

The Memory of Ruins: Quevedo's Silva to "Roma antigua y moderna"

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The silva to "Roma antigua y moderna" by Francisco de Quevedo is a complex rewriting of Joachim Du Bellay's Antiquitez de Rome. The Spanish author makes an archeological study of his model, identifying the sources, and, through intertextual dialogue with the classical and humanistic descriptions of Rome, creates a symbolic space of memory where different stages of history are represented. In this manner, Quevedo produces a Baroque reading of the Renaissance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Renaissance regarded the city of Rome as one of the privileged archives of the past. Its ruined buildings were also, however, a reminder that many achievements of the classical period had been irremediably lost. The *humanae litterae* had been corrupted by the passage of time and had fallen into the hands of barbarians who let them slowly fade away. Historical memory had been damaged, but this was not entirely irreversible. Humanists set themselves the task of recovering the classical legacy through a wide-ranging reconstruction of the chains that linked them with ancient Rome. The ruins of the city were like fragments of a corrupted manuscript that had to be amended and edited.¹ The text of the past was to be restored and the missing parts of the monuments were to be reinvented using the surviving stones as an ideal model. Memory and creativity were therefore inextricably linked: to retrieve was also to renew. This duality is at the core of some of the most relevant achievements of the Renaissance, and can also explain a number of its paradoxes.²

The aim of this essay is to analyze some of these creative tensions in a poem by Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645), “Roma antigua y moderna,” part of his collection of *silvas*, a poetic form based on the model of Statius. In 1617, Quevedo travelled to Rome on a diplomatic mission to the Vatican, and it has usually been thought that after this

¹On the metaphorical reading of texts as buildings and monuments, and its links with the idea of memory in the Renaissance, see Bolzoni, 198–203.

²On this paradox and its relationship with the concepts of memory and identity, see Lavin.

experience he wrote his *silva* and the sonnet “A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas.”³ In these texts, however, the visit to Rome is first of all a literary journey. Quevedo establishes at once a complex dialogue with two different pasts, European humanism and the classical tradition, particularly through the imitation of Joachim Du Bellay’s *Antiquitez de Rome* and *Poemata*, which were published in 1558 after the author had lived in Rome (1553–57) when working for his cousin, Cardinal Jean Du Bellay. Quevedo was therefore able to enact an archeology of memory while producing a Baroque reading of the Renaissance.

2. ROME: THE ARCHIVE OF MEMORY

When Tomaso Garzoni in his *Piazza universale* (1585) defines memory as “a large wardrobe full of everything that we learn,” he produces a synthesis of the long tradition behind what the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* labels as the “art of memory.”⁴ Memory played a crucial role among the five parts of classical rhetoric — *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, and *actio* — and a good orator had to develop this skill in order to present a convincing speech. Memory was considered a human attribute (*memoria naturalis*), but one that had to be enhanced by special mnemonic practices that depend on order and analogy (*memoria artificialis*). The speaker must associate the ideas he wants to retain with images of things or places that have some similarity between them, picturing them in a particular spatial disposition.⁵ Behind this mnemonic practice there was also a specific philosophical conception of

³Jauralde Pou, 1998, 349–50. See also Álvarez Hernández.

⁴Garzoni, 1:634 (*Piazza universale*, discorso 60, “De’ professori di memoria”): “uno armario di tutto quello che impariamo”; Cicero, 1968, 204–07 (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 3.28): “artificium memoriae.” On the art of memory, see Yates; Rossi; Carruthers. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. Occasionally I have introduced some changes in the translations that I have used.

⁵Cicero, 1968, 208–09 (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 3.29): “The artificial memory includes backgrounds and images”; Cicero, 1967–68, 1:466–67 (*De oratore*, 2.354): “with the result that the arrangement of the localities will preserve the order of the facts.” There are important sections on the art of memory in Cicero, 1968, 204–25 (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, 3.28–40); Cicero, 1967–68, 1:464–73 (*De Oratore*, 2.351–60); Quintilian, 5:59–85 (*Institutio oratoria*, 11.2). See also Yates, 1–26. Aristotle, 41 (*De memoria et reminiscencia*, 452a), also stresses the importance of order in the act of remembering: “Those [things] that have some sort of order are easily remembered.”

the soul and the intellect that originated in Greek philosophy.⁶ Both Plato and Aristotle regard memory as a distinguished human feature that, according to the latter, “belongs naturally only to those who also possess the faculty of deliberation.”⁷ Plato, however, holds a more transcendental view of the role of memory. For him the process of learning is a product of remembering, which connects the mind with the eternal and preexisting world of ideas.⁸ Through their memories, human beings are reminded of the divine essence that inhabits them.⁹

The Renaissance inherited these theories and used them as important tools for its projects of renovation. From the end of the fifteenth century onward, several mnemonic treatises were published and enjoyed great success.¹⁰ Their authors designed a method that not only improved the ability to remember, but that also helped to understand and organize human knowledge. By the second half of the sixteenth century, these works gradually expanded toward new encyclopedic and metaphysical meanings, being enriched by ideas derived from Platonism, Lullism, Hermetism, Kabbalism, alchemy, and magic, such as can be found in the writings on recollection by Giulio Camillo and Giordano Bruno. Memory was understood as a twofold device that allowed the individual to both discover the secrets of the world and to store them; it offered a universal key (*clavis universalis*) to access the divine masterplan.¹¹ This method of analysis relied on a crucial epistemological theory that was very prominent from the Middle Ages until the seventeenth century, and according to which all existing elements are connected, with each and every single particle (*microcosm*) reflecting the whole (*macrocosm*). The universe is like a map, a book that has been written by God with a secret language that ties all the different paragraphs through hidden analogies that are

⁶See Yates, 27–49; Rossi, 7–11; Carruthers, 18–55.

⁷Aristotle, 49 (*De memoria et reminiscencia*, 453a).

⁸Plato, 62–65, 70 (*Phaedo*, 72e–73b; 76a).

⁹Garzoni, 1:634: “It is noteworthy that, among the internal senses that belong to man, memory is the most extraordinary and superior, and the treasurer and the guardian of them all. This is why Cicero said that it was an explicit proof of the immortality of the soul and of the divinity of man.” See also Quintilian, 5:60–63 (*Institutio oratoria*, 11.2.7).

¹⁰Among the most popular ones are Peter of Ravenna, *Phoenix, sive artificiosa memoria* (1491); Johannes Romberch, *Congestiorum artificiose memorie* (1520); and Cosmas Rossellius, *Thesaurus artificiosae memoriae* (1579). See Yates, 105–28.

¹¹See Yates, 160–319; Rossi, 41–134; Bolzoni, xviii, who offers a wide-ranging analysis of the uses and meanings of memory in the Renaissance.

waiting to be discovered.¹² Memory was the tool, and also the metaphor, employed in this process of learning, since this was mainly understood as an act of discovering what is already there, remembering what connects us with eternity.

The links between these ideas and Platonism are obvious, and are crucial to understanding the meaning behind the encyclopedic exploration of knowledge undertaken by humanism. The study of the classical past must be set in the larger context of the uses of memory as the master key to access true knowledge. Archeological and philological research made it possible to reestablish the lost connection with the classical heritage, filling what humanists felt as a gap left behind by the Middle Ages. The analysis of corrupted manuscripts went hand-in-hand with the study of ancient ruins, and one of the privileged centers for this activity was Rome. Several fifteenth- and sixteenth-century authors composed guides that describe the ruins of the city.¹³ Parallel to this, we must consider the development of the poetry about ruins, written both in Latin and vernacular languages, that gained relevance in Europe from the fifteenth century onward and that made Rome one of its favorite subjects.¹⁴ Despite the frequent references to the greatness of the past that had been lost with the passage of time, the humanists looked back with excitement at the unlimited possibilities of recreation offered by these ruins. Rome can be regarded as one of the imagined spaces of memory described by the Latin rhetoricians, where every monument stands for an ideal.¹⁵ Temples, statues, and theaters can be analogically linked with concepts such as religion, art, and political power. On the other hand, in Platonic terms, the ancient stones are also like the bones of a dead body that once belonged to a remarkable creature, and through which it is still possible to have a dialogue with its soul. This conversation will enact a transformation that moves in several directions at the same time: antiquity will be reincarnated in a modern world, to which it will help give new shape. The lost buildings cannot be reassembled as they

¹²On the metaphor of the universe as a book and God as its author, see Curtius, 319–26.

¹³As studied by Burckhardt, 108–14; Weiss, 59–104; Grafton, 31–61; McGowan, 129–86.

¹⁴On the poetry of ruins, see Mortier; Fucilla; Hall; Orozco Díaz; Lara Garrido, 1980 and 1999; López Bueno; Wardropper; Ferri Coll; Talavera Estesos; Ruiz Sánchez; Martos Pérez.

¹⁵For example, among the ideal spaces of memory suggested by Quintilian, 68–69 (*Institutio oratoria*, 11.2.21), are listed the rooms of a house or public buildings. See Carruthers, 89–98.

once were, but this is not entirely negative, since it leaves space for creativity and regeneration.¹⁶

Architecture and literature are born from archeology and philology, which are used as twin metaphors in the texts on Rome written by Du Bellay and Quevedo. They embody the creative power of recollection, since, thanks to this previous research on the past, a new product can come to light through a creative process of imitation. Both Du Bellay and Quevedo base their compositions on the rewriting of Latin literature, using Rome as a symbolic synthesis of the achievements of the classical tradition. Memory is therefore employed in several complementary directions. First, it represents the recovery of ancient history, art, and poetry through imitation. This stimulates the production of new texts that aim to reestablish the dialogue with the classical world. Ruins are both a sign of decadence and of the power of art to preserve itself from corruption and to connect humankind with the timeless world of ideas. The city described by Du Bellay and Quevedo is as much a historical artifact as a metaphysical one. Rome is a metaphor for knowledge, which is both an endless archive of memory and a space for creativity. On the other hand, the ruins of Rome are also a metaphor for the Renaissance and the urgency it had for reconnecting with the intellectual enterprise started in Greece. The study of Quevedo's imitation of the *Antiquitez* uses these concepts of memory as a theoretical background to analyze the mechanism on which the transmission of culture is based, and also to emphasize the leading role that art and literature had in this process during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This research will also look at the literary technique involved in the reworking and transformation of previous models from the Renaissance to the Baroque period, pointing out some of its continuities as well as its divergences. Both Du Bellay and Quevedo awake their readers' intellectual memory, and through their poems they reorder the crumbled walls of Rome while founding their own cities, built on references to classical authors and new metaphors.

¹⁶I do not completely share thus the views of authors such as Greene, 8, who, basing some of his arguments on Bloom's anxiety of influence, sees the humanists as melancholic personalities anguishing in their "knowledge of loss." The statement by Bloom, 96, that "A poem is a poet's melancholy at his lack of priority" does not completely describe the attitude of Renaissance and Baroque authors towards the models of the past. Admiration for them gives place to the desire to imitate, and this is better conceived as a creative impulse rather than as a negative desire to compete with some kind of paternal figure. A more positive interpretation of the regenerating and innovative use of the classical past can be found in Grafton. For a revision of the concept of imitation in the Spanish Golden Age, see Schwartz, 5–20.

3. DU BELLAY AND QUEVEDO: FROM SONNET TO *SILVA*

Joachim Du Bellay's *Antiquitez de Rome* enacts a mechanism of memory-through-imitation that summarizes some of the most relevant drives behind the humanistic enterprise. The ruins of Rome are recovered together with the Latin lyrical tradition that praised the city's greatness, using the past to create new texts in a never-ending process that goes from death to rebirth. Plato thought that "all living men and all living things are born from the dead," and the authors of the Renaissance held similar views regarding their relationship with antiquity.¹⁷ The language, art, and literature of Greece and Rome were not to be completely recovered, but this space between past and present gave shape to modernity. In his *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise* (1549) Du Bellay explains that generation is an endless circle where the old decays and gives birth to the new, "the end and corruption of the one being the beginning and generation of the other."¹⁸ Therefore the final result can never be the same as the initial product.¹⁹

There is no way back: ruins are meant to remain such. Du Bellay states this very clearly in his *Antiquitez*: "Rome is no more."²⁰ But, while doing so, he also evokes the immortal literary tradition of Virgil and the *Aeneid*, devoted to the founder of Rome: "Troy is no more," which is echoed also in the *Poemata*, "Rome is no more."²¹ In order to write the epitaph of the city, Du Bellay brings its poets back to life, turning almost into one of them by imitating them both in French (the *Antiquitez*) and in Latin (the *Poemata*), for the emulation of an author of the past leads to an irreversible transformation, "as it were, to transform himself into him."²² Du Bellay discovered another persona and his writing changed after having assimilated these ancient voices. In *Les Regrets* (1558), also composed during his Roman period, he acknowledges this mutation to his friend Denisot: "Your Du Bellay is no more."²³ Destruction and defacement have given place to

¹⁷Plato, 60 (*Phaedo*, 71d).

¹⁸Du Bellay, 1939, 44; Du Bellay, 2003, 35: "etant la fin, & Corruption de l'un, le commencement, & generation de l'autre."

¹⁹According to Du Bellay, 2003, 43 (*Deffence*), something similar happens with languages once they have evolved, given birth to other languages, and have ceased to be used. On the creative process of reconstruction behind the *Antiquitez*, see McGowan, 187–219.

²⁰Du Bellay, 2006, 252; Du Bellay, 1910a, 8 (*Antiquitez*, 5.5): "Rome n'est plus."

²¹Virgil, 1:338–39 (*Aeneid*, 2.325): "fuit Ilium"; Du Bellay, 1984, 43, 49 (*Elegiae*, 2.114, 3.62): "Roma fuit."

²²Du Bellay, 1939, 39; Du Bellay, 2003, 32: "quasi comme se transformer en luy."

²³Du Bellay, 1910b, 68 (*Les Regrets*, 21.2): "Ton Dubellay n'est plus."

innovation and rebirth, and, despite his final return to France, Rome will endure in his poetry: "I am still a Roman."²⁴

Quevedo was writing at the end of the Renaissance and, although his education and his aesthetic and philosophic ideals coincide in many respects with those of Du Bellay, he is a seventeenth-century author and his imitations of the *Antiquitez* carry the signs of a different age. His poems on Rome use Du Bellay as a literary source and also as an intermediary by which to access other classical authors, confirming that the uniting of the Greco-Roman tradition and European humanism was still regarded as an ongoing project. But on the other hand, Quevedo's reading of these previous texts shows some characteristic features of how the Baroque reinterpreted the Renaissance. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the idea that through a deep analysis of the analogies between the different elements of the universe it was possible to decipher the divine code that kept the world together was increasingly called into question. The rediscovery of skepticism challenged this epistemological utopia, and produced a gradual waning of the principle of analogy.²⁵ As Foucault puts it, things (*res*) were no longer ontologically connected to words (*verba*): while the combinatory art of analogy was still in place, its practice did not discover any new universal meanings, but rather a proliferation of conceits. From the point of view of literature, this gave birth to Baroque conceptism, which is an aesthetic code based on the concentration of unexpected images derived from one original idea.²⁶ Divine knowledge had become unachievable, out of human reach, but language still offered a precious tool to create a parallel world where it was possible to develop the intellectual qualities of wit. Each word, each metaphor was expanded and questioned in a game of multiple perspectives. The Baroque did not offer new ideas, but rather multiple ways to look at ideas grounded in the humanistic tradition. Quevedo's poems on Rome follow several of the images used by the classical authors and Du Bellay, while stretching them and producing unexpected readings based on oxymoron and chains of metaphors. For example, in "Roma antigua y moderna" Quevedo claims that the "uneven ruins" of Rome "almost seem to have been / scattered about by Deucalion."²⁷

²⁴Ibid., 157 (130.12): "je suis encor' Romain."

²⁵Foucault studies this epistemological evolution. On the role of skepticism in the Spanish Baroque, see Robbins.

²⁶On conceptism, see Blanco, 1985, 1988, and 1992. For an introduction to the Hispanic Baroque, see Maravall; Flor.

²⁷Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:264 (*Obra poética*, 137.74, 89–90): "ruinas desiguales"; "que parece que fueron / por Deucalión tiradas." These lines seem to echo a passage from Du Bellay, 2004, 29 (second elegy of the *Poemata, Romae descriptio*, 18): "Scattered about on those plains, camps that the Romans once built."

Their former order has been lost, but it should not be forgotten that this is also a myth of regeneration.²⁸ Quevedo embraces the Renaissance ideal of artistic renewal through imitation, but at the same time emphasizes the Baroque proliferation of conceits. His texts are born from the humanistic tradition, but they also produce a new stream of images that are self-sufficient, much like the human beings born from Deucalion's stones. The intertextual relationship between Du Bellay and Quevedo shows continuity as well as deviation, summarizing to a certain extent the aesthetic shift experienced in the passage from the Renaissance to the Baroque.

The Roman dialogue between Quevedo and the *Antiquitez* probably begins in a poem that occupies a privileged position in the *Parnaso español* (1648), the posthumous edition of Quevedo's poetry organized in different sections named after the Nine Muses.²⁹ The first section, "Clío," is devoted to poems of circumstance, such as eulogies and epitaphs, and begins with two sonnets in which Quevedo describes the bronze statue of Philip III that today occupies the center of the Plaza Mayor in Madrid. Tributes to the art, power, and memory of the dead king open the volume, followed by a third sonnet, "A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas," which is a direct imitation of the third sonnet of Du Bellay's *Antiquitez*.³⁰

Buscas en Roma a Roma, ¡oh, peregrino!,
y en Roma misma a Roma no la hallas:
cadáver son las que ostentó murallas,
y tumba de sí proprio el Aventino.

Yace donde reinaba el Palatino;
y limadas del tiempo, las medallas
más se muestran destrozado a las batallas
de las edades que blasón latino.

Nouveau venu, qui cherches Rome en Rome
Et rien de Rome en Rome n'apperçois,
Ces vieux palais, ces vieux arcz que tu vois,
Et ces vieux murs, c'est ce que Rome on nomme.

Voy quel orgueil, quelle ruine: & comme
Celle qui mist le monde sous ses loix,
Pour donter tout, se donta quelquefois,
Et devint proye au temps, qui tout consomme.

²⁸Deucalion and Pyrrha were the only survivors of a flood sent by the gods to punish humanity, and from the stones that they threw behind them a new breed of men and women was created. On this myth, see Conti, 1567, 259^v–61^r (*Mythologiae*, 8.17); Ovid, 1984, 1:24–31 (*Metamorphoses*, 1.313–415).

²⁹On the relationship between Quevedo and Du Bellay, see Cuervo; Lida, 370–71; Ramalho; Wardropper, 300–02; Álvarez Hernández; Ferri Coll, 113–22.

³⁰It is well known that Quevedo considered Philip III an unworthy king who had let Spain fall into decadence. It is possible that there is an implicit comparison between his crumbling empire and Rome, and that this sonnet and the *silva* on Rome are an invitation to Philip IV and his *valido* Olivares to regenerate Spain's past greatness, as occurs in the *Epístola satírica y censoria*: see Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:294–301 (*Obra poética*, 146). The political implications of these texts deserve further research.

Sólo el Tibre quedó, cuya corriente,
si ciudad la regó, ya, sepultura,
la llora con funesto son doliente.

¡Oh, Roma!, en tu grandeza, en tu hermosura,
huyó lo que era firme, y solamente
lo fugitivo permanece y dura.³¹

[You search in Rome for Rome, oh pilgrim!,
and in Rome itself you don't find Rome:
a corpse is the walls which it once displayed,
and a tomb for itself the Aventine.

The Palatine lies where it used to reign;
and the medallions, worn away by time,
reveal themselves to be more the victims
of the ages' battles than the glory of Latium.

Only the Tiber has remained, whose current,
if it once watered it as a city, now weeps
over it as a tomb with funereal sound.

Oh Rome! in your grandeur, in your beauty,
that which was firm has fled, and only
what is fugitive remains and endures.]³²

Rome de Rome est le seul monument,
Et Rome Rome a vaincu seulement.
Le Tybre seul, qui vers la mer s'enfuit,

Reste de Rome. O mondaine inconstance!
Ce qui est ferme, est par le temps destruit,
Et ce qui fuit, au temps fait resistance.³³

[Newcomer, you who seek Rome in Rome
And find nothing of Rome in Rome,
These old palaces, these old arches that you see,
And these old walls, this is what they call Rome.

See what pride, what ruin, and how
She who brought the world under her laws,
In vanquishing all, at last vanquished herself
And became the prey of time, which devours all.

Rome is the only monument to Rome,
And only Rome conquered Rome.
Only the Tiber, which flees toward the sea,

Remains of Rome. O worldly inconstancy!
Whatever stands firm is destroyed by time.
And whatever flees resists time.]³⁴

Both sonnets have as a common model an epigram by the Italian poet Janus Vitalis, "Roma prisca," first published in his book *Sacrosanctae Romanae Ecclesiae elogium* (1553) and later reprinted in several anthologies of Neo-Latin poetry during the sixteenth and seventeenth century:

Qui Romam in media quaeris novus advena Roma,
Et Romae in Roma nil reperis media;
Adspice murorum moles, praeruptaque saxa,
Obrutaque horrenti vasta theatra situ.
Haec sunt Roma: viden velut ipsa cadavera tantae
Urbis adhuc spirent imperiosa minas?
Nunc victa in Roma victrix Roma illa sepulta est;
Atque eadem victrix victaque Roma fuit.
Albula romani restat nunc nominis index,
Qui quoque nunc rapidis fertur in aequor aquis.

³¹Ibid., 1:418 (*Obra poética*, 213).

³²Rivers, 278.

³³Du Bellay, 1910a, 5–6 (*Antiquitez*, 3).

³⁴Du Bellay, 2006, 251 (*Antiquitez*, 3).

Disce hinc quid possit Fortuna: immota labascunt,
 Et quae perpetuo sunt agitata manent.”³⁵
 [Newcomer, you who in the midst of Rome seek Rome,
 And scarcely find Rome in Rome’s midst,
 Behold the masses of walls, and rough stones,
 And vast theatres overgrown with bristling decay.
 These are Rome. Do you see how the very corpse of so great
 A city still imperiously breathes threats?
 That unconquered Rome is now buried in conquered Rome,
 And yet, the same Rome was both conqueror and conquered.
 Albula remained as a mark of the Roman name;
 Yea, there he flees with swift waters never to return.
 Learn from this what Fortune can do: the immovable totters,
 And what is ceaselessly moved, remains.]³⁶

It is very likely that Quevedo also knew Vitalis’s epigram.³⁷ Note, for example, the coincidences in the use of some terms that are missing in Du Bellay’s sonnet: *corpse* (“cadáver,” “cadavera”) and *walls* (“murallas,” “murorum”). Nevertheless, the same might be argued in relation to the French sonnet — *tomb* (“tumba,” “monument”), *time* (“tiempo,” “temps”), *Tiber* (“Tibre,” “Tybre”), *what is fugitive* (“lo fugitivo,” “ce qui fuit”) — and even to other sonnets of the *Antiquitez*: “the greatness of Rome”;³⁸ “what injurious time has gnawed away”;³⁹ or texts of the *Poemata*, particularly the second elegy, *Romae descriptio*, “Time like a rodent”;⁴⁰ “Even great Rome, in

³⁵Ghero, 1608, 2:1433. This poem became very well known and was imitated by several authors during the Renaissance, as documented by Ramalho; Mortier, 46–59; Skyrme; Ferri Coll, 25–29; Tucker, 1985; Tucker, 1990, 105–73. The poem was still popular in the seventeenth century, since Janus Gruterus decided to open the section devoted to Vitalis of his *Delitiae CC. italarum poetarum* with this epigram, included here under the title of *De Roma* (cited as Ghero, 1608). I quote from this edition, which has some variants and omits two lines from the first version, since it is more likely that Quevedo knew this text rather than the 1553 *Elogia*.

³⁶Tucker, 1990, 256.

³⁷The 1553 version of Vitalis’s epigram has two extra lines (7–8) that have disappeared in some of the following editions: “After conquering the world, she tried to conquer herself; she did, / So that nothing in the world should be unconquered by her.” See Tucker, 1990, 256. Ramalho, 313, argues that Quevedo’s failure to include this image in his sonnet (whereas Du Bellay does include it) proves that Quevedo was imitating also Vitalis rather than exclusively Du Bellay.

³⁸Du Bellay, 1910a, 24 (26.1): “la Romaine grandeur.” Cf. Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:418: “tu grandeza.”

³⁹Du Bellay, 1910a, 25 (27.6): “qu’a rongé le temps injurieux.” Cf. Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:418: “limadas del tiempo.”

⁴⁰Du Bellay, 1984, 43 (129): “tempus edax.”

her death, now is a tomb of her own";⁴¹ and the first tumulus, *Romae ueteris*, "Is now in death covered up by seven burial-mounds"⁴² that remind us of the title of the Spanish poem and of his fourth line: "buried in her ruins," and "a tomb for itself."⁴³ At the same time, Quevedo seems to be drawing also from other Neo-Latin poets who wrote poems about ruins.⁴⁴ In particular, there is the figure of the pilgrim that the Hungarian author Ianus Pannonius uses in poem that personifies Rome, who then addresses her visitors, "Roma ad hospites": "Whether fickle ambition or some unremitting law suit takes you here, / Or a holy love of pilgrimage."⁴⁵ Vitalis and Du Bellay only specify that the addressee of their poems was a "newcomer"; Quevedo introduces the religious motive that will be crucial in his "Roma antigua y moderna," where the opposition between past and present is expressed through the duality of pagan and Catholic Rome. The newcomer's first goal has become to visit the capital of Christianity.⁴⁶ But there is also another innovation in his sonnet that departs from his main sources: Quevedo mentions two of the seven Roman hills, the Aventine and the Palatine. The first is said by Livy to have received this name from one of the kings of Alba Longa who was buried there, and this adds a new conceit to the line, "a tomb for itself the Aventine."⁴⁷ The

⁴¹Ibid. (130): "ipsaque nunc tumulus mortua Roma sui est."

⁴²Ibid., 169 (14): "Mortua nunc septem contegitur tumulis." See Tucker, 1990, 258.

⁴³Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:418 (*Obra poética*, 213): "sepultada en sus ruinas," "tumba de sí propio." The image of the tomb runs repeatedly through the *Antiquitez*, as studied by MacPhail; Tucker, 1990, 100–01, 130, 134–35.

⁴⁴Several Neo-Latin texts share images with "A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas." See, for example, Arnaldi, Gualdo Rosa, and Monti Sabia, 192 (Cristoforo Landino, *De Roma fere diruta [Xandra, 2.30]*): "Time devours all"; *ibid.*, 4: "now you lie under a large mass of ruins"; Ghero, 1608, 1:475 (Lazaro Buonamici, *De Roma*, adaptation of Castiglione's "Superbi colli, et voi sacre ruine"): "voracious time"; *ibid.*, 261 (Nicolas Audebert, *In parentis sui Romam*): "Ancient Rome is now almost buried under her ruins."

⁴⁵Tucker, 1990, 257 (*Opera*, 58^v): "Seu levis ambitio, seu lis te huc improba ducit, / Seu peregrinandi religiosus amor."

⁴⁶The *Diccionario de Autoridades* (1726–39), s.v. "peregrino," gives a broad definition of the term together with a religious one: "it is used to refer to those who travel to foreign lands or who are away from their homeland. . . . It also refers to those who visit a sanctuary because of their devotion or to fulfil a vow." Covarrubias, s.v. "peregrino," offers only the latter in his *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611): "He who leaves his homeland to undertake a pilgrimage to visit a house of God or a holy place." Despite its various meanings, the word *peregrino* in relation to Rome in Quevedo's sonnet has unambiguous religious implications. Also, in Luis Martín de la Plaza's "A Roma," an adaptation of Du Bellay's sonnet, it can be found as the reference to the pilgrim in the first line: "Pilgrim, who in the middle of Rome, look for her in vain": see Lara Garrido, 1980, 388.

⁴⁷Livy, 1:16–17 (*Ab urbe condita*, 1.3): "Aventinus . . . was buried on that hill, which is now a part of the city of Rome, and gave his name to the hill."

hill was the tomb of Aventine — the king — and today is once more the tomb of Aventine — the ancient city. Quevedo has taken a widely used image in the poetry of ruins, Rome buried in itself, and has regenerated it by returning to the original Latin sources where the story of the hill is told.

A similar conceptual game applies to the other hill cited in the poem, “The Palatine lies where it used to reign.” The Palatine was the hill of the so-called palaces, the designated residence of kings and emperors, and therefore one of the richest areas of the city.⁴⁸ The former center of power has collapsed to its own feet, showing the usual turns of Fortune’s wheel. The Palatine is also the legendary place where the city was founded by Romulus and where his house once stood. In this sense, the reference to the Aventine and the Palatine goes back to the mythic story of Rome and to the fratricide that was its origin. Livy gives account of the contention between the twins, Romulus and Remus, to establish who would become king. It was agreed that this conflict over power be solved by consulting the auspices of the gods. In order to receive them, Romulus chose to stand on the Palatine and Remus on the Aventine.⁴⁹ The fight that followed led to the killing of Remus, and this murder was traditionally regarded as the beginning of Rome’s decadence: the city was doomed from the start.⁵⁰ The Aventine and the Palatine thus symbolize both the beginning and the end of Roman glory.

Together with the two hills, there is a third foundational myth deconstructed by Quevedo, that of the Tiber. The “Tiber’s lovely stream” was one of the first things that Aeneas saw when he arrived on the shores of Latium, running through a forest like an omen of prosperity.⁵¹ Once he reached land, Aeneas had a vision in a dream where the Tiber appeared to him, giving advice and predicting his future victories. On the other hand, the Tiber is said to have been responsible for saving the newborn Romulus and

⁴⁸Fauno, 65^v: “Since the foundation of Rome this has been . . . the site where the rooms of the kings and of the emperors was set”; Gamucci, 56: “this has always been the residence of the kings and of the emperors of the world.”

⁴⁹Livy, 1:24 (*Ab urbe condita*, 1.6): “Palatium Romulus, Remus Auentinum.” Virgilio Malvezzi used this passage in his *Il Romulo* (1629), a work that Quevedo translated into Spanish in 1631: see Quevedo, 1993, 61: “Remo sobre el monte Aventino, Rómulo sobre el Palatino.”

⁵⁰For example, see Horace, 2004, 290–91 (*Epodes*, 7.17–20): “That’s it: a cruel fate and the crime / Of a brother’s murderer have driven the Romans on, / Ever since the innocent Remus’ blood was spilt on the ground, / blood that has brought a curse on his descendants.” This idea is also present in Du Bellay, 2006, 256 (*Antiquitez*, 10.13): “that rage between brothers”; *ibid.*, 271 (24.9): “your cruel destiny”; *ibid.* (24.13): “your walls, bloodied by a brother’s hand.” This original sin has been compared to the killing of Abel by Cain, or to the Theban brothers Eteocles and Polyneices: Tucker, 1990, 181–83.

⁵¹Virgil, 2:4–5 (*Aeneid*, 7.30): “fluvio Tiberinus amoeno.”

Remus when they were condemned to be thrown in the river by Amulius. The Tiber overflowed, depositing the two infants in a puddle nearby, and afterwards they were found by the wolf who fed them.⁵² Vitalis and Du Bellay mention the Tiber, and Du Bellay goes even further, devoting the third elegy of the *Poemata* to the river. The traditional struggle between nature and art has been won by the first, thanks to the effects of time. Art has been ruined, but the water still flows bearing the memory of Rome.⁵³ Once more Quevedo shifts the original content of his models by creating yet another conceit: the flowing water represents life and the passage of time, as in Vitalis and Du Bellay, but it is also transformed into the tears of the city crying for its own death.⁵⁴ Every image employed by the Spanish poet incorporates its own contradiction, producing a chain of oxymoronic meanings where past and present, life and death are inextricably bound together.

The analysis of “A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas” is the first step to fully understanding the relationship between the *Antiquitez* and “Roma antigua y moderna.” The sonnet offers a summary of the most relevant themes and devices present in the *silva*. Through his reading of Du Bellay, Quevedo manages to travel back in time, regenerating literary memory. The Spanish author first identifies the models used by the French and then returns to them. Du Bellay leads to Vitalis, and both are used as a road to reach the myths of Rome and its classical authors. Quevedo holds the *Antiquitez* against the light to see through its sources and rewrite them in his own texts, producing an archeological reading that culminates in the *silva* to “Roma antigua y moderna.”

4. THE ARCHEOLOGY OF MEMORY: QUEVEDO AND HIS ROMAN *SILVA*

Quevedo’s collection of *silvas* stands at the center of the European humanistic tradition. In these texts Quevedo engages in a series of imitations of classical and modern authors ranging from Statius and Virgil to Petrarch, Marino, and the poets of La Pléiade, particularly Rémy Belleau and Joachim Du Bellay. The *silva* was a flexible and innovative genre that allowed him to establish himself as the direct successor to Statius and

⁵²Livy, 1:18–21 (*Ab urbe condita*, 1.4).

⁵³Ghero, 1608, 2:1433: “Albula remained as a mark of the Roman name”; Du Bellay, 1910a, 5–6 (*Antiquitez*, 3): “Only the Tiber . . . [r]emains of Rome.” *Albula* is an ancient name of the Tiber, as at Livy, 1:14–15 (*Ab urbe condita*, 1.3): “the river Albula, which men now call the Tiber.” See also Virgil, 2:82–83 (*Aeneid*, 8.330–32).

⁵⁴Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:418: “weeps / Over it as a tomb with funeral sound.” On the metaphorical use of the river Tiber in both Vitalis and Du Bellay, see Tucker, 1990, 157–73.

Poliziano.⁵⁵ In one of his annotations to his Latin copy of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Quevedo links the *silva* with the *oratio pedestris*, outlining some of his ideas on this poetic mode: "*Oratio pedestris* is that which runs free as it pleases, and that is why it loses its solemnity. Of this kind is that which I was the first to introduce in Spain under the name of *silva*."⁵⁶ The *silva* is a free form (*corre libre*) that easily lends itself to expansion into an unlimited combination of lines — of seven and eleven syllables — without the need for fixed rhymes or stanzas. It is an open genre that welcomes intertextual dialogue with other authors, and Quevedo states that he has been the first to attempt to compose in Spanish a coherent group of poems under the label of *silvas*. In his "Roma antigua y moderna" the rewriting of previous models has Du Bellay and his *Antiquitez de Rome* as a central interlocutor.⁵⁷

Quevedo's *silva* starts out, surprisingly, as a sonnet. The first fourteen lines of his composition are an imitation of sonnet 18 of the *Antiquitez*, particularly of its first and last stanza:

Esta que miras grande Roma agora,
huésped, fue yerba un tiempo, fue collado:
primero apacentó pobre ganado;
ya del mundo la ves reina y señora.

Ces grands monceaux pierreux, ces vieux murs
que tu vois,
Furent premierement le cloz d'un lieu champestre:
Et ces braves palais, dont le temps s'est fait maistre,
Cassines de pasteurs ont esté quelquefois.

⁵⁵On Quevedo's *silvas* and his models, see Asensio; Cacho Casal; Candelas Colodrón, 1995 and 1997; Crosby and Schwartz Lerner; Jauralde Pou, 1991; Kallendorf and Kallendorf. Scholars have not yet reached a consensus on the total number of texts that can be counted as part of this collection: Rey has studied this question, and considers twenty-eight poems as the definitive corpus of *silvas*. The most comprehensive anthology of his *silvas* can be found in the second part of Quevedo's *Parnaso español, Las tres musas últimas castellanas* (1670), in the section of its eighth Muse, "Calíope."

⁵⁶López Grigera, 122: "Orazion pedestre / Es la que corre libre como quiere i Por esso pierde grauedad deste Jenero es la que io use primero con Nombre que io la puse de silva en española." Quevedo seems to echo the poetics of improvisation and humble style mentioned several times by Statius in the dedicatory letters to his *Silvae*, which he describes as "trifling items" produced by a sudden inspiration: "these little pieces, which streamed from my pen in the heat of the moment . . . they have lost their only commendation, that of celerity." Similar opinions on the *silva* can be found in Quintilian, 4:344–45 (10.3.17); and in Poliziano, 68–69 (dedicatory letter to *Manto*): "to publish an unpolished, uncorrected poem." The openness of the *silva* is also emphasized by Poliziano in the prefatory text to *Ambra*, where he is unable to give a straightforward definition of it as a genre (101): "Therefore, I dedicate this little poem to you, whatever it is."

⁵⁷For a general introduction to "Roma antigua y moderna," see Quevedo, 1994, 193–222. The most comprehensive analysis of the literary sources of this poem is by Moreno Castillo.

Fueron en estos atrios Lamia y Flora
de unos admiración, de otros cuidado;
y la que pobre dios tuvo en el prado,
deidad preciosa en alto templo adora.

Jove tronó sobre desnuda peña,
donde se ven subir los chapiteles
a sacarle los rayos de la mano.

Lo que primero fue, rica, desdeña:
Senado rudo, que vistieron pieles,
da ley al mundo y peso al Oceano.⁵⁸

[Rome, which now appears to you in all
her greatness,
visitor, was once no more than bare fields
and a hill;
she was firstly used to feed humble cattle,
and now she has become queen and mistress
of the world.

In these atriums Lamia and Flora arose
admiration in some, and fear in others;
and her who had a humble god in the fields,
worships now a precious deity in a high
temple.

Jupiter cast his thunder over a bare rock,
where now one can see the capitals climbing
to steal the bolts out of his hand.

She has become rich and despises what she
once was
a rough senate, once dressed only with leather,
is now ruling the world and the ocean.]

Lors prindrent les bergers les ornemens des Roys,
Et le dur laboureur de fer arma sa dextre:
Puis l'annual pouvoir le plus grand se vid estre,
Et fut encor plus grand le pouvoir de six mois:

Qui, fait perpetuel, creut en telle puissance,
Que l'aigle Imperial de luy print sa naissance:
Mais le Ciel s'opposant à tel accroissement,

Mist ce pouvoir es mains du successeur de Pierre,
Qui sous nom de pasteur, fatal à ceste terre,
Monstre que tout retourne à son commencement.⁵⁹

[These great stony piles, these old walls
that you see,
At first enclosed country fields,
And these brave palaces, which time has
overthrown,
Were once the cottages of shepherds.

Then the shepherds assumed the ornaments of kings,
And the rough plowman armed his right hand with
steel.
Then the year-long power became greatest,
And still greater was the power of six months,

Which, made perpetual, grew to such strength
That from it the imperial eagle was born.
But heaven, opposing such increase,

Placed that power in the hands of the successor of Peter,
Who, under name of pastor, a name linked by fate to
that land,
Shows that everything returns to its beginning.]⁶⁰

Du Bellay contrasts the humble origins of Rome and its hills with the greatness achieved during the imperial age and its later decay. Nevertheless, the power of the city had been recovered in modern times due to the establishment of Rome as the see of the Catholic Church, which “placed that power in the hands of the successor of Peter.”⁶¹ This duality between pagan past and Christian present is also at the core of Quevedo’s *silva*, but he has delayed its appearance until the last lines of the poem (166–80), which have also been inspired by the same sonnet of the *Antiquitez*, “That which the

⁵⁸Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:262 (*Obra poética*, 137.1–14).

⁵⁹Du Bellay, 1910a, 18–19 (*Antiquitez*, 18).

⁶⁰Du Bellay, 2006, 265.

⁶¹However, the passage “fatal à ceste terre” is ambiguous and could also suggest that the pope is ruining Rome again. This is certainly the opinion in Du Bellay, 1910b (*Les Regrets*).

great heir of Peter commands.”⁶² Du Bellay’s line “everything returns to its beginning” applies to Quevedo both in a chronological sense, as a return to origins, and a literary one: the long *silva* concludes where it had started, with sonnet 18 of the *Antiquitez*. It is therefore possible to consider “Roma antigua y moderna” as an extensive amplification of Du Bellay’s text.

Quevedo connects “A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas” to the *silva* through the image of the hills. The Palatine is the protagonist of the first lines, although it is not mentioned explicitly. Both authors refer to the myth of the origin of Rome, linked with this hill where “Romulus founded the city on its top.”⁶³ Du Bellay imitates a series of classical poets who contrast the smallness of ancient Rome with the powerful imperial city, particularly Propertius’s elegy 4.1 where he describes the Palatine:

All that you see here, stranger, where mighty Rome now stands
 was grass and hill before the coming of Phrygian Aeneas;
 and where stands the Palatine consecrated to Apollo of the Ships,
 the cattle of exiled Evander there lay down.
 These golden temples have grown up for gods of clay,
 who deemed it no shame that their huts were crudely built.
 Tarpeian Jupiter thundered from a bare rock,
 and the Tiber, though foreign, was our forbears’ wall.⁶⁴

Despite this common source, the landscape described in the Spanish text differs notably from that of Du Bellay: his is a vision of ruins and decadence, “These great stony piles, these old walls,” whereas Quevedo emphasizes only “Rome in all her greatness.” The Latin poets and most modern European writers who composed poems about ruins saw different things in the duality between past and present. In the Roman authors, the idea of progress dominates, while in the modern authors, decline is

⁶²Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:266 (*Obra poética*, 137.177): “lo que el gran sucesor de Pedro ordena.”

⁶³Palladio, 88: “Romolo vi cominciò sopra la città.”

⁶⁴Propertius, 354–55 (*Elegiae*, 4.1.1–8): “Hoc, quodcumque vides, hospes, qua maxima Roma est, / ante Phrygem Aenean collis et herba fuit; / atque ubi Navali stant sacra Palatia Phoebos, / Euandri profugae concubuerunt boves. / Fictilibus crevere deis haec aurea templa, / nec fuit opprobrium facta sine arte casa; / Tarpeiusque pater nuda de rupe tonabat, / et Tiberis nostris advena bubus erat.” See Ruiz Sánchez, 351–54. For other classical sources, see Virgil 2:82–85 (*Aeneid*, 8.337–63), Tibullus, 270–79 (2.5), Ovid, 1989, 18–19, 84–85, 266–67 (*Fasti*, 1.243–48; 2.391–92; 5.93–94). Quevedo, 1916, 538 (*España defendida*), holds a less favorable opinion of the legends linked with the foundation of Rome, “Let us leave her antiquity and her origins to those legendary Romans, who do not deserve any credibility, but rather our contempt and mockery.”

emphasized.⁶⁵ Du Bellay follows the same pattern, but Quevedo departs from it by going back to the original Latin source. His sonnet is located in the same chronological frame as Propertius. The Spanish author speaks as an ancient Roman, and in this way the interpretation of the title becomes more problematic: which one is the *Roma Antigua*—that of Aeneas, that of Romulus, or that of the emperors? And which one is the *moderna*—Propertius's, Du Bellay's, or Quevedo's? Time and memory are fluid as the Tiber in the Spanish *silva*, and they flow in different directions at the same time.

In the first lines the point of view of the narrator is left in a secondary position to privilege the perspective of the *visitor* (“huésped,” “hospes”). The narrator functions as a guide who shows the newcomer the beauties of Rome, while at the same time leading the reader from Du Bellay to Propertius. But as stated by Quevedo, the *silva* is free to wander through different paths, and in the second stanza he departs from these two models. Quevedo's dialogue with the past is multidirectional. In the second stanza there is an obscure reference to Lamia and Flora that seems to be related to a sonnet by Francisco de Medrano (1570–1607) that is dedicated to the ruins of Italica, where these two mythical figures appear in the same lines as in the text by Quevedo: “In this circle, Flora and Lamia were / The flames and cause of admiration of the ignorant populace.”⁶⁶ In this case the Spanish authors are referring to primitive, obscene pagan rites devoted to minor divinities, such as the Lupercalia or the Floralia, contrasting with modern Christian practices. The Lupercalia are described by Ovid as a pre-Roman celebration brought to Latium by the Arcadians of Evander (mentioned in line 28), people considered “rude and unsophisticated.”⁶⁷ The rites were held in the cave of the Lupercal on the Palatine and they honored the god Pan, the divinity of kettles and the woods, which might explain the reference in line 7, “her who had a humble god in the fields.”⁶⁸ Nevertheless, it is more likely that Quevedo was thinking of the Floralia, the games devoted to the goddess Flora.⁶⁹ There was a circus in the Quirinal where prostitutes used to meet to celebrate the floral festivities, which

⁶⁵According to Ruiz Sánchez, 374, the authors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries carried out an inversion of the Latin model.

⁶⁶Medrano, 95 (“Estos de pan llevar campos ahora,” 5–6); “En este cerco fueron Lamia y Flora / llama y admiración del vulgo vano.” Moreno Castillo, 509–10, states that Quevedo has taken these lines from Medrano, but he also thinks that they might have some unidentified common source.

⁶⁷Ovid, 1989, 78–79 (*Fasti*, 2.292): “rude uolgu erat”; *ibid.*, 76–91 (2.267–474).

⁶⁸Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:262 (*Obra poética*, 137.7): “la que pobre dios tuvo en el prado.” It could also be a reference to Silvanus, the Roman god of the woods mentioned by Propertius, 382–85 (4.4.1–6).

⁶⁹Cf. Ovid, 1989, 274–87 (*Fasti*, 5.183–378).

were highly sexual in nature: “greater wantonness.”⁷⁰ According to the legend, this was because Flora was in reality a very rich courtesan who bequeathed all her wealth to the citizens of Rome and demanded that part of this money be used to celebrate the anniversary of her birth. With time the infamous origins of Flora were forgotten and she was promoted to the rank of goddess of flowers.⁷¹ This could explain the reference to Lamia, which in the Greek tradition was the name given to several prostitutes but also to a mythological creature said to have been a beautiful woman who became Zeus’s lover. In revenge, Hera condemned her to lose all the children to whom she gave birth. Grief and the longing to have children transformed her into a monster that would eat babies in their cradles; according to Natale Conti, Lamia “was the first woman ever to be a prophet.”⁷² Her legend grew, and during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance her name was used to refer to witches, nymphs, monsters, and prostitutes. This might justify the link with Flora, who, together with Lamia and Thais, was often regarded as the most famous harlot of the classical period.⁷³ This could be the reason why Lamia and Flora are said by Quevedo to have caused “admiration” but also “fear,” due to their ambiguous nature as part divine, part monstrous.

The second half of the stanza refers to Jupiter’s temples, found in several hills of Rome. The most important, the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, was on the Capitoline. Once again Quevedo locates his discourse in a foundational Roman golden age, also evoked by Virgil,⁷⁴ and here he is probably echoing the words of Evander presenting to Aeneas the land that will become Rome:

“This grove,” he cries, “this hill with its leafy crown —
 though we know not what god it is — is yet a god’s home; my Arcadians
 believe they have looked on Jove himself, when, as often happens,
 his right hand has shaken the darkening aegis and summoned the storm clouds.”⁷⁵

⁷⁰Ibid., 284 (*Fasti*, 5.331): “lascivia maior.”

⁷¹The legend of Flora can be found in Fauno, 119^v; Palladio, 106; Mauro, 84; Gamucci, 133.

⁷²Conti, 2006, 2:638; Conti, 1567, 222^v (7.12): “& primam omnium mulierum fuisse vaticinatam.” See also Martelli.

⁷³A good example of this connection can be found in Guevara, 1:438 (*Epistolas familiares*, 1.63), where he refutes the opinion that these women might be saints, explaining that they were actually three famous prostitutes: “Lamia, Flora and Thais whom you, Sir, consider to be saints, were in fact the three most beautiful and famous prostitutes who were born in Asia and who lived in Europe; they were also those whom the writers wrote more about and for whom many princes fell.”

⁷⁴Virgil, 2:82 (*Aeneid*, 8.324–25).

⁷⁵Ibid., 2:84–85 (*Aeneid*, 8.351–54): “Hoc nemus, hunc” inquit “frondoso vertice collem / (quis deus incertum est) habitat deus; Arcades ipsum / credunt se vidisse Iovem, cum saepe nigrantem / aegida concuteret dextra nimbosque cieret.”

Jupiter has moved from the woods to a “high temple.” The simple rites of the Arcadians, the primitive inhabitants of Latium, are contrasted with the more sophisticated Roman temples. The allusion to the father of the gods is made more explicit in the third stanza, where the religious content of the text is developed further: “Jupiter cast his thunder over a bare rock” seems to be also echoing Virgil’s text (“Jove . . . has shaken”) by connecting it with Propertius: “Tarpeian Jupiter thundered from a bare rock.”⁷⁶ The “high temple” is amplified in the following lines, where the image of tall buildings is presented through a hyperbole with the “capitals” climbing up to the skies to steal the god’s lightning.⁷⁷ This is a clear allusion to human pride, symbolically linked with the biblical Tower of Babel and with the gigantomachy between the Titans and the Olympian gods. The comparison of growing Rome with a giant threatening Jupiter appears already in “To Jupiter,” a poem from the *Greek Anthology* (9.526), here quoted in the Latin translation by Fausto Sabeo:

Shut, o God, the strongest door of great Olympus:
guard, o Jupiter, the sacred heavenly heights.
The Roman spear has now subjugated both sea and land,
and there is nothing left but to climb the path to the stars.⁷⁸

Similar images are employed by several Latin and Neo-Latin poets, as well as by Du Bellay.⁷⁹ In the *Antiquitez* these ideas recur in different sonnets that could have influenced Quevedo — in particular, the reference to Rome conquering land and sea and threatening Jupiter — as in “This city, which

⁷⁶Propertius, 354–55 (4.1.7): “Tarpeiusque pater nuda de rupe tonabat.”

⁷⁷Perhaps Quevedo was recalling the third elegy in Du Bellay, 2004, 40 (*Poemata*, “Tyberis,” 67): “Lift up your eyes to the temples of our gods / standing aloft on sublime columns.” A similar image is used in the following lines of the *silva*, “you made the stars read in your arches” (64), and in this case the model might be the tumulus *Romae ueteris* of the *Poemata* (2) — “I, Rome, supported the stars on my lofty head”: Tucker, 1990, 258. See also Martial, 1:12–13 (*De Spectaculis*, 2.1): “Where the starry colossus sees the constellations at close range.”

⁷⁸Ghero, 1608, 2:556: “*Ad Iouem* / Claude, Deus, magni validissima limina Olympi; / Sacram arcem serua Iupiter aetheream. / Iam mare, iam tellus hastae est subiecta Quiritum; / Restat inaccessi caelis ad astra poli.”

⁷⁹Moreno Castillo, 510–11, notes its use in some classical authors; Tucker, 1990, 115–20, refers to the epigram of the *Greek Anthology* and its use by Ianus Pannonius and Du Bellay. Compare also with Arnaldi, Gualdo Rosa, and Monti Sabia, 192 (Cristoforo Landino, *De Roma fere diruta* [11]): “O Titus, why do you rise your amphitheatre up to the skies?”; Ghero, 1608, 1:475 (Lazaro Buonamici, *De Roma*): “triumphal arcs and colossi that reach for the sky”; *ibid.*, 262 (Nicolas Audebert, *In parentis sui Romam*): “Touching the heights of Jupiter’s kingdoms.”

was the work of a shepherd, / Raising herself little by little, grew to such height / That she became queen of earth and sea,” or the following lines:

Jupiter fearing that, if she grew still more,
The pride of the Giants would rise up again,
Crushed her under these hills, these seven hills which now
Entomb the greatness that threatened heaven.⁸⁰

Quevedo's line “is now ruling the world and the ocean” closes the sonnet with a circular reference to its first stanza, “now she has become queen and mistress of the world,” and both seem to be the result of a rewriting of Du Bellay's “That she became queen of earth and sea,” but they are also connected with the Latin and Neo-Latin tradition. Together with the Roman foundational poems, Du Bellay was also using another source to reinforce his negative vision of the decadence of Rome: Lucan's *Pharsalia*, especially its book 1, which laments the destruction left by the civil war between Pompey and Caesar.⁸¹ Lucan's darker approach to the destiny of Rome is more in line with the themes explored by the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authors who composed poetry about ruins. Once again, Quevedo returns to the ancient models through his imitation of the *Antiquitez*. The thread that links these passages is Lucan: “the imperial people / That possessed sea and land the whole world over.”⁸² The Neo-Latin texts are also part of this literary collage, such as the poem “Ad Vesp. Gonzagam” by Ippolito Capilupi: “Here the Capitoline hill and its summit lie in ruins on the ground, / Which once upon a time used to rule the world,” where “used to rule the world” seems to echo in Quevedo's “is now ruling.”⁸³ But the circle closes on itself, reverting once again to Du Bellay and his third sonnet, “Celle qui mist le monde sous ses loix.”⁸⁴ Quevedo did

⁸⁰Du Bellay, 2006, 267; Du Bellay, 1910a, 20 (*Antiquitez*, 20.9–11): “Ceste ville qui fut l'ouvrage d'un pasteur, / S'élevant peu à peu, creut en telle hauteur, / Que royne elle se vid de la terre & de l'onde”; Du Bellay, 2006, 251; Du Bellay, 1910a, 7 (*Antiquitez*, 4.5–8): “Juppiter ayant peur, si plus elle croissoit, / Que l'orgueil des Geans se relevast encore, / L'accabla sous ces monts, ces sept monts qui sont ore / Tumbeaux de la grandeur qui le ciel menassoit.” For similar passages, see Du Bellay, 1910a, 10, 14, 25, 39 (*Antiquitez*, 7.5–6, 12, 27.2; *Songe*, 14.5); Du Bellay, 1984, 43 (*Poemata*, *Elegiae*, 2 [*Romae descriptio*], 113–14).

⁸¹On the influence of Lucan on Du Bellay, see McMinn Chambers; Tucker, 1990, 148–57.

⁸²Lucan, 10–11 (1.109–10): “populique potentis / quae mare, quae terras, quae totum possidet orbem.”

⁸³Ghero, 1608, 1:661: “Ecce iacent aequata solo Capitolia et arces / Quae terris prisco tempore iura dabant.”

⁸⁴Du Bellay, 1910a, 5–6 (*Antiquitez*, 3).

not use this image in his “A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas”; however, it appears in its twin poem, the opening sonnet to the *silva* on Rome.⁸⁵

“Roma antigua y moderna” stretches from the *Antiquitez* into a complex rewriting of a vast number of classical and Renaissance texts. But despite this variety, the main ideological points contained in the first sonnet are few, and are repeated throughout the *silva*. The contrast between past humbleness and present glory is conveyed through a personification of the city that is implicitly compared to an arrogant woman ashamed of her modest roots: “She has become rich and despises what she once was.”⁸⁶ The two aspects of this evolution that are emphasized are political power and religion, the combination of which was considered essential for the progress of civilization.⁸⁷ The decay of Rome has therefore been both physical and moral: the ruins are not only representing the action of time, but also the degradation of a civilization responsible for its own downfall. Quevedo’s “rough senate, once dressed only with leather,” is yet another borrowing from Propertius — “housed a rustic company of fathers clad in skins” — but, more than this, it mourns the great values that supported Rome’s growth and that were lost to the excesses of prosperity. As summarized by Lucan, “Great things come crashing down upon themselves.”⁸⁸

The initial sonnet mirrors the structure of the whole poem, projecting onto the rest of the *silva* its main ideas and style.⁸⁹ The following lines insist on the opposition between simplicity and over-sophistication. Quevedo

⁸⁵The image is repeated towards the end of the *silva*: see Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:266 (*Obra poética*, 137.165): “You owned and ruled the world.”

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 1:262 (*Obra poética*, 137.12). This is a concept that *ibid.*, 1:208, (*Obra poética*, 52.14) develops in similar terms in another poem, “A la violenta y injusta prosperidad”: “She hides what she once was, but she shows what she misappropriates.” There are also several parallelisms between the images and ideology presented in the *silva* in Quevedo’s *Epístola satírica y censoria*: *ibid.*, 294–301 (*Obra poética*, 146).

⁸⁷Machiavelli, 123 (*Discorsi*, 1.11, *Della religione de’ romani*), stresses the fundamental role of religion: “religion was used to rule over the army, to encourage the populace, to keep men on a short leash, and to make the delinquents feel ashamed of themselves.”

⁸⁸Propertius, 384–85 (4.1.12): “pellitos habuit, rustica corda, patres”; Lucan, 8–9 (1.81): “In se magna ruunt.” Compare the sonnet “Ruina de Roma por consentir robos de los gobernadores de sus provincias” in Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:233 (*Obra poética*, 96.5–6): “O Rome, why have your great origins deserved / Such a dishonourable end?” Livy, 1:2–5 (introduction to *Ab urbe condita*, 4), bases his story of Rome on the same arguments: “and that proceeding from slender beginnings it has so increased as now to be burdened by its own magnitude.”

⁸⁹This applies also to the rhyme scheme. The Spanish *silva* does not need a fixed structure, as the sonnet does, but nevertheless Quevedo uses consonant rhymes throughout the poem.

highlights some of the foundational myths of Rome, such as the legend of Romulus and Remus. If the twin brothers were only present through allusions to the Palatine and the Aventine in “A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas,” here they are mentioned in an ambiguous light: “and they both proved to be fitting descendants of such / Milk, since one kills and the other steals.”⁹⁰ They are fitting sons of a wolf — “he would not believe that a she-wolf nurtured the blood from which he sprang”⁹¹ — as shown by their cruel actions, killing and stealing. Quevedo probably alludes to Livy, according to whom the twins used to steal money from thieves to give it to the shepherds, and, indeed, also to the fratricide perpetrated by Romulus.⁹² Rome was founded on violence, and this was a premonition of its final collapse.⁹³

The idea of stealing is transferred to religious practices imported from Troy, “Gods that were saved / From the Danaan fire by Trojan devotion.”⁹⁴ But despite its violence, the civilization promoted by the primitive Romans was based on solid values, the “poverty . . . mother of manhood” celebrated by Lucan.⁹⁵ Quevedo insists on their rustic integrity, “with simple rituals, / with rustic devotion”:

The woods were a temple, the rocks were altars,
the heart was the victim, the gods were sticks,
and a poor and humble fire in these lands was
the great kingdom of both brothers.⁹⁶

These lines are a rewriting of the initial sonnet, but they have also been implemented by classical models. Tibullus mentions the divinities brought

⁹⁰Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:262 (17–18): “y no desconocieron / la leche, si éste mata y aquél roba.”

⁹¹Propertius, 358–59 (4.1.38): “sanguinis altricem non pudet esse lupam.”

⁹²Livy, 1:18–21 (1.4).

⁹³Compare the negative opinion of the ancient Romans held by Quevedo, 1916, 538: “And, once its history has been scrutinized, one finds that its antiquity was crowded with delinquents.”

⁹⁴Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:262 (19–20): “Dioses que trujo hurtados / del dánao fuego la piedad troyana.”

⁹⁵Lucan, 14–15 (1.165–66): “fecunda virorum . . . paupertas.” This is also the case for Quevedo’s sonnet “Ruina de Roma por consentir robos de los gobernadores de sus provincias,” in Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:233 (*Obra poética*, 96.9–11): “After the sacred and pure Roman / Poverty disappeared, your crimes, / Your dishonour and your madness have reached the top.”

⁹⁶Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:262 (*Obra poética*, 137.22): “con fácil pompa, / en devoción villana”; *ibid.*, (23–26): “Fue templo el bosque, los peñascos aras, / víctima el corazón, los dioses varas, / y pobre y común fuego en estos llanos / los grandes reinos de los dos hermanos.”

from the fire of Troy — “He turned his eyes in sorrow on Troy and its gods ablaze. . . . Whose exiled barks carry the holy things of Troy” — and also the simple wooden statues of the primitive gods, “shaped from wood,” which seem to have been remembered by Quevedo in “the gods were sticks.”⁹⁷ This passage constitutes an idyllic vision of ancient Rome described in a sort of *Beatus ille* context that opens up to another paradox: the “poor and humble fire” is the foundation on which “great kingdoms” were built. The simple religious practices go hand-in-hand with flourishing political power. But the fire mentioned here is in itself a contradictory image, since it also reminds us of the destruction of Troy while anticipating other fires, those that will burn the mortal remains of kings and emperors — “Fire scrutinized its monarchies”⁹⁸ — and will consume the walls of the city: “consumed by fire.”⁹⁹ Quevedo’s imitative technique follows the same pattern as the poem’s chronological structure, moving backward and forward from one age to another.

The next section of the *silva* is devoted to the growing political power of Rome, represented through the fluid movement of another element, water. The Tiber, which plays a relevant part in “A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas,” here occupies a long section of the poem (27–77). The river has run side-by-side with the city throughout its history, first “used to quench the thirst of fugitive Evander’s cattle” — which is yet another reference to Propertius: “The cattle of exiled Evander there lay down.”¹⁰⁰ Afterward the Tiber was stained with blood by the “consuls” and “kings.”¹⁰¹ With their greed they have conquered new lands, here represented metonymically through the personification of foreign rivers “in chains”: “Danube,” “Rhine,” “both Ebro,” “father Tajo,” and “the Nile.”¹⁰² This list was perhaps inspired by Du Bellay, who in sonnet 31 of the *Antiquitez* identifies several countries hostile to Rome through their rivers, “Who bathe in the Tigris or the Nile, the Ganges or the Euphrates. . . . Nor of the brave soldier who drinks from

⁹⁷Tibullus, 272–73, 274–75 (2.5.22, 40): “Ilion ardentis respiceretque deos. . . . Troica qui profugis sacra vehis ratibus”; *ibid.*, 272–73 (2.5.28): “facta . . . lignea.” Moreno Castillo, 513, recalls similar passages also in Propertius, 358–59 (4.1.39); and Ovid, 1989, 190–91 (*Fasti*, 4.37–38). See also *ibid.*, 266, (5.91–92); and Horace, 2004, 230–31 (*Carmina*, 4.4.53–56).

⁹⁸Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:265 (119): “El fuego examinó sus monarquías.”

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 1:266 (145): “abrasadas del fuego.”

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 1:262 (27–29): “A la sed de los bueyes / de Evandro fugitivo, Tibre santo, / sirvió”; Propertius, 354–55 (*Elegiae*, 4.1.4): “Euandri profugae concubuerunt boves.”

¹⁰¹Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:262 (29): “cónsules,” “reyes.”

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, 1:263 (34–37): “en cadena”; “Danubio”; “Rhenos”; “los dos Ebro”; “el padre Tajo”; “el Nilo.”

the Gallic Rhine.”¹⁰³ On the other hand, the idea of the chained rivers may have been borrowed from Virgil’s description of the shield of Aeneas — “Euphrates moved now with humbler waves, / And the Morini were there, furthest of mankind, / And the Rhine of double horn, / The untamed Dahae, and Araxes chafing at his bridge” — followed by Lucan — “the fetters he had laid upon the Rhine / And the Ocean” — and Propertius: “Or I should sing of Egypt and the Nile, when, haled into Rome, / It flowed flagging with its seven streams captive.”¹⁰⁴ Note also the reference to the Nile’s “seven mouths,” which reappears in Quevedo: “that which pours out of seven mouths . . . wounds the ringing sea with seven necks.”¹⁰⁵

This section on the Nile (37–49) may also have been inspired again by Lucan, who has an extensive section on the Egyptian river, especially when he states that, as opposed to other rivers, such as “the Rhone and the Po,” the Nile has never been conquered because no one could ever reach its source.¹⁰⁶ The same idea appears in the Spanish poem, “and no nation can boast that it takes pride in the Nile / As its own possession”; “His head has saved him / From suffering any yoke or dominion, / Defending his freedom / By hiding away.”¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, the Tiber, which had conquered other rivers, has itself been chained. The rise of Rome has brought power and technology, and the Tiber has been tied up by several bridges that are metaphorically represented as knots. Quevedo has turned Virgil’s image upside down. Whereas the Aras river resisted the constraints of bridges — “Araxes chafing at his bridge” — the Tiber could not:

¹⁰³Du Bellay, 2006, 279; Du Bellay, 1910a, 28 (31.4, 7): “Que le Tygre & le Nil, Gange & Euphrate baigne. . . . Ny ce brave soldat qui boit le Rhin Gaulois.”

¹⁰⁴Virgil, 2:110–11 (8.726–28): “Euphrates ibat iam mollior undis, / extremique hominum Morini Rhenusque bicornis / indomitique Dahae et pontem indignatus Araxes”; Lucan, 118–19 (3.76–77): “ut vincula Rheno / Oceanoque daret”; Propertius, 118–19 (2.1.31–32): “aut canerem Aegyptum et Nilum, cum attractus in urbem / septem captivis ibat aquis.” Moreno Castillo, 516–17, discusses these and other possible sources of Quevedo.

¹⁰⁵Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:263 (43–45): “el que por siete bocas derramado . . . con siete cuellos hiere el mar sonante.” It was a commonplace to refer to the Nile’s seven mouths: Moreno Castillo, 518–23, gives some examples of classical and Renaissance authors who do so. See also Du Bellay, 2004, 33 (*Poemata, Elegiae, Romae descriptio*, 2.94): “Who can identify which river’s a Seven-Mouthed god?”

¹⁰⁶Lucan, 610–11 (10.278): “Rhodanumque Padumque,”; *ibid.*, (10.282): “ignoto te.” See *ibid.*, 602–15 (*Pharsalia* 10.172–331).

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 610–11 (10.284–85): “et nulli contingit gloria genti / ut Nilo sit laeta suo”; Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:263 (39–42): “ha guardado / su cabeza de yugo y señorío, / defendiendo ignorada / la libertad.”

Tiber's neck and front were tied up
 by bridges with laces made of pure alabaster,
 over strong rocks,
 while his eyes cried out his currents.¹⁰⁸

This is another instance of the constant juxtaposition of ideas in the poem, since progress has also brought degradation to Rome. The bridges are examples of fine architecture — “pure alabaster” — but behind this apparent beauty lies decay. The sophisticated alabaster contrasts with the “rocks” touched by the river, mentioned earlier in relation to the places where the ancient Romans used to pray or the hills inhabited by the gods.¹⁰⁹ There is also an echo of the sonnet “A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas” and its representation of the Tiber crying over Rome, which here has been expanded through the use of conceits.¹¹⁰ The line “While his eyes [*ojos*] cried out his currents” is based on the double meaning of *ojos* — “eyes” and “spans” — which emphasizes the personification of the river, and these are compared with the many eyes of Argos and the circular decorations of the peacock: “the bridges look like Argos and the back like a peacock.”¹¹¹ Nature has been intoxicated by human artifice. The rocks and the water have been tamed and given a different shape, one loaded with new metaphors of power and sophistication.

These sets of oppositions underline a larger contrast between art and nature that runs throughout the text, and is characteristic of poetry about ruins in general. Human will has built up cities and monuments, violating the natural environment, but time has taken its revenge and artifice has been absorbed back into nature.¹¹² Apart from the moral significance of this duality, it also carries literary consequences that go back to the aesthetics of the *silva*. Since Statius, the genre of the *silva* has made the discussion of the Horatian pair *Ars-Natura* one of the main aspects of its poetics.¹¹³ Statius's *Silvae* have many compositions that show an evolution of the *locus amoenus* toward a more artificial context. Statius does not praise the countryside as

¹⁰⁸Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:263 (*Obra poética*, 137.50–53): “Añudaron al Tibre cuello y frente / puentes en lazos de alabastro puros, / sobre peñascos duros, / llorando tantos ojos su corriente.”

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 1:262 (23): “the rocks were altars”; *ibid.* (9): “Jupiter cast his thunder over a bare rock.”

¹¹⁰Ibid., 1:418 (213.11): “la llora con funesto son doliente.”

¹¹¹Ibid., 1:263 (55): “las puentes Argos y pavón la espalda.”

¹¹²This is Simmel's main thesis on the symbolic value of ruins. See also Wardropper, 295.

¹¹³Horace, 1978, 484–85 (*Ars poetica*, 408–11).

such, but rather concentrates on Roman villas and sophisticated gardens. These spaces where nature has been tamed are a metafictional representation of the power of literature to give new shape to language. Literature's artifice shows nature dominated by the poet-gardener: "nature . . . has been overcome and yielded to the developer."¹¹⁴ But in "Roma antiqua y moderna," Statius's villas have crumbled, returning to their original form: "the banks have turned into banks again," "those which once were walls are now a threat" to the passerby, and "the triumphal gates . . . that once caused admiration are now a threat."¹¹⁵ These oppositions are probably in dialogue with Lucan's catastrophic vision of postwar Rome: "But, if now in Italian cities the houses are half-demolished and the walls tottering."¹¹⁶ Quevedo has taken advantage of one of the most characteristic aspects of the *silva*, its variety, linking different texts from the classical and humanistic traditions and producing what Poliziano defined as "the abundance of material."¹¹⁷ In this process of assimilation, the influence of Lucan and the humanistic texts has produced a combination of two different discourses, those of the idealistic foundational poems and the poems about the ruins of a decadent Rome. Through this duality, Quevedo would seem to deny the typical optimistic message linked with the civilizing process of art that can be found in Statius and in Poliziano's *Silvae*. But this is not entirely the case.

The space of memory has been damaged and the artificial order crafted by humanity has collapsed. But, however imperfectly, these ruins still connect the poet with Rome's great cultural tradition. By listing buildings that have disappeared, the narrator of the *silva* is also reconstructing them. Behind a repeated chain of *ubi sunt*, there is as well a kind of *evidentia*. The *silva* becomes a portrait of immortal achievements linked with the Latin and humanistic traditions. It is useless to put any effort into perpetuating oneself through material symbols of power. Monuments are only *vanitas*.¹¹⁸ Towers, arches, and statues will collapse sooner or later, but poetry is immortal.

¹¹⁴Statius, 126–27 (*Silvae*, 2.2.52): "natura . . . victa colenti." It is no coincidence that this line might have interested Quevedo, who, in his personal copy of Statius's works, marked off this passage of the *Silvae*: see Kallendorf and Kallendorf, 161. Poliziano, 38–39 (94–97), also develops the idea of nature being tamed by art in his *silva Rusticus*.

¹¹⁵Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:264 (84): "vuelven a ser riberas las riberas"; *ibid.*, 1:263 (59): "peligros son los que antes fueron muros"; *ibid.*, 1:264 (72, 77): "las puertas triunfales . . . amenazan donde antes admiraron."

¹¹⁶Lucan, 4–5 (1.24): "At nunc semirutis pendent quod moenia tectis."

¹¹⁷Poliziano, 8–9 (*Manto*, 40): "ingens copia rerum." For the poetics of imitation in Poliziano, see Bettinzoli.

¹¹⁸This is the typical moral message that can be found in the poetry about ruins. The crumbling walls are an example against human ambition and a *memento mori*: Du Bellay,

“Rome is no more,” but “her writings, which in spite of time / Wrest her fairest praise from the grave.”¹¹⁹ Both Du Bellay and Quevedo mirror the Platonic division between body and soul. Digging up Rome’s ruins produces an archeology of literature, and these verbal excavations are the result of a conversation with the authors of the past, who give new life to modern writers, lending them their words and ideas, as stated by Quevedo: “I live in conversation with the deceased.”¹²⁰ Culture is an open dialogue between different traditions, and the ruins are an invitation to reactivate conversations with the past. In this sense, they should not be confused with the relics kept locked up in crystal boxes, as described in the *Deffence*: “those relics which are seen only through a little window, and which it is not permitted to touch with the hand.”¹²¹ The art of “good imitation” is based on an active rewriting of the past, not on passive veneration.¹²² The true humanist does not keep the knowledge of the past hidden in an urn, but digs into memory, raising his soul to the heights of immortal ideas.

“Roma antigua y moderna” can in this way be read, not as the contrast between two distant concepts, but rather as an inclusive combination of both of them. Rome’s past and present cohabit: modern culture is the result of its ancestor, which, on the other hand, could not live on without the memory of present civilization. Quevedo does not limit himself to a one-way conversation with tradition, as does Du Bellay in the *Antiquitez*. He is not content with summoning the dead authors of the past, for he also wants to look at the present from their perspective.¹²³ The Baroque complexity behind the Spanish *silva* lies also in the combination of several literary models and different chronological timeframes, which are presented simultaneously instead of one against the other. The bare hills of pre-Roman times coexist with the city of Romulus, the Roman Republic, the conquests of the Roman Empire, and the ruins of the seventeenth century. All the strata of memory have been reactivated at once in what could be

2006, 27 (*Antiquitez*, 27.8): “these old fragments still serve as models”; Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:264 (*Obra poética*, 137.85): “those which once were palaces serve now as an example.”

¹¹⁹Du Bellay, 2006, 252; Du Bellay, 1910a, 8 (*Antiquitez*, 5.5, 12–13): “Rome n’est plus”; “ses escripts, qui son loz le plus beau / Malgré le temps arrachent du tumbeau.” Similar ideas are expressed in Du Bellay, 1910a, 25 (*Antiquitez*, 27); Du Bellay, 2003, 56–59.

¹²⁰Rivers, 267; Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:253 (*Obra poética*, 131.3): “vivo en conversación con los difuntos.”

¹²¹Du Bellay, 1939, 50; Du Bellay, 2003, 40: “ces Reliques, qu’on voit seulement par une petite Vitre, & qu’il n’est permis toucher avec la Main.”

¹²²Du Bellay, 2003, 32: “bien immiter.”

¹²³Du Bellay, 2006, 247 (*Antiquitez, Au Roy*, 7–8): “Will be able to boast of having pulled from the tomb / The dusty remains of the ancient Romans.”

defined as a chronological conceit, a Baroque concentration of different timeframes. By doing so, Quevedo has taken to its last consequences the representations of the eternal ideas that connect individuals and their vicissitudes. The author is looking at history with the universal eyes of memory as it was conceived in Platonic terms. All times are but one time, all art is but one art. Quevedo's ideology is strongly grounded in the Renaissance; nevertheless, his manipulation of language shows also signs of rupture that make him a Baroque writer. He still firmly believes in the power of art to reach immortality, but he also represents this ideal through a fluid proliferation of conceits that are often at odds with themselves. This multiperspectivism is based on a richer combination of *res* and *verba*, but the vision of the world that is achieved is a fragmentary one. Language has become self-referential and arbitrary. If all possible signifiers and signified can be connected with each other, this also means that there is no way to decipher the divine secret code. This unsolvable contradiction is at the core of Baroque mentality and is clearly reflected in its aesthetics of wit, which employs strict combinatory logic to translate into literature an unstable vision of the world. Its linguistic coherence cannot disguise its epistemological inconsistency. Ultimately, conceptism could only produce an art of ruins. Looking at different stages of history at the same time offers a dark portrait of humanity, trapped in a circular repetition of misdeeds. Art can preserve great ideals, but it cannot save human beings from their own limitations.

The following step in the crafting of this collage of multiple chronological perspectives is the introduction of the poetic *I*. At the beginning of the second section of Quevedo's poem (97–122), the first-person narrator makes his explicit appearance: "I saw the insolence," "I cried when I saw the statue of Marius, now unrecognizable," "I saw in the stones," "I saw the emperors."¹²⁴ This rhetorical twist seems once again to be a borrowing from Du Bellay. The *Antiquitez* was published together with the *Songe*, which functions as an allegorical second part of the first book. One of the differences between these two texts is that the latter introduces the first-person voice of the narrator, and it seems very likely that Quevedo took this into account in his own *silva*: "I saw a building," "I saw the Dodonean tree," "I saw in a den under a rock," "I saw the bird."¹²⁵ In

¹²⁴Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:264 (97): "vi el atrevimiento"; *ibid.*, (103–04): "De Mario vi, y lloré desconocida, / la estatua"; *ibid.*, (105): "vi en las piedras"; *ibid.*, 1:265 (107): "vi los emperadores."

¹²⁵Du Bellay, 2006, 280, 284, 286; Du Bellay, 1910a, 31 (2.1): "je vis une Fabrique"; *ibid.*, 33 (5.1): "je vy l'Arbre Dodonien"; *ibid.* (6.1): "je vy sous l'antre d'un rocher"; *ibid.*, 34 (7.1): "Je vy l'Oyseau."

this section, however, Quevedo is not only recovering the *Songe*, but also the image of the hills where Rome was founded, and which had a relevant role in his sonnet “A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas.” The poetic *I* makes its appearance in a passage devoted to the Capitoline (93–130), thereby establishing further links between the *silva* and the sonnet, where the Palatine and the Aventine are mentioned. In his two poems on the ruins of Rome, Quevedo employs the three hills as foundational metaphors, since, according to Flavio Biondo, the original setting of the city included only these: “She only encompassed the Capitoline hill, the Palatine, and the Aventine.”¹²⁶ And of the three, the Capitoline is indeed the most important one, and tends to occupy a privileged position in the Renaissance books on the antiquities of Rome: Lucio Mauro goes as far as calling it the “the most famous place in Rome.”¹²⁷

The Capitoline’s relevance is due to its religious and political roles. The most important temples were there, together with the citadel and the seat of the Senate. The hill summarizes, therefore, two of the main aspects of the Roman civilization considered by Quevedo in his *silva*: its religious and political organization. The Capitoline is the best possible metonymy for Rome because it is there that its past greatness can still be fully recognized: “In the Capitoline only you have saved / the statues and sculptures that you have found.”¹²⁸ This space still holds on against the attacks of time, as in the past, from its citadel, the city resisted the besieging Gauls of Brennus in 390 BCE. Through divine intervention the consul Marcus Manlius was woken up in the middle of the night by some crying geese (devoted to Juno) and the attack was repelled:¹²⁹

You, great Rome, do not allow yourself
to be dominated in such fashion
by the envious hand of death.

¹²⁶Biondo, 15^v: “Ella dunque solamente abbracciava il monte Capitolino, il Palatino e l’Aventino.” Other authors state that Rome was originally founded only on two of these hills, the Palatine and the Capitoline: see Mauro, 2; Gamucci, 1.

¹²⁷Mauro, 6: “più celebre luogo di Roma.” See also Fauno, 28^v–29^r: “But now we have to pay special attention to them, to the Tarpeian or Capitoline in the first place, since this is the most important because it was devoted to sacred things”; Palladio, 88: “the Palatine was the most famous.”

¹²⁸Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:264 (93–94): “Sólo en el Capitolio perdonaste / las estatuas y bultos que hallaste.”

¹²⁹For historical accounts of the failed attack, see Livy, 3:156–61 (5.47); Virgil, 2:106–07 (*Aeneid*, 8.652–62); Fauno, 30^r; Mauro, 7; Gamucci, 13.

Fierce and brave people once climbed your walls,
 when the eloquent wings of the golden goose,
 and its prophetic cries, which are
 more easily to be admired than believed,
 alerted you to the banners of France.¹³⁰

Quevedo establishes once again a parallel between ancient and modern Rome, and by doing so links his own discourse with the humanistic tradition. Lorenzo Valla uses the same image in his preface to the first book of his *Elegantiae linguae latinae* (1471) to refer to the survival of the Latin language and literature, despite the cultural degradation caused by the barbarians: “the Capitoline bastion is barely standing.”¹³¹ From this symbolic space Valla invites the humanists to fight against ignorance in order to reestablish the dominion of Roman culture: “I ask you to fight in this honorable and beautiful battle.”¹³² Du Bellay takes on Valla’s passage in his *Deffence*, but inverts its terms: the French have to take up their arms and conquer Rome once again, since they are the only fitting successors of its greatness: “Frenchmen, march courageously upon that pious Roman city, and with the servile booty thereof (as you have done more than once) deck your temples and altars.”¹³³

Quevedo answers the call. His *silva* is a complex rewriting of the classical and humanistic culture that reminds the modern reader that the Capitoline is still standing. The fire that in the past devastated Rome has given birth to a new life. The poem closes in on itself with yet another paradox, that only through death can there be space for a new life. The conversation with the dead authors is then transformed into a new metaphor, the Phoenix:

¹³⁰Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:265 (*Obra poética*, 137.123–30): “Tú, no de aquella suerte, / te dejas poseer, Roma gloriosa, / de la invidiosa mano de la muerte: / escalote feroz gente animosa, / cuando del ánsar de oro las parleras / alas y los proféticos graznidos, / siendo más admirados que creídos, / advirtieron de Francia las banderas.”

¹³¹Garín, 598: “vix capitolina supersit arx.”

¹³²Ibid., 600: “Certemus, quaeso, honestissimum hoc pulcherrimumque certamen.”

¹³³Du Bellay, 2006, 107; Du Bellay, 2003, 81: “Francoys, marchez courageusement vers cete superbe Cité Romaine: & des serves Depouilles d’elle (comme vous avez fait plus d’une fois) ornez voz Temples, & Autelz.” See Cooper, 165–66. Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:265 (137.130) seems to deny Du Bellay’s statement by explicitly identifying the ancient Gauls with the modern French: “de Francia las banderas.” They were defeated then, and will be defeated once again. The same episode appears also in Quevedo, 2005, 301 (*Carta a Luis XIII* of 1635), with even clearer polemical intentions: “The Frenchmen were thrown out of Rome by the cries of a goose”; and in his Italian sonnet against Richelieu: Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:427 (*Obra poética*, 227).

“You are reborn from the flames as the Phoenix, / and your fortune transforms / your death into life, and your tomb into a cradle.”¹³⁴ Quevedo’s archeology of memory confuses linear and circular time, making of literature an imperishable archive whose documents are all written on the same page. Even his *silva* returns to the beginning, collapses onto itself with a passage that reuses ideas and images from the initial sonnet:

You were born to be queen and mistress
of every city.
In the past, during your childhood,
you had a rustic senate;
but, afterwards, thanks to fair and compassionate kings,
you owned and ruled the world.¹³⁵

Quevedo’s *silva*, however, does not conclude here. The final section of the poem (166–80) is an apotheosis of modern Rome, the see of the Catholic Church.¹³⁶ “The Popes” have replaced the emperors, and they exercise a much stronger power.¹³⁷ In the initial sonnet, Rome is said to be the queen of the world — “And now she has become queen and mistress of the world” — and this image has been amplified in order to emphasize the superior force of Catholic Rome, as opposed to the pagan rites described at the beginning of the *silva*: “queen of the world, and of heaven and hell.”¹³⁸ The “pilgrim” of “A Roma sepultada en sus ruinas” has finally reached the

¹³⁴Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:266 (148–50): “fénix renaces, parto de las llamas, / haciendo tu fortuna / tu muerte vida y tu sepulcro cuna.” The image of the Phoenix is a commonplace in the poetry on the ruins of Rome. It can be found, for instance, in Vitalis, Pannonius, and Du Bellay. The original source might be Martial, 1:358–59 (5.7): Tucker, 1986; Tucker, 1990, 111–15. See also Ghero, 1608, 1:261 (Nicolas Audebert, *In parentis sui Romam*): “Rome, as the Phoenix, has been reborn from her death.”

¹³⁵Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:266 (*Obra poética*, 137.160–65): “naciste para ser reina y señora / de todas las ciudades. / En tu niñez te vieron las edades / con rústico senado; / luego, con justos y piadosos reyes, / dueña del mundo, dar a todos leyes.”

¹³⁶The outdoing of pagan Rome by the modern capital of Christianity is a leitmotif of the literary texts that deal with the comparison between ancient and modern Rome. Moreno Castillo, 501–07, lists several examples from the Italian and Spanish traditions. See also Palladio, 117; Biondo, bvii v; Gamucci, 1. It is nevertheless inevitable to perceive this final section of the *silva* as a kind of forced addition, since it only takes up fifteen lines out of a total of 180. The Catholic *Roma moderna* seems to be a secondary colophon to the poem. It should also be noted that for Machiavelli, 127 (*Discorsi*, 1.12), the Church of Rome had great responsibility in the political subjection of Italy (promoting confrontations between its different states: “the Church has kept and still keeps this province divided.”

¹³⁷Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:266 (168): “Sumos Pontífices.”

¹³⁸*Ibid.*, (4): “ya del mundo la ves reina y señora”; *ibid.*, (170): “reina del mundo y cielo, y del infierno.”

city that he was looking for. Furthermore, the waters of the Tiber have found an invincible naval vessel, the ship of Christ — “You have exchanged . . . the name of city for that of Ship” — that will resist the tempests of all time.¹³⁹ St. Peter the fisherman and his successors will guide the congregation toward glory beyond the river of oblivion: “That which the great heir of Peter commands / reaches beyond the shore of death.”¹⁴⁰ Eternal memory has been achieved, and this strength will be used to fight against Christianity’s common enemy. Quevedo concludes his poem by bringing the reader back to the present, reminding him of the struggle against the Protestants: “In the midst of such cruel war, you are / the great court of faith in the world.”¹⁴¹ In this way the dubious pagan rites of the Romans are compared to modern dissident churches, a prediction that they will also collapse as did the rites of Jupiter, Lamia, Flora, and Janus. The *silva* ends with a statement that is both political and religious, and that refers to contemporary Europe and its turbulent situation.

The imitation of Du Bellay leaves, however, some interpretative gaps that are left to the reader’s discretion. Sonnet 18 from the *Antiquitez* sheds an ambiguous light on its cyclical reading of Roman history, presenting the papacy as both a return to the humble origins of the city (“pasteurs,” “pasteur”) and as a cause of its decadence. The line “linked by fate to that land” implies that the pope has been sent as a punishment rather than as a savior, and this is an idea that runs throughout the *Regrets*, where there is a constant satire of the Church. Quevedo’s expanded re-creation of this sonnet in his *silva* can therefore be considered as a polemical reversal of the cyclical reading offered by Du Bellay: there is no return to the origins, but rather a clear progress, embodied by the figure of the pope and the political achievements of the city in the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, Quevedo’s

¹³⁹Ibid., (171–72): “trocaste . . . el nombre de ciudad por el de Nave.” Cf. Matthew, 8.23–27; Mark, 4.35–41; Luke, 8.22–25. Quevedo is using the word *nave* in a metaphorical sense: see *Diccionario de Autoridades*, s.v. “nave”: “It is used metaphorically to refer to the congregation of believers under the authority of the Pope, as an allusion to the ship of Saint Peter.” See also Moreno Castillo, 538.

¹⁴⁰Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:266 (176–77): “a esotra parte de la muerte alcanza / lo que el gran sucesor de Pedro ordena.” Biondo, 61^f, states that the pope “holds the rudder of the ship.” This passage of the *silva* seems to refer to the mythological river Styx that separated Hades from the world of the living, and to the river Lethe that gave oblivion to the souls who drank from its waters. There is a similar image in Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:472 (*Obra poética*, “Amor constate más allá de la muerte,” 472.5–6): “But it will not, on the further shore, / Leave the memory in which it used to burn.”

¹⁴¹Quevedo, 1969–81, 1:266 (179–80): “siendo, en tan dura guerra, / gloriosa corte de la fe en la tierra.”

text is as fluid and open as the French sonnet. The pagan Romans of the past are not only comparable to Protestants, but also to Catholics, thus reinforcing the message present in the poem from the *Antiquitez*. This would explain why the exaltation of the papacy takes only a few lines of the *silva*, and why at all times the *Roma antigua* appears more relevant to the author than the *moderna*. The closing passage leaves the door open to a double interpretation, predicting the fall of either Protestants or Catholics (or both) if they do not refrain from fighting against each other in this “cruel war” that is raging across Europe. Ideology feeds on memory, and the historic perception of time offers a pessimistic vision of humanity to Quevedo, no matter what faith is professed. Men and politics are fragile, but the art and ideals behind them are not. Ruins and symbols are more consistent and perdurable than human beings and their governments.

“Roma antigua y moderna” represents the recovery and the reconstruction of a symbolic space of memory. Rome’s several pasts are perceived and described simultaneously through a rewriting that ranges from Propertius to Du Bellay. The classical tradition and its humanistic interpretation are read through a Baroque prism of multiple perspectives, which produces a celebration of the power of art to transcend human limitations, while at the same time emphasizing them. It is very likely that Quevedo’s visit to Rome in 1617 made a deep impression on him. However, when looking at the ruins of the city in his poems, he did not see crumbling temples and amphitheaters, but rather living ideas, words, and metaphors that enabled him to open poetry’s endless archive of memory.

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