HORACE AND HISTORIANS

Ob memoriam

I

In 'the only coherent piece of autobiography which we possess from Horace's pen', as Fraenkel has called it,[1] the poet wrote these famous lines (*Epist.* 2.2.49–52):

> unde simul primum me dimisere Philippi,
> decisis humilem pinnis inopemque paterni
> et laris et fundi paupertas impulit audax[2]
> ut uersus facerem.

> As soon as Philippi discharged me thence, poverty drove me—grounded as I was, with my wings clipped, and deprived of my ancestral home and farm—boldly to produce verses.

As is remarked by Lyne, however, 'Horace here omits an intervening and prosaic stage'.[3] The evidence for this omission comes from Suetonius' biography of the poet, in which the same period of Horace's life is described slightly differently: 'uictisque partibus uenia impetrata scriptum quaestorium comparauit. ac primo Maecenati ...insinuatus...' ('after the defeat of his party and a successful request for pardon he procured the position of *scriba quaestorius*. And having first become involved with Maecenas...').[4] What was the exact sequence of events? Lyne, like Brink, proposes that Horace after Philippi derived income from his position as *scriba quaestorius* and that this in turn enabled him

An earlier and rather different version of this paper was delivered in Oxford in June 2007 at the memorial colloquium for R. O. A. M. Lyne, who was a fellow research student at Cambridge in the 1960s and a lifelong friend. His first and last published papers were on Horace. For advice and comments I am most grateful to Professors A. Chahoud, T. J. Cornell, E. Courtney and D. S. Levene, as well as two referees.

[1] Fraenkel (1957) 7.

[2] Davison (1965) 248–9 suggested that *audax* should be taken, not with *paupertas* (as is usual), but with *facerem*.

[3] Lyne (1995) 4.

[4] Lines 7-8 in Rostagni (1944) 111.

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to write the poetry which eventually brought him to Maecenas' attention.[5] Nisbet, on the other hand, thinks that Horace's early poetry elicited subsidies from 'grandees like Pollio and Messalla' and that these provided him with the wherewithal to buy his position as *scriba*, from which he was effectively relieved by his later association with Maecenas.[6]

In the poem which begins the second half of the first book of his *Sermones*, and which is also autobiographical in nature, Horace makes no mention of his employment as *scriba*. He starts by emphasising that his father had been a freedman but that, despite this, Maecenas had not, like the majority, looked down upon him (1.6.1–6):

> Non quia, Maecenas, Lydorum quidquid Etruscos
> incoluit finis, nemo generosior est te,
> nec quod auus tibi maternus fuit atque paternus
> olim qui magnis legionibus imperitarent,
> ut plerique solent, naso suspendis adunco
> ignotos, ut me libertino patre natum.

> Although no one amongst all the Lydians who have ever inhabited Etruscan territory has higher lineage than you, Maecenas, and although your maternal and paternal ancestors once commanded great legions, you do not, like most people, on that account turn up a hooked nose at ignoble persons—like me, born of a freedman father.

After almost forty lines of complicated argument Horace then returns to the criticism which he encounters as being the son of a freedman father (45–6):[7]

> nunc ad me redeo libertino patre natum,
> quem rodunt omnes libertino patre natum. . .

> now I return to my being born of a freedman father, I whom everyone backbites as 'born of a freedman father'. . .

These three references to Horace's birth have been seen as part of a larger self-portrait in which he presents himself as a second Bion, who had also acknowledged that his

[5] Brink (1982) ad loc.
[6] Nisbet (2007) 9. For a wide-ranging discussion of *scribae* and similar officials see Purcell (1983).
[7] On the interpretation of these repeated references see Williams (1995).

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father was a freedman (F1A-B Kindstrand).[8] But the actual words with which Horace describes himself have their closest parallel in the descriptions which are given of Cn. Flavius, the aedile of 304 BC (Liv. 9.46.1 'patre libertino. . .ortus', *per.* 9 'libertino patre natus', Val. Max. 2.5.2 'libertino patre genitus', Plin. NH 33.17 'libertino patre. . . genitus'). No other person in the whole of classical Latin literature is so described.[9] From the consistent nature of Flavius' description it seems that he was a standard example of freedman birth; and from the striking similarity of Horace's language it seems possible that he was likening his situation to that of Flavius.

Although these references to Flavius' parentage are later than Horace's satire,[10] this is not the case with the historian L. Calpurnius Piso, consul in 133 BC, whose longest fragment is devoted to Flavius (F31 Cornell = 27 Peter):[11]

> Cn. Flauius *patre libertino natus* scriptum faciebat, isque in eo tempore aedili curuli apparebat, quo tempore aediles subrogantur, eumque pro tribu aedilem curulem renuntiauerunt. [aedilis][12] qui comitia habebat negat accipere, neque sibi placere, qui scriptum faceret, eum aedilem fieri. Cn. Flauius Anni filius dicitur tabulas posuisse, scriptu sese abdicasse, isque aedilis curulis factus est. Idem Cn. Flauius Anni filius dicitur ad collegam uenisse uisere aegrotum. eo in conclaue postquam introiuit, adulescentes ibi complures nobiles sedebant. hi contemnentes eum, assurgere ei nemo uoluit. Cn. Flauius Anni filius aedilis id arrisit, sellam curulem iussit sibi afferri, eam in limine apposuit ne quis illorum exire posset utique hi omnes inuiti uiderent sese in sella curuli sedentem.
>
> Cn. Flavius, who was born of a freedman father, held the office of *scriba* and, at the time when the next aediles were being elected, he was attendant on the curule aedile and was declared curule aedile on behalf

[8] Moles (2007) 166–7.

[9] The emperor Pertinax is 'libertino genitus patre' at [Vict.] *Epit.* 18.4.

[10] Book 1 of the *Sermones* was published in 'the winter of 36/35' (Du Quesnay (1984) 20–1); Livy probably started to write in the latter half of the 30s (Woodman (1988) 128–35).

[11] In his note on line 6 of the satire, Lejay (1911) 177 refers to this fragment. (In addition to H. Peter's traditional numbering of the fragment, I have given that adopted by Cornell (forthcoming). I am very grateful to Professor Cornell for a preview of this work.) On the Piso fragment see also Courtney (1999) 141–4.

[12] *aedilis* (V) was deleted by Lange and Mommsen, and emended to *aedilem* (which seems ambiguous) by Hertz and to *at ille* by Gruchius.

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> of the tribe. But the man who was holding the assembly refused to accept him, saying he did not agree that someone who held the office of *scriba* should be made an aedile. Cn. Flavius, the son of Annius, is said to have put aside his writing tablets and resigned from his office of *scriba*; and he was made curule aedile.
>
> Again, Cn. Flavius, the son of Annius, is said to have gone to visit a sick colleague. When he entered the room, numerous young nobles were sitting there. Despising him, none of them was prepared to rise for him. Cn. Flavius, the son of Annius, as aedile laughed at this, ordered the curule chair to be brought for him, and placed it in the threshold to prevent any of them from leaving and so that against their will they should see him sitting in the curule chair.

Not only does Piso describe Flavius' birth in the standard way but the fragment makes it clear why Flavius became an almost proverbial figure: he had been a *scriba* whose humble birth and circumstances were held against him.[13] It seems very likely indeed that Horace's readers were intended to recognise an allusion to Flavius, who was clearly the most famous *scriba* of all; to supply from the allusion the information (naturally missing from the parallels with Bion) that Horace was himself a *scriba*; and to be reminded that Flavius' identical background had not prevented him from getting the better of his critics. In fact it may well be that Horace, whose self-description uses exactly the same language as had been used by Piso, was alluding to this very passage of Piso's history. Though Piso mentions only once the expression which Horace in his satire repeats three times, it will be noticed that this is not Piso's only reference to Flavius' parentage. Piso repeats Flavius' name three times—'each time', as Linderski has remarked, 'in its full form, *Cn. Flauius Anni filius*'.[14] Is it possible that Horace's description of himself as *libertino patre natum* borrows the language of Piso's description of Flavius but its threefold repetition functions as a simultaneous allusion to the fact that Piso repeated three times an alternative way of referring to Flavius' parentage?[15]

[13] The other texts relating to the story of Flavius are conveniently assembled by Oakley (2005) 3.600–3; two of them (Plin. *NH* 33.17, Pompon. *Dig.* 1.2.2.7) allege that Flavius was the *scriba* of Appius Claudius Caecus, 'qui senatum primus libertinorum filiis lectis inquinauerat' (Liv. 9.46.10).

[14] Linderski (2002) 594.

[15] This would thus be a variant on the technique by which, for example, the Virgilian Anchises repeats *gnatus* three times in the same way as had his model, Aegeus, in Catullus 64: for this and other instances of numerical imitation see e.g. Wills (1997) 195.

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II

Such engagement with the Roman historians—Pollio apart—is not something which we normally associate with Horace, but the thesis receives support from the second satire of Book 1. The subject of this poem is sex, and after thirty lines there appears Cato the Censor, who is represented as upholding a version of sexual morality in which it is forbidden to take advantage of another man's wife (lines 31–5):

> quidam notus homo cum exiret fornice, 'macte
> uirtute esto', inquit sententia dia Catonis:
> 'nam simul ac uenas inflauit taetra libido,
> huc iuuenes aequom est descendere, non alienas
> permolere uxores.'

> When a certain notable was leaving a brothel, 'Congratulations on your . . .manliness!' was the divinely inspired verdict of Cato: 'For, as soon as foul lust inflates the veins, it's right for young men to come down here and not grind other men's wives.'

Cato's appearance is managed by means of an allusion to his younger contemporary, Lucilius, who had used the phrase 'Valeri sententia dia' (1316M) and whose manner of speech is evoked at the start and close of Cato's utterance;[16] but Horace has amusingly transposed the proper name to the end of the phrase, delaying till the very last moment the information that he has embarked on the well known and somewhat startling story concerning Cato the Censor's views on adultery.[17]

Cato's repudiation of adultery is followed by a section on the likely fates of adulterers, including being flogged to death (41–2 'ille flagellis | ad mortem caesus'). In the subsequent section (lines 47–54) there appears a man named Sallustius:

> tutior at quanto merx est in classe secunda,
> libertinarum dico: Sallustius in quas
> non minus insanit quam qui moechatur. at hic si,
> qua res, qua ratio suaderet quaque modeste 50

[16] Cf. 225M 'macte, inquam, uirtute...esto', 278M 'hunc molere'.

[17] Was Horace moved to transfer Lucilius' phrase from Valerius to Cato because the latter had a reputation for 'divinely inspired' replies (Gell. 6.3.48 'prope diuina responsionis figura')? That the story about Cato was well known may be inferred from Porphyrio and Pseudo-Acro.

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> munifico esse licet, uellet bonus atque benignus
> esse, daret quantum satis esset nec sibi damno
> dedecorique foret. uerum hoc se amplectitur uno,
> hoc amat et laudat: 'matronam nullam ego tango',...

> But how much safer is a commodity in the second class—I mean freedwomen, for whom Sallustius is just as crazy as is any adulterer. But, if he wished to be good and generous (in so far as his reserves and reason urged, in so far as he could be munificent modestly), he would give as much as was sufficient and constituted no deficit or disgrace to himself. In fact, however, the one thing for which he hugs, loves and praises himself is this: 'I touch no married woman',. . .

Sallustius has sex with *libertinae* and, since he says that he stays clear of married women, he presents himself as a follower of Cato. Scholars have debated whether this Sallustius is the historian or his adopted son. While two more recent scholars think that Horace is indeed referring to the historian,[18] Rudd in his study of names in the *Satires* is agnostic and the majority of commentators (such as Orelli, Morris, Lejay and Kiessling–Heinze) think that the reference is to the adopted son.[19]

A principal argument against identifying Sallustius with the historian resides in the stories told by Varro and the ancient commentators. According to Varro (ap. Gell. 17.18), the historian was caught in adultery by Milo and whipped:

> M. Varro...in libro quem scripsit *Pius aut de pace* C. Sallustium scriptorem seriae illius et seuerae orationis, in cuius historia notiones censorias fieri atque exerceri uidemus, in adulterio deprehensum ab Annio Milone loris bene caesum dicit.

> M. Varro...in the book which he entitled *Pius or On Peace* says that C. Sallustius, the writer of that famously stern and severe discourse, in whose history we see censorial enquiries taking place and being enforced, was caught in adultery by Annius Milo and well and truly whipped.

[18] Whitehorne (1975), Brown (1993) 106.

[19] Rudd (1966) 135–6. An argument against the adopted son is that he later received the compliment of an ode from Horace (2.2).

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Pseudo-Acro, whose note is repeated in very similar words by Porphyrio, detects an allusion to Sallustius' adultery in Horace's reference to flogging in lines 41–2 (quoted above):

> hoc de Sallustio uidetur dicere: Sallustius enim Crispus in Faustae (filiae Syllae) adulterio deprehensus ab Annio Milone flagellis caesus esse dicitur...*ad mortem* autem prope mortem.
>
> He seems to be talking here about Sallustius: for Sallustius Crispus is said to have been caught by Annius Milo in adultery with Fausta (the daughter of Sulla) and flogged... 'To death', however, <means> near to death.

Syme, who declares that the identity of Horace's Sallustius is 'a problem that has not been properly handled by commentators ancient and modern',[20] himself handles the problem in a most extraordinary manner. Although it seems fairly clear that the stories in Varro and the commentators are one and the same, Syme treats them entirely separately: he nowhere uses the one to elucidate the other nor even has any explicit cross-reference between them.[21] Syme adverts to Varro's 'allegation' (as he calls it) on three occasions, first describing it as 'suspect', then expressing it in hypothetical terms ('If Sallust committed adultery with Milo's wife...'), and finally resorting to rhetorical questions ('Who can tell, and who cares?').[22] The evidence of Pseudo-Acro, on the other hand, is dismissed with characteristic panache: 'No help can be expected by any prudent man from the ancient commentators'.[23] The reason for Syme's unusual behaviour is clear. Since he wishes to identify Horace's Sallustius with the historian, he feels compelled to discredit any evidence to the contrary: an ancient commentator is fair game, but Syme cannot quite bring himself to reject out of hand the polymathic and contemporary Varro.

It is surely unnecessary to resort to such tactics. In the preface to his *Histories* Sallust went out of his way to praise Cato (1.4M 'Romani generis disertissumus'),[24] and his imitation of Cato's style was one of his most famous characteristics.[25] Indeed Lenaeus, another contemporary satirist, had added plagiarism of Cato to his list of Sallust's other

[20] Syme (1964) 280.

[21] Indeed, when in his discussion of Pseudo-Acro he refers to 'The other occurrence of the story', he means, not Varro, but Servius' note on *Aen.* 6.612 (Syme (1964) 282 n. 30).

[22] Syme (1964) 26–7, 269, 278–80.

[23] Syme (1964) 282. He omits to mention that the same story is told by Porphyrio.

[24] Scanlon (1998) 200–3.

[25] Kaster (1995) 181 on Suet. *Gramm.* 15.2.

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alleged vices. Lenaeus was a freedman of Pompey the Great and, when he read what Sallust had written about his patron in the *Histories* (2.16M), we are told by Suetonius that he responded with a Lucilian satire (Suet. *Gramm.* 15.2 = Lenaeus fr. 1 Courtney):

> acerbissima satura lacerauerit lastaurum et lurconem et nebulonem popinonemque appellans, et uita scriptisque monstrosum, praeterea priscorum Catonis uerborum ineruditissimum furem.
>
> He mauled him in the bitterest satire, calling him a pathic and a glutton and a shady barfly, unnatural in his life and his writings, and an uneducated thief of Cato's old-fashioned vocabulary besides.

In the light of Sallust's well known literary connection with Cato, it seems overwhelmingly probable that Horace's Sallustius is, as Syme wished, the historian. It would be perverse in the extreme if the Sallustius who is made to claim an allegiance to Catonian morals were someone other than the Sallust for whom Cato was famously a literary model. Horace is inviting us to see an implicit comparison between Sallust's adherence to Catonian morality, which he claims in the satire, and his adherence to Catonian style, which he acknowledged in the *Histories*. Indeed one of Sallust's reasons for adopting a Catonian style was precisely to make a moral claim.[26] However, if the story told by Varro and the scholiasts was true, Horace amusingly makes Sallust defend his madness for freedwomen with a statement about married women which was notoriously false.[27] Sallust, in other words, is portrayed as disingenuous;[28] and it seems

[26] See Levene (2000), esp. 173.

[27] It may be that in the comparison *non minus insanit quam* in lines 48–9 Horace has already alluded to this falsity: 'The comparison...is misleading, in implying that the adulterer is crazy over freedwomen. I think that this form of statement is deliberate in hinting subtly that Sallust was an adulterer' (Ullman (1950) 411). It may perhaps be significant that, when Horace repeats the same verb at 1.4.27, the reference is to married women ('hic nuptarum insanit amoribus'). It is true that, when Fausta is actually named later in the satire (64), her lovers are there given as Villius and Longarenus and there is no reference to Sallust; but I interpret this not as contradictory evidence but as an example of Horace's characteristic technique of quasi-gratuitous naming for the purposes of criticism (Fraenkel (1957) 85): in this case his victim is a woman whose notoriously easy virtue is identified by reference to two <more> of her lovers. Indeed one could argue that, if lines 41–2 on adulterers foreshadow the reference to Sallust which comes in 48–9 (as suggested by Ullman (1950) 411), then lines 48–9 foreshadow the reference to Fausta which comes in 64.

[28] Although the historian is said by [Cic.] *In Sall.* 16 to have acknowledged his adultery in the senate, scholars usually attribute no value to this work. Conversely, Pseudo-Acro on line 47 says that Sallust defended himself against accusations of adultery in the senate by claiming that he was interested only in freedwomen ('ille se non matronarum sed libertinarum sectatorem esse testatus est'). Clearly the same source might lie behind both these statements (Ullman (1950) 411 n. 4).

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clear from the admittedly garbled account of Dio (43.9.2–3) that Sallust was in fact accused of hypocrisy, albeit on other grounds, by his contemporaries. Indeed, if Varro was responsible for the accusation of hypocrisy—rather than just the plain statement of adultery—that appears in Gellius, his accusation may have been made in specifically Catonian terms: a reference to *notiones censorias* can hardly fail to evoke thoughts of Cato the Censor.

Horace in the next four lines (55–8) compares Sallustius to the unknown Marsaeus:

> . . .ut quondam Marsaeus, amator Originis ille
> qui patrium mimae donat fundumque laremque,
> 'nil fuerit mi', inquit, 'cum uxoribus umquam alienis.'
> uerum est cum mimis, est cum meretricibus...

> . . .just as Marsaeus, that famous Origo-lover who gave the actress both his ancestral farm and home, once said: 'I'd never have anything to do with other men's wives.' But he *does* have with actresses and prostitutes...

Marsaeus resembles Sallust in that his denial of adultery belies a passion for other categories of women; and, since the wording of line 57 ('nil...cum uxoribus...alienis') repeats that of lines 34–5 in the section on Cato ('non alienas |...uxores'), the consequence is that Marsaeus too presents himself as a follower of Catonian morality. Now in such a context the phrase 'amator Originis ille' seems deliberately suggestive. Cato's most famous work was of course the *Origines*, the first history to be written in Latin; and, though the work was normally referred to by its common plural form, Gellius several times uses the singular of an individual book (10.1.10 'in M. autem Catonis quarta Origine', 10.24.7 'hoc sumpsit Coelius ex Origine M. Catonis',[29] 15.13.5, 17.13.3–4 'in secunda quoque Origine M. Cato. . .', 20.5.13). Since *amator* is regularly used of a literary devotee (e.g. Cic. *Brut.* 66 '*Origines* eius...amatores huic desunt'), it is tempting to think that Horace is simultaneously establishing a second parallel between Marsaeus and Sallust: Marsaeus too is an admirer of Cato's historical work, and the individual book of the *Origines* to which Marsaeus was addicted was presumably Book 2, in which the origins of the Marsi were treated (cf. F39 Cornell = 53 Peter = 57 Cugusi). Thus, if the phrase *amator Originis ille* is allowed to refer to

[29] It is generally assumed that IV has here been mistakenly omitted before M., although Gellius elsewhere always has the numeral preceding the reference to Cato's title (as at 10.1.10, 17.13.3–4, quoted). Varro uses the expressions *in libro Originum* and *in Originum libro* (*RR* 1.2.7, 2.3.3).

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Marsaeus' literary as well as sexual preference,[30] his case makes explicit the connection between Catonian style and morals which Horace had left implicit in the case of Sallust, with whom Marsaeus is compared.

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[30] This is somewhat similar to the procedures suggested for Persius by Bramble (1974).

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