INTRODUCTION: TRACTATIO, RE-TRACTATIO, REVISIONIST HISTORY

> … what a change there has been! Clio, Muse of History, has moved massively into the territory of her tragic sister Melpomene.
>
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How (Not) to Handle History: Horace's Ode to Pollio

Writing under Augustus was no easy task. Think of the poets Cornelius Gallus and Ovid: the former fallen into disgrace by the emperor allegedly for his haughty behaviour as prefect of Egypt and driven to suicide in 27–26 BCE,[2] the latter relegated to Tomis, on the Black Sea, in 8 CE, because of a *carmen* and an *error*, a poem and a mistake.[3] There is also Titus Labienus, an historian of Pompeian cause nicknamed 'Rabienus' because of the *rabies* ('rage') of his writings, who committed suicide around 6 CE on hearing that his whole work had been sentenced to flames (Sen. *Controu.* 10, praef. 4–8) – just like the *oeuvre* of the orator Cassius Severus relegated soon after Labienus' case for having divulgated *libelli* which allegedly defamed 'illustrious men and women' (Tac. *Ann.* 1.72).[4] An earlier, and even more intriguing, character is the politician, playwright and historian Asinius Pollio, certainly one of the most distinguished men writing history under Augustus, and a predecessor of Labienus in his supposed *ferocia*, 'fierceness' (Tac. *Ann.* 1.12), glossed by Cassius Dio as παρρησία, 'free

[1] Griffin (1999) 74.
[2] But Dio 53.23 also mentions that Gallus divulgated a gossip about Augustus; see also Suet. *Aug.* 66.2, *De Gramm. et Rhet.* 16, Jer. *Chron. ad Ol.* 188.17, Amm. Marc. 17.4.5.
[3] Ov. *Tr.* 2.207.
[4] On both Labienus and Severus see Pettinger (2012) 88–93.

speech' or 'outspokenness' (Dio 57.2.3). And yet even Pollio's bluntness seems to have had a limit. Whether or not a convinced partisan of Augustus, Pollio wisely justified his choice not to reply to some satirical verses addressed to him by the emperor in an almost proverbial manner: *non est enim facile in eum scribere qui potest proscribere*, 'for it is not easy to write against one who can proscribe' (Macr. 2.4.21)[5]

Satire, for sure,[6] but history, too, had to be handled carefully in the early Principate. Especially the history of the Civil Wars, those between Pompey and Caesar first, and Antony and Octavian next, a genuine minefield for Augustan authors, whether poets or historians. This, at least, in the absence of the histories of Asinius Pollio and Livy on the late Republic, is all we can evince from Horace's advice to the former in the poem that opens his second collection of *Odes*, the so-called 'Ode to Pollio'.[7] In the opening stanzas of the poem, Civil War history has become more and more like a weapon, 'a dangerous gambling game of dice' (6 *periculosae plenum opus aleae*), which Pollio must 'treat' or 'handle'[8] (7 *tractas*) accordingly:

> Motum ex Metello consule ciuicum
> bellique causas et uitia et modos
> ludumque Fortunae grauisque
> principum amicitias et arma

[5] Bowditch (2001) 64–5, T. S. Johnson (2009) 316 n. 9. See Bosworth (1972) for doubts over the extent of Pollio's anti-Augustanism.

[6] Cf. Pollio's statement with Suet. *Aug*. 89.3 *componi tamen aliquid de se nisi et serio et a praestantissimis offendebatur*, 'but he [Augustus] took offence at being made the subject of any composition except in serious earnest and by the most eminent writers', and especially Hor. *Sat*. 2.1.18–20 *nisi dextro tempore, Flacci | uerba per attentam non ibunt Caesaris aurem, | cui male si palpere, recalcitrat undique tutus*, 'only at an auspicious moment will the words of Flaccus find with Caesar entrance to an attentive ear. Stroke the steed clumsily and back he kicks, at every point on his guard', with Tatum (1998).

[7] The best treatment of *Ode* 2.1 to this date is to my knowledge Henderson (1996), reprinted with some changes in Henderson (1998) 108–62. See also Nadeau (1980), Lowrie (1997) 175–86, Bowditch (2001) 72–84, Woodman (2003), T. S. Johnson (2009).

[8] On the double meaning of *tractas*, referring to both *opus* (*OLD s.v. tracto* 9: 'to deal with, discuss, treat') and *arma* (*OLD s.v. tracto* 2a 'to handle'), see Nisbet-Hubbard (1978) 15 and Bowditch (2001) 76–7.

nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,
periculosae plenum opus aleae,
tractas et incedis per ignis
suppositos cineri doloso.

paulum seuerae Musa tragoediae
desit theatris: mox ubi publicas
res ordinaris, grande munus
Cecropio repetes coturno,

insigne maestis praesidium reis
et consulenti, Pollio, curiae,
cui laurus aeternos honores
Delmatico peperit triumpho.

(Hor. *Carm.* 2.1.1–16)

The civil strife that began with Metellus' consulship, the causes of the war, its blunders and phases, and the game of Fortune, the fatal friendships of the great, and the weapons, smeared with still unexpiated blood – a work fraught with the hazards of the dice – this is the theme you are handling, and you step over fires still smouldering beneath the treacherous ash. Do not let your stern tragic Muse desert the theatre for long; soon, when you have set public affairs in order, you will resume your great duty in Cecrops' tragic boots – you, a famous bastion of piteous defendants and of the Senate consulting you, Pollio, for whom the laurel brought forth evergreen honours in your Dalmatian triumph.

The hazardousness of history writing is the reason why Horace in the last stanza carves out a private space for himself, where he can 're-treat' himself in the *securitas* offered by the Augustan age:

sed ne relictis, Musa, procax iocis
Ceae retractes munera neniae;
mecum Dionaeo sub antro
quaere modos leuiore plectro.

(Hor. *Carm.* 2.1.37–40)

But come, my naughty Muse, do not abandon your frivolity, and do not undertake again the duties of the Cean dirge. Join me in the grotto of Dione's daughter and let us think of tunes for a lighter plectrum.

As many have noted, this last stanza reproposes in withdrawal many themes previously presented in the ode, linking Horace and Pollio in an inextricable bond:[9] the carefree games of private lyric (37 *iocis*) replace the whimsical game of Fortune which is seen to direct the course of history (3 *ludum … Fortunae*); the rites paid to the dead in the form of poetic lamentations (38 *munera*)[10] recall both Pollio's cultural munificence (11 *munus*) and the human sacrifices offered to Jugurtha (28 *inferias*). The historian and the poet are united in a common decision to abandon the *tractatio* of Civil War, but their literary paths take opposite directions: the austere Muse of tragedy *vs.* the wanton Muse of monodic lyric (9 *seuerae Musa tragoediae*, 37 *Musa procax*), public *vs.* private (10 *theatris*, 39 *sub antro*), *coturnus vs. plectrum* (12 *coturno*, 40 *plectro*), grand style *vs.* Callimachean *leptotes* (11 *grande*, 40 *leuiore*). Finally, in opposition to Pollio's *tractatio* of history that had opened the poem, Horace highlights the importance of his *re-tractatio*, a real 'withdrawal'[11] from history and politics (38 *retractes*, fusing 7 *tractas* and 12 *repetes*).

Retractatio can indeed be taken as the appropriate heading to the practice of writing history in the age of Augustus. It does not just signpost the lyricist's withdrawal from treating history, but implies a rewriting,[12] 'correction' and 'alteration'[13] of history, induced by the fact that to recall one's own personal history after the Civil Wars is a painful internal process, comparable to picking at open wounds again and again (cf. Ovid *Tr.* 3.11.19 *et tamen est aliquis qui uulnera cruda retractet*, 'and yet there is one who keeps picking at my open wounds').[14] This view of historiography lies at the heart of the cause-and-effect connection between Punic and Civil Wars established in

[9] See Nadeau (1980) 180–1, Henderson (1996) 121 = (1998) 151, Lowrie (1997) 181.
[10] Nisbet-Hubbard (1978) 30.
[11] *OLD s.v. retracto* A.
[12] *OLD s.v. retracto* B 'to handle again', 6c 'to reconsider'. Cf. T. S. Johnson (2009) 314: 'the lyricist contends that one never simply writes history, but always and inevitably rewrites history, a risky political venture'.
[13] Henderson (1996) 119 = (1998) 149. For Pollio ('Polisher') as a speaking name in this sense see Henderson (1996) 127 = (1998) 153.
[14] Which led to Peerlkamp's conjecture *uulnera* instead of *munera* (38).

Horace's Ode to Pollio and destined to become almost a leitmotiv in Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile*. The dead of the Civil Wars, winners *and* losers,[15] have become offerings to Carthaginian and African *manes*:[16]

> Iuno et deorum quisquis amicior
> Afris inulta cesserat inpotens
> tellure, uictorum nepotes
> rettulit inferias Iugurthae.
> (Hor. *Carm.* 2.1.25–8)

> Juno, and all the other deities who favoured the Africans, had withdrawn, powerless and furious,[17] leaving the soil unavenged, but now she has given the descendants of the conquered winners[18] as offerings to the shade of Jugurtha.

The *scelus* of Civil War is explicitly traced back to Juno/Tanit's eternal thirst for vengeance for the destruction of her beloved Carthage,[19] and the stanza thus stands as an explicit negation of that reconciliation of Juno foretold by Jupiter at *A.* 1.279–82 but already undermined at the very beginning of the *Aeneid*

[15] Henderson (1996) 106 = (1998) 140: '*VICTORUM, "THE CONQUERORS"* = *VICTORUM, "THE CONQUERED"*. Here "the winners" become and are "the losers".' On the possibility of a similar ambiguity in Horace's *Epod.* 10.12, see Giusti (2016b) 141.

[16] Cf. Lucan 1.39 *Poeni saturentur sanguine manes*, 'let the shades of the Carthaginians be glutted with blood' and 4.789–90 *ferat ista cruentus | Hannibal et Poeni tam dira piacula manes*, 'let bloody Hannibal and his Punic shades accept this dreadful expiation', with discussion in Ahl (1976) 82–115. On Metellus Scipio's death as the offer of a Scipio to the Carthaginians' unsated thirst for vengeance exactly 100 years after the destruction of Carthage (146 BCE–46 BCE), see Lucan 6.309–11 *nec Iuba Marmaricas nudus pressisset harenas | Poenorumque umbras placasset sanguine fuso | Scipio*, 'the naked body of Iuba would never have fallen on Marmaric sands and Scipio would not have placated the Punic shades by spilling his blood', and 6.788–9 *deplorat Libycis perituram Scipio terris | infaustam subolem*, 'Scipio grieves that his wretched progeny should die on Libyan land'.

[17] On the double meaning of *inpotens* see *OLD s.v. impotens* 1 and 3, with Nisbet-Hubbard (1978) 5 and Henderson (1996) 105 = (1998) 140.

[18] On the double meaning of *uictorum* see n. 15.

[19] See Feeney (1991) 116–17 and (1984) 183: 'Juno … has a "mythological" motive for her hatred of the Aeneadae – the judgement of Paris and all the Homeric matter connected with the name of Troy … and she has an "historical" motive, her predilection for Carthage and fear of the fate that awaits the city at the hands of Aeneas' descendants … for the purposes of the first motive she is regarded as "Argive Hera", while for the purposes of the second she is viewed under the aspect of the Carthaginian Tanit.'

(*A*. 1.36 *Iuno aeternum seruans sub pectore uulnus*, 'Juno, nursing an eternal wound deep in her breast').[20]

Through the idea of the Civil Wars as a direct result of Carthage's destruction, Horace and Lucan manage to express a genuinely historiographical concept in the guise of a tragic chain of guilt and retribution. It is highly probable that this idea was present in the *Historiae* of Pollio, the continuator of Sallust's *Historiae* and a possible exponent of the so-called 'tragic school of historiography'.[21] This view can indeed be seen as a development of 'Sallust's theorem' of *metus hostilis*, according to which the destruction of Carthage in 146 BCE, and the subsequent disappearance of that 'fear of the enemy' which is a necessary element of national unity, brought about the crisis of the Roman Republic which ultimately resulted in the shedding of brotherly rather than foreign blood.[22] A corollary of this implies that the Punic Wars not only led to the abolition of Rome's arch-enemy, but also triggered the civil conflict which resulted from that very abolition, a consequence that Scipio Nasica had apparently predicted when he advised that, against Cato's judgement, *Carthago seruanda esset*, 'Carthage must be saved'.[23]

However, to deduce from these historical theories that the slaughters of Civil War must be interpreted as expiatory offers to Carthaginian ghosts is an extremely tragic

[20] As Feeney (1984) has shown, Juno's reconciliation envisaged at *A*. 1.279–82 (already in Ennius' *Annales*: Serv. *ad A*. 1.281) presupposes a denial of her reconciliations in *A*. 12.791–842 and in Horace's Third Roman Ode.

[21] On tragic historiography, see p. 248–9 n. 144. I think it is beyond doubt that Horace establishes a connection between Pollio's tragic and historiographical careers. However, it is much less safe to infer traits of Pollio's historiographical method from *Ode* 2.1 only, as remarked by Nisbet-Hubbard (1978) 9 and, similarly, André (1949) 61–4.

[22] Sall. *BC* 10.1–2, *BJ* 41.2, *Hist*. fr. 1.11 McGushin. 'Sallust's theorem', also called, in modern political theory, the theory of 'Negative Association', was thought by some to have been derived from Posidonius but was actually something of a commonplace among ancient historians: see Earl (1961) 41–59, McGushin (1992) 77–9, Wood (1995), Evrigenis (2008) and Jacobs (2010).

[23] Diod. 34/35.33.4–6, Plut. *Cato Maior* 27, Flor. 1.31.5, App. *Pun*. 69 (see especially Diodorus 34/35.33.5 ἀπολομένης δὲ τῆς ἀντιπάλου πόλεως πρόδηλος ἦν ἐν μὲν τοῖς πολίταις ἐμφύλιος πόλεμος ἐσόμενος … ἅπερ ἅπαντα συνέβη τῇ Ῥώμῃ μετὰ τὴν τῆς Καρχηδόνος κατασκαφήν, 'but once the rival city was destroyed, it was only too evident that there would be civil war at home … all this did indeed happen to Rome after the destruction of Carthage'). The debate between Scipio Nasica and Cato

turn to take. Tragedy, as I argue in this book, is the proprietary genre not only of the literary representations of Punic or Civil Wars in Augustan literature, but more specifically of their interconnections, of that relationship of cause and effect indicated by Sallust and probably endorsed by Pollio. While we can remain uncertain over the degree to which tragedy featured in Pollio's *Historiae*, we can easily see how it shapes Horace's adaptation of them. Blood imagery as the reminder of the necessity of expiation opens the ode (4–5 *arma* | *nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus*), a memory which takes us back to the close of Horace's *Epode* 7 and Rome's original, fratricidal guilt (*Epod.* 7.19–20 *ut inmerentis fluxit in terram Remi* | *sacer nepotibus cruor*, 'since the blood of innocent Remus was spilt on the ground, bringing a curse on his descendants'), modelled on the conception expressed by the chorus' cries in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* (Aesch. *Ag.* 1019–21 τὸ δ' ἐπὶ γᾶν πεσὸν ἅπαξ θανάσιμον | πρόπαρ ἀνδρὸς μέλαν αἶμα τίς ἂν | πάλιν ἀγκαλέσαιτ' ἐπαείδων; 'but once the black blood of death has fallen on the earth in front of a man, who by an incantation can summon it back again?'). The dice of Caesar (6 *periculosae aleae*, Suet. *Caes.* 32 *alea iacta est*, 'the die is cast!') marks a tragic point of no return,[24] while also blending with the dice of the *Agamemnon*'s watchman, whose result was wrongly interpreted as a good omen (*Ag.* 32–3).[25] Pollio 'arrives on the scene'[26] in a spectacular way, 'stepping solemnly over fires still smouldering beneath the treacherous ash' (7–8 *incedis per ignis* | *suppositos cineri doloso*). Soon afterwards, as Johnson puts it, 'the historiographer Pollio becomes a character on stage in present time, calling the infantry to battle with a blast that stuns ears'[27] (17–8 *iam nunc minaci murmure cornuum* | *perstringis auris, iam litui strepunt*, 'but now you grate upon our ears with the menacing

must have occupied a long section of Livy's Book 49, according to its *Periocha*; see Mineo (2011) 123.

[24] On this aspect of tragedy see p. 267.

[25] See Denniston-Page (1957) 69–70.

[26] *OLD s.v. incedo* 1.

[27] T. S. Johnson (2009) 317.

murmur of horns; now bugles are blaring'). Now, thanks to the *enargeia* of Pollio, Horace 'already seems' (21 *iam uideor*) to hear or see[28] the captains of this war. In this highly performative history, the spectator's imagination finds its own role in shaping the description and significance of the events.[29] In Horace's, and perhaps Pollio's, blending of Punic and Civil Wars, tragic vision appears inextricably linked to historical re-vision. There is no way to narrate, or allude to, Republican history without the hindsight of the fall of the Republic, which brings with it a history of traumas as national as they are personal. While the necessity to narrate the Punic Wars from a post-Civil War perspective turns Republican history into revisionist history, the personal implications that accompany the allusions to the history of the late Republic merge historiography, lyric and epic with the genre of tragedy.

Why Should Hannibal Wear Boots?

Horace's Ode to Pollio is no isolated poem. Opening the book of *Odes* that does not talk about, but certainly hints at, the conspiracy of Caepio and Murena in 23 BCE,[30] it is an explicit *recusatio* from treating history, while it can also be read as an implicit hint at the fact that there is much that we are missing from the literature of the Augustan period. But if the extent of Augustan dissent was already better passed over in silence in its own time, it has become no less of a tricky topic to tackle nowadays. While it is generally safe to claim that opposition to Augustus did exist,[31] as well as to point out Augustus' deceit in

[28] *uidere* as the first word of line 21 is Beroaldus and Bentley's conjecture for *audire* of the MSS, printed by Shackleton-Bailey and accepted by Nisbet-Hubbard (1978) 22. In defence of *audire*, especially in connection to the practice of *recitationes*, see E. Fraenkel (1957) 236, Lowrie (1997) 183, D. West (1998) 8, Woodman (2003) 202, Tarrant (2016) 307–9.

[29] See T. S. Johnson (2009) 317 n. 11.

[30] In the mysterious Ode to Licinius (*Ode* 2.10), see most recently Dressler (2016) with further bibliography.

[31] Although its extent is far from clear; see Raaflaub-Samons (1990) for a survey of the sources and an analysis of the possible reasons why it was ineffective, as well as possibly 'minimal'.

masking under the pretence of a 'restoration of the Republic' (*res publica restituta*) what we all know would eventually become an hereditary monarchic rule,[32] it is very difficult to understand from our extant sources to what extent, and since when exactly, the Principate became an authoritarian regime, and perhaps an oppressive one at that.[33] Whatever we mean by 'Augustan' literature, whether we make the period start with Octavian's adoption of the name Augustus in 27 BCE, or with the end of the Civil Wars in 31 BCE, or even earlier, if we take Virgil's *Eclogues* and Horace's *Epodes* as already containing some main characteristics of their later works,[34] there is very little consensus over whether this literature displays some overarching characteristics that crystallise into a recognisable ideology of regime, that is a 'coherent and all-embracing system of thought' meant to promote the legitimacy of Augustus' power, which cut across the whole period during which Octavian/Augustus ruled.[35] And even if we achieve consensus about the existence and the main characteristics of such ideology, at least for some specific themes and values recurrent in the literature and images of the time, we still have to take a stand on what role the poets played in creating and transmitting it, and whether the all-encompassing presence of these themes in the culture of the time makes it acceptable, rather than anachronistic, to refer to this ideology as propaganda.[36] Finally, even if

[32] Only in hindsight, according to Eder (2005) 15, and see Galinsky (1996) 42–79 for a defence of Augustus' genuine intents in restoring the *res publica*. However, the idea that Augustus' regime was a monarchy[/tyranny] in Republican guise, supported by Tacitus' view in *Annals* 1, famously informed the account of Syme (1939), and has been longlived in scholarship; see the more nuanced accounts of Wallace-Hadrill (1982) and more recently Le Doze (2015) with further bibliography.

[33] See recently Pettinger (2012) against the *communis opinio* that Augustus' Principate was benign.

[34] See especially Geue (2013).

[35] I partly take the definition from Le Doze (2010) 260, who also emphasises the somewhat anachronistic use of the term for our context, and treats Augustan ideology at 284–8. Note that Zanker (1988) still remains the unavoidable point of departure for the understanding of Augustan ideology.

[36] The question is intertwined to the degree of anachronistic analysis in Syme (1939). On the anachronism inherent in talking about propaganda see Le Doze (2014) 19–38 with bibliography. I touch upon the issue in Giusti (2016c).

we recognise the works of Horace and Virgil as sharing, creating and transmitting such ideology or propaganda, it does not necessarily follow that we must think of this poetry as monolithically supportive of the new regime, especially when considering that Horace had fought on the opposite side to Octavian at Philippi[37] and that Virgil's family had had their land confiscated, but also restored, by the would-be Princeps.[38] Both examples, in fact, prove simultaneously Octavian's magnanimity as well as the traumatic personal consequences wrought in these poets by the Civil War in which he himself was implicated. Rather than stressing one aspect over the other, it seems more desirable to take the unstable dynamic between these two competitive views as itself the mark of Augustan poetry, in the same way as we may have to look at the difficult balancing between apparent opposites (e.g. Republic and monarchy, or continuity and rupture) in order to understand the nature of the Augustan Principate.[39]

While this book does not, and cannot, aspire to solve the long debated problems surrounding the age of Augustus, it is necessary to clarify from the start the assumptions on which I base my analysis of the uses and representations of Carthage and the Carthaginians in Virgil's *Aeneid*. First of all, this book is not concerned with the question of the degree of Virgil's partisanship towards the regime of Augustus, according to the terms set by the outdated debate between the so-called 'Harvard' and 'European' schools of interpretation of the *Aeneid*.[40] Rather, I follow a famous chapter by Duncan Kennedy in making our interpretation start from the reception of the *Aeneid* as a text

[37] See Citroni (2000) and Le Doze (2012).
[38] See Thomas (2001) 94–5 and 119–21 on ancient anti-Augustan readings of *Eclogues* 1 and 9.
[39] See Wallace-Hadrill (1982) on the ambivalence between autocratic reality and Republican façade as the essence of the emperor's role.
[40] Among the milestones of the so-called 'Harvard' school, which reads Virgil's *Aeneid* as fundamentally pessimistic and at times anti-Augustan, are Parry (1963), Clausen (1964), Putnam (1965), W. R. Johnson (1976) and Lyne (1987); on the 'European' side, which reads the *Aeneid* as fundamentally optimistic and (pro-) Augustan, are Pöschl (1962), Büchner (1955), Klingner (1967), Hardie (1986). The debate was obviously more nuanced and complicated that I could express in a footnote; see Thomas (2001) on the reception of Virgil's epic in terms of political allegiance.