Title: "Conditores Urbis Romae", Livy and Roman Coins

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In *Ab Urbe condita*, Livy reported that a monument to the founders—children suckled by a she-wolf—was erected in Rome near a fig tree:

\[\textit{Eodem anno Cn. et Q. Ogulnii aediles curules aliquot feneratoribus diem dixerunt; quorum bonis multatis ex eo quod in publicum redactum est aenea in Capitolio limina et trium mensarum argentea uasa in cella Iovis Iovemque in culmine cum quadrigis et ad ficum Ruminalem simulacra infantium conditorum urbis sub uberibus lupae posuerunt [...].}\]

The curule aediles, Cnaeus and Quintus Ogulnius, brought up several money-lenders for trial this year [296 BC]. The proportion of their fines which was paid into the treasury was devoted to various public objects; the wooden thresholds of the Capitol were replaced by bronze, silver vessels were made for the three tables in the shrine of Jupiter, and a statue of the god himself, seated in a four-horsed chariot, was set up on the roof. They also placed near the Ficus Ruminalis a group representing the Founders of the City as infants being suckled by the she-wolf.

The monument mentioned in the text, representing a she-wolf and children, is associated with a reverse representation on didrachmas which are dated at 269–266 BC (fig. 1). For the first time in the history...

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3 *RRC*, no 20; *BMCRR* Romano-Campanian, no 28; *CRR*, no 6. Cf. Dulière 1979: 43–46 and cat. M4; Evans 1992: 59–63; Dardenay 2010: 52–53; Darde-
of Roman minting, the reverse sides of these coins began to feature the Lupa Romana theme: an image consisting of the figures of a she-wolf and two human children. The inscription is the following: ROMANO(rum). This is a peculiar inscription among the group of early coins. The obverses feature a bust of Hercules’ profile. One may not rule out that Plinius Maior saw in those didrachmas the first silver coins which were struck, as he wrote, during the consulate of Q. Ogulnius and C. Fabius, in the year 485 ab urbe condita, five years before the First Punic War (HN 33, 13, 44)⁴.

It is assumed that the representation featured on these early didrachmas exerted an influence upon subsequent representations of the theme of the she-wolf which suckled Romulus and Remus in Roman minting. Such an assumption is legitimate. There are many clues which attest to inspiration for the minting, during a specific historical period, of monetary models developed in previous periods. This phenomenon could assume two forms. The first had to do with the restitution of early coins, i.e. the copying of those coins, both the obverses and the reverses. When the elements which were put on them were repeated, an inscription was added consisting of the name of the one who issued a given restoration series and the formula restituit, providing information about the “restitution” of an early coin. This piece of supplementary information updated the old monetary type in a new reality⁵. The second form had to do with the imitation of early coins. The representations and the words which were previously features of either republican or imperial minting were repeated exclusively on reverses, whereas the obverses of the “imitations” were constructed in the period of the Republic on the basis of an iconographical theme, and the inscriptions were used as required by monetary officials. In the period of the Empire

⁴ See also: Liv., Per. 15, 6: Tunc primum populus R. argento uti coepit.
the base was furnished by a portrait and the titulature of a representative of the currently ruling dynasty⁶.

The coins of the Flavii, in which the image of the Lupa Romana was repeated in the form which was introduced in the *RRC* 20 didrachmas, and which subsequently was utilised sporadically in minting in the third century BC (cf. fig. 2), later to be abandoned, were defined as imitations⁷.

After years of absence, the theme of the she-wolf and the twins appeared in 77–78, on *denarii* which were struck for *caesar* Domitianus of the Flavian dynasty (fig. 3)⁸. I emphasise the fact of the emergence of these Flavian emissions because they signified the restitution (after three hundred years) of the theme of the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, in the form of an independent element featured on monetary reverses.

The treatment of a mythical theme on the first ROMANO-type didrachmas with the Lupa Romana theme was imitated, we assume, also in the bas-relief on the lateral wall of the Mattei A sarcophagus, which is dated at the first half of the third century (ca. 225/230–240). It is decorated with bas-reliefs, which are associated thematically with episodes from Roman myth. The main plate features a development of the theme of the meeting of Mars and Rhea Silvia. One of the lateral walls was covered with a relief which represents the fate of Rhea, who is led by two armed men toward the Tiber. The second wall in question features the theme of the she-wolf which suckles Romulus and Remus. This image became an element within a broader scene: the scene unfolds in the Lupercal, which is peered into by two herdsmen; their figures were placed symmetrically above a grotto which was outlined in a semicircular manner (fig. 4)⁹. As far as the pose of

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⁹ Mars and Rhea: Rome, Palazzo Mattei; Rhea: Musei Vaticani, Belvedere (Cortile Oct.), inv. 913; Lupa Romana: Musei Vaticani, Belvedere (Cortile Oct.), inv. 916.
the animal and the arrangement of the infantile figures represented on the lateral wall of the sarcophagus is concerned, one may discern a similarity to the solution which was applied on the reverses of *RRC* 20 didrachmas. The imitation, as indicated by Alexandra Dardenay, is expressed in an archaizing style, in which the she-wolf group was presented in the décor of the sarcophagus (“selon un mode archaïsant”)

10. Therefore the image which was introduced to the didrachmas in the third century BC became a source of inspiration for the artists who created the ornamentation of the sarcophagus about 500 years later.

**Lupa nutrix**—the Roman *monumenta*

The earliest known representation of the Lupa Romana theme is the representation featured on the reverse of the *RRC* 20 coins. Nevertheless, the *passus* quoted from *Ab Urbe condita* becomes a testimony which suggests the belief of the ancients—in the person of the author from Patavium himself—that at the beginning of the third century BC the image of the *lupa nutrix* associated with the *initia* of Romulus and Remus did function, and was more widely recognisable. At least it was inscribed into the city landscape of Rome in a symbolic manner but also in the literal, material form of monuments. *Monumenta* of this kind were more numerous, which we may surmise on the basis of individual mentions of early authors. Their indications enable us to locate these monuments on the Capitoline Hill and the Palatine Hill

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10 Dardenay 2012: 120.

11 These two places are exceptional on the map of ancient Rome, considering the complexes which were erected there and the tokens of the past which were collected there, leading back to the earliest Roman past and associated with the idea of the permanence and eternity of Rome. Cf., *inter alia*, REA 2007.
It was Cicero above all who indicated a particular sculpture which used to stand on Capitoline Hill. Mentions of this sculpture recur a number of times in his texts. It is first mentioned in the *Oratio in L. Catilinam tertia* (63 BC), in the context of the *omina* in 65 BC (*Cotta et Torquato consulibus*) which presaged the calamities which were to strike the Roman state and the Romans. At that time the Capitol sustained damage, and the small gilded statue of Romulus, represented as a child taking hold of the udders of a suckling she-wolf, was destroyed after being struck by lightning. The Arpinate thus made reference to the memory of his contemporaries about this monument (*meministis*), suggesting either the complete destruction of the monument or its removal from the Capitol to a different location. Also, one may not rule out that the original location of the monument did not change and that it continued to stand in its former location on Capitoline Hill. Some years later, further mentions of a statue which represented the Roman she-wolf were interwoven by Cicero into the work *De divinatione* (44 BC). Once again, he made reference to the *omina* of the 60s and reminded his readers that:

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\text{Hic silvestris erat Romani nominis altrix / Martia, quae parvos Mavortis semine natos / uberibus gravidis vitali rore rigabat; / quae tum cum pueris flammato fulminis ictu / concidit atque avolsa pedum vestigia liquit}^{14}.
\]

Here was the Martian beast, the nurse of Roman dominion, Suckling with life-giving dew, that issued from udders distended, Children divinely begotten, who sprang from the loins of the War God; Stricken by lightning she toppled to earth, bearing with her the children; Torn from her station, she left the prints of her feet in descending.

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13 One of the authors reported that a statue of Jupiter which also suffered at that time was moved to the forum: *Obs.* 61.

He made reference to this episode one more time (Div. 2.21.47)\textsuperscript{15}. The fate of the lightning-struck figure of Romulus (\textit{Romulus lactens fulmine ictus}) was associated, at that time, with the presage of imminent danger to the city which he had established (\textit{quam ille condidit})\textsuperscript{16}.

A fragment in \textit{Rhômaikē archaiología} by Dionysius of Halicarnassus directs the attention of the reader toward the Palatine Hill as the place in which a monument representing the she-wolf with Remus and Romulus stood\textsuperscript{17}. In his description of the Lupercal, located near the place where herdsmen noticed a she-wolf which suckled children, the author referred to the place as a deep cave, overgrown with a forest in which the animal found shelter. This place had been of a sacred nature for a long time. An altar was erected for Pan, and another monument stood in the temenos: “[…] it represents a she-wolf suckling two infants, the figures being in bronze and of ancient workmanship” (trans. E. Cary). This monument “is still” in Lupercal—the piece of information provided by Dionysius dates back to the first century BC.

Certain specific points associated with the monument described by Livy cannot be established. Generally speaking, the fragment from \textit{Ab Urbe condita} was considered in the context of stated, possible, or ruled out identification of the monument described by Livy with the Capitoline She-wolf\textsuperscript{18}. However, we do not know about the existence of a reproduction

\textsuperscript{15} Cf. also Dio Cass. 37, 9, 1; Obs. 61.
\textsuperscript{16} At this point it is worth indicating the dimension of Romulus’s (and Remus’s) statue next to the she-wolf, which was symbolic also for Cicero, as well as displaying the high estimation of the role of Romulus in the history of Rome, and even the verbal stylisation for a new Romulus, which influenced all the more the metaphorical tenor of certain phrases. For a more comprehensive discussion of the position of the figure of Romulus in Cicero’s thinking: Ver Eecke 2008: 245–354. After all, fragments of the works of the great orator were analysed many times. They provide a basis \textit{inter alia} for the analysis of numerous \textit{prodigia} which presaged calamities which were supposed to befall the country with reference to Catilina’s \textit{coniuratio}. Cf. Kowalski 2009: 31–37.
\textsuperscript{17} Dion. Hal. 1, 79, 7–8.
of the ancient monument from the Capitol, whereas the famous Lupa Capitolina continues to be the subject of discussion. It suffices to mention that Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768) was already wondering whether the she-wolf from the Capitol was “the one to which Dionysius referred as a work of considerable antiquity or the one which, according to Cicero, was damaged by a lightning bolt, we do not know; however, on the back paw of the animal one may clearly see a scratch, and perhaps the latter is a mark of that [lightning] strike.” At the other end of the continuum might be placed the results of recent analyses by Anna Maria Carruba. She claims that the Capitoline She-wolf, which is erroneously treated as the work of the old Etruscan school, remains a product of medieval art and dates back to the Carolingian period.

Livy’s account is somewhat ambiguous as far as the construction of the monument is concerned. One may wonder whether the sculpture was erected “from scratch” in the first half of the third century BC or whether the already existing monument was supplemented by the figures of children, and one may also wonder whether the sole statue of the she-wolf, without the children, would have been a sufficient signal that the intention was to portray an episode of mythical history and an allusion to the miraculous salvation of the twins, Mars’ sons. The Romans were indeed sometimes symbolised by a wolf; there were also instances in which they were symbolised by a she-wolf. However, the one which

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19 Winckelmann 2012: 266.
21 Cf., e.g., Duilière 1979: 53–57: Ogulnii added the little figures of children to the statue of the she-wolf which stood at the ficus ruminalis; Dardenay 2012: 81–82: it seems that the Ogulnii placed the statue of the animal near the ficus ruminalis and they added the children; Picard 1987: 251: it is doubtful that the Ogulnii would have supplemented an apotropaic monument with the figures of children.
22 Cf., e.g., Liv. 3, 66, 3–4; Hor., Carm. 4, 4, 49–53; Vell. Pat. 2, 27, 2.
23 See, e.g., BMCRR 2: Social War 327, no 18; 333, no 41 (91–88 BC); CRR, no 628, 641 (90–88 BC) and RRC, no 388/1a–b (77 BC); CRR, nos 781–781a
was materialised in the form of various works of art acquired its prophetic dimension only when it was supplemented by the figures of children. Such a complete, three-figure composition signalled the miraculous salvation of Romulus and Remus. Therefore, one may suppose that from the beginning the statue of the animal was supplemented with the figures of children. However, this does not solve the problem of the dating of the exhibition of the monument.

It is also difficult to express judgement about the location of the monument of the Ogulnii. This problem is associated with the location of the *ficus ruminalis*, which in Livy’s description served as a topographical aid. The ancient authors mentioned two fig trees: one rose on the Palatine Hill in front of the Lupercal, the second grew in the Comitium24. Livy himself, in his relating of the stories about the fate of the children of Mars and Rhea, provided further information about the fig tree:

_Forte quadam divinitus super ripas Tiberis effusus lenibus stagnis nec adiri usquam ad iusti cursum poterat amnis et posse quamvis languida mergi aqua infantes spem ferentiibus dabat. Ita velut defuncti regis imperio in proxima alluvie ubi nunc ficus Ruminalis est—Romularem vocatam ferunt—pueros exponunt [...]25._

By a heaven-sent chance it happened that the Tiber was then overflowing its banks, and stretches of standing water prevented any approach to the main channel. Those who were carrying the children expected that this stagnant water would be sufficient to drown them, so under the impression that they were carrying out the king’s orders they exposed the boys at the nearest point of the overflow, where the Ficus Ruminalis (said to have been formerly called Romularis) now stands.

We may infer from the context that this *ficus ruminalis* should be placed at the foot of the hill—probably not near the Lupercal but rather at the

(c. 76–71 BC); BMCRR Rome, p. 392, nos 3208, 3209 (77 BC); cf. DULIÈRE 1979: cat. M11; DARDENAY 2012: cat. L83.


25 Liv. 1, 4, 4–5.
Forum next to the Comitium. The preservation of this sole tree in Livy’s time, i.e. in the later Republican and in the early imperial period, is confirmed by other ancient writers. They wrote that in Augustus period the tree on Palatine Hill was no longer in existence, whereas the tree in the Comitium continued to grow and was “respected”, and when it withered during Nero’s reign it was reborn in new shoots.

It is not by any means my intention to enter into discussion about the appearance and location of the original monument which represented the she-wolf and the children. This is merely a pretext to indicate the presence of monuments which present, in the Roman urban space, this specific episode of the mythical past which had to do with the she-wolf’s care for Remus and Romulus.

Of more significance for me are the words with which the early authors described these monuments. They simply indicated the children, Romulus and Remus, suckled by a she-wolf, to be the heroes rendered eternal in the statues. However, when Cicero made reference to this Capitoline monument, which in the light of his words consisted of the figure of a she-wolf and a gilded figure of one child, he wrote the following about it: ille, qui hanc urbem condidit, Romulus. Another significant reference to the children who sucked the udders of a she-wolf as the conditores urbis is featured only in Livy, in the description of the monument of the

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26 Dulière 1979: 59–60; Coarelli 1995a: 249. Contra: Evans 1991: 806: “In 296, a statue group was erected by the Ogulnii near the ficus ruminalis, which we have already ascertained was in the region of the Cermalus, by the cave called the Lupercal. The group was not found, as many scholars believe, under the fig tree in the Comitium; this has been seen to be based on an erroneous reading of Pliny. The statue remained in place by the Lupercal to be described by Dionysius, and is appropriately labelled archaic in style”.


28 Plin., HN 15, 20, 77.

29 Tac., Ann. 13, 58.

30 Cic., Cat. 3, 8, 19; cf. Cic., Div. 2, 21, 47.
Ogulnii\textsuperscript{31}. In these accounts the image of Romulus (and Remus) apart from the she-wolf was associated directly with the role of the founder, or founders, of Rome.

Liv, Romulus and \textit{conditores}

Livy made sparing use of the term \textit{conditor} in his work. In the substantive function he used it slightly more than twenty times. As a matter of fact, he used it in reference to various figures and in various contexts. He applied this term to the following figures: Augustus, the builder and the restorer of all temples\textsuperscript{32}, App. Claudius, the father of Roman law\textsuperscript{33}, L. Brutus, the one who established Roman liberty\textsuperscript{34}, king Servius Tullius and other kings, the subsequent architects of the city\textsuperscript{35}, as well as Aeneas\textsuperscript{36}. Sometimes the term \textit{conditor} / \textit{conditores} is used as a synonym of a certain nameless group of those who established cities or colonies, as well as reformers or organisers of the religious sphere\textsuperscript{37}. Therefore, the term was not reserved for the founder of Rome\textsuperscript{38}.

Livy used the term \textit{conditor} for Romulus himself only a few times\textsuperscript{39}. He became “our founder”, \textit{conditor noster}, when one recalls that the Romans

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{31} Liv. 10, 23, 11.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Liv. 4, 20, 7: \textit{templorum omnium conditor aut restitutor}.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Liv. 3, 58, 2: \textit{legum lator conditorque Romani iuris}.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Liv. 8, 34, 3: \textit{conditor Romanae libertatis}.
\item \textsuperscript{35} Liv. 1, 42, 4 and 2, 1, 2: \textit{conditores partium certe Urbis}.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Liv. 40, 4, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Liv. 7, 30, 19; 33, 49, 5; 37, 54, 19; 39, 17, 7.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Cf. Miles 1986: 29–32; Miles 1988: 193–204. A more comprehensive account of the earliest past featured in the work of Livy: Forsythe 1999. The significance of the term \textit{conditor} in reference to the figure of Romulus, also in the historical reality, especially of the period of the Empire, cf. Lefebvre 2004: 123–144.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Liv., \textit{praef.} 7; 1, 20, 3; 4, 15, 7.
\end{itemize}
originates from Mars and from our founder, in fact. Also when the casa Romuli is mentioned, the term casa conditoris nostri is used. Romulus is also referred to as conditor templi, when after victory over Acron he carries the armour taken from the enemy to the temple of Jupiter Feretrius. Moreover, other people are compared to Romulus. These include a dictator, M. Furius Camillus, whose merits, especially in the military field, are sufficient to refer to him as the second—after Romulus—founder of the City. Also T. Sicinius tr. pl., the champion of the project of colonising Veii, was supposed to be the “founder” of Veii, somewhat in opposition to Romulus, the founder of Rome (auctor Urbis Romae).

Livy used the term even more rarely. By referring to Romulus by the term conditor, at the same time he made direct reference to the city of Rome: conditor urbis. Patavinus used the term in this way in reference to Romulus only twice. When he reached the end of his story about the circumstances of the establishment of Rome, about the divinationes which were conducted by Romulus and Remus, and about the death of the second of the brothers, he summarised them in the following manner: “Romulus thus became sole ruler, and the city was called after him, its founder.”

In the account of the events of the fifth century BC, and in the context of the evaluation of the title rex and the monarchical system (regnum), Livy, who placed a mention of the expulsion of the kings into the mouth of M. Horatius Barbatus, referred to Romulus as the founder of the City:

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40 Liv. 10, 27, 9.
41 Liv. 5, 53, 8.
42 Liv. 1, 10, 7.
43 Liv. 5, 49, 7; 7, 1, 10.
44 Liv. 5, 24, 11.
45 Liv. 1, 7, 3: [...] ita solus potitus imperio Romulus; condita urbs conditoris nomine appellata.
Nec nominis homines tum pertaesum esse, quippe quo Iovem appellari fas sit, quo Romulum, conditorem urbis, deincepsque reges, quod sacris etiam ut sollemne retentum sit: superbiam violentiamque tum perosus regis.

It was not the name of “king” that men had now grown weary of, for it was the proper title of Jupiter, Romulus the founder of the City and his successors were called “kings,” and the name was still retained for religious purposes. It was the tyranny and violence of kings that men detested.

In order to exhaust this list, one should also indicate the previously mentioned fragment which describes the sculpture exhibited by the Ogulnii, in which both Romulus and Remus were referred to as conditores Urbis. However, their proper names were not mentioned in this passage, for in the eyes of contemporary readers, i.e. above all for Livy, and perhaps also for the people who had been looking at this monument ad ficum Ruminalem since the third century BC, the state of affairs was clear: it was Remus and Romulus who were presented with the she-wolf. Moreover, Livy referred to both brothers as founders, which seems important in the context of such rare instances of the use of the term conditor / conditores Urbis by this writer.

Maxentius and conditores Urbis

An important testimony to the functioning of the tradition about the founders (conditores) is provided by the period of the reign of Maxentius (306–312). He was an emperor whose reign occurred almost entirely in Rome, as far as the place of residence of the ruler was concerned, and was focused on Rome and romanitas, which refers in turn to the ideological support of Maxentius’s authority. He made strong reference to the Roman

\[46\] Liv. 3, 39, 4.
\[47\] Liv. 10, 23, 11.
tradition, including its Romulan themes. *Nota bene* he was the father of Valerius Romulus. He himself, as is expressed in the content of his coins, referred to himself as *conservator Urbis suae*, which is confirmed all the more by the great construction-related initiatives in the capital which were associated with his name⁴⁸.

The year 308 was exceptional for the manifestation of the relationship of Maxentius with early Rome. At that time the emperor, on the eve of the anniversary holiday of Rome established by emperor Hadrian, *dies natalis Urbis*⁴⁹, i.e. April 20th, accepted the first consulate with his son Romulus. In the series of coins which were struck to mark this occasion, one emitted gold medallions of the type ROMAE AETERNAE AVCTRICI AVG(usti) N(ostri), featuring the ruler in a consul’s garb, receiving a globe from Roma⁵⁰. Moreover, for the first time in the period of Maxentius’s rule, the theme of the Roman she-wolf was introduced, and from that time until the year 312 it became one of the principal themes featured on coins and medallions of various types (cf. figg. 5–7). It could constitute either the main or a supplementary element of the representation, while some of the iconographical solutions which were applied directly resemble the arrangement of figures featured in *RRC* 20 didrachmas.

It was also during Maxentius’s rule that a man by the name of Furius Octavianus, *curator aedium sacrarum*, placed a monument at the Forum Romanum of which the base, with the following inscription, is preserved:

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Marti Invicto Patri / et aeternae urbis suae / conditoribus / dominus noster /
I[[mp(erator) Maxent[iu]s p(ius) f(elix)]] / invictus Aug(ustus)⁵¹.
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⁵⁰ *Drost* 2013: no R36 (8Au); cf. *RIC* 6, 373, no 173.

⁵¹ *CIL* 06, 3385a.
Only the plinth of the monument was preserved, found in 1899 near the Arch of Septimius Severus and the Curia building (cf. fig. 8). We do not know the year in which this monument was erected; the name Octavianus points to a relatively broad period of time (307–312). However, the diurnal date of the event was preserved: 21 April, as indicated by the content of the inscription. This once again points to the date of the holiday which was established some time previously by emperor Hadrian, who in 121 made annual celebrations of the birth of Rome on the traditional date of the establishment of the city by Romulus, i.e. a holiday which was known as Ῥωμαια (Romaia) or dies natalis Urbis. This furnished a splendid opportunity for subsequent rulers to manifest their associations with Rome.

The proximity of the diurnal date carved on the base of the monument with the dating of the previously mentioned acceptance of consulates engendered the hypothesis that the sculpture monument was placed in the Forum in 308. This hypothesis was supported by the coins featuring the theme of the Roman she-wolf. In Maxentius’s coins Mars assumes a prominent place, among others as Mars invictus pater, which was a frequently used epithet of this god in the minting of the early fourth century. From 308, Maxentius issued coins of a theretofore unfamiliar type: MARTI PROPAG(atori) IMP(eri) AVG(usti) N(ostri)54. Another original feature had to do with the representation on the reverse. The latter presented the standing figures of Mars and a woman, and between them a she-wolf which suckled Romulus and Remus55.

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52 PLRE 1, Octavianus 638.
53 CIL 06, 3385B: dedicata die XI kal. maias.
54 Drost 2013: 196 and nos R67, R69, O12, O14, O16, see also: RIC 6: 375, no 189, 402, no 11.
55 The figure of a woman is identified as Roma, Italia, Victoria or Venus. Cf. Albertson 2012: 176 and Dulièr 1979: cat. M120 and M123: probably Venus; Dardenay 2012: 131; Dardenay 2010: 125, cat. L59: Roma; Cullhed 1994: 47–48: Victoria. The stylisation of a female figure on these coins constitutes a departure from the appearance of the goddesses and personifications which were a standard
Obviously, the date of the first emission of these coins may suggest that also at that time, in 308, a sculpture honouring Mars, Romulus, Remus and the eternal Rome was placed in the Forum. If we assume this likelihood, one should disregard any analogy of this sculpture monument and the iconography of the coins. Of course, one may assume that the image on the reverse of these coins is merely a loose reference to the content and form of the monument—the composition-related differences would result from this interpretive arbitrariness. However, it is above all the commentaries in the inscriptions, both on the plinth and on the reverse, that suggest that it is merely an apparent convergence, although without doubt they share an ideological context in which the protagonists of the founding myth occupy a prominent place.

Reinterpretations of the founding myth

Maxentius’s activities may produce associations with the initiative of the Ogulnii. It is assumed that the base which was found with his name may have performed the function of a plinth for an old monument, the ad ficum Ruminalem monument mentioned by Livy, or a more recent monument which replaced the previous one. The second possibility is associated with the assumption that the earlier monument could have stood in the Comitium already in Maxentius’s time, and feature of the minting of that time. Sometimes one indicates Rhea Silvia, the mother of twins—she would have complemented in a natural manner a scene with Mars, as well as Romulus and Remus suckled by a she-wolf. Cf. Drost 2013: 196: Rhea Silvia or Felicitas; Hauer-Prost 1994: no 33: Rhea Silvia, Italia or Roma.


57 Bruggisser 2002: 130–131. The hypothesis that the base from the Forum supported the Capitoline She-wolf is recalled by Curran 2000: 60–61. The idea loses its validity in the context of the research of Carruba and the “[chronological] rejuvenation” of the Capitoline She-wolf.
that the inscription was copied from it and repeated on the more recent monument\textsuperscript{58}.

Moreover, the inscription which is preserved on the base of Furius Octavianus suggests an arrangement of the fourth century sculpture other than just the she-wolf with two children mentioned by Livy. Even though this was the way in which Giacomo Boni, the one who found the plinth, imagined it to be\textsuperscript{59}, nevertheless it is more likely that the lost monument represented a statue of Mars, at whose feet were figures of Remus and Romulus suckled by a she-wolf\textsuperscript{60}, whereas the place where the base of Furius Octavianus was found indicates that topographically speaking the monument was incorporated into a space which was saturated with associations with Romulan tradition, and which was occupied by material tokens which recalled Romulus’s time. Nearby was mundus (umbilicus Urbis) and Lapis Niger, whereas the content of the inscription also evokes figures from the world of Roman myth: Mars and his sons, Romulus and Remus, but they maintain their association with the city, which is eternal (Urbs aeterna). An important feature is the appreciation of Remus. In the relevant fragment of Furius Octavianus’ inscription Romulus has no primacy. He was rendered equal with his brother by means of a common epithet: both are conditores. A similar thing happened earlier in the description of an early monument of the third century BC, written by Livy, in which the author indicated that the monument represented the founders: conditores urbis sub uberibus lupae (Liv. 10, 23, 11).

In a tradition which we might refer to as vulgate, it was Romulus who was the founder of Rome. The propitiousness of the gods which was manifested toward him during the auspices, the making of the sulcus primigenius, followed by a debate with Remus and the murder of the latter, and the subsequent development of the City made Romulus the only

\textsuperscript{58} Cf. Wiseman 1995: 72–73.
\textsuperscript{59} Boni 1903: 303.
\textsuperscript{60} Duliè\`e 1979: 182–183.
founder. To paraphrase the title of Robert Schilling’s study: “Romulus l’élu et Rémus le réprouvé”\textsuperscript{61}, it was he who was the chosen one, whereas Remus was forgotten in this role.

However, during Augustus’ reign, after the end of the civil wars which exacerbated the feud of the brothers in mythologised stories\textsuperscript{62}, a peculiar reinterpretation of the Roman myth occurred, which also brought about a shift of emphasis in the images of the heroes and the episodes in which they participated and had been developed by an earlier tradition. One may perceive new elements in the representations of Romulus and Remus. These corrections involved both topographical questions (\textit{auspicia} in the Palatine Hill and in the Aventine Hill), as well as ideological ones (the relations between Remus and Romulus). The final product of this \textit{aggiornamento} of the myth, whose witness, holder, or perhaps sole active author, was Livy, became Remus’s advancement. One may metaphorically express the sentiment that Remus returned to the hill of his childhood: the Palatine Hill. Now, he not only lived next to Romulus but he exercised power as well\textsuperscript{63}. His death—either as an innocent man or the provocative brother


\textsuperscript{62} Their figures were incorporated into the context of the civil wars during the Republic, cf., e.g., Lic. Mac. frg. 3 \textit{ap. OGR} 23, 5; Liv. 1.7.2; Dion. Hal. 1, 87, 2–3; Catull. 28, 15; Plut., \textit{Rom.} 10.2; Serv., \textit{ad Aen.} 1, 273; 6, 779. The memory of Romulus in the final period of the Republic, cf. Classen 1962: 174–204; Dulière 1979: 144–146; Evans 1992: 87–108; Ver Eecke 2008: \textit{passim}.

\textsuperscript{63} See: \textit{Prop.} 4, 1, 9–10: \textit{domus Remi}; cf. 3, 9, 50–51; 2, 1, 23–24; 4, 6, 80–82. See: \textit{Verg.}, \textit{Aen.} 1, 291–293: \textit{Remo cum fratre Quirinus, / iura dabunt}. Cf. especially the explanations Serv., \textit{ad Aen.} 1, 276 and 292; 6, 777 and 779, also allusions to the triarchy with the participation of Numitor, Romulus and Remus, who ruled in Alba. See \textit{OGR} 23, 1: Romulus and Remus’s project of the establishment of the city in which they could exercise power jointly (\textit{in qua ipsi pariter regnarent}), cf. \textit{ibidem} 23, 6: Remus outlived his brother. Remus was as equally a founder as Romulus, cf. August., \textit{De civ. D.} 3, 6. The idea of their equal power dates back to a remote past, cf. Cassius Hemina
of Fortune’s darling—was necessary in order for the greatness of Rome to realise itself. Remus’s rehabilitation is yet another feature of the “Roman revolution” which was underway at that time, which manifested itself also in the manner in which contemporaries perceived the past.

In the version of Livy, who represented the generation during the existence of which this change occurred, one may perceive a peculiar ambivalence in the understanding of the role of Remus and Romulus. In a relevant fragment of the first book of *Ab Urbe condita*, a description of the events which led to the establishment of the City, the author attributed the principal role to Romulus. As Livy wrote:

*Priori Remo augurium venisse furtur, sex voltures; iamque nuntiato augurio cum duplex numerus Romulo se ostendisset, utrumque regem sua multitudo consalutaverunt tempore illi praecpto, at bi numero avium regnum trahebant. Inde cum altercatione congressi*


\[ 64 Cf. Ov., Fast. 5, 457–474: Remus, in the form of a nocturnal spectre, justifies to himself the deed of Romulus. As a matter of fact, it was he that the birds presaged would assume supreme power. Celer’s deed (or perhaps Romulus’s deed) may be a prefiguration of civil wars. Cf. also Briquel 1980, 267–269; Ver Eecke 2006: 197–222. An interesting testimony of the recalling of the figure of Remus and the association of his memory with the Palatine Hill is provided by one of the archaising inscriptions—whose content features Remureine (CIL 1², 971)—placed on *cippi*, which were found at the foot of the Palatine Hill, near the Arch of Titus, copies of the originals which date back to Augustus’ time. Cf. Coarelli 2012: 34–35.\]

\[ 65 In Remus’s “advancement” there is also a poetic commentary on the political reality of Augustus’ period. A collaborator of the emperor, Agrippa, became something of a twin brother to the *princeps*; they introduced law into Rome together, and their dyarchy constituted a parallel to the mythical stories of the brothers. *Nb. Agrippa lived on Palatine Hill for certain periods of time, see Dio Cass. 53, 27, 5.* One may perceive a trace of this tradition in the commentaries of Servius, see Serv., *ad Aen.* 1, 292: Agrippa (instead of Remus) became something of a brother of Quirinus (Augustus).\]
Remus is said to have been the first to receive an omen: six vultures appeared to him. The augury had just been announced to Romulus when double the number appeared to him. Each was saluted as king by his own party. The one side based their claim on the priority of the appearance, the other on the number of the birds. Then followed an angry altercation; heated passions led to bloodshed; in the tumult Remus was killed. The more common report is that Remus contemptuously jumped over the newly raised walls and was forthwith killed by the enraged Romulus, who exclaimed, “So shall it be henceforth with every one who leaps over my walls”. Romulus thus became sole ruler, and the city was called after him, its founder.

A version which revoked the stigma of fratricide from Romulus was familiar to Livy. In this version he was somehow exonerated. Nevertheless, the rerum scriptor also adduced a version which is more frequently adopted (volgatior fama), and which put the blame on Romulus67. However, it is more important that it was exclusively Romulus who was referred to as the founder of the City (conditor).

As far as the idea of conditio Urbis is concerned, the historian from Patavium represented the matter in a completely different way, without entering any discussion, in the tenth book of his work, in which he related the sculpture-related initiative of the Ogulnii. Taking no heed of the fact that he contradicted himself, he introduced information about the conditores, the two founders, for the sculpture represented a topical image of the puerile Romulus and Remus. Stéphane Benoist is certain that the aforementioned reinterpretations of the founding myth within the framework of a “Roman revolution” constituted a gateway for Livy to present the participation of Remus and Romulus in the establishment

66 Liv. 1, 7, 1–3.
of Rome in this way, and also to note the double protection of Rome by the founders, anticipated by the monument of the Ogulnii situated at the very heart of the city\textsuperscript{68}.

Remus and Romulus in the iconography of Roman coins

Both Livy’s account, which is derived from the period of Augustus but which dates back to the third century BC, and the inscription of the period of Maxentius’s rule, document the fact that the tradition of the founders of Rome endured in a materialised form. Two mythical \textit{conditores Urbis} were commemorated in the specific monuments which used to stand in Rome.

As we continue our discussion of the iconographical tradition of the \textit{conditores Urbis} it is worth drawing the reader’s attention to the testimony of numismatic sources. In those sources one of the brothers, Romulus, the one to whom tradition more commonly attributed the establishment of Rome, was introduced independently to the representations featured on the reverse sides. He was presented as a victorious warrior who carried a trophy on his shoulder. Identified by inscriptions in which his name, Romulus, was evoked, he also received the following epithets: \textit{augustus} and \textit{conditor} (cf. fig. 9)\textsuperscript{69}. Remus was not distinguished in this way. However, the most common representations in Roman minting which allude to the Roman founding myth were constructed on the basis of the image of a she-wolf suckling two children (cf. figg. 10–14). They constitute a robust stepping stone from the third century BC to the fourth century BC. Moreover, in the sphere of official declarations made by the subsequent imperial rulers, until

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{68} Benoist 2011: 37.
\end{itemize}
the period of Maxentius they constituted the sole message demonstrating acceptance of the memory of the founders which was verbally expressed by Livy, and which was associated by him with the monument of the Ogulnii.

The iconographical theme of the Roman she-wolf was featured in minting in a number of varieties. It was limited to a representation of three figures, or supplemented by other elements, such as e.g. the figure of a herdsman or Roma, and it was incorporated into scenery constituted by a grotto or a tree. Some of the variants replicate the composition and style of the RRC 20 didrachmas from the third century BC, in which a she-wolf was represented with her head turned toward the children and with bristled fur, whereas others represent a she-wolf whose head is extended forward. However, even if the she-wolf is accompanied by children, there are always two of them. Such a representation, regardless of its variety in numismatical iconography, assumed an emblematic sense over the course of centuries.\(^{70}\)

As far as content is concerned, the theme of the Roman she-wolf evoked the mythical episode about the miraculous salvation of the sons of Mars and Rhea. However, in Roman minting, the theme of the Roman she-wolf suckling children frequently evoked the establishment of Rome and its founders. The salvation of the twins and the care of the she-wolf extended over them were also a prerequisite for the subsequent events which led to the *conditio Urbis*.

This was not a trivial theme in Roman minting. In the period of the Republic it was employed very rarely. In the period of the Empire it was not common either, and its presence was less dispersed in terms of chronology. Generally speaking, it correlates with the activities engaged by those emperors who focused their attention on the restoration of the tradition of the earliest Rome and the commemoration of the many centuries of its history, and who drew on its very beginnings, or on the anniversary celebrations which referred to the founding of Rome—obviously for purposes indicated by current policy and propaganda—related reasons. In these

\(^{70}\) Cf. Bonanome 1996: 188.
contexts the representation of a she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus remained a token of memory about the salvation of the twins. However, if we consider the symbolic nature of the numismatical representations, the necessity of the synthesis of various types of content in one image at the same time, and the employment of iconographical solutions featured in art, then the representation itself could also furnish associations with Rome in se and to the conditio Urbis itself. An identical place is occupied in this conditio by both Romulus and Remus.
Fig. 1. AR Quadr.—Didr., c. 269–266 BC. Obv.: Diademed head of Hercules, r.; Rv. She-wolf standing r., suckling the twins, ROMANO in exergue. Cf. RRC 20.1. All the credentials copyright Classical Numismatical Group, Inc. www.cngcoins.com

Fig. 2. Æ Sext., c. 217–215 BC. Obv. She-wolf standing r., suckling the twins / • • in exergue; Rv. ROMA, eagle standing r. / • • behind. Cf. RRC 39.3.

Fig. 3. Ar D., Vespasian (Domitian caes.), Rome, 77–78 AD. Obv. CAESAR AVG F DOMITIANVS, head of caesar, r.; Rv. COS V, she-wolf standing l., suckling the twins; boat in exergue. Cf. RIC 2.1, 961.
Fig. 4. Lupa Romana. Short side of the sarcophagus Mattei A, c. 225/230–240 AD. Musei Vaticani, inv. 916.

Fig. 5. Æ F., Maxentius, Oxtia, 308/309–309 AD. Obv. IMP C MAXENTIVS P F AVG, head of emperor, r.; Rv. AETERNITAS AVG N / MOSTΔ, Castor and Pollux standing facing one another; behind, two horses facing one another; between, she-wolf standing l., suckling the twins. Cf. RIC 6, 16 = Drost 2013, O17.

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Fig. 6. Æ F., Maxentius, Aquileia, 309–310 AD. Obv. IMP C MAXENTIVS P F AVG, head of emperor, r.; Rv. CONSERV VRB SVAE / AQS, Roma seated on shield within tetrastyle temple, handing globe to Maxentius, standing r., with foot on bound captive seated r.; Victories as acroteria, she-wolf and twins in pediment. Cf. *RIC* 6, 113 = Drost 2013, A35.

Fig. 7. Æ F., Maxentius, Oxtia, 310 AD. Obv. IMP C MAXENTIVS P F AVG, head of emperor, r.; Rv. SAECVLI FELICITAS AVG N / MOSTP, she-wolf standing l., suckling the twins. Cf. *RIC* 6. 52 = Drost 2013, O49.
Fig. 8. Maxentius’ inscription.

Fig. 9. Ar D, Hadrian, Rome, c. 134–138 AD. Obv. HADRIANVS AVG COS III P P, head of emperor, r.; Rv. ROMVLO CONDITORI, Romulus walking r., carrying spear and trophy. Cf. RIC 2, 266.
Fig. 10. Ar D., Sex. Pompeius, 137 BC. Obv. Head of Roma, r., X; Rv. SEX PO [FOST] LVS / ROMA, she-wolf standing r., suckling the twins, behind, birds on fig tree; on left, shepherd standing r. Cf. RRC 235.1.

Fig. 11. Æ Sest., Antoninus Pius, Rome, c. 140–144 AD. Obv. ANTONINVS AVG PIVS P P TR P COS III, head of emperor, r. Rv. SC, she-wolf standing r. in cave, suckling the twins. Cf. RIC 3, 631.

Fig. 13. Ant, Probus, Siscia, 277 AD. Obv. bust of emperor, r.; Rv. ORIGINI AVG / XXIT, she wolf standing r., suckling the twins. Cf. RIC 5.2, 703.

Fig. 14. Æ F., Constantine I, Arelate (Arles), 333 AD. Obv. VRBS ROMA, head of Roma, l.; Rv. She-wolf standing l., suckling the twins, wreath between two stars above / SCONST. Cf. RIC 7, 373.
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