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# Writing Politics in Imperial Rome

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can still feel admiration for this queen *quae generosius/perire quaerens nec mulibriter/expauit ensem* ("who sought a death more noble though, nor did not dread, effeminate, the sword," *Carm.* 1.37.21–3), who refuses humiliation as victim of a Roman triumph.

The agendas of Horace and of Octavian coincide to a very great degree. Horace is relieved that the foreign threat has been averted. He portrays Cleopatra as *fatale monstrum* ("deadly beast") to indicate the horror of the threat from which Octavian delivered Rome. For this he is grateful; however, the sympathetic humanity of the poet convinces him of the need to add elements of nobility and dignity to the queen's death. In Vergil's case that humanity is betrayed in the depiction of Dido, of Camilla and of Turnus, Italy's Hector to Aeneas's Achilles. The major difference between the humanity of Vergil and that of Horace is that the humanity of Vergil can be encoded within the relative anonymity of the epic form, whereas Horace finds a continuing tension between self and Augustan expectation in the composition of more personal poetic genres such as lyric and iambic, satire and literary epistle. In the significantly later *Carmen Saeculare* and fourth book of *Odes* such tension becomes less apparent. This change warns us that at a juncture when Horace sings the praises of *custos Augustus* ("our guardian Augustus") opportunities for misplaced humour and irony were diminishing. But even here Horace displays an individualizing streak in his confident assertion that it is these songs themselves that will ensure the actual immortality of the *princeps*.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE POLITICS OF ARISTOCRATIC COMPETITION: INNOVATION IN LIVY AND AUGUSTAN ROME

Matthew B. Roller

How do we locate the "politics" of a literary text? Most people would probably agree that "politics" refers to a struggle for power, as members of society seek to assert and sustain claims upon the whole or upon others. The *locus classicus* of such struggle is the formal, institutionalized setting of government, where people seek and discharge public offices, and compete to set and carry out particular policies or agendas. Thus one way to locate the politics of a literary text is to consider what it says about government and governmental operations. In Roman literary studies, questions about the "political" (in this sense) views of literary authors have been asked since at least the nineteenth century; however, this approach found a new vogue in the 1970s and 1980s as scholars turned away from the excessive decontextualization of New Criticism and sought to reconnect texts and authors with the social, cultural, and material environment within which literary production occurred. Regarding literature of the imperial age—when government was closely associated with the imperial regime—"political" questions were typically formulated as follows: What is the author's opinion of the emperor, his regime, or of contemporary events? Through what techniques and devices does the author express his support/opposition? What influence does the regime itself have upon the author, what he says, and how he says it? The words "propaganda" and "patronage" often appear in such discussions, since scholars suspected that an author might be expressing, if only out of prudence, an (excessively?) positive image of the regime, and since his means of support—especially if provided by someone within the regime—might affect what he said and how he said it.<sup>1</sup>

In due course, however, this approach came to seem unsatisfactory. In the first place, arguments for or against the imperial regime can be teased out of almost any author, depending how a scholar selects

<sup>1</sup> For these kinds of questions see, e.g., Woodman and West (1984) vii; Sullivan (1985) 19–73.

and marshall's quotations, how inclined she or he is to see irony, and so on. And with literary critics' increasing awareness of the complexity, mutability, and multifacetedness of the imperial regime itself, the quest for "for or against" judgments began to appear Procrustean if not incoherent.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, by the early 1990s, a broader, more flexible understanding of "politics" began to find currency in Roman studies, as in other areas of the humanities and social sciences. Retaining the idea that "politics" refers to a struggle for power through the assertion of claims against others, the broader understanding extends beyond government to embrace a variety of social arenas in which such struggles occur, and strategies by which agents compete for advantage. This broadened scope of the "political" has allowed the questions asked of literary texts to range more broadly and become more fundamental. For example: What other social rifts—beyond those between emperors and putatively dissident aristocratic writers—do literary texts reveal as generators of power struggles? Such a question directs our attention to contestation along gender lines, along ethnic lines (e.g., between urban Romans and Latins, or Latins and other Italians, or Italians and provincials), along class lines (e.g., between aristocrats and non-aristocrats), and among sectors of the aristocracy. In what arenas do our texts show these struggles being carried out, and what are the weapons with which the antagonists compete? This question spotlights (for example) the moral and aesthetic discourses that permeate Latin literature, inviting us to consider how the regimes of moral value established and exposed by everything from sexual insults to aesthetic judgments of poetry and art uphold the interests of some social sectors against others. And since it follows that literary texts can themselves be arenas for, and weapons in, struggles for power, a further question arises: how and to what extent do our texts themselves intervene in these contests? For literary texts not only describe and respond to "political" events, but may help constitute those events as such.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding Livy, the "political" question that scholars have traditionally asked is of the narrower type: what is the historian's view of Augustus and the Augustan dispensation? Admittedly, this question is tempting. The men were near contemporaries; a few texts have been taken to

<sup>2</sup> Feeney (1992) 1–5; Kennedy (1992) 26–30.

<sup>3</sup> For such understandings of the "politics" of literature see, e.g., Edwards (1993) 1–4, 24–8; Habinek (1998) 3–14; Roller (1998) 265–7, 300; Roller (2001) 17–126.

suggest that Livy enjoyed some intimacy with the imperial household; and while the latter ninety-seven of Livy's original 142 books of the *Ab Urbe Condita* are lost, surviving summaries indicate that the first *princeps* figured prominently in the final twenty-seven of these—nearly a fifth of the work's original bulk.<sup>4</sup> Livy must, indeed, have had views about Augustus. What were they? The abundant scholarship on this question has produced the widest imaginable spectrum of opinion;<sup>5</sup> iconoclastic analyses by Deininger and Badian have shown why consensus is never likely to be reached.<sup>6</sup> Yet even if there were consensus on this point, scholars would hardly have plumbed the enormous range of elements in Livy's text that are "political" in the broader, more flexible sense. Where and how does the text depict struggles for power and competing social claims more generally? How and to what extent might (at least some of) these depictions find a contemporary resonance? Can the text itself ever be seen as intervening in contemporary struggles? Through questions like these, we may grasp more comprehensively the ways in which Livy's text engages its contemporary society, and hence where its "politics" (in the broader sense) resides.<sup>7</sup>

Among the many kinds of social rifts and the accompanying power struggles that one might explore in Livy, I consider here one in particular: the competition among aristocrats for glory and prestige. I focus on Appius Claudius Caecus, a figure who Livy presents as transgressing

<sup>4</sup> Intimacy: Tac. *Ann.* 4.34.3; Suet. *Claud.* 41; perhaps Livy 4.20.5–11 and Sen. *Nat.* 5.18.4. The *Periochae* first notice Octavian/Augustus in book 116, where he is mentioned as Caesar's heir; by book 142 the narrative reaches 9 BCE, the middle of Augustus' reign.

<sup>5</sup> A search of *L'Année Philologique's* database reveals about a dozen articles entitled "Livy and Augustus" (*aut sim.*) in the interval 1959–2002; the question is also discussed in many longer studies of Livy's work or Augustan Rome.

<sup>6</sup> Deininger (1985) 265–72; Badian (1993) 9–38.

<sup>7</sup> Livy's "anachronisms," where he represents ancient events in contemporary terms (or, conversely, works out contemporary issues on an ancient canvas), have long been noted and discussed by scholars: these are one place we should look for his "politics" (in the broad sense). Recent works along these lines include Miles (1995) 211–19 on how depictions of marriage and rape in book 1 pertain to Augustan-era anxieties; Jaeger (1997) 182–3 on how Livy's written Rome and Augustus' built one cooperate and/or compete; Feldherr (1998) 223–4 *et passim* on how the language and imagery of contemporary public spectacle is used to connect individuals to the collective; and Chaplin (2001) 168–96 on Livy and Augustus' shared impulse to promote certain social values through exemplarity. In this chapter, then, I am not proposing a profoundly new and original way of understanding Livy's contemporary engagements: I merely observe that these engagements have "political" ramifications in the broad sense, and I offer some new readings expressly interpreted in "political" terms.

the boundaries of established competitive arenas and creating (or formalizing) a new competitive arena in the process. The nexus of innovation and competition is also explored elsewhere in Livy's history and is pertinent more generally to the situation of aristocrats early in the Augustan era when Livy wrote his surviving books. Indeed, it may pertain to Livy's own situation as probably a municipal elite who chose to make his name in Rome as a "professional historian."

Virtually every discussion of Appius cites De Sanctis' *dictum* that he is the first "personalità viva" of Roman history. Most of this "liveliness" is attributable to Livy. Without Livy's connected account in books 9–10 of the years 312–295 BCE, and of Appius' activities in that period, we would have a scatter of suggestive citations in various authors, along with the *elogium* from the Forum Augustum (see below)—enough to reveal a figure with unusual capabilities and involvements, but hardly sufficing to "animate" him. Yet, to my knowledge, no study has been devoted to examining how Livy constructs and deploys the figure of Appius in the context of his own history, and in light of his own aims and interests in these books. Historians have speculated at length on the aims and agendas of the historical Appius, extracting data from Livy's account, but—reasonably enough—rejecting or heavily modifying Livy's interpretations.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, scholarly discussion of Appius within Livy is almost exclusively source-critical. Such analyses, however, rely upon assumptions about the nature of "factional politics" in Appius' and subsequent ages, about how closely Livy's sources are implicated in these factional politics, and about how transparent Livy's text is to the interpretations and biases of his sources, that are now considered highly problematic.<sup>9</sup> For such reasons, many Livian scholars have turned away from source criticism in recent decades, seeking instead to recover and better understand Livy's own voice, agendas, and working methods.<sup>10</sup> Like these scholars, I assume that Livy has constructed his work consciously and intentionally—by invention, selection, or both—to promulgate a vision of the past that addresses his and his readers' contemporary needs and interests. I seek to understand what those needs

<sup>8</sup> On the state of these questions see Raaflaub, Richards, and Samons (1992) 34–50 with bibliography.

<sup>9</sup> Notable among the (generally misguided) source-critical discussions are Mommsen (1962[1864]) 1.314–18; Ferenczy (1970) 79–83; Wiseman (1979) 86–90; and Humm (2001) 85–96.

<sup>10</sup> See above, n. 7; also Kraus (1994).

are, and how Livy's version of events meets them. In this spirit, I offer an account of Appius' doings in books 9–10 that attends to how this figure participates in the dynamics of Livy's narrative. What, in Livy's construction of Appius, makes him seem so "alive?" A seemingly abrasive personality is part of it, as Appius is repeatedly shown in conflict with his peers. This, however, is but one device for portraying him as an innovator who establishes a novel arena of aristocratic competition and whose actions and values thereby diverge from those of his more conventional peers.

Appius first enters Livy's narrative at 9.29.5–30.2, the account of his tumultuous censorship (312 BCE). For virtually every censorial act, Livy remarks on the antagonism it arouses, and upon Appius' isolation in pursuing such a course. First, Appius' revision of the senate roll is met with blanket disapproval: his colleague Plautius, refusing to be associated with a revision he deems *infamis atque inuidiosa* ("disgraceful and odious," 9.29.7), resigns the office, and the consuls of the following year, using similarly harsh language, reject the revised roll.<sup>11</sup> Livy resumes this discussion at 9.46.10–15, when he reports that the censors of 304 BCE overturned another of Appius' censorial reforms: he had distributed poor city-dwellers across all the tribes, which Livy seems to have understood as an attempt to gain power or influence (*opes*) by impacting the voting assemblies.<sup>12</sup> The resistance these measures provoke perhaps implies that they are novel and unprecedented. His innovativeness is stressed, however, when Livy reports that he refused to abdicate along with his colleague, and so continued on as sole censor (9.29.7–8; cf. 9.34.17–22); and that he refused to resign even after the

<sup>11</sup> *Consules... questi apud populum deformatum ordinem prava lectione senatus... negauerunt eam lectionem se, quae sine recti prauisque discrimine ad gratiam ac libidinem facta esset, obseruatuos* ("the consuls... complained before the people that the senate had been disfigured by a perverse revision of the membership... they announced that they would not accept that revision, which had been made in a willful and partisan spirit, without regard for right and wrong," 9.30.1–2).

<sup>12</sup> *Qui senatum primus... inquinauerit et, posteaquam eam lectionem nemo ratam habuit nec in curia adeptus erat quas petierat opes, urbanis humilibus per omnes tribus diuisis forum et campum corrupit* ("who first debased the senate... and, after nobody accepted his revision as valid and he had failed to acquire the power in the senate house that he had sought, he perverted the tribal and centuriate assemblies by distributing the urban rabble across all the tribes," 9.46.10–11). The historical problems in understanding these purported tribal reforms are large: see Raaflaub, Richards, and Samons (1992) 39–42 and Oakley (1997) 3.629–35 for overview and bibliography. For my purposes, what matters is that Livy presents Appius as innovating against great opposition in the quest for personal advantage.

lawful 18 month term of this office had elapsed (9.33–4). With these notices, Livy underscores Appius' departure from exemplary models, the united disapproval of Romans of every social order, and Appius' own abrasive stubbornness.<sup>13</sup> Yet another innovation, as Livy presents it, is that Appius as censor removed the cult rites of the Ara Maxima from the supervision of the Potitii, their traditional guardians. Such meddling with ancient rites, Livy avers, is risky: the entire family of Potitii died out within a year, and Appius himself was eventually blinded due to divine anger (9.29.9–11).<sup>14</sup>

Livy credits a more fundamental innovation to Appius at 9.42.1–4, when he enters upon his first consulship (307 BCE). We are told that Q. Fabius Rullianus, consul the previous year with P. Decius Mus, is prorogued in his command against the Samnites, *maxime Appio aduersante* ("over Appius' strong objections," 9.42.2); meanwhile, a new war against the Sallentini is allotted to the other incoming consul, L. Volumnius. Consequently, Livy says, Appius *Romae mansit ut urbanis artibus opes auget* *quando belli decus penes alios esset* ("remained at Rome in order to grow his resources through urban arts, since the glory of war was in the hands of others," 9.42.4). This sentence likely explains Appius' opposition to Fabius being prorogued. For Livy presents to his readers a society in which war-fighting is far the most prestigious arena of aristocratic competition, and where celebrating triumphs, dedicating temples (and other monuments) from booty, and distributing booty to soldiers, are the chief ways of publicizing and enhancing the prestige of oneself and one's family.<sup>15</sup> In such a society, an aristocrat cannot pass over lightly the chance to gain military glory during his consulship, when he holds *imperium*. Appius, seeing both possible wars in the hands

<sup>13</sup> United disapproval: 9.33.5; cf. [Appius] *summa... invidia omnium ordinum solus censuram gessit* ("to the vast annoyance of all classes, he continued as sole censor," 9.34.26). Abrasiveness, stubbornness: the tribune Sempronius at 9.34.22–4 accuses him of *superbia*, *peruicacia*, *audacia*, and *contemptus deorum* for refusing to abdicate; the (authorial) narrator twice attributes *peritancia* to him (9.29.8, 10.26.6), and calls him *acer et ambitiosus* (10.15.8).

<sup>14</sup> Divine vengeance is indeed slow (*post aliquot annos*), since Livy must imagine Appius as sighted seventeen years later, during his campaigns as praetor in 295. However, *Per.* 13 claims that he was long blind by 279, when he delivered the famous speech against peace with Pyrrhus. Conversely, Val. Max. 8.13.5 seems to imagine him as blind through most of his adult life—perhaps, indeed, blinded by Hercules in his censorial year (1.1.17). Discussion by Oakley (1997) 3.383.

<sup>15</sup> Livy's depiction of the preeminence of war-fighting in this period is probably historically accurate: Harris (1979) 18–29; Hölkeskamp (1993) 22, 26. Oakley (1997) 3.548–50 discusses Appius' actions in this passage.

of others, is therefore (according to Livy) forced again to innovate: to make something of his consulship—to enhance his prestige and visibility—he must find a novel, non-military means to "grow his resources" (*opes auget*).<sup>16</sup> "Urban arts" are the means he chooses. Later developments help clarify what these are. But in the meantime Livy's reader, recalling the narrative of his censorship (9.29–30), may conjecture that these arts include the kinds of (non-military) activities mentioned there. Livy himself makes little of the gigantic, unprecedented public works that Appius undertook as censor—he merely notes that Appius' name outshone his colleague Plautius' by being attached to the road and aqueduct (9.29.5). Nevertheless, these public works were regarded by posterity—including Livy's contemporaries and readers—as the chief monuments to the man, the objects that preserved and bestowed glory upon his name.<sup>17</sup> Livy's reader may also recall the narratives of earlier Appii Claudii, whom Livy made most visible in their domestic roles as antagonists of the plebs: thus the domestic focus of the current Appius might be thought to reprise an established familial pattern. In the event, though (as we shall see), this Appius will surpass his ancestors by remaking domestic politics altogether.<sup>18</sup>

The characterization of Appius continues to develop in book 10, where Livy engineers a series of face-to-face encounters between Appius and his principal competitors: Decius, Fabius, and Volumnius. Rossi has recently studied Livy's syncretic technique, focusing on how Scipio and Hannibal are compared and contrasted in books 21–30.<sup>19</sup> In book 10, Livy has created a smaller-scale but multilateral syncretism, with these four figures interacting in various bilateral combinations. To borrow a term from philosophers who study the ethics of art, this is a "virtue wheel," a common device in multiple-character narratives, which can be defined

<sup>16</sup> Similar situation and rhetoric at 4.24.3.

<sup>17</sup> Appius was also "popularly" remembered for the temple of Bellona and the speech regarding Pyrrhus: see the Augustan *elogium* below; also, e.g., Cic. *Cael.* 34. Under Augustus, at least, roads could be repaired *ex manubiis*, thereby monumentalizing a successful general (Suet. *Aug.* 30). But nothing suggests the Appian way was built *ex manubiis*: indeed, Appius had apparently held no military command prior to his censorship.

<sup>18</sup> Vasaly (1987) discusses the patterns set by the first four Appii Claudii in Livy 1–5; more generally Walter (2004) 121–30, and Oakley (1997) 3.357–66. Given this family tradition, it seems fitting that a new arena of aristocratic competition in *artes urbanae* be pioneered by an Appius. But the achievement is no less pioneering for being done by an Appius.

<sup>19</sup> Rossi (2004) 359–81.

as “a studied array of characters who both correspond and contrast with each other along the dimension of a certain virtue or package of virtues.”<sup>20</sup> Here Livy defines the novel competitive niche that Appius is carving out by comparing his contemporaries’ relative abilities and deficiencies in domestic and military arts. The first such confrontation, a debate over a proposed *lex Ogulnia* (300 BCE) admitting plebeians to the augurate and pontificate (10.7.1), pits Appius in opposition to the measure against Decius in support of it. Decius, already graced with impeccable war-fighting credentials, here delivers a substantial oration (10.7.3–8.12) in which he assumes the mantle of spokesman for the plebeian nobility in its continuing struggle for empowerment against patrician privilege. In Appius, Decius has a patrician opponent conveniently connected to a *gens* renowned for its antagonism toward the plebs.<sup>21</sup> Yet Livy gives Appius no speech to counter Decius’, and Decius’ argument sways the electoral assembly—hardly a success for the specialist in *urbanae artes*.

An encounter with Fabius shortly follows. Appius seeks to have himself elected consul along with Fabius for 296 BCE (10.15.7–8)—two patricians, in order (says Livy) to shut plebeians out of their lawful share of office. Yet Fabius, the incumbent consul presiding over the election, refuses to accept his own nomination, declaring that it would be illegal and set a bad example (10.15.10–11); Appius is then returned as consul along with the plebeian Volumnius, his consular colleague from eleven years earlier. Here Livy remarks, *nobilitas obiectare Fabio fugisse eum Ap. Claudium collegam, eloquentia civilibusque artibus haud dubie praestantem* (“The nobles criticized Fabius for avoiding Appius Claudius as his colleague, a man undoubtedly preeminent in eloquence and civil arts,” 10.15.12). Strikingly, this statement attributes to Appius’ peers the view that he is “the best” in a certain area, and furthermore that other aristocrats *should* be willing to compete in this area themselves. Thus, even a Fabius—universally acknowledged as the preeminent military com-

<sup>20</sup> Carroll (2002) 12, also 12–19 with further bibliography.

<sup>21</sup> On Claudian “arrogance,” see above, n. 18 with Wiseman (1979) 86–90. Decius again speaks up for (noble) Plebeian rights at 10.24—supposedly in brief, as befits a man of deeds not words (10.24.4), yet Livy gives his speech a full Oxford page (10.24.8–17). Appius’ opponents, when plebeian, make much of his “anti-plebeian” lineage; cf. 9.34.1–5. Appius’ supposed opposition, here and elsewhere, to plebeian nobles taking up their lawful privileges has been thought inconsistent with his other acts benefiting lower-ranking plebeians, stirring much scholarly debate: Linke (2000) 75–6; Raaflaub, Richards, and Samons (1992) 44–5 with bibliography.

mander of this era (10.3.7, 11.9, 21.15–16), whose *gloria* in this sphere surpasses all others<sup>22</sup>—is thought diminished for shirking the implicit challenge to compete in this alternative arena. Fabius’ reluctance is the more remarkable in that (as Livy presents him) he is hardly incompetent in domestic politics: his honorific cognomen Maximus was supposedly earned for his tribal reforms as censor in 304 (9.46.14–15—in fact, for reversing Appius’ reforms of 312), and Livy further declares that, in securing the grain supply as aedile in 298, he measured up to his own military achievements.<sup>23</sup>

But if Appius overshadows Fabius in the (domestic) arena he supposedly dominates, how might he do in the (military) arena where Fabius has proven his mastery? Deprived of any command during his first consulship, he now, in his second, suffers further delay: for once again, the previous consuls Fabius and Decius are prorogued in their command in Samnium for six months, leaving the new consuls Appius and Volumnius without commands (10.16.1–2).<sup>24</sup> When news arrives of a rising in Etruria, we learn that Volumnius has already departed for Samnium with two legions to join the proconsuls (10.18.3, 8–9), leaving only Appius available to lead an army north. At long last, he has his chance in the field.<sup>25</sup> He bungles it. Livy says that he showed little aptitude as commander, joining battle at disadvantageous times and places, causing the enemy to swell with confidence, and ultimately losing confidence in, as well as losing the confidence of, his soldiers

<sup>22</sup> Probably historically true, since his iterated magistracies and prorogued commands likely do reflect his perceived military competence: Hölkesskamp (1987) 133, 138 (130–4 in general on iteration).

<sup>23</sup> [*Cura*] *qualis in bellicis rebus multis tempestatibus fuerat, talis domi tum in annonae dispensatione praeparando ac conuehendo frumento fuisset* (“[matters would have been bad] had this man not now taken such pains in planning the administration of the market and procuring grain as he had taken on many previous occasions regarding military matters,” 10.11.9).

<sup>24</sup> After narrating the proconsuls’ subsequent successes in Samnium (10.16–17), Livy mentions disagreement among his sources about who won these victories: some credit one or the other proconsul, while others credit the consul Volumnius, and still others credit both consuls. For my purposes, what matters is that Livy adopts a version that keeps Appius in Rome and out of battle as long as possible, concordant with his overall presentation of Appius’ distinctive specialization and competence.

<sup>25</sup> In 10.18 Livy carefully accounts for why Fabius, Decius, and Volumnius are unavailable, and he stresses the urgency of the Etruscan situation; thus he makes clear that the situation must be addressed, and that Appius is the only available bearer of *imperium*. His phrasing at 10.18.3, in fact, implies that Volumnius would have been preferred (as, indeed, he clearly was for the Samnite command, for which he had already departed).

(10.18.5–6). Livy then reports, but refuses to affirm, the assertion in some sources that Appius sent a letter to Volumnius requesting aid (10.18.7): at any rate Volumnius breaks off an already successful campaign in Samnium (10.18.8–9) and brings his army to Etruria, claiming that Appius summoned him (10.18.10–14).

Here begins the third “set-piece” confrontation that Livy has constructed between Appius and his major contemporaries. Appius angrily denies having written for help, and speaks curt words (given in *oratio recta*, as befits one deemed outstanding in *eloquentia*); he accuses his colleague of seeking glory in Etruria at his expense.<sup>26</sup> Volumnius’ words, given in *oratio obliqua*, are accommodating, and he prepares to return to Samnium (10.18.14). At this point, the officers of Appius’ army gather around the consuls (*digredientes iam consules legati tribunique ex Appiano exercitu circumstant*, 10.19.1)—the assembling of spectators being Livy’s characteristic device for emphasizing the civic, communal significance of the events unfolding<sup>27</sup>—exhorting Appius not to spurn his colleague’s help, regardless how it was offered, and begging Volumnius to stay, despite the quarrel, for the good of the *res publica* (10.19.1–4). Under such pressure the consuls are drawn into a highly ritualized performance situation: a full-scale, formal public assembly (*contio*) before Appius’ army, with each consul delivering a speech regarding what should be done. Competing now with words, Appius might be expected to have the advantage; yet Livy says that Volumnius’ verbal performance stood up well against his colleague’s outstanding eloquence, since he had the better cause (*Volumnius, causa superior, ne infacundus quidem aduersus eximiam eloquentiam collegae visus esset*, 10.19.6). Indeed, Livy shows Volumnius outperforming Appius, contrary to expectation: when Appius, offering grudging praise for his colleague’s speech, jeers that Volumnius should thank him for his unexpected fluency, as he was now a popular orator when he had hardly dared speak during their previous consulship, Volumnius “caps” him by replying, *quam mallet... tu a me strenue facere quam ego abs te scite loqui didicissem* (“would that you had learned from me

<sup>26</sup> Anger: *haud immerito iratum si nihil scripserat, inliberali et ingrato animo, si eguerat ope, dissimulantem* (“quite reasonably angered if he had not written, but dissembling with an ungenerous and ungrateful heart if he had needed assistance,” 10.18.10). Accusation: *etenim minime consentaneum est, cum bello tuo forsitan uix sufficias, huc te ad opem ferendam aliis gloriarı uenisse* (“Indeed it is completely inappropriate that, when you may scarcely be equal to your own war, you boast that you have come bearing assistance to others,” 10.18.13).

<sup>27</sup> Feldherr (1998) in general, though he does not specifically discuss the spectacular dynamics of oratory.

to act forcefully, than that I had learned from you to speak cleverly,” 10.19.8)—here with Appius’ words in *oratio obliqua* and Volumnius’ in *oratio recta*, as befits this inversion of the expected order.<sup>28</sup> Yet, having shown that he can speak effectively if the situation requires, this man of action does not neglect the main point: he concludes by remarking that the current issue is not to decide who is the better orator, but who the better general.<sup>29</sup>

Appius is clearly worsted in this encounter, as earlier by Decius (10.7–9): paradoxically, Livy never gives his acknowledged master of *eloquentia* an extended speech or any clear rhetorical success.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, Livy here validates the arena of aristocratic competition that he presents Appius as trailblazing. For Volumnius’ triumphant *sententia*, privileging forceful action (*strenue facere*) over clever speaking (*scite loqui*), implicitly concedes that—somewhere, sometime—the latter does have its uses. Moreover, the apparently sharp distinction Volumnius draws between these skills is undermined precisely by the cleverness of the *sententia* by which he articulates that distinction. Indeed, Volumnius himself sets a new competitive standard to challenge Appius. For the competition Livy creates here is not, *pace* Volumnius, over who is the better general or orator, but who is better in his off-field. Already a fine general, Volumnius has now shown he can rise to the occasion in speaking (perhaps thanks to Appius’ own example)—the very challenge Fabius was earlier accused of shirking (10.15.12). But can Appius, for his part, yet make a passable showing in generalship? We soon find out, for the soldiers, with an outcry, persuade Volumnius and his army to remain. Volumnius orders his soldiers to advance into battle and Appius is forced to do likewise, though fearing that Volumnius has stolen his show (*cernentem seu pugnante seu quieto se fore collegae uictoriam*, 10.19.13). Once battle is joined, however, Appius devises a stratagem by which to recover his share of glory; Livy writes:

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Cass. Dio 8.27. Oakley (1997) 4.219 observes that Appius’ expression *acceptum referre* is a metaphor from banking—another element, perhaps, of his characterization as a man of the forum.

<sup>29</sup> The *topos* that aristocrats compete in words as well as deeds is as old as Homer. For its Roman manifestation—defining the proper time and place for generals vis-à-vis orators—see, e.g., Cic. *Mur.* 30 (quoting Ennius); Harris (1979) 22–3.

<sup>30</sup> Also at 9.34 the tribune Sempronius speaks at length against Appius continuing as censor; Appius justifies himself only with a legal niggles given in *oratio obliqua* (9.32.8–9). He persuades three tribunes, thanks to whose veto he remains in office (9.34.26), but apparently persuades no one else (9.34.26; cf. 9.33.5).



dicitur Appius in medio pugnae discrimine, ita ut inter prima signa manibus ad caelum sublatis conspiceretur, ita precatus esse: "Bellona, si hodie nobis uictoriam dūis, ast ego tibi templum uoueo." haec precatus uelut instigante dea et ipse collegae et exercitus uirtutem aequauit ducis.

(Liv. 10.19.17–18)

It is said that Appius, at precisely the critical point of the battle, so that he might be seen among the standards in the forefront with his arms raised heavenwards, prayed as follows: "Bellona, if today you grant us victory, then I vow you a temple." With this prayer, as though spurred on by the goddess, he matched his colleague's valor and his army matched its general's.

Significantly, Livy makes Appius stand in the forefront—the proper place for a courageous general rallying his troops—where everyone sees him making the vow (and again, the reference to the spectators imbues the action with civic significance, conferring weight and legitimacy upon it). And given that war-fighting is not his specialty, it makes sense that he calls upon a war-goddess for help. Thus does he "equal" (*aequauit*) his colleague in battle,<sup>31</sup> just as his colleague equaled him in the *contio*. Finally, the temple he vows, presumably to be dedicated from the spoils of this victory,<sup>32</sup> will itself attest (rightly or wrongly) his military glory. So even if, as Appius fears, this specific victory redounds more to Volumnius' credit, by this dedication he will monumentalize himself as a war-fighter, complementing the road and aqueduct that monumentalize his prowess in *artes urbanae*. In the long run, it works: the temple of Bellona became the venue for senatorial deliberations over granting triumphs.<sup>33</sup> Thus, ironically, unwarlike Appius came to preside over all subsequent decisions regarding the supreme military honor the *res publica* could bestow—an honor that he himself never gained.

Despite the consuls' strife, Livy makes Volumnius into a conciliator who understands and articulates what his prickly colleague is good for. Volumnius is recalled to Rome to conduct elections, with the threats

<sup>31</sup> Massa-Pairault (2001) 103–4 suggests that Bellona may be especially associated with this particular enemy, making Appius' vow an *euocatio* such as Camillus employed with Veian Juno (Livy 5.22.3–7). But whether Livy or his readers would have interpreted the vow this way is uncertain.

<sup>32</sup> Though Livy does not say any booty was reserved: *castra capta direptaque; praeda ingens parta et militi concessa est* ("the camp was taken and pillaged; vast booty was procured and given over to the soldiers," 10.19.22).

<sup>33</sup> Temple: Viscogliosi, *LTUR* (1993) 1.190–2. Triumph debates occurring there: Livy 26.21.1, 28.9.5, 28.38.2, 31.47.6, etc.

in Etruria growing greater (emphasized by Appius' dispatches, which Volumnius corroborates: 10.21.11–15). Perhaps now feeling his oats as a public speaker, Volumnius addresses the assembled voters. He describes the military situation, and eventually endorses a particular slate of candidates:

Decium Fabiumque qui uno animo, una mente uiuerent esse praeterea uiros natos militiae, factis magnos, ad uerborum linguaeque certamina rudes. ea ingenia consularia esse: callidos sollertesque, iuris atque eloquentiae consultos, qualis Ap. Claudius esset, urbi ac foro praesides habendos praetoresque ad reddenda iura creandos esse.

(Liv. 10.22.6–8)

Decius and Fabius, who lived as with one heart and one mind, were moreover men born for campaigning: great in their deeds, they were inexperienced in contests of words and tongue. Theirs were consular dispositions. But men who were clever and resourceful, practiced in law and eloquence, such as Appius Claudius was, should be regarded as custodians of the city and forum, and should be elected praetors to administer justice.

Thus, in this most formalized and institutionalized of settings, namely an assembly of the *populus* prior to the vote of the *comitia centuriata*, Volumnius publicly defines the competitive arena appropriate to Appius' distinctive abilities—where *scite loqui*, as he put it earlier, has its time and place. Once again demonstrating his own passing competence as an orator, his words here are persuasive: the *comitia* duly return Fabius and Decius as consuls, along with Appius as praetor; Volumnius' own *imperium* is prorogued (10.22.8–9).

Two further encounters with contemporaries underscore the characterization that has emerged so far. Appius, alone again in his Etruscan command, had been sending alarmed dispatches to the Senate (10.21.11–12), and in terror had surrounded his camp with a double stockade and trench. Fabius, arriving as consul to relieve him, orders the soldiers to tear up the stockade—removing their protection but nevertheless dispelling their fear, such is their confidence in Fabius' generalship (10.25.5–10). Appius returns to Rome to assume his praetorship and (presumably) "preside over city and forum," as Volumnius put it. After Decius' *deuotio* at the battle of Sentinum, however, the praetor is pressed back into military service, since Decius' army in Samnium lacks a commander. Appius quickly joins forces with Volumnius, who is still in Samnium as proconsul, and the two win a battle together (10.31.3–7). These episodes seem to recapitulate aspects

of the encounter with Volumnius in Etruria: Appius again does poorly as sole commander, requiring rescue by a better general. But he does passably when collaborating closely with a better general (in the event, always Volumnius).

To summarize, Livy's Appius in books 9–10 is a “lively” figure insofar as he is stubborn and abrasive—personal characteristics, however, that reflect his structural function in the narrative as an innovator who changes the rules of contemporary aristocratic competition. The “virtue wheel” allows Livy's reader to see exactly what Appius changes, and how. A surfeit of fine generals (Fabius, Decius, Volumnius) keeps him long shut out of a military command, the premier arena of aristocratic competition. Reduced to engaging in urban pursuits, Appius innovatively decides to seek power and glory from them. In time, his contemporaries concede his mastery in eloquence and jurisprudence—but they also undertake to compete with him in these areas, thereby establishing and legitimating *urbanae artes* as a field of aristocratic competition. Yet Appius cannot completely neglect the battlefield: he makes a creditable showing in Volumnius' domain of excellence, as Volumnius does in Appius'. The virtue wheel also characterizes Appius' other main contemporaries. Fabius, the unrivalled master of the battlefield, twice overshadows Appius in the military sphere, but is mocked for avoiding competition with Appius in civil arts. Decius, another fine general and purportedly man of few words (10.24.4), emerges as a voluble spokesman for the rights of plebeian nobles: he speaks first against Appius regarding the *lex Ogulnia* and wins his point, while later, speaking against Fabius on the allocation of provinces, he loses it.

Why should Livy construct such a complex, transgressive, innovative figure? What does this Appius do for Livy? One way to approach this question is to consider the rather different version of Appius that Augustus placed in the gallery of *summi viri* in his Forum. Here, each hero had a statue accompanied by two inscriptions: one, on the statue's base, gave the commemorand's name and offices held; the second and larger, on a plaque below the niche in which the statue stood, specified his military victories and other items deemed noteworthy (including, sometimes, achievements in the domestic as well as in the military spheres). For Appius, these two inscriptions ran as follows:

Appius Claudius C. f. Caecus. censor, cos bis, dict, interrex III, pr II, aed cur II, q, tr mil III.

(Degrassi [1937] no. 79)

Appius Claudius Caecus, son of Gaius. Censor, consul twice, dictator, interrex three times, praetor twice, curule aedile twice, quaestor, military tribune three times.

complura oppida de Samnitibus cepit, Sabinorum et Tuscorum exercitum fudit. pacem fieri cum Pyrrho rege prohibuit. in censura uiam Appiam strauit et aquam in urbem adduxit. aedem Bellonae fecit.

(Degrassi [1937] nos. 12, 79)

He took a number of towns from the Samnites and routed an army of Sabines and Etruscans. He prevented peace being made with king Pyrrhus. In his censorship he laid the Appian way and brought an aqueduct into the city. He dedicated the temple of Bellona.

Scholars have noted that the formulaic character of the *elogia* from the Forum Augustum tends to cast all memoranda into the same mold: one that, above all, emphasizes and valorizes military achievement. Here Appius is credited with victories that can be correlated (somewhat awkwardly) with battles described in Livy, and viewers would probably have assumed that the temple was vowed in battle and paid for from Appius' share of the booty, though the inscription (like Livy) is silent on this.<sup>34</sup> Also, the “full” listing of offices, including junior ones like the military tribunate, both in this and other *elogia*, reminds the reader that young Republican aristocrats routinely apprenticed in the art of war, the most important single subject of their secondary education at least until the late second century BCE.<sup>35</sup> Augustus' Appius, then, like other figures in the gallery, is a respectable military hero with some noteworthy public works also to his credit. It is hard to recognize here the restless innovator and master of *artes urbanae* seen in Livy's narrative;

<sup>34</sup> Victories: Münzer (*RE* 3.2684) believes *complura oppida de Samnitibus cepit* refers to the campaigns of 296: Livy says Fabius and Decius took three *oppida* (10.16–17), but notes an alternative version (10.17.11–12) in which the consuls win these victories—arguably reconcilable with the *elogium*. Conversely, Massa-Pairault (2001) 99–101 takes the phrase as referring to the campaigns of 295 that Livy attributes to Appius as praetor and Volumnius as proconsul (10.31), though Livy mentions no *oppida* taken. For the Etruscans and Sabines of the *elogium*—where Livy has Etruscans and Samnites (10.18–20)—see Massa-Pairault (2001) 102–4; on the possible confusion of Sabines with Samnites, in this *elogium* and elsewhere, see Oakley (1997) 4.30–4. Temple-vowing: the *elogium* for Marius (Degrassi (1939) nos. 17, 83) specifies that he dedicated the temple to Honos and Virtus *de manibus*; perhaps also Postumius Regillensis (Degrassi [1937] no. 10).

<sup>35</sup> Young aristocrats' training in warfare: Harris (1979) 10–15. Appius' likely military experience as a young man: Ferenczy (1965) 392–3. Other *elogia* from the Forum Augustum mentioning military tribunates: Degrassi (1937) nos. 6, 7, 15, 17/83, 80, 81, 84; cf. 19.

likewise, the minimal military competence of Livy's Appius—the seeming novice who first takes the field only in his second consulship, and whose generalship is inept without expert guidance—is hard to recognize in the *elogium*'s standard-issue military victor who in his youth served no less than three times as military tribune.

How might we account for Augustus' version of Appius? Scholars, taking their cue from Suetonius (*Aug.* 31.5), have plausibly argued that the gallery of *summi viri* furnished a set of exemplary figures, and canons of achievement, for future aristocrats to emulate and for Augustus to present himself as having surpassed.<sup>36</sup> Yet what standard Appius sets is not altogether clear from the *elogium*. In his military achievements, even as presented here, he does not surpass other commemorands who have numerous victories and triumphs. Perhaps, instead, his censorship and its great public works are deemed exemplary: he is among the two most famous censors (with Cato the elder), and Augustus makes much of his own censorial activities (*RG* 8). Likewise, the temple to the war goddess Bellona should perhaps recall the temple of the war god Mars Ultor that looms over this gallery, itself dedicated by Augustus *ex manubiis*, and perhaps more generally recalls the 82 temples Augustus claims to have restored (*RG* 21). Yet it seems perverse to argue that achievements listed *after* his military victories are what “really” matter: the point of the formulaic structure listing victories first must be to insist that impeccable military credentials are the *sine qua non* of inclusion in the gallery; that this is the arena, above all others, in which exemplary aristocrats must have competed effectively.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Frisch (1980) discusses Augustus' probable oversight of the *elogia*, and the respects in which he surpassed these figures; also Luce (1990) 125–9. Central texts: Suet. *Aug.* 31.5; Cass. Dio 55.10.

<sup>37</sup> Anderson's suggestions (1984) 84–5 regarding Appius' relevance for Augustus are not persuasive. The *elogia* have been thought to emphasize the arts of peace (Kellum [1981] 116–124) cited in Chaplin [2001] 179–80), modeling achievement in non-military venues—a new mode of heroism for a new era. But the enumeration of military achievements first seems to give them ideological primacy, and accords with the martial program of the whole Forum Augustum-Mars Ultor complex. Surviving fragments of the statues prove some were togate and others armored. But togas need not imply the arts of peace (Rinaldi Tufi [1981] 84) since they may have been painted to represent the triumphator's *toga picta* (cf. Suet. *Aug.* 31.5: *statuas... triumphali effigie... dedicavit*—though two known commemorands, L. Albinus and Appius himself, were not *triumphatores*). Chaplin's ([2001] 184–92) observation that some *elogia* stress rewards for military achievement other than or ancillary to the traditional triumph is attractive. However, this observation does not directly illuminate Appius' *elogium*.

Livy's version, in contrast—deemphasizing Appius' military capabilities and activities—tallies with his efforts to present Appius as an innovator on other fronts, and differentiates him the more sharply from contemporaries whose “conventional” strengths and weaknesses are the opposite of his own. Moreover, Livy famously declares in his preface that the social benefits of reading history reside in encountering every kind of example, from which one must choose what to imitate and what to avoid (*praef.* 10); he further asks his reader to contemplate *quae uita, qui mores fuerint, per quos uiros quibusque artibus domi militiaeque et partum et auctum imperium sit* (“what the life and customs were, through what men and by what skills, at home and at war, the empire was begotten and grew large,” *praef.* 9). Thus, as scholars have recognized, Livy self-consciously participates in a discourse of exemplarity in which Augustus and most other contemporary Romans also engage.<sup>38</sup> Can Livy's innovative Appius be seen as providing a model for his (presumably elite) readers to imitate or avoid, and/or as demonstrating any of the *artes* through which the city grew great?

Certainly Appius is not the only figure in the extant portions of Livy who reorients received modes of aristocratic competition: he finds an imitator (though is not cited as a model) in Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator. Like Appius, Fabius is forced to innovate by circumstances beyond his control. Traditionally, hand-to-hand fighting in pitched battles was thought to secure the good of the *res publica*, and was rewarded by the ascription of positive values like *uirtus* and *gloria*: a tight nexus of value-oriented actions and action-oriented values. Early in the second Punic war, however, Hannibal's superiority in fighting pitched battles drives a wedge into this nexus, creating a military and ethical crisis simultaneously. For now, fighting pitched battles endangers rather than secures the *res publica*; the means and the end no longer form a seamless whole that can be valued as one. To which, then, do these values attach? To the means, such that valor and glory inhere in fighting traditional pitched battles and facing death bravely, even if the army is annihilated and the commonwealth put in mortal danger (Trebia, Trasimene, Cannae)? Or to the end of protecting the commonwealth, here requiring that the army be kept intact and therefore

<sup>38</sup> On the operation of exempla in Livy's text and Augustus' forum, see Chaplin (2001) 168–96 (*et passim* on Livy); on Roman exemplarity more generally see Roller (2004) 1–10.

avoiding pitched battles? Fabius' challenge in book 22 is to advocate the latter view: to remake military *gloria* as a strategic rather than tactical value, bucking many contemporaries who reflexively embrace the former view. Eventually Fabius carries the day, thereby reconfiguring an existing arena of aristocratic competition—the most important arena, in fact: that of war-fighting—whereas Appius innovated by creating an entirely new arena alongside war-fighting. The traces of Fabius' success are visible in the (apparent) paradox that he gained *gloria* (of the “state-preserving” sort) precisely by having foregone *gloria* (of the “bravery in combat” sort).<sup>39</sup> Beyond both Appius and Fabius Cunctator, Livy provides still further instances of figures who, under particular circumstances, receive greater acclaim by foregoing the standard, institutionalized modes of recognition (e.g., by declining a deserved triumph) than they would have received from being recognized in the standard way (e.g., 2.47.11, 3.21.7, 4.20.1–3, 7.38.3, 9.40.20–1, 24.9.11, 28.9.10–15). Indeed, early in book 4, the plebeian tribune Canuleius delivers a speech arguing that innovation itself is entirely traditional (4.4.1–5).

While hardly preoccupied with innovation and innovators, then, Livy shows a persistent interest in new and unusual ways for aristocrats to win glory and in changes to the arenas in which aristocrats compete. Here, I suggest, is an aspect of his contemporary “political” engagement (in the broader sense). The civil war years and preceding decade or two—the era in which Livy and Augustus came of age—featured aristocratic competition run amok. Prominent aristocrats sought prestige and status by holding traditional magistracies for ever longer or more frequent terms, by receiving ever more exceptional appointments, by conducting increasingly grandiose (and multiple) triumphs, by sponsoring ever more spectacular games, and ultimately by displaying their military prowess against one another as well as against “external” enemies. The bleeding of the aristocracy during the civil wars eliminated or sharply reduced some of the traditionally most competitive families. With the end of armed conflict after Actium, there began a

<sup>39</sup> Passages in book 22 exploring this crisis in values: 22.12.12, 22.14.4–15.2, 22.25.14–15, 22.39.8–22, 22.44.5–7. Fabius' stance is described similarly elsewhere: e.g., Plut. *Fab.* 4, 14, 17; Enn. *Ann.* frags. 363–5 Skutsch (1985). The *elogium* for Fabius in the Forum Augustum, meanwhile, presents a fairly unexceptional military hero, whose radical strategy of non-engagement is hinted at only in the phrases *Hannibalem ... subsequendo coercuit* and (perhaps) *dux aetatis suae cautissimus* (Degrassi [1937] no. 80). See Beck (2000) 79, 90, with further references at 384.

slow process of reconstructing the aristocracy, and of recreating stable, regulated (if not self-regulating) competitive modes. Even during the 20s BCE, when Livy probably completed his first decade and wrote the second and third, Octavian/Augustus was establishing himself not only as superior beyond competition in the traditional competitive arenas (triumphs, consulships...), but also as an umpire in the competition among other aristocrats. He took personal control of some aspects of traditional competition by (for instance) holding the consulship himself every year from 31–23 BCE, and—after 27—personally designating legates to military commands within his vast *provincia*. He also determined in other cases what was “out of bounds”: he disallowed Licinius Crassus' attempt to dedicate the *spolia opima*, the event behind the famous Livian passage regarding Augustus and the corselet of Cossus (4.20.5–11); and he reined in Cornelius Gallus for what he apparently deemed excessive self-aggrandizement as prefect of Egypt.<sup>40</sup> During the teens BCE, when Livy must have completed the remaining books that now that now survive (and more), further patterns may have been emerging, such as the restriction of full-scale triumphs, and also of the right to dedicate large-scale public works within Rome, to Augustus' own family. Indeed, Agrippa declined triumphs in 19 and 14, and even Tiberius supposedly refrained from celebrating every triumph he earned in this period, thereby winning praise for his moderation in some quarters.<sup>41</sup> But new competitive venues emerged as older ones withered: now aristocrats strove for Augustus' commendation for office-holding; military success could still gain *ornamenta triumphalia* and, eventually, a pedestrian statue in the Forum Augustum; and while public oratory in the senate, law courts, and popular assemblies declined in competitive significance, this oratorical impulse was diverted into other arenas of verbal display, such as *recitatio* and declamation, whose competitive importance correspondingly increased.<sup>42</sup> In this political environment (in the broad sense of how power is distributed in society), Livy's interest in how, why, and by whom competitive arenas get established and reconfigured seems fitting, even inevitable. Augustus shared this interest, as his interventions

<sup>40</sup> Eck (1984) 131. For the pace of Livy's writing see Oakley (1997) 1.109–10.

<sup>41</sup> Eck (1984) 138–42. Agrippa's declined triumphs: Cass. Dio 54.11.6, 54.24.7–8. Praise for Tiberius' moderation: Vell. Pat. 2.122.1–2. Gaining glory from foregoing a triumph, then, is not simply an antiquarian curiosity in Livy's text, but a key device in the Augustan-era reconfiguration of the economy of military prestige.

<sup>42</sup> Roller (1998) 266 n. 4 for further references.

in various competitive arenas show; however, every aristocrat of the Augustan age was involved, consciously or unconsciously, in the project of reconstructing the rules and venues of aristocratic competition. At least in this respect, Livy's history is "political" not in the sense of being "for" or "against" Augustus, but in the sense that Livy, Augustus, and their elite contemporaries were collectively immersed in a world characterized by novel problems, constraints, and possibilities, where all parties were feeling their way forward as if in the dark. For Livy, history provides a laboratory in which the contemporary crisis in aristocratic competition can be thought out and possible solutions can be "tried on."

Finally, these constraints and possibilities may have conditioned Livy's own self-positioning as an aristocrat in Augustan Rome. While nothing is known of his family in Patavium, the elite rhetorical education he manifestly received, and his apparent lack of patronage in Rome—implying that his own resources sufficed to support his literary career—may suggest he was a scion of the municipal aristocracy (a *domi nobilis*) who came to the metropolis to make his name. Had he been born one or two generations earlier, perhaps he would have competed in the arena of oratory, as Cicero, himself with such a background, so successfully did. But as *oratio* was displaced from the courts, senate, and assemblies into other arenas, its practitioners followed. Scholars have noted that Livy was among the first Roman historiographers who was not himself a Roman senator or at least of senatorial family, and Livy may allude to his own innovativeness in this respect in his preface.<sup>43</sup> If indeed he innovated by entering the field of historiography despite his family background, perhaps it was the shifting arenas of contemporary aristocratic competition that made this choice possible and desirable. All the more reason, then, for his engagement with such matters in his history.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Et si in tanta scriptorum turba mea fama in obscuro sit, nobilitate ac magnitudine eorum me qui nomini officient meo consoler* ("and should my reputation be overshadowed in so great a throng of writers, I would console myself by the high birth and splendor of those who eclipse my name," *praef.* 3.). Here *nobilitas* and *magnitudo* carry status connotations. Livy's social position: Kraus (1994) 1–5; Miles (1995) 47–54. "Senatorial" historians: Wiseman (1987) 244–52. Livy did achieve *gloria* in his lifetime (Sen. *Cont.* 10 *praef.* 2; Plin. *HN praef.* 16; Plin. *Ep.* 2.3.8) and after (e.g., Tac. *Ann.* 4.34.3; Suda s.v. *Kornoulos*).

<sup>44</sup> I thank Tom Habinek, Mary Jaeger, and Chris Kraus for valuable comments and corrections.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE POLITICS OF ELEGY: PROPERTIUS AND TIBULLUS

Marcus Wilson

The reader of current scholarship on Roman elegy cannot but be struck by a stark inconsistency between two modes of reading (often employed simultaneously), one applied to the erotic relationships articulated in the poems, the other applied to the political relationships. In the case of the former, there is a general acceptance of the principle that the representation of the poet's relationship with his lover is far from being a direct reflection of real life, that it is reshaped according to generic conventions, is (to some degree) fictionalized, and that the mistress portrayed is a *scripta puella*, a literary creation.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, the poets' relationships with patrons and ultimately with the emperor are treated almost universally as indicative of historical realities of the social, economic, and political hierarchy under Augustus, and enormous effort has been put into identifying precisely the poets' male addressees and charting the convergence (or divergence) of the themes of the poems with Augustan political ideology.<sup>2</sup>

These discordant ways of thinking about the poetry of Propertius and Tibullus may satisfy some historians who take seriously only the political or power relations evident in the poems and feel they can disregard as trivial or conventional the expression in the same texts of personal emotions and amatory desires. Yet, for those concerned to understand the poetry in its fullness as poetry, this critical situation is deeply unsatisfying. There is, of course, no close parallel between the function of this poetry with that of Augustan visual art which, being public (since most of that which survives is public in its original

<sup>1</sup> Veyne (1988); Wyke (1987) 47–61; Kennedy (1993); McNamee (1993) 215–48; Lee-Stecum (1998) 304–9; Greene (1998) 37–66; James (1998); Wyke (2002); James (2003) 21–6; Ancona and Greene (2005) 1–9.

<sup>2</sup> Hence the ongoing conflict between pro-Augustan and anti-Augustan readings of elegy. This dichotomy is rejected by Kennedy (1992) 26–58 and Kennedy (1993) 35–8, but for a systematic critique of his position, see Davis (2006) 9–22. See also Miller (2004) 30. Prominent among recent readings that reiterate the case of the pro-Augustan interpretation are Galinsky (1996); Newman (1997); Cairns (2006).

ancient virtue and ancient heroism. Loud and perhaps over-loud in their protestations, Juvenal and Tacitus betray symptoms of defeat or insecurity. They are the last great names in the literature of the Romans.<sup>33</sup>

Many decades before Syme the famous French scholar Gaston Boissier, a professor of Latin oratory, had written a book on opposition under the Roman emperors entitled *L'opposition sous les Césars*. He closed the last chapter of this book, "Les écrivains de l'opposition," with none other than Juvenal.<sup>34</sup> In recent scholarship the view of Juvenal that Dryden had voiced most forcefully and that Boissier and Syme restated may still be encountered:

One must surely conclude that the chief cause of his [sc. Juvenal's] restraint was prudence, or caution, or apprehension—at any rate some gradation on the scale of fear. . . . In the end he hit on a way of escape: he would simply ignore the passage of time. The last eighty years, or more, of Roman history would be treated as 'now'. Any example of crime, vice, or misfortune would be given a contemporary relevance . . . as conditions [although improved after Domitian] depended so much on the character of a single man, one never knew when such things might recur. . . . And so he came to be regarded as the 'opposition satirist' *par excellence*.<sup>35</sup>

Early in *Satire* 1, Juvenal, impassioned diagnostician of the ills of his time, voiced the indignant expostulation *difficile est saturam non scribere* ("it is difficult not to write satire," 1.30). With this he presented himself as acerbic critic of mankind's follies and vices. As such he still speaks to us with his unsurpassed wit and vividness. This makes him a classic, but an eternally modern one. To read him in the early twenty-first century, when questions of power and empire have resurfaced on a global level, is his—and also Dryden's—best vindication.

<sup>33</sup> Syme (1958) 500.

<sup>34</sup> Boissier (1937) 302–40, after a considerably shorter section on Tacitus (285–301) and preceding a brief conclusion (340–6). Boissier's book first appeared in 1875. He was elected to the Académie Française the following year.

<sup>35</sup> Rudd (1985) 80–1. Rudd's comments on Juvenal close with a quotation of Dryden's famous phrase.

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