

THREE MEN IN A VOTE: PROSCRIPTION AND THE POWER OF THE TEXT (APPIAN, *BELLUM CIVILE* 4.1.1–6. 51)¹

[*Editor's note*: readers will benefit from having Appian's Greek to hand.]

Summary

- 5. Introduction
- 4. Three for the Price of One
- 3. Three's a Crowd
- 2. Whose Counting?
- 1. Think of a Number, then ...
- 0. Reeling, Writhing 'n' 'Rithmetic (The Three Rs)

5. Introduction

*'You are a difficult case. But don't give up hope. Everyone is cured sooner or later.
In the end we shall shoot you.'*²

We *write* history. Writing construes—imagines and analyses—history. Writing involves us in history mimetically, while the discourse of history is programmed in writing. Writing so pervaded and staked out the Hellenistic culture of Rome that it dictated the social formation and dominated the civic image-repertoire. Public figures wrote, politicians and orators, generals and poets, emperors and historians. Their texts—from military *communiqués* to epic verses—were important vectors of sense that arose from and fed back into the social 'text'. Public life was constructed and contested through the flood of writing that constantly monitored, shifted and revised the *status quo* of intelligibility. Continuity between primary official edict that delimited, mandated, sanctioned, terms and categories of behaviour, and reflective commentary on the significance of such peremptory formulae, were as obtrusive a fact of Roman existence as discourse contesting primacy between the many different institutions of writing—whether on paper, or bronze, or whatever.

¹ This paper—writing death—was written for the live *ICS Research Seminar* 'From the Rubicon to Actium: Literature of the Triumviral Period', Spring 1996. My thanks for the invitation to the organizers, Prof. Susanna Morton Braund, Dr. Chris Kraus and Prof. Roland Mayer. I owe several of the ideas here to Mary Beard.

² George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Harmondsworth 1954) 220.

The players in history already wrote their own narratives into the acts they authored; historicity was built right into the conceptualization of political action. Roman statesmen glossed their decrees, they knew they were writing themselves onto the pages of history. Conversely, they knew, and so did Roman writers, that the narratives to which the Roman world subscribed were never in the gift of the players, but always beyond their command. The most absolute determination of a procedure, complete with bound-in prescription to guarantee how it was to be thought, was already caught within the contingencies of its sponsorship, and must take its turn in the stocks of history, mocked by inclusion in the roll-call of attempts at self-validation. The previous and the next such gesture of sovereign power would be no less peremptorily imperative, but no more proof against re-interpretation.

If history writing framed, shaped and controlled historical action, nevertheless (Romans learned the lesson time and again) historical action inevitably misread, eluded and thwarted the narrative scripts set for it; but only as the replacement with another history, no less liable to be displaced. The palimpsest on the wall, writing history could change *anything*, from the names to the game, *everything*, from the Rubicon to Actium.

Historical narratives blur their stake in their own hermeneutics with their interest in the legibility of the social text for the actor-participants, who must read events as they occur. How clear would you like your view of the events to be? Are historians power-merchants out to control reading of their stories, authorising the apportionment of clarity and intelligibility that their narrations dispense? Or, however masterful, must they share, like it or not, in the aporias that engulf other social actors, including the characters they write (with)? There is always a self-reflexive dimension to the reading of historical narrative, and when the narrative, in focussing on a critical written document, parades as itself a relatively explicit instance of writing-as-reading, this is to the fore. As narrative composition, history at such moments displays its own status as part of, as well as apart from, the 'writing/reading' that constitutes its characters' experience: the participants live out their readings, may die for and be nailed to them; historians, whether or not their coevals, must model their own reading from, with and against, over and above, these animated (mis)readings, committing themselves in their own writing to a particular position before their readers' re-readings in (both) their presents. On occasion, writing history proved suicidal.

Romans knew what kinds of appropriations of their own behaviour would commend themselves to contemporary historians and historians to come, and could model readings that would confute their host writings and might convict them of perhaps wilful, woeful, misreading of history. Roman writers knew that their characters lived, by their own lights, as *exempla* before

the fact, meant themselves to become interpretants of the future. While some classical writings might pose as speech-acts designed to deliver and impose monological messages, just the way that certain styles of modern criticism hold to have been the ideology (for some, the reality, even) of the entire canon of texts, the inclusivity of the major genres of narrative (epic in verse and history in prose) ensures that no item of writing was or can be out of the reach of dissent, dispute, displacement. Their resounding prestige should rather ensure polyphonous interpretation as the norm. These are multiple readings, and there to be read.

The paper on your screen puts a take on what it proposes as the *scriptural* moment of moments in any narrative of ancient Rome. The text in question resumes within its ambit the history of the implosion of the pancretic Roman Republic; inaugurally emblemizes the transformation of the world into the monarchic autocracy of the *Caesares Augusti* which has remained the aetiological parable of power in Roman political thought to this day; indelibly baptizes the generation of Roman statesmen and writers who at once incarnated and figure the apogee of civilised sensibility at Rome, along with every word they or ‘their’ Emperor Augustus ever penned or incised; pressures its every writer/reader to stare into the viral horror of contagious writing programmed to enlist for legalized slaughter all who stand in its way, in infinite regression: can you keep your head, your humanity, while all about you are losing theirs? The *docu-moment* concerned is the edict presented by Appian as the text for his reading of the manhunt initiated by Lepidus, Antony and Octavian on entering Rome to be quasi-legally invested by the (mockery of the) *Lex Titia*, three men in one vote, with the task of restoring the state in late 43 B.C.E., howsoever they listed.³ Rather than read the edict closely, the approach will be to explore the logic of the death-list it prefaced, within the episode in Appian that turns on it, and within the politics of the historical narrative. Capsized Rome lists, as we enter here the poisonous textuality of triumviral terrorism: proscription.⁴

³ Cf. App. *BC* 4. 2. 7.

⁴ On Appian’s version of the *προγραφή*, see esp. P. Wallmann, *Triumviri Rei Publicae Constituendae. Untersuchungen zur politischen Propaganda im zweiten Triumvirat (43-30 v. Chr.)* (Frankfurt 1989) 43-51, ‘Das Proskriptionsedikt’; H. Bengtson, *Zu den Proskriptionen des Triumvirn*, *SBAW München* 1972. *Heft 3* 10-13; F. Hinard, *Les Proscriptions de la Rome Républicaine* (Paris-Rome 1985) 227-30 ‘L’Edictum’; L. Canfora, ‘Proscrizioni e dissesto sociale nella repubblica Romana’, *Klio* 62 (1980) 425-37, at 430-4, ‘L’editto triumvirale (Appian. IV, 8-11)’.

4. Three for the Price of One

*proscriptionis miserrimum nomen illud*⁵

The triumviral proscription is set in counterpoint to the civil war against the forces led by Brutus and Cassius gathering strength in the East. Despite mutual antipathy and distrust, the Caesarian *diadochoi* have come together in a coalition brokered by their lesser brethren, especially Pollio and Plancus; they have united against the Pompeians grouped around Sex. Pompeius; and the bulk of the body of senators now needed to be deterred from initiatives by the lesson of the elimination of the ring-leaders who had organized the offensives against Antony, who had had him declared a public enemy, and who then did the same for Lepidus when he joined Antony; throwing in his lot with these outlaws carried the same implications for Octavian's position. Underlying the drama may have been the eruption of an 'esplosione di «forze latenti» in what amounted to 'a social revolution',⁶ but what captures the attention is the intromission of civil war within the walls of Rome.⁷ And, already, what we need to re-consider is what kind of narrative to tell: was this anywhere near so pre-planned, logical, calculated a sequence as my *precis* just intimated?

Proscriptions were, particularly for (Greek and Roman) readers of Greek history, far from an unprecedented *genus* of atrocity. We might think, for example, of the Reign of Terror of The Thirty in Athens at the end of the Peloponnesian War, with their variously circumscribed lists of citizens, their legalized elimination even of close associates and intimates, the killings they ordered.⁸ But the *species* 'proscription', marked in Latin by a new ('euphemistic') locution, and as such a problem for Greek, English, or whatever history narratives to register, was affixed to just two fateful moments of fatality.

Polybius does have, under 160/159 B.C.E., the Epirot quisling Charops 'For me, you see, there has never been, nor will ever be, a person either more bestial or more sinister than Charops'⁹—'finishing off the genocide

⁵ 'Proscription: the saddest word in Latin', Cic. *Dom.* 43.

⁶ Canfora 435; R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford 1939) 194, finessed by Hinard 303-5, 'Terrorisme'.

⁷ So App. *BC, Praef.* 1.2, 4. 3. 14. For powerful modern narrations-*cum*-commentaries of the events, cf. esp. Syme 187-201, 'The Proscriptions', Bengtson. For structural analysis, cf. Canfora, F. Millar, 'Triumvirate and Principate', *JRS* 63 (1973) 50-67, J. Bleicken, *Zwischen Republik und Prinzipat. Zum Charakter des Zweiten Triumvirats*, *Abh. Göttingen* 185 (1990), esp. 41-51.

⁸ Xen. *Mem.* 2. When Appian picks out the proscriptions as unparalleled among Hellenes in *stasis* or war (*BC* 4. 1. 1), he thinks especially of Thucydides on the Corcyraean *stasis* (3.82), signalling it by the Thucydidean editorial flourish (cf. A. M. Gowing, *The Triumviral Narratives of Appian and Cassius Dio* [Michigan 1992] 265f.).

⁹ Polyb. 30. 12. 3.

perpetrated by his Roman trainers, murdering people openly in the *agora* or in their homes, sending out squads to assassinate others on their estates or along the roads, confiscating the property of all the dead, he brought in another device. He *proscribed* as outlaws those who were blessed with property as outlaws—not just men, but women, too. ... When they'd unloaded all the men and women as far as they could, they brought all *the proscribed* before the people's court They condemned them all not to exile but to death as enemies.¹⁰ But this has to be an excerptor's paraphrase of Polybius' text, if this is to be recognized as the use of *prographo* elsewhere as a *calque* on the Latin *proscribo* (+ *aliquem*), which seems to be Sulla's contribution (in 82/81 B.C.E.) to the European fund of barbarous terms for barbarity: 'Evil a la Sulla: proscription' (*Sullani exempli malum: proscriptio*).¹¹

Sulla: 'first to *proscribe* enemies to death. ... Sulla *proscribed* killing on sight, for vast bounties and for ditto penalties for concealment';¹² Sulla 'proscribed them to death. For he it seems to be who *first proscribed* (*προγράψαι*) those inflicted with the death penalty, and *inscribed* (*ἐπιγράψαι*) bounties for killing, rewards for information leading to discovery, penalties for concealment'.¹³ Appian declares that 'the same sort of things happened under Sulla, and before him Marius', but, he writes, the triumviral proscriptions were 'all the more a living memory because they were *the last ones*'.¹⁴

At Rome, then, *proscription* was distinguished as a style of barbarity in a class of its own.¹⁵ And proscription never lost its Sullan ring: thus, Cicero was sure Pompey would emulate his teacher, 'for his mind is Sullavatin' 'n' proscripturatin' long since' (*ita sullaturit animus eius et proscripturit iam diu*).¹⁶ And when Horace turned *his* experience of 43 B.C.E. into a parable for the 30s, the emblematic *proscriptus* that stepped into his lines, Rupilius Rex, *had* to come from *Praeneste* because of what Sulla did when he stormed the Marians there, the moment before he invented proscription: 'He separated them from each other into three lots—Romans, Samnites, Praenestians; the Ro-

¹⁰ Polyb. 32.5.12, 6.1 (from the *exc. de uirt. et uit.*). Diodorus' account (31. 31) is derivative from Polybius but does not use *προγράψω*. On Charops, see H. H. Scullard, 'Charops and Roman Policy in Epirus', *JRS* 34 (1945) 58-64.

¹¹ Vell. 2. 66.1.

¹² App. *BC* 4. 1. 1.

¹³ App. *BC* 1. 11. 95; *ἐπὶ θανάτῳ προγραφαί* are also picked out as a particularly grim feature of the collapse of Rome in the *Preface*, 1. 1. 2, 1. 5, cf. 4. 1.1.

¹⁴ App. *BC* 4. 3. 16.

¹⁵ Cf. W. Nippel, *Public Order in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge 1995) 55f., 83f. for overlap and difference between proscription and its close kin; to an uncomfortable extent, Sulla's proscription must be imagined from its triumviral after-image (cf. Hinard 10).

¹⁶ Cic. *Att.* 9. 10. 6 (cf. Quintil. 8. 6. 32).

mans ... he pardoned, ... all the rest he had used for target-practice. ... The town he had them loot, top to tail'.¹⁷

When the triumviral proscription came in 43, it was christened a return, a 'son-of-Sulla' scenario, from what would one day be dubbed 'Sulla's student trio' (*Sullae ... discipuli tres*):¹⁸ 'those killings which once Sulla had used, from proscriptions, encored ... All the rest that had been done before in Sulla's day occurred at this time too'.¹⁹ It was worse, as rhetorical conceit has it, because Sulla's people had been 'improvising and experimentally innovating'; and because 'only Sulla's and his henchmen's enemies died, not his friends or other people ... apart from the odd multimillionaire'.²⁰ Dio quotes the *IIIviri* as telling the People they 'hadn't emulated either the brutality of Marius and Sulla ... or the clemency of Caesar'.²¹

In Appian's version of the text of the triumviral *Proskriptionsedikt*,²² they confess, in the full shame/shamelessness of denial:²³

We shall go hard on no mass group/swathe of people; we shan't regard as personal enemies all who opposed or schemed against us; nor for wealth on its own, or opulence, or status, or in the numbers that another *supremo* before us killed, when he too was ordering the state in a civil war, the one you dubbed '*Felix*' for his success—though three needs must have more enemies than one!²⁴

Just as within this tumbling sentence it is not clear how many of the denials relate to Sulla, as the euphemisms cling to 'us' and the 'killing' to Sulla, while 'our' rhetoric dashes on, through mild anacolouthon, to solicit felicitat-

¹⁷ Hor. *Serm.* 1. 7. 1, 28, App. *BC* 1. 10. 94; Liv. *Per.* 88, *omnes Praenestinos inermes concidi iussit*. [Editor's Hend-note: the author has modestly proscribed a reference to 'On Getting Rid of Kings: Horace *Satires* 1 7 (Endersong)', *CQ* 44 [1994] 146-70.]

¹⁸ Juv. 2. 28.

¹⁹ Dio 47. 3. 1, 2.

²⁰ Dio 47. 4. 1, 5. 1.

²¹ Dio 47. 13. 4; cf. Gowing 251.

²² I agree with the position argued by Wallmann 43, that Appian has re-touched a version of the edict, rather than dreamed it up: as with the other 'document' of the proscription episode, the speech of Hortensia (4. 5. 32f.), I do not see that Appian has originated very much of the thought, or wording, but by the same token do not see that the actors in 43 originated very much of it, either. Oddly enough, Appian's Hortensia has aroused much less scepticism than the edict.

²³ Cf. Canfora 430.

²⁴ App. *BC* 4. 2. 10.

tions and end in a ‘witticism’,²⁵ so too the entire document, together with its surrounding narrational commentary and festoon of accompanying narratives, prods the reader into synkrisis between the first and second proscriptions. Can we see how alike, how unlike they are—and how the comparisons are muddled, as they are forced upon us, by the triumviral denials, how the narrator plays false the thrust of the differences claimed in the edict,²⁶ how polluting the business of precisely calibrating the worst outrages perpetrated in the name of Roman law must be? Writing history, we are put in the same triumviral business of writing death. Everyone was, and is.

3. Three’s a Crowd

*Sulla potuit, ego non potero?*²⁷

The triumvirs let the unsharable and abjured *dictatura* favoured by Sulla and by Julius be—however impressively it may have served as model for the way to manufacture ‘legality’²⁸—and surprised Rome with proscriptions *before* their war.²⁹ Sulla’s proscriptions had mopped up losers in the aftermath of battle: if Brutus and Cassius had prevailed at Philippi, they ‘should’ have marched in his footsteps. Sullan proscription was *not* the way to vindicate filial piety toward the *popularis* (Julius) Caesar, and the publicly ceremonied and statutory triumvirate, if it did replay Caesarian politics, must *eo ipso* por-

²⁵ The inconcinnity of the final arithmetic (cf. the same juggling in Dio 47. 3. 3) does not just mime hasty composition (Wallmann 49), but projects the conceptual menace of the edict onto its tonality: this is the moment where the ‘psychic terrorism’, topically modulated as self-proclaimed *tutum, iustum, pium, modestum*, hits the rhetorical reef of brute ‘necessity’ in triplicate (the triumcolon of *ἀνάγκης ... ἀνάγκη ... ἀνάγκη*, *loc. cit.*; cf. the *color* that opens the *προσγραφή*: ... ἡναγκαζόμεθα, 4. 8); it is also the moment where the edict toys with the calculations it prompts in the minds of the audience: is anyone relieved that numbers will ‘not exceed’ (the several thousands of) Sulla’s massacres? The throwaway clausula at once pushes expectations back up to hover *only just* below the Sullan figure—with the tease that *ceteris paribus* a 300% increase should be obligatory under a triple dictatorship.

²⁶ Cf. Gowing 251: ‘As the surrounding narrative makes abundantly clear, where each of the pledges ... is methodically refuted, the edict was a masterpiece of sophistic propaganda. Appian’s debunking began in ... a direct contradiction of the edict’s terms. The intervening chapters ... further undercut the triumvirs’ promises.’

²⁷ ‘No one stopped Sulla—try stopping me!’, Cic. *Att.* 9. 10. 2.

²⁸ Cic. *Leg.* 1. 42 claims the interregnal *Lex Valeria Flacci* empowered Sulla as dictator *ut ... quem uellet ciuium uel indicta causa impune posset occidere* (cf. App. *BC* 1. 11. 98). Augustus’ ‘life tribunate’ could clone from the Sullan dictatorship, voted ‘not for a fixed term, but ... for at his pleasure’ (*ibid.*). But *Sulla* resigned ...

²⁹ Hinard 306.

tend fissure into a re-run of the internecine progress of the first, private and unofficial, compact. Who would be the Crassus? The Pompey? *Not*, then, Pompey's son? The bizarreries of historical precedent are a symptomatic facet of the unravelling of cultural poetics in crisis. Reading what was happening, what the triumvirs were doing and what was being done to Rome, had to operate in terms of the Sullan script of proscription. The connections could seem to dictate, to prescribe, the *coup*, but were the similarities what would count, or the differences, or was it the dissimulation of either of these, or what?

A synopsis of (shall we say?) 'ironic' (p)re-writes would include the following brief but indicative tally:

1. It was right, one and all could agree, that the **Labienus** 'who arrested and murdered many people in the Sullan proscriptions' should become a triumviral victim in 43; yet it was all wrong that he should 'feel dishonoured if he didn't take his medicine nobly, stepping out front of his home and taking a pew as he awaited his killers'.³⁰
2. What should it mean that **Brutus' father** was a victim of Sulla's proscriptions?
3. That, limping *into* Rome on two good legs, **Q. Lucretius Vespillo** 'got to the city-gate where *his* father, proscribed by Sulla, had been captured, and saw a cohort of legionaries coming out at the double'—Vespillo's faithful slave support hid with him in a tomb, saved him from grave-robbers, and got him safely into his wife's false ceiling, stored till his pardon, and an eventual Augustan consulate (in 19)?
- 4-5. Along with the **fathers of** the Antonian **L. Marcius Censorinus** (praetor 43), **and of** Antony's conqueror **C. Vibius Pansa** (the deceased consul of 43) ?
- 6-7. The otherwise forgotten **L. Fidustius** and the dangerously well-connected tyrannicide sympathiser and husband of Pompeia, widow of Sulla's son and Pompey's daughter, **L. Cornelius Cinna**, both managed to get onto *both* the proscription lists, leaving the latter's sons, L. Cinna, Octavian's consul (in 32), and Cn. Cinna Magnus, Augustus' (5 C.E.) with a memorable family narrative to weave and bequeath.

³⁰ App. *BC* 4. 4. 26: Hinard, no. 69, 48of.

8. And a certain *Maecenas* was on the list in 82/81, too.³¹

The symmetries and asymmetries in history story-shaped as repetition with(in) difference are, no doubt, precisely the materials of paradoxography, and a drily sado-dispassionate eye reminds us, of Appian's and Dio's series of proscript anecdotes, that 'These stories went a long way towards compensating the lack of prose fiction among the Romans'.³²

But the fictionality, or otherwise, of the anecdotes plentifully supplied by Appian, is of far less moment than the tralatian effort which they represent, and pass on to us; the effort to encompass the senselessness, the destruction of sense, which the mapping of perverted human relations pins to the triumvirate. The representation of societal collapse is bound to be a projection of imaginary as well as (anti-)analytic *δείνωσις*: Appian himself dubs these tales *εἰκόνας*, as replete with mimetic power as the ancestral *imagines* (*εἰκόνας*) such as Brutus', cherished by his old *quaestor*, the last proscript in the ledger, left with congratulations from Augustus for his fidelity.³³

To look back to the second triumvirate from the perspective of those who survived into post-Actian Rome, will provoke a similar response. But first we need to consider briefly how historical narratives of the period are bound to echo and shadow the experience of these survivors. Now *Quellenforschung* long tried to crack open secondary narratives such as Appian's *Romaika* (before he caught up with his own century in the last couple of books, 23-4 on the Dacian and Arabian Wars), along the seams of contrary attitudes expressed in particular passages towards particular figures or factions. These antinomies were huffed into contradictions which could then be puffed into diagnostic indications of shifts between subjection to one particular dominant source after another.³⁴ Did Suetonius *not* copy out his hype on Augustus from one narrative, the sleaze from another? Don't the former and the latter resemble respectively their equivalents in Appian and Dio? Can

³¹ Bruti: App. *BC* 2. 16. 111; Hinard, no. 35, 361-3; Vespillones: App. *BC* 4. 6. 44, Hinard, no. 41, 368f., no. 84., 491f.; Censorini: Hinard, no. 46, 37; Pansa: Dio 45. 17. 1, Hinard, no. 74, 408-10; Fidustius: Hinard, no. 26, 353 and no. 56, 468f.; Cinna: Hinard, no. 17, 343f. and no. 46, 457f.; Maecenas: Hinard, no. 42, 369f.

³² Syme, 190. n. 6, as ever giving an enhanced paraphrase in vindication of his beloved ancient sources, cf. App. *BC* 4. 3. 15.

³³ *BC* 4. 4. 21, 6. 51.

³⁴ E. Gabba, *Appiano e la Storia delle Guerre Civili* (Florence 1956) urged a heavy and inert dependence on Pollio's *Historiae* (225f. on the edict) on just these lines (cf. G. Zecchini, 'Asinio Pollione: Dall'attività politica alla riflessione storiografica', *ANRW* 2. 20. 3 (1982) 1265-96, at 1290f.). The most sensitive modern investigation of the sort is C. B. R. Pelling, 'Plutarch's method of work in the Roman Lives', *JHS* 99 (1979) 74-96.

we *not* guess that (to pick out a triumvirate of historians) Pollio, who gave up his father-in-law to the blacklist,³⁵ Messalla, whose name glittered on it, and Livy, innocent of all this, took rather different lines on this issue? Of course, more recent efforts have productively concentrated on registering the devotions of monumental projects such as Appian's, or Dio's (who will also become a primary historian of his own lifetime, as he eventually reaches the 'point' of his project), in their own writes.³⁶ This revaluation has the potential to whittle down our notions of the distance between our activities *qua* narrative historians of Antiquity and those of our 'sources'—in particular, to jettison bogus superiority and scientific *folies de grandeur*. But, more than this, the grist stripped out by *Quellenkritik* can feed straight into our mill, once it is re-assigned to contrary imaginings within, not between, individual reckonings of their subjects. Did not Suetonius firmly commit himself to an Augustus with two faces, duly fissured by contradiction?³⁷ Can anyone today entertain an integrated portrait of Augustus minus the ambivalence of fragmentation—without, that is, feeling their implication in the holistic politics of autocracy, as well (no doubt) of anarchy? So the narratives lived by those who survived to become Augustus and his imperial subjects must incorporate dissonance, cope with contrariety, and never, ever, oblivate barbarous uncreation.

2. Whose Counting?

*Die Tage der Menschenjagd haben sich unauslöschlich in das Gedächtnis der Zeitgenossen eingegraben.*³⁸

Appian's narrative, where triumviral Octavian will be transfigured into the monarch Augustus who set the mould for the Antonine world inhabited by this Alexandrian *procurator Augusti*, is bound to the task of damning the barbarity of civil war (as interruption to the subsumption of other peoples' histories within that of conquest by Rome). History slows to a crawl, a near stand-still, between the Ides of March and Philippi (as in Dio, too, and in lost Livy), and the new Caesar's terrorist *entrée* is a phase of intense interpretivity. Adequate encounter with the period *demand*s from a narrative the articulation of a breakdown in meaningfulness. Those who grew up with Octavian could scarcely talk the nightmares of their adolescence into anything

³⁵ App. *BC* 4. 3. 12: L. Quinctius, Hinard, no. 112, 511, cf. R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, *A Commentary on Horace Odes Book II* (Oxford 1978) 168 on Hor. *Carm.* 2. 11.

³⁶ See esp. J. W. Rich, 'Dio on Augustus', in *History as Text. The Writing of Ancient History* (London 1989), ed. A. Cameron, 86-110, at 91; Gowing 247-69, 'The Proscriptions'.

³⁷ For a review, cf. E. Gabba, 'The Historians and Augustus', in *Caesar Augustus. Seven Aspects*, edd. F. Millar and E. Segal (Oxford 1984) 61-88.

³⁸ Bengtson 19.

less than tragic carnage. Efforts to exculpate Augustus' youth attest and betray the permanent stain.³⁹ Or, in another transcription of history, the abominations of Octavian served an indispensable role in underpinning the narrative of Augustus, whose every blessing killed—with kindness. And so with all the line of *Augusti* to follow. In either case, the edict is designed to write into its reader an embryonic scheme for the impending imperial revolution: 'neither Sulla's ferocity nor Julius' insouciance' is to be the formula, a *via media* that denied the progression from Octavian's version of the former to Augustus' version of the latter, before the fact.⁴⁰

To run through the triumviral blacklist (after Hinard, whose labours have proscribed 160 triumviral citizens, to join his 75 Sullan Romans)⁴¹ is, intrinsically, to reenact the ritual of proscription. Here, then, is one death-writhen story of survival into post-Actian Rome.

1. For a start, to head the triumviral headhunters' list ('essentially a "media event"'?)⁴² was Lepidus' brother, **L. Aemilius Lepidus Paullus**: first to vote Lepidus and Antony *hostes*; he contrived to join Brutus, then stayed at Miletus, for keeps; but his eponymous son became first a consul appointed by Octavian (in 34), then an Augustan censor (22): when he held this office with Plancus for colleague, who could not remember how Lepidus *IIIvir* had shared the consulate in 42 with Plancus, their names forever dating the proscription campaign of terror?
2. What would his villa at Cumae, bought up from Cicero's confiscated estate, bring back to **C. Antistius Vetus**, once with the tyrannicides, later Octavian's appointee consul (in 30), and father of a consul of Augustus (6)?

³⁹ E.g. Vell. 2. 66. 1, with A. J. Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus. The Caesarian and Augustan Narrative (2.41-93)* (Cambridge 1983) 145, *ad loc.*; Dio 47. 7, with Rich 97; cf. App. *BC* 4. 3. 16. The *Laudatio Turiae* parades prototype Augustan incrimination of Lepidus (*ILS* 8393, col. 2. 11f., E. Wistrand, *The So-Called Laudatio Turiae* [Lund 1976] 24f.). What might be the politics of the ruling, 'Condemnation and apology, however, are equally out of place' (Syme 191)?

⁴⁰ App. *BC* 4. 2. 8-10.

⁴¹ Hinard 13. The dynamics of listing—in particular, the stochastic strain for completeness (to *finish it off*)—are all about numbers, sheer, overwhelming, blank, or whatever: for example, Appian's countervailing catalogues of anecdotes accumulate a quite different sense of saturation than the roll-calls presented in this essay, supplying the count Appian withholds. Schindler –

⁴² R. D. Weigel, *Lepidus. The Tarnished Triumvir* (London-New York 1992), 154 n. 34: but proscription was a volatile wheeze to risk, cf. Hinard 313.

3. **M. Appuleius** fought his way out to Brutus; to become another Augustan consul (in 20).

4. **L. Arruntius** fought his way out by Appuleius' side, to join Sex. Pompeius: with Octavian at Actium, he too became his consul (in 22). And a historian (of safely dead Punic Wars).

5. **Brutus** lived the part of the *exemplum* his name programmed him for.

6. **Cn. Calpurnius Piso Frugi** served Brutus, later to have an Augustan consulate thrust upon him at the restoration of the Republic (in 23), his sons matching him in 7 and 1 C.E.

7. **L. Cassius** fought to the death at Philippi for his uncle Cassius; his son was, eventually, Augustus' consul (suff. 11 C.E.).

8. **Cassius** is remembered.

9. **Cassius Parmensis** the Caesaricide was a fellow officer with Horace at Philippi, joined Sex. Pompeius, then Antony, and was hit on a contract from Octavian after Actium: he and his various writings didn't fade for Horace, who in the late 20s still finds Cassius leaping to mind when twitting Tibullus: 'you may be writing to outdo Cassius at his own game or refute his corpus of writings, or else creeping round the woods, head down and mouth shut, staying in one peace—it depends on whether it matters to you to ask what befits the *dignitas* of a *wise* man, and—is this the same thing or not?—the *dignitas* of a *good* man'. Pardoned Horace, 'now keeping *his* skin in tip-top condition', quizzes him on the vanity of human wishes: his advice is to put yourself in the shoes of ... the proscribed: 'reckon every dawn's your last, for every hour you don't count on will bring you happiness. As for me —'.

10. **Ti. Claudius Nero**, praetor in 43, was not proscribed until the Perusine War, whence he rallied to Sex. Pompeius: what praises did his nine year old son, Rome's second Emperor Tiberius, memorialize in his *laudatio funebris* (in 33)?

11. **L. Cornelius Cinna** and his consular sons we have remembered already.

12. **L. Cornelius Lentulus Cruscellio** may have become an admiral with Sex. Pompeius: was his son the Augustan *cos.* 18?

13. **Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus**, great-great-grandfather of the Emperor Nero, survived Philippi and negotiated reconciliation with Antony, who sponsored his consulate in 32; he swung to Octavian on the eve of Actium, but died soon after: his son was Augustus' consul (16).
14. The betrayed and slaughtered **Haterius** may have been father to the Augustan *cos. suff.* 5 C.E.: the *IIIviri* re-enslaved the freed informer to Haterius' sons, for buying up their father's estates and insulting them grossly.
15. The freedman's son **Q. Horatius Flaccus** fell out from Philippi, and into a *scriptus quaestorius*. He writes, but does not narrate, the sublation of Augustus.
16. **M. Iunius Silanus**, removed from the list by the Treaty of Misenum, was appointed consul by Augustus (in 25).
17. **D. Laelius Balbus**, who killed himself in Cornificius' defeat in Africa (42), was (probably) father of Augustus' *cos.* 6 C.E.
18. **M. Licinius Crassus**: son of the *IIIvir*, left Sex. Pompeius for Antony, then Octavian and the consulate (in 30): his adoptive son was Augustan consul in 14.
19. **M. Lollius Paulinus** may have been the Marcus who played a slave after Philippi, was recognized by his purchaser who won his pardon from Octavian; the situation was, believe it or not, replayed in reverse after Actium. The pair became Augustan consuls (in 21?).
20. **Q. Lucretius Vespillo** we have remembered already: Augustan *cos. ord.* 19.
21. **A. Manlius Torquatus** survived Philippi to receive both an *Epistle* and an *Ode* from comrade Horace.
22. A certain **Nonius** was grandfather of a triumviral consul (in 35 C.E.).
23. Horace whoops it up for a **Pompeius**, escapee from Philippi, then with Sex. Pompeius, until Octavian's post-Actium amnesty.

24. **T. Pomponius Atticus** was soon removed from the blacklist, by Antony. His biographer (who claims perfect instincts for Atticus: *timens proscriptionem* ...) makes a feature of memorialising his sheltering of other *proscripti*.

25-26. **Sex. Quinctilius Varus**, decapitated in Italy, and **Sex. Qunctilius Varus**, suicide after Philippi, were grandfather and father of the Augustan consul of 13.

27. Horace's butt **Rupilius Rex** we have remarked upon.

28. **L. Saenius Balbinus** escaped to Sex. Pompeius, and became Octavian's consul (in 30).

29. **L. Scribonius Libo** was Sex. Pompeius' aide, temporarily Octavian's father-in-law, joined Antony and held a triumviral consulate (in 34): his natural son held an Augustan consulate (15).

30. **C. Sentius Saturninus Vetulo** was pardoned after serving Sex. Pompeius; his son was an Augustan consul (in 19).

31. **M. Seruilius**, who fought for Brutus and Cassius, was probably father of the Augustan consul of 3 C.E. and so grandfather of the historian Seruilius Nonianus.

32. **L. Sestius Quirinalis Albinianus** was Brutus' proquaestor, and his suffect consulate in 23 inaugurated Augustus' restored Republic—the new spring of Horace's fourth *Ode*.

33. **Ser. Sulpicius Galba** had a historian for a son, an Augustan consul for a grandson (in 5 C.E.), and the Emperor Galba for a great-grandson.

34. The former Pompeian commander and voluminous writer **M. Terentius Varro** was soon *restitutus* and lived to be a hundred.

35. It seems **L. Titius** took refuge with Sex. Pompeius and so saved his captured son M. Titius, Plancus' nephew; the latter joined Antony, then executed Sex. Pompeius, and crossed to become Octavian's consul for the vital year of Actium (in 31).

36. **M. Tullius Cicero**, Junior, was an officer at Philippi, then for Sex. Pompeius, before becoming Octavian's *cos. suff.* (in 30).

37. **M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus** followed Brutus, then joined Antony, before siding with Octavian (*cos. suff.* 31). One son was an Augustan consul (in 3), another a Tiberian (20 C.E.). Messalla's *Memoirs* preserved his own sense of the history he had suffered and made.

38. **C. Velleius** worked with Brutus, committed suicide after the Perusine War; his grandson was Tiberius' senator historian.

39. **T. Vinus** was saved by his wife's intercession with Octavian; when the consul in the crisis Year of the Four Emperors died with the Emperor Galba, his epitaph tellingly placed him as 'the proscrip't's grandson'.

40. **M. Volusius** probably joined Sex. Pompeius. Was his nephew an Augustan *cos. suff.* (in 12)?⁴³

Here, then, are forty, but not the best, of the proscribed who lived on, in person or as memories, to add their stories to the Augustan heap.⁴⁴ These proscribed were, as they were bound to be, from the ranks of the Roman aristocracy, old and new; the Augustan aristocracy was bound to include the survivors and the families of the victims, or at any rate to empathize with their predecessors as such, so the purge was necessarily inscribed on their lives.

The single most vocal legacy of the triumviral putsch was, however, the corpus of writings left by **M. Tullius Cicero**, its sole known consular vic-

⁴³ Lepidi: Hinard, nos. 4-5, 418-21; Antistius: Hinard no. 8, 422f.; Appuleius: Hinard, no. 12, 426f.; Arruntius: Hinard, no. 20, 432f.; Brutus: Hinard, no. 26, 437f.; Piso: Hinard, no. 30, 442f.; L. Cassius: Hinard, no. 35, 447; Cassius: Hinard, no. 36, 448; Cassius Parmensis: Hor. *Epp.* 1. 4. 3, Hinard, no. 38, 449; Nero: Suet. *Tib.* 6, Hinard, no. 41, 451-3; Lentulus: Hinard, no. 47, 459f.; Ahenobarbus: Suet. *Ner.* 3.3, Hinard, no. 51, 463-4; Haterius: App. *BC* 4. 4. 29, Hinard, no. 61, 471; Horace: Acro ad *Epp.* 2. 2. 41, Suet. *Vit. Horat.*, Hinard, no. 63, 473-5; Silanus: Hinard, no. 68, 479f.; Laelius: Hinard, no. 71, 482f.; Crassus: Hinard, no. 73, 483f.; Lollius: App. *BC* 4. 6. 49, Hinard, no. 81, 487f.; Torquatus: Hor. *Epp.* 1. 5, *Carm.* 4. 7, Hinard, no. 85, 492; Nonius: Hinard, no. 93, 498; Pompeius: Hor. *Carm.* 2. 7, Hinard, no. 106, 506f.; Atticus: Nep. *Att.* 9-11, esp. 10. 2, Hinard, no. 108, 508; Quinctilii: Hinard, nos. 110-111, 509-11; Rupilius: Hinard, no. 114, 512f.; Balbinus: Hinard, no. 115, 513f.; Scribonius: Hinard, no. 118, 516f.; Sentius: Hinard, no. 120, 518f.; Servilius: Hinard, no. 123, 521; Sestius: Hinard, no. 126, 523, E. L. Will, 'Ambiguity in Horace, *Odes* 1. 4', *CPh* 77 (1982), 240-5; Galba: Suet. *Galb.* 3, Hinard, no. 132, 526f.; Varro: App. *BC* 4. 6. 47, Hinard, no. 133, 527; Titius: Hinard, no. 137, 533f.; Cicero: Hinard, no. 140, 537; Messalla: Hinard, no. 145, 540f.; Velleius: Hinard, no. 146, 541; Vinus: Tac. *Hist.* 1.48.3f., Hinard, no. 156, 548f.; Volusius: Hinard, no. 159, 550f.

⁴⁴ Appian's gallery of proscribed are given the twists to their fates, if any, beyond Actium (Gowing 263).

tim, the *princeps senatus*, together with the reams of hagiographic commentary, biography and legend.⁴⁵ In Livy's history, the Death of Cicero in book 120 has proved a convincing putative terminus for the work in its original conception. Likewise, in the declamatory world of the early empire, the slaughter of Cicero is both a favourite scenario for logorrhoea and the last moment in history the declaimers permitted themselves to colonize with their wild fancies and loose tongues.⁴⁶ The very dominance of the 'Augustan generation' over all ensuing conceptualizations of Rome has for foil the silencing of power as Cicero's Republican senatorial oratory. That is why the stories on this 'immortal theme' tell of his writing-hand severed and his tongue spiked in the mutilation of his corpse/*corpus*.⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, successive waves of Roman historians were induced to write up the lurid melodramas of these triumviral proscriptions to end proscription.⁴⁸

1. Think of a Number, then ...

*L'ouverture des listes*⁴⁹

Appian's plethora of proscription anecdotes composes a double series, with faintly etched chiasmus, first a trail of calamities and last a stream of escapes, in a ring around a centrepiece which is prefaced by the mockery of Lepidus' triumph, with its enforced merriment on pain of proscription, and climaxed by the splendour of Hortensia's rebuke to the triumvirs at daring to rob the matrons.⁵⁰ Before he delivers these 'highlights of the irrational' (ὄσα παραλογώτατα ὄντα),⁵¹ he has rapidly sketched an anonymous and general overview of the turmoil which the advent of proscriptions bestirred. The twin themes of the perversion of the social fabric and the tyranny of suspicion have been impressed on us;⁵² discordance between narrative and cited document has shown up *proscriptio* as *Rechtswort* cloaking *Schreckenswort*,⁵³ yet

⁴⁵ Hinard, no. 139, 536.

⁴⁶ Sen. *Contr.* 7.2, *Suas.* 6-7. For the copious materials on the Death of Cicero, cf. esp. H. Homeyer, 'Die Quellen zu Ciceros Tod', *Helikon* 17 (1977) 56-96.

⁴⁷ Syme 192; App. *BC* 4. 4. 19 (He even had to visit Caieta to feel the scene: *ibid.*), Dio 47. 8. 4, etc.

⁴⁸ So Appian assures us, as he cries up his (– considerably abridged –) chapter of thrills and horror (*BC* 4. 3. 16).

⁴⁹ 'Opening the lists', Hinard 309; the armature of 'un procede terroriste' (305).

⁵⁰ See Gowing 259f.

⁵¹ *BC* 4. 3. 16.

⁵² *BC* 4. 3. 13f.: see esp. Canfora 435f.

⁵³ M. Fuhrmann, *proscriptio*, RE 232 (1959) 2440-4, at 2441.

we have faced the Sullan/triumviral half-truth that proscription was a curb on indiscriminate massacre, if also a *carte blanche* for arbitrary butchery.⁵⁴ Parables attached to both proscriptions, pointing up the tease of circumscription as the play(th)ing of power:

The young senator C. Metellus asked Sulla what would be the end of the troubles? where was he going before they could expect what was happening to stop? ‘We are not begging off from your vengeance those you have determined to eliminate, but we do beg you to relieve from ambiguity those you have decided to preserve.’ To Sulla’s reply, that he didn’t yet know whom he was letting go, he put in with ‘Then clarify whom you mean to punish’. And Sulla said he would do that. ... At once Sulla proscribed eighty, sharing this with none of those in power. When they all complained, he left a day, then proscribed two hundred and twenty, and on the third day at least as many again. Delivering a public speech on the subject, he said he was proscribing as many as he happened to call to mind, but those that slipped his memory he would proscribe another time.⁵⁵

According to the [unknown, but perfectly named: named for perfect, carnivalised, ambivalence] writer ?Julius/Junius? Saturninus, when the proscription was completed, M. Lepidus had deprecated the past in the senate, and given hope of forgiveness for the future, since enough punishment had been exacted. Octavian came right out with it, contrariwise: he had set a limit for proscription in such a way that he had left the world free—for him to do whatever he liked to it! (... *ut omnia sibi reliquerit libera*).⁵⁶

While the wording of Appian’s edict is intimidatory not least through its ‘vague and nebulous’ lack of determinate programme, and is shown up by the narrative as a malevolently ‘open text’,⁵⁷ the theatre of proscription turned on the operational supplementarity of its writing.⁵⁸

This textuality was sufficiently iterable for the blacklist to circulate across Rome, Italy and the world; yet it was metamorphic enough to operate a mutational instability that approached rhizomatic authorship, resistant to documentary closure always deferred beyond progressive revision. The writing-space in proscription declared itself illimitably inclusive, programmed to draw in every name it could associate with another: there was room for all—whosoever aided or abetted the concealment or escape of a proscrip; anyone caught mourning a proscribed, or failing to celebrate a triumviral holi-

⁵⁴ App. *BC* 4. 2. 10, cf. Hinard 103, 139 (Sulla: damage limitation? Vengeance? Justice? ... ?).

⁵⁵ Plut. *Sull.* 31. 2-4, cf. Hinard 52, 61.

⁵⁶ Suet. *Aug.* 27. 2, cf. Hinard 232, 245f.

⁵⁷ Cf. Wallmann 51.

⁵⁸ Cf. Bleicken 46.

day; whoever the team of writers felt like adding, or substituting, or pretended had been included all along; anyone that ever crossed a proscriber, as events developed; anyone with the requisite cash; for however long the proscribers stayed in power, however long it might take to revoke, annul, cancel their edicts ...⁵⁹

Thus Dio knows that counting will not account for the deaths: ‘because many among those who were proscribed onto the blacklists first off were erased, many were later written up in their place, and while some of these people made it to safety, lots of others were done away with.’ And he assures us that when Antony and Fulvia did take a bribe, ‘so that the places of their names on the blacklists might not be empty, they wrote in some other people instead.’⁶⁰

o. Reeling, Writhing ’n’ ’Rithmetic (The Three R’s)

*La proscription a joué un rôle déterminant dans la définition de la nouvelle sagesse romaine.*⁶¹

No wonder the portents that greeted the triumviral entry to Rome culminated in this: ‘the senior *haruspex* summoned by the senate announced the return of kings to Rome and heralded a future of slavery for all, with the single exception of himself—whereupon he held his lip and his breath, until he was dead.’⁶²

Full transcription of the narrative of proscription entangles the writing *of*, with the writing *in*, the account, particularly in Greek, where ‘composition’ (*συγ-γράφω*) delivers a sequence of ‘public declarations’ (*προγραφαί*).⁶³ For the spectrum of uses of *προγράφω* blurs between ‘bill posting’, ‘public notification of auction’, ‘proclamation of edict’, ‘notice of confiscation’, and the full, Sullan, ‘proscription’.⁶⁴ In the abuse of law’s scriptural formality, lives oriented around the production and consumption of manic writing attendant on the master-text of triumviral proscription: most explicitly in Dio’s narration, Cicero’s killer Popillius Laenas, ‘so that he might not only get the credit for murdering him by occupying ears, but also eyes, set up a

⁵⁹ App. *BC* 4. 1. 5, 2. 7, Dio 47. 13. 1, Hinard 247.

⁶⁰ 47. 13. 1, 8. 5.

⁶¹ Hinard 326: *fin.*

⁶² App. *BC* 4. 1 4: cf. 4. 17, where the dinner-guests of the first proscript victim—that symbolic figure of Roman *libertas*, including freedom of speech: a *tribunus plebis*—‘reclined paralysed into deepest night, next his beheaded torso’ (Dio 47. 10. 7), where his son hid Q. Cicero and under torture ‘kept his mouth shut’—until father took pity, ‘came out and gave himself up to the hitmen’.

⁶³ So in Dio 47. 10. 1, 13. 1-2, 15. 3, 16. 1-4.

⁶⁴ Cf. Hinard 17-32.

be-garlanded icon of himself beside Cicero's head, with his name and his deed written up for the inscription' (*ἐπιγεγραμμένον*); whereas a certain tribune called 'M. Terentius Varro had done no wrong, but bore the same name as one of the outlawed except for his *agnomen*, and was scared something might happen to him like the fate of Cinna, so he put on public display a notice, clarifying this very fact (*γράμμα*). And for this he incurred amusement and derision.'⁶⁵

In Appian's 'script' *On Rome* (*συνέγραψα ... συγγραφής, Praef. 1.6*), Sulla likewise modulates to graphematics: a grateful People voted him an equestrian statue, 'with the subscription: *Cornelii Sullae ducis Felicis* (*ὑπέγραψαν*): but, he wonders, is it clear 'whether the inscription was their satirical joke on the great man, or them buttering him up'? Whether or not the oracular writing on the wall addressed to Sulla may have read the way Appian writes it up, for sure Sulla's reading of it had him send a crown and axe to Aphrodisias, with the writing on it that he cites (*ἐπιγράψας τάδε*).⁶⁶ We are, like Sulla, emphatically, to *read* Sulla.

Appian studs his Coming of the *IIIviri* with *writing*. They 'assigned their vets. the pick of Italy' and *co-authored* a manifesto of their plans — *read out* to the army by Octavian as consul—all but the death-sentences' (4. 1. 3). 'In conclave, they *compiled* the death-sentences ..., *listing* their personal enemies, ... and one batch after another later *supplemented the list*' (2.5). 'They *imposed* very heavy taxes on both People and matrons ... and by now folk got *proscribed* for the loveliness of a villa or *domus*'. They 'delayed the bulk of the *proscriptions*.. ... Everyone thought the flying squads were on their trail because it was known massacre was afoot, but none of the condemned had been *proscribed*.' So 'Pedi^{us} *proscribed* the seventeen [marks] as ... the only ones condemned in ignorance of the triumvirs' slate. And that night Pedius expired, of ... "exhaustion"' (2. 6-7).

'The *proscription/edict* ran thus: "the senate *outlawed* us ..., ... we had been *named in* Caesar's will ..., and the army was *outlawed* Our policy is to *proscribe* rather than arrest unawares ... A blessing on this: let no one hide, evacuate or take a bribe from any of those *written infra* on this screed. ... On pain of us putting them among the *proscribed*. ... And no recipient of bounty will be *registered* in our records/accounts, so they cannot be traced". So ran the *proscription-edict* (suffering only from translation; 2. 7-11)'.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Dio 47.11.2f.

⁶⁶ *BC* 1.11.97: Herodotean hamming (la Croesus)—from Appian? from his 'sources'? from Sulla?

Mentions of *proscribers*, *proscribed* and *proscriptions* crowd together to overpower their text (6 references: 3.12; 2 references: 3.14; 2 references: 3. 15). ‘In many books, Roman writers have *compiled* many an anecdote ... but I shall *write up* a sample under each (be)heading’ (συνέγραψαν ... ἀναγράψω, this editorial’s last word, 3. 16).

The sequence of anecdotes (constitutively) collects references to proscription and a closing editorial (29 references: 4. 18; 22; 24; 25; 26; 28; 29; 5. 30; 35; 6. 36; 43; 44; 46; 47; 49; 50; 51; 7. 51).

The matrons’ finances are also ‘*proscribed*’ (5. 32). Lepidus’ *edict* orders celebrations at his triumph—or else ‘be among the proscribed’ (διάγραμμα τοῖς προγεγραμμένοις, 5. 31). *Painterly-and-writerly imaginations* capture Aeneas bearing his load of father (γράφουσιν, 6. 41).

And, primally and ultimately, there remains Appian’s own writing (ἀναγράψω, ἀναγράψω, 4. 23, 36). Sullan *proscription* always bleeds into the bloodstream of ‘putting on public record’—‘noticing’ the terms of political existence. For writing history always is writing to death, as any Greek historian must proclaim, caught in the toils of translation into Greek, English, or whatever sociolect. We should remark that history is *constitutively* ‘programmatic/proscriptive’, τὰς αἰτίας προύγραφα πρῶτον ...⁶⁷

To ‘make the point’—‘set it out’, ‘keep it in the public domain’—in the course of t/his narrative of *proscription*, here is a file of ten anecdotes from Appian that unmistakably button life/death struggles in the toils of proscription to scenes of writing/reading, to (y)our scene:

1. The principal casualty Cicero lost ‘the hand with which he *composed* his invectives against “tyrant” Antony, *entitling* them *Philippics* in imitation of Demosthenes’ (συγγράφων ... ἐπέγραφεν, 4. 20)

2. On the other hand, ‘someone else’ (nameless) ‘ran up as his brother was being arrested, not to know he had himself been *proscribed* together with him: he told the squad, “Kill me first” (πρὸ τούτου = before him/instead of him). ‘The centurion holding the accurate *print-out* said: “A reasonable demand from you—*inscribed* before him”, and as he spoke he killed the pair of them—by the book’ ! (προγεγράφθαι ..., τὸ ἀκριβὲς ἀνάγραπτον ..., πρὸ τούτου γέγραψαι ..., κατὰ τὴν τάξιν, 4. 22). Here the semantics of *προ/γράγω* are cracked open to make a joke between temporality, formula, and human sociality, while tyranny paradigmatically dictates ‘order’ through textual power.

⁶⁷ Thuc. 1.23; I owe this point to Mary Beard.

3-5. First, ‘Caesennius and his hunters. He ran for it and yelled he wasn’t *proscribed*, but was being framed by them for his riches’ sake; but they fetched him to the *blacklist* and told him to *read* his name. They topped him as he *read*.⁶⁸ Aemilius, unaware that he had been *proscribed*, saw someone else being hunted down and asked the centurion hunter who the *proscribed* was. The centurion recognized Aemilius and said “You and him”—and killed two birds’! Cillo came out of the senate-house with Decius. When they found out their names had been *added to the list*, though no one was after them, they began to flee in disarray through the city-gate. It was this bolting that betrayed them to the centurions who intercepted them’ (4. 27). This triptych forcefully dramatizes the terms of proscription textuality—read it, ask what it says, heed it: anyhow, it writes you off.

6. Messalla ‘ran to join Brutus. The triumvirs were afraid of his mettle, so they *published an edict/proscription*, so: “Since his relatives have shown Messalla to have been away when C. Caesar perished, let Messalla be lifted from the *proscribed*” (6. 38). Written in, written out: erasibility is as arbitrarily reversible as inscription was. Neither suggests a threat has been written off (in any sense).

7. For the rest, the stories happily re-write the triumviral text: ‘On Arrianus’ tombstone there was incised according to his will: “The one who lies here his son hid, joined him on the run and saved his life: his son was not proscribed, he was”’ (6. 41).

8. Vinius’ ‘freedman hid him right in the very middle of his home, in one of those iron trunks people have for the safe-keeping of valuables *or books ...*’ (6. 44).

9. ‘Varro the philosopher-historian *writer*, a fine soldier and general besides, was therefore, it may be, an enemy of autocracy, and *proscribed*.’ (*συγγραφεύς ... προυγράφη*, 6.47).

10. And in the end: ‘when the despatch was sent by Caesar with news of Antony’s débâcle, Cicero’s son *read it out* to the People and publicly exhibited it on the rostra where before his father’s head had been publicly exhibited’ (6. 51).

⁶⁸ As Hinard notes (241 n. 65), only in this story is the killing done in central Rome; otherwise, heads only were brought to the triumvirs.

Now this scroll of tales is only where Appian's proscription saga *explicitly* situates writing/reading as the *locus* of triumviral terrorism and response to it. The social 'text' encompasses a far wider range of hermeneutic registers than this. But see already how the narrative unravels the document it promulgates—and substitutes parables of deconstructive dissemination and of inescapable elimination for that mortal list of names from 43 B.C.E. which, in refusing to reach a definitive form, modelled the unwritable illegibility of oppression. The episode engrossed Augustus, the Julio-Claudians, all the Emperors, Pollio's, Appian's, Dio's, and the rest. Its *listlessness* haunted—haunts ancient Rome, endlessly.

List, sirs, and may this bloody record be a warning to future tyrants.

King's College, Cambridge

JOHN HENDERSON