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Roman Myth and Mythography

Bremmer, J.N.; Horsfall, N.

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Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:

1987

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Bremmer, J. N., & Horsfall, N. (1987). *Roman Myth and Mythography*. s.n.

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MYTH AND MYTHOGRAPHY AT ROME ¹

No definition of myth is offered at the outset, not least because the chief concern of this chapter is mythography, and because over the last few years the powerful arguments of W. Burkert and his followers have indicated that it would be most unwise to make use of neat distinctions between 'myth' and 'legend';² at Rome, anyway, there are many stories (above all, that of Servius Tullius, p. 5) which look to contain elements of both. The 'peculiar sort of aridity' with which Michael Grant not unfairly characterised the mythological imagination of early Rome seems to have discouraged scholars writing in English from the study of Roman myth. This first chapter grew out of a longstanding preoccupation with Latin mythographic texts, and offers some clarification of the evidence and of its transmission. The literary and historical character of our scanty source-material has been neglected above all else, and that neglect weakens and often even invalidates many of the attempts that have been made to impose the approaches, subtle but often opaque, which students of Greek myth and comparative mythology have developed, especially in Italy and France, upon the modest but recalcitrant body of Roman material (eg Arrigoni (n. 1), Camassa (n. 27), Liou-Gille (n. 20)).

Very few students of Roman myth have paused to draw a distinction between:

(i) those very few Roman and Italian myths whose evidently great antiquity, predating both regular contact with Greek literature?³(cf. p. 5) and the spread of literacy in its application to the preservation of narrative' (cf. p. 5), is indicated both by their form and by copious Indo-European (and indeed non-Indo-European) parallels (Romulus, Cacus, Caeculus), and which have survived all the vicissitudes of accretion and transmission; and

(ii) those, which I shall call 'secondary myth', that are the products of antiquarian industry, literary activity, a desire for impressive antecedents, a good nose for suggestive analogies and for what might pass as a credibly antique story, a talent for creating a seductive but illusory patina of hoarily ancient authenticity, and, lastly, wide reading. The poets of classical Greece create or retell myth for society at large; Roman men of letters construct secondary myth for *recitationes*. In that context it exercises little or no 'social function' (cf. Burkert (n. 2), 2), though the *Aeneid* came at times to exercise something of that function for the Roman Empire.

¹ This study was prompted by invitations to write about Messapus and the Aeneas-legend (2. 221-9) for the *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*, to review Giampiera Arrigoni, *Camilla* (Milan, 1982), and Jocelyn Penny Small, *Cacus and Marsyas* (Princeton, 1982), for *CR* (34. 1 (1984), 61-2, and 34. 2 (1984), 226-9), and to lecture on Roman myth at Utrecht (at Jan Bremmer's invitation). Reviews of L. Braccusi, *Antenore* and *OGR* (ed. J.-C. Richard) to appear in *CR* will offer further clarification of details. I am also most grateful to Prof. Arrigoni for much disbelieving yet cordial discussion, to Fritz Graf for criticism of an early draft, to Tim Cornell and Peter Wiseman for helpful criticism at a later stage, and to Prof. Emilio Gabba, who kindly invited me to speak at Pavia and contributed a great deal to my understanding of the historical context. A text of an earlier version of this paper is also published in *Echos du monde classique* 29 (1985), 393-410. I quote from M. Grant, *Roman Myths* (London, 1971), a stimulating book.

² Cf. the neat but fallacious distinctions between myth ('thoroughgoing fiction'), legend ('stories based, however remotely, on historical fact') and 'folktale' ('a species of myth'): Grant (n. 1), 262 n. 24, 263 n. 27; cf. Small (n. 1), xiii. Cf., far more helpfully, W. Burkert, *Structure and History* (Berkeley, 1979), ch. 1; F. Graf, *Griechische Mythologie* (Munich, 1985), 7ff.

³ G. Wissowa, *Religion u. Kultus der Römer* (Munich, 1912), 9; C. Koch, *Der röm. Juppiter* (repr. Darmstadt, 1968), 30.

⁴ Note the prudent survey by G. Cavallo, in *Civiltà del Mezzogiorno: l'impronta ellenica* (Milan, 1984), 129ff; cf. further nn. 25, 75, and J. N. Bremmer in *Actus: Studies in honour of H. L. W. Nelson* (Utrecht, 1982), 44ff, for suggestive distinctions between oral and written transmissions of myth. I refer purely to the unquestionable antiquity of numerous themes contained in the stories under discussion. Cf. J. Poucet, *Les origines de Rome* (Brussels, 1985), 238ff.

Two central questions above all have been neglected: first, how the Romans themselves regarded what was or might pass for a myth; and, secondly, how the stories were transmitted and transmuted. This discussion is intended as a first step towards remedying that neglect.

Grant's 'peculiar aridity' is the more surprising in that it occurs in a society which preserved vigorously and unconcealed its peasant origins in language, in proverbs, in riddles, in superstitions, in folk-medicine, in animal-fables⁵ But the survival of stories about ghosts and werewolves (for instance Petr. 62, 63) is one thing, that of myths is quite another. It is very striking to contrast the extremely slender traces of popular awareness of Italian myth with the easy familiarity with classical mythology displayed in the dialogue of Theocritus 15 (61, 4), or with that assumed by the authors of New Comedy, whether in Greece, or even, very strikingly, before a third to second century BC Roman audience.⁶ Likewise, the language of Greek proverbs is rich in mythological content, whereas, extraordinarily, the subject index to Otto's *Sprichwörter* yields, alongside a page of references to Greek gods and heroes, only *Pici divitiae* from Italian soil.⁷ That is to say that imported myths have almost wholly displaced the native product at this basic level. Oaths are quite another matter,⁸ but *Equirine*, for instance, belongs rather to the study of popular religious language and falls outside the scope of this discussion. The popular Roman stage yields similar conclusions: only one mime-title proves relevant, the *Anna Perenna* of Laberius, whose plot (the story of Mars and Anna Perenna) may be reconstructed with the help of Ovid, *Fasti* 3. 677ff.⁹

The evidence of art may prove significant in this context, for a sufficient body of representations of Italian mythological themes would permit important inferences about the likely knowledge of the intended public. The Roman and Pompeian evidence is thoroughly catalogued, but, at least if one looks at the painting, mosaic and sculpture, little enough emerges: a handful of Pompeian Romulus-scenes, the reliefs of the Basilica Aemilia, the Esquiline paintings, a Rhea Silvia with Mars from the Domus Aurea, half-a-dozen fragments of sculptural relief, all but one clearly identifiable" — and the Capitoline wolf! The stories are all from the most conventional areas of mainstream myth or legend."

⁵ Language: O. Weise. *Charakteristik der lat. Sprache*, 3rd. ed. (Leipzig. 1905), 13ff = *Language and Character of the Roman People* (London. 1909). 12ff; C. di Meo. *Lingue tecniche del Latino* (Bologna, 1983), 27ff. Proverbs: A. Otto, *Sprichwörter*, 383ff. Riddles: Petr. 58. 8, with Smith's notes: Virgil, *Buc.* 3. 104ff; W. Schultz. *PW* IA 116. 16ff. Superstitions: Petr. *Cena*, ed. Smith, index, s.v.; X. F. M. G. Wolters, *Notes on antique folklore* (Amsterdam, 1935). Folk-medicine: J. Scarborough, *Roman medicine* (London, 1969). 23. Animal fables: Babrius and Phaedrus, ed. B. E. Perry (Loeb ed.), lxxxvff; A. Scobie, *RhM* 122 (1979), 244ff, and *Apuleius and Folklore* (London. 1983), 20ff. Of course Petronius might be expected to modify, moderate, manipulate. even invent 'popular' elements to suit his own literary purpose.

⁶ Fully discussed by F. Middelman, *Griech. Welt u. Sprache in Plautus' Komödien* (Bochum, 1938), 48ff; E. Fraenkel. *Elementi Plautini in Plauto* (Florence, 1960), 55ff.

⁷ E. L. van Leutsch, etc.. *Parioemiographi Graeci*, index *nominum*; contrast Otto (n. 5). 402f.

⁸ J. B. Hofmann, *Lar. Umgangssprache*, 3rd. ed. (Heidelberg. 1951), 30f = *La lingua d'uso Latina* (tr. L. Ricottilli: Bologna, 1980), 136ff.

⁹ E. Fantham. *HSCP* 87 (1983), 200. Greek influence on the mime was considerable, but I find it difficult to believe that the whole category of Roman mythological themes was excluded for precisely that reason: cf. further T. P. Wiseman in *Les 'Bourgeoisies' municipales Italiennes aux IIe et Ier siècles av. J.- C.* (Paris, 1983), 300.

¹⁰ W. Helbig, *Führer*, 4th. ed. (1963), 1397.

¹¹ Helbig, Index, s.v. Rom. Gründungssagen, Frühgeschichte: K. Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis* (Berlin, 1957), index s.v. Romulus. Aeneias, etc. The more extensive coin and gem material is conveniently collected by P. Aichholzer, *Darstellungen röm. Sagen*, diss. Wien 160 (1983), catal. 123ff; this list, however, is notably outdated in its bibliography and uncritical in its methods.

The absence of identifiable mythological scenes in Roman or Pompeian art containing figures of identifiable Italian origin¹² is clearly itself significant, though the numerous unidentified mythological or legendary figures in Etruscan or Praenestine art may of course often constitute unrecognisable evidence for lost non-Roman myth or for variant themes of known stories.¹³



At this point it might even seem legitimate to suspect that our knowledge is so extremely fragmentary that our entire picture of Roman myth might be distorted. But a search for unexplained allusions, unidentified iconographies, names without stories, and stories without names does not yield much. Possibly some of the towns of Latium once had king-lists more ancient and interesting than that of Alba, recording figures to whom legendary feats adhered:

¹² On a striking combat of Trojans and Latins (cf. *Aen.* 7-12), see my remarks in *Atti del convegno mondiale scientifico di studi su Virgilio*, 2 (Milan, 1984), 61 n. 71.

¹³ Etruscans: Small (n. 1) 37ff; on mirrors. C. Sowder in (ed.) N. de Grummond, *A guide to Etruscan mirrors* (Tallahassee, 1982), 100ff; on Praenestine cistae, see, T. Dohrn, 'Die Ficoronische Ciste'. *Mon. artis rom.* 11 (Berlin, 1972); G. Bordenache Battaglia, *Le ciste prenestine*, 1 (Rome, 1979). in progress: my thanks to Nigel Spivey for guidance in this morass. Cf. p. 4 for a typical instance of unhelpful speculation.

the survival of such names as Acron, king of Caenina,¹⁴ Propertius, Thebris and Morrius, kings of Veii,¹⁵ and Dercennus, king of the Laurentes (see below) might suggest as much. Erulus king of Praeneste is killed by the young Evander (*Aen.* 8. 561ff), but in his Virgilian form (cf. Eden, ad *loc.*) is merely a doublet of Geryon (cf. 8. 202) with his *tres animae*: the name Erulus is interesting, but clearly need not in origin have belonged to an authentic figure of primitive Praenestine myth. Dercennus (*Aen.* 11. 850) is named by Virgil as an ancient king of the Laurentes; the name appears Celtic and clearly belongs to a quite different stratum from the superficial reconstructions of 7. 45ff and 170ff.¹⁶

The name Recaranus is hardly more rewarding: it occurs only in the fragments of Hemina cited in the late fourth century compilation known as the *OGR*.¹⁷ The name appears in some way connected with that of Geryon: that Recaranus could once have existed as a figure distinct from Geryon is scarcely credible;¹⁸ certainly the existence of a further form, Garanus, used by Servius ad *Aen.* 8. 203 of a Recaranus-like figure, suggests as much. However, something very strange has happened not only to the name but to the function,¹⁹ for Recaranus/Garanus takes over the function of Hercules and slays Cacus. But the problems Recaranus presents are, I suspect, primarily ones of misunderstanding and garbled transmission. It does not solidly advance our comprehension to emend the name to Treccarus, the three-headed (cf. *Aen.* 8. 202, 564!) and to found giddy speculations thereupon."

But whereas, for example, the tales told by Nestor point clearly towards the existence of a vast body of non-Trojan epic" known to Homer, the surviving corpus of authentic central Italian myth conveys not the faintest impression of being the tiny visible part of a vast submerged mass. More important, this modest corpus is certainly not, by the period for which we are informed, a precious popular heritage: sufficient evidence should by now have been adduced (pp. 2-3) to suggest that popular culture embraced imported myth with enthusiasm, while native myths, which, I would argue, had never been very numerous (pp. 7-10), held by contrast little or no popular appeal. The *Mythenlosigkeit* of Roman religion was already noted by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (2. 18. 3), and has been variously explained by scholars from Wissowa to Gabba (*RSI* 96 (1984), 855ff). The present article and that controversy run parallel.

No single explanation for the 'failure' of Roman myth, for its absence from, for instance, the language of proverbs and from the popular stage, is here offered; but certainly, if aristocratic priesthoods had been the jealous guardians of a modest range of local myths,²² the stories would indeed remain little-known and highly vulnerable to sudden oblivion, in, for example, the

¹⁴ Acron: Liv. 1. 9. 8; Horsfall, *JRS* 63 (1973), 69, n. 11 = 92; G. Dumézil, *Mariages indo-européens* (Paris, 1979), 225ff.

¹⁵ Propertius: Cato fr. 48P; Thebris: Varro, LL 5. 30; Morrius, Serv. Dan. ad *Aen.* 8. 285. Cf. too *Aen.* 12. 94, *Actor-is Aurunci spoliū*, perhaps.

¹⁶ Dercennus: Th. Koves-Zulauf, *Gymn.* 85 (1978), 412ff.

¹⁷ *OGR* 6, 9; Small (n. 1), 27 n. 80.

¹⁸ To assert Recaranus' independent existence is, I suspect, wilfully to enlarge chaos; on the identification of Hercules and Recaranus. Small (n. 1), 27 n. 80.

¹⁹ Cf. Small (n. 1), 26ff; Burkert (n. 2), 854.

²⁰ Three-headed: after S. Ferri, A. Alföldi, *Die struktur des voretruskischen Römerstaates* (Heidelberg, 1974), 186; surprisingly, Burkert (n. 2), 86; B. Liou-Gille, *Cultes héroïques romains* (Paris, 1980), 34 and *passim* (on whose extravagances, see R. Turcan, *RHR* 199 (1982), 183-6). Three heads are now disquietingly promoted into the text of the *OGR*: (ed. Richard), 126.

²¹ G. L. Huxley, *Greek epic poetry* (London, 1969), 39ff.

²² J. Bayet, *Hist. . . de la religion romaine* (Paris, 1957), 45f; E. T. Salmon, *Sannium and the Samnites* (Cambridge, 1967), 179f; E. C. Evans, *Cults of the Sabine Territory* (New York, 1939), 121.

destruction of the Hannibalic or Social Wars:?' if the only context in which a foundation story was related was to reinforce the authority of an oligarchic or dominant family (cf. Salmon (n. 22), 82f), its popularity was perhaps unlikely to develop deep roots. There is not a word in Cicero on Arpinum's origins; very possibly, if the new men of Sullan Rome abandoned the myths and legends of their home towns, then the only guardians of those stories had departed.'" On the other hand, from 240 BC or so, the 'interloper', Greek mythology, was firmly linked to explicitly popular theatrical representations.?' There was now a growing literate public, and Roman armies were bringing back scraps of Greek stories, language and mores from the south. Two and a half centuries earlier, the Roman purchasers of black-figure and red-figure vases, if they could read (unlikely), were clearly Greekless, and even if there were itinerant polyglot storytellers, their skills have left no trace. Before Livius Andronicus, no vehicle existed whereby Greek myth could attract or retain the attention of a population monoglot and not long literate. Undeniably, the stories of Romulus at Rome²⁶, and, probably, that of Caeculus at Praeneste, were of immemorial antiquity, but such narratives are exceptionally rare. Likewise, the story of Servius Tullius is clearly in part of primitive character and has widespread mythological analogues,²⁷ yet he himself remains in some sense an historical figure. One would, at Rome, be most unwise to distinguish sharply between myth and legend, between *fabula* and *historia*; Livy lays down no firm periodisation in terms of chronology and credibility.²⁸ Etruscan art even juxtaposes the mythological Cacus with the historical Vibenna.²⁹ So when G. W. Williams asserts³⁰ that Virgil thought of Aeneas as historically real, one might suspect that no educated Roman of that date would have conceived of the matter in such crude terms.

We have also to remain at all times sharply aware of the distinction between transmission and creation: under the stimulus of Hellenistic mythography and local history, Roman poets and antiquarians successfully and deceptively created a corpus of 'secondary myth' for Rome and for many other central Italian towns, and we need to be more cautious than some recent writers in applying such terms as 'folktale' to the products of elegant first century BC composition on the analogy of old and familiar stories. According to Ovid, for example, Numa overcomes Faunus and Picus with wine in order to make them reveal how he can entice Jupiter Elicius. This is a story-type already old in Homer. Antias or his source will have known many instances; to create another is not 'folktale' (Fantham, *loc. cit.*) but mass-production of

²³ Hannibalic War: M. W. Frederiksen, *Campania* (Rome, 1983), 304. Social war: Salmon (n. 22), 55, 386f.

²⁴ E. T. Salmon, *The Making of Roman Italy* (London, 1982), 132f; Wiseman (n. 9), 305; J.- M. David, *ibid.*, 309ff. Cf. G. Wissowa (n. 2), 9, for comparable explanations, applied to an earlier era.

²⁵ Fraenkel (n. 6), 85ff, surely exaggerates knowledge of Greek myth at Rome before Livius. Literacy: note the highly significant career of Cn. Flavius, aed. cur. 304. Much of the apparent evidence for earlier popular literacy depends on annalistic reconstructions influenced by the κύρβητες and ἄξονες of Solon: Liv. 3. 34. 2; Plin. NH 35. 12; R. Stroud in *Athens comes of age* (Princeton, 1978), 20ff, and 'The Axones and Kyrbeis of Drakon and Solon'. *UCPCP* 19 (1979); cf. too the fascinating but chronologically inconclusive evidence of F. Schulz, *Roman legal science*, 2nd. ed. (Oxford, 1953), 25ff.

²⁶ See Bremmer, 25ff; Poucet (n. 4), 179ff and *passim*; T. J. Cornell, *PCPhS*, an admirable discussion of Romulus (on Aeneas, several of his conclusions have to be modified).

²⁷ On Cacus, see, for instance, G. Camassa, *L'occhio e il metallo* (Genoa, 1983), 48f; also Ogilvie on Liv. 1. 39. 1: Ov. F. 6. 627f. Compare Promathion of Gergis on the birth of Romulus and Remus. *FGrH* 817 = Plut. *Rom.* 2. 3: Cornell (n. 26), 25 n. 4. 26.

²⁸ Liv. Praef. 6. 1. 2; cf. DH 1. 79. 1; P. G. Walsh, *Livy* (Cambridge, 1961), 30, 32; T. J. Luce, *Livy* (Princeton, 1977), 141 n. 3; T. P. Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics* (Leicester, 1979), 143ff.

²⁹ Small (n. 2), 37ff.

³⁰ *Technique and ideas in the Aeneid* (New Haven, 1983), 36. Cf. P. Veyne, *Les Grecs ont-ils cru à leurs mythes?* (Paris, 1983), 44 n. 32.

pleasantly familiar goods by literary assembly-line." Interesting in its own right, often, but only an incidental concern of this paper. Nor is the enthusiasm of antiquarian writers the only stimulus to creation: local pride in the prosperous and well-educated Italian towns (cf. Cic. *Arch.* 5) will have cried out for heroic origins.³² Likewise, at a later stage, it is easy to imagine that the new-found dignity and expectations of the successful and often cultured *apparitores* might have encouraged and even financed the development of secondary myth." Where heroic origins did not exist, clearly they had to be invented.

The Romans' own perception of their native myths has often been neglected (but cf. Grant (n. 1). 18-43 for some incidental insights), nor is an awareness of ancient techniques for presenting — or inventing — such myths much in evidence. Two frequent and regularly misleading stylistic phenomena occurring in the presentation of Roman myths tend both to create an atmosphere antique, traditional, suggestive: first, to preface a narrative with *namque ferunt* (cf. *fertur, omnis quem credidit aeras, vel sim.*)³⁴ is a mannerism of Alexandrian scholarly poetry, a manifestation of the compulsion ἀμάρτυρον οὐδέν ἀεΐδειν.³⁵ Secondly, the same is true of what appears formally to be the reverse of such a preface, that is, of expressions such as *vix equidem credo*.³⁶ Such introductory flourishes are of themselves no guarantee against invention.³⁷ Similarly we should approach references to oral sources in, for instance, Ovid's *Fasti*³⁸ with, at the very least, caution. There are half-a-dozen. But that Ovid claims to have learned of the loves of Jupiter and Juno *per antiquos senes* (*F.* 2. 584) should not impress unduly. Such claims after all appear already in Callimachus,³⁹ and their ultimate origin belongs in the discussions between travellers such as Herodotus, Timaeus or Pausanias and the *exegetai*, the priests or guardians of the temples they visited."

It is perhaps worth making explicit here that there never seems to have existed any perception that there might be a difference in kind or degree between the myths of Italy and those of Greece; the absence of distinction is already clear from the post-Hesiodic lines, *Theogony* 1011ff,⁴¹ where Agrius (? = Silvius, cf. Cornell (n. 26). 31) and Latinus are described as offspring of Odysseus and Circe. And of course borrowed Greek and ancient Italian elements can coexist in the same story: the founders of Tibur, Tiburtus, Catillus and Coras are *Argiva iuventus* in Virgil (*Aen.* 7. 670ff) and this Hellenization of Tiburtine legend is at least as old as Cato.⁴² But Virgil also describes Catillus and Coras as *gemini fratres* (7. 670): that could

³¹ Cf. Poucet (n. 4). 196; Coleman on Virg. *Buc.* 6. 13-4, 19; F. R. Schroder in *Gedenkschr. W. Brandenstein* (Innsbruck, 1968). 325ff; Ov. *F.* 3. 289ff. After Antias: see Plut. *Num.* 15, Antias fr. 6P; Fantham (n. 9), 190. Cf. too Liv. 5. 15. 4. with Ogilvie's note, for another recent development of this story-type.

³² The cultural background before the social war is most stimulatingly sketched by Wiseman (n. 9), 299ff. Cf. S. Mratschek, *Athen.* 72 (1984), 154ff; G. A. Mansuelli, *I Cisalpini* (Florence, 1962), 267ff; E. Rawson, *Intellectual Life* (London, 1985), 19ff.

³³ Cf. N. Purcell, *PBSR* 51 (1983), 142ff.

³⁴ T. C. W. Stinton, *PCPhS* 22 (1976). 60ff; Bonier on Ov. *F.* 2. 203; R. Heinze, *Vergils epische Technik* (repr. Stuttgart, 1965), 240ff.

³⁵ Call. fr. 612Pf; cf. *A. R.* 1. 154.

³⁶ Ov. *F.* 2. 551.

³⁷ Horsfall, *JRS* 63 (1973). 75 = 100.

³⁸ Ov. *Fasti* ed. Bomer, 1. 29; Horsfall, *GR* 21 (1974), 196; L. P. Wilkinson, *Ovid Recalled* (Cambridge, 1955), 247f; *Fasti* ed. Frazer, lxiii; G. Wissowa, *Ges. Abh.* (Munich, 1904), 274ff; D. Porte, *L'Étiologie religieuse* (Paris, 1985), 125f.

³⁹ Fr. 282.

⁴⁰ Cf., for instance, W. M. Calder, *GRBS* 23 (1982), 281ff; E. Gabba, *JRS* 71 (1981), 61f; Ch. Habicht, *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (Berkeley, 1985). 145f.

⁴¹ On *Aen.* 7. 205ff see Horsfall, *JRS* 63 (1973), 78 n. 87, and below, 89.

⁴² *Orig.* fr. 56P; cf. S. Weinstock, *PW s.v. Tibur viA*, 816ff.

be an *autoschediasma*, a detail invented by Virgil or his source on the model of Rome, as the very name of Coras, associated evidently with the distant town of Cora, might suggest (cf. *JRS* 63 (1973), 71f = 98f); or, alternatively, these twins might in fact constitute a suggestive local analogy to Romulus and Remus.⁴³ We may also observe an apparent element of 'authentic' exposure of a royal child in the story of Silvius; though Livy's reference to *casu quodam in silvis natus* (1. 3. 6) might look like a late *aition* of the name, the story (*fugit ad silvas*, Cato (?) fr. 11P (cf. 22 n. 133); Cornell (n. 26), 31) is perhaps of no small antiquity. Even the tediously synthetic monarchy of Alba, a creation inspired by the chronological work of Eratosthenes and his followers,⁴⁴ appears therefore to retain or to have attracted some fragments of primitive myth.

It is only to be expected, first, that the Romans, as we have just seen, take over and re-use Greek techniques in the narration, presentation and beautification of their myths: and, secondly, that such fitful rationalist analysis as we discover is itself entirely traditional and perhaps faintly Stoic in character. Reason and respectability will tend, in the name of patriotism, to purge early stories of their vulgar and miraculous elements.⁴⁵ But it should not be thought either that there were not writers who toured central Italy in pursuit of information on the ground, or that there were not at least a few local myths to be uncovered. The evidence for local writings of at least part-historical character is excellent. for Etruscans and Sabines, for Interamna Nahars, Cumae and Praeneste (perhaps; cf. 59), possibly even for Ardea;⁴⁶ and Cato after all criticised the Ligurians for their absence of historical records (fr. 31P). Consultation, however, clearly entailed travel for the Roman historian or antiquarian. Both Cato and Varro, to go no further, not only consulted local records, but recorded inscriptions.⁴⁷ Such interests are not exceptional: from Hemina to Atticus and Hyginus⁴⁸ an interest in Italian origins, reaching far beyond mere consultation of earlier authorities in the comfort of a study, is attested, though we should be careful not to read back into the republican antiquarians the academic values and intentions of a Grimm or a Lonrot. That is to say that the means for the recording and preserving in writing such Roman and Italian myths as might have survived and the desire to record *in situ* may possibly reach back as far as Timaeus,⁴⁹ though one should never suppose that what is recorded is necessarily a story of vast and virginal antiquity. Local priests wish to please the distinguished visitor who in turn records what he wants or expects to hear.

The Etruscan and Italian catalogues in the *Aeneid* provide a test to determine how much Italian myth existed in the late first century BC to supplement Rome's own feeble contribution.

⁴³ Apparently not in G. Binder. *Die Aussetzung des Königskindes* (Meisenheim, 1964): but see Cornell, 30. For the motif of exposure (Silvius): Liv. 1. 3. 2; Grant (n. 1), 1032f; Binder, *passim*; Cornell (n. 26), 6: etc.

⁴⁴ Cf. Horsfall, *CQ* 24 (1974), 113f.

⁴⁵ H. D. Jocelyn, *PCPhS* 1971, 51. Cf. P. Boyancé, *REA* 57ff = *Ét. rel. rom.* (1972), 253ff; Ogilvie, *Livy*, 158.

⁴⁶ Interamna: *ILS* 157. Etruscans: Censorinus 17. 6: Cornell, *ASNP* 3. 6. 2 (1976), 411ff. Sabines: DH 2. 49.4: Dio 1 fr. 6. 5: C. Letta, *Athen.* 72 (1984), 423 n. 93 for bibliography. Cumae: *FGrH* 576: T. J. Cornell, *MH* 31 (1974), 206. Praeneste: Sol. 2. 9, but see 59ff. Ardea: Varr. *RR* 2. 11. 10. See in general E. Pais, *Storia Critica* (Rome, 1913), 1. 1, 90 n. 4 = (repr. 1918), 91, 1; G. C. Lewis, *Enquiry* 1 (London, 1855), 197f; H. Nissen, *Ital. Landeskunde* 1 (Berlin, 1883), 20, references for which I am grateful to Dr. Cornell. Add A. Schwegler, *Röm. Gesch.* 1 (Tübingen, 1867), 40: Salmon (n. 24), 205 n. 461. Are records implied by the claim that, for instance, Antemnae was older than Rome. Cato *Orig.* fr. 21P (with Cornell, n. 26, 15f)? Perhaps not necessarily: the narratives about Romulus implied that many towns were thought to be.

⁴⁷ For instance Cato fr. 48P. Varro, *RR* 2. 11. 10. See A. Stein, *Röm. Inschriften i.d. ant. Lit.* (diss. Prag, 1931). For further bibliography. see R. Chevallier, *Épigraphie et littérature à Rome* (Faenza, 1972), 11ff; Rawson (n. 32), 238f.

⁴⁸ E. Rawson, *Lot.* 35 (1976), 696, and (n. 32), 239, 248. Atticus: *Nep. Att.* 18. 3f. Hyginus: *CRF*, 533ff.

⁴⁹ Timaeus: see F. Castagnoli, *Lavinium* 1 (Rome, 1972), 109 n. 10; A. D. Momigliano, *Essays in ancient and modern historiography* (Oxford, 1977), 46ff.

Virgil's use of this corpus is most suggestive: upon Cacus and upon certain ancient names (for instance Dercennus) which appear to have lost their stories we have already touched. Beyond that, progress is difficult; the use of the Italian and Etruscan catalogues entails complex problems of source-analysis, and a distinction must be observed between stories, however they may have been transmitted (and expanded), that are demonstrably ancient and indigenous (Romulus, Cacus, Caeculus), whose existence in some form is overwhelmingly likely to have predated any close and regular contact (n. 3) with Greece, and those which, whether first recorded by Greek travellers or by Roman scholars writing more or less in the tradition of Greek local historiography, are essentially stories on a Greek model involving Greek heroes and their myriad offspring by intermarriage with Italian brides, even when, as was the case by the second century BC, such stories were actively welcomed by the local Italian aristocracies.

The Catalogue of Turnus' Italian allies in *Aeneid* 7 is crucial. Here, after all, a notoriously well-read poet presents thirteen leaders of primitive Italian peoples. Virgil's topographical source was conclusively shown by Rehm⁵⁰ to be Varro. *res humanae* 11; derivative and related texts, notably Pliny NH 3 and a number of topographical entries in Festus, *de significatu verborum*, suggest that Varro included in bare outline foundation stories where known.⁵¹ It is equally quite clear that where Pliny, Servius, the OGR and Solinus — that is to say, all the surviving elements of the prose mythographic tradition — are silent, then Varro himself had probably been silent too and Virgil could and did invent. But one may wonder how far he or his readers were aware of what a farrago of disparate elements these thirteen chieftains turn out to be when analysed. Umbro, Ufens and Aventinus (at least in his present role) are in all probability Virgilian inventions,⁵² whereas Mezentius and Turnus belong to the Aeneas-legend at least as far back as Cato; Mezentius has an Etruscan name and perhaps belonged in the first instance to the aition of the *vinalia rustica*.⁵³ Virbius of Aricia is linked to an aetiological story to account for the exclusion of horses from the shrine of Diana at Nemi,⁵⁴ which Virgil, it would seem, found in Callimachus' *Aetia*, though the name Virbius may have a very old place in Arician cult and myth.⁵⁵ Messapus and Halaesus represent a curious problem: Messapus (*Aen.* 7. 691ff) belongs by name to the heel of Italy (Messapia), yet leads the men of South Etruria, an area long associated with Halaesus, who in turn (7. 723ff) leads a contingent from Campania, with which he has no traditional associations.⁵⁶ Even a dislocation in the text has been suggested:⁵⁷ it is a good deal likelier that Virgil had at least some sense of how recent, synthetic and undeserving of reverence such stories were; Varro's collection and systematisation by cities of Italian foundation stories he had studied closely but ignored at will.⁵⁸ At all events, both Messapus and Halaesus, Oebalus, probably,⁵⁹ and likewise the leaders of the Tiburtines, Tiburtus, Catillus and Coras (but see 6f above), all belong to that single

⁵⁰ B. Rehm. *Das geogr. Bild des alten Italien in Vergils Aeneis*, *Philol. Supplbd.* 24 (1932). 92ff; Horsfall. Varrone e l'Eneide, *Encicl. Virgil.*, forthcoming.

⁵¹ For instance Plin. *NH* 3. 103. 104. 108; Horsfall *loc. cit.* (n. 44). For Festus, see R. Reitzenstein, *Hermes* 20 (1885), 532ff.

⁵² Rehm (n. 44), 92. The stories are discussed in greater detail in my (unpub.) Oxford thesis for D. Phil. 'Virgil. *Aeneid* VII: notes on selected passages' (1971).

⁵³ Cato, *Orig.* Fr. 12P, with W.- A. Schroder's note.

⁵⁴ *Aen.* 7. 778.

⁵⁵ Horsfall, *JRS* 65 (1975), 229; F.- H. Pairault, *MEFR* 81 (1969), 425ff.

⁵⁶ See Horsfall. *Encicl. Virgil.* s.v. Messapus. Forthcoming.

⁵⁷ J. Perret, *Mél. P. Boyancé (Coll. Ec. Fr. Rome 22)* (1974), 557ff.

⁵⁸ Horsfall *loc. cit.* (n. 50): *CR* 34 (1984). 61f.

⁵⁹ Oebalus: *Aen.* 7. 733ff with *G.* 4. 125; Horsfall, *CR* 34 (1984), 134.

category of Greek immigrants laboriously linked to Italian toponyms in Varro, Timaeus and earlier.⁶⁰ Their character as figures of 'scholarly' secondary myth is itself suggestive, for their towns and peoples cannot go leaderless whether in epic or in geographical and antiquarian writing, and their very existence therefore seems to point to the fact that the areas they represent lacked recorded indigenous mythological origins of their own.

The origins of Volscian Camilla have recently been discussed in great detail by Prof Giampiera Arrigoni of Milan.⁶¹ The source-analysis of that learned and stimulating book does not convince me. A case for sceptical analysis remains. Metabus, whom Virgil makes Camilla's father, may have no long-standing connexions with the town of Privernum, and therefore may not himself constitute a tiny fragment of ancient Volscian legend, or myth.⁶² Camilla herself cannot be shown beyond doubt to be anything other than Virgilian invention, though one of very varied antecedents (notably Penthesilea and Hippolyte) and associations.⁶³ We are left with Caeculus, for whom there exists a rich and complex tradition (cf. 59ff: NMH on the attestations; 49ff: JNB on the myth).

At Praeneste, there was also, probably (cf. 61f), available in Virgil's time a 'mass-produced' Hellenised ktisis-story: the town was, according to this, founded by a grandson of Odysseus, much as Telegonus had for some while been held to be the founder of Tusculum. Thus, exactly as in the case of Rome, it appears that indigenous and Hellenised versions coexisted. But it is unlikely that there is anything special and significant in Virgil's preference for the indigenous version. Caeculus is an ancient figure, who had long attracted mythographers. It is perhaps significant that our (relative) wealth of surviving testimony derives from a town which contained so majestic a sanctuary. Similar coincidences of rich mythological associations with a notable temple or temples occur of course also at, for instance, Lavinia, Alba, Nemi, Ardea, and Falerii. Hardly an accident: the physical structures, surviving into the late republic, provide walls to record and priests to embroider the scholars' source material.⁶⁴ But it is quite clear that what Virgil records tersely in *Aen.* 7. 678ff is a local story of great antiquity. So, aside from some minute but suggestive scraps, the thirteen leaders have yielded up precisely one native myth. Yet no impression emerges that Virgil himself thought this odd or striking or was even particularly aware of the highly distinctive character of Praeneste. And it would appear that the text of Virgil confirms the suspicion expressed above that by Virgil's time very few fragments of central Italian myth, properly speaking, did survive; and it is therefore, further, likely that such stories had not been firmly rooted and possible too that their number had never been very large (cf. 4).

But it may now be a little easier to understand the vagaries and mechanisms of transmission, and it is also possible to dismiss swiftly from consideration Virgil's Etruscan catalogue: after the extravagant claims made for the poet's expertise in matters Etruscan (cf. 100) on the basis of his name and Mantuan origin,⁶⁵ it is remarkable how little North Italian lore he actually does

⁶⁰ J. Bérard, *La colonisation grecque*, 2nd. ed. (Paris. 1957). *passim*.

⁶¹ See CR 34 (1984). 61-2. A. Brill, 'Die Gestalt der Camilla bei Vergil' (diss. Heidelberg. 1972), 1 ff. reached similar conclusions. though on a very narrow view of the evidence.

⁶² Cato, *Orig.* fr. 62P; but M. Cancellieri (in *Enea nel Lazio* (Rome, 1981), 78f) is of course quite right to insist that the text of Servius does not necessarily prove that Cato himself referred to Metabus.

⁶³ Arrigoni. *passim*. Cf. also E. C. Kopff in 'The Greek renaissance of the eighth century BC'. *Acta of the Swedish Institute in Athens* 30 (1983). 57ff.

⁶⁴ Cf. F. Coarelli. *Bourgeoisies* (n. 9). 217ff; Wiseman, *ibid.* 299f; F. Castagnoli. *Arch. Laz.* 3 (1980). 164ff; V. Cianfrani. *Culture Adriatiche* (Rome. 1978). 98ff; AA VV in *Enea nel Lazio* (n. 62). 10ff.

⁶⁵ Bibliography in *JRS* 63 (1973), 75f = 100 n. 95.

admit to his text.⁶⁶ Indeed, it would be truer to say, none at all. The only extended narrative in the Etruscan catalogue (Cycnus; 10. 189ff) is Greek and largely of identifiable origins.⁶⁷ Ships, arms and places of origin contain no surprising or suggestive relics; names are more interesting, and yet it is not unexpected to discover that they are not exclusively Etruscan and that none permits secure inferences about origins and antiquity.⁶⁸ Virgil's abstention from Etruscomania is the more striking inasmuch as Transpadana's cultural awareness was a recent and vigorous growth involving strong local pride and historical curiosity.⁶⁹

There had survived into the late republic innumerable ancient names, objects, shrines, rituals, formulae which cried out for expansion, explanation and embroidery, and this compulsion to explain in narrative terms was itself the most powerful stimulus towards the generation of a 'secondary mythology' (cf. Wissowa, *Ges. Ahd.* (Munich, 1904), 129ff; Poucet (n. 4), 199ff).

The decay and disappearance of so much ancient mythological material can only have been accelerated by the great changes in Latin language and literature; sophisticated scholars and stylists were disgusted on occasion by the Latin of the early republic;⁷⁰ more seriously, perhaps, *imitatio* or *aemulatio* of the Greeks entailed, generally, rivalry on the Greeks' terms within Greek forms and employing Greek stories.⁷¹ But the issue was not only one of literary taste; scholars of the late republic and early empire did not find easy the linguistic forms or the script of archaic Latin; thus Quintilian writes of the *Saliorum carmina vix sacerdotibus suis intellecta*,⁷² and Polybius of the 'first Carthaginian treaty', 'the fact is that the ancient language is so different from that at present in use that the best scholars among the Romans themselves have great difficulty in interpreting some points in it even after much study' (3. 22).⁷³ The decay of the Italian dialects — and Etruscan — in the face of Latin's advance may also have contributed to the disappearance of some local stories.⁷⁴ But the stories of Romulus or, more interestingly, Caeculus, to look no further, demonstrate the possibility that narrative can — at least in Latin — survive, whether in priestly formulae, in incised texts, in song or in folk-memory. One might also be tempted to wonder whether the paucity of myths transmitted is not itself a reflexion of the limitations of form and language in archaic Latin literature overall, and, did one wish to persevere in peculiarly fruitless speculation, in particular in the *carmina convivalia*.⁷⁵

⁶⁶ Despite the cultural activity in Transpadana (n. 32), it is highly significant to observe that Virgil's brief reference to the origins of Mantua (*Aen.* 10. 198ff) appears entirely traditional and Varroian in character (cf. Plin. *NH* 3. 115-6. *Sil.* 8. 598ff). The significance of these passages emerged from discussion with Dr Stephen Harrison; I am most grateful to him for generously sharing his fine understanding of *Aen.* 10.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Antichthon* 15 (1981), 149.

⁶⁸ See L. A. Holland, *AJPh* 56 (1935), 203f; and, with great caution, A. Montenegro Duque, *La onomastica de Virgilio* (Salamanca, 1949), 143ff.

⁶⁹ See n. 66, and Wiseman (n. 9), 306.

⁷⁰ Cf. Liv. 27. 37.13 (on Livius' hymn to Juno, *illa tempestate forsitan laudabile rudibus ingeniis, nunc abhorrens et inconditum si referatur*), 4. 20. 2, 5.49.7; Cic. *Brut.* 71; C. O. Brink. *Hor. Ep.* 2, p. 182.

⁷¹ Prop 4 (see 4. 1. 67ff) and Ov. F. (cf. 1. 7, *annalibus eruta prisca*) are sufficiently conscious of the element of primitive nationalism in their choice of theme; note the apocryphal but suggestive comment by Sew. *ad Buc.* 6. 3, *cum canerem reges et proelia, aut gesta regum Albanorum, quae coepta omisit nominum asperitate deterritus*.

⁷² Quint. 1. 6. 40. Cf. Liv. 7. 3. 5, DH 4. 58. 4; G. Radke. *Arch. Latein* (Darmstadt, 1981), 100ff; Rawson (n. 32), 240.

⁷³ Tr. Shuckburgh; cf. Radke (n. 72).

⁷⁴ Salmon (n. 24) 88f, (n. 22), 310f; W. V. Harris, *Rome in Etruria and Umbria* (Oxford, 1971), 169ff; J. Kaimio in P. Bruun (ed.), *Studies in the Romanisation of Etruria* (Rome, 1975), 95ff.

⁷⁵ V. M. 2. 1. 9; Cic. TD 4. 3. *Brut.* 75; Varro *de vita fr.* 84Rip.: all refer to the praise of famous men. But see DH 1. 79. 10 with Plut. *Numa* 5. 3; cf. Salmon (n. 22), 112ff, for analogous considerations. See too, Scobie, *Apul.* (n. 5) 4f: the material here neatly gathered shows that, *carmina* aside, no other pre-literary vehicle for myth is known. Cf. Poucet (n. 4), 238; J. Bayet, *MPI. lit. Lat.* (Rome, 1967), 340ff.

It is dangerous to concentrate exclusively on the 'original form' of such stories; the very fact of recording, itself an essential preliminary to transmission and survival, generates processes both of accretion and of distortion. Any story for which we have enough evidence to make analysis possible is therefore, throughout its recorded history undergoing both growth and decay, accretion and disintegration; and if we are fortunate enough with our material and prudent in our methods we shall at least be able tentatively to identify, if not always the primitive form of such stories as, for instance, Cacus and Caeculus, then the disparate elements in a Roman or Praenestine myth, their individual origin and, perhaps most important, where they occur in a myth's life-span.

Thus, to turn back to Camilla, Virgil's narrative reflects a supposed fact of Etruscan domination over the Volsci:⁷⁶ mothers *Tyrrhena per oppida* wanted her for a daughter-in-law; at some stage she has acquired the Privernate Metabus as a father, perhaps only in Virgil, and Metabus himself may not be a figure of respectable antiquity. It would appear that there also existed a tumulus (Il. 594) capable of bearing the designation 'Camilla's tomb'. If we accept the poetic allusion as proof of a topographical reality (which is not compulsory), then we have also to consider whether the association of the 'tomb' with Camilla is earlier than Virgil or not, and whether the designation is to be explained in terms of aetiology, antiquarian invention or poetic fantasy on a very familiar model.⁷⁷ There is lastly the problem of Camilla's name: its association with *camilla*, the religious attendant, is made clear in the text of the epic.⁷⁸ The relevance of the Furi Camilli is extremely doubtful.⁷⁹ All else, or so it appears from prolonged study, is merely a matter of literary borrowing by Virgil, from other doughty females of Greek myth and epic. But if Camilla adds little, or perhaps nothing at all, to our knowledge of myth, she does contribute a good deal to our understanding of the processes of mythography.

The above may also be taken as a protest against a doctrine once advanced by Lévi-Strauss,⁸⁰ that every element in the structure or pattern of a myth, as it has come down to us, is a significant part of its meaning. Michael Grant (n. 1, 229-30) vigorously pointed out the absurdity of attempting to apply this approach to our evidence for Roman myth, but the suspicion remains that this doctrine of the equipollence of all attestations lies behind some of the confusion which characterises many discussions of Roman myth and legend in the last ten years and more. No consistent hierarchy of merit exists; paradoxically, neither the age nor the authority of an ancient testimony is a guarantee of its significance: Varro is capable of cheap rationalism, while Solinus and the OGR can preserve material of the highest value; likewise the Verona scholia to Virgil can be vastly more helpful than the fragments of Cassius Hemina.

A technique which can distinguish the fundamental difference between Caeculus and Camilla, which can, that is, isolate 'secondary myth', is essential if we are to make any progress in our understanding of Italian mythology, yet the same range of texts transmit the two stories and make no differentiation between them.

⁷⁶ Cato fr. 62P and *Aen.* 11. 581f. See A. Alföldi, *Early Rome and the Latins* (Ann Arbor. 1965). 365: *aliter*, M. Cancellieri (n. 62), G. Colonna in *Gli Etruschi e Rôma* (Rome, 1981), 165f.

⁷⁷ If Virgil is inventing so much in the story of Camilla, then it is likely that he also extrapolates a burial mound on the analogy of, for instance. Misenus (6. 232ff), Palinurus (6. 301ff), and Caieta (7. 1ff); cf. F. Pfister, *Reliquienkult* (RVV 5 (Giessen, 1909)), 279ff.

⁷⁸ *Aen.* 11. 582ff. Cf. Varr. LL 7. 34, Call. fr. 725Pf.

⁷⁹ Proposed. *CR* 29 (1979). 222; rejected, probably with good reason, Arrigoni, Camilla, 72 n. 155. There is no connexion attested between the Furi Camilli and Privernum; yet the absence of such a link did not discourage the Caecilii Metelli at Praeneste (cf. 61).

⁸⁰ Cf., for instance. Grant (n. 1), 229; G. S. Kirk, *Myth*, 50. *Nature of Greek Myths*, 84; K. W. Gransden, *CR* 33 (1983), 306; K. R. Walters, *CW* 77. 6 (1984), 347, and the trenchant remarks of Bremmer (n. 4). 46f (quite independent of my own).