

The Forum Boarium and the Forum Holitorium in Rome. Their Religious and Economic Significance until the Early Imperial Time*

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Since early times the Forum Holitorium and the Forum Boarium had been important market places and economic transfer points near the Tiber port and were connected to the local and regional road system. Focussing on the Republican and early Imperial era, the case study analysed how religious and economic practices interacted on various levels. Both Fora are appropriate examples illuminating the complex interplay between city and religion, as the investment in new religious buildings and all activities connected to them transformed urban economic spaces in different ways.

An excellent example illustrating these complex processes is the Forum Holitorium, the so called vegetable market, located between the Tiber and the Palatine Hill.² As S. Schipporeit has shown, starting the middle of the 3rd century BC the intensification of building activities since led to a new definition of the area. Especially the four Republican temples of Ianus, Spes, Iuno Sospita and Pietas, which were built by victorious generals, and at least in the late first century BC the erection of a porticus on the eastern side of the area shows impressively how the actual market space of the Forum Holitorium was restricted. In this way, a huge part of the Forum had been transformed into a magnificent road 10–12 meters wide, framed by temples and a porticus and being a part of the triumphal route.³

Concerning the Forum Boarium,⁴ located on the intersection of the Tiber, the Tiber port and the Via Salaria, the situation is quite different. Besides the area's commercial functions, especially as a cattle market, which was relevant until the Imperial period, the different cult places for Hercules are of particular interest. The most prominent one is certainly the Ara Maxima Herculis, although the location and architectural layout and design are debated.⁵ However, the annual sacrifice on the 12th of August was followed by a common sacrificial banquet consuming the meat (reserved for male citizens) on the spot. In addition, the cult of Hercules at the Ara Maxima is linked to the triumph and private sacrifices. Mainly during the last three centuries BC triumphal processions crossed the zone, followed by huge banquets celebrated around the great altar.⁶ Private sacrifices are related to persons who had accomplished commercial or other enterprises successfully and offered the *decuma*, the tenth of their profit to the god. However, Hercules was not just a god of trade, but also protected commercial enterprises and travelling in general, especially risky voyages. Furthermore, in this context Hercules was finally linked to the successful or victorious return.⁷

In this context the emergence of new cult places for Hercules established by victorious generals as well as rich merchants or traders is not surprising. Some of these new cult places as the first round temple at the Forum Boarium were not only located in

close proximity to the Ara Maxima.⁸ Moreover, as in the case of the temple of Hercules Invictus near the Circus Maximus, which F. Coarelli has positioned between the Circus Maximus and the Ara Maxima, the annual festival was performed at the same day as those connected to the Ara Maxima.⁹

The long term changings concerning the Forum Holitorium and the Forum Boarium can therefore demonstrate how economic spaces are transformed by different forms of religious investment and how new performances interlinked to them have been established.

Notes

* A long version will be published separately.

² LTUR II (1995) 299 s. v. Forum Holitorium (F. Coarelli); Schipporeit 2014; Amaducci et al. 2015, d'Alessio 2017, 493–495. 499–512 tab. 208. 218. 222.

³ Schipporeit 2014, 211–223. 213 fig. 3; 215 fig. 5; 218 fig. 8.

⁴ Coarelli 1988; LTUR II (1995) 295–297 s. v. Forum Boarium (F. Coarelli); Scheid 2012; Amaducci et al. 2015; Bariviera 2017, 421–423. 426–434 tab. 171.

⁵ Coarelli 1988, 61–77; LTUR III (1996) 17–19 s. v. Hercules Invictus, Ara Maxima (A. Viscogliosi); Torelli 2006 and Bariviera 2017, 430 f. tab. 173.

⁶ Scheid 2012, 293. 296–298; Bariviera 2017, 426.

⁷ Scheid 2012, 297.

⁸ Considered to be identified with the Aedes Aemiliana Herculis (erected shortly after the middle of the second century BC). LTUR III (1996) 11–12 s. v. Hercules, Aedes Aemiliana (F. Coarelli) and Bariviera 2017, 430.

⁹ Considered to be identified with the Aedes Pompeiana Herculis (later restoration of an older temple?). LTUR III (1996) 20–21 s. v. Hercules Pompeianus, Aedes (F. Coarelli) and Bariviera 2017, 428.

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