

THE ANNALISTS AND MARIUS' EARLY CAREER

This paper, which seeks to cast a few rays of light on a dark chapter of Roman literature, more specifically: historiography, begins perhaps at an unusual place, namely with a Greek author, Plutarch. That will not necessarily surprise the historian of the Republic, however, whom bitter experience soon teaches that the bulk of his source material will be in Greek, not Latin. For it is an actual historical problem a solution to which we will be trying to propose, a problem which we should now state clearly. Plutarch, in chapters 4 to 6 of the *Life of Marius*, speaks of the numerous setbacks and embarrassments which that statesman suffered on his rocky road to the supreme office in the *res publica*, the consulship, in 107 B.C. In fact, Plutarch provides the one detailed narrative account which we have of Marius' rise to political prominence in Rome. The remainder of our sources for that are terse indeed.

For comparison Sallust has only the following to say of Marius' early career, until it stalled on the verge of the consulship (Bell. Iug. 63,4–5):

ergo ubi primum tribunatum militarem a populo petit, plerisque faciem eius ignorantibus facile <factis> notus per omnis tribus declaratur. deinde ab eo magistratu alium, post alium sibi peperit, semperque in potestatibus eo modo agitabat, ut ampliore quam gerebat dignus haberetur.

When, therefore, he first sought the military tribunate from the People, although most did not know what he looked like, he was nonetheless well-known by his deeds and thus easily secured election by all the tribes. Thereafter, on the basis of this initial office he obtained first one, then another for himself; and he always so conducted himself in each that he was deemed worthy of a yet higher position than the one which he currently held.

Unfortunately, the little Sallust does say stands at first glance in starkest disagreement with Plutarch. Whom should we believe here? And if one version be patently false, why and in what historiographical context did it arise? Or are they both true from a certain point of view? With that, we turn back to Plutarch whose account, owing to its detail and length, offers both the more and the better handholds for analysis¹.

¹ Livy is lost for the period in question; and the so-called Livian tradition – the *Periocha*, Festus, Florus, Orosius, Eutropius – offers little help in reconstructing Livy's account of Marius' rise to power. The final last-ditch attempt at reconstructing the history of the last century of the Republic – analysis of Appian's and Cassius Dio's fragmentary accounts – avails us little as the remains of neither provide us with very much on the present question. We will advert to the pertinent stray references in Cicero, Valerius Maximus, and Velleius Paterculus

Plutarch wrote biographies both of C. Marius and of P. Cornelius Sulla Felix. These two works overlap in various sections and include the occasional cross-reference². Plutarch possibly worked on both lives simultaneously³ and certainly used the same basic source material for both. He cites as sources explicitly: P. Rutilius Rufus; Q. Lutatius Catulus; P. Cornelius Sulla Felix; the Greek continuator of Polybius, Posidonius; Juba of Mauretania; Livy; Alexander of Myndus; Fenestella; and an otherwise unknown C. Piso⁴. A reasonable case exists that Plutarch also used Lucullus⁵. Now we need not assume that Plutarch named all his (ultimate) sources for he sometimes omits to name any at all in a given life; moreover we should not presume too much on our ability to identify those whom he did not name or whom he used indirectly through the medium of another. Other sources which Plutarch might have used, directly or indirectly, include Sempronius Asellio (HRR 1, 179–184), M. Aemilius Scaurus (HRR 1, 185–186), Q. Claudius Quadrigarius (HRR 1, 205–237), and Valerius Antias (HRR 1, 237–275).

Now of the writers mentioned in the preceding paragraph the following were known contemporaries and indeed associates, at one time or another, of Marius: Scaurus, Rufus, Catulus, and Sulla⁶. Much of what we find in Plutarch should ultimately come, on whatever twisted and intersecting paths of transmission we may care to devise in our mind's eye, from these writers who belong to a class often termed, for simplicity's sake, 'annalists'. Unfortunately, except for the occasional and for the current question mostly useless fragment, the works of Scaurus, Rufus, Catulus, and Sulla have all perished. However, all these authors were or at any rate eventually became political

in due course, as well as to two other 'accounts' of Marius' early career: the so-called *Elogium* from the Augustan forum and a brief passage in 'Aurelius Victor's' *De uiris illustribus*.

² E.g. Plut. *Marius*, 10,2.

³ On this method of simultaneous composition see C.B.R. Pelling, Plutarch's Method of Work in the Roman Lives, in: JHS 99, 1979, 74–96.

⁴ P. Rutilius Rufus (*Marius*, 28,8; FGGrHist 815 = HRR 1, 187–190); Q. Lutatius Catulus (*Marius*, 25,8; 26,10; 27,6; HRR 1, 191–194); P. Cornelius Sulla Felix (e.g. *Marius*, 25,6; HRR 1, 195–204); Posidonius (*Marius*, 45,7; FGGrHist 87); Juba of Mauretania (*Sulla*, 16,15; FGGrHist 275); Livy (*Sulla*, 6,19); Alexander of Myndus, (*Marius*, 17,6; FGGrHist 25 [though Jacoby does not book this passage]); Fenestella (*Sulla*, 28,14; HRR 2, 79–87); C. Piso (*Marius*, 45,8; on whom see Peter, HRR 1, CCCLXXX).

⁵ See T.F. Carney, A Textual Study in Plutarch's *Marius*, in: SO 36, 1960, 91–93.

⁶ We here leave out Sempronius Asellio whose history covered his own times (F 6 [HRR 1, 181] = Gellius, 2,13,3), i.e. the late second and early first centuries, and did go down to at least 91 B.C. (F 11 [HRR 1, 184] = Gellius, 13,22,8, combined with Appian, *Bell. ciu.* 1,36). We know nothing of any association of Sempronius' with Marius, and the surviving fragments of his work yield nothing for the reconstruction of Marius' career. E. Badian, *The Early Historians*, in: T.A. Dorey (Ed.), *The Latin Historians*, London 1966, 18, comments: "[Sempronius Asellio's] lack of style condemned him to remain unread: no one before A. Gellius quotes him, and if historians used him, we have no means of knowing it".

enemies of Marius'⁷; and it does not surprise, therefore, that so much of Plutarch's biography takes a dim view of him. Into it, after all, had flowed several inimical sources. Thus we repeatedly hear comments such as αὐτὸς μὲν γὰρ εἰς ἀρετῆς καὶ δεινότητος μερίδα τὸ ψεύσασθαι τιθέμενος, "personally, [Marius] considered lying a sign of ability and intelligence"⁸. Or, when Marius campaigns for his sixth consulship, he does so παρὰ τὸν ὄγκον καὶ τὸ κοινὸν ἀξίωμα τῆς ἀρχῆς, "to the detriment of the majesty and the common dignity of the office"⁹. And on and on it goes. Yet it does not always remain so simple.

In chapter 30 of Plutarch's life, for example, there stands a summary account of the demise of Saturninus and his partisans towards the end of the year 100 B.C. Marius, to rehearse matters briefly, had initially allied himself with Saturninus in the latter's struggle against the Senate. Nonetheless, when Saturninus and his political associates got out of hand and eventually occupied the Capitoline with their partisans, Marius used troops to intervene against them in favour of the Senate and the established order. Despite Marius' desire to prevent his erstwhile allies from being killed, a massacre ensued in which they perished¹⁰. Plutarch sums up: ἐκ τούτου τοῖς τε δυνατοῖς ἅμα καὶ τῷ δήμῳ προσκεκρουκός, "As a result [Marius] became detestable to nobles and people alike"¹¹. The interpretation of the foregoing narrative (at least in the presentation we find in Plutarch) rests on that summation: Marius, on this view, had initially affronted the established order by supporting Saturninus; and then had turned against Saturninus. Both sides accordingly now viewed him as untrustworthy and despicable.

We need not attempt a positive reconstruction of the historical Marius' involvement in the affair, easy though it be: e.g. of Marius as a moderate caught between the extremists on both sides; a moderate whom both sides came to loathe because he stood in neither camp entirely¹². Another way of assigning a summation interests us instead.

⁷ Although we do have some evidence of Scaurus' cooperation with Marius ([Aur. Victor], *De uiris illustribus*, 72,9), Cicero speaks explicitly of hostility betwixt the two: *De prou. cons.* 19; and given Scaurus' later reputation as an avid defender of the nobility's prerogatives (*Cicero, Sest.* 39 and 101; cf. *Sall. Bell. Iug.* 15,4), it seems likely that that cooperation took place by way of an exception against a more general background of enmity. For Rufus' hostility to Marius see below Nn. 44 and 46; for Catulus' Nn. 36–38. Sulla's enmity to Marius needs no special annotation.

⁸ *Plut. Marius*, 29,5.

⁹ *Plut. Marius*, 28,1. (The comment possibly stems from Rufus whom Plutarch cites later in this chapter.)

¹⁰ Cf. *App. Bell. ciu.* 1,32, where we find no explicit statement that Marius attempted to have their lives spared.

¹¹ *Plut. Marius*, 30,5.

¹² Both T.F. Carney, *A Biography of C. Marius*, Assen 1960, 42–43, and R.J. Evans, *Gaius Marius*, Pretoria 1994, 124–125, provide mostly sympathetic reconstructions of Marius' actions here. One may also compare E. Badian, *The Death of Saturninus*, in: *Chiron* 14, 1984, 114: "Marius had embarked on the road of saving the state from its internal, as he had saved it from its foreign, enemies".

We turn back to chapter 4 in Plutarch's life. Here we read the story of how Marius as a young tribune in 119 B.C. proposed a law which ran counter to the interests of the nobility¹³. Affronting many, including his aristocratic 'protector' Metellus¹⁴, he secured passage of his law. Later, however, he successfully thwarted passage of a law which very much lay in the interests of the people¹⁵. Now the summation: εἰς τὸ ἴσον ἑαυτὸν κατέστησε τῇ τιμῇ πρὸς ἀμφοτέρους, ὡς μηδετέροις παρὰ τὸ συμφέρον χαριζόμενοις, "he gained for himself the equal respect of both parties, as one who would favour neither side to the detriment of the public good"¹⁶.

Once again Marius stands between the extremists on both sides; once again he does something to affront them both. Yet this time both nobility and people come to respect him for it¹⁷. Obviously, no-one in ancient Rome could canvas public opinion as accurately as our modern pollsters do. The statement that nobility and people respected or disliked Marius equally after this or that action of his ultimately is an arbitrary summation, representing no-one's opinion but its author's. If one likes Marius, one chooses the one summation; if one dislikes him the other. The varying summations serve as a simple way to spin Marius' actions now this way, now that. Moreover, both summations could easily enough apply to either story – with little or no change to the facts in the case.

¹³ Plutarch names as consul at the time one Cotta; this provides the date. For discussion of Marius' law see E. Valgiglio, *Plutarco. Vita di Mario*, Firenze 1956, 18–19; Carney (above n. 12) 20; Evans (above n. 12) 38–40 and 96; R.J. Rowland, *Marius' Bridges*, in: *Historia* 25, 1976, 252. For the political background see esp. E. Badian, P. Decius P.F. Subulo, in: *JRS* 46, 1956, 91–96.

¹⁴ Presumably L. Caecilius Metellus Delmaticus, also consul in 119 B.C.: see Valgiglio (above n. 13) 17; Evans (above n. 12) 36.

¹⁵ For discussion of this law see Valgiglio (above n. 13) 21; Carney (above n. 12) 20–21; Evans (above n. 12) 97–101.

¹⁶ *Plut. Marius*, 4,7. Cf. here A. Passerini, *Caio Mario come uomo politico*, 1, in: *Athenaeum* 12, 1934, 12–15; note that Passerini views this section of Plutarch's life as stemming from "fonti filo-mariane" (15). Otherwise than Passerini, however, it seems to us that not just the pro-Marian sources, but even the anti-Marian ones tended to present Marius as "alieno in sè dalle fazioni" – the difference between the two groups of sources residing in how to present that aloofness from the "factions". Finally, Passerini, in the third instalment of his article (*Athenaeum* 12, 1934, 293–294), also concludes that the extant accounts – in this context only Plutarch's in *Marius*, 30, interests us – of Saturninus' downfall derive from anti-Marian sources – though unlike Passerini we feel that traces of a pro-Marian version do survive – see n. 18. On criticism of Passerini's identification of pro- and anti-Marian sources in Plutarch see below n. 59 with corresponding text.

¹⁷ B. Scardigli, *Echi di atteggiamenti pro e contro Mario in Plutarco*, in: *Critica Storica* 14, 1977, 4–8, in her rather fuller analysis of chap. 4 of the *Life of Marius*, sees in it "tendenze miste" and views it as stemming from "fonti diverse" (7). She may well be ultimately right (if we consider that the chapter may represent a pro-Marian reworking of an anti-Marian account), but the summation does appear to put a decisive pro-Marian stamp on the preceding account. (For Scardigli's comments on chap. 30 see *op.cit.*, 48–49.)

E.g. Marius supported a law deeply detrimental to the nobility which came to despise him; then, with peculiar perversity, he turned against the people and prevented passage of a law it desired: "As a result it came to pass that both nobility and people found him equally contemptible"¹⁸. Now that negative summation, as should soon become clear, would actually fit far better to what Plutarch recounts immediately after chapter 4. For in chapter 5 we read how Marius after holding the tribunate stood for the curule aedileship, but, seeing during the course of the voting that he was about to lose, switched his candidacy to the city aedileship – and promptly lost there too. He thus earned the dubious distinction of having lost two elections in a single day¹⁹. That would indeed cohere well with his having previously managed to make himself contemptible to all parties in Rome whilst tribune²⁰.

On the other hand, Sallust's statement that *semperque in potestatibus eo modo agitabat, ut ampliore quam gerebat dignus haberetur*, "Marius so conducted himself in office, that he was ever deemed worthy of holding a yet greater one than the one which he currently held", would cohere well with the summation which we do find in Plutarch,

¹⁸ A positive summation could certainly close Marius' actions against Saturninus: thus, from the so-called *Elogium* (CIL I², p. 195): *rem publicam turbatam seditionibus tribunorum plebis et praetoris, qui armati Capitolinum occupauerunt, sextum consul uindicauit*, „whilst consul for the sixth time he preserved the Republic when it was wracked by the sedition of the tribunes of the plebs and the praetor who under arms had occupied the Capitoline“. Likewise, Velleius Paterculus, 2,12,6, writes: *non tamen huius consulatus fraudetur gloria, quo Seruili Glaucae Saturninique Apulei furorem continuatis honoribus rem publicam lacerantium et gladiis quoque et caede comitia discutientium, consul armis compescuit hominesque exitiabilis in Hostilia curia morte multauit*, "nonetheless the [particular] glory of this (i.e. the sixth) consulship may not be taken away, during which he as consul curbed with arms the madness of Servilius Glaucia and Saturninus Apuleius, who by continuing in office were destroying the Republic and were both by force of arms and with murder disrupting the elections; and during which he punished these destructive men with death in the Curia Hostilia". Cf. also Val. Max. 8,6,2.

¹⁹ The defeat is variously attested elsewhere: Cicero, *Planc.* 51, states that Marius was twice defeated for the aedileship, but omits the detail that these defeats took place on the same day; Val. Max. 6,9,14, speaks of a defeat for the aedileship, but does not explicitly speak of a double-defeat. (In this passage Valerius also mentions an otherwise unattested defeat for a tribunate; possibly Valerius has simply confused matters here.) Finally, the *Elogium* (CIL I², p. 195), which lists Marius' offices, does not claim that he held the aedileship.

²⁰ Cf. here V. Werner, *Quantum bello optimus, tantum pace pessimus. Studien zum Mariusbild in der antiken Geschichtsschreibung*, Bonn 1995, 243, who also notes the jarring discord between the summation at the end of chap. 4 and the fiasco with the elections for the aedileship in chap. 5 and calls the summation „eine geradezu groteske Fehlinterpretation“ on Plutarch's part. Yet this would require Plutarch – who would then be working with material which presented the disastrous campaign for the aedileship as the logical consequence of Marius' offensive behaviour during his tribunate – to have *actively* made the misinterpretation not only against his source material, but also in disregard of all narratival logic. It seems to us more likely that Plutarch *passively* allowed something already in his source material to stand.

that Marius in his early career gained the respect of both nobility and people alike – which ought strongly to imply regular future preferment.

I suggest that we have here traced, in essence, two very different versions of Marius' early political career²¹. In point of Marius' ability to act – in extremely unpolitical fashion – against the interests of both sides in Rome both versions go hand in hand. This provides, incidentally, a strong argument for the general historicity of such behaviour of Marius'. In the result, however, the two presentations differ: one emphasises the respect Marius gained thereby and possibly explained his political successes in these terms, whereas the other insisted that Marius thereby made himself despicable and thus explained his political failures. Therein we reach our historical problem: one version needed political successes, the other political failures.

It might, *a priori*, appear more in concord with human nature that Marius' acts, now against the nobility, now against the people, incurred unpopularity rather than that they gained respect; and that Marius should have experienced numerous political setbacks. But we cannot resolve the matter in so simple a fashion for Marius also achieved spectacular political successes. Thus, in 114 B.C., give or take a year, he reached the praetorship, the second-highest office and the final stepping-stone to the consulship²².

²¹ One need not think of these two 'versions' as monolithic and inflexible, but rather as basic ways – which any given author might adapt to his own ends – of presenting a block of material or an historical interpretation; and, indeed, it seems to us probable that, whoever first put one or the other forward, successive authors did continually recast or reapply them with varying degrees of sophistication and appropriateness. To take one example: The topos that Marius won the approbation/disapprobation of people and nobility alike could come as early as Marius' tribunate of the plebs or as late as his suppression of Saturninus' rebellion. We have yet a third application of this topos: in Cassius Dio it comes in regard to Marius' fourth consulship and the battle of Vercellae. At 27.94.1 we read, *à propos* of the aftermath of this battle: καὶ ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὁ Μάριος, καίπερ ἐν τῷ πλήθει μόνῳ πρότερον, ὅτι ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγονώς ἦν καὶ ὅτι ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἠύξητο, εὖ φερόμενος, τότε καὶ τοὺς εὐπατρίδας ὑφ' ὧν ἐμισεῖτο ἐξενίκησεν, "and in this wise Marius, although previously popular with the people alone – for he had come of it and it had made him great –, now won over the nobility as well which (hitherto) had despised him". (A possible fourth appearance of the topos stands at *Periocha*, 68, when the *primores ciuitatis*, "the first men of the State", come round to acknowledging Marius as the saviour of the Republic after the battle of Vercellae. Unfortunately, we cannot tell if Livy emphasised that the nobility thereby joined the people.) In Dio (and possibly the *Periocha*) this topos comes, incidentally, not in combination with Marius' political actions as independent of the narrow desires of people and nobility (as in Plut. *Marius*, 4 and 30), but rather in combination with Marius' military success against the Celts. To conclude this note, it seems vain to attempt to trace the passage in Dio back to an ultimate source through hypothetical intermediate ones.

²² Cicero, *De officiis*, 3,79, states that Marius sought the consulship in the seventh year after his praetorship. Marius was consul in 107 B.C., i.e. sought election in 108. One might at need argue that Cicero, somewhat carelessly, reckoned from 107 rather than accurately from 108. Next, we could take the seven years as inclusive or, at a pinch, exclusive. The praetorship thereby falls into the period from 115 to 113 B.C.

Unfortunately, we cannot give his exact age upon attainment of that office²³; nor can we state with confidence the minimum age under the then valid pre-Sullan *lex annalis*²⁴. But Marius might actually have been forty and thus have entered onto the of-

²³ Plutarch puts Marius' age in 86 B.C. at seventy (*Marius*, 45,12). Velleius Paterculus, 2,18,6, however, has him at "over seventy" in 88 B.C., with which the *Elogium* (CIL 1², p. 195) agrees. Only by special pleading can one arrive at a clear result: Marius was born either earlier than 158 B.C. or as late as 156 B.C. By these figures Marius could have been as young as thirty-nine upon assuming the praetorship as early as 115 B.C.; or as old as 46 as late as 113 B.C. – whereby much depends also on when in the course of the year we place his birthday. (We need not, incidentally, castigate our ancient sources for uncertainty on the date of Marius' birth for even in modern times the birth-year of important figures can remain uncertain: thus Madame Chiang's birth-year varies from 1896 to 1898; and Emperor Haile Selassie's is given as both 1892 and 1894.)

²⁴ The *Lex Villia annalis* (Livy, 40,44,1) may have stipulated, whether effectively or explicitly, the minimum age for holding the praetorship. Both A.E. Astin, *The lex annalis before Sulla*, Bruxelles 1958, and H. Chantraine, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Geschichte am Ende des 2. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Kallmünz 1959, 68–75, independently attempted to reconstruct the relevant age minima which the *Lex Villia* imposed. Both reached the following results:

17 years: military service begins (Q. Aelius Tubero, F 4 [HRR 1, 309] = Gellius, 10,28,1; cf. Livy, 25,5,8; 27,11,14; Plut. *C. Gracchus*, 5,1)

27 years: candidature for quaestorship after ten years' military service (Pol. 6,19,2–5)

36 years: candidature for aedileship after an additional nine years (including the quaestorship; if one includes in the reckoning the year of the aedileship itself, then a systemically 'logical' ten years' interval emerges)

39 years: candidature for praetorship after a so-called biennium

42 years: candidature for consulship after an additional biennium

While these results have a certain plausibility, they do rest to an uncomfortable degree on general conclusions drawn from the relatively few careers for which we have dates (often rather less securely attested than we would like) for several offices held. Evans (above n. 12) 175–194, for example, has subjected this reconstruction to much criticism; and one can hardly avoid the uncomfortable concession that 'exceptions' occurred; for more temperate criticism see R. Develin, *Patterns in Office-Holding 366–49 B.C.*, Bruxelles 1979, 81–95.

It may be as well to discuss one such 'exception' briefly as it seems to us hitherto not to have found satisfactory explanation. Sulla became quaestor without any previous military service according to the unanimous view of our sources (Sall. *Bell. Jug.* 95,3; Plut. *Sulla*, 1–2; Val. Max. 6,9,6). Badian, *Lucius Cornelius Sulla: The deadly reformer*, Sydney 1970, 6 n. 11, has blithely stated that "well-connected young men" might receive dispensations, but Evans (above n. 12) 177, correctly replies that given what we hear of Sulla's impecuniousness and his family's general lack of prestige and influence (e.g. Plut. *Sulla*, 1), Sulla hardly seems the sort for whom the powers that be might have made the proverbial exception. We therefore suggest another way of explaining this alleged exception: despite our sources' tendency to backdate Marius' and Sulla's hostility (e.g. Val. Max. 6,9,6), they also provide other information which allows us to see that Marius helped Sulla win advancement during the early part of the latter's career (see esp. Plut. *Sulla*, 4,1–2; for discussion see T. Dijkstra and V. Parker, *Through Many Glasses Darkly: Sulla and the end of the Jugurthine War*, in: *WS* 120, 2007, 145–146). Perhaps Marius, as consul, procured the dispensation for Sulla in 106 B.C. – always provided that the rules outlined above truly did obtain.

fice, according to the admittedly later Sullan rule, *suo anno*. In other words, from a certain point of view, Marius may well have proceeded through the compulsory lesser offices with exemplary success²⁵.

For the aedileship was not compulsory. And, thus, if one looked only at the two obligatory stages of the *cursus honorum* – the quaestorship²⁶ and the praetorship –, a pro-Marian presentation of events could easily enough maintain that Marius indeed had exemplary success in his early career, proceeding from one office to the next. The simplest possible presentation – e.g. the so-called *Elogium*, of Augustan date²⁷ – would restrict itself to a list of offices attained. A more complicated presentation, even if fewer details ultimately found a place in it, would resemble what stands in Sallust; or, to give another example of such a pro-Marian version, what we find in the *De uiris illustribus*, attributed to Aurelius Victor:

²⁵ Even if Marius arrived at the praetorship a year or two after attaining the minimum age, his career would still remain on a par with those of quite illustrious *nobiles* whom intense competition for office sometimes accorded a year's unwelcome delay in the ascent to the consulship. (Various data are assembled and discussed in Chantraine [above n. 24] 70–73, Evans [above n. 12] 183–188, and Develin [above n. 24] loc.cit.)

²⁶ Sulla definitely made holding the quaestorship a legal requirement for the consulship: App. Bell. ciu. 1,100. Although, strictly speaking, we cannot demonstrate that this was so in the period before Sulla, we know of a number of consuls who had been quaestor (examples in Evans' list [above n. 12] 183–185); and, conversely, despite Evans' best efforts (see his list, op.cit., 186–188), we can with certainty name no-one who became consul who had not previously been quaestor. The one apparent exception proves the rule. Cicero, Planc. 52, mentions a certain politician who made consul without having first been quaestor – a certain "Q. Caelius". No consul by this name exists, however. Badian, Caesar's *Cursus* and Intervals between Offices, in: JRS 49, 1959, 89 (Studies in Greek and Roman History, 152–153), shewed that several proposed emendations of the name were demonstrably wrong and himself suggested "Q. (Lutatius) Catulus" – probably not the consul of 102 B.C., but rather the one of 78. "Catulus" stands as close to the manuscripts' "Caelius" as any of the other proposals and has the added merit of producing a consul whom Cicero's hearers were likely to remember. Finally, the date of Catulus' consulship, in the period immediately following Sulla's victory in the civil war, has its own peculiar significance: in precisely this period we hear of a politician, L. Licinius Lucullus, who received a special dispensation allowing him to obtain the praetorship earlier than legally prescribed (Cicero, Luc. 1). It seems that Sulla bent the rules on occasion, *a priori* for the benefit of his supporters. Perhaps not coincidentally, the one time when we do hear of a non-quaestorian consul, that man may very well have obtained his consulship at a time when the occasional 'exception' to the rules was granted.

Finally, Evans' scepticism about Marius' quaestorship (above n. 12) 186–187, seems to us extreme: yes, the *Elogium* (CIL 1², p. 195), which alone directly attests Marius' holding of this office, could conceivably have committed an error; yes, Val. Max. 6,9,14, who states that Marius at least sought the quaestorship, hardly stands above cavil. But given that the politicians of this age who made consul had routinely held the quaestorship, it seems more likely than not that Marius (as the *Elogium* states and Valerius implies) had also done so.

²⁷ CIL 1², p. 195: "consul seven times, praetor, tribune of the plebs, quaestor, augur, military tribune".

*Gaius Marius septies consul, Arpinas, humili loco natus, primis honoribus per ordinem functus...*²⁸

Gaius Marius, seven times consul, born at Arpinum, in humble circumstances, having held the initial offices 'in their order/according to the rule'...

With *primi honores* 'Aurelius Victor' can hardly mean other than the offices obligatory for the consulship. On the other hand we may certainly debate the exact meaning here of *per ordinem*, whether it really means that Marius held quaestor- and praetorship *suo anno*²⁹; but for our purposes all we need to constate is the existence of such a pro-Marian presentation of events which laid emphasis on the holding of the obligatory offices in the *cursus honorum* and omitted mention of the debacle in regard to the irrelevant aedileships.

A dim reflexion of this version may also be seen in Posidonius' presentation, preserved in the medium of Diodorus' abridgement³⁰ (itself abridged for Constantine Porphyrogenitus' collection):

ὅτι ὁ Μάριος εἷς ὦν τῶν συμβούλων καὶ τῶν πρεσβευτῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ παρεθεωρεῖτο, ταπεινότατος ὦν τῶν πρεσβευτῶν τῆ δόξῃ. οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι τοῖς ἀξιώμασι καὶ ταῖς εὐγενείαις ὑπερέχοντες μεγάλης ἀποδοχῆς ἐτύγχανον ὑπὸ τοῦ στρατηγοῦ, οὗτος δὲ δοκῶν γεγονέναι δημοσιώνης καὶ τὰς ὑποδεεστέρας ἀρχὰς μόγις εἰληφὼς ἐν ταῖς εἰς δόξαν προαγωγαῖς παρεθεωρεῖτο³¹.

The general [i.e. Metellus] looked down upon Marius, despite his being one of the staff officers and legates, since he was the least of them in repute. For the others excelled him in point of honours and noble birth and thus met with tokens of great respect from the general; but because he was deemed to have been a tax-collector and had barely gained the lesser offices, he was overlooked when it came to advancements for valour.

Here we find it noted that Marius had only barely managed to secure election to the "lesser offices". Clearly, as with 'Aurelius Victor', only the offices necessary for the *cursus honorum* are meant; the disaster with the aedileships in this specific context merits no mention. But Posidonius does say that Marius succeeded in obtaining these offices μόγις: "barely".

²⁸ [Aur. Victor], *De uiris illustribus*, 67,1.

²⁹ As Chantraine (above n. 24) 66–67, has argued (though few have discussed his view; e.g. G.M. Paul, A Historical Commentary on Sallust's *Bellum Jugurthinum*, Liverpool 1984, 170, seems without discussion wholly to dismiss Chantraine's views on this passage from the *De uiris illustribus*). Carney (above n. 12) 16, n. 84, e.g., takes *per ordinem* as meaning simply "in due order", i.e. "in the prescribed order".

³⁰ For Posidonius as Diodorus' source in these books see J. Malitz, *Die Historien des Posidonios* (Zetemata 79), München 1983, 34–42.

³¹ Diod. 34/35,38,1.

With that we turn back to Plutarch. His account of Marius' quest for the praetorship in chapter 5 seizes on every negative aspect: first, Marius was the last of the candidates selected; second, he faced prosecution for bribery and almost suffered the ignominy of losing – in fact, the votes for acquittal and conviction were equal. The summation: ἐν μὲν οὖν τῇ στρατηγίᾳ μετρίως ἐπαινούμενον ἑαυτὸν παρέσχε, “he conducted himself in his praetorship, then, in a fashion which hardly earned him excessive praise”³². We do not possess, so far as I have been able to survey the evidence, any trace of a pro-Marian presentation of Marius' praetorship, but one can certainly imagine possible lines which it may have taken.

Instead of indulging in such speculation, however, I would like to point to another aspect of Marius' election to the praetorship which his opponents played on to his embarrassment. In the trial, according to Plutarch in chapter 5, one C. Herennius aided him in a backhanded sort of way: Herennius refused to give testimony against Marius on the grounds that Marius was his hereditary client. Marius was incensed at the public reminder of his and his family's clientage to the Herennii and insisted that he had ceased to be Herennius' client when he first won office. As we find it presented in Plutarch (it may well have differed in reality), it was a lose-lose situation for Marius: either Herennius gave testimony against him or he administered a social humiliation; and the account in Plutarch makes the most of Marius' discomfiture³³.

Let us turn back to the earlier pro-Marian account concerning Marius' tribunate in chapter 4. Here too we have an aristocratic ‘protector’ of Marius, this time a Metellus³⁴. Marius, in securing ratification of his law, actually threatens to have Metellus arrested when Metellus opposes him. The relationship between Marius and his ‘protector’ is strained to say the least in both stories. In both Marius effectively insists on his freedom from the relationship. In one, however, it works out to his credit; in the other it serves for his farther humiliation. Again, this is spin; what both stories have in common we can probably accept as fact – namely, that Marius affronted his aristocratic ‘protectors’ during his rise to power and had strained relationships with them.

³² Plut. *Marius*, 6.1. μετρίως ἐπαινῶ: “to praise moderately, in but restrained fashion; i.e. not at all”. Cf. the point of our idiom “faint praise”.

³³ This passage only refers to the Marii as clients of the Herennii and is the sole reference to C. Herennius besides. This makes evaluation difficult. For comments on the legal situation Valgiglio (above n. 13) 26–27; see also F. Deniaux, Un problème de clientèle, Marius et les Herennii, in: *Philol.* 117, 1973, 179–196, who argues that Herennius was genuinely Marius' patron and refused to give evidence in a well-intentioned attempt to protect his client. Weynand, *Marius*, 14, *RE Supp.* 6, 1368, interprets Herennius' act as an intentional snub of Marius. For another alleged patron of Marius see next note.

³⁴ Although Plutarch, it seems to us, does view the Marii as clients of the Metelli (otherwise Deniaux [above n. 33] p. 191 with n. 67), he (or his source, whether immediate or intermediate) could conceivably have drawn this conclusion by mistake. As with the Herennii – see the previous note – this passage only directly attests the Metelli as patrons of the Marii. Cf. Valgiglio (above n. 13) 17; Badian, *Foreign Clientelae*, Oxford 1958, 194–195.

As with Marius' rise through the various offices, both versions work with the same basic 'fact' – just choose different points to emphasise, different constructions to place upon them. Most of Plutarch's biography reflects the anti-Marian version which in the end did achieve far greater currency. As we have already seen, the known contemporary writers who left accounts of the period – Scaurus, Rufus, Catulus, and Sulla – were all enemies of Marius³⁵.

Yet we still need to hold fast to the existence of a pro-Marian presentation, to which we can hardly attach a name anymore. Nonetheless, the general circumstances strongly do favour the existence of, if anything, several pro-Marian versions which possibly began to circulate even during Marius' lifetime.

For example, Q. Lutatius Catulus, an erstwhile friend of Marius', published his account of the wars against the Cimbri and the Teutones in order to justify his generalship therein. Thus, Catulus accused Marius of having arranged the plan for the battle of Vercellae in 102 B.C. so as to give himself all the glory³⁶. As it turned out, however, Catulus' troops bore the brunt of the fighting³⁷, and Catulus claimed that he deserved the credit for the victory³⁸. Did Catulus, who presumably owed his consulship in 102 to Marius' support³⁹ and who co-celebrated a triumph with Marius after Vercellae⁴⁰, open an historiographical war against his erstwhile 'protector' with this pamphlet⁴¹? Or was he responding to accusations of indolence from the other side⁴²? If so, did these accusations already stand in writing? I.e. did Catulus take up the quill to set the record, at least from his point of view, straight? Unfortunately, we have little idea when exactly Lutatius wrote, but since he died during Marius' reign of terror⁴³, he must have written before 87 B.C.

Rutilius Rufus had negative things to say about Marius' obtainment of his sixth consulship in 99 B.C.⁴⁴. Rufus probably wrote in the mid- to late 90s⁴⁵, and was already concerned to take Marius down a peg. Now he may have written purely to attack Marius, to whom some responsibility for Rufus' exile owing to a political prosecution was attributed⁴⁶. But did his pamphlet remain without answer from the other side?

³⁵ See above n. 7.

³⁶ Catulus, F 1 [HRR 1, 191] = Plut. *Marius*, 25.

³⁷ Sulla, F 6 [HRR 1, 197] = Plut. *Marius*, 26.

³⁸ Catulus, F 3 [HRR 1, 191–192] = Plut. *Marius*, 27.

³⁹ See Badian (above n. 24) 9; somewhat sceptical, however, R.G. Lewis, Catulus and the Cimbri, 102 B.C., in: *H 102*, 1974, 107 n. 58.

⁴⁰ Plut. *Marius*, 27,10.

⁴¹ Thus Carney (above n. 12) 38–39.

⁴² Thus F. Münzer, Lutatius, 7, *RE* 13.2, 2075.

⁴³ Plut. *Marius*, 44,8.

⁴⁴ Rufus, *FGrHist* 815, F 4 = HRR 1, 188, F 4 = Plut. *Marius*, 28,8. Cf. *Periocha*, 69.

⁴⁵ Rufus went into exile in ca. 94 B.C.: see R. Kallet-Marx, The Trial of Rutilius Rufus, in: *Phoenix* 44, 1990, 126–129. He may have written shortly thereafter.

⁴⁶ Cassius Dio, 28,97,3. (Yet see E.S. Gruen, Political Prosecutions in the 90s B.C., in: *Historia* 15, 1966, 54, for doubts about Marius' involvement in Rufus' prosecution.)

Rufus could have recounted, with some glee, Marius' disastrous candidature for the aedileship. But when did the counter-version begin, which, effectively, claimed that the aedileship was irrelevant and instead laid emphasis on the successful holding of quaestor- and praetorship? And made much of the tribunate and what could be construed as its successes? In the immediate aftermath of Marius' death and during the utter eclipse of his supporters during Sulla's dictatorship, few could have had much interest in putting forth a version flattering to Marius, defending his reputation against attack, and generally building it up. But while Marius was still very much alive in the 90s and early 80s, when the political disputes between him and his opponents were raging and Marius had need of propagandistic pamphlets putting forward *his* view of affairs, *then* perhaps we should expect to find such versions to arise⁴⁷.

We do not, of course, rule out that these initial pamphleteers had followers later on when Marius' political heirs came to the fore in the next round of civil strife later on in the first century. Sallust, for example, was one of those heirs during that later round. It is unlikely, however, that he first invented a pro-Marian version of Marius' early career: after all, we find traces of a pro-Marian version in Plutarch, a version which, while it dovetails with Sallust's, is clearly independent of it and far more detailed anyway. Next, the *De uiris illustribus* contains an account which bears some similarity to Sallust's without there appearing to be many traces of Sallust's influence otherwise on this tract⁴⁸. Moreover, the brevity and general summary character of both Sallust's and 'Aurelius Victor's' versions strongly suggests that both authors were availing themselves of an already extant and well-established presentation of Marius' early career. Finally, we have Posidonius who also reflects that version – but, if anything, in this particular point stands midway between it and the anti-Marian version.

Posidonius was a contemporary of the end of Marius' career. He demonstrably relied on Rufus at various points in his history⁴⁹ and may well have used other annalists as sources for events before his time. That is highly likely to be the case for anything positive about Marius within Posidonius: after all, Posidonius knew Marius at the latter's most bitter, most violent, most murderous stage⁵⁰; when he was having all old opponents whom he could lay hands on killed – e.g. Catulus. Yet we do find things fa-

⁴⁷ Cf. also B. Scardigli, *Die Römerbiographien Plutarchs. Ein Forschungsbericht*, München 1979, 74, who feels that such a pro-Marian source arose „spätestens kurz nach Marius' Tod“.

⁴⁸ For example, 'Aurelius Victor', when he provides a sketch for Marius' predecessor as commander in Numidia, Q. Caecilius Metellus, mentions both that general's triumph as well as his cognomen *Numidicus* (62,1) – two details which Sallust pointedly omitted despite a lengthy treatment of Metellus in the *Bellum Iugurthinum*.

⁴⁹ See Malitz (above n. 30) 360–361 and also 95.368.395 and 397. N.b. Posidonius, FGrHist 87, F 27 = Athenaeus, 4,66, p. 168de = Rufus, FGrHist 815, T 4b; cf. also (with regard to the verdict on Apicius) Rutilius' remarks on Sittius at FGrHist 815, F 5 = HRR 1, 188, F 6 = Athenaeus, 12,61, p. 543b.

⁵⁰ Posidonius, FGrHist 87, F 37 = Plut. *Marius*, 45,7. On Posidonius' meeting with Marius see Malitz (above n. 30) 394.

vourable about Marius in Posidonius⁵¹. Such things are easily explicable on the assumption that there already existed in Posidonius' day a pro-Marian account⁵² or even accounts – less explicable on the assumption that such accounts were wanting for then Poseidonius, working only from hostile accounts and having himself gained only hostile impressions of Marius, should have produced a straightforwardly hostile version.

Finally, here at the end I should like to make a suggestion to simplify how the matter stands with Plutarch's sources. Plutarch at first glance appears to have read numerous sources, but perhaps we need to maintain some realism about his reading. Catulus, from his own wording, he appears to have consulted at second hand only; probably, since he cites Catulus only for agreement with Sulla's Memoirs, through the medium of that work⁵³. Then, even if Plutarch did eventually teach himself Latin⁵⁴, how gladly did he read Latin works – especially when he had a work such as Posidonius' to hand which had consulted works in Latin for him⁵⁵. Posidonius, as we have seen, had consulted versions favourable to Marius anyway; and I suggest that much of the material favourable to Marius in Plutarch stems from him⁵⁶ – possibly also the material concerning Marius' tribunate. If, furthermore, Malitz be right in suggesting that Posidonius wished (by way of literary technique) to cast Marius' final degeneracy into starker re-

⁵¹ See in particular the positive comments at Diod. 34/35,38; for commentary Malitz (above n. 30) 397–398, who also notes: „(Posidonius) stellt Marius eigentlich günstiger dar, als man es aufgrund der Vorlage (i.e. Rufus) ... erwarten würde“. Posidonius also presented a version of Bocchus' surrender of Jugurtha which maximised Marius' and minimised Sulla's rôle: on this see Dijkstra and Parker (above n. 24) 153.

⁵² Thus also H. Strasburger, Poseidonius on Problems of the Roman Empire, in: JRS 55, 1965, 41 n. 18.

⁵³ Plut. *Marius*, 25,8; 26,10 and 27,6.

⁵⁴ Plut. *Demosthenes*, 2,2–3.

⁵⁵ Malitz (above n. 30) 20, also assumes that Posidonius consulted Roman primary sources in the original; cf. also, op. cit., 222, n. 170, for the suggestion that Diod. 34/35,37 preserves a bit of translated Latin. For Posidonius' study of Latin onomastics see esp. A. Bauer, Poseidonios und Plutarch über die römischen Eigennamen, in: Philol. 47, 1889, 242–273. N.b. also Bauer's comment, 272, on Plutarch's preferential use of Greek sources: „[er erzählte] seine Römerbiographien, soweit es ging, nach griechischen Autoren“.

⁵⁶ Heeren, *De fontibus et auctoritate uitarum parallelarum Plutarchi commentationes quatuor*, Göttingen 1820, 148, assumed Posidonius as Plutarch's source in chapters 3–27 (*non uidi*; citation according to the work mentioned in the immediately following). H. Peter, *Die Quellen Plutarchs in den Biographien der Römer*, Halle 1865, 105, suggests that Plutarch relied on Livy for the early chapters of the Life of Marius. Although Peter can point to the occasional correspondence between Plutarch and the Livian tradition (cf. Orosius, 5,16,9–24, and *Periocha*, 68, with *Marius*, 25–27), this could just as easily stem from Livy's and Plutarch's common use of the same ultimate source(s) as from Plutarch's use of Livy; to say nothing of the unhappy problem that the Livian tradition sometimes admits into itself non-Livian material (e.g. material from Sallust, Bell. Jug. 93,2, stands at Florus, 1,36,14). Furthermore, Peter too easily attributes the material at Val. Max. 1,2,3; 5,2,8 and 8,15,7 (cf. Plut. *Sulla*, 29; *Marius*, 28; and *Marius*, 3, respectively) to Livy. At any rate Peter, 103–104, too assumes Plutarch's heavy reliance on Posidonius in other parts of the Life of Marius.

lief by retailing promising material from an earlier period⁵⁷, then Posidonius had need to tap into these pro-Marian sources for the early period only – precisely where we find positive material about Marius in Plutarch to whom, finally, Posidonius’ treatment of Marius’ character may well have been congenial. Volker Werner, at any rate, sums up Plutarch’s view of Marius as follows: „Plutarch führte Marius seinen Lesern nämlich als das Paradebeispiel eines Menschen vor, der im Übermaß des Erfolges die Grenzen des ihm von den Göttern zugestandenen Glücks nicht mehr habe erkennen können und deshalb schließlich zwangsläufig der *Nemesis* habe anheimfallen müssen“⁵⁸. Accordingly, Plutarch may not have wished to tamper much with what he found in Posidonius concerning Marius’ early career since that material actually fit reasonably well with his own overall conception⁵⁹.

In any case I feel that we need to reckon with a somewhat richer annalistic tradition amongst Marius’ contemporaries than that of the known names of Scaurus, Rufus, Catulus, and Sulla. There is, after all, the otherwise unknown Piso whom Plutarch mentions as an author who wrote on Marius. Had Plutarch not by chance dropped the name, we would never guess at the existence of Piso and his work; and his example should alert us to the possibility that other accounts, whose authors’ names, for whatever reason, no-one ever dropped, may well have existed. Finally, here at the end of this paper the chief characteristic of this annalistic tradition which we have been discussing merits iterating: The respective authors worked in the main with the same basic facts which (historiographically at least) stood without dispute. They produced pamphlet after pamphlet which ground through the same old material all over again, the only difference – at least as far as an individual episode went⁶⁰ – lying in the spin: Did Marius success-

⁵⁷ Malitz (above n. 30) 397; so also Scardigli (above n. 47) 75. Diod. 37.29.2–5, provides the chief support for this view in its contrast between the *καλὰ ἔργα* and the *μέγαλαι πράξεις* of Marius’ younger days and the violent depravity of his old age; as well as in its explanation of Marius’ decline as due to his greed (cf. Plut. *Marius*, 2.4) which he initially held in check, but to which he eventually gave free rein.

⁵⁸ Werner (above n. 20) 370.

⁵⁹ Passerini’s views on material from anti- and pro-Marian sources in Plutarch (see above n. 16) eventually elicited severe criticism from Badian, in: *Gnomon* 46, 1974, 422–423. All the same and indeed despite certain errors by Passerini (above n. 16), his basic idea in our view retains its validity (and has received endorsement from Scardigli [above n. 47] 74; n.b. also Strasburger [above n. 52] loc.cit.): when Badian censures Passerini for “disallowing consideration of the mind that shaped the Lives”, he himself excludes from consideration the possibility that Plutarch, who on any view owing to the passage of some two centuries in this case wrote entirely at the mercy of his sources, may well have had literary purposes which coexisted with or corresponded to or even took shape on the basis of what he found in whatever immediate source(s) he was using – and he might even have chosen sources because they generally conformed to notions which he had already conceived.

⁶⁰ Across a full work, presumably, differences in the overall interpretation would manifest themselves as well. Here, however, we must capitulate before the fragmentary state of the evidence which simply does not allow us to form much of an opinion of, say, Rutilius Rufus’

fully obtain the praetorship? Then an annalist hostile to him emphasised that he was the last of the six candidates selected and was thereafter prosecuted for bribery under socially humiliating circumstances. Did Marius lose two elections for aedileships in one day? Then an annalist friendly to him switched the emphasis to the holding of the offices obligatory for the *cursus*.

In other words, both basic Roman versions of Marius' early career are 'true' – from a certain point of view. But both also seriously misrepresent matters as well; and it was the Greek Posidonius who, despite having his own tendentious⁶¹ views on Marius, in this particular case perhaps hit best upon the proverbial truth in the middle: Marius did secure election to the obligatory lesser offices, but he did so barely.

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overall conception of Marius. See Werner (above n. 20) 4–11 for a brief treatment of the annalists' view of Marius.

⁶¹ See above n. 57.