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UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO AT BOULDER

Damnation to Divinity

The Myth, Memory, and History of Monarchical
Power at the Dawn of the Roman Empire

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09 April 2013

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Chapter 1: The Fall of a King to the Birth of an Empire

“Every history is by nature critical, and all historians have sought to denounce the hypocritical mythologies of their predecessors.”
~ Pierre Nora¹

The Roman War for Independence

In 509 B.C., the people of Rome overthrew their king, a man of Etruscan origin named Lucius Tarquinius Superbus – “Tarquin the Proud” – and replaced him with a new republican government.² In his exile, Tarquin and his family took refuge in several Etruscan cities before ending up in Clusium amongst the court of King Lars Porsenna. According to the Roman historian Livy, the former royal family of Rome beseeched Porsenna not to allow fellow Etruscans to live the rest of their lives in exile and poverty. Furthermore, the Tarquins used this time at the king’s ear to convince him that Rome had set a dangerous precedent. After all, if the expulsion of a king, especially an Etruscan king, went unpunished, then the entire institution of monarchy would surely fall. It had fallen in Rome, and nothing was stopping it from falling elsewhere; even in Clusium. The Tarquins’ strategy paid off. Porsenna championed the cause of the ousted king, and Clusium’s army marched south with the intent of bringing Rome to heel.³

In Livy’s own words, “Never before had such fear gripped the Senate.”⁴ The Etruscan forces marched on Rome and almost immediately seized the Janiculum Hill on the western bank of the Tiber River. Porsenna then turned his eyes across the river on the city of Rome herself. According to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek contemporary of Livy, the Roman and

¹ Pierre Nora, “Between History and Memory: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” *Representations* No. 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring, 1989): 10.

² Werner Keller, *The Etruscans* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1974), 199.; T.J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000-264 BC)* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 215.; Scholars have listed dates for the expulsion of the kings ranging from 510 B.C. to 507 B.C. However, Keller’s and Cornell’s dating of 509 B.C. seems to be a standardly agreed upon year.

³ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 2.9.; Keller, *Etruscans*, 203.

⁴ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 2.9 (trans. T.J. Luce).

Etruscan armies clashed at the head of a bridge near the Etruscan lines.⁵ Both Livy and Dionysius wrote that the Etruscans proved too much for the Romans. Rome's soldiers retreated across the bridge, all save one: Horatius Cocles. Cocles stood alone and terrified the enemy of his people, deflecting their spears and defeating opponents with his sword and shield. At his back, his fellow soldiers destroyed the bridge. As it collapsed around him, Cocles leapt into the waters of the Tiber and swam to shore without losing any of his arms or armor.⁶ The hero survived his struggle, and achieved his goal: Rome was saved from being sacked. However, she was not free from danger; from his side of the Tiber, Porsenna was forced to alter his plans. Instead of an assault on Rome, he resorted to placing the city under siege.⁷

The sources diverge on how, exactly, this war came to end. Livy's history suggests that Porsenna was impressed with the bravery and nobility of the Romans on the battlefield and with the resolve of the citizenry at home. Accordingly, he sought a negotiated peace, on the condition that Rome restore the lands of Veii to her people, provide hostages in exchange for the removal of Porsenna's garrison from the Janiculum, and allow the Tarquins to be restored to power. So great was Porsenna's admiration for his foe, he still allowed peace even when his final condition was rejected.⁸ Dionysius tells a similar story, although his account suggests that Porsenna did not even bother to ask Rome to reinstate their king.⁹ Other sources still suggest that a peace was not achieved at all, and that Porsenna successfully invaded and occupied Rome.¹⁰ Nevertheless, all of these accounts have a common end. Rome may not have won the war, but she had won her

⁵ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 5.22.3.

⁶ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 2.10.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 5.24.1-3.

⁷ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 2.11.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.12-14.

⁹ Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 5.25-35.

¹⁰ Keller, *Etruscans*, 204.

independence. The Tarquins were never reinstated as monarchs, and the city of Rome continued to be governed by her people.

Rome's Memory of Monarchy

The deposition of Tarquinius Superbus brought an end to nearly two hundred and fifty years of Roman monarchy, or so the extant histories tell us.¹¹ From the ashes of war, the Roman Republic was reborn. To the Romans, the reign of Tarquinius Superbus was a formative period in their past; the historical moment in which *res publica* – the people – wrested power from the hands of a tyrant, and assumed that power themselves. In the person of their seventh and final king, the Romans found a symbol of cruelty and oppression, as well as a way to explain why Rome as a society was forever hateful and mistrustful of autocracy.¹²

This story is highly romanticized, and indeed, many modern historians have questioned its legitimacy. While Lars Porsenna is thought to have been a historical figure, the validity of the Tarquin clan, and indeed the entire history of Roman monarchy, has been called into question.¹³ Some scholars have drawn attention to the fact that the archaeology of early Rome conflicts with much of the traditional chronology, although a number of these academics accept the fifth, sixth, and seventh kings as being at least somewhat grounded in historical fact.¹⁴ Others report the history of each of these three monarchs as if it were indeed verifiable reality, declining to question anything other than the glaringly mythic features or possible factual errors.¹⁵ Others still have argued that Roman rule in the sixth century B.C. was less a legitimate monarchy and more

¹¹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.60.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 5.1.1.; Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 121.; Agnes Carr Vaughan, *The Etruscans* (New York: Barnes & Noble Book, 1993), 148.

¹² Rossella Lorenzi, "Unraveling the Etruscan Enigma," *Archaeology* 63 No. 6 (November 2010): n.p., accessed February 18, 2012, *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost.

¹³ R.M. Ogilvie, *Early Rome and the Etruscans* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1983), 88.; Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 121-141.

¹⁴ Keller, *Etruscans*, 119-120.; Emeline Richardson, *The Etruscans: Their Art and Civilization* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 65.

¹⁵ See: Vaughan, *The Etruscans*, 126-161.; Ogilvie, *Early Rome and the Etruscans*, 62-91.; H.H. Scullard, *The Etruscan Cities and Rome* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 254-266.

a succession of petty chiefs and warlords, some of whom may have been Etruscan, and one of whom may have been named Tarquinius Superbus.¹⁶

Determining whether or not Tarquin the Proud, or for that matter any of the Roman kings, were “real” historical figures is a worthy endeavor, albeit one that may ultimately be unattainable. In all likelihood, there will never be an interpretation regarding the current evidence for or against the kings that satisfies every scholar. Similarly, there may never be an archaeological discovery that can settle the debate conclusively. To that end, perhaps some historians should shift their focus from uncovering the “truth” of the Roman monarchical tradition to analyzing the power of the remembered Roman past. The fact of the matter is, to the Romans who heard, told, and wrote these stories Rome’s monarchical past was not memory and certainly not myth, assuming they even conceptualized “myth” and “memory” in terms we today would understand. These stories were fact, “truth,” and recorded history. In fact, the belief in this past was so strong that it not only made an impact on the social makeup of the Roman people, but it affected the progression of Roman history itself. For one man, the failure to recognize the power of this memory cost him his life. For his successor, however, the ability to manipulate this memory enabled him to change the very structure of Roman society, and alter the course of world history in the process.

Thus Fell Caesar

Roughly four hundred and sixty five years after the founding of the Republic, Julius Caesar was assassinated during a session of the Roman senate. According to Suetonius, a Roman historian writing in the early second century A.D., about sixty people were involved in the

¹⁶ Timothy Nolan Gantz, “The Tarquin Dynasty,” *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* Bd. 24 H. 4 (4th Qtr., 1975), pp. 539-540.

conspiracy against him.¹⁷ As Caesar took his seat, the conspirators surrounded him, at first under the pretense of paying him compliments. According to tradition, a senator by the name of Tillius Cimber approached Caesar as if he were going to ask a favor of the *dictator perpetuo*. Caesar waved Tillius off, suggesting that he should submit his request at a later occasion. In response, Tillius grabbed Caesar by his toga and pulled it from his shoulders. Servilius Casca, another of the conspirators, drew his dagger. Caesar, according to Suetonius, was able to cry “This is violence!” before Casca stabbed him below his throat. After sustaining twenty two further wounds, Julius Caesar fell dead.¹⁸

This is another very dramatic story from Roman history, though it is one that is more or less accepted as established historical fact. The assassination of Julius Caesar on the 15th of March 44 B.C. can be traced directly to the ousting of King Tarquin more than four and a half centuries earlier.¹⁹ Caesar had made a claim to power that was unprecedented in the history of the Republic. In the eyes of the Roman people, specifically the Roman aristocracy, his actions in doing so, and the honors he achieved as a result, were unacceptable. In Suetonius’s words, Caesar accepted “excessive honours” including having “a statue among those of the ancient kings...”²⁰ In other words, despite whatever “good qualities” Caesar might have had, he had overstepped his bounds. Even Suetonius, writing during the Roman Empire, comments that Caesar “abused his power, and was justly slain.”²¹

However, Caesar’s death was historically significant for another, far more important reason. His assassination sparked a chain of events that would lead to several civil wars, and

¹⁷ Suetonius, Julius Caesar, 80.4.; Michael Grant, forward to *The Twelve Caesars [De vita Caesarum]*, by Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus [Suetonius], trans. Robert Graves (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), 8.

¹⁸ Suetonius, Julius Caesar, 82 (trans. Robert Graves).; Plutarch, Life of Caesar, 66.3-7.; Plutarch, Life of Brutus, 17.

¹⁹ Date for the assassination found in: Ronald Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Roman Empire: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 5.

²⁰ Suetonius, Julius Caesar, 76.1 (tran. Robert Graves).

²¹ Ibid. (trans. J.C. Rolfe).

would ultimately result in Caesar's great-nephew and posthumously adopted son, Gaius Octavius – renamed Gaius Iulius Caesar Octavianus (Octavian) after his adoption – seizing control of Rome. By 31 B.C. Octavian had defeated his final military rival, and by 27 B.C., he was voted a series of official powers that cemented him as sole and unchallenged ruler of Rome. In this same year, the year historians generally cite as the beginning of his rule as emperor, he was also voted the title “Augustus” by the Roman senate, and it is by this title that he is known in subsequent years. It is also in this year historians claim the Roman Republic officially fell and Rome was reborn as the Empire.²²

It is this historical contradiction that shall serve as the focus of this thesis. After all, Julius Caesar met his end because he had been too bold in his play for preeminence. Though Caesar never made an official attempt to end the Republic, he had become far too powerful for the liking of many Romans. He was an autocrat who, for all intents and purposes, was a king by another name. Kingship, regardless of the name it went by, could not be tolerated in the Roman state, and Caesar paid for his offense with his life. However, less than twenty years later, Augustus, a man who was both a relative of Caesar's and calling himself by Caesar's name, had gained absolute power in Rome. How was he able to do this? In a society that so hated and feared monarchy, and especially in an atmosphere where assassination was an acceptable and tested method of keeping autocracy at bay, how was Augustus able to succeed where his adoptive father had failed?

The answer is, unsurprisingly, quite complicated. However, there are some general trends that we can see in the extant writings from the age of Augustus that provide potential clues as to how Augustus's rise was possible. In the writings of Marcus Tullius Cicero, specifically *De re publica* (“On the Republic”) written between 54 and 52 B.C., one finds an explicit admission by

²² Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 5-22.; J.A. Crook, “Political History, 30 B.C. to A.D. 14,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History Vol. X: The Augustan Empire (43 B.C.-A.D. 69)*, edited by Alan K. Bowman et. al. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 76, 79.

a Roman that kingship was not, in itself, a social evil. Rather, it was tyranny by the king that was unacceptable, and which must be combatted at all costs.²³ Knowing this, one must look at Livy's writings, published between 27 and 25 B.C., from a new perspective.²⁴ Whereas kings such as Romulus, the mythical founder of Rome, Numa Pompilius, his successor, and even Tarquin's father, Tarquinius Priscus, were explicitly described as just and virtuous men, Tarquin the Proud was described as incredibly unjust and tyrannical, often cartoonishly so.

Thus the door was open for any Roman to achieve sole power, provided they were able to avoid the accusation of being a "tyrant." However, Augustus had one final hurdle, one that Julius Caesar, among others, had failed to clear. Also in *De re publica*, Cicero acknowledged that "the overbearing and arrogant nature of [the younger] Tarquin" was the sole reason that the title of "king" had become so unfavorable to the people of Rome.²⁵ Tarquin the Proud had become synonymous with kingship, and in turn made kingship synonymous with tyranny. Augustus had to ensure, therefore, that he was never accused of being a king or anything similar to it. Augustus seems to have navigated this social and political pitfall masterfully. For one thing, Augustus was careful never to refer to himself as a "king" or, for that matter, any title that could be mistaken as such. Instead, Augustus preferred the moniker of *princeps* – "first man" – a "first citizen" in a restored Republic of equals.²⁶ Augustus also seems to have done everything in his power to distance himself from and contrast himself with the popular notion of a tyrant whenever he could.

²³ Cicero, *De re publica*, 1.55-64.; For translation of title, see: Jonathan Powell and Niall Rudd, introduction to *The Republic and the Law [De re publica and De legibus]*, by Cicero, trans. Niall Rudd (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), ix.; For dates, see: Powell and Rudd, "Table of Dates (BC)," in *The Republic and the Laws*, xlii.

²⁴ Dates found in: P.G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 5.

²⁵ Cicero, *De re publica*, 1.62.

²⁶ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 19.; Alain Gowing, *Empire and Memory: The Representation of the Roman Republic in Imperial Culture* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 18-19.

To analyze how Augustus was able to do this, we must remove ourselves for a time from the ancient past, and delve into modern social theory. In recent years, the field of history and memory has become a thriving field of study. The process of how humans and human societies remember their past, and the relationship between that memory and what “really” happened, has formed the basis of countless articles, journals, and books. In the field of history itself, a great deal of time has been spent attempting to separate historical truth from the falsehoods in the historical and oral narratives we as individuals and academics are told. Even for scholars who argue that “history” and “memory” are two sides of the same coin, there is an inherent assumed division between the two. Chapter two will be a discussion of some of the most important thinkers in memory studies. Through their work, I will argue that memories and mythology are incredibly useful tools in the reconstruction of our pasts. Utilizing their concepts and terminology, I will also provide a theoretical foundation upon which the remainder of this thesis will rest.

From there, chapter three will summarize the traditional narrative of the Etruscan kings of Rome. The war between Rome and Clusium was the climax and conclusion of a long series of events which made monarchy intolerable to the Romans. This story began in Greece with the rise of a tyrant, and with a wealthy trader named Demaratus who was forced to flee his home in Corinth in order to avoid persecution. It ended in Rome, with Tarquinius Superbus establishing a reign of terror that became equivalent to kingship in Roman collective thought. The narrative of chapter three concludes with a dreadful crime committed by the prince Sextus Tarquin, an offense which would result in the expulsion of the entire Tarquin clan, and in the revolution that firmly established the Roman Republic.

Chapter four focuses on this crime and its importance to Romans as both myth and memory. In this section, I compare the portrayals of this part of the story in the histories of both Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek historian who also composed his work in Rome during the period of Augustus's rise to power. I begin by briefly analyzing Dionysius's status among many Classical scholars as a "superior" historian to Livy, before shifting toward a look at each historian in his own terms: as a man and a member of a society, each with his own biases, each with his own memories, and each with his own reasons for composing his narrative in the ways he did. I close the chapter with an analysis of sections of Cicero's *De re publica* which I feel illustrate that Livy's version of events – including the emotion Livy infuses in his narrative – was the one most similar to the account known to most Romans in the late Republic.

Chapter five brings the focus of the thesis back to Augustus. In it, I apply the functions of myth outlined by Joseph Campbell and fleshed out in greater detail in my second and fourth chapters. I believe that the main characters in the traditional narrative of Roman kingship created archetypes which shaped and dominated the mindset of the Roman people. Even five hundred years after the accepted founding of the Republic, Romans could and did look back to that foundation narrative for symbols of heroism and villainy, justice and tyranny, and even a symbol for Rome and her people. In order to make his rise to power, Augustus had to actively contrast himself with the archetypal tyranny of the villains, compare himself to the justness and morality of the hero, and root his authority in the will of the people and the Senate that governed them, at least in his public performance. Augustus was able to do this even without making explicit references to the Republican foundation story.

In chapter six, I finally address my central research question: what made Augustus different from Julius Caesar? I argue that Caesar was partially able to appeal to the historical

memory of the Republic's founding; however, he did not fully incorporate what I refer to as the "legacy" of Rome's Etruscan dynasty into his own performance. He was able to legitimize his supremacy, and he was even able to render himself a hero to some extent, but he was not able to truly perform the characteristics of a *Republican* hero. In fact, his lust for power and fairly unambiguous plays for kingship drew direct if inexplicit comparisons with Tarquinius Superbus, and effectively cast him as an aspiring tyrant. Even though he was somehow able to earn the loyalty of the people, Caesar's actions earned him the hatred of the aristocracy, and it was this hatred that eventually culminated in his assassination.

The Significance of the Augustan Shift

The age of Augustus not only marked the historical moment in which autocracy became acceptable to the Roman people, it was the period in which kingship, albeit by a different name, became the status quo in Rome. It was also the first period where autocrats, far from being hated, were akin to gods. In Cicero's *Second Philippic* against Mark Antony, penned shortly after Julius Caesar's death, the statesman wrote that Caesar was given a number of divine honors, including "a sacred couch, an image" and a "special priest" to the divine Julius.²⁷ Suetonius also wrote that Caesar had a statue among those of the gods, a golden throne in the Senate house, and a special priest established in his honor.²⁸ Evidence suggests that Caesar was awarded these honors early in 44 B.C., and they likely contributed to the plot against him; however, it was not until after Caesar's death that Augustus official established a cult in his name. Around 42 B.C., Augustus also began the construction of a temple dedicated to *Divius Iulius* (the Divine Julius). In this way, Julius Caesar became the first Roman citizen ever officially recognized as a god.²⁹

²⁷ Cicero, *Philippic*, 2.110 (trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey).

²⁸ Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 76.1.

²⁹ Fred S. Kleiner, *A History of Roman Art* (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007), 63, 97.; Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 88.1.; Christopher Pelling, "The Triumviral Period," in *The Cambridge Ancient History Vol. X: The*

Augustus was also deified following his death, and in the Roman Empire, the Imperial Cult, wherein many of the emperors were worshipped as deities, became standard practice.³⁰

The hated memory of the final king of Rome was so powerful, that Julius Caesar was assassinated once his power had become too similar to kingship. By contrast, Augustus's manipulation of that memory was so great, he was able to establish what was essentially a divine monarchy in Rome less than twenty years after Caesar's demise. The aim of this thesis, through the example of these two men, is to speak to the potency of myth and memory; of "the story." Augustus was able to solidify his own power and avoid his adoptive father's fate because he was able to appeal to that story in a way that better resonated with the beliefs and values of the Roman people, both in the general populace and among the aristocracy. This, to me, is the real significance of memory studies. Through the contradiction between Julius Caesar and Augustus, I will argue that memory is not just a tool to be utilized in the study of history; it is also an actor in the development of history itself. Julius Caesar, his assassins, Augustus, and the rest of the Roman population worked with the memory of Tarquinius Superbus and the kings of Rome in different ways, and this drove them all to act in a manner that had profound consequences on the course of their future, which has become our history. Perhaps, then, "history" and "memory" should not be seen in terms of a dichotomy or as two pieces to a greater puzzle, but rather as a continuum; one whose extremes are constantly blending with and affecting one another.

Augustan Empire (43 B.C.-A.D. 69), edited by Alan K. Bowman et. al. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 5.

³⁰ Kleiner, *Roman Art*, 103-108.

Chapter 2: The Construction of Historical Memory

“We preserve memories in each epoch of our lives, and these are continually reproduced; through them, as by a continuous relationship, a sense of our identity is perpetuated.”
 ~ Maurice Halbwachs³¹

The study of memory is not a new field by any means. The Greek poet Simonides, writing in the sixth century B.C., is said to have pioneered the notion of “the art of memory,” and may have invented the concept outright.³² Similarly, the “problem,” if you will, of how memory relates to the study of history also has its roots in antiquity. In Book Two of *De oratore* – “On the Orator” – Cicero famously remarked that history “bears witness to the passing of the ages, sheds light upon reality, gives life to recollection and guidance to human existence...”³³ The ancients even contemplated the role of the historian in the preservation and presentation of memory. Herodotus apparently believed historians should act as the “guardians of memory.”³⁴ Livy himself, in the preface to *Ab urbe condita* (“On the Founding of the City,” also referred to as *History of Rome*), reflected on the ways in which myths and legends bleed into the historical record, before ultimately concluding that his charge was to report the established historical tradition rather than to question it.³⁵

The field of memory studies has come a long way since Simonides’s writings. The twentieth century in particular gave rise to a number of theories and theorists who significantly altered the ways in which scholars conceptualized memory. Many of these principles are still

³¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. & ed. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 47.

³² Jan Assmann, “The Culture of Recollection,” in *Cultural Memory: Script, Recollection, and Political Identity in Early Civilizations*, trans. Ursula Ballin, *Historiography East & West* 1, no. 2 (July 2003): 157, accessed April 19, 2012, *Academic Search Premier EBSCOhost*.

³³ Cicero, *De oratore*, 2.36.

³⁴ Peter Burke, “History as Social Memory,” in *Memory: History, Culture, and the Mind*, ed. Thomas Butler (New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1989), 97.

³⁵ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.Preface.; For translation of title, see: T.J. Luce, introduction to *The Rise of Rome [Ab urbe condita]: Books One to Five*, by Livy, trans. T.J. Luce (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), xi.

relevant today. The question is whether or not these principles *remain* relevant when applied to the study of the ancient past.

At first, a distinction between the study of the “ancient” past and that of the more “modern” past may seem trivial, but the practice of history is indeed significantly altered the further back in time one chooses to study. While history as a discipline relies upon written records, ancient historians are more dependent on written sources than many of their contemporaries. Ancient historians do not have oral accounts to draw upon, other than those recorded in the transcribed histories. They also do not have access to film or photographs of historical events, and what images do exist were often created months, years, decades, or even centuries after the events themselves had occurred and long after the “truth” of each event was lost to memory and interpretation. Furthermore, even the ancient sources that do exist are subject to the inherent “randomness” of the archaeological process. What remains is often fragmentary, and what we have is but a fraction of the entirety of material, some of which has yet to be discovered and some of which does not survive. This is true, of course, for all periods of history, but a greater passage of time allows for more opportunities for these sources to be lost, damaged, or destroyed.

Another problem with ancient history is how closely tied it is to ancient memory. Again, memory inevitably bleeds into all historical narratives as the men and women who record the past include the beliefs and biases of either themselves or their subjects in their accounts. However, the traditional narratives contained in ancient records – histories, images, letters, etc. – are often more influenced by memory, and the difference between fact and fiction can be much harder to discern. In the case of archaic Rome, stories like that of the twins Romulus and Remus, sons of the war god Mars who were raised by a she-wolf before growing up and becoming the

founders of Rome, can easily be identified as legend. However, what are we to make of men like Tarquin the Proud, whose stories are not obviously false but whose lives cannot be verified with any certainty?

The men and women whose theories I have incorporated in this chapter all speak to these issues to some extent. These theorists were not necessarily thinking of our ancient past while they developed their ideas. None of them referenced ancient historical narratives in their examples, and it is likely that few of them, if any, were familiar with the history of archaic Rome at all. Nevertheless, their work can help historians of all periods in their quest to better understand those historical instances in which the boundaries between memory, myth, and history are blurred.

Maurice Halbwachs and Collective Memory

Just as Simonides can be said to be the “father” of memory studies, the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs can be said to be the father of social recollection. His book *On Collective Memory* (1925) was among the first to take into account the so-called “social framework” of remembrance, and is certainly the most significant.³⁶

Halbwachs was primarily interested in “collective” memory on a limited scale. His book contains separate chapters on the memory of the individual family, the memory of religious groups, and the memory of separate social classes. Nevertheless, the overarching themes of his work, as well as many of his individual points, are applicable on a larger scale.

Halbwachs’s major contribution to the field of memory studies was his assertion that the memories of every individual are passed down to us by our ancestors, and are filtered and framed

³⁶ Lewis A. Coser, introduction to *On Collective Memory*, by Maurice Halbwachs, trans. & ed. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 21.; Burke, “History as Social Memory,” 98.

by the sociopolitical context of the societies we live in.³⁷ Initially, this concept seems as commonsensical as it was innovative. Most people would either intuitively recognize the validity of this theory or would readily accept it upon hearing it. By its very nature, the study of history relies on the oral and written stories of our forefathers, and the way in which historians relate the past is necessarily the result of personal biases molded by the historical moments in which they are writing. That being said, it is not necessarily an idea that one consciously considers when reading or thinking about history, and it is one the reader must keep in mind as they read the rest of this thesis.

The Halbwachsian model of family memory provides a miniature example of how and why society affects memory. In this model, the elderly act as family chroniclers. In Halbwachs's own words: "They attempt to make [memories] more precise, ask other old people, go through old papers, old letters; above all, they tell what they remember, when they do not try to write it down."³⁸ One can easily see the parallels between Halbwachs's elders and the role of historians in the larger social order. However, much like the professional practice of history, the passage of family stories is not a perfect process. In their stories, the elders pass on the rules and customs they inherited from their own families, either intentionally or subconsciously.³⁹

Equally important are the ways in which these memories are told. Halbwachs argued that these stories are often individual "scenes" that embody the larger history of the family.⁴⁰ This too may seem like an intuitive assessment, but it is one that is critically important to the understanding of how history itself takes shape. The stories of the family, according to Halbwachs, do not simply act as icons or milestones of an entire history. They are concise

³⁷ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 38, 51.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

summations of the personalities of many actors as well as the character of an inherently complicated and somewhat obscure historical backdrop. As a consequence, many elements and events from different periods in the past get blended into singular narratives and individual “landmarks” so that a life – as well as the lives that preceded and followed it – may be adequately summarized. In other words, the stories of our pasts are meant to serve as microcosms; narratives that are produced and continually reproduced so that our identity may be preserved.⁴¹ While the proper, professional practice of history may aim to avoid abridging entire historical periods into symbolic “landmark” events, it is fair to say that “popular history” and popular memories *of* that history often follow this Halbwachsian trend.

It is important to realize, though, that Halbwachs did not believe the elderly were the sole perpetuators of history. Indeed, every member of the family (from the grandparents and great-grandparents who tell these stories to the fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters who hear these stories while creating new stories of their own) is affected by what Halbwachs called the “social milieu” of the present. More specifically, the ways in which family histories are both framed and imagined are just as much the product of the social and political makeup of the present as they are of the past.⁴² As history itself progresses, the telling of that history changes. New thoughts and social ideas bleed into the historical record as people find analogies in the world around them. Because of this, historical narratives do not become stagnant; they are continually altered as new evidence and new “mental habits” characterize what is told and how it is expressed.⁴³

Along these lines, Halbwachs also did not believe that individual families lived or remembered in isolation. He conceptualized the family as part of a village, which in turn is a part

⁴¹ Ibid., 47, 60-61.

⁴² Ibid., 51.

⁴³ Ibid., 75.

of a “peasant community,” which is in turn part of an even larger collective, and so forth.⁴⁴ This web of collectives can take many different forms, and it is even possible to be a part of many different webs simultaneously. This is significant because, according to Halbwachs, each separate collective and each individual within those collectives is the product of “the totality of the memories of our groups.”⁴⁵ Because we as humans cannot escape social ties, we are thus always part and parcel of society. In Halbwachs’s words, “our history becomes their history,” and, I would argue, vice versa.⁴⁶

Yet there is an assumption that Halbwachs makes in his study of collective memory that I contest. In his argument, Halbwachs specifically states that so-called modern societies are able to “penetrate” the collective much easier and more thoroughly than ancient societies were.⁴⁷ He had good reason to believe this. Writing between the two World Wars, Halbwachs was a witness to the rise of the nation-state, and was thus aware of the great power and control that modern governments could have over the creation and transmission of collective memory. Nevertheless, I would contend that ancient societies and, more importantly, ancient governments were also quite effective at infiltrating social and individual thoughts and memories. The issue, then, is not whether ancient societies were effective in this respect, but the methods they utilized in order to achieve their aims.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 65.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 52.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 81-82.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 51.

History as Personal and Collective Memory and Forgetting

The concept of collective memory is imperative to our understanding of the past, but there is one aspect of Halbwachs's theory that often gets lost in the retelling. Collective memory is, almost by definition, a combination of many *individual* memories.⁴⁸

Just as human memories are shaped by their collectives, humans actively contribute to the process of history and historical memory.⁴⁹ According to Michel-Rolph Trouillot, humans participate in these processes in a number of ways. We are subjects to our history, characterizing the terms by which our historical situations can be described. We also serve as “agents” of and “actors” in that history; occupants in our Halbwachsian collectives and individuals living and working within those collectives.⁵⁰ Simultaneously, we act as narrators of history, telling the stories of our pasts as individuals, collectives, and societies. Trouillot goes so far as to say that “actors are always narrators and vice versa.”⁵¹ There are many ways in which we can fill these roles. We can act as participants in a war, or a battle, or a movement. We can build monuments to these events or statues to the people who participated in them. We can tell stories, or we can write about these people and events in books or in other forms of mass media. We can also immortalize these actors and events in museums.⁵²

This raises an interesting question. If individual people and collectives thereof are responsible both for driving history as well as remembering and representing history, then where do we draw the line between “history” and “memory” – between what Trouillot defines as “what

⁴⁸ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 52.; David Glassberg, "Public History and the Study of Memory," *The Public Historian* Vol. 18, No. 2 (Spring, 1996): 10.

⁴⁹ Assmann, “The Culture of Recollection,” 163.; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 2.

⁵⁰ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 23.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁵² Nora, “Between History and Memory,” 12.

happened” and “that which is said to have happened?”⁵³ How do we as historians reconcile the two? Perhaps most importantly, should we even draw a line at all?

In the nineteenth century, the general trend among historians was a “positivist” view, wherein historians attempted to find a distinction between these two concepts. Like memory studies itself, this notion has roots in the ancient past. The Latin language made a distinction between *res gestae* (“things done”) and *historia rerum gestarum* (loosely: “historiography”). Later German writings made a distinction between *Geschichte* (“history” or “story”) and *Geschichtsschreibung* (“historiography”).⁵⁴ While not directly related to the difference between the factual past and a more subjective remembrance of that past, these distinctions were the foundations for the assumption that there is a version of history that is in some way more “true” than the others. If we acknowledge that there are many different versions of the past, in the sense that there are many differing historical memories, then the positivist historian would view historiography as the process by which we create a single, factual historical account. Today, many scholars operate within this positivist framework, attempting to divulge what “really” happened or, barring that, attempting to come as close to the “truth” as possible.⁵⁵

This line of thinking is at least partially responsible for the old adage that “history is written by the winners.”⁵⁶ Indeed, many who study social historical memory according to the positivist model accept this adage as fact. When one assumes that one among the many narratives accompanying any historical figure or event is “true” or “more true” than the others, it stands to reason that there is a higher entity – the government or the members of the aristocracy for example – that needs or wants this version to survive. After all, whether it is true or not, there

⁵³ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

is always an “official” public version of the historical narrative.⁵⁷ It may be the government, the elite, or the culture as a whole, but the dominant forces in society – the “winners” – tell their story either through invention, emphasis, or omission. In this “vertical” system of remembrance, not all historical narratives can be assumed to have equal validity.⁵⁸

A second trend in the study of historical memory, one that took hold in the 1970s, is the so-called “constructivist view,” which looks at each historical narrative as one of many different perspectives on the same story.⁵⁹ In constructivist thought, these perspectives are all equally valuable, as they provide new insight into the historical interpretations of different individuals and collectives within a given society. Adherents to this theoretical model argue that the “top-down” model of historical memory is too simplistic; after all, there may exist many different “official” accounts of the past, just as there exist many “vernacular” accounts of it.⁶⁰ These accounts serve to satisfy psychological or symbolic wants and needs in individuals, communities, or even political systems, and through a synthesis of these many stories, constructivists try to learn as much about a given person or event as they are able to.⁶¹

At the root of constructivist thought, there is an assumption that the differing historical narratives are, at least in part, the product of the active creation and manipulation of memory and narrative, rather than “faulty” recollections.⁶² To that end, even those stories which can be definitively proven wrong carry some historical weight, because the lesson or moral that story carries *means* something to an individual or a collective. Taken to the logical extreme, even

⁵⁷ Glassberg, “Public History,” 11.

⁵⁸ Burke, “History as Social Memory,” 99-106.; Glassberg, “Public History,” 12-13.; Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990), 21.

⁵⁹ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 6.

⁶⁰ Glassberg, “Public History,” 12-13.

⁶¹ Portelli, *Luigi Trastulli*, 21,26.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 26.

those stories that are obviously false or blatant lies can carry the same weight for the same reason.

This is not to say that the different narratives of individuals or individual collectives are all “true” or, for that matter, equally valid. Instead, constructivists view each of these narratives as equally *useful* in the historian’s quest to reconstruct past events. Alessandro Portelli outlined this facet of constructivist thought beautifully in the first chapter of his book *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History*. Portelli argued that people and collectives thereof manipulate the factual and chronological details of historical persons and events in order to serve three major functions. The first is a “symbolic function,” meaning these narratives serve to represent the beliefs, feelings, and situations of the people who tell and retell them. The second is a “psychological function,” as individual accounts can ease and heal negative feelings certain collectives associate with past events. I would take this assertion one step further and argue that, for some, their version of events can also serve to reinforce positive feelings. The third and final function is a “formal” one, which means that certain events within a given narrative are reinterpreted or shifted chronologically to better fit around “time-marking functions” or “turning points” in history.⁶³ For Portelli, these functions were and are critically important, and they point to the usefulness of many differing memories of historical figures, events, and periods. Portelli believed even “errors, inventions, and myths lead us through and beyond facts to their meanings.”⁶⁴

Both the positivist and constructivist views are flawed to some degree. The positivist perspective ignores how important people and personal memories are to the historical narrative. To say that history is written by the winners is to assume that the majority of people are

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 2.

completely passive in the remembrance of their past, which is not the case. Paraphrasing Carl Becker, David Glassberg wrote that “every person is his or her own historian,” and it is certainly not impossible for the repressed or forgotten memories to be incorporated eventually into the public narratives.⁶⁵ Furthermore, the positivist model assumes that there is such a thing as universal historical “fact.” While some facets of history – the date(s), location(s), and casualty figures of a battle, for instance – can be discerned with relative certainty, others – such as who “won” said battle or why the war was fought in the first place – may be open to interpretation. Hence the literal distinction between *res gestae* and *historia rerum gestarum* and that between *Geschichte* and *Geschichtsschreibung*; there is a substantial difference between the “things that happened” and the process by which a historian analyzes, interprets, and represents those things.⁶⁶ Part of this interpretation requires synthesizing the many individual and collective memories of the past.

However, the constructivist view is equally problematic. While the “history is written by the winners” model of historical analysis may be a bit exaggerated or simplistic, it cannot be denied that in the creation of the “official” narrative of events, some perspectives are indeed repressed, ignored, or “forgotten.” This is often done for cynical or malicious reasons by those with a vested interest in how the story is told, and it does a disservice to the process of history if a historian, amateur or professional, does not question the validity of his or her sources, even if they are all ultimately blended into a larger argument.⁶⁷ Equally important, if one assumes that all historical narratives are even partially valid in their own way, or if we focus too closely on the

⁶⁵ Glassberg, “Public History,” 10.

⁶⁶ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 4-5.

⁶⁷ Eric Hobsbawm, from “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 271.; Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26.; Burke, “History as Social Memory,” 106.

meanings of these narratives, then the value and meaning of “the story” outweighs any attempt to arrive at what “really happened.”⁶⁸

I propose that the best way to look at the relationship between history and memory lies somewhere between these two. On the one hand, the constructivist focus on the stories that make up memory results in a loss on the part of history. What “really” happened may not matter as much as positivists assert, but it does matter to some degree. Part of our job as historians is indeed to uncover the facts of our pasts and present them as accurately as is possible. However, the positivist focus on fact results in a history that is ultimately incomplete. Our history, the *true* history, is a blend of many different narratives and stories that surround the actual people, events, and periods that acted in and composed that history, and the stories we tell are in many ways just as “true” as what actually happened. This is to say, the memory of our past matters just as much as the actual history.

To that end, I would argue that the relationship between history and memory is not the dichotomous binary of the positivist model. Nor, however, are these concepts interdependent but entirely separate notions striving to achieve similar ends, or “two sides of the same coin,” as many constructivist-leaning writings seem to suggest.⁶⁹ Rather, “history” and “memory” form the extremes of a continuum. These seemingly black and white opposites constantly interact with and affect one another, creating between them an ever-shifting multitude of gray areas

When Myth Becomes Memory

Frederick Whitling once wrote that “collective memory” was not the same thing as “collective mythology,” and he made it quite clear that myth and memory were not

⁶⁸ Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 10.

⁶⁹ Frederick Whitling, “Memory, History and the Classical Tradition,” *European Review of History* 16, no. 2 (April 2009): 237, accessed April 18, 2012. *Academic Search Premier*, EBSCOhost.

synonymous.⁷⁰ Indeed, many of the authors who have covered social and collective memory have noted how easily mythology can enter the historical record.⁷¹

The words “myth” or “mythology” tend to carry negative connotations. Generally speaking, academics and non-academics alike look at mythology as a story or collection of stories that have either been debunked or are so obviously false that they either will be or need to be debunked. In this conceptualization, these stories exist in an imaginative world of fantasy with little to no connection to any lived reality. However, I have chosen to look at mythology in the more practical sense. By Peter Burke’s definition, myth can be “a story with a symbolic meaning made up of stereotyped incidents and involving characters that are larger than life, whether heroes or villains.”⁷²

At this point, I must make an aside to clarify my terminology. Much like Jan Assmann, I feel that “tradition” and “memory” can, at times, be synonymous.⁷³ I also feel that “mythology” can become synonymous or, at the very least, quite similar to both of these terms. Particularly when it comes to ancient history, mythology can blend into the established tradition, and in turn, that tradition may become a memory or even *the* predominant memory. Because of this, all three of these terms will be used in similar contexts throughout this thesis.

Similarly, I must address the idea of “invented tradition” put forth by Eric Hobsbawm. From a positivist perspective, if the people in power can tell a particular story (or, perhaps, a version *of* that story) long enough or convincingly enough, it can result in an established and widely accepted narrative that is completely false.⁷⁴ Taking this one step further, it is

⁷⁰ Ibid., 235.

⁷¹ Whitling, “Memory, History, and the Classical Tradition,” 244-45.; Burke, “History as Social Memory,” 104.;

⁷² Burke, “History as Social Memory,” 103-104.

⁷³ Assmann, “The Culture of Recollection, 174.

⁷⁴ Hobsbawm, “Introduction,” 273-274.; Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 26-29.; Burke, “History as Social Memory,” 110.

theoretically possible that a constructivist view might accidentally result in a synthesized account that still fails to tell the “whole story.” Thus, I agree with Hobsbawm’s theory in principle, and I shall reference it periodically throughout my thesis.

However, like Terrence Ranger, I find the use of the term “invented” problematic. This word suggests a “one-sided” creation event, implicitly by a historical “winner,” that is unchanging. Indeed, the establishment of a tradition or a collection of traditions can take some time, and these traditions may shift, change, and grow through time. Like Ranger, I seek to emphasize the “ideas and images and symbols” that make up these traditions and contribute to the collective identity. To that end, I will adopt Ranger’s revisionist term. Instead of “invented” traditions, memories, or mythology, I shall refer to “imagined” traditions, memories, and mythology.⁷⁵

This revised terminology also points to how important and significant myth can be for a given society. In addition to telling stories that make sense of the world around us – as in creation myths, for example – myths can serve to teach lessons to those who hear them, whether or not they are imagined. In a very real way, myths represent a microcosm of societies as a whole. They are, after all, stories whose heroes highlight the very best (or worst) in humanity and whose morals reflect the characteristics of the “ideal” man, woman, or citizen in any given society. They thus serve an exemplary or didactic purpose, to provide models for behavior inside the norms of a society or to provide lessons for the proper arrangement and conduct of social relations.

To navigate the “myth” portion of my argument, I use the works of American mythologist Joseph Campbell. His book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949) covers the role

⁷⁵ Terrence Ranger, from “The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa,” in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffrey K. Olick et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 276-78.

of the mythic hero in society, specifically how “the hero” – a common trope of mythology cross-culturally – can often (though not always) express and personify the values that we, as members of a given society, should appreciate and aspire to.⁷⁶ For the purposes of this thesis, I also wish to bend Campbell’s work ever so slightly and refer to what I call “the mythic villain,” that is, those legendary figures whose attributes we should aim to avoid and combat whenever possible. In fact, Tarquin the Proud, the mythic villain in the story of the founding of the Roman Republic, fits another archetype Campbell mentions: the tyrant-monster, whose actions often call the hero to action, and whose deeds rouse the people’s cry for liberation.⁷⁷ Similarly, many of Campbell’s works discuss the overarching value that myths have in every society. Much like memory, myths act as a preserver of identity – a way to preserve the best and the most important aspects of our societies by passing them on, either in written or oral form, through the ages.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 3rd ed. (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2008), 1-2, 6-18.; Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth* (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 124-136.

⁷⁷ Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 11.

⁷⁸ Joseph Campbell, *The Masks of God, Vol.4: Creative Mythology* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), 4-6.; Joseph Campbell, “The Function of Mythology,” from *The Collected Lectures of Joseph Campbell, Vol. 1: A Brief History of Mythology*. The Esalen Institute. Big Sur, CA. August 1969. Amazon.com downloadable album.

Chapter 3: When Rome Was Ruled By Kings

“Rome at the beginning was ruled by kings.”
~ Tacitus, *The Annals*, 1.1.⁷⁹

In the case of Rome, as with most post-historical societies, our knowledge of their past relies heavily on written records and documentation. As with all histories, the human beings who wrote Rome’s past had their own personal biases and were subject to their own Halbwachsian social conditions that affected the stories they chose to tell and the ways in which they chose to represent and frame those stories. For this chapter, the intent is not to expose these personal biases; nor is it to analyze the social, economic, or political framework in which these authors composed their works. This chapter will not look to archaeological or historical contradictions in an attempt to find the “truth” as to how the foundation of the Republic *really* happened. Just as importantly, it will not attempt to prove that the established tradition *is* truth. Rather, the focus of the following paragraphs is to tell a story; a story that all Romans living in the age of Augustus would have known, and one that most Romans would have believed to be historical fact.

Beginning with Romulus, the mythical founder of the city, and ending with the removal of Tarquinius Superbus, the traditional dates of the monarchical period last almost two and a half centuries, from 754/733 B.C. to 509 B.C.⁸⁰ I have chosen to focus exclusively on the fall of the monarchy which, for the purposes of this thesis, begins with the reign of Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, Rome’s fifth king, and ends with the unseating of Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, the seventh king. Together with the reign of Servius Tullius, this period in Roman rule is referred to,

⁷⁹ Tacitus, *The Annals*, 1.1 (trans. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb).

⁸⁰ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 120.; Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.60.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 5.1.1.

somewhat informally, as the “Tarquin Dynasty”; a period of Etruscan dominance in Rome that led to revolution.⁸¹

In order to tell this story, I shall focus on the works of two historians: Titus Livius – “Livy” – and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Though the history of Rome’s origins is referenced in other sources, Livy’s *Ab urbe condita* and Dionysius’s *Roman Antiquities* are the most complete and, for that reason, the most important. Equally significant, these were both written during the reign of Augustus, and thus, are perfect sources for analyzing the social makeup in Rome during the transition from Republic to Empire, both from Livy’s *internal* Roman perspective and from Dionysius’s *external* Greek perspective. This will prove invaluable in later chapters when I shift my focus from historical narrative to memory. To that end, Livy’s work will form the principal basis from which this story is told, while Dionysius’s writings will be used primarily to inform and corroborate Livy’s narrative or to highlight contradictions in the historical tradition.

Secondary sources will be used only when dates, which are not clearly presented in Livy’s or Dionysius’s records, must be added to my condensed version of events. By chapter’s end, the hope is the reader will have a basic knowledge of the “history” behind the rise of the Roman Republic. In addition, the reader will hopefully have a basic understanding as to why, for the Romans, monarchy became an unacceptable social evil, and why it took nearly five hundred years for anything resembling monarchy to become tolerable in Rome.

⁸¹ Gantz, “The Tarquin Dynasty,” 539.; Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 122-123.; This “dynasty,” strictly speaking, refers to the entirety of the Tarquin family, beginning with Demaratus of Corinth and his Etruscan wife and even including Lucius Junius Brutus and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, two of the heroes of the early Republic who traditionally deposed the kings, all of whom will be discussed later in this chapter. However, in the context of this thesis, the “Tarquin Dynasty” primarily refers to these three kings.

Rome's Etruscan Dynasty

Sometime in the seventh century B.C., there lived a Greek trader named Demaratus, who Dionysius tells us was a member of the Bacchiadae family that ruled Corinth at the time.⁸² Demaratus sailed cargo back and forth between Greece and the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy, achieving great success in his venture as a merchant and becoming quite wealthy in the process. However, the established political order in Corinth became unstable as the Bacchiadae family was challenged by the tyrant Cypselus. Deciding that he was better off living in exile than under a tyrant, Demaratus of Corinth took to the sea.⁸³

According to Dionysius, Demaratus's trading ventures in Italy earned him many friends, especially in the wealthy and prosperous Etruscan city of Tarquinii, modern-day Tarquinia.⁸⁴ It was in Tarquinii that Demaratus settled. He took a noble Etruscan woman as his wife, and by her, had two sons, Arruns and Lucumo. These children were raised according to both Greek and Etruscan custom and, when the time came, both were married to daughters of distinguished Etruscan families.⁸⁵

Arruns, the eldest, died young. Grief-stricken, Demaratus died days later, leaving Lucumo to inherit his wealth. However, Lucumo was looked down upon by the people of Tarquinii as the son of a foreigner, and his low- to middle ranking among the Etruscans served as a source of great annoyance to both Lucumo and his wife, Tanaquil. The couple heard that the Romans readily received people of all lands, gave the opportunity for even strangers to earn citizenship, and bestowed honor based on merit rather than ethnicity or wealth. Knowing this,

⁸² Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.34.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities* 3.46.3.; Date(s) found in: Vaughan, *The Etruscans*, 126.; Scullard, *Etruscan Cities and Rome*, 85, 254-256.; Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 124.

⁸³ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.34.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 3.46.4.

⁸⁴ Dion. Halic., 3.46.5.; Scullard, *Etruscan Cities and Rome*, 294 [n. 70].

⁸⁵ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.34.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 3.46.5.

Lucumo decided to take his riches, family, and many of his household and friends south toward better prospects. Together, this Etruscan entourage set off toward the City of Seven Hills.⁸⁶

The group first saw Rome from the Janiculum Hill. According to both Livy and Dionysius, it was here that an eagle swooped down from the sky and removed the cap from Lucumo's head. The eagle circled Lucumo and his entourage, crying loudly as he rose in elevation. Then, just as suddenly, the eagle returned the cap to Lucumo, carefully placing it on his head exactly as it had been before flying away. To all present, this was seen as a great sign, and Tanaquil was especially excited by the omen. According to Livy, her Etruscan heritage made her an "expert in interpreting celestial prodigies," and she informed her husband that this particular presage foretold a majestic future for him, one that might even result in his achieving royalty.⁸⁷

Tanaquil's prediction proved accurate. Upon entering Rome, Lucumo became instantly popular among the people on account of his wealth and exoticness. He quickly acquired a home in the city itself and even adopted a Roman name. Soon, he attracted the attention of King Ancus Marcius, and was invited to an audience with the Roman monarch. According to Dionysius's history, Lucumo offered the king the use of his considerable fortune and, as their friendship grew, bestowed gifts upon the royal house. In fact, their friendship grew so much that Lucumo became a trusted advisor in matters of state, and in the king's will, he appointed Lucumo as the guardian of his children. Once Ancus Marcius died sometime around 617 or 616 B.C., Lucumo utilized his position and popularity to ensure that the king's sons were away from Rome on a hunting expedition, and he beseeched the Roman people to elect him as their new monarch. The people heeded his words, and appointed this foreigner as Rome's fifth king. Lucumo is perhaps

⁸⁶ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.34.; Dion. Halic, *Roman Antiquities*, 3.47.2.

⁸⁷ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.34 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 3.47.3 – 4.

better known to history by his Roman name: Lucius Tarquinius.⁸⁸ Following the ascent of his descendant, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, Lucius Tarquinius the first became known as Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, or “the Elder.”⁸⁹

Tarquinius Priscus – Tarquin the Elder – ruled in Rome for almost thirty-eight years.⁹⁰ According to Livy, Tarquinius was “an excellent man” plagued by ambition that led him to the throne and followed him in his policies once he was seated upon it. He is said to have created one hundred new senators, who became known as the “Lesser Houses” and who were afterwards staunch supporters of the king. Soon thereafter, Tarquinius embarked on a successful war against Rome’s Latin neighbors.⁹¹ Within the city herself, he is credited with celebrating the Roman Games with an unprecedented level of grandeur, adding horse racing and boxing (both of which were popular in Etruria) to the games, and laying the groundwork for what would become the Circus Maximus. He also is said to have adorned the Forum and to have begun preparations for building a stone wall around Rome before he was interrupted by a war with the Sabines.⁹²

However, thirty-eight years was not enough to placate the sons of Ancus Marcius, who felt they had been betrayed by their keeper. Sometime during his reign, Tarquinius began to favor a young man named Servius Tullius. The sources are somewhat contradictory on Tullius’s origins. Livy’s history reports the traditional story that Tullius was a slave and the son of a slave raised by Tarquinius and Tanaquil, though Livy himself expressed the opinion that Tullius was the son of a noble woman captured during Rome’s war with the Latins.⁹³ Dionysius also tells this latter story, and agrees with Livy that it is the most likely, although he also relates a somewhat

⁸⁸ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.35.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 3.48 – 49.1.; For dates, see: Vaughan, *The Etruscans*, 126.; Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 120, 122.

⁸⁹ Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.41.4.

⁹⁰ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.40.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.1.1.

⁹¹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.35(trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 3.49-50.

⁹² Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.36.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 3.67.4-68.

⁹³ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.39.

bizarre narrative – purported to be found “in many Roman histories” – wherein Tullius was the progeny of Ocrisia (the captured Latin noblewoman) and a phantom phallus that appeared in the fires of Tarquinius’s royal hearth.⁹⁴ In a speech delivered to the Senate in 48 A.D., Emperor Claudius claimed that according to Etruscan tradition, Tullius was originally named Mastarna and was a mercenary of Etruscan birth who fought under the Etruscan Caelius Vibenna.⁹⁵ In any case, it is generally agreed that by the end of Tarquinius’s reign, Servius Tullius had become quite well respected in Rome, and was held in such high esteem by the Tarquin family that he was betrothed to Tarquinius’s daughter. As a result, Servius Tullius had become a sort of heir presumptive to the Roman throne. This was deemed a great insult to the sons of the previous king, who were denied sovereignty by the actions of one foreigner and seemed poised to lose their monarchical chance thanks to another. Even though Tullius was the primary source of their frustration, the two former princes made Tarquinius the target of their assassination plot.⁹⁶

In one respect, this conspiracy was successful. The brothers hired two shepherds to perform the grisly deed, and under the pretext of seeking mediation in a personal quarrel, the assassins managed to drive either an axe or a billhook into the king’s skull.⁹⁷ Yet the assassins were soon apprehended. Queen Tanaquil called on Servius Tullius and, showing him the body of the slain monarch, beseeched Tullius not to allow the crime to go unpunished nor to allow her to become subject to the mercy of her enemies. She invoked the story of a divine fire that surrounded the head of Tullius in his youth and called on him to rise and take the noble destiny the gods had planned for him.⁹⁸ “The throne is yours,” she said to him, “if you are man enough to

⁹⁴ Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*. 4.2.1-2.

⁹⁵ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 133-134.; Keller, *Etruscans*, 137.; Vaughan, *The Etruscans*, 138-140.

⁹⁶ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.40.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 3.73.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.41.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.4-5.

take it...”⁹⁹ In this respect, the sons of Ancus Marcius had failed. Tanaquil addressed the people of Rome and, though she informed them of the assassination attempt on Tarquinius, did not disclose his death. Instead, she told the people that Tarquinius was alive, but badly injured, and claimed that the king wished for Servius Tullius to execute the “functions of royalty” in his place. Servius Tullius still became king; the first, in fact, to achieve the position of monarch without the express elected consent of the Roman people, though according to Livy’s narrative, the Roman Senate did not oppose him.¹⁰⁰ The sons of Ancus Marcius, realizing their plan had ultimately failed, and aware that they were now in grave danger, fled to exile in Suessa Pometia.¹⁰¹ The year, according to the legendary chronology, was 578 B.C.¹⁰²

Servius Tullius’s reign would last about forty-four years.¹⁰³ In that time, he proved to be a very effective monarch. As a means of protecting himself from a possible insurrection led by the sons of Tarquinius, Tullius betrothed the princesses to his two daughters. He was further able to create internal stability by going to war with Veii and other Etruscan cities, thus uniting Rome around a common enemy. His domestic policies were hugely influential, and it can be said without the slightest hint of hyperbole that they forever changed the face of the Roman state. He created laws that clearly divided the people based on socio-economic status, and implemented a census that accurately and fairly assessed the just contributions each man owed the state, in peace as well as war, according to his wealth. These classes and contributions, in turn, were part of the Servian Reform of the army, where each man was assigned and outfitted according to his class.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.41, (trans. T.J. Luce).

¹⁰⁰ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.41.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.5.8.

¹⁰¹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.41.

¹⁰² Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 122.; Vaughan, *The Etruscans*, 137.

¹⁰³ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.48.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.7.1.

¹⁰⁴ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.42-43.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.15.6 – 4.19.2, 4.27.1-3.

All told, the reign of Servius Tullius was a period of growth and change in Rome. As a result of the census, eight thousand people were numbered among the citizenry, which necessitated an expansion of the city. Tullius incorporated the Quirinal, Viminal, and Esquiline Hills into Roman borders, and even sought to give significance to the latter by living there himself.¹⁰⁵ In addition, he expanded the *pomerium*, the sacred boundary of the city of Rome, and with it added the mound, moats, and wall that protected her.¹⁰⁶

Late in Tullius's reign, the son or grandson of Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, who was also named Lucius Tarquinius, began publicly to criticize the sixth king of Rome.¹⁰⁷ The younger Tarquin drew attention to the fact that Tullius had not come to the throne via the consent of the Roman people. Furthermore, he asked his fellow citizens to put the long-time king to a vote, testing whether or not he really ruled by the people's will. The people obliged, and Servius Tullius was unanimously acclaimed the rightful Roman monarch, an achievement no other king before him could claim.¹⁰⁸ Though defeated in this instance, the great ambition of Tarquin the Younger was not extinguished. In fact, it was kindled by the love and admiration of the younger Tullia, daughter of the king and the wife of his brother Arruns. In Livy's terms, evil was attracted to evil, and through a double homicide, the eldest son of King Lucius Tarquinius Priscus and the youngest daughter of King Servius Tullius went from siblings-in-law to man and wife.¹⁰⁹

Tullia's ambition proved to surpass even that of her new husband. She persistently mocked the younger Tarquin's relatively low status, and belittled his choice to live "in servitude"

¹⁰⁵ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.44-45.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.13-14.1.

¹⁰⁶ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.44.

¹⁰⁷ Livy 1.46 draws attention to this son/grandson debate, as does Dion. Halic. 4.6-7. Livy, deferring to his sources, chooses to portray the younger Lucius Tarquinius as Priscus's son. Dionysius takes the opposite stance. Modern scholarship seems divided on the issue, though most agree Dionysius's assertion is likely the more accurate. See: Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 122-127.; Ogilvie, *Early Rome and the Etruscans*, 71.; Vaughan, *The Etruscans*, 148.; Scullard, *Etruscan Cities and Rome*, 259.

¹⁰⁸ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.46.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.30.6-4.37.

¹⁰⁹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.47.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.30.1,4-5.

rather than to seize his rightful place as the king of Rome. Furthermore, she reminded him of his ancestry, and used it to justify her assertion that Servius Tullius was, for all intents and purposes, a pretender to the throne. Tarquin soon acquiesced to his wife's harassment, and he began to seek the support of the nobles. He began with the Lesser Houses of the Senate and, by reminding them of the great debt they owed his father, he soon convinced these senators to support his cause. Eventually, through the making of "magnificent promises" and by making many charges against the king, Tarquin's support increased "amongst all ranks."¹¹⁰

Soon thereafter, Tarquin, flanked by a group of armed men, descended on the Forum. Once at the Senate house, Tarquin, dressed in royal attire, mounted the royal seat and ordered the crier to call the senators "into the presence of King Tarquin."¹¹¹ Some knew what the young Tarquin wanted, others were frightened and unsure, but all came. In their presence, Tarquin once again questioned the legitimacy of Servius Tullius's reign, and even criticized the justness of the reforms Tullius had put into place.¹¹²

This chapter of the Roman monarchy ends in a final physical confrontation between Tullius and Tarquin. Tullius entered the senate house and demanded to know why another man occupied his throne while he himself still lived. Tarquin replied that he had simply taken the seat of his father, a seat which he deserved to inherit far more than a common slave did. The two soon came to blows, and it was clear to all present that whoever won the contest would win the throne. Yet, just as quickly as it had begun, the fight was over. The young man grabbed the old king around his waist, forcibly removed him from the Senate house, and tossed him down the stairs. In the end, Servius Tullius was not slain by the hand of Tarquin, nor by the fall down the Senate steps, but rather by those whom Tarquin sent to end the life of the broken king. Around

¹¹⁰ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.47 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.30.5.

¹¹¹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.47 (trans. T.J. Luce).; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.38.2.

¹¹² Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.48.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.38.4.

this time, Tullia arrived in the Forum on a two-wheeled cart, and she became the first Roman to salute Tarquin as king. As she turned around to leave the chaos, it is said that she drove right over the corpse of her recently murdered father.¹¹³ Tarquin, for his part, denied Servius Tullius a proper burial (arguing that Romulus himself was not buried), and ordered the execution of nobles he believed to be supporters of the murdered monarch. For these and other unjust and unlawful actions, Lucius Tarquinius the Younger earned the moniker “Superbus” – “Proud.”¹¹⁴

Tarquin the Proud is reputed to have come to power in 534 B.C.¹¹⁵ According to Livy, his ascent to the throne brought an end to “all just and lawful kingship in Rome.”¹¹⁶ With no hope of ever winning over the hearts and minds of his people, Tarquin found another avenue to legitimize his rule: violence, intimidation, and fear. In Tarquin’s Rome, Tarquin alone presided over capital cases, and Tarquin alone possessed the right to fine, exile, or execute anyone he chose, including personal and political enemies. In Tarquin’s Rome, the senate dwindled in size and importance as Tarquin refused to fill vacancies and actively broke tradition by refusing to consult the Senate in matters of state, becoming the first and only king to do so. In Tarquin’s Rome, the state made peace and war, signed and broke treaties, purely on Tarquin’s whim, without confirmation or input from the Senate or his subjects.¹¹⁷ Tarquinius Superbus was an autocrat in a system wherein even kings were not meant to enjoy absolute rule. He stylized himself a king, but according to Livy, the people of Rome commonly whispered another title: “Tyrant.”¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.48.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.38.4 -4.39.

¹¹⁴ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.49.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.40.5 – 6.

¹¹⁵ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 120.;Vaughan, *The Etruscans*, 148.

¹¹⁶ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.48 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).

¹¹⁷ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.49.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.42 – 43.

¹¹⁸ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.50 (trans. Rev Canon Roberts).

Tarquin did everything he could to earn this second title. During his reign, he was known to forcibly take land away from his people, and it was not unheard of for Tarquin to arrest and execute those who spoke against him.¹¹⁹ However, according to Livy, his tyranny did not inhibit his skill on the battlefield. Livy remarks that Tarquin would have rivaled the best among his predecessors in military achievement “had not the degeneration of his character in other directions prevented him from attaining distinction here also.”¹²⁰ Partially thanks to Rome’s new alliance with the Latins (wherein Rome was the dominant power), Tarquinius was successful in his military campaign against Volsci, albeit he sparked a war that would last two hundred years in the process. He was also successful in acquiring the neighboring town of Gabii, albeit he did so more with spy-craft and trickery than he did through glorious battle. Following this latter accomplishment, Tarquin also made peace with the Aequi and renewed the standing treaty with the Etruscans.¹²¹

In Rome herself, Tarquin embarked on an ambitious construction project. Partially using the funds from his victory over Volsci, Tarquin made good on his father’s promise to build a great Temple of Jupiter on the Tarpeian Mount. To complete this project, he employed a great many Etruscan workers, and compelled the plebeians (lower classes) in Rome to work on the project, a “duty” they held in addition to military service. While this may have been irksome to some lower-class Romans, Livy reports that they did not view it a hardship to work toward the glory of the gods. However, the same could not be said of the construction of the “ford” near the Circus Maximus, nor of the Cloaca Maxima, which was the giant tunnel meant to house the city’s sewage. Perhaps most insulting of all, once his great projects were completed (and they were great – Livy wrote that the magnificence of these projects surpassed anything up until his

¹¹⁹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.50-51.

¹²⁰ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.53 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts.).

¹²¹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.53-55.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.45-49.1.

own day, though their magnificence may better be attributed to Tarquin's pride than his competency), Tarquin decided that Rome was populated by too many useless, unemployed citizens, and he sent many of these workers to colonies in Signia and Circeii.¹²²

Surprisingly, the fall of the Roman monarchy would not come as the result of Tarquinius Superbus's actions, at least not directly. Rather, his son, Sextus Tarquinius, would provide the proverbial straw that finally broke Rome's back. During the siege campaign against Ardea late in Tarquinius Superbus's reign, Sextus became enamored with a young Roman noblewoman named Lucretia. He first laid eyes on her while serving in the field and staying as a guest of Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus, Lucretia's husband. Falling instantly into lust, Sextus planned to have Lucretia for himself – if only for a night – by any means necessary.¹²³

A short time later, Sextus went to the home of Collatinus, and when night fell, he sneaked into Lucretia's bedroom and laid his left hand upon her breast, as a sword was in his right. When Lucretia awoke, Sextus threatened to kill her if she made a single sound. When her silence was assured, Sextus confessed his desire for her, and pleaded with her to satisfy his lust. Yet neither romantic plea nor threat of death could sway the young woman to betray her honor. However, Tarquin had a final threat. He told Lucretia that if she would not sleep with him, he would murder a slave and lay his naked body next to hers. By doing so, Sextus could claim to have slain the young woman as punishment for her "foul adultery." Unable to stand the thought of her honor being soiled in such a way, Lucretia finally acquiesced to Sextus's cruel demands.¹²⁴

From Lucretia's perspective, she had lost her integrity, and she was both horrified and saddened by the affront to her character. In her despair, she sent a messenger to her father Spurius Lucretius, who was in Rome at the time, and to her husband in Ardea asking them to

¹²² Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.55-56.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.44, 4.53-58, 4.61, 4.63.1.

¹²³ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.57.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.64.

¹²⁴ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.58.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.64.5-65.

come to her. She also requested that each bring a faithful friend. Spurius Lucretius brought with him Publius Valerius Publicola, a Roman aristocrat. At his side, Collatinus had Lucius Junius Brutus. The four men found Lucretia in her room, prostrate and weeping. Inconsolable, the poor woman told the men her story. In a truly heart breaking scene, she looked to her husband and promised him that it was but her body that had been violated, not her soul. At her behest, each man promised to see to it that Sextus Tarquinius was justly punished.¹²⁵ Lucretia's final words were thus: "It is for you to see that he gets his deserts; although I acquit myself of the sin, I do not free myself from the penalty; no unchaste woman shall henceforth live and plead Lucretia's example."¹²⁶

With these words, Lucretia withdrew a dagger from her toga and stabbed herself in the heart, ending her own life and freeing herself from suffering and guilt. All the men took their vows to heart, though none, perhaps, as much as Lucius Junius Brutus. Taking the dagger from the dead woman's chest, Brutus vowed:¹²⁷

"By this blood - most pure before the outrage wrought by the king's son - I swear, and you, O gods, I call to witness that I will drive hence Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, together with his cursed wife and his whole brood, with fire and sword and every means in my power, and I will not suffer them or anyone else to reign in Rome."¹²⁸

Brutus made good on his promise, and in 509 B.C., Tarquin the Proud and his entire family were expelled from Rome.¹²⁹ Brutus and Collatinus were elected the first consuls of the Republic, and the mere mention of monarchical power would become an intolerable evil for the next half millennium.¹³⁰ Rome was not yet free from the Tarquins; within a year, there would be war against an Etruscan force backing the Tarquins' cause. However, as the result of the death

¹²⁵ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.58.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.66-67.1.

¹²⁶ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.58 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).

¹²⁷ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.58.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.67.1, 70.4 – 5.

¹²⁸ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.59 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).

¹²⁹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.59.60.; Keller, *Etruscans*, 199.; Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 120-121.; Vaughan, *The Etruscans*, 148.

¹³⁰ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.60.

and dishonor of one noble Roman woman, the Roman people had taken their first formative steps toward republican rule.

The Tarquin Legacy

The story of the last three kings of Rome is not the story of one man or one historical moment. Instead, it is the story of the rise and fall of a family; one that had a tremendous impact on the history of Rome and, quite possibly, the world. Beginning with Demaratus of Corinth, this family immigrated to the Italian peninsula and established itself among the Etruscans before moving to Rome. In Rome, the family became so successful that they were eventually elevated to the position of royalty, and depending on how one conceptualizes Servius Tullius, this family remained in that position for over one hundred years.¹³¹

As history, imagined or otherwise, the Tarquins were supposed to be a lesson. The Tarquin family as a whole was not portrayed as evil, nor were the Etruscan people. Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius, and Lars Porsenna were all described as just and honorable men. Similarly, both Lucius Junius Brutus and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus – the first consuls – were blood relatives of the Tarquins, though it should be noted the latter was later forced to resign from power and go into exile because of his name.¹³² This was also not the story of kingship as an inherently evil practice; all of the kings before Tarquin the Proud were lauded as noble rulers and many of them exceptionally so.¹³³ The history, tradition, and myth of the Tarquin Dynasty was meant to demonstrate the inherent flaw of monarchy.

In Book Six of Polybius's *Histories*, written during the second century B.C., the Greek author discussed what he believed to be the three basic forms of government: monarchy,

¹³¹ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 123.; Vaughan, *The Etruscans*, 126, 137, 148.

¹³² Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.34-60, 2.1-2.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 5.1.2, 5.10-12.

¹³³ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.passim.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 2.1-4.85.

aristocracy, and democracy.¹³⁴ In Polybian thought, derived from the works of Plato before him, humanity begins in anarchy before the emergence of a king. Kingship inevitably degenerates into tyranny, which is then overthrown and replaced by aristocracy. Aristocracy, in turn, inevitably turns into an oligarchy, which the people rise up against and replace with democracy. Democracy then becomes perverted, and eventually becomes an ochlocracy, or “mob-rule.” For Polybius, and for most Romans, this was a succession that would repeat indefinitely in every established state.¹³⁵

For the Romans of the later Republic, Tarquin the Proud was proof positive that kingship would inevitably descend into tyranny. Furthermore, the fall of Tarquin and his family was evidence for the historical cycle of governance. The legacy of the Etruscan kings of Rome, then, was not as poster-children for the unwavering belief that monarchy was necessarily evil. Rather, the story of the Tarquin family as a whole was meant to demonstrate that the only way to escape the “rotation of polities,” and thus, to avoid the repetitive and circular ascent of the so-called “perverted” forms of government was to establish a system that utilized elements of all three “good” forms.

Rome, under the Republic, had such a system. The two consuls were seen as having monarch-like authority, just as the Senate was thought to be akin to an aristocracy. The power of the people in bestowing these offices, as well as voting for laws, in trials, and “on the question of peace and war” was understood as a form of democratic power. The division and balances of power between the three was meant to ensure that none became too powerful, and thus make certain that the “bad” forms of government were never given a chance to rise again.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ Cicero mentions Polybius in *De re publica*, 1.34.

¹³⁵ Polybius, *Histories*, 6.3.4-4.10.

¹³⁶ Polybius, *Histories*, 6.11.11-12, 6.18.1-8.

In other words, the story of Tarquin the Proud and his family was meant to explain and legitimize the Republican social and governmental order.

Chapter 4: History and Memory in the Annals of Ancient Rome

“This dreadful scene struck the Romans who were present with so much horror and compassion that they all cried out with one voice that they would rather die a thousand deaths in defense of their liberty than suffer such outrages to be committed by the tyrants.”
 ~ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, on the death of Lucretia¹³⁷

In his own summary of the Etruscan Dynasty of Rome, author R.M. Ogilvie wrote: “The rape of Lucretia is pure melodrama...”¹³⁸ The morally corrupt son of a tyrannical monarch was overcome by desire for a woman of incomparable beauty and unparalleled virtue. His inability to control his lust led him to commit a heinous crime on her person and her honor, an outrage that resulted in his victim taking her own life. With her dying breath, this woman beseeched her family and her family friends to avenge her, and made it clear that her sacrifice was her way of regaining the morality and chastity she felt had been taken from her. Lucius Brutus drew the bloody dagger from her chest, and by that blood, promised to punish justly not only Sextus Tarquin, the perpetrator, but Tarquin the Proud, his father, and all his immediate family. In parts, it seems a story more fit for the stage than for a history book.

Analyzed as mythology, however, this story was likely intended to serve a particular purpose. During Joseph Campbell’s August 1969 lecture at the Esalen Institute in Big Sur, California, the celebrated mythologist outlined what he believed to be the primary functions of mythology. Campbell was more interested in creation and religious mythology; however, I feel the basic elements of his functions are useful in understanding this narrative.

According to Campbell, myth serves to support and validate a specific social order; to shape the listeners into their “geographically and historically conditioned social group.”¹³⁹ This was discussed in the conclusion to the previous chapter. The story of the Tarquins, beginning

¹³⁷ Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 67.2.

¹³⁸ Ogilvie, *Early Rome and the Etruscans*, 79.

¹³⁹ Campbell, “Function of Mythology,” Aug. 1969.; Campbell, *Creative Mythology*, 4-5.

with Demaratus of Corinth, provided a short and convenient explanation for why the Roman system of governance was the way it was. Even if the emergence of a Republican state in Rome was a much lengthier and more complicated process than the extant histories suggest, this story would have acted as a way of communicating that process concisely, and more importantly, memorably – a sort of “history condensed.”¹⁴⁰

This is why Lucretia is so important to narrative. The drama surrounding her and her death is *the* definitive moment in the traditional historical shift from the Roman Monarchical Period to the Republic. From a certain perspective, Lucretia can be seen as an allegory for Rome and her people – a figure who was literally raped by the prince, just as the people were figuratively raped by their king. Portelli would say that the Lucretia story satisfies the symbolic, psychological, and formal functions of memory. She was a symbol of Rome and her people, her rape was a reminder of the humiliation Romans experienced under a tyrannical king, and her death was representative of a single “blurred” moment in which Rome chose to become a Republic.¹⁴¹ In this role, she acts as the primary bearer for another function of myth: she unites all of those who hear this myth, in this case the subjects of the Roman state, under a single, coherent self-conception.¹⁴² In other words, Lucretia was not only a symbol of why Rome chose to shun monarchy, she was also emblematic of the Roman people as a social and political collective.

But did such a collective exist? Did the Roman people universally accept the story of the Tarquins as fact? It is one thing to argue the traditional narrative as an “official” history in the positivist sense. The very presence of historical texts that relate this particular version of events

¹⁴⁰ The concept of *exempla* in Livy – of stories used to make a point or teach a lesson – is also covered in: Jane D. Chaplin, *Livy's Exemplary History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), passim.

¹⁴¹ Portelli, *Luigi Trastulli*, 26.

¹⁴² Campbell, “Function of Mythology,” Aug. 1969.

suggests that this narrative was at least passively accepted by the ruling elite, which of course allows the possibility that it was actively promoted for political reasons. It is quite another, however, to argue that the story was believed unquestioningly by every Roman or, for that matter, most Romans, especially those among the lower ranks who did not necessarily benefit from the status quo. To analyze whether or not a collective Roman society can be taken for granted, it is necessary to examine each of the major sources individually. Using Lucretia as a focal point, I will look at how the general story of the founding of the Roman Republic was represented by three authors: Dionysius, Livy, and Cicero.

Dionysius: A Critical, Disinterested Historian?

In terms of narrative, there are not many differences between Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. The differences that do exist are relatively minor – primarily inconsistencies in chronology. For example, Dionysius tells us that Tarquin the Proud and the younger Tullia killed their siblings and married each other before Tarquin's initial attempt to undermine Servius Tullius, while Livy writes that their murders and marriage occurred shortly after Tullius surpassed Tarquin's best efforts and was unanimously approved as king.¹⁴³ Nonetheless, the basic plot and the fundamental features of the story are present in both.

These dissimilarities have, however, sparked a debate amongst Classical historians. Where discrepancies do exist, which of the two accounts should be regarded as more accurate and/or more trustworthy? Certainly, this is a question worthy of discussion. In the attempt to reconstruct the true history of the early days of the Roman Republic as accurately as we possibly can, historians must be discriminating in their use of sources, and this is particularly true when the sources are in conflict. Arguably, even the most seemingly insignificant of details should be carefully considered and critically addressed.

¹⁴³ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.46 -47.; Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.30-37

More than a few modern historians have argued that Dionysius's *Roman Antiquities* is a better historical source than Livy's *Ab urbe condita*. Italian scholar Emilio Gabba goes so far as to say that "... Dionysius, and not Livy, is in reality the authentic historian of the Augustan age."¹⁴⁴ Especially early on in contemporary historical analyses, there was an inherent if somewhat bizarre assumption that Greek historians were superior to Roman historians, who were seen as inevitably derivative of their Greek antecedents.¹⁴⁵ This notion seems to have roots in antiquity; Dionysius himself notes that the earliest chroniclers of Rome's early history were all Greek.¹⁴⁶ Many contemporary scholars of early Roman history continue to emphasize Dionysius's "Greek-ness," though not because his heritage in and of itself makes him superior to Livy. Rather, it is assumed that Dionysius's status as an "outsider" freed him from the sociopolitical context of the Augustan age, and thus from the collective framework which surely affected Livy's writings.¹⁴⁷ In other words, Dionysius's ancestry allowed him to be disinterested, which in turn allowed him to compose a "better," more critical history.

There are indeed a number of valid reasons to give Dionysius's account greater credence, at least from a positivist perspective. Even at a glance, it is obvious that Dionysius was much more detailed in his descriptions.¹⁴⁸ An event that is discussed in a chapter (akin to a modern paragraph) or less of Livy's text might take up several chapters of Dionysius's account. Similarly, the entire narrative of Roman history from the founding of the city to the dethroning of the Tarquins takes up four books of Dionysius's larger work, while Livy manages to contain the same story in a single book. Furthermore, Dionysius is much more judicious than Livy. The former is noted for his attempt to leave out glaringly mythic facts – specifically the divine

¹⁴⁴ Emilio Gabba, *Dionysius and the History of Archaic Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 22.

¹⁴⁵ Gary B. Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), 3.

¹⁴⁶ Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 1.6.1.

¹⁴⁷ Gabba, *Dionysius and Archaic Rome*, 20-22.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

intervention of the gods in the day-to-day activities of humans.¹⁴⁹ He did also work critically with the traditional story and the sources he used in ways his Roman contemporary did not. A particularly significant example for the purposes of this thesis is when Dionysius takes a two-chapter aside (4.6-7) to discuss the reasons why, to his mind, Tarquin the Proud could not possibly have been the son of Tarquinius Priscus. Dionysius, arguing mainly on the problem of chronology, suggests that Tarquin the Proud and his brother were actually born as Priscus's grandsons and later named his sons through adoption, an interpretation he stands by throughout his narrative.¹⁵⁰

However, if one accepts the Halbwachsian assertion that each of us is the product of our own societies, it becomes impossible to see Dionysius as any better or, for that matter, as any worse than Livy. In the spirit of constructivist thought, it is fair to say that the number of histories of any given event is almost equal to the number of people who have memories or knowledge of that event.¹⁵¹ Along that line of thinking, it is important to note that the meaning ascribed to historical events are equally variable, and are as dependent on an individual's collective framework as they are on the memories themselves.¹⁵²

This brings me to Dionysius's portrayal of Lucretia and the events surrounding her death. Compared to Livy's account, Dionysius's version of the Lucretia story is missing the dramatic flair; that heartbreaking melodrama of which R.M. Ogilvie wrote. Let us compare, for example, the moment where Sextus Tarquin finally forces Lucretia to succumb to his lust:

“‘Silence, Lucretia! I am Sextus Tarquin, and I have a sword in my hand; if you utter a word, you shall die.’ When the woman, terrified out of her sleep, saw that no help was near, and instant death threatening her, Tarquin began to confess his passion, pleaded, used threats as well as entreaties, and employed every argument likely to influence a

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 118.

¹⁵⁰ Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.7.5.

¹⁵¹ Glassberg, “Public History,” 21.

¹⁵² Portelli, *Luigi Trastulli*, 26.

female heart. When he saw that she was inflexible and not moved even by the fear of death, he threatened to disgrace her, declaring that he would lay the naked corpse of the slave by her dead body, so that it might be said that she had been slain in foul adultery. By this awful threat, his lust triumphed over her inflexible chastity, and Tarquin went off exulting in having successfully attacked her honour.” ~ Livy ¹⁵³

“‘If, however, you endeavour to resist from a desire to preserve your virtue, I will kill you and then slay one of your slaves, and having laid both your bodies together, will state that I had caught you misbehaving with the slave and punished you to avenge the dishonour of my kinsman; so that your death will be attended with shame and reproach and your body will be deprived both of burial and every other customary rite.’ And as he kept urgently repeating his threats and entreaties and swearing that he was speaking the truth as to each alternative, Lucretia, fearing the ignominy of the death he threatened, was forced to yield and to allow him to accomplish his desire. When it was day, Sextus, having gratified his wicked and baneful passion, returned to the camp” ~ Dionysius ¹⁵⁴

Note the difference in language. Note how, in Livy’s version, Sextus Tarquin “triumphs” over the “inflexible” and chaste Lucretia. Note how Lucretia is “terrified” and fearful of death by the prince’s hand. Note Livy’s stress on Sextus Tarquin’s “*awful*” threat [emphasis mine] as well as his “attack” on Lucretia’s honor. Notice the lack of such language and dramatic emphasis in Dionysius’s account. This dissimilarity is present throughout both historians’ chronicle of the event. As another example, let us look at each author’s description of Lucretia’s death:

“They found Lucretia sitting in her room prostrate with grief. As they entered, she burst into tears, and to her husband's inquiry whether all was well, replied, ‘No! What can be well with a woman when her honour is lost? The marks of a stranger, Collatinus, are in your bed. But it is only the body that has been violated, the soul is pure; death shall bear witness to that. But pledge me your solemn word that the adulterer shall not go unpunished. It is Sextus Tarquin, who, coming as an enemy instead of a guest, forced from me last night by brutal violence a pleasure fatal to me, and, if you are men, fatal to him.’ They all successively pledged their word, and tried to console the distracted woman by turning the guilt from the victim of the outrage to the perpetrator, and urging that it is the mind that sins, not the body, and where there has been no consent there is no guilt. ‘It is for you,’ she said, ‘to see that he gets his deserts; although I acquit myself of the sin, I do not free myself from the penalty; no unchaste woman shall henceforth live and plead Lucretia's example.’ She had a knife concealed in her dress which she plunged into her heart, and fell dying on the floor. Her father and husband raised the death-cry.” ~ Livy ¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.58 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).

¹⁵⁴ Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.65.3-66.1 (trans. Earnest Cary).

¹⁵⁵ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.58 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).

“... She began at the beginning and told them all that had happened. Then, after embracing her father and addressing many entreaties both to him and to all present and praying to the gods and other divinities to grant her a speedy departure from life, she drew the dagger she was keeping concealed under her robes, and plunging it into her breast, with a single stroke pierced her heart. Upon this the women beat their breasts and filled the house with their shrieks and lamentations, but her father, enfolding her body in his arms, embraced it, and calling her by name again and again, ministered to her, as though she might recover from her wound, until in his arms, gasping and breathing out her life, she expired.” ~ Dionysius¹⁵⁶

On the surface, it would seem that this difference could be attributed to Dionysius’s attempt to avoid the mythic and fantastical elements of traditional Roman history. To that end, it would seem that the bland and rather academic way in which Dionysius describes and discusses Lucretia from her introduction to her death is the product of his historical professionalism. Dionysius reports the same facts that Livy does without the emotion that subtends Livy’s account.

However, I would argue that there was another reason for this lack of emotion. In short, Dionysius’s Greek heritage did indeed affect his work, but not in the way many historians assume. More directly, Lucretia did not really *mean* anything to Dionysius. Her rape and death may have affected him on a personal, emotional level, but it did not inspire him or anger him or bring him to tears. Dionysius, born and raised in Greek-speaking Asia Minor, was not a part of nor was he tied to the collective Roman society, and thus the rape of Lucretia, as memory and/or myth, did not resonate with him.

Livy: A Historian Preserving a Collective Memory

It is mistaken to say that Livy did not question his sources or was not privy to the fantastical elements of traditional Roman history. In fact, one of the most famous passages from Livy’s history, contained in his preface, directly addresses his position on the issue:

¹⁵⁶ Dion. Halic., *Roman Antiquities*, 4.67.1-2 (trans. Earnest Cary).

“The traditions of what happened prior to the foundation of the City or whilst it was being built, are more fitted to adorn the creations of the poet than the authentic records of the historian, and I have no intention of establishing either their truth or their falsehood. This much license is conceded to the ancients, that by intermingling human actions with divine they may confer a more august dignity on the origins of states.”¹⁵⁷

This passage points to Livy’s comprehensive – albeit passive – understanding of how much fact and fiction bleed together in the creation of history. From a certain point of view, this passage also hints at an ancient understanding of both Halbwachsian memory and Joseph Campbell’s functions of myth. Particularly in the second sentence, the careful reader might see a discussion from Livy on how a particular historical memory and/or myths and legends can serve both to explain and validate the current social order.

This is not to say that Livy was completely passive in his telling of events. Like Dionysius, he too brings attention to the possibility that Tarquinius Superbus was actually the grandson of Tarquinius Priscus, although unlike Dionysius, Livy eventually defers to the “preponderance of authorities” that preceded him which mostly suggested Tarquin the Proud was the son of Tarquinius Priscus.¹⁵⁸ In fact, I would argue that Livy, true to his aim listed in the preface, was simply more willing to defer to tradition and his Roman predecessors overall than Dionysius was, though this does not necessarily denote the practice of a lesser historian.

From a constructivist perspective, then, it could be argued that Livy was simply reporting a particular version of the Roman past. Livy, of course, had two roles in the writing of *Ab urbe condita*. As a historian, Livy needed to tell the facts of Rome’s monarchical history as close to accurately as he could. As he said in his preface, the “ancients,” including those ancestors who traditionally had overthrown Tarquin the Proud over four hundred and eighty years previous, had a fair amount of “license” in his estimation. Livy went on to say that the flaws in the historical

¹⁵⁷ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.Preface (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.46.

record are relatively insignificant. He argued that the general narrative that made up the past of the Roman community, her people, and the events that shaped her – as well as the lessons that could be learned from that history – were far more important than the minor details that historians diverge on and argue over.¹⁵⁹ Whether or not you agree with this assessment, it cannot be denied that this was a conscious decision, made by a careful and thoughtful historian who conceptualized his role in the telling of Rome’s past in a fundamentally different way than Dionysius did.

This is related to Livy’s second and arguably far more important role in the writing of his history, at least for the purposes of this thesis: that of his role as a Roman citizen. Livy was born in Patavium – what is now Padua in northern Italy – which by the time of his writings was within the bounds of Roman rule.¹⁶⁰ This may seem a trivial distinction to make between Livy and his Greek contemporary, but his Roman residency forces us as modern historians to look at his conscious decisions in a new light. Obviously, from a Halbwachsian perspective, Livy was raised under the Roman system, and as such he had a vested interest and a proclivity toward a certain version of events.¹⁶¹ It could be argued that this proclivity tended to be biased toward the version of events he himself had heard since he was a young boy. Also, the fact that Livy so often refers to the Roman historians who came before him, and roots his version of events and his decisions for how to represent the Roman “story” in their work, suggests that Livy’s account was not only

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 1.Preface.

¹⁶⁰ Luce, introduction, ix.; Miles, *Livy*, 47-48.

¹⁶¹ T.J. Luce notes that Patavium was not part of Rome when Livy was born between 64 and 59 B.C. Rather, it was a Roman provincial territory within the larger province of Cisalpine Gaul. Miles notes that the region was likely not given full Roman citizenship until around 49 B.C., and Luce himself draws attention to the fact the Livy may not have been *born* a Roman citizen. Luce believes this explains Livy’s perceived Republican leanings, writing that “those recently admitted to an exclusive group sometimes become its most blinkered champions.” However, according to Miles, Patavium seems to have been under Roman control by 174 B.C., albeit with relative autonomy. For me, this latter point still allows for the possibility, and I would say probability, that Livy heard the traditional Roman history from the time of his youth. See: Luce, introduction, ix.; Miles, *Livy*, 47-48.; T.J. Luce, *Livy: The Composition of His History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 285-286.

his favored narrative or his historical memory; it was also a version of that narrative which existed in the Roman *collective* memory, a version that most and perhaps all Romans would have been both familiar and comfortable with.¹⁶²

This has interesting implications for Livy's portrayal of the Lucretia story. Before, during, and following the rape of Lucretia, Livy refers to the king and his family as "wicked" or "despicable," and to their actions as "vile." He references the "beauty and exemplary purity" of Lucretia. He emphasizes the "grief" and "wrath" of the Roman people, particularly of the men who were with Lucretia as she died.¹⁶³ In other words, the characteristic melodrama of the traditional narrative plays out in such a way that the important lessons of history are emphasized. Through their actions, the Tarquins become unequivocal and inarguable villains, rightfully deserving of whatever negative fate will come their way. Lucretia – who we must remember acts as a symbolic stand-in for the city of Rome herself, mythological speaking – is the innocent woman who must be martyred in order for Campbell's "mythic hero," in this case probably best found in Brutus, to begin his hero's quest.¹⁶⁴ In Campbell's terms, her "given life" directly leads to a new life for the Roman people, and to a "new way of being" for the Roman state.¹⁶⁵ The emphasis on the anger and sacrifice of the Roman people was meant to remind all who read this why Rome hated monarchy, and why monarchy in any form must be combatted.

This is why I have chosen to focus on Livy's narrative for this thesis, both in the previous chapter and in references to Roman history from this point onward. Livy's account is certainly

¹⁶² T.J. Cornell argues that the overall similarity of the surviving literary accounts of Roman history suggests that the authors were drawing from a "common body of tradition." T.P. Wiseman suggests that this body – what he calls "the main outlines of 'Roman history'" – was formed at the turn of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. See: Timothy J. Cornell, "The Value of the Literary Tradition in Archaic Rome," in *Social Struggles in Archaic Rome: New Perspectives on the Conflict of the Orders*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub, Expanded and Updated Edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 52.; T.P. Wiseman, *Unwritten Rome* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2008), 235.

¹⁶³ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.53, 57-59.

¹⁶⁴ Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 41-48.

¹⁶⁵ Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 135.

dramatic in parts – much more so than Dionysius’s for sure. He also seems less discerning than Dionysius, prone to tales of divine intervention and to the inclusion of lofty speeches which, by definition, no one would have been around to hear, much less record. However, I disagree with Emilio Gabba when he says that Dionysius was somehow an “authentic” historian while Livy was not. Quite the contrary; due to the character of collective memory, especially in the context of imagined traditions, I would argue that Livy was not only equal to Dionysius in his significance, but is indeed a much better source when trying to determine how the history of Rome was seen from ancient Roman eyes.

Cicero: Education and Critical Thinking in Collective Historical Memory

As important as *Ab urbe condita* is to our understanding of what Romans believed to be their historical past, it does not necessarily provide any insight into our initial question: was this story universally believed in all echelons of Roman society? Livy and Augustus were, after all, acquainted; the historian even encouraged the young future-emperor Claudius to study and write history.¹⁶⁶ A passage in Tacitus’s *Annals* lends further credence to a relationship between Augustus and Livy: “Titus Livius, pre-eminently famous for eloquence and truthfulness, extolled [Gnaeus] Pompeius in such a panegyric that Augustus called him Pompeianus, and yet this was no obstacle to their friendship.”¹⁶⁷

This brief excerpt has generated a great deal of scholarly debate as to the nature of the relationship between Livy and Augustus. Some scholars have focused on Tacitus’s mention of a “friendship,” arguing that Livy was either naively unaware of the implications of Augustus’s growing powers or that, perhaps, he was “in joyful acceptance of the new order, in praise of the

¹⁶⁶ Suetonius, *Claudius*, 41.; R.M. Ogilvie, “Livy,” in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature, Vol. 2: Latin Literature*, ed. E.J. Kenney and W.V. Clausen (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 459.; Luce, introduction, x.

¹⁶⁷ Tacitus, *Annals*, 4.34.

government and its achievements.”¹⁶⁸ Others have focused on Augustus’s purported description of Livy as Pompeianus – a “Pompeian” – and suggested that Livy was a staunch Republican who supported Pompey the Great and the Senate in the civil war in which Julius Caesar eventually seized control. Reportedly, Livy not only praised Pompey, but he was “an outspoken critic” of Caesar and was reverent of a number of Caesar’s opponents, including Marcus Junius Brutus, one of the main conspirators in his assassination.¹⁶⁹ Some have even argued that Livy’s portrayal of Tarquinius Superbus was meant as a subtle allusion to the expanding power of the *princeps*, whom Livy personally opposed.¹⁷⁰ Other scholars have given more moderate interpretations, suggesting the possibility that Livy may have been “genuinely ambivalent” toward Augustus and his policies, or that Livy may have grown more conservative as he aged and Augustus’s power grew.¹⁷¹

We will never know what Augustus’s and Livy’s *true* feelings were for one another. In context, Tacitus’s assertion of Livy’s “Pompeianism” is delivered in a speech by Cremutius Cordus, a historian who was tried and ultimately executed in 25 A.D. on charges that his recent historical writing “praised” Marcus Brutus and declared Gaius Cassius (another of the lead conspirators against Caesar) as “the last of the Romans.”¹⁷² Given that Tacitus was writing about this event long after it happened, there is reason to doubt the historical validity of the quote.¹⁷³ Even if Tacitus was correct, and Cordus did say something to this effect while pleading for his

¹⁶⁸ Ronald Syme, “Livy and Augustus,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* Vol. 64 (1959): 75.

¹⁶⁹ Luce, introduction, xv.; Gian Biagio Conte, “Livy,” in *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. Joseph B. Solodow, revised by Dan Fowler and Glenn W. Most (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 370-371.; Walsh, *Livy: Aims and Methods*, 8.

¹⁷⁰ Hans Peterson, “Livy and Augustus,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* Vol. 92 (1961): 443, 450-451.

¹⁷¹ Luce, introduction, xv.; Ronald T. Ridley, “Eulogy of the Lost Republic or Acceptance of the New Monarchy?: Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita*,” *Antichthon* 44 (2010): 71, accessed April 3, 2013, http://courses.knox.edu/latin211_311/ridley_eulogy.pdf.

¹⁷² Tacitus, *Annals*, 3.43.; Ridley, “Eulogy or Acceptance?,” 72.

¹⁷³ Ridley, “Eulogy or Acceptance?,” 72.

life, the passage would still be hearsay on the part of Cordus. Likewise, the portion of Livy's history that covered the then-recent civil wars is lost to us, so we cannot know how Livy actually dealt with either Caesar or Pompey, although it is worth mentioning that Livy supposedly did not publish the final twenty-two books of *Ab urbe condita* until after Augustus's death.¹⁷⁴ Regardless of Livy's true political leanings, I would argue that the debate surrounding his partisanship is suggestive of a historian who was very careful of how he framed and phrased his narrative. This, in turn, is indicative of a man who was aware of his own beliefs and biases and who consciously attempted to maintain an air of neutrality.¹⁷⁵ In other words, friends or not, Livy was not simply a passive mouthpiece for the new regime.

That being said, Augustus was the sole ruler in Rome at the time Livy was writing, so it stands to reason that Livy's version of Roman history was the one that was approved by Augustus and his government. As noted by Gary B. Miles, Livy's narrative was a potential threat to the state, but Augustus was also a potential threat to Livy. Miles even speculates that Livy's "self-presentation" – the ambiguity of his prose – may have been a strategic choice, meant to avoid Augustus's ire.¹⁷⁶ How can we know, then, whether the people whose thoughts and writings don't survive in the historical record accepted this version of events or even believed the basic story at all?

Certainly, there is a plethora of circumstantial evidence that suggests this story was widely believed in Roman society. There is evidence for literacy in Rome as early as the sixth century B.C. and relatively widespread literacy by the latter half of the third century B.C.¹⁷⁷ This further bolsters the contention that Livy needed to write a narrative that spoke to a wide breadth

¹⁷⁴ Conte, "Livy," 370-371.; Walsh, *Livy: Aims and Methods*, 8.; Luce, introduction, xvi.

¹⁷⁵ Luce, introduction, xvi.

¹⁷⁶ Miles, *Livy*, 54.

¹⁷⁷ T.P. Wiseman, *Remus: A Roman Myth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 129.

of the citizenry. It is also worth mentioning that the Roman historian Cassius Dio, writing about two hundred and fifty years after Livy, tells the same basic story of the Tarquins, suggesting that the story resonated with people even many years after Livy's time.¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, archaeologists have found coins minted by Marcus Junius Brutus – a direct descendent of the first consul – which depict his storied ancestor.¹⁷⁹ The existence of these coins suggests that the story was actively remembered by a populace who would have understood what the images on these coins meant. They also suggest that, for Marcus Brutus, this narrative resonated quite strongly in his collective family history. This certainly provides insight into why he chose to stand against Caesar.

Yet I would argue that the best evidence for how important the “lesson” of the Tarquin Dynasty was to the ancient Romans comes in the writings of another aristocrat. In Book One of *De re publica*, Cicero explores the three forms of government outlined by Polybius. The book is written in dialogue form, with a number of characters taking part in the discussion. However, in the section most relevant to this thesis, Cicero “speaks” primarily through the character of Scipio Aemilianus, a historical Roman consul and general who became a hero following the destruction of Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War (149-146 B.C.).¹⁸⁰ Beginning in chapter thirty-seven, Scipio and his colleagues discuss which of the three forms of government are best. After giving an outline of the three forms, and briefly extolling the vices and virtues of each form through his characters, Cicero makes a startling admission. While he believes a “mixed”

¹⁷⁸ Cassius Dio, *Rome*, 2.7-11 (fragments).

¹⁷⁹ According to Plutarch, “Marcus Brutus was a descendant of that Junius Brutus whose bronze statue, with ancient sword in its hand, was erected by the ancient Romans on the Capitol among those of their kings, in token that he was most resolute in dethroning the Tarquins.” See: Plutarch, *Life of Brutus*, 1.1.

¹⁸⁰ A.E. Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967), 51, 61-62, 75-78.; W.W. How and H.D. Leigh, *A History of Rome to the Death of Caesar* (New York and Bombay: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1901), 248-253).

government to be the best, Cicero (Scipio), when pressed to choose among the pure forms, argues that monarchy is the best form of government:¹⁸¹

“Laelius: But what about yourself Scipio? Which of those three do *you* most approve of?

Scipio: You are right to ask which of the three I *most* approve of, for I do not consider any one of them ideal by itself. Rather than any one of the separate three types, I prefer a mixture of all three. But if one is to be preferred in its pure form, I would prefer monarchy... The name of the king is like that of father, in that a king takes thought for his subjects as if they were his children....”¹⁸²

In fact, a comment made by Scipio brings the entire concept of Roman hatred of monarchy into perspective.

“Scipio: Well, I take it you’re aware that it was because of the overbearing and arrogant nature of Tarquin alone that the name of king has become anathema to our people.

Laelius: I am, indeed.

Scipio: In that case you are also aware of another fact, on which I shall probably enlarge in the course of my talk, namely that after Tarquin’s expulsion the populace revelled in an extraordinary excess of liberty.”¹⁸³

Cicero, like all historians, had his own preconceptions and biases that affected his writing, and the point of this exercise is ultimately to validate the social order in which Cicero lived, a social order in which he maintained quite a bit of power and influence. That being said, I present these particular passages because of how they speak to the Roman intellectual character. Cicero was declared an enemy of the state shortly after Caesar’s assassination, and he met a similarly violent end.¹⁸⁴ Consequently, his assertion that kingship is the superior form of government cannot be said to be an attempt to validate either Caesar or Augustus. What it is, however, is a thoughtful critique of why the Roman people hated kingship, coming from a Roman citizen.

¹⁸¹ Cicero, *De re publica*, 1.37-64.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 1.54 (trans. Niall Rudd).

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 1.62 (trans. Niall Rudd).

¹⁸⁴ Powell and Rudd, introduction, xxiii.

In his article “Public History and the Study of Memory,” David Glassberg wonders:

“Do audiences really interpret history primarily on their social characteristics such as gender, class, and ethnicity? Or is education and ideological stance a better determinant of how text is interpreted? How competent are most audience members to recover the hidden meanings in popular culture texts, to construct an alternative interpretation of historical events by reconfiguring the information present and supplying what is left over?”¹⁸⁵

I would argue that education in particular affects the way in which we interpret texts. Part of the education process is learning to think critically about what we read and learn, and to be critical of the ways in which we ourselves and others make interpretations. I would also argue that the higher the levels of education one attains, the more capable one is as an audience member of recovering hidden meanings and constructing alternate interpretations. Cicero, then, would not have been one of many voices who were declaring a support for kingship – as I have mentioned, the ultimate point of this exercise was a defense of mixed government. Rather, Cicero was an intelligent and well-educated man who sought to *understand* his world through an intellectual exercise. The fact that, in the end, he came to a conclusion that more or less supported the lesson of the Etruscan kings suggests how widespread the belief in these kings and their lesson probably was. After all, if an educated man was able to deconstruct the myth and still support it, how likely is it that less educated Romans, who would not have broken down the story in the same ways, came to a different conclusion? Even in modern society, we are exposed to myths and legends (i.e. George Washington and the Cherry Tree) whose validities are not necessarily questioned by those with less formalized learning informing their knowledge and interpretations.

The Roman Collective Spirit

When Livy’s Lucretia declared, just prior to plunging the knife in her chest, that “no unchaste woman [would] henceforth live and plead Lucretia’s example,” she was certainly

¹⁸⁵ Glassberg, “Public History,” 15.

unaware of the great example she would become to Roman society as a whole.¹⁸⁶ By uniting the Romans under a common, collective identity, and by acting as an allegory for the Roman people of the early Republic, Lucretia served as an example throughout the Republic of the inevitable tyranny that accompanied kingship and the inherent danger that came with allowing monarchy to exist in any form and by any name. Though it was Lucius Junius Brutus who emerged from the overthrow of the Tarquins as a hero, and who took his place in history as both a liberator and a “second founder” of Rome, it was Lucretia who spurred him to action.¹⁸⁷ Campbell might say her death acted as the “call to adventure” for Brutus, the mythic hero.¹⁸⁸ Even if this story is completely or mostly fabricated, both Lucretia and Brutus would fill these roles as myth became memory and memory became history.

For her part, the “image of Lucretia,” as Friedrich Balke phrased it, also satisfies the two remaining functions of myth as outlined by Campbell.¹⁸⁹ Campbell’s first and, for him, most important function of myth was to make the listener aware of the inherent mystery that is our universe, and to either “affirm or negate the horror” of a chaotic existence. Part of this function, however, is to remind the audience that it is indeed possible, either as individuals or as a collective, to actively combat the evil, injustice, and impurity in the world.¹⁹⁰ The final function described by Campbell is myth as a life-guide. Campbell primarily viewed this function in terms of cultural rites of passage; however, he also conceptualized myth, particularly hero myths, as guides to how we as humans should engage with the world, as well as guides to the beliefs and values we too should strive to defend.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.58.

¹⁸⁷ Stephen C. Smith, “Brutus as an Earthborn Founder of Rome (Livy 1.56),” 285, 292.

¹⁸⁸ Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 41-48.

¹⁸⁹ Friedrich Balke, “The Image of Lucretia: On the Creation of Republican Charisma in Livy,” *New German Critique* No. 114, Narrating Charisma (Fall 2011): 35.

¹⁹⁰ Campbell, “Function of Mythology,” Aug. 1969.

¹⁹¹ Campbell, “Function of Mythology,” Aug. 1969.; Campbell, *Power of Myth*, 130-131.

The rape and suicide of Lucretia certainly affirms the intrinsic horror and chaos of the universe, though not in the way Campbell himself meant it. What the story does do, however, is invite the audience to combat the evil and injustice in their own lives. In this case, the rebellion led by Brutus in the wake of Lucretia's death serves to remind people of the evil and unjust nature of kingship, which in Roman thought would inevitably degenerate into tyranny. Similarly, Brutus himself acts as a symbol; a reminder that this evil and injustice can and should be actively opposed. More importantly, however, Brutus served as his own example; an example for all future Romans, including Augustus, as to what to believe and how to behave.

Chapter 5: Augustus's Obstructed Path to Power

“... as Livy's *History of Rome* goes on to show, it is easier to depose and banish a king than to prevent the future restoration of that royal power, albeit under a different name.”
 ~ Friedrich Balke¹⁹²

The expulsion of the kings did not end autocratic rule in Rome. Beginning in the early Republic, the Romans created the office of the dictator, where one man would be nominated to run the state with absolute power in “emergency” situations wherein the divided and potentially contradictory powers of the consuls might be perilous to the safety of the Roman people.¹⁹³ The definition of “absolute power” in this case seems to have shifted over the course of Republican history. In the early Republic, the authority of the dictator was more comprehensive, with the powers and even the offices of the consuls and other “executive offices” being suspended or abolished during the dictator’s term. By the end of the Second Punic War (218-202 B.C.) however, the dictator was almost a third consul, in the sense that the two consuls acted and exercised their powers independently of the dictator unless they received direct orders from him.¹⁹⁴ The evidence for this shift is contradictory and, ultimately, debatable. However, the fact remains that the Roman dictator exercised a level of power that would have been difficult to discern from a proper monarchy.

Similarly, it has been argued that the consulship of Lucius Junius Brutus had a much more monarchical character than has been previously assumed. In *Unwritten Rome* for example, T.P. Wiseman points to the contradictory nature of one of Livy’s most famous accounts of Brutus. After a snake glided out of a wooden column in the palace, Tarquin the Proud became

¹⁹² Balke, “Image of Lucretia,” 46.

¹⁹³ Clinton Walker Keyes, “The Constitutional Position of the Roman Dictatorship,” *Studies in Philology* Vol. 14, No. 4 (Oct., 1917): 298.

¹⁹⁴ Keyes, “Roman Dictatorship,” 298-299, 303-305.; For dates of the Second Punic War, see: Powell and Rudd, “Table of Dates (BC),” in *The Republic and the Laws*, xlii.

fearful of what was widely considered an ominous sign and sent his sons Titus and Arruns to the famous oracle of Delphi to seek advice. Titus and Arruns took Brutus along on their journey, mainly as a source of comedic fodder, given Brutus's reputation as an idiot. Brutus was no idiot; he had adopted this persona as a means of seeming less of a threat to the Tarquins, and to avoid the violent ends that had befallen so many of Rome's leading citizens, including Brutus's own father and brother.¹⁹⁵ On this journey, he famously proved his wisdom when confronted by the oracle, who said to the three travelers "Whichever of you, young men, shall be the first to kiss his mother, he shall hold supreme sway in Rome." While Titus and Arruns debated who would be the first to kiss their mother once the group returned to Rome, Brutus appealed to his perceived foolishness and pretended to stumble. As he fell, he pressed his lips to the ground, for as Livy puts it, "the earth is of course the common mother of us all."¹⁹⁶

According to Wiseman, the oracle's prophecy that Brutus would hold "supreme sway in Rome" is antithetical to the notion that Brutus and Collatinus shared power through a dual consulship. In fact, he argues that Brutus's presence at Lucretia's suicide might have been a way for Roman historians to retroactively give Collatinus his position as a consul, as there is really no logical reason Brutus should have been present at the suicide in the first place. Furthermore, Livy mentions that the principal official in the early Republic held the title of *praetor maximus*, a title which, according to Wiseman, negates the possibility of shared power. Ultimately, Wiseman argues that Rome under Brutus was actually governed by a supreme head office that essentially replaced the monarchy.¹⁹⁷ There is other evidence to suggest the consuls' supreme power, even if

¹⁹⁵ Stephen C. Smith notes that Dionysius and Livy disagree on whether Tarquin the Proud executed Brutus's father **and** elder brother or, as written by Livy, just his brother. See: Smith, "Brutus," 290-291.; Dion. Halic., 4.68.2.; Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.56.

¹⁹⁶ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.56 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).

¹⁹⁷ Wiseman, *Unwritten Rome*, 298-99.

a division of power existed from the onset. Livy tells us that “the first consuls retained all the rights and all the insignia of the king.”¹⁹⁸

Nevertheless, I would argue that the offices of the dictator and the consuls, respectively, were fundamentally different from the title of “king” or “*princeps*.” The office of consul was traditionally limited to a year, and weakened by the presence of a colleague with equal power. More importantly, each of the two consuls had the right to veto the decisions of the other.¹⁹⁹ As previously mentioned, the office of dictator was only created in cases of extreme emergency, and even then the office was limited to a six-month term.²⁰⁰ Both were tied to the power of the Senate, which both were eventually expected to consult and by whose decision both ultimately decided to abide.²⁰¹

Even as exceptions became more and more prevalent toward the end of the Republic, neither the consuls nor the dictator ever held the same degree of absolute authority that kings or emperors did. It is worth noting that Julius Caesar himself was assassinated about a month after he was declared dictator for life in February of 44 B.C.²⁰² It is equally worthy of mention that after the assassination, the conspirators took to the streets shouting “Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!”²⁰³ Even if some vestiges of autocratic power remained from the monarchy, even if the office of dictator was reminiscent of kingship, and even if there were men and women like Cicero who theoretically supported monarchy in its “pure” form, it is clear that there was a line that one could not cross.

¹⁹⁸ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 2.1.; Translation from Balke, “Image of Lucretia,” 49.

¹⁹⁹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 2.1.; Polybius, *Histories*, 6.12, 15.; Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 226.

²⁰⁰ Keyes, “Roman Dictatorship,” 303.; Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 227.

²⁰¹ Polybius, *Histories*, 6.15.1-3.; Keyes, “Roman Dictatorship,” 299.; The kings, by contrast, were expected to consult the Senate, but did not necessarily need to follow their advice.

²⁰² Elizabeth Rawson, “Caesar: Civil War and Dictatorship,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. IX: The Last Age of the Roman Republic (146-43 B.C.)*, ed. J.A. Crook et al. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 463.

²⁰³ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 5.

As far as forms of autocracy were accepted or tolerated in the late Republic, there was a huge obstruction that anyone seeking sole power needed to clear. When Cicero writes that “Tarquin alone” was the reason the title of “king” was so despicable to the Roman people, he hints at how Romans really viewed autocracy. In the Roman collective consciousness, the name of Tarquinius Superbus became synonymous with both “king” and “tyranny,” and thus, the title of “king” had become synonymous with tyrannical rule. The trick for the aspiring autocrat was to achieve the power of a king without being associated with either Tarquin or the monarchy. Augustus succeeded where others, including Julius Caesar, did not. This is largely thanks to a complicated mixture of military victories, personal and political charisma, intelligence, and luck. However, a very large part of Augustus’s success also lay in his ability to manipulate historical memory.

Augustus: The Anti-Tarquin

Augustus’s first hurdle was to make himself seem as unlike Tarquin the Proud as was humanly possible. Though Augustus may not have been thinking in these explicit terms, he was certainly aware of the potential consequences of being accused of monarchical aims or, worse yet, being labeled a “tyrant.” In order to avoid a violent coup against himself and/or his new government, Augustus employed a number of different strategies.

First, and perhaps most importantly, Augustus carefully avoided using the terms *rex* (king) and *dictator* to refer to himself.²⁰⁴ The former, of course, invoked the hated name of Tarquinius Superbus, and the latter would theoretically have drawn unwanted parallels with Julius Caesar. In the 30s B.C., Octavian began utilizing the term *imperator* (the word from which we get “emperor” in English), which was used for victorious generals. Around 29 B.C., Augustus, still known as Octavian, received the title of *Princeps senatus* – “the leader of the

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 19.

Senate” – which was the first a long series of titles applied to him.²⁰⁵ Then, in 27 B.C., he began calling himself the *princeps* – “first man of the state” – from which we derive the Roman name for the early Empire: the “Principate.” From his adoptive father, Augustus also referred to himself as “Caesar,” a personal name which then came to be used as a title for his successors. Even the name “Augustus,” which the Senate gave him in January of 27 B.C., was meant to avoid comparisons with kingship.²⁰⁶ Taken apart, “Augustus” is related to the word *augeo*, which is Latin for “growth” and *auctoritas*, the Latin word for “authority.”²⁰⁷

However, Augustus could not avoid comparisons with Tarquinius Superbus or the hated monarchy through simple terminology alone. There were undoubtedly a number of Romans among both the Senate and the general populace who would have seen through this obvious diversion, just as we today see through it. In order to further legitimize his position, Augustus also had to act completely different from the established definition of tyranny.

Recall Joseph Campbell’s assertion that the “mythic hero” acts as a guide for how we should act, what we should do, and how we should behave. Tarquin the Proud is the antithesis of this mythic hero; a mythic villain who acts as an example for how *not* to act, what *not* to do, and how *not* to behave. More than that, Tarquin was symbol: a symbol of the very evil, injustice, and impurity that Romans – all Romans – were supposed to oppose. Thus Augustus had to act in a way that was in direct opposition to Tarquin while simultaneously working to combat the social upheavals and inequalities of his own day.

Let us return, for a moment, to Livy’s narrative on the end of the monarchy. Remember that it was not Tarquinius Superbus who raped Lucretia, but rather his son Sextus Tarquin. As

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 17-19.

²⁰⁶ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 18.; Crook, “Political History,” 79.

²⁰⁷ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 18.; Suetonius tells us that the name “Augustus” was derived from the words *augusta*, used in reference to things “consecrated by augural rites,” and *auctus*, implying an “increase” in dignity these things received. See: Suetonius, *Augustus*, 7.2.

other scholars have pointed out, it seems odd that the crime that led to the dissolution of the monarchy was not committed by the king himself.²⁰⁸ In fact, Livy's narrative suggests that the Romans justified the expulsion of the king and his family based solely on a history of tyranny and violence enacted and perpetuated by most of the members of the Tarquin clan, of which the crime against Lucretia was only the latest example.²⁰⁹

If we accept that Tarquinius Superbus and his family had become tantamount to "tyranny," then it stands to reason that one of the major identifiers of tyranny and injustice would be sexual deviancy. Certainly, Sextus Tarquin's history-altering crime falls into this category. This means that, in order to appeal to his people, an aspiring Roman autocrat would need to stand in opposition to the rampant, uncontrolled sexuality embodied by the Tarquin prince.

By coincidence or by design, Augustus was highly concerned with sexual purity. The Julian Laws, as they are known, of 18 B.C. to 17 B.C. addressed a number of sexual issues in Roman society. The Julian Law on Classes Permitted to Marry (*lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus*), which was later supplemented by the Papian-Poppaeian Law, created bars to marriage and betrothal for people of widely differing classes. These laws also punished celibacy, granted privileges to married couples, and rewarded those who had children.²¹⁰ The Julian Law on Curbing Adultery (*lex Iulia de adulteriis*) criminalized infidelity, and also made it legal for fathers who caught their daughters in adultery to kill both the adulterer and/or their daughter if they chose to do so. It also granted the right to the husbands who caught their wife in the act of adultery to slay the adulterer, and it was made mandatory that the husband divorce his wife, whom he did not have the legal right to kill. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this latter law

²⁰⁸ Balke, "Image of Lucretia," 43.

²⁰⁹ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.49.

²¹⁰ Naphtali Lewis and Meyer Reinhold, eds., *Roman Civilization: Selected Readings, Vol. 1: The Republic and the Augustan Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 607-610.; Crook, "Political History," 93.; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 34.1.

is that it punished the man who even “without the use of force violate[d] either a virgin or the widow of a respectable character.”²¹¹

In rhetoric, Augustus referred to these reforms in terms of traditional Roman values. By acting as a “moral reformer,” he could return the Roman state to an idealized past that existed even before the late Republic.²¹² However, these laws would also place him in marked contrast with Sextus Tarquin, Tarquinius Superbus, and, by extension, all monarchs. However, this could not be Augustus’s only play. An integral aspect of his self-construction as an “Anti-Tarquin” was his portrayal as a new Roman hero. To do this, Augustus would need to associate himself with the original founder of the Roman Republic.

Augustus as a Savior and Hero

Earlier in this thesis, I touched on Lucius Junius Brutus’s role as a “second founder of Rome.” What this means is that Brutus can be seen as the creator of the cherished Roman Republic just as Romulus can be seen as the original founder of the City.²¹³ Augustus sought to create a similar image for himself. In the period around 27 B.C., when he was soon to be granted the title Augustus, Octavian briefly considered taking the name of Romulus, but soon realized that Romulus’s name carried negative connotations. Romulus had been a king and had also slain his own brother.²¹⁴ Instead, Augustus decided to cast himself not as a new founder, but rather as a *savior* – a man on a quest to restore the Republic.²¹⁵ Even as he was becoming an autocrat, Octavian thus chose to depict himself as a staunch proponent of republican government.

²¹¹ Lewis and Reinhold, *Roman Civilization*, 606-607.; Crook, “Political History,” 93.; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 34.1.

²¹² Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 25.

²¹³ Smith, “Brutus,” 285.

²¹⁴ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 18.; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 7.2.; Crook, “Political History,” 79.; Wiseman, *Remus*, 144.

²¹⁵ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 22.

To do this Augustus needed to appeal to the image of the mythic hero. Both because Romulus carried potentially unsavory associations, and because Augustus legitimized himself in terms of a “restorer” of the Republic, Lucius Junius Brutus might have seemed a logical choice as Octavian’s potential historical paradigm. Like the contrast with the Tarquins, these parallels were never explicitly drawn. However, Augustus could appeal to some very specific images that were ingrained in the collective Roman memory.

Part of what made Sextus Tarquin’s crime *so* reprehensible, *so* despicable, and *so memorable* was that, as the king’s son, he was all but absolved of responsibility for it, at least officially. Lucretia cleared herself of personal wrongdoing, but her suicide was overtly a way for her to punish herself for her lost honor.²¹⁶ The men present at her suicide (Brutus, Collatinus, Lucretius, etc...) certainly blamed Sextus, and sought to punish him and his entire family. However, the Tarquinius Superbus of Roman historical sources believed both he and his son were beyond punishment. In other words, the king and his family – the tyrants – were above the law.

In the early days of the Republic, before the war with Clusium, there was a conspiracy to reinstate the Tarquins to the throne. According to Livy, a number of “young men of high birth” living in Rome had thrived during the reign of the Tarquins. As long as there was a monarchy, there existed the possibility of bribery, favors, and favoritism, which meant these young men could influence their own position and advancement, whether or not this practice was lawful. Under the Republic, however, where “all were equal before the law,” these men felt they had fallen in status. Some even complained that “the liberty which others enjoyed became slavery for them.” When envoys representing the Tarquins came to Rome demanding the return of the family’s property, a group of these men plotted to give the Tarquins back more than their

²¹⁶ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 1.58.

personal things. The conspirators planned to sneak the Tarquins back into Rome under the cover of darkness, and thus restore Tarquin the Proud to his throne. Among the conspirators were Brutus's own sons, Titus and Tiberius.²¹⁷

The night before the scheduled departure of the Tarquins' envoys, the schemers began discussing their plans over dinner. A slave overheard their plot and reported it to the consuls, who quickly arrested the conspirators. All of the Roman traitors were put in jail, and were later sentenced to death. On the day of the execution, Lucius Junius Brutus, the most powerful man in Rome, stoically watched his sons meet their end. As the lictors "scourged" Titus's and Tiberius's bare backs with rods, and as the lictors beheaded the consul's sons, "...the father's countenance betrayed his feelings, but the father's stern resolution was still more apparent as he superintended the public execution."²¹⁸ Brutus proved that, under the Republic, no man was above the law, no matter how powerful he or his family may be.²¹⁹

Augustus also made a public display following this same example. By his own laws, Augustus made adultery illegal, and when his own daughter and granddaughter reportedly violated these laws, he had them sent into exile.²²⁰ Like Brutus before him, Augustus had to show his people that neither he nor anyone else was above the law. Tarquin the Proud – the quintessential tyrant – had lifted himself and his kin above the laws of man, and beginning with Brutus, no self-proclaimed Republican would dare do the same. Even so, Augustus had one final step to take before he could be truly safe in his new position as *princeps*.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 2.3-2.4 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).

²¹⁸ Ibid., 2.4-2.5 (trans. Rev. Canon Roberts).

²¹⁹ Balke, "Image of Lucretia," 48.

²²⁰ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 26.; Crook, "Political History," 102, 108.; K.A. Raaflaub and L. J. Samons II, "Opposition to Augustus," in *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub and Mark Toher (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 428-431.

The Authority of the Senate and the Power of the People

Perhaps the most prominent hallmark of Tarquinius Superbus's tyranny was his lack of legitimacy. He came to the throne by the murder and usurpation of his predecessor. Once on the throne, he undermined the power of the Senate, never sought their advice or their approval, and even actively attempted to eradicate its members. As king, he stole from his people, used their labor and their wealth to achieve his own ends, and ruled Rome without their consent.

Certainly by the late Republic, and possibly much earlier, Roman collective political thought was rooted in consent. The consuls, the most monarchical of the established Roman magistrates, were chosen by the people, and limited by a number of restrictions, including an annual term limit. The dictators – easily the best analog for truly absolute power in the Roman government – were the product of emergency powers granted to one man for a very limited span of time. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that the men in both offices were expected to seek the advice of the Senate and defer to their decisions, certainly by the end of the third-century B.C., and possibly throughout the Republican system. Even the kings, going back to Romulus, based their authority in the people and the Senate; it is important to remember that the Roman monarchy was also an elective office. Servius Tullius, who was the first man to become king without the express consent of the people or the Senate, legitimized himself late in his reign when he became the only king to be unanimously declared as such.

Legitimacy was a huge part of Augustus's reign. Much like Tarquin the Proud, the *princeps* earned his supremacy through violent means. Tarquin's one-on-one clash with Servius Tullius could, of course, be compared with Octavian's civil wars, in which the future Augustus

emerged victorious over Mark Antony.²²¹ However, whereas Tarquin's ascension was clearly illegal and unjust, Augustus did everything he could to make himself seem to be the rightful ruler. Think back to his addition of *imperator* to his official titles, and consider the implications this title had for his authority. Octavian – and later Augustus – was not Rome's first man because of an accident or a coup. He earned his position through success on the battlefield. The right to rule was his by right of victory.²²²

As for the Senate, Augustus may have spoken of a return to Republican rule, but it was clear by 27 B.C. that the Republican system had failed, and there was no going back.²²³ As part of his reforms, Augustus restructured the Senate as an administrative body rather than a legislative one. He also restructured the body of the Senate itself – filling the ranks depleted by the civil wars with men who were loyal to him. He also reduced the number of senators from 1,000 to 600, a number that both echoed more “normal numbers” during the Republic and gave him a greater chance of controlling this reduced body. He also brought capable men from all over Italy to serve in the Senate and in the high offices, even providing them with the necessary funds to meet the minimum property requirements he established for the senatorial class, which was one million sesterces. Even as Augustus expanded the administration of his empire, limited the power of the senators, and worked behind the scenes to ensure the Senate operated according to his wishes, he never publicly undermined the senatorial class. Even as Augustus himself became more powerful and amassed more and more titles, he allowed the senators to retain their

²²¹ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Roman Empire*, 13-16.; Pelling, “Triumviral Period,” 64-65.; Augustus famously declared war on Cleopatra, Antony's lover, but not on Antony himself. This further legitimized him by focusing his war on a foreign queen and not on a fellow Roman. See: Pelling, “Triumviral Period,” 54.

²²² Antony himself committed suicide, and his lover Cleopatra would do so later. But on the 1st of August 31 B.C., the city of Alexandria herself fell to Octavian “without opposition.” See: Pelling, “Triumviral,” 63-64.

²²³ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Roman Empire*, 22.

traditional honors and status.²²⁴ Perhaps, as Ronald Mellor asserts, this was because Augustus knew he needed the senators and their support to effectively manage his new state.²²⁵ Perhaps, in the back of his mind, Augustus also remembered that it was a faction of the senators and not the people that had assassinated Julius Caesar.

Even so, it was the people that formed the foundation on which Augustus rested his authority. In January of 27 B.C., Octavian famously declared: “[I have now] transferred the Republic from my own power to the authority of the Senate and the Roman people.”²²⁶ As we have seen, this was not strictly true. In the words of Ronald Mellor, “... Augustus did not derive power from his offices; his goal was to legalize, and veil, his real power, which came from the army’s loyalty and the elimination of rivals.”²²⁷ As Augustus wrested military, administrative, legislative, and executive powers from the old Republican system, more and more titles were heaped upon him. Not only was he the “first man” in what he claimed to be a republic of equals, he was granted lifelong consular *imperium* (the aforementioned military power), tribunicia *potestas* (which gave him broad powers over the people and the Senate), and named *pontifex maximus* (the chief priest). In 2 B.C., Augustus was also named *pater patriae*; “Father of his Country.”²²⁸

Conclusion

Overall, the early Principate under Augustus was a government of negotiation.²²⁹ The new “first man” gradually consolidated power to a degree that had been previously unthinkable

²²⁴ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 22-25.; Crook, “Political History,” 76.; J.A. Crook, “Augustus: Power, Authority, Achievement,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History Vol. X: The Augustan Empire (43 B.C.-A.D. 69)*, edited by Alan K. Bowman et al. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 113, 117-118, 123-124.

²²⁵ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 23.

²²⁶ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 18.; Crook, “Political History,” 76.

²²⁷ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 18.

²²⁸ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 22.; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 27.5, 31.1, 58.1.

²²⁹ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 22.

in Roman society, yet he was careful to do so in a way that masked how powerful he had really become. In a very real sense, Augustus was a king in all but name in a time and place where the mere mention of monarchy was despised, and where the accusations of monarchical aims could be deadly. Yet Augustus's path to power was not an easy one, nor was it a swift transition. He had to visibly and aggressively contrast himself with the memory of monarchy, which in the Roman collective memory was embodied by Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, the tyrannical seventh king of Rome, and he had to do so while carefully avoiding the use of the word "king." As part of this, he had to draw parallels between himself and Lucius Junius Brutus, the man who deposed Tarquin, at least in a clandestine manner that equated Augustus with the qualities of the "mythic hero" which Brutus personified.

But his fight for power was not over. Even after the war with Antony, which left Augustus the unopposed ruler of Rome, his takeover had to be subtle. Augustus, in a move of genius, restructured the state using the old Republican system as a guidepost and rooting his authority in both the traditional power of the Senate and the sovereignty of his people. It is true that the Senate watched this transition begrudgingly. However, the people of Rome loved their new leader, and consistently granted him more and more powers while demanding that he have even more.²³⁰ Essentially, by treading carefully, and being wary of the historical memory and makeup of his people, Augustus became the *de facto* absolute ruler of Rome. It would be for his successors to truly turn the Republic into the Empire.²³¹

²³⁰ Crook, "Augustus," 113, 118, 123-124.; Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 18-22.

²³¹ Crook, "Augustus," 117.; Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Empire*, 22.

Chapter 6 – Memory, Monarchy, and History in the Republic

“History is an invention which reality supports with raw materials. It is not, however, an arbitrary invention, and the interests it arouses is rooted in the interests of the teller.”

~ Hans Magnus Enzensberger²³²

On January 10th, 49 B.C., part of Julius Caesar’s army reached the banks of the Rubicon River.²³³ Both Suetonius and Plutarch write that when Caesar himself arrived, he paused to reflect on the actions he was about to take, as well as on the potential consequences. There is no reason to doubt this aspect of the narrative; Caesar was surely aware that by crossing the river, he was crossing the boundary between his province in Gaul and Roman Italy. He also was aware that crossing this boundary with an army would be seditious, and would draw a military response from the Roman Senate. We can never know his exact thoughts, his fears, or the words that he may or may not have said to his friends with whom, according to Plutarch, Caesar consulted. However, history tells us that Caesar and his army did indeed cross the Rubicon. According to Plutarch and Suetonius, Caesar began this civil war with the now infamous phrase *alea iacta est* – “let the die be cast.”²³⁴

Whether or not Caesar actually spoke these words, the die was indeed cast, though the stakes were much higher than anyone could have imagined. Almost twenty-two years to the day after Caesar’s historic crossing, Augustus stood before the Senate and made a declaration of his own, claiming to return power from his hands to those of the Senate and the Roman people. The question that drove this thesis is why Augustus, who came to surpass his adoptive father in power and influence, was able to die what Suetonius called “an easy death.”²³⁵ Why did he die naturally, painlessly, and surrounded by his loved ones at the age of seventy-five when Julius

²³² Portelli, *Luigi Trastulli*, 2.

²³³ Rawson, “Caesar,” 424.

²³⁴ Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 31-32.; Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 32 (trans. Bernadotte Perrin).

²³⁵ Suetonius, *Augustus*, 99 (trans. J.C. Rolfe).

Caesar met his end at fifty-five, betrayed by friends and fellow aristocrats, bathed in his own blood?

Like Augustus, Caesar almost certainly knew the story of Tarquin the Proud. Unlike Augustus, however, he did not utilize the lesson of Tarquin in his own self-construction and performance, at least not to the same degree. Perhaps it was a selfish hope for power that governed Caesar's choices, or perhaps it was arrogance that made him feel he was different from Tarquin or above the Roman hatred of monarchy. Perhaps he genuinely believed that he above all others deserved to rule in Rome, either as a quasi-monarch or as a *dictator perpetuo* in service to the Republic. In any case, Caesar seems to have made a strategic political error, at least in hindsight. It was this error that cost him his life.

Julius Caesar and the Memory of Tarquinius Superbus

Caesar took power through violence, just as Tarquin had before him and Augustus would after. As with Tarquin, this violence was more treacherous than just; Caesar's primary foe during the civil war, Pompey the Great, did not fall on the battlefield. After being defeated in the Battle of Pharsalus in August of 48 B.C., Pompey fled to Egypt hoping to regroup amongst the court of King Ptolemy XIII.²³⁶ According to Plutarch, Pompey's ship was received in Egypt by a small boat piloted by men representing Ptolemy's council.²³⁷ Under orders from the council, these men assassinated Pompey, cut off his head, and threw his naked body onto the shore.²³⁸ The council had betrayed Pompey for fear of Caesar's wrath, though they ironically provoked it. When Caesar arrived in Egypt, he was presented with Pompey's severed head and seal ring. Caesar reportedly turned his face in horror at the head of his countryman, and though he accepted the

²³⁶ Rawson, "Caesar," 433.

²³⁷ Ptolemy himself was a child at the time of Pompey's arrival. Furthermore, Ptolemy was engaged in a war for power against his sister, the famed Cleopatra. The council was assembled by and working for the eunuch Pothinus, who ran the young Ptolemy's government. See: Plutarch, *Life of Pompey*, 77.1-2 and Dio, *Rome*, 42.3-4.

²³⁸ Plutarch, *Life of Pompey*, 71-79.

ring, he cried bitter tears over Pompey's death, as Pompey had been his son-in-law and a friend earlier in Caesar's career.²³⁹

Even if Caesar's display of emotion was feigned, as Cassius Dio asserts, all sources agree that Caesar took revenge upon Pompey's murderers.²⁴⁰ He executed two of the men involved in the assassination and waged war upon the king himself, taking power from Ptolemy and placing it in the hands of his sister Cleopatra and their younger brother, Ptolemy XIV.²⁴¹ Caesar may not have won a clear victory to earn his supremacy as Augustus would, but by taking revenge on Pompey's murderers, Caesar could at least make it seem as if his preeminence was just. According to Suetonius, Caesar even stylized himself *imperator*, just as Augustus would do several years later.²⁴²

In this way, Caesar could legitimize his rule in Rome, and he could portray himself as a hero to his and Pompey's supporters alike. However, it was not enough to avoid comparisons with kingship and tyranny. In fact, Caesar seems to have actively drawn attention to the similarities between his own rule and that of the kings. A particularly noteworthy example of this is found in Plutarch. At the festival of Lupercalia, the dictator for life sat upon a golden throne, dressed in the clothing of a triumphant general, and watched the ceremonies. Mark Antony, who was a consul for the year and a competitor in the sacred race, ran through the parting crowd toward Caesar. In his hands, Antony carried a diadem wrapped in a laurel wreath, and offered this symbol of kingship to Caesar. According to Plutarch, the offering received scattered applause from men who had been placed in the crowd specifically to praise Caesar as king. However, when Caesar pushed the crown away, "all the people" cheered. Again Antony offered

²³⁹ Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 48.1-2.; Plutarch, *Life of Pompey*, 80.5.; Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 35.1.; Dio, *Rome*, 42.7-8.

²⁴⁰ Dio, *Rome*, 42.8.

²⁴¹ Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 48.2-5.

²⁴² Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 76.1.

the diadem, and the same planted men offered their scattered applause. Again, Caesar refused, and the crowd roared in approval. In Plutarch's words, "the experiment [had] thus failed, [and] Caesar rose from his seat, after ordering the wreath to be carried up to the Capitol..."²⁴³ Caesar had made an obvious play for the kingship, but the Roman people, in the tradition of Lucius Brutus's vow, would not allow a sovereign to be crowned, and thus a monarch so blatantly created in Rome.

This is not the only purported case of Caesar explicitly styling himself a monarch.

Suetonius accused Caesar of accepting an excessive number of powers and honors which, taken together, were potentially monarchical:

"Yet after all, his other actions and word so turn the scale, that it is thought that he abused his power and was justly slain. For not only did he accept excessive honours, such as an uninterrupted consulship, the dictatorship for life, and the censorship of public morals, as well as the forename Imperator, the surname of Father of his Country, a statue among those of the kings, and a raised couch in the orchestra; but he also allowed honours to be bestowed on him which were too great for mortal man: a golden throne in the House and on the judgment seat; a chariot and litter in the procession at the circus; temples, altars, and statues beside those of the gods; a special priest, an additional college of the Luperci, and the calling of one of the months by his name. In fact, there were no honours which he did not receive or confer at pleasure."²⁴⁴

Plutarch also tells us that, following the Lupercalia incident, statues of Caesar throughout Rome were adorned with "royal diadems," which the tribunes Maryllus and Flavius promptly removed.²⁴⁵ If these stories are true, it seems clear that Julius Caesar had monarchical aims and, more importantly, was hardly subtle in his readiness to advertise them publicly. It is likely that Augustus did as well, although he was much less open and presumptuous in his aspirations. As a result, Flavius and Maryllus were the ones who drew comparisons to Lucius Junius Brutus, the mythic hero-founder of the Republic:

²⁴³ Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 61.1-4.

²⁴⁴ Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 76.1 (trans. J.C. Rolfe).

²⁴⁵ Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 61.4-5.

“So two of the tribunes, Flavius and Maryllus, went up to [the statues] and pulled off the diadems, and after discovering those who had first hailed Caesar as king, led them off to prison. Moreover, the people followed the tribunes with applause and called them Brutuses, because Brutus was the man who put an end to the royal succession and brought the power into the hands of the senate and people instead of a sole ruler.”²⁴⁶

Whereas Augustus portrayed himself as the Anti-Tarquin, Caesar had effectively cast himself as the Anti-Brutus.

Plutarch contended that Caesar’s “passion for the royal power” sparked “open and deadly hatred towards him.”²⁴⁷ It is unclear how prevalent this hatred was in Roman society; both Suetonius and Plutarch wrote that Caesar’s assassination was met with riots in the streets of Rome. Tables, benches, and railings from the Forum were used to create a cremation fire for Caesar’s body, and those who attended the funeral reportedly gave solemn offerings. Actors and musicians tore the robes from their bodies, soldiers removed their weapons, and women gave up their jewelry, as well as the jewelry and the robes of their children, all of which was cast into the funeral pyre.²⁴⁸ In Plutarch’s words, the conspirators’ properties were destroyed, and the conspirators themselves were hunted “over every land and sea until not one of them was left, but even those who in any way so ever either put hand to the deed or took part in the plot were punished.”²⁴⁹ Indeed, it seems as if the hatred of which Plutarch spoke was more prevalent among the Roman aristocracy than among the Roman people as a whole.

Even so, it was precisely this hostility of the nobility that proved to be Julius Caesar’s undoing. Caesar may have loosely legitimized his victory over Pompey and the Senate, and despite his obvious plays for sole power, he may have been able to earn the love and respect of

²⁴⁶ Ibid. (trans. Bernadotte Perrin).

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 60.1.

²⁴⁸ Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 84.; Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 68.1-2.

²⁴⁹ Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 68.1, 69.2 (trans. Bernadotte Perrin).; So great was the anger at Caesar’s death that the Roman people accidentally murdered an innocent man; Helvius Cinna, a friend of Caesar’s, was torn to bits, and his head was placed on a spike and paraded through Rome. The people sought to punish one Cornelius Cinna, who had either recently made an indictment of Caesar or was one of the assassins, depending on the account. See: Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 68.2-4 and Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 85.1.

the people. However, Caesar's deadly mistake was his refusal even to pretend to submit to the power and authority of the senators. Plutarch's history contains what is perhaps the most infamous example of this refusal. Caesar had been voted a number of high honors by the Senate, and both the praetors and consuls went to Caesar to congratulate him, with the entirety of the Senate in tow. As the body approached, Caesar did not rise to greet them, but instead, "as if he were dealing with mere private persons," remained in his seat in the rostra and proclaimed that his honors did not need to be enlarged, but rather, reduced. This was seen by senators and private citizens alike as a double insult. Not only had Caesar implicitly placed himself above the senators in social rank, but he had turned down honors the likes of which no mortal man had the right to refuse. According to Plutarch, Caesar at once realized his mistake, and tried to make amends, but it was too late. The senators turned away from Caesar, dejected, many of them likely harboring a hatred that would result in conspiracy and end in assassination.²⁵⁰

The Potential Power of Myth and Memory

Julius Caesar was the last and perhaps the best example of the ongoing potency of Tarquin's name. Caesar's death on the 15th of March, 44 B.C. did not happen because of his personal arrogance, or his faults, or his lack of charisma. Caesar met his end because he had failed either to recognize or play to this potency in his public performance. Octavian's real genius was that he learned from Caesar's example, and was able to take that lesson and alter the course of history. Octavian carefully created the persona of Augustus, and was in turn able cautiously to transform the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire.

It is this caution that provides the best lesson for historians, whether or not their focus is in ancient history. As tempting as it is to divide our history into distinct periods, and as easy as it is to fill our histories with clear dichotomies between right and wrong, good and evil, and heroes

²⁵⁰ Plutarch, *Life of Caesar*, 60.3-5 (trans. Bernadotte Perrin).

and villains, both practices are inherently flawed.²⁵¹ 27 B.C. is useful for discussing the Roman shift to a proper empire, but it is in reality an arbitrary date that does not give justice to how gradual this shift was.²⁵²

The collapse of the Republic did not begin with Julius Caesar. There were powerful men before him who paved the way for his rise to power; men like Gaius Marius, who achieved the consulship an unprecedented seven times during the late-second to early first centuries B.C.²⁵³ Men like Lucius Cornelius Cinna, Caesar's father-in-law and Marius's co-consul who became the dominant power in Rome following Marius's death.²⁵⁴ Men like Lucius Cornelius Sulla, whose armies twice marched on Rome – once in 88/87 B.C. and again during the civil war of 83-82 B.C. – and who himself was named dictator without a defined term limit before his retirement around 80 B.C.²⁵⁵ Similarly, the Republic did not simply end with Augustus's ascension; even the creation of the Principate was a lengthy, measured process. Augustus himself is said to have adopted the motto *festina lente* – “make haste slowly.”²⁵⁶ We must also remember that the heroes and villains of our historical narratives were far more complicated than the memories we have of them. Even Augustus, for all his caution and heroic posturing, was not completely free from conspiracies against his life, although a grand conspiracy on the scale of the plot against Caesar never materialized.²⁵⁷

²⁵¹ Burke, “History as Social Memory,” 110.

²⁵² Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Roman Empire*, 20.

²⁵³ How and Leigh, *History of Rome*, 437-438.; Robin Seager, “Sulla,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. IX: The Last Age of the Roman Republic (146-43 B.C.)*, ed. J.A. Crook et. al. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 179 .

²⁵⁴ How and Leigh, *History of Rome*, 437-438, 460.; Seager, “Sulla,” 179, 198.

²⁵⁵ How and Leigh, *History of Rome*, 448-449.; Seager, “Sulla,” 167-173, 180, 187-197, 199, 205.

²⁵⁶ Mellor, *Augustus and the Creation of the Roman Empire*, 20.

²⁵⁷ Plots against Augustus were apparently quite common, yet even these seem to have been different in character from the plot against Julius Caesar. For example: the conspiracy of M. Aemilius Lepidus (30 B.C.) seems to have been the product of a personal grudge, the conspiracy of M. Licinius Crassus (27 B.C.) can be attributed to individual ambition, and the conspiracy of L. Murena and Fannius Caepio (23/22 B.C.) did not have a clear political motive, at least not one that survives in the historical records. For a discussion on these and other conspiracies, see: Raaflaub and Sammons II, “Opposition to Augustus,” *passim*.

As both myth and memory, however, these periods and these archetypes serve a very specific and important purpose. For those who hear these stories and learn of the lives of these characters, like Halbwachs's "family event," a summary of collective reflections and feelings becomes condensed into "a singularly vivid image on the screen of an obscure and unclear past."²⁵⁸ These iconic events become "pregnant" with associations that color perceptions of the present, just as their characters are "pregnant" with the characteristics of the archetypes they are meant to represent.²⁵⁹ In both cases, social orders are validated and supported, and the "rules and customs" that were established before us are explained.²⁶⁰

There is one final Halbwachsian idea which must be addressed here. Halbwachs argued that we inevitably reach a point where the so-called "constraints of the past" no longer matter. In other words, these stories and these characters no longer elicit in us an emotional response; as Halbwachs himself wrote, "we cannot love them nor can we detest them."²⁶¹ This is how we, as human collectives, forget our pasts – the constraints which these stories attempt to validate, and the constraints which shape our telling and remembrance *of* these stories "cease to be operative."²⁶² When this happens, collectives stop actively perpetuating the meanings and values of yesteryear, and as a result, social values shift, societies change, and traditions, and memories are lost.²⁶³

Halbwachs believed humans are naturally conservative when it comes to their beliefs, symbols, and conventions. He also believed societies will hold onto these beliefs, symbols, and

²⁵⁸ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 60.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

²⁶⁰ Campbell, "Function of Mythology," Aug. 1969.; Campbell, *Creative Mythology*, 5.; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 55.

²⁶¹ Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 51.

²⁶² *Ibid.*

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 120.

conventions as long as they possibly can.²⁶⁴ However, Halbwachs overestimated the influence of conservatism in the perpetuation of social ideology. Every so often, a story will become so powerful – so “pregnant” with meaning – that it will become self-perpetuating. The myth and memory of Tarquin the Proud was such a story.

The Tarquin Legacy Throughout the Ages

This past summer, I was fortunate enough to work on an archaeological dig about twenty-five kilometers south of Siena, Italy. After the excavation season ended, I spent some time in museums across the southern Italian peninsula, looking for evidence among both Etruscan and Roman artifacts. At the time, I was thinking about the Roman hatred of monarchy and how strange it was that such a staunchly republican society would eventually submit to rule by an autocrat. I was also vaguely aware that the solution to this conundrum lay in the history and memory, respectively, of Tarquin the Proud, though I was unsure exactly how Tarquin and Augustus were linked.

It would be several months before I realized the inherent contradiction between the lives and careers of Julius Caesar and Augustus, a contradiction which would become my central research question. However, in the Capitoline Museum in Rome, I made a find that would shape my thoughts and eventually change the way in which I conceptualized history and memory as a whole. The section of the museum devoted to early Republican artifacts is quite small, at least by my recollection, but on the explanatory plaques around the exhibits, a certain name kept popping up: “This temple,” “these artifacts,” or “this era” all were said to date from the time of the reign of Tarquinius Superbus. These signs and exhibits made no mention of the purported, traditional, or mythical reign of Tarquin – they reported his sovereignty as if it were established historical fact.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

This is a subtle yet powerful reminder of the power of memory. For many people, in Rome, in Italy, and throughout the world, the story of the deposition of the Tarquins is indeed history. Over two thousand five hundred years after the traditional founding of the Roman Republic, this story still *means* something to a great many people. This is why several scholars the world over argue that the last three kings of Rome were based, at least in part, in truth, even in the presence of contradictory evidence. As an audience, all of us can relate to the myth of the founding father(s) – a common trope of both mythologies and imagined traditions/memories – and for many of us, the notion of the overthrow of monarchy still elicits a powerful emotional response.²⁶⁵ The story remains so popular because it speaks to a wide variety of collectives, both throughout time across space. Perhaps this is why the story remained popular throughout the Republic and into the Empire. Clear into the second century A.D., Greek and Roman chroniclers of Roman history wrote of the dangers and inevitable tyranny of monarchy.

More important, however, is the drastic effect the Tarquin narrative had on the course of Republican history. In an early section of Livy's history, the historian tells us of a man named Spurius Maelius, who lived in the middle of the fifth century B.C. Maelius yearned for power, and used his wealth to purchase grain from Etruria which he then distributed *gratis* among the people. Maelius believed these actions would buy him the consulship, but he soon began to have visions of being king. He set a plan into action, holding "secret meetings" and gathering weapons at his home with the intent of staging a coup. His plans were discovered, however, by a man named Lucius Minucius, who brought Maelius's plans to the attention of the Senate. According to Livy, the Senate appointed Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus as dictator in order to combat the threat, and Cincinnatus called Maelius before the Senate to answer for his crimes. Servilius Ahala, Cincinnatus's "Master of the Horse" (second-in-command), was sent to retrieve Maelius,

²⁶⁵ Burke, "History as Social Memory," 110.; Balke, "Image of Lucretia," 35.

who was rescued by the Roman plebeians and pled their protection. Ahala responded by overtaking Maelius and slaying him in the street. When he returned to the Senate to report his actions, Cincinnatus is reported to have exclaimed “Well done! Gaius Servilius [Ahala], you have delivered the Republic!”²⁶⁶

Even if we attribute this story to mythology, as many historians have, it provides us with yet another iconic instance of men being killed as punishment for aspirations to kingship. Perhaps the most famous example from historical Rome are the Gracchi brothers, Tiberius and Gaius, both of whom were Roman populist politicians of the late second century B.C. and both of whom were killed because powerful men in Rome used the collective memory of repugnance toward monarchy as a tool to brand the Gracchi as monarchs/tyrants aspirant and murder them.²⁶⁷

This is what I meant by referring to Caesar as the last and best example of potency of the Tarquin legacy. Just as there were men who lived before him who were able to achieve unprecedented power and influence in Rome, there were also men who met correspondingly violent ends when their power grew too great for comfort. Whether or not Tarquinius Superbus’s name was explicitly mentioned in these events, the memory of his tyranny certainly bled into the collective conscious of the Romans who ousted these purported would-be autocrats. This demonstrates how powerful this narrative was in the collective memories of each generation of Roman citizens who heard this story as history. Men who failed to heed Tarquin’s lesson risked losing their lives, just as Caesar himself would in the early dawning of the Principate.

²⁶⁶ Livy, *Ab urbe condita*, 4.13-14.

²⁶⁷ How and Leigh, *History of Rome*, 341-342, 354-356.; Andrew Lintott, “Political History (146-95 B.C.),” in *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. IX: The Last Age of the Roman Republic (146-43 B.C.)*, ed. J.A. Crook et al. 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 68-72, 80-84.; Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus*, 211-226. Scipio Aemilianus, the voice of Cicero’s *De re publica*, was said to have remarked upon hearing of Tiberius Gracchus’s death, “So perish likewise all who work such deeds.” See: Astin, *Scipio Aemilianus*, 226.

However, the relationship between history and memory is not unidirectional. Caesar's death had as much to do with the precedents of assassination set by anti-monarchical patriots throughout the Republic as it did with the memory of Tarquin the Proud. Recall the coins mentioned in chapter four; the coins minted by Marcus Junius Brutus, one of Caesar's assassins, portraying Lucius Junius Brutus, the mythic hero-founder of the Republic and Marcus Brutus's ancestor.



These coins, minted in the period around 54 B.C. bear the image of Lucius Junius Brutus as consul on the reverse, shown to the right. Lucius Brutus is shown walking between two lictors and heralded by an *accensus*, a member of the light infantry in the army of the Roman Republic. On the obverse, pictured on the left, the head of Libertas – the goddess and personification of liberty – is presented in profile.²⁶⁸ This coin is pregnant with a number of significant associations. By showing Libertas in the same context as Lucius Brutus, Marcus Brutus is associating his ancestor with the very concept of liberty. By minting the coin in the first place, and by printing the name “BRVTVS” on the reverse, Marcus Brutus is overtly connecting

²⁶⁸ Ref 31 Junia denarius: “Marcus Junius Brutus Denarius. 54 BC. LIBERTAS, Head of Liberty right / Consul L Junius Brutus, between two lictors, preceded by accensus, all walking left, BRVTVS in ex. Syd 906, Cr433/1, Junia 31.” Example 15. Image courtesy of: “Sear Roman Coins and their Values (RCV 2000 Edition) Number 397,” found online at: <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0397.html#junia31>. Example used above found at: <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/rsc/junia/junia31.14.jpg>. Accessed February 6, 2013.

himself to the memory of his ancestor, the liberator. Symbolically, then, Marcus Brutus and his family were to be seen as the creators of Roman liberty.

Around the same time these coins were in circulation, Marcus Brutus was minting another coin:



This coin, and others like it, depicted Marcus Brutus himself, and on the reverse, Servilius Ahala.²⁶⁹ According to Plutarch, Marcus Brutus's mother Servilia was descended from Ahala.²⁷⁰

Both of these coins provide telling insight into the collective conscious of the Brutii family. Marcus Brutus viewed himself as the culmination of a family tradition; the progeny of two important clans, one which had given birth to Roman liberty and another which had defended that liberty in its infancy. Doubtless, when Marcus Brutus looked at Julius Caesar, he saw the very personification of everything his family had always stood against. By conspiring to assassinate Caesar, then, Brutus must have felt he was merely playing a role in a pre-scripted drama.

²⁶⁹ Ref Junia 30 denarius: "Marcus Junius Brutus, as moneyer, AR Denarius. 54 BC. BRVTVS, bare head of L Junius Brutus right / AHALA, bare head of C Servilius Ahala right. Syd 907, Cr433/2." Example 15. Image courtesy of: "Sear Roman Coins and their Values (RCV 2000 Edition) Number 398," found online at <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/sear5/s0398.html#junia30>. Example used above found at: <http://www.wildwinds.com/coins/rsc/junia/junia30.14.jpg>. Accessed February 6, 2013.

²⁷⁰ Plutarch, *Life of Brutus*, 1.3.

We must also remember, however, that these coins were not just seen by Brutus and his kin; they were used and viewed by Romans across the city, and perhaps throughout Rome's empire. Though the images on these coins may have held different levels of meaning for the Brutii than they did for the average Roman citizen, the images had some degree of significance for all who saw them. These coins are evidence that both the memory and the lesson of Tarquin the Proud were still very much alive for the Romans living in Julius Caesar's day.

This is why "history" and "memory" should not be seen as binary opposites. Even if the story of Tarquin the Proud, or the entire narrative of the kings of Rome for that matter, was based in myth, it cannot be denied that mythology became memory and memory became history. The individual collective societies that formed generation after generation of Roman citizen during the Republic surely portrayed Tarquin, his family, and his rule in different ways, though each did so with the intent of explaining why autocracy, by any name, was intolerable in Rome. Meanwhile, Romans throughout Republican history took this lesson to heart, and looked to examples of rebels and assassins who violently repelled monarchy for guidance as to what they themselves should do when confronted with men who had monarchical aims. In every case, history and memory acted for, against, and in tandem with each other, not only to produce portrayals of the Roman past, but to alter the very course of history, both in Rome and in the wider world.

As historians, we should look cautiously on historical memories. I firmly believe that each version of a historical figure, event, or period is equally useful in understanding the figure, event, or period it is trying to describe. That being said, we should not simply avoid attempts to discern what "really" happened. In our charge to make sense of our pasts, historians should look to primary sources, archaeological evidence, and historical memory alike in order to distinguish

truth and fact from what often amounts to an endless pool of evidence. If this is not done in the name of advancing historical knowledge, it should still be done out of personal or disciplinary interest and curiosity. Nevertheless, scholars of history should acknowledge the great power which memory can carry. After all, it was memory, in a sense, that killed Julius Caesar, and it was a careful manipulation of that same memory which allowed Augustus to begin the gradual transformation of Roman society.

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