

THE SERVIAN ENCEINTE: SHOULD THE DEBATE CONTINUE?²*

From the beginning of scientific investigation of the City of Rome in Antiquity the question of existence – or inexistence – of a continuous ring of fortifications surrounding her in the Late Archaic period has had significance far exceeding simple fact-finding. The calling in question, soon followed by the definite exploding of the traditional dating of the ‘Servian Wall’, the remains of which are still visible in several parts of the City, to the times of the last kings, became one of the decisive arguments of the sceptics who rejected the image of ‘la grande Roma dei Tarquini’ reflected in the literary sources and, in consequence, denied to the said sources historical value. In fact, if the Romans of the last generations of the Republic, when the earliest of the extant literary texts were written, wrongly dated the greatest, the most important and the most conspicuous element of the City’s landscape of their day, it is most doubtful that they possessed any reliable information on the Archaic period. Needless to say, the reverse holds as well: if it can be shown that the ancients were right as to the existence of a wall preceding that which surrounded the City in their day and whose mid-Republican dating was sufficiently well-documented to be known by those who cared about accuracy on this point, there is no reason why they should not have been right on at least some other matters pertaining to the regal period. The Archaic predecessor of the ‘Servian Wall’ has thus become a test case in a controversy, ideological no less than strictly methodological and historiographical, that is the quarrel about the credibility of the ancient tradition on early Rome.¹

* This paper is a part of the research project financed by the Polish National Science Centre, DEC-2013/09/B/HS3/00615. I would like to thank Gabriele Cifani for many a fruitful discussion of the subject.

¹ See A. Grandazzi, *La fondation de Rome. Réflexion sur l'histoire*, Paris 1991, for a classic analysis of the controversy, and T.J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome. Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000–264 BC)*, London-New York 1995, 1–30; idem, ‘The value of the literary

Today, with the other test case, the great Capitoline temple, alternatively dated to the 4th century still at the turn of the Second Millennium,² dropped from the sceptics' armoury after the excavations carried out for the Grande Giubileo demonstrated without a shadow of a doubt that the construction of the enormous podium and the concomitant radical transformation of the hill's form took place in the Late Archaic period,³ it is the main battleground of hypercritics and their adversaries.

In 2012 an article came out with an evocative title 'Continuing the debate on Rome's earliest circuit walls'.⁴ The author, Seth Bernard, thus explains why he wrote it: 'While the circuit's date and shape may be long debated, a return to the topic of the age of the walls seems appropriate now for two reasons. First, the last several decades have produced an increasing amount of data through new archaeological discoveries as well as through the collation of archival material from earlier excavations: an *aggiornamento* to the question is in order. Second, and importantly, this study is made timely by the fact that a consensus of sorts recently has started to form around the idea that a full circuit wall surrounded Rome already in the sixth century BC'.⁵ Since the author does not present any new data that do not figure in the latest update he quotes,⁶ the first reason is not obvious at all, which means that we must turn to the second – the disquieting consensus on the existence of a full enceinte in Late Archaic period – as the paper's *raison d'être*. The

tradition concerning Archaic Rome' in K.A. Raaflaub (ed.), *Social Struggles in Archaic Rome. New Perspectives on the Conflict of the Orders. Expanded and updated edition*, Malen-Oxford-Victoria 2005, 47–74, for an excellent presentation of the evidence and related problems, especially concerning the literary tradition.

² J. Poucet, 'Les grands travaux d'urbanisme dans la Rome "étrusque": libre propos sur la notion de confirmation du récit annalistique par l'archéologie', in *La Rome des premiers siècles. Légende et histoire. Actes de la table ronde en l'honneur de Massimo Pallottino*, Firenze 1992, 215–234, concisely repeated in J. Poucet, *Les rois de Rome. Tradition et histoire*, Bruxelles 2000, 231–234 (ostensibly non-committal but in reality firmly in the sceptical camp, see the next note); R. Ross Holloway, *The Archaeology of Early Rome and Latium*, London-New York 1994, 8–10; E. Gabba, 'La Roma dei Tarquini', *Athenaeum* 86 (1998), 5–12.

³ A. Mura Sommella, 'Le recenti scoperte sul Campidoglio e la fondazione del Tempio di Giove Capitolino', *RPAA* 70 (1997–1998), 57–79; eadem, "La grande Roma dei Tarquini". *Alterne vicende di una felice intuizione*', *BullCom* 101 (2000), 6–26; A. Danti, 'L'indagine archeologica nell'area del tempio di Giove Capitolino', *BullCom* 102 (2001), 323–346; F. Lugli, S. Brincatt, 'Le tombe dell'età del Ferro e l'attività metallurgica dall'età del Ferro al periodo arcaico', *BullCom* 102 (2001), 307–320. Undaunted, in a paper read on 27 March 2006 Jacques Poucet still maintains that 'la vérité est qu'il n'y a rien dans le dossier archéologique qui permette de dater avec certitude au VI^e siècle ces impressionnants vestiges' (J. Poucet, 'Les rois dits étrusques, ou la lente émergence de l'Histoire', *FEC - Folia Electronica Classica* 12 [2006]); but on this particular matter his is today a lone voice.

⁴ S. Bernard, 'Continuing the debate on Rome's earliest circuit walls', *PBSR* 80 (2012), 1–44.

⁵ Bernard, 'Debate on Rome's walls', 1–2.

⁶ G. Cifani, *L'architettura romana arcaica. Edilizia e società tra Monarchia e Repubblica*, Roma 2008, see below, p. 164.

subsequent sentence makes this clear: 'This paper sets to return to a more circumspect approach to the question of the date of Rome's early circuit wall, and, after reviewing the evidence, I side against the existence of a full circuit until the mid-Republic'.⁷ In what follows I shall try to show that whereas Bernard surely achieved his immediate goal – after the coming out of his paper it cannot be said that the consensus exists – there is no reason for the debate to continue.

* * *

The present-day debate on the existence of Archaic circuit fortifications in Rome, while reaching back to the 19th century,⁸ really began with the final demonstration by Tenney Frank that the partially visible 'Servian Wall' built essentially of blocks of Grotta Oscura tuff, quarried in the area which became Roman possession only after the fall of Veii in 396 B.C., must be attributed to the construction works mentioned by Livius after the Gallic sack under 378 and 353 B.C.⁹ This wall, however, was not built entirely of this material. At various points much smaller blocks of the local cappellaccio were found;¹⁰ and this tuff was the main building material only in Archaic and Early Republican constructions. These remains had already been assigned to the original enceinte of the kings by Heinrich Jordan and Esther Van Deman;¹¹ Frank, however, argued that they dated from the same period

⁷ Bernard, 'Debate on Rome's walls', 2.

⁸ H. Jordan, *Topographie der Stadt Rom in Alterthum* 1.1, Berlin 1878, 201–271; O. Richter, *Über antike Steinmetzzeichen (Programm zum Winckelmannsfeste der Archäologischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin 45)*, Berlin 1885.

⁹ T. Frank, *Roman Buildings of the Republic: an Attempt to Date Them from Their Material* (PAAR 3), Rome 1924. See Liv. 6.32.1 (378 B.C.): ... *postquam quietae res ab hostibus erant, celebrari de integro iuris dictio et tantum abesse spes veteris levandi fœnoris, ut tributo novum fœnus contraheretur in murum a censoribus locatum saxo quadrato faciundum* ('since there was peace from the enemies, justice started to be administered anew and there was no hope for any relief from old debts the more so as new debts were incurred to pay the levy to construct a new city-wall of square blocks contracted by the censors'), and 7.20.9 (353 B.C.): ... *legionibusque Romam reductis reliquum anni muris turrisque reficiendis consumptum* ... ('after the return of the legions to Rome the rest of the year was spent on repairing walls and towers').

¹⁰ As usual with pre-Republican remains in Rome, most of these finds, made between the Risorgimento and the outbreak of the First World War, almost exclusively on the Quirinal and in the Esquiliae, are poorly documented (see below, p. 169). See G. Säflund, *Le mura di Roma repubblicana* (AIRRS 4° 1), Lund 1932; G. Lugli, 'Le mura di Servio Tullio e le cosiddette Mura Serviane', *Historia. SAC* 7 (1933), 3–45; G. Cifani, 'La documentazione archeologica delle mura arcaiche a Roma', *RömMitt* 105 (1998), 359–389. As to the fragments of walls of small blocks of cappellaccio superimposed by large blocks of Grotta Oscura tuff, still visible in the western slope of the Palatine, sometimes interpreted as a section of city-walls, it has ever been obvious to the majority of specialists that they were buttressing walls, not fortifications; see P. Quoniam, 'À propos du mur dit de Servius Tullius', *MEFR* 59 (1947), 41–64; F. Castagnoli, 'Note sulla topografia del Palatino e del Foro Romano', *ArchClass* 16 (1964), 173–199.

¹¹ Jordan, *Topographie*, 252–253; E. Van Deman, 'Methods of Determining the Date of Roman

as the rest of the walls, pointing out that blocks of cappellaccio, of inferior quality but cheaper than any other material and as such widely used in building constructions throughout the Republic, usually turn up in less important parts of the wall, foundations and interior retaining walls of the Agger, a huge rampart (ca. 1400 metres long, ca. 40 metres wide and ca. 6 metres high, plus a ditch of corresponding dimensions) running N-S across the Esquiline plateau, forming a sort of artificial hill-side protecting the eastern districts of the City, undefended by nature.¹² Frank's argument was further elaborated by Gösta Säfllund, the author of the only exhaustive monograph of the 'Servian Wall', who explained the occasional presence of cappellaccio blocks in the wall's courses by repairs and reinforcements carried out after the Trasimene disaster in 217 B.C. (Liv. 22.8.6–7) and during the siege of Rome by C. Marius and L. Cornelius Cinna in 87 B.C. (App. BC 1.303). In his view, under the kings the fortifications of Rome consisted of the Agger, a simple earth rampart and a ditch defending the City from the plateau to the East, and possibly of separate defences of particular hills.¹³ The chief supporter of the opposite view, Giuseppe Lugli, counted no less than seventeen segments of the wall where, in his view, the use of cappellaccio preceded that of Grotta Oscura tuff, arguing that they strongly suggest the existence of the Archaic enceinte.¹⁴ Most importantly, he observed that in the wall, the cappellaccio blocks are usually multiples of the so-called Osco-Italic foot of 27.2 cm, used chiefly in Archaic period, whereas the Grotta Oscura blocks were cut to the standard of Attic/Roman foot (29.6 cm), prevalent from the Middle Republic onwards.¹⁵

A new bout of the debate was opened by Pierre Quoniam's interpretation of a section of a wall in cappellaccio superimposed by blocks of Grotta Oscura west of the church of Santa Sabina on the Aventine as remains of the Archaic city-wall.¹⁶ Before his day these remains were hardly taken into consideration in the discussion because of the then prevailing view that this hill, left outside the pomerium, must have been included within the city-walls only after the Gallic disaster.¹⁷ The chief importance of his study lay in the observation that on the Aventine the blocks of cappellaccio underlying those of Grotta Oscura tuff were recut to adopt them to the latter's greater width, which proves that originally

Concrete Munuments', *AJA* 16 (1912), 230–251, 387–432.

¹² Frank, *Roman Buildings of the Republic*, 117–118.

¹³ Säfllund, *Le mura di Roma*, *passim*.

¹⁴ Lugli, 'Le mura di Servio Tullio'; idem, *I monumenti antichi di Roma e suburbio. II: Le grandi opere pubbliche*, Roma 1934.

¹⁵ Lugli 'Le mura di Servio Tullio'.

¹⁶ Quoniam, 'À propos du mur dit de Servius Tullius'.

¹⁷ See eg. S. Platner, Th. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, Oxford 1929, 66 n.1 s.v. *Aventinus mons*: 'There are ... no traces in this section [of the Servian wall] of any construction earlier than 390 B.C.'.

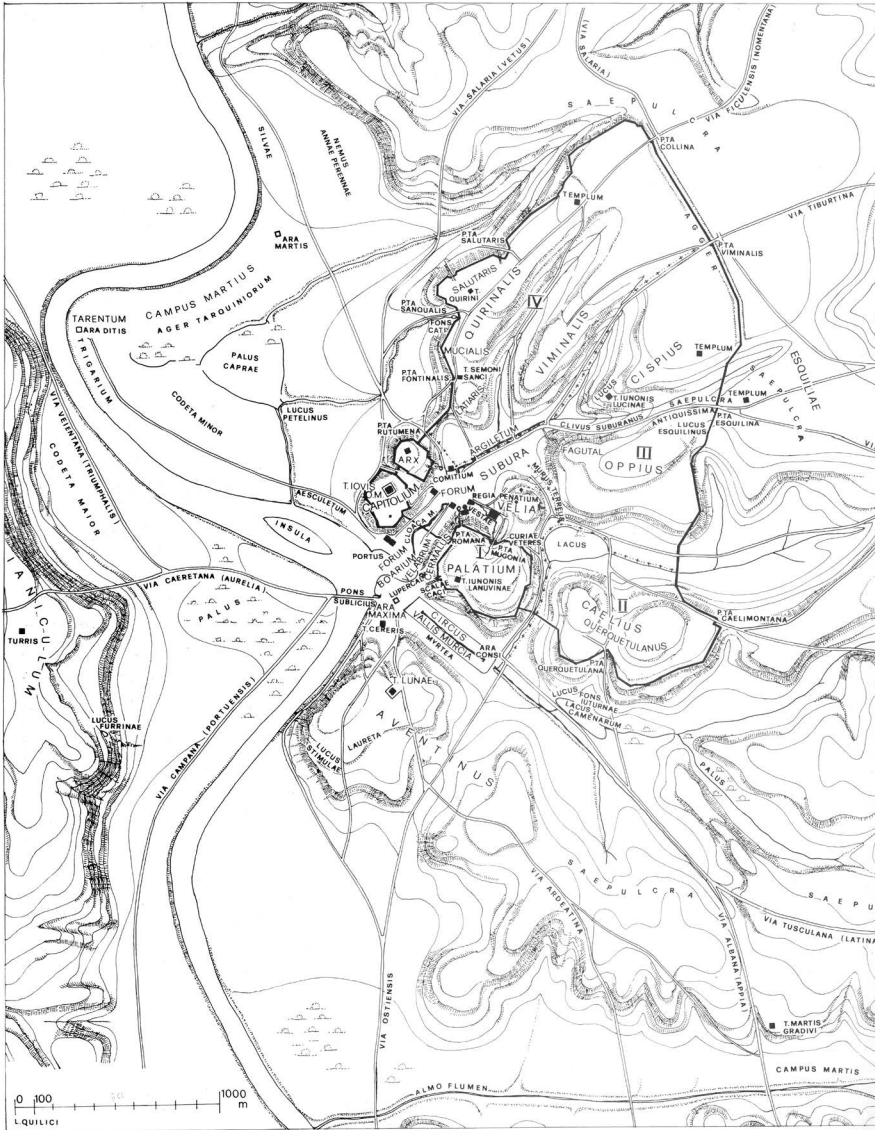


Fig. 1. Rome and her immediate surroundings at the end of the Archaic age. From: *La grande Roma dei Tarquini*, 34 fig. 4 (Lorenzo Quilici).

they had been used in a construction antedating the 'Servian Wall', surely the enceinte of the kings.

Quoniam's argument and conclusions were critically assessed by Gjerstad.¹⁸ His main argument, though, was not archaeological but antiquarian. In his view, the original intimate connection of the pomerium and the city-walls rules out the possibility of the Aventine having been included within the fortifications of the Archaic city.¹⁹ Without the Aventine evidence Lugli's dossier on the existence of an enceinte predating the fourth-century 'Servian Wall' could be countered using Säföund's argumentation or simply ignored as based on inadequately published reports: in this way Gjerstad, in his argument, disposed of most of the data on possible Archaic fortifications on the Quirinal. What was left were a few possibly Archaic sections of walls of cappellaccio of unsure purpose (buttressing walls? fortifications?) on the Palatine and the Capitol, and the earth mound of the Agger, ie. the same evidence on the basis of which Säföund had excluded the existence of a continuous city-wall under the kings. Gjerstad, however, in spite of his rejection of Quoniam's reasoning concerning the Aventine, arrived at the conclusion that the pre-4th century circuit wall after all did exist. This time his argument was based on common sense: as he put it, 'in view of the enormous work represented by the agger across the eastern table-land it is difficult to imagine that the hills would not have been connected by much shorter earth-walls, in particular considering the much better system of fortification thus obtained'.²⁰ He envisaged the following system: from the east, where nature gave no defence, Rome was protected by the Agger; elsewhere protection was assured by the steepness of the slopes of the hills, in some places strengthened with artificial walls, and by short earth-walls and ditches linking the hills across the valleys which lay between them, thus creating an unbroken line of fortifications, man-made and natural, all around the City.

This conclusion notwithstanding, Gjerstad's study quickly became the mainstay of the enemies of the Archaic enceinte theory.²¹ They found it in his

¹⁸ E. Gjerstad, 'The Agger of Servius Tullius', in *Studies presented to D.M. Robinson*, Saint Louis 1951, 412–422; idem, 'The Fortifications of Early Rome', *OpuscRom* 1 (1954), 50–65; idem, *Early Rome 3: Fortifications, Domestic Architecture, Sanctuaries, Stratigraphic Excavations* (AIRRS 4°, 17:3), Lund 1960, 26–44; idem, *Early Rome 4: Synthesis of Archaeological Evidence* (AIRRS 4°, 17:4), Lund 1966, 349–357.

¹⁹ Gjerstad, *Early Rome* 3, 44. This opinion is shared by a number of defenders of the Archaic predecessor of the 'Servian Wall', including Lugli and today Lorenzo Quilici; see the latter's map of Rome at the end of the monarchy in M. Cristofani (ed.), *La grande Roma dei Tarquini. Catalogo della mostra*, Roma 1990, 34, ill. 4 (here ill. 1).

²⁰ Gjerstad, *Early Rome* 3, 44.

²¹ A. von Gerkan, 'Zur Frühgeschichte Roms', *RhMus* 100 (1957), 82–97; H. Riemann, 'Beiträge zur römischen Topographie', *RömMitt* 86 (1969), 103–121; R. Thomsen, *King Servius Tullius. A Historical Synthesis*, Copenhagen 1980, 220–226.

argument concerning the chronology of the Agger. Against all his predecessors, positive that it dated from the second half of the 6th century B.C., i.e. from the days of Servius Tullius and the younger Tarquinius in traditional chronology, Gjerstad pointed out that all that previous studies of its dating had established is that it predated the construction of the 'Servian Wall' of Grotta Oscura blocks in 378–353 B.C. As to its *terminus ante quem non*, he established it on the basis of a fragment of a red-figure Attic *kylix* found in the Agger, dated by John Beazley to 520–470 B.C., most probably to 490–470 B.C.,²² emphasizing against the possible objection that one small pottery sherd is not sufficient for dating the huge rampart of Archaic Rome, that the date it provides 'is confirmed by the written records dealing with the construction of the agger'.²³ The corroboration he alluded to were the dates of the reigns of Servius Tullius and Tarquinius Superbus, to whom the Roman tradition ascribed the construction of the Agger, in Kirsten Hannell's controversial chronology which he adopted as his own, ca. 500–470 B.C. and 470–450 B.C. respectively.²⁴ Needless to say, for other scholars, who rejected the impossibly low chronology of the Swedish school, this 'corroboration' was worthless. There remained the fact that an early 5th-century sherd had been found in the mound dated by our written sources to the second half of the 6th century B.C., seemingly exploding the Archaic dating of the Agger. What is more, considering that we know nothing about any works on Rome's fortifications during the first century of the republic, the 'Servian Wall' of the second quarter of the fourth century B.C. appeared to be the earliest all-round defense of the City.

This conclusion quickly met reaction. Ferdinando Castagnoli pointed out that Gjerstad's argument against the 6th-century dating of the Agger is very weak since one small sherd could easily be posited there in one of repairs which an earth mound would frequently require.²⁵ Decisive in his view was another consideration: if by the end of the 6th century B.C. other Latial cities (Ardea, Satricum, Lavinium) had been surrounded on all sides by stone walls, the same must be true of Rome.²⁶ Last but not least, there remained Lugli's observation, never squarely faced by Gjerstad, that whereas the Grotta Oscura blocks were cut to the standard of the Roman foot, in those of cappellaccio the Osco-Italic foot was used. By the

²² Gjerstad, *Early Rome* 3, 40; Gjerstad, *Early Rome* 4, 353.

²³ Gjerstad, *Early Rome* 4, 4, 354.

²⁴ Gjerstad, *Early Rome* 5, *passim*, esp. 206–215, 365–379; idem, *Early Rome 6: Historical Survey* (AIRRS 4°, 17:5), Lund 1973, 142–203. See A. Momigliano, 'An Interim Report on the Origins of Rome', *JRS* 53 (1963), 95–121 [104].

²⁵ F. Castagnoli, 'Note di topografia romana', *BullCom* 74 (1951–52), 44–56 [50]; idem, 'Sulla tipologia degli altari di Lavinio', *BullCom* 77 (1959–1960), 145–172 [150 n. 10].

²⁶ F. Castagnoli, 'Roma arcaica e i recenti scavi di Lavinio', *ParPass* 32 (1977), 340–355 [347–348]; idem, 'Aspetti urbanistici di Roma e del Lazio in età arcaica', in *150 Jahre des Deutsches Archäologisches Institut 1829–1979*, Mainz 1979, 133–142 [141].

early nineties the view that cappellaccio fragments of the 'Servian Wall' and the mound of the Agger are vestiges of the first Archaic enceinte of Rome, attributed by our tradition to the two Tarquinii and Servius Tullius, clearly ruled the field.²⁷

The sceptical stance returned in force with the coming out of Tim Cornell's synthesis.²⁸ Although in the latest text in which he touches on the subject his position is agnostic rather than overtly critical,²⁹ I shall examine his arguments one by one, not only because his is the most comprehensive case against the existence of a complete Archaic enceinte in recent literature on the subject, but chiefly because his criticism as a whole, or single points he made, are still being quoted by others.³⁰ Needless to say, I shall also have recourse to evidence which appeared after the coming out of Cornell's book, which may not be quite fair to the author, but my target is not him but the view he defended. He starts his argument with the statement that particular bits of material evidence put forward by the defenders of both views - like the wall of cappellaccio at Santa Sabina and the sherd of a red-figure cup in the Agger - are inconclusive. What we have for sure is the 'Servian Wall', certainly built after the Gallic disaster, and the Agger, considerably earlier but impossible to date more precisely. These facts have to be confronted with arguments drawn from historical sources and from analogy with other cities.

The historical argument in favour of the existence of an Archaic enclosing wall, of which the Agger would have been a part, is the unanimous opinion of written sources; the argument against it is the ease with which the Gauls captured the City after their victory at the Allia. The latter has a long and venerable tradition: it was put forward to explain the course of events in 390 B.C. by, among others, Ettore Pais, Gaetano De Sanctis, Andras Alföldi³¹ and even by Christian Hülsen.³² Cornell concurs with his illustrious predecessors stating that 'the behaviour of the Romans before and during the Gallic raid can be explained only on the assumption that the city was virtually defenceless'.³³ If so, however, how can

²⁷ See e.g. M. Guitoli, 'Le città latine fino al 338 a.C. L'urbanistica', *Archeologia Laziale* 6 (1984), 364-381; F. Coarelli, *Il Foro Boario*, Roma 1988, 237-244; idem, 'Demografia e territorio', in *Storia di Roma*, 1: *Roma in Italia*, Torino 1988, 317-339; G. Cifani, 'Aspetti dell'edilizia romana arcaica', *StEtr* 60 (1994), 185-226.

²⁸ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 198-202.

²⁹ T. Cornell, 'Livy's Narrative of the Regal Period and Historical and Archaeological Facts', in B. Mineo (ed.), *A Companion to Livy*, Oxford 2015, 255 n.7.

³⁰ See e.g. Ch.J. Smith, *Early Rome and Latium: Economy and Society c. 1000 to 500 BC*, Oxford 1996, 151-154; Bernard, 'Debate on Rome's walls'.

³¹ E. Pais, *Storia di Roma*, Torino 1898-99, 1, 348-349; G. De Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani* 2, Firenze 1953-68, 1, 380, 2, 161; A. Alföldi, *Early Rome and the Latins*, Ann Arbor 1965, 321-322.

³² Cited by Samuel Platner in Platner-Ashby, *Topographical Dictionary*, 352 n. 1: the Romans would have been ordered to dismantle the original Archaic fortifications constructed under the kings by Porsenna's order.

³³ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 200.

we account for the unanimity with which literary sources provide Rome of the kings with a complete walled circuit? Cornell, while admitting that this unanimity deserves to be taken seriously, maintains that what the sources actually say is that all the kings except Numa Pompilius contributed to the defences of the City either by fortifying new additions or by strengthening the existing fortifications; the penultimate king is credited only with the construction of the Agger. In his view, the sources combine two elements: a probably genuine tradition connecting the Agger with the name of Servius Tullius and an unfounded assumption that *at every stage of its development* [Cornell's emphasis] the City was surrounded by fortifications. The final conclusion - not stated explicitly but implicit throughout his argument - is that in the light of the literary tradition Archaic Rome lacked all-round fortifications: it was defended from the most vulnerable north-eastern direction by an earth mound and a ditch, elsewhere relying on natural defences of particular hills.

The analogy with other Italian cities - says Cornell - leads to the same conclusion. The fact that Lavinium had a complete circuit of stone walls in the 6th century B.C. is meaningless as the argument for the existence of a similar enceinte in contemporary Rome. Lavinium was a tiny place compared with the Roman giant; if, therefore, we want our analogy to be legitimate, we should set Rome against cities of the same order of magnitude, in Italy and elsewhere. The author points out that in the Greek world the situation was too varied to prove anything; if, however, we look at the major Etruscan cities, especially at Rome's closest neighbours, Veii, Caere and Tarquinii, none of which equipped herself with walls before the close of the 5th century B.C., the odds are against the idea that Rome possessed such an enceinte a hundred years earlier. The final verdict is that 'the situation in the Etruscan cities tips the scales against the idea that Rome was completely surrounded by walls in the sixth century. On the other hand, there are good grounds for accepting the link between Servius Tullius and the so-called *agger*'.³⁴

The weightiest reproach against Cornell's argument is that he disposes too easily of the archaeological evidence, even that existing a quarter of a century ago. Conceding that one tiny sherd is not necessarily indicative of the post-Archaic date of the Agger is not enough to balance his almost total disregard of the weighty dossier in favour of the existence of the enceinte preceding the 'Servian Wall'. The discussion of the only point in this dossier he takes into consideration is obviously unsatisfactory. In his words, 'the trouble with this theory [that courses of *cappellaccio* are remains of a wall built by the kings] is that the best-preserved section of the earlier fortification in *cappellaccio* occurs on the Aventine ... But we know that

³⁴ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 202.

the Aventine was outside the sacred boundary of the city in the time of Servius'.³⁵ As can be seen, he does not question Quoniam's finding; he also admits that at the time of Servius the wall and the pomerium need not have coincided, 'surprising though that may seem'.³⁶ If so, however, one does not understand why he fails to accept, or at least face, the inference that if the extrapomerial Aventine had been fortified by a wall of cappellaccio before the construction of the fourth-century 'Servian Wall', similar remains underlying courses of Grotta Oscura blocks on the Quirinal, in the Esquiliae and on the Capitol, must once have been parts of the same early defences.

A separate question is the validity of the objection that the extrapomerial position of the Aventine rules out its being included in the Archaic predecessor of the 'Servian Wall'. As we have seen, Cornell does not consider it sufficiently strong to reject Quoniam's reasoning on its basis alone: but Lugli and Gjerstad – both partisans of the existence of the full circuit wall in the Archaic period – did, followed by others who keep repeating it until today as the argument against this hill being embraced by the circuit. The argument is the etymology of the term pomerium in ancient sources (*post-moerium* [from *post murum*], *pone muros*, *promoerium/promurium*).³⁷ Since, however, we know that the Aventine remained outside the pomerium till the middle of the 1st century A.D., i.e. more than four hundred years after the construction of the mid-Republican wall which surely embraced that hill, without apparently raising any misgivings, they are obliged to add that originally (ie. when? under Romulus or Servius?) the link between the pomerium and the city-walls would have been more intimate than in 'historical' times (thus explicitly Gjerstad).³⁸ This argument presupposes occult knowledge and so can safely be discarded; it is also inconclusive in the light of the only sure, functional definition of the pomerium copied by Gellius from the augural books: *pomerium est locus intra agrum effatum per totius urbis circuitum pone muros regionibus certis determinatus, qui facit finem urbani auspici* (Gell. NA 13.14.1).³⁹ In my opinion, the clinching historical argument for the inclusion of the Aventine in the Archaic enceinte is provided by the course of events in the revolutionary years 456–449 B.C. The *lex sacrata* of 456 B.C., by virtue of which the plebeians usurped the

³⁵ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 199.

³⁶ *ibid.*

³⁷ A useful précis with bibliography in P. Catalano, 'Aspetti spaziali del sistema giuridico-religioso romano. Mundus, templum, urbs, ager, Latium, Italia', in *ANRW* 2.16.1, Berlin - New York 1978, 440–553 [479–488].

³⁸ Gjerstad, *Early Rome* 3, 44.

³⁹ 'Pomerium is a place within the territory defined by the augurs, marked out with unmistakable boundary lines along the whole circuit of the City, which forms the limits of the urban auspices'.

Aventine for habitation,⁴⁰ would have made no sense whatsoever if this hill had been left outside the city-walls; in that case, the plebeians, instead of creating a secure anti-Establishment fortress within, would have shut themselves out of the City. Equally uncomprehensible would have been the sequel: the decision on the part of the moderate wing of the patricians to reach an understanding with the plebs and the fact that the counter-revolutionaries who in 449 B.C. overthrew the decemvirs, were nevertheless obliged to come to terms with the secessionist plebeians shut up on the Aventine.⁴¹

The *sacco di Roma* argument is worthless in spite of all the great names that endorsed it in the past. Even the most powerful fortifications are of no avail when defenders are lacking; and after the rout at the Allia, in which Rome had surely engaged, and lost, most of the manpower at her disposal, there would not have been enough warriors to man the walls eleven kilometres long. It is true that according to a part of our sources the Roman casualties were not heavy; but it suffices to observe that even according to this fanciful and self-contradictory account, clearly invented to provide Camillus with an army for his spurious victories, the majority of soldiers were supposed to have miraculously escaped to the right bank of the Tiber and find shelter in Veii, not in Rome.⁴² Besides, there is a good antiquarian evidence, unspoil by patriotic inventions of later Roman writers, that after the Gallic disaster the Romans were oppressed by the fear of *oliganthropia*, a clear indication of a great loss of citizen life at the Allia.⁴³

Turning to Cornell's treatment of the literary tradition concerning Rome's fortifications, the opening observation that in our sources, 'as each king made additions to the city, he adjusted the defensive circuit accordingly',⁴⁴ is broadly correct (see, however, below). The next link in his chain of reasoning is the contention that, in the Roman tradition, the enceinte grew piecemeal, achieving the full circuit only with the construction of the *agger*, as in the accounts of Dionysios and Strabo, the only two he discusses in some detail: 'the two authors partly state and partly imply that the rest of the circuit was already complete before Servius' time'.⁴⁵ In fact, this view can be detected in Strabo's description of Rome's

⁴⁰ The so-called *lex Icilia de Aventino publicando*: Liv. 3.31.1, see 3.32.7; Dion. Hal. 10.31–32.

⁴¹ The course of events in mid-5th century Rome, see De Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani* 2, 38–53.

⁴² As in the case of the decemvirate, the best modern analysis of the battle at the Allia and its aftermath is still De Sanctis, *Storia dei Romani* 2, 157–161.

⁴³ A. Ziolkowski, *The Temples of Mid-Republican Rome and Their Historical and Topographical Context*, Roma 1992, 69; idem, 'La scomparsa della clientela arcaica: un'ipotesi', *Athenaeum* 87 (1999), 369–382 [380–381].

⁴⁴ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 200.

⁴⁵ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 201, see 320.

growth⁴⁶ and to an extent in Livius, who, while agreeing that it was Servius who *aggere et fossis et muro circumdat urbem* (1.44.3), ascribes to his predecessor a project to surround the City with a stone wall which would have fortified the hitherto undefended districts, apparently never started because of the outbreak of the war with the Sabines.⁴⁷ Dionysios, however, nowhere speaks about Servius' 'filling gaps' in the city-wall. On the contrary, he says something entirely different: the City is surrounded with a stone wall first by Tarquinius Priscus (καὶ τὰ τεῖχη τῆς πόλεως αὐτοσχέδια καὶ φαῦλα ταῖς ἐργασίαις ὄντα πρῶτος περιλαβὼν ὠκοδομήσατο λίθοις ἀμαξιαῖσις εἰργασμένοις πρὸς κανόνα [3.67.4:])⁴⁸ and then by Servius Tullius: Ὁ δὲ Τύλλιος, ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ἐπταλόφους ἐνὶ τείχει περιέλαβεν... (4.14.1).⁴⁹ One thing is certain: the Roman tradition knew, rightly or wrongly, of an ideally unitary undertaking that was the creation of a system of fortifications embracing all of Rome, which it assigned either to Servius Tullius or to the Tarquinii. It is this tradition which, to quote Cornell once again, 'deserves to be taken seriously'.

⁴⁶ Strabo 5.3.7 (C 234): Οἱ μὲν γε πρῶτοι τὸ Καπιτώλιον καὶ τὸ Παλάτιον καὶ τὸν Κουιρίνον λόφον ἐτείχισαν, ὃς ἦν οὗτος εὐεπιβατός τοῖς ἐξωθεν ὥστ' ἐξ ἐφόδου Τίτος Τάτιος εἷλεν ἐπελθὼν, ἡνίκα μετῆι τὴν τῶν ἀρπαγείσων παρθένων ὕβριν· Ἄγκος τε Μάρκιος προσλαβὼν τὸ Καίλιον ὄρος καὶ τὸ Ἀβεντίνον ὄρος καὶ τὸ μεταξὺ τούτων πεδίον, διηρημένα καὶ ἀπ' ἀλλήλων καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν προτετελισμένων, προσέθηκεν ἀναγκαίως· οὔτε γὰρ οὕτως ἐρυμνοὺς λόφους ἐξω τεύχους ἔασαι τοῖς βουλομένοις ἐπιτειχίσματα καλῶς εἶχεν, οὔθ' ὅλον ἐκπληρῶσαι τὸν κύκλον ἴσχυσε τὸν μέχρι τοῦ Κουιρίνου. Ἦλεγξε δὲ Σερούιος τὴν ἑκλειψιν, ἀνεπλήρωσε γὰρ προσθεῖς τὸν τε Ἡσκυλῖνον λόφον καὶ τὸν Οὐμῖναιον. Καὶ ταῦτα δ' εὐέφοδα τοῖς ἐξωθεν ἐστὶ· διόπερ τάφρον βαθεῖαν ὀρύξαντες εἰς τὸ ἐντὸς ἐδόξαντο τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐξέτειναν ὅσον ἐξαστάδιον χῶμα ἐπὶ τῇ ἐντὸς ὀφρὺ τῆς τάφρου, καὶ ἐπέβαλον τεῖχος καὶ πύργους ἀπὸ τῆς Κολλίνας πύλης μέχρι τῆς Ἡσκυλῖνας. ('Anyhow, the first founders fortified the Capitol, the Palatine and the Quirinal hill, the last having been so easy to ascend for those from the outside that Titus Tatius took it at the first assault at the time when he came to avenge the outrage of the rape of the maidens. Ancus Marcius added the Caelian hill and the Aventine hill, together with the plain between them, separated both from one another and from those previously fortified, driven by necessity; it was in fact neither a good thing to leave hills so well defended by nature outside the walls for those who would want to use them as strongholds against the City, nor was he able to fill out the whole circuit as far as the Quirinal. Servius, however, detected this defect, for he filled out [the circuit] by adding both the Esquiline and the Viminal hill. And since these two are too easily accessible from without, for this reason [the Romans] dug a deep ditch gathering the earth on its inner side, and raised a mound for not less than six stadia on the inner face of the ditch, and built on it a wall with towers from the Colline to the Esquiline Gate.')

⁴⁷ Liv. 1.36.1: *muro quoque lapideo circumdare urbem parabat, cum Sabinum bellum coeptis intervenit* ('he was likewise preparing to surround the City with a stone wall when the Sabine war thwarted the undertaking'); Liv. 1.38.6: *muro lapideo, cuius exordium operis Sabino bello turbatum erat, urbem, qua nondum munitur, cingere parat* ('he planned to gird the City, in places where it was not yet fortified, with a stone wall, the task whose beginning had been disturbed by the Sabine war').

⁴⁸ 'and he was the first to have the city walls, previously of cheap and careless construction, built with stones of enormous dimensions, regularly worked'.

⁴⁹ 'Tullius, having surrounded the seven hills with a wall...'. See discussion in Thomsen, *King Servius Tullius*, 218–222.

There remains the argument from analogy. Cornell undoubtedly scores a point when he says that the mere appearance of circuit walls in Lavinium and other Latial cities is hardly relevant to the matter in question, 'because like is not being compared with like',⁵⁰ even though he overlooks similarities in construction techniques revealed by the comparison of courses of cappellaccio in the 'Servian Wall' with remains of Archaic fortifications individuated in Lavinium, Ficana and Castel di Decima.⁵¹ The main trouble, however, is that his own argument, namely, that the situation in major Etruscan cities argues against the existence of an Archaic enceinte in Rome, suffers from the same weakness. It is true that, as an urban community, 'Servian' Rome belonged to the same category as Veii, Caere and Tarquinii; but her geomorphology, the factor of prime importance in the matter of fortifications, was so unique as to render void a reasoning like that chosen by Cornell: if they had no fortifications, Rome did not need them either. The Etruscan cities, situated on single plateaux with steep, well-nigh vertical slopes apart from necks which joined them with the surrounding territory, might long have dispensed with full city-walls thanks to the natural impregnability of their 'promontorial' sites; Rome, from her earliest days spread on two ridges separated by a wide valley, and by the end of the monarchy extending over eight (or nine if we include the Aventine) individual major geomorphological formations, could never afford such a luxury. In reality, we know now that their magnificent natural defences notwithstanding, the great cities of South Etruria provided themselves with circuits of fortifications still in the Archaic Age: Veii, Rome's closest Etruscan neighbour and most formidable enemy, as early as the beginning of the 6th century;⁵² Tarquinii only slightly later,⁵³ Caere (where archaeological excavations are practically impossible) some time during the same century.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 200.

⁵¹ Guaitoli, 'Le città latine fino al 338 a.C.'; Cifani, 'Aspetti dell'edilizia romana'.

⁵² F. Boitani, 'Nuove indagini sulle mura di Veio nei pressi della Porta Nord-Ovest', in *La città murata in Etruria*, 135–154; F. Boitani, S. Neri, F. Biagi, 'Le più antiche fortificazioni di Veio (scavi 2003–2011)', *ScAm* 19.2–3 (2013), 160–162. Cornell relied on an antiquated estimate in J.B. Ward-Perkins, 'Excavations beside the North-West Gate at Veii', *PBSR* 27 (1959), 38–79; idem, 'Veii. The Historical Topography of the Ancient City', *PBSR* 29 (1961), on which see now R. Cascino, 'Gli scavi Ward-Perkins a Porta Nord-Ovest', in R. Cascino, U. Fusco, Ch. Smith (eds), *Novità nella ricerca archeologica a Veio. Dagli studi di John Ward-Perkins alle ultime scoperte. Atti della Giornata di Studi*, Roma 2015, 107–108.

⁵³ G. Baratti, M. Cataldi, L. Mordeglia, 'La cinta fortificata di Tarquinia alla luce della nuova documentazione', in *La città murata in Etruria, Atti XXV Convegno di Studi Etruschi ed Italici*, Pisa-Roma 2008, 155–169.

⁵⁴ M. Cristofani, G. Nardi, M.A. Rizzo, *Caere 1: Il parco archeologico*, Roma 1988, 85 (dating based on similarity of building technique of exposed fragments of the city-wall and the Archaic temples of the city); O. Cerasuolo, 'L'organizzazione del territorio di Cerveteri e dei Monti della Tolfa a confronto con l'agro tarquiniese (prima età del Ferro-età alto arcaica)', in F. Cambi (ed.), *Il ruolo degli oppida e la difesa del territorio in Etruria: casi di studio e prospettive di ricerca*, Trento 2012, 121–172 [122–123]; V. Bellelli, 'Le mura di Caere: una introduzione', in idem (ed.), *Caere e Pyrgi: il territorio, la viabilità e le fortificazioni*, Pisa-Roma 2014, 37–61, esp. 50–52.

If they did, Rome could not but follow suit. Cornell's decisive evidence *contra* turns out to be decisive (at least in my opinion) evidence *pro*.

The necessity of artificial defences all around Rome is amply demonstrated by the building of the Agger, whose dating to the Archaic period is today contested by no one; as we have seen, Cornell also accepts the link between it and the archetypal 'Servius Tullius'. The point is, however, that - as clearly perceived by Gjerstad - the Agger made sense only as an element of a system. West and south of it, between the eminences which made up the City, there were too many gaps - between the Capitol and the Palatine (Velabrum), between the Palatine and the Aventine (Circus Maximus), between the Aventine and the Caelius (Porta Capena), between the Caelius and the Oppius (Via Labicana), to name but the most conspicuous - to make reliance on the natural defences of individual hills a viable alternative to a continuous enclosing wall. If, therefore, one of the kings started constructing a huge stone-revetted rampart and ditch across the kilometre and a half of the eastern plateau, he must have had resolved that the fortifications would protect the City from all sides; otherwise, the enormous outlay of work on the construction of the Agger would have been wasted. As Cornell rightly says: 'after all, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link'.⁵⁵

In conclusion, historical and comparative arguments put forward by Cornell as decisive speak in favour of the contrary of what he was trying to demonstrate. There remains the archaeological dossier on Rome's Archaic fortifications other than the Agger, which he rated inconclusive. Three years after the publication of *The Beginnings of Rome* there appeared an exhaustive presentation and discussion of that dossier by Gabriele Cifani,⁵⁶ reiterated with addition of new material in the author's synthesis *Architettura romana arcaica*,⁵⁷ in the light of which the denial of the existence of Archaic walls simply cannot be maintained. As a result, when in 2012 scepticism was voiced again by Bernard, his line of reasoning was decidedly different from earlier arguments in favour of that view. In his paper the external evidence, historical and from analogy, is quickly written off as inconclusive: decisive are the archaeological remains; the existence of Archaic walls in particular places is not questioned:⁵⁸ what is denied is their being

⁵⁵ Cornell, *Beginnings of Rome*, 200.

⁵⁶ Cifani, 'Documentazione archeologica delle mura arcaiche'.

⁵⁷ Cifani, *L'architettura romana arcaica*.

⁵⁸ Out of the twenty-three sections of the Archaic wall individuated in Cifani, *L'architettura romana arcaica*, 45-73, (see ill. 2), Bernard firmly eliminates only one, at Salita del Grillo, interpreted as remains of habitative structures by the team of Roberto Meneghini excavating the north-western part of Mercato di Traiano (R. Meneghini, 'Indagini archeologiche lungo l'area perimetrale dei Mercati di Traiano: settori settentrionale e orientale (scavi 1989-1997)', *BullCom* 104 [2003], 219-234; idem, *I Fori Imperiali e i Mercati di Traiano: storia e descrizione dei monumenti alla luce degli studi e degli scavi recenti*, Roma 2009; P. Specchio, 'Nuove acquisizioni sulle tabernae prospicienti via Salita

parts of a single enceinte.⁵⁹ The author's strategy to demonstrate that the Archaic defences of the City consisted of the Agger and separate stone walls on individual hills is two-staged: he rather half-heartedly points out that the composition of the 'Servian Wall' varies from one hill to another and that some hills lack any traces of an earlier phase – true enough but irrelevant to the argument about the existence of pre-Republican circuit fortifications – and then displays his trump card: 'Besides the *agger*, there is little firm evidence for a wall of *tufo del Palatino* [cappellaccio] in between the individual hills, in the low-lying areas of valleys where we would want proof of a full circuit connecting multiple hills. This seems an important and decisive point'.⁶⁰ And the conclusion: 'The gaps connecting the hills, to my mind, clinch the argument. The evidence for a stone wall in Archaic Rome is weakest *in between* the hills and the strongest on top of some hills, and this coheres with the interpretation of a complex of separate hilltop fortifications bolstered by an eastern *agger*. Elsewhere, the city could have relied on its terrain: even in later periods of the Republic, this remained its *nativa praesidia*, defined on all sides by steep hills (Cic. *Rep.* 2.11)'.⁶¹

Bernard's denial of validity to the ancient sources' unanimous view that the last kings surrounded the huge Servian City with a continuous wall, in my opinion most questionable, is at least understandable in the light of the tenets of the hypercritical school to which he plainly belongs. Outright indefensible is, however, his dismissal of the argument from analogy. Instead of presenting a clear line of reasoning, as Cornell did, he makes several disparate remarks that might go with, or against, both views, clearly to create an impression that the argument is meaningless, but without any express conclusion.⁶² Still, two of his utterances reveal his position. The first runs thus: 'all of this Italian context is problematized by the 11 km size of Rome's wall. The only real comparison in terms of magnitude must be sought externally, in the kingdoms [!] of Magna Graecia', with the

del Grillo', in L. Ungaro, M.P. Del Moro, M. Vitti (eds), *I Mercati di Traiano restituiti. Studi e restauri 2005–2007*, Roma 2010, 175–184; eadem, 'Alcuni dati preliminari sull'Insula della Salita del Grillo all'interno dei mercati di Traiano a Roma', in *Il futuro dell'archeologia. Il contributo dei giovani ricercatori. Atti del IV Convegno nazionale dei giovani archeologi. Tuscania (VT), 12–15 maggio 2011*, Roma 2012, 349–353). See, however, critical remarks by Cifani, *L'architettura romana arcaica*, 63–66. It is worth observing that the traditional attribution of the Salita del Grillo section together with the position of the neighbouring one in the Palazzo Antonelli nullify Bernard's argument that tombs found in this area by Giovanni Pinza (Archaic, one maybe mid-Republican: G. Pinza, *Monumenti primitivi di Roma e del Lazio antico* (MonAnt 15), Milano 1905, cc. 260–264) provide a 4th-century *post quem* for the fortifications in the south-western Quirinal. As has been observed long ago, these tombs would simply have been outside the wall; see Cifani, *L'architettura romana arcaica*, 260.

⁵⁹ Bernard, 'Debate on Rome's walls', 37: 'the question, then, is not of existence, but of form and extent'.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁶¹ Bernard, 'Debate on Rome's walls', 37–38.

⁶² Bernard, 'Debate on Rome's walls', 8.



Fig. 2. Archaic Rome: location of principal building constructions (remains of the 'Servian Wall': n° 1–23). From: Cifani, *L'architettura romana arcaica*, 46 fig. 19.

Syracuse of Dionysios the Elder cited as an example [!]. However, this comparison turns out to be inexact as well, for the Greeks did not have the *agger* and *fossa* system, and their masonry style was different. We are thus thrown back to central Italy, which leads to the second statement: 'in this case there is a heuristic flaw contained in such a peer-polity driven comparison: Rome *could* have had a wall in the sixth century because other Latin communities had such walls, but Rome's wall was of a greater order of magnitude than any of its peers. Impossibly,

however, Rome would then become at the same moment parallel and singular'.⁶³ The last quotation is plainly a muddled way of expressing Cornell's reproach that 'like is not being compared with like'; both clearly mean that, in Bernard's view, no Italian or Sicilian city could legitimately be compared with Rome, with the unexpressed but inevitable conclusion that any argument from analogy for the existence of an Archaic enceinte is invalid.

It is worth observing that the author reduces the enormous expenditure of human labour and material required to construct walls such as those which rose in the 6th-century Central Italy not to dire necessity, as surely was the case, but to peer-polity competition, with the barely disguised message that the truly great, like Rome, did not need them. The main trouble, however, is that he omits the only securely valid comparison, that with Rome's Etruscan neighbours, which in Cornell's opinion tipped the scale against the 6th-century dating of the first wall. Is it so because with the evidence we have today that comparison is a most powerful argument for the continuous wall's Archaic dating? Without even one word about the fact that Veii and Tarquinii, Rome's true equals, had possessed themselves of circuit city-walls already in the early 6th century, Bernard's treatment of the argument from analogy is evasion pure and simple.

As I have said above, in my opinion the Etruscan evidence proves sufficiently that Rome's Archaic wall, whose existence no one denies anymore, made a complete circuit. But even without it, the idea of 'separate hilltop fortifications bolstered by an eastern Agger' suffers from incurable weaknesses. Such fortifications, strengthening the parts well-defended by nature and creating at enormous expense an artificial steep ridge across the Esquiline plateau, but at the same time leaving undefended five wide valleys leading to the political and religious centre of Rome, itself a valley too, would be not only an unheard-of absurdity, but most of all an unbelievable waste of human and material resources. They would have had to be much longer than the eleven kilometres of the 'Servian Wall': e.g. on the Quirinal their total length would almost be the double of the two kilometres and a half of the hill's northward-facing fortified slope; and the implied zigzag wall defending the Viminal, the Cispian and the Oppian from the west would add another three kilometres at the very least. All this to what effect: leaving the heart of the City – the Comitium, the Forum Romanum and the zone of the Sacra Via – open to attackers and letting particular hills be easily isolated from the rest, to be picked off one by one. Luckily, the Archaic Romans were not so stupid. The best proof of it is the fact that the undoubted remains of hilltop walls of *cappellaccio* have been individuated exclusively on the outward-facing slopes, whereas in the light of Bernard's reconstruction we should expect at least some of them to turn up on the inward, centre-facing

⁶³ *ibid.*

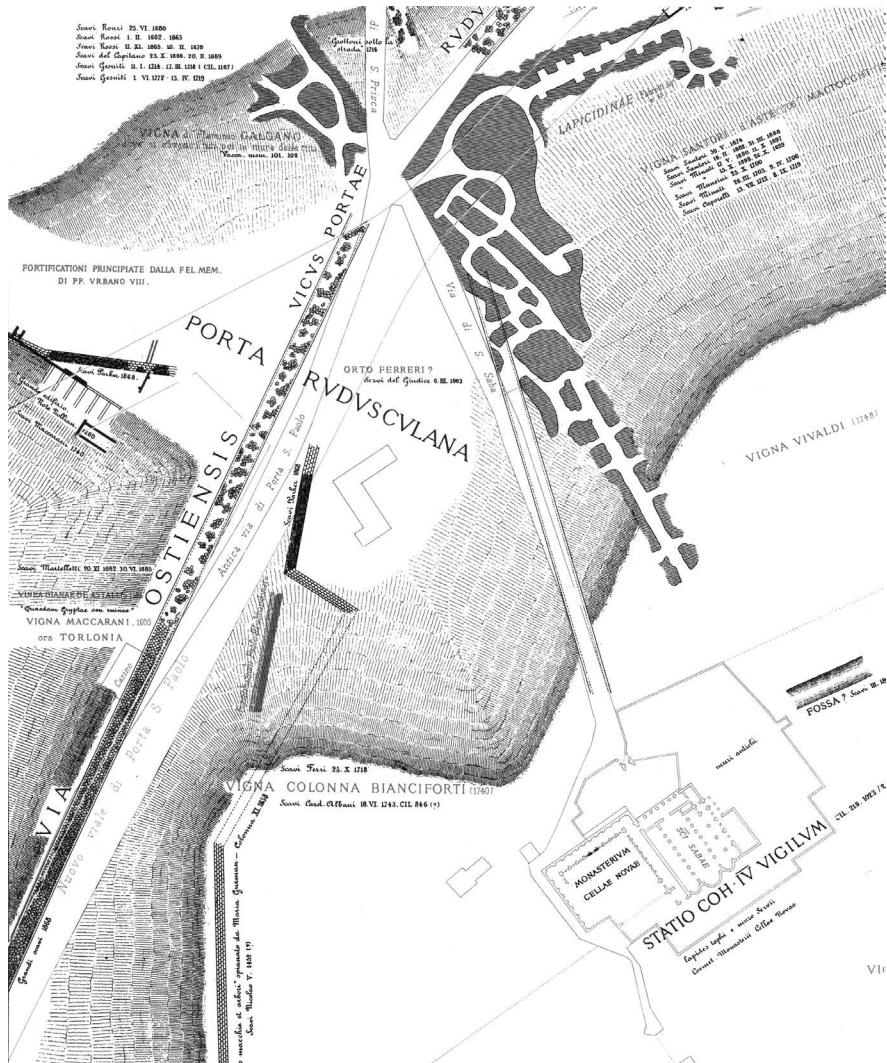


Fig. 3. Remains of Archaic walls near Porta Raudusculana. From: Lanciani, *Forma Urbis Romae*, tav. 41

sides of the hills. There is another proof, constantly repeated by the partisans of the existence of an Archaic full circuit-wall, namely the very construction of the Agger. In fact, what perversity would have prevented its builders from completing their undertaking by closing other gaps between the hills with defences whose combined length would have been smaller than the kilometre and a half of the Agger?

This brings me to Bernard's 'decisive point, the 'little firm evidence for a wall of *tufo del Palatino* in between the individual hills [besides the Agger]'. The word 'little' was judiciously chosen because such evidence, while admittedly not abundant, does exist. Remains of walls of cappellaccio were found on the saddle between the Aventine proper and the Saxum ('Piccolo Aventino') on the east side of Viale Aventino⁶⁴ and at the edge of the Tiberine front between the Aventine and the Capitol, at the foot of the former hill, by the now demolished monastery of the Sisters of San Vincenzo de' Paoli south of the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin.⁶⁵ Bernard for some reason ignores the latter evidence, maybe as not 'firm' enough because known mainly from a rather laconic description,⁶⁶ but even if we leave it out of the reckoning, the remains in Viale Aventino sufficiently prove that the Archaic Romans were not adverse to closing saddles between the eminences of their City with walls evidently joining the fortifications on hilltops.

That should be the end of it: after all, we have evidence for the walls of cappellaccio in between the hills. However, one might ask, following Bernard's line of reasoning, why then that evidence is so scarce. The answer is in the fundamental feature of the archaeological evidence in the City which, unfortunately, Bernard takes no notice of, namely, the extremely difficult accessibility of Archaic levels outside the archaeological zone of the *Centro Storico*. Cifani calculates that the combined length of the twenty-one documented sections of remains of the Archaic wall is ca. 200 metres against the ca. 11 kilometres of the whole enceinte, on the well-grounded assumption that the 'Servian Wall' faithfully copied its course.⁶⁷ The majority of these remains were found after the Risorgimento, when the construction of the new governmental quarter on the Quirinal, the enlargement of the Stazione Termini and the building of the new residential district in its neighbourhood made possible extensive demolishing of existing structures and digging low enough to reach pre-Republican levels, even if that also resulted in widespread destruction of ancient remains with no or inadequate documentation. In the valleys, where the Archaic levels are on the average fifteen-twenty metres below the surface and often well below the modern water-table,⁶⁸ searching for 6th-century fortifications is like looking for a needle in a haystack. A case in point is the Tiberine front between the Aventine and the Capitol, the only low-ground area in the City that a circuit wall would have had to traverse, which has been

⁶⁴ Cifani, 'Documentazione archeologica delle mura arcaiche', 373–374; Cifani, *L'architettura romana arcaica*, 59; Bernard, 'Debate on Rome's walls', 20–21. See R. Lanciani, *Forma Urbis Romae*, 1893–1901, tav. 41 (fig. 3).

⁶⁵ Cifani, 'Documentazione archeologica delle mura arcaiche', 373–375; Cifani, *L'architettura romana arcaica*, 61–62.

⁶⁶ Borsari in *BullCom* 1888, 20–22.

⁶⁷ Cifani, 'Documentazione archeologica delle mura arcaiche', 380.

⁶⁸ L. Quilici, *Roma primitiva e le origini della civiltà laziale*, Roma 1979, 69–70.

an object of intensive archaeological investigation and where – omitting for the argument’s sake the wall by the monastery of San Vincenzo – no sure remains of fortifications have been found, not only Archaic, but also Republican.⁶⁹ This (relative) lack of evidence enables the sceptics, including Bernard, to question the existence of the Servian Wall in the zone,⁷⁰ without bothering how to account then for three gates, Trigemina, Flumentana and Carmentalis, that stood there according to our written sources⁷¹ whose reliability for the Middle Republic is, I hope, beyond dispute. In these conditions the two above-mentioned finds are an incredible piece of luck: not too little but almost too much.⁷²

To sum up. There is no reason that the debate should continue. The strategy of today’s adversary of the existence of a complete circuit wall in Archaic Rome is that he will be convinced only by the finding of indubitable vestiges of Archaic walls all round the City; and that, for obvious reasons, is sheer impossibility, especially in her lower parts. Everything else is for him of no importance. In the 6th century, all around Rome we see small Latin towns and great Etruscan cities being surrounded with circuit walls, in Rome herself we find in many places indubitable traces of a city-wall dating from the same century; but the inference that in Rome’s particular case the wall must have conformed to the general (and, one might add, only sensible) pattern is ruled invalid. Remains of Archaic walls were found in the openings of two of the many valleys which pierced Rome’s urban territory; but the inference that other valleys were similarly defended is not even taken into consideration, and the relevant evidence is made light of as ‘weak’, because incomplete. This is scepticism in its most sterile, suicidal in any branch of knowledge. Of course, since our archaeological evidence must remain incomplete, the sceptical view is bound to hang around, ready to be picked up by those who a priori refuse to admit that the historical memory of the Romans of the last century of the Republic was able to preserve an important datum about their City from five-four hundred years before. For others, including the present writer, the debate is closed.

Adam Ziółkowski

a.ziolkowski@uw.edu.pl

Institut of History
University of Warsaw
Krakowskie Przedmieście 26/28
00-927 Warsaw, Poland

⁶⁹ I. Ruggiero, ‘La cinta muraria presso il Foro Boario in età arcaica e medio-repubblicana’, *Archeologia Laziale* 10 (1990), 23–30.

⁷⁰ Bernard, ‘Debate on Rome’s walls’, 37: ‘if indeed it [Forum Boarium] ever had a wall’.

⁷¹ Coarelli, *Foro Boario*, 13–54.

⁷² It is worth observing that the site by the monastery of San Vincenzo was in the highest part of the plain since the wall penetrated into the slope of the Aventine (Borsari in *BullCom* 1888, 21).