

POMPEY'S HEAD AND CAESAR'S TEARS: THE HISTORY OF AN ANECDOTE

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Summary: In many sources, Caesar is said to have wept and become indignant at the sight of Pompey's head presented to him as a gift from Ptolemy XIII. Given that Caesar does not mention the episode in *De Bello Ciuili*, this paper attempts, through a chronological survey of later extant sources, to determine their interdependence by observing the stable and fluid elements in each, and then to outline the history of the shaping of this anecdote. The episode might have been included in early accounts of the events surrounding Pompey's death, produced by pro-Caesarian historians in the immediate aftermath of Caesar's death. *Declamatio* not only picked up and reworked this historical anecdote and led to its reinterpretation in an anti-Caesarian way, but also probably played a major role in its broader diffusion.

I. The absence of the scene in Caesar and the question of the "ultimate source"

The aftermath of the battle of Pharsalia is recounted by Caesar at the end of *De Bello Ciuili* (§3.102-112). After his defeat, Cn. Pompeius Magnus (cos. 70, II 55, III 52), a.k.a. Pompey, fled to Egypt, where King Ptolemy XIII, still a minor, was fighting against his sister Cleopatra, who had been deposed from the throne. There, Pompey demanded the protection of the young king, invoking the friendship with his father. Among the king's troops there were many of Pompey's old soldiers, whom in 55 B.C., Aulus Gabinus (cos. 58) had received from Pompey's army in Syria, taken to Alexandria to restore Ptolemy XII to his kingdom, and left there with Ptolemy. Pompey's messengers thus exhorted these troops to assist their former general (*BCiv.* 3.103). Being informed of this, the king's ministers made a secret plan to assassinate Pompey. Caesar thoroughly investigates the reasons of the Egyptians' decision: either they were motivated by fear that Pompey would become master of Egypt; or they despised his low

condition, as “friends, in bad fortune, often turn enemies” (BCiv. 3.104.1). By contrast, the scene of Pompey’s execution is briefly recounted:

2. Ipsi clam consilio inito Achillam, praefectum regium, singulari hominem audacia, et L. Septimium tribunum militum ad interficiendum Pompeium miserunt. 3. Ab his liberaliter ipse appellatus et quadam notitia Septimi perductus, quod bello praedonum apud eum ordinem duxerat, nauiculam paruulam conscendit cum paucis suis. Ibi ab Achilla et Septimio interficitur. (Caes. BCiv. 3.104)

In secret they formed a plot and sent men to kill Pompey: Achilles, the king's general, a man of remarkable nerve, and Lucius Septimius, a military tribune. Addressed kindly by them and drawn forward by a degree of familiarity with Septimius, since the latter held the rank of centurion under him during the war against the pirates, Pompey boarded the tiny little vessel with a few of his friends. There he was killed by Achilles and Septimius.¹

Contrary to other sources, Caesar does not mention that Pompey was killed with a sword and very little is related about the circumstances of his assassination.² This is not the only interesting omission: Caesar states in a brief phrase that, after arriving in Egypt in pursuit of Pompey, he was informed of Pompey’s death, without adding any information on his reaction; he then immediately passes to the tumult aroused upon his arrival:

Alexandriae de Pompei morte cognoscit. Atque ibi primum e naui egrediens clamorem militum audit, quos rex in oppido praesidii causa reliquerat, et concursum ad se fieri uidet, quod fasces anteferrentur. In hoc omnis multitudo maiestatem regiam minui praedicabat. (Caes. BCiv. 3.106.4)

- 1 Quotations from Caesar’s *De Bello Ciuili* are based on the recent edition of C. Damon (OCT 2015). Translations of the same text are from the Loeb edition (Damon 2016).
- 2 See Plut. *Pomp.* 77–80; App. *B Civ.* 2.84–86; Cass. Dio 42.3–4; Luc. 8.456–711; cf. for a brief account Vell. Pat. 2.53; Flor. 2.13.52; Liv. *Per.* 112; *De vir. ill.* 77.9.

At Alexandria he learned about Pompey's death. Upon disembarking he heard shouts from the soldiers whom the king had left on guard in the city, and saw people converging on him, apparently because he had the *fasces* ahead of him. The whole crowd was shouting that this amounted to a slight on the king's majesty.

Caesar's succinct account is at odds with the detailed narrative of other sources, where Pompey's severed head is presented as a gift from the Egyptians to Caesar, who becomes indignant at the macabre spectacle of a Roman general treated with such cruelty. This famous scene inspired modern art and cinema.³ It is noteworthy that modern adaptations are based especially on Lucan and Plutarch. Scholars have also repeatedly focused on Lucan and pointed out the symbolic function of Pompey's beheading and its aftermath (8.536-872) and of the presentation of the severed head to Caesar (9.1000-1108) within the poet's narrative⁴, but have commented very little on the treatment of the episode in other, namely historiographical, sources.

Caesar's non-inclusion of the scene, which seems curious coming from the alleged protagonist of the episode, has been simply noted but not interpreted.⁵ To explain other omissions from Caesar's narrative,

- 3 See the paintings of Ricci (1659-1734), Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770), Pellegrini (1700-1741) and Lagrenée (1767) and the anonymous painting preserved in the Magnin Museum of Dijon. This scene is also staged in the series *Rome* (2005-2007), the docudrama *Rome: Rise and Fall of an Empire* (2006), and Haendel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* (1723).
- 4 For the metaphorical association between Pompey's and the Gorgon's head (Luc. 9.604-889), see Malamud 2003: 32-39; Jouteur 2005. According to Estèves 2010, Lucan makes decapitation a symbol of horror related to the civil wars. Scholars have recently analysed Pompey's head as a metaphor for the body politic. See Dinter 2012: 20-21, 23, 31, 47-49, 67, 105; Mebane 2016. See also Wick 2004: *ad loc.* and Tschiedel 1985: 12-18, for the significant narrative role of the episode in the *Pharsalia*.
- 5 Kraner, Hofmann & Meusel 1906: *ad loc.*, complete Caesar's account by referring to other sources, and add that "before landing, Theodotus brought him the head and seal ring of Pompey". Carter 1993: *ad loc.*, just remarks that Caesar's account of events leading to the Alexandrian War is unclear and needs to be completed by other sources. Tschiedel 1985: 4, Wick 2004: 426, and Martin 2005: 160-61, only observe Caesar's omission.

scholars have invoked several reasons: accidents in the textual transmission, political calculations and doubts about historicity.⁶ It goes without saying that *argumenta ex silentio*, like those presented by scholars in order to explain Caesar's silences, are hardly compelling: omissions may also be due to incidental reasons such as careless writing, oblivion or underestimation of the importance of an episode evaluated as more important by later writers. Moreover, Caesar's silence on his expressions of emotion, especially toward Pompey, does not only occur in the scene of his mourning over Pompey's head; this omission seems consistent with the general tendency of Caesar the writer to avoid putting on stage the emotional reactions of Caesar the protagonist, which appear for instance in Plutarch.⁷ Therefore, Caesar's general restraint could explain to some extent his omission of the anecdote under study. Nevertheless, given that

- 6 The omission, for instance, of the famous scene of the Rubicon crossing, has been described as "the best strategy to adopt", because Caesar knew that by crossing this limit between Gallia Cisalpina and Italy, he had acted contrary to the *lex Cornelia de maiestate* (Westall 2017: 48-49, 57). Similarly, Caesar chose to discard from his narrative the mutiny against him at Placentia in 49 B.C., which is found in other sources (App. *B Civ.* 2.7.47-48; Cass. Dio 41.26-36; Suet. *Jul.* 69; Luc. 5.237-373; Frontin. *Str.* 4.5.2; Plut. *Caes.* 37), in order not to harm the self-constructed image of a general exercising absolute control over his army (Chrissanthos 2001: 64; Westall 2017: 25 n80). The following episode, also excluded from *De Bello Ciuili*, has received a twofold interpretation: while stationed on the coast of Epirus and desperate for the arrival of reinforcements from Italy, Caesar is said to have attempted to cross back to Italy, unsuccessfully due to unfavourable winds (Val. Max. 9.8.2; Plut. *Caes.* 38; *Apophth. C. Caes.* 9; *De fort. Rom.* 6; Flor. 2.13.37; App. *B Civ.* 2.8.56-57, 21.150; Cass. Dio 41.46). According to Gelzer (1968: 229n1), Caesar "had no reason to report his own unsuccessful attempt. The account of it seems to go back to Asinius Pollio." Others have considered the episode "a malicious invention on the part of a hostile historian" (Friedrich 1954: 23; Westall 2017: 28-29). Finally, the defeat of C. Antonius, brother of the Triumvir, in Illyricum has been considered by Avery 1993: 457-58, a lost episode due to an accident of the textual transmission of *De Bello Ciuili*. See also *ibid.*: 468-69, where Avery discusses the possibility that the revolt at Placentia and the story of Caesar's unsuccessful attempt to return to Italy are also lost episodes due to accidents in textual transmission.
- 7 Plutarch portrays Caesar's feeling of perplexity and distress at Apollonia because of the delay of the troops from Italy (Plut. *Caes.* 38.1: ἀπορούμενος καὶ περιπαθῶν; 5: ἄχθεται), while Caesar's feelings are much more neutral in *De Bello ciuili* (Caes. *BCiv.* 3.25.3: *quibus rebus permotus Caesar Brundisium ad suos seuerius scripsit*). Whereas this

the *Commentarii de Bello Ciuili* include emotional scenes in other instances, sometimes with Pompey or the Pompeians as protagonists⁸, the restrained character of the *Commentarii*, as a genre,⁹ opposed to the inclination of the biographer Plutarch to pathetic and tragic elements¹⁰, cannot fully explain the narrator Caesar's general tendency to avoid relating his own emotional reactions. It seems thus impossible to specify with a reasonable degree of certainty the reason why this particular anecdote is not included in the Caesarian narrative, and one can only speculate on this matter.

omission can be explained on the same grounds as that of the whole episode of his rather embarrassing and unsuccessful attempt to cross from Epirus to Italy in Plutarch (see supra, n. 6), other expressions of feelings are more consistent with a positive self-presentation of Caesar. The Roman general is said, for instance, to have gained confidence (Plut. *Caes.* 39.1: θαρρήσας; Cass. Dio 41.49.1: θαρσήσας; cf. *Caes. BCiv.* 3.30) after the arrival of Antonius with his forces from Brundisium; he was also overjoyed (Plut. *Caes.* 44.1: περιχαρής; cf. *Caes. BCiv.* 3.85.3-4) to hear that the enemy were coming down into the plain for battle at Pharsalus, but, after the victory, he groaned (Plut. *Caes.* 46.1: στενάξας) upon entering Pompey's camp and seeing the dead or falling soldiers of his enemy (cf. *Caes. BCiv.* 3.97).

- 8 See in the same book *Caes. BCiv.* 3.18.3 (Pompey's discussion with Caesar's messenger Vibullius); 3.61.1 (Pompey made the round of his garrisons with the two Allobroges who deserted Caesar's camp and showed them off); 3.71.4 (details on Labienus' severe behaviour towards deserters); 3.91 (the remarkable courage of the *euocatus* Crastinus); 3.105 (list of prodigies). The narrator does not avoid emotions either, when he deals with Pompeians or Pompey himself: Pompey's soldiers who fled to Caesar's camp after the battle of Pharsalus are presented as crying (*flentes*), and Caesar started to console them (*consolatus consurgere*) by citing many examples of his clemency (*Caes. BCiv.* 3.98.2). The narrator, despite including much less detail than Plutarch (cf. Plut. *Pomp.* 73), when recounting Pompey's hasty flight from Pharsalia, also focuses on his feeling of abandonment and betrayal by his followers (*Caes. BCiv.* 3.96.4).
- 9 Cf. Guillaumin 1985: 743, who explains in this way Caesar's succinct account of the capitulation of Vercingetorix (*Caes. BGall.* 89.4).
- 10 On the role and function of tragic motifs in Plutarch's *Lives*, see Mossman 2014, and Pelling 2016, who focuses on the role of tragic motifs. See also Chrysanthou 2018: 66-102 (esp. 68-69), on the way the use of emotions engages with the reader in Plutarch's *Lives*.

The absence of this scene from what one would expect to be its ultimate source, whereas it is very common in later sources, raises the legitimate question of the circumstances of its appearance in the written tradition. The very anecdotic nature of the scene under study may, however, provide some relevant insight. According to the definition proposed by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, an anecdote is “the narrative of a detached incident, or of a single event, told as being in itself interesting or striking”.¹¹ Therefore, an anecdote distinguishes itself by its autonomy from the rest of the narrative and by its capacity to impress. Given the anecdotic character of the episode under study, to what extent may Caesar’s silence thus be analysed as an “omission”, in the same way that one might refer to the omission of a historical fact from a continuous historiographical narrative? In other words, is Caesar the narrator responsible for silencing the emotions of Caesar the protagonist or have later authors, based on earlier accounts, reworked and progressively shaped a relevant tradition, adding and enhancing details, for reasons pertaining to their own intended portrayal of Caesar?

Based on the methodological tools provided by Saller’s study¹² on the historical anecdotes of the Principate, the aim of this paper will accordingly be to explore (1) the context in which this anecdote was generated; (2) its alterations through transmission; and (3) its implications as historical evidence. Since, as the scholar noted, an anecdote’s full history of transmission is never documented and the stage preceding its appearance in the written tradition cannot be recovered, the only available method for exploring the context of generation of an anecdote and its alterations through transmission is “by comparing the different versions with respect to each element of the anecdote (chronological and physical settings, characters, minor details, and ‘punch-line’)”.¹³ The chronological and physical settings of the various versions of the anecdote under study remain practically unchanged; on the contrary, the minor details and to a lesser extent the characters involved are the most fluid elements. The pointed conclusion (“punch-line”) drawn from each anecdote

11 *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (1989), vol. I, s.v. anecdote 2.

12 Saller 1980.

13 Saller 1980 : 74.

is most often, according to Saller, the most stable element,¹⁴ but, as the study of relevant sources will show, two pointed conclusions have been shaped in the course of the transmission of this anecdote. Based on these categories of analysis, we will attempt to identify the ultimate source or sources of the episode and outline its possible evolution, by comparing the details of ancient sources reporting it and by focusing on the role it plays in each of them, also depending on their genre or ideological stance.¹⁵

A brief chronological survey of the sources relating the scene is thus *a priori* necessary, since this will provide the basis for classifying the various sources in different categories according to the stable and fluid elements observed in each of them, following Saller's methodological tools. The aim will then be to explore the extent to which extant sources reworked and reshaped the anecdote and trace the possible history - with reference to its possible earliest stages - of the progressive formation of a tradition on this episode which is associated with Caesar's *memoria*. Through this historiographical study, it will be shown that the anecdote was most likely reported for the first time by pro-Caesarian historians and then reworked, reinterpreted and embellished in the context of historical declamation.

II. Pompey's head presented to Caesar: survey of sources

Special mention should be made, in advance, of the attested presence of the episode in two non-preserved texts, because, if these two testimonies indeed reflect the content of the original texts, the latter chronologically precede any surviving account of the incident. In the last part of this paper, the role of these two texts in the formation of a tradition on this incident will thus be proven to be decisive.

14 Saller 1980: 78-79.

15 See also for a similar methodological approach on a case study Rondholz 2009 on the episode of Caesar's crossing the Rubicon, with the difference that Rondholz mostly focuses on the generic rather than the ideological reasons which motivated the inclusion or addition of different details in each of the relevant sources.

The scene of Pompey's head presented to Caesar is included in Livy's *Periocha* 112. The summaries of the *Ab Vrbe Condita* (AVC), made by an unknown author between the second and the fourth century A.D.¹⁶, reproduce, to a debated extent¹⁷, Livy's narrative, conducted during the Augustan period. The *Periocha* 112 seems to reflect a rather pro-Caesarian stance, by referring to Caesar's tears and sorrow: *Caesar post tertium diem insecutus, cum ei Theodotus caput Pompei et anulum obtulisset, infensus est et inlacrimavit*: "The third day thereafter Caesar arrived in pursuit (i.e. of Pompey), and when Theodotus brought him Pompey's head and ring, he was indignant and burst into tears."¹⁸ The genre of the *Periocha* imposes practical limits on our understanding of this mention: did the author draw the episode from Livy or from other sources? If the former is the case, did Livy also promote a rather positive *memoria* of Caesar? These questions will be examined in the last part of this paper. At this stage, it suffices to keep in mind that if the *Periocha* follows Livy's text, the cited text, along with the next passage, are the earliest testimonies of the scene. According to the traditional dating, Livy published the final version of the first five books of his work between 27 and 25 B.C.¹⁹ and wrote 142 books in the course of 40 to 45 years, if one accepts the view that when he died in 12 or 17 A.D. he was still writing or had recently finished his work.²⁰ The *Periocha* 112, which contains the incident under study, should thus be dated in the Late Augustan period. Furthermore, it is worth noting that despite its conciseness, this testimony is the most in-

16 See Bingham 1978: 475-76; and Jal 1984: XXIII-XVI, with earlier bibliography.

17 See *infra* on this subject.

18 Transl. by A.C. Schlesinger (LOEB 1987).

19 See on this traditional dating Klotz 1926: 818, and Ogilvie 1965: 94. According to some scholars, the surviving version of Livy's first pentade is a second edition of an earlier one published between 31-27 B.C. See on this theory Bayet 1940: XVI-XXI; Luce 1965, Burton 2000; *id.* 2008; *contra* Syme 1959, 46-50.

20 The date of 17 A.D. is based on Saint Jerome (Hieron., *Chron.* p. 154 & 171 Helm), whose trustworthiness was put into question by Syme 1959: 40-41, who suggested 12 A.D. as date of Livy's death. I addressed the question of Livy's date of death in a forthcoming paper (Vassiliades 2022), where I argue that Livy more probably died in 17 A.D. and that he was still writing his work when he died.

formative as far as the chronological setting (*post tertium diem*) is concerned; it is also the only source, along with Plutarch, to mention the tutor of the young Ptolemy XIII, Theodotus, as one of the protagonists.

In his collection of fictive court cases, known as *Controversiae*, published some years later, more probably during the rule of Caligula (37-41 A.D.)²¹, Seneca the Elder reports that the episode was exploited by two declaimers of the Early Imperial period: Moschus, exiled from Rome and already dead around 25 A.D.²², eleven years after Augustus' death, and Musa, a rhetorician whose *floruit* is also assumed to be during the Tiberian age²³. It is difficult to determine the precise date of the *declamatio* under discussion, but one can safely enough assume that it was produced around the late Augustan or early Tiberian period, which brings us to a contemporary or slightly later date than Livy's account of this episode.

The fictional law case was that of a daughter who, during the civil wars, took the side of her husband, although her father and son were on the opposite side; her party lost and her husband was killed; when she returned to her father's house, she was ordered by her father to hang herself and did so; the son accused his father of madness (*dementiae*). Seneca cites excerpts from this case drawn from declaimers defending the son or the father.²⁴ Moschus and Musa are among those who take the side of the son, and both refer to the *exemplum* of Caesar. Moschus argues as

21 Fairweather 1981: 3 suggests an approximate dating of *Controversiae* during the rule of Tiberius or Caligula, by arguing that by the time Seneca (born during the decade of fifties B.C.) wrote his work, he had an unusually intimate knowledge of his subject acquired over seventy years or more. Griffin 1972: 4-5, concludes that the *Controversiae* and the *Suasoriae* were composed between 37 and 40 A.D.

22 See Sen. *Controv.* 2.5.13: he was persecuted and convicted for poisoning and he was defended by Asinius Pollio, the consul of 23 A.D. He then taught and died around 25 A.D. at Massalia, where, following Tacitus (*Ann.* 4.43), he bequeathed his legacy.

23 See Griffin 1972: 8 and Fairweather 1981: 277, who date the *floruit* of this orator around that period, based on the information that Seneca attended his declamations with his sons (Sen. *Controv.* 10 *praef.* 1, 9). Seneca refers to Musa's style, whereas he only criticises Moschus for the excessive use of *figurae* (Sen. *Controv.* 10 *praef.* 9-10).

24 See for an analysis of this case Gunderson 2003: 132-35. The critic (*ibid.* 134) also refers to the exploitation of the scene of Pompey's head presented to Caesar, by treating it as a concrete historical *exemplum* used to further the defendants' speeches. See also Van der Poel 2009: 342-43, who analyses these passages as judicial *exempla* used by the declaimers in order to construct convincing arguments.

follows: *Adlatum ad se Caesar Pompei caput fleuit. Hoc ille propter filiam praestitit.* (Sen. *Controv.* 10.3.1): “Caesar wept when the head of Pompey was brought to him; this was the tribute he paid for his daughter’s sake”.²⁵ Caesar is presented as weeping for his daughter’s sake in front of her husband’s head, contrary to the father in the imagined case.

The scene is exploited some paragraphs later by Musa, who also opposes Caesar’s sensitivity at the sight of his former son-in-law’s head to the father’s lack of affection towards his own daughter: *Allato ad se capite Cn. Pompei Caesar auertisse oculos dicitur, quod tu ne in morte filiae quidem fecisti.* (Sen. *Controv.* 10.3.5): “When Pompey’s head was brought to him, Caesar is said to have averted his eyes; you didn’t do that even at the death of your daughter”. The tone is in both cases rather positive for Caesar, although one might discern a slight distancing from the victor of the civil wars in Moschus’ remark that Caesar wept for his daughter’s sake: this could be taken to imply that Caesar’s attitude was not a sign of sensitivity towards Pompey, but the fulfilment of a duty towards his own daughter. Furthermore, the verb *dicitur*, used in Musa’s *sententia* without an agent, attributes the cited information to a more or less shared tradition for whose authority or trustworthiness Musa avoids vouching personally.

Beyond the fact that the analysis of these rhetorical texts reveals a rather positive commemoration of Caesar’s attitude through the exploitation of the episode as a means of persuasion, and more precisely as a positive *exemplum*, one can further conclude from Seneca’s evidence that the anecdote itself was developed via declamatory exercises. These seem to interact with an already established anonymous tradition, which they seem to enrich by adapting it to the particular persuasive goals of each *declamatio*. As one would expect, the orators exploiting this episode betray a lack of interest in the chronological circumstances, the minor protagonists, and the minor details of the episode, since the only thing that seems relevant to their persuasive strategy is the pointed conclusion drawn from Caesar’s attitude. The eventually important role of *declamatio* in the diffusion of the episode and its interconnection with other genres in formulating a relevant tradition will, however, be discussed in detail later.

25 Transl. M. Winterbottom (LOEB 1974), as well as all translations of Seneca the Elder.

The fact that Valerius Maximus is the first preserved source to refer to this episode may not be a coincidence, given the close generic interaction between Valerius' work and the widespread practice of *declamatio* in his cultural milieu: Bloomer suggests that Valerius' collection of rhetorical *exempla* not only drew material from what was heard in declamatory exercises, but was even designed to influence these rhetorical exercises, which were the most highly esteemed public art forms in Tiberian Rome.²⁶ Commenting on the generic identity of Valerius' work, Welch points out that it blends elements of declamation and historiography, since, like the former, it is concerned with turns of phrases and moral dilemmas, and, like the latter, it is concerned with presenting and preserving past events.²⁷

The eventual implications of the exploitation of the scene under study both by declaimers of the Early Imperial period and by Valerius, whose cultural interaction with the genre of *declamatio* is generally acknowledged, will be discussed later, in the examination of the role this episode plays in the different ancient sources and in shaping and reshaping a relevant tradition. For the moment, it should be underlined that Valerius Maximus chooses to include in his positive *exempla de humanitate et clementia* a scene commemorating Caesar's *memoria*, which was apt to be used by both historians and declaimers. Following Valerius, when Pompey's head was presented to Caesar, it aroused even the victor's pity (*etiam ipsi uictori miserabile*):

ut enim id Caesar aspexit, oblitus hostis soceri uultum induit ac Pompeio cum proprias tum et filiae suae lacrimas reddidit, caput autem plurimis et pretiosissimis odoribus cremandum curauit. Quod si non tam mansuetus animus diuini principis extitisset, paulo ante Romani imperii columen habitum—sic mortalium negotia fortuna uersat—inhumatum iacuisset. (Val. Max. 5.1.10)

For when Caesar saw it, he forgot the role of enemy and put on the countenance of a father-in-law and gave tears to Pompey, his own and

26 See Bloomer 1992: 3-4, 7-9, 12-13, 17, 47, 60-62, 78, 146, 153-54.

27 See Welch 2013 (esp. 67-68). Langlands 2008: 160-61, also argues that Valerius' work is better understood within the context of the practice of *declamatio*, especially in the aspect of "controversial thinking".

his daughter's too; and he had the head cremated with an abundance of the costliest perfumes. If the **heart** of the divine leader had not shown itself so **gentle**, he who a little while before had been looked upon as the crown of the Roman empire (so does Fortune turn the affairs of mortals) would have lain unburied. (Transl. Shackleton Bailey - LOEB 2000)

Caesar's attitude is praised as consistent with his roles of father and father-in-law. The phrase *uultum induit* might be taken to allude only to an external (and thus perhaps hypocritical) reaction by Caesar, but the rest of the paragraph allows no doubt on the positive stance towards the leader, who is here meant to function as a positive *exemplum*: if he had not offered Pompey a proper burial, because of his *mansuetus animus*, the body would have been left unburied.²⁸ The "punch-line" is once again the most important element in this exploitation of the anecdote; the minor details elaborated only in this version of the anecdote, referring to the meticulous care taken by Caesar for the burial of Pompey (*caput autem plurimis et pretiosissimis odoribus cremandum curauit*), appear as a prelude to the moral conclusion of the anecdote regarding the gentle heart of Caesar.

The most elaborate account appears in the epic poem *Pharsalia*, where Seneca the Elder's grandson, Lucan, generally portrays Caesar in unflattering tones.²⁹ As soon as he arrived in Egypt, an attendant of Ptolemy (*satelles regis*) appeared, carrying Pompey's head as a gift, and tried through a short but solemn speech to value the beheading of Caesar's enemy as a service to him (9.1010-32). The invented speech delivered by Ptolemy's attendant, whose exact identity does not interest the narrator, is cited only here, in order to increase the dramatic tension of the scene. When then describing Caesar's weeping³⁰, Lucan highlights his hypocrisy, which appears as the moral conclusion of the scene and the reason for its inclusion in the narrative:

28 See Blommer 1992: 211.

29 See Tschiedel 1985: 12-18; Wick 2004: *ad loc.*; Radicke 2004: 478-89; D'Alessandro Behr 2007: 60-70.

30 Cf. Hagen 2017: 212-16, on the scenes of weeping of other heroes in Lucan at the sight of the dead Pompey.

Sic fatus opertum

*detexit tenuitque caput. Iam languida morte
effigies habitum noti mutauerat oris.*

Non primo Caesar damnauit munera uisu 1035

auertitque oculos; uoltus, dum crederet, haesit;

utque fidem uidit sceleris tutumque putauit

iam bonus esse socer, lacrimas non sponte cadentis

effudit gemitusque expressit pectore laeto,

non aliter manifesta potens abscondere mentis 1040

gaudia quam lacrimis, meritumque inmane tyranni

destruit et generi mauolt lugere reuolsum

quam debere caput. (Luc. 9.1032-43)

With these words he took off the covering from the head, and held it in his hands. By now the features, relaxed by death, had changed the aspect of that familiar face. When Caesar first saw it, he did not condemn the gift nor turn away: his eyes were fixed upon the face till he could be sure. Then, when he saw the proof of the crime, and thought it safe at last to be the loving kinsman, he shed crocodile tears and forced out groans while his heart rejoiced. By tears alone was he able to hide his obvious delight; and thus he belittles the king's horrid service, preferring to mourn the severed head of his kinsman rather than owe obligation for it.³¹

All the details added, including the changed aspect of the mutilated head, the gestures made by Caesar to ensure that Pompey was indeed dead, and the focalisation upon the inner thoughts and feelings of the protagonist, are placed in the service of the pointed moral conclusion of the anecdote: Caesar was cruel and a hypocrite. In a dramatic apostrophe to Caesar, Lucan declares that these tears were not sincere (9.1047-62). The speech then delivered by Caesar (9.1064-104) reveals his selfish motives: he complains that the Egyptians' initiative deprived him of the most important privilege of civil war: the power of granting life to the defeated (9.1066-

31 Translations of Lucan are from the Loeb edition (Duff 1928).

68); he then expresses his anger at Ptolemy's interference in Roman affairs, which contested Caesar's absolute authority (9.1068-78), and stresses that the same reception would have been prepared for him, had he not been the victor (9.1079-88). In the final part of the speech, he orders that Pompey should be given a proper burial and expresses his deep sorrow for his son-in-law's destiny and for a lost opportunity for reconciliation (9.1091-104). Lucan ensures that Caesar's performance will not deceive the readers, by concluding with the onlookers' scepticism. The addition of the onlookers, as minor protagonists of the scene, and the dramatic elaboration of their gestures and inner feelings, which is unique in all extant sources, are there to seal the moral of the story by also increasing dramatic tension:

*Nec talia fatus
 inuenit fletus comitem nec turba querenti 1105
 credidit: abscondunt gemitus et pectora laeta
 fronte tegunt, hilaresque nefas spectare cruentum,
 o bona libertas, cum Caesar lugeat, audent.* (Luc. 9.1104-08)

Thus he spoke, but found none to share his weeping; nor did the hearers believe his complaint; they hid their sorrow and veiled their feelings with a mask of rejoicing; though Caesar mourns, they dare—how gracious the privilege! —to look with cheerful faces at that sight of blood and crime.

Plutarch's account in the *Lives of Pompey* and *Caesar* is much briefer and much more favourable to Caesar. In line with the biographer's overall inclination to the pathetic element, Plutarch places emphasis on the emotions of the general at the sight of Pompey's head:

Τοῦτο Πομπηίου τέλος, οὐ πολλῶ δὲ ὕστερον Καῖσαρ ἔλθων εἰς Αἴγυπτον ἄγους τοσούτου καταπεπλησμένην τὸν μὲν προσφέροντα τὴν κεφαλὴν ὡς παλαμναῖον ἀπεστράφη, τὴν δὲ σφραγίδα τοῦ Πομπηίου δεξάμενος ἐδάκρυσεν· ἦν δὲ γλυφὴ λέων ζιφήρης. Ἀχιλλᾶν δὲ καὶ Ποθεινὸν ἀπέσφαξεν. (Plut. *Pomp.* 80.5)

This was the end of Pompey. But not long afterwards Caesar came to Egypt, and found it filled with this great deed of abomination. From the man who brought him Pompey's head he turned away with loathing, as from an assassin; and on receiving Pompey's seal-ring, he burst into tears; the device was a lion holding a sword in his paws. But Achilles and Potheinus he put to death. (Transl. Perrin—LOEB 1917)

εἰς δὲ Ἀλεξάνδρειαν ἐπὶ Πομπηΐῳ τεθνηκότι καταχθεὶς Θεόδοτον μὲν ἀπεστράφη τὴν Πομπηίου κεφαλὴν προσφέροντα, τὴν δὲ σφραγίδα δεξάμενος τοῦ ἀνδρὸς κατεδάκρυσεν. [...] τοῖς δὲ φίλοις εἰς Ἱώμην ἔγραψεν ὅτι τῆς νίκης ἀπολαύοι τοῦτο μέγιστον καὶ ἥδιστον, τὸ σῶζειν τινὰς αἰεὶ τῶν πεπολεμηκότων πολιτῶν αὐτῶ. (Plut. *Caes.* 48.2)

Arriving at Alexandria just after Pompey's death, he turned away in horror from Theodotus as he presented the head of Pompey, but he accepted Pompey's seal-ring, and shed tears over it. [...] And to his friends in Rome he wrote that this was the greatest and sweetest pleasure that he derived from his victory, namely, from time to time to save the lives of fellow citizens who had fought against him. (Transl. Perrin—LOEB 1919)

Commenting on *Caes.* 48.2, Pelling rightly stresses that Plutarch “leaves the impression that the tears are simply of distress for a former friend and relative”, although the last phrase (τῆς νίκης ... πολιτῶν αὐτῶ) “may also hint at disappointment at losing a chance to display clemency.”³² This nuancing remark is consistent with the theme of Caesar's pursuit of δόξα, which runs through the whole *Life of Caesar*,³³ but the biographer does not seem to question the frankness of Caesar's horror and sadness at the moment of staring at his adversary's severed head. Plutarch's fa-

32 Pelling 2011: *ad loc.* The cited passages have surprisingly not attracted scholars' attention. On Plutarch's *Caesar*, see Pelling 2002. On Plutarch's *Pompey*, see Beneker 2005b, who examines the rise and fall of Pompey, but without dealing with *Pomp.* 80. Beneker 2005a, focuses on thematic correspondences between Plutarch's *Lives of Caesar*, *Pompey*, and *Crassus*, but does not mention this episode.

33 See Santangelo 2019: 335–39.

vourable stance towards Caesar in this scene is also reflected in the biographer's choice, in *Pomp.* 80.7, to indirectly associate the murderers' execution with Caesar's indignation by placing the first immediately after the second.³⁴ As already stressed, Caesar's intervention in Egypt plays out as a normalising factor, since the killers are punished, and the remains of Pompey are then handed over to his wife Cornelia.³⁵ Plutarch here either follows a pro-Caesarian source, or has no other at his disposal.³⁶

The reference to Theodotus and the seal-ring of the defunct, details which also appear in Livy's *Periocha*, may reflect Plutarch's dependence upon Livy or a common source favourable to Caesar. These details, however, should not necessarily be analysed as reflecting Plutarch's interest in historical accuracy. As Saller has argued, anecdotes provided, above all, the biographers with the sort of material they required for the characterisation of their protagonists.³⁷ The information added by Plutarch about a letter addressed by Caesar to his friends in Rome (*Caes.* 48.2), along with the punishment of the Egyptian murderers, points to the clemency of the protagonist only towards his Roman enemies, as one of his virtues or policies.

This pro-Caesarian conclusion is shared by all sources examined up this point except Lucan. The poet's clear anti-Caesarian stance might point, however, to the existence of a parallel tradition or at least to its creation by the Roman epic poet. Cassius Dio's version of the episode also falls into a tradition hostile to Caesar.

Ὁ δ' οὖν Καῖσαρ τὴν τοῦ Πομπηίου κεφαλὴν ἰδὼν κατεδάκρυσεν καὶ κατωλοφύρατο, πολίτην τε αὐτὸν καὶ γαμβρὸν ὀνομάζων, καὶ πάνθ' ὅσα ποτὲ ἀλλήλοις ἀνθυπουργήκεσαν ἀναριθμούμενος. Τοῖς τε ἀποκτεῖναι αὐτὸν οὐχ ὅπως εὐεργεσίαν τινὰ ὀφείλειν ἔφη, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐπεκάλει, καὶ ἐκείνην κοσμησαί τε καὶ εὐθετῆσαι καὶ θάψαι τισὶν ἐκέλευσε. 2. Καὶ ἐπὶ μὲν τούτῳ ἔπαινον ἔσχεν, ἐπὶ δὲ δὴ τῇ προσποιήσει γέλωτα ὠφλίσκανε· τῆς γὰρ δυναστείας δεινῶς ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐφιέμενος,

34 The association becomes explicit in App. *B Civ.* 2.13.90: Ποθεινὸν μὲν καὶ Ἀχιλλᾶν ἐκόλασε θανάτῳ τῆς ἐς τὸν Πομπήιον παρανομίας.

35 See Santangelo 2019: 335.

36 Wick 2004: 426.

37 Saller 1980: 72-73.

καὶ ἐκεῖνον καὶ ὡς ἀνταγωνιστὴν καὶ ὡς ἀντίπαλον αἰεὶ ποτε μισήσας, 3. καὶ τὰ τε ἄλλα ἐπ' αὐτῷ πάντα πράξας καὶ τὸν πόλεμον τόνδε οὐκ ἐπ' ἄλλο τι παρασκευάσας ἢ ἵνα ἀπολομένου αὐτοῦ πρωτεύσῃ, τότε τε ἐς τὴν Αἴγυπτον οὐ δι' ἄλλο τι ἐπειχθεὶς ἢ ἵνα αὐτόν, εἰ περιεΐη, προσκατεργάσαιτο, ποθεῖν τε αὐτὸν ἐπλάττετο καὶ ἀγανακτεῖν τῷ ὀλέθρῳ αὐτοῦ ἐσκήπττετο. (Cass. Dio 42.8)

Now Caesar at the sight of Pompey's head wept and lamented bitterly, calling him countryman and son-in-law, and enumerating all the kindnesses they had shown each other. As for the murderers, far from admitting that he owed them any reward, he actually heaped reproaches upon them; and he commanded that the head should be adorned, properly prepared, and buried. 2. For this he received praise, **but for his hypocrisy he incurred ridicule.** He had, of course, from the outset been very eager for dominion; he had always hated Pompey as his antagonist and rival, 3. and besides all his other measures against him he had brought on this war with no other purpose than to secure this rival's ruin and his own supremacy; he had but now been hurrying to Egypt with no other end in view than to overthrow him completely if he should still be alive; yet he feigned to mourn his loss and made a show of vexation over his murder. (Transl. Cary - LOEB 1916)

Cassius Dio places even more emphasis than Lucan on the contradiction between Caesar's merciful attitude on this occasion and the fierce way he had pursued victory over him (cf. Luc. 9.1047-48, 1057-58). Furthermore, he adds an important detail when describing the onlookers' reactions: the Roman general was laughed at for his hypocrisy (cf. Luc. 1106-08, cited above). It is difficult to determine whether this aspect was added by the historian or whether he had drawn it from earlier accounts, now lost. In any case, this detail strengthens the moral "punch-line" of the story in the last part of the cited passage, in a way which is more elaborate and more explicit than in any other version of the anecdote. Dio's anti-Caesarian version is an exception to the general pro-Caesarian tendency of later historiographical sources, including Appian, Eutropius,

Orosius and the unknown author of *De viris illustribus*, who refer to the episode very briefly, by drawing some details from earlier sources.³⁸

To sum up, the different exploitation of the various elements (chronological and physical settings, characters, minor details, and “punch-line”) of the anecdote on Caesar’s emotional reaction to the sight of Pompey’s mutilated head reflects an ideological stance toward Caesar. The way this episode is commemorated in each source can sometimes be also attributed to its generic particularities or limitations and to its moralising intentions, especially in the cases of the *Periochae*, the declaimers, Valerius Maximus and Plutarch. Nevertheless, it always depends on the particular way each author positions himself toward an ambivalent figure of the civil wars, Caesar, and thus decides to pursue his *memoria*. In this context, two ideological and historical traditions were shaped regarding the scene under study: a clearly or rather pro-Caesarian, which focuses on the leader’s emotion at the sight of his dead enemy, and an anti-Caesarian, which stresses Caesar’s hypocrisy and selfish motives.³⁹ The first tradition is most prevalent in the extant tradition, whereas the second is only represented by the epic poet Lucan and the historian Cassius Dio, even though negative nuances may be discernible but not explicit in the declamatory tradition, namely Moschus.

The differences observed in the constitutive elements of the anecdote, and especially the opposing moral conclusions drawn from it, reflect its plasticity depending on the ideological interpretation of the incident by later authors. It should not be overlooked, when exploring the reception of this episode in later sources, that this small case study is inscribed in the larger context of the imperial representation and remembrance (*memoria*) of the republican factual past (*historia*). Gowing has convincingly argued that, in contrast to the modern perception, Romans of the early imperial period did not envisage a sharp distinction

38 App. B Civ. 2.13.90: τὴν δὲ κεφαλὴν τοῦ Πομπηίου προσφερομένην οὐχ ὑπέστη, ἀλλὰ προσέταξε ταφῆναι... *De vir. Ill.* 77.9: *qui non continens lacrimas illud plurimis et pretiosissimis odoribus cremandum curavit.* Eutr. 6.21.3: *Quo conspecto Caesar etiam lacrimas fudisse dicitur, tanti uiri intuens caput et generi quondam sui.* Oros. 6.15.29: *Caesar compositis apud Thessaliam rebus Alexandriam uenit perlatoque ad se ac uiso Pompei capite anuloque fleuit.* See also Zonar. 10.10 (p. 365, 6-10).

39 See on the same point Tschiedel 1985: 5-6.

between *historia* and *memoria*. It was required of any Roman author, as it is to a lesser extent by modern interpreters of the past, to give their proper meaning to the past and decide what to remember and how. *Historia* was any attempt to transmit the past and pursue its memory (*memoria*) regardless of the factual reliability of each source and regardless of the genre (historiography, poetry, epistolography etc.) involved in preserving and handing down the memory of the past. The distinction between “fiction” and “non-fiction” seems mostly a modern concern.⁴⁰ These blurred limits also apply to the scene of Caesar’s mourning upon Pompey’s head, and this is reflected in the different versions of the episode:⁴¹ there is a part emanating from “factual” history and a part which could be attributed to the tendency of ancient authors to pursue the memory of Caesar or the civil wars in a specific way.⁴²

It seems, of course, impossible to distinguish between what *in fact* took place and which details may have resulted from continuous later re-adaptations and re-interpretations of the anecdote for reasons pertaining to politics, literature or different sources. In other words, since Caesar himself did not attempt to promote a particular *memoria* of himself through this episode, we should rely on our survey of other extant sources, in order to briefly examine the place of each source in the progressive shaping of a tradition relevant to this episode and thereby to Caesar’s *memoria*. We will thus be able to outline the eventual history of

40 See Gowing 2005: 7–15 (esp. 9–12) for this discussion on the relationship between *memoria* and *historia* of the Republican past during the Early Empire. See also Gallia 2012 (esp. 1–11) on the dynamics of *memoria* of the Republic during the Imperial period, especially during the Flavian period. On the representation of late Republican civil wars in the historiography of the Imperial period, see Lange & Vervaet 2019: passim.

41 Cf. Heinen 1966: 72 n2, who defends the episode’s historicity, although noting that similar scenes appear in Plut. *Pyrrh.* 34.4; *Ant.* 78.2. Cf. Tschiedel 1985: 4, who points to the difficulty of distinguishing between fiction and historicity when dealing with scenes reproducing the *topos* of the victor weeping over the vanquished dead, the episode under study included. See along the same lines Hagen 2017: 59–61 and Vekselius 2018: 155–66 (esp. 159–61), generally on the scenes of weeping in ancient historiography.

42 See in a similar context Devillers & Sion-Jenkis 2012, where scholars focus on the reception of Caesar’s figure in individual authors, mostly of the Augustan period.

this tradition and seek one or more archetypical versions of the episode in sources other than Caesar himself.

III. The shaping of the literary tradition on the episode

The extant sources studied in the third part of this paper can be divided into two major categories according to their genre: a) “historiographical-biographical”, which include Livy’s *Periocha*, Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, Dio Cassius and the other later historians who only make a brief mention of the scene (Appian, Orosius, Eutropius and Zonaras); and b) “rhetorical-declamatory”, which include the two testimonies from Seneca the Elder. Our study of the literary tradition should thus be divided into these two parts. Lucan, who is our most extensive source for the episode, does not belong to either of the two genres, but, as will be pointed out, he draws from both historiographical and declamatory sources and approaches in order to construct his own account. Accordingly, our investigation will bring out the intersection and interaction between the “historiographical” and the “declamatory” branch in the creation, development, enhancement and diffusion of a tradition on Caesar’s mourning upon Pompey’s head.

1. Historiographical *Quellenkritik*

The investigation of the episode’s historiographical tradition is mostly a question of *Quellenkritik* aiming to assess the trustworthiness of extant sources relating it, and secondarily one of *Quellenforschung*, which only permits few certainties. As Saller pertinently notes: “We can rarely determine whether the first author known to us transmitting a particular story invented it, altered it, or was just passing it on. What is more important, most of our ancient sources, especially those living generations or even centuries after the incident, would have been similarly incapable of determining ultimate origins, since notice of original authorship rarely accompanied the anecdote.”⁴³ Therefore, the purpose of both approaches (*Quellenkritik* and *Quellenforschung*) will not only be to determine the historiographical context in which this anecdote was probably

43 Saller 1980: 69-70.

shaped, but also, and more importantly, to understand how it turned into a widespread version of history. Were there one or more common sources of this story?

It is important to clarify in advance that we are not concerned here with the creation of a tradition on Pompey's beheading, but specifically with the scene of Pompey's head presented to Caesar, who becomes indignant at the spectacle. Caesar does not mention Pompey's decapitation, probably, as already stressed, being unwilling to include disturbing details of his adversary's death. However, as Martin pointed out, we know that the victim's beheading after his execution became a common practice in the late Republican civil wars. Even if the horrific details of Pompey's decapitation provided by Lucan (8.663-91) are not necessarily accurate, there are no grounds to challenge the sources' consensus that Pompey was beheaded.⁴⁴ It seems, therefore, a reasonable assumption that his severed head would also be preserved in order to be presented to Caesar⁴⁵, on the Egyptians' initiative or at Caesar's request. The general's reaction, however, regardless of if there actually was one, has progressively generated a tradition in different and much more numerous sources, whose exact course will be investigated.

Let us then start our investigation from sources closer to the facts. The very first mention of Pompey's death in September 48, was made by Cicero in a letter to Atticus in December 48. He refers to it as to an expected outcome, given Pompey's pitiful situation, but without making any allusion to the method of Pompey's execution or the presentation of Pompey's head to Caesar:

3. [...] *De Pompei exitu mihi dubium numquam fuit. Tanta enim desperatio rerum eius omnium regum et populorum animos occuparat ut quocumque uenisset hoc putarem futurum.* 4. *Non possum eius casum non dolere; hominem enim integrum et castum et grauem cognoui.* (Cic. Att. 11.6.3-4)

44 See Martin 2005: 151-53.

45 Martin 2005: 153-56, shows that, contrary to the unanimity of sources on the destiny of Pompey's head, two traditions arose regarding Pompey's corpse: one created by Asinius Pollio and another created by Cremutius Cordus. See also *ibid*: 156-60, for a discussion on the embalment of Pompey's head.

3. [...] As to Pompey's end I never had any doubt, for all rulers and peoples had become so thoroughly persuaded of the hopelessness of his case that wherever he went I expected this to happen. 4. I cannot but grieve for his fate. I knew him for a man of good character, clean life, and serious principle. (Transl. D. R. Shackleton Bailey - LOEB 1999).

Cicero's omission of Caesar's reaction might be easily explained: even if Plutarch says that Caesar arrived in Egypt "not long afterwards" (οὐ πολλῶ δὲ ὕστερον), Cicero or his addressee Atticus may not have been informed of that incident. Furthermore, the inclusion of such a detail might seem unnecessary or even risky in a brief letter, in which Cicero, stuck in Brundisium, wishes to justify his decision of quitting the war and Pompey's side after the battle of Pharsalus, and to inform Atticus about his communication with Caesar's partners, Balbus and Oppius, in an attempt to guarantee his own standing (Cic. Att. 11.6.1-2). If Cicero had chosen to mention the incident, he would have been forced to interpret it in favour of Caesar or against him, which is something he might prefer to avoid. Cicero's omission does, however, constitute an indication that, in the immediate aftermath of Pompey's death, a tradition relevant to the famous scene of Pompey's head presented to Caesar may not yet have become so widespread that it should be mentioned as a necessary complement to the story of Pompey's death.

As already pointed out, the first accounts to include the anecdote are the *Periochae*, if one considers that they reproduce Livy's text, and Valerius Maximus, composed during Tiberius' reign.⁴⁶ The relative proximity to the events of the civil wars cannot be a compelling argument for concluding that the two sources reproduce exactly what happened in factual history, for different reasons in each case. Let us start our *Quellenkritik* with Valerius, since this analysis seems especially valid in his case, whereas some trends found in Valerius' preserved and more elaborate narrative will provide us with hints on the characteristics and purpose of Livy's account of the episode.

The following aspect of Valerius' work should be the first to be taken into account in evaluating the extent to which the author has altered the

46 See Wardle 1998: 1-6.

anecdote: the reconstruction of what actually happened was not always the primary goal of *Facta et dicta memorabilia*. In the preface, Valerius announces that he collected in one single work memorable deeds and words (*facta simul ac dicta memoratu digna*), dispersed in other authors; he clarifies that he pretends neither to exhaustivity, nor to a “more scrupulous accuracy” (*adtentiore cura*) or “more distinguished eloquence” (*praestantior facundia*)⁴⁷ than his predecessors. Valerius’ statement might be interpreted as a façade of humbleness⁴⁸, but the writer’s moralistic agenda, which had an impact on his method of dealing with sources⁴⁹, cannot be doubted. Valerius’ primary purpose is to provide his audience in general with *exempla*, an aim which may lead him to a reinterpretation or even manipulation of his sources according to his ethical or political agenda.⁵⁰ Gowing rightly insists, more precisely, on the political dimension of Valerius’ *exempla*, discussing how Valerius tends, through exclusion, inclusion or manipulation of stories, to fashion a memory of the Republic which emphasises how the stability established by Augustus and Tiberius allowed the permanence of Roman Republican values.⁵¹ The episode un-

47 I adopt the translation of Wardle 1998: *ad loc.* See on Valerius’ programmatic statements Bloomer 1992: 14-17.

48 Cf. Wardle 1998: *ad loc.*, who denies Valerius such subtlety.

49 On Valerius’ method of dealing with sources see Bloomer 1992: 59-146.

50 David 1998: 9-17, 119-30, stresses the rhetorical and exemplary dimension of Valerius’ work, which leads him to reinterpret his sources. On the function of Valerius’ *exempla* and their questionable trustworthiness, see Lucarelli 2007 (esp. 121-25, 282-92). Wardle 1998: 12-15, concludes that Valerius’ work had both a moral and a practical purpose, the latter consisting in providing orators with material for *declamatio*. Bloomer 1992: 1-10, 16-17, analyses Valerius’ *exempla* as means of persuasion consistent with Greek and Roman rhetorical theory. In her discussion of the function of *exempla* in Valerius’ work, Langlands 2008: 160-64, argues that the arrangement of *exempla* in sequences under ethical categories is designed to enact their readers’ moral reasoning skills in a context of controversial thinking, encouraged by the development of *declamatio*. *Idem* 2011 argues, through comparison with Cicero’s use of *exempla* in *De officiis*, that Valerius promotes an idea which is central to Roman ethics, namely that when reading *exempla*, one has to bear in mind the principle of situational variability: circumstances are important in judging one behaviour to be correct or not.

51 Gowing 2005: 49-62

der study illustrating Caesar's *mansuetudo* seems ideally suited to this ideological agenda. Furthermore, an *exemplum* need not be historically accurate; Cicero's standpoint that orators are even allowed to lie when they want to illustrate in a more expressive way the *mores* involved in the description of an episode or a person⁵² is probably extreme, but it does point to a rather loose connection between exemplarity and accuracy during this era. In the context of the use of anecdotes as *exempla*, whether the characterisations and details of the anecdotes were accurate mattered far less than the didactic purpose of each anecdote, which usually required stereotyping and adaptation of details to the intended moral lesson.⁵³

The same analysis cannot be adopted for Livy. The exemplary dimension of the AVC is explicitly stated in *praef.* 10.⁵⁴ It should not, however, be dismissed that, as opposed to Valerius, Livy stresses his attachment to the principle of *ueritas*: in *praef.* 5, he clarifies that he prefers to relate early Roman history, not because the narration of late Republican Roman history could divert the historian's mind from truth (*etsi non flectere a uero*), but because it might cause him anxiety. Moreover, Livy is a historical source, much closer to the civil wars than the biographer Plutarch and later historians like Appian and Cassius Dio, where the episode is related. It is, certainly, extremely difficult to determine whether the author of *Periocha* 112 drew the episode from Livy or from another source.

There is no consensus regarding the importance of the divergences between the *Periochae* and Livy's text. Did the epitomist copy directly and exclusively from Livy, or from an intermediate *Epitoma Liuiana*? In either case, to what extent did he consult other sources apart from Livy? I am personally more convinced by Jal's analysis, who examined all divergences between Livy's extant books and the corresponding *Periochae* proposed by Bingham and reduced the number of real ones to only a dozen,

52 See Cic. *Brut.* 42; *De or.* 2.241.

53 See on this point Saller 1980: 72.

54 The scholarship on the exemplarity in Livy is extensive. See ex. Moles 1993: 167-68; Kraus & Woodman 1997: 53-56; and esp. Chaplin 2000: 1-5, 50-72, who focus on Liv. *praef.* 10.

in which the author was also inspired by other sources or variants; the theory of existence of an intermediate *Epitoma* should be dismissed.⁵⁵

Could it, however, be still adduced that the author did not derive the episode under study from Book 112, but simply added it as a variant tradition found in other sources? Such additions seem untypical: Bingham's and Jal's comparisons provide no similar instance of the *Periochae* of extant Books containing "novelistic" episodes not related at all in Livy's narrative.⁵⁶ Moreover, it has been persuasively pointed out that Lucan's account of the civil war is to a significant extent dependent on Livy's lost books;⁵⁷ Bloomer's systematic examination of Valerius' dealing with sources has also revealed the author's preference for Cicero and Livy.⁵⁸ The fact that the scene of Pompey's head presented to Caesar appears in Lucan, Valerius and in Livy's *Periochae* can thus hardly be a coincidence: it is impossible to be certain, but it should be admitted that the episode was most probably indeed narrated by Livy.

Livy's alleged "Pompeianism" is another reason one can legitimately assume that he would be particularly interested in including such an anecdote. In Tacitus' *Annales*, the historian Cremutius Cordus, accused of having praised Brutus and Cassius in his work, states that Livy lavished such eulogies on Pompey that Augustus called him *Pompeianus*; yet this did not harm their *amicitia* (Tac. *Ann.* 4.34.4). This statement is put forward as an argument of defence in the mouth of Cordus, who probably exaggerates regarding not only the friendship between Livy and Augustus, but also Livy's praise of Pompey.⁵⁹ Tacitus' testimony should not thus

55 See Jal 1984: XXVI-LXVII (esp. XXXIX-XLVII); cf. Bingham 1978 (esp. 444-71); Bessone 1984; *idem* 2015.

56 See Bingham 1978: 88-405 (esp. 389-405); Jal 1984: XXXIX-XLVII.

57 See Narducci 2003; Mineo 2010.

58 Bloomer 1992: 59-146 (esp. 64-70, 75, 78, 104, 138, 146), with earlier bibliography.

59 Mette 1961: 277-78; Walsh 1961a: 28, 32-33; and Badian 1993: 11, among others, have taken this passage as evidence for Livy's attachment to the Republican ideology. Others have emphasised Livy's friendship with the prince. See ex. Burck 1991: 270.

lead to the conclusion that Livy would sketch a negative portrayal of Caesar in the episode under study.⁶⁰ In the *Periocha*, it is only stated that Caesar became indignant and wept when they brought him Pompey's head and ring (*cum ei Theodotus caput Pompei et anulum obtulisset, infensus est et inlacrimavit*). If this text reflects Livy's account, the historian may have presented the scene as an anecdote, found in his sources, and illustrating Caesar's *clementia*, a theme pervading the *Periochae* dedicated to the civil wars between Pompey and Caesar (see Liv. *Per.* 110.1, 111.7, 114.8).⁶¹ The episode was probably exploited by Livy, because it was consistent with the historian's ideological and narratological agenda.

The latter factor could explain the omission of the scene under study in authors of the Early Imperial Period, that is to say during a period where the episode was already well attested. They do, however, report Caesar's arrival in Egypt. Strong inferences based on omissions are, of course, difficult to make, given the very different level of detail in the various sources. Nevertheless, the historians' silence needs to be studied, given that they most probably came across this scene in their sources, Livy included.

Velleius Paterculus only stresses the disloyalty of Ptolemy and his court towards Caesar and Pompey (Vell. Pat. 2.54.1), and mentions nothing about the scene, whereas he had not failed to provide details about the circumstances of the general's death (Vell. Pat. 2.52.1-4). When introducing Caesar, he stresses that the general "lays hold upon his pen and compels him, despite his haste, to linger a while upon him" (Vell. Pat. 2.41.1: *qui scribenti manum iniicit et quamlibet festinantem in se morari cogit*); he then paints a positive portrait of the general and includes in his narrative anecdotes illustrating his virtues (Vell. Pat. 2.41-43). The absence of the incident under study seems thus unexpected despite the narrative

60 See along the same lines Tschiedel 1985: 6. See more generally on Livy's probable portrayal of Caesar in his lost books Mineo 2012, who argues that Caesar was presented as an ambivalent figure by Livy, but the historian also insisted on the equal responsibility of both him and the Pompeians for the outbreak of civil wars. Hoyos 2019: 225-27 shows that despite registering merit as the winner of civil wars, Caesar is not an admired Livian figure. Cf. Strasburger 1983 who suggests that Livy's presentation of Caesar was merely negative and consistent with his republican spirit.

61 On the theme of Caesar's *clementia* in Livy's *Periochae* of the civil wars, see Vassiliades 2020: 208-10, with earlier bibliography, and Hoyos 2019: 225-26.

haste characterising an epitomizing work, like Velleius' history. This omission may reflect the historian's general ambivalence when referring to Pompey and Caesar. As Seager pointed out, Velleius' attitude to Pompey, who was personally related to his grandfather, was sometimes eulogistic and sometimes disparaging.⁶² As far as Caesar is concerned, Velleius praises his clemency, but does not whitewash him, as he does with Octavian.⁶³ Therefore, Velleius may have excluded the scene from his narrative in order to avoid an interpretation for or against one of the protagonists.

Nor does Suetonius refer to the incident in his *Life of Caesar*, despite his general interest in anecdotic details and despite the fact that he elaborates other examples illustrating Caesar's *clementia* and *moderatio* (Suet. *Iul.* 75), and also Caesar's *arrogantia* (76).⁶⁴ The episode could, at first sight, be exploited in this context and be interpreted in a positive, negative or ambivalent manner for the protagonist. It should be observed, however, that Suetonius does not include in these paragraphs' anecdotic details or emotional reactions of ambiguous interpretation, but only concrete strategic and political decisions by Caesar. The scene of Pompey's head presented to Caesar would not fit as well in his short narrative of the civil wars (Suet. *Iul.* 34-35), at the beginning of which he stresses that he will only make a summary of the events after the crossing of the Rubicon (Suet. *Iul.* 34.1: *summa rerum*). Accordingly, he provides instead a brief account of Caesar's arrival and war in Egypt (Suet. *Iul.* 35.1). The brevity of this narrative has been associated with Suetonius' emphasis on the speed of Caesar's military successes, which seal the view that war and ultimate victory were Caesar's divine destiny.⁶⁵

Although largely dependent on Livy, Florus' narration of the events is also succinct, but more complicated, because it is not certain whether the author merely omits the scene or makes an implicit allusion to it:

62 Seager 2011.

63 See also Cowan 2019: 249-54, on the equally ambivalent characterisation of Caesarians and Pompeians in Velleius Paterculus.

64 For the ambivalent character of Caesar's *clementia* see Lossau 1975. More generally on Caesar's characterisation by Suetonius, see Henderson 2014, who sees an overall negative portrayal of Caesar in Suetonius; cf. Wardle 2019.

65 See on this point Wardle 2019: 398-404.

Quippe cum Ptolemaeus, rex Alexandriae, summum ciuilis belli scelus peregisset et foedus amicitiae cum Caesare medio Pompei capite sanxisset, ultionem clarissimi uiri manibus quaerente Fortuna causa non defuit. (Flor. 2.13.54-55)

Since Ptolemaeus, king of Alexandria, had perpetrated the crowning atrocity of the civil war and had sealed a treaty of friendship with Caesar **by means of Pompeius' murder**, fate called for vengeance for the shade of so illustrious a victim; and an occasion soon presented itself. (Transl. Foster - LOEB 1929)

Pompey's execution, described with horrific details in §2.13.53 (*Septimi desertoris sui gladio trucidatus sub oculis uxoris suae liberorumque moreretur*), is the *summum ciuilis belli scelus*. Nothing was said, however, about Pompey's beheading. Florus states here that Ptolemy had tried to seal a treaty of friendship (*foedus amicitiae sanxisset*)⁶⁶ with Caesar by means of Pompey's life (*medio Pompei capite*). The term *caput* may simply designate Pompey's life,⁶⁷ but could also refer to Pompey's severed head. One should not lose sight of the fact that Florus only provides a summary of the events of the civil wars, with particular emphasis on the major events and their causes.⁶⁸ Various comments in his account show that Florus considers Caesar's and Pompey's *furor* and *dominandi cupido* equally responsible for the civil wars (Flor. 1.47.13; 2.13.3, 12-14). An indirect allusion to an anecdotic episode, already well-established in the previous tradition⁶⁹ and

66 Florus does not refer to an actual treaty concluded between Caesar and Ptolemy, since all sources refer to hostilities which began between the two sides upon Caesar's arrival in Alexandria. It seems thus more sensible to assign the subjunctive *sanxisset* a tentative meaning ("he had attempted to seal a treaty"). See Cic. *Sest.* 10.24; Liv. 23.8.11; 25.16.6, where the phrase *foedus sancire* does not refer to an actual treaty but to a gesture aiming to obtain the other part's alliance.

67 See *OLD*, s.v. *caput* 4.

68 See Berge 2019 on the interpretation of civil wars and their causes in Florus.

69 Emberger 2006 shows that Florus had used, for his account of the civil wars between Pompey and Caesar, not only Livy, but also Lucan, who reports this scene in detail.

which would, moreover, demand an ideologically oriented interpretation in favour of Caesar or Pompey, does not thus seem consistent with the overall scope of Florus' narration.

The choice of reproducing an anecdote or not should not thus be attributed to the ignorance of such a tradition; it seems rather associated with the generic particularities and the narrative and ideological purposes of each author of this period's history. The different exploitation by Lucan of the episode of Pompey's head presented to Caesar is of particular interest, because it points exactly to the plasticity of this scene, according to the ideological and generic particularities of each text, and because it offers valuable insight into the parallel influence exercised by declamation upon a historiographical tradition. Despite the fact that Lucan reports the episode as factual, it cannot be overlooked that there is, overall, a large element of invention in his account of the events surrounding Pompey's death and its aftermath: Martin has shown that the poet invents horrific details regarding the actual scene of Pompey's beheading;⁷⁰ Caesar's visit to Troy, immediately preceding the scene under study, appears in no other source and is generally considered fictional.⁷¹ The construction of the episode under study also points to the prevalence of the rhetorical and dramatic over the historical aspect: Wick highlights not only the tragic elements pervading Lucan's narrative, but analyses the scene as a whole, including the speeches of Ptolemy's attendant and Caesar, as a "*dramatieseerte declamatio*" debated in the style of a *controuersia*.⁷²

The large element of invention in Lucan's narrative is further reflected in the poet's strongly critical stance towards Caesar.⁷³ If Lucan is indeed the first source to turn the incident against the Roman leader, this reveals his original reinterpretation of sources⁷⁴, which is consistent with the rhetorical construction of the episode: as an orator, Lucan chooses a

70 Martin 2005: 151-53.

71 See on this Borgeaud 2009-2010: 344-46; Ambühl 2015: 337.

72 Wick 2004: 424-28.

73 See, among others, Bartsch 2010; Tschiedel 2010; Tzounakas 2013; Sannicandro 2014; on Lucan's generally negative portrayal of Caesar.

74 See on this Tschiedel 1985: 12-15.

frontal attack on Caesar, by turning the hero's tears into crocodile tears.⁷⁵ We will discuss in the final paragraphs of this section what Lucan's "declamatory" reinterpretation of the episode could imply in our investigation of the possible sources of this scene.

Cassius Dio's version is important for the same reasons as Lucan's version. Given that he is the only anti-Caesarian source except Lucan, his version may depend on the poet's original treatment.⁷⁶ The new information reported in Dio, namely that Caesar was laughed at for his hypocrisy by the attendees, would be in this case his own reinterpretation of Lucan. Such an adaptation would be consistent with the overall emphasis Dio places on the hatred and envy of Caesar's opponents.⁷⁷ It cannot, of course, be ruled out that both Lucan and Cassius Dio had at their disposal an earlier source, now lost. Actorius Naso and Tanusius Geminus are the only late Republican historians, for whom evidence can be provided that they had a hostile stance towards Caesar.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, information about their work is extremely scattered and their probable use as sources by Lucan or Cassius Dio cannot be demonstrated. No legitimate assumption can be thus formulated regarding their eventual treatment of the episode under study.

Things are somewhat less difficult when attempting to discover a possible pro-Caesarian source upon which Plutarch and Valerius Maximus - and maybe Livy⁷⁹ - could be based. Plutarch mentions his sources in the *Lives of Pompey* and *Caesar*, among which are found the names of Asinius Pollio (Plut. *Pomp.* 72.3; *Caes.* 32.7, 46.2-3) and C. Oppius (Plut. *Pomp.* 10.4-

75 See Wick 2004, 427: for this reading.

76 See Tschiedel 1985: 6-8; see also Radicke 2004: 482-89, for a detailed comparison between Lucan and Cassius Dio.

77 See Madsen 2019 for more details on this point.

78 See *FRH*, I, 390-94, with earlier bibliography. Martin 2005: 162, assumes that Lucan's and Cassius Dio's accounts might be dependent from Cremutius Cordus. Nevertheless, Cassius Dio asserts that the historian said nothing against Caesar and Augustus, even if he did not too much praise them (Cass. Dio 57.24.3). Radicke 2004: 482-91, argues that both Lucan and Cassius Dio depended on Livy.

79 It cannot be excluded that Plutarch is based on Livy in his account of the scene under study. Livy is quoted twice as a source (Plut. *Caes.* 47.3-6, 63.9). Plutarch's use of Livy for the history of this period seems, however, limited and not systematic. See Pelling 1979: 88, 95; *idem* 2011: 48-49.

5; *Caes.* 17.7-11). Pollio's attitude to Caesar is unlikely to have been purely favourable: after all, he had to win a readership for his own competing narrative of the civil war, and he criticized that of Caesar for lack of objectivity.⁸⁰ It does not follow, however, that this rather critical evaluation of Caesar as a historian would be reflected in an equally negative stance towards Caesar as a general and leader. Opinions vary regarding Asinius' exact attitude towards Caesar:⁸¹ some suggest that he was just an unbiased historian⁸², whereas others argue that he wrote a partisan history⁸³. An *a priori* hostile standpoint towards Caesar seems, at any case, difficult to assume, even if it has been rightly suggested that Asinius' history rectified some of Caesar's omissions, while expressing more horror at civil war.⁸⁴ Besides, Asinius was already among Caesar's friends when the general crossed the Rubicon, and fought alongside him⁸⁵. Therefore, if the scene of Pompey's head presented to Caesar were found in Pollio, there is no concrete reason for us to believe that the historian's interpretation of the event would not be at least neutral, if not positive, and that he would intend instead to denigrate his benefactor through this episode. How probable is it that he indeed included the incident and, if so, to what extent could he be considered a primary source for it?

Pelling has stressed Pollio's influence on Plutarch's account in both *Lives*.⁸⁶ The biographer clearly states that his account of the battle of Pharsalia is based on Pollio (*Plut. Pomp.* 72.3; *Caes.* 46.2-3). If Asinius indeed included the scene under study, his autopsy of related events, which seems to have been a major claim of Pollio,⁸⁷ raises the possibility that the tradition related to this anecdote was generated by the histo-

80 See Suet. *Iul.* 56.4.

81 See on this point *FRH*, I, 441.

82 See Kornemann 1896; Hose 1994, 263-64.

83 See Bardon 1956, 94; Zecchini 1982, 1284.

84 Osgood 2019: 155.

85 See *Plut. Caes.* 32.7, and *FRH*, I, 431. On Pollio's life and work, see André 1949; Zecchini 1982.

86 Pelling 1979: 84-95; *idem* 2011: 44-47.

87 On the self-construction of Pollio as a trustworthy eyewitness, see Morgan 2000.

rian. An allusion to the episode cannot be excluded, especially if one accepts the view that Asinius narrated Pompey's death.⁸⁸ The problem is, however, not only that no mention is made of it in Pollio's fragments, but also, and more importantly, that the historian most probably did not follow Caesar in Egypt, but returned to Rome to hold the tribunate in 47 B.C.⁸⁹ Even if the scene of Pompey's head presented to Caesar did appear in Pollio's narrative, the author could not assert first-hand knowledge and could only include it as an anecdote reported by people of Caesar's entourage in Egypt.

The second possibility is C. Oppius, a close friend of Caesar, who wrote a biography or some other sort of memoir on Caesar.⁹⁰ Plutarch cites him as a source for anecdotes in which Caesar is depicted in praising tones (*Caes.* 17.7-11) and Pompey is accused of cruelty (*Pomp.* 10.4). The biographer shows his scepticism of Oppius' trustworthiness by stating that one must be cautious about believing him, when he talks about the enemies or friends of Caesar (*Pomp.* 10.5). It has been suspected, however, that Oppius was Plutarch's source for many biographical details, especially about Caesar's early life.⁹¹ Oppius is described by Saller 1980, as one of the rare cases where the ultimate source of anecdotes can be named.⁹²

There are also strong indications that in his collection of anecdotes aiming to illustrate Caesar's qualities without much chronological order⁹³, the author included anecdotes from Caesar's action in Egypt: Suetonius reports that Oppius mentioned in a book that he published that the boy who Cleopatra said was Caesar's son was not his (*Suet. Iul.* 52.2); he also asserts that there was a disagreement in Antiquity as to whether the author of the *Bellum Alexandrinum* was Hirtius or Oppius (*Iul.* 56.1). The latter possibility, unanimously dismissed by modern scholarship⁹⁴, may be due to the inclusion of anecdotes from this war in Oppius' work.

88 See Moles 1983: 287-88; Morgan 2000, who analyse Verg. *Aen.* 2.554-558, as an allusion to Pollio's account.

89 See Plut. *Ant.* 9.1-4, with Sumner 1971: 260-61, and *FRH*, I, 431.

90 See *FRH*, I, 381

91 See Townend 1987; Pelling 2011: 49-50, Zecchini 2011: 31-33; *FRH*, I, 382.

92 Saller 1980: 77-79.

93 See Townend 1987 (esp. 340-42); *FRH*, I, 382. On Oppius' idealistic portrayal of Caesar, see also Zecchini 2011: 32-33.

94 See on this point *FRH*, I, 381, with earlier bibliography.

There are thus reasons, but no proof, permitting us to assume that Oppius could be the ultimate historiographical source of the novelistic scene of Pompey's head presented to Caesar. If this assumption is correct, Oppius' partisan tendency, already stressed by Plutarch, is an indication of an ideological reworking of the events related in this episode, especially given that Oppius had no first-hand knowledge of anecdotes related to Caesar's action abroad, being active on his behalf in Rome.⁹⁵ This does not suggest that Oppius necessarily invented the episode, but that he picked up an anecdote and reinterpreted it according to his ideological agenda, perhaps adding or adapting relevant details.

Why would Oppius or any other author circulate such an incident? Zecchini stressed that after Caesar's death, many anecdotes on the leader were shaped by his friends, especially Oppius, whose purpose was to establish as a myth an idealised image of Caesar.⁹⁶ Regarding the episode under investigation, it can be assumed that, departing from the reality of Pompey's beheading and Ptolemy's political exploitation of it through the possible presentation of the head to Caesar, widespread literary *topoi* could be used to stage Caesar's reaction at the sight of his enemy's head in a way consistent with this general political purpose. Inversely, one could exploit elements from Caesar's historical reaction, either because they fitted these *topoi* or, more probably, to make them fit these *topoi*. The first was the *topos* of the leader crying upon his enemy's defeat: Marcellus is said to have wept for Syracuse⁹⁷ and Scipio Aemilianus for Carthage (Polyb. 38.21-22). The closest parallel, however, is an incident reported by Plutarch (*Pyrrh.* 34.4-5), probably drawn from earlier Greek sources: Alcyoneus presented Pyrrhus' head to his father Antigonus, who, angry at his son's impiety, burst into tears; then (like Caesar) he offered his enemy a proper burial. Similarly, when Dercetaeus showed Octavian Marc Antony's sword smeared with blood, Octavian wept for his ex-relative (*Ant.* 78). The opposite behaviour is criticised: Marius' joy and impiety when he saw the severed head of the orator Antonius is classified

95 For a synthesis of testimonies on Oppius' life and action, see *FRH*, I, 380-81.

96 Zecchini 2011: 33-34.

97 See Liv. 25.24.11; Plut. *Marc.* 19.1; with Rossi 2000; Marincola 2005.

among the *exempla de crudelitate* in Valerius Maximus (§9.2.2); the curiosity of Marc Antony staring at the head of Caesetius Rufus is included in the *exempla de superbia* (§9.5.4).⁹⁸

It cannot be proved either that all these anecdotes were merely fictional, or that the author(s) who initiated the tradition about the episode of Pompey's head presented to Caesar had in mind these examples, some of which are later than Caesar's death. It can be asserted, however, that weeping over the dead enemy's head is interpreted as a sign of the leader's sensitivity, and that such scenes form a *topos* exploited for the heroes' characterisation.⁹⁹ Regardless of the historicity of each episode involving tears, which can only be checked separately and to a limited extent¹⁰⁰, it may be concluded that authors drawing on this *topos* would be more interested in promoting the qualities or vices of their hero and in adapting the anecdote to their narrative agenda, rather than ensuring that every detail they reported in their version of the facts (*memoria*) entirely corresponded to the factual history (*historia*).¹⁰¹ The same applies to the scene which has Caesar as a protagonist,¹⁰² even when the anecdote is reproduced by historians like Livy, who stressed their attachment to the principle of *ueritas*.

2. The role of *declamatio*: diffusion and inflation of a historical anecdote?

The degree of the ideological or literary reworking of the anecdote of Caesar's reception of Pompey's death can only be evaluated, if one envis-

98 According to Wick 2004: 424-28, Lucan may have used these accounts as models for the construction of his episode. See also Tschiedel 1985: 3-4, on these *topoi*.

99 For tears as a means of persuasion and characterisation of heroes in imperial historiography, see Hagen 2016; *idem* 2017: 320-27. Vekselius 2018: 164-65, also argues that the Hellenistic motif of the weeping victor can be used apologetically to protect the idealised image of a protagonist, especially in Plutarch.

100 See on this point Hagen 2017: 59-61, 321; Vekselius 2018: 159-61.

101 Similarly, Saller 1980: 77-78, stresses that even when it can be deduced that different sources rely on the same source, they seem unconcerned about following their written sources precisely.

102 Vekselius 2018: 164-65, adds an alternative narrative function of Caesar's tears, suggesting that this tragic motif used in the narration of Caesar's victory foreshadows, as in other cases of weeping generals, the fall of the weeper himself as a result of his victory.

ages the eventually crucial role of *declamatio* in turning this historical anecdote, probably deriving from and circulating among Caesar's "circle", into a mainstream version of history during the Early Imperial period. Besides, we know that more generally, Caesar's reaction to Pompey's murder was a debated topic in declamatory schools, as we learn from Quint. *Inst.* 7.2.6: *quomodo laturus sit Caesar, si Ptolemaeus Pompeium occiderit*. Furthermore, let us recall that in his *Controuersiae*, Seneca the Elder includes more precisely the scene of Pompey's head offered to Caesar and the latter's humane reaction in the arguments used by declaimers of the Tiberian age, namely Moschus and Musa. The biographical information on Moschus renders such a reconstruction more probable: Moschus was, according to Seneca (*Controv.* 2.5.13), an *Apollodoreus*, a pupil of Apollodorus, who was the rhetor chosen by Caesar to take charge of the education of C. Octavius, the future Augustus, in 45 B.C.¹⁰³ This detail reveals the proximity of Moschus, and probably of other declaimers, to the Caesarian milieu, which might explain the use of this incident in declamatory exercises. Given the general tendency of *declamatio* to exploit historical anecdotes¹⁰⁴, the possibility cannot be dismissed that Moschus, or any other declaimer, picked a variant of this story from Oppius or someone else in the Caesarian milieu or even Caesar himself (through Apollodorus), to exploit it as a declamatory material, probably accentuating its emotional aspects. In the latter case, the declaimers used well-established declamatory *topoi*.

The element of tears is a variation included in late Augustan declamation, which was keen to present dramatic episodes. This is often reflected in Seneca's *Controuersiae*, where various Augustan declaimers stage family members, especially fathers, weeping at the loss or ill fate of their relatives.¹⁰⁵ Tears offered a number of variant *colores*, the third part of a *declamatio*, used to defend a particular line of argument: through the device

103 See Suet. *Aug.* 89.

104 For the use of historical anecdotes in orators, especially Valerius, who borrows this method from declamation, see Bloomer 1992: 4-5, 8-9.

105 The details of each episode are irrelevant to our argument. The status of the "weeping protagonist" involved in each case is noted in parentheses. See Sen. *Controv.* 1.1.8, 14, 17 (father); 1.5.1 (mother); 1.7.17 (father); 2.3.4 (father); 4 *praef.* 6 (a declaimer father); 7.1.12 (sons); 7.4.5, 9 (wife); 7.6.15 (father); 7.7.8, 16, 17 (father);

of *colores*, declaimers tried to alter the interpretation of facts, in order to intensify or mitigate the blame of the accused; the declaimer could invent and introduce anything he wished to support his case: clever twists, motives, intents, background stories, character traits, events, etc.¹⁰⁶ In the case of the scene under study, Caesar's tears could be introduced or simply reinterpreted, in order to mitigate Caesar's responsibility for Pompey's cruel end.

This is not meant to suggest that any fact used in declamation is merely fictional. I do not intend to thoroughly discuss here the question of the declamation's relationship with reality, but it should be noted that recent scholarship has highlighted the tendency of *declamatio* to (re)construct and refigure reality not to encourage empty rhetoric, but to provide a moral lesson.¹⁰⁷ As Saller points out, aspiring orators were even urged to invent a story, if applicable *exempla* from history were not available:¹⁰⁸ Cicero stresses that historical *exempla* and those with some verisimilitude were the most powerful, but sometimes even an invented story, however unbelievable it may seem, can be apt to touch the audience (*fabula etiam nonnumquam, etsi est incredibilis, tamen commouet* - Cic. *Part. or.* 11.40). Cicero's advice may not represent the usual practice followed in rhetorical exercises, but it does point to their subjective relationship with reality, which also has an impact on the (re)interpretation of historical facts, especially when it comes to historical anecdotes¹⁰⁹ such as that studied in this paper.

More importantly, the *declamatio*'s subjective relationship with events of the past does not stay within the boundaries of this rhetorical genre, but influences historiographical accounts. The anecdotes surrounding Cicero's execution are a telling example of this generic intersection, especially given that some aspects of the story are similar to the scene of

7.8.2 (mother and father); 9.3.5 (father); 9.5.2 (grandfather); 9.6.1, 8, 11, 12, 17 (sister); 10.1.1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 (son).

106 For a more developed discussion of *colores*, see Sussman 1978: 41-43; Fairweather 1981: 166-78; Roller 1997: 113-14; Burkard 2016: 108-32, with updated bibliography.

107 Beard 1993 examines the mythic features of *declamatio*, which he analyses as an important part of Roman mythmaking. See Gunderson 2003: 17-24 for a discussion on the interplay between fiction and reality in Roman declamation.

108 Saller 1980: 71.

109 See on this point Bloomer 1992: 161-63.

Pompey's head presented to Caesar. Seneca deals with Cicero's death in three declamations, in which declaimers turn a historical fact into an opportunity for invention: in *Suasoriae* 6 (*deliberat Cicero an Antonium deprecetur*) and 7 (*deliberat Cicero an scripta sua comburat, promittente Antonio incolumitatem si fecisset*), Cicero is envisaged as wondering, after the announcement of proscriptions, whether he should avoid execution or not, by begging Antony to pardon him (*Suas.* 6) or by burning his writings (*Suas.* 7). In *Controversia* 7.2, Cicero's killer Popilius is accused *de moribus*, for his ingratitude: Cicero had defended him when accused of parricide and he was acquitted, but when Cicero was proscribed, Popilius was sent by Antony to execute him and brought his head back to Antony.

The scenarios are completely hypothetical and Seneca himself admits that many details are invented by the declaimers: Cicero would not be so stupid (*stultus*) or fearful (*timidus*) even to think of begging Antony (*Suas.* 6.14), which is why only Asinius Pollio reports this information, because his narration is generally malicious against Cicero (*Suas.* 6.24); the charge of parricide against Popilius is also probably a declamatory fabrication (*Controv.* 7.2.8). Based on Seneca's statements and a thorough analysis of his text, Roller and Lentano shed light on the large amount of fabrication in these declamations. Distinguishing himself from Homeyer, who tries to establish the main sources (*Hauptquellen*) of the written tradition on Cicero's death¹¹⁰, Roller argues that the mostly oral tradition of *declamatio*, on which declamatory invention had a considerable impact, played a major role in the transmission and formation of the historiographical tradition as well.¹¹¹ Focusing on the *Controversia* 7.2, Lentano suggests that the figure of Popilius, presented in the *declamatio* as the ungrateful killer of Cicero, is largely a declamatory fabrication, which should be attributed to Augustus' attempt to manipulate and rewrite recent history through *declamatio*, in order to blame only Antony for Cicero's death.¹¹²

110 Homeyer 1964. For other accounts of Cicero's death, see Liv. *Per.* 120; Val. Max. 5.3.4; Vell. Pat. 2.66; Plut. *Cic.* 48-49; App. *B Civ.* 4.19-20; Cass. Dio 47.8.3-4, 11.1.

111 Roller 1997.

112 Lentano 2016. See also Roller 1997: 124-28, who suggests that the entire tradition that Cicero defended Popilius, on any charge, and delivered a speech on his behalf, is a declamatory fabrication that originated as a *color*.

The somewhat blurred boundaries between historiography and declamation, whose transgression can be encouraged by the ideological agenda of Augustus, can provide insights for the interpretation of the scene under study. Seneca draws a general distinction between declamation and historiography: in *Suas.* 6.16, he apologises for citing in the next paragraphs historiographical treatments of Cicero's death and promises to return soon to *declamatio*. Nevertheless, as Roller points out, he also effaces that distinction when he presents the historiographical accounts of Cicero's death (*Suas.* 6.16-24). The latter are indeed pervaded by declamatory material, such as ironic *sententiae* and vivid descriptions of Cicero's violent torture.¹¹³

But there is one further element pertaining to violence and emotions which is found both in the scene of Pompey's head presented to Caesar and in the account of Cicero's death, in *declamatio* and historiography, and which may therefore reveal a similar generic interaction. Seneca reports Antony's and the Roman people's different reactions in front of Cicero's severed head and mutilated body, by claiming as his source both declaimers in the *Controversia* 7.2 and historians in the *Suasoria* 6. Antony would not believe that Cicero was indeed executed by Popilius, unless he was shown proof (*Controv.* 7.2.3: *signum*), which would be Cicero's head (*Controv.* 7.2: *caput eius ad Antonium retullit*); according to Livy, at the sight of Cicero's head, Antony orders that Cicero's head and hand be displayed on the *rostra*, where Cicero had delivered polemic speeches against him (*Suas.* 6.17); Cremutius Cordus adds that Antony was happy with the spectacle (*Suas.* 6.19: *quibus uisis laetus Antonius*).¹¹⁴ On the contrary, the Roman people could not conceal their tears at the sight of Cicero's mutilated head and hands, and this is stressed in both *declamatio* (*Controv.* 7.2.5) and historiography, and more precisely in Livy, who states that the Roman citizens could barely watch with their tearful eyes the spectacle of Cicero's severed members (*Suas.* 6.17), in Cremutius Cordus (*Suas.* 6.19) and Bruttidius Niger, who focuses on the audience's thoughts and feelings (*Suas.* 6.20-21). All these emotional reactions, which remind us of the

113 See Roller 1997: 119-24 for a detailed analysis of declamatory elements in these historiographical accounts.

114 Similar accounts of Antony's reaction are preserved in later sources. See Plut. *Cic.* 49.1; App. *B Civ.* 4.20; Cass.Dio 47.8.3-4, 11.1-2.

presentation of Caesar's emotions in front of Pompey's severed head, seem ideally suited to be used as a declamatory *color* by both declaimers and historians, in order to highlight Antony's violent and inhumane character, which turned against the sentiments of the Roman people. Roller convincingly points out that the exercises on Cicero's death were formulated early in the Augustan era or even during the triumviral period, which dating makes the generic interaction between historiography and declamation possible.¹¹⁵

Such an interrelation between historiography and declamation should not be considered exceptional, given that rhetorical training had been shaping historiography from the late Republican period onwards. In *De Oratore* and *De Legibus*, Cicero analyses history as an *opus oratorium*, a literary genre which should conform to the norms of rhetoric.¹¹⁶ Accordingly, scholars, since the late 20th century, have shown that historiography was viewed by ancient historians as an artistic creation based on the norms of rhetoric,¹¹⁷ and that the rhetorical dimension of historical works assumed progressively greater importance.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, it is generally admitted that historians received a rhetorical education.¹¹⁹ Rhetorical exercises, in the form of *declamationes*, were, of course, part of this education.¹²⁰ Furthermore, ancient students in Greek and Roman schools of the Late Republican and Early Imperial period were using historical content, including anecdotes, in their rhetorical exercises

115 Roller 1997: 115-19.

116 Cic., *De or.* 2.12.51-15.64; *Leg.* 1.1.5 sq. On the relationship between historiography and rhetoric in Cicero, see Cape 1997.

117 See among others Wiseman 1981; Fornara 1983: 134 sq.; Woodman 1988; Nicolai 1992: 31-176; Kraus, Marincola & Pelling 2010.

118 See on this and generally on the evolution of historiography as a *genre* Ledentu 2004: 33-46, 99-122, 199-248. See also Timpe 1979: 97-119 (esp. 97-105, 116-17); Petzold 1993; Walter 2003.

119 See among others Timpe 1979: 116-17; Wiseman 1981: 388-90; Nicolai 1992: 156-76.

120 For *declamatio* as a part of rhetorical education, see among others Kaster 2001; Stroh 2003: 5-6, 12-13, 19-20, 31-33; Bernstein 2013: 165-70. Cf. Hömke 2007, who shows that *declamationes* were not only used for education but also for entertainment.

(προγυμνάσματα).¹²¹ Gibson pointed out that in Greek rhetorical schools of this period, the exercise in anecdotes encouraged students to attach moral significance to the actions of historical persons, and that they were sometimes expected to add some “historical” details in their elaborations of anecdotes, which could be easily incorporated in histories or biographies.¹²²

In Roman contexts, it is noteworthy that Livy, the first attested authority on the scene of Pompey’s head exposed to Caesar, is said to have been familiar with this rhetorical method in his history. The historian dealt with the reaction of Antony and the Roman people to the sight of Cicero’s severed members following a logic which seems consistent with declamatory *colores*.¹²³ Blurring the boundaries between historical truth and declamatory reshaping, Livy interpreted a historical event, namely Cicero’s death, within a declamatory framework, in order to provide a characterisation of his protagonists through the portrayal of their emotional reactions. Such a manipulation of historical material could have operated in the similar account of Caesar’s reaction to the sight of Pompey’s severed head. Livy’s close relationship with declamatory schools is moreover attested by Seneca the Elder, who mentions that Livy attended the performance of *declamationes*: audiences tolerated his son-in-law’s mediocre declamations showing respect for Livy (Sen. *Controv.* 10 *praef.* 2), while the historian also took part in an argument on translating epigrams (*Controv.* 9.1.13-14).¹²⁴ Declamatory influence can also be detected in other passages of Livy’s *Ab Vrbe Condita*, such as the Alexander digres-

121 See Nicolai 1992 on the relation of προγυμνάσματα with Roman history and historians; Gibson 2004 for the use of προγυμνάσματα with historical content in Greek schools. For the teaching of Roman history in Roman schools see Ferrill 1978.

122 See Gibson 2004. According to Beck 2003, Plutarch used these collections of anecdotes in his works.

123 *Contra* Keeline 2018: 230-40 argues that Livy’s treatment, as cited by Seneca, is rather uninfluenced by *declamatio*, on the grounds that declamatory exercises on Cicero’s death had not flourished until Livy produced his account.

124 See on the same point Kraus 1994: 3-4, against Syme 1959: 427, who denies Livy’s acquaintance with *declamatio*. On Livy’s rhetorical education, see Walsh 1961b: 3, 219-44, focusing on the historian’s use of rhetorical theory in the construction of his speeches.

sion, dealing with the hypothetical scenario of an expedition of the Macedonian general to the West¹²⁵, and the scene of Flamininus executing a Gaulish slave with his sword, in order to please a boy or a prostitute¹²⁶, where Livy's vocabulary echoes Seneca's *controuersia* 9.2: in both texts, Flamininus is accused of polluting the dinner table with the blood of an innocent victim for the sake of a prostitute.¹²⁷

It is not only Livy's historiographical treatment of Caesar's reaction to the sight of Pompey's severed head that may be pervaded and inflated by declamatory elements. Without excluding a historiographical source, such as Oppius or Livy, Valerius' and Lucan's accounts were also influenced by *declamatio*. We have seen that Valerius' work was addressed to orators practising *declamatio* and that Valerius, himself an orator, blends historiographical and declamatory elements in his *exempla*. His version of the scene under study, regardless of its eventual historiographical sources and their actual content, could thus be elaborated and reinterpreted following the devices of *declamatio*. The same stands for Lucan, who as a grandson of Seneca the Elder attended declamatory schools and practised *declamatio* himself,¹²⁸ and whose treatment of the scene has already been analysed by scholars as a dramatised declamation. Lucan, however, chooses a different *color* to the one used in the extant declamations, which is consistent with his generally negative portrayal of Caesar, by pointing to the general's hypocrisy and by turning the hero's tears into crocodile tears.

It must be underlined that when Livy, Valerius and Lucan, who are the first extant or attested sources, dealt with the episode under study, they

- 125 See Liv. 9.17-19. On the declamatory form of this digression, see Oakley 2005: 188. See also Sen. *Suasoria* 1, on Alexander's plans to cross the Ocean. Alexander's history provided various subjects for declamations in Greek and Latin. See for a relevant collection Pernot 2013: 133-59. For a discussion on the place and function of Alexander's digression in Livy, see among others Morello 2002; Briquel 2015.
- 126 According to Livy, he found these two versions in Valerius Antias and Cato (Liv. 39.42.11-43.5).
- 127 Compare Livy's judgment in Liv. 39.43.4 with Sen. *Controv.* 9.2.4-7. See Van der Poel 2009: 339-42, on Flamininus as *exemplum* in Seneca's *Controuersia* 9.2.
- 128 See on this matter Bonner 1966, who also discusses the influence of *declamatio* in his *Pharsalia*. See also Rutz 1970; Mancini 2018. See Berti 2015, generally on the systematic generic interaction between poetry and *declamatio*.

probably had at their disposal a much more elaborate form of *declamatio* on this anecdote than the two short *sententiae* of Moschus and Musa, since Seneca the Elder does not report complete declamations, but rather provides a fragmentary *florilegium*.¹²⁹ It is thus impossible to evaluate the degree of originality of each author regarding the early historiographical and declamatory tradition developed at the same or a previous time. It can be stated, however, with relative safety, that the historiographical and declamatory traditions contaminated each other in handling the memory of Caesar's sorrow before the severed head of his former son-in-law. The absence of the episode from Caesar's *Bellum Ciuile*, the political and idealistic agenda of probable historiographical early sources, and the additional impact of *declamatio* on the memory of this incident, all provide an outline of the first stages of transmission and inflation of this scene, which was henceforth reshaped and reinterpreted by later sources.

The *declamatio* contributed to, or even boosted, the diffusion and the rhetorical reworking of an anecdote, without being concerned about factual history. It sufficed that this representation of the past (*memoria*) was endowed with moral significance, and it was also apt to promulgate the Augustan version of the civil wars, in which agenda the declamation played a significant role.¹³⁰ The version of a humane and emotional Caesar unable to stand the sight of the severed head of his enemy and former relative and political friend, tends to exculpate Augustus' adoptive father from an atrocity committed during the civil wars against a great Roman leader, who, despite his hostility to his father, was still appreciated by Augustus.¹³¹

129 See on the fragmentary and mutilated character of preserved *declamationes* Roller 1997: 111; Gunderson 2003: 20.

130 See Bloomer 1992: 192-95, on the role of *declamatio* in promulgating the Augustan version of the civil wars. Generally, on the memory of the Republic during Augustus, see Gowing 2005: 17-27.

131 There are several testimonies attesting Augustus' esteem for Pompey. *Aug. Anc.* 20.1: Augustus restored Pompey's theatre without inscribing his own name. *Suet. Aug.* 31.9: instead of destroying Pompey's statue, the *princeps* transported it from the *curia*, where Caesar was assassinated, to Pompey's theatre. *Plut. Cic.* 49.3-4: Pompey's *imago* was present at Augustus' funeral. According to Frisch 1980: 97-98, Pompey was even included among the *summi uiri* of the *forum Augustum*.

IV. Conclusion

The anecdote portraying Caesar weeping over Pompey's head has been used in this paper as a case study to show that the limits between "factual history" (*historia*) and the reworked representation of this "factual history" (*memoria*) are blurred and to a large extent indistinguishable, when it comes to the representation and reception of the Roman civil wars in ancient literature. The brief analysis of the extant narratives of later sources on this incident has revealed the different role it played in each of these sources, which tended to adapt it to their own ideological, moralistic and generic particularities and purposes, or simply to omit it, probably because it was irrelevant to these. This adaptation was most often affected by changing minor details and minor characters, in order to draw a pointed conclusion, favourable or unfavourable to Caesar, in each case. The general was presented respectively either as a clement and humane leader or as a hypocrite responsible for Pompey's fate. Caesar's intended *memoria* was thus a crucial factor in the chosen version of the episode.

This survey on the alterations of the anecdotes has also allowed us to track the possible history of creating and reshaping a literary tradition on this anecdote. The scene in which Pompey's head is exposed to Caesar, who weeps and expresses his indignation, is absent from *De bello civili* for reasons which can only be speculated upon. This omission, however, raises the question of the historical and literary context in which this anecdote was generated. Our investigation of sources has led us to the hypothesis that the anecdote was probably introduced to the written tradition by pro-Caesarian historians in the immediate aftermath of Caesar's death. The diffusion of such a scene served to establish an idealised myth of the general. *Declamatio* not only picked up and reworked this historical anecdote, but also probably played a major role in its broader diffusion. The historiographical tradition on this episode was probably influenced in its early stages by declamatory exercises which enriched it with pathetic details. This episode thus provides a telling example of the generic intersection and interaction between historiography, *declamatio* and poetry during the Early Imperial period.

Furthermore, the history of the anecdote brings us to the third question examined by Saller 1980: the implication of the anecdote as historical evidence. A simple separation between what is historically “authentic” and what is “fictional” is not of course possible, especially when dealing with sources of that period, but it is methodologically fragile to suppose confusion between the two in the case of an anecdote like the one under study. The different exploitation of the incident in various sources confirms Saller’s point that the purposes of each author and an anonymous tradition lie behind all alterations: “this does not mean that all anecdotes are entirely or even partially fabrications; there may be kernels of truth in them, but there is no method for separating truth from fabrication. [...] Rarely serving as evidence for what actually happened, anecdotes should be evaluated and interpreted according to whether they reflected ideology or beliefs about reality” (Saller 1980: 79, 82). The same conclusion is valid for the anecdote of Pompey’s head presented to Caesar, whose history of transmission invites modern historians and scholars of Antiquity to prudence: rather than using the episode as a historical fact for reconstructing and understanding the events of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey, we should rather take it into account as valuable evidence for the reception of the figure of Caesar during the Early Imperial Period.

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