The political career of Gaius Marius was not only memorable for its unprecedented personal triumphs, but was also of momentous significance in the history of the Roman Republic. The military might of the Romans was dealt humiliating setbacks abroad by a minor despot in Numidia and by the marauding Germanic tribes, the Cimbri and Teutones.

Against this background of disasters, Marius achieved a position in political life in Rome which had not been witnessed before. In the pursuit for senatorial offices Marius experienced both victories and disappointments before finally winning the consulship in 108. Thereafter, he held the consulship a further six times, five times in succession, and dominated politics in the city during the decade between 108 and 99 BC.

This present volume sets out to trace Marius' rise to prominence, his contribution to the legislation of the period and his involvement with other senatorial politicians. Furthermore, this work seeks to fully expose the fact that, as a consequence of his role in republican politics, Marius became an example which other ambitious politicians sought to emulate or to exceed. Marius may not have realised the dangers he bequeathed to the res publica but, inadvertently or not, he was the cause of the beginning of the fall of the Roman Republic.
Bust presumed to be that of Gaius Marius.
(Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyphotek München.)
GAIUS MARIUS

A Political Biography

For my mother
and
Claudia and Christopher

RICHARD J EVANS

University of South Africa
Pretoria
For my mother

and

Claudia and Christopher

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**PROLOGUE**

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I am greatly indebted to Harold B. Mattingly and Barry Baldwin who kindly agreed to read the entire manuscript of this study. Both are gentlemen and scholars of great knowledge, expertise and experience, who bore their arduous burden with customary good humour and humanitas. Perspicacious observations, constructive criticisms and honest guidance corrected many a facile error of mine, and curbed some of the more reckless and adventurous suggestions evident in the earlier drafts. Moreover, Ursula Vogel-Weidemann, colleague and friend for many years now, has, as I have come to expect, been a pillar of good sense and sound judgement when approached for advice in the preparation of this biography. I place on record my sincere thanks to each of them. It should also be noted at the outset, however, that I alone am responsible for any inaccuracies which may remain here, or for any of those contentions which may appear to some to be untenable.

Certain sections of, or ideas contained in, this volume were read as a research seminar in March 1993 to the Classics Department of St. David's University College, Lampeter, University of Wales; as a paper at the Association of Ancient Historians annual meeting in May 1993, at the University of Calgary and in Banff, Alberta; and to an Ancient History Workshop at the University of Cape Town, September 1993. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues from each of these occasions for their pertinent and valuable comments. In particular, I should like to thank Tracey Rihll, my host at Lampeter, where I spent a peaceful spell of research, and the members of staff and students of St David's College for making my stay as Honorary Research Fellow enjoyable and rewarding.

Overseas research and travel bursaries awarded by the University of South Africa and the Centre for Science Development, Pretoria, made possible an extended visit, of four and half months' duration, to Britain and Europe during the course of a sabbatical leave from June 1992 to May 1993.
I wish to acknowledge the financial aid provided by these institutions, which enabled me to spend this time in developing several of the ideas which are subject to discussion in the pages which follow. Furthermore, the University of South Africa and the Centre for Science Development came forward to finance my subsequent visit to Canada and attendance of the conference mentioned above. I am especially grateful for their continued and substantial support throughout this period of long leave.

I should also like to extend a warm thanks to the members of the Department of Publishing Services at the University of South Africa and, in particular, to Phoebe van der Walt, the head of this section, for her friendly and concerned advice throughout the preparation of this volume; to Liz Stewart and Sarie Moolman for their tireless work in the editing and formatting of the manuscript; and to Hetta Oosthuizen for the various artistic embellishments to be found in the following pages and for the cover design.

This book is partly dedicated to my mother who, for more years than I care to remember, has given stalwart moral and financial support to her elder son in his choice of career, and who once again stepped into the breach as baby-sitter and chief bottle-washer during the last hectic stages of this biography’s gestation. It is also dedicated to Claudia and Christopher who have been obliged to cope with the political career and achievements of Gaius Marius to almost the same extent as the author. Finally, I promise Christopher more time for walks in the park, visits to the zoo and, since he is such a keen rail enthusiast, more rides on the steam trains which he and his father adore so much.
It is now well over thirty years since *A Biography of C. Marius* by T. F. Carney (1961) was published, and more than thirty-five years since E. Badian’s article ‘Caepio and Norbanus’ (*Historia* 6 [1957] 318–346) first appeared, a study which, as its sub-heading intimated (‘Notes on the Decade 100–90 B.C.’), was to examine thoroughly the political life of the Roman republic at the close of the second century and the beginning of the first century BC, and offer cogent ideas about politics in the 90s, until then viewed by scholars, such as H. Last (‘The Enfranchisement of Italy’, in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 1951, 9.173) as a decade of vacuous felicity. Between them, Badian and Carney were joint pioneers in the modern study of the period and career of Gaius Marius and each, through his various publications, has made a singular contribution to our understanding of this time. They were perhaps prompted into their course by the words of Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (86 n.1), who stated that: ‘The composition of the faction of Marius, an important (and neglected) topic, cannot be discussed here.’

Besides the many and various books and articles of Badian and Carney, other significant and relevant works about the period in question have been published and deserve to be mentioned here: the biography of Marius by J. Van Ooteghem (1964), a detailed examination of the role of the criminal courts in Roman politics between 149 and 78 BC by E. S. Gruen (1968), the re-publication of A. Passerini’s earlier studies on Marius (1971), a discussion of *novi homines* in the senate between 139 BC and AD 14 by T. P. Wiseman (1971) and commentaries on Sallust’s *Bellum Iugurthinum*, the earliest extant literary source for the last decade of the second century and for a considerable portion of Marius’ career, by E. Koestermann (1971) and G. M. Paul (1984). Notwithstanding the commentary on the *Marius* by Valgiglio (1956), Plutarch’s biography has not, however, attracted much recent attention nor, indeed, have the relevant sections of the *Bella Civilia* of Appian. Nevertheless, the publications of C. B. R. Pelling [1986 & 1990] on Plutarch
in more general terms, and sections of recent editions of Aufstieg und Nieder-
gang der römischen Welt, Volumes 33.6 and 34.1 [1992–1993] point perhaps
to a new interest in the sources for the period of Marius’ life and career.

The value of the numismatic evidence and its use to the historian, and
in particular the chronology of the republican denarius, has been completely
revolutionized by the work of M. H. Crawford (1974), and much new
information has emerged from further studies of the epigraphic material by,
among others, R. K. Sherk (1969) and H. B. Mattingly (1972 ff.). Many of
the ideas and much of the data which are available in print have been incorpo­
rated into the third volume of T. R. S. Broughton’s The Magistrates of
the Roman Republic (1986), which in its entirety is unquestionably the most
useful and extensive fount of information for any research concerned with
the politics of the Roman Republic.

This veritable wealth of scholarship prompted the author to embark on
this political biography because, whereas the ancient evidence has under­
gone, in some instances, profound reassessment, Marius’ role as a politi­
cian and as a pivotal figure of this same period has, to some extent, been
overlooked. Moreover, it seemed imperative that current hypotheses on the
nature of the republican senatorial oligarchy by, for example, I. Shatzman
(1975), W. V. Harris (1979) and K. Hopkins & G. Burton (1983) should be
absorbed into a work devoted to Marius and, primarily, his political career.
An examination of Marius (120-86 BC), his part in various political crises,
his allies and his opponents, remains fundamental not only to an under­
standing of the complexities of republican politics, but also to an awareness
of the constant evolution which inevitably hurtled the Republic, from its
inception, towards an autocracy. Marius played a full part in this process.

RJE
Pretoria, March 1994
Abbreviations of journal titles generally adhere to those found in *L'Année Philologique* but, where there is an occasional deviation, there should be no problem of identification. Modern studies which are referred to more than once here are subsequently given in an abbreviated form, which should be self-explanatory. The following works are, nonetheless, noted for the sake of clarity:

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<td>CAH</td>
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<td>SIG³</td>
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<td>T. P. Wiseman, New Men in the Roman Senate 139 B.C. – A.D. 14</td>
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‘Gaius Marius C.f., seven times consul, praetor, tribune of the plebs, quaestor, augur, military tribune, contrary to the rule governing provincial assignments, waged war as consul against
Jugurtha, the king of Numidia, and captured him, and celebrating a triumph in his second consulship ordered that the monarch be led before his chariot. In his absence he was declared consul for a third time, and in his fourth consulship annihilated an army of the Teutones and in his fifth routed the Cimbri. He again celebrated a triumph [this time] over the Cimbri and Teutones. In his sixth consulship he liberated the state when it had been thrown into chaos by the seditions of a tribune of the plebs and a praetor who had armed themselves and occupied the Capitoline hill. When he was aged more than seventy years he was expelled from his country through civil strife and was restored through force, and made consul for a seventh time. From the spoils of the Cimbri and Teutones as victor he dedicated a shrine to Honour and Virtue. In triumphal robes and patrician shoes [he entered the senate].

This is the official verdict on Marius' career, recorded for posterity among the Augustan elogia of illustrious Romans (Hor. Carm. 4.8.13; Suet. Aug. 31; Dio, 55.10; Lamprid. vit. Alex. 28), which adorned the new forum of the first principes. The inscription itself is, however, no longer extant, and is recorded only in the codices made by Renaissance observers. What we actually possess is the great reconstruction undertaken by Theodor Mommsen from the three existing fragments (CIL 12.1195, XVII, 105782), a reconstruction which has since been accepted by all later editors of the epigraphic evidence. While there may be little doubt that Mommsen's surmise regarding the content of the elogium was essentially faultless, nevertheless, we are obliged to view Marius first through the eyes of a nineteenth-century Classicist, then through those of the earlier commentators, and finally through the eyes of the original artist. Moreover, the sense of the text becomes speculative at the base of the inscription, which had apparently broken off at some indeterminate date. It ends by recounting a tale, found in Plutarch's biography of Marius, written over a century after the elogia were erected.

1 Th. Mommsen, Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Berlin 1863–, 12.1 195 (XVIII) cf. 105782, 11 1831.
2 E. Nash, Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome, London 1968, 1.401: 'The Forum of Augustus and the Temple of Mars Ultor which was vowed during the battle of Philippi in 42 B.C. and consecrated in 2 B.C. On either side of the temple were porticos, the entablatures of which were borne by caryatids. Behind the porticos were exedrae with statues in the niches of the mythical ancestors of the Julian family, generals to whom triumphs had been awarded, and other distinguished citizens. A great part of the inscriptions, the Elogia, has been found.'; M.M. Sage 'The Elogia of the Augustan Forum and the de viris illustribus', Historia 28 (1979) 192–210. It is interesting to note that the actions of Marius in 100 ('REM PVB ... VINDICAVIT') are exactly paralleled by Augustus' own words ('rem publicam ... vindicavi') in his Res Gestae 1.
which does not fit all that comfortably with the preceding information regarding Marius’ dedication of a shrine. Marius’ arrival in the senate still attired in his triumphal costume is said to have taken place after the celebrations following his return to Rome from Numidia in 105 BC (Plut. *Mar*. 12.5), while a monument to *Honos et Virtus* was probably dedicated after the conclusion of the Cimbric War in 101 (Cic. *Planc*. 78; *Sest* 116; *de Div.* 2.140). An *elogium* does not normally contain anecdotal material, and the events inscribed on one invariably follow a chronological order.

While the information which appears on the *elogia* has evoked much discussion, the *elogium* of Marius not least, its significance as evidence for the careers of republican politicians is elevated because virtually all the primary sources have disappeared. It should also be borne in mind that the *elogia* of famous Romans were intended to enhance the *gloria* of the man on whose initiative the whole edifice was constructed. And the inscriptions themselves were not necessarily accurate in all respects nor, of course, is there any need to assume that this should have been the case. The intention of the artificer was not to provide documentary evidence for scholars of a later age, but to equip the immediate surroundings with a suitably dignified perspective.

Furthermore, even if the epigraphic evidence was extant, how sure could we be that it provides a faithful summary of Marius’ offices and political career? The *elogium* was one of a number composed by a craftsman twenty-five years into the principate of Augustus, and over eighty years after Marius had died. In normal circumstances a politician’s honours would have been stored in the family’s *atrium* after his death, alongside the *imagines* of his ancestors. However, Marius was the first member of his family to win

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4 All dates are henceforth BC unless otherwise indicated.
6 Sage, 1979: 195, lists the general format of the *elogia*: ‘Name, Offices, Sacerdotalia, Military feats, Important civil offices, Important buildings’.
7 Sage, 1979: 192–194, identifies nineteen of these ‘viri illustres’ from earlier times.
8 A. Passerini, *Studi su Caio Mario*, Milan 1971, 198–207, highlights several of the problems involved with the epigraphic material. T. F. Carney, *A Political Biography of C. Marius*, Assen 1961, 6 n. 31; Sage, 1979: 202 n. 66, both seem to acquiesce with Mommsen’s view, CIL 12.1.191; cf. inscr. Ital. 13.3, p. 6, that the inscriptions were basically accurate. Indeed Carney believes that it may be used as a control over earlier and biased literary material.
9 Compare, for instance, the material evidently available in the first century for M. Aemilius Lepidus (cos. 187). He may well have composed his own *laudatio funebris*, Liv. *Per.* 48. Lepidus’ career and activities as a politician are attested throughout, and are also well portrayed on the denarii issued by his descendant M. Aemilius Lepidus (cos. 46), who was a moneyer ca. 58, R. J. Evans, ‘The Moneyership of Marcus Lepidus Triumvir’, *Acta Classica* 33 (1990) 103–108.
magisterial office at Rome and, with the exception of his son's consulship in 82, he was also the last of his line. The records of his many achievements were probably removed or destroyed immediately after he had been declared a hostis in 88 following Sulla's occupation of Rome. Indeed, if Marius had had the opportunity to salvage any of these after his own military coup in 87, they were undoubtedly obliterated at the end of the civil war, after the battle of the Colline Gate.

It is true that both Plutarch (Caes. 6) and Suetonius (Iul. 10) state that Caesar restored the trophies of Marius to the Capitolium during his aedileship in 65. This assertion, which has been accepted without question, cannot be verified, however, and it is not at all apparent from where Caesar could easily have obtained these decorations. While the home of his aunt Iulia, widow of Marius, was one of the few possibilities available to Caesar, it is extremely unlikely that she could ever have been in a position to rescue much from the destruction wrought by her former husband's enemies in the 80s. Moreover, Marius' tomb had probably been ransacked when Sulla ordered the exhumation of his former commander's corpse (Pliny, NH. 7.187). It seems more probable, therefore, that Caesar restored not the original but copies of Marius' trophies, and that he employed craftsmen to recreate them. Caesar was in debt to the tune of thirteen hundred talents by the time he ended his term as aedile (Plut. Caes. 2), and some of this not inconceivable sum may have found its way into the pockets or pouches of Roman artists. The Augustan sculptor, had he looked to this material for inspiration, did not necessarily work from a primary source for Marius' career.

Since Marius' elogium was merely one of a large group erected for Augustus' new forum, there must surely have been a certain amount of stylization of the information contained on it. Although an artist entrusted with the task at the end of the first century was relatively closer in time to the events than we are today, he was, nonetheless, not obviously in a better position to obtain accurate details nor, in truth, may he have wanted to undertake such tiresome research. The exigencies imposed upon him by his patron may not have allowed him much freedom. It is, therefore, not inconceivable that when this man came to the point of relating public offices, beyond those best remembered for each individual politician concerned, he may, very simply, have adopted those magistracies with which he was most familiar, subsequent to the Augustan reforms of a politician's career. However, before the Early Principate, and especially in the period before Sulla's dictatorship, the careers of republican politicians show a surprising degree of nonconformity. Politicians could, and frequently did, miss magistracies at junior levels since before the leges Corneliae of 81, but possibly also later, the praetorship alone was a prerequisite for a man who wished to

---

embark on a campaign for the consulship.\textsuperscript{11}

The *elogia* of *viri illustres* are, of course, certainly not uniform within the format chosen by the artist, and we should not expect too facile an approach from a master sculptor. However, there are probably errors of detail which might be explained as originating in misconceptions due to the changes which had occurred to the political career since Augustus had taken power. All in all, the weaknesses inherent in this particular epigraphic material and the problem of dealing with them illustrate that it is far from infallible.\textsuperscript{12} The creator of the *elogium*, rather than searching through the current literature, which even at that stage was not much more satisfactory than it is now, probably employed other commemorative artifacts as his source.\textsuperscript{13}

In fact, a study of Marius’ political career must be based mostly on the literary works which are, chronologically speaking, relatively distant from his life – Sallust wrote nearly fifty years after Marius’ death, while Plutarch composed his parallel lives of prominent Greeks and Romans at the start of the second century AD. Sallust’s *Bellum Iugurthinum* and Plutarch’s *Life* have, therefore, acquired a prominence they would possibly not have otherwise attained, not a unique feature of studies in ancient history, but one which profoundly intensifies the problem of reaching a satisfactory critical appraisal of Marius’ role in political life.\textsuperscript{14}

To compound the difficulty further, the existence may be determined, by the mid-first century, of greatly conflicting evaluations of the political career of Marius.\textsuperscript{15} Plutarch occasionally hints at the unsatisfactory nature of some of the works he consulted,\textsuperscript{16} and Cicero, whose comments about Marius are closer in time to the events than those of any other commentator,

\textsuperscript{11} See Appendix 1, in particular, for a discussion of the republican political career structure.

\textsuperscript{12} The *elogium* of Marius does not appear to have room for the propraetorship in Hispania Ulterior with which he is credited by Plutarch, *Mar.* 6.1. Reference to a proconsular command by Cicero, *Verr.* 3.209, may refer to his later commands against Jugurtha or against the Cimbri and Teutones. The creator of the *elogium* may, therefore, be more accurate than the literary evidence. See further in Chapter 2. Marius was never elected to the aedileship, Cic., *Planc.* 51; Plut. *Mar.* 5.1-2, and this office does not feature on his *elogium*, though this has not prevented him, in modern times, from being assigned this magistracy, Sage, 1979: 204 n. 82; C. J. Vinkesten, *De fontibus ex quibus scriptor libri de viris illustribus urbis Romae hausisse videtur*, Diss. Leiden 1886, 13.

\textsuperscript{13} It should be noted here that the *elogia* of C. Claudius Pulcher (cos. 92), M. Livius Drusus (trib. 91), C. Iulius Caesar (pr. 90s) and C. Iulius Caesar Strabo (aed. 90) all contain references to a variety of junior offices, some of which are quite recondite. These were evidently recalled or discovered by those entrusted with the task of researching the information for the inscriptions.

\textsuperscript{14} Note also, Carney, *Marius* 2-7, for an analysis of these same points.

\textsuperscript{15} Carney, *Marius* 2: ‘... two diametrically opposed reconstructions of Marius as a politician and as a personality are possible.’

is invariably at odds with the most complete of the ancient authors. Sal­
lust’s work, with its numerous chronological pitfalls and its eccentric view
about Roman history, and Plutarch’s biography, which ought not to be
handled as if it were a historical account, are notable for their antipathy
towards Marius. Nevertheless, Sallust should have been less affected by
any material he may have had close to hand for, when he wrote about the
war with Jugurtha, there was surely little upon which to base his narra­
tive. Plutarch, on the other hand, though generally considered scrupulous
in his treatment of his sources, was heavily dependent on a far greater quant­
ity of written works, which entailed more demanding labours in sifting the
good from the indifferent and the downright fallacious.

The earliest literature to have contained references to Marius must in­
clude the memoirs of the princeps senatus M. Aemilius Scaurus, the consu­
lars Q. Lutatius Catulus and P. Rutilius Rufus and the dictator Sulla. Con­
sidering the ways in which their careers diverged from that of Marius, it
seems wellnigh impossible that any of the four in question had much good
to say about his calibre as a politician. These contemporaries of Marius
are known to have composed and published their autobiographies. There
may have been many more if this activity became a fashionable and popu­
lar leisuretime activity for elder statesmen. The evidence may not be over­

17 The sustained and much-publicised connection between these two novi homines is examined
by Carney, WS 73 (1960) 83-122. In the pages which follow, I have opted to use the Latin
terminology for ‘new man’ or ‘new men’ only when this applies to politicians from equestrian
backgrounds who proceeded to achieve consular status in the senate. Elsewhere epithets
such as ‘newcomers’ are employed. On this issue see also my comments in Chapter 1 n. 18.
18 He possibly followed Posidonius, or conceivably an earlier writer such as P. Rutilius Rufus,
19 For example, Sall. Jug. 64.5: ‘Ita (Marius) cupidine atque ira, pessumis consultoribus, gris­
sari neque facto ullo neque dicto abstinere, quod modo ambitiosum foret’; Plut. Mar. 46.5,
the death of Marius being received in much the same way as the demise of a tyrant (τυραννος);
G. M. P(aul). OCD² 946.
20 R. E. Smith, The Failure of the Roman Republic, Cambridge 1955, 154, argues that Sallust created
Marius and his opponents in the image of Caesar and his senatorial enemies, which may
have suited his audience, in the late 40s, very well though it was hardly historically authen­
tic, at least according to modern scientific principles.
21 For Rutilius Rufus see Carney, WS 73 (1960) 83; Syme, Sallust 155, 249. For the early first
century sources of both Sallust and Plutarch see H. Peter, Die Quellen Plutarchs in den Bi­
ographieen der Römer, Amsterdam 1965, 100-106; R. E. Smith, ‘Plutarch’s Biographical Sources
in the Roman Lives’, CQ 34 (1940) 1-10; Syme, Sallust 153-156; C. B. R. Pelling, ‘Plutarch’s
Method of Work in the Roman Lives’, IHS 99 (1979) 74-96; E. Rawson, Intellectual Life in
the Late Roman Republic, London 1985, 215-232. Note also J. Geiger, Cornelius Nepos and Anci­
cent Political Biography, Stuttgart 1985, 80, who takes issue over the title ‘memoirs’, arguing
instead that they should more correctly be called historical monographs.
22 There may have been a profusion of published political orations worth consulting by the
time Sallust started work on his historical monographs, Syme, Sallust 154-156. Among these,
for the period of Marius’ career, were the speeches of L. Licinius Crassus (cos. 95), but not
(Cic. Cluent. 140) those of M. Antonius (cos. 99), E. Badian, Studies in Greek and Roman History,
whelming, but there is adequate reason to believe that self-commemorative literature was appearing in some quantity by this time.\textsuperscript{23} Given the upsurge in this particular form of literature, it is also possible that it emerged as a response to Marius' unparalleled career or, as his critics would no doubt have argued, his illegal domination of political and military affairs. Thus M. Aemilius Scaurus may have been an eminent member of the senate for over thirty years, but his military and political exploits did not match those of Marius. Q. Lutatius Catulus may have benefited from an association with Marius during the Cimbric War, but he was overshadowed by his consular colleague. P. Rutilius Rufus may, like Marius, have achieved the consulship after a long delay to his career, but his honours were never to be on a par with those of his more famous fellow \textit{consularis}. In his military apprenticeship Sulla was connected with Marius but later on, after he had become an implacable foe and in the process of celebrating his own remarkable career, he undoubtedly attacked his former opponent. These senior senators were all, in one way or another, linked to Marius, and each may have been intent on providing a 'true' interpretation of events as a corrective to Marius' fame, in order to ensure that it did not become the stuff from which legends were made.

It is, moreover, not beyond the bounds of possibility that the works of these writers may be singled out as an attempt to counter the propaganda contained in a journal kept by Marius himself or, in the case of Sulla, to the contents of a \textit{laudatio funebris}.\textsuperscript{24} Cicero (Arch. 5, 19–20) certainly implies that Marius had kept some record of his career, in which lay the potential for expansion into a fullscale history. And Marius is no longer to be regarded as the semi-literate peasant from a \textit{municipium} that features in the most complete of the ancient literature;\textsuperscript{25} and he may well have been keen to leave behind him a suitably dignified account of his victories in which his various actions, over many years, might be justified.\textsuperscript{26} Augustus undertook

\textsuperscript{23} Such memoirs or \textit{commentarii} may have been based on earlier Greek models, Rawson, \textit{Intellectual Life}, 227, but there is nothing in the surviving Hellenic or Hellenistic literature to compare with the great outpouring, which is conspicuously concomitant with the final stages of Marius' career. It is astounding that autobiography as a genre of Latin literature should emerge at precisely this point in republican history.

\textsuperscript{24} On the importance of laudations as historical documents see R. E. Smith, 1940: 6-7.

\textsuperscript{25} Cf. Plut. \textit{Mar.} 45.5, where Marius' last days are granted a certain amount of dignity with an account of his subject's discourse on Fortune.

\textsuperscript{26} Marius seems to have wanted to commission Archias to undertake this task, E. Badian, 'Caepio and Norbanus: Notes on the Decade 100-90 B.C.', \textit{Historia} 6 (1957) 336; Carney, WS 73 (1960) 94-95.
just such a mission a century or so later. The hypothesis may be conjectural, but the advent of autobiography does appear to be closely connected to Marius and the role he played in republican politics and military affairs. A document devoted to Marius' achievements in the field, if it ever existed, did not endure for long although it may have influenced later views about his worth as a general. The memoirs of his enemies also eventually succumbed to the ravages of time. Nevertheless, they were clearly accessible for long enough to affect the degree of antagonism evident in the literary tradition concerning Marius' role as a politician, though they did not, as we shall see, affect the extent to which his fame as a general became perpetuated.

Besides the commentarii, all of which were contemporary or near contemporary sources, there were also the encomiastic accounts of Sulla in the histories of L. Cornelius Sisenna and L. Licinius Lucullus. Finally, into this category of presumably inimical material also falls a history written by the philosopher Posidonius, which together with Sulla's autobiography was, arguably, the most influential work from this period of Roman history. It is also said to have displayed a certain degree of animosity towards the man from Arpinum.

Measured against the great auctoritas of works produced by powerful members of the ordo senatorius, and their often close adherents, which constitute a first tradition about Marius, stands a relatively weaker sympathetic version. A history of the civil wars in the 80s composed by L. Lucceius in the 50s or early 40s, in Greek and possibly a source for Appian's Bella Civilia, should be ranked, at least tentatively, among the rare encomiastic sources for Marius. Its basic function was, after all, the abundant praise of Caesar, Marius' relative by marriage. Furthermore, the evolution of the 'heroic suicide' at Praeneste of the younger Marius in 82, and the story of

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27 Carney, WS 73 (1960) 95, suggests that the project, proposed in the 90s, was stillborn. Cf. G. C. R(ichards), OCD 97 for the existence of a panegyric composed by Archias devoted to Marius' victories over the Germanic tribes.


30 R. J. Evans, 'The Sources of Appian's Bella Civilia for the 80's BC', in Charistion C. P. T. Naudé, ed. U. R. D. Vogel-Weidemann, Pretoria 1993, 35-36. There can be no question that Appian has a more positive attitude towards Marius than to Sulla. His opera are primarily concerned with military matters either in wars abroad or in civil strife at home. His knowledge of republican politics is not astounding, but he provides some evidence not found in the other sources.
the remarkably brutal death of his cousin, M. Marius Gratidianus, after the final battle of the civil war may also be attributed to a writer keen to proclaim his sympathies for the standpoint of this family.31

C. Licinius Macer, tribune of the plebs in 73 and praetor about 68,32 was an orator about whose abilities Cicero was plainly ambivalent (Brut. 238), but he campaigned vigorously for the restoration of the tribunes’ powers, which had been severely curtailed by the laws of Sulla. He also wrote a history which may have concluded with an account of the 80s and 70s, and the political posturing of his tribunate marks him out as a sympathiser of Marius.33 The history of Fenestella, composed during the principate of Augustus and noted for its even-handedness and honesty, covered the career of Marius and was probably one of the very few neutral accounts written about this epoch.34 On the other hand, Livy’s history of the same period, although usually impartial (Tac. Ann. 4.34), exhibited a distinct lack of enthusiasm for Caesar and his treatment of Marius may, therefore, be assumed to have also been somewhat lukewarm.35

The works of Cicero, with their numerous references to Marius, have been analysed and discussed by Carney; nothing needs to be added in this respect. However, though apparently favourable to Marius, Cicero cannot simply be assigned to the supportive literary tradition. In the vicissitudes of his later career,36 especially between 62 and 58, Cicero began to have frequent recourse to certain historical episodes in order to shield himself from charges, increasingly raised, regarding the legality of his execution of Catiline’s accomplices in 63. Cicero evidently scanned the recent history of the

31 The material concerned with the death of Gratidianus was no more than blatant and clumsy propaganda, but was used very effectively to discredit L. Sergius Catilina, B. A. Marshall, ‘Catilina and the Execution of M. Marius Gratidianus’, CQ 35 (1985) 124-133.
32 MRR 2.110, 138, 146 and n. 10, 3.122.
33 A. H. McD(onald), OCD2 634; R.M. Ogilvie, A Commentary on Livy: Books 1-5, Oxford 1965, 7-12, and especially 8: ‘Licinius is a Marian, committed to bitter and determined antagonism to Sulla’; Badian, 1966: 22; Rawson, Intellectual Life 219-220.
34 For Fenestella’s ‘integrity’ see Lactantius, Inst. 1.6.14; Wissowa, RE 6. 2177-2179; A. H. McD(onald), OCD2 434; Evans, in Charistion C. P. T. Naudé, 34-35. The history of Sempronius Asellio is another possible neutral source, A. H. McD(onald), OCD2 130, as may have been any works of Pomponius Atticus which dealt with this period, E. B(adian), OCD2 146. However, Badian, 1966: 17-18; ‘The Sempronii Aselliones’, PACA 11 (1968) 1, notes that the history of Asellio may not have achieved a wide readership. The anecdotes preserved by Valerius Maximus about Marius may also be considered mostly neutral, though his work does not deserve to be categorized under historiography; W. M. Bloomer, Valerius Maximus and the Rhetoric of the New Nobility, London 1992, 156: ‘... his methodology is not the historian’s
res publica for actions taken by magistrates similar to those which had been forced upon him during his consulship. Three events suited the purpose of bolstering his defence: the murder of Ti. Gracchus in 133 in a riot partly instigated by the pontifex maximus P. Cornelius Scipio Nasica (cos. 138), the subjugation of C. Gracchus and his followers in 121 by the consul L. Opimius, and the imposition of martial law by the consuls Marius and L. Valerius Flaccus during the seditio of Saturninus and Glaucia.³⁷ Cicero may well have had warm and sentimental memories of Marius,³⁸ for both of them came from the same municipium, but it was purely for use as an exemplum, which buttressed his defence against attack, that he formalized the connection and exploited it as much as possible. The Ciceronian material may thus be a less than truthful indication of the author’s feelings. His ostensible admiration should be treated with caution, for he is no eulogist of his fellow novus homo, and rather represents another strand in the historical tradition.

The more positive view of Marius sprang from those writers who tended to share the political inclinations of his family, from a politician like Cicero, who needed to be associated with his greater fame and, finally, from the tie which existed between the Marii and the Iulii Caesares. Marius’ political stature should have derived some benefit from his close family relationship with C. Iulius Caesar, who did indeed make some political capital from the link early in his career (Suet. Iul. 11).³⁹ The connection was never fully exploited and, in time, the link must have been forgotten, possibly because Caesar’s own position in the ancestral gloria of the Julio-Claudians was rather ambiguous, and his achievements were not advertised on the same scale as those of Augustus.⁴⁰ Little was made of the fact that Caesar was Marius’ nephew in either the biography of Plutarch or that composed by Suetonius (Iul. 6). Both refer to the astute way that Caesar, during his quaestorship, handled the occasion offered to him by the death of Julia, and his wife Cornelia, daughter of Marius’ ally L. Cornelius Cinna. But, thereafter, it may be

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³⁷ Cicero could never, of course, have employed Sulla as an exemplum even though he had similarly extinguished riots instigated in 88 by P. Sulpicius, who on that occasion was in league with Marius. This episode was entirely to the discredit of Marius.

³⁸ Carney, WS 73 (1960) 121. Cicero is not always consistent, however, Off. 3.79, and by the 40s, Phil. 11.1, he had even less cause to maintain an attachment to Marius.

³⁹ Caesar, perhaps surprisingly, is not attested as having used the connection again. Yet Carney, WS 73 (1960) 122; Marius 71–72 and n. 299, argues that Marius became an immensely popular figure, presumably at the very time that Caesar achieved his dictatorship, and sole rule of the Roman empire.

taken for granted that, as his own repute went from strength to strength, Caesar found that there was little to be gained from drawing on the exploits of an uncle by marriage. Instead, he chose to illustrate the spoils and trophies from his own victories in the field and the legendary ancestors of the Iulii Caesares when it was necessary to issue propaganda in his name.\footnote{Caesar’s propaganda, which appears on denarii in the 40s, is quite spectacular. See M. H. Crawford, \textit{Roman Republican Coinage}, Cambridge 1974, 1.461, no. 443, 1.463, no. 448, 1.466-467, nos. 450-452, 1.471, no. 456, 1.478-479, nos. 466-468, 1.485-486, nos. 475-476, 1.495, no. 481-482. For the legendary ancestors of Julius Caesar see T. P. Wiseman, ‘Legendary Genealogies in Late-Republican Rome’, \textit{G&R} 21 (1974) 153.}

Given its weight, it is not surprising that the views propagated by the anti-Marius literature were prevalent in antiquity. The research of Fenestella may have been adjudged sound but, like the histories of Luccceius and Licinius Macer, it may not have had a great circulation, while Livy failed to achieve the renown accorded to Sallust.\footnote{Syme, \textit{Sallust} 301; A. H. McD(onald), \textit{OCD}\textsuperscript{2} 615; On Livy’s supposed naivety see Syme, \textit{RR} 485-486.} Plutarch’s awareness of the imbalance in the sources for this period of the Republic stemmed from his earlier treatment of Sulla, with the result that the lives of both the dictator and Marius are characterized by an equal lack of compassion.\footnote{A. Wardman, \textit{Plutarch’s Lives}, London 1974, 97: ‘Both are seen as tyrants’; P. A. Stadter, ‘Paradoxical Paradigms: Lysander and Sulla’, in \textit{Plutarch and the Historical Tradition}, ed. P. A. Stadter, London & New York 1992, 43-44. On the order and dates of composition see C. P. Jones, ‘Towards a Chronology of Plutarch’s Works’, \textit{JRSE} 56 (1966) 68; Pelling, 1979: 74-96.} The underlying motives for the conflicting opinions about Marius in republican literature are easily discernible, though perhaps they are not often enough enunciated. Some of his political opponents, even those who may have been former allies, envious of his splendid career, put stylus to wax-tablet and published what they had written in order to add similar splendour to their own achievements. No one, with the possible exception of Marius himself, thought to leave a permanent record of this politician’s distinguished career. The writers who later viewed him with respect were lesser figures of Latin literature. The earliest sources, amicable or unfriendly, were eventually lost; none seem to have been of the highest artistic quality; and the recreation of Marius’ political career has become inextricably tied to second-generation material, perhaps of better quality than the primary sources but, nevertheless, affected to various degrees by the prejudices of previous writers.

Notwithstanding disparate opinions, Marius’ military genius lived on,\footnote{Within a comparatively short time the tradition became entrenched. Marius’ military successes were thought to have derived from the fact that he was favoured by \textit{Fortuna}, a theme probably developed by Cicero in a poem entitled \textit{Marius}, and in one composed by Varro, perhaps also dedicated to this politician. His military \textit{fama} early on became something of a topos, Weinstock, \textit{Julius} 113-114.} and became almost a legend in the literature of later antiquity, largely unencumbered by any distinctions he may have notched up in his political
career or by any repugnance he earned on account of crimes committed in his old age (Plut. *Mar.* 2.3). Within a hundred years or so after Plutarch and Appian had written, few writers could remember the significance of Marius' role as a politician, nor were they familiar with the period of republican history in which he had thrived. What material they found while researching their particular interests was nearly beyond their comprehension; they did not devote much attention to it. It was far less strenuous to relate glorious victories in exotic locations than to struggle over what were evidently archaic constitutional principles, which had long ceased to have any real meaning for authors living under an autocratic régime in which they did not have the slightest participation. Thus the fifth century poet Claudius Claudianus evidently had the highest regard for Marius whose praises he sang. And he employed Marius' military achievements as a standard against which Honorius' general Stilicho might be equated or even considered superior.

In the *Historia Augusta*, Marius appears as the military idol of Avidius Cassius, *Cass.* 3.8, and Pescennius Niger, *Niger*, 12, while the emperor Septimius Severus is likened to a 'Punic Marius' or a 'Punic Sulla' on account of his ferocity, *Niger*, 6.4. Orosius, 5.17.1, who employed Livy's history, admits to being baffled by the political events of 100, to which he devotes little space and less appreciation. Eutropius, 4.27–5.8, again dependent on Livy, discusses Marius' ambitions only where they are relevant to his military career.

In comparison to Sulla's reputation, Marius escaped relatively unscathed since his political exploits had become entirely overshadowed by his victories in the field, Cameron, *Claudian* 338: 'By a curious whim of posterity, Sulla was a monster of cruelty to the Imperial age, while Marius, guilty of proscriptions far worse than Sulla's, was the hero of his day. This conventional (and unhistorical) assessment of the two men is faithfully reflected in Claudian, who frequently evokes Marius as a hero, while Sulla is for him an author of murder and treachery'; cf. B. Baldwin, 'Sulla ἰδιωκρατευε', *Glotta* 61 (1983) 47.
nations, and engrave with this one inscription the monument which records our double victory: 'Here beneath the soil of Italy lie the bodies of brave Cimbri and Getae; their death they owed to our famous generals Marius and Stilicho. Learn presumptuous peoples, not to despise Rome.'

The modern study of Marius is, therefore, hampered not only by the various strands which are manifest in the earliest literary sources, but also by the fact that his military prowess became a regular exemplum in the later literature. As a result, his true character and attainments have become warped almost beyond any hope of easy recovery. In order to reach the real and historical Marius, layer after layer of deliberate or unintentional obfuscation must first be stripped away. However, it is far from certain that a successful picture is, ultimately, obtainable. Who is to say, for example, that the authors of the early first-century memoirs and histories were not truer patriots than Marius? We may ascribe their hostility to simple-minded jealousy of his great accomplishments, but they may well have genuinely believed that his career was inimical to the eventual safety of the res publica. Considering the events which were to ensue later in that same century, they were perhaps correct to sound a warning. Their views may certainly not be dismissed as if they were all merely second-rate pamphleteers who whiled away their time attempting to sully the memory of the novus homo from Arpinum who made good in the city.

The greatest difficulty arises in trying to gauge what these earlier writers may or may not have said on the basis of references to their works by Sallust and Plutarch, in particular. In the Bellum Iugurthinum and in the Life overt hostility is, to some extent, mitigated by the pious acknowledgement that Marius' achievements would have been greater still had he not succumbed to ambitio (Sall. lug. 64.5; Plut. Sull. 4.4). This view, seeing that it emerges in both works, may not be an original thought emanating from Sallust or Plutarch, but may also have been adopted from contemporary evaluations of Marius. It is not far from the truth. Leaving aside the possibility that Marius' career was objectively handled by historians such as Fenestella

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47 Claudian, Bell. Geticum. 635-647; cf. 8.641, 15.92; 24.35; 26.126.
48 The reception of Marius into the literature of later antiquity, the existence of Marian fama, and its impact on writers down to the present century, comprise a project which I shall pursue in due course.
and Asellio,\textsuperscript{50} the accounts which viewed him with some admiration were all equally compromised through political opposition to Sulla's constitutional settlement and support for Caesar. The striking feature which emerges is that, within a short time of his death, perceptions of Marius became linked to a passionate like or dislike of the current system of government; the gulf between positive and negative impressions could not have been more profound.\textsuperscript{51}

The uncertainties occasioned by the limited nature of the source material, and the dichotomy of views apparent about Marius in the ancient literature, were duly recognized in modern times. In a shrewd move, Mommsen re-defined the dimensions of this politician's role and achievements, questioned his talents as a general,\textsuperscript{52} but at the same time imposed party labels onto republican politics along the lines of those with which he was familiar from the 1850s.\textsuperscript{53} Obviously under the spell of the new ideologies of the mid-nineteenth century, and living in the aftermath of the 1848 revolutions, he re-cast Marius as a man of the people, and one of the leaders of the opposi-

\textsuperscript{50} However, Asellio's work may not have been worth consultation, Cic. Leg. 1.6: 'languorem atque inscitiam'; Badian, 1968: 1 and n. 2: 'The boasts of a prooemium cannot necessarily be taken at their face value'; Gell. NA. 5.18.7-8; H. Peter (ed.), \textit{Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae}, Leipzig 1906–1914: 1.179; Badian, 1966: 17–18; L. P. Kenter, \textit{M. Tullius Cicero: De Legibus, A Commentary on Book 1}, trans. M. L. Leenheer-Braid, Amsterdam 1972, 43-44.

\textsuperscript{51} As Carney, \textit{Marius} 2, has suggested. On the characterization of Roman politics in terms of a 'boule-demos antithesis' by Plutarch and other ancient writers see C. B. R. Pelling, 'Plutarch and Roman Politics', in \textit{Past Perspectives: Studies in Greek and Roman Historical Writing}, ed. I. S. Moxon, J. D. Smart & A. J. Woodman, Cambridge 1986, 168: '... a favourite device for analysing late-republican history ...'.

\textsuperscript{52} Th. Mommsen, \textit{Römische Geschichte}, Berlin 1910: 2.190: 'Eine militärische Capacität im eminenten Sinn war er, so weit wir urtheilen können, nicht; allein die sehr achtungswerthen Eigenschaften, die er besass, genügten unter den damals bestehenden Verhältnissen vollkommen um ihm den Ruf einer solchen zu verschaffen, und auf diesen gestützt war er in einer beispiellos ehrenvollen Weise eingetreten unter die Consulare und die Triumphatoren'; \textit{The History of Rome}, trans. W. P. Dickson, London 1908: 3.453; Cf. A. Ferguson, \textit{The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic}, London 1829, an earlier work first published in 1783, which clearly follows Plutarch's account of events much more rigidly and without much, if any, critical analysis.

\textsuperscript{53} B. Croke, 'Mommsen's Pompey', QS 22 (1985) 137: '... Roman politics, particularly of the republican period, ... was cast as a reflection of nineteenth-century European politics'; P. A. Brunt, \textit{The Fall of the Roman Republic}, Oxford 1988, 443-444. Parallelism, and inevitably the inverse parallel, remains as much in vogue as it did a century and a half ago. J. Bryce, \textit{Modern Democracies}, New York 1924: 1.26-27, a comparison of his own day with that of the Augustan principate; N. H. Baynes, in a review of F. W. Bussell (possibly in the \textit{The Yorkshire Post}, but not thus far discovered by the author), \textit{The Roman Empire: Essays on the Constitutional History from the Accession of Domitian (81 A.D.) to the Retirement of Nicephorus III (1081 A.D.)}, London 1910: 'the author throughout compares, contrasts and criticises the political theories and problems of our own times'; K. Bradley, \textit{Slavery and Rebellion in the Roman World 140 B.C.–70 B.C.}, London 1989, 1-17, for an examination of slave unrest in the Americas as a prelude to discussions of 'similar' phenomena in the Roman Republic; cf. U. R. D. Vogel-Weidemann, 'Ancient History in the 20th Century?', \textit{Akroterion} 34 (1989) 18: '... history never repeats itself, since the factors in given historical contexts are never identical'. 
tion to a conservative and aristocratic senatorial government. This novel interpretative analysis of Roman republican politics was greeted with enthusiasm, and found acceptance among a newly politicised and sensitive intellectual and scholarly readership. The slogans and labels Mommsen used were singularly inappropriate and were recognized as unhistorical even within his own lifetime, but the indelible mark which he left on Classical Scholarship has greatly affected perceptions of Marius' career ever since.

The metamorphosis by which Marius has emerged from the rusticity, with which he is attributed in the ancient literary sources to become a wily and successful republican politician has been slow and protracted. In the present century, the influence of Mommsen waned to be replaced by an attachment to the conclusions of Gelzer regarding the position of patronage in Roman society. Gelzer’s influence is most notable in Münzer’s study of relationships between senatorial families, and in Scullard’s scheme of Roman political life from 220 to 150, which was described as being dominated by a small number of warring aristocratic families, and in Syme’s reconstruction of senatorial politics after Sulla. The work of Scullard, in particular, has clearly affected Astin’s presentation of Roman history down to the death of Scipio Aemilianus. Although this pattern has been less rigidly applied by Badian, Carney and Gruen, they have all, to some degree, maintained that political groupings may be identified in the senate of Marius’ time,

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55 Croke, 1985: 145.

56 A sentimental attachment to slender means as a genesis for this novus homo remains noticeable; Carney, Marius 15, Marius was ‘A natural soldier’; E. Badian, ‘Marius and the Nobles’, DÜJ 25 (1963-1964), 141-142, ‘Marius did not come of a very distinguished family’; P. O. Spann, Quintus Sertorius and the Legacy of Sulla, Fayetteville 1987, 8-10, a rather orthodox view of Marius’ career.


perhaps less structured than the factions proposed by Scullard but, nonetheless, a permanent fixture of republican political life.\textsuperscript{60}

The schematic approach has been more rigorously questioned, each in their own fashion, by both Brunt and Meier,\textsuperscript{61} whose views tend to be regarded with more favour than any others today,\textsuperscript{62} and have largely been adopted below. Schematism is all very well in a vacuum but it takes little account of human nature, which is often rather unpredictable.\textsuperscript{63} Indeed, I shall argue that, while it is perfectly understandable that political friendships and alliances should have been formed in the environment of late second-century Rome, the impetus for attaining political offices lay with the individual, a situation which precluded the development of groups as such. Because they were the members of a political and social élite of three hundred, most politicians of this era of the \textit{res publica} wanted to be the top dog, even if only for a short time; they could neither conceive of, nor contemplate, a situation in which some were always superior and some always inferior. Competitive elections made all and everything possible and contributed to the somewhat disorganized structure in which they mostly prospered.\textsuperscript{64}

Into this less than perfect configuration Marius was to find his place first


\textsuperscript{63} Carney, \textit{Marius} 71, considers Marius’ policies throughout his career inconsistent, and thereby misses the crux of the problem: that all republican politicians, to greater or lesser degrees, were flexible in their approach to all political problems and crises. That was the nature of Roman politics and the reason why it was, largely, so successful.

\textsuperscript{64} Cf. P. F. Cagniart, ‘L. Cornelius Sulla in the Nineties: a Reassessment’, \textit{Latomus} 50 (1991) 303: ‘Sulla had good reasons to consider the praetorship the crowning achievement of his public career.’ Such an argument presupposes, however, that human nature today is quite different from what it was during the Roman republic. All men who entered politics must have entertained hopes of the highest offices; and the higher they ascended the greater the aspirations to reach the pinnacle. Moreover, the ancient literature has too frequent references to \textit{ambitio} to allow for an idea, which suggests that many politicians were content with secondary positions. Many were, no doubt, obliged to be content, since they failed to win elections, but that does not mean that they were happy with their lot.
as a junior ally to a consul in 119, a link which was quickly broken, never to be repaired. From his possession of curule office he gradually extended his connections within the senate and throughout the community; and this form of patronage or influence was the mainstay of his successful campaign for the consulship. Thereafter, he was a power to be reckoned with and naturally attracted political allies but, unlike Syme, I cannot identify a ‘party of Marius’ actively engaged in supporting his interests at Rome in the decade 108–99. Instead I shall suggest that it was rather through Marius’ personal authority and his own amazing energies that this primacy was prolonged. When his dignitas was damaged by the events of late 100, his auctoritas also declined, and he rejoined the ranks of the senior statesmen of the senate, still highly influential but no longer pre-eminent.

In Marius’ political career, as we shall see, the deficiencies of the evidence throw into a sharper focus the well-chosen words of Jacob Bronowski, who declared that:

> There is no absolute knowledge. And those who claim it, whether they are scientists or dogmatists, open the door to tragedy. All information is imperfect. We have to treat it with humility.

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65 Syme, RR 86 n. 1.