

City Gate Renovations in Roman Italy, 1st Century B.C.E. – 1st Century C.E.: Exploring the Cultural Conception and Physical Manifestation of the Urban Boundary.

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Abstract:

This thesis examines city gates during the first century B.C.E. and first century C.E. It addresses existing literature on city gates and fortifications and how the prevailing interpretation of such structures as primarily military architecture has led to a failure to recognise their important monumental value. It will also explore the lived experiences of Roman cities and interactions with city gates in order to explore their roles as key monuments, and urban artifacts, whose forms and meanings evolved over time. The study will investigate the role of city gates in Roman culture, highlighting the continued religious and cultural importance of the urban boundary in Roman society, and the literary and artistic uses of city gates. This will highlight the contrast between the Roman perception of city gates and their role in modern scholarship on Roman urbanism.

The thesis will also offer detailed case studies of city gate renovations at Rome and Pompeii, exploring how the gates' roles evolved over time and their relationship to the surrounding area. It will consider why, in times of relative peace, these gates were renovated and how their monumental forms and functions reflected the contemporary conception of Roman cities, in order to argue that the city gate was a key marker of the urban boundary; the importance of which persisted throughout this period despite seeming evidence to the contrary.

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Abbreviations.

AE = L'Année Épigraphique.

BMCRR = Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum.

CIL = Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.

DAR = Digital Augustan Rome Map.

ILS = Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.

LTUR = Lexicon Topigraphicum Urbis Romae.

OCD = Oxford Classical Dictionary.

PECS = Princeton Encyclopaedia of Classical Sites.

RIC = Roman Imperial Coinage.

RPC = Roman Provincial Coinage.

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Chapter 1: Introduction, Literature Review & Methodology.

1.1 – General Introduction.

This thesis addresses the subject of Roman city gates. It is a dedicated study of these monuments and their surroundings, and explores the importance of city gates to the conceptualisation and monumentalisation of the urban boundary in Roman Italy in the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. I have chosen to focus on gate renovations at Rome and Pompeii in this period as a means of exploring the changing roles of city gates and demonstrating that these monuments not only persisted in the urban landscape but were renewed and given new importance. This thesis also highlights the importance of the urban boundary, and specifically the city gate as its key threshold, in Roman culture, and will explore whether city gates should be understood as having more than just a defensive role within the wall circuit. Instead, it investigates their monumental roles within the city and urban life, the distinct socio-economic nodes which can be associated with them, and their cultural significance. By studying city gates as a collective I hope to shine more light on these roles and their place in Roman culture.

City gates are usually given cursory attention amidst the general phenomena of urban fortifications in literature on Roman urbanism.¹ However, their physical size and location across major roads made them very prominent in the lived experience of the city, and one of the places where religious, legal and cultural urban boundaries were most prominent. As the threshold which allowed travel across them, the gates were key sites of interactions with those fortifications and the boundaries they might represent, and were central to peoples' experiences of them. As such they would have been major landmarks, both physically and in the cognitive perception of the city.

Like many boundary markers, city gates' importance may have been situational, meaning that it was not always forefront in the minds of contemporary Romans in daily life. Instead, certain occasions in the city's civic

¹ As detailed in Section 1.2 - Literature Review, below.

and religious calendar, or events in the lives of individuals, might have emphasised the importance of the boundary and the connection of the city gate with that boundary. This thesis, however, will question why city gates retained an ever-present significance in urban life even as the religious, administrative or physical boundaries they marked changed in importance. The renovation of city gates, their construction in disproportionate scale and materials to surrounding fortifications, and the adoption of clearly monumental designs illustrates their importance as a category of monumental building, and reflects the importance of gates in the urban environment.

Despite this, city gates have received little sustained academic attention, and even less study which compares specific gates and their urban contexts in detail. Instead, literature on Roman urbanism has focused on gates as parts of the urban fortification system, often in provinces outside Italy, and identified them as primarily military architecture. In this thesis I address Italy during the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E., specifically to highlight how city gates were renovated as monuments in their own right throughout this period, during which Italy has been conventionally viewed as a peaceful province.² In doing so I hope to showcase city gates' importance beyond their role in urban fortifications, which receded over time, but as a monumental feature of the urban landscape, and an important concept in Roman urban culture.

In order to do so, I will first use this chapter to review existing trends in the study of Roman urbanism and fortifications to illustrate the value of studying city gates in their own right. I will aim to demonstrate how teleological narratives of Roman urbanism have contributed to the minimisation of the urban boundary as a cultural concept, and the misrepresentation of city gates and urban defences as markers of insecurity. In this thesis I intend to show how city gates could be constructed and renovated independently of city walls, and highlight the many roles they could play in the urban experience as a monument. I will also explore the benefits of studying the relationship between the city gate as a landmark and its surrounding area to construct compelling monument histories for these city gates and their roles in a dynamic urban landscape. I will then

² Despite notable episodes such as the Social Wars, Spartacan uprising, Civil Wars and the Year of the 4 Emperors, the perception of Italy during this period is still one of relative peace and stability in Roman history, compared with the Late Antique period.

outline the methodology by which I have conducted and selected case studies which exhibit the variety of city gate renovations.

An overview of the evidence of economic activity which routinely surrounded city gates will follow in Chapter 2, in order to explore the lived experiences of Roman city gates and their surrounding nodes. This allows for a reconstruction of the human activity in such areas, and exploration of how such activity would have affected the sensory experiences and perceptions of the urban boundary. This will provide vital background for the thesis and demonstrate why city gates should be understood in the context of their distinctive node within the urban landscape and how the study of these nodes can add detail and nuance to our understandings of Roman cities.

Chapter 3 will follow on from this by exploring the roles that city gates played in Roman art, literature and society. Much of this will pertain to the best-known urban boundary in Roman culture, the *pomerium* at Rome, but will draw on additional evidence to explore how the same concept was evident at other Roman cities, even if it was not formalised to the same extent as the *pomerium*. This chapter will investigate the role of the urban boundary and city gates in Roman mythology, religion, civic and legal definitions of the city, and artistic and literary devices which use the city gate. This evidence will demonstrate how important city gates were as a symbol and a landmark of the city. This will provide a platform from which to understand the renovations of city gates which will form the remainder of the thesis. Firstly, in Chapter 4 I will study the renovation of city gates in Rome itself, during the Augustan period, investigating their role in the urban landscape, and the persistence of the urban boundary represented by the Republican city wall. This chapter will also highlight how contradictory the evidence for such phenomena can be, as suburban development and infringements on the walls are combined with the monumental renovation of city gates. In Chapter 5 I will then compare the patterns of development surrounding gates and their renovations at Rome with those seen at Pompeii, to investigate how these experiences were played out on a smaller scale at other Italian cities, and not limited to the Imperial capital.

Chapter 6 will bring together the key findings of these case studies and consider what they suggest about the roles of city gates at Rome and Pompeii

during the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E., and what we might draw from these trends about Roman urbanism elsewhere in Roman Italy and beyond. It will also illustrate the possibilities that this avenue of research opens up for comparing and contrasting our understanding of urbanism for different neighbourhoods, cities, and provinces and how future research might use this approach to deepen our knowledge. Its aim will be to demonstrate that city gates can be used as important tools for understanding the urban landscape and how Roman culture interacted with its surroundings.

1.2 – Literature Review.

Despite the impressive standing remains of Roman city gates in Italy and elsewhere in the Roman world, there has been relatively little detailed study of these monuments. Partly as a result of that, their monumental roles in Roman culture have often been under-appreciated in broader works on Roman urbanism. In this literature review I will outline how existing literature on Roman urbanism has shaped preconceptions about the roles of city gates, and how new approaches to studying and understanding Roman cities have developed which will inform my methodology. I will first explore how studies of fortifications have been revived, with a greater focus on their monumental capability, then demonstrate how a more integrated approach to landmark and city can provide valuable insight into Roman culture. In doing so I will demonstrate how further studies of city gates as urban artefacts will be highly beneficial to our understanding of these monuments and Roman urban life more generally.

City walls and their gates were often the subject of nineteenth- and twentieth-century studies of Roman cities, not least because of the impressive size of surviving wall circuits such as the Aurelian walls.³ This meant, not only that they were highly visible, but they could be studied without extensive excavation. Early studies often focused on the identification of the routes of walls and positions of gates; especially at Rome where textual sources could be used to attempt to apply the original names to the locations of gates.⁴ Dating construction, repairs and renovations based on variations in stonework and

³ Leriche 2016: 11.

⁴ Parker 1874, for example, pays particularly close attention to identifying the locations of specific gates named in the historical record for Rome.

historical sources in order to establish the chronology of these monuments was often a key aim.⁵ Elsewhere, as at Pompeii, excavating the route of the city walls and gates was used as a means to identify the limits of the urban settlement, assuming that these marked the extent of the settlement.⁶ Walls were largely viewed in their capacity as fortifications, linked with the defence of the city and historical episodes of siege and warfare, and as such have long remained the subject of study of a few specialists interested in military architecture rather than social and cultural historians.⁷ Gates were inherently linked with walls in such studies, and perceived as part of the circuit that was necessary to allow access, but was primarily defensive in purpose.

However, as early as the 1930s scholars such as Ian Richmond were highlighting the monumental capacity of city walls and gates in the Augustan period and considering whether the monumental impact of such features should be recognised alongside their defensive purpose, and whether gates might be built as monuments outside the context of urban defence.⁸ Despite localised studies on specific gates or city walls, city gates never became the subject of sustained inquiry and made little impact on more mainstream studies of Roman cities or urbanism as a whole. Italian scholars such as Lucos Cozza worked in depth on the history of the Aurelian wall throughout the middle of the twentieth century but this interest did not transition into Anglophone scholarship.⁹ Instead, city fortifications were understood as defensive features, early Imperial walls and gates were minimised, and the subject as a whole seldom discussed outside the context of defence, military influence on colonial settlements, and Late Antique insecurity.

City walls, and therefore city gates, were viewed as primarily obstructive architecture. This emphasised their role in denying access, when necessary, and drew on many of the expectations of medieval historiography when city

⁵ For example, Maiuri (1929, 1943) established a chronology for the fortifications at Pompeii, which has subsequently been complicated (De Caro 1985; Van der Graaff 2018: 20, 22); Säflund (1932) conducted similar analysis on the Republican wall at Rome. Such work was foundational to the study of fortifications, but many chronologies have now been revised based on later work.

⁶ Van der Graaff 2018: 14.

⁷ Leriche 2016: 11.

⁸ Richmond 1932: 57, 59, 60.

⁹ For example; Cozza 1970, 1971, 1982.

walls might be more closely guarded for reasons of defence and taxation,¹⁰ but minimised the fact that city gates would usually have been open in the early Imperial period. There is little evidence that points to gates having gate-keepers or that they were regularly closed overnight, especially in the early Imperial period; instead, much of our evidence points to free and easy movement between different cities even overnight.¹¹ Many gates of the late Republic and early Imperial periods employed multiple passages, larger arches, and often lacked built-in closure mechanisms all together, illustrating that they were not intended to prevent access. In times of peace, it is very unlikely that city gates were used in an obstructive capacity, even if they were used as thresholds for certain laws which might have affected movement. Instead, I have chosen to emphasise their role as connective architecture, linking extra- and intra-mural areas, in an attempt to counter some of these assumptions.

This approach builds on MacDonald's study of the architecture of Roman cities, which offered an alternative interpretation of city gates and other arches which highlighted their role as connective architecture. While this has always been a key role of the city gate, which could equally prevent and allow access through city walls, it tends to be minimised in earlier studies of fortifications. Instead, MacDonald highlighted how large archways could simultaneously divide space because of their transverse position compared to the road, while also connecting the spaces on either side. The shape of the arch draws the eyeline along the axis of a street, directing focus and movement.¹² In applying this understanding to city gates, which shared many of the stylistic features of other monumental arches, we can recognise their roles as connective architecture, which was vital to the relationship between intra- and extra-mural spaces. My approach therefore also integrates new understandings of the importance of the urban periphery in Roman cities of this period which will be discussed below.

¹⁰ Van Tilburg 2007: 111.

¹¹ Aelius Aristides *Or.* 51.1-10, depicting Aristides' travel overnight to find a suitable inn. Van Tilburg (2007: 110, 118) highlights that Latin has no word corresponding to gate-keeper, and early writing on defensive strategy such as Aeneas Tacticus' 4th century B.C.E. treatise suggest that wall sentries and gate guards should be drawn from the social elite in the event of a siege, which implies there was not a regular cohort that fulfilled this duty (Aeneas Tacticus V.1-2, see also I and III for organisation of guards).

¹² MacDonald 1986: 'Passage Architecture.'

Pierre Gros' 1992 chapter 'Moenia' was a landmark in reconsidering the roles of fortifications beyond defensive purpose.¹³ Gros' work focused on fortifications at western cities during the Augustan period, and underlined the monumental capacity of city walls distinct from their defensive purpose. The chapter also highlighted how Greek literature included city walls as a key feature of a city, and how the term *moenia* could be used to encompass the walls and everything they contained.¹⁴ This corresponded with changing attitudes towards late antiquity, in particular, and the concept of city walls as a major urban monument was adopted as a useful alternative to their interpretation as a symptom of decline. Although this built on existing ideas,¹⁵ it was not widely incorporated into scholarship on Roman urbanism before this point, and the chapter served to effectively demonstrate the concept to a broader audience. In doing so, Gros demonstrated how walls and gates could be studied for their roles outside military history and the value of written sources for understanding the cultural significance of gates.

Since this time, studies of fortifications have usually acknowledged the monumental scale and impact walls and gates could have, through different features such as decorative stonework, scale, and inscriptions.¹⁶ But many of these studies are case studies of individual gates or cities, studied without comparison to other examples, rather than considering what city walls and gates might tell us about Roman urbanism more generally. Regional case studies do appear, but tend to focus on data such as size, construction materials, architecture and dating. In both cases the nature of the work dictates such specific studies, based on the archaeology of standing remains, excavation of specific sites or the comparison of available evidence from different sites.¹⁷ However, in the general interpretation of Roman city walls, defensive capability remains a crucial factor. While their monumentality is recognised, this is often seen as a secondary motive for their construction or design features, especially in works outside the field of fortification studies. City

¹³ Gros 1992.

¹⁴ Gros 1992: 212.

¹⁵ See for example, Richmond 1932, pg.14 above.

¹⁶ E.g., Dey 2010; Van der Graaff 2018.

¹⁷ For example, see contributions in Frederiksen et al. 2016 *Focus on Fortifications*.

gates continue to be studied as part of the wall circuit, not as their own monument with discrete construction phases.

The role of the city gate in Roman culture, urban life, and its impact on the landscape is almost never explored in depth. Other approaches, such as Van Tilburg's work on traffic in the Roman world have focused instead on gates' roles in the administration of the city,¹⁸ and sometimes cite their possible use as tax boundaries or inclusion in later aqueduct structures as justification for their importance, drawing on the uses and perception of gates in medieval history. Sustained inquiry suggests that while city gates may have fulfilled all of these roles at different times, infrastructure surrounding tax or traffic is an unconvincing argument for why these gates existed in the forms they did.¹⁹

Furthermore, where fortifications have been studied in detail, the majority of such investigations have been on the early and middle Republican periods – highlighting urban development, city state systems, or Roman colonisation – with a strong focus on city walls as monuments which could illustrate independence and defend the city.²⁰ This owes much to overarching narratives in histories of the Roman Empire and Roman urbanism which have viewed the development of colonies as a means of controlling and expanding Roman territory in Republican history. Literature on early Roman settlements and colonies often explores the influences on town-planning, and the presence of key monuments, that can be connected with 'Roman' cultural ideals (but are in reality often related to broader Mediterranean culture and the influence of the military on veteran settlements). In such cases the experiences of those living in the new foundation, and how the settlement changed over time, is rarely studied.

For later antiquity, many of the same interpretations of fortifications are evident in scholarship.²¹ Studies of Late Antique cities are often intended to investigate the transformations which took place in the early Medieval period and trace the beginnings of such processes back into the late Roman period.

¹⁸ Van Tilburg (2008: 134, 140) points to traffic flow as a key reason for the addition of extra arches at city gates in Pompeii.

¹⁹ For discussion of the evidence of taxation at city gates see Chapter 2, pp.41-42.

²⁰ See, for example, contributions to Frederiksen et al. 2016.

²¹ Contributions to Intagliata et al. *City Walls in Late Antiquity* (2020), for example.

The idea that late-Roman cities were increasingly under attack and threatened by incursions has been rightly challenged,²² and the idea of increasing autonomy in local civic government and weakening central power has also been used to explain the addition or renovation of fortifications at many Roman cities of this period.²³ In connecting Roman urbanism to ideas of state decline, a teleological narrative has been constructed whereby late-Roman cities are used to explain the urbanism of Medieval settlements rather than being understood in their own right. While it is often recognised that city walls and gates held a monumental role and could signal independence, status and means as well as military defence in both early and late Roman history, the monumentality of city walls and gates is still fundamentally viewed as stemming from their defensive purpose. According to this line of thought, the monumental scale of walls, towers and gates, and their social status in early colonies and late antiquity was still heavily influenced by the idea of defence.

Despite the contributions of Richmond and Gros, far fewer studies have explored the roles of fortifications in the urban landscape in the early Imperial period, largely due to narratives which emphasise themes of the security and prosperity of the Empire. The lives of walls and gates constructed earlier in Roman history within the transforming urban landscape have rarely been considered outside a small number of specialist volumes, while the continuity of city walls and renovation of city gates in the early Imperial period has been overlooked. Nonetheless, approaching city walls and gates as 'urban artifacts' whose meaning, importance and form could all change over time,²⁴ has been remarkably productive in studies such as Van der Graaff's book on the city wall at Pompeii. By focusing on the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E., my research will highlight gate renovations that are not connected with renovations of urban defences, and so provide a valuable opportunity to explore the cultural role of city gates independent from city walls.

²² See, for example, Dey 2010 for revision of narratives that wall building in Late Antique Gaul was solely caused by responses to incursions, and acknowledgement of different provincial experiences in Christie & Loseby's *Towns in Transition* (1996).

²³ Combinations of such factors that appreciate the historical experience of specific areas, (Esmonde-Cleary's work on late Roman Gaul, for example (2020)) are most common.

²⁴ Rossi 1984: 29-32.

The relative dearth of academic literature studying the construction and renovation of city walls and gates in the late Republic and Imperial period has restricted the deepening of our understanding of this phenomenon.²⁵ Even a cursory investigation into fortifications in this period yields numerous examples of the construction and renovation of city walls and gates, which warrant further examination. Many of these are particularly notable for the renovation of, or construction of, city gates in isolation from the construction or renovation of a city wall. This is particularly illustrative of the importance of city gates as monuments in their own right, apart from their role in a defensive circuit. Isobel Pinder's work on the subject has been particularly noteworthy, and recent studies have begun to address this topic.²⁶ Where city gates have been constructed or renovated, they are often described instead as arches, causing further confusion. The relationship between increasingly monumental city gates and other monumental arches in the urban and peri-urban landscape is complex, but city gates retain a function in defining space and marking a boundary, however historic that boundary may be. Understanding the transformations of city gates and the adoption of more monumental forms allows us to see the continuity of the urban boundary in Roman culture. This thesis, therefore, will address this period to redress the balance of scholarship and demonstrate the persistent importance of city gates as a monument.

In the study of Roman urbanism more generally there have also been significant shifts in approaches to the study of the Roman city, and topics of academic interest. Studies of Roman urbanism have often followed developments in the study of urban anthropology, with a gradual shift in focus from urbanisation – the processes by which urban settlements and city states came to exist – to urbanism, the study of lived experiences within the city and the urban way of life. Even so, foundation remains an important subject of study in Roman history, due to the importance of colonial foundation on Roman settlements throughout the Mediterranean.

²⁵ For examples which have focused on this: Gabba 1972; Lomas 1997; Stevens 2016, 2017.

²⁶ See, for example, Pinder 2011, 2016, 2017. Froehlich's 2022 volume *Stadttor und Stadteingang...* addresses many of the areas explored by this thesis, and will substantially fill this research gap, but was released too late to be brought into consideration for this thesis.

Literature on Roman urbanism has also historically focused on the question of influence, over subjects such as orthogonal planning, infrastructure and key ideas of what the city should represent, and whether those influences should be sought in Greek, Etruscan or other Italian origins.²⁷ For the most part, scholars now accept that Roman urbanism was inevitably influenced by many different internal and external forces. The notion of an identifiable 'Romanisation' of urban settlements in provinces beyond Italy is also less favoured compared to studies of a reciprocal cultural exchange and local identity. However, the identification of key urban features which can define a town, city, and illustrate 'Roman' influence have still been the focus of many of the studies of Roman urban sites, in order to contribute to these larger debates. Studies of Roman urbanism often fail to explore in depth how these towns and cities transformed over time, and repairs and renovations to major monuments. This leaves our understanding of Roman urban environments artificially static, rather than recognising them to be dynamic and constantly changing environments. By studying the development of a particular area within the city over a period of time, we can explore how changing culture and experiences affected the urban landscape and vice versa. This reciprocal relationship is at the heart of the case studies used in this thesis.

Scholarship on Roman urbanism was also pre-occupied for a long time with models of the Roman economy and the role that cities played within that. The debate between Consumer and Producer city models, and their various offshoots, dominated discussions of the Roman city and economy for much of the twentieth century.²⁸ Attention has since shifted away from macro-level theoretical debates towards studies of the Roman economy that focus more on how commerce, production and street trades operate, using evidence from archaeology, literature and other primary sources. Such studies explore how the Roman economy operated on smaller scales,²⁹ and move towards understanding the lived experiences of the Roman economy. This has helped in creating more detailed reconstructions of Roman urban life and understanding experiences of Roman urbanism.

²⁷ See for example, contributions to *Urban Society in Roman Italy* (Cornell & Lomas 1995).

²⁸ Parkins 1997; Whittaker 2005.

²⁹ Wilson & Flohr 2016; Kehoe 2018; Holleran 2018.

Since the 1980s, there has been an increasing focus on studying Roman cities as lived environments, and understanding the lived experiences of their residents. The appreciation of the influence of physical space on human behaviour, and vice versa, that came with the Spatial Turn has helped to alter perspectives on the urban environment and encouraged the consideration of human experiences within it. The use of GIS and other spatial mapping and measuring systems in archaeology has also enabled new approaches to the Roman city that can explore different subjects and data-sets such as sight-lines, and traffic patterns, which in turn can enable us to reconstruct how people in the ancient world might have actually used urban space. In conjunction with new sensory based approaches to archaeology and ancient history which emphasise the role of not only the visual experience of space but aural, tactile, olfactory and taste experiences, such approaches can help to understand the city and the experiences of the people living within it.³⁰ Such sensory approaches can vary from the hypothetical scenarios used by Favro,³¹ to scientific studies that consider how materials and architecture affected sightlines and audibility.³² However, such methods are still not routinely incorporated into the study of urban environments, despite their valuable contribution to our understanding of how these environments were experienced and altered by human interaction.

Malmberg and Bjür's 2011 study of the Porta Esquilina and Porta Tiburtina nodes at Rome was formative to this thesis in demonstrating the potential for studying the construction and renovation of a city gate in the context of the transformation of the surrounding areas.³³ Although their chapter could not cover either node in such depth as provided in this thesis, it demonstrated the potential for studying the city gate as a landmark, within a node, and on the changing sensory experiences of that node which came with its evolution over time. Such interconnected histories of the study of monument, landscape and transformation over time have seldom been applied to city gates. However, work such as Van der Graaff's study of the history of the walls and gates at Pompeii have demonstrated that approaches studying the history of

³⁰ Betts 2011: 119.

³¹ Favro 1996: Chapter 2 and Chapter 7.

³² E.g., Laurence 1995; Ellis 2004; Betts 2011; Van Nes 2011.

³³ The concept of nodes will be discussed more fully below, pp.24-25.

such monuments and their transformation over time have rich potential for our understanding of the urban environment as a whole, and the context for specific transformations of city gates.

Literature on Roman urbanism in general has been dominated by studies on the cities which have been best preserved and excavated. As a result, many of these studies focus on exceptionally preserved cities in north Africa such as Timgad and Leptis Magna,³⁴ or sites in Italy such as Ostia, Pompeii and Herculaneum. The lack of later occupation means that archaeological excavations have been able to uncover the majority of such cities, and the urban environment can be studied in greater detail. Other cities, such as Rome, which have undergone exceptionally high volumes of excavation, are also highly instructive. It could be questioned whether studies of Rome and Pompeii can be considered representative of urbanism in the rest of the Roman Empire, due to factors such as Imperial influence at Rome, and the small scale of cities like Pompeii. However, to move forward, scholarship must make use of the available evidence, and where possible compare and contrast evidence from these cities with others across the empire. Roman Italy, being at the heart of the Empire, is often neglected for studies of fortifications compared to cities in north-western provinces such as Britain, where the emphasis on the role of the military in influencing Romano-British culture has led to city walls being highlighted. By studying the transformation of city gates in Roman Italy, I believe I can bring such strands of scholarship closer together and compare how concepts such as the urban boundary were important across the Roman world.

Among key theoretical approaches to understanding the Roman urban boundary has been the idea of liminality. This refers to the state of being between easily definable categories. This concept was first developed by anthropologists such as Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep,³⁵ in the structuralist school of anthropology, to explore different life stages and the transitions between them that are often marked with rituals and ceremonies which define the movement from one category to another. In liminal states, people are felt to be particularly vulnerable to external threats of corruption or pollution. Although the model was developed in relation to cultures in East Africa

³⁴ E.g., MacDonald 1986: 'Introduction.'

³⁵ Turner 1967: 95-6; 1969: 109; Van Gennep 1960.

in the twentieth century, comparable rituals are easily found in Roman culture and indicate a similar degree of concern regarding liminal states, as in Roman wedding rituals.³⁶ The idea has since been adapted for other types of liminality such as pollution by other scholars, and the original theories have continued to evolve.³⁷

Liminality has also been applied to space by subsequent scholars, proposing that liminal spaces – which exist between clearly defined spheres such as outside and inside the home – would also have been viewed with similar levels of distrust and superstition. Concerns about the inherent spiritual vulnerability of liminal spaces like gates, bridges and doorways have often been incorporated into studies of the Roman world and Roman religion. In part this is due to the wealth of evidence which suggests that such locations were felt to require divine protection.³⁸ Therefore, the concept of liminality has proved to be a valuable tool in the study of space in the Roman world. The liminal nature of city gates and their potential vulnerability in this sense has been previously noted at Pompeii,³⁹ but despite the acknowledged importance of liminality at doorways in the Roman world there has been little study of the same phenomenon in city gates. This is largely due to the relative lack of evidence, compared to literary sources which clearly list the deities associated with doorways,⁴⁰ but this study will highlight the liminality of city gates as a threshold of the urban boundary and as a lived experience in the event of passing through some gateways.

Another anthropological shift which has deeply affected the study of Roman history and urbanism is in the approach to the study of boundaries. While previously, borders were primarily perceived in their capacity of dividing territory and thus cultures, now it is recognised that borders were often areas of intense exchange and cultural interaction.⁴¹ More modern approaches emphasise the importance of these cultural connections and interaction across

³⁶ Flower 2017: 78-85.

³⁷ Douglas 2003: 2-3, 97-8.

³⁸ See Chapter 3, pp.86-89.

³⁹ Van der Graaff 2018: 221-224; Van der Graaff & Ellis 2017: 277-8, 291, 297-8 on other cities in Italy.

⁴⁰ E.g., Augustine of Hippo *De Civ.* 4.8; Tertullian, *De Corona Militaris* 13; *De Idolatria* 15; Cyprian, *De Idolorum Vanitate* 4. See below, pp.86-88.

⁴¹ Mullin 2011: 5.

borderscapes which makes them distinct in character.⁴² The same is true of individual city boundaries and the relationship between city and countryside, which created peripheral and suburban areas with a distinctive character. This is in contrast to traditional scholarship on Roman cities which largely focused on central areas such as the forum and major public buildings. In part this is due to the historical significance which can be attached to such sites and structures. Although rural sites such as farms and villas were investigated, the fringes of the city were rarely studied in detail. As a result, the urban periphery was often conceptualised as a place with clear and obvious boundaries, where houses and commercial properties gave way to extra-mural tomb monuments, with clear division in use.

However, in the last twenty years there has been a growth in studies of the urban periphery, and the development of suburbs at Roman cities. Works such as Penelope Goodman's *The Urban Periphery* re-contextualised the development of such areas and the transformation of cities across time.⁴³ More recent studies, such as Allison Emmerson's *Life and Death in the Suburb*, have further explored the widespread peripheral growth of cities throughout the first century C.E.,⁴⁴ and have benefitted from extra-mural excavations at sites such as Pompeii which have demonstrated how funerary activity, commerce, leisure and residence could co-exist in the urban periphery. In doing so, study of suburban and peripheral areas of Roman cities has demonstrated how these sites changed over time, and that the borderscapes of Roman cities were important locations for interaction and exchange. Understanding these areas and their role in the wider urban system can offer greater insight into Roman urbanism, and especially to the lived experiences of people who may have lived and worked in them.

Anthropology has contributed much to approaches to studying Roman cities. In particular, Lynch's model for understanding the city through the study of 5 key component parts; landmarks, nodes, districts, edges and paths, has been influential in classicists' approaches to the ancient city.⁴⁵ In this framework,

⁴² See, for example contributions to Mullin (ed.) 2011.

⁴³ Goodman 2007.

⁴⁴ Emmerson 2020.

⁴⁵ See, for example Malmberg & Björ 2011, or Van der Graaff 2018.

Lynch defines landmarks as points of reference within the landscape which the observer experiences from outside, and nodes as distinctive areas within the city at which there is a concentration of a particular activity or building density, which become the focus and defining characteristic of a wider district.⁴⁶ The concept of the node might be applied to locations such as Roman *fora* or clusters of particular economic activity within the Roman city, but has also been applied to city gates.⁴⁷ I also propose that we should identify gates as landmarks, based on their presence in the urban landscape and their use in defining space and location within the city, that makes clear their role in the cognitive map of the Roman city.⁴⁸ By combining these two aspects and studying gates as a landmark which could be important in defining the specific node – both as a public monument and due to the influence that gates played on the development of economic activity – I hope to offer a different approach to studies of the urban environment. Case studies surrounding specific nodes, their transformation over time, and the renovation of a key landmark, allow us to explore the relationship between the city as a social entity and a physical one.

In addition to their defensive and monumental roles, city walls have been interpreted as a vital part of community building by marking out an ‘in’ group and an ‘out’ group based on relative position to the territorial limits of the wall. City walls could be a powerful tool for the organisation of space and community, creating an arbitrary spatial marker of belonging. However, by the first century B.C.E. the ‘Roman’ identity expanded far beyond the limits of the city of Rome and its immediate hinterland, seeming to transcend these urban boundaries. Roman culture and identity would have co-existed with many localised identities as the Empire grew, and the relationship between the physical space of the city and cultural identity can only have become more complex as cities outgrew their original fortifications. Chapter 3 will explore the extent to which the urban boundary, and fortifications and monuments which might reflect it, were still of cultural relevance during the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E.

In this thesis, I address the subject of city gates in the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E., and combine the study of the city gate as a node and a

⁴⁶ Lynch 1960: 47-8.

⁴⁷ See above, pp.21-22.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 3, pp.114-116, 122-124.

landmark. My intention is to demonstrate how the monument and the landscape around it were related and responded to changes in use and status across time. Specifically, I will highlight how city gates' roles changed over time and that at times defence could not have been a motivation for their construction and design. By focusing on Roman Italy, I hope to add to the corpus of literature on Roman fortifications and demonstrate the continued cultural capital of city gates throughout the stated time period. The roles of fortifications and the transformations they underwent have rarely been studied for the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. By focusing on the continuity of these monuments and their importance in the changing landscape of the Roman urban periphery, I hope to highlight just how culturally significant city gates were to the Roman conception of the city. In placing a spotlight on the development of distinct nodes on the urban periphery related to city gates, I intend to contribute to the growing literature on Roman suburbs and peripheral development, and showcase the importance of appreciating the impact of human activity on experiences of the built environment, and how they changed over time. Overall, I hope that this will contribute to our understanding of life in Roman cities and how areas could develop distinctive characteristics and associations with particular trades or industries.

By focusing on gate renovations in this particular period I hope to demonstrate that the city gate had an importance that resulted from its role as the key threshold of the urban boundary. This thesis will consider the urban boundary's role beyond military defence, how it was manifested in changing urban environments and demonstrate how the concept retained cultural capital. It will also demonstrate that city gates should be identified as monuments in their own right, especially when they are constructed or renovated independently of associated walls. The inherent connection to the urban boundary that contributed to gates' monumental role can be lost when such gates are referred to as monumental arches in scholarship on early Imperial cities. The variety of forms of city gates used may disguise the connections and comparisons that can be made between them as a category of monument, but I believe it is important to re-examine this evidence and demonstrate how important city gates were in Roman culture and Roman urban landscapes.

1.3 – Methodology.

In this thesis I will attempt to provide a foundation for future studies of city gates, by providing both a general overview of their cultural importance and their roles in the urban landscape, and specific case studies which illustrate the value of researching this topic, and the varied nature of city gate renovations and their surrounding nodes. In order to do so, I have had to establish a definition for a city gate, as there is no one form for these monuments and it is difficult to identify clear defining features. For instance, most city gates feature arches but not all do, as examples from Pompeii make clear. Other features such as closure mechanisms are in fact absent from many early Imperial gates. While in the past this has often led such gateways to be described as arches, I believe it is important to recognise the continuity of these structures as gates. Unlike ornamental arches which may be used to define discrete spatial areas such as *fora* or temple precincts, city gates are related to the urban boundary. This is often marked by features such as a city wall or earthwork system, or systems of *cippi*. The urban boundary was an important religious and cultural concept as well as a physical one, and often continued to be significant even if the circuit was not evident in the landscape.

City gates, moreover, marked the meeting places of the urban boundary and the road network, and continued the historical legacy of the boundary in the landscape. City gates should therefore be defined as structures located at the intersection of the road network and the urban boundary (whether historic or contemporary) which marked the transition across this boundary. Their designs are axially orientated along the route of the road, to allow passage, but also have a powerful role in the definition of space by sitting astride the road and having the potential to prevent or control movement. These structures could be arched, consist of multiple arches alongside each other, or form a courtyard system, with parallel lines of arches, but all are united in this relationship to the urban boundary.

To properly appreciate the importance of the urban boundary and city gates as key monuments of that boundary, it is necessary to examine the contemporary cultural conception of city gates. Chapter 2 will begin to provide this vital background by exploring the role of city gates in the economic life of

the Roman city, identifying key peripheral trades and how clustering might affect the character of gate nodes. I will use the concept of the node to explore how the concentration of particular economic activities in these areas, evidenced by archaeology and literature, would have impacted the character of the nodes surrounding city gates. In order to do this, I will also consider the sensory impact of these trades and industries and how that might affect the experience of these areas. This will rely on a logic based reconstruction, following consideration of the potential sensory impacts of different activities.

Chapter 3 consists of an interdisciplinary study which brings together extant scholarship on foundation rituals, literature, art and numismatics in order to consider the cultural perception of city gates. The chapter will draw on a wide range of evidence from the early Republic to the Late Antique period. This is in part to mitigate the relative lack of written sources which explicitly address the subject of gates, which makes it more difficult to perceive how ancients might have felt about gates. Moreover, it helps to demonstrate the continuity of the importance of city gates and similar cultural roles they fulfil across time. This will further highlight how significant city gates actually were in Roman culture, and ground my case studies of gate renovation in their cultural context. Firstly, I will examine the role of the urban boundary as a concept in Roman myth, religion, law and administration. Although this material will not specifically relate to city gates, I believe it is vital to establish the importance of the urban boundary in order to better understand the reasons for gates' continued importance outside their defensive role. Gates were primarily a threshold of this boundary, and so would have been imbued with much of the cultural and religious significance of the boundary itself.

Chapter 3 will also include a study of the roles that city gates play in Roman art, which will consider the iconographic use of city gates and outline the types of material that refer to city gates and the purpose for which the city gate is used. I have focused on identifying key categories of usage which demonstrate how city gates were perceived and experienced by contemporary residents. These uses can be categorised as; geographical references to situate events, as monuments in their own right, and to depict the city as a whole. A similar survey of evidence from Roman literary sources will compare whether similar trends in usage are evident. While neither can exhaustively

cover all source material relating to city gates, these two studies will reveal much about the conception of Roman city gates in Roman culture and draw in examples from across the Roman Empire and a broad time span. Particular focus, however, will be given to evidence relevant to the time period of this thesis, in order to demonstrate the continued cultural capital of city gates in a period in which their status has commonly been thought to diminish.

By considering evidence from literary sources, legal texts, inscriptions, and material culture I hope also to demonstrate how the conceptual importance of city gates and the urban boundary was born out in reality. Throughout, I will attempt to balance the wealth of evidence from Rome with evidence from other cities to demonstrate how the same phenomena were experienced elsewhere. This evidence will also demonstrate how the idea of the urban space and the urban boundary could change over time, while retaining a degree of cultural significance. This is intended to highlight the importance of the urban boundary so that the significance of the city gate as its key threshold can also be understood.

The thesis will then turn towards case studies of specific gate renovations at Rome and Pompeii. These renovations demonstrate the continuing significance of the city gate and the urban boundary, at a time when it has previously been understated by academics. Thus, in focusing on these examples, I can contribute new evidence to our understanding of the long-term evolution of city gates as monuments. The case studies featured in this thesis will come from Rome and Pompeii. In studying the transformation of city gates in Italian cities during this period I hope to illustrate that the monumental use of city gates was not exclusively connected to military architecture and its influence on colonies in peripheral provinces, but also in the heart of the Empire. This furthers my argument that we should consider other motives for the renovation of city gates and other factors behind their importance as monuments. Contextual research was also carried out on city gates and urbanism in other Italian cities and additional north-western provinces such as Roman Britain and Gaul to ground expectations of Roman urbanism in wider research. Although not included here, due to the scope of the thesis, comparative studies with these areas may offer avenues for future research.

Rome and Pompeii were chosen as the case study locations on account of the ease of access to published material on their urban archaeology. Rome's status as the Imperial capital and Pompeii's exceptional preservation have meant that both sites have received great academic attention, building up the archaeological knowledge of both cities to a higher degree than elsewhere. This means my case studies are able to draw on far more detailed archaeological data, which enhances the understanding of the contexts of gate renovations I have been able to provide beyond that possible for other cities. Further, by applying my approach to such well-known cities I hope to demonstrate the value of this method, and perhaps inspire similar studies at other cities. Issues with applying the evidence of Rome and Pompeii to other cities and assuming they are representative of Roman urbanism at other sites, and the merits of studying these cities have been addressed more fully in Chapters 4 and 5.

Each chapter will provide a summary of the history of the development of city walls and gates up to the first century B.C.E. that will provide the context for the later renovations. This will include a study of what these city gates might have looked like before their renovation based on the study of comparable city gates. Then, multiple individual gates from each city will be studied in depth. This is intended to highlight the variety of experiences of city gates and their renovations, and also to identify trends and comparisons across these different case studies. By choosing both more and less prestigious examples of gate renovation at each city, I hope to strengthen my argument that – while affected by their relative status and position within the city – even minor gates could be major landmarks. It will also demonstrate how factors such as road networks, geography and elite patronage could influence the distinctive characters of these gate nodes and their transformation over time.

Each case study will consist of comparative contextual 'snapshots' of the node surrounding the gate at the time of its original construction and renovation. These will be comprised of a study of the contemporary use of the space for economic, residential or other reasons, and consideration of the relative status of the area. This will allow for an examination of the motivations behind the construction of the original gate, and how those motivations can be reflected in the design of the original gates (where known). It will also allow me to identify patterns of usage which might have impacted human experiences in the area. I

will consider the sensory impacts of these activities by identifying key sights, sounds and smells which might be associated with specific industries and activities, and then highlighting that within the landscape. I will then chart major changes in the node over time, as well as other events which may have had an impact such as the colonisation of Pompeii, to create a parallel 'snapshot' of the node and its lived experience at the time of the renovation of the city gate. Each of these snapshots will consider the impact of contemporary use of the space and its potential effects on the sensory experience and social perception of the area. Then a detailed study of the new gate's structure will be carried out, before considering the motivations behind the renovation of the gate as evidenced by its design and the context of the surrounding node.

Chapter 4, on Rome's city gates, will close with a discussion of the motivations for the renovation of gates at Rome during the Augustan period, considering how the evolving urban boundary related to the city gates and the renovations which were carried out. Chapter 5 will compare the experience at Rome with that of Pompeii, and assess whether similar trends in suburban development and the role of the urban boundary can also be seen here. The conclusions of the thesis will bring together the results of the cultural survey of the roles and significance of Roman city gates with the of the renovation case studies. In doing so I will highlight the monumental importance of city gates within the Roman urban landscape, and cultural mindset, in Roman Italy from the first century B.C.E. to C.E.

Chapter 2: The Lived Experience of City Gates: Gates in the Roman Economy.

The importance of city gates in the Roman conception of urban space and their cultural value as means of representing and monumentalising the city will be explored in Chapter 3. It is important to demonstrate, first, that the cultural significance of city gates is also reliant on their role in urban life, which created, reinforced and sustained these beliefs and perpetuated gates' role as landmarks within the city. Gates, as monuments, shaped the experience of transition through the urban boundary, but the wider sensory experience was impacted by ongoing activity in the surrounding area. This chapter will be dedicated to exploring different types of economic activity which regularly transcended and interacted with city gates, and so understanding the role of gates in the urban economy. The purpose of this is to reconstruct some of the lived experiences which may have been associated with city gates and would have contributed to their social and cultural significance within the city and the conception of the city in the Roman world. This will complement the more specific economic and sensory reconstructions included in the case studies in Chapters 4 and 5, highlight the commonality of certain types of industry surrounding city gates, and explore these trends at cities beyond Rome and Pompeii. In order to do so, I will combine archaeological, epigraphical and literary sources which provide evidence for economic activity in the Roman world, and consider how commonplace (or otherwise) such phenomena were at Roman city gates and how they shaped the experience of gates as nodes in the urban landscape.

This approach draws directly on theoretical approaches to boundaries which recognises their role not only as spatial dividers, but as places where different groups interacted,⁴⁹ in this case the urban, the suburban, and the rural. This distinction is, of course, an oversimplification. In the Roman world the urban and rural spheres regularly interacted and overlapped, with urban residents travelling outside the urban space to visit temples, funerary monuments, public entertainment buildings and to attend religious or civic spectacles. There were also those who lived on the urban periphery or in extra-

⁴⁹ Mullin 2011: 5.

mural suburbs, for whom travel across the urban boundary and interaction with both urban and rural spheres was a fact of daily life. Each of these groups might have had occasion to visit shops in the suburbs, farm extra-mural land, or in the case of the elite, travel to rural estates. The same was true in reverse: rural residents might travel into towns and cities to attend political, religious and celebratory occasions such as festivals and games, and attend markets within the city. People might also cross the urban boundary in either direction for work, regularly moving between the urban, suburban and rural spheres. The fringes of Roman cities were thus an area of regular interaction between the urban and the rural, and the urban boundary would have been regularly crossed by a wide spectrum of society. At many Roman cities an identifiable suburban zone might develop as they expanded which could be characterised by its connection to both the urban and rural. This borderscape between these two theoretical zones would have been especially common at city gates, where suburban development often clustered. This leads, in my analysis, to the creation of distinct 'nodes' at city gates, defined in Lynch's theory as a focal area of or within a city, which has a specific character that is distinct from the surrounding area.⁵⁰ Although I will elsewhere refer to city gates' roles as landmarks, in this chapter I will focus on the establishment of nodes at and around city gates, based on the distinctive economic and sensory experiences associated with them.

It must be acknowledged that this sub-chapter, as with most scholarship on the Roman economy, is heavily reliant on knowledge rooted in studies from Rome, Ostia and Pompeii. Although we cannot assume that the same types of economic activity took place at every city, where possible I will also draw on evidence from other Roman cities to explore whether certain trends can be identified more broadly. Equally, economic activity can vary greatly between gates at the same city, depending on their transport connections and the status of the places that roads connected a city to,⁵¹ and the suitability of land outside the gate for building or other economic activity and particular local trades.

⁵⁰ Lynch 1960: 47.

⁵¹ For instance, roads leading towards Rome are often prioritised as locations for the building of monumental tombs, gates and other symbols of status for individuals, families and cities. See for example the treatment of the Porta Romana at Segni (Van der Graaff 2018: 193-4), Porta Ercolano at Pompeii (pp.276-279) or similar privileging of the Porta Romana at Ostia.

However, by identifying key categories of economic activity which commonly took place near city gates I hope to offer a general overview of what may be expected. These categories involve the travel and transportation industries, commerce, funerary activity, production, and informal trade. This chapter will also raise the question of taxation and challenge the conception that taxes were commonly collected at city gates. In highlighting these key economic activities, I also hope to illustrate the types of human activity which took place in the nodes surrounding city gates and to reconstruct some of the sensory experiences which may have been commonplace and contributed to the experience of the gates themselves.

2.1 – Travel and Transportation.

One of the key categories of economic activity identifiable at Roman city gates is that related to travel and transportation: this is driven by the gates' relationship to the road network, which was the main means of local and medium-distance connections. Gates, by definition and design, were located on roads; usually major roads connecting the urban street system with the regional road network. These roads comprised major thoroughfares within the city for travelling across or within it, and outside the city provided access to extra-mural suburbs, nearby farmlands, villas, towns and the wider Roman road network. The primary reason for interaction with a city gate, therefore, would have been travel and the transport of goods along these roads. City gates' roles could be permissive or obstructive; they acted as the means of conducting traffic through wall circuits, but could be barriers to traffic through their closure or through narrow passageways that limited movement. Gates' interaction with the road network and simultaneous potential to allow or block traffic would have made them a key threshold within the cognitive experience of the city. The following section will highlight occasions, means and modes of travel across the urban boundary and how these were reflected in the economy of the urban periphery. It will also aim to illustrate some of the resultant experiences surrounding city gates and how that may have contributed to their role as a node in the urban landscape.

Firstly, and most visibly in surviving Roman literature, there is evidence for elites and wealthy Roman citizens, freedmen and their slaves travelling routinely between the city, suburb and surrounding countryside, which is framed as part of the expected behaviour of the elite. Surviving literary accounts focus on the experiences of the elite, especially the senatorial elite at Rome, and associated groups such as poets and writers who might be patronised by such elites.⁵² Slaves and freedmen would inevitably have also composed part of these groups to assist in the travel and as part of household retinues, but their experiences are seldom mentioned. The possession of suburban estates was expected of the Roman senatorial elite, and such villas were prized for their location within easy reach of the city. Pliny the Younger takes great pride in his Laurentine villa being located only 17 miles from Rome, thus making it possible to reach after having spent the day in the city on business.⁵³ However, we know of other rural estates located much further from Rome, as elite land was often spread across different estates across Italy and other provinces, such as Maecenas' villa at Brundisium.⁵⁴ While we may question how regularly the Roman elite actually travelled back and forth between their estates, and whether they truly expected to be able to travel between estate and city within a day,⁵⁵ they certainly would have made the journey at points throughout the year, especially if the estates were located close to the city. While this phenomenon is primarily written about in relation to Rome, it is likely that wealthy families at other cities in the Roman world also split their time between urban and rural properties, and conducted similar (if smaller scale) journeys on a regular basis.

The mode of transport for groups such as these could vary significantly depending on the distance that was being travelled and the volume of goods and luggage being transported. Over the shortest distances, for example on a trip to a residence immediately outside the city, people might choose to walk or to be carried on a litter. Over longer distances, and especially where travel outside the urban area was required, elite travellers might transfer to either

⁵² Horace's account of a journey to a rural estate (see below, footnote 54) for example, lists many members of Maecenas' retinue including Virgil and himself.

⁵³ Pliny *Epistles* 2.17.

⁵⁴ Horace (*Satires* 1.5) describes the long and arduous voyage taken to arrive at the villa as lasting 15 days, but this journey could have been made quicker, if necessary, as Horace himself acknowledges (1.5.5), and would have been dependent on conditions such as weather.

⁵⁵ Goodman 2007: 23.

horseback, or a carriage, once they were able to.⁵⁶ Carriages could come in a variety of sizes, with four-wheeled larger types described as either a *raeda*, *carpentum* or *carruca*, compared to two-wheeled carts (*cisium* or *essedum*). These could transport a combination of people and goods, where luggage was required to be transported. Such travel, and the use of carriages, was clearly seen as a mark of high status and wealth, as such scenes are chosen to be depicted on sarcophagi.⁵⁷

The size of the retinue and the amount of luggage being taken might vary significantly depending on the individual household, their wealth, the purpose of the visit and the length of time they were expecting to be away. A dinner guest at a suburban property might, for example, travel by horse with no luggage, whereas a family travelling to spend time at a rural villa might take personal property, furniture and foodstuffs with them. Imperial retinues were, unsurprisingly, among the largest. Imperial households might travel to *horti* on the outskirts of Rome such as the *horti Maecenatis*,⁵⁸ or further afield to imperial estates such as Hadrian's villa at Tivoli. Suetonius' accusation that Nero never travelled with a retinue of less than 1000 carriages is likely hyperbole, but gives some sense of the extreme size of the imperial household and guard, and the necessary supplies for it at the time.⁵⁹ Cicero likewise remarks that Caesar travelled with approximately 2000 men as his retinue when visiting Cicero in Campania, all of whom would have required luggage, accommodation and food.⁶⁰ Such retinues would have made a striking impact on the street as they travelled, creating a large amount of noise, movement and crowding the street.

A particular, regular, subset of such elite travel, which would have been carried out over longer distances, was that of imperial officials setting out to take up magistracies in provinces outside mainland Italy. Such journeys would have had a more predictable timetable, with magistrates and their retinues setting out in order to assume their responsibilities and returning after that period was over. Magistrates would have inevitably travelled with a retinue of

⁵⁶ Restrictions on mounted travel within cities (see below, p.93-94), for example, might have made it necessary to undertake the first part of a long journey by foot or in a litter before transferring to a wheeled vehicle or horse.

⁵⁷ For examples, see Amedick, 1991.

⁵⁸ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 368.

⁵⁹ Suetonius *Nero* 30.

⁶⁰ Cicero *Att.* 13.52.

personal staff, slaves, and possibly family members who would accompany them during their tenure. This would inevitably have meant travelling with a large volume of personal items and goods. While many of these retinues would have travelled by sea or river to their provinces, the initial leg of these journeys would have been undertaken on the road network. Many would then return after their period in office, making similar journeys in reverse. On such occasions as this, expecting a significant time away from the city, one can imagine that the act of crossing the thresholds of the urban boundary might have become particularly significant as a marker of leaving or returning to the city. The symbolic enactment of this process can be seen formalised in rituals such as the *profectio* and *adventus*, discussed in Chapter 3,⁶¹ and reveals much about the cultural significance of the urban boundary to Roman culture.

However, elite travel such as this comprised only a very small minority of the total movement across the urban boundary in a Roman city, which was likely a part of life for the majority of urban or suburban residents across the spectrum of social strata. Although literary evidence privileges the experiences of the elite, for many urban residents, regular journeys to the suburban or rural surroundings of the city might be prompted by work; travelling to extra-mural workplaces such as workshops, extra-mural farmland, woods, or to provide manual labour related to the transport of goods or travellers into and around the city. It was common at early colonies for plots of land to be assigned outside the city, but for colonists to reside primarily within the city,⁶² while later extra-mural suburbs provided numerous opportunities to travel between the suburb and the city for social, commercial or religious reasons. At cities like Pompeii, as will be explored in Chapter 5, such suburbs could be vibrant commercial districts. Unlike elite travel, however, the majority of this travel would have been carried out either on foot, accompanied by pack animals, or perhaps in carts if transporting goods over longer distances. As a result, the experience of travel would have been very different, and the regularity with which such journeys might be made would mean the urban boundary's thresholds were not imbued with such significance on all occasions.

⁶¹ See pp.76-83.

⁶² Broadhead 2007: 148.

Other occasions might draw urban residents out of the city gates, such as religious festivals which involved the urban boundary, or which were celebrated at extra-urban temples, shrines or groves. This would include occasions such as the *lemuria* or *parentalia*, in which the living were supposed to visit the funerary sites of relatives, which were inevitably located outside the city.⁶³ Many other extra-mural shrines and temples would also have had specific rituals carried out on the appropriate days in the religious calendar. Other events, which were not fixed in the calendar would have included funerals, which, especially for the wealthy, would have been a large-scale processional event, leaving the city to arrive at the tomb before returning to the city once all of the rites were complete. At many cities, where entertainment venues such as theatres and amphitheatres were built outside the city, games and festivals would have been a substantial draw from not only the immediate area but also the neighbouring towns and rural areas.⁶⁴

In addition to games and religious festivals,⁶⁵ occasions such as markets could draw in the rural population, travelling traders and those from neighbouring towns to buy or sell goods. Additionally, longer distance travellers and traders might both enter and exit towns in the course of their journeys, sometimes stopping to rest overnight or to attend markets on their route.⁶⁶ The flow of movement could therefore be multidirectional and for a variety of purposes which meant there was no singular experience of the urban boundary but instead it was a part of life, especially for city dwellers and those living close to a town or city. The majority of travellers would simply have travelled on foot, especially over shorter distances, although animals such as horses, mules or donkeys, and carriages/carts could also have been used.

⁶³ Toynbee 1971: 61-64.

⁶⁴ Emmerson 2020: 163. In Italy, half of such entertainment buildings were found outside the city wall, and this was also commonplace in other provinces. Exceptions such as the intra-mural amphitheatre and theatre at Pompeii, however, would have attracted visitors inside the city itself.

⁶⁵ These often overlapped, both in the calendar (using the religious festival as the reason to host games), and spatially, since many extra-mural entertainment buildings were directly connected to religious hubs either within or outside the town, situating themselves on major roads. This also could provide opportunities for processions to explicitly link the two during celebrations (Emmerson 2020: 164-170).

⁶⁶ Van Tilburg 2007: 49; examples include Aelius Aristides' journey to Pergamum (Aristides *Or.* 51.1-10), and Horace's account of the journey to Maecenas' rural estate at Brindisi is, no doubt, exaggerated in *Satires* 1.5.

The above examples highlight how frequent interaction with the urban boundary would have been for those living in, or near, cities. All of these occasions would have required the negotiation of the urban boundary even if they did not necessarily cross through the city gate as a threshold. To such travellers the gate would have been a noteworthy landmark, which signified the boundary of the city and their position relative to it, and would thus have been an important part of the cognitive understanding of the city.

A significant volume of the traffic interacting with the urban boundary and city gates would have been involved in the transport of goods. While less numerous than pedestrian traffic, carts, pack animals and porters with goods would have had a large impact on the sensory experience of the urban boundary due to their size, and related activity like the unloading or reloading of goods. This would all have contributed to the noise of the area as people competed for work or conversed, enhanced the visual business and crowding of the streets, while animals and their waste would have added to the smell of the area. It is sufficient for the purposes of this thesis to recognise that all Roman towns and cities had some degree of inbound and outbound trade and traffic, rather than engaging with larger theoretical debates on the nature of the Roman urban economy.⁶⁷ At the simplest levels in small towns this could be the transport of surplus crops, animals and products such as oil or wool into town in order to be sold at markets in the town, while other goods such as tools, luxury items or other necessities might be bought from shops within the town and transported back out. On this level, there would have been both short-term and long-term temporal cycles to such activity, with spikes in activity around market days, and during harvest seasons for different crops or livestock. The *nundinae* were regular markets held in towns and cities in Italy, recorded in lists which saw towns host a market every eighth day, and would have been well known to local residents and traders who might travel the circuit of markets in order to sell their goods.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Neither the Consumer or Producer City models of urban economy assume a unilateral direction of trade, but propose that cities to a greater or lesser extent both imported and exported goods. This stance is widely accepted in modern literature on the subject, e.g., Erdkamp 2012: 245; Kehoe 2018: 443-4; see above, page 20.

⁶⁸ Morley 1996: 166-170.

At the other end of the spectrum, larger cities such as Rome (but to a lesser extent the same was true at all cities) would have sustained a constant demand for foodstuffs, building materials, luxury goods, raw materials and pre-produced products which would have led to almost perpetual activity at ports and major roads.⁶⁹ This was especially true of cities which formed major hubs in the Roman transport network, such as ports, or cities which connected major roads with the local road system. In all cases, however, this urban demand for goods would have necessitated their transport. While the vast majority of goods that were transported over long distances would have been transported by ship, either on rivers or by sea, a huge amount of that transport would also have been carried out over land due to the necessity of reaching different inland towns, transport from port to city and transfer of goods within the city itself.⁷⁰ The produce from individual farms and estates in Italy would have been transported to towns and markets for the most part by land. In terms of land transport, common means of transporting goods would have been through the use of pack animals, porters, or carts/wagons which could carry heavier loads.

Restrictions on the access of the largest wheeled vehicles into the city, although with many exceptions, would have meant that pack animals, smaller carts and porters were commonly used within the city itself.⁷¹ These restrictions would have meant that larger vehicles had to wait to be able to enter the city,⁷² transfer goods to different modes of transport, or unload goods at warehouses or markets on the outskirts of the city,⁷³ all of which would have added to the distinctly busy character of the urban periphery. Peripheral thresholds such as city gates would have been natural places for porters, drivers and those with pack animals to gather and wait for work. In addition to the many epigraphical references that imply the common presence of such workers around gates,⁷⁴ the phenomenon is referred to in Plautus' *Captivi*, in which Ergasilus

⁶⁹ Erdkamp 2013: 269-70.

⁷⁰ Laurence 1999: 95-99.

⁷¹ See discussion of restrictions below, p.93-94, in legal evidence from the *Tabula Heracleensis*.

⁷² *Plaustra* were only barred from entering the city during certain hours, so many would have simply waited, if their deliveries were not considered time urgent.

⁷³ Palmer 1980: 223-4. Warehouses such as the *Cellae Nova et Arruntiana*, and *Cella Civicana* were located outside the presumed limits of the second-century C.E. customs border at Rome, possibly in an attempt to avoid taxation.

⁷⁴ E.g., *AE*1975, 429 from Verona; *CIL*. V.5872; IV.97; IV.113; IV.134; II.6136; VI.9485 for other examples from Northern Italy, Pompeii, Spain and Rome. For more detail see pp.46-48, below.

disparagingly refers to the porters gathered '*extra Portam Trigeminam*'.⁷⁵ Elsewhere in Rome, locations supposed to be hubs of the drivers trade such as the *area carruces/schola carrucarum*, believed to be a headquarters of the drivers and transportation guild, were located in the peripheral area well outside the Republican wall near the Temple of Mars.⁷⁶ Other restrictions on traffic which required cart drivers and riders to dismount would further have slowed traffic, as was no doubt their intent.

A further potential impediment to traffic often discussed in relation to city gates were tax borders. Based on Palmer's work on the subject it has long been assumed that a tax border existed at Rome, which enforced a tax on all goods brought into the city for sale,⁷⁷ and subsequent explorations of the importance of city gates at Rome have explicitly connected the gates and peripheral arches with the tax boundary.⁷⁸ However, what evidence we have for a continuous tax boundary which would have used city gates as essentially customs check points, comes from the second century C.E. and does not have clear precedent.⁷⁹ Inscribed *cippi*, such as that found near the Porta Esquilina, clearly mark the limit of a tax boundary, and presumably it was expected that goods being transported through that boundary would be expected to pay the appropriate taxes.⁸⁰ However, at the time the *cippi* were erected, this would have left a large area of the city outside the theorised tax boundary, along with many potential alternative routes into the city that avoided using this gate, making a theoretical tax boundary here highly ineffective.

The idea of a customs boundary is commonly retrospectively applied to the Augustan period, as it is known that Augustus reintroduced certain taxes, but this possibly referred to the reapplication of inheritance taxes,⁸¹ and is not

⁷⁵ Plautus *Captivi* 90.

⁷⁶ Ball Platner & Ashby 1929: *Area Carruces/Schola Carrucarum*.

⁷⁷ Palmer 1980: 217.

⁷⁸ E.g., Van Tilburg (2007: 86) – who assumes that theorised tolls from the 2nd century B.C.E. were continuous, despite Caesar's removal of these tolls in the mid-first century B.C.E.

⁷⁹ While the text of the inscriptions (*CIL*. VI.1016a, b, c, *CIL* VI.31227) refers to an 'old law' this has been connected with a Flavian era law, which itself does not have a clear precedent despite attempts (Palmer 1980: 217), to then project the original law back to the time of Augustus.

⁸⁰ We know, for example, of bronze plates which were affixed to wagons that allowed drivers to pass with the relevant taxes being charged to the traders directly, rather than their drivers. (*CIL* VI.32033, the plaque of Probus & Proba, for example).

⁸¹ Günther 2016: 4-6, the *lex vicesima hereditatum* introduced a 5% tax on inheritances received through wills.

clear evidence of a customs border. Many of the taxes we know of from the Augustan period would have been paid on goods when they were sold wholesale at auctions and markets, rather than being the responsibility of the seller upon bringing them into the city.⁸² Other customs were expected to be paid at customs stations at the borders of the *Imperium Romanum* or at specified internal borders, and it is unclear whether this would have included at specific cities within the empire.⁸³ Nor do we have literary accounts, references or material culture relating specifically to the collection of taxes at urban boundaries during this period. Later evidence, such as bronze cart plaques which indicate an agreement between merchants and tax collectors gives us no indication of where the taxes were expected to be collected and imposed.⁸⁴ We cannot conclusively suggest, therefore, that there were tax checkpoints routinely at city gates in the Roman world, especially as there is little archaeological evidence for any infrastructure from which tax collectors might collect and store the revenue during the day.

Furthermore, while the linguistic connection between gates (*portae*) and the *portorium* – a specific type of tax levied on goods – has often been pointed to in order to suggest that there may have been a connection between the gates and the tax,⁸⁵ alternative etymologies would imply different origins and have very different implications for the collection of this tax. A link between the *portorium* and *portus* – harbour/port – may also indicate that these customs were levied on goods arriving by ship, and taxes taken at the harbour,⁸⁶ however the word *portorium* may also stem from *porto*, to carry or bear, and refer to the volume of goods sold. There is not, therefore, convincing evidence to assume that it was widespread practice to tax goods at a city gate and therefore slow down or stop traffic as it was checked by tax officials, at least in the Augustan period and early first century C.E. As more and more cities outgrew their walls, the practice would also have become increasingly ineffective, and the idea that gates were commonly used as tax thresholds should be discounted.

⁸² Holleran 2012: 176-77.

⁸³ Günther 2016: 11.

⁸⁴ See above, footnote 80.

⁸⁵ Palmer 1980: 223.

⁸⁶ Van Tilburg 2007: 86.

The cumulative effect of restrictions on travel and modes of transport around the urban boundary would have been the interruption and delay of movement for wheeled and mounted traffic, which would have had a subsequent impact on pedestrian traffic and movement. Dismounting, or changing mode of transport would all have involved stopping and taking time, and potentially the sourcing of casual labourers to transport goods or people onwards on their journey; for example, swapping a horse for a litter, or transferring goods off large *plaustra* and onto a series of smaller carts, pack animals or to porters.⁸⁷ While there were no restrictions on those leaving the city, it is likely that travellers would have opted to switch to a faster or more comfortable form of transport such as a horse or carriage, and that traders might have consolidated their goods into a larger wagon or cart. All of this, in addition to a flow of pedestrian traffic, would have made the roads at the edges of urban space, and especially any narrow city gates which might be a bottleneck for traffic, particularly busy. While the level of traffic would have varied depending on the importance of the city gate and its connections, and the time of day – with particular busy periods earlier and later in the day – it would have been a critical part of the sensory experiences of city gates in Roman Italy.

2.2 – Trades and Industries Near Roman City Gates.

While Roman cities were never zoned, and industrial, commercial and domestic activity could be found mixed throughout the urban area, some areas of the city did attract a high concentration or clustering of particular trades.⁸⁸ This is the case at city gates, where trades and industries that benefitted from proximity to the major roads accessing the city could commonly be found, whether capitalising on the easy accessibility of the area to travel or transport, or seeking to attract passing trade from those using the road. All of these would have added to the experience of the node near a city gate, and can help us to understand the sorts of daily activity which might have taken place. Some trades, and particularly productive industries were uncommon within cities themselves, and could even be legislated against. New pottery kilns, for

⁸⁷ For more on restrictions which would have required the change of means of transport see pp.93-94.

⁸⁸ Holleran 2018: 460; Goodman 2016: 310, 321-22.

example, could pose a fire risk – as could funerary pyres - and were sometimes expected to be located further from the city as a result.⁸⁹ We should avoid, however, the assumption that all peripheral commercial activities were related to activities such as tanning or pottery production, that produced unpleasant smells or posed fire risks. Many examples of potential tanning sites, metalworking shops and kilns can be found in cities throughout the empire.⁹⁰ We should also reject the idea that peripheral industry clusters were in any way the result of deliberate ‘zoning’ of industries which were automatically excluded from the urban area or forced to assume a peripheral position. Instead, many industries would have benefitted from the easy accessibility of peripheral locations to suppliers and customers.

A particularly notable form of economic activity which clustered around city gates were inns, providing overnight accommodation and food to travellers or short-term visitors to a city. At Pompeii, such properties were found in much higher concentrations near the city’s gates and especially those on major thoroughfares, than elsewhere in the city.⁹¹ This is particularly true of those inns identified as ‘transport properties’ by Poehler’s study of the transport economy in the city. These were inns that provided space for stabling animals and ramps by which carriages could be parked off the street and almost all were located within 100m of a city gate.⁹² Stabling has also been found outside the Porta Ercolano at Pompeii,⁹³ further suggesting that the ability to leave animals and vehicles on the outskirts of the city was beneficial to travellers, possibly as a result of the restrictions on the use of large wagons and mounted travel within cities discussed in Chapter 3.⁹⁴ In each case, peripheral locations were logical sites to put such properties, as travellers could avoid having to travel into the city to find accommodation, and could leave their animals and vehicles at the

⁸⁹ Cicero (*Leg.* 2.59) indicates his belief that the restriction on constructing funeral pyres within 60 feet of a building was to limit the risk of fires breaking out, other restrictions known from the Urso charter only stipulate that large kilns built within the town would enter public ownership (*lex Ursonensis*: 76).

⁹⁰ See, for example, clusters identified at Timgad and Silchester, discussed on page 48-49.

⁹¹ Poehler 2011: 201.

⁹² Poehler 2011: 202. 90% of these ‘transport property’ inns were located within a 100m radius of a city gate.

⁹³ Emmerson 2020: 140.

⁹⁴ See pp.93-94.

outskirts where they would find it necessary to dismount. Proximity to a city gate would therefore be a desirable attribute for a location to attract such customers.

Other industries which would have been particularly prominent at the urban boundary would have included supporting trades which enabled travel and transport, as I have already alluded to in the section above. This could include the renting and leasing of animals, equipment or labour which could be used to facilitate onward travel or transportation, such as pack-animals, animals for riding, carts, carriages, the labour of porters, litter-bearers or cart drivers. The '*muliones*,' cart drivers and mule handlers, were classified as skilled labourers, and their place in legal texts makes clear that their labour could be rented out to those who wanted either a skilled local driver or access to a cart.⁹⁵ On the basis of restrictions outlined below and the understanding of how difficult Roman cities such as Pompeii could be for an unfamiliar driver to navigate,⁹⁶ it is likely they offered their services to rent at the edges of the city, particularly on major roads entering the city where a large volume of traded goods may arrive. City gates, therefore, would have been a natural location for their clustering.



Figure 2.1 - Bas-relief of two porters carrying an amphora. Pompeii, Insula VII.4.16 (<https://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R7/7%2004%2016.htm>).

⁹⁵ Martin 1990: 311. *Muliones* and the competence of them is discussed in *Digest* 19.2.60.7 (Labeo), 9.2.27.34 (Mela) and 9.2.8.1 (Gaius), with respect to the hiring of their services and legal liability.

⁹⁶ Poehler 2017: 140-148, 156-164.

The peripheral location associated with the *schola carrucarum* at Rome, beyond the Porta Capena and in the region of the later Porta Appia,⁹⁷ further suggests that such peripheral locations were common gathering places for drivers and other porters. A major route such as the *via Appia* would have been particularly appealing as it was not only a major road, but one on which the outskirts of the city were populated with elite suburban residences who would have been a potentially lucrative source of income for such workers.⁹⁸ Graffiti at the Porta Ercolano in Pompeii which references the *muliones* as a collective group endorsing a political candidate may combine the high visibility of the roadside position with a location the *muliones* might be associated with.⁹⁹ Likewise, inscriptions at the urban periphery of a variety of Italian cities reference *collegia* of *muliones* or *iumentarii* (pack animal handlers),¹⁰⁰ further suggesting that they were an expected part of the experience of the urban periphery in Roman Italian cities. The mosaics depicting *cisiarii* (cart drivers) and carts around the edges of the urban space, at the bathhouse immediately inside the Porta Romana at Ostia, may make reference to the expected scenes outside the bathhouse itself.¹⁰¹



Figure 2.2 - Mosaic floor depicting mule-drawn carts around the edges of a stylised cityscape. Terme dei Cisiarii, Ostia (<https://www.ostia-antica.org/regio2/2/2-3.htm>).

⁹⁷ Believed to be analogous with the *area carruces* listed in the Regionary Catalogues for Region 1, in a similar area.

⁹⁸ Emmerson 2020: 160.

⁹⁹ Laurence 1999: 133-4. See also Emmerson (2020: 176) for a similar electoral notice found at the Porta Nocera which was promoting a political candidate at Nucera, and thus presumably was intended to be viewed by travellers between the two cities.

¹⁰⁰ Laurence 1999: 133-4.

¹⁰¹ Thomas 2007: 58-60. Terme dei Cisiarii Frigidarium C mosaics, Figure 2.2.

It is harder to trace the evidence of porters who would have carried goods themselves in packs or on carrying poles, such as those depicted in the bas-relief found at Pompeii (Figure 2.1, above),¹⁰² and pack animals would have been widely used for transporting goods within the city. At any one time there may have been as many as 5-10,000 pack animals (horses, mules, oxen) within the city of Rome,¹⁰³ which gives some sense of how commonly they were used to transport goods through urban street networks, as they were able to traverse the urban environment and features such as steps, narrow streets or traffic, more easily than wheeled vehicles. Many elites would have had their own slaves for using as litter-bearers, when necessary, rather than relying on hired labour, but it can be imagined that there were litters available for hire to cater to those who might only be visiting the city. All of these workers would have to gather in places that they might expect to find customers, such as ports, markets, or, as the epigraphical evidence above attests, city gates.¹⁰⁴ I have already demonstrated how city gates would have been key locations for changing modes of transport, all of which would have provided opportunities for labourers involved in travel and transport such as these. All of these activities would have added to the number of people who might have gathered at city gates in expectation of finding casual labour, along with their animals and carts, making city gates and peripheral urban spaces more heavily crowded with economic activity than many areas of the city which served only as thoroughfares.

Other trades and industries could also have benefitted from the easy accessibility of locations near city gates for bringing in raw materials or exporting finished products, which could contribute to the clustering of certain industries within Roman cities that is demonstrated at many varied sites. At Timgad, a distinctive group of 22 workshops have been identified on the basis of their common features – rectangular vats, circular tubs and wells, which may indicate involvement in the textile industry.¹⁰⁵ Of the 22 workshops thus identified, 17 are located in the north-east corner of the city defined by the *decumanus maximus* and *cardo maximus*, in *insulae* that would have been

¹⁰² Located outside *Insula* VII.4.16.

¹⁰³ MacKinnon 2013: 122.

¹⁰⁴ See above, pp.40, 44-47.

¹⁰⁵ Goodman 2016: 314-318.

easily accessible by road from the city's east gate, and the north-eastern postern gate that was cut after the wall's construction to provide easier access to this area.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, at Silchester a cluster of distinctive properties of unknown purpose with circular furnaces have been identified. Of the 31 total properties throughout the city, 15 are located close to the major roads from the city's north and west gates and 14 are located in a close proximity to the West Gate itself.¹⁰⁷ Although these productive properties are not usually located fronting onto the main roads themselves – which are usually given over to commercial properties as will be discussed later – their proximity to major transport routes would have made them comparably easy to access.¹⁰⁸ In both cases, it is possible that there may have been raw materials which were brought into the city along these routes which made a location near those roads and their associated city gates beneficial. At Pompeii this is clearly the case in *Regio VI* where a number of properties which flanked the *via Consolare* within the city before the first-century B.C.E. contained distinctive vats in their structure.¹⁰⁹ If these properties are, as Robinson has suggested, connected to the salted fish industry, their easy access to salt marshes to the north-west of Pompeii would have made this a logical location for such industries to gather.¹¹⁰

The identification of such clusters relies heavily on archaeological evidence and the presence of distinctive structural elements, but building styles can also be used to identify workshops or shops based on their orientation towards streets, which suggests commercial usage. Clusters of commercial properties have been identified in suburban neighbourhoods at Pompeii,¹¹¹ Ostia,¹¹² Padua and many other Italian cities.¹¹³ A high proportion of commercial properties could be found on the most major roads within a city,¹¹⁴ which usually corresponded with those that connected to city gates. These shops usually had wide frontages, and could consist of small single-roomed shops that were

¹⁰⁶ Goodman 2016: 314-318.

¹⁰⁷ Goodman 2016: 317.

¹⁰⁸ Goodman 2016: 317.

¹⁰⁹ Robinson 2016: 249.

¹¹⁰ Robinson 2016: 249.

¹¹¹ Emmerson 2020: 25, 140 – e.g., the commercial properties in the Porta Ercolano suburb and *Regio VI*

¹¹² Emmerson 2020: 132.

¹¹³ Emmerson 2020: 132-33.

¹¹⁴ Poehler (2017: 196) demonstrated that 54.1% of all identified shops in Pompeii can be found on the busiest 10% of the street network according to GIS analysis.

embedded into larger residential structures such as those commonly found at Pompeii or Ostia, or strip-buildings with commercial use at the front and residential at the rear or on upper floors that were commonplace in Roman Britain.¹¹⁵ The wide frontages of such shops suggests that they were intended to interact with the street beyond, attracting passing customers and allowing their products to be easily advertised and visible to passers-by. This would have made the major streets between city gates and the city centre, which generally carried the most traffic, desirable locations for traders as they would probably generate more revenue.¹¹⁶ There is evidence from Pompeii's *Regio VI*, where a high number of the commercial properties along the *via Consolare* sold food or drink, that counters selling food could even be oriented to try and catch the attention of passing travellers who might be arriving in the city and in need of food.¹¹⁷ The combined desirability of easy access for deliveries of raw materials or products and the high footfall of such locations for potential customers would have meant that the streets lining roads inside city gates were often densely packed with shops and workshops. This would have made such roads desirable commercial locations both inside and outside the city gate, contributing to the development of suburbs and ribbon development at settlements throughout the Empire.

The provision of these shops would have added to the flow of traffic in such areas, and potentially created obstacles where loading/unloading took place, but would also have slowed pedestrian movement. Shops might also have extended out into the street, with goods and stalls that could extend the shop frontage and interact even more directly with the passer-by, or make use of the space for drying and preparing raw materials. Such activity is described by Martial,¹¹⁸ and in legal texts from the second century C.E.¹¹⁹ As vendors vied for custom, workshops such as blacksmiths worked with raw materials, and customers talked, different sounds would have built up and contributed to a busy, active soundscape. The preparation and sale of food, along with smells from industrial processes such as tanning would also have been part of the

¹¹⁵ Mac Mahon 2005: 54-55.

¹¹⁶ Holleran 2017: 151.

¹¹⁷ Ellis 2004: 379.

¹¹⁸ Martial *Epigrams* 7.61.

¹¹⁹ *Digest* 43.10.1.3-5 (Papinian).

daily life of the city. All of this would have been combined with the considerable impact of economic activity without an archaeological footprint, described below. These factors combined to create the sensory experiences of the busy street, which would have contributed to the sense of these nodes being full of life and activity.

As alluded to above, much of the economic activity taking place near city gates is hard to reconstruct because it did not involve permanent architecture which can be identified in the archaeological record. However, the many literary and epigraphical references to a wide range of street-vendors, professionals and informal workers throughout the city makes clear that this was commonplace in the Roman world.¹²⁰ Martial describes how Domitian's reforms transformed street life by restricting the presence of barbers,¹²¹ as well as the proliferation of sex workers in the streets.¹²² While our sources might exaggerate the extent to which such activity was a nuisance for dramatic and comedic effect, the literary *topos* is certainly rooted in very real practices.¹²³ Such vendors could include food-sellers, people selling offerings to be made at temples and altars, barbers, goods sellers and sex workers, in addition to the transport related services already outlined.¹²⁴ Such commerce would have been found throughout the city, and while it would have been especially concentrated at locations such as *fora* or porticoes, there also would have been a proportion of this activity taking place along roadways, capitalising on passing traffic in the same way permanent shops did.

Sex workers in particular were often referred to in literary texts as present in the urban periphery, or similar locations such as cemeteries,¹²⁵ but this is likely a way of depicting both the sex workers and the suburban area in question as morally compromised. While sex workers almost certainly did work

¹²⁰ Hartnett 2017: 61-4. For instance, lawyers and teachers could commonly be found occupying spaces within porticoes at *fora*, and literary evidence makes clear that food sellers, and vendors of other goods and services could operate without having a fixed shop-front.

¹²¹ Martial *Epigrams* 7.61 (also refers to restrictions on merchants whose shops spilled out into the street).

¹²² Martial *Epigrams* 6.66.1-3. Also see Catullus (*Poems* 58.2-5), Horace (*Carm.* 1.25.10), Plautus (*Cist.* 330-31).

¹²³ Hartnett 2017: 39-40, 46-8, 61-4.

¹²⁴ Holleran 2011: 255-257.

¹²⁵ Catullus *Poems* 59, for example.

in areas close to city gates to attract the custom of travellers,¹²⁶ they could be found throughout most cities.¹²⁷ Beggars might also have taken advantage of locations such as gates or bridges where traffic slowed and might be forced to interact more with people on the street. Where there was open space or a broad street near a city gate, creating a plaza where street-vendors could operate while remaining out of the roadway, we can imagine that much of this sort of impermanent economic activity took place. This in turn would have created an even greater concentration of economic activity within the node of the city gate that heightened its sense of being a distinct area within the urban landscape.¹²⁸

Markets, many of which are archaeologically undetectable to us, would also have influenced the economic and sensory experiences of city gates. In addition to the increase of traffic flow and volume of human activity created by transporting goods to markets already described, peripheral markets could and did exist. While it is usually assumed, with good reason, that markets took place in the forum or dedicated buildings in most Roman cities, these buildings were often used for bulk trade in staple goods like grain, oil or wine, or specific high status, high cost, items such as spices and fabrics.¹²⁹ There also were more informal markets, perhaps selling less high-status goods and supplying smaller households, which may have favoured a peripheral location. It is known that at Rome the *Macellum 'Liviae'*, and *Macellum Magnum* were both built at more peripheral locations that were easier to reach by the roads entering the city than the traditional economic heart of the city closer to the river.¹³⁰ Peripheral market buildings associated with city gates and the easy access of goods and merchants can be found at Djemila, Timgad and the Porta Marina at Ostia.¹³¹ Other buildings described as markets can be identified centrally in many Roman towns and cities, such as at the forum at Pompeii,¹³² but given the size of these buildings it is likely they did not cater to the entire city, and were probably

¹²⁶ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 368, 375.

¹²⁷ See footnote 122, above; McGinn 2002: 16-17, 19, 22-28, 79-80.

¹²⁸ Emmerson 2020: 129.

¹²⁹ Holleran 2018: 464-66.

¹³⁰ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 376-77.

¹³¹ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 377.

¹³² Goodman 2016: 312.

complemented by non-permanent markets that could supplement the demand for foodstuffs and fresh goods in a particular neighbourhood of the city.¹³³

It is likely some of these informal markets utilised open spaces that could develop near city gates, which could have been used by traders to set out their goods for sale. Regular non-permanent markets such as the *nundinae* would have required available space, either in the forum or other open space that would be easily accessible to both travelling merchants and people from the local area. Peripheral locations may have been preferable for merchants, rather than having to navigate restrictions on the types of vehicles that could enter the city, and potentially confusing and difficult road systems.¹³⁴ Many city gates were preceded by wide stretches of road,¹³⁵ which opened out and could create a plaza-like space which would have been a potential location for such markets. Otherwise, open space within the city could have been used,¹³⁶ such as the open area inside the Porta Romana at Ostia. The high accessibility of the areas near city gates would have made them ideal locations for peripheral trade, and such spaces would have become hubs for informal economic activity and social gathering,

Another trade which was a distinctive feature of the urban periphery was related to funerals and funerary monuments, because of the extra-urban nature of burials, which were prohibited from taking place within the city in all but the most exceptional circumstances.¹³⁷ This restriction led to extensive stretches of monumental tombs located along major roads leaving the city in particular, as tomb monuments became key means of displaying personal and familial status in the late Republican period.¹³⁸ But the funerals themselves, particularly of the wealthy elite, could be elaborate spectacles and the provision of funerary services for such occasions would have been a major feature of the economic

¹³³ Holleran 2017: 464.

¹³⁴ Kaiser 2011: 178 on the difficulties of travelling through Pompeii due to obstructions to wheeled traffic that made many routes unsuitable for vehicles to travel, and blocked off the forum. Approximately 77% of Pompeii's street network was only suitable for single-lane traffic at a time (Poehler 2017: 156), creating significant impediment to free-flowing traffic. Although Van Tilburg has illustrated that many cities in north-western Europe were built to an easily navigable grid plan (Van Tilburg 2007: 143-146), the same cannot be said of many of the older Italian cities.

¹³⁵ Van Tilburg 2007: 28-29, 94, 171.

¹³⁶ Holleran 2017: 160.

¹³⁷ See Chapter 3, pp.84-6.

¹³⁸ Emmerson 2020: 4.

life of the suburbs. Our best sources of evidence for the practices of funerary workers come from Puteoli, where the *Lex Libitinae Puteolana* outlined restrictions on such funerary workers,¹³⁹ and from Rome where we have epigraphical evidence of how the funerary trade operated. Each of the case studies in this thesis will explore nearby cemeteries where possible, and the Porta Esquilina case study in particular will offer further insight into the experiences that could occur as a result of funerary activity near a city gate. The funerary trade embraced all elements of the process from death to the end of funerary rites, with specific workers handling the cleaning and preparation of the body, its removal and transportation to the burial site, as well as providing music, mourners and entertainment for the funeral itself. Since funerary workers were prohibited from living within the religious limits of the city, they were expected to enter the city to attend to their business, and distinctive clothing would have clearly marked them out to other members of the population.¹⁴⁰

The funerary trade was, of course, a constant business and although there would have been few large, spectacular funerals in a year, there would have been a constant flow of other funerals from the removal of bodies which had been abandoned, or had no family to carry out rites for them, to moderate funerals. Large funerals would have had a major impact on the sensory experience of the route between the house and the tomb site, with music being played and the body being borne ahead of family and friends.¹⁴¹ Smaller funerals would have attracted less attention and had a smaller impact, but would still have been significant – at this point the body was still seen as potentially polluting to come into contact with, and no doubt would have been highly notable and deliberately avoided as a result. This would have led to a consistent flow of related movement in and out of city gates, before, and during Roman funerals, and on a regular basis for the removal of bodies not afforded full funerary rites. All such workers would have been paid, and if the headquarters of the *libitinarii* were to be found in the suburbs,¹⁴² would have required families

¹³⁹ For more detail see Chapter 3, pp.85-6.

¹⁴⁰ Lennon 2012: 48, drawing on the evidence of various legal texts.

¹⁴¹ Bodel 1994: 50; Bodel 1999: 261.

¹⁴² See below, Chapter 4, p.141. Bodel (1994: 50) has also suggested that associated trades such as flute players (*tibicinarii*) may have also had their *collegia* headquarters in the Esquiline because of their frequent use in funerary processions, but the only evidence of this is statuary of flute-players, so cannot conclusively be argued for.

(or a slave) to travel to such areas to commission their services, all further adding to the movement through the urban boundary as part of daily life in the Roman city.

2.3 – Discussion.

Roman towns and cities were busy places, and with that came a high degree of sensory input of all types, from scents, sights, sounds and even touch as a person tried to navigate the – often crowded – city streets. It is no surprise, therefore, that the areas surrounding city gates both inside and outside the urban boundary were often busy and active parts of this broader urban life. However, this section has demonstrated that particular trades would have been more concentrated in the nodes surrounding city gates, including those related with travel, transport, and the funerary business. I believe that these, combined with the high density of properties related to the sale of food, lodging, shops and workshops associated with major city streets would have made the areas in the vicinity of city gates particularly busy. While not associated with the political and social functions of other busy nodes such as the forum, city gates could play host to many of their economic functions, as well as other economic activities that would not have been suitable for the forum. The nature of the area surrounding a city gate was largely dictated by its position in the road network, and on the urban periphery. Such activity was not, therefore, necessarily directly the result of the gate itself but of its position within a broader urban system, and such activity could be found at urban peripheries without city gates.

However, when combined with a landmark such as a city gate, which emphasised the transitional and peripheral nature of the urban boundary by creating a clear visual marker of it, I suggest that the intensification of specific economic activity relating to travel and trade, combined with the cultural and religious significance of the urban boundary, created an area with a distinctive character within the urban environment. The distinct nature of areas surrounding city gates has already been identified by scholars such as Malmberg and Bjür, but here has been supported by a wider range of examples from different cities which suggests that such nodes were not restricted to particular city gates but could be commonly found surrounding most city gates. It remains worth noting, however, that the precise character of these nodes and

the influences on their development will vary significantly depending on their geographical and historical contexts, which will alter the individual nature of these nodes, despite their many similarities. These Lynchian nodes, which would not have had clear boundaries themselves, also help to explain the use of city gates as a geographical reference point discussed in Chapter 3, as their physical and visual prominence as landmarks was expanded by their association with a broader area surrounding the gate. These gate nodes will make up much of the detail of the case studies to follow, exploring the reciprocal influence between the gate as a monument and the surrounding urban node.

Chapter 3: The Roles of the City Gate in Roman Culture.

3.1 - Introduction.

This chapter is intended to explore the roles which city gates played in urban life and the urban experience in the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. It will do so by drawing together existing research which has identified some of these roles in Roman religion and law, and trends in how gates are used in Roman art and literature. The evidence discussed throughout this chapter will largely focus on the period of discussion, but will also include examples from wider Roman history to demonstrate the prevalence and continuity of the city gate as a monumental building with cultural significance. It will also incorporate evidence from Roman provinces besides Italy, to demonstrate how this facet of Roman urbanism, which may have been transmitted through colonisation, extended across the empire. This will illustrate the pervasive and wide-reaching significance of the urban boundary as a Roman cultural concept, which may offer an explanation for the continued significance of city gates as monuments throughout the Roman Empire.

The chapter will begin with an examination of the Roman conception of the city, walls, gates, and the idea of the urban boundary as evidenced by myths and rituals relating to urban foundation, which will explore how fundamental the concept of the urban boundary was to the Roman idea of the city, and how this influenced the cultural significance of city gates. The chapter will then turn to exploring how Roman conceptions of the city intersected with urban realities, in studies of how the city was religiously defined by an urban boundary, and how civic and legal jurisdictions were forced to adapt to the changing nature of the urban boundary throughout Roman history. It will finish with studies of the roles that city gates played in Roman literature and art, and what that implies about the significance of city gates in urban life.

3.2 – City Gates, the Urban Boundary and the Foundation of the City.

The importance of the urban boundary and the gates of a city were established at the very foundation of a city itself, as demonstrated by the rituals which were an integral part of Roman town foundation. These rituals,

demonstrated best in the mythology of the foundation of Rome itself, place particular emphasis on the importance of defining the urban space and the creation of a symbolic and religious boundary for the town/city. These myths, and the corresponding rituals, also demonstrate the sacrosanct nature of this boundary, most famously through the death of Remus. This section will explore Roman foundation rituals by examining the presentation of the foundation of Rome itself in literary texts, and evidence that demonstrates the wider practice of this ritual, in order to demonstrate the continued cultural significance of the urban boundary as a key concept of Roman urban foundation in the early Imperial period. In particular, I will explore the role of the gate within these narratives and rituals, and how the sacred nature of the urban boundary may have led to the status of city gates as *res sacrae*, and their particular religious and cultural significance.

The best-known descriptions of Roman urban foundation rituals come from accounts of the mythological foundation of Rome by Romulus and Remus, set in the eighth century B.C.E. However, our preserved textual versions of the myth date from the first century B.C.E. to second century C.E., and record the version of the myth that was popularised by this time. Despite being many centuries removed from their subject matter, these accounts of the Roman foundation myth provide valuable insights into the contemporary perception of the urban boundary and its ongoing importance in Roman urban environments and in urban foundations in particular. Despite the clear archaeological evidence that Rome itself was not spontaneously founded, but gradually developed from many hilltop settlements that can be dated to as early as the fourteenth century B.C.E.,¹⁴³ these myths preserve a constructed narrative which was used to explain the origins of contemporary Roman society along with its institutions and culture.¹⁴⁴ In linking contemporary society, structures and rituals with the past, these myths reveal as much about contemporary culture and society as the mythic past that was being written about. As such, these accounts provide a valuable insight into Roman foundation practices, which were believed to be ancient and integral to the Roman conception of

¹⁴³ Grandazzi 1997: 109. Traces of potentially semi-nomadic settlement can be traced as far as the sixteenth/seventeenth century B.C.E. (Grandazzi 2013: 11).

¹⁴⁴ Wiseman (1995a: 5-15) highlights how different versions of the Romulus and Remus myth may have been adapted to appeal to contemporary popular culture and political systems.

urbanism. Therefore, we can see a reflection of contemporary late Republican and early Imperial urban culture, foundation rituals, and conception of the urban boundary, echoed in these myths. Critically for this study, a key feature of these myths is the depiction of a ritual identified as the *sulcus primigenius*, which established the boundary of a town and the route of its future fortifications, including city gates.

While gates primarily feature as an abstract location, rather than a physical structure, in these foundation myths, the urban boundary is key to the conception of the city foundation to both the founders themselves, and to the recorders of the myth. This offers a far more detailed insight into the importance of the urban boundary than the relatively scarce and vague references to this concept elsewhere in Roman literature.¹⁴⁵ Understanding the importance of the urban boundary in Roman culture is critical to understanding the importance of city gates as a monument, and to understanding their religious and cultural significance more widely. Thus, this discussion will begin by highlighting the key features of the foundation of Rome according to the myth described by late Republican and early Imperial authors.

Although there were evidently a huge number of different accounts of the foundation of Rome,¹⁴⁶ the best known identify Romulus as the city's founding hero and depict his foundation of the city along with the death of his twin Remus. There are many variations within this myth, possibly the result of its development over time and the addition of new features and characters in response to contemporary Roman culture and concerns.¹⁴⁷ By the first century B.C.E. this version had become popularised and broadly accepted, as it was described in these sources themselves,¹⁴⁸ and our most detailed versions are those written by Livy, Plutarch, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. All three accounts establish that, following returning their uncle to power at Alba Longa,

¹⁴⁵ As will be discussed in Section 3.5b, below.

¹⁴⁶ Some of these variants differ on relatively minor features such as the precise lineage of Romulus, whereas others demonstrate major divergent traditions in which others, such as Aeneas or Ascanius, founded Rome. Dionysius of Halicarnassus alone preserves 10 different versions of the myth (*Roman Antiquities* 1.71-75).

¹⁴⁷ Wiseman 1995a: 10-16, 106-110, 140.

¹⁴⁸ Plutarch (*Life of Romulus* 3) as "the story which has the widest credence and the greatest number of vouchers," and Livy (*Ab Urbe Condita* 1.7) as the "more common" version of the myth.

Romulus and Remus set forth to found a city of their own.¹⁴⁹ This resulted in a dispute between the two about the location of the future city and the two brothers separated to found their own settlements at the locations they believed to be divinely ordained.¹⁵⁰

This led to a critical passage of the myth in which Romulus marks out the walls of his future city with a line in the earth, and Remus is killed after leaping across this boundary. Here both Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus include a variant of the myth which states that Remus was killed in a conflict which broke out between the followers of the brothers, but also describe the version of the myth in which Remus was killed as a direct result of trying to cross the urban boundary which Romulus has marked out.¹⁵¹ Dionysius favours the idea that Remus was killed in fighting between the followers of either brother,¹⁵² and attempts to further distance Romulus from the killing by suggesting that a follower of Romulus called Celer was responsible for killing Remus, in carrying out Romulus' orders, rather than Romulus himself.¹⁵³ Ovid also follows this version, making Celer responsible for the death of Remus,¹⁵⁴ while Livy reports both versions, but describes the 'more common' version of the myth as being that in which Romulus killed Remus.¹⁵⁵

Remus' death is an unusual feature in a heroic foundation myth, and significant scholarly attention has been dedicated to understanding when and why this facet of the myth developed.¹⁵⁶ It has been speculated that the variants of the myth outlined above – which see Remus killed either by Celer or as part of a broader conflict – may have been intended to distance Romulus from the death of his brother and to therefore make him a more conventionally 'heroic' figure.¹⁵⁷ Other theories have suggested that Remus' death may have been developed from a tradition that saw the death as purificatory; a sacrifice made in

¹⁴⁹ Livy 1.6; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 1.85; Plutarch *Romulus* 1.9.

¹⁵⁰ Livy 1.7; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 1.85-6; Plutarch *Romulus* 1.9.

¹⁵¹ Livy 1.7; Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 1.87.

¹⁵² Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Roman Antiquities* 1.87) describes this as the "most probable" version of the myth before acknowledging the alternative in which Celer kills Remus.

¹⁵³ Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 1.87.

¹⁵⁴ Ovid *Fasti* 4.837-848.

¹⁵⁵ Livy 1.7.

¹⁵⁶ For a good overview of the development of the 'Remus' aspect of the myth, and its possible connections to Roman political history, see Wiseman (1995a).

¹⁵⁷ Wiseman 1995a: 10-11.

order to sanctify the walls and cleanse the internal space of the city, as is alluded to in some poetic references to the death.¹⁵⁸ Further interpretation has suggested that Remus' death was the result of the political nature of the myth – if Remus' inclusion in the myth was representative of dual power between patrician and plebeian officials, or a joint kingship akin to the consular structure, Remus' death represented the triumph of the patrician, or of the concentration of power in the hands of one person.¹⁵⁹ Other interpretations have considered the context of the written accounts, and seen the killing of Remus as a means of depicting internal conflict and civil war that would have been present in the cultural consciousness of the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. In some texts, Remus' death is even framed as an original sin, foreshadowing the internal conflicts the Roman people would later endure.¹⁶⁰

However, crucially for this study, Remus' death is framed in the most widely known versions of the myth as a direct result of his incorrectly crossing the urban boundary. The context of this act, taking place neither at the proper location for crossing an urban boundary (i.e., a gate), and in direct mockery of the physical nature of the boundary at this point, is portrayed in the texts as a sufficient justification for Remus' death.¹⁶¹ Although the literary accounts tend to poetically refer to Remus as having crossed the 'walls' laid out by Romulus, they cannot have been fully constructed at the time of Remus' death. Even an archaic earthwork and palisade structure would have been a considerable barrier to cross so casually, suggesting that the work must have only begun when this mythical episode took place. The boundary that Remus crossed, therefore, is best understood as being the future route of the walls, a symbolic

¹⁵⁸ Propertius (*Elegies* 4.1.49-50) and Florus (*Epitome of Roman History* 1.1.8) make reference to Remus' death having sanctified the walls. While there is precedent for human sacrifice in Roman religion, such occasions were usually the result of exceptional circumstances like the sacrifices made following the Battle of Cannae in accordance with the Sibylline books. In such circumstances, the sacrifices were usually used to gain protection, rather than purification (Rykwert 1976: 28; Wiseman 1995a: 124-5; 2004: 141-2).

¹⁵⁹ Wiseman 1995a: 106-7. This follows Wiseman's suggestions that Remus was a fourth-century B.C.E. addition to the myth that represented the plebeian population, and that his death was a later narrative addition in response to this by the patricians.

¹⁶⁰ Horace *Epodes* 7.17-20: "A cruel fate and the crime of a brother's murder have driven the Romans on, ever since the innocent Remus' blood was spilt on the ground, blood that has brought a curse on his descendants." Green 1994: 205-6; Rea 2007: 39-40.

¹⁶¹ Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1.87; Livy 1.7 "The more common story is that Remus leaped over the new walls in mockery of his brother, whereupon Romulus in great anger slew him..."; Plutarch *Romulus* 10 "At last when he [Remus] leaped across it, he was smitten (by Romulus himself some say; according to others by Celer, one of his companions) ..."

boundary which existed before a physical barrier could be constructed. This tells us that the boundary was considered sacrosanct even before the construction of the walls, and so it was not the walls themselves that were sacred but the boundary.¹⁶² Remus' killing indicates the great importance that was attached to these ritual urban boundaries, and perhaps seeks to establish a precedent for the evidence of later law codes which designated city walls as *res sacrae*, and the capital punishment required for those crossing the walls without using a gate.¹⁶³ The high importance of urban boundaries, which would have been most directly interacted with at the threshold of the city gate itself, would thus have imbued the fortifications, including the city gates, with the religious and legal significance that came with the urban boundary.

Having primarily drawn on Livy, Plutarch and Dionysius thus far for the outline of Roman foundation myth, I will now turn more specific attention to the evidence of urban foundation rituals given in Plutarch and Ovid's versions of the myth, which give us our best descriptions of the ritual associated with the foundation of the city and the demarcation of the urban boundary,¹⁶⁴ the *sulcus primigenius*. This will help to demonstrate how this myth reflects real foundation rituals and the high status of the urban boundary in reality. Plutarch's version of the myth, written in the early second century C.E., claims to be based on the historians Diodes of Peparethus and Fabius Pictor,¹⁶⁵ which would suggest that this version of the myth had already been popularised by the third century B.C.E. Plutarch's narrative closely follows that of Livy and Dionysius, as does Ovid, but offers more detail on the ritual itself. The foundation of Rome as an *ex novo* settlement presented in the myth does not fit with our archaeological evidence. The myth, and the ritual described, therefore are heavily influenced by contemporary Roman foundation practices – a fact Plutarch specifically alludes to.¹⁶⁶ Further literary and material evidence (discussed below) also indicate that this ritual was still a key part of urban foundation in the early Imperial period. The description given was likely heavily influenced by

¹⁶² Echoes of this can be seen throughout Rome's history when the *pomerium* no longer coincided with the city's walls, and will be explored throughout the case studies in Chapter 4.

¹⁶³ Bremmer & Horsfall 1987: 36. Legal evidence discussed in greater detail below, pp.97.

¹⁶⁴ Plutarch *Romulus* 10; Ovid *Fasti* 4.819-841.

¹⁶⁵ Plutarch *Romulus* 3.

¹⁶⁶ Plutarch (*Romulus* 11) offers the ritual as an explanation of contemporary Roman thought which viewed the walls as sacred but the gates not.

foundation rituals conducted at *ex novo* colonies in the late Roman Republic and into the Imperial period, which may themselves have originated in foundation and planning practices used when creating military camps.¹⁶⁷ In the context of camps and forts, fortifications would have provided protection and would have been considered a necessity. However, at colonial settlements, city walls had the additional functions of defining the political jurisdiction of the settlement and allowing the survey of land for allotting to colonists. While many of these functions could be carried out by simply marking the urban boundary, the construction of wall circuits could provide protection, as well as serving as a monumental demonstration of the power of Rome and the Roman colony in the local landscape.¹⁶⁸

Moreover, the description of the *sulcus primigenius* ritual in Ovid and Plutarch suggests that there was a great religious significance to the act of marking out the urban boundary that allowed for the symbolic definition of the future city and its protection from ritual impurity and supernatural threats. One key aspect to highlight is that in the narratives of Plutarch and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the description of the ritual comes after the killing of Remus, thus creating a chronological confusion about the role of this ritual. Remus is described as having crossed the line of the walls, despite the *sulcus primigenius* being later used to mark out this boundary. It is possible, considering how poorly understood these foundation rituals are in general, that the route of the walls had been marked out as part of a prior, functional process before they would be symbolically marked out by the later ritual,¹⁶⁹ or that following the death of Remus the area needed to be ritually purified.¹⁷⁰ However, this is most probably the result of the construction of the narrative and a decision to portray the foundation and purification of Rome's site as coming after the death of Remus which could otherwise have tainted the religious purity of the new city. The addition of a detailed account of the *sulcus primigenius* could offer both a reflection on the supposed origins of this ritual, as well as narratively dividing the foundation of the city from the death of Remus.

¹⁶⁷ Rykwert 1976: 68.

¹⁶⁸ Lomas 1997: 34.

¹⁶⁹ Stevens 2017: 25.

¹⁷⁰ Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Roman Antiquities* 1.88) alludes to this being the reason Romulus consults with Etruscan augurs.

Ovid's account, on the other hand, describes the *sulcus primigenius* as having taken place before the death of Remus, but the nature of his account of the foundation of Rome – coming from the context of describing the rituals of the *Parilia* – would have naturally placed greater emphasis on the religious ritual being carried out rather than the narrative of Remus' death. This further illustrates that the genre and literary construction of these texts may have affected even the attempt to lay out a historical narrative of the foundation of Rome.

“Then, taking this as a centre, they marked out the city in a circle round it. And the founder, having shod a plough with a brazen ploughshare, and having yoked to it a bull and a cow, himself drove a deep furrow round the boundary lines, while those who followed after him had to turn the clods, which the plough threw up, inwards towards the city, and suffer no clod to lie turned outwards. With this line they mark out the course of the wall, and it is called, by contraction, “pomerium,” that is “post murum,” behind or next the wall. And where they purposed to put in a gate, there they took the share out of the ground, lifted the plough over, and left a vacant space. And this is the reason why they regard all the wall as sacred except the gates; but if they held the gates sacred, it would not be possible, without religious scruples, to bring into and send out of the city things which are necessary, and yet unclean.”

Plutarch, *Romulus* 11.

“The trench was filled up with mould, and on the top was set an altar, and a fire was duly lit on a new hearth. Then pressing on the plough-handle he drew a furrow to mark out the line of the walls: the yoke was borne by a white cow and snow-white steer.”

Ovid, *Fasti* 4.823-826.

The *sulcus primigenius*, as described by Plutarch and Ovid, depicts a very clear ritual importance to the urban boundary. Plutarch's account further makes clear that the plough line created a religious boundary which would prevent anything that was ritually impure from entering the city except by the

gates. This detail of raising the plough at the gates is unique among the other descriptions of the *sulcus primigenius*, but Plutarch alludes to a widespread cultural belief that city walls were considered sacred, while city gates were not, which does not reflect the description given by the legal texts discussed later.¹⁷¹ The ploughing of the furrow here represents the purification of the soil of the boundary, and in so doing all of the space inside it, in accordance with other purificatory rituals that involve similar circumambulation explored later in this chapter. The use of the two white cattle, animals highly valued for other religious contexts like sacrifices to non-chthonic deities,¹⁷² demonstrates the importance of this ritual and the urban boundary it created. Furthermore, the yoking of an ox and a cow together has been suggested to have connotations for the establishment of an internal, domestic space associated with the cow, and the external – potentially military – space associated with the bull.¹⁷³ This division of space into the domestic and the military is also reflected in the political institutions of Rome, with powers being granted in either the Roman territory or in provinces, until the granting of *imperium* to Augustus which could remain active within the city, a power likewise taken up by later emperors.¹⁷⁴ Such details hint at the cultural and religious importance of this ritual in defining space, an importance which the urban boundary in subsequent forms such as wall circuits or other demarcations such as *cippi* or monumental city gates may then take on.

Importantly, the *sulcus primigenius* ritual is not only known through these texts, but through a variety of other literary and material evidence which indicates that this ritual was carried out at other Roman urban foundations besides Rome. This in turn demonstrates the broader applicability of the importance of the urban boundary elsewhere in the Roman world, which I believe is important to recognise as a phenomenon, and vital for understanding the prominence of city gates in other Roman urban sites. Varro refers to the ritual in his discussion of the origins of the term *pomerium*, which was used to

¹⁷¹ See below, pp.96-7, for laws in which gates are also considered sacrosanct alongside walls.

¹⁷² Scheid 2003: 80.

¹⁷³ Rykwert 1976: 127.

¹⁷⁴ Koortbojian 2020: 10. In 23 B.C.E. Augustus was granted proconsular *imperium* over the empire, allowing him to supersede provincial governors, along with tribune privileges that allowed him to also retain his dominance at Rome within the senate. This *imperium* would become an expected part of the role of the emperor (Koortbojian 2020: 41-2). See also pp.77-8.

designate the sacred boundary at Rome specifically, relating that the rite was believed to be Etruscan in origin, and specifically that the cow was yoked on the inside of the boundary as it was ploughed.¹⁷⁵ The practice of a ploughed furrow marking out the boundary of an urban foundation is also referred to in multiple episodes of the *Aeneid*, signalling that the ritual might commonly be referenced in relation to foundation acts in the Augustan period.¹⁷⁶ The Gracchan colony at Carthage was abandoned following the inauspicious destruction of the boundary markers for the town and the land parcels that had been marked out,¹⁷⁷ once again highlighting that the demarcation of such boundaries was an established part of colony foundation, but also carried a ritual significance as well as a practical purpose.

Other references include phrasing used in texts such as the *Lex Ursonensis* of 44 B.C.E., which designates the area from which burials, cremations and tomb monuments were excluded as “the area marked round by the plough.”¹⁷⁸ The absence of any reference to the *sulcus primigenius* in the *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum*, is a result of the fact that while these texts concerned the measuring and demarcation of allotted parcels of land for colonists, they did not concern the town itself. The heavy importance placed on the sanctity of these land boundaries under the protection of the god Terminus,¹⁷⁹ however, demonstrates the cultural significance of boundaries more generally, and the text furthermore uses the *pomerium* as an established boundary that was then used for the surveying of land.¹⁸⁰ These textual references, while scarce, suggest that the *sulcus primigenius* was a ritual carried out commonly at the foundation of new towns and colonies and not a phenomenon limited to Rome.

Archaeologically, the remains left by the ploughing ritual are untraceable, but the *sulcus primigenius* was often paired with the creation of a *mundus* deposit – a ritual pit, inside the area of the new city, which would be filled with

¹⁷⁵ Varro *De Linguae Latinae* 5.143. Simonelli (2001: 130) further links the rite to Etruscan practices and to the myth of Tages, the Etruscan who was born from a furrow ploughed into the ground and founded haruspicy.

¹⁷⁶ Virgil *Aeneid* 7.157-9; 5.755.

¹⁷⁷ Appian *Civil War* 1.24.

¹⁷⁸ *Lex Ursonensis* 73.

¹⁷⁹ *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum*: 106.34-36.

¹⁸⁰ *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum*: 67.29-31.

offerings such as the ‘first fruits’ of the harvest.¹⁸¹ Such deposits have been identified at sites including the Roman colony at Cosa,¹⁸² and multiple sites across Roman Britain,¹⁸³ suggesting that these types of foundational deposits were commonplace.¹⁸⁴ These deposits therefore lend credence to the idea that rituals such as the *sulcus primigenius* were widely carried out. The majority of our evidence for the *sulcus primigenius* comes from depictions on coins and reliefs. The ritual is often depicted on a numismatic reverse-type with a male figure, wearing a toga and with his head covered, driving a plough pulled by two oxen (see Figures 3.1 & 3.2, below). The presentation of the figure in a toga, with the head covered, is in line with expected dress for carrying out Etruscan religious rituals,¹⁸⁵ and therefore cannot represent an agricultural motif. This reverse type is found on coins with a wide geographical spread of mints and find-spots, and on issues dated from the first century B.C.E. to late antiquity.¹⁸⁶ Variants of this type also existed, such as a bronze medallion minted under Commodus which depicted the Emperor as Hercules, ploughing with a team of oxen whilst nude and holding a club.¹⁸⁷ These coins are often associated with Roman colonies and colony foundation in particular, with legends which might connect the coin to a particular Roman colony (Figure 3.2).

The fact that such coin issues were minted in relation to colonies founded in the Eastern Mediterranean, at cities that were not constructed *ex novo* (see Figure 3.2, for example),¹⁸⁸ is intriguing. It is unclear how a ritual such as the *sulcus primigenius* would have worked at such a site, if it was carried out at all. References to a colony at Casilinum, however, suggest that

¹⁸¹ Ovid *Fasti* 4.821-824; Plutarch *Romulus* 11.

¹⁸² Fentress 2000: 23.

¹⁸³ Woodward & Woodward 2004: 78-81. Sites include; Dorchester, Silchester, Castle Hill Cambridge, and St. Albans.

¹⁸⁴ It is worth highlighting, however, that deposits of this nature could have been made for a variety of reasons and not only in the context of town foundation. For example, a similar deposit has been found in an ancient warehouse in Lattes, Southern France, that seems to have no relation to an urban foundation ritual. Rovira & Chabal 2008: 192.

¹⁸⁵ Simonelli 2001: 130.

¹⁸⁶ Such depictions are found in the first-century B.C.E. (E.g., *RIC*.I.402. – an Augustan Aureus displaying the *sulcus primigenius* on the reverse, or RR21880., a denarius of Marius, also depicting the *sulcus primigenius* on the reverse) and on Imperial coins through the second century C.E. (Kneafsey 2017: 45-6).

¹⁸⁷ Hannestad 1988: 245. Medallion = *Hirmer* Berlin 2016.908.

¹⁸⁸ Although the coin may simply use the city in the background as a way of firmly establishing that this was depicting a colonial foundation, the fact that this is not used by other *sulcus primigenius* types suggests that this was a specific detail of this coin, reflecting perhaps an existing settlement at the site.

the ritual could be carried out where a previous settlement existed.¹⁸⁹ A symbolic stretch of land may have been ploughed,¹⁹⁰ or a route that encompassed the existing city, but in any case, the symbolism of the *sulcus primigenius* was adopted in order to represent the colonial foundation on coinage. This provides compelling evidence that the *sulcus primigenius* was both widely practised, and came to visually represent the process of town foundation in the Roman world.



Figure 3.1 - Aureus of Augustus (RIC.I.402). Obverse: Augustus, bare-headed, facing right. Lituus and simpulum behind. CAESAR AVGVST. Reverse: Augustus, veiled and togate, ploughing right with two oxen before the city walls. C MARIVS TRO III VIR ([https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.1\(2\).aug.402](https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.1(2).aug.402)).



Figure 3.2 - Coin of Caligula (RPC.I.382), c. 37-41 C.E., Caesaraugusta, Hispania. Obverse: Bust of Caligula (left) bare-headed. G CAESAR AVG GERMANICVS IMP PATER PATRIAE. Reverse: priest ploughing with yoke of oxen, right. C.C.A. TITVLLO ET MONTANO II VIR. (<https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/1/382>).

¹⁸⁹ Cicero *Philippics* 2.102. In this passage, Cicero mocks Mark Anthony for having set out a colony at a pre-existing colony, and infringing on the urban boundary of nearby Capua, having been refused the right to found a new colony at Capua.

¹⁹⁰ Stevens 2017: 13-37.

Representations of the *sulcus primigenius* can also be found in other media, such as statuary and sculptural relief, which further demonstrates the widespread knowledge, and use, of this ritual across the Roman Empire. A first-century C.E. marble relief from Aquileia (Figure 3.3, below), depicts a procession of togate male figures following a plough, with a team of two oxen being led by another male figure. This is typically identified as a depiction of a foundation ritual, despite Aquileia itself having been granted colonial status in the second-century B.C.E. It is unclear, therefore, whether this relief was intended as a depiction of the assumed historic ritual, or was in fact intended to depict another colonial foundation. From Britain, the Piercebridge Plough Group (Figure 3.4, below), depicts a hooded figure driving a cow and a bull yoked to a plough. The deliberate distinction between the cow and the bull on the bronze statuette, dated between the first and third centuries C.E., suggests that this too is a depiction of the *sulcus primigenius* rather than an agricultural scene.¹⁹¹ The Roman settlement at Piercebridge consisted of a military fort accompanied by a *vicus* rather than a planned town, but the statuette may refer to a local interpretation of the ritual, or something made in relation to foundation rituals elsewhere.

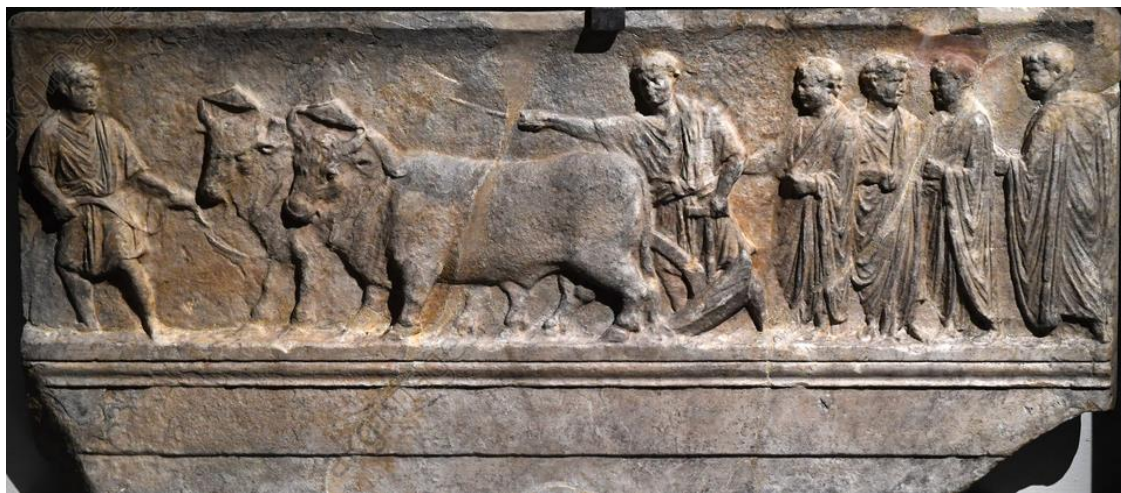


Figure 3.3 – *Sulcus Primigenius* relief from Aquileia, (1st century B.C.E. – 1st Century C.E.) (<https://www.akg-images.co.uk/CS.aspx?VP3=SearchResult&ITEMID=2UMEBM5QWUU77#/SearchResult&ITEMID=2UMEBM5QWUU77>).

¹⁹¹ Manning 1971: 134.



Figure 3.4 - The Piercebridge Plough Group statuette, bronze, 1st-3rd Centuries C.E., found at Piercebridge, County Durham, UK. (https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_1879-0710-1).

The repeated visual motif of the *sulcus primigenius* in connection with colonial foundations in particular demonstrates the widespread occurrence of this ritual as a part of urban foundation rites. While the majority of textual allusions to the ritual focus specifically on the mythic past of Rome itself – possibly as a means of anchoring this ritual to ancient tradition – the material evidence demonstrates that it was practiced elsewhere in the Empire. This therefore suggests that the urban boundary was ritually established in this way at Roman towns and cities across the Empire, suggesting that the importance of the urban boundary, which will be demonstrated throughout the remainder of this chapter, was experienced in provincial towns and cities as well as at Rome. This is likely the result of cultural, and population, exchange, especially at colonies where settled veterans might be expected to adhere to ‘Roman’ (or at least military) cultural norms. Legal evidence such as the *Lex Ursonensis* further demonstrates that this was expected, and so we can assume the importance of the urban boundary as an integral part of the foundation, or refoundation, of Roman towns and cities.

The marking out of the ritual route of the walls and the boundary of the city described in accounts of the *sulcus primigenius* adds to our understanding

of the cultural importance of the fortifications themselves. If they followed the route of the *sulcus primigenius* then the walls would have inherited some of the associations of religious protection against impurity, as well as their earthly role in marking and protecting the boundary. Assuming this to be the case, city gates would offer an exception to this religious boundary. Whether the plough was symbolically lifted at the site of future gates or not, the gate would be the threshold by which dangers in the form of impure or dangerous entities could enter the city on a metaphysical, as well as a physical level. Although Plutarch specifies that therefore gates cannot be considered sacred like the rest of the wall circuit, this may have emphasised the importance of seeking religious protection at such locations, as will be discussed in the following sub-chapter. The importance of the urban boundary and the potential vulnerability of the city gates were established from the very foundation of a town, according to Roman custom, and would continue to be culturally significant to the definition of the urban boundary throughout a site's history.

3.3 – The Role of City Gates in the Religious and Civic Definition of the City.

Having seen how the establishment of the urban boundary at the foundation of a Roman urban settlement imbued the city gates with ritual and symbolic importance, this sub-chapter aims to explore how other rituals restated the importance of that boundary and how its status was reflected and harnessed in Roman rituals. I will also explore how these religious and civic spheres intersected in rituals and political jurisdictions that concerned the urban boundary. The majority of evidence for this section comes from Rome, due to the prominent position that the city held in Roman literature, but we may expect that many of the same rituals might be held at other cities throughout the Empire.

Rituals pertaining to the urban boundary can loosely be organised into two categories; those which either symbolically or literally navigated the urban boundary, and those which crossed the urban boundary. The first category can be described as circumambulatory rituals – in which the boundary was restated by the community – which were usually related to the purification of the boundary (and by extension all that fell within it). This was an element of many

Roman rituals, such as the loosely defined *lustratio*, in which a procession would purify whatever was encircled, whether it was a physical space, a body of people such as an army, crops, animals, or entire cities.¹⁹² The second sub-set centred on the act of crossing the urban boundary, whether respecting the traditional limits of that boundary or in exceptional circumstances such as a triumph, by being allowed to ignore the usual restrictions. In either case, the urban boundary was critical, and such rituals would have restated its importance as a symbolic boundary where regulations were usually enforced. It is important to highlight that there were many urban boundaries at Rome, defined by religious and civic limits, which did not always correspond directly with the city walls, especially as religious and legal definitions were extended to include a much broader area. However, city gates would still have served as a dramatic visual marker of the urban boundary and would have been an important location for the expression of the boundary that could be easily understood, as will be explored below.

Circumambulatory rituals included the *Lupercalia*, an annual festival held at Rome that was closely linked to the city's foundation. Although it is most frequently associated with fertility, the *Lupercalia* was also connected with the purification of the city and its populace through the whipping of the crowd with a *februa* made from the skin of a sacrificial goat.¹⁹³ The *Luperci* runners left the *Lupercal* cave and processed in a route that was roughly anticlockwise – in keeping with Roman directional preference for auspicious reasons –¹⁹⁴ around the Palatine hill, the supposed location of Romulus' original foundation.¹⁹⁵ Although the route was not extended to encircle the entirety of the later wall circuits of the city, it possibly preserved or mythologised a route around an earlier boundary of the city.¹⁹⁶ This, therefore, would have been an example of a

¹⁹² *Encyclopaedia Britannica* s.v. 'Lustration.' For examples see: Ovid *Fasti* 4.735; Cato *de Re Rust.* 141; Appian *Civil War* 4.89; Cicero *de Divin.* 1.45. Other purificatory rites existed that did not involve circumnavigation, but many did.

¹⁹³ Kneafsey 2017: 90.

¹⁹⁴ Vuković 2018: 56. Examples of lustrations depicted on, E.G., the Trajan's column reliefs (Scene 8 – see Figure 3.5, below), depict lustration processions going in anticlockwise direction.

¹⁹⁵ Vuković 2018: 55.

¹⁹⁶ Kneafsey 2017: 90-92.

deliberate lustration of the urban space,¹⁹⁷ which became a more symbolic gesture as the city grew well beyond these limits.

The ritual that gives the clearest example of a purificatory circumambulation is the *amburbium*. With a name originating from the Latin 'to walk' and 'the city,' this ritual was a type of lustration that was carried out when Rome was believed to be under particular threat, rather than having a fixed date in the religious calendar.¹⁹⁸ This ritual involved a procession around the *pomerium* of Rome, before sacrifices were carried out, and resulted in the purification of the city's boundary, and the space it contained.¹⁹⁹ At Rome this was carried out by priests of the Arval Brotherhood, but similar lustrations are also depicted (as on Trajan's column) being carried out at other cities in which the sacrificial offerings of a cow, a sheep, and a pig were led around the outside of the city boundary (see Figure 3.5, below), before being sacrificed. These rituals could be carried out in the face of a looming physical threat, such as Caesar's march on the city which was described by Lucan as prompting a purification of the city's walls.²⁰⁰ The connection between the perceived threat of external enemies and the need to sanctify the city's urban defences is in this case obvious; by re-purifying the walls and all within them the Romans could hope to enlist divine protection for the city.

While the physical boundary of the Republican city walls returned to greater significance during this period of pressure, with repairs being carried out, the use of these fortifications essentially meant the abandonment of the built-up area outside the walls. The poor state of the Republican city walls by the first century B.C.E. and the fact that much built-up area now extended beyond them, will be discussed throughout Chapter 4, and demonstrates that its defensive role had much diminished by this point. In choosing to conduct the *amburbium* at this boundary instead of the edge of the built-up area, it demonstrates that the religious nature of this boundary was also forefront in the minds of Rome's population, and that the wall and the *pomerium* were inherently conceptually linked as means of protecting the city. This is further

¹⁹⁷ Vuković 2018: 51, 55.

¹⁹⁸ Kneafsey 2017: 89.

¹⁹⁹ Lucan *Civil War* 1.593.

²⁰⁰ Lucan *Civil War* 1.592-595.

confirmed by other episodes which provoked an *amburbium*, which included occasions of inauspicious portents such as in 194 B.C.E. when a series of ill portents led the city to be purified by a lustration among a nine-day period of sacrifices,²⁰¹ and even smaller events which were viewed to pollute the city, such as the entry of an inauspicious owl to the Capitoline sanctuary area.²⁰² This demonstrates that the ritual purity of the city was of paramount importance, but also that lustrations like the *amburbium* were used to account for the religious purity of all of the area encompassed by the religious boundary of the city. Lucan's account suggests that a circumambulation of the Republican wall circuit was still at least a memorable version of the ritual in the mid-first century C.E., but it is unclear whether as the city expanded a symbolic stretch of walls or land may have been circumnavigated instead of the entire outskirts of the city in later periods.²⁰³



Figure 3.5 - Depiction of a lustratio from Trajan's Column (Scene 8) (http://www.trajans-column.org/?page_id=107#PhotoSwipe1675074428314).

²⁰¹ Livy 35.9. The ill omens included; the flooding of the Tiber in the *Forum Boarium* area, the *Porta Caelimontana* and surrounding area being struck by lightning, showers of stones falling and a swarm of wasps settling in the Temple of Mars.

²⁰² Pliny *Natural History* 10.16.

²⁰³ Similar archaic rituals were reduced to a more easily achievable, symbolic feat; such as the throwing of a spear into enemy territory to initiate wars, which was altered so that the spear was thrown into a patch of land in Rome that would be symbolically owned by the enemy, rather than the *fetial* priests travelling to the frontier themselves. Rich 2013: 561.

Other rituals, about which we know less, may also have included an element of circumambulation, such as the *Parilia/Romaia*. This festival, which coincided with the date of Rome's mythological foundation,²⁰⁴ would have been closely linked to the establishment of the city's first urban boundary. Only the rural version of the festival is described in detail in extant sources, but it included purificatory elements such as leaping through fire and processing around sheep pens in order to purify the animals.²⁰⁵ It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the urban equivalent – which is alluded to – would have included similar purificatory elements, and possibly a circumambulation of the urban boundary itself. Likewise, the *ambarvalia*, in which processions would circumambulate property and estates in order to ritually purify them, and the similar rites carried out by the Arval Brothers in honour of Dea Dia to protect the entire *ager Romanus* demonstrate elements of this sacred purification of boundaries.²⁰⁶ Over time, as the boundaries of a city were exceeded by suburbs, especially at Rome, many of these rituals may have become symbolic rather than processing around the entirety of the space that was being purified.²⁰⁷ However, such rituals demonstrate the significance of the urban boundary as a religious boundary, which protected the city from ill fortune and had to be ritually cleansed when necessary.

Circumambulatory rituals such as these would have focused on the urban boundary in its entirety, or a symbolic representation of it. However, the city gates would have been a notable part of this, not only as highly visible parts of the urban boundary, but as the threshold by which the procession members left the city in order to carry it out, and then re-entered the city following its completion. As such, they would be deeply conceptually linked with such rituals and where the city's fortifications coincided with the religious boundary, the gates would have been imbued with the religious importance of that boundary. Furthermore, this would have heightened the sense that city gates were the

²⁰⁴ Ovid *Fasti* 4.819.

²⁰⁵ Ovid *Fasti* 4.819; Livy 1.7.2; Propertius *Elegies* 4.1.19-20, 4.4.70-75.

²⁰⁶ Iara 2015: 129-32.

²⁰⁷ The *Dea Dia* rites of the Arval brotherhood, for instance, include a circular ritual dance that may be supposed to invoke this act of circumambulation, (Iara 2015: 129); rituals such as the throwing of the *fetiales'* spear also ceased to take place at the actual border of enemy territory as conflicts took place further away, but at a symbolic tract of land for which ownership could be transferred to the enemy (*OCD. s.v. Fetiales*).

symbolic ‘weak-points’ of the urban boundary where ritual pollution and impurity might enter (and exit) the city, as Plutarch implies in his description of the *sulcus primigenius*. Although at Rome the religious boundary of the *pomerium* did not coincide with the circuits of city walls for all of its history, during the late Republic and early Imperial period, much of the *pomerium* aligned with the Republican city walls. This was not the edge of the legal, administrative, or physical city, but was a powerful symbolic border in the religious understanding of the city, and it is highly likely that such purificatory rituals still used this boundary as a limit. At cities other than Rome, the urban boundary usually more closely reflected the physical boundaries of the city such as fortifications or monumental gateways, and the relationship between the religious boundary and the physical structure of the gateways would have been closer.

But city gates could also be places where the religious boundary of the city was restated through the very act of its crossing. As will be explored later, it was only one of the means by which the edge of the city could be legally defined, but unlike other measures of the limit of urban space, the visual prominence of a gate as a structure could frame the ceremonial crossing of the urban boundary with a large and visible threshold, and so form a focal point in other rituals related to departure and arrival. Best known among these is the triumph, in which a victorious general and his troops were granted a temporary exemption to the usual restrictions which were expected when crossing the boundary into the city. These triumphal processions were allowed to enter the city bearing arms, with the triumphant general – the *triumphator* – dressed in purple, processing through the city to the Capitoline hill showing off their captured wealth before completing sacrifices at the Temple of Jupiter.²⁰⁸ Despite the transition across the urban boundary being only one element of this ritual, the entrance of the *triumphator* and their army to the city would have been an important moment of the triumph, and the use of the ‘Porta Triumphalis’ to enter the city would have been a climactic moment in the entire procession.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Beard 2007: 81; Rich 2013: 554-555.

²⁰⁹ There is significant debate surrounding the nature of the Porta Triumphalis – whether it was a specific gate in the Republican city wall, a title applied occasionally to a particular gate such as the Porta Carmentalis, or a title applied to whichever gate the *triumphator* was using to enter the city, or an honorific title that then came to be associated with a specific gate over time. (See Popkin 2016: Chapter 1 for an overview of the historiography on this topic, and Grunow Sobocinski 2009 on the difficulties of



Figure 3.6 - Relief of Marcus Aurelius' triumph. Musei Capitolini (Inv. Scu. 808). Marcus Aurelius enters the city through an unidentifiable arch/gateway, mounted in a quadriga. (<http://capitolini.info/scu00808/>).

It is common, therefore, that images depicting triumphs often use the procession's arrival at a gate or arch as part of the iconography of the triumph.²¹⁰ Similar rituals such as the *ovatio* – which conferred similar but lesser rights on generals, and allowed them to parade through the city – would also have used the urban boundary as a crucial threshold.²¹¹ In such circumstances, city gates and peripheral arches would have become focal points for the processions, thresholds which framed the act of crossing the boundary, and possibly key locations in which crowds began to view the procession, and ones which would become common in the artistic depiction of such rituals (see Figure 3.6). In such depictions, the gate or arch symbolised the act of crossing this threshold in the visual depiction. The gate therefore became the backdrop

the evidence). For the current discussion this distinction is not important, whatever gate was used would have been imbued with significant importance on the day.

²¹⁰ The use of arches and gates in Roman art to depict the urban boundary will be discussed in more detail in Section 3.5a.

²¹¹ Hjort Lange 2015: 135; Rich 2013: 552-553.

against which the special permissions that had been granted were most obvious and best framed to the audience.

In such ceremonies which granted exceptions to the usual religious and civic expectations of the urban boundary, these expectations and restrictions on behaviour would have been emphasised. In the inversion of the norms that the urban boundary restricted, triumphs and *ovationes* would have further highlighted the importance of these restrictions in normal circumstances, as well as the exceptionality of those granted these rights. Although at Rome, where the majority of the ceremonies referred to above took place, the urban boundary as a legal and religious concept had been extended to beyond the limits of the city wall, the gates provided the visual and conceptual backdrop for their entry into the city.

However, other ceremonies which involved crossing the urban boundary would have drawn attention to its importance differently, by ritualising compliance to the expected traditional restrictions of the urban boundary. Two of these which I shall highlight here, the *profectio* and the *adventus*, are thought to have developed from Republican traditions which were part of the departure and arrival of provincial magistrates at Rome.²¹² In Republican tradition, most magistrates' jurisdiction was held either within the city or outside it, and appropriate corresponding auspices had to be taken or renewed.²¹³ The *auspicia urbana* was taken on the Capitoline hill and granted jurisdiction within the *pomerium*, while the *auspicia maxima* granted the same powers but for up to a mile outside the *pomerium*, thus allowing it to hold jurisdiction over all of the growing city of Rome.²¹⁴ Magistrates whose power would be held in provinces had to take their auspices, the *auspicia bellica* or *militaria*, outside the city limits, and these auspices were not valid within the city of Rome or a mile of the *pomerium*.²¹⁵ Consuls, and later Emperors, were exceptions to these distinctions as they held both *imperium* – which granted them military command

²¹² MacCormack 1971: 726; see also Beard (2007: 324) for references to the relationship between the *adventus* and triumph, and Rich (2013: 545-547, 551-556).

²¹³ Koortbojian 2020: 10–11.

²¹⁴ Kneafsey 2017: 103-4; Koortbojian 2020: 11.

²¹⁵ Kneafsey 2017: 103-4; Koortbojian 2020: 11, 44-45, 48. These auspices were often taken upon arrival in a province by 'private' officials (those appointed rather than elected: *privati cum imperio*), but by elected magistrates before their departure from Rome (Koortbojian 2020: 69-71).

in the provinces – and *auspicia* due to their investiture with this magistracy, allowing them to transcend this barrier expected of other magistrates.²¹⁶

The act of crossing the urban boundary was supposed to void these auspices, and if a magistrate did so during his time in office, he would have to re-take the auspices.²¹⁷ Obviously, in practice, as it became more commonplace for senators and magistrates to hold suburban properties near Rome to which they could travel for leisure, such restrictions would have become limiting, and perhaps were considered an inconvenience. However, allusions to the impropriety of voiding these auspices and having to re-take them in the late Republican period suggest that they still had strong religious importance,²¹⁸ no doubt combined with political motives for their policing. Certainly by the principate, Augustus was awarded a specific dispensation that his proconsular *imperium* did not lapse inside the city boundary, allowing him to maintain his status as superior to all other contemporary magistrates.²¹⁹ This demonstrates how the traditional boundary still served as a limit on the powers of magistrates at this time, although the advent of the Emperor as a singular power in Roman government who held power both within and outside the boundary would erode some of this importance in the Imperial period.

The *profectio* was a ritualised ‘setting-out’ ceremony, used when an emperor left a city. Little is known about the exact nature of the ceremony, but it was depicted in artistic representations such as the *Cancellaria* reliefs (Figures 3.7a & b), which show the Emperor leaving a city in travelling clothes – neither a toga nor military armour.²²⁰ The ceremony is presumed to have mirrored the *adventus* (below), and would have consisted of a consul or Emperor leaving the city, complete with his retinue, and it may have involved the ritualised process of changing out of a toga in order to signal that the magistrate was leaving the city

²¹⁶ Koortbojian 2020: 70-71.

²¹⁷ Kneafsey 2017: 104. Additional exceptions, such as Consuls and Emperors have already been highlighted, the same would be held true of military commanders during times of war when troops might have to enter the city (Koortbojian 2020: 12).

²¹⁸ Cicero *De Nat. Deo*. 2.4 – describing how the elections presided over by Tiberius Gracchus were judged to be invalid by the augurs, because he had left the city and not retaken the auspices on his return.

²¹⁹ Jones 1951: 114.

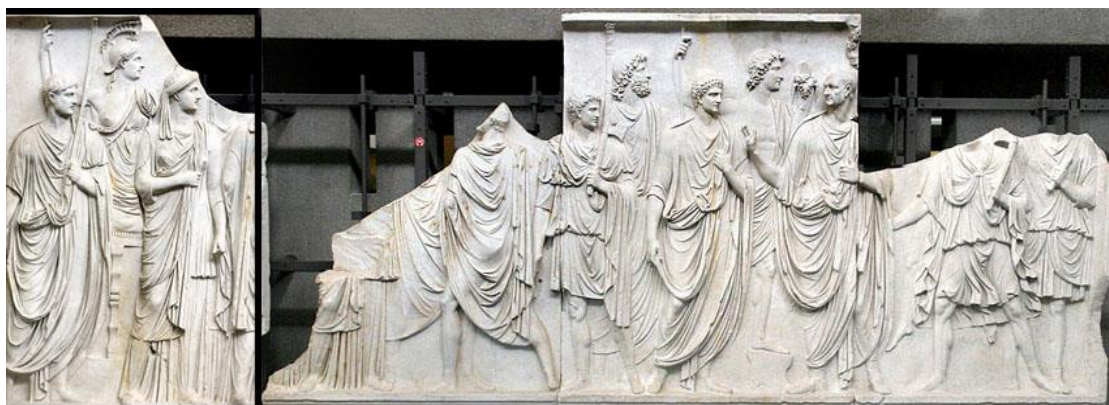
²²⁰ *Cancellaria* Reliefs, Frieze A; Kneafsey 2017: 111-12.

(which was the correct civic sphere in which to wear a toga).²²¹ In the *Cancellaria* relief, Frieze A, Domitian is depicted being led from the city by Mars and Minerva, dressed in a tunic and travelling cloak, accompanied by troops who are armed, but not dressed in armour. I would suggest that a large scale *profectio*, such as when a consul or Emperor was setting out on a military campaign may have been accompanied by much fanfare and ceremony, however other *profectioes* which saw provincial magistrates leaving the city may have been much smaller and would have had little effect on the popular consciousness. Little is known about the public interaction with the *profectio*, but the lack of evidence referring to the occasion and the context of a departure suggests that there was not as widespread popular involvement in this ceremony as its counterpart the *adventus*.



Figure 3.7A - (Above) The *Cancellaria* Reliefs, Frieze A. Depicting a *profectio* of Domitian (later re-carved as Nerva) (<https://www.rome101.com/Cancellaria/>).

Figure 3.7B - (Below) The *Cancellaria* Reliefs, Frieze B. Depicting the *adventus* of Vespasian (<https://www.rome101.com/Cancellaria/>).



²²¹ The depiction in the *Cancellaria* reliefs (Frieze A), for example, depicts Domitian in neither a toga nor armour, suggesting a change into appropriate clothing for the journey.

The *adventus* is much better known due to its popularity in the Late Antique period, when the ceremony was often recorded in panegyrics that were given to Emperors on their arrival in a city. This ceremony marked the arrival of the Emperor into a city, either during travelling or returning from a military campaign, and was a celebratory occasion, which possibly shared much of the visual language of a triumph, from which the *adventus* may have developed.²²² The frequent military campaigns of later Emperors, along with more frequent travel between different cities of the empire, no doubt saw more occasions for this ceremony, and its association with the reception of gifts and privileges by the host city must have contributed to its popularity and the number of occasions it was well recorded. However, earlier literary and artistic depictions, such as Frieze B of the *Cancellaria* reliefs demonstrate that this was not a Late Antique innovation, but built on a pre-existing ceremony from at least the late first-century C.E. when these reliefs were constructed.²²³ According to Late Antique sources, the Emperor and his entourage would be greeted outside a city's boundary by a delegation from the city where, at least at Rome, the Emperor was expected to change out of his armour and into a toga before proceeding into the city itself.²²⁴ This was presumably to signal the peaceful intentions of the Emperor and the shift from the military realm to the civic one, and much importance was attached to this in the accounts of Vitellius' arrival at Rome in 69 C.E. Both Tacitus and Suetonius use this expectation of changing out of military attire, and Vitellius' reluctance (or refusal), to signal the belligerent nature of the short-lived Emperor, as well as his disregard for the appropriate civic and religious traditions expected of an Emperor.²²⁵ At Rome, this aspect of the *adventus* has been strongly associated with the *mutatorium Caesaris*, a structure identified by Coarelli on the *via Appia* shortly outside the Porta

²²² Beard 2007: 323-324. Many arguments have attempted to trace whether the *adventus* developed from the triumph or vice-versa, which is not important here, but highlights how the ceremonial expression may have been similar.

²²³ Kneafsey 2017: 111-113.

²²⁴ MacCormack 1971: 723.

²²⁵ Tacitus (*Histories* 2.89) describes Vitellius as being persuaded by his advisors not to enter Rome "as if it were a captured city," but to change into a toga and enter the city on foot instead, while Suetonius (*Vitellius* 11) has Vitellius enter the city still armed and in military uniform, at the head of his troops. In doing so, Vitellius apparently showed "greater and greater disregard for the laws of Gods and men."

Capena, where the Imperial entourage could have stopped so the Emperor could change clothes before entering the city.²²⁶

The entire retinue, both the Imperial entourage and the city delegates, could now continue into the forum, where it was customary for speeches to be given in praise of the Emperor, in return for which suitable gifts and rewards would be awarded to the city by the Emperor.²²⁷ Throughout Late Antiquity, other aspects of this ritual developed which further embellished the reception and procession of the Emperor such as the carrying of collegial symbols to greet the Imperial retinue, the lighting of candles and incense, pouring libations and decorating the streets to the forum became increasingly common parts of the expected celebrations of the *adventus*.²²⁸ Although the ritual culminated in the arrival of the Imperial retinue at the forum – which is usually the focus of the ritual in literary accounts – artistic depictions of the *adventus* usually situate the ritual at the edges of the urban space, usually through the depiction of a city gate or arch towards which the Emperor is travelling (see Figure 3.8, for example).²²⁹ Although many *adventus/profectio* depictions on coins, such as the coins of Trajan, do not include recognisable geographic markers,²³⁰ but rely on their inscription to make obvious the context of the procession depicted, later and larger types sometimes did include details such as city gates. This is a notable trend in *adventus* type coins, that were popularised during the reign of Hadrian, which depict the arrival of the Emperor at a city (perhaps indicated by the presence of city walls and gates in the background) being greeted by the personification of a city or province.²³¹ The city gate here is used as a means of representing the entire city, as will be discussed in greater detail in Section 3.5a, partly due to the lack of space to depict recognisable structures on the coin and partly due to their ability to represent the urban boundary (Figure 3.9, for example).

²²⁶ Kneafsey 2016: 154; Coarelli 2007: 214.

²²⁷ MacCormack 1971: 723.

²²⁸ Kneafsey 2017: 110; MacCormack 1981: 22-28.

²²⁹ MacCormack 1981: 37.

²³⁰ Wolfram Thill 2014: 95-108.

²³¹ Abdy & Mittag 2019: 40-42. The trend later combines such features in notable examples such as the Arras medallion. Where city gates do not appear in *adventus* coins, we can assume that this is an artistic choice to focus on the procession, given the limited field available on regular denominations of coin.

As in other rituals, such as the triumph, the transition of the entourage through a city gateway would have been a significant moment as they crossed a highly visible threshold of the religious boundary of the city. The passage through a gate would have appeared particularly climactic, exploiting the architecture of the gate, which simultaneously served as a landmark, border, and means of passage, to provide the ritual transition between distinct spaces. As such, these rituals which crossed through city gates as part of the urban boundary would have reified the urban boundary just as much as those which featured the circumnavigation of the urban boundary. All of these rituals and ceremonies demonstrate the importance of the boundary of the city for religious sanctity, protection and the correct jurisdiction of religious auspices. The definition of urban space was key to understanding how the city could be protected or purified, and so in times of perceived threat and insecurity it is common to find these boundaries reinforced and redefined.



Figure 3.8 - Relief depicting a simultaneous profectio/adventus scene from the Arch of Galerius, Thessaloniki. NE face, Pillar B (Hermann Wagner 1935, photo courtesy of the DAI Athens photograph archive).



Figure 3.9 - The Arras Medallion (Reverse), 297 C.E. - Constantius is greeted by a personified Londinium with city gate in the background (Electrotype of original in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Arras. Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. PHGCOM).

Numerous other examples demonstrate how important the urban boundary was as a religious phenomenon in the Roman world, such as the proscription on burials within the limits of the city. The *Lex Ursonensis* makes clear that burials and the cremation of the dead were restricted within the city in all but the most exceptional of cases.²³² This was a precept established in the Twelve Tables, a collection of Roman laws from the fifth century B.C.E., which stipulated – amongst a collection of its sacred laws – that the dead should neither be buried or burned inside the city.²³³ Later exceptions developed that conferred the rights to have remains placed, or cremations carried out, within the city. These exceptions were usually given to particularly notable statesmen and later Emperors, such as the placing of Trajan’s cremated remains within or below the base of Trajan’s column at Rome.²³⁴

It has been argued that measures restating the prohibition of cremations and burials, such as those found near the Porta Esquilina at Rome (See Chapter 4), might be related to practical issues such as the risk of fires breaking out from funeral pyres or disease spreading from bodies,²³⁵ or as sumptuary

²³² *Lex Ursonensis* 73.

²³³ *Twelve Tables*: Table X.1.

²³⁴ Claridge 1993: 11.

²³⁵ Often based on the interpretation of Cicero in his account of this law (Cicero *De Leg.* 2.58).

laws which could restrict the size and political capital of individual funerals.²³⁶ However, I find it more convincing that there is also a significant religious element to this. The processes of a Roman funeral and the ritual cleansing of the house after the body has been removed demonstrate how closely connected the physical and religious concept of pollution could be in the Roman world.²³⁷ Emerson rightly highlights that the mingling of tomb monuments with domestic and commercial structures in suburbs of Roman cities illustrates that the tombs themselves cannot have been seen as inherently polluting.²³⁸ This mixed use of the suburban landscape will be explored in more detail in case studies on the Porta Esquilina and Porta Ercolano. Instead of rejecting the idea that human remains were felt to be ritually polluting, I propose that this is because the bodies have by this point been subjected to the proper funerary rites and therefore no longer threaten the ritual purity of the space.

This would mean that until correct funerary rites had been completed, the body was ritually polluting; a fact that can clearly be evidenced by the ritual pollution of the *libitinarii*, a collective name for funerary workers who handled such bodies and prepared them for burial or cremation.²³⁹ Restrictions placed on these *libitinarii* stipulated they should live outside the city walls and wear identifying clothing when entering the city to carry out their business.²⁴⁰ The term *exopolitai* is often used in the middle and later Empire as a means of describing funerary workers, rooted specifically in their expected location outside the gates of a city.²⁴¹ The context of these laws suggests that the frequent contact with the recently deceased meant that the *libitinarii* themselves were considered ritually polluted and therefore had to be segregated from the majority of society unless they retired or changed careers.²⁴² The exclusion of burials and cremations from the city therefore, along with the exclusion of the funerary workers themselves suggests that the deceased were felt to bring pollution into the religiously purified area of the city.

²³⁶ Emerson 2020: 61.

²³⁷ Lennon 2012: 47-48.

²³⁸ Emerson 2020: 56-58.

²³⁹ Bond 2016: 70-72.

²⁴⁰ Lennon 2012: 47-8; 2013: 138; Bond 2016: 69.

²⁴¹ Bodel 1994: 50 (from Greek *exo* – outside and *pulos* meaning gateway).

²⁴² Lennon 2013: 152-3.

Such restrictions would have resulted in funerals almost always taking place outside of the city, but with a necessary procession of the body out of the urban space, which would have meant crossing the urban boundary, usually through one of the city gates. Late Republican restrictions on the depositions of bodies in the area immediately in the vicinity of the Porta Esquilina at Rome suggests that the gate, in this instance a marker of the *pomerium* of the city, was popularly viewed as the location at which this restriction applied, and so led to the dumping of bodies immediately outside it. The urban boundary, therefore, had a significance in every-day life for the residents of a Roman city as well as for infrequent rituals and ceremonies, and would have shaped patterns of tomb building, and funerary rites. The city gates were a mark of that boundary, and based on the proliferation of tomb monuments associated with city gates found around the Roman world, were the threshold of the religious urban boundary in most conceptions of the Roman city.

The continued practice of these rituals and ceremonies throughout the Roman Imperial period demonstrates how deeply embedded the urban boundary was in the Roman conception of urbanism and how the populace of a Roman city might conceive of their own urban space. It is also critical to note how frequently the fortifications of a city, or monumental gateways, became particular locations for the threshold of the boundary in artistic depictions. They must also have been understood as a threshold of this religious boundary in contemporary society, partly due to the way that such passage-architecture emphasised liminality and transition between inside and outside the city.

It must also be noted that there were many deities associated with the protection of the city and the urban boundary in the Roman world. This thesis does not have the scope to explore the relationship between Roman culture's many boundaries and their respective deities, but will provide an illustrative overview of major deities which can be referred to which highlight the importance of boundaries and – in particular – thresholds in Roman religion. Little is known about these gods, which included; Janus, Portunus, Terminus, and the *lares*. This is possibly the result of the nature of such deities, who did not have particular *loci* for their worship such as large temples or cult statues, were only commemorated at a small number of sites, or were worshipped at

small altars such as compital shrines.²⁴³ Such deities, while sustained by cult practice, pontifical activity and their relevance in daily life, were not well recorded in literary texts and leave relatively little trace for archaeologists.²⁴⁴ Additionally, the archaic nature of many of these deities means that they were not well understood even by the authors of our surviving texts. Nonetheless, I will attempt to highlight here their relevance to the concept of boundaries.

Janus, the best known of these gods, has long attracted academic attention; even though much of the detail of the role of this god remains unclear. Although Adams Holland proposed that Janus' archaic role was related to the crossing of the Tiber,²⁴⁵ by the late Republic the god was most commonly associated with a range of liminal jurisdictions including the physical – such as doors, passages and gates – and the unquantifiable, such as new beginnings and transitions like the start of the new year.²⁴⁶ Janus' role is generally understood as being protective, watching over such transitional spaces and states of being.²⁴⁷ The idea that transitional spaces were somehow vulnerable is a repeated theme in Roman culture and religion, and has been widely adopted by scholars studying Roman society and religion.²⁴⁸ In the context of Janus' association this can be understood as spatial and spiritual, with the god offering a source of protection for each. Although not worshipped with large temples, Janus was given primacy in lists of gods, as the god of beginnings,²⁴⁹ demonstrating the god's significant role in Roman culture. Despite Janus' association with doorways, little research has been carried out on the god's relationship to city gates, largely due to a lack of evidence from textual sources or archaeology about how this may have been manifested.

Portunus, likewise, seems to be associated with a variety of spaces and objects associated with liminality. The best known of these is of ports,²⁵⁰ but

²⁴³ While Portunus and Janus both did have cult sites at Rome, they were not widespread. The Temple of Portunus in the *Forum Boarium* may also have been linked with the god's tutelary role over ports (and so presumably was also popular with traders and sailors), while the so-called 'Temple' of Janus in the Forum Romanum was more closely associated with the ceremonial opening and closing of the doors according to whether Rome was at peace or at war.

²⁴⁴ Lipka 2009: 13.

²⁴⁵ Adams Holland 1961.

²⁴⁶ Gag e 1979: 3-4; March 2014: 274.

²⁴⁷ Rykwert 1976: 137-139.

²⁴⁸ See discussion of liminality, pp.22-23.

²⁴⁹ Woodard 2006: 8.

²⁵⁰ See for example March 2014: 412, who identifies Portunus solely as the god of ports.

Portunus may also have been associated with the protection of gates/doors, keys and locks.²⁵¹ The linguistic connection between Portunus, *portus* (port) and *porta* (gate) has repeatedly been signalled as explaining why the god had a protective role over the two,²⁵² but I would highlight furthermore that all have a liminal spatial or physical element that may suggest Portunus was more widely associated with protection of liminal spaces, alongside Janus. Furthermore, Portunus was assigned his own *flamen*, a high-ranking priest, which implies the importance of the god in archaic Roman religion; Janus, by contrast, was not assigned a *flamen*.²⁵³ Very little is recorded about the protection of gates by either of these deities, other than the gods' responsibility for them. However, the fact that both of these gods were invoked in the protection of doorways – along with a host of other minor deities including Cardea, Forculus and Limentinus –²⁵⁴ demonstrates how the doorway, or thresholds more generally, were thought to be a vulnerable point in a Roman building. I propose that, considering the importance of the urban boundary that has already been demonstrated and the vulnerability of the doorway, that gates should likewise be considered important thresholds of the urban boundary and points of religious, as well as defensive, vulnerability.

The importance of boundaries and the clear definition of space in Roman society is further underlined by the worship and existence of Terminus, another supposedly very archaic Roman god, who was associated with land boundaries.²⁵⁵ These boundaries were important for legal reasons and could define land ownership, so were obviously afforded high status, and boundary markers could be anything from trees and natural landmarks to deliberately placed stones. However, the existence and continued worship of Terminus with appropriate offerings made at boundary markers when they were first

²⁵¹ Portunus has been characterised as having had a protective function for entrances of all kinds (*OCD* s.v. Portunus), partly as a result of this confusion and evolution across time.

²⁵² Brill's New Pauly s.v. Portunus; Fowler 1899: 202-4; Bonfante 1937.

²⁵³ Gag  1979: 8-9. Gag  has further suggested that Janus and Portunus may have been linked or had their roles assimilated at some point, which may explain their overlapping functions and Janus' lack of a *flamen*.

²⁵⁴ Augustine of Hippo *De Civ.* 4.8; Tertullian, *De Corona Militaris* 13; *De Idolatria* 15; Cyprian, *De Idolorum Vanitate* 4.

²⁵⁵ Livy (5.54-57) records that Terminus was one of only two gods who refused to leave their original cult site on the Capitoline hill to make room for Jupiter Capitolinus, suggesting that Terminus was believed to be a particularly ancient god.

established, and at regular intervals after that to ensure the continued protection of the boundary,²⁵⁶ demonstrates the religious significance of these boundaries and their markers. The degree of importance that was given here to the proper positioning and maintenance of these boundaries and the sacred nature of them through Terminus' protection demonstrates clearly how important boundaries and the definition of space were to the Roman cultural psyche.

Other gods with a spatial component to their function included the *lares*, who could provide protection for specific designated groups or spaces; while the *lares penates* – who protected particular households – may be best known, other *lares* – such as the *lares compitales* (*lares* of the crossroads) – existed and were usually associated with a particular defined space. Some of these spatial areas were small, such as the neighbourhood which used a particular compital shrine,²⁵⁷ but others were clearly considered to be protective of the city as a whole. The *lares compitales* watched over crossroads, specifically, but seem to have had a wider purpose as protecting a particular area of the city that surrounded this crossroads.²⁵⁸ The *lares* who were served by the Arval Brotherhood in a series of rituals and prayers clearly had a broader function as protective of all of Rome, its people and its armies.²⁵⁹ In addition to the smaller compital shrines found throughout Rome, two temples were constructed for the worship of the *lares*, and the *lares permarini* (*lares* of the sea), and it is assumed that these *lares* had wider ranging function for the protection of Rome and the Roman people more generally.²⁶⁰ Outside Rome, similar trends can be seen at Pompeii, where small altar shrines that have been identified with *lares* or the *genius* of the city have been discovered, such as that found at *Insulae* VI.1, I.8.1, IX.8.8.²⁶¹ At Pompeii these shrines are usually found in association

²⁵⁶ Ovid *Fasti* 2.639-684 (on Terminus' festival, the *terminalia*); Siculus Flaccus in *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum*: 106.28-40 (on the rituals surrounding positioning boundary stones).

²⁵⁷ Pliny cites that in Vespasian & Titus' census, 265 *compita larum* were identified within the city of Rome, meaning that these *compita* were regular occurrences in the landscape and served much smaller communities than larger temples might have done (Pliny *Nat. His.* 3.66).

²⁵⁸ Offerings were made at the *compita larum*, for example, when a bride came to live in the house of her new husband, and a coin was deposited in order to symbolise that the woman now lived in the area of that shrine. Flower 2017: 82-83.

²⁵⁹ Flower 2017: 24.

²⁶⁰ Flower 2017: 86, 97-98.

²⁶¹ Flower 2017: 151, 150, 152.

with paintings of snakes, seemingly which were identified as gods of the space and the land.²⁶²

Outside exceptionally well investigated sites as Rome and Pompeii, such small altars and shrines have not been well studied or identified in the archaeological record. However, their presence at Rome and Pompeii suggests that there was a tendency in Roman culture, and the Roman culture adopted in Italian colonies, to recognise deities which were responsible for the protection of space. While many of the *lares* introduced here either watched over areas smaller than entire cities, or had a wider reaching function, they are indicative of this general trend. The *lares praestites*, on the other hand, are specifically related to the protection of Rome's walls by Ovid, and were said to guard the city and bring assistance.²⁶³ Although Ovid bemoans that these ancient *lares* were being overshadowed by the new *lares augusti* (*lares* for the Emperor) in the time of Augustus, Plutarch's description of the *lares praestites* and their relationship with dogs in the second century C.E. suggests that some remnants of this cult continued.²⁶⁴ Assuming Ovid is correct to assign these *lares* to the protection of the urban space of Rome, it provides a further example of Roman culture feeling the necessity to protect such spaces from spiritual threats, and another in which the limits of urban space are reinforced not just physically but religiously. Other religious concepts such as the *genius* of a city, which are not well understood, further illustrate the idea of the protective urban deity which encompassed the urban space and its population.

The *lares praestites* may have much in common with the Greek goddess Tyche, who was believed to watch over the fortune and destiny of a particular city.²⁶⁵ Tyche was known to be adopted into Roman art, as will be discussed later, and may have been seen as another god who may be appealed to for the protection and good fortune of an individual city. However, other gods also may have filled this capacity for specific cities. The idea of a *custos Urbis* deity, proposed by Pina Polo, sees a particular deity invoked as the tutelary deity and guardian of a city.²⁶⁶ At Pompeii, Minerva has been suggested as such a

²⁶² Flower 2017: 63-65.

²⁶³ Ovid *Fasti* 5.129-146.

²⁶⁴ Plutarch *Moralia: Roman Questions* 51.

²⁶⁵ *OCD*. s.v. Tyche.

²⁶⁶ Pina Polo 2003, relating to the role of Minerva as a '*custos urbis*' at Rome and Tarraco.

tutelary deity invoked for the protection of the city, and one especially relevant to the boundaries of the city.²⁶⁷ Although the grounds for this attribution are far from conclusive, the presence of a shrine to Minerva at the Porta Marina and a bust of the goddess on the keystone of the Porta Nola may support the idea that the city's gates were particularly relevant to the divine protection of the city. However, there are also arguments that Venus 'Pompeiana,' who was worshipped at Pompeii following the foundation of the Roman colony and possibly replaced a similar earlier cult to Mefitis, may have likewise had a protective role for Pompeii and its population.²⁶⁸ In either case this demonstrates how multiple deities might be called upon for their protection of urban space and might come to be associated with that particular city.

Similar busts of gods have been identified on many other city gates in the Roman world; it is impossible to discern whether the heads were supposed to be purely decorative, to suggest the piety of the patron or community, or to provide divine protection to the gate and the urban boundary more generally. Given the pervasiveness of religion in Roman culture it is likely that such busts were intended as a combination of these factors. Notable examples include the Arch of Augustus at Rimini, a monumental city gate dedicated in 27 B.C.E. which feature busts of Jupiter and Apollo facing the *via Flaminia* towards Rome, and Neptune and Roma on the inwards side facing towards the city.²⁶⁹ At Ostia, the Porta Romana, renovated in the late first century C.E. featured twin statues of winged Minervae, possibly drawing on her associations with many urban characteristics such as law, wisdom, justice and defensive warfare as a goddess who could protect the urban space.²⁷⁰ Minerva was also, however, heavily favoured by Domitian, who commissioned this renovation, so the choice of deity may also have been personal preference.²⁷¹

In summary, although the individual evidence for the religious significance of the urban boundary in the Roman world is disparate, it is compelling. A variety of major and minor gods and rituals seem to have been employed to protect and sanctify the boundary of urban space, which was often

²⁶⁷ Van der Graaff & Ellis 2017; See Chapter 5.

²⁶⁸ Small 2007: 186.

²⁶⁹ Chevalier 1961: 195.

²⁷⁰ Meiggs 1973: 66; See Ovid (*Fasti* 3.810-848), for examples of Minerva's wide-ranging patronage.

²⁷¹ Meiggs 1973: 66.

articulated as the city wall. This, therefore, would have made the gates places of particular religious importance. Not only were the gates the threshold of the urban boundary and therefore the most vulnerable locations, but according to Plutarch they were deliberately left unprotected by the *sulcus primigenius*. It is possible therefore, that other means of religiously protecting the urban space such as shrines for tutelary deities – either localised or for the entire city – were located at city gates in order to provide protection for the gateway and the city more generally. City gates were also not only thresholds of the urban boundary, but liminal spaces in their own right which fell between the definition of being inside or outside this religious boundary, as we shall see at Pompeii in Chapter 5. As such they would invite attempts to protect the gate, both as a liminal space and a threshold of the urban boundary. With a greater appreciation for the religious significance of the urban boundary, and how that boundary was articulated in religious and civic rituals ranging from circumambulations to triumphs, we can better understand why city gates came to be important monuments in the urban landscape. This continuing significance in the cultural and religious landscape of the city further explains why city gates retained their importance even in times when defence was not an obvious priority for the architects of the monuments. In the context of the first century B.C.E. and particularly the Julio-Claudian period, this may be key to understanding the use of gates as a form of monumental architecture which continued and developed throughout the Imperial period.

3.4 – The Legal Definition of the Urban Boundary in Roman Culture.

Throughout this chapter, I have largely discussed the urban boundary as being analogous with urban fortifications. However, there were a series of terms used in Latin legal texts in order to identify the edge of urban space which used different terminology to refer to the legal limits of the city. It is important to recognise this evidence, and how the growth of suburban and extra-mural settlements outside many Roman towns and cities in the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. would have changed the limit of the city as it was legally defined and experienced in everyday life. These changes would have meant that in some respects, the legal boundary of the urban space did not correspond with urban defences, or the religious boundary associated with the foundation of a city.

Instead, extended legal limits and the growth of suburbs would have created a borderscape in which different religious, legal and physical limits co-existed. This section will briefly cover the variety of terms used in Latin legal texts, ground which has already been covered by scholars such as Goodman,²⁷² and will also discuss how the important cultural status of city walls and gates was reflected in their legal status, and expected changes in behaviour between urban and rural areas. This will highlight that for many practical – and some less practical – reasons, urban areas had specific expectations for acceptable behaviours, emphasising their distinctive nature. These legal changes would have heightened the significance of the urban boundary in many Roman towns and cities, and made it more significant as a boundary with lived experiences associated with crossing it.

A wide range of Roman laws were enforced at the boundaries of urban space, many of which originated in practical concerns such as the management of traffic and the protection of pedestrians. Others, such as the prohibition of burials and cremations within urban space – discussed above – also had strong religious importance. One of the most frequently discussed of these restrictions was that contained within the *Tabula Heracleensis*, a first-century B.C.E legal text which stipulated that between sunrise and the tenth hour of the day, *plaustra* (heavy wagons) could not travel along the streets of Rome or in the area of continuous building in the suburbs.²⁷³ Multiple exemptions were then included that could authorise the use of such vehicles, and the specific reference to *plaustra* does not mean that the other smaller wheeled vehicles could not enter the city freely. *Plaustra* may have been singled out because of their large size, the heavy loads they carried, and the inconvenience and risk they posed to pedestrians,²⁷⁴ or as part of a wider attempt to ease traffic congestion.²⁷⁵

²⁷² Goodman 2007: 14-20.

²⁷³ *Tabula Heracleensis* 14.

²⁷⁴ Van Tilburg 2007: 122; Alfenus (*Digest* 9.2.52.2) records a legal case in which a boy was crushed during a dispute between two *plaustra*-drivers.

²⁷⁵ Rome's congested streets are a common literary *topos*, probably exaggerating a very real sense of busy traffic throughout the city (Laurence 2013: 247; Seneca *Cl.* 1.6.1; Juvenal 3.236-61; Horace *Epistles* 2.2.72-80).

It is unclear whether this restriction, possibly part of a wider series of municipal laws,²⁷⁶ was actually followed at other cities besides Rome and Heraclea, but if the *Tabula Heracleensis* does preserve the text of the *Lex Julia Municipalis*, then other cities in the Roman Empire would also have been expected to follow this. While this restriction was specifically stated to include all of the *continentia aedificia* (continuous building), at Roman cities besides Rome there may not have been continuous building outside city walls or gates. Later Claudian restrictions were widely applied, and insisted that travellers should dismount before entering urban areas rather than being able to ride through, presumably for similar reasons of pedestrian safety.²⁷⁷ The fact that heavy goods vehicles and mounted travellers were expected to stop and either wait (in the case of *plaustra*) or change their mode of travel, would have emphasised the entrance into the city and its surrounding areas to travellers.

We have already seen in this chapter how other civic definitions of the Roman 'city' such as the jurisdiction of magistracies were not strictly limited to the urban space or the area included within fortifications.²⁷⁸ Instead, broader areas such as the limits of a colony's territory, or an area extending a given radius from Rome were more usual, and more practical for the administration of cities. This was increasingly the case throughout the Roman period as cities such as Rome grew beyond their original limits. The physical growth of cities beyond the clearly recognisable boundary of their urban fortifications was likely a factor in the use of different terminology in Roman legal texts to define the limits of the city.

A range of terms were used in Roman legal texts to define the urban area relevant to the law, which did not refer directly to fortifications. Some of these terms, such as 'the area marked round by the plough,' of the *Lex Ursonensis*, clearly refer to the religious boundaries of the city and a specific area marked out for that purpose.²⁷⁹ Presumably there must have been an

²⁷⁶ Van Tilburg (2007: 128) takes the opinion that the *Tabula Heracleensis* is the same as the *Lex Julia Municipalis* and would have been enforced at both Rome and Heraclea, but it is uncertain whether the text of the *Tabula Heracleensis* was derived from these existing restrictions at Rome.

²⁷⁷ Suetonius *Claudius* 25. The restriction was possibly a restatement of the *Lex Julia Municipalis*, and would also later be re-affirmed by Hadrian (Van Tilburg 2007: 123, 132-134). As Van Tilburg (2007: 132) highlights, there is no evidence this applied equally to travellers and to traders.

²⁷⁸ See pp.77-8.

²⁷⁹ *Lex Ursonensis* 73, see p.65 for discussion.

identifiable circuit to which this corresponded, whether that was the edge of urban space or some other marker such as the city wall, or *cippi*. Other restrictions were also clearly rooted in the idea of the sacred boundary of a city and the need for ritual purity without referring to a specific demarcated boundary circuit, such as the description found in the *Lex Libitinae Puteolana* of Puteoli which stipulated that the *libitinarii* should only enter the area inward of the grove of Libitina if they were carrying out their jobs as funerary workers, and should otherwise live beyond that point.²⁸⁰ These terms, which referred to either specific geographical markers or an area which had been clearly established (and was presumably also marked) are not specifically described as coinciding with city walls, but illustrate the tendency to mark out publicly acceptable behaviour with specific exclusions from urban areas for the ritual purity of the city. In many cities, especially at colonial foundations, the area ritually defined by the *sulcus primigenius*, would have coincided with the route of future defensive fortifications, and so would also have been a notable visual phenomenon. Over time urban expansion may have forced the extension of religious boundaries to other areas which could be identified by referring to local landmarks such as groves or temples.

At Rome, there were multiple different boundaries of the city, which were described in different ways, which usually corresponded with either changes in the landscape or physical means of demarcation. Rome's most famous religious boundary, the *pomerium*, was subject to change and expansion throughout Roman history, and was marked by *cippi* set out in the reigns of Claudius,²⁸¹ Vespasian,²⁸² and Hadrian,²⁸³ which restricted behaviour such as burials and cremations, as well as other actions which could be believed to be religiously polluting for the city. The *pomerium* is primarily found in reference to religious restrictions and not in other legal texts. On the other hand, the *urbs*, as defined by Alfenus in the first century B.C.E., consisted of the area of Rome which was encircled by the Republican city walls,²⁸⁴ which would have by this point ceased to encompass the whole city, but had traditional and religious significance. This

²⁸⁰ Bond 2016: 69.

²⁸¹ E.G., *CIL* VI.31537a, *CIL* VI.1231b, *CIL* VI.1231c.

²⁸² *CIL* VI.31538a, *CIL* VI.1232, *CIL* VI.31538c.

²⁸³ *CIL* VI.1233a, *CIL* VI.31539b, *CIL* VI.1233b.

²⁸⁴ *Digest* 50.16.87, see also *Digest* 50.16.2 which likewise defines a city by its walls.

is contrasted in the same text with the broader description of 'Roma' which incorporated the area of continuous habitation up to 1000 paces (1 Roman mile) of the city.²⁸⁵ Such definitions would have been designed to include Rome's extra-mural suburbs which had developed by this point; which would naturally be considered part of the city in a practical sense, but were not part of the *urbs* as it had been previously defined.

The concept of continuous building – *continentia aedificia* – as a means of identifying the totality of an urban area is found first in the *Tabula Heracleensis*, dating from the mid-first century B.C.E.²⁸⁶ This law may have originated at Rome as the *Lex Julia Municipalis*, but similar extra-mural and suburban development can be charted at many other Roman towns and cities in this period, so may have been a common formulation for the limit of urban space. It also appears in the *Lex Irnitana*, relating to the demolition of buildings within the city, and clearly serves as a means of defining the entire built-up space.²⁸⁷ The idea of the *continentia aedificia* can be found in conjunction with the stipulation that it be within 1000 paces (*mille passus*) of the city, or independently.²⁸⁸ The 1000 paces should not necessarily be taken literally, but to refer to the area within the first mile markers from the city,²⁸⁹ which was also a limit which, at Rome, was considered the jurisdiction of urban magistrates. The designation of the 1000 paces could also be used independently of the *continentia aedificia*,²⁹⁰ and was not only used at Rome, but at other Roman towns such as Urso.²⁹¹ Other legal limits were not referred to in specific surviving literary texts but used physical markers such as stone *cippi* as a means of demonstrating the limit of their restrictions. For example, a series of *cippi* found in the Esquiline region of Rome – which will be discussed in Chapter 4 – restricted the deposition of waste and burial of bodies within the area

²⁸⁵ *Digest* 50.16.87; *Digest* 50.16.2 which also recognises Rome as extending far beyond its walls.

²⁸⁶ Goodman 2007: 14.

²⁸⁷ Goodman 2007: 15.

²⁸⁸ For example, in the *Tabula Heracleensis* (14), the idea of the *continentia aedificia* is found independently, as is the description 'within one mile of Rome' (*Tabula Heracleensis* 17), but the concepts can also be combined, as in *Tabula Heracleensis* 7.

²⁸⁹ Goodman 2007: 15. This seems to have been equally debated among Roman jurists, with Macer specifying that the 1000 paces were not to be measured from the milestone in Rome but the end of the continuous habitation (*Digest* 50.16.154).

²⁹⁰ *Tabula Heracleensis* 8, 12, 15, 16 17, 19.

²⁹¹ *Lex Ursonensis* 91 – specifying that magistrates of the town should own a house within the town, or within one mile of the town.

marked by the line of the *cippi*. Similar inscriptions which allude to the exclusion of dumping waste, and particularly dung, within the city limits can also be found at other cities in Italy.²⁹² Although they could not have created a complete ring in the way that a continuous barrier could, such restrictions were effective means of marking the precise limit of legislation in the landscape.

It is worth highlighting that in colonial/municipal law, not all laws did distinguish between the urban area and the rural territory of the town, as many of the laws established in charters for colonies and *municipia* applied to the entire territory which included land given to colonists. Only specific restrictions applied that defined the urban space, and these usually related to either necessary urban maintenance such as the care of roads, or behaviour such as burial and cremation, which as we have already seen could have both practical and religious reasons for its prohibition. It is probable that the adoption of a variety of means of defining the city legally was the result of the growth of suburban and extra-mural areas of cities, which could have fallen outside the exact definition of previous laws. This would fit with the majority of our legal sources, which were originally written in the first century B.C.E. to second century C.E., and the use of such alternative means of defining the city as introduced above. What is interesting is that city walls are not commonly used as a legal boundary for Roman towns and cities in these texts. This is probably a result of the fact that there were so many extra-mural suburbs developing in this period, that walls were no longer a practical limit for urban legislation, and the same phenomenon saw a rise in other expressions of the urban area. It is curious, therefore, how significant city gates such as those renovated at Rome, Pompeii and many other cities across Roman Italy, remained. This suggests that city gates as manifestations of the urban boundary were of greater significance than simply a legal boundary, and indicates some of their monumental importance.

Gates and city walls also appear in Roman legal texts as the subject of laws in their own right; we have already seen Plutarch's description which labels the walls as sacred, but the gates as being not.²⁹³ This is in contrast to other

²⁹² Although not an official proscription, *CIL* IV.7038 alludes to the same attitude to unwanted dumping of waste at Pompeii, while *ILS* 8207b records similar at Verona.

²⁹³ Plutarch *Romulus* 11, see above, pp.63-4.

legal evidence which specifically labels both the walls and the gates as being *res sanctae* – a category which designated things which were considered to be sacred to the gods and therefore could not be defiled.²⁹⁴ The inclusion of city walls and gates in this category most likely reflected two of their key roles in the Roman urban landscape; firstly, the religious significance of the urban boundary which may have been established by the *sulcus primigenius*, and secondly the defensive purpose of the fortifications. Many of the laws referring to city walls and gates strictly prohibit both the damage of the wall or gate, and the construction of private property which would abut the wall or the gate.²⁹⁵ Other laws also restricted any means of access across city walls except using the gates, presumably to ensure their security.²⁹⁶ Later laws also prohibited people living in gates, possibly a trend that developed in later periods when city gates could become relatively isolated structures as major cities contracted, as at Rome in the early medieval period when many hermits used city gates as their dwellings.²⁹⁷ These laws are obviously intended to ensure that a city's fortifications were fully functional for defence in the event of an attack, with no breaches to the wall or abutting structures which could provide cover for attackers.

What is most interesting about such laws, however, is the fact that they were clearly ignored on many occasions and, despite their repeated occurrence throughout Roman legal texts, were not necessarily upheld. Infringements upon city walls included the demolition of sections of wall, the construction of buildings up to and utilising the city wall, and at Pompeii the complete overtopping of the city wall by elite houses. Such examples will be commonplace throughout Chapters 4 and 5, and their widespread nature suggests that there were no punishments enforced for these actions, despite their being illegal. Recorded examples of punishment for such actions tends to be in conjunction with other crimes; for example, Cn. Calpurnius Piso's house which built 'over' the Porta Fontinalis in Rome was ordered to be torn down only after his reputed

²⁹⁴ *Digest* 1.8.1, 1.8.8.2, 1.8.9.

²⁹⁵ *Digest* 43.6.1.2, 43.6.1.3.

²⁹⁶ *Digest* 1.8.11.

²⁹⁷ *Digest* 43.6.1.3 (this is specifically described by Paulus as minimising the risk of fire, thus keeping these structures secure from damage, but Hermogianus (*Digest* 43.6.1.2) points to the gates' status as sacred as the reason nothing can be done that might damage them).

involvement in the death of Germanicus in 20 C.E.²⁹⁸ If we compare this with Maecenas' construction over the Republican wall at Rome, discussed in Chapter 4,²⁹⁹ it is clear that there were political factors at play. No doubt the relative stability of Roman Italy from the Augustan Principate through the early Empire was a contributing factor, meaning that the defensive role of urban fortifications was minimised and their other roles in the urban landscape were of greater significance.

From the second century C.E. onwards, however, there are clear signs that the strategic importance of city walls was part of their conceptual importance. Laws from the Severan period stipulated that any town wishing to build fortifications had to ensure the permission of the emperor.³⁰⁰ This has typically been linked to the desire to prevent any potentially rebellious towns from constructing their own defences, but also has civic ramifications, since city walls were a vital component in the identification and self-representation of a Roman town or city. In addition to demonstrating that there were of course towns and cities that lacked city walls within the empire, this law also implies that they were a desirable monument to have, whether for protection or status. The act of requiring Imperial permission demonstrated the power of the emperor and ensured that all towns had to recognise the primacy of the emperor, further linking the emperor with the construction of this major urban monument.

This brief discussion has highlighted that there were a variety of laws which used the urban boundary as a threshold, and a variety of means of expressing the urban boundary within those laws. Many of the laws which used the urban boundary as a threshold refer to practical matters such as the management of traffic flow and road systems, which were enforced at the edges of urban space as it was understood in the landscape. But others concerned deeply religious matters such as the correct disposal of the dead, and so were enforced at the correct religious boundaries of the city that had been established by rituals such as the *sulcus primigenius*. Most of the means of expressing the urban boundary in Roman laws relied on a physical, observable

²⁹⁸ Eck et al. 1996; Tacitus (*Annals* 3.9.3) alludes to a house overlooking the forum which may be the same house.

²⁹⁹ See pp.147-149, below.

³⁰⁰ *Digest* 1.8.9.4.

marker of some kind – whether that be a boundary *cippus*, or the changing landscape that meant the end of continuous buildings. This was highly logical as it would have made the boundary more recognisable and therefore the laws easier to obey.

Gates and city walls rarely appear as the threshold of these legal limits of the city in Roman legal texts, underlining the number of towns and cities in Italy for which there were either not recognisable urban fortifications, or which had exceeded these fortifications through extra-mural building. City gates, therefore were not necessarily the threshold of the city in legal definitions, but their high visual prominence would have meant that at many cities without extensive extra-mural suburbs, the gate may have been viewed as the boundary of the city. However, these boundaries would have become more blurred where suburbs developed during the late Republic and early Imperial period.

What is clear, however, from the legal texts is that gates were accorded high importance, along with city walls, because of the importance of maintaining effective defences. However, as shall be seen throughout this thesis, their defensive importance was highly variable depending on the political and social contexts of the time. Archaeological evidence clearly demonstrates many incidences of walls and gates being demolished, abutted or overtopped by later building, without evidence of repercussions against those responsible except in very rare cases. Given the only occasional use of city gates as a threshold of the urban boundary, and their minimal defensive role, in the first centuries B.C.E. – C.E., this suggests that there is another explanation for their cultural capital during this period. I would suggest that this rests on the religious and cultural importance of the religious boundary, and the monumental role that city gates could play in defining an urban space, and representing the wealth and status of a particular town or city.

3.5 – The Role of City Gates in the Artistic and Literary Definition of the City.

City walls and city gates often appear in a variety of different Roman artistic and literary works, from epic poetry to coins, as a key means of defining and representing the Roman city. These depictions overwhelmingly favour a

clear distinction between the urban and the rural, with a fortification dividing the two, in contrast to archaeological evidence of Roman cities which provides clear evidence of contemporary suburbs and extra-mural burial areas. This sub-chapter will explore the uses of the city wall, and the city gate in particular, as a means of depicting cities in the ancient world in both the artistic and literary representations of the Roman city. In the artistic evidence, I will draw together the existing discussions of material such as coinage, wall paintings and mosaics which have been studied independently in the past, to explore how city walls and gates are used as a motif which could represent the entirety of a city, but also the depiction of gates in their own right as an urban monument. Then I will outline the range of uses and references to city gates and urban defences more generally in Roman literature, exploring how city gates are referred to in different genres of text and how the trope of fortifications representing the entire city is replicated in the literary evidence. This section will also explore how references to city gates in Roman literature illustrate their roles as major urban landmarks.

This sub-chapter builds on existing work which has investigated the use of city walls as a means of depicting the city, such as Penelope Goodman's work on depictions of the urban periphery in Roman art and literature,³⁰¹ and Pierre Gros' seminal study of the symbolic importance of city walls,³⁰² but will offer a greater depth of study on the gates themselves and their appearances as key elements of these artistic and literary definitions of the city. This approach, taking city walls and gates as a synecdoche – or iconographic shorthand – is influenced by the approach to representations of cities in the Late Antique and early Medieval periods, during which similar city gate or wall circuit motifs were commonly used to depict cities.³⁰³ In applying the same approach to the first centuries B.C.E and C.E., I will demonstrate that similar trends existed in the use of city walls and gates as an artistic and literary means of representing the city, and reflected their role in the urban experience, which may have built on earlier cultural phenomena. This survey will not be exhaustive of the available evidence, but will aim to offer a range of different artistic and

³⁰¹ Goodman 2007: 7-39.

³⁰² Gros 1992.

³⁰³ Elkins (2013: 289), for example, highlights the continued use of gate iconography from Valentinian III through to Vandal and Carolingian coin issues; Creighton & Higham 2005: 167.

literary examples which are indicative of the general trend. In doing so, I hope to bring together these strands of evidence in order to re-appraise the importance of city gates as an urban monument worthy of greater study, and to demonstrate their roles as monuments and landmarks in the life of a Roman city. This, I believe, also explains the continued construction of monumentalised city gates in the Roman world at a time in which urbanism increasingly involved extensive extra-mural and peri-urban settlement.

3.5a – City Walls and Gates in Roman Art and Iconography.

City walls and gates seldom feature in broader discussions of Roman art and iconography, as depictions of cities are relatively uncommon, especially in the well-studied fields of wall painting and mosaics. This is despite cities' appearances in these mediums, as well as on coinage, relief sculpture and as illustrations in textual sources such as ancient maps and the *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum*. City walls and gates also appear in these media in different symbolic uses, where a gate might appear individually on coinage, or a city wall may be used as an artistic device, for example in the form of a mural crown. Triumphal and free-standing arches also appear in many of these categories of evidence, and while they may share many of the same roles in the urban landscape, I have attempted to focus here on examples which can specifically be interpreted as city gates, or with a clear connection to the urban boundary. This sub-chapter will explore how city walls and gates were used as a visual synecdoche to represent the entirety of a city, before highlighting how gates often appeared in disproportionate emphasis, or isolation from their city walls in Roman art as monuments in their own right.

Representations of the City as a Whole.

One of the most common depictions of cities and city walls found in Roman art and iconography is the depiction of a walled circuit from a $\frac{3}{4}$ birds eye view (see Figure 3.10, below). These depictions can show a walled circuit surrounding a collection of buildings, or simply a space enclosed by a wall circuit; the – often limited – space available inside the circuits of such depictions means that an artist would only be able to add a handful of illustrative buildings to indicate urban space. In these cases, the city wall is intended to represent

the urban space in its entirety, sufficient on its own to indicate the city. Such depictions rarely appear with any signs of suburban building which might confuse the iconography of the city walls, except for in unusual and relevant circumstances. For example, one illustration from the fourth-century *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum* shows tombs outside the city walls, but illustrates a corresponding passage on the correct location of tombs outside the city.³⁰⁴

Such depictions of cities by an angular walled circuit with towers and gates is commonly found on later Roman coinage. The representation of walled circuits on coinage is not only practical – managing to depict the entire urban area in a shape which suited the circular field available on the coin – but when linked with a specific mint could represent the status of a specific city. City walls, associated with major urban settlements and culturally viewed as a symbol of *urbanitas* and *romanitas*, could therefore represent the civic authority of the minting city. Assuming such coins were being issued by local mints, then it is likely that the walled circuit is being used as a means of depicting and representing the entirety of the city, and alluding to the fortifications of that city as an impressive monument. The majority of coins depicting a full circuit of city walls date from the mid-second century C.E. onwards, and adopt very similar iconographic styles to depict the city, consisting of a polygonal shaped wall circuit set with towers, and usually a gate set into the section of wall central to the coin.



Figure 3.10 - Coin of Philip I (RPC.VIII (48687), mid-third century C.E.). Obverse: Bust of Philip I, laureate, draped, cuirassed (left). Reverse: city wall with ten towers and half-opened city gate, flanked by two towers, other buildings and figures inside (<https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/type/48687>).

³⁰⁴ Campbell 2000: Illustrations 6, 88, 196.

This is in keeping with similar general city depictions found in other artistic mediums, as shall be explored below. Some issues feature identifying buildings within the city wall, but because of the limited space available this is highly formulaic and a legend which refers specifically to the city is often used as a means of identifying the city.

However, walled circuits are also found depicted on coins that were not minted locally to the place being depicted. First century B.C.E. issues minted at Rome included reverses which depicted the city of Tusculum,³⁰⁵ and Eryx in Sicily.³⁰⁶ In each case, it can be assumed that the magistrates involved in minting the coin had a reason to depict these cities, and the use of key urban features such as the temple of Venus Erycina at Eryx, city walls and gates, demonstrates that city walls were a key means of representing the urban on coins throughout the Roman Imperial period. The increasing role of major Imperial mints in the later Empire would also have meant that in the Western provinces in particular, coins were rarely minted at individual cities,³⁰⁷ but such designs were still frequently used in the Eastern Empire where local mints were more common.³⁰⁸



Figure 3.11 - Augustan era as minted at Augusta Emerita, Spain. Obverse: Bust of Augustus (r.) IMP CAESAR AVGVST. Reverse: City gate with double-arches, two flanking towers and city wall circuit in background, P CARISIVS LEG PRO PR EMERITA (RIC I.9a) ([https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.1\(2\).aug.9A](https://numismatics.org/ocre/id/ric.1(2).aug.9A)).

³⁰⁵ BMCRR Rome 4204, Aureus, Rome, 41 B.C.E. Obverse: Jugate heads of the Dioscurii wearing laurel *pilei* L SERVIVS RVFVS. Reverse: view of Tusculum with gate TVSCVL.

³⁰⁶ Crawford 1975: 424/1 Denarius, Rome, 57 B.C.E. Obverse: Laureate and draped bust of Venus Erycina (r.), wearing a *stephane* C. CONSIDI NONIANVS. Reverse: temple on the summit of a rocky mountain, surrounded by a wall with towers on either side and a gate in the centre ERYC. Unclear whether this walled circuit is intended to depict a sanctuary wall or a city wall.

³⁰⁷ Amandry 2012: 394-95; Heuchert 2005: 33.

³⁰⁸ Amandry 2012: 394-95.



Figure 3.12 - Hadrianic coin issue (RPC.III.530) Obverse: Hadrian, laureate and cuirassed (r.). Reverse: Triple-arched city gate, with upper gallery and two flanking-towers (<https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/3/530>).

Gates are often made a focal point within these generalised city wall depictions on coins; some are shown simply as an arch set into one of the stretches of wall, whereas other gates are provided with greater detail such as statuary niches and flanking towers (compare Figures 3.11 & 3.12, above). The variation in the level of detail added to the gate usually depends on the scaling of the image; if the gate is depicted as larger and more central to the coin than the surrounding wall it allows for greater detail than a short stretch of wall between towers on a smaller scale. The inclusion of the gate, even as a very basic feature is consistent with such circuit wall images in other media of Roman art, and demonstrates that they were a critically important part of the wall circuit conceptually. The growth in the use of this design on coins in the second to fourth centuries C.E. may have been related to the phenomenon of renewed fortification at Roman cities, exemplified by the construction of the Aurelian wall at Rome. City walls on coins may have been a reference to their real counterparts, which symbolised the civic status, resources and power of individual cities.

The same visual style of depicting city wall circuits with gates in an angled, aerial view in order to represent a city is also found in other mediums of Roman art including wall-painting and mosaics. Frescoes from Pompeii (Figure 3.13, below) depicting the fall of Icarus use the same method of portraying a city with a collection of buildings inside a polygonal wall circuit set with towers and

arches depicting the gates. Similar modes of depicting cities occur on mosaics. Mosaics from the Baths of the Cisiarii at Ostia, (see Figure 2.2) depict a stylised city as a square wall circuit with corner towers and four double-arched gates in each stretch of the wall.³⁰⁹ Elsewhere in the Roman world the same trend was common. In a sixth-century C.E. mosaic from Gerasa (Figure 3.14) the cities of Alexandria and Memphis are both depicted by stylised polygonal wall circuits surrounding a collection of buildings. This mosaic does, however, demonstrate an attempt to differentiate the two cities by portraying them with slightly different wall circuits and buildings inside them. Such features could be achieved when there was a larger space available for the artist to represent the cities, although it is unclear whether any of the buildings depicted inside either city were intended to be representations of actual buildings.



Figure 3.13 - Fresco depicting the fall of Icarus, Casa del Sacerdos Amandus (Pompeii, I.7.7), 1st Century C.E.
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Fall_of_Icarus,_fresco_from_Pompeii,_40-79_AD.png).

³⁰⁹ Thomas 2007: 58-9.

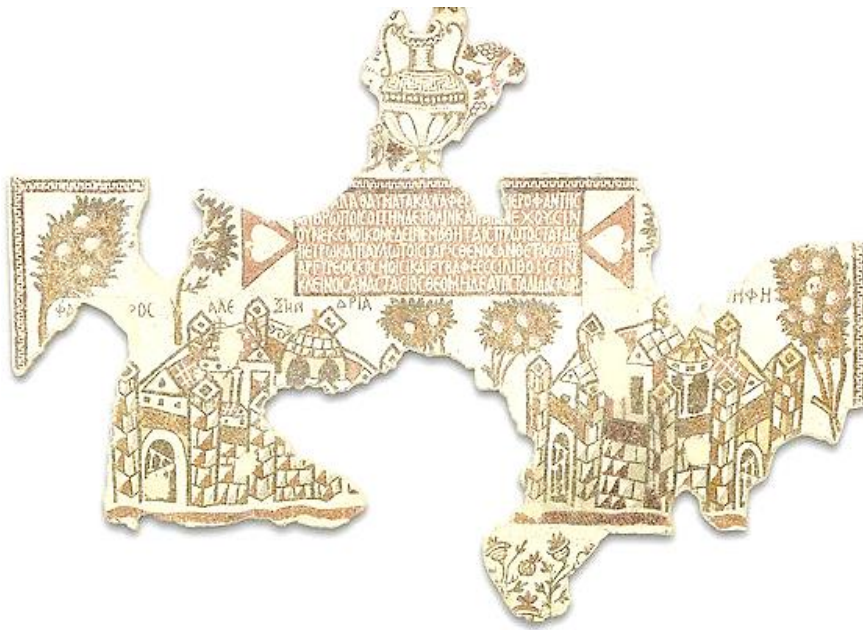


Figure 3.14 - Mosaic from Gerasa, 6th Century C.E., depicting Alexandria (left) and Memphis (right) (<https://artgallery.yale.edu/collections/objects/51363>).

This style of angled view of a polygonal wall circuit was also used as a means of representing cities in other sources, such as in the *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum*, where the illustrations of the fifth-century C.E. manuscript were used to demonstrate different concepts of the division of space and correct procedure for surveying land outside cities.³¹⁰ Likewise, walled circuits with a few buildings inside to indicate the urban space, were used to depict cities on the Peutinger Table, a later copy of what was likely a Roman original. While unwalled cities do appear in the *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum* illustrations,³¹¹ most appear with a wall circuit, illustrating the common use of this trope. Clearly the style had developed into a widely used and recognised artistic trope which could depict urban spaces in an efficient use of space. Particularly interesting, given the minimal detail given to these images, is that city gates are routinely depicted in the walls, and usually as open archways. Many feature multiple gates, despite the minimal weight given to the depiction of internal buildings which might identify the city.³¹² This confirms that the city gates were considered a vital part of the urban fortifications, and possibly reflects the great importance given to city gates as an

³¹⁰ See examples in footnote 312.

³¹¹ Goodman 2007: 35.

³¹² Campbell 2000: Illustrations 47, 52, 93, 111, 112. See also Figure 3.13.

area which was highly significant to the cultural understanding of city boundaries.

The decision to depict the majority of these gateways as open arches rather than closed gates also suggests that the general expectation was for gates to be open rather than closed, allowing freer access to the city itself. This may further be indicative of the expectations of connectivity and openness between the city and countryside, and between different cities. For those sources which relate to travel and the logistical organisation of the city, such as the Peutinger Table or *Corpus Agrimensorum Romanorum*, this is highly logical. Such sources have a focus on travel and movement, and furthermore use the major roads of the city as anchoring points in the landscape. It is natural, therefore, that the gates might be depicted open in such cases. In artistic representations the motivation for depicting the gate open is unclear, and some examples such as the *fauces* mosaic of the *Casa di M. Caesius Blandi* do depict the gates as closed. Further study on the occurrences of opened and closed gates and their contexts might reveal additional implications about the impact of genre and location on this presentation.

In relief carvings, city walls can also be found as a means of representing a city. They can appear in a range of contexts such as the depiction of sieges (see Figure 3.15) and in other situations in which they represent the urban boundary discussed below. The city walls depicted in such reliefs are highly generic, and provide no clear indication of the fort or town under attack, but instead are likely intended to serve as a generic representation of the towns and cities captured during military campaigns. Other depictions of Roman cities include the city wall as a key urban feature despite including a recognisable scene of urban life, such as the *Città Dipinta* fresco from the Oppian Hill which depicts the city in question with a city wall which surrounds the various buildings visible in the surviving section. This large painted scene, approximately 10m² originally, provided plenty of space for the depiction of specific buildings and scenes typical of a large Roman city.³¹³ It is unclear whether this fresco is

³¹³ La Rocca 2001: 122-123.

intended to depict a specific city or a generalised idea of a city,³¹⁴ but in either case the circuit wall is a significant and recognisable element of the depiction, along with city gates.



Figure 3.15 - Siege scene from Trajan's Column relief, Scene 32 (Composite Image) (https://www.trajans-column.org/?page_id=107#PhotoSwipe1675083016566).

For the most part, cities in Roman artistic depictions are shown as clearly bounded, usually by a city wall which serves to define and represent the urban area more generally. As shall be demonstrated throughout this thesis, however, by the first century C.E. extra-mural suburbs were very common in Roman towns and cities and would continue to be so throughout the remainder of the Imperial period, placing the reality at odds with the artistic convention. While this likely owes much to the clear distinction between the urban and the rural found in contemporary Roman literature discussed later in this chapter, it is also a convenient artistic device which can more clearly identify the city.

However, a handful of artistic representations of Roman cities also show clear extra-mural areas of the city which are representative of such peri-urban environments. Examples such as the *Città Dipinta* fresco and scenes from Trajan's column's reliefs show extra-mural ports and surrounding areas as part

³¹⁴ Goodman (2007: 34) argues that the painting is decorative, and therefore most likely only a generalised city, contra La Rocca (2001: 123) who argues that the painting is both symbolic and cartographical.

of their artistic programme.³¹⁵ Cases such as this likely reflect the reality of extra-mural ports at many Roman cities, where the peripheral location on a river or at the coast may have made it impractical to fortify the port area as well. Pompeii, for example, does not include its port area within the city walls. The relief of Avezzano (Figure 3.16) also features extra-mural buildings, including tomb monuments, and trees in the landscape outside the city, which is depicted as a collection of buildings surrounded by a wall. In this relief, the city is situated in its wider context in the landscape and shows suburban buildings, such as villas, typically found at Italian cities which are often excluded from artistic depictions. However, the frieze does not show any of the intensive extra-mural suburban growth which also commonly developed at Italian cities. This frieze simultaneously provides an interesting example of the focus given to the depiction of city gates, with the gate at the front of the walled city being of a far larger scale than the surrounding wall, with greater attention given to the depiction of the stone work and stylised towers over the gatehouse. As such these depictions should not detract from our understanding of the importance of the urban boundary in Roman culture, but illustrate the symbolic importance given to city gates in Roman art and culture.

City walls could also be used as a means of invoking the whole city in relation to specific religious rites and mythological episodes. This is particularly true of depictions of the foundation of cities, in keeping with the literary evocation of city walls to refer to the founding of cities explored later in this chapter. Coins from both Carthage and Thebes employed city walls in reference to mythological episodes; the foundation of Carthage,³¹⁶ and Cadmus standing before the gates of Thebes.³¹⁷ The city walls here serve as a visual representation of the city, and one recognisable from narratives of urban foundation in the Roman world which often outlined the construction of walls and gates first.

³¹⁵ Figure 3.17, for example

³¹⁶ *RPC* VI.8613, 8614, 8615. Obverse: Bust of Elagabalus (r.). Reverse: Dido founding Carthage, with construction of walls and a visible city gate.

³¹⁷ Price & Trelle 1977: Figure 35. Third century C.E. coin from Aegeae in Cilicia.



Figure 3.16 - The 'Avezzano' Relief - relief of a walled city, with extra-mural tombs and villas (<https://cultura.gov.it/luogo/castello-piccolomini-collezione-torlonia-e-museo-d-arte-sacra-della-marsica>).



Figure 3.17 - Trajan's Column First Spiral (Scenes 1-4) depicting extra-mural port buildings on the Danube surrounded by their own palisades, and troops leaving the city via a city gate (http://www.trajans-column.org/?page_id=107#PhotoSwipe1681203090622).

City walls also appeared in Roman mosaics as a boundary motif, placed around the edge of the main mosaic. The wall was well suited to such use, as its shape, usually depicted with crenellations, could run around the edge of the mosaic as a band. It also allowed an interplay between its role as a border to the mosaic with the function of actual city walls as borders in the Roman city. Some, such as at the *Casa di M. Caesius Blandi* at Pompeii, even included details such as placing a city gate in the area facing the *fauces* of the house, pairing the artistic and the physical entrances to the room (Figure 3.18).



Figure 3.18 - Detail from the fauces mosaic, Casa di M. Caesius Blandi, Pompeii (VII.1.40) (<https://www.pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R7/7%2001%2040.htm>).

A final use of city walls as an artistic motif which will be explored here comes from the use of mural crowns on statuary. These mural crowns consisted of decorative crowns made of masonry walls with towers, and often city gates, which were used in the artistic depiction of certain deities. These are distinct from the mural crowns which were awarded to Roman soldiers who were the first to reach the top of an enemy's fortifications during a siege, which were similar in appearance but have different connotations which directly referred to the act of defeating a city's defences. Symbolic mural crowns appeared, on the other hand, in the statuary and portraiture of tutelary deities such as Tyche or Oecumene. Tyche was a tutelary goddess of the Greek world associated with fate or destiny,³¹⁸ and individual Tychai could be adopted by different cities to serve as a protective and guiding goddess for the entire city and its population.³¹⁹ Likewise, Oecumene was a Greek personification of the civilised and inhabited world, who was frequently connected with cities as the expression of such concepts.³²⁰ Other protective deities such as Cybele might also be depicted in a mural crown.³²¹ In both cases, it is evident that the mural crown is used to evoke a direct connection between the goddess and the concept of urbanism and the city. The walls here are used to indicate the concept of the city in a convenient artistic form which could simultaneously represent the city and serve as an honorific crown for the statue. The representation of the wall

³¹⁸ *OCD*.⁴ s.v. 'Tyche.'

³¹⁹ *OCD*.⁴ s.v. 'Tyche.'

³²⁰ Galinsky 1996: 120.

³²¹ Jeppesen 1994: 342-3.

also invokes the protective function of such deities, and the defensive purpose of wall circuits.

Both of these goddesses are Greek in origin, and this symbolic mural crown seems to have originated in the Greek world with depictions of such goddesses, but was widely adopted in the Roman world in depictions such as the pantheon of the *gemma augustea*, in which Oecumene can be seen wearing a mural crown.³²² Other examples of the mural crown can be found in Roman art, illustrating the adoption of the symbolism associated with the city and the protection of the city, such as the figures of Roma and the personified *genius* of the Equestrian order depicted on a scene showing Trajan's *adventus* at Benevento.³²³ Although many of these depictions are too small to include significant detailing to the mural crown other than distinctive towers, the larger versions found on statuary can include significant detail. This often includes the positioning of a gate central to the crown and the face of the subject (Figure 3.19 for example). In doing so, the gate is turned into an ornamental focus of the mural crown, no doubt intended to replicate the sorts of adornment that might occupy a similar place on other crowns or head-dresses, but also highlights how crucial gates were to the depiction of walled circuits more generally, despite the fact that they have rarely been noted in the art historical literature on the subject. The adoption of this Greek artistic convention and its application to distinctly Roman personifications as well as Greek deities indicates that the city wall and gates were felt to be key representative urban monuments in the Roman world as well as the Greek one.

City walls' most obvious connotations are the strength and defensive capability of the city which could construct them, but could also signal the status of a particular city. The construction of circuit walls suggests a command of significant resources, or an imperial gift in order to carry out fortification in some cases – as at Saepinum.³²⁴ City walls were also a key indicator of *urbanitas* and *romanitas* in the Early Imperial period, and were part of the expected

³²² First century C.E. engraved gemstone with a lower register depicting the erection of a *tropaion* (trophy) and an upper register depicting Augustus surrounded by gods and goddesses, being crowned by Oecumene. Whether the deity depicted is Oecumene, Tyche, or Cybele as is debated (Jeppesen 1994: 342-3) is largely irrelevant here – the use of the mural crown in the depiction of each deity points to the symbolic use of the city fortifications as a sign of protection and civilisation.

³²³ Hannestad 1988: 181, 185.

³²⁴ Goodman 2007: 60; Pinder 2011: 71.

monumental buildings of major Roman cities.³²⁵ By depicting a city through its circuit walls instead of a single distinctive building such as a major temple, it is clear that the iconography is less concerned with the identification of the individual city than the conveyance of its status through the city walls. The use of a peripheral monument such as a city wall and gates, moreover, has the benefit of being highly recognisable in the urban and peri-urban landscape for real travellers, for whom the city walls and gates would have been one of the first major civic monuments visible. Considering all of these factors, the use of city walls as a visual synecdoche for the city is indicative of their wider role in the understanding of the urban landscape and the conscious self-presentation of such cities.



Figure 3.19 - Head of the Goddess Tyche, with mural crown. Corinth, 1st century C.E. (<https://www.corinth-museum.gr/en/collection-item/head-of-the-goddess-tyche/>).

Gates as Indicators of the Urban Boundary.

Walls and gates are also found on Roman coinage in the context of certain rituals and processions such as the *adventus* or triumph, rituals in which the moment of arrival into a city was a key point of transition within the ceremony.³²⁶ As outlined above, for the most part, such ceremonies are depicted on coinage using the personification of a particular city/province

³²⁵ Goodman 2007: 60; Gros 1992: 220.

³²⁶ See above, pp.75-77, 80-82.

kneeling in welcome of the emperor. Hadrianic and Trajanic *adventus* issues, for example, depict the ritual without using any city walls, gates or other architectural features to indicate the urban periphery.³²⁷ Instead, the legend ADVENTUS could be used, alongside an image of the emperor being greeted or received by a personification of the province or city in question. The same is the case of many *profectio* coins, which usually used the legend 'PROFECTIO' to explain a scene of the emperor accompanied by soldiers and Mars.³²⁸ Some *adventus* coins, such as the Arras medallion discussed below, do make use of the architecture of a city wall/gate to situate the ritual at the urban boundary, but this is a later example.

However, state relief from the early Imperial period regularly uses city gates as a means of locating a scene at the edge of urban space particularly when depicting processual rituals such as *adventus*, *profectio*, lustrations and triumphs,³²⁹ described in Section 3.3. In such images the city wall is usually depicted in a very generic fashion, lacking any clear identifying feature. Many of these representations do not include a recognisable city wall at all, but instead depict an array of buildings such as temples along with a gate or arch. Temples may be included because of the expectation that these rituals would usually either originate or culminate in a visit to a temple to give offerings, while the gate/arch is used to locate the ritual at the edge of urban space. While the features depicted may be based on free-standing arches at Rome, the context of the ritual makes clear that the arch is serving as a marker of the urban boundary. In doing so, these relief images also demonstrate the importance of crossing or circumambulating thresholds during such rituals, and the importance of that moment as one of transition within the celebration of an *adventus* or triumph.

The arches used in these representations – see Figure 3.6, above, for example – are usually architecturally generic single arches, which are not depicted as part of a circuit wall. The generic nature of the gates or arches is likely a result of the available space on such reliefs, and the fact that the gate was simply a device to situate the procession's arrival at the edge of urban

³²⁷ Wolfram Thill 2014: 95.

³²⁸ Wolfram Thill 2014: 97-8.

³²⁹ See Figures 3.17, 3.5 and 3.6, 3.8 and 3.9, for example.

space. However, at times they could include features that clearly referenced specific historical gates/arches. Reliefs from the reign of Marcus Aurelius, for example, depict an elaborate *quadrifons* arch topped by a statuary group of elephant-drawn chariots, associated with an arch originally constructed by Domitian.³³⁰ This so-called Elephant Arch sat astride the *via Flaminia* in Rome, the most probable route along which Marcus Aurelius would have returned to city from his military campaigns, and thus the depiction of the arch likely provides a specific reference to the location of the *profectio/adventus* depicted.³³¹

The absence of city walls, however, likely reflects the nature of city gates and arches of the time at Rome – from which the majority of our evidence comes – which were no longer obviously associated with a wall circuit, and *quadrifons* arches were by definition free-standing. Even the gates of the Republican wall, as shall be explored in Chapter 4, were increasingly divorced from their context as parts of the city’s former fortifications with the expansion of suburban development surrounding the city and the demolition of the wall in many areas. New peripheral arches, constructed in the first century C.E., such as the Claudian Porta Maggiore and the so-called Elephant Arch of Domitian straddled major roads entering the city, but were not associated with a clear urban boundary in the same sense that city gates had previously been. A similar phenomenon can be seen elsewhere in Italy, Africa and Gaul where additional arches were built on roads approaching the outskirts of Roman towns and cities further out than the original city walls.³³² With the growth of extra-mural settlement at many towns and cities across Italy and the Roman world during the period of this study, it is highly likely that such peripheral arches may well have become the backdrop for transitional moments of crossing into the city. Although Rome’s *pomerium* was not extended to meet such peripheral arches until well after this period, these arches still preserved the traditions and

³³⁰ Grunow Sobocinski 2009: 147, 149. The ‘Elephant Arch’ appears on 3 reliefs dating to Marcus Aurelius’ reign, as well as a coin medallion produced by the same emperor (Paris Cabinet des Medailles 152).

³³¹ Grunow Sobocinski 2009: 149.

³³² For example, the Arch of Augustus at Aosta, The Arch of Hadrian at Gerasa (MacDonald 1986: Fig. 35); Successive monumental gates at Timgad’s eastern and western limits (MacDonald 1986: Urban Armatures); the Triumphal Arch at Glanum, Gaul, which stood outside the North gate (Anderson 2013: 35-6); or the Triumphal Arch at Orange, Gaul to the north of the North Gate (Anderson 2013: 55-6).

importance of marking the edges of urban space and providing a suitable monumental setting for such rituals. In this way, however, we see city gates, and peripheral arches which developed to mimic city gates, being used in Roman art to represent the concept of the urban boundary and the act of leaving or arriving in a city.

Specific Depictions of City Gates in Roman Art.

The depiction of buildings on coins is generally viewed as being a result of Roman cultural influence, which was adopted by local and provincial mints in Spain and the Mediterranean,³³³ before Imperial mints took over coinage production in the Western provinces and local issues declined in the first century C.E.³³⁴ Prior to Roman influence mints in Spain tended not to use buildings as a design for coins, but used a range of other symbols such as animals and plants instead.³³⁵ Where buildings appear on Roman coins, Howgego has suggested that these issues were usually related to a specific event, such as the construction or reparation of a significant building, and celebrated that specific achievement.³³⁶ This is in contrast to the use of buildings on Greek coinage which often used a key building such as a temple as a recognisable symbol to represent the city it was minted at, that led to the building becoming a 'logo' for the city.³³⁷ However, I would highlight that where buildings appeared in local issues, especially when combined with legends that might refer to specific towns/cities and their status, this may well have had an unintended 'logoization' effect on the audience regularly handling these coins who associated the building with the location, especially if repeated issues used the same building in conjunction with a legend naming the mint.

Gates are not a common reverse image for Roman coinage, but where they do appear they can be broadly categorised as either being part of an overarching depiction of a city such as a circuit wall motif, or appearing

³³³ Howgego 2005: 4; Ripollès 2005: 85 (summarising general trends in pre-Roman Spanish coin iconography which can be contrasted with, e.g., the Merida city gate type coins explored above).

³³⁴ This shift to Imperial mints likely accounts for the decline in city-gate issues found in Western provinces between the first- and third-centuries C.E., as issues would not tend to favour designs which were associated with particular cities and their local monuments and identities, but instead Imperial achievements and virtues.

³³⁵ Ripollès 2005: 85.

³³⁶ Howgego 2005: 4.

³³⁷ Howgego 2005: 4.

independently as a building separate from the rest of the urban boundary. In the former category, can be included examples such as Figures 3.11 and 3.12, above, which depict the city gate in far greater emphasis than the rest of the wall circuit.³³⁸ Figure 3.11 is an example of a common type from *Augusta Emerita*, and shows a double-arched city gate, flanked by towers, in clearly disproportionate scale to the remainder of the circuit wall which is depicted in the background. This was possibly the result of the desire of the artist to emphasise the gate to make clear that it was a circuit wall being depicted and including the gate for clarity, or more likely that the gate was of particular importance as a local monument. Given the repeated appearance of a double-arched city gate on coins from the colony *Augusta Emerita*, it is highly likely that this gate was intended to represent a particular monumental gate in the city wall of the city, whose wall circuit represented the colonial status of the city. The Arras medallion (Figure 3.9) by contrast, shows how city gates could be used as a synecdoche indicating the whole city in depictions of other scenes. The *adventus* pictured here is located at the edge of urban space by the presence of the city gate in the far right of the field, thus situating the ritual in its proper place at the edge of urban space.

The majority of coins that depict gates as their major reverse image, however, are associated with the ‘camp-gate’ types which developed in the third and fourth centuries C.E. These reverse types depict a single stylised, two-dimensional gate with a very high wall, two flanking towers and often a third tower behind the gate itself (See Figure 3.20).³³⁹ In his discussion of the spread of this ‘camp-gate’ type, Elkins illustrates how they spread from the local mints of the Eastern Mediterranean world to major Imperial mints,³⁴⁰ but fails to recognise that visually similar reverse types featuring city gates had been employed from the first century B.C.E in mints elsewhere,³⁴¹ even if they became more common from the second century C.E.

Generally, such coins as these depict gates that can either be associated with a local mint, or as a particular reference to a city of specific relevance to

³³⁸ For contrast, see Figure 3.10 which depicts the gate as a component part of the whole wall circuit, but with relatively little emphasis.

³³⁹ Elkins 2013: 285-293.

³⁴⁰ Elkins 2013: 285-293.

³⁴¹ BMCRR Rome 4204, for example. An Augustan-era coin depicting a city gate.

contemporary historical or political events. In the case of the former, such coins featuring a city gate may be in reference to a specific gate as a prominent urban landmark, perhaps by using characteristic features such as the number of arches, flanking towers or specific statuary to identify the gate to its audience. *Augusta Emerita's* distinctive double-arched gate repeatedly appeared on coins as already described,³⁴² while *Caesarea Germanica's* coinage repeatedly featured a distinctive four-towered gate as a reverse type.³⁴³ It can be assumed that such specific details of the depiction of the gate were intended to refer to a particular monumental gate from that city. City gate coins could also invoke the city wall more generally by reference to a gate within it, highlighting the presence of the city wall by featuring a specific and monumental element of the entire circuit more widely. Combining the gate as a landmark with a legend which specifically references the city as the place of mint would provide a direct connection between the two, and would be understood as representing the entire city, even when the gate appeared in isolation,³⁴⁴ and other examples can be found from Bizya, Anchialus and Alexandria.³⁴⁵ Although the gate on its own appears as a monument, it is one which demonstrates the presence of a circuit wall and has resultant connotations of strength, power, the command of resources and official status within the Roman provincial order.

³⁴² E.g., BMC 289 Denarius, Augustus. From Augusta Emerita (Merida, Spain). Obverse: bare-headed Augustus facing right IMP CAESAR AVGVST. Reverse: Double-arched gate with disproportionately small semi-circular city wall in background P CARVSIVS LEG PRO PR EMERITA.; compare with Figure 3.11, also from Merida.

³⁴³ American Numismatic Society 1944.100.41992 Bronze Coin, c. 20 C.E., Caesarea Germanica. Obverse: Bust (r.) of Germanicus. Reverse: City gate with four flanking towers and a statue above.

³⁴⁴ Elkins 2013: 291, 293.

³⁴⁵ *Bizya*: Yale University Art Gallery, 2009.110.19. Bronze coin, Hadrian, Bizya. Obverse: Bust (r.) of Hadrian. Reverse: large city gate with flanking towers, topped with a *quadriga* statue. *Anchialus*: Y.U.A.G. 2004.6.919. Bronze coin, Septimius Severus, Anchialus. Obverse: Bust (r.) of Septimius Severus. Reverse: City gate with flanking towers, no attached walls. *Alexandria*: Price & Trell 1977, Figure 89. Hadrian, Alexandria. Obverse: Bust, Trajan. Reverse: Triple-arched gate/triumphal arch topped with pediment, entablature and attic statuary.



Figure 3.20 - Coin of Marcus Aurelius. Obverse: Bust of Lucius Verus (r.). Reverse: City wall with gate, flanking towers and third tower behind (RPC.VI.1, 10341) (<https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/4/10341>).

Discussion.

Three major trends emerge in the use of city walls and gates in Roman art. The first is in the representation of the city, or urban civilisation more generally, through the depiction of a city wall, with or without accompanying buildings inside. These stylised, bird's eye view representations of circuit walls with gates can be found on coins, in wall paintings, mosaics and as illustrations on maps and in other manuscripts. Their use likely developed out of the convenience of the walled circuit as a means to indicate a city on a relatively small area, and with a relatively simple iconography. But it was also probably influenced by the attitudes towards the definition of a city evident in Greek and Roman literature which associated city status with certain key monuments including city walls. City walls could also indicate the strength and wealth of a particular city, and even allude to its history and independence, even within the Roman system. As such, the city wall served as an ideal visual synecdoche in order to represent the city as a whole. This idea was then taken further in its metaphorical representation of the city in its use in mural crowns in statuary of goddesses and personified deities connected with cities, urbanism and the protection of the city.

However, despite the limited space available in many of these depictions, such as coinage and illustrations especially, great care was often taken to include city gates in these depictions. This speaks to not only their vital role

within city walls as the threshold of the circuit, but their importance as a monument in their own right. Gates' role as a threshold is a factor which also explains the second of the major trends in the depiction of city walls, city gates and other representative archways. This trend, particularly common in relief sculpture, uses city walls and gateways as a means of locating an event at the urban boundary. Such depictions, which tend to show major Imperial occasions such as rituals which commemorated the emperor's entrance to or exit from a city, usually use a single arch in isolation as a means of representing the transitional moment in which the imperial retinue crossed the boundary of the city. These spatial references, which may not be intended to correspond to any particular arch or gate in the city often stood alongside other symbolically charged buildings such as temples, which are also not identifiable as specific temples, but represent the important religious nature of such occasions and the piety of those depicted. The inclusion of city gates as a monument therefore is best understood as representing a means of situating the event with the transition through the urban boundary and the processual nature of such rituals.

Finally, gates in particular could be depicted as monumental buildings in the urban landscape. City walls more generally are recognised as having a clear monumental impact as well as their defensive role, but city gates in particular as the key areas of interaction with this monument could become increasingly monumentalised. This was especially the case for city gates in Italy in the first century B.C.E., and onwards in other provinces. City gates are also given prominence in depictions of cities and wall circuits, but can further be emphasised by being depicted in exaggerated scale – such as the gate in the Avezano relief, or Augusta Emerita coins – or being pictured independently of the rest of the city wall. This speaks to the monumental value which city gates could have as particular landmarks of the city. They had a high representative value as one of the first monumental structures encountered at the fringes of a city, and could become emblematic of the city when used as an image on coins, for example.

The consistent use of city walls and gates in Roman art from the first century B.C.E. at least, into Late Antiquity is indicative of the fact that walls and gates were a crucial part of the expectations and experiences of the urban boundary in the Roman world throughout the Imperial period. However, the

prevalence of city gates in the early Roman Empire is highly instructive, especially since in this period many historical studies have underestimated the cultural importance of the urban boundary and city walls and gates as manifestations of that boundary.

3.5b – City Walls and Gates in Roman Literature.

City walls and gates also regularly appear in Roman literary texts of a variety of genres, which exhibit similar categories of use to the artistic representation of walls and gates in Roman art. This section will explore the use of city walls and gates in Roman literature as a metaphorical means of representing the city in its entirety; their use as geographical reference points within the literary urban landscape; and the reference to city walls and gates as a necessary and monumental part of the urban landscape. Trends in the use of walls and gates in Roman literature also vary according to the genre of their context, with distinct differences in usage across different genres, as is to be expected based on their different content and styles of presenting information. Finally, this section will highlight the discord between the literary conception of the Roman city, which clearly separates between the urban and the rural, with the archaeological reality of suburban and peri-urban development that was commonplace at the same times. I shall also briefly comment on the nature of the presentation of the suburban/extra-mural in Roman literature and the philosophical and moral connotations of the different spheres in Roman literature.

The majority of references to city gates in Roman literature can be described as pragmatic, where the city gate is used as a geographic reference point to explain the location of a building or event. Such references are most commonly found in historical texts such as Livy's, but also feature in other genres, as a means of simply referring to space. Particularly common among such examples, is the use of gates as reference points in narratives of urban sieges, and many of them specifically at Rome. Livy, for example, refers to the locations of the attackers and their attempts to besiege Veii using the city wall, and describes the counter-attack coming out of the gate.³⁴⁶ Similar usage is

³⁴⁶ Livy 5.7.

preserved much later in Roman history by Procopius, who uses city gates to locate the action being described when referring to the siege of Rome in 537-8 C.E.³⁴⁷ In such contexts, the gate is usually serving as a setting for the action, and a means to situate narrative events clearly in the landscape, which refer to historical locations. As gates were a major weak-point in any defensive circuit, they commonly came under attack, and were used as points of egress for counter attacks.

Some specific gates, especially at Rome, are featured heavily in such narratives, but this is usually a result of their geographic relationship to the city and road networks. The Porta Collina, for example, appears repeatedly in Roman literary texts as the location of attacks and sieges.³⁴⁸ Since this gate was the northernmost of the Republican city wall, and was accessed by the *via Nomentana* leading north-east of Rome, it is unsurprising that it was often the centrepiece of attacks on the city from enemies who came from (or via) the north of Italy. It is natural, therefore, to use it as a geographical reference point in such circumstances, and such accounts tally with the evidence of inscriptions from Pompeii which use the gates as key muster points for the city defences.³⁴⁹ The defensive role of the city gate made them central to the effective defence of a besieged city, and heightened their importance as landmarks.

However, city gates were also used as geographical reference points in situations which were unrelated to their role as defensive fortifications, illustrating instead to their role as landmarks within the city during peacetime. The formula "*extram portam*" is particularly commonly used as a means of spatial designation across a variety of literary genres. Livy commonly uses the formula, along with the name of the specific gate, to describe the locations of other urban landmarks which might need specification. For example, the statue of Minucius is described as "*extram portam trigeminam*,"³⁵⁰ as is the Porticus Aemilia.³⁵¹ The exact same formulation is used in Plautus to refer to the

³⁴⁷ Procopius, *History of the Wars* V.29.40-44; VI.1.11-12; VI.1.28-30, for example.

³⁴⁸ Livy 4.21 (on troops from Veii & Fidenae setting out their standards "not far from the Colline Gate" in 436/5 B.C.E.); 5.41 (on the Gauls entrance to the city by the Porta Collina in 390 B.C.E.); Pliny *Nat. His.* 15.20 (on Hannibal's army camping north of the city and Hannibal riding up to inspect the Porta Collina).

³⁴⁹ See Chapter 5, on the *eituns* inscriptions, p.255-256.

³⁵⁰ Livy 4.16

³⁵¹ Livy 35.10.12

gathering of porters outside a gate in the play *Captivi*,³⁵² and although the play is not set at Rome, Plautus may be exploiting the name of a Roman gate in order to better set the scene for his Roman audience and make implications about the nature of the surrounding area, for instance the Porta Trigemina's connections to river ports at Rome.³⁵³ But city gates were also referred to as a geographical reference point in a range of other grammatical formulations depending on the exact circumstances being described. Livy further uses terms such as "*circam*" or "*ab*" to locate certain events or buildings within the city.³⁵⁴

Another example of urban navigation using key landmarks, including the city gate, is included in Terence's *Adelphi*, and gives some indication of how major landmarks such as large private houses, temples and city gates could be used to describe directions to a location.³⁵⁵ Such repeated use of city gates as geographical landmarks within the city hints at their impact as urban monuments, which were clearly recognisable and identifiable. In part, this is due to their direct relationship to the road network, placed on key roads in the urban network which would have been used in navigation across the city and between city and countryside. The size of city gates, and their role as architecture which directly crossed roads – making them highly visible and memorable landmarks – would have further increased their impact as urban monuments and thus made them more memorable and useful means of describing and understanding space in the Roman city.

Such references to walls and city gates in Roman literature are rooted in daily life in the city and practical means of navigating and describing urban locations in and around the city. However, city walls, and particularly the concept of the city wall, are also used as a metaphorical device for describing the city as a whole in Roman literature. Gates are not specifically referred to in such metaphors, which refer more directly to the generalised 'walls,' but a brief discussion is included here to highlight the symbolic role of urban fortifications as a means of defining the city more generally. The terms "*muros*" and "*moenia*"

³⁵² Plautus *Captivi*: 90. Given the proliferation of trade in the corresponding area of Rome, see Chapter 4, this may well have been in reference to a common phenomenon at the gate.

³⁵³ See Chapter 4, p.182-3 on the Porta Trigemina's riverine position.

³⁵⁴ Livy 35.9 (describing the collapse of buildings "*circam portam Flumentanam*" during heavy flooding in 194 B.C.E.; 35.10.12 (explaining the location of a porticus built outside the Porta Fontinalis).

³⁵⁵ Terence *Adelphi*: 580-585.

are most commonly translated simply as ‘walls,’ but there are subtle distinctions between the two that dictate their usage; while *muros/murus* translates directly as a town or city wall, *moenia* should be understood as referring to the city walls and all that is contained within them.³⁵⁶ Both words are commonly used in Roman literature as a device to refer to the city more broadly, and illustrate that city walls were considered an emblematic means of representing the city, on par with other major public buildings such as temples. This phenomenon is clearly linked to the similar use of city walls as means of representing the city in Roman art discussed above.

The metaphor could be further extended in literature by using walls and gates as both references to actual defensive structures while simultaneously using them as representations of the city more generally. There are clear precedents for such metaphorical uses of defensive fortifications from Greek literature, where *Seven Against Thebes*, for example, situates the crucial battles between Thebes’ seven heroes and the seven attacking commanders at each of the city’s gates. In this dramatized sense, the city gates’ role as a weak-point in the defences of the city are emphasised, and they represent the fortunes of the entire city. City walls had a well-established use as a metaphor for the city, or wider *polis*, in Greek literature by the fifth century B.C.E.,³⁵⁷ and such metaphors are embedded in the works of historians such as Herodotus and in Greek tragedy, such as Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*. We see similar usages in Roman literature, where walls feature heavily in epic narratives about battles and conflicts. In the *Aeneid*, all of the battle scenes focus on the siege or defence of city walls rather than pitched battles – in a distinct break with Greek tradition which highlighted that the open field was the only truly honourable field of battle.³⁵⁸ The allusion is made obvious in Silius Italicus’ epic poem of the Second Punic War, the *Punica*, in which a character named *Murrus* – obviously alluding to the word *murus/muros* – valiantly defends his city from Hannibal’s troops and in doing so delays the Punic attack on Rome.³⁵⁹ In this instance, *Murrus* serves as effectively a personification of the city wall, protecting and defending his city, even if he is ultimately unsuccessful. Other mythical episodes

³⁵⁶ Gros 1992: 212.

³⁵⁷ Dougherty 2014: 133-143, 148, 163.

³⁵⁸ Warren Kelly 2020.

³⁵⁹ Kortmann 2020.

such as Genucius Cipus' banishment from Rome heavily invoke the idea of city gates as the threshold of the city, employing the visual imagery of crossing the *pomerium* with the understanding that the gates represented the entire space of the city.³⁶⁰

Walls are particularly commonly invoked when referring to the foundation of cities, as a means of expressing the wider city that had actually been founded. Roman poetry often makes use of this allusion, referring to Romulus' foundation of the walls of Rome,³⁶¹ using the metaphorical formulation rather than more explicitly stating the foundation of the city. Other accounts of urban foundation make use of the imagery of city walls and gates, as in Virgil's description of the foundation of Carthage which makes specific reference to the construction of the walls and gates.³⁶² If we consider such cultural references in conjunction with the foundation rituals already explored in this chapter and the religious importance afforded to the urban boundary by these foundation rituals it makes sense that the city walls would have been one of the first things marked out in the foundation of a new city. For practical reasons such as the defence of a new colony, it is highly likely that building civic defences might have been prioritised at Republican colonies. The construction of city walls would therefore have been an instrumental part of the establishment of a city, and would perhaps have contributed to such metaphors which relate the walls of a city specifically to its foundation or growth.

It is unclear how this metaphorical use of walls to describe the city as a whole came about in Roman literature, but it can perhaps be attributed to the conventional expectations of a city in the Roman world. Despite the growth of extra-mural suburbs at many Roman cities throughout the late Republic and into the Imperial period, artistically and in literature, cities were still usually depicted as being urban spaces with clear boundaries.³⁶³ The use of city walls as a

³⁶⁰ Ovid *Met.* 15.565-620; especially lines 583-4, and 597-8. See also Valerius Maximus 5.6.3, which describes Cipus' horns growing as he crossed through the threshold of the city gate, indicating his symbolic departure from the city and the threshold through which he could not return. The linguistic similarity between Cipus' name and the *cippus* used to mark boundaries is also suggestive.

³⁶¹ For example: Tibullus *Elegies* 2.5.23-4 ("Not yet had Romulus traced the walls of the Eternal city"); Propertius *Elegies* 4.4.73-5 ("It was the birthday of Rome's walls), 4.1.55-8 ("She-wolf of Mars, best of nurses for our fortunes what walls have sprung up from your milk..."); Virgil *Aeneid* 1.278-9 ("Then Romulus ... shall take up the line and found the walls of Mars").

³⁶² Virgil *Aeneid* 1.365-7, 1.418-25; See also Ovid *Met.* 15.55-57 on foundation

³⁶³ Goodman 2007: 29-35.

representative monument may have stemmed from the expectation that a city wall would encompass all of the urban space (or perhaps at least all of the important areas of the town and major public buildings), rather than the reality of growing extra-mural suburbs. It may also be contributed to by the expectation found in Greek and Roman literature that any properly-defined city should include certain major buildings, of which a wall was considered a critical part.³⁶⁴ This, and the dominant visual role which city walls played as one of the first major monuments identifiable on the approach to a Roman city, may have led to this representative role.

In addition to being used as a means of referring metaphorically to the city as a whole, or providing specific geographic reference, gates and city walls can be described as monuments intended to reflect the strength and glory of the city, in Roman textual sources. Virgil's *Aeneid*, in addition to the description of Carthage's gates and walls as a source of wonder for Aeneas and his crew,³⁶⁵ repeatedly refers to the walls of Rome as being a monument to the greatness of the city.³⁶⁶ While in such circumstances, Virgil can refer to the *moenia* as a broader idea encompassing many other monuments and buildings within the city of Rome, the specific references to city gates at Carthage stands out. By the time the poem was written, there were no standing city gates at the original site of Carthage, thanks to its destruction in 146 B.C.E., but the colony settled at the city in the first century B.C.E. by Julius Caesar may have been part of the intended reference for Virgil's audience. Additionally, the passage is most likely intended to reflect the contemporary building programme taking place at Rome during the Augustan period, and perhaps even parallel contemporary renovations to the city gates at Rome. Virgil here uses the grand building scheme of Carthage's gates as a means of demonstrating the grandeur of Rome, holding up such construction as an expected norm of a great city. Likewise, Propertius uses walls at Rome as simultaneously a means of referring to the foundation of Rome, and a remarkable feature of Rome and its people in the passage already highlighted.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁴ Aristotle *Politics* VII.10; Vitruvius I.IV.1.

³⁶⁵ See above, p.125.

³⁶⁶ Virgil *Aeneid* 1.07, 3.159-60, for example.

³⁶⁷ See footnote 357, Propertius *Elegies* 4.1.55-58.

What is evident in the usage of walls and gates in Roman literature are three very similar trends to their use in Roman art and iconography. City walls appear as a means of identifying the city more generally, as a metaphor which expresses the whole. The wall and gates of a city can also be used as monuments which reflect the prestige and power of a specific city in Roman literature, as their monumental designs did in both art and real life. Finally, city gates in particular appeared as landmarks which could be used to situate events, locations and even to navigate the urban landscape.

3.5c – Discussion.

The multiple roles of city walls and gates within Roman art and literature serve to complement the evidence of the importance of gates and the urban boundary in Roman religion. These uses reflect their widely held cultural significance as a means of defining and understanding the city as a whole, and as monuments which had a major impact in the urban landscape. It also further reinforces our understanding of the importance of the urban boundary as a concept in Roman culture, that artistic and literary depictions of the city consistently favoured a clear division between rural and urban space, despite the wealth of archaeological evidence which points to the fact that suburbs were common at Roman cities in Italy by the first century C.E.³⁶⁸ This may have been the result of artistic convention and ease, depicting the city as a simplified set of walls, or may relate to the underlying connotations of many of our textual sources, for which the urban and the rural were held as direct contrasts to each other for moralising purposes, which left little room for suburbs. Where suburbs are referenced in Roman literature, they are usually either the idealised suburbs of Rome where wealthy elites had rural estates within a close proximity of Rome and produced high-value fresh goods for consumption and sale at Rome, or present a darker and more mysterious view of the suburbs. Suburbs are common locations for tales of ghosts, witches, and other supernatural creatures, possibly drawing on the connotations of suburbs as a liminal place neither within nor outside the city.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁸ Emmerson 2020: 39-42.

³⁶⁹ Doroszewska 2017: 1-3.

The growth of suburbs would surely have altered the way cities were perceived in the Roman empire, with city walls and fortifications being less commonly built and repaired in the first and second centuries C.E. than in later periods.³⁷⁰ The growth of extra-mural buildings would have meant that urban laws were applied further outside the city, and visually the arrival into/exit from a city was less governed by the transition through a city gate than when wall circuits defined the entirety of the urban space. Likewise, sources rarely refer to the nature of unwalled towns and cities, which made up a large proportion of urban settlements. Instead, in art and literature, the trope of cities being a clearly demarcated space, expected to have city walls and gates, persevered throughout the Roman period and would become even more significant in the Late Antique period. I believe that one of the key reasons for this is the cultural importance of the religious urban boundary established during urban foundation rituals and repeatedly underscored by other religious and civic rituals which respected and reified this urban boundary.

To fully appreciate the reason that city gates in particular played a role in the definition of the city, and as major local landmarks within the urban landscape, it is helpful to consider their impact on the viewer. From street level, city walls were truly imposing monuments which would have towered over the majority of surrounding buildings. City gates, as the primary location for interacting with the city wall were even more emphasised, and often were built to deliberately increase their visual impact. Their perpendicular orientation to the road simultaneously represented a barrier, dividing space, while their arches channelled the line of sight along the line of the road and seemed to connect the spaces on either side of the gate. Even a relatively minor city gate could have an arch up to 4m in height, and the total structure would have seemed to loom over the approaching traveller and dominated the sensory experience of that stretch of road. The high visibility would have also contributed to their significance as major landmarks, as they would have been a noticeable landscape feature for a long stretch of the approaching road. Where city walls existed alongside the gates, the walls further blocked sight-lines into the city, as

³⁷⁰ The first century B.C.E. saw a flourishing of renovations to fortification circuits in Italy, with at least 18 towns in central-southern Italy alone renovated in the period following the Social War (Gabba 1972: 95-100).

well as blocking out other sensory factors such as sounds or smells, which would have created a sharper division between the intra- and extra-mural areas. This would all have served to emphasise the sense of transition, especially when emerging into a new area on the other side of the wall, making the gate feel like an area of liminality and a threshold between different spheres.³⁷¹ This may have been a key reason that cities and individual patrons continued to build gateways and peripheral arches at Roman cities, even without accompanying walls.

The major impact that city walls and gates would have had on the sensory experience of the urban periphery helps, therefore, to explain why walls and gates are referenced so frequently in Roman art and literature as major urban monuments, and as a means of representing the idea of the city more broadly. However, we should keep in mind that many people would have travelled through such boundaries on a daily basis, moving between city, suburb and countryside. These urban fortifications would have been familiar monuments, therefore, particularly to those who had to travel through them regularly.

The cultural significance of Roman walls and gates, compared to the scarcity of academic study given to either, gives strong reasons for studying the phenomenon of gate construction and renovation in the Roman world. In light of the fact that the Roman conception of the city placed such a value on fortifications, and walls and gates as a means of representing the city, we should take such peripheral monuments into greater consideration in our studies of urban environments. This is particularly relevant when considering the continued construction of city gates and similar peripheral monumental arches at cities where walls were not present, or were accorded far less investment than the gates themselves, and the renovation of such gates at other cities where older city walls were being exceeded by suburban development. The key role of gates in defining the urban space, or at least the concept of it, indicated in the literary and artistic sources demonstrates that city gates were important urban monuments and landmarks not only at times of

³⁷¹ MacDonald 1986: 'Passage Architecture.'

conflict or insecurity when their defensive capability may have come to the forefront, but in the daily life of the city.

Chapter 4: The Augustan Era Transformation of Republican Gates at Rome.

4.1 – Introduction.

Augustan Rome has been widely recognised as a period in which not only the political system of Rome, but the landscape of the city itself, was transformed. In many respects, this urban transformation (much like its political counterpart) was, in fact, the culmination of ongoing trends which had begun in the third century B.C.E. The construction of increasingly monumental structures such as manubial temples, and large-scale infrastructural projects such as roads and aqueducts, had begun to transform Rome's landscape well before the Augustan age.³⁷² However, in this period, in which a single figure came to dominate both the political system and the patronage of building programmes in the city, the use of monumental building took on a new significance as part of the political programme of the first emperor. Monumental building could be used to transmit, and reinforce, messages on the status of the patron as an individual, the community as a collective, and could convey aspects of the particular character of the region.

This chapter will explore how the renovations of three of Rome's Republican city gateways – the Porta Esquilina, Porta Caelimontana, and Porta Trigemina – demonstrate the changes in form and function of city gateways in the Augustan era, in comparison to their fourth century B.C.E. predecessors, and how city gates could be used as an urban monument. The Porta Esquilina and Porta Caelimontana have been selected on the basis of their survival, the standing remains of which clearly demonstrate their renovated form, while the Porta Trigemina has been included as a speculative case study based on the convincing evidence that the gate was renovated but has since been lost. It will also explore the transformation of their surrounding areas over this time frame, the sensory experience of these landscapes and consider how the renovation of

³⁷² See discussion of the transformation of the *Forum Boarium*, pp.182-191, for example. Infrastructure projects include the Aqua Appia (completed 312 B.C.E.), the Aqua Anio Vetus (completed 269 B.C.E.) and the Aqua Marcia (completed 140 B.C.E.).

these gates contributes to our understanding of how Rome was conceived of as a city during the Augustan era.

The ‘Republican’ walls referred to in this chapter are the fourth-century B.C.E. city walls,³⁷³ constructed of *Grotta Oscura* tuff in the wake of the defeat of Veii in 396 B.C.E. and the Gallic sack of Rome c.390 B.C.E.³⁷⁴ A series of earlier fortifications, dating from the sixth century B.C.E., including the *agger* and *fosse* earthworks on the eastern side of the city, and stretches of wall built in Cappellaccio tuff, were repaired, replaced, and added to by the new fourth-century wall.³⁷⁵ As such, the new wall largely followed the route of the previous fortifications, but possibly was the first to fully encircle the city (Figure 4.1, below). Both of these early fortifications paid particular attention to the eastern side of the city, which was not protected by the river, and where the relatively level terrain would have made it easier to attack.³⁷⁶

The reconstruction of the wall’s circuit relies on hypothesising a route based on the location of preserved sections of the wall and projecting their trajectory: as such, in places it has been disputed and the exact location of the wall and gates within it is subject to debate. Section 4.4, on the Porta Trigemina, for example, will summarise the different interpretations of the route of the wall in the area between the Palatine and Aventine hills, which illustrates this problem. Given the turbulent historical context of the fourth century B.C.E., the primary motivation behind the construction of these walls has been generally interpreted as being defence, and it has even been seen as a direct response to the Gallic sack of 390 B.C.E.³⁷⁷ Defence, of course, is a major motivation for the construction of peripheral boundaries which block or control movement, such as

³⁷³ These walls are often referred to as the ‘Servian’ walls, especially in relation to their 6th century B.C.E. iteration which is believed to have been the earliest circuit wall of the city. These walls were attributed to Servius Tullius in ancient literary sources (Livy 1.44, Strabo *Geography* 5.3.7), but I have opted to refer to them as the Republican walls in order to make clear a distinction between the walls in the literary tradition and the archaeological remains.

³⁷⁴ Livy (6.32) describes how taxes were raised to pay for the construction of the walls in 377 B.C.E. A date in the early 4th century B.C.E. is widely accepted. For example, Coarelli (2007: 11-12) accepts this date for the *Grotta Oscura* phase without question, as it fits with the chronology of the archaeology, as does Witcher (2013: 207).

³⁷⁵ Coarelli 2008: 11-13 offers a very brief introduction. Todd (1979: 13-14) suggests the *agger* and *fosse* pre-dates the 4th century wall, but does not take into consideration the 6th century B.C.E./Cappellaccio tuff phase of the defences.

³⁷⁶ This was acknowledged in antiquity (Strabo 5.3.7).

³⁷⁷ Grandazzi 2013: 22-23.

city walls, but it should also be noted that city walls were an impressive visual monument of an urban boundary, that demonstrated the wealth, power and autonomy of the city as well as marking its boundaries.³⁷⁸ At an estimated 10m in height, and up to 4m thick, the fourth-century wall would have dominated the visual experience of Rome's urban periphery at this period, and clearly stated its ability to command resources and man-power, as well as serving effectively for defence if required.³⁷⁹ This wall encompassed an area of roughly 470 hectares, comparable with major cities in the Greek world and Greek colonies in Italy.³⁸⁰

Little is known about the gateways within the Republican city walls, which – although they are frequently referenced in Roman literature – are not described in any detail, and only the Porta Viminalis is known from archaeological excavation. The Porta Viminalis consisted of a single arch, 3m wide,³⁸¹ which would only have permitted limited traffic to move through the gate at any one time, especially wheeled traffic, which would not have been able to pass in both directions through this gate simultaneously.³⁸² The Porta Viminalis was not a major access point for traffic into the city since it was not aligned with a major road that could carry traffic from the districts around Rome, and this may account for the relatively small scale of the gateway. Additionally, the Porta Viminalis was set directly into the area of wall reinforced by the *agger* and *fosse* which would have made the construction of a passageway particularly difficult and may have necessitated a smaller gateway than was usual.³⁸³

However, comparison with other gateways in Roman towns and cities across central and northern Italy such as: the Etruscan Arch at Perugia,³⁸⁴ the Porta all'Arco and Porta Diana at Volterra,³⁸⁵ and Porta Nola at Pompeii,³⁸⁶

³⁷⁸ Gros 1992: 211.

³⁷⁹ Coarelli 2007: 12.

³⁸⁰ Grandazzi 2013: 23. This, for example, was larger than Athens but smaller than Syracuse.

³⁸¹ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 372.

³⁸² Malmberg & Björ 2011: 269.

³⁸³ T.P. Wiseman (pers. Comm.).

³⁸⁴ A single-arch constructed in the third/second century B.C.E. but restored c.40 B.C.E. (*PECS s.v. Perugia*).

³⁸⁵ *PECS s.v. Volaterrae*. Both single-arched city gates. The Porta all'Arco dates from the 4th century B.C.E. and features carved heads (now unidentifiable) on the outside face of the barrel vault of the arch. The Porta Diana was contemporary, and also a single-arch (although its vaulting has since been lost).

³⁸⁶ See Porta Nola, Chapter 4 (pp.209-216).

suggest that a single, relatively narrow, arch was a common design for gateways in the third and fourth centuries B.C.E., even when that gate provided a major access route to the town. As such, it is reasonable to follow Todd's interpretation of the form of the fourth century Republican gateways at Rome as single-arched, with defensive features such as closure mechanisms and towers which sat astride the gate overlooking the entrance.³⁸⁷ A narrow and relatively small arch within a gateway would have been easier to effectively block up and defend in the event of an attack, which may have resulted in the narrow single-arches of many gates of this period. Visually, these early gates would have been impressive due to their height relative to the lack of extra-mural buildings, and the dividing effect they would have had on the eyeline of travellers, that simultaneously defined and connected the inside and outside of the city wall. Their purpose was primarily defensive and their appearance was most likely simple, rather than employing the sorts of decorative features that emerged on city gates in later periods.

We know little about how the Republican city gates at Rome were adjusted after the fourth century B.C.E. until the Augustan renovations, and there is no evidence of a major transformation of these gates,³⁸⁸ but small adjustments were likely made to allow for greater defensibility. Throughout its history, the Republican wall was repeatedly restored and renovated – often at times connected to a particular threat to Rome's security (perceived or real) – and this later work can be seen in the insertion of later *opus caementicium*,³⁸⁹ and in literary records.³⁹⁰ Despite this, by the Augustan era the Republican wall circuit was in considerable disrepair. The growth of the city during the mid- and late Republic had meant that significant changes had been made to the urban fabric, including the demolition of sections of the city wall to allow easier access and new routes into the city.³⁹¹ Additionally, the substantial extra-mural growth meant that the Republican wall was no longer at the edge of the urban space, but the wall and gates often ran through the built-up area. The defensive role of

³⁸⁷ Todd 1979: 19.

³⁸⁸ Todd 1979: 19.

³⁸⁹ For example, the Sullan renovations carried out in 87 B.C.E. as a result of his war against Marius. Säflund 1932: 260; Todd 1979: 19.

³⁹⁰ Livy (25.7.5-6) records an account of the walls near the *Forum Boarium* and the Tiber having been damaged by a fire in 212 B.C.E. and subsequently being repaired.

³⁹¹ De Angelis Bertolotti 1983: 123-4, 119.

the city wall was, in practice, defunct. Furthermore, Rome's status had significantly changed, it was no longer an emergent city-state, but the capital of an empire, with extensive provincial territories. Contemporary writers praised the fact that the city did not need walls, for it was protected by its empire.³⁹² Modern authors have often taken the same view; that the walls were redundant in a defensive capacity,³⁹³ despite the fact that they were employed as late as 87 B.C.E. during the wars between Marius and Sulla.³⁹⁴ This, therefore, marks a shift in the way Rome was conceptualised in the Augustan era, and how its urban defences were interpreted. The continued importance of the circuit, therefore, which will be discussed in the conclusion of this chapter is symptomatic of the importance of marking a traditional, and culturally symbolic boundary of the city.

The evidence for this chapter relies primarily on the archaeology of the gates themselves and that of the surrounding areas. Unsurprisingly, this evidence has been badly impacted by the poor survival of the Republican wall and gates due to later renovation, demolition and the effects of continuous habitation on the landscape of Rome.³⁹⁵ Generally, the Republican wall gates have survived only where later renovations have preserved them, but it is assumed that many of the original gates had been destroyed, and the gap in the wall widened, in order to provide easier access to the city even by the Augustan period.³⁹⁶ This would presumably have left normal streets, with sections of wall evident at either edge that might indicate the location of the previous gate. Street patterns suggest that other areas of the wall were also destroyed in order to create alternate routes through the walls, examples of which will be discussed below, leaving similar such gaps in other areas of the city. However, the Porta Esquilina and Porta Caelimontana have been preserved, along with Augustan era inscriptions from the Porta Caelimontana and the Porta Trigemina. Each case study will support the discussion of the renovation of the

³⁹² Strabo (5.3.7) comments in the first century C.E. that although the city "needed" a new set of fortifications, they put their trust in the army rather than fortifications.

³⁹³ De Angelis Bertolotti 1983: 119; Haselberger 2007: 36

³⁹⁴ Todd 1979: 19 – archaeological remains of wall restoration and the addition of artillery positions have been dated to this era.

³⁹⁵ Patterson 2004: 85.

³⁹⁶ Ball Platner (1929: 407), for example, assumes this was the case for the Porta Esquilina, but does not account for the Augustan renovation and assumes a gap until the third century C.E.

gate itself with a more general investigation of archaeological and literary sources relating to the surrounding areas, which suggests the types of human activity taking place at the time and how the experience of the area may have evolved. In doing so I intend to outline not only how these gates' designs and purpose changed from the fourth century B.C.E to the first century C.E., but to outline how they relate to more widespread changes in the urban landscape and urban experience of Rome.

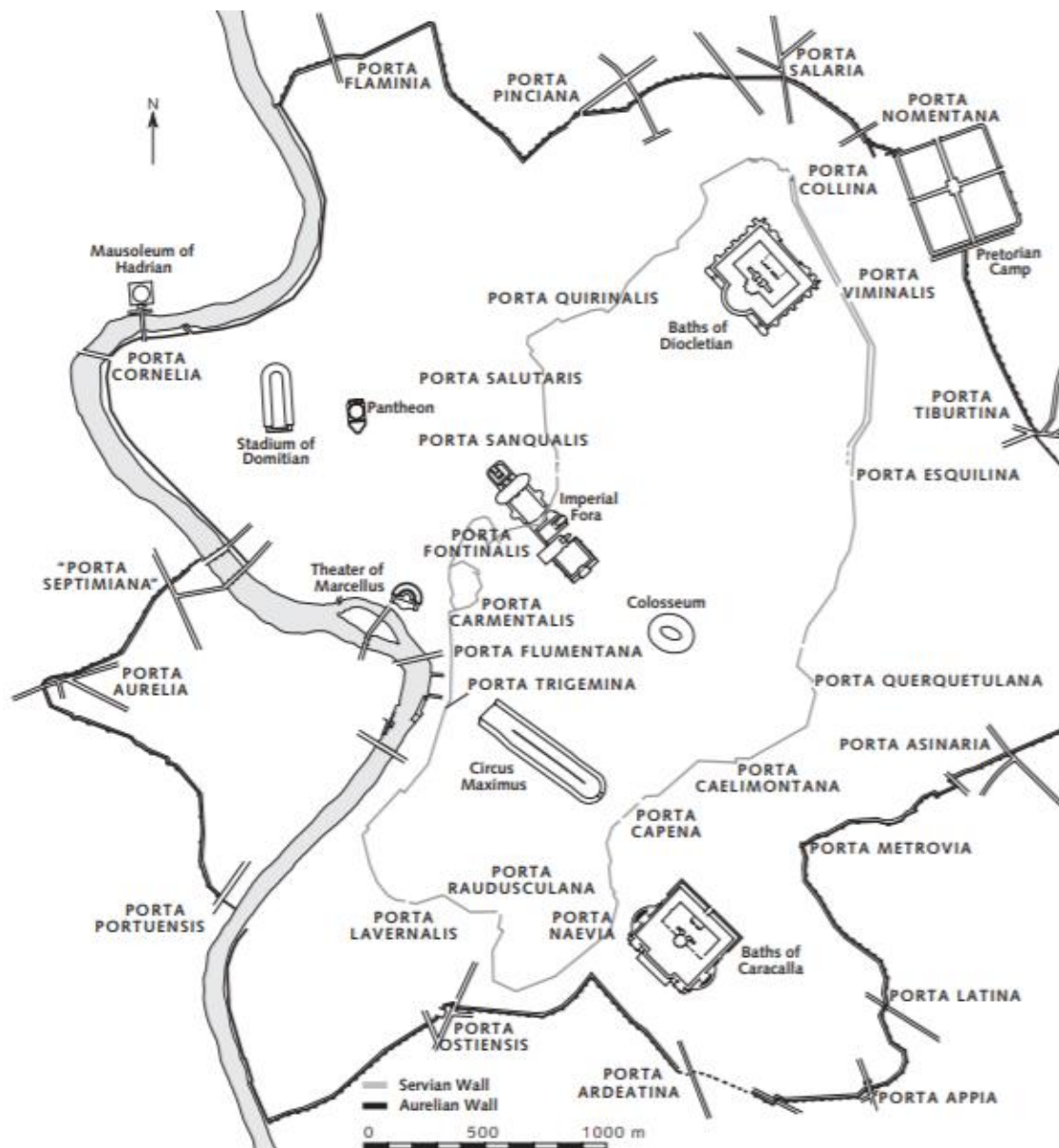


Figure 4.1 - Map of Rome's city walls (Coarelli 2007: Figure 3).

For clarity, throughout this chapter I will refer to these gate renovations as Augustan, despite the fact that none of the examples can be explicitly linked

to Augustus himself, instead referring to their chronological and programmatic links to the transformation of the city in that specific time period. My approach will try to recapture an idea of the sensory experiences of the areas surrounding the gates, in order to best understand how they relate to their specific local setting. It will also enable the consideration of who viewed the gates, under what circumstances and how they experienced the gates, and to understand the role the gates were intended to play in the landscape by their Augustan elite patrons. Recovering the experiences of such an audience is particularly difficult, but by understanding the types of commercial, social and religious activity taking place in the region we can hope to consider who may have used the gateways, and under what circumstances. Particular emphasis will be placed on how the experiences of the areas around the gates changed over time between the construction of the Republican gates and their Augustan counterparts, to fully appreciate how the latter reflected the experiences of their contemporary urban environments, and how these gates were intended to be experienced and understood as monuments.

4.2 – The Porta Esquilina.

The Development of the Porta Esquilina to the Augustan Age.

The Porta Esquilina provides an invaluable opportunity to study the relationship between the architectural form of a gate and its topographical context, where that context changed notably over time. The Porta Esquilina was a gate in the Republican wall on the Eastern side of the city of Rome (Figure 4.1), and was likely a major route of entry and exit for travellers to/from this direction. It was located at the end of the *clivus suburbanus*, a major urban road which provided access to the very heart of the city, through the region of the Subura – which is largely presented as a low status residential/commercial area of the city in Roman literature –³⁹⁷ to Rome’s commercial, political, and religious heart in the area of the *Forum Romanum* and the later Imperial Fora. Outside this gate, the road branched into the *via Labicana* and *via Tiburtina*, two major regional roads which provided access to Rome’s eastern hinterland and towns

³⁹⁷ Martial, *Epigrams*, 6.78; Malmberg (2009: 41) characterises the area as likely having busy commercial activity and a primarily plebeian population.

such as Gabii, Labicum and Praeneste. By the first-century B.C.E. these roads would have been busy with traffic, due to increasing volume of traded goods entering the city to provide for its growing population.³⁹⁸ This would have included goods transported by land between the city and its hinterland, and the internal traffic of the city itself as people of all statuses travelled to and from the centre of the city, the Subura, and the extensive extra-mural area of the city which had developed beyond the Porta Esquilina in the course of the late Republic.

The natural geography of this eastern area of the city was relatively flat due to a plateau, which had previously represented a defensive weak point in the city's natural defences where access was much easier than the surrounding hills, but now facilitated the easy expansion of the urban area.³⁹⁹ It is unsurprising, therefore, that this area was heavily fortified from an early date by the addition of the *agger* and *fosse*, an extensive earthwork ditch and rampart, into which the fourth century B.C.E. Republican wall was incorporated.⁴⁰⁰ The Porta Esquilina was located at the southern end of these earthworks. Based on this context, we can assume that these gates were designed with defence as a primary motivation, and that the original Porta Esquilina would have consisted of a singular, relatively small arch. Excavations at the site of the Porta Esquilina seem to confirm this, with surviving pre-Augustan remains indicating the presence of a tower, or bastion, alongside the gate,⁴⁰¹ with foundations having supposedly been uncovered in 1875 that confirm the gate was located on this spot in the Republican period too.⁴⁰² When this gate was originally constructed, it represented the boundary of the urban space, and the archaeology seems to support the fact that the area outside the city was mostly taken up by cemeteries and funerary activity, but by the late Republican period, the landscape had changed significantly.

By the late Republic, the area of the Porta Esquilina had gained a particularly negative reputation, as an area of low-status funerary activity and

³⁹⁸ Erdkamp 2013: 274; Tuck 2013: 241; Morley 2013: 42.

³⁹⁹ Fraioli 2012: 326.

⁴⁰⁰ Fraioli 2012: 326.

⁴⁰¹ Andrews & Bernard 2017: 250.

⁴⁰² Säflund 1932: 43.

for the dumping of waste.⁴⁰³ Modern scholarship has also associated the region with the traditional location of public executions and capital punishments (which

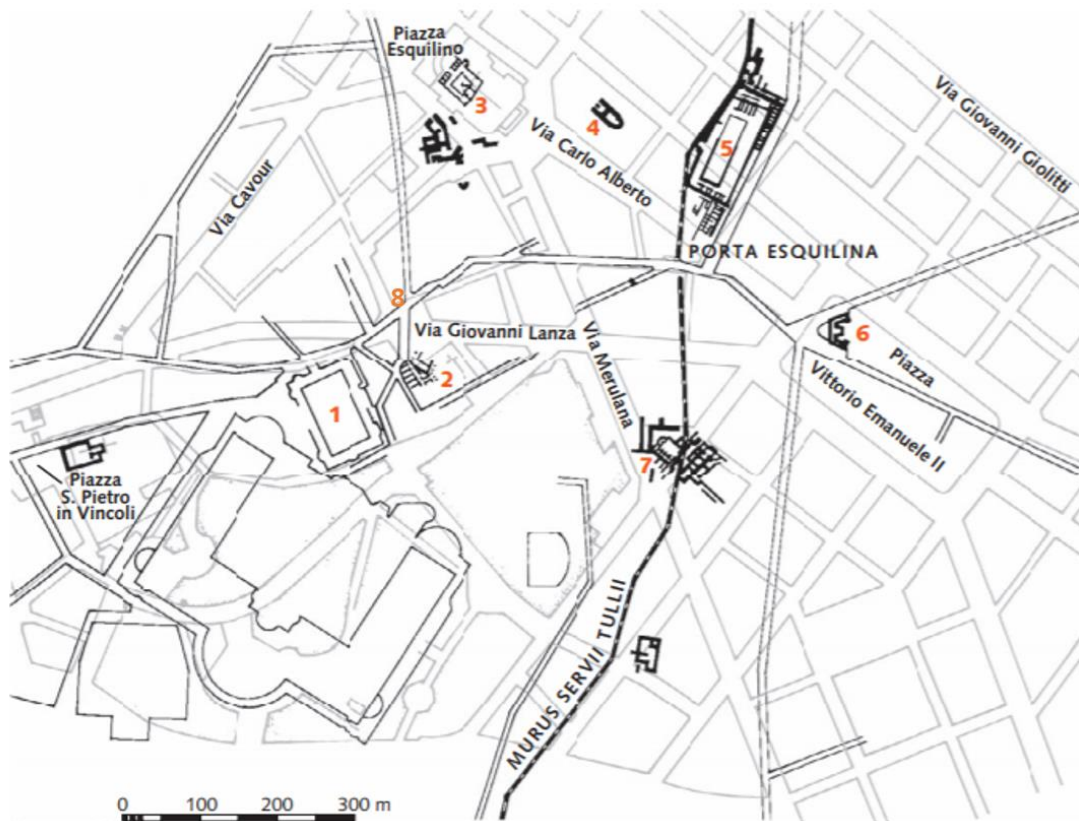


Figure 4.2 – Map of the Esquiline (After Coarelli 2007, Figure 48). **1: Porticus Liviae.** **2: Building under S. Martino ai Monti.** **3: Building under S. Maria Maggiore.** **4: Basilica of Junius Bassus.** **5: Macellum ‘Liviae’.** **6: ‘Nymphaeum of Alexander’ in Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II.** **7: Auditorium of Maecenas.** **8: Compitum: S. Martino ai Monti.**

had to be carried out beyond the *pomerium*), but ancient evidence for this is scarce and post-dates the period of our study.⁴⁰⁴ Brief comments in Augustan literature preserve the memory of the area’s negative associations, as a place “ghastly with bleaching bones,”⁴⁰⁵ and where the poor had been buried in “*puticuli*” rather than in tombs.⁴⁰⁶ The presence of funerary activity in the area outside the Porta Esquilina was longstanding and unsurprising, and a necropolis had been present in the area since the ‘proto-urban’ period of the

⁴⁰³ Patterson 2004: 92, 95; Malmberg & Bjür 2011: 363-4.

⁴⁰⁴ Malmberg & Bjür (2011: 363, 368) make this claim without providing supporting evidence. Suetonius (*Claudius* 25) contains a reference to executions at the *Campus Esquilinus* for those who “usurped the privileges of Roman citizenship.” Whether this was in fact a commonplace location for executions at this period or otherwise in Roman history is not clear.

⁴⁰⁵ Horace *Satires* 1.8.14-16.

⁴⁰⁶ Varro *De Ling.* 25.5-8.

city's history.⁴⁰⁷ It was widespread custom for Romans (and other Italian civilizations) to place tombs and burials, and carry out cremations, outside city boundaries and such early cemeteries have been found at many other sites on Republican Rome's periphery. However, the Esquiline seemed to become particularly closely associated with low status funerary activity by the end of the Republic, where textual evidence suggests that this impacted the perception of the area as whole. Much literature on the archaeology of this area has been shaped by this, with Lanciani identifying large pits found in the area with mass graves, and the '*puticuli*' described by ancient authors; an identification that has since been refuted.⁴⁰⁸

The Esquiline was supposedly home to the grove of the Goddess Libitina, a goddess associated with death and funerals,⁴⁰⁹ which may have directly and indirectly contributed to the area's association with funerals. It is possibly for this reason that the headquarters of the *libitinarii* (grave-diggers and funerary workers) was located in the same region outside the Porta Esquilina,⁴¹⁰ although it is just as possible that its funerary associations were the origins of the association of the grove, and the two were intrinsically linked. This may offer an explanation for why the cultural association between the Esquiline and burials was so strong. Legal restrictions on the *libitinarii* from Puteoli also establish strict rules for the residences of the *libitinarii* which should be outside the city as a location named as the Grove of Libitina, possibly in reference to the grove at Rome,⁴¹¹ suggesting that there may have been similar expectations at Rome. The discovery of two peperino statues depicting flute-players (*tibicini*) who performed in funeral processions may reinforce the idea that this area had strong associations with the funerary trade.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁷ Fraioli 2012: 326.

⁴⁰⁸ See below, p.142, 143-4.

⁴⁰⁹ Varro *De Ling.* 6.47. Wiseman (1995a: 15-16) argues that Libitina was originally a deity relating to sexual desire, following the etymology given in Varro (*De Ling* 6.47), and associating Libitina with Venus Lubentina/Libentina, but the goddess's associations by the late Republic seem to have been primarily related to death and funerals.

⁴¹⁰ Bodel 1994: 49-50. The use of the Grove of Libitina to indicate an area of the late Republican city likewise indicates a possible historical association with the site of the original grove.

⁴¹¹ Noy 2004.

⁴¹² Bodel 1994: 50; Fraioli 2012: 327-8.

Furthermore, the location of the *puticuli* burials attested by Varro may confirm the location of the headquarters of the *libitinarii*,⁴¹³ if we assume that these burials would have been placed relatively near to the headquarters for the convenience of funerary labourers.⁴¹⁴ If these *puticuli* are to be identified with a number of tuff-lined pits located in excavations surrounding the Porta Esquilina by Lanciani,⁴¹⁵ which have been interpreted as burial pits in subsequent literature,⁴¹⁶ the clustering of these burials close to the gate would create an association with the funerary trade based on their proximity. The discovery of human remains among organic matter excavated from the *fosse* also seems to confirm that bodies may have been dumped in this area on occasion.⁴¹⁷ However, logistical consideration of the size of these pits – roughly 1m wide and 2 to 3 m deep – points to them not being used as mass graves,⁴¹⁸ and recent study of this archaeology has suggested that the purpose of these pits was instead for waste management, and that would account for the high degree of organic matter.⁴¹⁹ We need not assume that the *puticuli* were mass graves, but they may instead have been simply inhumation burials without a tomb monument, which would have been viewed by the Roman elite as being low status.

However, the grove of Libitina was not solely a cult site related to death and funerals. Libitina may also have been used as an epithet of Venus,⁴²⁰ and the grove of Libitina was a location for the festival of the *Rustica Vinalia* on 19th August, as part of celebrations of the harvest of grapes and other crops from gardens.⁴²¹ On this occasion, we can expect that members of all Rome's social strata would have proceeded to the Grove in order to participate in rituals, and would have considered the Porta Esquilina to be a point of transition as they left the city's *pomerium* and embarked on the route to the Grove outside the city. This particular festival may also have invoked associations with the sorts of

⁴¹³ Varro *De Ling.* 5.25.

⁴¹⁴ Bodel 1994: 49-50.

⁴¹⁵ Emmerson (2020: 101) has highlighted that although Lanciani claims to have found 75 of these pits, substantially fewer are actually marked on his plans of the area.

⁴¹⁶ Bodel 1994: 40.

⁴¹⁷ Bodel 1994: 42.

⁴¹⁸ Bodel 1994: 41.

⁴¹⁹ Emmerson 2020: 53.

⁴²⁰ Wiseman 1995b: 15-16. Although there seems to be a linguistic link between Libitina and Libentina, the exact term Venus Libitina is never attested in ancient sources (Miano 2022: 160).

⁴²¹ Wiseman 1995b: 16; Varro *De Ling.* 6.20.

productive, cultivated land that might be used on the fringes of the city to produce food for personal use and sale,⁴²² making its peripheral location particularly appropriate. Neither was funerary activity solely concerned with low-status burials and cremations. High status funerals consisted of processions, and involved the playing of music, the provision of games and dramatic performances and speeches, often originally at the site of the tomb.⁴²³

In addition, multiple events in the Roman religious calendar would have warranted family members visiting tombs and commemorate ancestors on key festival days such as the *Lemuria* and *Parentalia* as well as anniversaries of deaths, and such occasions were often considered celebratory.⁴²⁴ Processions and occasions such as these contrast with the image created by, likely exaggerated, literary sources such as the satirists which paint such a despairing picture of the Esquiline. While there are few of the kinds of high-status tomb monuments that would have attracted such fanfare in this region, smaller funerary processions and visits to grave sites may have occurred even for lower status burials, but many – especially for unclaimed bodies – may have gone unmarked. Funerary activity did make up a significant part of the landscape of the Esquiline throughout the early and mid-Republic, and for many of those who lived in Rome, their use of the gate would be linked to the burial or commemoration of the dead, however, this was not the only occasion for people to use the gate, as will be demonstrated below.

As Rome's population continued to grow over the course of the mid- and late Republic, the city's urban fabric also expanded, bringing substantial changes to the landscape outside the Porta Esquilina. The funerary activity taking place outside the gate would suggest that there was a distinct contrast between the activity taking place outside the gate – primarily related to funerary activity, waste disposal, and religious ceremonies – and that taking place within the city walls which involved more commercial, residential and leisure activities. With the expansion of the population and the developed area of the city beyond the walls, this distinction would have become less obvious in the landscape,⁴²⁵

⁴²² Morley 1996: 95 on productive uses of tomb plots. Emmerson 2020: 42, 155, Fig.5.10.

⁴²³ Toynbee 1971: 43-51.

⁴²⁴ Toynbee 1971: 63-64.

⁴²⁵ Witcher 2013: 208.

despite the presence of the wall and gate, and would have necessitated changes in the way that the area outside the Porta Esquilina was used. As early as the second century B.C.E. we can chart attempts to improve the environment of the Esquiline and prohibit the sorts of funerary practices and poor waste disposal that had resulted in the area's negative reputation. A senate decree, the language of which suggests a date in the late second century B.C.E.,⁴²⁶ prohibited cremations and burning within the proscribed area,⁴²⁷ as well as the deposition of bodies or refuse. A series of *cippi*, located between 175m-225m beyond the *agger*, also preserve a decree attributed to Sentius further reiterating the prohibition of deposition of bodies and refuse within that limit.⁴²⁸ The date of these *cippi* is uncertain but seems to be in the early first century B.C.E.⁴²⁹ Based on their find spots, this second decree was enforced further out than that of the previous *senatus consultum* inscription,⁴³⁰ which suggests a reinforcement and extension of these prohibitions that may be related to the growth of the suburb beyond the gate and the increasing use of this landscape for residential and commercial purposes.

The provision of these decrees and the inscriptions relating to them indicate that cremations, and the disposal of bodies and waste, were taking place in this area on a sufficient scale for it to be considered a public problem that required legislating against. It is important to highlight, however, that these decrees did not stop all funerary activity in the Esquiline region, and additions of burials to tombs in the area is attested until at least the Augustan era, with the supposed burials of Maecenas and Horace at the *Casa Tonda* in the *horti Maecenatis*.⁴³¹ This first century B.C.E. tomb monument, 20m in diameter, stood in the *horti Maecenatis* roughly 350m from the Porta Esquilina and overlooked the *via Labicana-Praenestina*,⁴³² making it highly visible from the road. However, the addition of remains to an existing monument which was located on private land would have been a very different type of funerary

⁴²⁶ Bodel 1994: 47.

⁴²⁷ *CIL* I² 591.

⁴²⁸ *CIL* I² 838, 839, 2981.

⁴²⁹ Bodel 1994: 44.

⁴³⁰ Bodel 1994: 42, 49.

⁴³¹ Bodel 2014: 178.

⁴³² *DAR*: Entry 315. Measurements from Archaeositar WebGIS project. This would have been outside the *cippi* marking Sentius' decree.

deposition to the burial or cremation of remains that was targeted by the decrees. Instead, the decrees would have primarily targeted poorer burials or cremations that might not have involved tombs, and practices involving the disposal of waste such as animal carcasses.

Revision of the archaeology of the tuff lined pits uncovered by Lanciani in the late nineteenth century has already been mentioned, and has led Emmerson to propose that these pits were not mass graves – as they have previously been interpreted – but cess pits that were created in an attempt to manage waste disposal in the region in the mid-Republic.⁴³³ The emergence of these features in the third century B.C.E. and the end of their use in the early first century B.C.E. would also fit the chronology of the growth of the city and the attempts to regulate the types of activity being carried out beyond the city wall,⁴³⁴ and the ultimate development of the region into a recognisably urban landscape. The Esquiline's accessibility would have offered a viable location for the disposal of waste from areas such as the Subura with relative ease, while it was relatively undeveloped.⁴³⁵

As the area was further built up, both waste disposal and funerary activity would have been less desirable and would likely have been pushed further out away from the gate into more sparsely populated areas further outside the city. The relative scarcity of human bones in these deposits suggests that, while some bodies may have been disposed of in this way,⁴³⁶ it was not widespread practice. It is worth highlighting that although this re-evaluation of the archaeology of the Esquiline suggests a less gruesome vision than that given in Horace's description and fuelled by Lanciani's descriptions of mass public graves, the proliferation of cess pits for the disposal of organic matter, animal carcasses and all manner of urban waste – sometimes including human remains – would still have had a negative impact on the senses, especially on the sense of smell, and the reputation of the area would still have likely suffered as a result, before the extension of restrictions on waste deposition in the first century B.C.E.

⁴³³ Emmerson 2020: 93.

⁴³⁴ On chronology of the pits: Emmerson 2020: 103.

⁴³⁵ Emmerson 2020: 108.

⁴³⁶ Emmerson 2020: 98-100, 101-102.

But the area outside the Porta Esquilina was not only used for burials, funerary rites and the disposal of waste, and it came to have an important role in the economy of the city as a particular node for trade, especially of fresh goods and perishable items. By the first century B.C.E. the area immediately inside the Porta Esquilina had come to be known as the *Forum Esquilinum*, indicating that it was both a recognisable node in the landscape of this area of the city, but also that it presumably had a primarily commercial role, perhaps as a location for markets to be held.⁴³⁷ Peripheral locations such as this were commonly used as informal markets in Roman towns and cities, presumably because of their accessibility for those from the countryside to bring goods to the city to sell.⁴³⁸ Given the location of the Porta Esquilina and the connections provided by the *via Labicana* and *via Tiburtina* to the southern and eastern hinterland of the city, and to the Apennines and Campania further afield, it is likely that the Porta Esquilina and *Forum Esquilinum* were important locations which received goods being transported from those areas by road.⁴³⁹

Although the majority of long-distance trading was carried out by maritime routes and would have arrived in the city via docks along the Tiber, road routes were also vital to supplying the city of Rome with perishable, and luxury items.⁴⁴⁰ Major imports to Rome from these regions are known to have included perishable goods, particularly food and fresh produce such as vegetables, fruit, flowers and dairy products,⁴⁴¹ since many of the agricultural areas located close to Rome were increasingly given over to producing luxury perishable goods for sale in the city.⁴⁴² Livestock may also have been brought into this area and sold before being butchered, as the Tibur region had longstanding relationships with transhumance routes,⁴⁴³ which complements epigraphical evidence that attests to the presence of a butcher, and a clothes dealer who list their professions and their residence in the Esquiline region.⁴⁴⁴

⁴³⁷ Appian, *Civil War*: 1.58; *CIL* VI.2223, 9179, 9180.

⁴³⁸ Morley 1996: 166-74; Cato *Agr.* 135; Livy 7.15.13.

⁴³⁹ Holleran 2012: 165; Morley 1996: 174 – Rome features on lists of the locations of *nundinae* markets from first century C.E. Campania, confirming it was part of the commercial life of this region.

⁴⁴⁰ Morley 1996: 89; Laurence 1999: 99.

⁴⁴¹ Erdkamp 2013: 269; Malmberg & Björ 2011: 365; Wilson 2009: 760.

⁴⁴² Wilson 2009: 733-734.

⁴⁴³ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 366.

⁴⁴⁴ *CIL* I² 1268 & 1411. Neither of these inscriptions were discovered *in situ* and so they cannot be accurately dated, however both describe the deceased as being from the Grove of Libitina.

At a later date, timber from the Tibur region was extensively used in building programmes throughout the city, and would most likely have been brought into the city via the Porta Esquilina for building projects within the city itself.⁴⁴⁵ Such imports would also have been made during the Republic, although little trace remains of them in our evidence today. But reciprocally, items brought into the city via other routes such as by ship or overland from other directions would also have been traded at markets, for the use and consumption of those who live in this eastern area of the city and the hinterland beyond. The majority of this trade is invisible in the archaeological record because of the nature of the goods being traded, and because much of it may have been sold in informal settings such as market stalls. Nonetheless, we can assume that the area associated with the Porta Esquilina had increasing economic importance, commensurate with the growth of the urban population, over the course of the mid- and late Republic as is demonstrated by the construction of trading hubs such as the so-called *Macellum Liviae*. All of this archaeological, epigraphical and literary evidence suggests that this economic significance gave the gate a role as a key node not only in the economy of the local area, but of the city as a whole.

The Transformation of the Esquiline in the Augustan Age.

By the end of the Republic, therefore, the Esquiline had already undergone a long and gradual process of change, and the situation was nowhere near as bleak as the scene painted by Horace would suggest.⁴⁴⁶ While some funerary monuments – generally high status, such as the *Casa Tonda* – remained in the Esquiline, the suburb was also a part of the life of the city, and although these associations of death and the funerary trade remained, they would not have dominated the perception of the region in daily life.⁴⁴⁷ The first century B.C.E., however, represented a turning point in the perception of the Esquiline as an area within the city due to an increasing volume of high-status buildings which included private residences, commercial buildings and infrastructural projects. The coincidence of this change with Augustus' principate also likely emphasised the changes being made in this region of the city,

⁴⁴⁵ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 367.

⁴⁴⁶ See above, pp.139-40, footnote 405.

⁴⁴⁷ Witcher 2013: 211.

especially through the direct patronage of Augustus and other members of the Imperial family, and that of his close circle of friends and supporters. The most obvious indicator of the change in the status of the Esquiline comes from the development of *horti* in the immediate vicinity of the Porta Esquilina. It is these luxurious, privately-owned estates that Horace alludes to in contrast to the previous landscape of the Esquiline, describing the area as having become “wholesome.”⁴⁴⁸ Although *horti* were not a new phenomenon on the outskirts of Rome, by this period their primary function had become less involved in productive farming, and more closely associated with private residential and leisure facilities.⁴⁴⁹ In the area of the Esquiline, such developments may have driven the changing pattern of land use, and actively reshaped the landscape to remove such features.

The *horti Maecenatis* is particularly relevant to the transformation of the Esquiline region as it is located only approximately 200m from the Porta Esquilina, and enjoyed a particularly high status as Maecenas was a close friend of Augustus. The *horti* was frequently host to the Emperor and his retinue, eventually passing into Augustus’ private property after the death of Maecenas in 8 B.C.E.⁴⁵⁰ Maecenas was able to substantially change the landscape of the Esquiline by re-landscaping the area and uniting lands on either side of the Republican wall.⁴⁵¹ One of the buildings of the *horti Maecenatis*, identified as a Nymphaeum by Fraioli, even cuts across the line of the Republican walls, and suggests that construction in this period was able to actively break the line of the walls. This *horti* also replaced areas that would once have been primarily used as a necropolis, and although some tombs, such as the so-called *Casa Tonda*, remained in the area, many of the lower status burials would have been completely lost in the changes to the landscape. Alternative burial areas such as the *via Salaria* necropolis saw an increase in the frequency of burials, as a result of the decreased number of burials possible in the Esquiline region.⁴⁵²

Although Maecenas’ status as a high-ranking individual close to Emperor Augustus may have given him permission to do so, the open destruction of this

⁴⁴⁸ Horace *Satires* 1.8.14-16.

⁴⁴⁹ Morley 1996: 92, 94; Mandich 2015: 93.

⁴⁵⁰ Coarelli 2007: 197.

⁴⁵¹ Fraioli 2012: 329.

⁴⁵² Bodel 2014: 184.

section of the city wall is symptomatic of change in the perception of Rome's urban defences; implying that they were no longer necessary to the defence of the city, and thus were able to be destroyed or built across. The lack of any recorded punitive response from either the Senate or Augustus underscores this, and highlights that while this seemingly contradicts the legal status of walls and gates as *res sanctae*, at times of perceived peace, and especially when the urban boundary already exceeded the limits of the fortifications, the importance of the walls could be diminished. Literary sources even make reference to the new uses of the former defences as a location for walking, entertainment and scholarly discussion, all of which were primarily associated with the elite.⁴⁵³ Both literally and symbolically, the demolition of the wall in this area unified the areas inside and outside the Republican walls which had once been distinctive, but had become less so as land-use and human activity in the area of the Porta Esquilina changed throughout the late Republic.

The creation of *horti* such as the *horti Maecenatis* changed the perception and experience of the Esquiline as a region, as well as the landscape, especially as it became associated with the imperial family. With far fewer funerary monuments in the area, and an increasing number of large buildings, of which surviving remains tend to be in brickwork, the Esquiline outside the gate must have looked and felt increasingly contiguous with the area inside it. The transformation would also have been affected by the changing use of the landscape, as the cessation of burials, cremations, and waste disposal in the area would doubtless have also had a notably positive impact on the sensory experience of the area. Other buildings contributed to the transformation of the area, such as Sulla's dedication of a temple of Hercules in the *Campus Esquilinus*, possibly a renovation of an existing cult site,⁴⁵⁴ demonstrating increased investment in the area in the first century B.C.E. It is particularly interesting that despite the context of the shrinking importance of the Republican wall as a feature and a boundary in the landscape of the Esquiline, that the Porta Esquilina was renovated during the Augustan era. The continuing importance of the gate as a monument, and its increased status through its

⁴⁵³ Horace *Satires* 1.8; Juvenal 5.153-5; Quintilian 12.10.74.

⁴⁵⁴ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 366; *CIL* VI.330 preserves an inscription relating to Hercules Victor. It is possible that the dedication was related to Sulla's victory in the area during the Civil war (Appian *Civil War* 1.58).

renovation, highlight the importance of the gate as a landmark within the city and a monument of the traditional boundary of the city.

The Porta Esquilina remained a very commercially active area in the Augustan period, catering to the increased demand that the expansion of the city's population created. Although the structure usually known as the *Macellum Liviae* is unlikely to have actually been an imperial construction associated with the dedication of Tiberius in 7 B.C.E.,⁴⁵⁵ there is evidence of *opus reticulatum* dating to the early first century C.E. that was then expanded into a larger *Macellum* complex 8900m² in area,⁴⁵⁶ within 100m of the Porta Esquilina.⁴⁵⁷ Although this structure post-dates the renovation of the Porta Esquilina, it may have been built on a site with pre-existing commercial use, perhaps formalising or replacing the *Forum Esquilinum*.⁴⁵⁸ The dedication carried out by Tiberius in 7 B.C.E. is much more likely to refer to the *Porticus Liviae*,⁴⁵⁹ a precinct located inside the Republican wall c.400m from the Porta Esquilina along the *clivus Suburanus*, constructed by either Augustus, Tiberius or Livia herself.⁴⁶⁰ With the inheritance of the *Horti Maecenatis* by Augustus in 8 B.C.E., following his regular visits there previously,⁴⁶¹ and Tiberius supposedly taking up residence in the *horti* after his return to Rome,⁴⁶² the combination of these sites would have resulted in the areas surrounding the Porta Esquilina being associated with the imperial family.

A compital shrine for the *lares augusti* c.300m from the Porta Esquilina,⁴⁶³ was dedicated in 10 B.C.E., which consisted of an inscribed marble altar and tuff podium.⁴⁶⁴ Its location on the *clivus Suburanus* and very close to the *Porticus Liviae* further reinforces the connections between this area

⁴⁵⁵ *DAR*: Entry 335. Haselberger et al. (2002) refute the assumption made in previous archaeology (E.G., Fraioli 2012: 330) that this complex should be associated with the dedication described in Cassius Dio 55.8. In that case the earliest potential reference to the *Macellum Liviae* comes from a 4th century inscription (*CIL* VI.1178). This stance has generally been accepted by subsequent scholarship (E.G. Malmberg & Björ 2011: 381-382).

⁴⁵⁶ *DAR*: Entry 335.

⁴⁵⁷ Fraioli 2012: 330.

⁴⁵⁸ In such late Republican contexts, the term *Forum* was often used to dedicate a particular commercial space, such as elsewhere in the city at the *Forum Boarium* or *Forum Holitorium*. Holleran 2012: 163.

⁴⁵⁹ Cassius Dio 55.8; *DAR*: Entry 335.

⁴⁶⁰ Haselberger et al. 2002: 204.

⁴⁶¹ Suetonius *Augustus* 72.2.

⁴⁶² Suetonius *Tiberius* 15.

⁴⁶³ Haselberger et al. 2002: 95.

⁴⁶⁴ Coarelli 2007: 193.

and the *genius* of the Imperial family. The first phase of the *nymphaeum* of Severus Alexander, also known as the *Trofei di Mario*, also likely dates to the Augustan period and changes to the water distribution system in this area.⁴⁶⁵ If it took on a monumental form like its successor, then it would have been highly visible from the Porta Esquilina, as it was located only 200m from the city gate.⁴⁶⁶ The widening of the road outside the Porta Esquilina, which after this point then branched into the *via Labicana-Praenestina* and *via Tiburtina*, may have created an informal plaza outside the gate, framed at either end by the Porta Esquilina and nymphaeum. This would have emphasised the scale of the Porta Esquilina on approach, and provided space for commercial activity to take place, and for waiting vehicles, porters and informal workers to gather. Travelling along the *clivus Suburanus* away from the city centre, repeated monuments related to Augustus' self and immediate family would have created a strong sense of the patronage of the imperial family. Such 're-programming' of existing urban nodes has been highlighted by Favro as a trend in Augustus' building programmes,⁴⁶⁷ and I propose that the area surrounding the Porta Esquilina, which has not previously been identified in scholarship, fell into this category. This would have especially boosted the status of the region and offered a stark contrast to the supposed degradation of the Esquiline in preceding centuries. The Republican city gate would likely have felt out of place with newer monumental buildings, and would have offered another excellent opportunity for patronage and monumental rejuvenation of the area, with particularly high visibility from the road.

In the later second century C.E., the Porta Esquilina functioned as a tax boundary for goods entering the city of Rome, as marked by a *cippus* which indicated that the gate was the location of this boundary.⁴⁶⁸ Whether this tax boundary can be said to preserve an older boundary has been more fully discussed in Chapter 2,⁴⁶⁹ but it has been proposed that this boundary was a restatement of a previous tax boundary dated to the Flavian period.⁴⁷⁰ Despite

⁴⁶⁵ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 376.

⁴⁶⁶ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 376; Tedeschi Grisanti 1977; *LTUR III* 351-2.

⁴⁶⁷ Favro 1996: 221.

⁴⁶⁸ *CIL VI*.31227.

⁴⁶⁹ See pp.41-42.

⁴⁷⁰ Palmer 1980: 217; Malmberg & Björ (2011: 374-5) argue that this, and related *cippi* (*CIL VI*.1016a-c) followed the same route as the earlier 1st century border, and so can be used to argue its location.

no evidence emerging, Palmer's argument that the Flavian tax border was a restatement of an earlier Augustan tax boundary has been widely adopted by scholarship.⁴⁷¹ As a result it has often been assumed that city gates would function as the tax 'checkpoint' at Rome, this would be very ineffective in Augustan Rome, considering the expanse of the city beyond the walls, and some of the taxes would have been levied at the point of sale rather than their entry into the city itself.⁴⁷² If we follow the academic consensus and assume an Augustan tax border at the Porta Esquilina, then the market complex would have been located outside this tax boundary. This would have been beneficial to traders, who would then not have to pay any additional taxes by bringing the goods through the boundary, and it is common to find warehouses and other storage facilities for goods such as wine located in peripheral locations that would perhaps have been outside the tax boundary elsewhere in the city.⁴⁷³ Similar clusters of city gate, peripheral *macella*, open space and a temple have also been identified at other Roman cities.⁴⁷⁴ However, our limited understanding of the tax systems of the time mean it is unclear who was expected to pay taxes; some taxes were not levied on items being transported for personal use,⁴⁷⁵ so customers may not have been expected to pay them, but wholesalers transporting goods to other areas of the city may have been.

If there was an Augustan era tax border at the Porta Esquilina, this would have had a significant effect on the experience of the gate, and especially the flow of traffic. While the gate may have served as a visible marker of the boundary, there also would have had to be supporting infrastructure for the collection of those taxes, whether this was simply in the form of tax collectors or if there was some sort of toll booth in the area approaching the gate.⁴⁷⁶ Any

⁴⁷¹ Palmer (1980: 217) rests this proposition on the idea that the Flavian tax boundary was linked to Vespasian and Titus' censorship and the restatement of the 14 administrative regions in 73-74 C.E., and that Augustus' censorship must have been used to establish the boundary in relation to the re-organisation of the urban administration into 14 regions. If this was the case, the use of the Porta Esquilina is very strange, considering it is well within the border of the Augustan administrative regions.

⁴⁷² Holleran 2012: 177. Pliny refers to a *portorium* on the sale of food/market goods, which would presumably have been charged at the point of purchase in *macella* or at auctions. We should not therefore assume that *portoria* necessarily were charged at gates at this time.

⁴⁷³ Patterson 2004: 93-4. Palmer 1980: 223-224 on wine depots in Rome.

⁴⁷⁴ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 377. Similar examples can be seen at Djemila, Timgad and Ostia.

⁴⁷⁵ Palmer 1980: 221.

⁴⁷⁶ N.B. If any such structure existed, one has not been identified in the archaeological record for the area. Nor have any *cippi* or similar notices which would announce that the gate was the location of an Augustan tax boundary, other than Palmer's argument for the second century C.E. *cippus*.

delays caused by tax inspections and traffic pausing to pay taxes would have potentially caused delays and build-ups of traffic along the roadway as goods vehicles and other means of transportation carrying goods had to negotiate this tax border. This would have created additional noise and activity around the gate, especially during the hours in which large vehicles were allowed to enter the city. However, even if the attribution of a tax boundary is incorrect as I have argued above, the gate would still have been a bottleneck through which much traffic related to trade passed, as it remained a major access route for traded goods. While traffic would have had less occasion to stop, the piazza area might still have been used for unloading and redistributing goods for onwards travel, and this would have contributed to a lot of movement and activity both through the gate and in the surrounding area. Markets and shops would also have attracted pedestrian traffic as the inhabitants of this area of the city came to buy produce and goods from these areas, and potentially a wider area of the city in order to access goods arriving at the markets in this region. Therefore, the area surrounding the Porta Esquilina in the Augustan age is perhaps best understood as a node,⁴⁷⁷ which was the focal point of this area of the city and a place of interaction between localised commercial activity, long distance trade, and the travel, transport and occupation of the urban elite to residences in the eastern periphery of the city.

The Renovation of the Porta Esquilina.

These changes provide the context for the Augustan renovation of the Porta Esquilina, and it is within this context that the renovation can be fully understood. The exact form of the Republican Porta Esquilina is unknown, but – as already outlined – its context made defensibility a key factor in the design of the gate, and its architectural form would have likely reflected this. This suggests a probable form with a single, relatively narrow archway, and mechanisms in place to close the gate, comparable with the Porta Viminalis and other contemporary Italian examples already described. Although the third century C.E. renovations associated with the Arch of Gallienus have complicated the archaeological evidence for the exact form of the Augustan era gate, general consensus now agrees that the standing remains of that Arch

⁴⁷⁷ For discussion on the concept of the node, see pp.24-25.

were originally constructed in the Augustan era as a renovation of the Porta Esquilina. The exact dating of the renovation is unclear, but on the grounds of its relationship to other archaeology in the area, and its architectural style, it has been proposed that the date is Augustan.⁴⁷⁸ Stylistically, the gate offers similarities to other Augustan era gate renovations known outside Rome such as the Porta Augusta in Nîmes.⁴⁷⁹ The presence of imperial investment in the *Porticus Liviae* and Augustus' inheritance of Maecenas' estates would potentially suggest a date in the later part of the Augustan principate in the period c.10 B.C.E. – 14 C.E., and if the Porta Esquilina was part of a programmatic renovation of Republican city gateways,⁴⁸⁰ then a later date within this range would be most likely.

This Augustan phase was originally triple-arched, with a central arch 7.16m wide which could easily accommodate two-way wheeled traffic, and two smaller flanking arches for pedestrian usage, each 3.45m wide (Figure 4.3 below).⁴⁸¹ This would facilitate a much easier flow of traffic, and would better correspond with the widening of the road as it left the gate which took place in a similar timeframe.⁴⁸² This widening the road would also create a 'plaza' like effect, heightening the impact of the gateway itself as a distinctive landmark, and would have allowed for stopping and pausing of traffic as it dealt with the potential tax checkpoint. This would have been exacerbated by other vehicles stopping while they waited to be allowed to enter the city at the appropriate times, or otherwise unloading goods to pack animals, porters or smaller carts that would have been able to move items onwards.

Proposed features of this Augustan renovation include the Corinthian order inset pilasters which are still evident today (Figure 4.4, below), and a horizontal entablature which may have included an inscription that was later

⁴⁷⁸ Coarelli 2007: 17, 195; Richardson 1992: 25, 303.

⁴⁷⁹ The relatively simple *opus quadrata* facing of both gates is visually similar, as is the use of squared pilasters flanking the central portion of the gateway.

⁴⁸⁰ Coarelli 1988: 49.

⁴⁸¹ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 373; Coarelli 2007: 195; Claridge 2010: 335; Fraioli 2012: 330.

⁴⁸² Malmberg & Björ 2011: 373; Bodel (1994: 45) follows Pinza's interpretation, which believes the widening of the road is 'pre-Augustan' and related to an earlier phase of levelling, but considers the widening of the road to be contemporary to the renovation of the gate. Based on the re-evaluation of the dating of the gate, therefore, I believe an Augustan date is more convincing for the extension of the road as well.

replaced during the third century rededication.⁴⁸³ The renovation of the gate is notable for its visual similarities to triumphal arches, with multiple passageways and the use of sculptural elements such as the inset pilasters and combination of cornice, frieze and architrave typical of high status architecture. It also lacks any distinctively 'defensive' or 'military' architectural characteristics such as flanking towers, an upper-storey with a walkway or surmounting tower, or any evidence of a system for closing the gate.⁴⁸⁴ The combination of these two factors suggest that the purpose of the gate was monumental, designed to signal the traditional boundary of the city and perhaps a contemporary tax boundary, rather than it having any defensive role in the landscape of the city.

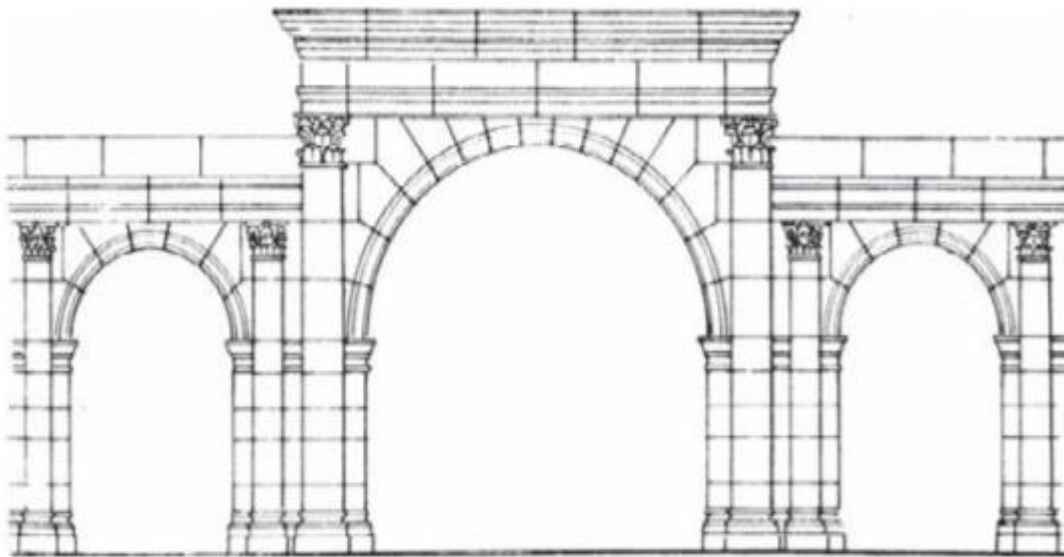


Figure 4.3 - Reconstruction of the original Augustan design of the Porta Esquilina/Arch of Gallienus (Coarelli 2007: Figure 53).

⁴⁸³ Claridge 2010: 335; Coarelli 2007: 195. The surviving dedicatory inscription is relevant to the rededication of the gate as the Arch of Gallienus, but Claridge and Coarelli have both proposed that this may have replaced an earlier dedicatory inscription.

⁴⁸⁴ Such features may have been lost, but based on the design of the gate it appears unlikely to have supported a significant upper storey. Excavations beneath the modern church of San Vito have also not turned up any evidence of foundations that could be associated with flanking towers contemporary to the Augustan renovation of the gate (Andrews & Bernard 2017).



Figure 4.4 - Standing remains of the Porta Esquilina/Arch of Gallienus (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porta_Esquilina).

The renovation of the Porta Esquilina to its new Augustan form, demonstrates clearly the shifting role of the gateway in the urban experience of Rome. The gate was no longer primarily intended to prevent access, but allowed for much easier movement through the gate and accommodated the increasing volume of wheeled traffic, animals and pedestrian traffic. Visually, the transformation of the gate would have surely created a more striking impression, especially given the resemblance of the gateway to a recognisably triumphal, or honorific form of archway established by the roughly contemporary Augustan arch in the *Forum Romanum*.⁴⁸⁵ The use of high-status building materials, such as the travertine employed here, would have created a bright, light-coloured surface which was highly visible and signalled the wealth of the patron and the expense they had incurred in the renovation,⁴⁸⁶ especially if we assume the previous iteration of the gate had been constructed in *Grotta Oscura* tuff like the majority of the fourth century B.C.E. wall circuit. The use of

⁴⁸⁵ Favro 1996: 184 (on the understanding of urban monuments by urban residents). See Holland 1946 on the proposed design of Augustus' 'Parthian' arch in the *Forum Romanum* based on coin depictions of that arch, which employs a central tall arch with two smaller flanking arches.

⁴⁸⁶ Favro 1996: 183.

travertine would also have tied the gate into the new landscapes of monumental buildings in Rome, where marble and travertine were increasingly employed as building materials for high-status public building projects.⁴⁸⁷ If the Augustan gateway did indeed include a dedicatory inscription, then it presumably carried the name of its dedicators (see *CIL* VI.1384 and VI.1385, below, for comparable dedicatory inscriptions). This would have associated the individual or individuals with the gate, meaning that it comprised a specific monument to their actions or positions which justified the construction of the new gateway. The size of the gateway was significant, and it would have been a highly prominent feature in the landscape as one travelled along the *clivus Suburanus*, or approached it from outside the city.

Considering its design, and the fact that the contemporary nymphaeum at the *Horti Maecenatis* actually broke through the line of the Republican wall, the purpose of the Augustan Porta Esquilina cannot be said to have been defensive. The gate would have been impractical to close and defend, and would have meant leaving a significant area of the city outside urban defences in the event of an attack. Nor can the purpose have been solely to improve the flow of traffic in the area, since although the design of the new gate would have done this, it would have been a far simpler solution to remove the redundant gate altogether rather than replace it with a new and expensive alternative. This therefore suggests that the gate had a continued function, or cultural significance in the landscape. The purpose of the gate's renovation was to continue to mark traditional boundaries within the city, which will be discussed in greater detail below. Although the gate itself was not an active agent in controlling or preventing traffic flow, since it could not be closed and we have no evidence of any gate-keepers whose responsibility it was to enforce restrictions on entry, it signified a boundary at which legislation and potential taxes could be enforced, if they were not already enforced further out of the city. The location of the gate on an area of newly widened road, and in alignment with an Augustan era fountain which was located beneath the later Nymphaeum of Severus Alexander,⁴⁸⁸ suggests the creation of an informal plaza space immediately outside the gate, which would have allowed a clear line of sight that

⁴⁸⁷ Lancaster & Ulrich 2014: 163-164; Davies 2014: 39.

⁴⁸⁸ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 376; Tedeschi Grisanti 1977; *LTUR III* 351-2.

emphasised the scale of the monument on its approach from outside the city emphasising its status as a boundary. This plaza space would also have allowed space for waiting vehicles and traders to gather, as well as local people and travellers using the fountain, creating a particularly busy urban node, of which the Porta Esquilina was a key landscape feature.

If we contrast the experience of the Porta Esquilina in the late Republic and that of the era after the gate's Augustan renovation, it is clear that not only has the gate itself changed, but so has the experience of this area of the city. In the Republican period, especially prior to the decree of Sentius, our sources reveal a landscape that was impacted by the funerary trade, cremations, burials and waste disposal. While by the late Republic, these activities had been moved away from this area, they still dominated its cultural conception. It would also have been a busy location for trade and traffic entering and leaving the city; a continuous feature of the Esquiline throughout its history which was heightened in the late Republic by the high volume of traffic combined with the relatively poor infrastructure of a narrow road and gateway that created a traffic bottleneck and would trigger delays. This, combined with crowds of pedestrians navigating this area, would have meant that key streets were especially busy and crowded during peak times of the day such as in the mornings and after people finished working. The Republican Esquiline was not only an area with negative visual associations – poor burials and waste disposal pits would have been very visually unappealing, and clearly lived long in the social memory of the area – but would also have been noisy and crowded. The combined noise and smells of crowds of people, animals pulling vehicles or transporting packs of goods, cremations, butchery and the disposal of waste could have created particularly potent and unpleasant experiences in the area, something which no doubt contributed to the area's poor reputation in late Republican literature.

Changes in the sensory experience of the Porta Esquilina would have been gradual, as residential and commercial life expanded out beyond the gate and activities such as burial, cremation and waste dumping were pushed further out away from these populated areas during the second and first century B.C.E. Other funerary areas such as the necropolis on the *via Salaria*, beyond the *Horti Sallustiani*, saw an increase in use during this period, suggesting that alternate

funerary sites were sought.⁴⁸⁹ Tombs dating from the late second century B.C.E. were also increasingly located further out on the eastern side of Rome at locations such as the area of the later Porta Maggiore, a monumentalised gate constructed of the arches of the *Aqua Claudia*.⁴⁹⁰ Legislation intended to move those practices away from the increasingly urbanised landscape of the Esquiline is symptomatic of the expansion of the city and the need for land use to change in order to remove undesirable practices, with their negative sensory consequences, from those areas. The comparative sensory effects of such activity also explain why seemingly related practices such as the continued use of mausolea and columbaria could continue in built-up areas, but informal disposal of waste and bodies would be undesirable, as the two had very different impacts on the sensory experience.

Commercial activity was evidently taking place in this region, as elsewhere at Rome, and the *Forum Esquilinum* may have served as a centre of trade and commerce, particularly for those goods arriving from the south and east of Rome already described. This would have manifested itself in traffic bringing goods, customers travelling to markets, shops, or street traders to buy them and the resultant noise and traffic. While the transformation of the *horti* would have had little impact on the volume of traffic entering the city through this node, it would have caused regular surges of traffic as elite households travelled between urban dwellings, peri-urban *horti* and suburban estates. The *Horti Maecenatis* would have had a particularly notable impact on the local traffic as it regularly played host to Augustus' household, which would have meant the transfer of a considerable number of slaves and the transport of any goods that the emperor required during his stay, which would have created an irregular flux in the traffic to the region. Widespread building in the city and particularly monumental building projects in the heart of Rome, such as in the

⁴⁸⁹ Bodel 2014: 184. While the distance between the *via Salaria* necropolis and the Esquiline means it is unlikely this increase in funerary activity was a direct result of the restriction of funerary activity in the Esquiline, it does indicate that there were changing patterns of use across time. It is most likely that funerary activity simply moved further out towards the east of Rome.

⁴⁹⁰ Coates-Stephens 2004: 18-19. This area has displayed a number of tomb monuments such as the Tomb of Eurysaces the baker, dating to the late Republican/early Augustan period (21), a tumulus rotunda opposite (34), *collegia* burials in *columbaria*, and simple burials marked by *cippi* (18-19), which are certainly of higher status than the supposed Esquiline *puticuli*. The chronology suggests there may have been a replacement of earlier funerary activity closer to the Porta Esquilina with these more peripheral areas.

Forum Romanum, and the Forum of Augustus which were both accessible via the *clivus Suburanus*, would also have created a flow of particularly large wheeled vehicles transporting building materials such as wood, travertine, sand, and lime for mortar, which were transported to the city from the regions near modern-day Tivoli,⁴⁹¹ along the *via Tiburtina*. A narrow, single archway therefore would have represented a considerable barrier to traffic during the Augustan era, especially to large vehicles transporting building materials that could have created additional delays to movement through the city as wheeled vehicles attempted to navigate the gate as an obstacle. This may have been one of the reasons that the new gate adopted a much larger design than traditional gateways, shaping the form of the renovated gate.

The newly renovated Porta Esquilina had a much larger central arch and would have facilitated easier traffic flow by combining this wide central arch with flanking pedestrian arches, although the imposition of taxes at the gate may have caused delays to wheeled traffic, porters and pack animals entering through the gate. The wide arches of the Augustan Porta Esquilina would also have created a wider field of vision along the axis of the road, meaning that travellers could see more of their route and the landscape ahead of them than was the case for a narrow gate. This in turn would create a greater sense of continuity and connection between either side of the monument and possibly meant that it represented a less obvious division of the city than its predecessor, especially as the landscapes inside and outside the gate had become far less distinct in the intervening time period. The light-coloured stone would also have made the gate especially visible, and its decorative features, which resembled styles used in other public architecture such as temples and basilicas, would have spoken to the importance of the gate. Compared to its late Republican reputation, the transformation of the Porta Esquilina and the landscape surrounding it, with improvements to the road and dedication of public buildings with imperial associations like the *Porticus Liviae*, and increasing association of the area with elite suburban estates and the additional construction of a new, monumental gateway, the impression of the area would have changed significantly. Now, the Porta Esquilina would have created an impression of

⁴⁹¹ DeLaine 2018: 483, 485.

wealth, grandeur and prestige for those travelling from the eastern side of the city into the *urbs* proper.

4.3 – The Porta Caelimontana.

The Development of the Porta Caelimontana to the Augustan Age.

For another of the gates of the Republican city wall renovated during Augustus' rule, the Porta Caelimontana, we have no surviving contemporary literary sources that discuss the transformation of either the gate or its surrounding area. The Porta Caelimontana, located in the south-east of Rome on the Caelian hill, is also referred to as the Arch of Dolabella and Silanus in modern scholarship because of the dedicatory inscription still surviving on the Augustan renovation (see below), since the two were associated by Colini in the 1940s.⁴⁹² The lack of contemporary written descriptions is most likely because the landscape changes here were less radical than those at the Porta Esquilina, and because the Caelian hill at this period was not home to the sorts of ultra-high-status residences of elite patrons that caused writers like Horace to write about the Esquiline. The change in the perceived social status of the area of the Porta Caelimontana would therefore have been less noteworthy for contemporary authors. However, the standing remains of the gateway and the archaeological record of the surrounding area can give an indication of the changes that the area underwent throughout the late Republic and Julio-Claudian periods. The archaeology also indicates that unlike the Esquiline's particular association with funerary activity and the disposal of waste, the area around the Porta Caelimontana had relatively few associations with specific trades or industries, meaning that less concentrated land use of one type made the area harder to characterise in relation to one phenomenon. However, as I will put forward here, there were strong associations between the area outside the Porta Caelimontana and the military administration of the city of Rome

⁴⁹² Colini 1944: 33-35. Earlier scholarship (E.G., Säflund 1932: 201-202) often identified this arch with having replaced the Porta Querquetulana, another Republican city gate known to be located somewhere on the Caelian hill. The strict identification of correct nomenclature for the gate that was renovated by Dolabella and Silanus in 10 C.E. has little impact on my enquiry, but I have chosen to follow current consensus and identify it as the Porta Caelimontana, and use that name to emphasise its continued role as a city gate rather than a newly constructed independent arch.

which continued and were even formalised in the Augustan period, which will be relevant to our discussion of the renovation of the Porta Caelimontana itself.

The geomorphology of the Caelian hill near the Porta Caelimontana, much like that surrounding the Porta Esquilina, makes clear the need for a defensive circuit in this area in this earlier period. An elongated plateau to the exterior of the Republican wall,⁴⁹³ would have provided a location for hostile troops to gather and attack. Despite the elevation of the hill, this plateau could still have presented a vulnerable point in the city's defences and so merited the construction of the Republican city wall around this area. We can assume that the defensive necessity of the original Republican gate, combined with the fact that no major road entered the city at this point would have resulted in the Republican gateway being a narrow, single-arched design with limited decoration. It would almost certainly have been constructed from *Grotta Oscura* tuff, as was used for the walls; some of which still survives surrounding the later Augustan gateway,⁴⁹⁴ indicating that the Augustan renovation used the same footprint as the Republican gate.

Literary sources documenting the expansion of the city relate that the Caelian hill was originally settled by the '*Querquetulani*,' an early Latin local tribe whose name may have derived from the heavily wooded nature of the hill which also gave it the antique name *mons Querquetulanus* (the hill of the oak trees).⁴⁹⁵ This correlates with the knowledge of the original landscape of the hill, which seems to have been rich in streams and watercourses as well as being heavily wooded in the proto-urban history of the city,⁴⁹⁶ and references exist to a sacred grove near the Porta Querquetulana, the other Republican wall gate located on this hill further to the north and west, that would disappear by the late Republic.⁴⁹⁷ Early burials dating to the seventh century B.C.E. on the outskirts of the Caelian hill near the likely location of the Porta Querquetulana indicate continuous habitation in this area of the city from that period, and additional tombs have been found along the *via Caelimontana* outside the line of the

⁴⁹³ Fatuci 2012: 344.

⁴⁹⁴ Claridge 2010: 348.

⁴⁹⁵ Fatuci 2012: 344-5. This information is most likely projected back by Roman historians, rather than being rooted in historical fact.

⁴⁹⁶ Fatuci 2012: 344-5.

⁴⁹⁷ Fatuci 2012: 344.

Republican city wall.⁴⁹⁸ This sort of funerary activity is typical of extra-mural areas in the city of Rome, but the Porta Caelimontana does not demonstrate the sorts of cultural connection with death and burial evident in the literary references to the Porta Esquilina already discussed. Recorded tile graves and a tuff sarcophagus dating to the Republican period found under the remains of the *Castra Peregrina* (c.200m from the Porta Caelimontana),⁴⁹⁹ suggest that the burials were associated with higher social classes than those that gave the Esquiline its negative reputation, but only represent a small sample.

The Porta Caelimontana is not associated with any major access routes to the city of Rome in terms of the wider regional road network, and instead long-distance travellers approaching the city from the south-east would be far more likely to approach by the *via Appia* which entered the city at the Porta Capena, to the south-west of the Porta Caelimontana. The Porta Querquetulana also appears to have been a more significant route for long-distance travel, based on remnants of the road network which suggest its connection to the *via Tusculana* inside the city and its continuation beyond. However, on a local level, the Porta Caelimontana did provide access for road travel into the city through the Republican walls and inevitably traffic would have entered and exited the city at this point, and many routes from the south and east of Rome could converge in this area.⁵⁰⁰ Several local routes met at a crossroads outside the Porta Caelimontana including branch routes that ran outside the Republican wall but connected to the roads that exited the city at the Porta Capena and Porta Querquetulana, as well as the suburbs outside the Porta Caelimontana (see Figure 4.5). Inside the city, the *clivus Scauri* led roughly west towards the valley of the *Circus Maximus*, while branch roads led towards the later site of the Colosseum, which was most likely heavily populated in the period before the fire of 64 C.E.⁵⁰¹

The Porta Caelimontana could thus be used to access key areas of the city such as the *Forum Romanum*, Palatine hill and the *Circus Maximus*, the last

⁴⁹⁸ Fatuci 2012: 345-6.

⁴⁹⁹ Haselberger et al 2002: 71

⁵⁰⁰ Holleran 2012: 167.

⁵⁰¹ Coarelli 2007: 159. While much of the archaeology of the area was destroyed by later fires, and the construction of large imperial residences (the *Domus Transitoria* and *Domus Aurea*) and later public sites (the Colosseum and Baths of Trajan, for example), several private homes have been identified as having been destroyed before this period.

of which would have particular impact on the volume of pedestrian traffic during days on which races were held. Therefore, the Porta Caelimontana could have offered an alternative route for travellers from the south-east and east of the city to enter and travel relatively directly into the heart of the city and supply shops and households in these areas directly. Locally transported goods such as perishable food – fruit, vegetables, dairy, and meat – could have been brought into the city in such ways to supply markets,⁵⁰² and the presence of warehouses on the Caelian hill suggests that, like most gateways, the area did play a significant role in the transport network for goods within the economy of the city.⁵⁰³ Thus, while the Porta Caelimontana may not have been a major gateway in the Republican wall, nor a major access point by the Augustan period, with the growth of the city's population and the volume of traffic that created, we can assume that this gate would still have been busy with the traffic of urban life.

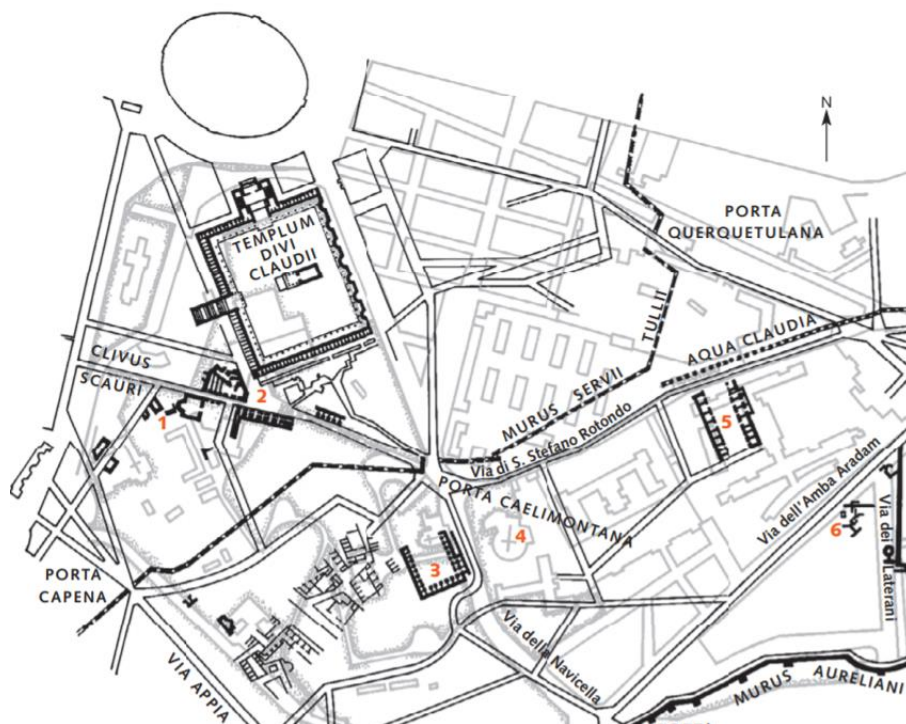


Figure 4.5 – Map of the Southern Caelian Hill (After Coarelli 2007: Figure 56). 1: Buildings near the Church of S. Gregorio. 2: Buildings under the Church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo. 3: **Fifth Cohort of the Vigiles**. 4: **Church of Santo Stefano Rotondo**. 5: Imperial Buildings. 6: Domus Faustae.

⁵⁰² Wilson 2009: 760.

⁵⁰³ Malmberg & Bjür 2011: 364; Richardson 1992: 25. The Caelian hill would later become the location for Nero's *Macellum Magnum*, highlighting its convenient location for access from trade (Holleran 2012: 167).

The area outside the Porta Caelimontana, known as the *Campus Martialis* (or *Campus Caelimontanus*) was used as a replacement for the *Campus Martius* when flooding rendered it unusable.⁵⁰⁴ This would have potentially included citizen assemblies being held for voting, conducting censuses,⁵⁰⁵ as well as the provision of *ludi* and public religious festivals such as the *Equirria*.⁵⁰⁶ Although irregular, such events would have called for the gathering of a large proportion of the population of the city, and probably initially took place in this location because it had open space that could be used to gather large crowds and facilitate religious rituals involving races. While Ovid only makes reference to the religious rituals which took place at the *Campus Martialis*,⁵⁰⁷ the *Campus Martius* was also used for voting assemblies and the assemblage and training of military troops during the Republic before the area became too built up. It is likely, that if the *Campus Martialis* was used as a replacement for the *Campus Martius* for religious ceremonies, then it would also be used for occasions such as these. The name itself, *Campus Martialis*, indicates some sort of connection between the site and Mars or the military. In the absence of evidence of a cult site to Mars in the area, it is probable that the name developed in reference to some sort of military usage of the *Campus* that took place regularly enough to trigger the connection between the site and the military.

The Porta Caelimontana in the Augustan Age.

Unfortunately, the Augustan topography of the area was heavily impacted by later building and events. Much of the Caelian hill was affected by fires in the first century C.E.,⁵⁰⁸ which destroyed buildings and has limited our knowledge of the archaeology of the area in the late Republic and early Imperial periods, so less can be said about the overall nature of the region in the Augustan period. The Republican wall and the Porta Caelimontana were particularly heavily disrupted by the construction of the Neronian *Aqua Claudia* which built over and

⁵⁰⁴ Ovid, *Fasti*. 3.517-22.

⁵⁰⁵ Fatuci 2012: 344-5.

⁵⁰⁶ Ovid, *Fasti*. 3.517-522; Festus 6.5; Haselberger et al. 2002: 73

⁵⁰⁷ This is due to the context of the passage, which relates to the *Equirria*, chariot races held in honour of Mars, and the wider work of the *Fasti* as a poem charting the religious calendar of Rome. There would be no reason to refer to other civic events in this context.

⁵⁰⁸ Coarelli 2007: 215. The fires referred to took place in 27 C.E. and 64 C.E.

across the Porta Caelimontana and incorporated the gateway into one of its supporting arches. This has meant that only a small section of the Augustan gateway is visible today, consisting of the archway and dedicatory inscription (*CIL* VI.1384), while the rest of the supporting structures and any upper level has been encased in the later brickwork (see Figure 4.6).

By the Late Antique period, the general character of the area, as it is recorded in the Regionary Catalogues for Rome, is of mixed urban usage and includes primarily housing (which is dominated by *insula* buildings rather than individual *domus*), and commercial and leisure buildings.⁵⁰⁹ Although this source records the land usage in the fourth century C.E., and many of the larger *domus* can be associated with a late imperial phase of development that saw the introduction of large private residences such as the *domus Symmachorum*,⁵¹⁰ this sort of mixed urban usage seems to be consistent with the archaeological evidence for the late Republic and Augustan era. The region was largely abandoned during Late Antiquity and the Medieval period, where its primary landmarks were several churches related to martyr burials such as San Giovanni and San Paolo.⁵¹¹ The majority of notable Roman monuments that can be attributed to the region, including the aqueducts and a Neronian nymphaeum, were constructed during the first century C.E.,⁵¹² and would come to dominate the landscape in this area of the city but were not features at the time of the renovation of the Porta Caelimontana.

As was the case at the Porta Esquilina, by the Augustan period, the Republican circuit wall had become obsolete as a defensive boundary to the city on the Caelian hill. Late Republican *insulae* had been built in the area outside the limit of the walls, and new streets and terracing had been constructed on the southern slopes of the Caelian hill to accommodate for the extension of habitation beyond the city wall.⁵¹³ The projected line of street layouts also suggest that the wall may have been destroyed in sections that allowed roads to travel through the line of the circuit without navigating via the

⁵⁰⁹ Fatuci 2012: 343. The Regionary Catalogues record 123 *domus*, 3550 *insulae*, 27 *horrea*, 15 bakeries, 85 baths and 65 fountains within the region as an entirety, suggesting a typically Roman mixed-usage of urban space that combined residential, commercial and leisure facilities.

⁵¹⁰ Coarelli 2007: 224.

⁵¹¹ Fatuci 2012: 342.

⁵¹² Fatuci 2012: 342; Coarelli 2007: 217.

⁵¹³ Fatuci 2012: 346.

gate,⁵¹⁴ further indicating the defensive irrelevance of the Republican wall by this period, and how closely integrated life in both intra- and extra-mural areas of the Caelian hill were. This also suggests that any tax border of the city, if one existed in the Augustan era, was unlikely to coincide with the city gates everywhere, otherwise such breaks in the walls would provide ideal opportunities to enter the city avoiding major gateways. As elsewhere in the city, this expansion was most likely the natural result of the growth of the city's population and the expansion of the occupied area that came as a result. Although the Caelian hill is not known to have been a high-status residential area, the Late Republic did see some high-status residential building, such as the house of Mamurra, a *praefectus fabrum* under Julius Caesar, which supposedly was the first Roman house clad entirely in marble.⁵¹⁵ Additionally, remains of glass mosaic fragments dated to the Julio-Claudian period found at the *nymphaeum* slightly north of the *Domus Faustae* further suggest the presence of luxurious private properties on the Caelian hill at the time, potentially associated with the Pisones and Laterani families.⁵¹⁶

During the Augustan era further construction saw new commercial buildings being built on the north-eastern side of the hill, outside the walls, including a *horreum* and a *taberna*.⁵¹⁷ Malmberg and Bjür have hypothesised that the *Campus Martialis* area beyond the gate may also have provided a location for informal markets such as *nundinae* and commercial activity that would not leave archaeological traces such as street-vendors.⁵¹⁸ Such locations would be particularly important for fresh produce entering the city from its southern and eastern hinterlands, as already outlined at the Porta Esquilina, and supplying the demands of the population of the Caelian hill for such items. This would lead to an increased association between the area of the *Campus* and commercial importance, especially for the local residents. Similarly, the convergence of the roads entering the city at the Porta Caelimontana would

⁵¹⁴ Fatuci 2012: 346.

⁵¹⁵ Coarelli 2007: 215; Pliny *Nat. His.* 36.7 As a later source, and given Mamurra's seeming unpopularity with many of the Roman senatorial elite (see Catullus *Poems* 29, 41, 56 for example), the description of the house may be exaggerated to insinuate wasteful luxury, but can be read as confirming that there was high-status residential building taking place on the Caelian at that time.

⁵¹⁶ Coarelli 2007: 225-226.

⁵¹⁷ Coarelli 2007: 225-226.

⁵¹⁸ Malmberg & Bjür 2011: 364. See also Morley 1996: 167 (on the role of the *nundinae* in urban markets), 170 (on the *nundinae* at Rome).

have created an informal plaza space, which could easily have played host to informal vendors selling food and goods to passers-by, which demonstrates that even this relatively minor city gate served as a node in the commercial life of the Caelian hill as an area within the city.

Perhaps the most notable of the Augustan era changes to the area of the Porta Caelimontana was the construction of a *statio* for one of the new cohorts of *vigiles*, located almost immediately outside the gate,⁵¹⁹ and the establishment of the site of the *Castra Peregrina*, on the other side of the road running south from the gate.⁵²⁰ The dating for both of these sites is disputed; although the *vigiles* were established by Augustus c.6 C.E., it is theorised that the original cohorts were not housed in specifically built barracks but lived separately until barracks were constructed in the early second century C.E.⁵²¹ However, the *vigiles* would still have required some sort of base in which to store their equipment, called an *excubitoria*, which would have been built in each region of the Augustan city c.6 C.E.,⁵²² and such locations were probably used as bases for the cohort while they were on duty. If one was located on the Caelian hill, then it would make sense for this *excubitoria* to be located in the same area as the later *statio*, meaning that the same site outside the Porta Caelimontana would have been connected with the *vigiles* since 6 B.C.E.

The *Castra Peregrina* was a military base in Rome, but crucially outside the *pomerium*, where troops could be housed, but little is known about what troops were stationed there and why. The remains of the *Castra* are located close to the site of S. Stefano Rotondo and would have been directly opposite the site of the *excubitoria/statio* of the *vigiles*, roughly 150m directly south of the Porta Caelimontana along the line of the south-bound road. While the dating of the *Castra* is disputed,⁵²³ earliest estimates based on the brickwork suggest an Augustan origin with subsequent renovations.⁵²⁴ The locations of both of these

⁵¹⁹ Fatuci 2012: 346; Rainbird 1986: 154, Fig 1b. This assumes that the evidence of location of the later Trajanic base approximately 150m south of the gate (Coarelli 2007: 224), reflects the original position of the *statio*.

⁵²⁰ Fatuci 2012: 346.

⁵²¹ Rainbird 1986: 156.

⁵²² Rainbird 1986: 156.

⁵²³ Second-century C.E. walls have been found at the site have been identified as the *Castra Peregrina*, earlier walls may be related to a much smaller camp (Richardson Jr. 1992: 78), a private property used as a billet (Baille Reynolds 1923: 159, 162), or unrelated (*DAR*: Entry 287).

⁵²⁴ Richardson Jr. 1992: 78.

sites would have put them within sight of the Porta Caelimontana in the Augustan period, and with a clear route of access. The location of the two, and especially the *Castra Peregrina*, in relation to the Porta Caelimontana is significant, since although the Republican wall no longer represented a defensive or administrative boundary, the *pomerium* forbade active troops being kept within that boundary of the city.⁵²⁵ Thus, the location of the *Castra Peregrina* potentially implies the continued importance of the *pomerium* as a traditional and religious boundary of the city, and the relevance of the line of the Republican wall as having marked the boundary of the *pomerium*. The location outside the Porta Caelimontana may also have been deliberately evocative of the site's previous role as the *Campus Martialis*, by continuing association between the site and military/civic organisations.

Although the *Campus Martialis*' role as a location for voting assemblies and military training would surely have been redundant by the Augustan period, with the creation of new fixed locations for assemblies such as the *Saepta Julia*,⁵²⁶ and the urban sprawl making the space no longer suitable for large gatherings, these traditional roles would still have impacted the popular memory associated with the space. The creation of the *Castra Peregrina* and the cohort of the *vigiles* would have served as visual reminders of Augustus' administrative changes in the city, but would also have introduced some localised demographic changes by increasing the population of young adult males, as the original *vigiles* cohorts were made up of freedmen, but slaves had previously been used for the same purpose under Augustus.⁵²⁷ Provision for the *vigiles* and the *Peregrini* might also have increased commercial activity in the area by increasing the population, who would have required food, clothing, personal items and would have likely frequented bars and brothels.

Finally, the *lares* shrine of a local vicus, dedicated in 2 B.C.E. was also located close to the Porta Caelimontana,⁵²⁸ potentially conceptually linking the gate with the *lares* of that vicus by their proximity. Since major visible landmarks

⁵²⁵ For comparison, the location of the *Castra Praetoria* also fell outside the traditional limit of the *pomerium* and this was ostensibly to uphold the sanctity of the city from having troops of the Praetorian guard actually garrisoned inside the *pomerium*.

⁵²⁶ Haselberger et al. 2002: 219.

⁵²⁷ Fuhrmann 2011: 217, 220.

⁵²⁸ Fatuci 2012: 346

such as city gates were often key parts of the ancient comprehension of urban space and navigation,⁵²⁹ the Porta Caelimontana may have therefore been associated with not only this *vicus*, but perhaps the identity of a wider area of the south-eastern Caelian hill. This is especially likely to have been the case given the lack of any other major monumental structures in this area at the time of the renovation of the Porta Caelimontana. The transformation of the urban and suburban landscapes seen here is very much in keeping with the steady urban expansion of Rome throughout the late Republic, and does not offer such a drastic change as that seen at the Porta Esquilina. However, this suburban expansion would have heightened the sense of continuity between intra- and extra-mural areas, and potentially intensified traffic pressures on the gate itself.

The Renovation of the Porta Caelimontana.

Having outlined the transformation of this area of the Caelian hill up to the end of the Augustan period, attention can now turn to the transformation of the gate itself. The renovation of the Porta Caelimontana can be precisely dated to 10 C.E. thanks to the dedicatory inscription which was added to the external face of the newly renovated archway (*CIL* VI.1384, below), which attributes its construction to the consuls of that year, Dolabella and Silanus.⁵³⁰ This resulted in the gate being frequently referred to as the Arch of Dolabella and Silanus in modern literature, but as previously outlined,⁵³¹ the arch is now understood to be analogous with the Porta Caelimontana, as an Augustan renovation of the earlier Republican gate. Traces of the Republican gate are still evident in the *Grotta Oscura* tuff, consistent with the construction of the fourth-century B.C.E. wall, which can still be found at the edges of the Augustan stonework of the gate.⁵³²

The ultimate design of the Augustan renovation is unclear, thanks to the later construction of the Neronian *Aqua Claudia* which incorporated the Porta Caelimontana into its substructures and has encased the gateway in later *opus Latericium*. However, the arch survives, along with the dedicatory inscription

⁵²⁹ See, for example, Terence's description of how directions might be given within the city (Terence, *Adelphi* 573-84), above p.123.

⁵³⁰ Claridge 2010: 348.

⁵³¹ Above, footnote 492.

⁵³² Fatuci 2012: 345.

and the surviving cornices at the base of the vault of the arch (see Figure 4.7). The Augustan gate was constructed of travertine, and the estimated height of the arch would have been approximately 6.5m tall.⁵³³ The most likely reconstruction of the design of the gate would be that it had a single arch; lateral arches are unlikely, since there is no surviving evidence of additional arches to the side of the gate. Furthermore, although the arch is relatively narrow, the alignment of the dedicatory inscription above the surviving arch makes certain that this was not a smaller flanking arch, but the primary arch of the gateway. Although Piranesi's later etching (below, Figure 4.6) does show a similar arch to the right of the Porta Caelimontana, the detailing of the stonework indicates that the two arches are of different materials and construction and are not part of one singular feature such as a city gate. Instead, the second arch shown in the Piranesi drawing is clearly a later construction associated with the boundary wall shown in the image. Such single-arched designs were common in Italian cities during the Republic, even with such tall archways,⁵³⁴ so while it may not mimic the form of the roughly contemporary Porta Esquilina, the Porta Caelimontana's renovated form was not unique. The remaining *Grotta Oscura* tuff suggests that the newly renovated Porta Caelimontana adopted the footprint of the previous arch and filled the same position in the Republican wall. Considering the relatively modest status of the surrounding area and comparatively limited traffic-flow that would be required to pass through the gate in comparison to the Porta Esquilina, such a form is completely in keeping with architectural styles and tradition. It is possible, even, that the Augustan era Porta Caelimontana replicated the basic architectural form of its Republican predecessor with a single-archway, but utilised more visually impressive materials and decorative features such as its inscription.

Despite the gate's relatively simple single-arched design, the change in the visual impact of the Augusta era Porta Caelimontana should not be underestimated. By reconstructing the gateway in large blocks of travertine, a stone which was often used in large-scale building projects because of its attractive colour and ability to be highly finished, the appearance of the gate

⁵³³ Claridge 2010: 348.

⁵³⁴ See above, pp.133-134.

would have been significantly improved. The use of the travertine would also signal the expenditure invested in the renovation as a relatively expensive building stone, and would have perhaps visually connected the Porta Caelimontana with other building projects and monuments making use of the stone, notably the Porta Esquilina. This use of similar building materials may indicate a programmatic approach to the renovation of these gates, but would also have contrasted the Porta Caelimontana with surrounding buildings which were mostly made of brick, which could then be plastered. The height of the gateway was also significant, as the reconstructed height of 6.5m would have been much taller than was required by the traffic passing through the gate, the majority of which would have travelled on foot or by cart. The use of the vertical axis in this way is commonplace in single-arched gateways, and would have resulted in a striking visual impact as the arch of the gate drew the eyeline upwards and emphasised a sense of scale. When viewed from the comparatively low angle of a pedestrian, or even mounted traveller, at the original street level, the gate would have been an imposing monument, albeit one that allowed free passage between extra- and intra-mural areas.

This monumental impression would have been emphasised by the addition of the dedicatory inscription on the external face of the Porta Caelimontana which listed the consuls Dolabella and Silanus as the dedicators of the new gateway. This inscription (below) details the names of the two dedicators, Dolabella and Silanus and gives their rank as consuls. The formula '*ex s[enatus] c[onsultum]*' designates the renovation of the gate as being the result of a senatorial edict, and credits the consuls with the creation and approval of the gateway. This indicates that the renovation of the gate was a very deliberate decision undertaken by the senate to replace the previous gate rather than remove it, and when combined with the evidence of other gates discussed in this chapter supports the idea that the renovation of multiple city gates was part of a systematic programme, which will be discussed in detail below. While honouring both of the dedicators as having held the position of consul, the inscription also records that Silanus held the position of *flamen martialis*, one of the most important priesthoods in Rome and one specifically related to the worship of Mars. This title may have been included purely to emphasise Silanus' importance as both consul and the holder of this priesthood,

but it would also have had particular importance considering the location of the gateway.



Figure 4.6 - The Porta Caelimontana (A) (Piranesi's 'View of the arch of the consuls Dolabella and Silanus enclosed within the Neronian arches of the Aqua Claudia,' from the series *Roman Antiquities (Le Antichità Romane)* 1756).



Figure 4.7 - Standing remains of the Porta Caelimontana, taken from the exterior of the gate. N.B. The modern height of the gateway is substantially reduced by later ground-level rise (https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porta_Celimontana).

The inscription would have faced towards the *Campus Martialis*, which on the basis of its name possibly had associations with Mars as well as historic military training and assemblage. With the addition of the *Castra Peregrina*, the military associations of the Caelian hill would have continued to be emphasised, and Silanus' title was likely deliberately used to draw connections between the *flamen martialis* and the military connections of the *Campus Martialis*. The position of the inscription on the exterior of the gate is also significant,⁵³⁵ as it places it on the outside of the *pomerium* to be read by those entering the *urbs* of the city. This, and use of the term '*curaverunt*' which indicates the care and restoration of an existing monument, would have added to the sense that the gate still marked a boundary of the city that was experienced by those living and travelling through the area. It also may have emphasised a sense of unity between the *Castra Peregrina* and the gate, conceptually linking the two physical landmarks, which would have further strengthened the idea that this location was connected with the military in the mind of the passer-by.

P CORNELIVS P F DOLABELLA COS
C IVNIVS C F SILANVS FLAMEN MARTIAL
EX S C
FACIVNDUM CVRAVERVNT IDEMQUE PROBAVERVNT

CIL VI.1384 (Dedicatory inscription of the Porta Caelimontana/Arch of Dolabella and Silanus).

It has been proposed that the Porta Caelimontana's renovation, along with that of the Porta Trigemina, was originally intended to serve an infrastructural purpose by carrying an aqueduct, which justified the creation of the monumental archways created here in the Augustan era.⁵³⁶ However, in the case of the latter this has already been dismissed on the grounds of the difficult angles that this would have created in the line of the aqueduct,⁵³⁷ and there is no surviving evidence for an earlier phase of arches for the *Aqua Claudia* in this area before the Neronian structures. Considering the renovation of the Porta Esquilina already discussed, which also served no infrastructural purpose, I do

⁵³⁵ There is no evidence for a matching inscription on the other side, since that side of the gate has been encased in the Neronian aqueduct.

⁵³⁶ Favro 1996: 160.

⁵³⁷ Favro 1996: 160-161.

not believe that an infrastructural purpose was necessary for the reconstruction of the Porta Caelimontana. Instead, the role of the gate was as a monumental marker of the religious and traditional boundary of the *urbs*, and particularly with relevance to the traditional limits of military activity represented by the *pomerium*, that would have contrasted the space inside and outside the gate. The creation of the new cohort of the *vigiles* and the *Castra Peregrina*, and the inscription of the Porta Caelimontana evoking senatorial involvement in the renovation, would have created a sense of imperial administrative involvement in the area of the Caelian hill. In an area generally without large-scale imperial building projects at this time, these buildings would have had a marked impact on the landscape of the Caelian hill. It is possible, even, that the renovation of the Porta Caelimontana was deliberately undertaken to improve the visual appearance of this area following the construction of the new bases for the *vigiles* and *Peregrini*, and to further demonstrate official intervention in the landscape of this urban node.

In comparison to the Porta Esquilina, the renovation of the Porta Caelimontana was humbler, and would have had less of an impact on the experience of the landscape surrounding the gate. Nonetheless, the changes to this gate would have impacted the landscape of the Caelian hill and especially the experience of entering or exiting the city through this gateway. The significant height of the gate, its highly-finished travertine façade and the dedicatory inscription above the arch would have drawn attention to the gate as an eye-catching landmark, and the tall narrow arch would have particularly drawn the eye-line along the route of the road. The construction of the new gate would have brought new attention to the traditional boundary established by the Republican walls, and its reconstruction would have restated the continued relevance of the boundary of the *urbs*. The scale of the gate would have clearly marked the Porta Caelimontana out as an important piece of architecture, and the dedicatory inscription made clear that this was a monument commissioned by the Senate and completed by the consuls themselves. As such, the Porta Caelimontana was a monument which signalled the continued prestige of the senate as an influence of the city of Rome, and specifically the wealth, achievements and generosity of Dolabella and Silanus as individuals.

Although the area surrounding the Porta Caelimontana did not undergo dramatic transformation in this time, the continued expansion of the city beyond the Republican wall may have been emphasised by the construction of a new monumental gateway, highlighting what changes were taking place in the landscape. Most significant for the Porta Caelimontana was the creation of the cohort of *vigiles* and their possible *excubitoria* in 6 C.E. and the construction of the *Castra Peregrina*. Both were closely geographically related to the Porta Caelimontana, and would have been additionally conceptually linked to the renovation of 10 C.E. by Silanus' evocation of his role as *flamen martialis*. The combination of these two sites and the Porta Caelimontana's renovation in a relatively close time-frame would inevitably have created a sense of connection between them, especially considering the deliberate use of Silanus' title as *flamen martialis*, that may have suggested this node had a particularly military character and history. It is unclear whether any military exercises would still have been carried out in the *Campus Martialis* by this period, as much of the area had now been built over, but the *Castra Peregrina* would surely have maintained the connection between the area and the military.

However, aside from an additional population of young adult males related to the *Castra Peregrina* and slave members of the *vigiles*, life in the area of the Caelian hill seems to have been relatively unaffected by changes in the Augustan period. The majority of buildings in this area are likely to have been a mixture of domestic and commercial use, although the mosaics found at a residential property suggest some high-status building in the extra-mural areas of the Caelian hill during the Augustan and early Imperial periods.⁵³⁸ This area of the city would have had an active commercial life including inns, informal markets, street vendors, workshops and artisans, as was common throughout the city of Rome. Such commerce would have resulted in traffic, with pedestrians, pack-animals, wheeled vehicles and porters travelling and transporting goods, who may have been forced to slow or stop as they travelled into the city through the Porta Caelimontana because its single-arch created a bottle-neck for wheeled vehicles. However, due to the fact that the Caelian hill was not a major economic hub in this period, lacking large scale markets or major transport routes through the city, we can assume that the volume of traffic

⁵³⁸ *DAR*: Entry 289.

was usually lower at the Porta Caelimontana than it would have been at the Porta Esquilina or Porta Trigemina. Therefore, the Porta Caelimontana would not have represented such a major impediment to the passage of traffic, but it may have been particularly busy on days when major races were being held at the *Circus Maximus*, for example.

The purpose of the renovation of the Porta Caelimontana was clearly monumental, the construction of the monumentalised form built in high-status stone, and dedicatory inscription would have created a more striking visual impact. The retention of the single-arched form of the gateway makes it clear that increased traffic flow cannot have been a major factor in the design of the renovated gate. Nor can defence have been the motivation behind the gate's renovation, as there is no evidence of a closure mechanism surviving in the gate's arch today, and the position of the gate in the Republican wall had been engulfed by extra-mural development throughout the first century B.C.E, meaning it would be highly impractical as a means of defending the city. Instead, once again the renovation of the Porta Caelimontana was a deliberately monumentalised renovation of the original Republican city gate, which served to add grandeur to one of the entrances to the traditional *urbs* and to emphasise the importance of that boundary.

4.4 – The Porta Trigemina.

The Location of the Porta Trigemina.

The Porta Trigemina was a city gate in the area of the *Forum Boarium*, near the Tiber, which is mainly known through literary references since it was likely destroyed in the 15th century. This gate has generated substantial debate in modern scholarship, and because of its lack of standing remains it is the least well-documented of the case studies discussed in this chapter. In spite of this, the exact location, architectural form and etymology of the gate have all been debated at length and many different theories have been created to reconcile the literary and archaeological evidence.⁵³⁹ The difficulty in precisely locating the gate stems partly from its destruction, and partly from the wider issue of

⁵³⁹ Wiseman (2021: 12-14) discusses many of the arguments that have been put forwards on the Porta Trigemina's etymology and location. Coarelli (1988) also provides an excellent summary.

tracing the route of the Republican city wall through the area between the Tiber, and the Aventine and Capitoline hills around the *Forum Boarium*. Multiple theories for the route of the walls have been put forwards, and the different routes would have implications for the locations of the three city gates that were recorded in this region; the Porta Trigemina, Porta Flumentana, and Porta Carmentalis. One theory proposes that the walls ran directly down from the Aventine and Capitoline hills to the banks of the Tiber, perpendicular to the river and using the river itself to complete the defensive circuit. This would place the Porta Trigemina, which is known to have been somewhere in a tract of wall between the base of the Aventine and the Tiber,⁵⁴⁰ on a roughly north-south alignment that could allow entrance and access to and from the extra-mural areas south of the Aventine hill along the Tiber.⁵⁴¹

However, the more popular current hypothesis on the route of the walls in this region has been put forward by Coarelli, and is informed by archaeological discoveries of *Grotta Oscura* tuff walls, that are consistent with the fourth century B.C.E. wall circuit elsewhere in the city, in multiple sites in the *Forum Boarium* area. These find spots can be connected to create a hypothetical route for the wall which would run from the Basilica of *Santa Sabina all'Aventino*, through the Basilica *Santa Maria in Cosmedin* and *Piazza Bocca della Verità*, to the junction of *San Nicola in Carcere* and the *Sant'Omobono* sacred area.⁵⁴² This would place the Republican wall parallel to the Tiber, fully closing the circuit of the wall and leaving a small strip of land outside the wall, between the wall and the Tiber river itself.⁵⁴³ In turn, this would dictate that the Porta Trigemina was aligned on an east-west axis within this wall, facing the river and providing direct access towards the small extra-mural strip of the city here, the river bank, and the river crossing at the *pons Sublicius*. Many nuanced interpretations have been raised which combine elements of these two different ideas about the route of the wall, (see Figure 4.8), and it is possible that different routes existed

⁵⁴⁰ Frontinus *Aq.* 5.9.

⁵⁴¹ Coarelli (1988: 14) summarises the pre-existing theories of the route of the walls before introducing his own later. This theory seems primarily based on the reasoning that this would be the most efficient means of 'closing' the circuit by using the river, and it would not be contradicted by the ancient textual references to the route of the wall in the area

⁵⁴² Bariviera 2012: 427; Coarelli 1988: 35-41.

⁵⁴³ Coarelli 1988: 14.

at different periods,⁵⁴⁴ but Coarelli's theoretical path of the wall running parallel to the river is now the most widely accepted as it relies on the archaeological evidence, where prior theories had been primarily based on the very scant literary references to the route of the wall. While it may seem counterintuitive to a modern view to build this stretch of wall, excluding such a narrow strip, I would highlight that the banks of the Tiber were not so reliably fixed at the time of the Republican wall's original construction, flooding would have been commonplace as well as changes to the river bank, and therefore it would have been practical to build the walls on the stable ground further from the river's edge, and to enclose the circuit rather than allowing the river to do so.

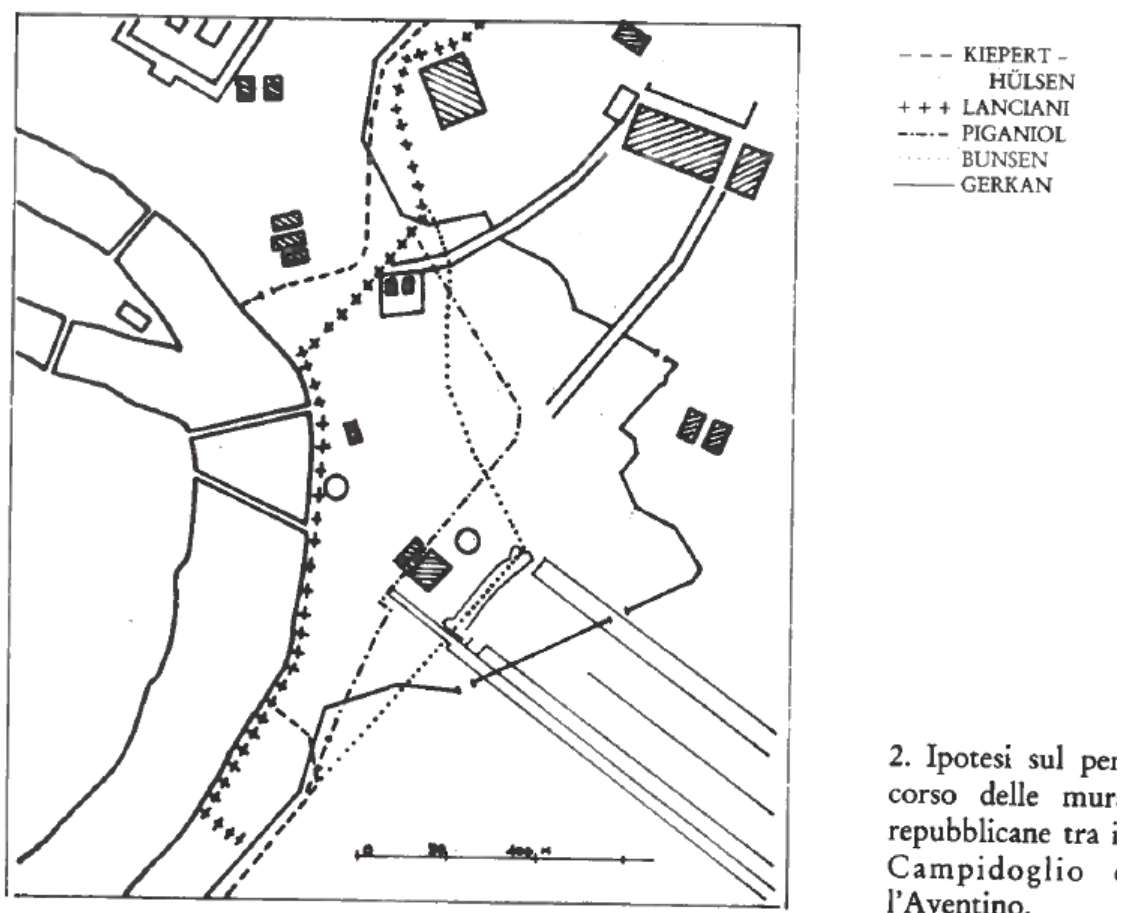


Figure 4.8 – Map of the Forum Boarium, showing different theoretical routes of the Republican wall (Coarelli 1988: Map 2).

Accepting Coarelli's proposed reconstruction of the route of the Republican wall, the location of the city gates within this wall must then be considered. Coarelli, inferring the location of the gates partly from

⁵⁴⁴ Wiseman 2021: 22.

archaeological remains (see below), and the routes of ancient roads through the area, has reasoned that the two ‘river facing’ gates – the Porta Flumentana and Porta Trigemina –⁵⁴⁵ would have aligned with the roads leading to the two Roman bridges in the area; the *pons Aemilianus* and *pons Sublicius*,⁵⁴⁶ provided that the route of these roads would not have changed majorly over time. Assuming that the Porta Trigemina would be the gate closest to the Aventine hill and would therefore align with the *pons Sublicius*, this would place the Porta Trigemina in the area of *S. Maria in Cosmedin*. This would then suggest that the gate spanned the *clivus Publicius*, a major route for wheeled traffic to and from the Aventine Hill, the *Forum Boarium* and routes across the river via the *pons Sublicius*.⁵⁴⁷ The location of the Porta Trigemina here, on a road leading roughly east-west, is supported by archaeological remains found at *S. Maria in Cosmedin* consisting of *opus quadrata* stonework only a few metres from a surviving tract of *Grotta Oscura* tuff wall remains found at the site that are on the same alignment, which have been proposed as a possible bastion of the Porta Trigemina.⁵⁴⁸

Additionally, an ‘arch’ was recorded at *S. Maria in Cosmedin* until the 15th century, when it was destroyed.⁵⁴⁹ This arch was associated with the dedicatory inscription (*CIL* VI.1385, below) that recorded a construction made by the consuls of 2 C.E., Lentulus and Crispinus.⁵⁵⁰ Based on the location of the arch and its coincidence with the proposed location of the Porta Trigemina, and the almost exact duplication of the inscription to the later dedication of the Porta Caelimontana (*CIL* VI.1384, above), Coarelli has suggested that this arch should best be understood as an Augustan renovation of the Porta Trigemina.⁵⁵¹ This has been widely accepted since, and the identification will form the basis of the discussion to follow. However, it is worth noting that alternative proposed locations for the Porta Trigemina would have relatively little impact on the

⁵⁴⁵ The Porta Carmentalis is associated with archaeological remains to the north of the Temple of Fortuna & Mater Matuta at the north end of the *Forum Boarium*. The standing remains commonly identified with the Porta Carmentalis are far more likely to be those of a portico which separated the *Forum Boarium* from the *Forum Holitorium* (*DAR*: Entry 171 & 198).

⁵⁴⁶ Coarelli 1988: 42.

⁵⁴⁷ Coarelli 1988: 42.

⁵⁴⁸ Bariviera 2012: 427.

⁵⁴⁹ *CIL* VI.1385 lists historical sources on the location of an arch at this location.

⁵⁵⁰ Coarelli 1988: 42; *CIL* VI.1385.

⁵⁵¹ Coarelli 1988: 45.

discussion to follow, since they would all still be located in a similar area between the Aventine, the Tiber and the *Forum Boarium*, and intersect with similar parts of the road network. For instance, the location proposed by Haselberger for the Mapping Augustan Rome project suggests that the Porta Trigemina was located in a short section of the wall that ran towards the Tiber before it turned and ran parallel to the river.⁵⁵² Although this would have impacted the direction of travel through the gate, and the views directly through the gate's arch, it would not have notably changed the types of human activity taking place in the areas around the gate, nor the sort of traffic that would have used the gate and key local destinations that a traveller might be coming to or from.

The Evolution of the *Forum Boarium* to the Augustan Age.

Regardless of the precise orientation of the Porta Trigemina, its location near the *Forum Boarium* placed it at one of the busiest areas of the city, and one of increasing monumentality throughout the late Republican period. There would have been a very high volume of traffic here as a result of its critical position in the transport networks of Roman Italy, which had made the *Forum Boarium* an important commercial area since the archaic period. The very name, *Forum Boarium* (Cattle Market) suggests its commercial associations with livestock, as well as the myth of Hercules, Cacus, and the cattle of Geryon that supposedly took place in this area.⁵⁵³ Likewise the nearby *Forum Holitorium* was named after its traditional role as a vegetable market,⁵⁵⁴ reinforcing the importance of the area as a trading centre within Rome.

The *Forum Boarium*, and the bridges across the Tiber played a key role in road networks on a regional level, as it served as the first major crossing point of the Tiber upstream of river's mouth.⁵⁵⁵ As such, the *Forum Boarium* would have been the place that traffic travelling to, or arriving from, the hinterland to the west of Rome and the river Tiber, would have been able to

⁵⁵² Haselberger et al. 2002: 199 (Although the location of the Porta Trigemina on the Mapping Augustan Rome project's map demonstrates it to be on an alignment parallel to the river, the textual description acknowledges the multiple theories for its location).

⁵⁵³ Virgil *Aeneid* 8.270; Livy 1.7.3.

⁵⁵⁴ Coarelli 2007: 313-14.

⁵⁵⁵ Coarelli 2007: 307.

enter the city. This would likely have meant road traffic transporting fresh produce such as fruit, vegetables, dairy and high-status goods entered the city from farms and productive villas in those regions. By the beginning of the empire the sheer scale of the city meant Rome was the major consumer of produce in this area of Italy,⁵⁵⁶ meaning such traffic would have increased in volume. The *Forum Boarium* also was a key area of the city in relation to the wider Italian road network. Major Italian regional roads, such as the main road connecting Etruria and Campania, and the route connecting Rome – and Italy more widely – with the salt marshes at the mouth of the Tiber, arrived in Rome at this point where it crossed the bridges, to be able to traverse the Tiber.⁵⁵⁷ Therefore, this area of the city was a hub of connections to short and long distance trade routes, and benefitted from the trading possibilities those connections brought.

Within the city, the *Forum Boarium* was able to connect these long-distance routes with the urban road network. This included roads accessing the Aventine hill, the Palatine hill and the valley of the *Circus Maximus*, meaning it was an area that could have been hugely busy with traffic. Routes such as the *clivus Publicius*, which lead from the *pons Sublicius*, through the *Forum Boarium* and up onto the Aventine hill probably would have been key links for travellers and goods entering and exiting the city to the north or west.⁵⁵⁸ It is highly likely that much of this traffic was commercial, as goods were transported from the hinterland of Rome throughout the city's history, using carts and pack animals; in its earliest phases livestock were probably even driven to market in the *Forum Boarium* itself, but this likely reduced over time. By the Augustan era the area had become increasingly monumentalised and a key religious area within the city. It is likely, especially with the development of the suburban area of the city in Trastevere, that livestock markets were less prevalent here as butchery, and especially slaughtering took place elsewhere, but the sale and distribution of produce very likely continued. Animals may also have been brought into this area in order to be sold and used as sacrifices at the many temples in the *Forum*. As the monumental and religious significance of the

⁵⁵⁶ Morley 1996: 89-90.

⁵⁵⁷ Coarelli 2007: 307.

⁵⁵⁸ Coarelli 1988: 29-30.

Forum Boarium increased, it is likely that trade in raw materials and produce declined, but that sellers of goods such as prepared food, and food and drink for use as offerings at the temples, took advantage of the crowds in this area.

The *Forum Boarium* is also crucial to Rome's commercial life because of its relationship to the river Tiber itself, which provided a critical means of transport for the necessary goods of the city such as grain, oil, salt, wine and many more imported items that were transported upriver from Ostia.⁵⁵⁹ The majority of the staple products that sustained Rome's population, such as the aforementioned, were shipped to Ostia and then transferred upriver to Rome by barge, before arriving in the heart of the city.⁵⁶⁰ The Tiber would also have provided a route for goods such as timber, bricks, tiles and fresh produce to be transported downriver from the interior of Italy.⁵⁶¹ Rome's river traffic was a major part of the commercial systems that sustained the city, and much of the supporting infrastructure can also be found in the areas immediately upstream and downstream of the *Forum Boarium* at the *Portus Tiberinus* and *Emporium*. These two docks would have been the locations at which the vast majority of the goods brought into Rome by river were unloaded and redistributed into warehouses and onto markets, shops or individual buyers. The *Portus Tiberinus*, believed to have been a port for the city, was situated slightly upriver of the *Forum Boarium*, although with the construction of the permanent bridges this must have become harder to reach for vessels travelling upstream, so perhaps primarily received goods brought from further up the Tiber.

The huge complex of warehouses and other commercial properties to the south of the *Forum Boarium* and the Aventine hill, known as the *Emporium*, was another of Rome's major dock sites. This site was home to the so-called *Porticus Aemilia*, a key Republican complex of warehouses that were the location that grain was collected and distributed for the *annona* in the Republican period, and the *Horrea Galbana*, another major late Republican warehouse building.⁵⁶² The *Emporium* is particularly relevant to the Porta

⁵⁵⁹ Erdkamp 2013: 269-271; Tuck 2013: 230.

⁵⁶⁰ Rice 2018: 205.

⁵⁶¹ Rice 2018: 200.

⁵⁶² Coarelli 2007: 315-16; *DAR*: Entry 271, 269. While the use of the *Porticus Aemilia* is uncertain, (it is almost certainly not a *porticus* in the true sense, and the name may have been wrongly applied to these structures – Tuck 2000: 178), its proposed use as a warehouse or commercial depot (Tuck 2000), is more likely than a ship-building complex as proposed by Cozza & Tucci (Cozza & Tucci 2006). Archaeological

Trigemina since it is referred to by Livy specifically using the formula “*ex portam trigeminam*.”⁵⁶³ Although the location of the archaeologically attested warehouses are not in fact immediately outside the Porta Trigemina in its proposed location, there may have been more informal commercial activity taking place throughout the area and much closer to the gate.⁵⁶⁴ Such formulaic uses of city gates as reference markers are common, and have been discussed more generally in Chapter 3.⁵⁶⁵ The conceptual link between the two reinforces our understanding of this area as a particularly busy commercial district, and that the gate dealt with a lot of traffic related to the *Emporium* such as carts, pack-animals and porters transporting goods to and from the *Emporium* into the city. The location of the Porta Trigemina in the area of the *Forum Boarium*, therefore, places it at the centre of Rome’s commercial life, and a particularly busy intersection between river and road networks that both brought produce and goods into and out of the city through this area. The *Forum Boarium* would have been a hugely busy area of the city, with a constant flow of different forms of traffic. This would have made this area, including the road leading through the Porta Trigemina, a very busy point in the city’s infrastructure and potentially creating a bottleneck that could delay or slow traffic.

The area surrounding the Porta Trigemina also had a particularly high concentration of major religious sites, with temples and shrines in the *Forum Boarium*, near the *Forum Holitorium*, and in the area between the *Circus Maximus* and the Porta Trigemina. Many of these had associations with particularly ancient deities, and especially Hercules, whose presence in the area of the *Forum Boarium* was linked to the myth of the theft of Geryon’s cattle in this area.⁵⁶⁶ By the Augustan era, Hercules was worshipped at multiple sites in the vicinity that had been constructed throughout the Republic. The most ancient of these was the *Ara Maxima*, a large cult altar dedicated to Hercules which was located just inside the proposed location of the Porta Trigemina at *S. Maria in Cosmedin*,⁵⁶⁷ which was supposedly a site already in use at the time of

investigations have highlighted how the building would have been very poorly designed to serve as a ship-shed, but cannot give clearer insight into the actual use of the structure (Arata & Felici 2011).

⁵⁶³ Livy 41.27.8.

⁵⁶⁴ Tuck 2000: 177.

⁵⁶⁵ See pp.122-123.

⁵⁶⁶ Livy 1.7.3; Virgil *Aeneid* 8.270.

⁵⁶⁷ Bariviera 2012: 430.

Rome's foundation.⁵⁶⁸ Likely reconstructed around 212 B.C.E.,⁵⁶⁹ a large podium in Anio tuff approximately 20x30m in size,⁵⁷⁰ would have served as the primary focus of the site, possibly in the style of a grand Hellenistic altar. If it was indeed located just inside the gate, the two would have been very closely linked in the conceptual geography of the city, as well as adding to the volume of traffic using the gate. Sacrifices and offerings in particular would have affected the sensory experience, with the smell of blood, burnt offerings and other sacrifices at the altar that would have permeated the experience of the Porta Trigemina.

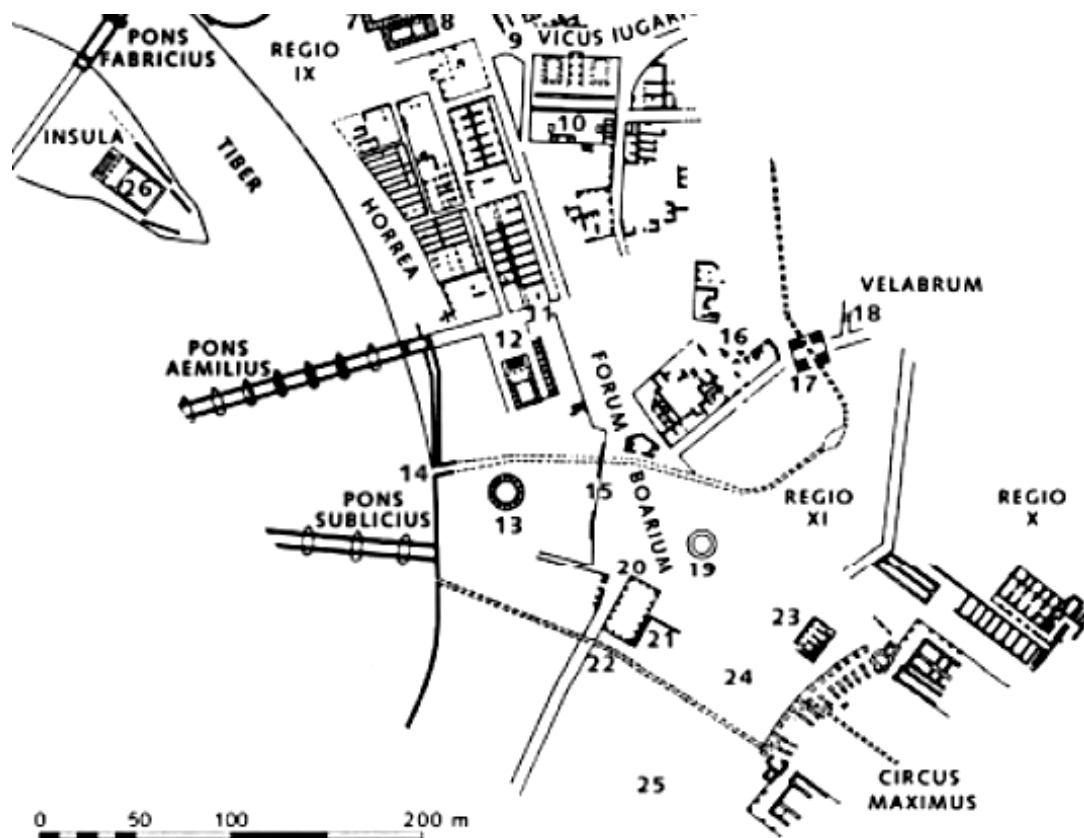


Figure 4.9 - Map of the Forum Boarium Area (Coarelli 2007: Figure 85). Sites referenced in text: 10, the Temples of Fortuna & Mater Matuta, 12, Temple of Portunus, 13 Temple of Hercules Victor, 19 Temple of Hercules Aemilianus, 21 The Ara Maxima, 22 **The Porta Trigemina**, 23 Temple of Ceres, 24 Temple of Hercules Pompeianus.

⁵⁶⁸ Coarelli 2007: 308. While the literary references to the antiquity of the site cannot be verified, the fact it was reported to be so ancient does indicate that it was a very old cult site.

⁵⁶⁹ Coarelli 2007: 309. A fire destroyed much of the area outside the walls in the *Forum Boarium*, and many temples in the area were subsequently rebuilt. Although the *Ara Maxima* would have been located inside the wall, this phase of rebuilding may have triggered renovation here too.

⁵⁷⁰ Haselberger et al. 2002: 136; Coarelli 2007: 319.

Slightly to the south-east, between the *Ara Maxima* and the *Circus Maximus* was the Temple of Hercules ‘Pompeianus,’ so named after Pompey rebuilt or renovated the temple.⁵⁷¹ This temple has also been identified as the Temple of Hercules Invictus, and is recorded as having a rectangular plan, associated with ancient Etruscan temple designs.⁵⁷² This suggests that the original temple was of quite early origins, even if it was then renovated in the first century B.C.E. Its description as Etruscan indicates it was probably set on a high podium and would have been visually focused on the frontal view, with columns across the porch of the temple, stuccoed walls and decorative statuary on the roof.⁵⁷³ Another temple of Hercules is found to the north of the *Ara Maxima*, which is potentially the Temple of Hercules Aemilianus, dedicated by Scipio Aemilianus in 142 B.C.E.⁵⁷⁴ This temple was round, and included an Etruscan style colonnade around the outside, possibly the result of an Augustan era renovation.⁵⁷⁵ The renovation in Etruscan style may suggest that the patron was trying to emphasise traditional Italian religious architecture, although the *tholos* style of temple is generally a result of Hellenistic influence.

Finally, the cult focus of Hercules in the *Forum Boarium* was completed by the construction of the Temple of Hercules Invictus/Olivarius, dedicated at some point in the early first century B.C.E.⁵⁷⁶ This temple, constructed to the west of the other cult sites of Hercules, was originally built in Pentelic marble imported from Greece,⁵⁷⁷ and elevated above the ground level of the *Forum Boarium*,⁵⁷⁸ thus making a striking visual impression on the landscape of this area. The discovery of an inscribed statue base including the fragment “Olivarius” suggests that this temple was that dedicated by Marcus Octavius Herrenus – a wealthy merchant – to Hercules Olivarius, but may also be the

⁵⁷¹ Haselberger et al. 2002: 137.

⁵⁷² Vitruvius *de Arch*: 3.3.5; Coarelli 2007: 319; Haselberger et al. (2002: 137) highlight that it is not certain that the temple of Hercules Invictus and the so-called Hercules Pompeianus are the same temple but they do seem to have both been in this similar area.

⁵⁷³ Gates 2003: 310.

⁵⁷⁴ Haselberger et al. 2002: 216-17; Coarelli (2007: 319) is slightly more convinced by the attribution.

⁵⁷⁵ Haselberger et al. 2002: 216-17.

⁵⁷⁶ Coarelli 2007: 318.

⁵⁷⁷ Haselberger et al. 2002: 217.

⁵⁷⁸ Haselberger et al. 2002: 217.

Temple of Hercules Victor dedicated by L. Mummius, a prominent general of the mid-second century B.C.E.⁵⁷⁹

The development of this cluster of temples during the late Republic is due to Hercules' associations with victory, military prowess and male *virtus* in the Roman period.⁵⁸⁰ The combination of the religious associations of Hercules, and the fact that many of the temples dedicated in this area were dedicated 'ex *manubis*' (from the spoils of profitable and successful military campaigns) would further have cemented the region's status as an area of monumental display which charted the military success of Rome and notable generals. The concentration of this cluster of temples to Hercules within a compact area of the city would also have conceptually connected this area and the worship of Hercules. As a key city gate in this area and situated in clear eyeline of several of these temples, the Porta Trigemina would have been conceptually linked to this cluster of temples, but the node more generally would have directly been impacted by the resultant sensory experience. In addition to the sale of animals, food, drink and flowers for making offerings, the traffic of people visiting these temples – particularly on feast days – and the carrying out of the offerings would have influenced the sensory experience. This area would have been busy, and filled with noise and smells, including unpleasant ones such as burnt offerings and blood.

However, Hercules was not the only god worshipped in the *Forum Boarium*, and many other temples and shrines occupied this area, further concentrating the religious character and sensory experiences of this area surrounding the Porta Trigemina. The Temple of Portunus is located close to the river and the crossing of the *pons Aemilius* towards the northern end of the *Forum Boarium*, and can be dated archaeologically to the fourth/third centuries B.C.E. when the temple's high podium was constructed.⁵⁸¹ Portunus' associations were broad and included doors, keys, and livestock, but later came

⁵⁷⁹ Haselberger et al. 2002: 217. While Coarelli (1988) identifies it as the Temple of Hercules Olivarius, Ziolkowski (1988) prefers the interpretation that this temple should be identified as that of Hercules Invictus. In either case, it would have added a further temple related to Hercules in this region, creating a concentration of cult sites for that god within a small area. Although the deity's roles as Invictus/Olivarius would have resonated with slightly different audiences (with the latter having specific relevance to merchants and traders), both would have attracted sacrifices and dedications.

⁵⁸⁰ Siwicki 2021: 495.

⁵⁸¹ Haselberger et al. 2002: 208-210.

to be associated primarily with ports. This is particularly relevant to the location of the Temple, next to the Tiber and the *Forum Boarium* where river trade and livestock trade intersected. The Temple was reconstructed in the first century B.C.E., possibly following renovations in the early second century B.C.E.⁵⁸² The first century B.C.E. temple was rectilinear, with pseudoperipteral columns along the outside, and was mostly constructed of Anio tuff, but key components were highlighted in travertine.⁵⁸³ By the Augustan period, the rising ground level in the *Forum Boarium* meant that the Temple of Portunus no longer stood on such a high podium, but it was then complemented by the addition of statue bases dedicated to Gaius and Lucius Caesar,⁵⁸⁴ that would have added to the overall impact of the temple in the landscape.

At the extreme northern end of the *Forum Boarium*, a pair of temples, dedicated to Fortuna and Mater Matuta, share a single monumental podium, but both had separate altars and *cellae* for their worship.⁵⁸⁵ The origins of this site date back to the sixth-century B.C.E. construction of the archaic temples, but these were reconstructed post-212 B.C.E., when a fire destroyed many of the existing structures in the *Forum Boarium*.⁵⁸⁶ This phase saw the area repaved in Monteverde tuff, and rebuilt the relatively small temples ‘distyle in antis;’ with stone walls and a colonnaded front.⁵⁸⁷ Although these temples were more closely associated with the Porta Carmentalis than the Porta Trigemina, based on their proximity to the gate at that end of the *Forum Boarium*,⁵⁸⁸ they would have undoubtedly also contributed to the overall perception of the *Forum Boarium* as an area particularly associated with religious activity. Finally, the Augustan era saw the addition of a travertine altar in the central area of the *Forum Boarium*, along with the travertine base for a statue, which has been identified as a *lares* shrine.⁵⁸⁹ The inclusion of a shrine here to the *lares Augusti* would have introduced the celebration of the imperial *gens* to this historic

⁵⁸² Haselberger et al. 2002: 309.

⁵⁸³ Haselberger et al. 2002: 208-210.

⁵⁸⁴ Coarelli 1988: 51.

⁵⁸⁵ Haselberger et al. 2002: 127.

⁵⁸⁶ Coarelli 2007: 311-313.

⁵⁸⁷ Coarelli 2007: 311-313.

⁵⁸⁸ Haselberger et al. 2002: 127 – the two temples were described as being in the area between the Salinas and the Porta Carmentalis by Livy in his account of the fire of 212 B.C.E. which destroyed the temples (Livy 24.47.15-16).

⁵⁸⁹ Haselberger et al. 2002: 132.

religious landscape, and was likely a deliberate move to incorporate this new system of urban division and imperial worship into the area. This indicates the continued religious significance in this area in the Augustan period.

To understand the surroundings of the Porta Trigemina, the area inside the city gate must also be examined, which showed similar clustering of religious buildings which would have defined much of the experience of this area. Inside the Republican city walls, clustered around the west end of the *Circus Maximus* were a group of temples and shrines, very close to the *Ara Maxima*, Temple of Hercules 'Pompeianus' and the Porta Trigemina. These temples, dedicated to Flora, Luna, and Ceres, Liber and Libera have not been identified archaeologically but can be roughly located by textual references to their position at the northern end of the Aventine and near the *Circus Maximus's* starting gates.⁵⁹⁰ All three cults were historically associated with the plebeian class, especially the temple of Ceres which was known to be the location for distribution of bread to plebeians, and headquarters of the plebeian aediles.⁵⁹¹ Nothing is known of the archaeological remains of these temples but the Temple of Ceres is described as being 'Tuscan' in style,⁵⁹² with significant works of art housed within, including a bronze statue of the god.⁵⁹³ The design of the temple may have served to make it stand out even more, and appeal to the antiquity of the cult, compared with the more newly built or renovated temples of the *Forum Boarium*. However, Vitruvius also records that the Temple of Ceres had been destroyed by fire in 31 B.C.E.,⁵⁹⁴ and it seems not to have been repaired immediately as it was only rededicated in 17 C.E.,⁵⁹⁵ so at the time of the renovation of the Porta Trigemina, this may well have been only beginning reconstruction, or even inactive.

When considered as a corpus, these temples would have contributed to the *Forum Boarium* and adjacent areas extending towards the Circus Maximus

⁵⁹⁰ Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Roman Antiquities* 6.94.3 (locating the Temple of Ceres at this spot); Tacitus *Annals* 2.49 (co-locating the temple of Flora with the Temple of Ceres); Appian *Civil War* 1.78 (further locating the Temple of Luna as being next to the Temple of Ceres).

⁵⁹¹ Haselberger et al. 2002: 85.

⁵⁹² Vitruvius *De arch.* 3.3.5. This (used to describe the architectural style interchangeably named Tuscan/Etruscan) likely denotes a rectilinear temple with a high podium, deep porch, and wide eaves.

⁵⁹³ Pliny *Nat. His.* 34.15, 35.24; Strabo 8.6.23.

⁵⁹⁴ Pliny *Nat. His.* 34.15, 35.24; Strabo 8.6.23.

⁵⁹⁵ Tacitus *Annals* 2.49.

having particularly strong religious associations, even within a city as permeated by religion as Rome. In particular, the cluster of temples to Hercules in the *Forum Boarium* in very close proximity to the proposed location of the Porta Trigemina would have linked the gate and the worship of Hercules in various forms. Other public monuments in the *Forum Boarium* contributed to the display, such as the Column of Minucius, or the statue of an ox supposedly located in the *Forum*.⁵⁹⁶ Although not strictly manubial in character, honorific monuments such as these added to the overall sense of competitive display and the celebration of notable figures in the *Forum Boarium*. By the end of the Republic, the *Forum Boarium* had become a key location for competitive display as wealthy families made dedications that expressed both their piety and their success. Although everyday activity continued in this area, the built environment was now dominated by temples, shrines and statues. While open space remained that may have been used for a wide range of commercial or social purposes, the overall impression would have been shaped by the honorific monuments of the area. Augustus was no exception, having dedicated statues to honour his nephews Gaius and Lucius, as well as statues to Salus Publica, Concordia and Pax – which Coarelli also locates in the *Forum Boarium* – in 11 B.C.E.,⁵⁹⁷ adding to the monumental character of this urban node.

The Renovation of the Porta Trigemina.

The high volume of traffic which used the *Forum Boarium* as part of daily life for religious observances, travelling around the city, and engaging in trade would have made it a particularly appealing location for building projects, which could display the wealth and prestige of the patron to a large audience. In the context of this landscape, a single-arched Republican city wall gate would not only have been a significant bottleneck to traffic, but a monument that did not live up to the standards of the surrounding buildings. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the Porta Trigemina should be reconstructed in the Augustan period, complementing the restorations to temples and the additions of new statues and monumental features. Considering the prestige of the location and the surrounding buildings, any renovation of the Porta Trigemina would surely

⁵⁹⁶ Bariviera 2012: 426.

⁵⁹⁷ Coarelli 1988: 51; Coarelli 2007: 316; Cassius Dio 54.35.2.

be intended to improve the visual appearance of the gate and to provide a suitably impressive monumental entrance to the city to stand out among the surrounding landscape of monumental buildings.

It is unclear how the Porta Trigemina would have looked in the late Republic, as we have no contemporary descriptions or depictions that specify its appearance. It is even possible that the original Republican gate had been demolished, as Coarelli has suggested that the section of the city wall that once ran through the *Forum Boarium* may have been destroyed after the fires in the late third century B.C.E.⁵⁹⁸ The original Republican design would likely have been a single-arched gate, similar to the Porta Viminalis and other fourth century precedents already discussed. Although the name 'Trigemina' has been suggested to indicate a triple-arched design,⁵⁹⁹ this is highly unlikely for the fourth-century gate, as it would have been a very unusual design for that time period, and an impractical design for a defensive fortification. A single-arched gate would have hindered the flow of traffic through the area by the Augustan period, especially when we consider the high volume of traffic related to both riverine and road trade discussed above which would have used this gate as an entry/exit point for the city.

It is possible that the gate was altered in the intervening period to provide extra arches or widen the gate to allow easier traffic flow as the need increased, but there is no archaeological or literary evidence for such an intervention. If the 'postern' created by a break in the Republican wall further around the Aventine hill was indeed blocked off in the Augustan period,⁶⁰⁰ this would have further intensified the volume of traffic using the Porta Trigemina as a primary means of accessing and exiting the city in this area. As was the case at the Porta Esquilina, the simplest solution for easing the flow of traffic at the Porta Trigemina would surely have been to remove the gateway and widen the road, if necessary. If the city gates did serve as a tax boundary in this period, then

⁵⁹⁸ Coarelli (2007: 308-9) proposed that from that time onwards, after much of the area was damaged by fire it was likely that any urban defences of the city also encompassed the Transtiberim areas of the city and so would have made the previous line of the wall through the *Forum Boarium* redundant. It is unclear whether there would have been a demolition of the Republican wall, however, or what happened to the Porta Trigemina or other city gates in this region.

⁵⁹⁹ Wiseman (2021: 32, footnote 102) demonstrates how the triple-arched idea has been widely used in earlier scholarship.

⁶⁰⁰ Bariviera 2012: 432.

The inscription itself records the names and consulships of the dedicators Lentulus and Crispinus along with the formulaic information that the monument was the result of a senatorial edict. The similarity of the language to that of the Porta Caelimontana is undeniable, particularly in its last two lines which use an almost identical formula to express the consuls' responsibility for its construction and approval. Beyond the presence of the dedicatory inscription, we can say nothing else about the design of the renovated Porta Trigemina, since there is little archaeological evidence and no surviving depictions of the gate in later images. However, considering the location of the gate in the *Forum Boarium*, and the volume of traffic that was liable to use this gate, we can generalise that the renewed gate would probably have been large and monumental. Like the Porta Esquilina, the renovated Porta Trigemina may have comprised of multiple archways, or simply have enlarged the arch to allow for easier traffic flow. Considering the prestigious temples, statues and associations of the *Forum Boarium* with high status architecture and the legacy of those buildings, any addition to this area would surely have been equally high status in its use of materials and design.

Although we can say little about the specific impression that would have been created by the renovation of the Porta Trigemina, its new form would likely have made a striking monument of the gateway. Including the names and consular titles of Lentulus and Crispinus would have made this gate a monument to their achievements, much like the other monuments of the *Forum Boarium* preserved the achievements and prestige of their dedicators. The newly renovated gate would have fitted into the landscape of monumental buildings and statuary that dominated the area, transforming the marker of the traditional urban boundary into a monumental threshold that simultaneously divided and connected the intra- and extra-mural areas of the city. It is particularly notable that if the Republican wall and the gate had indeed been destroyed in the late third century and not rebuilt, the decision to rebuild an arch at the site of the gate in the Augustan period would have been an even more deliberate attempt to emphasise the importance of the previous gate location and to suggest continuity with the Republican city wall, which would imply a historical memory of its location. It is more likely that a standing gate indicated the site, but was replaced, possibly as part of a systematic approach to

renovating these major urban monuments, but certainly in order to better represent the entrance to the city in this important monumental setting.

4.5 – The Motivations for Gate Renovation in Augustan Rome.

These three examples of the renovation of Republican city wall gates during the Augustan age suggest deliberate changes in the form and function of the city gates which were intended to better suit their urban context during the Augustan era. Each of these city gates' renovations were reflections of transformation in their surrounding nodes over time, and the direct result of intervention by patrons who might wish to demonstrate euergetism at highly visible points in the landscape. However, the renovation of three such gates, including the relatively minor Porta Caelimontana, and the seemingly systematic dedicatory inscriptions employed at two of these gates, suggests there may have been a wider trend for the renovation of city gates. This raises the question of why Rome's Republican city gates might be renovated, considering their decreased relevance as a political or defensive boundary. As this chapter has shown, these renovated gates employed expensive, high-quality building materials such as travertine, carried inscriptions (in the case of the Porta Caelimontana and Porta Trigemina) and adopted features such as architraves and cornices that were commonly features of public, monumental architecture and have no military or defensive function. As a result of this, it can be concluded that the Augustan era city gates were much more visually impressive and monumental in their design than their Republican predecessors, but also that they were civic architecture rather than military architecture. The replacement or renovation of existing Republican buildings and monuments with new versions that used grander architectural forms, decorations and richer building materials, is highly typical of the public building programmes of Augustus and the Imperial family during the Augustan age.⁶⁰⁴

Building materials such as travertine, and features such as the cornices, architraves, inset columns and dedicatory inscriptions employed in the renovation of these city gates would have been well understood by a

⁶⁰⁴ Favro 1996: 221.

contemporary audience, as components of expensive and monumental building projects. These sorts of details and materials were commonly employed in projects such as temples, basilicas and other public spaces dedicated by private patrons. The most obvious visual similarity to a modern audience for these gate renovations are triumphal arches, which also employed the arch as a form of monument with decorative features such as dedicatory inscriptions and inset pilasters. Few examples of pre-Imperial triumphal arches survive, as the monument was not widely used, but the type as it would later be established commonly used a single or triple arched format. It seems obvious that there was a reciprocal influence between the designs of monumental city gates and triumphal and honorific arches, that gave both monuments shared visual characteristics.

By the end of Augustus' principate, triumphal arches and triumphs themselves had become restricted to Augustus and members of the Imperial family. It has been proposed that instead honorific arches – which could employ the same visual language of achievement and *virtus* – could have been adopted to continue the tradition of celebrating the achievements of notable figures without invoking the specific rites and privileges of a triumph.⁶⁰⁵ While triumphs were restricted to the Imperial family, Augustus promoted infrastructural projects as being a desirable and valued contribution to the city. As such, the renovation of city gates and other structures such as aqueduct arches may have been adapted into new monumental forms that celebrated the achievements of the dedicator as well as addressing infrastructural problems within the city, serving as a substitute for triumphal arches.⁶⁰⁶ These arches could be dedicated *ex senatus consultum*, suggesting that their renovation was prioritised and supported by the senate, and the renovations of the Porta Caelimontana and Porta Trigemina were explicitly stated to be so in their inscriptions. These inscriptions, listing the consuls as the dedicators, likely used the gates as a means to celebrate their achievements in their capacity as consuls for that year. Augustus' interest in redirecting elite patronage to major infrastructural projects such as aqueducts and road repairs would have made the renovation of the Republican city gates a prestigious architectural project for the consuls to

⁶⁰⁵ Wallace-Hadrill 1990: 146.

⁶⁰⁶ Favro 1996: 160.

undertake. It is unsurprising, therefore, that consuls may have taken this opportunity to publicly display their status and benefaction through the means of a gate renovation, and this offers one explanation for the monumental character of these gates. However, this chapter has demonstrated that the renovation of city gates did not always respond to infrastructural challenges, and the gates renovated at Rome cannot be definitively linked to expansions of the roadway that might have prompted their renovation. Instead, the motivation for renovating these gates may have been more monumental, and related to the definition of traditional boundaries within the city, which compelled the senate and the consuls to take action to define these boundaries. Such action may have come as a response to Augustus' alteration to administrative boundaries in the city in 7 B.C.E., either by conservatives within the senate, or as part of Augustus' systems of balancing radical changes with appeals to traditionalism.

To understand the reason behind the changes in form of the Augustan city gates compared to their Republican predecessors, the motivations that drove the construction of the gate and its design must be considered. At the simplest level, the Republican city wall gates were intended to serve a defensive purpose and to permit access for traffic that needed to enter and exit the city. The compromise between these two functions resulted in the relatively simple design of gates like the Porta Viminalis which were defensively strong, with only a single point of access and practical and imposing features such as towers that could support the defence of the gate. By the time of the Augustan renovations of the gates discussed in this chapter, the context of these gates within the city had changed dramatically. The Republican city wall was in considerable disrepair in many areas of the city, where it had been perforated by later streets to provide easier access, or built up against and across by private buildings, and the wall had been substantially exceeded by the area of continuous habitation due to the growth of the city and its population. Therefore, the city gates cannot be said to be relevant to the defence of the city in any realistic way.

The city also no longer required urban fortifications, or so was the carefully propagated message of the *Pax Augusta*, which furthered the idea that Rome was the capital of an empire, no longer a city-state, and so was able to rely upon its provinces for defence and would be under no imminent military

threat.⁶⁰⁷ High-status building projects were completed in areas that extended beyond the city's Republican defences and the official limits of the *urbs*, including the increasing status of the *horti* already outlined, and the overtly monumental transformation of the *Campus Martius* during the Augustan principate. Such projects would have reinforced the idea that the city was no longer dependent on its urban defences, and this idea was even more strongly promulgated by the Augustan administrative reforms of 7 B.C.E. which reorganised the city into 14 *regiones* which incorporated intra- and extra-mural areas of the city and often combined them to create the new *regiones*.⁶⁰⁸ With the Republican walls being obviously redundant for their original purpose of the defence of the city, so too was the defensive function of the city gates. As the city wall and gates had dictated much of the street network of the city, the gates still played an important role in allowing the movement of traffic through the wall on major thoroughfares. However, the availability of alternate routes into the city meant that the Augustan gate renovations were no longer the only means of accessing the urban area, so could not effectively control movement to even the portion of urban space within the wall's historic route. The absence of defence as a motive for the renovation of these city gates is particularly obvious considering across all of the examples discussed in this chapter, there is no evidence of typical defensive features such as closure mechanisms, or an upper storey from which a defence could be mounted. This clearly points to there having been an alternate purpose for the renovation of these gates.

One motive that has been proposed for the changes in design and scale of city gates in Roman cities generally around this period has been the demands placed upon urban infrastructure by increasing volumes of traffic, to which narrow single-arched city gates would have been a significant obstacle.⁶⁰⁹ The growth of Rome's population to around 1 million people by the Augustan age would have put immense pressure on the infrastructure of the city, especially those aspects which had been built in the past and were not designed to withstand such a volume. Narrow roads could prove difficult for high volumes of traffic to navigate, especially when including litters, carts, wagons

⁶⁰⁷ Favro 1996: 218.

⁶⁰⁸ Haselberger 2007: 224, 228.

⁶⁰⁹ Van Tilburg 2007: 85.

and pack animals. Repairs and improvements to aqueducts, sewers and roads were common features of the building programme of the Augustan era, many of them intended to increase the capacity of these systems, such as Agrippa's patronage of the city's water systems.⁶¹⁰ The urban population growth not only contributed to the expansion of the city beyond the Republican walls, but resulted in a far larger volume of traffic using the Republican city gates as more people and goods travelled to and from the city, both as residents and in order to supply the city's increased demand. With arches that could only allow the passage of one wheeled vehicle at a time, this would inevitably have created delays and build-up of queues at city gates during certain times of the day, such as at the tenth hour when large wheeled vehicles were permitted to enter the city.⁶¹¹ At gates like the Porta Esquilina, Porta Trigemina or Porta Capena – located on major arteries into the city – any narrow Republican city gateway would have been a particularly problematic impediment to the flow of traffic of people, animals, and vehicles along these major routes, potentially disrupting the systems which supplied the city with food, goods and materials.

The widening of major roads into the city allowed for easier traffic flow, and measures such as this can be seen in the Augustan age, along with the creation of the office of the *Cura Viarum*, which was intended to encourage senators to take responsibility for road repair and improvement.⁶¹² Augustus himself took this office in 20 B.C.E. in order to carry out improvements to the *via Flaminia*, demonstrating the importance of these infrastructural projects to the city's life, and the social prestige that Augustus wanted to associate with such projects. Unfortunately, if there was an Augustan gate renovation at Rome associated with the improvements to the *via Flaminia* there is no evidence of it,⁶¹³ so we cannot assume a direct relationship between improvements to, and widening of, roads and the renovation of their traditional gates at Rome. However, the designs of the renovated gates, as we have seen in the case of the Porta Esquilina, may have been intended to facilitate easier movement between the *urbs*, suburbs and hinterland of Rome. By providing a wide-central

⁶¹⁰ Bruun 2013: 301.

⁶¹¹ *Tabula Heracleensis* 14.

⁶¹² Favro 1996: 111-112.

⁶¹³ Augustus was however granted an exceptionally large arch replacing the Eastern city gate of Rimini, which marked the other end of the *via Flaminia*, in recognition of his care of the road system (*PECS s.v. Ariminum*).

arch which could permit multi-directional flow of wheeled traffic and separate arches that could be used by pedestrian traffic, the Augustan Porta Esquilina surely would have permitted much easier movement of traffic in busy times of the day.

However, as I have alluded to throughout this chapter, the free flow of traffic is an insufficient factor to explain why the gates themselves were renovated, even if it was a factor in their design. The simplest solution to Republican city gates causing an obstacle to traffic would have been to remove the gates altogether and allow free movement along the length of the roads that entered and exited the city. The renovation of these gates, therefore, points to them having played another role in the urban landscape that was significant enough to warrant their reconstruction rather than their demolition, and it has already been demonstrated this motive was not defence. Instead, I propose that it was felt necessary to preserve the location of the Republican city wall's gates, and so to continue to mark the boundaries of the *urbs* as it had been traditionally defined by the route of the walls and as it stood in Augustan law and religious practice.

One practical motive for maintaining this boundary would have been for taxation: a late second-century C.E. *cippus* indicates that the Porta Esquilina was at a boundary of the taxation zone for goods and materials entering Rome. It is unclear whether a similar system of taxation existed in the Augustan era, and what the route of any such boundary would have been.⁶¹⁴ Assuming that this boundary was extended over time, then any Augustan era tax boundary likely either was smaller than, or coincided with, the later boundary. It is also highly unlikely that any tax boundary would have been within the line of the Republican wall, as this area was densely built up and within the urban boundary by any definition of the city at the time. This would suggest that the Porta Esquilina was potentially located at a tax boundary, but this was not the case for all of the gates explored in this chapter. Certainly, the later tax boundaries extended further around the city of Rome, and the tax boundaries of the second century C.E. are largely believed to have coincided with the

⁶¹⁴ See pp.41-42, 150-152, for why this evidence cannot be easily applied to the Augustan period.

locations of gates of the later Aurelian walls substantially farther out of the city.⁶¹⁵

It can be assumed that having some sort of obvious visual feature that marked a tax boundary would be beneficial, but considering that a *cippus* was used as the marker of the boundary in the second century C.E. after the construction of the Porta Esquilina, it is very unlikely that this was one of the primary roles of the gate itself when it was reconstructed in the Augustan period. It would seem counter-intuitive to use such a small and comparatively low-visibility marker of the tax boundary when a larger and more obvious monument was available, if there was an existing connection between the Republican city wall gates and the tax boundary. The fact that several *cippi* related to this tax boundary and later ones were not located at city gates suggests that there was not a necessary correlation between the tax boundary and the location of Republican city gates, which is logical considering how much the city had extended beyond these gates in some areas, such as with the entire Transiberim region. The relationship between city gates and the tax boundary, at Rome at least, was therefore not a direct one, and not all city gates would have been the threshold for taxes. This means that the city gates would not all have been renovated in order to provide a marker for taxation boundaries.

Instead, I propose that the Augustan era gate renovations and their monumental designs were the result of a desire to mark the boundary of the *urbs* due to the ongoing cultural significance of that boundary. The *urbs*, distinguished from other areas of the city's peripheral development, was the area within the Republican walls and the *pomerium* – the city's religious boundary – during the Augustan period.⁶¹⁶ The legal and religious significance of the *pomerium* has been previously established by many works, and will not be discussed in full detail here,⁶¹⁷ but this boundary had longstanding significance to how the city of Rome was conceptualised. Its correlation with the

⁶¹⁵ Capanna 2012: 72; Palmer 1980: 219. It is unclear, therefore, why the proposed tax boundary at the Porta Esquilina would have been so much further in to the city in this area.

⁶¹⁶ Capanna 2012: 71. The Aventine hill is a curious exception to this at this time, as although the hill was included within the walls, it had been traditionally excluded from the *pomerium* and would remain so until the Claudian extension of the *pomerium* to include the Aventine hill.

⁶¹⁷ See pp.62-65.

Republican city wall in the majority of the city – excluding the Aventine hill which was only brought into the *pomerium* by Claudius' extension –⁶¹⁸ would have led the city wall to be perceived as an important religious and symbolic boundary of the city, of which city gates became the threshold. The status of the *pomerium* in the Augustan period is highly complex, as many of the historically important roles of this boundary seem to have been broken, for instance in the introduction of 'foreign' cult temples within the *pomerium*,⁶¹⁹ and the special privileges granted to Augustus that meant his powers were no longer limited by the *pomerium*.⁶²⁰

The administrative re-structuring of the city into the fourteen *regiones* has often been taken to supersede the relevance of the *pomerium* as a boundary within the city of Rome, but it remained important for religious ceremonies well beyond this period.⁶²¹ It could be theorised that Augustus extended the *pomerium* to match the extended boundaries of these regions, but there is no contemporary evidence of Augustus having officially extended the *pomerium*. Although Tacitus lists Augustus as having extended the *pomerium*, it is never mentioned in contemporary Augustan literature, the *res gestae*, or any archaeological evidence such as *cippi*, unlike later pomerial extensions, and so is almost certainly a later tradition used to elevate the status of such pomerial extensions.⁶²² It is unlikely that this was due to a disregard of the symbolic importance of the *pomerium*, since during the same period, the importance of the urban boundary as a religious concept is repeatedly underscored in contemporary sources, as has been discussed in Chapter 3.⁶²³ This implies that despite the contrast between the idea of a clearly defined *urbs* and the reality of the many complex, overlapping and often contradictory boundaries of Rome in

⁶¹⁸ Kneafsey 2017: 48; Capanna 2012: 71.

⁶¹⁹ Augustus created a Temple to Apollo at his own residence on the Palatine and cultivated close connections between himself and the deity (Haselberger 2007: 86; Favro 1996: 100, 110), and not only constructed the Temple of Mars Ultor – welcoming Mars who had traditionally been worshipped outside the *pomerium* – but also held games in his honour (Haselberger 2007: 200). For contrast, however, Augustus also expelled Egyptian cults from the *pomerium* citing the importance of excluding foreign cults from this zone (Favro 1996: 105), however this was likely heavily influenced by political motives to alienate Egypt and demonstrate his loyalty to Rome in contrast to Mark Anthony.

⁶²⁰ Hurllet 2011: 328.

⁶²¹ See pp.69-73, 74-83.

⁶²² Kneafsey 2017: 51-53.

⁶²³ See pp.60-70, 71-73.

the Augustan period, the *pomerium* and the route of the Republican walls remained a relevant concept in the understanding of the city.

While it may seem contradictory to reaffirm the importance of the Republican wall as a boundary by the reconstruction of city gates in the Augustan period, in a city in which it was becoming increasingly subsumed by other boundaries, this is not unusual for the building 'programme' and public messaging employed by Augustus, and the period more generally. A common feature of the Augustan era building programme, and many of Augustus' laws and public acts, was to simultaneously demonstrate respect and reverence for the city, its history, traditions, and institutions, while also adapting and often subverting those traditions in other ways. Augustan building projects, for example, tend to respect the existing street network, despite the difficulty these routes posed for transport and commercial traffic, and great importance was placed on the restoration of buildings and temples that had a connection to significant times and individuals in Roman history.⁶²⁴ The Augustan restructuring of the fourteen *regiones* of the city demonstrates little regard for existing urban boundaries such as the Republican wall, by creating *regiones* which stretch across the walls and unite intra- and extra-mural zones. However, Augustus also chose not to extend the limits of the *pomerium* to include the entirety of this new administrative system, despite this being a considered a prestigious achievement by later emperors, and attempts to attribute a pomerial extension to Augustus.⁶²⁵ This could be interpreted as a deliberate decision on Augustus' part to display adherence to the traditional *pomerium*, and so to not risk being perceived as breaking with tradition, thus making his administrative reforms seem less radical to those who might oppose them. The renovation of Republican city gates would clearly demonstrate the continued cultural

⁶²⁴ Favro 1990: 116.

⁶²⁵ Sulla, supposedly, extended the *pomerium* in the early first century B.C.E., creating precedent for later Emperors (however the only evidence of this comes from the later literary account of Aulus Gellius in the second century C.E. (Aulus Gellius XIII.13.4). Claudius was responsible for the first epigraphically attested extension of the *pomerium* (Koortbojian 2020: 6). This practice would continue at intervals under different emperors until Aurelian extended the *pomerium* in line with the new Aurelian walls in the third century C.E. Although there is some speculation that Augustus extended the *pomerium*, based on his inclusion in lists given by Tacitus, the lack of any other evidence of this expansion suggests that Augustus did not in fact extend the *pomerium*. See Kneafsey 2017: 51-3, for a summary of this debate.

importance of these monuments and the boundary they more generally represented, and may have been encouraged for this purpose.

Coarelli has proposed that the renovation of Republican city wall gates during the Augustan era was in fact part of a systematic renovation of these gates in grander and more monumental styles. In addition to the Porta Esquilina, Porta Caelimontana and Porta Trigemina, Coarelli has suggested that the inscription *CIL VI.878* is related to a renovation of the, now lost, Porta Flumentana.⁶²⁶ The presence of three city gates, the Porta Esquilina, Porta Caelimontana and Porta Trigemina, which were all renovated in more monumental materials and designs than their predecessors, and which were related to different urban contexts within the city does suggest that there was a trend for the renovation of these gateways in the Augustan period. The similarity of the inscriptions from the Porta Trigemina and Porta Caelimontana may imply that the renovation of the two was somehow connected to a senatorial initiative, but it is important to note they were constructed under different consuls, 8 years apart and in different areas of the city. However, if the senate (possibly with the influence of Augustus) had mandated the renovation of these gates as a programme, it is also highly natural that the Porta Trigemina might be prioritised over other less significant gates. As it occupied such a busy and intensely monumentalised area of the city it is a natural candidate for early renovation for both practical and monumental reasons, and the intervening years may have seen the renovation of other gates in the circuit in the south of the city before reaching the Porta Caelimontana. The fact that the Porta Caelimontana would not have been considered a major gate in terms of the importance of the road travelling through it, with comparatively low traffic and visibility, suggests that renovations were perhaps not limited to only the most visible and important of Rome's city gates, but that they could respond to localised developments at the node of the individual gate such as the military sites at the Porta Caelimontana. A concerted scheme of renovations under Augustus would give further credence to the idea that these city gates were intended to reaffirm and monumentalise the traditional boundary of the *urbs* and ensure that boundary retained a physical presence in the urban landscape.

⁶²⁶ Coarelli 1988: 48-50.

However, without evidence to suggest the Augustan era renovation of other Republican city wall gates in the city, it cannot be conclusively demonstrated that these renovations were part of a 'programme' to renovate all the city gates. There is, however, evidence of the construction of a portico which divided the *Forum Holitorium* and *Forum Boarium*, which possibly respected and monumentalised the location of the former Porta Carmentalis.⁶²⁷ This may further indicate that the historic boundary here was once again being monumentalised in a new form appropriate for the changed urban environment.

City gates were ideal monuments, because of their high visibility from the road in either direction of travel, which would draw the eye of an observer. Busy routes for the entry and exit of Roman towns and cities had long been used as a means of displaying the wealth and power of certain local families, especially through tombs which became increasingly monumental throughout the Republic. Approaches to Rome such as that of the *via Appia* were often lined with monuments that demonstrated the prestige of individual families, and could become key sites for competitive display through the patronage of monumental architecture.⁶²⁸ In the case of city gates, these monuments were able to also impress the idea of a boundary, by transecting the line of the road and marking the previous limit as defined by the Republican city wall. Gates were also ideal monuments of the urban boundary, since they were the thresholds of these boundaries, and the location in which people engaged most directly with those boundaries.

These urban gateways, therefore, maintained their former significance as a threshold in the urban landscape of Rome in the Augustan era. The visual impact of these Republican gateways was increased by their renovation at the Porta Esquilina, Porta Caelimontana and Porta Trigemina, creating more impressive monuments which employed the architectural language of public buildings to create monumental gateways, and detracted from the function of a gate as a barrier to access. These gates marked the transition between the suburbs and the *urbs*, and the resultant legal and religious status changes

⁶²⁷ The remains of this portico (*DAR*: Entry 171), are often mistaken for being the gate itself, but the parallel lines of arches are more suggestive of a portico than a gate, since a 'courtyard' gate would be deeply unusual in this area of Rome.

⁶²⁸ Patterson 2004: 98-99.

which were associated with the *urbs* and the *pomerium* as opposed to the area of the city defined by *continentia aedificia*. The Augustan gates, in their newly monumentalised forms, would have been a truly impressive representation of this boundary, and would easily be understood as defining the space even to those unfamiliar with the exact significance of the *pomerium*. Thus, the benefit of these renovations was not only infrastructural in allowing for easier flow of traffic into and out of the city, but demarcated the boundary of the *urbs* in a way that complemented the political messaging of Augustus and those around him.

The continued presence of these gateways would have appealed to the tradition of the city and the cultural importance of the wall as a historical boundary of Rome, which was believed to have been originally constructed by Servius Tullius. Their new appearance not only impressed the onlooker with their grandeur and the wealth required to construct them but made clear that defence was not a function of these gates. The Republican wall renovations of 87 B.C.E., in which the defensive purpose of the walls was once again resurrected, would have served as visual reminders of the internal division and conflict between Marius and Sulla. In stark contrast, the Augustan era gate renovations would have emphasised a sense of openness, prosperity and triumph. Any traveller crossing through the threshold represented by these gates would have recognised that the space on either side of the gate was being defined by the gateway, and been impressed by the scale, and visual impact, of these gateways as monuments in their own right to the patrons that constructed them. Such gates would have been in keeping with the idea of Rome as an imperial capital which was being cultivated in building projects of the Augustan era, and demonstrate clearly how city gates could be used as a monument to promote the prestige and power of the city while forgoing a defensive purpose.

Chapter 5: Gate Renovation in Roman Pompeii.

5.1 – Introduction.

This chapter will explore the renovation of two major city gates at Pompeii following the foundation of the Roman colony at the city in 80 B.C.E. These gates, the Porta Marina and Porta Ercolano, will be studied in comparison to the Porta Nola, a Pompeiian city gate which typified those gates at Pompeii that were not renovated. The renovated gates will be studied individually with consideration of their original forms, changes in their urban and social contexts between that time and their renovations, and considering the motivations behind their subsequent renovations. Finally, the evidence of these two case studies will be compared and contrasted, to explore what these examples tell us about the motivations behind gate renovations and the forms of these monuments between the first century B.C.E. and the first century C.E. The intention of these case studies is to provide comparison with the phenomenon of gate renovation at Rome during the Augustan period explored in Chapter 4. This comparison will enable me to explore whether gate renovations at Pompeii can be linked to similar processes of suburban development and the importance of monumentality on the urban boundary, how the forms of renovated gates compare to each other, and how context may explain some of the differences between such gates.

Pompeii has been chosen as a location for these case studies for two principal reasons; the preservation of archaeological remains at the site and high intensity of study of the site as a whole, and to provide comparison and contrast to the case studies at Rome from a smaller and less politically significant city that was not originally Roman. Pompeii's exceptional preservation and the long history of excavation at the site have meant that Pompeii's urban landscape is relatively well known, at least in its final stages before the eruption. This rich contextual background helps us to better understand the urban environment and types of social and economic activity taking place in the areas surrounding gates to allow for a fuller reconstruction of the gates' role in the landscape. Recent excavation projects such as the *via Consolare* Project and excavations in the Porta Ercolano suburb have been

particularly significant for boosting the knowledge of that area, helping to revise the chronology of the development of key buildings in that suburb.⁶²⁹ While the area surrounding the Porta Marina has not been studied in such comprehensive excavations, the focused studies of major buildings such as the Temple of Venus and the Sanctuary of Apollo, and the Pompeii Forum Project excavations have enabled me to synthesise the findings of these excavations to build a fuller picture of the area of the *via Marina*.⁶³⁰

The gates of Pompeii were originally excavated in the early nineteenth century, relatively early in the site's exploration.⁶³¹ As such, the gates have undergone significant weathering and degradation in the subsequent years which has meant that delicate features – such as the plasterwork found during initial excavations – have since disappeared or been degraded. The loss of potential decorative detailing makes it difficult to speculate on the overall visual impression given by these gates, but for the most part the structures themselves remain standing as they were excavated. The exceptions to this are the Porta Marina, sections of which had to be reconstructed after it was badly damaged by bombing during World War II, and the Porta Sarno, also damaged by Allied bombing.⁶³² Pre-war photographs, however, confirm that the reconstruction of the Porta Marina remains close to the design of the structure as it stood after excavation.⁶³³ On the balance of this and the many detailed architectural plans of the gate available, I have therefore judged that my overall conclusions will not be adversely affected by the reconstruction and have chosen to include the Porta Marina as a case study. Pompeii's remarkable preservation also means that all of the 7 city gates have survived, including those not renovated during the colony, creating a corpus against which the renovated gates can be compared.

⁶²⁹ San Francisco State University's 'Via Consolare Project' has also been invaluable in investigating sites on this road near the Porta Ercolano (Anderson et al. 2012, with annual published reports from 2007 – 2019 at Fasti Online), as has the 'Pompei, Porta Ercolano...' project headed by Sandra Zanella (Zanella et al. 2016).

⁶³⁰ The 'Pompeii Forum Project,' led by Larry Ball & John Dobbins has contributed enormously to the understanding of the history of this area of the city and the chronology of buildings (Ball & Dobbins 2013 & 2017).

⁶³¹ Foss 2007: 32. The walls were excavated in the early 1800s by French excavators funded by Queen Caroline of Naples, as part of an attempt to identify the limits of the city and archaeological site.

⁶³² Van der Graaff 2018: 62, 126.

⁶³³ See Figure 5.8, below, depicting the Porta Marina in 1927.

Whether Pompeii should be used as a representative example of Roman urbanism or not, has been debated, since Pompeii was originally an Etruscan/Samnite city and only became a Roman colony late in the city's history,⁶³⁴ but for the purposes of my thesis this actually serves as a useful counterpoint to Rome. Compared to the Imperial capital, a small city like Pompeii with pre-Roman origins is likely to be far more indicative of general trends in urbanism and culture in Roman Italy. The Pompeian gates offer an opportunity to explore how local influence impacted gate design, while the presence of similar trends in gate renovation and urban development suggest that such phenomena were not limited only to major cities like Rome. As such, Pompeii will complement the study of gate renovation at Rome, allow me to consider the implications of this for the cultural role of gates more widely, and offer an indication of the potential for further research on this subject at other Roman settlements across the Empire.

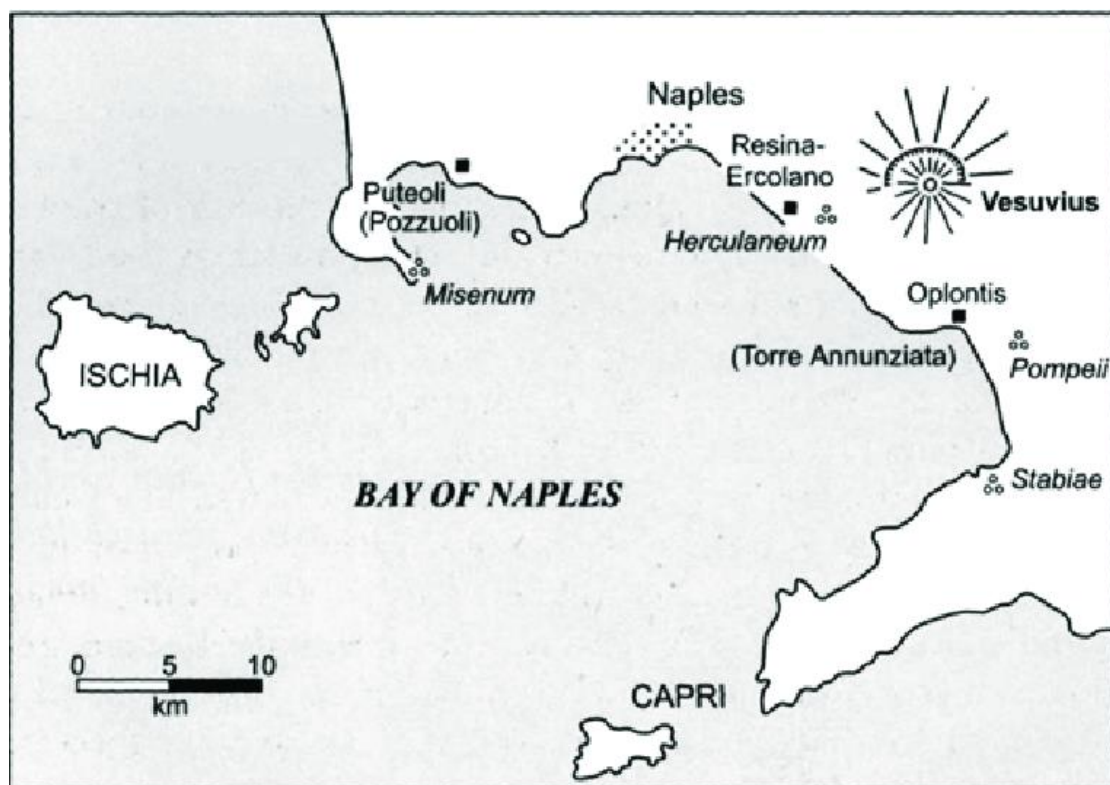


Figure 5.1 - Map of Pompeii and surrounding areas (After Tanner & Calvari 2012: Figure 9).

⁶³⁴ Laurence et al. (2011) for example suggest that all of Pompeii's 'Roman' features pre-dated the construction of the colony, depending on our definition of Roman, and so should not be understood as indicative of Roman urbanism.

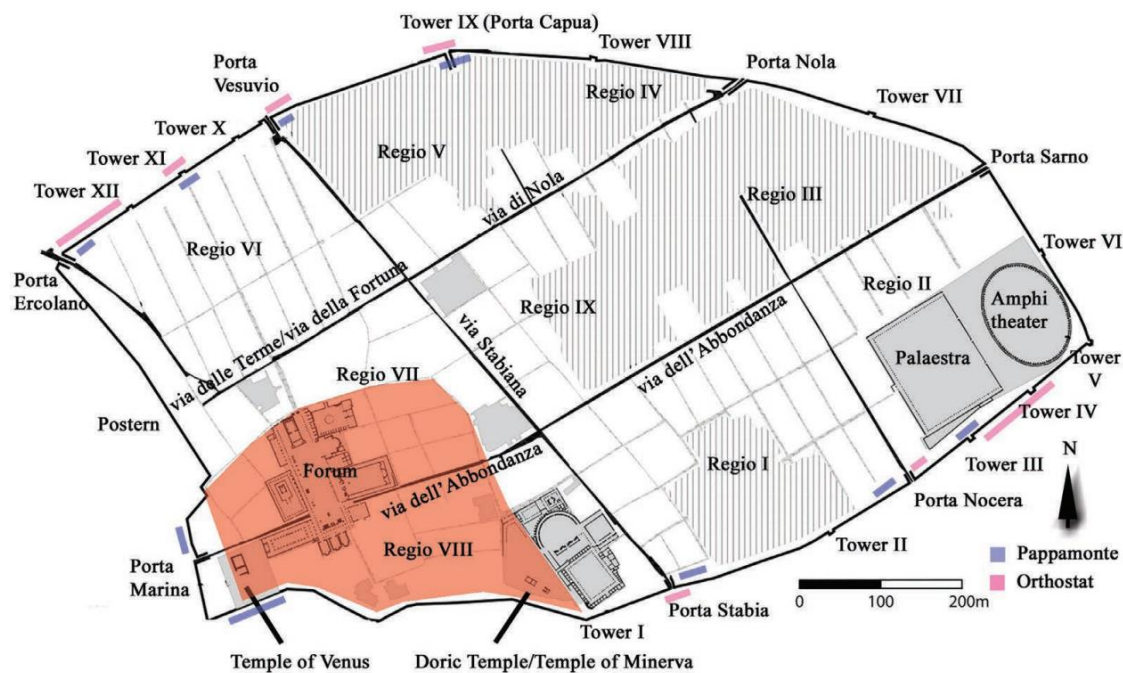


Figure 5.2 - Map of Pompeii showing location of walls & gates (Van der Graaff 2018: Plate 2).

Pompeii, a relatively small city located in the Bay of Naples, was settled from at least the sixth century B.C.E. and developed its earliest fortifications in the later stages of that century.⁶³⁵ This wall would have been able to protect the town from attackers considering the military technology of the period,⁶³⁶ and would have provided a symbolic and impressive marker of the urban limit of Pompeii.⁶³⁷ The so-called '*pappamonte*' city wall coincided roughly with the expansion of the city from its old centre, now *Regio VII*, to include the area to the north-west of the city which is now labelled *Regio VI*.⁶³⁸ Whether the expansion of the walled area, or the expansion of the built-up area of the city, came first is unclear from current archaeological knowledge, but it is now evident that the area of *Regio VI* did not lie empty once it had been fortified.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁵ Coarelli 2002: 46; Van der Graaff 2018: 2. See also Van Der Graaff (2018: 44-58) and Chiamonte (2007: 141-147) on the chronology of the walls' development. For purpose of wall construction see Van der Graaff 2018: 50, 90, 97

⁶³⁶ Van der Graaff 2018: 30.

⁶³⁷ Van der Graaff 2018: 33-34; Coarelli 2002: 47.

⁶³⁸ Coarelli 2002: 29.

⁶³⁹ Recent archaeological evidence from this period (see Coarelli 2002: 92) refutes the older hypothesis that the sixth century B.C.E. wall encircled a much larger area than was actually being used for residential or commercial activities at the time and that the area was only built up in the fourth century B.C.E. (E.G. De Caro 1985: 109). It is likely that while the building density was lower (Carafa 2007: 67-8),

Having become a federated Roman ally in 307 B.C.E. and following the siege of Nocera in 216 B.C.E., Pompeii's relative importance also grew, as it became an increasingly important port town and market centre for inland towns of Campania such as Nocera and Nola.⁶⁴⁰ This would have brought the growing city additional wealth through trade, attracted extra local and regional traffic for commerce, and heightened the status of Pompeii as an informal leading settlement in the area. Subsequent alterations to the city wall in the fourth, third and second centuries increased its height and width, and along with it that of the city gates. The second century B.C.E. saw the addition of 12 towers to the defences, which reinforced the existing wall and provided additional firing coverage. These towers are not spread evenly around the wall circuit, but cluster more on the northern and eastern sides of the city (see Figure 5.2), which were more vulnerable to attack.⁶⁴¹ None of the new towers were located at city gates, however. The addition of barrel-vaulted arches to the gates in the late second/early first century B.C.E.,⁶⁴² completed the 'tripartite' configuration of the pre-Roman city gates, typified by the Porta Nola. After the Roman conquest of the town, only two city gates underwent completed renovations. A renovation of the Porta Vesuvio was also begun, but not completed, and so it has not been included as a case study here. The survival of gates that have not been renovated allows for a case study charting the development of the Pompeiian wall and city gates before the Roman colony was founded.

The Porta Nola.

The Porta Nola, one of the best surviving gates at Pompeii, provides an excellent example of the history of the gates of Pompeii prior to 80 B.C.E., and demonstrates the architectural development that these gates underwent. The gates developed over a period from the sixth century B.C.E. to the first century C.E., and subsequent building phases which extended the city wall led to the extension of the city gates to add a 'court' or passageway within the structure, before the ultimate addition of arches in the final phases.⁶⁴³ The same basic

and the planning of the *Insula* and street grid only came in later stages (Geertman 2007: 87), the area was occupied and used for residential and commercial purposes from the beginning.

⁶⁴⁰ Zanker 2001: 32.

⁶⁴¹ Van der Graaff 2018: 66.

⁶⁴² Van der Graaff 2018: 71.

⁶⁴³ See Figure 5.3.

form was used at the Porta Sarno, Porta Nocera, Porta Vesuvio and a very similar one employing slightly different building stone was used at the Porta Stabia.⁶⁴⁴ The close similarities of these gates suggests that all Pompeiian gates conformed to a general type, and therefore the Porta Ercolano and Porta Marina would have been similar before their renovations. Therefore, this brief case study provides a valuable comparison, and starting point for the study of gate renovations at Pompeii.

The positions of the gates, having been established by the early city walls of the sixth- to fourth-centuries, were first marked by comparatively simple openings through the city wall which were protected by large travertine bastions.⁶⁴⁵ At the Porta Nola, these bastions and the subsequent gate are at an unusual angle to the rest of the city wall in this area (see Figure 5.3) suggesting that the road pre-dated the construction of the wall and this construction reconciled the angles of the two. The bastions, constructed of large ashlar of travertine masonry that had a yellowy appearance, probably originally housed a wooden gate system that could be opened and closed, but do not appear to have had any upper level (See Figures 5.4 & 5.5).⁶⁴⁶

The city wall underwent subsequent renovations and additions in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., the latter establishing the basis for the city's urban fortifications as they would survive until 79 C.E.⁶⁴⁷ These walls employed an earthwork, or *agger*, with retaining walls to the front and the rear,⁶⁴⁸ and increased the total height and width of the city wall which would have made it more effective for defensive purpose, but also more visually imposing. The extension of the *agger* prompted the extension of the gates themselves,⁶⁴⁹ creating a longer passageway. There is some debate concerning whether the surviving tuff masonry dated to this original extension,⁶⁵⁰ or a later renovation of

⁶⁴⁴ Van der Graaff 2018: 60. The standard pattern combined travertine bastions, tuff lining to the court walls, then a plastered *opus incertum* vault, see pp.213-14. The Porta Stabia by contrast features travertine 'court' walls in the gate structure, in contrast to the tuff of the 'court' walls at the other gates (Van der Graaff 2018: 58).

⁶⁴⁵ Van der Graaff 2018: 2; Chiaramonte 2007: 140-141.

⁶⁴⁶ Van der Graaff 2018: 56.

⁶⁴⁷ Coarelli 2002: 47-50; Van der Graaff 2018: 2, 44, 50.

⁶⁴⁸ Van der Graaff 2018: 44-45.

⁶⁴⁹ Van der Graaff 2018: 56-58.

⁶⁵⁰ Pesando & Guidobaldi 2006: 33.

the gates,⁶⁵¹ but in either case I would argue that the extension of the *agger* would have necessitated a longer gate. At the Porta Nola, this area of passageway is lined by brown tuff masonry, which would have visually contrasted with the travertine bastions in both colour and sizes of the blocks.⁶⁵² While this building phase cannot be exactly dated, it would have taken place between the fourth and second centuries B.C.E.

Maiuri has proposed that the tuff lined gate extensions were also complemented by the construction of tuff vaults,⁶⁵³ but there is little evidence to support this. At the Porta Nola, preserved tuff masonry in the piers of the vault may suggest an earlier tuff vault, but this may have been simply aesthetic.⁶⁵⁴ *Opus incertum* vaults were added to the gates later, most likely in the second-century B.C.E. Until this point, there has been no evidence of the gates having an upper level, and while the vaulted arch presented an upper limit to the gate, the majority of the Pompeiian gates' length was open to the sky. At the Porta Nola, this arch marked the internal end of the gate, (see Figure 5.3, below), as was typical for these arches. The Porta Vesuvio was an exception, where the arch was located at the exterior end of the gate, likely due to the particular development of that gate which had a more external emphasis in its design.⁶⁵⁵ The Porta Nola's arch was finished with plasterwork, consisting of an elevated yellow socle, receding to white for the upper part. The use of yellow may have sought to emulate the yellow of the travertine and bring visual harmony to the different elements of the gate, but the white in particular was a common element of plasterwork at Pompeii.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵¹ Van der Graaff (2018: 58) instead proposes the date for the tuff masonry should be understood as the first half of the second century B.C.E. and that it is contemporary with the *opus incertum* vaults.

⁶⁵² Van der Graaff 2018: 58.

⁶⁵³ Maiuri 1929: 218; *c.f.* Van der Graaff 2018: 58.

⁶⁵⁴ Van der Graaff 2018: 58.

⁶⁵⁵ The Porta Vesuvio was slightly set back from the curtain wall, possibly due to the vulnerability of its location at the bottom of a slope, creating a forecourt which was overlooked by the walls where attackers could be isolated and fired upon. This led to the positioning of the closure mechanisms at the outer edge of the bastions, unlike the other gates. The decision to place the arch at the exterior of the gate seems to follow this trend and marks the threshold represented here by the closure mechanism. Van der Graaff 2018: 54, 65-66.

⁶⁵⁶ Van der Graaff 2018: 70.

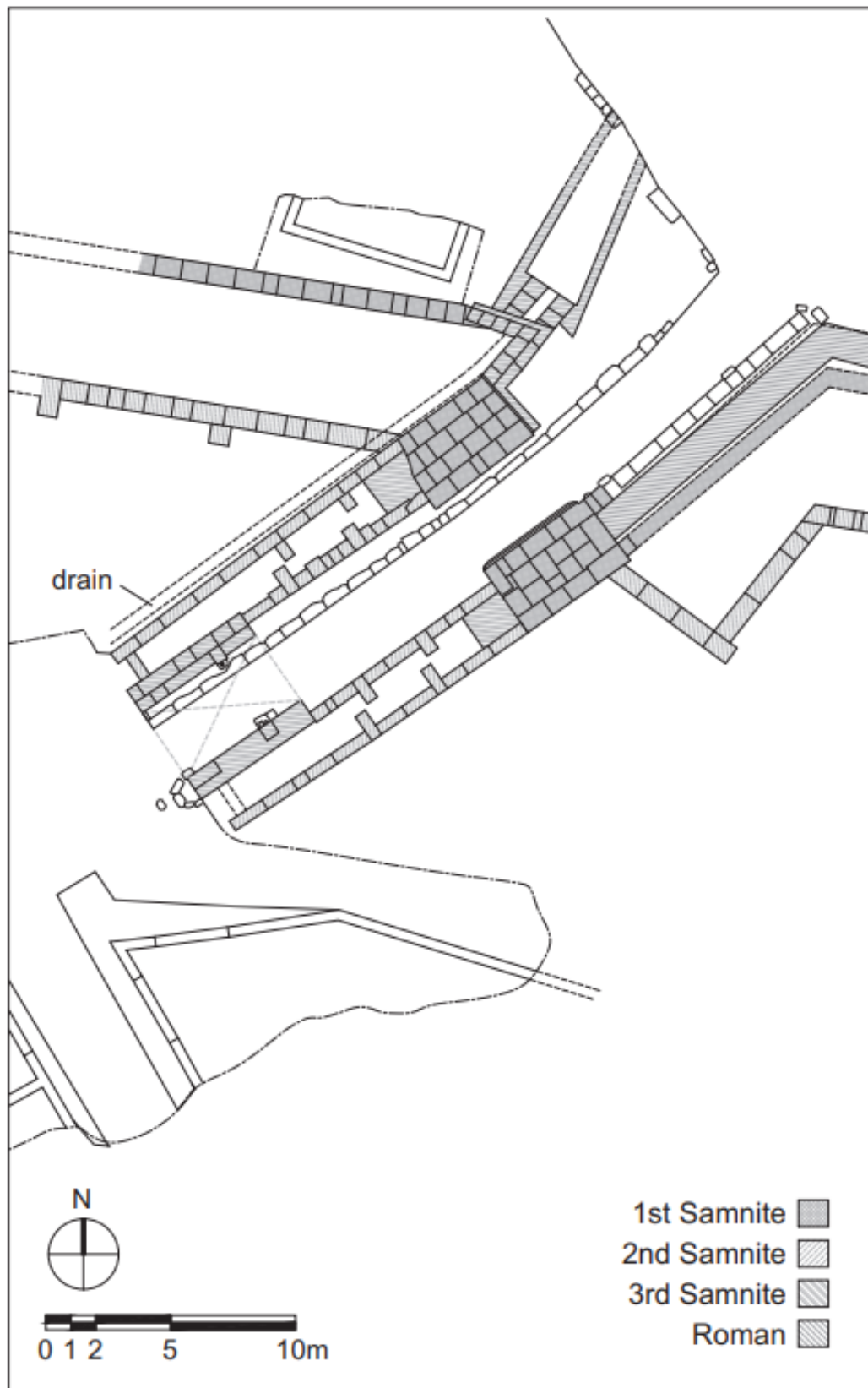


Figure 5.3 - Plan of the Porta Nola, Pompeii, 1:300 scale. (Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 3.6. Drawing by T. Liddell).

The Porta Nola's arch is further embellished by a carved head on the keystone of the vault, facing the inside of the city.⁶⁵⁷ This head has been interpreted as Minerva, suggesting – along with the statue of Minerva found at the Porta Marina – that the goddess may have had a protective role for the city and was invoked at the city gates.⁶⁵⁸ An Oscan inscription, seemingly originally located next to this head on the vault of the arch, once recorded the dedication of the gate by Vibius Popidius.⁶⁵⁹ In addition to suggesting a date in the second-century B.C.E.,⁶⁶⁰ this inscription further demonstrates that maintenance and improvements to the gates were considered a notable public work, and that even at this early stage, the gates had a key monumental role as well as a functional one.

In total, the Porta Nola measured approximately 20m between the exterior of the bastions and the internal face of the arch, displaying the characteristic length typical of the Pompeiian gates.⁶⁶¹ This is the result of the construction of the wall, and the necessary length of the gates to be able to accommodate its full width, creating a form of gate that was much longer than later examples elsewhere.⁶⁶² The maximum width of the gateway was around 4m, and narrowed between the bastions and within the arch, which would have restricted two-way travel of wheeled vehicles. The length of the Porta Nola, combined with the use of different building materials and techniques which would have emphasised the different sections of the gate, results in what Van der Graaff has described as a 'tripartite' configuration for the gates of Pompeii, consisting of travertine bastions at the exterior, a tuff-lined 'court' or passage in the centre, and an internal *opus incertum* arch.⁶⁶³ This tripartite division may have further emphasised the length of the gate and the amount of time spent passing through the gateway, and the liminality of doing so.⁶⁶⁴ This may have resulted in the gates feeling like places of particular vulnerability due to this

⁶⁵⁷ Van der Graaff 2018: 54.

⁶⁵⁸ Van der Graaff 2018: 212-213; Van der Graaff & Ellis 2017. See further discussion on pp.238-39.

⁶⁵⁹ Vetter 1953: No. 14.

⁶⁶⁰ If this is the same Vibius Popidius referred to in a Latin dedicatory inscription on the tuff colonnade on the south side of the Forum, this would mean the gate would have had to be late second-century considering the colonnade dates from the early first-century B.C.E. (Ball & Dobbins 2017: 485-486).

⁶⁶¹ Approximate measurements taken from Van der Graaff 2018: Figures 3.2, 3.4, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 5.5.

⁶⁶² By contrast the Augustan Porta Esquilina, above pp.151-154, was only approximately 4m in depth.

⁶⁶³ Van der Graaff 2018: 50-51, 71.

⁶⁶⁴ Van der Graaff 2018: 53-54, 71. On liminality see pp.22-23, on liminality of gateways see pp.85-89.

liminal state, particularly for a notable period of seconds while one crossed through the threshold of the city wall. This, and the resultant choice to look to protective deities across such liminal spaces, may have been the reason for the location of shrines and altars in areas near to the city gates at Pompeii, such as the example which will be discussed in the Porta Marina, below, or the bust of Minerva at the Porta Nola.⁶⁶⁵

This series of alterations made to the Porta Nola is typical of those made to other surviving gates across the city. At times these were prompted by the extension of the wall itself, but the latest phases of renovation seem to have been motivated by aesthetic and monumental choices rather than any need for the vaults to be added. The deliberate use of building materials that could make a striking visual impression by their contrast, decorative features such as the bust of Minerva and the dedicatory inscription demonstrate that the city gates at Pompeii, had a clear monumental role in the urban landscape even before the foundation of the Roman colony. The similarity of the gates further suggests that either these gates were overhauled as part of a systematic process of renovation, or individual patrons emulated the other gates in order to create a consistent design across the different gates at Pompeii. Major construction events like the extension of the city wall might have prompted the redesign of the city gates, with pragmatic motivations for the use of a similar design, that could have been combined with a desire to ensure unity for both monumental effect and ease of defence. Later construction such as the addition of the arches seems to have been more explicitly monumental. The dedicatory inscription of Popidius suggests there may have been social prestige attached to such building projects, and hence it was undertaken by individual patrons. If these patrons did act independently the adherence to the basic type is striking, and suggests a desire to create a uniform design.⁶⁶⁶ Regardless, it is highly likely that the Porta Marina and Porta Ercolano were both similar to this basic typology before their renovations.

With the Roman siege of the city in 89 B.C.E. the city wall and several gateways were subjected to damage by artillery and slingshots, and the

⁶⁶⁵ Van der Graaff 2018: 54, 205-9, 224.

⁶⁶⁶ Similar debate can be had about the nature of the Augustan gates at Rome (pp.201-203) and whether their renovation was the result of a policy, or individual patronage.

defences may have been deliberately damaged following the capture of the city to reduce their defensive capability and symbolically demonstrating the town's new status as a direct subject of Rome.⁶⁶⁷ However, the 70s B.C.E. may have seen a reversal of such work, with epigraphically attested repairs carried out to the wall in this period by two of the town's *duoviri*.⁶⁶⁸ The foundation of a veteran colony at the city by Sulla in 80 B.C.E., formally named *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum*, saw Pompeii enter a new period of its history, in which the local inhabitants and settled colonists were more closely aligned with Rome as a result. In the period between 80 B.C.E and 79 C.E., two city gates, the Porta Marina and the Porta Ercolano, underwent separate renovations, relating closely to changes and developments in their surrounding nodes. Although the two renovations do not seem to be connected, and take place over a century apart, both can be connected more widely to the processes of urban monumentalisation and the development of the city of Pompeii as a Roman colony.

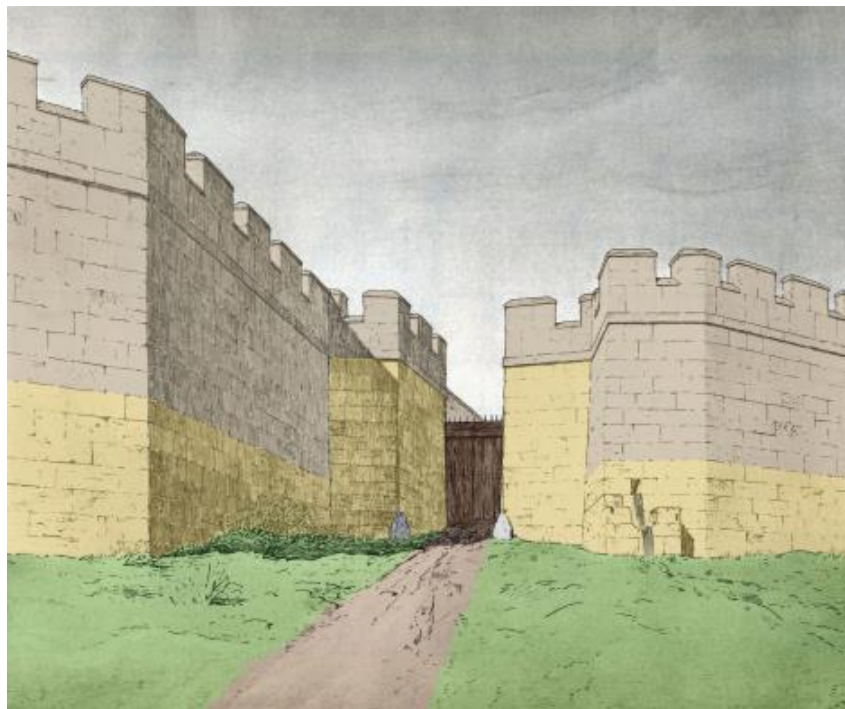


Figure 5.4 - Reconstruction drawing of the Porta Nola (external view) in the First Samnite Phase of construction, c. late 4th century B.C.E. (Van der Graaff 2018: Plate 9, after Krischen 1941, plate IV, with modifications by Van der Graaff).

⁶⁶⁷ Van der Graaff 2018: 114. Appian (*Civil War*. I.96) records that the destruction of city walls was used widely as a punishment by Sulla against the towns that had resisted him, but there is no clear evidence of this at Pompeii.

⁶⁶⁸ Van der Graaff 2018: 113; *CIL* X.937.

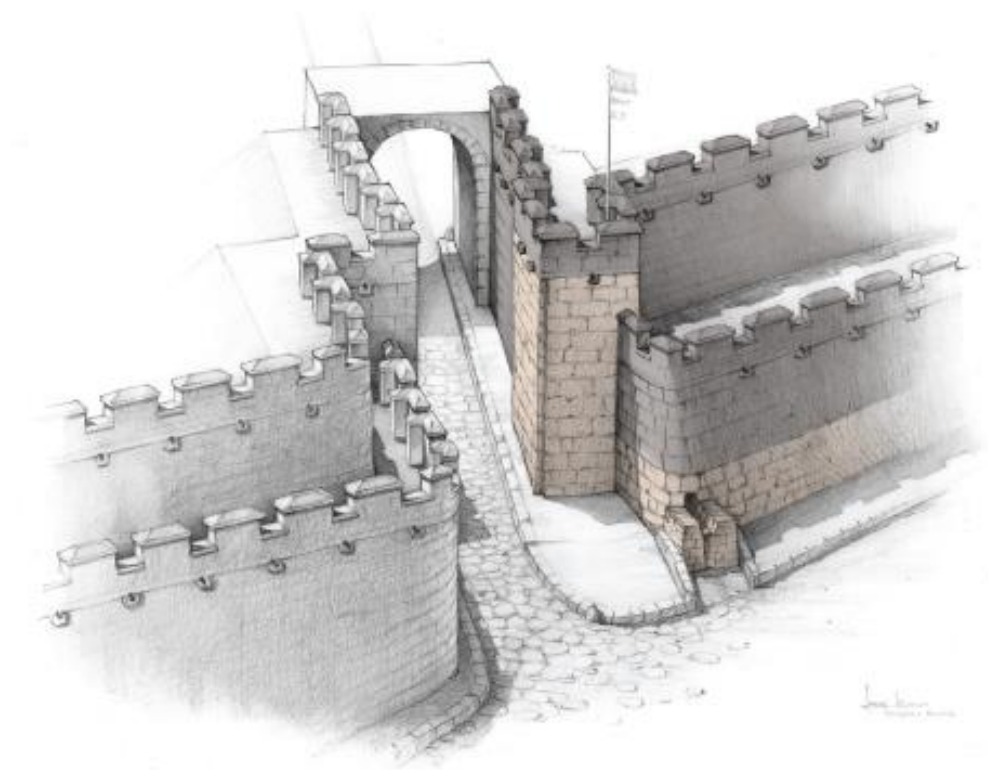


Figure 5.5 - Reconstruction drawing of the Porta Nola in its final phase (Van der Graaff 2018: Plate 15. Drawing by L. Kukler).

5.2 – The Porta Marina.

The Porta Marina was renovated following the foundation of the Sullan veteran colony at the city in 80 B.C.E. and so can be dated to a period in the mid-first century B.C.E.,⁶⁶⁹ during which Pompeii underwent significant social changes and changes to the fabric of the city itself. This is particularly true in the area surrounding the Porta Marina, which underwent major transformations relating to the city's new status as a Roman colony with close ties to Sulla. While responding to the demands of defence and traffic flow, and its location in an area of major monumental public buildings, this gate demonstrates the adaptation of an existing gateway in order to create a more impressive entrance for the city. The Porta Marina provides an example of a comparatively early gate renovation, particularly for one employing multiple passages, and offers a precursor for the multi-passaged gateways which would become commonplace in Italy, and beyond, throughout the Principate and early Imperial periods. That

⁶⁶⁹ Van der Graaff 2018: 219.

this renovation took place at a relatively minor colony is highly instructive and will be discussed in greater detail in the analysis of this gate renovation.

While the structure of Porta Marina's final form is well understood, thanks to twentieth century excavations, the precise dating and chronology of changes to the gate's form have been difficult to reconstruct, as several phases of building are laid over each other. This is compounded with damage inflicted on the gate during bombing in World War II,⁶⁷⁰ which meant that evidence of the plasterwork decorating the gate has now been lost, and with unclear excavation reports this has made the decorative elements of the Porta Marina very difficult to reconstruct. The area surrounding the Porta Marina, on the other hand, especially on the *via Marina* within the city, has been very well studied due to the proliferation of major public monuments such as the Temple of Venus. Recent excavations have also shone a light on houses in the *Insula Occidentalis* that reveal more of the history of the fortifications in this western area of the city. This information makes possible a thorough reconstruction of the context of the Porta Marina's renovation and the Porta Marina as both a landmark and node within the city.

The Development of the Porta Marina to 80 B.C.E.

The Porta Marina is located on the western side of Pompeii on the *via Marina*, a road which led from the Forum out to the area between the city and coastline. This road would once have provided onward access through the Forum towards the eastern half of the city, but was later truncated by traffic measures that meant it ended at the Forum,⁶⁷¹ reducing its importance in the overall traffic system of Pompeii. The area between the Porta Marina and the coast was potentially a narrow strip of land – possibly with many boggy and marshy areas – but the exact coastline in the Roman period is unclear since seismic activity and sea level changes have substantially altered the coastline of the entire region around Pompeii.⁶⁷² Although it was once presumed that Pompeii's port was located close to the Porta Marina along the *via Marina*,

⁶⁷⁰ See above, p.206.

⁶⁷¹ Kaiser 2011: Figure 7.1 (after Tsujimura 1991 & Poehler 2006).

⁶⁷² Pescatore et al. 2001: 77, 81.

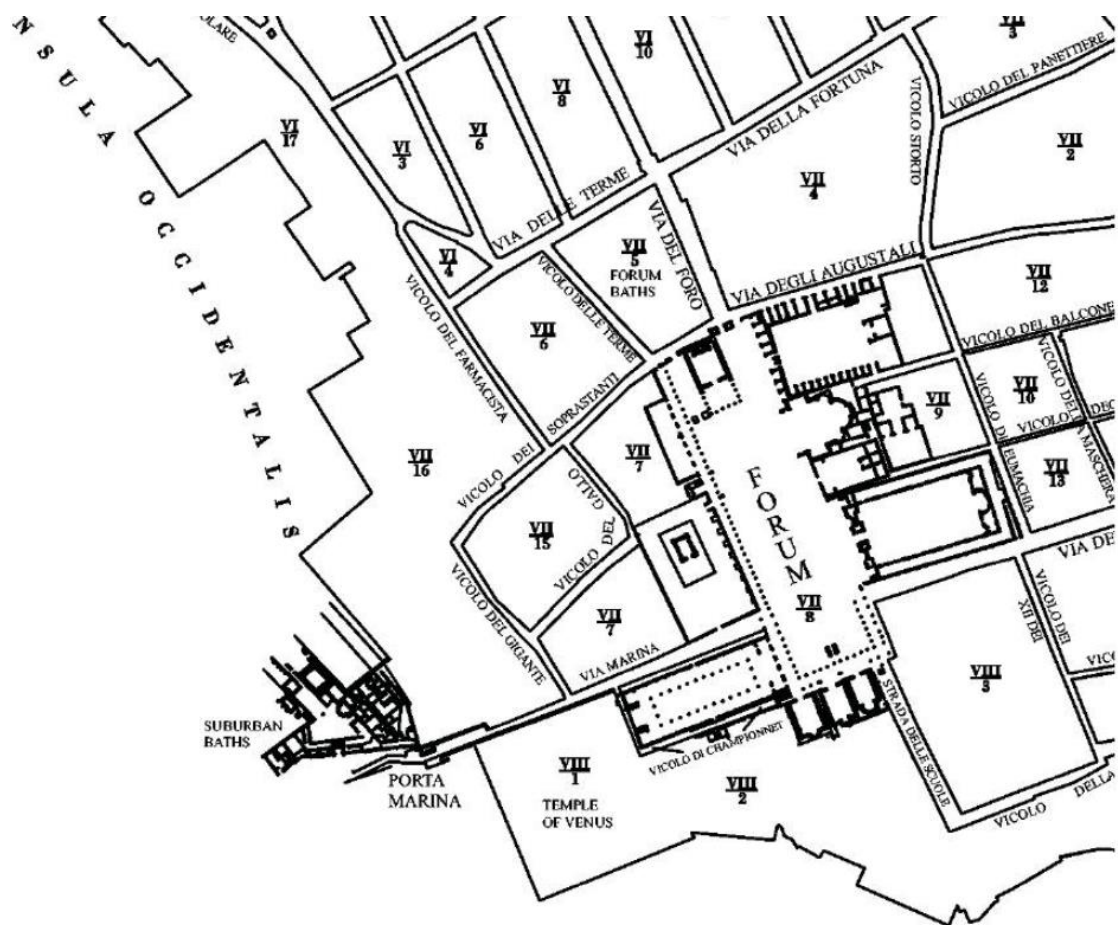


Figure 5.6 - The Porta Marina/via Marina/Forum area of the city (After Dobbin & Foss 2007: Map 2).

which would have made this area a major hub for trade, commerce and transport activities, that now seems unlikely to be the case.⁶⁷³ Late twentieth-century excavations have exposed that what was once thought to be a quay wall located alongside the *via Marina* is highly unlikely to be one, considering it is well above the projected sea level of the Roman period, and the wall itself is only 75cm wide, with traces of further buildings on one side of it.⁶⁷⁴ Excavations in the Bottaro region further to the south and east of the city have discovered many items associated with fishing and maritime trade, such as anchors and fishing net weights, as well as multiple large dwellings, residential buildings and possible warehouse buildings.⁶⁷⁵ This suggests that Pompeii's port was in fact

⁶⁷³ Ling (2007: 121) for example still considers the Porta Marina to have been a key part of the route for visitors arriving from the port to travel into the city, despite the fact the port seems to have been closer to the Porta Stabia.

⁶⁷⁴ Descouedres 1998: 210-11, 213, 215, 216. The purpose of this wall and the rings set into it is therefore unclear, but they appear to have been added only in the first-century C.E.

⁶⁷⁵ Butterworth & Laurence 2005: 40-41.

further along the coast and located on either the mouth, or the estuary, of the river Sarno, although no exact location for the port has yet been discovered.⁶⁷⁶ This would place Pompeii's port closer to the Porta Stabia than the Porta Marina, indicating that the Porta Marina was not the primary route of access to/from the port. However, the existence of the *via Marina* and the Porta Marina indicate that there was a road that led to the area west of the city and thus, presumably, traffic did take this route. This was perhaps used by the traffic accessing the coast for fishing, trade, and may well have connected the Forum to areas such as the Bottaro suburb and the river mouth, providing secondary access to and from the port.

The Porta Marina sits at the top of a steep slope, as it is located at the edge of the ancient lava flow on which Pompeii was built.⁶⁷⁷ This, and the difficult marshy terrain towards the sea, would have made this side of the city more naturally defensible than the northern areas of the city where the approach to the city was easier. This defensive strength may have affected the nature of the fortifications in this area during their construction and renovation, meaning it was not as heavily fortified as other areas. However, this steep gradient did not prevent the gate from coming under attack, as projectiles found in the gardens in the south end of the *Insula Occidentalis* clearly demonstrate that this area came under fire during the Sullan siege of the city in 89 B.C.E.⁶⁷⁸ This steep slope would also have affected the use of the *via Marina* by traffic accessing the city, as it would have made it difficult for wheeled traffic to use this route, particularly when carrying heavy loads,⁶⁷⁹ and so probably dissuaded such vehicles from using the *via Marina*. Although reducing the flow of regular traffic through the Porta Marina, this steepness is unlikely to have prevented the use of this route by pack animals, porters, and pedestrian traffic,⁶⁸⁰ or wheeled vehicles if their use of this route was necessary. For example, the *via Marina* may have particularly seen heavy use in the first century B.C.E. due to building works carried out at the Temple of Venus, Sanctuary of Apollo and in the Forum, which may have used this route to provide access to those sites. The Porta

⁶⁷⁶ Butterworth & Laurence 2005: 39-41.

⁶⁷⁷ Tybout 2007: 411; Sigurdsson 2007: 46.

⁶⁷⁸ Bruni 2018: 90.

⁶⁷⁹ Wallace-Hadrill 2021: 228.

⁶⁸⁰ Wallace-Hadrill 2021: 233.

Marina, therefore, despite not being a major route for long-distance traffic to enter or exit the city, was probably an important local route for providing access to the extra-mural areas west of the city, a direct route to the Forum for those skirting the outside of the city, and for local traffic travelling to and from this area to the west of the Forum. As such there would have been a regular flow of traffic using the Porta Marina and travelling in and out of this area.

A gate had existed at the Porta Marina since the construction of the city wall in the sixth century B.C.E., which capitalised on the defensive strength of this position.⁶⁸¹ There is little evidence of the original structure of the gate, but based on its later form, and the uniform nature of the gates at Pompeii which were not renovated, it can be assumed that the Porta Marina was similar to gates seen elsewhere in the city, such as the Porta Nola.⁶⁸² This phase of the Porta Marina would probably, therefore, have comprised of a single central passage, set between large travertine bastions, that could be closed by a wooden door system. Renovations to the wall in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E., and the construction of the *agger*, would have necessitated the extension of the gate, including an area lined with tuff orthostats which contrasted with the earlier travertine bastions.⁶⁸³

At a later date, probably in the second century B.C.E., the passageway was then vaulted with a barrel vault that completely covered the passage into the city. This passageway was, by this point, exceptionally long at nearly 30m in length.⁶⁸⁴ The Porta Marina's long, vaulted passageway is unique among Italian city gates, to the author's knowledge. The Porta Marina is also unusual in a Pompeian context, since while the other gates in Pompeii were also very long, this is the only example where the entirety of the passage was vaulted, not simply a small section. It is unclear why this was different at the Porta Marina, especially since no traces of an upper level remain. Furthermore, it would have meant that the process of entering/exiting the city through the Porta Marina would have not been a singular moment of transition, but a process during which one had to travel through the covered passageway for a substantial and

⁶⁸¹ Van der Graaff 2018: 44.

⁶⁸² See above, pp.209-216.

⁶⁸³ Van der Graaff 2018: 71.

⁶⁸⁴ Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 5.5.

notable period of time.⁶⁸⁵ Also unusually, this passageway shows signs of multiple infringements into the passage that may have provided direct access into the gateway for buildings or properties on either side (see Figure 5.7). This was perhaps necessitated by the length of the gate, and the structures with access may have been related to the fortifications of the city, but there is no evidence of any flanking towers or additional defensive structures surrounding the gate to support this. A structure, located in the nearby gardens of the *Casa di Umbricius Scaurus*, may have been a guard tower or arsenal for weaponry, but is not directly associated with the *Porta Marina*.⁶⁸⁶

It is probable that the gate was damaged during the Sullan siege of 89 B.C.E.,⁶⁸⁷ which may have contributed to the motivation for renovating this gate, but the extent of that damage is unclear. The fact that the second-century B.C.E. structure of the gate largely survives suggests that any damage was not significant enough to warrant a complete reconstruction of the *Porta Marina*, and so was perhaps limited to relatively minor, cosmetic damage. The *Porta Marina* was the first of the gates to undergo repair and renovation in the first century B.C.E., following the foundation of the Sullan colony. While this may have been a result of the damage sustained during the siege, it shall be explored below how this renovation also relates to a period of transformation and construction in the area of the *via Marina* and the Forum that related closely to the cultural identity of the new colony. This building work, and the increased status of this area as the religious and political heart of the city of Pompeii may have been a major factor in the decision to renovate the *Porta Marina* in the same time period.

It is also critical to consider the relationship between the *Porta Marina* and the surrounding area of Pompeii, in order to fully appreciate the gate as a monument in the lived experience of the city. The *via Marina* would have provided access from the area of the coast, to the west of the city, and possibly secondary access from the port, into the very centre of Pompeii. Although the *via Marina*'s steep access may have restricted the ease of use for wheeled vehicles and heavily laden traffic, once inside the city this short tract of road led

⁶⁸⁵ See below, p.239.

⁶⁸⁶ Bruni 2018: 89.

⁶⁸⁷ Bruni 2018: 90. See above, p.219.

directly into the Forum, and originally across to the eastern side of the city. There is little evidence of large public buildings in this area, except for the Sanctuary of Apollo, before the foundation of the colony, but there was certainly an open space in this area,⁶⁸⁸ which would become the religious, political and commercial heart of the city in the colonial period. Before that, while the space was still open, it may have been used for informal commercial activity such as markets selling goods and produce from stalls, carts, or street-hawkers that would have left no trace in the archaeological record. The *via Marina*, therefore may have been a significant route used to access this area directly, and to bring goods into and out of the city.

From the Forum, the *via dell'Abbondanza* continues on the same axis as the *via Marina* to the Porta Sarno, where it exits the city. Before the Forum was sealed off by porticoes and raised pavements that prevented traffic crossing the Forum, the connection of these two roads would have created a route from the coast to the countryside that travelled directly through the centre of the city. This route could therefore have connected travellers from the coast, and towns and countryside to the east of the city, with the centre of the Pompeii and significant commercial areas such as the *via dell'Abbondanza*. The Porta Marina's possible role as an alternate access point for the port by the extra-mural road, for those avoiding the Porta Stabia would have meant that some commercial travel and transport of goods might have further added to the traffic in this area. As such, the route might have been used to transport fish and imported goods from the coast or port into the city, and trade agricultural produce brought from the Pompeiian hinterland to the port or residents of the Bottaro suburb.

While it was not yet the civic heart of Pompeii that it would come to be in later periods, at the foundation of the colony, the Forum would still have attracted visitors for religious reasons and commerce. In the second century B.C.E. the Forum is understood to have been an open space, bordered by the Sanctuary of Apollo and buildings to the south of the Forum, while many of the buildings that would later characterise the political, religious and commercial character of the Forum were yet to be constructed.⁶⁸⁹ The Sanctuary of Apollo, although it would become only one of multiple temples flanking the Forum, was

⁶⁸⁸ Ball & Dobbins 2013: 473.

⁶⁸⁹ Ball & Dobbins 2013: 473.

one of the earliest in the city and dated back to as early as the sixth century B.C.E.⁶⁹⁰ If Pompeii did indeed develop around early cult sites, such as the Sanctuary of Apollo and the Doric Temple in the Triangular Forum,⁶⁹¹ then this Sanctuary would have been an important destination within the city, especially on feast days and at other significant points in the religious calendar. The Sanctuary was one of major importance in Pompeii, and was renovated in the third/second century B.C.E.,⁶⁹² including a reduction in the size of the *temenos* boundary,⁶⁹³ which had originally projected into the Forum, allowing for a more regular rectangular shape for the Forum itself.⁶⁹⁴ Major cult sites such as this not only attracted worshippers from the immediate vicinity, but also from the countryside and nearby towns. Depending on the direction of travellers' arrival it may have been easier to simply traverse the city, but the Porta Marina would have provided one of the most direct routes to the Sanctuary of Apollo, so many may have travelled around peripheral routes to access the Sanctuary. Therefore, while the Forum did not yet have the elevated social, political and religious status that would be associated with it in the Imperial period, it was still a significant node in the landscape of Pompeii and in the religious life of the city. The transformation of the Forum, as shall be explored later, was highly relevant to the changing status of the Porta Marina and its ultimate renovation.

Proof of the increasing status of this area of the city can be found in the private buildings to the west of the Forum, near the Porta Marina, which span *Regio VII* and *VIII* of the modern designation system. A series of large private residences have been excavated, most of the floorplans of which can be dated to the second century B.C.E, including the *Casa del Marinaio*, *Casa di Romolo e Remo*, *Casa di Trittolemo* and *Casa di Championnet*, which were all located close to the *via Marina* and the Porta Marina itself.⁶⁹⁵ These were all large private houses that were obviously owned by wealthy families within the elite of Pompeian society, and included such features as private bathing facilities which reflected this status.⁶⁹⁶ Other large private residences are also found slightly

⁶⁹⁰ Ball & Dobbins 2013: 468-9; Newsome 2009: 125.

⁶⁹¹ De Caro 2007: 73; Carafa 2007: 65.

⁶⁹² Ball & Dobbins 2013: 469.

⁶⁹³ Ball & Dobbins 2017: 471.

⁶⁹⁴ Ball & Dobbins 2013: 467.

⁶⁹⁵ www.pompeiiisites.org/pompei-map: Items 4, 4a, 4b, 5.

⁶⁹⁶ www.pompeiiisites.org/pompei-map: Item 5 – *Casa di Championnet*.

further to the north of the Porta Marina in the *Insula Occidentalis*, such as the *Casa di M. Fabius Rufus* – the later expansion of which will be discussed below. In the case of the *Casa del Marinaio*, evidence of a previous building at the site – which seems to have been a *horreum* –⁶⁹⁷ suggests that this area of the city was becoming increasingly high status and such commercial properties were being replaced by private residences as a result. However, other *horrea* found in this area imply that it did retain an element of commercial use and may have been connected with the supply of grain to bakeries in this central area of the city.⁶⁹⁸ It is possible, therefore, that the expansion of private houses was related to increasing wealth in the city as a whole from its role as a trading port. The *tabernae* along the front of houses that lined the *via Marina* which were in use at the time of the eruption,⁶⁹⁹ further hints to commercial activity continuing in the Porta Marina node, as well as the probable use of the Forum for temporary markets. Such mixed usage is characteristic of Pompeii's urban landscape, and Italian and Roman cities of this period in general, but the area of the Forum and the *via Marina* does not reveal any major productive activity, in contrast to the industries found in the area of the Porta Ercolano.

The Porta Marina was not one of the most important city gates in terms of its connections to wider road networks, and would not have witnessed as much traffic as some of Pompeii's city gates. However, it still offered a route of local significance, that could bypass traffic and navigation difficulties in the city and allow direct access to the Forum and Sanctuary of Apollo. It may also have been used to connect the coast and the Forum, and with other roads such as the *via dell'Abbondanza* and onwards to towns and cities in the interior of Latium, and nearby countryside. The increasing status of this area of the city in the second century B.C.E. is signalled by, and possibly related to, the renovation of the Sanctuary of Apollo and the construction of large private residences associated with wealthy and locally significant owners in the area surrounding the Porta Marina. However, even the most minor city gate still had local significance, and we know that the gate was an active part of the defence

⁶⁹⁷ Laurence 2007: 88.

⁶⁹⁸ Laurence 2007: 88.

⁶⁹⁹ Laurence 2007: Map 4.7 (identifying one workshop on the north side of the *via Marina*), Map 5.4 (identifying a further *popinae* in the same *Insula*, as well as one in the *insula* immediately inside the Porta Marina on the north of the *via Marina*).

of the city during the siege of 89 B.C.E. The capture of the city and subsequent foundation of the veteran colony in 80 B.C.E. would go on to have major impacts on the city as a whole, on the area surrounding the Porta Marina, and on the Porta Marina itself.

The Transformation of the Porta Marina and Forum During the Colonial Period.

The foundation of the veteran colony at Pompeii in 80 B.C.E. marked a significant shift in the presentation of the identity of the city, as newly settled veterans – and possibly the pre-existing local elite – used public building projects to provide facilities for the new settlers, and to signal the cultural dominance of Rome and the allegiance of the colonists to Sulla, during his lifetime. The foundation of the colony is often interpreted as essentially a ‘refoundation’ of Pompeii in which the idea of the city and its identity was shifted in order to align more closely with the Sullan patronage of the city and the ‘Roman’ identity that many of the veteran settlers brought with them.⁷⁰⁰ This Roman cultural identity and allegiance, and the urge to display this, can be seen through public building and the provision of events such as gladiatorial games.⁷⁰¹ This led to a period of public building, which included major monuments such as the amphitheatre, and repairs to the city wall carried out by Loreius and Cuspius. While repairs to the city wall may also have been prompted by feelings of heightened insecurity due to the Spartacan revolt of the 70s B.C.E. which impacted this area of Italy,⁷⁰² these repairs should also be understood as a means of expressing Pompeii’s status as a Roman colony, as city walls were a major means of visually expressing the status of colonies in this period.⁷⁰³ The repair of the city walls, in conjunction with the ‘refoundation’ of the city therefore could strongly connect them to the urban identity of Pompeii and the newly founded colony. The renovation of the Porta Marina is best

⁷⁰⁰ It is not known where the veterans settled at Pompeii actually originated from. These veterans may have been from Rome or the surrounding areas of Latium, but may also have been recruited from other areas of the Empire. Therefore the ‘Roman’ identity thus represented by the colonists is perhaps understood as reflecting the culture of the Roman military, and the Italian and Roman elites such as the *duovirs* Loreius and Cuspius.

⁷⁰¹ Pompeii’s amphitheatre, constructed in c.70 B.C.E. is universally interpreted as being the result of catering to the veteran settlers (Van der Graaff 2018: 146-7; Welch 1994: 61-62.), who may have had a particular interest in gladiatorial games (Welch 1994: 64-65).

⁷⁰² Van der Graaff 2018: 135.

⁷⁰³ Van der Graaff 2018: 137-8; Gros 1992: 211, 220.

understood as a complementary part of this building phase of the mid-first century B.C.E., and directly relates to the colonial refoundation and the increasing status of the area of the *via Marina* and the Forum as a result of the new buildings in that area.

Most significant among these new public buildings was the Temple of Venus, located immediately inside the Porta Marina to the south of the *via Marina*. The construction of this large and imposing temple precinct was particularly significant because of the connection between the goddess Venus and Sulla.⁷⁰⁴ This personal connection was also invoked in the name of the colony: *Colonia Cornelia Veneria Pompeianorum*,⁷⁰⁵ and may have been chosen deliberately to signal connection between the colonists and Sulla, as well as invoking the goddess as a tutelary deity of the city. It is possible that this temple was further related to the civic identity of the new colony by syncretising the goddess with local deities who had tutelary roles in the pre-colonial period such as Mefitis, to worship Venus as Venus Pompeiana or Venus Fisica.⁷⁰⁶ The location of the temple may have previously hosted a temple to Mefitis,⁷⁰⁷ and therefore the reuse of this site for the Temple of Venus would harness the continuity of worship at the site and the associations of this temple with the protection of the city as a whole.

The construction of the new Temple of Venus was a major undertaking, which created a large flat terrace for the temple precinct, that post-dated the Sullan siege based on pottery and ammunition finds found within the fill.⁷⁰⁸ Importantly, this terrace seems to have extended across the line of the city wall in this area, and so provided unimpeded views from the river plain to the temple (and vice versa), and undermined the functionality of the city wall as a defensive system. The temple itself was surrounded on three sides by a large colonnaded building, and the temple and its precinct – constructed in tuff and *opus incertum* – were orientated towards the river mouth.⁷⁰⁹ In this position, raised on the hill

⁷⁰⁴ Carroll 2011: 95. Sulla's agnomen 'Felix' was a rendering of the Greek epithet '*epaphriditos*' or 'beloved of Aphrodite' that referred to his skill and luck as a general. This personal connection, with the Romanised version, the goddess Venus, is invoked here.

⁷⁰⁵ The colony's name here invoking both Sulla's *gens*, the *gens Cornelia*, and Venus.

⁷⁰⁶ Small 2007: 186; Carroll 2011: 96.

⁷⁰⁷ Carroll 2011: 67.

⁷⁰⁸ Carroll 2011: 69-70.

⁷⁰⁹ Carroll 2011: 65.

overlooking the river, the temple would have dominated this area of the city skyline for those approaching the city from that direction.⁷¹⁰ However, this did mean that the temple was oriented away from the *via Marina*, and presented the view from the road with the rear wall to the temple precinct,⁷¹¹ while the precinct itself could only be accessed by an entrance at the north-eastern corner of the complex. The reflex angle of this entrance, especially to one travelling into the city from the Porta Marina, effectively secluded the temple from the road, limiting the interaction of the road and the temples sensory experiences. Equally, little of the sensory experience related to the temple such as the smells of blood and burning from sacrifices would have reached the road.

However, the sheer scale of the temple's surrounding buildings and its proximity to the road would have meant that this building blocked any view to the south when travelling the *via Marina*, giving it an imposing presence to the south of the road. The construction of the temple, would likely have resulted in related traffic, bringing building materials and workers into the city through the Porta Marina and would have contributed to traffic, dust, and a lot of noise. Despite its orientation away from the *via Marina*, the presence of the building – which would surely have been known to local Pompeians and many visitors – would have demonstrated the allegiance of the colonists to Sulla and the colony's relationship to Venus as a protective goddess. Even if the exterior wall of the building did not demonstrate the wealth or cultural sophistication that is often associated with public building, this was a major undertaking, and its proximity to the Porta Marina would have increased the status of this area, while perhaps dwarfing the existing gate and being visible on the approach to the city along the *via Marina*.

Another major colonial building project took place along the south side of the *via Marina* with the construction of the Basilica. Although it has been proposed that the Basilica was in fact a second-century B.C.E. Samnite building,⁷¹² recent excavations and the typology of the structure make it more

⁷¹⁰ Carroll 2011: 65; Laurence 2007: 43.

⁷¹¹ Flohr, *Spatial Archaeologies of Religion at Pompeii*: 3. The orientation of the temple complex seems to have been intended to enhance its visual connection with the river mouth and port area. The construction of the precinct buildings served to isolate the temple from the road, thus reducing the noise from the road, whether this was intentional or not.

⁷¹² Ball & Dobbins (2017: 485) discuss this hypothesis but have disproved it in their study of the building.

likely that it was built early in the colonial period.⁷¹³ A graffito found in the wall plaster of the Basilica suggests a construction date before 78 B.C.E., which would place its construction very close to the foundation of the colony.⁷¹⁴ A Basilica, as a distinctly Roman form of civic building, would make most sense as having been constructed following the foundation of the colony as a place for conducting public business and the government of the colony.⁷¹⁵ It would also have appeared as a clear indicator of Pompeii's new status as a Roman colony rather than a federated ally, and underscored the importance of the colonists within the political order of the city. Although there are additional entrances to the Basilica from the *via Marina* and *vicolo di Championnet*, the building was oriented towards the Forum, with a large colonnaded entrance at its eastern end, compared to the much smaller and unadorned side entrances (see Figure 5.6).⁷¹⁶ Much like the Temple of Venus, despite the large sensory impact that the construction would have had, the Basilica then had very little sensory interaction with the *via Marina* and the Porta Marina, except in its spatial proximity.

The so-called Comitium, a public building of unclear purpose, can also be dated to this period and was constructed at the southern end of the Forum, close to the Basilica.⁷¹⁷ The Forum itself was further monumentalised by the construction of the Porticus of Popidius, which was possibly intended to connect the disparate architectural elements of the Forum as they were constructed, and to spatially define the Forum, in contrast to its earlier more open form.⁷¹⁸ Although all three buildings were constructed using the same tuff, the walls of the Basilica and the Comitium were probably plastered. Little remains of the plasterwork today, giving the buildings a sense of visual cohesion, but the original plasterwork may have employed different styles and designs which made each more distinctive. However, their construction at similar times, and general tendencies to use a white plaster, with a black or coloured socle, would have possibly meant that the buildings were cognitively linked and all added to

⁷¹³ Ball & Dobbins 2017: 484-487.

⁷¹⁴ Ball & Dobbins 2017: 486; *CIL* IV.1842.

⁷¹⁵ Ball & Dobbins 2017: 486.

⁷¹⁶ Yegül & Favro 2019: Figure 1.44.

⁷¹⁷ Ball & Dobbins 2017: 483.

⁷¹⁸ Ball & Dobbins 2013: 483.

the sense that the area of the Forum and the *via Marina* were a connected node of religious, political and social significance.

The Forum was further monumentalised with the construction of the Capitulum at the northern end. This temple, dedicated to the trio of Jupiter, Juno and Minerva was a distinctly Roman urban feature which became commonplace at Roman colonies throughout the Empire as a symbol of Roman cultural identity and allegiance. A temple may have existed at this site before the Sullan colony was founded, but since the architectural style of the Capitulum conforms more with late Republican Roman architectural style than with Samnite temples, it is likely that this temple was constructed after the foundation of the colony.⁷¹⁹ It is probable that the Capitulum was built as part of the flurry of public building in and around the Forum early in the history of the colony, in the mid-first century B.C.E., and it would have been a major religious site for the new colony, adding to the existing religious associations of the area. The total effect of the construction of these buildings was to turn the Forum into the civic and religious centre of the new colony, especially for the new colonists, and to formalise this area as the commercial heart of the city. Many of these buildings were not finished until the mid-first century B.C.E., and so were roughly contemporaneous with the renovation of the Porta Marina. These construction projects, which required building materials and workers, would have contributed significantly to traffic using the *via Marina* and accessing this area by the Porta Marina. Even before the completion of these buildings, their construction and the resultant increase in the status of this area may have been an influencing factor in the decision to renovate the Porta Marina in order to provide a more suitably monumental entrance to the city, and one which could better manage the traffic flow in this area.

The spread of the monumental buildings associated with the Forum along the *via Marina* would have elevated the status of the area, thus incorporating the Porta Marina into a landscape of monumental building associated with the colony's foundation. Minor damage to the existing gate from the Sullan siege, combined with the increased status of this area as an extension of the Forum, would have provided the impetus for renovating the

⁷¹⁹ Ball & Dobbins 2013: 479.

gate, as shall be explored below.⁷²⁰ However, it is important to re-iterate that because of the orientation of the Temple of Venus, and minimal interaction of the Basilica with the *via Marina*, there was little interaction between these buildings and the road as a sensory landscape. While people would have turned off the road to enter the Temple complex and the Basilica, the relatively plain facades and simple entrances of these buildings would have encouraged the observer to look directly down the road towards either the Forum or the gate, depending on the direction of travel. This would have reduced the sense of grandeur that was experienced while travelling along the *via Marina*, but might have heightened the spatial connection between the Porta Marina and the Forum itself.

The private properties to the north of the *via Marina* seem to have undergone few changes to their floorplans during this period, so do not suggest any major alterations in their use or appearance, and most-likely continued to be owned by high-status families within Pompeian society, whether colonist or local. The proximity of the Forum, as it became the civic centre of the city, would have added to the appeal and the prestige of living in this area. Further north, this period began to see the encroachment of the properties of the *Insula Occidentalis* into the area previously reserved for the city wall. These homes, which were highly decorated, large and provided with private gardens would likely have belonged to many of Pompeii's wealthiest residents. Houses such as the *Casa di M. Fabius Rufus* and *Casa di Umbricius Scaurus* would extend their buildings all the way up to and across the city wall itself in the later first century B.C.E. capitalising on views towards the coast to create highly prestigious homes.⁷²¹ This trajectory suggests that the area remained a high status one, and that the Porta Marina may have been the entrance/exit point for traffic related to these houses.

The nature of the area outside the Porta Marina at this point in Pompeii's history is unclear, as the excavated area outside the gate is dominated by the later complexes of the Suburban Baths to the north of the *via Marina*, and the *Villa Imperiale* to the south. These buildings, constructed in the late first century

⁷²⁰ Van der Graaff 2018: 124.

⁷²¹ Adams 2012: 73 (*Casa di M. Fabius Rufus*), 75-76 (*Casa di Umbricius Scaurus*); Grimaldi 2011: 145-153 (*Casa di M. Fabius Rufus*).

B.C.E. to the first century C.E., have obscured the evidence of the previous land use, as excavations have not yet explored below these levels. It is impossible to say whether there was funerary, residential or commercial activity taking place outside the Porta Marina, therefore, at the time of its renovation.⁷²² Overall, however it can be concluded that the node surrounding the Porta Marina was undergoing substantial transformation during the period immediately following the capture of the city and the subsequent establishment of the colony. This would very likely have added to the volume of traffic using the Porta Marina as labourers and building materials could easily access the area by using the *via Marina* and the gate to bypass traffic elsewhere in Pompeii. The difficulty of transporting heavy loads up the steep hill entering the city would have meant such traffic was slow-moving, and potentially made the area difficult to navigate. Once completed, these large-scale public buildings would have defined the character of the Forum and the *via Marina* node, but the volume of goods traffic using this route would have reduced. However, other traffic using the Forum for commerce, political purposes or worshipping at the temples would have regularly flowed in and out of the area and interacted with the Porta Marina.

The *via Marina* is unusual as a road that enters through a city gate and provides direct access to the Forum. While most such roads are lined with shops, bars and taverns competing to attract the custom of those travelling into and out of the city, the *via Marina* only has a few potential road-side shops along its length.⁷²³ Although there is only a short section of road between the Porta Marina and the Forum, the absence is notable.⁷²⁴ The *via Marina* also lacks any roadside shrines, or fountains at this period, both of which are commonly found elsewhere on major city roads that enter through city gates.⁷²⁵ This would have meant there were few reasons, or opportunities, for stopping

⁷²² The absence of large monumental tombs outside the Porta Marina is very different to the majority of gates in Roman cities, including at Pompeii where the other city gates all have tombs in close proximity. The absence here is probably the result of the steep slope outside the gate meaning the area closest to the gate was difficult to build such structures on, and would not have been favoured for inhumation burials. There may have been burial areas further from the gate which have not been identified in modern excavations.

⁷²³ See above, p.224. Few of the front rooms of houses actually open onto the street, unlike other examples such as the *via Consolare* or *via dell'abbondanza*.

⁷²⁴ It is possible that informal and temporary commerce such as street-vendors used the stretch of road, but considering the narrowness of the pavements and road compared to the nearby Forum and the precinct of the Temple of Venus, the *via Marina* offers relatively little space for such activities.

⁷²⁵ See the Porta Ercolano, below (Section 5.3), for contrast.

along this length of the road, and movement would have been channelled more directly to or from the Porta Marina itself. This, combined with the unadorned walls of the Temple of Venus precinct and Basilica which channel sightlines straight along the street, would have heightened the sense of connection between the Porta Marina and the Forum by reducing the number of visual distractions, and reasons for people to stop and linger, between the two spaces. In this way, the Porta Marina is notable for not having key components that might have led to the development of a distinctive economic or social node in the vicinity of the gate, but instead was more closely connected with the much larger social, political, religious and economic node of the Forum.

It is clear that at the time of the renovation of the Porta Marina, Pompeii's refoundation as a Roman colony was being stamped on the urban landscape through the construction of major civic and religious buildings, that were crucial to the running and definition of the colony, including renovations to the city wall. These building projects, although not interacting directly with the *via Marina* or the Porta Marina once they were completed, would have redefined the character of this area of the city. This, combined with the high status of the private residences of the area, would have meant that the Porta Marina was located in a significant area of the city, which was likely to attract travel through this gate despite its lower connectivity in the urban and regional traffic system. Along with any damage sustained during the Sullan siege of the city, this would have meant that the Porta Marina became a prime candidate for renovation in order to create a city gate that could more effectively manage traffic flow, and more importantly which reflected the grandeur and significance of its surroundings. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the Porta Marina was renovated in the mid-first century B.C.E. However, the renovated form of this gate is highly atypical when compared to the city gate renovations seen elsewhere later in the first century B.C.E. and this form, and the potential reasons for its unusual design will be explored below.

The Renovation of the Porta Marina.

The unusual design of the Porta Marina was probably heavily influenced by the existing gate at the time of the colony's foundation, which was then

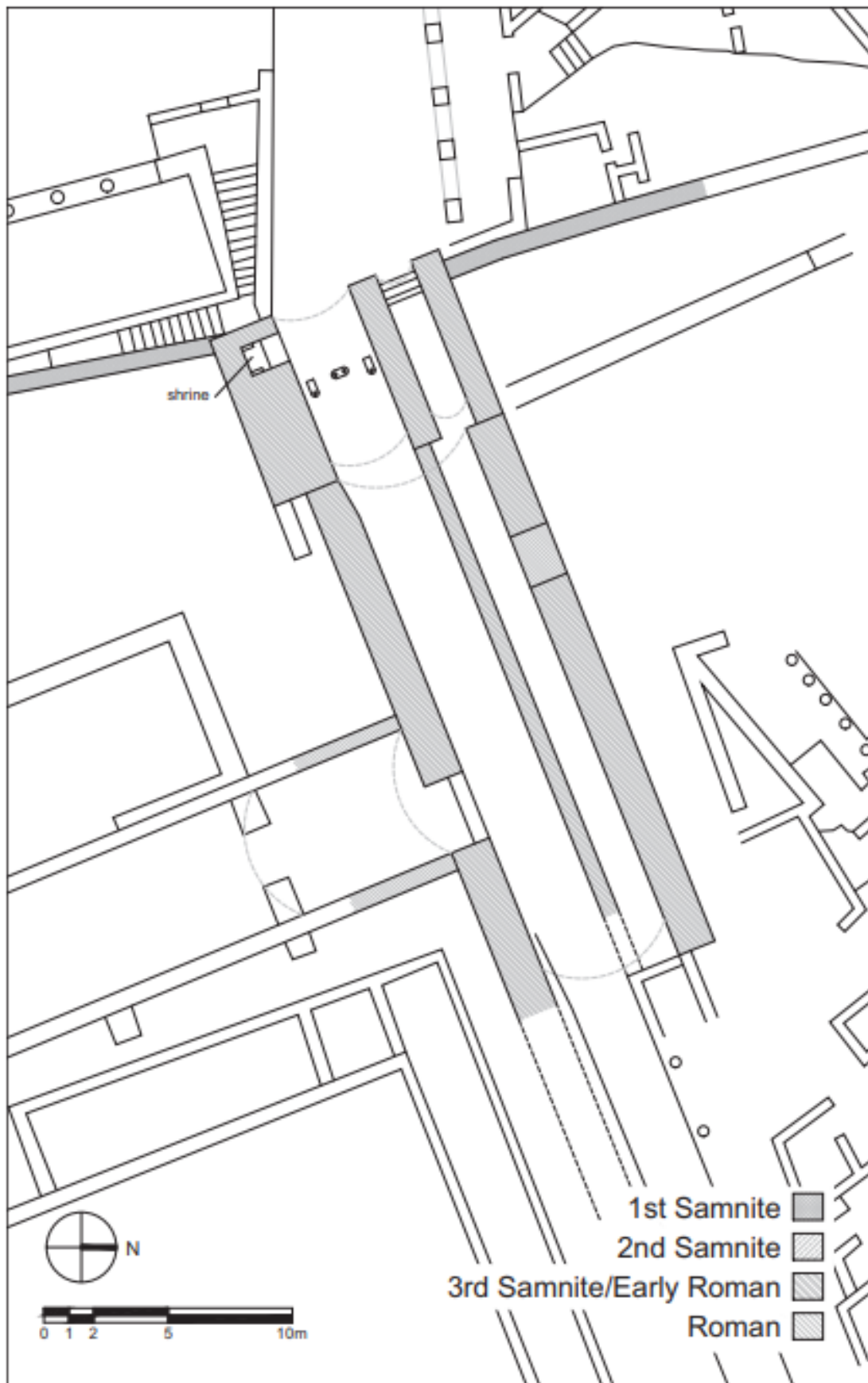


Figure 5.7 - Porta Marina Plan, 1:300 Scale (Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 5.5).

adapted to create the renovated form. As described above, the renovation was likely prompted by aesthetic damage sustained during the Sullan siege, and construction associated with the Forum and *via Marina* at a similar period, with the intention of both facilitating traffic flow to the new civic centre of the city, and to complement these buildings with a suitably monumental gateway which would signal the status and wealth of the new colony.

The renovated Porta Marina takes the form of an asymmetrical pair of long passageways, both covered with the same barrel-vault, that stretched back approximately 30m from the exterior face to the interior end of the gate.⁷²⁶ This is an exceptionally long gateway, even at Pompeii.⁷²⁷ While the length of the gate would once have been determined by the width of the *agger* and the internal retaining wall, the renovation of the Porta Marina would have been an opportunity for the gate to be shortened. Shortening the gate would have weakened the gate's defensive strength, but it would hypothetically have meant that traffic was constricted through the gate for a much shorter period, thus allowing for easier traffic flow. It should also be noted that the encroachment of structures such as the back wall of the Temple of Venus precinct into the roadway meant that this section of the road was also limited to one-way flow of wheeled traffic,⁷²⁸ so the street itself provided challenges to the movement of traffic. The design of the gate, therefore, would have done little to ease traffic flow in this area. That the gate remained 30m long, therefore, suggests that either the defensive role of the wall and the *agger* were still considered vital, or that the design deliberately used as much of the standing gateway as possible and made relatively few interventions to its design.

The fact that this gate was renovated at approximately the time during which the Temple of Venus to the south, and private properties to the north and south, were allowed to encroach on the city wall, suggests that the defences were not considered vital by the new colonial government. Furthermore, while the long narrow passages of the gate would have created a bottleneck for attackers entering the city and slowed access to the city, the lack of defensive features like flanking towers would have limited its effectiveness for defence.

⁷²⁶ Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 5.5. (See Figure 5.7)

⁷²⁷ See pp.213-214, for reference.

⁷²⁸ Kaiser 2011: 180.

The fact that only the external end of the gate has a doorway also means that this point was particularly vulnerable and attackers could not effectively be trapped in the length of the gate, undermining its ability to withstand any sustained attack. The addition of the vaulted arch across the gate meant that defending troops could no longer attack troops in the bottleneck of the gate from above, effectively undermining one of the means of defending the gate. This conclusively demonstrates therefore that the gate's length was preserved to maintain as much of the existing Samnite gateway as possible, possibly due to the greater ease, and lower costs, of the renovation in that case. It is likely that the significant lengths of the gates elsewhere at Pompeii may also have influenced expectations for the Porta Marina, conforming to this particular feature seen elsewhere in the city, rather than adopting a radically different design, as will be discussed more fully below. The length of the gates at Pompeii would have created a limited visual field along the axis of the gate, and this is especially true at the Porta Marina where the vaulted arch would have meant that very little was visible beyond the gate. This would have contributed to the channelling of the line of sight from the gate to the Forum and intensified their conceptual connection.

Another unusual feature of the Porta Marina is its asymmetrical passageways. While multiple-arched gates would become common from the Augustan period onwards, compared to earlier single-arched forms, these gates are usually designed with deliberate symmetry regarding the arrangement of pedestrian and vehicular arches. Such gates, for example, often had two smaller flanking arches for pedestrian use on either side of one or two taller and wider central arches that could be used by animals and vehicles.⁷²⁹ At the Porta Marina, however, the main arch, roughly 4m in width at its opening before narrowing to around 3.6m,⁷³⁰ would only just been able to accommodate two-way wheeled traffic.⁷³¹ To the northern side of this passage is located a single,

⁷²⁹ See, for example, the Porta Esquilina at Rome (Chapter 4, especially pp.152-156), or the Porta Praetoria at Aosta.

⁷³⁰ Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 5.5.

⁷³¹ Malmberg & Björ 2011: 369. By calculations based on the widths of restored carts excavated at Pompeii and Stabiae, a city gate would have to be around 4m in width to be able to have a two-way flow of such carts. The narrowing of the passageway would have meant this was very difficult and wider carts likely did have to travel in turn rather than simultaneously in different directions.

smaller secondary passage, around 1.5m wide,⁷³² that was probably intended for pedestrian use. The second-century B.C.E. barrel vault covered the total width of both passages (see Figure 5.7),⁷³³ and seems to have been only later divided by a wall in *opus quasireticulatum*, dating to the first century B.C.E., which created two separate passages within the vault. The fact that this wall is located off-centre to the vault, further illustrates that it was a later addition to the gate. This would mean that the twin passages were created by the division of an earlier singular passage, that would not have been large enough to be divided into three functional passageways. Importantly, for travellers this would have meant that the gate's passages were much narrower than the previous arch, and created a more confined space that may have felt uncomfortable for travellers, especially those using the pedestrian arch. The division of the gate into two passages suggests that there was sufficient pedestrian transport using this gate to justify the creation of the extra passage,⁷³⁴ either accessing extra-mural suburban areas, or using an extra-mural route to bypass traffic within the city itself. By creating two passages, pedestrian traffic could avoid disruption from navigating animals and wheeled vehicles, and vice versa. It is possible that surrounding buildings made it impossible, or overly difficult, to put a twin pedestrian passage in to the south of the gate, or that the volume of traffic using this gate was simply not felt necessary to require a further pedestrian passage. I propose that it is more likely to have been dictated by the renovation using the footprint of the existing gate, rather than constructing a new, larger gate which could have accommodated multiple pedestrian passages.

Further changes to the Porta Marina included the external face, where an entrance to the gate, which included two separate arches over the entrances of the passages, was constructed. Since this area of the gate was particularly heavily damaged by the World War II bombing, and later reconstructed, it is hard to establish a precise chronology for these changes. The reconstruction broadly corresponds to the gate as it can be seen in pre-war photographs and drawings.⁷³⁵ However, since the external face incorporates two separate arches for the entrances to each passage, this suggests that the changes were made

⁷³² Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 5.5.

⁷³³ Van der Graaff 2018: 66, 71.

⁷³⁴ Van Tilburg 2008: 134-5.

⁷³⁵ See Figure 5.8.

either contemporary to, or after, the division of the main passage. Although the walls of this exterior facing section do not quite align with the dividing wall described already,⁷³⁶ suggesting they may have been constructed after the initial division of the passageway, both are constructed using *opus quasireticulatum*, typical of the first century B.C.E. This would suggest they were constructed in relatively close sequence, during this period. Later lowering of the road through the Porta Marina, which took place in the Augustan period,⁷³⁷ has left the pedestrian passage standing higher than the wider passage, but this was unlikely to have been the case at the time of its original construction. A set of wooden doors and an iron gate were found during the original excavations of the Porta Marina in this exterior section of the gate, suggesting that this comprised the closure mechanisms for the gate at that time.⁷³⁸ Based on the evidence laid out here, I propose that these adjustments to the outer facing of the gate were made during the early colonial renovation period that coincided with the major transformation of the area surrounding the Porta Marina.



Figure 5.8 - Porta Marina, c. 1927

(http://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/gates/Gate%20Marine_files/image039.jpg).

⁷³⁶ Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 5.5. Figure 5.7, above.

⁷³⁷ Van der Graaff 2018: 126.

⁷³⁸ Van der Graaff 2018: 126.



Figure 5.9 - Porta Marina from the west (Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 5.6).

This outer section also incorporated a large niche (see Figure 5.10), in the southern side of the vault for the main passageway. This niche has been interpreted as a shrine, particularly since the original excavators found fragments of statuary associated with it. While badly damaged, the fragments (see Figure 5.11) comprised a female figure, with what is proposed to be a shield next to her leg. Although this is not clear from available images, the lower left-hand side of the figure features what has been identified by Von Rohden as a stone and the rim of a shield.⁷³⁹ This has led to the statue, and therefore the shrine, being connected with Minerva.⁷⁴⁰ Indications of cult sites at the Porta Stabia, Porta Nola and Porta Ercolano which include altars and shrines may also have been dedicated to Minerva.⁷⁴¹ This attribution, while uncertain, has been used as evidence for the theory that Minerva was a tutelary deity for Pompeii, one with the function of protecting the gateway and the city as a

⁷³⁹ Von Rohden 1881: 44, plate 31.

⁷⁴⁰ Van der Graaff & Ellis 2017: 288-291.

⁷⁴¹ Van der Graaff 2018: 205-207.

whole.⁷⁴² Critically for this study, this evidence suggests that the gates of Pompeii were a common location for the placement of religious shrines.⁷⁴³ If these were indeed all dedicated to the same deity, invoking a tutelary role over the city, it would further suggest that the gates, as entry and exit points of the city were considered to be the appropriate locations for invoking the protection of the goddess, perhaps underlining the importance of the urban boundary for the city's religious definition. However, it is very difficult to ascribe these shrines and altars to specific deities without clear epigraphic or statuary evidence, which we are lacking in most cases, the Porta Marina being the most clearly attributable.

Being located at the edge of the urban space, as defined by the city wall, city gates could mark the moment of transition across this religious, and often civic, boundary, between the city and the areas beyond.⁷⁴⁴ This would have meant that crossing through a city gate was a transitional moment; one in which the traveller was between religiously defined zones, without the clear protection of any one deity. Such liminality was, as is discussed more fully in Chapter 3, something which caused discomfort in Roman and Italic religions. At Pompeii's city gates, most of which were around 20m in length, this sense of liminality would have been particularly heightened. At the Porta Marina, the gate could take as much as 23 seconds to walk through, and even longer if laden with goods or negotiating traffic.⁷⁴⁵ When combined with the sensory experience of passing through the long, dark and narrow passages at the Porta Marina, it is easy to see why the gate may have created a sense of discomfort that led to the creation of the shrine to Minerva at the gate, in order to protect the gate and watch over travellers passing through it. Likewise, at the other lengthy gates of Pompeii this liminality may have been the motivation for the location of their various shrines.

⁷⁴² Pina Polo (2003) has proposed Minerva's role as a protective deity elsewhere. Van der Graaff & Ellis (2017) have identified Minerva as being a protective deity at Pompeii in particular.

⁷⁴³ Flower (2017: 150) has identified how such shrines, and especially in the form of niches, can be found associated with the city wall, gates, cult buildings and entrances to the Forum, in a way that made clear that "Gods watched over entrances to the city and to its main spaces and buildings."

⁷⁴⁴ See Chapter 3 for a more detailed discussion of gates in relation to the urban boundary.

⁷⁴⁵ Estimate calculated using modern average walking speeds (unladen) to establish a lower (16.9 seconds) and upper (22.4 seconds) estimate for the time taken to travel through the 30m of gate, but is unable to factor in variables like loads being carried, or the effects of traffic on movement. On walking speeds, see Murtagh et al. 2021.

Functionally, this renovation of the Porta Marina balanced the dual necessities of a traditional city gate: the need for traffic and pedestrians to be able to travel through the gate with minimal disruption, and the need to be able to prevent access in the event of an attack. Considering how soon after the Sullan siege of the city the Porta Marina was renovated, and the possible increase in perceived insecurity caused by the Spartacan revolt in the 70s B.C.E., it is unsurprising the Porta Marina was equipped with doors and a gate as closure mechanisms. However, there is no evidence of additional defensive features such as flanking towers that might have provided extra defensive capability.



Figure 5.10 - Niche in the Porta Marina, viewed from the north-west (Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 8.4).



Figure 5.11 - Statuary fragments/reconstruction of the statue of Minerva from the niche (Van der Graaff & Ellis 2017: Figure 7. Original drawing: Von Rohden 1880 plate 31).

While the Porta Marina was relatively well positioned for defence, this suggests that defence was not the primary motivation for renovating the gate. This is perhaps the result of Pompeii's new status as a Roman colony and a perceived feeling of safety as a result, or alternately as a means of ensuring that the city could not once more be used for opposition to the Roman state. In either case, the fact that defence was a reduced priority at the time of the renovation of the Porta Marina is further evidenced by the encroachment of multiple structures towards and across the line of the city wall itself. Since the

wall was compromised in this way, extensive reinforcements of the gates would have had limited effectiveness in securing the city from any attack.

Instead, the provision of the Porta Marina with multiple passages – the first gate of this kind at Pompeii – suggests that the design was intended to divide pedestrian and wheeled/animal traffic. This may have allowed for easier movement through this area, especially for pedestrians who would not be stopped by any potential queuing of other traffic trying to use the main passageway. The narrowness of the passages would not have allowed completely free movement through the gateway, and it may still have represented a major bottleneck in the traffic system of this area, where wheeled vehicles would have to slow and potentially stop. Multiple arches became common in the design of city gates across the Roman Empire in the Augustan and early Imperial period and would remain so for the rest of antiquity,⁷⁴⁶ but the Porta Marina offers an early surviving example of the type that features none of the symmetry that is usual of later Roman city gates. It is possible that the renovations to the Porta Marina were an early experimentation with this design and its possible benefits for improving traffic flow, while coinciding with the perceived security that meant multiple openings at gateways were viewed less as a potential weakness in the defensive system but a potential means of allowing easier access. However, its unusual features are also, most likely, the result of the adaptation of the gate from an existing structure rather than it being built from scratch. Due to the damage to the plasterwork, it is impossible to comment on precisely how the Porta Marina's renovation was finished and whether the plasterwork was used to emphasise certain features that might have created a more monumental and impressive finish, which may have echoed the styles of plasterwork used in other major public buildings such as the Basilica.

After its renovation the Porta Marina would have been elevated in appearance and impact, with the addition of the outer vaults and the clear division of the two passages that would have given the impression of the gate being larger and more significant than a single-arched design. Whether the shrine in the main passage replaced an earlier shrine at the site or was newly

⁷⁴⁶ This has been associated with the increasing prioritisation of traffic flow over defence (Van Tilburg 2008: 134-135).

built, its presence signals that the Porta Marina was divinely protected and associated with the deity who protected this gateway, further increasing its cultural significance. The unusual length of the Porta Marina would, however, have conformed to the type established by the earlier Samnite gates with a particularly long passageway, and continued to emphasise the visual and conceptual connection between the Porta Marina and the Forum by channelling movement and the line of sight.

Discussion.

Cornelis van Tilburg has suggested that the Porta Marina is an early example of the prioritisation of traffic over the demands of defensive capabilities in the form of a Roman gate renovation.⁷⁴⁷ However, I believe that the form of the Porta Marina was also motivated by a desire to provide a suitably impressive entrance to the city in an area closely connected to the civic and religious life of the new colony, demonstrating the role of city gates as an urban monument. While the multiple-arched design may have eased traffic flow, it also adds to the monumentality of the gateway, giving the impression of greater overall size and architectural significance. The provision of doors and an iron gate at the Porta Marina suggests that the ability to prevent access was still key to the function and conception of a gate at this time, even if its defensive capabilities were not actually strengthened by the renovation. In terms of the prioritisation of traffic flow, the simplest solution to a gate hindering traffic would have been to remove the gate entirely and allow the use of the entire span of the road and the pavement. As seen at the contemporary Temple of Venus, the removal of sections of city wall was not unprecedented at Pompeii, and given the narrow passages of the Porta Marina it is not clear that the renovation would actually have allowed freer movement for traffic. The fact that the gate was retained and renovated instead suggests that this structure was felt to be too important to the city to be removed. In conjunction with my study of the importance of the city gate to Roman urbanism, I propose that the importance of marking the urban boundary with a suitable monument – that signalled both the

⁷⁴⁷ Van Tilburg 2008: 135.

urban boundary and the city as a whole – was a major factor in the design of, and completion of, the renovation of the Porta Marina.

In addition to the cultural significance of city walls and the urban boundary in Roman and Italian cultures, Pompeii had a long history of being surrounded by a city wall, and the wall and its gates therefore would have been a significant part of how the city was conceived of by its population and those approaching the city. The damaged wall and gates would not have presented the city as a successful colony. City gates, as the point of arrival for travellers were key representative monuments, signalling the wealth and status of a city, and could dominate the eyeline as a person approached and then entered the city. Given the probable damage to the Porta Marina during the Sullan siege, its monumental appearance would have been compromised, especially when compared to the new monumental buildings which were being constructed in this area at the time. The importance of portraying Pompeii as a prosperous colony that was bounded by walls would have been a strong factor in determining that the Porta Marina should be renovated rather than left in its previous form or demolished.

The unusual form of the Porta Marina compared to other gate renovations may be the result of its comparatively early date in the first century B.C.E., at a time when the majority of city gates comprised of single-arched portals that had been constructed in earlier centuries. The division of the previous gate into asymmetrical passages created an early example of the multi-arched gate, but without the symmetry typical of later examples. It may be the result of a particular adaptation to the volume of traffic using the gate and limiting factors in the available land to build the gate itself. The unusually long, passage-like corridors of the gate should be understood as the result of this adaptation of the existing structure and the localised tradition of gate architecture at Pompeii. The provision of the shrine at the entrance to the Porta Marina suggests that the Porta Marina, like other city gates with associated shrines at Pompeii, was of important cultural status through its religious association, but also that the length of these gates possibly invoked feelings of insecurity at the length of the liminal space that may have required the protection of the deities being invoked.

The fact that the Porta Marina was prioritised for renovation in the early colonial period may have been the result of damage resulting from the Sullan siege. However, there is little evidence of major structural damage, and damage was also likely at the Porta Ercolano, which also underwent heavy artillery fire and was not renovated until the late first century C.E. Instead, I propose that the Porta Marina's relationship to the new construction projects in the Forum and along the *via Marina* following 80 B.C.E. was the primary motivation for the renovation of this gate. These religious and civic buildings, even if they were not yet complete at the time of the Porta Marina's renovation, were clearly intended to become the heart of Pompeii in the colonial period. The construction itself would require access for a large volume of building material and a large workforce to be able to access this area of the city, much of which may have travelled through the Porta Marina due to its proximity to the Forum. This traffic, and that accessing these buildings after their completion, may have increased and illustrated the need to renovate the Porta Marina, to provide a potentially more effective route for traffic to flow through by separating pedestrian and wheeled traffic.

However, construction related traffic was only a short-term factor in the renovation of the gate and its design. A more permanent influence that likely prompted the renovation of the Porta Marina was its close physical relationship to such major buildings and the node of the Forum would have meant that this gate came under particular scrutiny when considering its impact on this increasingly monumental landscape. The Porta Marina's renovation acted as a monument signifying the status of Pompeii and its citizens, as well as removing traces of the siege which had led to the foundation of the colony. As a case study of gate renovation, the Porta Marina provides a valuable example of an early renovated multiple-arched gateway, that clearly demonstrates the impact of local tradition on the form of the gate. Importantly, it also demonstrates the fact that gates would be renovated to enhance their monumental impact even at such minor cities as Pompeii, and shortly after the foundation of the colony, which suggests that its renovation was a high priority comparable with other developments in and around the Forum area.

5.3 – The Porta Ercolano.

Located at the north-western tip of Pompeii's walled circuit (see Figure 5.2), the Porta Ercolano also underwent a substantial renovation during the Roman period.⁷⁴⁸ This gate sat astride one of the major roads accessing Pompeii, the *via Consolare*, which branched into the *via dei Sepolcri* and the *via Superiore* shortly outside the city. These roads provided a significant route for movement between Pompeii and other major settlements in the Bay of Naples such as Herculaneum and Naples, and from Naples this provided access to the *via Appia* which led directly to Rome. Due to its location at the entry of a major road, and the significant extra-mural suburb which grew up outside the Porta Ercolano, the gate has been labelled the 'front-door' of the city.⁷⁴⁹ This gate was the first major public monument that was visible when entering the city by this route, and so would have had a major role as a monumental threshold of the city. The Porta Ercolano would also have had a high volume of traffic regularly using this route to enter and exit the city, making it a particularly busy area of the city.

This case study will explore the development of the node surrounding the Porta Ercolano both inside and outside the city walls, with particular emphasis on the period of the Roman colony at Pompeii, from 80 B.C.E. to 79 C.E. which is most relevant to the renovation of the gate in the late first century C.E. This helps to give a fuller picture of the motivations for the transformation of the Porta Ercolano and the adoption of a more monumental design of the gate in this final renovation in comparison to its previous forms. The study of this area of the city in *Regio VI* and the suburbs immediately outside the Porta Ercolano can be carried out in depth thanks to recent excavations which have focused on this area, and allow a rich understanding of the types of activity which took place in the area surrounding the Porta Ercolano. This allows for an understanding of the Porta Ercolano's renovation in its proper context.

⁷⁴⁸ I shall use the name Porta Ercolano throughout, following academic convention to use the names that were assigned by the excavators rather than the ancient name (the Porta Salis, to be discussed below, p.249) for clarity and consistency.

⁷⁴⁹ Emmerson 2020: 138.

The Development of the Porta Ercolano to 80 B.C.E.

A gate existed at the site of the Porta Ercolano since the sixth century B.C.E.,⁷⁵⁰ when the construction of the earliest city wall encircled this area of the north-west of the city,⁷⁵¹ and presumably respected the location of an existing road accessing the growing settlement of Pompeii. From this point onwards, the Porta Ercolano remained a fixed point in the Pompeian landscape with only minor adjustments to its form and alignment in subsequent renovations. This sixth-century gate was likely similar to those gates seen elsewhere at Pompeii, with travertine bastions flanking an opening through the city wall which could then be closed and controlled by a closure mechanism such as a door.⁷⁵²

A major factor in the importance of the Porta Ercolano comes from its position on a significant road connecting Pompeii to other key towns and cities in the regional economy of the Bay of Naples. Unlike other roads which led from gates in the north of Pompeii, the *via Consolare* connected Pompeii to regional towns, cities and the wider Italian road network.⁷⁵³ This road, leading north-west from the city, would have connected Pompeii with Herculaneum, Puteoli, Oplontis and Naples, which were important locations for inter-urban trade throughout Pompeii's history. It also likely predated the construction of buildings in *Regio VI* at Pompeii, as the route of the *via Consolare* does not align with other north-south axes of the street-grid in this area (see Figure 5.12). This indicates that the two were not planned at the same time, and resulted in features such as the tapering shape of *Insula VI.1*. Although the *via Consolare* does not lead directly to Pompeii's Forum, Coarelli has proposed that the original continuation of the road may have led to the Triangular Forum and the Doric Temple found there,⁷⁵⁴ which was an important cult site that the town may

⁷⁵⁰ Van der Graaff 2018:2.

⁷⁵¹ There may have been an earlier fortification that surrounded the 'Altstadt' area of the city – now roughly analogous with *Regio VII* – but this is irrelevant to the discussion of the Porta Ercolano since it did not include this area.

⁷⁵² See above, pp.209-216, on the Porta Nola for instance.

⁷⁵³ The *via Vesuvio*, leading out of the Porta Vesuvio by comparison, despite being a key element of the internal street grid of the city leads directly to the countryside to the north of the city and the slopes of Vesuvius (Figure 5.1 & 5.2).

⁷⁵⁴ Coarelli 2002: 29.

have grown up around.⁷⁵⁵ This would suggest that the *via Consolare* was used to visit these cult sites and connect them with other towns in the area. As the city developed, the internal layout of streets meant that the *via Consolare* no longer provided direct access to either the Forum or the Triangular Forum, but was still a major axis for travel and transportation into the city.⁷⁵⁶

Providing access from the north-west of the city, the Porta Ercolano therefore would have been the main entry route for travellers coming to/from the nearby towns already mentioned, and the important agricultural regions to the north of the city. This area is particularly fertile for farming due to trace minerals found in the volcanic soils near Vesuvius. The Pompeiian hinterland and Campanian region more generally was well known for its production of grapes – and wine – and the quality of its onions, as well as many varieties of other foodstuffs including legumes, pulses, herbs, greens and olives.⁷⁵⁷ The eruption of Vesuvius left little evidence of grain cultivation in comparison to other crops, but grain likely would have been harvested before the eruption and so left few traces in the fields.⁷⁵⁸ Furthermore, staple crops such as grains and olives are evidenced by the presence of millstones at many farms in the Campanian region, which may have been producing products such as olive oil and milling flour on a small scale.⁷⁵⁹ Therefore, it can be assumed that such staple crops were being grown as they were necessary to maintain both the rural and urban populations.

The proliferation of bakeries with mills found in the northern areas of Pompeii suggest that there may have been a strong connection between this region and rural farms producing grain for sale to the city for the consumption of the urban population.⁷⁶⁰ Much of the produce of the farms in these areas would likely have been transported into the nearby towns such as Pompeii in order to sell to the urban market, or directly transported to property owners who owned suburban estates but lived within the city for most of the year. This would have resulted in the Porta Ercolano being the entry point to the city for a considerable

⁷⁵⁵ Coarelli 2002: 32.

⁷⁵⁶ Geertman 2007: 86.

⁷⁵⁷ De Simone 2016: 33, Table 1.8.

⁷⁵⁸ De Simone: 41.

⁷⁵⁹ De Simone: 40.

⁷⁶⁰ Laurence 2007: Map 4.1.

volume of wheeled traffic or pack animals transporting such goods into the city, and subsequently exiting the city.

A particularly significant natural product of the region to the north-west of Pompeii was salt, which was an important, and expensive, commodity used for preserving and seasoning food. Columella refers to salt production in the area to the north-west of Pompeii,⁷⁶¹ suggesting there were salt-marshes which were managed to extract the salt for use and sale. Oscan epigraphic evidence also suggests a strong connection between the north-west sector of Pompeii and the production and use of salt, referring to the existence of the *Viu Sarinu* (the salt road) which may correspond to the *via Consolare*,⁷⁶² and the *Veru Sarinu* (the salt gate) which corresponds with the Porta Ercolano.⁷⁶³ Later Latin graffiti inscriptions have been found in *Regio VI* which refer to the *Porta Salis* –⁷⁶⁴ continuing the name of the gate as ‘the salt gate’ in Latin – and to the *Salinienses*,⁷⁶⁵ most likely a voting group based on their context in electoral notices,⁷⁶⁶ which preserves the connection between the people of this area and the production and trade of salt. The high concentration of commercial properties with vats and cisterns found in *Regio VI*, where every commercial property dated before the mid-first century featured a vat/cistern at some point, suggests that this area may have been a hub for the salting of fish.⁷⁶⁷ The fact that the gate, the road and the electoral body were all named in relation to the salt industry clearly implies the close connection between this area of the city and salt trade and production. The significance of the gate being named in this way and its relationship to the region’s association with salt will be discussed in greater detail below.

As well as serving as the key entrance point to Pompeii for goods from the north, the Porta Ercolano would also have served as the exit point for goods

⁷⁶¹ Columella 10.316.

⁷⁶² Vetter 1953: No. 10; Coarelli (2002: 32) proposes the association between the continuation of the *via Consolare* and the *Viu Sarinu*. This makes sense on the grounds of the direction of travel of the *via Consolare* on exiting the city which would take it towards the direction of the salt fields, but cannot be confirmed.

⁷⁶³ Vetter 1953: No.s 23 & 24. The locations of these inscriptions make the most obvious and closely associated gate the Porta Ercolano.

⁷⁶⁴ *CIL* IV.9159.

⁷⁶⁵ *CIL* IV.128.

⁷⁶⁶ Henderson 2015: 116; Ling (1990: 204-5) on the context of these inscriptions in electoral graffiti relating to voting districts.

⁷⁶⁷ Robinson 2016: 249.

that were produced or traded in the city that were being distributed to those same areas. This would have meant that goods brought into the city via the port that might be taken for use or trade to towns, cities or private properties to the north of Pompeii would also have exited the city through the Porta Ercolano. As the city's connections with Mediterranean trade intensified in the Roman period, the volume of trade coming into the port would only have increased.

Additionally, because of the *via Consolare's* connections within the city with east-west roads such as the *via di Nola*, which provided access to the rural hinterland and towns such as Nola, these roads could have been a key transport route for goods brought into the city by other roads. The *via Consolare* would therefore have been a comparatively busy road, with a high volume of traffic, including wheeled traffic and pack animals laden with goods, that may have created crowded roads and a busy atmosphere as this traffic attempted to navigate the area of the *via Consolare* approaching the gate in either direction. This would all have contributed to the Porta Ercolano being a busy access point for traffic both entering and leaving the city.

However, the location and orientation of the Porta Ercolano mean that the gate was approached along a relatively accessible plateau on top of the ancient lava flow on which Pompeii sits. This made the location exposed to attack, compared to other gates in the south or west of the city like the Porta Marina, which sat atop steeper slopes.⁷⁶⁸ As such, we might expect that extra fortifications would be provided to this gate in order to prioritise its defence;⁷⁶⁹ but none were added to the Porta Ercolano or its immediate vicinity. This is most likely the result of the fact it was not perceived as necessary to add further defences to the gate, demonstrating clearly that defensive considerations were not the only factor in the development of the fortifications in this area. The relatively level terrain outside the Porta Ercolano made it an ideal location for extra-mural burials, as was common at most of the gates at Pompeii, but also for extra-mural development and building projects that would become

⁷⁶⁸ Van der Graaff 2018: 27.

⁷⁶⁹ The towers added to the city wall in the late second/early first century B.C.E. cluster on the north and east sides of the city, (Van der Graaff 2018: 2, 66; Figure 5.2) suggesting they were intended to provide additional defence to these areas that were easier to approach.

increasingly important in transforming the landscape surrounding the Porta Ercolano in the first century B.C.E. and first century C.E.

Few specifics can be gleaned about the nature of the area surrounding the Porta Ercolano when it was first constructed in the sixth century B.C.E., beyond what has already been outlined. While the volume of traffic using the gate would have been less, due to a smaller population size and less long-distance trade, many of the same relationships between the town and its surrounding countryside would have been established at this early point. Travellers bringing agricultural produce, salt, and items for trade, as well as visitors to the cult sites at Pompeii, would have travelled this route, and the Porta Ercolano's status within Pompeii would still have been as a relatively major gate. However, there is no indication that its status was elevated above those of the other city gates architecturally, or in terms of the development of specific localised features.

Subsequent renovations and improvements to the wall and gates of Pompeii throughout the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. established the form of the city wall and the gates that are found elsewhere at Pompeii, and so provide a model for the likely original form of the Porta Ercolano before its renovation. It is most likely that the gate was a single-passaged form as is seen at other gates at Pompeii, such as the Porta Nola. These renovations, which increased the overall height and width of the wall, would have increased its defensive capability,⁷⁷⁰ but would have also increased its monumentality, making it visible from a further distance and employing different building stones to create a distinctive two-toned impression to the wall.⁷⁷¹ The extension of the gate to match its height and length would also have increased the impact of the gate, ultimately leading to the creation of the 'tripartite' gates already described. Importantly for the Porta Ercolano, during these renovation phases, the gate that once stood at the *Torre di Mercurio*, close to the Porta Ercolano, was closed,⁷⁷² which would have intensified the flow of traffic to the two gates either side as travellers found alternative routes into the city at the Porta Ercolano and the Porta Vesuvio.

⁷⁷⁰ Van der Graaff 2018: 44.

⁷⁷¹ Van der Graaff 2018: 34, 49.

⁷⁷² Van der Graaff 2018: 46.

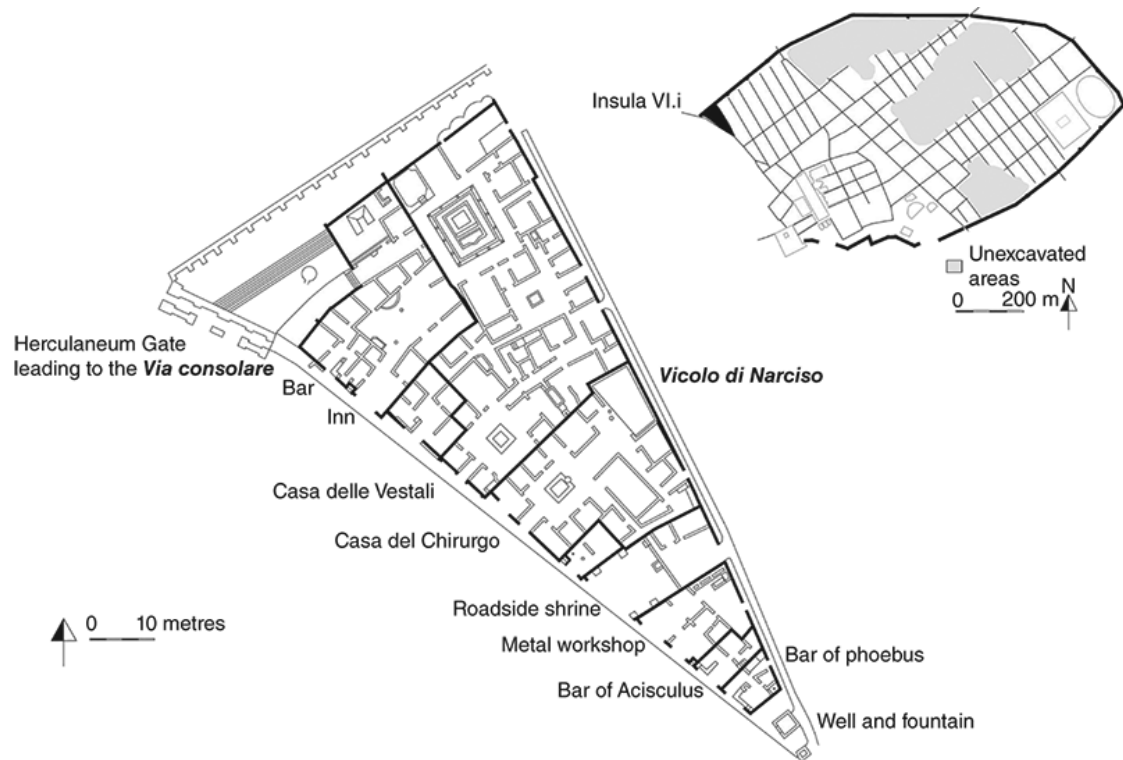


Figure 5.12 - Map of Insula VI.1, Pompeii (Robinson 2016: Figure 8.1).

From the second century B.C.E. onwards, the archaeological evidence can provide a more conclusive indication of what the area surrounding the Porta Ercolano actually looked like and was used for, and thus the types of activity taking place around the gate. This period also corresponds with a notable phase of new building both inside and outside the city wall. Pompeii was increasingly important as a local trading centre and port, which would have brought wealth into the city. The increasingly important relationship with Rome as the seat of political power would also have increased the importance of the *via Consolare* because its connection to the regional road network meant that the Porta Ercolano was the entry point for those travelling to Pompeii from Naples or Rome by road. This made the *via Consolare* an attractive location to place buildings such as monumental tombs or large private residences where they could be observed, and could therefore promote the legacy of particular individuals, families or curate a favourable impression of the city overall.

Among the earliest of these developments was the construction of the Villa of the Mysteries, located roughly 300m from the Porta Ercolano, of which

the earliest phase can be dated to the mid-second century B.C.E.⁷⁷³ This villa may have developed as an agricultural property, and retained its productive economic role, as demonstrated by the pressing equipment found within the villa at the time of the eruption, most likely used for the production of wine.⁷⁷⁴ However, the property was also a luxury residence, and subsequent phases of expansion and decoration suggest that the property was owned by a family that was part of the social elite at Pompeii.⁷⁷⁵ This large and imposing villa complex overlooked the road leading away from the city, and was constructed on a large block foundation that raised it above the ground level.⁷⁷⁶ A series of gardens and garden rooms harnessed this foundation to create terracing that allowed views to the west towards the coast.⁷⁷⁷ The size of the villa and its position on top of this foundation block would have meant it was highly visible in the surrounding landscape, especially from the nearby road, clearly demonstrating the wealth and importance of the owners. It is likely that the owners, and slaves of the family, regularly travelled between the villa and the city transferring items and taking produce like wine for sale or consumption within the city. Other elite locals may also have travelled to the villa for dining or to visit friends and conduct business, demonstrating some of the types of traffic may have regularly travelled through the Porta Ercolano, between the city and the suburb.

Although the land outside the Porta Ercolano was used for funerary activity, before the early first century B.C.E. it had relatively little impact on the landscape compared to later periods. Before the Roman colony, inhumation burials with simple grave markers were the preferred means of funerary deposition at Pompeii.⁷⁷⁸ As a result, there was relatively little visual impact from funerary monuments, but we must remember that these funerals were often significant occasions, during which family members and friends processed out of the city to attend the grave site. Here they would have hosted eulogies, made

⁷⁷³ Guidobaldi et al. 2002: 346. Previous chronology established by Maiuri had presumed that this, and the other extra-mural villas at the Porta Ercolano (discussed below) had developed from agricultural properties in the fourth century B.C.E. and gradually increased in status to become luxury villas. However, excavation at the Villa of the Mysteries and the other villas have provided no evidence of such an early date.

⁷⁷⁴ Guidobaldi et al. 2002: 346-50.

⁷⁷⁵ Guidobaldi et al. 2002: 346-50.

⁷⁷⁶ Clarke 1991: 19.

⁷⁷⁷ Adams 2012: 62.

⁷⁷⁸ Campbell 2014: 32.

offerings to the dead and even eaten meals. Such rituals were then repeated at key points in the religious calendar to honour the dead with libations and meals at the grave site, so the extra-mural burial area at the Porta Ercolano would periodically have been busy with funerary and commemorative activity that would have filled the area with noise and movement. This would have affected the perception of the gate, and perhaps linked the area and funerary activity. However, the lack of large funerary monuments would have meant that the contrast between the countryside outside the city and the tall, formidable architecture of the Porta Ercolano and surrounding walls was stark, further emphasising the monumentality of the city gate as a landmark and clearly defining the boundary of the city.

Within the city, high-status residences lined the *via Consolare*, with the expansion of the *Casa delle Vestali* (*Insula* VI.1.7) becoming one of the largest private houses in Pompeii from the second to the mid-first century B.C.E.⁷⁷⁹ The footprints of the *Casa di Sallustio* (*Insula* VI.2.4) and *Casa del Forno* (*Insula* VI.3.3) also date from the second century B.C.E.,⁷⁸⁰ and suggest a period of increasing wealth at Pompeii that supported the growth of such large and prestigious private residences. While most of these properties were oriented inwards and so did not outwardly display the rich decoration that was common to the interiors, the properties likely belonged to important figures within the city who could accrue such wealth. As such, the homes may often have been visited by the clients of these families and those who conducted business with or for them, as well as guests and social visitors. Such activity, and views through doorways, may have given a hint of the wealth and status of the property's owners and the construction and design of such properties was always intended to demonstrate the wealth and importance of their owners. This traffic, and that supplying these houses with goods, would also have added to the regular traffic along the road.

However, as is the case elsewhere in the Roman world, these private residences are combined with commercial properties, and the second century also saw a boom in the construction of shops and workshops alongside the *via*

⁷⁷⁹ Robinson 2016: 250.

⁷⁸⁰ www.pompeisites.org/sito-archaeologico/casa-del-forno; www.pompeisites.org/sito-archaeologico/casa-di-sallustio.

Consolare. A roadside position would be beneficial for these shops to attract passing trade, and for access to deliveries of goods and raw materials. For the period before the second century B.C.E., the presence of workshops featuring large tanks and cisterns, which may have been related to the fish-salting industry have already been highlighted. These workshops seem to have largely gone out of use by the mid-first century B.C.E. at Pompeii,⁷⁸¹ possibly as the result of increasing competition from Mediterranean trade routes, or the movement of such activity to another area such as closer to the port itself.⁷⁸² Other properties may have functioned as shops for selling food or drink, as is the case for the later periods at Pompeii, or a wide range of other goods, and productive workshops.

It is generally assumed that the transformations at the Porta Ercolano were, to this point, consistent with those seen at the majority of other gates at Pompeii, both in the gate itself and the surrounding landscape. At this stage there was no evidence of a heightened status that might explain its later renovation, and its form was probably very similar to other city gates at Pompeii. However, this area's accessibility, and road connections both inside and outside the city clearly offered an attractive location for shops and workshops because of the accessibility of goods, raw materials and customers. Similar appeal extended to private residences, where the properties on the *via Consolare* and the Villa of the Mysteries suggest that the area was able to attract wealthy private citizens. The addition of towers to the wall also demonstrates that the Pompeians recognised the defensive vulnerability of this area of the city. Already, the area of the Porta Ercolano was impacted by competing social, economic and defensive demands and influences.

Furthermore, the *ēituns* inscriptions, which seem to have been used to direct Pompeian defenders to muster points during the Sullan siege, used the Porta Ercolano as a key landmark for the spatial organisation of this district.⁷⁸³ These painted inscriptions were found throughout the city, and seemed to have directed defenders or residents of different areas of the city towards certain

⁷⁸¹ Cool 2016: 15. The period post-colonial foundation saw such cisterns in the properties as *Insula VI.1.13* and *VI.1.23* filled in during this period, suggesting a change in usage of the space.

⁷⁸² Ellis 2011: 79.

⁷⁸³ Vetter 1953: No.s 23 & 24; Henderson 2015: 112.

points; presumably for the defence of the city.⁷⁸⁴ The inscriptions use features such as houses, wall towers and city gates to both organise and describe regions within the city,⁷⁸⁵ as in Vetter 23 included below.

“eksuk.amvíanud.eítuns
 anter.tiurrí.xii.íní.ver(u)
 sarínu.puf.faamat
 mr.aadíriis.v26

From this area go
 between the 12th tower and the
 Sarina gate where
 Maras Atrius, son of Vibius is stationed.”⁷⁸⁶

The structures referred to must have been highly visible and well-known, and the easy recognition of them indicates why such major buildings as city gates would be used. This suggests such buildings were of major conceptual importance to understanding the city, and illustrates the importance of the Porta Ercolano (among other city gates used in these inscriptions) as a major local landmark. These trends provide early indication of those which would continue into the Roman period and see the development of a flourishing suburb and intra-mural neighbourhood throughout the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E.

The Porta Ercolano in the Colonial Period.

In the first century B.C.E., Pompeii’s status changed greatly with the foundation of the colony.⁷⁸⁷ The siege itself caused significant damage to the city and its fortifications, and large tracts of the city wall were damaged by artillery fire and slingshot, including the area immediately adjacent to the Porta Ercolano.⁷⁸⁸ The foundation of the colony seems to have led to a period of rejuvenation at Pompeii, and may have been a factor in Pompeii’s increasing importance in the geopolitical and economic landscape of Campania. By the

⁷⁸⁴ Henderson 2015: 99.

⁷⁸⁵ Henderson 2015: 103-110.

⁷⁸⁶ Vetter 1958: No. 23, translation by Henderson 2015. The ‘Sarina gate’ referred to here is the Porta Sarina/Ercolano.

⁷⁸⁷ Ling 2007: 120.

⁷⁸⁸ Van der Graaff 2018: 65, 113.

mid-first century B.C.E., Pompeii's port was a major destination for trade from Mediterranean sea routes that connected it with Spain, North Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean and the rest of Italy.⁷⁸⁹ Pompeii's port and its increasing size and significance also made it an important destination for goods transported by land or river from the towns, cities and rural areas of Campania.⁷⁹⁰ The links between Pompeii and Rome were further strengthened by the foundation of the colony, which initially tied the veterans who had supported Sulla to the dictator's patronage networks at Rome,⁷⁹¹ and then by economic, familial and political ties to the centre of the Empire.⁷⁹²

The area surrounding the Porta Ercolano underwent significant transformation during this period, including the development of a substantial extra-mural suburb. This development continued earlier trends at the Porta Ercolano for increasing status and display in the area, and was possibly a result of the privileged location of this gate on the most direct road route to Rome and Naples, but was facilitated by the increasing wealth of the city and its elite residents. This area in particular saw a growth in monumental building and tomb architecture, while commerce, production and trade thrived both inside and outside the Porta Ercolano. This would ultimately be complemented by the renovation of the Porta Ercolano itself in the period after 62 C.E.

Approaching the city by the *via dei Sepolcri*, one of the first observable major changes to Pompeii's suburban landscape would have been the new trend for building monumental tombs, evident in contemporary Roman funerary practices.⁷⁹³ In contrast to the inhumations marked by small *columellae* busts made of wood or stone, which had been the norm at Pompeii before the foundation of the colony,⁷⁹⁴ the period following 80 B.C.E. saw a boom in the construction of substantial above ground tombs which gathered around roads leading out of the city and on peripheral extra-mural roads that encircled the

⁷⁸⁹ Raper 1979: 145; Zanker 2001: 32.

⁷⁹⁰ Raper 1979: 145.

⁷⁹¹ Dedicatory inscriptions ascribe the building of the amphitheatre, for example, to *duoviri* Quinctius Valgus and Marcus Porcius, who were probably appointed to these roles by Sulla's nephew P. Cornelius Sulla, and had most likely served as senior officers in the legion colonising the city (Welch 1994: 61).

⁷⁹² Welch 1994: 68.

⁷⁹³ Campbell 2014: 33, 38-9.

⁷⁹⁴ Campbell 2014: 32-33.

city.⁷⁹⁵ Of the 30 monumental tombs which have been discovered outside the Porta Ercolano to date, only 2 can be securely dated to the period immediately following the colony's foundation,⁷⁹⁶ but this still represented a notable and highly visible shift in the nature of burials in this area compared to pre-Roman periods. These tombs, one an 'altar' tomb and the other an 'aedicula' tomb would have been very obvious in the landscape as they stood above ground and were constructed from stone, and would have been designed deliberately to catch the attention of passers-by using the road.⁷⁹⁷

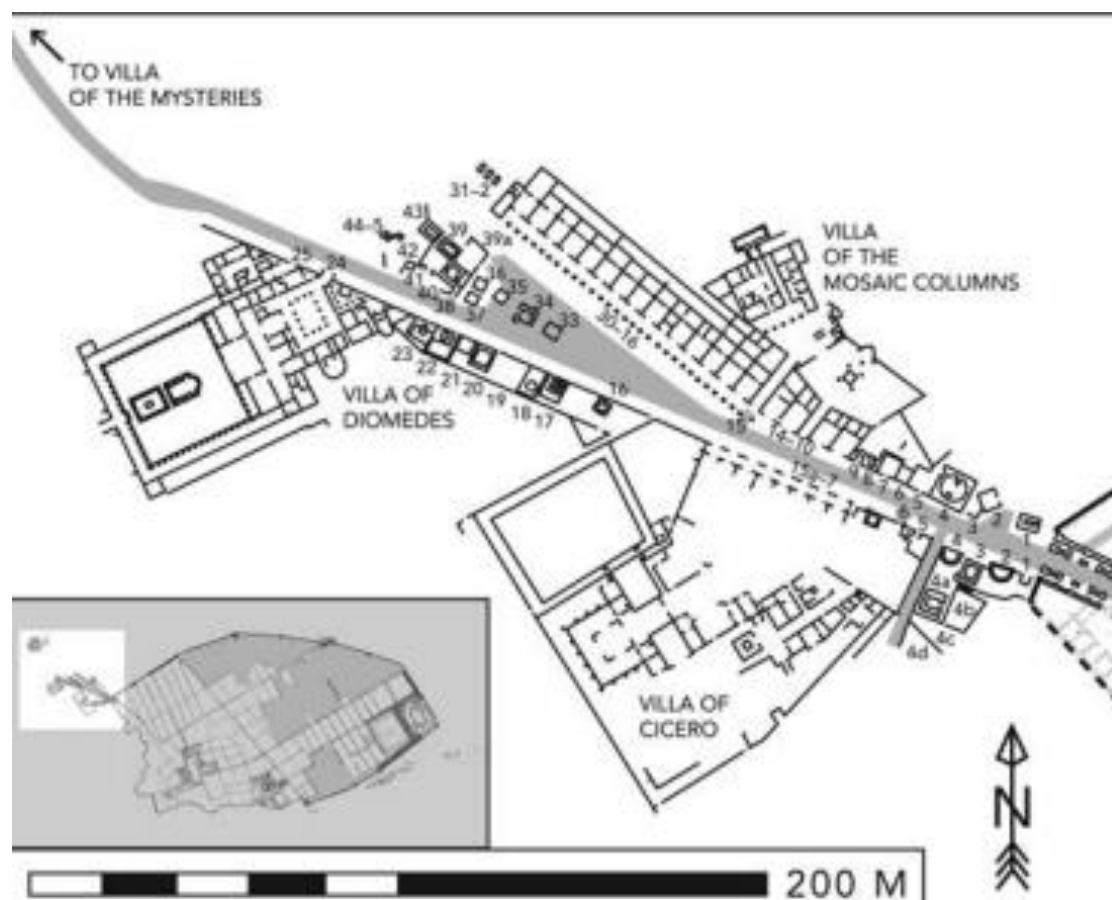


Figure 5.13 - Map of the Porta Ercolano Suburb, Pompeii (Plan by G. Tibbott, after Dobbins & Foss 2007).

⁷⁹⁵ Campbell 2014: 33-38 (on spatial distribution of tombs at Pompeii), 51; Cormack 2007: 586.

⁷⁹⁶ Campbell 2014: Table 3.1.

⁷⁹⁷ Campbell (2014: 38) gives the example of how several tombs were raised on foundations to make them more easily visible from the road. Monumental tombs more generally were intended to signal wealth, prestige and record achievements, for all of which they required an 'audience' of passers-by (Campbell 2014: 15).

This trend would continue, with the Porta Ercolano consistently being among the Pompeian *necropoleis* with the highest percentage of new monumental tombs constructed, with 46% of the total monumental tombs built at Pompeii between 62 and 79 C.E. being built at the Porta Ercolano.⁷⁹⁸ This coincided with the period of the renovation of the gate itself. These new tombs lined the *via dei Sepolcri* and the fork of the roads created by changes to the road network outside the Porta Ercolano in the Augustan period.⁷⁹⁹ These tombs were mostly constructed of stone, and featured inscriptions naming the deceased and their achievements. A variety of styles were used, which all included above-ground structures which could be decorated with sculptures, in stark contrast to previous burial practice at Pompeii. Visibility was a key factor in the design of these tombs, with some including large foundation platforms that raised up the tombs located further down the slope, to ensure they were visible from the road.⁸⁰⁰ The increasing number of highly visible tombs would have meant that the area surrounding the gate was dominated by these monuments. This would have strengthened the pre-existing association between the area beyond the gate and funerary activity, as well as commemorative rituals and interactions, by the visual dominance of these tombs.

Many of the monumental tombs created at Pompeii actually encouraged the interaction with the tomb by both family members and strangers, by incorporating features such as the benches of the *schola* tombs. These uniquely Pompeian tomb types consisted of a large curved bench, sometimes featuring an inscription commemorating the deceased – as at the tomb of Mamia outside the Porta Ercolano –⁸⁰¹ which were intended to encourage family members and others to spend time at the tomb site.⁸⁰² Of the eight known *schola* tombs, two are located at the Porta Ercolano, and are associated with members of the highest social and political class at Pompeii.⁸⁰³ Such tombs also offered ideal locations for traders selling goods without a fixed stall to gather and attract custom, further encouraging commercial and social activity in the necropolis.

⁷⁹⁸ Campbell 2014: 43.

⁷⁹⁹ Dobbins & Foss 2007: Figure 37.1; for changes to road network see p.262.

⁸⁰⁰ Campbell 2014: 38.

⁸⁰¹ *CIL* X.998.

⁸⁰² Campbell 2014: 49.

⁸⁰³ Campbell 2014: 49. Other *schola* tombs are located at the Porta Nola (x2), Porta Vesuvio (x1), and Porta Stabia (x3).

While above-ground monumental tombs became much more common at Pompeii after the foundation of the colony, the Porta Ercolano necropolis had a particularly high proportion of high-status tombs associated with significant figures of Pompeii's history, such as the wealthy freedwoman Naevoleia Tyche.⁸⁰⁴ The high visibility of these tombs from the *via dei Sepolcri* would have meant that they were on display to traffic on this road, who could therefore be impressed by the wealth and status of these important families. Roadside locations, and particularly those near city gates, are common locations for tomb monuments, and they are found near all of the gates at Pompeii except for the Porta Marina. The Porta Ercolano would have been particularly important as a location for display as these tombs could display directly to travellers coming from Rome or Naples, to whom Pompeian local elites may have wished to display their personal status, that of their families and the wealth and status of the city as a whole.

However, in addition to its funerary nature, the area outside the Porta Ercolano developed a distinctly urban character, with the construction of rows of shops with colonnaded fronts on both sides of the *via dei Sepolcri* following the re-alignment of the road network. This was complemented by the construction of major private residences close to the city gate in the second and first centuries B.C.E., that co-existed with the necropolis to create a suburban blend of funerary and urban contexts. The residential and commercial use of the area was sometimes directly linked, as the shops to the south of the road backed onto the Villa of Cicero, meaning that the shops were probably constructed in order to rent to business owners or sell goods produced by the villa itself and capitalise on the road-side location.⁸⁰⁵ Sadly, their precise architectural relationship is unclear, since the Villa of Cicero has been reburied since its original excavation.⁸⁰⁶

The complex of colonnaded shops constructed to the north of the *via dei Sepolcri*, consist of almost identical rooms with wide openings onto the porticoed frontage that ran alongside the road.⁸⁰⁷ The building would also once

⁸⁰⁴ Campbell 2014: 120.

⁸⁰⁵ Emmerson 2020: 25.

⁸⁰⁶ Emmerson 2020: Chapter 2, footnote 18.

⁸⁰⁷ Zanella 2020: 289.

have had an upper floor, accessed by stairs, that might have consisted of more shops or perhaps additional storage or residential rooms belonging to the shops on the floor below.⁸⁰⁸ Archaeological remains indicate the use of some of these shops, with masonry counters in shops both north and south of the road which suggest they were used for selling food or drink to passing customers; one such shop on the south side of the street also had an oven, implying it was preparing food for sale on site.⁸⁰⁹ Shop 20 also displayed evidence of metalworking, while a series of connected rooms in Shops 28-30 were used as a ceramic production workshop that included dedicated spaces for shaping, drying and firing pottery.⁸¹⁰ The combination of commercial and industrial use for these workshops would have made them busy, vibrant environments, with deliveries of goods and raw materials leaving and arriving regularly, as well as customers exiting the city, or stopping on their arrival to buy or look at items for sale. This would have created near-constant activity and movement in the suburb, and made it feel like an extension of the city.

The construction of two major peri-urban villas, the Villa of the Mosaic Columns and the Villa of Diomedes, also took place in the Porta Ercolano suburb, demonstrating its use for elite residential purposes. While their exact dating is unknown, their earliest datable wall-paintings come from the mid-first century B.C.E.⁸¹¹ Along with the Villa of Cicero, this created a series of major private residences very close outside the city gate that is not seen at other gates at Pompeii, that would have further contributed to the extension of the extra-mural urban area. These villas may have originated as productive rural villas, as Maiuri proposed, but given their close proximity to the city itself, within 100m of the Porta Ercolano, this seems unlikely. Recent excavations have suggested that there were not fourth- or third-century phases to these villas, and instead they may have been originally constructed in the second or first centuries B.C.E. as extra-urban residential villas.⁸¹² The size and decoration of these luxurious private residences, included wall paintings, mosaics and the elaborate columns which gave the Villa of the Mosaic Columns its name, further

⁸⁰⁸ Emmerson 2020: 25; Zanella 2020: 291.

⁸⁰⁹ Emmerson 2020: 139.

⁸¹⁰ Emmerson 2020: 141; Zanella 2020: 294.

⁸¹¹ Emmerson 2020: 26.

⁸¹² Emmerson 2020: 24.

suggesting that these villas were primarily domestic rather than productive. While the interiors of these buildings were richly decorated, the facades of the two villas were occupied by shops and so would not have been as obvious to passers-by. The Villa of Diomedes also seems, based on the irregular angle of its façade, to have been adjusted following the changes to the layout of the *via Superiore* and *via dei Sepolcri* in the Augustan period, potentially lessening the effectiveness of its façade, but this would have been offset by the large scale of the property. However, the scale of the buildings and the regular traffic moving in and out as people visited these houses would have suggested that they were large and very important homes to anyone passing by, and further exhibited continuity with the intra-mural area.

The transformation of the area outside the Porta Ercolano saw the construction of major monumental tombs which lined the approaches to the gate, the construction of major private residences that would have dominated the landscape, and the construction of purpose-built economic units such as the colonnaded shops. This all suggests a major shift in the sorts of activities taking place in this area by the late first century C.E. These changes transformed the experience of the approach to the Porta Ercolano, creating an extra-mural suburb which lessened the visual impact of the gate and city wall as a marker of the urban boundary. While funerary activity and commemoration continued in the area outside the Porta Ercolano, these monuments now publicly displayed the prestige of particular families which may have attracted the attention of passers-by. The combination of monumental tomb architecture such as the *schola* tombs and the new residential and commercial properties would also have encouraged people to spend more time in the emerging suburb rather than simply travelling through this area. This may have contributed to an increase in traffic, and a wide variety of human activity such as shopping, travelling to work or homes in the suburb, visiting friends or patrons at the elite villas, or providing goods to supply these shops and residences. In addition to the existing, and potentially increased, impact of funerary and commemorative traditions in this area, all of this would have created a busy suburban environment full of sound, movement, smells and experiences associated with urban life. This would have continued the urban experience beyond the Porta Ercolano and blurred the traditional boundary of Pompeii.

Inside the city wall, *Regio VI* and particularly the area lining the *via Consolare* continued to benefit from the importance of this road as a major artery in the urban street network, and the opportunities for commerce and production this provided. A series of workshops were constructed as a unit in the first century B.C.E at the end of *Insula VI.1.*, the *Insula* immediately inside the Porta Ercolano.⁸¹³ The original function of these workshops, *Insula VI.1.14-20*, is unclear but they seem to have been used for production rather than just commerce, suggesting that this area remained an attractive location for trade and production. Metal-working is attested at properties in *Insula VI.3*,⁸¹⁴ and the workshops at *Insula VI.1.14-20* were later reconfigured in the mid-first century C.E. to comprise of two shops and a new large shrine located at this junction.⁸¹⁵ The presence of a public fountain at this junction,⁸¹⁶ as well as a *lares* shrine would have turned this junction into not only a busy area for traffic, but a place people would gather during daily life, and to give offerings to the *lares* and the *genius Augustus*.⁸¹⁷ This would have resulted in the formation of a node in the urban landscape in which this junction came to be a destination in its own right, and one important for understanding the communal space of *Regio VI*.

Many of the properties along the *via Consolare* also exploited their location to interact directly with traffic using this route. The shop fronts here opened onto the pavement, as is typical for Roman shops, and included counters for the sale of food and drinks that were oriented to be most visible to traffic entering the city along the *via Consolare*.⁸¹⁸ This further suggests that there was a sufficient stream of traffic entering the city to sustain multiple different food shops along a short stretch of road, highlighting the volume of traffic using this route and travelling through the Porta Ercolano. Other notable commercial properties in *Regio VI* include the division of the *Casa delle Vestali*, in order to create a separate stable block and rooms that most likely functioned as an inn, ideally located to cater to travellers arriving the city.⁸¹⁹ This first-century C.E. trend towards the commercialisation of private residences at

⁸¹³ Robinson 2016: 248.

⁸¹⁴ Monteix 2016: Figure 7.2.

⁸¹⁵ Robinson 2016: 254.

⁸¹⁶ Flower 2017: 151. As depicted in Mazois, 1824, volume 2, plate 2.1.

⁸¹⁷ Flower 2017: 151.

⁸¹⁸ Ellis 2004: Figure 7, 379-381.

⁸¹⁹ Robinson 2016: 254; DeFelice 2007: 477.

Pompeii is also seen with the installation of new ovens at the *Casa del Forno* and *Casa del Sallustio* elsewhere in *Regio VI*, which suggest either a new commercial use of the properties or an increase in production of bread for sale.⁸²⁰ Millstones found at several other properties along the *via Consolare* suggest that these properties were also involved in the production and sale of bread, probably capitalising on the easy connections between this area and the farmland to the north of the city for easy access to flour or grain as the raw product.⁸²¹

However, the private properties in the *insulae* surrounding the Porta Ercolano also confirm that the status of this area was still increasing, along with the wealth of its residents. In addition to the large private properties such as the *Casa delle Vestali* which continued to serve as an opulent private residence even if it gave some of its land over to commercial use as an inn, the period of the Roman colony saw a transformation in the *Insula Occidentalis*, to the west of the *via Consolare* inside the city. This *insula*, which stretches along the western side of the city all the way to *Regio VII* and the properties already mentioned in relation to the Porta Marina, saw the gradual expansion of private residences throughout the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. Such properties came to build over and across the city wall in this area, to capitalise on the views provided towards the coast.⁸²² The size of properties such as the *Casa di M. Fabio Rufo*, and many other large dwellings along this *insula* suggests that the owners were wealthy and important figures among the population of Pompeii, who would often have received guests at their houses. The decoration is often luxurious, with rich wall-paintings, mosaics and garden areas.⁸²³

This concentration of high-status residences may be the result of a combination of factors about the location, such as the accessibility from the road which would have been logistically beneficial, but would also have allowed an opportunity for public display through exterior architecture or wall-painting to passers-by. Critically, however, all of these properties were orientated to take advantage of the views available from this edge of the city to the coast, with

⁸²⁰ Monteix 2016: Figure 7.2.

⁸²¹ Pirson 2007: 463.

⁸²² Stevens 2017: 132-133.

⁸²³ Adams 2012: 73-76.

entertaining rooms and gardens all oriented to face the west, which would have been an appealing factor in encouraging wealthy citizens to live here.⁸²⁴ These properties, combined with the villas found outside the Porta Ercolano created a concentration of elite private residences on this side of the city, which would have made the Porta Ercolano suburb and *via Consolare* an even more attractive location to own property. The presence of many wealthy citizens in this area may have contributed to the motivation for the renovation of the Porta Ercolano, particularly if the renovation was funded by such a member of the local elite.

The *via Consolare* itself also provides clues to the volume of traffic that regularly used the Porta Ercolano, where wheel ruts confirm that wheeled traffic, including some of the largest carts used in Pompeii, regularly used the road and would have entered and exited the city through the Porta Ercolano.⁸²⁵ Such carts may have been used for the transport of raw produce such as grain, salt, vegetables and fruits, wine and olive oil, into the city from nearby farms. Finished goods such as pottery, metalwork, glassware and other items would also have been transported to shops in the suburbs and to/from other nearby towns. While the majority of items that arrived at Pompeii's port by sea would have been transported by river or sea to nearby towns if they were being traded on, some goods may have been transported by land for sale at local markets or for use at rural villas. The transportation of building materials, including wood, stone and other raw materials as required by building projects would have further added to the volume of traffic, with large, heavily loaded vehicles. Considering the expansion of private properties, such as those in the *Insula Occidentalis*, and many other building projects throughout the city there would have been a near-constant demand for such building materials. This would have particularly been the case following the earthquake of 62 C.E., when many public and private buildings needed to undergo repair and renovation. This would also have created a need to transport rubble from damaged buildings out of the city, or to empty areas where it could be disposed of, adding to the normal volume of waste and refuse that were deposited throughout Pompeii,

⁸²⁴ Adams 2012: 73-76.

⁸²⁵ Poehler 2017: 120. Cart ruts here include ruts with a span of 5 Roman Feet, the widest category of ruts found at Pompeii and probably associated with carts drawn by two horses/mules.

but often in the more open space outside the city wall in and around tombs.⁸²⁶ Pack animals and porters may also have carried similar loads, meaning there was a steady flow of movement into and out of the city, but are archaeologically hard to attest.

Concentration of traffic would have created an intense sensory experience; not only would moving vehicles, animals and people have populated the visual experience, but the sound of cart wheels on cobblestones, human voices and animal noises would have added to the urban soundscape. Where many people, and especially animals, were concentrated together this would also inevitably have led to a wide variety of smells from scented oils and perfumes to sweat, animals, and their waste. This traffic would have been most concentrated, and therefore have the greatest impact on the sensory experience, in the sections of the road immediately either side of the Porta Ercolano where traffic was constrained to this route. At junctions such as the fork between the *via dei Sepolcri* and *via Superiore*, or internally where the *via Consolare* met the *via delle Terme*, the traffic could then follow different routes depending on its destination or point of origin.

Traffic management, whether formal or informal, dictated the flow of traffic through the city, creating 'one-way' roads where wheeled vehicles could only travel one at a time, and many had a favoured direction. The erosion of kerbstones and stepping stones can reveal this directionality, which in *Regio VI* suggests that traffic preparing to leave the city on the *via Consolare* would have turned off the *via dell'Abbondanza* and up the *via di Mercurio* and then along the *vicolo di Mercurio* before joining the *via Consolare*.⁸²⁷ This would have allowed wheeled vehicles to avoid a tightly angled corner at the junction of the *via delle Terme* and *via Consolare*. The fact that all traffic entering and leaving the city used the gates to cross the city wall meant that traffic reconverged at the city gates, and would have concentrated the level of traffic that was seen, heard and smelt in these areas. This would have been emphasised particularly at narrow gates, where the traffic would have to filter through the gateway itself and face on-coming traffic. Erosion patterns do not tell us about the movement of pedestrians and traffic such as pack animals, which would have joined the

⁸²⁶ Emmerson 2020: 108-111.

⁸²⁷ Poehler 2017: Figure 6.5; Kaiser 2011: 181; Van Tilburg 2011: 153.

wheeled traffic travelling into and from the city, and added to the sensory experience of the *via Consolare* in the stretch either side of the Porta Ercolano.

However, the volume of traffic would not have been consistent and would have fluctuated throughout the day, and especially would have been influenced by events in the religious calendar involving the commemoration of the dead, or irregularly with large funerals. At times early in the day, and at the end of the working day, more people would have entered and left the city as workers travelled between intra- and extra-mural homes and workplaces, and went about their business. The evenings would also have seen wealthy citizens potentially travelling to the extra-mural villas on the *via Consolare* in order to dine with their owners, while the middle of the day would have seen less frequent traffic. To illustrate this, Poehler has proposed that the Porta Ercolano – which was most likely the busiest gate at Pompeii – might have seen up to 1500 people travel through it each day, but as many as 250 people an hour during a ‘rush’ hour and far fewer at quieter times of the day.⁸²⁸ These figures are extrapolations based on a theorised population and judgements of the relative ‘business’ of city gates, so cannot be taken as a literal expectation of traffic numbers. The concept is, however, helpful to demonstrate how movement through a city gate could vary significantly depending on the location of the particular gate, and the time of day. Compared with Augustan Rome, there would have been a lower volume of traffic travelling through the Porta Ercolano than that experienced at any of the renovated gates in Rome, due to the much smaller population of Pompeii. However, since Pompeii had fewer city gates and entry points in general, the concentration of traffic found at the city gates would still have felt noticeably high, especially during the busiest parts of the day. This would have been particularly the case for the Porta Ercolano, as outlined above, because of its connections to key long-distance destinations and nearby towns through the regional road network, which would have increased the total volume of traffic; and the presence of the extra-mural suburb and villas which would have increased local traffic compared to Pompeii’s other gates. This would have given the gate a feeling of being busy, as the sight, sounds and smells of all of the traffic using the gate all impacted the experience

⁸²⁸ Poehler 2016: Table 6.2.

of the area as a whole and perhaps shaped the perception of this particularly busy node in the urban landscape.

The Porta Ercolano, and its surrounding areas both inside and outside the city wall, developed into key areas for public display throughout the period of the Roman colony, with tomb monuments, private residences and shrines co-existing with the commercial and industrial properties of the area and the busy road. However, it is particularly interesting to note that there were no major public monuments in this area of the city. All of the types of display listed above are means of displaying the private wealth and status of a family or individual, but *Regio VI* lacks public buildings such as baths, temples, or other donations such as statues that such families might use to display their status within the wider community. This would have meant that the Porta Ercolano and the city wall were the major, and perhaps defining, public monuments of this area of the city. However, the defensive purpose of the wall and gate were potentially undermined by the expansion of the suburb, which not only created a large unprotected area outside the city gate, but whose buildings would have provided cover for attackers in the event of a siege.⁸²⁹ That no action was taken to manage the risk of this indicates that Pompeian officials felt suitably safe to not improve the defences. Thus, we should look to the local significance of the gate as a monument to explain why Porta Ercolano was renovated in the later first century C.E.

The Renovation of the Porta Ercolano.

While the landscape and activity surrounding the Porta Ercolano had changed substantially, the lack of archaeological evidence for previous phases means there is no evidence for the gate itself having been altered, until after the earthquake of 62 C.E. Assuming that the Porta Ercolano was very similar in design to the other tripartite pre-Roman gates at Pompeii, it is possible that minor aesthetic transformations such as re-plastering were carried out during that time, but there is no evidence of this. It is possible that the Porta Ercolano was damaged in the earthquake, and if there was substantial damage then this

⁸²⁹ This opinion is a common interpretation of the restriction of building close to/against walls in Roman writing on the subject of the *pomerium* and legal texts (e.g. Stevens 2017: 121-123), however, buildings could also have forced attackers to take a more direct route towards the city gate aiding defenders, so its impact in a real-world siege situation is hard to judge.

may have been one factor that triggered the renovation of the Porta Ercolano in the period that followed. It is likely that this area was affected by the earthquake, especially considering the damage to the nearest gate on the north of Pompeii, the Porta Vesuvio. This gate shows signs of major damage from the earthquake, and is depicted in a lararium relief falling over,⁸³⁰ and was undergoing renovation when Pompeii was destroyed in 79 C.E.⁸³¹ Given the state of completion of the Porta Ercolano, it can be concluded that the Porta Ercolano's renovation was begun before that of the Porta Vesuvio, suggesting it was prioritised for some reason. It is also noteworthy that the substantial damage that was done during the earthquake included many other major public buildings in the city centre, and private residences. The prioritisation of the renovation of the Porta Ercolano, therefore, suggests this was considered a very important public monument. As I have alluded to above, it may be because the gate had been damaged by the earthquake and presented a hazard or blockage to traffic, and so needed major repairs.

The final incarnation of the Porta Ercolano saw a dramatic alteration to the footprint and form of the gate. The previous long, single passageway was replaced with a triple-arched design that had a central carriageway, c.3.5m wide, flanked by two smaller pedestrian arches both c.1.5m in width.⁸³² The new gate totalled c.11m wide, and 16m long,⁸³³ while its total height is unclear, due to the loss of the archaeology of any upper level. The existing footprint, and if we assume an upper level (see below for evidence) would make it a substantially large building which would have dominated the eyeline along the *via Consolare* and blocked further views on the other side of the gate. Although the Porta Ercolano is shorter than many of its counterparts, it still displays the characteristic length typical of Pompeian gates. Like the Porta Marina, the renovated gate retained a long profile, most likely as a result of the width of the existing fortifications, and the influence of other Pompeian gates on the expected design. The renovated Porta Ercolano would have taken roughly 10

⁸³⁰ Lararium from the House of L. Caecilius Iucundus, Pompeii.

⁸³¹ Van der Graaff 2018: 130-131.

⁸³² Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 3.9.

⁸³³ Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 3.9.

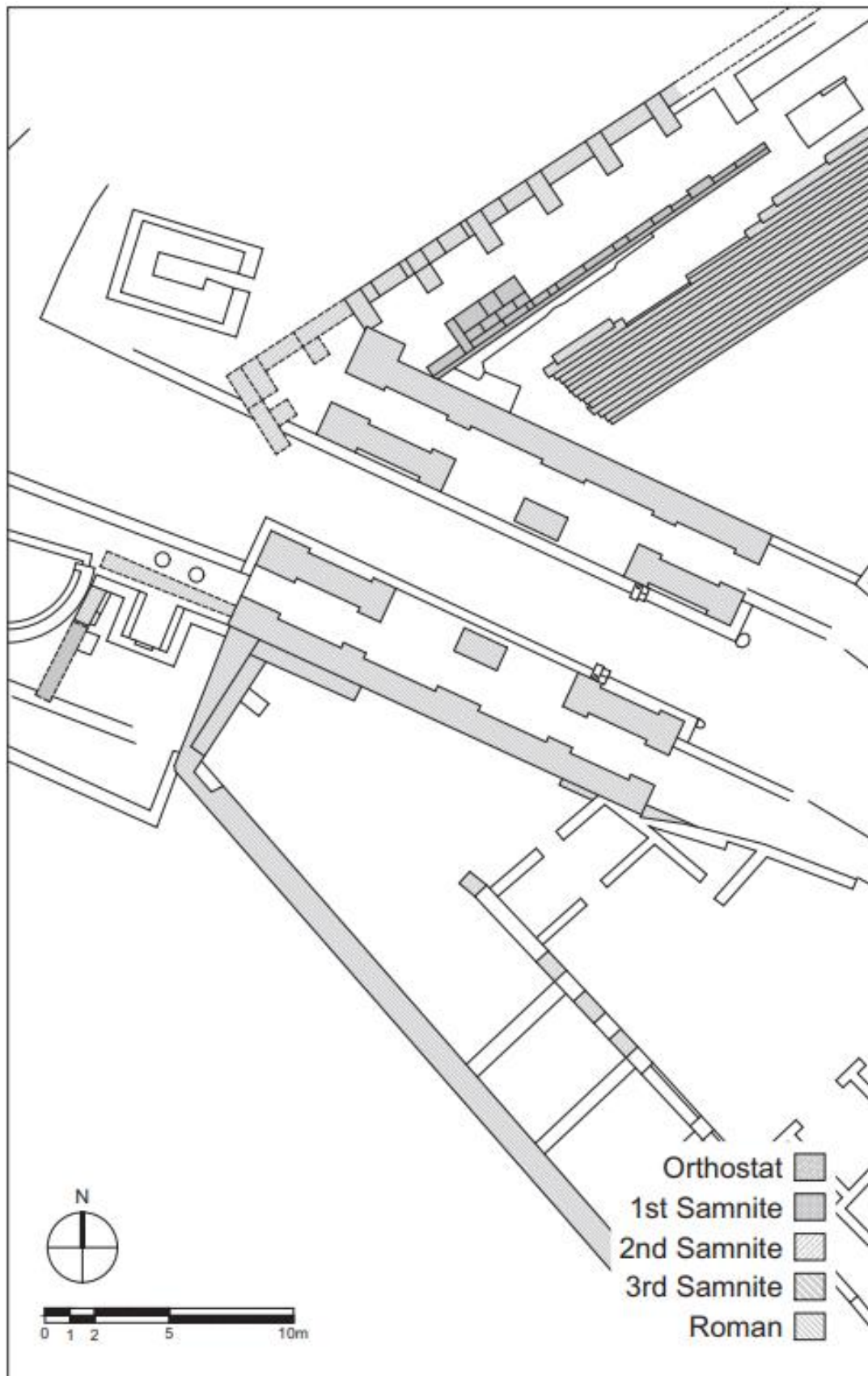


Figure 5.14 - Plan of the Porta Ercolano (Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 3.9).

seconds to pass through at average walking speed,⁸³⁴ and so the gate would still be experienced as a liminal space, as one traversed the space between the inside and outside of the gate.

Van Tilburg has proposed that the multiple arches of the Porta Ercolano were the result of attempts to better manage traffic flow through a city gate, and enable pedestrian traffic to access the area outside the gate which would allow this suburb to grow.⁸³⁵ However, more recent archaeology has altered the chronology, and places the renovation of the Porta Ercolano after the growth of the suburb, suggesting that the renovation responded to increased pedestrian traffic, rather than trying to encourage the suburb's establishment. Furthermore, as shall be discussed below, the renovated Porta Ercolano still offered an impediment to traffic, suggesting that traffic was not the primary consideration of the monument's architects.

The central passage, at 3.5m wide, would just have been able to allow two-way traffic of wheeled vehicles, but would not have been able to accommodate the widest axle width carts travel through in both directions at the same time.⁸³⁶ This would have created a potential bottleneck, meaning that occasionally, traffic would be forced to queue until a vehicle coming the other way had passed the gate. The flanking arches would have allowed pedestrian traffic travelling between the city, extra-mural suburb and surrounding countryside, to use the pavements to the sides of the *via Consolare*. But the close proximity of monumental tombs, such as Tomb 1 on the north side of the road,⁸³⁷ outside the gate would have meant that pedestrians may be forced to step into the roadway to navigate these obstacles. The dog-leg in the pavement of the northern side of the *via Consolare* inside the gate, and that on the southern side of the road on the outside of the gate,⁸³⁸ suggest that the central arch of the gate was in fact narrower than the previous roadway, which would have made it harder to navigate. As such, while the new design of the gate may theoretically allow for freer movement through the Porta Ercolano, it was far

⁸³⁴ See p.239, footnote 745. Basic calculations based on modern average walking pace produce a time between 8.98 and 11.94 seconds to cross a distance of 16m. Again, this not able to account for traffic obstruction, or heavy loads which might have slowed movement.

⁸³⁵ Van Tilburg 2008: 140.

⁸³⁶ See above, footnote 731.

⁸³⁷ See Figures 5.13 and 5.14.

⁸³⁸ Van der Graaff 2018: Figure 3.9.

from an ideal solution for allowing easy traffic flow. If traffic flow was the primary motivation for renovating the gate, a wider central carriageway, and the removal/prohibition of potential obstacles to traffic would surely have been prioritised. Instead, I propose that the decision to completely reconstruct a new version of the gate in the same location is indicative of the importance of the Porta Ercolano to *Regio VI*, the importance of the city gates to the self-conception and self-representation of the city, and the cultural significance of marking the urban boundary. Therefore, while this renovation may have been triggered by earthquake damage, the construction of the new gate and its overtly monumental form were the result of the importance of city gates in general as a monument marking the urban boundary, and the role of the Porta Ercolano in particular as a major representative monument of the *Regio VI* at Pompeii.

By this period, triple-arched gates were becoming commonplace across Italy, where they were seen at Rome, Spello and Aosta.⁸³⁹ These multiple-arched gates would have theoretically allowed for easier traffic flow, but often also included features that were overtly decorative and would have increased the monumentality of the gate. Such features included galleried upper stories, statuary, relief carving and dedicatory inscriptions that cannot have been defensive features. At times, such features would have actively detracted from the defensive capability of the gate, such as the sheer number of window openings in the Porta Palatina at Turin. I argue that the Porta Ercolano followed such examples, and adopted multiple arches as a means of increasing the scale and monumentality of the gate as part of its overall design, emulating examples at other Italian cities.

In the case of the Porta Ercolano, the exact design of the gate is unknown, since the upper levels were not preserved by the eruption and the final decoration has been badly damaged. The remaining lower level consists of two large piers, including the flanking arches and surrounding the central carriageway. From the surviving archaeology, there is no indication of the arch of the central carriageway, suggesting that this central arch was significantly taller than the flanking arches. It is possible that the central carriageway was not

⁸³⁹ For Rome, see the Porta Esquilina (pp.152-156, Figure 4.3). At Spello the Porta Venere and Porta Consolare (Van der Graaff 2018: 229) and Porta Praetoria at Aosta.

vaulted, like the earlier city gates at Pompeii, but this would have been a very unusual form for a first century C.E. gate, based on the designs of contemporary Italian gates. Furthermore, the presence of grooves in the sides of the central carriageway suggests that there was a lowerable closure mechanism such as a portcullis,⁸⁴⁰ which would have required an upper level in order to operate the mechanism. This suggests, therefore, that the central carriageway was indeed roofed, most likely with a vaulted arch based on contemporary gates, but that the vault was simply much taller than either of the flanking passages. This was quite common in multiple-arched gates of the first century C.E., so it would be logical to conclude that this was the case at the Porta Ercolano as well.

Towards the interior end of the gate, a system of doors would have served as a further closure mechanism, creating a second line of defence.⁸⁴¹ The fact that the gate still featured such closure mechanisms signals that the gate was not entirely monumental, as is seen in some examples where city gates lack closure mechanisms altogether, and could still be closed if necessary. However, like the Porta Marina, the Porta Ercolano's renovation lacked any other features associated with defence such as flanking towers which could provide covering fire for the gate, suggesting that defence was not a major priority of the renovated gate's design, and therefore is unlikely to have been a major motivation for the gate's renovation. Contextually, it is also important to note that in this period of the mid-first century C.E. (and likely before the political upheaval of 69 C.E.), the Italian peninsula had largely been at peace since the civil wars of the first century B.C.E. Feelings of security and stability might have resulted in defence not being such a key role of urban defences and city gates could adapt to take on these more monumental forms.

The Porta Ercolano was primarily constructed using *opus vittatum* – alternating layers of stone and brick which faced a concrete core – but would have originally been plastered.⁸⁴² Surviving fragments of the plasterwork suggest that it was mostly white stucco, as is commonly seen at Pompeii, with low relief stucco pilasters on the outer faces of the piers, and a black socle in

⁸⁴⁰ Van der Graaff 2018: 129.

⁸⁴¹ Van der Graaff 2018: 129.

⁸⁴² Van der Graaff 2018: 129.

the passageways.⁸⁴³ This would have disguised the relatively commonplace materials that the gate was built from and produced a higher quality finish that was in keeping with much of the architecture at Pompeii. The stucco pilasters on the exterior would also have mimicked the sort of inset columns made of stone found on other monumental gateways such as the Porta Esquilina at Rome.⁸⁴⁴ Without being able fully reconstruct the appearance of the Porta Ercolano, and especially without knowing the architecture of the upper levels, it is difficult to explore the full impact of the renovated Porta Ercolano. However, based on its size and position on the *via Consolare* it can be said that the Porta Ercolano would have dominated the visual experience of this road. The gate ran across the axis of the road, impeding views along the road except for through the very focused lines of the arches. Due to its size, it would have been visible from some distance, especially along the *via dei Sepolcri*, creating the impression that the gate was a destination, or major landmark on the journey. The size of the gate, and the city wall, would also have had an impact on dampening the sounds audible from either side of the urban boundary, which then would have emphasised such sounds on emerging from the gate.



Figure 5.15 - View of the Porta Ercolano, dated 1868, showing additional plasterwork and damage to towers
 (https://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/Gates/Gate%20Ercolano_files/image027.jpg).

⁸⁴³ Van der Graaff 2018: 130.

⁸⁴⁴ See Figure 4.3 and 4.4.



Figure 5.16 - View of the Porta Ercolano, looking north along the via Consolare (https://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/Gates/Gate%20Ercolano_files/image002.jpg).

This would have meant that the experience of travelling through the gate would have been one of transition, and that had a clear role in dividing the inside of the city from the suburb outside it, despite the similarity of their commercial and residential use.

Discussion.

Of the three gates at Pompeii that were renovated following the colonisation of Pompeii – the Porta Marina, the Porta Ercolano and the unfinished Porta Vesuvio – only the Porta Ercolano was completely rebuilt. Whether more gates would have been substantially renovated had the eruption of Vesuvius not destroyed the city, or not, the Porta Ercolano was deliberately selected for a major transformation. This choice seems to revolve around two key factors; firstly, the potential damage or destruction of the previous iteration of the Porta Ercolano which might have provided the opportunity – or necessity – for the gate to be rebuilt, and secondly the importance of this gate as a major public monument in this area of the city, which was only growing in status and importance. As has been outlined, the Porta Ercolano was an important entrance to the city of Pompeii, admitting traffic from both local villas and

neighbouring coastal towns on the Bay of Naples, and longer-distance traffic that might originate in Naples or Rome. While the volume of traffic, and the need to facilitate easier movement might have influenced the triple-arched design of the Porta Ercolano, as I have demonstrated above, the design itself argues against traffic management as the primary motivation behind this gate's renovation. The connection with Rome would have especially elevated the Porta Ercolano's role as a monument, since it made it the major entry point for such potentially important travellers, who would have included local elites, regional and even imperial officials.

The Porta Ercolano and its extra-mural suburb would have served as the first impression to such travellers, and so this area became a prominent location for competitive display through the construction of tomb monuments and private residences. These high-status private properties would also have meant that many of the residents of this area comprised the wealthy and social elite of Pompeii, who may have sought to elevate the status and appearance of this area. In a node otherwise devoid of large public monuments, it is possible that the Porta Ercolano was a very important representative monument for the local identity of this region of the city and its population. The onomastic connection between the ancient name of the gate, the road, and the people of this region – especially at a time when the salt industry did not appear to be as prevalent in this node as it once had been – further suggests that the gate was a significant local landmark and a defining feature of this north-western area of the city. This would have elevated its status compared to other gates at Pompeii. Its renovation, therefore, would have been an important investment in the presentation of the area and the city as a whole. As a result, it was prioritised for renovation and rebuilt with a much more monumental design, and one more similar to gates at other Roman cities and colonies than the other gates at Pompeii.

The growth of the extra-mural suburb at the Porta Ercolano would have decreased the visual dominance of the Porta Ercolano in the landscape, and lessened the sensory contrast between the inside and outside of the city, but the renovation of the gate would have increased its size relative to the tomb monuments and buildings which now populated the area and would have increased its impact to dominate the visual experience of the *via Consolare*.

This suburb would have increased the volume of traffic using the gate on any given day and created a much busier environment outside it than at other city gates in Pompeii. Although other extra-mural suburbs existed at Pompeii, such as the Bottaro region where archaeological excavation reveals industrial, commercial and residential properties,⁸⁴⁵ and the Suburban Baths outside the Porta Marina, these were not so substantial, or immediately located outside the gate, as the Porta Ercolano suburb. Both *Regio VI* and the Porta Ercolano suburb were economically important, with many shops, workshops and eating/drinking venues in the area, suggesting it was an attractive commercial location because of its access to a market of prospective buyers and to routes for accessing raw materials and trade. By the time of the renovation of the Porta Ercolano, this area was a thriving part of Pompeii, with significant continuity of commercial, industrial and domestic land use on either side of the gate; the only activity strictly limited to outside the gate was burials and funerary commemorations which co-existed here with urban life.

Although the Porta Ercolano divided the intra- and extra-mural areas, it also connected these busy socio-economic nodes both physically and cognitively, creating one broader node associated with the gate itself. These connections would have made the area feel comparatively busy, and perhaps heightened its importance compared to other city gates which fewer people interacted with. The new triple arched design may have eased traffic flow through this gate but, as I have already highlighted, the narrowness of the arches and the positioning of monumental tombs immediately outside the gate would have undermined the effectiveness of this. The large, new gate with multiple arches, however, would have further increased the status of the Porta Ercolano as a monument, befitting its role as an important entrance into the city. This multiple arched style, which was drastically different to most of the remaining gates at Pompeii at this time, had more in common with examples found elsewhere in Roman Italy. The high status of the tombs and private residences in this area would have further signalled the importance of this approach to the city as an important area. Location, and the rising social capital

⁸⁴⁵ See above, pp.218-19, for more.

of this area of the city, were vital factors in the decision to renovate the Porta Ercolano so extensively.

The Porta Ercolano itself would have been the first major public monument that was visible when entering Pompeii from the north-west. This would have given it a significant role as a monument that was representative of not only the north-western area of Pompeii, but of the city as a whole. The size, design and appearance of this gate would have had the opportunity to impress visitors to the city and display the wealth, power and status of Pompeii as a whole, something which would have been highly desirable particularly to the town's wealthiest citizens. The large and imposing renovated Porta Ercolano would have dominated the sensory experience of entering the city of Pompeii from this direction, as already described. This would have heightened the sense of definition of the urban boundary as you transferred from one realm outside the city to that inside the city, and also would have emphasised the sense that the gate itself was a liminal space that existed between these two spheres, making crossing this boundary a more significant moment to the ancient traveller. The triple arched design harnessed an architectural style which was in use at many other Roman cities, and was also used in triumphal arches, where it found its most overtly monumental form. In doing so, the design clearly demonstrates an attempt to monumentalise the entrance into the city, and the urban boundary of Pompeii, but may also suggest the influence of Roman architecture on Pompeii.

This renovation must also have relatively closely followed the earthquake of 62 C.E., since the lower levels at least were fully completed before the eruption of Vesuvius, suggesting that the gate's renovation was considered a major priority. Considering the fact that many houses were still undergoing renovation following the earthquake,⁸⁴⁶ the Porta Ercolano's renovation project is a further indication of just how significant city gates were as a form or representative urban monument.⁸⁴⁷ The scale and design of this gate mimicked the form of major monumental gateways seen elsewhere, but retained the characteristic length that was associated with all gates at Pompeii, thus

⁸⁴⁶ Anderson 2011: 84.

⁸⁴⁷ Other completed building projects included the temples, porticoes and public buildings of the Forum (Dobbins 2007: 173-174).

adapting to the local architectural vernacular of gate design. Without knowing who commissioned this project, it is impossible to say whether the renovation also had a particular local significance, but the Porta Ercolano did have a major role in the perception of the north-western corner of the city analogous with *Regio VI* today, and the identification of this node. This case study provides another demonstration of the significance of marking the urban boundary in the early Imperial period, despite the growth of extra-mural suburbs, and the use of a monumentalised city gate in order to do so. That this monumental role, which has so often been overlooked, was evident at Pompeii, by comparison a small and relatively insignificant city of the Roman world, as well as in Rome itself suggests that this was a common trend that can be related to how Roman cities were conceptualised in the Roman world.

5.4 – Gate Renovations and their Purpose at Roman Pompeii.

Throughout Pompeii's history, as Van der Graaff's work has demonstrated, the city wall and its gates were repeatedly altered, and these alterations were often completed with consideration of not only the defensive effectiveness, but the visual impact of the city's fortifications.⁸⁴⁸ The deliberate use of contrasting building materials highlights that Pompeii's urban fortifications had a long tradition of serving as a monument which could both define the urban boundary, and impress the viewer with Pompeii's strength and wealth. The gate renovations at Pompeii provide a fascinating insight into the transformation of the city's urban space during the period of the Roman colony from 80 B.C.E. to the city's destruction in 79 C.E. The Porta Marina, the earlier of these renovations – in the mid-first century B.C.E. – experiments with the design of the city gate previously used at Pompeii, through the division of the gate into two separate passages to divide pedestrian and wheeled/animal traffic. As was explored, this design may have been the result of attempts to ease the flow of traffic into the city at this point, but was also, crucially, impacted by the association between this gate and the new monumental public building projects taking place along the *via Marina* and in the Forum. The construction of the Temple of Venus, Basilica, 'Comitium', Capitolium and other buildings

⁸⁴⁸ Van der Graaff 2018.

greatly transformed the physical landscape of this node, and elevated the status of the area as it formed a new central political, economic and religious node within the heart of the city, of which the Porta Marina sat on the fringes. While the renovation of the Porta Marina may have been the result of a combination of factors such as damage during the siege of 89 B.C.E. and increasing traffic flow, it also directly responded to the transformation of the Forum node. The creation of the exterior entrance with a niche for a statue of Minerva, and the twin-vaulted facade, clearly attempt to elevate the significance and visual impact of the pre-existing structure, most likely in order to provide a fittingly monumental entrance to this area of the city.

The renovation of the Porta Marina in the context of the early colony at Pompeii, in tandem with the repairs made to the city wall in the 70s B.C.E., is also important for understanding the importance of the urban boundary in Roman culture at this time. As well as responding to the possible insecurity of the 70s B.C.E., the renewal of the wall and the Porta Marina have connotations of the refoundation of the city as a Roman colony. Since many Roman colonies built city walls as a means of defence, and spatially defining the colony, repairs were commonly carried out when colonies were founded at cities with pre-existing defences. In this context, the renovation of the Porta Marina may also have been related to the refoundation of the city, and thus would have been even more closely associated with the newly constructed colonial buildings in the Forum. The unusual sensory experience of the long passages of the Porta Marina, coupled with the walls of the buildings to the south of the *via Marina* would have channelled movement and the line of sight directly along this stretch of road, until reaching the Forum where the space suddenly opened out. Although most likely an unintended consequence of the designs of the related buildings, this would have effectively fore-shortened the *via Marina* and more closely cognitively connected the Porta Marina with the Forum.

The Porta Marina, therefore, allows us to not only explore a relatively early surviving gate renovation, but one closely connected to the redefinition of the city itself and the identity of Pompeii. That the gate was renovated strongly suggests the continued importance of the urban boundary to the colonists, but adapts to use the pre-existing structure of the gate, and so retains characteristic elements of the Pompeiian gate typology. This unusual case study, with

asymmetrical, long passageways, clearly demonstrates the impact of the local architectural tendencies, but the experimentation with other building materials and technologies in vaulting the entire passageway. By reconsidering the motivations for the renovation of the Porta Marina, this study has highlighted the monumental role of the gate, and its connections to nearby monumental buildings within the city. The Porta Marina is also unusual in that, unlike the other city gates explored in this thesis, it does not have a recognisable social or economic node associated with it. Instead, I propose that the Porta Marina should be understood as part of the extended node of the Pompeian Forum and the public buildings associated with it, joining the collection of buildings that could be cognitively linked and that would be conceived as part of the new colonial apparatus at Pompeii. The Porta Marina served as a boundary to this region of the city as well as the city itself, which explains its high status and the decision to renovate this gate in a more monumental form. As such, it clearly demonstrates the important monumental role that city gates could play in the urban landscape, both as markers of the urban boundary, but also as monuments in their own right.

Likewise, at the Porta Ercolano roughly a century later, the transformation of the urban environment both inside and outside the city to include more monumental funerary architecture, larger and more opulent private residences, alongside commercial and industrial properties was a key driving factor in the renovation of the gate. While underlying traffic pressures may have influenced the design choice of the multiple arches, the narrowness of these arches and the crowding of the gate by monumental tombs suggests that traffic flow was not in fact the priority of the design, or additional measures would have been taken to ease such pressures. Damage resulting from the earthquake of 62 C.E. may have provided an impetus for the renovation of the gate, but the Porta Ercolano was clearly prioritised over the nearby Porta Vesuvio which was significantly damaged in the same earthquake. This suggests that the Porta Ercolano had a greater importance in the urban landscape, possibly because it was a busier gate, but also likely because the position of the Porta Ercolano meant that more important traffic travelled along the *via Consolare*. This made the Porta Ercolano an important location for public display, as seen by the location of major tomb monuments along the road, and made the Porta

Ercolano itself an important monument representative of both Pompeii and particularly this area of the city. Unlike the Porta Marina, the Porta Ercolano was one of the only major public monuments in this area of the city, perhaps further increasing its role as a representative monument for this node.

The renovation of the Porta Ercolano in the first century C.E., at a time when Pompeii was under no military threat, further points to the significance of the urban boundary to the conception of the city. As we have seen at Rome, despite the growth of a significant extra-mural suburb, the decision was made to rebuild the city gate in its original location, rather than extend the boundaries of the city or re-position the monument to the edge of the built environment. While the restatement of urban boundaries despite their decreased relevance in daily economic and social life may seem contradictory, the evidence of these case studies suggests that there was still a cultural significance to the urban boundary in the first century C.E., even though extra-mural suburbs were becoming commonplace.⁸⁴⁹ This implies that the traditional boundary of the city remained culturally significant, and the definition of this boundary was probably a major factor in the gate's renovation. The fact that such a costly renovation was undertaken shortly after the earthquake of 62 C.E., further highlights the cultural importance of the Porta Ercolano.

Although the gates at Pompeii were still equipped with closure mechanisms, the absence of flanking towers and provision of multiple arches implies that defence was not a primary factor in their renovation. While the materials and decorative elements employed at Pompeii are by no means as monumental as those seen at Rome, Pompeii was of course a much smaller city with less wealth. Features such as decorative plaster and any features that would have originally adorned the upper levels would have added to the monumentality of these gates, but are lost to our reconstructions of the Pompeian gate renovations. Nevertheless, considering the sheer scale of the gates as buildings, and their visual prominence in the landscape, I argue that the Pompeian gate renovations were significant monuments in their own right. By combining existing studies of the fortifications at Pompeii and the urban, and extra-urban landscape, these case studies have demonstrated the value of

⁸⁴⁹ Emmerson 2020: 20-21, 39-42.

considering the relationship between the monument and the surrounding area for best understanding the cultural significance of the gates' construction.

The Pompeiian gate renovations offer evidence of two key phenomena in relation to the status and role of city gates in the late Republican and early Imperial period. Both gate renovations coincide with the transformation of the surrounding urban space, and in the case of the Porta Ercolano, the growth of extra-mural suburbs. While the renovation of the Porta Marina in the early colonial period may conform to both expectations of its defensive role, and the symbolic repair to the city wall as part of a refoundation of the city, the Porta Ercolano provides an example which cannot be explained in these terms. This is particularly noteworthy, since previous conceptions of the role of gates that emphasised their role as being a purely defensive one would not expect to find such a major investment in the renovation of these gates while a time of perceived peace and prosperity enabled the growth of extra-mural suburbs.

However, the renovation of gates at Pompeii, particularly at the Porta Ercolano, demonstrates that these monuments still held cultural significance. I propose that their role in the demarcation of the urban boundary, and as a representative monument for the city as a whole, was a key factor in the renovation of these gates. Both gates also respond, as monuments in their own right, to the transformation of surrounding areas. The same trends can be seen in the renovated gateways of Augustan Rome explored in Chapter 4. The fact that the same trends in the significance of gates as an urban monument, and markers of the urban boundary, were evident at Pompeii implies that these were widespread features of Roman culture. The contrast between the unusual design of the Porta Marina, heavily influenced by the existing structure and local architectural tradition, and the Porta Ercolano, which is more obviously similar to multiple-arched gates found elsewhere in Italy, also suggests an increasing influence of Roman architecture over the period from the first century B.C.E. to the late first century C.E. While the importance of the urban boundary has often been discussed in relation to the well documented *pomerium* at Rome, the evidence for elsewhere in the Roman world is less conclusive. Recent work on the growth of suburbs in the Roman world has emphasised how arbitrary these boundaries become in the early Imperial period. However, the evidence of these case studies suggest that city gates deserve greater academic attention in

future as monuments of the urban boundary prevalent in the early Imperial period.

Chapter 6: Conclusions.

Roman city gates were a spectacularly varied category of monument, defined by their relationship to an urban boundary. Throughout Roman history they took on many different forms, from unroofed entrances between the bastions of city walls, to single, double, triple and even quadruple arched portals, with a whole range of accompanying features such as flanking towers and city walls, inscriptions, statuary and decorative stonework. The general trend in the construction of Roman city gates was towards ever larger and more monumental structures. At times, such as in the Republican period, or post-third century C.E., defensive capability heavily influenced city gates' designs. Military architecture inspired the inclusion of flanking towers, inner courtyards or upper storeys which could house closing mechanisms and provide a line of fire directly on attackers. But it has been widely acknowledged, since the work of Gros, that city walls and gates could also serve a monumental purpose, defining the space of the city and representing its power and autonomy.⁸⁵⁰ During the early Imperial period, it is clear that gates' designs shifted towards monumental architecture that removed defensive features and replaced them with decorative ones. This was possibly the result of changing urban contexts with increased suburban development and a widespread rhetoric of peace and security within the empire, which in many provinces was reflected by long periods of relative peace. But gates' designs were also influenced by the demands of traffic, and their increasingly explicit use as monuments.

Despite the early attention given to Roman city fortifications in general – largely due to the spectacular standing remains of circuits such as the Aurelian walls – there has been a dearth of academic literature exploring the role of these fortifications in Roman life and culture during the early Imperial period. Since early studies such as Parker's book on the walls of Rome and Richmond's articles on Augustan gates in Roman Italy,⁸⁵¹ there has been a lacuna in work on the subject. Instead, fortifications have been briefly referred to in broader works on Roman urbanism as a feature of colonial architecture. More recently, a resurgence of scholarship on fortifications has brought attention to

⁸⁵⁰ Gros 1992.

⁸⁵¹ Parker 1874; Richmond 1932; Richmond 1933.

the subject, but has generally focused on the early periods of Classical history or the Late Antique period. This is largely a result of existing trends in scholarship; the history of early Roman colonisation, for example, focuses heavily on the importance of city walls as a means of defence and self-definition for the new community, and on the influence of military architecture on Roman colonies. In contrast, while traditional narratives that viewed the construction and renovation of urban fortifications in Late Antiquity as a symptom of the decline of the Imperial system and the increasing insecurity of the Roman world have become less popular, the subject remains of interest. More recent works on Late Antique fortifications focus instead on the increasing independence of Late Antique cities and the importance of fortifications as a means of self-definition, but still largely draw on a teleological narrative which seeks to connect Roman urban settlements with the perception of cities as largely independent hubs seen in scholarship on early Medieval Europe. By contrast the late Republican and early Imperial periods have rarely been included in studies of fortifications, as broader works on Roman urbanism prefer to identify this period as one of peace and prosperity. City gates have been given very little attention in their own right except for isolated studies focusing on individual case studies.

Greater academic attention on suburban areas of Roman cities and the urban periphery in recent decades has contributed greatly to our understanding of the Roman city and life within it. Moreover, these studies have demonstrated that the cities of the Roman Empire commonly had suburban settlement growth, and that the idea of clearly defined and defensible boundaries to urban space had ceased to be a reality in Roman Italy by the first century C.E.⁸⁵² However, I hope that this thesis has demonstrated that although city gates' roles changed and their defensive importance was substantially limited at Roman cities in Italy for this period, they remained highly significant features of the urban landscape. The cultural significance of the city gate as a monument persisted through the first centuries B.C.E and C.E., and beyond, and the areas surrounding city gates demonstrate characteristics that made them distinctive in the urban landscape.

⁸⁵² All of these trends are discussed in greater detail in the Literature Review in Chapter 1, along with additional relevant scholarship.

The City Gate in Roman Culture: Manifesting and Preserving the Urban Boundary.

Chapter 2 demonstrated that the urban boundary was not simply a geographical feature, or a boundary between the abstract concepts of the urban and the rural. Instead, the boundaries of Roman cities in Italy were key locations for the interaction of urban, rural and travelling groups such as merchants and traders. These areas were often rich with commercial properties and spaces for trade (whether specially built markets or open spaces), entertainment venues such as theatres and amphitheatres, and sites of religious significance, all of which provided occasions for communities to interact across the urban boundary. The evidence discussed here demonstrated clearly how such peripheral areas were vibrant nodes within the wider urban sphere in the early Imperial period. For this period, therefore, we should not consider urban boundaries to be divisive, but opportunities for interaction and commerce. Gates would have been a focal point for this interaction, as they were the threshold of the urban boundary. Those travelling to peripheral areas, or between city and countryside, would have been forced to navigate city gates by the road network. This direct relationship between the gate and the road would have made them a key part of the experience of such journeys across the urban boundary. Furthermore, where many approaches to a city lacked substantial other public monuments, the gate would have been the first major public landmark to appear. As will be explored below, their cultural role on the urban boundary would have further added to their importance in the experience of the urban boundary and heightened the importance of this threshold.

My assessment in Chapter 2, and throughout this thesis, strongly suggests that we should view Roman city gates as being both landmarks and nodes according to the Lynchian model of urban conception.⁸⁵³ The gate itself, as a monumental structure of significant size and visibility, would have been a highly recognisable and notable landmark. But city gates also sat at the heart of an area of rich economic and social activity which led to, and was created by, people crossing the urban boundary. These nodes cannot be clearly spatially defined by their own boundaries, sitting as they do astride existing urban

⁸⁵³ See pp.54-5, 119-21, 128-9.

boundaries. Instead, as suburbs developed the node would have included both intra- and extra-mural urban life, but was distinctive in its character and highly influenced by its relationship to both the road and the urban boundary. As such, these areas should be identified as nodes within the urban landscape, which were characterised by their relationship to the road network and with the city gate as a defining landmark.

The road network was a major driving force in dictating the nature of the nodes which formed around city gates, depending on the size of the road, the volume of traffic which might regularly use it, and the connections it afforded to other towns, cities, or natural resources. The roads drove economic activity directly, through trade and related industries which assisted in the movement of goods and people using the road, but also indirectly in related economic activity such as provision of food and hospitality for travellers and traders. Food shops and inns often clustered close to city gates, no doubt hoping to capture some of this passing trade. The road could also provide access to specialty produce or raw materials which might lead to a cluster of productive industries such as milling, baking, salting, tanning, dyeing, metalworking or pottery developing as a result of the ease of access and connections to areas of production for raw materials provided by the road. The volume of traffic had a major influence on the experience of the node, with more traffic resulting in difficulty in navigating roads, louder noise and slower movement. In this way the road network may have directly impacted the nature of the gates themselves, with the busiest gates receiving multiple pedestrian arches – as at the Porta Esquilina – while gates that had less traffic regularly using them might retain smaller single-arched designs such as the Porta Caelimontana.

Chapter 3 further demonstrates the great importance of the urban boundary as a concept and as a physical feature in Roman culture of this period. This is very likely the result of the importance of urban boundaries for defence and community definition in earlier periods of Roman and Italian history. But, rituals such as the *sulcus primigenius* which were still practiced in the first century C.E., and its use as an artistic motif,⁸⁵⁴ illustrate how deeply the concept of the urban boundary was still connected with the foundation – and

⁸⁵⁴ See pp.62-70.

thus existence – of a Roman city. Other religious and civic rituals maintained the importance of this boundary in Roman culture in a wide variety of circumstances, and although they may have originated when Rome was a much smaller city and the urban boundary clearer and more easily navigable, the evidence clearly points to their preservation throughout Roman history.⁸⁵⁵ The urban boundary was therefore an area of great symbolic importance to the inhabitants of a city, even if that importance was only felt in certain circumstances such as times of perceived danger, or specific religious rituals.

Although the evidence explored in this thesis suggests that many of the older deities with spatial connections such as Janus, Portunus, or the *lares penates*, were gradually losing their importance at Rome and being replaced by other deities such as deified members of the Imperial family and the *lares augusti*, the evidence of ongoing rituals such as *lustratio*, the *ambarvalia* and the continued importance of localised deities such as the *lares compitales* illustrate that such concepts still held importance in Roman culture. As the Roman Empire encompassed more and more territory, local urban religions and the perceived need for fortifications may have reduced. However, we have seen at Pompeii how the idea of the urban boundary remained relevant, and local identity doubtlessly remained important to people across the Empire. Likewise, even as political and administrative reforms at Rome seemingly made the urban boundary less significant, rituals such as the triumph, *ovatio*, *profectio* and *adventus* still utilised the symbolic boundary of cities and underlined both its existence and its importance.⁸⁵⁶

Legal evidence further underlines the importance of city walls and gates with their definition as *res sanctae*, which was most likely a result of their tantamount importance for urban defence in the event of sieges. The continuity of laws forbidding the demolition of walls and gates, and any intervention which might make them less effective for defence without explicit Imperial permission, indicates that urban fortifications were felt to be deeply important at many cities, so much so that infringement upon the fortifications was a capital offence.⁸⁵⁷ However, in practice the enforcement of such laws was highly situational, as we

⁸⁵⁵ See pp.71-75.

⁸⁵⁶ See pp.75-82.

⁸⁵⁷ See pp.96-98.

can see from their politicised use to justify the destruction of Gn. Calpurnius Piso's property, compared to Maecenas' construction over the Republican city walls several decades earlier.⁸⁵⁸ Legal evidence also demonstrates that although city walls, and the urban boundary associated with them at the foundation of a colony, might be used as a means to define an urban settlement, the development of extra-mural suburbs and unwalled towns and cities led to changes in legal definitions which increasingly used alternate measures such as continuous buildings to define the edges of the city.⁸⁵⁹ Once again, we see that while the 'practical' boundary of the city is extended to include new areas, the status of fortifications and city gates is formally kept in place and would have been substantially reinvigorated by the renovation of city gates.

In the literary and material culture discussed in Chapter 3 we also see how pervasive the city gate and wall circuit remained in culture and understandings of urban space, from the first-century B.C.E. to the sixth-century C.E. I have categorised the uses of the city gate in Roman art and literature into the following groups: as a means of depicting the city as a whole, as a landmark which could situate events at the urban boundary, and as a monument in their own right which could demonstrate the power and success of a city or patron. I believe these uses originate in the real-world experiences of city gates. As major monuments at the edge of urban space that are felt to encompass the city, fortifications would be a natural choice for a monument which could depict the entire space within them, with extra-mural buildings minimised for visual effect.⁸⁶⁰ We have also seen how gates feature as landmarks in the navigation of the city and the cognitive understanding of the city as a space. Their high visibility and intrinsic connection to the road network makes them very recognisable elements to use for situating places and events. The investment in city gates as monuments in their own right which created large and often ornate monumental structures would further have cemented their role as a means of representing the successes of the community as a whole, and the patron.

⁸⁵⁸ See pp.97-98, 147-8.

⁸⁵⁹ See pp.93-6.

⁸⁶⁰ See pp.104-109, 125-6, Figures 3.13, 3.14 for example.

Chapter 3 has demonstrated, above all, that city gates were highly important monuments in Roman culture throughout Roman history and it should be acknowledged that gates as monuments could exist in isolation from walls and with their own monument histories. This is not only obvious from the remains of the gates themselves, but from the many ways in which gates are used in Roman culture. Furthermore, the urban boundary in its many forms remained a hugely important concept in the Roman and Italian understanding of urbanism. Although the physical urban boundary was evolving significantly during the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E., the boundary of the city remained important as a conceptual, political and religiously significant idea. For these reasons, I believe it is important that we reconsider narratives which minimise the importance of fortifications, including city gates, for this period based on their defensive value. Instead, we must consider how the urban boundary was maintained as an idea, and as a physical presence in the landscape through the renovation of city gates and the construction of peripheral arches.

Rome: Gate Renovation in the Imperial Capital.

Rome is usually considered an outlier in Roman urban studies: although it is well studied and provides a large proportion of our evidence for Roman urbanism more generally, its exceptional size and the privileges that resulted from its role as the Imperial capital mean that it is not always representative of patterns of urbanism seen elsewhere in the Empire. The prosperity of the city led to population growth and the expansion of the city well beyond its early walls. While the scale of Rome's suburban development beyond the Republican city wall is beyond anything seen at other Roman cities in Italy, it exhibits many of the same trends in urban development. Suburbs particularly developed along those roads which were most used as trading routes, and commercial and residential activity came to replace funerary activity and waste deposition in such suburbs. The character of these suburbs was dictated by their relationship to the road network, accessibility and connections to trade, raw materials, and other cities; and the resultant status of properties and land in those areas.

Given the growth of such suburbs at Rome, it could easily be assumed that the Republican city wall and traditional associated boundaries such as the

pomerium might have become irrelevant to the lived experience of the city and its conception. Certainly, the Republican city wall was largely irrelevant for defence by this point, with multiple areas having been breached or abutted by later building.⁸⁶¹ However, it was not felt necessary to extend the wall circuit or build new city walls which would encircle these areas, largely due to the growing territory of the Roman Empire and its dominance in the Italian peninsula, and no doubt the extraordinary cost of creating a new wall circuit on such a large scale. This makes the renovation of city gates of the Republican wall during the Augustan period all the more interesting. I believe they demonstrate an attempt to maintain the relevance of the traditional boundary of the city, possibly to offset the radical administrative reforms of Augustus which redefined the city and its regions with little regard for the previous urban boundaries.

In each of the Roman case studies, the renovation of the city gate can be seen as a result of, and component of, wider changes in the landscape which included the development of both extra-mural and intra-mural areas. These transformations are clearly demonstrated by my joint study of the gate as a landmark and the surrounding node. The Porta Esquilina node underwent perhaps the most dramatic transformation, from an area famed for its low status, funerary activity and waste deposition, to a busy area associated with trade, commerce, and high-status *horti* which brought elite residences and leisure activities into the area. Although part of an ongoing process, the Augustan era marked a dramatic shift in perception of the Esquiline periphery, with the increasing involvement of the Imperial family in the region and related building which would have further increased the status of the area.

The renovation of the Porta Esquilina was undoubtedly an attempt to monumentalise the city gate, elevating its visual impact by the use of expensive materials which would have been highly visible, decorative features such as inset-columns, and the triple-arched design. This design would also have facilitated freer movement through the gate, emphasising its role more as a piece of passage architecture than an obstruction to movement. The construction of the new monument over the location of the previous gate would

⁸⁶¹ See pp.147-48, 165-66, 190, for examples.

have meant that the new Porta Esquilina inherited the existing role of the Republican gate as a landscape feature, and perhaps even, with its greater size and visibility, emphasised it more. While restating the importance of the previous city wall as a boundary within the city, its monumental appearance would have better fitted into – and further elevated – the heightened status of the Porta Esquilina area.

At the Porta Caelimontana we see a very different node, which was not associated with such luxury private residences or the same volume of trade and commerce as the Porta Esquilina. Instead, the Porta Caelimontana's node can largely be defined by historic associations with civic and military use of the *Campus Martialis* outside the city gate. Although this area was built over in the late Republic and mixed commercial and residential building had come to dominate the area surrounding the Porta Caelimontana, the Augustan era saw a continuation of its civic and military roles, possibly drawing on these historic associations. The construction of the *Castra Peregrina* and a base for a cohort of *vigiles* would have brought soldiers and *vigiles* into the area, who would have had a visible and financial presence in the surrounding area as they went about business, trained, travelled, shopped and socialised. However, the Porta Caelimontana never attracted the same volume of traffic as the Porta Esquilina, and only later became a major centre for trade and commerce with the construction of the *Macellum Magnum* under Nero. The renovation of the Porta Caelimontana seems to have been intended to replace the existing city gate with a more monumental form, while remaining within the footprint of the Republican gate. Lower levels of traffic may also have meant that a multiple-arched design was not considered necessary, but the high-quality materials used and the dedicatory inscription make clear that the consular patrons were operating with the senate's approval in renovating the gate, and clearly wanted to elevate its impact in the landscape.

In an area of the city with comparatively few public buildings or monuments, the renovation of the gate would have made a significant visual impact in the landscape. The connections drawn between the extra-mural *Castra Peregrina* and base of the *vigiles*, and Silanus' invocation of his role as *flamen martialis* would have further conceptually linked these buildings, and the node more generally, with the military presence around the city. Once again, the

decision to renovate the Republican city wall gate into one more in keeping with monumental building of the time suggests that the boundary marked here was still felt to be important. The Porta Caelimontana would have marked the location of the *pomerium*, thus validating the location of the *Castra Peregrina* outside it, adding greater local significance to this boundary, and possibly motivating its renovation. More widely it demonstrates that the traditional urban boundary of the city was still felt to hold cultural capital, and that city gates could offer a valuable opportunity for highly visible patronage.

The Porta Trigemina remains a speculative case study, but I am convinced by Coarelli's identification of the Porta Trigemina with a renovation carried out by Lentulus and Crispinus in the Augustan period.⁸⁶² This area, always closely associated with trade and commerce, as well as religion, would become more intensely characterised by these two associations by the Augustan era. The *Forum Boarium* became increasingly monumentalised with the construction of manubial temples and monuments, while the areas up- and down-river became major trading entrepôts for the city. This would have led to a very high volume of traffic using the area and using the Porta Trigemina to access other areas of the city, while the surrounding buildings became increasingly grand and impressive monuments to individual achievements and those of Rome more generally. A Republican era city gate would have represented a potential bottleneck for traffic, while also making a much less impressive visual impact in such an area. A renovation, possibly employing wider, or multiple, arches which could allow easier traffic flow, and more monumental materials would have had a greater impact on passing travellers and made the boundary represented by the Republican city gate far more obvious and recognisable, even if it enabled easier passage.

These case studies demonstrate the variety possible in gate renovations, all of which created a more striking visual impression than their predecessors by use of expensive materials and decorative features. They also illustrate the varied nature of nodes on the urban periphery even within the same city depending on the connections afforded by the road network and the evolution of the area over time based on topography and the actions of individual patrons.

⁸⁶² See pp.178-80.

Such renovations exhibit that while the Republican city wall was dramatically reduced in its defensive significance since the time of its construction, the boundary this represented was still highly important in the contemporary conception of the city, and thus its cultural role persisted.

The Republican city gates would have been ill-suited to the traffic associated with an urban population the size of Augustan Rome, and may have been an obstruction to urban traffic flow while offering little defensive value. Their renovations included no features which indicate a defensive purpose, such as closure mechanisms, suggesting that the gate renovations were never intended to prevent movement within the city, but possibly to actively improve traffic flow. However, instead of removing these city gates entirely – which would have enabled even freer movement of traffic – these three examples at least were renovated, which suggests that the gates had an importance that went beyond their original defensive function. With little evidence of an Augustan extension of the *pomerium*, I argue that the *pomerium* remained roughly analogous with the city walls in all areas except the Aventine hill. The decision to renovate city gates, therefore, is a result of the importance of the religious boundary of the city, which was felt to be important enough to resist changes to the administrative boundaries of Rome, and for the gates to be built in new and monumental forms.

Visually, the Porta Esquilina bears similarities with many later monuments which might be defined as peripheral arches, which could be placed at the edges of urban space or at major road junctions and provided a sense of definition without impeding the movement of traffic or representing a defined urban boundary.⁸⁶³ Throughout the first century C.E. monuments such as the Porta Maggiore were constructed at Rome,⁸⁶⁴ possibly mimicking the renovation of the Augustan arches. Such trends highlight the value of gates and arches as a means of visually defining space while also emphasising passage and movement along the axis of the arch. It also suggests that after the

⁸⁶³ Similar arches would also be used to provide entrance to Imperial *fora* which constituted discrete spaces within the city. Outside Rome examples include the Augustan arch at Aosta located 600m outside the city at the point that the road leading to Rome cross the nearby river (Laurence et al. 2011: 49-50).

⁸⁶⁴ A double-arch created where the *Aqua Claudia* crossed over the *via Labicana* and *via Praenestina* as they entered the city creating the appearance of an urban boundary (Coates-Stephens 2004: 9-11). Titus renovated an existing arch at the site of the later Porta Tiburtina where the *Aqua Julia*, *Aqua Tepula* and *Aqua Marcia* crossed the *via Tiburtina*.

Augustan period as the city continued to expand and eventually the *pomerium* of the city also began to be expanded, the importance of the urban boundary at Rome began to move away from the Republican walls and was increasingly assumed by monuments at the edges of the urban space, many of which – such as the Porta Maggiore and Porta Tiburtina – would later be used as locations for the gates of the Aurelian walls.

Pompeii: City Gate Renovation in Colonial Italy.

Pompeii's development, as a city with pre-Roman origins and existing fortifications at the time of the foundation of the colony in 80 B.C.E. is possibly more representative of experiences of urban development in Italy than Rome itself. Here we also see the adaptation of the city over time as it grew, and the alterations made to city gates as a result of changes to the city wall and to provide increasingly monumental features. Pompeii exhibits many of the trends seen at Rome, albeit on a much smaller scale. Extra-mural development seems to have begun at several city gates, especially those with most flat land available for building, during the second century B.C.E. and continued through to the destruction of the city. We also see that the city gates had important roles in the conceptual understanding of the city, whose role as landmarks was made clear by the *ēituns* inscriptions dating to the Sullan siege. There is also substantial evidence from Pompeii that the city gates were used as locations for invoking deities, including Minerva, possibly in order to elicit protection for the urban area as a whole, or for the liminal spaces of the gates themselves. The gates at Pompeii are long, compared with the examples from Rome, due to the thickness of the wall circuit and could reach between c.15m and c.30m in length. The time taken to move through such gates would have emphasised the feeling of liminality associated with gates and may have prompted such shrines to be located there for divine protection.

Pompeii's city gates may appear unusual when compared to other examples, but these long openings through the city wall, possibly with wooden infrastructure for doors that could open/close the gates, may have been more common at cities where walls and fortifications were developed over a long

period of time.⁸⁶⁵ Vaulted architecture seems to have become common at Pompeii only in the late second century B.C.E., introducing a form more recognisable in gate architecture elsewhere. Vaulted arches were added to the gates at Pompeii, but only for small sections rather than the entire length of the passage.⁸⁶⁶ Following the foundation of the colony at Pompeii in 80 B.C.E. the city underwent an intense period of urban transformation that largely centred on the area of the Forum.

The Porta Marina may seem at first to be an outlier when compared with other Roman city gates, on account of its unusual asymmetrical, passage-like design. However, I argue that it is a valuable example of gate renovation that allows us to explore the importance of the city gate in the identification of the ‘new’ city of Pompeii. The Porta Marina also lacks an extra-mural suburb in the immediate vicinity of the gate at this point in the early first century B.C.E., partly due to the steepness of terrain in the area and the fact that the *via Marina* seems to have been a minor road in terms of the connections it allowed with the road network and other towns. Other suburbs at Pompeii were also smaller in this period, made up of a few extra-mural houses compared with the sprawling suburban development seen by this period at Rome. Prior to the renovation of the Porta Marina, it is hard to identify any characteristic node, as seen at the gates in Rome, at this city gate. The surrounding intra-mural area was mostly used for domestic purposes, with little commercial activity, but included major religious sites such as the Temple of Apollo and the Temple pre-dating the Temple of Venus. These temples would have largely defined the area surrounding the gate, but had relatively little interaction with the *via Marina* which would have connected them and the Porta Marina.

The Porta Marina’s renovation is, therefore, best understood as having been related to the transformation of the Forum area during the early years of the colony. It is located close by, and the clear sight line along the *via Marina* would have enhanced the spatial connection between the gate and the Forum.

⁸⁶⁵ Nocera, for example similarly developed its wall circuit over time (Van der Graaff 2018: 178-180). At Segni (supposedly colonised in the 5th century B.C.E.) the original 4th century B.C.E. wall circuit was destroyed in places to make way for new ashlar masonry and a completely new gate at the Porta Romana (Van der Graaff 2018: 193-194). Likewise, the Republican wall circuit at Rome underwent many periods of transformation (See p.132).

⁸⁶⁶ With the exception of the Porta Marina, see p.209-10, 213.

The massive programme of building which formalised the Forum and created accompanying buildings such as the Basilica, and major changes to what became the Temple of Venus, all indicate the intense investment in the renovation of this area and the creation of a new civic and administrative centre for the colony. The Porta Marina would have been the closest access point and may have been used by many involved in the construction of the new Forum buildings. Wider renovations to the city wall were carried out in the 70s B.C.E., possibly as a result of necessary maintenance following the Sullan siege on the city and in response to heightened insecurity during the Spartacan revolt. However, the repairs to the walls also symbolically would have complemented the foundation of the colony, considering the close link between permissions for urban fortifications and colonial status. The renovation of the Porta Marina may have come as a result of the repairs to the walls and the symbolic refoundation of the town, which emphasised the limits of the urban space and indicated the degree of autonomy experienced by the town. It would also have provided another monumental means of accessing the Forum.

I have argued that the Porta Marina's unusual design, while it offers separation for pedestrian traffic and larger vehicles and animals, would not actually have eased traffic flow due to the narrowness of the passages which would have hampered free movement and caused a traveller to slow or pause while navigating the gate. The unusual asymmetrical design most likely stems from the decision made, either for reasons of cost, or to avoid disruption to surrounding buildings, to avoid removing the existing structure. Although equipped with doors and an iron grate, the renovated gate did not employ any additional defensive features. Instead, the vaulted roof formed a long, tunnel-like structure that would have created a very strong sense of liminal space and the transition between intra- and extra-mural areas. The archways at the exterior which divided the passages, along with the shrine and statue that are identified as belonging to Minerva, suggest a clear attempt to increase the monumentality of the gate as a structure, especially to those approaching the city.

In many ways, the Porta Marina parallels what we have seen at the Porta Caelimontana at Rome, where a minor road leading into the city has relatively little traffic flow compared to other city gates, and so does not develop a

monumental complex or busy commercial cluster associated with the road. Without these factors the gate renovation remains on the same footprint as the original, although at the Porta Marina with some effort to divide traffic flow and potentially make it easier for pedestrians to use the gate. However, the design in both cases still demonstrates deliberate efforts to enhance the monumental impact of the structure, and to restate a historic urban boundary that was clearly of contemporary relevance. In the period following the renovation of the gate the construction of extra-mural buildings such as the Suburban Baths would have increased the flow of traffic to this area, perhaps making the gate more important as a means of connecting the intra- and extra-mural, and a remnant of the city wall at a period in which it had been largely built over on the western side of the city.

The Porta Ercolano, by contrast, shows greater similarities with the Porta Esquilina. At both sites, early funerary use of the land outside the city wall is steadily replaced by domestic and commercial properties which could make use of the excellent commercial potential offered by a major road accessing the city and the wider Italian road network. The *via Consolare*'s connections with Naples and Rome meant that traffic from this direction would have periodically included important Imperial officials,⁸⁶⁷ and sustained commerce in expensive goods such as salt, and high-status products that might be brought by traders from such ports as Naples and Ostia. By the mid-first century C.E., the colony at Pompeii had been long established, and the renovation of the Porta Ercolano cannot have been related to the foundation of the colony. However, we have seen how throughout the history of Pompeii, the Porta Ercolano was a major monument in this area of the city, and a key landmark for the geographical and social organisation of the area. The choice to prioritise this monument for renovation following the earthquake of 62 C.E. further signifies the high status afforded to the monument by the people of Pompeii.

The triple-arched design of the Porta Ercolano renovation was probably influenced by design trends seen elsewhere in Roman Italy and other provinces such as Gaul, by this period. Nonetheless, the Porta Ercolano retained a very deep design, possibly adapting to ensure it aligned with the thickness of the wall

⁸⁶⁷ The prioritisation of monumentalising 'Rome-facing' gates can also be seen at Segni (above, footnotes 51 & 865), Ostia (the Porta Romana), and Rimini (the 'Arch' of Augustus).

circuit. Once again, although equipped with a closure mechanism, the widespread infringement on the city walls at this period and the steady expansion of private properties to encompass and overtop the city wall, as well as extra-mural properties, suggests that defence was not a primary concern among the Pompeian local elite. Instead, I have proposed that the nature of the *via Consolare* and the development of the surrounding node would have made it a favoured location for the display of the wealth and status of Pompeii to those approaching the city, and re-marking the boundary of the traditional city. The new monumental gate would also have achieved greater contrast with the surrounding buildings and tomb monuments, compared to the previous iteration. Unfortunately, the details of the final design of the gate are lost to us, but the size of the lower levels suggests significant investment and likely a tall upper level which would have dominated the visual experience of the road.

The prioritisation of the repair and renovation of the city wall following the foundation of the colony in 80 B.C.E., and the renovation of the Porta Ercolano following the earthquake illustrates clearly that walls and gates were a critical part of the monumental apparatus of Pompeii. The decision to prioritise the renovation of the Porta Ercolano over the nearby Porta Vesuvio which was badly damaged in the earthquake further points to the variable nature of gates and gate nodes in the Roman world. Their importance as a monument was dependent on the volume and variety of traffic that used the area, subsequent suburban development, and the significance of the Porta Ercolano as the entrance point for important visitors from Rome.

The city wall, by contrast, seems to have become almost irrelevant to the landscape of Pompeii and the cognitive perception of the city, based on the buildings which removed, built over, and across the city wall on the western and southern sides of the city. Such building would also have diminished its visual impact and lessened the importance of the wall in the urban landscape. The context of the Pompeian gate renovations, following the foundation of the colony and the earthquake, suggests that gates played an important role as a representative monument for the city, and remained so even when the city wall lost this role. This is in contrast to academic literature which has largely focused on other means of defining the city such as key public buildings which might be found in the city centre, and viewed city gates solely through their connection to

walls. In tandem with Chapter 3, the renovation of the Porta Ercolano suggests that the importance of the urban boundary, while situational, was still deeply ingrained in Roman urbanism. The renovation demonstrates that while the importance of the urban boundary was decreasing, the key interfaces with this boundary – the gates – remained important landmarks and indicators of that boundary, and were monuments in and of themselves.

While the renovated city gates at Pompeii demonstrate clearly the influence of the existing wall circuit and gate buildings in their renovated forms, the Porta Ercolano also demonstrates a shift towards a design similar to those seen elsewhere in the Roman world. Considered together, the two examples demonstrate the evolution of gate architecture, and on a local level the adoption of a widespread typology of city gate which used larger central passages and smaller side passages for pedestrian traffic. We also see at Pompeii the same development of extra-mural suburbs and increasing infringement upon the city wall throughout the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E. that was evident at Rome. The development of such suburbs at other Italian cities has been clearly demonstrated by Emmerson,⁸⁶⁸ and the Pompeian examples may be representative of this experience of transforming urban environments during the period. That Rome and Pompeii shared similar trends in the development of their urban fringes and the renovation of city gates, despite their gulf in size and political importance is highly suggestive that these trends may have been commonplace in other Roman cities as well.

City Gates: Continuity in a Changing Urban Landscape.

Overall, this thesis has demonstrated that even while the urban boundary became an increasingly complex area of Roman cities in Italy in the first centuries B.C.E. and C.E., and harder to physically define, it was still felt to be an important concept for the religious and ritual identity of the city. Although the urban boundary retained an – increasingly situational – importance in the conception of the city, city walls often fell into disrepair and were infringed upon or demolished in areas, and the urban boundary might have become less

⁸⁶⁸ Emmerson 2020: 39-42.

evident in the landscape. City gates, however, were often renovated and given new monumental significance, which suggests that the traditional boundaries of Roman cities still retained their cultural capital, and the creation of landmarks which identified it remained important. The development of suburbs would have reduced much of the visual impact of older fortifications and gateways, with the construction of larger tomb monuments and extra-mural buildings that would have been the first thing seen when approaching the city from the countryside, obscuring the city gate. The forms of renovated city gates, especially those that were completely rebuilt, seem to have responded to this by favouring larger designs and more impressive building materials which may have been visible from a greater distance. The scale of such monuments, and dedicatory inscriptions such as those seen at the Porta Caelimontana and Porta Trigemina, but also evident at sites such as Saepinum and Rimini,⁸⁶⁹ would have clearly marked these gates out as public monuments and again indicated that the gate represented the formal edge of the city. The picture became increasingly blurred with the creation of other peripheral arches at later dates in many Roman cities in Italy which sought to capitalise on the same high visibility and perhaps even sought to mark the edges of expanded suburban development or major road junctions.

Although city gates represented boundaries, the growth of extra-mural suburbs increasingly reduced those boundaries to their symbolic and cultural roles rather than impactful limits of settlement. City gates' primary functions in the landscape had always been to balance allowing movement through this boundary, and preventing it in the event of an attack. Over time the restrictive role seems to have waned, and greater focus on the permeability the urban boundary is reflected in the designs of city gates which adopted larger arches, multiple arches, and in some cases completely avoided building closure mechanisms into the gate. The increasing permeability of the urban boundary meant that its importance in daily life was reduced, as elsewhere parts of city wall were demolished or incorporated into private buildings. This is usually explained in two key ways; as a result of the relative peace and stability of Italy during the late Republic and early Empire, and as a result of the increasing

⁸⁶⁹ *CIL* XI.365 (Rimini); *CIL* IX.2443 (Saepinum).

sense of belonging to a wider Roman Imperial community reducing the need for walls to demonstrate autonomy.

However, the late Republican period saw a flourishing in the renovation, or construction of, fortifications at cities throughout Roman Italy, including high densities in Latium and Etruria despite their close geographical relationship with Rome. In part this may be a result of the numerous incidences which demonstrated the insecurity of the period; such as the Social War and civil wars between Marius and Sulla, Caesar and Pompey. However, I would also argue that it relates to the use of these wall circuits as an urban monument, at colonies and other towns and cities across Italy. Following the rise of Augustus, we still see the construction of wall circuits, as at Saepinum, but particularly frequently the renovation of city gates, possibly drawing on the examples of gate renovations from Rome. While their importance as boundaries was reduced throughout the centuries of this study, it periodically resurfaced at times of perceived military or supernatural threat, and on occasions which celebrated the arrival or departure of the emperor. On a local level, gates remained an important feature of the city regardless of their form, and would have been relevant to the experiences of individuals in daily life in a variety of situations such as funerals, religious rituals celebrating the dead or involving extra-mural shrines, and conducting trade or visiting peripheral markets. The renovation of key monuments such as city gates which were highly visible and marked out the boundary of the city might also be an important means of demonstrating local identity, and promoting the reputation of local patrons internally and externally, as well as the status of the city overall to visitors.

I also hope to have demonstrated that city gates in Roman cities in Italy should be understood as landmarks in the Lynchian categorisation of the city – major features which could be used for spatial and social organisation, which were highly visible and informed contemporary Romans' understanding of their urban space. Their use in the literary and artistic culture of the Roman world clearly illustrates their symbolic role in defining the city as a whole, and in understanding and navigating the urban space, as does their use in real-world situations such as the mustering of troops seen in the Pompeiian *ēituns* inscriptions. The continued use of city gates as a means of understanding and representing the city in a literary and artistic sphere clearly indicates their

continued social and cultural role in how the Romans understood urban landscapes. This challenges the notion that city gates were – along with city walls – unimportant during the early Imperial period, and forces us to consider that while the defensive function of fortifications may have been reduced, the symbolic and monumental roles of city gates were able to continue both alongside wall circuits and in isolation.

As key landmarks of the urban periphery, however, gates also served as the focal point of the area – both extra- and intra-mural – which surrounded them. Although they are not clearly defined at their edges, these nodes can be discovered located in the vicinity of city gates and can be characterised by their close relationship to the road, and to the urban boundary. These nodes could vary significantly depending on the nature of the landscape outside the city gate and the availability of land to build on, but also varied according to the size and importance of the road in both volume and type of traffic. Larger roads naturally carried more traffic, but might also connect a city with neighbouring towns and cities from which traders and travellers might arrive and depart. Connections with major regional centres, and ultimately with Rome, might further enhance the status of travellers using the road, while connections with natural resources such as salt marshes, mines, or agricultural regions would increase the volume of goods being traded through that area.

In these peripheral areas of the city, the easy access to raw materials and traded goods meant that commerce was particularly intense along the major arteries which led into the city. This, combined with secondary industries which supported commerce such as porters, cart drivers, pack animal handlers, food-sellers, inns and stables all would have led to a heightened sense of commercial activity in such areas. By focusing on a city gate and its surrounding node, I believe we can closely explore case studies of the urban periphery, and in so doing deepen our understanding of this area and the experiences of life in the ancient city beyond the city centre, and capture some of the experiences of non-elites within the city. In adopting this holistic approach, my case studies have demonstrated how – by exploring both sides of the urban boundary – we can deepen our understanding of Roman urbanism and urban life in this period. I also believe that by taking this approach, and studying the contextual landscape which surrounded the construction of monuments such as city gates

and exploring their transformation over time, we can better understand their patterns of use, motivations for their renovation, and variation between different examples of the same building type.

My research has shown that in regards to city gates, renovations were clearly impacted by factors such as traffic, the status of residences and public buildings in the area, and their role as public monuments within the surrounding node. The case studies I have provided illustrate examples where the motivation for the gates' renovation was clearly not the result of strategic concerns, or the use of city gates as tax collection points. This instead supports my hypothesis that city gates, even in isolation from city walls, should be understood as key urban monuments. In highlighting the importance of these nodes in the overall life of the Roman city, I hope to encourage further study on the subject. City gates provide an excellent opportunity for studying a monument in its urban context, not only for the Late Antique period where much research has focused, but throughout Roman history.

Opportunities for further study.

This thesis has demonstrated that studies of the transformation of urban areas can be hugely beneficial to our understanding of Roman urbanism and Roman culture more widely, but has raised many other interesting possibilities for future research. Firstly, the application of my approach to other city gates throughout Roman Italy would enhance our understanding of not only those individual cities and their urban peripheries, but wider trends in Roman urbanism and the culture of Roman Italy. Likewise, monumental city gates and gate renovations can be found across the Roman empire. While this study was restricted in its scope, initial inquiries indicated that many monumental gates in Britain and North Africa were constructed in disproportionately monumental scale, design and materials compared to their accompanying fortifications. Locations such as Timgad, Leptis Magna, Djemila, St Albans, Lincoln, as well as sites across Northern Italy and southern France like Aosta, Torino, Verona, Nîmes, and Autun, all demonstrate exceptional city gates in varying designs and scales, which can all be considered monumental. These examples suggest that the role of city gates as a major urban monument was widespread throughout

the Mediterranean and north-west European world, and possibly indicate the influence of Greek and Roman urbanism on the urban development of this area. Exploring how widespread the phenomenon of gate renovations was in other provinces and whether these cities demonstrate similar trends in suburban development and urban transformation would be highly valuable to our wider understanding of urbanism in the Roman empire. Studies here on the variety of gate forms, with an analysis on chronological or regional trends, might indicate how influence from similar building types such as triumphal arches or military camp gates might be manifested in different gates. A thorough typological study might also be able to chart changes in the designs of gates and confirm how these monuments changed over time as a result of different political and social contexts.

There is further scope for a deeper study of material covered in Chapter 3, which could explore literary and artistic uses of city gates in order to identify trends and changes in those uses over time. A deeper study of Roman literature would no doubt raise further examples of the use of city gates as means of navigating the Roman city, as monuments, and with walls as a means of alluding to the city as a whole. These references could then be categorised according to the genre and chronology of the text, and the use of the city gate or wall within it. This would allow the trends I have identified to be tested against a broader framework, which would serve to further demonstrate the important roles city walls and gates played in the conception of the city in the Roman world. A similar study could be carried out for artistic uses of city gates, which could incorporate other types of evidence such as relief sculpture from sarcophagi, which would explore the use of the city gate as a symbol across different artistic media and whether those uses changed over time. Such studies would not only illustrate the cultural capital of the gate in art and literature, but reveal trends in their conception and roles in the urban landscape across time. This would, in turn, help us to achieve a greater understanding of the Roman urban experience, and especially of peripheral areas of the city and interaction with the urban boundary.

This thesis has also demonstrated the need to question assumptions that have been made on subjects such as Rome's tax boundary. While there is recent work on the subject of taxes, older hypotheses such as Palmer's theory

on an Augustan tax boundary have often been taken as fact in subsequent literature on Roman cities without due attention to what the primary sources actually tell us.⁸⁷⁰ In turn, such ideas have permeated studies of Roman urbanism, but upon closer examination do not fit well with the archaeology of Roman towns and cities. A clearly structured discussion of the subject which emphasised what evidence we have for taxes on different goods, trades and inheritances, and how and where they were implemented, for different periods would provide far greater clarity for broader studies of Roman culture and urban experience. It would prove fruitful to ask further questions of the existing evidence. For example, if the second-century C.E. tax boundary at Rome was located at the Porta Esquilina, why was that location placed so far into the city compared to later indicators of the tax boundary? Was the location placed here to respect an earlier boundary, as Palmer claims? Or was this related to the ownership of *horti* in the area by the Imperial family? Rather than assuming that Roman taxation was a static system, a thorough re-examination of the evidence could illustrate the many changes and peculiarities thrown up by the primary evidence on the subject.

Likewise, at Rome, Coarelli has proposed a systematic renovation of city gates in the Augustan period based on evidence from the Porta Esquilina, Porta Caelimontana, Porta Trigemina and an inscription speculatively linked with the Porta Flumentana. Although it is always difficult to study previously unexplored areas within the city of Rome, a thorough study of the approximate locations of the Republican city wall gates and exploration of excavation reports may offer up additional evidence of gate renovations, or disprove this theory. Another avenue for study this could open up would be the exploration of other 'gate' nodes, whether accompanied by a gate renovation or not. By exploring these peripheral nodes, not only would we be able to learn more about these areas of the city, but may be able to compare similarities and differences between particular nodes. This would reveal a far more detailed understanding of life in Roman cities and how local factors may have altered the urban experience in different areas.

⁸⁷⁰ See pp.41-42, 150-52.

In this thesis, I have attempted to address the sizeable lacuna in studies of city gates and their histories, and hope to have demonstrated their value as an interesting category of monuments and a tool for understanding the cultural aspects of Roman urbanism. I have combined this approach with studies of the suburban and urban periphery, aspiring to contribute to scholarship on this subject. Drawing on Malmberg and Björ's study of the Porta Esquilina and Porta Tiburtina nodes, I have developed a systematic approach to the study of city gates as both nodes and landmarks, exploring the relationship between these two roles, and their historical context. Throughout this thesis, I have brought together different strands of evidence, many of which have been previously studied individually, but have not been considered as a corpus of evidence that testifies to the cultural significance of city gates in the Roman world. In doing so, I have highlighted the previously under-studied cultural significance of Roman city gates as an artistic and literary device, and have shown that the urban boundary remained an important religious and civic concept despite the seemingly contradictory growth of suburbs and changes in the legal and administrative definitions of the city. I have also highlighted how city gates' designs began to change significantly during this period, moving towards monumental arched examples which are often described as being monumental or honorific arches in studies on Roman urbanism of the period. However, due to their location on contemporary or former city boundaries, I argue that these monuments should still be understood as gateways, and as a result we should recognise the continued – if transformed – importance of city gates as a monument.

By centring the city gate in this discussion, rather than city walls as a circuit, I have been able to demonstrate how important gates were both in tandem with city walls, but also in isolation, as these were the primary means by which citizens of the ancient world actually interacted with the urban boundary. I have also demonstrated the many opportunities for further study on the subject which could enhance our knowledge and understanding of the Roman conception and experience of the city, variety in the urban landscape and life on the urban periphery, as well as the ways people engaged with city gates as a monument. In doing so I hope to provoke further research and debate surrounding the role of the city gate in Roman culture across the entirety of

Roman history and not only in periods concerning urban foundation or Late Antiquity.

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