

## **Numa Before Augustus**

1. Getting started on the state of scholarship: Christopher Smith *BICS 2011* offers state of the question overview. I also recommend Guy Bradley's, *Rome before 290 BCE* as an introduction. Likewise, Alexandra Dardenay's *Images des Fondateurs* is a personal favorite. Watch for Andrew Johnston's new book *Regnum*; and Christopher Mallen and Eleanor Cowan's forthcoming edited volume, *Making Sense of Monarchy*.

2. Horace, *Epistles* 1.1.59-64:

At pueri ludentes: **'Rex eris'** aiunt,  
**'si recte facies'**: hic murus aeneus esto           60  
nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.  
Roscia, dic sodes, melior lex an *puerorum est*  
**nenia, quae regnum recte facientibus offert,**  
et maribus Curiis et decantata Camillis?

3. Kings on Roman coins down to c. 70 BCE: RRC 293/1, 334/1\*\*, 344/1-3, 346/1, 3-4, 372/1\*, 392/1\*, 404/1\*; after 70 BCE: 425/1\*, 446/1, RIC 1.390-396 (\*\*- following Mattingly not Crawford on date; \* - my interpretation of iconography differs from Crawford's). RRC 334/1, c. 93 BCE
  - a. Apollo had appeared on few earlier denarius reverses in a quadriga (RRC 236/1, c. 137 BC; 254/1, c. 131 BC), and also on the obverse of an odd, rare uncia (RRC 285/7; c. 116 BC).
  - b. On Marian-Apollo connection: Luce 1968: 28; critiqued by Walt 1997: 4-8 and Wiseman 2009: 72 n. 76. The assessment of both is perhaps colored by their focus of the coinage of Macer, which in all likelihood does not represent Apollo (RRC 354/1). A more reasonable criticism of Luce's hypothesis could be built on the evidence for Sulla's own devotion to Apollo, on which see Santangelo 2007: 219 n. 14.
  - c. On reverse design: Buraselis 1976: 378 building on observations of a link between Apollo and Numa through Pythagoras in Gagé 1955: 297-347, followed and expanded upon by Farney 2007: 262 and Koortbojian 2013: 61.
  - d. On Pomponii connection to *Iudi Apollinares*, Farney 2007: 262; also sees a similar claim in the coin types of Q. Pomponius Musa (RRC 410). We have no testimony to when M. Pomponius Matho was inducted into this priesthood, only the report that he held it at his death in 204 BC (Liv. 29.38.7). However, Cf. Liv. 25.12 and 26.23 with RRC 340.
  - e. *Iudi Apollinares* on the coins of Pisones: RRC 340/1 & 3 and 408/1 (c. 61 BCE, not as Crawford 67 BCE)
4. Contested Genealogies: Plut. Numa 21, Gn. Gellius FRH 14 F21 = DH 2.72.2, Paulus Clodius FRH 16 F1 = Plut. *Num.* 1; Calpus, son of Numa: RRC 446/1 (48 BCE) and RIC 1 394 (15 BCE); Hor. *Ars P.* 292; *Laus. Pis.* 3, 14; Plut. *Numa* 21,2
5. Livy's account of the foundation of the *Iudi Apollinares* (213 BCE): 25.1.6-12 narratives adherent religious actions by individual Romans, chapters 2-11 alternate between other self-inflicted problems and reports of religious and state activities, chapter 12 narrates the foundation of the *Iudi* and points back in both the language of the prophecy and the unusual features of the festival to each of the difficulties faced by the Romans in the preceding 11 chapters.
  - a. Inspiration for use of Apollo in the 90s BCE: Alföldi 1997: 70-75; as he notes, the basic idea is already found in Hoffmann 1933: 26ff.
  - b. Religious authority attached to the name 'Marcius': Santangelo 2013: 163-164 building on Russo 2005: 13-24.
  - c. On relevant historical background of the 90s BCE, Steel 2013: 41-62, esp. 60 and Gruen 1966 with Roselaar 2010: 243-288 and Orlin 2010: 191-214.

6. Accounts of the discovery of Numa's Books (181BCE)

- a. **Livy** 40.29: A colony was settled this year at Gravisca in Etruria on territory which had formerly been taken from the Tarquinii. Five jugera were given to each man; the supervisors of the settlement were C. Calpurnius Piso, P. Claudius Pulcher and C Terentius Istra.

The year was marked by a drought and failure of the crops. It is recorded that no rain fell for six months.

During this year while labourers were digging at some depth on land belonging to L. Petilius, a *scriba* who lived at the foot of the Janiculum, two stone chests were discovered about eight feet long and four wide, the lids being fastened down with lead. Each bore an inscription in Latin and Greek; one stating that Numa Pompilius, son of Pompo and king of the Romans, was buried there, and the other saying that it contained his books. When the owner at the suggestion of his friends had opened them, the one which bore the inscription of the buried king was found to be empty, with no vestige of a human body or of anything else, so completely had everything disappeared after such a lapse of time. In the other there were two bundles tied round with cords steeped in wax, each containing seven books, not only intact but to all appearance new. There were seven in Latin on pontifical law, and seven in Greek dealing with the study of philosophy so far as was possible in that age. **Valerius Antias (c. 40s BCE)** says further that they were Pythagorean books, thus shaping his belief to the common opinion that Numa was a disciple of Pythagoras, and trying to give probability to a fiction.

The books were first examined by the friends who were present. As the number of those who read them grew, and they became widely known, Q. Petilius, the City praetor, was anxious to read them and took them from Lucius. They were on very friendly terms; when Q. Petilius was quaestor he had given Lucius Petilius a place on the decuria. After perusing the most important passages he perceived that most of them would lead to the break-up of the national religion. Lucius promised that he would throw the books into the fire, but before doing so said that he should like to find out, if allowed to do so, whether he could reclaim them either by the right of possession or by the authority of the tribunes of the plebs, without, however, disturbing his friendly relations with the praetor. The scrivener approached the tribunes, and the tribunes left the matter for the senate to deal with. The praetor stated that he was ready to declare on oath that the books ought not to be preserved. The senate held the praetor's asseveration to be sufficient, and that the books ought to be burnt as soon as possible in the comitium. Whatever sum the praetor and the majority of the tribunes thought a fair price for the books was to be paid to the owner. The scrivener refused to accept it. The books were burnt in the comitium in the sight of the people in a fire made by the victimarii.

- b. **Pliny** *NH* 13.84-8: There are important instances forthcoming that make against the opinion of Marcus Varro in regard to the history of papyrus [*i.e. contradicting his claim that papyrus starts with Alexander's conquest of Egypt*]. **Cassius Hemina (c. 149 BCE)**, a historian of great antiquity, has stated in his Annals, Book IV, that the *scriba* Gnaeus Terentius, when digging over his land on the Janiculum, turned up a coffer that had contained the body of Numa, who was king at Rome, and that in the same coffer were found some books of his—this was in the consulship of Publius Cornelius Cethegus, son of Lucius, and of Marcus Baebius Tamphilus, son of Quintus, dating 535 years after the accession of Numa; and the historian says that the books were made of papyrus, which makes the matter still more remarkable, because of their having lasted in a hole in the ground, and consequently on a point of such importance I will quote the words of Hemina himself: 'Other people wondered how those books could have lasted so long, but Terentius's explanation was that about in the middle of the coffer there had been a square stone tied all round with waxed cords, and that the [three?] books had been placed on the top of this stone; and he thought this position was the

reason why they had not decayed; and that the books had been soaked in citrus-oil, and he thought that this was why they were not moth-eaten. These books contained the philosophical doctrines of Pythagoras'—and Hemina said that the books had been burnt by the praetor Quintus Petilius *because they were writings of philosophy*. The same story is recorded by **Piso (c. 120 BCE)** the former Censor in his Commentaries, Book I, but he says that there were seven volumes of pontifical law and the same number of Pythagorean philosophy; while **Tuditanus (?150s-50s BCE?)** in Book XIII says that there were [twelve volumes?] of the Decrees of Numa; **Varro (c. 50s BC)** himself says that there were seven volumes of *Antiquities of Man*, and **Antias (c. 40s BC)** in his Second Book speaks of there having been twelve volumes *On Matters Pontifical* written in Latin and the same number in Greek containing *Doctrines of Philosophy*; Antias also quotes in Book III a Resolution of the Senate deciding that these volumes were to be burnt.

- c. **Augustine's** co-option of the story for his own purposes: *City of God* 7.34: But, on the other hand, we find, as the same most learned man has related, that the causes of the sacred rites which were given from the books of Numa Pompilius could by no means be tolerated, and were considered unworthy, not only to become known to the religious by being read, but even to lie written in the darkness in which they had been concealed. For now let me say what I promised in the third book of this work to say in its proper place. For, as we read in the same **Varro's book on the worship of the gods (c. 50s BCE)**,

“A certain one Terentius had a field at the Janiculum, and once, when his ploughman was passing the plough near to the tomb of Numa Pompilius, he turned up from the ground the books of Numa, in which were written *the causes of the sacred institutions*; which books he carried to the praetor, who, having read the beginnings of them, referred to the senate what seemed to be a matter of so much importance. And when the chief senators had read certain of the causes why this or that rite was instituted, the senate assented to the dead Numa, and the conscript fathers, as though concerned for the interests of religion, ordered the praetor to burn the books.”

Let each one believe what he thinks; nay, let every champion of such impiety say whatever mad contention may suggest. For my part, let it suffice to suggest that the causes of those sacred things which were written down by King Numa Pompilius, the institutor of the Roman rites, ought never to have become known to people or senate, or even to the priests themselves; and also that Numa himself attained to these secrets of demons by an illicit curiosity, in order that he might write them down, so as to be able, by reading, to be reminded of them. However, though he was king, and had no cause to be afraid of any one, he neither dared to teach them to any one, nor to destroy them by obliteration, or any other form of destruction. Therefore, because he was unwilling that any one should know them, lest men should be taught infamous things, and because he was afraid to violate them, lest he should enrage the demons against himself, he buried them in what he thought a safe place, believing that a plough could not approach his sepulchre. But the senate, fearing to condemn the religious solemnities of their ancestors, and therefore compelled to assent to Numa, were nevertheless so convinced that those books were pernicious, that they did not order them to be buried again, knowing that human curiosity would thereby be excited to seek with far greater eagerness after the matter already divulged, but ordered the scandalous relics to be destroyed with fire; because, as they thought it was now a necessity to perform those sacred rites, they judged that the error arising from ignorance of their causes was more tolerable than the disturbance which the knowledge of them would occasion the state.

- d. **Plutarch's** version (for completeness): *Numa* 22: They did not burn his body, because, as it is said, he forbade it; but they made two stone coffins and buried them under the Janiculum. One of these held his body, and the other the sacred books which he had written out with his own hand, as the Greek lawgivers their tablets. But since, while he was still living, he had taught the priests the written contents of the books,

and had inculcated in their hearts the scope and meaning of them all, he commanded that they should be buried with his body, convinced that such mysteries ought not to be entrusted to the care of lifeless documents.

This is the reason, we are told, why the Pythagoreans also do not entrust their precepts to writing, but implant the memory and practice of them in living disciples worthy to receive them. And when their treatment of the abstruse and mysterious processes of geometry had been divulged to a certain unworthy person, they said the gods threatened to punish such lawlessness and impiety with some signal and wide-spread calamity. 4 Therefore we may well be indulgent with those who are eager to prove, on the basis of so many resemblances between them, that Numa was acquainted with Pythagoras.

**Antias (40s BCE)**, however, writes that it was twelve pontifical books, and twelve others of Greek philosophy, which were placed in the coffin. And about four hundred years afterwards, when Publius Cornelius and Marcus Baebius were consuls, heavy rains fell, and the torrent of water tore away the earth and dislodged the coffins. When their lids had fallen off, one coffin was seen to be entirely empty, without any trace whatever of the body, but in the other the writings were found. These Petilius, who was then praetor, is said to have read, and then brought to the senate, declaring that, in his opinion, it was not lawful or proper that the writings should be published abroad. The books were therefore carried to the comitium and burned.

e. A summary of various reports of what was found:

- 1 coffin, some (3?) books square stone, waxed cords, citrus oil; *philosophiae Pythagoricae* (???) (Cassius Hemina via Pliny)
- 7 *ius pontificii*, 7 *Pythagoricos* (Piso via Pliny)
- 12(?) books of *Numae decretorum* (Tuditanus via Pliny)
- 7 books of *humanarum antiquitatum* (Varro via Pliny) or *sacrorum institutorum causae* (Varro via Augustine)
- 12 pontificales Latinos, 12 *Graecos praecepta philosophiae* (Antias via Pliny); cf. *Pythagoricos* (Antias via Livy)
- Two coffins, two bundles tied with waxed cords: 7 Roman pontifical law, 7 Greek philosophy (Livy)
- Two coffins, pontifical law (Plutarch)

7. Bacchanalia affair **186 BCE**: Livy 39.16 "... How often in the times of your fathers and grandfathers has the task been assigned to the magistrates of forbidding all foreign rites and ceremonies, prohibiting hedge-priests and diviners from entering either the Forum, the Circus, or the City, seeking out and burning all books of pretended prophecies, and abolishing every sacrificial ritual except what was accordant with Roman usage! ..." Speech by Spurius Postumius Albinus, cos., no mention in *CIL* I<sup>2</sup> 581 = *ILLRP*<sup>2</sup> 511 = Degraasi: *Imagines*, N<sup>o</sup> 392 = *ILS* 18.

8. Doliola, 'The Jars'; Crawford 1971 who is interested in what the doliola can tell us about connections between the Penates and the Dioscuri.

- a. Varro, *L.L.* 5. 157: The place near the Cloaca Maxima which is called Doliola, 'The Jars', where spitting is prohibited, from some doliola, jars, that are buried under the earth. Two stories about these are handed down: some say that bones of dead men were in them, others that certain sacred objects belonging to Numa Pompilius were buried in them after his death.

Cf. Leon Battista Alberti, *de re Aedificatoria* 6.35

- b. Livy 5.40: While all this was going on, the Flamen of Quirinus and the Vestal virgins, without giving a thought to their own property, were deliberating as to which of the sacred things they ought to take with them, and which to leave behind, since they had not strength enough to carry all, and also what place would be the safest for their custody. They thought best to conceal what they could not take in earthen jars and bury them under the chapel next to the Flamen's house, where spitting is now forbidden. The rest they divided amongst them and carried off, taking the road which leads by the Pons Sublicius to the Janiculum.
- c. Festus, s.v. "Doliola": the place of Rome so named, because at the time when the Gauls invaded the city, the sacred objects were thrown into this place, enclosed in jars. For this reason, it was forbidden even to spit in this place.
- d. Plutarch, *Camillus* 20.5-6: Others say that this fire is kept burning before the sacred things by way of purification, as among the Greeks, and that other objects within the temple are kept hidden from the gaze of all except these virgins, whom they call Vestals. And a very prevalent story had it that the famous Palladium of Troy was hidden away there, having been brought to Italy by Aeneas. There are some who say that it is the Samothracian images which are hidden there, and they tell the tale of Dardanus bringing these to Troy, after he had founded that city, and consecrating them there with celebration of their rites; and of Aeneas, at the capture of Troy, stealing them away and preserving them until he settled in Italy. Others still, pretending to have larger knowledge in these matters, say that two small jars are stored away there, of which one is open and empty, and the other full and sealed up, and that both are visible only to the holy virgins. But others think that these knowing ones have been led astray by the fact that the virgins, at the time of which I am now speaking, cast the most of their sacred treasures into two jars, and hid them underground in the temple of Quirinus, whence that place, down to the present time, has the name of "Doliola," or "Jars."

Cf. L. Cassius Hemina (FRH 6, before 149 BCE) F22 = App. *Gall.* 6 which records the priest Dorso's saving of the sacred objects during the Gallic sack, no Doliola involved.

9. Further L. Cassius Hemina (FRH 6, before 149 BCE) fragments on Numa

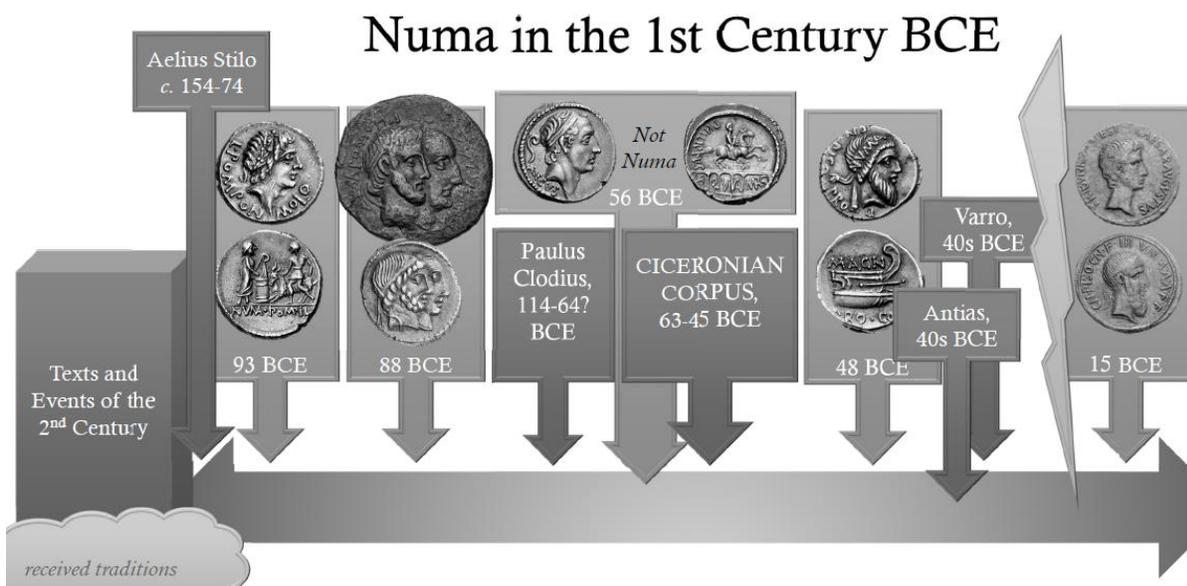
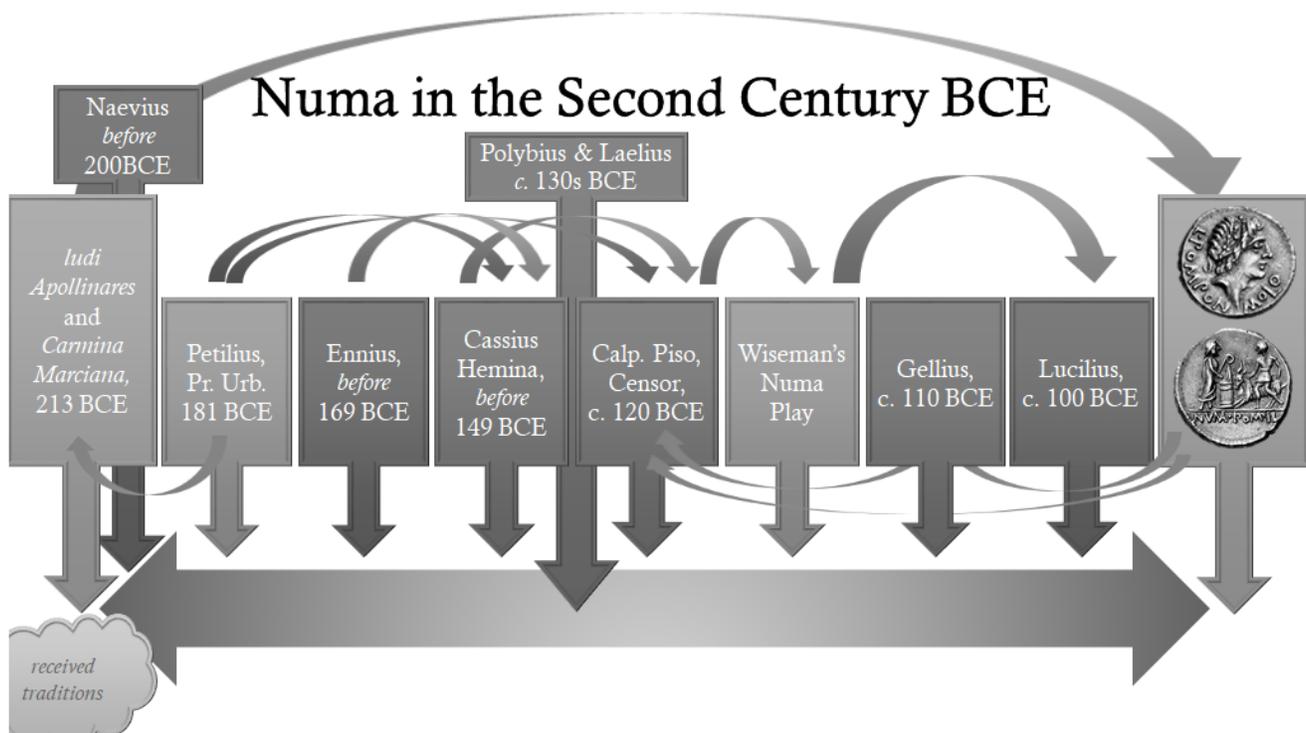
- a. F16 = Pliny *NH* 18.7: roasting emmer-wheat, since it was more healthy as food when roasted, achieving that by one method, namely by ruling that emmer-wheat was not pure for religious purposes unless it was roasted
- b. F17 = Pliny *NH* 32.20: Numa established that fish without scales should not be used for sacrifices. †patrimones† devising that both public and private parties and dinners at couches of the gods should be more easily prepared, lest those who were buying for sacrifices should be less concerned about price and buy up the produce in advance.

Cf. Saturn as human = F1 = Tert. *Apol.* 10.7 & *Nat.* 2.12 & Min Fel. 23.9 & Lact. *Inst.* 1.13.8; Faunus (by implication only) = F2 = Serv. *Georg.* 1.10; Cacus and Recaranus = F3 = *OGR* 6.

10. Further L. Calpurnius Piso Frugi (FRH 9, cens. 120 BCE) fragments on Numa

- a. F11 = Varro, *Ling Lat.* 5.165 = instituted closing of the Janus Gate in times of peace
- b. F12 = Plin., *NH* 2.140 with F15 = Plin., *NH* 2.140 and 28.13-14; calling down lightning and fatal misuse by Tullus Hostilius
- c. F13 = Plut., *Num.* 21.7 = easy death
- d. F47 = Lydus *mens. frg.* 6 (168) 179-80 = incantation for rekindling Vesta's fire

11. Wiseman's Numa Drama: Wiseman 1998: 21-23 with Antias (25 FRH) F 8 = Arnobius 5.1 and Ovid, *Fasti* 3.259-392.
- Lucilius 15.524-5: *Terriculas Lamias Fauni quas Pompiliique / instituere Numae tremit has hic omnia point*
  - Pliny *NH* 25:29 (discussing poppies): *haec medetur et **Faunorum** in quiete ludibriis. praecipunt eruere noctu, quoniam, si **picus Martius** videat, tuendo in oculos impetum faciat.*
12. Some Numa in Cicero: *Dom.* 127, *Sull.* 22, *de Leg.* 1.4-5, *Sest.* 123, *Brut.* 62.



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