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Many years ago Marleen B. Flory introduced me to Livy; I would like to dedicate this volume to her memory.

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Introduction

Livy’s life and times

Of the three great historians of Rome, Livy tells us the least about himself. Unlike Sallust before and Tacitus after him, Livy says nothing directly about his origins or background, with the result that what little we know of his life comes from external, and not always trustworthy, sources. The late antique scholar Jerome gives Livy’s dates as 59 BCE to 17 CE. These dates may be five years off, and Livy may have lived 64 BCE to 12 CE. Other external sources tell us that he was from Patavium (modern Padua) in the Po delta, a large and prosperous town in Cisalpine Gaul. (An epitaph commemorating a T. Livius who had a wife and two sons attests to the family presence in the area.) Although subject to Rome by 174 BCE, Patavium enjoyed local autonomy, as well as a reputation for strict moral conservatism. Livy expresses his local patriotism implicitly by writing of Antenor’s settlement of the area near Patavium (Book 1.1.1–3) before mentioning Aeneas’ arrival in Latium.

Whether or not Jerome’s dates are correct, Livy was almost contemporary with Augustus (63 BCE–14 CE). Thus he was an impressionable youth during the years of conflict between Caesar and Pompey (48–46 BCE) and a young man during the long period of civil war (44–31 BCE) that followed Caesar’s assassination. He was, therefore, a witness to both the destruction of the civil war and the restoration that followed under Caesar’s heir Augustus. Internal evidence combined with Jerome’s dates suggests that Livy began to write between 35 and 30 BCE. The political conflict and violence that occurred during his youth would have influenced profoundly the thoughts of this intelligent and creative observer as he conceived and mapped out his project.
Livy’s origins and background, then, explain to some degree his interest in ethics and moral lessons, his pro-Republican attitude, and the virtues with which he invests Rome’s early leaders. There is some evidence—evidence that, however, lends itself to different interpretations—that Livy knew and was on good terms with Augustus. The Augustan regime’s endorsement of such Roman values as pietas, virtus, and iustitia, if not its creeping monarchism, probably appealed to Livy. The overall impression is of a thinker who is independent in his judgement of people and events, yet sympathetic to the Augustan program for restoring Rome physically and morally.

Livy had the education expected of a talented and well-off young man of his place and time. Such an education included early study of Greek and Latin literature, followed by a thorough grounding in rhetoric, which generally included practice in the art of declamation. This art involved the crafting and presentation of both fictive speeches on legal matters, a form of composition known as controversia, and fictive speeches, known as suasoriae, that deliberated on historical or mythological subjects. Livy’s early study of poets and historians influenced the way in which he imagined the past. His skill at imagining the psychology of historical figures as they encountered various dilemmas, and at presenting events in a lively and convincing manner, could stem from the practice of declamation.

Although, according to Seneca, Livy wrote some philosophical dialogues in his youth, he appears to have devoted his adult life solely to writing history; and he seems to have written history at the expense of any other significant activity. This is a conclusion drawn from the size and scope of his historical project and from some negative facts: first, there is no evidence that Livy ever held political office nor that he had any military experience. (Although that is just what it is: no evidence.) Nor is there evidence that Livy traveled widely. He was familiar with the Po valley. His references to Rome’s topography suggest that he spent some time in the city, the place that offered him the most access to the works of earlier historians, especially the Latin ones; but, aside from saying that he saw the estate of Scipio Africanus at Liternum, a town near Cumae. Livy does not write of

This absence of evidence for a life involved in politics and military affairs has at times led scholars to judge Livy’s history more for what it is not than for what it is, and more for what it lacks than for what it has. For example, we find in Livy’s history neither the emphasis on eyewitness information so pronounced in the great Athenian historian, Thucydides, nor the interest in geographical autopsy and political analysis so characteristic of the Hellenistic historian of Rome, Polybius. Both of these men took part in politics, and could speak of war from personal experience. Yet, because the books of Livy’s history that covered contemporary events are lost, we cannot fault him too much for not consulting eyewitnesses; and, although Livy preferred the dramatic presentation of politics in action to Polybian analysis, his history, as we shall see, shows that he had thought carefully about the impact of past events on his contemporary world, about the uses of the recorded past, and about ways in which to represent it.

Livy’s work, subject and scope
The traditional title of Livy’s work is Ab Urbe Condita Libri “Books From the Founding of the City” (= AUC). To set about writing a detailed narrative history centered on Rome, one that covered events from the city’s origins into the Augustan Age, was to undertake a massive and ambitious task. We do not know what Livy envisioned as his entire project nor if he completed the work he had planned. We know that he wrote at least 142 books, because, although only thirty-five books have survived, there are multiple summaries of his work from the third and fourth centuries ce. The most extensive of these covers 142 books (with those for Books 136 and 137 inexplicably missing). The 142 books begin with the immediate aftermath of the fall of Troy (iam primum omnium satis constat Troia capta in ceteros saeuitum esse Troianos . . . “it is first of all agreed that, after Troy was taken, the rest of the Trojans suffered the fierce consequences . . . ”); their last dateable event is the death of Tiberius’ brother Drusus in 9 bce. The surviving books are 1–10 and 21–45. Books 1–10 cover the period from the founding of the city to Rome’s conquest of the
First Punic War; Books 21–30, the Second Punic War; Books 31–45, the Second and Third Macedonian Wars. A few fragments of the lost books survive, such as, for example, a passage from Book 120 quoted by Seneca, which preserves Livy’s description of the murder of Cicero in 43 B.C.E. Books 121 and following may have been published after Augustus’ death.

Massive as it is, Livy’s project does not lack structure. The first part of the work shows a pattern of arrangement by groups of five books (pentads) and groups of ten (decades). Books 1–5 take the reader from the founding of the city to its near-destruction by invading Gauls; Book 6 begins with a new preface and the rebuilding of the city; and Books 6–10 cover Rome’s conquest of the Italian peninsula. Books 21–30, one of the most satisfying parts of the history to read as a unit, recount the war against Hannibal, with Carthage ascendant in most of 21–25 and Rome turning the tables in most of 26–30. Books 31–45 relate the second and third Macedonian wars. In his use of books and groups of books to give structure to a larger work, Livy shares an interest with other writers of the Augustan era, who likewise took pains both in constructing individual books and in arranging multi-book works. The first three books of Horace’s Odes, for example, show a careful arrangement of the poems within each book as well as a strong sense of opening and closure at the beginning and end of the entire collection. Likewise the twelve books of Vergil’s Aeneid include both an Odyssean half, Aeneas’ journey to Italy in Books 1–6, and an Iliadic one, Aeneas’ battle for a foothold in Italy in Books 7–12.

The result of Livy’s labors was bulky and expensive. The first century B.C.E. poet Martial already knew of an abridged version: his book of mottoes for party favors includes one for a summary of Livy (14.190): *pellibus exiguis artatur Livius ingens / quem mea non totum bibliotheca capit* (“within meager parchments is compressed huge Livy, whom my entire library does not hold”).

**Livy’s sources**

Modern historians use primary sources, such as public records, private papers, transcripts of speeches, and interviews with eyewitnesses. To some degree ancient historians writing contemporary history—Thucydides, for example—did this as well. But ancient historians writing non-contemporary history mostly relied on the accounts of other historians. This does not make for good historiography by modern standards; and even the Hellenistic historian Polybius (c. 200–c. 188 B.C.E) said that anyone who wanted to write political history needed to examine documents, visit sites, and take part in political life. But in general the standards of the ancients were not ours. Historiography was a creative art: writers of history started with what modern scholars would recognize as documented fact, or at least as attested tradition, and represented the events surrounding it in a compelling and persuasive manner, even if doing so meant departing from their sources. Moreover, ancient historians tended to represent their relationships with their sources in terms of emulation and competition. The result is that ancient historiography is by nature intertextual, with historians using previous narratives both as sources of information and as backgrounds against which to distinguish themselves within the tradition. In his preface, Livy refers to the “crowd of writers,” *tura scriptorum*, in which he feels he might be lost; and he consistently positions and repositions the AUC relative to the works of his literary rivals. His work comments on and contributes to the literary tradition, even as it preserves the memory of Rome’s past.

Livy’s sources vary according to his subject. Oral traditions, including historical drama, stories about monuments and place-names, as well as family traditions, all grafted onto a mythical rootstock, formed the largely legendary account of Rome in the regal period. In addition, surveys of early Rome appeared in the work of the city’s first historian, Fabius Pictor, and in the Annales of the early Roman epic poet, Ennius (239–169 B.C.E). For the period of the republic, Livy primarily used the works of earlier Roman “annalistic” historians,
who produced accounts of Rome’s past structured by the consular year. These annalists may have worked from priestly records, known as the *annales maximi*, which contained such information as the names of magistrates, prodigies, the dedication of temples, and possibly military achievements or setbacks. The annalistic form of narrative followed a stylized pattern, beginning the year with the election of magistrates and the listing of religious portents, and then moving on to cover events at home and abroad. For the first decade Livy used the works of the late Roman annalists, Valerius Antias, Claudius Quadrigarius, and Licinius Macer, all from the early first century BCE, as well as that of Aelius Tubero, who survived into the Augustan period. For the third decade, Livy could use Fabius Pictor’s Greek monograph on the Second Punic War, as well as the Latin history of Coelius Antipater, who used both Roman sources and a pro-Carthaginian account. Livy also used the Hellenistic historian, Polybios, who wrote in Greek, as a source for the Second Punic War, although where he began using him directly and not through an intermediary author is still debated. For the period covered by Books 31–45, however, Livy’s major source was clearly Polybios, whose work he adapted and adjusted to suit his purposes. For information about events in Rome, Livy continued to use the Roman annalists, especially Valerius Antias and Claudius Quadrigarius.

Livy probably kept a scroll of his primary source for a given episode unrolled before him as he wrote, so that he could follow it, sometimes in detail, and make corrections, comments on variants, and alterations and improvements in sentence structure. (He even comments on the ruder taste of his literary predecessors, in the story of Manlius and the Gaul from Book 7, which is included in this volume. It is one of the rare passages for which we also have the version of an annalist, Claudius Quadrigarius, as well. Comparing the two is a good way of seeing how Livy shapes the received tradition.) Livy had also read other earlier Roman writers, including Sallust, Cicero, and Caesar, who influenced his prose style and were probably sources for events in the later, lost books. Important, but distinct from sources for information about past events, were the writers, such as the great Greek historians Herodotus and Thucydides, who shaped Livy’s patterns of thought and thus contributed to shaping his narrative.

**Ideas**

Preserving the memory of the past was an avowed purpose for historians from Herodotus on. Although Livy said that his subject was the achievements (*res gestae*) of the Roman people, he made it clear that his own work was an achievement too, a *res* accomplished on Rome’s behalf in the form of a *monumentum*, a reminder, one that commemorated the past by engaging the attention of the present and engaging it for a purpose. According to Livy, Rome was in crisis. Luxury, greed, and personal ambition had destroyed the moral character that had once made Rome great and won it an empire. He described the city metaphorically as being in such a condition that it could endure neither the illness it suffered nor the remedy for it. The task Livy set himself was to identify and celebrate early Rome’s strict moral character, elements of which he found in individual men and women, and in groups. He also aimed to trace the process by which luxury, greed, and personal ambition entered Rome, attacked such fine qualities as courage, nobility, and self-sacrifice, and undermined that early Roman character. The recorded past was useful both for understanding this process of rise and decline and for resisting, as much as possible, the final collapse, because history provided contemporary Rome with moral examples, both good and bad, to follow or avoid.

Livy was interested in the lessons offered by the record of the wide variety of human experience. Thus, in the small sample of his work contained in this volume, we see the founder of the city murdering his brother; three figures, an obscure soldier, a young woman, and a young aristocrat, separately defying the invading enemy; the son of an accomplished family engaging an enemy soldier in single combat; Rome’s most terrifying enemy displaying extraordinary qualities as a leader; a Roman general trying to put heart into his innumerable army; an awful model of Roman determination
found among the carnage of the battlefield; and a female ex-slave being comforted by the mother-in-law of a consul. Moreover, although the stories of the obscure soldier, young woman, and young aristocrat, that is, those of Horatius at the bridge, Mucius Scaevola, and Cioelia, can be read each alone as an example of heroic behavior, the three together create a composite picture of Roman moral character that embraces the socially obscure as well as the aristocrat, the female as well as the male. Likewise the exposure of the cult of Bacchus begins with the female ex-slave (and prostitute), Hispala, demonstrating morally exemplary behavior; it ends with the Roman elite, the consuls and Senate, restoring social order. In Livy examples of good and bad behavior can come from anywhere, although most come from the aristocracy.

These stories also show how Livy preferred demonstration to theoretical discussion: the reaction of consuls and senate to the cult of Bacchus exemplifies the actions of an efficient if repressive government; and Hannibal’s staging of single combat between Gauls and Carthaginians both makes very clear to his army its precarious situation and displays Hannibal’s own brilliance as a leader.

This focus on human behavior in all its variety largely determines Livy’s treatment of religion. In spite of numerous references to omens, portents, and the dedication of temples, and in spite of many of his characters’ references to the gods, Livy approaches religion from the human side. His narrative shows Roman pietas and lapses in pietas influencing events rather than the gods acting in order to influence events. When, for example, early in the Second Punic War, the consul-elect Flamininus sneaks away from the city without having fulfilled his ritual observations, disaster falls in the form of the Roman defeat at Lake Trasimene. The Romans act with increasing responsibility towards the gods starting from the aftermath of Cannae, and success in war attends these efforts. This focus on human behavior and this human perspective on events as opposed to the divine are features that distinguish ancient historiography from epic. A comparison of any book of the Aeneid and any book of Livy quickly makes this clear.

**Livy’s artistry**

Readers encountering Livy for the first time will immediately appreciate his talents as a storyteller, one who conveys clearly and with effective detail his accounts of individuals acting for Rome’s good or harm and who accents their deeds with memorable words. Indeed, Livy’s artistry appears in many facets of his work from the large scale to the small: the arrangement of the history into pentads and decades; the cyclical marking of the passage of time through the annalistic framework; the organization of events into unified episodes that have their own beginnings, middles and ends; and the lively mixture of narrative with direct and indirect speech.

This last feature came to ancient historiography from epic poetry through Herodotus, who included both dialogue and speeches in his history of the Persian Wars. Set speeches at crucial moments became a standard element of historical writing, especially for writers following the precedent set by Thucydides, who includes, for example, Pericles’ famous funeral oration at the end of the first year’s fighting, and the speeches of Nicias and Alcibiades debating about the Athenian expedition against Sicily. Like other ancient historians, Livy does not try, or claim, to replicate the very words used by his speakers; rather, he gives them words that portray their characters and the nature of the situations in which they find themselves. Thus the paired speeches delivered by the elder Scipio and Hannibal before the Romans and Carthaginians meet in battle for the first time tell us about the personalities and mental qualities of the speakers. Scipio’s speech displays his concern for his men together with an arrogance born of ignorance. (He does not yet know he is up against one of the greatest generals of all time.) Hannibal’s makes clear his determination and his ability to inspire his followers. Moreover, these speeches from the first book on the war (Book 21) are balanced by another pair from the last (Book 30), only the latter pair are delivered by Hannibal and by Scipio’s son (the future Africanus), when the two meet before the decisive Roman victory at Zama.
Livy wrote in Latin that the rhetorician Quintilian characterized as being of “milky richness” (lactea ubertas). It seems to have been a reaction against the compressed and contorted Thucydidean style of Sallust. Yet milk is not clear water, and Livy, aiming for neither Caesar’s stark simplicity nor Cicero’s balanced periods, adds richness to his prose in several ways. One of them is by writing in a variety of styles. I compare here only two of these, the highly paratactic and the highly periodic. First, because he uses the annalist framework, Livy often begins a year’s narrative with a list, which generally includes the inauguration of magistrates, the assignment of provinces, the appearance of portents, the performance of games, and the dedication of temples. Such passages may seem monotonous to modern readers, but they appealed to the antiquarian interests of Augustan Romans and marked the passage of time with dignity and even ritual solemnity. Here is one from the beginning of 204 BCE (29.1.9–14). I have not translated it here, because the structure of the Latin sentences is the important point:


The selection of a dictator for the purpose of holding elections; his master of horse; the election of magistrates, and the names of the elected; which games were put on and under which aediles; the dedication of a temple, and the death of a priest—Livy conveys this information in short sentences in which there is almost no subordination of one clause to another. This passage, in fact, which contains fourteen personal names and six place names, has only one ablative absolute (comitiis peractis) and two subordinate clauses (cum . . . haberet; postquam . . . usque . . . fuerat).

In contrast, Livy’s periodic sentences offer us our earliest examples of a fully developed periodic structure in historiography. Livy modeled his style on that of Cicero and Caesar, but avoided Caesar’s tendency to repeat constructions for the sake of clarity and used fewer parallel constructions in his sentence structure than did Cicero. In addition, Livy’s periodic sentences make extensive use of participles to convey a great amount of information in a relatively small space. Consider, for example, Livy’s description of Hannibal’s swearing that he will be an enemy to Rome:

Fama est etiam Hannibalem, annorum ferme nouem, pueriliter blandientem patri Hamilcarri ut duceretur in Hispaniam, cum perfecto Africo bello exercitum eo traiecturus sacrificaret, altarius admotum tactis sacris ture turando adactum, se cum primum posset hostem fore populo Romano.

Although this sentence is less than a third the length of the annalist passage quoted above, it has many more subordinate elements. After the introductory forma est, readers encounter the following: the subject of the indirect statement, Hannibal; his age in apposition; a present active participle modifying him and introducing a subordinate clause; a circumstantial cum-clause, which includes an ablative absolute in the perfect describing what Hamilcar has done, and a future participle modifying him by describing what he is about to do; another participle modifying Hannibal; an ablative absolute relating his actions;
introducing the substance of his oath, which is an indirect statement including yet another *cum*-clause. The result is a complex sentence, which changes constructions too quickly to become tedious.

Other features of Livy’s prose include the use of archaisms and poetical expressions, which tend to appear in the books covering the legendary period or elsewhere when Livy discusses the distant past, and the deployment of such rhetorical figures as *asyneton* (omission of conjunctions); alliteration (e.g., *Romulum Remumque cupido cepit*); chiastic word order (ABBA); and such forms of amplification as *congeries verborum* (an accumulation of words; e.g., crossing the Alps, the Carthaginians are *contusi ac debilitati inter saxa rupesque*, “broken and bruised among the rocks and cliffs”). The commentary points out specific instances of these.

**Reception**

Livy’s history was famous from the start. Pliny (Ep. 2.3.8) tells the story of a man from Gades (Cadiz), who came all the way to Rome just to look upon Livy. Quintilian says that he prefers Livy to Sallust for the novice reader. The biographer Suetonius mentions Livy three times in his *Lives* of the Caesars: Gaius (Caligula) wanted to banish Livy’s works and portrait busts from the libraries because he found him wordy and inaccurate (Livy was in good company, because Gaius wanted to do the same to Vergil and to suppress the poems of Homer as well); Livy encouraged the young Claudius in the writing of history; and the emperor Domitian had one Metlius Pompeius executed for, among other offenses, carrying about a collection of speeches of kings and generals excerpted from Livy. Tacitus pays Livy homage by alluding to his preface in the opening lines of his *Annales* and at times imitating him. For example, he models the character of Livia, to some degree, on that of the ambitious and aggressive Etruscan wives in Livy, Book 1. The epic poet Silanus Italicus used Livy as a source for his *Bellum Punicum*. In addition, the second-century historian Florus, the late fourth-century historian Eutropius, and the late fourth- to early fifth-century Julius Obsequens, who catalogued medici, all used Livy in their work.

The fourteenth-century humanist Petrarch, was the first person since antiquity to have a text of Livy substantially as complete as the one we have today. He writes of his frustration at searching for but never finding the manuscript of the lost second decade. Petrarch used Livy for the Roman material in two of his prose works, the *Libri Rerum Memorandum* and the *De Viris Illustribus*. In addition, his epic, *Africa*, which takes as its subject Scipio Africanus’ victory over Carthage, draws on the final books of Livy’s account of the Second Punic War. The political philosopher Niccolo Machiavelli (1469–1527) drew on his careful reading of Livy for his study of Republicanism (Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius, 1513–1517). The nineteenth-century British politician, historian, essayist, and poet, Lord Macaulay, wrote a series of poems titled *Lays of Ancient Rome*, which were inspired by an ancient reference to the singing of sagas at early Roman banquets. The most famous of the *Lays* was an account of Horatius at the Bridge, based on stories from Book 2. Memorized and recited by schoolchildren until memorizing fell out of fashion, it is still a stirring read today.

**Suggested reading**

**Introductory**


**Commentaries, dictionaries, and grammars**


The history as a whole

Particular aspects of the history


The rediscovery of Livy
From Livy's preface

Praef. 6–10

Quae ante conditam condendamue urbem poetis magis decora fabulis quam incorruptis rerum gestarum monumentis traduntur, ea nec adfirmare nec refellere in animo est. Datur haec uenia antiquitati ut miscendo humana diuinis primordia urbs augustiora faciat; et si cui populo licere oporet consercare origines suas et ad deos referre auctores, ea belli gloria est populo Romano ut cum suum conditorisque sui parentem Martem potissimum ferat, tam et hoc gentes humanae patiuntur aequo animo quam imperium patiuntur. Sed haec et his similia utcumque animaduersa aut existimata erunt haud in magno equidem ponam discrimine; ad illa mihi pro se quisque acriter intendat animum, quae uita, qui mores fuerint, per quos uiros quibusque artibus domi militiaeque et partum et auctum imperium sit; labante deinde paulatim disciplina uelut dissidentes primo mores sequatur animo, deinde ut magis magisque lapsi sint, tum ire coeperint praecepites, donec ad haec tempora quibus nec uita nostra nec remedia pati possimus peruentum est. Hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum, omnis te exempli documenta in industria posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imiteres capias, inde foedum inceptu foedum exitu quod uites.

From the first decade (Books 1–10)
The founding of Rome, 1.6.3–7.3

Ita Numitori Albana re permessa Romulum Remumque cupido cepit in iis locis, ubi expositi ubique educati erant urbis condendae. Et supererat multitudo Albanorum Latinoorumque; ad id pastores quoque accesserant, qui omnes facile speravit facerent, parsum Albam, parsum Lauinimum praec. ea urbe quae conderetur fore. Interuenit deinde his cogitationibus antiquum malum, regni cupido, atque inde foedum certamen coortum a satiis miti principio; Quoniam gemini essent nec aetatis uerescundia discerni facere posset, ut di quorum tutelae ea loca essent auguriis legentur qui nomen nouae urbi daret, qui conditam imperio regeret. Palatium Romulus, Remus Auentinum ad inaugurandum templum capiunt.

Priori Remo augurium uenisse furtur, sex uoltures; iamque nuntiato augurio cum duplex numerus Romulo se ostendisset, utrumque regem sua multitudo consulatae-rat: tempore illi praecippo, at hi numero aium regnum trahebant. Inde cum altercatione congressi certamine irarum ad caedem uertentur; ibi in turba ictus Remus cecidit. Volgator fama est ludibrio fratriu Remm nouos translusisse muros; inde ab irato Romulo, cum uerbis quoque increpitans adiecisset, ' Sic deinde, quicumque alius transiliet moenia mea', interfecerunt. Ita solus potitus imperio Romulus; condita urbs conditoris nomine appellata.
Horatius at the bridge, 2.10.1–13

Cum hostes adessent, pro se quisque in urbem ex agris demigrant; urbem ipsam saepiunt praesidii. Alia muris, alia Tiberi obiecto uidebantur tuta: pons sublicius iter paene hostibus dedit, ni unus uir fuisset, Horatius Cocles; id munimentum illo die fortuna urbis Romanae habuit. Qui positus forte in statione pontis cum captum repentino impetu Ianiculum atque inde citatos decurrere hostes uideset trepidamque turbam suorum arma ordinesque reliquere, reprehensam singulos, obsistens obtestansque deum et hominum fidem testabatur nequiquam deserto praesidio eos fugere; si transitum pontem a tergo reliquisserat, iam plus hostium in Palatio Capitolioque quam in Ianiculo fore. Itaque monere, praedicere ut pontem ferro, igni, quacumque ui possint, interrumpant: se impetum hostium, quantum corpore uno posset obsisti, excepturum. Vadiit inde in primum aditum pontis, insignisque inter conspecta cedentium pugnae terga obuersis comminus ad ineundum proelium armis, ipso miraculo audaciae obstupefecit hostes. Duos tamen cum eo pudor tenuit, Sp. Larcium ac T.

Herminium, ambos claros genere factisque. Cum his primam periculi procellam et quod tumultuosissimum pugnae erat parumper sustinuirt; deinde eos quoque ipsos exigua parte pontis relicta reuocantibus qui rescindebant cedere in tutum coegit. Circumferens inde truces minaciter oculos ad proceres Etruscorum nunc singulos provocare, nunc increpare omnes: seruitia regum superborum, suae

Book 2: Horatius • Mucius Scaevola

aliquamdiu sunt, dum alius alium, ut proelium incipient, circumspectant; pudor deinde commouit aciem, et clamore sublato undique in unum hostem tela coniciunt. Quae cum in obiecto cuncta scuto haesissent, neque ille minus obstinatus ingenti pontem obtineret gradu, iam impetu contumant detrudere uirum, cum simul fragor rupti pontis, simul clamor Romanorum, alacritate perfecti operis sublatus, pauore subito impetum sustinuit. Tum Cocles 'Tiberine pater,' inquit, 'te sancte precor, haec arma et hunc militem propitio flumine accipias.' Ita sic armatus in Tiberim desiluit multisque superincidentibus telis incoluis ad suos transauit, rem ausus plus famae habituram ad posteros quam fidel. Grata erga tantam uirtutem cuitas fuit; statua in comitio posita; agri quantum uno die circumaruit, datum. Privata quoque inter publicos honores studia eminebant; nam in magna inopia pro domesticis copiis unusquisque ei liquid, fraudans se ipse uictu suo, contulit.

Mucius Scaevola, 2.12.1–16

Obsidio erat nihil minus et frumenti cum summa caritate inopia, sedendoque expugnaturum se urbem spem Porsenna habebat, cum C. Mucius, adulescens nobilis, cui indignum uidebatur populum Romanum seruentem cum sub regibus esset nullo bello nec ab hostibus ullis obsessum esse, liberum eundem populum ab iisdem Etruscis obsideri quorum saepe exercitus fuderit—itaque magno audacique
sequatur animo "let him follow in thought"

deinde ut... lapsi sint... [sc. mores]: more indirect questions praecepites the speed of collapse increases

donec until; donec + pf. is frequent in Livy remedia The metaphor changes to one of medicine. The nature of the cue is left unspecified.

peruentum est impers. construction. Translate by taking the person from possumus: "we have arrived." The metaphorical language conveys the idea of physical disintegration and collapse (labante... dissidentes... lapsi sint... ire coeperint praecepites), the increasing rate of deterioration (paulatim... magis magisque... ire coeperint praecepites), and how collapsing morals bring down the empire with them.

hoc illud est "it is this that is"
in cognitio ne rerum a way of saying "in the study of history" salubre This continues the medical metaphor.

frugiferum literally "fruit-bearing"; one can translate it as "profitable," but it is good to keep in mind the idea of fruitfulness as an adjunct to health.

omnis emphatic by position

exempli here, a specimen of conduct. This is an important word for Roman historians, since it can mean both a specimen of conduct and a specimen of conduct used as an illustration or proof.

documenta examples serving as precedents

monumento a reminder, a record, a monument, a written history

in industria positum monumento This can be translated in ways that bring the metaphors into play to greater or lesser degrees, ranging from "expressed in a clear record" to "set up on a monument bathed in light."

21-22 tibi tuaeque rei publicae Livy collars his readers, individually and collectively, to a high standard of public service. He speaks to them as members of a community with a shared destiny.

learn from the AUC for the public good. The combination of "you" and "your republic" responds to the expression of public and private morals in quaestio qui mores fuerint.

Quod imittere (= imitteris): rel. clause of characteristic

inceptu/exitu abl. of respect

quod uites another rel. clause of characteristic

From the first decade (Books 1–10)
The founding of Rome, 1.6.3–7.3

The relationship between the twins Romulus and Remus turned ugly when their desire to found a city (cupido... urbis condendae) gave way to the desire to rule (regni cupidus). Livy reports two versions of the killing of Remus and calls each a tradition (fertur/fama est). The second demonstrates how Romulus chose his city over his brother, thus making patriotic fratricide part of Rome from its foundation.

1 Numitor the grandfather of Romulus and Remus, who had been driven from the throne of Alba Longa by his brother, Amulius

Albana re "the rule at Alba." Alba Longa was in Latium, about twelve miles from the site of Rome.

2 cupidus "passionate desire" plays an important role in this story

3 urbis condendae "of founding a city," an objective gen. of the gerundive construction

Et "and in fact"

supererat multitudine the usual reason for sending forth a colony

ad id "and in addition to these"

qui... facerent best translated as a result clause

spem + acc. and infinitive expressing the nature of the hope or expectation

parum Albam, parum Launium, the predicate adj.s. (adjs. that denote something said about their subject e.g. "Alba..."
fore = futurum esse
praec + abl. “in comparison to”
qua condideretur part of the expectation (spes), thus a subordinate clause in indirect speech, with its verb in the subjunctive
interuenerit the position of the verb makes it emphatic
cognitionibus the thoughts of future greatness
regni cupidus in apposition to autum malum; regni is an objective gen.

Quoniam ... essent nec ... posset causal clauses
actatis uercundia “the deference of youth”
ut di ... legerant purpose after capiant
tutela gen.
auguris “by means of bird-omens”
qui ... dare, qui ... regerent indirect questions after legerent
Palatinum Romulus, Remus Auentium chiasitic wordorder.
The Palatine was the central and traditionally oldest hill of Rome; it overlooked the city’s earliest commercial area, the forum Boarium, as well as the old crossing points of the Tiber and the paths along the riverbank. At its base was the Lupercal, the cave where the she-wolf was said to have suckled the exposed twins. During the republican period the Palatine became a fashionable neighborhood: Cicero lived there, as did Crassus, Milo, and Mark Antony. Augustus build his house there, as well as the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, vowed in 36 BCE, completed in 28 BCE, and thus under construction about the time when Livy wrote these books. The Aventine is the southernmost of the canonical seven hills of Rome. During the republic it was a plebeian stronghold; and it was outside the pomerium until 49 BCE.
ad inaugurandum “for taking the auspices,” that is, taking omens by watching the flight of birds
templa predicate acc., after Palatium and Auentium, the objects of capiant. A templum was a space marked out for the

Priori here “first” (of the two brothers). Primo would suggest that Remus was the first person ever to receive a bird sign.
uenisse + dat. “to have happened to” (OLD s.v. uenire, 15)
sex uultures in apposition to augurium

cum ... ostendisset cum temporal in a subordinate clause in indirect speech
consultaverat plpf., because it reports what happened before uertuntur
tempore ... praecipito literally, “the moment (sc. of the birds) having been seized first” (in contrast to numero)
illi ... hi “the supporters of Remus ... those of Romulus”
regnum trahebant “sought to claim,” the English does not keep the metaphor in trahe of a tug-of-war over the kingship
cum atercamon congressi “having come together in a dispute”
certaine abl. of cause
ibi “thereupon”

Judicio fratris dat. of purpose followed by an objective gen.
nous transulissem muros an act of arrogance and a threat to the new city’s physical and religious integrity
irato predicate position, “by a Romulus who was angry”
cum urbem quoque inrepati raise attention to the direct speech that follows, the first made by a character in Livy
‘Sit deinde ... mea’ With these words Romulus recasts his murder of his brother into an act of patriotism. There is an ellipse of a verb expressing the thought “I shall kill” or “he shall die.”
solus ... Romulus the emphasis here is on solus
putitus [sc. est] + abl.

condita ... conditoris the repetition drives home the important points: this is the founding of the city, and its founder is Romulus. Cf. also line 11, above.
Horatius at the bridge, 2.10.1–13

At the end of Book 1, the Romans expelled the family of the Etruscan kings, the Tarquins, and established a republic led by consuls, whose power was limited, partly because there were two of them, and partly because they were elected annually. The Tarquins took refuge with Lars Porsenna, the ruler of Clusium, a major Etruscan city northeast of Rome. Persuaded by the Tarquins, Porsenna attacked Rome. Having captured the Janiculum, he prepared to send his army across the Tiber, in order to strike at the heart of the city. Livy tells here the story of Horatius Cocles, the man who saved Rome at this critical moment.

cum ... adissent narrative (i.e., circumstantial) cum
pro se quisque “each acting on his own behalf”; the sing. of quisque can be used, as here, to distribute a pl. subject.

demigrant ... saepiunt historical presents, used for vividness urbem ipsam used here in contrast with in urbem to form a transition: “as for the city itself” (OLD s.v. urbs, 3)
alia ... alia n. pl. “some [sc. places] ... others”

Tiberis Tiberis, -is, m. (ī) the Tiber river (acc. -im; abl. -i)
Tiberi obiecto a common topographical use of the pass. obiectus, “to be in the way” or “to constitute a defense” pons sublicius The bridge connecting Rome (at the forum Boarium) to the Janiculum. According to legend it was originally built by the fourth king of Rome, Ancus Marcus (Livy 1.33.6), and received its name from the word sublica (pile). The bridge was made entirely of wood, apparently for religious reasons; its care was the concern of the college of pontifices (lit. “bridge-makers” Varro, De Lingua Latina, 5.83). It was frequently destroyed but always restored, and still standing in the fourth century B.C. (See Richardson, A New Topographical Dictionary.)

11-12 si ... reliquissent ... plus hostium ... fore a fut. more vivid condition in indirect statement in secondary sequence; direct speech would give nequiquam vos fugitis; si ... reliqueris ... plus hostium erant.
a tergo “behind them”
iam “presently”
hostium partitive gen., with plus
Palatii Capitoliisque the two central hills of Rome

13-15
Itaque monere, praedicere The direct expression would be
“And so I exhort, I advise that you . . .” The sentence that follows is also subordinate to testabatur.

ut . . . interrupiant indirect command
ferro, igni, quicumque ui possint The third element in the list is the broadest: “with iron, with fire, with whatever force they might.”
quantum adv.

excepturum [sc. esse]

16-17
primum aditum “the nearest part of the approach”
conspecta (w. tergo), here, “visible to view”
cedentium pugnae cedo + dat.

17-18
ad ineundum proelium gerundive expressing purpose
ipso miraculo audaciae “by the very wonder of his daring.”
Audaciae is a defining or descriptive gen.

20
Duos emphatic world order
Sp. Larcium Sp. = Spuritus; Larcus is an Etruscan name
T. Herminium T. = Titus; Herminius is an Etruscan name

genere factisque causal abl.

21
quod tumultuosissimum pugnae erat pugna is a partitive gen., “the most uproarious part of the fight”
exigua parte pontis relictsa abl. absolute
renucentibus qui rescindebant renucentibus [illis] qui rescindebant; abl. absolute
coegit sc. Horatius

25-26
circumferens . . . oculos a poetic expression; with ad proceres
cf. (of Niobe) oculos circumultit alta superbos (“standing tall,
proceres Etruscorum “the leading men of the Etruscans.”
The word proceres strengthens the contrast with Cocles, unknown until this deed.
pronocare . . . increpare historical infinitives

26-27
suae liberatatis suae as opposed to alienam

oppugnatum uenire supine with a verb of motion; uenire is infinitive in indirect speech introduced by increpare.

27-35
cunctati . . . sustinuit N.B. the many temporal expressions, aliquamdiu . . . dum . . . deinde . . .; iam . . . cum simul . . . simul . . ., in addition to cunctati, alaecriate, and subito.

28-29
dum . . . circumspectant dum with the pres. indicative denotes continued action in past time.
alius alius “one . . . another”

ut proelium incipient clause depending on circumspectant

30
Quae connective rel.

34
alaecriate causal abl.

perfecti operis the ab urbe condita construction, in which the pple. has substantive force: “of the completion of the work”


36-37
Inmec militem a poetic way of saying me
accipias subjunctive in an object clause after precor

ita sic the adv. ita connects the sentence to the previous. Translate sic with armatus: “and thus it came about that, in armor, as he was . . .”

38
multis superincidentibus telis abl. absolute

incolam In other versions of the story (e.g., Polybius 6.55.1–4) Horatius is wounded or dies. Livy has told the story so as to
39-40 rem here “a deed” in the same sense as res gestae, “accom-
plishments”

fidei “credibility”
ad posteros “among future generations”

Grata with cuitas; note its emphatic position.
erga + acc. here, “in return for”

41 statua in comitio The origins of the story of Horatius are ob-
scure: it may be an etymology explaining a particular statue
identified with Horatius Cocles that once stood in the com-
tium. The comitium was the earliest place of public assembly
in Rome; it was an inaugurated area, a templum, in front of the
Curia Hostilia, between the Curia and the Forum Romanum.

agri partitive gen. with quantum

43-44 pro domesticis copis “in proportion to their household
supplies”
ei indirect object of contulit

fraudentis fraudare means “to cheat or swindle out of;” with an
abl. of separation

Mucius Scaevola, 2.12.1-16

Horatius Cocles has, as it were, stepped offstage, never to reappear
in what survives of Livy’s history. He has, however, provided an en-
during example of courage and fortitude both to readers and to au-
diences within the text. His initial attack thwarted, Lars Porsenna
establishes a garrison on the Janiculum, sets up his camp near the
Tiber, and attempts to starve the city into submission. As the siege
continues and Rome’s situation grows dire, another Roman steps
forth to save the day. This time it is a well-born youth, G. Mucius.
The figures change but the setting is constant, for once again the
Tiber plays a central role in a fundamental story of Roman heroism.

1-2 obsidio erat . . . et . . . inopia both nom. The gen. frumenti
depends on caritate

nihilo minus “none the less”

sedendo abl. of means

expugnaturum se sc. esse; indirect statement introduced by
spem Porsenna habebat

cum introduces the clause whose main verb is constituit (line
9). Note how the impf. indicatives erat and habebat set the
scene and cum . . . constituit notes an abrupt event. This use
of cum is called cum-inversum.

indignum uidebatur introduces indirect statement: populum
Romanum is the subject of obsessum esse and eundem popu-
lotum that of obsideri. Note the emphatic antithesis of seruien-
tem vs. liberum (line 6).

4-5 cum sub regibus esset cum-circumstantial clause explaining
seruiement

7 fuderit subject is populus Romanus

7-8 magnus audacique aliquo faciit abl. of means. The word
order places emphasis on the adja.: greatness and daring are
Mucius’ primary thoughts.

ratus “thinking” introduces indirect statement: eam indigniti-
tem uindicandam [esse] “that the humiliation should be avenged”
primo adv. in contrast with dein (line 9)

9 constituit main verb of the first part of the sentence; it com-
pletes the syntactical structure begun at line 1; but note how
the temporal advs. primo . . . dein bridge the break between
the two syntactically complete parts of the sentence.

10-11 ne . . . retraheretur clause of fearing

consulm iniuissu “without the command of the consul”

12 fortuna . . . adfimtante abl. absolute

13-15 “Transire Tiberim” Mucius’ direct speech makes the scene all
the more vivid.

populationem objective gen. (of the wrong avenged) depending
on ulti.