The Limits of the Civic Model of Religion in Late Republican Religion: Reflections on Individual and Community Practices.

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This thesis examines the concept of individual and community religion in second and first-century BC Rome. The model of civic religion, influenced by Durkheimian sociology, has retained a privileged position in the study of Greek and Roman religions. The model suggests that official religious structures provided a framework for the broader community, promoting social cohesion. However, recently, scholars such as Jörg Rüpke, John North and Andreas Bendlin have begun to discuss the individual more substantially, with suggestions that a degree of choice existed in selecting which gods to worship and how to worship them. Building on previous scholarship that I outline in this and the next chapter, which discusses individuals, I suggest that a plurality of gods and practices allowed some personal expression within and outside civic institutions. Many scholars who discuss the individual focus on the imperial period. I aim to push evidence for individuality into earlier periods. While the space available means that my analysis cannot be comprehensive, a case study-based approach will allow me to emphasise the level of choice permitted to all individuals across society, creating a mixed picture of religious freedom and restrictions during the later Republic. I do not aim to replace the civic model but suggest how the individual could select practices within and beyond it, moving beyond arguing in favour of any one model.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Context and Aims

Roman religion has been a topic of interest within the study of the ancient world since the time of Mommsen. Innumerable books and articles have been published detailing specific rites to the overall history of how practices developed from the time of the kings to the end of the empire. As I will outline in this and the next chapter, for much of this time, the idea that the pantheon represented the gods of the city has dominated scholarly views. The gods are understood to have provided the citizens with a body of rites that reinforced their position within society. For instance, many attended public festivals and sacrifices led by an elite group of priests, taking part in a communal celebration that reinforced the power of the gods and their impact over the city as a whole.[1] Therefore, it is unsurprising that religious practice has been understood as particularly "civic", expressed through institutions guided by religious officials that determine how the community should worship the gods. However, since the 2000s, a reappraisal of evidence has occurred, leading to a new emphasis on the role of the individual in the religious sphere. I will argue that the religious system accommodated a degree of individualism and that many could even enjoy religious experiences that existed explicitly outside of what was deemed acceptable.

I focus on how the Senate expressed authority by marking some practices as "civic" and some as "other", often perceived as "foreign". Equally, individuals could express themselves within and beyond civic structures, taking part in a range of practices, including those that faced legal restrictions, such as astrology. While civic religion and individuals were not in opposition, my central argument is that focus can be shifted more fully onto the individual, who valued both civic and non-civic practices. This chapter focusses on sociological thought that has influenced how historians have discussed key themes. This chapter can therefore be read in parallel with the next chapter, where I analyse scholarly views.

[1] Scheid understands sacrifice as reinforcing social hierarchies. I discuss this below.

In summary, the research objectives of this thesis are to:

- Emphasise the individual as a religious agent who participated both in and outside of civic religion by highlighting the religious choices that were available in the second and first centuries BC.
- Highlight how civic religion remained important throughout society while these underlying processes of individualisation occurred.
- Discuss how interaction with perceived "foreign" religions provided religious choices for individuals and civic authorities.
- Highlight how civic authorities represented their authority by marking boundaries as to what was acceptable, and that individuals, despite this, continued to use a variety of religious options not endorsed publicly.

All translations are modified from the Loeb Classical Library, unless otherwise stated.

Background and Methodology

It is debatable how far the modern understanding of individualisation can be retroactively applied to antiquity. We must be mindful that the ancient understanding of what an individual was, as well as other underlying concepts discussed in the definition section of this chapter, differs from how we understand them today. This may limit my analysis which inherently emerges from a modern lens, although I argue that there is a solid basis for discussing "individualism" despite this. I will highlight evidence from the Second and First centuries that indicates people made decisions about how to interact with the gods. In the following chapter, I highlight how modern scholars have consistently acknowledged that the individual was a significant actor in both religion and the ancient world more broadly. We must, ultimately, approach our sources with the understanding that while the ancients understood what an individual was differently, we can tentatively draw information as to how far they could make decisions for themselves that could either align or not with the societal norms around them. I base this on the understanding that the individual, just as they are today, was able to recognise the society and culture around them, making the decisions a conscious

process of renegotiating or reasserting their place in the community. This allows a more nuanced understanding of individualism in antiquity, maintaining the connection between the person in question and the ancient, rather than modern, world.

Chapter Two will analyse modern literature that engages with the development of the civic model from Mommsen to the present day. However, the methodological underpinnings of these authors' thought processes on religion require initial discussion. French sociologist Émile Durkheim and German philosopher Georg Simmel, both active in the nineteenth century, initially worked together before diverging.[2] Simmel argued that the individual and society were opposing forces. In his view, these forces intersected as individuals are both a part of society and a separate entity.[3] Simmel discussed individuals more readily than Durkheim in the context of religion. For instance, he stated that "The individual feels himself bound to a universal, to something higher", indicating that he placed weight on a personal sense of religious belonging.[4] Similarly to Simmel, the German sociologist Max Weber, also writing in the nineteenth century, placed substantial focus on individuals, suggesting that a strong sense of social activity is unnecessary in religion. Mystics, for instance, are individualistic, operating on their own, even though their activities may derive from collective practices.[5]

Durkheim, instead, argued that religion did not result from individual experiences but was a collection of beliefs and practices that formed a unified system that the whole community experienced together.[6] He formed these views studying under Fustel de Coulanges, both emphasising society's capacity to guide individuals.[7] Neither school of

[2] For a summary of their intellectual interactions, see: Fitzi (2017).
[3] Simmel was particularly interested in differing "types" of individuals: The individual as reflecting the whole and a more unique type of individual. He did not fully support either view, but overall seems to have placed greater emphasis on the former type. Nevertheless, the individual for him still existed: See Podoksik (2010), particularly pages 137 and 144. Pyyhitinen (2008) 282-283, particularly 284.
[4] Simmel (1905) 372.
[5] Adair-Toteff (2016) 21-22. Weber's focus on the individual: Ritzer and Stepnisky's (2019) 31-32.
[6] Bloch (2014) 286; Launay (2022).
[7] For the general impact of Fustel on Durkheim, see: Maryanski (2014) 364; Prendergast (1983/1984). For an example of specific engagement, see: Joas (1984) 575.

thought completely rejected the ideas of the other. While Durkheim's definitions of religion excluded individuals, he, nevertheless, emphasised individuals such as Christ and Socrates, whom he perceived as breaking traditional norms and suggested that individuals developed their own approaches that derived from collective activity.[8] Therefore, there is a flexible degree of emphasis placed on individuals or collective action.

Durkheim influenced later structuralists such as Michel Foucault, a French historian writing in the 1960s and 1970s. Both placed less focus on personal "experiences", instead focussing on socio-historical conditions as producing perceptions of the world.[9] This influence continued in Mary Douglas' work in the later twentieth century. She praised Durkheim, although she also expressed reservations about his view of the social community, calling it "too unitary".[10] These reservations potentially fed into the creation of her Grid/Group model which explores the extent to which a society is skewed towards the individual or a more communal understanding of religion. This model changed throughout her life, charted by James Spickard, who suggests three iterations.[11] Common to all is Douglas' underlying assumption that individuals in different societies could experience a degree of choice, implying that it is possible in some circumstances for individuals to be relatively (and perhaps in some circumstances completely) free of social control.[12] I, therefore, understand Douglas as integrating similar ideas employed by Simmel and Weber, more substantially emphasising the individual. However, Douglas maintained focus on the impact of society over the individual, suggesting beliefs are socially determined and institutions lead people to particular points of view.[13]

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[8] For Durkheim's definitions of religion and derivation of individuality from collective activity, as well as his discussion of key individuals, see: Pickering (1984) 194-199. For further discussion of how Durkheim emphasised society as opposed to the individual, see Fenn (2009) 15; 79.
[9] Datta (2008) 287.
[10] Douglas (1966/2002) 22. See page 19 for her positive view.
[11] In summary, "group" refers to the social, whereas "grid" refers to what Welbourn describes as "ego-centred relationships": Welbourn (1970) 93; Spickard (1989).
[12] Spickard (1989) 157-159. For an example of how the individual could integrate into society in Douglas' understanding, see: Douglas (1982/2011) 193.
[13] Spickard (1991) 141-142

While Durkheim's ideas remain influential, further integration of Simmel and Weber's views may prove useful to understanding ancient religion. Simmel pointed out that so-called "personal" aspects of people's lives, such as their social standing, are not unique. Nevertheless, while characteristics are typical, the individuals that they form are not.[14] If society is more than its constituent parts, then individuals are more than their respective characteristics. This is compatible with a Durkheimian view of society and highlights Simmel's incorporation of societal factors beyond the control of the individual into his arguments. Furthermore, Simmel suggested that an individual is created through inclusion in different groups, meaning that the more groups someone is part of, the more likely they will be a "true" individual.[15] This suggests that individuals are products of society as they participate in local, available activities such as sacrifices. This included rites over which they may not have direct influence. Applying this to the ancient world may generate a new understanding of how individuals interacted with the religious world around them. Simmel's understanding of religion has received some criticism, such as being too functionalist, meaning that he focussed too deeply on how institutions created social cohesion. McCole points out that this sits uneasily with his arguments in favour of individual action.[16] However, the greater emphasis placed on individuals is a useful tool that I take forward in this thesis. I interpret Simmel as arguing that the individual is inherently social, but that is not the totality of what a person is. This is a nuanced view that will allow me to discuss both the civic model and the individual without discarding either argument.[17]

Therefore, nineteenth to twentieth-century sociologists emphasised interactions between the individual and society but disagreed as to how far individuals should be seen as independent. The Simmel/Weber school of thought places greater emphasis on

[14] Pyyhitinen (2008) 289. Interactions between individuals: Weber and Levine (1972) 162
[15] This view can be summarised as increasing intersectionality leads to increasing individuality: Stoetzler (2016) 233. Podoksik (2010) 127.
[16] McCole (2005) 16-17.
[17] Related to this, I base my enquiries on the principle that the individual is the basic unit of society, which I discuss below.

individual action, whereas the Durkheimian school suggests that individuals are guided by institutions that influence independent thought. Simmel's conception of the individual as comprised of interactions with different groups is particularly useful to the study of the Roman Republic. The interconnected nature of the Mediterranean and the plurality of cults that existed indicate that individuals could select between a variety of gods and practices.[18] Civic authorities guided this process to an extent. For instance, the Senate could forbid groups from taking part in public rituals, such as during the female-only rites of Bona Dea.[19] However, this could harden the boundaries between groups, making choices more distinct and less part of a coherent whole. Ultimately, I perceive that individuals had personal thoughts and desires that directed them towards particular religious rites that were meaningful for them.

While these rites could comprise civic rituals such as a festival of Jupiter, highlighting the impact of society on individual thought, these were single components in a diverse religious world that also comprised practices, which I argue below, were explicitly determined as outside of the civic system. These included forms of divination such as astrology and certain types of sortilege. An individual could participate in a civic festival, return home via the Circus Maximus to have their fortune read by a diviner not recognised as official and go to a public sacrifice the following day. This process potentially allowed individuals to explore personal interests while taking part in rituals important to society generally. It is unlikely that a visitor to an astrologer would suddenly feel "un-Roman" until they returned to a civic ritual, later.

This is compatible with Durkheim's view that individuals had personal approaches to religion, which were impacted by (presumably) different experiences of collective

[18] Orlin (2010) 3-5 and (2007) 61-62; Beard and Crawford (1999) 25. Contra: North, who suggests that while people experimented with "foreign" religions, loyalty was maintained to the gods of the city: (1992) 177-178. North may be discussing earlier periods, however.

[19] I will examine several examples of this throughout the thesis. The exclusion of males from the Bona Dea festival is perhaps the most famous, discussed in Chapters Three and Six. I will also briefly discuss the views of Schultz (2006) 67-68 and Flemming (2007) 90, followed by DiLuzio (2016) 94-95 regarding female exclusion from elements of the cult of Hercules.

activity.[20] The varying interpretations presented in republican religious conflicts, such as between Bibulus and Caesar, suggest that no one had the same experience of a religious event. While societal norms and pressures influenced individuals, personal interests and interpretations played a role. For example, I argue that the Senate defined what was "acceptable".[21] This inherently produces an understanding that there is also the "non-acceptable". I outline evidence throughout the thesis that suggests that these "non-acceptable" options, such as "foreign" rites, continued in use. While the close link between religion and society remained important, this approach allows a deeper exploration of how individuals acted beyond societal conventions.[22] Whether people unconsciously, or as I suggest, consciously, knew that they were acting against the wishes of religious authorities, deeper knowledge of Republican religion can be gained by considering this. Religious practice can, in some sense. be seen as a form of resistance. However, I see this as resulting from a personal need to form connections with the gods that could not be obtained elsewhere, rather than active hostility towards civic religion.

I do not perceive a binary between "individual" and "civic" religion. Institutions ultimately allowed some individual expression. For instance, the office of *Pontifex Maximus*, the chief priest, presumably allowed the officeholder some individual choice. Cotta, the *Pontifex Maximus* in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, potentially shares individual thoughts that were challenging to accepted norms, including suggestions that the gods do not appear to people/humans.[23] While a character, Cicero's Cotta may hint at an underlying assumption that a *Pontifex Maximus* could think independently. The priesthood also had a role in judicial proceedings, providing opinions as well as

[20] See Pickering (1984) above.
[21] I discuss Beard's perception of the prominent place of the Senate in the next chapter (1990). See also Pina Polo (2011) 21 and Orlin (2010) 87. I am following Orlin's argument, where he suggests that the Senate "needed to demonstrate its control over foreign cults." (2010) 76, n. 61. I wish to explore this further to see how far the broader populace could explore perceived "foreign" rites despite this.
[22] For challenges to Durkheim's dominant role, see Coleman, who follows others in highlighting that religion can have a divisive role (1970) 67-68. For Durkheim's difficulty in dealing with the "individual element" of religion, see Pickering (1984) 201. Coleman also argues that civil religion fits neatly into Durkheim's understanding of religion.
[23] Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.11-12. Further evidence is discussed in Chapter Five.

disciplining other groups such as the Vestals.[24] In Douglas' understanding, the *Pontifex Maximus* may exist on the individualistic "grid" side of the spectrum.

Other groups of priests may have experienced greater degrees of social constraint. The conflict over Cicero's house in 57 BC was referred to the College of Pontiffs, who acted as a group in judgement of the case.[25] Group dynamics may have compelled members to act or think in certain ways. For instance, a junior member may think differently from his senior colleague, but side with him due to his experience. Their final pronouncement was a collective decision. Possibly, different dynamics impacted wider society. For instance, somebody wishing to visit a diviner at the Circus Maximus may have been dissuaded by a senatorial decree such as that in 139 BC that expelled astrologers. This is difficult to substantiate with evidence, although these processes potentially occurred as they do today. Douglas points out that individuals may have had a degree of choice, but everyone was aware that they were choosing and being chosen and that all humans are steeped in the culture within which they exist.[26] The underlying principles that I take forward in my understanding of Roman religion are:

- The individual exists but is inherently social and guided by their society.
- Individuals may experience a greater or lesser degree of freedom to act independently depending on the society around them.
- There were choices within civic practices that reinforced the civic identity of what it is, in this case, to be Roman.

I wish to emphasise that the individual was informed by social groups as well as existing as a separate entity, as suggested by Simmel. However, this is compatible with Durkheim/Douglas' view that society also exerts substantial influence over individuals. This includes familial groupings who may have had their own traditions that all individuals were expected, or at least were likely, to participate in. Civic authorities were able to define and regulate religion by permitting or disallowing gods/rites into the city. I

[24] Scheid (2003) 175; For the wide-ranging abilities of the priesthood and how they were perceived in the ancient world, see Ridley (2005) 276-280.
[25] Cic. *Dom*. 1.
[26] Douglas (1982/2011) 193. For Douglas's further views on the individual, see Douglas (1996) 41.

do not see this as the totality of the religious experience. Max Weber's emphasis on the ability of individuals to reject societal norms is applicable here, as I argue that people could, if they wished, select practices from a plurality of religions that did not form an official part of the civic system. This additionally applies to household/family religion. In the same way, a person could reject a family tradition in favour of something new if it better met their needs. Therefore, I separate the individual from the family in this thesis, although it is additionally possible that a family unit could choose to reject a societal norm for the same reason. In a world where multiple different gods and rituals were accessible, there may have been little conceptual difference between participating in a civic or non-civic practice for the ordinary person. In summary, I argue in favour of shifting emphasis onto individual action more so than Durkheimian scholars, while still highlighting the importance of institutions.

This is potentially a productive avenue as Durkheim's school of thought has had a greater impact on the study of Roman religion compared to those of other sociologists, leading to the formation of the "civic" or "polis" model of religion.[27] I analyse the development of this model in more depth in the next chapter. However, it is beneficial, briefly, to discuss recent reactions to Durkheim's influence. The civic model was developed for interpreting religions in Greek city-states. Religion is given key social, public and political functions.[28] Walter Burkert and Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood highlight how city-states "anchored" religion, for example, mediating individual interaction with the gods and restricting who could access an oracle.[29] Both highlight the importance of Durkheim's ideas, emphasising the impact of social forces and arguing that ritual reinforces group solidarity.[30]

[27] "Civic" religion is a term usually used in scholarship focussing on the Roman world, whereas "polis" religion is usually used when discussing Greek cities. As they describe the same phenomena, I will use "civic" religion unless quoting an author.
[28] The connection to politics is particularly important: Liebeschuetz (1979) 1-3; Bontty (2011). However, religion and politics were not synonymous. Rüpke highlights what he perceives as "individual superstitions" as separate (2007) 5.
[29] See Sourvinou-Inwood (2000a) 15.
[30] Sourvinou-Inwood (2000a) 22 and n.25; Burkert (1985) 3.

Scholars such as John Scheid have applied this to Roman religion: "official" practices such as sacrifices and festivals are perceived to be a foundation for the religious lives of people in Rome. Scheid promotes the civic model, suggesting that it allowed citizens to establish relations with the gods founded in reason as opposed to fear and irrationality.[31] More recently, Scheid, similarly to Sourvinou-Inwood, argued that city-states continued to provide a framework for the lives of individuals.[32] He highlights the influence of Durkheimian sociology on his ideas, although he does not so fully advance Durkheim's view that society was the source of religion, seeing this more as a generalisation.[33] Importantly, these authors still recognise that the individual was a factor in religion. They were agents who could take part in individual practices, forming the basic unit of the civic system.[34] In this conception, individuals had some freedom but remained bound within civic religion, unable to act outside of it extensively. For example, Sourvinou-Inwood suggests that mystery cults that allowed personal experiences were part of civic religion, as they were interconnected with the Athenian Polis.[35]

Durkheimian influence is also present in Mary Beard, John North and Simon Price's influential *Religions of Rome*. The authors do not provide a substantial discussion of their interpretation or definition of civic religion. However, they appear to accept a "civic core" in Roman religion, referencing "civic deities" and "civic practices". The authors also discuss the role of individuals in civic religion: "Our final topic in this section concerns the role of the individual citizen in these rituals, and the relationship of public, State religion to private and domestic life."[36] Therefore, the authors perceive a differentiation between public religion, seen as civic, and private religion of individuals and families. The association between "private" and "individual" religion is problematic, as individuals could perform religious actions in public settings, although this highlights

[31] Scheid (2003) 21.
[32] Scheid (2015a) 32. For the continuing emphasis of civic religion in scholarship, see also Woolf (1997/2003) 40.
[33] Scheid (2015a) 54-55. See particularly page 110.
[34] Sourvinou-Inwood (2000b) 44. Scheid perceives the opposition of civic religion and the "religiosity" of the individual as problematic (2015a) 44.
[35] Sourvinou-Inwood (2000b) 54.
[36] Beard et al. (1998a) 48.

Durkheim's influence over these authors.[37] Beard, particularly, is also influenced by Douglas, although she does not refer to the "grid/group" model in this book.[38]

While interest in civic religion continues, there have been some attempts to move away from the dominance of Durkheimian thought. Jörg Rüpke emphasises the individual in religion more substantially, arguing that focus on the civic system undervalues the role of votive religion, magic and forms of divination. Therefore, he perceives Durkheimian sociology as unable to accommodate the totality of Roman religion.[39] However, he does not discount these ideas entirely, stating that his ideas are a "supplement" to the model.[40] Rüpke does not refer to Weber or Simmel, although he has potentially been influenced by them, given his focus on alternatives to Durkheim's ideas.

In the next chapter, I analyse Andreas Bendlin's "market model" and Lindsay Driediger-Murphy's arguments in the context of the broader development of the civic model. However, I highlight them here as their arguments provide further indications that there is currently a reaction against Durkheimian thought. Similarly to Rüpke, Bendlin specifically stated that he wished to push beyond Durkheimian sociology as it is too simplistic, suggesting that proponents of it presuppose congruity within the Roman religious system. He suggests there is little focus on dissenting voices or the fluid nature of how individuals may interpret practices.[41] Instead, he sees a plurality of religions that are decentralised from civic authority, although he also does not engage with other sociological arguments.[42]

Driediger-Murphy does not directly discuss sociology, although she engages with the underlying Durkheimian concept of "social cohesion". Taking a cross-disciplinary

[37] The issue of "public" and "private" religion is discussed in the definitions section below.
[38] For the use of Douglas' work, see Beard et al. (1998a) 37.
[39] See Rüpke (2018) 5-6; Rüpke (2013b) 12.
[40] Rüpke presumably therefore sees the civic model as still useful (2013b) 6. For an example of how Rüpke typically sees civic religion in operation in a public setting, see (2013a) 13-14.
[41] Bendlin (2000) 128-129.
[42] Bendlin (200) 135.

approach, including psychology, she argues that divination could cause anxiety rather than increase bonds between groups.[43] She further argues that Beard et al and Santangelo's attempt to move beyond seeing divination as a method for social cohesion has failed to alter this perception.[44] Instead, Driediger-Murphy argues that Jupiter was perceived to be the entity expressing its will through augury rather than the priest/magistrate.[45] Therefore, at least to an extent, Driediger-Murphy rejects the Durkheimian belief that religion was the product of institutions, able to impose a particular interpretation/view. Instead, she seems to introduce an element of "religiosity" as, presumably, there had to be real belief in Jupiter and augural signs for them to be "believed" in the way that she highlights.[46] I intend to continue this trend in challenging the dominance of Durkheimian sociology, although the Senate ultimately maintained its position as an authoritative body.

Therefore, the emphasis on societal institutions and the individual present in sociological discourse is echoed by scholars such as Rüpke and Scheid, who disagree on which aspect should be more greatly emphasised while referring to the importance of the other. John North's views represent how views towards sociological discourses have shifted. He initially suggested that individuals did not have substantial choices and that their experiences could not be separated from communities. More recently, North has begun to explore individual identity, suggesting its formation may have been possible in religion, although he remains sceptical and does not think that it occurred in the centuries BC.[47] Currently, both the civic model and the Durkheimian sociological strain remain dominant, although the new focus on the individual may allow further examination of how religious practices permitted individual expression. Overall, I combine Rüpke and Scheid's approach. I follow Scheid's argument that the civic and

[43] Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 11.
[44] Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 165 cites Santangelo (2013a) 172.
[45] For these arguments, see Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 4-5.
[46] There is a specific focus on emotions, which directly contrasts Scheid: Berthelet (2020).
[47] North (2013) 78-79; Cf. North (1979) 85. Other scholars who support Durkheim's work also often focus on the imperial period, such as Mol and Versluys. For their analysis of Durkheim, see (2015) 452-253, and for their focus on the imperial period, see their discussion of the cult of Isis, which utilises material evidence from the period (2015) 458-460.

individual are not in opposition. However, I also wish to emphasise the individual far more greatly.

Ancient Views of Civic Religion and Senatorial Control

It is necessary to discuss the ancient evidence to understand why Durkheim's views became so influential. I suggest that primary evidence, initially, seems to fit more easily into a Durkheimian view of how religion operated in Rome, as sources discuss a unified system in which everyone participated. Additionally, authors presented the Senate as "directing" this system, which, I suggest, partly occurred through labelling practices as "foreign" or "official". This also fits a Durkheimian view as an institution-based civic religion that reinforced a collective set of beliefs would presumably require civic authorities to define what was permissible. However, I outline evidence later in the section that I use throughout the thesis to suggest individuals had some freedom within and beyond civic religion. Polybius, writing in the second century BC to educate a Greek audience in Roman history, provides a cynical view, presenting religion as a tool for controlling the masses:

> But the quality in which the Roman commonwealth is most distinctly superior is in my opinion the nature of their religious convictions. I believe that it is the very thing which among other peoples is an object of reproach, I mean superstition, which maintains the cohesion of the Roman State. These matters are clothed in ceremony and introduced to such an extent into their public and private life that nothing could exceed it, a fact which will surprise many. My own opinion at least is that they have adopted this course for the sake of the common people. It is a course which perhaps would not have been necessary had it been possible to form a state composed of wise men, but as every multitude is fickle, full of lawless desires, unreasoned passion, and violent anger, the multitude must be held in by invisible terrors and suchlike pageantry.[48]

[48] Μεγίστην δέ μοι δοκεῖ διαφορὰν ἔχειν τὸ Ῥωμαίων πολίτευμα πρὸς βέλτιον ἐν τῇ περὶ θεῶν διαλήψει. καί μοι δοκεῖ τὸ παρὰ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀνθρώποις ὀνειδιζόμενον, τοῦτο συνέχειν τὰ Ῥωμαίων πράγματα, λέγω δὲ τὴν δεισιδαιμονίαν· ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον γὰρ ἐκτετραγῴδηται καὶ παρεισῆκται τοῦτο τὸ μέρος παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς εἴς τε τοὺς κατ᾽ ἰδίαν βίους καὶ τὰ κοινὰ τῆς πόλεως ὥστε μὴ καταλιπεῖν ὑπερβολήν. ὃ καὶ δόξειεν ἂν πολλοῖς

For Polybius, religion was a methodology for control.[49] Varro, quoted by Augustine in the early fifth century AD, suggests that religious truths should be hidden from the populace, indicating similar sentiments.[50] He states that he adheres to religious custom as he must follow Roman state traditions, not because it is the best system:

> Now what are the views of Varro himself? We regret that he put the stage shows in his "Divine Things," though that was not his own judgement. For although in many places he exhorts the people, as a religious man, to worship the gods, does he not reveal that it is not by his own judgement that he follows the institutions that the Roman state set up? He does not hesitate to say frankly that, if he were founding that city anew, he would consecrate the gods and give them names according to the principles of nature, rather than as they are now. But as it is, since he is living in an old country, he says that he must keep the traditional account of the names and surnames, and that the object of his writing and research was to persuade people to worship rather than disregard them.[51]

Cicero, quoted by Lactantius, states that he feels it best to hide discussions of the gods from the community to protect the "established religion" from destruction.[52] Both this and the quotation from Varro are problematic as they are quoted by later Christian polemicists. However, elsewhere, Cicero states: "Take again those who have asserted that the entire notion of the immortal gods is a fiction invented by wise men in the interest of the state."[53] Consequently, this was a view that existed in the first century, in

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εἶναι θαυμάσιον. ἐμοί γε μὴν δοκοῦσι τοῦ πλήθους χάριν τοῦτο πεποιηκέναι. εἰ μὲν γὰρ ἦν σοφῶν ἀνδρῶν πολίτευμα συναγαγεῖν, ἴσως οὐδὲν ἦν ἀναγκαῖος ὁ τοιοῦτος τρόπος· ἐπεὶ δὲ πᾶν πλῆθός ἐστιν ἐλαφρὸν καὶ πλῆρες ἐπιθυμιῶν παρανόμων, ὀργῆς ἀλόγου, θυμοῦ βιαίου, λείπεται τοῖς ἀδήλοις φόβοις καὶ τῇ τοιαύτῃ τραγῳδίᾳ τὰ πλήθη συνέχειν. Polyb 6.56.6-12.

[49] van Hooff analyses this passage, coming to the same conclusion (1977) 106-109.

[50] See August. *De Civ.* 4.31, quoted in Ch. 5 n. 84

[51] *Quid ipse Varro, quem dolemus in rebus divinis ludos scaenicos, quamvis non iudicio proprio, posuisse, cum ad deos colendos multis locis velut religiosus hortetur, nonne ita confitetur non se illa iudicio suo sequi quae civitatem Romanam instituisse commemorat ut, si eam civitatem novam constitueret, ex naturae potius formula deos nominaque eorum se fuisse dedicaturum non dubitet confiteri? Sed iam quoniam in vetere populo esset, acceptam ab antiquis nominum et cognominum historiam tenere, ut tradita est, debere se dicit, et ad eum finem illa scribere ac perscrutari ut potius eos magis colere quam despicere vulgus velit.* August. *De civ. D.* 4.31. For commentary on this, see Scheid (2015a) 50-51.

[52] Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 2.3.2.

[53] *Quid, ii qui dixerunt totam de dis inmortalibus opinionem fictam esse ab hominibus sapientibus rei publicae causa* Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.118

addition to Polybius' in the second.[54] Therefore, the above quotations may represent Cicero and Varro's thoughts. Elite sources viewed, in an idealised system at least, that members of the elite would oversee the religious system. This is matched by Cicero's ideal religious laws in *De Legibus*,[55] the supplement to *De Republica,* where he provides an outline of an ideal state. Notably, religion is given a political character when he states that one of the greatest powers of the augurs is to adjourn assemblies.[56] A similar connection is drawn when Cicero states that the *haruspices* are necessary to cultivate a state religion.[57] Cicero, therefore, continually reinforced that Rome required its religious system to be maintained by the political elite.

Simultaneously, these authors provide only scant focus on the lives of individuals or practices that can be perceived as outside civic religion. Primacy was given to the state and its ability to enforce religious laws in the lives of individuals. Cicero states:

> No one shall have gods to himself, either new gods or alien gods, unless recognized by the State. Privately they shall worship those gods whose worship they have duly received from their ancestors.[58]

The emphasis placed on institutions in these sources suggests why Durkheimian sociology has come to dominate the scholarship that I have discussed. "Correct" collective action, as determined by religious authorities, provides individuals with a, reinforcing their place in society. The civic elite seemed to present themselves as "controllers" able to define civic religion. However, these authors consequently rarely mention important evidence, such as votive offerings, which likely formed part of everyday religious life for many.[59] Additionally, older scholars such as Burriss and Goar argued that these sources suggest that members of the elite saw religion as a political tool without any underlying belief in the religious importance of practices or the gods.

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[54] For further discussion on the quotes from Varro and Cicero and their authenticity, see Chapter Five.
[55] See Cic. *Leg.* 2.23; 2.26; 2.31.
[56] Cic. *Leg.* 2.31.
[57] Cic. *Div.* 2.28.
[58] *Separatim nemo habessit deos neve novos neve advenas nisi publice adscitos; privatim colunto, quos rite a patribus cultos acceperint.* Cic. *Leg.* 2.19
[59] Evidence is discussed in Chapter Six.

MacBain challenged this view in the 1980s.[60] I perceive that the religious debates in the first century, philosophical and political, highlight real concerns about the gods and with whom they sided. Civic religion was not just a creation and tool of the civic elite.[61] Equally, I argue that members of the political elite were able to direct religious practices. Consequently, I suggest that the views presented in the above quotations reflect genuinely felt concerns but focus on a particularly narrow view of what religion was. Richard Gordon discusses this "control", which Scheid also accepts in this narrow sense.[62]

Senatorial control requires discussion, as, if they directed what civic religion was, individual participants would have less influence over aspects of their religious lives. For instance, a group may have come together at a public sacrifice and form bonds through sharing similar experiences, but had less influence over the specific practices and were not able to explore what interested them. Potentially, hierarchies would be reinforced as state priests conducted rites on behalf of wider society, emphasising the elite ability to direct religious activity.[63] Furthermore, at festivals, particular groups of people could be excluded, such as enslaved people, women and "foreigners".[64] In religious rites where this happened, such as the Bona Dea festival in Rome, famous for Clodius' presence at the female-only event,[65] divisions were drawn between what was and was not acceptable. Therefore, civic authorities held influence over what citizens could experience. It is also likely that individuals would be aware of what members of the elite had determined to be acceptable through the official importation of rites or

[60] Burriss suggests that Cicero did not "believe" in religion and used it for political expediency (1924). See also Goar (1972). Cf. with Driediger-Murphy's comments that Augury was genuinely respected (2019b) 51. Particularly, Champion argues against manipulation, which he terms "elite-instrumentalism". See, for instance, (2017) 73. MacBain shows the early challenge to these ideas in the 1980s, which I discuss in the next chapter. See Ch. 2 n. 56.
[61] For the problems in taking Polybius et al and face value, see Champion (2017) 9-12, particularly n. 26 in relation to Polybius. For the real, deep engagement with religious questions, see Momigliano (1984b); Várhelyi (2010) 153. For a general discussion of the outdated nature of the cynical interpretation of religion, see Bendlin (2000) 118-119; 131. Goar is an example of the older view that members of the elite took a sceptical view of religion (1972).
[62] Gordon (1990b) 235; 238; Scheid (2015a) 45.
[63] Additionally, Scheid sees sacrifice as reinforcing social hierarchies relating to the quality of victims, for instance (2012) 87. This is rooted in a Durkheimian interpretation.
[64] Burkert (1985) 254.
[65] Cic. *Att.* 1.13.3

gods, which explicitly marked them as "official". Therefore, the general community potentially had a sense of what comprised civic religion and how members of the elite directed it. It is possible to apply Simmel's argument that the individual is comprised of intersecting social circles.[66] Individuals who attended games held for Magna Mater, for instance, inherently and willingly made civic religion a part of their personal religious experience, even if they visited a non-civic diviner. This could differ from another who attended a sacrifice to Jupiter instead. Both are adhering to civic norms.

I suggest that civic authorities expressed their control through defining civic religion against what they saw as "other", often perceived as "foreign". [67] For instance, the expulsion of astrologers in 139 BC was an opportunity for (re)asserting what was Roman.[68] Eric Orlin argues that members of the elite wished to introduce "foreign" religions while maintaining a Roman identity as a result of the third-century expansion.[69] The reception of Ceres is an example of this. I argue additionally, in Chapter Three, that individuals across society engaged with "foreign" cults in unexpected ways, suggested by the dedications of Attis in votive deposits. In a diverse religious world, with different options for divine communication, I find it unlikely that many perceived major differences between "foreign" and "official" diviners. They both allowed direct communication with the gods. The persistence of "foreign" diviners in sources throughout the period suggests that they continued to be utilised, regardless of any senatorial control or concerns.

Orlin characterises senatorial worries as a genuine concern for determining a sense of "Romanness".[70] This is in line with Driediger-Murphy's arguments that members of the elite had genuine religious concerns. Simultaneously, the acceptance or rejection of "foreign" gods and practices allowed the senatorial elite to reassert their authority

[66] Podoksik (2010) 127.
[67] See the section on definitions below for further explanation.
[68] Expulsion of astrologers: Val. Max. 1.3.3.
[69] Orlin (2010) 101-103. Orlin discusses a "paraded" foreignness designed to mark a boundary between "Roman" and "foreign". Poletti discusses similar themes relating to the imperial period (2018) 550.
[70] I discuss Orlin's view on this more deeply in the next chapter.

through presenting their ability to alter civic religion.[71] Expulsions highlight an attempt to determine what constituted permissible worship, even if their repetition indicates they were ineffective. Acceptance of "foreign" religions achieved the same end.

This process permitted the Senate to represent its ability to create boundaries. The Senate also had choices in religion, but only they could officially introduce new elements. Simultaneously, individuals, while taking part in civic practices, may have been interested in religions that offered different experiences.

While the views presented in preserved sources seemingly present a binary between "civic" and "non-civic" or "foreign," I suggest that there was a spectrum. On one end were practices that the state disapproved of, and at the other were public sacrifices, festivals and games that comprised official civic religion. For instance, while the Senate utilised an official group of *haruspices*, non-elite individuals utilised *vicani* (village) *haruspices* who were disliked by elite authors, despite representing the same practice.[72] Similarly, there was a complex reaction to Hellenistic theories of religious practice and the existence of the gods. The Senate did not prevent individuals from investigating new theories that challenged civic norms. Equally, the arguments presented by first-century authors did not have public significance in so far as these were personal investigations designed to educate or explore theoretical approaches, not alter the civic system.

In contrast, votive offerings were perceived positively and dedicated in large numbers by both elite and non-elite individuals. This may partly have resulted from the ability to express oneself within public, civic settings, something perhaps more acceptable to members of the elite.[73] I, therefore, consider how civic religion and personal/individual

[71] For instance, Cicero claimed to assert Roman authority through appropriating aspects of Greek culture, such as its language and Hellenistic philosophy. I will discuss this evidence in Chapter Five, which includes Cic. *Brut.* 254. The same is suggested by Dionysius' discussion of the division of the rites of Magna Mater into Roman and "foreign" (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.19.4). This passage is problematic, however, discussed in Chapter Three.
[72] Discussed in Chapter Four.
[73] For the individual nature of votives, see: Belayche (2013) 243-244; Rüpke (2013b) 6.

forms of religion interacted, blurring the lines between the two. Refocussing on the individual can be pushed further with concepts such as "new materialism", promoted by Emma-Jayne Graham. She argues that we can focus on human experience through a deeper understanding of the objects used in ritual activities. This allows greater focus on the individual but not at the expense of other interpretations of religion.[74] The coexistence between the religious life of the community and the individual is therefore an active strand of current debates.[75] I explore this relationship to identify problems that could arise from this, as individuals acted in a way that would incur the state's disapproval, and attempt to emphasise more fully the individual practices that were accepted.

Much scholarship that focusses on the individual discusses members of the elite. For example, Greg Woolf refers to major events such as the foundations of temples, which were often funded by victorious elite generals or the Senate, for instance.[76] John North discusses the general concept of individuals, but through the lens of Cicero's writings, such as *De Legibus*.[77] This is a productive line of inquiry that I utilise to discuss how members of the elite used rituals and imagery to differentiate themselves from each other. This approach partially results from the nature of the evidence, with most of our understanding devolving from elite male written sources. However, this can be supplemented through analysis of material evidence, including votive offerings, allowing a greater focus on both members of the elite and, potentially, some individuals outside this group. This allows modification of North's arguments – who is unsure that a strong sense of individuality existed in the Republic during the Republican period.[78] By analysing a series of case studies that, at first, seem disparate, I aim to show that there is substantial evidence that indicates individuals could, and did, act in a way not endorsed by the Senate. I suggest that non-elite individuals deliberately turned to

[74] Graham (2021) 16.
[75] See also Belayche (2013) 243.
[76] Woolf (2013) 141.
[77] North (2013) 68-69.
[78] North (2013) 77-80. While Scheid does not focus specifically on the Republic, he may take a more positive view of the individual as he refers to the contests between individual generals in the first century and "individual devotion" toward the "divinities of the republic of the Roman people" (2015a) 65; 25.

religion that held as much importance to them as civic rituals and deities. This did not preclude them from taking part in civic rituals. Individual identity does not exist in opposition to a civic identity; someone could have potentially viewed their civic commitments as part of their personal identity.

Evidence

I use a range of literary evidence to discuss these themes, including works of philosophy, poetry, history and biography. The period I examine provides substantial evidence from contemporary writers such as Cicero, Lucretius and Varro in the first century. Cato and Plautus provide evidence for earlier periods. Others, including Livy and Dionysius, while writing after the end of the Republic, lived during the first century AD and may provide insight into religious processes that occurred earlier. I supplement this with later sources such as Plutarch and Cassius Dio. While considerably later, they potentially provide reliable information about the later Republic, as they use earlier sources.[79] Problematically, this evidence provides only an elite outlook on religion. Many sources emphasise the place of religious authorities to the detriment of other religious aspects. It is unclear how far a non-elite view can be recovered. Plautus may provide some insight, as he may have come from a poorer background. Aulus Gellius claims that he became destitute, forcing him to write while working in a bakery. [80] It is unclear whether this account is factual, however.[81] Several sources comment on non-elite action, including Cicero and Diodorus Siculus. While often taking a negative view, it is possible to unpick details to suggest what religious options were being utilised. Diodorus refers to leaders of slave revolts who used divination to legitimise their positions, for example. While Diodorus presented this as negative, it provides a brief view into participation of non-elite individuals in religious practices.

[79] Discussed below.
[80] Gel. *NA*. 3.3.13-14.
[81] Brown discounts Gellius' account (2012). However, Lefèvre is more willing to accept these stories, highlighting that Gellius stated that they came from Varro, although they still refer to them as "colourful" (2005).

The use of poetry and plays is complicated, as the views they present are artistic representations that do not necessarily relate to first-century BC Rome. For instance, while Plautus discusses certain diviners likely present in Rome, he does not discuss real events, adding further difficulty in parsing how they may have operated. However, his audiences presumably found these works relatable, and it is reasonable to think that they present ideas and themes that existed in the Republican period.[82] Despite these issues, Catullus is an important source for understanding Magna Mater, as his negative treatment exemplifies an aspect of the complex elite reaction to "foreign" rites. Philosophical works form the complex central body of evidence in Chapter Five. While Roman philosophers did not aim to alter the civic system, I perceive that they wished to explore religion, not atheism. The focus on Roman morals in histories and biographies written by Livy, Plutarch and Diodorus adds further difficulty as they skew events to present individuals and their actions as more or less "good" depending on their needs in the narrative. Their approaches may still inform us about the elite expectation of how religion should function, and where possible, I will separate the information provided about religious action from personal interpretations. Likewise, when discussing "foreign" cults, I approach the evidence with an understanding that negative elite perceptions were often matched by an interest and engagement which may inform us about their intentions and views.

Particularly relevant is Cicero, who was a senator, philosopher, and augur, who wrote about religion extensively. I will explore his trilogy of philosophical treatises on religion, produced in the 40s BC, principally in the Greek philosophy chapter. The earlier *De Republica* and *De Legibus,* which contain information on religious laws in an ideal state,

[82] To an extent, Plautus' relatability/popularity is suggested by the number of his works that survive. Additionally, his plays were engaged by later authors in antiquity, indicating that they were deemed significant enough to be canonised, and his plays continued to be performed into the late Republic: Ferri (2014) 774-775. While Ferri points out that we do not know how the performances were received, they must have been well-regarded enough to warrant being repeated. Similar arguments can be made for the other authors I discuss. For instance, Cicero's works were utilised in schools in antiquity, and he may have acted as a model for Seneca: Hall (2019).

are also useful in providing elite views of religious practices.[83] Cicero's political speeches, including *De Domo Sua* and *De Haruspicum Responso,* reveal how civic religion was perceived to function, including the prominent authority of the priestly colleges. *Pro Balbo*, delivered in 56 BC, is also particularly relevant. Balbus was prosecuted for allegedly illegally assuming the rites of a Roman citizen. In this speech, Cicero discusses the Greek rites of Ceres, providing insight into how "foreign" aspects of religion were perceived. Likewise, as a senator, Cicero embodied the senatorial perspective, often taking negative views of non-civic religion. He, similarly to Varro, perceives that the religion of his day is in decline, possibly due to writing during the turmoil of the late Republic.[84]

I frequently utilise Plutarch's *Parallel Lives,* written after AD 96.[85] The biographies of the Gracchi, Sulla, Marius, Pompey and Caesar explore how these individuals personally interacted with religious practices, important evidence for Chapter Four. Importantly, Plutarch was a priest at Delphi with a particular interest in religious antiquities.[86] This may suggest that the information he provides for religious practices is potentially well-researched. He also utilised earlier sources, particularly for his Roman lives, notably Asinius Pollio, who was present in Rome through much of the first century, adding to his trustworthiness.[87] However, his biographies also included attempts to create a moral history, treating his subjects as exempla, indicating that certain elements may be emphasised or minimised, creating a skewed account.[88]

[83] *De Republica* is usually attributed to the 50s BC. For the historical context of *De Republica*: Asmis (2005) 390. There is less certainty about the supplement of *De Legibus*. Balsdon et al. argue that it was started after *De Republic,* but not published quickly, as it does not appear in the list of works Cicero provides in *De Divinatione* (2012). However, as it is a supplement, Cicero may have assumed his readership would associate the two. Bringman and Leonhardt tentatively suggest 52 BC as the date of publication (2005).
[84] For instance, he takes a negative view of the *auspices* in his own day compared to the past: Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.9; Cic. *Div.* 2.71; 2.73. For Cicero's view on decline, see Arena (2020) 23.
[85] Pelling (2005).
[86] Russell (2012).
[87] Pelling (1979) 84-85. For a summary of Pollio's involvement in the conflicts of the later Republic, see Morgan (2000).
[88] Hershbell (1997) 231.

Livy's history is useful, even though it cuts off in the mid-second century. However, later evidence from other authors provides a wider perspective over the whole period. Livy engaged with a range of earlier historians whose works are not preserved, such as Fabius Pictor and Macer, and utilised Polybius, which may aid in making his descriptions of the second century more reliable.[89] While not a senator, he often embodies the elite view of religion, emphasising senatorial authority. Writing under Augustus, his history contains moralising elements, again leading to skewed accounts of information to suit his needs. Nevertheless, as he grew up in the Republican period, his narratives may provide insight into how religious practices were perceived to function ideally. He also writes with the knowledge that the Republic culminates with the Principate, skewing his presentation of religious conflicts, although basic information may be accurate.[90] Importantly, the fourth/fifth-century writer Julius Obsequens produced a book of prodigies, using the missing books of Livy. Despite being viewed through the lens of a later author, these prodigies allow insight into the workings of civic religion and how it dealt with religious crises.

Cassius Dio produced a history of Rome in the early third century AD, much later than the events he describes.[91] However, Osgood and Baron suggest that he still provides reliable information about the late Republic.[92] It is unclear who his sources are, but he may have used Polybius and Livy, although a broader range is likely.[93] Much like Plutarch, Dio was sensitive to religious issues, presenting the divine as a driving force in

[89] For a summary of further authors, see Briscoe (2012). Briscoe notes, however, that Livy did not make substantial use of documentary evidence. Chaplin also discusses Livy's sources, pointing out that we know little about them (2007) xiv.
[90] Livy, like Cicero and Varro, also likely skewed his interpretation of these events to suggest that religion was in decline: Chaplin (2007) xxi. This is similar to Dionysius' approach, indicating that this was a theme of authors at the time. See above for my discussion of Cicero's view.
[91] While he almost certainly wrote his history in this period, the exact date of publication is debated. See: Barnes (1984) 240-241; Birley (2005).
[92] Osgood and Baron (2019) 2-3. Driediger-Murphy shows how Cassius Dio can be used to better understand Republican religion by discussing an aborted attempt at an election during the civil war between Pompey and Caesar (2014).
[93] For the date of his work and sources, see: Rich (2012); Birley (2005).

his work.[94] While anachronistic, applying the expectations of how religious practice functioned in his day onto the past, he may fill some gaps in knowledge left by Livy.

Lucretius wrote a work of Epicurean poetry entitled *De Rerum Natura* in the 50s BC. While facing the same issues as other poems that I outlined above, the text provides evidence for how underlying religious theories were developed in the first century.[95] I will argue that he was more critical of civic practices compared to Epicurus, although he anticipated that divine communication would continue. Varro wrote the *Antiquitates Rerum Humanarum et Divinarum*, published in the 50s or 40s BC, which now only exists as fragments.[96] Varro used Stoic principles to generate a natural history of religion that substantially impacted later authors, including Ovid and Suetonius.[97] Similarly to Cicero, he embodies the elite view that religion stems from civic institutions. He seemingly aimed at defending "tradition" by claiming to save ancient knowledge.[98] While therefore having a clear agenda, moralising and perceiving that religion has declined, he is useful for exploring a particularly elite view. I will contrast these three authors in Chapter Five to suggest that personal interpretations of religion were generated in the first century BC.

Examining archaeological material may allow deeper inspection of religious practices outside of elite circles. I examine votive offerings and inscriptions. Generally, scholars such as Hughes, Glinister and Flemming focus on the dedication of anatomical votives, which declined in the first century.[99] Some cross over into my period, such as those at Ponte di Nona, where activity peaked in the third to second centuries, while some Etruscan heads date to the first century.[100] However, I will focus on examples that can

[94] Rich (2012).
[95] Lucretius likely started writing around 59 BC, with the poem published posthumously, possibly in 55 BC: Smith (2001) xi; xvii.
[96] Cicero mentions the *Antiquitates* in 46 BC, so it cannot have been published after that: Momigliano (1984b) 205.
[97] For this and further context, see: Kaster (2012) and particularly Sallmann (2005).
[98] Van Nuffelen (2010) 162.
[99] This is the general trend in all scholarship that focusses on votive offerings.
[100] Potter and Wells (1985) 38; Turfa (2004).

be more clearly attributed to the second to first centuries, including coinage and dedicatory inscriptions from within Rome and surrounding areas. While votives were likely dedicated by non-elite individuals, it is possible that more expensive metal objects also represent elite dedications, as suggested by evidence from San Casciano dei Bagni. I will discuss how Terracotta votives were dedicated by both rich and poor individuals, despite costing more than is usually assumed.[101] The huge number of surviving examples attests to a broad practice.

I use coins as evidence for individual expression, as they are issued by one person who selects particular imagery important to them. Interestingly, these images tend to depict, but not exclusively, civic deities and practices. This forms part of my argument that members of the elite remained concerned with civic religion, wishing to express individuality through traditional imagery rather than alternatives. I will also analyse the topography of temples, particularly Magna Mater, suggesting what the positioning may suggest about the Roman perception of the cult.

Definitions

Foreign

It is necessary to define several terms employed in this thesis. "Foreign" or "foreignness" is particularly complex. The Roman word, *peregrinus,* meaning "foreign", expresses a sense of "exoticness" or "strangeness". When making a dramatic point when discussing an agrarian law in 63 BC, Cicero said that on arrival in Capua, he was called a "stranger and foreigner", for example.[102] In most instances, *peregrinus* denoted something negative. Plautus has the slave Stichus state, "I want us to wash today, leave everything foreign behind",[103] and Cicero said that people should avoid "foreign

[101] See Glinister (2006) 27-28. Otto highlights how focussing on elite literature distorts our perceptions and is not representative of the religious processes undertaken by the broader popular. (2011) 186. Focussing on votive offerings allows a method for meeting some of these issues.
[102] *peregrini atque advenae* Cic. *Agr.* 2.94.
[103] *uolo eluamus hodie, peregrina omnia relinque* Plaut. *Stich.* 669-670.

unusualness" in their accents.[104] Therefore, in a general sense, "foreign" described something outside everyday norms that should be avoided. However, notably, Festus states that "foreign rites are practiced according to the customs of the people from whom they were received" when discussing "foreign rites": *peregrina sacra*.[105] This exemplifies the construction of a perceived "foreignness" that continued to develop in later periods.[106] Despite negative connotations, a perceived "foreignness" was permitted in the civic system. Consequently, "foreign" is not inherently "non-Roman", being included in various cults and practices such as Magna Mater's. Ultimately, the city and its religions comprised elements from different cultures early on, an aspect emphasised by the Romans themselves.[107] Terrenato, for instance, emphasises the interconnectedness of Rome with the Greek cities of Southern Italy, thus indicating the acceptance of outside influences.[108] While any cult introduced could be called "foreign" to Rome, as part of the civic system, it could also be referred to as Roman.[109] However, I argue that Civic authorities demarcated certain cults and practices as "other" for positive and negative reasons and that the concept of "foreign" was useful for marking what they deemed as acceptable for the "Roman" community.

Eric Orlin highlights that the Senate had no formal definition of what was "foreign" and consequently no definitive methodology for determining what was "foreign". Instead, each cult or practice was understood on its own merits.[110] If a cult was introduced in response to a crisis, presumably concerns about "foreignness" would be secondary.

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[104] *peregrinam insolentiam* Cic. *De Or.* 3.44
[105] *peregrina sacra appellantur, quae coluntur eorum more, a quibus sunt accepta,* Festus 268 L
[106] Beard highlights the importance of recognising that the "foreign" is a social construct (2012b), particularly onpages. 325, 352-353. Beard is followed by Poletti (2018) 549, n.1.
[107] Scheid argues that there is no true core of Roman religion (1995) 18. See Cornell for a summary of how the Romans saw themselves as a product of a mixture of cultures: (1995) 59-60. The cult of Hercules exemplifies this, a cult with Greek characteristics present in Rome from the sixth century: Wiseman (1995) 41-42. Bradley also emphasises the importance of the influence of other cultures, which he states became stronger throughout the Republic (2020) 356.
[108] For instance, Terrenato emphasises how elite individuals could move between different cities, referring to this as "horizontal social mobility". (2019) 56.
[109] For this nuanced understanding, see Beard et al. (1998a) 60, n. 134.
[110] Orlin (2010) 11-12. This means that for many rites, "foreignness" was perceived rather than a reality, particularly for those that had been strongly integrated. Poletti highlights the openness to "foreign" gods within Roman religion (2018) 552. This potential led to confused reactions, with some holding negative views and others positive. For an example, see: Solmsen (1979) 68.

Orlin suggests that historians should do the same, considering each cult on its own merits to determine if it is "foreign".[111] I apply this methodology but also more substantially shift focus onto what the Romans themselves understood to be "foreign". This is necessary as this thesis considers specifically how individuals in the ancient world perceived themselves and the religious world around them. Definitively defining what was "foreign" is comparatively less important. Many cults, such as that of Ceres, comprised both "traditional" and "foreign" elements, thereby blurring this distinction. Regardless of the origins of Jupiter, Hercules or Magna Mater, these divinities were understood to have different characteristics that marked them as either "foreign" or "Roman". By regulating what cults were "officially" accepted, the Senate was able to define civic religion and reinforce what was acceptable for the broader community.

I suggest that "foreign" refers to aspects of religion that members of the elite determined or perceived to originate beyond Rome, conducted by another cultural group. While still vague, this allows a degree of nuance. For instance, Greek aspects of Ceres were perceived as "foreign". Despite this, Greek practices and gods were seemingly more acceptable than "Eastern" rites.[112] In *Pro Balbo,* Cicero refers to the "foreign" nature of the priestesses positively. Therefore, "foreign" is not inherently negative. It was a term employed by authors to convey whatever they needed at any given time. This is why I suggest that negative perceptions could hide a real interest. However, this itself informs us about the motivations of the Senate. I suggest that (re)defining what was "foreign" reinforced senatorial authority, even if they were attacking straw men, by setting themselves as the ultimate judges for what was "Roman". The reception of Greek philosophy suggests similar themes, although I suggest that authors still had to navigate negative perceptions to justify arguments that could be seen as detrimental to civic religion.

Civic and Non-Civic.

[111] Orlin (2010) 11-12.
[112] Gruen is particularly interested in understanding Roman identity, highlighting the importance of Greek culture to the Romans (1993) 223. See also Beard and Crawford (1999) 38-39; 28.

I outline some thoughts of what is meant by "civic" above, although determining a concrete definition is difficult, as the concept loses meaning in the vast plurality of cults in Rome. John Coleman's definition of civic religion provides an outline of how we can understand the concept:

> By definition, civil religion is a religious system given to the social integration of society. It performs the function of religion stipulated by Durkheim, the religion of national identity and solidarity.[113]

This makes sense given Durkheim's view that religion is interlinked to group identity. However, additional aspects of elite control can be included in the definition. Members of the elite could guide Roman religion by incorporating new elements. This aspect is what Richard Gordon suggests, but Scheid only accepts to a limited extent.[114] I argue that the Senate acted as the ultimate arbiter in religious decisions made on behalf of the community. The responses to the health crises discussed in Chapter Six suggest this. The Senate created religious responses that impacted wider society. Consequently, I add to Coleman's definition that civic religion was a body of practices that members of the elite directed. Civic religion is, therefore, a "canon" of gods and rituals that are deemed acceptable in which the community is expected to participate. What civic religion comprised may have shifted. As Cicero's speeches attest, the Senate was frequently divided, and it is unclear that all members agreed on what was acceptable. This is a central reason why civic religion must remain somewhat ambiguous. My definition of civic includes "foreign" rites that the Senate permitted.[115]

Religion/Religio

Defining religion is difficult due to the ambiguity of the term. In the first century BC, Cicero gives *religio* a broad definition, saying it is the correct worship of the gods.[116] He

[113] Coleman (1970) 76.
[114] See above and Scheid (2015a) 11. Champion perceives that the traditional elite held dominance in state offices (2017) 3. See also Goldberg (2015).
[115] See sections two and three of the next chapter for modern views that favour these arguments; Scheid (1995) 17-19.
[116] Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.8-9.

additionally associates *religio* with a sense of reverence and piety, drawing a contrast with "superstition": "They take away superstition in which belongs foolish fear of the gods, but also religion, which maintains the pious worship of the gods."[117] Lewis and Short provide two definitions based on this evidence, suggesting that *religio* means reverence through the gods associated with scrupulousness in performing rites. This is generally how the term is defined in modern works.[118]

This leaves the concept of "Roman religion" as a broad category comprising an amalgam of gods and practices. Nevertheless, I follow Driediger-Murphy's view that "religion" remains a useful Category which denotes practices and ideas (relevant to Chapter Five) directed at the gods.[119] I combine this with Beard et al's. approach of working to understand what may be counted as "religious".[120] In my view, "Roman religion" could mean a practice performed by any group or individual in an attempt to communicate with or maintain the favour of the gods. It could be an official "civic" practice or a "non-civic" practice that a member of the elite could term "superstition". In defining ancient religions, scholars, particularly Scheid, have tended to distance themselves from discussing "belief" as an anachronistic Christian concept.[121] This is how *religio* differs from a modern conception of "religion". Cicero's definition certainly does not refer to belief. However, since the 2000s, some, notably Mackey, have reintroduced the concept.[122] While "belief" is a currently productive area of discussion, to which my research may prove useful, a fuller discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis, and my focus remains on religious practices.

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[117] *superstitionem tollunt in qua inest timor inanis deorum, sed etiam religionem quae deorum 118cultu pio continetur.* Cic. *Nat. D.* 117-118.
[118] See Lewis and Short (1879) 1556-1557. For the acceptance of this definition, see Warrior (2006) 6 and Bernstein (2007) 227.
[119] Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 47-48 n. 176. See also Wynne, who defines religion similarly but with a focus on institutions, which he says are "loose" (2019) 52-53.
[120] For Beard et al's definition or lack thereof, see (1998a) x-xi. For discussions of belief, see: Mackey (2022) page 384, for example. Summary of views see: Roubekas (2023).
[121] For Scheid's complex views on "belief", see (2015a) 140. See Bendlin (2000) 117-118; Champion (2017) 3-4. For a summary of views. For example, Beard et al. imply that "belief" only developed in the fourth to fifth centuries AD (1998a) x.
[122] Mackey (2022). This is in addition to Champion and Bendlin, above.

It is useful to briefly discuss the place of Roman religion in the broader context of the Mediterranean. I perceive Roman religion as forming part of a wider polytheistic system throughout the area, making much of what I say potentially applicable to other cultures and places. Rupke points out that ancient polytheism did not originate in Rome, which absorbed aspects of culture from other areas.[123] This indicates that scholars accept that Roman religion was embedded in Mediterranean culture. Additionally, Beard, North and Price discuss different cults throughout the empire, pointing out that they likely "meant" different things to different people.[124] Therefore, ancient religions shared many characteristics, such as animal sacrifice, although differences in practice and interpretation created some variation.[125] Roman religion influenced, and was influenced by, other cults, forming part of a web of practices.

Ritual/Practice

Throughout my argument, I refer to "rituals" and "practices". Graf points out that ritual lacks an agreed definition among modern scholars but states that, in its simplest form, it is a "symbolic activity in a religious context." Graf also notes that neither the Greeks nor Romans analysed ritual as a specific category of religious activity.[126] Despite these issues, Graf's definition is a useful starting place as it conveys a sense of "doing". A ritual represents a group or individual acting in a specific way to worship or communicate with the gods. It is how proper *religio* is conducted in the Roman view. Bocock and Mackey agree that ritual is action, but Mackey also points out that it is a standardised "practice" that is repeated.[127] Generally, Roman scholars have not differentiated "practice" from "ritual", using both interchangeably.[128] Consequently, I

[123] Rupke (2018) 3-4. Similar ideas are echoed by Scheid, who highlights the influences of other cultures, such as the Greeks and Phoenicians, on Rome (2003) 13-14. Scholars generally accept that there was "no true core" of Roman religion, an argument that I return to throughout the thesis.
[124] Beard et al. (1998) 301 ff.
[125] Scheid discusses the importance of animal sacrifice at Rome (2012).
[126] Graf (2012).
[127] Bocock refers to "ritual action" and contrasts it with "belief" (1970) 285; Mackey (2022) 337.
[128] In addition to Mackey, Scheid refers to both practice and ritual interchangeably (2007). Schultz refers to sacrifice as both "practice" and "ritual" at different points of her argument (2016) 59.

define ritual as any religious practice whereby individuals or groups attempt to maintain *religio* or communicate with the gods. The rituals/practices they perform could be part of the accepted body of practices or otherwise.

Elite.

These definitions raise the question of who the "civic elite" are. This must include the Senate, although senators alone would be a small group consisting of a few hundred people. Those of senatorial rank, although not always specifically senators, filled the major colleges.[129] These were initially comprised of a narrow "patrician class". In 300 BC, the *Lex Ogulnia* increased the number of priests and allowed Plebeians to become members. This was followed in the mid-second century by apparent proposals to replace the previous method of filling vacancies through co-optation with elections instead.[130] However, it was only through the *Lex Domitia* in 104–103 BC that elections were conducted by the *comitia tributa*, the assembly consisting of citizens. This was repealed, then reintroduced by Caesar in the 60s BC.[131] In a similar manner to the opening of political offices, such as the consulate to the Plebeians through the Licinian laws in 367 BC, the potential membership of priesthoods was also widened. The repeal of the *Lex Domitia* suggests that there were tensions. Ultimately, only a narrow band of senators held major priesthoods, regardless of whether they were Plebeian or Patrician. Ultimately, it was the Senate that was able to determine acceptable practices. Others

[129] There are rare instances of "*adulecens"* meaning a young person who has not reached maturity. Livy records two examples: Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus co-opted as augur in 204 BC and Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus made pontifex in 172 BC. Lucius Quinctius Flamininus may also have been a teenager when elected as an augur. See Hahm (1963) 76-77 and notes 13-14. He also calls into question how young Domitius Ahenobarbus really was, although generally, younger priests who were not senators were possible. See Scheid (2003) 144 for a general discussion on how most major priests were senators. Other key priesthoods, such as the Vestal Virgins, were high-ranking but not senators: Gell. *NA.* 1.12; Kroppenberg 426-427

[130] Cic. *Amic,* 96. Cotta mentions Gaius Laelius' oration, which successfully opposed the proposals: Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.5.

[131] For background summaries of the laws that were passed see, Beard et al (1998a), 99-100. For the *Lex Domitia* specifically: Rawson (1974) 209. Scheid provides a useful timeline of religious events, including these laws (2003) 193 ff.

could introduce practices, but the Senate could make them official, and priests could only pass judgement if a religious issue was referred to them by the Senate.[132]

As laws changed and new rites were introduced requiring people from different backgrounds to fulfil religious roles, the definition of a civic religious elite becomes vague. I suggest that there was a hierarchical system with the Senate in the centre, with overall oversight. However, various priests from different backgrounds, like the priestesses of Ceres, also held their authority, directing religious rites. Therefore, when I discuss "members of the elite", I am referring particularly to the Senate and those with the authority to make major decisions, including priests outside the Senate. This more broadly refers to a "priestly class" including other minor priesthoods that had authority in religious matters. The wealthy and educated also produced works that influenced religious discourse. While Lucretius was not a senator, and we know little about his background, he was part of the literate elite that was respected and able to influence others, as suggested by Cicero's engagement with *De Rerum Natura*.[133] Varro, also an equestrian, is similar. He was an influential writer, greatly respected by his peers and may have, therefore, impacted how they thought about their religious policies.[134] Ultimately, the equestrians are members of the elite as they interlock with the Senate and could become senators.[135] Many were presumably wealthy with substantial resources. Additionally, Varro's writings suggest ideological similarities with senators. Therefore, I include authors like him and Lucretius in my definition.

A separate, but interrelated issue is that of gender, which is an important theme particularly in Chapter Three. As this thesis aims to move away from discussing a narrow band of elite male authors, priestesses, and the activity of women provides an alternative view as to how religion functioned. I will discuss how they played both a civic

[132] The importance that was placed on the Senate is also outlined by Ripat (2006) 162.
[133] Cic. *QFr.* 2.10.3. For what we know of Lucretius' background, see Smith (2001) viii and Melville et al. (1997) xi-xii. For engagement with Lucretius' work, see Trinacty (2020).
[134] For the respect that Varro's peers had for him, see: Rawson (1985) 96-97; Kaster (2012).
[135] See Duncan-Jones (2016) 89.

role, as priestesses of Ceres, for example. However, they did not occupy the same religious status as the elite males who filled the roles of the major priestly colleges. Simultaneously, archaeological evidence discussed in Chapter Six indicates that, just as any other group, they were able to act with a degree of religious freedom, choosing a deity to worship and how to worship them. Analysis is complicated by the misogynistic views presented in the sources, as well as the issue of "foreignness", which is present in many of the cults associated with women. This echoes the issue of identifying non-elite action in elite sources. This, in itself, however, informs us of how hierarchies were reinforced and how individuals attempted to meet their own needs.

Public and Private.

"Private" and "public" religion require definition, as "private" could be conflated with the personal and the public with the civic. The Romans marked a distinction between *sacra publica* and *sacra privata*. *Sacra Publica* can be connected to civic religion, as they are the rites that were carried out on behalf of the people. Festus is the only author with an extant discussion of how *sacra privata* differed from *publica*. He says that they are the rites that are carried out on behalf of the individual, or family (*gens*):

> Public rites are those performed at public expense for the people and for mountains, villages, assemblies, and shrines. Private rites, on the other hand, are those performed for individuals, families, and clans.[136]

Additionally, *sacra privata* is incorporated into civic religion in so far as Cicero includes it in an ideal state.[137] He implies that those who are ignorant of both public and private sacrifices should be instructed by public priests:

> The many gods will have several priests, the gods all together their pontiffs, and the individual gods their flamens. The Vestal Virgins shall guard the eternal fire on the public hearth of the city. Those who are ignorant as to the methods and

[136] *Publica sacra quae publico sumptu pro populo fiunt, quaeque pro montibus, pagis, curiis, sacellis. At privata quae pro singulis hominibus, familiis, gentibus fiunt.* Festus 245.
[137] Cic. *Leg.* 2.22.

> rites suitable to these public and private sacrifices shall seek instruction from the public priests.[138]

As *sacra privata* were subject to civic oversight, the phrase presumably cannot have referred simply to the private worship of an individual or small group conducting rites independently of the overarching civic system. It is consequently possible that there was an overlap between the two categories. This does not mean that there was no "personal" aspect to religion. While arguing that the categories of "public" and "private" are ultimately unhelpful, blunt tools, Robert Parker argues that votive offerings are a body of evidence where the two spheres come together.[139]

Parker, therefore, suggests that the "private" should not be equated to "personal", individual, or "non-civic" religion. Continuing this theme, I suggest that individuals could personally select particular gods and practices in public settings based on private criteria or circumstances. These may or may not be an "official" part of the religious system. Likewise, "civic" gods (i.e. gods worshipped publicly) could be worshipped in "more private" contexts, such as at a small shrine within the home beyond the view of other members of the community. In questioning the concept of private religion, Parker, albeit half-heartedly, argues for "domestic religion", suggesting that this did not express the distinctiveness of one household against another and is consequently part of the religion of the city. However, he cautioned that this should not be pressed heavily as the category of the "individual" would cease to have meaning.[140] Bendlin also argues that the dualism of civic religion and private cult should be questioned, suggesting that *sacra privata* were not subordinated to *sacra publica* and that civic religion was not an

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[138] *Divisque aliis alii*[1] *sacerdotes, omnibus pontifices, singulis flamines sunto. virginesque Vestales in urbe custodiunto ignem foci publici sempiternum. Quoque haec privatim et publici modo rituque fiant, discunto ignari a publicis sacerdotibus* Cic. *Leg.* 2.20.

[139] Parker (2015) 71-72. The boundary between the two categories may have been blurred in many other instances. For instance, the private financing of temples. See: Van Andringa (2015).

[140] Parker (2015) 73. This point is seemingly also suggested by Petersen, who refers to the domestic setting as potentially "less public", suggesting that there is a spectrum: (2011/2012) 10. Others see houses as "private", which I disagree with, given that authors discuss their houses as open: Beard and Crawford (1999) 25. Cf. Cic. *Att.* 12.23.1.

elite creation utilised exclusively by them.[141] Current scholarship has, therefore, trended away from seeing a division between public and private. While I believe the distinction between categories is unclear, I find it necessary to discuss "private" religion. While the "private" blurs into the "public", it is a separation made in our sources. These were categories that existed for the Romans and should not be discarded just because we do not possess a fuller picture.

Nevertheless, the basic point – that individuals used the "cultic infrastructure" of Rome, as Bendlin puts it, to meet "individual private concerns" –[142] is something that I will apply, particularly in the case of votive offerings and divination, in which practices that were part of civic religion could be reinterpreted to meet individual needs. Potentially, there was a spectrum of "more public" to "more private" settings. However, in comparison to public sacrifices, for instance, it may have been easier to form choices as to what gods to dedicate to and what to dedicate in a "more private" setting, such as the home, away from civic authorities/regulation. With no official present, the individual became the religious authority able to determine the best action. This must have been necessary as there would not always be an official priest to determine this on their behalf. While Cicero claims that "private" religion was regulated, what was dedicated and to what god potentially allowed some choice.[143] I combine my arguments for personal choice with Kindt's view that public and private religion is a spectrum where personal dedications could have a public dimension.[144] For instance, I suggest that philosophers in the first century personally created new interpretive frameworks, which they published publicly. Votive offerings are a more direct example of how the personal and public intersected. Overall, the differences between "public" and "private" are

[141] Bendlin (2000) 131. While essentially stating the same point as Parker, Bendlin is more open to the idea of the individual. Rüpke also seems to suggest a limited utility of "public" and "private" categories, saying that these could be deliberately constructed and deconstructed (2018) 133.
[142] Bendlin (2000) 131-132.
[143] Principally, I am here referring to votive offerings discussed in Chapter Six. However, similar ideas are explored in Chapter Four in relation to religion that falls outside the civic in going to see one of the various forms of diviners at the Circus Maximus. Similarly, I discuss religious options in Chapter Five.
[144] Kindt (2015) 44 and 47. Kindt's focus is on Greek religion, whereas I will apply these ideas to Roman.

unclear and cannot be mapped onto "civic" and "individual" as a "private" dedication could occur in a public setting.

Performative.

Another important term that I use throughout the thesis is "performative". John Austin initially developed the concept of performativity in the 1960s to discuss how language can be used to generate an identity. Jergus summarise Austin's application of his argument to marriage as an example. Through saying "I declare you…", a priest confers a new status upon a couple, also altering their legal status.[145] Scholars such as Butler developed this idea, applying it to race and gender. They argue that these concepts are produced "performatively" meaning that what people say allows them to affect their and others' identities. This has led Souza to suggest that there is no "original" identity, as performativity leads to identity formation through "doing" rather than an inherent quality that individuals possess.[146] I will present evidence that suggests that ancient authors wrote "performatively" in an attempt to create a sense of "Romanness" and "foreignness". Importantly, race and gender, when viewed as a performance, become political tools that reinforce hierarchies.[147] I apply this idea to suggest that authors felt it necessary to reinforce their position within the civic system. They achieved this through "othering" some while also experiencing social pressure to perform the "correct" identity, creating boundaries and hierarchies within civic religion. Consequently, I view identities as created performances that members of the elite utilised to form a sense of "belonging" which does not exist inherently.[148]

When I employ the term "performative" to discuss an individual or their reaction/perception to a religious practice, I do not mean to imply they are being false.

[145] Jergus (2018) 112-113. See also Laketa for a brief summary (2020) 65.
[146] De Souza (2022) 634; 643-644. For an overview of Butler's view: Ehlers (2012) 7.
[147] De Souza (2022) 643 McCoskey also emphasises how ancient authors in the first centuries created a "hierarchy of racial differences". See his comments on Caesar and Juvenal (2012) 78; 156,
[148] Here I am applying Bell's argument (1999) 3. Bell also follows Fortier in suggesting that performative "belonging" helps to maintain religion and community (1999) 3.

The fears for "foreignness" that individuals felt may have been genuine. I instead mean that members of the elite often took part in a "performative" culture that exerted pressure on them to present certain views to create a sense of "Romanness".

Roadmap

In this Section, I discuss the structure of my argument. Chapter Two outlines the development of the civic model and other relevant interpretations of ancient religion. Key scholars from Mommsen to the modern day, notably Scheid and Rüpke, will be analysed in greater depth, followed by a summary of my position. Chapter Three focusses on senatorial authority over religious affairs. Cicero's speeches regarding the destruction and restitution of his house after his exile orient the reader in how I understand civic religion functioned. The Senate regulated specific gods and practices, arbitrating religious decisions and determining what was acceptable. I discuss the cults of Ceres and Magna Mater as evidence of how the Senate was able to reinforce its authority by renegotiating what elements of these cults were permissible to build on this principle. The Senate was the final arbiter of what comprised the civic religion that broader Roman society engaged. The individuals whom I discuss in this chapter were bound by expectations and social pressures to act in certain ways, needing to show how their actions aligned with "traditional" practices. Despite this, some independent action can be emphasised, including Cicero and Clodius; the ability to craft personal arguments and the priestess of Ceres' ability to make personal decisions.

Chapter Four builds on these ideas. Shifting emphasis onto individuals, I suggest that elite politicians competed with each other, emphasising their individuality. They often utilised civic images and processes resulting from a need to align with expected norms and maintain their positions in an influential system. However, I suggest, also, that divinatory methods that fell outside civic religion also provided a different means to the same end. For instance, astrology was used directly to predict the future or in intellectual discussions of the stars, indicating the choices available to individuals. The chapter also analyses how the broader community utilised various forms of divination.

Key to this argument is Pauline Ripat's conclusion that all members of society utilised "unofficial" divination, which formed the background noise of the city.[149] While civic religion remained just as important to the broader community as to members of the elite, other options could be explored. I examine different types of *haruspices*, some of whom were not accepted as part of the civic system. This further indicates that individuals could utilise religion on a personal level outside of civic structures.

Having analysed the importance of civic religion and how individuals acted within and beyond it, I discuss Greek philosophy in Chapter Five, combining these themes. I argue that individuals developed independent arguments, presenting themselves as having civic-religious knowledge in substantially different ways. The first section analyses the reception of Greek philosophy in Rome, arguing that negative perceptions were performative given its long presence in Rome. This necessitated that authors engage with this negativity, which they used to present themselves as innovators. The following section analyses Lucretius and Varro, who had different approaches to religious theory with different methods. I follow Summers in suggesting that Lucretius presented himself as a radical Epicurean, whereas Varro wrote a satire and history, emphasising the different interpretive frameworks individuals could create.[150] The final two sections discuss Cicero's multiple approaches. I suggest that he used the perception of "foreignness" to present his works as innovative, in an attempt to culturally "conquer" Greece. Furthermore, he used Roman exempla in an attempt to make religious philosophy "Roman", showing his peers how it could be employed practically in speeches. This was an important aspect of Cicero's writings, as he saw himself as an educator. He presented a variety of views in his religious trilogy to highlight his personal knowledge, claiming to teach the youth. All three authors maintained an interest in defending civic religion. Greek philosophy is a strong case study for showing the ability of individuals to explore religion while remaining committed to traditional norms.

[149] Ripat (2006) 156.
[150] For Summers' views, see below, page 187.

Chapter Six also combines my ideas about the civic and the individual, applying them to individual crises resolved through state practices and votive offerings. I analyse the reaction to epidemics to examine how the Senate attempted to solve the issues of the broader community. The Senate determined collective responses, deciding to what longstanding civic gods and rituals to turn, including Asclepius and the *Lectisternia*. However, some sources hint that authorities occasionally struggled to rectify issues. I also analyse why elite responses to plagues often had a Greek character, although "foreignness" is less relevant to votive offerings as they form a pan-Mediterranean practice. The rest of the chapter focusses on these artefacts, which will allow me to explore how elite and non-elite people could communicate with the gods "more personally". An underlying theme is the multitude of objects and gods that formed votive traditions, building a level of choice throughout the process. An individual could select a coin, altar, inscription or other objects to give to a specific god that was relevant to them. This allowed the dedicator to have a religious experience at a place, time and cost that was more flexible than some civic rituals may have been. Furthermore, the qualities of the objects, such as artistic motifs and materials used, would potentially create a more personalised experience. I argue that many votives retained a civic function. Some dedicated by members of the elite were for the benefit of the whole community. However, each artefact ultimately represents an individual's religious experience.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

In the introduction, I outlined my interpretation of the development of sociological discourses on religion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and their influence on key scholars. The Durkheimian school emphasised how religion was experienced collectively, while others, such as Simmel, placed greater focus on the individual's ability to have personal experiences. Neither argued that the individual and societal institutions were in opposition, but developed different views of how religion was experienced and expressed. This chapter analyses the impact of these ideas on Roman religion and the development of the civic model. Since it is not possible to engage with every major work, I select a range of views to highlight key turning points.

In section one, I analyse the work of early scholars who laid the foundations for how Roman religion is understood, notably Mommsen and Wissowa. These scholars debated how far individuals could be emphasised and the extent to which "state religion" reinforced social cohesion. They, plus Cumont and Burriss, often argued Roman religion was "austere", while seeing the rise of Christianity as inevitable due to its focus on a personal connection with the divine lacking in Roman polytheism. These authors accepted "Sceptical" views of religion in ancient sources, which critiqued practices and seemed to undermine a belief in the gods with little critical analysis. Wissowa, Fowler and Mommsen also focussed on festivals, the Senate and the calendar, indicating that an emphasis on civic aspects solidified in the early twentieth century. In section two, I continue analysing these ideas to the present day, identifying changes. A move away from cynical interpretations of religion occurred alongside a focus on "change" in the 1970s, as scholars such as Liebeschuetz began to recognise the plurality of religious experiences that existed in Rome. The civic model remained dominant at this time. Another turning point occurred in the 2000s when some, notably German, scholars such as Bendlin and Rüpke, moved away from the civic model, arguing that it hides the totality of the potential religious experiences in Rome, although

indicating that it remained useful.[1] I analyse the development of the civic model in authors such as Arnaldo Momigliano, Mary Beard and Walter Burkert, who I suggest were influenced by Durkheimian Sociology as outlined in the previous chapter.

In section three, I focus on how the concept of "foreignness" developed. Earlier scholars, particularly Cumont, argued that "oriental religions" pervaded a "traditional core" of Roman religion. This view altered in the twentieth century, with an increasing understanding that, from an early point, Rome was influenced by other cultures. Eric Orlin and Beard began to discuss "foreignness" as a construct, although focus has moved away from the specific study of "foreignness" in recent works. I conclude in section four with a summary of my position, suggesting that individuals should be seen as an integrated aspect of civic religion, selecting between "civic" and "non-civic" practices. I, therefore, utilise several approaches to provide a more detailed picture of the second and first centuries.

Early Scholars and the Development of the Civic Model

Starting in 1854, Theodore Mommsen published the first volume of Römische Geschichte , including a chapter specific to religion, providing a balance between "state religion" and the individual. He emphasised the "communal" aspects of Roman religion when he described priesthoods:

> ...thence arose the corporations or colleges of men specially skilled in religious lore, a thoroughly national Italian institution which had which had a far more important influence on political development than the individual priests or priesthood.[2]

[1] While I focus on Rüpke and Bendlin, Rosenberger also refers to the interconnectedness of religion and politics while also examining individual monarchical rule: Corbeill (1998). North, while advocating the civic model, has explored the individual, discussed below. Schörner another discussed how the Senate was integrated into the Polei in the provinces as a cult, emphasising the importance of political organisation (2014) 217.

[2] Mommsen (1862) 178. The discussion of colleges/corporations echoes an interest in civic structures apparent in French scholarship in the 19th century. Waltzing collects epigraphic evidence, although the

Mommsen here gives institutions greater authority than the individual, but also wrote, "Every suppliant and inquirer addressed himself directly to the divinity,"[3] and in the opening paragraph: "The state and the clan, the individual phenomena of nature as well as the individual operations of the mind, every man, every place and object, every act even falling within the sphere of Roman law reappeared in the Roman world of gods".[4] Therefore, Mommsen argued that religious experiences resulted from individual expression, although these were mediated by priests and institutions. This balance is also identifiable in Fustel de Coulanges' work, as he argued that religious practice was key to the development of the city: "From it [Religion] came all the institutions, as well as all the private law."[5] However, Fustel differed from Mommsen in his emphasis on private property. He connected this to religion, saying that each family had its own gods that were its property.[6] While families represent a group dynamic, Fustel gives less prominence to overarching societal structures than Mommsen in this case. While they differ in specifics, both indicate that personal action was possible.

This "balance" is not present to the same extent in Georg Wissowa and Warde Fowler's works. This may be a product of writing before Durkheim came to prominence.[7] Mommsen's analysis may be limited as his specific focus is not on religion. He also described Roman religion as "stationary", characterising it as formulaic. This lacks the "personal" aspect that later scholars such as Liebeschuetz suggest.[8] Nevertheless, the emphasis on the individual remains notable. It is possible to see the beginnings of a focus on individuals later present in Weber, Simmel and eventually Bendlin and Rüpke.

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mention of "private lives" may also suggest some interest in individual actions beyond the civic before Durkheim's influence: Waltzing (1895) 3-4.

[3] Mommsen (1862) 177.

[4] Mommsen (1862) 171.

[5] Coulanges (1874, originally published 1864) 12.

[6] Coulanges (1874, originally published 1864) 77-78. For the differences between him and Mommsen, see Momigliano (1982) 27. For Mommsen's view of communal property: Mueller (1986) 14.

[7] Mommsen started publishing his history of Rome in 1854. I am using an English translation published in 1862 based on the German third edition published in 1861.

[8] Liebeschuetz (1979) 6-7 This is partially connected to the discussion of religion and belief. See Mackey (2022).

A specific interest in Roman religious practice, separate from other aspects of society, developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Warde Fowler, a British historian, and Georg Wissowa, a German classical philologist, remain influential. Both continued Mommsen's thoughts to an extent, although I suggest they emphasised the influence of the state more substantially. For example, Fowler focussed on the importance of the augurs' role concerning public law compared to their role in providing the community with a religious experience, a view that he connected to Mommsen's works.[9] He also stated that,

> It [religion] has become overlaid with foreign rites and ideas, and it has become a religious monopoly of the state; of which the essential characteristic, as Mommsen has well put it, and as we shall see later on, was "the conscious retention of the principles of the popular belief, which were recognised as irrational, for reasons of outward convenience."[10]

Wissowa says the community paid the gods reverence but followed Mommsen in discussing the individual, arguing they could also venerate deities before the state incorporated them.[11] Wissowa also recognised the individual when discussing the *genius,* the concept of personal divine power. He perceived that it had significance for all individuals while discussing a civic aspect in the cult of the "*Genius* of the Roman people", presenting it as a natural result of people forming groups.[12] While he did not emphasise the civic aspects of religion as forcefully as Fowler, Wissowa moved away from Mommsen.

Scheid suggests that another reason for Wissowa's focus on the individual may be the influence of eighteenth-century German philosophers such as

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[9] Fowler (1911) 305.
[10] Fowler (1911) 1-2.
[11] This makes some sense as Wissowa and Mommsen knew and worked together: Scheid (2015a) 9. Earlier scholars also connected the two, seeing them as producing an overarching system. For example, Rose (1935) 162. For Wissowa's comment on the community and the individual revering the gods: (1921) 23-26.
[12] Wissowa (1912) 25-26. See Rüpke for a discussion of the individual element of the worship of the *genius* (2018) 280-281.

Friedrich Schleiermacher.[13] Schleiermacher discussed religion as purely individual, although also seemed to subordinate individual rights to the state.[14] My focus remains on sociologists such as Simmel, as these were active when Wissowa et al. were working. However, earlier theological philosophers were part of the intellectual milieu.

The authors I have discussed so far varied in how much authority they believed the Senate possessed. Mommsen does not mention it concerning religion, which is surprising given its importance in making religious decisions.[15] As the priests whom Mommsen discusses were senators, he may implicitly be referring to the Senate, although priestly colleges played a separate role in some religious decisions.[16] In contrast, Fowler referred to the Senate aiming to show how individuals could assert their authority against it, and indicating that he also sought some "balance". He recounted the story of Flaccus who was forced to accept the role of *Flamen Dialis* in 209 BC, stating: "Flaccus insisted on asserting his individuality in spite of the *ius divinum*, and the Senate and people both backed him up."[17] Simultaneously, he highlighted senatorial authority, describing how the Senate and magistrates were responsible for dealing with the "danger" of the Bacchanalia.[18] Fowler's focus, therefore, remained on institutions, including the Senate, although he argued the individual was an important religious actor. The generality of the studies, not focussing on specific cults or rights, may have prevented authors from generating in-depth analyses. I will, however, take forward the concept that individuals and the civic were in balance. I suggest that Fowler and Wissowa set the trend for the following century, moving towards discussing the civic more than the individual, while not completely

[13] Scheid (2015a) 16-17 and xxi. I note that Wissowa does not cite Schleiermacher or Hegel directly, although I accept that they may have had an influence.
[14] For a specific example of Schleiermacher's thoughts on the individual, see: Wyman (2007) 381, but particularly Dole (2008). For the debates relating to the emphasis on society in Schleiermacher's works, see Kinlaw (2022).
[15] For examples of the emphasis on the Senate, see Rüpke (2018) 151; Scheid (2003) 103. Both use the word "had" when referring to the need for senatorial approval.
[16] See my discussion of Beard and North's *Pagan Priests* below for my explanation.
[17] Fowler (1911) 343. See Livy 27.8.4-10.
[18] Fowler (1911) 347.

discounting the personal aspect. I suggest that this became more pronounced throughout the early twentieth century.

The increasing focus on "civic" aspects of religion in mid to late-twentieth-century scholarship was matched by a growing awareness of "non-civic" practices. This view is presented in Franz Cumont's *Les Religions Orientales Dans Le Paganisme Romain*, published in 1906.[19] He briefly discussed civic religion, contrasting it with the "personal" worship of "foreign" gods: "The worship of the Roman gods was a civic duty, the worship of the foreign gods the expression of a personal belief."[20] Similarly to Edward Eli Burriss, whom I discuss below, Cumont perceived a direct association between "belief" and the individual, although only believed this occurred in "foreign"/non-civic cults. As explained in the introduction, this is problematic, and I argue that personal expression was also possible through participation in civic practices. Nevertheless, Cumont fits the trend of increasing focus on institutions with which everyone in the community engaged. This may result, partly, from engaging with Wissowa, whom Cumont cites frequently.[21] Cumont also argued that Roman Paganism would lead, naturally, to the rise of Christianity.[22] This agenda complicates Cumont's argument, as he wrote with a set of preconceptions that led to him assuming Roman religion was deficient in some way. While no historian can fully escape their preconceptions, the Christian lens through which early scholars, also including Wissowa and Fowler, analysed Roman religion skewed their perceptions of "state" religion, seeing it as weak and malleable. The perceived civic "state religion" was not presented as an enticing religious option for the broader community.

[19] Cumont's work was initially published in French in 1906. I am using the 1911 English translation.
[20] Cumont (1911) 44.
[21] Cumont cites Wissowa as a central text in several chapters: Cumont (1911) 218; 223; 228. Wissowa, therefore, seems to have had a substantial impact on Cumont's thoughts.
[22] See Kaizer (2006) 28. This is specifically related to his argument that "foreign" religions permitted a more personal experience. Scheerlinck et al. (2016) 226.

Burriss, a British historian influenced by Warde Fowler, highlighted similar ideas and issues.[23] Writing in the 1920s–1930s, he discussed the individual to a limited extent: "It has been the mode of scholars, since the time of Mommsen, to deny affection on the part of the worshipping Roman for the object of their worship."[24] He then cites Cicero's description of how men are moved by affection for the gods. Burriss is possibly over-emphasising Mommsen's suggestion that there was a lack of personal beliefs. Based on the quotations I have provided, Mommsen seemed to make a point of emphasising individual connections to the gods. However, this may not have gone far enough for Burriss.[25] He also gave the "civic view" of religion, arguing that Roman practices were in decline and accepting that they were viewed sceptically by Cicero, his peers, and the broader community.[26] This is matched by a belief that there was a "popular religion" separate from the state, an idea similar to Cumont's:

> No one has as yet, so far as I know, made an attempt to gather from the ancient sources those elements in the Roman State religion and in the popular religious life of the Roman people which are commonly termed primitive.[27]

Burriss also contrasted himself against Wissowa and Fowler, implying they dedicated too much time to interpreting state festivals.[28] Nevertheless, when he referred to "primitive/popular" practices, it was often to discuss their relationship with state religion rather than focussing on individual action. For instance, he argued that state religion discouraged the use of ritual objects and actions which belonged to popular rites.[29] Burriss ultimately accommodated the individual, but only in magic, saying, "In the case of magic rites, the individual is concerned; in religion the common good is

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[23] Taylor (1932) 268. Burriss seems to have substantially engaged with Fowler, referencing him throughout *Tabu, Magic Spirits: A Study of Primitive Elements in Roman Religion* (1931). For an example of this engagement, see Rose (1931).
[24] Burriss (1926) 528.
[25] See above in relation to Mommsen.
[26] Burriss (1926) 530-531; 526. It should be noted, however, that even earlier than Burriss, some took a more nuanced approach. Pease, for instance, when analysing *De Natura Deorum,* implies that Cicero's thoughts on religion are not easy to reveal: (1913) 37.
[27] Burriss (1931) ix. Compare this to Cumont's comments above.
[28] It is a fair argument that festivals and the calendar were a central aspect for these authors. Fowler directly connects the religious calendar to the development of the city-state (and, therefore, presumably civic religion): Fowler (1911) 96.
[29] Burriss (1931) 114.

involved."[30] I consequently interpret Burriss as maintaining the Senate as the primary authority, although his discussion indicates an early argument that rites could be "non-civic", again similar to Cumont. Burriss' view of how far the individual should be emphasised is somewhat unclear, although he allows for some balance.

Burriss and Fowler represent an important shift in approaching religious practices through anthropology, lacking in Wissowa's interpretations.[31] These scholars may, therefore, represent a growing interest in introducing cross-disciplinary methods, potentially explaining why Durkheimian ideas were incorporated. Wissowa's lack of engagement with sociology and anthropology is an early split, potentially leading to the different levels of emphasis on the individual among scholars today. The influence of Durkheim is identifiable, also, in Georges Dumézil's works. Writing in the mid-twentieth century, he developed a "trifunctional hypothesis", which posited that Indo-European societies comprised three groups: priests, warriors and producers. Notably, Dumézil related this model to "social cohesion". When describing the *libri rituales* (Etruscan Sacred texts), he stated that "along with religious rites, they treated everything that concerns the life of the state and of individuals".[32] I interpret this as suggesting that important religious documents played a role in regulating the lives of individuals. Dumézil applied these ideas to Roman religion, which became his focus in the 1960s, although the model was developed initially in the 1930s and applied to Germanic traditions.[33] The concept of social cohesion is taken further as he stated:

> The great gods of the archaic triad dominate public life, but they represent functions and respond to needs which likewise control the life of every subgroup, every household, every individual.[34]

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[30] Burriss (1931) 175. This seems to be following a trend in the twentieth century, as Fowler, as I note above, who was an influence on Burriss, states the same sentiment: "In civilised communities and in historical times magic is in the main individualistic, not social…": Fowler (1911) 49.
[31] For Fowler's engagement with anthropology, see (1911) 16-22. While being tentative, Fowler calls it a "source of light." For Burriss' engagement with Frazer, see Rose (1931) and Taylor (1932). For Wissowa's lack of engagement, see Granger (1902).
[32] Dumézil (1970b – originally published in 1966) 660-661.
[33] For the connection to social cohesion, see Miller (2017-2018) 11. For the application to Rome specifically, see Momigliano (1984b).
[34] Dumézil (1970a - originally published in 1966) 231.

Therefore, Dumézil represents the development of deeper methodological approaches that focussed on the civic aspects of religious processes. This is also identifiable in the structure of Dumézil's work, which focuses on "*sacra publica"* and civic deities such as the Capitoline triad. Dumézil consequently integrated Durkheim's argument that religion reflects or is a product of society. [35] He, consequently, represents a turning point in the scholarship of Roman religious practice, reinforcing the position of key institutions and the state as the arbiters of what was permissible. While Fowler and Burriss approached religious practice with anthropology, they did not push these ideas as forcefully.

There are problems with Dumézil's approaches, however. An underlying principle is that the gods reflect the three categories (presumably reinforcing "social cohesion" themselves). Therefore, Mars represents the "warrior" aspect, Ceres the "producer", and so on.[36] It is unclear that the majority of gods can be categorised in this manner, as attributes changed and bled into each other, as Beard et al. highlight.[37] There are other societies for which the trifunctional hypothesis is more appropriate.[38] It is also unclear whether separate groups of warriors and priests apply to Rome, given that some individuals could fill both roles simultaneously. While models designed to apply to every society remain valuable for underlying key trends across cultures, Dumézil dedicated little space to deeper discussions of alternative forms of divination such as astrology, household religion and votive offerings. This is a valuable consideration for showing the importance of institutions in Rome. However, Dumézil's influence potentially led to an overemphasis on the civic aspects of religion to the detriment of alternative views that may deepen our understanding of the ancient world. I argue this is the case as his approaches have remained influential among those who advocate for

[35] Dubuisson (1993) 32-33; 35-36. Littleton also briefly discusses Durkheim's influence on Dumézil (1999) 560-561.
[36] See Momigliano (1984c) 316. Dumézil constantly reinforces a "warlike" perception of Mars (1970a) 376, 390, 392. These are a small selection of references. For Ceres as a producer, see (1970a) 374-375.
[37] Beard et al., for example, point out that Mars, while a warrior god, was also associated with agriculture (1998a) 15-16.
[38] Momigliano (1984c) 329

the civic model.[39] Overall, the trend of utilising sociological and anthropological approaches that commenced with Fowler matured with Dumézil's writings. The increasing focus on "civic" aspects of religion was cemented at this time, with less emphasis on individuals. This partly resulted from a desire to analyse core deities and events such as state festivals, which underpinned much of the day-to-day lives of ancient Romans, expressed through institutions guided by the Senate and Priesthoods.

This trend continued into the second half of the twentieth century. In *Divus Julius,* for instance, published in 1971, Weinstock states:

> Nevertheless, it is not correct to speak of a contrast between personal religion and the religion of the state… The gods of the state cared for the needs of the individual, and he was bound to them by ritual acts from birth to death.[40]

This echoes much of the previous body of scholarship above. Weinstock saw the individual as a religious actor, but through the lens of civic religion. In a Durkheimian sense, the state provides the religious framework for these individuals. For example, he argued that temples in Rome originated in individual choice, but it was a "civic duty generally accepted by the Romans."[41] However, Weinstock notably differs from earlier scholars by focussing on one individual and his divine honours rather than a broader "state religion". While exploring a "personal" aspect of religion was not Weinstock's central theme, he introduces some discussion of this when discussing Caesar's statue on the Capitol, arguing that some imagery he used was a response to Pompeian propaganda.[42] This signalled an early shift away from discussing just state rituals and gods as in earlier scholarship.

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[39] See Scheid (2015a) 6-7 (particularly page 7). Scheid views Dumézil's approaches as useful but agrees with me that there are distortions. Champion (2017) also engages with Dumézil throughout his study.
[40] Weinstock (1971) 1. It should be noted, however, that there are major errors in Weinstock's work, such as when Caesar was designated the flaminate, that limit its utility: Sumner (1974); Alföldi (1975). Nevertheless, the underlying ideas remain useful.
[41] Weinstock (1971) 80.
[42] Weinstock characterises the dedication through the lens of the Senate honouring Caesar. This is reasonable as Dio informs us it was voted by the Senate (1971) 40-43. However, a potential association with Quirinus, highlighted by Koortbojjian, suggests that personal implications and motivations can be drawn out further (2013) 84.

At a similar time, Goar focussed specifically on Cicero, providing similar, although more forceful, arguments about the influence of civic religion, saying "More than ever before [during the late Republic] Roman religion was mere ritual conducted by men chiefly concerned with their social status as priests, or with the political uses of religion."[43] He further states,

> And yet, it is difficult to see how Roman religion could have been other than authoritarian and legalistic. For, for very early times, it was in the hands of men who were not only pontiffs but magistrates and senators as well... [44]

Goar does not cite Durkheim, but the presentation of religion as a state function aimed at achieving social cohesion seems similar to his ideas. Published only a year after *Divus Julius*, this further indicates the entrenching of civic approaches, with Goar repeating some perceptions presented in Burriss et al. that religion declined and was perceived sceptically. Both Weinstock and Goar also represent a tightening of focus in scholarship on particular bodies of evidence and periods compared to early twentieth-century scholars. While Cumont and Cramer produced studies of astrology specifically, these retained broad chronological parameters.[45] In summary, initial scholarship focussed on both the civic and individual, often viewing the "state religion" cynically as a political tool. These ideas developed throughout the twentieth century, as scholars engaged with anthropology and sociology. The structuralist school of thought, in combination with the application of sociological principles, identifiable in Dumézil, came to dominate. British and German scholars did not engage with this to the same extent initially, although I identified in the introduction how sociological discourse ultimately impacted various scholars, including Beard, North and Price. The next section continues to examine the continuing development of these trends.

[43] Goar (1972) 31.
[44] Goar (1972) 15.
[45] Cumont (1912), Cramer (1954).

Later Scholarship: Solidification of the Civic Model and Alternatives

The 1970s were a watershed decade in the study of ancient religions, with tighter focus within major studies, analysing specific cults and individuals such as the Bacchanalia and Caesar. The civic model became entrenched. For instance, Walter Burkert produced *Greek Religion* where he gave religious practices a key social role, binding together other aspects of life, including commerce, administration and the courts, which he perceived was an aspect of Plato's *Laws*. This helped enshrine the "polis model" as the dominant interpretation of religion.[46] Notably, Burkert's arguments highlight the growing dominance of French sociological thought at this time, which he, albeit briefly, refers to in his introduction. Burkert also provides varied views on the place of the individual. On the one hand, he stated that, "The formation of the rising generation appears almost the principal function of religion", while saying of initiations into the cult at Eleusis, "The initiation, *myesis,* was an act of individual choice."[47] While not deeply engaging with Durkheim's arguments, there is acceptance that the central focus of religion is on society and social cohesion. The discussion of individual choice is not substantially expanded but remains a notable inclusion.[48]

A further trend during the 1970s was a focus on "change" within Roman religion. This has implications when discussing "foreign" religions, but also impacts the interpretation of the civic model. John North argued that "conservatism" was an underlying characteristic of religious practices as the Senate desired a continuation of tradition. He discusses a "state cult" and focusses on "public life", suggesting that he accepted aspects of Durkheim's ideas.[49] However, he suggested that the state failed to

[46] Kindt discusses the development of the polis model in the 1960s and 1970s, perceiving Burkert and the "Paris school" as key motivators (2012) 3-4. For Burkert's comments that I refer to above, see Burkert (1985) 332-337. The work was originally published in 1977, although I am using the 1985 English edition.
[47] Burkert (1985) 260 and 285, respectively. While a work focussing on Greek religion, this remains relevant given Burkert's influence: Kearns (1987).
[48] Burkert is interpreted in different ways. Kearns sees Burkert as accommodating the individual in his interpretation, including in his understanding of philosophy as applied to religion (1987) 217. However, Kindt argues that, overall, "personal religion" is neglected (2015) 35.
[49] See North (1976) page 1 for North's discussion of tradition, conservatism and use of the phrase "state cult". The influence of the French school of thought is also suggested by his engagement with Dumézil from pages 3-4.

provide individuals with what they desired from a connection to the gods, citing the Bacchanalia as an example of an alternative practice.[50] While North placed greater weight on civic religion at this stage, it does not seem as substantial as it would become in his later arguments. A similar focus on change came from John Liebeschuetz in 1979. He referred to Dumézil, Durkheim and notably Weber again suggesting that sociological thought was becoming deeply embedded in how ancient religion is understood. While accepting the social role of religion, he questioned Livy and Polybius' discussions, calling them simplified, pushing back to an extent by emphasising individual emotions.[51] Consequently, he held similar views to North, who placed greater emphasis on civic aspects while having a limited discussion of the individual. Champion, a later American scholar, shows the influence of Liebeschuetz's ideas and non-Durkheimian ideas on recent scholarship in *The Peace of the Gods* (2017). He argued against "elite-instrumentalism" (control of the masses), which he perceived was part of the civic model concept, agreeing with Liebeschuetz that Polybius' account of Roman Religion is problematic.[52] Consequently, he placed greater focus on the individual throughout his work, desiring to move away from the civic model.[53]

Champion's arguments may represent the culmination of a split in scholarship that occurred in the 1970s, as North's later arguments moved closer to supporting the civic model more fully. While also arguing that overt coercion was not needed to maintain religion, North contrasted his earlier statements by saying that individuals were unable to make religious choices.[54] He continues to present similar ideas against individual identity, discussed below.[55] The American scholar Bruce MacBain, writing an

[50] North (1976). See page 10 for his discussion of individual needs.
[51] Liebeschuetz (1979) 4-7.
[52] Compare Champion (2017) 9-10 with Liebeschuetz (ibid.) regarding their similar views of Polybius. For a comparison of views about fears, see Liebeschuetz (1979) 10. See page 180 of Champion for his connection between Polybius and civic religion. For Champion's view on civic religion generally, see page 5, although he uses the term "polis religion."
[53] See Champion (2017) 5-6 for his views on civic religion and the individual. While he does not completely align with Rüpke's LAR project, he fundamentally agrees with refocussing perspectives onto the individual. However, see page 180 for his tacit acceptance of the civic model.
[54] North (1979) 85. See Champion (2017) pages xviii and xx for his views regarding agency.
[55] This includes in *The Religions of Rome* (1998) and his contribution to the edited volume *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean* (2013).

exploration of prodigies in 1982, summarised modern scholarship up to this point, saying:

> Roman historians have tended to focus either on those occasions in the later Republic when prodigy reports, like the other apparatus of the state religion were manipulated cynically in the interests of party politics; or else they have seen in them evidence simply of the superstitious hysteria of the Roman masses... No one will deny some measure of truth to both of these observations. But nether point of view – the cynical or the hysterical – can carry us very far toward an understanding of how the prodigy phenomenon functioned as an important collective experience.[56]

MacBain still sees religion as a socially binding experience, and there is little focus on the individual. This likely resulted from the solidification of the civic model and the impact of French sociology, although the recognition that religion was not just a political tool was also an important development. Possibly, scholars sought alternative interpretations at this time but were unable to push strong arguments. North presents differing ideas suggesting that, by the late second century, there was a "market for new religious experiences".[57] This is despite his assertion that there was little choice, perhaps indicating he still accommodated some personal expression. A "market" could only develop if there was a body of people able and willing to select aspects from it. Whatever the case, MacBain and North show the germination of ideas that led to new interpretations, such as Bendlin's market model, emphasising the importance of the scholarly trends developing in the 1970s, which recognised "change" and a plurality of cults. Bendlin does not cite North's article, but the similarity in their language suggests some influence.

Similar trends continued into the next decade. While Momigliano did not directly discuss the civic model, it was an underlying principle of his arguments. He viewed Varro's works as emphasising a particularly civic religion, not challenging if other

[56] MacBain (1982) 7.
[57] North (1979) 98.

processes occurred, while generally focussing on collective action in religion without a personal connection to the gods.[58] However, he likewise referred to Varro as a "freethinker" regarding his style, indicating that he also perceived some role for individual thought and approaches without pushing this further.[59] I understand "freethinker" to imply that Momigliano understood that there was a level of personal freedom in how subjects were approached. Beard and Schofield developed these themes when discussing Cicero and his religious trilogy of dialogues. Beard cautions against assuming that a Ciceronian viewpoint can be perceived, as his arguments differed between dialogues, while Schofield suggested that Cicero presented the sceptical arguments in *De Divinatione* to give the school more weight.[60] Both arguments consequently indicate a growing acceptance that individuals could discuss religious theory. Schofield particularly seems to echo Momigliano when he states: "But every people has its religion, and in societies not purely traditional there are few intelligent individuals who have not thought and formed views about religious questions."[61] Analysis of approaches to religious theory may, therefore, have allowed scholars in the 1970s and 1980s a methodology for exploring an individual dimension of religious practice. Each written work was produced by one person, giving their particular view, whether it was deeply influenced by the civic system or not.

These developments did not shift the hegemony of the civic model, which remained influential over British scholars. For instance, in *Pagan Priests,* an edited volume published in 1990, Richard Gordon specifically explores what he terms the "civic compromise".[62] However, Brennan criticised the presented approaches, in part for suggesting that priests (notably the Pontiffs) lacked authority when mediating issues between gods and humans.[63] Beard notes that the Senate was not the only "mediator",

[58] For Momigliano's views on Varro: (1984b) 202-203. For the idea of collective responsibility: (1984a) 888.
[59] Momigliano (1984b) 204.
[60] Schofield (1986); Beard (1986) 35. Green provides a useful summary of both scholars' views, seeming to perceive both studies as an important turning point in how Cicero's thoughts about religion have been understood (2014) 78-80.
[61] Schofield (1986) 49.
[62] Gordon (1990b).
[63] For a general overview of the work, see Hickson (1992) 447. For criticisms, see Brennan (1991), who points out that the advice of priests was often implemented without a *senatus consultum.* Brennan is

although she places greater emphasis on senatorial control than any other group.[64] The de-emphasis of the individual in favour of the binding power of institutions is indicated when Beard states:

> In practical terms, from the point of view of the individual Roman, the *pontifices* must have seemed strikingly powerful; for it was they who determined men's day-to-day religious conduct and controlled areas of importance to the individual such as burial and the religion of the family.[65]

This is unsurprising given that the volume resulted from a seminar series entitled "Priests and Power". However, as Scheid points out, this only provides a narrow view, which, while valid, obscures other aspects of religious life.[66] While the pontiffs fulfilled the roles Beard describes, this is not representative of the totality of the religious experience in Rome. King points out that, while the *pontifices* played an important role in regulating burial rites, they did not regulate the underlying beliefs of the people performing them.[67] Consequently, there is scope to shift focus away from elite individuals and civic practices. Furthermore, other forms of divination or the plurality of cults outside the authority of the pontiffs are not discussed, for instance. The above quotation highlights that "control" and social cohesion remained a central focus at this time, although this was no longer the sole focus of scholars, as North and Beard explored individual and non-civic religion previously.

Focus on civic religion continued in the *Religions of Rome*, discussed in the introduction, which remains influential.[68] Beard, North and Price explored religious practice chronologically, utilising several case studies and material evidence to discuss

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generally critical of this approach. Van Haeperen, a French scholar writing at a similar time, continued to highlight the public importance of the Pontiffs, studying them as an entity beyond the Senate, although mentions that Beard, amongst others, had highlighted the diversity in priesthoods at Rome (2002) 6-7.

[64] Compare Beard (1990) 31 to 34; North (1990a) 52.

[65] Beard (1990) 39.

[66] See Scheid (2015a) 45. I explore this view in the introduction.

[67] King (2020) 81-83. For the role of priests in regulating funerary rites, see also Santangelo, who interestingly notes that Cicero's discussion of priests in Book Two of *De Legibus* highlights how individuals affected official policy regarding funerary processes (2013b) 753-754. This is an example of how we can begin to look deeper into broader generalisations about how religion operated.

[68] For this impact, see King (2000). The *Religions of Rome* is often referred to as a key text. For an example ,see Orlin (2007).

themes such as what was deemed "acceptable" and how this was patrolled. Many arguments appear similar to *Pagan Priests*, as the focus remained on the political/civic aspects of religion. The authors are sceptical of the role that "personal belief" played: "Even the idea of 'personal belief' (to us, a self-evident part of religious experience) provides a strikingly *in*appropriate model for understanding the religious experience of early Rome."[69] This is interrelated with the authors' perception that Roman religion was institution-based with a focus on the performance of rites. Consequently, gods that were not worshipped in temples or domestic religion were not treated substantially.[70] Nevertheless, there is some focus on what I define as "non-civic". Astrology was described as a form of religious knowledge belonging to "experts" outside of priestly groups, although the discussion focussed on astrology's political and (lack of) social impacts rather than how individuals could more personally engage a diviner.[71] This focus on the political aspects of religious practice was also presented in North's summary volume on Roman religion, produced at a similar time.[72] These monographs show that for British scholars, Durkheim and Dumézil had a significant impact, although Beard et al. point out issues in their approaches.[73]

Another introductory volume produced by John Scheid in 2003 stated that civic religion aimed to establish relations with the gods founded on reason. Despite this, he also stated that, "the elite also played upon the irrational fears of the common people, so as more easily to bend them to its will."[74] He does not push this too far, also suggesting that fear was felt by *all* (presumably meaning members of the elite), but generally argued for religious authorities as "controllers" in a more rigid sense than some scholars before and after.[75] This seems to be a fundamental aspect of his understanding of the civic model, referenced throughout. For example: "In short, the example of divination in all its

[69] Beard et al. (1998a) x.
[70] King (2000).
[71] Beard et al. (1998a) 161.
[72] North (2000). See pages 26-27, for instance.
[73] See my discussion of Dumézil, above, for these criticisms.
[74] See Scheid (2003) 152. See pages 21-22 for Scheid's views on the civic model and fear.
[75] Liebeschuetz's (1979) comments on the emotional aspects of religion discussed above provide an interesting comparison, for example. Champion (2017) more forcefully suggests that members of the elite felt a genuine fear when arguing against elite-instrumentalism (2017) 20.

forms shows that, notwithstanding their superiority in the city of Rome the gods were under the control of the magistrates."[76] Scheid therefore gives the state substantial authority over the religious lives of individuals, believing they provided a rational framework to mitigate fear. He also seems to limit much ritual activity to men, implying other groups, including women, were not able to perform rites to the same extent. This view has now been substantially criticised by scholars, such as Schultz, due to sources that refer to female sacrifices, for example.[77]

This "control" is not total, however. Similarly to Beard et al. Scheid also provided some limited discussion of "private" divination, saying that astrology and *haruspicy* were used intensely through "forbidden means", although it is unclear what he meant by this.[78] Scheid and Beard et al.'s work suggested that more personal forms of divination developed as an area of scholarly interest at this time. Pauline Ripat continued this, stating, "purported divine responses to anxious individuals virtually formed the white background noise of the city".[79] This highlights an increased focus on religious authority outside the major priesthoods. Discussing private cults, Scheid also states "the priests were, in any case, far too restricted in numbers to control anything other than the great public acts of the Roman state," perhaps suggesting he understood that "more private" rites were accessible to individuals.[80] While civic institutions were still privileged, the early twenty-first century saw some attempts to discuss other aspects of practice. The individual was largely not a topic of interest. However, the increasing fragmentation of specialised topics, in contrast to Wissowa and Fowler's wide overarching studies, and the diversity of evidence utilised by scholars, laid the groundwork for new ideas and interpretations to be presented.

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[76] Scheid (2003) 150.
[77] See particularly Schultz (2006) 134. DiLuzio follows this argument (2016) 2. For a softer criticism, see Staples, who agrees with Scheid that only men had "religious power" but still sees women as playing a key role in various cults (1998) 4-5; 7.
[78] Scheid (2003) 124-126.
[79] Ripat (2006) 156. Grotanelli (2005) and Klingshirn's (2019) studies of sortilege suggest a developing interest in divination beyond civic institutions. This contrasts with earlier scholars such as MacBain, who principally focussed on the political uses of diviners such as the *haruspices* (1982).
[80] Scheid (2003) 131.

At a similar time, Andreas Bendlin argued that civic religion should be replaced with a "market model". I discussed how this challenged Durkheimian sociology in the previous chapter. Rather than a state monopoly over religious ideas, Bendlin perceived "small religio-economic entities semi-detached from, rather than conceptually embedded in, the civic system", and that "there existed a market of customers and a range of cults and temples to serve that market."[81] This is a more forceful move towards an alternative to the civic model. Interestingly, Bendlin's suggestion that these "entities" were semi-detached implies he perceived that civic religion retained some influence and did not seek a complete replacement. Bendlin also states, "the *a priori* exclusion of the category of private religious belief, of personal commitment, individual morality or spirituality is, as I have argued above, equally unwarranted."[82] This, therefore, appears to be an attempt to deliberately discuss ideas that were not the emphasis of structuralist works. This may have resulted from the influence of the German sociologists, choosing to focus on them rather than Durkheim, although this is somewhat speculative, as Bendlin does not cite Simmel or Weber.

Bendlin's discussion of the influence of individualisation on Wissowa also indicates an attempt to re-engage with earlier German scholars, reinterpreting them for a modern audience.[83] There are similarities to Rüpke's later arguments that civic religion was unable to accommodate diverse religious experiences, such as the use of private divination or votive religion. To me, this means the religious landscape of Republican Rome, from at least the first century, but likely earlier, is too complex for explanation through the civic model alone.[84] While Bendlin states, "This is not to deny that under certain circumstances the Roman Senate demanded collective worship,"[85] it is unclear how he thought the market model integrated into the civic system. For instance, did the

[81] Both quotations taken are from Bendlin (2000) 134. Bendlin provided a deeper overview of his ideas in his 1998 thesis. For instance, see Bendlin (1998) 104; 118.
[82] Bendlin (2000) 131. These ideas have been taken up by scholars such as Santangelo, who agrees that we need to look beyond civic religion (2013a).
[83] Modern scholars often cite Wissowa. For instance: Kragelund (2001) 64-65 n. 35; Scheid (2003) 7-8. However, Bendlin's engagement with Wissowa is deeper and presented throughout the article, although for the influence of individualisation specifically see (2000) 118.
[84] Compare Rüpke (2013b) 6 to Bendlin (2000) 14-125. See below for more on Rüpke.
[85] Bendlin (2000) 125-126.

Senate participate in this market? Did collective worship form part of, or exist beyond, it? Nevertheless, Bendlin's arguments were an important step in highlighting alternative ways that scholars could understand religious life in Rome through approaches that did not privilege one group of state-mandated religious rites.

From this point, the individual and alternative forms of religion have been more substantially explored, although the civic model has never fallen completely out of fashion. Rüpke's edited volume *The Individual in the Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean*[86] highlights this shift.[87] The structure of the work is thematic, concerning the fourth century BC to the late empire. Many authors referred to the multicultural characteristics of religion, such as the integration of Phoenician religion into Greece and Rome, perhaps echoing Bendlin's ideas of a marketplace. However, it seems that there is little agreement between the different contributors, making an overall argument throughout the volume difficult to discern. Thomassen points out that Woolf seems to undermine the volume as a whole when he says, "If, as now seems most likely, there were (properly speaking) neither individuals nor religions in Roman antiquity, our explanations will need to be recast."[88] This seems to contrast with his earlier statement that "Ritual action has always been about individuals."[89] North also only tentatively accepted the greater emphasis on individuals.[90] Therefore, civic religion remained more prominent despite these new trends. Nevertheless, the contributions of authors such as North and Gordon indicate a move away from placing civic religion in a privileged position with no further discussion. At a similar time, Bodel and Olyan edited *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity.*[91] While this does not focus on Rome specifically, the work goes some way to redress the balance that was lacking in earlier

[86] Rüpke (2013) 4; 6.
[87] Further examples of explicit moves beyond civic religion in German scholarship are provided by Auffarth, who reviews a number of more recent works, highlighting plurality as a key theme while mitigating the influence of civic religion (2007).
[88] Woolf (2013) 155; Thomassen (2015) 207.
[89] Woolf (2013) 136.
[90] North (2013) 79.
[91] Bodel and Olyan (ed.) (2008). Familial aspects of religion had been studied earlier: Samter (I refer to a 2018 reprint of this work from 1901). Therefore, Bodel and Olyan's work represents a refocussing on different aspects of religion.

monographs, again suggesting a developing interest in exploring different aspects of the ancient religious world.

Other scholars, such as Scheid, were less willing to push these arguments about the individual further. The 2007 volume, *A Companion to Roman Religion*, showcases this. Various views are presented thematically, although two introductory essays set the tone, defining religion in terms of social groupings, while acknowledging that there were choices in selecting these groups.[92] Notably, one of the thematic groups focusses on identity, marking a shift towards deeper discussions of how religion could impact an individual. John Scheid continued to argue in favour of the civic model in later works, although, possibly in response to Rüpke and Bendlin, he has introduced some discussions of the individual, summarising:

> The challenge that they [English and German researchers] pose to the model of polis- religion is that, according to them, it does not take account of the religion of the individual, of religiosity viewed as a universal phenomenon, everywhere and always identical and present.[93]

Scheid consequently attempted to reconfigure preconceptions of the civic model. For instance, he stated that individuals in polytheistic contexts established relations with divinities that were important to them.[94] He continued to argue that practices can only be perceived as a collective activity: "For Roman authors, every relationship with the gods occurs in an institutional framework" and "What the critics of civic religion forget completely… is that the entire population of the Roman world was organised into communities".[95] A fundamental issue with Scheid's approach is the failure to account for astrology or votive religion, a subject that Rüpke argues is hidden by focussing on civic religion alone. While understandable to an extent, as Scheid focussed on

[92] Tanaseanu-Döbler (2009). This seems reminiscent of Simmel's ideas discussed in the introduction.
[93] Scheid (2015a) 1.
[94] Scheid (2015a) 63. This is also relevant to my discussion of Votive offerings, in which people make personal choices while operating within civic religion. See my discussion of Hughes' view below. See also Flemming (2016) 120.
[95] Scheid (2015a) 52 and 138, respectively. Beard et al. match Scheid's argument referring to "religious communities" (1998a) x. Scheid also discounts the possibility of an "emotional belief" in the final chapter. This has begun to shift slightly. See my discussion of Mackey in the introduction.

revitalising his previous arguments, this would be strengthened by a fuller engagement with other evidence. I believe that more integrated approaches should be taken to acknowledge the diverse ancient religious world. Durdin suggests that Scheid's criticism of "pro-individual scholars" goes too far in attributing to them a reliance on Christian ideas, resulting in unconvincing interpretations.[96] Nonetheless, he highlights the continuing utility of the civic model, which can now be matched with a discussion of individuals in a more nuanced way. Many practices and events Scheid cited had key social dimensions, such as his analysis of Varro and Cicero, who discuss practices based in institutions, and which I discuss throughout this thesis.

Rüpke continued to see the individual as highly important, emphasising their role more fully, while additionally continuing to highlight the role of traditional institutions.[97] For example, he states that the choices made by religious actors responsible for dedicating statuettes of gods in a "private" space in the forum of fourth-century AD Corinth were influenced by the roles commonly ascribed to these deities.[98] This initially seems similar to Scheid's discussions of collective activity, implying that individuals derived their religious thoughts from their interactions with the wider community, indicating he does not completely discount a civic influence. However, he then discusses how the differing materials and provenance of the artefacts indicate that these individuals were acting autonomously. Individuals could, therefore, participate in religion without necessarily needing to engage in the difficult concept of an emotional belief. Instead, simple fundamental choices existed at different stages of each religious process that necessitated individual engagement. To dedicate a statue, an individual *must* select one

[96] See Durdin (2017) 95 for a summary of some of these issues.
[97] Rüpke, for instance, states that Durkheim's interpretations "can explain a lot" (2018) 5-6. Lundgreen, another German scholar, discusses the civic aspects of Rome, including how individuals interact with the state (2014, ed.). For a summary of the arguments presented, see Nebelin (2016).
[98] Rüpke (2018) 219-221. This train of thought can also be applied to votive offerings. Hughes discusses the significance of the specific "choices" made in determining what was dedicated (2017) 47. Civic religion still impacts this process as "regional conventions" affect this choice (2017) 40. I interpret this to mean that societies and institutions continued to exert pressure.

from many options. Scheid criticises this, connecting the concept of individuality to a Christianising view that is anachronistically applied to the ancient world.[99]

Rüpke also discusses non-civic practices such as astrology, although the broad chronological approach, starting with a chapter on "A history of Mediterranean Religion", prevents deeper inspection of specific practices. The same is true of the votive offerings that Rüpke briefly describes. The density of his writing makes the overarching arguments hard to interpret.[100] This is understandable as a renewed focus on individuals required a broad application to Roman religion in a similar style to the *Religions of Rome* before deeper inspections. The Lived Ancient Religion (LAR) project, headed by Rüpke from 2012 to 2017, has also been influential in challenging the dominance of civic religion, producing twenty monographs going some way to redressing the individual/civic balance.[101] The focus on "lived religion," which emphasises action and experience, has enabled Rüpke to highlight specific religious agents who, in turn, influence institutions. This provides a methodology for understanding how individuals influenced change in religion, moving the discussion away from a narrowly civic view, a directly stated aim of those involved in the project. Instead, focus is moved onto what the authors associated with the LAR project call "sub-categories", such as mystery cults, that they perceive as often being excluded from study.[102] Therefore, Rüpke takes a more holistic approach to Roman religion, viewing it as an amalgam of practices that extend beyond civic religion, many of which he considers underprivileged in scholarship. He argues that approaching religion through the lens of individual action is a way to rectify this.

[99] For instance, see Scheid (2015a) 16-18, although Scheid makes a point of mentioning this outlook throughout his book.
[100] This is a point made by Hunt (2019). Szabó (2020) seems to reinforce this, saying "Jörg Rüpke's monumental book is way too big for most of us."
[101] See Szabó (2024) 382-383.
[102] See Jacobs for Rüpke's views on how religious agents influence institutions and ability to make choices (2017). Albrecht, et al., involved in the LAR project, discuss how moving away from civic religion to discuss other aspects is one of their central aims (2018) 569.

Driediger-Murphy presents complementary arguments. In the previous chapter, I discussed my understanding that she reacted against Durkheimian sociology. Her overall aim is to move away from discussing civic religion as a force for "control". She argues that many scholars incorrectly view augural signs as aiding the Senate in enforcing its authority, suggesting this represents an "alignment model", whereby members of the elite gained the signs that they wanted from the gods.[103] Instead, Driediger-Murphy suggests that augury also constrained senators, as they had to obey religious rules.[104] She agrees with Rüpke that civic religion remained important, but that this should be supplemented with deeper discussions of individuals.[105] Her approach somewhat overplays the tendency of modern scholars to view members of the elite as cynical manipulators.[106] Nevertheless, Driediger-Murphy's discussion of individuals throughout indicates the ongoing trend of focussing less on civic religion. For instance, she states that there was an increasing focus on individuals within the religious system.[107] I utilise these ideas but engage the civic model more fully.

The Development of "Foreignness"

As I explore perceived "foreignness", it is necessary to analyse the development of how scholars have understood what this means in a Roman context. In the introduction, I outlined how "foreignness" was a spectrum. In contrast, early scholarship viewed a "core" of "true" Roman religion that was impacted by "oriental cults". Mommsen suggested this "traditional core" while noting, "Its [Rome's] national character was not infringed by the fact that, from the earlier times, modes and systems of worship were introduced from abroad." He also suggested that there was an early "pervasion" of oriental ideas.[108] Fowler's views were similar. He stated that "Roman" practices were

[103] Thus, divine signs "align" with the will of the Senate or representative of the Senate, hence the "alignment model."
[104] Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 161; 166; 188. See page 185 for a specific example.
[105] Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 18 n. 69.
[106] See Berthelet for these criticisms of Driediger-Murphy's approach (2020). The idea that Roman religion was a tool for cynical manipulation is long discounted. For Scheid on "control", see (2015a) 127. The idea of cynical "control" is outdated in the sense of manipulation, but it is still possible to discuss how the religious system could be abused by members of the elite for their own benefit: Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 166-167.
[107] Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 46-47 n.175.
[108] Mommsen (1862) 186-188.

discovered to be insufficient, leading to the "engrafting on the State religion of Rome of an ever-increasing number of foreign rites and deities."[109] A "traditional" core, therefore, existed in his view. Like Mommsen, he suggested that "foreign" religions had an early impact, arguing that the Capitoline triad displayed Etruscan influences, notably in the style of the temple.[110] Interestingly, Mommsen seems closer to modern arguments, as the quotation can be interpreted as meaning that "foreign" cults could be made "Roman" rather than being a category additional to state religion, as Fowler suggests. Wissowa's approach differed from Fowler's, arguing that many "foreign" religions attempted to avoid state supervision.[111] His focus on individualism, in addition to his presentation of practices outside civic religion, indicates an almost proto-idea of a market model, although this is not pushed further. [112] The primary issue of earlier scholars is the perception that Roman religion was in decline, caused by the presence of "foreign" rites, eventually culminating in Christianity.[113]

Cumont analysed "oriental" religions as an independent topic. He created a binary, comparing a perceived austere, civic-oriented, Roman religion with "oriental mysteries" that contained personal obligations.[114] Consequently, Cumont presented Roman religion as a civic creation with the individual existing in direct opposition to it:

> If it is true that every conversion involves a psychological crisis, a transformation of the intimate personality of the individual, this is especially true of the propagation of the Oriental religions. Born outside of the narrow limits of the Roman city, they grew up frequently in hostility to it, and were international, consequently individual.[115]

This is similar to Wissowa's arguments, although his description suggests that the Senate wished to "police" religion, whereas Cumont indicated a direct conflict between

[109] Fowler (1911) 223.
[110] Fowler (1911) 237-238.
[111] Wissowa (1912) 64.
[112] See my discussion of Bendlin above. I am not suggesting that Wissowa was advocating for a market model personally, but it is possible to see how these ideas developed in strands of scholarship.
[113] A typical example is Burriss (1926) 526 cf. Fowler and Mommsen.
[114] Cumont (1911) xxii.
[115] Cumont (1911) 27.

the individual and the state. Overall, Wissowa's argument is more logical as religious authorities introduced "foreign" practices and cults, although there is no substantial difference between the two arguments. A benefit of Cumont's approach is to show the plurality of cults that came to Rome through contact with other cultures. This contrasts with Fowler and Wissowa's arguments, which placed greater emphasis on what was "Roman", although they discussed some "foreign" rites. Cumont's chapter dedicated to astrology and magic also emphasises an early interest in what I term "non-civic" religion. Therefore, while the notion of choice was not Cumont's specific focus, his discussions of various cults emphasised the plurality of options that were available in Rome.

These views softened in the later twentieth century, as a deeper understanding of the interconnected nature of Mediterranean cultures developed alongside the view that there was no "true core" of Roman religion. North recognised that outside influences were accepted, arguing that Livy's presentation of the Bacchanalia as a new rite with shallow impact is likely inaccurate.[116] Simultaneously, in challenging ideas of decline, there was a push to remove the perception that "foreign" cults catered for emotional needs. Beard and Crawford succinctly argued that this is anachronistic, replacing this model with the concept of public religion.[117] Despite the focus on state-mandated communal rituals, the authors simultaneously emphasised the importance of "non-civic" cults that came to Rome through contact with other cultures when discussing the Bacchanalia:

> New kinds of religious choices were being offered to the Romans. The state cult would become only one religious option among many.[118]

This implies that an individual made choices outside the civic system. However, Beard and Crawford, in disregarding emotional reasons, provided little discussion of why

[116] North points to evidence that the cult had a long presence in Rome (1979) 86; 95. See also Lomas (2017) and Cornell (1995) for the early openness to other cultures: Ch. 5 n. 11.
[117] Beard and Crawford (1999) 27-30. At a similar time, Rasmussen pointed out the dangers in applying a Christian conception of belief (2000) 18-19.
[118] Beard and Crawford (1999) 38-39.

alternatives, including "foreign" religions, were selected. For instance, this does not explain why individuals selected a specific statuette of a god over another. [119]

Nevertheless, the challenge to earlier viewpoints like Fowler's, which Beard and Crawford suggested was problematic, was important. Specifically, they challenged Fowler's view that religious processes were misused for political gain and that practices should cater for emotional needs.[120] They, therefore, present similar arguments to Scheid's, discussed in the previous section. Beard, alongside John North and Simon Price, developed these ideas further in *The Religions of Rome*. The authors argued that "foreign" practices and priests, such as the "Etruscan" *haruspices*, were simply representations of a "foreign" skill or idea.[121] They recognised that certain practices lay explicitly outside "direct control".[122] Similar ideas are presented by Ripat in her discussion of the importance of omens and divination. She did not discuss "foreignness" substantially, although she highlighted that Livy's complaints about "foreign" practices may relate to concerns that the Senate was not in control of them, rather than any "foreign" connotations.[123] Scholars in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, therefore, developed a more nuanced understanding of what the Romans meant when they employed terms like "foreign".

Eric Orlin developed these ideas further in a 2010 monograph on "foreign" cults, suggesting that contact with outside cultures caused conceptual issues for Roman social cohesion as what was "other" became incorporated as "Roman". He argued that this was unproblematic in early Rome with a small community. However, the empire became too large for a civic community to be clearly defined.[124] Orlin, therefore,

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[119] See above for this example that is dealt with by Rüpke.
[120] See specifically Beard and Crawford (1999) note five on page 27; also, page 28,
[121] Beard et al (1998a) 20. The extent to which the *haruspices* were perceived as "foreign" forms a debate in Chapter Four, but for more on the priesthood and specifically their differences with "traditional" Roman approaches to divination, see Lengahan (1969) 32-34.
[122] Ibid 87. This matches the discussions about the "non-civic" nature of the Bacchanalia, which I discussed above.
[123] Ripat (2006) 161
[124] Orlin (2010) 5. Gates and Goldman discuss changes that occurred in the late Republic. While not specifically studying "foreignness," he discusses similar ideas, suggesting that expansion caused major

understood early Roman religion as an institution-based phenomenon, with his comments regarding social cohesion echoing Durkheim. He maintained a civic focus, which led to criticism that he did not focus on non-state religion, although he also discusses the Bacchanalia.[125] A civic focus is also presented when he states:

> Rome was still what we might call a traditional city-state, and a Roman lived in or just outside the city of Rome, participated in the civic structures of the Roman state, and fought for Rome in her battles against neighbouring states. In the third century, however, Rome began to outgrow those structures… Rome became home to a variety of practices that blurred the boundaries between Roman and non-Roman.[126]

This explicitly associates the "non-civic" with the "foreign", indicating that a new range of religious options became available. Simultaneously, he agreed with Beard et al.'s conclusion that much of the perceived "foreignness" was a fabrication to demarcate boundaries for what was acceptable in religious practice. I follow this argument to examine what it tells us about senatorial authority. This appears to be a period within which scholars perceived "foreignness" as a useful, albeit problematic, category, wishing to incorporate it into discussions of the civic model. While the above quotations are logical, as the expansion of the empire likely impacted what religious practices were present in Rome, Orlin's focus can be pushed further to analyse the reactions of the broader population and why individuals selected "foreign" and "traditional" rites.

Before analysing recent arguments, it is necessary to discuss astrology. While it forms only one aspect of my argument, it emerged as an independent topic of interest from the early twentieth century. This allows a deeper focus on religious practices that existed beyond civic religion. Early scholars into the mid-twentieth century argued that Greek philosophical arguments promoted astrological ideas. For instance, when discussing the "dissemination" of astrology in the West, Cumont credits the Stoic

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changes to the city in the late Republic, including an increasing variation of architectural styles of temples, partly caused by contact with the Hellenistic world (2024) 404; 398.

[125] Ando (2012).

[126] Orlin (2010) 150. See also Edmonds (2019) 410, who also discusses a "cultural blurring" (2019) 410.

philosopher Posidonius with including astrology in a "coherent explanation of the world" and discusses his influence over Cicero.[127] Republican astrology is not discussed substantially as Cumont moves on to Manilius and the *Astronomica*. Cramer also referred to the relationship between Hellenistic philosophy and astrology, discussing the Roman Republic more fully, although he dedicated more space to the Empire. This approach is not inherently problematic, although Cramer uses his discussion to suggest that Greek theory pushed members of the elite towards scepticism: "The disdain of omens and divination Caesar shared with men like Cicero and Lucretius."[128] There is also little emphasis on the personal uses of astrology or non-elite individuals.

More recently, scholars have shifted focus away from discussing links between astrology and philosophy, although they have generally continued to focus on the imperial period. Tamsyn Barton and Green give a deeper overview of earlier periods, although Barton is tentative of evidence before the Principate.[129] While I accept this view, as references in earlier ancient authors are vague and infrequent, a deeper inspection of what we have may increase understanding of how astrology operated in second to first-century Rome. Barton potentially could not achieve this due to writing a general history of astrology throughout the Mediterranean. Barton also specifically mentioned the "personal" aspects of astrology which will be central to my argument: "Of course, the fact that we hear little of private divination under the Republic does not imply that it never happened, but the fact that the individual has moved centre stage is an important change in itself."[130] Edmonds, writing later, passes over the Republic quickly, saying that astrology rose to prominence in the first century. He does not comment on "personal" aspects of astrology.[131] This potentially resulted from Edmonds'

[127] Cumont (1912) 84-85. See von Stuckrad for an overview of scholarship on astrology, including recent works and the importance of Cumont (2000) 2-3. Bouché-Leclercq, in particular, was an early influential voice that associated astrology with Greece, providing little focus on its perception in Rome (1899) 546-547.
[128] Cramer (1954) 74. Cramer cites Cumont as an influential work, which is likely why he follows a similar pattern in treating Hellenistic philosophers. See page 2.
[129] Green discusses pre-imperial evidence from Cicero and discusses Caesar's comet, although his main focus is much later (2014). For Barton's view on Republican astrology, see (1994a) 38-41.
[130] Barton (1994a) 41.
[131] Edmonds (2019) 241.

focus on "magic" across several cultures, preventing deeper investigations of particular periods and locations. He stated that some forms of astrological divination were magical, suggesting that it was below "normal" authority.[132] Edmonds, therefore, seemingly argues that astrology existed outside civic structures, although much evidence he used related to the elite. Neither Barton nor Edmonds discussed the perceived "foreignness" of astrology in Rome.[133] This is a notable shift from earlier authors, perhaps representing a level of caution in response to the more nuanced understanding of other cultures that had developed by this time.

"Foreignness" has been discussed to a lesser extent in recent works that debate the civic model. Scholars continue to use the concept, while arguing that the Roman elite applied it inconsistently. Scheid highlighted that the priestesses of Ceres, who were perceived as "foreign", were citizens.[134] Regarding astrology and Egyptian cults, Rüpke stated that, "The various actors concerned must have judged communication with foreign gods, more beset with risks though it was, to hold advantages in circumstances of political confrontation."[135] Rüpke, therefore, accepted there were conceptual issues with "foreignness" but does not discuss the extent to which this was genuinely felt further. This may be due to the complex and contradictory perceptions of the Roman elite, which I discuss relating to Magna Mater, initially being accepted but treated suspiciously later. Gruen attempted to solve these conceptual issues by saying, regarding Greek influences:

> Closer study reveals a fundamental consistency and continuity. Roman command of the Greek language and familiarity with Greek conventions and institutions combined with a drive to distinguish Roman from Greek qualities,

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[132] Edmonds (2019) 267-268. Edmonds' general analysis of "magic" is useful as, although I do not examine it specifically in this work, it is often perceived as "non-normative", lying outside of the Durkheimian conception of an accepted civic religion. See Levy (2021). It is important not to see "magic" as in opposition to religion, although it potentially opens a new avenue into discussing the individual: Graham (2021) 179.

[133] Green discusses Cicero's perception of "foreignness", which I will explore more fully in Chapter Four (2014) 81-83,

[134] Scheid (2015a) 66. See also Isayev (2011) 387-388. These ideas are explored more fully in Chapter Three.

[135] Rüpke (2018) 267. Nevertheless, many recent studies do not discuss "foreignness" to a substantial extent. See, for instance, Luke (2014).

> thereby permitting the westerner both to expropriate and to subordinate the Hellenic heritage.[136]

This highlights a paradoxical attitude, discernible in the varying reactions to the application of Greek theory to religious practice in Chapter Five. While "foreignness" was used to indicate dislike, there was a push to bring ideas marked as "Greek" under Roman influence. However, I do not apply Gruen's argument that "Rome was groping towards cultural maturity,"[137] as this assumes that Rome was "underdeveloped" in some way. While I utilise the concept of "foreignness" to a greater extent than some recent scholars, I maintain that it was a construct that allowed the Roman elite to maintain superiority, as it was useful in (re)asserting their authority in religious matters. The application of "foreign" to describe cults that were as Roman as any other, hinted at by Scheid, informs us of elite concerns. I relate this to the civic model to suggest that there was an openness to "foreignness" and genuine interest in allowing the broader community to access new rites as the empire expanded. Simultaneously, defining something as "other" permitted the Senate to mark what it saw as permissible.

Summary and Approaching late Republican religion.

Earlier scholars highlighted the individual as a religious agent while simultaneously emphasising social institutions. Similarly, scholars such as Cumont put forward problematic perceptions of "foreignness", seeing a binary between an austere "Roman" religion, which declined due to an influx of "oriental" religions that catered for individual needs. Authors such as Burriss and Cumont believed that decline was inevitable, culminating with Christianity. Many of these earlier works, such as Wissowa's, had wide chronological parameters. This is not problematic in itself and was potentially necessary to lay the foundations for future research, although this limited deeper analysis into specific topics. This may have aided the developing trend of discussing "state religion" over other aspects due to space limitations and generalisations.

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[136] Gruen (1993) 4-5.
[137] *Ibid* 2.

These views were developed further due to the influence of the sociological discourses outlined in Chapter One. I suggest that two separate schools developed within the scholarship of ancient religions on parallel lines. One emphasised individual relations with the gods while pro-civic authors, influenced by Durkheim, became dominant, focussing more heavily on religion as rooted in society and creating social cohesion. This school of thought is present throughout European scholarship, including John North, John Scheid and Mary Beard, who also cites Mary Douglas as an influence. While the civic model became dominant, the treatment of "foreignness" has become more subtle. An acceptance that Rome always accepted new gods and practices occurred during the twentieth century, leading to questions about the binary developed in earlier works. For instance, Eric Orlin's reference to a "blurring" between the Roman and non-Roman suggests that this did not reflect the reality of the Roman experience of religion. "Foreignness", rather than implying that there was once a "true core" of religion, reflects Roman self-perception. Members of the elite viewed a set of practices as particularly Roman, even if they originated elsewhere in the distant past. I argue that this perception developed in the second and first centuries. The concept of a "decline" in Roman religion, which required revival by Augustus and culminated with Christianity, is now outdated.

While Roman religious practices are well studied, it is undergoing a reappraisal. In recent decades, a focus on individuals has grown in prominence, although not at the expense of civic religion. Bendlin and Rüpke have pushed this view, arguing that civic religion hides the everyday religious practices experienced by people in antiquity. Scheid reacted against this. He argued that those wishing to focus on the individual are reintroducing Christian assumptions regarding personal belief. Mackey disagreed as he argued for a separate non-Christianised understanding of belief that still catered for emotional needs.[138] The contrasting views of these scholars suggest, to an extent, there has been a fragmentation within scholarship since the 2000s. North summarises this,

[138] Mackey (2022) 3-4.

suggesting "it may be long before there is again any kind of consensus."[139] While this seems likely, I aim to provide a methodology for incorporating more recent ideas about the individual into the civic model.

In my view, Scheid's arguments remain convincing, but scholars of the civic model continue to underplay the importance of practices such as votive offerings, divination and personal choice in selecting what gods to worship. I do not follow Scheid's criticism that individuality is anachronistically applied to the ancient world. To dedicate a votive, some individual choice had to occur, likely based on an interest in aesthetic qualities, material qualities and cost. Many of these choices were possible within civic religion. While Bendlin's market model is important in highlighting the plurality of religions that existed in Rome, I do not accept it fully, as he concludes there was a "religious economy", seeing individuals as producers and consumers. This risks hiding the importance of factors beyond the economic, such as personal belief or interests in particular deities. An economic focus may be applicable when discussing votive offerings, and I address some of the questions I raised above by arguing that individuals could select a range of civic practices. I feel that Rüpke more successfully does this, as he incorporated the individual into the civic model. He emphasised that regional and societal norms impacted personal choice.

As I highlighted in the introduction, most conversations about the individual focussed on the imperial period, although I suggest there was also a growing emphasis on individuals during the late Republic.[140] Furthermore, Rüpke's recent study of Roman religion is a general history. These ideas can now be applied to specific periods to generate deeper interpretations of certain trends and practices. As the late Republic is not the usual focus in discussions of individuals, this allows new interpretations that bring together different arguments to suggest societal institutions and individuals interacted, creating a more nuanced picture of how religious practices were

[139] North (2023) 2. See also Szabó, who summarises changes over the last decade, highlighting the impact of the Lived Ancient Religion project and newer focus on individuals (2020).
[140] This disagrees with North (2013) as discussed in the introduction.

experienced. While I argue that the individual needs greater focus, I do not discount Scheid et al.'s ideas.

Consequently, I argue that there was a blurring between the civic and the individual. Weinstock and Scheid perceived that the Senate permitted choice, which I take forward, but add that individuals could choose, simultaneously, to take part in practices outside of senatorial control. The different forms of divination, such as astrology, which were available to the broader community at the same time as "more civic" rites, suggest this. I will suggest that these practices could be relevant, personally, to the individual in question. This opens the scope of the discussion to explore individuals more fully. I also push Scheid's arguments further, discussing political debates and civic divination such as augury in the conflict between Caesar and Bibulus. Nevertheless, I continue to see the civic model as valuable, as societal pressures and institutions provided a framework for religious life. I follow many scholars, including Scheid and Beard & Crawford, in seeing the Senate as the highest religious authority that was able to impose rules on the broader population, but I suggest that there were also centres of religious authority that existed outside of it, such as the personal diviners I discuss in Chapter Four.

Therefore, I employ Brennan's suggestion that authority was diffused, which allows a deeper discussion of individual authority. For instance, in Chapter Three, I discuss the *flaminica cerialis*, who had oversight of the cult of Ceres but was not a senator. These were potentially able to make independent decisions, although I will suggest that they did not attain the high level of authority of the priestly colleges. I also discuss the pontifices. While they were a civic institution, representing senatorial interest, that they judged the matter of Cicero's house rather than the Senate indicates religious authority was more diffused than Beard suggests.[141]

[141] See Lisdorf, who reiterates that the focus of the speech was the *pontifices* (2005) 445. This highlights Brennan's argument that the Senate needed religious authorities to advise it, in contrast to Beard and North's belief that the Senate was all-powerful.

“Foreignness” continues to be used as a useful descriptor for defining certain practices with which members of the elite had conceptual issues. I suggest that each practice, regardless of whether it was “civic” or “non-civic” could afford some personal expression. Furthermore, nominally “foreign” religions may have afforded interesting or new experiences, not available in civic religion, increasing the choices available to individuals. I apply Orlin’s argument that there was a “blurring” between different aspects of religion, when considering practices such as haruspicy and cults such as Ceres that maintained “foreign” characteristics but were treated similarly to any other “traditional” cult. I reinterpret this argument to suggest that there was a spectrum of perceived “foreignness.” Some forms of divination were characterised as “more foreign”, and thus “less acceptable”. While elite individuals still utilised these practices regularly, I suggest they wished to create a perceived core of “acceptable” rites, which is aligns with North’s view that the Senate aimed to be “conservative”.

The treatment of Astrology is an example of these themes. I apply Ripat and Barton’s idea of “personal” divination, while reintroducing evidence from ancient authors who referred to astrologers as Babylonian or Chaldean. I suggest that members of the elite wished to assert authority over forms of divination that they did not control by marking them as “unacceptable” and “foreign”. I also combine this focus on personal divination with Beard et al.’s argument that some practices lay outside “direct control” to further my suggestion that “foreign” or “non-civic” diviners generated religious choices beyond the civic system. Consequently, an underlying principle of my argument is that individuals could select in what rites to participate, regardless of “control”, in many instances. Furthermore, as I examine in Chapter Three, Magna Mater was accepted, although aspects seen as “foreign” in later periods were perceived negatively, thus representing the complex reactions to perceived “otherness”.

While some concerns were potentially genuine, many of these reactions hid a real interest. Despite Cato’s expression of wariness, there was no strong dislike of

philosophy, for instance.[142] However, the definition of what was unacceptable may indicate a desire on the part of religious authorities to reassert themselves in positions of control, where they were able to determine what was *the* "Roman" religion that impacted the wider community. While I follow Champion's view that religion was not manipulated cynically, as I will present evidence that members of the elite truly cared about the community, I also argue that members of the elite wished to maintain positions of religious authority. The expulsion of philosophers and astrologers in the second and first centuries BC is an example of how members of the elite acted to create boundaries over where they held authority, even though these actions were ineffective, as these practices continued to flourish. I attribute this to a genuine perceived need to perform the correct religious rites. Regardless of "belief", this is what the religious system aimed to achieve. Consequently, "foreignness" is a key concept for this thesis. The expansion of the empire allowed individuals from all parts of society to have greater access to the plurality of religions that Bendlin describes. I reject the idea that "foreign" practices allowed a more personalised experience than "public" religion, as this catered for families and individuals as well. However, a degree of individuality could also be expressed through choosing to participate in rites that religious authorities had deemed "foreign" and were thus outside of the civic religion.

In summary, scholars have interpreted the religious practices of the second and first centuries BC in various ways. Cicero and Livy's discussions of particular cults and rites that were also encouraged and employed by the Roman Senate led many, early on, to focus on civic religion. More recently, a growing interest in other bodies of evidence, such as votive offerings, embodied by scholars such as Jessica Hughes and Emma-Jayne Graham, has caused a shift towards looking at potential "more individual" religious practices that are not mentioned in elite sources, although this is not necessarily the central focus of their work.[143] Scholarship, since the 1990s, has further supplemented this reassessment through closer analysis of textual evidence, which

[142] Plut. *Vit. Cat. Mai.* 22.
[143] Hughes (2017), Graham (2021). These authors discuss individuals throughout their work.

often alludes to what I term "non-elite" divination.[144] This includes lists of diviners in Cato and Cicero's works, which place these diviners outside of the civic system. Evidence like this is what potentially adds credence to different understandings of religion, such as Bendlin's market model, which requires substantiation of a wider choice in religion beyond what was deemed acceptable by the Senate. This has encouraged reassessment among modern scholars, which now attempts to encompass a broader range of evidence.

[144] I discuss this in Chapter 4, but for examples of scholarly assessment of "non-elite" divination, see North (1990a), Ripat (2011) and Peralta (2017).

Chapter Three: Senatorial Authority and Choice

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse civic religion to understand how members of the elite reinforced their positions by determining what was acceptable. I suggest that they had oversight over the gods and practices in which the community participated. In Section One, I focus on "traditional" religion, using the debate regarding Cicero's house as a case study. I argue that Cicero and Clodius presented individual arguments but simultaneously had to show respect for religious authorities by aligning with the religious consensus. Individuals had to promote perceived "traditional" gods and practices. Cicero emphasised the role of the Senate and the proper worship of the gods as key aspects of civic religion. The Senate was the ultimate arbiter in deciding who was correct.

In Section Two, I analyse Ceres to suggest that civic authorities introduced perceived "foreign" gods to reassert their authority. The Senate created a sense of "otherness" over which they could express control. The cult became specifically relevant to women, who were given a prominent civic religious role that was still separated from the core of traditional religion. Mystery rites and imagery on coins allowed some personal expression within the civic system. Ultimately, perceived "foreignness" allowed the Senate to create a contrast with "traditional" rites, allowing them to demonstrate they could determine what was acceptable. They chose what elements were important based on the needs of the Roman community at any given time. I use the reaction to the death of Tiberius Gracchus to suggest that nominally "foreign" gods were useful to the Senate in reasserting its authority after destabilising events. In doing so, the Senate marked its ability to make decisions on behalf of the community through utilising and integrating "foreign" elements.

In Section Three, I discuss Magna Mater. The initial reception was positive, as with Ceres, highlighting the ability of the Senate to introduce new gods that benefitted Rome.

However, later authors presented "foreign" aspects negatively, although I follow others, such as Satterfield, in arguing that both the "Roman" and "foreign" elements were part of the civic system.[1] I use this to argue that individuals created independent interpretations that differed from civic norms. Archaeological evidence and the topography of Rome also highlight the Senate's control, as it was able to determine geographical parameters for the cult.

Therefore, I begin to examine how individual action was possible within civic religion, a theme continued in the next chapter. However, it remains necessary to discuss civic religion to examine the pressures that existed on individuals. While I argue in favour of senatorial authority in this chapter, it is not the only way that Roman religious practices and gods should be understood. The overall principle I wish to convey is that civic religion was impacted by choice. Rome, situated in the broader context of the Mediterranean, was affected by the cultures with which it came into contact. New cults came to be officially imported to Rome, leading to changes in civic religion. While the individual retained the agency to select from a range of practices, only the Senate could officially alter civic religion.

I also do not assume that the Senate was a unified body. The Republic was intensely competitive, partially expressed in religious disagreements. However, I argue it is possible to discuss a religious consensus, as the Senate agreed upon "correct" gods and rites that were promoted through speeches, decrees and temple building. Furthermore, I do not see the individual in opposition to the civic religion. I mentioned above how individuals engaged in civic religion on a personal level and that the Senate permitted this. I also suggest the Senate was not just cynically manipulating the civic system but was genuinely trying to meet the needs of the community. As part of this, the Senate created avenues for individuals to explore religion, which I discuss throughout

[1] See pages 117-118.

the chapter, although they retained the prominent position of deciding what was "official" policy.

"Traditional" Civic Authority: Cicero's Speeches as Evidence

De Domo Sua and *De Haruspicum Responoso,* speeches delivered by Cicero against Clodius, provide insight into how civic religion operated and its continuing importance to members of the elite. Cicero delivered *De Domo Sua* in 57 BC to the Pontiffs after his return from exile. Clodius had destroyed Cicero's house, replacing it with a shrine to *Libertas*. Cicero proved that the consecration was invalid, allowing his property to be returned. Throughout, he highlighted a respect for civic religion. *De Haruspicum Responso*, delivered in 56 BC, relates to the same issue. The *haruspices* interpreted a sound emanating from outside the city, stating that it pertained to the profanation of a sacred site. Consequently, Clodius used the prodigy to attack Cicero, arguing that this referred to the shrine of *Libertas*, removed for the rebuilding of Cicero's house. Ultimately, Cicero was successful.[2] I suggest that both men had to express respect for "traditional" priesthoods and senatorial authority to be successful, highlighting how their actions met expected norms. This respect and the need to present a convincing case highlights the control that civic religion held over individuals, binding them to take part in particular "traditional" norms and display civic *pietas*. I do not suggest that individuals participated unwillingly. The respect was genuine. Analysis is made difficult as only Cicero's highly rhetorical viewpoint survives. This itself, however, indicates Cicero's need to show his respect for civic religion. Through this evidence, it is also possible to emphasise the individual to a greater extent. These speeches related to a conflict between two people. We can, therefore, begin to examine how they presented themselves as religious authorities.[3]

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[2] See Beard for a summary (2012a) 20-21. Some of the themes discussed here can also be applied to the Individual Identities chapter, as the focus is on the actions of specific individuals. Seager, for instance, discusses the various ways Clodius is presented negatively throughout Cicero's speeches, including as impious and incestuous (2014). This is a personal attempt by Cicero to undermine another individual. While my focus is on the importance of civic religion, I wish to emphasise how individuals were an integrated part of the system, exploring and debating religion.

[3] The presentation of elite individuals as religious authorities is discussed in Chapter Five in relation to Greek philosophy.

A feature of civic religion was the retention of power among a relatively small group of elite individuals who presided over civic rituals. Evidence suggests that by this time, there were fifteen Pontiffs after Sulla increased their number.[4] Livy also states that there were fifteen *augures,* indicating that access to major religious offices was constrained to relatively few.[5] Furthermore, membership was for life, further restricting access to "official" positions of authority.[6] Cicero shows the respect expected to be shown to these groups at the start of *De Domo Sua,* as he addressed the Pontiffs, saying:

> Surely the importance of the case now before you justifies the belief that to the wisdom and impartiality of your decision the whole prestige of the republic, the well-being of all her citizens, their lives, their liberty, their altars, their hearths, their household gods, their property, their fortunes, and their dwellings, are unreservedly entrusted.[7]

When addressing a major priesthood, Cicero expressed the expectation that the needs of the whole community would be met, reinforcing the importance of a collective set of practices and the areas of life over which they held authority. The reference to the Republic[8] also emphasises the connection between religion and politics, unsurprising, as the *pontifices* were often senators.[9] Cicero was flattering the priests to convince them to agree with him, and the connection between the well-being of the citizenry and his house is exaggerated. Nevertheless, Cicero's interpretation of the Pontiff's role is valid. This is likely how they wished to be perceived and were understood by Cicero's readership.[10] This, in turn, indicates the requirement to reinforce civic religion to win the

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[4] Livy. *Per.* 89.

[5] It is worth noting that individuals tend not to hold more than one priesthood, allowing a diffusion of religious power, until this breaks down under Caesar. There are earlier examples in the Second Punic War of multiple officeholders as well. This is discussed more fully in Chapter Four.

[6] There were alternatives for expressing their knowledge, as suggested in Chapter Five.

[7] *haec profecto tanta est, ut omnis rei publicae dignitas, omnium civium salus, vita, libertas, arae, foci, di penates, bona, fortunae, domicilia vestrae sapientiae, fidei, potestati commissa creditaque esse videantur.* Cic. Dom. 1-2.

[8] *Res publica*

[9] I discussed in the introduction how some priests were not senators but still had elite backgrounds. Szelmer points out that there should be greater emphasis placed on the fact that these priests were also magistrates, which is what made them senators, not the priesthood itself. However, the point that these were individuals with powerful political positions stands (1971) 128 n.34.

[10] Beard et al (1998a) 114-115. Tellegen-Couperus highlights the civic nature of the pontiffs, arguing that they held *iurisdictio* or the supervision of civil litigation until c.200 BC (2006) 31-32; 38-44. Even though

debate and, therefore, its ability to influence members of the elite. Cicero emphasised his commitment to civic religion as there was no alternative. He and Clodius had to conform to the religious norms laid down by the Senate and priestly colleges, as suggested by the wide range of powers that Cicero attests they held. While Cicero's claim that the state is entrusted to the Pontiffs was rhetorical flattery, the priests were reasonably considered a primary authority.

An underlying theme of these debates is the hierarchical nature of the religious system. I suggest a "top-down" structure that maintained authority among senators. The Senate judged the case based on advice from the priesthood, who in turn based their advice on the arguments of individuals. Similar themes are identifiable in Book Two of *De Legibus*, where Cicero provided ideal religious laws. He emphasised the importance of the Pontiffs and the role they had in enforcing laws relating to property and *incestus*.[11] This is borne out in *De Domo Sua*, where the Pontiffs affect the lives of individuals by determining the correct course of action. As religious authority was diffused among many priesthoods, Champion argues that the system is not hierarchical. Instead, he suggests that power was fragmented and follows Beard in suggesting it was not until Augustus that a centre of power could be found.[12] This is reasonable as different priesthoods could be selected for the same purpose. For instance, the same prodigy could be interpreted by the *Quindecemviri* or the *Haruspices*.[13] However, I suggest there was ultimately a loose hierarchy. Festus and Aulus Gellius gave archaic hierarchies of priesthoods, giving the *flamen Dialis* a prominent position, although the Pontifex Maximus was most important in reality.[14] While not reflecting late republican reality, a

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they no longer held this by Cicero's time, they evidently maintained an ability to regulate disagreements that had public importance concerning the relationship with the gods.

[11] Cic. *Leg.* 2.50; 2.22; cf 2.47. *Incestus* can mean incest, but here probably refers to its sense of "unclean" in a ritual/religious sense. Importantly, the gods sat above this hierarchy, as indicated when Cicero says that the gods' ability to punish the disobedient strengthens the power of religion due to fear: Cic. *Leg.* 2.25.

[12] Champion also suggests that this lack of hierarchy may have strengthened civic religion. Without a centre of power, there was less definition of rules and greater flexibility (2017) 44-46. See: Beard (1990) 48.

[13] Berthelet argues that there was a choice between choosing either priesthood (2011) 3.

[14] Festus 198L. Forsythe (2005), 136. For the role of the pontifex Maximus and pontifical hierarchy, specifically see Champion (2017) 38-39.

conception of hierarchy was seemingly built into the Roman understanding of their system. A more contemporary example is the Pontifex Maximus having the power to determine membership in other priesthoods, such as the Vestal Virgins.[15] The Pontiffs seemed to have a high status as the Senate made them judges for this case. Even if the hierarchy is ad hoc, it existed.[16] Fundamentally, the Senate made key decisions that impacted the actions of individuals.

Cicero appears to have presented his independent view of events. Santangelo and Gildenhard argue that Cicero redefined the role of the Pontiffs when he said that they offered a "sage interpretation of religion".[17] The Pontiffs were no longer simply advisors.[18] This was not necessarily an exaggeration, as Roller suggests that the Pontiffs were "empowered" to act as judges, indicating they were truly given an untypical role.[19] However, when recounting events to Atticus, Cicero stated that a Pontiff declared that the priesthood "had been judges of the religious issue", but the Senate was the "judge of the law".[20] This implies that, despite some possible "empowerment" to decide on a religious issue, the Pontiffs ultimately remained an advisory body rather than the final judges. Therefore, Cicero potentially pushed the defined boundaries of the Pontiff's role to an extent. This was a minor change. If the Pontiffs' role was to advise, they would have to interpret the matter to a degree anyway, although Cicero's statement that "It is for you to decide whether [...]"[21] further suggests a more robust redefinition of an advisory body. Cicero's claims may have been a necessity. Clodius also had supporters and, despite Cicero's recall from exile, he was not necessarily in a strong position.[22] In

[15] Gell. *NA.* 1.12.11-14.
[16] This can still agree with Champion's view as an "ad hoc" system is one where power is dispersed and can move. The Senate could shift the hierarchy when needed.
[17] *religiones sapienter interpretando* Cic. *Dom.* 1.
[18] Santangelo argues that the pontifical college was essentially turned into a law court (2013b) 746-747. Gildenhard argues that Cicero was being innovative (2010) 306-315. This further emphasises the importance of politics to civic religion. Traditionally, the Pontiffs advised the Senate once a matter had been referred to them: Orlin (2007) 60-61.
[19] Roller (2018) 234.
[20] *se et collegas suos de religione statuisse, in senatu de lege statu<tur>os cum senatu*. Cic. *Att.* 4.2.4-5.
[21] *Vobis hodierno die constituendum est utrum* Cic. *Dom.* 2.
[22] Claassen argues that Cicero was recalled simply due to the political climate (1992) 31. The recall was not a guarantee. Crawford suggests that Cicero wished to repress a now-lost speech against Clodius in case it alienated his supporters, suggesting his situation was possibly precarious (1994) 233.

response to a genuine threat of losing the case, Cicero was able to present a novel argument about "traditional" norms to increase his chances of success, flattering his audience. His redefinition did not alter the key underlying characteristics that were important to members of the elite. It was still a civic body that made the decision.

Fundamentally, the speech shows the senatorial elite attempting to protect the state through the correct worship of the gods. Cicero had to show how his actions met these criteria. For instance, he characterised the return of his house as pleasing to the gods.[23] His justification was that the destruction of his home also meant the destruction of the home of his household gods, presumably upsetting the *Pax Deorum*.[24] Cicero, therefore, emphasised the importance of correct practices needed to maintain divine favour, thereby keeping the Republic safe.[25] Importantly, members of the elite believed that they were best placed to ensure such divine favour was so maintained. He stated it was excellent that "the worship of the gods and the vital interests of the state should be entrusted to the direction of the same individuals".[26] Volk argues that, despite the obvious flattery directed at the *pontifices*, this was a fundamental element of civic religion.[27] The Senate, advised by the priesthoods, determined what was a religious issue and how it should be resolved. Again, this passage suggests that Cicero needed to align himself with this "traditional" norm. That he and Clodius had to present their arguments represents their need to obey the rulings of civic bodies.

[23] Cic. *Dom.* 147.
[24] Cic. *Dom.* 143.
[25] Volk (2021) 242. Also see Satterfield, who agrees and summarises other scholars (2015) 433-434. The *pax deorum* is often connected to matters of state and, therefore, civic religion. Santangelo (above) also sees Cicero's comments as based on the truth, not just trying to flatter his audience.
[26] *uod eosdem et religionibus deorum immortalium et summae rei publicae praeesse voluerunt* Cic. *Dom.* 1.
[27] Volk (2021) 242. Kenty seems to agree as she points out that Cicero's expression of sympathy with the *pontifices* was "necessary", which I understand to mean that the *pontiffs* were understood to have an essential role and had to be obeyed (2018) 252. Kenty also mentions how Cicero placed pressure on the Pontiffs to come to the correct decision, which I do not think is antithetical to the need to respect the decision. The *pontifices* could decide to side against Cicero regardless of his objections. Ultimately, the highly rhetorical nature of the work, as I discussed above, means that Cicero is a problematic source.

This is borne out by Cicero's claims that Clodius failed to follow correct procedures when referring to state priests: "Did you think that there was no need for any reference to state priests, when by an impious and unheard-of process you were inaugurating a new shrine upon the most renowned spot in the city?"[28] Furthermore, Cicero highlights that the consecration that Clodius performed was invalid, as an ancient law stated that a popular mandate was required.[29] Cicero presented himself as knowledgeable in civic practices in a way that Clodius was deficient. This aligns with Volk's overall argument that individuals benefitted from debating religious norms, but that civic practices remained the basis for their arguments. Cicero, as an augur, potentially introduced these arguments to suggest he could interpret religious processes that would, in his view, align with those of the Pontiffs. Clodius might compete with Cicero's view, as he was also a priest, meaning his arguments would, also, have substantial weight. Cicero combatted this with the claim that Clodius was impious, undermining his civic authority.[30] It is unclear if this argument was convincing, but suggests the ability to depict someone as not conforming to civic rules was a powerful tool. In summary, the Pontiffs had jurisdiction over a public cult (*Libertas*) that had been part of civic religion for a considerable time.[31] Cicero's arguments suggest that the role of elite groups and the proper worship of the gods were key aspects of civic religion. While flattering his audience, Cicero's statements highlight how civic authorities wanted to be perceived: as the final arbiters in religious decisions.

Both Cicero and Clodius needed to conform to this perception and appear obedient to the rulings of civic institutions. While ensuring this happened, Cicero's speech contains indications that Cicero and Clodius each attempted to present themselves as more

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[28] *novum delubrum cum in urbis clarissimo loco nefando quodam atque inaudito instituto inchoares, referendum ad sacerdotes publicos non putasti?* Cic. *Dom.* 132.
[29] Cic. *Dom.* 127-128. He is showing the Pontiffs how his intended action of removing the shrine would not be sacrilegious, as the consecration was not conducted properly in the first place. He was not at risk of contravening civic rules.
[30] Cicero, for instance, stated that Clodius had an impious mind: i*mpia mente* Cic. *Har Resp.* 26. See Rüpke (2008) 625 for evidence of Clodius being a member of the *Quindecemviri*. Mitchell provides a good overview of the legal and political back and forth between the two men after Cicero's recall (1991) 144 ff.
[31] Von der Osten (2006) 34 ff for a summary of the early cult.

religious than the other.[32] Clodius seemed to have a stronger position in some instances. That Cicero implied that the law requiring a mandate for consecration did not specifically relate to private dwellings throughout 127-128 hints at this. He commented that Quintus Papirius, who proposed the law, did not refer to private dwellings, as he did not think they would be in danger. Cicero then stated, perhaps pre-empting attacks against him, "The Papirian law forbids the consecration of shrines without the approval of the plebeians. Let this apply to private buildings and not to public temples ".[33] This indicates Cicero had to reinterpret a law to validate his argument, which may not have necessarily been convincing, given that Clodius could more easily argue the law was simply inapplicable to Cicero's home.

Similar arguments continued after *De Domo Sua* was delivered. Cicero claimed that, after the final verdict, Clodius stated the Pontiffs actually sided with him.[34] Cicero possibly exaggerated, although the Pontiff's decree may have been ambiguous, as Cicero also stated that the Senate's final decision was delayed. This, and the debate over the Papirian law, suggest his legal standpoint had weaknesses.[35] The issue was resolved when the Senate met to pass a decree regarding the rebuilding of structures that Clodius demolished. The confusion that Clodius caused, and Cicero's refusal to approach the site until the Senate passed the decree (detailed in the letter to Atticus), highlights that an individual's personal argument could have real effect. Clodius' claims of pontifical favour also indicate he needed the backing of a central civic institution. Overall, the trial itself indicates the authority of the civic system over these individuals and the need to fit the expectations of the Senate.

[32] Cicero states that Clodius acted unconstitutionally and was sacrilegious, indicating again the connection between politics and religion: Cic. *Dom*. 69. Cicero also contrasts himself with Clodius, stating that he was made saviour of the state by the unanimous verdict of the gods and men: Cic. *Dom*. 26. For more examples of the debates between the two men, as well as the competition to be the "most religious" and Cicero's potential weakness, see Neel (2015) 118; Tatum (1999) 191-192.
[33] Cic. *Dom*. 128.
[34] Cic. *Att*. 4.2.3.
[35] For this and the debates that occurred and Cicero's potential weaknesses, see Stroh (2004) 330; 327.

Cicero's allusion to the Bona Dea scandal also suggests the necessity for individuals to connect themselves to correct civic norms. In 62 BC, Clodius was prosecuted for intruding on the Bona Dea festival, a female-only event.[36] Clodius was not found guilty, although Cicero continued to attack him for this in later conflicts. Notably, he alluded to the event when referring to a "good goddess" in *De Domo Sua*.[37] Neel argues that this shows that Clodius faced difficulty in demonstrating he was as pious as Cicero.[38] Lennon more definitively suggests that Cicero was alluding to the scandal, using Clodius' tarnished reputation to suggest that he was impious.[39] Connecting the scandal to the dedication potentially, therefore, allowed Cicero to present both as profane, arguing Clodius' actions marred his ability to participate in other state rituals, contrasting Cicero's own claims that the restoration of his house would benefit the state. I do not accept Lennon's argument completely, as Clodius' acquittal would likely nullify some of the potency of Cicero's attack. Nonetheless, I accept that lingering doubts about Clodius' legitimacy as a religious authority may have remained. Cicero would not have mentioned the scandal if it were not useful to do so. Therefore, it seems likely that Clodius had difficulty in claiming to meet the expected level of civic piety required by the Senate.[40] That this civic piety needed to be displayed is evidenced by Cicero's concluding remark (that the restoration of his house was "the will of the Senate" and the gods). It was seemingly desirable, and a powerful argument, to link oneself to the principal religious authority.[41] In addition to redefining the Pontiffs, Cicero presented Clodius as unable to achieve the same level of piety as himself by highlighting Clodius' previous failures to respect a civic deity.

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[36] Cic. *Att.* 1.13.3.
[37] Cic. *Dom.* 110.
[38] Neel (2015) 118. Neel also suggests that Cicero had a strategy for self-promotion (2015) 119. Frazel points out that the publication of these speeches (although focussing on the Verrine orations) was for this purpose (2004) 129; 141. This indicates how individuals could also engage civic religion for personal benefit.
[39] Lennon (2010) 435. See Tatum for the genuine concern that Clodius broke civic norms (1990) 207-208.
[40] Beard and Crawford highlight the central role of the Senate, a view I discuss in the introduction. I interpret their argument to mean that the Senate set the "religious agenda", deciding what was and was not pious. They also cite the lack of obstructions that could be used to prevent assemblies as evidence for Senatorial religious power (1999) 34-35. It is beyond the scope of the chapter to analyse the Bona Dea scandal in more depth. However, see Mulroy for a further summary (1988). Both he and Tatum refer to the public nature of the debate and how *sacra publica* had to be respected: (ibid) 176-177; Tatum (1990) 204.
[41] *senatus ita vult* Cic. *Dom.* 147.

Another example, hinting at the ability of individuals to create independent arguments and present themselves as personally pious compared to their peers, is Cicero and Clodius' contrasting interpretations of the dedication itself. Cicero claimed that it was conducted improperly, as the Pontiff was the brother of Clodius' wife and had only joined the college a few days prior.[42] Furthermore, he highlighted that Clodius commanded only one Pontiff to be present, not the whole college.[43] These were not necessarily strong arguments. Clodius apparently stated that "a Pontiff was present" in his defence.[44] Therefore, he presumably believed that one Pontiff was enough. Equally, if Cicero is being truthful in reporting Clodius' statement, Clodius had no choice but to argue this. Regardless, there were two contrasting arguments, indicating the ability for individuals to reinterpret and debate civic processes.

Cicero's comments at the end of the speech suggest how individuals bolstered their religious authority: "when the state so nearly met her doom, I offered my own head to the reckless weapons of the ungodly on behalf of your rites and temples".[45] This forms part of his aim in section 147 of highlighting the state and Roman virtues.[46] He did this while speaking to the Capitoline triad, referencing his defence of Vesta. At a critical point in the speech, Cicero emphasised his commitment to specific civic gods through pious actions, further contrasting himself with his presentation, throughout sections 110-141 of the speech, of Clodius' failure to conduct a ritual correctly. This is exaggerated – Cicero's house had little connection to the survival of the state. Nevertheless, this suggests that individuals could emphasise their deeds but had to connect their arguments to the religious consensus. Throughout these passages, and

[42] For the dedication being carried out by the brother of Clodius' wife, see Cic. *Dom*. 117-118. Cicero provided deep inspections of Clodius' failure to carry out procedures in other matters, presumably intended to emphasise his failure to conduct civic rites correctly. Cic. *Dom* 52-55; 45.
[43] Cic. *Dom*. 117. Presumably, this argument held weight considering it was argued in front of the Pontiffs themselves.
[44] *Pontifex, inquit, adfuit* Cic. *Dom*. 117.
[45] *ut, si in illo paene fato rei publicae obieci meum caput pro vestris caerimoniis atque templis.* Cic. *Dom*. 144-145.
[46] Lisdorf (2005) 448-449; Lennon (2010) 435-436.

the speech generally, focus is placed on following procedures with care for "traditional" gods.[47]

Similar themes are identifiable in *De Haruspicum Responso*. The speech, delivered in 56 BC, dealt with the same issue as *De Domo Sua*. Cicero, again, felt it necessary to argue that his views were in line with civic-religious authorities as he did at the end of *De Domo Sua*. He stated: "My words, possibly, have been many, but the opinions which those words express are those of the *haruspices*…"[48] This is a bold claim. It is unclear whether he was actually in lockstep with the *haruspices*. Nevertheless, as the speech was public, a heavily distorted version would be unlikely to convince many.[49] This represents an attempt to directly associate his views with a public priesthood. So matching his own opinion with a civic priesthood, presumably, made it harder to suggest he was wrong.[50] Beard suggests that the lines between Cicero, the *haruspices* and the gods, expressing their opinion through the prodigy, are blurred, potentially aiding in this association.[51] Additionally, Cicero's comments, as in *De Domo Sua*, show how religious principles could be used to legitimise personal and political arguments.[52] The speech as a whole, as well as this specific quotation, highlights how individuals constructed independent arguments that were related to civic norms. It is notable that Clodius, in arguing that the removal of the *Libertas* shrine caused the prodigy, implicitly indicates the Senate's actions were incorrect in his view. However, it was ultimately

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[47] Rasmussen (2000) 12. Liebeschuetz also briefly discusses the feud between Clodius and Cicero, emphasising the importance of traditions and legal procedure (1979) 1-2. Diluzio states that every public cult contributed to maintaining the *pax deorum* (2016) 7. This, therefore, must have become a primary theme of *de domo,* indicating the personal need to conform to "tradition".

[48] *Mea fuerunt verba fortasse plura, sententiae quidem omnes haruspicum*. Cic. *Har Resp.* 61.

[49] Rasmussen states this in relation to *De Haruspicum Responso*, but this was presumably true of De Domo Sua also (2000) 13.

[50] The *haruspices* may have had an ambiguous position. I discuss this in the next chapter. Corbeill argues that the *haruspices* were utilised as an independent body to help resolve the conflict between Cicero and Clodius (2023) xxxviii. Therefore, Cicero possibly had no choice but to claim this and align himself with civic norms. The credibility of this statement, however, rested on Cicero's ability to emphasise how his actions matched expectations through independent arguments.

[51] Beard (2012a) 36-37. This interpretation is made problematic by Cicero's apparent attempt to distance himself from the *haruspices*, discussed below, although this seems to be the only way to interpret this quotation.

[52] Rasmussen (2000) 15; Rosenberger highlights how the whole affair was used by individuals for their personal benefit (2007) 300-303. Another example are omens which were used by politicians to legitimise positions. I suggest Cicero is here doing the same.

necessary for individuals to adhere to the religious consensus. Throughout the speech, Cicero referred to the decree of the Senate. When talking to Clodius, he said: "in accordance with the decree of the Senate which has been recently passed the matter must inevitably come before you."[53] Cicero seems to have contrasted Clodius' arguments against the Senate's decision, showing Clodius was not obeying the central authority.

A notable example of the respect required towards civic authorities was Cicero's statement that: "I will even be delighted, to comply with the portents of the immortal gods and the obligations which they impose."[54] This is an extreme statement, potentially putting Cicero's house at risk. Nevertheless, Cicero, still forcefully argued his case later in the speech, using the prodigy against Clodius, attempting to ally himself with the gods.[55] This makes sense as Cicero was an augur and senator, justifying his claims. Nevertheless, Cicero's initial statement should not be discounted completely. While he may have exaggerated, ultimately, he would have to obey the Senate if they sided with Clodius' argument, just as Clodius had to accept the initial removal of the shrine of *Libertas*. This is another facet of how individuals were affected by civic religion. It required all participants, including members of the elite, to show proper reverence.[56] The Senate, through its decisions at the end of these speeches, indicated what it deemed acceptable and was therefore able to reinforce its authority. I argue in the next two sections that the Senate also reinforced its authority through shaping what was acceptable in religion by introducing and debating new elements of civic religion.

However, elsewhere, Cicero does not seem to show the *haruspices* the respect we would expect. Instead, he seems to challenge the need for them, stating: "for cannot we

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[53] *Agatur modo haec res, quod ex eo senatus consulto, quod nuper est factum, referri ad vos necesse est* Cic. *Har Resp.* 31. The decree is also referred to in section 14.
[54] *non modo patienti, sed etiam libenti animo portentis deorum immortalium religionique parebo*. Cic. *Har Resp.* 11.
[55] Corbeill (2010) 149. This is similar to Beard's argument as to the blurring of identity between Cicero and the gods (see above). Cicero appears to have tried to form some sort of association.
[56] This is a theme of Champion (2017) and Driediger-Murphy's (2019) arguments. See my discussion in the literature review

be our own *haruspices*?"[57] Beard argues that Cicero was hinting at how the interpretive processes and the relationship between the *haruspices* and the Senate should be viewed differently, by creating the perception that the *haruspices* were simple translators and could, potentially, be dispensed with.[58] Additionally, I suggest that it is notable that the role of the Senate was not diminished, only that of the *haruspices*. Corbeill points out that Cicero stressed the ability of the Senate to create its own interpretations throughout the speech.[59] As Cicero was speaking to the Senate, it is possible that he was flattering its members with suggestions of their own religious knowledge. He may be seen as presenting himself as a religious interpreter who agreed specifically with them, setting Clodius' view in opposition. The response of the *haruspices* – that a sacred site had been profaned – was highly beneficial to Clodius, necessitating that Cicero undermine it.[60]

Cicero's pride may be a factor. When discussing the *haruspices*, he often highlighted their perceived "foreignness".[61] While not inherently negative, in *De Divinatione*, he did not mention the Pontiffs and defended the Augurs, whom he explicitly calls "Roman", while criticising the *haruspices* heavily. Referring to their otherness may have been aimed at undermining them in this instance. Given his priesthood, he may have seen himself as above the *haruspices*. Ultimately, in the quotation, Cicero is not advocating for an overturning of an important priesthood. Earlier in the speech, he described a meeting of senators where the response of the *haruspices* was discussed: "He

[57] *nos nonne haruspices esse possumus?* Cic. *Har Resp.* 20; cf 56.
[58] Beard (2012a) 31-32. Beard notably sees debates like those represented by *de haruspicum responso* as a key aspect of the divinatory process: page 27. Corbeill also argues that Cicero is claiming to be a higher authority than the *haruspices* (2010) 151.
[59] Corbeill (2023) 148. Van Haeperen argues that this speech, similarly to what I have argued in relation to *de domo sua*, displays substantial respect for the pontifices who are acknowledged to have authority over both public and private religions (2002) 49-50.
[60] For Cicero's claim to religious expertise, see above. I do not mean to suggest that the *haruspices* necessarily sided with Clodius, although this suggests why Cicero potentially undermined an important and longstanding priesthood. For Clodius' relationship with the *Haruspices,* see Rawson. (1978) 142. Cicero may have been genuinely concerned about Clodius' actions and ambitions: Rundell (1979) 327-328. Rundell suggests that Cicero was in a relatively weak position compared to Clodius, which may indicate that he had some beneficial association with the priesthood. This explains Cicero's need to present himself as a greater interpreter (See Beard (2012a) above).
[61] Cic. *Cat.* 3.19; *Div* 2.11-12; 2.28. The *haruspices* and their perceived "foreignness" are analysed in the next chapter.

[Clodius] read to the meeting the response recently delivered by the *haruspices* with regard to the strange noise."[62] The *haruspices,* evidently, were taken seriously – otherwise, Cicero would not need to make this speech. Instead, Cicero may be seen as attempting to control religious interpretations as a civic authority himself, subordinating a group of priests while displaying the necessary commitments to civic norms. This highlights that individuals had freedom in religion but were bound to civic norms.

Modifications and the Reception of Ceres

Therefore, I suggest that civic religion was a mechanism that allowed the expression of authority by determining what was acceptable. It comprised "traditional" gods and rituals needed to maintain the *pax deorum*. This section considers how the determination of what was acceptable extended to the cult of Ceres and how the Senate utilised its perceived "Greekness" for its benefit. The earliest reference to Ceres is a temple constructed in 496 BC,[63] although it is unclear whether the cult had a Greek character from the outset.[64] Scheid, who focusses on the Greek rites of Ceres, argues that Rome was an open city from the archaic period. Therefore, what members of the elite perceived as "foreign" was actually as Roman as any cult, having long formed part of the religious life of the citizenry, becoming deeply embedded.[65] For instance, while a perceived "foreignness" was maintained, the cult had non-Greek elements. Scheid points to evidence that some priestesses were daughters of Roman citizens, while highlighting the separateness of the "Greek" aspects, which prohibited wine and included a festival of the *matronae* called the *sacra Cereris*.[66] Most notably, following

[62] *Responsum haruspicum hoc recens de fremitu in contione recitavit* Cic. *Har Resp.* 9.
[63] Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 6.17; 6.94.3.
[64] See Isayev (2011) 377-378 for this debate.
[65] Scheid (1995) 17-19. I discussed this above, but Scheid refers to the Greek rites in particular. Isayev discusses this argument and does not definitively state conclusions (2011), ibid. In broad terms, I am in agreement with Scheid that there is no "true" core of religion. He points out that Roman religion was not radically different from "foreign" religions (1995) 18. Cornell also highlights the early impact of other cultures on Rome (1995) 85-86.
[66] (1995) 23-24. For a brief discussion of these "Greek" rites, see also Spaeth (1996) 104 and Boyd (1960). Santangelo also argues that there were non-Greek elements (2020) 10. Orlin argues that Greek elements were brought to Rome at a later point (1997) 100-101. Below, I discuss how the Second and First centuries were periods of greater reservation about perceived "foreign" influences. It seems possible that non-Greek elements would be highlighted if this is the case.

the Greek model, the chief priestesses were Greek women. While a sense of "foreignness" was not present in all aspects of the cult, there was a desire to highlight how the cult differed from traditional norms, if only nominally.

This is contrary to the elite fears of "foreignness" that I discuss in the next section. I accept that Rome was always open to new gods, but suggest that it was politically beneficial for the cult to maintain a sense of "otherness". Overall, I suggest that members of the elite could present themselves as able to determine what was acceptable religious practice for the wider community by making the nominally "foreign" part of the civic system. Equally, there was genuine religious interest in perceived "Greek" rites.

It is also necessary to discuss the traditional association between Ceres and the plebeians, stemming from the early Republic. Pellam is unsure that there was a specific connection, arguing that the Capitoline triad was also associated with the plebeians. He posits that Jupiter played a role in protecting the tribunes as Ceres did, rendering "plebeian" religion almost meaningless.[67] Mignone argues that there is little evidence to support a connection between the Aventine and the plebeians, although is less sure about Ceres specifically.[68] However, I think a connection is possible based on Spaeth's evidence that the temple of Ceres was located on the Aventine, which was directly associated with the plebeians, through the secessions.[69] I present arguments that suggest that the Senate made decisions that responded to this connection, aiming to please the plebeians.

[67] Pellam (2014) 76; 78-79. I will discuss an example of Ceres' role in protecting the tribunes in relation to Tiberius Gracchus, below.
[68] Mignone (2016) 209-211.
[69] See Livy 3.54-55 for the second secession. See Spaeth (1996) 82-83 for analysis. Consequently, decrees of the Senate were kept in the temple. There may also have been an association between Ceres and the first secession as the temple was founded the same year: Spaeth (1996), 81-82.

Evidence suggests there was a desire to introduce nominally "Greek" elements to the cult in the third century BC. While I focus on the second and first centuries, it is useful to understand earlier interactions with Ceres. Livy referred to the yearly rite of Ceres being suspended in 217/216 BC:

> Then, disasters spread through private homes as well, and grief filled the whole city to such an extent that the annual sacred rite of Ceres was omitted, because it is not right for mourners to perform it, nor was there any matron at that time free from mourning.[70]

He does not record specific details, but Festus claims that they were imported from Greece.[71] Piccioni points out that votive busts of Ceres from Ariccia, dating to the third century, show similarities to Sicilian examples with Greek characteristics such as a himation, a garment worn over the shoulder.[72] Therefore, there are hints that Ceres maintained Greek imagery and associations early on. By the late Republic, there was a long history of positive receptions to the "Greek" aspects of Ceres. Cicero reinforced this when he stated in *Pro Balbo* that "it was the wish of our fathers",[73] concerning the respect shown for the "Greek" element of the cult. I analyse this passage more deeply below, but for now, this comment implicitly highlights that the "Greek" cult was seen as an integral part of the civic system. Cicero's comment specifically marked the Senate as a key religious authority in determining acceptable religious practices. The "Greekness" of the cult is what made this possible, allowing it to be contrasted against the already existing religious system. I argue, tentatively, that perceived "foreignness" was a useful tool for members of the elite in highlighting their authority as they could claim, officially, to deem some aspects as acceptable.[74]

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[70] *Tum privatae quoque per domos clades volgatae sunt adeoque totam urbem opplevit luctus ut sacrum anniversarium Cereris intermissum sit, quia nec lugentibus id facere est fas nec ulla in illa tempestate matrona expers luctus fuerat.* Livy 22.56.4.

[71] Festus 97. Spaeth agrees the cult has a Greek element and was brought from Magna Graecia in the late third century (1996) 11-12. See Orlin (2007) 63; and Isayev (2011) 376-380 for a general overview of the cult.

[72] Piccioni (2016) 390-391; Spaeth discusses these features and how they are similar to Greek examples (1996) 11.

[73] See note 93 in this chapter. I will discuss this further below.

[74] I discuss similar themes in regard to Greek philosophy in Chapter Five.

While Livy does not explicitly state that Greek aspects were added in the third century, this view, likely, is what his comment implies, as he specifically mentions *matrona*.[75] Women had a particularly prominent role in the "Greek" element of the cult, which I explore further below. Livy also described how the Punic wars were perceived to strain "traditional" rites.[76] He stated that women in particular failed to follow tradition: "Crowds of women following traditional practice neither in sacrifice nor prayer to the gods."[77] This echoes the common elite trope of women behaving in an anti-civic fashion. Witches, for example, while a literary construct, were possibly perceived as dangerous to civic norms.[78] Livy also described an implausible narrative of matrons causing mass poisoning in the fourth century, indicating that this may be a trope throughout his work.[79] However, even if exaggerated, some genuine concerns about proper reverence for the gods may have existed at a strenuous time in the Second Punic War, causing the Senate to feel a need to reassert what it thought was permissible. While the introduction of the rites may have been a reaction to military issues, it may also have been a method for reasserting senatorial control over a cult specifically relevant to women.[80] Broad interest in perceived "foreign" religions amongst the community also makes sense given the state interest in other "foreign" gods that were worshipped with *ritus graecus,* such as Hercules. If this was the aim, it was seemingly successful, as several later sources referred to the civic aspects of the cult of Ceres, indicating it became deeply integrated into the civic system.[81] The extent of civic religion acting as a

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[75] See also Orlin (2010) 104-105.
[76] Livy 25.1.6-7.
[77] *mulierum turba erat nec sacrificantium nec precantium deos patrio more*. Livy 25.1.7-8.
[78] See Ripat (2016) and Paule (2014) for a discussion of witches. Ripat points to evidence that witches were dismissed as having low social value, but also indicates some genuine worry about the impact they had. This is similar to what I argue in relation to astrologers in Chapter Four. She also perceives witches as a form of "specialist" (2016) 117. Therefore, they are in some ways similar to the priestesses of Ceres that I will discuss below – women who play a particularly unique role in religion. For the literary construction of witches, see pages 105 and 116.
[79] Livy 8.18.
[80] Staples highlights how the cult was relevant to women, while also highlighting how women were seen to be subversive (1998) 86, 57-58. This adds credence to the idea that some form of control was perceived to be needed.
[81] See Spaeth (1996) 105 for a summary of this evidence which includes inscriptions referring to priestesses with the descriptor "*publica*" and Plutarch's later comment that the priesthood was the greatest honour that a *matrona* could achieve (Plut. *De mul. Vir.* 26). Cicero also highlights the civic aspect in *Pro Balbo* 55 saying that the priestess acted on behalf of the Roman people: "*pro civibus"*.

controlling force can be questioned, however, if the Senate felt pressured into accepting "foreign" rites simply so that it could claim authority over them. Furthermore, this does not explain why the "foreign" label was maintained.

Potentially, this emphasis continued into the late Republic, providing women with a prominent role which was nominally separated from the "traditional" core of priesthoods promoted by members of the elite.[82] Republican gravestones indicate that priestesses of Ceres acted relatively independently. While the inscriptions occasionally refer to male relatives, particularly who was the priestesses' father, Schultz points out that, often, they do not mention a husband.[83] Schultz concludes that the priestesses were not married, at least during their tenure, although she points out that the relatively short nature of the text means that we are provided with little exact evidence for their marital status.[84] Nevertheless, that male relatives or office holders are rarely mentioned suggests that the priestesses held a particularly prominent role and had some freedom to act independently. A first-century AD inscription from Samnium refers to a priestess making her own tombstone while still alive.[85] While this does not prove the same could happen in Republican Rome, the inscription parallels the Roman examples in not mentioning any male influences, suggesting an expectation that women had the means and authority to emphasise their religious position.

While there was a male *flamen* of Ceres, only the priestess had oversight of the "Greek" aspects, further suggesting that women had some degree of freedom.[86] This gave them

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Spaeth points out that this could only be done as they were citizens (1996) 13. Again, this quote is discussed more fully below.

[82] Again, this relates to the perception that women were perceived to be subversive/negative but were still an integrated part of the religious system (See Staples above).

[83] An example from Rome: *CIL* 1^2.974 = 6.2192 = ILS 3342 = ILLRP 61; the male relative: CIL 1^2 .3110 – 10.6103 and Schultz (2006) 76 n. 104 for other examples.

[84] Schultz further emphasises that this is a substantial difference from other priestesses such as the *regina sacrorum* whose married status was essential (2006) 75-76.

[85] *viva sibi fecit* (CIL IX 3089).

[86] Spaeth highlights the "female nature" of the cult (1996) 104. Isayev, while following Spaeth, more concretely links the priestess to the Greek aspects of the cult, suggesting that the male *flamen* continued duties for the "Roman" aspects of the cult (2011) 378-379.

greater autonomy than the *flaminica Dialis,* for instance.[87] This was possible as these "Greek" elements were integrated into the Roman system, operating similarly to other cults. For instance, as with other priesthoods, evidence suggests that priestesses came from elite families. Cicero refers to a priestess and cult officials from Catania in Sicily as "noble", which Spaeth uses to indicate that the same was likely true in Rome.[88] An inscription which refers to a Roman public priestess originating from Sicily attests to the possibility that similar "noble" individuals were the cult leaders in Rome.[89] Later inscriptional evidence from across Italy attests to higher-class officials in localised cults.[90]

The same, therefore, seems likely in Republican Rome. As outlined in the previous section, civic authorities perceived that people from "higher-class" backgrounds should be religious authorities. However, the "foreign" construction potentially permitted a methodology for marking this element of civic religion as something that is still "other". While having freedom, these women did not occupy the same position as traditional priesthoods. In the same way that Cicero subordinated the *haruspices* by referring to them as "foreign", similar processes may have occurred here. This may, partially, explain why the "Greekness" of the cult was so heavily emphasised.

Another reason is the genuine religious interest held by the Senate and wider society in a "Greek version" of Ceres, indicated by the votive offerings from Ariccia.[91] Given the

[87] Isayev (2011) 384-385, who also mentions the gravestones (no. 69). For discussion of the *Flaminica Dialis* see Beard et al (1998a) 357. There are hints that the *Flaminica Dialis* was respected as an independent religious official: Gosline (1996) 32 n.36; Scheid (1992), 384-385. This seems likely, but as Scheid points out, their power is derived from being a single unit with the *flamen*. Therefore, the priestess of Ceres can still be said to be unique.
[88] *Nobiles* Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.99. See Spaeth (1996) ` 05.
[89] For the Late Republican inscription, see CIL 6.2181. See DiLuzio (2016) 109-110 for this and further context.
[90] Schultz discusses a variety of imperial inscriptions from across Italy that suggest these priestesses had elite backgrounds (2006) 77-78.
[91] See note 72 in this chapter for these votives.

concerns for "foreign" elements in other cults, this requires deeper inspection.[92] Returning to Cicero, his speech defending Balbus delivered in 56 BC provides evidence:

> Our ancestors wished that the rites of Ceres should be performed with the highest reverence; and since they were introduced from Greece, they were always performed through Greek priestesses and all the terms in use are Greek. But, although they chose from Greece a woman who should perform that Greek rite, they wished that she should be a citizen when she performed rites on behalf of Roman citizens.[93]

The purpose of the speech was to reassert Balbus' Roman citizenship, citing the priestess of Ceres as an example of how citizenship could be given to "foreigners". Balbus' enemies attempted to discredit his status, which had been granted sixteen years prior. While this was the main focus, there are hints of how religion in the late Republic was understood to have incorporated "foreign" elements. This passage implies an "authentic" version of the cult was desired based on the need for "highest reverence" in close association with the use of Greek priestesses and terms. "Foreign" elements were sought, therefore, at the civic level.[94] Equally, the term "*voluerunt*" meaning "they wanted" referring to the priestess' citizenship indicates the "foreign" had to become Roman. Cicero's positive tone indicates that this was still the case in the late Republic despite the time elapsed since the introduction of the cult. This initially seems paradoxical: Why make something Roman if you wish to emphasise it is "foreign"? However, this may return to the Senate's feeling that it needed to moderate religion by defining what was permitted. The Senate could mark a boundary, allowing a "foreign" element in religion while also stamping its authority by making that element "Roman".[95]

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[92] I discuss this more deeply in the literature review and Chapter Five.

[93] *Sacra Cereris, iudices, summa maiores nostri religione confici caerimoniaque voluerunt; quae cum essent adsumpta de Graecia. et per Graecas curata sunt semper sacerdotes et Graeca omnino nominata. Sed cum illam, quae Graecum illud sacrum monstraret et faceret, ex Graecia deligerent, tamen sacra pro civibus civem facere voluerunt* Cic. *Balb.* 55.

[94] Isayev (2011) 373. However, Orlin correctly cautions that we must be careful in assuming how far the changes to the cult of Ceres were intentional due to the indirect nature of the sources (2010) 105. Nevertheless, that Cicero mentions the priestesses being sought may suggest that there was a deliberate push to introduce "foreign" elements. For how "foreign" the Greek rites of Ceres were, see Scheid (1995) 20-21.

[95] See also the discussion of the cult statue of Magna Mater, below.

In summary, Cicero's comments represent two key strands of how the cult of Ceres was perceived in the late Republic. On the one hand, there was a substantial degree of individual freedom to act autonomously within civic religion. He specifically cited the priestesses' ability to perform rites on behalf of the people, a suggestion supported by the gravestones that I discuss above.[96] However, he also indicated that the cult should be controlled. The specific reference to the senators deciding that the priestess should be a citizen highlights a reinforcement of civic authority as the central body decided to make something acceptable. Women, who had no access to the Senate or the *Pontifices*, for instance, were instead given access to religious authority that was made acceptable by, but specifically under the control of, the Senate.[97] That this was Cicero's view is suggested in *De Legibus*, when he affirmed that there should be no initiations except for women into the cult of Ceres.[98] While Cicero wrote laws for an idealised state, he indicated that his views were based on already established customs.[99] Whatever autonomy the priestesses retained, their influence derived from the Senate, which also had a hand in managing aspects of the cult.[100] Cicero's references to the "Greekness" of the cult and how it was made "Roman" indicate that, while a cult introduced early, Ceres continued to act as an example of how late Republican members of the elite could reassert their religious authority. The senatorial elite could claim pride in

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[96] Cic. *Balb.* 55. See Schultz for a discussion (2006) 72. Isayev highlights the particularly unique freedom that the priestess had in acting alone and initiating people into the rites of Ceres (2011) 380-382.

[97] Orlin cautions that Cicero may not be truthful in stating that citizenship was granted so that citizens could perform the rites, as other priests were not made Roman. He argues instead that women were granted citizenship as it provided fewer benefits to them compared to men (2010) 107. This still matches my argument – the Senate is expressing authority by determining what is acceptable.

[98] Cic. *Leg.* 2.21; 2.37. This is analysed further below, as this can be connected to the Eleusinian mysteries, another important facet of the cult.

[99] Cic. *Leg.* 2.23. See Asmis, who argues that Cicero expounded what existed already, in custom if not in law. (2008) 25 for a brief discussion. For Cicero, giving an idealised view in *De Legibus*, see Van Haeperen (2002) 47.

[100] A clearer example of this is the Vestal Virgins. Dionysius mentions those who "retired" often met with unhappy ends, perhaps suggesting external pressures on them (Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom. 2.67.1-5). He also mentions that they received great honours and severe penalties. I have touched on the Pontifex Maximus' oversight of the cult earlier, although notably the removal of the vestal from the power of her father was not replaced with a husband's power, indicating that they had a unique status: Gallia (2015) 75-76. Kroppenberg describes the Vestals as "sovereign" figures but still under the control of the Pontifex (2010) 425-426. Chatelard and Stevens similarly mention the authority of the Pontifex while mentioning they lacked male guardianship (2016) 28 and 40, n.57. Beard highlights the legal privileges they had (1980) 17. Overall, scholarship seems to perceive that they had some exceptional freedoms while being under the guidance of a male priest in a way that the priestess of Ceres was not (see above).

introducing a key aspect of civic religion, linking themselves to a respected past. It was potentially a useful means of presenting themselves as religious authorities that had made a "correct" decision.

Similar themes of control and individual autonomy are suggested by Cicero's attacks against Verres, the governor of Sicily, whom Cicero prosecuted in 70 BC. Cicero highlighted Verres' sacrilege against Ceres:

> At Catania there is a shrine of Ceres that is revered no less than such shrines at Rome, in other lands, almost throughout the world. In its innermost chamber was a very ancient statue of Ceres, the appearance and indeed the existence of which was unknown to men, since men are not allowed to enter the shrine, and the sacred rites are regularly performed by women and girls. This statue was stolen one night from this ancient and hallowed place by Verres' slaves.[101]

These references imply a deep respect for the Greek goddess in Catania. This respect possibly resulted from the early impact of Sicily/Magna Graecia on the perception of the cult. For instance, Piccioni accepts Pliny's statement that the artists who worked on the temple in 496 BC were Greek, suggesting they came from Magna Graecia.[102] While Piccioni's evidence comes before the first century BC, there must also have been great respect for perceived "Greek" aspects of religion in the second and first centuries, given the above evidence. Much like in his conflict with Clodius, Cicero presented Verres as failing to respect an important deity. However, this was a specifically "Greek" deity beyond Rome. While this was a debate between two individuals, Cicero could only attack Verres in this way as the Senate deemed the "Greek" elements acceptable. Cicero's claim that the shrine was "revered no less" than Roman shrines may indicate an attempt to align his argument with the elite religious consensus that he hinted at in

[101] *Sacrarium Cereri est apud Catinenses eadem religione qua Romae, qua in ceteris locis, qua prope in toto orbe terrarum. In eo sacrario intimo signum fuit Cereris perantiquum, quod viri non modo cuius modi esset sed ne esse quidem sciebant; aditus enim in id sacrarium non est viris; sacra per mulieres ac virgines confici solent. Hoc signum noctu clam istius servi ex illo religiosissimo atque antiquissimo loco sustulerunt.* Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.99; cf. 2.4.110-111; 2.4.114; 2.5.187.
[102] Plin. *HN*. 35.154. Piccioni (2016) 387-388. This is made plausible due to the connection between Rome and Sicily that allowed artistic goods (and presumably artists themselves) to travel between the two cultures. See: Malfitana (2022).

Pro Balbo. Verres' actions were presented as particularly bad as the "Greek" was as respected as the "Roman". Individual debates could occur, but had to work within the framework of what was "officially" accepted.

That the Senate used a perceived "foreignness" to emphasise its authority in the late Republic is also identifiable in the reaction to the death of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 BC. In the aftermath, the Senate sent priests to the temple of Ceres at Enna in Sicily as the Sibylline oracles stated that Ceres must be placated, despite her having a temple in Rome.[103] Valerius and Cicero seemingly quoted the oracle directly, referring to "most ancient Ceres".[104] It is unclear how they knew what the oracle said, although they may have seen a record of it. This specific show of respect may have had political benefits, as suggested by Spaeth and Sudano. Spaeth argues that the Senate symbolically used Ceres to justify the death of Gracchus, as he was accused of seeking kingship, and she was associated with laws pertaining to tyranny.[105] As the death was unpopular, Spaeth concludes that the cult at Enna was used as it lacked difficult political associations.[106] This argument relies on the assumed connection between Ceres and the Plebeians, which I discussed above.[107] As Cicero directly refers to Tiberius Gracchus, a political element is likely. Therefore, the Senate reasserted its authority after a destabilising event with a specifically Greek cult. The language used to describe Ceres was respectful, indicating the Senate's ability to negotiate and emphasise what it saw as important, marking the "foreign" Greek element as a potential solution to a civic problem. For instance, Cicero claimed that it seemed they were visiting "not a temple of

[103] Val. Max. 1.1.1c; Cic. *Ver.* 2.4.108.
[104] *vetustissimam Cererem*
[105] Spaeth (1990) 183; 185. Surdano also argues that this was a unique episode with a political dimension. They interpret that this was done to restore the *concordia ordinum* or peace between the social classes (2017).
[106] Sudano does not go as far but indicates that the delegation was sent in part due to the death of Tiberius Gracchus (2017). Their view can therefore align with Spaeth's. For the unpopularity of Tiberius' death amongst the populace, see Plut. *Vit. Ti. Gracch*. 21.
[107] Pellam argues that Ceres was associated with Libertas rather than directly with the Plebeians (2014) 84; 94. Contra: Spaeth (1996) 81-101. I take a middle view that it is like there was some connection between the Plebeians, even if it is not as strong as Spaeth argues given Pellam's arguments.

Ceres but Ceres herself."[108] Evidently, there must have been benefits to using a "foreign" perception of Ceres.

It is important not to see these events as purely political. There was independent religious significance.[109] It is striking that Cicero described Ceres at Enna as the "most sacred", perhaps even including the cult at Rome.[110] The delegation was therefore potentially a genuine display of respect as the Romans perceived the area to have an ancient connection to Ceres.[111] This is not antithetical to my above argument. If the response had political benefits, then so much the better. Dillon and Orlin, while questioning whether the delegation was related to the death of Gracchus, highlight that it is striking that Roman public priests could expiate prodigies received in Rome from outside of Italy.[112] This may have proved a necessity if Ceres at Enna was respected in the way I suggest. Furthermore, Sicily was part of the Empire, if not part of Italy. From a political standpoint, it is a display of authority that public priests could deal directly with a Sicilian goddess. Dillon's contention that the Romans saw close associations between a particular territory, its people, and its gods gives this further credence.[113] It may have also been an opportunity to show respect to Sicilian cities through proper respect for their deities. I suggest that in the wake of the assassination of Tiberius Gracchus, Ceres was too important politically and religiously for the Senate to ignore. While there was likely a real belief in the importance of Ceres, the "foreign" aspect had political benefits to the civic system. These events also made the "foreign" an acceptable part of the civic system. However, this was not just about political control.

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[108] *non ad aedem Cereris sed ad ipsam Cererem proficisci viderentur.* Cic. *Ver.* 2.4.108.
[109] Dillon (2013) 96 followed by Santangelo, who agrees but is more cautious (2020) 14. Surdano argues that there was a dual religious and political significance (2017).
[110] *religiosissimam* Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.109.
[111] Cicero often uses *antiquissimus,* meaning "very ancient" or *vetustas,* when describing Ceres to emphasise this. (ibid. and 2.4.99.
[112] Dillon (2013) 98-99. Orlin is unsure that the purpose was related to placating the plebs but was about reasserting control over the sanctuary (2010) 193. I see no reason why it could not be both. However, Raggi suggests that Roman authorities had an interest in influencing religious processes beyond Rome (2006) 701.
[113] Dillon (2013) 100.

Livy's record of a ritual fast in 191 BC in honour of Ceres, resulting from worrying portents, further suggests that the Senate used Ceres as a source of religious experimentation. He stated: "A fast should be instituted in honour of Ceres, to be held every fifth year".[114] While he claimed that this was to be repeated, there is no record of it occurring again. This practice was unusual, as fasting was not a common state ritual in Rome, being more customary in Greek areas.[115] This may be an instance of the Senate introducing a nominally "foreign" aspect of Ceres but being less successful in creating a long-lasting ritual. Nevertheless, rejection or disinterest in religious elements also highlights the ability to alter civic religion in the same way as accepting "foreign" rites. Their actions or lack thereof, determined what was acceptable, not just outright statements. It was the Senate's prerogative to decide whether these rites should continue, regardless of whether individuals, elite or otherwise, wished to participate. Similar to the reaction to the death of Tiberius Gracchus, the Senate highlighted its authority by modifying civic religion with "foreign" aspects. Possibly the rites continued without being recorded, although I find this an unsatisfactory argument, as Livy attests to other rituals, such as the *lectisternia,* on multiple occasions.[116]

My argument so far has focussed on the public-facing aspects of the cult. The rest of the chapter will consider the Eleusinian mysteries, which became prominent in the late Republic.[117] Eleusis was a religious centre to which many throughout the Mediterranean travelled.[118] I suggest that the cult formed an avenue for individuals to explore civic religion. In general, the Roman civic elite seemed to dislike mystery cults. For instance, the restrictions on the Bacchanalia can be understood as a concern about rites occurring outside of state control.[119] However, rites for Ceres were the exception. This is

[114] *renuntiaverunt ieiunium instituendum Cereri esse, et id quinto quoque anno servandum* Livy 36.37.4.
[115] Rosenberger (2007) 296; Heinrichs emphasises the Greek nature of fasting as a ritual (2016).
[116] See Chapter Six for my analysis of this ritual. It shares similarities to the ritual fast as it maintained "Greek" characteristics, but was reused a multitude of times.
[117] Spaeth (1996) 17-18. Clinton summarises Roman involvement in the late Republic (1989) 1503-1507. The numerous references in ancient sources, in my view, indicate a particular Roman interest in the mysteries. For example, see Sulla's initiation, see Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 16, for instance.
[118] For an overview, see Bowden (2010) 26 ff. For an overview of the mysteries, see Mylonas (1961) 224ff.
[119] Orlin (2010) attributes a fear of individuals wielding too much power as a reason for the dislike of the Bacchanalia 207.

exemplified by Cicero's inclusion of them in *De Legibus*. The mysteries formed part of his discussion as to whether women should perform sacrifices at night.[120] These rites and the Bacchanalia at first seem to pose similar issues, and it is unclear why one was suppressed and the other was not. Perceived respectability may be a reason. The mysteries were based in Attica, for which Cicero makes his respect clear:

> For among the many excellent and divine institutions which your Athens has brought forth and contributed to human life, none, in my opinion, is better than those mysteries.[121]

Furthermore, the mysteries would be easier to control as Cicero marks them specifically as far away, which may have been more comfortable for the civic elite, unlike the Bacchanalia occurring in Italy. Additionally, only those with the resources to travel to Eleusis could take part, creating an automatic filter.[122] Consequently, these mysteries may more easily integrate into the civic system, although they exist beyond Rome. There were also public festivals, meaning the cult was not completely hidden.[123] This may have given the cult a degree of respectability for members of the elite. Cicero's comments indicate that he was defining what was an acceptable activity as he was speaking to Atticus in the dialogue. Notably, he promoted this view, indicating that individuals expressed religious preferences. However, this could likely only occur because the cult was seen as acceptable and permitted by the Senate.[124]

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[120] Cic. *Leg.* 2.35-36. For a brief analysis of Cicero's comments, see Heibges (1969a) 308.
[121] *nam mihi cum multa eximia divinaque videntur Athenae tuae peperisse atque in vitam hominum attulisse, tum nihil melius illis mysteriis* Cic. *Leg.* 2.36.
[122] Scholars agree that the rites were open to everyone regardless of social status: Mylonas (1947) 132; Evans (2002) 250-251. However, Evans also highlights the financial cost of participating, including purchasing piglets.
[123] Clinton summarises the festivities day-by-day (1993) 92-94. It is only on the last day that the initiations take place. Prior to that, there were public processions which could hardly be secret. See also Bowden (2010) 33-35.
[124] The cult at Eleusis seems to have been viewed positively from the first century onwards: Poletti points to Cicero's comments as well as Sulla's initiation (2018) 558-559. Augustus also became an initiate in 31 BC, with Suetonius indicating he respected them greatly: Suet. *Vit. Aug.* 93. Poletti seems to accept this (2018) 557-558. Orlin also seems to agree, although he questions Suetonius' account (2008) 233-234. The point stands that by the end of the Republic, the cult was a religious option in elite circles.

Additional assertions of control can be discerned. I suggest, tentatively, that there was a particularly Roman understanding of the mysteries separate from, but based on, Greek originals that took place in Rome. While Cicero suggests that he is initiated into the mysteries, he also hints at different "Roman" rites specific to women:

> In these laws indeed it must be made inviolable most carefully that the clear light [of day] guard the reputation of women in the eyes of the many, and that they be initiated with that rite to Ceres with which they are initiated at Rome.[125]

Spaeth uses this evidence, and other passages discussed above, to suggest that the cult at Rome was exclusively female.[126] Obviously, Cicero cannot be an initiate in this specific cult. Therefore, his reference to Roman initiations unique to women implies that another form of the mysteries existed. Spaeth also points out that, when Cicero discusses the myth of Demeter/Ceres and Persephone, he focuses on the cult in Sicily rather than Eleusis.[127] Consequently, she highlights the Thesmophoria, a three-day Greek festival for Demeter and Persephone, as a likely model for the Romans. This is plausible because only women participated in this festival.[128] Therefore, while Roman men could be initiated at Eleusis, elements were potentially taken from other models to create a particularly "Roman" cult. If this is not the case, the focus on female exclusivity seems to be a Roman invention. This seems to be the implication of Cicero's reference to specific initiations in Rome. Potentially, this is another example of the Senate adopting "foreign" rites but again altering them to become "Roman". If so, a practice more directly under senatorial control was created specifically for females. This is similar to what I suggest occurred in the creation of a unique role for women as priestesses of Ceres.

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[125] Cic. *Leg.* 2.36-37. Translation taken from Spaeth (1996) 106.
[126] Spaeth (1996) 106. Spaeth lays out their argument in n. 12 (page 215). She convincingly argues that female exclusivity is likely (although not certainly) how this passage can be interpreted as this is the easiest grammatical understanding. Furthermore, she highlights that Cicero is linking his discussion to Clodius' profanation of the Bona Dea rites, which certainly were female only.
[127] Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.106-111.
[128] Spaeth (1996) 18, 104. Orlin also highlights the connection to the Thesmophoria (2010) 105-106.

This suggests a complex cultural mixing. The full passage of *De Legibus* 2.36-37 does not indicate clearly whether the Eleusinian mysteries or the Thesmophoria were models for the Roman cult.[129] I suggest that the confused, fluid understanding that Cicero presents, not seeming to mark a distinction between the Eleusinian mysteries and the rites at Rome, suggests that potentially both were influences. However, that only women were initiated in Rome may represent a need to control religious processes. Similar to the priestesses, the Senate defined a particular role for women over which they held oversight. I do not push this far, as these women could also participate in the cult at Eleusis if they wished. Genuine religious concerns, including the need to provide a way for women to worship a goddess in which they were potentially interested, were also a likely factor. Nevertheless, it is notable that the Senate were particularly concerned for creating religious roles for women that they could more easily direct than a far away mystery rite over which they had no authority. Whatever the case, the Senate impacted civic religion by creating new rituals relevant to the broader community, reinterpreting practices to make them applicable in Rome, possibly at a similar time to the introduction of the other Greek rites in the third century.[130] While this is speculative, at least by the late Republic, individuals could explore mystery rites if they wished, but only because civic authorities permitted it.

This likely resulted from genuine interest, but there may have been a perceived political benefit. The first century saw a high concentration of coins depicting Ceres. Some show a chariot, torches and snakes (Fig. 1).[131] This imagery is present in the myth of Persephone, which is linked with the mysteries.[132] The specifics of why this was beneficial are unclear, but representing elements of a particularly Greek cult at Eleusis (and perhaps a Roman) version was desirable. As Ceres had a long presence in Rome, displaying these elements may even highlight a connection to what came to be seen as "traditional", indicating that the senatorial ability to alter civic religion was successful.

[129] Bayet suggests the cult in Rome was influenced by the Eleusinian mysteries, although there does not seem to be substantial consensus (1951) (cited by Spaeth (1996) 18.
[130] See above for evidence from Livy.
[131] Examples from 48 BC issued by C. Vibius Pansa Caetronianus: RRC 449/2, 449/3.
[132] See Spaeth (1996) 61 for an overview of this symbology. See Bowden for the torches specifically in the Greek mysteries (2010) 26-27

While there were many facets of Ceres, she was ultimately the same goddess with the mystery elements integrated. Other coins depict Ceres with "more traditional" symbolism, such as the lituus or a wheat/corn motif, associated with the Augurs and agriculture respectively (Fig. 2).[133] While a definitive interpretation is difficult, Alföldi suggests that the issuers were attempting to emphasise the grain supply. This is logical given the association between Ceres, food and agriculture.[134] This highlights how Ceres was perceived as a "traditional" goddess that could be used as any other for political gain. Simultaneously, the varying imagery indicates how elite individuals could choose different elements of civic imagery. I explore this further in the next chapter, although, for now, this highlights a more personal way that people could engage with cults over which the Senate had oversight, connecting themselves to not just a civic deity, but a specific aspect of that deity.

Fig. 1. RRC 449/2 (above); 449/3 (below).

Obverse: Head of Liber.

Reverse: Ceres holding torches riding a chariot pulled by snakes.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate LIII
https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-449.2

https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-449/3

[133] RRC 351/1, RRC 494/44, RRC 467/1.
[134] Alföldi (1956) 93. Spaeth summarises Ceres' association, particularly with wheat/grain. She mentions Alföldi's view but does not comment on it specifically (1996) 16-17; (1994) 70-71. Spinelli also emphasises the connection to agricultural fertility (2017) 376.

Fig. 2. RRC 494/44 (above).

Obverse: Head of Ceres.

Reverse: Corn wreath.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate LIX https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-494.44

RRC 467/1 (below).

Obverse: Head of Ceres

Reverse: Symbols of "traditional" colleges of priests including the lituus.

Crawford (1974b) Plate LV

https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-467.1

This section has attempted to highlight how the Senate defined its authority in a multitude of ways by engaging different elements of a perceived Greek religion. This resulted from religious and political concerns, with the Senate acting as the final judge of how civic religion was altered. I apply similar ideas to Magna Mater. Both she and Ceres share similarities, both linked to fertility. However, they also seemed to have a deeper connection. Aulus Gellius stated that Patricians invited each other to the Megalensia, whereas the plebeians went to the Cerealia.[135] Furthermore, the temple of Magna Mater is located on the Palatine, a patrician area, while Ceres is located on the Aventine, associated with the Plebeians.[136] Interestingly, Pliny claimed that the grain harvest was better than it had been for a decade the year that Magna Mater came to Rome.[137] This may suggest some competition between Ceres and Magna Mater.[138] This evidence highlights a useful comparison to draw between the two. While there was an openness to the Greek rites of Ceres, Eastern elements of the cult of Magna Mater

[135] Aull. Gell. 18.2.10-13.
[136] Spaeth highlights these differences (1996) 93-94.
[137] Pliny. *HN*. 18.16.
[138] Pellam (2014) 89-90; Spaeth (1996) 96; These authors see Magna Mater as encroaching on the rites of traditional fertility and agricultural deities.

caused debates about Roman identity. The Senate retained the ability to introduce new elements, but struggled more so in this instance.

Negotiating "Traditional" Identity and Authority: Magna Mater

I have suggested that Ceres was politically useful partly because she had a deeply ingrained cult by the late Republic. There were other similar cults, such as that of Hercules, who was associated with Rome's mythical past through the story of driving Geryon's cattle through Italy.[139] The cultural connections between Greece and Rome, which increased as the empire expanded, make this unsurprising. This may be why Hercules became a topic of interest for first-century authors.[140] Magna Mater does not seem to match this pattern, however. Conceptually, the cult appears to have caused friction with a perceived "traditional" core of civic religion, as it contained aspects that were considered "Eastern". While Magna Mater was imported in 204 BC, I analyse the reception of this cult in the second and first centuries. She was likely introduced for both political and religious reasons, again highlighting the Senate's ability to decide what was acceptable. However, I follow others such as Orlin and Latham, who suggest that the cult caused concern for maintaining a sense of "Romanness" and develop this to suggest that individual members of the elite used the cult to reassert what they believed was "traditionally" acceptable.[141] In truth, just like Ceres, Magna Mater was a Roman goddess.[142] A false binary contrasting the "foreign" with the "Roman" allowed senators to reengage with the cult and assert its authority. It demarcated what they presented as acceptable religious practice, using "traditionalist" reactions to show a

[139] Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.35.2-3.
[140] Dion Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.41-42; Livy 1.7; Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.62; Wiseman (1995) 39.
[141] A concern for "Roman identity" is most clearly elucidated by Orlin, who points out that the "Roman" aspects of the goddess were emphasised, such as her connection to Troy (2010) 82. See also page 27. Latham analyses the impact on specifically male elite identities, arguing that the *galli* (eunuch) priests were something that members of the elite reacted against, although he points out that this perception changed over time (2012) 88-89. I will explore in relation to Catullus' poem, below.
[142] Roller argues that the "foreign" aspects were equally Roman (1999) 292 n. 34. This agrees with my argument elsewhere that a cult introduced into the civic system is inherently "Roman".

more, in their eyes, beneficial Roman cult.[143] In summary, the cult was a useful tool which allowed the Senate to mark what was Roman and what was not.

To understand the later reception of the cult, it is necessary to analyse the initial introduction, which seemed positive. Livy discussed a delegation sent to Pergamum to retrieve the goddess as well as the eventual temple dedication in 191 BC. Notably, he stated that the "best men"[144] were required for the arrival of Magna Mater's cult statue, advised by the *decemviri*.[145] Consequently, the narrative reinforces an early elite interest in the cult. While Livy wrote much later than the events he described, I accept these basic elements. The dedication of a temple in 191 BC attests that this interest was genuine, as does the reuse of Magna Mater's imagery.[146] In contrast, other gods, such as Isis, were introduced by, and popular with, non-elite citizens.[147] This popularity led to repression as the Senate acted to reinforce its authority.[148] Therefore, there was an openness to introducing some gods into the civic system, but only through official channels.[149] This may partly result from the usefulness of allowing civic leaders to highlight their religious authority. The acceptance, or not, of any deity creates a moment in which the Senate makes a decision, reinforcing to the broader community what was an accepted element of the civic system. Livy's reference to the public show of the

[143] I argue that the same occurred in relation to Greek philosophy. A perceived negativity to undertaking philosophical practices existed, which was useful to individuals in showing that they could make studying religious theory acceptable.
[144] *Viri optimi*.
[145] Livy 29.10-11; 36.36.
[146] Orlin (2007) 62. I discuss depictions of Magna Mater below.
[147] Evidence is sporadic, but Dio mentions that in 53 BC, temples built by individuals of their own accord were torn down (Dio 40.47). Valerius Maximus states that labourers refused to damage these temples, causing Aemilius Paullus to do this himself: Val. Max. 1.3.4. On this event and popularity with lower classes, see Orlin (2010) 206, n.52 and n. 53, who also points out that a late Republican inscription relating to the cult highlights several freedmen: CIL VI.2247. For more on this, see Takács (1995) 52-53, who states that these Freedmen were still rich. However, these may not be the "elite" that I defined in the introduction.
[148] Orlin (2008) 237; cf Takács (1995) 67. For alternative views, see Orlin (ibid) n.11. This is also similar to the Bacchanalia.
[149] While not a new goddess in herself, the "Greek" rites of Ceres exemplify this. The triumvirate wished to build Isis a temple, although it is unclear whether it was ever built: Dio 47.16. Asclepius is an earlier third-century example, being summoned on the advice of the sibylline oracles in 293 BC: Livy. 10.47.6-7. I will discuss Asclepius in greater depth in Chapter Six.

"best men" may suggest this was a moment when elite authority could be highlighted. This contrasts the later dislike of "foreign" elements in the cult.[150]

Scholars such as North and Orlin point out that after 200 BC there was much greater caution about introducing perceived "non-Roman" elements to religion, highlighting that temples in the second century tended to be dedicated to Italian deities.[151] The hesitancy in accepting new "foreign" cults, therefore, developed soon after Magna Mater's arrival. She was the last "foreign" deity introduced through consulting the sibylline books.[152] This change in perception did not mean there was no interest in outside influences, although potentially there was greater concern about Roman identity. Senatorial concerns may well have evolved, although the key principle remains that they were in charge of this process.

The latter caution will be discussed below. However, there may have been other political benefits to introducing Magna Mater. During this period, Rome interacted with the Hellenistic kingdoms, particularly the Attalids. Livy stressed the friendly relations with King Attalus in contrast with other states.[153] He also referenced the military partnership between Rome and Attalus during the war with Phillip V.[154] Possibly, Magna Mater was imported from his kingdom as a result of diplomatic interest, reconfirming the relationship between the two and showing respect to a friendly state.[155] This arrangement likely suited Attalus, as defending his kingdom would be easier with Rome

[150] Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.19.3. These views are analysed below.
[151] Orlin (2010) 180-181; North (1979) 9. Orlin posits that this resulted not from "conservatism" but a desire to show commonality with Italy. However, given the conceptual issues ancient authors present with perceived "foreignness" discussed in Chapters Three to Five, I suggest this was also a factor. For the year 200 BC as a turning point: North (1976) 8. Similar points are reiterated by Beard et al (1998a) 89-90. For the third century as a time of innovation, see page 84 (Ibid). Crawford and Coarelli list the temples vowed/built between 200 BC to 78 BC, which seems to support Orlin and North's hypothesis (1977) 20-22. For instance, temples to Jupiter and Juno were constructed, but comparatively few for "foreign" deities. Hercules is an exception.
[152] Satterfield (2012) 374.
[153] Livy 29.11.
[154] For example, see Eckstein's discussion (2002) 275-276.
[155] Burton (1996) 62. Erskine suggests that the importation of the cult allowed the Romans to show their commitment to the "East" (2001) 209.

as an ally.[156] As an ally must be perceived positively, it follows that the gods that support them must be as well, adding credence to the idea that there was a political dimension to the introduction. Furthermore, the Romans had a personal interest as Magna Mater was associated with Troy and Aeneas, and therefore, Rome's origins.[157] Roller argues that Republican depictions of pine cones depicted on terracotta votives echo Augustan poets who state that Aeneas and Magna Mater both came to Rome on ships made from sacred pine, intertwining their stories.[158] A simpler example is Magna Mater's official name: *Magna Mater Deorum Idaea*.[159] A genuine religious interest in the goddess and her relation to this distant past may therefore have influenced the decision to introduce her. Any concerns about "foreign" elements were presumably outweighed by political usefulness and a real trust that she would aid the Romans, explaining the initial positive reaction. This is indicated by the Sibylline Oracle's statement that her introduction would lead to Hannibal's defeat.[160] While specific religious reasons are harder to discern, there were also likely other processes that influenced the introduction.[161] The movement of people between cultures brought new religious ideas, such as the cult of Isis.[162]

The Senate appeared to have been successful in integrating Magna Mater as she was depicted on coins like any other state deity. The first surviving example dates to 102 BC where she is paired with Victory on the opposite side, riding a chariot (Fig. 3).[163] From

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[156] Allen (1983) 74; cf Bowden, who points out that Attalus and the Romans shared a common enemy (2010) 94.
[157] For examples of this association, see Wilhelm (1988); Orlin (2002) 7; Burton (1966) 43
[158] See Roller (1999) 279; Ov. *Fast*. 4.273-274; Verg. *Aen*. 9.85-89 I discuss this association more substantially below. Erskine, who discusses the associations between Magna Mater and Troy points out that only these imperial authors explicitly make the connection known. Given the earlier republican evidence, however, I suggest it may still have been an element in the cult introduction.
[159] Bowden highlights this (2010) 94. Burton points out that Cicero and Livy used the name *Mater Idaea,* but is less convinced that a specific association with Troy, was the aim of the introduction (1996), particularly page 4. I see no reason to discount that there was a perception that Magna Mater was linked to Rome's ancestry, given the reference to her association with Troy in all these authors.
[160] Livy. 29.10.4-6
[161] The frequent discussions within our sources attest to an ongoing fascination with the cult.
[162] Takács (1995) 5-6; Wortham (2006) 104. For similar ideas applied to Hercules, see Orlin (2010) 62, and for Mithras, see Martin, who argues that the spread of Mithras occurred due to (re)deployments of the army (2015) 126. While these cults are beyond the chronological scope of the thesis, they serve to show how the movement of people was able to impact civic identity.
[163] RRC 322/1.

this point, infrequent representations occur such as in 78 and 43 BC showing Magna Mater on a throne pulled by lions (Fig. 4).[164] The pairing with victory provides particularly strong evidence for the importance placed on Magna Mater's role in civic religion.[165] L. Postumius Megellus constructed the temple to Victory, dedicated in 294 BC.[166] This was where Magna Mater was initially housed, with this coin suggesting the association with an important pre-existing cult continued.[167] This was presumably a deliberate choice due to the circumstances of the introduction during the Hannibalic War.[168] That both goddesses were presented, albeit separately, on chariots potentially indicates an association between the two.

This may have helped the Senate legitimise Magna Mater's position, as Victory was an important religious theme explicitly associated with central civic gods, indicated by many, such as Jupiter, gaining the epithet "Victor".[169] Fears and Orlin argue that a "theology of Victory" developed as a result of this and military success, culminating in substantial numbers of associated cults.[170] Many of these were housed on the Palatine, alongside Magna Mater. For example, Octavian dedicated a temple of Apollo next to hers.[171] This temple may have had associations with the victory at Actium, indicated by Propertius' description of "Actian Apollo".[172] The initial housing of the cult stone in the

[164] 78 BC: RRC 385/4. 43 BC: RRC 491/2.
[165] Roller emphasises that this civic role of Magna Mater was reinforced through a connection to victory (1999) 289-290. Wiseman argues that there was a close association between the two, suggesting that the temples of both goddesses were built on an identical terrace: Wiseman (1981) 46.
[166] Livy 10.33.9, although traditionally the temple dates to the time of Evander Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.32.5.
[167] Plutarch mentions that a priest came to Rome from Pessinus claiming that the goddess had informed him that the Romans would be victorious in war. (Plut. *Mar.* 17.5). Burton cites this as evidence that there was a continuing connection with Pessinus, to which I add that the idea of victory also remained present in the cult: Burton (1996) 53-54.
[168] Bøgh makes this explicit, saying that Magna Mater was introduced to save the city (2012) 61. Burton agrees (1996). This seems to be the general scholarly consensus, although the introduction was relatively late in the Hannibalic War. I do not think, however, that the association with victory is satisfactorily reconciled as a coincidence.
[169] See Weinstock (1971) 92 for a summary. Jupiter is an example of a deity that gained the epithet "victor", explicitly connected to imagery of Victory: Hill (1960) 116-117. Hill discusses imperial evidence, although RRC 531/1 issued in 39 BC, potentially depicts Jupiter Victor.
[170] Fears (1981) 773-777. Orlin follows this, pointing out that Fears is using later examples (2010) 60-61. My only modification here is to associate this specifically with the Palatine, although there are representations elsewhere. Orlin does mention the Palatine.
[171] Dio 53.1.34
[172] "*Actius hinc traxit Phoebus monumenta*" Prop. 4.6.67-69. See Hekster and Rich (2006) 163-164 for this argument.

temple of Victory must also have been a clear link between the two goddesses.[173] I, therefore, suggest that Magna Mater also formed part of Fears' "theology". Potentially, this was coincidental as the Palatine had religious significance regardless of associations with Victory. However, that the area around Magna Mater was filled with references to military success is significant. It seems she was perceived to have some role in maintaining the empire and was given a similar status to other key deities. The temple could ultimately have been placed elsewhere, away from a geographic connection to Victory if desired.[174] Members of the elite may therefore have had a clear sense of Magna Mater's purpose. This emphasises how the cult, when directed by the Senate, could represent key principles that they wished to reinforce and why it was deemed acceptable. The cult also formed part of a physical representation of senatorial authority and military successes.

There are other ways that the temple reinforced the Senate's authority to emphasise what it saw as important. The Romans understood the Palatine as the area where the early settlers of Rome built their huts, including the hut of Romulus.[175] This area, therefore, had important historical connections to Rome's past. Magna Mater became part of this, as I have highlighted, through her associations with Troy. [176] Therefore, the Senate may have used the cult to assert what it perceived as a key element of Rome's history. This was reinforced when the temple was destroyed and consequently reconstructed by Augustus in AD 3.[177] While a later example, Octavian's interest may highlight how the area was useful for connecting his lineage to Troy.[178] Magna Mater was potentially important as she enhanced the prestige of the ruling class that connected

[173] Livy 29.14.13-14.
[174] For example, see Asclepius discussed in Chapter Six.
[175] For instance, see Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.79.4 who expressly mentions the same area.
[176] For the importance of the goddess as a connection to Troy, see Bell (2009) 82 and Nauta (n. 200 in this chapter); Vermaseren also highlights this and the proximity to the hut of Romulus (1977) 41. Both the literary sources and archaeological material support the view that there was a particular connection to an ancient idea of Roman/Trojan identity.
[177] 110-109 BC: Val. Max. 1.8.11. AD 3: RG 19; Ovid. *Fast.* 4.348.
[178] Vermaseren (1977) 42. See Roller for the importance of the connection between Troy and Magna Mater (1999) 299-303. While she focusses on the *Aeneid,* it is reasonable that similar ideas were circulating in the late Republic.

itself to a respected distant past.[179] We know that an association with decisions made in the past was a concern for elite authors due to Cicero's reference to "the wish of our fathers" concerning the Greek aspects of Ceres. The same likely seems true here. This could only be achieved because Magna Mater was seen as "foreign." Notably, only the Senate could emphasise these elements by deciding where the cult was located. This may explain why the goddess never lost favour. Ultimately, the Senate incorporated the goddess successfully, emphasising aspects they felt were important for the whole community, reinforcing their position as the central religious authority. This continued throughout the period into the principate, regardless of some individuals perceiving some elements negatively, as discussed below.

Magna Mater was, therefore, associated with the survival of the state. The depictions of lions on RRC 385/4 suggest that there was additional success in introducing "Eastern/Phrygian" elements, although there are differences in how individuals understood this imagery. Lucretius referred to the Greeks as depicting Magna Mater with lions: "It is she whom the poets of ancient Greece represented as enthroned in a chariot drawn by lions".[180] This conflicts with later evidence from the *Aeneid* in which the lions are specifically called "Phrygian".[181] As the lions were a central aspect of the cult in Asia Minor before they were introduced to Greece, some may likely have understood these depictions as "foreign".[182] Different individuals could hold either view in the late Republic, hinting at the personal ways a person could choose to understand the cult. Additionally, this increased the number of symbols associated with Magna Mater that a coin issuer could select from. However, these depictions and differing personal interpretations were only possible because Magna Mater was an official importation.

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[179] Erskine downplays the importance of Troy in the self-image of Republican Romans, but his discussion of later sources highlights how Magna Mater was thought to be associated with Roman traditions. (2001) 43; 210-211. I suggest that this is not a coincidence, and that Magna Mater was important, at least in part due to her connections to Troy.

[180] *Hanc veteres Graium docti cecinere poetae sedibus in curru biiugos agitare leones* Lucr. 2.600-601. Spinelli argues that the lions are originally Phrygian: (2017) 369. However, this imagery had also long been present in Greece: Vermarseren (1977) 14-15. This recalls the confusion of the interpretation of Magna Mater as either "Hellenised" or "Eastern".

[181] Verg. *Aen*. 10.156-157.

[182] For the importance of lions in the cult in Asia Minor: Bøgh (2012) 42, 39 n.8.

This “individual use” through issuing coins, also discussed above, can be related to specific examples. Summers highlights that RRC 385/4 is part of a broader series of coins minted by M. Volteius, commemorating various festivals for which he was responsible as Aedile. Summers concludes, based also on depictions of Jupiter (RRC 385/1) and Hercules (385/2) who were also associated with games, that this may have been an electioneering strategy (Fig. 5).[183] While these gods could have been a personal preference, the importance of civic deities in first-century religious debates and competitions such as Cicero’s speeches makes a deliberate strategy likely. [184] Roller and Crawford also suggest that RRC 491/2 which depicts Magna Mater pulled on a chariot of lions, issued 43 BC, alluded to Octavian’s forthcoming military victories due to the association between her and the goddess Victory (Fig. 6).[185] While Octavian could potentially have depicted Victory herself, this is possible given the connection between the two goddesses. Therefore, individuals utilised imagery of Magna Mater for personal benefit. This still occurred within the civic framework. All the imagery that Volteius presented was well-established within the civic system. Therefore, individuals could select between different gods provided that the Senate permitted them.[186]

Fig. 3. RRC 322/1b.

Obverse: Head of Magna Mater

Reverse: Victory on a chariot

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate XLII
https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-322.1

[183] Summers (1996) 344. The political use of coins should not be overstated, as the religious element was also important: Naiden (2003). These views can be combined to suggest that both political and religious interpretations are valid for the same coin – there is no reason why both cannot be emphasised.
[184] As in the note above, Summers only tends to focus on the political rather than the religious aspect. Additionally, Voletius may have just been interested in showing respect to a civic deity.
[185] Roller (1999) 290; Crawford (1974a) 500-501.
[186] Burden-Strevens highlights that the issuers of coins were often ambitious and acted independently, citing the example of Brutus minting coins depicting Libertas and his ancestor who drove out the kings in 55 BC (2022) 114; 129-130; RRC 433/1. This is clear imagery that reinforces both himself and the importance of the Senate. Zanin also highlights that members of the elite used coins to showcase their personal identity while simultaneously reflecting the broader political culture (2026, 6-7). How individuals utilised coins is also discussed below in Chapter Four.

Fig. 4. RRC 385/4.

Obverse: Head of unknown deity.

Reverse: Magna Mater in a chariot pulled by lions.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate XLIX

Fig. 5 RRC 385/1 (above).

Obverse: Head of Jupiter.

Reverse: Capitoline Temple.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate XLIX
https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-385.1

RRC 385/2 (below).

Obverse: Head of Hercules.

Reverse: Boar.

Crawford (1974b) Plate XLIX

https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-385.2

Fig. 6. RRC 491/2.

Obverse: Head of disputed deity.

Reverse: Magna Mater riding a chariot pulled by lions.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate LVIII
https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-491.2

Therefore, there were positive perceptions of the cult initially and in the late Republic. However, later literary sources often gave a hostile view. Members of the elite presented a separation between perceived "foreign" and "traditional" elements. Dionysius, the Greek rhetorician, discusses this:

> the praetors perform sacrifices and celebrate games in her honour every year according to the Roman customs, but the priest and priestess of the goddess are Phrygians, and it is they who carry her image in procession through the city.[187]

Dionysius also claimed that no Roman citizen walked in the procession. He also seemed to imply that the "foreign" rites were not an official part of civic religion, as he excluded them from "officially accepted" practices:

> Even though Rome has introduced rites from abroad resulting from oracles, it celebrates them in accordance with its own traditions, banishing all mythical adornment. The rites of the Idaean goddess are an example.[188]

Other deities were reinterpreted for a Roman audience. [189] For instance, as I touched on above, Hercules was linked to Italy through the story of Geryon's cattle. However, Dionysius' account is a more dramatic separation of "foreign" and "Roman". I do not accept Dionysius' comments are accurate, as he perceived Rome as a Greek city, and citizenship was a theme of his writing.[190] Possibly, this caused him to worry about elements beyond what he saw as a "true" core of Graeco-Roman identity. The adoption of "foreign" elements contrasts his presentation of Rome as an adopter of "sensible" Greek ideas. Satterfield further questions Dionysius' account, pointing out that the Senate officially permitted the rites to occur in Rome, while Latham suggests that the cult had a "manufactured foreignness".[191] Nothing in Dionysius' descriptions of the cult implies that the rites existed outside of the civic system in a practical sense. The

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[187] θυσίας μὰν γὰρ αὐτῇ καὶ ἀγῶνας ἄγουσιν ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος οἱ στρατηγοὶ κατὰ τοὺς Ῥωμαίων νόμους, ἱερᾶται δὲ αὐτῆς ἀνὴρ Φρὺξ καὶ γυνὴ Φρυγία καὶ περιάγουσιν ἀνὰ τὴν πόλιν. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.19.3-5.

[188] δημοσίᾳ, ὃ πολλαῖς ἤδη συνέβη παθεῖν, ἀλλὰ καὶ εἴ τινα κατὰ χρησμοὺς ἐπεισηγάγετο ἱερά, τοῖς ἐαυτῆς αὐτὰ τιμᾷ νομίμοις ἅπασαν ἐκβαλοῦσα τερθρείαν μυθικήν, ὥσπερ τὰ 4τῆς Ἰδαίας θεᾶς ἱερά. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.19.3-4.

[189] For the reinterpretation of other deities, see Takács (1995) 10; 2.

[190] For the mixing of Greek and Roman identities and Rome as a Greek city, see De Jonge and Hunter (2019) 6-11; Hill (1961).

[191] Satterfield (2012) 373-374; Latham (2014/2015). See also Roller's arguments for the civic importance of Magna Mater: n. 165 in this chapter. However, there may have been some legal separation between "foreign" and Roman. For an older view that the cult was separated, see Cumont (1911) 52-53. For more recent arguments, see below, n. 208 in this chapter.

"Phrygians" he mentions, even if perceived negatively, participated in a procession as any other religious official would. Consequently, I follow Satterfield and Latham's arguments, which indicate that the cult was implicitly Roman regardless of the views of first-century authors, although I add that Dionysius potentially reflected a real view of the cult that resonated with his audience. Another reason for his discussion may be his attempt to present a unique interpretation of a civic deity. I suggest below that similar presentations of aspects of the cult as "foreign" allowed individuals to present their personal views on practices while still respecting civic authorities who wished for these rites to continue. Dionysius' approach allowed him to criticise certain civic elements by presenting them as "other" while insulating other aspects that he redefined as "acceptable." This was necessary as Magna Mater had to be shown respect as a civic deity. I suggest that similar trends are identifiable in other authors.

Catullus and Lucretius provide evidence that individual authors came to different conclusions about Magna Mater, although they needed to align with the religious consensus, as Clodius and Cicero had to do in their conflicts. In poem 63, Catullus emphasised the "non-Roman" elements of the cult, such as the castration of the Galli, the eunuch priests of Magna Mater.[192] He also discussed the noise and implied that the cult created "delirious madness".[193] Notably, a substantial section is dedicated to Attis' regret for leaving his country behind: "My eyes long to turn their gaze to you, while for a short space my mind is free from wild frenzy."[194] However, it is unclear whether the poem represents Catullus' feelings about Magna Mater specifically. Scholars such as Nauta and Miller argue that she was a stand-in for Lesbia, the individual with whom Catullus had a relationship, who appears in many poems, as she is also characterised as causing madness.[195] Furthermore, Catullus used a Greek model in his poetry. Hellenistic writers were unsympathetic towards the cult.[196] Despite this, it may be

[192] 63.1-10.
[193] *rabidus furor.* 63.38.
[194] *cupit ipsa pupula ad te sibi derigere aciem, rabie fera carens dum breve tempus animus est.* 63.56-57.
[195] Nauta (2004) 598. Nauta also mentions that Catullus referred to marriage throughout poems 61-68, perhaps suggesting that he had his own love life in mind (2004) 597. See also Miller for the "unambiguous" connection between Lesbia and Magna Mater (2008) 129. See also Lefèvre (1998) 321; See Roller for Lesbia causing madness (1999) 306.
[196] Solmsen (1978) 77-79.

presumed he discussed themes that made sense to his Roman audience. To be a successful poet necessitated discussing what his audience found relevant and relatable.

Catullus displayed why there could be an apprehensive attitude towards the cult. The castration episode represents an action outside Roman norms.[197] It caused a loss of masculinity and "Romanness": Catullus refers to Attis as a woman.[198] Potentially, there were concerns about a loss of dignity in the religious world.[199] The poem as a whole may display a concern about Roman identity.[200] This is implied by the fear in the above quotation that cult participants may abandon Rome. However, while providing his personal views, Catullus was unlikely to be attempting to alter civic religion. This was not possible as the Senate had the final decision on what was permissible.[201] Potentially, he presented the same false dichotomy as that found in Dionysius's passage, showing his peers that he found "foreign" elements unacceptable without criticising traditional practices beyond extreme examples such as castration. He did this through highlighting different elements in his poem. Notably, he did not criticise civic practices such as the games or the "Roman" traditions which Dionysius described. He is, therefore, giving a personal view, subtly criticising a civic cult by presenting some aspects as "other" while insulating other elements, presenting his argument in a different way from other authors.

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[197] The perception that music and dance were not acceptable is difficult to accept fully, as these were aspects of other cults, suggesting that authors who describe this are falsely highlighting a "foreign" element or took issue with the form it took. For dancing in Roman cults, see Fless and Moede (2007) 252-253. Lares, for example, were often depicted as dancing: Flower (2017) 171.

[198] 63.27. Latham argues that the association with effeminacy and "non-Romanness" developed fully in the early empire but was still present in the late Republic (2012) 105 and 120. While a tangential example, the requirement that the Vestal Virgins remained chaste highlights the importance of bodily (or in this instance sexual) purity in religious processes: Schultz (2010) 530. The necessity of ritual purity is also suggested by the need to repeat sacrifice in light of any aberrations: Scheid (2007) 266.

[199] Gordon (1990b) 248.

[200] Nauta concludes this based on the importance of the connection between Magna Mater and Troy. Nauta also convincingly argues that this allowed "exotic" elements to be incorporated into Roman religion (2004) 620-621. Catullus does not link Magna Mater to Troy as others, like Virgil, do, but he does mention Troy in other poems, cf.68a.86-91. Contra: Gordon (Ibid), who sees the cult as separated from civic religion.

[201] Catullus was likely from an Equestrian background: Wiseman and Benz (2005). While still falling into my definition of "elite" (see the introductory chapter), he personally could not decide what was an official aspect of the religious system

Lucretius also aligned himself with civic norms but presented a different interpretation. He discussed the procession of Magna Mater, highlighting the sounds and sights, stating that learned poets sing about her.[202] Overall, he was more positive, although he had ulterior motives. As an Epicurean, he suggested that these practices were removed from the truth.[203] However, he did not criticise the worship of Magna Mater for its perceived "foreignness" and chose not to focus on aspects some saw as problematic. Instead, it is to present his arguments against religious practice more generally.[204] His choice to analyse Magna Mater may even indicate that she was an important deity, representative of the civic system. He mentioned that the poets were Greek and discussed an armed band called the "curetes", highlighting that this is a Greek term. The presentation of cultic elements as Greek may result from Rome's proclivity for looking to Greece for religious models when dealing with "foreign" gods.[205] Therefore, he discussed the "more acceptable" elements mentioned by Dionysius, aligning himself with civic authorities in taking a positive view of a "Romanised" cult. This is a different approach to Catullus, who disliked the soundscape.[206] Individuals could choose different elements to support or argue against. Both engaged in a false separation or disregard of "foreign" aspects, equally indicating a need to align with a civic cult. Ultimately, the cult was part of the religious system, and so members of the elite had to show it respect. Marking aspects as not "Roman" and thus outside of civic religion may have permitted a methodology for presenting negative views while avoiding showing the cult disrespect.

Dionysius' claims regarding the dual nature of the cult may be an attempt to achieve this. Varro also fits these trends. According to Augustine, he mentioned the Galli,

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[202] Lucr. 2.600-645.
[203] See Solmsen for a brief summary and discussion (1978) 83-85.
[204] Discussed further in Chapter Five.
[205] Burkert sees the cult as being particularly Greek (1987) 2. Given the complexity of cultural mixing, it is fair to say there are Greek models. However, I modify this by seeing the cult as Roman with Greek and Eastern elements. When a cult is introduced into Rome, it becomes Roman. For the cult in Greece, see Bowden (2010) 88-92. For the cult in Rome as the product of the Greek East, see Bowden (2010) 98.
[206] See Latham (2012) 97-98 for the sounds of the cult as well as seeing this version of Cybele/Magna Mater as Romanised.

saying, “They created Galli to serve this goddess.”[207] Varro is discussing Roman religion, so the nebulous reference to some other “they” makes little sense. If Roman authorities were responsible, Varro would presumably make this clear. This may result from the passage being an isolated quote embedded in Augustine’s text, but it is nonetheless a potential separation of “foreign” and “Roman”. Rolle argues that Varro’s references to Magna Mater focused particularly on the “Roman” aspects, excluding the “foreign”.[208] Rolle bases this argument on Varro’s desire to create a canon of Roman religion as he laid out what he perceived “correct” religion to be, including listing Roman and Italic deities.[209] Varro’s interest in various gods and practices indicates this is possible, although I modify this as, in reality, the “foreign” was also part of the civic system. Augustine mentions that Varro described Magna Mater’s companion lions, which other authors describe as expressly “Phrygian”, suggesting he included a “foreign” aspect of the cult. He also mentions the timbrel, which Dionysius includes in his description of the “foreign” rites.[210] While Varro’s reaction was, therefore, complex, I suggest that authors separated different elements of the cult so that they could discuss civic religion positively while criticising a faux “foreignness” that they claimed to dislike. This “othering” of aspects of the cult, potentially, allowed them to criticise civic religion while presenting themselves as respectful.

Therefore, many authors had differing and complex reactions to the cult. As it formed an aspect of the civic system, it continued to be respected, as indicated by Lucretius’ description and Dionysius’ claims of a “traditional” approach, although they also presented independent views. Physical depictions and remains suggest that

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[207] *Quod Gallos huic deae ut servirent fecerunt* August. *De civ. D.* 7.24.

[208] Rolle (2022) 268. In the cult generally, there may have been some legal separation between “foreign” and Roman, allowing “respectable” elements to be discussed without the other. Latham is tentative but suggests that Dionysius’ account of separated rites may be true (2014/2015) 53. Rolle sees that the cult does have a dual status. Cf. with Satterfield’s more cautious approach (2012). Other authors also failed to discuss castration, suggesting that they did not wish to discuss specifically “foreign” aspects (Tougher 2021, 14-15). Tougher interestingly highlights how it is not clear that Galli were castrated. However, there does seem to be a conceptual issue with them. Latham also points out that Varro glosses over problematic aspects such as the castration of the priest (2012) 97-98.

[209] Rolle (2022) 267. This is explored further in Chapter Five.

[210] Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.19.4. Dionysius uses the word τύμπανο while Varro uses *tympanum*. While possibly not exactly the same, both can reasonably be translated as “drum”, which may mean they are discussing the same instrument.

"foreignness" was accepted regardless of the views of individual authors, although there was some potential separation of perceived "foreign" aspects, allowing the Senate to exert its authority. The topography of the cult and restrictions on participation also highlight how civic authorities engaged the cult to determine what was acceptable.

Cicero stated that shows in honour of Magna Mater took place on the Palatine "under the very eyes of the Great Mother".[211] This was a logical place to hold the games, as cultic activities often took place outside temples. However, Latham argues that cult activities were intentionally restricted to a piazza in front of the temple, segregating even the Roman aspects of the cult.[212] These interpretations can be combined. The games were held in this location as it was a natural choice, although, in response to negative perceptions, the restriction of the cult to the Palatine was potentially seen as beneficial.[213] Cicero also stated that only free men should be present, whereas Clodius allowed slaves (and possibly foreigners) to attend.[214] This suggests that thought was given to how different elements might be physically segregated, allowing the Senate authority over who could attend, at the very least, even if we do not accept Latham's view.[215] This was not unique to Magna Mater. I discussed above the female-only rites for Ceres. Additionally, the "foreign" aspect may have played a role, given its constant emphasis in various sources. Whatever the case, the Senate seemingly determined the physical limits of the rites, still permitting what some perceived as "foreign", but, equally, expressing control over them.

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[211] *in ipso matris magnae conspectu Megalesibus* Cic. *Har resp.* 24.

[212] Latham discusses convincing evidence for restrictions on the foreign elements of the cult, such as a specific area for rituals (2012) 93-94. See also Beard et al, who suggest that cultic activities were restricted to the temple (1998a) 96-98.

[213] Thus, while I disagree with Latham's argument that the cult was restricted when it was first introduced, this makes more sense when considering the cult in the first century due to the increasing suspicion after the "foreign" importations of the third century (see above).

[214] Cicero's focus was on contrasting free men with slaves. Cic. *Har Resp.* 24-25. However, Vermarseren suggests that Cicero's "free men" restriction implies that specifically foreigners were also excluded (1977) 125. I am unconvinced due to the lack of evidence, but this is certainly possible.

[215] Livy also stated that the rites were overseen by the aediles, indicating state involvement in regulating relevant practices on behalf of the people: 34.54, 36.36. This is further evidenced by the coins of M. Voletius I discussed above, although Magna Mater was, of course, not the only deity to be treated in this way.

Archaeological evidence provides evidence for non-elite interest that the Senate did not necessarily control. Regardless of the tensions surrounding the cult, Magna Mater, seemingly, was adopted by the broader populace. Relatively small terracotta votive representations of Attis, the companion of Magna Mater, dating to the first century BC, found on the Palatine, seem to indicate this.[216] Beard et al and Vermarseren suggest that these objects indicate that the cult led to the introduction of elements outside senatorial influence, as Attis was not officially recognised until the imperial period.[217] A "foreign" deity arrived and was consequently reinterpreted through its use in votive practices, a normal part of everyday religion. I explore votive offerings in greater depth in Chapter Six, where I highlight that we should not assume that they were non-elite dedications only, although many likely originated in this way. This reinterpretation of an official cult, therefore, indicates how the broader community may have had some independence. Votive practices were a long-standing pan-Mediterranean practice in Rome.[218] By worshipping Attis in this way, non-elite individuals integrated the cult into the existing system, which contrasted sharply with how later elite authors engaged in the cult and its related practices, generating a different way of showing respect to a god.[219]

It is equally notable that non-elite individuals engaged with a specifically civic cult on this personal level. In a sense, ordinary people adhered to civic identities, adopting a state cult, but altered it in new ways. They were able to take a particular deity and practice, utilising them to fit their own religious needs, seemingly unconcerned with perceived "foreignness". As I also discuss in Chapter Six, votives were not often

[216] See Romanelli (1963) for a deeper analysis of these votives. For an example of the figurines, see Vermaseren (1997) plate 34.
[217] Beard et al. (1998a) 98. Vermarseren does not state that the Senate failed to anticipate the use of Attis but does point out that there was no official recognition until the Imperial period (1977) 43. Latham argues that there was a lack of elite control (2012) 95. For further examples and the relatively small size of the votives, see Beard et al. (1998b) 48. Arguments from silence are dangerous, although if Attis was an important aspect in the Republic, he would likely be mentioned more often than just Catullus, given the interest in the cult across several other Republican authors. Bremmer (2004) 566-567; Fear (1996) 41 and n. 28.
[218] See Chapter Six for the votive tradition in Italy.
[219] Alvar points out this contrast (2008) 245-246. Summers also seems to perceive the votives as a Roman practice that just happened to use a foreign deity. However, he overall downplays the importance of Attis in Rome (1996) 358.

discussed in written texts, so we cannot know if members of the elite felt uncomfortable about their lack of oversight. However, that there was no known attempt to restrict these practices indicates that, while members of the elite attempted to demonstrate what was permissible, non-elite individuals retained the ability to explore practices relevant to them.

The Senate's desire to determine what was acceptable can also be discerned in physical representations of the cult, which suggest both "foreign" and "traditional" elements. For instance, a large statue of the goddess was found at the Palatine temple in the nineteenth century. While possibly an Augustan work, it is also typical of Republican examples displaying the goddess as static. This contrasts the active goddess suggested by the procession and Catullus' characterisations, although it may have been drawn from a Pergamene prototype.[220] The cult statue, which Livy described as a stone, also indicates a mixing of "foreign" and "Roman". Some later authors claim that this was inserted into the face of a statue.[221] As these accounts were written by considerably later Christian authors who took a dim view of pagan practices, they may be untrustworthy. Republican authors did not mention this, and I have pointed out that there was an interest in cults being "authentic", although this could represent a reinterpretation for a Roman audience. However, it is unclear why these authors would falsify what the statue looked like, as this does not alter the arguments they presented. Arnobius stated when referring to the statue: "we all see", which perhaps suggests he saw it himself. Ultimately, if the statue existed in this form, it echoes how an Eastern goddess was brought to Rome and enshrined in a case of Roman practices.[222] Remodelling and reinterpretation to aid understanding should be expected. At least, all these sources indicate an awareness of the "foreign" attributes. Thus, the Senate deliberately introduced aspects "alien" to Rome while expressing its authority through making depictions and practices "civic," regulating and controlling physical representations.

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[220] Roller discusses this example, highlighting that Republican examples were also depicted as static (1999) 314-315.
[221] Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 7.49; Prudent. *Perist.* 10.154-160.
[222] Satterfield (2012) 385; Borgeaud (2004) 60.

Conclusion

Throughout the Republic, the Senate was concerned with maintaining a perceived "traditional" civic religion. This was the expression of religion through rites perceived as Roman. Senatorial authority was central to this. This continued into the late Republic, as shown by the respect Cicero had for the Senate and priestly colleges, as well as the maintenance of public rites. However, the introduction of perceived "foreign" cults altered civic religion. The Senate, as the central religious authority, was able to make these cults "Roman" by integrating them into the civic system from political necessity and religious interest. Members of the elite negotiated these elements, attempting to emphasise aspects they thought of as acceptable and useful, allowing them to provide their personal thoughts. The Senate ultimately decided what formed part of the overall civic system, to which these authors had to adhere. Ultimately, while new, "foreign" gods came to Rome, senatorial authority determined what was and was not a civic identity, although, as suggested by the reactions to Magna Mater, there was not always a consensus.

This analysis is complicated, as surviving sources are often not contemporary to the events they discuss, for instance, Livy's discussion of women's activity in the Punic War and the cult introductions discussed throughout the chapter. Livy may have based his narrative on earlier sources that are no longer extant, lending some credibility to his claims, although this is difficult to determine. However, all these sources provide a view as to how members of the elite believed that religion should be directed. While the Senate and members of the elite more generally are presented as key authorities, this is not antithetical to individual action. Within civic cults, there were choices as to what aspects to participate in, such as the Eleusinian mysteries. No source mentioned that someone had to participate, but it became a popular aspect that could be selected. The gravestones of the priestess of Ceres and the votives depicting Attis attest that individuals could also highlight aspects of cults important to them and worship in ways that were not proscribed by the Senate.

Therefore, there was a complex interplay of individual action and civic pressures. Cicero and Clodius had to conform to the religious norms that existed in society, as did the broader community. However, in addition, individuals retained the ability to explore other aspects of religion that were permitted within the civic system. This is suggested by coinage, which displayed a variety of different symbolism, indicating that a level of personal choice was built into the system. A similar process occurred among the authors who discussed Magna Mater. Catullus, Lucretius, and Varro took different viewpoints on various aspects of the cult, presenting independent views. The next chapter will examine individual explorations of religion further, while also suggesting the possibility that non-civic religion was also an area that interested people could engage with.

Chapter Four: Individual Identity and Divination

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to emphasise the ability of individuals to select from a variety of practices in divination during the first and second centuries BC. In the introduction, I laid out my definition of civic religion and modern scholarship that has begun highlighting the individual. Particularly important is Liebeschuetz's contention that religion was important for allowing people to understand their place in the universe, which Rüpke pushes further, linking religion to identity. He argues that divination was key to the idea of self-care.[1] As I indicated in the introduction, I do not argue that the individual existed in opposition to civic religion.[2] Instead, individuals could select a range of practices that existed on a spectrum. Some may have been more acceptable to civic authorities, while others were less so. This means that civic religion allowed individual emphasis, although it could also act as a controlling force.

Therefore, I will reinterpret similar themes that I discussed in the previous chapter, applying these theories to divination rather than state cults. State divination remained an important religious option. However, simultaneously, individuals from all parts of society could, if they wished, take part in practices that existed beyond the boundaries of civic religion. I argue in Section One that civic religion remained important to individual members of the elite who utilised civic imagery and divination in political conflicts to emphasise that they had divine favour. I advance similar arguments that I presented concerning Clodius and Cicero's conflict to be the most pious, but further emphasise how individuals could act within civic religion to achieve their aims. Nevertheless, civic religion remained able to constrain these individuals to an extent as they needed to align with the religious consensus.

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[1] Liebeschuetz (1979) 6-7; Rüpke (2013b) 22.

[2] Scheid highlights that there was a range of practices and that Roman religion was not a unified doctrine. Individuals could emphasise aspects of religion relevant to them if they wished (2015a) 59, 62-63. That the individual was not opposed to civic religion: (2015a) 44. Sourvinou-Inwood's discussion of the individual that I discuss in the introduction is applicable here (2000b) 44-45. Simultaneously, civic religion was the basic framework within which religion was expressed (2000a) 13. Cf. Burkert (1985). Religion is intrinsically linked to the civic community: Scheid (2015a) 50-51.

Section two argues that elite politicians had access to a range of other practices, including haruspicy and astrology. Haruspicy had a civic dimension as the Senate used it. However, the priesthood retained unusual characteristics, and there may have been *haruspices* that did not form part of the official *ordo*.[3] Astrology, against which there was legislation, was more clearly outside civic religion. Similar to the cult of Magna Mater, there seems to have been a reaction against a perceived or constructed "foreignness" that marked the practice as unsuitable. Additionally, individuals such as Sulla used astrologers in their retinues, highlighting that practices outside of civic religion were utilised. The third section continues to look at astrology, suggesting it, with other forms of divination, was relatively accessible to poorer individuals.[4] While they participated in civic practices, they maintained the ability to take part in religious experiences that members of the elite, at least outwardly, viewed disparagingly. Despite restrictions, astrologers were consulted in broader society, suggesting individuals pushed against constraints imposed by civic religion.

While I suggest that members of the elite had limited power to prevent astrology, it is possible that they did not truly wish to. As with the cults discussed in the previous chapter, attacks were performative, and the expulsions were a statement of intent rather than a methodology for control. I argue, nevertheless, that astrology existed beyond civic religion. The Senate did not make use of official astrologers, for instance. However, this may mean that civic religion, albeit tacitly, permitted individuals to participate in religions seen as "foreign" or "other". Members of the elite privileged civic religion as they could present themselves as religious authorities, but the approach of Nigidius Figulus and the other individuals discussed in this chapter suggests this was

[3] As will be discussed in later sections, haruspicy occupied a complex place in Roman religion. However, it may have retained some Etruscan character, Turfa discusses Cicero's characterisation of them as something" foreign" although suggests they were generally perceived as "native": Turfa (2012 33). They also, however, point out that graves of priests in the first century used Etruscan words: (ibid). 48. At least some of the *haruspices* at Rome were ethnically Etruscan (ibid.) 33. See also Linderski (2012) for a brief discussion.

[4] Divination is often discussed in relation to members of the elite. Rüpke highlights that auspices were only taken by magistrates (2013a) 14. See also Konrad (2022) 260. This evidence, therefore, allows a move beyond just discussing members of the elite.

not the only source of interest. The views of members of the elite are complex and should, therefore, be analysed individually rather than as a coherent whole. Through a vote, the Senate could present a definitive answer, although the actions of individuals that contravened these decisions suggest there were many diverse perceptions. During the later Republic, the impact of expansion led to the circulation of many ideas that the Senate could not prevent from having an impact, increasing the options available in an already diverse religious world.

Elite Experts Part One: The Use of "Traditional" Civic Divination by the Individual

The religious debates that I have analysed so far remained rooted in "traditional" forms of practice perceived to have originated in the distant past. This included longstanding civic traditions such as augury, comprehensively examined by Driediger-Murphy.[5] This section continues the themes of the last chapter, suggesting that the Senate played a key role in civic religion until the breakdown of religious norms when Caesar and Augustus came to prominence in the latter half of the first century. For instance, Dionysius gives a negative view of augury, although one that seems to suggest that the Senate retained a substantial degree of authority:

> It [augury] has fallen into disuse in our days except a certain semblance of it remains for form's sake. Those who are about to assume the magistracies remain outside, and rising at break of day, offer prayers under the sky; some of the augurs present, who are paid by the State, then declare that a flash of lightning coming from the left has given them a sign, although there really has not been any.[6]

While a cynical view in that he attributes no value to augury beyond being a formality, Dionysius succinctly highlights how the Senate was able to control religious processes

[5] (2019b).

[6] πέπαυται δ᾽ ἐν τοῖς καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς χρόνοις, πλὴν οἷον εἰκών τις αὐτοῦ λείπεται τῆς ὁσίας αὐτῆς1 ἕνεκα γινομένη ἐπαυλίζονται μὲν γὰρ οἱ τὰς ἀρχὰς μέλλοντες λαμβάνειν καὶ περὶ τὸν ὄρθρον ἀνιστάμενοι ποιοῦνταί τινας εὐχὰς ὑπαίθριοι, τῶν δὲ παρόντων τινὲς ὀρνιθοσκόπων μισθὸν ἐκ τοῦ δημοσίου φερόμενοι ἀστραπὴν αὐτοῖς σημαίνειν1 ἐκ 3τῶν ἀριστερῶν φασιν τὴν οὐ γενομένην. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.6.2

for its own end. This could mean that augury became a simple political, ceremonial tool, rather than a respected institution.[7] Nevertheless, Driediger-Murphy points out that there is an underlying assumption that signs from the sky should be respected.[8] Additionally, Dionysius attributes the creation of augury to Romulus, which indicates that it was connected to a respected past, something important to members of the elite. Regardless of the falsification of signs, Dionysius' account implies that they were still heeded. Therefore, augury, and the Senate through its use, remained influential by maintaining a real respect in the practice. This can partly be attributed to the Roman preoccupation with religious customs.[9] The focus on these, similarly to the *mos mairoum*, is a key reason why the Republican system was successful in regulating itself.[10] As augury was a key part of this system, being the focus of the College of Augurs, it forms a useful case study for the themes of this section.[11] As a central aspect of civic religion, it fits into the framework described in the previous chapter. However, I develop my arguments that focussed on Cicero and Clodius, to suggest that individuals had a high degree of freedom to experiment within the civic system.

That individuals potentially began to explore ways of using civic religion for personal gain or interests is hinted at by several conflicts. For example, Bibulus declared bad omens (*Obnuntiatio)* to prevent Caesar from passing legislation when both were

[7] Liebeschuetz argues that these religious processes were usually, but not always, a simple formality. Military commanders, for instance, would genuinely benefit from sharing responsibility with the gods (1979) 11. While I take the view that these procedures were important religiously, they did have a clear political benefit. See Gildenhard, who highlights the connection between politics and religion when discussing the argument between Cicero and Antony (2018) 239; 242.

[8] Driediger-Murphy makes this point broadly, suggesting that augural signs did not always align with the wishes of the people who received them. She relates this specifically to Dionysius' account. See (2019b) 98 and page 185 for another example. For the general respect for augury on the part of Cicero, see Grottanelli (2005) 138. Tucker states that Cicero had no personal belief in augury, which is problematic given my arguments in Chapter Five, although he points out that it was respected as an ancient institution (1976) 171-172.

[9] For example, see Cicero praising Laelius' defence of religion: Cic. *Brut*. 83 and Cicero's chastising of Verres for failing to respect religious norms: Cic. Verr. 2.4.74-75. For this, see my discussion in Chapter Three as well. The respect is also seen in the structure of Livy's work, in which he focusses on public prodigies and how they were expiated. See also my discussions of *de legibus*.

[10] Hölkeskamp (2010) 17-18. Cf. Yakobson, who connects this with civic religion (2010) 284.

[11] There are other examples beyond augury that may suggest similar themes. Rohde points out that individuals were able to use collegia to leverage social acceptance, using religious groupings for upward social mobility (2012) 201. This is again suggestive of the possibility of individual expression within societal norms and groupings that is not in opposition to civic religion, which I explore in this chapter.

consuls.[12] Importantly, Suetonius notes that Caesar resorted to violence when Bibulus attempted to constrain his actions with augury: "He [Caesar] brought forward an agrarian law too, and when his colleague announced adverse omens, he resorted to arms and drove him from the Forum".[13] This appears initially as a cynical disregard for civic norms. However, Caesar's position in the civic system may have caused him reasonably to believe that he had divine favour and that Bibulus was incorrect. Whatever the case, his legislation had doubtful legitimacy.[14] A similar example occurred earlier in 101 BC. The *popularis* tribune, Saturninus, introduced an agrarian bill causing, those who opposed him to state that they heard thunder, despite the law being passed.[15] The Senate was unable to prevent the law from being ratified, partly due to trickery from Marius.[16] Saturninus similarly could conclude that he had the favour of the gods, making this a legitimate action. Regardless of whether the claim to hear thunder was false, individual members of the elite seemed to compete with augury to legitimise their positions. Interestingly, they did not turn to alternative practices. A sense of tradition and maintaining religious customs remained important.[17] To an extent, this may suggest a breakdown in normal processes as individuals competed for religious and political power.[18] This may not be a new development, as we lack evidence for earlier periods. However, the end of the Republic indicates a uniquely intense period of political conflict.[19]

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[12] Suet. *Iul.* 20.1-2.
[13] *Lege autem agraria promulgata obnuntiantem collegam armis Foro expulit* (ibid).
[14] Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 144 argues that the validity of Caesar's legislation remained questionable. Scullard states that Caesar could "technically" ignore Bibulus, indicating some uncertainty (1982) 426-427 (n.17). However, others are less sympathetic: Gray-Fow (1990) 181; Ryan (1996) 387-388; Stocker (1970) 18. Overall, I suggest that the legislation was problematic, although I accept that Caesar's power allowed him to ignore Bibulus. The affair would still have been damaging.
[15] App. *BC.* 1.30.
[16] Cf. Lebovitz for this event and evidence for the falsification of thunder in this instance (2015) 431 n.48. See also Gildenhard (above) for a further example of a conflict between Antony and Cicero regarding the auspices.
[17] For instance, Driediger-Murphy discusses the general importance placed by members of the elite on following religious rules (2019b) 45.
[18] Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 46. However, Driediger-Murphy also maintains that many would be guided by the answers that they received through divination. I will push these arguments further to suggest in later sections that individuals could explore "non-state" religion.
[19] This is the general view of scholarship. For instance, Evans highlights some examples to show this intense political competition (2016) 80. Steel states that electoral competition reached "unprecedented levels" in the first century (2013) 151. While we must be mindful of different sources and the lower availability of evidence, competition was always an important aspect of Roman elite culture, including in

Therefore, the later Republic potentially saw increasing individualism.[20] I consider that, for members of the elite, this remained rooted in civic religion and "tradition". For instance, in 57 BC, Milo attempted to block Clodius from the Aedileship by announcing bad omens in the "traditional" way.[21] Milo was relatively successful in preventing this particular election, although Clodius later gained the Aedileship for the following year. There are various similar examples.[22] While Cicero is hostile to Clodius, his letters were meant to inform Atticus, so the general sequence of events may be accurate. Problematically, Cicero also emphasised that violence was an influential factor. While this played a role in preventing the elections, the declaration of bad omens appears to be important for Milo and Cicero in suggesting that they had divine favour. Religious legitimacy needed to be maintained. No individual seems to have escaped this until the last years of the Republic, as the Senate remained the central authority, as indicated by the conflict over Cicero's house. However, within this system, individuals seemingly could legitimise their own positions. While one of the individuals in question could have had the backing of the broader civic elite, Cicero's letters suggest an individual dimension. It was Milo, not the Senate or religious body, who declared the omens: "Milo caught him between the Woods and announced bad omens."[23] Possibly, Milo was influenced by others, although the overall tone suggests he acted independently. Cicero, for instance, praised Milo's "judgement".[24] Therefore, Milo was possibly able to act as an individual, making his own decisions and interpretations. Likewise, he was operating within a civic framework that allowed him to do this. His ability to prevent elections was derived from the Senate, alongside religious traditions and institutions.

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the second century: Millar (1984) 2. However, I tentatively suggest that the first century BC saw particularly intense competition given the rise of the principate.

[20] This is suggested by scholars such as Kragelund (2001) 94-95; Driediger-Murphy (2019b, ibid.); Volk (2021) 241. The clearest example of this is Caesar. The religious process outlined by Koortbojian shows that the honours given to Caesar had a profound effect on Roman religion (2013) 4-13, particularly page 8. It was the individual who drove these changes.

[21] Cic. *Att.* 4.3.1-6.

[22] Other examples include the prevention of the *Lex Titia* in 99 BC: Cic. *Leg.* 2.14; 2.31; Obsequens 46, Pompey lying about thunder: Plut. *Vit. Pomp.* 52.1-4, and Cato attempting to block a meeting Dio 39.35.1-5; Plut. *Vit. Cat. Min.* 43.4-5.

[23] *adsequitur inter lucos hominem Milo, obnuntiat.* Cic. *Att.* 4.3.4

[24] Cicero used the word "*consili"* Cic. *Att.* 4.3.5. I understand this to mean judgement, advice or wisdom, although the Loeb translation gives "resourceful".

Coins also allowed individual members of the elite to explore civic religion. I touched on this in the last chapter concerning different images of Magna Mater and Ceres.[25] Imagery overall indicates that "traditional" civic religion retained a privileged position and was an easy way to represent divine authority on a mass scale. For instance, the *lituus*, a staff used to divide the sky, was a symbol of the augurs and frequently appeared from c.135 BC (Fig. 7).[26] That the lituus appears next to other symbols of "traditional" authority like the curule chair and laurel wreath on RRC 434/2 emphasises the civic importance of this priesthood. Cicero also marked the priesthood as an important authority: "But the highest and most important authority in the State is that of the augurs".[27] He said this because he was an augur, although the above examples suggest they had an important position. To an extent, these depictions may result from individuals feeling a need to align with a powerful institution.[28] However, a degree of personal choice was possible. There were numerous other religious symbols, such as the jug, tripod, or numerous deities that could be selected.

[25] See my discussion of M. Voletius depicting various deities for personal benefit.
[26] See RRC 242/1 and RRC 434/2 minted in 135 BC and 54 BC, respectively, for example. Other examples include: RRC 370/1; 456/1; 374/2; 359/1; 243/3.
[27] *maximum autem et praestantissimum in re publica ius est augurum Leg.* 2.31. In combination with Driediger-Murphy in the note above, Tucker points to other passages in *De Legibus* which he interprets as Cicero emphasising the influence augurs had over civic affairs (1976) 175. See also Santangelo (2013b) 750-751.
[28] Driediger-Murphy highlights the real power of the augurs to control members of the elite in the middle and late Republic (2019b) 184-185. If this is correct, it makes sense that symbols of augury would also be powerful.

Fig. 7. RRC 242/1 (above).

Obverse: Head of Roma.

Reverse: Two figures either side of a column. The one on the right holds a lituus.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate XXXVI https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-242.1

434/2 (below).

Obverse: Curule chair between a laurel branch and an arrow.

Reverse: Curule chair between a lituus and a wreath.

Fears argues that a form of personalisation can be identified on a coin of Q. Cornificus, minted in 42 BC (Fig. 8).[29] Fears suggests that the *lituus* was separated from its origins and connected explicitly to the individual who is depicted on the coin. Rather than Jupiter speaking through signs, this symbolism is associated with particular people.[30] This could form another arena for elite competition where conventions could be used for personal advantage, although this seems a particularly extreme example. The figure of Cornificus is presented alongside Juno, indicating a close relationship between the individual and the deity. This emphasises the extent to which an individual could push civic norms for personal benefit during the later Republic. While not a religious example, similar themes are identifiable on coins minted by Pompey's sons after his death.[31] The coin depicts the personification of a Spanish city. The purpose of this was to reinforce the connection between Pompey's faction and an area in which they had strong support.[32] As Pompey was depicted on the obverse, this may represent the importance

[29] RRC 509/5.

[30] Fears (1975) 599, who also summarises other examples. Alföldi interprets this as a "dispossessing" of Jupiter and sees similar trends in other uses of imagery (1956) 86-87. I am unsure that Jupiter is dispossessed, but Alföldi seems reasonable in saying that this aided in laying the framework for a monarchical system, given the importance that Caesar and later emperors placed on their connections to particular deities.

[31] For example, RRC 470/1.

[32] See Tanner for this background (2000) 47-48. He also argues that coins like this were designed to encourage a perception of prestige. This may aid the individual in forming their own personal authority. The idea of coins as a tool for displaying individual authority in the ancient world is also argued by

of individuals and their authority in the late Republic. It was Pompey who had a particular association, not the Roman Senate.

Fig. 8. RRC 509/5.

Obverse: Head of Tanit.

Reverse: Q. Cornuficius holding a lituus while being crowned by Juno.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate LXI Platehttps://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-509.5

There are further examples of religious imagery used in this way. Faust points out that, while coins were minted on behalf of the Senate, Augustus occasionally included personal imagery such as the Capricorn, his birth sign.[33] Similar, albeit modified, ideas apply to the late Republican period. Both Octavian and Antony minted coins in 31 BC in Africa displaying Jupiter Ammon with representations of Victory (Fig. 9).[34] Both seemingly tried to associate themselves with Victory alongside a deity that was relevant to the area in which they were in conflict.[35] In the late Republic, it was possible for individuals, rather than the Senate, to form associations with particular religious imagery to emphasise their connections to the divine. This still related to depictions of "traditional" gods and imagery. It was the syncretised "Jupiter Ammon" who was depicted, not a "foreign" deity. Individuals still may have been hesitant, or unable, to push the boundaries of civic religion too far. Astrological symbols, outside of civic religion,[36] do not appear as frequently in the Republic. Traditional civic religion retained a privileged position. Societal pressure and the Senate's ability to enforce what was

Creighton (2000). He perceives that the first century saw a refocussing on the individual at Rome. While focussing mainly on Iron Age British coins, his suggestion that coins and, specifically, ritual imagery were used to express individual authority can be applied here. See pages 1-2, 22.

[33] RIC I^2 124 – 130, for example. See Faust (2022) 116-117. Faust does not expand on this example further, although he points out that imagery such as statues resulted from various sources of authority, such as the Senate, the emperor and the overseer of the production: page 117.

[34] Antony: RRC 546/2, 546/3. Octavian: RRC 546/4.

[35] Jupiter was associated with Ammon, worshipped in Libya and was a famous oracle. Sauron provides a useful discussion of the importance of the god to Octavian/Augustus (2006).

[36] See the introduction for my definition of "civic" and "non-civic".

acceptable must have played a role in this. Whatever the reason, it seems likely that individualism was constrained by respect for civic religion until Caesar's unique honours pushed religious boundaries.[37]

Fig 9. RRC 546/2a (above).

Obverse: Head of Jupiter Ammon.

Reverse: Victory holding a laurel wreath.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate LXIV https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-546.2

RRC 546/4 (below).

Obverse: Jupiter Ammon.

Reverse: Victory standing on a globe while holding a laurel wreath.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate LXIV https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-546.4

The late Republican understanding of Roman religious history also emphasised senatorial authority. Checks and balances, related to augury, were built into Roman memory. For instance, elite authors negatively discussed Claudius Pulcher throwing the sacred chickens into the sea during the first Punic War because they refused to provide the desired sign.[38] While an older example from 249 BC, the ubiquity of the story in the late Republic indicates that it remained relevant. Claudius' image was damaged as a result, facing charges of impiety. As he died soon after, the long-term effects this would have had on his career are unclear. Nevertheless, the importance of the story in later periods suggests that it fitted into the broader narratives of the dangers of individuals

[37] Caesar's divine honours have long been discussed, most famously by Weinstock (1971) and more recently by Koortbojian (2013). There is a general acceptance that Caesar was deified to some extent, although not everyone agrees: Gradel (2002) 54-56; Luke (2014) 181-183.

[38] Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.7; Suet. *Tib* 2.2. Val. Max. 1.4.3. Valerius relates other similar examples in the same chapter that focusses on Augury. Notably, Polybius does not mention this event in his account of events: Polyb 1.49-54. Nevertheless, regardless of whether this was an authentic event, its repetition highlights the importance of stories of misuse of religious practices to members of the elite

ignoring signs from the gods.[39] Cicero referred to it as a "great disaster for the Roman people", and Valerius (albeit a later author) suggested that Claudius caused "damage to the state and his own destruction".[40] Therefore, individuals who sought to assert themselves against tradition were warned of the resulting dangers, as civic religion continued to exert pressure. A further example is that of Tiberius Gracchus ignoring the bad omen of the sacred chickens' refusal to eat, amid other signs, just before his death.[41] The reality of this is questionable, as deaths of famous Romans were often embellished with omens, but it is again relevant that the story persisted. [42] Respect for "traditional" religion was reinforced through retelling these stories. Plutarch wrote later, but the story must have been transmitted to him through the late Republic. As a priest himself, with a sensitivity to, and interest in, religion, he may be expected to have researched this and trusted its validity. The story emphasises the respect necessary for state divination upheld by the Senate. While individual members of the elite could explore religion, they had to obey senatorial consensus.

I, therefore, infer that individuals respected and were bound by civic religion. However, this may have begun to shift in the later Republic as individuals gained prominence. Civic religion was still respected, but authority came to be concentrated in fewer hands, culminating with the principate. A shift in "traditional" norms is suggested by Octavian's actions. He represents civic symbols on his coins, including those relating to the *Augures* and *Pontifices*.[43] The tripod represents the *Quindecemviri*, a priesthood in which Octavian gained a position the year this coin was minted in 37 BC. This marked his attainment of the three major colleges.[44] While the evidence is less clear, Caesar

[39] Rosenberger (2007) 300; For other examples of the same principle, see Ripat (2006) 172.
[40] Cicero: *magnam populo Romano cladem attulit*. Valerius Maximus: *multo rei pub. damno et suo exitio amisit*.
[41] Plut. *Vit. Tib. Gracch*. 17.1.
[42] Ripat points out that stories of omens are often embellished. See n. 63.
[43] RRC 537/1 & 537/2.
[44] Hekster and Rich (2006) 159. Hekster and Rich also point out Octavian's connections to Apollo and the personal use of the haruspices that provide further evidence for individualism. Astrology was also a factor. Schmid summarises the importance of 'conviction' in the practice to establishing a monarchy in Rome, citing the *solarium augusti* and Augustus' horoscope as evidence (Abry 2008). This focus on the more personal elements seems to be a product of the German school of sociology that I discussed in the introduction. However, this summarises neatly how a shift towards individualism could occur through different practices, whether there was a personal 'conviction' or not. I discuss astrology below.

similarly may have become an augur in 47 BC despite being Pontifex Maximus, as Cicero said: "In spite of everything, I think I see hope that our colleague Caesar will try, and is already trying, to get us some sort of a constitutional system".[45] The "colleague" seems to imply that Caesar was an augur, supported by Cassius Dio's similar claim.[46] While there are few examples, the accumulation of priesthoods by powerful individuals was possible. This should not be possible in the Republican system, as usually only one priesthood was held by an individual to diffuse authority.[47] There is evidence for dual priesthoods in the third century.[48] However, there is a substantial gap between then and the late first century. Potentially, individualism was aided by extreme events that put pressure on civic structures, stopping them from functioning correctly, such as the Punic Wars and the political violence of the first century. While civic religion retained an influential position, individuals were able to emphasise their religious authority through the use of "traditional" imagery.

Elite Experts Part Two: The Use of "Non-State" Practices: Haruspicy and Astrology

I suggest in this section that, despite this respect for civic religion, individuals made use of a wider range of religious options that existed beyond it. I focus on two methods of divine communication: haruspicy and astrology. Reactions to astrology varied as some forms were presented positively, while others were treated as dangerous. Haruspicy differed as it was part of civic religion, used by the Senate to deal with public prodigies. While it is unclear when the *haruspices* became an official priesthood, they were likely integrated early in the Republic, making them an accepted part of public religious life by Cicero's time. Tacitus stated that Claudius: "*Rettulit deinde ad senatum super collegio*

[45] *sperare tamen videor Caesari, collegae nostro, fore curae et esse ut habeamus aliquam rem publicam*. Cic. *ad Fam.* 13.68.2. See also Vell. Pat. 2.43.1 for Caesars other priesthoods.
[46] Dio. 42.51.4-5.
[47] Hahm (1963) 76. See n. 6 for exceptions to the rule. See also Broughton (1975) 386
[48] Szelmer (1974); North points out that there were occasional aberrations in the system (1990b) 534. In the previous chapter, I highlighted that Cicero argued that one Pontiff at the dedication of the shrine of *Libertas* was not enough. Santangelo perceives this as Cicero arguing in favour of the distribution of power, although questions how truthful he is being (2013b) 748. Nevertheless, this at least reveals an expectation that power could be shared even within a priesthood.

haruspicum, ne vetustissima Italiae disciplina per desidiam exolesceret".[49] This is translated in the Loeb and Oxford World Classics translations as Claudius "founding/establishing"[50] an official priesthood, implying that this did not exist prior. Despite this, Tacitus does not directly mention a "founding" and suggests that Claudius aimed to "maintain and strengthen" the college, indicating a formal relationship already existed.[51] Cicero earlier stated that,

> it was wisely decreed by the Senate, when the state was thriving, that, of the sons of the chief men, six should be handed over to each of the Etruscan tribes for training [in divination].[52]

MacBain points out that this also implies an earlier formal relationship.[53] However, the priesthood simultaneously maintained a "foreign" character and was occasionally presented as non-civic. Orlin highlights that the *ordo* of sixty *haruspices* mentioned in the *Elogia Tarquiniensia*, early imperial inscriptions set up in Tarquinia, was substantially larger than most Roman priesthoods, indicating an Etruscan influence. Orlin further suggests that they were treated as a separate ethnic/religious group when they were first utilised.[54] As Cicero mentioned that the state used Etruscan haruspicy specifically, I agree that the "foreign" origins made the *haruspices* "other" and advance

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[49] Tac. *Ann.* 11.15.

[50] Loeb translation, Jackson (1937): "He next consulted the senate on the question of founding a college of diviners, so that the oldest art of Italy should not become extinct through their indolence." Oxford Worlds Classics, Yardley (2008): "Claudius next brought before the Senate the matter of establishing a college of soothsayers, to prevent Italy's oldest art from falling into disuse through lack of practice."

[51] *retinenda firmandaque haruspicum* Tac. *Ann* 11.15.

[52] *Quocirca bene apud maiores nostros senatus tum, cum florebat imperium, decrevit, ut de principum filiis sex1 singulis Etruriae populis in disciplinam traderentur* Cic. *Div.* 1.92.

[53] MacBain (1982) 49-50. MacBain suggests that Cicero may be implying this occurred in the second century, although there is no clear evidence for this. There is no clear agreement. Torelli argues for a mid-republican date (1975) 119-121. Contra: Rawson (1978) 140. Orlin believes that an *ordo* must have existed prior to the 80s BC and potentially much earlier (2010) 93-94. Beard et al. do not think there was a priesthood until the end of the Republic (1998) 20. See also Haack, who argues that the Senate systematised the use of the *haruspices* from the fourth to third centuries BC (2018, Chapter One). They also point out that there were private *haruspices*. Scheid seems to indicate that there may have been an "unofficial" collective (2015b) 259.

[54] Orlin (2010) 93-94. Orlin also suggests the *ordo* was "not exactly like a Roman college but similar" (ibid.). Rüpke, in his comprehensive analysis of Republican priesthoods, categorises the *haruspices* as external to Rome but active in the city (2008) 10. For a brief summary of the *Elogia Tarquiniensia* and the *ordo* it mentions, see Cornell (1978).

Orlin's argument to suggest that this differentiation continued into the first century.[55] I discussed in the previous chapter how Cicero subordinated the *haruspices* through emphasising their "foreignness". They were therefore presented as something not completely civic, despite their influence over public matters. In addition to a "foreign" label, there were also "informal or non-civic" *haruspices,* separate from the official *ordo,* whose services anyone could purchase.[56] Quintus lists diviners he does not like, including "*vicani haruspices"*:

> I will assert in conclusions, that I do not recognize fortune-tellers, or those who prophesy for money, or necromancers, or mediums, whom your friend Appius makes it a practice to consult, 'I do not care for Marsian augurs, village haruspices, Astrologers who haunt the circus grounds, Or Isis-seers, or dream interpreters:' for they are not diviners either by knowledge or skill.[57]

Quintus potentially quotes Ennius but endorses this view. He claimed that Appius, a friend of Cicero, consulted similar diviners, suggesting this remained applicable to the late Republic. Nice convincingly argues that, while the passage contains archaisms, only the latter half of 1.132 is from Ennius, attributing the references to astrologers and "village haruspices" to Cicero. She points out that many of the terms that Cicero used, such as "*circi astrologi",* are peculiar to him, not found elsewhere, and that the passage may have been designed to anticipate the arguments in Book Two.[58] Furthermore, Nice highlights that the passage from Ennius repeats much of the above quotation. Therefore, Cicero seems to be presenting an updated list, relevant to his own time, but based on Ennius. Some *haruspices* in the first century, even regardless of their "foreignness", could be marked as non-civic.

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[55] *omnem hanc ex Etruria scientiam adhibebant.* Cic. *Div.* 1.3. Elsewhere, he notes that there were other forms of haruspicy, including Egyptian and Carthaginian, highlighting that the practice at Rome was seen as particularly Etruscan: Cic. *Div.* 2.28.
[56] Traill (2004) 124.
[57] *"Nunc illa testabor, non me sortilegos neque eos, qui quaestus causa hariolentur, ne psychomantia quidem, quibus Appius, amicus tuus, uti solebat, agnoscere: non habeo denique nauci Marsum augurem; non vicanos haruspices, non de circo astrologos; non Isiacos coniectores, non interpretes sómnium; — non enim sunt ei aut scientia aut arte divini—* Cic. *Div.* 1.132.
[58] Nice (2001) 153-154; 161-166.

While these personal diviners could be a literary construct, there are examples of individuals using personal diviners, such as the *haruspex* Volusius following Verres.[59] Sulla also utilised *haruspices*. For instance, Postumius begged Sulla to march on Nola during the Social War in 89 BC. Sulla did so and was successful in defeating a Samnite army outside the city:

> The *haruspex* Postumius, after Sulla had offered a sacrifice and observed the signs, stretched out both hands to Sulla and asked to be bound and kept under guard until the battle, as he was willing to face the ultimate punishment if everything did not quickly and favourably succeed for him. [60]

While still a public, civic use, these are more personal engagements than the Senate consulting a priesthood. These *haruspices* could have been part of the official *ordo,* but we cannot discount that they were informal, paid diviners who followed governors and generals.[61] This seems likely of Verres' *haruspices* as Cicero stated: "The members of your select retinue were your hands; your managers, secretaries, orderlies, doctors, *haruspices*".[62] That Cicero referred specifically to a "retinue", including the priests alongside personal secretaries, may indicate they were all employed by Verres directly. This may also be true for Sulla. While these stories should be treated cautiously, as they are often embellished, this seems to be a normal use for this form of divination.[63] Augustine, citing Livy as his source, also mentioned the Postumius story, stating that he was prepared to be executed.[64] Plutarch's account is similar, possibly indicating that he used Livy. Therefore, an author comparatively close to Sulla in time highlighted his personal use of a *haruspex*. If Postumius' statement is real, it suggests a close association with Sulla. Even if untrue, the assumption that this connection was real suggests that these associations were possible. This would be useful in war, at least

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[59] Cic. *Verr.* 2.3.28; 2.3.54.
[60] ὁ δὲ μάντις Ποστούμιος θύσαντος αὐτοῦ καταμαθὼν τὰ σημεῖα, καὶ τὰς χεῖρας ἀμφοτέρας τῷ Σύλλᾳ προτείνας, ἠξίου δεθῆναι καὶ φυλάττεσθαι μέχρι τῆς μάχης, ὡς, εἰ μὴ πάντα ταχὺ καὶ καλῶς αὐτῷ συντελεσθείη, 4τὴν ἐσχάτην δίκην ὑποσχεῖν βουλόμενος Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9.3. This story is also recounted by Cicero: Cic. *Div.* 1.72.
[61] Rawson separates salaried *haruspices* from other types (1978) 139-140. This is also argued by Lenaghan (below).
[62] *Comites illi tui delecti manus erant tuae; praefecti, scribae, accensi, medici, haruspices* Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.27.
[63] Ripat (2006) 167-169 for a discussion of Caesar's death and the signs that surround it, as an example.
[64] August. *De Civ.* 2.24.

acting as a morale boost. For this to occur, the individual, rather than a civic body, needed the ability to perform religious actions. Presumably, this provided the individual in question legitimacy. A degree of individual freedom was, in some instances, an integral part of state religion.

Therefore, powerful individuals needed support beyond Rome, where state priesthoods were located. This particularly applies to generals on campaigns. Lenaghan argues that the use of priests by generals, such as Sulla's use of Postumius before a battle, indicates that har*uspices* had a separate use in military matters. He argues that certain officials who led the army would not have the right to conduct *spectio*,[65] allowing *haruspices* to fulfil this function.[66] Importantly, Lenaghan separates these *haruspices* from those that would be used by the Senate (presumably the *ordo* of sixty). He also argues that, despite having a hierarchy, "they did not act as a group in an official way".[67] I follow Lenagahan's argument that the priests used by campaigning generals were likely different to those used by the Senate. Presumably, a large number would need to remain in the city in case they were needed for consultation, and, thus, could not accompany generals. Furthermore, the Senate is often described as communicating with *haruspices*: the above references often involve the consultation of a singular *haruspex*, perhaps indicating different forms.[68] Postumius is not mentioned elsewhere, so he can only be positively associated with a military function. I do not develop these ideas as far as Lenaghan, however, as it is unclear whether these priests had rigid areas of expertise. The state *haruspices* had other roles in interpreting prodigies outside a

[65] This term means the process of watching for auspices.
[66] Lenaghan also argues that the *haruspices* were not a state cult (1969) 34-35. The separation of the *haruspices* from state religion may also be identified in Cicero's comments that individuals can be their own *haruspices:* Cic. *Har Resp.* 20. Santangelo sees them as part of public religion, but not necessarily central to it (2013b) 750. Ultimately, a distinction is generally understood between the public priesthood and "individual priests", e.g. Linderski (2012).
[67] Lenaghan (1969) 35. Lenaghan's divisions reinforce the key point that haruspicy played a central role in both private and public divination, another way in which the practice inhabits a grey area. While I focus on the individual aspects here, there was clear public importance. See Thulin (1968/1906) Book 2, pages 4-5. Thulin also notes differences between Etruscan and Roman extispicy, suggesting that some forms of the practice maintained a "foreign" character. Traill characterises all "informal" *haruspices* as "*vicani*", not mentioning the military sub-group explicitly, although I maintain they had a military function based on this evidence (2004) 124.
[68] Compare Livy 32.1.14 with notes 59 and 60. Scheid also notes that the *haruspices* used by individuals differed in rank from those used by the Senate (2015b) 259.

military function, which may also be the case for these personal diviners, particularly Volusius.[69] Furthermore, Postumius could simultaneously be a *vicani haruspex*.[70] I also discussed above that the haruspices likely had a formal relationship with the Senate. Nevertheless, we cannot discount that there were separate, personal priests.

Possibly, individuals could argue that they were participating in a practice that the Senate deemed acceptable, even though the form of *haruspex* they used was not necessarily the same that the Senate utilised. The key difference to my arguments in the previous chapter is that individuals could consult *haruspices* personally with little to no civic oversight. As these individuals were senators, they likely had the personal authority to determine what the appropriate course of religious action was anyway, although it is notable that whatever decision was made based on the advice of the *haruspices* was not validated by the Senate as a whole. This is another reason why these events are unlike a formal consultation by the Senate.[71] Overall, I perceive these *haruspices* were a part of the civic system, but some less strongly than others. While there is no definitive evidence for what types of *haruspices* were utilised by Sulla and Verres, there was a personal element to the process.

Nevertheless, individuals were still bound by societal expectations and needed to show how their actions followed them, as I outlined in the previous chapter. For instance, individuals still needed to present their actions as "respectable", which they might achieve through the use of *haruspices* from "higher-class" backgrounds. Spurinna and Caesar's relationship indicates this.[72] Spurinna warned Caesar of his impending death, which he ignored. Incidentally, this suggests that, even within Rome, individuals could

[69] For example, in 172 BC, the *decemviri* and the *haruspices* interpreted a lightning prodigy in Rome: Livy 42.40. See Orlin for the context of this event (2010) 90. I discuss this event further below. For the *haruspices* as prodigy experts, see Satterfield (2014) 224. I mention Voulusius here as Cicero does not ascribe him a military role.
[70] Linderski perceives that *vicani haruspices* were "private" or "itinerant" (2012). I see no reason why Postumius could not belong to this category while serving a military function.
[71] This may be fairly typical. Santangelo points out that the authority of individual priests is more numerous than the authority of priestly colleges (2013b) 762.
[72] Suet. *Iul.* 81.1-4.

make use of more personal forms of divination that are not as clearly integrated as augury, for instance. It is unclear whether Spurinna was a "formal" or "informal" *haruspex*, but nothing excludes the latter.[73] Spurinna notably appears to have had a particularly aristocratic name.[74] Given that some were critical of lower-class priests, it is possible that status factored into religious choice.[75] This does not mean that elite individuals would not use lower-status priests, but this seems to be the case here. This plays into the supposed fears of Magna Mater, discussed in the previous chapter, which were perceived to cause a loss of dignity. Sulla may have felt similar concerns, as Postumius is a distinguished Latin name, suggesting a priest of high status.[76] Despite this, Rawson interprets him as a personal *haruspex* rather than a state official, although she notes this cannot be proven.[77] While there is limited evidence, members of the elite generally engaged "respectable" officials. Presumably, Postumius' interpretations were meant to add religious legitimacy to Sulla's actions. Postumius' social background may have aided this, as I discussed in the previous chapter – members of the elite perceived that they were best placed to maintain the *pax deorum*.

Caesar is an important case study as he seems to have formed a personal association with *haruspicy,* which could bolster his relationship with Etruria.[78] In the war with

[73] Rawson is unsure but states it is unlikely that Spurinna can be placed into the same category as Volusius, Verres' *haruspex* (1978) 144. I modify this to suggest that they might still both be personal, "informal" *haruspices,* even if they were not in the same social category. There are likely to have been various grades. The nature of "informal" *haruspices* might mean that people from all sorts of backgrounds could be a *haruspex*.

[74] Rawson (1978) 139; Turfa (2012) 33. Turfa sees *haruspicy* and the *etrusca disciplina* more broadly as being in the domain of the elite (page x).

[75] I discuss Tibullus and Propertius' disdain for non-elite religion below. Cicero criticises priests who prophesised for money rather than *haruspices*, although they must fall into that category: Cic. *Div.* 1.132. See Nice (2001) 163-164 for this and other examples. Later, Tacitus also criticised astrologers, although he called them mathematicians who watch the stars. He referred to them as "a race deceitful to those in power": *genus hominum potentibus infidum* Tac. *Hist*. 1.22. Cato's views are also similar, as discussed elsewhere in the chapter.

[76] See above for a discussion of the status of priests and how elite individuals may have favoured priests of higher status.

[77] Rawson (1978) 141. Rawson also points out that the stories may be untrue, although this is relevant as there is an underlying assumption that Sulla had a personal *haruspex* regardless of what pronouncement was made.

[78] See Rawson for a summary of evidence and modern arguments for Caesar's connection to Etruria (1978) 132-135. Badian, for instance, highlights the connection between both Marius and members of the Julii prior to Caesar. (1958) 226; 224.

Pompey, this provided him with a direct source of authority, separate from civic religion. In *Bellum Civile*, Caesar emphasised the support he gained from Italian towns.[79] While there is little direct evidence for this,[80] there was possibly some support. A connection between Caesar and Etruria may have developed during the Social War and the Catilinarian conspiracy that might have led to political associations. For instance, Caesar was suspected of being involved in the Catilinarian Conspiracy, which was active in Etruria.[81] By the first century, the mixing of aristocracies across Italy made connections possible. It would make sense for Caesar to utilise a priesthood that had its history in an area politically connected to him, indicating the use of a religious practice for personal reasons. Not every individual who used a *haruspex* had a connection to Etruria, although if it did exist, it could be a useful tool. This is complicated, as it is unlikely that Caesar wanted Spurinna to provide the prophecy about his death. However, Caesar was in a powerful position, and his refusal of a diadem at the Lupercalia indicates that he had control over public events.[82] His public disagreement with Spurinna may be similar, suggesting that he attempted to set himself in opposition to a *haruspex*. This potentially allowed Caesar to present himself as an authority while making use of personal associations.

In summary, different forms of this priesthood facilitated individual engagement with divine communication that was not overseen by a larger group responsible for maintaining civic norms. Haruspicy was not the only method of divination that permitted this. Members of the elite could, if they wished, also use astrology to legitimise their positions and represent their authority, which was more clearly outside

[79] e.g. *BCiv.* 1.13.1.
[80] Harris points this out and takes a middle view that there was support for Caesar, but this should not be exaggerated (1971) 296. He also points out that Caesar is a strong propagandist, so the claims in *Bellum Civile* are untrustworthy. I modify this to suggest that while he exaggerated, there may be some truth in the claims. It would be difficult for Caesar to lie outright about something that his contemporaries had witnessed.
[81] The extent to which Caesar supported Catiline is not completely clear. Gruen argues the view that Caesar and Crassus used Catiline as a puppet is outdated (1974) 429 n.107. This is reasonable, but Mellor argues there may have been an association that did not extend as far as supporting the conspiracy (1999) 36-37. It is plausible that there was some link between the two.
[82] At this event, Caesar was offered a diadem several times by Antony and refused it: Plut. *vit. Caes.* 61; Cic *Phil* 13.31; Dio 44.11.2. Most sources characterise this as a planned event, and modern scholars accept this view: North (2008) 158. For a more cautious view, see Rawson (1975) 148-149.

the civic system. Plutarch, for instance, references Sulla using astrologers almost as often as *haruspices*. While speaking to a Parthian ambassador, an astrologer studied Sulla, prophesising that he would become the greatest man in the world.[83] This may just represent an ambassador trying to generate a positive relationship. However, Plutarch states that Sulla was looked "intently in the face,"[84] and studied closely. Sulla must have been a willing participant. Clearer evidence that he fostered an interest in astrology comes later in his life. Astrologers foretold that he would die at the height of his fortune.[85] This seems to be a more proactive use as Plutarch says: "he [Sulla] says that the Chaldaeans foretold him [about his death]".[86] Plutarch recounts that Sulla stopped writing his memoirs due to this, although the story is likely embellished.

At the very least, Sulla was interested in and heeded their information. These stories could be a fabrication. However, Plutarch relied heavily on sources from the Late Republic and Augustan periods.[87] Even if details are embellished, it is possible Sulla maintained an interest in both *haruspices* and astrology. Tamsyn Barton plausibly suggests that Sulla was undecided about which group of priests was best, and there was competition between them. Barton highlights the above example and the continued use of *haruspices* in the empire as evidence.[88] While this is reasonable, there is no reason why Sulla could not use both. "Non-civic" religion was a viable alternative.

The notion that astrology was "non-civic" requires further analysis. I suggest this must be the case as there were no official state astrologers, unlike the *haruspices,* although some individuals viewed astrology positively. Perceived "foreignness" seemed to play a role, as, throughout *De Divinatione*, Cicero referred to them directly as Chaldeans or

[83] Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 5.5-6.
[84] εἰς τὸ τοῦ Σύλλα πρόσωπον ἀπιδὼν (ibid.).
[85] Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 37.1.
[86] καί φησι τοὺς Χαλδαίους αὐτῷ προειπεῖν ὡς (ibid.)
[87] Schettino (2014) 421-42. I also noted in the introduction that Plutarch was sensitive to religious issues, particularly.
[88] Barton (1994b) 38-40. Both priesthoods had similar applications (Green 2014, 67-68). A rivalry between them is therefore plausible, and the focus on signs like Caesar's comets may indicate the increasing importance of astrology. There may be some overlap as Etruscan texts utilised the same sources as those from Mesopotamia: Turfa (2012) viii.

from the Near East.[89] In these passages, they are discussed negatively and as outsiders.[90] As "foreign" cults like Magna Mater were acceptable, it is possible Cicero was making a distinction between what was acceptable (civic) and not acceptable (non-civic) rather than "foreign" and "Roman".[91] Pliny, while a later source, provides further evidence for how "foreign" labels were used performatively in this way. He stated that a slave named Manilius Antiochus was the originator of astrology when he came to Rome in the first century BC.[92] This must be apocryphal, given the evidence that astrology was present in Rome earlier, which I discuss below. Potentially, Pliny was presenting similar concerns to Cicero. "Foreignness" was an important theme as Pliny often compared Rome to what he perceived as negative examples. For instance, he was concerned that Roman morality was damaged by contact with Greece.[93] Within Book 35 specifically, Pliny expressed dislike for the social mobility of slaves, possibly using the story to criticise the poet Manilius by highlighting his "foreign" ancestry.[94] This is important as Manilius wrote a poem called the *Astronomica*, discussing the constellations and how the universe is ruled by a God.[95] Therefore, authors presented astrology as non-civic by superficially presenting it as "foreign."

If so, this did not stop Sulla. Elite individuals could engage in non-civic religion as long as they also supported "traditional" religion. An example is Nigidius Figulus, a contemporary of Cicero and Praetor in 58 BC, famous for his interest in astrology. Lucan

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[89] 2.85; 2.87; 1.36.

[90] Cf. Nice's comments which agree with my view that Cicero disliked "foreign" diviners and used the label to discuss these diviners negatively (2001) 154; 162.

[91] In this section, I will consequently develop van der Lans' view that "foreign" labels like "Chaldean" were used to determine what was seen as "proper" or "correct" worship, as I suggested in the case of Magna Mater in the previous chapter (2017) 57. Some genuine concerns may have existed. I will explore these ideas throughout this and the next section. Green does not go as far but suggests Cicero labelled the practice as "foreign" so that he did not have to present himself as attacking a "Roman" religion (2014) 83. I do not completely accept this, given that he was happy to attack most forms of divination in *De Divinatione,* regardless, although this view agrees with mine that Cicero wrote performatively to create a sense of "otherness".

[92] Plin. *NH.* 35.199-201.

[93] Wallace-Hadrill (1990) 93. Carey argues that Pliny views Greek culture and artefacts as paradoxical. They show the superiority of Rome but were also the reason for moral decline. (2000) 4, 6-7, 10. Carey does not mention Pliny's treatment of astrology, but it is possible that similar ideas can be applied to it, given that Cicero also held a paradoxical attitude, hating the "Chaldean" but engaging in the "Greek".

[94] See Herbert-Brown (2007) 125, 119.

[95] *Astronomica* 1.251. For more on Manilius see Volk (2009) 1-6; Green (2014) 190-192.

said: “Figulus, whom not even Egyptian Memphis could match in observation of the heavens and calculations that keep pace with the stars”.[96] He then devoted a long digression to Nigidius, referencing astrological themes. While Lucan wrote an epic poem, likely embellishing some details as it was not his purpose to create a historical account, he wrote later in the first century. Consequently, Lucan’s readers likely had access to Nigidius’ works, which themselves highlight a real interest. [97] Nigidius additionally wrote several works on more “traditional” religion, like *De Augurio Privato,* and another work called “On the Gods” dealing with a variety of Graeco-Roman deities.[98] Individuals could therefore explore a range of religious options, some considered “non-civic” although they retained an interest in “traditional” forms of religion simultaneously. Potentially, some astrologers in Republican Rome were from Eastern areas, given the movement possible within the empire.[99] However, astrology was ultimately likely practiced by people from all backgrounds, further indicating the false boundaries sources drew.

The practice of astrology by all members of society was possible due to earlier changes in the Republic.[100] An influx of cults and practices altered the religious landscape of Rome as the empire expanded. Magna Mater is an example.[101] More subtle trends relating to astrology are identifiable. Livy stated that in 172 BC, the haruspices interpreted a lightning strike favourably, while the *decemviri* believed that an expiation

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[96] *quem* [Figulus] *non stellarum Aegyptia Memphis Aequaret visu numerisque sequentibus astra,* Luc. *Pharsalia* 1.639-641.
[97] For the ability of readers to engage in Nigidius’ works and further problems, see Santangelo (2015) 180 n.10. For Nigidius embodying Lucan’s thoughts, see Dicks (1963) 39. For a summary of Nigidius’ real interest, see Rawson (1985) 311.
[98] See Rawson (1985) 309-312, although they argue that Nigidius was more interested in astrology and that we lack information about these works. See also Beard et al (1998) 153-154.
[99] Isayev argues for a highly interconnected Mediterranean (2017) 87-88. Noy suggests that Rome in particular may have been an attractive city for people to move to (2000) 87; Zerbini (2016) 308.
[100] The early influence of astrology is not discussed to the same extent as in the imperial period (see my summary in the literature review). Cramer analysed early evidence of astrology, linking it to Greek philosophy (1954) 44. However, later scholars continued to focus on later periods with some discussion of the Republican expulsions. Beard et al. (1998) 230-231; Liebeshuetz discusses attitudes towards late Republican astrology but is generally dismissive (1979) 122. Astrology, as Cramer indicates, must have had an impact prior to this, given the apparent need to expel the astrologers. This makes sense given the impact of “foreign” religion on Rome in the third century.
[101] Livy 29.10.4-11.

was required.[102] This may be because the *haruspices* were influenced by astrological ideas. Weinstock specifically highlights that the *haruspices* used knowledge of the planets to explain the origins of lightning. Barton agrees, connecting this to the theory that the *haruspices* introduced the idea that prodigies could be seen as favourable.[103] Turfa suggests that Etruscan texts were influenced by Near Eastern documents containing astrological references.[104] I accept that there was, at least, some influence on the *haruspices*.[105] While some claimed to dislike astrology in the first century, Livy suggests it had become interrelated with other, more respected practices, used by both the state and individuals.[106] This possibly facilitated the use of more direct forms of personal astrology, such as Sulla's, as it had formed an aspect of state religion for some time, if only tangentially, marking it as respectable. This might be interpreted as a result of the spread of cultural ideas and religious interests rather than a deliberate policy. However, if this early integration did occur, it is notable that it did so long before evidence for more personal uses. Perhaps this indicates some semblance of needing to connect oneself to civic practices remained, even in personal practice. It was only once the state incorporated priests who used astrology that individuals began to explore the practice themselves.

Despite Cicero's claimed dislike of astrology, he represents the culmination of these processes. I suggest he explored astrology in a personal way relevant to him, as I argue in the next chapter, he did with philosophy. This is suggested by a poem he wrote in his youth called the *Aratea,* a translation of Aratus' *Phaenomena*, a third-century BC Greek astronomical poem describing the constellations. The *Aratea* survives in fragments in Cicero's religious treatises, *De Divinatione* and a large section of *De Natura Deorum*.[107]

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[102] Livy 42.20.2-6.
[103] cf. Pliny. *NH.* 2.82; Barton (1994b) 35; Weinstock (1951) 135. For the heavy astrological influence on the *haruspices,* see page 153.
[104] However, Turfa also highlights that the brontoscopic calendar, potentially produced by Nigidius Figulus, contained no astrological references (2012) 289; 111-117.
[105] (ibid). See above.
[106] The overall impact of astrology is ultimately hard to determine. Some diviners seemed to claim to be both *haruspex* and astrologer. Ripat highlights the similarities in their practices (2011) 131. Interestingly, there may have been some competition between the two groups: Ramsey (2000) 441-442.
[107] 2.104-115.

Cicero was a noted poet in his lifetime,[108] engaging with Hellenistic poetry early on.[109] Elsewhere, Cicero commented that Rome was outpacing Greek culture, and by improving Rome's cultural standing, he was increasing his own: "For the one thing in which conquered Greece still remained our conqueror, we have now wrested from her".[110] Therefore, a key motivation for writing the *Aratea* was presumably a desire to emulate Greek poetry.[111] I suggest this was interrelated with a desire to highlight his own religious knowledge. While the *Phaenomena* was not a religious poem itself, Cicero's use of it in his religious works suggests he desired to present his knowledge of "foreign" ideas and incorporate them into an understanding of the civic system. This is notable as the poem contains astrological themes.[112] Therefore, he accepted certain aspects and applied them to his personal interpretations. It seems likely that he was aware of the poem's astrological characteristics given the Roman exposure to astrology by this time. That the *Phaenomena* was Greek, rather than Near Eastern, may have permitted him to represent what he was doing as respectable, despite the importance of Babylonian astrology to Greek astronomy and his use of astrological ideas.[113]

If Cicero utilised and reworked astrological ideas to increase his standing, he did so very differently from Sulla and Nigidius, who utilised astrology more directly. Ultimately, all these methods allowed these individuals to explore astrology however they wanted. Cicero happened to prefer philosophical and scientific approaches. His further interest is suggested by a letter to Atticus in 60 BC, informing him that a translation of part of the *Aratea* was ready for him.[114] As at least part of the *Aratea* dated to the early 80s BC, this

[108] Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 2.3-4.
[109] Knox (2011) 200; Gee (2013); Bishop (2018) 143-144; 154-155.
[110] *Quo enim uno vincebamur a victa Graecia, id aut ereptum*[4] *illis est aut certe nobis cum Graecis communicatum. Brut.* 254-255. See also Cic. *Tusc.* 1.1-5. This quotation is explored more fully in the next chapter.
[111] Bishop (2016) 156. The "competition" with Greek culture is discussed more fully in Chapter Five. Rick specifically perceives Cicero as aiming to show his poetic skill (2019) 224.
[112] See the next note.
[113] For the astrological themes of the poem, see: Rochberg (2010) 386 n.22; van der Waerden (1952-1953) 217-218; Rochberg-Halton (1988); Monroe (2019). For the issue of seeing astrology as a Greek practice rather than Mesopotamian, see Von Stuckrad (2000) 3-4
[114] Cic. *Att.* 2.1.11.

later letter suggests Cicero's continued engagement,[115] and indicates Cicero continued to revise at least part of his translation, a level of interest not shown in his other poems.[116] This may have been due to the usefulness of the poem in the religious works. The most obvious example is when Balbus used the poem to prove the existence of the gods. At the end of a lengthy quotation, Balbus states:

> Can any sane person believe that this array of stars and this great ornament of the sky could have been created out of atoms rushing to and fro fortuitously and at random?[117]

Here, Cicero expressly demarcated a text that had astrological elements as an important tool for understanding the civic gods of the city through challenging Epicurean theories. This presumably aided Cicero in his wider aim of teaching his audience about Greek philosophy, allowing him to present himself as an authority on religious and philosophical matters.[118] As highlighted in the next chapter, it is difficult to interpret Cicero's thoughts behind the characters he presented, as they do not necessarily portray his own thoughts. However, Cicero's use of Balbus, the Stoic, may suggest his positive reception of astrological themes. He is the interlocutor with whom Cicero agrees the most at the end of the work, which is an implicit endorsement of his views in Book Two. Therefore, Cicero explored non-civic ideas but attempted to integrate them into "traditional" religion. By presenting his ideas through the lens of philosophy, he could use astrology in a unique way, relevant to him.

That Cicero generated an original work rather than just translating the *Phaenomena* adds credence to these arguments. Emma Gee and Evelyn Rick compare the *Aratea* to the *Phaenomena* to illustrate Cicero's originality. For instance, in comparing Aratus (*Phaen*. 281–286) and Cicero (*Aratea* 53–61), Gee finds considerable differences. Cicero

[115] Green (2014) 134; See Gee (2013) for information on the date of the poem. There is a consensus that the poem was written in the early 80s BC, followed by the updated addition of "weather signs" in the 60s BC. See Bishop (2016) 157, n.8.
[116] Gee (2001) 521.
[117] *Haec omnis discriptio siderum atque hic tantus caeli ornatus ex corporibus huc et illuc casu et temere cursantibus potuisse effici cuiquam sano videri potest?* Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.115.
[118] See Chapter Five.

embellishes Aratus as his passage is longer, and might utilise Ennius.[119] Therefore, Gee's analysis highlights Cicero engaged with astronomical and astrological themes deeply, suggesting a real interest. I argue that this interest was in a particular subset of astrology. Throughout the quoted sections of the *Aratea* within the more positive Book One of *De Divinatione*, Cicero emphasised the stars in relation to the weather.[120] This contrasts with his criticisms of horoscopic/natal astrology, [121] and may result from the importance of astrometeorology within the *Phaenomena,* although Cicero emphasised it to a much greater extent.[122] Cicero was therefore able to explore personal interests, which he then incorporated into his understanding of the civic system. While this is only speculative, as Cicero did not directly state a fondness for astrometeorology, it may be reasonable, given that this was a central part of a work that he thought worthy of discussion concerning civic religion. Nigidius and Sulla's enthusiasm for horoscopic astrology compared to Cicero's interest in astrometeorology also potentially suggests the variety of ideas that individuals could select, resulting from the separation of one form of divination into different categories

That not all forms of astrology were problematic can be inferred by returning to Cicero's comments on *haruspicy*. His dislike of *vicani haruspices* was an attack on a particular form of the practice, rather than on the practice generally.[123] He also attacked the personal use of *haruspices*, [124] while including them for civic use in an ideal state.[125]

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[119] Gee (2001) 524-525. For other examples, see Rick (2019) 224-225.
[120] Cic. *Div.* 1.13-15. See also Green (2014) 136-138 for Cicero's emphasis on the connection between stars and the weather.
[121] Notably, Cicero is not the only evidence for this. Ausonius in eclogue 25 quotes an astrological poem of Quintus Cicero, which refers to the association between stars and the weather/seasons. Gee points out that it may be the case that the superscription that names Quintus was written by an individual who confused the brothers, but this cannot be known for certain (2007) 584-585. Nevertheless, Quintus does appear to be accepted as the likely source of the poem: Courtney (1993) 179-181. Therefore, astrometeorology may have been a growing topic of interest at this time.
[122] Green (2014) 134-135. Green also points out the astrological aspects of the poems.
[123] Discussed above.
[124] Cic. *Cat.* 3.9; cf. Cic. *Nat D.* 1.71. While Cicero did not state that his criticising "personal use", this statement could be applied to the "non-elite *haruspices*" based on his comments at Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.56. Here, Cicero listed diviners who created superstition. This list closely matches those he criticises at Cic. *Div.* 1.132 who prophesised for money.
[125] In the more positive Book One, the importance of the *haruspices* was emphasised when Cicero said they have great power: "*magna vis"* Cic. *Div.* 1.3. For Cicero's inclusion of them in civic religion, see. Cic. *Leg.* 2.20-21.

This, partly, resulted from his varied agendas and adapting to different audiences. In the speech against Catiline, for example, he specifically criticised Lentulus, a participant in the Catilinarian conspiracy, partly for his use of haruspices. Given the importance of this prosecution to Cicero, it is logical he would use any line of attack which may indicate he did not have a fundamental issue with personal *haruspices*. However, the dislike of a specific type of *haruspex* in *De Divinatione* is important. In a critical section, Cicero specifically chose to exclude those used by the state, differentiating between different forms of haruspicy. Cicero's treatment of astrology is similar as he discussed aspects more relevant to the state while criticising elements that focussed on individuals.[126] While it was not an official part of civic religion, Cicero may have felt able to discuss astrometeorology more positively as it dealt with signs that were already a part of civic religion, such as weather prodigies.[127] This may be further evidence that he explored a practice that he was interested in, but felt he needed to do so in a way that aligned with the pre-existing system with which he participated.[128] That he could point to his source as Greek, rather than Near Eastern, may have helped, given elite education in Greek thought and literature.[129] Lucretius contrasts Babylonian/Chaldean astrology and Greek astronomy, at least suggesting that the two topics were understood as separate subjects:

> This is the theory that the Babylonian teaching of the Chaldeans attempts to prove in opposition to the hypothesis of the Greek astronomers.[130]

However, in reality, both astronomy and astrology were deeply interconnected. The Latin term *astrologus* can mean both astrologer and astronomer. I, therefore, argue

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[126] Here, I am modifying Green's argument. He lists various types of astrology, suggesting different forms related to different groups/individuals. For instance, eclipses were seen as a prodigy of public significance (2014) 1. Barton, however, sees the rise of astrology in the republic as resulting from the rise of the individual (1994a) 38. Both ideas can be combined. Eclipses, as discussed below, required public expiation. However, horoscopes, for instance, would be more popular at the time that individuals gained prominence. Horoscopes of the emperors would ultimately have public significance, as the horoscope of Romulus may have had: Plut. *Vit. Rom.* 12. See Grafton and Swerdlow for a discussion of this horoscope (1986).

[127] Also, see my discussion of the eclipse at Pydna below.

[128] See above, n. 91 for my thoughts on Green's suggestion that Cicero's negativity was performative.

[129] I discuss the evidence for this in the next chapter.

[130] *ut Babylonica Chaldaeum doctrina refutans astrologorum artem contra convincere tendi* Lucr. 5.727-728, (trans. Smith 2001 156),

Cicero presented his work as "acceptable" in numerous ways, possibly highlighting some of the social pressures to which he felt he had to conform.

The Broader Population: Astrology and Divination

Overall, I argue that members of the elite explored both civic and non-civic religion. These ideas can be applied to the broader population. Civic religion did not lose its importance for non-elite people. They continued to worship civic deities with civic practices, and the Senate continued to cater for their needs. I discuss sacrifices as an example, below. Civic religion also accommodated a focus on individuals and families. For instance, the cult of the *lares* was utilised in rituals relating to marriage or the transition into adulthood.[131] However, this may result from seeing individual or family units as building blocks for the wider community.[132] Civic rites were not supplanted by non-civic practices, but non-elite individuals could explore practices that were not part of the official system, which allowed further focus on the individual.[133] My analysis has the problem of the necessity of relying on elite sources that reflect fears of non-elite religion. While these sources exaggerate, this tells us about the pressures that civic religion exerted on individuals and how members of the elite attempted to present themselves as religious authorities. Occasional expulsions of astrologers are an example, although these reactions may be performative, as elite individuals still valued them. I argue astrology remained an important religious outlet for people across society. The average person on the street could explore religion, similarly to members of the elite, in a way relevant to them outside of the civic system, where they could not attain high office.[134]

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[131] See Flower's in-depth analysis (2017) 83-85.

[132] I base this partly on Flower's comment that the *lares* acted as gods of the community, but also more broadly on Sourvinou-Inwood's view that the individual acted as the basic unit of the polis, discussed in the introduction. For the community role of the *lares,* also see Viglietti (2007).

[133] Rüpke argues that astrology had a direct impact on the individual, allowing them to legitimise their decisions. He specifically marks it as a key example of divination in his process of "individuation" (2013b) 15, 20.

[134] Beard et al. emphasise that any given cult would have significance for both members of the elite and non-elite (1998) 247. I accept this, given the continued participation of all members of society in civic rituals such as those I discuss in Chapter Six, Section One. Furthermore, there are religious priesthoods specifically for plebeians. See Rupke (2008) 8 (although Rüpke is here referring to the imperial period). However, given the greater number of those who could not attain high office compared to the elite, I

The most often discussed evidence for astrology in Rome is the expulsion of astrologers in 139 BC, followed by another in 33 BC.[135] There were more expulsions during the imperial period, and it is on this that scholarship generally focusses, particularly regarding the civic uses of astrology.[136] Nevertheless, these examples may provide insight into the importance individuals placed on astrology earlier. Any interpretation is problematic, as Valerius, the source for the earlier expulsion, wrote long after under Tiberius. However, his mention of an edict may suggest he had access to an actual decree. His account also fits the trend of greater second-century reservations about perceived "foreign" gods and practices, discussed in the previous chapter. I, therefore, accept the basic elements of the narrative. Members of the elite were concerned about non-elite individuals accessing forms of divination explicitly beyond civic religion. Valerius did not overtly state this was the cause of the tension:

> Gnaeus Cornelius Hispalus, foreign Praetor, in the consulship of Marcus Popillius Laenus and Lucius Calpurnius [139 BC], ordered the Chaldeans to leave the city and Italy within ten days by edict, accusing them of spreading profitable darkness over foolish minds by false interpretations of the stars.[137]

However, this may still be an assertion of elite authority. By presenting astrology as a mendacious practice, members of the elite could contrast it with "traditional" practices. My suggestion that members of the elite characterised aspects of religion as "foreign" to (re)assert authority over them is applicable here. A reference to specifically "foreign knowledge"[138] later in the passage may indicate this was their aim. There are other potential explanations for the expulsion. Heidi Wendt, analysing expulsions of freelance religious practitioners, posits that it represented a desire to restrict people unskilled in astrology from profiting from the practice rather than being against

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nuance these arguments by suggesting that religious authority was harder to gain for the broader populace within civic religion.

[135] 139 BC expulsion: Val. Max. 1.3.3. 33 BC: Dio 49.43.5.

[136] Liebeschuetz (1979) 122. See also Cramer (1954), who dedicates more space to the imperial period.

[137] *Cn. Cornelius Hispalus praetor peregrinus M. Popillio Laenate L. Calpurnio coss. edicto Chaldaeos citra decimum diem abire ex urbe atque Italia iussit, levibus et ineptis ingeniis fallaci siderum interpretatione quaestuosam mendaciis suis caliginem inicientes* Val. Max. 1.3.3.

[138] *peregrinam scientiam* (ibid.).

astrology itself, although she does not discount the possibility that there was a concern for "foreignness".[139] Orlin goes further, suggesting that the main concern for the civic elite was that astrology placed religious knowledge in the hands of people outside their control.[140] Valerius made no distinction between different astrologers, referring to "Chaldeans" as a single group, so a generalised concern for the practice as a whole is possible as opposed to fears that the practice was conducted improperly. Given the elite interest, however, these actions seem performative and could be nothing more than a statement of religious control, as astrology itself was not outlawed.[141] Even so, there are hints that astrology was perceived as a real threat.

I do not completely discount William Klingshirn and Wendt's view that Valerius' emphasis on the money that astrologers were accused of gaining through trickery was important.[142] Valerius' comments are matched by Cicero's concerns about paid diviners, suggesting this was a theme of elite discourse.[143] This could suggest genuine paternalistic concern, not antithetical to Orlin et al.'s arguments. The reassertion of authority may be directly linked to a desire to stop non-elite people from being tricked, simultaneously representing a genuine concern about access to unregulated practices. This necessitates proof that the decree was specifically targeted at non-elite people. Valerius did not make this explicit. However, his statement that astrologers were ordered to leave "the city and Italy" indicates they would be impacted regardless. The derogatory language may hint at an attempt to attack a practice seen as "low-class".[144] I find it unlikely that the reference to "foolish minds" referred to members of the elite, as,

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[139] Wendt (2015) 108-109. This is similar to my discussion of the reaction to philosophy in Chapter Five, Section One. Klingshirn takes a similar view, suggesting that there was a concern about the "profits" that paid diviners could generate while also indicating a concern for "foreignness" (2006) 147. He is following Beard et al (1998) 113.

[140] Orlin (2010) 183. King discusses how civic authorities perceived a "threat" in methodology that allowed a bypassing of traditional authority (2003) 300. King cites the Bacchanalia, but this could equally apply to paid diviners, given that they were also not the "traditional" authorities.

[141] Ripat (2011) 136.

[142] See note 139, above.

[143] Concern about falsehood and trickery is a theme in Book Two of *De Divinatione*: 2.110; 2.113. While not specifically criticising paid diviners in these passages, Cicero is criticising all divination, which presumably included paid divination that occurred at the Circus Maximus.

[144] Ripat (2011) 126; 117. Liebeschuetz states that the expulsion in 139 BC was due to a disturbance among the people at large (1979) 124. Ripat disagrees that the expulsion resulted from any form of "conspiracy", but the point stands that both scholars see astrology as connected to ordinary people.

while Valerius was not from a distinguished background, he generally perceived civic authorities positively.[145] Therefore, there may be some non-elite interest in non-civic practices. If so, the repetition in 33 BC may also suggest that the broader community continued to practice astrology regardless of what civic authorities defined as acceptable.

The cost of astrology requires further consideration. If few could afford the service, it would provide an opportunity for individual expression to a limited number, indicating concerns in these sources did not represent reality. Klingshirn's substantial study of sortilege discusses the price of paid divination. He suggests the rise in paid services was matched by an increasing ability to pay for them, and the *haruspices* and astrologers potentially charged more due to their more substantial training compared to *sortilegi*.[146] As someone who casts lots presumably required very little training to act as a diviner, as opposed to an astrologer, who required knowledge of astronomy and mathematics, I follow this argument. However, there is little direct evidence for the cost of private divination, and no evidence specific to astrology, although Juvenal referred to the relative cheapness of divination, as well as more expensive options:

> If she's less well off, she'll cross the space between the two turning posts and draw the cards that tell her fortune, and offer her forehead and her hand to the seer who asks her to make noisy kisses.[147]

While a later example, this is possibly applicable to the late Republic. Juvenal's account mentioned diviners in the *circus maximus,* implying these are similar to the republican priests Cicero discussed as occupying the same place. That diviners were relatively

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[145] For example, Valerius used the Senate's bestowal of honours on Caesar to justify them, suggesting that he implicitly perceived the body as positive and accepted their authority: Wardle (1997) 336. Valerius also emphasised virtues that helped guide the senate: Langlands (2008) 166. Valerius, therefore, aligned himself with civic religious authorities and is unlikely to have viewed them as "foolish".

[146] Klingshirn (2006) 147. There is no major discussion of the cost of divination as it is ultimately unknowable. For a summary of limited evidence and Klingshirn's view that sortilege was a cheap option, see (2019) 64. While elite writers are possibly exaggerating, they tend to focus on the use of astrologers by non-elite individuals. See Ripat for evidence (2011) 123-124. It is therefore reasonable that they would be an affordable service.

[147] *si mediocris erit, spatium lustrabit utrimquemetarum et sortes ducet frontemque manumquepraebebit vati crebrum poppysma roganti.* Juv. 6.581-584.

accessible seems reasonable given the importance of divine communication in the ancient world. Furthermore, according to Edmonds, the repetition of expulsions indicates both the continuing presence of astrologers and the existence of a clientele that could afford to hire them.[148] Interestingly, Juvenal stated it was rich women who could visit "an expert in the stars and the cosmos".[149] However, Juvenal may still have been referring to non-elite people as the overall passage deals with "plebeian destiny" which is "settled in the Circus and the Embankment".[150] Juvenal also perceived astrologers as criminals, making it possible that he understood them as, at least partly, an aspect of non-elite religion.[151] As with *haruspices,* it is plausible that there was a range of practitioners who catered to different levels of society. Therefore, it is likely non-elite individuals could access astrologers and other forms of diviners financially.

Further evidence for this comes from Cato's discussion of restrictions on what forms of divination individuals should avoid in the second century BC: "He should not consult a *haruspex*, Augur, prophet or Chaldean."[152] The "he" refers to the overseer of agricultural duties who would be a slave or freedman, for example.[153] This is a relatively off-hand comment in a long list of rules from sections 5.1–5.5, including "He should give back thanks for benefit"[154] and "He should know how to attend to every job on the farm".[155] The general day-to-day mundane nature of these rules may suggest that the diviners he

[148] Edmonds (2019) 264. This is a reasonable interpretation, although it cannot be known how many people visited an astrologer. Gordon argues that a later imperial expulsion in AD 16/17 (Mentioned in Tacitus: Tac. *Ann.* 2.32) led to the deaths of 130 (1999) 166; Ripat (2011) 119 n. 16. This example is not much later than the period studied here. If 130 astrologers or users of "illicit religion" were killed, then there must have been a large number of clients in order to support this number. In any case, van der Lans points out that Tiberius' expulsion of astrologers in AD 16/17 occurred despite Augustus' earlier edict prohibiting the consultation of astrologers (2015) 57-58. This again implies astrology was used despite what civic authorities wanted.
[149] *dabit astrorum mundique peritus* Juv. 6.586.
[150] *plebeium in Circo positum est et in aggere fatum.* Juv. 6.588.
[151] Juv. 6.560-563.
[152] *Haruspicem, augurem, hariolum, Chaldaeum nequem consuluisse velit* Cato. *Agr.* 5.4.
[153] North (1990a) 58. North points out that this passage also hints at a rich divinatory tradition. This is comparable with Cicero's list of diviners in *De Divinatione,* which suggests the same in the first century. However much they cost, it seems that diviners were able to maintain their presence. For further context, see below. This tradition is also hinted at later with further laws against magic. Gordon discusses this and the relatively high visibility of private divination: Gordon (1999) 165-166.
[154] *Pro beneficio gratiam referat* Cat. *Agr.* 5.2.
[155] *Opus rusticum omne curet uti sciat facere* Cat. *Agr.* 5.4-5.5.

mentioned were a fact of life, commonly available. This matches later evidence that portrays astrologers as readily available in the Circus Maximus. Horace discussed listening to "fortune tellers" in the "deceitful circus".[156] While Horace wrote under Augustus, he was born in the late Republic and may therefore also be reflecting practices that occurred during the period. That Cato and Cicero refer to the Circus at least suggests that forms of divination were accessible throughout the later Republic. Overall, this evidence tentatively indicates that individuals could select a range of practices regardless of the negative elite reactions and the cost of the service.

Negative elite reactions make it difficult to determine the reasons for the broader community finding astrology useful. Personal interest and a desire to access religious knowledge played a role, resulting in the generation of positive predictions. Not all astrological predictions were positive, such as the story of Sulla's death. However, Plutarch did not portray him as worried, perhaps indicating Sulla sought this prediction, similar to the public events Caesar planned, discussed in the previous chapter. Overall, astrology tended to provide predictions that the client desired.[157] Given the above evidence, it seems likely that the broader community received these positive predictions. This was less clearly possible in civic religion that catered for the whole community rather than individuals who experienced specific moments of personal crisis or interest that they may have wished to meet through a personal diviner. Ripat argues that astrologers were "yes-men", earning them disdain from the Senate, which perceived itself as the central religious authority.[158] This is compatible with the view that members of the elite so perceived themselves as the central religious authority and may explain why astrologers were marked as "foreign" and, therefore, unacceptable.

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[156] *fallacem Circum vespertinumque4 pererro saepe Forum; adsisto divinis* Hor. *Sat.* 1.6.113-116. *Divinus* does not contain inherent negative connotations, although *fallax* implies that the passage overall views these diviners negatively. It is, therefore, reasonable that this included astrologers. A declamation attributed to Quintilian, who wrote in the first century AD, also dealt with a man troubled by a prophecy made by an astrologer (Major Declamation 4). See Rolle (2015) summarising Schneider. This is complicated, as there is no consensus that Quintilian was the actual author. See Corbeill (2016) 13; Murphy (1987) XVII-XVIII and notes 21 and 38 in the same work.

[157] Barton uses an astrological prediction that Nigidius made about Octavian to suggest that powerful individuals were "bombarded" with positive interpretations (1994a) 40. While citing a later example, Beck argues that astrologers often provided individuals with what they desired (2007) 125.

[158] Ripat (2011) 137. Beard summarises the power of the Senate that Ripat is referring to (1990) 32.

However, I explore elsewhere in this thesis other aspects of non-elite religion that the Senate accommodated, suggesting there may also be some underlying genuine concerns.[159] That astrology allowed knowledge that existed outside civic structures was possibly problematic, as the Senate could not easily assert authority over it. Astrology had no organised structure, which could be more easily targeted.[160]

Popular interest in astrology may also be suggested by Plautus' use of the star Arcturus as a character c.200 BC: "a constellation that always rises in its due season here and in heaven. Arcturus is my name".[161] While not directly linked to astrology, this indicates that ordinary people thought stars could affect their lives.[162] This is unsurprising given the connections between deities and heavenly bodies, and the importance of astrology to everyday activities, such as navigation and seasons in agriculture.[163] As Plautus based his plays on Greek originals, he may have reflected Greek rather than Roman thoughts about the stars. However, he wrote for a Roman audience, so his characters, therefore, presumably made sense to his contemporaries. Furthermore, Plautus did not write direct translations; instead, editing and adding to plays, including new characters.[164] Therefore, non-elite individuals were exposed to astrological ideas that would have made sense to them. It seems likely this process started earlier, although there is little surviving evidence for prior interest. Notably, Arcturus claimed to have caused a storm, a key motivator in the plot, indicating that non-elite individuals understood the stars could aid in shaping the lives of mortals. A wish to explore this further may explain increasing references to non-elite astrologers in later periods. That Plautus could put on a play containing astrological ideas, as indicated when Arcturus claims that the stars act as messengers between men and gods, suggests some tacit elite acceptance.[165] Discussion, above, of the influence of astrology over the *haruspices*

[159] See my discussion about the votives of Attis in the previous chapter, for instance.
[160] North (1992) 182. For the concern displayed for organised structures outside of senatorial control, see Orlin (2010) 167-168.
[161] *signum quod semper tempore exoritur suo hic atque in caelo. nomen Arcturo est mihi.* Plaut. *Rud*. 1-10.
[162] Cramer (1954) 45-46; Green (2014) 65.
[163] For instance, see Lehoux's comments on the role of the planets in *De Republica* (2012) 188.
[164] For the addition of new characters, see Lowe (1992) 157. For further specific examples of how Plautus changed, added to, and edited plays, see O'Bryhim (1989). Scafuro also argues that Plautus used Italian styles of writing (2014) 5.
[165] Plaut. *Rud*. 10-15

indicates that aspects of astrology became normalised early on, suggesting that by the late Republic, it was a viable option even though it was never officially accepted. This applied to the broader community as it did to members of the elite.

I touched on Cicero's potential interest in astrometeorology and dislike of natal or horoscopic astrology above.[166] Plautus' use of Arcturus likewise suggests the broader community also engaged in similar decision-making, able to select between different forms of astrology. Celestial activity, particularly that of Arcturus, was thought to be connected to weather events, meaning that he may have a specific connection to astrometeorology.[167] Problematically, there is little evidence for the development of astrometeorology before the first century, and other gods claim responsibility for the storm in the play.[168] However, Arcturus' claim should not be discounted, given the stars' more general associations with the weather. He is the first character presented as having authority over meteorological events in the play, marking this as an important ability. While non-elite individuals could utilise astrologers who practiced forms that were perceived negatively, they were also aware of other sub-categories that they could select. This fragmentation, similar to the different types of *haruspices,* would have allowed a greater degree of personal expression.

Athenion's use of astrology is a clearer example of how it could be used to undermine civic norms. He led the slave revolt during the Second Servile War (104-100 BC). Diodorus claimed that he used astrology to legitimise his position:

> having great skill in astrology he won over first the slaves who were under him, some two hundred, and then those in the vicinity, so that in five days he had gathered together more than a thousand men.[169]

[166] See above and Cic. *Div.* 2.88-89; 2.96-97.
[167] Lewis & Short (1879) 155. Hunter perceives that Plautus is writing a close parallel to Aratus. Arcturus is a servant of Jupiter that causes weather (2008) 185.
[168] Green (2014) 132-133, n.15.
[169] καὶ τῆς ἀστρομαντικῆς πολλὴν ἔχων ἐμπειρίαν, ἔπεισε τῶν οἰκετῶν πρῶτον μὲν τοὺς ὑφ᾽ ἑαυτὸν τεταγμένους περὶ διακοσίους ὄντας, ἔπειτα τοὺς γειτνιῶντας, ὥστε ἐν πέντε ἡμέραις συναχθῆναι πλείους τῶν χιλίων. Diod. Sic. 36.5.1-4.

Again, this story may be embellished, reflecting possible performative fears about "foreign" non-civic religion.[170] Diodorus also wrote a moralistic history, which may have led him to include more salacious elements to reinforce his points of view.[171] Nevertheless, the underlying facts may be accurately reported. When referring to Ennus, another leader, he mentioned that Ennus "gave oracles by means of dreams".[172] Only Athenion was singled out as using astrology, suggesting Diodorus may have included details that he had researched, not simply stating they "used divination". Despite similarities in their stories, it seems unlikely that Diodorus was making arbitrary decisions to lie.[173] He was born in Sicily in the first century, able to draw on local sources, and was temporally close to the events he described.[174] Thus, non-elite individuals may well have turned to "foreign" non-civic religion when it was felt necessary. Athenion presumably could not claim to have any personal civic-religious authority. His actions were not dissimilar to members of the elite, such as Sulla's use of Postumius to legitimise his military actions. Astrology provided Athenion with a similar, albeit non-civic, option.

This adds credence to the idea that astrology gained popularity at this time. Cramer suggests astrologers and diviners had considerable influence over people from poorer backgrounds, and that Athenion and the other leaders relied, maybe completely, on types of divination for their claim to leadership.[175] Potentially, there were other factors

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[170] Morton also argues that Diodorus is creating a caricature of Athenion, using an association with astrology to highlight him as something unacceptable. Morton sees parallels with the other leaders of the slave revolts who utilised divination, possibly indicating that the presentation of them as prophets is a literary construct. However, he also notes that the exact parameters are different for each person (2023), 99-104. This may mean that there is a kernel of truth in each story, and Morton does not specifically discount the possibility that Athenion used astrology. He further notes that Athenion demonstrated his ability to divine the future in Diodorus' account, unlike Salvius/Tryphon, who is said to have a "reputation" for divination but is not shown undertaking it. The direct record of Athenion's use of astrology may, therefore, reflect how he gained prominence.

[171] Hau (2016) 74.

[172] ὀνείρων ἐμαντεύετο Diod Sic. 34/35.2.5-10.

[173] In addition, it is plausible to think that these accounts are true as the slave revolts would require strong leaders, which would be enhanced by associations with divine favour: Bradley (1983) 448. Bradley, however, plays down the notion that leaders of slave revolts required religious legitimisation (1983) 439-440. I still argue that they were a useful tool for these individuals. However, caution must be exercised due to Diodorus' hostility: Morton (2013) 247-249.

[174] Diod. Sic. 1.4.4.

[175] Cramer (1954) 59-60.

Diodorus did not report, wishing to focus solely on what fitted his moralistic viewpoint. However, individual claims to personal religious authority likely had some influence, given the importance placed on divine communication in the civic system. While non-elite people did not visit astrologers in the Circus Maximus to undermine/overturn civic norms, Athenion's actions seem to validate some elite concerns. [176] This evidence hints at non-elite individuals' use of specifically non-civic religion to generate personal religious authority. Diodorus specifically relates Athenion's use of astrology to his large personal following, presenting it as the key reason for his success. Members of the elite would not wish Athenion, or other leaders of the revolt, to have access to these forms of divination, but there seems little they could do to prevent non-elite interest. While a particularly extreme example, this neatly illustrates the ability of the individual to use religious practices to meet their own needs.

Cato's comments on what diviners an overseer should not consult suggest that their authority was presented as in direct opposition to members of the elite.[177] North interprets the whole passage as Cato attempting to say it was dangerous to allow non-elite individuals to consult any diviner, as it may challenge the master's domination.[178] This seems plausible as Cato conveys less concern about deception and foreign attributes, attacking a variety of diviners. For instance, he mentioned an augur, suggesting a priesthood similar to the state cult. We would expect that this would be more acceptable than the explicitly non-civic "foreign" astrologers he mentioned in the same list. These may have been similar to the *vicani haruspices*, providing an accessible service that was still perceived negatively as something beyond elite control. Therefore, he primarily seemed concerned with non-elite access to religious authorities more generally. Nevertheless, the "foreign" label likely remained useful when it could be applied, reasonably, to a practice that carried these connotations. Cato often expressed

[176] Barton (1994a) 33 also argues that the expulsions are linked to specific examples of unrest (page 50). Ripat provides a more nuanced view (2011) 117, 144. Athenion is not a unique example in the Mediterranean. Otto discusses a range of ritual practices that could be perceived as damaging and harmful, that simultaneously allow an individual to exert their influence (2011) 188. Athenion seems to fall into this mould.
[177] See note 152.
[178] North (1990a) 59. See also Peralta's comments on the next page (2017). Also, page 339.

a dislike for non-Roman culture, such as Greek philosophy, indicating this was a common approach for him.[179] The use of the word "Chaldean" indicates performative fears of foreignness remained useful when referring to astrologers specifically, marking them as unacceptable and dangerous, as North suggests.[180]

The fear of non-elite access to divination may be associated with Cato's supposedly poor treatment of slaves. Plutarch stated that Cato treated them harshly and spoke of them as less than their owners.[181] While specific stories may be untrue, this represents how slaves could be treated by their masters without having recourse to help. In this context, Cato's concerns that slaves would seek practices that could aid them are reasonable. Possibly, Cato was fearful for no reason. While elite authors would desire to reinforce the cults and practices, they genuinely believed aided the Roman state, non-elite individuals did not generally wish to undermine "traditional" norms. However, in the following decades after *De Agricultura* was published, those such as Athenion made use of astrology to legitimise their positions. Cato's concerns were, therefore, prophetic at least.[182] Occasionally, civic religion could be vulnerable.[183] There is a difference between a slave and a non-elite citizen, and it is not clear if Cato's view differed on this. Nonetheless, attempts are made to restrict individual action.[184] Rather than a concern for a practice in which many of the elite were interested, the real issue seems to be *who* was practicing it.

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[179] Plut. *Vit. Cat. Mai.* 23.1; See also Erskine (1997) 38. However, I discuss issues with this interpretation in the next chapter. I will suggest that these reactions were ultimately performative.
[180] I am therefore combining North's view with van der Lans, discussed above: n. 91.
[181] Plut. *Vit. Cai. Mai.* 4.4-5.1; 20.4; 21.3-4.
[182] This recalls the possible real fears that civic authorities had for non-traditional forms of practice discussed above, n. 140.
[183] North (1990a) 71. It is true that the Senate was never truly challenged: Barton (1994a) 38; Beard (1990) 32. However, North seems reasonable in saying that civic religion could be perceived as vulnerable given events such as revolts legitimised through religious practices. Peralta suggests that Cato's statements indicate there was a real threat to elite authority (2017) 335-336.
[184] However, the interest of every individual could not be controlled, and private diviners remained a key part of life: Ripat (2006) 156. The broader importance of personal connections with the divine is suggested by Renberg's discussion of the quantities of dedicatory inscriptions relating to dreams perceived to be sent from the gods (2010) 34-35. While potentially a "more" civic option, this highlights the real interest in divination beyond the interests of the state.

Regardless of these concerns, the civic elite retained the ability to enforce collective response to religious issues that impacted the non-elite. For example, at Pydna in 168 BC, an eclipse occurred shortly before a battle. The general, Aemilius Paullus, understood the scientific reasons for it. However, he still conducted sacrifices for the soldiers' benefit. Livy and Plutarch differ as only Plutarch connects the sacrifices to the eclipse:

> However, since he [Aemilius] was very devout and given to sacrifices and divination, as soon as he saw the moon beginning to emerge from the shadow, he sacrificed eleven heifers to her.[185]

However, Livy's narrative does not preclude the possibility that the sacrifices were at least partially related. Given the evidence from Cato, Plautus and Cicero, many of the soldiers would be aware of astrology as a religious option and how the eclipse might be interpreted through its use. This interest is, ultimately, why the Senate could not completely prevent astrology.[186] Equally, these events highlight that elite persons determined how to rectify issues. In matters of state importance, civic practices were performed, and the soldiers seemed willing participants. Cramer, in his major study of astrology, suggests that Aemilius was reluctant to accept completely rational explanations of natural events.[187] Cramer sees this as a characteristic of the period, presumably in contrast to late Republican rationalism.[188] While a problematic view, as members of the elite in the first century were no less religious than those in previous centuries, Plutarch indicates Aemilius sacrificed willingly. A member of the elite seemingly interpreted an event in a particularly "traditional" way.[189] Aemilius had the authority to decide this. He settled on reinforcing civic religion.

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[185] Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 17.7-13. Livy 44.37.5-7.
[186] Potter (1994) 149; Barton also discusses how astrology came to be utilised in opposition to "traditional priesthoods", although the examples they discuss come from the early principate (1994a) 63.
[187] Cramer (1954) 49. Livy states that Aemilius warned his men prior to the eclipse, while Plutarch does not. For a summary of these sources, see Hammond (1984) 43-44. Livy emphasises that Aemilius did not want the men to panic. Performing a sacrifice would presumably aid this despite the scientific explanation. Therefore, there may be an association in his narrative between the sacrifices and the eclipse.
[188] The comment that Aemilius was aware of the scientific reasons for the eclipse may be a later addition from the late Republic/early Empire, as many authors presented themselves as having specific religious knowledge that should be kept from the populace. I discuss this in the next chapter.
[189] For the importance of sacrifice in civic religion, see Scheid (2007).

As the leading civic official, Aemillius presumably had a choice in how to react to the religious sign but could not ignore it. This is suggested by the number of eclipses that were recorded in the second and first centuries.[190] While there are fewer references to astrology before the second century, [191] this may result from lost evidence. Eclipses were usually portrayed as negative or neutral. As they fell into the remit of signs dealt with by "traditional" religion, they required a religious response. Aemilius and the soldiers would likely agree. However, Aemilius' position permitted him to decide how to expiate the sign. That he performed a sacrifice is important, as this practice played a key role for everyone in Roman society, regardless of social status.[192] This may explain why the soldiers accepted the elite interpretation. They were willing participants in civic religion, which was potentially useful for Aemilius personally. He took control, decided the acceptable response, and by winning the battle, could represent himself as having divine favour and religious authority. There is consequently a complex interplay between individuals and civic religion. This would have applied to the soldiers themselves. Livy states the tribune Sulpicius "summoned the soldiers to an assembly, by permission of the consul, and announced that no one should regard it [the eclipse] as a bad omen".[193] This perhaps hints at Aemilius' fears that they would generate their own interpretation. Plutarch says that, when the eclipse occurred, "The Romans, according to custom, tried to call the moon's light back by clashing of bronze utensils and holding up blazing fires and torches towards the sky".[194] If this is accurate, the soldiers seemed to disregard their order and generate their own response as well. If so, this shows the prominence of celestial events that may be understood through astrology, the non-elite being able to decide what to do for themselves.

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[190] Livy 30.38.8 (203 BC); 37.4.4 (190 BC); 38.36.4 (188 BC); 44.37.5-9 (168 BC); Dio 41.14.3 (49 BC).
[191] Fantham (2011), discussing Roman thoughts on the stars before Manilius, mentions no evidence prior to the time of Plautus and Ennius. Cramer discusses evidence from the third century, referencing Plautus and Greek philosophy, but agrees that the earliest expressions of interest cannot be found (1954) 44-45.
[192] Ordinary citizens unsurprisingly valued sacrifice. Propertius and Tibullus discuss cheaper options for sacrifice that indicate that everyone participated. Prop. 2.10.24 and Tib. 1.1.19-24; King (2020) 146-147. I discuss these quotes more fully below.
[193] *consulis permissu ad contionem militibus vocatis 6pronuntiavit, nocte proxima, ne quis id pro portento acciperet* Livy. 44.37.5-6.
[194] τῶν δὲ Ῥωμαίων, ὥσπερ ἐστὶ νενομισμένον, χαλκοῦ τε πατάγοις ἀνακαλουμένων τὸ φῶς αὐτῆς καὶ πυρὰ πολλὰ δαλοῖς καὶ δᾳσὶν ἀνεχόντων πρὸς τὸν οὐρανόν, Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 17.8.

There are further hints that civic religion was successfully reinforced, and that Athenion was an extreme case. Further to the engagement with Aemilius' sacrifice, indicating civic practices were a key part of day-to-day life, authors attempted to subordinate practices that they saw as less acceptable. In Plautus' play, Jupiter tells Amphitruo to "forget about all seers and *haruspices*", as they are less reliable than he, simply because he is Jupiter.[195] Plautus did not describe the *haruspices* whom he mentions as *vicani*. However, the context seems to suggest that these were personal diviners, as Amphitruo was reacting to events that affected his family, not a major civic portent. He stated, "I will seek peace with Jupiter with many sacrifices. I will call the seer Tiresias."[196] Tiresias was a famous seer in Greek mythology and does not seem to function here as a civic priest, as he is called by an individual privately. Notably, only Jupiter mentions the *haruspices*. Amphitruo only describes summoning a "*coniector*", meaning seer. Possibly, Tiresias was both "seer" and haruspex, given that *haruspices* also provided predictions.[197] If so, the more general term of "seer" may also indicate a more private use, given there were no state *coniectores*. If this were a "more civic" priesthood, Jupiter would, presumably, have no issue with their use. Therefore, a key civic deity communicated to the audience, many of whom are likely to have been non-elite, that specific priests are unsuitable.[198] Civic religion is presented as the only place where truth can be found.

Plautus' comments are interesting, as *haruspices* should fit more easily into "traditional" religion than astrology, indicating the real fear was non-elite access to divination generally, matching Cato's fear of augurs. Hierarchies could be reinforced with sacrifices. Scheid discusses this, arguing: "The method of sharing the various parts of the victim also divided the human participants according to their social rank."[199]

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[195] *hariolos, haruspices mitte omnis*. Plaut. *Amph*. 1132-1133.
[196] *Iouis supremi multis hostiis pacem expetam. ego Teresiam coniectorem aduocabo* Plaut. *Amph*. 1127-1128.
[197] See Ripat in n. 106 for the ability of one individual to perform different priestly functions.
[198] Seaman (1954) 115; Richlin (2014) 175.
[199] Scheid (2012) 87-88.

Scheid adds that this was performative in the period that I discuss, as the social hierarchy was well-established from the second century onwards. Similar ideas can be applied to differences between types of offerings. Propertius writes: "bring lowly/cheap incense in a poor man's sacrifice".[200] While non-blood sacrifice was an important ritual, the use of "poor man" seems disparaging. [201] Tibullus' comments about lesser animal offerings do not seem as negative, although he created a distinction between different types of offering: "a lamb is a small offering for the land."[202] Additionally, Cicero in describing sacrifices at funerals, seems to suggest there were specific regulations: "The grave is not complete until the proper rites are performed and a pig is sacrificed."[203] Cicero attributed oversight of these "proper rites" to the *pontifices*: "This whole body of pontifical law shows deep religious feeling."[204] This indicates that, while regulated, there was a deeply felt need to ensure practices were conducted properly. All these sources indicate that sacrifice was an accessible aspect of religion to everyone in society.[205] Nevertheless, Tibullus and Propertius' writings indicate that an element of hierarchy reinforcement remained present in later periods. This may indicate why non-elite individuals sought alternatives outside a system in which they were subordinated. Sacrifice, like astrology, may have permitted a more personal religious expression without these negative connotations.[206]

Other forms of divination provide evidence for individual action in religion. While there were different reactions to each form, having different perceived origins and

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[200] *pauperibus sacris vilia tura damus* Prop. 2.10.24.
[201] For the importance of non-blood sacrifice, see: Schultz (2016) 63-64; Scheid (2012) 88. Scheid specifically mentions that members of the elite were not truly concerned about vegetable offerings, for instance. However, I suggest that there was a performative element to these comments that allowed some hierarchy reinforcement, even if only nominal.
[202] *nunc agna exigui est hostia parva soli.* Tib. 1.1.19-24. My own translation.
[203] *nec tamen eorum ante sepulchrum est, quam iusta facta et porcus caesus est* Cic. *Leg.* 2.57.
[204] *totaque huius iuris conpositio pontificalis magnam religionem caerimoniamque declarat.* Cic. *Leg.* 2.55
[205] King emphasises that Cicero presented the heaping of earth on the grave as the minimum necessary element to make it sacred, although the sacrifice was also an important aspect (2020) 172. While it is unclear how affordable a pig was, given that there was a clear interest in maintaining these rituals, it seems likely that a sacrifice would also be necessary, although potentially there was flexibility and other non-animal offerings could be made.
[206] Rüpke highlights how astrology could be used to legitimise individual decisions (2013b) 20. Rüpke also mentions votive offerings as a form of divine communication, which I suggest more clearly formed part of the civic system as they were deposited in public places to civic deities.

practitioners, sortilege indicates some parallels to astrology. I referenced, earlier, Klingshirn's views that these were accessible diviners, potentially even more so than astrologers. This was divination through the drawing of inscribed lots from a container. Initially, Quintus seems to accept sortilege, saying "divination by lot should not be disregarded if it has the sanction of antiquity" when referring to the lots at Praeneste.[207] There was a temple dedicated to Fortuna Primigenia, here that was associated with lot drawing. The cult and associated practices seemed to have been a respected part of civic religion, with a similar temple constructed for Fortuna in Rome in the late second and early first centuries.[208] Champeaux and Klingshirn interpret a coin issued in 69 BC by M. Plaetorius Cestianus as depicting both the goddess and a lot specifically from Praeneste, based on the iconography of a child.[209] Children were traditionally those who drew the lots at Praeneste.[210] This may, therefore, be a further indicator of the importance of both the goddess and sortilege in the late Republic.

This is bolstered by Quintus' comments that attest to the importance of the site. Additionally, the quotation implies that lots without a respectable past should be ignored. This could represent a separation between an elite and non-elite practice. This is clearer at the end of the book, when Quintus states he does not respect those who charge for divinatory services. This may imply a concern for non-elite access to personal religious practices was a factor in Cicero and Quintus' negative perceptions, even though he did not directly state this was the case. Cicero, in the more critical Book Two, goes further, undermining the lots even in the civic cult: "What certainty can you put in these things that are guided and led by Fortune in the hands of boys?[211] It seems, like forms of haruspicy, it existed in a grey area. Cicero's more dismissive attitude may also result from his specific aim to critique the totality of divination, not just "low-class"

[207] *etsi ipsa sors contemnenda non est, si auctoritatem habet vetustatis* Cic. *Div.* 1.34.
[208] For the temple constructed at Rome in the Lago Argentina, see Leach (2010) 117. Purcell discusses the importance of the Praeneste cult, stating that the temple was more "magnificent" than those at Rome. See also Huntsman, who suggests that Praeneste was the centre of lot divination (1996-1997) 367.
[209] Champeaux (1982) 65; Klingshirn follows this argument (2019) 60.
[210] See Klingshirn (2006) 144 for more on this.
[211] *Quid igitur in his potest esse certi, quae Fortunae monitu pueri manu miscentur atque ducuntur?* Cic *Div.* 2.86.

divine communication.[212] However, that Quintus subtly criticises some forms of sortilege, despite generally discussing divination more positively, which may indicate there were similar performative concerns to astrology.

A further similarity between astrology and sortilege is apparent paternalistic concerns that individuals could be tricked out of money. Cicero states: "The entire matter [sortilege] was invented either for deceit, profit, superstition, or error."[213] This matches Valerius Maximus' claims as to why astrologers were expelled in 139 BC. Given there was interest in religion being conducted "correctly", it may represent a real concern. Equally, the anxieties about superstition suggest other motives. Nice argues the statements at the end of Book One of *De Divinatione* represent the elite view that state religion was valued above "rustic" and "mercenary" religion.[214] This quotation seems to echo the same.

North's arguments that Cato was worried about non-elite individuals utilising private divination may also be applicable.[215] Cicero states in Book Two: "If you see an astrologer or *haruspex*."[216] The use of "you", presumably aimed at Quintus, seems to imply an expectation that diviners would be present in the city.[217] This can also be applied to Sortilege, given the physical evidence discussed below that suggests that practitioners were present at this time. The overall passage also deals with "superstition" as opposed to "religion", indicating that these diviners were not part of the civic system but akin to

[212] Grotanelli points this out in her discussion of sortilege (2005) 136. Cicero does make a distinction between elite and non-elite religion, however: Krostenko (2000) 360-361. Both elements could be an aspect of Cicero's argument, although his refutation of Quintus' examples that relate to members of the elite may suggest Grotanelli's interpretation makes more sense. I discuss Cicero's aims in *De* Divinatione more deeply in Chapter Five.
[213] *Tota res est inventa fallaciis aut ad quaestum aut ad superstitionem aut ad errorem*. Cic. *Div.* 2.85 (my own translation).
[214] Nice (2001); Krostenko (2000) 361. This discussion is linked to the difficulties of integrating Greek philosophy into Roman religion: Beard (1986) 44. See Chapter Five.
[215] For North's arguments, see above.
[216] *si Chaldaeum, si haruspicem videris* Cic. *Div.* 2.149.
[217] A similar example comes from Cicero's story that Cato wondered how a *haruspex* could not laugh when he saw another, also implying that these diviners were present within the city. While it is unclear if these were "official" or "non-official" diviners. The lack of specificity implies the passage could refer to either or both (Cic. *Div.* 2.51).

non-elite diviners mentioned in the previous book. This is not entirely clear, as Cicero also criticised state *haruspices*. However, the mention of astrologers suggests that non-elite divination may be the focus of Cicero's attack here. Overall, there is no reason why elite authors could not reassert the authority of the civic system while also having a genuine concern about paid diviners tricking their clients. These sources also reveal the range of practices available for non-elite individuals to utilise.

Physical examples of *sortes* that date to the late Republic and early Empire provide further evidence for these themes. For example, CIL I^2 2183 is inscribed with *Laetus lubens petito quod / dabitur gaudebis semper.* Grottanelli provides two possible translations and suggests the passage could be read positively or negatively, indicating that the person the lot refers to should be glad about their lot in life[218]

> Translation 1: Seek you joyfully and willingly, and you will be glad forever, because of what you have been given.
>
> Translation 2: Happily and spontaneously ask for what you shall be given: you shall be forever happy.

If we accept this, it gives credence to the idea that diviners could deceive people by failing to provide them with a meaningful interpretation, indicating Cicero's concerns were not completely disingenuous. This implies these diviners could manipulate their answers, providing their own spin on what the lots say.[219] This is not surprising. Presumably, they were viewed as religious experts able to do this legitimately. However, this may have allowed members of the elite an avenue for attacking the practice, as Cicero does. As varied interpretations were a natural part of the civic system as well, as discussed in the previous chapter and Section One, the concern here may again relate to a fear of non-elite access to divination. This is notable in the case of sortilege, as it does not seem as "dangerous" as astrology, as it formed an aspect of a civic cult.

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[218] Grottanelli (2005) 139-140 for the debate and a summary of other physical examples. Klingshirn also analyses lots as objects, suggesting that elite authors did not value them due to being cheap (2019) 63-65.

[219] For an example of this, see Luijendijk, who suggests that diviners argued that their methods were correct, even if the client was unhappy, by suggesting that they had "doubted the lot", thus making it give an insufficient answer (2019) 318.

Furthermore, regardless of the interpretations, the actual answers that *sortilegi* provided are predetermined, therefore not permitting as unique an experience. The lots were presumably applicable to all individuals, rather than a particular client. This, in combination with lots forming an aspect of civic religion, suggests that members of the elite continued to reinforce their position as religious authorities even over forms of divination that could fit more clearly into the civic system. Nevertheless, if there were genuine concerns, then it would be no more difficult for the Senate to target it than astrology, although, as pointed out, the expulsions of astrologers were potentially ineffective token gestures anyway.

During the last two centuries of the Republic, there were complex religious processes that allowed non-elite individuals to take part in religions that did not fit within "traditional" civic religion. There does not seem to have been a clear definition as to what was a "civic" or "non-civic" practice. However, members of the elite made statements as to what they perceived as acceptable. Some practices might fall into a grey area, such as different forms of *haruspex* or sortilege, respected as part of a civic cult but not when conducted by "lower-class" diviners. The attacks against forms of divination, such as astrology, were likely performative. Members of the elite selected desirable elements that they could utilise, such as astrometeorology. What they disliked was labelled "non-Roman". Astrology seems to fit into the broader performative fears regarding the impact of "foreign" cults and practices, despite some embracing elements of it.[220] Stories such as that of Athenion indicate that there were some legitimate fears about how forms of divination could be used.

Ultimately, the repeated reinforcements on the part of elite authors suggest the diviners available to the broader community remained a popular option for personal religious expression. Despite some wariness, the traditionalistic elite was open to taking part in "non-civic" practices, although they continued to associate themselves with more

[220] Turfa (2012) 34. See Possanza (1992) 45-46; Schmidt (2005) for a brief discussion of Nigidius Figulus and his astrological interest, also discussed above.

clearly civic practices such as augury. This was necessary for them, as the Senate retained the ability to decide what was acceptable for the broader populace by suppressing what it saw as "foreign." This was a wide-ranging power, given that the Senate had the sole power to determine what was "alien."[221] Nevertheless, the individual retained agency, aided by Republican competition, to explore other religious options. The concerns about paid diviners expressed by Cato, in the mid-second century, and Cicero, in the mid-first century, evidence the inability of members of the elite to completely restrict non-civic religion that allowed individual expression. The varied concerns *for* non-elite people were not necessarily shared *by* non-elite people.

[221] North suggests that the Senate may have made it impossible for the practices of the Bacchanalia to continue after the repression. Even if they did not, the Senate presented the rites as unacceptable unless under their control. (1979) 90-91. Consequently, "foreign" practices are made other, outside of civic religion, determined by the Senate alone. For a further example of senatorial control, see Orlin (2010) 168. See my discussions of Ceres and Magna Mater in the previous chapter.

Chapter Five: The Reception of Greek Philosophy

Introduction

This chapter argues that individuals explored Hellenistic philosophical theories of religious practice to generate unique perceptions of civic religion with relative freedom. As with the forms of divination discussed in the previous chapter, individuals could select between different theories to explore. However, employing the principles developed in Chapter Three, I add that authors felt a pressure to recommit themselves to civic religion, which continued to guide their thought. Just as with astrology and haruspicy, philosophical theories of religion provided another level of choice in how religion could be considered and experienced, allowing individual expression through writing.

In Section One, I analyse the reactions of members of the elite to philosophical inquiry prior to the late Republic. This provides necessary context, as later authors claimed to dislike "Greek" theory, including theoretical discussions of the gods, while simultaneously employing it in their written works. I argue throughout that negative discussions were performative but useful to authors who presented themselves as innovative in creating a "Roman" philosophy. Individuals, rather than official religious authorities, claimed to make a practice acceptable, although philosophical approaches were long established. Therefore, while their claims are exaggerated, individuals presented themselves as unique philosophical writers, able to introduce new perceptions of civic religion independent of institutions. The "constructed negativity" may also have created real social pressure, requiring individuals to reaffirm their commitment to "traditional" norms, as discussed in the previous chapters. Later sections suggest these authors were genuinely innovative in other ways.[1] In Section Two, I focus on Lucretius and Varro and how they created intellectual debates about religion, but in substantially different ways. Lucretius produced a work focussing

[1] For Cicero as innovative, see Beard (1986) 36. For Cicero's thorough examination of religion through applying theoretical ideas, see Rassmussen (2003) 197. See also Bragova for a strong summary of modern views on Cicero's explorations of religion through theory (2017) 309.

exclusively on Epicurean ideas. He used others' negative reactions for personal benefit. Varro instead created a history of religious institutions, presenting himself as a scholarly authority in writing satires and history. Individuals could, therefore, explore many approaches when discussing practices and the gods, indicating freedom in how the civic system could be understood, although they likely felt a pressure to emphasise their commitment to civic religion.

In Section Three, I analyse Cicero's stated aim of wishing to "conquer" Greek culture. As outlined in Section One, his presentation of Hellenistic schools as new, needing to be Romanised, does not match evidence for their longstanding presence in Rome. However, he presented himself as innovatively creating a "Roman" philosophy by integrating Roman exempla. This also defended his work against "traditionalist" reactions against perceived "foreignness". A variety of Cicero's speeches and passages from *De Republica* suggest he attempted to show his peers a practical application for Stoic theories about the gods. This is one of several ways in which he presented himself as a philosophical authority, showing knowledge of religious doctrines while exploring practices in new ways. In Section Four, I argue Cicero analysed civic religion through a range of frameworks, reinforcing it and the position of the Senate. Additionally, he wished to create a "compendium" of philosophical views to instruct others.[2] This included producing new interpretations that his readers could perceive as radical. In constructing these views, he could "publicly" display his philosophical knowledge and present himself as a new authority on religious customs. He provided detailed discussions of Greek sources, creating new arguments, which he applied to Roman practice.

Therefore, the key sources are *De Natura Deorum, De Divinatione* and *De Fato*, written in the mid-40s BC. These form the religious core of Cicero's "compendium", although he discussed religion in *De Legibus*. *De Natura Deorum* is designed to present a variety of

[2] This idea is discussed by Schofield and Striker. See page 213.

ideas from different schools on the existence of the gods. *De Divinatione* analyses forms of divination, providing a Stoic, positive view in Book One, balanced by a critical, sceptical view in Book Two. Lucretius' poem *De Rerum Natura,* written in the mid-first century, before Cicero's trilogy, provided an in-depth analysis of Epicurean philosophy. The focus was not solely religious, exploring the nature of matter and the mind. However, Lucretius discussed religion in Book Five, giving a traditional Epicurean view that the gods had limited interest in the lives of humans. I additionally argue that Lucretius advanced these ideas to create his own "Lucretian" view. Varro's (now fragmentary) *Antiquitates Rerum Humarum et Divinarum* (ARD), also published in the mid-first century, is another key work. It comprised 41 books, sixteen of which analyse *Res Divinae,* focussing on the institutional history of Roman religion. While the fragmentary nature makes concrete discussions difficult, civic practices and institutions were seemingly reinforced as an important aspect of Roman society.

Defining "philosophy" is difficult due to the many schools these sources discuss. Hellenistic thought was the main interest. Cicero analysed Stoicism, Epicureanism and Scepticism, critiquing their ideas in *De Natura Deorum,* although he referred to others such as Plato. Cicero's use of Academic scepticism particularly allowed him to explore aspects of other schools and avoid dogmatic conclusions. Epicurean arguments against divine involvement in human affairs are particularly important to Lucretius' discussion of religious practice. Focus, therefore, must be on these schools. Due to the broad range of approaches, I define "religious philosophy" as a means of applying different schools of thought to Roman practice. Religious philosophy often focussed on divination and the extent to which the gods were involved in mortal affairs.[3] Most sources conclude that the gods exist. Therefore, my definition of "Roman Religion" relates to practices and civic institutions rather than notions of belief.[4] Cicero focusses on the "correct" performance of rites and following rules.[5] This is in line with his

[3] I, therefore, broadly follow Graver (2009) 119. I also follow Bénatouïl in suggesting that this form of philosophy was not a practice done in a "social void" (2021) 3-4. Religious philosophy focussed on practical examples of its employment.
[4] See Wynne (2019) 53.
[5] Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.8-9.

arguments in debates with Clodius, outlined in Chapter Three. However, ideas beyond civic religion could also be explored, suggested by Lucretius' more radical interpretations.

Early Reactions to Greek Philosophy

Discussing the earlier perception of Greek thought is necessary, as late Republican authors provided contradictory, paradoxical views. Evidence, ultimately, suggests that Greek influences were accepted early. Bradley outlines examples of cultural connections from the fourth century BC, including an embassy sent to Alexander the Great in 323 BC, and the presence of Greek motifs on Roman coinage.[6] This can be related to philosophy specifically. Pliny discussed the erection of statues of Pythagoras and Alcibiades in the 340s BC.[7] Later, in 155 BC, an Athenian embassy of philosophers delivered speeches to convince the Senate to reduce a fine imposed on Athens for raiding the town of Oropus.[8] Additionally, Pythagorean philosophy was thought to have a substantial early impact. Cicero stated that Pythagorean teachings entered the city at the same time the Republic was formed.[9] Various authors associated Pythagoras with Numa Pompilius, although they were aware that this chronology did not line up, as they determined that Pythagoras came to Italy 140 years after Numa's death.[10] Nevertheless, these stories suggest that first-century authors were aware of the earlier impact of philosophers.[11]

Events in the mid-second century further highlight a complex elite reaction to engaging in theoretical enquiries that likely impacted later authors. As part of the Athenian embassy in 155 BC, Carneades, a sceptic philosopher who influenced Cicero, spoke in

[6] Bradley (2020) 352. For the embassy to Alexander, see Plin. *HN*. 3.57; Arr. *Anab.* 7.15.5-6.
[7] Plin. *HN* 34.26.
[8] Gell. *NA*. 6.14.8-10; Cic. *De Or* 2.155; Plut. *Vit. Cat. Mai.* 22.1-23.1.
[9] Cic. *Tusc.* 4.2. For the impact of Pythagoras, see Volk (2016)36-37; McGowan (2016) 245-246.
[10] For Pythagoras and Numa: Diod. Sic. 8.14; Dion Hal. *Ant. Rom*. 2.59.1; Plut. *Num.* 1.1-2. For awareness of the incompatible chronology, see Cic. *Rep.* 2.28-29; Livy. 1.18.1-3.
[11] For the early impact of Greece on Italy, see Cornell (1995) 40. Lomas reinforces the importance of the presence of Greeks in Italy, emphasising, amongst other aspects, the influx of Greek objects (2017) 117.

Rome. Plutarch stated Cato was wary, although generally most, and particularly the young, were interested.[12] While this indicates a positive reaction, a few years prior, in 161 BC, Suetonius and Aulus Gellius recorded that philosophers were expelled from the city.[13] While these sources were written centuries after the events they describe, both claim to directly quote the decree: "I will append an ancient decree of the senate, as well as an edict of the censors:"[14] While this may, consequently, be a historical event, the continuing production of philosophical writings and Carneades' later presence, suggests that, similarly to the expulsion of astrologers, this measure was ineffective.[15] The acceptance of philosophers may be a cultural trend overcoming laws.[16] Ultimately, philosophical inquiry was an accepted avenue for individuals to explore religious ideas, but was matched with symbolic expressions of wariness. Cato was often characterised as anti-Greek in ancient literature, although he also visited Athens and quoted the *Odyssey*. Erskine uses this to suggest that there was an "ambivalent" attitude towards Greek ideas and literature.[17] Perhaps, rather, many held a real interest in learning Hellenistic ideas about the gods, although there were ingrained conceptual issues with utilising these ideas in written works, presumably why negative reactions were necessary. While certain concerns may be artificial, I suggest below that later authors utilised this to present themselves as able to "Romanise" philosophy, exploring theoretical religious ideas.

[12] Plut. *Vit. Cat. Mai.* 22. While I think that philosophy was popular in Rome early on, this event has been interpreted as causing surprise as Carneades refuted his own arguments: Wilkerson (1988) 133. However, for issues of authenticity see Glucker (2001) 60ff. Possibly the Romans were less well acquainted with philosophy at this point, but overall, I suggest that any surprise was likely muted.
[13] Suet. *Rhet.* 1.(25); Gell. 15.11.1. These sources discuss both this expulsion and the restrictions on rhetoricians, which I discuss below.
[14] *vetus S. C.3 item censorium edictum subiciam* Suet. (ibid).
[15] Gruen sees the expulsion as tokenistic (1990) 177; 192. This would potentially suggest a long-running trend of the Senatorial elite accepting foreign ideas but still attempting to reaffirm control over public matters. For expulsions as a trend of the late Republic, see Beard et al. (1998a) 230.
[16] Hopkins (1978) 77-78.
[17] Erskine (1997). Evidence for Cato's interest in Greek culture: page 39. Overall, I think that interest and concerns about the impact of Greece ebbed and flowed. For instance, while philosophy remained popular, interest in importing Greek cults declined: See Chapter Three, Section Three.

More generally, the second century saw apparent concerns for foreign luxury. The *Lex Fannia Sumptuaria* was designed to restrict luxury goods, passed in 161 BC.[18] The law concerned market-bought foods rather than philosophy or specifically Greek goods. However, Erich Gruen points out that the law was timed with the expulsion of philosophers the same year, and it stressed the irresponsibility of Roman youths.[19] This was echoed in Plutarch's comments that the young were interested in Carneades' speech. Gellius also commented on the impact on young people in his discussion of the edict against Rhetors in 92 BC, discussed below. Therefore, a supposed concern for young people appears to be a developing theme. I explore this, concerning Cicero's claim to train the youth, in Section Four. While ultimately hypocritical, as elite Romans studied philosophy as part of their education, discussed below, the presentation of the corruption of youth through contact with "foreign" ideas was something that late Republican authors could react against. Ultimately, this highlights the ingrained nature of negative perceptions in Roman elite society that did not prevent them from being open to philosophicalideas.[20]

Confusingly, some expressions of wariness may suggest an acceptance of outside influences. Gellius and Suetonius recorded that the censors issued an edict criticising Latin Rhetors in 92 BC.[21] Cicero used Crassus, one of the censors, as an interlocutor in *De Oratore,* indicating that the edict aimed to stop Latin rhetors from misusing rhetoric, protecting a Greek practice against those not of a high enough standard.[22] This implies

[18] Gell. *NA*. 2.24.2-6. Vincent Rosivach analyses the law, arguing that it was symbolic, resulting from a drunk magistrate presiding over a trial. This is convincing as Rosivach shows that the law was impractical to enforce (2006) 11, 14-15. This may, therefore, be another example of token repression,
[19] Macrobius, when discussing the law, mentioned "Greek wine" (*vino Graeco)*: Macrob. *Sat.* 3.16.14-16. See also Gruen (1990) 172-174. Gruen goes further and suggests that there was a concern for a "national character" This is reminiscent of my argument in chapter two regarding the reinforcement of civic identity. This may partly have resulted from Greeks being granted citizenship and immigrating to Rome, which is evident from the second century: Townsend (2016) 454-455. While Macrobius is a much later fifth-century author, he claims to be quoting a speech from the time.
[20] For instance, this process matches Orlin's ideas that there was, what he termed a "conservative" reaction against the Bacchanalia, but the Roman elite were still interested in new cults (2010) 7. See also North's discussion of conservatism (1976), which I discuss in Chapter Two.
[21] Suet. *Rhet.* 1.(25); Gell. 15.11.1.
[22] Cic. *De or.* 3.93-95. Crassus is presented as having an interest in Greek oratory generally: Cic. *De or.* 1.45-47. Gruen accepts Cicero's account (1990) 187-188.

that rhetoric was an important aspect of elite life. While Cicero was writing a fictional conversation, he and Crassus knew each other, which may suggest that the passage reflects views he held.[23] Gellius and Suetonius mention "Latin rhetors" when quoting the decree, making it plausible that the utilisation of a Greek practice was not the issue.[24] The acceptance of Greek ideas made the next generation's claim to make them "Roman" less plausible. The long presence of philosophical dialogues meant that it was already a "Roman" practice. However, Cicero's claim that he wanted to be "free" of Greek writers suggests he felt it necessary to go further. This negative perception was a tool, allowing authors to claim to be exploring theory personally to "Romanise" it.

Despite the early acceptance of philosophy, Cicero presented himself as concerned about the ideas he presented:

> I have just read the third book of your treatise, On the Nature of the Gods, containing Cotta's discussion, which, though it has shaken my views, has not destroyed them entirely.[25]

However, simultaneously, he argued that a theoretical approach could aid in understanding the gods:

> There are a number of branches of philosophy that have not as yet been by any means adequately explored; but the inquiry into the nature of the gods, which is both highly interesting in relation to the theory of the soul, and necessary for the regulation of religion, is one of difficulty and obscurity, as you are aware Brutus.[26]

Quintus' statement was presumably intended to reassure the reader that civic religion was not undermined, a point Cicero often reiterated: "I want it understood that the

[23] See Rawson for the evidence of this and Crassus' general impact on Cicero (1971), particularly page 83.
[24] "*Latinos rhetoras*", Aulus Gellius' quotation is almost exactly the same as Suetonius', making it possible that he was his source.
[25] "*Perlegi," inquit, "tuum paulo ante tertium de Natura Deorum, in quo disputatio Cottae, quamquam labefactavit sententiam meam, non funditus tamen sustulit."* Cic. *Div.* 1.8.
[26] *Cum multae res in philosophia nequaquam satis adhuc explicatae sint, tum perdifficilis, Brute, quod tu minime ignoras, et perobscura quaestio est de natura deorum, quae et ad cognitionem animi pulcherrima est et ad moderandam religionem necessaria.* Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.1.

destruction of superstition does not mean the destruction of religion."[27] However, it is unlikely that Greek theories about religion presented an actual threat. I interpret these reactions as similar to those towards "foreign" cults, discussed in Chapter Three. A perceived "foreignness" was applied to a practice that had been present for a long time. [28] Late Republican authors engaged in "constructed" negative reactions and "foreignness" for personal benefit. For example, Cicero stated that "in my work entitled Hortensius, I appealed earnestly as I could for the study of philosophy" [29] and "Furthermore, it would contribute to the glory of the Roman people to be independent of Greek writers in the study of philosophy, and this result I will bring about if my plans are accomplished."[30] That Cicero had to appeal for the use of philosophy must be an exaggeration, given the longstanding interest in philosophy discussed above. Nevertheless, the second quotation highlights that Cicero presented himself as a pioneer in defining a new, specifically "Roman," practice, and is possibly why he presented philosophical enquiry as something dangerous. Evidence that Lucretius attempted the same requires consideration. Consequently, I suggest certain authors, acting as individuals, also utilised the "foreign" label, just as did the Senate. Their approach differed somewhat, as "foreignness" or "Greekness" were meant to act as a contrast to their writings, even though they utilised Greek sources such as Carneades. Therefore, this represents the individual rather than the Senate, attempting to assert authority over what was permitted to be "Roman". Some may have held genuine interests in defining a "Roman" body of philosophical texts, as Cicero indicates, which is explored throughout the chapter.

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[27] *Nec vero—id enim diligenter intellegi volo—superstitione tollenda religio tollitur* Cic. 2.148.

[28] These ideas are linked to the fact that there was no "true core" of religion, discussed in the introduction. Cambino argues that philosophy was seen to be a Greek affair and that concepts perceived as Greek were not always favourable (2002) 66-67. I combine this with the view that there was a definite interest in philosophy, although this tension existed. Cambino also highlights this in suggesting that Cicero made it clear that philosophy could appeal to Roman traditional values (ibid) 79. I explore this in relation to political speeches below.

[29] *Nam et cohortati sumus, ut maxime potuimus, ad philosophiae studium eo libro, qui est inscriptus Hortensius,* Cic. *Div.* 2.1.

[30] *Magnificum illud etiam Romanisque hominibus gloriosum, ut Graecis 6de philosophia litteris non egeant; quod adsequar profecto, si instituta perfecero*. Cic. *Div.* 2.5-6.

Claudia Moatti argues that imperial conquests were a turning point as members of the elite became surrounded by philosophers. She cites Cicero's comment that Stoic books surrounded Cato as an example.[31] Cicero's statement that the Epicureans "occupied all Italy"[32] during the earlier first century, also suggests philosophical studies were an integrated aspect of elite culture, although he discussed them negatively, saying that their ideas "may be learned so easily and be approved by the uneducated."[33] The long presence of Hellenistic thought likely normalised it regardless of Cicero's presentation. The Athenian embassy indicates its early presence.[34] Notably, there are no known further expulsions until the imperial period, which may indicate a reduction in even the constructed negativity.[35] Cicero's statement that many Romans surrounded themselves with philosophers attests to this and the impact of imperial conquests.[36] He discussed his own education under Posidonius.[37] All this sits uneasily with Cicero's supposed concerns for applying philosophy to civic practices and his need to appeal for the use of philosophy. Therefore, his negative presentations require explanation. Erskine argues that there was a desire to embrace Greek intellectual approaches while defining a sense of "Romanness", while Gruen suggests these ideas were embraced officially by the late Republic.[38] These views can be combined; philosophy was embraced, but there was some performative negativity, simply because it was seen as "Greek". Cicero had Lucullus say in *Academica,* "For there are many who have no love for Greek literature, and more who have none for philosophy",[39] and that it was "not becoming for great

[31] Moatti (2021) 12.
[32] *Italiam totam occupaverunt* Cic. *Tusc.* 4.7.
[33] *tam facile ediscantur et ab indoctis probentur* (ibid.). Valachova discusses the careers of several known Epicureans in the late Republic, including at least two consuls (2018). Epicureanism was presumably, therefore, a widely known school of philosophy, adding credence to Cicero's comment.
[34] Plut. *Vit. Cat. Mai.* 22. Cramer, while focussing on astrology, discusses major developments in philosophy (1954) 54. He argues that Roman interest in philosophy was limited, although Moatti disagrees (2021) 11-12. I suggest that there probably was some genuine concern, although generally there was an interest in the subject.
[35] Possibly, we lack evidence, but given the genuine interest in philosophy, I find it more likely that there were no further actions taken.
[36] Cicero is here referring to the Gracchi: Cic. *Amic.* 36-37; Plut. *Ti. Gracch.* 8.4-6. I therefore follow Moatti (n. 736).
[37] Posidonius: Cic. *Att.* 2.1.2. Moatti (2021) 13. For the impact of Posidonius on Cicero, see Cramer (1954) 62. For the impact of Posidonius on introducing Stoicism to the Romans more generally, see Liebeschuetz (1979) 121.
[38] Erskine (1997) 45; 44. Gruen (1990) 192. For Cicero's general education and interest in Stoicism, see Aubert-Baillot (2021b) 533
[39] *Sunt enim multi qui omnino Graecas non ament litteras, plures qui philosophiam;* Cic. *Acad.* 2.5.

statesmen."[40] While exaggerative, it is plausible that some claimed to dislike philosophy, worried about how it would affect Roman society. Social pressure and a tradition of perceiving Greek theoretical approaches negatively may have caused Cicero to feel a need to justify his engagement.

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Individual Philosophers: The Reaction of Other Members of the Elite

Overall, engagement with philosophy as an intellectual pursuit was normalised, although a need to present discourses as "foreign" continued, allowing authors to present themselves as creating a "Romanised" version. This had a substantial impact on Cicero's aims. Before I analyse his works, I focus on Lucretius and Varro, who also shaped first-century intellectual debates. Both were less concerned with perceived "foreignness", although Lucretius similarly presented himself as innovative by transplanting Greek ideas into Latin. Lucretius' use of Epicureanism and Varro's creation of satire and history allowed them to present unique interpretations and craft identities of religious and philosophical authorities. Some views presented did not match the "traditional" understanding of religion. However, this was not designed to undermine civic practices. These works were ultimately theoretical, and both made some effort simultaneously to align their writings with expected norms. I wish to emphasise the ability of individuals to create unique ideas and works within civic religion.

Taking an analysis of Lucretius as a commencement, he published *De Rerum Natura* in the mid-first century.[41] The poem comprises six books of Epicurean philosophy in dactylic hexameter. The overall purpose was to expound an Epicurean understanding of the world, focussing on nature, metaphysics and atomism. Lucretius focussed on religious practices in several sections, particularly in Book Five. This is notable, as

[40] *disputationem principibus civitatis non ita decoram putant* Cic. *Acad.* 2.5.
[41] This was prior to Cicero, hence why I began with him. For issues of dating the poem, see Hutchinson (2001).

Epicureanism does not integrate easily into a Roman concept of religious practice, as many passages can be taken to undermine civic religious ideas.[42] For instance, visiting shrines was critiqued.[43] Lucretius maintained that piety existed, but was gained through a tranquil mind rather than specific actions:

> Piety does not consist in veiling one's head and turning with frequency to a stone, or in visiting every altar, or in prostrating oneself on the ground with outstretched palms before the shrines of the gods, or saturating the sacrificial slabs with the blood of four-footed beasts, or in linking vows to vows, but rather in possessing the ability to contemplate all things with a tranquil mind.[44]

This passage questions the relevance of rituals without the use of a philosophical understanding of the world, a substantially different way of thinking about traditional norms, which tended to focus solely on performing religious acts "correctly". How far this is independent thought is unclear from this passage alone.[45] Cicero's comment that the Epicureans took Italy by storm may indicate Lucretius was engaging with a large group of scholars who generated similar views.[46] Equally, this and other passages may indicate Lucretius did not follow Greek sources entirely, creating his own "Lucretian" view. It is impossible to know how far this differed from other Epicureans, although this was a substantially different approach from Cicero and Varro. Cicero, for instance, drew from many schools of thought and made his support for civic practices clear.

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[42] The existence of the gods, however, is not undermined. For Scholars who interpret Lucretius as undermining state religion, see Eckerman (2019); Summers (1995). For the view of the Epicureans on the gods more generally during the first century, see Asmis (1987) 2381-2384 with particular reference to 2383.

[43] Lucr. 5.1198-1203.

[44] "*nec pietas ullast velatum saepe viderivertier ad lapidem atque omnis accedere ad aras,1200nec procumbere humi prostratum et pandere palmasante deum delubra, nec aras sanguine multo spargere quadrupedum, nec votis nectere vota, sed mage placata posse omnia mente tueri*". (ibid. trans. Smith 2001).

[45] For the attack on ritual, see Summers (1995) 34-35. However, this was not the totality of Lucretius' approach, as he also discussed religion positively. I discuss this below.

[46] The surviving evidence is unclear, although it is possible that Epicureanism was very popular when Lucretius was writing: Howe (1951) 57-58. He certainly was not the first to write Epicureanism: Eckerman (2013) 796-797.

Authors consequently came to vastly different conclusions resulting from different aims and interests. There were no prescriptions on how to approach discourse on religious practice, allowing Lucretius to develop as an independent philosopher. A letter from Cicero to Quintus praising Lucretius' technical skill suggests that he was successful in this process: "Lucretius' poetry is as you say—sparkling with natural genius, but plenty of technical skill."[47] Individuals gained respect by promoting religious ideas, even though the above quotation suggests they did not clearly integrate into civic religion. A letter from Cicero to Memmius, another Epicurean, also suggests this. [48] Cicero utilised Lucretian language, possibly to hint at Memmius' sophistication and knowledge.[49] Cicero's dislike of Epicureanism did not preclude him from praising Epicureans.[50] The echoes of Lucretius' language suggest that his interpretations of religious practices garnered him respect. It may be Cicero was being polite, but there is no reason why he needed to be disingenuous when writing to his brother. Even if this was superficial, Cicero validated Lucretius' interpretation. Through this, Cicero could validate his own knowledge by showing Memmius his understanding of Epicureanism.

While I argue Cicero and Varro emphasised the maintenance of civic religion, Lucretius was more radical, as suggested by the above quotation and his example of an admiral at sea in trouble:

> Does he not in his panic pray that the winds may be calmed and succeeded by propitious breezes? But in vain; for often, despite his prayers, he is seized by the tearing Tornado and hurled to his death.[51]

He also discusses the gods' lack of care:

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[47] *Lucreti poemata ut scribis ita sunt, multis luminibus ingeni, multae tamen artis* Cic. *QFr.* 2.10.3.
[48] Cic. *Fam*. 13.1.
[49] Trinacty gives a short overview, highlighting that Cicero uses the phrase *vitae rationem* (2020) 441. The same phrase is used in Lucretius' address to Memmius. As Trinacty points out, there has been little scholarly focus on this issue. Morgan and Taylor suggest that Lucretius may have had substantial philosophical influence over Memmius (2017) 541.
[50] See Hanchey for a summary of scholarship on Cicero's dislike of Epicureanism (2013) 119 n. 2. See also Clarke (2023), who suggests that Cicero was concerned about the impact of Epicureanism on civic life. Overall, I suggest that he did not favour it as he sided with the Stoics in *De Natura Deorum* and did not include their arguments at all in *De Divinatione*.
[51] *ac prece quaesit ventorum pavidus paces animasque secundas? — nequiquam, quoniam violento turbine saepe correptus nilo fertur minus ad vada leti.* (trans. Smith 2001) Lucr. 5.1229-1232.

> For even those who have rightly learned that the gods lead lives free from care may wonder how all things can continue.[52]

Here, Lucretius followed the Epicurean view that the gods had a limited impact on the world.[53] Summers argues that Lucretius' belief that a "tranquil mind"[54] could be gained through an Epicurean understanding of the gods could challenge the "traditional" contractual communication between men and gods.[55] The same seems to be true in these quotations as the gods reject prayers. All forms of divine communication are undermined, not just those Cicero claimed to dislike in *De Divinatione*. There are similarities between the two authors as both connected their discussions to a fear of the gods.[56] However, Lucretius argued that rituals were based on fear: "what ways that fear of gods crept into the heart".[57] This attack on practice challenged Cicero's view that ritual acts maintained the *Pax Deorum*:

> For these opinions not only remove the superstition in which there is a baseless fear of the gods, but also the religion that is contained in pious worship of the gods.[58]

Therefore, both wished to mitigate fears but came to dramatically different conclusions. For instance, in 169 BC, poor prodigies were received. The *decemviri* advised that sacrifices should take place in the principal temples.[59] This typical religious process is what Lucretius criticised and Cicero supported.[60] These differing views indicate that

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[52] *nam bene qui didicere deos securum agere aevom, si tamen interea mirantur qua rationequaeque geri possint* Lucr. 5.82-84 (trans. Smith 2001).
[53] For this inactivity see Spinelli and Verde (2020) 89. For Epicurus, the gods were also unaffected by emotion: Tsouna (2016) 177. See also Kaiser for a brief discussion (2016) 168. Also, Long (2006) 214.
[54] See above.
[55] (1995) 35. While I follow Summers' view, my interest is how this differed from other first-century authors.
[56] Champion argues that members of the elite were motivated by fear just as members of the non-elite were (2017) 20. I discuss Champion's views in Chapter Two. As he points out, this is a modification of Scheid's view that fear played a role (2003) 152. This feeds into the scholarly debate of orthodoxy vs orthopraxy. I take Champion's view that there was a genuine fear of the gods.
[57] *et quibus ille modis divom metus insinuarit pectora* Lucr. 5.74-75;
[58] *Horum enim sententiae omnium non modo superstitionem tollunt in qua inest timor inanis deorum, sed etiam religionem quae deorum cultu pio continetur* Cic. *Nat. D.*1.117-118. A direct contrast can be drawn. Cicero made a point of highlighting the importance of shrines and religious ceremonies: Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.94.
[59] Livy. 43.13.
[60] Cic. *Leg.* 2.55. This is unrelated to the events of 169 BC, discussing funerary sacrifices. However, this suggests that, unlike Lucretius, Cicero wanted "traditional" practices to continue.

individual thought facilitated the creation of new ways of interpreting religion. However, neither was an atheist, and religious rites continued.

Summers also argues that Lucretius went further than Epicurus, who argued for the maintenance of rituals, to compromise current religious feelings. He argues that Lucretius achieved this by removing the need for the *Parentalia*, achieved by asserting that sacrifices for ancestors led to an interest in superstition.[61] The heavy criticism of ritual in Book Five makes this plausible. However, Warren points out that Lucretius followed Epicurus closely in other ways, focussing on Natural Philosophy and excluding other topics.[62] This makes it uncertain how far Lucretius is truly different. Epicurus was Lucretius' underlying model.[63] Penwill closely associates Lucretius' disregard of ritual with Epicurus' views, indicating there was not a substantial difference between the two.[64] Nevertheless, even if a minor change, the refusal to compromise on the acceptability of ritual, as Epicurus did, is significant in the Roman system, which prized "correct" worship. This subtle shift may indicate that Lucretius was developing his own position. His knowledge of Epicurus must mean that his exclusion of some permissible rites was a conscious decision.

Lucretius similarly utilised first-century negative perceptions to present himself as an innovator, independently able to introduce new ideas and explore religion. He and Cicero achieved this by presenting themselves as the first to write Stoicism and Epicureanism in Latin. Cicero claimed, "What reason is there why accomplished Greeks should read Latin poets and not read Latin philosophers?"[65] He suggested that this increased accessibility and, therefore, his readership.[66] Lucretius had similar aims, as

[61] Lucr. 3.50-54. Summers (1995) 44-45.
[62] Warren (2007) 21. Eckerman agrees (2013) 787. However, Eckerman also points to the Italian tradition of Epicureanism (2013) 798-799. This likely also impacted Lucretius, potentially creating a new tradition.
[63] Sedley argues that Lucretius was an Epicurean "fundamentalist" (1998) 134. Epicurus was likely Lucretius' main model, but I still argue that he modified these ideas.
[64] Penwill (2014) 96-97. For the similarities between Epicurus and Lucretius, see also Lienhard (1969) 351.
[65] *Quid enim causae est cur poëtas Latinos Graecis litteris eruditi legant, philosophos non legant?* Cic. *Acad.* 1.10.
[66] Cic. *Acad.* 1.10.

he stated, "Our system of philosophy too is a recent invention, and I myself am found to be the very first with the ability to expound it in the language of my country."[67] Again, the presentation of studying philosophical schools as new is false. The Epicurean Amafinius also wrote in Latin prior, although Lucretius seems to be the first to write a systematic account of the general tenets of the philosophy in a poem.[68] Amafinius was also criticised for an inelegant style.[69] Lucretius could react against this, presenting himself as an innovator by writing a work that more successfully incorporated Epicurean ideas into Latin. While Lucretius did not name Amafinius, he seems to hint at this when he compared writing Epicureanism in a poem to encouraging a child to take medicine by covering it in honey. He hoped that this would make his writings more palatable to those who had not experienced it.[70] This, alongside the quotation above from 5.336-337, indicates that Lucretius saw himself as "Romanising" Epicureanism by using Latin to garner an engaged audience. This benefited him by creating the perception of a philosopher presenting interpretations of various subjects, including religion, in a unique, nominally "Roman" way.[71]

Lucretius may be taken to have expressed radical views, as he did not hold "traditional" authority. Presenting Epicurean ideas was an alternative, permitting him to comment on civic practices in a system where most could not be priests.[72] Similar ideas regarding non-elite individuals, discussed in Chapter Four, are applicable. That Lucretius saw himself as a philosophical authority, able to generate new interpretations of civic practices, is further suggested in Book Six. He stated that shrines could be approached

[67] *et hanc primus cum primis ipse repertus nunc ego sum in patrias qui possim vertere voces* Lucr 5.336-337. (trans. Smith.) Lucretius does not explicitly refer to Epicureanism, but the broader context of the whole passage makes it clear that this is what he referred to. See also Book 1.136-139.
[68] Smith points this out: (2001) 146, n. 27.
[69] Cicero criticised Amafinius and another Epicurean, Rabirius: Cic. *Acad.* 1.5. Contrast with Cicero's praise of Lucretius' style, above.
[70] Lucr 1.930-950.
[71] Eckerman suggests that Lucretius was a "leading man" in transplanting Epicurean ideas into Latin (2013) 800. Benferhat highlights Lucretius' challenge in dealing with what he terms the "poverty" of Latin and suggests that he was genuinely innovative in encouraging Latin to flourish (2014) 596-597 and 613-614.
[72] See Szemler, who succinctly summarises the number of priests of the major priesthoods (1971) 114 n. 79. For specific numbers of priestly lists, including minor priesthoods, see Rüpke (2008).

without angering the gods.[73] This could represent a departure from earlier negative views, permitting the continuation of civic practices.[74] However, the overall passage implies that Lucretius desired "traditional" worship to continue, only if it was modified. He stated, "you will not be able to approach their shrines with an untroubled breast," if people did not dispel unworthy thoughts about the gods.[75] This is followed by a discussion of images moving from the minds of gods into the minds of humans:

> You will be impotent to receive in peace and tranquillity the images that emanate from their sacred bodies and enter human minds with divine beauty.[76]

This divine communication is substantially different from "traditional" civic practices, which Lucretius seemed not to favour. However, the use of the word *nuntia,* meaning "messenger," reinforced that contact with the gods, an underlying principle of civic religion, was possible in his conception.[77] This alteration to civic practice may have allowed Lucretius to showcase his ability to create new ideas, consistent with being a further attempt to present a "Lucretian" view. Any attempt to do this was limited, as he had to include the argument that the gods had limited involvement in the world. This was a well-known Epicurean idea. Velleius, in Cicero's work, stated that "your Stoic god seems to be overworked", for example.[78] These passages may represent an attempt to marry this principle into a "more traditional" Roman conception, arguing against rituals, while still emphasising how a "traditional" idea could continue, though heavily modified. Simultaneously, this may represent an attempt to align with the elite consensus of respect for divine communication, even if it is heavily influenced by Epicurus' teachings. Lucretius would be obliged to do so align, as Cicero and Clodius

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[73] Lucr. 6.68-79.
[74] Scullard interprets this as suggesting that Lucretius wanted "traditional" civic religion to continue. He did not think that Lucretius' ideas would have widespread influence, regardless (1981) 34-35. However, Summers points out that the context of the passage in the broader work should caution against this (1995) 46. Also, see Eckerman (2019) 293-296.
[75] *Nec delubra deum placido cum pecotre adibis* Lucr. 6.75.
[76] trans. Smith (2001) 180.
[77] Lucr. 6.77. Smith (2001) xxix; Eckerman (2019) 295 both highlight that Lucretius' argument here is based on a desire to prevent misconceptions impacting worship. Nevertheless, the implication that worship should continue is maintained. See Smith particularly for this view.
[78] *Hunc deum rite beatum dixerimus, vestrum vero laboriosissimum.* Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.52-53.

did, although there seems no reason, based on theoretical discussions alone, to suggest he was not a willing participant in civic religion.

Overall, Lucretius developed a position of an authentic Epicurean philosopher, while presenting the philosophy's relevance to a Roman audience, highlighting his religious knowledge outside of institutions, such as the traditional priesthoods. It is not that Lucretius, or other authors discussed, did not support civic practices in their daily lives. Practices ultimately continued as these writings were, simply, academic discussions. Nevertheless, it is important that he presented Epicurean views on practice. Stoicism accepted divination more readily, as indicated by Quintus' support in *De Divinatione*.[79] Lucretius could have followed a similar path. However, his writings suggest a readership interested in more challenging ideas, even if few beyond the literate elite could explore individual interests and present their expertise in this manner. Freedom to present challenging ideas at all, ultimately, highlights that civic religion was open to those who wished to explore it through theoretical concepts.

Philosophy was not the only theoretical tool that interested later Republican authors. Varro, a contemporary of Cicero, wrote the *Antiquitates Rerum Humanarum et Divinarum* (abbreviated to ARD), including a sixteen-book study of *Res Divinae* (divine affairs). The purpose was to create a history of Rome and, specific to the *Res Divinae*, an institutional history of religion. The work is lost, but substantial fragments are quoted in Augustine's *City of God*.[80] This complicates interpretations as Augustine is a fourth to fifth-century Christian author. He viewed Varro critically, and sources where fragments survive contain errors.[81] However, it is possible to draw some conclusions, given Augustine's close engagement with Varro's writings. He seemed to have genuine

[79] This may be a reason why Stoicism became prominent in the empire. Liebeschuetz argues that philosophy had the ability to impact civic practices but relates his argument specifically to Stoicism (1979) 37-38.
[80] Other sources that quote Varro include Pliny and Aulus Gellius.
[81] Augustine engaged heavily with Varro, although this was potentially done to undermine him. See Hadas for this argument (2017). For issues in errors of the surviving quotes see Jocelyn (1980) 103-105ff.

respect for Varro, which may make it less likely that he altered his interpretations.[82] Ultimately, he wished to engage Varro's arguments, making it less likely that he would misreport them.[83] Furthermore, the ARD still existed for others to read when Augustine wrote, making it harder for him to misrepresent Varro's views. Therefore, some underlying principles are likely to be accurately conveyed.

Varro presented his views in subtly different ways from the other authors discussed. However, similarly to Cicero, he implied that his theoretical approach was dangerous to civic religion, and people should believe false traditions:

> This must have seemed my own conjecture, if he did not in another place, speaking of religious ceremonies, himself [Varro] say that there are many truths that it is best for the people not to know, and what is more, many mistaken views are held which it is better for the people to take as true.[84]

If Augustine is accurate, Varro engaged in the "performative negativity" which I argue existed in the first century.[85] These apparent collective concerns for civic religion may be a reaction to the changing culture of the late Republic.[86] On the one hand, this also allowed him to present himself as knowledgeable in religious theory, inferred from the implication that he presented himself as aware of the "truth". Equally, the passage would permit alignment with the "traditional" consensus that civic religion should continue unaltered, indicating that his discussions were theoretical. This also partially resulted from the expectation that he would conform to this consensus. This matches

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[82] Hadas mentions that Augustine respected Varro, but clearly not his paganism (2017) 76.
[83] Volk expresses reservations about how far Augustine presented Varro misleadingly (2020) 229. Kronenberg points out that just because Augustine is selective, he is not necessarily inaccurate (2017) 306.
[84] *Ego ista conicere putari debui, nisi evidenter alio loco ipse diceret de religionibus loquens multa esse vera, quae non modo vulgo scire non sit utile, sed etiam, tametsi falsa sunt, aliter existimare populum* August. *De civ. D.* 4.31. Cicero, quoted by Lactantius, another later Christian author, provides a similar view *Div. Inst.* 2.3.2. This poses its own problems that I discuss below.
[85] See Section One. Beard (1986), whom I discuss below, suggests that there were tensions in integrating Hellenistic thought into Roman practice. See page 36. This issue is mitigated by highlighting that these discussions were only ever meant to be theoretical anyway.
[86] Nuffelen argues this, although he also states that there was an "influx of new, mainly Greek, ideas" (2010) 162. While I am unconvinced based on the evidence I provided in section one, evidently, something caused these authors to express these concerns. Rather than new Greek ideas being present, this is a reaction against a perceived "foreignness".

Lucretius' approach, and why it can be taken the general sentiment of Varro's views is conveyed accurately – these trends are identifiable in other writers, including Cicero, discussed later. However, he also differed from Lucretius, whose main subject was not religion. [87] Varro presented himself as a source of information to a broad audience: "What, therefore, is the great benefit that Varro boasts he conferred on his fellow citizens – that he not only named the gods whom the Romans should include in their worship but also reported their several provinces?"[88] The word "citizens" suggests that he intended a wide impact through presentation of broad knowledge about the gods.

A notable difference to Lucretius was the explicit desire to maintain civic-religious practices, despite Augustine's presentation of Varro as unwilling:

> He does not hesitate to say that, if he were founding that city, he would consecrate the gods and give them names according to the principles of nature, rather than as they are now. But as it is, since he is living in an old country, he says that he must keep the traditional account of the names, and that the object of his writing and research was to persuade people to worship rather than disregard them.[89]

Regardless of any real or imagined worries about the impact of his discussions, I interpret this as Varro aligning with his peers, which may indicate some pressure on him. Additionally, it is likely he genuinely wished practices to continue. The quotation emphasises Varro's perception of religion as an institution, produced by the civic community.[90] Augustine claimed Varro did not attack religion forcefully as he lacked the

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[87] Cicero could claim to treat civic religion broadly in *De Natura Deroum*. However, this is a different form of looking at the same topic. Varro wrote a broader, in-depth history.

[88] *Quid est ergo, quod pro ingenti beneficio Varro iactat praestare se civibus suis, qia non solum commemorat deos, quos coli oporteat a Romanis, verum etiam dicit quid ad quemque pertineat?* August. *De civ. D.* 4.22.

[89] *si eam civitatem novam constitueret, ex naturae potius formula deos nominaque eorum se fuisse dedicaturum non dubitet confiteri? Sed iam quoniam in vetere populo esset, acceptam ab antiquis nominum et cognominum historiam tenere, ut tradita est, debere se dicit, et ad eum finem illa scribere ac perscrutari ut potius eos magis colere quam despicere vulgus velit. Quibus verbis homo acutissimus satis indicat non se aperire omnia* August. *De Civ. D.* 4.31.

[90] Scheid (2015a) 50-51. Gordon (1990a) 180 points out that Varro is a strong supporter of civic religion but neglects key aspects and differs from Cicero in that he does not mention the authority of the Senate.

freedom to do so.[91] However, as Lucretius was more radical, presumably Varro could so be, if he wished. His interests, then, lay elsewhere, as he seemingly aimed at a fuller discussion of civic practices, engaging with complex elements.[92] This suggests the different ways in which religious practice and the nature of the gods could be approached. Each author could present their personal, differing interpretations while supporting the civic system. Varro's in-depth discussion may result from the size of his work, allowing him to discuss obscure elements of religion, such as gods like Orcus.[93] This approach differs from the other authors discussed.

The ARD can be interpreted in different ways, partly due to the fragmentary nature of the work. Leah Kronenberg contends Varro created a satire to criticise pedantic intellectualism, citing inconsistencies within the ARD as evidence.[94] Volk also argues Varro had a satirical persona, and Kirk Freudenburg suggests satire was a key aspect of his writing.[95] For example, Kronenberg cites Aulus Gellius 1.18.1–6. Gellius quoted Varro, who criticised another author for making a mistake but then proceeded to make the same error. She points out that if Gellius saw these errors, Varro, likely, did also, implying they were intentional.[96] Varro wrote Menippean satires, within which he mixed verse with prose, indicating he was accustomed to writing satirically in a style suitable for a more academic work like the ARD, supporting this view.[97] I follow the arguments of these scholars, contending that Varro's satirical flair allowed him to create a personal approach. Varro's interest in satire was certainly not unique. However, the criticism of others through its use may have helped him assert himself as an authority on different

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See Beard (1990) 31-34; Beard et al. (1998a) 29-30, for this importance. I will return to this issue below, which was also discussed in Chapter Three in relation to *De Domo Sua* and *De Haruspicum Responso*.

[91] August. *De* civ. *D.* 6.10.

[92] Woolf argues that Varro engaged with this complexity in order to find a rationale for the religious life of the Romans (1997/2003) 39.

[93] August. *De civ. D.* 7.2. See Liebeschuetz for a summary (1979) 37.

[94] (2017) 326-328.

[95] Volk is critical of what we can learn from this satirical persona, although, for my argument, this is a secondary issue. It is that this persona existed at all that is relevant. (2020) 231; Freudenburg (2013) 299-300.

[96] Kronenberg (2017) 326-327. Kronenberg's argument is based on Jocelyn, who questions Varro's philosophical goal and argues that Varro was cynical in the sense of being "tongue in cheek" (1982) 200. This is also somewhat supported by Relihan, who perceived that Varro comically attacked scholars (1933) x.

[97] Quintero (2007) 7. This potentially allowed him to draw out his arguments in a way suitable for the ARD.

topics. This is similar to the religious debates outlined in Chapters Three and Four. Varro's way of doing this was substantially different to Lucretius, who was less interested in engaging other scholars, suggesting unique approaches were possible.

The historical dimension of the ARD can also be emphasised more substantially. Cancick and Rüpke argue that Varro wrote a historical account of Roman religion using philosophical schools as a model of cultural history to create a "universal identity".[98] That Varro wanted to be perceived as a historian is supported by his interest in other works. He discussed the history of farming in *De Rustica* and the changing topography of Rome in *De Lingua Latina,* including a focus on temples.[99] I follow modern interpretations that Varro created a history to preserve civic religion.[100] Varro's mention of "tradition" and the antiquity of Rome highlights this theme.[101] Furthermore, Cicero specifically references the historical impact of Varro's writings: "You [discussed/revealed] the age of the country".[102] This likely related specifically to religious institutions, as he was (nominally) concerned that the gods would perish through negligence: "he says in this very work he was alarmed they [the gods] would perish, not by enemy's invasion, but by the neglect of his fellow citizens".[103] The importance of civic religion is also indicated by the structure of the ARD. Three books each were dedicated to priestly colleges, sacred places and rituals. The gods were only mentioned after this. [104] However, nothing in this evidence is incompatible with the perception that Varro utilised satire. He was able to write this in-depth historical account of religion while creating a satirical persona to subordinate others, an

[98] Cancick emphasises that Varro's focus was on history, not philosophy (1997) 685. Rüpke follows Cancik (2014) 246-247. Universal identity: (2014) 253. Rüpke bases his argument on Varro doing more than simply collecting stories. Similarly to Kronenberg, concluding this is difficult due to the fragmentary nature of the work.
[99] Farming: Nelsestuen (2017). History of topography: Bernard (2014/2015) 164-165.
[100] Macrae sees Varro as concerned specifically with the "tradition of the city." (2017) 43. For Varro's concern specifically with civic religious institutions, see Rüpke's comments (2014) 255-256.
[101] See the quotation from *De Civ. D.* 6.10 above.
[102] Cic. *Acad.* 1.9.
[103] *ipso opere litterarum suarum dicat se timere ne pereant, non incursu hostili, sed civium neglegentia* Frag. 2a; August. *De civ. D.* 6.2.
[104] Varro Frag. 20; 22; 25-37; 39. Interestingly, Varro neglected to mention Senatorial authority: Gordon (1990a) 180. However, this cannot be attributed to a dislike of civic authority.

apparently unique "Varronian" approach.[105] This maintained support for civic religion through emphasising the importance of its antiquity while allowing some personal expression.

This "historical" approach led Varro to be concerned with preserving ancient knowledge, presenting himself as an antiquarian.[106] This is suggested by his list of obscure gods.[107] Cicero, also, was interested in the past, expressed through using Roman exempla, although he did not discuss history to the same extent.[108] For example, Cicero did not mention these obscure gods, focussing on more widely known civic deities such as the Capitoline triad. This hints at the variety of intellectual approaches that existed even within a single subset of interest in religious history.[109] However, they achieved similar goals. Varro's focus on an antiquarian approach to the history of institutions allowed him to show his audience his command of knowledge over civic religion.[110] Consequently, there seemed much scope for expressing a uniquely personal interest in the civic system.

While Varro's lesser philosophical focus substantially differs from Cicero and Lucretius, Peter Van Nuffelen argues Varro had a philosophical programme, present through the use of allegories, using it as an aide without interpreting specific arguments. For

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[105] Compare Rüpke's focus on Varro's use of history (2014) 255 with Kronenberg (2017). This is a much different reading. This may result from the fragmentary nature of the work, making it easier for scholars to create different interpretations, but it may also hint at the broad process of identity creation that Varro could take part in. It can be both.

[106] See Marshall (2017) for Varro's antiquarian interest. This was not unique in itself, as Marshall highlights Varro's friendship with Atticus, who was another antiquarian. However, my point is that satire combined with history may have differentiated Varro.

[107] I mentioned this above in relation to Orcus specifically, which Nuffelen called obscure (2010) 165. However, there are many others, such as the goddess Mena, responsible for menstrual flow: August. *De civ. D.* 7.2. See also the discussion of Vitumnus and Sentius, the givers of life and sensation respectively: August. *De civ. D.* 7.3

[108] Cicero's use of Roman exempla is discussed in the next section. Volk summarises the different methodologies that Varro and Cicero employ (2019) 207.

[109] Volk mentions a "philosophical marketplace" (2019) 206. This echoes Bendlin's market model (2000). It seems, therefore, reasonable that those ideas can be applied here. One individual can select between, and even multiple, ways of discussing the nature of the gods and rituals.

[110] Arena argues that Varro was able to present himself as a creator of divine rules, allowing him to achieve this. (2021) 608. Presumably, he required in-depth knowledge to make this believable. Flower also emphasises how Varro's works allowed him to become the preeminent authority on Roman religion: (2017) 8.

instance, van Nuffelen suggests Varro discussed the seed of Saturn as a starting point to highlight how the gods interacted with humans: "Saturn has charge of all seeds, and hence the planting also of human seed cannot be severed from his activity".[111] Varro seems to choose various myths and imagery to represent philosophical principles, without further interpretation.[112] Without these, possibly missing due to the fragmentary nature of the work, it is difficult to know what knowledge Varro had, although he engaged with epistemology and the philosophical community.[113] Cicero mentioned Varro's engagement: "[You] have sketched an outline of philosophy in many departments that is enough to stimulate the student but not enough to complete their education". [114] Cicero's phrasing reinforces that Varro's philosophical engagement was not deep. Nevertheless, the level of Varro's engagement implies that he was able to choose freely between various approaches as required. There were no restrictions on how intellectual debates could be approached, permitting substantial freedom.

A more theoretically discursive Varronian approach is preserved. He discussed Scaevola's ideas of tripartite religion, the idea that there were three strands of religion handed down by poets, philosophers and civic leaders. Scaevola was *Pontifex Maximus* from 89 to 82 BC, who seemed to have a substantial impact on that generation, which Cicero praised.[115] According to Augustine, Scaevola found religion from the poets frivolous, and that from philosophers as inappropriate for cities.[116] Incidentally, this highlights the acceptance of philosophical approaches before the latter half of the first century.[117] Analysis remains complicated by fragmentation. However, Varro seemed to

[111] *et omnium seminum Saturnum et ideo seminationem quoque hominis non posse ab eius operatione seiungi* August. De civ. D. 7.3.
[112] Nuffelen (2010) 166.
[113] For instance, we know that Varro directly cited (although not extensively) Antiochus, a contemporary Stoic and Platonist philosopher: Sedley (2012) 252. Arena, similarly to Nuffelen, puts greater emphasis on the philosophical aspects of Varro's work (2021) 608.
[114] *philosophiamque multis locis incohasti, ad impellendum satis, ad edocendum parum.* Cic. *Acad.* 1.9-10.
[115] Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 33. For the influence of the Scaevolae on Varro and Cicero, see Macrae (2017) and North (2014) 228.
[116] *De civ. D.* 4.27.
[117] See above.

incorporate these ideas but made alterations, as Augustine commented that Varro was interested in integrating the three parts:

> [Varro] was trying to distinguish the civil theology from the mythical and the natural, as being a third and special kind, he wished it to be understood that it is rather a combination of the other two kinds, and not one separate from both.[118]

This is notable for two reasons. It indicates that Varro engaged with philosophy in a different way from Lucretius and Cicero. Rather than presenting philosophy in an easy-to-read way for a Latin-speaking audience, Varro developed an overarching philosophical system.[119] Furthermore, the tripartite model is originally, in part, Greek, suggesting an acceptance of Greek ideas.[120] Consequently, he promoted Greek thought explicitly, again questioning the truthfulness of the apparent negativity towards it. Furthermore, he created unique, personal arguments within the constraints of needing to promote civic religion.

During the first century, authors experimented with theoretical approaches to gods and practices to inform their understanding. Rome became a cultural centre within the Mediterranean.[121] Cicero's comments on Lucretius and Varro suggest a level of cooperation. Nevertheless, the works discussed so far seem dramatically different. Lucretius wrote an Epicurean poem, while Varro wrote a work that incorporated elements of philosophy, historiography[122] and satire.[123] The different ways Varro can be understood are partly due to the fragmented nature of the work. However, evidence of interest in sub-topics, like satire, suggests he created a personal approach to discussing civic religious practice, not based on a specific framework like Lucretius. This echoes the discussion of Georg Simmel in the introduction, indicating that an

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[118] *civilem theologian a fabulosa et naturali tertiam quandam sui generis distinguere conaretur, magis eam ex utraque temperatam quam ab utraque separatam intellegi voluit*. August. *De civ. D*. 6.6.
[119] Rolle (2022) 275, following Rüpke (2012) 184.
[120] Rolle (2022) 274. Rüpke points out that even the word "theology" used by Varro has a Greek origin (2012) 173.
[121] Rüpke points out the explosion of texts in the mid-first century (2014) 248. He follows Wallace-Hadrill, who also notes the changing culture of Rome in the first century, referring to Cicero's discussion of Greek culture (1997) 8-9.
[122] Rüpke (2014).
[123] Kronenberg (2017).

individual is formed of different groups. While philosophy was not a new pursuit, the late Republic saw a wave of interest that generated new approaches from individuals who presented their knowledge to emphasise their understanding. Civic institutions permitted this, and civic practices were never seriously challenged. Authors, to differing extents, recommitted themselves to "traditional" norms, likely due to necessity. Theoretical approaches became a natural part of how an elite individual could express interest in religion regardless of perceived "foreignness" or negativity.

Cicero's Perception and Integration of Theory into Civic Religion

While philosophy was fully integrated by the end of the Republic, Cicero particularly, was concerned to maintain a sense of "Romanness" He utilised negative reactions to "perceived foreignness" to generate the image of an innovator/pioneer, able to make "Greek" theories into "Roman," particularly with Stoicism.[124] Asserting Roman dominance was a stated aim. At the start of the *Tusculan Disputations,* Cicero presented a comparison between Greece and Rome, suggesting Rome was mostly superior, but this should be furthered by writing philosophy in Latin: "Philosophy has lain neglected to this day, and Latin literature has thrown no light upon it: it must be illuminated".[125] He also links Rome's cultural domination to his success when Brutus says:

> To call you at once the pioneer and inventor of eloquence, and to add that you have deserved the name and prestige of Rome. For the one thing in which conquered Greece still remained our conqueror, we have now wrested from her, or at least we now share with her.[126]

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[124] Hill suggesst that Stoicism was particularly relevant to Cicero as it was more politically oriented than Epicureanism and highlights that Stoicism was not the dominant philosophy of the time (2004) 73. This matches the concern for civic religion and society as highlighted by Hösle. See n. 141. While there were other Roman Stoics, I find it notable that Cicero was also acting against general trends in intellectual theory.

[125] *Philosophia iacuit usque ad hanc aetatem nec ullum habuit lumen litterarum Latinarum quae illustranda* Cic. *Tusc.* 1.5-6.

[126] *non solum principem atque inventorem copiae dixerit, quae erat magna laus, sed etiam bene meritum de populi Romani nomine et dignitate. Quo enim uno vincebamur a victa Graecia, id aut ereptum illis est 255aut certe nobis cum Graecis communicatum.* Cic. *Brut.* 254. The Loeb translates "*copiae*" as

Brutus praised Cicero's eloquence, but this can be applied to philosophy given similar themes. The *Disputations*, written to console himself after the death of Tullia, and *Brutus*, a history of oratory, were written at a similar time to the religious works. While they do not relate to religious practice, I will argue that these works formed one overarching project. While Cicero could claim to have achieved his aims by creating a Latin vocabulary to translate Greek ideas, he overstated his position in saying philosophy had been neglected.[127] Potentially, he portrayed himself as more innovative than he was. Portraying philosophical theories as "foreign" he promoted an ability to "legitimise" philosophical inquiry even though it was generally accepted anyway. Cicero may have been navigating the paradoxical attitude towards perceived "foreign" practices. These statements also helped protect him from those who may have claimed to think his approaches were improper.

Cicero's use of Roman exempla highlights these pressures. Henriette Van Der Blom summarises Cicero's use of Greek and Roman exempla, arguing that there were variations from work to work depending on the audience. Those interested in philosophy would prefer Greek models.[128] She accepts that one of Cicero's aims was to surpass the Greeks, although this was not always the case.[129] Cicero used Greek examples, discussing Macedonians, Spartans and Demetrius,[130] although he noted some disliked this.[131] However, Cicero's religious trilogy produces a more nuanced picture, challenging Van Der Blom's theories. Cicero often used Roman examples in philosophical enquiries that analysed religion, discussing Crassus, the Gracchi and

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eloquence. This is not a direct translation, although it is a reasonable one given that the passage deals with words and Cicero's ability to be "eloquent."

[127] Bishop discusses Cicero's need to create a Latin vocabulary in relation to the *Aratea* and accepts that the domination of Greece was an important factor for Cicero (2016) 156. His translations, however, were not always accurate, so it can be questioned how successful Cicero was in this regard (Powell 1995a 273-279).

[128] (2007) 159. However, Van Der Blom points out that there was a mixed use of Roman and Greek exempla generally.

[129] Van Der Blom (2007) 160. There is also a useful summary of scholarly arguments regarding Cicero's attitude to Greek culture (157-158). James Zetzel also contends that Cicero aimed to show his audience how to employ Greek ideas which seem to fit into these theories (2003). Particularly useful is Zetzel's argument that Cicero is being both comparative and normative. Greece is contrasted with Rome simultaneous to Greek culture being accepted (2003) 134.

[130] Cic. *Off.* 2.26-27.

[131] Cic. *De or.* 2.4-5.

Appius Claudius among many others.[132] This was a deliberate choice, for which he praised Quintus: "the thing that delights me most is the fact that you illustrated your argument with many incidents taken from our sources." [133] Roman exempla are also prevalent in *De Natura Deorum*.[134] This may be a signpost to a "traditionalist" audience, highlighting the relevance of theoretical approaches to understanding civic religion, and a defence against any negativity, as perceived "foreignness" could be set aside. Others could create their own discourses by claiming to participate in a "Roman" tradition. In turn, Cicero could present himself as the innovative individual who made this possible.

Cicero's studies of Stoic and Epicurean ideas in *De Natura Deorum* suggest the same aim of appealing to a "traditionalist" audience.[135] He followed Greek sources closely,[136] but inserted Roman examples.[137] For instance, when discussing Stoic ideas, he mentioned the Roman conception of Venus: "However, our countrymen named Venus as the goddess who comes (*venire*) to all things".[138] While relying on Greek originals, Cicero presented himself as an independent philosopher through a discussion of specifically Roman ideas. This integration may have been a genuine innovation.[139] Quotations such as this had the benefit of communicating to his readers that a better understanding of "traditional" civic gods could be gained through a theoretical understanding.[140] Venus is mentioned in the argument from 2.59–62, which is dedicated to expounding the Stoic understanding of the gods, of what they comprised, and the benefits they bestowed. Contrary to Cicero's apparent concerns that civic religion was

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[132] Examples taken from *De Divinatione.* Crassus: 1.29; The Gracchi: 1.56, 1.33; Appius Claudius 1.105. Other examples include Caesar: 1.119 and Gaius Flaminius 1.77. This is not an exhaustive list.
[133] *uodque me maxime delectat, plurimis nostris exemplis usus es* Cic. *Div.* 2.8. The Loeb translates this phrase with the word "Roman", which does not appear in the original Latin. However, I think that this is a fair interpretation as Quintus gave specific Roman examples and Cicero refers to them as noble.
[134] Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.10-11; 3.48-49; 3.5.
[135] Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.60-72; 1.39-41.
[136] Thompson (1979/1980) 144;146. Thompson argues that Cicero was a great "stylist" when translating Greek originals (ibid.) 143. Powell disagrees, seeing Cicero as "simply doing his best" (1995a 299). Both can be true throughout different works, and the main point that Cicero was attentive to his source material is not lost.
[137] Thompson (1979/1980) 149.
[138] *Quae autem dea ad res omnes veniret Venerem nostri nominaverunt*. Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.69.
[139] Beard argues that Cicero was genuinely innovative in using Roman exempla and a Roman setting (1986) 38.
[140] This is indicated when Cicero stated that he wanted his readers to "observe and learn" about a variety of practices, including oaths and sacrifices: "*cognoscant animadvertant*" Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.14.

undermined, presented arguments nullifying any reactionary, negative views; the gods could be better understood by thinking about them more deeply. This highlights how individuals could explore civic religion as well as the pressure on them to reinforce it. I argue in the next section that this also applied to more radical ideas.

Cicero attempted to show his peers how, particularly Stoicism, could be utilised practically, integrating philosophical approaches into the civic system and showing his personal understanding. This encompassed use in political debates and understanding of Roman history.[141] For example, Asmis analyses Cicero's creation of a myth of the founders of Rome in *De Republica,* from Romulus through to the Decemvirate.[142] Asmis connects this to the dream of Scipio in Book Six, based on Plato's myth of Er in the Republic. This continued a theme of exalting the ancestors, with Africanus as the final example, creating one overarching myth.[143] Cicero discussed Stoic ideas, including a "supreme god" and the boundaries between men and divinity,[144] connecting the virtues of the men he discussed to this god:

> You, Publius, and all good men, must leave that soul in the custody of the body, and must not abandon human life except at the behest of him by whom it was given you, unless you appear to have shirked the duty imposed upon man by God.[145]

Asmis concludes that Cicero attempted to create a mythological past, emphasising the virtue of political leaders, creating a Roman myth based on the Greek.[146] I would add that this was an attempt to integrate philosophical approaches into the civic system, as

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[141] Hösle characterises Cicero's approach as particularly concerned with civic religion, arguing that he, like Plato, perceived that human nature was "essentially social" (2008) 159-160. This may be an aspect of Cicero's approach, although I add the context of needing to conform as a reason for why he used theoretical approaches in the way I describe in this section.
[142] Cic. *Rep.* 2.4-64.
[143] Asmis (2014) 23.
[144] Cic. *Rep.* 6.26.
[145] *quare et tibi, Publi, et piis omnibus retinendus animus est in custodia corporis nec iniussu eius, a quo ille est vobis datus, ex hominum vita migrandum est, ne munus humanum2 adsignatum a deo defugisse videamini.* Cic. *Rep.* 6.15.
[146] Asmis (2014) 40. There are parallels between the reworking of Greek philosophy and Greek myths for a Roman identity. For instance, see Bremmer and Horsfall (1987).

virtues were a subject of interest and concern for late Republican politicians.[147] Atkins highlights how the myth (specifically the dream of Scipio) focussed on politics and hope.[148] This hope was offered to those who are virtuous. There is a focus on the individual politician as needing to protect civic norms. Cicero showed what made a good politician through a philosophical discourse connected to religion, also bolstering his position as a philosophical authority over religious and political matters, highlighting how other individuals could explore religion in a "civic-minded" way.

In contrast, Cicero also stated that politics was more important than philosophy, as theoretical discussions were an intellectual exercise to be conducted in free time: "We expressed opinions, addressed the assembly and believed that philosophy was substituted by us for the management of the state. Now that we have begun to discuss the state, attention must be given to its affairs."[149] Cicero was excluded from politics during the 40s BC due to Caesar's rise to power. However, his comments should not be taken literally. A deeper inspection of Cicero's speeches indicates that Stoicism became a useful political tool.[150] In 43 BC, Cicero delivered a speech advocating that a military command should be given to Cassius Longinus to attack Dolabella, who had illegally seized Smyrna. In his argument, Cicero stated that the law is a code of conduct resulting from the will of the gods, which Heibges points out is a Stoic doctrine.[151] Cicero used Stoic doctrines in other parts of the speech when discussing the gods.[152]

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[147] Schofield discusses the importance of virtues to Cicero personally, including seeing *fides* (faith) as particularly Roman (2021b) 147-149. The special focus on Roman piety is echoed in Polybius' discussion of religion. See Levick (1982) for the general late Republican concern for failing morals. Clark argues that virtues were part of the fabric of the city, afforded resources like statues, and further points out that Cicero consciously associated himself with virtues on numerous occasions, such as purportedly delivering the *Philippics* from the temple of Concordia (2007) 26; 174.

[148] Atkins (2019) 27.

[149] *sententiam dicebamus, contionabamur, philosophiam nobis pro rei publicae procuratione substitutam putabamus. Nunc quoniam de re publica consuli coepti sumus, Nunc quoniam de re publica consuli coepti sumus, tribuenda est opera rei publicae* Cic. *Div.* 2.7; cf. *Div.* 1.11.

[150] Boes suggests that philosophy was a central aspect of Cicero's political career from his consulship to his death: Berry (1992). While I do not go this far, I suggest that philosophy was a useful tool in a variety of speeches.

[151] Cic. *Phil.* 11.28. For the Stoic view on "natural law" and its connections to divinity, see Espíndola (2014). See Heibges in the next note, who specifically connects Cicero's statement to Stoic doctrine.

[152] Heibges highlights many other examples (1969a) 310-312. A further example of the use of Stoicism comes from *Pro Murena,* discussed in the next paragraph. For the knowledge of Stoicism that existed at the time of the speech, see Craig (1986) 233.

The Senate rejected the proposals, but this does not mean that his approach was inadequate. Many factors potentially impacted the decision. Cicero must have felt that presenting Stoic interpretations of the gods increased his chances of success beyond writing theoretical works. Consequently, in this public setting, Cicero demonstrated to his peers how a philosophical underpinning to their arguments was beneficial.

A further example is *Pro Murena*. Murena was elected consul in 63 BC, but Cato brought him to trial for bribery. Cicero, defending Murena, mocked Cato for being a Stoic.[153] *Pro Murena* is one of three surviving speeches to begin with a direct appeal to the gods.[154] Cicero may have subtly contrasted "traditional" respect for the gods with Cato's philosophical approach,[155] a view based on Cicero's claim that Cato attacked him with Stoic principles directly following his appeal to deity, potentially contrasting the two approaches.[156] This indicates that a constructed "foreignness" was a useful tool in debates. However, in other passages, Cicero attacked Cato's understanding rather than Stoicism itself, claiming others were wiser.[157] Potentially, Cicero was indicating that theoretical approaches might be useful, but were damaging if used incorrectly. This echoes Cicero's statement that views of some philosophers could lead to the cessation of religion: "the disappearance of piety towards the gods will entail the disappearance of loyalty and social union among men."[158] Nevertheless, he continued with a balanced view, indicating that the state could benefit, citing translations of Greek ideas into Latin,

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[153] Cic. *Mur.* 65; 74.
[154] Cic. *Mur.* 1. Heibges (1969b) 834.
[155] This is not the only reason why Cicero may have discussed the gods. Potentially, he invoked them to emphasise that Murena was divinely protected: Ahleid (1996) 356. It may also be an attempt to recall the election in the minds of the jurors: Lushkov (2018) 225. These interpretations are compatible with mine, as Cicero may have had several purposes for discussing the gods here.
[156] Cato apparently referred to Cicero as not conducting a "right act" in taking on the case: Cic. *Mur.* 2-3. This is a technical stoic terminology: Macdonald (1977) 188, n. b.
[157] Cic. *Mur.* 66. Craig argues that Cicero was attacking Cato's misunderstanding of Stoicism (1986) 237. Craig also highlights how Cicero actually thought that Stoics were reasonable in the speech, but had specific issues with Cato (1986) 232. Elsewhere, Cicero praised Cato's use of philosophy: Cic. *Brut.* 119; *Par. Stoic.* 1-3. Van Der Blom points out that Cicero had an agenda here of praising Republicans during the war between Caesar and Pompey, although Cato probably had a genuine interest in Stoicism: (2012) 44. This agrees with Stem, who goes further in suggesting that Cato was innovative in his use of philosophy (2006). Stem also argues that Stoicism was seen as dangerous.
[158] *atque haud scio an pietate adversus deos sublata fides etiam et societas generis humani* Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.4. See Auvray-Assayas for the concerns about how philosophy impacted politics. (2021) 124.

although not stating how this was beneficial aside from increasing Rome's glory.[159] *Pro Murena* may be an attempt to show the utility of philosophical theories *only* if conducted properly, to match "traditional" norms. Another example is *Pro Milone*. Cicero discussed tyranny while attacking Clodius.[160] Steel highlights the philosophical approach in this statement, linking it to justifications for tyrannicide in *De Officiis*, and suggests Cicero implied the gods agreed it was justifiable.[161] Cicero presented practical, and what he perceived as appropriate, uses for Stoic teachings, representing himself as a key individual guiding this process.[162]

As philosophy was deeply embedded in Cicero's time, it is possible that he and the other authors discussed were not innovative, simply reinterpreting ideas that many already knew. Cicero's "public" demonstration of knowledge was only possible because it was an accepted practice. Even so, the memory of senatorial decrees and concerns for "Romanness" discussed in Section One allowed Cicero to present himself as a pioneer, integrating theoretical approaches into Roman history and politics. He claimed to Atticus that "not even among the Greeks is there anything similar"[163] when discussing the *Academica* published in 45 BC. This creates a contrast between his "Roman" approach and "Greek" originals, highlighting his supposed novelty in creating something "new" and "better." While the *Academica* was not a religious work, it was published the same year as *De Natura Deorum,* in which academic scepticism was influential. Therefore, he might be taken to see his religious works in the same light. His self-assessment was justifiable to an extent. If he aimed to make philosophy clear, writing in Latin and applying Roman exempla would achieve this more than the Greek originals.[164] Lucretius could claim something similar, although through a substantially different approach.

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[159] Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.7-9. Cicero also stated that writing philosophy was a personal consolation to him after the death of his daughter Tullia, highlighting the highly personal nature of what he was doing.
[160] Cic. *Mil*. 79-80.
[161] Steel (2021) 68.
[162] The evidence that he perceived himself as a guiding innovator is discussed in the next section in relation to Cicero presenting himself as a "teacher".
[163] *ne apud Graecos quidem simile quicquam* Cic. *Att.* 13.13-14.1.
[164] Striker (1995) 60-61.

Ultimately, practicing philosophy was a personal choice.[165] Aside from expulsions, no civic mechanism prevented philosophical inquiry, although the recommitments to civic religion make it likely that external pressures still played a role. Civic religion was open to intellectual discourses, seen as positive. Importantly, neither was there a civic mechanism for encouraging theoretical approaches. Individual action was the main driver for its application. It was Cicero's choice to attend the lectures of Greek philosophers, although societal pressures might play a role. The ability to choose meant different approaches could be taken. Cicero presented many schools of thought, so he never created a coherent philosophical system. He claimed to take an "ad-hoc" approach.[166] Moatti argues this allowed Cicero to create an "open dialogue" – a feature of theoretical discussions at the time – which allowed Cicero to present his knowledge of Epicureanism and Stoicism equally.[167] This contrasts with Lucretius, who focused on Epicureanism in *De Rerum Natura,* and Varro, who utilised a mix of history and satire. Cicero's approaches allowed him to explore religion personally, generating the perception of a philosophical authority and teacher.

Cicero's Religious Works: Civic and Individual Aims

I consider how Cicero discussed potentially radical ideas, similarly to Lucretius, while reiterating his commitment to civic religion. He did this to present himself as a teacher of philosophical theories about the gods. He stated that the conversation in *De Natura Deorum* should not be discussed publicly to protect state religion from destruction: "These matters ought not to be discussed in public, lest such discussion destroy the established religion of the nation."[168] While this quotation, emphasising Cicero's commitment to civic religion, survives only in Lactantius' *Divine Institutes,* it is usually attributed to Book Three. As Lanctantius is a later Christian polemicist, it is plausible

[165] Moatti (2021) 14. See also Fox, below.
[166] Cic. *Off.* 1.6.
[167] Fox highlights the different choices that could be made while writing a philosophical work, as well as highlighting how Cicero was genuinely innovative. For instance, Cicero was the first to use speakers in dialogues from different philosophical schools (2023). Moatti (2021) 19-20.
[168] *non esse illa vulgo disputanda, ne susceptas publice religiones disputatio talis exstinguat.* Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 2.3.2; cf. Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.118.

that he misrepresented Cicero's views. Saying that Cicero knew the gods were false is certainly an exaggeration. However, the general fear for religion may represent Cicero's actual thoughts.[169] Quintus' "shaken views" in *De Divinatione* and Cicero's reassurance indicate he communicated similar ideas to his audience. The quotation further indicates members of the elite had to align themselves with the religious consensus.

Reassurances that echo Lactantius are given elsewhere in Book Three of *De Natura Deorum*: "This more or less is what I have to say about the nature of the gods; it is not my desire to disprove it, but to bring you to understand how obscure it is and how difficult to explain."[170] Cotta, the sceptic, reinforced his trust in civic practices and institutions over any school of thought.[171] He emphasised that his wish to discuss doctrine and believed his sceptical views could be defeated.[172] Therefore, Cicero's approach validated civic religion, emphasising it should be maintained, and he was simply undertaking a theoretical discussion. While Cicero, equally, wished civic religion to continue in its "traditional" form anyway, this may represent an attempt to negotiate societal pressures that encouraged claims that "foreign" influences were negative. Some read Cicero's arguments as radical, engaging in the paradoxical attitude discussed in Section One. The engagement with civic religion had the potential to allow Cicero to create a discussion relevant and relatable to his peers. This would be more likely to generate an engaged audience, necessary for acceptance as a philosopher. For instance, Cicero subordinated private religion to the public when describing ideal religious laws, reinforcing the authority of religious institutions.[173] Elite control should not be over-emphasised, as members of the elite were genuinely interested in the

[169] Gassman discusses the quotation, suggesting caution but also perceiving that Cicero may be conveying some real concern (2020) 32. It should be noted that other scholars also readily accept that Lanctantius is a key source for lost quotes of Cicero. Atkins (2021) 233. Where they can be checked, Lanctantius quotations are often accurate. Zetzel (2017) 311. Zetzel still suggests caution. Kendeffy argues that Lactantius' quotations were modified (2015) 91.
[170] *Haec fere dicere habui de natura deorum, non ut eam tollerem sed ut intellegeretis quam esset obscura et quam difficilis explicatus haberet.* Cic.*Nat. D.* 3.93.
[171] Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.5-6.
[172] Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.95.
[173] Cic. *Leg.* 2.30.

gods.[174] However, as with the speeches discussed in Section Three, this was another method of allowing Cicero to show how his ideas were compatible with elite public life.

A specific example of these themes is Cicero's discussion of augury, which he claimed was maintained "out of respect for the opinion of the people and because of the great service to the State".[175] Additionally, Cicero's analysis of practices that he supported was beneficial to him personally. He utilised theories to demonstrate his knowledge of civic processes familiar to his readers. For example, Cicero explained forms of augury, claiming the "Roman" version did not predict the future, implying that this excluded it from criticism.[176] This could highlight the potential difficulty in applying academic scepticism to "traditional" religion.[177] However, if philosophy were truly damaging, Cicero would not have promoted it. Rather, Cicero used theoretical dialogues to show a deep knowledge of the civic processes relevant to his readers and how philosophical interpretations can be integrated into Roman society.

Quintus communicated similar ideas in *De Divinatione* when giving a positive view of divination while referring negatively to those who prophesy for money.[178] Presumably, the inference is that those who did not charge money (state priests) are worthy of respect. This is not stated specifically but is a reasonable assumption given the focus on priests and institutions. This, alongside Quintus' "shaken" views from the prologue, represents Cicero's interest in promoting civic religion through theoretical discourse. Ultimately, Cicero could not control his readers' reactions. They may have claimed to dislike his approach and arguments. However, through these discussions, Cicero could show how theoretical dialogues were an accepted practice that could increase his readers' understanding. Of the authors discussed, he is the only priest and, consequently, likely wrote with civic religion at the fore of his mind. This and the

[174] Champion points out that Cicero is not necessarily clearly stating his personal viewpoint, for instance. This will be explored further below. (2017) 10-11.
[175] *ad opinionem vulgi et ad magnas utilitates rei publicae* Cic. *Div.* 2.70.
[176] ibid.
[177] Burkert argues that Cicero "has" to defend his own office (2005) 44-45; Momigliano (1984b) 207.
[178] Cic. *Div.* 1.132. See the substantial discussion in Chapter Four.

importance of "traditional" norms to a large proportion of Cicero's readers, given its political importance, highlights why he referred to these themes to such an extent. Religious conflicts, such as that between Caesar and Bibulus, were commonplace.[179] In the political realm, where understanding civic practices could help an individual, it is unsurprising that Cicero gave it a prominent place. While he showed the practical uses of his ideas in speeches, these comments on augury provided the theoretical underpinnings with which his readers could engage. He was likely expected to promote and protect the institutions important to everyone, but able, simultaneously, to highlight his personal religious knowledge, increasing his standing among his peers.

A further example of this process is Cicero's discussion of the division of religion into three parts: *Sacra, Auspicia,* and warning about the future.[180] Gordon argues this implies institutions, rather than the objects of worship, are Cicero's focus.[181] This is bolstered by Cicero's emphasis that Romulus and Numa laid down the ancient rites and religious foundations of Rome. This emerges as a theme, as highlighted above, in that Varro focussed first on institutions, although both ultimately discuss the gods to some extent. Cicero discusses the forms gods took in other cultures, for example.[182] Therefore, I do not go as far as Gordon, but consider institutions were a central aspect of these works. Cotta made it clear he gave what he perceived as a "traditional" understanding of Roman religion as a whole in his discussions: "I am guided by the high pontiffs, Titus Coruncanius, Publius Scipio and Publius Scaevola, not by Zeno or Cleanthes or Chrysippus."[183] This clearly divides between "traditional" and "Hellenistic" interpretations, but suggests Cotta was displaying an ability to discuss both as philosopher and priest, a possible signpost to Cicero's audience that they could do the

[179] For religion as useful in politics generally, see Russell (2016) 102. For the conflict between Bibulus and Caesar, see: Suet. *Iul.* 20; Driediger-Murphy (2019b) 143ff and Beard et al (1998a) 126-129 for this. I also discuss this conflict more fully in Chapter Four.
[180] Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.5. Cicero was taking part in a trend of late Republican thought in categorising religious practice. Beard discusses various authors and their classifications of religion, highlighting how there was not a single accepted view (1990) 44.
[181] Gordon (1990a) 179.
[182] Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.81-82. This discussion focusses on anthropomorphism.
[183] *Sed cum de religione agitur, Ti. Coruncanium P. Scipionem P. Scaevolam pontifices maximos, non Zenonem aut Cleanthen aut Chrysippum sequor* Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.5.

same. This approach meant Cicero did not represent the true complexity of ritual discussed in Chapters Four and Six.[184] This obfuscation was unlikely an issue for Cicero's audience, probably more interested in the civic rites and practices relevant to them. Tailoring his writings to his audience would make readers more receptive to his views, allowing him to present himself as a religious authority more easily.

Cicero similarly focused on civic religion in the preface of Book One of *De Divinatione,* where he presented a historical account of divination, reinforcing to his readership his understanding of basic traditions and commitment to civic practices.[185] Additionally, he included radical arguments, seeming to treat divination as a subject independent of its political uses:

> There is an ancient belief, handed down to us from mythical times and established by general agreement of the Roman people and of all countries, that divination of some kind exists among men; this the Greeks call μαντική —that is, the foresight and knowledge of future events. A helpful thing it is—if only it exists—since by its means men may approach very near to the power of gods.[186]

This was the first time that divination was thought of this way in Rome, suggestive of the ability of Stoicism and Scepticism to generate new ideas in this and other works.[187] Cicero may be genuinely innovative, moving beyond just focusing on institutions, although it is unlikely he wanted this to be applied to actual divinatory practices outside of his attempts to educate others. Cicero mentioned institutions in relation to Romulus soon after, in section three, possibly needing to align with the religious consensus. This

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[184] DiLuzio (2016) 240. This is also highlighted by Bendlin, who discusses religious pluralism (2000); Orlin (2007) 61-63.
[185] Cic. *Div.* 1.1-3.
[186] *Vetus opinio est iam usque ab heroicis ducta temporibus, eaque et populi Romani et omnium gentium firmata consensu, versari quandam inter homines divinationem, quam Graeci μαντικήν appellant, id est praesensionem et scientiam rerum futurarum. Magnifica quaedam res et salutaris, si modo est ulla, quaque proxime ad deorum vim natura mortalis possit accedere.* Cic. *Div.* 1.1.
[187] Beard discusses the treatment of divination as an independent subject (1986) 36, 46. While it is difficult to definitively prove this, it appears that the late Republic was a period where individuals held a *specific* interest in religion: Momigliano (1984) 199-200. See also Rüpke (2014) 248 North gives a similar but more hesitant view (2014) 227. Bendlin pushes this further, suggesting that Roman religion should be differentiated from other aspects of society in modern studies (2000) 125. While more radical, these ideas could be applied given the apparent similar shift in Cicero's works.

does not negate the earlier passages. He could engage both "traditional" and radical arguments simultaneously, allowing him to create the image of a committed philosopher who could integrate his ideas by reinforcing the importance of ancient institutions.

Cicero's less civically focussed ideas may have roots in the influence of Greek models he used, rather than attempts to create wholly new ideas.[188] Cicero's originality is important to substantiate. This affects his ability to present himself as an independent philosopher.[189] His summaries of relevant authors in *De Natura Deorum* indicate he was not translating his sources passively, as he independently critiqued specific aspects of their theories.[190] Through doing this, he created new interpretations that displayed his personal understanding of the topics he discussed. For instance, through engaging Empedocles' ideas, he developed his own philosophical standpoint on the nature of the gods:

> Empedocles among other issues is disgraceful in his theology. He assigns divinity to the four substances which in his system are the constituent elements of the universe, although these substances both come into and pass out of existence, and are entirely devoid of sensation.[191]

Potentially, these arguments, of which there are several in sections 1.25–41, are summaries taken from other sources. However, Cicero tended to explicitly state when he cited others, e.g. "The following dream of the Vestal Virgin is from Ennius".[192] When discussing Parmenides, he stated he did not need to critique him more fully than he had already, as another had done so: "this has been criticized by another philosopher and

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[188] Beard et al attribute the shift in treating religion differently in the late Republic in part due to Greek philosophy (1998a) 116.
[189] For the older view that Cicero was not an original author, see Powell (1995b) 2; Richard (2003) 185. Alonso is slightly more nuanced (2012).
[190] Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.25-41.
[191] *Empedocles autem multa alia peccans in deorum opinione turpissume labitur. Quattuor enim naturas ex quibus omnia constare censet divinas esse vult; quas et nasci et extingui perspicuum est et sensu omni carere.* Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.29.
[192] *Narrat enim et apud Ennium Vestalis illa* Cic. *Div.* 1.40.

need not be dealt with now in the case of Parmenides."[193] Therefore, the arguments Cicero presented against other philosophers are consistent with being his own. He was happy to refer his readers to other sources if he deemed them sufficient.[194] Cicero is highlighting that he was well-placed to write a series of philosophical works.

That Cicero dedicated space to expounding a range of previous scholars may suggest he aimed to instruct others, presenting himself as a teacher. He stated that training the youth was his goal: "For what greater or better service can I render to the commonwealth than to instruct and train the youth".[195] This is a direct claim that he is proficient as a teacher, and, consequently, likely how he wanted to be perceived. Begemann argues Cicero had genuine concerns that the Republic was not functioning as it should, hence he reached out to the next generation.[196] This is compatible with my view. Cicero's concern is found in the speeches I have discussed. Additionally, his attempt to reach out with discourses that could be radical, related, at least partially, to his wishing to be seen as a substantial authority due to the intense competition in the late Republic.

To be seen as a teacher, Cicero had to write convincingly. He would be unsuccessful if he only discussed religious practices he disliked. Therefore, the totality of religious practice was critiqued, indicated by his discussion of augury, a possible reason for his constant reassurance that these discussions were theoretical. Although he makes the opposite point elsewhere, this allowed him to present an argument that philosophical discourse could be more beneficial than divination:

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[193] *eademque de sideribus, quae reprehensa in alio iam in hoc omittantur.* Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.28.
[194] For Cicero's understanding of his sources: Erskine (2003) 5-6; For a specific example, see Schofield, who discusses Cicero's knowledge of Plato (2021a) 90-96. This is unsurprising given that Cicero was educated by Greek philosophers. For a summary, see: Schmidt (1978/1979) 115-116. Engagement with philosophy: Powell (2007) 341 and (2013) 38. For an example of this subtle engagement in relation to Stoicism, see: Alonso (2012) 165-166. Similar patterns are identifiable in *De Fato,* which I discuss below. Also, see Mas (2015).
[195] *Quod enim munus rei publicae afferre maius meliusve possumus, quam si docemus atque erudimus iuventutem.* Cic. Div. 2.4.
[196] Begemann (2023) 90.

> But if there is no place for divination in things perceived by the senses, or in those included among the arts, or in those discussed by philosophers, or in those which have to do with government, I see absolutely no need for it anywhere.[197]

This is a radical argument, a feature of *De Divinatione* in a similar vein to Lucretius' arguments against "traditional" divine communication.[198] While Cicero balances this view in Book One, and this was unlikely his actual view, the passage remains a departure from what most would traditionally be comfortable, given that the Senate derived authority through divination. It is possible that Cicero explored these ideas to present himself as a "teacher" of authentic arguments. To achieve this, Cicero needed an engaged intellectual community. How many read Cicero's works is unknown, but he may well have had a wide readership.[199] This is suggested by Cicero discussing high levels of engagement with his works.[200] Cicero's letters also refer to this community, suggesting philosophical discussions took place.[201] Miriam Griffin argues that Cicero's letters are a window into the broader community of philosophers in Rome, allowing voices otherwise not preserved to come to light.[202] The dialectical nature of Cicero's works and Plutarch's account of Carneades attracting a large audience, highlighting that philosophy was spoken, also suggests this. That his works survived also indicates successful engagement with this community through discussing both civic religion and radical ideas. This provided the necessary basis to meet his aims.

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[197] *Quodsi nec earum rerum, quae subiectae sensibus sunt, ulla divinatio est nec earum, quae artibus continentur, nec earum, quae in philosophia disseruntur, nec earum, quae in re publica versantur, quarum rerum sit, nihil prorsus intellego.* Cic. *Div.* 2.12.

[198] Santangelo discusses the "radical" nature of the work in relation to both augural lore and *haruspicy,* but importantly stresses that Cicero distinguished between politics and his agenda, not wishing for a reorganisation of public religion (2013a) 29.

[199] Blyth highlights Cicero's influence and his own claims, which should be taken with a grain of salt. (2010) 72; 87. However, Cicero's interaction with engaged readers in his letters suggests this may be reasonable.

[200] Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.6; *Div* 2.5; *Off.* 2.2.

[201] Powell (1995b) 32. See Aubert-Baillot for a summary of Cicero's correspondence and how deeply he and his friends engaged in philosophy through letters (2021b) 535

[202] Griffin (1995); See also Aubert-Baillot, who provides a summary of some of Cicero's interactions with his friends (2021a) 45.

A personal desire to teach is additionally suggested by Cicero's possible attempt to create a "compendium" of Greek theories. Schofield, followed by Striker, described Cicero's approach as an "introductory encyclopaedia". Schofield argues that the prologue of Book Two of *De Divinatione*, listing Cicero's other philosophical works, can be interpreted as a reading list, supported by Cicero's comments that he intends to write *De Fato*.[203] This indicates a well-thought-out structure, which appears designed to facilitate teaching. A comprehensive approach would achieve this more successfully than focussing on a single topic or school. Overall, Cicero attempted to present himself as a teacher guiding his audience through aspects of Hellenistic thought, with a key focus on religious practice. This may have been a central focus as he discussed theology more readily than other philosophers.[204] It is debatable if Cicero could, realistically, portray himself as a teacher, due to the general access to Greek teachers and earlier philosophers described in section one. Nevertheless, the programmatic nature of his writing, combined with the focus on Roman examples, differed substantially from his contemporary authors.[205]

By presenting himself as a teacher, Cicero could direct religious discourse, emphasising and critiquing elements that personally interested him. This necessitated the assertion of Roman authority to match the civic expectations of his peers and the culture around him.[206] For instance, he claimed Greek laws were absurd and believed Romans had surpassed the Greeks regarding philosophical vocabulary.[207] This suggests he felt it

[203] (1986) 48 and page 47 n.2; See also Schofield (2021a) 101. Striker sees Cicero's philosophy as divided into different groups, with only later writings belonging to the "encyclopaedia" (1995) 57. I, however, modify this to suggest that Cicero saw all of his works as part of the encyclopaedic project, but that this may not have been an aim when he wrote his initial works. For Cicero's comment on *De Fato,* see Cic. *Div.* 2.3. Erskine disagrees that Cicero had a wider programme, seeing him as a "user" rather than a "participant," principally to work through his own anxieties (2003) 6; 15. I see no reason why Cicero cannot have both aims. While I follow Schofield and Striker's view, Erskine's suggestions reveal the way that philosophy allowed personal expression.

[204] Schofield (1986) 48-49. This therefore also agrees with Beard's view that this was a period where religion came to be understood as a separate topic (1986).

[205] At the very least, Beard argues that Cicero was highly innovative in applying Hellenistic philosophy to Roman practices (1986) 40. Creating a new Latin vocabulary is another aspect of his innovation. For example, see Lévy (2021) 77.

[206] Van Der Blom (2007) 157. This was also true for him personally as a philosopher: Hösle (2008). This idea is explored more fully in Section Three.

[207] Cic. *De Or.* 1.197; *Fin.* 3.5.

necessary to present his work as a "Romanised" version of Greek models. An example is the discussion of specifically Roman applications and interpretations of Greek ideas in Book One of *De Natura Deorum*. He discussed the third-century Stoic philosopher, Cleanthes', understanding of how the idea of the gods formed in the minds of men:

> Cleanthes gave four reasons to account for the formation in men's minds of their ideas of the gods. [...] third, the awe inspired by lightning, storms, rain, snow, hail, floods, plagues, earthquakes and occasionally subterranean rumblings, showers of stones and raindrops the colour of blood, also landslips and chasms suddenly opening in the ground, also unnatural monstrosities human and animal, and also the appearance of meteoric lights and what are called by the Greeks 'comets,' and in our language 'long-haired stars,' such as recently during the [war between mithridates and Gaius Octavian] appeared as harbingers of dire disasters, and the doubling of the sun, which my father told me had happened in the consulship of Tuditanus and Aquilius.[208]

The specific reference to recent events, presumably, was designed to show the application of Stoicism in understanding forms of prodigy typically seen in Livy, for instance.[209] While Lucretius related Epicureanism to Roman religion, Cicero seems to provide a deeper exploration, mentioning various theories and divine signs. The reference to his own father indicates that he gave an example of how philosophy could be personally applied . Therefore, the passage neatly encapsulates how Cicero could present himself as making the nominally "Greek" not only "Roman" but highly specific to his own time, perhaps bolstering his position as a teacher.

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[208] *Cleanthes quidem noster quattuor de causis dixit in animis hominum informatas deorum esse notiones. [...] tertiam, quae terreret animos fulminibus tempestatibus nimbis nivibus grandinibus vastitate pestilentia terrae motibus et saepe fremitibus lapideisque imbribus et guttis imbrium quasi cruentis, tum labibus aut repentinis terrarum hiatibus, tum praeter naturam hominum pecudumque portentis, tum facibus visis caelestibus, tum stellis iis quas Graeci cometas nostri cincinnatas vocant, quae nuper bello Octaviano magnarum fuerunt calamitatum praenuntiae, tum sole geminato, quod ut e patre audivi Tuditano et Aquilio consulibus evenerat.* Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.13-14.

[209] Another example is Cotta discussing Roman examples in Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.80-81. In Chapter Four, I also discuss the *Aratea,* which is used in Cicero's religious works, a possible example of how Greek models were applied to Roman thought.

The aim to present himself as a teacher is indicated by his use of New Academic Scepticism. In the preface of *De Natura Deorum,* he stated that he wished to hide his views.[210] This was necessary as he wished to argue for and against *all* schools to find what seemed the most correct:

> If it is a considerable matter to understand any one of the systems of philosophy alone, how much harder to master them all! Yet this is the task that confronts those whose aim is to discover the truth by the method of arguing both for and against all the schools.[211]

While there is an "incoherence" to Cicero's views, and I follow Beard in concluding that there is no discernible Ciceronian viewpoint, this resulted from his choice to present himself as a teacher of several different doctrines rather than a failure to construct a definitive standpoint.[212] This approach adds credence to the compendium theory, given the broad range of topics that Cicero discussed through multiple viewpoints. Cicero seemed to perceive that scepticism was a central aspect of his ability to teach, stating, when justifying his writing philosophy: "the authority of those who profess to teach is often a hindrance to those who desire to learn".[213] The beginning of *De Natura Deorum* appears to be a guide for how Cicero wished his readership to approach religious practice with theory, selecting different arguments. However, he went further, showing how his readers could generate their own understanding. In *De Officiis,* written in 44 BC, a year after *De Natura Deorum*, Cicero stated that, despite being a sceptic, his mind did not wander, and he occasionally agreed with the Stoics.[214] He also sided with Stoics at the end of *De Natura Deorum* but took a more sceptical stance in *De Divinatione*.[215]

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[210] Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.10. For more information on Cicero's use of academic scepticism as arguing both sides of an issue, see Cambino (2002) 70.

[211] *Quod non Academiae vitio sed tarditate hominum arbitror contigisse; nam si singulas disciplinas percipere magnum est, quanto maius omnis? quod facere iis necesse est quibus propositum est veri reperiendi causa et contra omnis philosophos et pro omnibus dicere. Cuius rei tantae tamque difficilis facultatem consecutum esse me non profiteor, secutum esse prae me fero*. Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.10-12 (modified from the loeb).

[212] Krostenko (2000); Beard (1986) 35. Krostenko is more sympathetic to the idea that Cicero presented his own thoughts in *De Divinatione,* although I reject this, given Cicero's comments about hiding his views. For an older view, see Momigliano, who seems to suggest that Cicero was sceptical (1984b) 207-209.

[213] *Quin etiam obest plerumque iis qui discere volunt auctoritas eorum qui se docere profitentur* Cic. *Nat D.* 1.10.

[214] Cic. *Off.* 2.7; 1.6.

[215] Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.95.

While this mitigates suggestions that Cicero was a radical sceptic, Cicero was able to put forward a range of opinions.[216] This demonstrated to his readership how to construct arguments, which he showed as useful in his speeches.

This impacts how *De Divinatione* is interpreted. Older scholars tended to view the second sceptical book as Cicero's real view.[217] Beard's study altered this perception. She argues that it does not prove Cicero is sceptical, as the second, more radical book, is balanced by the first.[218] Green modifies this, arguing that Beard goes too far in suggesting that the character "Marcus" is a literary construct. He agrees with Schofield that "Marcus" would have been understood as representing Cicero's view.[219] Overall, the evidence I have presented, that Cicero wished to teach his readers by guiding them to their own conclusions, leads me to agree with Rassmussen and Bragova that the treatise does not represent Cicero's "real" views, but was presented to show his readers different arguments.[220] I modify this slightly, in that he created new arguments about the philosophers he discussed, not coming to specific conclusions, but wishing to present his knowledge and ideas about them. Rather than presenting no concrete view, Cicero provided multiple viewpoints, portraying himself as an individual able to instruct others in a way that was meaningful to them personally. He reinforced his claim that he did not think it necessary to give his thoughts in *De Divinatione*, and the lack of scholarly consensus indicates that he was successful.[221] Scepticism was particularly apt for teaching due to its ability to explore the ideas of others.[222] That he gave himself the role of sceptic may result from being known as a sceptic through earlier writings, making it the natural choice. I find it more likely the work was designed to educate others on how

[216] See Beard (1986) 35 for a discussion of Cicero's viewpoint. Contra: Reinhardt (2021) 117, who argues Cicero is a radical sceptic.
[217] Goar (1972) 99-101; Momigliano (1984b) 208 Burriss (1926). Harris perceives that many among the Roman elite were sceptical of dream prodigies (a form of divination), but this could be overcome in periods of high tension (2003) 26.
[218] Beard (1986) 34
[219] Green (2014) 78-79; Schofield (1986) 56-57.
[220] Bragova (2017) 309; Rasmussen (2003) 193-197.
[221] Cic. *Div.* 2.150.
[222] Beard (1986) 42. For the academic philosophical principles that Cicero used, see Schmidt (1978/1979) 124. Schmidt emphasises how this philosophical discourse would allow the pros and cons of different viewpoints to be weighed. This would make the school apt for teaching.

to conduct a philosophical dialogue, as opposed to Cicero arguing in favour of scepticism specifically.

As Cicero perceived his works as a coherent whole, it is instructive to analyse them in this manner also. While the dialogues of the 40s BC are important, Cicero's religious arguments are presented, also, in Book Two of *De Legibus*. Cicero relayed religious laws that emphasised the position of the Senate. For instance, separate from the community, no one should worship "new/foreign" gods unless adopted by the state.[223] Cicero seems to emphasise elements of state control, similarly to Varro.[224] North suggests that, in this passage, Cicero suggested limited interest in control, as the use of "*separatim*" implies he was prepared to allow private worship, as long as the gods were accepted by the Senate.[225] Consequently, even in North's understanding, the Senate remained a central authority. While North is sceptical of individual innovation, I modify his views, considering Cicero, personally, generated contrasting views.[226] There is no clear evidence when *De Legibus* was published, although it could date to the late 50s BC.[227] If so, Cicero focussed on the position of the state and the control of religious processes early on, highlighting views that fit into the "traditional" understanding of religion relevant to his readers. Later, in the religious dialogues of the mid to late 40s, he seems comfortable exploring more radical ideas. This fits the trend of presenting different schools of thought to highlight different approaches. Later critiques of practice do not undermine Cicero's earlier presentations.[228] This was part of the development of his "compendium," showing how civic religion could be discussed with theory before moving on to other ideas.

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[223] Cic. *Leg.* 2.19; 2.25.
[224] *ARD* frag. 46a C. See: Rolle (2022) 278. While highly fragmented, it is not difficult to identify an emphasis on the traditional role of religion in Varro's work Rawson (1985) 299; Liebeschuetz (1979) 37; North (2014) 244.
[225] North (2013) 69.
[226] I discuss these views in the literature review. See: North (2013) 77-78.
[227] See Geiger (1984) 43 and Rothkamm (2014) 155-156 for information on dating the works. Rasmussen (2003) highlights the issues in dating *De Legibus* and leans more towards a later date. I follow Rothkamm in suggesting an earlier date, as they point out Cicero's allusion to the death of Clodius that occurred in 52, amongst other reasons.
[228] That is to say, Cicero was not becoming "more sceptical", Cf. Momigliano (1984b) for the older view that Cicero was a sceptic (above).

The continuation of these trends can also be identified when analysing *De Fato*, the final work in the trilogy of religious dialogues. Scholarship generally focuses less on this, possibly because it is highly fragmented. It seems initially similar to the other works. As in *De Natura Deorum*, the views of Greek philosophers such as Chrysippus are summarised.[229] However, it is considerably denser. Alongside *De Divinatione,* it is more experimental than *De Natura Deorum,* which focusses more on presenting different schools of thought.[230] For instance, Bourbon suggests the work argues in favour of autonomy and freedom, due to Cicero's acceptance of Carneades' philosophy. Begemann also highlights the importance of freedom and Cicero's concept of fate.[231] The individual was highlighted as an active, free participant, in a discussion of civic religion. This is a substantial difference, from, perhaps a contrast to, the reinforcement of civic institutions in *De Legibus.* By the time of the later dialogues BC, Cicero claimed to have received a positive reception: "they are finding comfort in my books, and by their ardour in reading are raising my eagerness for writing to a higher pitch every day."[232] He possibly exaggerated, although hints at the intellectual community may mean that there was an appetite for philosophical writing. This would have given Cicero the confidence to explore new interpretations. Viewing these works as a whole, it is possible to see Cicero personally developing as a philosopher. Not that Cicero became "more rational". Civic religion was always important to him, as suggested by comments in *De Natura Deorum*. However, he was able to explore ideas that did not integrate easily in later works, after reaffirming his support for "traditional" norms.

In summary, individuals explored religion through interpretive frameworks in unique ways, developing personal interests. Within civic religion, radical ideas, such as Lucretius' critique of practice, were explored. This allowed individual late Republican

[229] Cic. *Fat.* 39. I note here that this engagement shows the same pattern of Cicero producing original ideas as Mas points out that he criticised Chryssippus' arguments (2015) 659; 663.
[230] Schofield (1986) 50; cf Kleywegt (1973) for the complexity of *De Fato.*
[231] See Bourbon (2019) 225-226; Altman (2012). Cicero discusses Carneades' ideas about free "movement of the mind" Cic. *Fat.* 23. Carneades also said that humans were free from fate, and even Apollo did not know the future: Cic. *Fat.* 32-33.
[232] *quorum studio legendi meum scribendi studium vehementius in dies incitatur.* Cic. *Div.* 2.5.

authors to present themselves as independent authorities of religion. While religion and politics were deeply entrenched,[233] religion gained distinct importance that could be discussed independently. Cicero's presentation of different philosophical schools facilitated his representing himself as a teacher. Similarly, Varro's satirical flair, in his history, allowed him to represent himself as a scholarly authority on the history of religious institutions, and Lucretius attempted to highlight the importance of Epicureanism. Fundamentally, individuals were able to select between different theories and approaches for understanding civic religion. In doing so, they engaged in the negative perceptions of "foreign" ideas. Philosophical inquiry was a "Roman" practice by the late Republic. However, Cicero and Lucretius used this "constructed negativity" to present themselves as producing a new body of specifically Latin/Roman works. While Latin works had been written before their generation, they used these claims to bolster their identities as independent religious authorities. This may have been necessary due to social pressures requiring individuals to affirm a commitment to "traditional norms." Likewise, some claims of innovation were justifiable. Lucretius was the first to write about Epicureanism, generally, in poetry, and Cicero was the first to write a comprehensive overview of several schools. This suggests that they made real attempts to explore civic religion independently.

The various interpretations of Cicero suggest the creation of individual identities, not just by late Republican authors, but also by readers. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to apply reception theory, but we can ask how these texts would be understood. Despite Cicero's desire to hide his views, it has not stopped modern scholars from trying, and is unlikely to have stopped Cicero's readers. Members of the elite would be able to interpret different arguments and form their own ideas. Presumably, Cicero, in presenting himself as a teacher, wanted his peers to explore similar ideas. [234] This was

[233] Santangelo (2013a) 32-33; Beard et al (1998a) 102. While individuals did play a role and were crafting identities as knowledgeable authorities, this background must be remembered. See Chapter Three for further discussion of the traditional role of politics and religion and the importance of the civic system.
[234] Gass (2015/2016).

another method with potential for individual expression. While this chapter focussed on the authors, the impact on their readers may have been greater.

Chapter Six: Healing Crises and Gifts to the Gods: Evidence for Individuality and Civic Pressures

Introduction

Just as the exploration of theoretical ideas provides evidence for individual expression within civic religion, this chapter argues that the same is true of votive offerings. Section One analyses senatorial responses to epidemics, attempting to identify how members of the elite catered for the community's needs. Similar to my discussion of Ceres and Magna Mater, there is evidence that the Senate sought specifically "foreign" gods. While these were as Roman as any other, the Senate often highlighted the "foreign" elements of cults and rituals related to healing.[1] Therefore, the Senate highlighted its religious authority by using "foreign" deities in a similar way to my discussion in Chapter Three. However, some evidence suggests that senatorial responses could be insufficient.

Section Two discusses elite dedications of votive objects, representing a personal connection to a god while serving a civic purpose. Evidence from Livy and Cicero indicates that, throughout the second and first centuries, members of the elite communed with the gods in "more public" and "less public" settings.[2] A range of options, including what to dedicate, were available, permitting a degree of individualisation in the process, although this was mediated by expected societal norms. In Section Three, I discuss surviving material evidence indicating individual expression was possible across society. I follow Rüpke's argument that votives "point to a 'votive religion' that copes well with individual crises".[3] Inscriptions, miniature altars

[1] While not undertaking a broader discussion on this, Orlin draws a distinction between Asclepius and Jupiter, suggesting that the former did retain a "foreign" character: Orlin (2008) 243. Given the earlier discussion of Ceres, this makes sense.

[2] Aberson states that there are three spheres that come together when a votive is deposited: The public the private, and the divine (2009) 99-100. I follow this line of thinking as votives represent individual acts in public spaces, but also argue that some locations were less clearly public, such as the river Liri. Natural features were less "controlled" by the civic elite as they could not choose where they were placed, unlike a temple, for instance. Rural shrines received votives in the second century BC at Tessennano: Glinister (2009) 209. While these retained public significance, they belonged to a smaller, more intimate community than Rome, hence my "more public" and "less public" designations.

[3] Rüpke (2013b) 6.

and coins, the gods they were dedicated to and where they were dedicated, attest to choices available to individuals when communicating with the gods. However, members of the elite still mediated these processes, and the artefacts retained a public and civic function. Consequently, votives differ from the forms of divination I discussed in Chapter Four, which existed beyond civic religion. Individuals could experience a personal form of religion in temples performing civic rites, at a time, place and cost that met personal need. The civic responses to epidemics occurred simultaneously with the dedication of these artefacts, indicating the population expressed individual responses to meet their needs while collectively participating in civic religion.

Modern scholarship has recently focussed on terracotta anatomical votives, primarily from the fourth to second centuries, declining in the first century.[4] The consensus is that these objects were made freehand, by pressing clay into moulds, allowing for a pseudo-mass production.[5] Many types, including representations of both external and internal body parts, miniature altars (*arulae*) and representations of infants, were produced and dedicated throughout Italy.[6] These artefacts, often, are perceived as related to healing, suggesting similar concerns to the civic rites discussed in Section One, although I discuss potential alternatives posited in scholarship.[7] As my focus is on Rome in the second and first centuries, I intend to utilise similar arguments but shift focus onto items more common in the later Republic. I briefly discuss *arulae* as some from the Largo Argentina have been dated to the third and second centuries. Votive coins are the easiest to date to the period, although less has been published about specific examples from Republican Rome. There is limited evidence for their importance in first-century authors as well as physical examples in the wider region surrounding the city in areas such as Volsinii and Liri. Dedicatory inscriptions form the most substantial body of

[4] For general information on the dates of these objects, see Graham (2013) 218; Glinister (2006) 10; Griffith (2013) 238-239. For the difficulties in dating terracotta votives, see Graham (2017) 45-46; Scopacasa (2015) 6.
[5] For the idea of mass production, see Glinister (2006) 27; Haumesser (2017) 183. For moulds more generally, see Scopacasa (2015) 7.
[6] Graham states that new and old shrines throughout Italy received these objects from the fourth century (2017) 45-46.
[7] Scopacasa and Glinister discuss the association with healing but point out that there are other alternative interpretations: Scopacasa (2015) 10; 14. Glinister (2006) 12-13.

evidence for personal connections with the divine within the city during this period. Unfortunately, many cannot be dated with certainty to the Republic, and generally, there are fewer examples compared to the imperial period.[8] I analyse examples reasonably attributed after 200 BC.

State Responses to Healing Concerns

This Section considers state responses to healing concerns and how members of the elite determined acceptable civic responses. It focusses on the Greek god, Asclepius. In the early third century, the Sibylline books were consulted in response to a plague, leading to the foundation of a temple to Asclepius on the Tiber Island in 291 BC. Livy stated: "It was discovered in the Books that Asclepius must be summoned to Rome from Epidaurus."[9] Assuming this is correct, given Livy's use of earlier records, this was a clear state importation. The use of Asclepius continued, as evidenced by the Senate, during a plague in 180 BC.[10] This may have been the last time, although there is another potential, but unproven, use in 87 BC.[11] The loss of Livy's history means we lack information for how Asclepius was perceived in later periods, although there is some indication that interest continued. A non-dedicatory inscription found at a medieval church believed to be the location of the Asklepieion the Tiber Island, possibly dating to 66 BC, references construction taking place at the temple and may, tentatively, suggest the area was monumentalised in the first century.[12] Renberg follows Degrassi in suggesting the Flaccus to whom the inscription refers may be the aedile of 66 BC, indicating a potential new phase of interest in the deity.[13] The god, therefore, seemed to

[8] See Schultz (2006) 48-49.
[9] *Inventum in libris Aesculapium ab Epidauro Romam arcessendum* Livy 10.47.6-7; Val. Max. 1.8.2.
[10] Livy 40.37.2-3.
[11] Discussed by Renberg (2006/2007) 89-90. Asclepius appears on coins after a plague in 87 BC, but there is no further evidence that the god was officially utilised by the Senate. As argued in Chapter Four, images on coins may have, by this point, been a result of individual action and interest.
[12] CIL 1^2 800 = ILS 3836.
[13] See Renberg (2006/2007) 138 and 99. Degrassi (1987) 526. See also Nunziata, who agrees (2008) 59.

form a part of official policy regarding the health of the populace throughout the mid to late Republic.[14]

Wazer lists numerous plagues that were met with senatorial intervention, including eight instances from 187 BC to 22 BC, many of which utilised Asclepius. In contrast to the Greeks, the Romans often interpreted epidemics as a form of prodigy.[15] As a religious response was perceived necessary, members of the elite likely thought they were responsible for crafting an appropriate response on behalf of the community.[16] While individual members of the elite participated in votive traditions, "official" action focussed on larger-scale solutions that impacted the entire population. In the same manner in which I suggested religious actions against divinatory practices, and the reaction to the cults of Magna Mater and Ceres, allowed the Senate to present itself as an authority by defining what was acceptable, the same may be true here. Votive offerings seem less clearly able to achieve this, being more closely related to the individual rather than the general population.[17] Furthermore, as members of the elite likely had genuine concern for the community, a policy of calling on a civic deity or practice would more easily meet the aims of helping everyone. Asclepius, amongst other gods, formed a key part of this process.

[14] Overall, it seems likely that some interest at least was maintained. Asclepius appears in Augustan literature. See Parker and Purcell (2015) for a summary. See also Orlin, who discusses Asclepius' importance more generally during the Hellenistic period (2008), particularly page 245. Renberg discusses the date of this inscription, suggesting, although not conclusively, that it is from the late Republic (2006/2007) 138. See page 99 for the development of the temple on Tiber Island.

[15] For the full list and this view, see Wazer (2016) 134-136. While potentially not unique, the civic elite did seem to be concerned with the health of the civic community. For instance, the Vestal Virgins were thought to have a major impact on health and fertility: Beard et al. (1998a) 52. DiLuzio, discussing the imperial period, highlights that they were associated with the health of the emperor (2016) 219. Likewise, she also mentions the healing aspects of the cult of Bona Dea, which treated people from "both ends of the social spectrum" (2016) 118.

[16] See Chapter Three.

[17] While there was a civic dimension to votives that I will discuss, they have an inherently individual aspect. See Draycott's discussion of votives, where she focusses on the individual (2017) 82; 92. While Draycott is discussing anatomical votives, the focus on the individual can be maintained on the other forms that I will discuss. Santoro argues that "polis religion" has been over-privileged (cf. Rüpke 2013b), which archaeological evidence can help rectify (2013) 49. While this is reasonable, and I aim to emphasise the individual, the civic aspect should not be entirely discounted.

The perceived need for a collective response is suggested by the reaction to plagues in the early second century. Livy laid out the actions taken by religious authorities in 180 BC:

> And even this army was in difficulty due to the plague which for the third year had ravaged the city of Rome and Italy. The praetor Tiberius Minucius and not long after, the consul Gaius Calpurnius died, along with many other illustrious men of all ranks. Finally, this disaster began to be regarded as a prodigy. Gaius Servilius, the pontifex maximus, was ordered to seek expiatory sacrifices to appease the gods anger, the *decemviri* were instructed to consult the Sibylline books, and the consul vowed and offered gifts—gilded statues—to Apollo, Asclepius, and Salus, which he vowed and gave. The *decemviri* declared a two-day supplication throughout the city for health, in all forums and assemblies; for twelve years, all the elders, crowned and holding laurel in hand, prayed.[18]

This reinforces several facets of civic religion. First, the identification of a religious sign resided with the Senate, which decided how to rectify the issue. They turned to three healing deities, rather than Asclepius alone, indicating the Senate's ability to create responses to meet specific religious needs. This is highlighted by the contrasting reaction to the earlier plague, in 181 BC, where Livy states that "The senators decreed that the consuls should offer sacrifices of great victims to whichever gods they deemed appropriate."[19] This was a less specific approach, but still highlights that members of the elite entrusted individuals from their own ranks to determine the correct course of action. These decisions remained rooted in tradition. Asclepius had been present from the earlier third century, and Apollo was associated with healing from an early point,

[18] *Et is ipse exercitus aegre explebatur propter pestilentiam quae tertium iam annum urbem Romanam atque Italiam vastabat. Praetor Ti. Minucius et haud ita multo post consul C. Calpurnius moritur, multique alii omnium ordinum illustres viri. Postremo prodigii loco ea clades haberi coepta est. C. Servilius pontifex maximus piacula irae deum conquirere iussus decemviri libros inspicere, consul Apollini Aesculapio Saluti dona vovere et dare signa inaurata; quae vovit deditque. Decemviri supplicationem in biduum valetudinis causa in urbe et per omnia fora conciliabulaque edixerunt; maiores duodecim annis omnes coronati et lauream in manu tenentes supplicaverunt* Livy 40.36.17-37.4

[19] *patres decreverunt ut et consules quibus dis videretur hostiis maioribus sacrificarent,* Livy 40.19.4-5.

introduced in the fifth century with a temple, seemingly, also, resulting from a plague.[20] Emphasis remained on "traditional" gods.

Second, an element of control can be discerned, despite genuine desires to meet the needs of the community, in Livy's comment that two-day supplication was decreed "throughout the city for health in all forums and assemblies."[21] Livy's wording is ambiguous, although modern translators have taken this to mean forums and assemblies throughout Italy.[22] Given the plural "*fora"* and that the plague would affect many places, not just Rome, this is a fair interpretation. Presumably, non-elite individuals took part, attesting to the Senate's ability to impact the general community and define what civic groupings should do. Likewise, in response to the plagues of 187 and 181 BC, the Senate referred the matter to the *Decemviri,* who ordered supplications to take place over specified periods.[23] This confirms a "traditional" response was seen as necessary, as the *Decemviri* were a central priesthood in charge of the Sibylline oracles, used to determine how best to expiate bad prodigies. They seem to have been called on by the Senate, particularly, to aid in plague relief.[24] Consequently, they were a key aspect of civic religion.[25] The Senate, while having flexibility to choose how to react, focused on specific rites and gods over which it had oversight, creating a body of previously tested civic processes.

This relates to the discussion of "foreignness" in earlier chapters, that "foreign" aspects were emphasised in the cults of Ceres and Magna Mater for religious and political reasons, allowing the Senate to reinforce its authority by determining what was acceptable for the community. Strikingly, many aspects of the senatorial responses to plagues had a Greek character. Potentially, this resulted from the importance of "Greek"

[20] Livy 4.25. Of the three, Salus is potentially less clearly related to healing, although Marwood argues he is a healing deity, connecting Salus to Hygieia, a Greek goddess of health (1988) 13; see also Wazer (2016) 141.
[21] *et per omnia fora conciliabulaque edixerunt;* Livy 40.37.3.
[22] Yardley (2000) 519; Sage and Schlesinger (1938) 115.
[23] Livy 38.44; 40.19.
[24] O'Brien and Vervaet (2020) 94-95; Orlin (1997) 87-88.
[25] Scheid succinctly explains the functions of the *Decemviri* while highlighting their particularly traditional "Roman character" (2003) 122. On their civic importance, also see Santangelo (2013a) 141.

customs related to healing throughout the Mediterranean. While this is likely a factor, the evidence I present below indicates that the Romans of the later Republic perceived and emphasised that the gods and customs they utilised were *specifically* Greek. Ultimately, there were non-Greek alternatives, such as Minerva Medica as opposed to Asclepius. Therefore, asserting authority remains a possible factor. Interest in "authentic" deities may have played an additional role, as it is doubtful that reinforcing authority was the only aim of the Senate.[26] The continuing use of Asclepius into the second and, potentially, first centuries highlights that this could be an aspect of plague responses in later periods.

If the Senate wished to reassert its authority during healing crises by demarcating a "foreign" god as Roman, this necessitates that Asclepius retained a "foreign" character. Consequently, the cult in Rome, seemingly, was modelled on that from Epidaurus.[27] This temple was one of the most important healing sites in the Greek world.[28] However, the extent to which this "Greek character" was maintained is unclear. Macmullen and Scheid argue that Asclepius was worshipped with *graecus ritus* while Orlin states this was not the case.[29] Festus, quoted by Flaccus, in the Augustan period, sheds some light on this:

> Those rites are called foreign that have been led to Rome after the gods were "evoked" at a time when their cities were under siege, or which were sought on account of various religious motivations during peacetime, such as those of the Magna Mater from Phrygia, of Ceres from Greece, and of Aesculapius from Epidaurus, which are conducted according to the custom of those from whom they were received.[30]

[26] I am therefore applying Isayev's ideas, also discussed in Chapter Three, that the Senate wanted its responses to be authentic, applying it to Asclepius (2011) 386.
[27] Hammond and Scullard (1970) 19. Compton points out that this is not unique; many cult centres seem to have been modelled on that from Epidaurus (1998) 303.
[28] Trümper (2014) 211.
[29] Scheid (1995) 21; MacMullen 426 and n.21; Orlin (2010) 163.
[30] Festus p. 268 (Lindsay) (translation taken from Orlin 2002, 3).

Orlin cautions that we should not accept Festus' presentation as Augustus was concerned with defining what was, and was not Roman, potentially making this inapplicable to earlier periods.[31] However, Ceres was given "foreign" connotations in the first century BC, so I see no reason why the same may not be true for Asclepius. Indirect first-century BC evidence provides further clarification. Whenever Cicero discusses Asclepius, he refers to his worship specifically in Greek areas:

> In Greece, they worship many gods who were humans, such as Alabandus in Alabanda, Tennes, in Tenedos, Leucottheia who Ino and her son Palaemon, honoured throughout Greece, Hercules, Asclepius and the sons of Tyndaridas. Our own Romulus and many others are considered by them as new added citizens in the heavens.[32]

Notable is the separation of Romulus from the list of "Greek" deities, including Asclepius.[33] The use of "*nostri"* meaning "our" relating to Romulus intrinsically casts Asclepius as "other". Further evidence is the repetition of the gods from *De Legibus* 2.19 in *De Natura Deorum*.[34] The list matches exactly, aside from Romulus, who is separated from the main discussion. Furthermore, Cicero makes it clear that the version of Liber he discusses in the passage is specifically Greek, not Roman. Therefore, Cicero seems to have conceived of Asclepius as specifically Greek. This is more tentative than my discussion of Ceres and Magna Mater, there being fewer direct references to how first-century BC Romans understood Asclepius, although these passages from Cicero are, at least, in line with Festus' claims. Other "Greek" aspects of the cult may have been imported, such as the snake symbolism that appears in stories of Asclepius' arrival (discussed below). A coin minted by L. Rubrius Dossenus in 87 BC shows a snake,

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[31] Orlin (2002) 3.
[32] *in Graecia multos habent ex hominibus deos, Alabandum Alabandis, Tenedii Tennen, Leucotheam quae fuit Ino et eius Palaemonem filium cuncta Graecia, Herculem Aesculapium Tyndaridas; Romulum nostri aliosque compluris, quos quasi novos et adscripticios cives in caelum receptos putant.* Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.37.
[33] It should be noted that there are difficulties with this translation. The Oxford World Classics edition indicates that the statement "Our own" also refers to Asclepius: Walsh (1998) 121. However, the Loeb and Penguin Classics edition indicates that this refers only to Romulus: McGregor (1972) 208; Rackham (1933) 323. This seems more reasonable to me as Cicero often characterises the cult as linked to Greece or Epidaurus elsewhere: Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.57; 3.83-84.
[34] Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.62

interpreted as Asclepius.[35] Snakes were a particularly frequent depiction within Asclepius cults in Greece.[36] Therefore, I suggest that when Asclepius was called upon, the Senate understood that they were utilising a specifically Greek deity. [37] This might allow senators to demonstrate a degree of control, reinforcing it was they who determined what was acceptable in civic religion – something necessary in times of crisis, when the broader community were fearful and turned to civic authorities for aid. This may be a factor explaining Greek deities being used, in addition to genuine religious interest.

The Senate appeared to successfully integrate this "foreignness", as Asclepius became a central deity, highlighting the elite ability to direct religious policy successfully. While his cult was excluded from the *pomerium* (Rome's religious boundary), he was still respected.[38] Tiber Island was a natural location for a healing cult due to the presence of water. Renberg points out that Festus gives this reason for the location of the cult.[39] Later sources refer to Asclepius taking the form of a snake, selecting the Tiber Island as his home, indicating that there was an established rationale for the cult's location.[40] Sources generally discuss Asclepius positively. Characters in Plautus' *Curculio*, likely

[35] RRC 348/4. This interpretation is generally accepted but is not without issues. See: Renberg (2006/2007) 159- 162.
[36] For specific examples of the importance of the snake symbology in Greece, see Compton (1998) 302-303; Wickkiser (2009) 200; Robinson (1978) 534. Other aspects of the cult may also have been imported, such as dream incubation, although this is challenged by Renberg, who is less certain (2006/2007) 128-134.
[37] Orlin notably argues that the Romans deliberately introduced a Greek cult in Asclepius, as during the 290s the Romans turned their attention to *Magna Graecia* (1997) 106; 34. Therefore, it makes sense that Cicero and other late Republicans viewed Asclepius as Greek. Parker takes a middle view when discussing Greek Gods in Rome more generally. He argues that, on the one hand, there was a heavy Greek influence on Roman cults (which the ancient Romans were presumably aware of), although Livy, for instance, often used Roman names for Greek gods, perhaps suggesting that they were perceived as Roman (2017) 40. Taking the evidence I have presented, such as the modelling of the cult on that from Epidaurus, I tentatively suggest that Asclepius maintained a Greek character, perhaps suggested in the similarity of his name in Latin and Greek, although it is not exactly the same as for Apollo.
[38] It should be noted that not all "foreign" gods were excluded from the *pomerium*. See Carlà (2015) 606-607 for a summary of this argument. Orlin (2010) points out this as well while making the point that most "foreign" gods were outside the boundary.
[39] 110M. Renberg (2006/2007) 96-97. Brandenburg also posits that the isolation of the cult on the island made it suitable for housing contagious patients: Csepregi (2011).
[40] Livy 10.47; Per. 11; Ov. Met. 15.622-745.

dating to the early second century,[41] imply that Asclepius should be respected, saying: "Be grateful to Asclepius, since you are chaste,"[42] and "You should seek peace from Asclepius, so that a great evil does not happen to you."[43] Both quotations highlight Asclepius as important, conveying an expectation he should be respected, as any other civic god. He, seemingly, was perceived to impact the lives of individuals. Likewise, Cicero indicates that Asclepius was a central deity in his conception of Rome's religious system as he mentions him specifically when giving his religious laws: "Worship as gods those who have always been regarded as heavenly, and also those whom merit has placed in heaven: Hercules, Liber, Asclepius, Castor, Pollux, Quirinus."[44] Unlike Magna Mater, Asclepius did not cause issues relating to identity and "foreignness", possibly due to the length of time he was present and the association with a "respectable" cult at Epidaurus. People across society, from those watching Plautus' play to elite authors, respected Asclepius, indicating senatorial success in determining what was permissible.

Other responses to epidemics had Greek associations. The *lectisternium,* originally a Greek rite, consisted of a ritual meal offered to the gods. Livy and Dionysius state it occurred, for the first time, in Rome in 399 BC.[45] This seems to have become a central civic practice as Livy refers to it throughout his work, first in book 5 (5.13.6) and finally in book 42 (42.30.8). Many, but not all, instances related to plagues.[46] These rites were understood to be part of the *graecus ritus* and, therefore, maintained a "foreign" characterisation.[47] However, Livy's narrative implies the *lectisternia* changed in the second century as, starting in 191 BC, he discussed "perpetual" *lectisternia* that

[41] Melo dates it to the middle of Plautus' work and suggests a date of around 193 BC as Plautus potentially alludes to a law concerning money lending passed in 193 BC (2011) 223-224.
[42] *Aesculapio huic habeto, quom pudica es, gratiam* Plaut. *Curc.* 699.
[43] *pacem ab Aesculapio petas, ne fort' tibi eueniat magnum malum* Plaut. *Curc.* 270-272.
[44] *Divos et eos, qui caelestes semper habiti, colunto et ollos, quos endo caelo merita locaverint, Herculem, Liberum, Aesculapium, Castorem, Pollucem, Quirinum* Cic. *Leg.* 2.19.
[45] Livy 5.13.4-8; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 12.9.1-3.
[46] Livy failed to mention every *lectisternium* that occurred, so it is difficult to make definitive conclusions. However, Northwood comments that the ritual meal is often related to plagues (2006) 89.
[47] Scheid (1995) 20. Veyne describes the Romans as imitating the Greeks in introducing the *lectisternium* (2000) 12. It is less clear if this was how the rites were perceived in the later Republic, but it is possible that they were aware of the "foreign" association. Veyne also highlights the similarity of the practice with the Greek *theoxenies*.

occurred for a year.[48] Incidentally, while he did not explain how this version differed, this nevertheless suggests that previously tested "foreign" rituals could be altered to create new traditions when collective responses were needed.[49] Interestingly, Valerius Maximus discussed *lectisternia* as though they were Roman, only referencing the Capitoline Triad and perceiving it as an ancient institution.[50] Veyne and Macmullen suggest that the ritual he discussed was a *lectisternia*, not a separate "Roman" ritual.[51] The description of dining reclined seems similar. Therefore, while some "foreign" characterisation may have existed, the Senate seemed successful in integrating outside practices, determining what was "officially" acceptable while expressing its authority by altering the rites.

The use of Apollo in 180 BC may also suggest Greek influences, as he played a key role in healing in Greece and was named in the Hippocratic oath.[52] Salus (safety) can also be understood as a Greek influence, possibly linked to Hygeia.[53] Worship of abstractions seems to have been a Greek innovation.[54] This was the Roman perception, as Cicero stated: "Many other divinities however have with good reason been recognized and named both by the wisest men of Greece and by our ancestors from the great benefits that they bestow".[55] While he did not mention Salus specifically, the discussion of abstractions generally makes this applicable, suggesting a mixing of Greek and Roman

[48] There is comparatively little discussion of this, as much scholarship focusses on earlier *lectisternia*. See Yardley (2018) 153, N.2

[49] Atkinson emphasises that selecting between a previous tradition and a new tradition was an aspect of Senatorial responses to plagues. Interestingly, they also highlight how senatorial action was preceded by public discontent, a point I return to below (2001) 45. The trio of gods used in 180 BC may not be new, as Livy may simply not have mentioned their use previously. However, the different lengths of supplication during different plagues at least suggest that practices could be altered to suit perceived needs.

[50] Val. Max. 2.1.2

[51] Veyne (2000) 12; Macmullen (1991) 426.

[52] For the Hippocratic oath, see Compton (2002) 319. For Apollo's connection to health more generally in Greece, see Orlin (2010) 154-155. Orlin also argues that Apollo, similarly to Ceres, was given Greek characteristics in the third century, which may have played a role in the decision to use him during plagues. Also, see Macmullen, who agrees and points out the same was true of Hercules and Bona Dea (1991) 426-427.

[53] See note 56.

[54] Lind argues that the Greeks were the first to worship abstractions, and Roman interest arose against this background (1973-1974) 109. Beard et al. imply there is a "foreign" character to these abstractions (1998a) 62; 160.

[55] *Multae autem aliae naturae deorum ex magnis beneficiis eorum non sine causa et a Graeciae sapientissimis et a maioribus nostris constitutae nominatae que sunt.* Cic. *Nat D.* 2.60.

cultures, with an older Roman goddess gaining Greek influences through a connection to Hygeia.[56] The Senate, therefore, used a range of gods and practices with Greek characteristics when attempting to alleviate epidemics. There may be various reasons, but partly, a perceived need to reassert authority during periods of hardship. Introducing new gods would allow the Senate to show direct action, while repeating their use in later centuries would associate themselves with long-established practices that had been made Roman. This exemplifies senators presenting themselves as correct decision makers, as, presumably, these gods were thought to have helped. Cicero's comment that it was the "wisest men of Greece" and "our ancestors" that were responsible for worshipping abstractions, equating members of the elite from Greece and Rome, indicates the worship of perceived "Greek" deities aided in hierarchy reinforcement. Equally, an interest in "authentic" deities influenced the Senate's actions.

Despite this, civic authorities were not always successful. Events in 22 BC may suggest non-elite individuals retained the ability to oppose civic authorities. Cassius Dio recorded a plague, stating the Romans believed it occurred because Augustus was not consul, leading to anti-senatorial riots:

> They accordingly wished to elect him dictator, and shutting the senators up in the council chamber, they forced them to vote for this decree by threatening to burn down the building.[57]

The riot was possibly staged or organised to some extent.[58] Nevertheless, in this chaotic period, genuine feelings might have motivated the violence and, at least, events suggest the wider populace had, and took, opportunities to express themselves directly against

[56] This seems to be implied by Hammond and Scullard (1970) as the authors indicate a separation between an older, Roman goddess and the later associations with Hygeia. Page: 948. For other Greek influences, see Marwood, who also connects Salus to the Greek concept of Soter (1988) 1.
[57] Αὔγουστον ἔσχον, δικτάτορα αὐτὸν ἠθέλησαν προχειρίσασθαι, καὶ τήν τε βουλὴν κατακλείσαντες ἐς τὸ συνέδριον ἐπηνάγκασαν τοῦτο ψηφίσασθαι, ἀπειλοῦντές σφας καταπρήσειν, Dio 54.1.3.
[58] Atkinson (2001) 48. Atkinson sees this as a continuation of the pattern of responses from the Republic, arguing that a sense of drama was created in order to bind the community. This can be modified to suggest that there was a change, as there was a new focus on Augustus rather than the Senate, which was able to deal with the issue.

the Senate. Dio referred to the "people" or the "Romans", making it hard to state whether these individuals were "non-elite," although the generality in his language makes it plausible that some were. Discussing the riot after Clodius' death in 52 BC, Asconius stated the *vulgus* were responsible for destroying the Senate house, indicating the population of the city was capable of such acts.[59] Dio implied the disease was a prodigy, noting that the Tiber overflowed and statues in the Pantheon were struck by lightning at the same time.[60] Consequently, the opposition was partly a refusal to accept that the Senate could rectify religious issues. Augustus, as well as willing sections of the broader population, challenged traditional elite authority. While an extreme example, the period saw substantial political violence, perhaps emboldening individual citizens, elite or not, to express themselves against the Senate.[61] Votive objects also allowed this personal expression, although not in contrast with civic authority.

The Senate also struggled to aid the wider community through collective action in 142 BC. Obsequens states:

> When there was famine and pestilence, supplications were decreed by the *Decemviri*. At Luna a hermaphrodite was born and was carried down to the sea by the orders of the *haruspices*. The plague was so great amongst the people of Luna, that there were corpses lying everywhere in public and there were insufficient people to perform the funerals.[62]

The reaction was similar to the other plagues discussed, including supplications. However, the reference to corpses *afte*r the religious action may indicate that the Senate was not perceived as successful. Again, the wording is ambiguous as to whether

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[59] Asc. *Mil.* 33. For a general overview, see Berry (2000) 164.
[60] Dio 54.1.1. Particularly notable is the mention of the Tiber flooding. Pliny directly links the river to a religious warning (HN 3.53-55). Despite Dio not concretely stating as such, a flood was commonly seen as a portent: Aldrete (2006) 219. For other examples of the same principles, see Liebeschuetz (1979) 160 n.3, 195-196.
[61] For a description of the political climate in the late Republic, see Ungern-Sternberg (2014) 91-92. They and Flower (2010) 144 both highlight how individual members of the elite rose in power during the late Republic.
[62] *Fames et pestilentia cum essent, per decemviros supplicatum. Lunae androgynus natus praecepto aruspicum in mare deportatus. Tanta fuit Lunensibus pestilentia ut iacentibus in publicum passim cadaveribus, qui funerarent defuerint.* Obsequens 22. This is also mentioned by Orosius, a later anti-pagan author: 5.4.8.

the supplication applied to Luna and whether the *Haruspices* were civic officials or otherwise.[63] Possibly, there are two separate processes, one led by the *Decemviri* and one by some group of *Haruspices*. The proximity of the colony to Rome means both priesthoods may have comprised civic officials, possibly indicating that senatorial action was perceived to have failed, leading to the consultation of an alternative group. That the *Haruspices* and *Decemviri* fulfilled similar, albeit separate, functions adds credence to this theory.[64] Consequently, the Senate might have feared their actions may be unsuccessful. Wazer argues that Orosius' anti-pagan narrative of this plague, while heavily biased, suggests a key facet of senatorial action: The Senate waited late into the epidemic before taking action, at which point the plague itself had declined in severity.[65] This is likely given Obsequens' implication that a large number of people died, the Senate delaying to act, as it was worried about the outcome of its actions. No expiation was guaranteed to be successful. A weakness of the civic system is the pressure placed on it. Non-elite individuals likely expected action, but to provide a religious solution was a role of the dice. If state responses were only employed in extreme situations, this leaves a gap of smaller crises they may not have aided. While a plague, typically, required religious action, it was the Senate that ultimately decided whether to act.[66] With the potential for senatorial action to fail, or not occur at all, other options, like votive offerings, might fill the void.

Therefore, the Senate was reactionary rather than proactive.[67] Similar patterns are identifiable in other instances. In 174 BC, another plague indicates similar patterns. Livy records "Since the pestilence would not come to an end, the Senate decreed that the

[63] For the complications surrounding this, see Chapter Four.
[64] See Santangelo for the potential differences and similarities between the priesthoods (2013a) 141. Cf. Satterfield (2015) 442.
[65] Wazer (2016) 142.
[66] Satterfield for plagues as prodigies (2015) 438. For the position of the Senate, see Beard et al (1998a) 29-30; Scheid (2003) 122-123.
[67] This is unsurprising as the Senate did not pre-empt religious signs but acted on them when they presented themselves and were determined to need expiation. This behaviour may be identified more broadly. For instance, the Bacchanalia had been present in Rome long before any senatorial action was taken against it: Bowden (2010) 127; Orlin (2007) 64. The Senate often granted requests, rather than gave orders in relation to religious affairs, e.g., Scheid (2015a) 90.

Decemvirs should consult the Sibylline Books".[68] This implies the Senate waited for as long as possible before responding. Livy also commented, "The slaves especially died".[69] Health concerns may have disproportionately impacted non-elite individuals who potentially felt that they had to turn to seek alternative options.

Likewise, during the plague of 180 BC Livy uses the phrase "eventually this disaster began to be regarded as a prodigy", after the deaths of major officials,[70] revealing the Senate's inaction for a lengthy period, seemingly acting only when important magistrates died, and consistent with fears their decisions would not prevent the spread of the disease. Dio's account that a lictor died at a sacrifice in 44 BC, during a plague, after the Senate had tried to rectify the issue by rebuilding the Curia Hostilia, indicates this was a real concern.[71] Nevertheless, the Senate was not idle, as it acted eventually, and when it failed, it tried again.[72] Civic religion tried to meet the needs of the broader population, and the involvement of individuals throughout the city and Italy in some of these examples suggests it was respected and able to exert authority. Nevertheless, people in Rome and colonies, such as Luna, may have felt the need to rectify issues themselves. It seems unlikely that the populace would simply wait for situations to deteriorate.

Therefore, I focus on votive offerings that allowed individuals to rectify similar issues on a more personal level. This was not antithetical to Civic religion. Votive offerings were dedicated to civic gods in civic places, although there was some flexibility. Asclepius is an example. Renberg contends, based on epigraphical evidence from public and private contexts, that Asclepius became important for individual devotees from the second

[68] *Cum pestilentiae finis non fieret, senatus decrevit uti decemviri libros Sibyllinos adirent.* Livy 41.21.10-11.
[69] *Servitia maxime moriebantur;* Livy 41.21.5-6; Obsequens 10.
[70] See above n. 18.
[71] Dio 45.17.8-9.
[72] Again, as the Bacchanalia suggests, despite the potentially reactionary nature of the Senate, it did take concrete steps. While Livy's narrative contains embellishments, the facts, such as the Senate setting up an investigation, are accurate: North (1979) 86.

century BC.[73] This indicates that he was accepted by the population, but, possibly, not in a way that was expected or controlled, suggesting a blurring between the civic and the individual.[74] Gordon argues that the spread of Ascelpius in Asia Minor during the imperial period indicates the broader community did not always accept the imposition of cults or religious models.[75] The reverse could be true in Republican Italy. Asclepius was an official civic deity who could be promoted, despite the lack of evidence for interest in him – a lack, possibly, due to loss of sources. As part of state religion, it was, presumably, acceptable for Asclepius to become the object of individual worship. Much evidence comes from the imperial period, but this was likely an ongoing process.[76] Votives may, somewhat, call into question the extent of elite control, as individual action was harder to regulate. This concern seems expressed by Cicero's desire to police individual worship.[77] However, this is mitigated by these objects often representing a connection to an explicitly accepted, "official" deity, evidencing that individuals could interact with civic religion on a personal level.

Elite Dedications

The Senate reacted to health crises, constructing practices and rituals to aid the community in times of need. Equally, while its actions were occasionally insufficient or delayed, it permitted, even if tacitly, individuals to meet their own religious needs through votive practices in civic places. These objects do not always relate to the

[73] Renberg (2006/2007) 89-90, although they base this on the state disuse after 180 BC, which I am less sure of. Renberg also argues that the topography of the cult in Rome suggests a key role in "personal" religion. Much of Renberg's evidence dates to the imperial period, but his ideas may apply earlier, as the inscription from 66 BC discussed above indicates that Asclepius was still a prominent god.
[74] This is similar to how the Senate did not foresee the adoption of Attis and a votive tradition to him when the cult of Magna Mater was imported. See Chapter Three. For Asclepius as important to individuals see above and Renberg (2006/2007) 88.
[75] Gordon (1990b) 240. Gordon also suggests that this is evidence for Romanisation. This must be tempered with the knowledge that Asclepius existed in Asia Minor long before the Romans at Pergamum. For instance, the God appeared on Hellenistic coins: Burnett (2011) 2. A temple of Asclepius is attested from at least the fourth century outside Pergamum: Melfi (2016) 90-92. Nevertheless, the spread beyond this could be, as Gordon suggests, attributed to Rome.
[76] For example, CIL6:19/ILS2194, a possible marble altar dedicated to Asclepius and Hygieia found on the Via Labicana c.AD 150 and IGUR 1:104, an altar also dating to the second century AD, near the baths of Trajan. Nevertheless, the perception that Asclepius lost public relevance may simply be due to evidence not surviving, or more personal inscriptional evidence becoming more common.
[77] Cic. *Leg.* 2.26.

healing issues discussed in Section One, although they served similar purposes for dealing with individual crises or fulfilling a need to commune with the gods. Rather than waiting for the Senate to decide, people from across society could determine what gods to worship, where, with what item and at what cost.[78] This may be seen as a necessity, as the day-to-day needs of every individual cannot be met by a comparatively small number of priests and senators. A communal aspect was present, as civic deities were utilised in civic settings. Individuals used rites that were established as part of the civic system, as the examples to be discussed suggest.[79] It is possible, however, to more fully emphasise the individual, and how votive offerings may have allowed a greater degree of choice in their forms and meanings. "Foreignness" factors less into this discussion, as votive traditions were a pan-Mediterranean practice, although contact with new gods may have facilitated some choice.[80]

Elite reactions to votive offerings are seen in literature. Aemilius Paullus' potential visit to the temple of Asclepius in Epidaurus in 167 BC indicates members of the elite valued individual expression in civic religion:

> From there, he went to Sicyon and Argos, famous cities, then to Epidaurus, a city not equal in wealth, but famous for the illustrious temple of Ascelpius, which, five miles, from the city, was then rich with offerings, now seen only in their ruins, that had once been dedicated to the god by the sick in gratitude for healing remedies.[81]

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[78] These points are made by Grijalvo, who discusses second-century AD votives, although notably uses the phrase "*more* personal" (my own emphasis) (2013) 244-245. They caution against focussing on the individual too heavily. Ammerman, discussing earlier votives at Paestum from the sixth century onwards, points out that each votive represented an "individual act of piety" (2007) 132-133. Votives are often discussed as being "personal." For example: Friesen (2001). All of this is applicable to the votives that I will discuss from the Second and First centuries BC.

[79] For some of these themes, see Bauman (2004) 4, who is followed by Grijalvo (see note above).

[80] Fenelli, while discussing anatomical votives, mentions that they were dedicated throughout the ancient world (1975) 207. This is discussed in some literary evidence as Cicero mentions dedications in Greece that Diagoras criticised (Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.89). Livy also mentions King Prusias coming to Rome in the mid-second century, vowing and dedicating sacrifices, suggesting that similar practices continued beyond anatomical votives (Livy. 45.44.8-9).

[81] *Sicyonem inde et Argos, nobiles urbes, adit; inde haud parem opibus Epidaurum, sed inclutam Aesculapi nobili templo, quod quinque milibus passuum ab urbe distans nunc vestigiis revolsorum donorum, tum donis dives erat, quae remediorum salutarium aegri mercedem sacraverant deo.* Livy. 45.28.2-3. Livy does not outright say that Aemilius Paulus visited the temple, but this is how I understand

Livy refers positively to the votive tradition, and the temple seems respected to the extent that members of the elite valued visiting it.[82]Aemilius may have visited to fulfil a public function as a Roman representative, although Livy characterised the whole tour as a personal decision.[83] It is also unclear that these artefacts were dedicated in the second century, although, while terracotta votives had fallen into disuse in Italy by Livy's time, his comments suggest the temple was well maintained during the period he described. The votives, at least, may have maintained some significance. Similar items were dedicated in the third and second centuries at Ponte di Nona, near Rome, although long display times may mean the votives Livy describes came from an earlier period.[84] Whatever the case, the focus on offerings to a god whom Aemilius valued suggests an acceptance that a civic deity could be worshipped in different ways and votive offerings were an important practice at civic centres, where important public rites, such as festivals, took place.[85] Votive offerings, as a form of "more personal" religious expression, occurred in an explicitly public, civic setting.

Evidence that these ideas apply to the first century is suggested by a potential reference to similar objects dedicated at the temple of Liber and Libera in Rome. Augustine states:

> And for this reason, the male genitalia are placed in the temple of Liber, and the female genitalia in the temple of Libera.[86]

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the passage. I do not see why he would mention it otherwise, as the entire chapter deals with Aemilius' movements specifically.

[82] Panagiotidou posits that the cult was particularly popular with educated people during the Hellenistic period, citing Aemilius Paullus as an example (2016) 91.

[83] Livy. 45.27.5.

[84] Potter & Wells (1985) 26. Interestingly, however, the votives do not appear to have been deposited until the late Roman period (ibid) 38. This is not atypical: Glinister (2006) 20 n.43. On display times, also see Hughes, who argues that votives that were displayed had an ongoing impact on those who visited the sanctuaries (2017) 104. Votives from Gravisca, for instance, were left in situ (page 73). There is some archaeological material to suggest that the site had a long use into the later Roman period: Pedley and Torelli (1984) 375.

[85] Melfi emphasises the importance of civic rituals at sites like the Asklepia in Roman Greece (2010) 317. While these may be more relevant to the Greek population, we know that the Romans travelled to Greece to take part in rituals that were linked specifically to civic cults located in Rome. See the discussion of Ceres in Chapter Three; cf Keller (1988) 30 and Cic. *Leg.* 2.36.

[86] *et ob haec Libero eandem virilem corporis partem in templo poni, femineam Liberae.* August. *De Civ. D.* 6.9.

While Augustine does not state he is quoting Varro, it is likely this is where this information came from, as he drew on Varro throughout Book Six, from which this quotation is taken.[87] Furthermore, Augustine wrote long after the peak of terracotta votives in Italy, where the temple is located, making it unlikely that he was referring to contemporary practices. If Varro is Augustine's source, this may suggest anatomical votives may have retained some importance in the city during the first century. The present passive tense "*poni*" meaning "are placed" may support this. Elsewhere, Augustine more clearly quotes Varro, saying:

> He [Varro] also says that those who made the images of the gods in human form seem to have believed that the mortal mind that exists in the human body is very similar to the immortal mind. It is as if vessels were placed to represent the gods: as, for example, a wine-jar might be placed in the temple of Liber to signify wine, that which is contained being signified by that which contains.[88]

In this passage, Varro's focus is on understanding how humans perceive the gods, not on votive offerings. [89] While some sources I discuss below touch on votives left by members of the elite for civic purposes, there is little information presented regarding the broader practices among the population that Varro is discussing here.[90] However, neither passage presents the practice in a negative light in the same way that Propertius and Tibullus discussed forms of non-elite sacrifice.[91] Rather, the casual reference to votive offerings that aided Varro in presenting his arguments points to a generally accepted practice as part of everyday life. Members of the elite likely wanted the broader community to be capable of fulfilling their religious needs. The arguments that I applied to sacrifice are applicable here. Varro does not state he is referring to a non-

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[87] Glinister believes that Augustine is likely drawing on Varo. (2017) 133. For the broader context of how Augustine used Varro, see Vessey (2012) 20-24. For the importance of Varro in Book Six of *City of God,* see North (2014) 233-234.

[88] *quorum qui simulacra specie hominis fecerunt, hoc videri secutos quod mortalium animus, qui est in corpore humano, simillimus est inmortalis animi; tamquam si vasa ponerentur causa notandorum deorum et in Liberi aede oenophorum sisteretur, quod significaret vinum, per id quod continet id quod continetur;* August. *De Civ. D.* 7.5. Translation taken from Nuffelen (2010) 174-175.

[89] See Nuffelen (ibid.), who discusses the philosophical underpinnings of these passages.

[90] Glinister suggests that the low status of anatomical votives may explain the lack of elite interest, although she is cautious in taking this view too far (2006) 27. I do not see why this cannot be applied to other forms of votive.

[91] See my discussion of these authors in Chapter Four.

elite practice, and I follow the trend in more recent scholarship in suggesting votive gifts to the gods were not dedicated just by those from poorer backgrounds.[92] Nevertheless, it is notable that he referred to the temple of Liber and Libera specifically. This, presumably, was the temple dedicated in 494 BC to Ceres as well.[93] This is important for two reasons. Firstly, the area surrounding the temple was associated with the Plebeians.[94] This does not mean all votives left here originated from non-elite people alone, although the association makes it plausible some did. Secondly, Liber and Libera were long-established civic deities. Consequently, Varro is hinting at the ability of individuals to express themselves, personally, within a civic cult. We do not know why these objects were dedicated, but civic religion catered for personal needs, even if it was not directed by members of the elite.

There is more evidence for objects dedicated by members of the elite for civic purposes. These votives still fulfilled a personal function, allowing individuals a unique experience with a god. Livy's narrative provides a variety of examples from the second century BC:

200BC:

> While the consuls were engaged in the conscription and all the necessary preparations for the war, religious feeling in the city mounted, as it especially did at the commencement of new wars. Public devotions were held, and at all the couches of the gods communal prayers were offered. Fearful that any procedure followed in the past be omitted on this occasion, the people issued orders that the consul who was allotted the province of Macedonia should make a vow promising games and a gift to Jupiter. However, the public votive offering was held up by the pontifex maximus, Licinius, who asserted that one could not formulate a vow based on an unspecified sum of money, because such money

[92] See Turfa for the older view that votives were dedicated by non-elite people alone (1994) 224-225. This view is still present in some more recent works. See: Steingräber (2018) 404. I still think that many objects were still dedicated by non-elite people, but that this was not just the case. Graham (2021) 9 and Glinister (2006) 27 suggest this in relation to terracotta votives, although this was likely equally true for the objects that I will discuss.

[93] See Dion Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 6.17.2.

[94] This is related to by discussion specifically to Ceres. See also: Andreussi (1993) and Richlin (2014) 209.

could not be employed for the war; it should be immediately set apart and not combined with other moneys.[95]

180 BC:

> One of the censors, Marcus Aemilius, also asked the Senate for funds to be allocated to him to stage games for the dedication of temples of Queen Juno and Diana which he had promised in a vow in the Ligurian War eight years earlier. The senators allocated him 20,000 asses.[96]

172 BC:

> The Senate decreed on the same day that the consul, Gaius Popillius, should vow ten days of games to Jupiter Optimus Maximus as well as gifts at all the sacred couches, if the Republic should remain in the same condition for ten years. Therefore, in accordance with this decree, the consul gave his oath on the Capitol for the holding of games and the distribution of gifts, at whatever cost the Senate chose, provided that at least 150 senators were in attendance at the time. This vow was made with Lepidus, the Pontifex Maximus, pronouncing the formulaic prayer.[97]

All these passages hint at the importance of providing gifts for the gods in fulfilment of a vow or a request, the two main goals of the votive tradition.[98] However, these examples were provided on behalf of the whole community, which matches the elite perception

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[95] *Cum dilectum consules haberent, pararentque quae ad bellum opus essent, civitas religiosa in principiis maxime novorum bellorum, supplicationibus habitis iam et obsecratione circa omnia pulvinaria facta, ne quid praetermitteretur quod aliquando factum esset, ludos Iovi donumque vovere consulem cui provincia Macedonia evenisset iussit. moram voto publico Licinius pontifex maximus attulit, qui negavit ex incerta pecunia voveri12 debere, quia ea pecunia non posset in bellum usui esse, seponique statim deberet nec cum alia pecunia misceri* Livy 31.9.5-8. (translation taken from Yardley (2000) 10-11).

[96] *Et alter ex censoribus M. Aemilius petiit ab senatu ut sibi dedicationis causa templorum reginae Iunonis et Dianae, quae bello Ligustino ante annis octo vovisset, pecunia ad ludos decerneretur. Viginti milia aeris decreverunt.* Livy 40.52.1-3 (translation taken from Yardley (2000) 532.

[97] *Eodem die decrevit senatus C. Popilius consul ludos per dies decem Iovi optimo maximo fieri voveret donaque circa omnia pulvinaria dari, si res publica decem annos in eodem statu fuisset. Ita ut censuerant, in Capitolio vovit consul, ludos fieri donaque dari quanta ex pecunia decresset senatus, cum centum et quinquaginta non minus adessent. Praeeunte verba Lepido pontifice maximo id votum susceptum est.* Livy 42.28.8-9. (Translation taken from Chaplin (2007) 56

[98] Grove (2017) 227; Glinister (2006) 10; Hughes (2017) 2-3.

that they were best placed to provide "official" religious responses, in the same way as the response to healing crises. The examples from 180 BC and 172 BC illustrate direct senatorial involvement in proceedings that guided the individual to the correct religious action. Marcus Aemilius may have been unable to fulfil his vow without the Senate's aid, given the required finances. Therefore, even when an individual made a vow for civic benefit, there was an expectation that the Senate would determine whether the action was valid.

Orlin highlights that there is no known example of the Senate disallowing the fulfilment of a vow through temple building and follows Eckstein in suggesting individuals had considerable influence in forming religious policy. Orlin concludes that individual members of the elite were in concordance with the Senate and expected it would help fulfil their vows.[99] However, the role of the Senate should not be discounted on the basis its support was automatic. Even if it was assumed that the Senate would permit the temple to be built, Aemilius still had to ask. The Senate mediated what individuals could give to the gods, suggesting a complex interplay between the individual and civic pressures. Gaius Popillius' vows highlight similar themes, as the Senate instructed him to vow gifts and decided their cost, indicating their authority to determine what was acceptable. This indicates that the Senate directed individuals while giving them an Important role in maintaining the *pax deorum.* Presumably, Popillius gained some personal prestige or at least a personal connection to the gods not experienced by his peers.

The gifts for the gods in 200 BC further reveal how votive dedications could fulfil a particularly civic function that did not focus on the individual. Livy provided a lengthy digression, relating a debate over whether the vow of money was acceptable if it was not specified. Eventually, after being referred to the *pontifices,* it was deemed permissible.[100] Livy highlights the concern was whether the vow could be "correctly

[99] Orlin (1997) 75; 66; 62. Eckstein (1987 page xiii).
[100] Livy. 31.9.7-10.

undertaken".[101] He further stated that these debates occurred because there were religious fears throughout the community. This reinforces that senators wished to perform the best action possible for the community, and thought they were best placed to make religious decisions. The concern for correct formulae was common, including in non-elite votive practice.[102] Unlike the two later examples, the key focus seems to be on communal action, as no particular individual, other than the *Pontifex Maximus,* was mentioned, and this was only because he took issue with the actions that were being taken. While individual action can be emphasised in the votive process, it formed a central part of official civic policy, guiding elite individuals and impacting wider society as a whole.

Members of the elite also dedicated votives in a "more personal" manner, even though their actions may have had public significance.[103] Occasional references exist in the literary record. Livy stated that, in 193 BC:

> During the same period, Marcus Porcius Cato dedicated a small temple to Victoria Virgo near the temple of Victoria, two years after he had promised it in a vow.[104]

Then, in the first century, Cicero accused Verres of attacking a businessman and stealing his possessions to use as a gift to the gods:

> Thus, in this state, he was carried away as if dead, and shortly thereafter, he actually died. But this man, full of charm and grace, placed a silver Cupid, taken

[101] *si posset recte votum incertae pecuniae suscipi* Livy 31.9.8.
[102] Griffith argues that votive offerings were offered according to a particular formula (2013) 238. This includes the votives that I will discuss below. For the importance of following the correct processes/formula, see Neumeister (1993) 35. I do not follow Neumeister's view that this focus on exact ritual meant there was no room for belief. See also King (2003) generally for an opposing view and page 293, n.41 and 295 for another example of an important formula.
[103] I am here following Kindt's view that I discussed in the introduction, that "private" and "public" were not distinct categories that existed in the ancient world, but there was a scale where some actions could be more personal. I suggest that the actions I discuss could be both personal and private. See Kindt (2015) 47.
[104] *iisdem diebus aediculam Victoriae Virginis prope aedem Victoriae M. Porcius Cato dedicavit biennio post quam vovit.* Livy. 35.9.6.

> from the deceased's possessions, in the temple of Venus. In this way, he misused the wealth of others to satisfy the nightly desires of his lusts.[105]

Cato's "offering" may represent a mid-point between a personalised offering and a civic display of piety such as those described above. While the temple had an important civic dimension, Livy specifically describes it as *aediculam*, connoting a diminutive structure, possibly indicating a more personal gesture. Davies suggests the temple was vowed in 195 BC, when Cato was consul, but represents a particularly personal dedication, showing his "conservatism", built through money he gained while on campaign in Spain. Davies cites the diminutive size and the antiquity of the Palatine, where the temple was located, as evidence.[106] Furthermore, Crawford argues the cult statue may be depicted on a later coin of the younger Cato in 89 BC (Fig. 10).[107] Davies agrees and suggests the depiction shows distinct Roman iconography. Unlike Greek depictions of Nike, Victory is shown seated, for instance.[108] This is problematic as the placement of the temple on the Palatine seems natural, rather than a reassertion of "conservative" ideas. I highlighted in Chapter Three, Fears and Orlin's argument that there was a longstanding association between Victory and the Palatine. However, I accept the basic principle that Cato expressed a personal choice, potentially representing what he felt was appropriate in Roman religion. While a civic dedication in a civic place, that Cato used money he gained through campaigning, suggests the Senate had less of a hand in the process compared to Marcus Aemilius in 180 BC. Even he likely still required permission, indicating some constraints.

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[105] *Sic ille affectus illim tum pro mortuo sublatus perbrevi postea est mortuus. Iste autem homo Venerius, adfluens omni lepore ac venustate, de bonis illius in aede Veneris argenteum Cupidinem posuit. Sic etiam fortunis hominum abutebatur ad nocturna vota cupiditatum suarum* Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.142.

[106] See Davies (2017) 92; 84; 86. For the use of Cato's money from Spain, see pages 119-120. See Miano (2016) 144 for further context. Pensabene discusses a small temple on the Palatine, suggesting that it could be Cato's dedication for Victory (1999) 150-151. He describes it as small.

[107] RRC 343/1 Crawford posits this (1974a) 352.

[108] Davies (2017) 115.

Fig. 10. RRC 343/1a

Obverse: Head, possibly of Roma.

Reverse: Victory seated holding a patera.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate XLV
https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-343.1

Cicero's account, however, is a much clearer example of a personalised association between an individual and a deity. Possibly, he was disingenuous, although he stated Verres' attack took place in the forum and that "There was no one in Lilybaeum who did not see."[109] His comments at least reveal aspects of how the votive process was expected to occur. While Verres was a public official, it is hard to imagine his offering had the same public significance as other examples discussed, being a small statue chosen by him personally. It may, therefore, represent a "more private" dedication, although it was given in a public temple, indicating a civic dimension. Gifts for the gods were routinely displayed for everyone to see, thus forming a public commemoration.[110]

Factors beyond Verres' control may have influenced his choices. Cicero did not record why he dedicated to Venus, only associating her with Verres' lust. Potentially, Verres decided to dedicate the Cupid in the temple of Venus due to the natural association between the two, or, simply, because the temple of Venus was an important local religious centre in Lilybaeum, where these events took place. The goddess seemed associated with the Western coast of Sicily, which was particularly relevant to the Romans.[111] For example, Venus Erycina, from nearby Eryx, was brought to Rome in the late third century. The goddess was already associated with victory over the Carthaginians during the First Punic War.[112] She remained important throughout the first

[109] *nemo Lilybaei fuit quin videri* Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.140.
[110] Flemming (2017) 114. For examples of how Votive offerings could be displayed, see Hughes (2017) 32. Graham highlights votive anatomical objects at Pantanacci, which were discovered in their original display positions, indicating the public-facing importance of these objects (2021) 109-110.
[111] Angelis mentions Greek cities on the western coast, pointing out the development of another cult on Monte Iato (2011-2012) 183. Greek magistrates made dedications to Aphrodite on Sicily, also attesting to the importance of the goddess in the area: Sokolowski (1964) 3.
[112] Orlin (2010) 71-73 for this and further context.

century, appearing on a coin in 57 BC.[113] Venus was a natural choice, and Verres, ultimately, may have been guided by these external pressures as to what deities he could dedicate in a public setting, even if subconsciously. He could not have dedicated the artefacts to, for instance, Jupiter, if there was no temple present. Consequently, the choices of individuals were shaped by what was immediately available to them in the local area.

To have a unique experience, individuals require a level of choice. Selecting between a multitude of options allows for a more personal "customised" experience where individuals can select aspects of a process or artefact that are relevant to them. Sources discussed so far attest to a variety of gifts that facilitated this, including temples, money and statues. While temples would be harder to construct, Verres, presumably, could have selected between a range of smaller objects. Cicero, elsewhere, comments that in Syracuse:

> He [Verres] carried off every ivory carving, every painting and every sacred image on which he chose to lay his hands.[114]

It is unlikely that Verres stole *every* artefact. Cicero is exaggerating to prosecute Verres. However, as the speech was given in legal proceedings, with witnesses present, Cicero's implication that Verres was responsible for taking valuable items seems reasonable. Verres' position might well have allowed him access to a range of items he could dedicate to any particular god present in Sicily, and Cicero's list of items is not exhaustive. Verres would also have had access to food, jewellery, ceramics and more that also functioned as votive offerings during the Republican period.[115] Therefore, Verres experienced some choices in what, where and when to dedicate as well as to what god. At each stage, there was no explicit external oversight additional to that described above. He did not seek permission or financial assistance, unlike the

[113] For the temple dedication in 215 BC, see Livy 23.31. First century BC coin showing Venus Erycina: RRC 424/1.
[114] *omne ebur ex aedibus sacris, omnes undique tabulas pictas, deorum denique simulacra quae vellet auferret* Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.50
[115] See Griffith for these and more examples (2013) 238. This is interrelated to the materials that votive offerings were made from, which I discuss below.

individuals in the above examples. His decisions were, consequently, personal to him. Therefore, while there were some restrictions as to what deity he could give the statue to, this seems an example of a "more" individual religious observance.[116]

Material Objects and the Broader Community

To examine the extent to which individual choices were accessible to the broader population, it is necessary to discuss the material value of votives, as this is interlinked to the scholarly debate regarding who dedicated these objects. The consensus is that objects were made from precious metals, terracotta, plus materials that do not survive, such as wood and wax.[117] However, we should not assume that low-value material objects were dedicated by non-elite people alone. Glinister argues cheaper offerings did not necessarily have a low religious value.[118] What the votive represented, rather than the object itself, was the likely relevant factor to the dedicant. Verres, therefore, experienced a real choice as a much cheaper option could have retained the same religious significance. This makes determining the people who dedicated specific objects difficult. Furthermore, metal objects have been found in reasonable numbers, making it impossible to say that they all originated from members of the elite. [119]

Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that everyone could dedicate similar metal objects as Verres.[120] Flemming argues that the range of materials used to make anatomical votives reinforced societal hierarchies, with each person dedicating according to their means.[121] As votive offerings were displayed, permitting others to understand how their

[116] I am here following Graf's definition that individual religion derives specifically from choices that the individual has made (2013) 115. Graham highlights that Graf directly contrasts the individual with the civic, which is not my intention (2021) 20. This is why I use the phrase "more individual" to indicate that there were other pressures that impacted what an individual could do.
[117] Flemming (2017) 115; Scheid (2003) 101; Graham and Draycott (2017) 8-9. Flemming (2017) 115.
[118] Glinister (2006) 27-28. See also Potter & Wells (1985), who come to a similar conclusion based on a range of votives from Ponte di Nona.
[119] For examples of surviving metal examples, see Graham (2021) 113.
[120] For instance, see Ammerman, who argues that most could not afford costly votives (2007) 131; See also Scopacasa (2015) 7-8.
[121] Flemming (2016) 119 and n. 46. Wood and stone votives were also used in the ancient world, adding further credence to Flemming's ideas: Cazanove (2017) 67-68.

votive or inscription compared to others, it seems likely some hierarchical reinforcement took place as poorer people faced more limited choices in what they could afford. Recent excavations from San Casciano dei Bagni yielded full-size bronze statues with substantial detail, amongst other plant-based offerings, dedicated throughout the third century BC to the first century AD. Tabolli interprets some statues as representing members of the elite.[122] Presumably, the intrinsic cost of the material and the cost of production mean that these offerings were beyond the purchasing power of many. However, the way that the votives from San Casciano dei Bagni were deposited may indicate that they were reused several times, with earlier Etruscan models being reutilised during the imperial period.[123] This may have reduced the cost as no one would be paid for the making of the objects, although a religiously significant item made from metal may still have cost more than one made from a cheaper material.

Epigraphic evidence attests that slaves and freedmen dedicated at San Casciano dei Bagni, although in at least one example, the slaves belong to a senatorial family and are dedicating on behalf of their masters.[124] It, therefore, seems likely that comparatively poor dedicants were funded by people with the purchasing power to afford metal objects.[125] This may be another aspect of how the votive process may have reinforced societal norms, even if there was an individual dimension. That richer individuals were responsible for the deposit is consistent with the objects themselves, which are relatively large and well-detailed, indicating a high degree of craftsmanship. For example, one statue includes fine details such as intricate folds in a toga, jewellery and conveys a sense of movement with the arms raised and one leg moving forward (Fig. 11). Regardless of the religious value of the votives, larger objects must have cost more due to the amount of raw material needed and the artistic qualities, which likely factored into the final cost as skilled specialists were presumably required.

[122] Tabolli (2023) 2-5.
[123] Mariotti et al. (2024) 5.
[124] Gregori (2025) 150;143.
[125] For another example, see my discussion of Felix Asinianus below

Fig. 11. Votive bronze statue. Source: Tabolli (2023) 4. Photo by E. Mariotti.

In addition to the metal finds, organic offerings have been recovered. These have received comparatively less focus in scholarly discourse so far, but provide tentative evidence for who dedicated at the site.[126] Tabolli briefly mentions the recovery of seeds and what he terms "ritually cut wood", although it is unclear what this means. He also specifically mentions intact pinecones, highlighting that there were no pine trees in the area.[127] It is reasonable that, regardless of the religious value, these items would have cost less than the bronze offerings. Potentially, the cost was increased if the pinecones were imported to the site. Some may have originated from dedicants travelling from areas where they were readily available, although the discovery of multiple could suggest a specific significance to the site that led to them being purchasable "off the shelf" as other offerings were.[128] This is speculative, and even if this were the case, it is highly unlikely they were as expensive as the metal objects. While there is no reason why an elite individual could not dedicate these objects, they were an accessible alternative to other members of society who wished to fulfil a personal need to speak to a god. That the metal and organic votives were deposited at the same site may also further support Flemming's argument that hierarchy reinforcement took place. A bronze statue is visually more significant than seeds and pinecones, serving to reinforce the wealth and position of each dedicant that visited the site.

A combination of civic and individual factors consequently influenced the votive process, allowing some choice while reinforcing the structure of society. While it is impossible to know the socio-economic background of many who dedicated these objects, the sheer volume of votives discovered across Italy suggests that people from across society took part in these practices.[129] The quotations from Varro regarding the

[126] Mariotti et al. simply refer to votive "natural elements" with no further discussion (2024) 5. Gregpri focuses on the bronze votive and epigraphic evidence only (2025).
[127] Tabolli (2023) 4.
[128] See Glinister (2006) 11 and page 273.
[129] Earlier anatomical votives are the main evidence when it pertains to the number of objects dedicated. Scopacasa presents tables of found votives which show that 3,401 objects were found in 16 sites in the Tyrrhenian and Daunian regions alone (2015) Table 1&2, Fig 3 &4, pages 11-13. Ammerman points out that thousands of representations of wombs and swaddled infants have been found at Paestum (2007) 142-143. For the prolific nature of the votive phenomenon, see Flemming (2016) 105. This remains applicable to my argument as votives likely retained their importance, the lack of evidence resulting from the materials used in the later Republic not surviving.

temple of Liber and Libera in the previous section indicate this, as does the ability to mass-produce some objects.[130] This is additional to the vast number of votive offerings that have not survived. Consequently, votive traditions were likely a part of everyday life in Rome for the whole population, indicating that the individual could interact with the gods, in part according to their means but also at a place, time and cost of their choosing. This permitted a degree of freedom in how religion was experienced.

One type potentially dedicated by non-elite people was votive *arulae*. These are small model terracotta representations of altars. A small number have been found in Rome's Largo Argentina area, dating to the third and second centuries. Claudia Moser analyses these offerings, describing them as eight to eleven inches tall, made from local clay pressed into moulds, making it plausible they were relatively accessible to poorer people due to cheaper materials and production costs.[131] Some are hourglass-shaped, others rectangular, indicating individuals had a degree of choice in selecting what form best represented their needs (Fig. 12). Of those published, one displays a bull; the others are plain. Other examples from Rome suggest different artistic qualities were available. Van Buren presents several altars dating after 300 BC, depicting the Capitoline Triad, the head of a woman with floral motifs and a bull charging at a serpent.[132] These hint at the variation possible, from relatively plain to depictions of mythological scenes. As comparative studies suggest, individuals go to great lengths to find a votive that meets their personal criteria.[133] Elaborate depictions may indicate the same, and the degree of individual expression sought, although the exact meaning may only have been known by the dedicator. Equally, the mould-made nature of these

[130] I discuss the use of moulds in the introduction to this chapter. See page 218.
[131] See Moser (2019) 66-67 for an overview of these objects. See also Van Buren, who, while an older scholar, provides an overview of these objects more generally, including examples from Rome. Clarke briefly mentions how "portable" altars may have been commonly used (1991) 7. Santoro agrees, suggesting *arulae* were commonplace (2013) 49-50.
[132] Van Buren (1918).
[133] For instance, in the United States, individuals can go through great pains in order to obtain a specific votive offering from specific vendors: Teske (1985) 211. Graziano discusses photographs and personal messages dedicated in Mexico that suggest the level of personalisation that can occur when dedicating a modern votive (2016) 197-199. While this was not necessarily possible to the same extent in the ancient world, each individual knew they were trying to rectify a personal concern, so they may have felt the need to have some unique experience that separated them from the community.

objects might restrict the ability of those unable to afford elaborate examples to have a personalised experience, as many potentially dedicated objects that looked similar.

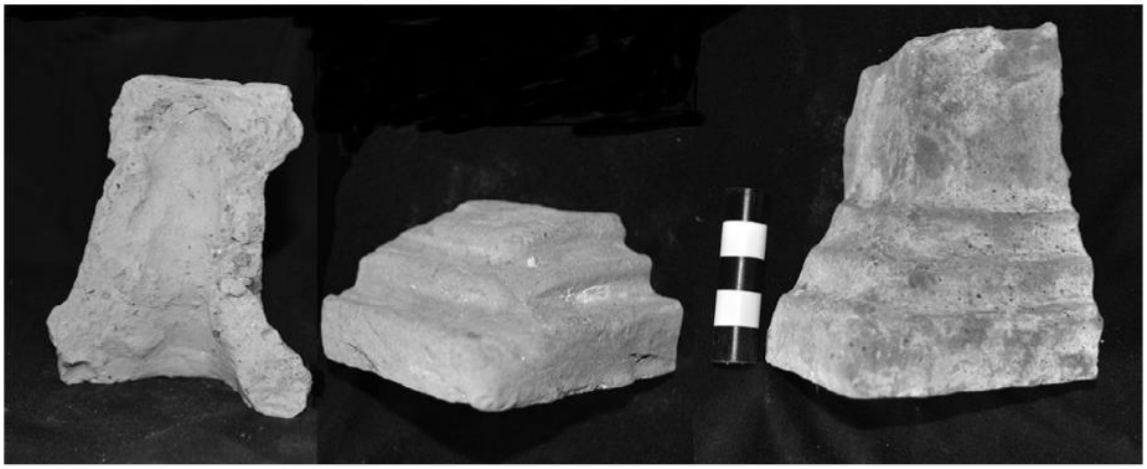

Fig. 12. Examples of votive *arulae* from the Largo Argentina.

Source: Moser (2019) 67. Figure 20.

It is also possible to see a "civic influence" over the individuals who dedicated these objects. Moser points out that throughout Italy, *arulae* appear to be modelled on actual altars, stylistically tying them to the local area.[134] This may result from craftspeople using local altars as models. People who travelled to a sanctuary or shrine may have wished to dedicate something that resembled the goal of their journey.[135] Individuals might have some choice, deciding what shape or artistic qualities were relevant to them, but they were restricted by what the civic elite had chosen as an appropriate altar for the place they visited. This may not have been the case in smaller local shrines. However, the Largo Argentina was a monumentalised area comprising four separate temples that underwent phases of construction throughout the Republican and

[134] Moser (2019) 54-55. Moser also points out that this highlights the complexity of the nature of the relationship between public and private sacrifice.

[135] I base this on the scholarly consensus that pilgrims often journeyed to the sites where objects such as these were dedicated: Grayham and Draycott (2017) 10; Votive feet may have related specifically to pilgrimage: Glinister (2006) 12; Graham (2021) 115. I discuss this further below. Chiarini further posits other uses, such as showing a connection to the underworld (2017) 163-164. Pilgrimage may be particularly relevant to the Largo Argentina area as Rome became a religious centre over the republic: Padilla Peralta (2020) 178-179 ff.

Imperial periods, attesting to the importance of the site to the Roman elite.[136] Moser also directly connects these objects to large-scale public rituals, suggesting they permitted individuals to represent their participation in civic sacrifices by dedicating at an accessible time and cost. Schultz challenges this, pointing out that altars do not necessarily imply the performance of (only) a sacrifice, although she accepts that *arulae* represent large counterparts at the sites where they are found.[137] I do not think that every altar necessarily had the function Moser ascribes to it. Due to the association between temple, altar and *arulae,* they may have represented a specific deity and acted as a simple thanks for the fulfilment of a vow. Moser's focus on the civic aspect is not lost. Altars were located outside of temples, marking them as a key public-facing aspect of civic cults, viewable by anyone.[138] People who dedicated an *arula,* therefore, communicated with the gods using specifically civic symbolism that they had no influence over.

Hundreds of votives depicting body parts, dredged from the Tiber and dating throughout the Republic and into the Imperial period, attest that various choices and constraints also applied to other votive objects.[139] For instance, Flemming follows Pensabene in highlighting eleven different types of womb depiction are identifiable specifically from the Tiber.[140] Differences include size, overall shape and the style of the ridges (Fig. 13). Importantly, Flemming notes that this is a smaller number of differences than available in Etruria, for example. This implies that there was not a total free choice, as individuals in Rome were limited by what was available locally. This likely resulted from factors beyond their control. For instance, broader cultural trends or simply what craftsmen in

[136] For an overview of the development of the site, including potential magistrates who were involved, see Stefano (2017 – originally published 2012) 542-548; Coarelli (2014) 275-280. This is mitigated by the idea of pilgrimage, as potentially some individuals were only interested in the specific altar and consequently did not need alternative objects to experience religious freedom. They chose which god/temple/altar to associate with prior to the physical process of dedicating an object.
[137] Moser (2019) 80-81. Nevertheless, Moser still argues that votives offered at sanctuaries had personal character, different from the significance of larger public experiences: page 54. For this and other challenges to Moser's approach, see Schultz (2019).
[138] Orlin points out that for sacrifices, the altar, not the temple, was the necessary element: Orlin (1997) 11. For the accessibility of altars outside of the temples that they belong to, see Beard et al (1998b) 78 and figures 4.1b & 4.2a.
[139] See Renberg for a summary of this evidence (2006/2007) 137-139.
[140] Flemming (2017) 119-121.

the area were interested in producing. Furthermore, while the variation *between* objects, such as coins, *arulae*, and anatomical votives, allowed some choice, an individual responding to a *specific* concern, such as an illness resulting from a pregnancy, may feel that they had to dedicate a womb. For example, a second-century AD silver spleen of unknown provenance was dedicated with an inscription stating that the dedicator had "been saved by your [Asclepius'] hands from a swelling of the spleen".[141] The decision to dedicate a votive was personal, but many likely felt they had little real choice as they needed to purchase an object that directly related to their ailment. It is unlikely someone would dedicate a representation of an arm if they had a broken leg, even if they preferred the quality of the former.

Fig. 13.

Two votive uteri from Rome. Flemming states these are similar to those found in the Tiber (2017) 120.

Source: The Wellcome Collection and Femming

Despite this, an individual dimension can be emphasised. The individual decided to dedicate an object and, therefore, to try to attempt to meet their personal needs

[141] Translation is taken from Renberg (2006/2007)126. De Cazanove agrees that the dates to the second century (2017) 72. While a later example, this exemplifies votives throughout the Republic and Imperial periods (*ibid.*).

independent of civic authorities. Even a small range of womb depictions would force an individual to decide what to dedicate, making them an active agent in a religious process. For instance, they may desire one votive womb over the other because they prefer the colour of the clay, the overall shape, or feel that a particular object best represents their needs. Additionally, while an individual may have felt that they needed to dedicate a particular anatomical votive, some may represent more general concerns, opening the scope of what and when an individual could dedicate. Some wombs may represent a general concern for fertility.[142] Others are depicted with "balls" or "pellets", which may represent embryos. Some examples showing two "pellets" have been interpreted as a request for twins.[143] Within the general constraint of needing to dedicate an object related to their issue, a dedicator had some freedom, as they did not have to wait for a specific crisis to participate in the votive process. Many anatomical objects may not represent a concern for health at all. Glinister and Flemming both suggest that depictions of feet may represent pilgrimage, for instance. There is some discrepancy as Glinister argues that a "medical interpretation" remains the most likely while, Flemming suggests that anatomical votives can only be described as medical "loosely". Votives likely met a range of needs, medical and non-medical. [144] Consequently, individuals had some ability to choose between and within types of votive offerings for a range of purposes.

A civic dimension can be emphasised simultaneously. As anatomical votives are often not inscribed, it is difficult to determine to which god they were dedicated.[145] However, given the proximity of the finds to Asclepius' Temple on Tiber Island, it is logical that at least some related to him specifically. As with dedicatory inscriptions, discussed below, civic gods promoted by the Senate were often the object of worship across

[142] Polyvisceral votives may have resulted from a general concern for well-being rather than specific medical concerns: Pavia (2020) 47. For the association between votive wombs and fertility, see Flemming (2017), particularly page 116; Hughes (2017) 99 n.87. For the importance of fertility at sites where votives were dedicated: Graham (2017) 56.
[143] Dasen (2004) 127-129.
[144] Glinister (2006) 12 and Flemming (2016) 111-114. Votives representing feet could be more closely related to health issues than, for instance, votives depicting youths with piglets found near Paestum, for instance. (see Merker (1992) for these objects).
[145] On the rarity of inscribed examples, see Glinister (2006) 21 and Flemming (2017) 114.

society. Additionally, many of the votives may have been dedicated within the temple before their later deposition in the river. Although this is speculative, it matches patterns across Italy where ritual objects are cleared from their initial placement and dumped in large-scale deposits.[146] Consequently, these individual acts of devotion occurred within a civic framework, at least conceptually through the worship of civic gods, if not also spatially within a public temple. While elite sources discuss anatomical votive practices infrequently, they must have at least tacitly accepted the votive process, given the large volume of objects found. Therefore, individual acts occurred within a civic setting, permitting personal experiences between an individual and a civic god that also had a role in protecting the wider community. There was a complex interplay of various pressures. Individuals were likely restricted by an expectation of what gods they should communicate with and what objects were purchasable at any given time. Nevertheless, the choices a person had to make regarding what to dedicate and the personal nature of the health crises they relate to indicate that a sense of individuality existed within civic religion.

Coins also functioned as votive offerings, but with notable differences from *arulae*. Crawford points out they were not specifically designed to be votives, being reusable and potentially high value. Evans points out many coins were worn, presumably indicating their use prior to deposition.[147] This suggests the range of objects that individuals could dedicate. There are some similarities to *arulae,* as different coins displayed varying gods and symbolism. It is difficult to discern how this impacted an individual's decision. If someone held three coins and wished to deposit one, they would have to make a decision based on some personal criteria, even if selecting at random. Unfortunately, there are few specific examples from Rome in the later Republic, although evidence suggests the practice likely occurred throughout Italy.

[146] Ritual deposition "en masse" seems to have been the norm: Gliniister (2006) 20-21 and n. 43; Scopacasa (2015) 6. Both suggest this occurred "peridocially" although Glinister also highlights that the votives at Ponte di Nona were deposited centuries after their initial dedication. See Potter and Wells (1985) 38. Therefore, it remains possible that the votives were initially left in a civic-religious space.
[147] Crawford (2003) 69; Evans (2013) 115-116. Evans is more tentative regarding the material coins were made of, however, arguing that most were not made of precious metals. Crawford still defines a bronze *as* as high value.

Investigations of the river Liri near Minturnae, a Roman colony on the border between Latium and Campania, yielded coins interpreted as being a votive deposit, intermixed with other, more clearly ritual, objects. In total, 4,918 coins dating from the third century BC to the sixth century AD were found.[148] Coins depicting Janus, Venus and Diana, among others, dating to the first century BC, were recovered from the final investigation (Fig. 14).[149] Caution is required as, while coins are easier to date than most ritual objects, many were, potentially, in circulation for a long time before deposition.[150] Interestingly, this would have boosted the number of options available to the dedicant, permitting a greater range of styles, gods and denominations. The range of dates from the site must mean some coins were dedicated during the second and first centuries.[151] Therefore, individuals had another option for making a personal connection to a deity within Latium.

Fig 14. RRC 479/1.

Obverse: Head of Janus.

Reverse: A ship's prow.

Source: Crawford (1974b) Plate LVI. https://numismatics.org/crro/id/rrc-479.1

[148] For an overview of these investigations, see Frier and Parker (1970); Metcalf (1974); Houghtalin (1985).
[149] For the full list, see Houghtalin (1985). I have selected these coins to demonstrate the options an individual had in deciding what to dedicate. Janus: RRC 479/1 (45 BC); Venus: 463/1 (46 BC); Diana: RRC 407/2. 68 BC
[150] Evans cites a coin of Phillip II of Macedon found within the Liri deposit as an example of how coins can be in circulation for some time prior to ritual use (2013) 114.
[151] Moser argues that the decline in votive terracottas may relate specifically to the rise of coinage serving a similar function, although there is no direct evidence for this (2019) 66-67. See Schultz, who comments that there is no connection between coins and *arulae* (2019). I am less sure, as we cannot know what coins represented for individuals in a religious sense.

Varro, although providing little detail, seems to imply similar practices occurred within Rome during the first century:

> It appears that, as was the custom then, they speak even now of giving bronze coins (*asses*) to the gods with treasures.[152]

Who the "they" Varro references in this passage is unclear, although he is likely discussing soldiers, speaking of their pay in this and the following section. If so, it is notable that he referred to *assess*, the lowest denomination of coinage.[153] The *as* was, therefore, comparatively "cheaper" than the many *denarii* found in Liri (although *asses* were found there also), making it plausible that a proportion of non-elite people could participate in this practice. This seems likely, as coins were readily available in general circulation.[154] At least, they were presumably more accessible than votive *arulae,* which likely cost more than a single coin, although the exact value is unknown. Varro does not mention specific deities, referring to a generic plurality, consequently suggesting that there was a level of personal choice. Possibly, individuals dedicated representations of the gods at their respective temples, although the range of sacred buildings in Rome may mean, at least within the city, there was a relatively free choice in how individuals could communicate with the divine.

Finds from Liri may provide insight into how these coins were understood. Three *asses* of Janus were found during the final investigation, making it the most frequently discovered type from the Republican period.[155] In the first century, Janus was associated with new beginnings.[156] Consequently, the coins could represent requests for good fortune after a relationship, an illness or other life event. Janus was also

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[152] *Id apparet, quod ut tum institutum etiam nunc diis cum thesauris asses dant stipem dicunt* Varro. *LL*. 5.182. *Thesauris* may refer to temple treasuries, although the basic point that coins were given to the gods remains.

[153] The silver denarius made up the main body of Roman coinage, introduced during the third century, although *asses* were minted in high quantities during the later Republican period: Woytek (2012) 315-316; 320). See also Yarrow, who discusses a re-tariffing of coinage after 146 BC, pointing out that four asses were one-fifth of two denarii, indicating a comparatively low monetary value (2021) 39-41.

[154] Livy contains an early reference to the payment of sailors and soldiers in the Second Punic War, indicating that non-elite people had access to coins: Livy 23.21. Yarrow suggests that one die could produce between 10,000 to 40,000 coins, indicating the high levels that could be produced (2021) 48-50.

[155] Houghtalin lists the coins found (1985) 70-71.

[156] August. *De Civ. D.* 7.9 (from a quote from Varro). Cf. Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.67.

associated with war and peace. The doors of his temple were closed in Rome during times of peace, possibly making Janus relevant to the soldiers that Varro mentions.[157] While this discussion is speculative, this represents how individuals could, personally, meet their own needs. All these interpretations were possible, simultaneously, between different people. However, the dedicant had no control over the gods presented on coinage, which was issued by members of the elite. Individuals did not experience total freedom, being restricted by what was immediately available. While this is a more incidental "control" over religious processes compared to what Cicero describes in *De Legibus*, for example, individuals were still utilising objects and images generated by civic authorities. Likewise, if they wished to dedicate a coin in a temple, then, just as with *arulae,* they were doing so in a public place to a civic god.

Some, albeit uncertain, material evidence survives of votive coins from the late Republic within Rome. Two *thesauri* have been found, one from an unknown location and the other from the Largo Argentina area. These are small stone containers with a slot into which visitors to a temple or sanctuary placed coins.[158] The example from the Largo Argentina was in use in the first half of the first century AD, containing late Republican coins still in circulation, suggesting similar patterns as at Liri.[159] I suggest the container may have been utilised in the late Republic also, as *thesauri* could be re-used multiple times, although this is speculative. The other *thesaurus* is part of the Arundel marble collection, purchased in the seventeenth century, rendering definitive conclusions about the date near impossible. Wojciechowski includes it as evidence when discussing imperial Rome, although he does not provide specific evidence as to why he dates it to this time.[160] However, the consensus is that deposits in *thesauri* represent a practice occurring throughout the later Republic into the imperial period. Ranucci analyses a stone *thesaurus* from *Volsinii* containing 185 Republican *asses*

[157] For this and an overview of Janus' associations, see Purcell (2012). For a deeper examination of the closing of the temple doors, see Syme (1979).
[158] For an overview, see Crawford (2003). Catalli & Scheid (1994) 60 and Barbato (2021) 18-22 highlight several examples throughout Italy.
[159] Barbato (2015).
[160] Wojciechowski (2013) 112-113.

dating between 211 to 91 BC, and deposited in the late first century BC.[161] Barbato specifically marks the late Republic as a period in which *thesauri* were in common use, and follows Bolder-Boos & Calapà's argument – that many rituals in sanctuaries related to healing – to suggest the same was true of coin votives.[162]

Therefore, while it cannot be stated definitively, these objects may represent practices that occurred in late Republican Rome, given Varro's reference to the dedication of coins. As with other evidence discussed, there is an intermingling of civic and individual processes. While there is no direct evidence, presumably temple officials were responsible for setting up *thesauri,* as they served a religious function within a civic space.[163] Consequently, they were likely placed in public areas, for ease of access, and inscribed *thesauri* may suggest civic officials determined with what gods individuals could interact. The Arundel example is inscribed with: *HERCVLI LIBERO SILVANO DIIS SANCTIS TI IVLIVS ALEXANDER D.D* (Fig. 15).[164] The inclusion of three separate gods may have permitted some degree of choice, although, potentially, the person depositing a coin would interpret this to mean all three were recipients of the gift. However, if *Diis Sanctis* is taken to mean "other sacred gods", this may have allowed worshippers to select their own recipient. As with other coins, it seems reasonable that individuals could form independent rationales for engaging in the votive process. Any coin deposited could represent thanks for safety, completion of a pilgrimage, or other issues, including healing.[165]

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[161] Ranucci (2009) 955-966.
[162] Barbato (2021) 15; Bolder-Boos and Calapà (2019) 118.
[163] The *thesaurus* from *Volsinii* was deposited next to an altar, for example: Ranucci (2009) 954.
[164] CIL VI 294 = ILS 3464.
[165] Barbato posits that Hercules may have functioned as a healing deity, although I again do not think that there is enough evidence to say that this was always the case (2021) 12-13. He certainly held this function in Greece, where he was perceived as having a healing role by both civic authorities and private dedicators, as pointed out by Larson in a chapter dedicated to discussing the Greek cult generally in the Oxford Handbook of Heracles (2021) 450-451. However, no mention is made in Siwicki's analysis of the Roman cult (2021). This does not mean that there was no association, but generally, the Roman focus was on Asclepius and the other deities that I mentioned.

Fig 15. A depiction of the Arundel Thesuari with the inscription referencing Hercules, Liver and Silvanus.

Source: Seldon (1628) 51.

Consequently, *thesauri* could facilitate individual expression, explicitly, within civic places, the Liri deposit indicating civic religious centres were not the only places where this occurred.[166] As a coin deposited in a *thesaurus* was one part of a larger collection, individuals may have felt this process allowed them to associate with the broader community. However, this may be a more personal act as, unlike anatomical votives that were displayed, these personal associations with the gods were hidden by the *thesauri* itself. This impeded an individual's understanding of how their dedication related to their peers. The act of dedication in this instance could only be experienced by one person at a single moment in time.

Coins, therefore, functioned differently between sites, potentially allowing some personalisation of the religious experience within a civic context. The inscribed *thesauri* attest that written messages could factor into this process. Schultz examines a variety of Republican dedicatory inscriptions, arguing they replaced earlier anatomical votive

[166] Graham points out that coins were common deposits in springs and water pools during the early and middle Republic (2021) 168.

offerings as a means for alleviating medical issues, citing this first-century BC dedication taken from Ostia:[167]

> Felix Asinianus, public slave of the pontifices, fulfilled his vow to Bona Dea Agrestis Felicula willingly and with good cause, (sacrificing) a white heifer on account of his eyesight having been restored. Abandoned by doctors, he recovered after ten months by taking medicines, by the aid of the Mistress. Through her, all things were restored during Cannia Fortunata's tenure as *ministra* (Fig. 16).[168]

While examples that shared other purposes are to be discussed, this example attests that inscriptions formed what Schultz calls a "continuum" from anatomical dedications related to healing.[169] While it is not possible to date this inscription precisely, Brouwer suggests, based on grammatical elements, that it was dedicated during the first century BC or first century AD.[170] As the use of terracotta votives declined in the first century BC, it seems possible that more dedicatory inscriptions may have fulfilled similar functions, although this is speculative.[171] Notably, the dedicant identifies himself as a public slave, indicating more clearly than coinage and *arulae* that non-elite people participated in votive processes. This may add some credence to the idea that smaller, comparatively easier-to-obtain items were dedicated by poorer people. Potentially, Felix had some financial aid or some higher status as a slave of the *pontifices*, as he sacrificed a white

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[167] Schultz (2006) 100-101. Incidentally, see above for her disagreement with Moser that coins fulfilled the same functions as anatomical votives: n. 137 and Schultz (2019). Schultz's disagreement, however, is based on a lack of evidence, so she does not necessarily completely discount the possibility that some were related to healing. Petridou interprets anatomical votives of eyes as representing concerns for healing (2017) 96-100. This supports Schultz's view, although Petridou (ibid.) and Graham (2020) 214 also suggest they may represent "mysteric vision". for instance. CIL I^2 1423 = ILS 3005, which I discuss below, suggests that individuals could see the gods, which some eye votives may have represented. Many votives, as with veiled heads, may just represent the worshipper: Glinister (2009) 193.

[168] *Felix publicus / Asinianus pontific(um servus) / Bonae dea agrestic Felicu(la) / votum solvit iunicem alba / libens animo ob luminibus / restitutis derelictus a medicis post / menses decem bineficio dominaes medicinis sanatus per / eam restituta omnia ministerio Canniae Fortunatae*. (CIL 6.68 = ILS 3513). Trans taken from Schultz (2006) 101. DiLuzio believes the inscription is from the late first century BC (2016) 96.

[169] Some votives, although infrequently, were inscribed, giving credence to Schultz's idea. For the rarity of inscribed examples, see above and Graham and Draycott (2017) 13. Cf. Hughes mentions the same but provides some surviving examples (2017) 67-68.

[170] Brouwer (1989) 53. Ambasciano states that they are unsure of the date but seem to accept Brouwer's suggestion (2016) 5. Schultz simply refers to the object as undated (2006) 73.

[171] For further issues of dating, see Gordon (1951) 75-76.

cow as part of his thanks. While the exact cost of the sacrificial process is difficult to determine, it may have been relatively expensive – certainly more so than the vegetal offerings discussed elsewhere.[172] The inscription itself would have increased the cost, written on marble and likely more expensive than a simpler stone example. Nevertheless, as Felix felt that Bona Dea was responsible for his improved vision, he may have felt a need to provide the best thanks regardless of the cost.[173] The text of the inscription implies he sacrificed the animal regardless of whether he or someone else paid for it, suggesting this dedication represents his connection with a deity.

Fig 16. CIL 6.68 = ILS 3513.

Dedicatory inscription on marble.

Source: https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_url.php?p_edcs_id=EDCS-17200170&s_sprache=en

The inscription shows the interplay between the individual and the civic. Firstly, the artefact was found on the road between Ostia and Rome, presumably intended for public display. This is likely true of all the inscriptions to be discussed. In contrast to the "more private" *thesauri,* these marked the named dedicator as taking part in a ritual process that the whole community could see. Therefore, Felix seemingly felt the need to

[172] Whittaker discusses the cost of live animals, suggesting they cost around (or just under) 3,000 denarii (2020) 111. The sacrifice of a cow was likely among the most expensive options: Aldrete (2014) 28 n.1.
[173] Jameson refers to the sacrifice of large cattle as the "most pleasing" to the gods (2020) 94. I feel we should be careful in assuming larger offerings mean they were perceived as better, although they presumably were more impressive displays.

reinforce his religious commitments in a "more public" setting.[174] Furthermore, a religious official, Cannia Fortunata, was involved, described as a *ministra*, suggesting she was an attendant within the cult.[175] DiLuzio and Gatto & Gregori hypothesise that she was fundamental to the healing process, possibly having some expertise in preparing medicines.[176] Felix does not state that Cannia was involved in helping him directly, although his reference to her suggests he perceived her as having an important role. Therefore, while this object represents an individual attempting to form a personal relationship with a goddess, his overall experience was mediated through a religious official in a civic cult, a connection they chose to make explicit. Substantial emphasis can still be placed on the individual, as Felix was the originator of the object and what was written on it.

Other inscriptions indicate that individuals experienced more personal associations with gods unmediated by cult officials. An undated inscription, on stone, although attributed to the period between the Second Punic War and the death of Caesar in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL), reads:

> IOVI OPTIVMO MAXIMO EX VISO ARAM AEDIFICAVIT P CORNELIVS P L TRVPO MESOR PREC.[177]

This altar was dedicated by Cornelius, a freedman of Trupo, having received a vision of Jupiter. While this is another inscription that refers to more than one individual, this may represent a personal religious experience. Ando follows the CIL reconstruction in suggesting "MESOR" means *mensor*, indicating Trupo was a surveyor or architect.[178]

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[174] I base this on evidence that the earlier anatomical votives were displayed (see above). Dedicatory inscriptions seem similar, allowing the individual to represent their religious experiences to the broader populace. Inscriptions can be seen as both public and private. For instance, Schultz argues that they allow a window into women's public religious roles (2006) 47-48. North cites them as evidence for specifically private religion (2013) 75-77. The function depends on the type of votive, but many may exist on the "spectrum" that I discuss elsewhere, serving private and public functions.

[175] Lewis and Short define *ministra* as an attendant, assistant or servant with religious associations (1879) 1146. This is a different post to a priestess but involved managing cult activities: Lundeen (2006) 46-47; Schultz (2006) 71. See also Holland (2012).

[176] Gatto and Gregori (2021). DiLuzio points out the credit that Felix gives to Cannia for the help that she gave him and speculates that she may have supervised the temple pharmacy, although states a detailed understanding cannot be known (2016) 97-98.

[177] CIL I^2 1423 = ILS 3005.

[178] Ando (2010) 45. I take these definitions from Lewis and Short (1879) 1133.

Therefore, there are no mentions of civic or religious officials indicating, Cornelius was the central focus of the religious action. A civic dimension is retained as, through explicitly stating why he dedicated the altar in the inscription, Corenelius inherently shares his experience with a civic God to the broader community.

This is one of several inscriptions from the Republic and imperial periods attesting that individuals experienced visions of the gods.[179] This must have been a highly important, personal experience. Mackey, citing imperial examples from across the empire, highlights that inscriptions mentioning the gods seen *ex visu* (which he translates as "on account of a vision") match first-century BC evidence describing manifestations of the gods, such as Cicero's description of the frequency of epiphanies.[180] While Mackey notes Cicero plays down the ability of the gods to manifest before humans in *De Haruspicum Responso*, this provides further insight into the reasons why a person may have left a votive.[181] Cicero's comments, combined with this inscription, attest that civic deities were understood to play a central role in the day-to-day life of individuals from all backgrounds. If the altar was constructed as a result of a direct order from Jupiter, then it represents an individual obeying a deity over whom the Senate traditionally had oversight. However, they were not involved in this process, allowing the individual to make their own decision as to how best to please the god. Potentially, Jupiter simply provided some benefit for which the dedicant wished to thank him, indicating individuals, rather than the Senate, determined the best course of action for themselves. While Cornelius' exact position is unclear, that he was a freedman indicates that people from across society participated in this process.

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[179] See ILS 3006 and 3007. North also provides further examples (2013) 75, n. 43. See Ando argues that this evidence highlights that "private individuals saw gods on a regular basis" (2010) 45

[180] Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.5-6; Mackey (2022) 222-224.

[181] Cicero suggests that the gods give their messages more subtly than appearing to humans. Cic. *Har Resp.* 62-63. Mackey (2022) 225-226. Cicero does this to undermine the arguments against him, but possibly reveals some snobbery that only members of the elite were expected to receive divine messages as opposed to the "latins" or "gatherings of men" he described. I am here following Ripat's line of argument (2006) 159. This seems reasonable based on the evidence I have presented in section one of this chapter, as well as Chapter Three, that members of the elite saw themselves as religious authorities best placed to resolve issues for others. In *De Natura Deorum,* Cicero generally only relates stories that concern members of the elite seeing the gods, such as the Dioscuri at the battle of Lake Regillus.

Many inscriptions allow further exploration of these themes. The following are from the CIL based on the range of individuals and gods to which they relate. Unless stated, they are of uncertain date but taken from the CIL volume that places them before the death of Caesar. All are from, or near, Rome. Descriptions are also taken from the CIL:

Inscription 1:

(c.90-80 BC) An altar of Tiburtine stone:

SEI DEO SEI DEIVAE SAC C SEXTIVS C F CALVINVS PRDE SENATI SENTENTIA RESTITVIT. (Fig. 17).[182]

Inscription 2:

A square plaque of Tiburtine stone:

PUBLICIA L F CN CORNELI A F VXOR HERCOLE AEDEM VALVASQVE FECIT EADEMQVE EXPoLIVIT ARAMQVE SACRAM HERCOLE RESTITV HAEC OMNIA DE SVO ET VIREI FECIT FACIVNDVM CVRAVIT. (Fig. 18).[183]

Inscription 3:

A marble altar:

Q MVCIVS Q *L* TRVPHO SERVOVIT LEIBER SOLV L M BONAE DEAE SACR.[184]

Inscription 4:

On an altar made of limestone:

T QVINCTIVS Q F TVLLI <...> CALTILI CALT L MAG DE DVOBVS PAGEIS ET VICEI SVLPICEI (Fig. 19).[185]

Inscription 5:

On a rough stone, located across the Tiber. Likely from the first century[186]:

[182] CIL I^2 801 = ILS 4015.
[183] CIL I^2 981 = ILS 3423.
[184] CIL I^2 972 = ILS 3491.
[185] CIL I^2 1002.
[186] Zamudio suggests this and states that it likely dates no earlier than the late third century (1985) 282.

DEVAS CORNISCAS SACRUM.[187]

This list is not exhaustive, but reveals the variety of functions votive offerings could perform. Inscription One is attributed to the son of Sextius Calvinus, consul of 124 BC, possibly dating to the Sullan period.[188] It is a full-size altar, showing carved decorations along the top and base. The statement that it was restored via a vote of the Senate highlights that it performed a civic function, similar to the dedications discussed in Section Two. The reason for the initial dedication is unclear, but, potentially resulted from some personal vow. Equally, the restoration may have derived from personal motivations, although the mention of a decree of the Senate reveals that there was civic oversight over a relatively small object. This supports that personal interactions between elite individuals and the gods were mediated by religious authorities. This is likely true of non-elite dedications as well. "PREC", which appears in Cornelius' dedication, is an abbreviated form of *Precario,* which Lommatzsch and Dessau interpret as meaning the location of the inscription was granted temporarily.[189] Both inscriptions, together, may give insight into the process of setting up inscriptions. Whether through the Senate or a local magistrate, some form of permission was likely needed, restricting the freedom of anyone to dedicate what they wanted at any given point. Presumably, the Senate could have disallowed the restoration if it felt it was unneeded. Senatorial oversight may have been greater over dedicatory inscriptions as opposed to the deposition of coins, for instance, which were smaller, easier to move and had less public-facing significance. The process of commissioning an inscription is considered below.

[187] CIL I^2 975 = ILS 2986.
[188] Lommatzsch (1918) 551.
[189] Dessau (1902) 6 Lommatzsch (1918) 617. Ando accepts PREC to mean *precario* but does not state what it may mean (2010) 45. For other examples of the use of *Precario*, although they do not always relate to religious matters or originate in Rome: ILS 6008, 6009, 6012, 6017 and 6017a.

Fig. 17. Inscription One. CIL I^2 801 = ILS 4015.

Source: https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_url.php?s_sprache=en&p_publication=CIL+01,+00801

Fig. 18. Inscription Two. CIL I^2 981 = ILS 3423.

Source: https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_url.php?s_sprache=en&p_publication=CIL+01,+00981

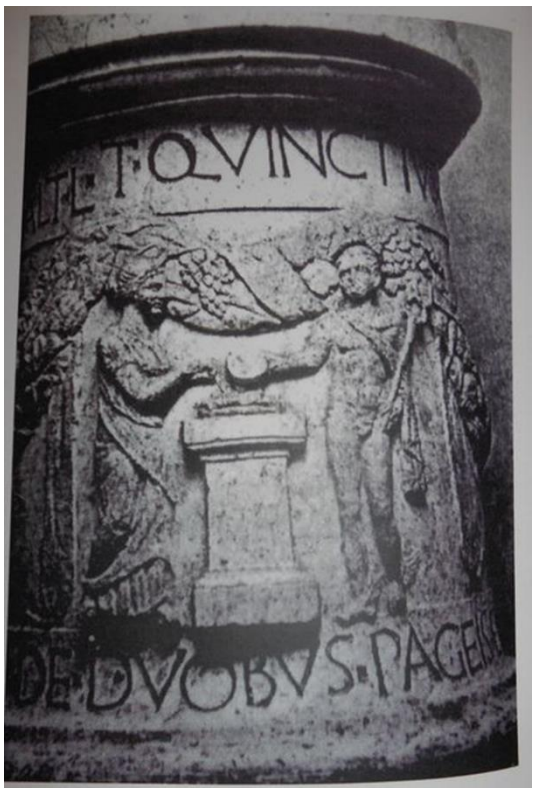

Fig. 19. Inscription Four. CIL I^2 1002.

Source: https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi_url.php?s_sprache=en&p_publication=CIL+01,+01002

Inscription four may have shared a similar purpose. It refers to two freeborn citizens and a freedman, all local magistrates. It was, presumably, left for civic benefit, reinforcing the bonds of the individuals mentioned in the inscription to the community over which they had oversight. However, this is not in the same category as examples from Livy's narrative, as this, as far as we know, was not endorsed or requested by the Senate. That Caltilius was a freedman reinforces that the votive process was available to many in society, although he is not "non-elite" in the same sense as a slave, having resources to rise to a local political position. In contrast, inscription three refers to a freedman vowing an altar when enslaved. Compared to inscription four, this seems "more personal", mentioning only one individual and Bona Dea. This may represent a request or thanks for healing, as she was a healing deity, although it may be a general thanks. The inscription also references that the altar was dedicated "after his manumission", suggesting this happened recently. That freedmen made these dedications is unsurprising, as Mouritsen suggests that they made up 1/3 of the population – although this cannot be determined definitively – emphasising how votives offer a window past

the narrow view of elite sources.[190] Consequently, these inscriptions represent two people, from similar backgrounds, fulfilling their needs in two different ways, but through the same votive process. As with personal diviners, there was flexibility in how individuals of lower status could engage the gods, providing a level of choice.

Inscription two highlights the personal religious activity of women, relating to the building of a temple of Hercules by Publicia. Schultz argues: "By announcing their financial commitment in this way, women like… Publicia emulated the advertisements of public beneficence commonly set up by wealthy men, as private individuals or public officials," also noting that Publicia's family is otherwise unknown, although wealthy.[191] Therefore, there was both a "civic" and "individual" dimension to Publicia's action. The temple was built for the community and required official permission, although the inscription makes it clear she was the originator of the temple: "She adorned it".[192] This matches Caltilius' dedication, constructed for all but referring to specific people. Votive inscriptions may therefore exist on a scale from "more civic" to "more personal."[193] All the inscriptions I analyse can be thought of in this way, as they were designed to be read by members of the community but commemorate a specific action relevant to a specific person.

Publicia's dedication also suggests the range of deities that could be worshipped beyond public rituals, given that there were some gender segregations in the cults of Bona Dea and Hercules. I touched on the female-only rites of Bona Dea in Chapter Three. Regarding Hercules, Propertius narrates a myth in which he became angry with the female worshippers of Bona Dea, who would not allow him into her temple, leading

[190] Mouritsen arrives at this number based on late Republican claims of mass manumission, amongst other events: (2011) 120-123 Dion Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4.24.5. He admits that this cannot be known for certain but agrees with Brunt that slaves and freedmen made up a substantial proportion of the population (1971) 386.
[191] Schultz (2006) 60; 59.
[192] Translation taken from Schultz (2006) ibid.
[193] Treggiari argues that freedmen had few opportunities in civic religion, although they played a role in sacrifices as attendants (1969) 156. I accept the basic points that few were likely able to become priests and consequently, votives offered an alternate method to commune with civic deities.

Hercules to create male-only rites at the *Ara Maxima*.[194] Plutarch reiterates that only men sacrifice at the larger of two altars for Hercules.[195] Schultz concludes, from these statements, that restrictions on women worshipping Hercules likely related to rites at the *Ara Maxima*.[196] Staples, following Brouwer, highlights that votive evidence, such as the examples presented here, including inscription three, attests that male worshippers were common for Bona Dea and the restrictions related only to the December festival.[197] Consequently, it seems there were gendered restrictions in civic religion, but only at specific events. Any man or woman could publicly worship these deities, but civic authorities retained some oversight, limiting what was acceptable within each cult. Consequently, these inscriptions may reveal how individuals could circumvent limited restrictions. Dedicatory inscriptions, like the *arulae,* could be used to worship *any* god at a time and place relevant to the individual. This was not a reaction against civic religion and may have allowed greater participation in civic rites, following Moser's arguments discussed above. This is applicable to the other gods present in inscriptions. Cornelius did not have to wait until a public celebration of Jupiter to worship him.

Inscription five reveals the available choices, referring to *Deuas Corniscas.* This has caused some confusion. Warmington translates this as "sacred crow", presumably associating "*Corniscas*" with *"corvus"* or "*cornix.*"[198] There is disagreement as to whether the inscription refers to a single or multiple deities, although Festus attests to a grove of "Cornisca" deities to which commentators on the inscription suggest the inscription refers.[199] The lack of references in literary sources suggests that relatively obscure deities, not generally regarded as important in the civic pantheon, were

[194] Propertius 4.9.51-70. Flemming sees the rites at the *ara maxima* as similar to the rites for Bona Dea, emphasising that they were exclusively male (2007) 91. DiLuzio follows this argument, suggesting that this connection is derived from the close proximity of the *ara maxima* to Bona Dea's sanctuary. (2016) 94-95.
[195] Plut. *Mor. Quaest. Rom.* 60.
[196] Schultz (2006) 67-68
[197] Staples posits that the inscriptions reveal a different form of the cult (1998) 14; Brouwer (1989) 260-262
[198] Warmington (1940) 78-79.
[199] See Festus 56, 14, quoted by Zamudio, who argues that it is a singular deity and has the most comprehensive discussion of the inscription (1985). Lommatzsch draws the connection with Festus (1918) 574.

respected by individuals who were willing to spend time and money providing them with gifts.[200] Consequently, the dedicant must have felt some connection with the gods, regardless of their public importance.[201] Personal expression did not have to be guided by civic authorities.

Comparing the material qualities of inscriptions one and five reveals another reinforcement of civic connections. I highlighted Glinister's argument that, just because the material of which a votive consisted was cheap, it did not mean it was of low religious value.[202] However, it is hard to imagine that individuals would not compare themselves to others. A rougher, less artistic item, such as Inscription five, placed next to the higher quality Inscription one, is representative of each person's status and, to an extent, place in society.[203] Likewise, inscription four depicts well-defined, detailed figures at an altar. As minor officials produced this, it may have reinforced their positions compared to simpler dedications, as proof that they could dedicate high-quality items. Further consideration of material and artistic qualities reveals how votives facilitated individual experiences. Emma-Jayne Graham advocates this approach, suggesting:

> …The human body operated in conjunction with the material affordances of the things that it manipulated and was manipulated by in the course of particular ritualised activities. These material engagements, in turn, produced specific forms of understanding and, consequently, highly personal or proximal forms of religious knowledge…[204]

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[200] I am aware of no other literary references and only one other inscription that refers to these deities, which Warmington (1940) 79 and Lommatzsch (1918) 976 agree dates to no later than the Hannibalic war.
[201] Steingräber importantly, while discussing anatomical votives, mentions that anonymous local deities played an important role, playing down the role of civic gods (2018) 403. The dedications to Jupiter and Bona Dea challenge the idea that civic deities were "less important", but it is reasonable to think a range of gods not attested commonly in literature were important, suggesting that individuals could select what was relevant to them from a broader range than what civic rituals permitted.
[202] See above n. 118.
[203] Inscription three may play a similar role. Made from marble, it was potentially more expensive than Inscription Five but not as grandiose as one, suggesting the scale of different potential hierarchies.
[204] Graham (2021) 110-111. Stek promotes a similar focus on religious experiences, which I have adopted when considering more personal forms of religion (2009) 54.

This forms part of a "new materialist" approach that argues individuals developed "religious knowledge" by interacting with the unique characteristics of objects. This applies to all the votives here described. A coin would reflect the sun in a way that terracotta cannot and make a different sound when deposited, highlighting that they created separate experiences. This is even true of the same votive as a coin dedicated in a *thesaurus* at Rome would afford a completely different experience to a coin thrown into the river Liri, due to setting, distance needed to travel, and the soundscape of a city compared to a river. This applies to inscriptions that have different artistic and material qualities.[205] I have noted details of inscription one that differ substantially from the simpler inscription five, providing viewers and dedicants with different experiences. This, potentially, increased the options available during the commission process. Anatomical votives are, generally, assumed to have been purchased "off the shelf", although painted details on swaddled infants indicate more unique examples could be generated.[206] This likely seems true of *arulae,* although not regarding coins. There was, also, presumably, a commission process for inscriptions, allowing individuals to decide what, if any, motifs they wished to include. Wealthier individuals might afford more options and higher-quality craftsmanship, although terracotta votives of Magna Mater indicate non-elite individuals could afford artistic depictions, even if not of the same standard.

Both the text and object may, therefore, combine to create a relatively personalised experience within civic settings. Mackey notes that many inscriptions are formulaic.[207] Among the examples provided, several follow a similar order in naming the dedicant, their relations, and the god to whom they dedicate, although no two are exactly the same. Some later curse tablets appear to have been written with blank spaces to allow the dedicant to insert their name and other relevant information, although many were

[205] CIL I^2 632, dating from the 140s BC from Reate to the Northeast of Rome, exemplifies the artistic detailing that was possible, comprising a round stone with different figures, a key and possibly Hercules.
[206] For painted details, see Graham (2013) 215, 217; Pedrucci (2021) 145. For the purchasing of votives off the shelf, see Glinister (2006) 11. Glinister also suggests that pathologies could be added to votive offerings. While not discussing how votives were purchased, Flemming states that they were made in bulk, also commenting on their relatively low cost (2016) 118-119.
[207] Mackey (2022) 225. They, however, point out that these formulae could be altered and expanded, presumably according to individual needs: page 223.

"self-authored".[208] This removed some control from the buyer as to what their votive said and looked like. As many inscriptions were likely produced in workshops, a similar lack of complete control over the process existed in the dedication of these objects.[209] The artist might add their own flair or make decisions about elements which the purchaser left unspecified. These decisions might be based on local trends, integrating what was fashionable at the time. Therefore, while permitting some individual expression, certain elements could not be directed. A purchased stone may be unsuitable for fine carving, further reducing the ability of an individual to produce the object they wanted for their particular religious experience. Nevertheless, a "personal" aspect was central to the votive process. There were no expectations for the broader community, other than local or cultural norms encouraging or demanding they leave gifts for the gods. Variations that existed suggest little attempt at regulation. It seems unlikely that the Senate had substantial sway over the tradition, given its ubiquity across the Mediterranean.

In conclusion, members of the elite created rituals to aid the broader community during times of crisis. This demonstrated oversight of religion, determining what was permissible. However, sometimes, civic action was insufficient, not always coping with individual issues. Both elite and non-elite people consequently dedicated personal objects to the gods, to aid in healing and other concerns. For members of the elite, this often encompassed dedicating something on behalf of, and for the benefit of, the whole community, although Verres' dedication in Sicily suggests elite individuals also formed more personal connections to the gods. Material objects within and around Rome attest to a votive tradition that allowed people from across society to meet their own needs.

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[208] For curse tablets with blank spaces, see Urbanova (2018) 37-38. Urbanova also points out that examples that show similarities may attest to productions in workshops, reducing some level of personalisation. Mckie discusses the overall process of depositing a curse tablet, mentioning that many were "self-authored and that individuals did not seek "religious experts" to aid them: (2022) 29. I suggest that the individual dedicator, in a sense, becomes their own "religious expert."

[209] This is somewhat of an assumption, as some inscriptions may not have originated in this way, such as inscription five. However, artworks of many types originated in workshops. For example, see Anguissola discussing statues (2014) 118-119 and Martin discussing amphorae (2015) 289-294. Gordon makes a brief comment about professional stonecutters regarding inscriptions (1951) 75-76.

These objects, particularly inscriptions, retained a civic function, potentially mediated by civic officials, although this was not necessarily always the case.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

Summary

This thesis aimed to analyse religion in the second and first centuries BC, to determine how far individuals could express their interests within and beyond civic religion. Overall, individuals experienced some freedom to express religious interest by participating in varied practices. Simultaneously, civic authorities retained the ability to determine what was acceptable for wider society, introducing new practices and gods. This was not a cynical method of control. Elite and non-elite people were interested in civic gods and continued to worship them during civic rituals. However, individuals simultaneously explored other options that civic authorities deemed unacceptable. This was a complex process as, for instance, astrology was officially discouraged through the expulsion of astrologers, despite members of the elite continuing to seek their services. Civic religion was not in opposition to the individual. Votive traditions permitted "more personal" connections to civic deities, for example. Different practices can be regarded as "more or less personal or civic". Roman generals, for example, might use personal diviners before a battle, something with clear civic importance. Particular forms of haruspicy, even if nominally disliked, in official terms, were utilised at key civic moments, permitting individuals a personal experience. Members of the elite, likely, desired to accommodate a range of religious practices in which the population was interested, to an extent, providing it did not infringe on their authority.

In Chapter Three, the functioning of civic religion was discussed. The Senate retained a prominent position in religious affairs, permitting or disallowing practices available to broader society, determining what was acceptable. The impact of "foreign" religions is notable, allowing the Senate to directly express authority in determining what was "Roman". The extent to which a cult objectively might be seen as "foreign" is debateable. Both Ceres and Magna Mater were understood to be "foreign", despite being a part of the civic pantheon. This permitted individuals to renegotiate what was acceptable despite Magna Mater's integral role in the civic system. At least for Magna Mater's rites, the "foreign" aspects, such as castration, may have caused some

concern, as they differed from what was traditionally regarded as “Roman”. Authors such as Catullus and Lucretius had differing reactions to cult practices, indicating the potential for individuals to express independent views, regardless of what was considered acceptable in civic religion.

Ultimately, both cults were as integrated as any other, forming an official part of civic religion. The “foreign otherness” used to demarcate them indicates that civic authorities had an ongoing desire to negotiate the practices in which broader society participated. Cicero’s speeches indicate that individuals presented independent ideas and arguments. Members of the elite could associate themselves with particular gods, for instance, by issuing coins. However, this remained bound within the civic framework, necessitating that people associate themselves with “traditional norms”. A further example of this is the priestesses of Ceres, who appear to have had some independence specifically within civic religion. Likewise, individuals could participate Eleusinian mysteries, which were, if only implicitly, deemed acceptable by religious authorities.

Chapter Four provided a deeper focus on these themes and the individual. Augural imagery and political debates suggest that individuals could work within civic structures to emphasise they had the favour of the gods in competition with others. Additionally, practices outside of civic religion could be explored. Haruspicy, for instance, fell into a grey area as there were negative perceptions despite these priests being utilised at the civic level. Astrology was often marked as “foreign” outside of the civic system. Nevertheless, individuals, such as Sulla, continued to use these practices, allowing them a more personalised experience to fit their needs at any particular time. The “foreignness” of these practices can be questioned. However, this label marked these forms of divination as problematic. While, as in the preceding chapter, the Senate tried to express control over what was acceptable, the use of “non-civic” practices continued, regardless of the religious choices potentially available.

This also applied to broader society, as people engaged paid diviners to meet their personal needs. Members of the elite reacted negatively to this, in part as they viewed these diviners as a source of religious authority that they did not control. *Vicani haruspices* and astrologers allowed access to a more personal form of divination that was unrelated to civic religion, even if they utilised similar processes for divine communication. While there were occasional, potentially performative, attempts at repression, the evidence that refers to these practices throughout the second and first centuries, into the imperial period, suggests that a deep engagement with more personal forms of religion was an integrated part of Roman society.

In Chapters Five and Six, the reception of philosophy and gifts for the gods, respectively, were considered. While substantially different practices, this confirmed the methods individuals could select to interact with religious ideas and gods. Greek philosophy permitted individuals to discuss perceptions of how religious processes that interested them, personally, functioned, and to generate unique viewpoints on that functioning. There was not complete freedom; elite authors still felt the need to reaffirm to their readers that their writings did not contravene "traditional" norms, suggestive of some civic, societal or cultural pressure exerted on them. Despite this, Cicero and Lucretius presented radical arguments, undermining key principles, such as divine communication. The fears they present were, likely, exaggerated, as their writings did not alter civic practices. Philosophy had been present for a long time. This meant, by the late first century BC, it was an accepted subject, allowing authors to express personal ideas, provided they restate their commitment to the civic system.

Therefore, the presentation of philosophy as a specifically Greek "foreign" practice is problematic. Cicero's justifications for writing were a response to performative attacks, providing an opportunity for him to show his commitment to "traditional" norms while simultaneously presenting himself as innovative by turning something "Greek" into a "Roman" practice. Lucretius also attempted to present himself as an innovative translator while Varro generated the image of an authoritative scholar. All these authors had different methods for achieving their aims. Cicero produced an overview of many

religious-philosophical ideas, Lucretius focussed on a single school of thought, and Varro used satires and history to present his knowledge. Differing forms of discussion about the nature of religion allowed individuals a range of options to express their thoughts separately from performing “traditional” rites.

Similarly, votive offerings allowed some personal expression, as well as allowing individuals to participate in civic religion. Objects were dedicated to civic gods, such as Jupiter and Bona Dea, in public places containing other dedications from the surrounding community. There may have been some hierarchy reinforcement, some individuals only being able to dedicate lower-quality items next to higher-quality, elite examples. At the extreme, richer individuals might dedicate an entire temple to the gods. Nevertheless, individuals could have a personal experience. Each offering represented one instance of a communication with a deity, within which a single person selected a particular site, votive, god and issue, all resulting from individual choices, needs and interests. A person could dedicate a coin in a more private setting inside a thesaurus at a temple or leave a dedicatory inscription alongside a road for everyone to see.

Different offerings with different physical qualities may have allowed some personalisation. Plain or a range of decorative motifs could be chosen. Metal objects feel and look different to an item made of terracotta, attesting to a variety of sensory experiences individuals could select between. External factors influenced these decisions. Economics played a role, although the relative material “cheapness” of many objects likely made them accessible. Members of the elite were responsible for determining where temples were located, and what gods were worshipped there, although the same may not be true for local shrines or natural religious spaces, such as the river Liri. Overall, individual choices were possible to an extent, but these were informed by the individual’s interactions with the wider community, which impacted the ability to have a completely free choice. Even though options existed, the overall process of purchasing and dedicating an object may not have differed substantially from person to person. Overall, theoretical discussions and votive offerings allow a

window into how religion was understood and practiced by the individual while still participating in the civic system.

Consequently, I argue there was a plurality of ways that religion could be experienced in the later Republic. Access to these was facilitated by the expansion of Rome throughout the Mediterranean, increasing the accessibility to new practices, gods and ideas. This allowed the Senate and individual members of the elite to comment on what was acceptable for broader society. Analysis of Magna Mater and Ceres indicates this was an intricate process, with different attitudes taken at different times. The Senate re-evaluated practices and gods introduced earlier, allowing the body to reassert its authority by reiterating or changing what was acceptable, although this also stemmed from genuine religious interest. Similar choices existed for individuals, deciding what would best meet their personal needs, such as visiting a diviner or dedicating an object. However, only the Senate could determine what practices were "official." Similarly to haruspicy, astrology could have been accepted as a civic practice, although the Senate decided not to consult astrologers, demarcating them as "other."

Thus, I conclude civic religion is a somewhat arbitrary line drawn between what civic authorities deemed appropriate and what was not permissible for maintaining the *pax deorum*. This was not a cynical desire for control. The Senate was, likely, deeply concerned with ensuring a correct relationship with the gods, and therefore wished to ensure their decisions met the needs of the whole community. Attacks on "foreignness" often hid a real interest. However, some "outsider practices" were perceived to allow access to authority outside of the body that was traditionally responsible for ensuring the *pax deorum*. Continual reinforcement of commitments to state practices and gods in theoretical works suggests the continuing influence of civic religion on the elite psyche. Equally, this did not prevent the exploration of non-civic rites by individuals. There was no binary choice between practicing "civic" and "non-civic" rites. Someone who visited a foreign diviner did not become "un-Roman", or unable to take part in the civic practices discussed in Chapters Three and Six. For this reason, presentations of

"foreignness" as negative did not reflect reality, although indicate that creating false binaries served a useful function in defining elite civic identity.

While I have used the binary of "civic" and "non-civic" to mark how different practices were perceived, many forms of religious interest could be both. For instance, some forms of *haruspex* were civic, some not. Different categories of the same practices existed, some used for personal reasons to meet personal needs, such as military *haruspices* used by generals or *vicani haruspices* used by wider society. "Official" *haruspices* were used by the Senate to determine how best to resolve communal problems. Similarly, while astrology was not civic, astrometeorology may more easily have been integrated into the civic system, as astronomical signs were already utilised as prodigies, such as at the battle of Pydna. Similarly, votives could be dedicated to civic gods in civic places, or otherwise. A similar issue is discernible in the use of a binary of "foreign" and "traditional" categorisation. As pointed out in the introduction, I follow scholars such as Scheid in suggesting that there was no "true core" of Roman religion.[1] There was always a mix of different cultural ideas. Nevertheless, these are categories with which first-century authors engaged, and should, consequently, be analysed.

Evidence suggests *haruspices*, for instance, maintained a "foreign" character and were not understood as a "Roman" priesthood in the "traditional" sense, despite being used by the Senate regularly. Therefore, when discussing categories such as "foreign", "traditional", "civic" and "non-civic", a nuanced approach must be taken, as the boundaries between each are blurred, representing how individuals perceive themselves and their surroundings. Overall, Roman religion was a patchwork of practices that were all ultimately "Roman" but allowed individuals to define themselves by, or against, these practices. Both individual expression and civic rites were important, intertwining facets of religion in the Republic. Cicero, in writing challenging

[1] See my discussion in the introduction, particularly n. 110.

literature, did not become an atheist, and individuals who visited astrologers were not attempting to undermine civic religion.

The concepts of private and public religion must be considered, although they have not been a major focus. As in the introduction, it seems intuitive to connect private *sacra* to individual action, and public *sacra* to the civic model. I continue to think that civic religion had a key public role. While I have not focussed on public festivals, these are an example, and there are communal aspects in the cults discussed in Chapter Three and the responses to healing crises discussed in Chapter Six. *Sacra Privata,* however, should not be equated with a modern conception of "private". An interaction between an individual and diviner at the Circus Maximus did not have the same public significance, although it took place in a public area, and was, therefore, not truly "private". Similarly, elite authors developed personal interpretations of religion, which they freely published in works of philosophy for, theoretically, anyone to read. Cicero described public oversight over "private" rites, although it is unclear how this would work in practice. Consequently, "public" and "private" are not useful categories in this discussion. Regardless of whether a practice was "public" or "private", some level of personalisation may have been possible, as indicated by votive offerings.

While civic religion and individual religious expressions are not opposed, it is useful to discuss their intersection. While the civic model has remained prominent, more recent modern analyses have sought to place greater emphasis on the individual. This is not necessarily at the expense of civic religion. Rather, there is growing recognition that civic religion is not the totality of the religious experience available in the ancient world. Therefore, I follow Rüpke's line of argument that civic religion can be supplemented with an understanding of the individual.[2] As suggested in Chapter Three, civic religion was a binding force aiding in social cohesion, as civic authorities determined the practices in which everyone took part. This was not just a "top-down" control, whereby members of the elite enforced religious rulings on others. Instead, I follow Driediger-Murphy's

[2] Rüpke (2013b) 6. While supporting civic religion, Scheid argues that we should not strongly perceive the individual as subordinated to the "public". He sees this as an exaggeration (2015a) 42.

suggestion that elite individuals had genuine respect for religious practices, causing them to be bound by the same rules.[3] This is illustrated by Cicero's debate with Clodius. Despite being prominent political figures, both were forced to present their points of view. Similarly, in the conflict between Caesar and Bibulus, both could claim to be in the right, and Caesar's legislation remained in doubt, emphasising the ability of civic religion to have a binding effect on members of the elite as well.[4] However, I suggest, as indicated above, the Senate maintained a substantial degree of influence as a collective, determining who was in the right.

Justification of approaches.

While scholars such as Rüpke and Bendlin have explored the idea of individuals and alternatives to the civic model, my approach has differed in the use of a case-study-based approach to analyse the nature of individual religion, specifically, in the later Republic. This aids the debate regarding individuality in Roman religion in several ways. Firstly, the study of individuals as religious agents tends to skew towards the imperial period. For instance, North is unsure whether what he terms "religious identity" existed in the centuries BC and, if it did, was it bound to other political, social and ethnic identities. Woolf points out that debates regarding individuality often focus on Christianity and, primarily, uses material from the early imperial period.[5] I have shifted focus further back, into the Republican period, as I believe the evidence I have presented suggests individuality in religion can be more substantially emphasised in earlier centuries. For example, political conflicts in the first century often revolved around individuals with differing interpretations of how religion should, or could, operate. I do not think the Second and First centuries were the first period in which this form of individualisation occurred, although the numerous examples due to surviving evidence make this period a strong starting place.

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[3] For instance, see Driediger-Murphy (2019a) 191. Here, Driediger-Murphy emphasises how the Senate could be bound by religious issues and genuine emotional responses to them.
[4] See my discussion in Chapter Four.
[5] North (2013) 79. I take this to mean that North continues to see the individual as interlinked substantially with civic religion. This is an aspect that I do not discount, but perceive that other processes occurred; Woolf (2013) 138-142. Ultimately, I seek to emphasise the individual more than North and suggest that alternatives to civic practices were available. The entire "agency" section of the 2013 volume focusses on later Christian evidence.

Secondly, I have attempted to introduce more evidence relating to non-elite religious practices. This is problematic, as many elite sources present non-elite actions negatively, although I suggest that there are hints at how those outside elite circles may have experienced religion in a personalised way, relating to divination and votive offerings. Votive offerings, particularly, have long been understood as a methodology for allowing individual religious expression.[6] I point out that they were dedicated by people across society, and provide a window into the general populace's experience of religion. Further application of Graham's ideas and "materialist" approaches may allow a deeper analysis of how individuals from across society experienced a personal relationship with the gods.[7]

I have attempted to create a broad interpretation of religious life in the second and first centuries BC. This "overarching" approach aimed to provide an overview of how religion can be understood, incorporating civic practices and a greater emphasis on individuals. For example, the personal, theoretical discussions I analysed in Chapter Five occurred at the same time as the political debates that were outlined in Chapter Three, which focussed on civic gods and rituals. The Senate marking its authority occurred at the same time that individuals dedicated votive objects and visited personal diviners. By selecting these topics, I attempt to represent some facets of the diversity that existed in the Roman religious world. Rather than focus on a single aspect, I seek to show how the concept of "personal or individual religion" can be applied in a broader sense, which may allow further discussion of the aspects highlighted. While discussions of religious philosophy and votive offerings, for instance, are substantially different, it was a deliberate choice to examine them as part of multiple opportunities to express personal interests. As many choices were not at odds with civic religion, similar ideas can be applied to the collective decisions of the Senate or priesthoods. These arguments may benefit from further analysis of the debates occurring within these bodies. This may shed further light on how individuals affected civic matters. I have hinted at this concerning the debates between Cicero and Clodius, where the Senate may have been

[6] Chiarini (2017) 163-164.; Graham and Draycott (2017) 9.
[7] For Graham's discussion of "new materialism", see particularly (2021) page 11.

divided in deciding with whom to side. I understand the Senate was comprised of individuals with personal ideas.

Therefore, while topics discussed, at first, seem disparate, they should be seen as representing concurrent processes at different levels of society. As individuals differentiate themselves through making choices, those choices can be emphasised, presenting the multiplicity of ways religion could be experienced, rather than focusing on a single cult or practice. Analysing types of divination, philosophies, cults and practices allows the choices and range of experiences that were available to come to the fore. This range of evidence is suggestive of the avenues scholars can explore to further analyse the individual. As argued in Chapter Four, the continuing expulsion of astrologers suggests individuals desired to take part in religious processes that could be personalised, unrelated to state matters that were often, although not exclusively, the concern of civic religion. Likewise, while personal use of diviners, such as haruspices and astrologers, may have had a public function when used by members of the elite, they remain of a more personal use, not necessarily sanctioned by the Senate. The use of even accepted civic divination, such as depictions of augury on coins, could have an individualistic dimension. While some conclusions can only be tentative, this is suggestive of new ways Roman Republican religion can be interpreted.

My arguments are interrelated with Simmel's views that the individual is a unique entity comprised of experiences in different social circles, outlined in the introduction. For example, person A may visit an astrologer at the Circus Maximus, on the way home from dedicating a votive offering, while person B may visit a *sortilegus*, attend a sacrifice and then dedicate a votive offering next to that of person A. The emphasis placed on the plurality of experiences described is intended to show how this form of identity development could have occurred. These individuals could, potentially, have different experiences. Simultaneously, civic religion provided a religious structure. Many personal experiences used civic ideas, gods and rituals. Therefore, I aimed to show the extent to which the lives of individuals and the civic system meshed. In summary, I suggest that individuals expressed religious interests under civic structures, using practices both inside and outside its boundaries, as determined by members of the

elite. The extent to which this was possible, in practice, was determined by many factors, including location, status and resources. Different practices may have allowed a higher degree of personalisation, such as a commission process when purchasing votives. Each practice can be considered independently in this manner, although all the examples discussed permitted, at least, some degree of expression if individuals could access them. While poorer, uneducated people may not have been able to write philosophy, they could express their interests through visiting a diviner.

Further research

The approaches that I have presented could be applied to other periods and cultures. I have touched on current interest in the imperial period. It may be productive to apply similar ideas to the Greek world. Sourvinou-Inwood perceived that, while there was no personal spiritual experience for the individual in Greek religion, the individual was a religious agent whose experience was mediated by the *polis*.[8] While this likely remained the case, my arguments that there were individual choices, both permitted by civic authorities and outside civic structures, could be applied here. Greek city-states existed in the same Mediterranean context as Rome, exposed to other cultures and ideas. For instance, while mystery cults are discussed as an aspect of civic/*polis* religion, reassessments to find evidence for individual thought may be beneficial. Katharina Waldner has emphasised the role of the individual within these cults, following on from Walter Burkert's statement that these cults arose during a period of individual discovery.[9] However, in discussions of the individual, other aspects of *polis* religion are not analysed substantially. This may be due to the focus on later periods and Christianity. A potential avenue for exploration is the rites of Dionysius, which had a civic dimension, such as the festival celebrated in 285 BC for the accession of Ptolemy II. Both public and private forms of worship are recorded on inscriptions.[10] Deeper

[8] Sourvinou-Inwood (2000b) 44-47. Older scholarship tends not to go this far, focussing more on overarching gods and practices such as festival calendars. E.g. Burkert (1985) 225-227. Polignac's 1984 study (translated into English in 1995), for instance, focussed on social relationships which remain important but no longer the sole focus of scholarship.
[9] Waldner (2013) 217-218. See Burkert (1987) 11.
[10] Public festival: Bowden (2010) 107. Examples of private worship (ibid) 121. In a Roman context, Livy characterises elements of the cult as private, suggesting private initiations. See Dickie, who interprets Livy's account as having a particularly private/individual dimension in these rites (2003) 157. While Livy is problematic in understanding the cult, presenting it as new when it was likely that it had a long presence,

exploration of the cult in the Greek world may, therefore, be possible, which is harder in the Italian context, due to the lack and nature of the evidence. I do not mean to suggest that every city-state or cultural group allowed individual expression to occur to the same extent as I have argued in Rome, but this approach may lead to more nuanced understandings of how religion in the ancient world operated.

These ideas can also be applied to the earlier Republic. As noted in the votive chapter, anatomical terracotta votives were deposited regularly from the sixth to second centuries. While I focussed on later examples, I see no reason why similar arguments could not be applied earlier. There are issues with other forms of evidence, as we lack first-hand accounts of political debates, such as those that Cicero provides. Livy is partially preserved and may provide some insights into how individualism occurred, although we lack much of his third-century narrative. In his account of the Second Punic War, Livy discussed Scipio Africanus spending time in the temple of Jupiter, leading some to speculate he was, himself, divine.[11] This, perhaps, is an early indication of the growing emphasis on individual generals, which culminated with Caesar and Octavian, possibly representing similar themes to my discussion of how augural symbols became associated with individuals in Chapter Four.

I discussed the late Republican retelling and interpretation of the story of Appius Claudius throwing sacred chickens into the sea. Further investigation of similar uses of divination during the Punic wars and earlier may prove fertile ground for exploring individualism, although this may reveal more about how individuals in later centuries understood religious processes. The success of this approach may depend on how far we can successfully identify Livy's sources and, consequently, the quality of the evidence. Livy may provide insight into the religious lives of non-elite people in earlier centuries. He discussed how priests and prophets took over people's minds, claiming Roman practices fell into disuse during the Second Punic War:

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it seems reasonable that this was an aspect. For the issue of Livy presenting the cult as new, see North (1979) 87-89. For issues with Livy's account more generally, see Walsh (1996) 199-200.

[11] Livy 26.19.5-7.

> Roman ritual was falling into disuse, and not just in private, and within the home. In public, too – in the forum and on the Capitol – there were crowds of women whose sacrifices and prayers to the gods did not follow traditional practice. Priests and prophets had taken possession of the minds of the public, and the number of such people were swollen by the rustic proletariat.[12]

This passage reveals similar patterns to Cicero and Cato's discussion of dangerous diviners, including fear of non-elite poverty and "non-Roman" traditions. While Livy may be echoing the perception of his own time, I see no reason why personal diviners would not have existed earlier, and why similar concerns would not have existed.

A clearer example of earlier individual action arises when Livy mentions that Fabius Pictor was sent by the Senate to the oracle of Delphi.[13] While this seems an individual acting on behalf of the Senate, Livy later implies Pictor acted without approval over the exact religious processes, as he was so far removed in Greece. The Senate was only made aware of what action was taken when he returned and reported to the Senate:

> After reading this out, translated from the Greek verse, Pictor added that on emerging from the oracle he had immediately sacrificed with incense and wine to all the specified deities; and that he had been instructed by the temple priest that, just as he had worn a laurel wreath both coming to the temple and while performing the sacrifice, so he should also wear it to board ship and not remove it before reaching Rome.[14]

While his actions were widely accepted, this seems to be a particular individual taking on the role of deciding the best course of religious action, usually decided by the Senate. Similar themes to the individual use of personal diviners at key civic moments, such as before a battle, are echoed here. The third century may, consequently, prove to

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[12] *nec iam in secreto modo atque intra parietes abolebantur Romani ritus, sed in publico etiam ac foro Capitolioque mulierum turba erat nec sacrificantium nec precantium deos patrio more. sacrificuli ac vates ceperant hominum mentes; quorum numerum auxit rustica plebs.* Livy 25.1.7-8. (modified translation of Yardley (2006) 252).

[13] Livy 23.57.4-6

[14] *Haec ubi ex Graeco carmine interpretata recitavit, tum dixit se oraculo egressum extemplo iis omnibus divis rem divinam ture ac vino fecisse, 5iussumque a templi antistite, sicut coronatus laurea corona et oraculum adisset et rem divinam fecisset, ita coronatum navem adscendere nec ante deponere eam quam Romam pervenisset* Livy 23.11.4-6.

be a key period for the development of individualism if further examples can be identified and examined. The same conclusions may not necessarily be drawn, although taking a more nuanced approach that considers individual expression more deeply may be productive in opening new avenues of discussion.

In light of my discussion of "private" and "public" religion, these categories may be more useful in researching what was regarded as taboo. Magic, for instance, may generally require a more "private" setting for conducting necessary rituals.[15] However, as the line between "magic" and "religion" is blurred, it is difficult to determine how far it is "non-civic", or whether it is useful to discuss as an independent subject. [16] I wish, simply, to draw attention to this complexity and highlight potential avenues of discussion going forward. Ultimately, I follow Kindt's view that there is a spectrum of public and private practices rather than definitive categories.[17]

Analysing earlier material may allow changes over time to be identified. I have followed Orlin's view that there was a push to develop a sense of "Romanness" in the later Republic. Analysis of earlier cult introductions such as Apollo, Hercules and Juno Erycina may clarify how individuals and civic authorities interacted to introduce new gods through temple dedications, with less focus on concerns for "foreignness."[18] This may reveal new information about how the Romans perceived themselves, and how the Senate expressed its authority. This combines the evidence and approaches of Chapters Three and Six. Possibly, these approaches may not yield enough evidence to state that individual action was a major aspect of religion in earlier centuries, if investigation suggests most individuals conformed to the Senate's wishes. However,

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[15] Scheid mentions this in relation to sacrifices (2003) 79-80. This could also include inscriptions like curse tablets, which some perceive as private. For a summary, see Natalías, who has some reservations (2018) 10. However, I suggest that some deposits in public spaces retained a public dimension. Similar to the diviners I discuss in Chapter Four. Some other examples are discussed by Dickie, who mentions *sacrificulus vates,* priests/prophets that conducted sacrifices, which may have conducted private rites (2003) 157.

[16] For the similarities between "religion" and "magic", see Emma-Jayne Graham, who argues that both categories did not offer consistent experiences. Her argument that religious and magical and religious agency were produced in the same way indicates a close relationship: (2021) 198.

[17] Discussed in the introductory chapter.

[18] I discuss Orlin's views in the introduction and literature review.

this itself would inform understanding of how religious practices developed. Individual forms of religious expression may be important in earlier centuries, even if not to the same extent. There is little reason to think the political debates described in this thesis were any less intense in earlier periods. While the Senate was not a unified body in the later Republic, it is unclear whether the earlier Republic differed.

Limitations

My approaches are limited, as the overall analysis of the late Republic is not comprehensive. As hinted at by my reference to Scipio Africanus, above, the connections that certain individuals created between themselves and the divine are a further productive area of research. This could encompass the association that Sulla, Pompey and Caesar made with Venus, as well as the substantial honours that were given to Caesar, and the debate regarding how far a cult was intended for him in his lifetime, comprehensively outlined by Weinstock and Koortbojian.[19] Using these scholars' research, in combination with evidence from earlier centuries into the imperial period, may allow changes over time to be identified. This alone could fill a significant study, although I have focussed on a broader approach to analyse more obscure evidence. A benefit of this has been the focus on non-elite individuals. Other potential topics that could be analysed include funeral orations, deeper inspections of the multiplicity of divination available, and prayers. Focussing on these aspects would provide a fuller picture of the religious life of individuals in the second and first centuries. I presented the topics of cults, divination, theoretical approaches and votive offerings as case studies to provide a baseline of examples, particularly relevant in the later Republic, to highlight how the debate regarding individuals can be applied to periods before the principate. Overall, I argue that the approach I have taken was necessary to emphasise the diverse approaches to religion that individuals could take. No study can discuss every facet of religious practice in the ancient world.

A further limitation, as pointed out in the thesis, is the difficulty of identifying non-elite action through the lens of written sources. This is alleviated by the votive offerings

[19] Weinstock (1971); Koortbojian (2013).

chapter, highlighting the utility of material evidence in uncovering aspects of everyday religion. However, particularly when discussing divination, we must rely on sources that seem to disparage non-elite practices. In my view, this does not prevent us from using these sources, as they still reveal the importance of divinatory practices in day-to-day life. We must remember that elite sources represent concerns about who holds religious authority, and take care when interpreting elite views. The criticism of astrology, while being used by elite individuals, suggests this. Even in "traditional" forms of divine communication, such as sacrifice, there is some criticism of what elite sources seemed to regard as "poorer" forms. I suggest this formed part of elite identity formation, expressing what they, both as individuals and a collective, thought was an appropriate way to communicate to the gods. This may have allowed them to reinforce to their peers how they were able to maintain civic "traditions." These issues must be considered when interpreting non-elite practices.

I have, tentatively, argued that these views may have inhibited the ability of civic religion to act as a unifying force, potentially encouraging alternative, non-civic practices. If a non-elite individual was disparaged for sacrificing in a way that was acceptable in the civic system, they may not have understood what a member of the elite would perceive as "non-civic" as substantially different. The evidence for this is unclear, although it is a potential effect of the views in written sources. Further examination into non-elite practices may shed further light on this. Possibly, individuals simply sought practices and gods that interested them, regardless of what members of the elite thought. If the average person was not concerned with the views presented in written sources, they were, at least, presumably aware of official decrees, expulsions and restrictions. This suggests there was a possible dissonance between what non-elite people wished to practice and what members of the elite thought was acceptable, implying civic religion did not always provide the individual with the experience they felt they needed. This explains some of the phenomena I have outlined, including the dedication of objects to obscure deities that received less civic focus at times of personal crisis.

Final comments

The bodies of evidence from each chapter, while disparate, hint at the multitude of ways that religion was experienced both by the community and by individuals. There were numerous opportunities for personal choice, such as choosing to visit one of multiple diviners, emphasising their position in a cult, discussing theoretical ideas and dedicating votives meaningful to them. All of these processes were occurring simultaneously at different levels of society. However, there were also constraints, as societal norms likely played a role in what was acceptable. Cults had to be accepted by civic authorities to become easily accessible, and theoretical discussions took place with the understanding that civic norms were respected. The votive objects that I discuss were often dedicated to civic gods as part of these accepted cults. Occasional repressions against diviners indicate elite attempts to define what was acceptable, although this seems to be the area where most freedom could be experienced, as members of the elite could not, and possibly did not want, to end access to paid diviners. A picture, therefore, emerges of a complex relationship between the individual and the civic. Different areas of someone's religious life may have afforded more or less personal choices, and modern scholars have begun to discuss individual actors more deeply while also acknowledging the importance of society in guiding these processes.

I draw these conclusions from the thesis as a whole:

- Independent of the civic model, individuals could select from a variety of different religious choices in their daily lives, allowing them to explore religious interests.
- Civic practices, simultaneously, remained important, as they continued to provide for the needs of the community, which continued to participate in them. Additionally, they allowed personal expression in some settings.
- Both elite and non-elite individuals were able to express themselves. Some may not have been able to participate in all practices that allowed this if they lacked the resources. However, a range of practices of different costs potentially facilitated a level of personal choice.

- "Foreign" religions increased the choices available to civic authorities and individuals, as contact with the broader Mediterranean allowed new practices to enter Rome.
- Many attacks against "foreign" practices were performative, such as those against Magna Mater and the perception of Greek theory. Rome was always a hybridised culture.
- This reaction allowed civic bodies to highlight their authority by deciding that practices were "foreign" or unacceptable, although individuals from all backgrounds continued to take part in these practices.

More research could be done to further solidify these conclusions. However, the evidence presented here is enough to suggest that refocussing on the individual in the centuries BC may provide a new way of interpreting how religion was experienced in the ancient world.

The renegotiation of what was acceptable civic practice and the ability of individuals to select what mattered to them indicate that religion was a dynamic concept. Varro and Cicero's focus on ancient institutions was fair, as many potentially understood religion in this way and experienced it as such. Senators could point to a body of traditions that were previously tested, that they could reuse, as suggested in Chapter Six. However, the ability to participate in forms of divination not used by the Senate, to discuss religious theory that did not necessarily match civic norms and the potential to deal with personal issues through votives discussed in Chapters Four and Five, suggests that individuals could also understand their actions differently. I have not gone as far as to suggest there was an emotional "belief". Scholarship, generally, has discounted this notion, perceiving it as anachronistic, although recent scholarship has attempted to reintroduce this, to an extent.[20] I think that this is a potentially fruitful line of enquiry, although a deeper discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis. Refocussing on the individual may prove useful in these debates. A more nuanced, less "civic-centric" view, which considers why individuals selected particular actions, may allow researchers to

[20] The view where belief is separated from religion/ritual is maintained by Scheid (2003) 173 and (2015a) 123 as well as Beard et al (1998a) 42-43. Liebeschuetz in particular suggests that belief had no impact on the Romans as they rarely expressed fear of the gods (1979) 3. For a summary of the development of these views and newer arguments that reintroduce belief, see Mackey (2022) 3.

discuss the emotional, physical or mental needs of people in the ancient world, and why they felt these could be rectified through a relationship with a deity. The late Republic may be a useful starting point, as the philosophical dialogues on religion suggest individuals were grappling with key questions about the nature of the divine, even if this did not impact state policy.

Ultimately, the concept of "civic" religion may remain useful in some discussions, although it is unclear, in many cases, where it ends and where other forms of religion begin. It encompassed perceived "foreign", "traditional", "public" and "personal" forms of religion. Therefore, it may be time to begin considering alternative ideas more fully. While these concepts blur together, they may remain useful in discussing aspects of Roman religion in general terms, as long as scholars ensure that they maintain a nuanced understanding. For instance, other practices and even gods may exist in the "grey area" spectrum I discuss, concerning different forms of haruspicy. To an extent, these categories remain necessary, as we require tools to investigate the ancient world, despite the differences between modern and ancient society. It may be the case that, eventually, these categories can be supplanted with others that more accurately convey how religions were experienced. I believe that future studies may benefit from taking similar approaches, revealing new interpretations of religious practices more broadly than this study can achieve. This would permit further modifications of the civic model, which more substantially incorporates the plurality of religious practices and cults in the ancient Mediterranean. A focus on individuals is one way of achieving this.

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