

ARCHIVES AND ALTERNATIVES IN REPUBLICAN ROME

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HISTORIANS of republican Rome often assert that Livy, Polybius, and other writers on whom they must rely had access to public documentary sources.¹ Even when a Roman document survives in an inscription, they may believe that it is derived from an official copy verified by professional record-keepers.² Similarly, historians of archival practices, taking the centrality of their own profession as a given, have little incentive to disabuse historians of the belief that their ancient counterparts consulted public archives.³ Both archival and ancient historians commonly assume that all *tabulae publicae* were in public custody; that the *aerarium* functioned as a public archive almost from its inception; that the Romans created a centralized and efficient archive in 78 B.C. by constructing a building called the *tabularium* for that purpose; and that state documents were filed originally in the *aerarium* and later in the *tabularium* so that a master text would be available as a check against forgeries and alterations or as an aid in settling political and legal disputes.⁴ These assumptions have made their way into basic text-

I wish to thank J. Linderski and R. E. A. Palmer for their extensive comments on an earlier draft of this paper and R. E. Mitchell and C. Williamson for allowing me to consult their (then) unpublished work. My colleague T. Brennan was an indispensable consultant in dealing with the anthropology.

1. Noted by R. E. Mitchell, "Historical Development in Livy," in *Classical Texts and Their Traditions: Studies in Honor of C. R. Trahman*, ed. D. F. Bright and E. S. Ramage (Chico, Cal., 1984), p. 1. See, e.g., P. G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 112-13; F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1957), pp. 1, 32; M. L. W. Laistner, *The Greater Roman Historians*, Sather Classical Lectures, vol. 21 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1947), pp. 86-87; and cf., more recently, C. W. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1983), p. 56, and E. Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (Baltimore, 1985), pp. 219, 231.

2. See, e.g., R. K. Sherk, *Roman Documents from the Greek East* (Baltimore, 1969), pp. 4-13, 18-19; both Sherk and J. Reynolds, *Aphrodisias and Rome*, *Journal of Roman Studies Monographs*, vol. 1 (London, 1982), pp. 65-66, rely heavily on T. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*³, vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1887), pp. 1015-21.

3. See, e.g., E. Posner, *Archives in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), pp. 160-85; G. Cencetti, "Gli archivi dell'antica Roma nell'età repubblicana," *Archivi* 18 (1940): 7-47; M. Puma, *La conservazione dei documenti giuridici nell'antica Roma* (Palermo, 1934).

4. In addition to the works cited in nn. 1-3, see L. Wenger, *Die Quellen des römischen Rechts*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Denkschriften der Gesamtakademie, vol. 2 (Vienna, 1953), pp. 55-59, 65-74; F. F. von Schwind, *Zur Frage der Publikation im römischen Recht*, Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte, vol. 31 (Munich, 1940), pp. 1-60; F. Schultz, *Roman Legal Science* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 80-84; M. Corbier, *L'aerarium Saturni et l'aerarium militare*, Collection de l'École française de Rome, vol. 24 (Rome, 1974), p. 674; M. W. Fredericksen, "The Republican Municipal Laws: Errors and Drafts," *JRS* 55 (1965): 183-95. A few of these works do not offer all four assumptions, but all reflect at least three of the four.

books and into many of the standard reference works on Roman history.⁵ I shall reexamine what we know about the building most often identified as Rome's archive, the evidence for documentation kept in private hands, and the measures that were taken to make information available and to preserve public documents. This review of the evidence will suggest that neither the *aerarium* nor the *tabularium* successfully functioned as a public archive during the Republic and that they were not originally intended to serve that purpose. I will propose an alternative explanation of why the Romans handled documents as they did and will conclude with Cato's and Cicero's attempts to cope with the Republic's lack of a state archive.

I. THE "AERARIUM" AND THE "TABULARIUM"

No ancient literary source distinguishes between the *tabularium* and the *aerarium* in practice. (I shall observe throughout the Roman habit of referring to the *aerarium* alone when it is not certain what building or buildings would actually have been involved.) The *tabularium*, in fact, is named in only one inscription (*CIL* 6. 1314 = *ILS* 35), without which we would not even know what the building was called or what functions it might have housed, since there are no spaces clearly suited to the handling of documents.⁶ There are no instances in which Romans of the Republic or early Empire used *archium* or some related, Greek-based term to refer to any site in Rome, but the modern habit of referring to these structures as archives has led us to assume that modern archival practices such as deposition, retrieval, and consultation of documents were routine at both sites.

The *aerarium* is a small, boxy temple where no more than a few clerks could have worked on simple tasks.⁷ Even in the later *tabularium*, which one would expect to house *tabulae*, there are no evident arrangements for either safe storage or convenient consultation. The single, large interior hall on its first floor lacked light and offered no area in which documents could easily be secured.⁸ The smaller rooms on that floor communicated with exits from the building, not with the large, central hall. This floor plan is plainly unsuited to retrieving documents for patrons; as a result, it has been suggested that the actual archival area must have been on the second floor, of which few traces survive.⁹ The

5. See, e.g., H. H. Scullard, *A History of Rome*³ (New York, 1975), p. 58; and, among common reference works, S. B. Platner and T. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (London, 1929), pp. 506–8; Caillemer, "Archeion," *Dar.-Sag.* 1:372–73, and Lafaye, "Tabularium," *Dar.-Sag.* 5:14–19; A. H. McDonald, "Archives," *OCD*², p. 101; Mommsen, *Staatsrecht*³, 2:547–59; Kubitschek, "Aerarium," *RE* 1 (1893): 667–73; Dzialtzo, "Archive," *RE* 2 (1895): 553–64; Sachers, "Tabularium," *RE* 4A (1932): 1962–69.

6. On the inscription, preserved only in manuscript, see T. Mommsen, "Sui modi usati da' Romani nel conservare e pubblicare le leggi e senatus consulti," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 3 (Berlin, 1907), pp. 309–13.

7. See F. Millar, "The *Aerarium* and Its Officials under the Empire," *JRS* 54 (1964): 33–40.

8. The best description of the building is still in R. Delbrück, *Hellenistische Bauten in Latium*, vol. 1 (Strassburg, 1907), pp. 23–46 and tables III–IX.

9. See G. Lugli, *Roma antica: Il centro municipale* (Rome, 1946), pp. 44–46.

second story, however, was perhaps added a generation or so later. The staircase from the forum, at the level of the *tabularium*'s substructure, to the first floor loggia, where one could exit into the complex of buildings on the Capitoline, could not easily have been used by the senate to send runners with or for documents. This grand marble staircase did not communicate with the interior of the building or with the large hall on the first floor.

If the *tabularium* was not built with archival efficiency in mind, one may reasonably ask what the point of its design was. It is clearly reminiscent of a number of contemporary Italian public buildings with all-purpose interior spaces and sheltering loggias.¹⁰ There is every reason to assume that it was similar to them in purpose also, intended primarily to present an architecturally impressive terminus to the forum area and a central focus for the Capitoline. Its construction in 78 B.C. should be seen not in the context of Roman bureaucratic expansion but as part of the renovations on the Capitoline following the fire damage of 83.¹¹ Its monumental staircase, offering protection from the weather, carried traffic from the forum to the Capitoline; its loggia provided a pedestrian connection between the two crests of the hill; its lower portico was an imposing and sheltering boundary to the forum. These pedestrian passages communicated with each other and with multiple exits designed to facilitate transit to adjacent buildings. Since the *tabularium* worked well as a monumental marker of space and as a protected passageway, those were presumably the main functions it was intended to serve. Its great interior hall could have been used to receive the deposition of documents after the *aerarium* had been filled; but its builder did not have the retrieval and consultation of documents in mind.

II. AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE "AERARIUM"

According to the well-known Roman historiographic tradition, the patricians and, indeed, the senate as a whole refused to make available to the public the most fundamental sorts of information on the mechanisms of state until forced to do so. It is difficult to reconcile the traditional Roman portrait of the early state with the modern assumption that this state had, almost from its beginning, a building dedicated to preserving for consultation written copies of decisions and transactions made by agents of the state.

It is true that *leges* and *senatus consulta* were formally deposited in the *aerarium*; and, indeed, it was presumably the presence of these two series of governmental proceedings that first suggested the modern concep-

10. See J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Architecture* (New York, 1974), pp. 47–48.

11. Gell. *NA* 2. 10 cites Varro quoting the builder, Q. Lutatius Catulus, on his ambitions for the site. For the arrangement of monuments and documents on the Capitoline and the consequences of the fire, see R. Mellor, "The Dedications on the Capitoline Hill," *Chiron* 8 (1978): 319–30; for a reconstruction, see G. Carettoni, A. M. Colini, L. Cozza, and G. Catti, *La pianta marmorea di Roma* (Rome, 1960), p. 75 and table XXI.

tion of the *aerarium* as archive.¹² Nonetheless, the *aerarium* did not serve the documentary needs of most Romans. We are told that the plebeians began to deposit their own copies of various resolutions at the temple of Ceres because their opponents kept producing deceptive versions of measures supposedly agreed upon (Livy 3. 55. 13; as we shall see later, there is no reason to assume that even those unreliable texts came from the *aerarium*). None of the standard modern accounts successfully explains this duplication of part of the *aerarium*'s holdings at the temple of Ceres. It has recently been argued that only the plebeians would have had the three prerequisites for organizing a usable repository of public documents: resolutions to file, people to file them, and political motivation for doing so. R. M. Ogilvie noted the large number of plebeian officials who seem to have been milling about the temple of Ceres and who must have had something to do.¹³ Similarly, R. E. Mitchell has observed that Roman tradition clearly associated plebeian magistrates and plebeian functions with specific Roman topographical features.¹⁴ Both A. Watson and Mitchell have recently called attention to the fact that *leges* from the early Republic are not generally cited by our sources, which talk instead about *plebiscita*. Watson argued that the references we have to *leges* and *plebiscita* represent the documents actually available for consultation; since references to *plebiscita* are much more common than references to *leges*, that should mean that *leges* were less accessible.¹⁵ In any reconstruction consistent with ancient accounts of the fifth through third centuries B.C., the temple of Ceres would more closely resemble a modern archive than did the *aerarium*; no one is said to have consulted or retrieved texts at the *aerarium*; no one is said to have looked to it as the repository of a master text.¹⁶

The *aerarium*, it must be remembered, was mainly a treasury; that is the capacity in which it is most often mentioned. As such, it must have been firmly in the control of the senate, which considered finance to be its exclusive sphere. It would be surprising if the *aerarium*, run by the quaestors, could perform independently of senatorial policy, let alone contrary to senatorial interests.¹⁷ A cynic could suggest that depositing *leges* or *consulta* at the *aerarium* might represent an effort to make such things inaccessible rather than the reverse.

12. On the deposition of *senatus consulta* at the *aerarium*, see Livy 39. 4. 8, Cic. *Fam.* 12. 1. 1, Plut. *Cat. min.* 17; for the deposition of *leges*, see Suet. *Iul.* 28. 3, Sisenna *HRR* 117.

13. *A Commentary on Livy: Books 1-5* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 101-2, 406, 503.

14. "The Definition of Patres and Plebs: An End to the Struggle of the Orders," in *The Conflict of the Orders in Archaic Rome: New Approaches to Old Questions*, ed. K. Raaflaub (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986), pp. 130-74. The temple of Ceres was presumably larger than the *aerarium*; cf. Cic. *Verr.* 4. 108 *pulcherrimum et magnificentissimum*.

15. Watson, *Roman Private Law around 200 B.C.* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 8-13; Mitchell, "Livy," p. 196.

16. The *plebs* would have had little incentive to keep documents in the temple of Ceres for use in future disputes if the distinction between copy and original were clear and if the *plebs*' documents were considered the copies, *pace* Sherk, *Roman Documents*, p. 9 with n. 17.

17. On the senate's control of finances, see Mommsen, *Staatsrecht*³, 2:149-89; on the *aerarium* as treasury, see Corbier, *L'aerarium*, pp. 19-23, 44-46.

III. PRIVATE ALTERNATIVES TO PUBLIC ARCHIVES

The powerful families at the center of the oligarchy we call the Republic would certainly not have needed a senatorial or central archive to conduct their daily business, whether public or private. The focal point of loyalty, conflict, and negotiation was the household. Keeping and transcribing records did not differ from any other transaction performed in this context. Each great household would have had a separate room, the *tablinum*, for just this purpose.¹⁸ All the evidence for the Republic indicates that we should assume private custody of *tabulae publicae* unless public custody at a certain site is specifically attested. Cicero (*Sull.* 42) could hardly speak more directly to this point: *tabulae publicae* that recorded senatorial questions to witnesses and their responses were kept *more maiorum* in *privata custodia*, and extraordinary measures were required to make the information contained in these *tabulae publicae* available to the public.

Even the working census-records were kept not at the *aerarium* but at the atrium of Libertas.¹⁹ Researchers went to the households of former censors to consult records from previous years (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 13. 22. 4; Varro *Ling.* 6. 86). It is certainly significant that the census-records, copies of which were apparently kept both at the atrium and by the censors, were called *tabulae publicae*, and that the censors were said to exercise a *cura tabularum*: in this case, clearly, these terms cannot denote records kept at the *aerarium* (Livy 6. 27. 6, 8. 4).²⁰ The censorial records, in fact, are consistently the best argument against postulating a trend toward centralization in the *aerarium*. The censors generated both public contracts, which were housed in the *aerarium* (as treasury), and the census and property records, which were kept elsewhere. This distinction demonstrates a victory of functionalism over centralization.

Among the most frequently consulted records of public affairs in the Republic were the magistrates' daybooks (*commentarii*), which would have contained the most detailed descriptions of transactions carried out before a public official. There is no reason to believe that these books regularly left the custody of their authors to be deposited with any

18. Cf. Pliny *HN* 35. 7, Fest. 356, and R. Besnier, "Les archives privées, publiques et religieuses à Rome au temps du rois," *Studi in memoria di Emilio Albertario*, vol. 2 (Milan, 1953), pp. 7-27. R. E. A. Palmer has drawn my attention to Tac. *Dial.* 39. 1, which implies that this practice continued, with its importance undiminished, during the Empire.

19. This building must have been spacious (hostages from two cities could be detained there: Livy 25. 7. 12) and well lit (it was later a library and then an art museum: Suet. *Aug.* 29, Pliny *HN* 36. 23-25). Cf. Livy 45. 15. 5: the angry censors suspended operations at the atrium by sealing the *tabulae publicae* (presumably their accounts, which had been criticized), closing the *tabularium*, and dismissing the *servi publici*; perhaps their *tabularium* at the atrium was their accounting office.

20. The later *curatores tabularum publicarum* assigned to the *aerarium* (Cass. Dio 57. 16. 2) are irrelevant to Republican usage; cf. M. Hammond, "Curatores Tabularum Publicarum," in *Classical and Medieval Studies in Honor of Edward Kennard Rand*, ed. L. W. Jones (New York, 1938), pp. 125-31. Most raw census records were kept locally in the Italian *municipia*, and such decentralization increased in the late Republic: see esp. P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower 225 B.C.-A.D. 14* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 15-17, 26; Cicero (*Arch.* 4. 8) cites these municipal rosters and demonstrates (ibid. 9-10) deficiencies in the records of noncitizens resident at Rome. The lists handled by the censors in Livy 29. 37. 13-15 were not the basic census records but simply summaries made to aid in financial administration.

public office, and Cicero implies that they did not.²¹ Similarly, there is no reason to believe that Varro read in the *aerarium* the *commentaria consularia* he cites at *De lingua Latina* 6. 88. The evidence for provincial governors in the late Republic is clear. They had to deposit their *rationes* at the *aerarium*, which was, after all, the treasury; there is no mention of *commentarii* (Cic. *Verr.* 2. 1. 14, 37, 21. 57, *Fam.* 5. 20. 2, *Att.* 6. 7. 2; Gell. *NA* 4. 18. 7–12). Nor is there reason, given the avarice of some provincial governors of the late Republic, to assume that even the *rationes* that were deposited were accurate and complete; *In Verrem* 2. 2. 23. 60–61, where Cicero demands that Verres turn over his private accounts, illustrates the problem.

Private memoranda could include more than notes kept by an official while in office. In the last generation of the Republic, when it became increasingly necessary to keep close track of one's interests in Rome while administering a province, private citizens compiled minutes of the senate, including *consulta* passed in each session, and sent them to friends posted abroad (Cic. *Fam.* 8. 1. 1 and 8. 2. 11).²² Even earlier they had, obviously, compiled and circulated lists of events and state actions that they called *annales*. It should be apparent, then, that the old senatorial families could expect their need for information to be met by archival resources in their own households and in those of their friends; they did not need an institution that might well work against their interests.

IV. POSTED DOCUMENTS AS ALTERNATIVES TO ARCHIVAL COPIES

Nonetheless, there were occasions on which those who controlled the Roman state found it expedient to disseminate information and even make it available to be read. Perhaps the oldest consistently kept public records were the annals of the *pontifex maximus*. They included from an early date eclipses and other phenomena to which a pontifical response was required. Events that posed dilemmas for the Roman state (e.g., wars and famines) would have elicited responses that had implications not only for the institution of new rituals but for economics and politics as well.²³ One can see in these cases the utility of disseminating accurate information and inspiring the citizens' cooperation with measures in a

21. Cf. *Sull.* 45, which contrasts the senate's memory of recent events with *commentario meo*, and the *Philippics*, where Cicero distinguishes between carefully constructed personal records meant for consultation (*commentarii*) and rough notes (*commentarioli* and *chirographi*): e.g., 1. 1. 2, 1. 7. 16 and 18, 2. 39. 100. Tac. *Dial.* 37 implies that magistrates other than censors retained files relating to their careers; see too Rawson, *Intellectual Life*, pp. 238–39, and J. J. Phillips, "Atticus and the Publication of Cicero's Works," *CW* 79 (1986): 231, on researchers borrowing *commentarii*. *CIL* 11. 3614 (A.D. 113) from Caere, though often cited, cannot provide evidence for the practices of Rome in a much earlier period.

22. The official *acta senatus* initiated later presumably followed the model of this less formal practice. On communications with provincials, see R. J. A. Talbert, *The Senate of Imperial Rome* (Princeton, 1984), pp. 306–7.

23. See B. W. Frier, *Libri Annales Pontificum Maximorum: The Origins of the Annalistic Tradition*, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome, vol. 27 (Rome, 1979), pp. 88–91; and Schultz, *Legal Science*, pp. 80–84.

crisis. This central record contained all the information the *pontifex* wanted to preserve either to provide precedent or because he thought it was of general import. This document, meant to be consulted by the community, was not deposited anywhere; it was publicly posted. When previous years' records had to be taken down and put into storage, they were kept in the custody of the *pontifex*, not moved into the *aerarium*.²⁴

The earliest documents that republican historians claimed to have consulted were these annals and some treaties to be discussed later. It is important to note that both sorts of document were posted in public. Posting, in fact, seems to have been the way in which any document was kept available for ready consultation. The praetor's edict, for instance, listed legal causes of action that might be used in bringing a suit. It was painted on an *album*.²⁵ There are many other examples of records posted on *alba*. Membership rosters were normally posted, and there were available for consultation *alba senatorum*, *equitum*, *iudicum*, *pontificum*, and *veteranorum*. The Romans plainly did not think it would be efficient to settle disputes over status and privilege by retrieving lists from a registry.²⁶ Posting might also be used to make available a kind of text that could otherwise be consulted only by a privileged few.²⁷

It is not surprising that posting, as opposed to deposition in an archive, was the standard means for making information publicly available; A. L. Boegehold's investigation of record-keeping in classical Athens has disclosed the use of similar practices. The Athenian state kept on file in a temple only records of debts to the state; they had, in other words, something similar to the *aerarium*. Otherwise, the officials who had to perform a task kept the documents relevant to it.²⁸ One of Boegehold's most significant findings, moreover, is that in the Athenian system there was no question of referring back to an archival original, or even, apparently, a conception of an archival or original text. Public business rested upon the posted text.²⁹ If this was true in fifth-century Athens at the height of the Periclean democracy, with its boards, its

24. See Frier, *Annales*, pp. 100–101. R. Drews, "Pontiffs, Prodigies, and the Disappearance of the *Annales Maximi*," *CP* 83 (1988): 289–99, suggests (p. 295) that the pontifical annals "did not survive into the second half of the first century B.C." in any format.

25. On the edict in the republican period, see H. F. Jolowicz, *Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law*² (Cambridge, 1952), pp. 95–99, 207–9; von Schwind, *Publikation*, pp. 49–53; and B. Frier, *The Rise of the Roman Jurists* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 42–44.

26. Cf. Schmidt, "Album," *RE* I (1893): 1332–36; some lists that had financial implications were also registered at the *aerarium* in the late Republic: cf. Cic. *Phil.* 5. 5. 15. C. Williamson, "Monuments of Bronze: Roman Legal Documents on Bronze Tablets," *CA* 6 (1987): 169, demonstrates that, since most bronze texts were very difficult to read *in situ*, information that needed to be disseminated was put on an *album*.

27. As was noted above, magistrates ordinarily retained their *commentarii*; but if such a daybook needed to be made public, posting was again the answer: see, e.g., the *commentarii* of Clodius at Cass. Dio 39. 21, Plut. *Cat. min.* 40. 1, Cic. 34.

28. "The Establishment of a Central Archive at Athens," *AJA* 76 (1972): 26–28.

29. *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28 (though the public copy could be altered or otherwise vandalized). Cf. G. Nieddu, "Alfabetismo e diffusione sociale della scrittura nella Grecia arcaica e classica: Pregiudizi recenti e realtà documentaria," *S&C* 2 (1978): 237, on the utility of publicly posted "archival documents"; and W. V. Harris, "Literacy and Epigraphy, I," *ZPE* 52 (1983): 104–5, on the audience of typical public messages on walls.

hordes of bureaucrats, and its obsession with accountability, then there is still less reason to project notions of archival copies onto the Roman Republic, unless the ancient accounts supply specific evidence that the Romans of the Republic shared our tendency to archival elaboration.

Actually, the ancient evidence points to the opposite conclusion. Nothing indicates that the Romans thought of themselves as depositing an original in an archive or that they considered a text posted in bronze or another medium to be a copy. Suetonius (*Vesp.* 8. 5) and Josephus (*AJ* 14. 10) show that records from the Republic were not thought to be retrievable from archival holdings in the first century A.D.³⁰ The Capitol had been damaged by fire in the civil wars of A.D. 69–70; three thousand bronze tablets posted on the Capitoline, including laws, *senatus consulta*, treaties, and grants of privilege, were destroyed. Suetonius' passage records Vespasian's extraordinary efforts to find copies of these documents and to post them again.³¹ Josephus' defense of his research has been taken to show that he consulted documents in the *aerarium*; but it is, instead, powerful evidence to the contrary, for Josephus explicitly states that he consulted, and expected his readers to check, texts posted in bronze.³²

Suetonius describes the three steps in the official handling of a measure: passage, engraving on bronze, and deposition at the *aerarium*, in that order (*Iul.* 28. 3; cf. *Cic. Phil.* 5. 4. 12, *Suet. Gai.* 41). It is hard to imagine what an "archival" copy would have been. In the case of a *senatus consultum*, a draft was made in front of witnesses after the debate. If that draft was the one taken to the *aerarium* and bound, the text in bronze, which our sources consistently regard as the master copy, must have been taken from yet another copy that was given to an engraver. The *aerarium*, however, apparently copied the texts that were brought there into its own *codices* in chronological sequence.³³ In case of a problem, it would ultimately be necessary to seek verification from the proposer or presiding officer (cf. *Cic. Leg. Agr.* 2. 14. 37), who presumably kept careful *commentarii* for his own use. Furthermore, the two copies at the *aerarium* and, probably, the *commentarii* would have

30. G. W. Houston, "Administrative Records in the Roman Empire," presented 1 Sept. 1984 at the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists.

31. Sherck, *Roman Documents*, p. 12, suggests that the vast majority of the lost documents were grants of privilege; many were probably the tablets to which Roman military diplomas often referred for verification: for examples, see M. Roxan, *Roman Military Diplomas 1954–1977*, Institute of Archaeology (London) Occasional Publications, vol. 2 (London, 1978), and *Roman Military Diplomas 1978 to 1984*, Occasional Publications, vol. 9 (London, 1985).

32. Cf. Talbert, *Senate*, p. 309; Williamson, "Monuments," p. 169.

33. See Reynolds, *Aphrodisias*, p. 54, no. 8, lines 1–4, certifying the document by giving its location both in the *codices* made from the *tabulae* brought to the senate and in the *codices* of the quaestors (presumably the *aerarium*'s series of copies); this attestation of the double record is unique. Numbered sections in other documents are probably only elements of internal organization (cf. *FIRA*⁷ I. 10 and 11), as C. Williamson, "Law-Making in the *Comitia* of Republican Rome" (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1984), p. 231, suggests; and where there is a numerical reference to a *tabula*, it could well be a bronze *tabula* that was consulted as in the case of military diplomas (cf. *FIRA*⁷ I. 98). M. Beard, "Diversity and Expansion in the Arval Acta," *PBSR* 40 (1985): 140, demonstrates that, though the Arvals of the Empire recorded their rituals in a *codex*, the primary text was the epigraphic record.

been in wax.³⁴ It is easy to see how forgery could become rampant, as both Cato and Cicero discovered (Plut. *Cat. min.* 18, Cic. *Att.* 4. 17).³⁵ Neither the literary use of legal documents nor the preambles of the texts on bronze suggest that the Romans before the end of the Republic were concerned to establish authenticity or derivation from an authenticated original by referring to the *codices* in the *aerarium*.³⁶ The common carelessness in citation would have made forgery of *senatus consulta* particularly easy. Most documents circulating during the *dominatio* and in the chaos immediately after Caesar's assassination were justly considered suspect. The explicit registry data at the head of a document in bronze quoted by Josephus (*AJ* 14. 10. 10) presumably illustrate an effort to exempt this document from the general suspicion of enactments during the civil war. The latter part of the same decree cites administrative measures taken to insure that this one document be handled properly.³⁷

The treaties mentioned in our narrative sources were posted also. Although the treaties with Carthage cited by Polybius at 3. 22 have often been used to prove that diligent historians could consult documents in the *aerarium*, it is not clear that these documents were at the *aerarium* at all, since Polybius calls the building where he saw the bronze tablets "the treasury of the aediles," which is otherwise unattested; in any case, Polybius' description of the tablets' location plainly shows that they were on this building, not in it, just as the foreign policy measures Josephus examined two centuries later were posted on the Capitoline (*AJ* 14. 10–14).³⁸ The treaties that Polybius cites cannot have been posted to aid private citizens who might need information quickly in pursuing their own interests. Instead, the treaties would have been consulted by Roman magistrates while they negotiated with Carthage, or to prove themselves right in a dispute with that state and so satisfy

34. On the construction of such *tabulae*, see C. H. Roberts and T. C. Skeat, *The Birth of the Codex* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 11–12; *Dig.* 48. 10. 1. 4 and Cic. *Clu.* 48 show that they were easily altered.

35. The treatment of *leges* poses a more complicated question in view of the *Lex Caecilia Didia* (98 B.C.) and the *Lex Iunia Licinia* (62 B.C.). The former concerned legislative procedures, and the latter demanded that a copy of a *lex* be deposited at the *aerarium* after it was adopted; but it is not clear how the text of a proposed law was to be published or how it was to be recorded before the vote (see *Schol. Bob.* pp. 140, 310; Cic. *Leg.* 3. 4. 11, *Phil.* 5. 3. 8). Whatever the procedures before voting, Sisenna (*HRR* 117) apparently shows a law being taken from the *comitia* directly to the quaestors (presumably the *aerarium*) upon passage. No inscriptions show whether the copy was bound into a *codex* and kept the way *senatus consulta* were kept.

36. On the inconsistencies in preambles to laws, see Williamson, "Law-Making," pp. 192–93, 234–35, showing that we cannot deduce a filing or retrieval system from the evidence; on the headings and formulas in *senatus consulta*, see Talbert, *Senate*, pp. 304–5, noting the "curiously sparing use" of identifying data. On the ease and frequency of forgery, see E. Gabba, "Cicerone e la falsificazione dei senatoconsulti," *SCO* 10 (1961): 95.

37. The unique document from Aphrodisias (n. 33 above) may reflect the same motive; but there may be another, more disquieting explanation, which I hope to discuss elsewhere.

38. Walbank, *Historical Commentary*, 1:353–54, recognized that the tablets were on the building; but Polybius' use of ἀγορανόμοι (normally = *aediles*) led him to deny that the building was the *aerarium*. It is not impossible, however, that Polybius meant the *aerarium*: he may have called quaestors ἀγορανόμοι, since the Greek terms for Roman offices were not then as standardized as they were in the Empire; furthermore, since aediles contracted for street and temple repairs, one or more of them may have worked at the *aerarium* with the quaestors who let and supervised public contracts.

their own gods. The second motive may well have been the more compelling; it was a religious imperative for the Romans that they be technically in the right in any dispute.³⁹ Since there was no international court before which the Romans could present their legal interpretation of a treaty, one would not be surprised to find that such documents were most often consulted with a view to religious procedures used in case of conflict.

V. AN ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION FOR THE DEPOSITION OF DOCUMENTS

The passage in Polybius raises the question why the Romans kept these documents at all, posting some for consultation, depositing others at sacred sites like the *aerarium*. Modern archival practices do not seem to provide a wholly satisfactory answer. I have argued above that the Romans of the Republic lacked some modern archival concepts (retrieval, providing an original text, serving the public) and that these concepts, therefore, cannot be invoked to explain their customary treatment of documents. To find an answer, then, one might first ask, why the *aerarium*? At the simplest level, anything that one wanted to secure might be deposited at a sacred site, in the hope that the divinity of the site would protect it against misappropriation. That is why temples served as the treasuries of the ancient world. The temple of Saturnus we usually call the *aerarium* was first and foremost a treasury, as its name plainly suggests. Since most Roman public documents were posted in bronze, it would have been an obvious step for the early Roman state to place these documents on the *aerarium*, the storehouse of bronze; and, indeed, we are told that documents were so posted (Varro *Ling.* 5. 42, Cass. Dio 55. 17. 3). Bronze was a suitable medium for the preservation of a public or master text because of its inherent and potent sacral associations.⁴⁰ Documents in wood and wax probably came to be deposited at the *aerarium* after the example of the bronze tablets. In the archaic Roman state, the treasury would have been the only senatorial operation (as opposed to the counter-administration posited for the plebeians at the temple of Ceres) that had the manpower trained to administer lists and log items.

Yet this does not explain why these *leges* and *senatus consulta* on wood and wax *tabulae* should have been deposited anywhere. The answer appears to lie with the religious significance of deposition. Plebeians seem to have believed that the mere act of producing a permanent, written text would deter magistrates from acting arbitrarily (Livy 3. 9, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 10. 1. 24). Even the senate had an interest in seeing that its advisory *consulta* were heeded and that no magistrate with *imperium* forgot in the field the guidance offered him by his peers

39. See W. V. Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 170–75.

40. See A.-M. Tupet, *La magie dans la poésie latine* (Paris, 1976), pp. 39–43; E. Massonneau, *La magie dans l'antiquité romaine* (Paris, 1934), p. 115.

and elders.⁴¹ Moreover, there was the belief that depositing a document in the guardianship of a god made it potent and efficacious. This belief was in keeping with the Roman conception of *religio*; the word itself refers to the act of binding.⁴² By depositing these documents, the Romans hoped to bind the magistrates and people to certain procedures and to obligate their gods to help enforce the measures of which they were the guardians.

The Romans attempted in a number of ways to secure religious protection for the words involved in public transactions. The senate itself met at sacred sites, apparently with the idea that its deliberations might receive divine sanction.⁴³ Appian notes that oaths were administered to officials at the *aerarium* (*BCiv.* 1. 31). J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz has explained how the traditional discipline provided by Roman religion subordinated the individual to his duties, to the priests, and to his elders.⁴⁴ Priests had the unique advantage of enjoining obedience while relying on someone else—the gods—for enforcement. There were certainly no ordinary procedures, and very few extraordinary means short of civil war, for imposing the will of the senate on a magistrate with *imperium* acting in his authorized sphere. One would also be deterred from violating laws that had been placed under divine sanction. Numa's alleged ascription of his laws to the nymph Egeria is a well-known example of an attempt to borrow divine authority.⁴⁵ An obvious effort to use the power of religious sanction is the Twelve Tables themselves, especially the sections dealing with offenses like witchcraft and the removal of boundary stones. These archaic provisions, concerned with daily conduct and property-management, are thoroughly sacral in tone; they are gnomic in the manner of oracles and declare offenders anathema.⁴⁶ Another clear case of harnessing divine power is the handling of treaties: in one set of negotiations between Rome and Aetolia, for example, both sides wanted the treaty to be *testata sacratīs monumentis* (Livy 26. 24. 14). Fundamental to *religio* was the idea of *fides*. *Fides* was nowhere more important than in relations between states. International agreements would otherwise have been without supervision or guarantees.⁴⁷ Liebeschuetz has described the severity with which the Roman

41. See Frier, *Annales*, pp. 98, 129–30.

42. Cf. J. Bayet, *La religion romaine: Histoire politique et psychologique* (Paris, 1969), pp. 58–59; P. Boyancé, "Fides et le serment," in *Hommages à Albert Grenier*, ed. M. Renard (Brussels, 1962), p. 341. For the suggestion that the Romans were especially concerned to make the word permanent, see R. MacMullen, "The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire," *AJP* 103 (1982): 239–40, 246.

43. See Mitchell, "Definition," p. 12; Talbert, *Senate*, pp. 113, 117–19, 224–25; cf. M. Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York, 1970), pp. 38–39.

44. *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 6, 42–43, 50.

45. Cf. Von Schwind, *Publikation*, p. 22.

46. Cf. M. Weber, *Economy and Society*, vol. 1 (Berkeley, 1968), pp. 233, 270; Mitchell, "Livy," p. 12.

47. On *fides*, see Bayet, *Religion*, pp. 141–42; J. Imbert, "De la sociologie au droit: La 'fides' romaine," *Droits de l'antiquité et sociologie juridique: Mélanges Henri Lévy-Bruhl*, Publications de l'Institut de droit romain de l'Université de Paris, vol. 17 (Paris, 1959), pp. 407–15; R. Heinze, "Fides," *Hermes* 64 (1929): 154–57; E. Fraenkel, "Zur Geschichte des Wortes Fides," *RhM* 71 (1916): 187–99. On the relationship of *fides*, *foedus*, and *fetiales*, see Boyancé, "Fides," pp. 332–33; on the connections of Jupiter with Roma and Fides, see Mellor, "Dedications," p. 329.

gods viewed a breach of *fides*; the gods were explicitly expected to punish every such violation when a treaty was broken.⁴⁸

Considerations of this kind gave the Romans a motive for depositing documents at religious sites. Many documents of various sorts were associated with the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus: instructions of great antiquity for the marking of years, military diplomas, decrees, *senatus consulta*, treaties, and—before they were moved to the temple of Apollo on the Palatine—the Sibylline books.⁴⁹ The patron deity of the Roman state was clearly a suitable guardian for documents central to the state's interests, but Jupiter may have been doubly appropriate as a guarantor of documents because of his association with *fides*. At least one treaty was deposited at the temple of Dius Fidius, an ancient deity who combined attributes of both Jupiter and the personified Fides (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 4. 58. 4). There was also a temple of Fides on the Capitoline, where laws in bronze were posted (Cic. *Div.* 1. 12. 19, 2. 21. 47, *Cat.* 3. 8. 19). A set of *fasti* on linen scrolls may have been placed at the temple of Juno Moneta, whose epithet perhaps means "Juno Who Records" rather than "Juno Who Warns."⁵⁰ Regulations governing the distribution of land may have been posted at the temple of Diana on the Aventine, because that was a site of great symbolic importance for all the Latin-speaking peoples, not just the Romans; the laws posted there were apparently widely influential (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 10. 32. 4). It has been noted above that the plebeians kept records at the temple of Ceres on the Aventine—perhaps an especially convenient site, since it was prominent, yet outside the original sacred boundaries of Rome, and so less subject to the magistrates' authority.⁵¹

The *aerarium* itself had similarly appropriate religious credentials for receiving documents; Saturn himself may have been a sort of heavenly bookkeeper, since he was associated with the division of spoils and his consort was Ops. This is presumably why a temple of Saturn would become a treasury; it is difficult to imagine where the Romans of the early Republic would have got a stockpile of metal to store save from weapons and other items captured in war.⁵² It is less clear why some documents were deposited at less well-known shrines: for example, the

48. *Religion*, p. 42; for a modern parallel in the Somali practice of swearing to treaties on the tombs of saints, see I. M. Lewis, "Literacy in a Nomadic Society: The Somali Case," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. J. Goody (Cambridge, 1968), p. 271.

49. Livy 7. 3. 5–8 (marking years); Cass. Dio 44. 7. 1 and (possibly) Livy 40. 51. 3 (military diploma); Cic. *Phil.* 2. 37 (*decretum*); Cass. Dio 44. 7. 1 (*consultum*); Livy 26. 24. 14 (treaty); Tac. *Ann.* 6. 12. 3, Suet. *Aug.* 31 (Sibylline books).

50. Linen scrolls: Livy 4. 7. 12, Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 11. 62. 3 (some scholars have doubted the provenance and even the existence of these items: basic references supplied by Ogilvie, *Commentary*, pp. 544–45). Juno Moneta: R. E. A. Palmer, *Roman Religion and Roman Empire: Five Essays* (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 30, 98–99.

51. On the significance of both laws and temple, see A. Alföldi, *Early Rome and the Latins* (Ann Arbor, 1963), pp. 85–89, and Palmer, *Religion*, pp. 57–58; on the authenticity of the laws, see Besnier, "Les archives," pp. 11–12; on the legal status of the Aventine, see Mommsen, *Staatsrecht*³, 3:113 and n. 5.

52. See G. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus der Römer*², Handbuch der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft, vol. 5.4 (Munich, 1912), p. 208; cf. Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 43. On the connection of Saturn with wealth, see Corbier, *L'aerarium*, p. 632.

fasti kept at the temple of Hercules of the Muses (Charisius *GL* 1:138), or an archaic grant of citizenship to Campanian horsemen, which presumably duplicated the censorial record, deposited at the temple of Castor (Livy 8. 11. 16). In any case, it is inadequate to describe the *aerarium*, and the *aerarium* alone, as an archive, and certainly misleading to speak of it as a central archive.

We should not, moreover, confuse deposition of material at a sacred site with the intent to provide public access to that material. In the case of treaties and other documents in bronze, public access was incidental to the consecration of the object bearing the text.⁵³ In other cases, access to records was restricted by the priests. In daily life, as Mitchell says, the priests' importance "was the result of their expertise in and monopoly of legal secrets, procedures, and rituals, and of the proper times to undertake private and public measures, determined by the calendar, which they also controlled."⁵⁴ At one point, the tradition claimed, the *pontifices* were so insistent on retaining exclusive control of their documents that they refused to let magistrates use them in reconstructing records destroyed in the sack by the Gauls.⁵⁵ It is not surprising that priests should keep essential documents from, not for, the public. Goody has noted the ubiquity, even in modern societies, of groups who maintain their importance by controlling access to texts.⁵⁶ Calendars, invocations, and instructions for ceremonies are scripts that confer power.⁵⁷ Religious custody of documents, in short, does not imply public access and often militates against it.⁵⁸ If documents were originally deposited at the *aerarium* because of its religious significance, there need not have been any intent to make them available to readers.

VI. EFFORTS TO CONSULT DOCUMENTS IN THE LATE REPUBLIC

Nonetheless, it might be objected, an action prompted by one motive can issue in entirely different results: the earliest Romans might have deposited documents at sacred sites for the reasons noted above, with no intention of founding a state archive; but after five hundred years a more sophisticated age, familiar with the archival practices of the Hellenistic cities and burdened with an increasingly complex government, might have converted the documents piously accumulated at the *aerarium* into a functioning state archive. The suggestion, though plausible enough in the abstract, is not borne out by the evidence. I have already shown that even in the first century A.D., when the Empire's civil service was larger

53. See Williamson, "Monuments," pp. 175–77.

54. "Definition," p. 156.

55. See Livy 4. 3. 9, 6. 1. 10–12; cf. Pliny *HN* 33. 6 (the plebs attempting to find out crucial dates *a paucis principum*). See also A. Michels, *The Calendar of the Roman Republic* (Princeton, 1967), pp. 97–101.

56. *Literacy*, pp. 12–13.

57. See D. L. O'Keefe, *Stolen Lightning: The Social Theory of Magic* (New York, 1982), p. 67; cf. J. Linderski, "The *Libri Reconditi*," *HSCP* 89 (1985): 221, on the need for precise repetition.

58. F. Cassola, "Livio, il tempio di Giove Feretrio e la inaccessibilità dei santuari in Roma," *RSI* 82 (1970): 5–31, discounts the "public" nature of items deposited at sacral sites.

and more professionalized, a researcher expected to consult either publicly posted documents or privately held records. The late Republic itself provides even better evidence that access to collections of records was made difficult, not by extraordinary political upheavals or the chaos of the civil wars, but by the ordinary workings of Roman life.

By the last generation of the Roman Republic an educated and cosmopolitan elite had developed a sophisticated antiquarian interest in their own past and would have found the documents deposited in the *aerarium* quite an asset in their research.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, we know of only one man who tried to consult documents in the *aerarium*; and his attempt demonstrates that it was next to impossible, even for a wealthy and powerful senator, to use documents in the *aerarium*.

The case is that of Cato. When he was placed in charge of the *aerarium* (probably in 64), Cato attempted to rationalize the procedures for handling the state finances. One would expect the *aerarium* to keep working financial records ready for use and to give their handling a much higher priority than that of old *senatus consulta* of interest only to antiquarians. If Cato shared these expectations, he must have been dreadfully disappointed. This head of the operation and scion of one of the city's great political families paid the extraordinary sum of five talents to have researchers compile the annual accounts of government income and outlays for the previous generation. As quaestor in charge of the *aerarium*, apparently aspiring only to get the treasury to do its real job efficiently, Cato experienced one frustration after another (Plut. *Cat. min.* 16).

Cicero is often cited as an example of a researcher attempting to use documents in the *aerarium*, despite his notorious claim that consulting anything at the *aerarium* was nearly impossible and that the permanent staff was worse than no help at all (*Leg.* 3. 20. 36). Writing from Tusculum in 45 B.C., Cicero asked Atticus to find out the names of the ten commissioners sent to Corinth in 146. Although Atticus' side of the correspondence does not survive, it is clear that neither Cicero nor Atticus was quite sure what the simplest way to find the data would be.⁶⁰ One clue in the exchange is often missed: Cicero (*Att.* 13. 33. 3) specifically suggests that Atticus send someone who "reperiet ex eo libro, in quo sunt senatus consulta Cn. Cornelio, L. Mummio coss." There is no reason to believe that this *liber* was in the *aerarium*. Documents sent to the *aerarium* were kept in *codices*, attached sets of wooden tablets faced with wax, not in papyrus *libri*.⁶¹ Romans would not have confused the

59. See E. Rawson, "Cicero the Historian and Cicero the Antiquarian," *JRS* 62 (1972): 33–45.

60. *Att.* 13. 30, 32, 33, 5, 6, 4 = letters 303, 305, 309, 312, 310, 311 in D. R. Shackleton Bailey, ed., *Cicero's "Letters to Atticus,"* vol. 5 (Cambridge, 1966). This is the order restored by E. Badian, "Cicero and the Commission of 146 B.C.," *Hommages à Marcel Renard*, ed. J. Bibauw, vol. 1 (Brussels, 1969), pp. 59–60.

61. See *FIRA*⁷ I. 71a, lines 1–4, of A.D. 69, showing the official use of a *codex* of bound *tabulae*. Notation on other laws has been thought to attest engraving from a *codex*, but see n. 33. The *senatus consultum* in *CIL* 8. 23246, which mentions a *liber sententiarum in senatu dictarum*, is from Africa at the end of the first century A.D. and probably refers to the "published" *acta* of the Empire, since that record is usually spoken of as containing *sententiae*; cf. Talbert, *Senate*, pp. 318–19.

two dissimilar objects; even the Romans of the Empire lacked our general mental category "book."⁶² It is more likely that Cicero was asking Atticus to consult a "published" or well-known *liber* compiling lists of officials for historians and antiquarians.⁶³ Atticus sent Cicero some new information, but not what Cicero had requested. Their joint speculation continued through more exchanges. Clearly, their problem could not be simply or routinely resolved. In a final letter, Cicero thanked Atticus for supplying the set of names he needed for his project and apologized for setting him such a troublesome task. The end of the exchange as we have it does not disclose whether or not the names were actually obtained from the *aerarium*; it is clear, however, that Atticus could not simply dispatch a secretary to the *aerarium* to check the *codex* for 146.⁶⁴

The disposition of documents in late republican Rome resembles the arrangements Boegehold has described for Athens in the late fifth century, when scribes were set to collect and transcribe decrees and measures that had been posted in scattered locations and left with various officials.⁶⁵ Cicero and Cato, leaders of a sophisticated generation who knew about the tax records and similar resources available to the Hellenistic monarchs, may have wanted their old temple of Saturn to play a similar archival role; but if these more ambitious demands were made, there is no evidence that the *aerarium* successfully began to adapt its operations to meet them. There are, again, hints that it never did adapt. Tacitus (*Dial.* 37) shows that antiquarians used published editions of old records from the great households, even at the end of the first century A.D., when the *aerarium* was better staffed and its operations regularized.⁶⁶

VII. CONCLUSION

It seems best to end on a positive note by describing what the *aerarium* did do. The deposition of *senatus consulta* and laws has already been discussed. The other items known to have been placed in the *aerarium* were all of a kind. It is obvious that financial records were directly relevant to the primary function of the *aerarium* as the state treasury

62. This is to be expected, since *codices* and *libri* differed in their materials, origins, appearances, and ways in which they were used: see Roberts and Skeat, *Codex*, pp. 11–14. Furthermore, one wrote on *codices* and scrolls in different postures and under different conditions: see G. M. Parassoglou, "Some Thoughts on the Postures of the Ancient Greeks and Romans When Writing on a Papyrus Roll," *S&C* 3 (1979): 7–31.

63. For various suggestions, see Linderski, "*Libri*," p. 222; Rawson, *Intellectual Life*, p. 42, n. 14; Phillips, "Atticus," p. 231; or perhaps the *liber* contained *fasti* of the sort referred to in Livy 39. 52. 4 (*in magistratuum libris*). Drews, "Pontiffs," discusses the significance of the absence of the pontifical annals from this discussion.

64. Pace Badian, "Cicero," pp. 58–59 ("Cicero . . . now reminded him that one simple way of finding out was to look at the register of senate decrees for 146"). As Badian says (p. 63), Atticus was almost a professional historian; he would hardly have needed the reminder if the matter were that simple.

65. "Archive," p. 29.

66. On the Julio-Claudians' changes in management of the *aerarium*, see C. H. V. Sutherland, "*Aerarium* and *Fiscus* during the Early Empire," *AJP* 66 (1945): 151–53; F. Millar, "The *Aerarium*," pp. 35, 40; Corbier, *L'aerarium*, pp. 17–30.

and do not imply that the *aerarium* functioned as a repository of records in general (cf. Plut. *Cat. min.* 17. 2). Contracts for public works were also given to the *aerarium* under the authority of the quaestors because of the need for financial supervision (Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 42). Another set of documents housed in the *aerarium* at first appears unlike the last two but is nonetheless consistent with them: the rosters of foreign embassies in Rome, which were actually financial records accounting for the funds used to entertain these dignitaries (Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 43). If one compares this short list of records found in the *aerarium* with the great variety of documents mentioned above, one sees immediately that there are insufficient grounds for saying that most documents were kept in the *aerarium*. In view of the mass of detail that had to be managed daily in the Republic of the first century B.C., it seems likely that interior space in the *tabularium* was needed simply to provide working areas for dealing with the most pressing financial tasks. One does not have to account for its construction by making it the central state archive.

The usual assumptions about the archival function of the *aerarium* are incompatible both with the Romans' own accounts of conditions in the Republic and with the mass of evidence for the actual disposition of documents. Some researchers took the trouble to consult epigraphic material. Nonepigraphic material could have been consulted only in the private holdings of the consular and censorial families and in unverified manuscript versions. The more dedicated the ancient researcher was to the consultation of documents, the more dependent he would have been on the consular and censorial families.

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