ANTIRELICS — LOCA SCELERATA IN ANCIENT ROME

One can wonder if a place can become a relic. The last word’s Latin archetype, verb *relinquare*, meant «to leave behind». Late Latin *reliquiae* and their Medieval version *reliquia* usually designated remains of a martyr or a saint and nowadays these have been the commonest associations of the word « relic ». However, in the histories of nations some places play special roles, just to quote the Kosovo Field and the Serbs.

Talking about relics means talking about memory. Not only the ancient Romans, but most of the modern nations, to cite Gowings’s observation, *viewed memory as an essential means of connecting with the past, and thereby of preserving their sense of self and identity* [Gowing, 2005, p. 152]. Memory understood in that way has been often opposed history. This aspect of philosophy of history produced an abundant literature. Social memory or memories, collective or collected, are usually seen as living, crucial for the preservation of groups, families, believers — but memories of the past are constituted and influenced by social contexts of the present [Iwaszkiewicz-Wronikowska, 2010, s. 11–14] as well as by language (thanks to Hayden White the impact of linguistic factors on historical narrations became obvious). On the other hand history is a dead, even useless, art, an artificial scholar discipline. Uniting memory with history turned to be almost an impossible task. Nevertheless such attempts have been made, for example by inventing alternative histories as antithesis to traditional ones.

History like memory is influenced and even constructed by social contexts — we know it very well. Looking more positively, history can be just one form of memory, be a memory of the age of science. The differences boil down to methods and rhetoric applied. Ancient historians were well aware of this and saw their narrations as tools serving living men, especially the posterity. Their books had been a part of memory and worked for it.

Both memory and history need past. They can be seen as two ways of constructing and re-enacting of a given past. Both need basis, reminders, carriers, evidence, monuments, relics. In one word they both have to (or must) be underpinned by so called sites of memory: museums, archives, cemeteries, concepts, practices, rituals, texts, symbols, sources — and places. All of them could be named (and are in fact) *loqui memoriae*.

The expression *loca memoriae* is well known to every student of ancient rhetoric and mnemonic: *constat igitur artificiosa memoria ex locis et imaginibus* [Rhet. ad Her. III 29; Yates, 1977, p. 18–20]. As it has been stated above, every form of memory could be seen as artificial. Unfortunately a thorough study on the meaning of *memoria* has not been done yet [but see: Stroż, 2010]. However, introductory remarks and studies cleared some points.

Rome witnessed a real revolution in memory after the Second Punic War. By the end of the third century B.C. the Romans «imagined» themselves, and their past started to matter [Pina Polo, 2003]. Collected memory transformed into an ideological construct — the *mos maiorum* — and earned its tutorial goddess, Iuno Moneta. By the end of the second century B.C. the Romans became very conscious about their past and memory. This phenomenon did not started, as written above, in the period, but from then on it gained a momentum. Its visible aspect is well attested in the coinage: in the beginnings of the 30s of the second century coin designs changed [Meadows, Williams, 2001, p. 37]. In the same period we hear for the first time of procedures later named (thanks to modern epigraphists) as *damnatio memoriae* (the Gracchi). The Roman understanding of memory changed, and it was a paradigm, a long-lasting shift.

The past and memory in literature and art are quite well described — it is enough to evoke the abundant research on the very Roman art: so called historical reliefs and portraiture. The spatial realisations of memory are less popular fields of interest, excluding the Augustan period [Zanker, 1999; Rea, 2007]. Topography of Rome became to be seen as a kind of a «carpet of memory». Places enshrined memory.

It is quite obvious that monuments such as temples, statues, graves can be «carriers», «relics» of memory. But among toponyms of ancient Rome one
can find places labelled as *sclerati*. The aim of this contribution is to attempt at explaining what was their meaning as well as at understanding of their role in the Roman memorisation, that is, creating and re-acting of the collected and collective memory.

*Sclerati* is a participle of a verb *sclero* [Forcellini, V, p. 365]. These two are closely connected with much debated term *sclerus*. *Sclerus* could be used to denote every deed committed against law, religion, or morality [cf. Charis., p. 425; 27 Barbwick: *factum* flagittum. maleficium. *sclerus* nefas; in general see: Reichenbecher, 1913; on the legal meaning: Thome, 1993, p. 330–331; Stachura, 2010, p. 144–145]. Such a deed could bring onto a culprit a curse, a ritual pollution or a moral condemnation. *Sclerati* in that context meant someone or something polluted and contaminated by *sclerus* — usually it is translated as «curse» or «accursed». Men and places called so should be avoided, because through *contagium* they can «infect» others [Latte, 1960, p. 48, note 1; Thome, 1992, p. 77, note 19].

The Romans were aware of less honourable and dark events from their past: defeats, crimes and vices. Roman historiography elaborated ways of coping with unwanted past — lost battles and wars had been presented as almost won and full of heroic actions and figures or caused by negligence towards the gods. But some of such events of the past had been left as historic reminders.

Places, as already stated, could be also reminders. A question arises — were *loca sclerata* reminders (places of memory) or warnings — or both? *Locus* could describe any area or a part of a certain area (*fundus*), and had many synonyms [Kubler, 1963; Schambacher, 1997]. Mythic space of Taractus delivered one example of such a place — *sedes scleratus* [Tib. I 3, 67; Ovid., Met. IV 456], called by Virgil *lumen scleratus* [Aen. VI 563 Hirzel: *nulla fas custo scleratum insistere limen*]. This area was reserved for the *sclerati*; they suffered punishment there. Important is Virgil’s remark that for a *castus* it is *nulla fas* to stand on such place, and Servius explanation for *sclerare* as *polluere* [Serv., ad Aen. III 42; Latte, 1960, p. 48, note 1]. As far as actual sites are concerned in the most cases connection between a name of an area or even a country with an adjective *scleratus/scleratus* served as a way of derogating a particular place [Ovid., Met. XIII 628; Ponto I 6, 29] or a person. Its insulting or invasive character had not been unfamiliar to Plautus and in general, to the Roman comedy.

The historical space of Rome had at least three places marked as *sclerata*. These were *porta Sclerata*, *vicus Scleratus* and *campus Scleratus*. Aetiological explanations of the causes of these names dated them back to the early Roman history.

*Campus Scleratus* was (traditionally) the oldest of them [Samter, *Campus Scleratus*, RE III, 2, s. 1447; Brtnicky, 1925, p. 379; Coarelli, *Campus Scleratus*, LTUR, 1, p. 225, 433; Dumser, *Campus Scleratus*, MAR, p. 78]. According to Plutarch king Numa ordered to prepare a special chamber where unchaste Vestal Virgins were to be buried alive and this was excavated from the *Agger* [Plut., *Numa* 10, 4; Wissowa, 1912, p. 508]. Livy and Festus did not specify any further details [Liv. XXII 57, 2; Festus, p. 448 Lindsay: *Scleratus campus app<ellatur prope portam Col>linam, in quo virgin<es Vestales, quae incestrum> fecerunt, defosse sunt u<lvae>; in quo indicates that campus could be a synonym of loc<us>, cf. Liv. VIII 15; Dion. Hal. II 67; Plut., *Numa* 10]. The area was placed inside the Servian walls, near *porta Collina* [Liv. VIII 15, 7–8 Weissenborn, Muller: ad portam Collinam dextra via stratum; XXII 57, 2: ad portam Collinam; Plut., *Numa* 10, 6–7]. Modern reconstructions place the *campus* south of the *porta* and close to the Servian wall. The area was not of notable size [Dumser, *Campus*, p. 78; R.E.A. Palmer postulated that the shrine of Bellona Pulviersis stood within the campus, but this view is rather restrictive, see: Palmer, 1975], but big enough to contain participants of the ceremony of burying a Vestal virgin: pontifex maximus, all priests and spectators as well [Plut., *Numa* 10, 6–7]. Interesting enough is that Livy connected burying (in fact executing) of a Vestal Mini<u>nua* [Liv. XXII 57, 2] on the *campus* with famous human sacrifices of Greek and Gallic couples on the Forum Boarium [Liv. XXII 57, 6]: sub terram (...) in locum saxo consaepturn (...) — another locus *scleratus*?

*Vicus scleratus* laid at the area of the Carinae [Coarelli, *Clivus Orbius, Urbium*, LTUR, 1, p. 283; Dumser, *Carinae*, MAR, p. 81–82; cadem, *Carinae: street*, MAR, p. 82]. It earned its nickname because of Tullia’s *sclerus* [Liv. I 48, 7 Weissenborn, Muller: foedum inhumanumique inde traditum sclerus, monumento locus ess]: she drove over her father’s dead body [Varro, LL V 159; Val. Max. IX 11, 1; Liv. I 48, 6–7 Weissenborn, Muller: Scleraratum vicum vocant, quo amens agitantibus fuistis sororis ac viri Tullia per patris corpus carneum egisse furtur partermque sanguinis ac caedis paternae cruento vehiculo, contaminata ipsa respersaque, tulisse ad penates suus virique sui, quibus iratis malo regni principis similis prope diem exitus sequeretur; Ovid., Fasti VI 609ff; Festus, p. 450 Lindsay: *Scleratus vi<cus> ... focust Tarquinii Superbus interfici<endum curas>set Servium Tullium regem, soc<e>rum suum,
corpus> <eius iacens filia carp>ento supervacast, pro<perans in possession>em domus paternae, cf. Pauli excerpta, p. 451 Lindsay; Ps.-Aur. Vict., de vir. ill., 7, 19 Pichlmayr: Tullia statin in Forum properavit et prima coniugem regem salutavit, a quo iussa turba decedere, cum domum redirect, uis patris corpora millonem euitam super ipsum corpus carpentum agree praepexit: unde vicus ille Sceletar
tus dictus; Dion. Hal. IV 39, 4–5; Zonaras 7, 9. The Carinae themselves from the Middle Republic on were a very fashionable quarter of Rome and many aristocrats had their houses there [Dumser, Carinae, MAR, p. 81–82]. Vicus, as well as the legend, suggest that in this case Sceletaratus was a name of a street and also for the whole vicus (neighbourhood). In fact Tullia’s itinerary from the Forum to her home on the Esquiline is a good prove for this thesis [Liv. I 48, 6–7; Dion. Hal. IV 39, 3–5; Dumser, Carinae: streets, MAR, p. 82].

Porta Sceletarata was another name for Porta Carmentalis, a gate close to a ford and the Capit
tol [Plut., Cam. 25, 3; Dion. Hal. I 32, 3: υπὸ τῆς κοιλομένου Κοπτοπόλεως; Solin. 1, 13 Mommsen: pars etiam infima Capitolini montis habitaculum Carmentae fuit, ubi Carmentis nunc fanum est, a qua Carmentali portae nomen datum; Coarelli, Porta Carmentalis, LTUR, 3, p.324–325; Bur
bonus, Haselberger, Porta: Carmentalis, MAR, p.193]. Porta Carmentalis was called sceletarata because through this gate the Fabii with their clients marched out against the Etruscans and all died at the battle of Cremera in 477 BC [Festus, p. 450 Lindsay: Sceele<rata porta ... app>ellari a quibusdam; <qua et Carmentali> dicitur, quod ei proximum Car<mentae sacellum fuit; sceele>rata autem, quod per eam <sex et trecenti Favii> cum clientium mil
dibus <quinque egressi adversus E>truscos, ad amnem <Cremeram omnes sunt inter>feci, cf. Pauli excerpta, p. 451 Lindsay]. According the tradition fell 305 Fabii and 4000 or 5000 their clients. Only one of the Fabii survived — Q. Fabius Vibulanus [Smith, 2006, p. 46, 291]. This battle was a turning point in the history of Roman clientela.

The gate had two passages: left and right. Livy and Ovid wrote that only the right wing had ominous character [Liv. I 49, 8: Weissenthorn, Muller: infelici via, dextro Iano portae Carmentalis, profecto ad Cremeram flumen pervenient. Is opportunus visus locus communiendo praeсидio; Ovid., Fasti II 201–202; Ps. Aur. Vict., de vir. ill., 14, 5 Pichlmayr; Burbonus, Haselberger, Porta: Carmentalis, MAR, p. 193]. The same probably had also Festus who gave a wider explanation, but in this place the manuscript is badly damaged; what was left says qua ex causa ... intra-

re egridiv... So both leaving and entering the city through this wing could bring misfortune.

These three places got their nicknames because of different reasons. Sceletaratus was a warning for the inhabi
tants in every case. But only Tullia committed a scelus, the Fabii not; they had just bad luck (and were defeated because they were pious). Campus sceletar
tus had been named so as a mean of excluding the place from a normal daily live. What is also important is the fact that these places were connected with gat
es and the Servian wall (Porta Sceletarata and Campus sceletaratus) or with Rome’s inner routes (Vicus Sceletaratus). City walls and gates were according ius divina rebus sanctae: all tombs and burial grounds were res religiosae, that is dedicated to the infernal gods. They were protected by interdictum ne quid in loco sacro religioso fiat, similarly roads by interdictum de viis publicis. It is necessary to see if the status of sceletaratus made any difference.

As already stated this was a kind of a warning. It is not clear if passing or any other contact with these places involved purification on the side of a pedes
trian. Unfortunately, we know more about collective state rituals of purification than about private ones. It is reasonable to maintain that a label sceletaratus had no legal meaning (of course in the given context) and consequences. The Romans developed legal and religio
er rites to exclude subjects of law from irius humani and to move them under the rules of ius divinum [Insadowski, 1931; Kowalski, 2005; Joňa, 2005]. Naming anything sceletaratus was not a legal act.

An attempt towards explaining of the nature of this step can be made basing on the case of Porta Carmentalis — Sceletarata. Cassius Dio mentioned an important fact about this Porta. Its accursed gate had to be avoided by the Roman magistrates or only consuls, because for them passing through the gate was omin
sous [Cass. Dio VI 21, 3: (...) καὶ τὸς πῦλας δεῖ ναῖ anterior tó
εξοσμηθήσεται εν ετίμια ἐποίησον, ἄστε μηδένα δι αὐτῶν ἄρχοντα διεινόην on the possible meaning of ἄρχοντα see Freyburger — Galland, 1997, p. 155–156]. Ovid delivered similar facts about the right wing of the Porta: Carmentis portae dext
tro est via praxima iano: ire per hanc noli, quisquis es; omen habet. illa fama referit Fabios excisse recentes: porta vacat culpa, sed tamen omen habet [Ovid., Fasti II 201–204]. So the poet claimed that the gate was ominous for every passerby (quisquis es) and the nature of evil consisted in a word omen (omen habet).

Cassius Dio remarked that the Romans were shocked by the Fabii’s defeat that pushed them into acclaiming the day of the battle as religiosus [Cass. Dio VI 21, 3]. His information is supported by Livy and Ovid [Liv. VI 1, 11; Ovid., Fasti II 195–196]. But
what is particularly interesting here is that according to Livy on the same day — 18th of July — the Romans lost the battle of Allia. Ovid knew 13th of February as the date of Cremeran clades. Modern literature on the matter connected the whole story of Cremera with the Fabian familial history and with Quintus Fabius Pictor [Elter, 1910; Lefevre, 1980; Fraschetti, 1998; Smith, 2006, p. 46]. The Fabii were very influential and played a pivotal role during the 4th and 3rd centuries BC [Ziolokowski, 2008, p. 108–109]. Uniting Cremera and Allia could be thought as a way to join two histories into one national story.

It is necessary to stress a similarity between the story about Portia Carmentalis and later (or not: if Pictor was spiritus movens of the story they were more or less concurrent) damnatio memoriae procedure. It was rather impossible to destroy one of the city gates (they were res sanctae), and the gate itself was innocent (porta vacat culpa), only passing through it sent down an omen. It was also impossible to accuse it. So a narration had been invented to confer this nevertheless important to the city traffic gate a status of a haunted place. If it was connected with any ritual or legal procedures it is hard to solve. Two other cases of loca scelerata, when juxtapose, give an impression that this label had been conferred by the common belief rather than official acts. It is affirmed by the sources: all the Latin authors mentioned above stressed that the places had been named or called because of this or other reason (nomen datum est; dicitus). Sceleratus formulated popular beliefs and emotions not results of legal or official movements.

The example of Portia Carmentalis — Scelerata is instructive for another historical analogues, like Curia Pompeia, the place of Caius Iulius Caesar’s violent death [for the literature on the Curia see: Ruciński, 2008, p. 39–50]. Both Suetonius and Cassius Dio placed their information on post-15th of March fates of the Curia after short reports on Caesar’s posthumous honours [Suet., Jul. 84–85; Cass. Dio XLVII 18]. One should have in mind that Caesar had been in that moment still just a dead man, only, as Suetonius informed, persuasio volgi had him as a god [Suet., Jul. 88; Olszewski, 2008, p. 51–66]. The resolution concerning Pompey’s Curia is to be seen as another honour for the murdered dictator. The biographer mentioned also that the decision could have been different. There was a proposal to burn Caesar’s body in the Curia, or in the cella of Iovis Capitolinus: quem cum pars in Capitolini Iovis cella cremare pars in curia Pompei destinaret [Suet., Jul. 84 11m]. We know that Caesar’s body, brought into the Forum, was burnt there. And according to Suetonius, curiam, in qua occissus est, obstrui placuit Idusque Martias Parridium nominari, ac ne uquam eo die senatus ageretur [Suet., Jul. 88]: the Curia was walled, the day called parridium, and senate’s meetings on the day forbidden. Cassius Dio adds more details. The day had been decreed as unlucky, in 42 BC the Curia was walled up and finally in 2nd century AD turned into latrines [Cass. Dio XLVII 19, 1, cf. Suet., Aug. 31]. Similarity between Curia and Porta Scelerata are obvious.

One point must be stressed here. Curia Pompeia as a senate’s meeting places should be a templum and this meant a necessity of profanatio ritual — the extant sources give no hint about such act. Destruction of this building could be seen as one of methods of honouring Caesar, but this solution — if it had been considered at all — was abandoned. Destroying one of a senate’s meeting places as a way of expressing the feelings of the people was not anything alien to the Romans. On the day of Publius Clodius’ funeral mob burnt the Curia Hostilia [Fezzi, 2008, p. 107–108]. It was a substitute for revenge.

There is one more curious case from outside Rome. When on 14th of September in 9 BC died Drusus, his army called (apellata sunt) the camp where this sorrowful event took place scelerata — Castra scelerata, probably modern Schellerten [Suet., Claud. 1,3 lhm: (...) expeditione repetita supremum diem morbo obit in aestuibus castris, quae ex eo scelerata sunt appellata; Stein, Claudius 139, RE III, 2, s. 2715; Sawiński, 2005, p. 30]. As in the case of Porta Scelerata and Pompey’s Curia also now this nickname was another sign of mourning, regret and honour. Drusus’ memory was to be preserved and strengthened by monuments, symbolic graves, annual ceremonies and military parades [Sawiński, 2005, p. 92, 95, 97–98, 100]. All these honours were enacted by soldiers and provincial societies.

This short review of the loca scelerata of the city of Rome shows additional light on the Roman policy on memory. Not only official enactments, senatorial decrees and then princes’ will were able to turn some ordinary places into special ones. Even negative events could be honoured. In the case of scelerata the decision was made by popular feelings and emotions. The sources clearly show that popular sentiments have been underestimated by modern scholars dealing with the Roman memoria. Fields, places or buildings could be turned into sacral ones only through official decisions by priests, assemblies, senate, then by a given princeps. Political clashes and tensions limited official movements and sometimes even made them impossible. Places called scelerata were popular ways of commemorating persons and events. This stream of collective or collected memory had been
not under control of any of the Roman offices. From
time to time this phenomenon was used by some of
the Roman gentes to improve their position, increase
their influence — in one word, to strengthen their status
or policy.

The phenomenon was not reduced to denominat-
ing places with negative adjectives. Besides scelerat-
tus there were also positive nicknames like sacra via,
Mons sacer, Loco Felici (settlement in Pannonia).
Positively haunted was also a house where Augustus
was born, but the building had been dangerous for
mean and unworthy men: hunc introire nisi necessa-
sario et caste religio est, concepta opinione veteri,
quasi temere adeuntibus horror quidam et metus obi-
ciator, sed max confirmata [Suet., Aug. 6 Ilium]. Sueto-
nius pointed here opinia vevera as the source of divine
status of the house.

The argument presented above can be resumed as
follow. In the ancient Rome there were mechanisms
allowing the community to build their own memo-
ry without official steps. This part of collective/coll-
lected recollection based on popular beliefs and was
used by powerful Roman aristocratic families. The
maintenance of this memory needed reminders such
as buildings, places, areas which were turned into
shrines of popular memory. Changing status of a giv-
en subject was accomplished without official or ritual
acts and it had not alter a legal status of the subject
(Augustus' house described by Suetonius was sold to
a common man). The phenomenon expressed feelings
of lower strata of Roman society. Sometimes it was
a step against ruling bodies or factions; sometimes it
was a step to honour an extraordinary and beloved
person. All this helped to remember common tradi-
tion and history and, as was stated above, it turned
Rome into a carpet of memory, full of reminders and
relics of the venerated past.

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АНТИРЕЛИКВИИ — LOCA SCELERATA В ДРЕВНЕМ РИМЕ

РЕЗЮМЕ

В последнее десятилетие отмечается повышенный интерес к вопросам памяти в античном Риме. В большинстве случаев это явление исследуется, основываясь на археологических данных и произведениях искусства. Возводимые в Вечном городе строения были предназначены не только усиливать престиж соперничавших между собой ролей, а в дальнейшем позицию кесаря, но также восходили к коллективной памяти. Таким образом, Рим становится своеобразной «сокровищницей памяти». Однако, исследователи редко обращали внимание на топографический аспект этого феномена. Loca scele rata (проклятые места), появлявшиеся в топографическом списке римских мест, также служили memoria. Самое древнее из них — vicus scele ratus и campus scele ratus — свои названия почерпнули из религии, но уже следующие, например Porta Scele rata, или потом Castra Scele rata, — возникли уже благодаря историческим событиям. Название, таким образом, определенное архитектурной или топографической данностью было также формой почитания субъекта, судьбы или действия которого привели к ассоциации названия с scelus.