

Functions of Roman Memory, University of Texas, Austin, April 16-18, 2010

History as Memory: Remembering the Past in Republican Times

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Historia as inquiry

- *Permulta alia colligit Chrysippus, ut est in omni historia curiosus, sed ita taetra sunt quaedam, ut ea fugiat et reformidet oratio.*
- Chrysippus collects a large number of other instances as suits his inquisitive way in making any **investigation**, but there are details so disgusting that language avoids them with abhorrence.

(Cic. *Tusc.* 1.108)

(see also Plaut. *Trin.* 381; Plaut. *Bach.* 158; Plaut. *Men.* 248; Var. *Men.* 414)

Historia as written account of past events

- *Talibus exemplis non fictae solum fabulae, verum etiam historiae refertae sunt, et quidem maxime nostrae.*
 - These high examples crowd the pages not only of romance, but also of history, and especially the **history** of our own country.
(Cic. *Fin.* 5.22.64)
 - *Ab adulescentia confecit orationes. senex historias scribere instituit. earum sunt libri septem.*
 - From early youth he composed speeches. He was already an old man when he began to write **history**, of which he left seven books.
(Nep. *Cat.* 3, 3)
- (see also Nep. *Pel* 1.1; Cic. *Att.* 12.3; Cic. *Att.* 2.5; Cic. *Fin.* 5.19.51)

Historia as knowledge of the past in general terms

- *Erat enim historia nihil aliud nisi annalium confectio, cuius rei memoriaeque publicae retinendae causa ab initio rerum Romanarum usque ad P. Mucium pontificem maximum res omnis singulorum annorum mandabat litteris pontifex maximus referebatque in album et proponebat tabulam domi, potestas ut esset populo cognoscendi, eique etiam nunc annales maximi nominantur.*

- For **history** began as a mere compilation of annals, on which account, and in order to preserve the general traditions, from the earliest period of the City down to the pontificate of Publius Mucius, each High Priest used to commit to writing all the events of his year of office, and record them on a white surface, and post up the tablet at his house, that all men, might have liberty to acquaint themselves therewith, and to this day those records are known as the Pontifical Chronicles.

(Cic. *de Orat.* 2.12.51)

(see also Cic. *de Orat.* 2.15.62)

Historia as the past itself

- *Tum Laelius: Laudandus etiam iste rex; sed obscura est historia Romana, siquidem istius regis matrem habemus, ignoramus patrem.*
- Laelius. Truly a praiseworthy king! But the **history of Rome** is indeed obscure if we know who this king's mother was, but are ignorant of his fathers' name!

(Cic. *Rep.* 2.18.33)

(see also Cic. *Div.* 1.18.37; Cic. *Div.* 1.19.38; Cic. *Brut.* 16.62)

Memoria as recollection (1)

- *Ceterum ex aliis negotiis, quae ingenio exercentur, in primis magno usui est memoria rerum gestarum, quous de virtute quia multi dixere, praetereundum puto, simul ne per insolentiam quis existimet memet studium meum laudando extollere.*
- But among intellectual pursuits, the **recording of the events of the past** is especially serviceable; but of that it becomes me to say nothing, both because many men have already spoken of its value, and in order that no one may suppose that I am led by vanity to eulogize my own favorite occupation.

(Sall. *Iug.* 4.1)

Memoria as recollection (2)

- *Nemo qui ius civile didicisset rem ad privatas causas et ad oratoris prudentiam maxume necessariam; nemo qui memoriam rerum Romanarum teneret, ex qua, si quando opus esset, ab inferis locupletissimos testes excitaret...*
- No one who has mastered thoroughly the civil law, a subject absolutely essential to equip the orator with the knowledge and practical judgement requisite for the conduct of private suits; no one who knew thoroughly **Roman history**, from which as occasion demanded he could summon as from the dead most unimpeachable witnesses...

(Cic. Brut. 93. 322)

(see also Cic. *Leg.* 3.14.31; Cic. *Sen.* 4, 12; Cic. *Rep.* 3, 9, 14; Cic. *Off.* 2.43; Cic. *Orat.* 34.120)

Post hominum memoriae within the memory of men

- *Tempore pristina consuetudine pro muro pugnari coeptum est. cum bene magnam multitudinem telorum ignemque nostris defendentibus iniiecissent, nefandum crudelissimumque facinus sunt adgressi in conspectuque nostro hospites qui in oppido erant, iugulare et de muro praecipites mittere coeperunt, sicuti apud barbaros, quod post hominum memoriam numquam est factum.*
- After discharging a very large number of missile weapons and firebrands at our troops, who were on the defensive, the enemy embarked upon an abominable and completely ruthless outrage; for in our sight they proceeded to massacre some of their hosts in the town, and to fling them headlong from the battlements –a barbarous act, and one for which **history** can produce no precedent.
(*B. Hisp.* 15.6)

(see also *Nep. Reg.* 1.3; *Cic. Catil.* 2.13.28; *Nep. Ar.* 1.2)

Memoria as **divided by generations** (1)

- *Nostra memoria* victor Sulla quom Damasippum et alios eius modi, qui malo rei publicae creverant, iugulari iussit, quis non factum eius laudabat?
- Within **our own memory**, when the conqueror Sulla ordered the execution of Damasippus and others of that kind, who had become prominent at the expense of the state, who did not commend his action?

(Sall. *Cat.* 51.31-32)

Memoria as **divided by generations** (2)

- *Iam vero consilio ac sapientia qui regere ac gubernare rem publicam possint, multi nostra, plures patrum memoria atque etiam maiorum exstiterunt, cum boni per diu nulli, vix autem singulis aetatibus singuli tolerabiles oratores invenirentur.*
- Nay further, among the men who by their counsel and wisdom could control and direct the helm of state, many have stood out in our own day, and still more in the **history of our fathers** and even of our remoter ancestors, and yet through lengthy ages on good orator is to be found, and in each successive generation hardly a single tolerable one.

(Cic. *de Orat.* 1.2.8)

Memoria prodere in a context of orality

- *Britanniae pars interior ab iis incolitur quos natos in insula ipsi memoria proditum dicunt, maritima pars ab iis qui praedae ac belli inferendi causa ex Belgio transierant*
- The inland part of Britain is inhabited by tribes declared **in their own tradition** to be indigenous to the island, the maritime part by tribes that migrated at an earlier time from Belgium to seek booty by invasion.

(Caes. *B Gall.* 5.12)

(see also Cic. *Rep.* 2.15.28)

Memoria prodere in a context of literacy

- *Huius belli gesta multi memoriae prodiderunt, sed ex his duo, qui cum eo in castris fuerunt simulque uixerunt, quamdiu fortuna passa est, Silenus et Sosylus Lacedaemonius.*
- Hannibal's deeds of arms **have been recorded by many writers**, among them two men who were with him in camp and lived with him so long as fortune allowed, Silenus and Sosylus of Lacaedaemon.

(Nep. *Ham.* 13.3)

(see also Cic. *Fam.* 6.12.5; Nep. *Iph.* 3.2)

Livy's assertion of his purpose in *Ab Urbe Condita*

- *Facturusne operae pretium sim si a primordio urbis res populi Romani perscripserim nec satis scio nec, si sciam, dicere ausim, quippe qui cum ueterem tum uolgatam esse rem uideam, dum noui semper scriptores aut in rebus certius aliquid allatueros se aut scribendi arte rudem uetustatem superatueros credunt. utcumque erit, iuuabit tamen rerum gestarum memoriae principis terrarum populi pro uirili parte et ipsum consuluisse...*
- Whether I am likely to accomplish anything worthy of the labor, if I record the achievements of the Roman people from the foundation of the city, I do not really know, nor if I knew would I dare to avouch it; perceiving as I do that the theme is not only old but hackneyed, through the constant succession of new historians, who believe either that in their facts they can produce more authentic information, or that in their style they will prove better than the rude attempts of ancients. Yet, however this shall be, it will be a satisfaction to have done my self as much as lies in me **to commemorate the deeds** of the foremost people of the world...

(Liv. Praef. 1)

- *Quid vero historiae de nobis ad annos dc praedicarint? quas quidem ego multo magis vereor quam eorum hominum qui hodie vivunt rumusculos.*
- What would **history** be saying of me six hundred years hence? And that is a thing I fear much more than the petty gossip of those who are alive to-day.

Cic. *Att.* 2.5 (Antium, April, B.C. 59)