Caesar at the Lupercalia*

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PROLEGOMENON: SHAKESPEARE

CASCA I can as well be hanged as tell the manner of it: it was mere foolery; I did not mark it. I saw Mark Antony offer him a crown; yet 'twas not a crown neither, 'twas one of these coronets; and, as I told you, he put it by once; but, for all that, to my thinking, he would fain have had it. Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again; but, to my thinking, he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time; he put it the third time by; and still as he refused it the rabblement shouted and clapped their chopped hands, and threw up their sweaty nightcaps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown that it had almost choked Caesar. For he swounded and fell down at it: and for mine own part I durst not laugh, for fear of opening my lips and receiving the bad air.

CASSIUS But soft, I pray you, what, did Caesar swound?

CASCA He fell down in the market-place, and foamed at mouth and was speechless.

BRUTUS 'Tis very like: he hath the falling-sickness.

CASSIUS No Caesar hath it not, but you and I
And honest Casca, we have the falling-sickness.

CASCA I know not what you mean by that, but I am sure Caesar fell down.

Julius Caesar I.ii.234ff.

This discussion starts from Shakespeare as a reminder that the theme of this passage is one of the most famous incidents in the whole of classical antiquity. He is, as is his way, using the classical sources, but also inventing what he wants for dramatic purposes.[1] Casca (in fact, a Roman aristocrat, and a leading conspirator) has become a simple fellow who can only speak plain prose, while Brutus and Cassius exchange elegant lines of blank verse;[2] Casca cannot see the point of Cassius' savage play with the two meanings of 'falling sickness', i.e. epilepsy, from which Caesar was said to suffer, and the loss of political power to the tyrant. But the offering of the crown (or not quite a crown) is an incident well-grounded in the sources and much-discussed.

I INTRODUCTION

In honour of the Lupercalia, which is after all a festival of transgression, I am breaking a rule, of my own making, not to write about individual Roman festivals. My reasons are that we know too little about individual festivals to say much that is new and profitable

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[1] F. Kermode, *The Age of Shakespeare* (2004), 114–17; on Shakespeare's use of his sources, see J. Roe, '"Character" in Plutarch and Shakespeare: Brutus, Julius Caesar and Mark Antony', in C. Martindale and A. B. Taylor (eds), *Shakespeare and the Classics* (2004), 173–87, especially 174–6; for more bibliography, see 305–6.

[2] F. Kermode, *Shakespeare's Language* (2000), 90–5.

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and that there are far too many other experts round the world who already know that little, and that all too well. My excuse for deciding to break my rule is that the evidence about the Lupercalia offers a somewhat better opportunity than the others. My real problem with festivals is that understanding a festival requires a two-dimensional approach in time. One is the *longue durée*, the history of the festival and its rituals over long periods of time and the search for its enduring meaning or its changing meanings. This can be done and has been done to some extent with Roman festivals,[3] though all too often in the form of a search for their 'true original meaning', a fantasy if ever there was one.[4] But the other dimension is the experience of the festival as it happens on a particular day in a particular year, to see the festival interacting with the social, political realities of a particular community in their festival spirit.[5] This is normally quite impossible in the Roman case; at best we hear occasionally about rituals that go wrong or cause dissension.[6] There are therefore two good reasons for thinking about this topic: first, we have at least some information about the festival from early Roman times until late imperial, if not Byzantine times;[7] secondly, the intersection between Julius Caesar, Mark Antony and the Lupercalia festival gives us a chance to learn something about the meaning of the festival in 44 B.C.E. and something also about Caesar's situation in the over-heated month before his assassination. I shall argue that we can at least make some sense of the character of the festival as it was celebrated at this point; that we can reconstruct the reason for Caesar's involvement with it; and that we can exclude at least some possible interpretations of what he and Antony were trying to do, even if in the nature of the evidence we can never reach certainty.

II THE STORY OF 15 FEBRUARY 44 B.C.E.

In some ways we have a very clear picture of what happened on 15 February 44 B.C.E. As we shall see, in other respects there is a good deal of confusion, but I shall argue that the confusion too is instructive and part of what we need to take into account. Caesar interacted with the festival this year in two respects that need to be considered together:

1. This was the first day on which the new company (*sodalitas*) of the Luperci, the Luperci Iuliani, joined the ancient ones, the Fabiani and Quinctiani, in the running of the Lupercalia route.[8]

[3] See, e.g., M. Beard, 'A complex of times: no more sheep on Romulus' birthday', *PCPS* 213, n.s. 33 (1987), 1–15, reprinted in C. Ando (ed.), *Roman Religion*, Edinburgh Readings on the Ancient World (2003), 273–88.

[4] A clear example might be provided by A. K. Michels, 'The topography and interpretation of the Lupercalia', *TAPA* 84 (1955), 35–59, arguing that the circuit of the Palatine was not the original element, but rather purification from contact with death; or by D. Porte, 'Le devin, son bouc et Junon', *REL* 51 (1973), 171–89, arguing that fertility elements must be separate from purification; but the same assumption can be found recently, e.g., in Peter Wiseman's account in *Remus: a Roman Myth* (1995), 77–88. Other discussions of the ritual and its development: U. W. Scholz, 'Römischer Opfer: Die Lupercalia', in J. Rudhardt and O. Reverdin (eds), *Le sacrifice dans l'antiquité*, Fondation Hardt, Entretiens 27 (1980), 289–340; C. Ulf, *Das römische Lupercalienfest: ein Modellfall für Methodenprobleme in der Altertumswissenschaft*, Impulse der Forschung 38 (1982); W. Pötscher, 'Die Lupercalia: ein Strukturanalyse', *Grazer Beiträge* 11 (1984), 221–49; T. Köves-Zulauf, 'Römische Geburtsriten', *Zetemata* 87 (1990), 221–89; B. Valli, '*Lupercis nudis lustratur antiquum oppidum palatinum*: alcune reflessioni sui *Lupercalia*', in *Florentia: studi di archeologia* 2 (2007), 101–54.

[5] E. Le Roy Ladurie, *Carnival in Romans* (1979; English trans. 1980).

[6] As in the account of events at the Ludi Megalenses, truthful or not, in Cicero, *de HR* 22–9, on which T. P Wiseman, 'Clodius at the games', in idem, *Cinna the Poet and other Roman Essays* (1974), 159–69.

[7] See below p. 152 and McLynn, below pp. 161–75.

[8] For the introduction of the third *sodalitas*: Dio Cass. 44.6.2; Suetonius, *DJ* 76.1; S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (1971), 332–3. Aelius Tubero fgt. 3 (Peter), from Dion. Hal. 1.80, seems to be implying that there were three groups already in the time of Romulus; if he was writing in the 30s B.C.E., perhaps he was reflecting a bogus precedent created for Caesar.

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2. It was also, to quote Cicero (*Philippic* 13): that day on which, sodden with wine, smothered with perfumes and naked (Antony) dared to urge the groaning people of Rome into slavery by offering Caesar the diadem that symbolized the kingship.[9]

We have one little touch belonging to the very day itself. According to Quintilian,[10] when discussing the figure *aposeiopesis* (that is leaving a sentence unfinished, for dramatic effect):

> Nec ego illud quidem aposiopesin semper uoco in quo res quaecunque relinquitur intelligenda ut ea quae in epistolis Cicero: 'Data Lupercalibus, quo die Antonius Caesari . . .'; non enim obticuit: lusit, quia nihil hic aliud intelligi poterat quam hoc: 'diadema imposuit'.
>
> Quintilian, *inst*. 9.3.61

> And I do not always call it *aposiopesis* in a case where some point or other is left to be understood, as the one in Cicero's letters: 'Sent on the Lupercalia, the day Antonius on Caesar . . .'. No, Cicero has not surpressed something: he is joking, because nothing else could be understood except this: '. . . placed the diadem'.

This little fragment of information is far from being useless: it shows us Cicero on the same day as the events we are considering already realizing the significance of what had happened and assuming that the letter's recipient will have realized it as well. It was not, as Shakespeare's Casca put it, 'mere foolery', that you could afford to ignore. Casca may have thought that; we know from this brief mention that Cicero did not.

The most basic facts about the day are not subject to any very serious dispute. According to Cicero again, this time in the second *Philippic*:[11]

> Your colleague[12] sat on the rostra, dressed in his purple toga, on his golden throne (*sella*), wearing a crown (*coronatus*). You climb up, you reach the throne — you were being a *lupercus* when you ought to have been remembering that you were the consul; you display a diadem. Groans round the whole forum. Where did the diadem come from? You didn't just pick up a cast-off, you had brought it with you, a crime thought out and planned at home. You placed the diadem on his head to popular lamentation; he refused it to popular cheering. So you were the only one to be found who, having tried to launch a monarchy by turning the man who was your colleague into your lord, tested out what the Roman People would tolerate and suffer.

Note that Cicero is not implying here that Caesar was already enthroned as King: it is clear that the robe (even if it was kingly, as Stefan Weinstock argued[13]) and the golden throne (clearly not a consul's proper seat) are both honours he can use, but evidently are not to be seen as making him the *rex* of Rome. The adding on of the diadem is apparently understood as quite another matter.

[9] '. . . illius diei . . . quo ausus est obrutus vino, unguentis oblitus, nudus gementem populum Romanum ad servitutem cohortari' (Cicero, *Philippic* 13.31).

[10] Quintilian, *Inst.Or*. 9.3 = Cicero, *Epistulae* (ed. W. S. Watt (1958)), fgt. XVII.1, p. 175. Quintilian, here as elsewhere, quotes from letters not in the surviving collections of Cicero's letters, but does not give a name to the addressee.

[11] 'sedebat in rostris conlega tuus amictus toga purpurea in sella aurea coronatus. escendis, accedis ad sellam, (ita eras Lupercus, ut te consulem esse meminisse deberes) diadema ostendis. gemitus toto foro. unde diadema? non enim abiectum sustuleras, sed adtuleras domo meditatum et cogitatum scelus. tu diadema inponebas cum plangore populi, ille cum plausu reiciebat. tu ergo unus, scelerate, inventus es, qui cum auctor regni esse eumque, quem collegam habebas, dominum habere velles, idem temptares, quid populus Romanus ferre et pati posset' (Cicero, *Philippic* 2.85).

[12] Cicero is addressing Antony after the assassination, referring to his days as consul, when it had been Caesar who was his colleague as consul of 44 B.C.E., see *MRR* II.315–16. The speech was never in fact delivered; it was probably published by November 44 B.C.E., but composed as if for delivery on 19 September, in reply to an attack by Antony made on that day.

[13] Weinstock, op. cit. (n. 8), 270–3.

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Dio Cassius[14] adds some more uncontroversial detail:

> When he went to the Lupercalia in the forum and seated himself on the golden throne, dressed in the royal garb and distinguished by the golden crown, Antonius together with his fellow priests hailed him as King and placed the diadem on his head, saying 'The people give this to you through me'.

So Antony, as Dio and other sources also tell us,[15] was running as one of the Luperci, which is why, as we have already seen and as Cicero repeatedly insists, he was naked, as the runners traditionally were. Cicero repeatedly derides the nakedness as though it was to be seen as a shameful state, but we can be confident that in other contexts he, like any other Roman, might have taken quite a different view of this most traditional of Roman rituals.[16] We know again from Dio,[17] though also from Plutarch[18] and, if a bit confusedly, from Nicolaus of Damascus,[19] that Antony was running specifically for the new group of Luperci, the Iuliani, and that he was in fact their leader. There is only a little more to be added to this picture, as we shall see later on, but the later stages of the incident become matters of deeper and deeper controversy.

From this discussion, there are questions that have been identified to which some answers need to be found. Granted that in these various ways, Caesar and Antony, whether by pre-arrangement or not, were evidently seeking advantage from the ritual programme, can we see what it was that made this particular festival suitable for their purposes? Secondly, (perhaps, alternatively) does the ritual programme itself throw any light on what that purpose was?

III THE COHERENCE OF THE LUPERCALIA

Accounts of and debates about the Lupercalia, down to some of the most recent ones, have sometimes started from the assumption that the ritual programme as we have it is incoherent:[20] i.e. that its different elements do not add up to any unity that could have conveyed a meaning to participants. As a result, we can identify the original 'primitive' core, and then assess when and through what forces the different elements of the ritual were added to this core. Even if this is ever a legitimate procedure for those studying the earliest history of a ritual, which I do not myself believe, the concern of this article is with the understanding of the ritual as it was practised in the first century B.C.E.; the stages by which it came to be performed in the form we know it from first-century sources are not the issue here.

To summarize briefly what the ritual consisted of: before February 44 B.C.E., there were two teams (*sodalitates*) of Luperci — one the team of Romulus, the other the team of Remus. Each was apparently called after an ancient Roman *gens* — the Fabii and the Quinctii or Quintilii, though the exact names of the *sodalitates* are variously reported. Romulus' team was the Quinctii, Remus' the Fabii.[21] How these groups, named after particular ancient *gentes*, came to be associated with one each of the twin founders is not recorded.

The traditional ritual programme had two stages. In the first stage, at the Lupercal itself (i.e. the scene of the discovery of the twins suckled by the wolf), the Luperci sacrificed a

[14] Dio Cassius 44.11.2.
[15] Cicero, *Philippic* 2.85; Dio Cassius, loc. cit. (n. 14); Plutarch, *Caesar* 61.3.
[16] For the implications of Cicero's comment on the Luperci at *Pro Caelio* 26, see below Postscript p. 177.
[17] 45.30; see Weinstock, op. cit. (n. 8), 333.
[18] Plutarch, *Antony* 12.2.
[19] Nicolaus, *Life of Augustus* 71.
[20] See above n. 4.
[21] For the exact names reported: G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus* (2nd edn; 1912), 559 & n. 2; Weinstock, op. cit. (n. 8), 332 n. 6.

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goat and a dog. They then smeared the forehead of the young Luperci (perhaps the initiates) with blood and milk. The new bloods then gave a laugh. The hide of the sacrificed goat (or goats?) was cut up to provide loin-cloths for the runners and strips of hide to be used as whips, also by the runners. There was then feasting, with much wine.[22] The second stage consisted of running around in the Palatine/*forum*/*sacra via* area of Rome, striking all the people they met with their strips of hide and joking, laughing, larking about and exchanging obscenities with those who attended the ritual. It was believed that women who had been struck with the goatskin whip would become pregnant. Gerhard Binder[23] has pointed out, rightly in my view, how these practices imply that the ritual was of the Carnival type.[24] In my view this is a fundamental point, which needs to be borne in mind later on in this argument. At least our sources, not least Valerius Maximus,[25] are emphatic about the joking, jeering, obscenity and play that accompanied the progress of the run.

The basic elements of this programme might be analysed as:

- the invocation of the first creation of the community (the respective *sodales* of Remus and of Romulus, the founders);
- the confrontation of primitive to civilized (i.e. the naked Luperci in contrast with the onlookers from the contemporary city);
- the annual ritual purification of the community (the sacrifice and the running and the actions of the runners);
- the ritual fertilization of the human community (the ritual of whipping).

There are some other themes to be remembered: the off-setting and inter-penetration of the animal against the human, evoked by the references to wolves and goats, as in the (mythically) wolfish feeding of the twins at the Lupercal and the (symbolically) goatish penetration of the women in the fertilization ritual; also the goatish character of the presiding deity.[26]

There are of course very serious gaps in our knowledge even of this, the best-known and longest-lived of Roman rituals. We know the Luperci ran: but the route seems to be described sometimes as running round the Palatine; once as running up and down the *sacra via*; often simply as *discurrere*, which means to run about, though not necessarily purposelessly.[27] The identity of the god to whom the festival was dedicated is another point of extended debate, but Faunus, who might be called Inuus as the god of sexual penetration, is currently the clear winner in this race and for good reasons. It is a very reasonable hypothesis that we can see him pictured on a mirror from Praeneste (Figs 1–2), standing beside what must be a representation of the miracle of the feeding of the twins.[28] We shall return

[22] The information about this first stage of the ritual comes mainly from Plutarch, *Romulus* 21.4–10, a learned discussion citing earlier authorities for the mythical origins of the festival; it cannot be certain whether his 'we see' at 21.5 implies a claim to have seen the ritual himself.

[23] G. Binder, 'Kommunikative Elemente im römischen Staatskult am Ende der Republik: das Beispiel des Lupercalia des Jahres 44', in G. Binder and K. Ehlich (eds), *Religiöse Kommunikation, Formen unde Praxis von der Neuzeit* (1997), 225–41.

[24] Binder, op. cit. (n. 23); for the notion, Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (English trans., 1968).

[25] Val. Max. 2.2.9: '... epularum hilaritate ac uino largiore prouecti ... obuios iocantes petierunt. cuius hilaritatis memoria annuo circuitu feriarum repetitur'. ('In the enjoyment of the feast and heightened by plenty of wine ...they struck the bystanders in fun. The memory of this hilarity is recalled at the festival by the annual circular run.') On this passage see below, pp. 178–9.

[26] See below pp. 151–2.

[27] For discussion of the route: Michels, op. cit. (n. 4); contra, very effectively, F. Coarelli, 'I percorsi ceremoniali a Roma in età regia', in E. Greco (ed.), *Teseo e Romolo: le origini di Atene e Roma a confronto*, Atti del convegno internazionale di studi Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene, Tripodes 1 (2005), 32–7; Valli, op. cit. (n. 4), 110–20.

[28] For the group of goatish deities, who all come into question here, see particularly, R. E. A. Palmer, *Roman Religion and the Roman Empire* (1974), 80–9; 159–63; T. P. Wiseman, 'The god of the Lupercal', *JRS* 85 (1995), 1–15. For the mirror, see also T. P. Wiseman, 'The She-wolf mirror. An interpretation', *PBSR* 61 (1993), 1–6. For a survey of the many identifications of the figures, Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 4), 65–71.

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FIG. 1. Mirror from Praeneste, fourth century B.C.E., showing the scene of the wolf suckling twins, with rustic deity on left. (*After JRS 85 (1995), 5, fig. 2*)

FIG. 2. Detail of Fig. 1: the god of the Lupercal, with goatskin cape and throwing stick, in some respects resembling the Luperci.

to these points. But, in any case, confusion about some of the facts is not the same thing as proven incoherence. To take one example, it has been almost an axiom of the subject that the purification and the fertilization elements are quite separable: either one is early and the other an accretion to the ritual, whose date can be discussed; or else one is the real meaning of the ritual, while the other is of minor importance.[29] But consider the following text of Paul the Deacon, reporting Festus, who drew on the Augustan antiquarian Verrius, who should be a first-rate informant on this kind of detail:

> Februarius mensis dictus, quod tum, id est extremo mense anni, populus februaretur, id est lustraretur ac purgaretur, uel a Iunone Februata, quam alii Februalem, Romani Februlim uocant, quod ipsi eo mense sacra fiebant, eiusque feriae erant Lupercalia, quo die mulieres februabantur a lupercis amiculo Iunonis, id est pelle caprina; quam ob causam is quoque dies Februatus appellabatur.
>
> Festus (Paul) 75.236

[29] For discussion of this issue, see especially: Pötscher, op. cit. (n. 4); Köves-Zulauf, op. cit. (n. 4).

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The received text, at a cursory reading, seems to be all about the goddess Iuno and it might seem that she, on the view of Festus/Paulus, was herself the goddess of the Lupercalia.[30] But it is in fact clear that there is a lacuna somewhere in this entry: Paul evidently worked rapidly, often picking one element out of a complicated entry in the Lexicon, characteristically the first or last sentence. Sometimes he attempts a proper summary, but omits or misunderstands a crucial phrase. In this case, we can in fact be certain that Iuno was not the deity of the Lupercalia at all:[31] but, crucially, the phrase '... either by Iuno...'('... uel a Iunone...') could originally have been answered by another '*uel*...' clause,[32] in which the god of the Lupercalia was actually named — Inuus, the penetrator of women, would be the best conjecture.[33] That Iuno, the goddess here of childbirth,[34] and Inuus, the god of sexual penetration, are found in collaboration together is scarcely a matter for surprise: and, as we shall see below, the 'penetration' at the Lupercalia fulfils a prophetic utterance reported by Ovid in the *Fasti*.[35] Paul regularly changes the present tenses of Festus' entries dealing with pagan rituals into imperfects, thus consciously distancing himself and his Christian readers from rituals no longer practised in their time;[36] if we restore the tenses Festus would have used and conjecture what might have stood in the lacuna, the entry might be reconstructed as:

> Februarius mensis dicitur, quod tum, id est extremo mense anni, populus februetur id est lustretur ac purgetur, uel a Iunone Februata (quam alii Februalem, Romani Februlim vocant) quod ipsi eo mense sacra fiunt, [vel ab Inuuo, quod ei quoque sacra fiunt], eiusque feriae sunt Lupercalia, quo die mulieres februantur a lupercis amiculo Iunonis, id est pelle caprina; quam ob causam is quoque dies Februatus appellatur.
>
> The month is called Februarius because at that time, the last month of the year, the people is purified, that is lustrated and cleansed, either by Iuno Februata (whom others call Februalis, the Romans Februlis) because it is in that month that rituals are performed for her [or else by Inuus, because rituals are also performed for him and because] his festival is the Lupercalia, on which day women are purified by the Luperci using Iuno's *amiculus* (or *amiculum*), that is the skin of the goat. As a result, the day too is called Februatus.[37]

Paul, of course, normally shortens the entries he includes and this one may therefore originally have been longer than this restoration; but if it is on the right lines at all,[38] it provides us with some essential connections. One phrase has been left untranslated: '... amiculo Iunonis id est pelle caprina'. The reference of this phrase should be clear enough: the instrument through which the Luperci purified the women of Rome was indeed *pellis*

[30] As has sometimes been argued: see e.g. P. Lambrechts, 'Les Lupercales, une fête prédéiste?', in *Hommages à J. Bidez et Fr. Cumont*, Coll. Latomus 2 (1949), 167–76.

[31] For the evidence, Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 28).

[32] Another possibility is that a previous *uel* could be understood and *ab* taken in the sense of 'derived from', which would give the sense: February was so called *either* because the people was purified (*februaretur*) *or* (its name was derived) from Iuno Februata etc.; the Latin would be awkward, though not impossible for Paul, but the problem of Iuno as goddess of the Lupercalia would remain. I am grateful to Dr Luke Pitcher of Durham University for discussion of this text.

[33] For Inuus see Palmer, op. cit. (n. 28), 85–8; Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 28, 1995), 8–10. This name rather than Faunus, by which the god might also have been called, is made highly plausible by the similarity of *vel a Iunone* to *vel ab Inuuo*: the scribe's eye has surely jumped over the near repetition.

[34] There is no need here to regard Iuno Februata as a special identity of the goddess, for which we have no real evidence: as Palmer, op. cit. (n. 28), 18–19, saw, the adjective needs to means no more than 'after her purification'. Contra, Porte, op. cit. (n. 4).

[35] Below p. 151.

[36] The following sentence in Paul's version returns to the present tense, either because he forgot to make the changes or because he is dealing with the meanings of words, not directly with rituals. For Paul in his own time, see C. Woods, 'A contribution to the King's Library: Paul the Deacon's epitome and its Carolingian context', in F. Glinister and C. Woods (eds), *Verrius, Festus and Paul* (2007), 109–35.

[37] i.e. like the Goddess herself.

[38] Paul makes errors in his summaries, but seldom departs far from what he found in Festus.

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caprina, viz. the strips of skin from the sacrificed victim. The question is why this name for the whip? Much discussion has centred on the assumption that the word comes from *amĭculum*, meaning Iuno's cape. Iuno Sospita is indeed shown with a goatskin mantle over her shoulders, as is the god of the Lupercal (see Fig. 2); but it has never been satisfactorily explained how this could have been used for purification.[39] Another possibility would be to understand not *amĭculum* (cape) but *amīculus* (little friend); that is to say that the whip, which promoted pregnancy and thereby assisted Iuno in fulfilling her proper functions, was called — colloquially, it should be assumed — 'Iuno's little helper'. In that case, one might guess that this phrase belongs not to archaic history, but to the streets in Festus' own day.

Whether or not that suggestion is right, the passage makes it quite clear in the context of February purification rituals, that the whipping by the Luperci and the purification both by Iuno and by the god of the Lupercalia are integrally connected with the promotion of fertility amongst the people of Rome. In addition, Thomas Köves-Zulauf[40] has argued very plausibly that the fertility elements in the ritual are not limited to the second part of the action: he quite plausibly interprets the whole ritual in the Lupercal as a symbolic evocation of the stages of a human birth. If he is right, then the unity of the programme would be doubly confirmed.

Another entry in Paul's epitome of Festus' *Lexicon* confirms that he, and in all likelihood Verrius, did (whether rightly or wrongly) regard the whipping ritual as directed particularly at the women among the bystanders:

> Crepi, that is Luperci, were called after the crack (*crepitus*) that strips of hide made while whipping. For the Romans had a custom at the Lupercalia that naked men ran about and whipped every woman they met with strips of hide.[41]

Some other sources do not emphasize this distinction between men and women, and indeed it seems very likely that the Luperci as they ran lashed out indifferently at the passers-by to purify the people, men as well as women. Since it was (one might expect) the women who became pregnant, it is hardly surprising that they are mentioned as offering their hands or backs[42] to the flick of the whip or that Verrius saw this as the central purpose of this part of the ritual.

Ovid[43] provides us with important related evidence, confirming the link between Iuno Lucina and the Luperci, in the course of his account of the Lupercalia in Book 2 of the *Fasti*:

> There was a grove beneath the Esquiline Hill, unpruned for many years, called by the name of great Iuno. Wives and husbands had come there together to supplicate on bended knees, when the tree-tops suddenly trembled and the goddess miraculously spoke through her own grove: 'Let the sacred he-goat penetrate the Italian matrons'. The crowd in terror was astounded at the obscure words.

A prophet, Ovid goes on, was able to interpret these words in a less affrighting manner, by taking the penetration as referring to the whip, not to sexual penetration. This is Ovid's account of the introduction of the whipping ritual, which he places in the time of Romulus himself.[44] Those who wish to see the original ritual as one of the purification of the

[39] For discussion: Köves-Zulauf, op. cit. (n. 4), 246–56.

[40] Köves-Zulauf, op. cit. (n. 4), 224–45.

[41] 'Crep[p]os, id est lupercos, dicebant a crepitu pellicularum, quem faciunt verberantes. mos enim erat Romanis in Lupercalibus nudos discurrere et pellibus obvias quasque feminas ferire.' Festus (Paul) 49.186

[42] For the hands, see Plutarch, *Caesar* 61.2 and Juvenal 2.142 (on whom see further below, Postscript, p. 180); for the backs, Ovid, *Fasti* 2.445. See below, pp. 179–81, and Pl. IV for the very different third-century C.E. evidence.

[43] Ovid, *Fasti* 2.435–42. For a sceptical account of Ovid's evidence, Porte, op. cit. (n. 4), who argues that the whole story has been transposed from another religious context.

[44] For Livy's view of this matter, see below, p. 152; McLynn, p. 165 and especially n. 21.

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settlement and not concerned with fertility at all have tried to exploit a passage from Pope Gelasius' attack on those who wished to maintain the festival in their own time, the fifth century C.E.[45]

> Livy gives the reason for the institution of the Lupercalia in his second decade, in so far as he looks back at the invention of this very superstition: and it is not in order to resist diseases that he says it was instituted; rather it had to be put on, as he thinks, because of the women's sterility that had happened at that time.[46]

No doubt Gelasius, by quoting from Livy, the great historian, was seeking to outmanoeuvre his opponents by showing his better control of the pagan sources; but his statement (even if it is a reliable reference) does not imply that Livy dated any particular event in the middle Republic, nor does it support the idea of a reform. Taking the words '...propter quid instituta sint' literally, he would seem to be dating the introduction of the whole festival to the middle Republic. It would not be safe to infer that the words 'nec propter morbos inhibendos' formed part of Livy's text; they could well be an inference by the Pope himself from a mention of *sterilitas*. Even *sterilitas* itself is a word not apparently used by Livy in the extant part of his *History*. No element of this sentence should therefore be regarded as an actual fragment of Livy's text. The likeliest interpretation is that Livy mentioned the fact that the festival was concerned with fertility from its origins. Thus he may well be referring to a story of the time of Romulus, such as that told by Ovid, or to some similar version of events. The question does then arise as to what event in Livy's narrative would have triggered the mention of the origins of the festival; but it need not be more than a perceived shortage of live births at some particular moment.[47]

Peter Wiseman[48] has argued that the prophecy in Ovid reflects a historical event and gives it a precise date, as is his way; but he then argues that the form of the prophecy implies that the women struck in the ritual must have been made to bleed or the prophecy would not have been fulfilled, the goat would not have 'penetrated'. He adds a linguistic argument because the women (*puellae*) offer their backs *percutienda*, which he translates 'to be cut' with the goatskin. This seems to me to be literal-mindedness carried to excess. Prophecies, whether real or mythical (as I remain convinced this one was), can be fulfilled at a symbolic as well as at a literal level. The blow symbolized the penetration. Meanwhile *percutere* either means to stab with a sword or knife or else to strike, the natural sense when it is the question of a blow with a whip. In this sense, how serious the consequences might be would depend on what was used to strike the blow. According to our best information, we are talking precisely of a strip of skin, freshly cut from a victim, not of a whip made of cured hardened leather. I remain myself totally sceptical towards the claimed bloodshed.

It may well be that the ritual became more violent in the course of the later period, and we discuss this possibility below,[49] but its republican form must have been more a display of fun and games than of sexist violence. A good deal turns here on how we should imagine the atmosphere of the festival at this date, which in turn depends on how seriously we take the evidence of Plutarch's account. On his view, the ritual began with a sacrifice of goats and the runners were then provided with flimsy loincloths and makeshift whips cut off from the skins of the newly sacrificed animals. If so, we may legitimately continue to think

[45] For Gelasius, see A. W. J. Hollemann, *Pope Gelasius I and the Lupercalia* (1974); McLynn, below p. 162; for the date of the incident; McLynn, below, p. 162 n. 9.

[46] Gelasius, *Adv. Andromachum* 12: 'Lupercalia autem propter quid instituta sint, quantum ad ipsius superstitionis commenta respectat, Liuius in secunda decade loquitur nec propter morbos inhibendos instituta commemorat sed propter sterilitatem, ut ei uidetur, mulierum quae tunc acciderat, exhibenda.'

[47] According to Orosius, *adv.pag.* 4.4.2, there was such an incident in 276 B.C.E.; for discussion, Hollemann, op. cit. (n. 45), 20–2; Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 4), 84; op. cit. (n. 28, 1995), 14.

[48] Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 28).

[49] Below, Postcript pp. 180–1.

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of the Luperci as running, flicking the passers-by as they run and generally larking about, not as stopping the run, stripping the women and flogging them.

IV OVID AND THE MYTH OF THE LUPERCALIA

One striking version of the myth of the Lupercalia[50] is provided for us by an earlier passage of the same account in Ovid. Romulus and Remus and their followers are engaged in making a sacrifice to Faunus; while waiting for the sacrificial meat to be cooked, they strip off and practice their gymnastic exercises, at this point:

> A shepherd called out from a high point: 'Romulus, Remus, there are bandits driving away the bullocks across the trackless lands'. It was a long delay to be armed; the brothers rushed off each in a different direction and the stolen beasts were recovered through Remus' running across them. When he came back, he pulled the hissing meats (*exta*) from the spits and said: 'None but the victor should surely eat these'. He did as he said, and so likewise did the Fabii. Romulus came back there empty-handed and found the tables empty and the bones bare. He laughed, and grieved that Remus and the Fabii had been able to win, while his Quintilii could not. The representation (*forma*) of these deeds lives on; they (the Luperci) run naked — and an action that turned out well in the end keeps its undying fame.[51]
>
> Ovid, *Fasti* 2.369ff.

This is a very curious story, raising real problems about the relationship between the ritual and the myth of this part of the Lupercalia Festival. To dispose of one complication, it seems clear that the *exta* in question here are not simply the entrails, which ought to be dedicated to the gods not eaten by men, rather the word is being used in a more general and looser sense, as it sometimes is; it means the meat cooked on the spits, as is assured by the fact that Romulus and his Quintilii only find the bones left. That can hardly be the bones of the liver and heart. So I think no question arises (it certainly is not implied at all by Ovid) that Remus committed any act of sacrilege, or that this explains his later death.[52] The point is only that he was the quicker twin and the victor. There can be no doubt that there is a close relationship here between ritual and poem: we know that Romulus' laugh was re-played every year when the two new Luperci were blooded at the preliminary goat-sacrifice.[53] And these lines must reflect some further correspondence between text and ritual, specifically referred to in l. 379; the only question is what was the extent of this correspondence.

[50] As so often, there are many stories that can be told in association with Roman rituals and it is not possible to claim one as the official truth. I assume that Ovid has the best claim on our attention in this particular context. For other versions, see Valerius Maximus, quoted below pp. 178–9; Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 4), 87–8.

[51] Pastor ab excelso 'per devia rura iuvencos,
Romule, praedones, et Reme', dixit, 'agunt.'
Longum erat armari: diversis exit uterque
partibus, occursu praeda recepta Remi.
Ut rediit, veribus stridentia detrahit exta
atque ait 'haec certe non nisi victor edet.'
Dicta facit, Fabiique simul. venit inritus illic
Romulus et mensas ossaque nuda videt.
Risit et indoluit Fabios potuisse Remumque
vincere, Quintilios non potuisse suos.
F<or>ma manet facti: posito velamine currunt,
et memorem famam quod bene cessit habet.
(In l. 379 fama *MSS*; forma *Alton*.)

[52] For the theory that he did so, see R. Schilling, 'Romulus l'élu et Rémus le réprouvé', reprinted in *Rites, Cultes, Dieux de Rome* (1979), 103–20, especially 112–14 (= *REL* 38 (1961), 182–99).

[53] For the laugh of Romulus, *Fasti* 2.377; for the laugh of the Luperci, Plutarch, *Romulus* 21.7.

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Forma, as used in l. 379, is an emendation of the manuscript reading *fama* (fame); palaeographically, this is an exceptionally easy change, but it is unfortunate that the reading does make a difference to the sense. The objection to *fama* is that the repetition of the same word in the next line is pointless, feeble and very un-Ovidian; it is in any case impossible that *fama* should be the subject of *habet* ('the fame ... has abiding fame'). *Forma* would imply something far broader in the sense of a re-presentation of the actual triumph of Remus in the race. The question is how much is needed to make sense of the deliberate Ovidian recalling of the ritual in the context of his story. Just the existence of the two groups of Luperci seems quite inadequate to explain what he means, though no doubt the story does provide an *aition* for the existence of the two groups of runners. A hypothetical explanation has been suggested: that in the performance of the ritual, the Fabii always consumed a share of the sacrificial meat, while the Quintilii were not allocated one and that the story is an attempt to explain the apparent anomaly. The idea derives from an anecdote in Livy, where much the same story, in a far more concise form, is told of two other families (the Potitii and the Pinarii) in relation to the cult of Hercules at the Ara Maxima. The outcome in that case is that the Pinarii, who arrived late for the initial ritual, never, so long as the two families continued to perform their roles, received their share of the *exta*.[54]

However, what is most striking about Ovid's tale is precisely what is not paralleled by the tale of the Potitii and the Pinarii, viz. the racing, the rescuing of the flock from the rustlers, the victor as the recipient of the honours, and above all the victory by the wrong twin. Remus' victory, startling enough on any view, is all the more astonishing in view of Peter Wiseman's very suggestive arguments[55] that the contrast between the twins is worked out in the tradition as a contrast between Romulus the swift and Remus the slow. Remus the slow is eventually killed and sometimes not by Romulus himself, but by Celer, whose very name means 'the swift'.[56] If this very appealing argument is right, then the myth of the Lupercalia precisely reverses all normal expectations about Romulus and Remus. And the race between them to rescue the bullocks must have been the crucial phase of the story on which the message turned. Ovid's whole account would make more sense if the running of the two groups of Luperci in some sense reflected the competition between their founders, so that each year saw the re-running of the race and a new set of victors who would no doubt have been rewarded with the honour of eating the *exta*.[57] However, there is no trace of such an outcome of the running in the sources we have.

There are in fact three paradoxical elements in Ovid's account of this incident, none of which does he find it necessary to explain. First, the victim whose sacrifice leads to the whole incident and the apparent triumph of Remus over Romulus is a female goat sacrificed to Faunus, a male (assertively male) deity, against all the normal rules;[58] secondly, the winner turns out to be the wrong twin, if this event is to be the precursor of the celebration of the founding of Rome, as it should be; thirdly, the focus of Ovid's account seems to be almost entirely on the one issue of the nakedness of the runners. What may be detected here is again the spirit of the Carnival. Just as the runners subvert the normal conventions of Roman life, so the myth transposes the founders, subverts the rules of sacrifice, and presents the nakedness as the main theme of the day. The carnival tradition spreads from life into myth and literature.

From one perspective at least, the religious centre of the ritual programme seems to me to be possible to locate: the annual purification of the Roman people and their maintenance through the promotion of fertility are identical actions and they are

[54] Livy 1.7.12–14.

[55] Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 4), 6–13.

[56] For this version of the story, Ovid, *Fasti* 4.837–44; Festus (Paul) 48.2 L; Diod.Sic. 8.6.1–3.

[57] For the agonistic element in the myth, see G. Piccaluga, 'L'aspetto agonistico dei Lupercalia', *Studi di storia delle religioni* 33 (1962), 51–62; G. Capdeville, 'Jeux athlétiques et rituals de fondation', in *Spectacles sportifs et scéniques dans le monde Étrusco-Italique*, CEFR 172 (1993), 141–87, especially 170–6.

[58] The normal rules in Wissowa, op. cit. (n. 21), 412–16.

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inseparable from the running of the Luperci. The maintenance of the ritual protects the people and guarantees its continuity and survival from the founding birth of the twins onwards. The three elements of purification, fertility, and protection are all meanings inherent in the ritual programme. It is also perfectly likely that this had always cohered with a celebration of the founders and the origin of the community: nothing requires us to postulate specific later accretions, though the understanding of a ritual of this kind must always have changed over time. My main point in any case is that by the time of this article's vantage point of 15 February 44 B.C.E., the whole ritual is certainly together in its familiar form; it would have made perfectly good sense, as a coded history of the origins, development and maintenance of the community of the Roman people. The ritual is one of continuity with the past and annual renewal for the future.

One more aspect deserves to be thought about here, even though the evidential basis for the connection may be tenuous in the extreme.[59] The date of the festival is just a few days after the Roman date for the beginning of spring.[60] A note in the *Liber Caerimoniarum*,[61] which introduces a particular day's racing in the Hippodrome at Constantinople, marks the day as 'Luperc.' (Λουπέρκ.). There seems no reason to doubt that this abbreviation should be understood as Lupercalia, i.e. what survives of the old Roman festival centuries later in a Christian context. It is unsurprising that little if anything is left of the rituals except the name and the approximate date.[62] But what is suggestive is that the celebration is accompanied by a hymn to the spring.[63] That suggests that the annual awakening of human fertility is timed to coincide with the annual awakening of the fertility of animals and plants. The question needs to be asked (though it is not answered here) how far human fertility was perceived in the context of other natural events. This is to perceive it as a festival of spring, rather than of the new year as a calendrical event.

V CAESAR IN STATE

It is time to return to Caesar in his purple robe on his golden throne.[64] So far, my argument has been that the character of the Festival as it was in the late Republic can be interpreted and that nothing suggests that it was in any way a coronation-ritual or that the position of Caesar on the *rostra* was in any way a traditional part of the ceremonial. It is, however, surely possible to understand why he was where he was and why seated in such state. In the first place, his position must have been very close to the finishing-point of the run. Augustine gives us a firm clue to the route the Luperci ran, when he mentions in passing that they ran up the Via Sacra (the sacred way) and then down again.[65] He tells us this was

[59] R. P. Grumel, 'Le commencement et la fin des jeux à l'Hippodrome de Contantinople', *Échos d'Orient* 1936, 428; Y.-M. Duval, 'Des Lupercales de Constantinople aux Lupercales de Rome', *REL* 55 (1977), 222–70.

[60] Varro, *de RR* 1.28.1 (verni dies ex a.d. VII id. Feb.); Pliny, *NH* 2.122 (is dies sextus Februarius ante idus); 16.93 (ex a.d. fere vi idus Febr.); Ovid, *Fasti* 2.149–50 (under a.d. V id.Feb.).

[61] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *Liber Caerimoniarum* 2.82, with A.Vogt's commentary, *Commentaire* (1964), vol. 2, 172–7.

[62] For the date, Duval, op. cit. (n. 59), 227–34.

[63] Grumel, op. cit. (n. 59), 428–32; Duval, op. cit. (n. 59), 237–43. For a sceptical account of the alleged connection between the Lupercalia and the festival of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, see C. Schäublin, 'Lupercalien und Lichtmess', *Hermes* 123 (1995), 117–25.

[64] For discussion of Caesar's Lupercalia: A. Alföldi, *Studien über Caesars Monarchie* (1953), 15ff.; K. W. Welwei, 'Das Angebots des Diadems an Caesar und das Luperkalienproblem', *Historia* 16 (1967), 44–69; Weinstock, op. cit. (n. 8), 331–40; Valli, op. cit. (n. 4), 115–20. Georges Dumézil in *Archaic Roman Religion* (English trans.; 1970), vol. 1, 346–50, argued that the festival should be seen as a royal initiation, but he does so arguing from Caesar's use of it, not from the ritual itself. For the attempt to interpret the ritual as initiatory in its essence, see especially Ulf, op. cit. (n. 4).

[65] 'For people also explain the ascent and descent of the *luperci* along the sacred way, saying that they represent the men who headed for the mountain peaks because of the flood and came back down to the low-lying ground when it subsided' (Augustine, *City of God* 18.12).

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interpreted as a reference to the men who fled to the hills to escape the flood and returned to the plain when the waters subsided at last. We can surely be confident that this reflects, not Augustine's report of Varro, but the results of his seeing the festival while visiting Rome, and hearing a fifth-century interpretation of the ritual.[66] The Luperci, therefore, ran up the hill away from the forum, towards the area of the later Arch of Titus, and then back towards the forum. Caesar's seat at the *rostra* must have been close to the end of the route, chosen because that was where the runners would arrive.[67] This was, we can be sure, not the complete run[68] and there are one or two more indicators to be considered here: the run certainly started from the Lupercal (see plan at Fig. 3), where Romulus and Remus were supposed to have been found and where the preliminary rituals took place; it almost certainly circled round the Palatine;[69] meanwhile, the area of the *comitium*, near the end of the Via Sacra, not far from where Caesar was seated, seems also to have had mythical links with the story of the twins. In both places, according to different sources, there was a fig-tree, the *ficus Ruminalis*, which figured in the story of the discovery of the twins.[70] Pliny, in a discussion of the various trees in the forum area, shows awareness that a *ficus Ruminalis* was to be found both at the Lupercal and in the *comitium* and implies that it moved from one site to the other while the early augur, Attus Navius, was taking the auguries.[71] The fig-tree in the *comitium* was the one called Navia, after Attus himself. This adds substance to the probability that one site was the beginning, the other the end of the runners' route.

Further suggestive evidence is provided by the series of reliefs showing this part of the forum, called the *Anaglypha* or *Plutei Traiani* (Pls I–II).[72] They show a procession in the second century C.E., with account-books being transported to destruction, cancelling the people's debts, in a gesture of imperial munificence; behind the procession, where the Temple of Saturn, the only building in the vicinity with Ionic capitals, is clearly identifiable (Pl. II.1), the procession passes what must be the Basilica Julia (see Fig. 3). Clearly visible in the relief are the fig-tree and an accompanying statue of Marsyas (Pl. II.2) at the back of the procession.[73] The position they occupy certainly does not reflect their exact location in space; they were in fact on the other side of the forum, in the area of the *comitium* near the old *rostra*, not the Caesarian ones. They are present as symbolic markers of the traditions and liberty of the people of Rome. But they also strongly support an association between the end-point of the run of the Luperci and the *rostra* where Caesar was seated.

If we can make out the association between the end of the run, the *ficus Ruminalis* and the place in which Caesar was seated, then a possible explanation follows. When Antony arrives as the first of the runners from the new *sodalitas*, named after the *gens Julia*, Caesar is receiving one of his greatest honours. The sources make it quite clear that the creation of this third *sodalitas* was seen as an honour to him and it is listed as such in the elaborate lists that have been preserved in the historians.[74] What he was doing therefore was deliberately placing himself in parallel to the founders, who also had their own group of companions running the course. We know already that the comparison with Romulus/Quirinus

[66] So, A. Ziolkowski, 'From the Lupercalia to the Argei', *Ancient Society* 29 (1998/99), 199 & n. 3. See McLynn, below p. 173.

[67] For a detailed plan of the area, see F. Coarelli, *Il Foro Romano: periodo arcaico* (1983), 16–17.

[68] For discussion, Valli, op. cit. (n. 4), 117–18, who argues that the run up and down the Via Sacra was an innovation of Caesar's. For a quite different view, Michels, op. cit. (n. 4), for whom the original run was the Via Sacra. See also n. 27 above.

[69] For insistence on this point, Coarelli, op. cit. (n. 27), 32–7.

[70] Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 28, 1995), 7–8; F. Coarelli in *LTUR* 2.240–9 (s.v. *ficus Navia*; *ficus Ruminalis*).

[71] Pliny, *NH* 15.77: '... tamquam in comitium sponte transisset Atto Nauio augurante'. The word *miraculo* earlier in this sentence clearly refers to the miracle of the wolf feeding the twins, not to the transfer of the fig-tree.

[72] For which see M. Torelli, 'Plutei Traianei', in *LTUR* 4.95–6; *Typology and Structure of Roman Historical Reliefs* (1992), 89–109.

[73] For the significance of Marsyas, see Torelli, op. cit. (n. 72), 102–6.

[74] Dio Cassius 44.6.2; Suetonius, *DJ* 76.1.

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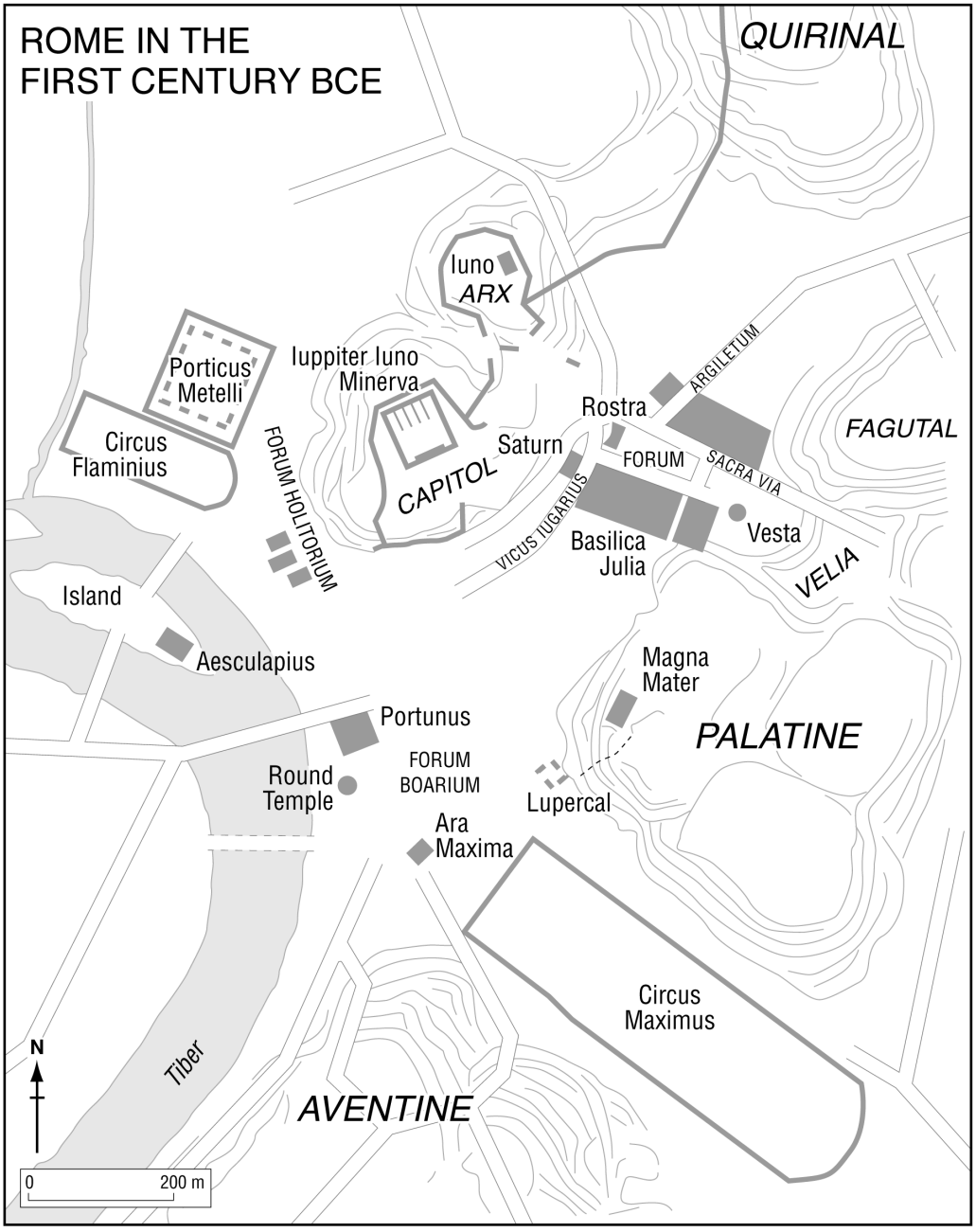


FIG. 3. Rome in the first century B.C.E. (*Drawn by Miles Irving, Department of Geography, UCL*)

was part of his programme because of the clear evidence that a similar parallelism with Romulus was evoked at the Parilia of 21 April.[75] So he is seated in state not following Romulus as King of Rome, but following both twins as the Founders of Rome. He is emphasizing a double link: the *gens Julia* can trace its origins back to the twins and

[75] Weinstock, op. cit. (n. 8), 175–99, especially, on Caesar as founder, 180–4; on the Parilia, 184–6.

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through them to Aeneas and Venus, but he himself is now creating a new position for himself following the precedent of the original founders. He is the New Founder.

So far so good; but what follows is the incident of the diadem. Cicero[76] makes the strong point that the production of the diadem at this moment strongly implies that this was a planned move, not an inspiration of the moment. But from this point onwards, the story becomes hard to follow: in the first place, there are various different reports as to what exactly happened. In one version, Caesar sends the diadem to the temple of Capitoline Iuppiter, saying that there was no King (*Rex*) in Rome except Iuppiter, i.e. Iuppiter Rex.[77] In a second version, the diadem is first thrown into the crowd and then, on Antony's instruction, placed on Caesar's nearby statue.[78] In what seems to be still a third version, Caesar himself places it on a *sella*, that is to say, on a throne.[79] This third version, known only from the *epitome* of Livy, has in the past been assimilated to the first, on the assumption that the reading in Livy's text is corrupt and that the word *sella* (throne) should be emended to *cella*, i.e. the cell, or sacred room, of Iuppiter in the Capitoline temple.[80] However this theory will not do: the essence of the Capitoline version is that Caesar displays modesty by yielding the diadem to Iuppiter. Livy, however, includes the incident in a list of reasons for the assassination. It is not for him a display of modesty, but rather one of arrogance, in a list of acts which were thought to justify the assassination.

> ... these (honours) provided the cause of hostility (*invidia*) against him, and also that when he was seated in front of the temple of Venus Genetrix and the Senate came bringing him these honours, he did not stand up; and also that when the diadem had been placed upon his head by M. Antonius, his consular colleague who was running amongst the *luperci*, he placed it upon a throne (*in sella*); and also that...[81]

It is not hard to see why Livy or his source might have taken this view. The ritual referred to is the placing of a symbol, normally the symbol of a god or goddess, on a throne as a mark of their presence at a ritual or at the games, usually after being taken from the temple and carried in procession. If that is how the gesture was interpreted, then it could have been interpreted, not as the rejection of the *regnum*, but as the acceptance by Caesar himself of his status as deity, which we know at least was under discussion at the time. The diadem had been given to him; it thus became his symbolic presence; placed on the throne, it represented his claim to be recognized as a deity.[82] Livy's version, then, seems to imply a quite independent tradition in which Caesar did not so much renounce the *regnum*, whether willingly or unwillingly, as reinterpret the offer of the diadem as an act of deification.

These variations as to the facts of what happened must correspond to the huge variations also in the interpretations of what happened that have come down to us. No doubt, if it true that Caesar's original purpose had been to associate himself with the founders not the *regnum*, that message was immediately obscured by the search for the meaning of the offering of the diadem and the political opportunities created by the incident for his enemies — '...to my thinking, he would fain have had it'. It was evidently a matter of speculation from the very beginning who was seeking to achieve what in the whole affair. Was the offering of the honour genuine or was it an effort to discredit Caesar by loading

[76] Cicero, *Philippic* 2.85, quoted p. 146 above.
[77] Suetonius, *DJ* 79.2; Dio Cassius 44.11.2; Nicolaus of Damascus, *Life of Augustus* 73.
[78] Nicolaus, *Life of Augustus* 72; 75.
[79] Livy, *Per.* 116.
[80] So, E. Hohl, 'Das Angebot des Diadems an Cäsars', *Klio* 34 (1942), 92–117; Weinstock, op. cit. (n. 8), 331 n. 3.
[81] '... inuidiae aduersus eum causam praestiterunt, quod senatui deferenti hos honores, cum ante aedem Veneris Genetricis sederet, non adsurrexit, et quod a M. Antonio cos., collega suo, inter lupercos currente diadema capiti suo impositum in sella reposuit, et quod ...' (Livy, *Per.* 116).
[82] For the chair ritual, see Weinstock, op. cit. (n. 8), 181–6.

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him with excessive honours? Whose side was Antony really on?[83] Nicolaus' version has been much criticized,[84] and indeed seems to be thoroughly unreliable on the religious details, but it is very interesting on the political speculation that surrounded later interpretations of events. He has Aemilius Lepidus playing an ambiguous role;[85] and even Cassius and Casca the future tyrannicides appear, supporting the offer of the diadem and playing a part in the drama, though of course they were supposed to be doing so for concealed anti-Caesarian reasons, hoping that he would discredit himself in the eyes of his supporters.[86] It is tempting to see the intense speculation the incident provoked as to its meaning, as a creative literary extension of the Carnival and of the role-swapping that went with it.

VI CONCLUSIONS

This article has been arguing for three main conclusions. The first is that Caesar's central purpose of the day was to associate himself and his *gens* with the foundation myths of Rome. He was to be the living version of the founding twins in a re-founded Rome. That explains his position in the forum and his reception of Antony. The second is that the ritual was in no sense a coronation. It was simply not about the conferring of power on any individual; it is all about a community and its transition through time, past, present and future linked in the performance of inherited rituals. The idea of the offering of the diadem simply cannot derive from any knowledge of the ritual programme. Thirdly, that both the ritual programme and the myth have very strong elements of the Carnival. In the myth, as we have found, the swift is reversed with the slow, the winner with the loser, the future king with his doomed twin. In the ritual, the consul runs in a loin-cloth lashing whomsoever he meets, and is greeted with joking, larking and obscenity. He stinks of perfume and of alcohol. The actions of the young men before the running starts link the carnivalesque elements of the myth (Romulus' laugh) with that of the ritual (the young men's laugh). It is a feature of carnival rituals that special roles (characteristically, the King of the Carnival) are conferred on individuals, designed to contrast with their real everyday ones.

One implication of all this is surely that Caesar would have had to be out of his senses to use this particular ritual to provide him with a ritual of coronation. The hypothesis that he would have chosen this occasion to test public reactions to the offer of the diadem seems just as improbable. When offered the diadem, he did the only thing he could in the circumstances and turned the offer down. In my view, we can be certain that, if the whole operation was indeed planned by Caesar and Antony in advance, it must always have been intended as a demonstration of his *refusal* of the position of *Rex*, which offered no solution to the problems posed by his new position of power. What we can take further is the value to Caesar of using the ritual in this way. He was, we should not forget, trying to achieve something next to impossible, as it seemed at the time: to make his transition from a republican leader to a monarch acceptable to a volatile and vocal public opinion, of both the élite and the masses in Rome. Partly, as we have seen, he tried to do this by associating himself with the founders, by even putting himself, in a sense, on a level with the two of

[83] See, e.g., the highly implausible speculations about Antony's motives in the speech of Fufius Calenas in Dio Cassius 46.17–19.

[84] For discussion, see Jacoby, *FGH* 90 F 130.71–5; the evidence is dismissed by Weinstock, op. cit. (n. 8), 332 n. 1; see also, J. Bellemore, *Nicolaus of Damascus, Life of Augustus* (1984); J. Malitz, *Nikolaos von Damaskos, Leben des Kaisers Augustus* (2003), who regards all these tales as inventions of Nicolaus himself.

[85] Mentioned by Nicolaus, *Life of Augustus* 72, as hesitating to offer the crown.

[86] According to Nicolaus, *Life of Augustus* 72, Cassius actually placed the crown on Caesar's knee, before Antony had arrived. In reading these accounts, it should be remembered that Caesar on the *rostra* is high above those on the level of the *Forum*.

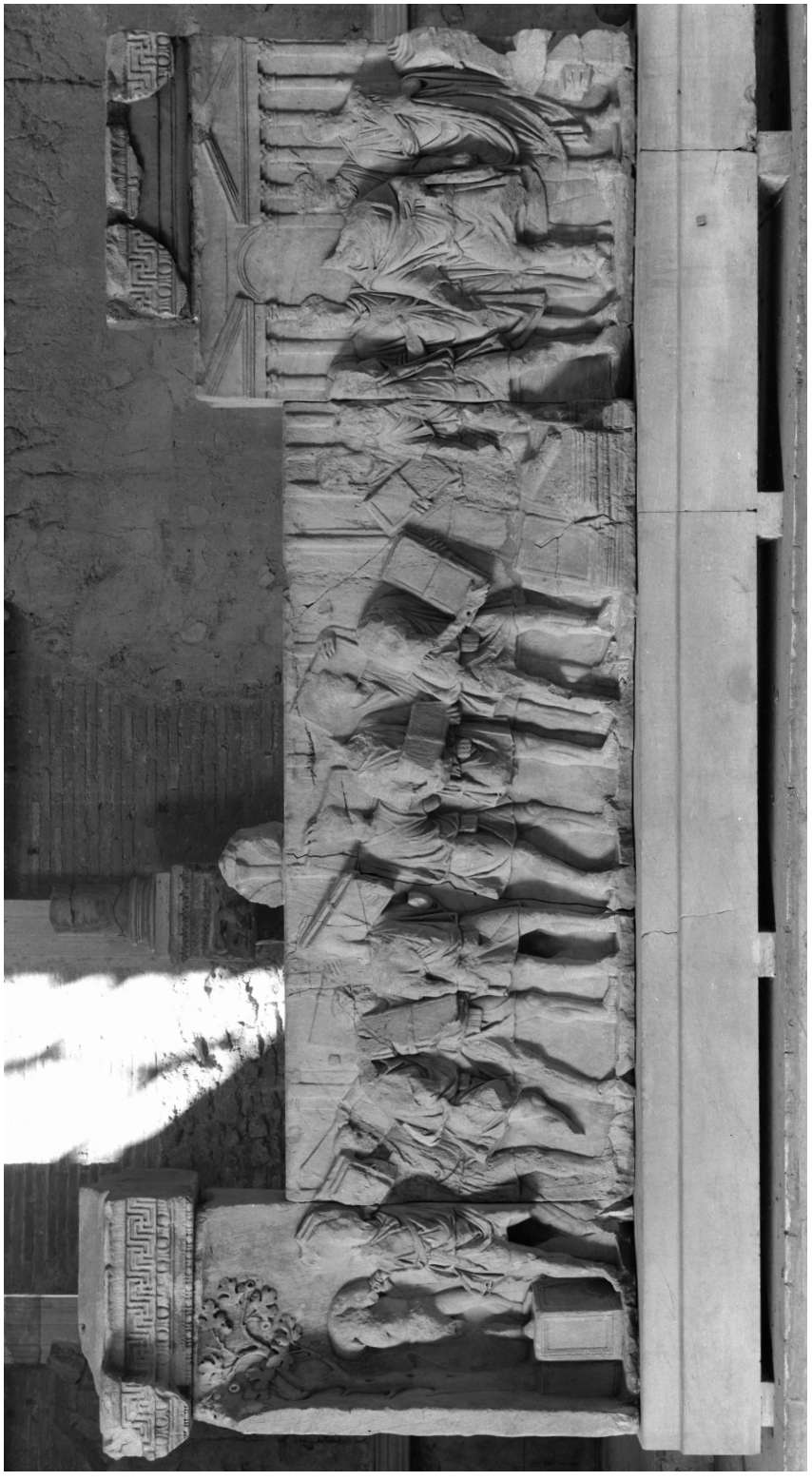
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them. But there is more to it than this: the ritual of the annual festival, with its recalling of ancient days, its celebration of the passing of fertility from generation to generation, provided a link between the Romans of the past, the dead forefathers, and those of the present and of the future. It was not that the celebration re-asserted the kings of the remote past or recovered some arcane coronation ritual: rather it connected the founders and the new ruler with the whole glorious tradition of the Republic and the men who had fought to create Roman dominance over Italy and then the Mediterranean world.

The implications are considerable: first we must recognize that the ritual was at this date not a dead, meaningless ceremony but a live and vigorous tradition or Caesar and Antony would not have sought to make use of it. Secondly, they were quite prepared, in full awareness of the ancient beliefs and traditions, to explore the possibilities of revision and reform. Nowhere does the Roman combination of conservatism and change become more evident.

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Relief from the Anaglypha Traiani: procession to the destruction of account books, passing in front of the Basilica Julia.
Courtesy of the DAI Rome: Photo by Felbermeyer, inst. neg. 1968.2785.

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1. Detail of Pl. I: the temple of Saturn, in the background of the procession. *Courtesy of the DAI Rome: Photo by Felbermeyer, inst. neg. 1968.2785.*

2. Detail of Pl. I: the *ficus Ruminalis* and the statue of Marsyas, carrying the goatskin that identifies him. *Courtesy of the DAI Rome: Photo by Felbermeyer, inst. neg.1969.1143.*

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1. Monument of Claudius Liberalis (Vatican Galleria Lapidaria, inv. no. 9132): Claudius as an *eques Romanus*.
Photo: Vatican Museums.

2. Monument of Claudius Liberalis (Vatican Galleria Lapidaria, inv. no. 9132): Claudius as a Lupercus.
Photo: Vatican Museums.

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1. Panel from a sarcophagus, with inscription in memory of Aelia Afanacia, Catacomb of St Praetexta, Rome (late third century C.E.): the whipping of a woman by a Lupercus. *Courtesy of the DAI Rome: Photo by Felbermeyer, inst. neg. 1932.120.*



2. Detail of Pl. IV.1. The Lupercus and the Lady. *Courtesy of the DAI Rome: Photo by Felbermeyer, inst. neg. 1932.120.*

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