

The Business of Butchery
Bellona and War, Society and Religion
from Republic to Empire

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Abstract

Bellona, blood-frenzied goddess of war, played an integral role in Roman Republican warfare. Her temple became the *de facto* meeting place of the Senate for nearly all matters concerning war; treaties, triumphs, engagements, meetings with ambassadors, even its ritualized declaration. Despite Bellona's dominion over warfare, there has yet to be a single monograph dedicated to her study. Our understanding of Roman military history—not only the more ideological aspects as the study of any deity reveals, but even the concrete practicalities like how war was actualized from start to finish—cannot be complete without at least a basic understanding of Bellona's role.

Because the topic of Bellona has remained largely unexplored in current scholarship, this project will necessarily be preliminary. This thesis will paint a large, yet as detailed as possible, image of Bellona's life at Rome. The approach is diachronic. We begin as far back as our evidence allows, to somewhere before the 3rd century BC, and move forward into the 3rd century AD. We trace Bellona's evolution from an Italian, Sabine goddess of war and victory, to one closely linked to the Senate, to a goddess who would descend into madness, becoming an exoticized Eastern divinity in the company of Cybele, Attis and Isis. We will see that individual families—the Claudians, Cornelians, and Julians—will play vital roles in her transition. Naturally, not every aspect of Bellona can possibly be detailed in the following, and it must be reiterated that this thesis serves as the necessary first step, the much needed foundation, for further study.

Broadly speaking, this is a work on Roman religion. However, as has almost become a maxim among scholars of ancient religion, we cannot extricate religion from politics, society, the arts and daily life more generally. The following inevitably touches upon topics like Roman military history, *gens* based politics in the Roman Republic, topography and the politics of space, collective and individual memory, ancestral worship, civic religion, and the importation of Eastern cults.

Résumé

Bellona, déesse de la guerre, animée d'une frénésie sanglante, a joué un rôle intégral dans les combats de la République Romaine. Son temple est devenu, de fait, le lieu de congrès du sénat pour presque toutes les affaires concernant la guerre—traités, triomphes, engagements, l'accueil des ambassadeurs, et même sa déclaration ritualisée. Or, malgré la domination de Bellona dans le cadre de la guerre, il reste qu'aucune œuvre a été consacrée à son étude. Notre connaissance de l'histoire militaire de Rome -- tant les aspects plutôt idéologiques, que révèle l'étude de n'importe quel dieu, tant les réalités matérielles, voire comment une guerre s'est manifestée de son début jusqu'à sa fin—ne peut s'achever sans une connaissance au moins rudimentaire du rôle de Bellona.

A mesure que le sujet de Bellona est resté pour la plupart ignoré, ce projet sera nécessairement préliminaire. Cette recherche vise à peindre à grands traits, mais comprenant autant de détail que possible, une image de la vie de Bellona chez les Romains. Le programme sera diachronique: on commencera d'un point de départ aussi reculé que nous permettent nos témoignages—c'est à dire d'un temps antérieur au troisième siècle av. J. C—et on avancera jusqu'en plein troisième siècle de notre ère. On suivra le fil de l'évolution de Bellona, de ses origines comme déesse sabine à sa place privilégiée auprès du sénat, et ensuite à son caractère d'une déesse qui s'abîme dans la folie, devenant une figure orientale et exotisée en compagnie de Cybele, Attis, et Isis. On verra que des familles particulières—les Claudiens, les Cornéliens, et les Juliens—vont jouer des rôles cruciaux dans sa transformation. Bien entendu, ce ne sera pas possible de préciser tous les aspects de Bellona, et il faut encore souligner que cette recherche sert comme premier pas, la base nécessaire de futures études.

En gros, ceci est une enquête sur la religion Romaine. Cependant, nous constatons, avec les autres spécialistes de la religion antique, qui en ont fait presque une maxime, que nous ne pouvons dégager la religion de la politique, de la société, de l'art, et, plus généralement, de la vie quotidienne de la communauté. Inévitablement, ce qui suit va porter sur d'autres thèmes, à savoir l'histoire militaire de Rome, la politique de la gens chez la République, la topographie et la politique de l'espace, les mémoires collectifs et individuels, le culte des ancêtres, la religion civique, et l'appropriation des cultes orientaux.

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Introduction

On the rare occasion that modern scholarship makes mention of Bellona, she is often considered as little more than a Roman Enyo.¹ Like her Greek counterpart Ares,² her frenzied bloodlust is commonly understood as a mark of social subversion. Wherever she walks, she brings ruin for the mortals in her path. She rushes the plains of civil war, bloody whip in hand, with Discordia, Strife and the Furies by her side.³ She desecrates the *penates* with human gore.⁴ She leads both Helen and Lavinia to their ill-fated, blood-soaked marriages.⁵ Sulla, the infamous butcher, becomes a favourite of hers.⁶ He too was touched by Bellona's unique sense of madness, plunging Rome into the first of its shattering civil wars.⁷ Given her penchant for chaos, it is perhaps unsurprising that her most prominent temple, the temple of Bellona Victrix, was kept outside of the sacred bounds of the *pomerium*.⁸ Bellona was a dangerous force, one better kept out of sight and quietly appeased rather than openly embraced.

However, the historical record presents a paradoxical image to this socially destructive force. Since its foundation in 296 BC, Bellona's temple became the primary location for state conduct concerning warfare.⁹ Within view of the temple, fetial priests would perform their rite at the *columna bellica* which declared the official beginning of war.¹⁰ Returning generals would formally seek triumph within her walls and visiting emissaries would treat with the senate under her auspices.¹¹ A discrepancy exists between the imagery presented in Roman literature and the political usage of her space. Poetry presents a Bellona who seeks only to destroy through

¹ Llyod-Morgan, G. "Nemesis and Bellona: A Preliminary Study in Two Neglected Goddesses" in *The Concept of the Goddess*. eds. Sandra Billington and Miranda Green. London: Routledge, 1996: 120-129; Grueber, H. *The Myths of Greece and Rome*. New York: American Book Co., 1921: 138. See also: Ov. *Heroides* 15.135; Strab. 12. 2. 3; Stat. *Theb.* 8.655; Tryph. *Sack of Ilium* 560

² Quint. Smyrn. 8.424; Aesch. *Sept.* 41. Enyo is Ares' sister, wife and charioteer. Roman sources mirror this image, with Bellona playing similar roles in the *Thebaid* and *Punica* (Stat. *Theb.* 3.424, 7.73; Sil. *Pun.* 4.439).

³ Luc. *Bellum Civile* 7.568; Verg. *Aen.* 8.700-3; Sen. *Dialogi* 4.35.6.3 cf. Quint. Smyrn. 11.7-15

⁴ Ov. *Met.* 5.155

⁵ Stat. *Ach.* 1.34; Verg. *Aen.* 7.319

⁶ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9, 27, 30

⁷ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9, 30-1

⁸ Orlin, E. *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Roman Republic*. Boston: Brill, 2002: 62

⁹ Humm, M. *Appius Claudius Caecus: la république accomplie*. Rome: École française de Rome, 2005: 42 Platner, S. and Thomas Ashby. *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*. London: University Oxford Press, 1929: 84; Viscogliosi, A. "Bellona, Aedes in Circo" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 1, eds. Eva Margareta Steinby. Roma: Edizioni Quasar, 2000: 193; Ziolkowski, A. *The Temples of Mid-Republican Rome and their Historical and Topographical Context*. Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1992: 18

¹⁰ Ov. *Fast.* 6.201

¹¹ Liv. 26.21, 31.47, 38.44, 42.21, 45.3

mindless slaughter, but the Senate's consistent use of her temple demonstrates that the goddess was essential to the functioning of the state. In order to perform this function, Bellona must have carried some capacity for clear governance. Unlike her supposed twin Enyo, she is not restricted to the realm of chaos alone.

Our sources are not lacking in the mention of Bellona. The books of Livy are riddled with senatorial meetings within the temple.¹² Her cult, the *hastiferi*, are present in inscriptions from Africa to Germany.¹³ Her exploits are found in the works of Ovid, Vergil, Tibullus, Statius, Seneca, Martial and Juvenal amongst others.¹⁴ The proliferation of her sacred spaces, her temples at Rome and her shrines on the Capitoline and at Ostia, speak greatly to the prominence of her cult. Far from being a shunned entity, sources suggest that Bellona was not only heavily present in Roman consciousness, but central to Roman civic life, particularly in regard to war.

Despite frequent mention in antiquity, modern scholarship on the goddess is admittedly scant. Current scholarly sentiment is perhaps best surmised in the title of Glenys Llyod-Morgan's chapter in *The Concept of a Goddess*: "Nemesis and Bellona: A Preliminary Study in Two Neglected Goddesses".¹⁵ Not a single monograph exists dedicated to the goddess.¹⁶ Articles or other scholarly mentions of the goddess have been sporadic at the best of times. As so much in our field, Bellona's begins her academic trajectory with Mommsen.¹⁷ On account of her syncretism with the Cappadocian Ma, Franz Cumont included Bellona in his seminal 1906 work *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*.¹⁸ However, unlike the other Eastern deities

¹² Liv. 26.21, 31.47, 38.44, 42.21, 45.3. There is also early epigraphic evidence, namely the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*, which makes the first recorded mention of a meeting of the Senate within the temple (CIL I² 581). Cicero, too, refers to the frequency with which the Senate met in Bellona's temple (Cic. Verr. 2.5.41.2).

¹³ CIL 13.7281, 13.7317. For the inscription found in Numidia, see Cumont (1918): 313.

¹⁴ Pl. *Bacc.* 847; Tib. *Elegiae* 1.6.45; Verg. *Aen.* 7.319, 8.703; Luc. *Bellum Civile* 1.565, 7.568; Ov. *Met.* 5.155; Petr. *Sat.* 124.1.256; Sen. *Ag.* 82, *Her. O.* 1312, *Dial.* 4.35.6.3; Stat. *Theb.* 2.719, 4.6, 7.73, 805, 8.348, 9.297, 10.855, 11.413, 12.721, *Ach.* 1.34; V. Fl. *Argon.* 2.228, 3.60, 7.636; Juv. *Satires* 4.124, 6.512; Mart. *Epigrammata* 12.57; Sil. *Pun.* 4.439, 5.221

¹⁵ Llyod-Morgan (1996): 120-129

¹⁶ This is in sharp contrast to the deities with whom she would become associated with. The likes of Cybele, Attis, Mithras, Diana and even Hekate have all had a number of monographs dedicated to their study. See Green, C. *Roman Religion and the Cult of Diana at Aricia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Vermaseren, M. *Cybele and Attis: the Myth and the Cult*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1977; Beck, R. *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire: Mysteries of the Unconquered Sun*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006; Ronan, S. ed. *The Goddess Hekate*. Hastings: Chthonios, 1992

¹⁷ Mommsen presents his initial thoughts on the *hastiferi* in *Württembergische Vierteljahrshefte für Landesgeschichte* 8. Stuttgart: H. Lindemann, 1889: 19-28

¹⁸ Cumont, F. *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*. eds. Corinne Bonnet and Françoise Van Haepere. Turin: Nino Aragno Editore, 2006: 82-3

in his account, namely Cybele, Sybaris, Attis and Mithras who dominate the work, Cumont only wrote two brief pages about Rome's warrior goddess.¹⁹ Georg Wissowa would do a little better in his *Religion und Kultus der Römer*, doubling the amount of pages Cumont devoted to the goddess.²⁰ In 1918, Cumont did discuss the *hastiferi*, Bellona's cult at Rome, in moderate depth.²¹ This inspired a slight rise in the interest of her cult with a handful of papers being published following the then recent discovery of a number of inscriptions.²² This interest was short lived, however, and her cult would only be revisited much later with Duncan Fishwick's article in 1967.²³ In 1975, Robert Palmer wrote an immensely helpful article on Sulla and his connection to Bellona, but this seemed to spell the end of modern interest in the goddess.²⁴ Only in 1996 would Lloyd-Morgan bring our disinterest to light, but it seems that very few, if any, took up her call to arms.

The few times the goddess is otherwise mentioned, scholars generally focus on Bellona's more chaotic capacity, whereas any in depth discussion of her connection to the governance of warfare remains scarce to non-existent. A new, focused approach is necessary. A study on Bellona would not only expand our knowledge of individual Roman cults and deities, but it has much to tell us about Roman war. From a practical perspective, the goddess played an active role in war's articulation; senatorial meetings were held under her auspices, hostilities would be officially declared outside of her doors, and war would eventually see its official end within her halls as homebound generals made their cases for triumph.

My approach to this study is largely a natural extension of the ever-growing field of Roman religion. Despite a recent and much needed surge of interest, spear-headed to great extent by the works (and frequent collaborations) of Clifford Ando and Jörg Rüpke, the topic of religion nevertheless remains notoriously difficult to pin down. Scholars of Roman religion have long

¹⁹ Ibid. Unfortunately, while Cumont points us in a useful direction, these two pages are largely unsatisfactory as many of the conclusions he makes about the goddess are left uncited. Namely, the goddess' association with fertility and the supposed black robes and blood-drinking of her cultists. Not even in the 2006 edited edition of his book was this problem remedied (Cumont (2006): 82).

²⁰ Wissowa, G. *Religion und Kultus der Römer*. München: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1912: 348-51

²¹ Cumont, F. "Les Hastiferi de Bellone d'après une inscription d'Afrique." *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 4 (1918): 312-323

²² CIL 6.30851, 12.1841, 13.7317, 8184; ILS 3804; Calza 200 n. 2, 3, 5

²³ Fishwick, Duncan. "Hastiferi", *JRS* 57 (1967): 142-60

²⁴ Palmer, R. "The Neighborhood of Sullan Bellona at the Colline Gate", *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Antiquité*, 87.2 (1975): 653-65

lamented the difficulty in defining the term ‘religion’.²⁵ There is no one Latin word which encapsulates the breadth of Roman religious experience, no one easily identifiable monolithic concept. *Religio*, whose modern cognate is well known to us, may come close, but the term is rife with its own problems too long and too frequently discussed to go over here.²⁶

What is clear, however, is that a relationship with the divine, no matter how difficult to define, existed at Rome. This system has long been lauded for its expansive malleability. Seemingly more than any other Mediterranean people, the Romans were especially adaptive and receptive to changes in their divine system.²⁷ The Romans regularly imported deities, rites, priests, and experts. These importations frequently led to complex assimilations and syncretisms.²⁸ In addition to their malleability, the Romans were notorious in their adherence to tradition. But we should not mistake Roman traditionalism for Roman stagnation or stasis.

Rüpke writes:

Religious knowledge certainly was traditional, at Rome as elsewhere, but the traditional character of social knowledge does not mean that it is particularly stable...traditional orally-transmitted knowledge is a form of knowledge that can rapidly assimilate and process new items, is flexible and adaptable, because it can only be kept vital by means of rehearsal, re-performance, in constantly-changing immediate situations. (Rüpke (2007): 12)

Roman religion was mutable and expansive. It was adaptive, reactive, and dependent on the ever-changing interactions of the mortals who engaged in the cults, the rituals, the sanctuaries and temples, the artistic portrayals, the poems and the treatises about the divine.²⁹ Rüpke describes this process as a “chaotic system whose structures are context-bound shards”.³⁰ Any attempt to understand Roman religion requires a sensitivity to circumstance, an eye for detail, and a willingness to remain ever open and fluid.

²⁵ Rüpke, J. *Religion of the Romans*. trans. Richard Gordon. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007: 6-16, *Religion in Republican Rome: Rationalization and Ritual Change*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012:12-3; Lind, L. “Primitivity and Roman Ideas: the Survivals”, *Latomus* 35.2 (1975): 266; Beard, North, and Price (1998): 215-9

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Clarke, A. *Divine Qualities: Cult and Community in Republican Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007: 21-2

²⁸ Orlin, E. *Foreign Cults in Rome*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010: 4, 25; Xella, P. “« Syncretisme » comme catégorie conceptuelle : une notion utile?” in *Les religions orientales dans le monde grec et romain: cent ans après Cumont (1906-2006)* (2009): 135-150

²⁹ Rüpke offers the useful following: “‘Religion’ as used in the following refers to an ensemble of practices, institutions, habits, and beliefs, of which no internal coherence or consistency is to be expected, and none is here sought.” (*Religion in Rep. Rome*, 13)

³⁰ Rüpke (2007): 5

But this is not to say that Roman religion was a lawless free-for-all.³¹ There were rules, many of which were strictly adhered to. Roman rituals were notoriously formulaic. If a prayer was recited improperly, if a sacrifice was ill-performed, then this could very well spell doom not only for those present, but for society as a whole.³² There were acceptable and required sacrificial victims, like a bull to Mars or a heifer to Jupiter,³³ and forms of sacrifice which were strictly prohibited, like the offering of human flesh to the *penates*.³⁴ Better, then, to think of Roman religion as a liquid. It was a medium that could quite readily stretch and mould itself around the rough edges, the cracks, the dips and uneven surfaces of any container. However, just like any other liquid, the medium had its limitations. It was bounded, and given those boundaries, the medium could only be stretched so thin. Naturally, any study of a specific deity will reflect the overarching malleability, and yet moments of restraint, of the system as a whole.

As we will come to see, Bellona was a highly adaptive deity. Depending on the context, the warrior goddess could shift quite readily from a goddess of chaos to one of order. She was simultaneously a deeply Italic divinity whose roots could be traced to the founding of the city, and an exotic newcomer whose Eastern rites were equal parts alluring and dangerous.

My approach to Bellona is deeply inspired by the following: “In a historical perspective, it is important to remember that, for literary texts as for temples, the reconstruction of potential “meanings” cannot be restricted to the moment of creation but has to cover the long period of usage (and maybe different usages), too”.³⁵ This thesis is an attempt to chart and reconstruct the various “meanings” of Bellona at Rome. I will make note of the variations and coexistence of her usages in war, society, cult, and literature. As such, this work will be structured roughly diachronically. We will begin with her origin (or potential origins), and move consistently forward into the Empire. We will see that Bellona began her life as a deeply Italic goddess. During the Republican period, she developed a close relationship to the Senate and became central to the state’s functioning in war. As the Senate’s power waned in favour of increasingly powerful individuals, Bellona’s senatorial duties ebbed. Simultaneously, through her syncretism

³¹ To this point, Orlin writes: “...Roman religious system was not a hodgepodge, a mere accretion of cults and practices, but that decisions were made to create a sense of direction for the Roman religious system.” ((2010): 4)

³² Lennon, Jack J. *Pollution and Religion in Ancient Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013: 111

³³ *CIL* 6.1.2086

³⁴ Liv. 1.48.7, 59.13

³⁵ Rüpke (2007): 18

with Cappadocian Ma, Bellona became increasingly associated with other Eastern deities, namely Magna Mater, Attis, and Isis. As Rome moved from Republic to Empire, Bellona became an increasingly Eastern, bloody and exoticized goddess, dangerous in her femininity.

Strict periodization is always a point of contention in the field of Classics and Ancient History, and this work is no exception. Roughly, this thesis charts 600 years of Bellona's history at Rome, from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century AD. The primary focus of this work is to understand Bellona's early life and role in Roman society, and as such the majority of the arguments presented will be situated during the Republican period (3rd–1st centuries BC). We will only move to the Empire in the later parts of the work, generally in order to illustrate contrast and, this I stress, a tentative end-point her evolution. The major points of diversion in the goddess' trajectory, namely the influence of Sulla and later Augustus, occurred in the 1st century BC, and it is for this reason that this century largely dominates the work. These dates are not strict boundaries, however, and they will bend wherever the evidence makes it necessary to do so.

Chapter 1 focuses on Bellona's relationship to war. We will establish Bellona as fundamentally a warrior goddess, as well as discussing the possibility of her Sabine, Etruscan, or perhaps even Campanian roots. Varro's *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum* will be indispensable here, as well as the epic portrayals of the goddess on the battlefields of the *Aeneid*, *Thebaid*, and *Argonautica* amongst others. This chapter will focus on the period before the 3rd century BC, but given the nature of our literary sources, nearly all of which date from the 1st century BC, we will inevitably be drawn back to the twilight of the Republic.

Chapter 2 moves us from the blurry fringes of the pre-3rd century and into the height of what is typically called the Middle Republic; the 3rd and 2nd centuries. This is the period in which some contemporary evidence begins to surface, namely with construction of two of her temples in 296 and 290 BC. This chapter focuses not only on Bellona's relationship to the Senate (namely through her role in triumph, treaty ratification, and emissary meetings), but the circumstances which first drew the goddess to the Roman state. The influence of particular families, namely the Claudians, will be of central importance. We will see that the goddess, especially through the temple of Bellona Victrix, dedicated by Appius Claudius Caecus in 296 BC, developed a close relationship to the *Claudii*. The temple of Bellona Victrix essentially

became, as Humm describes it, a *sanctuaire familiale*.³⁶ This is a relationship which would be fostered by the family for centuries, and even Augustus, who would famously marry into the family, would continue in this tradition.

In addition to establishing the Senatorial and Claudian connections with Bellona, this chapter is deeply concerned with topography. The temple of Bellona's position in the Campus Martius, as well as its relationship to neighbouring structures, encapsulates the goddess' relationship to both Senate and *Claudii*. We will see that the temple of Bellona Victrix became the center in which nearly all of Rome's martial decisions were made. We will see that the temple, as well as the neighbouring temple of Apollo Medicus Sosianus and the *columna bellica* became what I will refer to as *the* Roman military complex of the Republic. I will also chart changes in this region of the Campus Martius and the ultimate effect this would have had on Bellona's role in the city.

The last chapter brings the thesis to its conclusion. This chapter finally addresses Bellona's most contentious aspects—her association with human blood, civil war, and chaos. Ultimately, we will see that this association began with her connection with Sulla. Sulla's association with the goddess, as well as the importation of Cappadocian Ma, altered the goddess' path irreversibly. The memory of the general's bloody reign—the civil war, the proscriptions—is ultimately reflected in later literary descriptions of Bellona as a blood-crazed goddess of chaos.

The origins and consequences of her relationship with other Eastern deities, namely Magna Mater, Attis, and Isis, will be a large focus of this chapter. This relationship is most vividly depicted through descriptions of her cult, their rites and rituals. The place of human blood in Roman religious taboo will also see a much needed revision.

³⁶ Humm (2005): 42 n.35

CHAPTER ONE – THE WARRIOR GODDESS

“*Bellona ab bellum*”
-Varro, *De Lingua Latina* 5.73

War is intrinsic to Bellona’s nature. She is born from *bellum* and personifies it in all its breadth. At once, she is spear, warrior, and battle-cry. She is trumpet-blast, death rattle, battlefield and triumph. This first chapter is dedicated to vivifying the connection between Bellona and *bellum* from her very beginnings (or at least, what we believe to be her beginnings) into the early Imperial period. Born in Italy, potentially in Sabine territory, Bellona quickly became associated with battle and victory. At Rome, she came to capture and oversee numerous aspects of war. She would mark its beginning (through her connection with the fetial rite), its articulation (through her personification of warrior and battlefield), and its end (through her role in triumph). She was war deified in its entirety. But war was not stagnant, and over time, it would adapt. The beginning of the civil wars in the first century BC permanently altered the Roman perception of war, and as war’s goddess, Bellona would naturally reflect this change. She would become associated with civil war and all that came with it—the blood, the corruption, and chaos.

Origins

To begin at the beginning proves to be a difficult, if not currently impossible, task. In general, very little firm Roman religious evidence survives prior to the third century BC.³⁷ There is scant epigraphic evidence, few temples, and only traces of any sort of cult activity which survives. Bellona’s case is no different. No contemporary evidence of the goddess prior to the 3rd century exists, with the exception of a single cup bearing her name.³⁸ Instead, we must rely on later Roman authors, namely Varro, who discuss the early periods of Roman religion. As such, our understanding of this early period cannot help but to be colored by late Republican sentiments. Despite this, it is still beneficial to discuss what the Romans at the very least believed to be Bellona’s origins.

Bellona was an Italian goddess, likely Sabine.³⁹ The ancients believed, as well as later commentators,⁴⁰ that she began as the Sabine goddess Vacuna. This was a goddess closely

³⁷ Rüpkke, 2001: 39; Dumézil, *Archaic Roman Religion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966: 10

³⁸ *CIL* I² 44; Humm (2005): 504-5. The cup bears the inscription *Belolai pocolum* and is dated to the first decades of the 3rd century BC, but had previously been believed to date from the 4th century.

³⁹ Varro, *Antiquitates Rerum Humanarum et Divinarum*, 1.1; Porphyrio in *Hor. Epist.* 1, 10

⁴⁰ Serv. *Aen.* 12.118; Strab. *Geography* 12.2.3

associated with victory, as well as possibly Minerva and Diana. Again, little contemporary pre-3rd century BC evidence survives and it is therefore not possible to prove the validity of this connection conclusively. That being said, if valid, the association with victory may point to an early affinity that the goddess possessed to war.

Rather than questioning the validity of Varro's assumption, it is perhaps more useful to explore the possible motivations for Varro's Sabine connection. The Sabines played a fundamental role in Rome's foundation. These were the women who famously threw themselves between their Sabine fathers and Roman husbands, begging them to lay down their arms and to find peace. This was critical to Rome's survival—the Sabine women would provide much needed sons and daughters, without whom Rome could not have survived its twilight moments.

This origin myth is placed in the same canon as the bloody conflicts between Romulus and Remus, the Trojan war, and Aeneas' early conflicts in Italy.⁴¹ These were the conflicts out of which Rome was born. As a Sabine goddess, Bellona is placed into this tradition in a fundamental way. She inhabits a moment of origin. Even if Bellona's Sabine connection was nothing more than a Varronian fabrication, it was nevertheless a purposeful one which placed the goddess at Rome's very beginning. Her connection to the Sabines would have increased the goddess' legitimacy amongst Rome's people, elite and common alike. A deity so closely associated with Rome's first moments was worthy of veneration, particularly amongst a people so devoted to their ancestors, their histories, their origins as the Romans were.

The Rape of the Sabines can also be read as a model for Rome's later conquest of the Italian peninsula. The Romans were just as willing to absorb their enemies into their fold as they were to slaughter them on the fields of war, as their interaction with their Sabine enemies-turned-brothers exhibits. The Romans would act similarly as they made their way through Italy, conquering the likes of the Volscanii, Marsi, and Capuans either through blood or through oath, oftentimes both. Bellona, through her connection to this myth, becomes an agent through which the conquest of Italy is legitimized. The dedication of her early temples, the temple of Bellona Victrix in 296 BC and that of Bellona Rufilia in 290, reifies this connection. These spaces were

⁴¹ Liv. 1.1-11; Verg. *Aen.* 7-12

dedicated following victories against the Etruscans, Gauls, and Samnites. Again, she plays a role in a critical period of Rome's earliest moments.

Varro reinforces Bellona's originary, or ancient, roots in the *de Lingua Latina*. Here he writes: "*Bellona ab bello nunc, quae Duellona a duello.*"⁴² Beyond her connection with war, which is obvious, Varro consciously utilizes the archaic spelling of her name, *Duellona*.⁴³ This suggests that by the late Republic, the Romans at the very least *believed* that Bellona was a goddess with ancient roots, regardless if her Sabine heritage was historical or not.

There is also the possibility of a Campanian, if not Greek, origin to the deity, although it comes much later in Rome's trajectory than Varro's Sabine theory. The oldest instance of Bellona's name is found on the bottom of a Campanian cup, dating to the early decades of the 3rd century BC. The inscription bears the words *Belolai pocolum* above a painted Bellona with wild, unkempt hair.⁴⁴ The cup's iconography has led to Humm to posit that the goddess found her way to Campania by way of Greece, mirroring her Hellenic counterpart Enyo's appearance.⁴⁵ This would reinforce later Roman authors, namely Plutarch, Strabo, and Pomponius Porphyrio, who have also attributed Bellona's name to Enyo.⁴⁶ It is possible that the inspiration for Bellona's appearance on the cup was Hellenic, however the name inscribed bears no resemblance etymologically to any Greek deity. More than likely, Bellona was an already established goddess in Italy by the time such depictions found their way into the peninsula. Later depictions, as is the case in nearly all of Roman art, may have been influenced by the Greeks, but the goddess herself was Italian.⁴⁷

Despite Bellona's disheveled appearance on the cup, we should be hesitant to paint Bellona exclusively as a Fury at this early point in her trajectory. Clearly, her fury-like

⁴² Varro, *Ling.* 5.73

⁴³ This form first appears in the *SC de Bacchanalibus*. The inscription, dating from 186 BC, mentions the goddess with her archaic name: "...APVD AEDEM / DVELONAI..." (*CIL* 1².581)

⁴⁴ *CIL* 1².44; Humm (2005): 504-5; Beard, North and Price (1998): 41. This inscription is also one of our oldest instances of Latin to survive, likely dating from the first decades of the 3rd century BC, but had previously been dated as far back as the mid-4th century BC. Of Latin or Roman make, found in Campania. Exact find-spot unknown.

⁴⁵ Humm (2005): 505

⁴⁶ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9; Pompon. *Commentum in Horati Epistulas* 1.10.2; Strab. *Geography* 12.2.3

⁴⁷ The idea of an archaic form of Roman religion without images or iconography of any kind is an old one (Lind (1976): 245; Clarke (2007): 17; Dumézil (1966): 23). Even the Romans themselves, namely Varro, supported the idea (August. *De civ. D.* 6.2; Varro, *ARD frag.* 2 Cardauns)

appearance on the cup, if indeed the portrait was intended to depict the goddess,⁴⁸ demonstrates very early on Bellona's capacity for vengeance. However, we should not confuse potential for exclusivity. Over the course of her journey, we will see a Bellona who adopts and moves through numerous aspects. I would stress that this chaotic capacity only becomes one of Bellona's defining characteristics—one which seemingly overshadows nearly all others—only much later in her trajectory, namely as a product of the civil wars, as will be made apparent over the course of this thesis. The origin of this chaotic association, however, began here, with this cup.

After the *Belolai pocolum*, the goddess' name next appears in the form of temples, both of which were manubial in nature.⁴⁹ In 296 BC, Appius Claudius Caecus dedicated the first known temple to Bellona on the Campus Martius.⁵⁰ This he dedicated after his victory over the Samnites, Etruscans and Gauls. A second temple to Bellona was dedicated in 290 BC by P. Cornelius Rufinus following a subsequent victory over the Samnites.⁵¹ These temples essentially served as victory monuments, reinforcing Bellona's association with victory which she may have inherited from Vacuna.

The nature of Appius Claudius' campaign, largely fought in Etruria, has also led some to believe that Bellona may have been an Etruscan import.⁵² Similar to the *evocatio* of Juno from Veii, Appius may have brought the goddess back to Rome in victory.⁵³ This is not an unfounded theory. The goddess may have displayed some arguably Etruscan traits, as the *bipenni* which her later priests used to lacerate themselves could have originated in the region.⁵⁴ Moreover, when Plutarch describes the damning portents which plagued Rome at the beginning of the first civil

⁴⁸ Beard, North and Price hesitate to make this connection firmly, stressing that the painting does not resemble later depictions of Bellona which have her heavily armored, and therefore may not depict the goddess at all (1998): 41. Admittedly, this portrait bears no trace of any military garb, although we may make out the trace of a laurel on her head. If indeed the laurel is present, then it would point to Bellona's early connection with victory. Regardless, the position of the inscription relative to the painting seems to indicate with little room for disagreement that the cup, indeed, depicts an early Bellona.

⁴⁹ These temples were products of a wide-spreading trend of manubial temple construction in the 3rd century BC. The temple of Bellona Victrix, Orlin claims, may have been the first of these constructions (Orlin (2002): 117)

⁵⁰ Viscogliosi, A. "Bellona, Aedes in Circo" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 1, 2000: 193; Platner and Ashby (1929): 83

⁵¹ Viscogliosi, A. "Bellona Rufilia, Aedes" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae I* (2000): 194

⁵² Liv. 2.9 *cf.* Humm (2005): 609

⁵³ Liv. 5.21

⁵⁴ Vaughan, A. *The House of the Double Axe: The Palace at Knossos*. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959: 170; Gimbutas, M. "Battle axe or Cult Axe?", *Man* 53 (1953): 52; Drews R. "Light from Anatolia on the Roman Fasces", *The American Journal of Philology* 93.1 (1972): 47

war, he mentions that Tuscan wise men were summoned to her temple to discuss the omens.⁵⁵ Even Ovid refers to the temple of Bellona Victrix as *sacrata Tusco duello*.⁵⁶ However, in his account of Appius Claudius' vow to the goddess, Livy makes no mention that Bellona was a foreign deity, or that Appius was imploring her to abandon her people in favor of a seat at Rome, as was the case with Juno at Veii. Even the double-sided axe could have just as easily been imported from Asia, or even Crete.⁵⁷ Currently, there is not enough evidence to conclude without doubt that Bellona was originally an Etruscan goddess, but it remains a possibility.

Beyond her cup and temples, very little else survives from this period. No contemporary votives have been discovered, no other material evidence which may have hinted at what Bellona's early cult may have looked like, or what duties they were responsible for. For Bellona's early period, then, we are forced to rely solely on informed conjectures. Should we trust Varro's account, which is problematic due to its much later conception, we can posit two things; first, that there is a relatively consistent connection between Bellona, warfare, and victory. Second, that she was a native Italian goddess related to Rome's origin. The presence of Bellona's cup in Campania, the earliest piece of evidence to bear her name, seems to reinforce Bellona's Italian roots. Again, relying on much later evidence and retrojection, we may also be tempted to read Bellona as an Etruscan importation, though it is impossible to say for certain.

As we move into the first century, textual evidence begins to surface. It is in this period where we can approach Bellona's association with warfare with greater nuance. She is not simply a deity of war, but personifies and captures a series of specific war-related aspects. These include, but are not limited to, Bellona's role in the initiation, articulation, and closing of war, and the symbolism of her weaponry.

War and Initiation

Bellona stands as a gatekeeper, an entry point, to war. Varro's aforementioned passage in the *de Lingua Latina* illustrates this well. Varro does not only place Bellona at the beginning of this discussion, but describes Roman martial ideology more broadly through the mention of various deities:

⁵⁵ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 7

⁵⁶ Ov. *Fast.* 6.201

⁵⁷ Vaughan (1959): 170; Gimbutas (1953): 52

Bellona ab bello nunc, quae Duellona a duello. Mars ab eo quod maribus in bello praeest, aut quod Sabinis acceptus ibi est Mamers. Quirinus a Quiritibus. Virtus ut viritus a virilitate. Honos ab onere: itaque honestum dicitur quod oneratum, et dictum:

Onus est honos qui sustinet rem publicam.

Castoris nomen Graecum, Pollucis a Graecis; in Latinis litteris veteribus nomen quod est, inscribitur ut Polydeukes Polluces, non ut nunc Pollux. Concordia a corde congruente. (Varro, Ling. 5.73)

Now, [we call] Bellona from war (bellum), who [before we called] Duellona from duellum. Mars [is called so] on account of this: because he presides over men in war, or because, in this matter, he was called Mamers by the Sabines. Quirinus is from Quiritibus. Virtus as viritus from virility, or manhood. Honos from burden (onus): since it is called honor because it is a burden, and it is said:

“Burden is the honor which sustains the republic.”

The name of Castor is Greek, the name of Pollux is likewise from the Greeks; in ancient Latin text, the name is so: Polydeukes was written as Polluces, and not Pollux as it is now. Concordia comes from harmonious heart.⁵⁸

All of the deities present in this short etiological passage are directly linked to war. Mars’ association to warfare is clear—he is connected to soldiers specifically. Quirinus is also considered a warrior god.⁵⁹ LaJoye refers to Quirinus as “*une sorte de doublon de Mars*”, a sort of double of Mars, which may account for the close proximity between the gods in Varro’s passage.⁶⁰ *Honos* and *Virtus* both lend themselves to the ideal virtues of warriors.⁶¹ The transition here is masterful; these are the virtues of the warriors over which Mars and Quirinus

⁵⁸ All translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

⁵⁹ LaJoye, P. “Quirinus, un ancien dieu tonnant? Nouvelles hypothèses sur son étymologie et sa nature primitive” *Revue de l’histoire des religions*. 227, 2. (2010): 178 cf. Porte, D. ‘Romulus-Quirinus prince et dieu, dieu des princes: étude sur le personnage de Quirinus et sur son évolution, des origines à Auguste’, *ANRW* 17.2 (1981); Dumézil challenges this idea, saying that Quirinus was mainly an agricultural god, and one that most importantly presided over peace. (Dumézil (1966): 258). However, as LaJoye points out, Mars was also an agricultural god (LaJoye, 176). An agricultural aspect in and of itself cannot therefore discount Quirinus from having a connection to war. Furthermore, I would argue that for the Romans, peace was a function of war. The presence of Concordia within this passage suggests likewise.

⁶⁰ LaJoye (2010): 178

⁶¹ *Honos* and *Virtus* had two temple complexes dedicated to them in Rome, both of which occurred following victories. The first was a double-temple complex initially dedicated to *Honos* in 234 BC. This followed Q. Fabius Maximus Verrucosus’ victory over the Ligurians. The second half was dedicated to *Virtus* by M. Claudius Marcellus in 208 BC following the capture of Syracuse. (Platner and Ashby, 259; Cic. *de nat. deor.* 2.61; Liv. 25.40.1-3, 27.25.7-9) This double-temple complex was likely located near, but outside, the Porta Capena. The complex contained many war-spoils from the siege of Syracuse. (Cic. *de Rep.* 1.21). The second temple to *Honos* and *Virtus* was dedicated following Marius’ defeat of the Cimbri and Teutones. This temple was said to be located on the Sacra Via. Though impossible to reconstruct, this would nevertheless place the temple on the triumphal route, again reiterating the divinities’ connection with war. (Platner and Ashby, 260)

preside.⁶² Castor and Pollux were famed twins and deified war heroes, revered for their prowess on the battlefield and their articulation of brotherly love.⁶³ Their mention is also demonstrative of Varro's care—these divine twins bore the virtues which they follow in Varro's passage.⁶⁴ The passage comes to a close with the ultimate goal of war—Concordia, the restoration and maintenance of cosmological order.

Bellona's position at the beginning of the passage reflects a conscious choice on Varro's behalf. She is the very first war deity mentioned in a passage on war deities. She marks the beginning of Varro's dialogue on war, and as such she herself encompasses not only the dialogue's opening but also its guide. This idea of initiation mirrors the use of her temple-complex on the Campus Martius during the Republic. The *columna bellica* stands outside her *aedes*, within view. In his *Fasti*, Ovid mentions the structure in direct association with the temple of Bellona:

*prospicit a templo [Bellonae] summum brevis area Circum:
est ibi non parvae parva columna notae;
hinc solet hasta manu, belli praenuntia, mitti,
in regem et gentes cum placet arma capi.* (Ov. *Fast.* 6.205-8)

There is a little area at the peak of the Circus in view from the temple [of Bellona]:
There lays a small column of no small note;
Here the spear, the pronouncement of war, is accustomed to be cast from the hand,
When it is pleasing to take up arms against kingdom and races of men.

As the passage details, the primary usage of the *columna bellica* was to mark the sacred and official pronouncement of war. The Fetial priests were responsible for casting the spear over the column, where it would pierce a portion of land on the other side which had been consecrated as foreign.⁶⁵ This was the beginning, the just initiation, of war and it occurred under the watchful gaze (*prospicit*) of the goddess.

⁶² Honos and Virtus would become explicitly linked to Bellona later in an inscription: *deae Virtuti Bello|ne* (CIL 13.7281) cf. Fishwick (1967): 143

⁶³ Hom. *Il.* 3.237; Verg. *Aen.* 6.121; Champlin, E. 'Tiberius and the Heavenly Twins', *the Journal of Roman Studies*, 101 (2011): 74

⁶⁴ Champlin (2011): 74

⁶⁵ Liv. 1.32.6-13; Notably, Quirinus was also closely affiliated with the fetial rite, again articulating the god's connection with war (LaJoye, 178). For more on the Fetial rite, see Rich, J. 'The *Fetiales* and Roman International Relations' in *Priests and State in the Roman World*. eds. James H. Richardson and Frederico Santangelo. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011: 186-193.

Bellona actually performs this rite in Statius' *Thebaid*:

*prima manu rutilam de vertice Larissaeo
ostendit Bellona facem dextraque trabalem
hastam intorsit agens, liquido quae stridula caelo
fugit et Aoniae celso stetit aggere Dirces.* (Stat. *Theb.* 4.5-8)

First down from the Larissaeon heights,
Bellona brandished her golden-red torch in her hand
and from her right hand, she twisted her swift spear, casting it,
that hissing spear which flew across the liquid sky
and plunged into the high citadel of Aonian Dirces.

Bellona is first onto the field, *prima*. Performing the fetial rite, Bellona's spear is the first cast in the conflict, the first to penetrate enemy territory. Only now can war begin in earnest. Statius' continues to play with Bellona's connection to initiation. He describes Bellona as Mars' charioteer.⁶⁶ With bloody hands, she holds the reins, and it is only through her guidance that War himself is capable of entering the field. In both the *de Lingua Latina* and the *Thebaid*, just as ritually in the city of Rome, Bellona stands as an entry point, the initiator and guide, to war.

Bellona and the Closing of War

Bellona equally stands at war's end. Her temple on the Campus Martius, as mentioned before, was the primary location for triumph allocation during the Republic.⁶⁷ The triumphs of Quintus Fabius Maximus, Lucius Furius and Gaius Latinus Labeo were all granted within this temple.⁶⁸ Moreover, her temple likely stood along the triumphal route until the construction of the Theater of Marcellus in 13 BC, which probably caused an adjustment in the procession.

The triumph stood as a highly ritualized symbol for a particular conflict's end. Livy is very clear in this respect. He states that triumphs can only be granted once war, *bellum*, was completed or decided. When Marcus Marcellus seeks triumph, he is denied by the senate *quod nisi manente in prouincia bello non decerneretur*, because, since war remained in the province, it had not been concluded.⁶⁹ Bellona presided over these senatorial meetings, thereby establishing herself firmly at war's close.

⁶⁶ Stat. *Theb.* 7.73

⁶⁷ Mason, G. "Senacula and Meeting Places of the Roman Senate", *CJ* 83.1 (1987):

⁶⁸ Liv. 28.9.5, 31.47-9, 33.22-3 respectively.

⁶⁹ Liv. 26.21

Perhaps the deity most famously associated with war's opening and close was Janus. The temple's gates, those heavy doors which announced peace and war, were only closed three times in the course of the Republic's history.⁷⁰ Although both Janus and Bellona appear functionally similar, evidence for their connection in antiquity is slim. They only appear once together,⁷¹ in Livy's *devotio* formula: "*Iane Iuppiter Mars pater Quirine Bellona Lares Divi Novensiles Di Indigetes Divi quorum est potestas nostrorum...*"⁷² Janus opens the passage, followed by Jupiter and other deities of war. His position in the invocation likely mirrors the function of his opening gates, much as Bellona's position heralded war's beginning in Varro's *de Lingua Latina*. It remains to be seen if the two deities share anything more in this passage rather than a simple connection to war writ large. The relationship between these two deities, and moreover Janus' individual role in Roman warfare, is a subject which requires a deeper, further study than there is room for here. Regardless of her relationship to Janus, Bellona nevertheless had a clear role to play in this regard. As a deity, Bellona stood as a bookend, enveloping war from beginning to end.

Bellona as Warrior

But between war's beginning and end, there remains the great topic of war itself. It comes as no surprise that Bellona would have had an active role in war's articulation. Bellona was a warrior goddess. She was an active force on the field. Twice, Statius describes her presiding over naval battles.⁷³ She "mixes up" (*miscet*) the ships over contemptuous seas.⁷⁴ It is within the context of battle that Vergil portrays Bellona on the shield of Aeneas, flanked by Mars, Strife, Discord and the Furies, cracking her bloody whip.⁷⁵ Valerius Flaccus has the

⁷⁰ First by Numa (Liv. 1.19), next by T. Manlius Torquatus in 235 BC (Plut. *Vit. Num.* 20), and again under Augustus (*Res Gestae* 13).

⁷¹ An 18th century sculpture has both Bellona and Janus together, gazing at one another. Janus' youthful face looks to Bellona's, while the Elderly Janus faces away. Bellona seems to be holding a torch. The statue was sculpted by Johann Wilhelm Beyer and was commissioned for the gardens at Schönbrunn Palace where it is still housed today. It is unclear if Beyer was inspired by an ancient precedent, though given their similar martial function in antiquity, the connection seems like a natural one to make.

⁷² Liv. 8.9

⁷³ Stat. *Theb.* 7.805-8. *Sic ubi navales miscet super aequora pugnas / contempto Bellona mari....* Just as when Bellona mingles among the ships, fighting over contemptuous seas...; Stat. *Ach.* 1.34-5 again Bellona is depicted at sea, bringing Helen to Troy.

⁷⁴ Stat. *Theb.* 7.805

⁷⁵ Verg. *Aen.* 8.700-3 "*saevit medio in certamine Mauors / caelatus ferro, tristesque ex aethere Dirae, / et scissa gaudens vadit Discordia palla, / quam cum sanguineo sequitur Belloa flagello.*" Perhaps coincidentally, Bellona yet

goddess stepping into the fight with armor and weapons clanging.⁷⁶ Statius has her diving headlong into combat, spear in hand: *ostendit Bellona...hastam intorsit agens, liquid quae stridula caelo fugit...* (4.6-7).

The spear plays an essential role in establishing Bellona as a hero-warrior goddess.⁷⁷ The spear is the hero's weapon—Aeneas, Achilles, Hektor, Camilla, among others were all famous spear-bearers. Although not identical, similar constructions to *dextraque...hastam intorsit agens* occur commonly in Latin epic. Both Vergil and Statius describe spears (*hastae, tela, iacula*) in conjunction with the verb *intorqueo*, as well as specifying the use of the right hand and the whizzing of the spear's flight.⁷⁸ When Bellona is described with spear in hand, particularly through the usage of the verb *intorqueo*, we are reminded of all the heroes of epic. When she enters the field, she stands as the deified persona of the idealized warrior. She is the warrior goddess, wielding a spear, *hastataque pugnae*, accustomed to battle.⁷⁹

The relationship between Bellona and the spear would only grow in later periods. The *hastiferi*, or spear-bearers, formed a college of priests dedicated to Bellona.⁸⁰ Their origins, and moreover their function, are not without controversy.⁸¹ All evidence referring to the *hastiferi* is explicitly epigraphic and these inscriptions date from the second and third centuries AD.⁸² If this college was not founded in the early imperial period, it certainly saw its height during these centuries.⁸³ What is important to establish at this juncture is the continued relationship between

again appears during a naval battle, this time at Actium. This has likely less to do with her connection to the navy, but more to do with the importance of Actium itself.

⁷⁶ V. Fl. *Argonautica* 3.60

⁷⁷ Stat. *Theb.* 7.73 “*regit atra iugales / sanguinea Bellona manu longaue fatigat / cuspidē*.” With her dark bloody hand, Bellona guides the yoke and she tires the team with her long spear in hand.

⁷⁸ For *intorqueo*: Verg. *Aen.* 9.534, 10.382, 882, 11.637, Stat. *Theb.* 4.6, 2.579, 9.104; for *stridens*: Verg. *Aen.* 9.419, 10.645, 10.776

⁷⁹ Stat. *Theb.* 2.719: “*nec magis ardentēs Mavors hastataque pugnae / impulerit Bellona tubas...*”, nor did Mavors or Bellona with her battle-spears incite greater burning trumpet blasts.

⁸⁰ A space is dedicated to them within the sanctuary of Magna Mater at Ostia, near the shrine to Bellona. The college is linked to both goddesses only insofar as Bellona served as Magna Mater's *pedisequa*. I revisit the *hastiferi* again in Chapter 3, pg. 79

⁸¹ Fishwick, D. ‘Hastiferi’, *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 57 (1967): 143

⁸² CIL 13.7317 (236 AD); CIL 13.8184; CIL 12.1814; CIL 13. 7317; Calza 200, no. 2; Calza 200, no. 3 (203 AD); Calza 200, no. 5 (203/5 AD) cf. Fishwick (1967): 142.

⁸³ Some, namely Hepding (Fishwick, 149), have argued that the Lucretius may have been referring to the *hastiferi* when he writes “*telaque praeportant violenti signa furoris*” (*de Rerum Naturae*, 2.621). This would place the *hastiferi* in the late Republican period of the 1st century BC. However, nowhere in this section is Bellona mentioned explicitly. Only Attis and Magna Mater are named. The priests of the former were, like Attis, eunuchs. This more than likely refers to the implements used for self-castration rather than the Bellona's war-waging spears. Later, the

the spear and the goddess. More than an implement of war, the spear became a symbol sacred to Bellona herself.⁸⁴

It has been argued that the *hastiferi* may have had martial connotations—perhaps those devoted to her, particularly in the liminal regions of the empire, were engaged with the military in some way.⁸⁵ In the east, Bellona’s connection to the soldiery may be hinted at by the epithet she shares with Mithras, Ἀνείκητος, the Undefeated.⁸⁶ The connection between Mithras and soldiers in the empire has long been established.⁸⁷ By sharing this epithet, it is possible that Bellona served a similar function. In addition, a later imperial inscription to Bellona calls her the *dea Virtuti Bello/ne*.⁸⁸ Should we read Virtus as a martial virtue, this only puts Bellona further into the light of idealized warrior.

Bellona as Battlefield

While Bellona is capable of embodying and acting as a deified warrior, she is also intimately connected to the battlefield itself. This is particularly evident in her relationship to sound. Bellona is the din of battle. When she walks, her weapons ring.⁸⁹ She sounds trumpet blasts.⁹⁰ She shouts with the force of squadrons.⁹¹ The battlefield is a sonorous place; the ring of metal on metal, the crash of spears breaking on shields, the cries of terrified horses, the shouts of the bloodied and dying. The ever-presence and oppressive nature of this din is well articulated by Horace who says that the goddess, reveling in in bloodshed, *circumtonuit*.⁹² Bellona booms-all-

dea pedisqua (Bellona) and her *hastiferi* were added to Magna Mater’s infamous procession, but the only evidence for this addition is, again, imperial.

⁸⁴ Fishwick (1967): 158; Recall the fetial rite as well—Statius has Bellona wield the fetial spear. Beyond being simply a warrior goddess, Bellona’s relationship to the fetial rite only strengthens the sacred aspect of this connection.

⁸⁵ Fishwick (1967): 147-8, 157. Fishwick discounts this notion of a militia-cult, citing Mommsen’s earlier conclusion of such a martial cult (Mommsen, T. *Westd. Korr.-bl.* viii, 1889: 19-28). However, the issue deserve revisitation.

⁸⁶ Cumont, F. *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*. 2nd edition. eds. Corinne Bonnet and Françoise Van Haepere (2006): 79 n.23

⁸⁷ Cumont, F. (2006): 300; Beck, R. “Ritual, Myth, Doctrine and Initiation in the Mysteries of Mithras: New Evidence from a Cult Vessel”, *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 90 (2000): 155

⁸⁸ CIL 13.7281 cf. Fishwick (1967): 143. In 236 AD, on the 23rd of August, the *hastiferi civitatis Mattiacorum* restored the collapsed Vatican mountain.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Stat. *Theb.* 2.719

⁹¹ Stat. *Theb.* 4.9

⁹² Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.223: “*hunc circumtonuit gaudens Bellona cruentis*.” Here, reveling in bloodshed, Bellona booms all around.

around. Her thundering is enveloping. This portrayal of the clangorous goddess is evident again in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which the goddess appears in the midst of bloody conflict:

*Sed sonus armorum superat gemitusque cadentum,
pollutosque semel multo Bellona penates
sanguine perfundit renovataque proelia miscet.* (Ov. *Met.* 5.154-56)

But the clash of arms and the groans of slaughter deafened,⁹³
And at the same time, Bellona drowned the polluted penates
in blood and mixed up renewed conflicts.

It is precisely the sound of battle, the *sonus armorum* and *gemitus cadentum*, which heralds the goddess' presence. She arrives at the same time, *semel*, as the sounds of war. Bellona embodies this clamor. She is every war cry, trumpet blast, death rattle and whiny. She is the battlefield in all its cacophony.

Leading up to the civil war between Sulla and Marius, Plutarch makes mention of multiple omens. Among them are spontaneous fires, ravens bringing their young into the street only to eat them, mice gnawing on sacred temple gold, one of which gave birth in a trap and devoured three of her children.⁹⁴ The last omen Plutarch mentions is the blare of a trumpet which reverberates through the city:

τὸ δὲ πάντων μέγιστον, ἐξ ἀνεφέλου καὶ διαίθρου τοῦ περιέχοντος ἤχησε φωνὴ
σάλπιγγος ὅξυν ἀποτείνουσα καὶ θρηνώδη φθόγγον, ὥστε πάντας ἔκφρονας
γενέσθαι καὶ καταπτῆξαι διὰ τὸ μέγεθος. (Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 7.3)

But the greatest, most important of them was this: from the cloudless and clear sky, there came the blast of a war trumpet, all-encompassing and clear, prolonging a shrill and distinct dirge-like sound, so that everyone became out of their minds with fear and cowered because of its magnitude.

It is after this portent that the senate decides to meet in the temple of Bellona.⁹⁵ The location of the meeting is significant. The Romans would have recognized Bellona's association with the war trumpet immediately. They understood the sound—that terror-inspiring boom—as a

⁹³ In the sense that the noise was over-coming, overwhelming *superat*.

⁹⁴ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 7

⁹⁵ Following the sound of the trumpet blast, Plutarch tells us that the Romans consulted Tuscan wise men, Τυρρηνῶν δὲ οἱ λόγιοι, who claim that the portent was sent from the god, ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. Although Plutarch does not explicitly state who this deity was, it is more than likely Bellona. If the episode is historical and Tuscan wise men were indeed consulted, this may prove to be another point of connection between Bellona and her potential Etruscan roots. Even if it is not historical, it becomes clear by Plutarch's time that Bellona's Etruscan and Sabine originary traditions become conflated.

message from the goddess and as such met in her halls to discuss its meaning.⁹⁶ Was the goddess warning them of the incoming threat? Or was it already too late? Had she already brought the battlefield into the city, declaring it with a familiar trumpet blast? Regardless, the Senate's choice of meeting place in relation to the omen only furthers Bellona's connection to the sounds of war, linking her all the more intimately to the battlefield itself.

Bellona's martial cacophony manifests itself throughout her entire trajectory. The fanatics of Bellona were infamous for their loud rituals. Tibullus describes an agitated priestess chanting as she lacerates her arms.⁹⁷ Martial complains of the near incessant wailing of Bellona's adherents (these kept him awake at all hours).⁹⁸ The priests wailed, ululated, crashed cymbals.⁹⁹ This clamor would have mimicked the blood soaked cries of the battle-field, recalling the goddess herself.

There remains something to be said on the subject of human blood and battle. In the *Thebaid*, Bellona is described with wet, bloody hands.¹⁰⁰ The whip she wields in the *Aeneid* drips gore.¹⁰¹ We have seen her in the *Metamorphoses* in the midst of slaughter, flooding the *penates* in *sanguine*.¹⁰² The presence of blood only serves to reinforce her connection to the battle-field. She captures the moments in which slaughter is performed, the actual heat of battle, and she is suspended there.

Bellona is seldom seen without either her body or armor being sullied with blood. This is highly significant in her relationship to warfare. The washing of the body and arms ritualistically marks the end of battle, or at least of the day's fighting. For epic heroes, this marks a transition from the field to rest, but it is also a moment of purification. The body and weapons are cleansed of blood—that pollutive element inextricable from the nature of warfare. Recall the post-battle

⁹⁶ This is not the first instance in which a meeting in the temple of Bellona was held to discuss religious matters. The *SC de Bacchanlibus* states very clearly that it was within the *aedes Duellonae* in which the Senate deliberated. (CIL 1².581)

⁹⁷ Tib. *Elegiae* 1.6.45-54

⁹⁸ Mart. *Epigrammata* 12.57

⁹⁹ Juv. *Satires* 11.5

¹⁰⁰ Stat. *Theb.* 2.73

¹⁰¹ Verg. *Aen.* 8.703

¹⁰² Ov. *Met.* 5.156

baths of epic heroes. Expecting his return, Andromache prepares a bath for Hektor.¹⁰³ Blood is washed from Turnus' body and armor in the Tiber.¹⁰⁴ Even Ares bathes and dawns new, fresh clothing in the *Iliad*.¹⁰⁵ Bellona does not wash.¹⁰⁶ Caked with blood, she does not transition to a moment outside of conflict. This forces her to reside within battle. She is caught in the moment of slaughter, caught in and as the battlefield itself. Through clamour and gore, Bellona moves beyond merely warrior and embodies the very field of battle.

Bellona and Civil War

We have seen Bellona embody various elements of war. From war itself, to its soldiers, to the battlefield, from beginning to end, Bellona is present. Up until this point, however, we have consistently skirted around the critical issue of civil war. More than any other deity of war, Bellona establishes a particularly close relationship to civil war. By the first century BC, she is consistently portrayed in moments of civil strife. She flanks Discordia and the Furies on the shield of Aeneas, presiding over Actium.¹⁰⁷ She plays a central role in the *Thebaid*, an epic of civil war and fratricide. This domestic dissonance is amplified when she is mentioned in the context of ill-fated marriage, as she is in the *Aeneid*, *Achilleid* and *Metamorphoses*.¹⁰⁸ In every piece of literary evidence proposed so far in this chapter, civil war has been present.¹⁰⁹ It is perhaps best to revisit some of these texts more closely in order to further develop this connection.

Varro's supposition of Sabine origins for Bellona have echoes of domestic strife. The marriage of the Sabine women to the Romans created a complex social relationship between the husbands and in-laws. Through marriage, as the Sabine women emphatically state, their peoples had become related, familiarized. Continued warfare would not only result in civil war, but corruption:

¹⁰³ Hom. *Il.* 22.437-46. Hektor's bath perfectly illustrates the relationship between bathing after battle and the bathing which occurs during funeral rites. For more on this relationship, see Grethlein, J. "The Poetics of the Bath in the 'Iliad'", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 103 (2007): 28.

¹⁰⁴ Verg. *Aen.* 9.816-8

¹⁰⁵ Hom. *Il.* 5.905

¹⁰⁶ This mirrors Achilles' refusal to bathe after the death of Patroclus. Achilles, too, is suspended and confined in the moment of slaughter (Hom. *Il.* 23.40-6).

¹⁰⁷ Verg. *Aen.* 8.703

¹⁰⁸ Verg. *Aen.* 7.17-20; Stat. *Ach.* 1.33-4; Ov. *Met.* 5.149-56

¹⁰⁹ The same inference of civil war is present in Statius' *Thebaid*, written after a time of civil war during the Flavian Period.

Tum Sabinae mulieres...dirimere iras, hinc patres hinc viros orantes, ne se sanguine nefando soceri generique respergerent, ne parricidio macularent partus suos, nepotum illi, hi liberum progeniem. (Liv. 1.13.2)

And then the Sabine women...begging here their fathers, there their husbands, to break their rage, lest the father- and son-in-laws spray themselves with nefarious blood, lest they pollute their own sons with patricide, and the sons of their grandsons, and the entire progeny of free men.

Livy's use of language is very clear here. To spill the blood of a family member is inherently corruptive, *maculo*. This corruption is present in the blood itself, the *sanguine nefando*.¹¹⁰ This pollution does not only have immediate consequences for the men involved, but for the entire community for generations to come, *macularent...hi liberum progeniem*. The Sabines are successful in their pleas. After a series of altercations, the Romans and Sabines are convinced and lay down their arms, embracing one another in new found friendship and cooperation. They are able to rid themselves of communal corruption through concord.

Varro's passage in the *de Lingua Latina* follows a similar pattern. The passage begins with Bellona, the embodiment of battle, war and martial bloodshed, and ends with Concordia. Concordia, too, has a connection with civil strife. The first temple to Concordia, Plutarch tells us, was vowed in 367 BC by Marcellus Furius Camillus.¹¹¹ Camillus vowed this temple in a moment of great civil conflict—the plebeians demanded access to the consulship, the patricians refused. This tension resulted in some form of conflict, some tumult, in the forum itself where the sacrosanct body of magistrates had been violated. The temple of Concordia was vowed in a moment of desired reconciliation. Following the vow, Plutarch tells us that the plebeians received access to the consulship and that the plebeians and patricians established renewed harmony. Roman bloodshed, and by extension the corruption of the community, had, as in the Sabine case, been avoided.

But not indefinitely. Varro had lived through three civil wars by the time of his death in 27 BC. The conflicts between Marius and Sulla, Caesar and Pompey, Antony and Octavian were notoriously bloody. On the battlefield and in the city, the corpse of brother laid beside brother,

¹¹⁰ For the corruptive nature of familiar blood and its consequences, see also Livy's Tullia episode (*ab Urbe Condita* 1.48). After killing her father, Tullia takes pieces of his body and places them on the family's altar of the *penates*. As a result, Tullia is chased and tormented by a Fury for the rest of her days.

¹¹¹ Plut. *Vit. Cam.* 42; Ov. *Fast.* 1.637-50. This temple was rebuilt in 121 following the death of Caius Gracchus, the younger of the Gracchi brothers. Again, the temple's reconstruction followed a period of great civic unrest (Plut. *Vit. C. Gracch.* 17.6, App. *B Civ.* 1.3.26, Platner and Ashby (1929): 138).

father-in-law next to son. Friend or foe were impossible to distinguish.¹¹² Rome itself had become corrupted through the shedding of Roman blood on and outside of the battlefield. Varro's mention of Concordia in *de Lingua Latina* 57 betrays a sense of optimism. Following the civil wars and years of internal strife, in Varro's view, the Romans would come back together and re-establish harmony. They would absolve themselves of their corruption, as the Sabines and their forefathers had done before them, through renewed friendship.¹¹³ Rome would move through war and disharmony, Bellona, in order to re-establish Concordia.

Vergil inverses this imagery. Instead of Bellona leading Concordia, we have a Bellona trailing Discordia on the shield of Aeneas:

*Saevit medio in certamine Mavors
caelatus ferro tristesque ex aethere Dirae,
et scissa gaudens vadit Discordia palla,
quam cum sanguineo sequitur Bellona flagello.* (Verg. *Aen.* 8.700-3)

In the middle of the fight, Mavors rages
engraved in iron, and from the sky, the miserable Furies,
and rejoicing, Discordia with rent robes rushes forth,
She whom Bellona follows with bloody whip.

In the moment of conflict, in the heat of battle, Vergil offers no resolution. Rather than Concordia, he gives us Discordia.¹¹⁴ It is not difficult to see why. The entire *ekphrasis* on the shield of Aeneas serves as a thinly veiled reference to the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, the climax of the civil war between Antony and Octavian. Here, Vergil is capturing the moment of corruption. Roman blood, signified by the *sanguineo flagella*, is actively being shed. This is happening in the midst of battle, Bellona's domain. Discordia's presence amplifies the cosmological breakdown of order which follows the corruption of spilt familial blood, while the Furies emphasize not only the madness of such a scenario, but also the retribution required in times of corruption. Bellona becomes intimately linked to this inversion of social order.

¹¹² This imagery recalls Sallust's passage near the end of the *Bellum Catilinae*: "*multi autem, qui e castris visundi aut spoliandi gratia processerant, volentes hostilia cadavera amicum alii, pars hospitem aut cognatum reperiebant; fuere item qui inimicos suos cognoscerent.*" (61.8). The bodies of friend and foe had become confused as one walks through the battlefield.

¹¹³ I would place the fratricide of Remus and the re-established order which results in the same tradition. (Liv. 1.7)

¹¹⁴ Seneca also refers to these lines in *de Ira*: "*Sanguineum quatiens dextra Bellona flagellum, / aut scissa gaudens vadit Discordia palla*" (2.35). "Bellona, shaking her bloody whip in her right hand, or, reveling, Discordia in rent robes rushes."

Bellona's martial and political dissonance is captured in more domestic contexts as well. On three separate occasions, Bellona is invoked in the context of marriage. In each case, these marriages are destined for strife, bloodshed, and dissonance. More importantly, these marriages have consequences for the communities they find themselves in. They disrupt these communities fundamentally, most often resulting in bloodshed. In the *Achilleid*, Thetis laments that Bellona brings Helen, *nurus*, to Troy.¹¹⁵ When Ovid recounts the wedding of Perseus and Andromeda, he invokes Bellona and has her fill the halls and the shrines of the *penates* with blood.¹¹⁶

Concerning Amata's marriage, Juno declares:

*Hac gener atque socer coeant mercede suorum
sanguine Troiano et Rutulo dotabere, virgo,
et Bellona manet te pronuba.* (Verg. *Aen.* 7.17-20)

Let the father and son-in-law come together in their reward
You will be endowed in Trojan and Rutilian blood, virgin,
And Bellona will be your bride's maid.

Marriage, symbolic of union, one of the most intimate instances of concord, becomes wrought with discord through Bellona's presence. The very thing which has the capability of binding communities together, as the marriage of the Sabines illustrates, becomes the very thing which tears society apart. Bellona's presence in these instances makes sure of this.

It has become clear that by the Augustan period, Bellona becomes undeniably associated with civil strife and discord. One of the verbs most commonly used in her presence is *misceo*.¹¹⁷ This means to blend or to mix up (the arms of men clashing together, the mixing of blood and mud on the battlefield), but it also means to disorient and bewilder. Socially and cosmologically, Bellona comes to be the agent of this instability, *Bellona miscet*.¹¹⁸ She confounds and confuses, binding people together only to rend them apart. While this phenomenon is evident, we have yet to explain what in particular about Bellona's nature lent itself so easily to strife. Notably, it is Bellona, and not Mars or Minerva or any other war deity, who most often appears in these contexts. This is not a matter of happenstance. Should we understand Bellona as the manifestation of battle—the battlefield, the cries, the bloodshed—then as the Roman battlefield changed, it is only natural that the goddess changed with it. The first century BC saw a

¹¹⁵ Stat. *Ach.* 1.33-4

¹¹⁶ Ov. *Met.* 5.149-56

¹¹⁷ Stat. *Theb.* 7.805; Ov. *Met.* 5.154-56.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

fundamental shift in the way that wars were waged. The most bloody, most devastating wars were civil ones. Romans died on both sides, their blood spattered Bellona's field. We have already seen that the blood of a brother is *nefandus*. It is only logical that Bellona would be subject to this *nefandus* and that her nature would become more closely associated with a cosmos that was in disarray. Even the din of battle lends itself to the confusion of civil war—loud, disharmonious, raucous clangor. It is Bellona's deep and particular connection to the battlefield which readily allows for her association with strife. Civil war is corruptive. In these contexts, Bellona becomes a bearer, a harbinger of this corruption.

Conclusions

The above has been an attempt to illustrate Bellona in all her martial aspects. She becomes the embodiment of war, but more precisely of both warrior and battlefield. Through Bellona, we are able to see each functional moment of *bellum*—its opening through the fetial rite, its close through triumph and its articulation through din and bloodshed. We have come to understand her not only as a deity of war, but as a goddess closely associated with civil war and cosmological breakdown. Particularly during the Imperial period, this image intensifies. Bellona becomes a sort of short-hand for civil strife. In the *Life of Sulla*, we have already seen Plutarch present her as the harbinger of the civil war.¹¹⁹ Lucan rather obliquely refers to her in his *Bellum Civile*.¹²⁰ This usage of Bellona as a bearer of civil war is perhaps most obvious throughout Statius' *Thebaid*.¹²¹ The social upheaval which civil war brings lent itself to a connection with madness, an aspect which Bellona begins to bear at the turn of the first century BC and only intensifies during the Imperial period. Not only is she very often portrayed with Furies,¹²² those chthonic beings known for driving mortals to insanity, but it is in the context of losing one's mind that she appears in both Horace and later Seneca.¹²³

This picture remains incomplete, however. A real problem arises when considering the usage of Bellona's temple on the Campus Martius. Over the course of the Republican period, this

¹¹⁹ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 7

¹²⁰ Luc. *Bellum Civile* 1.565, 7.568

¹²¹ Stat. *Thebaid* 2.719, 4.6, 7.73, 7.805, 8.348, 9.297, 10.855, 11.413, 12.721

¹²² Verg. *Aen.* 8.703; Petron. *Sat.* 1.124; Sen. *Ag.* 82, *Her. O.* 1312

¹²³ Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.223; Sen. *Clem.* 1.12, *Ira* 2.35; Insanity itself is a sort of corruption, a disease of the mind.

However, the corruptive state of war-making was not the only factor in establishing a connection between Bellona and madness. We will revisit the issue of lunacy in Chapter 3 when we discuss Bellona's syncretism with eastern deities.

was the extra-pomerial temple most frequently used by the Senate. This is where critical decisions concerning war, treaty making, and triumph allocation were discussed. Her political role, her consistent and persistent connection with statecraft since the founding of her temple in 296 BC, seems to contradict the chaotic Bellona we have painted above. Why would the Senate who clearly valued social stability risk meeting in a *templum* dedicated to a goddess so closely connected to Discordia? Would this not have invited corruption? Recall the weddings over which Bellona presided; these moments of civil union (and the communities they found themselves in) were each doomed. And yet the Senate did meet in her temple. They continued to do so for nearly three centuries. This forces us to widen our scope of the goddess. While Bellona's connotations with discord and strife were clear and felt, she must have also been capable of stepping outside of these bounds. The following chapter is dedicated to the goddess' connection to the Senate in order to present a more multifaceted, malleable, Bellona.

CHAPTER TWO – Memory, Space, and Gens

“*O divina senatus frequentis in aede Bellonae admurmuratio!*”

- Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.5.41

Over the course of its history, the city of Rome became a haphazard kaleidoscope of temples, shrines, *basilicae*, *fora* and porticos. Statues of long gone generals lined the streets, shields taken in the heat of battle hung from temple eaves, ship rams clung to the forum’s *rostra*, each harkening Rome’s past victories. To move through Rome’s streets would be to move through the city’s collective, vibrant, ever-expressive and labyrinthine memory. Here, the *Vicus Sceleratus* where Tullia killed her own father, there the steps where Caesar breathed his last.¹²⁴ To venture into these spaces, even to gesture to them in passing or through textual reference, was to reignite those memories. As the city continued to monumentalize, this memory-scape could easily become dizzying. Rome became a cramped place, with twisted and narrow streets made full of centuries of memorabilia. For an ancient, particularly a Roman, walking through the city must have felt like a bombardment, an almost maddening barrage of the whispers from the dead and alive.

For the Romans, space and memory were twinned. A statue, a temple, a house, a tomb, a stele all recalled specific memories. Monumentalization was a way in which something ephemeral—a memory—could become physical, and with any luck, permanent. It was a way to carve out, loudly, a place for oneself and one’s kin within the very streets of Rome. The greater the monument, the more centrally located, the more frequently visited, the more often the individuals who created these monuments, and the people and acts which they commemorated, would be remembered. In the highly politically competitive environment of the Roman Republic, monumentalization and the maintenance of the memories therein became an indispensable part of what it meant to compete in Rome’s political arena.¹²⁵

We know that the Romans were deeply concerned with remembering. Their unbroken insistence on the *mos maiorum* tells us as much. To reproduce, to physically reperform the same acts as those that came before you was an essential act not only for the reverence of the dead, but

¹²⁴ Liv. 1.48; Suet. *Vit. Caes.* 82, Cass. Dio 44.19

¹²⁵ Humm (2005): 42; Ziolkowski (1992): 235-58; Orlin (2002): 4, Russel, A. *The Politics of Space in Republican Rome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015: 74, 117-8

to the functional maintenance of Roman society. The way that the Senate met, elections were held, festivals were celebrated was informed, if not explicitly dictated, by the *mos maiorum*. Commemoration, especially when done through physical monumentalization, was equally subject to this influence. There were necessary and precise steps which commemoration required. Proper reverence was often a very public act informed by easily reproducible formulae; funerary *tituli* tended to look similar to one another in form, coins bore predictable abbreviations and recognizable iconography, and funeral stele adopted similar styles.¹²⁶ Commemoration had a regulated *parlance*. There was a grave, even existential danger when these forms were not reproduced properly. To leave a *titulus* incomplete, to fail to upkeep a tomb, or more grievously, to physically carve out an individual's face or name from a monument was to destroy that person's memory.¹²⁷ The destruction of a person's memory, in turn, would result in the destruction of the person wholesale.

Conversely, the act of remembering essentially became an act of resurrection. To remember was to revive (and to keep alive) the dead, their victories, their misdeeds, their lessons. One only has to turn to the *pompa funebris* to see this revivification put into motion. Each Roman death brought the promise of renewed life as their *imagines* were removed from the walls and worn by the kin who survived them.¹²⁸ They would assume the offices of their ancestors, wearing the garb representative of them, allowing the dead to walk through the streets once more. Not only would the individuals involved in the *pompa* be reminded of the dead, but the public display ensured that all of Rome would remember these specific ancestors.¹²⁹ Again, it

¹²⁶ Tulloch, J. "Devotional Visuality in Family Funerary Monuments in the Roman World", in *A Companion to Families in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. ed. Beryl Rawson. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011: 542. Ancestry was always a great focus of these monuments (545-55).

¹²⁷ The *damnatio memoriae* is the most obvious example of this. It was rarely practiced, but when it was, the intention was clear: utter and complete oblivion. See Flower, H. "Rethinking 'Damnatio Memoriae': The Case of Cn. Piso Pater in AD 20", *Antiquity* 17.2 (1998): 155-187

¹²⁸ Polyb. 6.53; Burke, P. "Roman Rites for the Dead and 'Aeneid 6'", *The Classical Journal* 74.4 (1979): 220-8; Winkes, R. "Pliny's Chapter on Roman Funeral Customs in the Light of *Clipeatae Imagines*", *American Journal of Archeology* 83.4 (1979): 83.

¹²⁹ Polybius' description of the *pompa funebris* is too long to quote here, but there are a few choice constructions which bring the importance of memory to the fore. Polybius focuses on remembering through words like ἀναμνήσκω, to remember (6.53). He also illustrates that this is very much a process of revivification, of memory brought to life, when he states that the images of the dead were life-like, ζώσας. Revival is reiterated once more when Polybius states that the glory of the dead men are constantly renewed: ἐξ ὧν καινοποιουμένης ἀεὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνδρῶν... εὐκλεία (6.54). Polybius also tells us that the death masks of the deceased were placed in the most conspicuous part of the house, implying that these masks were intended to be seen, and that the individuals who they represented were meant to be constantly remembered (6.53).

is the physicality of this act—the tangibility of the actual death masks, the reperformance of their lives through their dress and movements—which was essential to the act of Roman remembering. It is perhaps unsurprising that the Roman approach to architecture would reflect this same insistence on preserving memory in a physical form.

The following passage from Pliny demonstrates this distinctively Roman process. Space—a physical, tangible, and interactive sort of space—is both what harbours memory and what exerts memory upon a recipient. Pliny also reminds the reader of the destruction which can occur when a space is misused and when the appropriate forms are not met:

Cum venissem in socrus meae villam Alsiensem, quae aliquamdiu Rufi Vergini fuit, ipse mihi locus optimi illius et maximi viri desiderium non sine dolore renovavit. Hunc enim colere secessum atque etiam senectutis suae nidulum vocare consueverat. Quocumque me contulissem, illum animus illum oculi requirebant. Libuit etiam monimentum eius videre, et vidisse paenituit. Est enim adhuc imperfectum, nec difficultas operis in causa, modici ac potius exigui, sed inertia eius cui cura mandata est. Subit indignatio cum miseratione, post decimum mortis annum reliquias neglectumque cinerem sine titulo sine nomine iacere, cuius memoria orbem terrarum gloria pervagetur. At ille mandaverat caveratque, ut divinum illud et immortale factum versibus inscriberetur:

*Hic situs est Rufus, pulso qui Vindice quondam
imperium asseruit non sibi sed patriae.*

Tam rara in amicitiiis fides, tam parata oblivio mortuorum, ut ipsi nobis debeamus etiam conditoria exstruere omniaque heredum officia praesumere. Nam cui non est verendum, quod videmus accidisse Verginio? cuius iniuriam ut indigniorem, sic etiam notiores ipsius claritas facit. Vale. (Plin. Ep. 6.10)

When I came to the villa of my mother-in-law in Alsium, which had once belonged to Rufus Verginius, that very place renewed in me a longing, not without grief, for that best and greatest man. Here he tended his retirement and he was wont to call it the little nest of his old age. Wherever I turned, my eyes, my spirit, sought him. And so it was opportune [for me] to see his monument, but having seen it, it caused [me only] regret. It was still unfinished, and not because of the difficulty of the work, which was modest and possibly even poor, but because of the ignorance, the laziness, of he who had been mandated its care. Indignation followed with pity, that ten years after his death, his remains and neglected ashes were cast [there] with no *titulus*, no name—he whose glorious memory spread through the orb of the earth.

But he had taken care and [even] ordered that his divine and immortal deed be inscribed with these words:

Here lies Rufus, he who once, after driving back Vindex,
safeguarded *imperium* not for himself, but for his country.

So rare is fidelity in friends, so readily does the oblivion of the dead [come], that we ourselves must now build our own tombs and must assume the duties of our heirs. Now who could not be terrified [of this], since we see it happen to Verginius? He whose distinction makes this injury, no this denigration, even more notorious. Goodbye.

Pliny makes us aware of the power of space in his opening line: *Cum venissem in socrus meae villam Alsiensem*. It was the villa's walls, those which had once belonged to Verginius, which ignited within Pliny a deep and painful longing. Everywhere he turned within the villa, *quocumque me contulissem*, his eyes longed to catch a glimpse of Rufinius. The use of *quocumque* is essential here. There is an actual 'where', a *quo*, a physical parameter, which harbours memory. Pliny's laments were not simply the unprovoked inner musings for a lost friend, but his longing was brought on by and rooted in the very space, *ipse locus*, within which he found himself.

Pliny not only reiterates the power that space has to evoke memory, but equally demonstrates how important form is in this matter. Pliny's greatest pain is brought on by the physical state of Verginius' funerary monument. Despite its modesty, the tomb is incomplete. It lacks both his name and a proper *titulus*, that brief incision which would have stated Verginius' offices. The inscription Verginius had desired was also missing. The presence of a name, *titulus* and inscription were all common elements of typical Roman funerary monuments.¹³⁰ When these elements are not present, the memory of the deceased risks to be lost forever, a sentiment which Pliny's lament "*tam parata oblivio mortuorum*" preserves. Despite Verginius' fame, word of mouth alone is not enough to preserve a life's work. Memory requires space, a tomb, a proper *titulus* to survive. It requires a place that can be reached, touched, and sought out in its physicality.¹³¹ A *factum* cannot be *immortale* without this.

This process of memory collection and assertion gives rise to a space's unique identity. The identity of a space is the active, simultaneous expression of all of the memories which have come

¹³⁰ Carrol, M. *Spirits of the Dead: Roman Funerary Commemoration in Western Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006: 126-50

¹³¹ Tacitus, too, remarks on the importance of remembering and the generational obligation remembrance demands (Tac. Ag. 46). Notably, Tacitus states that statuary and other physical monuments are all well and good, but notes that these are prone to destruction and decay. In addition to monuments, Tacitus states that it is the constant emulation of the character of the dead which constitutes true reverence and remembrance, and keeps the dead alive: *is verus honos, ea coniunctissimi cuiusque pietas...non quia intercedendum putem imaginibus quae marmore aut aere finguntur, sed, ut vultus hominum, ita simulacra vultus imbecilla ac mortalia sunt, forma mentis aeterna, quam tenere et exprimere non per alienam materiam et artem, sed tuis ipse moribus possis.*

to be collected there. Its formation is a creative process. It requires active participation from outside actors—family members inscribing *tituli* on the walls of a mausoleum, the Senate consistently choosing to meet in one space over another, the location of prominent murders like those of Tiberius Gracchus’ on the Capitoline Hill and Gaius Gracchus’ on the Aventine.¹³² These interactions infuse physical locations with distinct memories. These memories, in turn, are actively expressed by and reanimated within the space anytime they are approached.

Spatial identity, however, is more than merely the passive result of a unilateral memory dump. A space’s identity often takes a life of its own. As much as it is informed by the actions which have happened within it, spatial identity informs, if not dictates, what kinds of future actions may take place within the space. Take the *curia* as an example. It is the space’s identity which dictates not only who may enter, but how they are to act, to be dressed, to sit and to speak. The *curia*, as a physical space, demands certain action. Its sacred and spatially delineated boundaries, a *templum* in its own right, prohibits bloodshed or the bearing of arms.¹³³ These expectations were established through repeated previous actions in that space, and over time they came to be cemented in the very mortar of the building to form the space’s identity. Eventually, the *curia* was a place that edified, cemented, and brought into the physical world all that the Senate represented.

As powerful as a space’s identity may be, it is not frozen in time. Because spatial identity is formed through a creative process of actions and interactions, these identities can change and adapt. As new memories fill the space, as new actors enter it, as new actions are performed, the spatial identity becomes more varied and elaborate. The theater of Pompey is a good example. It was not only associated with Pompey Magnus himself and his increasing power, but Caesar’s death would permanently alter the course of that space’s identity. Through his restorations, Augustus made sure that it would become a space first and foremost remembered for his father’s murder, and the role the conspirators played within it.

This chapter is an attempt to chart the course of Bellona’s spatial identity at Rome. Naturally, this spatial identity was informed in part by the goddess’ martial qualities we have discussed in the previous chapter. But this identity was not stagnant. It changed and adapted over the course

¹³² Liv. *Per.* 58.7, Plut. *Vit. Ti. Gracch.* 19; Plut. *Vit. C. Gracch.* 17.

¹³³ Beard, North and Price (1998): 23, 179; Rüpke (2007): 178, 182; Ziolkowski, A. (1992): 268-296

of the Republic, often reflecting the overall political situation at Rome. Not only would the space come to reflect the dominance of a particular Roman *gens*—the Claudians—but its identity would also become bound to Roman Republican governance. During the Republic, this space became the Senate’s *de facto* choice for any Senatorial meeting which required an extra-*pomerial* setting. These included treating with foreign emissaries and granting Roman generals triumph. Nearly each functional stage of war—its deliberation, its commencement, its conclusion—was performed either in or directly without the temple of Bellona Victrix.¹³⁴ The political machine that was Roman war-making was ultimately housed and synonymous with this space. The political shift from the Republic to Empire could also be read through the usage of the space. Eventually, Augustus would usurp some of Bellona Victrix’s martial functions and would move them to the temple of Mars Ultor instead. The spatial identities of both spaces are a core component of this shift.

Although there were three Republican structures dedicated to the goddess in Rome,¹³⁵ with a fourth temple being added in the 3rd century AD,¹³⁶ I will only focus on one of these buildings; the temple of Bellona Victrix on the Campus Martius. This is not only for the sake of time—each of these spaces, naturally, had their own individual identities which grew out of unique circumstances, and it would be impossible to chart the paths of each over the course of one small chapter—but because Bellona Victrix’s spatial identity best illustrates the goddess’ relationship to *gens* competition, Republican senatorial politics, and ultimately becomes emblematic of Augustus’ imperial project.

Family Ties – Bellona and the Claudians

We begin the discussion of the temple of Bellona Victrix with its foundation. This is a critical moment in defining the space—the circumstances, the actors involved as well as the temple’s location are vital in defining the temple’s identity. In 296 BC, Appius Claudius Caecus

¹³⁴ Humm (2005): 5-6; Russel (2015): 219; Ziolkowski (1992): 18

¹³⁵ These spaces include the temple of Bellona Victrix (296 BC), the temple of Bellona Ruffilia (290 BC) and a shrine on the Capitoline, likely destroyed in 48 BC.

¹³⁶ The late temple of Bellona Insulensis was located on an islet in the Tiber (Platner and Ashby (1929): 84; CIL 6.490, 2232, 2233; Chiotti, L. “*Bellona Insulensis, Aedes*” in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae I* (2000): 193).

dedicates the first known temple to Bellona in Rome.¹³⁷ Livy describes Appius Claudius' vow in considerable detail:

Dicitur Appius in medio pugnae discrimine, ita ut prima signa manibus ad caelum sublati conspiceretur, ita precatus esse: "Bellona, si hodie nobis victoriam duis, ast ego tibi templum voveo." (Liv. 10.19.17)

It is said that Appius, in the middle of the fight, so that he could be seen by the first standards raising his hands to the sky, prayed this: "Bellona, if you will give us victory today, then I, in response, vow a temple to you."

The scene evokes aspects of Bellona we have come to expect. Appius stands in the midst of the fighting, *in medio pugnae discrimine*—the same place where we have seen the goddess revel and thrive.¹³⁸ The consul prays for victory, which is perhaps a reference to Bellona's origin as the victory goddess Vacuna.¹³⁹ Either Appius is demonstrating his contemporary understanding of Bellona as a goddess of victory and tumult, or, as is perhaps more likely, this is a later retrojection on Livy's behalf which inserts Appius directly into a later established mythos of the goddess. Regardless, the temple's vow reaffirms some of Bellona's martial aspects while simultaneously establishing the beginning of the profound connection between the goddess and Caecus.

Caecus' prayer worked. Bellona did grant him victory that day, and the general was able to return to Rome laden with war-spoils. When he arrived, he made good on his vow by dedicating a temple to Bellona Victrix on the Campus Martius.¹⁴⁰ The initial choice of placement likely had something to do with Bellona's martial nature. It seemed only fitting for the war goddess to be nestled into the crook of the Campus Martius, a space who bears Mars' name and saw the rallying of so many of Rome's troops. Later, the topographical relationship between Mars and Bellona could be read more intimately as poets and other authors painted Bellona as

¹³⁷ A victory over the Sabines only reinforces Bellona's possible Sabine origin. Perhaps she had been imported as a deity during or following such a battle. Perhaps her attributed Sabine origin is meant to reflect Caecus' own heritage—his ancestor and progenitor of his *gens*, Attius Clausus, was reportedly Sabine (Liv. 2.16; Keaney, A. "Three Sabine *Nomina*: Clausus, Cōnsus, *Fisus", *Glotta* 69 (1991): 202-14).

¹³⁸ See Chapter 1 pg. 23-6. See also Russel, 2015: 118

¹³⁹ This may demonstrate Appius' knowledge of Bellona's Sabine origin, which seems possible as he did campaign in Sabine territory. Or, this too might be a later retrojection of subsequent aspects with which Bellona would later come to be known. It is impossible, given our sources, to firmly establish one possibility over the other.

¹⁴⁰ Humm (2005): 42; Platner and Ashby (1929): 84; Viscogliosi, A. "Bellona, *Aedes in Circo*" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae 1*, eds. Eva Margareta Steinby. Roma: Edizioni Quasar, 2000: 193; Ziolkowski (1992): 18

the war god's sister, consort and charioteer.¹⁴¹ By placing the temple of Bellona Victrix in the Campus Martius, Caecus was effectively laying claim to a piece of Rome's overarching military ethos.

If Caecus intended to be individually remembered for the construction of the temple, and more broadly, for his relationship to Bellona, he was successful. Some three centuries after the temple's dedication, Ovid describes in his *Fasti* the annual festival celebrating the goddess.¹⁴² Ovid does not only explicitly name Appius Claudius in the following lines, but he also describes his victories:

*hac sacrata die Tusco Bellona duello
dicitur et Latio prospera semper adest.
Appius est auctor, Pyrrho qui pace negata
multum animo vidit, lumine captus erat.* (Ov. *Fast.* 6.201-4)

It is said that on this day, Bellona was consecrated during the Tuscan war
And she is ever gracious to Latium.
Appius is the actor, he who, when he refused peace with Pyrrhus,
saw the greatness in his own spirit, although he had been deprived of sight.

In addition, a first century BC *elogium* dedicated to Caecus also mentions the temple of Bellona Victrix in a list of the consul's accomplishments.¹⁴³ The above establishes Appius Claudius Caecus as the principal actor in Bellona Victrix's history. This was a role worthy of remembering, one which was still worth celebrating three years after the fact. His *gens* would continue to maintain this role throughout the course of the Republic. The memory of Caecus would serve as a nexus, a center around which much of Bellona's spatial identity orbited. The Claudians would commemorate their own subsequent victories as they simultaneously recalled that of Caecus. This they would do consciously and publically, loudly decrying and maintaining their social prominence before their peers.¹⁴⁴ In the competitive field of Roman Republican politics, the temple of Bellona Victrix would serve as a crown jewel in the maintenance of Claudian public image for centuries with Appius Caecus serving as its centerpiece.

¹⁴¹ Stat. *Theb.* 7.73

¹⁴² The festival occurred every year on June 3rd. It is not clear whether or not the anniversary of the temple's dedication was celebrated unbrokenly from 296 BC to the time of Ovid's writing, however it is clear that at least by the 1st century AD, Appius' relationship to the temple's space was not only remembered, but cemented.

¹⁴³ *CIL* I² 192. The *elogium* was found in Brundisium. See also Russel (2015): 118

¹⁴⁴ Russel (2015): 119

The most explicit example of such temple usage comes to us from Pliny the Elder. Pliny claims that an Appius Claudius was the first to dedicate shields in a public and sacred space in order to commemorate a personal victory.¹⁴⁵ This divergence from tradition was notable and strange enough for Pliny to comment on its innovation.¹⁴⁶ The placement of shields on private spaces, like a *domus*, had been commonplace, but to place them on a building which was not privately owned was another affair entirely. The effect on memory and space which this act provided was profound. Appius Claudius, whose very name evokes the memory of Caecus, monumentalized his own victory in the same space which stood as a victory monument to his ancestor. By doing this, he is actively recalling the memory of Caecus while simultaneously carving himself into the identity of the space. Moreover, he established this connection through predominantly domestic imagery, the sort which we'd more readily associated with a particular family or *gens* rather than the public at large. This reminded the Romans that the temple of Bellona Victrix was ultimately a Claudian space, despite however frequently the Senate or Bellona's cult made use of it.

Appius Claudius would continue to mix forms of private and public monumentalization in the temple. In addition to the shields, he was also the first to have *tituli* and images of his ancestors in the temple:

posuit enim in Bellonae aede maiores suos, placuitque in excelso spectari et titulos honorum legi, decora res, utique si liberum turba parvulis imaginibus ceu nidum aliquem subolis pariter ostendat, quales clupeos nemo non gaudens favensque aspicit (Plin. NH 35.12)

He even placed his ancestors in the temple of Bellona, and *tituli* of their rank were appropriately placed high up in order to [easily] be seen and read – a decorous thing – just as when a group of small children with their little likenesses equally represent some other member [of their family], like some

¹⁴⁵ Pliny the Elder claims that this was during Appius Claudius' consulship in 259th year of the city, or 494 BC (NH 35.12). Since the temple of Bellona was founded only in 296 BC, Pliny's dating is impossible. Many scholars, Humm most prominent among them, have claimed that Pliny was likely referring to the consulship of Appius Claudius Pulcher in 79 BC (Humm (2005): 45). An earlier tradition, established by Mommsen, proposed that it was Caecus himself who placed the shields there. Regardless, the relationship between space, memory and family politics remains the same in either case.

¹⁴⁶ "...*privatim primus [Appius] instituit...*" Appius was *primus*, the first, to do this (Plin. NH 35.12). But he was not the last. In 79 BC, M. Aemilius would follow in this tradition, decorating the Basilica Aemilia in a similar fashion (Plin. NH 35.14; Winkes (1979): 483). No doubt Aemilius was looking to replicate the success of the Claudians and hoped to establish his own familial space in the Basilica Aemilia.

sort of nest of their lineage. No one could look onto such shields with displeasure or unfavorably.

Typically, both the images and the *tituli* of a deceased family member would be kept in a private space, as we have already seen in the case of Verginius Rufus.¹⁴⁷ His unfinished tomb, notably lacking the customary *titulus*, were on the grounds of his family's villa in Alsium.¹⁴⁸ By having the physical inscriptions and images placed upon the walls of a public temple, Appius Claudius was yet again blurring the division between private and public space. Appius Claudius effectively transformed the temple of Bellona Victrix into a house, a *domus*, of the Claudians. Each subsequent meeting of the Senate, each time a victorious general was granted triumph, these acts could be claimed, to some extent, by the Claudians. The temple's spatial identity ensured this.

The placement of the *tituli* demonstrates that Appius Claudius wanted to ensure that the public would be actively reminded of him and his ancestors. He did not place these just anywhere within the temple, but he specifically chose to make the *tituli* as conspicuous as possible. Pliny tells us that these were placed *in excelso spectari et titulus honorum legi*, up high (likely at eye-level), so that the title of their rank could be easily seen and read.¹⁴⁹ Claudius understood that something physical—a statue, a *titulus*, an entire building—could not only house memory, but evoke it. He wanted to ensure that anyone who entered the temple would not have the opportunity to miss such obviously placed inscriptions, that they would not have the opportunity to deny the reanimation of his ancestry's memory. Even if one did not take the time to stop and read every *titulus*, or even if they were unable to read at all, the form alone of these inscriptions, taken in at a glance, would have indicated to passerbys that an individual was being commemorated there. As the temple of Bellona Victrix was so heavily bound to the Claudians, the connection to the *gens* would have been made near instantaneously by anyone well versed in the political climate of the city.

¹⁴⁷ It was the shields themselves which depicted the images of Appius Claudius' ancestors. These are typically referred to as *clipeatae imagines* (Winkes (1979): 481). Again, the reference to the domestic imagery of the *imagines* is pronounced.

¹⁴⁸ Plin. *Ep.* 6.10

¹⁴⁹ Polybius describes similar placement of the *imagines*, though notably in Roman homes (6.53).

Humm, following Massa-Pairault, has posited that this Appius Claudius Pulcher was likely acting according to an already established and on-going Claudian tradition.¹⁵⁰ The Claudians would not only beautify the temple with artifacts that displayed their prominence, but they would consistently revisit the temple in order to reawaken the memories housed within. The case of Marcus Claudius Marcellus is particularly telling. Marcellus Claudius was incredibly successful, having achieved the consulship some five times throughout his life.¹⁵¹ In 210 BC, following a victory in Sicily during the second Punic War, he returned to Rome in seek of triumph.¹⁵² A meeting of the Senate was, appropriately, arranged in the temple of Bellona Victrix. Marcellus likely hoped that his Claudian status would help sway the Senate. How fitting that they should meet there, in the same *cella* which the most prominent ancestor of his *gens* dedicated. Marcellus desired to inscribe his own victory into this Claudian memory-museum, reperforming and reviving the victories of his ancestor Appius Claudius Caecus.

Marcellus was not successful. His bid for triumph was denied, although the *ovatio* which he was granted instead would be lauded as one of the most lavish in all of Republican history.¹⁵³ Despite being denied the triumph, this was not Marcellus' last attempt to reinforce his victories through the memories of Appius Claudius Caecus. Like Caecus before him, Marcellus also dedicated a temple to commemorate his victories, the dual-temple complex of Honos and Virtus.¹⁵⁴ This temple was also located in the same region as the temple of Bellona Victrix, near the Porta Capena.¹⁵⁵ Asconius tells us that Marcellus even placed statues of his ancestors within

¹⁵⁰ Humm describes this process succinctly in the following: "L'image de Appius Claudius Caecus semble bien donc avoir être un "modèle" auquel plusieurs générations de *Claudii*, patriciens ou plébéiens, se sont identifiées." (49).

¹⁵¹ Marcellus was consul in 222, 215, 214, 210, and 208 BC. He was also elected censor in 189. In addition, he served as proconsul on a number of occasions. See Plut. *Vit. Marc.* 1, 6, 9, 12-13, 23, 27; Liv. 26.21, 27.27

¹⁵² Liv. 26.21

¹⁵³ Ibid.; Plut. *Vit. Marc.* 22

¹⁵⁴ Notably, Marcellus vowed this temple some years earlier during his first consulship in 222 BC (Platner and Ashby (1929): 259; Palombi, D. "*Honos et Virtus, Aedes*" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 3 (2000): 33-5). In 210 BC, he renewed this vow and in 208 BC, Marcellus restored the temple of Honos and built an adjoining temple dedicated to Virtus, forming Rome's first dual-temple complex (Plut. *Vit. Marc.* 28; Liv. 25.40; Val. Max. 1.1.8). He displayed numerous artifacts taken from the sack of Syracuse within the temple and likely a depiction of Caecus, Bellona and Mars as well (Liv. 25.40; Val. Max. 1.1.8; Humm (2005): 48-9). In the first chapter of this thesis, we established that there was a strong link between Bellona and Virtus. This connection moved beyond their evident martial nature, again exhibiting a strong Claudian facet much like the temple of Bellona Victrix. The close relationship between these two deities likely saw its beginnings here, through Marcellus' temple dedication and its location.

¹⁵⁵ Liv. 25.40. This would not be the last of Marcellus' interest in the region. As censor in 189 BC, he also repaved the road leading from the Porta Capena to the temple of Mars (Humm (2005): 49). This use of topography would have had a deep effect on the Roman public. Marcellus, by continuing in an established Claudian topographic tradition, was reanimating the memories of his kin while inserting himself, rather prominently, among them.

the temple, making his attempt to follow in a Claudian tradition all the more evident.¹⁵⁶ Although he does not mention Caecus as being explicitly among them, it is not difficult to imagine that Marcellus would have included him.

Amongst the many Hellenic spoils which Marcellus later displayed in the temple, he also commissioned a painting, or perhaps a relief, of Appius Claudius Caecus to be kept there.¹⁵⁷ Appius was flanked by Mars and Bellona. Not only is the reference to Caecus clear here, and Marcellus' attempt to reenvoke the memory of his ancestor and his personal connection to him apparent, but the choice in deities is particularly striking. When read together, the three figures point directly to the temple of Bellona Victrix. Mars' presence situates us in the Campus Martius, Bellona forces the observer to recall the temple of Bellona Victrix while Appius Claudius' presence reminds us of the very strong connection the Claudians have to the space. This was an edification of not only the temple of Bellona Victrix as a building, but also its spatial identity. By representing these figures together, Marcellus was attempting to inscribe himself into the spatial identity of the temple despite initially being denied triumph within the space.

Marcellus' fixation on Caecus' memory may have been motivated, by some extent, by Marcellus' plebeian status. Notably, the *Marcelli* comprised the majority of the *gens Claudia*'s plebeian branch. Conversely, Appius Claudius Caecus was firmly patrician. It is unclear how exactly this plebeian branch came to be connected to the Claudians. What is clear, however, is that claiming a connection to Appius Claudius Caecus directly was an important part of a Claudian's public persona and political success.¹⁵⁸ Other branches of the *gens*, namely the *Claudii Pulchrii* or *Nerones* could quite easily claim direct descent to Caecus, who in turn could readily claim direct descent to Attius Clausus, the progenitor of the *gens*.¹⁵⁹ For the *Marcelli*, such a direct connection may not have been possible or as clear. By commissioning depictions of Caecus, Marcellus was legitimizing his family's position as a firmly Claudian.

The Claudian presence on the Campus Martius was not limited to the temple of Bellona Victrix. The temple would be part of a greater Claudian topographical domain which dominated

¹⁵⁶ Asc. *In Pis.* 44.

¹⁵⁷ Humm (2005): 48 n. 57

¹⁵⁸ Humm describes the temple of Bellona Victrix as a "sanctuaire familial pour les *Claudii*" ((2005): 42 n.35).

¹⁵⁹ Appius Claudius Caecus had four sons: Appius Claudius Russus, Publius Claudius Pulcher, Caius Claudius Centho, and Tiberius Claudius Nero. See Humm (2005): 662-3 for complete genealogy.

this part of the Campus Martius.¹⁶⁰ As much as Caecus' decision to place the temple of Bellona Victrix in the Campus Martius was influenced by Mars' martial connection, his choice of where exactly within the Campus to place the temple was equally informed. The temple of Bellona Victrix was located very near to the tomb of the Claudians.¹⁶¹ By placing the temple so close to the tomb, Caecus was capitalizing on and reinforcing the already present Claudian spatial identity in the region. Anytime the Senate gathered in the temple, any time soldiers and generals marched into the city in triumph, they would pass by both tomb and temple, only to be reminded yet again of the Claudians.

The temple of Bellona Victrix's spatial identity was largely defined by the Claudians. The temple, and moreover this entire region of the Campus, housed the memories of this *gens*. The most prominent figure, who would be evoked time and time again, was Appius Claudius Caecus. Since the founding of the temple in 296 BC, the Claudians would consistently use Caecus' memory and its relationship to Bellona Victrix's spatial identity to great political effect. Even Augustus, who would marry into the *gens*, would follow in this tradition. He would build the theater of Marcellus in this same region of the Campus Martius and he would include Appius Claudius Caecus among the *summi viri* in the *forum Augustae*. But as much as the temple became a source of familial power and prestige, the space's identity would come to gain another equally important facet; a deep, inextricable connection to the Senate.

Bellona and the Senate

The temple of Bellona Victrix would become near synonymous with the Republican Senate, particularly in regard to Roman martial action. The temple would come to house nearly all the business of war-making.¹⁶² Within these walls, countless meetings of the Senate were held, innumerable emissaries met, treaties ratified and rejected, nearly all triumphs granted, wars declared and concluded. During many of Rome's most tumultuous and defining wars—the

¹⁶⁰ Humm (2005): 48; Russel (2015): 119

¹⁶¹ Humm (2005): 42; Russel (2015): 119

¹⁶² Perhaps the most emblematic year for the temple of Bellona's war-making functions was in 197 BC. Livy tells us of three separate occasions when the Senate met within the temple over the course of that year; the first two concern triumph and the latter concerns meeting with Macedonian emissaries following Philip's defeat (33.22-4).

Samnite Wars,¹⁶³ the Punic Wars,¹⁶⁴ The Macedonian Wars,¹⁶⁵ the Civil Wars¹⁶⁶ to name a few—the temple of Bellona Victrix played a role. Many of Rome’s most prominent figures, following Appius Claudius Caecus of course, set foot within the temple’s halls; Scipio Africanus, Titus Flamininus and Cicero.¹⁶⁷ Many of these would exit as *triumphators*. As much as the temple housed the memories of the Claudians, Bellona Victrix absolutely resounded with the symphonic tones of the struggles, the victories, the glories of the *Senatus Populusque Romanum*. To set foot within this temple was to reawaken all of these competing memories at once, would be to feel the entire weight of the Republic pressed upon you.

The close relationship between Senate and goddess is not merely a modern observation. Contemporary Romans themselves recognized the particularly close relationship between the goddess and the Senate. Roman authors would refer to the temple often, and many times with a degree of fondness. In his *In Verrem*, Cicero cries out *O divina senatus frequentis in aede Bellonae admurmuratio!*¹⁶⁸ This short statement betrays the level of intimacy between Bellona and Senate. The Senate’s deliberations are not only described as divine, but the body itself is *frequentis*, frequenting. This is a sentiment which Livy echoes in the following through his similar use of *frequens*: *inde praemisso edict out triduo post frequens senatus ad aedem Bellonae adesset, omni multitudine obviam effuse ad urbem accessere.*¹⁶⁹ Like Cicero, Livy takes care to emphasize the Senate’s deep familiarity with the space through the use of the adjective.

In fact, the temple of Bellona Victrix became so bound to Republican governance that Roman authors seldom thought it necessary to specify to which of Bellona’s temples they were referring. Recall that there were two during the Republic; the temple of Bellona Victrix (dedicated 296 BC) and the temple of Bellona Rutilia (dedicated 290 BC). Despite being founded only six years apart, and arguably under similar circumstances (both vowed by generals, both following a victory over the Samnites) one temple rose to Senatorial prominence while the

¹⁶³ Liv. 10.19

¹⁶⁴ Liv. 26.21, 30.40

¹⁶⁵ Liv. 33.22-4

¹⁶⁶ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 7

¹⁶⁷ Triumph of Scipio Africanus: Livy 30.40, Polyb. 16.23; Triumph of Titus Flamininus: Plut. *Life of Flamininus* 13; Livy 34.53; Cicero delivered his speech in defence of Marcus Otho before the temple of Bellona (Cic. *Att.* 2.1.3; Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 13.4).

¹⁶⁸ “O divine mutterings of the frequenting Senate in the temple of Bellona!” (Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.41)

¹⁶⁹ Liv. 28.9.5

other fell into relative obscurity. The temple of Bellona Victrix simply became *the* temple of Bellona.¹⁷⁰ This has everything to do with the gradual construction of the temple of Bellona Victrix's spatial identity as a Senatorial space. The temple of Bellona Victrix became a permanent and literal fixture in daily political Roman life. The temple of Bellona Rufilia, while possessing its own unique identity, cannot boast the same illustrious trajectory.

What is clear is that the Romans consistently returned to the temple of Bellona Victrix for centuries. What is less clear is why. The reasons for this are varied and none of them are mutually exclusive. The three most primary reasons are the following; the temple's position outside of the *pomerium*, the influence of the Claudians, and the effect of repeated action on spatial identity. The progression of each of these factors, in order, will be the subject of the following.

Perhaps the most obvious reason for meeting within the temple of Bellona is its location. Generals holding *imperium*, the sacred right to wield violence, were not permitted to enter the bounds of the *pomerium*, the sacral border which surrounded the city. However, if a general desired triumph—and this was the most desirable end to any campaign, one which would naturally secure not only glory for the individual, but for his family, past, present and future—they were required to meet with the Senate, generally in person, to make a case for themselves. As a general could not lawfully enter the city without first laying down his arms, and as the Senate could only meet upon consecrated grounds, an extra-*pomerial* temple seems not only like the best choice, but almost the only choice for this purpose.

Of the available extra-*pomerial* spaces, the temple of Bellona Victrix was located very conveniently. It was in the Campus Martius where generals and soldiers customarily mustered, meaning that there was already a precedent for housing generals and their armies within the region. It was just north of the Circus Flaminius, near the Porta Capena, which would grant easy access to senators moving in and out of the city. It was also likely located on the old *Via Triumphales*, which would have been topographically fitting given the nature of many of these meetings.

¹⁷⁰ Liv. 30.40: ...*ad aedem Bellonae habitus est*, 28.9.5: ...*ad aedem Bellonae*...; Cic. Verr. 2.5.41: ...*frequentis in aede Bellonae*; *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus* (CIL I² 2.58): ... APVD AEDEM / DVELONAI...; Plin. NH 35.12: ...*in Bellonae aede*...

But Bellona's position in the *Campus Martius* alone does not justify the space's consistent use. The triumph as a ritual did not begin following the construction of the temple of Bellona Victrix.¹⁷¹ Surely, even as early as the third century BC, there were other sacred spaces *extra pomerium* for the Senate to use. The temple of Juno, dedicated in 396 BC, the existing temple of Ceres and that of Mercury near the Circus Maximus could have been suitable.¹⁷² The neighbouring temple of Apollo Sosianus, built in 433 BC, could have also easily fulfilled this purpose.¹⁷³ There must have been a previous location (or perhaps locations) which the Senate had used for this purpose. Convenience's sake alone does not seem like a strong enough justification to break from tradition, whatever it may have been. This is even more apparent if we consider the Romans as being particularly careful with their traditions and conscious of the role space plays in the maintenance of the *mos maiorum*. There was something more, a greater force, which pushed the Senate towards Bellona Victrix.

The circumstances surrounding the earliest meetings in the temple of Bellona may hold firmer answers. Unfortunately, the source material for the early 3rd century, when the temple was built, is not perfect. Livy's 11th through 20th books do not survive, which would have doubtlessly

¹⁷¹ Reconstructing the early days of the triumph is notoriously difficult. Contemporary evidence for triumphs of the 3rd century BC, the period which most concerns us with regard to Bellona Victrix, shares this difficulty. Although the Romans traced the rite to the foundations of the city—Romulus was Rome's first *triumphator*—the historicity of the event is debatable at best. The *Fasti Triumphales* offers 509 BC as the first date following Romulus' triumph in 752 BC and those of Rome's early kings (*CIL* I² 1). However, even the veracity of the *Fasti Triumphales* is not without doubt. The inscription dates to the Augustan period, post-dating P. Valerius Publicola's 509 triumph by at least five centuries. Due to sheer temporal distance alone, the potential for retroactive invention cannot be discounted. Moreover, there are numerous discrepancies between the *Fasti* and the later accounts of Livy. If the *Fasti* cannot be wholly trusted, there is very little else for us to turn to regarding triumphs which pre-dated the construction of the temple of Bellona Victrix. For the years surrounding 296 BC, there exists no contemporary surviving materials which describe a triumph (Beard, M. *The Roman Triumph*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007: 76-8). The record only picks up again in the 2nd century, where evidence is more or less firm. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to say with any degree of certainty what the triumphs of a pre-Bellona Victrix era may have looked like. If Livy's accounts of pre-Bellonan triumphs provide any indication (the 396 BC triumph of Camillus in 5.23, for example), it is likely, at the very least, that triumphs existed, but in what capacity, it is impossible to tell.

¹⁷² Ziolkowski (1992): 283

¹⁷³ The temple of Apollo did, eventually, house meetings of the Senate. However, recorded meetings not only post-date the earliest of those which had occurred within the temple of Bellona, but also happen far less frequently. Over the course of the Republic, if the accounts of Livy are to be trusted in this regard, the temple of Apollo was used only three times in this capacity (Livy 34.43, 39.4, 41.17). Polybius does not mention the temple of Apollo Sosianus at all, though he mentions a meeting of the Senate which took place in the Temple of Bellona Victrix in a fragment from his 27th book (27.1 cf. Livy 42.36). The Temple of Bellona Victrix seemed to be the Senate's preferred location, utilizing the temple of Apollo likely only as a result of some external circumstance which prevented the Senate from using their preferred space. See also Viscogliosi, A. "Apollo Medicus Sosianus, Aedes" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 1 (2000): 49-54)

held invaluable information concerning the earliest meetings in the space had any occurred. Although some fragments of considerable length survive from the 19th and 20th books of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, none of them mention the temple of Bellona Victrix. Polybius' brief summary of the first Punic War in Book 1 of his *Histories* also fails to mention the goddess. Following what Livy tells us about his vow in 296 BC, the literary record concerning the temple of Bellona picks up again only in 211 BC, and a second time in 184 BC. In both cases, three variables are consistent: the temple, the Senate, and the presence of at least one prominent Claudian. The first concerns Marcus Claudius Marcellus' bid for triumph and the second the Bacchanalia affair. In this later incident, the name Appius Claudius Pulcher appears first in the list of Senators present in the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*.¹⁷⁴

To say that the *gens Claudia* was one of the most prominent, most powerful *gentes* to have ever lived at Rome is no overstatement. Since the incorporation of the Sabine traitor Attius Clausus into the Roman patriciate in 505 BC, the Claudians enjoyed a great degree of social prominence. Only ten years after he arrived at Rome, Attius became consul in 495 BC.¹⁷⁵ He would be the first in a long line of Claudians to reach that rank, spanning the entirety of the Republic and moving well into the Imperial period when the emperors themselves would number amongst them. Throughout the course of the Republic, the Claudians held 41 consulships (21 of which were held by unique actors, and of those, 10 were members of the *Pulchri* branch).¹⁷⁶ Among these, the Claudians could claim 7 unique *triumphators* and 8 triumphs.¹⁷⁷ The Claudians could also boast of five, perhaps six,¹⁷⁸ dictatorships, and 7 censorships. They would even lay claim to 2 plebeian tribunitions despite being a predominantly patrician *gens*.

Not only did the Claudians hold one of the greatest numbers of high-ranking offices out of any Roman *gens*, but they held these offices during critical periods of change or defining Republican moments. Appius Claudius Crassus Sabinus, son of Attius Clausus and consul in 451

¹⁷⁴ "APVD AEDEM / DVELONAI SC ARF M CLAVDI M F L VALERI P F..." (*CIL* I² 581 = ILS 18).

¹⁷⁵ Of Attius' inclusion into the Senate and his accelerated career, Livy writes: *Appius inter patres lectus haud ita multo post in principum dignationem pervenit*. "Appius, having been elected amongst the fathers, came into the most prominent rank, the highest designation, in no time at all." (2.16)

¹⁷⁶ Attius Clausus cos. 494 BC (Liv. 2.21); Appius Claudius Sabinus cos. 471 (Liv. 2.56); Caius Claudius Sabinus cos. 460 BC (Liv. 3.15); Appius Claudius Crassus Sabinus cos. 451... see also Humm (2005): 662

¹⁷⁷ In 273 BC, 268 BC, 222 BC, 196 BC, 177 BC, 174 BC, 166 BC, and 155 BC. Marcus Claudius Marcellus would hold two triumphs, the first in 166 and the second in 155 BC. (*Fasti Triumphales*, *CIL* I 314)

¹⁷⁸ Appius Claudius Caecus' dictatorship is contested. A late *elogium* dedicated to Caecus attributes the dictatorship to him (*CIL* 11.1827). See also Humm (2005): 126-8.

BC, was also one of the *decemvirs* who first set down Rome's 10 tables.¹⁷⁹ Appius Claudius Caecus, Bellona Victrix's dedicator, held two consulships in 307 and 296 BC, and possibly a dictatorship in 285 BC. Marcus Claudius Marcellus was consul five times and could count the sack of Syracuse as well as the claiming of the *spolia opima* among his accomplishments.¹⁸⁰ An Appius Claudius Pulcher, consul in 143 BC, was Tiberius Gracchus' father-in-law. He served alongside Tiberius on the triumviral board for the redistribution of land.¹⁸¹ To say nothing of the influence Clodius, tribune in 59 BC, had in the later part of the 1st century BC.¹⁸² Rome's second emperor Tiberius could trace his descent directly from Appius Claudius Caecus,¹⁸³ and the beloved young Marcellus who died in 23 BC was a direct descendent of the aforementioned Marcus Claudius Marcellus.

Through their association with their powerful brothers and fathers, Claudian women would also play significant roles. Claudia Quinta played an essential role in bringing the cult of Magna Mater to Rome.¹⁸⁴ Another Claudia served as a Vestal Virgin.¹⁸⁵ Two daughters of Appius Claudius Pulcher, consul in 54 BC, would marry Pompey and Brutus respectively.¹⁸⁶ Livia, Rome's first empress, was also a member of the *gens*.¹⁸⁷ It seems as though the entire course of Roman history could not escape the touch of the Claudians.

Considering their wide-spread influence, it should come as no surprise that a temple so closely linked to the family, the temple of Bellona Victrix, would also rise in prominence. If we take a closer look at not only who was explicitly present during the first meetings of the temple, but also who of the Claudians were politically active during this period, the Claudian influence within the Senate becomes all the more clear.

Between the periods of 296 BC to 184 BC, the second of the recorded meetings in the temple of Bellona, a number of Claudians reached high rank. Of Appius Claudius' four sons,

¹⁷⁹ Liv. 2.56; 3.33-34

¹⁸⁰ Sack of Syracuse: Plut. *Vit. Marc.* 28; Livy 25.40; *Spolia opima*: Plut. *Vit. Marc.* 8; Liv. *Per.* 20; Polyb. 2.34

¹⁸¹ Liv. *Per.* 58.1

¹⁸² Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 28-9; Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 9-10, 14; Cass. Dio, 38.12-17, 30. For the circumstances surrounding Clodius' infamous death and funeral, see Cic. *Mil.* 28-29, 33; Asc. *Mil.* 32-33, 46C; Dio, *History* 40.48-50

¹⁸³ Plut. *Vit. Tib.* 3

¹⁸⁴ Cic. *Cael.* 34; Liv. 29.14

¹⁸⁵ Cic. *Cael.* 34

¹⁸⁶ Humm (2005): 661

¹⁸⁷ Plut. *Vit. Tib.* 3

three of them reached the consulship. Appius Claudius Pulcher, progenator of the formidable *Pulchri* branch of the gens, was consul in 249 BC. Appius Claudius Russus was consul in 268 and Gaius Claudius Centho in 240. In 213 BC, Centho would also be named dictator. In two generations alone, four direct members of this family were capable of reaching the highest achievable office. This would continue into the following generations.

Until the beginning of the first century BC, and even beyond, each generation of the *Claudi Pulchri* branch would boast of at least one consul. Publius Claudius Pulcher obtained his consulship in 249 BC. His son, Appius Claudius Pulcher, would reach his in 212 BC. In turn, his own son, also named Appius, would be named consul in 185 BC. Counting Caecus inclusively, four consecutive generations of *Pulchri* obtained the consulship by the first quarter of the 2nd century BC.

The *Nerones* branch of the gens would have a slightly slower start. Caecus' son Tiberius Claudius Nero died young, and his son Tiberius would suffer the same fate. But Caius Claudius Nero, Caecus' great-grandson and cousin to the *Pulchri*, would achieve the consulship in 207 BC. His two cousins, Tiberius Claudius Nero and Appius Claudius Nero would also be consul in 202 and 197 respectively. Three cousins of this branch alone were politically active at roughly the same time, and all were capable of achieving the highest office. Appius Claudius Nero would have a son, Tiberius, and he too would reach high office, being named praetor in 181 BC.

The *Marcelli* were the Claudians' most prominent plebeian branch. It is unclear how they came to be related to their patrician counterparts, but their plebeian status did not prevent them from obtaining high office. The earliest known Marcellus, Marcus Claudius Marcellus, was consul in 331 BC and dictator in 327 BC. His son by the same name would be consul in 287 BC. After this, the family would have a slight slump for two generations until perhaps the most famous of the Republican *Marcelli* came upon the scene. M. Claudius Marcellus, great-great grandson of the first Marcellus, achieved five consulships. He was named consul in 222, 215, 214, 210 and 208 BC. His two sons would also achieve the rank, the older in 183 BC and the younger in 196 BC. This later Marcellus would also be named censor in 189 BC.

By the time of the first record meeting of the Senate in the temple of Bellona Victrix in 211 BC, there was an already established generational precedent that the Claudians would obtain consulships. By the late 3rd century, the Claudians were undoubtedly viewed as one of the most

politically powerful and active families in Rome. When Marcellus entered the temple in 211 BC, he faced a senate which included prominent members of his own *gens*. If he was still alive, Centho, son of Caecus, who had been consul, interrex and dictator over the course of his life, would have been present. Appius Claudius Pulcher, consul the year before and who had commanded alongside Marcellus twice, once as praetor in 214 BC and a second time during the siege of Sicily in 213, would have also been there. The *Nerones* cousins Caius, Tiberius and Appius, who would all achieve the rank of consul in the next few years, were also likely in attendance. Not only were these individuals present, but by virtue of their ancestry, their presence alone would have evoked the memories of all the generations of high ranking senators that came before them. This pressure would have only been compounded by the space's identity as a Claudian one. How fitting it would be for the Claudians to make one of their own *triumphator* within the very halls that resonated with their family's memory. Claudian influence, and their desire to foster this influence, likely drew the Senate to the temple in the first place. Of course, Marcellus was unsuccessful in his bid, but we would be remiss to discount the influence that such high-ranking members of the Claudians, an influence which was only exacerbated by Bellona's spatial identity, must have had over the course of this meeting.

The situation in 184 BC was similar. A year before, Appius Claudius Pulcher was named consul—the fourth in a line of consuls after Caecus. Marcus Claudius Marcellus, son of the famous Marcellus, was consul the following year in 183 BC. It is likely this Marcellus Claudius which the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus* names.¹⁸⁸ It may have equally been his brother, who was consul in 196 and censor in 189 BC. Tiberius Claudius Nero, son of the Appius Claudius Nero who was consul in 195 BC, may have also been present. He was elected praetor in 181 BC. Again, the Claudian presence in the space must have been palpable.

On the surface, the Bacchanalia Affair does not seem to have much to do with martial action. This was a matter of religious transgression. The choice to meet in the Temple of Bellona Victrix, then, could not simply be attributed to Bellona's status as a war goddess. However, the Senate's choice becomes more clear in light of the meeting's makeup. There were several

¹⁸⁸ The first two lines of the inscription read: [Q] MARCIVS L F S POSTVMIVS L F COS SENATVM CONSOLVERVNT N OCTOB APVD AEDEM / DVELONAI SC ARF M CLAVDI M F L VALERI P F... "Quintus Marcius, son of Lucius S. Postumius, son of Lucius, as consul convened the senate on the 9th of October at the temple / of Duellona. Present for the purpose of writing are: Marcus Claudius, son of Marcus, Lucius Valerius, son of Publius..." (*Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*, CIL I² 2.581)

powerful Claudians active during this time, and it is possible that they were able to influence the Senate to meet within the temple.

From the state of our sources, it is impossible to say how exactly the Claudians managed to convince the Senate. Whether an outright demand was made, or whether their maneuvering was much more subtle is impossible to tell. Whatever the case, the presence of so many high-ranking Claudians within a space so closely linked to their family seems too coincidental to ignore.

But the Claudians' hold on the temple would not be exclusive. Recall the organic nature of a space's identity. Spatial identity is constructed by the interactions which happen within a space. They are filled with and express vividly the memories of those interactions, which in turn inform and influence future interactions within that place. The more the Senate used the space, the greater the number of memories the temple housed, and the more varied its identity became. Soon, the echoes of Claudian victories would compete with those of Titus Flamininus,¹⁸⁹ Scipio Africanus,¹⁹⁰ Scipio Asiaticus,¹⁹¹—all of whom were granted triumphs in these halls. In a way,

¹⁸⁹ Neither Livy nor Plutarch specify where the Senate met during the deliberation of Flamininus' triumph (Liv. 30.45; Plut. *Vit. Flam.* 13-4). Livy only writes that the Senate met "*extra urbem*", or outside the city (35.52). If we rely on Roman tradition, more than likely this *extra urbem* space was the temple of Bellona Victrix, but we cannot be conclusive in this matter.

¹⁹⁰ Livy does not state explicitly when or where the meeting of the Senate occurred in which triumph was granted to Scipio. He merely states that Scipio entered the city in triumph (30.45). However, during the Republican period at least, there is not a single recorded instance in which a meeting for the purpose of granting triumph was not held either in the temple of Bellona Victrix or the neighbouring temple of Apollo Sosianus. Between these two, the temple of Bellona Victrix seems like the most likely. In 30.40, Livy states clearly that Carthaginian envoys were met in the temple of Bellona: *...ad aedem Bellonae habitus est*. From chapters 40-43, envoys from Carthage and Macedon are met by the Senate at Rome. Although Bellona is not explicitly mentioned, the setting likely remained consistent from the previous chapter. In 30.43, the Roman Senators propose peace terms to the Carthaginians. We know that this meeting was located outside of the city as the Carthaginians ask permission to enter: *ut sibi in urbem introire et colloqui cum civibus suis liceret...* As the Senate had used the temple of Bellona to first welcome the envoy in 30.40, there is little reason to believe that the meeting in 30.43 did not also occur in the temple given its *extra-pomerial* location. In the same chapter, Livy refers to the fetials who were to be sent to Carthage. The fetial rite was closely related to Bellona, a connection which would only be reinforced through the topographical proximity the *columna bellica* had to the temple of Bellona Victrix. In chapter 44, Scipio sends Carthaginian envoys yet again to Rome in order that they would be met by the Senate. All of these instances, from the first envoys met in 30.40, to those who were sent in 30.44, and even the Senatorial meeting which must have occurred concerning Scipio's triumph which Livy leaves undescribed, likely occurred within the temple of Bellona Victrix. As Livy only makes mention of a specific Roman location once in these consecutive instances, notably at the very beginning, it is likely that no change in space occurred.

¹⁹¹ Liv. 36.39. The Senate meets in the temple of Bellona to discuss Publius Cornelius' bid, but chooses instead to defer the triumph to a later date.

the temple itself reflected Republican Rome's political environment; no matter how prominent or powerful an individual or a family became, there would always come a challenge.

Eventually, the temple of Bellona Victrix became a symbol of the Republic. Whatever it meant for Rome to wage war—its declaration, its closing, the treating of emissaries, its commemoration through triumph—it was housed, in some way or another, in the temple of Bellona Victrix. No other Republican space would be used in this capacity.¹⁹² To be within the temple was to be step into the machine that was Republican warfare, and, as a result, was to reawaken the memories of each martial decision made within.

The temple of Bellona Victrix's spatial identity as a place for Republican war-making would affect the identities of the buildings directly proximate to it. The temple of Bellona Victrix, although undoubtedly the most prominent of these spaces, would become one part of a larger three edifice war-making complex. This complex was made up of the neighbouring temple of Apollo Sosianus, the *columna bellica* in addition to the temple of Bellona Victrix. Any martial action that could be performed at Rome was conducted here. In addition to its association with Claudians, this region of the Campus would also become synonymous with Roman warfare. Each of these three building would function in unison and were actively thought of in relation to one another.

The temple of Apollo Sosianus would be used nearly identically as the temple of Bellona Victrix. Emissaries would be met here and triumphs could be discussed.¹⁹³ Functionally, and from the prospective of war-making, the two structures were the same. However, the instances in which the temple of Bellona Victrix was used far outnumber the uses of Apollo Sosianus. Over the course of what survives of Livy's history, the temple of Apollo is only used three times in this capacity.¹⁹⁴ From frequency alone, it appears that the Romans far preferred to use the temple of Bellona Victrix.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² With the exception, of course, of the neighbouring temple of Apollo (Liv. 34.43, 39.4, 41.17) and the nearby *columna bellica* (Ov. *Fast.* 6.205-6). As we will see, there would be good reason for this in which Bellona would play a vital role.

¹⁹³ Liv. 34.43, 39.4, 41.17

¹⁹⁴ Liv. 34.43, 39.4, 41.17

¹⁹⁵ While we have seen the adjective *frequens* used with *senatus* and *aedis Bellonae* on numerous occasions, the temple of Apollo cannot boast the same association.

The sources never reveal why this was the case. The proximity to the temple of Bellona was likely a factor. Perhaps the temple of Bellona was indisposed—the space may have been preoccupied with cult activity,¹⁹⁶ or had possibly been undergoing repairs. A temple as old and heavily used as Bellona’s would have doubtlessly needed repair over the course of the three centuries of the Republic in which it was active. Regardless of the reason, a strong topographic and functional relationship developed between the two.

This relationship was ultimately rearticulated in later works of prose and poetry. Bellona, through her connection to Diana, would effectively become Apollo’s twin. Plutarch would call the goddess Selene,¹⁹⁷ and Pomponius Porphyrio, a first century AD commentator on Horace, would write: *Vacuna in Sabinis dea...hanc quidam Bellonam, alii Minervam, alii Dianam <putant>*.¹⁹⁸ There is also a first century *denarius* which likely depicts Bellona, but could also be attributed to Diana.¹⁹⁹ A spear-wielding, helmeted goddess stands on the obverse. A crescent moon rests in the center of her forehead. If Bellona can be read as a kind of Diana, then it is not only appropriate that her temple be located next to her twin, Apollo, but that the two spaces should serve identical functions as well.

There is an important third piece of this spatial puzzle; the *columna bellica*. According to Servius,²⁰⁰ a soldier of Pyrrhus was forced to buy a small plot of land on the Campus Martius, very near to the temple of Bellona Victrix.²⁰¹ This land, from a Roman religious and legal perspective, was technically foreign. This portion of land served a very practical and religious

¹⁹⁶ The first recorded meeting of the Senate in the temple of Apollo occurred in 195 BC (Liv. 34.43). Livy states that this meeting occurred at the beginning of the year. If Livy was following the previous Republican calendar which placed March as the first month, then this meeting would have occurred during Mars’ month. The first of March was a festival day dedicated to Mars (Ov. *Fast.* 3.1-398). It is possible that the cult of Bellona, given the goddess’ close ties to Mars, also played a role during the festivities. If this was the case, then it is possible that the temple of Bellona Victrix would have been unavailable to the Senate during this time.

¹⁹⁷ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9: λέγεται δὲ καὶ κατὰ τοὺς ὕπνους αὐτῷ Σύλλα φανῆναι θεὸν ἢν τιμῶσι Ῥωμαῖοι παρὰ Καππαδοκῶν μαθόντες, εἴτε δὴ Σελήνην οὖσαν εἴτε Ἀθηνᾶν εἴτε Ἐνυώ. “It is said that a god appeared to Sulla in his dreams which the Romans had learned about from the Cappadocians, either she was Selene, or Athena, or Enyo.”

¹⁹⁸ Pompon. *Commentum in Horati Epistulas* 1.10.49 cf. Hor. *Ep.* 1.10.49. “Vacuna is a goddess in Sabine country...at times Bellona, others Minerva, others still Diana”.

¹⁹⁹ Fishwick (1967): 152 n.72; 72; Alföldi, A. *Die Trojanischen Urahnen der Römer*. Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneide, 1957: 6; plate X, 9 and 12.

²⁰⁰ Serv. *Aen.* 9.52.

²⁰¹ Caecus was celebrated for denying peace with Pyrrhus (Ov. *Fast.* 6.203). Perhaps Caecus wanted this plot to be so close to his temple as yet another reminder of his staunch defence of the Republic. For the description of the *columna bellica*, see Platner and Ashby (1929): 131 and La Rocca, E. “*Columna Bellica*” in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 1 (2000): 300; Champion, C. “*The Peace of the Gods: Elite Religious Practices in the Middle Roman Republic*. Leiden: Brill, 2017: 83. See also Serv. *Aen.* 9.52.

function. In order to officially declare war on a people, the Romans were required to perform the fetial rite.²⁰² This rite involved the casting of a spear into enemy territory.²⁰³ As Rome's wars drew further and further from the city, performing this rite became less and less practical. The presence of foreign land on the Campus Martius provided an easy solution to this problem; the Romans could wage distant wars without fear of religious transgression and the fetial priests could perform their rite at the *columna bellica*.

The way Rome conducted war was crucially dependent on the usage of these three spaces. The temple of Bellona, the temple of Apollo, and the *columna bellica* would not only be used in unison, creating a distinct spatial identity shared between the three, but would have also been actively thought of in relation to one another. Recall Ovid's description of the festival to Bellona. The entire entry for June 3rd, from beginning to end, reads:

*Mane ubi bis fuerit Phoebusque iteraverit ortus
factaque erit posito rore bis uda seges,
hac sacrata die Tusco Bellona duello
dicitur, et Latio prospera semper adest.
Appius est auctor, Pyrrho qui pace negate
multum animo vidit, lumine cas erat.
prospicit a templo summum brevis area Circum:
est ibi non parvae parva columna notae;
hinc solet hasta manu, belli praenuntia, mitti,
in regem et gentes cum placet arma capi. (Fast. 6.199-208)*

When two dawns have passed, and rising Phoebus came,
And when the cornfield was wet twice by resting dew,
It is said that on this day Bellona was consecrated during the Turscan war,
And she is ever gracious to Latium.
Appius was the author, he who, when he denied peace with Pyrrhus,
Saw greatness in his spirit, although his sight was robbed [from him].
There is a little area at the peak of the Circus in view from the temple [of Bellona]:
There lays a small column of no small note;
Here the spear, the pronouncement of war, is accustomed to be cast from the hand,
When it is pleasing to take up arms against kingdom and races of men.

Ovid is effectively capturing the martial complex's spatial identity in these short lines. He begins his poem with a direct reference to Apollo. From Apollo, he moves to Bellona and finally to the

²⁰² Liv. 1.32; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.72. See also Rich, J. "The *Fetiales* and Roman International Relations", in *Priests and State in the Roman World*, eds. James H. Richardson and Frederico Santangelo. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag (2011): 187-235

²⁰³ Bellona would perform this rite in Statius' *Thebaid* (4.5-8)

columna bellica. Not only is he situating the reader in the Campus Martius when he writes “*sumum...Circum*”, but he is forcing his audience to reconstruct the physical temple within their minds. This passage would have had the same ability to revivify the memories of the Senate, Republican warfare, and the Claudians as physically entering the space. If the references to the triad of buildings was not enough, his references to Caecus and Pyrrhus would have ensured that the complex’s spatial identity as a Claudian space would have been felt. This passage’s composition demonstrates that Ovid, as well as his audience, recognized that these three structures existed and acted together.²⁰⁴

Ovid is not alone in this regard. Statius performs a similar act of reconstruction, perhaps with these lines of the *Fasti* in mind. The opening lines of Book 4 of the *Thebaid* read:

*Tertius horrentem zephyris laxaverat annum
Phoebus et angustum cogebat limite verno
longius ire diem, eum fracta impulsaque fatis
consilia et tandem miseri data copia belli,
prima manu rutilam de vertice Larissaco
ostendit Bellona facem dextraque trabalem
hastam intorsit agens, liquido quae stridula caelo
fugit et Aoniae celso stetit aggere Dirces.* (*Theb.* 4.1-8)

Three times, Phoebus Apollo loosened bristling winter with his Zephyrs
and for a long while drove the short day down its constrained
path towards spring, and wise counsel was shattered by the blow of Fate
and finally the masses were given to miserable war.
First down from the Larissaeon heights,
Bellona brandished her golden-red torch in her hand and from her right hand,
she twisted her swift spear, casting it,
that hissing spear which flew across the liquid sky
and plunged into the high citadel of Aonian Dirces.

Statius’ work is less explicit than Ovid’s. Ovid makes his reconstruction of the Campus Martius obvious through the reference of the *columna bellica*’s location relative to the Circus Flaminius. Statius, on the other hand, takes a more subtle, though just as effective, approach. Like Ovid, Statius opens his passage with Apollo. He then introduces Bellona, spear in hand. Rather than

²⁰⁴ Arguably, the nearby Villa Publica could be thought of as an extension of this complex (Liv. 4.22; Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 30; Platner and Ashby (1929): 581; Agache, S. “*Villa Publica*” in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 5 (2000): 202-5). This was where Romans typically housed foreign emissaries before and after their meetings in the temple of Bellona. However, the Roman authors do not seem to include the Villa Publica in the same way that they bind the temple of Apollo, the temple of Bellona and the *columna bellica* together. There was something distinct about the spatial identity formed between these three edifices that was recognizable by the Romans which did not necessarily include the *Villa*.

referring to the *columna bellica* by name, he instead has Bellona perform the fetial rite. Mirroring Ovid, Statius reconstructs the Rome's war-making complex. He transports the reader there, willing them to remember not only the physicality of this region of the Campus Martius, but all the functions it served and associations it boasted.

By the first century BC, the temple of Bellona Victrix developed a strong Senatorial element to its spatial identity. This element eventually became strong enough to challenge the Claudian's near exclusive hold on the space. Bellona's halls would ring out with the memories of Rome's most important military decisions, mixing and blending with the memories of Claudian ancestry. Bellona Victrix's connection to the Senate would ultimately affect the buildings in its direct vicinity. The temple of Bellona, the temple of Apollo and the *columna bellica* would come to form Rome's war-making complex—a space synonymous with the Roman state.

Augustus and Bellona's Spatial Identity: the shift from Republic to Empire

But this heavily Senatorial spatial identity would not go unchallenged. Augustus was highly aware of the relationship between the temple of Bellona Victrix and the Senate, particularly the relationship the space had to the Roman triumph. He was also aware of the temple's identity as a Claudian space. Through his own building program in the city, he would attempt to absorb and mitigate some of Bellona's spatial identity for his own gain. He would insert himself into the spatial dialogue of the Campus Martius alongside the Claudians, but he would ultimately claim the space as his own. This process was a slow one, beginning with the construction of the theater of Marcellus in 13 BC and ending with new triumphal policies in temple of Mars Ultor some ten years later.

Augustus had a personal vested interest in the Claudian region of the Campus Martius. His wife Livia was a direct descendent of Appius Claudius Caecus. In 25 BC, the emperor arranged a marriage between his niece Julia, Octavia's daughter, and Marcus Claudius Marcellus of the *Marcelli* branch of the Claudian *gens*. Marcellus more than likely would have succeeded Augustus had he not met an untimely death only two years later. After the equally inopportune deaths of Gaius, Lucius and Drusus, Augustus turned to Livia's son by her previous marriage, Tiberius. This Tiberius could not only trace his descent to Caecus through his mother's *Pulchri* bloodline, but he was also a descendent of the *Claudii Nerones* through his father Tiberius

Claudius Nero.²⁰⁵ Augustus first sought out a marriage with Livia in order to make use of her Claudian pedigree. Now, as emperor, it was imperative that he could not only insert himself seamlessly into the family—which would have included the use of their monumentalized spaces like the temple of Bellona Victrix and their mausoleum—but that he could also control this imagery. He needed to preserve and maintain Claudian prestige, but he wished to place himself first and foremost in the minds of the Roman public.

Augustus' careful dance between maintaining his relationship to the Claudians while also attempting to differentiate himself played out vividly in the emperor's building program. Ten years after the death of Marcellus, Augustus dedicated the Theater of Marcellus.²⁰⁶ He had the theater built in the southern corner of the Campus Martius, in the same region as the temple of Bellona Victrix and the Claudian mausoleum.²⁰⁷ This was a highly appropriate usage of space. By dedicating the theater of Marcellus here, Augustus was commemorating the young man alongside his ancestors, thereby strengthening the Claudian presence in the region.

However, the position of the theater would have an important secondary effect. Previously, the triumphal route was capable of easily passing before the temple of Bellona.²⁰⁸ When a general with his armies and spoils passed by the monument, the sight of the temple would have ignited within him a clamouring of memories—numerous meetings and politicking between the general and members of Rome's elite, the multiple couriers which must have passed between the general and the Senate prior to securing any meeting, the long hours spent outlining his achievements in detail, all culminating in the eventual meeting which had occurred in that very space opposite from him now; the meeting in which the Senate declared him triumphator. He would have been reminded of all Rome's generals who had triumphed before him, each of which had not only been subject to a similar process, but had walked along the same stones on

²⁰⁵ Suet. *Tib.* 3: *Ex hac stirpe Tiberius Caesar genus trahit, e[t] quidem utrumque: paternum a Tiberio Nerone, maternum ab Appio Pulchro, qui ambo Appi Caeci filii fuerunt.* "Tiberius Caesar drew his origin from this stock, and on both sides: on his father's side, from Tiberius Nero, and on his mother's side, from Appius Pulcher, who were both sons of Appius Caecus." Even by Suetonius' time, it was imperative that Claudians traced their bloodline back to Caecus specifically.

²⁰⁶ Construction was completed in 13 BC, though Augustus would only officially dedicate the space in 12 BC. (Aug. *Res Gestae* 21; Suet. *Aug.* 29; Plut. *Vit. Marc.* 30; Platner and Ashby (1929): 169; Kockel, V. "Forum Augusti" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 2 (2000): 290-4)

²⁰⁷ Russel, 2015: 118

²⁰⁸ Plut. *Vit. Aem.* 32; Coarelli, F. "Via Triumphalis (2)" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 5 (2000): 148; Platner and Ashby (1929): 83 cf. Beard (2007): 101-3

which he now stood. Simultaneously, he would have been reminded of the individual who first dedicated that space and all the kin who were memorialized there—the Claudians. Whispers of their past echoed from Bellona's halls, lined with their images and *tituli*. Their memory would only ring out more clearly as the triumphator passed by their nearby tomb.

When the route changed, the space told a different story. The construction of the theater of Marcellus obstructed the old route, forcing generals to pass by the theater and cutting off the temple of Bellona Victrix from the procession.²⁰⁹ As a member of the Claudian *gens*, Marcellus' theater would have maintained the Claudian connection Bellona Victrix had once evoked. However, what rang out above the memory of the boy was the memory of the man who commissioned the space; Augustus Caesar.

The connection between the theater of Marcellus and Augustus would be reiterated time and time again, often by Augustus himself. Augustus would refer to his role in its construction in his *Res Gestae*, and other authors,²¹⁰ namely Suetonius and Plutarch, would follow suit.²¹¹ The Augustan impression which the theater of Marcellus exerted in the Campus Martius would have only been magnified by the other restorations and beautifications Augustus had commissioned in the region.²¹² In addition to the theater, Augustus built or restored the following structures in the Campus: *Porticus Octavia* (33 BC),²¹³ the theater of Pompey (32 BC),²¹⁴ and the Mausoleum of Augustus (28 BC).²¹⁵ His general, Agrippa, built aggressively in the region—monuments which would have equally evoked the power of Augustus by association.²¹⁶ Augustus forcibly inserted

²⁰⁹ Ciancio Roscetto, P. "Theatrum Marcelli" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 5 (2000): V.31-5; Platner and Ashby (1929): 513-5

²¹⁰ Aug. *Res Gestae* 21

²¹¹ Suet. *Aug.* 29; Plut. *Vit. Marc.* 30; Liv. *Epit.* 138; Platner and Ashby (1929): 513-4

²¹² Strabo would credit Augustus with the extensive development of the Campus Martius: ὁ θεὸς Καῖσαρ... πᾶσαν ὑπερεβάλοντο σπουδὴν καὶ δαπάνην εἰς τὰς κατασκευάς; τούτων δὲ τὰ πλεῖστα ὁ Μάρτιος ἔχει κάμπος... "Divine Caesar [and all his relatives and close associates]...surpassed all others in their zeal and expenditure in regard to construction. The Campus Martius held most of these..." (5.3.8)

²¹³ Aug. *Res Gestae* 21; Viscogliosi, A. "Porticus Octaviae" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 4 (2000): 141-5

²¹⁴ Aug. *Res Gestae* 20; Suet. *Aug.* 31; Strab. 5.3.8

²¹⁵ Aug. *Res Gestae*; Strab. 5.3.8; Suet. *Aug.* 100-1; Cass. Dio 53.30; von Hesberg, H. "Mausoleum Augusti" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 3 (2000): 234-7; Platner and Ashby (1929): 332-6

²¹⁶ The *Saepta Julia* was completed in 26 BC by Agrippa and dedicated to Augustus (Cic. *ad Att.* 4.16.14; Cass. Dio 53.23; Platner and Ashby (1929): 460; Gatti, E. "Saepta Julia" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 4 (2000): 228-9). The general also built the Pantheon and attempted a similar dedication, but the Emperor refused the distinction (CIL 6.896; Plin. *NH* 34.13; Platner and Ashby (1929): 383-6; Ziolkowski, A. "Pantheon" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 4 (2000): 54-61). Agrippa would also restore numerous aqueducts and other public

himself into the spatial dialogue of the Campus Martius. He maintained the space's Claudian associations, however he made sure to put his own, admittedly loud, stamp in the region. Anywhere one turned, they would be met with a stark reminder of the Emperor.²¹⁷

The combination of Augustus' restorations and the construction of the Theater of Marcellus had a large impact on the temple of Bellona's spatial identity. Effectively, the temple was pushed aside, no longer as centrally located as it once had been. By limiting access to the temple, Augustus was limiting Bellona's potential to exert her spatial identity upon passersby—an identity heavily bound to both Senate and Claudians. At the expense of the Senatorial presence in the region, Augustus made a name for himself, and for the imperial project, in the Campus.

Augustus would continue this program of Claudian absorption. In 2 BC, the forum of Augustus would be completed. At its peak stood the temple of Mars Ultor, vowed 29 years earlier at the battle of Philippi in 42 BC.²¹⁸ The way up to the temple was lined with statues of Rome's *summi viri*—the Great Men. This procession progressed in increasing order of prominence, moving from mortal to divine. Augustus included Appius Claudius Caecus amongst the mortals. Before the temple, to the left and to the right, opposite of one another and located in their own hemicycles, stood the statues of Romulus and Aeneas. At the apex of this procession, standing deified within the temple of Mars Ultor's *cella*, was Divus Julius himself. Caesar shared this space with Mars and Venus, overlooking all of Rome's greatest men. Again, Augustus made sure to commemorate his ties to the Claudians through the inclusion of Caecus, but he was equally careful to place the *gens Juli* in the most prominent position. The message was clear; the Claudians were great, but Augustus himself—and his own lineage—was greater.

Augustus would continue to chip away at the predominantly Senatorial and Claudian spatial identity of Bellona Victrix through the use of the temple of Mars Ultor. Both Suetonius

works in the Campus, including the Baths of Agrippa (Cass. Dio 53.27; Pliny *NH* 35.26; Platner and Ashby (1929): 518-20; Ghini, G. “*Thermae Agrippae*” in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 5 (2000): 40-2).

²¹⁷ The emperor Tiberius would follow in this tradition. He would restore the temple of Castor and Pollux (near the circus Flaminius), again reiterating his Claudian heritage while simultaneously reinforcing the prestige of the imperial dynasty (Coarelli, F. “*Castor et Pollux (Aedes in Circo)*” in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* 1 (2000): 245-6)

²¹⁸ Suet. *Aug.* 29

and Cassius Dio preserve Augustus' intent that the temple of Mars Ultor would become Rome's *de facto* location for all war matters:²¹⁹

Aedem Martis bello Philippensi pro ultione paterna suscepto voverat; sanxit ergo, ut de bellis triumphisque hic consuleretur senatus, provincias cum imperio petitori hinc deducerentur, quique victores redissent, huc insignia triumphorum conferrent.

[Augustus] vowed the temple of Mars during the war of Phillipi, during which he took up revenge for his father. And so he ordained that the Senate would deliberate about war and triumph here, and that those setting out with *imperium* would be sent off from this place, and that whatever victors returned [to the city], they would bring the tokens of their triumphs here. (Suet. *Life of Augustus*, 29)

... Ἄρει, ἑαυτὸν δὲ καὶ τοὺς ἐγγόνους, ὅσάκις ἂν ἐθελήσωσι, τοὺς τε ἐκ τῶν παίδων ἐξιόντας καὶ ἐς τοὺς ἐφήβους ἐγγραφομένους ἐκεῖσε πάντως ἀφικνεῖσθαι, καὶ τοὺς ἐπὶ τὰς ἀρχὰς τὰς ἐκδήμους στελλομένους ἐκεῖθεν ἀφορμᾶσθαι, τὰς τε γνώμας τὰς περὶ τῶν νικητηρίων ἐκεῖ τὴν βουλήν ποιεῖσθαι, καὶ τοὺς πέμπσαντας αὐτὰ τῷ Ἄρει τούτῳ καὶ τὸ σκῆπτρον καὶ τὸν στέφανον ἀνατιθέναι, καὶ ἐκείνους τε καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους τοὺς τὰς ἐπινικίους τιμὰς λαμβάνοντας ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ χαλκοῦς ἵστασθαι, ἂν τέ ποτε σημεῖα στρατιωτικὰ ἐς πολεμίους ἀλόντα ἀνακομισθῇ, ἐς τὸν ναὸν αὐτὰ τίθεσθαι, καὶ πανήγυριν τινα πρὸς τοῖς ἀναβασμοῖς αὐτοῦ ὑπὸ τῶν ἀεὶ ἱλαρχούντων ποιεῖσθαι...(Cassius Dio, Roman History 55.10.2-5)

...to Mars, it was concluded that, for himself [Augustus] and his kin, [they should go there] however many times they wished, and that those who were exiting boyhood and entering the military, having just been registered, should, by all means, go to this place. And those who were just at the beginning with respect to distant campaigns should set off from this place, and that the Senate should make their judgements about victories (triumphs) here. And [it was decreed that] those partaking in this (triumph) should dedicate both their sceptre and garland to Mars, and that each of them and others who took up triumphal honors should be set in bronze (statues of them should be erected) in that forum. If ever military standards were recovered from the grasp of an enemy, then they should be placed in the temple. And [it was decreed] that a

²¹⁹ Augustus intended that the following acts would be performed in and around the temple of Mars Ultor despite its position inside the *pomerium*. This marks a pointed shift in the Roman conception of *imperium*. During the Republic, generals wielding *imperium* were not permitted within the bounds of the *pomerium* (Beard (2007): 205). In 23 BC, the Senate granted Augustus *maius imperium*. This meant that all commands, whether or not Augustus was present in the provinces, fell under Augustus' control. All further victories could then be technically claimed by Augustus, as the famous example of Crassus and the *spolia opima* demonstrate (Dio. 51.25.2; Flower, H. "The Tradition of the *Spolia Opima*: M. Claudius and Augustus", *Classical Antiquity* 19.1 (2000): 52). In addition, Augustus was granted a special permission to be present in the city despite his *imperium*. This would have made it possible for Senatorial meetings concerning triumph to occur within the temple of Mars Ultor. This special sort of *imperium* would also be imparted onto Augustus' successors with the result that the space could continue to be used in this way. See also Clarke (2007): 24

festival be celebrated next to the steps of the temple by the cavalry commanders of each year...

Both Suetonius and Cassius Dio are describing functions which fell under the near exclusive domain of Bellona Victrix during the Republic. Since the temple of Bellona Victrix's founding in 296 BC, there has not been a single recorded triumphal senatorial proceeding which did not occur either in this space or in adjacent temple of Apollo. When Augustus decrees that not only must the Senate now meet within the temple of Mars Ultor to discuss triumph, but also describes a whole slew of military actions which must now be performed in the temple of Mars, he is effectively taking control of Rome's martial machine.²²⁰ This was deeply demonstrative of the politics of the day. The temple of Bellona Victrix, that bastion of Senatorial and Republican dominance, capitulated before the Emperor. Pushed aside by the Theater of Marcellus, and now with its military functions stripped away, the temple of Bellona was no longer as central to the operations of the state as it used to be.

Conclusion

Space mattered. Spaces, and their identities, were capable of preserving communal memories. They had stories to tell, expectations to impose on those who found themselves within their bounds. The Romans seemed to possess a unique sensitivity to this phenomenon. As the example of Verginius' demonstrates, space not only played a central role in how the Romans commemorated their dead, but how they reanimated and kept alive these memories. This process gave space an immense power. Many political actors, as we have seen through the building programs of Caecus and Augustus, were not afraid to manipulate this power for their own—and their family's—benefit.

The temple of Bellona Victrix's identity was a complex construction. It was a clamoring space full of resounding memories. These memories, in equal part, included those of its founder Appius Claudius Caecus, the Claudian *gens* more broadly, the Senate, and a slew of Roman triumphators. Bellona Victrix's identity was far from stagnant. It began as a place predominantly for the commemoration of Claudian memories, but eventually the temple would become

²²⁰ Clarke (2007): 24

synonymous and central to the function of the state at war. The Senate and Roman warfare could not be thought of separately from the temple of Bellona Victrix.

The usage of the temple's space came to be reflective of the Senate's heyday; incredibly active during the 2nd century, but would slowly ebb and finally dissipate with the rise of Augustus. The advent of the Theater of Marcellus and the temple of Mars Ultor would bring serious changes for the goddess' position in the city. Augustus cut the temple of Bellona Victrix from the triumphal route and he transferred the temple's martial functions to the temple of Mars Ultor. The pillars of the temple of Bellona's spatial identity—its connection to the Claudians, its prominence as a Senatorial meeting place—were eroding. Ultimately, this erosion would help pave the way for Bellona's continued evolution in the Roman imagination. No longer so tightly bound to the Senate and the Claudians, Bellona would become something more chaotic, bloody and exotic in the following centuries. In addition to the spatial changes which Bellona incurred at the hands of Augustus, the beginning of Bellona's final transformation, as we will see in the following, would trace its beginnings to Sulla—a bloody butcher in his own right.

CHAPTER THREE – Sulla and Easternization of Bellona

“*Ipsa bipenne suos caedit violenta lacertos
sanguineque effuse spargit inulta deam*”

Tibullus, *Elegiae* 1.6.47-8

An inherent contradiction seems to emerge when comparing Bellona's role as a goddess who presided over the Senate and her later depictions as a blood-frenzied, civil war reveling, maddened goddess. Nearly every time Bellona is mentioned in Roman poetry, she is a harbinger of chaos. She presides over the marriage of Paris and Helen in the *Achilleid*, mirroring her similar role in the *Aeneid* where she serves as Lavinia's bridesmaid.²²¹ She plays significant roles in accounts of civil war, be they in the *Aeneid*, *Thebaid* or Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.²²² Ovid even portrays her defiling an altar of the *penates* with human blood.²²³ The chaotic aspect of Bellona would become so intensified that she would eventually come to be modeled as a Fury. She enters the field with torch and whip in hand, instruments of the Erinyes, loosened hair falling to her shoulders in a disheveled heap.²²⁴ She keeps close company with others of her kind, in addition to Strife and Discordia, often to the detriment of the mortals in her path.²²⁵

But her clear association with chaos did not dissuade the Senate from using her temple for centuries. That most important and revered body of men, the *patres* of the Republic, custodians of the *res publica*,²²⁶ chose her halls, her auspices, in order to make some of the most critical military decisions ever made at Rome. Ideologically, the protection and maintenance of the Republic was the Senate's top priority. This was no easy task. In the Roman mindset, the Republic, and the city more generally, was a fragile thing. Since its very first moments, Rome was under threat.²²⁷ Romulus slaughtered his own brother in order to protect the sacred bounds of his city.²²⁸ Lucius Junius Brutus murdered the Tarquin king in order to establish a Republic

²²¹ Stat. *Ach.* 1.34-5; Verg. *Aen.* 7.319; Serv. *Aen.* 4.59. Bellona would be present at another ill-fated wedding in the *Metamorphoses* (Ov. *Met.* 5.155).

²²² Verg. *Aen.* 7.319, 8.700; Stat. *Theb.* 2.719, 4.6, 7.73, 805, 8.348, 9.297, 10.855, 11.413, 12.721, *Ach.* 1.34-5; Luc. *Bellum Civile* 1.565, 7.568; Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 7, 9, 27

²²³ Ov. *Met.* 5.155 cf. Livy's account of Tullia's desecration of the *penates* (1.48.7, 59.13). See also Amphytrion's repulsion at the thought of Hercules approaching an altar with bloody hands in Sen. *Her. F.* 919.

²²⁴ Verg. *Aen.* 8.700-3; Luc. *Bellum Civile* 1.565-7, 7.568; Petron. *Sat.* 124.1.256; Sen. *Dial.* 4.35.6.3; Stat. *Theb.* 4.6, 10.855, 11.413, *Ach.* 1.33-4; Sil. *Pun.* 4.439, 5.221; Serv. *Aen.* 8.702

²²⁵ Sen. *Ag.* 82-3, *Dial.* 4.35.6.3-4; Verg. *Aen.* 8.700-3

²²⁶ Champion, C. *The Peace of the Gods: Elite religious Practices in the Middle Roman Republic*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017: 4

²²⁷ Champion (2017): 82, 87, 92

²²⁸ Liv. 1.7.2-3

free from tyranny.²²⁹ No matter how many centuries passed, the paranoia of losing such hard-won freedom never relented. The Romans became obsessed with maintaining the stability of the Republic in the face of constant danger. This obsession translated into a near mania for due process and ritual. Every action, meeting, election, piece of legislation,²³⁰ even the way senators moved about the city, the way they dressed, was heavily ritualized and formulaic in order to maintain the republic's safety.²³¹ Respecting and maintaining their relationship with the gods, the *pax deorum*, was at the heart of this desire for protection. The Romans were exceptionally careful in their cult practices, lest the *pax deorum* be broken and the gods abandon their city, or worse, unleash their wrath upon it.²³²

Even the way that the Romans waged wars was, on an ideological level, in the name of defense. The Romans prided themselves in only engaging in battle when it was declared *ius*, or just. *Ius bellum* was inherently defensive, fought for the protection of either Rome or her allies, be they *socii*, *amici*, or *clientelae*.²³³ Although clearly many of Rome's battles were fought with imperialistic and expansive intent, the justification of these wars was always protectionist.²³⁴ The Romans never depicted themselves as war-mongers, but instead as the reluctant arbiters of peace, justice and freedom—all fundamental values of the Republic. The *patres*, being at the forefront of Roman society, often themselves direct descendants of the same men who first established their prized Republic,²³⁵ carried the burden of the *res publica*'s defense most heavily of all of Rome's citizens.

²²⁹ Liv. 1.58-9

²³⁰ Roman inscriptions, particularly those of a legal nature like those which outline regional borders, tend to be intensely detailed, precise, and formulaic. The *Sententia Minuciorum* (CIL I² 584), *Tabula Heracleensis* (CIL I² 593), and *Epistula Praetoris ad Tiburtes* (CIL I² 586) are but a few examples of typical Roman legalistic style. See also Tellegen-Couperus, O. *Law and Religion in the Roman Republic*. Leiden: Brill, 2012 especially Tellegen-Couperus, O. "Sacred Law and Civil Law", 147-67.

²³¹ See Champion, C. "Domi: Priesthoods, Politics, and the People" in *The Peace of the Gods*. especially 30-1.

²³² The devastating effects of a god's abandonment can be seen during the siege of Veii. Juno abandoned the city, allowing the Romans to seize victory and for the town to be razed (Liv. 5.21). Conversely, a god's presence could offer protection. During the Second Punic War, the Romans turned to Magna Mater (Liv. 29.10; Plut. *Vit. Mar.* 17.4). In times of crisis, they would often turn to the Sibylline Texts. See also Champion (2017): 83, 126; Santangelo, F. "Law and Divination in the Late Roman Republic" in *Law and Religion in the Roman Republic*. (2012): 48; Orlin (2002): 20, 76-115.

²³³ Champion (2017): 83; Ando, C. "Aliens, Ambassadors, and the Integrity of the Empire", *Law and History Review* 26.3 (2008): 492

²³⁴ Ando (2008): 493

²³⁵ The most famous example, of course, is Lucius Junius Brutus and his *gens* (Liv. 1.58-9).

It seems like a very strange choice, then, for the Senate to willingly meet within a temple of a goddess so closely linked to the forces of chaos and social instability. Even if the initial choice to meet within the temple was for cynical political and *gens* based reasons, peppered to some extent by the convenience of its location, the Romans would eventually have to contend with and reconcile Bellona's more chaotic aspects. We have already seen how receptive and organic spatial identity was at Rome. Like a sponge, Roman space would absorb and seep with meaning and memory. As Bellona's depiction as a blood hungry goddess grew, it would come to affect the temple of Bellona Victrix. There is no more obvious example than Sulla's execution of the Samnites prisoners. The blood-curdling shrieks of 3,000 slaughtered Samnites, or 8,000 by Livy's count, filled Bellona's *cella*, much to the terror of the Senators within.²³⁶ In this episode, Bellona's depiction as both a goddess who presided over Senatorial meetings and as a goddess of slaughter, tumult and madness came to a crashing head.²³⁷ Deciphering these seemingly opposed facets, now embedded in the temple itself, is the subject of this chapter.

The simplest solution is evolution. Bellona did not begin her life at Rome as a goddess of chaos. No senator would have ever dedicated a temple to her, much less within the *pomerium* like the temple of Bellona Rufilia,²³⁸ if they believed that the goddess would pose an existential threat to their society. Even if an individual had made such a vow, the Senate, who discussed and ratified all temple dedications throughout the Republic, would have never approved of such a motion.²³⁹ Instead, as we have seen over the course of the two previous chapters, Bellona was first a goddess who embodied military prowess and victory—an aspect which ideologically served the Republic well. In addition to Claudian politicking, this aspect drew her close to the Senate, particularly at the peak of Senatorial power in the 3rd to 2nd centuries. The waning of the Senate's political dominance in favour of individual actors, as we have seen through Augustus' building program in the Campus Martius, had a natural effect not only on the way that Bellona's space was used, but also the role she played in the city. As the Campus Martius continued to be monumentalized, pushing her further and further into the topographical periphery of the region, her grasp on Rome's political machine loosened. This opened the goddess up for a change in her path. But this process of transition actually began some years earlier. It was Sulla, and more

²³⁶ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 30; Liv. *Per.* 88.1-2

²³⁷ Plutarch describes the Senators as τῶν συγκλητικῶν ἐκπλαγέντων, struck-out with fear (*Vit. Sull.* 30).

²³⁸ Palmer (1975): 655

²³⁹ Orlin (2002): 66-73

precisely the memories of his bloody reign, who would provide the most important point of divergence in Bellona's trajectory.

In the 90s BC, Sulla returned to Rome from his *propraetorship* in Cappadocia.²⁴⁰ With him, he brought the Cappadocian Ma, who would quickly become syncretized with Bellona.²⁴¹ He would become very close to this goddess. She would visit him in dreams.²⁴² One of her fanatics would stop Sulla in the street only to profess his imminent victory, and he would meet the Senate in the temple of Bellona Victrix.²⁴³ Bellona and Sulla became tightly bound to one another, much in the same way Caesar would later claim a special relationship to Venus, or Sextus Pompey to Neptune.²⁴⁴

Spatial identity will play an integral role in first establishing a relationship between Sulla and Bellona. One of the primary reasons Sulla was first drawn to Bellona specifically, and not any other of Rome's war deities, was on account of his ancestor's, P. Cornelius Rufinus, connection with the goddess. It was this man who also dedicated a temple to Bellona in 290 BC. In effect, we will see that Sulla was initially following in a very Republican tradition. Like the Claudians and Aemilians, he was attempting to establish the temple of Bellona Rufilia as another sort of "*sanctuaire familial*",²⁴⁵ a place where Sulla's ancestry could be remembered and venerated. Given Ma's prominence in Comana as the most powerful cult in the region,²⁴⁶ Sulla likely aspired that her syncretism with Bellona would elevate his family's public image. This was a conquest in its own right, with the most important cult in Cappadocia capitulating before the Roman people. But ultimately, it would be the memory of Sulla's bloody civil wars and his proscriptions which would have the most prominent effect on the goddess' place in Roman

²⁴⁰ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 5, 24; Palmer (1975): 656; Sherwin-White, A. "Ariobarzanes, Mithridates, and Sulla", *CQ* 27.1 (1977): 173; Keaveney, A. *Sulla: The Last Republican*. London: Routledge, 2005: 29; Santangelo, F. *Sulla, The Elites, and the Empire*. Leiden: Brill, 2007: 3-4. The dates for Sulla's praetor- and propaetorships are contested. Keaveney posits 97 BC, Sherwin and Santangelo 96, while Palmer merely states that the office fell somewhere in the 90s.

²⁴¹ Palmer (1975): 656; Seyrig, H. 'Une déesse anatolienne', *Antike Kunst* 13 (1970): 76-7

²⁴² Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9.3

²⁴³ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 27.6

²⁴⁴ Caesar and Venus: Suet. *Life of Julius Caesar* 6, 49, 61, 78; Sextus and Neptune: Cass. Dio 48.19. Sulla would also develop a close relationship with Apollo and Venus (Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 29 and 19, 34 respectively). The general would even adopt the epithet *Epaphroditos* (Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 34; Santangelo (2007): 199-213).

²⁴⁵ Humm (2005): 42 n.35

²⁴⁶ Both Strabo and Pseudo Caesar claim that the cult's power, and by extension the high priest's, was second only to the king (*Geography* 12.2.4 and *de Bello Alexandrino* 66 respectively)

society. Through Sulla, Bellona would transition from a goddess of war, stability and governance, to one of war, frenzy and madness.

Bellona's syncretism with Ma would have another, equally important effect. Ma's relationship to the East would come to dominate Bellona's cult practices in Rome. The *bipennis*, the dual-bladed axe which Bellona's fanatics used to shed their own blood, was an eastern instrument.²⁴⁷ The ululating and the usage of cymbals in her rites also rang with familiar Eastern tones.²⁴⁸ She would become closely linked to other Eastern, notably feminine or emasculated, deities. Beginning in the 1st century AD, she would be called Cybele's *dea pedisequa*, or footman.²⁴⁹ Her connection to Cybele would also draw her close to Attis. She would develop a close relationship to Isis as well, in addition to Diana of Ephesus. All of these cults would share in important aspects; they were eastern, their cults involved ecstatic priests, many of their rites included self-harm in the form of bloodletting, they often made use of similar instruments, and they were all not only effeminate, but dangerous or subversive in their femininity.²⁵⁰

The relationship between these deities would also be reflected in the topography within and without Rome. At Ostia, in the sanctuary of Magna Mater, opposite from the shrine of Attis, stood a temple to Bellona.²⁵¹ There was also a shrine to Bellona on the Capitoline hill.²⁵² This shrine was accidentally destroyed when the neighbouring temple of Isis and Serapis was ordered to be destroyed in 48 BC.²⁵³ The temple of Bellona Rufilia shared the same street as another temple of Isis and Serapis.²⁵⁴ This latter temple would give *Regio III* its colloquial name. The Romans would come to recognize the relationship between these deities and cement it in stone in their sanctuaries and cities.

I do not wish to present the veneer that this transition was overly easy or smooth. Bellona would never lose the aspects—namely war, victory, and even the memory of her relationship to

²⁴⁷ Vaughan (1959): 170; Tib. *Elegiae* 1.6.47

²⁴⁸ Juv. *Sat.* 6.509-13; Mart. *Epigrammata* 12.57

²⁴⁹ Fishwick (1976): 152-4, 160; *CIL* 6.30851; *ILS* 3804

²⁵⁰ The clearest example is the cult of Isis at Rome. During the civil war against Antony, Augustus banned the rites of many Egyptian cults from being performed within the *pomerium* and may have supported the destruction of a temple of Isis and Serapis on the Capitoline (Cass. Dio 53.2.4, 42.26 cf. Orlin, "Octavian and Egyptian Cults: Redrawing the Boundaries of Romanness", *AJPh* 129.2 (2008): 231-53).

²⁵¹ Meiggs, R. *Roman Ostia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960: 359-60; Calza, R. *Ostia*. Florenz: Sansoni, 1959, 94-5

²⁵² Cass. Dio 42.26; Platner and Ashby (1929): 83-4

²⁵³ Palmer (1975): 654

²⁵⁴ Palmer (1975): 655

the state—to which she had first been associated. Bellona’s evolution would span the course of centuries and would often exhibit times of significant overlap and confusion. Numerous aspects of the goddess would come to light, clash, bend, twist, slip away and fall back together again. One of these points of confusion and seeming contradiction would be, as we will come to see, Bellona’s role as a Fury. Rüpke wrote that Roman religion is a “chaotic system whose structures are context-bound shards” and we would do well to remember this moving forward.²⁵⁵ The following is an attempt to pick up the often disparate shards of Bellona. To hold them up to the light, piece them together, in order to create a more coherent, though ever shifting and kaleidoscopic, image of the goddess.

Sulla and Bellona – Family Politics and the Importation of Cappadocian Ma

In the 90s BC, Sulla was given a propraetorship in Cappadocia. It was there that Sulla would be first introduced to the goddess, Ma. The cult of Ma was one of, if not the most, powerful cults in the region. Pseudo Caesar describes the prominence of the cult:

...Comana venit, vetustissimum et sanctissimum in Cappadocia Bellonae templum, quod tanta religione colitur ut sacerdos eius deae maiestate, imperio, potentia secundus a rege consensus gentis illius habeatur. (Pseud. Caesar, *de Bello Alexandrino* 66)

[Caesar] arrived at Comana, at the oldest and most sacred temple of Bellona in Cappadocia, which is cultivated with such religious piety that the priest of the goddess is second only to the king in majesty, imperium and power, [and the priest] is held in consensus by the people.

Strabo corroborates Pseudo Caesar’s claim concerning the priest’s power: καὶ ἔστιν οὗτος δεύτερος κατὰ τιμὴν ἐν τῇ Καππαδοκίᾳ μετὰ τὸν βασιλέα: ὥς δ’ ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ τοῦ αὐτοῦ γένους ἦσαν οἱ ἱερεῖς τοῖς βασιλεῦσι.²⁵⁶ In Comana, nestled in the Antitaurus Mountains, the cult of Ma dominated.²⁵⁷

The exact nature of Sulla’s early encounter with the cult, however, is obscure. Although our sources are relatively thorough concerning Sulla’s military operations in Cappadocia, they are frustratingly mute in regard to any explicit connection Sulla had made to the cult during his

²⁵⁵ Rüpke, J. *Religion of the Romans*. trans. Richard Gordon. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007: 5

²⁵⁶ Strab. 12.3.32: “In Cappadocia, he [the priest] was second in rank only after the king; and, for the most part, the priests were the king’s relatives.”

²⁵⁷ Ma would also have a cult center at Pontus. See Palmer (1975): 656; Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 27.

stay. We do know, however, that Sulla's played relatively heavy hand in Cappadocian politics, particularly in regard to succession. Sulla's role in this dispute was likely what brought him in close contact with the cult. The contest for Cappadocia's throne is surmised as follows:

The death of the Cappadocian king Ariarathes VII in 101-100 BC threw Cappadocia's succession into turmoil. Mithradates of Pontus, seeing potential to extend his power in the region, installed one of his sons, who would then be known as Ariarathes, as king. Nicomedes III, king of Bithynia, challenged this claim with a claimant of his own. Both parties brought their pleas before the Roman Senate, and both were denied.²⁵⁸ Instead, the Senate favoured a Cappadocian native, Ariobarzanes.²⁵⁹ The battle for succession would soon turn violent. In response, Mithridates invaded, forcing Ariobarzanes to flee to Rome. Sulla was dispatched with an army to Cappadocia in order to forcefully restore Ariobarzanes. He was met with moderate success.²⁶⁰ Sulla succeeded in restoring Ariobarzanes' throne, but the king would be deposed yet again by Mithridates some years later.²⁶¹

Sulla's time in Cappadocia was dominated by the succession dispute. This would have meant that Sulla had personally, if not indirectly, dealt with numerous members of Cappadocia's nobility, some of which were royal claimants. If Strabo's assertion that the cult of Ma drew its high-priests from the royal bloodline is correct, and if this claim can be traced back to the beginning of the first century BC, then in all likelihood Sulla had not only heard about the cult, but had met with some of her high ranking priests during his stay. Even if Ma's priests did not yet count themselves among Cappadocia's royalty, the prominence and dominion of the cult alone would be reason enough for Sulla to have had made some form of contact with Ma during his time in Cappadocia.²⁶²

When Sulla returned from his propraetorship, he brought with him the cult of Ma.²⁶³ The importation of Cappadocian Ma was not only a sign of Rome's imperial strength and reach in the

²⁵⁸ Liv. *Per.* 70; App. *Mith.* 67; Strab. 12.2.11

²⁵⁹ App. *Mith.* 67; Justin 38.2; Strabo 12.2.11; Liv. *Per.* 70

²⁶⁰ Livy, *Per.* 70; App. *Mithr.* 61; Santangelo (2007): 4, 108

²⁶¹ App. *Mithr.* 57; Santangelo (2007): 26-7; Sherwin-White (1977): 174

²⁶² Plutarch does describe one encounter between Sulla and one of Ma's cultists. It did not occur in Cappadocia, but at Silvium in Apulia (*Life of Sulla* 27). This was from Pontus where there was also a cult center to Ma.

²⁶³ Seyrig (1970): 76 ; Palmer (1975): 655; Cumont (1906):81-2; We know that Ma entered the city as one of the freedwoman of Aulus Claudius bore the cognomen Ma on her funeral stele (*CIL* 6.15721). This freedwoman tended

East—one which could force even the most powerful foreign gods to capitulate before the city—but was also a symbol of Sulla's individual prowess. As the architect of Ma's importation, Sulla could claim the glory of her new place among Rome's pantheon for himself.

The importation of Ma into Rome must have reminded the Roman people of another, more prominent, eastern import: Magna Mater.²⁶⁴ Imported during the Second Punic War, following a slew of disturbing omens in 204 BC, the cult of Magna Mater quickly became one of the most prominent, respected and powerful in the city.²⁶⁵ Despite the eccentricities of the cult's rituals—the castrations, the trance-like states, the clanging of cymbals and loud cacophonous chanting—the Romans embraced the cult whole-heartedly. Magna Mater was viewed as a saviour, the goddess who enabled them to finally defeat Hannibal, and thus demanded respect and reverence. The goddess would claim numerous sacred spaces in Rome; the *metroon* on the Palatine, the Phrygianum near the circus of Gaius and Nero, a shrine on the circus maximus, a sanctuary at Ostia among others.²⁶⁶

There must have been some ceremony, some ritual which accompanied Ma's integration into Rome. Unfortunately, no account of this rite survives. However, if, as is typical, a procession accompanied the goddess,²⁶⁷ then doubtlessly the Roman spectators would have been reminded of Cybele's similar rite. At the very least, the Roman elite who were well versed in the Magna Mater's history would have recognized the connection immediately. By essentially reperforming Magna Mater's *evocatio*, Sulla was legitimizing Ma's new place among Rome's gods as well as capitalizing upon the prominence of the Mother Goddess for his own personal gain.

There was already a precedent for individuals claiming glory for the importation of deities. There was one Roman figure who would be credited for Cybele's *evocatio* above all others: Claudia Quinta.²⁶⁸ The sister of Appius Claudius, consul in 212 BC, was chosen to

to the temple of Bellona Victrix and was buried alongside the freedmen Publius and Appius (*CIL* 6.15724, 15730, 15759). See also Palmer (1975): 656 n.3.

²⁶⁴ Cumont (1906): 78-88; Liv. 29.10-3

²⁶⁵ Liv. 29.10-3

²⁶⁶ Platner and Ashby (1929): 323-6; Meiggs (1960): 359-60; Calza (1959): 94-5

²⁶⁷ We also know that Ma's cult in Comana included a ritualized procession, and later Ma-Bellona would serve a role as Cybele's *pedisequa* during the festival of Magna Mater (Palmer (1975): 657; Fishwick (1976): 152-4, 160; *CIL* 6.30851; *ILS* 3804).

²⁶⁸ Cic. *Cael.* 34

welcome the goddess into the city. She was revered for her character, called by Cicero the *matronarum castissima*,²⁶⁹ and thereby became an *exemplum* for Roman *matronae*. For her role in Cybele's *evocatio* and her esteemed matronly virtue, her statue was erected in the goddess' temple on the Palatine. This statue, on account of Claudia's virtue, survived two catastrophes untouched: one fire in 111 BC and another in 3 AD.²⁷⁰ Claudia's reputation would be a great boon to the Claudian *gens*, and her role in the *evocatio* of Magna Mater only heightened the *gens*' social and political position.²⁷¹ Performing a similar role as Quinta, Sulla likely desired to be individually remembered for Ma's, who was equally Anatolian, integration into the city.²⁷²

Once situated at Rome, Ma became associated with Bellona more than any other deity. Plutarch and Porphyrio offer other related connections, namely Athena or Minerva, Enyo and Diana,²⁷³ but it is Ma's association with Bellona which eclipsed all the rest. Pseudo Caesar makes the connection between Ma and Bellona explicit and modern scholars have followed in this tradition.²⁷⁴ In the few places in scholarship where Cappadocian Ma is mentioned, she is always assimilated with Bellona.

Ma's association with Bellona may have something to do with Cappadocian portrayals of the goddess. Hellenistic depictions of Ma generally have her bearing a shield, spear, or club.²⁷⁵ In previous chapters, we have already established a sacred connection between Bellona and the spear, one only reinforced through her connection to the fetial rite.²⁷⁶ A large bronze icon from Comana also depicts the goddess with shield in her right hand, a club resting on her shoulder in her left, as well as a spiked crown around her head.²⁷⁷ The military kit and weaponry point to the war goddess. But the presence of the shield could just as easily lead us to Minerva, and the club

²⁶⁹ Cic. *Har. Resp.* 13.27; Leach, E. "Claudia Quinta (*Pro Caelio* 34) and an altar to Magna Mater", *Dictynna: Revue de poétique latine*, 4 (2007): 2

²⁷⁰ After the first fire, the temple was restored by a Metellus. In 3 AD, Augustus restored the temple for a second time. Again, Augustus reifies his connection to the Claudians through his building program (Chapter 2 pg. 57-62). Val. Max. 1.8.11; Ov. *Fast.* 4.347-8; Leach (2007): 3; Platner and Ashby (1929): 324

²⁷¹ Leach (2007): 1

²⁷² Cumont, Leach, vermaseren

²⁷³ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9; Pompon. *Commentum in Horati Epistulas* 1.10.2

²⁷⁴ "Comana venit, vetustissimum et sanctissimum in Cappadocia Bellonae templum..." (Pseudo Caesar, *de Bello Alexandrino* 66). See also Seyrig (1970): 76; Cumont (1906): 81-2; Palmer (1975): 655; Kragelund, P. "Dreams, Religion and Politics in Republican Rome", *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 50. 1 (2001): 92.

²⁷⁵ Seyrig (1970): 76

²⁷⁶ See Chapter 1 pg. 19-20 and Chapter 2 pg. 56-7

²⁷⁷ Seyrig (1970): 76; SNG von Aulock 1 (1957) Pontus n^o125s

has echoes of Hercules.²⁷⁸ Cappadocian iconography, although it may push us in Bellona's direction, is not enough to solidify her claim on Ma.

Like so much to do with Bellona at Rome, we can turn to Sulla for the answer. He, like the Claudians before him, was seeking not only to glorify his ancestry through an association with a specific goddess, cult, and temple, but to rehabilitate it. Sulla's direct ancestor, P. Cornelius Rufinus, a member of the Cornelian *gens* from the *Rufi* or *Rufini* branch, was connected to the goddess.²⁷⁹ It was this Rufinus who dedicated a temple to Bellona in 290 BC. The circumstances revolving the temple's dedication, as well as the career of its dedicator, are critical in understanding Sulla's later involvement with the goddess.

Rufinus was a prominent Roman figure with a strong pedigree. His father by the same name had been dictator in 334 BC.²⁸⁰ Rufinus himself was consul twice, once in 290 BC and again in 277 BC. Aulus Gellius would also claim that Rufinus, like his father, became dictator.²⁸¹ His reputation as a gifted general grew over the course of his career. At the beginning of the third Samnite War, Rufinus was elected consul. The reputation of his victories were enough to convince even his enemy, Fabricius Luscinus, to support him in his second bid for the consulship. Fabricius, despite his distaste for the man, argued that his expertise on the field would be essential in the fight against Pyrrhus.²⁸²

The dedication of Rufinus' temple to Bellona was likely motivated by a sense of competition between himself and Appius Claudius Caecus. Their respective careers, rising at the same time, shared numerous similarities. Like Caecus, Rufinus came from a strong patrician background. Both of them fought the Samnites, both achieved two consulships and a dictatorship over the course of their respective careers. Both would be struck blind.²⁸³ By this point, Caecus'

²⁷⁸ The crown of rays around Ma's head has been connected to the sun (Seyrig (1970): 662). This connection, as well as her priests' prophetic abilities (Plut. *Life of Sulla* BLEH) and Bellona Victrix's spatial identity at Rome may have also justified her connection to Apollo. For more on Bellona's connection with Phoebus, see Chapter 2 53-5 cf. Palmer (1975): 662.

²⁷⁹ Palmer (1975): 654-7; Viscogliosi, A. "Bellona Rufilia, Aedes" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae I* (2000): 194; *CIL* 6.2234; Platner and Ashby (1929): 83

²⁸⁰ Sulla's heritage is contested, but it is probable that P. Cornelius Rufinus, dictator in 334 BC, was Publius' father by the same name (Keaveney (2005): 5).

²⁸¹ Gel. 4.8.1

²⁸² Ibid. cf. Cic. *Orat.* 2.268; Keaveney (2005): 5

²⁸³ Rufinus goes blind: Plin. *NH* 7.50.166. Caecus goes blind: Plut. *Vit. Pyrrh.* 18; Liv. 9.29.11; Diod. 20.36

family had already set a generational precedent in achieving Rome's highest offices.²⁸⁴ The Claudians were an established Republican Senatorial family, and they were wont to flaunt this prominence through numerous building projects across the city.²⁸⁵ Rufinus' ancestral prominence, on the other hand, was a little more fresh, with only his father achieving high office before him. But Rufinus was ambitious and capable. He sought to secure a name not only for himself but his family amongst the mightiest in Rome. When Rufinus dedicated a temple to Bellona Rufilia only 9 years after Appius Claudius Caecus' dedication, it could be viewed at worst as a direct threat, and at best, as a jab of friendly competition. Both temples were vowed to the same goddess during a battle against the same people by two consuls who shared similar ambitions. Rufinus had entered into a contest with Caecus, grappling with him to see who, and whose family, would rise to the top.

But Rufinus' career—and any benefit his temple of Bellona may have seen as a result of his rise—came to an abrupt end in 275 BC.²⁸⁶ Rufinus was known for his greed, and eventually it would catch up with him.²⁸⁷ Famously, Rufinus was accused of owning more than 10 *librae* of silver plate which exceeded the maximum amount a Roman Senator could lawfully own. He was swiftly expelled from the Senate on account of his crime. He would be the very first of Rome's Senators to receive this punishment, becoming an *exemplum* of bad elite behaviour for generations to come.²⁸⁸ Following Rufinus, his family saw a stark decline in political power.²⁸⁹ Although other Cornelians, namely the Scipios, would become extremely powerful in time, the *Rufini* fell into relative obscurity. None of Rufinus' line would attain the consulship again until Sulla.²⁹⁰ This decline is reflected in the historical silence around Rufinus' temple. No mention of the temple is made again in our Republican sources. Its name would only resurface with

²⁸⁴ For the Caecus' heritage and family tree, see Humm (2005): 662-3.

²⁸⁵ See Chapter 2 pg. 53-5

²⁸⁶ Gel. 4.8.1; Plut. *Life of Sulla* 1

²⁸⁷ Cic. *de Orat.* 2.268

²⁸⁸ Humm (2005): 9-12

²⁸⁹ "Of the seven patrician families who belonged to the Cornelian gens, that to which Sulla belonged, although it could boast of one colourful character, was the least distinguished...his disgrace seems to have led to the partial political eclipse of his family." The colourful character to which Keaveney refers is none other than Rufinus. (Keaveney (2005): 5) *cf.* Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 1: αὐτός τε Σύλλας ἐν οὐκ ἀφθόνοις ἐτράφη τοῖς πατράοις... τις εἰπεῖν... 'καὶ πῶς ἂν εἴης σὺ χρηστός, ὃς τοῦ πατρὸς σοι μηδὲν καταλιπόντος τοσαῦτα κέκτησαι;" "And Sulla himself was not raised in prosperous parentage....and someone said [to him]...And how could you be a good, moral man, when your father left you nothing, yet you are so rich?"

²⁹⁰ There was another Sulla, P. Cornelius Sulla Rufus Sibylla, who would become praetor and decemvir in 212 BC, but he would never achieve the consulship (Palmer (2005): 654).

discovery of a 2nd century AD inscription.²⁹¹ Ultimately, Rufinus lost in his struggle against Caecus. While the prominence and use of the temple of Bellona Victrix only grew over the course of the Republic, the temple of Bellona Rufilia was left behind, mostly forgotten.²⁹²

Sulla's sudden rise would bring the *Rufini* branch of the Cornelian *gens* back to the fore. Sulla was doubtlessly aware of his forefather's infamy and the devastating result this had on his family. He may have even harboured some resentment towards the Senate who had for so long shirked his kin. We have already seen how important it was for individual political actors to appeal to their ancestry for legitimacy. The Claudians, Aemilians and Julians are all examples we have exhausted. Rufinus' image, the most high-achieving member of Sulla's family, needed to be rehabilitated, perhaps even avenged, if Sulla wanted to compete in this highly family-centric arena. To accomplish this, Sulla turned to the goddess who had been closest to his forefather: Bellona.

Although it is yet to be physically located, Palmer argues that Sulla built yet another temple to Bellona outside of Rome's Colline gate.²⁹³ In 82 BC, at the twilight of the civil war, Sulla met a predominantly Samnite force before the gate. Being victorious, Palmer argues that Sulla had built a temple on the location of the battle. The general dedicated the temple to the goddess who, six years previous, came to him in a dream and promised him violent victory.²⁹⁴ It was this same goddess who, nearly two centuries earlier, had granted Rufinus victory against a similar enemy. This temple would soon give the region its name, the *vicus Bellonae*. By dedicating yet another temple to Bellona, following yet another Samnite defeat, Sulla was reperforming the memory of Rufinus. Sulla reminded the Romans of his connection to Rufinus, forcibly rehabilitating his ancestor's position in Roman society.

²⁹¹ *CIL* 6.2235. Although the inscription has since been lost, it has allowed us to identify the temple to which Martial refers as the temple of Bellona Rufilia (Palmer (1975): 656-7; Viscogliosi,(2000): 194).

²⁹² The responsibility for the upkeep of both the temple of Bellona Victrix and the temple of Bellona Rufilia was kept within their respective families for centuries. In the 2nd century AD, freedmen who tended these cults bore the names Claudius and Rufinus and were buried in sites not far from the temples (*CIL* 6.1282, 15721, 15724, 15730, 15759; Palmer (1975): 653-7).

²⁹³ Palmer's argument relies heavily on regional catalogue of Rome compiled in the 15th century. This catalogue is attributed to Pomponius Laetus, and it is the only piece of evidence which explicitly refers to the *Vicus Bellonae* ((1975): 657).

²⁹⁴ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9.3

Even Sulla's execution of the Samnite prisoners was an attempt to re-invoke his forefather's memory. The Samnite screams mirrored those Rufinus must have heard on the field some two hundred years ago. Sulla forced the Senate to listen to their death cries, having gathered them in the nearby temple of Bellona Victrix, which itself had been dedicated following a Samnite defeat. He did not want to allow any Senator the opportunity to turn a blind eye (or in this case, a deaf ear) to his and his bloodline's victory. In addition to re-invoking Rufinus' memory, the execution also marked a thinly veiled threat, demonstrating to the Senate how ruthless and brutal Sulla's brand of retribution could be. This threat was not lost upon the listening Senators. Plutarch writes that they were ἐκπλαγέντων, struck-out with fear.²⁹⁵ Sulla had unleashed a kind of ancestral, generational fury and it could just as easily turn from the Samnites to the Senate. This was the fury, the vengeance, of the *Rufini*.

Whatever efforts Sulla may have spent on avenging or rehabilitating Rufinus' image, Sulla's reputation as a murderer would overcome them. Very few sources mention Sulla's connection to Rufinus, and none do so in a positive light.²⁹⁶ Instead, later authors focus, perhaps unsurprisingly, on Sulla's role during the first civil war, the events which led up to it, and those which followed. Sulla's character is rarely celebrated. He is often painted as a pockmarked butcher.²⁹⁷ Seneca finds him so deplorable that he portrays Sulla drinking human blood, a reference to the blood-stained wealth he consumed following his brutal conscriptions.²⁹⁸

Unsurprisingly, Bellona herself would share in Sulla's bloody fame. She, too, became emblematic of civil war and the blood which was shed on account of it. Her blood-soaked hands in the *Thebaid* are a reminder of civil war's savagery.²⁹⁹ In Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, he describes her with bloody tresses.³⁰⁰ Her whip drips with blood.³⁰¹ She defiles an altar of the *penates* with

²⁹⁵ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 30

²⁹⁶ Plutarch opens his biography of Sulla by introducing Rufinus. This sets the tone for the rest of the biography, as Sulla's character would be portrayed as a mirror of Rufinus' more deplorable qualities (*Vit. Sull.* 1).

²⁹⁷ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 2. It was the ruddiness and uneven state of his complexion, Plutarch claims, which gave him the cognomen Sulla. This is likely untrue, as his ancestor P. Cornelius Sulla Rufus Sibylla also bore the name, but the state of his complexion no doubt reinforced his connection to the name. See also Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 31.

²⁹⁸ Sen. *Clem.* 1.12.2.5 cf. Suet. *Tib.* 59

²⁹⁹ Stat. *Theb.* 7.73, 9.297. Seneca, too, depicts Bellona with bloody hands (*Ag.* 82)

³⁰⁰ Luc. *Bellum Civile* 1.565-6

³⁰¹ Sen. *Dial.* 4.35.6.3; Verg. *Aen.* 8.703

human gore.³⁰² Horace portrays her reveling in slaughter, *gaudens Bellona cruentis*.³⁰³ Bellona, mirroring Sulla, becomes synonymous with cruel bloodshed and social breakdown.³⁰⁴

Bellona's association with civil strife becomes so distilled, so powerful that descriptions of the goddess began to mirror those of the Furies. She is consistently portrayed with whips and torches, instruments of the Erinyes.³⁰⁵ Her hair, too, would be described as loosened and disheveled—a mark of feminine mourning and madness.³⁰⁶ She kept close company with other *Dirae*, as well as Strife and Discordia.³⁰⁷ Horace mentions the goddess in the same breath as *insania*.³⁰⁸ Bellona, a Fury in her own right, was insanity incarnate.

But this depiction of Bellona as a Fury would also serve as a point of reconciliation. This depiction may have paradoxically helped the Senate justify their continued usage of the temple of Bellona Victrix in a post-Sulla Rome. Furies are only dispatched when something has gone terribly wrong.³⁰⁹ Someone has been slighted,³¹⁰ some corruption has been unleashed, something or someone has thrown the cosmos out of balance. The *Dirae* are invoked in the wake of this disruption not with the purpose of worsening the condition of the cosmos, but rather with the intent of rectifying the situation. They are unleashed upon the assailant, sent to utterly destroy the source of the unbalance, like removing a malignant cancer from an otherwise healthy body.

This role echoes the Roman idea of *ius bellum*. The Romans always acted in defence of some slight, either upon them or an ally. Their retribution matched that of a Fury. The Romans prided themselves in never relenting until either the enemy was destroyed or the affront had been resolved.³¹¹ When the Senate met in her halls to discuss potential wars, they were essentially pleading their case to a Fury.³¹² If indeed there was some slight, then Bellona, the embodiment of

³⁰² Ov. *Met.* 6.201

³⁰³ Hor. *Sat.* 2.3.223

³⁰⁴ Notably, each of the aforementioned works post-date Sulla.

³⁰⁵ Tisiphone's whip and torch: Stat. *Theb.* 7.579-81. Allecto's torch: Verg. *Aen.* 7.415. Bellona's whip and torch: Stat. *Theb.* 4.6, 11.413, *Ach.* 1.33-4; Sen. *Dial.* 4.35.6.3; Petron. *Satyr.* 124.1.256; Luc. *Bellum Civile* 7.568

³⁰⁶ V. Fl. *Argonautica* 7.363; Luc. *Bellum Civile* 1.565; Verg. *Aen.* 8.703

³⁰⁷ Verg. *Aen.* 8.700-3; Sen. *Dial.* 4.35.6.3-4

³⁰⁸ Horace *Sermones* 2.3.221-3

³⁰⁹ Georgacopoulou, S. "Les Erinyes et le Narrateur Épique ou la Métamorphose Impossible (Stace "*Theb.*" 11.576-579)", *Phoenix* 52.1 (1998):100

³¹⁰ Juno's jilted role and the summoning of Allecto in Vergil's *Aeneid* is a ready example (Verg. *Aen.* 7.324). Sulla's sensational execution could also be read as an act of familial vengeance (Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 30).

³¹¹ One only has to turn to Cato's now famous "*Carthago delenda est*" to see Roman martial retribution in action (Plut. *Vit. Cat.* 27; Plin. *NH* 15.23)

³¹² Cf. similar pleas to the furies: Verg. *Aen.* 7.324; Stat. *Theb.* 1.46-87

the Roman warrior, bearer of vengeance, would deliver swift retribution. When the Senate greeted foreign emissaries in the temple, it was a not so subtle reminder to the visitors that a Fury was watching. Her vengeance would not come meekly should whatever treaty was being ratified, whatever agreement was being made, be breached. Even if the visitors did not share the same understanding of Bellona's role as a Fury, the Senate would have been aware of her presence, and it would colour the temple's spatial identity. Bellona, as both deity of war and vengeance, seems like the natural agent to dole out the Senate's justice.

But this was a dangerous tool and Bellona's fury was fickle. As the works of Vergil, Ovid, Statius, Seneca among others clearly demonstrate, Bellona's rage could easily turn inward. To echo Rüpke, Bellona's role as a Fury was "context-bound."³¹³ Depending on the situation, Bellona's nature as a Fury could either be a boon or a curse. At times, she was the aggressor of instability, at others, she was Rome's deliverer. It is precisely this malleability, however, which allowed the Senate to justify her temple's continued use.

When later authors looked back, it is unsurprising that they focused on Sulla's, and by extension Bellona's, brutality. But what is important to note is that Sulla's initial usage of the goddess was very much in keeping with an established Republican tradition which focused on the re-memorizing and veneration of the ancestors.³¹⁴ It would only be later when the Romans were reflecting upon the savagery of Sulla's reign that Bellona would gain her bloody reputation.

Bellona and the East

Bellona's association with Sulla paved the way to her transformation into a goddess of tumult, chaos, blood and social upheaval. But this association would also have an equally impactful secondary effect. Bellona's syncretism with Ma, one initially motivated by Sulla's desire to legitimize himself and his family, would permanently alter the goddess' path. Despite her roots as an Italian goddess, and as a goddess who, from the 3rd century BC, became closely linked with Rome's most quintessential institution, the Senate, Bellona would in time become an Eastern goddess. Not only would her cult practices come to reflect this change, particularly in

³¹³ Rüpke (2007): 5. Notably, Rüpke was not discussing Bellona specifically, but Roman deities in general.

³¹⁴ Even Bellona's epithet, *Rufilia*, would only later come to be associated with 'blood-red'. Initially, the epithet was nothing more than a marker of her ties to the *Rufini* (*contra* Palmer (1975): 654). It was only later, after the importation of Eastern blood rites and Sulla's violent career, that the epithet would carry a more sanguine connotation.

regard to self-harm and blood-letting, but she would also become very closely associated with other prominent eastern deities in Rome, namely Magna Mater, Attis, and Isis.

The sources which detail the cult practices of Bellona come only relatively late. The name of her cult, the *hastiferi*, fitting given the goddess' sacred connection to the spear, would only surface in the 3rd century AD.³¹⁵ All evidence of their existence is explicitly epigraphic. What can be deduced from these inscriptions, however, is that the cult was relatively wide spread and seemed to be connected to the military. Inscriptions bearing the *hastiferi* name have been found in Africa, Germany and at Ostia.³¹⁶ The proliferation of these inscriptions seems to indicate a surge of Bellona's cult activity from the 3rd century AD onward. The mention of the Bellona's cultists in Juvenal and Martial seems to corroborate that, at the very least, Bellona's cult was not unpopular during the imperial period. It is unclear if the *hastiferi* were the only cult dedicated to Bellona as no other evidence of named cults of the goddess survive.³¹⁷

What does survive, however, are earlier accounts of specific Bellona related rituals. Again, these fall relatively late in Bellona's trajectory in Rome, dating from the Augustan period at the earliest.³¹⁸ The most detailed account comes to us from Tibullus:

*Est mihi divino vaticinata sono.
Haec ubi Bellonae motu est agitate, nec acrem
flammas, non amens verbera torta timet;*

³¹⁵ Some have tried to argue, namely Hepding and Graillot, that Bellona's *hastiferi* can be attested as early as the 1st century BC (Hepding, H. *Attis, seine Mythen und sein Kult. Gieszen: J. Ricker'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903: 69-72; Graillot, H. "Le Culte de Cybele", Revue des Études Anciennes. 18.3 (1916): 278-80*). Hepding argues that Lucretius refers to them in the *de Rerum Naturae* when the poet describes Cybele's procession. Lucretius' mention of those carrying the rods and symbols of their violent fury, *telaque praeporant violenti signa furoris*, led Hepding to conclude that these were Bellona's *hastiferi* (*de Rerum Naturae* 2.621; Fishwick (1976): 149; Hepding (1903): 69). However, nowhere in the poem does Lucretius mention Bellona by name while he does not hesitate to either name Cybele outright or make oblique references to the goddess (*de Rerum Naturae* 2.611, 620, 630). There is not enough evidence provided by Lucretius to conclude that the *telaque violenti signa furoris* are anything more than a reference to the instruments used by Cybele's—and not Bellona's—priests during their castrations and self-harm rituals. More conclusive evidence for Bellona's participation in the procession will only come later, through Juvenal's description of Cybele's procession (this time including the priests of Bellona), the discovery of inscriptions bearing the *pedisequa* name from the imperial period, and the epigraphic evidence of the *hastiferi* which only emerges at the beginning of the 3rd century AD (Juv. *Sat.* 4.124, 6.512; *CIL* 6.30851; *ILS* 3804; Calza 200 n. 2, 3, 5; *CIL* 12.1841; 13.7317, 8184 respectively. See also Fishwick (1976): 153 n.81). I would prefer to err on the side of caution and I would not attempt to date the *hastiferi* conclusively before the 3rd century AD when stronger evidence begins to surface.

³¹⁶ Fishwick (1976): 155

³¹⁷ Notably, when Tibullus, Plutarch, Martial or Juvenal mention Bellona's priests, none of them use the term *hastiferi*. The term *bellonarii*, another possible cult name, surfaces only in a medieval work by a scholiast of Horace (*Sat.* 2.3.223). Again, the only conclusive cult to Bellona remains the *hastiferi* and it is only attested epigraphically.

³¹⁸ Tib. *Elegiae* 1.6.44-55; Juv. *Sat.* 4.124, 6.512; Mart. *Epigrammata* 12.57; Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 27

*Ipsa bipenne suos caedit violenta lacertos
 sanguineque effuse spargit inulta deam,
 statque latus praefixa veru, stat saucia pectus,
 et canit eventus, quos dea magna monet:
 'Parcite, quam custodit Amor, violare puellam,
 ne pigeat magno post didicisse malo.
 Adtigerit, labentur opes, ut vulnere nostro
 sanguis, ut hic ventis diripiturque cinis.'
 et tibi nescio quas dixit, mea Delia, poenas (Tib. Elegiae 1.6.44-55)*

To me, as a prophet, she spoke with a divine sound.
 Wherever the matters of Bellona were shaken with agitation,
 the one lost in trance [the priestess] feared neither piercing flame nor twisted words;
 Her violent double sided axe fell upon her own lacerations,
 Unharmd, she spattered the goddess with gushing blood,
 And she stands with pierced side, she stands with wounded breast,
 and she began singing, and the great goddess revealed this:
 'Spare the girl whom Amor guards, violate the girl,
 and the goddess will be moved to give you greater woes.
 Touch her and [your] wealth will seep away, just as the blood from my wounds,
 just as this ash is ravaged by winds.'
 And I do not know the punishments which she said for you, my Delia

Tibullus brings to our attention numerous aspects of Bellona's cult, each of which deserve pause. Firstly, the priestess is in a state of ecstasy. She is *amens*, feverish and beyond herself. The emphasis on the priestess' state of mind is in keeping with Bellona's connection to madness. As much as this echoes Horace's later association of the goddess to *insania*, this maddened state also reflects the chaos of the battle-field, the moment of bloodshed, and the *misceo* in which Bellona revels.³¹⁹

This trance-like state allows the priestess to utter prophecy, making her *vaticana*. Bellona's connection with prophecy could very well be an eastern import. In his *Life of Sulla*, Plutarch tells us that a priest of Ma stopped Sulla at Silvium, foreseeing the defeat of the general's enemies.³²⁰ Plutarch is clear in attributing to the priest a Pontian origin. Bellona's prophetic abilities would reveal themselves again, as she later visited Sulla in dreams, promising him victory.³²¹ The Romans themselves seemed to recognize a connection between Bellona and prophecy as Plutarch tells us that they met in the temple of Bellona Victrix in order to discuss

³¹⁹ See Chapter 1 pg. 29

³²⁰ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 27

³²¹ Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9

numerous ill-omens.³²² Bellona's prophetic abilities must have intensified her connection to Apollo, her twin who was famed for his foresight, but ultimately these abilities saw their roots in the East.³²³

In this fevered, prophetic state, Tibullus' priestess takes a *bipennis* to her limbs, letting her own blood pour out onto an altar to the goddess. The axe is a marked weapon in a Roman context. The typical Roman kit did not include axes. The Romans typically fought with spears, javelins, swords and shields. Even iconography which depicted Bellona generally had her outfitted in typical martial fashion, with a shield and spear rather than a double-sided axe.³²⁴ Notably, there were some uses for axes in Roman society as the *fasces* demonstrates, but this axe was only one-sided. The inclusion of the double-sided axe in Bellona's cult activity, particularly in light of Bellona's already established connection to the spear or Roman military kit more generally, is striking.

The *bipennis* has two possible origins, none of which are Roman. The first is, unsurprisingly, Eastern.³²⁵ The Eastern Mediterranean tradition of the double-sided axe can be traced as far back as the Minoan period. At Knossos, in the Priest-King's chambers, multiple axes of this kind were found, leading many to believe that they served a religious purpose.³²⁶ They have also been connected to an early Minoan cult to the Mother Goddess, which would be highly appropriate given Bellona's later affiliation with Cybele.³²⁷ The Cretan goddess, Dictynna, also wielded two dual-bladed axes.³²⁸ The Minoans, it is believed, inherited the axe from Lydia.³²⁹ Plutarch tells us that the Lydians called this axe a *labrys*, and this may be the

³²² Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 7

³²³ See Chapter 2 pg. 53-5 and Palmer (1975): 657. Bellona's foresight may have also had Etruscan ties. For this, see Chapter 1 pg. 16.

³²⁴ Seyrig (1970): 77

³²⁵ Vaughan (1959): 170; Gimbutas (1953): 52

³²⁶ Vaughan (1959): 170. Concerning the proliferation of these axes at Knossos, Vaughan writes: "...so many, in fact, that the two lower floors are known as the Lower and Upper Halls of the Double Axes" (171).

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 170-5

³²⁸ Also called Britomartis: Call. *Hymn 3 to Artemis* 188; *Orphic Hymn 35 to Artemis*; Paus. 2.30.3, 3.12.8, 3.24.9; Strab. 10.4.12, 13; Philostr. *V. A* 8.30; Diod. 5.76.3; Aristoph. *Ran.* 1359; Ant. Lib. *Met.* 40. Dictynna is also a name that comes to be associated with Diana and the moon amongst Roman authors (Ov. *Met.* 2.543-4; Apuleius, *The Golden Ass* 11.5ff; Rabinowitz, J. "Underneath the Moon: Hekate and Luna", *Latomus* 56.3 (1997): 539), a connection which Bellona also shares. In the Greek world, there were numerous shrines to Artemis Dictynna, only heightening the connection to the hunter goddess: Paus. 3.14.2, 24.9. For Bellona and the moon, see Plut. *Vit. Sull.* 9; Fishwick (1967): 152. Bellona's connection to the moon may also strengthen her association to madness, or lunacy.

³²⁹ Vaughan (1959): 174; Drews (1972): 47

origin of our labyrinth, as the infamous Minotaur was famed to brandish one.³³⁰ The use of the double axe can also be attested during the same period in Anatolia, the birth place of Ma.³³¹

It is also possible that the *bipennis* found its way to Rome from Etruria.³³² This would not be the first case in which Etruscan elements penetrated Bellona's cult. When describing the temple of Bellona Victrix, Ovid tells us that it was dedicated in the *Tusco bello*, leading some to believe that Appius Claudius Caecus brought the goddess to Rome from the region.³³³ Plutarch also mentions that Etruscan wise men were consulted in the temple of Bellona Victrix in order to help them decipher ill-omens. The *bipennis* could be yet another Etruscan intrusion into the cult, as the weapon was used for religious purposes and as an early symbol of military command in Etruria.³³⁴ Whatever the case, the *bipennis* was not a Roman weapon, but an import of some kind.

Tibullus also alludes to Bellona's vengeful nature. The priestess promises Tibullus that his wealth will ebb away, *opes labentur*, should he continue in his pursuit of Delia.³³⁵ The goddess is capable of punishments, *poenas*. The threat of divine retribution echoes Bellona's association to the Furies, a topic which we have already explored.³³⁶

Many of the elements of Bellona's cult, the majority of which seem distinctly foreign, are shared between the cult of Bellona and Magna Mater. Perhaps the most obvious connection is in self-mutilation. Martial compares the barbarity of his barber's techniques to the lacerations of the cult of Cybele: *Alba minus saevis lacerantur bracchia cultris, / cum furit ad Phrygios enthea turba modos*. "Less savage are the blades of the cult who lacerate their arms, when the enthralled mob rages at Phrygia."³³⁷ Like the priestess of Bellona, the cultists of Cybele take blades to their

³³⁰ Drews (1972): 47; Plut. *Aetia Graeca*, 45 (*Moralia* 301F-302A)

³³¹ Gimbutas (1953): 52

³³² Drews (1972): 46. In turn, the Etruscans themselves shared numerous cultural aspects with peoples from Asia Minor (Drews (1972): 46). The question then becomes whether the Romans, through their expansion into the east, came in contact with the *bipennis* at that point, or if it was indirectly passed to them from the East through an Etruscan vector. More than likely, it was a combination of the two.

³³³ This possibility is discussed in Chapter 1 pg. 16

³³⁴ Drews (1975): 42-5; 5 Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.61 where Tarquinius Priscus is given twelve axes.

³³⁵ Tib. *Elegiae* 1.6.55

³³⁶ See Chapter 3 pg. 77

³³⁷ Mart. *Epigrammata* 11.82.3-4

arms during ecstatic fits of worship. Even the weapon of choice, the double-sided axe in Bellona's case, may also be an allusion to the Great Mother.³³⁸

The musical instruments which the two cults used were also shared, a connection which would also draw a related god, Attis, into the group. Both the cultists of Cybele and Bellona made use of cymbals and drums, *cymbala* and *tympana*.³³⁹ Catullus' 63rd poem, an ode to Attis, makes heavy reference to the instruments.³⁴⁰ Juvenal paints the priests of Magna Mater and Bellona shouting in the streets together, clanging their cymbals and beating their drums. It is not difficult to imagine that the wailing which Martial complained about was also accompanied by similar instruments.³⁴¹

The connection between Bellona and Cybele would become so strong that Bellona would eventually serve a role in Magna Mater's ritual procession.³⁴² There are some inscriptions which describe the goddess as the *pedisequa*, the footman, of Magna Mater.³⁴³ Bellona's new epithet not only reinforces her martial nature as a protector-warrior, but also alludes to her participation in Cybele's annual ritualized procession, a role shared with Attis.³⁴⁴

Like the relationship between Apollo and Bellona from the previous chapter, the goddess' relationship to Magna Mater and Attis would become set in stone. There was a shrine to Bellona in the sanctuary of Magna Mater at Ostia, very near to the temple of Attis.³⁴⁵ A shared spatial identity emerged between the three deities, one which is maintained over the course of the Imperial period and reiterated through their shared cult functions.

Bellona would come to develop a shared spatial identity with yet another eastern import, Isis. Dio tells us of a shrine to Bellona which was accidentally destroyed on the Capitoline

³³⁸ Vaughan (1959): 174. This may also point to a connection with Eastern cults to Artemis, through her connection to Britomartis.

³³⁹ *Cymbala*: Cat. 63.21, 29; Lucr. *de Rerum Naturae* 2.619; Ov. *Fast.* 4.213 *Tympana*: Cat. 63.8-9, 21, 29, 32; Lucr. *de Rerum Naturae* 2.619; Ov. *Fast.* 4.213; Juv. *Sat.* 6.59

³⁴⁰ Cat. 63.8-9, 21, 29, 32.

³⁴¹ Mart. *Epigrammata* 12.57

³⁴² Ma also had a ritual procession at Comana (Fishwick (1970): 142; Palmer (1975): 656).

³⁴³ *CIL* 6.30851; *ILS* 3804; Fishwick (1976): 153

³⁴⁴ Juv. *Sat.* 6.59

³⁴⁵ Meiggs (1960): 359-60; Calza (1959): 94-5

Hill.³⁴⁶ This shrine was located right beside the temple of Isis and Serapis, likely destroyed in 48 BC when Octavian did his best to remove the goddess from the city. This was no doubt on account of her connection with Cleopatra, his Egyptian nemesis.³⁴⁷ In addition, the temple of Bellona Rufilia was located on the same street as another temple to Isis and Serapis.³⁴⁸ These spaces became pockets of eastern-influenced cultic activity at Rome.

In addition to Cybele, Attis and Isis, Bellona would also come to be connected to Diana. Again, this is likely on account of the influence of eastern cults to Artemis, which were also prolific in Anatolia.³⁴⁹ It remains unclear if the two goddesses celebrated comparable rites, however, there are significant similarities between the two. Both goddesses were connected to the moon. This can be seen both in our literary sources and in visual depictions of the deities.³⁵⁰ Like Bellona, Diana was a vengeful and punishing goddess. One only has to recall the accidental gaze of Actaeon, or the unintentional pregnancy of Callisto, to see the goddess' wrath.³⁵¹ Diana, too, possesses the potential for social instability. A goddess of the unbridled wild, she represents a world without civic order.³⁵² In the *Thebaid*, Statius would even depict Diana wielding a whip, chasing the stars away.³⁵³

Bellona's connection to eastern, primarily female,³⁵⁴ deities brought the goddess into close contact with a dangerous and potentially socially disruptive kind of femininity. Diana's capacity as an inverter of society has already been detailed.³⁵⁵ Isis' threat, when keeping in mind her connection to Cleopatra, seems obvious—she is the embodiment of the Hellenized, overly

³⁴⁶ Cass. Dio 42.26. Bellona's connection to human blood is made clear here again, as Dio reports that jars of human gore came spilling out of the shrine when it was destroyed.

³⁴⁷ Orlin (2008): 232.

³⁴⁸ Palmer (1975): 654

³⁴⁹ Seyrig (1970): 77; Mattingly, H. "Artemis of Troy", *G&R* 7.2 (1960): 114

³⁵⁰ Plut. *Vi t. Sull.* 9; Pompon. *Commentum in Horati Epistulas* 1.10.2 Fishwick (1967): 152

³⁵¹ Ov. *Met.* 3.241-50 and 2.466-495 respectively.

³⁵² D'Ambra, E. "Daughters of Diana: Mythological Models in Roman Portraiture", *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary Volumes, Vol. 7* (2008): 171, 175

³⁵³ Statius does not explicitly name Diana here, writing only *soror ignea Phoebi*, the fiery sister of Phoebus (Stat. *Theb.* 8.271). This twin *moto fugat astra flagello*, or chases away the stars with the flick of her whip (8.274). Perhaps Statius is purposely confounding the imagery of Bellona and Diana, collapsing the goddesses into one another, forcing the reader to recall both deities at once.

³⁵⁴ Although Attis is not explicitly female, I would include him amongst these deities on account of the fluidity of his gender which often leans to the feminine. Throughout Catullus 63, for example, the poet refers to Attis using feminine participles following the castration (6-11).

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

lavish East which so often tempts and destroys good Roman men.³⁵⁶ The threat to Roman masculinity, and by extension society as a whole, only continues in the cults of Magna Mater and Attis. These two deities demanded the ritualized castration of their priests. The femininity, exoticism and danger of these deities bound them together, an aspect which Juvenal would reflect. In his infamous sixth book of his *Satires*, the one in which he labours the destructive tendencies of women, he essentially produces a long list of Eastern deities. In order, he mentions Isis, Bellona, Cybele and Attis, all while explicitly noting the over-extravagance, the lasciviousness, of the East.³⁵⁷

Despite their dangerous potential, the Romans seldom shunned these cults. In fact, it was quite the opposite as many of these cults enjoyed great popularity. Perhaps the Romans believed that anything so fearsome and powerful demanded their respect, or maybe it was precisely the thrill which these cults provided that made them so attractive.³⁵⁸ Regardless, Bellona slowly became connected with a dangerous kind of feminine exoticism. Coupled with Bellona's connections with civil war, the Furies, Discordia and Strife, Bellona's femininity only contributed to her danger, her potential for societal destruction.

There is another aspect which binds these deities together and requires much further investigation: blood. Post-Sullan mentions of Bellona are seldom made without gore's presence; her hands, hair, and whip drip with blood fresh from slaughter.³⁵⁹ Her priestesses lacerate themselves with axes, covering her shrines in their own blood.³⁶⁰ The cult of Cybele shares in the self-mutilation of their limbs.³⁶¹ Priests dedicated to Attis and the Great Mother perform self-castrations.³⁶² Priestesses of Isis would perform a *lustratio* around the goddess' temple, crawling on their hands and knees until they were raw, leaving a trail of blood in their wake.³⁶³

³⁵⁶ Hor. *Od.* 1.37; Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 10, 25, 27, 29, 31; Orlin (2008): 232

³⁵⁷ Juv. *Sat.* 6. 296-303, 489, 510-6

³⁵⁸ The cult of Isis enjoyed great popularity at Rome throughout the Republic and Empire, despite Augustus' hatred of Cleopatra (Orlin (2008): 231).

³⁵⁹ Stat. *Theb.* 7.73, 9.297; Sen. *Agamemnon* 82; Ovid, *Met.* 5.155.

³⁶⁰ Tib. *Elegies* 1.6.49

³⁶¹ Mart. *Epigrammata* 11.84

³⁶² Cat. 63.5; Lucr. *de Rerum Naturae* 2.621; Juv. *Sat.* 6.214

³⁶³ Juv. *Sat.* 6.18-30

The presence of blood has always been an integral part of Graeco-Roman religion. It is a religion, if it is even right to quantify such activity as ‘one religion’, founded on sacrifice. The sight of blood upon altars to the gods was not only common, but welcomed. But blood had a dual-sided power. It could harm and protect, purify and corrupt in equal measure.³⁶⁴ Such a powerful tool required strict parameters in order to contain and mitigate its more dangerous effects. Sacrifice became heavily regulated; only certain victims were permitted, particular actors allowed to perform the rite, and a slew of incantations, votives, incenses, poultices and ointments were necessary accompaniments. Each deity required their own idiosyncratic rites, and each demanded that their varied steps be performed identically and to perfection, each time, lest the rite, actors present, and even society as a whole, be corrupted.

Even if each of these requirements were met, there was still the possibility of corruption. Like so much in Roman life, space and boundaries were critically important. Should the blood expelled from the victim spill outside of some prescribed confine—typically an altar or container of some kind—the rite was considered violated. Should the blood splatter a bystander, or priest, the ritual was stopped, a series purification rites performed, and the initial ritual was performed yet again, from the very beginning, in the hopes that the ire of the god could be avoided.³⁶⁵ Blood, while a necessary component of many Roman rites, could only be spilled in specific contexts and within the bounds of highly regulated spaces.³⁶⁶

One fundamental taboo, reinforced by numerous scholars of ancient Mediterranean religion more broadly, is the presence of human blood or sacrifice in Roman ritual. Lennon, and many would support him in this, states that “the offering of human victims represented the antithesis of traditional Roman religious values”.³⁶⁷ And for good reason, too. In the *Aeneid*, it is a human sacrifice which opens the poem and forewarns the reader of a cosmos which has been twisted, corrupted, inverted.³⁶⁸ Tullia’s offering of her father’s flesh to the *penates* curses her for life.³⁶⁹ Even instances in which Romans performed human sacrifices (although the use of the

³⁶⁴ Lennon (2013): 90

³⁶⁵ Lennon (2013): 96; Jos. *AJ* 19.87; Suet. *Calig.* 57.4

³⁶⁶ “It has the power to be either beneficial or dangerous depending upon the context of its presence and the role ascribed to it in any specific scenario.” (Lennon (2013): 91)

³⁶⁷ Lennon (2013): 92, 109

³⁶⁸ Verg. *Aen.* 1.109-23 *cf.* 10.517-20; 11.81-2

³⁶⁹ Liv. 1.48.7, 59.13

term ‘sacrifice’ is debated in these contexts), they were extremely careful to avoid any human bloodshed, opting instead for live burials.³⁷⁰ Seemingly, there was no context, no space, in which the presence of human blood was permitted in Roman ritual.³⁷¹

But for many cults, predominantly ones which were heavily easternized like those of Cybele and Isis, the presence of human blood was essential to cult functioning. The repeated and standardized nature of these rites—the castrations, the *lustrationes*, the lacerations—read just as rigidly regulated as any sacrifice of a sow to Ceres or a lamb to Mars.³⁷² Moreover, these were not fringe cults on the periphery of Roman society. The cult of Cybele was one of the most prolific civic cults in Roman history, and the presence of ritualized human bloodletting was a foundational aspect to her worship.

The presence of acceptable human bloodshed in these rituals forces us as scholars of Roman religion to expand our views on human blood taboos in Roman society. In many ways, scholarship has come very close to accommodating human blood’s presence. On his chapter on blood, Lennon reiterates the importance of context and space in sacrifice.³⁷³ This model is still very much applicable to human bloodshed. Human blood—like all blood—was an acceptable form of sacrifice only if certain requirements were met. The rites of Isis, Cybele, Attis and Bellona demonstrate that there were specific contexts, and regulated spaces, in which the shedding of human blood is not only acceptable, but required.

There are two possible aspects of these cults and their rituals which may have made the presence of human blood more permissible in a Roman mindset. Firstly, as has already been perhaps exhaustively established, each of these cults were heavily influenced by the East. In the Roman imagination, the East has always stood as a symbol for opulence, over-indulgence, and effeminacy. Eastern peoples were strange in their ways, their animal-faced gods, their dishes, their strange barley-beers. Their way of life seemed to fundamentally oppose and undermine Roman societal values who prided themselves in their restraint, their estheticism, and adherence

³⁷⁰ Lennon (2013): 111; Beard, North and Price (1998): 81

³⁷¹ The widely accepted exception is the *devotio* in which Roman generals would sacrifice themselves (Livy 8.9.1–10; Plin. *NH* 28.3.12). The historicity of such rites, however, is heavily debated. See Lennon (2013): 114; Beard, North and Price (1998): 35–6; Dumézil (1966): 94

³⁷² Cato the Elder, *de Agricultura* 134, 141

³⁷³ Lennon (2013): 91, 101

to law. And yet Rome was absolutely titillated by the East. They imported their art in droves, mimicked their architectural techniques, filled their brothels with their women and their boys and made room for their gods alongside their own. The presence of human blood in these Easternized cults could have been understood as an extension of the East's dangerous, and yet ever alluring and enticing, exoticism.

The second aspect concerns the precise nature of these cults' blood rites. Notably, in each of the aforementioned cults—Bellona, Cybele, Attis and Isis—the wounds were self-inflicted. Tibullus' priestess draws the blade across her own limbs as do fanatics of Cybele in Martial's *Epigrammatica*.³⁷⁴ In Catullus 63, Attis is the agent of his own castration.³⁷⁵ No external blade touched the priestess of Isis' flesh, but it is her own crawling and scraping which draws the blood from her limbs.³⁷⁶ The self-inflicted nature of their wounds may have made these rites more amenable to Roman sensibilities. The *devotatio*, famously regarded as nearly the sole exception to Rome's aversion to human sacrifice, was also understood as ritualized suicide.³⁷⁷

But this is not to say that Bellona received a *carte blanche* in her association with human blood. There is clearly something unsettling and ominous about Bellona drowning an altar of the *penates* with gore.³⁷⁸ Again, the importance of context and space is paramount. When Bellona sheds blood in a space which was not permitted—if the bloodshed was not self-inflicted and directed solely upon an altar of hers—then this was a clear act of corruption. Sulla misuses space and context when he essentially sacrifices some 3,000 Samnites outside of Bellona's temple. Bellona, like blood itself, harboured the potential to corrupt or to purify. The result—corruption or purity—ultimately depended on context and space.

Conclusion

Bellona's trajectory was long, bloody and ultimately malleable. She began her life at Rome as a deity of war and victory, but her connection to Sulla's family would bring significant changes to the goddess. Initially, Sulla's relationship to the goddess was very much in keeping

³⁷⁴ Tib. *Elegiae* 1.6.49; Juv. *Sat.* 6.512; Mart. *Epigrammata* 11.84

³⁷⁵ Cat. 63.5

³⁷⁶ Juv. *Sat.* 6.18-30

³⁷⁷ Lennon (2013): 114

³⁷⁸ Ov. *Met.* 5.155

with Republican tradition. He turned to a goddess who had a relationship to his forsaken ancestor, P. Cornelius Rufus, and attempted to create some sort of familial cult around the deity in the same way that the Claudians regarded Bellona Victrix. Sulla attempted to avenge and rehabilitate his family's position in Roman society through the goddess, particularly through her syncretism to a powerful Eastern goddess, Ma.

Bellona's connection to Ma would further alter Bellona's path, solidifying her connection with blood. She would develop a close relationship with other Eastern deities of her kind, namely Magna Mater, Attis and Isis. Many times, this relationship would be reflected in the topography of the city. In addition to bringing Bellona closer the East, the connection to these deities would also bring her cult closer to human bloodshed. Human blood, although largely taboo in the context of Roman religion, was not only accepted, but demanded within these cults.

Conclusion

Bellona was a goddess of war. Her “shards”, as Rüpke calls them, were many and their meanings diverse.³⁷⁹ She encapsulated every facet of Roman warfare, from the warrior, the general, the battlefield and the triumphs, to the bloodshed, the retribution, the chaos. Over the course of this diachronic survey, we have seen Bellona, aided in great part by the Claudians, rise to the rank of a goddess inextricable from the Senate and the functioning of the state. Her temple, as well as the *columna bellica* and the temple of Apollo Medicus Sosianus, formed the war-making complex of the Republic. She became a goddess whose justice was exacting, and was entrusted, particularly from a military perspective, with maintaining the social balance of the Roman world. This was a role which required sound, albeit at times brutal, judgement, contrary to her usual affiliation with madness. Bellona’s familial connections also led her to Sulla, who attempted to rehabilitate the memory of his ancestor, P. Rufinus Cornelius, and largely failed. But where the general failed to make a lasting impact with Rufinus, he would succeed in his relationship with Bellona. The memory of Sulla’s brutality, in combination with the syncretism to Ma, also initiated by Sulla, would alter the course of Bellona’s trajectory forever. She became closely linked to savagery and grew ever closer to largely foreign and feminine deities like Cybele, Attis, and Isis. She would rarely be depicted without the presence of human blood, forever flirting with the line between purity and corruption. She was driven mad, largely undifferentiable from civil war and the chaos which it brings.

While the image presented throughout has been diachronic and has presented a deceptively smooth, mostly unproblematic, evolution, we should be careful to not over-simplify our view of the goddess. Bellona could possess and move through any of the aspects, any of the “shards”, presented above, if only given the opportunity, or rather the context, to do so.³⁸⁰ Naturally, at times she would exhibit one more than the other, but she would never lose the capacity to exhibit each. Even in the later work of the *Thebaid*, written at a point in her trajectory where she was largely associated with chaos and exoticism, her association with governance and the Senate were not forgotten. Although she largely played the role of a harbinger of civil war, and by extension, chaos, the opening to book 4 indicates that Statius was aware of, and willing to

³⁷⁹ Rüpke (2007): 5

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

evoke, Bellona's old association with the Senate and her role in war's governance. He depicts her performing the fetial rite, a rite which, should we believe Augustus, had been performed outside her temple for centuries. With the opening mention of Apollo, Statius transports the reader to the Campus Martius and we are reminded of almost every military decision made at Rome. In short, Bellona was as much Sabine as she was Cappadocian. She was an agent of chaos and stability in equal measure, could purify just as readily as she could putrify. Bellona's aspects were iron-clad prisons, but rather liquid parameters. This malleability is not exclusive to the goddess alone, but demonstrative of the overarching fluidity of Roman religion as a whole.

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