



SOCIETAS VIA ROMANA NEWSLETTER

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In this issue:

<i>Editorial</i>	1
<i>Trivia</i>	2
<i>Message from the consules</i>	3
<i>Essay: Measuring time in ancient Rome (P. Dionysius Mus)</i>	6
<i>Cartoon</i>	8
<i>News from the collegia</i>	9
<i>Essay: Chronus (Romulus Aurelius Orcus)</i>	10
<i>Interview: Gnaeus Dionysius Draco Invictus</i>	13
<i>Message from the editor</i>	16
<i>Caesar: History by Television (M. Moravius Horatianus Piscinus)</i>	17
<i>Games</i>	18



THE FIRST WORDS...

Roar the drums, sound the trumpets! I proudly present the first issue of our new Societas Via Romana newsletter! Available to all our members, and everyone outside the Societas, downloadable through our website. This will be a bimonthly magazine during the first year, a try-out year. For now, the newsletter has no name. There is however a contest to find a suitable name. Everyone can participate, just look on page ...! The magazine will be electronically available in pdf format. To read and print the downloaded pdf newsletter, you Acrobat Reader on your computer (available for free at <http://www.adobe.com>). This first issue is filled with lots of interesting stuff, so start reading and discover for yourself!! The next issue will be available on September 1st.

TRIVIA

In this section you will find all pieces of news, gathered by the editor, or sent by members.

Make sure this section gets filled for our next issue:

If you want to post something here, send your message to pudionmus@yahoo.com



MESSAGE FROM THE CONSULES

The consul speaks! In each issue, one of our consules will address the members in this section.

The Fasces of Rome

During the time when Roma antiqua was ruled by the Ten, and those magistrates exceeded their authority, plundering the Roman people, scourging and beheading citizens without trial, confiscating the land of others, using the courts to seize free-women as chattel, and murdering those who spoke out against these abuses, Livy especially pointed out that among their many crimes the Ten had brought fasces into the city of Rome itself.

Tradition held that the fasces composed of bundled elm rods from which protruded axheads, would never be permitted anywhere inside the pomerium that marked the sacred boundaries of the city. This was regarded to be a sacrilege against the gods and against a free people. Inside the city the lictores who proceeded magistrates bore only the bundles of rods. While the lictores and the fasces they bore symbolized the auctoritas of magistrates, the absence of the axheads represented that their powers were limited inside the city, and that these powers did not extend over the lives of citizens. From the Founding of the Res Publica Libera, in fact Cicero says by the very first legislative enactment of the Comitia Centuriata (*De Republica* 2.53), under the Lex Valeria no Roman citizen could be executed without the right of provocatio, allowing them an appeal to the people of Rome. That then became part of Rome's written laws, first in the Twelve Tablets VI.6: "Putting to death of any man, whosoever he might be, if unconvicted is forbidden" The basic founding principle of the Res Publica Libera was stated by Livy (4.4.10-11) through the voice of Canuleius, "Finally, I would ask you, is it not the Roman people who hold the supreme authority?" This principle was symbolized from the very beginning, when the first consul of the Republic Publilius Valerius Publicola had his lictores lower the fasces upon his entry before the assembly of the Roman people

(Livy 2.7), a traditional salute to the citizens of Rome that was followed ever after by all consules in recognition that true sovereignty in Rome resided solely with the Roman people. When therefore Appius Claudius, one of the Ten, attempted to have his lictores, bearing fasces with axheads, seize Valerius and Horatius as they defended the right of provocatio of Verginius, it was the people of Rome, assembled together in the Forum, who seized the fasces from the lictores and broke the rods that symbolized the magisterial authority of Claudius.

That which the members of the Societas Via Romana most admire of Roma antiqua, that which we most seek to emulate as the virtue of Romanitas in our societas, that which we honor by having established our societas, is all to be found in the Res Publica Libera of Roma antiqua. We do not praise a king like Tarquinius Superbus and the rule of privilege, but rather we honor the memory of Junius Brutus who overthrew Tarquinius' tyranny. We do not praise Coriolanus who sought to have the people of Rome give up their rights, to put aside their tribunes, but rather we praise Veturia, Volumnia and the women of Rome who marched against his treachery. Is it Kaeso Quinctius we should honor, with his thugs attacking the tribuni plebis, coercing the praetores, and murdering the poor and the ill, and who then fled when confronted by a trial before the people of Rome? Or is it rather his father, Quinctius Cincinnatus? Once ruined by his son's flight, Cincinnatus was raised once more to a position of honor by his appointment to the dictatorship. But it is not for this reason that we honor the memory of Cincinnatus; rather it is because when, his duty completed, he laid down the powers entrusted to him by the people of Rome.

When the sons of the leading Falerii were delivered by treachery to the Roman commander Camillius, he responded in part by saying, "Neither the general nor the people of Rome, to whom you have brought this wicked gift, are like you... War has laws even as peace, and to these laws we have learnt obedience." Ancient Romans understood where their duty lay in the defense of their liberty and their freedom. They knew what was sacred. They knew from where true sanctity was derived. And they knew what true courage entails, honoring it in every story they told. For the ancient Romans, the principles of justice by which they had established their Republic were handed down by the gods. These principles of justice were not meant to benefit only a privileged few, and could only be made meaningless if not applied equally to the lowliest member of Roman society as they were for the powerful. As those principles were derived from the gods, so too, as Camillius demonstrated by his honorable actions, they also applied to the enemies of Rome and to their children. The duty of every Roman is to abide by what the gods had ordained, and true courage is measured by those who stand in defense of others.

Republican Rome, so long as it still held men and women of courage, virtue, and honor, would not become a state ruled by fasces. Those who hold such values in contempt, as they hold their fellow citizens in contempt, are ignorant of the true meaning of the State as a commonwealth to benefit all its members. Those who try to disenfranchise or otherwise eliminate whole groups of people from the body politic, those who seek to impose the will of a few on the whole of a populace, are cowards who fear open forums and the free exchange of ideas. They would rather murder those who would speak out against them, brutalize those who would listen, burn books that hold ideas they cannot understand, than be counted among honorable and free men and women.

In the end, it may be argued that tyrants did seize Rome. Treasonous Sulla raised an army and marched against Rome and its people, just as Mussolini was to do in 1922. Sulla, the first fascist dictator to impose himself on Rome, who maintained his rule solely through the use of military power and thugs to oppress his own

people. In doing so, he set the example whereby politics in Rome declined into a constant series of civil wars. The legacy of fascist regimes, even in ancient Rome, was one of brutality, violence, constant strife and oppression. Sulla, Caesar, Commodus, Franco, Mussolini, Hitler, Somoza, Pinochet, Castillo Armas, Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein, and all other such sullatoriones in the end have only managed to destroy their own societies.

The political legacy that has endured from Rome, from the Roman people and Roman civilization, was not that rule should be imposed by fasces. Rather, the principles of law, the rule of law, respect for the law, and the underlying principle that law is a compact between all people within a society, are the composite parts of the heritage we have received from the *mos maiorum* of *Roma antiqua*. This is the legacy of Rome, of that *Res Publica Libera*, that forms the basis today of the legal traditions inherited by Western civilization and has been passed on to all civilized nations. The rights of every citizen to free speech and free assembly, the right of redress of wrongs in a court of law, the publication of laws and the equal application of law for every citizen, were first won by Romans standing together for their individual rights, and were ensured by Romans standing together in defense of the rights of others. The plebeians who assembled in peaceful protest on the *Mons Sacra*, individuals and tribunes like Macer, the Gracchi, Sicinius, and Volero Publius, who stood in public to voice their dissent, offering themselves in self-sacrifice in the cause of freedom for their fellow citizens, those are the true heroes of Rome who have inspired generations of free people in Alabama, in India, in South Africa, in Burma, and elsewhere. This is the true legacy of Rome that endures and inspires the world today, this is the heritage celebrated by our *Societas*.

The *Societas Via Romana*, by its formation, has chosen which face of Rome it seeks to emulate. We cherish the stories told by Livy of a free people, and of free individuals exercising their rights and defending the rights of others. We denounce the self-serving lies of a Sulla and of all sullatoriones who seek to emulate his dictatorial example. We have made it a part of our *Regula Fundamental*is to uphold "the Roman heritage of Mankind, especially in

its humanism, universalism, and dedication to freedom under the rational rule of law." We have further made as part of our fundamental law a denunciation of all "totalitarian or terrorist organizations." We pose ourselves, as participants in Western civilization, to be inheritors of a proud Roman heritage. Today as we commemorate the founding of our Societas, we celebrate our coming together, collectively standing as a bundle of rods held together by our principles, as inheritors who share in the Roman heritage. Individually, by joining the

Societas Via Romana, we have committed ourselves to uphold that Roman heritage and to promote all that it stands for within our societas, in our personal lives, within the nations we reside, and to the world at large.

**Marcus Moravius Horatianus Piscinus
Consul iterum Societatis Viae Romanae**

Kalendae Quinctilis MMDCCCLVI



ESSAY: MEASURING TIME IN ANCIENT ROME

By Publius Dionysius Mus

The oldest Roman calendar dates back to the eight or seventh century BC. The year started in March, and consisted of ten months: six with 31 days and four with 30 days in between. The ten months were named as follows:

1. *Martius*: after the Roman god of war, *Mars* (March meant the start of the military season)
2. *Aprilis*: much doubt: maybe after *Aphrodite?* *Aperire?* *Apricus?*
3. *Maius*: possibly after *Maia*, mother of *Mercurius*
4. *Iunius*: after *Iuno*, wife of *Iupiter*
5. *Quintilis*: after *quintus* ('five' – the fifth month)
6. *Sextilis*: after *sextus* ('six' – the sixth month)
7. *September*: after *septem* ('seven' – the seventh month)
8. *October*: after *octo* ('eight' – the eighth month)
9. *November*: after *novem* ('nine' – the ninth month)
10. *December*: after *decem* ('ten' – the tenth month)

After these ten months there was a nameless period until Spring, when the new year began on the first of March. This nameless period was later divided in two extra months: *Ianuarius* and *Februarius*. *Ianuarius* refers to the Roman god *Ianus*, the god of doors, beginning and end. *Februarius* is named after *Februa*, a festival at the end of the winter with cleansing and thanking rituals.

The Roman republican calendar (\pm 600 BC) counted 355 days and followed the cycle of the moon. To cover the difference between sun and moon, there was a special creation every two years: *intercalaris* or *mercedonius*. The last five days of *Februarius* were then transformed into a period of 27 or 28 days. In 153 BC they decided to let the year begin on the first day of *Ianuarius*, but the old names were kept to remember the old system (*September*, the 'seventh' month, now became the ninth month). The *intercalares* however were not always strictly followed, and this created after a while a huge difference between the actual seasons and the calendar: in 50 BC Spring began half May...

This problem was solved in 46 BC by *Caius Iulius Caesar*, as *pontifex maximus*. He brought the seasons back to normal by adding 67 extra days to that year. From that year on, the calendar followed the sun, every year being $365 \frac{1}{4}$ long (so every four years one extra day was needed to come back to normal). The twelve months were kept, with their original names, but their length was adapted to fit the new system. In 44 BC, in remembrance of *Iulius Caesar's* death, the name of the month *Quintilis* was changed into *Iulius*.

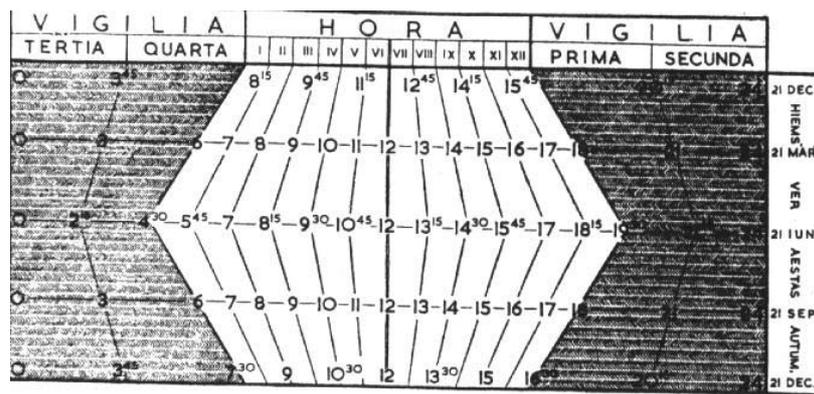
A last reform came in 8 BC: because of a mistake (they added an extra day every three years instead of every four years) the period between 8 BC and AD 4 knew no leap year. The month *Sextilis* was also renamed in this year: it became *Augustus* (and an extra day was added to this month, in order not to be shorter than Caesar's month).

The Romans knew no such thing as a week; the seven days-week will only be introduced by Constantine the Great in the fourth century (see further). The days in a month were counted as follows:

1. Every month had three marks for counting the days
 - *Kalendae*: the first day of the month
 - *Nonae*: the fifth or seventh day of the month
 - *Ides*: the thirteenth or fifteenth day of the month
2. From these marks on, the counted back to name the days: *Pridie Nonae Februarii* was the day before the *nonae* of *Februarius* (February 6); III NON FEB is the abbreviation for the third day before the *nonae* of February (February 5)

3. Notes:
- *Nonae* always fall on the 9th day of the ides (*'nonae' < 'novem'*).
 - Since we have to count backwards to name the days, counting from the *kalendae* gives a date in the previous month, for example IV KAL IUN is May 29th.
 - The extra day at the end of February every four years is noted as BIS VI KAL MART; such a year is called '*annus bissextus*' or '*annus bissextilis*'.

A Roman's idea about the hour was also different from our view. For us an hour is 60 minutes, and a minute is 60 seconds. But the Romans had no such intelligent things as watches to keep the time. They mostly used the sun and moon to tell what time it was. Therefor the following system was used:



The day, from sunrise to sunset, was divided into twelve segments called *hora*. Their length of course varied as the length of day varied. Thus *hora prima* (the first hour) began at 7.30 in December, but on 4.30 in June. The night was also divided, but then into four segments called *vigilia* (), corresponding with the four night-watches. Only the seventh hour (*hora septima*) and the third watch (*vigilia tertia*) always began on the same moment, no matter what time of the year.

As has been said before, the week as we know it has a religious origin, and was introduced by Constantine the Great. The week began on *Feria Prima*, also called *Feria Dominica*, *Dominica* or *Dies Dominicus*. Then came *Dies Secunda*, *Tertia*, *Quarta*, *Quinta*, *Sexta* and the week ended on *Feria Septima* (also *Sabbatum* or *Dies Sabbatinus*). But there was also an older system used, of Babylonian-Egyptian origin. In this system every hour of the week was dominated by one of the seven known planets (Sun, Moon, Saturnus, Mars, Mercurius, Juppiter and Venus). They all followed onto each other continuously, resulting in the following days of the week: *Dies Saturni*, *Dies Solis*, *Dies Lunae*, *Dies Martis*, *Dies Mercurii*, *Dies Iovis* and *Dies Veneris*. The Romanic languages kept most of this system (except *Dies Solis*, which became the Day of the Lord). The Germanic languages replaced most of these names with Germanic gods: Tiw, Wodan/Odin, Donar/Thor and Freya. We can summarize this in the following table:

FRENCH	SPANISH	ENGLISH	GERMAN
Lundi	Lunes	Monday	Montag
Mardi	Martes	Tuesday	Dienstag
Mercredi	Miércoles	Wednesday	Mittwoch
Jeudi	Jueves	Thursday	Donnerstag
Vendredi	Viernes	Friday	Freitag
Samedi	Sábado	Saturday	Samstag
Dimanche	Domingo	Sunday	Sonntag

CARTOON

Cartoon from 1919.



Suggestions for new cartoons can be sent to pudionmus@yahoo.com

NEWS FROM THE COLLEGIA

In this section, the rectores of our different collegia can speak out and inform the membership. For the next issue I would like to ask all rectores to send me a message to fill this section. I will send out a reminder to all rectores when the time is there. For now, I simply mention every Collegium's new rector.

Collegium Artium

The new rector here is Marcus Scribonius Curio Britannicus.

Collegium Graecum

The new rector here is Alexander Dionysius Hellenos.

Collegium Historicum

The new rector here is Publius Dionysius Mus.

Collegium Latinum

The new rector here is Gnaeus Dionysius Draco Invictus.

Collegium Militarium

The new rector here is Marcus Pomponius Lupus.

Collegium Philosophicum

The new rector here is Quintus Claudius Locatus Barbatus.

Collegium Religionis

The new rector here is Marcus Moravius Horatianus Piscinus.

Collegium Vitae Quotidianae

The new rector here is Tiberius Dionysius Draco.

ESSAY: KRONOS

by Romulus Aurelius Orcus

Kronos, also known as Cronus/ Khronos, was the god of time, which started when he was born. His primordial nature is also reflected in his identity with the 'World Serpent' and the 'Cosmic Ocean'. Various authors have the serpent as a totemic animal of Kronos, which he held in his hands to form a ring by holding its tail in its mouth. Oceanus, the boundary of the world, was synonymous with the serpent Kronos. He was the power that rotated heaven around the polar axis. This was done at the beginning of time. In Greek myth, Kronos was the youngest son of Ouranos ('Heaven') and Gaia ('earth'). He was thus one of the first generation of divine beings. Kronos became leader of the Titans after overthrowing his father. He did this by taking a flint sickle and separating him from his mother Gaia, the Earth. In the process, Kronos cut off Ouranos' genitals, and the blood and semen fell onto the earth and into the ocean, begetting several more creatures.

Initially Kronos ruled benevolently, but soon turned into a tyrant. He took his father's place in Heaven and married his sister Rhea. Together they engendered the Olympian gods and goddesses. He cast the Cyclopes and Hecantocheires, whom he had released from Tartaros, back into the Underworld. Gaia had prophesied that one of his offspring would overthrow him. In response, he ate, in succession, Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon. However, Rhea, not appreciating going through all that time and trouble just to see Kronos eat her precious little darlings, conspired to deceive him. When she was pregnant with her sixth child she fled to Crete to secretly give birth in the cave of Dicte. After giving birth to Zeus, she wrapped a stone in a baby's swaddling cloth and gave in to Kronos to eat. The infant's cries were concealed by the music and noise of the Curetes, who were Rhea's servants she employed during the deception of Kronos. Thus her husband did not hear the cries of his child. Finally, Zeus appeared to rival Kronos. With the aid of the Oceanid Metis (or Gaia), he gave his father a potion which made him regurgitate his brothers and sisters. With his siblings, Zeus fought Kronos and the Titans for ten years before finally defeating them. Victory came after Gaia promised Zeus that by freeing the Cyclopes and Hecantocheires he would prevail. Zeus liberated them, and Kronos and the Titans were defeated and cast into Tartaros where the Hecantocheires guarded them. Various legends also have Kronos as the father of the Centaur Chiron by Philyra, of Hephaestus by Hera, and also of Aphrodite. In Roman tradition, Kronos was exiled to Italy, where he was gladly received as the god Saturn. His reign was remembered as the golden age on earth, honored in Roman tradition by the Saturnalia feast at the winter solstice. Kronos was 'rehabilitated' in classical Orphism. Kronos was freed from his chains and reconciled with Zeus. He lived in the Islands of the Blessed. He had once reigned in Olympus and, as Saturn, on the Capitol. He was fashioned as a creator-god:

Chronos produced an egg containing male and female elements, a multiplicity of seeds, and a bodiless god ... named Protogonos. The great Chronos fashioned in the divine Aether [the fiery sea] a silver egg. And it moved without slackening in a vast circle (Orphic Hymns). The egg was described as white (Orphic theogony).

However, with the discovery of bronze and iron, mankind had become corrupted, and so Kronos was relegated to Heaven. He had a small priesthood and a sacrifice. His festival, the Kronia, was celebrated at Athens and elsewhere at harvest time. Masters and slaves would dine together, while in Rome masters served slaves on Saturnalia. He also seems to have been synonymous with Aion, the personification of the passage of time (or a period of time), in late classical times. But the name Chronos is also used to designate a God of Time who was apparently assimilated into Kronos later on. It has been said that Kronos and the Titans represent the forces of nature that made room for the coming of the Olympian Gods because the Olympians represented order, civilization while the Titans represents nature and the primordial life. Cronus or Kronos is the Supreme deity of the Titans. He has a rather bad reputation as a father, which caused the rebellion against him in the first place, like he did with his own father. But the reason why he ate his own children was through the prophecy that Ouranos foretold when he castrated his father. Zeus with the help of the Titanide Metis was able to let him throw up his own children, which started the war in the first place. But than Zeus received the

same prophecy about a child of Zeus and Metis which Zeus reacted on by turning Metis into a fly and eats her.

Kronos is not only the Titan of Time, Earth, and fertility but also of honesty, Justice and the Harvest. He is also the personification of the tenth month. However Kronos did not participate in the Titanomachy and Atlas took his place in, are Atlas and Cronus associated with each other as Atlas to be the youthful aspect of Kronos. When Cronus ruled the world, Mankind didn't know death, disease, corruption but peace and prosperity. They could have sex without getting pregnant since immortal humans can not conceive children. The Romans called him Saturn and the sixth planet in our solar system is called after the Roman Saturn. It is said that Kronos fled to Hesperia (Italy) after the Titanomachy and ruled there as a king of Latium with or without Janus, the God of time, Portals, doors, War and Peace and his wife Jana. I think Kronos can be compared to Zeus into personality since a son is likely to take after his father which Zeus did when he overthrew his own father Kronos. Kronos is more powerful than Zeus. His function and duty oversees the function of Zeus and even though he likes hospitality, Kronos would not hesitate like Zeus to punish those who defied him and everything he stands for. Kronos had a festival called Kronia/ Kronalia at Athens. He was later seen as Time itself. His attributes are serpent with the tail in her mouth (symbol of eternity) His parents were Ouranos and Gaia (Theogony, Apollodorus, Simonides fragment, Diodorus Siculus and Cicero, the Nature Deorum).

He had children with Rhea and Philyre. With Rhea: Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, Poseidon, Zeus (Illiad, Theogony, Apollodorus, Diodorus Siculus et al). With Philyre: Kheiron and Aphros (Suidas 'Aphroi, Titanomachia frag 6, Apollodorus, Argonautica, Hyginus Fabulae, Metamorphoses). Philyre was an Oceanid loved by Kronos. His other children whose mother is not mentioned are: the Korybantēs (Strabo) and Pīsus (Aeneid, Metamorphoses). It is said that mankind knew no death or misery during the reign of Kronos. When those people died, they became daimones, who guide people. They are the ones said to guide people, but this fact maybe of some dispute. In art, Cronus was depicted carrying a sickle used to gather the harvest, but this was also the weapon he used to castrate his father. The sickle was used later on as an attribute for Father Time (Khronos) and the Grim Reaper. Kronos is one of the Gods whose reputation does not really suit him. On the one hand, we have Kronos ruling over humanity during the golden age, the age where nothing goes wrong, where there is no pain, etc.. But on the other hand, we have Kronos who devours his own children. In mythology this comes to dominate and it is more emphasized on this aspect of Kronos.

Hymn:

Kronos, ancient god of wisdom
 You fill the whole expanse of space
 Your spirit stretches from heaven to earth
 And to the confines of the abyss
 Your mysteries penetrate yet elude us
 Darkness beyond darkness
 You enlighten the world
 Earthly, windy, moist, full of fire
 The elements rise and fall in your presence
 Firstborn of heaven, God of the ages
 Ruler of eternity, we honor you
 May your kingdom flourish in our hearts forever
 (c) 1995, Bruce Nelson

Kronia:

Although the Kronia is the first major festival of the Athenian year, it belongs to a carnivalesque time where social roles are inverted. Kronos was the king of the Gods before Zeus, and was imprisoned by his own son with the other titans. These tales may underlie the Kronia, for during this festival

Athenian slaves ran free and were treated to a sumptuous banquet by their masters. It is a celebration of the golden age where the current social order did not exist yet. For modern day Hellenists this day might stand for being free of nagging habits, social obligations as financial, free of any restraints even if it is only temporary. A ritual may be performed on this day to honor Kronos and the elder Gods. This ritual can be performed outdoors, in a park or other convenient setting. This ritual includes purification by water, hymnodia, sacrifice & libation and concluding the ritual by feasting. A suggested feast menu: grilled meat and/ or vegetable skewers, bulghers and chickpea salad chopped salad, sweet cakes or breads and light wines. This festival takes place on Hekatombaion the 12th.

As Saturnus/ Semino, God of Agriculture and Fertility:

Titan father of the Di consentes, God of the Abundant Earth and consort of Ops. Representing the father of the gods of the pre-Italic peoples, the Ausones, He brought an earlier form of agriculture to Italy, prior to Ceres instituting grain cultivation, and ruled the earth during the Golden Age. His main festival is the *Saturnalia* on 17-23 Dec. At the foot of the Capitoline His temple served as the state treasury, the *aerarium Saturni*. Many of the Neolithic megaliths and stone walls of Italy are attributed to the "Sons of Saturnus" who were giants. Saturn demonstrated his leadership abilities and became a ruler in Latium. As a king of Latium, Saturn was responsible for the remarkable achievements of this legendary time, a time which was thought of as the Golden Age of ancient Italy. According to the myth, Saturn introduced agriculture to his people by teaching them how to farm the land. For this reason Saturn was thought of as a god of fertility and agriculture.

In memory of this Golden Age, each year the Saturnalia was observed on December 17 at his temple on the Forum Romanum. This temple, below the Capitoline Hill, contained the Royal Treasury and is one of the oldest in Rome. The Saturnalia was one of the major events of the year. Originally only one day, it was later extended to seven days. During this festival, business was suspended, the roles of master and slaves were reversed, moral restrictions were loosened and gifts were exchanged. Offerings made in his honor were done with uncovered heads, contrary to the Roman tradition. In contrast to his festival, Saturn himself was never very popular. From the 3rd century on, he was identified with the Greek Kronos, and his cult became only marginally more popular. That he ruled over the Golden Age is an extension to the Greek myth. Saturday is named after him. In early myth, Saturn was associated with the obscure Italian goddess Lua. However later legends claim that he was married to Ops, a Roman goddess of the harvest who was identified with the Greek goddess Rhea.



INTERVIEW : GNAEUS DIONYSIUS DRACO

The man behind the name

Gnaeus Dionysius Draco Invictus is the Latin Inquisition in person, but also one of the founders of our Societas, and a good friend to many of us. An in-depth interview with the nam behind the name.

For those who don't know you very well, can you give a short description of yourself?

Well, my name is Gnaeus Dionysius Draco Invictus. Outside of the Societas Via Romana the name on my id card is Jeroen Meuleman, but hardly anyone ever calls me by that name. My old friends call me Meule and in some places they call me Q. So, in short, I'm used to having different names! :) I was born in the city of Ghent and lived in the town of Merelbeke (just south of Ghent) all my life. I have two brothers. I'm quite possibly the hottest stud in town (said tongue in cheek). In secondary school I did Latin for six years and Greek for five years (Greek was not an option in our first year). I chose these ancient languages, not only because I was fascinated by the culture of the ancients, but also, in part, to escape forms which had more maths, sciences or French. So luckily, the necessary, the practical and the ideal found one another! I was never the best student but I was lucky that I could get by without doing much work. I faithfully completed all assignments but I hated, and still hate, mindless cramming.

The good thing of being what I like to describe as a cynical optimist is that you get to meet a lot of interesting people. The later the hour, the more interesting they get, of course!

Right now I am studying English and German at college level. Momentarily I'm in my second candidature (this would, in anglophone countries, equal the second Bachelor-year). I chose these two languages for different reasons. I chose English because I like the language and German because I wanted to be

challenged. And I am being challenged, that's for sure! I didn't choose to study classical languages because I felt it would have been an overkill. So now I can devote some hobby time to this passion without being constantly reminded of college :).

Do you have any hobbies?

No. I am boring and I sit, accompanied by my loyal indoor plants, on a small plastic chair all day long, without music and without anything to do. However, when I'm not doing this, I like to devote my time to writing. I consider myself an amateur writer of both prose and poetry (I write mostly in Dutch). One of my English poems made it to a compilation somewhere in the States (which I was, at that time, too poor for to afford) and a farcical horoscope I wrote was recently used in a radio programme on a national radio station. I've also appeared numerous times in the magazine of our student's club (unsurprisingly, I am one of the two chief editors next year, which will give me the opportunity to force the readers to read my stuff) and I write columns for the cartoonist Lectrr. My greatest project is an sf-cycle which I've been working on since I was fourteen, but is in perpetual progress because once in a few years, I find myself unsatisfied with it and I rewrite everything completely. A part from writing, another hobby of mine is the student life (my Dionysian side, if you will). This means partying, going to bars and just socialising with a lot of people from college. This year I lived in Ghent during the weektime. The good thing of being what I like to describe as a cynical optimist is that you get to meet a lot of interesting people. The later the hour, the more interesting they get, of course! Other hobbies include video gaming. I'm a great video game fan. At home me and my brothers own about five gaming consoles and about fifty games. I'm especially into the fighting game genre. I also like strategy games and racing games. I'm an active poster at an important Mortal Kombat site and a large wipEout fan community. I'm passionate about

music. I started out listening to pop in the early nineties and discovered soon that I had a thing for the new wave of electronic music that was washing all over the hit charts. My scope widened and in the mid-nineties I discovered club, acid and trance. It didn't take long before I sank my teeth into real techno, idm and jungle, too. Although I'm lucky that Belgium has a very strong electronic tradition, I have felt on numerous occasions that not many people understand electronic music. For them it's mainly visions from violent rave parties with excessive amounts of drugs, frequented by fascist skinheads or the lower classes. While this is true for a certain segment of the population, it's very different for most other people who like the music. In recent years I've also discovered electro, prog metal and other sub-genres of metal. I've also developed a curious fascination with eighties pop. Of course, this listing excludes the SVR. This is also a major hobby. As you can see, my life is very filled :).

So far, we can't complain! Our forum is quite a civil place with room for lots of topics pertaining to Antiquity.

How would you describe your character and attitude?

Always tricky to have a man describe himself! Well, let's see. On the positive side, I'm very energetic and I'm rarely not busy doing things. I also like to think that I'm fairly intelligent. On the downside however, I can't always keep my focus for too long and I'm easily distracted. Although projects are very important for me, people are even more important. I'm very likely to drop out of an assignment or stop working on a scheduled task if someone in my circle has problems. People always get priority. I like to think about many things and would consider myself as philosophical, in spite of my constant need for concrete projects and goals. As busy as I am with my cerebral activities, so lazy am I when it comes down to physical activities. Although I frequently put it on my to-do-list I rarely get to do some sport. The only physical activities I get to do are walking (my bike was stolen this year) and sitting in my garden when the weather is fine. As a child I used to play indoors a lot but I've come to like the outdoors now, too. I like forests. Contrary to the opinion of many of

my countrymen, I also like a good rainstorm and I watch thunderstorms from my room with fascination. Speaking of fascination, I'm not overly religious. If anything I am a Buddhist, but this is more of a philosophy than it is a religion. I especially appreciate the very practical character of its teachings and its ability to withstand rational criticism to a far greater degree than the other established world religions. However, I also find myself fascinated with nature religions or with ancient religions such as the Religio Romana. I don't dismiss stories about the supernatural as nonsense, but neither do I believe in them. I do dismiss fate. Sometimes I'm a bit too critical, both for myself and for other people. This earned me, in SVR, the nickname of Latin Inquisition. I can live with it :). I'm also prone to sudden outbursts of anger when I'm faced with people who don't seem to show the slightest bit of empathy or who pride themselves on their ignorance or small-mindedness. For my mental health I tend to avoid such types more than anything else. That's about as far as my personality goes, I think!

What is your role in SVR?

Officially, I am one of the two aediles this year and I've been elected as rector of the collegium Latinum. The aediles mainly work on the site and organise virtual festivals and real-world get-togethers (kind of like the aediles of old!). As rector of collegium Latinum I am, as mentioned before, a cruel and sadistic maniac. Without wanting to sound arrogant, I am unofficially one of the driving forces behind SVR. I was one of the two founders back when it was started with about six or seven people in the spring of 2001. Back then I was mainly an administrator and a coordinator, but also took an active role in promoting our society and trying to start topics on our mailing lists. I believed and still believe that activity is the pounding heart of a living community on the internet. So far, we can't complain! Our forum is quite a civil place with room for lots of topics pertaining to Antiquity.

What does the SVR mean to you personally?

It's fully integrated into my own life, meaning: it would be very weird not to be in SVR.

What do you want to reach with the SVR?

Ideally, SVR was envisioned as a society incorporating sub-communities (the collegia) dealing with their own topics each. Theoretically, the sky is the limit. I would like to keep SVR an active but personal place where everyone feels at home and at ease. It would be great if SVR became the largest Roman organisation out there, but that will most certainly remain but a noble dream for the coming decade.

What are your personal goals in the SVR?

For myself, I don't have any concrete goals. I hope to realise my projects. And it would be nice if, five years from now, I would not be in the centre of the web anymore but see other people doing that job. I may have founded SVR, but I certainly don't claim ownership over it, and I'm very curious to see how newer members will deal with the legacy.

Thank you very much for this interview!



MESSAGE FROM ... THE EDITOR

In this section, one of our magistrates will speak out to the SVR members about an issue concerning their magistracy. For this time, the editor fills this section to talk about his new baby' magazine.

P. DIONYSIVS MVS EDITOR OMNIBVS SALUTEM

This newsletter was an idea I had for a long time already. I think it adds a new dimension to the Societas as an organization. In the two years we exist, our Societas has grown steadily in terms of members and fast in terms of quality. Started from scratch by our (almost legendary) founders, the SVR can now show an impressive record on the field of qualitative information, but also when it comes to social relations: friendship is a high estimated value in our Societas. Amicitia and Industria, two Roman virtues that made the SVR what it is today.

And now we have this newsletter, a possibility to escape the briefness that characterizes the internet, a possibility to add a lasting dimension to the Societas' activities. But this magazine needs two things: a name, and contributors. Everyone who wants to contribute something to this newsletter, is free to do so. If you want to write anything in the existing sections, or if you have an idea for this newsletter, contact the editor at ...

There will also be a special section on our forum for the newsletter, where everyone can post ideas, contributions etc. Societas members who are willing to assist with the newsletter are free to contact me. There is ot very much work involved in this, but a helping hand is always welcome!

And the second important matter, our magazine needs a name! Therefore we're throwing a little contest. Think of a good name for our magazine, and send it to us. Include your SVR-name, country and the reason why you chose that specific name. The SVR senatus will act as a judge, and the winner will be announced in the next issue (september-october). There will also be a nice prize for the winner!

I would like to end this message here by saying this: I hope this newsletter will be appreciated by our membership, and I want this issue to be the start of a lasting tradition. Verba volent, scripta manent!

OPTAMO VOBIS BENE VALERE

Caesar: History by Television

By Marcus Moravius Horatianus Piscinus

Last night I made an effort to view a broadcast on American television. This is not something I would normally do, but the presentation of a miniseries on Julius Caesar raised my curiosity. So there was Jeremy Sisto's appearance as Caesar, maybe with a vague resemblance to a bust Gaius Julius but with little else to convey the Caesar we may think we know. That could not be due to Sisto's performance, however, but rather on the scriptwriter.

Julius Caesar, on television at least, appeared in a Rome where there was no Crassus, no Catalina, a slave revolt with no mention of Spartacus, and wherever was Cicero to be found? A brief mention of Cicero, as a very aged looking Cato (Christopher Walken) unnaturally quotes the missing *pater patriae*. Perhaps just as disappointing is the absence of the Clodia sisters, of Fulvia and her husband Clodius, Catullus and a host of many others everyone of us would like to have seen portrayed. Well it was television after all, hard to put in everyone when years are zipping by in a four hour miniseries. Sulla dies and Pompey becomes consul, seemingly in an instant, and without a colleague Crassus. And just as quickly Caesar is suddenly in his first consulship.

Caesar the television version was so devoid of anything to interest even the most casual acquaintance of Roman history that it does not deserve a review here. I should say though that I did like the bridal dress worn by Julia. The show did bring something else to my mind. With all of its telescoping of years, and its rapid panavision skipping through events, with the authors picking out only a few of the more memorable characters, it really was only an abridged version of what we tend to read of those years. If you are use to reading histories of the Late Republic meant for the general public or for the undergraduate student, then would you miss not having read about L. Minucius Basilus, L. Munatius Placus, P. Sulpicius Rufus, C. Antistius Reginus, M. Sempronius Rutilus, C. Volcaciuss Tullus, Marcus Rufus and Q. Cornificius? These were minor senators, all being *pedarii* but with respectable senatorial families. All served with Caesar in Gaul, and because of their

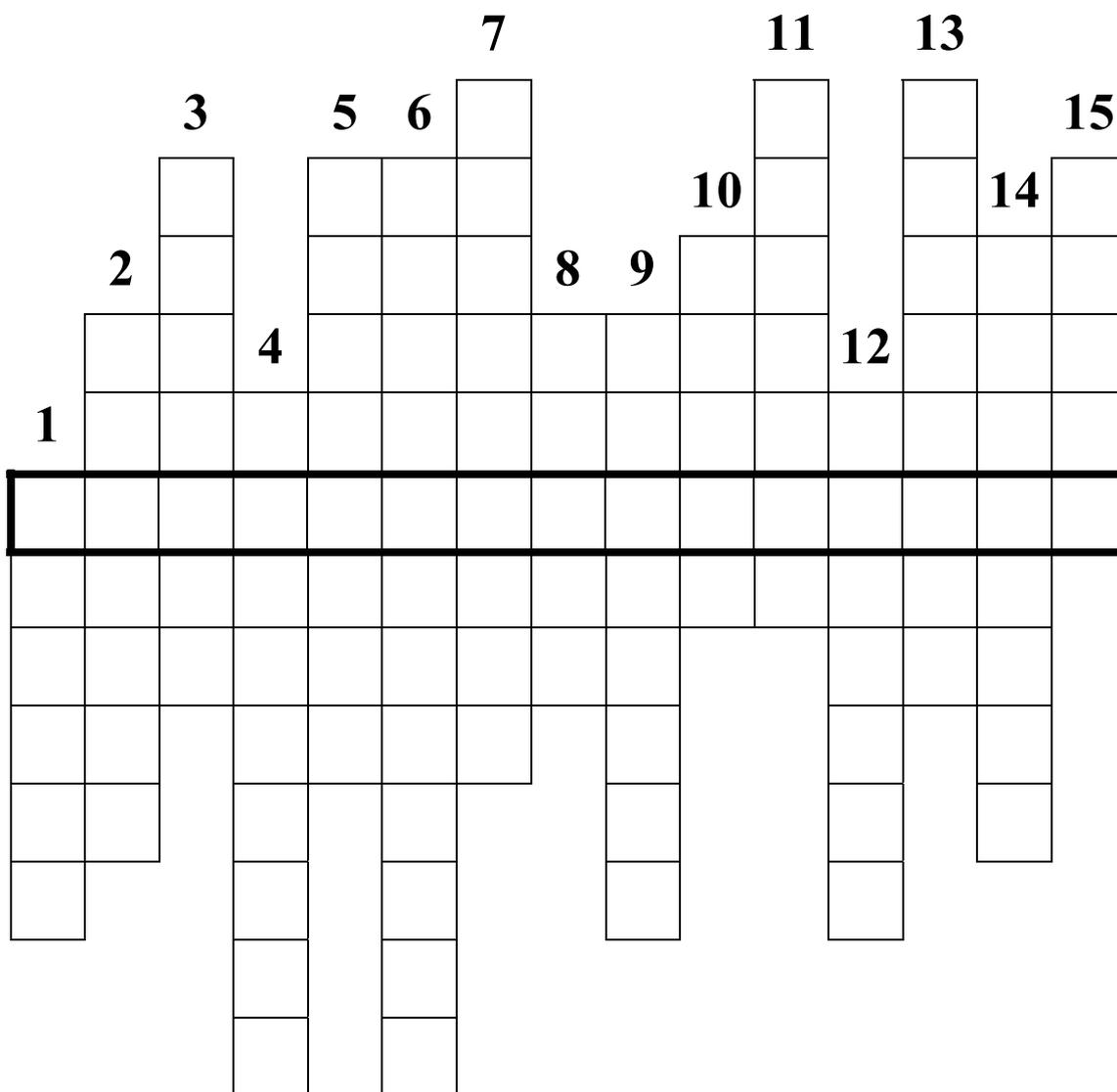
association with Caesar some managed to rise higher than would normally have been their lot. Then too is Q. Lucretius Vespillo, another minor senator before the Civil War, a Pompeian officer who managed not only to survive but to continue his career afterwards, even to rise to the consulship under Augustus.

In Sulla's wake a number of new senators arrived on the scene, who were to make the important difference in how the Republic was to progress in the following years. Sulla's Senate eventually formed into little *amicitiae* centered around Pompey, Crassus, Cato, eventually Caesar, and maybe one might include a subgroup of Pompeians centered around Cicero. We know the names of all the main players. But the breakdown into *partes* and *factiones* really came about with the other players, those lesser known members of the Senate who were the *pedarii*, and the *curiones* and the *vici*, all of whom had their own little areas of influence and were thus able to bring along the winning numbers needed to win an election or a Civil War. We usually do not think of these lesser figures of history. Indeed for most of them we do not even know their names. But these were the real important players in the events leading from the dictatorship of Sulla to the dictatorship of Caesar.

If the cast of characters that played in the television version seemed noticeably too few, for me at least it only served to emphasize what all we have come to miss if we rely on general histories of the period. A brief survey of the period with a little more depth, mention of all the main characters along with their immediate friends and subordinates, still leaves us missing out on a great deal. It points, too, to the fact that even those who have dug deeper into the period, gathered the names of as many names as are possibly recorded, still must feel a certain disappointment over what they are also missing. For all of us - casual readers, amateur historians, students, grad students, on up to professional historians, archaeologists, and Classicists, we still have much more to do, of working together to create a better understanding of the subject so dear to us
Eternal Rome.

GAMES

Solve the puzzle to find a well known Roman in the bold squares.



1. Latin word for the typical Roman military shield
2. The first province Rome acquired
3. He wrote 'Metamorphoses', 'Ars Amoris', etc.
4. The study of inscriptions
5. Famous general opposing Rome in the second Punic War
6. Young and decadent Roman emperor
7. Son of Septimius Severus, he murdered his brother Geta and became emperor
8. A Roman praenomen
9. An empire that was given to Rome by testament ()
10. The harbour of Rome
11. The province where was born
12. Roman historian, he wrote 'Annales' and 'Historiae'
13. The most famous Roman jurist, he was also Praefectus Praetorio under
14. The first, and probably greatest Roman emperor
15. One of our censores, Marcus Pomponius ...