual itself employed by the first Romans to found their city was an inherited activity originally from Etruria or one of the Latin territories, and this ritual created the *sulcus primigenius*, from which the *pomerium* was formed. The final and key element of the boundary's ancient mythological 'origin story' is its creator and connection to the city of Rome's legendary founder. The link between the *pomerium* and Romulus was recorded by a number of ancient authors: Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* 1. 88), Plutarch (*Rom.* 11. 1-4), Tacitus (*Ann.* 12. 23-24), Aulus Gellius (*NA* 13. 14), and Festus (*Lexicon* 295L s.v. *Posimerium*), amongst others. The stories recorded by these authors were all very minor variations on the following sequence of events: the *pomerium* of Rome was believed to have been ploughed

⁴⁷ Cornell, 1995: 167.

⁴⁸ For further information see Dumézil, 1954: 30-33.

originally by Romulus around the Palatine according to the instructions of an Etruscan priest, breaking the furrow at the points of entry and exit from the city. This line was the first furrow, and it set out the line for not only the first *pomerium*, but also the first city wall. The only surviving source that mentioned the foundation ritual prior to the first century BC was Cato's *Origines*, written in the early second century BC and which survives only in fragments. The *Origines* was the first history written in Latin prose, and the first of its seven books was concerned with the *origo populi Romani*.⁴⁹ His account of the creation of a *pomerium* included the first record of the ritual:

Founders of a city used to yoke a bull on the right, and a cow on the inside [the left]; then, clad in the Gabine manner – that is, with part of the toga covering the head and the rest tucked up – they would hold the plough-handle bent in so that all the clods fell inwards, and ploughing a furrow in this manner they would describe the course of the walls, lifting the plough over the gateways (1. 18a = fr 18 P).

Cato does not mention the Etruscan link outlined earlier, but does include reference to the Gabine dress that would perhaps suggest an Italic or Latin influence over the ritual. His account does not refer specifically to Rome nor does it name Romulus, corroborating the interpretation that this was a ritual employed in the foundation of many Roman cities, and not just the capital. Interestingly, though it is a common theme in foundation stories from antiquity, not all ancient authors explicitly credit Rome's *pomerium* to Romulus; Livy (1.44) documents the boundary as being extended by Servius Tullius in the sixth century, connecting it to the construction of the fortifications that were attributed to the sixth king of Rome in the literary tradition, known as the 'Servian Wall' (archaeologically-speaking, this is complicated by several extant phases of city wall, ranging from

⁴⁹ Cornell, 1995: 6.

the sixth to the fourth century BC). His lengthy discussion of the ritual and meaning of the boundary takes place, not with the foundation story, but with Servius Tullius' actions. While the majority of the ancient authors who wrote on the subject do not follow Livy's emphasis on Servius Tullius over Romulus, and focus instead on the ritual as a key element of the Romulean origin story, Cornell argued that a later date for the *pomerium's* foundation would complement the known development of the early city; the sixth century organisation of the 'urban' space into four regions (*Suburana, Esquilina, Collina, Palatina*) may reflect changes that were extended to the religious boundary of the city.⁵⁰ Cornell accounted for the proliferation of Romulean foundation stories in the texts of Livy's contemporaries by suggesting that they were unable to visualise a version of Romulus's Rome that existed without a sacred boundary. While this interpretation is largely conjectural, in the absence of additional evidence for the early *pomerium* or the development of Rome's boundaries prior to the sixth century, associating the first *pomerium* with the first defensive circuit of the city remains the most convincing theory.

It is perhaps true to say that in antiquity it was largely irrelevant whether or not the connection between the *pomerium* and the foundation of Rome by Romulus was based on fact; by the late republic and early imperial periods the link was firmly established in visual culture, as the yoked bull and cow ploughing the pomerial furrow had become symbols of colony foundation. This can be seen in the first century AD Aquileia relief, the only known sculptural representation of the *pomerium* ritual, associated with the founding of the Italian colony (fig. 2.2).⁵¹ Other representations of the ploughing ritual that may represent colony

⁵⁰ Cornell, 1995: 203.

⁵¹ Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Aquileia: inv. 1171.

foundation and the emperor in the guise of Romulus can be found on coins, for example a coin from Aelia Capitolina, a Roman colony founded by Hadrian on the site of the devastated Jerusalem. The coin dates to AD 130-138, and depicts the emperor and the yoke of two oxen on the reverse, ploughing the *pomerium* of the new city (fig. 2.3).⁵² This is a relatively well-attested ‘type’ in the numismatic record known as “the Founder”, with examples surviving from the coinage of Antoninus Pius, Hadrian and Elagabalus, amongst others. However, the Aelia Capitolina coins are particularly interesting examples as they were minted at the time of the colony’s foundation, and thus may represent the actual celebration of the creation of a new *pomerium* rather than simply portraying the emperor in the guise of the ‘founder’.⁵³

There has been some debate about the origin of the boundary itself, that is, the process of its creation and the relationship between the *pomerium* and the *sulcus primigenius*, the ‘first furrow’ created by the ploughing ritual during the foundation of a Roman town or city.⁵⁴ The argument I present in this thesis, of which the development of the *pomerium* is a large part, is based upon the belief that the *sulcus primigenius* that was set out during the foundation ritual and which was believed to have informed the line of the city wall was, immediately at the time of its creation, also the *pomerium*. That the *pomerium* could, in later centuries, be adjusted (while presumably the *sulcus primigenius* could not), does not negate the relationship between these two limits and their initial status as coterminous, with the *pomerium* the natural successor of the *sulcus primigenius*. Indeed, the *pomerium* could not exist without it. This argument is based primarily on the textual sources that use the two boundaries seemingly interchangeably,

⁵² British Museum exhibition, inv. 1908,0110.1871; Mershorer, 1989: Cat.2 (private collection).

⁵³ Mershorer, 1989: 14.

⁵⁴ Simonelli, 2001: 128-136; cf. Cibotto, 2006.

connecting the ploughing ritual to both the *sulcus primigenius* and the *pomerium* without problem. These sources will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

2.2.2 Etymology

It is apparent from the literary sources that the origins, appearance, and nature of the *pomerium* were topics of much confusion in antiquity. Modern scholars have, in recent decades, attempted to solve these issues by studying the etymology of the word *pomerium* (following on from the work of Varro in the first century BC), in an attempt to better understand its history. Discussion has been centred on the correct division of the word *pomerium* in order to understand its root; Antaya has argued for the division of '*pomerium*' into the Indo-European prefix *po* (meaning 'without') plus the root *smer*, the same root as the Latin verb for measuring, *mereo*.⁵⁵ Other interpretations rely heavily on the connection favoured by the ancient authors, between the words *pomerium* and *murus* (wall).⁵⁶ Both of these interpretations are flawed as definitions, and bring into question the validity of using etymology to shed light on the meaning of the boundary: the former assumes a simple, unexplained, and ultimately problematic continuity between very early Indo-European etymological features and Latin, while the latter emphasises the fundamental link between the *pomerium* and a wall, for which there is only inconsistent evidence, with plenty of evidence to support a *pomerium* that was also marked in other ways. There has not been a great deal of work in this area, and as such few conclusive arguments have been presented thus far. With further research, it may be possible to better understand

⁵⁵ Antaya, 1980: 187.

⁵⁶ Kent, 1913: 24.

the name of the boundary, but until such work is completed, its etymological development is largely inconsequential to its meaning.

2.2.3 The line of the *pomerium*

The line of the *pomerium* changed over time, as has already been noted: in the antique tradition, it initially surrounded the top of the Palatine Hill, it was subsequently extended to the line of the Servian Walls, and then into different areas of the city during the imperial period before reaching its fullest extent at the line of the Aurelian Wall in the late third century AD (fig. 2.4). It is commonly accepted that by the time of the late republic the *pomerium* surrounded the major hills of Rome, with the exception of the Aventine, which was included in its circuit by Claudius in the first century AD. Parts of the Campus Martius also appear to have been outside the sacred boundary. This particular topic has been the subject of investigation on many occasions, and I will not attempt to question the current orthodoxy in this thesis. The interpretation of the boundary presented by Beard, North & Price has been adopted in the present research as the most likely and convincing line of the ancient *pomerium* at the time of the Vespasianic intervention (largely based on *cippi* find spots). In this interpretation, the proposed line of the *pomerium* excludes a large section of the Campus Martius, but includes the Aventine, and for a short stretch in the south of the city, is almost coterminous with the later Aurelian Wall (fig. 2.1).

The *pomerium* was undoubtedly a boundary which was affected by the changing political environment in Rome during the late republic and imperial periods, and no more so than on the occasion of its extension. The veracity of the literary sources on the subject of extensions to the *pomerium* has divided scholarship for over a century, and has, in my opinion, often distracted from the significance of the surviving evidence. Many have been too hasty to dismiss a

literary source as evidence for a pomerial extension. That the line of the *pomerium* was adjusted over time is not a debated fact; incontrovertible archaeological proof in the form of *cippi* attests to at least two separate interventions by the emperor during the first century AD. Numerous other references to extensions survive, and must be recognised as important indicators of the meaning of the boundary and the prestige associated with its adjustment, irrespective of whether or not the extension can be undeniably proven in the archaeological record (which seems to be the benchmark for such criticisms). The following sections will chart the documented extensions and supporting evidence, but it is my intention to steer clear of judging the sources in an attempt to find the 'truth' (which in all likelihood is an unattainable thing), and instead to present a survey of the evidence to accurately represent the field at present. The ways in which the *pomerium* was used, either as a genuine political act or as a symbolic literary trope in the late republic and imperial periods, can tell us a great deal about the relationship between the emperor, his audience, and the boundary of Rome.

a) The pre-first century BC *pomerium*

Both the founding and possible extension of the *pomerium* were recorded by later sources as having taken place during the time of Rome's kings (as has already been discussed). Though there is a notable absence of direct evidence to support such extensions (*cippi*, contemporary accounts), their inclusion in the literary tradition that grew up around the boundary in the first century AD is worth mentioning here. The establishment of the *sulcus primigenius* by Romulus was a key part of the foundation story of the city, and the details have been discussed previously so will not be repeated here. That said, the importance placed upon this feature of the foundation myth cemented its position as a recurring *topos* in

Roman historical writing, and we see repeated attempts by imperial authors to record changes to the city's boundary, sometimes cited as efforts to bestow authority or prestige on an emperor. It is perhaps important to bear in mind throughout the following discussion, that such intentions may be responsible for the inclusion of a particular emperor's name in the canon of rulers who adjusted the line of Rome's sacred boundary, rather than any attempt at providing a faithful historical record.

b) The dictators

The extension of the *pomerium* by Sulla was documented by Seneca (*De Brev. Vit.* 10.13), Tacitus (*Ann.* 12.23-24), Aulus Gellius (*NA.* 13.14), and Festus (*Lex.* 295L s. v. *Posimerium*). Though no explicit archaeological evidence survives to corroborate these claims (i.e. no *cippus* with the inscription '*pomerium*'), it is possible that other interventions into the peripheral areas of Rome during Sulla's active years in Rome could be interpreted as adjustments of the pomerial line. Three *cippi* extending the ban on burials to certain areas of the extra-pomerial Esquiline Hill have survived, set up by a late republican *praetor*, Lucius Sentius. It is possible that these inscriptions are a reflection of the extension of the city's pomerial restrictions into spaces beyond the existing line of the late republican boundary, although there is no indication that Sulla was directly involved in the implementation of these measures. A further late republican extension has been attributed to Julius Caesar by Aulus Gellius (*NA* 13.14) and Cassius Dio (43.50.1; 44.49.2), though there is no archaeological evidence to corroborate it, nor is it known which areas of the city were added to the area enclosed by the *pomerium*.

c) The emperors

From the late first century BC onwards, the beginning of the imperial period, the literary sources record seven emperors who adjusted or paid attention to the *pomerium* during their reign. It was recorded that their interest in the boundary was demonstrated in one of two ways (with no exceptions): firstly, by an extension of the boundary to include a greater amount of the urban sprawl of the city, the process of which is likely to have included the re-enactment of the boundary ritual and augury and, in some cases, the erection of stone markers to set out the adjusted line of the *pomerium*, or secondly, a restatement of the existing line of the boundary after a particular event. Only one example of the latter action can be evidenced, that of Hadrian in the second century AD, with several of the *cippi* surviving.⁵⁷ Of the former, the emperors who have been connected to a pomerial extension are: Augustus, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian, Trajan, and Aurelian. Direct archaeological evidence (in the form of *pomerium cippi*, rather than corroborating evidence such as cemeteries) only survives for three: Claudius, Vespasian, and Hadrian.

Augustus

Tacitus (*Ann.* 12.23-24), Cassius Dio (55.6.6), Aulus Gellius (*NA* 13.14) and the *Historia Augusta* (*Aurel.* 21.9) report that the first imperial extension to the boundary was completed by Augustus in approximately AD 8, though there is no archaeological evidence to support this claim, and it does not feature in the *Res Gestae* – Augustus' own account of his achievements as emperor (this in itself is not enough to disprove his extension). Conceptually, a pomerial extension suits the reign of Augustus which may account for the amount of scholarship which supports the theory; emphasis on the renewal of old traditions and religious

⁵⁷ Appendix A: H1-4.

practices in this period is relatively well-attested and there is little doubt that the *pomerium* existed in Rome as early as the fourth century BC or possibly even earlier, certainly early enough to have been considered an element of the traditional Rome Augustus sought to recreate in the late first century BC and the early first century AD.⁵⁸ In addition, a single boundary stone dating to Augustus' censorship has been discovered and while it is not a *pomerium cippus*, it does refer to the common practice of returning land to the public.⁵⁹ On numerous occasions, acting as censor, the leader of the city divided or reassessed the urban space for better administration of the census.

It has been suggested that this, alongside the division of the city into fourteen regions represented Augustus' interest in the boundaries of the city and as such, has been used to support the idea of an Augustan pomerial extension. This is a somewhat problematic use of the epigraphic evidence. The boundary stone referring to the transference of land into public ownership is no more an indication of Augustus' pomerial extension than his fourteen regions were: both show an interest in the organisation of the city and the fulfilment of his political duties, but neither demonstrate a convincing interest in the particulars of the city's sacred boundary. Unlike evidence such as the *Sentius cippi* found on the Esquiline that altered the burial boundary and thus directly interfered with the city's *pomerium* (perhaps a deliberate act on behalf of Sulla, who is credited with a pomerial extension), the Augustan boundary stone is the result of a different, unconnected action taken by the censor which had no direct consequence for the line or meaning of the contemporary *pomerium*. It was not found in an area that has been associated with the pomerial line, and its inscription does not appear

⁵⁸ Shotter, 1991: 61; for counter-argument see Bedlin 2013: 464; Boatwright, 1986: 26.

⁵⁹ Boatwright, 1986: 23, fn. 34.

similar to those of Claudius and Vespasian in any way. The literary sources are silent on the area of land that Augustus included inside the *pomerium*, and at present this remains unknown. It is perhaps the case that later authors simply assumed Augustus had extended the *pomerium* given his intervention into other aspects of religious and spatial organisation in the city during his reign.

Claudius

The Claudian pomerial extension of AD 49 is the first convincingly archaeologically-attested imperial expansion of the area included in the sacred boundary's circuit. Seven verified Claudian *pomerium cippi* survive, bearing the following inscriptions (*CIL* 6.40852, 6.37023, 6.31537, 6.37022, 6.01231, 6.40853, 6.31537. Fig. 2.5a - f):⁶⁰

Top:	POMERIUM
Front:	Ti(berius) Claudius Drusi f(ilius) Caisar Aug(ustus) Germanicus, pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate) VIII(I) imp(erator) XVI, co(n)s(ul) III, Censor, p(ater) p(atriciae), auctis populi Romani finibus pomerium ampliaJit terminaJitq(ue).
Side (left):	Numbering system, e.g. CXXXIX

⁶⁰ Appendix A: C1-7.

The numbering system on the side of each *pomerium cippus* has enabled scholars to reconstruct sections of the boundary which are unknown; a number of the Claudian *cippi* were found in situ, and using this information alongside their numbers, it has been possible to estimate that the boundary was comprised of at least 139 *cippi* in total (approx. 70-150m apart), and (using the literary sources as a guide here) most likely included the Aventine and parts of the *Campus Martius* in the circuit for the first time.⁶¹

Accounts of the act occur in both Tacitus' (*Ann.* 12.23-24) and Aulus Gellius' (*NA* 13.14) works, and Claudius is named as Vespasian's predecessor in the act by the *lex de Imperio Vespasiani*, which will be discussed below. The extension of the *pomerium* by Claudius is of little surprise considering his antiquarian interest in traditions: observe for example, the unusual spelling of "Caisar" in his inscriptions (this is also seen on the *Porta Maggiore* dedicatory inscription, *CIL* 6.1256-1258) and his inclusion of the inverse 'f' character.⁶² It also complements our understanding of his position as an emperor with little military experience prior to his accession, and connecting his campaign successes in Britain (AD 43) to the extension of the *pomerium* in order to glorify his military victory and tie it indelibly to the city of Rome, would appear to be a suitably feasible motive for his extension of the boundary. Traditionally the *pomerium* could only have been extended by someone who had added to the territory of Rome within the Italian peninsula, according to Seneca (*Brev. Vit.* 13.8-9: "it was customary to extend [the *pomerium*] after the acquisition of Italian, but never of provincial, territory") though it is obvious from the Claudian extension that this rule was relaxed to refer to the addition of any territory to the Roman

⁶¹ Boatwright, 1984: 38.

⁶² Coates-Stephens, 2004: 37.

Empire. The extension of the *pomerium*, in this instance, may have served as a means to an end for the emperor: while satisfying his own interests in tradition (including an interest in possible Etruscan practices), it allowed the emperor to lay claim to the sacred boundaries of the city and tie his own victory to a boundary symbolically linked to the founder of Rome and the very heart of the city itself. In this way, Claudius became the new founder of Rome, cast as the new Romulus responsible for the very space in which his victory was celebrated and for which his campaign was won. Importantly, if we are to accept the scholarly interpretation that the Augustan extension is untenable, then Claudius' pomerial act would have been the first of its kind since the republic, and the first instance of an imperial focus on the sacred boundary of Rome. It included in the city's sacred circuit for the first time parts of the Campus Martius and the Aventine, which had previously been excluded. It is not implausible that Claudius favoured this particular tradition in part because it established a deep connection with the city of Rome that was not already dominated by associations with Augustus, allowing him to lay claim to the city in his own right.

Nero

Claudius' successor Nero is also reported to have extended the limits of the city although such a claim only appears in the *Historia Augusta* (*Aurel.* 21.9) and is generally discounted by modern scholars, including Mommsen, Robinson, Boatwright and Lugli, amongst many others.⁶³ The context of the inclusion of Nero's name in the *Historia Augusta*, that is, as a predecessor to Aurelian as an extender of the *pomerium*, may allow us to extrapolate the potential reason

⁶³ Mommsen, 1876; Boatwright, 1986; Robinson, 2003: 4, fn.7; Lugli, 1952.

behind his association with the boundary in late antiquity. The passage is as follows:

The *pomerium*, however, he [Aurelian] did not extend at that time, but later. For no emperor may extend the *pomerium* save one who has added to the empire of Rome some portion of foreign territory. It was, indeed, extended by Augustus, by Trajan, and by Nero, under whom the districts of Pontus Polemoniacus and the Cottian Alps were brought under the sway of Rome (*Aurel.* 21.9).

This quote demonstrates that the reason for including Nero may not have been to add emperors to a list of predecessors in the act of pomerial extension, but to establish precedent for the precise set of circumstances that gave Aurelian the right to extend the *pomerium* at the end of the third century AD – that is, adding (or returning) territories to the empire. In the case of Aurelian, the revolt in Palmyra was quelled and the land brought under Roman control once more, for Nero, it seems to have been believed that his inclusion of Pontus Polemoniacus and the Cottian Alps into the empire granted him the right to extend the sacred boundary, at least in late antiquity. It is quite irrelevant to the content of the *Historia Augusta* whether or not Nero's extension actually took place, more important were the specifics of a potential extension. Thus the appearance of Nero's name may serve a particular purpose in the text and for a contemporary audience, rather than acting as a verifiable historical record.

Indeed, there is no archaeological evidence which supports the Neronian extension, but perhaps more importantly, the *lex de Imperio Vespasiani* (the AD 75 law that conferred upon Vespasian powers of the *Princeps* and with it, the right to extend the *pomerium*) makes no mention of Nero's name, citing as a precedent for pomerial extensions only Claudius. This could mean two things: firstly, it could suggest that Vespasian and the Senate of the late first century AD were

attempting to distance themselves from the civil war and the emperor after whose death it began. The absence of Nero's name from the *lex* may suggest that Vespasian was hoping to legitimise himself and his new dynasty in an era of uncertainty by tying himself to a member of the Julio-Claudians more commonly associated with stability than Nero. Alternatively, the second (more likely) possibility is that the absence of Nero's name from the *lex* occurred because Nero had not extended the *pomerium*. Augustus' name is also suspiciously absent from this official record of predecessors who had adjusted the line of the *pomerium*, and no convincing argument can be made for his exclusion from the list. Augustus was the obvious choice of predecessor, more highly-regarded than Claudius. Thus it may be advantageous to assume that the *lex* only included the names of those emperors who had, in fact, extended the boundary, and as such, discount the Neronian (and Augustan) examples. Though it is also true that the *lex* does not make reference to any extensions prior to Claudius, in spite of evidence to support the pomerial extensions of both Sulla and Servius Tullius, it is likely that the imperial precedent (rather than a republican or royal one) was considered to be most important in legitimising the acts of a new emperor.

Vespasian

Vespasian's extension of the Roman *pomerium* in AD 75 is a particularly interesting event owing to the nature of the evidence, partially discussed above. The survival of four *pomerium cippi* which originally marked the line of the sacred boundary, and the existence of the *lex de imperio Vespasiani* which conferred upon the emperor powers of the *Princeps* and with it the right to extend the *pomerium* (the only law of its kind to survive), are fascinating materials that provide information about a pomerial extension that is entirely absent from the literary sources (which in itself should call into question the practice of relying

entirely on the literary material to accept or dismiss an extension). The four surviving *cippi* bear the following inscriptions (unlike the Claudian *cippi*, there was no inscription on the top side of the stone) (fig. 2.6a – c):⁶⁴

Front:	<p>[I]mp(erator) Cae[sar] Ve<s>pasianu[s] Aug(ustus), pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate) VI, imp(erator) XI[V], p(ater) p(atriciae), censor, co(n)s(ul) VI, desig(natus) VII, T(itus) Caesar Aug(usti) f(ilius) Vespasianus, imp(erator) VI, pont(ifex), trib(unicia) pot(estate) IV, censor, co(n)s(ul) IV, desig(natus) V, auctis p(opuli) R(omani) finibus, pomerium ampliaverunt terminaveruntque.</p>
Side (left):	<p>Like the Claudian <i>cippi</i>, these stones include a numbering system on the side, e.g. CLVIII</p>
Side (right):	<p>Two of the four surviving <i>cippi</i> have an additional (different) number on the right-hand side, which may be a later addition, e.g. CCX[L]</p>

⁶⁴ *CIL* 6.40854; 6.01232; 6.31538, Appendix A: V1-4. It is possible that the extension of the *pomerium* by Vespasian and the new circuit of *cippi* had a direct effect on the design of the Cancelleria reliefs, and may be the reason behind the depiction of a boundary stone in the B scene.

Arguably the most significant piece of information the *lex* provides is that by the time Vespasian became emperor, he no longer had to extend the boundaries of the empire to possess the right to extend the *pomerium* of Rome, nor did he require the permission of the Senate to do so if he wished. The additional survival of these four *cippi* suggests he used this power, and in doing so he restated not only the sacred space of Rome which had been polluted by the violence of the civil war (the example of Galba's death springs to mind), but cast himself as its protector.⁶⁵ While it is true that the surviving *cippi* feature the familiar '*auctis p R finibus*,' considering the content of the *lex*, it is likely that this was a gesture of goodwill from the emperor rather than a reflection of legal protocol.

Trajan

The pomerial extension of Trajan was recorded in Cassius Dio (55.6.6) and the *Historia Augusta* (*Aurel.* 21.9) and is often dismissed for the same reasons as the Neronian extension (discussed above). There is no additional evidence, and while Dio is our most prolific source for the *pomerium* in antiquity, the lack of any other archaeological or literary evidence has been seen to weaken the case for this particular extension. It is interesting to note at this point that Trajan was buried inside the *pomerium* (*Eutr.* 8.5.3; Dio 69.2.3): an honour reserved for a select few in imperial Rome.⁶⁶ There is much debate about whether his resting place (either in the base of his column or nearby in the Forum of Trajan) was planned when the complex was constructed or whether it was a posthumous honour conferred upon the deceased *optimus princeps* by his successor, Hadrian.⁶⁷ It is, in my opinion, too presumptuous to believe that the column was

⁶⁵ For further discussion, see Coarelli, 2009.

⁶⁶ Davies, 2004: 27-34.

⁶⁷ Davies, 2004: 27; see also Zanker, 1970.

built as Trajan's sepulchre, especially considering the storage of trophies from the Dacian Wars in its base chamber before the emperor's death, not to mention the fact that the inscription on the base refers to the emperor as *divus* – something that does not appear in Trajan's titulature until after his death and deification.⁶⁸ It could be argued that the restatement of the city boundary that took place in AD 121 by the augural college on the instruction of Hadrian (discussed in the next section) suggests that there was, during the reign of Trajan's successor, a degree of interest in the *pomerium* and its meaning. Trajan, as far as can be ascertained from the sources available, demonstrated no such explicit interest in the boundary during his lifetime. Whoever made the decision to place Trajan's ashes in his column chose a burial location that was not only deeply meaningful but utterly unprecedented in the imperial era, and had the dual effect of honouring the deceased emperor beyond all others and, by association, elevating his chosen successor. This is, in my opinion, the strongest argument in favour of Hadrian (who evidently displayed an interest in the boundary and had the power to instigate this unusual move) as the deciding hand in Trajan's intra-pomerial tomb location.

Setting aside the issue of whether the intra-pomerial burial of the emperor was planned before his death, the fact that it occurred at all was significant in itself. Trajan is the only confirmed emperor to have been buried inside the sacred space of the city, an honour only reserved for *summi viri* (in the republic, not in the imperial period), vestal virgins, and very young children. Trajan's intra-pomerial burial was an act which deliberately violated the *pomerium* but which was cast as an honour of the highest calibre: a contradiction enshrined in law, to ignore the inviolable boundary. Though no further evidence of his intervention in

⁶⁸ Further discussion can be found in Claridge, 1993; Gesmann, 2003; and Beckman, 2011.

the line of the *pomerium* survives, nor any indication of the area his extension would have incorporated into the city, his connection to the boundary is an interesting reminder that even the most sacred of augural rules and the decorum associated with them could shift over time, and that many of the restrictions associated with the *pomerium* were similarly flexible.

Hadrian

The final two pomerial acts were undertaken by Hadrian and Aurelian; the first was a restatement and the second an extension. Hadrian's restatement of the pomerial line of Vespasian in AD 121 is archaeologically evidenced by four surviving *cippi*, but, like that of Vespasian, does not appear in the literary record. At least one of the Vespasianic *cippi* was found *in situ* buried in alluvial silt from the Tiber which covered more than half of its inscription. It has been suggested that Hadrian's restatement of the boundary was a pragmatic response to increased seasonal flooding and damage to the markers of the existing circuit.⁶⁹ In this way, Hadrian was performing a duty to the city in remarking the boundary and renewing its *cippi*, reclaiming some of the flood plain (notably areas near the Campus Martius) and returning it to the Roman people. It was, in a way, a renewal of the city, and it corroborates what we know of Hadrian's general attitude to borders and frontiers during his reign, particularly in relation to his frontier policy of retrenchment in certain areas, and securing the limits of the empire rather than expanding them. The inscription on the *cippi* is included below, and makes direct reference to the restatement of the boundary. Interestingly, the work was

⁶⁹ Boatwright, 1986: 21.

undertaken primarily by the augural college rather than the emperor himself (fig.

2.7a – b):⁷⁰

Front	<p>Ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) collegium</p> <p>augurum auctore</p> <p>Imp(eratore) Caesare Divi</p> <p>Traiani Parthici f(ilio),</p> <p>Divi Nervae nepote,</p> <p>Traiano Hadriano</p> <p>Aug(usto) pont(ifice) max(imo),</p> <p>trib(unicia) pot(estate) V,</p> <p>co(n)s(ule) III, proco(n)s(ule),</p> <p>terminos pomerii</p> <p>restituendos</p> <p>curavit.</p>
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Aurelian

The final extension of the Roman *pomerium* to its greatest extent and the circuit which it maintained for the remainder of its existence is attributed to Aurelian, and dates to shortly after the building of the Aurelian Wall in Rome between approximately AD 271-5. This adjustment, from the line of the Hadrianic restatement to the line of the Aurelian Wall only constitutes an ‘extension’ in certain places as the wall followed the line of some stretches of the existing Hadrianic/Vespasianic *pomerium*, which some have argued may have acted as

⁷⁰ *CIL* 6.40855 (found in situ); 6.10233; 6.31539. No top or side inscriptions dating from the restatement are visible on the four surviving Hadrianic *cippi*, although one does include a number on the left side which is likely to have been from reuse.

a guideline for the planners of the fortification.⁷¹ Aurelian's extension is only evidenced in the literature by the *Historia Augusta* (*Vit. Aur.* 21.9) which has raised questions about the validity of the claim. However it is clear that by the fourth century a number of the restrictions which were traditionally associated with the *pomerium* had been transferred onto the line of the wall, and thus it is reasonable to assume that at some point, the wall did indeed become the final incarnation of the *pomerium*. Questions about Aurelian's involvement in the extension have been raised on a number of occasions and there are certainly better-suited candidates for the role, Maxentius, for instance, who was actually resident in Rome long enough to extend the boundary, was also present when the walls were in their finished state, and may have even increased the height of certain sections in preparation for his ultimately unsuccessful conflict with Constantine. Aurelian, on the other hand, only visited Rome on two occasions – once before the wall was built and once during its construction. He never saw it finished. Nevertheless, in the face of such a dearth of additional evidence, it is likely to be an unresolvable debate and thus it is most productive to accept that at some point after the building of the Aurelian Wall, the line of the *pomerium* became coterminous with the fortifications (this can be most clearly proven through the use of burial evidence, see chapter four).

So how can these pomerial extensions and restatements be interpreted and how can they shed light on the meaning of the *pomerium* in the imperial period? There is undoubtedly a variety of agendas behind the actions discussed above, and the context of each is different enough to suggest little obvious connection between the extensions: Vespasian did not extend the *pomerium* because Claudius had done it, rather he extended it for his own reasons and used

⁷¹ Dey, 2011: 81-2.

Claudius to prove his right to do so. There does, however, appear to be one unifying factor in the pomerial amendments: extensions of the *pomerium*, without exception, take place during the censorship of the emperor.⁷² This could be related to two things: it is probable that a requirement of the extension was that the emperor had to be holding the office of censor at the time, but it is also feasible that the role of censor, the point in a reign at which the emperor was most directly responsible for his city and its inhabitants, was the environment in which pomerial extensions and subsequently re-representing the city as a whole through the unification of the sacred and urban landscapes, were not only attractive acts, but encouraged. Often, an extension also coincided with a census: the time at which the emperor would be acutely aware of the population of Rome and the limitations of the space of the city, perhaps prompting a re-evaluation of its boundaries.

2.2.4 The *pomerium* and the city

So far it has been possible to define the *pomerium* and trace its origins and development throughout the republic and imperial periods. There has been little attempt to investigate how these developments affected the city's inhabitants, either in their behaviour or in their understanding of what the *pomerium* meant. In order to understand the degree to which ordinary people would have interacted with the *pomerium* on an everyday basis, and the degree to which the boundary would have had an effect on the lives of the inhabitants of Rome, the link between the boundary and the conceptualisation of "the city" must be addressed. How did Romans define their city? Was it as the space within the *pomerium*, or the extent of the urban sprawl? Did people know when they crossed the *pomerium*? Did this have any impact on the way they lived their lives? These may be unanswerable

⁷² Boatwright, 1986: 14.

questions given the simple fact that evidence for this subject may never have existed – it is likely that no accounts of the *pomerium* have ever been written or inscribed by a significant portion of the chosen demographic (i.e. non-elite inhabitants of Rome). However, certain types of evidence may offer a glimpse into the attitudes of the population of Rome to its most sacred boundary. This will be discussed further in chapter four with regard to burial topography, which is arguably the case in which divisions between city and *pomerium* are most evident (in the imperial period) but also, in late antiquity, most blurred. Though other evidence is limited, there are a number of sources which shall be discussed that may help to shed some light on the definition of the space of Rome.

The first ancient author to be discussed, and the one whose writings most accurately sum up the problem of defining Rome in both the ancient world and the modern, is Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who stated in the first century BC:

If anyone wishes to estimate the size of Rome by looking at these suburbs he will necessarily be misled for want of a definite clue by which to determine up to what point it is still the city and where it ceases to be the city; so closely is the city connected with the country, giving the beholder the impression of a city stretching out indefinitely. But if one should wish to measure Rome by the wall, which, though hard to be discovered by reason of the buildings that surround it in many places, yet preserves in several parts of it some traces of its ancient structures, and to compare it with the circuit of Athens, the circuit of Rome would not seem to him very much larger than the other (*Ant. Rom.* 4.13.4-5).

The confusion about how best to measure Rome is evident in this source; though Dionysius does not directly address the *pomerium*/city debate, he does succinctly summarise the problem facing inhabitants of Rome and outsiders alike – did Rome end at its walls, its suburbs, or the peripheral countryside? Measuring the city by its ancient walls would result in only a relatively small portion of the built-

up area being considered 'Rome', but measuring the city by its surrounding territory was a similarly confusing pursuit. No conclusions were provided by Dionysius. Certain ancient authors have sidestepped this problem by simply using the terms "*pomerium*" and "city" interchangeably. An example of this can be found in Valerius Maximus' *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* during a discussion about sumptuary laws and the curbing of luxury in republican Rome (2.4). During the course of this discussion, the restrictions on luxury within the *pomerium* of Rome are compared to the proceedings within the boundary of "[an]other city", from which it can be inferred that the *pomerium* is deemed an equivalent boundary to the boundary of the other city, if only in name. Maximus uses the term *pomerium* presumably because it was interchangeable with 'the city,' and thus would be a comparable term in this context.

Other ancient authors' use of the words "*pomerium*" and "city" (*urbs*) suggests that the *pomerium* was the boundary most commonly associated with the definition of Rome. For example,

"Do you know someone named Milo, one of the foremost citizens?"
 "Foremost is the right word for your Milo," she replied, "since he lives outside the *pomerium* and the whole town" (Apul. *Met.* 1.21).

This exchange includes two references to the space of Rome: the space outside the *pomerium* and the space outside the *whole* city. That Apuleius needed to specify the "whole city" (*urbem totam*) in opposition to the *pomerium* suggests that just using the word 'city' would not suffice: had the word *pomerium* or simply "the city" been used alone to refer to the city (as it has in other situations), it would not have conveyed the meaning Apuleius intended, and thus the qualifier (whole, entire) was required. From this it may be inferred that "the city" was not commonly understood to mean the entire urban sprawl but only a part of it, thus the "whole

city” was a necessary description to achieve the meaning Apuleius desired. This passage could imply that the terms *pomerium* and city could be used interchangeably in everyday conversation (and also, potentially in legal documents), therefore it was necessary, in this text, to specify the sprawl of the city and not just its sacred core.

Similarly, when Aulus Gellius wrote about the restrictions placed upon tribunes in Rome, he discussed how their civic powers were limited to the space within the *pomerium* and how they were prohibited from leaving this area for more than a day (*NA* 3.2.11). However, when recounting how they dealt with this restriction, Gellius simply used the word “Rome” rather than *pomerium*, implying that the two were interchangeable. These are just a few of the many examples in which the phrases “the city,” “Rome” and “the *pomerium*” were used synonymously.⁷³ While it appears that using the word *pomerium* was an acceptable way of referring to the city and vice versa, in certain contexts and in order to properly refer to the edge of urban space, certain additions were needed. It is likely that there are a number of examples which contradict the evidence presented here, but that is largely irrelevant: what is important is that the *pomerium* was, in some contexts and by some authors, perceived in this way.

It is likely that notions of the city and its limits were similarly understood ‘on the ground’. It is therefore a useful exercise to envisage ordinary situations in which inhabitants of Rome would come into direct contact with the *pomerium*: the moment at which they would be most aware of its existence as a boundary of their city. The case of the republican Esquiline will be discussed in greater depth in chapter four, but for now it may provide an interesting example of such direct

⁷³ For example, *Amm. Marc.* 14.6.21-3. For further discussion, Gargola, 2017 (esp. chapters 4 and 6).

contact with the *pomerium*, as an area which had previously been extra-pomerial, but which was subject to new burial restrictions in the first century BC. Prior to the erection of the *Sentius cippi* and the banning of burial, cremation and the dumping of corpses in the Potter's Fields, the area in question was funerary space, and as such it is reasonable to assume that the area was visited on a semi-regular basis. Its location as an extra-pomerial but intra-urban cemetery is particularly significant: those who visited the area from within the *pomerium* had to pass by the remnants of the Servian Wall in order to access it, and thus pass through the sacred boundary of Rome that was responsible for the cemetery's location. There is obviously no way of conclusively knowing how aware people would have been of this transition, but some plausible guesses can be made, particularly when envisaging passing from the space of the city into cemeterial areas which would have been characterised by the sudden onset of tombs outside the line the *pomerium*. It is an example of the moment at which an inhabitant of the city would have been in direct contact with the boundary that affected the topography around them, and thus arguably this is the moment when a Roman would have been most aware of leaving the sacred area, and entering the space beyond: the cemetery. Later, when the *pomerium* was extended to the line of the Aurelian Wall, the experience of crossing the sacred boundary and leaving the city proper was monumentalised and could not have gone unnoticed, though its association with the *pomerium* may have been largely forgotten. What was preserved, and what can be found even in late antiquity, was the perception that outside Rome (as demarcated by the *pomerium* or by the wall) lay a different sphere. Though connected by continuous urban sprawl, the area outside the *pomerium* was of a different character to that which lay within.

2.3.1 Research context (the Aurelian Wall)

In spite of its monumental size and domination over the peripheral landscape of Rome, the Aurelian Wall has been the subject of relatively little scholarly attention in comparison to some of the city's other archaeological sites. Since the early nineteenth century, there has been a surprisingly small collection of detailed studies published about the wall, of which most have been primarily concerned with establishing the technicalities of its architecture with particular emphasis on defining each construction phase and dating it as accurately as possible. The earliest of these major publications was Nibby's *Le Mura di Roma* (1821), followed by Heinrich Jordan's *Forma Urbis Romae* (1874) and Lanciani's publication of the same name (1901). Early photographs of the wall can be found in the collections of John Henry Parker.⁷⁴ The work of these early scholars documents sections of the wall that have since been demolished, often during the *Risorgimento* and the destructive actions of the Bersaglieri (for instance, at the old *Porta Salaria* at *Piazza Fiume*).⁷⁵ Richmond's monograph on the wall, published in the 1930s, was the first major English-language study to be written about the subject and it presented new interpretations of the different phases of the wall's construction, although many of these have since been refuted.⁷⁶ There were few subsequent interventions until Todd's short book on the wall in the late 1970s, which was largely a summary of prior work on the monument.⁷⁷ Beyond these publications, there have been several articles written on short sections of the wall that further narrowed the date ranges of certain areas, such as Coates-

⁷⁴ John Henry Parker's archive is available via the British School at Rome library, Digital Collections webpage: <http://www.bsrdigitalcollections.it/jhp.aspx> [accessed 11/2017].

⁷⁵ Jacobsen, 2013: foreword (Richmond, 1931 reprint).

⁷⁶ Richmond, 1931.

⁷⁷ Todd, 1978.

Stephens' work on the early medieval phases⁷⁸ and the work of Lucos Cozza.⁷⁹ Mancini's atlas was published in the early 2000s, and collated much of the earlier work on establishing phases for the wall.⁸⁰ The first departure from traditional topics for discussion (phases of construction, specifics of architecture, masonry, or historical development) was made by Dey in his recent monograph, which for the first time focused on the impact of the wall on Rome and its inhabitants, and began to examine its meaning in the city.⁸¹ This was a welcome intervention into a field that had long been dominated by technical discussions, and it has shed a different light on the subject leading to a variety of new approaches (such as the incorporation of the wall into discussions of the development of districts in the city, for instance, the Aventine)⁸², of which this thesis is just one. Dey's book has refocused the field somewhat, but it remains true that little attention has ever been paid to the wall's place in the long development of Rome's city boundary, with only passing comments noting similarities or divergences from earlier boundaries in its line.⁸³ Similarly, investigations into the inhabitants' relationship to the wall in late antiquity and the boundary's conceptual meaning have been limited and often superficial. It is the aim of this thesis to contribute to this discussion, and begin to fill the gap that has been left in the field.

2.3.2 The Aurelian Wall

The monumental fortification wall that can, to this day, be seen in Rome, was constructed in the late third century (fig. 2.8). It was the first full, functioning city wall to have graced Rome's periphery since the late republic and the first century

⁷⁸ Coates-Stephens, 1998, 1999, 2004, 2012.

⁷⁹ Cozza, 1952, 1987.

⁸⁰ Mancini, 2001.

⁸¹ Dey, 2011.

⁸² Mignone, 2016.

⁸³ Dey, 2011: 209-241.

BC, when the Servian Wall was rendered ineffective due to the urban sprawl that overtook its line (fig. 2.1). This section will provide an overview of the late antique city boundary of Rome, including a brief monument biography, a discussion of the significance of its location, and an assessment of the wall's impact on the city. The purpose of this section is twofold: firstly, following on from the first part of this chapter I will provide historical and archaeological context for the discussions to come in chapters three and four, and secondly, I will introduce the interpretation that the third century city wall of Rome was a boundary that was, from its inception, conceptualised as a monument that represented the whole city and which took on the associations of its predecessor, the *pomerium*. This can be seen most clearly in the degree of continuity found in depictions of the city boundary, in the art and text of both the imperial and the late antique periods, and will be discussed in depth in chapter three.

Thanks to several decades of dedicated study, the details of the wall's construction and its subsequent modification phases are widely accepted and can be relayed here without question. According to the ancient textual sources (of which there are few that comment on anything beyond the wall's existence), the fortification was planned and constructed from AD 271, during the reign of the emperor Aurelian (Aur. Vict. *Caes.* 35.7; *SHA Aurel.* 21.9, 39.2; Chronography of 354, *Chron. Aurel.*; Cass. *Chron.* 29; Oros. *ad. Pag.* 7.23.5; Eutr. 9.15; John Malalas, *Chron.* 12.30). It is likely that the circuit was not completed in its entirety until approximately AD 282 at the latest, prior to the death of Aurelian's successor, Probus, who took on the project after Aurelian's death in AD 275 (Zosimus, 1.49).⁸⁴ Though the wall remained unfinished in his lifetime, it was

⁸⁴ Dey, 2011: 17.

recorded that sometime before his death, Aurelian returned to Rome to extend the *pomerium* to the line of the new city boundary (*SHA Aurel.* 21.9).

The wall itself was almost 19 kilometres in length, and its course enclosed much of the urban centre. The Aurelian phase was approximately 8 metres high and 3.5 metres thick; its height was raised an additional 2 metres in the fourth century, and nearly doubled in the fifth due to the intervention of Honorius (AD 401-3).⁸⁵ Some minor repairs were completed in the turbulent fifth and sixth centuries, for example at the gates of the *Porta Appia* (*Porta San Sebastiano*) and the *Porta Flaminia* (*Porta del Popolo*). Its structure was made of ‘brick-faced concrete’ – a facing of thin bricks in mortar, with a tufa aggregate core, held together by lime and *pozzolana* sand cement.⁸⁶ The wall was topped with a gallery or rampart, which ran between the sixteen major gate-towers and numerous other smaller *posterulae* that enabled citizens to enter and exit the city.⁸⁷ The total number of major gates could drop to fifteen, depending on whether one accepts the *Porta Ostiensis West* as a major gate or as a *posterula* – Richmond included it in his list of gates, while Dey did not.⁸⁸

The wall did not enclose the entirety of Rome’s urban sprawl within its line (nor all of its fourteen regions completely), but instead cut through the densely-populated districts of the city. This resulted in the razing of a great number of public and private buildings to make way for the fortification, remnants of which have been discovered in modern excavations, for instance between *Porta Latina* and the *Porta Ostiensis* several cisterns have been found, levelled, in the foundations of the wall.⁸⁹ Other types of architecture were incorporated in the

⁸⁵ Dey, 2011: 13.

⁸⁶ Richmond, 1931: 10.

⁸⁷ Richmond, 1931: 10; Todd, 1978: 24; Dey, 2011: 13.

⁸⁸ Richmond, 1931: 219-220; Dey, 2011: 29.

⁸⁹ Richmond, 1931: 15;

wall's structure instead of being demolished, and these sites have become some of the monument's most famous features: the aqueducts visible in the cross section at *Porta Praenestina-Labicana* (*Porta Maggiore*, fig. 2.9),⁹⁰ towers from the *Castra Praetoria* in the north-east of the city, parts of the Sessorian Palace and the outer wall of the *Amphitheatrum Castrense* (fig. 2.10) close to the church of *Santa Croce in Gerusalemme*, and the *Muro Torto* originally from the *Horti Aciliorum* (fig. 2.11).⁹¹ Perhaps most famously, a handful of tombs were preserved by the wall: notably those of the republican baker, Eurysaces' (at *Porta Praenestina-Labicana*) and that of Gaius Cestius at *Porta Ostiensis* in the shape of a pyramid. It has been suggested that such buildings were included because they were striking and aesthetically-pleasing (in the cases of the amphitheatre, or the tombs of Eurysaces and Cestius), or because some were sacred, inviolable funerary monuments, but this is demonstrably not the case.⁹² Given the vast range of existing structures incorporated into the standing levels of the wall, not to mention those used in the foundations, it is undeniable that such monuments were included in order to save on construction costs and time by utilising existing structures. A strong argument can be made against the idea that tombs were sacred monuments that could not, under any circumstances, be desecrated, and were thus included in the wall to prevent their destruction: there are many examples of half-demolished tombs included in the remains of the wall that were in no way preserved or protected by their use in the monument, for instance those of Aulus Platorinus in Trastevere, of Quintus Haterius at the *Porta Nomentana*, and of Cornelia Vateria at the *Porta Salaria*, amongst many others.⁹³ (This is not counting the quite overwhelming degree of physical evidence from the Roman

⁹⁰ Coates-Stephens, 2004: 79-103.

⁹¹ Richmond, 1931: 13-15.

⁹² Richmond, 1931: 11.

⁹³ Richmond, 1931: 12.

world that suggests tombs and epitaphs were reused without issue.) How such tombs came to be included in the wall is, from a legal perspective, somewhat unclear. There is a multitude of evidence from Rome to suggest that funerary spaces (individual tombs, grave groups or larger organised cemeteries) could be 'decommissioned' in some way - formally closed, covered, and eventually reused.⁹⁴ The necropolis on the Vatican Hill was closed by Constantine in the fourth century and buried, and the land was repurposed as the site of the new *Basilica di San Pietro*.⁹⁵ Similarly, the extensive cemetery close to the *Porta Salaria* was closed during the reign of Trajan, and it seems that land from the excavation of the Quirinal during the construction of the new imperial Forum and market was dumped there, 25 feet deep, to cover the remaining graves.⁹⁶ Earlier, in the late republic, the Esquiline burial ground had been closed and the gardens of Maecenas constructed on the land.⁹⁷ In these instances then, it must be assumed that there was some kind of legal procedure in which the extant graves were declared violable. Tombs could possibly be declared violable by the emperor, and in the late antique Digest of Justinian, there does appear to be some flexibility in the funerary law: 11.7.8; 47.12.1; 47.12.3.1; 47.12.11. Alternatively, given that all three cases above involved the burying of graves rather than their wholesale destruction, perhaps this could be seen as evidence of a loophole in the law, or it is possible that the tombs were already abandoned or ruined prior to construction. Nevertheless, as there is precedent for the inclusion of funerary land in large imperial projects, it is likely that the tombs that were built into the Aurelian

⁹⁴ Bodel, 2014; Carroll, 2006: 59-85.

⁹⁵ Mielsch & Von Hesberg, 1995; Liverani & Spinola, 2010; Bodel, 2014: 181-183.

⁹⁶ Bodel, 2014: 179-181.

⁹⁷ Bodel, 2014: 178-9.

Wall were declared violable in some way by the State, and were thus an unproblematic addition to the structure.

The construction of the Aurelian Wall was most frequently recorded as a necessary response to the looming threat of invasion by the Marcomanni, whom the emperor Gallienus had previously engaged in war. Ancient authors recorded that security which had long been taken for granted at Rome was threatened in the late third century (*SHA Aurel.* 21.9). Its defensive function is difficult to argue with; in over fifteen centuries as Rome's boundary wall, it was breached only a handful of times and rarely ever through force. There has, in recent years however, been a reassessment of the reasons for the construction of the Aurelian Wall, and other potential motivations for the monument may have been identified, though any argument that the wall was simply a vanity project can be easily dismissed. Dey's contribution to this debate, in particular, has been instrumental in shaping understanding about the subject; he presented a range of possibilities including the positive effect that such a large-scale building project would have had on the economy and workforce of Rome, and the wall as the legacy of a soldier emperor in a precarious political position.⁹⁸ In all likelihood, the building of the wall was a combination of these different motivating factors: certainly the political and military climate in Roman Italy had veered into unstable territory (as is well documented by scholars of the third century), and Rome, as the wealthy capital of the Empire was undeniably a target. That *spolia* were used extensively in the structure of the fortification may perhaps suggest that speed was a concern in its construction, and the acquisition of finer building materials was neither financially nor safely possible. Additionally, a project of such an enormous size would certainly have resulted in the large-scale employment of Rome's

⁹⁸ Dey, 2011: 279-280.

professional builders, ironworkers, stonecutters (and so on), to whom the task of construction would have fallen in the absence of much of the army (who were based in Palmyra at this time with the emperor).⁹⁹ Finally, Aurelian's mark on the city of Rome was unprecedented in impact, though it is unclear how positive a reception the wall received by inhabitants of the city at the time. As a legacy, it was a clever choice: imposing and grand, but also presented as necessary and a service to the city, toeing carefully the line between boring and decadent.

2.3.3 The line of the wall

As previously mentioned, the Aurelian Wall did not demarcate the edge of the built up space of Rome, but rather it cut through districts of the city that were densely-occupied, and monuments and buildings that were in its designated path were demolished or incorporated into its structure. How the line of the Aurelian Wall was decided prior to its construction has been the subject of much debate.¹⁰⁰ The question remains: was the line of the Aurelian Wall influenced by the network of boundaries that already existed at Rome?

The answer is: almost certainly in places, but definitely not everywhere. It was noted in the late nineteenth century by Lanciani that there was some overlap between the customs boundary of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus as reconstructed on the basis of boundary stones, and the extant line of the third century fortification.¹⁰¹ Similarly, it has been suggested that the *pomerium* of Vespasian (later restated under Hadrian) informed some of the line of the Aurelian Wall, and that the fourteen regions set out by Augustus share some boundaries with the fortification.¹⁰² Precise knowledge of the locations of these

⁹⁹ Dey, 2011: 98-99.

¹⁰⁰ Dey, 2011: 72-87.

¹⁰¹ Lanciani, 1892: 87-111.

¹⁰² Dey, 2011: 81-83; cf. Richmond, 1931: 9.

three pre-third century boundaries (or boundary systems, in the case of the fourteen *regiones*) is incomplete, and so it is not possible to state with absolute certainty how far they matched the course of the wall for the entirety of its length. What is clear from the surviving evidence of the earlier borders, is that there are areas in the city where the wall and earlier boundaries were coterminous.

This thesis is not the place for an inch-by-inch comparison of the known line of each boundary with the line of the wall, but a few general comments on the planning process can perhaps be made. The wall was built around and through what was, at the time, the largest city in the world and thus, it was from the outset an impossibility that the whole urban sprawl be included in its circuit. It is presumably the case that a variety of people were involved in the early planning stages: military architects, government officials and the emperor, all of whom were extremely likely to have had an awareness of the topography of the city in the third century (including the lines of its existing network of boundaries). As in the case of other imperial building projects (such as the Forum of Augustus in what had previously been the *Subura*), any private property that was in the way of the proposed line of the wall had to be purchased from its owner, at cost to the state or the emperor. With this in mind, it has been suggested that attempts were made to reduce the amount of private property that was purchased by building through a 'green belt' of imperial property that included *horti* and urban estates (such as the Sessorian Palace).¹⁰³ These are the only places where the wall does not cut through densely-occupied neighbourhoods, and where the wall does not coincide with a pre-existing boundary; it has been proposed that up to 8 kilometres of the nearly 19 kilometre circuit was planned in this way.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Dey, 2011: 73.

¹⁰⁴ Lanciani, 1892: 106; Dey, 2011: 74. For further discussion, see Homo, 1904.

So what of the remaining 11 kilometres? The northern stretch of the Aurelian Wall, running from the *Porta Flaminia* to the *Porta Salaria* appears to have followed the earlier line of the customs boundary that has been partially reconstructed on the basis of *cippi* findspots, along with an area close to the *Porta Asinaria* (fig. 2.4).¹⁰⁵ In the south of the city, the discovery of several *pomerium cippi* has enabled scholars to partially reconstruct the line of the sacred boundary, and it appears that the Aurelian Wall, between *Porta Ostiensis* and the banks of the Tiber, approximately followed this course (fig. 2.1). There is only one place in the city where the line of the *pomerium* extended beyond that of the Aurelian Wall, and it has been verified by the discovery of a *pomerium cippus in situ* on the *viale del Policlinico*, close to the *Porta Nomentana* (CIL 6. 40853). Thus it is clear that the line of the previous sacred city boundary was not the blueprint for the whole of the Aurelian Wall, but that the two coincided in what must be assumed to have been a deliberate act. Similarly, the outer boundaries of the fourteen *regiones* were largely included within the line of the Aurelian Wall and in places there appears to be a more than coincidental correlation, but again, there remain a few exceptions: *Regio V, I, and XIV* were all left partially outside of the new city boundary.¹⁰⁶ So then, it appears that to some extent the pre-existing network of boundaries that criss-crossed the city of Rome prior to the building of the Aurelian Wall did coincide with the line of the later fortification. It is impossible to know for sure whether or not this was a deliberate action by those who planned the wall (as no explicit acknowledgement of the wall's location survives from contemporary texts or inscriptions), but it can, with relative confidence, be accepted that those who were responsible for planning the monument did so with

¹⁰⁵ Dey, 2011: 81.

¹⁰⁶ Dey, 2011: 83.

an awareness of the city's topography, including its existing boundaries. This in turn would suggest that the places in the city where the Aurelian Wall follows the line of an existing boundary were not coincidence, but city-planners following the well-trod path, and placing a new boundary in a place where evidence would suggest an old boundary had been accepted. Though there must have been a multitude of concerns that were weighed when the line of the wall was initially drawn out – not least the inherent difficulty in building an 8 metre high wall through a city made of hills – it seems that the intricacies of Rome's pre-third century borderscape were at least an influencing factor on the eventual line of the Aurelian Wall.

It is impossible to overstate how immense the impact on the city of Rome the building of the Aurelian Wall would have been, particularly for those living in the peripheral areas of the city at the time. Up to 11 kilometres of the wall's length was built through property that was not, in the late third century, in the hands of the imperial court. This means that, excluding any remaining public or industry-related buildings, a vast percentage of the tract of land occupied by the new wall had previously belonged to inhabitants of the city, people whose homes and livelihoods had been bought from them, whose ancestral tombs were demolished to make way for the largest monument ever constructed in the city of Rome. To those who lived outside its line, in neighbourhoods that had been excluded from the city, the centre of Rome was rendered inaccessible and hidden from view in less than a decade. Access routes to the city from the periphery that had been in use for several hundred years were blocked by the wall, with entry and exit from the city controlled at the sixteen major gates, or one of the smaller *posterulae*. For a population whose only prior experiences of the city boundary were likely to

have been during a festival or a funeral, this would have been a shocking intervention into the landscape.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research context for both the *pomerium* and the Aurelian Wall, examining the current state of the field and identifying gaps in scholarship. A definition of the *pomerium* of Rome was proposed, including a discussion of the literary evidence for its origin, creation ritual, and aetiological meaning. Each recorded extension to the boundary was examined alongside supporting evidence, culminating in a discussion of the *pomerium* and its meaning as the city boundary of Rome. In the second part of the chapter I presented an overview of the Aurelian Wall, including details of its construction and its line. There was a consideration of the factors that influenced the course of the wall, including its relationship to earlier boundaries in the city, such as the *pomerium*. Finally, the impact of the wall on the inhabitants of Rome and the physical city was assessed.

In the two chapters to come, numerous associations with the *pomerium* and Aurelian Wall will be discussed. These are often explicitly recorded in literary sources (particularly in the case of rituals or festivals), or they are abundantly clear from archaeological evidence (for instance, burial topography). It is important to remember, however, that there are innumerable possible associations the *pomerium* and Aurelian Wall may have had in antiquity which were of an ephemeral nature, and thus do not survive. An unusual example of such an association has been noted by Dey. An inscription from a slave collar dated to approximately the fourth century, after Constantine's banning of the

branding of slaves' faces, contains a rare topographical reference to the wall as a different kind of boundary.¹⁰⁷ Its inscription reads:

I am Asellus, the slave of Praeiectus, an official of the *praefectus annonae*.
I have gone outside the Wall; capture me, because I have fled, and return me to Flora at the To(n)sores.¹⁰⁸

This is the only surviving slave collar of its type: no other example from the fourth century includes a reference to the Aurelian Wall as the boundary beyond which a slave could not pass. The owner of Asellus, Praeiectus, may have decided to limit his slaves by setting such a limit on their movements, or it is possible that this restriction may have applied to all the slaves in the employ of the *annonae* and based at Rome. It is impossible to know in the absence of further evidence. This object and its inscription highlight the potentially limitless meanings such boundaries may, and indeed must, have had in Rome. It is plausible that the *pomerium* functioned in a similar way in the late republic and imperial periods, not only as the boundary of the city but also as a boundary associated with the movement of "human assets," or types of produce, or activities that leave little to no physical mark (for example, as meeting places). It is worth bearing in mind when considering the above discussion, and for what follows, that the *pomerium* may have had numerous meanings that are simply untraceable, and as such events like the extension of the pomerial line may have had more of an impact on the city than is easily understood. All that can be assessed here are the subjects that are explicitly evidenced in the literary, epigraphic, and archaeological record. As will be explored in the concluding discussion of the thesis, though it is possible to discuss our perception of the concept of Rome's city boundary on the basis of

¹⁰⁷ Dey, 2011: 214.

¹⁰⁸ *CTh.* 9.40.2; Bradley, 1994: 172. *ASELLUS SERVUS PRAEIECTI OFFICIALIS PRAEFECTI ANNONIS FORAS MURU EXIVI TENEME QUIA FUGI REDUC ME AD FLORA AD TOSORES.*

surviving evidence, it is important to remember that such borders were experienced in vastly different ways by the inhabitants of the city at different times, both in the chronology and at various times during the Roman calendar. Objects such as the Asellus collar are reminders that individuals create associations with monuments that are 'unknown unknowns', largely invisible to historians, and that the meaning of the city boundary must have been vastly more complicated than it is possible to understand now.

Chapter three: religion at the edge of the city

3.1 Beating the bounds

There is an ancient tradition in the parishes of England: during Rogationtide, members of the clergy and local parishioners gather together to 'go a-ganging'. They walk the boundaries of the parish to reaffirm its limits and to seek blessings for the congregation, to forgive sins and grant protection to their community. In past centuries, younger generations were taught the boundary markers during this time so that they may know the breadth of their homes without a map, and participants engaged in local traditions during the walk, such as beating the boundary stones and wooden posts with willow wands (fig. 3.1).

Perambulations of this kind have been practised for many centuries across many cultures from antiquity to the modern day, in rituals that recognise the significance of boundaries in the formation and identity of communities. Such rituals were regular occurrences at the boundaries of Rome, with rituals and religious activity at the edge of the city often serving to purify and protect the urban space and its inhabitants, or recognise the division between land outside and land within the city at particular times in the calendar. Ritually-charged activity in the borderscape is a useful avenue of investigation for ascertaining the ways in which people interacted with the city's sacred boundary, and how that relationship changed over time as the boundary was once more given physical form with the building of the Aurelian Wall. It can also help our understanding of the meaning of the boundary, and how this may have changed at different times of the year to serve a particular contextual purpose. It is my aim in this chapter to examine instances of religious behaviour at or concerning the city boundary of

Rome, and how these activities can shed light on the interconnected meaning of the *pomerium* and the Aurelian Wall in the late antique city.

This chapter will examine the boundary of Rome (first the *pomerium* and then the Aurelian Wall) in light of such religious activity. Rituals that took place at the boundary line will be discussed in terms of practice, continuity and change, beginning with religious festivals, progressing to the religious and legal implications of entering the city proper, and culminating in a discussion of military rituals. A final section will trace continuities of ritual behaviour into late antiquity, with particular interest in the rise of Christian ambulatory rituals and their behavioural connections to similar practices in republican and imperial Rome. It is this continuity of practice that will emerge as the dominating trend of the chapter; in spite of the changes that the city of Rome underwent between the imperial period and late antiquity, there can be found an unexpected degree of continuity in ritual behaviour concerning the city boundary up to and including the fifth century.

It is important for what follows to note a key chronological point. Late antiquity was a period of great change in the religious landscape of Rome and the wider late- and post- Roman West. There has been a great deal of work completed on this wide-ranging subject, and recently Cameron's contribution, *The Last Pagans of Rome* has been enormously influential, leading to a reassessment of the religious climate in Rome in the late antique centuries. It has been noted that a changing attitude to traditionally 'Roman' religious festivals and activities became increasingly apparent in imperial court and administration in Constantinople in the fourth and fifth centuries, and it has often been accepted that this subsequently had a large effect on the practices that took place in Rome. This is primarily evidenced by the repeated legislative efforts taken by the Roman

administration in Constantinople to prohibit animal sacrifices (key elements of pre-Christian rites) across the empire during the fourth century, which culminated in the famous Theodosian decree of AD 391 that was issued to the pagan *praefectus urbi* of Rome, Rufius Albinus.¹ Rather than viewing this process as a gradually escalating effort to totally eradicate non-Christian cult activity (and thus, a no-tolerance attitude), it is perhaps more useful to read this repetitive activity as a consciously inefficient attempt to control pre-Christian religious practices, particularly in Rome where evidence for the continued celebration of pagan festivals and rituals can, in some cases, be evidenced into the fifth and even sixth centuries. I support the reading of this measure presented by Cameron, that is, that while it may represent a public effort to curtail pre-Christian religious practices in Rome, the intent or expectation of success from the authorities who issued it may not have been especially high, given the known status of the city as a bastion of pagan activity and the known religious identity of its urban prefect (and many of the elite in the fourth century).² Adopting this view, it is possible to study the connections between pre-Christian and Christian boundary rituals without the assumption that they were distinct and separate phenomena, and that continuity from the imperial period can be found even as late as the fifth century without problem. The co-existence of traditional Roman religious practices alongside the early development of Christian ritual is a fascinating feature of the changing cityscape in late antique Rome, particularly in relation to the importance and meaning of its sacred boundary, and is thus an interesting avenue of investigation for this thesis.

¹ Cameron, Al. 2010: 64-65.

² Marazzi, 2000: 21-42.

3.2 Rituals that celebrated the city boundary

As discussed in chapter two, the *pomerium* was most commonly defined as a religious or “sacred” boundary and it has been closely tied to the “myth of place” – a phrase which sums up the relationship between the boundary (and thus, the city as a real location and a point of reference) and the foundation myths of Rome.³ In addition to the ritual that created the *pomerium* - the ploughing of the *sulcus primigenius*, discussed in chapter two – the boundary was a key element in many religious behaviours and rituals that took place in the city. It was closely connected to the practice of augury (as shall be discussed later), and was an integral part of a number of rituals celebrated during the Roman calendar, most commonly as the location for the festivals, but also as the subject of celebration.

One such festival was the *Parilia*. This was, in antiquity, believed to have originated as a rural festival that was intended to ritually cleanse sheep, cattle and the farms that could be found in the periphery of Rome, making use of fire and water as purifying elements on the landscape and its inhabitants. It was documented by Ovid in over one hundred lines of his *Fasti* (4), one of our most fertile sources for Roman ritual.⁴ The *Parilia*, which was celebrated in honour of the deity Pales, was performed at the beginning of spring (traditionally the 21st April), and was believed to have pre-dated even the foundation of Rome itself by Romulus. According to the literary tradition, the festival of the *Parilia* was performed in the countryside at the time of Rome’s legendary foundation, thus leading to a connection between the ritual and the city’s sacred boundary which was ploughed on this day (Ov. *Fast.* 4.731-805).⁵ This explicit connection between Rome and the *Parilia* was most evident in the specifically urban

³ Beard, *et al.* 1998a: 177; see chapter two for discussion.

⁴ Baundy, 2006: *Parilia*.

⁵ Beard, *et al.* 1998b: 175.

incarnation of the ritual which celebrated the birthday of the city, rather than the rural version that was more extensively recorded by Ovid. Additional sources for the urban festival exist, such as a record of the name alongside a note (“Rome founded”) in the earliest surviving Roman calendar from Antium, dated 84-55 BC.⁶ In addition, the festival appears in the works of Propertius (4.1.19-20), Livy (1.7.2), and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* 1.87.2). The link between the *Parilia* ritual and the foundation myth became more marked in the late republic and early empire, and has been viewed as a reflection of the emphasis (politically and religiously) on tradition in this period, particularly during the reign of Augustus.⁷

It is known that the festival included a *lustratio*; in the rural incarnation this meant a short procession around sheep stalls (*Calp. Ecl.* 5.27f), and though it is not known exactly where the lustration took place in the urban incarnation, I would suggest that a circular procession around the city boundary (similar to the procedure in the *Amburbium* or a *lustratio urbis*) would not be entirely unexpected, given the connection between the foundation of the city and the celebration of the *Parilia*. This could mean, in earlier centuries, a procession around the *pomerium* or Servian Wall, and later, around the Aurelian Wall (or certain sections of it, given the prohibitively extensive length of the fortification). Another possibility is that myriad smaller processions may have taken place, one in each district of the city, as it is possible that the festival celebrations were divided between local urban communities, rather than one large lustral procession as part of a central, whole-city celebration. Little is known or has been written about the precise locations for such festivals. The festival, reinstated by

⁶ Beard, *et al.* 1998b: 61-2.

⁷ Beard, *et al.* 1998b: 62.

Augustus, was practised throughout the imperial period, and the name of the *Parilia* was changed to *Romaia* by Hadrian in the second century.⁸ The reason for this change is likely connected to the dedication of Hadrian's Temple to Venus and Rome in the Forum, which took place on the day of the festival.⁹ In addition to the existing celebrations, games (*ludi circenses*) were held on the day of the *Parilia* (or *Romaia*), instituted by Hadrian in the second century and held, annually, thereafter. There is some evidence to suggest that the games for the *Parilia* were held until at least the fifth century AD, even though the festival itself is likely to have vanished from the Roman calendar sometime around the fourth century AD (*CIL* 1.391). The festival of the *Parilia*, merged as it was with the 'birthday of Rome' continued to be recorded in calendars, appearing in the Chronography of AD 354, from which it appears likely that the festivities associated with the *Parilia* were held until at least this time.

Not all festivals which recognised Rome's city boundary were positive and celebratory in nature. The *Amburbium* was not a festival in the traditional sense, but a lustral rite, nor was it necessarily a fixed feature of the calendar as the *Parilia* had been. There has been some suggestion that it took place annually in February possibly to cope with *prodigia* throughout the year,¹⁰ although the textual evidence that survives points to the rite as a 'moveable feast' that was employed during times of crisis. This is strengthened by the absence of the *Amburbium* from any surviving Roman calendar, and the fact that it was seldom referenced by ancient authors (*Serv. Ad. Virg. Ecl.* 3. 77; *Festus, Gloss. Lat.* 112). The *Amburbium* related to the *pomerium* not because of its origin story (like the *Parilia*), but because of the details of its location: it included without doubt a

⁸ Smith, 2012.

⁹ Beard, 1987: 280.

¹⁰ Rüpke, 2012: 31.

circumambulation of the pomerial line. This took the form of a ritual procession, and the group of participants included many inhabitants of the city, such as those that formed the everyday masses, the elite, and members of various priesthoods.

The *Amburbium* (on occasion confused with the *Ambarvalia*, which was a similar rural festival) is believed to have been practised during periods of insecurity or hardship in Rome, as a means of protecting or purifying the city and seeking protection for its inhabitants. The most famous literary example occurs in book one of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, in which the city of Rome suffered widespread panic as Caesar's troops approached its boundaries (1.593). According to the text, citizens were advised by an Etruscan soothsayer to circumambulate the city in accordance with the ritual of *Amburbium*, with the lustration designed to purify the sacred, inaugurated space of Rome and put an end to the bad omens and portents plaguing its inhabitants. This particular passage can be read in a number of ways and almost certainly does not reflect an actual historical moment in the late republic, but the appearance of the ritual in the literary context of urban crisis corroborates other accounts of the rite and its religious meaning (Apul. *Metamorph.* 3.2; Serv. *ad Virg. Ecl.* 3.77). There is patchy evidence for the *Amburbium*, with the last recorded occurrence taking place in the late third century AD. According to the *Historia Augusta*, it was celebrated during the reign of Aurelian after consultation with the Sibylline Books (*Aurel.* 20). In the text, this is recorded as taking place prior to the building of the Aurelian Wall, and thus we can assume that the lustration took place at the old pomerial line of Hadrian. Whether the ritual was ever performed at the line of the Aurelian Wall is unknown, but the extensive length of the fortification (almost 19 kilometres) would perhaps suggest that this was not feasible. Although the example from the *Historia Augusta* is the last known occurrence of the ritual in the literary tradition, it is at

least possible that it was practised in some form into late antiquity. Certainly the idea that if citizens circled the city in a ritual procession, the urban space and its inhabitants could be granted protection by a higher power was enduring, and evidence suggests that this powerful idea was preserved into the Christian period and beyond, as shall be discussed later on in the chapter.

A final festival that was associated with the *pomerium* remains to be discussed, and it is undoubtedly one of ancient Rome's most famous events. The *Lupercalia* was an annual celebration and ritual that took place at the *Lupercal* at the foot of the Palatine hill, the cave in which Romulus and Remus were supposedly nurtured by the she-wolf in Rome's foundation story (Aurel. Vict. *de Orig. Gent. Rom.* 22; Ovid. *Fast.* 2. 267). The *Lupercalia* is interesting to this discussion, as – like the *Parilia* – it acknowledged the legendary foundation story in its performance, and recognised the city's first boundary in its ritual. The location of the *sulcus primigenius* was recorded by Tacitus as follows:

From the *Forum Boarium* [...] the furrow to mark out the town was cut so as to take in the great altar of Hercules. From that point, boundary-stones were interspersed at fixed intervals along the base of the Palatine Hill up to the altar of Consus, then to the old *curiae*, then again to the shrine of the *Lares*, and after that to the *Forum Romanum* (*Ann.* 12. 23-24).

It was this line that participants in the ritual (*luperci*) followed during the climax of the festival – after the sacrifice and ritual dining – when two youths, armed with goatskin thongs (*februa*) ran around the Palatine striking those who watched. It has been suggested that in later centuries the location of this race may have been moved, though the intended association with the boundary persisted. The *Lupercalia* was held annually on the 15th February, and is recorded to have primarily been concerned with fertility and the purity of the city (Varro, *de Ling. Lat.* 5; Plut. *Caes.* 61). Though it has often been discussed for its meaning to the

elite (the demographic from whose members the two *luperci* were chosen each year), or for the details of its ritual, it is the association with the boundary that is important for the present discussion, though there were undoubtedly numerous other associations attached to the festival.

The *Lupercalia* was one of Rome's longest-surviving pre-Christian festivals, practised in some form well into the late antique and medieval periods. There is evidence for the performance of the festival in Rome up to and beyond the Theodosian decree of AD 391: it was recorded on the Chronography of AD 354 and was mentioned by both Prudentius (*Adv. Symm.* 816-817) and Servius (*ad. Aen.* 8. 343). In the early fifth century it was referenced by Augustine (*Civ.* 18. 12. 17), it was then recorded in a calendar from the middle of the century (*CIL* 1.259), and was later discussed at some length by Pope Gelasius I from which we can be certain it was practised during the reign of Theoderic at the end of the fifth century (*Ep.* 100).¹¹ Though it would be tempting to read the long survival of this festival as an element of pagan protest against the 'Christianisation' of the city, it is extremely unlikely to be the case. The survival of the *Lupercalia* has been attributed to the seemingly limited importance of sacrifice to the overall celebration of the festival – elements that could be (and in all likelihood were) removed without compromising the ritual as a whole.¹² As mentioned earlier, certain pre-Christian practices were tolerated in Rome and elsewhere even after the official prohibition of sacrifices in the late fourth century, and it may be that this was because such rituals were, to some degree, secularised. Lee has developed this proposal by suggesting that in the fifth century the festival of the *Lupercalia* was no more than 'street-theatre', but this

¹¹ Lee, 2013: 191; *CSEL* 35.1: 453-464.

¹² Graf, 2015: 166; Rebillard, 2009: 53.

interpretation does little to explain exactly why it would have enduring appeal to a largely Christian audience. In this context then, it may be helpful to observe the first *pomerium* and the foundation story in the ritual as more than simply the backdrop to a show. The *Lupercalia* was, in the imperial period, not just a fertility festival; its importance had always lain in the threading together of aetiological tradition, core Roman cultural identity, and celebratory, performative religion. Had it simply been a fertility ritual it is unlikely to have survived into the Christian period at all. Though in late antiquity it may have been performed, in some capacity, by actors, and the presumed removal of any sacrificial elements may have chipped away at its overall religious meaning, the *Lupercalia* appears to have retained its conceptual importance. This is precisely the time at which the link to Rome's foundation story and thus, its first *pomerium*, became most relevant.

The foundation story and Rome's first sacred boundary were powerful elements of the city's cultural and historical identity. This is evident from the number of texts that refer in some way to the origin myths of Rome, and the continued appearance of associated visual motifs in art and on coinage throughout the imperial period. I propose that tracing the *sulcus primigenius* and gathering at the site of the *Lupercal* were not simply rote behaviours in a standard festival or elements of religious practice, they were acts that came to symbolise the city of Rome through acknowledgement of its earliest myths. Importantly, this was an idea that may not have been objectionable to a Christian community as it could co-exist with their faith without challenging it (although Pope Gelasius clearly did not approve). By removing the pre-Christian religious behaviours and focusing instead on the conceptual and symbolic elements of the festival, it was able to survive.

The *Lupercalia* was such a location-specific festival that embodied Rome and the foundation story, that it seems almost inconceivable for it to be performed elsewhere, after all, who could be interested in a ritual so obviously designed to honour another city? But this is precisely what happened, presumably because Rome and its legendary history were so universally relevant throughout the empire. The exporting of this festival to other cities, irrespective of its precise religious meaning, is of crucial importance when evaluating its late antique survival. Famously, the *Lupercalia* was one of the festivals that was exported to Constantinople (“New Rome”) from Old Rome in the mid-fourth century and held in the Hippodrome.¹³ In response to opposition to the festival from the church in Rome (see Gelasius’ letters), in the late fifth century measures were taken by the Senate to finally put an end to its performance in the Eternal City, but the festival survived elsewhere. Such was the enduring nature of the ‘*Luperkalion*’ that evidence suggests it was celebrated in Constantinople as late as the tenth century AD, although it remains unclear whether it was continuously practised or revived some centuries after late antiquity.¹⁴ Either way, its continuing appeal is clear, long after its religious purpose had faded: Rome was a special place, the symbol of the empire, and the *Lupercalia* celebrated its origins.

The three festivals outlined above are connected, not by the ways in which they refer to and include the city boundary in their celebrations (as each demonstrably used the boundary in a different way), but by the consistent meaning of the boundary as the conceptual foundation for each ritual. In all three the *pomerium* was both the legendary setting for each festival and a remnant of the city’s foundation, it was the spatial recognition of the very identity of the Rome

¹³ Graf, 2015: 181.

¹⁴ Graf, 2015: 163-183.

that was celebrated and circumambulated and remembered during these vastly different occasions. Though the *pomerium* was often not at the forefront of such events, it acted as the ritual landscape in which some of Rome's most enduring and remarkable religious customs were performed.

Considering the use of the *pomerium* as the sacred location for such festivals, it comes as no surprise that the *pomerium* is often categorised primarily as a ritual boundary. This is however, only one facet of a complicated sacred geography in the late republic and imperial periods, elements of which shall be addressed in the following sections. It is important to remember however, that although festivals that referenced the boundary were only a small proportion of the activities and behaviours that were associated with it, religion was pervasive in antiquity. Activities relating to the military and to magistrates, and the organisation of religious buildings in Rome are therefore included in this chapter.

3.3 The ritual boundary as a dividing line

A topographical boundary is, at its most basic, a division between two places: the space outside the line, and the space within. Though the *pomerium* was not an imposing physical monument and was instead, immaterial and thus wholly permeable, it was still recognised in antiquity as the division between spheres: separating the religious from the profane, the world of the living from that of the dead, and keeping military action at a safe distance so that the city could remain peaceful (in theory). So too was the Aurelian Wall seen in this way, as containing a significant and sacred place that was distinctly different in character to the land that lay outside its line, and one which was subject to different laws. The previous section examined some of the occasions on which the inhabitants of the city of Rome engaged with the concept of their city boundary through ritual activity, and how this changed (or continued) in late antiquity. This section will address two

major ideas: firstly, that the *pomerium* of Rome was the division between acceptable religious practice and cults which were deemed unsafe, and secondly that it was associated with several important legal and military restrictions throughout its existence.

There is a certain amount of misinformation that has, for many decades, been repeated uncritically when the subject of the *pomerium* occurs in scholarship. Two such common misconceptions will be addressed in the course of this section, beginning with the alleged ban on 'foreign cults' inside the sacred boundary, and progressing to a discussion of the alleged prohibition of military cults and, indeed, soldiers themselves inside the circuit of the *pomerium*.¹⁵ The belief that foreign cults could not reside inside the *pomerium* is based, primarily, on a passage of Dio which documents the removal of temples to Egyptian gods from the city in the late republic, and later, their exclusion from the city by Octavian, supposedly in reaction to the Battle of Actium.¹⁶ In order to understand these actions, it is first important to ascertain what is meant by 'foreign' cults.

As noted by Scheid, any attempt to present a concept of 'true' or 'pure' Roman religion in antiquity is doomed to fail.¹⁷ From the archaic period onwards, religion in Rome was the product of mixing 'native' and 'foreign' practices, incorporating traditions, architecture, and religious institutions from neighbouring territories (and those further afield) into their own array of customs. Roman religion was defined by its borrowing nature. Throughout even the imperial period, cult practices were adopted into the existing religious framework, and Rome can be considered – to a large degree – an open city with regard to religion, in which

¹⁵ Patterson, 2002: 91.

¹⁶ Dio, 40.47.3-4; 53.2.4. Orlin, 2008: 231; Bendlin, 2013: 266; Beard *et al.* 1998a: 180 & 230.

¹⁷ Scheid, 1995: 16-17.

instances of intolerance and political intervention were rare. Thus the classification of certain cults as 'foreign' is not as straightforward as it may seem; instead of referring to those cults that originated in distant lands and which were alien to the population of Rome, it may be that cults deemed 'foreign' were actually classified as such because of certain aspects of their ritual behaviour, or because of other reasons that had little to do with the cult itself, and more to do with the political climate. Scheid develops the former point, using the example of the so-called *ritus Graecus* to assess what was meant by the concept of 'foreignness' in republican Rome,¹⁸ while it is the latter of these two suggestions that is pertinent in the case of Egyptian cults banned from the *pomerium* of Rome during the earliest years of Augustus' reign.

The cults in question were that of Isis and Serapis, both of which had a long history of worship in the city of Rome. The only source for this episode is Cassius Dio, an author whose histories are our most abundant literary source for the *pomerium*. He states:

...it seems to me that that decree passed the previous year, near its close, with regard to Serapis and Isis, was a portent equal to any; for the Senate had decided to tear down their temples, which some individuals had built on their own account. Indeed, for a long time they did not believe in these gods, and even when the rendering of public worship to them gained the day, they settled them outside the *pomerium* (40.47.3-4).

This text references a decree issued by the Senate between 52 and 48 BC which resulted in the destruction of temples and the relocation of the cults of Serapis and Isis to areas outside the *pomerium*. The context of the passage is significant: it occurs at the end of a list of bad omens during a particularly turbulent period of time during the Civil War between Pompey and Caesar. It is possible, given its

¹⁸ Scheid, 1995; for related discussion, North, 1994; Orlin, 2010.

place in the text, that the reference is more a literary device than a true record, designed to heighten the sense of discomfort. That said, there are later references to the same intolerance of Egyptian cults in Rome, and a deliberate attempt to cast them as 'foreign' or 'un-Roman' (Tac. *Ann.* 2. 85). It is also true that the known location of the *Isaeum et Serapeum* in the *Campus Martius* does indeed fall outside the proposed line of the Vespasianic *pomerium*. With these points in mind, further discussion of the passage seems necessary.

Dio's record of the decree suggests that instead of always perceiving these cults as 'foreign' as it has so often been labelled, there was a shift in tolerance, and the cults were no longer viewed as safe or acceptable religious activity in the contemporary climate. It is clear from this passage that the cults of Isis and Serapis were, at this time, already established in the city of Rome and had been for some time, long enough to build temples. Thus they were not new, foreign cults that were recently imported into the city and were subsequently not permitted space inside the *pomerium*, but familiar ones that were banned. Later in Dio's text, the similar actions of Augustus are mentioned (53. 2. 4):

As for religious matters, he [Augustus] did not allow the Egyptian rites to be celebrated inside the *pomerium*, but made provision for the temples; those which had been built by private individuals he ordered their sons and descendants, if any survived, to repair, and the rest he restored himself.

A number of scholars have suggested that Augustus' banishing Egyptian cults from Rome was in line with existing republican practice, using Dio's earlier comments as precedent.¹⁹ What is not evidenced by these two sources however is whether this type of action was commonplace with regard to other cults that had a presence in Rome. As has already been mentioned, this does not appear

¹⁹ For further discussion see Nock, 1952; Ziolkowski, 1992.

to be the exclusion of 'foreign' religions as a whole, but instead seems to be an exceptional measure taken to excise from the city very specific cult practices in response to a shift in perception. This suggests that it was not the origin of the cults that was deemed problematic, not their supposed foreignness, but a change in the religious climate at Rome, and would thus follow the understanding that cults in Rome were not necessarily deemed to be foreign solely on the basis of the place of origin. Orlin has suggested that the move to ban these cults from the sacred space of the *pomerium* was made by Augustus specifically to frame these cults as un-Roman in reaction to the Battle of Actium, where previously they had been mostly tolerated. He very carefully toed the line between creating his vision of 'Romanness' and avoiding impiety, as is clear from the comment that Augustus was then directly responsible for the rebuilding of their shrines and temples outside the *pomerium*.²⁰ By the time of Caracalla, the cult had seemingly been rehabilitated and was once more permitted inside the *pomerium* (*SHA M. Ant.* 9. 10-11; *Aurel. Vict. Caes.* 21. 4), and in the late third century Aurelian's extension of the pomerial line would have included, for the first time, the whole Campus Martius in his *pomerium* (*SHA* 21.9). From this point on, the location of the once-banned Egyptian cults was intra-pomerial and the temples to Isis and Serapis (the *Isaeum Campense* and *Serapeum*) were presumably accepted again.²¹ From this we must extrapolate that the senatorial decree was not binding, or that it was at least deemed unimportant enough by the second century AD to ignore, and similarly that Augustus' actions in removing Egyptian cults from within Rome's sacred boundary were not indisputable.

²⁰ Orlin, 2002: 231.

²¹ Coarelli, 1996.

It seems then that not only can the perception of certain cults as 'foreign' be questioned, but also the exclusion of such religious groups from the city from areas inside the *pomerium* on the basis of their origin is suspect. There is little additional evidence to suggest that the boundary was used in this way later in the imperial period, and by the time of the construction of the Aurelian Wall in the late third century, the pace of temple-building in Rome had slowed considerably such that excluding or including cults was, in all likelihood, a non-issue. It is interesting to note, however, that the earliest churches in Rome were located outside of the ancient heart of the city. Of the earliest imperial basilicas constructed under Constantine in the early fourth century, all but two were located outside the wall (*San Giovanni in Laterano, Santa Croce in Gerusalemme*). Both were sited immediately inside the Aurelian Wall, a great distance away from the centre of the city. The reasons for this are unconnected to the notion of 'foreignness' that has been discussed in this section and may instead be a reflection of Constantine's negotiation of the church and the mostly pagan city of Rome, but it is once again an example of use of the *pomerium* of Rome as a divisive religious boundary. Though the early fourth century is not commonly associated with the adherence to pomerial law, according to the *Historia Augusta* (*Aurel.* 21.9) the *pomerium* had been extended to the line of the Aurelian wall less than fifty years prior to these constructions, not to mention several of its more important topographical restrictions persisted, and so a working knowledge of the boundary by those responsible for planning the buildings must be assumed.

As discussed at the start of the section, the exclusion of 'military cults' from within the boundary of the *pomerium* is a misconception that is noted in the ancient texts in spite of evidence to suggest it was neither practical nor

implemented for much of the imperial period.²² Associated with this claim is the supposed exclusion of armed troops from the space within the sacred boundary. There is a legitimate military connection to the *pomerium* that was in effect throughout the imperial and late antique periods, and which can be best evidenced through the continued practice of the *adventus* (to be discussed in the next section). According to augural law, the auspices that were held by certain magistrates were granted either at home (*domi*) or in the field (*militiae*), and the division between these two spheres was the *pomerium*. Thus a general who had been granted the power of *imperium militiae* outside the city, and who was permitted to run or participate in campaigns and hold command of legions, gave up this power at the boundary of Rome.²³ It follows then (and has on occasion been assumed), that the division between non-military and military associations inside and outside the *pomerium* was extended to all related areas, including cults and the soldiers themselves bearing arms in the city. The origins of the prohibition of troops within the *pomerium* is documented, to some extent, by Aulus Gellius. He discussed a restriction on the assembly of centuries within the *pomerium*, stating that “it is not lawful for it [the army] to be summoned within the city,” (*NA* 15. 27). However, reading into this short statement the wholesale exclusion of armed troops from the city is misleading and a significant exaggeration. It is widely known that two armed groups operated in the city and its periphery in the imperial period: the Praetorian Guard, and the *equites singulares augusti*, both of whom held barracks close to the city: the former at the *Castra Praetoria* and the latter in the southeast of the city, where today the remains of the cavalry barracks lie under the church of *San Giovanni in Laterano*. It is not implausible for this

²² Discussion can be found in Koortbojian, 2010; Drogula, 2007.

²³ Koortbojian, 2010: 248.

restriction to have been in place at some point in the early history of Rome, to prevent the obvious threat of large gatherings of troops inside the city who may pose a threat to the civic status quo. It is much more difficult to see how such a rule would have been enforced and monitored in the imperial period, and certainly by the time of the first century AD, it was no longer in place (Tac. *Ann.* 1. 7. 5).²⁴ Similarly, the prohibition of military cults from inside the city boundary may once have been adhered to, but this restriction is conclusively proven to have only lasted until the reign of Augustus, at which time the Temple to Mars Ultor was built as part of his Forum (fig. 2.1, number 9).

A final note, one which I shall not discuss in much depth but which requires mentioning: the *pomerium* was tangentially associated with the priestly college of the *fetiales*, and the rituals of declaring war. There is much debate about the ancient process of declaring war, in particular whether or not the “spear-ritual” can be considered to have traditionally taken place since the republic, whether it was an Augustan invention or revival, or even whether it was practised in reality at all.²⁵ The intricacies of these discussions are, for the current work, largely irrelevant – it is of course important to know whether such rituals took place in accordance with pomerial protocols, but it is more interesting in this instance to examine the stories told by the ancient authors about the *fetiales* and their practices in relation to the boundaries of the city, and to attempt to understand what such stories can tell us about meaning of the city boundary to the inhabitants of Rome. If we are to accept that such a ritual was known (irrespective of whether it was practised) in the imperial period, then it is possible to extrapolate information about which activities were deemed suitable for sacred space and

²⁴ For further discussion, see J. Coulston’s chapter on troops in the city in Coulston & Dodge, 2000.

²⁵ Zollschan, 2012: 119; also see Santangelo, 2008.

which were not, which in turn can expand understanding of the perceived inviolability of the *pomerium* and what it represented: the division between spheres of activity in the ancient city. The ritual, briefly summed up, was thus: at the start of a conflict, the *fetiales* were said to have thrown a spear into a particular plot of land in the liminal space outside the city's *pomerium*, thus officially declaring war on a foreign territory from the symbolic heart of the empire.²⁶ It is reported by a number of ancient authors that this practice dated from the early republic, during which time it was possible for the *fetiales* involved in the ritual to allegedly travel far beyond the Roman *pomerium* to the equivalent borders of the enemy territory, and if negotiations failed, the spear was then thrown in to represent the beginning of hostilities (Livy, 1.32.6-14, Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Ant. Rom.* 2.72). In the later republic and early imperial period (indeed it has been suggested that the incarnation which follows was an entirely Augustan invention: Dio, 50.4.4; Ovid, *Fasti.* 6.205-7; *Res Gestae* 4.7), the ritual was simply too demanding to be undertaken properly, given the number of wars waged by Rome and the vast geographical spread of the empire. The process that replaced the alleged fetial ritual was thus: a foreign prisoner being held at Rome was forced to purchase a small plot of land outside the city's boundaries near the Temple to Bellona in the Campus Martius, which was intended to officially and perpetually represent foreign soil. It was this spot into which the *fetiales* then conducted their rituals of war and threw the decisive spear (Serv. *ad Aen.* 9.52).²⁷ This tradition, whether a version of a real ritual or simply a story, indicates that the space inside the *pomerium* was, on a conceptual level at least, deemed fundamentally unsuitable for the act of formally declaring war. The original incarnation of the

²⁶ Rich, 2011: 187-242.

²⁷ Rehak, 2009: 119; Ando, 2011: 54.

ritual was rooted once more in place; Rome and its liminal spaces were the domestic parallels to the home territory and the foreign territory. Even in the imperial period, the act could not take place inside the city, rather it had to be played out in false foreign territory as the act of declaring war was one which had to be undertaken on ground which had not been deemed sacred, to prevent the pollution of the city with the violence of conflict, perhaps. This ritual or story indicates once more the role of the pomerial line in acting as the divider between two separate spheres; military and, in this case, domestic.

The *pomerium* was inextricably connected to the limits of legal power in republican and imperial Rome, as has already been touched upon in discussion of military power. Intrinsicly associated with Romulus and the founding of the city, the *pomerium* was recognised as the boundary laid out by the first founder in response to the favourable auspices that signalled Jupiter's support for the site. The inauguration of the city by Romulus and the drawing of the first pomerial line marked out the space of Rome as special, favoured by the gods, in opposition to the rural areas beyond its circuit. Magistrates' powers were defined by the nature of the auspices they undertook, which in turn were rooted in the places that gave them authority. The inaugurated space of the city (the area that lay within the *pomerium*) played host to a particular type of auspices known by modern scholars as "investing auspices," taken at the *arx* on the Capitol and which were generally referred to as *auspicia urbana*.²⁸ Favourable investing auspices conferred upon magistrates (by divine right) the powers granted to them over the civic sphere at the start of their terms in office. The physical limit of the command granted to magistrates by another type of auspices (*auspicia maxima*) was approximately

²⁸ Humm, 2012: 76.

one Roman mile beyond the line of the *pomerium*.²⁹ This granted magistrates *imperium domi*, which was a type of civic command that was exclusively granted to the urban prefect. Other types of auspices were taken at the boundaries of the city, either at or beyond the pomerial line. In addition, magistrates' civic powers were only valid for the time that the magistrate was present within the *pomerium*, and should he cross the boundary of the city, he must retake the auspices before re-entering Rome. A magistrate who failed to do so would not only invalidate his own actions within the city, but bring upon others unfortunate events. This raises the question of practicality: in the late republic and imperial periods when the urban sprawl of Rome spread far beyond the line of the *pomerium*, would magistrates still have been required to retake their auspices on each crossing? This must have been a regular occurrence, particularly when considering how many *horti* and large urban houses were situated outside the pomerial line. How can this have been enforced? We have no records which would help to answer these questions, but it is possible that – as with many of the restrictions associated with the sacred boundary – exceptions to the rule were common. Indeed, there is a number of recorded events during which a large portion of the Senate left Rome to greet an approaching general or emperor, for example in Cassius Dio's *Roman History* (41.3.4 and 41.15.2), in which the Senate left Rome during the late republican civil war, to greet Pompey and Caesar respectively. Are we to accept that before re-entering the city, mass augury took place? It may not be possible to conclusively resolve these debates, and it seems the most likely answer is that pomerial rules were not without flexibility, and thus in certain instances, magistrates simply bypassed their auspicial duties.

²⁹ Humm, 2012: 76.

In ancient literature, mention of the *pomerium* as a legal limit almost always occurs in the form of an anecdote about a magistrate who has caused civic trouble by not taking auspices correctly at the boundaries of the city (the pomerial line). There are numerous examples of this, notably Cicero's account of Tiberius Gracchus failing to re-take the proper auspices upon entering the city from his *tabernaculum* at the gardens of Scipio, thus invalidating the process of appointing new consuls in which he had participated and even causing the *rogatur* who was announcing the new officials to die suddenly (Cic. *Div.* 2.10-12). In this instance, the *pomerium* once more represents the boundary between worlds: sacred and profane, legal and illegal. In an environment where religion and law were as closely connected as in Rome, the *pomerium's* status as the city's sacred boundary was important not only because of its religious connotations, but because of the limits of power associated with its line. It was the manifestation of the limitations of power, of the division between *urbs* and *ager*, civic and military.

There is no surviving reference to the *pomerium* representing such a line for the magistrates of late antique Rome, although, given that the pomerial line was extended to the Aurelian Wall in the late third century, it is likely that all such limits were adjusted to the fortification for as long as they were applicable in the city.

3.4 Military rituals at the boundary of Rome

Two main military rituals took place at the *pomerium* of Rome (and later at the gates of the Aurelian Wall): the *profectio* and the *adventus*. Of the two, the latter persisted well into the late antique period, and presents an interesting case study for the ways in which the city boundary was used to conceptualise space in Rome. The late antique incarnation of the Roman *adventus* is a topic that has

attracted much scholarly attention in recent decades, as the focus for discussions of late Roman ceremony, religious practices, and the continuity of the imperial tradition into late antiquity.³⁰ Its topographical and prior historical importance has nonetheless been largely overlooked; the *adventus* was an event that was as rooted in place as it was in ceremony, as evidenced by the numerous surviving visual and literary accounts that include detailed references to city boundaries, gates, and walls – the locations of the climax of the ceremony, as the emperor crossed the urban border and entered the city proper. The late antique *adventus* has been, in the past, approached from three distinct interpretative stances: as a ceremony that reinforced the relationship between an emperor and his god (or gods); as a moment of traditional Roman pageantry that was intended to strengthen the relationship between the emperor and his people; and finally as an event that highlighted the emperor's commitment to his city.³¹ I will develop the third interpretative model: namely that the Roman *adventus*, in all periods of its existence but especially so in its late antique form, reinforced the relationship between the emperor and the city of Rome, and will add that visual accounts of such events not only honed in on this relationship, but through the depiction of boundaries, reflected the concept of the city as both a physical place and a symbol. Contrary to expectation, I will show that there is a visible degree of continuity between the imperial and late antique depictions of the city boundary in the *adventus*, which reflects a wider continuity in the understanding and meaning of the border.

This section will be divided into two parts: the first will comprise an introduction to the Roman *adventus*, setting out its format and examining the

³⁰ MacCormack, 1972, 1981; Dufraigne, 1994; Dey 2011, 2015.

³¹ MacCormack, 1981: 40, 43 & 50.

ceremony in art of the imperial period to establish the pre-existing visual trends at Rome prior to late antiquity; the second part will contain an examination of late antique material from the city of Rome (with three additional examples from cities of the western empire), in order to discuss the following questions: how was the late antique *adventus* depicted? Can such depictions tell us about the importance of place and boundaries in the ceremony? What can *adventus* scenes tell us about the conceptualisation of space and borders in the wider context of late Roman art? Can an examination of these scenes contribute to the wider discussion of the conceptualisation of boundary space in the city of Rome in late antiquity? Presented here is a collection of material that suggests that depictions of the *adventus* at Rome between the late third and early fifth centuries AD were not only formulaic, but based on three recurrent motifs, one of which - the city boundary - is indicative of a wider conceptualisation of urban space in the late antique city. Through an examination of the imperial and late antique material relating to the city boundary and military ritual, it is possible to demonstrate that the city wall or gate motif was not only an integral part of the visual language of the late antique *adventus*, but was representative of the urban space of the city of Rome as a whole - a visual synecdoche designed to symbolise or represent the entire city through the depiction of its base part.

What was the Roman *adventus*?

Adventus (meaning 'arrival') was an urban ceremony during which an emperor or magistrate, or later, bishop would approach the boundaries of a city and cross into the urban space where he would be formally welcomed by the city's inhabitants. In the case of Rome in the imperial period and prior to the building of the Aurelian Wall, this took place at one of the gates of the old city, at the line of the *pomerium* (for instance, at the *Porta Capena*) and in the late antique city

(post-AD 271), it was held at one of the gates of the Aurelian Wall.³² The roots of the ceremony lay in the military processions of the Roman Republic and the ceremony developed as a form of imperial expression during the Principate – part of the pageantry of imperial life – at which time associations with homecoming, victory, and triumph became common.³³ There is a distinction between the *adventus* and a triumph, though they were connected. The *adventus* ceremony was paralleled by the previously-mentioned *profectio*, which celebrated departure from a city, usually on military campaigns.³⁴

It has been suggested that the *Mutatorium Caesaris* on the *via Appia* (near the *Porta Capena* and the Baths of Caracalla) was the location for *adventus* ceremonies that took place in the south of the city; on the Severan marble map this has long been identified as a ‘post station’ (fig. 3.2).³⁵ It was near to this location (or another similar pomerial or extra-pomerial space) that the city boundary was crossed, and it was here that another central part of the *adventus* took place: the *mutatio vestis*. The *mutatio vestis* was the ritualistic act of changing from the military cloak of the general, the *paludamentum*, to civilian or civic garb, such as the toga.³⁶ This was a significant moment in the republican incarnation of the ceremony: it represented the laying down of arms and the temporary power of *imperium*.³⁷ During this act, the *pomerium* was the boundary between two opposing spaces - civic and military. This divisive role, representing the line between two separate zones of activity, was occupied by the *pomerium* in a variety of ways during its existence (civic/military, administrative, funerary – see chapter four), and it was a division that the Aurelian Wall came to represent

³² Dyson, 2010: 296.

³³ Beard, 2007: 323.

³⁴ MacCormack, 1981: 37.

³⁵ Fragment XI – 6; Platner, 1929: 355; Dyson, 2010: 234.

³⁶ Pisani Sartorio, 1993-2000: 335.

³⁷ Marshall, 1984: 122.

in late antiquity. In the early imperial period when Augustus was granted the title *imperator* indefinitely (c. 23 B.C.), the moment of republican importance – the crossing of the boundary, the changing dress, and the entry into a different sphere of activity – became redundant: it was henceforth a symbolic gesture, rather than a truly transitional act. Augustus and his successors' power of *imperium* no longer ended at the line of the *pomerium*, and thus their changing from the *paludamentum* to the toga was a conciliatory 'nod' to the traditions of their forebears. Nonetheless, it continued to be part of the pageantry of Roman life, and the successful completion of it (or lack thereof) was something on which an emperor could still be judged.³⁸ Hence Vitellius' entry into Rome after his successful bid to become emperor in AD 69 was documented by Suetonius (*Vit.* 11.5) and Tacitus (*Ann.* 2.89), and both accounts include lengthy passages about the emperor's botched *mutatio vestis*. Their commentaries tell us two things: that the crossing of the city boundary remained a significant moment even after the realities of power in Rome had changed with the advent of the Principate; and that the changing of the garb, the *mutatio vestis*, remained a value-laden gesture. By late antiquity the authority of the emperor and his absolute power both inside and outside the city was firmly established, and thus the crossing of the city boundary during the *adventus* was not an act with real implications (such as the loss of *imperium*), as it had been in the Republic, and was more an event similar to the ones in which his imperial predecessors had participated - a traditional transition between symbolic spheres.

While the details of each individual *adventus* event vary, a general pattern or formula is recognisable, and was observed by Sabine MacCormack in the

³⁸ Marshall, 1984: 120.

1970s.³⁹ The basic framework for the Roman *adventus* ceremony in both the imperial and late antique periods was as follows: the arrival of the emperor would be announced in the host city in advance, after which the inhabitants would decorate buildings, monumental public buildings, homes and streets. On the day of the emperor's arrival, a group of citizens, led by the Senate, magistrates, and elite, would process to a specific place outside the city's boundaries, where they would gather and wait for the emperor to arrive. The emperor would then arrive with his entourage of soldiers, associates and 'civil servants'. After being welcomed, the entire group would prepare to enter the city proper to continue their celebrations. At this point, some emperors would participate in the *mutatio vestis*, after which he would cross the threshold of the city and, later in the day, formally meet the Senate who had reconvened inside the city limits. It was then that the city could make requests of the emperor, and during which time he would act as benefactor or patron, planning buildings, monuments, or restoration.⁴⁰ Some emperors visited the Capitoline as part of their *adventus*, and it is assumed that during visits to Rome the emperor and his court stayed on the Palatine. The following day, games were held to celebrate the presence of the emperor, at which he would distribute largesse. Though the moment of entry into the city, the crossing of the boundary, was only a small part of the *adventus* process and by no means the end, it was the most dramatic moment, the climax of the ceremony, and the moment most commonly depicted in surviving literary and visual representations.

In the imperial period, visual representations of *adventus* ceremonies were most often, though not exclusively, found on coinage. Numismatic evidence for

³⁹ MacCormack, 1972: 723.

⁴⁰ MacCormack, 1972: 727.

this trend is relatively common until roughly the reign of Severus Alexander (c. AD 222), after which trends in imperial representation began to change.⁴¹ Extended literary accounts and other types of artistic representations of *adventus* ceremonies were comparatively less common in the imperial period than they were in late antiquity, although a number of examples from large public buildings have survived.⁴² There are two notable sculptural examples from Rome that will be discussed here.

The Cancelleria reliefs were found at the renaissance *Palazzo della Cancelleria* in Rome (the building from which they take their name) in the late 1930s and date from the reign of Domitian.⁴³ The set of large bas-relief fragments (seven pieces in total, comprising two reliefs measuring 606 cm x 206 cm) are likely to have originally been displayed on a large public monument and depict two scenes, the first of which (relief A, fig. 3.3) depicts Domitian engaging in what is most commonly identified as the *profectio* ceremony, although it has been suggested that the subject of this relief is in fact his *reditus*.⁴⁴ Relief B (fig. 3.4) shows the *adventus* of Vespasian in AD 70 entering Rome after the civil war and greeting his son Domitian, who had been acting as a *legatus* in Rome during the conflict and in the emperor's absence.⁴⁵ Relief A was recut during Domitian's posthumous *damnatio memoriae* to show his successor, Nerva, but these alterations do not affect the integrity of the original sculptural content. It is likely that the reliefs were never re-displayed after their alterations as they show little sign of wear, and were found in storage near the tomb of Hirtius.⁴⁶ The '*profectio*' scene on relief A is a group scene featuring figures such as Mars and Roma, and

⁴¹ Manders, 2012: 75.

⁴² For further information on imperial examples, see Koeppel, 1969.

⁴³ Varner, 2004: 119.

⁴⁴ Varner, 2004: 119.

⁴⁵ Last, 1948: 10.

⁴⁶ Last, 1948: 9; Pollini, 2012: 309.

in which the emperor Domitian is shown in travelling clothes as he makes his way out of the city. In the parallel scene (fig. 3.4), Vespasian's *adventus*, the emperor is depicted in his toga, backed by the Senate and the *genius populi Romani*. The latter scene is particularly interesting regarding the location of the *adventus* in the imperial period: in the lower right-hand register of the bas relief under the foot of the personification of the Roman people, a scalloped-square shape is visible, tilting slightly to the right (fig. 3.5). It has been suggested by Last that this feature may represent an altar (*arula*) owing to its unusual shape⁴⁷, although this is unlikely given the fairly standardised representation of altars in other relief sculpture from the imperial period, for example the Hadrianic roundels spoliated and reused on the Arch of Constantine, in which sacrifices before the large, upright altars of Diana and Apollo are visible (fig. 3.6).⁴⁸ Similarly, there are few examples of statue bases (another suggested identification for the object) in imperial reliefs, and of the ones that do exist, none share characteristics with the object depicted in the Cancelleria relief B. For comparative materials, see the Marsyas statue bases on the imperial *Anaglypha Traiani*, or painted statue bases on the frescoes of the House of Julia Felix in Pompeii (fig. 3.7).⁴⁹ To my knowledge no surviving statue bases from Rome take this shape. This leaves only one likely option, suggested by Dufraigne but never fully explored⁵⁰: the object depicted is a boundary-stone or *cippus* indicating that the scene is taking place at the boundaries of the city. The unusual angle of the *cippus* suggests an old boundary stone relating to a previous pomerial line, one which had since been replaced or superseded. The presence of this object in the scene fits with the traditional location of the *adventus* ceremony at the pomerial line and, given the

⁴⁷ Last, 1948: 10.

⁴⁸ Claridge, 2010: 310.

⁴⁹ Torelli, 1982: 90; Ewald and Noreña, 2010: 55.

⁵⁰ Dufraigne, 1994: 46.

relatively large amount of space it occupies, may even act as a visual marker, signposting the topographical context of the ceremony to its audience. The shape of the *cippus* in the relief, while not exactly the same as surviving *pomerium cippi*, does match depictions of boundary stones on coinage from the same period.

The sculptural representation of a boundary *cippus* in the *adventus* scene is significant for one main reason: the inclusion of such a motif in public artwork suggests that it would have been a familiar sight to a contemporary audience, who would potentially recognise in the reliefs the boundary stones which marked out the Roman *pomerium* in reality. In this way, the sculpted *cippus* functions as a point of reference, grounding the activities portrayed in the frieze in the urban topography of the ancient city and situating the *adventus* ceremony in a recognisable place.

The second sculptural example of imperial *adventus* to be discussed is currently in situ on the Arch of Constantine in Rome, reused as *spolia* in the construction of the fourth-century triumphal arch, but originally carved for a large public monument celebrating Marcus Aurelius' *adventus* of AD 176. The panel (approx. 210 cm x 350 cm) is located on the attic storey of the triumphal arch, and on the right hand side of the scene, we see the so-called Arch of Domitian through which the emperor entered the city of Rome during his homecoming.⁵¹ In a similar fashion to the *cippus* in the Cancelleria relief, the carved panel includes a depiction of a monument located at the boundaries of the city that the emperor had to pass on entering the urban space. Such motifs root the *adventus* in the actual topography of the city of Rome.

⁵¹ MacCormack, 1981: 31.

In both these sculptural examples, there is clear interest in depicting the space of the *adventus* – the physical location - either as the sacred boundary of Rome or as the architecture through which the emperor had to pass on entry. This ensured that viewers of such scenes in figurative art were aware of the relationship between the image, the event, and their city. After the third century, this moment became heightened as the boundaries themselves were monumentalised: marked by large, imposing circuits of walls and gates, the city boundary was an architectural space through which the emperor moved rather than a line, such as the *pomerium*, that he crossed.⁵² While earlier imperial scenes focussed on the emperor figure, boundary markers, or isolated arches, later ones gave prominence to walls and gates as key components of the framework of *adventus*.

The importance of the physical city, and in particular its boundaries, in late antique *adventus* scenes is evidenced by the consistent featuring of walls and gates in art and literature of the late third to early fifth century.⁵³ It would be simple to conclude that boundaries were explicitly featured in *adventus* scenes because they were the location for the crucial part of the ceremony, but the consistency of their prominent inclusion on such scenes, coupled with the particular types of depictions that occur, suggests that the boundaries were not background images, but integral parts of the visual language of the *adventus*. Walls were large public monuments, often the focus of civic and urban pride as evidenced by the remarkable circuit at Le Mans, a provincial city in the Gallic interior, whose wall dates to the late third century and which provides us with an excellent example of a monumental city boundary in the western empire. Dey has noted that this

⁵² Dey, 2010: 23.

⁵³ Dey, 2010: 23.

late antique wall was decorated with alternating brick and contrasting stone polychrome designs on its entire outer face (1,300 m), suggesting that this was an attempt to make the exterior space of the city a more impressive and suitable setting for boundary ceremonies such as the *adventus*, which became increasingly popular in late antiquity and which occurred throughout the empire, not just at Rome (fig. 3.8).⁵⁴

The prominent place awarded to the fortifications of late Roman cities is evident in a variety of media that demonstrate the trend. The panegyric for the occasion of Constantine's arrival at Autun in AD 311 uses figurative language to imbue the walls with human characteristics, actively welcoming the emperor into the city and not just existing as a passive backdrop:

Immortal Gods, what a day shone upon us [...] when you entered the gates of this city [...] and when the gates curved inwards and flanked by twin towers, seemed to receive you in a kind of embrace (*Pan. Lat.* 5/8.7, 6).

Similar imagery is evident on the Arras medallion, struck in AD 310 and depicting the *adventus* of Constantius I in London after the defeat of the usurper Allectus in AD 297.⁵⁵ The personification of London can be seen kneeling before the approaching emperor, with the gates and walls of the city on the far right. Again, in the absence of the crowd, the city itself welcomes the emperor.⁵⁶ Other notable examples of this trend from provincial cities include the Arch of Galerius at Salonica (fig. 3.9), dated to approximately AD 303. The *adventus* scene on this monument depicts the emperor (possibly Diocletian) and his entourage on the left approaching a city (possibly Nisibis); this time, he is welcomed by a crowd.⁵⁷ On the upper right of the scene is the city's gate and, inside, a temple is visible.

⁵⁴ Dey, 2010: 11.

⁵⁵ Dey, 2010: 24.

⁵⁶ Rees, 2004: 48-49.

⁵⁷ Dufraigne, 1994: 69.

The frieze depicts urban space towards which the emperor is moving as part of his *adventus*: it is the culmination of his journey.

These are just a few examples from a long list of late antique *adventus* scenes and descriptions in which gates and walls are given a prominent position.⁵⁸ They suggest that there is a strong link between the ceremony of *adventus* and the conceptualisation of 'the city' as represented by its boundaries. Representations of the late antique incarnation of *adventus* can be tentatively broken down into three recurrent parts: the emperor figure, the welcoming crowd, and the city boundary. Each part is integral to the overall comprehension of the composition; each motif provides key information about the type of activity being portrayed, who is participating, and where such an event takes place. Though there are undoubtedly examples of *adventus* scenes that deviate from this pattern (for example, the rare scenes appearing on late antique coinage), there is an overwhelming degree of conformity to the 'type' in late antique art. The boundary marker (gate, wall) in such scenes is not to be taken at face-value: it is a visual device designed not only to locate the event at the familiar edge of the urban space, but to evoke the city as a whole through the depiction of its most recognisable part – the monumental city wall.

Thus far, the examples discussed have not been from Rome, and this has been deliberate. It has been suggested that while city walls loom large on provincial art (as we have seen), the same trend is not visible in Rome in the fourth century.⁵⁹ There is, however, a wealth of evidence to suggest the contrary: the same trends visible in provincial art and literature may also be traced in the visual and literary representation of *adventus* at Rome between the late third and

⁵⁸ See Dufraigne, 1994; MacCormack, 1981; Dey, 2011 for further examples.

⁵⁹ Dey, 2010: 35.

early fifth centuries. It should be remembered that the examples already discussed, and the additional ones that Dey chose to focus his argument on, are from a wide geographical area and chronological span, and often exist as the only example of such art or literature in the region. There is a great deal more evidence from Rome which sees the Aurelian Wall as an integral part of the visual language used to portray the late antique *adventus*.

The examination of evidence for city gates and walls as significant parts of surviving *adventus* scenes from Rome will begin with two literary examples, before focussing on two material examples. The first example is from Ammianus Marcellinus' famous account of Constantius II's *adventus* into Rome in AD 357 (16.10.10):

For he [Constantius] stooped when passing through lofty gates (although he was very short)...

In this short section of a larger passage describing the emperor's *adventus*, we are informed that Constantius, moving as though he were a work of art himself, crossed the threshold of the city of Rome by passing through the 'lofty gates' of the Aurelian Wall. The architecture of the boundary in this passage is a key element in the framework of Ammianus' account – there can be no entry, no arrival without a boundary to cross. Constantius' passage through the gate signifies his entry into the city proper and the completion of his 'arrival' in Rome, even though the periphery of the city was home to an array of active sites in this period - domestic buildings, *horti* and agricultural land in particular - and the wall was by no means located at the edge of the city's sprawl.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Dey, 2011: 169.

The second literary example comes from Claudian's panegyric of AD 403-4, '*On the Sixth Consulship of Honorius*' (531-536):

Still fairer than of old the city seemed by reason of those new walls that the rumour of the Getae's approach had just caused to be built [...] For fear it was that caused the sudden upspringing of all those towers and renewed the youth of Rome's seven hills by enclosing them all within one long wall.

Claudian's mention of Honorius and Arcadius' recent renewal of the Aurelian Wall ("those new walls") takes place almost immediately before his account of Honorius' *adventus* of AD 403, and thus sets the architectural backdrop for the scenes that follow, once more rooting the *adventus* in the real physical space of the city of Rome. In this instance, *adventus*, the emperor, and the city are interdependent, and the value of Honorius' *adventus* lies in the significance of its location at Rome which, even though the city could no longer claim the permanent residence of the emperor, remained the symbolic heart of the empire.⁶¹ We, the audience, know that this scene is located in Rome because the defining monumental circuit of the city has been described.

The emphasis on the walls and gates of Rome is also visible in the art produced there in and around the fourth century. The eastern side of the Arch of Constantine is decorated with a panel of contemporary narrative frieze (AD 315) which commemorates the titular emperor's *adventus* after the victory over Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in AD 312 (fig. 3.10). The emperor is shown entering not as a victor in military garb and in a triumphal chariot, but as a citizen, seated in a chariot drawn by four horses, with Victory at his feet. Most interestingly, the scene is bordered on the left-hand side by architecture that

⁶¹ MacCormack, 1981: 54.

appears as an arch with brick detail. This cannot be a framing device as similar features do not appear in the other portions of the frieze, but rather it is specific to this scene and this position. Sabine MacCormack has identified this as the *Porta Flaminia*.⁶² This is a convincing interpretation, particularly when considering that parts of the frieze would have been painted and this fine brick-work detail is a likely candidate for colour, which may have made the motif stand out in the scene. Once again, the boundaries of the city are an integral part of the *adventus* story. We know that this is Constantine's entry into Rome, his *adventus*, because we, the viewer, see him passing through the archway of a gate building, which can only mean he has entered the city proper.

Other media demonstrate the same trend. The small, private funerary complex known as the 'Hypogeum of the Aurelii' was located inside the Aurelian Wall and was in use from the third century A.D into the Christian period.⁶³ It includes a fresco (fig. 3.11) that appears to depict an imperial-style *adventus* – the man on horseback is passing through an archway towards a gathered crowd who are waiting to receive him and, in the background, there is a walled city. This wall painting, composed before the construction of the Aurelian Wall but bridging the gap between the depiction of architectural boundary markers (the arches and *cippi* discussed above) and the later inclusion of walls and gates, contains the three key elements of the imperial and late antique *adventus* scene: emperor-style figure, welcoming crowd, and city boundary.

The exact character of this fresco is unclear, however the use of *adventus*-style imagery is striking, and demonstrates that the depiction of Rome's boundaries in art was indeed present in *adventus* scenes in Rome, and not just

⁶² MacCormack, 1981: 36.

⁶³ Bisconti, 2004: 15.

on large scale public monuments but had spread into the private (or semi-private) funerary sphere.

Late antique *adventus* scenes are formulaic: often they contain a combination of three key elements (emperor, crowd, and city); the directionality of the scene is most commonly left-to-right, with the approaching figure depicted on the left and the destination (the city or the gate) on the right; and the scenes appear with relative ubiquity throughout the period. The late antique *adventus* had many meanings: it was a display of triumph, a display of imperial benefaction, a religious ceremony, a homecoming. The recurring motif of city walls and gate buildings in late antique *adventus* scenes is not an exclusively provincial phenomenon, but one that can also be traced in the art that was produced at Rome between the late third century and the early fifth century, in both the public and private spheres. Not only that, but the use of such images represented the artistic conceptualisation of the space of the late antique *adventus* at Rome. The entire urban space was evoked in these scenes through the employment of a single image, the city boundary. In late antique art and literature, circuits of walls and gate buildings and arches became symbols, acting as visual synecdoche in which a gate or wall referred to the entire urban space within, the space that was only hinted at by the motif itself. In this way, Rome's Aurelian Wall had transcended its physical form to become a symbol of the urban identity of late antique Rome as a whole.

3.5 Christian ritual and the sacred city

It has been shown so far that up to and including the fifth century there was a substantial degree of continuity in the rituals and religious behaviour associated with the city boundary, either in its pre-third century form as the *pomerium*, or in its late antique manifestation as the Aurelian Wall. The main thrust of the

argument presented in this thesis shows the fifth century as a watershed moment, after which it is argued that people's relationship with the city boundary was different. This is reflected in the substantially changed character of religious behaviours and meanings attributed to Rome's borderscape in the sixth century, such as the disappearance of several prominent rituals from the calendar, and the breakdown of the burial boundary. This may partially be the result of the gradual formation of a Church infrastructure that, by the late sixth century, was capable of managing and maintaining the city in the relative absence of effective state administration. More will be said on this subject in relation to burial topography in chapter four. There are, however, two points of interest from the fifth century and after that will be discussed here. Through an examination of the names of the Aurelian Wall's gates and a discussion of the adoption of ambulatory rituals by the Christian church in the sixth century, I seek to demonstrate that though the specific religious ritual conceptualisation of the pre-Christian city boundary had been supplanted by a new approach to the city's topography, it remained governed by the same conceptual framework.

Firstly, an issue of classification. The continued importance of the wall to the wider conceptualisation of the city in late antiquity and the early medieval period is clear from the way in which the wall was, for lack of a better term, 'christianised.' By this, I do not refer to an aggressive process, or to decorative schemes or ancient literature on the subject of the enceinte, but the process of re-naming the major gates in the Aurelian Wall after saints, and in doing so, expanding the area in the periphery of the city that was believed to be imbued with their protective power. The sanctity of the city boundary can be evidenced throughout late antiquity, and is not a concept that is abandoned in the Christian period. The old names of the gates indicated the names of the great arterial roads

from Rome: some were named for the consular roads (e.g. the *Porta Appia*), and others were named for their destination or primary association, such as the *Porta Tiburtina*, or the *Porta Salaria*. The new martyrial names for the gates were not seemingly the result of wholesale official intervention that renamed the gates in one act, or at very least, not any official intervention that was recorded. More likely it was a gradual process of association between a gate and a basilica or sanctuary that resulted in the Christian names for the gates, many of which survive today.⁶⁴

Aside from the riverbank gate that was known as the *Porta San Pietro* from approximately the mid-fifth century, the first record we have of a shift towards Christian nomenclature is in the renaming of the *Porta San Paolo* (previously the *Porta Ostiensis*) and the *Porta S. Pancrazio* (formerly the *Porta Aurelia*) some time before the 530s. The first appeared in the *Liber Pontificalis* (61, Pope Vigilius, AD 537-555), while both names featured in Procopius' *De Bello Gothico* (*S. Paolo*: 2.4.3, 3.36.7-10; *S. Pancrazio*: 1.18.35, 1.28.19). A century later, in the middle of the seventh century, four more boasted new names: the *Portae S. Valentini* (previously the *Flaminia*, now the *Porta del Popolo*), the *S. Silvestri* (*Salaria*), the *S. Lorenzo* (*Tiburtina*), and the *San Giovanni* (*Asinaria*).⁶⁵ Dey argued that the process of renaming the gates after saints acknowledged the important extramural Christian sites, and surrounded the sixth and seventh century city with a boundary that had been 'reinforced with a concentrated dose of holiness.'⁶⁶ Connecting the gates directly to their extramural cemetery sites (and the saints commemorated there) is an apt assessment, and goes some way

⁶⁴ Pani Ermini, 1999: 42; Dey, 2011: 225.

⁶⁵ Dey, 2011: 225, fn. 69.

⁶⁶ Dey, 2011: 225.

towards explaining the choice of particular names, but it does not quite seem to satisfactorily explain the wider meaning of this process.

The understanding of the city boundary 'on the ground' between the fifth and early seventh centuries in Rome must have been complex, the product of many centuries of change and adaptation. It seems that some of the earlier restrictions that were associated with the boundary were known in this time; this can be evidenced through the actions of the inhabitants of the late antique city that have left some mark in the archaeological or epigraphic record, or which have been recorded in late antique texts. As will be discussed in chapter four, there was a continuing awareness of the traditional prohibition of burials inside the walls which can be seen in both legislation and in the continued burial activity at sites outside the city, though it was not strictly adhered to in this time. *Adventus*, as examined above, was a ritual that did not disappear for many centuries after the period under discussion in this thesis, having been adapted to suit the needs and beliefs of the post-Roman world. What is harder to prove, is the continued belief that the city boundary of Rome was a sacred entity, and that the space enclosed within its boundary was, in some way, different to what lay outside it. It is clear from the earlier accounts of the *pomerium* that prior to the late fifth and sixth centuries, the city boundary of Rome was defined by its sacredness, a sanctity that affected everyday behaviours and was reflected in the proliferation of ritual meaning and ritualistic approaches to its line. It is my belief that this same concept of the sanctity of the city boundary does not disappear from the periphery of Rome, but can be evidenced from the fifth century onwards, in a Christian context. It is telling that one of the last known uses of the term 'pomerial' in antiquity comes from a letter of Sidonius Apollinaris to his friend, Herenius, in which he details his arrival at Rome in AD 467 (*Ep.* 1. 5. 9):

But before allowing myself to set foot even on the pomerial boundary of the city I sank on my knees at the triumphal thresholds of the Apostles, and straightway I felt that all the sickness had been driven from my enfeebled limbs.⁶⁷

In this passage, the 'pomerial boundary' of the city is the Aurelian Wall, recognised as such in the mid- to late-fifth century AD, almost two centuries after the last known extension of the *pomerium* in approximately AD 275. This is remarkable for two reasons: firstly, the use of this term appears to be a curious reversal of the earlier process that was noted in chapter two, in which 'the city' came to mean 'the space inside *pomerium*' to the inhabitants of the imperial city. In the fifth century the religious associations of the *pomerium* of Rome all but ceased to exist, with only a few minor exceptions. Sidonius was almost certainly not referring to the *pomerium* of Rome as the same sacred boundary that existed in the time of Tacitus (one which had no place in a Christian city); he was using the term *pomoeria* as a reference to the city wall of Rome. It appears that the pomerial boundary was a phrase that could, in the fifth century, be used as a spatial identifier divorced from its original religious meaning. However, it remains an interesting and, in my opinion, meaningful choice of word that is indicative of how deeply ingrained in the borderscape of Rome the *pomerium* had come to be, even in late antiquity.

In addition, I propose that the conceptual framework for the sacred boundary of Rome persisted, but required adaptation to become relevant for the Christian city. These adaptations produced a new Christian conception of the peripheral spaces of Rome which, while religiously distinct from what had come

⁶⁷ Loeb translation, slightly adapted: ...*ubi priusquam vel pomoeria contingerem, triumphalibus apostolorum liminibus adfusus omnem protinus sensi membris male fortibus explosum esse languorem.*

before, were similar in some notable ways. This is supported by Sidonius' comment that before he could reach the city boundary, he had passed through a 'sacred' area outside the city, consisting of the extramural spaces that were dominated by Christian martyrial and cemeterial basilicas and sprawling funerary complexes. This belt of churches and cemeteries had surrounded the city in some capacity since the pontificate of Damasus, and created, as Dey noted, 'a sanctified buffer zone' around Rome.⁶⁸ Consider this passage in combination with the addition of saint's names to the city boundary less than a century later (sanctifying it in a way that hadn't existed since the *pomerium* was adhered to); the result is that in the fifth and early sixth centuries the Aurelian Wall was treated as a sacred boundary that, through a connection to the saints, could protect the city.⁶⁹ Further out, a ring around the city of Rome existed that consisted of shrines and prestigious funerary spaces, which people regularly crossed the boundary to visit. During this time they would have not only experienced passing through the gates of the monumental Aurelian wall (and thus leaving the city proper), but they would have been acutely aware of entering an area that was explicitly associated with funerary activity, and which would still have been a stark change in the landscape, in spite of the growing numbers of burials located inside the city walls. Though this scenario is wholly Christian in character and is clearly of the fifth or sixth century (the gates were named for saints, the funerary spaces were associated with churches), the framework is much older. It parallels the conceptualisation of the borderscape in the republican and imperial periods: a system in which the sacred boundary marked the line between the city and the world of the dead, with a dense area of funerary spaces immediately outside the city boundary, and then, after, a series of

⁶⁸ Dey, 2011: 225; Trout, 2003.

⁶⁹ Dey, 2011: 223-225.

shrines and altars lining the roads. Rome's Christian periphery was not created anew in the fifth century: it evolved in a space that had been occupied and which had been imbued with ritual and religious meaning for nearly a millennium. To assume that there is no connection between these liminal systems would be reductive: though the religious meaning is different, the actual framework shows similarities. To its inhabitants, pagan or Christian, the city of Rome was always a sacred place, and the line that demarcated its limits was sacrosanct.

Moving on from the modification of the borders of the city in late antiquity, a final example from the late sixth and very early seventh century could add some late context to round off this discussion of the ritual associations of the city boundary of Rome. Two events that took place early in the pontificate of Gregory, first in AD 590 and then again in AD 603, simultaneously suggest that there were new dominant *foci* in the city which were not connected to the space of the wall, but which demonstrate a continuity in ritual behaviour associated with the protection of the city, and which, in earlier centuries, had been connected to the city boundary. Two of the earliest, large-scale Christian processions in the city, known as the *laetaniae septiformes*, were held in response to acute crises in the city of Rome, in an attempt to restore the city to its prosperous past and gain protection for its inhabitants (Gregory I, *Registrum*, 2. 1102-4).⁷⁰ They are likely to have been a response to the devastating epidemic of the Justinianic plague.⁷¹ They were unusual for their organisation and appropriation of the space of the whole city, and relate to the formation of stational liturgy in Rome that will not be discussed at length here. It will suffice to say that the new arena for ritual procession was the interior space of the city, with a seven-armed procession

⁷⁰ Andrews, 2015: 156-157.

⁷¹ Brubaker, 2001: 36, fn. 21; Romano, 2016: 112.

leading from churches inside the city boundary which culminated at the church of *Santa Maria Maggiore* on the Cispan Hill.⁷² I do not want to suggest that there was any overt or conscious connection to the processions that took place many centuries earlier at the boundaries of Rome to protect and purify the city, and this study is not the place for anthropological discussions of the importance of movement in community ritual. It remains, however, a curious behavioural continuity in Rome that the movement of large numbers of people, of members from every demographic group, on a specific day and with a single ritual purpose to the same destination, could grant protection over that place. This is a very ancient idea, which we have already seen in earlier discussions of the *Amburbium*, and the underlying premise seems largely unchanged despite its Christian context.

3.6 Concluding remarks

This chapter has traced some of the religious and ritual associations of the city boundary of Rome from the late republic and early imperial period, through to the late sixth and early seventh centuries.

There has been a discussion of the long development of three of Rome's rituals that celebrated the boundary – the *Parilia*, the *Amburbium* and the *Lupercalia*, and it was demonstrated that the importance of the *pomerium* in all three of these events was at least partially connected to its role as a remnant of the legendary history of the city. Ritual activity connected to the *pomerium* appears to have been practised as late as the fifth century, after which many of the associations between boundary and city were irrevocably altered. There followed a summary of the ways in which Rome's city boundary acted as the

⁷² Baldovin, 1987: 158-166.

division between legal and military spheres of activity, which touched upon some of the more unusual associations that may have been made with the *pomerium*, for instance, in the rituals of the *fetiales*.

In the section dedicated to the development of the *adventus* ritual, focus on the late antique examples presented evidence to suggest that the city boundary played an important part in the construction of the ritual, and is conceptualised in artistic and literary depictions as a symbol of the entire city of Rome. Finally, there was a discussion of two examples from the very end of the chosen chronology that suggest continuities in the treatment of the borderscape even in the period long after Rome's traditional religions had been supplanted by the Christian faith.

Rituals were powerful events, even though their ephemeral nature makes it difficult to prove so using tangible evidence – the best we can do is rely on visual representations or literary accounts of such moments to reconstruct the experiences of the inhabitants of Rome.⁷³ The ritualistic approach to the boundaries of Rome is a consistent feature of its urban character, though the specific religious motivations and meaning may have altered at different times in the period under study. The Christian city of the fifth century onwards was undoubtedly a vastly different ritual environment to what had preceded it in the centuries of the republican and imperial periods, but perhaps most importantly, it was not entirely alien. The inheritances of late antique Rome can still be seen in the small continuities of language, conceptualisation, and behaviour, in spite of the changed religious identity of the city.

⁷³ Härke, 2001: 24.

Chapter four: burial topography

4.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters set out the scholarly context for discussions of late antique urban centres and their boundaries, and the specific circumstances and inheritances of the city of Rome. The values, regulations and concepts associated with the two city boundaries chosen for this study – the *pomerium* of the republican and imperial city and the Aurelian Wall of late antiquity – are significant factors in the consideration of several important areas of Roman life in the capital, including funerary practices and ritual activity. This chapter will examine these borders in the context of the former, specifically Rome's burial topography. The approach will be broadly chronological, beginning with the *pomerium* and progressing to a discussion of the fifth and sixth centuries AD interspersed with some non-chronological thematic discussion. It will set out the ways in which the locations of burial activity were controlled and organised over time, and the reasons behind efforts to regulate Rome's burial sites.

The first part of the chapter will focus on burial legislation and the *pomerium* in the Republic and imperial periods to firmly establish the connection between the two, to chart continuities of practice over time, and note any changes to the measures put in place by the Roman state to manage the city's cemeteries and extra-urban burials. The second part of the chapter will concentrate on the gradual shift from extra- to intra-mural burial sites in the fifth and sixth centuries, and how this significant change in funerary activity can be interpreted.

4.1.1 The *pomerium* as a funerary boundary

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the *pomerium* was the boundary of Rome inside which (amongst other things) neither burials nor cremations could take place.

Though there is no direct quotation from an ancient author or surviving inscription that explicitly uses the word *pomerium* to describe this funerary restriction, it is a widely accepted conclusion that the two were connected. The funerary boundary of Rome was its *pomerium*. Evidence to confirm this is visible in a collection of literary passages, burial legislation, archaeological material and epigraphy stretching from the Republic into the fourth and fifth centuries AD.

In the republican and imperial periods inhabitants of Rome, both the rich and poor, were buried or had their ashes deposited outside the city boundary.¹ The earliest record of the prohibition of intra-pomerial burial² can be found in an excerpt of the fifth century BC Twelve (henceforth: XII) Tables, the first codification of civil and criminal law in Roman history, transmitted to us via Cicero's *De Legibus*:

A dead man [...] shall not be buried or burned inside the city (Cic. De Leg. 2. 23. 58).³

In practice however, this prohibition was far less clear-cut. It seems that throughout the Republic and imperial periods there was not a wholesale ban on intra-pomerial burial, and several notable exceptions were made, presumably in addition to many thousands of illegal depositions made during the centuries the boundary was intact. These were as follows:

1. Certain accomplished men (*summi viri*) whose military or civic achievements were viewed with such admiration that in response, the honour

¹ Patterson, 2000: 92.

² In this thesis, the term 'burial' is used to discuss both kinds of funerary deposition – inhumations and cremation alike, but not the act of cremating itself which often took place away from the eventual grave location. The reason for this is that it is likely that both methods of deposition were practised concurrently (with both as the minority practice at different times) throughout the chosen period, with no distinct differences in the choice of grave location. For further discussion, see Pearce, 2017: 4.

³ *Hominem mortuum inquit lex in duodecim in urbe ne sepelito neve urito*. See chapter 2, section titled 'The *pomerium* and the city'.

of intra-pomerial burial was awarded to them and their descendants by the Senate. Examples from the Republic (when the practice was more common) include Valerius Publicola and his descendants, though none ever made use of this right, and Fabricius, both of whom were permitted burial in the Forum. In the imperial period, *summi viri* were no longer honoured in this way, with intra-pomerial burial reserved as a particular honour for exemplary emperors only, the most famous example of which is Trajan, whose ashes were entombed in or near to his column in the Forum of Trajan (Plut. *Vit. Publ.* 23. 2-3; *Quaest. Rome.* 79; Cic. *De Leg.* 2. 23. 58).⁴

2. Vestal Virgins who were convicted of breaking their vow of chastity were escorted to a location inside the *Porta Collina* known as the *Campus Sceleratus*, where they were allegedly executed by vivisepture (Serv. *ad Aen.* 11. 206).⁵ In contrast to this 'ritual murder' (as it has been termed by Celia Schultz), vestals who successfully fulfilled their required years of duty were granted the honour of intra-pomerial burial in the same way as the *summi viri*, although the precise locations of their graves remain unknown.⁶

3. Traditionally, it has been believed that children under four days' old were buried *sub grundo* (under porch) (Fulg. *Exposito sermonum antiquorum* 7), although this has now been largely discredited.⁷

4. During the Republic, the only suggested examples of human sacrifice practised by the Romans occurred on three occasions within the ritual boundary of the city: it took the form of the burial of pairs of Gauls and Greeks (one man,

⁴ Claridge, 2010; Packer, 1993-2000: 348-56.

⁵ It should be noted here that examples of the entombment of unchaste Vestal Virgins are only documented by the literary sources on rare occasions, and the *Campus Sceleratus* has never been securely identified archaeologically: Schultz, 2012: 123-4.

⁶ Schultz, 2012: 133.

⁷ Lindsay, 2000: 170. It is also recorded by Pliny (*NH.* 7.16.72) that children who had not reached teething age were excluded from cremation rites. The counter-argument presented by Carroll (2011a: 103-5; 2018) strongly suggests that children under one year old were in fact buried alongside adults in regular necropoleis.

one woman of each) as purifying rituals, although it is likely this was a rare ritual custom that quickly fell out of usage in the Republic and was never revived.⁸

Thus it appears that the *pomerium* of Rome and the burial laws attached to it were not fixed or even universally applicable, and that in certain officially-sanctioned circumstances, the rules that were applied to the general population could be bypassed. This is of crucial importance: there are no absolutes to be found when approaching the subject of boundaries and burials, for every general rule there can be found an exception. This will become especially clear later in the chapter, when evidence from the fifth century begins to show that exceptions to the old laws became increasingly common, and it will be useful to remember then that the roots of this phenomenon can be found in the legal (and illegal) exceptions to the pomerial burial rule of the republic and imperial periods.

While the XII Tables law as communicated to us via Cicero did not use the word '*pomerium*,' there is sufficient corroborative evidence to tentatively suggest that in the case of burial legislation, reading "the city" as "the space within the *pomerium*" is justified. The strongest evidence for the synonymous nature of '*pomerium*' and 'the city' in burial legislation such as the XII Tables is contained within the foundation charter of the colony of *Colonia Genetiva Iulia* at Urso in southern Spain, known as the *lex Coloniae Genetivae Iuliae*, found in fragments in 1870-1 and currently on display in the *Museo Arqueològico Nacional* in Madrid (fig. 4.1).⁹ The bronze inscription is dated to the reign of Vespasian but records a decree drafted in the late republic by Julius Caesar (c.44 BC). Its text includes the following lines:

⁸ Schultz, 2012: 133.

⁹ *CIL* 2.5.439 / *ILS* 6087; *M.A.N.* 16736, 16736bis.

No one within the boundaries of the town or the colony or within the area marked round by the plough, shall bring a dead person, or bury, or cremate a body there, or build a monument to a dead person. If any person acts contrary to this regulation he shall be condemned to pay to the colonists of the colony *Genetiva Julia* 5,000 sesterces and he shall be sued and prosecuted for that sum by any person who wishes.¹⁰

The line “drawn around by a plough” is a direct reference to the practice of ploughing a *pomerium* during the foundation of a colony (as described by numerous ancient authors) and thus refers to the sacred boundary of the *Colonia Genetiva Iulia* at Urso. This type of provincial legislation is an insight into not only the spread of pomerial law throughout the empire (a subject for which there is scant evidence), but also, projecting backwards, into the details of this type of pomerial restriction in the capital. Given that the subject of the restriction in the *lex Coloniae Genetivae Iuliae* is the same as that of the XII Tables – the prohibition of burial and cremation in the city – and that their place of origin is identical (republican Rome), it is reasonable to assume that they also shared common details in the boundary associated with the law, i.e. the *pomerium*. Reading the boundary in this way simplifies the reading of passages concerning burial legislation, and suggests a connection between disparate events which can now be conclusively understood as taking place in the same exceptional context. So for instance, Cicero’s digression into the individuals granted intra-urban burial in the Republic was an exception to the same pomerial law in place in the imperial period, though the two are rarely explicitly connected (Cic. *De Leg.* 2. 23). This exception to the pomerial law in effect in the republican era was the same as the

¹⁰ Translation from Hope, 2007: 130. Original text (slightly adapted) from Crawford, 1996: 424: *Ne quis intra fines oppida coloniaeve, qua arato/ circumductum erit, hominem mortuom/ inferto neve ibi humato neve urito neve homi-/nis mortui monimentum aedificato. Si quis adversus ea fecerit, is c(olonis) c(coloniae) G(enetivae) Iul(iae) (sestertium) (quinque milia) d(are) (damnas) esto,/ eiusque pecuniae cui volet petito persecu-/tio exactioq(ue) esto. (73)*

'loophole' in the XII Tables law that permitted the burial of the deified Trajan inside the *pomerium* in the second century AD. Furthermore, the Severan jurist, Iulius Paulus, who wrote in the *Opinions*: "You are not allowed to bring a corpse into the city in case the sacred places in the city are polluted," (Paulus, *Op.* 1. 21. 2) echoed the first lines of the *lex Coloniae Genetivae* excerpt, from which it may be inferred that to Paulus, the pollution of "the sacred places" could only have taken place within the *pomerium*, or "in the city".

4.1.2 Regulating the city: how and why

Burial legislation was not simply concerned with establishing the funerary boundary of the city. Other references to the city's burial legislation and the prohibition of intra-pomerial burial were more focussed on enforcement, and included a pecuniary penalty levied upon anyone violating the ban:

The Divine Hadrian, by a rescript, fixed a penalty of forty aurei against those who buried dead bodies in cities, and he ordered the penalty to be paid to the treasury (Ulp. Dig. 47. 12. 3. 5).

Again, 'the city' should in the case of Rome be read as 'the space inside the *pomerium*,' although given the wording of this particular passage ("cities") it is probable that this rule was applicable to cities across the empire. Indeed, the Urso Charter discussed previously contains a similar detail: the addition of a harsh fine (five thousand *sesterces* instead of Rome's forty *aurei*).¹¹ The obvious choice of explanation for the addition of this monetary penalty is that the burial law had been issued but alone was proving unsuccessful in controlling intra-pomerial burial. Alternatively, it is possible that Hadrian reiterated or adjusted the monetary fine for the violation of this traditional pomerial restriction in association with his restatement of the boundary itself (marked out by *cippi* and following the

¹¹ *Lex Coloniae Genetivae Iuliae* 73.

line of the earlier Vespasianic expansion). While both suggestions have merit it is the latter that is, in my opinion, more convincing as an explanation for this particular imperial intervention in the control over Rome's burial topography.

It is likely however that the continued issuing of decrees relating to the prohibition of intra-pomerial burial (throughout the chosen chronology) may indeed be an indicator of the inefficacy of the rule.¹² John Bodel estimated that in a single year at the height of the population of Rome (between the late first and early second century AD, when the city approached one million inhabitants), up to 1,500 people would die without enough money to provide for the proper burial or disposal of their corpse.¹³ The infrastructure required to efficiently deal with such a large number of corpses presumably dumped around the city and its periphery is difficult to imagine and even more so to demonstrate archaeologically or legislatively. Thus accounts from the literary sources of exposed bodies are not a surprise, for example Suetonius' account of Nero encountering a dead body as he fled the city shortly before his suicide (Suet. *Nero*. 48), or his mention of Vespasian coming across a severed hand, and this being interpreted as a good omen for his reign (Suet. *Vesp*. 5). The first of these stories is rooted in the liminal space of Rome: crossroads and roadsides on the way out of the city, presumably beyond the pomerial line, but still within reach of the urban space. Though evidence for the illegal dumping of corpses is largely related to liminal or peripheral spaces or existing cemetery spaces, it has interesting implications for the development of the *pomerium* in the late republic and early imperial period. In particular, this is demonstrated by the case of a late republican revision of the space covered by the burial laws of Rome. (It should be noted here that the dearth

¹² For additional repetitions see Serv. *ad Aen.* 11.206; *SHA. Ant. Pius* 12.

¹³ Bodel, 1994: 41-2.

of evidence for illegal burials inside the city proper is not necessarily indicative of the nonexistence of such graves, rather due to their inaccessibility owing to the siting of the modern city above them and the patchy nature of archaeological investigation in Rome. Any further discussion of this category of burials will be tabled until future evidence comes to light, to avoid relying on speculation.)

In the early first century BC, the area around the *Porta Esquilina* known as the ‘potter’s fields’ lay outside the *pomerium*, and was targeted by a decree that intended to resolve what had become a serious urban problem: the dumping of the corpses of the urban poor in cemetery space.¹⁴ It was a practice that was mentioned by a number of ancient authors, including Varro (*LL* 5. 25) and Horace, who wrote of the notorious Esquiline boneyard:

[...] this place
 served as the common burial-place for the wretched multitude,
 for the loafer Pantolabus and the playboy Nomentanus.
 Here a marker granted a thousand feet in front, three hundred
 toward the field, lest the memorial be passed to heirs.
 Now one may live on a healthy Esquiline and
 stretch one's legs on the sunny embankment, where recently
[people] had a gloomy view of a plot disfigured by white bones...
 (Sat. 1. 8. 9-16).¹⁵

The ‘healthy Esquiline’ is a reference to the late republican changes to the area, which saw the potter’s field covered by the *horti* of Maecenas in approximately 35 BC.¹⁶ Prior to the closure of the public cemetery, the change in land ownership and the dramatic shift in the area’s appearance, this was singled out as a place

¹⁴ For more discussion see Graham, 2006.

¹⁵ Translation by Johnson, 2012: 15, emphasis my own. Original text: *...hoc miserae plebe stabat commune sepulchrum, Pantolabo scurrae Nomentanoque nepoti. Mille pedes in fronte, trecentos cippus in agrum hic dabat, heredes monumentum ne sequeretur. Nunc licet Esquiliis habitare salubribus atque aggere in aprico spatia, quo modo tristes albis informem spectabant ossibus agrum...*

¹⁶ Häuber, 1993-2000: 70-4.

of concern by a *praetor* named Lucius Sentius. Between approximately 93-89 BC, a number of boundary stones were set up in the area of the potter's field on the Esquiline, of which three survive and are currently on display in Rome's *Galleria Lapidaria* in the *Musei Capitolini*, in the *Chiostro Michelangeo*, at the *Museo Nazionale Romano - Terme di Diocleziano*, and in the *Museo Centrale Montemartini*.¹⁷ They bear the following inscription:

Inscription:	L SENTIVS C F PR DE SEN SENT LOCA TERMINANDA COER B F NEI QVIS INTRA TERMINOS PROPIVS VRBEN VSTRINAM FECISSE VELIT NIVE STERCVS CADAVER INIECISSE VELIT
Transcription:	L(ucius) Sentius C(ai) f(ilius) pr(aetor) de sen(atus) sent(entia) loca terminanda coer(avit). B(onum) f(actum). Nei quis intra terminos propius urbem ustrinam fecisse velit nive stercus, cadaver iniecisse velit. ¹⁸

Lucius Sentius, son of Caius, praetor, has made regulation, by decree of the Senate, about the siting of graves. For the public good. No burning of

¹⁷ See Appendix A for details. NCE 74, 2921; inv. 121977.

¹⁸ *CIL* 6.40885; 1.2981; 6.31614/5.

corpses beyond this marker in the direction of the city. No dumping of rubbish or corpses. Take shit further on, if you want to avoid trouble.¹⁹

These inscriptions extended the ban on unlawful burial, cremation and the dumping of corpses inside the *pomerium* to cover the public cemetery of the extra-pomerial Esquiline. Not only does this contribute to the notion that burial legislation was initially restricted to the space within the *pomerium* (or ‘the city’), it shows that certain restrictions associated with the *pomerium* were fluid, and were able to be adjusted (through formal intervention) to include other areas of the city that required attention. It is also possible that this particular act related to the supposed pomerial extension of Sulla, which is otherwise poorly-evidenced but had it taken place, it would likely have been undertaken during a similar time period (Tac. *Ann.* 12. 23-24; Gell. *NA.* 13. 14).

Interpretations of the corpus of evidence presented thus far often speculate as to the motivations behind the burial restrictions. Though more than one of the ancient literary sources explicitly stated that the ‘preservation of the sacred city’ was the reason for the exclusion of burials from inside the *pomerium*, this is often discarded as a motivation and other potential reasons have been suggested. It has been proposed that the ban was motivated by a concern for sanitation,²⁰ but in my opinion there is little convincing evidence for this in relation to funerary matters at any point in the Roman period. The suggestion can be countered by highlighting the Roman preference for displaying the corpses of certain individuals (ousted political figures, e.g. Cicero at the *Rostra* (Plut. *Cic.* 47 – 49; *Ant.* 20), or the many victims of the *Scalae Gemoniae*) in their public spaces for long stretches of time prior to interment or cremation, which was deemed a

¹⁹ Translation from Hope, 2007: 131.

²⁰ Lindsay, 2000: 169.

safe act and of little threat to the health of the populace.²¹ In addition, the low level of sanitation in Rome is strongly attested in the archaeology of numerous areas of the city, but none more so than the republican Esquiline (mentioned previously). Though technically outside the *pomerium*, it lay within the urban sprawl of the city. The district housed not only the public cemetery notorious for the dumping of corpses and refuse, but a ‘Temple to Fever’ and an altar to the ‘Evil Eye’ (*Mala Fortuna*) both cited by Lanciani as indicators of the poor reputation of the area and a reflection of the quality of its sanitation.²² In this area, too, lay the supposed ‘*puticuli*’, which were described by Varro in the following manner:

Outside the towns there are *puticuli* ‘little pits’, called after *putei* ‘pits’ because people used to be buried there in *putei* ‘pits’; unless instead, as Aelius writes, the *puticuli* are so called because the corpses which had been thrown out *putescebant* ‘used to rot’ there, in the public place which is beyond the Esquiline (Ling. 5. 25).²³

The alleged site was uncovered by Lanciani in the late nineteenth century and described as a collection of seventy-five public mass graves, a “uniform mass of black, viscid, pestilent, unctuous matter” (although their precise identification as such has since been challenged).²⁴ Irrespective of their specific identification as the *puticuli* or a different kind of grave, these pits appear to have been separate from the public cemetery described by Horace, and it seems that they were covered over decades before the potter’s field was closed, contemporary to the

²¹ Lindsay, 2000: 169, see particularly the discussion of ancient conceptions of sanitation and how they relate to modern comprehension of the subject, for example the outdated notion of “bad air”. Other sources on the display of Cicero’s corpse in the Forum: Livy, *per.* 120; Appian, *B. Civ.* 4.19-20; Seneca the Elder, *Controv.* 7.2.8. On the *Scalae Gemoniae*, see Barry, 2008: 222-246.

²² Lanciani, 1889: 52.

²³ Translation from Hope, 2007: 132; See similar comments in Festus, *De sign. verb.* 240.

²⁴ Lanciani, 1889: 64-67; Bodel, 2000: 131. Cf. Graham, 2006: 2; Häuber, 1998: 58.

corpse-filled stretch of *Agger* found north of the *Porta Esquilina* (fig. 4.3).²⁵ Though these examples are confined to the late Republic, they are by no means unique to it and similar indicators of poor urban hygiene and sanitation can be found throughout the Roman period and well into late antiquity.²⁶ Given the existence of such urban environments found throughout the city it is extremely unlikely that burial restrictions in Rome were created because of a concern for public health or any conception of pathology.²⁷ So why were burials banned from the city of Rome? The protection of the sacred, inaugurated city and the prevention of religious pollution by the interment of the dead inside its limits is provided as the conceptual foundation for the burial law. It was noted by Toynbee that “death brought pollution”, both for the family in the home and for the wider community.²⁸ It was evidently accepted by ancient authors as the given reason, and though illegal exceptions to the law must have been frequent and were seemingly unproblematic (as were the official exceptions), this was supplied as the only official reason for the burial law for centuries, appearing in Paulus’ record of the restriction and again in the final repetitions of the law in the fifth and sixth century law codes (*Codex Theodosianus* and the *Codex Iustinianus* in the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*). I see no reason to reject this at present as the motivation behind the burial law. For the inhabitants of Rome who regularly engaged with the funerary spaces of the city and abided by the law (or chose to disobey it), funerary practices were likely to have been unquestioningly based on tradition, on the *mos maiorum*, but at present, little more can be said on the matter in the absence of

²⁵ Bodel, 1994: 38-54; Coarelli, 1999: 173-4.

²⁶ See Liebeschuetz, 2015: 7-11; Morley, 2005: 192-204; Scheidel, 2003: 158-176; Hope & Marshall, 2000 (particularly the contributions of Nutton, Patterson, Hope (esp. 108-9), and Lindsay); Scobie, 1986: 399-433.

²⁷ Recent discussion of the concept of sanitation in Rome and Roman Italy can be found in Stow & Bradley, 2012 and Koloski-Ostrow, 2015. For a more focused examination of the role of death pollution in religious space, see Lennon, 2013.

²⁸ Toynbee, 1971: 43.

new evidence. This is a subject that requires more attention, and in particular the ways in which the law was officially side-stepped by the authorities in Rome would provide an interesting contribution to the field.

The ban on cremation within the city limits is often connected to the ban on burials, although the two appear to have been implemented for different reasons. An example of such a restriction can be found in Cassius Dio, who recorded the following act:

...an act was also passed prohibiting any senator from fighting as a gladiator, any slave from serving as a lictor, and any burning of dead bodies from being carried on within two miles of the city (Cass. Dio. 48. 43. 3).

Other examples include the extended text of the *lex Coloniae Genetivae Iuliae*, whose ban on cremation only extended to half a mile outside the boundary of the town, very likely in reflection of the reduced size of the provincial colony in relation to the urban sprawl of Rome, which stretched far beyond its *pomerium*.²⁹ Dio specified that cremations were required to take place two miles from Rome, but once again “the city” was used as the vague line of measurement. To a modern reader, it is unclear whether the two miles would have been measured from the line of the *pomerium* which, by the imperial period was by no means the end of the built-up space of Rome, or from the edge of the urban sprawl (the *continentia aedificia*). There is a strong argument to be made in favour the former interpretation. Setting aside the sensible conclusion that ‘the edge of the urban sprawl’ was a very fluid and malleable boundary that would have shifted with an ever-changing settlement pattern, causing immense problems for implementing the restriction, two miles from the edge of the urban sprawl would place the *ustrinae* not only an impractical distance from the inhabitants of the city and their

²⁹ *Lex Coloniae Genetivae Iuliae* 74.

primary funerary spaces, but far beyond the remit of most of the magistrates of Rome.³⁰ Placing the *ustrinae* two miles from the line of the *pomerium* however, would situate the space for cremations a safe distance from the densely-occupied and sacred centre of the city, but within reach of the civic bodies which governed the periphery of Rome. It is also possible, as established earlier in relation to the *Sentius cippi*, that there was a degree of flexibility in the burial restrictions associated with the *pomerium*, and thus it is possible that this two mile cremation limit was similarly flexible. Once again, it must be presumed that an ancient audience (or at least the inhabitants of Rome) would have had a basic but functional understanding of the restriction and the associated boundary.

The additional two miles of 'buffer space' between the city and the area for cremations, the *ustrinae*, could be the result of concerns for pollution, both in the case of sanitation and in which the presence of the corpse and the act of its cremation ritually polluted the space of the living. Alternatively, the far more simple reason is that cremations were a fire hazard, and in a city as densely-packed as Rome was in the late republic and imperial periods, fire was a constant risk.³¹ Following the earlier discussion regarding the unlikely existence of concerns for sanitation in Rome, fire safety is by far the more logical reason behind the restriction, and it is corroborated by Cicero (*De Leg. 2. 23. 58*). Banning pyres from the centre of the city, the space enclosed by the pomerial line, was a pragmatic move likely motivated by concerns for the safety of the city's inhabitants.

³⁰ Patterson, 2000: 90; Gargola, 2017 (on the Republic).

³¹ Robinson, 2003: 90-95.

4.1.3 Confusion in the sources

While many of the sources discussed thus far have included details of the actions prohibited in urban or intra-pomerial space (cremations, inhumations, the dumping of corpses or refuse), few contain any topographical information beyond vague references to ‘the city’, unspecified ‘boundaries’ or ‘limits’, as we have seen. In some cases, the reason for this is clear: *cippi* did not need to include specifics of the area affected by the burial restriction because their very presence marked the boundary, and in these cases the find-spots of the *cippi* are crucially important in establishing the locations they once delimited.³² In the case of the evidence provided by literary passages, it could be presumed that the link between ‘city/boundary/limit’ and ‘*pomerium*’ was known to the intended audience and thus did not require further explanation. In some, however, paying further attention is worthwhile as the inclusion of certain topographical details can be revealing in two ways: firstly, such details can suggest that the scope of burial legislation was far greater than just the capital city at any one time (be that Rome or, later, Constantinople), and secondly, it can demonstrate the degree of confusion to which even ancient authors were susceptible when it came to defining a city’s boundaries (sacred or otherwise). The following statement is attributed to Paulus (dated to the early – mid third century AD):

A body cannot be committed to burial within the walls of a city, or be buried therein (*Op.* 1. 21. 3).

Regarding the first category, “a city” (not specifically Rome) implies once more that this was a restriction explicitly active in cities beyond the empire’s capital, a reasonable assumption given evidence discussed previously (the much earlier *lex Coloniae Genetivae Iuliae*), but one for which there remains little conclusive

³² See Appendix A for further details.

proof: examples are surprisingly scarce given the considerable size of the empire. Interestingly it may add weight to the argument that these types of explicitly recorded, formal burial laws had great longevity even outside Rome, corroborating the funerary evidence supplied by the existence of almost exclusively extra-urban cemeteries prior to the late antique period. For the second category, “walls” could simply refer to the increasing prevalence of fortifications in third century urban environments, but if we are to accept that this passage must, in some way, refer to or include the city from which the regulation originated (Rome), the inclusion of walls as topographical markers becomes problematic, if unsurprising (given how quick other imperial authors were to associated the *pomerium* with a wall). At the time of writing, Rome’s *pomerium* had not been marked by walls for many centuries. Nor could the “walls” relate to the monumental circuit of fortifications built by Aurelian as it had not yet been conceived or constructed (in the Severan period), thus this passage must reference the only other existing fortifications in Rome: the Servian Walls. Though for the most part the Vespasianic and Hadrianic *pomerium* (marked by *cippi*) did not follow the line of the Servian Walls, the two may have been coterminous in places and it is likely that Paulus was indeed referencing this defensive boundary as the funerary limit of Rome. The confusion evident here is also reflected in numerous earlier accounts of the true location of the city’s sacred boundary discussed in this thesis.

4.1.4 Continuity of practice

At the other end of our chronological spectrum exists one of the last records of Rome’s burial ban, noted in the late antique *Codex Theodosianus*. It contains the following note which was addressed to Pancratius, the late fourth century urban prefect of Constantinople, by the emperors Gratian, Valentinian, and Theodosius:

All bodies that are contained in urns or sarcophagi and are kept above ground shall be carried and placed outside the City, that they may present an example of humanity and may leave to the homes of citizens their sanctity (*Cod. Theod.* 9. 17. 6).

This demonstrated a variation on the type of decree discussed previously, and possibly represents the reaction to a gradual increase in intra-pomerial burials. Though this particular source dates to the period in which pomeria are generally ignored or forgotten (late antiquity), the similar descriptions of the space of the city in the earlier imperial legislation and the late antique example presents an interesting continuity; the prohibition of urns and sarcophagi in the city is intended to preserve the “sanctity” of the citizens’ homes, as the decree recorded by Paulus is intended to preserve the “sacred” places in Rome.³³ The motivation behind the ban on burials in these two sources appears to be preventing sacred space (be it the area inside the *pomerium*, or the home) from religious pollution by a dead body, and so the *pomerium* or city boundary once more functioned as the division between conceptual spheres, in this case, between the living and the dead.³⁴ This similarity of content can also be seen in the final reference to the burial boundary from the chosen chronology. Originally dated to AD 290, this passage was preserved and reiterated in the sixth-century *Codex Iustinianus*:

The same Emperors to Victorinus. In order that the right of a municipality may be kept sacred, it has long been forbidden to bury the remains of dead persons within its limits (*Cod. Iust.* 3. 44. 12).³⁵

The *Codex Iustinianus* (contained within the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*) was issued by the Roman imperial court in Constantinople under Justinian I, at which time the

³³ In fact, the prohibition of intra-pomerial/intra-urban burial was not officially ended until the ninth century AD, during the reign of the emperor Leo VI, as documented in his *Novellae*. Costambeys, 2001; Lindsay, 2002: 170.

³⁴ *Pomerium* in the republic and imperial periods, city boundary in late antiquity.

³⁵ Translation by Blume, *et al.* 2016.

inclusion of Rome and Italy in the surviving Roman Empire fluctuated.³⁶ While this may have affected the way this legislation was implemented in Rome (a delay of up to two decades from its initial compilation has been suggested)³⁷ - the late repetition of the burial restriction is a demonstration of its remarkable survival and continuing relevance in the last vestiges of the western Roman Empire, a millennium after the earliest known record in the XII Tables. Even the given reason remains unchanged (preserving the sanctity of the city). In the fifth century the rise of intramural burial left this restriction obsolete in much of the empire and especially in the west, but the last repetition of the rule even as the process of change was occurring highlights the deep conceptual foundation for the *pomerium* and its lasting meaning in the cities of the late antique Mediterranean.

4.1.5 Summary: the *pomerium* as a funerary boundary

Examining the effect of the *pomerium* on funerary activity and burial topography in Rome can be a difficult task, given the inconsistent and sometimes sparse nature of the surviving evidence. That the sacred boundary was closely tied to restrictions on burial, however, can be easily proven with a glance at any Roman road leading out of the city, and the tombs and grave markers that line its route.

The connection between the *pomerium* and Rome's burial restrictions has been set out, alongside a discussion of how the boundary was maintained and the reasons for its existence. There is at times a degree of confusion in the texts, for example with the association between the *pomerium* and a wall or set of *cippi* at different times.³⁸ Similarly, a lack of precision is evident in certain passages. Nevertheless, it is possible to anticipate how the regulations associated with the

³⁶ Radding, *et al.* 2007: 35.

³⁷ Radding, *et al.* 2007: 36.

³⁸ See chapter two.

city's sacred boundary may have been interpreted 'on the ground' by inhabitants with a working knowledge of the city's periphery. The remarkable continuity of practice has been noted, alongside the continued issuing of burial restrictions into late antiquity and the implications of this for reading the intentions of the state and their efforts to maintain the sacred spaces of Rome.

It is clear from surviving archaeological evidence that in the republic and imperial periods funerary activity was predominantly located in the periphery of Rome, the liminal spaces outside the *pomerium*, and the departure from this trend seen in late antiquity thus raises interesting questions as to the changed meaning of the late antique city boundary.

4.2 Intramural burial between the fifth and seventh centuries AD³⁹

As discussed previously, for centuries prior to late antiquity the inhabitants of Rome had, like those of many other Mediterranean cities, buried or cremated their dead outside the city limits.⁴⁰ Rome's most prominent city boundary prior to late antiquity was the *pomerium*, the sacred or ritual boundary, and for much of the republican and imperial periods, it was this line that formally separated the living from the dead. The prohibition of urban burial was enshrined in Roman law and appears in various legal texts from the first century BC until the Justinianic Code in late antiquity; the law was finally repealed in the ninth century under the instruction of Emperor Leo VI (886-912).⁴¹

³⁹ In this section, burials located inside the Aurelian Wall will be discussed as *intra-mural*. Any burials located within the city boundary but dating to the period before the wall's construction will be referred to as *intra-pomerial*.

⁴⁰ See earlier in the current chapter. For introductory discussion on Etruscan extra-urban cemeteries, see Barker & Rasmussen, 1998 or Toynbee, 1971; on Greek extra-mural burial topography, see Morris, 1989 (archaic, especially the Kerameikos) or Kurtz & Boardman, 1971 (hellenistic).

⁴¹ Burial legislation, sample: *CIL* 6.40885; *Cic. De Leg.* 2.23.58; *CIL* 2.5.439; *Ulp. Dig.* 47.12.3.5; *Cod. Theod.* 9.17.6; *Cod. Iust.* 3.44.12. On the final repeal of the law: Leo VI, *Novellae ad Calcem Cod. Iust.* LIII; Costambeys, 2001: 171; Lambert, 1997: 285-93.

The 'exclusion' area delineated by the *pomerium* reached its greatest extent in the late third century (c. AD 274), when, as documented by the *Historia Augusta*, the sacred boundary was extended to the line of the newly-constructed Aurelian wall (*Vit. Aur.* 21. 9).⁴² Though there is some debate around the instigator of this change, the suggestion that the Aurelian wall marked the funerary boundary of Rome at the end of the third century or shortly thereafter is tentatively supported by archaeological evidence. Existing cemeteries inside the *Porta Flaminia* and *Porta Salaria* and the stretch of funerary ground between the *Portae Tiburtina* and *Praeneste-Labicana* fell out of use in the period after the building of the wall, as did the burial grounds around *Porta Ardeatina* and the stretch of the *via Appia* that was enclosed within the wall's circuit.⁴³ Certain sites in the city may erroneously challenge this narrative, such as cemeteries located inside the third-century enceinte that may have in fact been closed long before the wall's construction, an example of which is the *via Salaria* necropolis. Though this site was located inside the Aurelian Wall it significantly pre-dated the construction of the fortification and is unlikely to have been in use in the late third century. It appears to have been closed more than a century earlier as a result of the direct imperial intervention of Trajan.⁴⁴ So too, the burials clustering around the *Porta Maggiore* appear, at least superficially, to demonstrate evidence of continued funerary activity within the city's burial boundary from the Claudian period into the third and possibly early fourth century, although several questions

⁴²Dey, 2011: 209.

⁴³Sceptics of Aurelian as the extender of the *pomerium* on the basis of the reliability of the *Historia Augusta*: Syme, 1978: 222; Mommsen. Aurelian's extension is omitted from Galsterer, 2001: 86-7, as are those of Nero and Trajan. Good discussion of this debate can be found in Dmitriev, 2004. On archaeological evidence to support the third-century extension: Bodel, 2014: 180-181; Dey, 2011: 211; Patterson, 2000: 96; Lanciani, 1880: 51-2. For refutation, Coates-Stephens, 2004: 61. Further discussion can be found earlier in the thesis and will not be repeated here, but it is relevant to note that this thesis is based on the view that the *pomerium* was extended to the line of the Aurelian Wall either by its eponymous emperor as documented by the *Vita Aureliani*, or shortly thereafter, and certainly by the beginning of the fourth century.

⁴⁴Bodel, 2014: 181.

remain to be conclusively answered about the dating of such graves, an example of which is the much-debated and recently restored Hypogeum of the Aurelii on viale Manzoni.⁴⁵ The initial mausoleum was, without doubt, cut in the first half of the third century AD, but the exact date of the tomb extensions are as yet unknown. It may be that the south extension dates to the second half of the third century, while the date of the other extension is unknown (and is likely to remain so until a study can be completed on any small finds from the site). The later dating for these tomb extensions (mid-late third century AD) would suggest at least the intention to continue funerary activity inside the walls. It is certainly possible that burial customs were permitted for families who owned pre-existing tombs located inside the Aurelian Wall, even after the pomerial line and the burial restrictions were extended in the late third century, though this is a subject for another research project.

These uncertainties aside, what is clear from surviving evidence is that from the mid-fifth century burials began to appear inside the city walls with increasing frequency – burials which, according to contemporary legislative and religious restrictions, contravened Roman law and centuries of established funerary practice. I am wary that the trend should not be overstated: the early decades of the phenomenon, between the mid-fifth and mid-sixth centuries, demonstrate that those choosing intramural burial over the more established extramural funerary spaces were certainly in the minority, and much of the funerary activity taking place in this period clearly conformed to established practice, i.e. extramural, suburban, or extra-urban cemeteries, catacombs, and individual burials littering the periphery of the city, including the large cemeteries

⁴⁵ For further discussion see Borg, 2013: 249-252 and Bisconti, 2011 & 2004. General discussion of graves inside the Aurelian Wall at *Porta Maggiore* can be found in Coates-Stephens, 2004: 61.

associated with the churches of San Pietro, San Sebastiano, and Santa Domitilla. Indeed, several large extramural cemeteries continued to be in use until at least the late sixth century, including the period after the Gothic War.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, the shift in burial activity – however modest the initial phase – represents a significant change in custom that took place over a relatively short space of time and over a large geographic spread as numerous sites in the late Roman empire (east and west) mirrored the change in practice that took place at Rome.⁴⁷ From the fifth century, intramural burial was an escalating phenomenon; by the seventh it was a firmly entrenched custom, unchallenged in any significant way until the nineteenth century.⁴⁸

There are two reasons why Rome is a particularly significant example of this trend, and thus why the present study has chosen to focus on it rather than another representative example from the later western empire: firstly, its extraordinary size. The footprint of the city of Rome, even in late antiquity as its population decreased, marked it out as unusual – trends visible in other cities on smaller scales are magnified there, and for this reason it is a useful choice for the present study.⁴⁹ Secondly, and connected to the first reason, the sheer size of the city and its subsequent long history as a place of intense archaeological investigation means that there is a large amount of recorded burials and epigraphy from a wide variety of contexts across the urban space – this significant collection of archaeological reporting and archival material provides a rich and

⁴⁶ Morris, 1992: 172.

⁴⁷ For general discussion see Morris, 1992: 172-3; for a small sample of the numerous specific examples that have been studied in recent decades, see: Achim, 2014 on Moesia Inferior/Scythia Minor; Ivison, 1996 on Corinth; Pearce, 2011 briefly on Britain (specifically, Gloucester); Stevens, 1996 on Carthage; Kulikowski, 2006: 141 on Spain; Pani Ermini, 1999; and Brogiolo, 2001 on sites in Italy.

⁴⁸ Dey, 2011: 219.

⁴⁹ For Rome's population, see Witcher, 2005; Kron, 2005; on Rome's Christian population in late antiquity see Bodel, 2008: 183; Hopkins, 1998; and on mortality rates see Bodel, 2000.

diverse corpus for study. That said, it should not be forgotten that this is a phenomenon more widespread than the limits of Rome and its immediate periphery, and any interpretation of the selected evidence must take this into account.

4.2.1 The evidence

Most of the archaeological evidence from Rome used in this chapter is taken from Roberto Meneghini and Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani's catalogue of intramural burials from Rome that date to between the fifth and seventh centuries AD, compiled in the 1990s.⁵⁰ The catalogue is comprised of records of 74 locations all within the Aurelian Wall, excavated and recorded since the medieval period, each containing between one and one hundred and twenty individual inhumations. The catalogue has been compiled using a combination of archival material, excavation records, and epigraphy. The information provided by the catalogue is minimal and, in places, requires reassessment (particularly the dating of certain burials); it is also somewhat outdated – excavations since the mid-1990s that have uncovered late antique intramural burials are obviously not included, such as those found in the area of the *Templum Pacis*.⁵¹ However, the data included in the two publications is sufficient for the present discussion, and there is neither adequate space nor pressing need to re-evaluate or add to the catalogue in this thesis. Any concerns about the data that may affect the conclusions of the thesis will be noted. The data from Rome can be divided into three broad categories of burial:⁵²

⁵⁰ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 89-111; 1995: 283-290; with further discussion of the material in 2000; cf. Cantino Wataghin, 1999: 158-9. See Appendix B for a reproduction of the full catalogue (with minor alterations) and source materials.

⁵¹ Capponi & Ghilardi, 2002.

⁵² Fifth to seventh century only - not including intramural burials dating to before the fifth century AD which did undoubtedly occur, but in a sporadic (and illegal) manner, in spite of the prohibition.

1. *Isolated or small group burials.* These are the earliest type of intramural burial attested in the archaeological record (appearing from the second quarter to the mid-fifth century and continuing into the seventh), and can be found not just at Rome, but elsewhere in late antique Italy, including: Ostia, Porto, Verona, Lucca, Reggio Emilia, Bergamo, Piacenza, Parma, and Aquileia. Such burials were typically located in formerly built-up areas in buildings that were used occasionally in a funerary capacity but not continuously (such as bath houses or porticoes), and which did not later develop into full cemeteries. The fifth-century examples of this type can also be found in more remote open spaces, along roadsides, and in areas of high traffic. This kind of burial has a wide distribution pattern and is found throughout the urban environment, with the only notable difference in location choice taking place between the fifth and late sixth century. This type of burial can be categorised as sporadic funerary activity, rather than consistent, or organised. An example of this type of burial from Rome (found in the catalogue) is *Sito N. 13, Via Varese*: this site yielded one solo *a cappuccina* burial on the road inside the section of the Aurelian Wall that contains the remains of the *Castra Praetoria*.⁵³ It is unlikely to have been linked to any organised cemetery or cult building owing to a lack of associated burials or nearby funerary activity. There is no known church in the immediate vicinity.

2. *Burials in cemeteries that show signs of internal organisation.* These sites were in use for a lengthy period of time and, while not generally dated to as early as the isolated burials, began to appear in the mid-sixth century, becoming relatively common in the later sixth and seventh. It was during this

See chapter one for more discussion of intraurban burials in Rome which date to the period prior to the building of the Aurelian Wall. Cantino Wataghin, 1999: 158.

⁵³ Sito N. 13, Via Varese. Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 99.

time that such cemeteries grew in size, especially in Rome. These cemeteries were not initially connected to church buildings, although in some cases churches were constructed on the sites at later dates. Certain examples show signs of being abandoned in the seventh century, perhaps in favour of those cemeteries associated with the larger intramural churches. The relatively large cemetery found under the *Piazza del Colosseo* on the *via di S. Giovanni* is a good example of this type; a necropolis not associated with any known church but which was found to contain 71 graves, 28 of which date to between the sixth and seventh centuries (after which funerary activity in the area declined sharply and eventually ceased entirely). Many of these graves were the *cappuccina* type with at least two found *in muratura*.⁵⁴

3. *Burials in cult buildings*. This category is dominated by clusters of burials found in urban episcopal churches from the late fifth century onwards. Such burials are largely attested through associated epigraphy that remained in situ, often after the remains of the deceased were removed. For example, the cemetery containing upwards of 120 individuals found under the paving of the oratory at S. Saba in the south of the city, additionally evidenced by epitaphs and graffiti.⁵⁵

The distribution map (fig. 4.4) produced as a part of the catalogue demonstrates the absence of any discernible geographic deposition pattern, even when grouping sites by burial type or date. The irregular spacing and clustering of burial sites does however reflect the date-specific typologies outlined in the three burial site types. Assessing the kinds of burial found and attempting to extrapolate approximate status groups from grave type is problematic in the common

⁵⁴ Sito N. 6, Piazza del Colosseo, via di S. Giovanni. Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 98.

⁵⁵ Sito N. 45, S. Saba. Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 103.

absence of grave goods, nevertheless some broad categories can tentatively be discerned: less affluent burials (but not the poorest, who were likely unable to afford burial of any kind and are thus not represented in this data set) took the form of rough *fossa* graves with limited (if any) reused materials as coverings or linings. Many families could afford to provide a *cappuccina* burials for the deceased – these were incredibly common, largely inexpensive and not especially resource-intensive, constructed of simple tiles and often found in the same isolated spaces as the *fossa* graves. Burials found in more privileged locations, close to churches or in established cemeteries, were occasionally decorated with grave goods and took the form of slightly more affluent *fossa* or a *cappuccina* type graves, occasionally found *in muratura*. Wealthy graves are mostly evidenced by surviving epigraphy, located inside or close to churches, or in expensive reused sarcophagus tombs. While there is some differentiation to be found in the late antique intramural burial types, it should be noted that the wealthier types are found exclusively from the sixth century onwards.

4.2.2 Problems with the evidence

There are myriad problems that arise when working with evidence of this kind. Much of the archaeological work undertaken in Rome since the mid- to late nineteenth century has been ‘rescue’ archaeology, that is, as the result of either the construction or removal of buildings.⁵⁶ This has resulted in a specific issue that affects all kinds of archaeological exploration, but which has a particularly problematic effect on studies of burial topography: how can an archaeologist be sure that they have discovered or uncovered an entire site (or assemblage or cemetery)? Is it possible to know if the body/two bodies/three bodies (and so on)

⁵⁶ For the extent of work undertaken between 1872 and 1885, Lanciani, 1889: ix.

are the total number of inhumations on that particular site, or if they are indicative of a larger cemetery? With little money or space to excavate or survey further, knowledge about the extent of potential burial sites in Rome is patchy and limited. In addition, it has been the case that excavation reports for sites of this kind have, in Rome, been fairly lax when recording data such as stratigraphy, precise contexts, and associated small finds. In the absence of grave goods (which is often to be expected in Christian burials), almost no dateable evidence exists to conclusively place a burial in its chronological context. Prior to the nineteenth century there was little interest in documenting or even preserving late antique burials as they were excavated, in spite of a well-established interest in Christian relics and funerary activities (i.e. the extramural catacombs) at Rome.⁵⁷ This only truly began to change during the extensive construction and subsequent archaeological work undertaken in the city as part of the *Risorgimento*. Archaeologists such as Giovanni Battista de Rossi and Rodolfo Lanciani, and publications such as the *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichita* and the *Bulletino della Commissione archeologica comunale di Roma* were invaluable communicators of the discovery of such burials, and often remain our only evidence for those sites that have long since been destroyed or covered over.⁵⁸ So, while some of the evidence we have is fairly informative (such as church burials with surviving detailed inscriptions), there are examples which are highly problematic (for example, isolated burials with no grave goods and poor excavations records), thus further muddying the water of an already complicated issue.

Additional problems with studies of this nature include the dangerous but tempting inclination to treat evidence as representative of a single group, simply

⁵⁷ It should be noted that even the catacombs attracted little attention from archaeologists prior to the 1860s. Bowes, 2008a: 582-6.

⁵⁸ For example, de Rossi, 1863; 1864-77; Lanciani, 1897; 1876-1913.

because there is so little data available.⁵⁹ It is important then, during the course of this chapter, to continue asking the questions raised by Ian Morris in his *Death Ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity* and Marios Costambeys in his 2002 essay, to ensure the most methodologically-sound approach: Are we dealing with a single phase of varied burials or several phases of homogenous burials?⁶⁰ When it comes to burial evidence, can we generalise?⁶¹ In cases of notable variation in burial data, is it the result of more intense study of this period and this place, or is it a true representation of urban trends departing from established tradition?⁶² The imperial regulations and boundaries designed to control burial were an imperfect system, and there had always been, to some degree, illegal intramural burial at Rome. How much is our interpretation of the funerary landscape in late antiquity distorted by our focus on these burials as exceptional? All of these questions will be returned to (in some cases, repeatedly) in course of this discussion.

In the case of late antique Rome and its complicated funerary landscape, there are a few important details that must be established at the outset in an attempt to counter such pitfalls. They are as follows: Firstly, the 74 burial sites identified by Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani represent the absolute minimum number of intramural burials in Rome that have been documented by modern archaeological investigation, not the total number of late antique intramural burials at Rome.⁶³ It is crucial that any analysis of this issue must be based on the primary assumption that this was a much more widespread practice than current evidence shows, given the patchy nature of excavation and

⁵⁹ Morris, 1992: 12.

⁶⁰ Morris, 1992: 25, 26 & 33.

⁶¹ Costambeys, 2002: 721.

⁶² Costambeys, 2002: 721.

⁶³ Costambeys, 2002: 723; Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 105.

recording practices. Secondly, it has been noted that the evidence demonstrates a strong preference for deposition in two types of intramural location: large public buildings especially porticoes and bath houses such as the *porticus Liviae* and the imperial baths of Caracalla, Decius, and Diocletian (although this may be investigative bias, given that such buildings have been more extensively studied in the modern era), and churches (both under the paving inside and in the immediate surrounding area).⁶⁴ And finally, all of the known, organised intramural cemeteries (not isolated or small group sites) date to the sixth century or later - there are none that can be conclusively dated to the fifth - and it is in these cemeteries alone that high status, intramural graves have been identified.⁶⁵ From this then, the present research can begin with the understanding that the shift in burials from extra- to intra-mural locations was a phenomenon led by the urban poor. It can be recognised immediately that the earliest wave of burials clustered in large abandoned or repurposed public or civic buildings or on roadsides, but importantly, away from urban churches. It can be ascertained that the early phase of burials (of which we have documented perhaps only a tiny percentage), taking place in the decades between the beginning of the fifth century and the advent of the sixth, saw the very earliest and therefore crucial evidence of a change that was to affect, wholesale, the physical and religious landscape of Rome.

The reasons for this shift have been the subject of much scholarly attention since the 1950s, but no conclusive answer has yet been proposed, nor has there been adequate discussion of the implications of this phenomenon on the spatial understanding of the city in late antiquity. The research question is simple: what

⁶⁴ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993; 1995; 2000: 263; Costambeys, 2002: 723.

⁶⁵ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993; 1995; 2000: 263-264; Costambeys, 2002: 723. Sites from the catalogue that contain ten or more burials and are also found in close proximity to a church: 5 (SS. Quattro Coronati), 11 (S. Eusebio), 23 (S. Susanna), 29 (S. Maria Antiqua), 45 (S. Saba), 64 (S. Bibiana), 74 (S. Gregorio Magno). Costambeys, 2001: 173.

was the reason for the change in burial pattern in Rome between the fifth and seventh centuries, and can the current interpretations be improved upon? This section will first examine existing interpretations, and then propose a new approach to studying this topic.

4.2.3 Interpretations, 1952-2011

This section will discuss the dominant interpretations of late antique burial topography proposed since the early 1950s. It will be followed by the proposal of a new approach, the intention of which is to steer the discussion in a different direction, more focussed on the broader material context than has previously been the case.

Burial *ad sanctos* and the changing arena of elite competition

In the nineteenth century, the famous Italian archaeologists Carlo Fea and (later) Giovanni Battista De Rossi noted separately that burials from approximately the sixth century had been discovered inside the city walls, in the areas of the *Castro Pretorio*, the Basilica of Maxentius in the Forum, and the Esquiline.⁶⁶ The depositions attracted little further attention from the contemporary archaeological field, with the limited discussion focussing on the possibility that these were privileged burials placed at sacred, desired grave locations. It was not until the notable interventions in this field by scholars Ejnar Dyggve and Philippe Ariés in the twentieth century that particular attention was paid to this type of evidence, and that it was marked out as a significant and fertile field for discussion. Because of this, the contributions of the latter two scholars have become the foundational literature upon which many subsequent interpretations have been based or whence they take their starting point. To summarise, it was proposed by Dyggve

⁶⁶ Fea, 1821; De Rossi, 1864-67: 557; Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 89.

in an article from the early 1950s and again by Ariès in his landmark publication *L'homme devant la mort* in the late 1970s (translated into English in the early 1980s) that the reason for the appearance of these sixth (and fifth) century graves, and the noted rise in urban burials in late antiquity was rooted in the desire to be buried *ad sanctos* or close to the saints, and thus it was the movement of relics from extra-urban churches into urban ones in late antiquity that prompted the change in burial custom.⁶⁷

Burial close to the bones of the martyrs was both in late antiquity and the medieval period a status symbol and seen as 'safer' - the protective power of the martyr was written about in antiquity by Augustine of Hippo and Gregory of Nyssa, and later the benefits of church burial can be found documented in the writings of Gregory the Great.⁶⁸ It was, by the Christian community at least, deemed desirable.⁶⁹ It has been suggested that as a result of this belief, the arena for elite competition shifted in this period, and high status graves began to be marked out not by their elaborate decoration as in previous centuries, but by their privileged location near to the martyr. This reading of the material and literary evidence as a changing preference in types of display complements another well-documented phenomenon that appears in late antique Rome, that is, the decreasing frequency of inscriptions and elaborate inscribed grave markers, commonly termed the 'epigraphic habit'.⁷⁰

Burial *ad sanctos* was a well-documented phenomenon in this period at the extramural funerary complexes that included the large Christian necropoleis

⁶⁷ Dyggve, 1952: 150, Ariès, 1977; 1981: 36.

⁶⁸ For both sides of the debate, see August, *Retract.* 2.64; on the miracles that took place at the graves of martyrs, Gregory the Great, *Dialog.* 1.4, 3.19, 22; Gregory of Nyssa buried his parents at the shrine to the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste, *In XL Martyres* 2.

⁶⁹ Dyggve, 1952: 150-1.

⁷⁰ MacMullen, 1982; Morris, 1992: 170.

and catacombs that encircled the city, such as those found at the *Basilica di San Pietro* on the Vatican Hill, or the sprawling subterranean complexes found at the churches of *San Sebastiano* and *Santa Domitilla*, to name but two.⁷¹ Burial *ad sanctos* can also be convincingly attested in churches located inside the walls of Rome in the Early Medieval Period, and a glance at any major church or cathedral in Rome today easily confirms that burials did, indeed, then and since, cluster in and around buildings which held the relics of the faithful.

The fact that burial *ad sanctos* has, in the past, taken place at Rome's Christian basilicas, both intra- and extra-mural, is not an issue for debate. Instead, the major flaw in the argument is its poor chronology: the first mass movement of relics from the catacombs and periphery of Rome into the city did not take place until the mid-eighth century under Pope Paul I (757-767), and the tradition did not reach its zenith until even later under Paschal I in the ninth century (*LP*, 95. 4).⁷² There are rare examples of relics being placed or brought into intramural churches prior to the eighth century, for example, at the late fourth century basilica of *San Giovanni e Paolo* on the Caelian Hill, and at the fifth century church of *Santa Bibiana* in the area previously known as the *Horti Liciniani*, but they are few and thus cannot adequately account for the widespread phenomenon of intramural burial. This is especially true when considering that graves found inside the city that have been dated to the fifth and sixth centuries did not cluster exclusively around relic-holding churches but were distributed far more randomly throughout the urban space, which suggests the link between relic and grave did not exist as strongly at that time as it can be attested later (*LP*,

⁷¹ On the churches: Krautheimer, *et al.* 1937-77: 5.165-279 (San Pietro); 4.99-147 (San Sebastiano). For the cemeteries and catacombs: Focchi Nicolai *et al.* 2009; Borg, 2013.

⁷² Osborne, 1984: 295; Birch, 2000: 100-2; Costambeys, 2002: 722.

49. 1).⁷³ Other factors must be at play here, to account for the widespread distribution pattern of burials (fig. 4.4). By the mid-eighth century intramural burial was an established pattern in Rome, Constantinople, and the provincial cities of the empire and had been the funerary norm for over a century, replacing more established deposition trends and leading to the eventual closure or abandonment of the catacombs and the extramural cemeteries altogether. This problematic interpretation is additionally defined by its Rome-‘centrism’: it proves an unworkable model for cities and smaller towns who demonstrate the intramural burial trend but whose collections of relics were small or even non-existent. In fact there were even numerous churches in Rome that likely held no relics at all in this period, but have been associated with numerous burials, for example Santa Cecilia in Trastevere was not a relic-holding church until the ninth century, but is associated with several burials dating from the sixth and seventh centuries.⁷⁴ Conversely, there are burial sites of significant size in Rome that are associated with no church or cult building, such as the considerable number of graves found in the Piazza del Colosseo.⁷⁵ It is far more likely that the movement of relics into Rome was at least partially instigated by the Christian authorities at the time because of the strong presence of urban burials in the city in the eighth century, not the reverse. The precedent established by the intramural cemeteries enabled relics to be brought into the intramural churches without objection. Burials did not follow the relics, the relics followed the graves.

⁷³ Costambeys, 2002: 724. According to tradition, the fifth century church of Santa Bibiana may lie on the site of an earlier chapel to the saint, although this has not been confirmed.

⁷⁴ *Sito* 59, Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 102; Birch, 2000: 101.

⁷⁵ *Sito* 6, Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 98.

Social trauma and the inaccessibility of extramural funerary spaces

The second influential argument has taken a primarily historical approach. It was initially proposed by John Osborne in response to Dyggve, and has since been echoed by Capponi and Ghilardi in their interpretation of the graves discovered in the area of the *Templum Pacis*; Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani's own work on the catalogue of known intramural burials introduced above (which has touched on many of the theories presented in this chapter); and most recently, by Dey in his monograph on the Aurelian Wall.⁷⁶ It was, broadly speaking, that 'social trauma' and its repercussions in the period between the first half of the fifth century and the mid to late sixth century AD was the cause of the growth in intramural burial.⁷⁷ 'Social trauma' should be understood in Osborne's initial interpretation to be limited to the conflict known as the 'Gothic War' which took place in the mid-sixth century and which culminated in the brutal sack of Rome led by Totila and the Ostrogoths in AD 546 (with some intermittent conflict continuing until 552).⁷⁸ It has, in publications since Osborne's, often been extended chronologically backwards to the beginning of the fifth century, in order to include both the AD 408 – 410 siege and sack of Rome by Alaric and the Visigoths and the AD 455 sack by the North African Vandals under Genseric, which has been used to explain those problematic intramural burials that predate the sixth century.⁷⁹

Osborne stated that between the last known burial in a catacomb and the first datable burial inside the Aurelian Wall, Rome experienced a period of violent

⁷⁶ Osborne, 1984; Capponi & Ghilardi, 2002: 746; Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, repeatedly in 1993, 1995, 2000 & 2004; Dey, 2011: 218.

⁷⁷ Osborne, 1984: 296.

⁷⁸ Osborne, 1984: 296; Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 91.

⁷⁹ Especially in Dey, 2011; 218-19. See Appendix B for catalogue records of fifth century burials. Also Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1995: 288.

conflict during which both the physical state of the city and its population suffered immensely, with estimated figures for the latter dropping from the hundreds of thousands to the tens of thousands in around a century.⁸⁰ The last known burial in a catacomb is listed by Osborne with a date of AD 535 and was found in the *Catacomba S. Sebastiano*, originally documented in 1908, but it is unclear which burial Osborne is referring to as the first within the Aurelian Wall, or if this is simply assumed to be a late third century grave (in the absence of a specific archaeological example).⁸¹

Zosimus was the first to record the inaccessibility of Rome's extra-urban cemeteries during Alaric's siege of Rome in the early fifth century:

Corpses lay everywhere, and since the bodies could not be buried outside the city with the enemy guarding every exit, the city became their tomb (Zosimus, 5. 40. 2-3).⁸²

A similar account can be found later, written by Procopius and noting not just the inaccessibility, but the subsequent ransacking of extra-urban cemeteries during the Gothic War. According to his account, it seems the repeated sieging of Rome left sub- or extra-urban cemeteries (i.e. those outside the relative safety of the Aurelian Wall) completely unreachable for long periods of time.

...they [the inhabitants of Rome] began to be distressed by their inability to bathe and the scarcity of provisions, and found themselves obliged to forgo sleep in guarding the circuit-wall [...] at the same time, they saw the enemy plundering their fields and other possessions... (Procop. Goth. 5. 20. 5.)

...as for the Romans, some already lie in death, and it has not been their portion to be hidden in the earth, and we who survive, to put all our terrible

⁸⁰ Osborne, 1984: 296. For population, see Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 90.

⁸¹ Osborne, 1984: 296. For the original publication of the AD 535 burial, see Colagrossi, 1909: 58.

⁸² Translation by Ridley, 1990: 120.

misfortunes in a word, only pray to be placed beside those who lie thus (Procop. Goth. 6. 3. 19).

It is primarily these three passages that have formed the basis of all iterations of this interpretation.⁸³ There is no need to express doubt about the general point made by both Zosimus and Procopius (although some issue may be taken with the specifics); between the early decades of the fifth century and the end of the sixth, Rome's population was indeed devastated by violence, famine, and disease, and it is perfectly plausible that burying the dead according to tradition became an insurmountable problem, especially during the prolonged sieges of the Gothic War.⁸⁴ The need for the inhabitants of the city to find a solution to this problem, coupled with a suggested increase in the amount of available space inside the city due to the high death toll meant that for the first time in over 800 years, it was at least feasible for mass burial to take place inside the city boundary of Rome.⁸⁵ As for the longevity of the practice and its endurance after the darkest days of the sixth century, it is possible that the perceived 'risk' of burying outside the walls even after the conflicts were over could have resulted in the survival of the practice into the medieval period and beyond.⁸⁶

This is a neat and thus popular theory, but it is myopic. The fifth and sixth centuries were undoubtedly scarred by traumatic events both in Rome and elsewhere, but there is little evidence beyond the literature to suggest that mass, widespread intramural burial began and, importantly, stuck as the dominant burial custom as a result of these events. Refutation of this theory can be made in two important points:

⁸³ For the other supporting evidence provided by Osborne, 1984: 297; fn.19-22.

⁸⁴ Lançon, 2000:14, 37.

⁸⁵ Osborne, 1984: 297.

⁸⁶ A suggestion made by John Bodell in conversation, one that remains unpublished but is nevertheless worth addressing.

Firstly, the sieges and sacks of Rome cannot realistically be considered the catalyst for intramural burial beyond its immediate periphery, and to attribute to these events the rapid appearance of such a vastly widespread phenomenon at sites spread far across the territory of the late Roman Empire would be to simplify a complex and multi-faceted social change. Such sites found throughout the late Roman Empire – from Gloucester in Britain to the Balkans, Greece, Constantinople, Spain and even post-Roman Carthage – demonstrate that between the fourth and sixth centuries, burials increasingly encroached on urban spaces inside the city boundary that had previously been off-limits, and that this phenomenon was most certainly not unique to Rome.⁸⁷ Though some areas also experienced conflict in the tumultuous fifth century, few experienced the same degree of concentrated disturbance as Rome.⁸⁸ How then are we to explain the closely contemporary appearance of intramural burials across the empire, especially in places that experienced comparatively little ‘social trauma’? Some cities demonstrate the intramural burial trend as early as the fourth century, predating both the evidence from Rome and the earliest traumatic event: the AD 408-10 siege and sack.⁸⁹ For an interpretation of the intramural burial habit to be convincing, it cannot simply apply to Rome. Though each city and town that demonstrates the trend will undoubtedly be subject to different pressures and environments, the outcome is the same: burials moved inside city boundaries, *en masse*, on the same timeline. Thus it would be impossible to believe that the catalyst for such a movement in the fourth century Danube region, or in Corinth,

⁸⁷ Pearce, 2011 (Britain); Achim, 2014 (Balkans/Danube region); Ivison, 1996 (Greece); Poulou-Papadimitriou, *et al.* 2012 (Greece); Snively, 2006 (Constantinople); Kulikowski, 2006 (Spain); Stevens, 1996 (North Africa).

⁸⁸ For a general discussion of the conflicts that befell some cities in the late Roman Empire, see Cameron, 2012; cf. Liebeschuetz, 2015.

⁸⁹ In the Danube region, for example, clusters of burials found in abandoned bath complexes: Achim, 2014: 328.

was the sack of Rome that took place in the fifth century. It is my belief that there was a wider set of pressures at play in the appearance of this phenomenon, pressures that connected these disparate places, for they were too consistently similar in development to be the product of coincidence. This will be discussed further later in the chapter.

Secondly, chronologically at the very least, the 'social trauma' theory is unsound when considering the archaeological evidence alongside the passages quoted above. Examination of the recorded late antique intramural burials at Rome brings to light numerous sites that date to the fifth and sixth centuries, and from which it can be clearly ascertained that there was at least some form of burial activity inside the city boundary throughout this period of time, with an increase in activity in the sixth century as the establishment of intramural cemeteries began to gain momentum.⁹⁰ This is the base conclusion that can be made at present from the information provided. At face value, this could strengthen the argument that the fifth century sacks of Rome and the sixth century Gothic Wars were the reason behind the growth of the urban burial habit, but a closer look would suggest that in fact it may simply be the case that there is insufficient evidence to prove this, and that correlation does not necessarily mean causation.

One of the major issues with the burial catalogue as it currently stands is the lack of specific information provided on the dating of burial sites, often because such information was not provided in the original excavation notes.⁹¹ This has led to methodological inconsistencies for Meneghini and Santangeli

⁹⁰ See Appendix B for a reproduction of the full burial catalogue.

⁹¹ I believe it would be possible to re-visit many of the catalogue entries in the future, with a view to establishing closer date ranges for a large proportion of the sites. This could be done through the use of contextual evidence, subsequent archaeological reports, and additional archival and archaeological/stratigraphic (where possible) material.

Valenzani in their analysis of the evidence and the construction of their interpretation. Unlike later interpretations, such as Hendrik Dey's, the original publication of the catalogue and accompanying notes contained a clear dismissal of the fifth century burials on the basis that they comprised too small a percentage of the overall number of sites to be significant.⁹² Of the small proportion that were deemed legitimate fifth century burials, all conformed to the type of chaotic deposition expected in both organisation and location, and thus were classed as evidence of "*momenti di emergenza, quali assedi o pestilenza.*"⁹³ This was used as justification for focusing on the sixth century burials as the only true evidence of the intramural burial habit proper, with the earlier graves depicted as anomalies while the Gothic War was presented as the driving factor behind the appearance of the phenomenon. I will discuss why the overlooked fifth century burials are significant later in this chapter, but for the present discussion, it is important to note that the primary reason for the dismissal of the fifth century sites (that only four can be verified by modern archaeological investigation (Nos. 3, 6, 46, 63), and the remaining five must therefore be treated with suspicion) was not equally applied to the sixth century sites, many of which demonstrate the same evidential weaknesses as those that precede them chronologically.⁹⁴ This is a significant oversight. Dismissing the fifth century burial sites and focussing on the sixth century sites is, in my opinion, a slight misrepresentation of the evidence, and has led to the acceptance of certain trends when in fact they too are questionable. For example, of the seventy-four burial sites recorded in the mid-1990s, the initial foundation of at least nine is recorded as taking place in the fifth century (Nos. 2, 3, 6, 25, 31, 35, 40, 46, 63), while approximately fourteen appear to have been

⁹² Dey, 2011: 218; Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 103.

⁹³ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 103.

⁹⁴ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 103-4. See Appendix B.

founded in the sixth century (Nos. 7, 10, 23, 29, 32, 34, 41, 44, 45, 49, 71, 72, 73, 74). Seven sites show continued use from the fifth century into the sixth (Nos. 2, 6, 31, 35, 39, 40, 46). Of the fourteen sites founded in the sixth century however, only three (Nos. 7, 72, 73) can be dated precisely enough to show that they were founded during or after the Gothic War, fewer than the number of sites that was dismissed earlier as insignificant for the fifth century evidence.⁹⁵ So, it would appear that the total amount of archaeological evidence that exists to suggest intramural burial began as a result of the disruption caused by the Gothic War is in fact quite small. The remaining sixth century sites can neither prove nor disprove the theory; until further investigation takes place they remain infuriatingly imprecise and we cannot know whether they date to the early, middle or late sixth century (or all of the above). Attempting to prove this theory by using archaeological evidence alone is problematic, but it becomes even more difficult to accept when the material evidence is compared to the literary passages often quoted in support of this interpretation.

It has been established that the two groups of graves are consistent in their separate characteristics: the fifth century burials were all found in the same types of locations (isolated open spaces, or roadsides and areas of high-traffic), and were similar in status (exclusively representing varying groups of the urban poor). Sixth century graves could be found in two types of locations: individual or small group sites found predominantly in large, abandoned, public buildings, and established cemeteries that demonstrate internal organisation. In this period higher status graves began to appear in intramural cemeteries, as extramural funerary activity gradually decreased.⁹⁶ The latter group in particular does not

⁹⁵ Refer to Appendix B for the catalogue reproduction, including any details provided for the dating of sites.

⁹⁶ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 103-4.

demonstrate the characteristic traits associated with emergency burial activity, which I would expect to peak during the Gothic War siege years with numerous highly disorganised depositions and then disappear once peace had been restored in the years that followed (as has been suggested for the fifth century on the basis of little conclusive evidence). In addition, the burial pattern one would expect to find in periods of violent 'trauma' is haphazard and desperate, characterised by hasty depositions and with the utilisation of mass graves. Instead, this is gradual, expected growth, beginning with the opportunistic, but carefully-located burials of the less affluent and progressing to a more organised system of deposition, indicating that control was being exerted over the activity, either by private land-owning individuals or public institutions, such as the Church or state.

Turning to the literary evidence, both Zosimus and Procopius' accounts can only be viewed as significant evidence in favour of the conflicts causing intramural burial if burial activity inside the city was non-existent prior to and in between those times. This is crucial if we are to read the texts as a reflection of the status of intramural burial as the last resort option for the inhabitants of Rome, only to be considered in times of violence, famine, and plague. However, given that there is no evidence to suggest that the burials found inside the walls between the beginning of the fifth and the late sixth century were deposited only during times of crisis, (indeed contradicting evidence appears in the form of large, established intramural cemeteries dating to the late sixth and early seventh centuries, which cannot have been populated instantaneously) it must be assumed that this was not the case.

I propose that both Zosimus and Procopius were referring to a different depositional process entirely; neither author provides explicit evidence that

bodies were actually interred inside the city during these difficult times, only that the corpses themselves were visible owing to the inability to complete proper extramural burial. In these instances, it is not the inaccessibility of funerary spaces that is deemed a tragedy, but the inability to provide the deceased with proper burial according to tradition. We know that at the time of writing (certainly for Procopius, and possibly also for Zosimus) intramural burial was an established option for the poorer inhabitants of the city, while the right to choose higher-status extramural burial was exercised by those of means wherever possible until the late sixth. Thus the bodies mentioned by the texts on display in the city, explicitly unburied, are unlikely to be those of the lower classes who had, by the mid sixth century, been burying their dead inside the city for potentially a century. It is certainly possible that any unburied corpses exposed inside the city were kept so because they were awaiting a chosen burial that was unavailable. Alternatively, the inclusion of these passages in both the writings of Zosimus and Procopius may suggest that the unburied bodies are a literary *topos* designed to stress the seriousness of the situation in Rome. A denial of burial was one of the worst imaginable outcomes in the Roman world (and earlier in the Greek), and as such this image may serve a literary purpose instead of accurately reporting on the events of the sieges (Hor. *Carm.* 1.28.2.10-14).⁹⁷ Unfortunately, neither author returns to the subject to report the eventual fate of these bodies.

It is significant that both texts quoted above suggest not just a reluctance to formally inter the dead inside the walls, but also a continued desire to bury the dead outside the city boundary during this tumultuous period, a desire that can be evidenced archaeologically in burial depositions found *extra muros* that may have even been made throughout both conflicts (although on a reduced scale),

⁹⁷ Lennon, 2012: 48.

and which certainly continued into the late sixth century. Contrary to the evidence presented by Osborne, more recent studies (including those by Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani) have cited epigraphic evidence to suggest that burial in the extramural catacombs continued until at least AD 584, while Morris has added that burial *sub divo* at extramural sites continued until approximately AD 567 and appears to have taken place at a reduced rate even during the siege years.⁹⁸ Both of these practices post-date the end of the Gothic Wars in AD 554-6 quite significantly, with the catacomb burials in particular continuing for roughly a generation after the end of the conflict. It is useful to be wary when considering absolutes such as these: the dating of such burials is based on the inclusion of consular dates found on epitaphs, which is in itself a limited pool of evidence due to the rapid decline of the epigraphic habit in late antiquity. The disappearance of dated epitaphs may not be a reflection of the disappearance of all burials in these places, but rather a symptom of a different process of change altogether. Nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that the old traditions persisted for so many years while also accepting that the Gothic Wars and the inaccessibility of extramural cemeteries were the solo catalysts for the change in burial custom. The evidence does not line up with the proposed narrative.

To summarise, this theory is site-specific and is not applicable to places that demonstrate the burial trend outside of Rome and its immediate periphery. The archaeological evidence used to support the interpretation is not significantly more numerous or detailed than conflicting evidence which has been dismissed, and must therefore be critiqued in the same way. Literary accounts used to further prove the existence of 'emergency burial' as exceptional funerary activity in times of crisis rely on the total cessation of the practice in between conflicts in order to

⁹⁸ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 91; fn.32; Morris, 1992: 172.

be believable, which is not suggested by the archaeological material. In fact, such accounts may refer to a different process altogether, which is supported by archaeological evidence suggesting that the desire and means to practice extramural burial did not disappear until after the Gothic Wars were ended.

As for the sense of external 'risk' that may have contributed to the rapid adoption of the intramural burial habit in the fifth and sixth centuries, no sense of insecurity is visible in the funerary activity outside the walls, even in the period after the Gothic War. Many extramural cemeteries and large cemeterial basilicas continued as places of both elite and non-elite burial up until the end of the sixth century, as previously noted; fifty-seven securely-dated Christian inscriptions have been found in the extramural basilicas and catacombs that post-date the outbreak of the Gothic Wars in AD 535.⁹⁹ Particularly convincing are those elite and wealthy burials found *extra muros* after the end of the Gothic War, a demographic that would, in this argument, be expected to disappear from the archaeological record in perceived 'high-risk' areas outside the city walls where grave sacking had been noted during the earlier sieges of Rome (although this too may be a literary *topos*). Nevertheless, while they are not common (perhaps owing to the increasing appeal of intramural sites, particularly those inside churches in the later sixth century), they are still found. It has been suggested that such activity continued even into the seventh century at certain sites before gradually petering out.¹⁰⁰ Had the threat of looting or tomb desecration been recognised in this period, it is likely that the abandonment of the extramural burial sites would have taken place in the immediate aftermath of the AD 410 sack and certainly before the Gothic Wars, not over a century later. It is significant that the

⁹⁹ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 91.

¹⁰⁰ Dey, 2011: 218.

movement of relics from the extramural catacombs and cemeterial basilicas into the safer spaces of the churches within the Aurelian Wall did not begin until much later, in the mid-eighth and ninth centuries. Morris has highlighted the important fact that those traumatic events of the fifth and sixth centuries did not alter the settlement patterns or the fortifications of Roman towns in the west, and so it is potentially unlikely that something such as burial, which may have been central to an emerging Christian identity, would have been disrupted.¹⁰¹ The importance and essentiality of burial locations and type of burial to the early Christian faith has been debated, and is still very much an unresolved issue. It is possible that the idea of burial as a central tenet of Christianity only gained momentum later, and certainly after the interventions of Damasus or possibly later, given Augustine's reluctance to attach significance to modes of burial when considering resurrection. Nevertheless, it is correct to note that even in the fifth century (and certainly by the sixth), funerary matters were of increasing importance to the developing Church, and attention, resources, and energy were increasingly spent to exert some level of control over them. Though burial was not necessarily essential to early Christian identity, there were certainly efforts made towards creating designated Christian burial spaces (such as organised urban cemeteries around churches) in the sixth century would support the idea that burial was deemed a significant part of the faith. This may not be reflected in the theology, but certainly the importance of burial is evident in the actions of the local clergy 'on the ground'. Efforts were clearly made in this period to organise and control burial, although the motives may not have been entirely faith-based.

The repeated sieging and sacking of Rome in the fifth and sixth centuries was undoubtedly important, and it can be recognised that the conflicts had an

¹⁰¹ Morris, 1992: 172.

influence on the urban environment which in turn had consequences for the burial habit. The most significant contribution made as a result of this interpretation is the suggestion that land became available inside the city as an indirect result of the traumatic fifth century and the Gothic Wars. Whether this came as the result of a high death toll or from migration out of Rome and its troubled *campagna* (both have been suggested) is unknown, and it is likely that both scenarios played a part in the eventual depopulation of the city.

Though the importance of the 'social trauma' crises of the fifth and sixth centuries has undoubtedly been overstated; it is almost certain that such conflicts were dramatic, era-defining, and had serious consequences for the physical city, it is simply impossible that these events alone caused the intramural burial phenomenon. While it can be accepted that the events of the fifth century and the Gothic War acted as environmental stressors and therefore contributed to the appearance of the intramural burial habit, and may indeed have heightened the visibility or accelerated the pace of the rising frequency of such activity, I reject the proposal that it was its main cause, and seriously question the attribution of all fifth century intramural burials to the AD 410 and 455 periods of emergency.

The Church: ghost buildings and bureaucracy

The role played by the early Christian Church in the deliberate organisation of and control over urban burial at Rome had, before the early 2000s, been largely absent from discussion. This was remedied by interpretations put forward primarily by Roberto Meneghini and Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani in a re-evaluation of their earlier publications, and soon after, Marios Costambeys in two influential essays.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 2000: 263-4; Costambeys, 2001: 180, 189; 2002: 725.

Interpretations which prioritise the role of the emerging Christian Church in the control and organisation of intramural burial have often covered two threads of discussion. The first was concerned with status, in a similar vein to the *ad sanctos* argument, and suggested that intramural burial on church property was a sign of status in late antiquity that was often reserved for the clergy and wealthy Christian elite and thus the rise in intramural burial, particularly the group of graves found on church land, can be attributed to the prestige associated with the grave site.¹⁰³ The crucial distinction to note here is the increased scope: instead of identifying the bones of the martyrs as the driving factors in grave site desirability, the physical cult buildings have been ascribed value, irrespective of whether or not they housed relics, simply on the basis that they were buildings of increasing social, religious, and political power. This would potentially explain the proliferation of burials inside the city prior to the mass movement of relics in the ninth century, as numerous churches are known to have existed inside the Aurelian Walls as early as the fourth century, including the basilicas of San Giovanni in Laterano (one of the four Constantinian basilicas in Rome at the beginning of the fourth century, and the only one located inside the city wall), Santa Bibiana, Sant'Eusebio, and San Giovanni e Paolo, amongst others.

As a theoretical model for explaining the choice of burial sites in Rome, this fits nicely alongside the well-documented Roman desire for high-profile burials,¹⁰⁴ simply with a shift in focus to a location increasingly valued by late

¹⁰³ For a general discussion of Christian display through privileged burial spaces rather than elaborate grave markers or painted *aediculae* in catacombs: Morris, 1992: 170 On the high status of church burials driving intramural burial in late antique Rome: Costambeys, 2002: 725; Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 2000: 263. This is also an interpretation that has been adopted for evidence from provincial towns, see discussion in Achim (2014) and Iverson (1996) for Moesia Secunda and Corinth respectively.

¹⁰⁴ On high-status Roman burials: Davies, 2000; Elsner, 1998; Reece, 1977; Toynbee, 1971. For examples of more common elite burials see the extant archaeological remains at the *Isola Sacra* necropolis and the Vatican necropolis, the tombs in the area of the *Porta Romana* and the *Porta Laurentina* at Ostia, and numerous necropoleis outside the city gates of Pompeii. In Rome, the

antique society - the church and its associated (later) consecrated ground. There are certainly areas that reflect this trend, if only superficially:

The church of Santa Bibiana on the Esquiline hill (fig. 4.5) appears to demonstrate this clustering of burials around a privileged Christian site (*Sito* 64 in the catalogue, described as “*una vasta area sepolcrale*”).¹⁰⁵ According to tradition, the *Chiesa di Santa Bibiana* was founded (or finished) in the fifth century by Pope Simplicius on the site of an older *domus* or private chapel, with the papal intervention suggesting the basilica at least was formal church property, if not the surrounding land (*LP*, 49).¹⁰⁶ According to later tradition, it was a possible early relic-bearing church (Santa Bibiana was allegedly martyred in the late fourth century), which would make it perhaps unsurprising that burials have been found in the vicinity of the building which have been dated to approximately the late fifth to early sixth century, according to non-stratigraphic assessment during the original archaeological investigation (1875-1880).¹⁰⁷ The intramural burials in the area surrounding the church of Santa Bibiana fall into three distinct groupings: an unspecified number of amphora burials near the *nymphaeum* of the *Horti Liciniani*, (also known as the so-called ‘Temple to Minerva Medica’); a group of *cappuccina* burials in a nearby abandoned private bath attached to an imperial *domus*; and three sarcophagi outside the church itself (two marble and one terracotta). The inclusion of all these burial sites in the catalogue as a single entry shows that these finds have been interpreted by Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani as connected, representing concentric rings of funerary activity surrounding the church, in which burials took place based on wealth with the most

Pyramid of Cestius, Tomb of Eurysaces, and the Tomb of the Scipios are all surviving examples of status burials in privileged locations close to the city.

¹⁰⁵ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 105; 1995: 284. Refer to Appendix B for full catalogue entry.

¹⁰⁶ De Spirito, 1993-2000a:194-5.

¹⁰⁷ Costambeys, 2001: 179.

financially able families (buried in sarcophagi) occupying the area closest to the church, and the poorest (amphora burials) further away. Santa Bibiana is believed to have been a high-status burial spot for three reasons: it was one of the first wave of churches to be constructed inside the city walls, it had a strong papal connection through Pope Simplicius, and it was (at least in the mid sixth century) believed to have been an early relic-bearing church, although this has since been questioned. Costambeys has expressed doubt about the existence of Santa Bibiana's relics being housed in the church, based on the absence of contemporary texts as confirmation and the late antique *topos* that repeatedly connected family properties to church foundations in the late sixth to eighth centuries.¹⁰⁸ In any case, irrespective of the relics' true location, her body was believed by some to lie in the church by the mid-sixth century, as recorded by the *Liber Pontificalis*, and perhaps also demonstrated by the three sarcophagi outside the walls of the church; Santa Bibiana may indeed be a rare example of intramural *ad sanctos* burial prior to the mid-ninth century (discussed earlier in the chapter), or at the very least a reflection of the belief that such relics existed there (*LP*, 49).

The church of Sant' Eusebio, also on the Esquiline, was similarly surrounded by a substantial cemetery (*Sito* 11), although it is quite certain that this particular church contained no relics in late antiquity.¹⁰⁹ Unlike the church of Santa Bibiana, there was no papal connection with Sant' Eusebio, and its foundation is somewhat unclear: epigraphic evidence dates the church to AD 474, although literary evidence suggests that there was a cult place potentially dedicated to saint Eusebius on the site as early as the first half of the fifth

¹⁰⁸ Costambeys, 2001: 180, esp. fn. 42.

¹⁰⁹ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 99; De Spirito, 1993-2000b: 239-40. Refer to Appendix B for full catalogue entry.

century.¹¹⁰ Burials in the vicinity of this church appear to date to the late fifth or early sixth century, approximately the same time as those found near to Santa Bibiana, dated on the basis of comparative funerary material.¹¹¹ Even in the absence of relics and a strong papal connection, Sant' Eusebio was a titular church and because of this the burials found near to the building have long been associated with it.

The problem with the idea that choice in burial location was motivated by a desire to procure high-status grave sites close to churches is that prestigious intramural burials from this period are not found exclusively near churches (for example, the wealthy sixth century burial of Gemmula in the *Piazza del Colosseo*).¹¹² Some are (such as the sarcophagi at Santa Bibiana), and in these cases it is not impossible to imagine that the lure of a powerful institution such as the Church motivated the particular choice in burial location, but there are enough exceptions to cast doubt on the likelihood that this was the case for all grave choices. The example of Santa Bibiana is misleading: there is no strong evidence beyond general proximity to link the three distinct groups of burials to one other, and the only group that demonstrates any link to the church itself is the small number of carved sarcophagi located immediately outside the building's walls.¹¹³ The amphora burials and the *a cappuccina* burials display internal consistency in grave type and location, and as such they could just as easily represent two separate burial grounds with no link either to each other or the church. Though

¹¹⁰ Hieron. *Martyr. AASS, Noa. II. p. post.* 443, *ICUR* n.s. 2.16002.

¹¹¹ Costambeys, 2001: 179.

¹¹² Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 2000: 265; the funerary inscription of Gemmula can be found in the Musei Capitolini (inv. 5503); Rea, 1993: 649. Sites from the catalogue that contained more than ten burials (including those of higher status) and which were not found in close proximity to a church: 6 (Piazza del Colosseo), 7 (Porticus Liviae), 16 (Castro Pretorio), 37 (Mausoleo di Augusto), 40 (Vigna Barberini), 44 (Terme di Caracalla), 47 (Terme Deciane), 55 (Domus Tiberiana), 68 (Palatino), 70 (Terme di Diocleziano). Costambeys, 2001: 173, fn. 16.

¹¹³ Costambeys, 2001: 175.

the three sarcophagi may go some way towards proving that *ad sanctos* burial did take place inside the walls on the rare occasion that an intramural church was sufficiently associated with relics prior to the mid-eighth century (truthfully or not), it does not prove that churches alone were enough of a draw in the fifth century to cause the change in burial habit. Furthermore, in the absence of strong evidence to suggest that the land surrounding the churches of Santa Bibiana and Sant' Eusebio was owned by the respective churches in the late fifth and early sixth centuries, it is impossible to draw a strong link between the buildings and the nearby cemeteries (although the substantial burial ground surrounding Sant' Eusebio may present a clearer picture of association). Both churches were located in the area of the Esquiline Hill which was formerly urban *horti*, parcelled up into smaller properties by the fourth century. A great deal of work has been done on the fate of these properties, although little consensus has been reached on how they became church property beyond the vague suggestion that ownership was split between a triad of Church, State, and private owners, with the latter two ceding land to the former sometime after the Gothic Wars.¹¹⁴

Establishing property ownership in late antiquity is notoriously difficult, and little is known about the ways in which the Church acquired land for its buildings and cemeteries in this period. The *Liber Pontificalis* presents an incomplete, non-specific but nevertheless useful record of the categories of intra- and extra-mural property owned or managed by the church in late antiquity (for example houses and baths, such as those around the churches of *Santi Marcellino e Pietro* and *San Lorenzo*), but specific evidence for any more than a few properties of this kind in or around Rome is lacking (*LP*, 34, 39. 4, 42. 6, 69. 2). After Constantine's

¹¹⁴ For further discussion, see Guidobaldi, 1998.

defeat of Maxentius in AD 312, the emperor's support for the church gradually increased, as can be seen in his patronage of several large construction projects (notably the churches of San Giovanni in Laterano and San Pietro).¹¹⁵ Prior to this, it had been difficult for the Church to own property for the burial of its members outright, and private or collective ownership and management of land in the periphery of the city on behalf of the Church appears to have been the dominant model.¹¹⁶ Assessing the legal rights of the Church as a collective institution or association is difficult, although this has been simplified somewhat in recent years; it has previously been suggested that after AD 313 the Church was considered to be one of the *collegia religionis causa* which were strongly associated with burial and thus have been defined differently in scholarship to the more traditional Roman *collegia*. This has been challenged in recent years by Rebillard, who argued instead that all Roman associations (including those concerned with burial, and the Church) can be grouped under the title of *collegia tenuiorum*.¹¹⁷ If true, this would indicate that the rights of the Church in land ownership and usage were equal to those of the established Roman associations, and we can proceed with the understanding that after AD 313, the Church was able to gain its first legal footing in the city through the use of existing structures, with little difficulty.¹¹⁸ From then on it can be accepted that gradually, over the next few centuries as *collegia* were replaced by the corporations of the late antique world, a sizeable property portfolio was amassed by the institution, which led to the sixth and seventh century explosion of Church-managed, organised,

¹¹⁵ Krautheimer, 1980. On San Pietro: McKitterick, *et al.* 2013; on the Lateran: Brandenburg, 2005: 20. See also Livingstone, 2006: *Milan, Edict of.*

¹¹⁶ Bowes, 2008b: 64.

¹¹⁷ Rebillard, 2009: 41-5. For further discussion of the Christian community's integration into the existing system of *collegia*, see Rebillard, 2009: 50-55.

¹¹⁸ Detailed investigation of the subject of land and property ownership by the Church in late antiquity can be found in Marazzi, 1998: 25-40.

and owned burial grounds inside the city walls.¹¹⁹ The lack of evidence for properties of this kind inside the walls of Rome in the fifth century may therefore be significant, reflecting that the acquisition of intramural burial grounds was not yet a priority for the institution, whose attention was undoubtedly focused on exerting control over the popular extramural cemeteries.¹²⁰ The land for churches such as Santa Bibiana may have been a straightforward but exceptional transaction between the Church and the State, in which land that had previously belonged to the imperial court (prior to the deposition of the last Roman emperor in the west) was handed to the papacy in the fifth century, while others may have been private bequests or donations. In the midst of this confusion then, it is difficult to simply accept that all burial sites found within a certain distance of a church are automatically sited there because of the status of the religious building, there simply must be a more nuanced approach.

This interpretation has, at its most extreme, fallen into 'ghost church' theorising in which a fictional church is proposed to have existed at a burial site devoid of any cult building whatsoever. This does not just happen at Rome. Fifth and sixth century burials found in the forum at Corinth were not found in the vicinity of any known church, and yet, a hitherto undiscovered church has been suggested as an explanation for the location of the burials.¹²¹ Marios Costambeys has similarly expressed surprise at burial sites in Rome that occur in the absence of a church, in spite of his scepticism at the link between the Santa Bibiana sites,

¹¹⁹ Christian participation in the system of Roman associations is a complicated subject, and there is neither time nor space to delve deeper in the present research. Further engagement with the topic however can be found in Rebillard, 2009; Bodel, 2008 (both in the context of collective burial); and Meeks, 2003; Cracco Ruggini, 1971.

¹²⁰ Cantino Wataghin has suggested there was little interest in creating Christian burial spaces inside the city of Rome prior to the eighth century, although this may be a little extreme. 1999:162.

¹²¹ Ivison, 1996: 111.

and even though evidence for sites of this kind proliferates in the catalogue, but not taken this observation any further.¹²²

It can be accepted that burial inside or close to intramural churches was, by the late sixth century, an established practice, with the connection between church burial and the salvation of the soul being noted by Gregory the Great (*Dialog.* 4. 52). This is exemplified by the strong correlation between the funerary epigraphy from the sixth and seventh centuries and burials in cemeteries associated with cult buildings: almost all of the surviving late antique funerary inscriptions come from ecclesiastical buildings and sites.¹²³ However, accepting this does not require the automatic acceptance of the idea that the high status of church burials (both those that took place inside churches or those that were located in the immediate vicinity) was the driving factor behind the emergence of the intramural burial habit in the fifth century, given that so many sites from the fifth and sixth centuries appear to have been founded in the absence of an associated cult building (particularly the earliest sites).¹²⁴

The second strand of interpretation linked to the role of the Church in the spread of intramural burial is more directly tied to notions of organisation and control, rather than perceptions of status. It is not disputed here that during late antiquity the Church gradually took control of the 'funerary industry' and certainly the implications of this change are significant for our understanding of the shift in burial topography. By the end of the sixth century, the Church appears to have been responsible for a large proportion of the burial activity that took place at

¹²² Costambeys, 2002: 725; refer to fn. 134 for catalogue entries with no known associated church.

¹²³ Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 2000: 263.

¹²⁴ Sites in the catalogue with foundation dates in the fifth century that were not associated with a cult building: 2 (Ospedale Militare), 3 (via dei Simmaci), 6 (Piazza del Colosseo), 25 (Ministero degli Interni), 31 (Tabularium), 40 (Vigna Barberini), 46 (Lungotevere Testaccio), 63 (Caserma Lamarmora).

Rome. This would have involved employing gravediggers (although a degree of separation remained between the *fossores* or the *copiatae*, and the clergy with the former retaining their independence, particularly concerning their fees¹²⁵), selling or leasing burial lots through the work of the *praepositi*, participating in or running funerary processions, including commemorations for the dead in liturgy, and promising sponsored prayer.¹²⁶ This is assumed to have been achieved through either direct control over funerary industries or through the contracting of workers who had previously been in the service of the Roman state, alongside the gradual formalisation of liturgy pertaining to funerals and mourning.¹²⁷ Liturgy that was concerned with provision for the dead was gradually refined over the course of the late fifth and sixth centuries to reflect the growing preoccupation of the church with funerary activity and the importance of Christian burial, e.g. the *memento etiam* prayer was instituted in this period, said in combination with the recitation of the names of the deceased.¹²⁸ Though controlling the burial of its members appears not to have been a priority for the early Church (the first true intervention into the funerary sphere was led by Damasus in the extramural cemeteries of the fourth century), by the end of the sixth century the near opposite circumstances existed.¹²⁹ It can be said with confidence that by this time, burial in the city of Rome was largely undertaken on the terms of the Church, with few exceptions. This evident monopoly on the business of death and commemoration in late antique Rome, the ecclesiastical commerciality of the funerary sphere, is suggested to have accelerated the movement of burials from outside the walls to

¹²⁵ Costambeys, 2001: 187, cf. Cantino Wataghin, 1999: 148.

¹²⁶ Costambeys, 2001: 185-88; 2002: 730-1; Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 2000: 265.

¹²⁷ Costambeys, 2001: 182-85; Baldovin, 1987; Rowell, 1977: 22; see also Paxton, 1990.

¹²⁸ Constable, 2000: 177, 185.

¹²⁹ Trout, 2003; Curran, 2000: 142-5.

closer, Church-owned and -managed land, and to be primarily responsible for its acceptance as the new dominant funerary model.¹³⁰

The Church undoubtedly played a role in the shift in burial practice between the fifth and sixth centuries, not least because from the fifth century onwards it is reasonable to assume that the population of Rome did, for the most part, identify as Christian and engage in some way with the activities of the institution that represented their faith.¹³¹ However, to attribute the rapid and wholesale change in burial custom, beginning in the fifth century and accelerating throughout the sixth, to the growing power of the Church in this period is to construct an argument entirely based on later evidence. There is little to suggest that a formal and organised interest in intramural burial was taken by the Church prior to the sixth century, and the little evidence that does survive which details the infrastructure that managed the funerary activities of the Church from the late sixth century onwards cannot be used as evidence of such organisation more than a century earlier. As noted by Effros, the dearth of liturgy dedicated to burial rites in the fourth and fifth centuries suggests that funerals remained the responsibility of the individual family, and that the church had little interest in controlling its congregation's burial habits.¹³² The disparate and disorganised distribution of fifth and early sixth century burials in the city, coupled with their exclusively poor status, further suggests there was little overarching control over the depositions. Once again, this is an argument that fails to acknowledge the sizeable number of burials that were not located on Church property.

¹³⁰ Particularly in Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 2000: 265, with a focus on the role of the Church in selecting and selling or leasing burial plots.

¹³¹ On the Christian population of Rome: Bodel, 2008; Hopkins, 1998. See also Cameron, 2011.

¹³² Effros, 1997: 8.

In choosing an interpretation that privileges Christianity and the actions of the Church as the motivating factor behind choice of burial, there is an implicit denial that for the majority of people who lived in Rome in the fifth and sixth centuries, being buried in or in the immediate vicinity of an intramural basilica would likely have been a near impossibility. It is telling that those burials inside churches or in the privileged spaces surrounding them are often those of status, in both life and death. Being buried so close to a Christian centre of status was, for many people, an unattainable luxury, as burial in an elaborate mausoleum close to the city had once been for the inhabitants of imperial Rome. No interpretation of burial practice in the fifth century would be complete if it only charted those burials associated with churches or church property – in order to build up a synthesis of all available material, the activities of the lower status and poor must be addressed as significant parts of the intramural burial phenomenon in the fifth and sixth centuries. It has already been established in both the burial catalogue and earlier in this chapter that the first phase of intramural burials was populated by the graves of the urban poor, not the wealthy elite, and this should remain central in the interpretation.

Spatial flux and the disintegration of the urban fabric of Rome

Finally, scholars have often viewed late antique cities as places in a state of spatial flux. Consider, for example, the many studies on *spolia* in late antique Rome, or the discussions of late Roman fortifications and the changing occupancy of public and domestic spaces.¹³³ In amongst this, Gisella Cantino Wataghin countered much of the discussion of the intramural burial habit with the

¹³³ On *spolia*, see Alchermes, 1994; Brandenburg, 2011; Hansen, 2003; Coates-Stephens, 2002; Elsner, 2000. On Roman fortifications: Coates-Stephens, 2012; Dey, 2011, 2010; Goodman, 2007; Coates-Stephens, 1998; Todd, 1983; Richmond, 1930. On public spaces and the *domus*: Machado, 2012; Ward-Perkins, 2005, 1984.

publication of a chapter in the late 1990s.¹³⁴ In agreement with Ward-Perkins' suggestion that the late antique period was one characterised by instability and violence, she asserted that late antique cities were highly fragmentary societies, and the breakdown in established burial custom should be viewed in light of other phenomena which increased rapidly in this period, such as the widespread spoliation of public art and building materials, and illegal land appropriation. Prior to her intervention, much of the discussion had been focussed on the intramural burial habit as a contravention of Roman law, and had attempted to explain this illegal but wilfully ignored activity.¹³⁵ Dyggve, Osborne, Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani, and many of the archaeologists working (then and since) in Rome have, understandably, been primarily concerned with the phenomenon as it manifested in the old capital city, but Cantino Wataghin's contribution to the subject attempted to refocus the discussion on the wider context of late Roman Italy and further afield.¹³⁶ This is a useful pursuit; the pitfalls of attempting too specific a discussion of the available material from Rome have already been highlighted, and thus it is a valuable exercise to attempt to construct a 'big idea' that serves to provide some degree of explanation for a phenomenon that can be traced throughout the late antique Mediterranean world. Her focus was the late antique transformation of cities, in particular notions of reuse, with the practice of spoliation acting as a framework for the interpretation. It was that gradually, intramural burial habits combined with spoliation and land appropriation eroded conceptions of symbolic public spaces, and turned high-profile churches into natural successors as the foci of the city.¹³⁷ This development can be seen in numerous cities and towns in the late Roman Empire, as *fora* were increasingly

¹³⁴ Cantino Wataghin, 1999.

¹³⁵ Cantino Wataghin, 1999: 149-50, 157.

¹³⁶ Cantino Wataghin, 1999: 150.

¹³⁷ Cantino Wataghin, 1999: 153.

abandoned and cities became 'polycentric', something she termed the "fragmentary character of late antique urbanism."¹³⁸

She argued that no firm conclusions as to the reasons behind this shift can be drawn from the available data because of the remarkable lack of consistency in the funerary pattern, which suggests that scattered burials rather than organised Christian burial spaces were the dominant type until the Carolingian period.¹³⁹ While this approach can be viewed as perhaps too defeatist – there are certainly things that can be said about burial topography and customs in this period, and it seems that distinctive Christian burial spaces existed as early as the late sixth century¹⁴⁰ – Cantino Wataghin is correct to draw attention to other, parallel phenomena to highlight the concurrent fracturing of social practice particularly in Rome in this period, if only to contextualise the shift, and to demonstrate that the confusion in funerary activity is by no means an isolated event. Many facets of life that had previously been organised and controlled by the civic authorities were now unregulated, in freefall until the sixth century, and the creation of a church infrastructure that was capable of taking on responsibility for the provision for the dead, the preservation of the appearance of the city, and the regulation of land distribution was gradual and piecemeal.

Evidence from provincial cities in the late Roman Empire

This section will briefly chart recent research on the late antique intramural burial phenomenon outside of Italy, focussing on two examples already mentioned: Scythia/Moesia Secunda in the Lower Danube region, and Corinth. This serves three purposes in the broader context of the current research: firstly it

¹³⁸ Cantino Wataghin, 1999: 154.

¹³⁹ Cantino Wataghin, 1999: 161-3.

¹⁴⁰ Refer to the Appendix B for full entries of sites associated with churches.

demonstrates the application of some of the theories discussed in this chapter to other geographical locations in the late Roman Empire that have produced similar bodies of evidence to that of Rome. In some cases, while smaller in total number of excavated or documented graves, these bodies of evidence are far more complete records of their respective intramural funerary landscapes than we currently have for Rome, and thus may be useful comparanda to elucidate or help to fill those gaps in our knowledge about the ex-capital that result from the significant but incomplete catalogue of burials. Secondly, it reaffirms that the phenomenon of intramural burial in the late antique period was not limited to Roman Italy and can be evidenced in cities across the empire, taking place on a similar timeline and to a similar scale as the shift that can be seen at Rome. Finally, it maps the contemporary scholarly field of studies of intramural burial outside Rome to show that a) while attention is increasingly being paid to material of this type, much remains to be done before anything even approaching a comprehensive one-size-fits-all interpretation can be proposed (if, indeed, such a thing is possible), and b) that much of the work being done on provincial material is unfortunately several decades behind the interpretative development of similar studies at Rome (i.e. they are relying on theories that have been largely discredited or convincingly surpassed in recent years).

Both of the studies discussed here have been chosen as they represent some of the more recent work to have been published on the subject of provincial intramural burial in late antiquity, and as such the discussion that follows is not intended to be a comprehensive survey of the field and its development, more a glance at its current status.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Achim, 2014; Iverson, 1996.

Scythia and Moesia Secunda

Beginning with the late antique Danube region, Achim's work on Scythia and Moesia Secunda largely focussed on the establishment of "a new Christian topography" in cities of the region between the fourth and sixth centuries AD, through a phenomenon termed "the desacralisation of urban space".¹⁴² From the outset it is clear that the author has chosen to develop a variation of the *ad sanctos* argument discussed above, which sets forth the idea that burials clustered around the graves of the martyrs (or cult buildings that held their relics) and as those buildings encroached upon the intramural spaces, so too did the cemeteries.¹⁴³ It is acknowledged that the process began in earnest in the fifth century, similarly to the evidence presented at Rome,¹⁴⁴ although interestingly it appears that there is a small amount of evidence for a cluster of intramural burials in an abandoned *thermae* complex starting in the fourth century which is largely dismissed by the author.¹⁴⁵ This predates the known phenomenon at Rome and if it is the result of accurate dating, would supply evidence that directly contradicts the assertion that burials were attracted to the space around the intramural churches. In any case, these fourth century graves are not an integral part of the analysis present in Achim's chapter.

The graves that are included in the study (those from the fifth century onwards) are divided up into two categories, *intra* and *extra ecclesiam*, in order to develop the interpretation of the evidence. The choice of terminology here fairly clearly highlights the approach to the evidence. Achim elaborates on the *ad sanctos* argument by using Ian Morris to establish that *ad sanctos* burial may not

¹⁴² Achim, 2014: 291.

¹⁴³ Achim, 2014: 291.

¹⁴⁴ Meneghini & Santangeli, 1993, 1995.

¹⁴⁵ Achim, 2014: 328.

just have been the result of the desirability of proximity to a relic, but that it may also have reflected the appeal of being buried close to the church itself.¹⁴⁶ This idea was developed above in relation to the burials surrounding the churches of Santa Bibiana and Sant'Eusebio in Rome, and the interpretation's strengths and limitations in the capital will not be revisited here. The same idea that has been presented by Achim in relation to the burials in the lower Danube region is that all burials found in the vicinity of the intramural basilicas were associated with those churches and, as a result, it must be that the choice of grave location was driven by a desire to be buried close to cult buildings, irrespective of whether or not they were relic-holding institutions (as indeed many were not). It is argued that the connection between the grave site and the appeal of the church can be seen as part of a larger theory, termed 'a late antique Christian sociology', in which status in death was more connected to prestigious grave location rather than tomb type or decoration, as had been the case in previous centuries.¹⁴⁷ The changing arena for elite competition in late antique society created an environment in which value was placed on the siting of graves over the choice in decorative scheme, expensive material, or artisan craftsmanship.

It is proposed that the process was linear: the process began with an association between cemetery space and extramural churches as basilicas were constructed in funerary spaces outside the city, thus forging the perception that burials close to churches were prestigious. It is posited that when the construction of intramural churches began, the same spatial hierarchy was transplanted inside the walls, and burials soon followed.

¹⁴⁶ Achim, 2014: 329; Morris, 1992: 173.

¹⁴⁷ Achim, 2014: 329.

There is no significant attention paid to any of the burials found outside this funerary context, which - given that this work is presented as an interpretation of intramural burial without caveat - is slightly problematic, and especially so when considering that it is an interpretation that is intended to apply to an entire region. Indeed, it is claimed that the shift from extramural to intraurban burial was sudden, with no middle stage. This is demonstrably not the case in other cities that show evidence of the intramural burial phenomenon in late antiquity, not least at Rome where the slow growth of the trend is crucial to the understanding of its cause. Furthermore, the evidence mentioned by Achim earlier in the same chapter would appear to contradict this statement – an intermediate phase is evident (though limited) in the small number of graves located in an abandoned bath building with no clear connection to a church, prior to the mass appearance of intramural graves in the fifth century that form the basis of the *ad sanctos* argument. In the closing comments of the chapter, Achim notes that the cities retained their Roman civic identity, as evidenced by the persistence of extramural burial during this time as the dominant funerary choice.¹⁴⁸

Though the area under consideration in Achim's study appears to represent an interesting example of the rise of the intramural burial habit, the limited nature of the approach (focussing only on burials associated with churches) may have created self-fulfilling conclusions, in which the trend appears to be edging towards *ad sanctos* burial, but contradictory evidence is not examined to present the wider context.

¹⁴⁸ Achim, 2014: 330.

Corinth

Iverson's study focused on Corinth between AD 400 and AD 700, and seems to demonstrate the same reliance on *ad sanctos* and Church-based arguments that Achim's did, although there is some interesting acknowledgement of other contributing factors to the rise in the Corinthian intramural burial habit and overall, the interpretation is almost convincing (with the exception of a proposal towards the end of the study).¹⁴⁹ The author examines less than 100 Roman and Byzantine graves that were recovered from the centre of the city in the 1980s – a significantly smaller number than the catalogue size from Rome, but one that represents a more complete picture of the city centre.¹⁵⁰ Though it is spread out through the discussion, it appears that the historical events which took place in the city shaped its development considerably, and are worth summarising here. Corinth's burial topography was, in the fourth century, exactly as expected: predominantly focused in organised, extramural cemeteries and funerary spaces that fell outside of the city boundary or *pomerium*.¹⁵¹ In the fifth century, several large extramural basilicas were constructed on the site of Christian martyr burials, altering the peripheral topography considerably.

Initially, it is stated that in the late antique period, Corinth was largely unscathed, and continued to show evidence of private patronage, public munificence, and a functioning city infrastructure much later than other cities in the area, although much of this activity is focussed in the periphery of the city, around the extramural churches.¹⁵² Later, it is noted that this description was only accurate for the peripheral areas of the city in which the major churches were

¹⁴⁹ Iverson, 1996: 102.

¹⁵⁰ Iverson, 1996: 100.

¹⁵¹ Iverson, 1996: 103.

¹⁵² Iverson, 1996: 101; 104.

concentrated. In contrast to this relative prosperity in the periphery, there was some evidence of 'rapid urban decay' in the civic centre of Corinth that has, in previous studies, been suggested to be the result of an earthquake of AD 375 and an attack by Alaric and the Visigoths in AD 396.¹⁵³ Ivison argues instead that the change in physical appearance of the civic centre of Corinth was instead a result of the rising role of the Church in the city, located primarily in the periphery, and the subsequent decline in traditional Roman religion, which had been concentrated in the centre. It is noted that those buildings which were spoliated first were the cult buildings of the pre-Christian city, and that there are no known honorific or imperial inscriptions which date to the fifth century or after that have been recovered from the centre and the Forum area.¹⁵⁴ Epigraphy of this type is only found in the periphery.

Developing this rather bleak picture of the city of Corinth in the fifth century, it seems that during the sixth, the Church took over responsibility for organising and managing burial areas in the now largely derelict city centre. From the fifth century, there survives no evidence that other kinds of public or private activity was based there, and so it is suggested that the land was formally repurposed as a burial ground.¹⁵⁵ The reason for assuming that this funerary activity was dictated by the Church and not opportunistic, piecemeal development (as can be evidenced in Rome), is that the burials that were grouped in this area include complex monuments – large, *spolia* constructions that were intended to house numerous graves.¹⁵⁶ Burials occupied areas in fourth century shops and baths, and seem to have been arranged in rows to make the best use of the available

¹⁵³ Ivison, 1996: 105.

¹⁵⁴ Ivison, 1996: 104-105.

¹⁵⁵ Ivison, 1996: 104.

¹⁵⁶ Ivison, 1996: 110.

space. All of this discussion culminates in the simple proposal that through the Church's involvement in structuring and managing this area as funerary space, it was given new life, and a degree of urban regeneration was achieved.¹⁵⁷

Overall, the interpretation of the intramural funerary landscape of late antique Corinth appears convincing: it was noted that investment in the city was focussed on the peripheral churches which left the centre of the city to decay. What followed was intervention into this space, to exert some control over it and prevent the area from deteriorating further – and there can only have been one institution capable of this in the late sixth century, the Church. It would be interesting to know whether all the burials excavated from this site conformed to the neat linear narrative presented by the author, or whether, like Rome and the cities of Scythia and Moesia Secunda, there were small groups of anomalies in the pattern. Where this interpretation falls down is in the final proposals that attempt to explain why burials were found in the city centre to begin with. It is suggested that either a villa complex or an unknown church may have existed in the area (in spite of no such building thus far known in the archaeological record), which is a theory that has also been posited for the environment at Rome, and is similarly perplexing. There is no evidence to suggest that burials in this period could only exist in these two contexts, and in addition, if the Church was responsible for the burial ground at Corinth, the land must in some way have been associated with the institution locally, even in the absence of a cult building.

Intramural burial in the late antique period is attested throughout the Mediterranean, and it is even true that the trend can be found as far away from Rome as Gloucester.¹⁵⁸ Much of the scholarship that has been completed on the

¹⁵⁷ Ivison, 1996: 111.

¹⁵⁸ Pearce, 2011: 135.

subject has been focussed on Rome, and as such studies that examine other places – cities or regions – are often less supported by prior research. This can result in the repetition of familiar and well-trodden interpretations, such as those that have been mentioned in this section. With more research in this field, it might be possible in the future to build up a better idea of how such changes to the funerary sphere played out over much bigger geographical areas, but at present there is insufficient evidence to do so.

4.2.4 Summary of interpretations, 1952-2011

In sum, these four interpretations have dominated discussion of late antique intramural burial at Rome (and elsewhere), and though there are many more studies than could possibly be included here, there has been little deviation from these major theories.

It has been established that *ad sanctos* burial certainly existed in late antiquity and can be attested at extramural cemetery sites, and perhaps even at those rare relic-holding intramural churches, such as Santa Bibiana and Santi Giovanni e Paolo. Given that the major movement of relics from extramural sites into churches inside the Aurelian Wall did not take place until the eighth century however, it is unlikely that the desirability of burial *ad sanctos* alone motivated the change in funerary pattern.

‘Social trauma’ as an explanation for intramural burial, while superficially persuasive, cannot sufficiently explain the phenomenon outside Rome, nor can it provide a convincing explanation for the continuation of burial activity throughout the fifth and sixth centuries in times of peace. Elements of this theory are valuable however, such as the proposal that intramural burial was facilitated by the sharp decline in population that took place between the fifth and sixth centuries, and

the subsequent abandonment of numerous urban properties which created protected spaces for burial sites. These points will be developed later.

The role of the Church in the appearance of intramural burial is complicated, and though the influence of the institution over the funerary sphere in later centuries is undeniable, it is questionable how far the Church was willing to exert control over burial activity at Rome and elsewhere between the fifth and mid-sixth centuries. In the absence of corroborative evidence, this interpretation requires a certain degree of faith in order to accept that the Church was even capable of such a feat in the fifth century. In addition, though it is logical to connect burials with high status religious buildings inside Rome, this interpretation failed to take into account the numerous burial sites in Rome (and elsewhere) that were not associated with a church or known cult site. Overall, while it is not useful to totally discount the importance of the Church in the development of Rome's later burial topography, using it to attempt to explain the appearance of the phenomenon in the fifth century is misleading.

Finally, the fragmentation of urban spaces in late antiquity was highlighted as a possible explanation for the intramural burial phenomenon both in Rome and elsewhere in the late Roman Empire. The usefulness of this approach lay in its recognition that the process of urban burial did not take place in isolation, and that parallel phenomena unique to the late antique period could be used to build up a more comprehensive picture of the process of change in cities. The final conclusion of the discussion was somewhat at odds with the thoughtful content, and veered towards the rejection of all interpretations on the basis that individual choices dominated burial topography in late antiquity, and thus no meaningful patterns could be deduced. Furthermore, no explanation is provided for why 'individual choice' would result in burial inside the city, when such burial practices

had been officially banned for almost a thousand years. It is my firm belief that burial topography is a subject with plenty of scope for discussion and the possibility for further interpretation, and thus I am inclined to disagree with the final proposal.

What follows is my own contribution to the field: a re-evaluation of the research question and an interpretation that combines a new idea with the best of the existing arguments in an attempt to craft a proposal that may solve this most intriguing of subjects.

4.3 Re-evaluating the field: a new approach

As I have shown, there is little scholarly consensus on this matter, in spite of the considerable amount of work that has addressed it in some way. In response to the interpretations discussed above, this study proposes two things that modify and build upon the work published in the field thus far.

Firstly, I suggest a re-framing of the research question outlined above, which each of the interpretations discussed so far has attempted to answer, and which I believe can be improved upon. Secondly, I propose a change in methodological approach, moving away from trying to find a singular cause for the change in burial custom, and instead adopting an explorative approach to the many and varied social pressures exerted on Rome between the fifth and seventh centuries, taking into account the substantial historical inheritance of the city. I expect that when considered as a whole, the variety of factors discussed in isolation in previous interpretations will appear to present the precise context necessary to facilitate a cultural change as significant as the late antique shift from extra- to intra-mural burial.

To develop the first proposal, in order to satisfactorily answer the research question it is necessary to assess the appropriateness of its phraseology:

What was the reason for the change in burial pattern in Rome between the fifth and seventh centuries?

The wording of this question (and the variations that appear in the interpretations outlined earlier) suggests that there was a particular active event or pressure in late antiquity to which causation can be attributed, that something happened or changed in the fifth century and as a result, the burial pattern was irrevocably altered. However, few events or phenomena can ever be attributed to a single cause, and as has already been demonstrated, none of the catalysts or 'triggers' that have thus far been proposed in response to this question are convincing. This is partly because the question has been framed incorrectly. The approach proposed here is that the same problem (the appearance of intramural burial) should be viewed from a new angle - instead of searching for what actively motivated people to begin burying their dead inside the city, research should be focussed (at least in part) on finding out what was absent: What had previously restricted intra-mural burial in the imperial period that was missing in late antiquity? With this in mind, we can add to the existing research aim the following question to reflect the adjusted emphasis:

What were the factors preventing the inhabitants of Rome from burying their dead inside the city prior to the fifth century, and can such factors still be evidenced between the fifth and seventh centuries?

Cities in the late Roman Empire were defined, in many ways, by their inheritance from earlier periods, and this is especially true of Rome. For example, earlier discussion of the ritual of *adventus*, practised well into late antiquity, noted the continuity of not only behaviour, but also depiction in the art and literary accounts

of the ritual, set against an imperial backdrop.¹⁵⁹ The history and traditions of the city of Rome cannot be divorced from its late antique existence, and so the appearance of intramural burial should not be viewed as an isolated and separate event to the practices and activities that had come before.

The second proposal made here is that no interpretation will be convincing if it attempts to attribute the change in burial pattern to a single cause (such as the Gothic War, or the role of the Church), and that research should attempt to draw together a variety of reasons for the shift in order to construct an interpretation based on a thorough examination of the whole contemporary climate, not a single sliver. A more rounded approach is needed. The following sections will first summarise the prohibition of intramural burial at Rome prior to late antiquity and then attempt to find evidence for those restrictions operating in the same way between the fifth and seventh centuries, accounting for the disappearance of those that were no longer visible.¹⁶⁰

4.4 The prevention of urban burial prior to late antiquity

For the purposes of the discussion, the prohibition of intrapomerial/intramural burial has been divided into three particular areas of interest. The first section will be a discussion of the Roman perceptions of death pollution and the slow process of change that took place between the second and the fourth centuries that enabled the inhabitants of Rome to bury their dead inside what had once been considered a sacred city. The second will set out the lack of opportunity for intramural burial in the centuries prior to late antiquity, and the subsequent changing environs of the fifth century city. The third and final section will be a

¹⁵⁹ See chapter 3 for further details.

¹⁶⁰ For more specific discussion of republican and imperial burial legislation, see the first section of the current chapter.

discussion of the formal, prohibitive legislation set out at the beginning of this chapter and the role of the State in controlling burial, followed by an examination of the involvement of the State and Church in the administration of the physical city in the fifth century.

4.4.1 Death pollution and the divide between the living and the dead

As seen in earlier discussion, prior to late antiquity the city of Rome as defined by the *pomerium* was deemed a sacred and inaugurated space, and its inhabitants were subject to numerous laws and restrictions that were intended to keep the city free from ritual pollution and unsavoury activities. These restrictions and pieces of burial legislation appear to have been regularly issued between the first century BC and the sixth century AD with little significant alteration. Other activities were prohibited alongside burial and cremation, such as undertaking and tanning (although this appears to have been zoned, rather than outright banned).¹⁶¹ Though these laws were undoubtedly broken often, the justification provided for them is nonetheless significant. On a societal level, it is possible to talk about the perception of death pollution in Rome and the measures taken to prevent it, and though individual beliefs and behaviours may contradict these patterns, they do not invalidate them.

The Roman belief about the polluting nature of the corpse is relevant here in the context of urban burial: the body of the deceased was traditionally viewed as a conceptually-polluting entity that represented a threat to the ritual purity of not only the inaugurated area of Rome, but also the bodies, welfare, and properties of those living in it and the surrounding area. There have been several important works on the concept of death pollution in recent years, notably by

¹⁶¹ Bodel, 1994.

Lennon on ritual pollution more widely, and, on the subject of those connected to the funerary industry, Bodel and, more recently, Bond.¹⁶² Death pollution was a concern that can be seen in many areas of Roman life, and was primarily viewed as the result of handling or coming into contact with a corpse. The results of this pollution could range from a compromised role in public office, to strained relationships with others, to more serious concerns such as an inability to properly participate in ritual and worship of the gods, or health problems – put simply, death was ‘unclean’ and it contaminated the living.¹⁶³ It is especially true that those whose jobs were associated with death and burial were, at least in theory, tainted in some way: a law from Augustan Puteoli dictated that executioners and corpse-bearers were required to mark themselves out when conducting their business in the city, so that others may know to avoid them, and this has been taken to reflect similar practices elsewhere, such as those who worked at the grove of Libitina outside Rome.¹⁶⁴ This law has informed much of our understanding of the mechanics of the ancient funerary industry and pollution, providing details that may otherwise remain unknown.¹⁶⁵ For instance, in addition to highlighting their profession when active in the city, labourers who did the work of undertaking in the city were, it seems, not permitted to live inside the *pomerium*, or enter it at all outside of the specific instances in which they were required to remove a corpse from inside the *pomerium*.¹⁶⁶ They were polluted men.

City-wide pollution was a concern. It is known that the space of Rome was ritually cleansed on a regular basis, at least twice per calendar year, and occasionally more often in response to different kinds of pollution (such as

¹⁶² Lennon, 2012, 2014; Bodel, 1994, 2004; Bond, 2016 (esp. 59-97).

¹⁶³ Retief, 2005: 128; Bodel, 2000: 128-151.

¹⁶⁴ Lennon, 2012: 48; Bodel, 1994: 15.

¹⁶⁵ Lennon, 2014: 128.

¹⁶⁶ Lennon, 2012: 48.

prodigia, but also due to outbreaks of disease or incidents of violence in which death had polluted the city). Conceptions of pollution have already been touched upon in chapter three, and it was noted during the discussion of the *Amburbium* and *Parilia*, that both were intended to ritually purify the city through the act of *lustratio*. Though it is impossible to know whether or not these rites were truly performed for their purifying effect (and how far this was believed by inhabitants of the city), the fact that they were continuously held in the periphery of Rome until late antiquity would suggest that on a theoretical level, at least, the concept of ritual and death pollution was a concern for the inhabitants of Rome. Death pollution was not just an occurrence in the funerary spaces outside the city boundary, however. Executions were sometimes held inside the city's *pomerium* which resulted in unsavoury associations with certain places, such as the *Campus Sceleratus* (the place at which Vestals were buried alive) or the *Tullianum* (one of the execution chambers of the city), both of which were located in spaces underground as if to remove the polluting activity from the living space of the city.¹⁶⁷ Similarly, people who died in the amphitheatre as part of the games were swiftly removed from the building and thrown into the Tiber, as much to physically dispose of their bodies as to ritually purify the city with water.¹⁶⁸ By extension, the interring of a corpse inside the city boundary would constitute pollution of the sacred city, just as contact with the dead body could pollute an individual. It was a powerful concept, even to a city as familiar with death as Rome, and there are numerous other situations in which the population and administration of the city were required to deal with the possibility that the inaugurated, sacred space of the intra-pomerial city could be polluted in some

¹⁶⁷ Lennon, 2014: 153.

¹⁶⁸ Lennon, 2014: 157; Kyle: 1998: 155; 214-217.

way. On a superficial, general level then, death pollution was a concept that was managed in the day-to-day life of the city, but on closer inspection, it is not a subject without caveat.

From the early Republic it is clear that on the subject of death pollution, the Romans were flexible. As has already been discussed above, certain people were seemingly less pollutive than others, and were, on occasion, permitted burial inside the sacred boundary of Rome without great consequence for the fortunes of the city.¹⁶⁹ This suggests that there was not a fundamental, wholesale ideological objection to the presence of a burial inside the city or close to the space of the living, but instead it was a concept that included the possibility for exceptions. Importantly, the exceptions were permitted because in a variety of ways, they were not deemed a threat to the ritual purity of the city, either because of their status as one of the *summi viri*, or perhaps, as Schultz has noted, because in the case of the Vestals, their burial was viewed as part of a destructive ritual process and not a funerary one.¹⁷⁰ Similarly the pollution associated with the undertakers and executioners was temporary, and their affliction ceased when they no longer participated in their funerary employment.¹⁷¹ Presumably there were also instances in which the extended display of certain corpses in public places in the city was not polluting, as in the case of Cicero on the *Rostra* (Plut. *Cic.* 49), or the victims of the *Scalae Gemoniae*. The execution chamber of the *Tullianum* was buried, but the Colosseum, which regularly filled the same function in executing criminals, was not remotely hidden or avoided. It seems that not all corpses were polluting, and that there were in fact many contradictions in the concept of death pollution in antiquity. It has always been assumed that the

¹⁶⁹ Patterson, 2002; Bodel, 1994.

¹⁷⁰ Schultz, 2012: 123-135.

¹⁷¹ Lennon, 2014: 152-153.

concept of death pollution eventually broke down in the fifth and sixth centuries in response to Christian beliefs about the body as a holy receptacle and not as an unclean, polluting entity, but such complexities in the imperial understanding of pollution suggest that the breakdown of this supposed 'taboo' requires additional attention.

It has been suggested already in this chapter that in late antiquity, there was a change in the general perception of the dead body from a polluting entity to a sacred one,¹⁷² beginning with venerated saints' bodies outside the city and gradually extending to encompass the wider Christian population.¹⁷³ There is little else to add here, save to say that there can be no doubt that by the late sixth century this taboo had utterly disappeared as a concern for the inhabitants of Rome, and they were content to bury their dead not only inside the city boundary, but inside buildings that had a multitude of other uses, such as domestic spaces and properties devoted to industry. It is my opinion, however, that the erosion of this particular taboo did not begin in the late antique period, and archaeological evidence demonstrating this can in fact be traced back to funerary spaces outside the city boundary of Rome as early as the third century AD.

The concept of death pollution in Rome, as already discussed, was complex. As an underlying framework for the prohibition of burial in cities, it was already set up to permit exceptions, and so it can be of little surprise that eventually, exceptions became the rule. Burial customs on the outskirts of Rome from the third century AD onwards show evidence of the deconstruction of the concept of 'death pollution' and the gradual acceptance of tombs and burials that

¹⁷² Rasmus Brandt, J. 2012: 154.

¹⁷³ Shepardson, 2014: 171. For further discussion of the development of the martyr cult, see Brown, 1981.

were directly connected to domestic spaces. This process culminated in the deliberate placement of tombs inside the rooms of domestic buildings in the fourth and fifth centuries, in which occupants presumably shared living space with the graves without evident concern for ritual pollution.¹⁷⁴ The coexistence of tombs and domestic spaces outside the boundary of Rome can be found most clearly in the development of villa complexes lining the roads from the city, and it is in this context that the connection between tomb and habitation is most strongly established.¹⁷⁵ There has been a great deal of work completed in recent decades on the changing meaning of the villa as an elite residence throughout the Roman period, in particular relating to villas as places of memory and personal commemoration.¹⁷⁶ The shift in perception of the dead body and concepts of pollution appears to have begun with a gradual destigmatising of commemoration of the dead, and an increasing tolerance for funerary monuments on the properties of elite houses, placed some distance away from the main buildings. Bodel has noted that the connection between tomb and country estate may have existed as early as second century BC, and there are numerous examples that survive in the epigraphic, literary and archaeological record to support his claim.¹⁷⁷ An example that has attracted attention in recent years dates to the second century AD and concerns the estate of Herodes Atticus on the *via Appia*, at which his wife, Regilla was commemorated. It has been suggested that there were commemorative gardens to Regilla and other deceased family members to be found at both of his known properties, in Rome and in Greece.¹⁷⁸ An epitaph from the same time period commemorates the death of a boy of sixteen, a slave,

¹⁷⁴ Griesbach, 2005: 113-123.

¹⁷⁵ Marzano, 2007: 32.

¹⁷⁶ Bodel, 2007: 18.

¹⁷⁷ Bodel, 2007: 20-21.

¹⁷⁸ Marzano, 2007: 32; Griesbach, 2005: 116. For further discussion, Gatti, 2002.

at a property outside Rome (*CIL* 6. 16913).¹⁷⁹ Griesbach has suggested that these memorials were placed on private properties so that families could mourn the loss of their kin or a beloved slave.¹⁸⁰ Though not the earliest example, the villa complex constructed by Maxentius on the *via Appia* in the early fourth century also included a large tomb building on the same plot of land, with no evidence to suggest that such proximity between living and funerary space was problematic.

The normalisation of funerary monuments as part of private, domestic properties was a slow process, but by the third century there is evidence that *mausolea* were not just being constructed on these properties and sharing land with people's homes, but even, in some examples, were built as part of the main residential buildings. This is clear in a particularly interesting example: the remains of a villa in the modern *Cimitero Flaminio* on the *via Flaminia* outside Rome (fig. 4.6). In the second century AD a tomb was constructed on the estate on land that was below the level of the villa, and which was close to the ancient *via Tiberina* - in other words, separate from the main domestic space and still, to some extent, publicly-visible from the road as many elite, imperial tomb monuments were intended to be (number 29 on the plan).¹⁸¹ This phase of building was of a limited size and presumably intended for the owner and his immediate family only. There was then an intermediate phase during which the tomb was extended to add in four additional *arcosolia* (number 30). The final phase of tomb building was dated to the beginning of the fourth century AD by Griesbach,¹⁸² but has been dated to the late third century by both Marzano and

¹⁷⁹ Griesbach, 2005: 118.

¹⁸⁰ Griesbach, 2005: 118.

¹⁸¹ Borg, 2013: 143.

¹⁸² Griesbach, 2005: 118.

Borg.¹⁸³ In this building phase, the tomb that had initially been constructed on the property and which had previously been separate from the main villa complex, was connected to the outer wall of the villa building by a large, *opus latericium* burial chamber (number 31).¹⁸⁴ This addition significantly increased the number of burial spaces provided in the tomb, although the exact number remains unknown.¹⁸⁵ It also had the effect of making the tomb a seamless part of the main domestic building, with those living in the adjacent rooms of the villa in close proximity to the remains of their ancestors. This site demonstrates a series of significant steps in the development of tomb location, away from widely known Roman burial practices that have always been read as the result of concerns about death pollution. In this example, and several others that date from the second century into the fifth, the ‘taboo’ of sharing domestic space with graves was gradually, incrementally, deconstructed.

It is my opinion that this body of evidence, and other sites like it, represents the very beginning of a change in perception that would contribute to the total breakdown of the prohibition of intramural burial that had been in place since the XII Tables were issued in the Republic. By destigmatising the co-existence of domestic and funerary spaces, one of the key justifications for the pomerial burial law was rendered irrelevant. By the fifth century, there was no longer a conceptual or ideological reason to separate the space of the living from that of the dead. As for why this shift in burial location took place in Rome’s extramural villa estates, there is a multitude of possible reasons why individuals chose to build tombs into their homes. It could have been a cost-cutting measure, or an attempt to further cement legal claims to ancestral homes, or for personal

¹⁸³ Marzano, 2007: 521; Borg, 2013: 143.

¹⁸⁴ Griesbach, 2005: 119; Borg, 2013: 143-145; Marzano, 2007: 521.

¹⁸⁵ Borg, 2013: 143.

preference, or any number of unknowable reasons. Though it is impossible to prove or deny, I will suggest one more possible reason for the inclusion of tombs in the homes of the elite at their country estates.

Positive exceptions to the pomerial burial law in the public eye were made almost exclusively in the case of special individuals who commanded great respect and were important to the city of Rome. The ability to choose who was worthy of intra-pomerial burial and who was not (and thus whose body would pollute the city and whose would not) was already built into the very concept of death pollution in the public sphere. I propose that it is possible the same exceptions were informally made on private property, to allow for the commemoration of a beloved family member in a place that had traditionally been free from burials. Griesbach has proposed that the movement of memorials to the villa complex facilitated private mourning, and it may be that this process eventually led to the inclusion of burials on residential properties as well, as simply the next step in commemoration.

In any case, irrespective of the role of mourning in the movement of burial spaces, it is relevant for the current study to view the change in tomb placement at extramural villa sites as the result of the increasing unimportance of the concept of death pollution in the imperial period. Interestingly, it has been noted by Cantino Wataghin that from the third century, at the same time the concept of death pollution was declining in importance in the arrangement of funerary spaces at villa estates near Rome, the extramural burial patterns in organised cemeteries elsewhere in Italy and further afield were also beginning to change.¹⁸⁶ It seems that the burial pattern from the third century onwards was much more

¹⁸⁶ Cantino Wataghin, 1999: 151.

focussed on cemeteries that were closer to city boundaries, rather than the older, more established necropoleis that were located further away from the urban space. This can be seen at the cemetery around the church of *S. Andrea* in Bergamo, in tomb groups close to the southeast boundary of Reggio Emilia, and also at Imola, Geneva, Grenoble, and Lyon.¹⁸⁷ Funerary spaces were beginning to move closer to cities.

It can be concluded from the discussions in this section that the concept of death pollution in Rome, while it may have initially been connected to the exclusion of burials from inside the *pomerium*, was declining in relevance from the second century onwards. By the fifth century it cannot be considered an influential reason that encouraged people to bury their dead outside the city walls, as the taboo of sharing space with a grave had largely disappeared in the two preceding centuries. The collapse of the concept of death pollution is directly related to and therefore crucial for our understanding of the growth in intramural burial. The main contribution that has been made here is the reframing of this phenomenon – while it has been commented on many occasions that there was a different attitude to the body in late antiquity, the change in perception has often been attributed to the rise of Christian beliefs. I have shown here that the roots of this development can actually be found in the funerary behaviours of people living long before the fifth century.

4.4.2 Opportunity

It has been established that the disappearance of the concept of death pollution by the fifth century was a contributing factor in the rise of intramural burials at Rome. It was, however, not the only reason for the appearance of the graves

¹⁸⁷ Cantino Wataghin, 1999: 151-152.

inside the city. The lack of available spaces that would have been appropriate for burial inside the city walls prior to the fifth century, and the subsequent reversal of this situation between the fifth and seventh centuries is significant for any consideration of this subject.

Rome was, for much of its imperial history, a densely-occupied and crowded city. It is often quoted that the city population swelled to up to one million inhabitants in the second century AD, and though this is not a figure that will be debated here, it is enough to note that in the imperial period, and particularly the first two centuries AD, space in Rome was coveted and came at a high premium.¹⁸⁸ Homes were stacked storey upon storey in many thousands of *insulae* recorded in the late antique *Notitia*, and while it is at present unclear how exactly these figures should be interpreted, it can be ascertained that population density was high. 'Green space' could indeed be found in the city, but it was predominantly located in privately-owned *horti* and the urban estates of the wealthy, such as that of Maecenas on the Esquiline, or the *Horti Aciliorum* in the north of the city. Buildings were rarely abandoned, but often rebuilt, and legislation existed to protect the edifices of the city from falling into disrepair.¹⁸⁹ There was, quite simply, less opportunity in the pre-fifth century city and less available urban space in which to bury the dead. From a purely pragmatic perspective, tombs and graves littered the periphery of the city, as close as was legally allowed, and the valuable space inside the boundary was protected. Evidence of this trend can be seen to this day at the tombs lining the *via Appia* or the *via Latina* in Rome.

¹⁸⁸ For further discussion, see Scheidel, 2007: 17-70.

¹⁸⁹ Siwicki, 2015: 84-89.

The cities of the western empire were, as Cantino Wataghin has highlighted, in a state of spatial flux in the fifth century, and this is no better evidenced than at Rome. With a declining population and a severely imbalanced distribution pattern (with clustering habitation in the city centre and *Campus Martius* areas resulting in the concentration of populated space that would eventually be known as the *abitato*), the city had large swathes of owned but unoccupied land and abandoned or repurposed buildings within its walls for the first time in its history (the *disabitato*).¹⁹⁰ *Horti* had been gradually split up into smaller properties that, it has been suggested, were often left empty.¹⁹¹ The population had dropped significantly by the end of the fifth century. The maintenance of certain kinds of public buildings was no longer a priority for the State of fifth century Rome, in particular bath houses and aqueducts, which were increasingly expensive to maintain and several of which fell into disrepair after the sieges of the city.¹⁹² Of the aqueducts that continued to work, by the fifth century almost all had a reduced flows due to lack of regular maintenance or damage, and were primarily directed at ecclesiastical buildings or public fountains. There was, by the fifth century, unprecedented opportunity for the inhabitants of the city of Rome to bury their dead *intra muros*.

Though (as discussed earlier), property ownership is very complicated to determine with any certainty, particular buildings are widely accepted to have been originally commissioned, constructed, and then operated and owned by the local government or imperial office, such as the *thermae*, theatres, and porticoes of the imperial city.¹⁹³ It is precisely these spaces that suffered neglect from the

¹⁹⁰ Krautheimer, 1980.

¹⁹¹ Häuber, 1998, 2014.

¹⁹² Coates-Stephens, 1998, 1999.

¹⁹³ Costambeys, 2002: 726.

fifth century onwards, as resources once directed towards the preservation of such edifices was more urgently required elsewhere, and as a result, these buildings were, over time, used less frequently for their original purpose. The extensive study of the Crypta Balbi in Rome, excavated in the 1980s and published in several extensive volumes,¹⁹⁴ is a good example of a site which had previously been a public building – the Theatre of Balbus in the Campus Martius, but which appears to quickly have fallen out of the hands of the State in the fifth century. In the early fifth century the building seems to have experienced a process of degradation that has been variously attributed to Alaric's sack of AD 410 and a series of earthquakes at the start of the century.¹⁹⁵ It is clear from the archaeological excavations that the damaged building, rather than being repaired or totally abandoned, was instead adopted by the local community and reused in a variety of ways – as domestic space, for industry such as glassmaking and later, lime-kilns, and also, for burials. The group of burials found at the site, though collected together in the catalogue, were not deposited in the same part of the building, but in several different locations (*Sito* 73). The areas used for funerary purposes included the area of the *piazza*, in the colonnade of the building's *quadroporticus*, and inside the perimeter wall of the northern Crypta Balbi, sharing space with the glassmakers.¹⁹⁶ Though in the catalogue entry these burials have been dated as a group to the late sixth century, I would treat this date with caution: the clearly staggered depositional process and the much longer history of the site as a repurposed building that never truly developed into a cemetery would suggest that some of these graves (those not conclusively

¹⁹⁴ Manacorda, 1990, 2001; Arena, *et al.* 2000.

¹⁹⁵ Manacorda, 2001: 44.

¹⁹⁶ Manacorda, 2001: 49.

dated by epigraphy or associated small finds), may predate this late date by some decades.

The Crypta Balbi is a rare example of a site in late antique Rome that appears to have passed out of the hands of the State and into private ownership. This is not representative of the built environment of the city more generally in the late antique period. Property in late antique Rome that was *not* under church control from the fourth century onwards is exceedingly difficult to match with named owners. This is one of the major difficulties encountered when engaging with late antique funerary material found outside the established and documented Christian cemetery spaces, as it hinders our ability to assess how certain plots eventually became burial sites and who was responsible for them. Some interesting work has been completed in recent decades on the fate of the large, urban *horti* in Rome, tracing high-profile ownership and usage, which may provide some explanation for the distribution of certain early intramural burials sites in the city.¹⁹⁷ It seems that at least a small percentage of these urban estates were divided into numerous, smaller properties that were privately owned and either put to use as domestic dwellings, places of industry, vineyards, or they were abandoned and left to fall into disrepair.¹⁹⁸ There is a noted connection between the republican and imperial *horti* and Christian cemeteries established in the sixth and seventh centuries, but the reuse of these spaces as smaller, isolated, and less organised funerary sites in the fifth and early sixth centuries is not altogether uncommon, though it has attracted less attention.¹⁹⁹ Some *horti* are known to have passed in and out of imperial ownership over several centuries such as the interesting case of the area known initially as the *horti Luculliani*, a famously

¹⁹⁷ Most notably the work of Christina Häuber on the Esquiline: 2014; 1998.

¹⁹⁸ Häuber, 1998, 2104; Purcell, 2007: 371-2.

¹⁹⁹ Costambeys, 2001: 175.

beautiful urban estate that was set out on the Pincian hill and originally privately owned in the late republic by L. Licinius Lucullus (c. 60 BC).²⁰⁰ The estate fell into the hands of Valerius Asiaticus in the first century AD, after which it was seized by the imperial court (allegedly on the orders of Messalina) who retained the property until the second century.²⁰¹ It was then sold to a private citizen of the family Acilii Glabriones, and was known as the *horti Aciliorum*.²⁰² In the fourth century the estate and villa were owned by Anicia Faltonia Proba and Petronius Probus, and thereafter (in the fifth century) it was in the hands of the *gens Pincia* and was thus referred to as part of the renowned *Domus Pinciana*.²⁰³ Though the fate of the estate is not entirely clear beyond this time, it is likely that the area once again became imperial property given the prestigious dwellings associated with the site and its appearance in passing in both Cassiodorus' *Variae* and the *Liber Pontificalis*.²⁰⁴ The *horti* were situated close to the late third century Aurelian Wall, and in a similar fashion to other large architectural features located in the peripheral areas of Rome, portions of the estate's boundary wall were included in the fortification, including the *Muro Torto* (fig. 2.11). This conclusively categorises the site as intramural in late antiquity.²⁰⁵

It is known that a single *a cappuccina* burial dated to between the fifth and seventh centuries was uncovered in the area by Carlo Fea in the early nineteenth century, suggesting that in spite of its presumed status as imperial property, a small portion of the land was at some point repurposed (although the precise

²⁰⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 11.1.

²⁰¹ Cass. Dio, 60.27.3, at which time the land was known as the *horti Asiatici*.

²⁰² Plut. *Lucul.* 39.2; Richardson, 1992: 200; Platner & Ashby, 1929: 264, 268-9.

²⁰³ *CIL* 6.1751, 1754; *ILS* 1265, 1269.

²⁰⁴ Cassiod. *Var.* 3.10; *LP* (Pope Silverius, AD 536-537) 60.6, 8.

²⁰⁵ Richardson, 1992: 195; LTUR III, 67-70. Other monuments incorporated into the city wall include: the Pyramid of Gaius Cestius; the *Porta Maggiore*; and the *Amphitheatrum Castrense*. See discussion in chapter two.

location of the grave was not recorded at the time of discovery).²⁰⁶ It remains unknown whether this funerary activity was the result of officially-permitted or illicit behaviour; given the lower (although not destitute) status of the single grave found on site, I am inclined to lean towards the latter.²⁰⁷ This kind of intramural burial activity – isolated, non-elite, and seemingly randomly located far from an established cemetery or cult building – is characteristic of the earliest wave of depositions that took place in the fifth and early sixth centuries: it is chaotic and disorganised, with no clear permission from a controlling party. It was likely the product of opportunism. Nor does the burial appear to have been found in a large, abandoned public building such as a bath or portico, which we know to have been characteristic of the isolated or clustered burials of the late sixth and seventh centuries. From these observations, and given the vague dating of the original archaeological material, it is perhaps possible to narrow the potential date range of the grave; I would propose that the topographical context of deposition strongly suggests that the burial dates to the late fifth or early sixth century and almost certainly before the site was occupied once again during the Gothic Wars. It seems doubtful that the grave dates to the late sixth or seventh century, at which time large, organised intramural cemeteries were the established norm and isolated burials of this type were less common.²⁰⁸ Given the isolated nature of the Pincian burial, with no suggestion that it formed part of a larger, unexplored cemetery, it would appear as an anomaly should it be grouped with the late sixth and seventh century graves.

This was not an isolated example. It appears that other *horti* owned by the imperial court fell into disrepair, such as the *horti Sallustiani* in the north of the

²⁰⁶ *Sito* 66; Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 105.

²⁰⁷ *Sito* 66; Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 105.

²⁰⁸ On the reoccupation of the area during the Gothic War: *LP* 60.8.

city also bordering the walls of Aurelian, which were sacked by the Goths in AD 410 and remained at least partially ruined until the time of Procopius (*Vand.* 1.2.24).²⁰⁹ A single burial *a cappuccia* was discovered on the *via Campania* that was dated to the reign of Theodoric (AD 493-526) or shortly thereafter on the basis of a tile stamp, with another potentially found up against the wall itself.²¹⁰

The connection between Rome's *horti* and the Christian cemeteries of the sixth and seventh centuries has been noted by Costambeys, but the roots of this development can be found much earlier in the random, opportunistic burials that clustered in these neglected spaces.²¹¹

The increased amount of abandoned buildings and plots of land provided opportunities to bury the dead inside the city. Coupled with the disintegration of the concept of death pollution discussed in the previous section, it seems clear that there was neither a logistical nor an ideological barrier to burying in the city for those inhabitants of the fifth century city. And yet extramural cemeteries persisted as places of extensive, prestigious burial throughout this time and into the sixth century. Irrespective of the increased space inside the city boundary, or the lack of concern for death pollution, what had not changed was the traditional desire to bury outside the walls, as was evidenced by Zosimus and Procopius even during the conflicts of the fifth and sixth centuries. It seems then, that the middle class and urban poor were the most likely candidates to take advantage of the increased opportunity to bury inside the walls. The prohibitively expensive cost (for many people) of extramural burial is crucial in this matter: burial inside the city walls is likely to have been significantly less expensive than burial in one

²⁰⁹ Richardson, 1992: 202. The estate passed into imperial ownership prior to AD 43, according to *CIL* 6.9005 / *ILS* 1795.

²¹⁰ *CIL* 15.1666; *Sito* 15; Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 96 (*Sito* 15).

²¹¹ Costambeys, 2001: 175.

of the extramural cemeteries, catacombs or basilicas. It is true that all of the surviving fifth century graves are simple *fossa* or a *cappuccina* types. It is also telling that all of the surviving inscriptions from extramural burials dating to between AD 535 and AD 585 are of named elite officials (although this may also be related to the more general decline in the epigraphic habit during this time).²¹² It is worth noting at the time that many of the earliest burials, especially those found isolated on properties that were unlikely to have been owned by the family of the deceased, were transgressive burials that were deposited without the legal right to do so. In this way, land appropriation and reuse became one of the hallmarks of the late antique funerary environment, and in almost every case, it appears to have gone unpunished.

4.4.3 Legality

The mechanism of the Roman State was not only present in imperial Rome (as the capital of the empire), but was relatively streamlined, efficient, and authoritative, with numerous offices and magistracies directly responsible for the maintenance of the city and the enactment of its laws. Though undoubtedly there were examples of intraurban burial in the imperial period that directly contravened Roman law, they were fewer and occurred less often than the intramural burials of the fifth century, and repeated attempts were made to curb this practice. Though the *pomerium* and its associated burial legislation could in no way be called a perfect system (evidenced by the simple fact that the law had to be continually restated for several hundred years), it did – in combination with a civic authority responsible for the organisation and provision for the dead – manage to mediate the problem and keep it at bay.

²¹² Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 92.

Late antiquity saw the movement of the emperor from Rome to Constantinople in the early decades of the fourth century, the deposition of the last Roman emperor of the west in AD 476, the declining power of traditional State apparatus, and the growing power of the Church.²¹³ In this climate, it is reasonable to assume that the prohibition of urban burial and the boundary that delineated the restriction (the *pomerium*) were meaningless if the institution that created them was no longer willing to enforce the law. It certainly seems that the implementation of these restrictions and the maintenance of the *pomerium* was simply no longer a priority or concern for magistrates of Rome in the fifth century, understandably so in the case of the pagan boundary. By the fourth century, the word *pomerium* had largely dropped out of common use and from then is only rarely found in texts, and never again in epigraphy. By the fifth, it is likely that many of the proposed original 139 Claudian, 150 Vespasianic, and 130 Hadrianic boundary stones (*cippi*) that had once marked the line of the *pomerium* and may have served as a reminder of its existence had been spoliated (as had many other building materials from the city), and of the few secure examples we have of stones that were recovered *in situ*, all showed signs of being heavily silted up, and it is possible that they would have been effectively illegible even in antiquity.²¹⁴ There is no known attempt to restore the boundary after the third century. And though the official prohibition of burial inside the city had not formally been repealed (and would not be so until the ninth century), it is clear from the proliferation of urban burials from the fifth century onwards (and particularly those that occur in formerly public buildings owned by the state) that there was no

²¹³ All of these subjects are covered extensively by Curran, 2000.

²¹⁴ Associated bibliography for each *cippus* can be found in the *CIL* entries which have been recorded in Appendix A.

longer any legal consequence to breaking the law. The Church certainly had no need to enforce such a rule.

It seems that after each traumatic event the city underwent notable degrees of rebuilding and the infrastructure that had been damaged during the conflict began to be repaired. After the siege and sack of AD 408-10 it appears that the inhabitants of Rome turned their attentions towards restoring the city, possibly on the instructions of Honorius.²¹⁵ Attempts were made to return the appearance of the city to a semblance of its former glory, though some of those attempts were largely superficial as in the case of the *Basilica Aemilia*, whose façade appears to have been restored while the rest of the building, destroyed by fire sometime around the AD 410 sack, remained in ruins.²¹⁶ Efforts of this kind were also documented by Cassiodorus as late as the reign of Theodoric, demonstrating a persistent effort by the inhabitants of Rome and the governing elite to return the city to both its former physical beauty and functionality (as far as was possible), and to preserve its reputation (Cassiod. *Var.* on the beautification of Rome: 1.21, 3.29-31; on the restoration of Pompey's theatre: 4.51; on the aqueducts: 7.6; and on the duty of the urban prefect: 7.15). It follows then, that any emergency measures taken by the administration to permit citizens a form of burial inside the city walls during the fifth century were unlikely to have been adopted as acceptable, organised funerary practices once the traumatic events of those decades had passed and city life had regained a modicum of normality. The burial activity from the fifth century is haphazard and disorganised, and shows no clear evidence of management. It is not legal funerary activity, either in the extremities of the conflict, or during times of peace. It is clear that

²¹⁵ Philostorgius, *Hist. Eccl.* 12.5.

²¹⁶ Ward-Perkins, 2012: 68.

there was an interest on the part of the Christian Church in protecting and honouring the tombs and relics of the martyrs, and in controlling high-status burial in churches. What is less evident is any such interest in the burial of the common Christian before the seventh century.²¹⁷

At the end of the period under examination, the pontificate of Gregory I in the late sixth century, the ancient position of the *praefectus urbi* (who had previously held responsibility for the urban administration) disappeared, last mentioned in AD 599.²¹⁸ The role of the Senate in controlling and maintaining the city was diminished in the aftermath of the Gothic Wars, and much of its responsibilities in running the city were delegated to the Church, including control over its boundaries and the maintenance of its walls.²¹⁹ In sum, the institution that would have been responsible for the implementation of the burial law was one that had no interest in doing so.

4.4.4 Summary

The prohibition of urban burial prior to late antiquity was a multi-faceted restriction based upon the requirements of a city experiencing different pressures to those experienced by Rome in the fifth century. That the religious, social, and political climate of the fifth century differed from that of the first and second is undeniable and crucially important to our understanding of the shift in funerary practice; the phenomenon of urban burial in late antiquity must be viewed in light of the burial tradition in Rome and not as an isolated and new subject divorced from its historical context. In addition, the examination of the pressures on the city of Rome and its burial topography prior to late antiquity reveals a landscape of

²¹⁷ Bodel, 2008: 182;

²¹⁸ Dey, 2011: 242.

²¹⁹ Brown, 1971: 21-37; Dey, 2011: 243.

different factors coalescing to create the environment needed for the *pomerium* and its associated restrictions to be born: with this in mind, it is vital that my examination of the late antique burial context must be viewed in a similar fashion – not as the result of a single deciding factor but as the effect produced by a complex and evolving group of pressures.

The prohibition of urban burial at Rome, prior to late antiquity, rested on three underlying elements – the ideological understanding of death and the deceased, the lack of opportunity inside the city (and the resultant importance of preventing premium space being used for burial or monument), and finally the legal implications of contravening the law, from a state that was at least superficially willing to penalise those who were found to be in breach of the law (and which actively exported such a regulation to its provinces). All three of these underpinning factors in the development and endurance of the pomerial law had in effect disappeared by the fifth century. In fact, in more than one case, the near opposite situation existed.

It has been established through the discussion of these three areas that the climate in late antiquity was one of the absence of regulation, we can start to look at the shift in burials in the first phase – the fifth century - as the result of opportunistic actions made by the lower classes and urban poor in an environment that was unregulated and in which there was little fear of retribution.

Keeping track of property ownership in the late antique period is exceptionally difficult – we only know of a few examples of property being formally ceded to the church, the obvious case is that of the Pantheon which was given to the church by the emperor Phocas in AD 609, but this is so well-known precisely

because it is so rare.²²⁰ The *Liber Pontificalis* documents some cases of property owned by the church but generally these are of a smaller, private nature. It follows then that the large public buildings in which we find burials in the fifth and sixth centuries were not formally in the hands of the church; if they were, not a single piece of evidence has survived for any large public building of any kind. In this first phase of intramural burial then, the hundred years or so of a vacuum created by the absence of state intervention and an insufficient church infrastructure, in which burial appears to be relatively unregulated, it could be proposed that burials proliferated in buildings that were simply not high priority for either the church or the state, in an environment where formal permission to bury was not deemed important.

There is a distinct possibility that large public or civic buildings chosen for burials (such as the baths) may have been chosen for their architectural character or integrity – large superstructures with protective boundary walls.²²¹ Often large public buildings such as these were abandoned: it has already been mentioned that many *thermae* were in a state of disuse in this period. In this way, intramural burial could be viewed as merely an extension of the relentless resourcefulness of the Roman people, the same resourcefulness that led to mass spoliation, the repurposing of valuable space and materials, and illegal land appropriation. Grave location, in this early phase, was clearly not chosen on the basis of proximity to churches, but because of the availability of suitable buildings. It must also be noted that burials were not the only new activity taking place in these buildings. Burials were not clustering in empty buildings all the time: burials in what's now known as the Crypta Balbi for example, the footprint of the Theatre of

²²⁰ Costambeys, 2002: 726; Marder, 2009: 145; *LP* 69.2.

²²¹ Costambeys, 2002: 725.

Balbus, took place alongside shops, lime kilns, and domestic spaces. The building had been chosen as a site of activity because of the quality and size and suitability of the space, which is why we find lime kilns in the same latrine as the burials.

How then, to account for those anonymous low-status burials that were not located in large public buildings, but along roadsides or in houses, made from reused materials? To answer this, it is important to remember firstly that anonymous burials took place in all eras, not just the late antique Christian period – the anepigraphic environment in Rome in the fifth century does not necessarily reflect a significant change in funerary practice on its own. Similarly, the scattered or clustered nature of late antique intramural burials is not unique to the period – evidence from the *Isola Sacra* necropolis (*il campo dei poveri*) and elsewhere in Italy demonstrates that poorer burials were not zoned in organised cemeteries, but instead littered the available spaces, and this can also be seen at Rome in the imperial period.²²² Some several hundred burials from *Isola Sacra* were anonymous, with the deceased interred in simple graves of terracotta or simply in the soil.²²³ Without more precision in the descriptions of late antique burials from Rome it is impossible to know just how large a percentage of the known graves were of this type, though it is likely to have been a considerable number, if not all of the fifth century burials. The reuse of grave markers and materials in late antique burials also occurred in earlier periods and is attested in cemeteries in Italy, notably the recycled gravestones or markers found outside the *Porta Nocera* gate at Pompeii.²²⁴ So it seems that many of the characteristics which are often deemed new and unique about late antique funerary activity are actually

²²² Carroll, 2011b: 70.

²²³ Carroll, 2011b: 70.

²²⁴ Carroll, 2011b: 84.

well-established practices, and do not represent quite such a dramatic departure from tradition as previously assumed.

The fifth century graves were the first phase of urban burials, in the intermediate century between the neglect of burial regulations by the civic authorities and the creation of church infrastructure capable of taking over in the sixth century. This was an environment in which opportunity was key, as were individual choices, facilitated by the increasing number of abandoned buildings and falling population. The changing pattern was not the result of risk or insecurity as burials continued outside the walls, but of pragmatic choices that enabled people with little fiscal power to bury their dead closer to their homes in secure locations they otherwise wouldn't have been able to afford, with little fear of retribution for breaking a law that was no longer relevant due to the disintegration of a previously dominant concept of pollution. This was all governed by a state that was unwilling to enforce outdated and largely irrelevant burial legislation, drawn up centuries before to suit the needs and priorities of a very different city.

4.4.5 Concluding remarks - why does this matter?

All previous interpretations of this evidence and subject have dismissed the fifth century evidence as the product of emergency measures taken during the crises of the AD 410 and AD 455, and have focussed their attentions on the sixth and seventh century material. In some ways, this methodology can be understood. The fifth century burials documented in the catalogue represent a relatively small percentage of the total number of burials recorded by Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani. Using the information provided in the catalogue, the estimated minimum total number of individual burials (not burial *sites*, of which there are seventy-four) uncovered and documented up until 1995, and which have been dated to between the fifth and seventh centuries, is just over four hundred. This

is a particularly (and deliberately) low estimate, and in reality the amount would certainly be higher as sites with unspecified numbers of burials have been counted as having only one, even if they were known to have been developed cemetery sites. The total number of burials found at the sites documented in the catalogue could potentially be increased up to five or six hundred graves, based on the comparable sizes of those cemeteries whose numbers are known, but in the interest of avoiding too much guesswork, I have chosen to err on the side of caution. The burials that have been dated exclusively to the fifth century (and not also to the sixth) were found at just six of the seventy-four burial sites, numbering forty-five individual recorded graves. This represents just over 11% of the minimum total of four hundred, and nearer to 7% of the higher estimate of up to six hundred burials.

The sample size is small and unfortunately statistically insignificant, making this is a difficult body of evidence to work with precisely because the total number of burials is low and known to be incomplete, with unsystematic archaeological excavation hindering any possibility of a comprehensive survey. This does not mean it's not worth working on. This doesn't seem like a lot, but given that these sites are known to be isolated or clustered, not developed and protected cemeteries under church control, the likelihood of survival is low and the true total can be assumed to be much higher precisely because these burials weren't located in cemeteries that required permission to bury in. They are also up to a century older than the other burials in the catalogue, located in high-traffic areas or places that were redeveloped or abandoned, and their discovery has been almost entirely accidental. Of course the percentage is low – this is the beginning of the trend in the city, running parallel to other sites in the empire that demonstrate similar burial patterns, but it is not insignificant. This is not one or

two anomalies in an otherwise linear process, this is the gradual growth of a cultural practice, evidenced by sites ranging from one or two burials to multiple depositions, between five and thirty-five in the same spot – it is deliberate and careful burial taking place against the technicality of the law in an environment that had become favourable to such activity, activity which eased the financial and physical burden of providing proper burial for the middle to lower class. So while it is true that the vast majority of the burials date to the mid-late sixth century and seventh century, at which time the custom had become firmly entrenched, to dismiss the fifth century burials as anomalies or the result of conflicts would be reductive and would divert attention away from arguably the burials that show the earliest evidence for the phenomenon. The intramural burial habit did not develop in earlier periods of conflict, before the late antique period, because the precise set of circumstances were needed in order for it to be possible. Similar circumstances are found elsewhere in the empire on the same timeline to Rome, and demonstrate that the city was not simply responding to a crisis but changing its perception of funerary processes and controls. The dismissal of the fifth century evidence by earlier research was a mistake, and doing so has left a gap in the understanding of the phenomenon of intramural burial. It has shifted focus towards elements that have been attributed greater influence than can be evidenced, and derailed the discussion away from the larger picture and into guesswork and tangential discussion.

A great deal of information can be learned about a community from the systems that it creates with which to process and manage death. Ian Hodder wrote that "...burial ritual is not a passive reflection of other aspects of life. It is meaningfully constructed."²²⁵ Burials tell us about hierarchy, about privilege and

²²⁵ Hodder, 1982: 141-146; for discussion, Morris, 1992: 23.

poverty, about a community's priorities and concerns, their social structures and religious practices. Similarly, boundary creation is a fundamental part of community building, of delineating the world that a group occupies and exerting some control over it. Rome's boundaries tell us about the way in which its territory was regulated both inside the city and out, and the way the city was perceived and conceptualised. The intersection of these two spheres – burials and boundaries – in the *pomerium* and its gradual disappearance in the fifth and sixth centuries, offers an opportunity to study these fertile topics in tandem.

Once the burials creep into the city, it can be said with some certainty that the city of Rome no longer had a *pomerium* as it had been understood for almost a millennium – the residual pagan boundary that had lingered in the actions of its inhabitants and their conceptualisation of the city's borderscapes had been supplanted by a different spatial perspective which, while it could at least in some instances demonstrate small hints of continuity, marks a large departure from the physical reality of the city prior to the fifth century. The city of Rome in this period was characteristically distinct from what had come before, both in its religious life and in the ways in which its inhabitants occupied and appropriated space for burials. It should not be forgotten that intramural burial not only changed the way that inhabitants of the city behaved and understood the spaces they occupied, but it also fundamentally and irrevocably changed the way the city *looked*. The Rome of the medieval period, of the seventh century and beyond, was visually and conceptually different from its imperial and late antique predecessors, between which there had been a great deal of continuity.

It can be concluded from this chapter then, that the definition of the *pomerium* as a burial boundary as it had been set out in the republic had, by the time of the fifth and sixth centuries AD, almost entirely disappeared, as had the

specific set of circumstances that had produced such a restriction. The physical, religious, and legal environment of the late antique city, combined with a long process of accepting funerary spaces into the domestic sphere culminated in a fundamentally different funerary environment to anything that had been experienced in Rome before, and which would irrevocably alter the city in the centuries to come.

Chapter five: conclusions

In this thesis, I have traced the development of the city boundary from its earliest form as the Roman *pomerium*, a sacred line, to the monumental Aurelian Wall of late antiquity. In doing so, I have discussed the changing concept and meaning of the boundary of Rome, suggesting that there was a great degree of continuity in its conceptualisation until approximately the fifth century, after which treatment of the wall, ritual behaviours associated with it, and burial topography all show evidence of change.

There were two primary research questions that were set out in chapter one at the beginning of the thesis, to which each chapter has attempted to present an answer. Firstly:

What were the associations and restrictions attached to Rome's city boundary, and how did these change over time?

Chapter two set out a definition of the city boundary, demonstrating that the *pomerium* was seen as the primary boundary of Rome after the Servian Wall was rendered redundant in the late Republic. This discussion served the purpose of explaining the choice of subject (why the *pomerium* and not the customs boundary, for instance). What followed was an examination of the origins of the *pomerium* and an outline of the historical and political development of the city boundary of Rome, including the construction of the Aurelian Wall. In answer to the research question above, it was proposed that the political associations with the *pomerium* and the Aurelian Wall changed significantly over time – each extension of the *pomerium* was undertaken for different reasons, and the construction of the third century fortification was, in all likelihood, the result of several contributing factors.

Chapter three was primarily focussed on ritual activity that was associated with the boundary of Rome. It began with a discussion of three Roman festivals that were closely connected to either the location of the *pomerium* or its origin story. The *Parilia* was held on the day of Rome's foundation, while the *Amburbium* included a circumambulation of its line, and the *Lupercalia* made reference to the *sulcus primigenius* in its ritual. The longevity of these ritual practices suggests the continued importance of the boundary in the religious and public life of the city. The folklore of the *pomerium*, while not always prominent in accounts of festivals from the surviving literature, formed the backdrop to so many of Rome's important ritual practices. It remained, even into late antiquity, a location of undeniable conceptual importance, evoking both the foundation story of the city and thus, the very identity of Rome. Following the discussion of ritual, there was an examination of the city boundary as a division between spheres of activity: military, domestic, religious, and the legal implications of crossing the border. The military ritual of the *adventus* was examined, and using evidence of the depiction of the ritual in art and text throughout the imperial and late antique periods, it was demonstrated that a remarkable degree of continuity could be found in the conceptualisation of the border as a representation of the city as a whole. Finally, it was suggested that even after the changes that took place to the ritual landscape in the fifth century, some of the conceptual framework that had previously been associated with the *pomerium* could be seen in the inheritance of the Christian city boundary and its meaning in the city. Overall, in answer to the research question, chapter three demonstrated that there is to be found a remarkable degree of continuity in the religious associations of the sacred city boundary of Rome, even after it was once more given physical form as the Aurelian Wall. It can be seen again that in ritual activity, the fifth century was a

significant period of change, although the long development of the city boundary was not entirely replaced in the conceptualisation of the Christian city border.

Chapter four began with an investigation of the role of the *pomerium* as the burial boundary of Rome, followed by a discussion of the shift in burial topography, from extramural sites to intramural grave sites and cemeteries between the fifth and seventh centuries. After a discussion and critique of the current set of interpretative models, it was proposed that the change in distribution pattern could be the result of several different factors: the disappearance of the concept of 'death pollution', the increased opportunity to bury inside the city owing to the drop in population and abandonment of buildings, and the lack of state involvement in implementing and enforcing the burial laws. In answer to the research question above, the funerary associations with Rome's city boundary all but disappeared between the fifth and seventh centuries, which had a notable effect on the physical character of the city and represented a significant departure from the customs which had been in effect for many centuries prior to late antiquity.

The second research question that was posed in the introduction, and which was intended to make a much larger point about the city of Rome as a whole in late antiquity, was as follows:

Why was the fifth century a significant time for the development of Rome's city boundary and its associated meaning, and how does this reflect the development of the city as a whole?

As has hopefully been shown in the course of this thesis, the fifth century represents a period of great change in many ways for the city of Rome and its inhabitants' relationships to the city boundary. Associations and customs which were ingrained in the life of the city and which had been practised for almost a

millennium, in this period, began to disappear and in many cases, be replaced by alternative Christian customs. What is significant however, is that although many of the religious and funerary associations with the boundary changed, elements of the underlying conceptual understanding of peripheral space in Rome persisted. This is a reminder that the late antique city was not one that existed in isolation, and the deeply ingrained customs and traditions and meaning of the city boundary of Rome, stretching back to the *pomerium* of the Republic, had effect over the conceptualisation of the border in the fifth century and beyond.

It is often said that there are many Romes, and this is as true today as it was in antiquity. Though the form of the city boundary may have changed over time, from the walls of Servius Tullius to those of Aurelian, from the *pomerium cippi* of Vespasian to the *Portae* named for Christian saints, there is to be found a remarkable continuity contained not within a border, but within an idea that the Eternal City was a sacred and significant place.

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Appendix A: Boundary and *pomerium cippi* catalogue

Abbreviations

<i>CIL</i>	1863-. <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> . Berlin.
<i>ILS</i>	Dessau, H. 1892-1916. <i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i> . Berlin.
EDR	Epigraphic Database Roma.

Boundary *cippi* of Lucius Sentius, 93-89 BC (3 surviving):

S1.

<i>Found</i>	via Marsala, Fernandino di Savoia barracks (1942)
<i>Current location</i>	Chiostro di Michelangelo, Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome, inv. 121977
<i>Material</i>	travertine
<i>Size</i>	200 cm x 63 cm x 26 cm
<i>ID numbers</i>	<i>CIL</i> 6.40885, EDR 093196
<i>Text (front)</i>	L(ucius) Sentius C(ai) f(ilius) pr(aetor) de sen(atus) sent(entia) loca terminanda coer(avit). B(onum) f(actum). Nei quis intra terminos propius urbem ustrinam fecisse velit nive stercus, cadaver iniecisse velit.
<i>Figure number</i>	4.2a

S2.

<i>Found</i>	via Magenta (1882)
<i>Current location</i>	Museo Montemartini, Rome, NCE 74
<i>Material</i>	travertine
<i>Size</i>	64 cm x 59 cm x 9 cm
<i>ID numbers</i>	CIL 6.31614, EDR 113977
<i>Text (front)</i>	L(ucius) Sentius C(ai) f(ilius), pr(aetor) de s(enatus) sent(entia) loca terminanda coer(avit). B(onum) f(actum). Nei quis intra terminos propius urbem ustrinam fecisse velit nive stercus, cadaver iniecisse velit.
<i>Figure number</i>	4.2b

S3.

<i>Found</i>	between via Principe Amedeo and via Alfredo Cappellini
<i>Current location</i>	Musei Capitolini, Rome, NCE 2921
<i>Material</i>	travertine
<i>Size</i>	115 cm x 65 cm x 26 cm
<i>ID numbers</i>	CIL 6.31615, ILS 8208b, EDR 113978
<i>Text (front)</i>	L(ucius) Sentius C(ai) f(ilius) pr(aetor) de sen(atus) sent(entia) loca terminanda coeravit.

B(onum) f(actum). Nei quis intra
terminos propius
urbem ustrinam
fecisse velit nive
stercus, cadaver
iniecisce velit.
'Stercus longe'
'aufer'
'ne malum habeas'.

Figure number 4.2c

Pomerium cippi of Claudius, AD 49 (7 surviving):

C1.

Found via Flaminia 52, c.330m from the Porta del Popolo
Current location Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome, inv. 61132
Material travertine
Size 190 cm x 71 cm x 48 cm
ID numbers CIL 6.40852, EDR 093182
Text (top) Pomerium
(front) Ti(berius) Claudius
Drusi f(ilius) Caisar
Aug(ustus) Germanicus,
pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(inucia) pot(estate)
VIII[I], imp(erator) XVI, co(n)s(ul) III,

	<p> censor, p(ater) p(atriciae), auctis populi Romani finibus pomerium amplia((v))it termina((v))itq(ue). </p>
<i>(left side)</i>	CXXXIX
<i>Figure number</i>	2.5a
C2.	
<i>Found</i>	between via Tevere and via Po
<i>Current location</i>	unknown
<i>Material</i>	travertine
<i>Size</i>	195 cm x 64 cm x 41 cm
<i>ID numbers</i>	CIL 6.37023, ILS 0213, EDR 072320
<i>Text (top)</i>	Pomerium
<i>(front)</i>	<p> Ti(berius) Claudius Drusi f(ilius) Caisar Aug(ustus) Germanicus pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate) VIII, imp(erator) XVI, co(n)s(ul) III, censor, p(ater) p(atriciae), auctis populi Romani [fi]nibus pomerium amplia((v))it termina((v))itq(ue). </p>
<i>(left side)</i>	CIIX

C3.

<i>Found</i>	south of Monte Testaccio (1885)
<i>Current location</i>	Antiquarium Comunale del Celio, Rome, NCE 4736
<i>Material</i>	travertine
<i>Size</i>	200 cm x 75 cm x 50 cm
<i>ID numbers</i>	CIL 6.31537a, 6.37022, ILS 0213, EDR 032554
<i>Text (front)</i>	Ti(berius) Claudius Drusi f(ilius) Caisar Aug(ustus) Germanicus pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate) VIII, imp(erator) XVI, co(n)s(ul) III, censor, p(ater) p(atriciae), auctis populi Romani finibus pomerium amplia((v))it termina((v))itq(ue).
<i>(left side)</i>	VIII
<i>Figure number</i>	2.5b

C4.

<i>Found</i>	between via dei Banchi Vecchi and vicolo di Malpasso
<i>Current location</i>	via dei Banchi Vecchi 145, Rome
<i>Material</i>	travertine
<i>Size</i>	72 cm x 66 cm x 10 cm
<i>ID numbers</i>	CIL 6.01231a, 6.31537b, 6.37022, ILS 0213, EDR 104000
<i>Text (top)</i>	Pomerium
<i>(front)</i>	[T]i(berius) Claudius

Drusi f(ilius) Caisar
 Aug(ustus) Germanicus
 pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate)
 VIII, imp(erator) XVI, co(n)s(ul) III,
 censor, p(ater) p(atriciae),
 auctis populi Romani
 finibus pomerium
 amplia((v))it termina((v))itq(ue).

Figure number 2.5c

C5.

Found Porta Metronia, Celio

Current location Galleria Lapidaria, XLI (9), Musei Vaticani, Città del Vaticano, inv. 6894

Material travertine

Size 56.2 cm x 65 cm x ?

ID numbers CIL 6.01231b, 6.31537b, 6.37022a, ILS 0213, EDR 105762

Text (front) Ti(berius) C[laudius]
 Drusi f(ilius) Caisar
 Aug(ustus) Germanicus
 pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate)
 VIII, imp(erator) XVI, co(n)s(ul) III,
 censor, p(ater) p(atriciae),
 auctis populi Romani
 finibus pomerium
 amplia((v))it termina((v))itq(ue)

Figure number 2.5d

C6.

Found Vigna Nari, via Salaria

Current location Galleria Lapidaria, XL (7), Musei Vaticani, Città del Vaticano, inv. 9268

Material travertine

Size 86.5 cm x 66 cm x 29 cm

ID numbers CIL 6.01231c, 6.31537c, ILS 0213, EDR 105763

Text (front) Ti(berius) Claudius
 Drusi f(ilius) Caisar
 Aug(ustus) Germanicus
 pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate)
 VI(III), imp(erator) XVI co(n)s(ul) IIII,
 censor, p(ater) p(atriciae),
 auctis populi Romani
 finibus pomerium
 amplia((v))it termina((v))itq(ue).

Figure number 2.5e

C7.

Found Monte Testaccio

Current location Galleria Lapidaria, XLI (5), Musei Vaticani, Città del Vaticano, inv. 6890

Material travertine

Size 56.2 cm x 65 cm x ?

<i>ID numbers</i>	CIL 6.37022b, EDR 105769
<i>Text (front)</i>	[T]i(berius) Cl[adius] Drusi f(ilius) Caesar Aug(ustus) Germanicus pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate) VIII, imp(erator) XVI, co(n)s(ul) IIII, censor, p(ater) p(atriciae), auctis populi Romani finibus, pomerium amplia((v))it termina((v))itq(ue).
<i>Figure number</i>	2.5f

Pomerium cippi of Vespasian, AD 75 (4 surviving):

V1.

<i>Found</i>	between via di Campo Marzio and via della Torretta
<i>Current location</i>	Chiostro di Michelangelo, Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome, inv. 125404
<i>Material</i>	travertine
<i>Size</i>	170 cm x 80 cm x 80 cm
<i>ID numbers</i>	CIL 6.40854, EDR 093184
<i>Text (front)</i>	[I]mp(erator) Cae[sar] Ve<s>pasianu[s] Aug(ustus) pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate) VI, imp(erator) XI[V],

p(ater) p(atriciae), censor,
 co(n)s(ul) VI, desig(natus) VII [et]
 T(itus) Caesar Aug(usti) f(ilius)
 Vespasianus, imp(erator) VI,
 pont(ifex), trib(unicia) pot(estate) IV,
 censor, co(n)s(ul) IV, desig(natus) V,
 auctis p(opuli) R(omani)
 finibus pomerium
 ampliaverunt terminaverunt(que).

(left side) CLVIII

(right side) CCX[L]

Figure number 2.6a

V2.

Found between Monte Testaccio and Porta S. Paolo (1856)

Current location Antiquarium Comunale del Celio, Rome, NCE 4735

Material travertine

Size 230 cm x 80 cm x 65 cm

ID numbers CIL 6.01232, 6.31538b, ILS 0248, EDR 032555

Text (front) [Imp(erator) Caesar]
 [Vespasianus Aug(ustus)]
 [pont(ifex) m]ax(imus),
 trib(unicia) pot(estate) VI, im[p(erator) XIV],
 p(ater) p(atriciae), censor, co(n)s(ul) VI, desig(natus) V[II et]
 T(itus) Caesar Aug(usti) f(ilius)
 Vespasianus, imp(erator) VI,

pont(ifex), trib(unicia) pot(estate) IV,
 censor, co(n)s(ul) IV, desig(natus) V,
 auctis p(opuli) R(omani)
 finibus pomerium
 ampliaverunt terminaveruntq(ue).

<i>(left side)</i>	XL VII
<i>(right side)</i>	P(assus) CCCXL VII
<i>Figure number</i>	2.6b

V3.

<i>Found</i>	beneath the basilica of S. Cecilia in Trastevere
<i>Current location</i>	S. Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome
<i>Material</i>	travertine
<i>Size</i>	65 cm x 62 cm x 10 cm
<i>ID numbers</i>	CIL 6.31538c, EDR 103989
<i>Text (front)</i>	[Imperator Cae]sar [Vespasi]anus Aug(ustus) pont(ifex) max(imus), trib(unicia) pot(estate) VI, imp(erator) XIV, p(ater) p(atriciae), censor, co(n)s(ul) VI, desig(natus) VII, [et] T(itus) Caesar Aug(usti) f(ilius) Vespasianus, imp(erator) VI, pont(ifex), trib(unicia) pot(estate) IV, censor, co(n)s(ul) IV, desig(natus) V, auctis p(opuli) R(omani) finibus [pomerium]

[ampliaverunt terminaveruntq(ue)].

(right side) p[edes] [----]

Figure number 2.6c

V4.

Found Vigna di Alfonso Ceciliano, Porta Salaria

Current location unknown

Material travertine

ID numbers CIL 6.31538a, EDR 105772

Text (front) [Imp(erator) Caesar]
 [Vespasianus Aug(ustus)]
 [pont(ifex) max(imus)],
 [trib(unicia) pot(estate) VI, im[p(erator) XIV],
 [p(ater) p(atriciae), censor, co(n)s(ul) VI, desig(natus) VII et]
 [T(itus)] Caesar Aug(usti) [f(ilius)]
 Vespasianus, imp(erator) VI,
 pont(ifex), trib(unicia) pot(estate) IV,
 censor, co(n)s(ul) IV, desig(natus) V,
 auctis p(opuli) R(omani)
 finib(us) pomerium
 ampliaverunt terminaveruntq(ue).

(left side) XXXI

Pomerium cippi of Hadrian, AD 121 (4 surviving):**H1.**

Found between via di Campo Marzio and via della Torretta, *in situ*
(1930)

Current location Chostro di Michelangelo, Musei Nazionale Romano,
Rome, inv. 125405

Material travertine

Size 210 cm x 115 cm x 80 cm

ID numbers CIL 6.40855, EDR 093185

Text (front) [Ex s(enatus)] c(onsulto) col[l]e[g]ium
[au]gurum auctore
[Im]p(eratore) Caesare Divi
[T]raiani Parthici f(ilio)
[D]ivi Nervae nepote
[T]raiano Hadriano
Aug(usto), pontif(ice) max(imo)
trib(unicia) potest(ate) V,
co(n)s(ule) III, proco(n)s(ule),
terminos pomerii
restituendos curavit.

(left side) CLIX

(right side) P(edes) CCXI

Figure number 2.7a

H2.

<i>Found</i>	Piazza Sforza Cesarini (1867)
<i>Current location</i>	Antiquarium Comunale del Celio, Rome, NCE 4748
<i>Material</i>	travertine
<i>Size</i>	200 cm x 80 cm x 44 cm
<i>ID numbers</i>	CIL 6.01233a, 6.31539a, EDR 032553
<i>Text (front)</i>	[Ex s(enatus)] c(onsultum), collegium augurum auctore Imp(eratore) Caesare Divi Traiani Parthici f(ilio) Divi Nervae nepote Traiano Hadriano Aug(usto), pont(ifice) max(imo), trib(unicia) pot(estate) V, co(n)s(ule) III, proco(n)s(ule), terminos pomerii restituendos curavit.
<i>(left side)</i>	VI
<i>(right side)</i>	P(assum) CCCCLXXX
<i>Figure number</i>	2.7b

H3.

<i>Found</i>	unknown
<i>Current location</i>	unknown
<i>Material</i>	travertine
<i>ID numbers</i>	CIL 6.01233b, 6.31539c, EDR 128093

Text (front) [Ex s(enatus)] c(onsulto) collegium
 augurum, auctore
 Imp(eratore) Caesare Divi
 Traiani Parthici f(ilio)
 Divi Nervae nepote
 Traiano Hadriano
 Aug(usto), pont(ifice) max(imo),
 trib(unicia) pot(estate) V,
 co(n)s(ule) III, proco(n)s(ule),
 terminos pomerii
 restituendos curavit.

H4.

Found S. Stefano del Cacco (1735)
Current location unknown
ID numbers CIL 6.31539b, ILS 0311, EDR 128094
Text (front) Ex s(enatus) c(onsulto) collegium
 augurum auctore
 Imp(eratore) Caesare Divi
 Traiani Parthici f(ilio),
 Divi Nervae nepote,
 Traiano Hadriano
 Aug(usto), pont(ifice) max(imo),
 trib(unicia) pot(estate) V,
 co(n)s(ule) III, proco(n)s(ule),
 terminos pomerii

restituendos curavit.

Unidentified *pomerium cippus* (1 surviving, possibly Claudian, AD 49):

P1.

Found via Nomentana, viale del Policlinico, during the
refurbishment of the Ministero dei Trasporti (1909)

Current location unknown

Material travertine (fragmentary)

Size 142 cm x 78 cm x 44 cm

ID numbers CIL 6.40853, EDR 093183

Text (top) Pomerium

**Appendix B: catalogue of intramural burials at Rome, fifth to seventh
centuries AD**

Appendix B has been removed by the author of this thesis for copyright reasons. It can be found in Meneghini & Santangeli Valenzani, 1993: 89-111; 1995: 283-90.

Figures

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Fig. 2.1 Map of Rome, including the Vespasianic *pomerium*,
the Servian and Aurelian Walls, and major temples/monuments.

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Fig. 2.2 A relief from Aquileia showing the ploughing of a *sulcus primigenius*,
2nd century BC.

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Fig. 2.3 A coin of Hadrian from Aelia Capitolina, showing the ploughing of the *sulcus primigenius*, AD 130-138.

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Fig. 2.4 Map showing the Aurelian Wall and major gates.



Fig. 2.5a Claudian *pomerium cippus* (Appendix A: C1), front and top.



Fig. 2.5b Claudian *pomerium cippus* (Appendix A: C3), side and front.



Fig. 2.5c Claudian *pomerium cippus* (Appendix A: C4), front.



Fig. 2.5d Claudian *pomerium cippus* (Appendix A: C5), front.

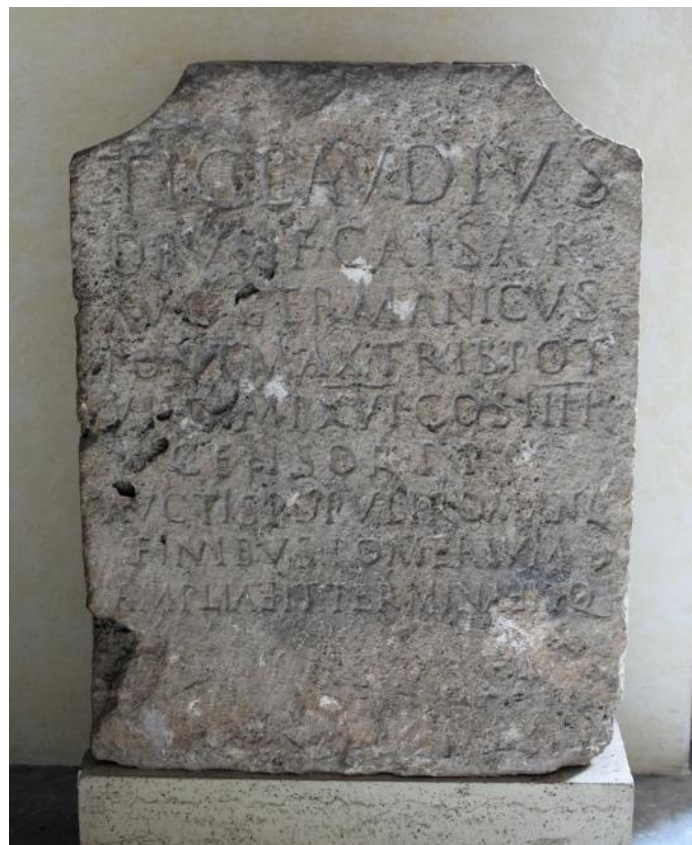


Fig. 2.5e Claudian *pomerium cippus* (Appendix A: C6), front.



Fig. 2.5f Claudian pomerium cippus (Appendix A: C7), front.



Fig. 2.6.a Vespasianic *pomerium cippus* (Appendix A, V1), front.

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Fig. 2.6b Vespasianic *pomerium cippus* (Appendix A, V2), front.



Fig. 2.6c Vespasianic *pomerium cippus* (Appendix A, V3), front.

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Fig. 2.7a Hadrianic *pomerium cippus* (Appendix A, H1), front.

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Fig. 2.7b Hadrianic *pomerium cippus* (Appendix A: H2), front.



Fig. 2.8 A stretch of the Aurelian Wall at the *Porta Appia*.



Fig. 2.9 *Porta Maggiore*, Rome.



Fig. 2.10 The *Amphiteatrum Castrense*, Rome.

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Fig. 2.11 The *Muro Torto*, Rome.

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Fig. 3.1 Beating the bounds, Hungerford, 1913.

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Fig. 3.2 A Fragment of the Severan Marble Map showing the *Mutatorium Caesaris* in the lower left corner.



Fig. 3.3 Cancellaria Relief A, Museo Gregoriano Profano.

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Fig.3.4 Cancelleria Relief B, Museo Gregoriano Profano.



Fig.3.5 *Cippus* detail of Cancelleria Relief B, Museo Gregoriano Profano.

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Fig. 3.6 Hadrianic panel on the Arch of Constantine, depicting a sacrifice at the altar of Diana, Rome.

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Fig. 3.7 Detail of the *adlocutio* scene of the *Anaglypha Traiani*, showing the base of the statue of Marsyas, late 1nd century AD.

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Fig. 3.8 Polychrome designs on the city wall of Le Mans, third century AD.

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Fig. 3.9 An *adventus* scene on the Arch of Galerius, Thessaloniki.

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Fig. 3.10 An *adventus* scene on the Arch of Constantine, fourth century AD, Rome.

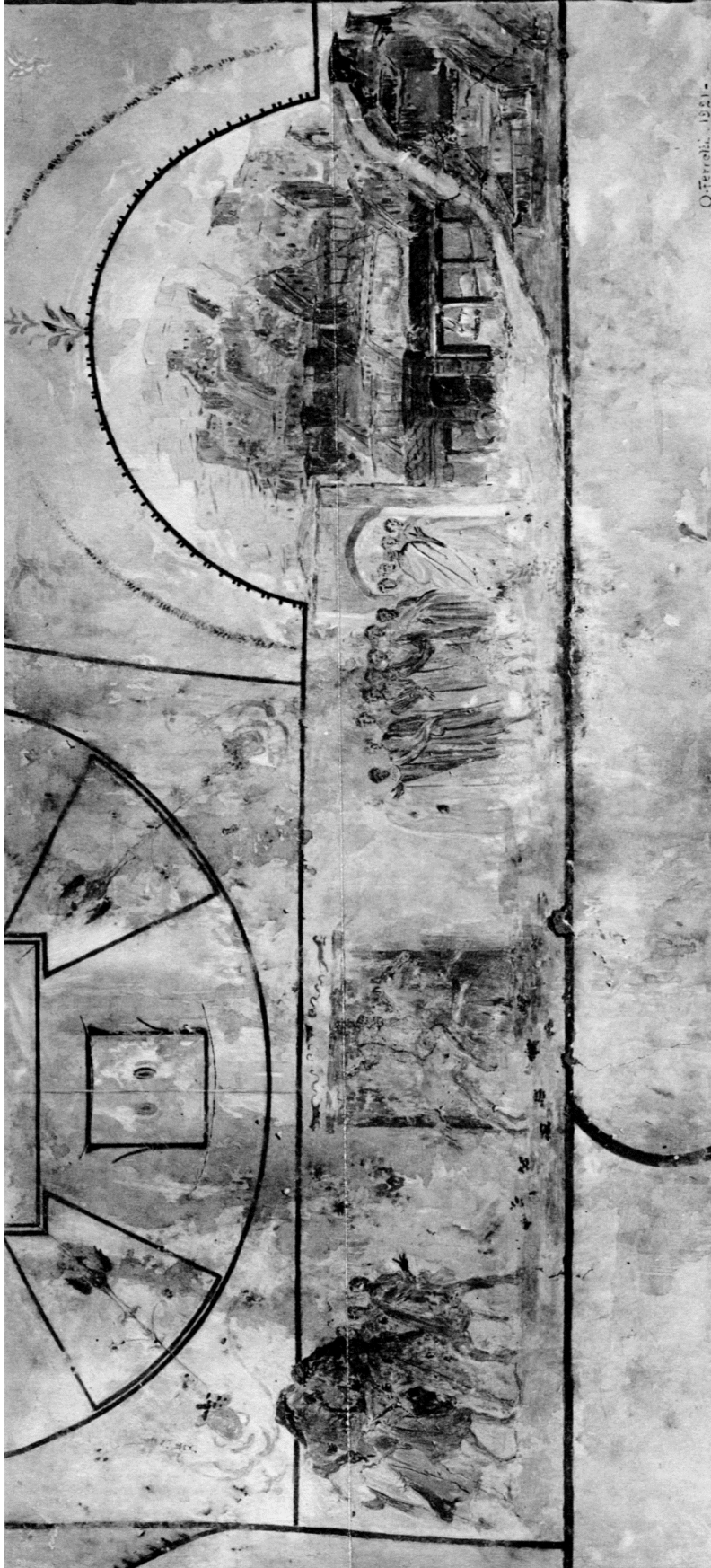


Fig. 3.11 An *adventus* scene from the Hypogeum of the Aurelii, Rome.

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Fig. 4.1 Tabula 1 of the *Lex Coloniae Genetivae Iuliae*, Madrid.



Fig. 4.2a *Cippus* of Lucius Sentius, (Appendix A: S1), front.

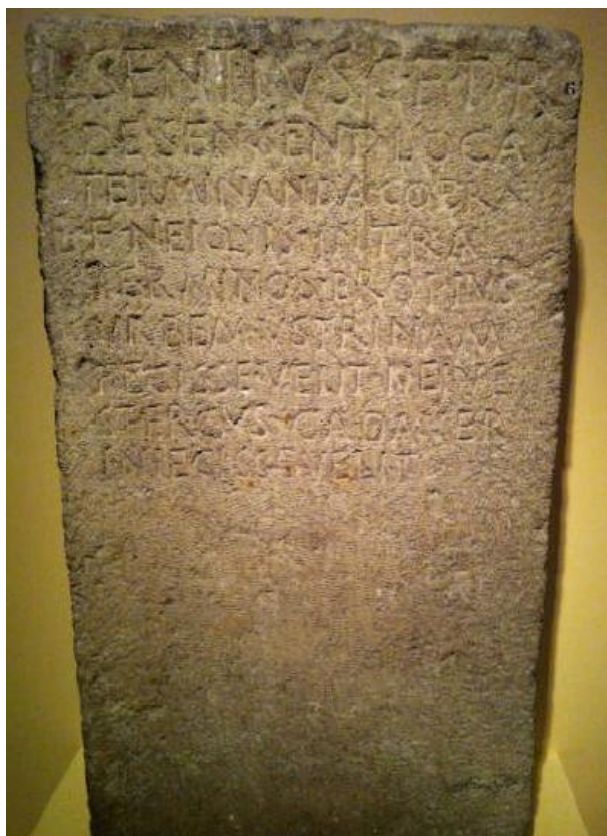


Fig. 4.2b *Cippus* of Lucius Sentius
(Appendix A: S2), front.

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Fig. 4.2c *Cippus* of Lucius Sentius (Appendix A: S3), front.

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Fig. 4.3 Map showing the Porta Esquilina and *puticuli*, Rome.

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Fig. 4.4 Map showing the distribution of intramural burials in Rome, fifth - seventh centuries AD.

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Fig. 4.5 Map showing the churches of Santa Bibiana and Sant'Eusebio, Rome.

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Fig. 4.6 Plan of a villa on the *via Flaminia*, showing connected tomb and residential buildings (numbers 29-31).