

development of my thesis in the intervening years, as I grew to understand first-hand how the Strait of Messina shapes movement along its shores and across its currents. While the closure of the BSR and my unexpected early departure from Italy was very interruptive and greatly changed the scope of my project, the data and evidence I was able to access in those two months were crucial to the success of my project.

By 2022, my research project had progressed to the writing-up stage. My time at the BSR from April to June 2022 was largely focused on the library, as a space to work and write up my PhD, while also granting me renewed access to materials I had otherwise been unable to access in the intervening 24 months. Additionally, engaging in multidisciplinary discussions with the other Fellows, architects and artists among them, helped tease out and develop many of my ideas concerning the lived experiences of landscapes and the constructed nature of human geographies.

I am proud to say that my PhD has now been conferred and the School played a crucial part in the project's, and my personal, success. I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my colleagues at the School for their camaraderie and community during my terms, and a special thanks to all the staff at the BSR for their support in 2020, and in aiding my return in 2022.

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#### COLEMAN-HILTON (UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY) SCHOLARSHIP

doi: 10.1017/S0068246223000363

#### *Fruits of empire: grain in the Roman Republic*

The grain laws of the Roman Republic do not attract as much attention as other controversial policies of the late Republic, and when they do, they are seen as part of a wider populist programme. However, most attested grain laws were passed not by popular politicians, but their 'conservative' opponents. My research seeks to show that while the grain distribution system began as a popular policy, the establishment quickly adopted it, as the stability it offered made the task of governance easier and less vulnerable to crisis. The organization of Rome's food supply rose above partisan politics, becoming a crucial problem to be managed by the government of the day, irrespective of political ideology.

My project in Rome was to examine the material evidence and archaeological sites related to the acquisition of grain for the city. This involved visits to villas surrounding Rome (in particular the *Villa Volusii Saturnini*), Rome's naval museums, and archaeological sites visible in Rome: the Testaccio and forum warehouses, the *Porticus Minucia* under the Crypta Balbi museum, and Ostia Antica.

One key aspect of the organization of Rome's grain supply was the store buildings that housed the food once it came into the city. Aside from the *horrea Sempronia*, which were built specifically to house grain for the public distributions, store buildings in Republican Rome were originally privately owned. Therefore, part of my research was focused on looking at the owners of these buildings. I sought to uncover who they were, why they might have chosen to build a large warehouse in Rome, and what interactions they had with those actually in charge of Rome's food supply.

An example of one of these owners is Marcus Seius, an aedile of 74, who is widely accepted as the possible founder of the *horrea Seiana*. Not much is known about him. As the only well-known Seius in Rome from the time, it is assumed that he owned the storehouse because it bears his name. He clearly had plenty of supplies — during his aedileship he handed out grain and olive oil incredibly cheaply, despite a severe shortage only a year previously. Seius, or his son, probably owned a productive villa at Ostia. He entered Roman politics as a relatively new citizen: epigraphic evidence suggests his family originated in Volsinii, which had recently been granted Roman citizenship, and he was elected despite a setback involving a disgraceful loss in the courts. Seius' handouts of food made him so popular that he received a public funeral of sorts. When Seius appears in Cicero's letters it is as a friend of Varro and Atticus. Cicero introduces him to the governor of Asia on Atticus' request and later mentions visiting him for dinner.

What might this collection of details reveal about Seius' role in Rome's food supply? First, given the timing of his election and benefaction immediately after a severe shortage, it appears his granary gave him a political advantage going into an election. I am also investigating whether this could mean an ongoing relationship with the state. A law passed the year after his aedileship meant large amounts of grain would be imported into Rome from 73 onwards using state funds. It is entirely possible Seius would have benefited from contracts to store public grain in his warehouse as he was one of the few to possess the space. Finally, while little else is known of Seius' political career, the Seian family immediately rose within the ranks of the principate — a later descendant of Seius was the famous Sejanus. Seius' story shares common ground with the history of many of Rome's early granary owners, as private ownership of something critical to the state brought wealth and political opportunity.

I would like to convey my appreciation to the BSR for providing such a stimulating and welcoming environment. Additionally, I want to thank both Suzy Coleman and Jeffrey Hilton for their kindness in providing me with this fantastic opportunity.

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SOCIETY FOR RENAISSANCE STUDIES — BSR AWARD

doi: 10.1017/S0068246223000375

*Rubens, van Dyck, and women's dress in Genoese portraiture, 1604–1627*

My project at the BSR investigated elite women, dress and representation in early modern Genoa through portraits executed by Flemish painters Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck. Situating Genoa's fashion system within a global framework, I explored the sartorial vocabulary used by women, their relationship with a materialized world, and the dynamics of these interactions as they appear in elite portraiture.

While a study of Genoa undertaken in Rome might seem unusual, Rome was an important site for my research. I was particularly interested in probate inventories, account books and wills housed in the Archivio Doria-Pamphilj that pertain to the Genoese Doria clan, and aimed to trace the connections between these sources and the portraits of the Doria painted by Rubens and van Dyck. Further, I was broadly interested