It is evident that it would be difficult to make out a case for any of the above, and probably fruitless to extend the search to senators of lower rank. We simply do not know enough about the factors motivating the great majority of those known to us. The candidate for an alternative to Crassus has to be well enough known at that time for his absence to be conspicuous, and one of those who liked to be thought *popularis*, but in this case a half-hearted *popularis* who, like Crassus, had shown by his *sententiae* of 3 and 4 December that he did not approve of a revolutionary conspiracy.

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doi:10.1017/S0009838806000656

THE ADDRESSEE OF VERGIL'S EIGHTH *ECLOGUE*

To whom is the eighth *Eclogue* dedicated? From the poem's introduction we learn that the anonymous addressee is sailing by the coastline of Illyricum (6—7), has written tragedy (9—10, 13), and is anticipating a military triumph (8, 13). This individual has traditionally been identified with Asinius Pollio, the famous general, orator and man of letters who was once thought to have served his proconsulship of 39 B.C. in Illyricum. The identification was first seriously challenged in 1971 by G. W. Bowersock.[1] Bowersock drew attention to an old demonstration of Ronald Syme's that Pollio was in fact assigned the province of Macedonia.[2] He also observed that the usual and most direct return route from Macedonia to Italy would cross the sea near Brundisium—yet Vergil has his addressee sailing near the head of the Adriatic.[3] Bowersock proposed instead that the addressee was Octavian, who campaigned in Illyricum during the years 35–3 B.C.; in Vergil's phrase *sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna coturno* (10) he identified an allusion to Octavian's aborted efforts at an *Ajax*. On this interpretation it follows that the date of publication for the *Eclogue* collection must be pushed down from the traditional *c.* 38 B.C. to 34 or 33. Though accepted by several scholars, Bowersock's thesis has by no means won universal assent. The sceptics strain either at the late date or at the identification of tragic *carmina* with an unfinished *Ajax*.[4] Those who accept it point out parallels in Vergil's other references to Octavian within the collection; as for the altered chronology, they point to the unreliability of the Servian tradition on which the traditional date is based.[5]

A different tack may be of help in resolving this debate. Implicit in Bowersock's thesis are certain assumptions about the geography of the poem; of these the most crucial posits that the addressee is described *returning* from campaign. In fact, as I shall argue shortly, he must be setting out. This seemingly minor point has a number of implications which tip the balance of probabilities against Octavian and in favor of Pollio.

* I want to thank Michael C. J. Putnam and the anonymous reader for their helpful comments on a draft of this article.

[1] G. W. Bowersock, 'A date in the eighth *Eclogue*', *HSCP* 75 (1971), 73—80.

[2] R. Syme, 'Pollio, Saloninus and Salonae', *CQ* 31.1 (1937), 39—48.

[3] Bowersock (n. 1), 77—9.

[4] Cf. R. J. Tarrant, 'The addressee of Virgil's eighth *Eclogue*', *HSCP* 82 (1978), 197—9; J. Farrell, 'Asinius Pollio in Vergil *Eclogue* 8', *CP* 86.3 (1991), 204—11; and R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard (edd.), *A Commentary on Horace, Odes Book II* (Oxford, 1978), at *Carm.* 2.1.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009838806000668 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The assumption that the addressee is returning from a campaign in Illyricum—that is, traversing the upper coast of the Adriatic from south-east to north-west—is commonly made.[6] Yet the order of the places mentioned by the poet points the opposite way (8.6—10):

> tu mihi, seu magni superas iam saxa Timavi
> sive oram Illyrici legis aequoris, en erit umquam
> ille dies, mihi cum liceat tua dicere facta?
> en erit ut liceat totum mihi ferre per orbem
> sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna coturno?

The Timavus empties into the Adriatic between Aquileia and Treveste (Trieste), while the *Illyricum aequor* and its coast begin on the other side of the Istrian peninsula. Given their relative positions, the implied direction of travel is to the south-east. An instructive contrast is furnished by *Aen.* 1.242—4:

> Antenor potuit mediis elapsus Achivis
> Illyricos penetrare sinus atque intima tutus
> regna Liburnorum et fontem superare Timavi . . .

Note the poet's fidelity to geographical truth. Antenor is coming into the Adriatic from the south. He enters the islands and bays of the Illyrian coastline, passes through the domain of the Liburni at the north end of the coast, then, after skirting the Istrian peninsula, crosses the mouth of the Timavus; from there it is only a few days' sail to the Po and the future location of Patavium. By placing the Illyrian shore after the Timavus in *Eclogue* 8, Vergil describes a voyage going in the opposite direction.

The two generals who might have made that voyage conducted their campaigns on opposite ends of the Illyrian coast: Pollio's march against the Parthini in 39 B.C. took him into the hinterland of Dyrrhacium, while Octavian invaded the Iapydes four years later from Senia, a small port town on the other side of the Istrian peninsula from Treveste.[7] In either case a ship sailing past the Timavus to the south-east would be heading towards the *starting* point of the land expedition. Since the poet is addressing a commander who is setting out, the context is the beginning of the campaign season. Vergil's reference to laurels may have created the impression that victory has been secured (8.11—13):

> a te principium, tibi desinam: accipe iussis
> carmina coepta tuis, atque hanc sine tempora circum
> inter victricis hederam tibi serpere lauros.

[5] W. Clausen, 'On the date of the first Eclogue', *HSCP* 76 (1972), 201—5, and id., *Virgil: Eclogues* (Oxford, 1994), 233—7; J. Van Sickle, '*Commentaria in Maronem Commentica*: a case history of the 'Bucolics' misread', *Arethusa* 14 (1981), 17—34; and D. Mankin, 'The addressee of Virgil's eighth *Eclogue*: a reconsideration', *Hermes* 116 (1988), 61—76.

[6] Compare the following (italics mine): Syme (n. 2), 48: 'The poet, writing in vivid anticipation, imagines Pollio *returning* from Macedonia to northern Italy'; Bowersock (n. 1), 79: 'As Wilkes points out, these island communities will have yielded to Octavian's forces as the fleet was sailing *northward* along the Dalmatian coast in 35 B.C'; Mankin (n. 5), 66: 'Octavian, who definitely campaigned in Illyricum, would have *returned* along the same route'; Clausen (n. 5), 235: 'No doubt Pollio *returned* to Italy the usual way in 39 BC, crossing over from Dyrrhachium to Brundisium, from which he had embarked in the previous year.'

[7] Pollio: see Dio 48.41.7; App. *B Civ.* 5.75, with Syme (n. 2). Octavian: App. *Il.* 16—28 with J. J. Wilkes, *Dalmatia* (Harvard, 1969), 46—58.

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Yet poets were always forecasting wars of conquest, which were always expected to end in triumph; as here.[8]

The place and direction of travel enables one to hazard an informed guess as to the port of departure. It must lie on the Adriatic counterclockwise from the Timavus—and no great distance hence, since a journey from the lower half of the Italian peninsula to Illyricum would normally cross the Adriatic at Brundisium; also it should have facilities for embarking several legions worth of troops.[9] Locations meeting these criteria would include Ariminium, a town strategically situated at the junction of the Via Aemilia and the Via Popilia and possessing a good harbour, and a bit further north, Ravenna, which had a large and thriving port Augustus would later convert into a base for the eastern fleet. Yet another candidate can lay perhaps the strongest claim: Aquileia. Long used by Roman generals as a base for operations in northern Illyricum, the city had most recently served Julius Caesar as the site for his administration of the province.[10] Moreover, just a short distance (*c.* 10 miles) across its bay lay the scenic, mysterious *Fons Timavi*, whose estuary would have been one of the first landmarks visible to those sailing for points south.[11] Though complete certainty is neither possible nor, for the present argument, necessary, Vergil's reference to the *saxa Timavi* would suggest that these lines were written from the perspective, whether real or imagined, of Aquileia.

The question posed at the start of this paper can now be rephrased as follows: who would Vergil be more likely to depict leading a flotilla from the upper Adriatic? To answer this one must establish where the armies of Octavian and Pollio were before their seasons in the field began.

First, Pollio. Since 42 B.C. he had held Venetia for Antony with seven legions (Vell. Pat. 2.76.2). After the Perusine War broke out Fulvia persuaded him to move south, but whether from scruple, an inability to co-ordinate with his fellow Antonians, or the reluctance of his soldiers, he held back. After Perusia fell, the generals went off with their troops in different directions; as Appian cryptically puts it, 'Some headed to Brundisium, others to Ravenna or Tarentum, some looking for Murcus or Ahenobarbus, others for Antonius' (*B Civ.* 5.50); the text that follows allows us to piece together who went where. Plancus joined Fulvia and escorted her to Antonius, via Brundisium; those seeking Murcus, who was in league with Sextus Pompey, headed for Tarentum. Pollio sought a meeting with Domitius Ahenobarbus, whose fleet controlled the Adriatic. This should put Ahenobarbus at Ravenna; and there for the

[8] E.g. *Pan. Mess.* 135—76; Verg. *G.* 3.22—3; Hor. *Carm.* 1.29; Prop. 2.10, etc.

[9] If the legions Pollio took with him against the Parthini were the same as those he commanded during his governorship of Cisalpina, he may have had as many as seven (cf. Vell. Pat. 2.76.2). R. Syme, 'Octavian und Illyricum', *JRS* 23 (1933), 68, regards five legions as a reasonable estimate for the size of Octavian's army in Illyricum; at the end of the first year a force half that size (twenty-five cohorts) was left behind with Fufius Geminus to garrison Siscia (Dio 48.38.1; App. *Il.* 24).

[10] Aquileia was originally founded to serve as a bulwark against the Histri in 183; there was fighting with the neighbouring tribes for the next several years (cf. Livy 39.54—5, 40.26, 34, 41.1—5). Operations against Illyrian peoples were conducted from that city in 171 by L. Cassius Longinus (Livy 43.1, 5) and in 129 by C. Sempronius Tuditanus (Wilkes [n. 7], 32—3). Caesar's command included Illyricum as well as Gaul; for his presence at Aquileia see Wilkes, 38—9. Augustus would later repair to the city when the rebellions in Pannonia and Germany were taking place, the quicker to catch the latest news from the frontier (Suet. *Aug.* 20).

[11] On the river and its estuary see Strabo 5.1.8—9 and H. Philipp, 'Timavus', *RE* 2nd ser., 6.1244. Vergil's conception of the topography of the Timavus is usefully discussed by R. R. Dyer, 'Timavus and the supine at Vergil *Aen.* 1.246', *CW* 89.5 (1996), 403—8.

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moment is where we can place the legions which Pollio brought down with him from Cisalpine Gaul. Once he reached Ahenobarbus, Pollio's first order of business was to win him over to Antony's side; that done, he worked with him to secure the coast in anticipation of the triumvir's return to Italy.[12]

When we next encounter him, Pollio is engaged with the principals at Brundisium, trying to defuse the tense situation that had developed there. Did his troops accompany him on his mission? Our sources nowhere mention their threat or presence. This silence is particularly striking given how woefully outmanned Antony was reported to be; if the triumvir had Pollio's seven legions at his disposal, the disparity would be hard to account for.[13] Keeping his troops out of the fray would in fact have been quite consistent with Pollio's previous course of action. During the year that followed Caesar's assassination he held his legions in Spain, waiting for the Caesarian partisans in Italy to settle their quarrel; at Perusia he brought his forces into the neighbourhood of the battle but ultimately would not let them intervene. In both instances the prospect of armed involvement in a factional conflict kept him on the sidelines.[14] Adding his soldiers to the mix at Brundisium would have been uncharacteristically provocative. It is also telling that in the negotiations he was picked to serve as the counterpart to Maecenas, a man who led no troops. Though not without cards of his own to play, the role he chose at Brundisium was that of a diplomat.

What Pollio did immediately after the pact is not known; possibly he joined the triumvirs for the wedding in Rome, or returned north. His consulship ended during the dead of winter, as the suffect consuls appointed by the triumvirs in late 40 B.C. held office only a few days (Dio 48.32.1). His proconsulship would send him to Macedonia, where he was to curb the Parthini, but given the season he could not have yet attempted to move his legions there by sea. As for the situation of those legions, nothing would indicate that they had moved from their previous position on the Adriatic coast of Cisalpine Gaul. Possibly they quartered in Ravenna; yet given that the camps where they passed the last two winters lay not far beyond the Po, they may also have returned there, to await spring, and departure from, say, Aquileia.[15]

[12] Pollio's actions and inactions at Perusia are well analysed by A. B. Bosworth, 'Asinius Pollio and Augustus', *Historia* 21 (1972), 441—73, esp. 468—72.

[13] See App. *B Civ.* 5.24—80 for troop strengths; the following references are to the chapters in that book. On paper Octavian commanded forty legions (53); however most of these were not available for his use at this place and time. More than half, it would seem, were tied up in the provinces: eleven in Gaul (24, 51) under Salvidenus (66), who also commanded another six Octavian had earlier assigned him to lead to Spain (24—7), plus six in Africa with Lepidus (53), and at least one each in Illyricum (80), Spain and Sardinia (for the last two, see P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower 225 BC – AD 14* [Oxford, 1971], 494). Some would also be needed to guard against Sextus and Ahenobarbus (a half-legion in Brundisium alone, 56; cf. 27). That would leave Octavian with no more than thirteen legions, and perhaps as few as ten, available for immediate use. The calling up of evocate legions indicates Octavian was worried whether *he* had enough forces to face Antony with; and many soldiers would not follow him against the triumvir (57). To counter these, his rival could pose the 'small' force that had accompanied him from Greece in 200 ships (55; cf. Plut. *Ant*. 30), which included siege equipment and 400 cavalry (58); one to two legions, perhaps. If Pollio's seven had been combined with this force Antony ought to have been roughly matched with his opponent, rather than being so outnumbered he had to resort to strategems to conceal his vulnerability (57—8). For a fuller discussion of the numbers of legions see Brunt (this n.), 493—9. Brunt states that 'it is impossible to determine how many legions Octavian still had in Italy or elsewhere at the time of Brundisium', (496), but the available data does allow an estimate of the *range* of possible legion-strengths to be made.

[14] Cf. Bosworth (n. 10), 452—72.

[15] Julius Caesar had three legions in winter quarters at Aquileia at the start of the Gallic War: *B Gall.* 1.10.

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To infer what route Octavian's soldiers took to Illyricum in 35 B.C. is a much less complicated matter. The last we hear of his legions after Naulochus they are in Bruttium, having just crossed from Messene. It was late in the season, probably October, the weather was too poor to journey very far, and the troops were in an ugly mood; they probably spent the winter there.[16] This means that in the spring they would have crossed the mouth of the Adriatic and sailed north along the Illyrian coast to the beach-head at Senia. Making the trip from that direction, Octavian would not pass the Timavus.

To sum up: the evidence suggests that Pollio was travelling to his destination from the north of the Adriatic, Octavian from its south. Vergil in his prologue describes a commander leading a fleet south from Aquileia or thereabouts. The most economical interpretation would identify that commander with Pollio.

Finally, a word or two concerning genre. Vergil's lines are meant to see his dedicatee off on a voyage by sea and wish him well. Thus they constitute a token *propempticon*. Though the gesture might suit either man, for Pollio it would have special significance. One of the masterpieces of neoteric poetry was Helvius Cinna's *Propempticon*, written perhaps in 56 B.C. and addressed to none other than Asinius Pollio.[17] A nod to Cinna would not be surprising coming from Vergil, who in the ninth *Eclogue* held his predecessor's work up as a touchstone (9.35). For Pollio, the allusion to the late poet would have struck close to the heart.

The arguments made here can now be woven into those advanced by previous scholarship. My claim is that there is nothing discordant, either in terms of geography or administration, to the assumption that Vergil's addressee is Pollio. One may accept Syme's contention that Pollio served as proconsul in Macedonia—the poem offers no contradiction.[18] Vergil says not that his addressee is going off to campaign in Illyricum, but that he is *passing by* (*legis*) its coast. This detail fits the geography to a t, since Illyricum lay between Pollio's previous base of operations and the province to which he presumably sailed his troops.[19] Vergil seems to have been busy in the north around 41 B.C. (*Ecl.* 9), and was perhaps part of Pollio's retinue in late 40 (*Ecl.* 4), so one could, if one wanted, imagine him at the port wishing his patron *buon viaggio*; at very least, the *propempticon*-motif of lines 6—8 would have a special resonance for Pollio. By contrast, the troops of Octavian, if he were the subject, would be out of position for the journey so described. Though it is possible they were marched across the length of Italy to Cisalpine Gaul during the winter of 36/35 B.C., there is no evidence for such a march. If instead they were transported by ship from Bruttium in

[16] For the mood and situation of his troops, see Livy, *Per.* 131, Vell. Pat. 2.81.1, App. *B Civ.* 5.128—9; for the weather, Dio 49.34.1.

[17] See Cinna, *FLP* 1—5 , with Courtney's notes. Nisbet and Hubbard (n. 4), on Hor. *Carm*. 1.3 offer a useful overview of the genre in Roman times.

[18] Syme (n. 1), 41—7. Bosworth's claim (n. 12) that Pollio did in fact govern Illyricum rests on the premise that he switched his allegiance to Octavian after Brundisium. But the evidence he cites shows only that Pollio maintained relatively friendly relations with Octavian during later years; it offers no support for the contention that Pollio became one of Octavian's lieutenants at so early a date.

[19] It may be worth noting too that this eclogue is the only one in the collection to locate its characters in a *northern* Greek landscape: if Mt Oeta limns his western sky (*deserit Hesperus Oetam* 30), the speaker in Damon's song should be in Thessaly; and Thessaly is presumably where the witch-like female character of Alphesiboeus' song is imagined to be. Together Oeta and the obscure Tmaros (44; a mountain in Epirus near the oracle of Dodona) mark the eastern and western portions of the Roman province of Macedonia, for which Pollio was heading.

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the spring, the fleet would neither reach the Timavus nor come at it from the right direction.

The geography of the passage matches Pollio's mission much better than Octavian's. The deciding factor will then be the reference to *sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna coturno* (10). If the reference is to Pollio's tragedies, the description rings true.[20] Conversely, grave difficulties will remain for interpretations which would identify the Sophoclean *carmina* (note the plural) with Octavian's aborted attempt at an *Ajax*.[21] In fact, the only *carmina* Octavian is known to have completed and made public during this period were obscene political elegies.[22] Bowersock's thesis, then, has shortcomings of a geographic, chronological and literary character. All in all, it seems best to allow the identification of the addressee with Pollio, and to preserve with it the traditional date for the poem's *ultima manus*, 39 B.C.

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doi:10.1017/S0009838806000668

[20] Tarrant (n. 4), 197—9; Farrell (n. 4); and Nisbet and Hubbard (n. 4), on Hor. *Carm.* 2.1.
[21] See esp. Farrell (n. 4).
[22] Attacking Pollio, among others. See Macrobius *Sat*. 2.4.21 and Martial 11.20 with Courtney, *FLP*, pp. 282–3.

VERGIL'S MYSTERIOUS *SILER*: A POSSIBLE IDENTIFICATION FROM A LOUSY CLUE

Vergil mentions a plant called *siler*. Its identification has proved difficult since the word seems to be used only three other times in all Latin literature.

1. *Georgics* 2.9—13:

> Principio arboribus varia est natura creandis.
> namque aliae nullis hominum cogentibus ipsae
> sponte sua veniunt camposque et flumina late
> curva tenent, ut molle siler lentaeque genistae,
> populus et glauca canentia fronde salicta;

To begin with, nature has different ways of making trees. For some, with no man forcing them, come of their own accord and hold far and wide both the fields and the curving rivers, such as the soft siler and the pliant broom, the poplar and the willow groves growing grey with shining leaves.

2. Servius (ad loc.) is no help, but he does let us know that by his time the word *siler* had vanished from the vocabulary:

genus arboris est. et notandum genus neutrum de arbore, quod est admodum rarum.

A type of tree. Note the neuter gender for a tree, which is quite unusual.

3. We do, however, get some pointers from two passages in Pliny (*HN* 16.77):

non nisi in aquosis proveniunt salices, alni, populi, siler, ligustra tesseris utilissima, item vaccinia Italiae in aucupiis sata, Galliae vero etiam purpurae tinguendae causa ad servitiorum vestes.

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