

The University of Manitoba

Thesis

The Perusine War in its  
Historiographic and Literary  
Context

Submitted by

G. Bryan Natali

Thesis Advisor

Dr. Rory Egan

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Arts

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**THE PERUSINE WAR IN ITS HISTORIOGRAPHIC AND LITERARY CONTEXT**

**BY**

**G. Bryan Natali**

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of  
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the degree**

**Of**

**Master of Arts**

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## Abstract

The various accounts of the Perusine War present incongruous reports of the events following the surrender of the city. Some of these versions depict Octavian, the future emperor of the Roman Empire, as a priest of his deified father who officiated over a vengeful human sacrifice. The historical record as well as the literary evidence regarding this episode are examined with a view to establishing a credible explanation for the historical ambiguity. Furthermore, this thesis examines the modern scholarship relating to this episode, which views it as either wholly incredible or historical fact.

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## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
<b>Part 1: The Historical Evidence</b>	
The Historians.....	12
The Historians and the <i>Bellum Perusinum</i> .....	16
<b>Part 2: The Literary Evidence</b>	
Octavian, Fulvia and Martial 11.20.....	44
Propertius and the <i>Bellum Perusinum</i> .....	59
Propertius 1.22.....	73
Vergil and the <i>Arae Perusinae</i> ? .....	81
Conclusion.....	99
Bibliography.....	104

The Perusine War, a seemingly minor event in the years before Actium, holds great significance for our understanding of the people and the personalities which shaped the Roman world in the last century BCE. The conflict pitted Octavian and his generals against Lucius Antonius, the brother of Marcus Antonius, and Fulvia, M. Antonius' wife. The conflict ended with the surrender of Perusia, which had been besieged by Octavian in 40 BCE, and reports have come down to us of exceptional cruelty perpetrated by Octavian against the defeated Perusians.

The Perusine War of 41-40 BCE remains one of the most elusive and difficult episodes of the transition from Republic to principate. The historical significance of the events prior to and following the conflict provide the modern interpreter much in the way of opportunity, and difficulty, for coming to grips with many of the political issues of the era. The Perusine War encapsulates, in one episode, much of the political understanding we, as readers, have of the struggle for supremacy within a rapidly changing Roman state which was being actively shaped, both politically and historically, by those figures associated with it. In the actions of these historical figures and in the transmission of the historical narrative, there lies a great debate regarding the character of the civil wars which preceded the principate of Augustus, as well as the character of Octavian as he vied with others for supremacy in the new state. This contest resulted in what would become a significant campaign by the protagonists to depict the events of the civil wars in a light that was more favourable to each individual. Eventually



the primacy of Octavian resulted in the opportunity for the emperor to reshape and recast events in this same spirit. The events of the Perusine War provided little opportunity for the emperor to maintain an image that was consistent with the persona he would later come to adopt. The image of a benevolent ruler who re-established the Republic for the Roman people, after dispatching the common enemies of the state and the populace does not agree with the picture that is painted by, at least some, of those who commented upon his actions during the civil wars.

Any study of the imagery and of the information campaigns which were presented by Octavian in the wake of this event will greatly benefit from an examination of contingent poetic material which I view to be of paramount importance for the imagery the emperor wished to see propagated. In addition, there will be an examination of seemingly subversive elements in verse and the portrayal that they embody of these turbulent events. Such elements can be found in the poetic works of the Augustan age; specifically, the relationship between what some consider the most subversive, and what others consider the most encomiastic poetic expressions of the era, will be examined with a view to establishing the underlying factors which informed these expressions. Likewise, there will be an examination of the historical episode of the Perusine War as it is presented by the historians that treat it. The pertinent works of Appian, Cassius Dio, Livy, Suetonius and Velleius Paterculus provide the modern scholar with the opportunity to view these authors' own particular representation of the historical events from an objective and comprehensive viewpoint. Specific attention will be

paid to the particularly disconcerting charges made against the future emperor, openly by some figures, obliquely (perhaps) by others, regarding the so called *Arae Perusinae*. In this way, these representations, as they pertain to the expression of this darkest of Roman historical episodes, will bring the events and the popular sentiment regarding the uncertain circumstances surrounding it into clearer focus.

This thesis will examine the pertinent historical and literary evidence, in order to come to grips with the various accounts which are all influenced by the historical climate surrounding those who reported on the Perusine War. This era saw a great flourishing in the communications programs developed by the various figures in their attempts to portray themselves and their adversaries in specific ways. These individuals each have their own connections to the narrative, the events, and the subsequent historians who compiled and commented upon them. In the examination of the relationships between commanders and army, general and Republic, and the underlying relationship between those vying for power and the people, to whom overtures were made and from whom punishments were exacted, there arises the opportunity to comprehend the motivating factors which shape the versions of historical events handed down to us. By examining the propaganda that, on the one hand, vilified the republican contingent and its principal representatives at Perugia, L. Antonius and his wife Fulvia, and those accounts which brought criticism against Octavian and the aspects of violence and conquest he brought to the struggle for supremacy during the civil wars, it becomes possible to begin to understand the

motivations which underlie the transmission of an historical episode that remains obscure in many of its most important aspects.

It is evident by the parameters laid out that the picture of the events at Perugia is murky and is rendered even more obscure by the various motivations accompanying reports of the actions which the principal players undertook in the conflict. Ronald Syme saw this conflict as Italy's final attempt against utter Roman domination.<sup>1</sup> Perugia was a wealthy and relatively independent city, whose populace suffered terribly as the intermediary between the ostensibly republican values of L. Antonius and the triumviral struggles that would soon erupt into a conflagration which enveloped the Roman state. By the harsh treatment of this renegade city, the extent of the ruthlessness of the young Octavian was made prominently visible. It is this perception of cruelty and the possibility that an emperor, insistent upon moulding his image for posterity, would have discouraged any mention of such horrifying events while alive that has prompted some to accept the more troubling allegations made against Octavian. This perception may be at the root of the difficulty regarding these historical events and it is this climate which may have given rise to stories such as the *Arae Perusinae*. At any rate, the examination of issues such as these serves to characterize the triumviral struggle that represented the final stage of Rome's civil wars and our historical understanding of it.

The situation is further complicated by the depiction, or supposed depiction, of the events surrounding the conflict by the Augustan poets who

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<sup>1</sup> Syme (1939) 208.

commented, somewhat obliquely, on them. The relationship between the conception of the Perusine War as depicted by the poets and that presented in the historical record emphasizes for the modern reader the emotional aspects in the aftermath of this turbulent time. By taking a comprehensive view of the episode from the historians who were removed by time and political reality from the actual events and from the poets, some of whom had a very personal attachment to the Perusine War; it will be possible to come to a fuller understanding of the tumult of this period. In light of this, it will be expedient to outline briefly the careers and times of the literary and historical characters who figure prominently in the discussion of this particular subject.

Of the accounts of the Perusine War that have come down to us from antiquity the works of Appian and Cassius Dio serve as the best documents from which a modern reader may try to get to the underlying causes and difficulties in the transmission of this episode. The Perusine War occurred shortly after the forces of Brutus and Cassius were destroyed at Philippi in 42 BCE, when the Roman world was divided among the triumvirs and, principally, between Antony's operations in the East and Octavian's in the West. This partition was initially seen as beneficial to Antony who held the richest provinces and was detached from the pressing issues facing Octavian in the West. The settlement of the veterans of the civil wars was, to say the least, a daunting task for the young triumvir. This assignment was expected "to bring him more animosity than glory."<sup>2</sup> This created a climate wherein Octavian found himself under the watchful eye of Antony's western armies and was required to appease the real base of his power, the

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<sup>2</sup> Gabba (1971) 139.

army. In addition to these complications for Octavian, there was the general discontent of the still somewhat influential senatorial class, as well as the necessity of dealing with “a general hostile movement spread out through all of Italy, which anxiously looked forward to another confiscation of land.”<sup>3</sup>

The issue of the need to settle the veterans, while not completely alienating the Italian people whose land was being expropriated for these settlements, was a matter of political survival for Octavian. During this time Octavian found himself somewhat besieged on the Italian peninsula, partly because of the situation previously mentioned, and partly on account of the blockade of Italy which Sextus Pompeius was conducting from his naval bases of operations in Sicily and Spain. This blockade created near-famine conditions for Rome, which could only be exacerbated by the politically necessary land confiscations. As a result Octavian's prospects seemed bleak. The situation presented to Octavian held much in the way of danger and little in the way of prospective success. That is not to say that the young triumvir was without resources in Italy; his army was loyal and well commanded by such men as Salvidienus Rufus and Marcus Agrippa and he carried with him the mystique of Caesar's name and memory which he utilized in what must now be seen as one of the most successful propaganda and public image campaigns in history. It is by the historical fact of the outcome of the struggles for supremacy at Rome that the Perusine War may be measured as indicative of the necessities and complications which Octavian faced in 41-40 BCE.

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<sup>3</sup> Gabba (1971) 139-40.

The land confiscations were central to the pressures facing anyone attempting to maintain power in the vacuum that the murder of Caesar and its aftermath had created. The problem is mentioned in contemporary literature, which provides modern interpreters with the opportunity to gauge the reaction at Rome and throughout Italy of the dispossessed who had already suffered on account of the civil wars. Horace, Propertius and Vergil all commented, in their poetry, on the confiscations of land and on the effects of these hardships on the Italic peoples.<sup>4</sup> This literary perspective will be a factor in the understanding that this thesis will attempt to reach, regarding the political climate and personal struggles which the poetry presents in relation to the historical record. By examining the works of prominent Augustan poets, it will be possible to gauge the freedom that was afforded to the poets and the manner in which they presented an episode as distasteful as the Perusine War. This troublesome aspect stems from the conduct of Octavian as he besieged the city and faced the forces of L. Antonius and the dispossessed landowners. The conflict came to an end as the besieged surrendered. Accounts come down to us of the conduct of Octavian who reportedly executed 300 individuals of the senatorial and equestrian order in a sacrificial manner on the Ides of March. This episode is disputed on various levels, from the nature of the executions to the role that Octavian played in the face of the demands of his troops after the city's surrender. This episode will be examined with evidence given by historical as well as literary sources. Of particular interest will be the comments written by

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<sup>4</sup> Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.49-52: Prop. 4.71.27,127-130: Ver. *Ecl.* 1 and 9.

Propertius and, possibly, Vergil regarding the Perusine War.<sup>5</sup> While Propertius' view of the events of the Perusine War are related from a very personal level redolent with pathos for the vanquished, Vergil's rendition, if we can accept it as that,<sup>6</sup> may stand as one of the most subversive and accusatory of the expositions of this event which has come down to us. The understanding that we, as modern readers, have of the events of 41-40 BCE will benefit from an examination of the literary reaction to historical stimuli as presented within the poetry of the Augustan poets. Many of these poets were expected to serve as important channels for the propagation of the image of the emperor as a peaceful ruler whose actions were necessary in the movement from the strife of the last century BCE towards the principate. In this way it becomes possible to create an idea of the imagery and the manner in which it was constructed in order to serve as an important aspect of the historical view that Octavian sought to promulgate.

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<sup>5</sup> Prop. 1.21, 1.22 & 4.71, Verg. *Aen.* 10.517ff.

<sup>6</sup> See subsequent chapter on Vergil & the *Arae* in *Aeneid* Bk. 10.

## The Historians

Appian of Alexandria was born at the end of the first century AD. He moved to Rome, became a citizen and acted as an advocate. He held an important friendship with the influential M. Cornelius Fronto<sup>7</sup> (ca. AD 95-ca.166) who served as a tutor to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. Having reached the procuratorship under Antoninus Pius he embarked upon the writing of his Roman history. His work begins with early Rome and the kings. After this the books are arranged in the order of the peoples whom Rome conquered.<sup>8</sup> In the *schema* of Appian's work, the civil wars are depicted in books 13-17 of 24. The final books were concerned with Trajan's campaigns against the Dacians, Jews, and Pontic peoples, with the final one treating the Arabians. The *corpus* of his work is impressive in the sheer magnitude of the historical material covered. Appian managed to condense a near millennium of history by reducing the material from various Greek and Latin sources.<sup>9</sup> It is for this wealth of background sources, many of which are lost, notably Augustus' commentaries and Pollio's *Historiae*, that Appian's work gains such importance in the historical record. Considered a conservative he also displays a particular interest in administration and finance, relating more about these aspects than most historians.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Advocate and famed orator.

<sup>8</sup> Italians, Samnites, Celts, Sicilians etc.

<sup>9</sup> Broderson (1996) 130. The sources used in the *Civil Wars* include C. Asinius Pollio, Caesar and Augustus

<sup>10</sup> Broderson (1996) 130.



Cassius Dio (ca. AD 164-ca. 229), a Greek senator born to a prominent family of Nicaea in Bithynia, undertook a massive work in his eighty-book history of Rome, which spanned the period from the foundation of the city to AD 229. Dio utilizes a style that combines the annalistic tradition of arranging events by consular year with the presentation of numerous digressions. The *OCD* entry describes his work as composed in such a manner that he researched for ten years and spent twelve writing his history from his notes. The distinctive character of his work<sup>11</sup> is reflective of this historical method. "Dio does show considerable independence, both in shaping his material and in interpretation; he freely makes causal links between events and attributes motivations to his characters, and many of these explanations must be his own contribution rather than drawn from a source."<sup>12</sup> This characteristic of his history will be shown to have specific significance in his treatment of the Perusine war and may help explain the nature of the episode, as he portrays it. It must also be noted that Dio lived through some horrifying times; his life saw the reigns of Commodus and Caracalla. The exposure to reigns such as these helped define the manner in which Dio relates the actions of men in power and must be kept in mind in any interpretation of his histories.

G. Suetonius Tranquillus (ca. AD 70- ca. 130) the son of an equestrian father who was military tribune in AD 69 was possibly born at Pisaurum in

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<sup>11</sup> Rich (1996) 299: "often thin and slapdash; errors and distortions are quite common, and there are some surprising omissions"; cf. below p.26 n.54

<sup>12</sup> Rich (1996) 300.

Umbria.<sup>13</sup> In the late years of Trajan's reign and in Hadrian's he held important positions within the imperial administration. He wrote his twelve book *De Vita Caesarum* comprising the biographies of the emperors from Caesar to Domitian in the early 2nd century.<sup>14</sup> The lives of *Julius* and *Augustus* are considered by many to be the best and most informed of his works. The decline from *Tiberius* onwards has been attributed, with some plausibility, to Suetonius' expulsion (ca. 120) from the secretariat of the emperor.<sup>15</sup> This expulsion caused the historian to lose the access to documents which facilitated the writing of his earlier *Lives*. The simultaneous dismissal of the praetorian prefect C. Septicius Clarus, to whom Suetonius dedicated his *Lives*, may be connected to Suetonius' expulsion. The *Augustus* combines a Roman 'documentary' approach, in which the events portrayed allow the reader to draw the desired conclusion for himself, and the Greek ethical approach.<sup>16</sup> This approach is notable for its concern with exposing the *ethos* or essence of an individual rather than with a strict historical narrative. The sources for the *Augustus* are many and include such items as, Augustus' autobiography, the decrees of the senate, the works of Cremutius Cordus and those of Cornelius Nepos. His work includes the unflattering portrayal of Augustus which charges him with sacrificing three hundred knights and senators at an altar to the dead Julius Caesar. It is this aspect of his history that I will place within the context of other materials pertinent to the Perusine conflict.

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<sup>13</sup> Bradley (1996) 1451.

<sup>14</sup> Bradley (1996) 1452.

<sup>15</sup> Carter (1982) 4.

<sup>16</sup> Carter (1982) 4.

Velleius Paterculus was born in 20 BC, but little is known of the date of his death. It has been suggested, and received skeptically, that he was executed in the aftermath of the demise of L. Aelius Sejanus in AD 31.<sup>17</sup> Most modern scholars predominantly view him as a court historian whose allegiance is principally to the emperor and Sejanus. Accordingly, his treatment of these figures is considered tastelessly sycophantic by modern scholars who discount his work on these grounds. His version of the events at Perusia is reflective of the same historical inclination; his narrative refrains from any critical words for the *princeps*, regardless of the situation.

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<sup>17</sup> Woodman (1996) 1585.

### **The Historians and the *Bellum Perusinum***

The sources which have come down to us regarding the Perusine War and the contingent events are indebted to the historical treatment given by Appian of Alexandria, Cassius Dio, Suetonius and Velleius Paterculus. These treatments stand as the most comprehensive accounts of the conflicts that preceded the principate of Augustus. In the analysis of these treatments, modern scholars have detected the remnants of other historical sources within the work of Appian and Dio.<sup>18</sup> The question of Appian's sources in his exposition of the historical events is a keenly debated one. The identity of his principal source remains questionable, despite the arguments of various scholars touting a republican one such as C. Asinius Pollio.<sup>19</sup> It is in this environment that the source and his identity is often granted preeminence over the historical narrative offered by Appian. It becomes a very simple exercise to assign arbitrarily statements that are unflattering to Octavian as being the work of a republican source. The opposite can be said of statements which cast a positive light on the triumvir – that they are from pro-Augustan sources. In this way the difficulty in identifying any particular individuals as sources is apparent. E. Gabba states that "Appian's historical sources seem to go back to an independent and carefully thought out interpretation of those political events", whereas the "historical work of the Severan senator (Cassius Dio) had undergone much influence of the

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<sup>18</sup> Badian (1958) 159; Cuff (1967) 185; Gabba (1956), (1970), (1971); Sordi (1998).

<sup>19</sup> Praetor in 45 BCE. Consul in 40, the same year he saved Vergil's property near Mantua from confiscation.

Augustan point of view..., although it preserves, at the same time, also several arguments of the political propaganda against Octavian."<sup>20</sup> The approach taken by these historians, regardless of their sources, provides modern readers with the opportunity to evaluate the situation as represented in the text. However, this evaluation must be a cautious one in light of the incongruous nature of the historical and literary evidence which is often reflective of the historians' own experiences in their respective eras.

In accomplishing the task of recreating the historical episode of the Perusine War, it will be beneficial to examine the underlying issues facing the individuals interested in the event. The allotment of land was an ancient issue; the struggles which saw the Gracchi take up the cause of land redistribution now found new importance for Octavian in the necessary appeasement of the veterans. This situation was not unique to Octavian, as M. Antonius too had the problem to contend with, albeit to a lesser degree than the one facing Octavian. However, it must be kept in mind that, at this particular time, Octavian was in a very perilous situation. In addition to the problems which he had with the senatorial class, Octavian also found himself hemmed in and exposed to the possibility of complete collapse on the Italian peninsula.<sup>21</sup> It is quite remarkable, given the opposition which I have outlined and the situation that faced Octavian, that the historical outcome of the events pertinent to this issue developed in such a manner as to bring about the supremacy of Octavian over the East and West of

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<sup>20</sup> Gabba (1971) 139

<sup>21</sup> Cass. Dio 48.1.2, 2.2, 3.6, 5.1.

the Empire. The settlement of veterans after the battle of Philippi was of paramount importance to Octavian, as it was to Antony. The allotment of the spheres of influence and the military tasks created a situation where Octavian found himself seeing to the affairs of the Western portion of the Empire.<sup>22</sup> This development combined the pressures of settling his veterans with maintaining the loyalty of the Italian peoples who had undergone a great deal of hardship during the civil wars. The reliance upon his troops was of the utmost importance, as the political landscape at Rome produced, ever more increasingly after Marius, a situation in which the appeasement of troops was a matter of political survival. Appian represents this climate succinctly and powerfully

αίτιον δ' ἦν, ὅτι καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ ἀχειροτόνητοί ἦσαν οἱ πλείους ὡς ἐν ἐμφυλίοις καὶ οἱ στρατοὶ αὐτῶν οὐ τοῖς πατρίοις ἔθεσιν ἐκ καταλόγου συνήγοντο οὐδ' ἐπὶ χρεῖα τῆς πατρίδος, οὐδὲ τῷ δημοσίῳ στρατευόμενοι μᾶλλον ἢ τοῖς συνάγουσιν αὐτοὺς μόνοις, οὐδὲ τοῦτοις ὑπὸ ἀνάγκῃ νόμων, ἀλλ' ὑποσχέσεσιν ἰδίαις, οὐδὲ ἐπὶ πολεμίους κοινούς, ἀλλὰ ἰδίους ἐχθρούς, οὐδὲ ἐπὶ ξένους, ἀλλὰ πολίτας καὶ ὁμοτίμους. τάδε γὰρ πάντα αὐτοῖς τὸν στρατιωτικὸν φόβον ἐξέλευν, οὔτε στρατεῦσθαι νομίζουσι μᾶλλον ἢ βοηθεῖν οἰκείᾳ χάριτι καὶ γνώμῃ, καὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας ἡγουμένους ὑπὸ ἀνάγκης αὐτῶν ἐς τὰ ἴδια ἐπιδείσθαι. τό τε αὐτομολεῖν, πάλαι Ῥωμαίοις ἀδιάλλακτον ὄν, τότε καὶ δωρεῶν ἠξιοῦτο· καὶ ἔπρασσον αὐτὸ οἱ τε στρατοὶ κατὰ πλῆθος καὶ τῶν ἐπιφανῶν ἀνδρῶν ἔνιοι, νομίζοντες οὐκ αὐτομολίαν εἶναι τὴν ἐς τὰ ὅμοια μεταβολήν. ὅμοια γὰρ δὴ πάντα ἦν, καὶ οὐδὲ ἕτερα αὐτῶν ἐς ἐχθραν κοινήν Ῥωμαίοις ἀπεκέκριτο· ἢ τε τῶν στρατηγῶν ὑπόκρισις μία, ὡς ἀπάντων ἐς τὰ συμφέροντα τῆ πατρίδι βοηθοῦντων, εὐχερεστέρους ἐποίει πρὸς τὴν μεταβολήν ὡς πανταχοῦ τῆ πατρίδι βοηθοῦντας. ἃ καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ συνιέντες ἔφερον, ὡς οὐ νόμῳ μᾶλλον αὐτῶν ἄρχοντες ἢ ταῖς δωρεαῖς.

The cause was that the generals, for the most part, as is usually the case in civil wars, were not regularly chosen; that their armies were not drawn from the enrolment according to the custom of the fathers, nor for the benefit of the country; that they did not serve the public so much as they did the individuals who brought them together; and that they served these not by force of law, but by reason of private promises; not against the common enemy, but against private foes; not against foreigners, but against fellow citizens, their equals in rank. All these things impaired military discipline, and the soldiers thought that they were not so much serving in the army as lending assistance, by their own favour and judgment, to leaders who needed them for their own personal ends. Desertion, which had been formally unpardonable, was now actually rewarded with gifts, and whole armies resorted to it, including some illustrious men, who did not consider it desertion to change to a like cause, for all parties were alike, since neither of them could be distinguished as battling against the common enemy of the Roman people. The common pretence of the generals that they were all striving for the

<sup>22</sup> Appian *BC* 5.11.

good of the country made desertion easy in the thought that one could serve his country in any party. Understanding these facts the generals tolerated this behaviour, for they knew that their authority over their armies depended on donatives rather than on law.<sup>23</sup>

The climate of the day, then, is shown to be one of tenuous control maintained by the appeasement of the new base of Roman power, the army. The importance of maintaining the favour of the troops as the term of the triumvirate was set to expire is evident

πολύ δ' ἦν καὶ τὸ παροδεύειν σφίσιν ἤδη τὴν τῆς ἀρχῆς πενταεταίαν καὶ χρῆζειν αὐθις εὐνοίας στρατοῦ. δλοπερ αὐτῶν καὶ τῆς ὕβρεως ἢ καταφρονήσεως ἐν τῷ τότε ἐκὼν ὑπερέωρα.

It was a matter of much importance that the five years' term of office was running out, and that the good-will of the soldiers was needed to renew it, for which reason he was willing to overlook for the time being their insolence and arrogance.<sup>24</sup>

With this situation at hand the importance for Octavian of settlement of his troops would have seemed a primary consideration in his initial steps towards consolidating his position in the West. There is one instance in Appian, later echoed by Suetonius (*Aug.* 14.2), that shows the licentiousness of the troops and the reliance on their favour. The spectacle in a public theatre clearly displays the power the soldiers wielded over their commanders. The story tells of a soldier who, not finding his seat, resorted to taking one of the seats assigned to the knights.<sup>25</sup> When he did this the spectators pointed it out to Octavian who had the soldier removed. This resulted in an uproar, at which point the soldiers gathered

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<sup>23</sup> Appian. 5.17. Translations from H. White (Loeb Classical Library).

<sup>24</sup> App. 5.15.61-62.

<sup>25</sup> The *Lex Roscia* of 67 BCE established that the first fourteen rows behind seats of the senators were to be reserved for the knights.

menacingly round Octavian thinking that the offending soldier's absence meant that he had been executed. Even when he was brought forth, the soldiery was still suspicious. They assumed that the soldier had been placed in prison and had, subsequently, been trotted out to prevent a riot among the troops. With his appearance and professions that he had not been mistreated, they accused him of lying and undermining the soldiers' cause.<sup>26</sup> This episode underlines the attitude of the troops and the real issues concerning them which all the interested parties faced. The difficulty lay, in this instance, with the conflicting pressures faced by Octavian. Within this political framework the appeasement of one sector, the troops, would likely lead to resistance from another, the landed Italians and the remnants of republican sentiment in the senatorial class.

This created the climate in which Octavian had to contend with the remnants of the Italian aristocracy whose influence, although waning, still provided the possibility that Octavian's designs would be hindered. The problematic nature of the relationship with the senatorial class and the possibility of Lepidus, the other triumvir, assuming a leading position within this camp created another concern for Octavian within Italy.<sup>27</sup> The relevance of Lepidus, at this period, is traditionally viewed as being limited and controlled by Octavian,<sup>28</sup> but this depiction in the historical tradition was influenced by Augustan propaganda and came to be seen in such a manner with the passage of time.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> App. 5.15.62-63.

<sup>27</sup> Cassius Dio 48.1.2, 2.2, 3.6, 5.1.

<sup>28</sup> Gowing (1992) 77.

<sup>29</sup> Gabba (1971) 140.



The proximity of Sextus Pompeius to Lepidus, in their capacity as friends, and physically, in his position in Sicily as a counterweight to the triumvirate, did not create a situation which could be called favourable to Octavian.<sup>30</sup> The situation Octavian faced seemed dire indeed, if we take into account the situation of the blockade of Italy and the political necessity for Octavian to appease his veterans. This situation aggravated the problem of the lack of food which the Italian peninsula faced at the time. The fact that landed individuals were being driven away in order to provide for the veterans created an agricultural crisis.<sup>31</sup> These factors, as Appian presents them, give us a picture of the level of popularity which we can assume Octavian enjoyed among the Italian peoples. It is these people and their dissatisfaction with the state of affairs that provided the necessary foothold for those who wished to champion their own conception of the Republic, namely L. Antonius and Fulvia, in the events surrounding Perugia in 41-40 BCE.

The difficulties which Lepidus presented were minimal compared to the other disturbances facing Octavian in 41. L. Antonius and Fulvia had, by this time, become willing to exploit the growing dissatisfaction of the disgruntled veterans.<sup>32</sup> Appian chronicles the mounting difficulties which Octavian faced at this time and creates the impression that the underlying aspects of the conflict rested equally upon various factors.<sup>33</sup> This comprehensive appraisal does much

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<sup>30</sup>Gabba (1971) 140.

<sup>31</sup> Gabba (1971) 141, App. 5.49.

<sup>32</sup> Gowing (1992) 78.

<sup>33</sup> Gowing (1992) 79.

to place the pertinent issues in their particular context. Appian's treatment of this historical episode shows a subtle understanding of socioeconomic considerations which drive to the heart of the underlying causes of the Perusine War. Whereas Dio is most critical of Octavian in discussing the Perusine war, expressing his criticism on a personal level, while diminishing the importance of other characters and events, Appian's narrative is more comprehensive and shows a compassionate tone that reveals his commiseration with the Italian peoples terrorized by the wars which destabilized the peninsula and left uncertainty in its wake.<sup>34</sup> This provides the background for the depictions of the masses pouring into Rome to voice their opposition to the hardships shouldered by the populace as they provided the land for the veteran settlements and found themselves in the middle of a squabble that Dio characterizes in this way:

χαλεπὸν γὰρ ἄνδρας τρεῖς ἢ καὶ δύο ὁμοτίμους, ἐγκρατεῖς τηλικούτων ἐκ πολέμου πραγμάτων γενομένους, ὁμονοῆσαι. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ὅσα τέως ἐπὶ τῇ τῶν ἀνθισταμένων σφίσι καταλύσει συμφρονήσαντες κατέπραξαν, ταῦτα τότε ἄθλα τῆς πρὸς ἀλλήλους φιλοτιμίας ἤρξαντο ποιεῖσθαι.

For it is a difficult matter for three men, or even two, who are equal in rank and as a result of war have gained control over such vast interests, to be of one accord. Hence, whatever they for a time had gained while acting in harmony for the purpose of overthrowing their adversaries, all this they now began to set up as prizes to be won by rivalry with each other.<sup>35</sup>

One of the prizes in this struggle was the land which was needed by the interested parties, which they they might utilize to settle their soldiery. The sheer magnitude of this task is not easily overlooked, if we accept the appraisal of

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<sup>34</sup> Gowing (1992) 78.

<sup>35</sup> Cass. Dio 48.1.2-3.

Appian that the number of legions was no less than twenty-eight.<sup>36</sup> In addition to this, the pressure to appease the veterans resulted in another six legions which were rewarded with land.<sup>37</sup> This created an “upheaval of immense importance.”<sup>38</sup> In contrast, the confiscations of the latter era caused a serious decrease in agricultural production which, in turn, created a crisis that caused a further destabilization of the Italian peninsula.<sup>39</sup> Mark Antony, in one of his speeches in the East, gives the number of troops who needed to be accommodated at 170,000.<sup>40</sup> Evidence of the effects of this crisis can be found in Appian.<sup>41</sup> The scenes of the Italic peoples flooding into Rome inspires great pity as the depiction is that of an oppressed populace punished as foreign enemies:

ἀλλὰ συνιόντες ἀνά μέρος ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην οἳ τε νέοι καὶ γέροντες ἢ αἱ γυναῖκες ἅμα τοῖς παιδίοις, ἐς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἢ τὰ ἱερά, ἐθρήνουν, οὐδὲν μὲν ἀδικῆσαι λέγοντες, Ἴταλιῶται δὲ ὄντες ἀνίστασθαι γῆς τε καὶ ἐστίας οἷα δορίληπτοι. ἐφ’ οἷς οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι συνήχθοντο καὶ ἐπεδάκρουν, καὶ μάλιστα, ὅτε ἐνθυμηθεῖεν οὐχ ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς καὶ τῇ μεταβολῇ τῆς πολιτείας τὸν τε πόλεμον γεγονότα καὶ τὰ ἐπινίκια διδόμενα καὶ τὰς ἀποικίας συνισταμένας τοῦ μηδ’ αὐθις ἀνακῦσαι τὴν δημοκρατίαν, παρωκισμένων τοῖς ἄρχουσι μισθοφόρων ἐτοίμων, ἐς ὃ τι χρίζοιεν.

They came to Rome in crowds, young and old, women and children, to the forum and temples, uttering lamentations, saying that they had done no wrong for which they, Italians, should be driven from their fields and their hearthstones, like people conquered in war. The Romans mourned and wept with them, especially when they reflected that the war had been waged, and the rewards of victory given, not in behalf of the commonwealth, but against themselves and for a change of the form of government; that the colonies were established to the end that democracy

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<sup>36</sup> App. 5.21 & 27.

<sup>37</sup> App. 5.86-87; cf. Cass. Dio 48.5.2.

<sup>38</sup> Gabba (1951) 22 ff.: “ even greater than Sulla’s colonization which does not appear to have left any appreciable traces in the structure of Italic society.”

<sup>39</sup> Gabba (1971) 141.

<sup>40</sup> App. 5.21.

<sup>41</sup> App. 5.72. and 314; cf. Cass. Dio 48.9.4-5.

should never again lift its head,— colonies composed of hirelings settled there by the rulers to be in readiness for whatever purpose they might be wanted.<sup>42</sup>

In addition there is further evidence of the difficulties of supplying Rome. The pressure of the need to uproot Italy's γεωργοί<sup>43</sup> decreased agricultural production, most notably in the cereal crops predominantly produced by middle-sized farms. Furthermore, the blockade effected by Pompeius' operations in the south created a disastrous scenario for the landed Italians and the population in general.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, it is clear that both the middle classes and the senatorial classes had reason to be dismayed by the events after Philippi. This popular discontent also found expression among the urban proletariat, as they joined in their protestations against the unpopular triumvirate. The people at Rome, according to Appian, found that the events had not played out in favour of the populace or the Republic.<sup>45</sup> J.M. Roddaz sees the struggle as one primarily of class, as Italy, less than a half century removed from the social wars, found itself in another social conflict which, once again, had at its core the distribution of land and the attendant economic ramifications for the Italian people.<sup>46</sup> The combination of these factors led to the Perusine War. In summary the historical record, as presented by Appian, squarely focuses the blame on a combination of "the soldier's license, exacerbated by their leaders' reluctance to impose

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<sup>42</sup> App. 5.49.

<sup>43</sup> App. 5.60, 72, 280.

<sup>44</sup> App. 5.15.60; Gabba (1971) 141.

<sup>45</sup> App. 5,12.50. ὅτε ἐνθυμηθεῖεν οὐχ ὑπὲρ τῆς πόλεως, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ σφίσιν αὐτοῖς καὶ τῇ μεταβολῇ τῆς πολιτείας τὸν τε πόλεμον γεγονότα.

<sup>46</sup> Roddaz (1988) 317ff.

discipline, and a war-weary populace.”<sup>47</sup> Ronald Syme characterizes the resistance as a conglomeration of various interests which opposed the triumvirate in collusion with those who represented an older feud which took on the colours of an ancient wrong.<sup>48</sup> This animosity reflected the price that the Italian population had paid for the political contests which devolved into the civil wars. These people found themselves, once again, exploited by Rome for the interests of its leading citizens who vied for domination. “Denied justice and liberty, Italy rose against Rome for the last time. It was not the fierce peoples of the *Bellum Italicum*, but rather the more prosperous and civilized regions – Umbria, Etruria and the Sabine country.”<sup>49</sup> This situation found the Antonian faction at a marked advantage and provided the opportunity for L. Antonius and Fulvia to foster the ill-will of the Italic populations against Octavian. This required a delicate hand, however, as the interests of M. Antony with regards to his own troops would have to be kept in mind in any relations with the veterans; hence the early machinations of L. Antonius and Fulvia.<sup>50</sup> This led to a duplicitous stance taken by these individuals; they laid the blame for any delays in the allotments to the veterans at the feet of Octavian and they championed the cause of the dispossessed. In both instances they used the overwhelming popularity of M. Antony’s name and made reference to *pietas*.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Gowing (1992) 79.

<sup>48</sup> Syme (1939) 208.

<sup>49</sup> Syme (1939) 208.

<sup>50</sup> p.34 below.

<sup>51</sup> Syme (1939) 208; Cass. Dio 48.5.4

The exploitation of this situation had already been initiated with Mark Antony's speech at Ephesus which spoke of the Italian peoples being driven from their land:

ἐκ μὲν δὴ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν ἀνδρῶν τὸ πλῆθος τῆς χρείας συνορᾶν δόνασθε. τὴν δὲ γῆν καὶ τὰς πόλεις αὐτοῖς διαδώσω ὁ Καῖσαρ ἄπεισιν ἐς τὴν Ἰταλίαν, εἰ χρὴ τῷ λόγῳ τὸ ἔργον εἴπειν, ἀναστήσω τὴν Ἰταλίαν.

The vast sum that we need for such a vast number of men you can easily imagine. Octavian has gone to Italy to private them with the land and the cities — to expropriate Italy, if we must speak plainly.<sup>52</sup>

I see this as the first salvo of an operation in which M. Antony could deny any participation in the event of a negative outcome, but where he stood to gain much by Octavian's troubles in Italy. Here we see Mark Antony playing a double game also, as he was faced with the same issues and risked losing the favour of the troops.<sup>53</sup> It is the delicate situation of maintaining the loyalties of disparate entities that necessitated the arm's length stance Antony maintained in the conflict which arrayed his brother, his wife and Manius and the interests that they espoused against Octavian.<sup>54</sup> By extension, the duplicitous nature of political activity was reflective of the contrasting demands placed by the interested parties on the triumvirs as they attempted to consolidate their power, while maintaining an ostensibly solid alliance which we know to have been untenable. The events at Perugia can be seen as being an embarrassment to Mark Antony whose situation would have been complicated by the perception that he supported his

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<sup>52</sup> App. 5.5.22-23.

<sup>53</sup> Gabba (1970) lix.

<sup>54</sup> It is noteworthy that Cass. Dio makes no mention of Manius as part of the events at Perugia. This is typical of the historian's attempt to characterize the events as a personal conflict between Fulvia, Lucius and Octavian.

brother to the detriment of his position in the triumvirate and the soldiery. Gabba sees the policy of L. Antonius as a problematic one, since it required M. Antony to leave his brother to his own devices lest he find himself in a position which jeopardized his own interests and alienated his real base of power, the troops.<sup>55</sup>

The issue of M. Antony's attitude towards the events in Italy at the time, and whether he even knew of the events, is a subject which is not entirely clear. As for the transmission of messages, there is evidence that reports were dispatched and received between the East and Rome. Examples of this correspondence included accounts of Antony's affair with a Cappadocian princess and later with Cleopatra.<sup>56</sup> As a result of this, Fulvia's jealousy had become a topic of popular conversation and even found expression as one of the primary causes of the Perusine War.<sup>57</sup> The importance of this issue is made manifest when we see the disunited manner in which the tactically advantaged Antonian forces led by Calenus, Plancus, Ventidius and Pollio conducted themselves during the conflict. Gabba finds it incredible, given the evidence, that Antony was unaware of the events at Perusia. He also discounts the possibility that the winter months and the *mare clausum* impeded the transmission of communications.<sup>58</sup> This then points to M. Antonius remaining aloof in the face of

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<sup>55</sup> Gabba (1970) lix.

<sup>56</sup> App. 5.6.30-31; Cass. Dio 49.32.3-4. Evidence of Octavian's response to these reports can be found in Martial 11.20.

<sup>57</sup> App. 5.19.75. This passage displays the effects of the Augustan propaganda which views Fulvia's jealousy as a catalyst in the war: μέχρι τὴν Φουλίαν ὁ Μάνιος πανούργως μετεδίδαξεν ὡς εἰρηνευομένης μὲν τῆς Ἰταλίας ἐπιμενεῖν Ἀντώνιον Κλεοπάτρα, πολεμουμένης δ' ἀφίξεσθαι κατὰ τάχος. τότε γὰρ δὴ γυναικὸς τι παθοῦσα ἢ Φουλβία τὸν Λεύκιον ἐπέτριβεν ἐς τὴν διαφοράν.; cf. Martial 11.20.

<sup>58</sup> Gabba (1971) 150; Cass. Dio 48.27.1; *contra* Plutarch *Antony* 30.1.

the disturbances created by his brother and wife: “It seems probable that precisely the ideological motives bruited by L. Antonius were the cause of Mark Antony’s attitude....surely he did not share his brother’s republican sentiments...further, he could not have approved Lucius’ alliance with the Italian expropriated classes.”<sup>59</sup> If we take this understanding of events, we see that M. Antonius stood to gain very little and risked losing his base of power by actively endorsing the actions of his brother. That is not to say that he did not realize the benefits that would accrue from further destabilization of the situation in Italy. The uncertainty of M. Antony’s true intentions is raised by Appian: ἔτι ἐπικρύπτων, ἃ ἐφρόνει. It must be deduced that, for a number of reasons, L. Antonius and Fulvia would conduct the war without open support from the triumvir in the East. Despite their production of a letter which authorized action, the support of the triumvir seems unlikely

ὁ δὲ Μάνιος καὶ ἐπιστολὴν ἐδείκνυε τοῦ Ἀντωνίου, εἴτε πλασάμενος εἴτε ἀληθῆ, πολεμεῖν, ἐάν τις αὐτοῦ τὴν ἀξίωσιν καθαιρῆ.

Manius showed also a letter of Antony's, either true or fictitious, saying that they should fight if anybody assailed his dignity.<sup>60</sup>

Whether the generals aligned to the triumvir would support this ‘republican’ cause, taken up by a consul, remained to be seen. This creates the interesting situation in which Lucius and Fulvia found themselves, at least implicitly, at odds with the best interests of their relative M. Antonius. A testament to the possibility

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<sup>59</sup> Gabba (1971) 150.

<sup>60</sup> App. 5.29.112. Gabba (1970) 149 notes: “Appian’s doubts about the authenticity of the letter are accepted by Groag (1914) 44, without good reason in my opinion.”



that L. Antonius may indeed have been as much of a republican as Appian's record states can be found in the inconvenience that L. Antonius' actions caused for his brother as well as from the words in the speech, which he gave after the surrender of Perusia.<sup>61</sup> There is also Octavian's treatment of the towns of Nursia and Sentinum, which presents to us his sentiments regarding popular uprisings of the sort that L. Antonius and Fulvia had championed. Nursia, in particular, bore a stiff penalty for erecting a monument to its dead, lost in the campaign against Salvidienus, with the inscription that they had died for *libertas*. Octavian's reaction to this popular expression was a fine that was so crushing that it brought about the desertion of the territory.<sup>62</sup>

I have tried to reconstruct the situation in Italy as it relates to the pressures which finally exploded into the conflict at Perusia. Those who wished to capitalize on the situation exacerbated these pressures, yet the difficulty of discerning the motivations of the protagonists remains a complicating factor. As will be discussed below, the ostensible motivations presented by the protagonists are diverse and bear the mark of propaganda which colours much of the historical narrative.

The actions of Fulvia, perhaps most coloured of all the protagonists by the propaganda of the day, are characterized by Syme: "Fulvia, if anybody, knew the character of her husband: he neither would nor could go back upon his pledges of allegiance to Octavianus. She must force him – by discrediting if not

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<sup>61</sup> App. 5.54.

<sup>62</sup> Cass. Dio 48.13.

destroying, the rival Caesarian leader, and thus win for her absent and unsuspecting consort the sole power which he scarcely seemed to desire.”<sup>63</sup> Fulvia’s treatment in the historical evidence is augmented by other materials that lend us a view of the current opinions regarding the matron who would become a model for powerful women in the Empire; one may view Fulvia as a forerunner to the empresses who would follow. Her unflattering appraisals certainly provide for us an image of a vigorous personality whose grasp of the situation in the triumvirate was realistic and adept; she understood that the situation in Italy was not tenable and the inevitability of conflict would have been apparent to her. The threat that she posed to the designs of Octavian is evident in the treatment of Fulvia in the Augustan propaganda. On the other hand, Lucius Antonius is depicted in Appian as a champion of republican ideals in the face of the triumvirate. Appian *BC* 5.19.74 begins:

Λευκίῳ δὲ ὄντι δημοτικῷ καὶ δυσχεραίνοντι τῇ τῶν τριῶν ἀρχῇ, οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τῷ χρόνῳ παύσεσθαι νομιζομένη, προσκρούσματα ἐς τὸν Καίσαρα ἐγένετο καὶ διαφοραὶ μείζους· τοὺς τε γεωργοὺς, ὅσοι τῆς γῆς ἀφῆροῦντο, ἰκέτας γιγνομένους τῶν δυνατῶν ἑκάστου μόνος ὑπεδέχετο καὶ βοηθήσειν ὑπισχνεῖτο, κάκειων ὑπισχνομένων ἀμυνεῖν, ἐς ὃ κελύοι.

Lucius Antonius, who was a republican and ill affected toward the triumvirate, which seemed not likely to come to an end at the appointed time, fell into controversy, and even graver differences, with Octavian. He alone received kindly, and promised aid to the agriculturists who had been deprived of their lands and who were now the suppliants of every man of importance; and they promised to carry out his orders.

Appian presents this temperament to the triumvirate as an assured fact.<sup>64</sup> By this ideology L. Antonius found himself at the centre of an anti-triumviral coalition comprised of disparate entities which represented the *δυνατοί*, that is the old

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<sup>63</sup> Syme (1939) 208.

<sup>64</sup> App. 5.19.74; 43.179 ff.; 54.226 ff.

aristocratic class, the γεωργοί, driven from their land as well as united by their hostility to Octavian, Fulvia, and a portion of Antony's troops.<sup>65</sup> The coalition's chances of success in the conflict rest upon Pollio, Plancus, and Ventidius, Antony's generals in the north who held the Gallic provinces, joining forces with L. Antonius to overpower Octavian's position in Italy. Octavian, sensing the precarious position he occupied, sent for Salvidienus who made his return from Spain. Pollio and Ventidius followed, "slow but menacing."<sup>66</sup> These generals seemed unwilling to engage in open combat, and their intentions remained unknown. Syme, among others, views the hesitation of Plancus as being principally responsible for the failure to relieve the siege,<sup>67</sup> with Pollio depicted as an individualist who would not give battle in such uncertain circumstances, but who held the Republic's hopes in his hands. More recently, however, there have been attempts at both the reformation of Plancus' moral reputation,<sup>68</sup> and new appraisals of the political opportunism of Pollio.<sup>69</sup> Both of these approaches cast doubt on the historical representations. It is of interest that Pollio, who wrote personal invectives against Plancus, and is credited with having been a principal

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<sup>65</sup> Gabba (1956) 193.

<sup>66</sup> Syme (1939) 210.

<sup>67</sup> The traditional explanation is that this vituperation stemmed from Velleius Paterculus' depiction of Plancus, which was influenced by the hostility directed, in Velleius' time, against Munatia Plancina. Plancina was the daughter or granddaughter of Plancus, wife of Cn. Calpurnius Piso, and, in the popular imagination, the poisoner of Germanicus. There may also have been the presence of propaganda of the 30s BC, in which the Augustan victors blackened the reputation of the Antonian losers. Wright (2002) 179 n.4.

<sup>68</sup> Wright (2002) 178-184.

<sup>69</sup> Bosworth (1972). This casts doubt on much of the romantic image of the republican idealist and individualist Pollio.

source for Appian, is depicted favourably, while Plancus is vilified in the historical record. Nevertheless, the effect was the same: the forces of L. Antonius and those he championed were now left to face the siege alone and unaided by a force which could have easily reversed the course of affairs in Italy. The fact that the Antonians were “ separated by distance and divided in counsel”<sup>70</sup> outweighs any considerations of individual attitude. This is in contrast to Appian’s and Velleius Paterculus’ narratives which lay the blame for the failure to relieve Perugia at Plancus’ feet.<sup>71</sup> There is another interesting and telling point that calls into question the wisdom of relying on the unity of the Antonian generals. Syme points out that dissension was rife among the leaders of these armies

“ The soldierly Ventidius knew that Plancus had called him a muleteer and a brigand; and Pollio hated Plancus. But there was a more potent factor than the doubts and dissensions of the generals – their soldiers had an acute perception of their own interests as well as a strong distaste for war: it would be plain folly to fight for L. Antonius and the propertied classes of Italy.”<sup>72</sup>

After the soldiers’ unsuccessful attempt to take matters into their own hands by holding talks at Gabii, in hope of effecting a compromise, the machinery of conflict was set in place and, once again, Italy would be the theatre of war. Both sides raised forces and seized temple-treasures. The accusation of temple-robbing is identified by Gabba as one of the important aspects of Antonian propaganda; this is especially evident in that Augustus saw that it was

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<sup>70</sup> Syme (1939) 208.

<sup>71</sup> App. 5.35.141; Vell. Pat. 2.74.3.

<sup>72</sup> Syme (1939) 211.

necessary to refute such actions in his *Res Gestae* (24).<sup>73</sup> This action seems to display Augustus' preoccupation with overcoming the Antonian propaganda which remained persistently in the background of many depictions of events during the triumviral period. Inevitably, war broke out between the factions. The historical evidence does not agree about the causes. Whereas Appian saw the reasons for war as complex and diverse, Dio sees them as driven by personality. It would seem to be imprudent to discount wholly either version; as we have seen, Appian's socioeconomic appraisal provides much of our understanding of events, while the personality-centred account of Dio affords us a view of a time when the protagonists were close, both physically and in their relations with each other. In this way Dio's account does have some merit. In my appraisal of the literary evidence presented by Martial I will further develop the theme of the personal nature of the invective which these individuals levied at each other and the personal nature of the enmities to which this invective testifies.

Dio has focused on Lucius Antonius and Fulvia in his exposition of the causes of the Perusine War. Initially the two were said to be hoping to share in Octavian's ἡγεμονία,<sup>74</sup> but with the passage of time and the realization that they would not achieve what they wanted, they eventually came to open conflict.<sup>75</sup> Another point that merits mention is that the marriage between Octavian and Claudia, the daughter of Fulvia, was ended at this point. It would not be the last

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<sup>73</sup> Gabba (1956) 194.

<sup>74</sup> Cass. Dio 48.3.1.

<sup>75</sup> The much-vilified Fulvia takes the blame in the Augustan sources, that is to say those influenced by Augustan propaganda; cf. Livy *Per.* 125.; Florus. *Epit.* 2.16.; Plutarch *Ant.* 30.2.; Vell. Pat. 2.74.2-4.

Roman political marriage to end as alliances shifted. Dio's narrative shows Octavian trying to effect a conciliatory solution on four occasions,<sup>76</sup> whereas Appian depicts these attempts as being made through either officers or optimates. Dio is looking at the situation through 'Augustan eyes'.<sup>77</sup> The result is that Dio's narrative appears to display them as the accomplishment of Lucius and Fulvia who obstructed Octavian's attempts to maintain peace, whereas Appian's narrative takes a comprehensive view of the events.<sup>78</sup>

The narrative of Cassius Dio, as we have seen, regarded the situation as a contest between those who sought power amidst the tumultuous backdrop of 41-40 BCE. These individuals were faced with difficulties which in some instances forced the leaders' hands, and in others caused the involvement of the middle and upper classes of Roman society in the conflict. The narrative of Cassius Dio does away with the elements of land and loyalty in Italy and focuses solely on individuals and their desires for power. According to Appian, the rationale for Fulvia's actions was a desire to maintain the favour of the troops who stood to ally themselves with those who represented their interests. This is the reason for the demands of L. Antonius and Fulvia that land be distributed only when M. Antonius could be present.<sup>79</sup> After this they softened their demands to the extent that only Antonian delegates should settle Antonius' soldiers, so that

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<sup>76</sup> Cass. Dio 48.10.3: "personally and on his own responsibility".

<sup>77</sup> Gowing (1982) 82.

<sup>78</sup> Cass. Dio 48.10.2; 48.11.1; 48.11.4.

<sup>79</sup> App. 5.14.54.

he would maintain their favour.<sup>80</sup> Appian and Cassius Dio diverge on an important point. Whereas the Appianic narrative goes on to describe the soldiers running roughshod, invading lands outside of their allotments,<sup>81</sup> Dio represents the events as being a direct result of the hatred of L. Antonius and Fulvia, which led them to espouse the cause of the dispossessed, not for their sake, or for any ideology, but in order to oppose Octavian in his weakened strategic position.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, Gabba has recognized the value of these differing accounts for the propagandistic components which they divulge.<sup>83</sup>

The treatment of L. Antonius is emblematic of the discrepancies which arise from the Antonian and Augustan propaganda evident in the historians. The Augustan perspective of Cassius Dio does not represent Lucius as the idealized defender of republican values that Appian does. Lucius' hostility to the triumvirate is shown, in Appian, as being genuine, yet Lucius played his hand in the hope of relief from the Antonian generals who certainly did not appear to hold any republican allegiance. An apt observation regarding Pollio's allegiances is made by Syme:

a friend of Caesar and of Antonius but a republican, Pollio found his loyalties at variance or out of date: it is pretty clear that he had no use for any party. He knew about them all. The pessimistic and clear-sighted republican felt no confidence in a cause championed by Cicero.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> App. 5.14.55-56.

<sup>81</sup> App. 5.13.51-52.

<sup>82</sup> Cass. Dio 48.6.3-5.

<sup>83</sup> Gabba (1956) 194 ff.

<sup>84</sup> Syme (1939) 166.

While this observation comments on Pollio before Philippi, it does much to aid in the understanding of Pollio's attitude in the triumviral period. Furthermore, Cicero's *Ad Familiares* X.31.2 gives Pollio's attitude towards civil war and his distaste for choosing sides in the civil conflicts.

From Appian's perspective, the hope of military aid was unrealistic:

οἱ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ διὰ σφῶν ὤκνουσιν ἐπείγεσθαι, τὸν τε πόλεμον ἀποδοκιμάζοντες ὅλως καὶ τὴν Ἄντωνίου γνώμην οὐκ ἐπιστάμενοι καὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν τῆς στρατιᾶς οὐ παριέντες ἀλλήλοις κατ' ἀξίωσιν οὐδέτερος.

The latter, however, hesitated on their own account to advance, as they altogether disapproved of the war and did not know what Antony thought about it, and on account of mutual rivalry were unwilling to yield to each other the military chieftainship.<sup>85</sup>

This indicates that Lucius perhaps considered his position as consul to be stronger than it really was. Nevertheless, his actions are those befitting an active republican commander who felt the triumvirate needed to be checked on Italian soil. The appraisal put forth by Gabba seems accurate in regard to the character of Appian's narrative as it pertains to Lucius Antonius

il tono apertamente polemico induce a credere che, presentando questa guerra come un movimento antitriumvale, il cui campione L. Antonio viene idealizzato a difensore della libertà tradizionale di fronte ad Ottaviano, non si è fatto altro che trasferire in sede narrativa la unilaterale visione della propaganda di una fazione politica (quella di Lucio Antonio).

The open polemic tone induces one to believe that, in presenting this war as an anti-triumviral movement, whose champion L. Antonius becomes idealized as a defender of traditional liberties opposed to Octavian, nothing other occurs than the transference of the unilateral vision of the propaganda of a political faction, (that of Lucius Antonius) to the historical narrative.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> App. 5.32.126-127.

<sup>86</sup> Gabba (1956) 198. My translation.



Furthermore, Gabba's theories concerning the ὑπομνήματα<sup>87</sup>, after Schwarz<sup>88</sup>, if accepted, seem to add the authority to L. Antonius' sincerity as a magistrate of the Republic.<sup>89</sup> Gabba's belief that L. Antonius' speech was included in the *Acta Diurna Populi Romani* lends it the appearance of having been officially recognized as an action of the free state.<sup>90</sup>

Augustan sources, balanced by republican and Antonian ones, give Appian's narrative its place as a fair source in which a more temperate approach to historiography can be detected.<sup>91</sup> These sources create an undercurrent which steers the historical narrative. In their historical contexts the surrender of Perusia and its aftermath are best examined from the viewpoint that the propagandistic elements contained in the narratives create a disparity that may or may not be an effective measure of the validity of the statements.<sup>92</sup> For the sake of simplicity, it can be said that, for the most part in this instance, Dio's and Velleius Paterculus' histories can be seen as pro-Augustan, with Appian's showing a balanced examination of the materials available to him. By comparison, Suetonius' rendition of the siege of Perusia is the least flattering of the historians; his

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<sup>87</sup> App. 5.45.191 ff. The ὑπομνήματα indicate a change of the source from which Appian draws his narrative.

<sup>88</sup> Gabba (1970) xxx ff.; Schwartz (1898) 209, 232 n.4.

<sup>89</sup> *Contra* Gowing (1992) 241.

<sup>90</sup> Others have been more amenable to the idea that the *Commentarii* of Augustus provide the source.

<sup>91</sup> Gabba (1956) 156 ff, (1970) xxxi; Gowing (1992) 240 ff ; Sordi (1985) 301 (1988) 24 ff.

<sup>92</sup> Gabba (1970) xvii ff. argues that the ὑπομνήματα of App. 5.45.191 represent not the memoirs of Augustus, but the *Acta Diurna*; *contra* Gowing (1992), who sees the personal nature of the exchange between L. Antonius and Octavian, on the occasion of their speeches after Perusia's capitulation, as anachronistic with an official source such as the *Acta*.

account represents an Augustus whose severity is shocking in its calculating cruelty. Why, then, is there the disparity which allows for the actions of Octavian, after Perugia, to be viewed as either emblematic of great clemency, tempered by a realistic appraisal of the situation, or as one of the most disquieting episodes in the history of the civil wars? It must be recalled, in this context, that L. Antonius was treated with clemency and sent to Spain where he died shortly thereafter. Furthermore, why is it that one of the sources that we may expect to be most amenable to Octavian, namely Cassius Dio, echoes the accusations of anti-Augustan propaganda in its portrayal of the sacrifice of knights and senators? Gowing provides one explanation, stating that the manner of Octavian's portrayal, in this instance, is not uncommon in Dio's depictions of emperors acting badly.<sup>93</sup> This differs from the depiction in which Appian, working from republican or Antonian sources, refrains from mentioning the ritualistic killing of three hundred knights and senators. Does this provide us with the necessary evidence to discount the *Arae Perusinae*? These questions are not easily answered and the historical evidence we have is contradictory and influenced by the respective propaganda of both sides. For this reason, it is difficult to draw a complete picture merely from historical sources. Literary material will help to provide another, more personal perspective.

There remain other discrepancies in the historical evidence for the fall of Perugia and her fate. In one instance, Appian does not lay most of the blame for these events on Octavian; instead the obloquy is leveled against the soldiers:

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<sup>93</sup> Gowing (1992) 84.

τῆς δ' ἐπιούσης ὁ μὲν Καῖσαρ ἐσπένδετο ἅπασιν, ὁ δὲ στρατὸς οὐκ ἐπαύετο ἐπὶ τισι θορυβῶν, ἕως ἀνηρέθησαν· καὶ ἦσαν οἱ μάλιστα Καίσαρος ἐχθροί, Καννούτιός τε καὶ Γάιος Φλάβιος καὶ Κλώδιος ὁ Βιθυνικὸς καὶ ἕτεροι.

On the following day Octavian made peace with all of them, but the soldiers did not desist from tumults against some of them until the latter were killed. These were the chief personal enemies of Octavian, namely, Cannutius, Gaius Flavius, Clodius Bithynicus, and others.<sup>94</sup>

In this instance, we can ascertain that Octavian did show clemency towards his defeated enemies. The charges against the soldiers seem plausible considering their hesitation to engage, their war-weariness, and the fact that they attempted on numerous occasions to effect a peaceful solution which was thwarted by L. Antonius and his confederates. In light of these factors, and in conjunction with the temperament of the armies cognizant of their own interests, the reaction of Octavian's troops seems to be a probable end to these events. The Appianic record succeeds even at divesting Octavian of any guilt in regard to the burning of the city; the conflagration's origin was the ostentatious funeral pyre of Cestius, a Perusine citizen.<sup>95</sup>

The narrative of Dio, already hostile in some instances but predominantly Augustan in sentiment, gives us the account which has Octavian oversee the ritualistic killing of knights and senators. This version is qualified by the phrase καὶ λόγος ἔχει which removes some of the certainty from the story. This statement is mirrored in Suetonius who states *quidam scribunt* before his account. These qualifications do not necessarily discount the events, but they do provide the reader with the first seeds of skepticism with respect to this episode

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<sup>94</sup> App. 5.49.207. These ἕτεροι leave the question somewhat open as to the possibility of extraordinary executions, but offer no insight into the charges of human sacrifice.

<sup>95</sup> App. 5.49.204-205.

in Dio and Suetonius.<sup>96</sup> The numbers of those executed at Perusia has been a one of the most shocking aspects of these events. In both Dio and Suetonius the number of those executed is given at 300. It has been suggested that this number is a convention in the Latin language and may signify something along the lines of 'a lot'. Examples of this convention can be seen in both colloquial Latin and in poetry.<sup>97</sup> It also merits mention that there seems to be a connection between this number and the number of those proscribed.<sup>98</sup> The size of this number also lends authority to the thesis that the events may have been exaggerated and magnified with the passage of time.

Another aspect of Suetonius' and Dio's version of events is the mention of an altar where the sacrifices were carried out.<sup>99</sup> E. Kraggerud is hesitant to accept the presence of any altar at Perusia.<sup>100</sup> He finds it unlikely that Octavian would have erected an altar *ad hoc* after the fall of the city. He states that it is unlikely that Suetonius would characterize the altar as *exstructam* if it already existed.<sup>101</sup> This may be true, but it must also be kept in mind that there is mention in *Aug. 14* of Octavian sacrificing *circa Perusinum...murum*. This may well place an altar near at hand, upon which the sacrifice in question may have been

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<sup>96</sup> Kraggerud (1987) 83: "the fact that a piece of information is given only by some of the sources on a given subject does not in itself necessarily discredit it."

<sup>97</sup> Carter (1982) 104; Kraggerud (1987) 83; Dyson (1996) 284; Farron (1985) 27.

<sup>98</sup> Kraggerud (1987) 83 n.19: Plut. *Ant.* 20.1 and *Brut.* 27.5 give the number of those proscribed as 300.

<sup>99</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 15.2 *Scribunt quidam trecentos ex dediticiis electos utriusque ordinis ad aram Divo Iulio exstructam Idibus Martiis hostiarum more mactatos.*

<sup>100</sup> Kraggerud (1987) 83.

<sup>101</sup> Kraggerud (1987) 83.

carried out. It is apparent from such considerations that there is conflicting evidence that makes it difficult to determine the true nature of the historical events. Whereas the historical evidence grants us an imprecise and conflicting view after the fall of Perusia, modern scholars have questioned the veracity of the more serious allegations against Octavian.<sup>102</sup> On this subject J. Carter writes: "it is impossible to believe this story of human sacrifice, though it appears in Dio too."<sup>103</sup> However, there are those who are not willing to discount the reports of Octavian's exceptional cruelty at Perusia.<sup>104</sup> It is this difference of scholarly opinion which propagates the varied interpretations of Octavian's actions during this historical episode.

As for Velleius Paterculus' version of things, he "takes two words to deal with the winter-long siege which became a by-word for cruelty. By being able to combine his own personal *fortuna* with *virtus*, Octavian is here depicted as the ideal general"<sup>105</sup>: *usus Caesar uirtute et fortuna sua Perusiam expugnauit. Antonium inuiolatum dimisit; in Perusinos magis ira militum quam uoluntate saeuitum ducis.*<sup>106</sup> The gloss over the events, as presented by Velleius, is in

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<sup>102</sup> Syme (1939) 212: "These judicial murders were magnified by defamation and credulity into a hecatomb of three hundred Roman senators and knights slaughtered in solemn and religious ceremony on the Ides of March before an altar dedicated to *Divus Julius*." Cf. Gowing (1992) 84.

<sup>103</sup> Carter (1982) 104.

<sup>104</sup> Frothingham (1909) 345 ff., Gardthausen (1904) 97, Heinze (1915) 210, Kienast (1982), Dyson (1996) 281 ff., Renger (1985) 64, Rieks (1981) 728 ff., Weinstock (1971) 398. Stahl (1981) 174 seems inclined to believe in the possibility of Octavian's *parentalia*. One of the inherent difficulties in any appraisal is that, besides the conflicting evidence there is no measure other than one's own personal feeling with regards to the nature of Roman power, and the forms it took, when one contemplates the issue.

<sup>105</sup> Woodman (1996) 182.

<sup>106</sup> Vell. Pat. 2.74.4

keeping with his position as a historian of the Julio-Claudian era. Velleius is among the most sycophantic of historians. Syme characterizes Velleius' histories, in some instances, as 'fraudulent'.<sup>107</sup> He is seen as a court historian, a "typical government writer...unswervingly loyal to Tiberius and L. Aelius Sejanus."<sup>108</sup> By extension, it is possible to understand such a character's unwillingness or inability to be critical of the relatively new and insecure principate. There remains one other mention in Seneca's *de Clementia*, where we first see the term *Aræ Perusinae*.<sup>109</sup> Lily Ross-Taylor sees the inclusion of this episode as being proof of the acceptance, during Seneca's life, of the obscure historical event.<sup>110</sup>

As I have attempted to show, the events of 41-40 BCE are complex and are rendered even more so by the disparate historical evidence that we have regarding them. There is no exact account of events; some tend towards Antonian sympathies, yet neglect the opportunity to make mention of the sensational propagandistic accounts, clearly still vibrant, which resounded through successive generations of Roman historiography. Others, seemingly pro-Augustan in sentiment, give us this horrifying example of the extent of the young Octavian's cruelty. All sides, ancient and modern, seem to agree with respect to the traumatic nature of the events at Perugia and the importance they held as the first overt cracks in the triumviral facade made themselves apparent. Given the

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<sup>107</sup> Syme (1939) 393 n.1.

<sup>108</sup> Syme (1939) 498.

<sup>109</sup> *de Clementia* 1.11.1: Comparare nemo mansuetudini tuae tuae audebit divum Augustum, etiam si in certamen iuveniliū annorum deduxerit senectutem plus quam maturam; fuerit moderatus et clemens, nempe post mare Actiacum Romano cruore infectum, nempe post Perusinas Aras et proscriptiones.

<sup>110</sup> Taylor (1975) 211.

uncertainty of the events I have been discussing, an examination of the contemporary literary evidence for the Perusine War will benefit our view of the historical narrative as presented from a human standpoint. In analyzing these instances, I intend to examine the mentality surrounding the historical events and the contemporary attitudes which created the environment that allowed the *Arae Perusinae* to become part of the popular perception of Octavian's actions before he became emperor.

## Octavian, Fulvia and Martial 11.20

Thus far I have attempted to outline the desperate situation that Octavian faced in regard to the Perusine War. Furthermore, I have tried to display that this conflict held a very personal component. This aspect has been shown from the historical records available to us, awash in the propaganda of the time, which tempers any declarations of certainty pertaining to specific events. One need only look to the *Periochae* of Livy's work (125) to see the manner in which sources favourable to Octavian portrayed the conflict.<sup>111</sup> In the same spirit of exploring the implications of the concerted efforts, by the protagonists in the Perusine War, at propagating specific images in the minds of Romans, I will now turn to Martial 11.20:

Caesaris Augusti lascivos, livide, versus  
sex lege, qui tristis verba Latina legis:  
'Quod futuit Glaphyran Antonius, hanc mihi poenam  
Fulvia constituit, se quoque uti futuam.  
Fulviam ego ut futuam? Quod si me Manius oret  
pedicem? faciam? Non puto, si sapiam.  
'Aut futue, aut pugnemus' ait. Quid quod mihi vita  
carior est mentula? Signa canant!'<sup>111</sup>  
absolvit lepidos nimirum, Auguste, libellos,  
qui scis Romana simplicitate loqui.

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<sup>111</sup> *Caesar relicto trans mare Antonio (provinciae ea parte imperi positae ei cesserant) reversus in Italiam veteranis agros divisit. Seditiones exercitus sui quas corrupti a Fulvia, M. Antoni uxore, milites adversus imperatorem suum concitaverant, cum gravi periculo inhibuit. L. Antomius cos., M. Antoni frater, eadem Fulvia consiliante bellum Caesari intulit. Receptis in partes suas populis cuprum agri veteranis adsignati erant, et M. Lepido, qui custodiae urbis cum exercitu praeerat, fuso hostiliter in urbem inrupit.*



The authenticity of lines 3-8 as Octavian's work has been challenged by Groag and others.<sup>112</sup> However, Bardon presents an argument for authenticity.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, the language and style is consistent with the attested date of composition.<sup>114</sup> There is also evidence that Octavian/Augustus created epigrams that survived until later in antiquity.<sup>115</sup> It is also known that Octavian wrote *fescennini* against Asinius Pollio.<sup>116</sup> These ribald songs found reply from Pollio: "at ego taceo: non est enim facile in eum scribere qui potest proscribere."<sup>117</sup> This statement casts a deadly pall over what seems to have been a pastime for leading Romans – personal invective. This practice is attested by Pliny, who makes mention of *doctissimi gravissimi sanctissimi homines* who had written verses which rivaled his in their bawdy content.<sup>118</sup> This all paints the picture of these poems as designed "to hurt and humiliate"<sup>119</sup> and to depict the combat and

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<sup>112</sup> Kay, (1985) 111; Groag (1914) 47: "meines Erachtens kaum echt, ist es doch sicherlich von einem genauen Kenner der damaligen politischen Situation verfasst." Others include: W. Drumann- P. Groebe (1899) I 289; W. Teuffel (1920) II 13.

<sup>113</sup> Bardon (1968) 18: "L'authenticité de l'épigramme n'est pas contestable, car le public lettré du temps de Martial n'aurait pas permis une supercherie qu'il eût découverte sans difficulté." Other supporters of authenticity are M.A. Levi (1933) II 21; Malcovati (1948) xii n.3; Scott (1933); Gabba (1970) XLIII-XLIV.

<sup>114</sup> Kay (1985) 111, 113 re: line 5- *Fulvia ego ut*: "the harsh elision is evidence of an early date of composition: cf. Catullus (e.g. 73.6), whose rate of elision from *Carm.* 69 to 116 is 75 per 100 lines; in general, the more frequent the elisions (in the more colloquial genres), the earlier the poet." Bardon (1968) 19-20 notes that the poem contains several expressions found in the colloquial Latin of some Republican authors (*orare* without *ut*; *non puto*; *si sapiam*).

<sup>115</sup> Suet. *Aug.* 85.2; Hallett (1977) 161.

<sup>116</sup> Kay (1985) 111; Syme (1939) 211.

<sup>117</sup> Macrobius *Sat.* 2.4.21.

<sup>118</sup> Pliny *Ep.* 5.3.3 f.

<sup>119</sup> Hallett (1977) 163.

the enmity attached to it as 'good dirty fun.'<sup>120</sup> This somewhat comic aspect is in keeping with other reports that we have of the personality of Augustus and his sense of humour. On one occasion, the Roman emperor encountered a man who could have been his twin brother. "Tell me," Augustus asked (apparently unaffected by the laughter of the people around him), "has your mother ever been to Rome?" The man replied, "My mother has never visited Rome, but my father came here frequently."<sup>121</sup> Anecdotes such as these reinforced the image of a ruler who was able to wear his power lightly and detract from the bitter memories of those who opposed him in the civil wars. Expressions such as these are in keeping with Roman humour which was, for the most part, vulgar with a propensity to joke about parts of the body.<sup>122</sup> The verses attributed to Octavian by Martial are certainly in keeping with this tradition. In many ways, this epigram bridges the gap between traditional Roman slander against one's enemies and the military and sexual imagery that Octavian used to malign Fulvia and Manius in a pointedly deliberate manner and which found expression in the historical record. The statement quoted by Pollio earlier<sup>123</sup> reminds us that, apart from all considerations of comical insults, there was a serious undercurrent to the political events they trivialize.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Hallett (1977) 163.

<sup>121</sup> Macr. 2.4.19; Yavetz (1990) 36.

<sup>122</sup> Yavetz (1990) 37.

<sup>123</sup> Above p.45

<sup>124</sup> Hallett (1977) 163 writes: "The poetic attempt to turn the situation into a joke, to depict it as the result of non-negotiable sexual demands made by a jealous, foolish, but unmistakably feminine woman could not, it would appear, efface the popular impression of this war as shameful and sordid."

By examining the text of this epigram, I hope to point out important aspects of the conflict as they pertain to the imagery which Octavian wished to perpetuate. I will show that the verses by the future emperor serve to address specific issues regarding himself and others that are primarily concerned with the imagery he wishes to project regarding himself and those who are his enemies. The tone of the verses is predominantly sexual and serves to frame a military conflict, with sweeping social, economic and political ramifications in a sexually explicit, light style. I will examine the reasons for this trivialization of the issues, while presenting the concerns behind them within their context, as part of the triumviral struggle that Octavian was cognizant of and in regards to which he enacted one of the most effective campaigns of propaganda and counter-propaganda in antiquity.

The representation of Fulvia in this poem seems to me to be emblematic of the gradual evolution of her image. This evolution eventually met its *terminus* with the characterization that comes down to us from Velleius Paterculus: *nihil muliebre praeter corpus gerens*.<sup>125</sup> This appraisal is typical of the popular representations of Fulvia, such as that of Plutarch (*Ant.* 10.3). This passage makes note of her lack of interest in traditional feminine pursuits, such as spinning and other domestic duties. Furthermore, it is charged that she held γυναικοκρατία over Antony. This representation must certainly be reflective of the campaign, initiated by Octavian, to discredit Antony as a man controlled by his sexual desire. By doing this, Octavian utilized Antony's reputation as an

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<sup>125</sup> Vell. Pat. 2.74.; cf. Flor. 2.16.2 *Fulvia tum gladio cincta uirilis militiae*.

accomplished *amator* to his advantage.<sup>126</sup> This is even more noteworthy if we recognize Octavian's attempts to recast himself as a virile male, in the face of contrary propaganda. Another aspect of this tactic can be seen in Octavian's readiness to utilize the imagery of sexuality and politics to create a specific set of associations in regard to himself and those at whom he aims his vituperation.

J.P. Hallett has recognized the young Octavian's desire to create an image for himself which was representative of a ruler who embodied strength, virility and stability.<sup>127</sup> Contrary to this imagery, we have examples of the view of the young triumvir which held currency, at least among those who initiated propaganda against him. Suetonius, the historian who gives us the bloody account of the sacrifice at Perusia, provides examples of the negative representations of the young Octavian. In *Divus Augustus* 68, Suetonius states that Octavian *variorum dedecorum infamiam subiit*. This charge of repeated shameful acts found currency in the statements that Suetonius ascribes to Octavian's enemies: Sextus Pompeius branded Octavian as *effeminatum*; Mark Antony attributed Octavian's adoption to a homosexual encounter with Julius Caesar: *adoptionem avunculi stupro meritum*; Lucius Antonius is reported by Suetonius as slandering the triumvir in this way: *solitusque crura suburere nuce ardentii, quo mollior pilus surgeret*.<sup>128</sup> In the face of attempts at characterizing Octavian in such a manner, the young triumvir enacted his own communications

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<sup>126</sup> Cicero *Philippics* 2.20,58,61,69,77; Plutarch *Ant.* 24.

<sup>127</sup> Hallett (1977)158.

<sup>128</sup> *Aug.* 68. It may be slander such as this that Octavian objects to in the speech following the surrender of Perusia, App.5.45.189: οὐδὲν ἔτι δέομαι διελέγχειν, ὅσα σὺν τέχνῃ μου κατεψεύσω.

campaign, of which Martial's epigram is indicative. The veracity of the statements Suetonius presents from the mouths of Octavian's enemies is difficult to judge, but it would be best to view them with a modicum of suspicion; the recognition of the concerted efforts of the protagonists to slander each other necessitates caution in any credulous acceptance of every aspect of the sensational accounts which come down to us. The sexual accusations, in conjunction with the generally hostile stance taken against the young triumvir in Suetonius' histories, may well be indicative of a propensity by the historian to accept the hostile propaganda at face value. I do not presume to accept these characterizations completely, yet I agree with Hallett's statement regarding the popular image of the future emperor: "they provide evidence that, at approximately the time of the Perusine siege, Octavian's enemies, including his official adversary at Perugia, agreed with the assessment of his sexual nature."<sup>129</sup>

Further evidence of the nature of the insults levied at each other by the protagonists can be found in the archaeological evidence of the sling-bullets found at the site of the Perusine siege, the so-called *Perusinae Glandes*.<sup>130</sup> *CIL* XI 6721.5 contains the inscription: FVLVIAE/ [L]ANDICAM/ PET[O].<sup>131</sup> PET[O]/ OCTAVIA[!]/ CVLVM<sup>132</sup> (*CIL* XI 6721.7). Zangmeister conjectures that, in *CIL* XI 6721.9a, the inscription states [S]ALVE/ OCTAVI/ FELAS.<sup>133</sup> Also, *CIL*

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<sup>129</sup> Hallett (1977) 158.

<sup>130</sup> *CIL* XI 6721.5,7,9a,10,11,13,14,34,35,39.

<sup>131</sup> "I seek/ Fulvia's/ clitoris".

<sup>132</sup> "I seek/ Octavian's (fem.)/ ass".

<sup>133</sup> Zangmeister (1885) 57. "Greetings/ you fellate/ of Octavian".

XI 6721.14: LA (Lucius Antonius)/ CALVE/ FVLVIA/ CVLVM/ PANDITE.<sup>134</sup> These sling-bullets and their inscriptions serve two important purposes in any understanding of the issues of the time: they present to us the opinions of the soldiery at the siege, as well as reinforcing the view that the very personal enmities in the conflict found expression by the leaders' subordinates in the field. By extension, it is possible to deduce that the armies controlled a significant amount of the language that came to be utilized. That is to say that these *glandes* represent somewhat of a novelty among sling-bullets found from other Greek and Roman battles. The use of sexual imagery, and especially that of sexual assault finds no parallel in other Greek and Roman missiles.<sup>135</sup> Of further significance is the appearance of the word *landica* (clitoris), which is not attested in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* before this instance.<sup>136</sup> I believe this is indicative of the ability of the soldiery to actively take up their commanders' hostility in a manner that gained currency in the propagandistic and military language of the day. I have tried to demonstrate that the protagonists enacted specific accusations against their enemies, in order to effect a negative popular image of the targeted individual. Specifically, the sling-bullets imply that Octavian was a *pathicus*<sup>137</sup> and was considered an unmanly, effeminate character. The

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<sup>134</sup> "Bald Lucius and Fulvia open up your ass".

<sup>135</sup> Hallett (1977) 154. However, it seems that such expressions are common to civil war; artillery was inscribed in a similar fashion in the Spanish civil war.

<sup>136</sup> Hallett (1977) 165 n.22.

<sup>137</sup> *CIL* 6721.39.

use of the feminine OCTAVIAI<sup>138</sup> further reinforces this image.<sup>139</sup> This mode of representation certainly remained current, as can be attested by the echoes of it found in Suetonius. This then created the obvious necessity for Octavian to counter these charges and present himself in a different light. The fact that he would later be regarded so differently is a testament to the power of the Augustan propaganda.

Martial's epigram was written in the same spirit as the *glandes*, but with the intent of creating an image that would afford Octavian a foil with which to juxtapose himself in order to create an image like the popular one we hold today. Firstly, it has been noted that the verses testify to Octavian's virility; they depict him as physically irresistible to an experienced older woman, Fulvia.<sup>140</sup> Also, it can be seen as the first successful attempt by Octavian to place the blame on his enemies, specifically laying the lion's-share of it at the feet of a woman. This can be seen as a forerunner of the campaign which destroyed Antony's image in the East and which successfully portrayed him as enslaved by Cleopatra.<sup>141</sup> All this was presented as a rivalry between Rome and the East, which was characterized, once again, as effeminate, luxurious and decadent. Aside from this destructive aspect of the poem, there is the converse aspect, that of Octavian trying to rehabilitate his image, in the light of the aspersions which were

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<sup>138</sup> *CIL* 6721.7; above p.49

<sup>139</sup> Hallett (1977) 152.

<sup>140</sup> Hallett (1977) 160.

<sup>141</sup> Kay (1985) 111.

cast upon his character by his enemies.<sup>142</sup> In many ways, I see the lessons learned by Octavian in the Perusine conflict as forerunners to the successful campaign that Octavian waged against M. Antony and Cleopatra some ten years later. In this way, Fulvia became a forerunner for the “wicked female” *leitmotif* which Octavian would utilize in the run-up to Actium.

Octavian frames the entire conflict as one whose origins can be found in Fulvia’s jealousy. The first two lines after the introductory statement represent Fulvia as jilted and wishing to even the score with Antony, whose affair with Glaphyra was the cause of her jealousy. It goes on to depict Octavian, against the popular image of the day, as ‘unmistakably courageous, belligerent, physically attractive, and above all virile. The poem ascribes to him qualities which...he was generally thought to lack at this moment in his life.<sup>143</sup>

The result of Fulvia’s jealousy: *hanc mihi poenam constituit* (11.20.4). Sexual relations with Fulvia are termed a *poena*. This is reflective of Octavian’s attempt to depict Fulvia as enveloped by her jealousy which, in turn, threatens to envelop the Roman state. This emotional disturbance of Fulvia, as we have seen, was eagerly accepted as a catalyst for war by the Romans, to judge from the agreement on this point in the historical evidence. This treatment “adds to Caesar Augustus’ aura of masculinity by representing her as an ordinary Roman woman, exceptional only in her self-assertiveness and unattractiveness.”<sup>144</sup> In my opinion, this betrays a deeper concern for Octavian; his concerted efforts at

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<sup>142</sup> Kay (1985) 112.

<sup>143</sup> Hallett (1977) 161-162.

<sup>144</sup> Hallett (1977) 163.



creating a concurrent, alternate image of Fulvia underlies the political necessity of depicting Fulvia in the meanest terms, hence the most likely to find resonance in popular opinion. This all acts in conjunction with his efforts to recast himself as a mature capable ruler, but the significance of Octavian's designs for Fulvia must be regarded as being of the highest importance to the successful execution of his propaganda. This portrayal of Fulvia, while evident from later materials, is incongruous with much of the evidence from her earlier life. To the contrary, Charles Babcock has shown Fulvia to be "a woman of some personal charm."<sup>145</sup> It is asserted that Fulvia proved an attractive prospect for marriage. The husbands that she took, P. Clodius Pulcher, C. Scribonius Piso, and M. Antonius, all found in her various attractive aspects. What were the reasons that these three men of consular family wed the repellent Fulvia, if we take Octavian as an authority? Certainly one was the fact that, although Fulvia's family associations – the Fulvii were among the most distinguished of republican plebeian noble families – were waning in importance,<sup>146</sup> there remained the prestige for future husbands of attaching themselves to the revered plebeian names of the Fulvii and the Sempronii Tuditani, Fulvia's blood lines. This conglomeration of plebeian nobility, albeit from nearly extinguished lines, created a coveted familial association for any future husband. In addition to this, it is quite possible that Fulvia possessed one vital resource for any husband who aspired to political

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<sup>145</sup> Babcock (1965) 12.

<sup>146</sup> Syme (1939)19 writes: "the Fulvii, the Sempronii and the Livii were almost extinct" after the Sullan restoration of the oligarchy.

prominence, namely money.<sup>147</sup> The combination of money and a name, readily recognizable by the plebeians, offered the attractiveness of political advantage to the union with Fulvia. Her status as an individual who could rally the people is attested by the very historical events that comprise the Perusine conflict. It is in this sense that Octavian must have discerned the importance of diminishing the character of Fulvia. Fulvia's stature as a wife was further augmented by the fact that she had produced sons for all of her husbands, a significant factor for dynastically conscious Roman noble families.<sup>148</sup> This all serves to represent a counter-point to the depiction of Fulvia, which Augustan propaganda had successfully distorted. The specific propaganda found in Martial's epigram sought to diminish the role that Fulvia played politically. On this particular point it is agreed that she had an active role in the careers of her husbands. There is indeed enough evidence to accept the view of Fulvia as

οὐ ταλασίαν οὐδὲ οἰκουρίαν φρονοῦν γύναιον οὐδὲ ἀνδρὸς ἰδιώτου κρατεῖν ἀξιοῦν,  
ἄλλ' ἄρχοντος ἄρχειν καὶ στρατηγούντος στρατηγεῖν βουλόμενον.

a woman who did not see herself as being only worthy to spend her time in spinning and housewifery, nor to control but one man, but who also wished to command commanders and give orders to generals.<sup>149</sup>

I have attempted to cast Fulvia in a light that finds little resonance in Octavian's depiction of her, one that effects an image of a formidable and politically aware

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<sup>147</sup> Babcock (1965) 4. The manner in which leading Roman men exhausted vast sums of money, whether by political manoeuver or in leisure pursuits is attested in much of the invective against them. Cf. Cicero *Har. Resp.* 42. (Clodius Pulcher); Pliny *N.H.* 36.116-20 (Curio's lavish expense on his father's funeral); Cic. *Phil.* 44-5. Plut. *Ant.* 2.3 (Antony's massive debt, six million sesterces, 250 talents).

<sup>148</sup> Babcock (1965) 13.

<sup>149</sup> Plut. *Ant.* 10.3.

woman who understood the ramifications of the events in the triumvirate.

Octavian's verses are specifically arrayed against any interpretations of Fulvia's political acumen. In depicting Fulvia as prone to base 'feminine' emotions, Octavian hoped to reiterate his own masculinity by contrast with Fulvia's distasteful femininity and, by extension, increase his stature in an area where he clearly needed to fashion a new image.

Manius also finds mention in these verses. His treatment is that of a passive homosexual partner. In this instance we see Octavian refuting the specific charges of being a *pathicus*, seen in the *glandes*, by assuming the role of the active partner spurning the entreaties (*si me Manius oret pedicem*)<sup>150</sup> of Manius. Hallett sees the obloquy as representative of Octavian's attempt to recast his image as an active heterosexual lover.<sup>151</sup> Furthermore, the verses serve to depict the *casus belli* – "an etiological and autobiographical work, an explanation of the war's origins by its instigator."<sup>152</sup> The casting of Fulvia's anger and hostility as the catalyst, in conjunction with a role diminished to feminine jealousy, which sparked the Perusine conflagration, finds similar treatment in Appian. This can be seen as "perhaps reflecting Asinius Pollio or Augustan propaganda, (and) shows L. Antonius as the protagonist"<sup>153</sup> For the purposes of this argument, it can be seen as politically expeditious for Octavian to perpetuate such an image of Fulvia. Hallett summarizes the historical depiction in regard to

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<sup>150</sup> Mart. 11.20.5-6.

<sup>151</sup> Hallett (1977) 162.

<sup>152</sup> Hallett (1977) 161.

<sup>153</sup> Babcock (1965) 19 n.33.

Fulvia: “this picture of a conventionally feminine Fulvia has many features in common with that painted by Appian (and might well conjecture a familiarity with the poem on the part of a source).”<sup>154</sup>

The subject is brought into clear focus in Octavian’s verses, leaving little doubt as to the context in which he hoped to frame the conflict *Aut futue, aut pugnemus*.<sup>155</sup> Fulvia’s demands take on, once again, the tone of a vindictive woman. To this point, the verses have tried to depict Fulvia as bent for war, merely as a means to soothe her feminine sensibilities, damaged by Antony. In order to maintain her pride as a female, she inverts the accepted understanding of feminine behaviour by dictating sexual terms and joining them to military pursuits. In this way, she represents an altogether frightful combination of attributes to the interests of Octavian. This betrays the concern that she will indeed act in the masculine sphere of power and warfare, contrary to her ‘effeminized’ image. In this way her depiction as a woman whose actions are dictated by purely ‘feminine’ considerations has a hollow ring to it; her stature as a political and military figure cannot be discounted.<sup>156</sup> Octavian addresses this by

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<sup>154</sup> Hallett (1977) 162.

<sup>155</sup> Mart. 11.20.7. Hallett (1977) 170 n. 66: “From the instances of *futuo* cited by the *TLL*, it seems clear that the word belonged to male parlance and was not used by respectable women. *CIL IV* 2176, 2185, 2186, 2217, 2219, and 2260, all from the Vico del Lupanare at Pompeii and the only examples *ex persona puellae*, were obviously written by prostitutes. Thus Fulvia’s alleged ‘*aut futue aut pugnemus*’ in line 7 was intended to strike the Roman reader as most unladylike.”

<sup>156</sup> Hallett (1977) 170 n.67; cf. Vell. Pat. 2.74 where she is said to have had single-handed control of operations in the war; Cass. Dio 48.4.1 where she and Lucius are termed the real consuls of 41 and she is ascribed more power than the senate and people; Cass. Dio 48.4.10 where Fulvia is described as girding herself with a sword and exhorting troops in battle; Appian 5.19.75, 5.33.131 implies that she was considered a commander at the battle site.

framing himself as the one who declares, “*Signa canant!*”<sup>157</sup> This phrase moves from the epigrammatic crudity of Octavian’s verses to the language of epic poetry.<sup>158</sup> In this usage, Octavian regains the traditional masculine role, replete with the *imperium*, of declaring war. By doing so, he underscores his virility and unbending control of the situation. Furthermore, this is accomplished by belittling Fulvia’s motivations. It seems that this preoccupation with the personal aspects of Fulvia’s hostility served to diminish, in the minds of Romans, the true potential for power that Fulvia held; her familial and personal qualities, combined with the name of M. Antonius, presented a significant obstacle to success for Octavian on Italian soil. In realizing this danger, Octavian sought to cast Fulvia as a force that seemed to be informed by a feminine lack of control. By contrast, Octavian sought to enhance his own image as an individual who could wield the power of a commander and embody masculine qualities.

Martial’s final line declares *Auguste...qui scis Romana simplicitate loqui*.<sup>159</sup>

The whole exercise is viewed as emblematic of Octavian’s ability to distill the issues at hand with direct Roman frankness. This statement is an overly simplified view of an important piece in the propaganda which accompanied the growing divide that was occurring in the triumvirate. These verses are significant to our understanding of the anxieties faced by the man who would come to rule the Roman world. They provide for us a clearer understanding of the true motivations of the protagonists, as well as the imagery which was put forth in the

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<sup>157</sup> Mart. 11.20.8.

<sup>158</sup> Kay (1985) 112; cf. Ver. *Aen.* 10.310.

<sup>159</sup> Mart. 11.20.10.

depiction of their respective opponents. These considerations preclude any understanding of the verses as simple jests, aimed at an individual. Instead, these are indicative of a sophisticated campaign which utilized the resources at hand to effect a very specific outcome. However, "The poetic attempt to turn the situation into a joke, to depict it as a result of non-negotiable sexual demands made by a jealous, foolish, but unmistakably feminine, woman could not, it would appear, efface the popular impression of this war as shameful and sordid."<sup>160</sup>

There remains the one consideration that the subsequent historical representations betray the formidable, traditionally 'masculine' qualities that Fulvia wielded and which were the basis for Octavian's well-founded fears about Fulvia's potential as an enemy, regardless of any propagandistic attempts to frame the situation otherwise.

The attempt at recasting the image of Octavian into a more virile figure was successful, as can be surmised by the later depictions of the emperor as a military and *pius* religious figure. With this imagery in mind, it will be useful to attempt to extrapolate the root of the grotesque extension of this image, that of a chillingly vengeful general who is represented as undertaking some of the most shocking acts of the civil wars. This manner of depiction may have found its foundations in the negative opinion held by some of the populace that could conceive of such actions. In this way, the personal effects of the civil wars are seen to have found expression, despite the concerted efforts of the *princeps* to the contrary.

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<sup>160</sup> Hallett (1977) 163.

### Propertius and the *Bellum Perusinum*

*'Tu, qui consortem properas euadere casum,  
miles ab Etruscis saucius aggeribus,  
quid nostro gemitu turgentia lumina torques?  
pars ego sum uestrae proxima militiae,  
sic te seruato ut possint gaudere parentes:  
ne soror acta tuis sentiat e lacrimis,  
Gallum, per medios ereptum Caesaris enses,  
effugere ignotas non potuisse manus;  
et quaecumque super dispersa inuenerit ossa  
montibus Etruscis, haec sciat esse mea.'*

You who hurries to flee our shared calamity,  
wounded soldier from the Etruscan ramparts,  
why do you turn your swollen eyes from my groaning?  
I am your mate in the battle-lines,  
Thus with you safe that your parents may be happy:  
lest the sister know what happened by your tears,  
that Gallus, delivered from the middle of Caesar's swords,  
was not able to flee unknown hands:  
and whichever bones she may find scattered on the Etruscan mountainside,  
let her know that they are mine. 1.21<sup>161</sup>

*Qualis et unde genus, qui sint mihi, Tulle, Penates,  
quaeris pro nostra semper amicitia.  
si Perusina tibi patriae sunt nota sepulcra,  
Italiae duris funera temporibus,  
cum Romana suos egit discordia ciuis  
(sit mihi praecipue, puluis Etrusca, dolor:  
tu proiecta mei perpessa es membra propinqui,  
tu nullo miseri contegis ossa solo)  
proxima supposito contingens Vmbria campo*

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<sup>161</sup> Text is taken from Butler & Barber, eds, *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford 1933). My Translation.

me genuit terris fertilis uberibus.  
Of what stock and from where, which *Penates* are mine,  
    you always ask, Tullus, for the sake of our friendship.  
If you know Perusia the graveyard of our country,  
    Italy's funeral in those hard times,  
when Roman discord drove her own citizens  
    (there is this particular sorrow for me, Etruscan dust:  
you have borne the scattered bones of my relative,  
    you cover his wretched bones with no soil),  
neighbouring Umbria touching upon the subjected plain  
    bore me, a fruitful and rich land. 1.22<sup>162</sup>

The last two poems of Propertius' *Monobiblos* relate the personal effects of the Perusine War as they relate to the poet's life. The poems tell us of the uncertainty facing those who found themselves implicated in the civil conflicts of the last century BCE. Propertius was born near Assisi, across a plain from Perusia, and the civil wars had an important formative effect on the young poet's mind. The geographical proximity of these two towns as well as the shared blight of the land confiscations enacted by Octavian create a landscape of common suffering that Propertius treats in a most dramatic manner, redolent with human *pathos*. Propertius was a person who found himself, his family and his homeland on the unfortunate side of Octavian's 'peace achieved by victories'<sup>163</sup>. This biographical aspect of the poems brings Propertius' experiences into his poetry. This exposition of the personal losses incurred by the Italian people has afforded

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<sup>162</sup> Text is taken from Butler & Barber, eds, *The Elegies of Propertius* (Oxford 1933). My Translation.

<sup>163</sup> Stahl (1985)127; *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 13.



modern scholars much material for discussion regarding the meaning and significance of these poems. This is further complicated by textual irregularities which have cast doubt on the meaning of these poems and the nature of the relationships between the persons who are mentioned therein.<sup>164</sup> These very factors complicate any interpretations and have led some to discount their authenticity entirely.<sup>165</sup>

Poems 1.21 and 1.22, published ca. 29-28 BCE, look back to the Perusine War, apparently an important early memory for the poet which shaped his view of the world. W.R. Nethercut sees this experience as having forged the poet's nature; his obsession with death and misery is reflective of the indelible imprint made upon the young poet's mind.<sup>166</sup> The subjects of loss and death permeate Propertius' work, with 1.21 and 1.22 serving as explicit examples of this.<sup>167</sup> The acute sense of loss and death in these two poems is related in the form of elegies that are based on epigrammatic motifs. In this way the poems are neither simply epigrammatic nor simply elegiac. They have, instead, been termed epigrammatic elegies.<sup>168</sup> There is, within this framework, a distinct dramatic element which has been detected by J.T. Davis.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Various scholars have promulgated vastly disparate interpretations of the identities of the passerby, the sister and Gallus, as well as of the relationship between Gallus and the Propinquus of 1.22. see p.73 ff. below.; Stahl (1985) 111-112 for discussion.

<sup>165</sup> See p.75 n.212 below.

<sup>166</sup> Nethercut (1963) 27.

<sup>167</sup> Nethercut (1963) 27 notes that, in 1.22, 'six of ten lines are given over to death'.

<sup>168</sup> Nethercut (1963) 12.

<sup>169</sup> Davis (1971) 210: "the way the circumstances of Gallus' death are related is not historical or epigraphical, but dramatic."

1.21 contains characteristics of epigrams in which the convention of a dead man speaks directly to a passerby as though from the grave. This convention is evident from the outset of the poem which begins with *Tu*, a variation on the common *heus*, found in the beginning of many epigrams.<sup>170</sup> This then leads to the words *qui properas...miles*, another epigrammatic convention.<sup>171</sup> There is another Classical *topos* at play in 1.21, which represents the motif of one who, seemingly successful in avoiding death, is overtaken by some other unforeseen stroke of misfortune.<sup>172</sup> This motif served to intensify the human tragedy of the vicissitudes which life may present.<sup>173</sup> Another epigrammatic motif can be found in the striking similarity of 1.21 to two sepulchral epigrams by Callimachus.<sup>174</sup>

οἵτινες Ἀλείοιο παρέρπετε σᾶμα Κίμωνος

ἴστε τὸν Ἴππαιου παῖδα παρερχόμενοι.

(AP 7.523 = Pf. 60)

and

ὅστις ἐμὸν παρὰ σῆμα φέρεις πόδα, Καλλιμάχου με

ἴσθι Κυρηναίου παῖδά τε καὶ γενέτην.

(AP 7.525 = Pf. 21.1-2)

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<sup>170</sup> Hodge & Buttimore (1977) 210; cf. *Anthologia Latina* 55,119.

<sup>171</sup> cf. *Anth. Lat.* 1950: *Ego Antoninus umbra tenus tibi dico, meator, quamvis festinanti gradu carpas iter.*

<sup>172</sup> Nethercut (1971) 18. Examples of this convention can be found in Homer *Od.* 11.405-412; *Aeneid* 6.337 ff. and often elsewhere.

<sup>173</sup> Nethercut (1971) 18: "the strange and irrational twist of fate makes the death more pathetic".

<sup>174</sup> Traill (1994) 91.

These lines imply the existence of a formula that is used at the end of Propertius' *Monobiblos*: "Whoever you are who pass my tomb, know that I am χ."<sup>175</sup> This bears a striking resemblance to lines 9-10 which state the identity of Gallus. However, within this framework there is Propertian innovation, as he uses these conventions to put forth a poetic expression which fuses various elements to create dramatic tension within the poems.

Interpretations such as the ones above are complicated by the uncertainty regarding the transmission of the text.

*ne soror acta tuis sentiat e lacrimis,  
Gallum, per medios ereptum Caesaris enses,  
effugere ignotas non potuisse manus;  
et quaecumque super dispersa inuenerit ossa  
montibus Etruscis, haec sciat esse mea.* 1.21.6-10.

Traill prefers the reading of the verses that takes *quicumque* over *quaecumque*. He feels this removes the difficulty in relating the point of verses 9-10 with the *ne* of line 6. That is to say, why would the sister, spared the details of her relative's death, be expected to look for his body in 9-10? Traill thinks that in using *quaecumque* the *ne* in line 6 must be emended to *et*, *haec*, or *me*, in order to resolve the incongruity.<sup>176</sup> Bodoh finds this reading "intolerably inappropriate."<sup>177</sup> A.L. Frothingham interprets differently; he reads *nec* for *et*, and translates: 'And

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<sup>175</sup> Traill (1994) 91.

<sup>176</sup> Traill (1994) 92.

<sup>177</sup> Bodoh (1972) 236.

let no one, finding my bones scattered on these Etruscan hills, believe that they are mine'.<sup>178</sup> For the purposes of this work, I will maintain the reading of the manuscript that presents the *ne* in line 6 as part of a jussive construction, and which takes *quaecumque* over *quicumque*, treating *haec* as its antecedent.

Taken together, Poem 1.21 and 1.22 are seen as an unorthodox “seal” or σφραγίς of Propertius’ work.<sup>179</sup> His is a poem more concerned with universal mortality than with his own eternity, more about the price of power than a poet’s upward strivings.<sup>180</sup> Examples of Propertius’ unease in the new state formed by Augustus, with its related focus on military endeavour and on taking an encomiastic stance, can be found in his poetry, especially in 1.21 and 1.22. Propertius displays the factors which informed his world view in the final two poems of the *Monobiblos*, with the result that that they can be interpreted as highly critical of the new regime and of the hardships borne by the people of Italy. Specifically, 1.21 and 1.22 have been interpreted as an accusation directed against Octavian, in which Paratore takes the *ignotas manus* of line 8 as being those of plundering soldiers who had been given the city by Octavian after the

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<sup>178</sup> Frothingham (1909) 346. Bodoh responds: “This interpretation, in addition to compounding the violence done to the reading of the manuscripts, suffers from serving no dramatic purpose— the poem ends with an aside or an afterthought. Incredibly feeble! Besides, *sciat* does not yield the desired sense; it means *know* not *believe*.”

<sup>179</sup> Putnam (1976) 93: “Unlike other contemporary examples of this type of ending, Propertius’ *envoi* neither contains any proud boast of his craftsmanship nor lays claim to his immortality through a monument of words.”

<sup>180</sup> Stahl (1985) 80.

surrender.<sup>181</sup> Appian's claim that the majority of the blame for Perugia's sad fate rested with the troops supports this interpretation. Paratore puts forth Velleius Paterculus' words at 2.74 as indicative of the violence at Perugia<sup>182</sup>; Velleius' mention of *saeuitum*, coming from such a partisan of the imperial house, lends credence to the extremes of cruelty faced by the inhabitants of Perugia. This, in turn, lends some credence to Suetonius' presentation of events. For Propertius' part, it 'makes more likely the hypothesis that this incident may have precluded any possibility of an unreserved and enthusiastic adherence...to the program and person of Octavian.'<sup>183</sup> For Propertius, this uneasiness with the principate manifests itself as a choice of lifestyles – one which spurns military service for battles in bed: *nos contra angusto uersantes proelia lecto*.<sup>184</sup> Another explicit declaration along these lines can be found at 1.6.29-30 *non ego sum laudi, non natus idoneus armis: hanc me militiam fata subire uolunt*. Propertius counts himself as fundamentally disconnected from the Roman pursuit of fame achieved in the military field. In addition to this, there is a conscious understanding by the poet of the contrast he poses to 'typical' Roman behaviour within his art. The contrast that he embodies and its counterpart are evident in 1.6, where Propertius presents Tullus, with his desire for reaching the rank that his uncle

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<sup>181</sup> Nethercut (1963) 12; Paratore (1936) 98: "Tutto spinge a concludere che nel doloroso epitafio sia celata un' accusa contro Ottaviano come responsabile di tutte le stragi della guerra perugina, anche di quelle commesse nei dintorni della città assediata, e quindi anche della morte di Gallo, congiunto del poeta."

<sup>182</sup> Vell. Pat. 2.74: *in Perusinos magis ira militum quam voluntate saeuitum ducis*.

<sup>183</sup> Stahl (1985) 90; Nethercut (1971) 13.

<sup>184</sup> Prop. 2.1.45.

had achieved, as a contrasting figure who embraces much of what Propertius spurns.

The Tullus of 1.22 who poses the questions is the nephew of C. Volcaciuss Tullus, proconsul in 30-29 BCE.<sup>185</sup> Another indicator of the eminence of Tullus' family can be found in that inscriptions of the Volcaciuss family name, an Etruscan one, have been found in Perugia.<sup>186</sup> Essentially, by creating the contrast between the two individuals, Propertius has enabled his art to examine the effects of the civil wars on two individuals, both from neighbouring districts of Italy and from similar familial backgrounds, but distinct in the divergent paths they take in their lives. "Tullus is interested in *militia* and its concomitant attributes (*securis, laus, arma*) all of which enforce rights (*iura*) and maintain imperial might (*imperium*)".<sup>187</sup> He is *accepti pars...imperii* (1.6.34). This contrast of personalities and ambitions serves to underscore the poet's worldview. This characterization takes on especial significance when, at the end of the *Monobiblos*, Propertius declares his position and outlook in counter-distinction to Tullus.

The initial lines of 1.21 are reminiscent of the epigrammatic formula previously mentioned. One soldier – *pars...uestrae proxima militiae* (1.21.4)– entreats another who is passing by. The passerby is identified as *consortem...casum* (1.21.1). These words are used to underscore the combined lot of the soldiers. The word *casus* denotes a fall and can be construed as connoting death. However, in this instance, it would seem to mean something

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<sup>185</sup> Hodge & Buttimore (1977) 113; Putnam (1976) 116.

<sup>186</sup> Lake (1940) 299; *CIL* XI. 2083, 2084.

<sup>187</sup> Putnam (1976) 117.

along the lines of calamity or ruination.<sup>188</sup> Various theories have been proposed regarding the nature of the events which precipitated Gallus' demise, with much attention having been given to the hypothesis that bandits attacked Gallus as he made his escape from Perugia. This argument rests upon lines 7-8:

*Gallum, per medios ereptum Caesaris enses,  
effugere ignotas non potuisse manus.*<sup>189</sup>

For Nethercut this interpretation rests on the *ignotas manus* that brought about Gallus' demise.<sup>190</sup> Traill's interpretation rests upon the request that the sister be spared details of the events, in order that she not undertake the dangerous task of collecting bones in the hills which hid the dangerous highwaymen.<sup>191</sup> Traill's statement that "the only facts of which we can be reasonably sure are that Gallus fought at Perugia, that he managed to break out through the siege works, that he subsequently disappeared, and that his body was never found"<sup>192</sup>, disregards one aspect of the siege of Perugia that will be discussed later. One interesting point regarding bandits and epigrammatic expressions involving those who had

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<sup>188</sup> Bodoh's argument that death is the common lot of soldiers and that this *consortem casum* is the death of the passerby who sacrifices himself to bury his comrade does not seem to take into account the spirit of the lines regarding his wishes with regard to the *soror*; a dead man cannot spare his sister pain by refraining from tears.

<sup>189</sup> Butler & Barber (1933)186; Frothingham (1909) 346; Heiden (1995)166;Traill (1994) 94 *contra* Gabba (1971)142, who is skeptical of drawing any connections between Propertius' poem and the armed bands, comprised of dispossessed land owners and some of the proscribed, which roamed Italy in the aftermath of the civil wars. He sees the situation as more likely to have created an increase in the urban proletariat than an epidemic of banditry.

<sup>190</sup> Nethercut (1971) 469: "There are two parties; Caesar's troops, from whom Gallus was saved, and the highwaymen, at whose hands he died."

<sup>191</sup> Traill (1994) 93. The sister's relation to Gallus, whether sister or sister-in-law, is of secondary importance to my arguments. For the sister's identity see Bodoh (1972) 237; Davis (1971) 210; Stahl (1985) 112.

<sup>192</sup> Traill (1994) 94.

the misfortune to find their ends at the hands of highwaymen is that there is often specific mention of the cause of death on the tombstone – *interfectus a latronibus*.<sup>193</sup> In my opinion, it is significant that there is no such mention in Propertius' poem, so it can be inferred that this may be indicative of another fate which befell Gallus. I propose a different interpretation which rests upon the historical evidence, and which presents an under-appreciated aspect of the suffering faced by those who sought to defend their homes and property from Octavian's actions in Italy.

I regard the final two poems of Propertius' first book as part of an organic whole whose parts, taken together, provide an explicit statement of Propertius' origins and his understanding of the Roman world as a function of the hardships that he was subjected to in his youth. Specifically, we have evidence of Propertius' own experience in the disturbances of the last century BCE<sup>194</sup> by identifying with the 'wrong side' of the civil wars on various occasions, Propertius constructs an identity in his poems which precludes any ornate reading of *casum* that the soldiers faced; it seems sufficient, for the sake of this argument, to accept Propertius' identification with his homeland and its *casum* at the hands of Octavian as the mutual calamity which befalls the comrades in 1.21.<sup>195</sup> In my

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<sup>193</sup> Shaw (1984) states that these types of deaths gave rise to the formulaic expression above – 'killed by bandits' 10.

<sup>194</sup> *Elegies* 4.1.121 makes mention of Propertius' family and the confiscations which they underwent. Stahl (1985) 102 states: "Propertius experienced the loss of his family's fortunes and suffered a deprived childhood when...Octavian in 41/40 executed the triumviral land confiscations."

<sup>195</sup> The populace must have felt an acute sense of loss, for the Republic and for free Italy, before the imposition of Octavian's will. The effects of such traumatizing events find treatment, with a view to various ends, by the Augustan poets.



opinion, the two lines at the end of 1.21 reinforce this: *et quaecumque super dispersa inuenerit ossa montibus Etruscis, haec sciat esse mea* (1.21.9-10). I take this to represent the dead man's understanding of the destruction of identity, which went hand in hand with the destruction of Perusia and the pacification of Italy. This is concomitant with the historical reality of the city's fall where the struggles of the Republic and the dispossessed came to an end.

While many have accepted that Gallus found his end at the hands of bandits, I believe that this interpretation disregards a very important aspect of the historical situation at Perusia. Appian writes that, on account of the ongoing siege, a wall of circumvallation with towers every sixty feet surrounded the city of Perusia.<sup>196</sup> In the words of A.L. Frothingham, "Not even a dog could have passed through."<sup>197</sup> This necessarily negates any interpretation that places Gallus, alive or dead, outside of the works erected by Octavian's forces around Perusia. Furthermore, "we must conclude that before the surrender there was for a soldier no chance and after it no need to flee from Perusia: the assumption on which the common interpretation of the elegy is based fall, therefore, to the ground."<sup>198</sup> This particular difficulty, put forth by Frothingham and subsequently ignored by many others, moves the interpretation in a new direction. At this point I wish to introduce some considerations, found in the historical record, which point to a modified interpretation of 1.21. If we accept Frothingham's assessment of the

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<sup>196</sup> App. *BC* 5.48

<sup>197</sup> Frothingham (1909) 348.

<sup>198</sup> Frothingham (1909) 349. Octavian declared a general and absolute amnesty to the soldiers involved in Perusia's defense. App.5.40.

impenetrability of the works around Perugia, we may limit the geographical area where the passerby found Gallus to the city of Perugia proper. Furthermore, the historical record shows that Lucius Antonius, besieged and facing the direst of circumstances, buried the dead in long trenches. This was done to conceal the desperation of the besieged, which would have been revealed by the constant smoke that would be proof of the mounting deaths caused by hunger and disease. These trenches were covered in order to limit the risk of disease 'from the poisonous exhalations'.<sup>199</sup> I postulate that Gallus found his resting place in one of these trenches, or remained unburied after the fall of Perugia.

Frothingham's interpretation is deficient in that by attempting to draw affinities between 1.21 and the *Arae Perusinae*, he neglects to make any mention of the *ignotas manus* of line 8, which Gallus was unable to escape. An explanation for *ignotas* can be found in Appian's narrative – it is stated that Lucius Antonius, badly outnumbered in troops and desperate from lack of provisions, ordered night-time sorties in an attempt to break through the siege-works and to join with his other forces, "of which he had abundance in many places."<sup>200</sup> These night sorties would have created an ambiguity as to who fought whom. This then creates the possibility that the *ignotas manus* refers to the uncertainty involved in these night battles. Therefore, it is possible that Gallus' fate is that of a soldier who lost his life attempting to break through the siege-works at night. The events of the surrender lend further legitimacy to this theory, in that the town quickly

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<sup>199</sup> App. 5.35.144.

<sup>200</sup> App. 5.34.136.

capitulated after one final, bloody sortie.<sup>201</sup> Cognizant of the futility of throwing his forces ineffectually at the siege-works, L. Antonius called for surrender. After the surrender and, perhaps, before any of the ditches filled from the preceding sortie could be covered, Octavian declared the previously mentioned amnesty. This rapid turn of events would have created a massive exodus from Perugia, as those associated with its defense would have wished to disassociate themselves from the surrender and to distance themselves from any enemy troops intent upon violence in the confusion of the surrender. Another factor that must be acknowledged is that the town was burned shortly before it was to be turned over to the soldiers for plunder.<sup>202</sup> These events can certainly be seen as creating a set of circumstances which make it likely that the defenders fled the city, leaving behind their fallen and wounded comrades. Most of these fallen soldiers would find no burial other than to have their bones mixed with those of their compatriots, either in a trench that would not have been covered for lack of opportunity in the events after the surrender, or when they were burned in the general conflagration which consumed Perugia.<sup>203</sup> There remains one supplementary consideration in all this, that Etruria's topography is mountainous. In fact Perugia stands atop a steep hill, thus necessitating any burials not done in

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<sup>201</sup> Kraggerud (1987) 85 postulates an early surrender— January 40 BCE; Appian 5.47.200 states that the surrendering army had to be provided with winter quarters— more likely at the end of January than February. Those who try to place the alleged judicial sacrifices at the ides of March argue for the capitulation of the city near the end of February (Gardthausen p.97, Kromayer p.562-565). The rapid shift from desperate attempts against the siege-works to the surrender of the city provides a compact temporal space to encompass the actions of 1.21.

<sup>202</sup> App. 5.49

<sup>203</sup> Perugia was utterly destroyed, and remained uninhabited until it was rebuilt and re-consecrated as *Perusia Augusta*.

the city itself to occur on the *montes Etrusci*, where Gallus found his final resting place.

The indignity of not having his body interred and the reason for it, namely that Gallus' comrades chose to save themselves in the chaos of surrender are the *acta*,<sup>204</sup> of which Gallus wishes to spare the *soror*. The sense of shame inherent in the military defeat displays the harsh realities and loss of ideals which accompanied the capitulation of the city. In one sense, I agree with Bodoh concerning the dramatic tension that occurs, as the *miles saucius* must decide between self-preservation and interring a comrade.<sup>205</sup> It is in this demonstration of the tragic consequences, on a personal level, of the civil wars that Propertius removes the veneer of conflicting propaganda and recriminations surrounding many of these acts to create a heightened sense of the real losses which weighed upon those affected by the tumultuous events.

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<sup>204</sup> Prop. 1.21.6.

<sup>205</sup> Bodoh's theory (1972) 237 that the fugitive of 1.21 is the *propinquus* of 1.22 seems unlikely, since it completely discounts the point of *sic te seruato possint gaudere parentes*, ignoring the ablative absolute. His interpretation is that it means "save yourself with honour that your parents may be able to have joy and not shame in your safety." With the fugitive dying after having buried his fallen comrade, Bodoh finds the pitiful lot of the comrades to be heightened. This interpretation ignores the *siste viator* formula of the poem's epigrammatic nature, which represents the words of a dead man; Bodoh has interpreted Gallus as alive and begging his compatriot to remain until he dies, so that he can be buried. This provides no explanation for the state of the bones, as they are presented in lines 9-10. Furthermore, how is the dead fugitive to keep his sister from knowing the *acta* by refraining from tears.

## Propertius 1.22

Now that I have placed the fate of Gallus at a particular time and place, I will place the evidence from 1.21 in its context in relation to 1.22. This poem reflects many of the emotional factors associated with the historical events. Poem 1.22 begins with pointed questions, posed by Tullus. The questions display an inquisitiveness concerning the status and rank of Propertius. Tullus' questions all drive to one thing – what are Propertius' social and familial origins? As I have previously discussed,<sup>206</sup> Tullus was emblematic of the successful adherents to the new regime; his uncle was consular colleague with Octavian in 33 BCE<sup>207</sup> Propertius, on the other hand, is thought to have been specifically critical of the same regime.<sup>208</sup> Consideration of the contrast posed between the two individuals is important to the overall understanding of the meaning of 1.22.

In 1.22 there are questions posed *pro nostra semper amicitia* (1.22.2). The *semper* seems an irritating aspect; why would one constantly ask such questions of a friend? Camp and Richardson take *semper* with *amicitia* in an adjectival fashion, thus denoting the longevity and consistency of their relationship. Richardson states: “*semper* cannot go with *quaeris*, for the thought of constant repetition of this simple question is ludicrous.”<sup>209</sup> This interpretation supposes that 1) this is an easy question for Propertius to answer, and 2) *semper* is in this

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<sup>206</sup> above p.66

<sup>207</sup> Stahl (1985) 80.

<sup>208</sup> If one subscribes to Paratore's view *contra* Nethercut (1963) 25.

<sup>209</sup> Richardson (1977) 100.

case taken adjectivally, rather than adverbially.<sup>210</sup> I propose that this alludes to Tullus' repeated jibing of a friend whom he seeks to belittle. This jibing is done in a manner that could be considered insensitive, though not inconceivable in the context of Roman humour. This mode of discourse places *semper* in a specific context: Tullus, attempting to bait Propertius in an effort to cause him shame with regard to his present state in the *cursus honorum*, would constantly ask him these questions. Propertius has apparently been ambiguous or less than forthcoming on the subject, as can be surmised by the repetition of the questions. The reason for this evasiveness stems from the poet's art. This art seeks to present the emotional and physical imagery of events in succinct and striking ways. The inherent difficulty for Propertius in answering these questions stems from the poet's desire to link the history of his life to the history of his homeland. One can almost detect the poet's irritation in his responses which, for Tullus, expose Propertius' lack of desire to achieve in the public arena, but which represent an open wound for Propertius. It is as a result of this sensitive issue that we recognize that Tullus has hit a nerve with this questioning, and finally Propertius will answer. With his answer, Propertius removes all nicety and asks if Tullus has heard of Perusia: *patriae...nota sepulcra* (1.22.3).<sup>211</sup> It is as though the

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<sup>210</sup> Buttimore and Hodge (1977) 215 state: *semper* "would go most naturally with 'quaeris', to suggest a persistence in this questioning which is slightly ludicrous, as Camps points out. It would imply a resentment of Tullus very unusual in a poem of this kind. But 'semper', with its hostile note, is enclosed by 'nostra amicitia', as though to indicate that this irritating questioning is enclosed by their friendship, accommodated within it. Camps suggests that 'semper' goes with 'amicitia' in an adjectival fashion, for 'continua'. As a primary meaning this would be strained, but the placing of 'semper' here may be intended to suggest something of this kind, that their friendship is as continuous as this persistent questioning."

<sup>211</sup> Stahl (1985) 108 wonders if *Perusina sepulcra*, for the contemporary reader, would conjure up associations with *arae Perusinae*.

poet is stating, “if you wish to know what I am about, know the horrifying events that shaped me.” It is open to debate whether the comment that such a declaration would make concerning the cruelty of Octavian would have seen the light of day in the climate of the new principate. L. Herrmann considered the allusion to the killing to be too bold to have been written under Octavian.<sup>212</sup> Therefore, he is inclined to consider 1.21 and 1.22 as inauthentic. B.Georg also believes 1.21 to be spurious.<sup>213</sup> The reasons given by Georg include: textual problems; extraordinary language, including the *acta*; unevenness of thought; the deceased’s sister not sufficiently identified; the poem’s unusual epigrammatic character; its unconnectedness to the Cynthia theme; the fact that it has nothing to do with Propertius himself etc. Others have regarded the two poems as connected by a common theme<sup>214</sup> that shows the authenticity of 1.21 in relation to 1.22. I also regard the poem as an integral part of Propertius’ *σφραγίς* taken with 1.21. He frames his own experience, as a person from Umbria, in the context of Rome’s influence on his life. The *sepulcra* of Perusia were those of his *patria*. Furthermore, it was the *funera* of *Italia*. This aspect refers back to the notion that the actions of Rome’s *discordia* reverberated throughout Italy. Propertius has picked up the theme of the hardships which Italy underwent, since they are his own.

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<sup>212</sup> Herrmann (1959) 751.

<sup>213</sup> Georg (2001) 171 ff., *contra* Stahl in *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2002.08.34

<sup>214</sup> Davis (1971) 211; Nethercut (1963) 28, (1971) 480. In the Neapolitanus MS. 22 follows 21 without a break.

The connection between the Gallus of 1.21 and the *propinquus* of 1.22 has been accepted by the likes of Butler and Barber, Camps, Hubbard, Hodge and Buttimore, and Stahl. This affinity displays the personal impact of the actions of Rome on the young poet's family and life. The pain associated with such acts is apparent in the line which refers back to Gallus' fate. The Etrurian dust was *perpessa*, that is it bore the uncovered bones of his *propinquus*. If taken in connection with the lot of Gallus in 1.21, we can see the deeply troubling aspect which still has the ability to stir emotions in the poet years after the fact. There is an element of failure, inescapable and striking in its impact on the life of the poet. By making any statement concerning the burial of the dead, in the Perusine context, Propertius opened up a dramatic aspect of the effects of Octavian's rise to supremacy. If taken in concert with the interpretation of 1.21 offered earlier, the lack of regard for the bodies of the defenders who died in the final, desperate attempts to relieve the siege can be seen as a deliberate act of omission by Octavian. In much the same way that Octavian made special efforts to refute charges of temple-robbing<sup>215</sup>, in which few doubt both sides of the triumviral struggle engaged, he made special mention in his *de Vita Sua* of his mercy in allowing executed men burials<sup>216</sup> and stated that he had spared all defeated citizens who sought mercy.<sup>217</sup> The fact that Octavian personally saw to the recasting of his image on the particular point of the burial of enemies indicates

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<sup>215</sup> Above p.32. App.13.

<sup>216</sup> Scott (1933) 22; Ulpian *Dig.* 48.24.1: *De cadaveribus damnatorum*.

<sup>217</sup> Farron (1985) 27; *Res Gestae* 3.1. This certainly runs contrary to Suetonius' version which depicts Octavian meeting all entreaties with *moriendum esse*.



Octavian's understanding of the negative image that persisted in Italy well after the facts slipped into obscurity. This image was reshaped, partly as a result of the passage of time, partly because of the victor's assumption of the historical narrative, propagated by such figures as Velleius Paterculus and some of the earlier Augustans who glossed over the effects of the civil wars and Octavian's hand in them.<sup>218</sup>

In the manner that 1.21 focuses on personal loss and on the individuals who are affected, 1.22 projects many of the same emotions onto the greater landscape of Italy. In answering Tullus' questions, Propertius immediately refers the subject matter to *Italia* and the *patria* of line 3.<sup>219</sup> The use of place names such as *Perusia* (1.22.3), *Italiae* (4), *Romana* (5), *Etrusca* (6), and *Umbria* (9) further reinforce the sense that much of what was undergone by individuals bears a magnified resonance throughout Italy. The places mentioned above are all related to aspects of suffering caused by Rome and, specifically, the policies of Octavian. Whereas *Perusia* is framed as a graveyard, where, in turn, *Italia* finds its *funera*, and *Romana* is paired with *discordia* (1.22.5), the specific pain which stings the poet lies in the land's inability to protect him and his kin from the losses they have incurred (1.22.6-7). This identification with the land bears a specific significance to the poet. It is in this spirit of loss of cultural identity, an identity inexorably linked to the land, that Propertius gives specific sources of the

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<sup>218</sup> Cf. Hor. *Sat.* 2; Verg. *Ecl.* 1.71-2. Propertius' experience of dispossession, as opposed to Horace and Vergil who seem to have found recompense from Octavian, pushed Propertius in the direction he took with regards to his attitude towards the authority of the state and its effect on Italy.

<sup>219</sup> Nethercut (1963) 28.

misery he vividly recalls from his youth. The source of suffering is given a name in 1.21 – Caesar. In 1.22 the reader is given a clear indicator of the poet's conception of the *princeps*' effect on himself and his homeland. In line 5 the poet depicts Rome's discord as rippling outwards and affecting all of Italy. When it is taken in connection with 1.21, it is possible to imagine the poet's desire to link the name of Caesar with the civil conflict that *suos egit...ciuis* (1.22.5). This characterization of Octavian and the conflict he would eventually emerge from as master stands in opposition to the manner in which many of the Augustan poets represented them. "Propertius writes not of Octavian's heritage or the greatness of his accomplishments; he does not picture the enemy fleeing in terror,<sup>220</sup> but Italians. In Propertius' verse Octavian is not the conqueror of the East, but the persecutor of his own people."<sup>221</sup> This subjugation of the people and the confiscation of their lands can be seen in line 9, which characterizes the poet's homeland in such a way: *proxima supposito contingens Vmbria campo*. The ablative *supposito campo* is of particular interest in this. Does the phrase simply signify topographical details?<sup>222</sup> Another possibility lies in the more politicized interpretation that *supposito* means subjected, subdued, or conquered. Hodge and Buttimore count this as a possibility, but remark that all instances of this particular meaning of the word occur later than Propertius.<sup>223</sup> It must be kept in

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<sup>220</sup> As Vergil does in *Georgics* 2.170-172.

<sup>221</sup> Nethercut (1963) 32.

<sup>222</sup> I.e. a low-lying plain. Richardson, Camps and Enk all accept some variation of the phrase in this sense.

<sup>223</sup> Hodge & Buttimore (1977) 217; Ovid *Tristia* 8.48, Persius *Saturae* 5.36.

mind that Propertius has shown himself to be an innovative poet who modified conventions to suit his art, and thus it is not implausible that Propertius would be innovative in the usage of this word.<sup>224</sup> On this subject, “unless we are to assume that Propertius is being obscure for the sake of obscurity here then one must suppose that ‘*supposito*’ has some function further than the topographical, since in that function it is difficult to decipher.”<sup>225</sup> It seems a reasonable assumption that this line continues in the same manner of ambiguity that has prompted such divergent interpretations of Propertius’ poetic intent. On this count, it is possible that the obscurity and ambiguity prevalent in Propertius’ work are deliberate, in order that the poet may survive in the climate of the new principate.<sup>226</sup> If indeed the poet wished for line 9 to contain a *double-entendre* it would certainly be in keeping with a poet who clearly felt himself a political outsider, not only for his *recusatio* of Rome’s obsession with war and power, but also in the subject matter which these poems treated. The purpose of the unclear picture we get from Propertius may be explained as serving to obfuscate any clear-cut interpretations of his poetry. This obscuring of intent may have helped ensure the survival of the poet’s work. It suffices to acknowledge the painful uneasiness that many have detected in the poet’s work, and to recognize the effect that Octavian had in his life, a life which, when questioned, is referred to in its connection to the land and

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<sup>224</sup> See above p.61 n.168. The Ovidian usage seems chronologically close enough to accept the usage of *supposito*, in such a way, by Propertius.

<sup>225</sup> Hodge & Buttimore (1977) 217 n.8. For the difficulty in effecting a satisfactory translation see Richardson (1977) 209, Camps (1961) 101.

<sup>226</sup> Stahl (1985) 126 writes: “Coping with this force thus is a matter of survival, now, after Actium, even more than ever, intellectually perhaps even more than physically.”

the earth (1.22.10) and the sorrow of its subjugation. It is the detachment from these things that creates the melancholy that is captured in these poems. If anything, the disconnection from family, homeland, and the earth itself serves to display the sad outcomes of the civil wars and their deleterious effects on a suffering populace. In this way I have attempted to show that Propertius has created a poetic landscape which criticizes the central power of Rome and refuses to let lapse any memory of the mark this time in history left on his life. For Propertius Perusia is emblematic of personal losses that culminate in a shared loss of identity; when asked about his life, the only points of reference that the poet provides are the conflict which shaped him, the subjugation of his homeland and the fertility that it represents. This manner of expression is even more striking when we consider the poet's experience in the land confiscations, which, if considered in relation to his σφραγίς, further reinforces the disconnection between poet and the *terris fertilis uberibus* (1.22.10) of his homeland. These events left an indelible mark on the poet's outlook in regard to Rome and the principate. That these poems connect Octavian's actions with the suffering of the poet and his kin is clear. More importantly, however, are those aspects provided by the poet which display the social effects of the principate on those who found their place within it and on those who were less fortunate as it took hold.

### **Vergil and the *Arae Perusinae*?**

The possibility that Vergil's words in book 10.517 ff. of the *Aeneid* stand as an indictment of the actions of Octavian after Perusia is tantalizing yet difficult to assess with certainty. There is evidence from Vergil's own life, such as the land confiscations that occurred near his home at Mantua, which offers the modern interpreter a view that perhaps Vergil was willing to comment, albeit ambiguously, on Octavian's transgressions in the triumviral period. The veiled manner in which the events after Perusia are described provides us with the opportunity to understand the limits of freedom of expression within the Augustan age, as well as the sentiments that were felt by people in various strata of Roman society – those who represented the new power structure in post triumviral Italy as well as those who represented the vanquished and dispossessed. In the *Eclogues*, (1 and 9)<sup>227</sup> there is mention of the confiscations of land and the fact that Vergil was saved from such a fate by the favour of Pollio<sup>228</sup> who used his influence to allow Vergil to retain his familial home. While spared from the confiscations, surely Vergil would have seen the cumulative effect that the civil wars had on the Italian populace, with the possible result that he would have had reason to make

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<sup>227</sup> *Eclogue* 1 gives us Meliboeus the dispossessed and Tityrus the fortunate land-owner who kept his estate by an appeal to Octavian. This bears a similarity to the respective fortunes of Propertius and Tullus, and similar fates must have occurred to many others of that time.

<sup>228</sup> The identity of the individual who helped Vergil is a topic of much discussion (between the *scholia*, Donatus and Servius we have either Varus, Gallus and Pollio acting in concert, or Augustus upon the instigation of Pollio and Maecenas). The question of the identity, in conjunction with the nature of the statements made in the *Eclogues* dedicated to Pollio 4&8 Bennett (1930) 332, and their relationship to Vergil's experience are topics which cannot be treated adequately here.

comment on them and to frame these comments within the struggles which faced the Italic peoples.

The relationship between Vergil and Octavian can be regarded as one of the most complex and enigmatic between poet and ruler in antiquity. Vergil was a poet so esteemed that he was the author of the Roman national epic, commissioned by the *princeps*. Despite this apparent closeness to the principate, many modern scholars have found evidence that has created a debate regarding the nature of the *Aeneid* and the connection between the actions of its hero Aeneas and Augustus. The question of Vergil's temperament towards the principate, his relationship to the *princeps* and the significance of these factors in relation to his poetry has been the subject of much debate. That Vergil wrote encomiastic depictions of the emperor cannot be denied.<sup>229</sup> Poetic expressions such as the one in the *Georgics*, along with others, have prompted some to consider Vergil's work to be an integral part of the Augustan communications program which, if anything, has been shown to have been complex and comprehensive. There are many passages in the *Aeneid* that have been perceived as evidence of Vergil's seemingly unflagging support for the divine nature of Augustus' ascendancy and rule.<sup>230</sup> Others, however, have promulgated the opposite view. Those who can be termed as 'intentionalists', that is those who see in Vergil another more humanistic strain capable of criticizing the dark episodes in the ruler's past, take this viewpoint. This humane view provides a

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<sup>229</sup> *Geor.* 4.559-562.

<sup>230</sup> Of the more famous examples: *Aen.* 1.278-296 Jupiter's prophecy; 6.791-807 Anchises' speech to Aeneas in the underworld; 8.671-728 Shield of Aeneas, replete with imagery of Actium and the victorious Octavian.

landscape in which the victims of Roman imperialism are given at least as much consideration by the poet as victorious Rome.<sup>231</sup> It will not be the intention of this chapter to provide an exhaustive catalogue of such instances, but to present one of the more enigmatic in order to determine if there are any associations which can be made between the poetic expression of Aeneas' wrath in book 10 of the *Aeneid* and the conduct of Octavian in the civil wars, specifically at Perusia.

The passages in question are *Aeneid* 10.517-20 and 11.81-82:

...Sulmone creatos  
quattuor hic iuvenes, totidem quos educat Ufens  
viventis rapit, inferias quos immolet umbris  
captivoque rogi perfundat sanguine flammis. (10.517-520)

The captives of Aeneas are mentioned once more:

vinxerat et post terga manus, quos mitteret umbris  
inferias caeso sparsurus sanguine flammis. (11.81-82).

These episodes are considered by some to be "an extremely serious attack on Aeneas and also Octavian"<sup>232</sup>, whereas others have considered the likelihood that they represent any connection between Octavian's actions at Perusia and the poem as preposterous.<sup>233</sup> The importance of the passage cannot be understated as it represents the matter of human sacrifice, repulsive to the

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<sup>231</sup> Stahl (1991) p.xxi.

<sup>232</sup> Farron (1985) 21.

<sup>233</sup> Harrison (1991) 203 states: "The story (*Arae Perusinae*) is almost certainly false, and even if it were true an allusion to it in a poem which otherwise lauds the *princeps* is fundamentally unlikely."

Roman mind, and possibly draws a connection between the actions of Aeneas and those of the *princeps*.<sup>234</sup> The issue is difficult to lay to rest in a satisfactory manner and will benefit from an appraisal which takes note of the most relevant issues attendant to the subject. These issues, including the disposition of the poet to the *princeps*, the perception of human sacrifice at Rome, and the likelihood that something as damning as the sacrifice the lines seem to represent would have been permitted in such a poem at such a time, if indeed they were reminiscent of anything the young triumvir had done in the past, all bear significant importance to the consideration of these passages. All of these issues must be cautiously examined to avoid the possibility of a modern interpreter retrojecting his own modern political understandings and sympathies onto events in antiquity. That this problem has occurred in Classical scholarship has been detected by the likes of P.White,<sup>235</sup> but, more importantly, if we look to the ages in which minds are most ready to accept the heinous actions of Octavian as credible, they are ones associated with the turmoil of war.<sup>236</sup> It will be necessary to keep this in mind when attempting to come to any conclusions regarding the events at Perugia.

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<sup>234</sup> The Aeneas-Augustus connection has been accepted by Gardthausen (1891); Heinze (1915) 210 n.2; Weinstock (1971) 398; Farron (1985) 21-33; Renger (1985) 64; Brenk (1988) 75; Dyson (1996) 277-286.

<sup>235</sup> White (1993): "the political interpretation of Augustan poetry is a habit of thought which has to be combated head on."

<sup>236</sup> Stahl (1990) 179 states: "after World War II, and especially during the Vietnam era, a general dissatisfaction with forms of militarism and imperialism spilled over into the reading of literature."



Vergil's inclusion of human sacrifice was not an innovation in epic.<sup>237</sup> The model for Aeneas' wrath is found in Homer's Achilles. In 18.336-7 Achilles declares his intention of slaughtering twelve Trojans at Patroclus' pyre, which he carries out at 23.175-7. A description of the sacrifice itself is avoided by Homer, except for the phrase: κακὰ . . . μῆδετο ἔργα (23.176). The scholiast T interpreted the actions of Achilles as being indicative of the savagery (cf. ὤμῶν)<sup>238</sup> that Achilles displays against Hector after the death of Patroclus.<sup>239</sup> It is apparent that in antiquity such a sacrifice was considered excessive and futile. The connection between the sacrifice of the young Trojans and the death of Hector is explicitly made in the *Iliad*, where at 18.334, 23.20-23 and 180-183 Achilles links his sacrifice to the mutilation and exposure of Hector's corpse.<sup>240</sup> The revulsion which ancients felt towards such a sacrifice is compounded by the sense that such an offering to a dead man was pointless. Farron argues that the *Iliad* represents such a sacrifice to the dead as to be viewed by gods and men as 'gratuitous and futile'.<sup>241</sup>

At 6.212-35 the funeral scene for Misenus occurs, where Aeneas takes up the persona of a priest who officiates in a manner that displays his *pietas*. The significance of the statement that *cineri ingrato suprema ferebant* (6.213)

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<sup>237</sup> Harrison (1991) 202, Farron (1985) 23 ff.; *Iliad* 18.336-337, 21.26-33, 23.175-183.

<sup>238</sup> *Iliad* 23.21.

<sup>239</sup> Farron (1985) 24.

<sup>240</sup> Farron (1985) 24: "Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Homer's attitude and the attitude that he intended his audience to have to Achilles' human sacrifice was similar to that for Achilles' treatment of Hector's body."

<sup>241</sup> Farron (1985) 25.

displays the orthodox understanding that the funerary rite, while ostensibly for the dead, perhaps held more importance for the living.<sup>242</sup> Other instances such as the one above occur at 6.885-886, where “Anchises ends his revelation of Rome’s future with reference to the *inane munus* for Marcellus, which Donatus (*ad loc.*) points out is astonishing in the mouth of a dead person.”<sup>243</sup> Most tellingly, as far as what we can ascertain of Vergil’s thoughts on the utility of Aeneas’ sacrifice, we have 11.52 where it is characterized as a: *vanus honor*. It is by examples such as these that Vergil seems to offer a straightforward understanding of the implications of Aeneas’ actions; his sentiments seem to be in line with the typical Roman notion of the futility of spilling human blood to expiate the dead.<sup>244</sup> It is for this reason that some have seen the inclusion of sacrifice, in an epic that was to be the ultimate exposition of Augustus’ divinely sanctioned destiny to rule Rome, as a serious critique of Aeneas and, by extension, Augustus. This very issue gives rise to those opinions which see the *Aeneid* as a work whose surface appearance belies much subtextual content that can be seen as critical of the emperor.<sup>245</sup> Others have not been so ready to

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<sup>242</sup> One need not elaborate on the supreme importance of burial of the dead in antiquity. However, I wish to show the manner in which readers may view Aeneas’ acts as excessive, in light of Vergil’s characterization of them.

<sup>243</sup> Farron (1985) 25.

<sup>244</sup> The idea of spilling blood in sacrifice to the *manes* still retained a ceremonial aspect, in gladiatorial combat. Reid (1912) 44: “It may be said that the death of gladiators was a sort of religious immolation, since the practice, introduced from Etruria, was intended to appease the spirits of the dead; and for centuries at Rome the *ludi gladiatorii* were nominally connected with departed persons, but the link with religion was not felt; and human sacrifice in the proper sense is a very different thing.”

<sup>245</sup> Gardthausen (1891), Farron (1977), (1985), Brenk (1988), Dyson (1996).

accept any such criticisms.<sup>246</sup> It is apparent that there is a similarity between the actions of Aeneas as he rages in book ten and Octavian's actions, as reported by some, at Perusia. This similarity does not yield any conclusive answers as to the likelihood that Vergil would have wished to comment on a subject as taboo as the alleged actions of the triumvir during the desperate days of the civil wars.

In defending his theory that the words of Propertius 1.21 denote a description of the sacrifice at Perusia, Frothingham opposes the conventional understanding of the Romans' attitude towards human sacrifice.<sup>247</sup> Upon consideration of the sources, however, it becomes apparent that these instances of sacrifice portrayed by Cassius Dio are in keeping with the Severan senator's predilection in his histories for exposing the shocking deeds of men of power.<sup>248</sup> On the point of those sacrificed in the *bellum ludicum*, there needs to be a distinction made between the sacrifice of foreigners seen as hostile to Rome and the Italians who were fighting for their land and whom the majority of the populace pitied. This distinction is important in conceptualizing the impact of such actions on the public mentality; that is to say, the alleged actions of Octavian would have eclipsed all in cruelty and in being contrary to Roman custom. The importance of public perception drives to the heart of the matter, since this

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<sup>246</sup> Reid (1912), Scott (1933), Crane (1974), Kraggerud (1987), to name a representative few.

<sup>247</sup> Frothingham (1909) 352: "What of the two legionaries of Caesar sacrificed to Mars in the Campus Martius (Cass. Dio xliii.24)? What of the killing of British prisoners at the games and ceremonies in honor of the British triumph of Claudius (Cass. Dio lx.30)? What of the 2,500 Jewish prisoners put to death at Paneas by Titus in honor of Domitian's birthday, and the still greater number at Berytus a few days later, in honor of the birthday of Vespasian (Josephus *Bell. lud. vii.3.1*)?"

<sup>248</sup> See above p.38

episode had undergone such a strenuous process of revision that it became construed in the way that it was. This is especially significant since Augustus rested much of his image, after his *Ultor* phase, on the perception that he was a peaceful and clement ruler, an orthodox religious figure. It must be inferred that if Octavian's actions, were as barbarous as the negative accounts suggest they would have found a more significant place in Roman historiography. On another incident mentioned by Frothingham<sup>249</sup> – the apparent depiction of two soldiers who were sacrificed and had their heads nailed to the wall of the *Regia* in the manner of the 'October horse'<sup>250</sup> – Reid has offered an alternative interpretation: "The foundation of the fable may be that Caesar, being *Pontifex Maximus*, and the *Regia*<sup>251</sup> being his official residence, was present at a purely military execution that took place near the *ara martis* in the Campus Martius. Furthermore, "There is no authority outside the passage of Dio (obviously poor evidence) for the notion that either the *pontifex* or the *flamen* of Mars had anything to do with the ceremony of the 'October horse'."<sup>252</sup> This episode displays the means by which certain ceremonial *topoi* have been conflated with historical events to represent the actions of the principal agents in a negative manner. A conflation which took echoes of religious ritual and merges them with a mistaken notion of a person's actions may have been at the root of the story surrounding

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<sup>249</sup> Dio 43.24.

<sup>250</sup> A sacrifice in which a horse's head was transfixed to the same wall.

<sup>251</sup> Patterson (1996)1297: "traditionally the home of King Numa, was situated at the east end of the forum Romanum between the via Sacra and the precinct of Vesta. Under the Republic it was the seat of authority of the *pontifex maximus* and contained his archives."

<sup>252</sup> Reid (1912) 41.

the sacrifice at Perugia. It was this mixture of credulity and hearsay which spawned acceptance of Octavian's *parentalia* as truth.

Of the historical evidence regarding human sacrifice, we have the statements of Pliny, Cicero and Livy, from whose treatment of the subject we may get a sense of the mentality that was pervasive among Vergil's contemporaries.

Pliny states:

*boario vero in foro graecum graecamque defossos aut aliarum gentium cum quibus tum res esset, etiam nostra aetas vidit, cuius sacri precationem, qua solet praeire xv virum collegii magister, si quis legat, profecto vim carminum fateatur, omnia ea adprobantibus dcccxxx annorum eventibus.*

Our own age even has seen a man and a woman buried alive in the Ox-market, Greeks by birth, or else natives of some other country with which we were at war at the time. The prayer used upon the occasion of this ceremonial, and which is usually pronounced first by the Master of the College of the Quindecimviri, if read by a person, must assuredly force him to admit the potency of formulæ; when it is recollected that it has been proved to be effectual by the experience of eight hundred and thirty years.<sup>253</sup>

The statement *etiam nostra aetas vidit* may seem to show that human sacrifice was an ongoing part of Roman ritual. However, Reid has taken the passage to denote something altogether different: "Scholars of eminence, both early and recent, Wissowa for example, have deduced from the passage an annual ceremony of immolation. But a close examination of the words will show the inference is not justified. A yearly celebration of the kind could not fail to be notorious, and the expression 'etiam nostra aetas vidit' could not have suitably applied to it. Further the words 'cum quibus res esset' clearly point to an

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<sup>253</sup> Pliny *N.H.* 28.3.12. Trans. Jones W.H.S., Loeb Classical Library.

intermittent and irregular sacrifice, performed at times of crisis caused by war.<sup>254</sup> Again the mention of 830 years, taken in connexion with the context, means no more than this: that the *precatio*, at whatever date it might have been uttered, had proved itself permanently effectual; that is the prayer that the state might be saved by the ritual that had been granted by the gods”.<sup>255</sup> That human sacrifice was highly unorthodox is further reinforced by Cicero’s words on the subject in his *Pro Fonteio* (31):

[31] postremo his quicquam sanctum ac religiosum videri potest qui, etiam si quando aliquo metu adducti deos placandos esse arbitrantur, humanis hostiis eorum aras ac templa funestant, ut ne religionem quidem colere possint, nisi eam ipsam prius scelere violarint? quis enim ignorat eos usque ad hanc diem retinere illam immanem ac barbaram consuetudinem hominum immolatorum? quam ob rem quali fide, quali pietate existimatis esse eos qui etiam deos immortalis arbitrentur hominum scelere et sanguine facillime posse placari?

[31] Lastly, can anything appear holy or solemn in the eyes of those men, who, if ever they are so much influenced by any fear as to think it necessary to propitiate the immortal gods, defile their altars and temples with human victims? So that they cannot pay proper honour to religion itself without first violating it with wickedness. For who is ignorant that, to this very day, they retain that savage and barbarous custom of sacrificing men? What, therefore, do you suppose is the good faith, what the piety of those men, who think that even the immortal gods can be most easily propitiated by the wickedness and murder of men?<sup>256</sup>

Clearly, Cicero aggressively utilizes the imagery of human sacrifice as being representative of the worst instincts of barbarous peoples: *illam immanem ac barbaram consuetudinem hominum immolatorum*. It is a matter of public record that human sacrifice was considered to be one of the most reprehensible acts to the Roman mind. Livy also mentions human sacrifice, labelling the act as a ‘*foeditas*’ (7.5.10) when referring to the sacrifice of 307 Roman captives.<sup>257</sup> He

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<sup>254</sup> See Eckstein (1982) 69 ff.

<sup>255</sup> Reid (1912) 34.

<sup>256</sup> Cicero *pro M. Fonteio*. trans. N. Watts.

<sup>257</sup> Once again, the number 300 is connected with human sacrifice; see above p.40.

then makes mention of a Roman human sacrifice of Vestals and the previously mentioned Gauls and Greeks only to characterize such events as extraordinary and *minime Romanum sacrum* (22.57.6). By these examples we see the implications, for Vergil, of including the sacrificial scene in book 10. That there are humanistic aspects in the *Aeneid* that elicit sympathy and compassion in the reader is apparent; the infusion of a moral debate over the nature of Vergil's representation of Aeneas in book 10 is testament to this. Despite this, there are other considerations which must be observed by the conscientious academic, before any statements as bold as the ones attributed to Vergil<sup>258</sup> can be accepted as correct in interpretation.

It is clear that the situation contains a ready and enticing possibility that Vergil, prompted by some combination of pity and indignation in regard to the new political landscape in Rome and its effects on the populace, made such a bold comment as to model Aeneas' wrath after an episode such as the alleged actions of Octavian at Perugia . If this comment was reflective of actual events, it would call to mind the emperor engaged in crimes that transcended the conventional atrocities which Italians had come to witness during the civil wars.<sup>259</sup> This image would have exceeded any one other of a grim general, a common enough Classical *topos*<sup>260</sup>, by depicting him as an avenging priest of his

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<sup>258</sup> *Aen.* 10.517 and 11.81-82.

<sup>259</sup> Romans, by this time, had heard stories from the earlier civil conflicts of the nearly twelve thousand inhabitants of Praeneste who were slaughtered by Sulla after they surrendered, and when thousands of Marian prisoners captured at the Colline gate were shut up in the Villa Publica in Rome where Sulla turned his soldiers upon them: Livy 88; App. 1.93.94.

<sup>260</sup> E.g. Alexander at Thebes, Gaza and Persepolis, Demetrius the Besieger and Sulla (see note above).

adoptive, deified father. This depiction, if reflective of reality, would have been a monumental source of infamy. There remains the possibility, impossible to prove, that we have so little in the way of solid evidence, either way, on account of a concerted effort by Octavian to suppress the episode. This seems unlikely. If indeed Vergil had commented so openly in book 10 on genuine civil war atrocities, why would the emperor go to such lengths to mould his image, on this particular issue, only to suffer having it undone by his own most lauded poet? It must be kept in mind that, in certain instances, the emperor exercised a heavy hand against poets who were on the unfortunate side of his artistic program.<sup>261</sup> The possibility was very real at the time that a poet who had caused enough aggravation could find himself utterly failed as an artist, relegated to oblivion by an edict of *damnatio memoriae*<sup>262</sup> and possibly endangered physically. This then seems to supersede any considerations of Aeneas' sacrifice scene as critical of Augustus' actions after the fall of Perusia; it is difficult to believe that such an accusation, if indeed reminiscent of one of the darkest episodes of Octavian's career, would have found its way into a poem such as the *Aeneid*.

The words of H.P. Stahl characterize the situation succinctly: "recent literary criticism has increasingly felt free from obligations of basing interpretations on the logical and rhetorical organization which is an essential characteristic of

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<sup>261</sup> E.g. Ovid, Cassius Parmensis and Cornelius Gallus.

<sup>262</sup> Stahl (1985) 127: "...the victorious master of Rome has the power to decree a final *damnatio memoriae*, i.e., kill a poet outright (as happened recently to Cassius Parmensis or will happen soon to Propertius "forerunner" Gallus, of whose work only by a chance finding more than a single line comes down to us); he also, by controlling public communications, can kill a poet partly, by stating conditions for allowing or not allowing him publicity, i.e., an audience (the story of Vergil having to delete from his *Georgics* the praise of Gallus would have to be listed here.)"



ancient literature. Supposedly suggestive leads, supplied by imagery, verbal echoes, presumed ambiguities, etc. have sometimes been assigned the power of overruling the *Aeneid's* plot line or train of thought."<sup>263</sup> It appears to me that the connection drawn by some between Aeneas' sacrifice and the *Arae Perusinae* may very well be best classed in this category. In this way the acceptance of the more frightening aspects of Octavian's conduct after Perusia's fall becomes a bit of a 'conspiracy theory', one that is only propagated by credence in similarities and echoes of the kind mentioned by Stahl.

One such coincidence can be found in the relationship between sacrifice, Mars, and Augustus' adherence to his *ultio* policy. In 10.536 ff. we see Aeneas dispatch Haemonides a priest of Phoebus and Trivia. The killing is characterized as a sacrifice – *immolat* (542), with the arms of the victim being offered to *Rex Gradivus*. *Gradivus* is an epithet of Mars possibly derived from the verb *gradior* ("stride" or "advance"). It is said that Numa originally appointed priests to this god. This is significant if we recall the situation which arose concerning the sacrifice in the Campus Martius that J. Caesar oversaw. In that instance the connection between J. Caesar's role of *Pontifex Maximus*, whose home was the *Regia* traditional home of Numa where the 'October horse' was displayed,<sup>264</sup> and the execution of soldiers in an unrelated capacity created the perception over time, with the aid of those ill-disposed to the person in question, that the execution was a human sacrifice carried out under the auspices of the *Pontifex*.

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<sup>263</sup> Stahl (1990) 179.

<sup>264</sup> Above p.88 n.249.

In light of this type of conflation of disparate events, it is possible to imagine the manner in which aspects of Vergil's poem could have been seen as critical of historical events. Furthermore, the similarity between Octavian's *Ultor* persona and actions like those of line 542 lend further credence to those already inclined towards belief in any such criticism. On the contrary, it is possible to interpret this episode which depicts the ritualistic killing of Phoebus' priest as unlikely to represent Octavian who found the cultivation of Apollo as a tutelary deity more suitable after the civil wars when he had laid down the *Ultor* aspect of Mars' worship.

E. Kraggerud has proposed a possible explanation for the connection between these events, both those that are definite and those conjectured. The concept of the sacrifice requires an altar. In his examination of the meaning of this altar he has drawn a connection between the altar of Caesar, the policy of *Ultio* enacted by Octavian in the wake of Caesar's death, and the campaign against Lucius.<sup>265</sup> The possibility that the altar, found in Dio and Suetonius represents "a metaphorical summing up of the whole affair from the pen of someone who had little or no sympathy with Octavian" is proposed by Kraggerud. The altar, then, is probably meant to be visible only to the mind's eye.<sup>266</sup> The argument continues along the lines that the archaeological evidence of the sling-bullets found at Perugia, which bear the inscriptions *Mars Ultor* and *divom Iulium*,<sup>267</sup> are indicative of the easy connection that could be made between

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<sup>265</sup> Kraggerud (1987) 84.

<sup>266</sup> Kraggerud (1987) 84.

<sup>267</sup> Reid (1912) 43.

Octavian's *ultio* policy and the Perusine conflict in the mind of one already hostile to Octavian. It is in this way that consideration of the concerted efforts of those disaffected by Octavian, of whom there were doubtless a great many, must be factored in to any assessment of the veracity of the story about the human sacrifice.<sup>268</sup> It is perhaps best to approach the issue with this consideration held firmly in mind, in order to achieve an understanding that is comprehensive in its interpretation of the propagandistic aspect of civil warfare, which could damage the image of a ruler more than any real events. The accusation of human sacrifice has been a common one throughout history, made potent by the revulsion associated with the charges.<sup>269</sup> It is perhaps the power of such an accusation which helped to perpetuate it as it captivated the imaginations of those willing to accept it. This perception combined with the reception of Aeneas' actions in book 10 may have afforded the charges of human sacrifice a currency which was somehow transferred into credulity.

It is important to recall that for all the discussion of Aeneas' actions in book 10, there is the Homeric model of Achilles who serves as a forerunner for Aeneas. This cannot be discounted in importance: "present day scholarship should not...rashly deny the Virgilian hero the features of a full-scale Homeric

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<sup>268</sup> Reid (1912) 44: "Around the person of every emperor there sprang up two rank crops of literature, one eulogistic, the other vilificatory."

<sup>269</sup> Reid (1912) 44 writes: "A formidable array of Christian writers mention an annual sacrifice of a *bestiarius* or criminal at the altar of Iuppiter Latiaris on the occasion of the *feriae Latinae*. So monstrously improbable is the allegation that hardly any competent scholar has brought himself to believe it."

warrior.”<sup>270</sup> The presence of such a model is important in that it does not represent the Roman hero in a light any more negative than that cast upon Achilles as he rages in his otherworldly avenging mode. It seems that this Homeric model combined with the desire by the emperor to represent Rome’s greatness in a national epic would help explain the inclusion of such an episode, even if it could be construed negatively.<sup>271</sup> Stahl states that Vergil has “skillfully prepared the reader over two books to share Aeneas’ paternal feelings for Pallas. (The reader) is presently horrified by the crime against a sacrosanct human relationship. Thus he can sympathize with Aeneas’ almost Achillean reaction.”<sup>272</sup> Stahl frames this within the argument that Aeneas’ actions are entirely in keeping with a hero who displays *pietas* in avenging the death of his young protégé.<sup>273</sup> The similarity between this poetic expression and the sacrifice at Perusia is a by-product of these coincidences. These echoes have been interpreted as being reminiscent of true historical events, and it is through this similarity that they have remained in the realm of possibility for those who contemplate the nature of Augustus’ rise to absolute power in the Roman world. It may be that this aspect of Vergil’s work, clearly provocative to both modern and ancient readers and the

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<sup>270</sup> Stahl (1981) 159.

<sup>271</sup> Our modern revulsion to the blood spilled by the hero may not have been felt by the Romans, who would not have viewed Aeneas’ actions as any more shocking than the Homeric model before him.

<sup>272</sup> Stahl (1981) 158.

<sup>273</sup> Made evident by Aeneas’ spurning of Magus’ resort to bargaining with a ransom for his life. Whether, on account of the fact that Magus is a Carthaginian name (Hannibal’s brother had this name), we can infer that this episode shows a contradiction between the Roman *pietas* which, unmoved by material considerations, is displayed by Aeneas in opposition to Carthaginian luxury represented by Magus, is open to debate.

connection of the work to Augustus proved too much of a temptation not to become connected in the public mind which, in time, had become familiar with other aspects of autocratic rule even more shocking than this alleged one.

The connection between the historical narrative and the poetic representation of Vergil is one that has been made; the similarities are evident and they have been proposed as proof of the *Arae Perusinae*. However, in examining the pertinent sections of Suetonius' narrative, it becomes possible to see the true connection which is likely shared by the work of Vergil and Suetonius. E. Kraggerud puts forth the name of Seneca the Elder as a possible source for Suetonius' history.<sup>274</sup> This is only a conjecture, but it may not be far from the mark. Quite possibly only one generation removed, the life of the younger Seneca, who is our first concrete source for the tradition of the *Arae Perusinae*, may provide us with a reason why this piece of information began to circulate. It is possible that Seneca, exiled by Claudius<sup>275</sup> and reinstated by Nero's mother, expressed the charges in his *De Clementia* in a broad retaliation against the earlier representatives of the imperial house. It is somewhat ironic that this treatise on clemency was written shortly after Nero poisoned C. Caesar Britannicus, the son of Claudius, for having come into the favour of the emperor's mother Agrippina. Consequently it must, as a treatise lauding the present

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<sup>274</sup> Kraggerud (1987) 85: "Who was the ultimate source of the tradition in ch. 15.2? What I can offer is, needless to say, no more than a guess. I cannot think that such information originated in the propaganda around Antony in the years before Actium. There was nothing to score for Antony by denigrating his colleague in connection with Perusia. The account of Perusia in Suetonius rather reveals the attitude of those opposing the triumvirate from Republican leanings. At least one name suggests itself under this head, Seneca the Elder."

<sup>275</sup> Ostensibly for an affair with Julia, Claudius' brother Germanicus' wife.

emperor's forbearance, be viewed with some skepticism. Furthermore, it is recorded in Tacitus *Annals* 13.4 that, during his first speech to the senate, written by Seneca, Nero included a renunciation of the abuses of the Claudian regime.<sup>276</sup> This seems to point to a climate in which the present regime was represented as enlightened in comparison to earlier, degenerate, ones. It seems that, in this way, it is possible that the emergence of the tradition of the *Arae Perusinae* may have been a result of the relationships between Nero, Seneca and Claudius. Thus it is possible that the *Aeneid's* representation of human sacrifice, though entirely in keeping with epic convention, as displayed by Achilles' actions in the *Iliad*, may have served as an early source for Seneca, one used on account of its place in the public imagination and which was subsequently distorted in the reign of Nero. This source may well account for the mention of the *Arae* in Seneca's work that may have spawned the notion of Octavian's sacrifice at Perugia. Therefore, a good starting point for those wishing to explore the actions attributed to Octavian at Perugia is the hostility between Seneca the Younger and the Julio-Claudian imperial house.

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<sup>276</sup> Seneca also wrote the *Apocolocyntosis*, a satire on the apotheosis of Claudius.

## Conclusion

The historical record of the Perusine War provides little in the way of agreement in regard to the factors which precipitated the conflict. Thus our initial understanding of the nature of the conflict is compromised. In addition to these disagreements, the tradition of the *Arae Perusinae* seems to have found its genesis in the propaganda campaigns which proliferated in the years immediately before and after Actium. The state of popular opinion and the perception of Octavian as he sought to gain supremacy in the Roman world were also greatly influenced by the communications campaigns on all sides of the triumviral struggle. These factors help contribute to the persistent allegations which found their expression in different works from various eras in antiquity. The persistence of the tradition is a testament to the power of the negative reports which Octavian's enemies propagated. The historians that treat the seemingly minor conflict give it a significant place in the framework of the larger theatre of civil war. This conflict, apart from the more serious allegations surrounding it, involves a great portion of the issues which the generals, their armies and the Italic peoples faced as a result of the policies of the triumvirs. The ill-will which arose on account of the politically necessary land confiscations found more than a passing mention in the historical and literary record. The presence of the *Arae* is proof that there was a many people who were not only opposed to Octavian's actions in the civil wars, but who were also capable of influencing the tradition which came down to us. Outside of the considerations of the negative view of

Octavian which may have prompted the damning tradition, we can find no specific instance which does not raise suspicion as to its veracity.

In Appian, our most reliable source on the civil wars, we find no mention of the *Arae Perusinae*, despite the detection by certain scholars of a republican source. This republican tradition provides the perfect circumstance in which we might expect to find the more damning aspects of the Perusine War expressed. However, this is not the case: Appian's historical narrative seems to take special care to exonerate the future emperor of any exceptionally cruel actions. In fact, the Appianic narrative depicts Octavian as a conscientious general who displays clemency towards the majority of his enemies after the surrender. Of the other historians treated, Dio and Suetonius do mention the negative tradition but only after qualifying it with cautionary statements which call their sources into question. Despite this distancing from their sources, others such as Seneca have taken up the negative tradition and propagated it.

In order to come to a more comprehensive understanding of the conflict and the allegations surrounding it I have examined the literary evidence in the hopes of discovering the personal results of Octavian's conduct which helped to shape the versions of events we now have. Martial 11.20 has shown us the true nature of the propaganda campaigns enacted by the principal persons in the triumviral period. In attempting to reach an understanding with respect to the manner in which these people denigrated each other and leveled obloquy at one another, it is impossible to come to any conclusion about the tradition of the *Arae*. The focus of this particular piece of propagandistic literature is to redress



Octavian's image and to defame his personal enemies. This course of action suggests that just as Octavian enacted communications campaigns against his enemies to effect a negative popular opinion, others who opposed him must also have done the same to him. These attempts at changing the opinions which were held in the public imagination had a significant effect in controlling the language and discussion surrounding the events. This may have given rise to the tradition of the *Arae Perusinae*.

With the epigram of Martial we have been granted an intimate view of the propaganda campaigns of the triumviral period. In Propertius' work we see the very personal aspects of Octavian's actions on the Italic peoples. In light of Propertius' experience in the civil wars, we could expect to see a serious criticism of the emperor's actions. This criticism is apparent in his elegies where the events are characterized as a dire funeral for a nation. However, even in this context there is no specific mention of the human sacrifice at Perugia where we could expect such a statement to be made. The possibility of the emergence of such a statement is made less plausible if we consider the literary environment which surrounded the Augustan poets and the likelihood that such damning statements would have never been published. We can infer from the publication of Propertius' elegies on the subject of Perugia that there was a relatively free literary environment, yet one which had its limits. This literary environment allowed for the publication of works such as Propertius 1.21 and 1.22 but may have forbidden other bolder statements about the killings at Perugia; it was common knowledge that the conflict had created hardships for the people it

affected, but it seems that if the unlikely story of the *Arae Perusinae* were true it would have been suppressed. This basic problem surrounds all the evidence for the events of the Perusine War: can we explain the echoes and innuendo that surround the tradition of the *Arae* as being the remnants of a suppressed historical tradition or are these remnants simply the negative rumours of the time filtering through the historical and literary record? On this count it seems there is no answer. It is this difficulty which has prompted some modern scholars to accept the tradition and others to discount it.

The issue of literary freedom and the willingness of Augustus to actively shape the literature that was reflective of the age finds further importance in the analysis of Vergil's depiction of Aeneas' wrath in the aftermath of Pallas' death. This episode, for obvious reasons, calls to mind the worst reports that we have from Perusia. The question is whether this depiction stands as being a literary parallel of the human sacrifice purported to have been carried out by Octavian. The depiction can be interpreted either as an apologetic piece which accepts the negative tradition of the *Arae* by framing Octavian's actions within the Homeric model of Achilles and making Aeneas the proxy between the two, or it can be seen as nothing more than a work commissioned by an emperor, which represents that ruler as the offspring of a hero no less heroic than the great Achilles. Within these parameters it becomes increasingly difficult to make any definitive statements. However, on the totality of the evidence which we have before us, it would seem to be somewhat naive to accept the worst reports from any time as tumultuous and full of invective between enemies as the triumviral

period was. It is on account of this invective that any acceptance of allegations which serve to dehumanize an enemy must be viewed with a certain amount of skepticism. The possibility remains that the victor has directed the path of the histories which have their historical tradition relating to his own time.

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