

## THE PUZZLES OF PORSENNA

Everyone knows the most famous saga of the early Roman Republic: that of Porsenna, the Etruscan king who besieged Rome in the first years of the Republic, and who was confronted by three egregious examples of Roman bravery: Horatius, Mucius and Cloelia, with the result that he abandoned the siege. Thus went the traditional account.

Ever since the text of Tacitus' *Histories* was discovered, however, a more concise truth (three words in this case!) has blown the whole story apart: Rome surrendered to Porsenna (*hist.* III 72). And ever since one of the most brilliant, pioneering analyses of early Roman history, by Louis de Beaufort, his *Dissertation sur l'incertitude des cinq premiers siècles de l'histoire Romaine*, Utrecht 1738, that has been accepted. Modern historians have devoted much labour to refining the details of the siege, and correcting some of them, especially Porsenna's motives, and the nature of his relations with Rome. Only here and there, 'en passant', has attention been drawn to the most basic problems within the sources. The results of such an analysis are truly startling.

There are more than *forty* Greek and Latin sources, spread over fourteen centuries. The earliest surviving source seems to be Polybios, who, in his famous excursus on funerals, mentioned Horatius as the example of a hero (VI 55)<sup>1</sup>. Another Greek source of this century is Aristeides of Miletos in his *Histories* (*ap.* Plut., *Mor.* 305)<sup>2</sup>. Not surprisingly, as a Greek, he gave a very negative view of Porsenna (see Mucius, below).

Interest by the annalists, from Fabius Pictor<sup>3</sup> on, must have been strong, but few fragments survive: one of Cassius Hemina (19 Chassignet)<sup>4</sup> and one of Piso (22 Chassignet) proving at least that they told of Mucius and Cloelia<sup>5</sup>. If an edition of the *Annales*

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<sup>1</sup> F. MÜNZER, *Horatius*, in *RE* VIII (1913), col. 2331-2336 at 2332 noted two fundamental points: that what was fable for Livy was history for Polybios, and that the episode was totally timeless, without mention of the enemy! He was followed by F. WALBANK, *Commentary on Polybios*, Oxford 1957-79, I, p. 740.

<sup>2</sup> Aristeides of Miletos (*FGrH* no. 286) is dated «probably» to the second century BC: M. FUSILLO - L. GALLI, in *NPauI* (1996), p. 1096.

<sup>3</sup> MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 1), col. 2332 suggested Ennius as a source. A. ALFÖLDI, *Early Rome and the Latins*, Ann Arbor 1965, p. 82 suggested that Fabius and Ennius undoubtedly included these stories; he was followed by M. GRANT, *Roman Myths*, London 1971, p. 182. J. HEURGON, *La vie quotidienne chez les Étrusques*, Paris 1961: *Daily life of the Etruscans*, transl. by J. Kirkup, London 1964, p. 253 agreed about Fabius. The loss of these two fundamental sources is an eternal regret. B. G. NIEBUHR, *Römische Geschichte*, Berlin 1811-12: *History of Rome*, transl. Hare and Thirlwell, London 1855, I, p. 544 famously nominated ballads as the source for such episodes as Porsenna.

<sup>4</sup> Fragments of the annalists are cited according to M. CHASSIGNET, *L'annalistique romaine*, Paris 2003-2004.

<sup>5</sup> G. FORSYTHE, *The Historian L. Calpurnius Piso and the Roman Annalistic Tradition*, Lanham 1994, pp. 252-257 noted that Piso accepted the equestrian statue of Cloelia (his fragment 27). That Piso also mentioned

*maximi* can be dated to the 130s, they told of the statue of Horatius in the *Comitium* (fr. 7 Chassignet) being struck by lightning. Etruscan *haruspices* were consulted, who advised moving it to a lower position. Cicero in his speeches, letters and philosophical works made passing allusions to Horatius, Mucius and Cloelia as paradigms of courage (*Sest.* 48; *leg.* II 10; *off.* I 61 – Cloelia anonymously! – *parad.* 12<sup>6</sup>), and blamed Tarquin for stirring up Porsenna and Mamilius against Rome (*Att.* IX 10, 3), but mentioned later only Veii and the Latins as possible helpers (*Tusc.* III 27). So much for the tatters of the Republican tradition.

Livy provides the classic account (II 9-15). He stresses that the plebeians had to be bribed to resist (II 9, 5-7), and Porsenna's admiration for Mucius (II 12, 14) and Cloelia (II 13, 8-9). Dionysios devoted no fewer than fifteen chapters to this war (V 21-35)<sup>7</sup>. He depicted Porsenna as arrogant (it was his son Aruns who favoured peace), but finally he showed his generosity. Dionysios indulged in extravagant praise of Horatius, but it was Mucius who ended the war; he could not, however, even remember Cloelia's name! Vergil included this war on Aeneas' shield, among a very careful selection of scenes: the twins, the Sabine women, Tullus and Mettus, Manlius Capitolinus, Catiline, Cato and Actium. He named Horatius and Cloelia, but not Mucius, and represented Porsenna as angry and threatening (*indignantem similem similemque minanti*) (*Aen.* VIII 646-651). Horace contemplated Rome, the city which so many enemies could not destroy, being destroyed in civil war. He included Porsenna among Rome's most dangerous foes: the Gauls, Hannibal, Capua, the Germans and the Marsi! (*epodi* 16, 4). Propertius added a topographical memory of Horatius (III 11, 63). The geographer Strabo explained Porsenna's mission as restoration of the Tarquins, but when he failed, he overcame Roman enmity and departed as a friend (V 2, 2). Manilius the late Augustan astronomer offered a list of the Roman heroes dwelling in heaven! They included the three heroes (*astron.* I 779-781), who also appeared as illustrations of the importance of fate (IV 30-33). Plutarch quoted another Augustan source, Athenodoros, who wrote a book dedicated to Octavia (Plut., *Publ.* 17, 8). Pliny mentioned another source: Annius Fetalis<sup>8</sup>, who tampered with the Cloelia story (*nat.* XXXIV 29).

Velleius Paterculus (published in AD 30), recounting the fate of C. Gracchus in 121, compared his friend Pomponius holding back the enemies on the *pons Sublicius* to Cocles (II 66). Valerius Maximus, under Tiberius, was bound to make much of the three heroes, and indeed compared Laetorius' rather than Pomponius' loyalty to C. Gracchus

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Porsenna evoking lightning (fr. 12 Chassignet) is very uncertain. Piso is cited for similar activities by Numa and Hostilius.

<sup>6</sup> MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 1), col. 2332 saw that only this of Cicero's three references mentions Porsenna: he compared Polybios' lack of context.

<sup>7</sup> ALFÖLDI, *cit.* (note 3), pp. 53-72 made much of the 'Kymaean chronicle' embedded in Dionysios; this had already been noted by A. SCHWEGLER, *Römische Geschichte*, Tübingen 1853-58, II, p. 192. NIEBUHR, *cit.* (note 3), II, p. 550 wrote of Greek annals.

<sup>8</sup> Annius Fetalis: F. MÜNZER, *Beiträge zur Quellenkritik der Naturgeschichte des Plinius*, Berlin 1897, pp. 168-169 thought that he was a contemporary of Piso; he is now dated to the first century AD: K. ELVERS, in *NPauly* I (1996), p. 709. *PIR*<sup>2</sup> A646 gives no date.

to Horatius' patriotism (IV 7, 2). Under *fortitudo*, he listed Horatius and Cloelia (III 2, 1-2), and under *patientia*, he completely rewrote the story of Mucius (III 3, 1). Seneca the Elder (d. c. 40), in discussing the right of those who committed suicide to burial, mentioned Mucius – who obviously did not fit: he only courted death (*de ira*, exc. VIII 4). Seneca the Younger (died 65) in his letters mentioned Horatius and Mucius, but not Cloelia (XXIV 5; LXVI 51, 53; XCVIII 12; CXX 7). He echoed Dionysios that Mucius brought the war to an end and revealed that such tales were «an everlasting refrain in every school» (XXIV 6). In his essays he revealed more: that Stoics discussed the problem of whether Mucius was a traitor (*benef.* IV 27, 2), because he had acted in an un-Roman way as a stealthy assassin; see also *benef.* VII 15, 2; *dial.* [*provid.*] I 3, 5; [*cons. Marc.*] VI 16, 2 on Cloelia.

Pliny's *Natural History* showed considerable interest in the Etruscan war: Porsenna, another king who played with thunderbolts (II 140), Cloelia (XXXIV 29), the treaty (XXXIV 139), and his tomb (XXXVI 91-93)<sup>9</sup>. Silius Italicus (cos. 68) in his *Punica* lists a leader from the Pomptine Marshes, a Scaevola, with his shield illustrating his ancestor's deed (VIII 384-389): he caused Porsenna to abandon the war. He also mentions Clusium, city of Porsenna (VIII 478-480). Hannibal was told the story of Cloelia (X 481-502), while the Sibyl revealed the future to Scipio with another pageant of Roman heroes including Horatius (unnamed) (XIII 726-728) and Cloelia (828-830). Frontinus (pr. 70) naturally mentioned only Horatius in his *Stratagems*, under 'retreats' (II 13, 5)! Martial wrote his epigrams in the 80s and 90s. He showed a squeamish Porsenna, who could not watch Mucius' hand (I 21), and ridiculed the luxury of his crockery (XIV 98). Juvenal lists the three heroes in his catalogue, contrasting them with Brutus' sons (VIII 264-265).

The most famous source on Porsenna is undoubtedly Tacitus (cos. 97), where he was describing the destruction of the civil wars 68-69. Never in earlier disasters had the Capitol been burned: not even when Rome surrendered to Porsenna (III 72, 1: *Porsenna dedita urbe*); not, be it noted, when Porsenna 'captured' Rome<sup>10</sup>.

Plutarch (died after 120) is the third major source after Livy and Dionysios, in his

<sup>9</sup> On Pliny's sources here, see MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 8), pp. 167-169, especially on Valeria in the Cloelia story, which presumably comes from Valerius Antias. The information on the treaty, from «most ancient authors», refers to Piso (pp. 231-232). SCHWEGLER, *cit.* (note 7), II, p. 182 thought that Pliny's source for the treaty was Macer or Verrius.

<sup>10</sup> This point is rarely made: E. SHUCKBURGH, *History of Rome*, London 1894, p. 67. L. DE BEAUFORT, *Dissertation sur l'incertitude des cinq premiers siècles de l'histoire Romaine*, Utrecht 1738, p. 240 suggested that, like Pliny, Tacitus had discovered the treaty. P. FABIA saw Tacitus' source as Pliny: *Les sources de Tacite*, Paris 1898, p. 204. R. SYME's sentence was lapidary: «Three words demolish pages of Livy»: *Tacitus*, Oxford 1958, I, p. 398. H. HEUBNER was interested only in chronology: P. Cornelius Tacitus, *Die Historien*, Heidelberg 1963-82, III, pp. 151-153. K. WELLESLEY pointed to a basic illogicality: of course the Capitoline temple could not have been burned if the city surrendered: Tacitus, *Histories book 3*, Sydney 1972, p. 172. E. DOVERE thought that Tacitus had Etruscan sources: *Contributo alla lettura delle fonti su Porsenna*, in *Atti dell'Accademia di Scienze Morali e Politiche di Napoli* XCV, 1984, pp. 69-126, at p. 82. D. BRIQUEL raised basic questions about Claudius' *Tyrrhenika*. He agreed with Fabia that Tacitus' source was probably not Claudius but Pliny: *Que savons-nous des Tyrrhenika de l'empereur Claude?*, in *RivFilCl* CXVI, 1988, pp. 463-468.

life of Poplicola and the essays of the *Moralia*<sup>11</sup>. In the former, the most generous portrait so far is painted of Porsenna: worthy and ambitious (*Publ.* 16, 1), marked by *arete* (17, 4), courageous (17, 5), chivalrous (19, 4), and generous (19, 5). The dominant Roman figure in parallel is Valerius: in battle (16, 3; 17, 1), administration (16, 7), diplomacy (18, 1) and a man of honour (19, 1). Plutarch admits that the story of Mucius is «often and variously told» (17, 1). In the *Moralia*, similarly Porsenna is a just and fair king, who wished to depart as friend of the Romans (250B). He compared Porsenna's war to Xerxes' invasion of Greece, and quoted Aristides' version of Mucius (305E-306A). He praised Porsenna's just treatment of Mucius (457F-458A).

Florus' second century summary of Roman history stated that Porsenna *almost* conquered Rome, and admitted that the three «prodigies and miracles» would seem fabulous were they not recorded in the annals (I 4, 10)! Appian (writing under Marcus Aurelius) would have told the story in his histories, but only a fragment of the section on monarchies remains (fr. 10), which tells of Horatius. Polyainos, the strategist under Marcus Aurelius, told of Mucius and Cloelia (*strat.* VIII 8; VIII 31). And Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* (published c. 180), IV 5, 1 alone preserved the story of Horatius' statue from the *annales maximi*. The earliest Christian source belongs to this time: Tertullian referred naturally to the Roman heroes in connection with Christian martyrs: the former sought only fame (*ad martyres* 4).

To the early third century is dated one of the last historical accounts, that of Dio, although his major narrative, in the early books, is lost. His references to the Etruscan war are therefore allusions. He quoted Cicero in the senate in 43 ridiculing Antony's nakedness when Horatius and Cloelia were either fully armed or fully clothed (XLV 31, 1). He referred to symbols of freedom: the leg of Horatius and the hand of Mucius (XLV 32, 3) – heroes reduced to body parts (!); in contrast, Antony did not break a leg or burn off a hand (XLVI 19, 8). And Octavian in his 'abdication' speech listed the three along with Regulus and the Decii in a catalogue of heroes (LIII 8, 3). Eutropius' mid-fourth century summary of Roman history stressed the importance of the war: with Porsenna's help, Tarquin *almost* recaptured Rome. The last of the great Roman historians, Ammianus, had Julian refer to the old heroes as he invaded Persia in 363: the Curtii, Mucii and Decii (XXIII 5, 19). At the end of the century Macrobius still recalled Etruscan luxury by a reference to Porsenna's beryl (a precious gem), but he was quoting Augustus' joke against Maecenas' style (*Sat.* II 4, 12). Claudian, official panegyrist in the 390s, still has echoes of the war: Porsenna's support for the Tarquins (*bell. Gild.* 123), his camp on the Janiculum (*Eutrop.* I 444), and Horatius (*sext. cons. Hon.* 484-488). Servius' commentary on the *Aeneid* of necessity prompted memories of Porsenna: Horatius and Cloelia, and – amazingly – circus games during the truce (*ad Aen.* VIII 646; XI 134)<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> H. PETER, *Die Quellen Plutarchs in den Biographien der Römer*, Halle 1865. pp. 45-51 posited Valerius Antias as the main source.

<sup>12</sup> This amazing revelation is rarely commented upon. K. MÜLLER, *Die Etrusker*, Breslau 1829, II, p. 220 suggested that with the truce, Porsenna could participate in the games, which he won! W. EHLERS, *Porsenna*, *RE* XXII (1953), col. 318 admitted that this might be «an historical reminiscence» (it is hard to explain it as an invention).

To the fourth century perhaps belongs the *de viris illustribus*, which assigns a chapter to each of the heroes (*de vir. ill.* 11-13).

After that, the echoes fade away. In the fifth century Augustine compared the old Roman heroes (the Scaevolae, Curtii and Decii) with Christian martyrs and found the former lacking, because of their motives (*civ.* V 14). Orosius credited Mucius and Cloelia with saving Rome from capture or enslavement during a siege lasting three years (II 5). Sidonius, writing in the 450s against the backdrop of the war with the Vandals, recalled the heroes of the past: Horatius and Mucius (*carm.* V 66-80; VII 65, 127-128). Another commentator (fifth-sixth centuries) was the Scholiast Boboniensis. He commented on Cic., *Sest.* 48. The tenth century lexicon *Suda* preserves no fewer than three references to Horatius' disabilities. And finally the chronicle of John Tzetzes (1110-1180) focussed on Mucius, but also mentioned Cloelia (*chil.* VI 39, *ap.* Dio, Loeb ed. I 101).

The name Porsina is known epigraphically (*CIL* VI 32919). It is significant, on the other hand, that Republican coinage knows nothing of the three heroes, save the most oblique reference, if it is that, to Mucius, on a denarius of 70 BC issued by Fufius Calenus and Mucius Scaevola Cordus, whose cognomen may recall the original Scaevola<sup>13</sup>.

The puzzles which these sources present us may now be clearly set out. These, it must be stressed, have not been the focus of modern historiography, which has concentrated on the problem of historicity. First, surely, must come an assessment of the sources!

## 1. WHO WAS LARS PORSENNA?

Aristeides of Miletos called him king of the Etruscans (*ap.* Plut., *Mor.* 305E). Livy calls him *Clusinus rex* (II 9, 1). Dionysios calls him «king of the Clusians» (V 21, 1; 34, 5) but also «king of the Etruscans» (V 26, 1). Vergil (*Aen.* VIII 646) gave him no title. For Strabo he was king of Clusium (V 2). Pliny knew of a Porsenna, king of Bolsena/Volsinii (II 140), but that may be an entirely different person. Plutarch does not give his title, but locates him in Clusium and calls him the most powerful king in Italy (*Publ.* 16, 1). For Florus, he was king of the Etruscans (I 4, 10), as for Polyainos (*strat.* VIII 8), Ampelius (XXXIX 3), and *de viris illustribus* 11. In Servius, he is king of Tuscany (*ad Aen.* VIII 646). For John Tzetzes, he was simply an Etruscan (*chil.* VI 39: see below, Mucius)<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> M. H. CRAWFORD, *Roman Republican Coinage*, Cambridge 1974, I, p. 413, no. 403.

<sup>14</sup> E. PAIS, *Storia di Roma*, Roma 1913-20, II, pp. 96-98 argued that the siege was by the king of Veii, because of the direction of the attack and the return of the *Septem pagi* (see below). H. LAST, of all people, *Cambridge Ancient History* VII, Cambridge 1928, p. 397, followed suit. For HEURGON, *cit.* (note 3), p. 41 Porsenna was king of Clusium, «whom the common peril had elevated to the rank of federal king of all the nation»; compare J.-R. JANNOT: king of Clusium and Volsinii, head of a symmachy of middle Etruria: *L'Etrurie intérieure de Lars Porsenna à Arruns le Jeune*, in *MEFRA* C, 1988, pp. 601-614, at p. 605; also for M. PALLOTTINO, *Origini e storia primitiva di Roma*, Milano 1993, p. 309, Porsenna was king of a united Clusium and Volsinii. R. HIRATA, *La monarchia di Porsenna*, in *Annuario dell'Istituto Giapponese di Cultura in Roma* XXII, 1986-87, pp. 7-22, at p. 7 counted six identities proposed by moderns: king of Clusium, head of the Etruscan league, king of Veii, Macstarna, a misunderstanding of the title *purthne*, and a «condottiere».

## 2. WHY DID HE MOVE AGAINST ROME?

Livy says that the Tarquins appealed to him as a fellow-Etruscan, but that in addition he himself might be in danger of losing power (II 9, 1-4). Dionysios states that he promised the Tarquins that he would either reconcile the Romans with them or at least recover their property. Both attempts were rejected: Porsenna, an «arrogant man», claimed that he was insulted – *but he had long desired to overthrow the Romans* (V 31, 1-2)<sup>15</sup>. Vergil has Porsenna simply telling the Romans to ‘accept’ the banished Tarquin (*Aen.* VIII 646-647). Silius states that he came to restore the Tarquins (*Pun.* VIII 479). Plutarch gives no real reason, apart from Tarquin’s appeal and hints at Porsenna’s ambition (φιλότιμος) (*Publ.* 16, 1). He came to restore the Tarquins according to Florus (I 4, 10). According to Ampelius he besieged Rome «on behalf of the Tarquins» (XXXIX 3).

## 3. WHEN DID PORSENNA ATTACK ROME?

Livy places the invasion in the second year of the republic, the consulship of Valerius and Lucretius (508). Dionysios dated the invasion to Valerius’ third consulship, with colleague Horatius Pulvillus for the second time (507) (V 21, 1). In Plutarch it occupies Valerius second and third consulships (*Publ.* 16, 2; 17, 1). Polyainos dates Mucius’ deed to Valerius’ third consulship (*strat.* VIII 8). Eutropius (I 11) dated the war 508-507. Orosius famously stated that the siege lasted three years (II 5), although he does not specify the dates<sup>16</sup>.

## 4. DID PORSENNA HAVE ALLIES?

According to Dionysios (V 21, 3), he was assisted by Mamilius of Tusculum and other Latins<sup>17</sup>. Livy mentions the former only as Tarquin’s refuge (II 15, 7). Silius states that he was supported by the «wealth of Lydia and the Etruscan people» (*Pun.* X 485).

## 5. WHAT WAS ROME’S REACTION TO THE THREAT?

Livy says that the senate was terrified, not only of Porsenna, but also of the plebeians, who might submit to Porsenna. They therefore granted them many privileges, corn was bought from the Volsci and Kyme, the salt supply was ensured, and the rural

<sup>15</sup> DEMPSTER I, p. 203 declared that his real aim was to crush Rome; DE BEAUFORT, *cit.* (note 10), p. 245 saw the restoration of the Tarquins as a pretext for Porsenna’s own ambition – and most moderns have agreed. SHUCKBURGH, *cit.* (note 10), pp. 66-67 tried to reconcile the conflict by a change of plans by Porsenna!

<sup>16</sup> DEMPSTER I, p. 207 was already one of the few to notice Orosius. It may merely be noted here that modern estimates of the chronology for Porsenna’s connection with Rome range from c. 575 (but mostly c. 510 on) to 504.

<sup>17</sup> NIEBUHR, *cit.* (note 3), I, p. 541 declared Dionysios’ claim a «palpable forgery».

population moved into the city (II 9, 5-6; 10, 1). Dionysios writes that the *plebs* were ordered into the mountains, the Janiculum was fortified, and the plebeians were given tax concessions (V 22, 1-2); only after the first battle troops were sought from the Latins and food brought from Kyme and the Pomptine plain (V 26) <sup>18</sup>.

#### 6. HOW WAS THE 'SIEGE' ENFORCED?

According to Livy (II 10, 2; 11, 1-10), Rome relied on her walls and the Tiber, but the Janiculum was captured, and the Etruscans camped by the river. They used ships to patrol the last and crossed over to plunder. The major problem for the Etruscans, however, was control of all the gates in the wall, and Livy describes an ambush of the Etruscans using the *portae Naevia* (Säflund <sup>19</sup> no. 9), *Esquilina* (13) and *Collina* (16). Dionysios contradicts Livy: as well as the Etruscan camp on the right bank, the Tarquins camped on the left and laid waste Roman territory, so that «all open country was in the hands of the enemy». He further states that no food came by land, but small amounts by river (V 26, 1-2). Then many boat loads arrived from the Pomptine plain (V 26, 4) and supplies also came by land (V 31, 1) <sup>20</sup>.

#### 7. WHERE WAS THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT?

Livy has only the taking of the Janiculum, then moves straight to the bridge (II 10, 3-4). According to Dionysios, Porsenna took the Janiculum by storm. A pitched battle followed: Mamilius on the right, Porsenna in the middle, the Tarquins on the left, while for the Romans the right was led by Larcus and Herminius (coss. 506), the centre by the two consuls, and the left by M. Valerius and Lucretius (cos. 508). The Romans were defeated (V 22, 4-23, 1).

#### 8. WHO DEFENDED THE BRIDGE?

Polybios has Horatius fighting two of the Etruscans at the Janiculum end of the bridge, when he saw many more enemy coming, so that he called for the bridge to be cut (VI 55, 1-2). Livy says that Horatius Cocles alone was on guard when the Etruscans attacked from the Janiculum, dispersing the Romans obviously beyond the bridge on the right bank, who fled back across the bridge. He commanded the bridge to be cut down, while he held the bridgehead (II 10, 2-5). At this point he was joined by Larcus and Herminius, who came to his aid until he sent them back (II 10, 6-7). Dionysios

<sup>18</sup> G. C. LEWIS, *An Enquiry into the Credibility of the Early Roman History*, London 1855, II, p. 15 noted this divergence.

<sup>19</sup> G. SÄFLUND, *Le mura di Roma repubblicana*, Lund 1932.

<sup>20</sup> NIEBUHR, *cit.* (note 3), I, p. 544 saw the problem: how could Rome be starved by an enemy on the Janiculum?

has three men check the attack: Larcus and Herminius (commanders on the right) and Horatius, until Horatius sent the other two back to tell the consuls to cut the bridge (V 23, 2-25, 1). Plutarch agrees (*Publ.* 16, 4 and 6)<sup>21</sup>. In short, were there three heroes or one?

#### 9. WHY WAS HORATIUS CALLED COCLES?

Livy does not see the question. For Dionysios, he had lost an eye in battle. He claims also that he was nephew of the consul Horatius, and a descendant of the Horatii who fought the Curiatii (V 23, 2-3). Plutarch has various explanations: he had lost an eye in battle, or his face was very strange, with a nose so sunk that his eyes were not separated (*Publ.* 16, 5), that is, it was congenital<sup>22</sup>.

#### 10. WHAT WAS HORATIUS' FATE?

Polybios has him wounded many times while the bridge was being cut, whereupon he plunged into the river fully armed and drowned (VI 55, 3)<sup>23</sup>. All other sources have him swim to safety. According to Livy he plunged into the river and swam unhurt (*incolumis*) to the other side (II 10, 11), and so Valerius Maximus (III 2, 1) and Seneca (*epist.* CXX 7); in *de viris illustribus* (11) he swam to safety in full armour (no wounds are mentioned)<sup>24</sup>. All other sources have him wounded, but where? Dionysios has him wounded through the buttock (and so Plut., *Publ.* 16, 6) and so he became lame (so Plut., *Mor.* 820E; App., *reg. fr.* 10), but he was still able to swim the river without losing any arms (V 24, 3; 25, 3). Dio alludes in speeches to a broken leg (XLV 32, 3; XLVI 19, 8). Servius' commentary has him swim to safety in his armour, although wounded in the hip (*ad Aen.* VIII 646). Frontinus had him swim the river in his armour, exhausted also by his (unspecified) wounds (*strat.* II 13, 5). The *Suidas* paid special attention to his weakness in the legs and the loss of an eye (ἀχρηστία, ὀφθαλμὸς, ἐξέκοπη)<sup>25</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 1) col. 2336 praised Livy's correctness in comparison with Dionysios' attempt to weld together so many traditions into a credible narrative. E. BURCK, *Die Erzählungskunst des Livius*, Berlin 1933, pp. 55-56 brilliantly showed that, while Livy emphasised Horatius' character, Dionysios focussed on his danger.

<sup>22</sup> D. BRIQUEL, *Mythe et révolution. La fabrication d'un récit: la naissance de la république à Rome*, Bruxelles 2007, claims that Horatius' monophthalmia remains unexplained, in that it is not the result of his exploit.

<sup>23</sup> DE BEAUFORT, *cit.* (note 10), p. 254 already preferred the Polybian tradition. BRIQUEL, *cit.* (note 22), p. 78 attempts to reconcile this fundamental divergence by claiming that Horatius' wound was «almost the equivalent of death», excluding him from public office.

<sup>24</sup> It is not true, then, *contra* MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 1), p. 2334 and R. OGILVIE, *Commentary on Livy Books 1-5*, Oxford 1965, p. 258 that only Livy has him unharmed.

<sup>25</sup> The contradictory tradition naturally fascinated MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 1), col. 2334.



## 11. WHAT WERE HIS REWARDS?

According to Livy, two:

1. the state gave him a statue in the *Comitium*<sup>26</sup>, and as much land as he could plough around (*circumaravit*) in one day<sup>27</sup>.
2. private citizens (unnumbered) gave him some (*aliquid*) provisions, despite the famine (II 10, 12-13).

In Dionysios the people gave him a bronze statue in the forum and as much land as he could plough round (περιαρόσει) in a day, and a day's ration from each of 300,000 people (V 25, 2). In Plutarch the statue was bronze, but in the temple of Vulcan, and the food contribution was a day's supplies from each citizen. Most importantly, the majority of these rewards were suggested by Valerius (*Publ.* 16, 7). Plutarch noted acutely that Horatius received as much land as he could plough around in a day – but that he was lame (*Mor.* 820E)<sup>28</sup>!

The later history of this statue is preserved only in the *annales maximi*. It stood in the *Comitium*, and was struck by lightning. Etruscan *haruspices* were summoned, who advised its being moved to a lower position. This was, in fact, a deceit, and when it was discovered, they were executed and the statue was elevated to the Volcanal (fr. 7 Chassignet, *ap.* Gell. IV 5, 1). This explains the disagreement about the position of the statue.

It is Propertius alone who adds that the “lane of Cocles” (*semita Coclidis*) recalled the cutting of the bridge<sup>29</sup>. And Servius alone records a quotation by Horatius: when his wounds were held against him in the assembly (that is, that he was disqualified for the consulship), he said: «I am reminded of my triumph by each step that I take» (*ad Aen.* VI 646)<sup>30</sup>.

## 12. WHAT WAS PORSENNA'S REACTION?

In Livy he put a garrison on the Janiculum, a camp by the bank of the Tiber, and blockaded the river with boats (II 11, 1-3). In Dionysios Porsenna was master of the right bank, and sent the Tarquins and Mamilius to set up camp on the left bank, laying waste and creating famine (V 26, 1-2).

<sup>26</sup> So much modern criticism hinges on the statue. It is only WALBANK, *cit.* (note 1), I, pp. 740-741 and J. GAGÉ, *Une consultation d'haruspices: sur les tabous étrusques de la statue dite d'Horatius Cocles*, in *Latomus* XXXII, 1973, pp. 3-22, at p. 11, who stress that no source describes it!

<sup>27</sup> NIEBUHR, *cit.* (note 3), I, p. 543 noted the extravagance of the grant.

<sup>28</sup> MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 1), col. 2333 noted that Livy and Dionysios distinguish public from private rewards, but Plutarch does not.

<sup>29</sup> This is known to no topographical reference work: S. PLATNER - T. ASHBY, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, Oxford 1929; M. STEINBY (ed.), *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, Roma 1993-2000.

<sup>30</sup> PETRARCH, *De viris illustribus*, ed. by G. Martellotti, Firenze 1964, p. 7 was one of the few to notice this. BRIQUEL, *cit.* (note 22), pp. 70-71 tried to dismiss it as a topos (Cic., *de or.* II 61; PLUT., *Mor.* 241.13) – but these are *mothers* speaking to their sons.

## 13. WHEN WAS THE ROMAN AMBUSH?

Livy has the Romans lay a trap by driving out animals from the *porta Esquilina*. Cos. Valerius set Herminius on the *via Gabinia* and Larcus at the *porta Collina*, while he came out by *mons Caelius* (the *porta Caelimontana*?) and colleague Lucretius left by the *porta Naevia*. The raiding Etruscans were cut to pieces (II 11, 7-10). In Dionysios this ambush – without any detail – comes after Mucius' deed (see 19)<sup>31</sup>. In Plutarch, the Roman success is all Valerius' work, the enemy were «another Etruscan army» (unidentified) and he killed 5,000 of the enemy. It was now 507 (*Publ.* 17, 1).

14. WHO WAS GAIUS MUCIUS?<sup>32</sup>

In Aristeides of Miletos he was a noble (*ap. Plut., Mor.* 305F); in Livy, a young Roman noble (II 12, 2); in Dionysios he was C. Mucius Cordus (V 25, 4), a noble, a patrician (V 29, 1 and 3)<sup>33</sup>; Athenodoros (contemporary of Augustus) agreed that his *cognomen* (in Greek) was 'Οψίγονος ("late born") (*ap. Plut., Publ.* 17, 5), which is Cordus in Latin<sup>34</sup>; for Plutarch he was simply most virtuous and most brave (*Publ.* 17, 2). The *cognomen* Cordus reappears in *de viris illustribus* (12), and *Schol. Bob. ad Cic., Sest.* 48.

## 15. WHAT WERE HIS MOTIVES?

According to Livy, he was ashamed (*indignus*) that the Etruscans, so often beaten, were blockading the city. He sought revenge by a great deed: *magno audacique aliquid facinore* (II 12, 2-3). In Dionysios Mucius wished to avoid the only two outcomes of the blockade, either that the Romans would surrender or die a miserable death (V 27, 1). In Valerius Maximus he is angry (*aegre ferret*) at the siege (III 3, 1). Plutarch gives no motive (*Publ.* 17, 2). In a separate category, it goes without saying, are Christian sources, who denigrated these heroes such as Mucius, because he sought only fame (*Tert., ad martyres* 4). In short, the Latin sources concentrate on Mucius' frame of mind, while the Greek sources examine (very pessimistically) the situation of Rome.

<sup>31</sup> BURCK, *cit.* (note 21), p. 56 was especially interested in this contradiction. The ambush is «a fluid incident»: OGILVIE (note 24), p. 261.

<sup>32</sup> F. MÜNZER, *Mucius Cordus Scaevola*, in *RE* XVI (1935), col. 416-423 stressed the agreement of sources, «save in unimportant details». His whole analysis contradicts this. BRIQUEL, *cit.* (note 22), 36 claims that the tradition is «fairly united», but also goes on to list many divergences.

<sup>33</sup> DE BEAUFORT, *cit.* (note 10), p. 258 made a brilliant point in 1738: the Scaevolae were plebeians, the Cordi patrician. NIEBUHR, *cit.* (note 3), I, pp. 545-546 suggested very acutely that the hero originally was known only as Gaius, a patrician.

<sup>34</sup> Not Postumus, as usually translated (!): OGILVIE, *cit.* (note 24), p. 263.

## 16. WHO KNEW OF HIS PLAN?

According to Livy, fearing he might be caught by the Romans and charged as a deserter, he told the senate<sup>35</sup>. He told no details, but the senate approved (II 12, 4-5). In Dionysios he informed the senate that he intended to kill Porsenna, desirous of winning great praise for noble deeds, but not trusting the people, because of possible traitors (V 27, 2). He told no one according to Plutarch (*Publ.* 17, 2).

## 17. HOW WAS HE EQUIPPED FOR THIS DEED?

Aristeides of Miletos in his *Histories* claimed that he was dressed as a civilian, but accompanied by *four hundred* other young men (*ap. Plut., Mor.* 305F)! According to Livy he simply took a sword under his (unspecified) clothes (II 12, 5). In Dionysios he was to be disguised as a *deserter* (obviously a Roman), but the Etruscan guard thought that he was an Etruscan, speaking their language, taught to him by his Etruscan nurse (V 27, 4-28, 1; 29, 1). In Plutarch, he was both wearing *Etruscan* dress and speaking Etruscan (*Publ.* 17, 2)<sup>36</sup>. Florus declares openly that Mucius indulged in some deceit (*dolum*) (I 4, 10). For Tzetzes, Mucius was armed and dressed as an *Etruscan*, and went as a *scout* (κατόπτης) (*chil.* VI 39). In short, we have a total confusion about whether Mucius went as a Roman or an Etruscan, and in exactly what dress. Most confused internally is Dionysios, who has him a Roman deserter, but accepted as an Etruscan.

## 18. WHOM DID HE KILL?

In Aristeides, he killed one of the king's *bodyguards*. In Livy, the king's secretary, sitting beside Porsenna, dressed in the same way, paying the soldiers (II 12, 7). In Dionysios he killed the secretary, a man of imposing stature dressed in purple (a detail also found in Florus I 10, 5 and *de vir. ill.* 12, 2) and seated on the king's tribunal, surrounded by armed men, who was making out pay records: *Porsenna was absent*. The secretary seems to have been sitting in the king's chair (V 28, 2; 29, 1). Valerius Maximus gave a completely new version: Mucius tried to kill *Porsenna* while he was sacrificing! (III 3, 1): no mention of the secretary. How then did he fail? In Martial, it was a *courtier* (*satellites*) whom he killed (I 21). According to Plutarch, Porsenna was sitting on a tribunal with others, and Mucius chose «the one he thought most likely of these seated together» (*Publ.*

<sup>35</sup> MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 32), col. 416 acutely noted that this was to involve the senate in the guilt of the assassination. Compare the senate's reaction to an offer to assassinate Pyrrhos in 279 (PLUT., *Pyrrh.* 21). The basis of the whole story may be the need to explain the cognomen, as everyone sees, but perhaps there is some contamination here with Servilius Ahala, also an assassin wielding a blade, who informed the senate.

<sup>36</sup> SCHWEGLER, *cit.* (note 7), II, p. 54, pointed out that only Dionysios explained how Mucius came to speak Etruscan. MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 32), col. 418 declared that this was a late addition, to overcome improbabilities.

17, 2). For Polyainos, it was one seated near the king and most like him (*strat.* VIII 8). In Tzetzes, Mucius killed a *scribe* called Clusinus (*hist.* VI 39)!

#### 19. AFTER HIS ARREST, WHAT DID MUCIUS DO?

In Aristeides, he immediately put his hand in the fire, and addressed Porsenna scornfully as «barbarian» and told him of the 400 other young men already in his camp! In Livy he told Porsenna of the other young men dedicated to kill him<sup>37</sup>. Threatened with torture, he then thrust his hand into the flames of a sacrificial fire to show his disdain for physical pain (*facere et pati fortia Romanum*). Porsenna in astonishment then set him free. Mucius, supposedly in gratitude, reiterated the story of the 300<sup>38</sup>. He was given the *cognomen* Scaevola (II 12, 8-13, 1). In Dionysios, threatened with torture, he concocted the deceit (ἀπάτη) of the story of the 300 (V 29, 3-4): no mention of the hand or the *cognomen*!<sup>39</sup> In Valerius Maximus, when arrested, to show his contempt for torture – but hating his right hand *which had failed him* – he burned it (III 3, 1)<sup>40</sup>. Seneca could not solve the problem of the hand: it paid the penalty for its mistake (*dial.* I [*provid.*] 3, 5), but it was left on the enemy altar as glorious as if it had killed Porsenna (*benef.* VII 15, 2). Silius Italicus had Mucius punishing himself (*ira in semet versa*) (*Pun.* VIII 385-387) – obviously for his mistake. In Martial the failed right hand punished itself (I 21). In Plutarch, Porsenna was about to sacrifice, and Mucius spontaneously held his hand over the fire. Porsenna in amazement freed him, and Mucius in gratitude (!) told him of the other 300 (*Publ.* 17, 4). As with Aristeides, for Polyainos the other 300 Romans were already in the Etruscan camp (*strat.* VIII 8). In the *de viris illustribus* (12), Mucius punished his erring hand, and Porsenna was overcome with compassion. Mucius then revealed the existence of 300 other nobles. Sidonius suggested that in a sense, he was punishing his erring hand (*carm.* V 78). For Tzetzes also, Mucius burned his hand because he had killed the wrong man (*chil.* VI 39).

We thus have *three* motives for the burning of his hand: to show his disdain for torture; because of his perjury in inventing the story of the three hundred; or because the hand had failed him. It is the *last* which is the favoured explanation; it takes over in the post-Augustan tradition. Livy, in fact, combines the first two.

<sup>37</sup> MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 32), col. 419-420 rightly observed that this was the first mention of the 300 in Livy, indicating that he also took it to be an invention.

<sup>38</sup> BURCK, *cit.* (note 21), p. 58 demonstrated that in Livy the emphasis is on Mucius' speeches, which are more effective than the failed deed.

<sup>39</sup> SCHWEGLER, *cit.* (note 7), II, p. 184 pointed to an important question: did Dionysios omit the story deliberately, or was he following a simpler, older tradition? E. GJERSTAD, *Porsenna and Rome*, in *OpRom* VII, 1969, pp. 144-161 at p. 153 declared Dionysios' version (with nothing about the hand) the original one.

<sup>40</sup> N. MACHIAVELLI, *Discorsi sopra la prima Deca di Tito Livio*, Firenze 1531, 1.24.3; 1.32.1 preferred this explanation (the dominant one in our sources), as did DE BEAUFORT (note 10), p. 255. MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 32), col. 419-422 argued that the burning of the hand was the punishment for perjury (the falsehood about the 300), as did OGLVIE, *cit.* (note 24), p. 262, who stressed that the reference to a left hand worked only in Greek.

## 20. WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE COGNOMEN SCAEVOLA?

Mucius was known as Scaevola from the loss of his right hand (Livy II 13, 1; Val. Max. III 3, 1; Plut., *Publ.* 17, 4). Note that this is a Greek name. There is no explanation in Dionysios, Seneca, Martial or *de viris illustribus*. Sidonius (*carm.* V 78) gives him the cognomen *before* the ordeal! Hidden away in Varro's *de lingua Latina*, however, is the revelation that a *scaevola* is an apotropaic amulet in the shape of a penis worn by boys. The name derives from σκαία in Greek, meaning "left", because this was the propitious side<sup>41</sup>.

## 21. WHY DID PORSENNA PROPOSE TERMS?

In Aristeides Porsenna was frightened of the 400 (*sic*) other young Romans (*ap.* Plut., *Mor.* 306A). In Livy he was «moved» (*moverat eum*) by his danger (II 13, 2), in other words the deed of Mucius. In Dionysios, Porsenna's son Aruns counselled the peace to avoid the danger of assassination; Porsenna hoped the Romans would come to him, but when they did not, he took the initiative when plundering Etruscans were killed and captured by the consuls, so that his own troops were disaffected: he was *forced* to treat; the envoys were his closest friends. Some said Mucius was among them, but Dionysios does not accept this (V 30-31, 2). In Plutarch, Valerius invited Porsenna to become a friend of the Romans, and Porsenna was amazed at the resolution and bravery of the Romans, had fallen out with Tarquin, and was urged by his son Aruns (*Publ.* 17, 5-18, 2) – a broad and compelling array of reasons! Polyainos returned to the explanation of fear (*strat.* VIII 8). In Tzetzes, out of admiration for Mucius, Porsenna became a friend of the Romans (*chil.* VI 39). The fundamental divergence here is that Dionysios added the consuls' success to Mucius' deed, while Livy dated the former before Mucius, so that it had no influence on Porsenna<sup>42</sup>.

## 22. WHAT WERE THE TERMS?

In Livy, 1. restoration of the Tarquins; 2. return of Veientine territory (later called the *septem pagi*); 3. hostages: how many? Livy gives no number<sup>43</sup>. In return Porsenna evacuated Roman territory (II 13, 3-4).

Dionysios makes this the turning-point: now Porsenna abandons the Tarquins (1), but substituted compensation for their lost property (only in Dionysios); the hostages sought were an unspecified number of *sons* of the most noble families, but when they came to be sent, they were twenty and included the son of consul Horatius and the

<sup>41</sup> NIEBUHR, *cit.* (note 3), I, p. 546 was the first to spot Varro; followed by G. DE SANCTIS, *Storia dei Romani* I, Torino 1907, p. 449, and OGILVIE, *cit.* (note 24), p. 262.

<sup>42</sup> This divergence was emphasised by LEWIS, *cit.* (note 18), II, p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> J. GAGÉ, *Les otages de Porsenna*, in *Hommages à Henri Le Bonniec*. Res Sacrae, Bruxelles 1988, pp. 236-245 is aware of the clash of sources.

daughter of consul Valerius. The people would not hear of compensation, but asked Porsenna to adjudicate between Rome and the Tarquins. The leading senators came to Porsenna to attend his judgement (V 31, 3-32, 4). Plutarch, of course, omitted 1, and added the return of Etruscan prisoners of war and Roman deserters to their respective sides. The hostages numbered ten young men and ten young women, one being Valeria (*Publ.* 18, 2; *Mor.* 250C).

Servius adds something quite extraordinary, as a proof of the strictness with which the Romans upheld a truce (*indutiae*): when one was declared with Porsenna, circus games were held, and the enemy leaders came into the city, and not only competed, but won (*ad Aen.* XI 134)!

What exactly was the result of these negotiations? Livy defines it as a peace (II 13, 4 and 11: *pax*), Dionysios as a truce (V 32, 4: σπένδεται), only after the return of the hostages «peace and friendship» (εἰρήνη καὶ φιλία) (V 34, 4)<sup>44</sup>.

### 23. WHAT WAS MUCIUS' REWARD?

Livy obviously takes the reward to be not for the plot against Porsenna (which failed), but his bravery (*virtus*): a field across the Tiber, *Mucia prata* (II 13, 5). Dionysios makes Mucius «the chief instrument in putting an end to the war», rewarded with as much land across the Tiber as he could plough around in a day (V 35, 1). Plutarch omits rewards. Festus also gives great credit to Mucius: by his firmness (*constantia*), he forced Porsenna to withdraw (131 L). *de viris illustribus* (12) mentions the *prata* and adds a statue<sup>45</sup> but gives no locations.

### 24. HOW DID THE FEMALE HOSTAGES ESCAPE TO SWIM ACROSS THE TIBER?

In Livy the camp of the Etruscans was simply close to the river (II 13, 6). In Dionysios (V 33, 1) and Plutarch (*Publ.* 19, 1) the women went to bathe, and were unguarded; some say Cloelia found a horse and, mounted on it, guided the others (*Mor.* 250C-E). Vergil reveals a totally different story: *the 'hostages' were bound*: Cloelia broke her bonds (*vinclis ... ruptis*)<sup>46</sup> and swam the river (*Aen.* VIII 651). Valerius Maximus focuses on Cloelia alone: she eluded the guards at night, found a horse, and swam across (III 2, 2). Cloelia crossed the river on horseback in Florus (I 4, 10). Polyainos was the first to think of practicalities: the women tied their clothes around their heads and swam (*strat.* VIII 31). Dio's source (XLV 31, 1), purportedly Cicero in 43 BC, had the girls swim across fully clothed. In *de viris illustribus* (13), Cloelia escaped from the camp, seized a horse, and swam the river.

<sup>44</sup> EHLERS, *cit.* (note 12), p. 321 noted the conflict over terms, but that it was a «disgraceful, dictated peace»; DOVERE, *cit.* (note 10), p. 86 alone defined it: a *foedus iniquum*.

<sup>45</sup> BRIQUEL, *cit.* (note 22), p. 58 asserts that the statue had a mutilated arm!

<sup>46</sup> Stress was first laid on this by EHLERS, *cit.* (note 12), p. 317.

## 25. HOW MANY HOSTAGES ESCAPED?

In Livy Cloelia led a group (*agmen*) of girls (II 13, 6), but the number is unspecified. In Dionysios all ten escaped, led by Cloelia, while the father of one of them, Valerius, was still in Porsenna's camp (V 33, 1-2). Silius focuses on Cloelia, because he is telling the story of her family (*Pun.* X 492-501), vouchsafing us another detail: she was twelve years old – but that is his deduction from the fact that she was unmarried! In Plutarch, all ten escaped, led by Cloelia on horseback, but he noted sources which said that only Cloelia escaped, on horseback (*Publ.* 19, 1-2 and 4). In Polyainos the women hostages escaped, led by Cloelia (*strat.* VIII 31). Cloelia alone again is mentioned by *de viris illustribus* (13) and Servius (*ad Aen.* VIII 646)<sup>47</sup>.

## 26. WHAT WAS PORSENNA'S REACTION?

In Livy, enraged, he demanded the return of Cloelia, then in admiration he stated that she was more brave than Horatius or Mucius. He asserted (rightly) that the treaty had been broken (*pro rupto foedus*), but again in admiration promised that he would restore her. He then rewarded her with the choice of *half* the hostages who were to be freed (II 13, 7-9). In Dionysios and Plutarch, it is not Porsenna's reaction which counts, but Valerius', because the peace was broken. Cloelia was guilty of fraud (Plutarch). The hostages were being returned to Porsenna when Tarquin attacked them, but they were saved by Aruns (Dionysios V 33, 3-34, 1; *Publ.* 19, 2-3; *Mor.* 250E-F). A bizarre version in Anniius Fetiialis (*ap. Pliny, nat.* XXXIV 29) claims that only Valeria survived when all the other hostages were killed by the Tarquins as they were being «sent» to Porsenna: he means «returned», and contradicts everyone else that the hostages were saved by Aruns<sup>48</sup>.

## 27. WHICH HOSTAGES DID CLOELIA SELECT AND WHY?

In Livy, she selected the young boys (*impubes*), number unspecified: because it was more appropriate for her as a *virgo* (in other words the choice of more mature men might have been misunderstood as revealing some emotional interest of hers), and because they were «most exposed to injury» (in other words, the notorious homosexual proclivities of the Etruscans!) (II 13, 10)<sup>49</sup>. Dionysios and Plutarch know nothing of this story. It resurfaces in the fourth century: according to *de viris illustribus* (13) she chose young boys, but in Servius she chose the *girls*, because they might be in danger (*ad Aen.* VIII 646).

<sup>47</sup> F. MÜNZER, *Cloelia*, in *RE* IV (1901), col. 110 was interested in this inconsistency, and added a third version, that the men also escaped – but that would spoil the whole story.

<sup>48</sup> MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 47), col. 110-111 suggested that the Tarquins' attack and the promotion of Valeria was the work of the younger annalists.

<sup>49</sup> GRANT, *cit.* (note 3), p. 188 is one of the few to see this.

## 28. WHAT WAS CLOELIA'S OWN REWARD?

In our earliest source, Calpurnius Piso (fr. 22 Chassignet), a statue of Cloelia was paid for *by the other hostages*, whom she had rescued. Annius Fetalis claimed that the statue was of Valeria, who swam the river alone (*ap. Pliny, nat. XXXIV 29*); he goes on to claim that all the other hostages were killed by the Tarquins<sup>50</sup>. In Livy, an equestrian statue of Cloelia was erected by «the Romans» *in summa Sacra via* (II 13, 11), without explanation; in Dionysios Porsenna gave an unnamed (!) female hostage a war-horse (V 34, 3) and *the senate* erected a bronze<sup>51</sup> statue of Cloelia on the *Sacra via*, *no longer standing*, having been destroyed by fire (V 35, 2). Seneca, on the other hand, stated that her equestrian statue still stood on the *Sacra via* (*dial. VI [cons. Marc.] 16, 2*). In Plutarch, it was an equestrian statue by the *Sacra via* as one goes to the Palatine – because Porsenna gave her a horse, or because she swam the Tiber on one, but some said that it was Valeria (*Publ. 19, 4-5; Mor. 250E*)! According to Polyainos, Porsenna in admiration gave her a horse when he sent her and her companions back to Rome (*strat. VIII 31*). In Servius, Porsenna wrote to the Romans asking that she be given a male reward (*aliquid virile*): an equestrian statue, *still to be seen on the Sacra via* (*ad Aen. VIII 646*). In Tzetzes, Porsenna gave her arms and a horse (*chil. VI 39*)<sup>52</sup>.

## 29. WHEN DID PORSENNA ABANDON THE TARQUINS?

According to Livy after the battle of Aricia (II 15, 5), in Dionysios after the attempt on the returning hostages (V 34, 1), for Plutarch in connection with Mucius, when Tarquin rejected Porsenna's arbitration (*Publ. 18*)<sup>53</sup>.

## 30. WHAT WAS THE MEANING OF THE 'SALE OF THE GOODS OF KING PORSENNA' WHEN BOOTY WAS BEING SOLD?

In Livy this was a puzzle: the sale of an enemy's property did not accord with the peaceful departure of the king. Livy therefore stated that the explanation 'closest to the truth' of those handed down is that Porsenna generously left the provisions in his well-stocked camp to the Romans, and they were sold so that they could be distributed fairly (II 14, 1-4). Dionysios stressed that the Etruscan camp was more like a city, which the Etruscans usually burned on departure, and that the contents were auctioned by the

<sup>50</sup> MÜNZER, *cit.* (note 47), col. 110 unravels a tangled tradition here: 1. that *only* Valeria swam the Tiber, 2. that she alone survived when *all* the hostages were returned.

<sup>51</sup> GRANT, *cit.* (note 3), p. 188 alerts us that Dionysios does not say that the statue was equestrian.

<sup>52</sup> LEWIS, *cit.* (note 18), II, p. 19 saw that Porsenna's incongruous gift of a horse to Cloelia was to explain the equally incongruous statue.

<sup>53</sup> This is noted only by SCHWEGLER, *cit.* (note 7), II, p. 190.



quaestors (V 34, 4): no mention of the Roman formula. In Plutarch, the same story is found, as a record of Porsenna's kindness (*Publ.* 19, 5-6)<sup>54</sup>.

### 31. WHAT WAS THE FINAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PORSENNA AND THE ROMANS?

For Livy peace (*pax*) was re-established after the episode of Cloelia (II 13, 11). Dionysios agrees: a treaty of «peace and friendship», and gives one condition: return of all prisoners (V 34, 4). Pliny (XXXIV 139) totally contradicts this: the most fascinating clause, presumably among others, specified that the Romans were to be allowed the use of iron only for agricultural purposes<sup>55</sup>. This is stated to derive from «most ancient authors» (*vetustissimi auctores*). For Florus, if this is the occasion to which he refers, Porsenna made a treaty of friendship with the Romans, overcome with admiration, when he had *almost* conquered (I 4, 10).

### 32. WHEN WERE THE HOSTAGES ALL RETURNED?

Next year, 506, after Porsenna's last request that the Tarquins be restored had failed, according to Livy (II 15, 6); after the Tarquins' treacherous attack on the hostages, when they were being returned to Porsenna after their escape, according to Dionysios (V 34, 3).

### 33. WHEN WERE THE *SEPTEM PAGI* RESTORED TO ROME?

Along with the hostages in 506 according to Livy (II 15, 6); after the battle of Aricia (504), in thanks for Roman care of the Etruscan survivors, according to Dionysios (V 36, 3).

### 34. DID PORSENNA RECEIVE ANY HONOUR FROM THE ROMANS?

Livy admits nothing, save Porsenna's admiration for the Romans. According to Dionysios (V 35, 11), the Roman senate sent him an ivory throne, a sceptre, and a gold crown – the very insignia of the kings – and a triumphal robe<sup>56</sup>. According to Plutarch a bronze statue in archaic style was erected near the senate house (*Publ.* 19, 6) – but in his time it was no longer there<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> EHLERS, *cit.* (note 12), p. 318 saw Livy's explanation as contradictory; for him this was the essential evidence that Porsenna remained Rome's irreconcilable enemy.

<sup>55</sup> DEMPSTER, I, p. 207 compared the terms on the Ligurians (FLOR. I 19); E. CIACERI, *Le origini di Roma*, Milano 1937, p. 340 inventively referred this clause to control over the mines of Elba!

<sup>56</sup> CIACERI, *cit.* (note 55), p. 339 perversely maintained that the insignia related to the kingship of Clusium. EHLERS, *cit.* (note 12), pp. 317-318 declared this «a gross anachronism», but understandable if Porsenna had in fact held a triumph.

<sup>57</sup> G. HAFNER, *Porsenna*, in *RivArch* I, 1977, pp. 36-42 famously identified a marble head in the villa S. Michele on Capri as a copy of this statue.

35. WHAT IS THE ORIGIN OF THE *VICUS TUSCUS*?

In Livy, Aruns, Porsenna's son, led the disastrous attack on Aricia. Some of the survivors returned to Rome and were settled in the *vicus Tuscus* (II 14); so in Dionysios (V 36). For Festus, the *vicus Tuscus* is where those Etruscans lived who remained when Porsenna lifted the siege (487 L)<sup>58</sup>. This is the last confusion in the saga of Porsenna. A *third* explanation of this *vicus* is that it went back to Romulus' time, when he was aided by Etruscans against Titus Tatius, and they settled in Rome (Varro, *ling.* V 46; Prop. IV 2, 49-54, Serv., *ad Aen.* V 560). The division is interesting: we can call the first and second explanations those of the historians, the third that of the antiquarians.

## SUMMING UP

The Greek and Latin sources on Porsenna number more than *forty* of them and are spread over *fourteen* centuries. A number of fundamental observations may now be offered:

1. There is *not a single detail of the narrative on which they agree* – except that an Etruscan king besieged Rome<sup>59</sup>!
2. There are, however, two major strands: Roman and Greek, the latter especially Dionysios and Plutarch, but going back to Polybios and Aristeides.
3. A transformation dates from Plutarch's more deliberately favourable view of Porsenna – not that the annalists did not stress his positive responses to the Roman heroes. That he was always Rome's «irreconcilable enemy»<sup>60</sup> is therefore not correct: the annalists were never fundamentally hostile<sup>61</sup>. It was Ogilvie, however, who described correctly the transformation from foe to friend<sup>62</sup>. Another innovation by Plutarch is the prominence suddenly given, as usual, to his subject, Valerius – and obviously he could find sources to exaggerate his importance<sup>63</sup>.
4. Some fascinating details are revealed only by quite late sources; for example the games in Servius.
5. There are major flaws in the saga: two of the three heroes are ambiguous: Mucius planned an un-Roman action in the first place, and then is commonly thought to have

<sup>58</sup> OGILVIE, *cit.* (note 24), p. 269 added a modern *fourth*: these were the Etruscans who remained behind after the building of the Capitoline temple. HIRATA, *cit.* (note 14), p. 17 added a *fifth*: the taking in of Etruscans after Aricia was incredible. These were the Etruscans left behind on Porsenna's retreat!

<sup>59</sup> SCHWEGLER's mention (note 7), II, p. 181 of a «common tradition» is therefore quite misleading.

<sup>60</sup> EHLERS, *cit.* (note 12), p. 318.

<sup>61</sup> JANNOT, *cit.* (note 14), p. 605. M. SORDI, *Prospettive di storia etrusca*, Como 1995, pp. 198-199 dated the change to the fourth century – but on what evidence?

<sup>62</sup> OGILVIE, *cit.* (note 24), p. 268.

<sup>63</sup> J. GAGÉ, *La chute des Tarquins et les débuts de la république romaine*, Paris 1976, p. 91 was taken in by this: the three heroes, he declared, were subordinate to the consul Valerius. Dionysios does not offer support for this view.

committed perjury, and so burned his guilty right hand, and Cloelia broke the conditions of the peace/truce, and so had to be handed back.

6. Most important of all, the idea that Pliny and Tacitus were the first and only sources to reveal that Rome submitted to Porsenna is a total misunderstanding. The same version of the story is known to *all the major sources*: Livy (the surrender of the *Septem Pagi* and hostages; the reception of Etruscan refugees)<sup>64</sup>, Dionysios (the regal insignia or triumphal *ornamenta*) and Plutarch (Porsenna's statue in Rome near the *curia*)<sup>65</sup>. It is striking, however, that Pliny went much further in a reference – in his treatise on metals!<sup>66</sup> – to what was obviously a *foedus iniquum*.

7. Three centuries after Fabius Pictor, however, Tacitus was the first to declare simply that Rome had submitted. There are two observations to be made. They are of fundamental importance – and they have hardly ever been made. First, Tacitus' reference is totally *en passant*<sup>67</sup> as if everyone knew the truth about Porsenna. Second, no later source took the slightest notice!

8. A fundamental question is when these three stories were attached to Porsenna. Modern sources are in total contradiction, varying from the early to the late Republic.

9. Even more fundamental is the origin of the three stories. There are obvious topographical stimuli (statues, tracts of land), and these have been commonly accepted as the starting-point of the stories. Family traditions presumably contributed, even if the families were not prominent.

10. There is, however, one very simple explanation for the totally divergent details at every point, as demonstrated above. The three stories were contrived to prove that Rome survived unharmed the Etruscan siege, when, in fact, she submitted.

How are we to explain this double-headed surprise? Tacitus lived a good century after the 'fall' of the Republic, and the last celebration of its greatness by one who had known it, Livy. It seems it was now possible to tell the truth openly, instead of leaving only concealed hints. And yet the eternal fascination of Rome's past greatness still exercised such a spell that the old legends could not be overturned and discarded<sup>68</sup>. Vital clues are here revealed concerning the attitude of imperial society towards the long lost Republic.

RONALD T. RIDLEY

<sup>64</sup> L. AIGNER-FORESTI, *Die Etrusker und das frühe Rom*, Darmstadt 2003, p. 144 is one of the few to state that even Livy knew the truth. CIACERI, *cit.* (note 55), p. 338 implied as much.

<sup>65</sup> This answers an important question of method raised by an archaeologist friend, Dr Robert Coates-Stephens. Why should one 'automatically' accept a 'negative', unflattering view? Not out of perversity or an anxiety to be thought critical or 'realistic', but because it is the view, in fact, supported by most of the basic sources.

<sup>66</sup> Noted by BRIQUEL, *cit.* (note 22), p. 404.

<sup>67</sup> Credit again to D. Briquel.

<sup>68</sup> These were «cherished legends»: M. CARY, *History of Rome down to the Reign of Constantine*<sup>2</sup>, London 1954, p. 64.