

Zeitschrift: Museum Helveticum : schweizerische Zeitschrift für klassische Altertumswissenschaft = Revue suisse pour l'étude de l'antiquité classique = Rivista svizzera di filologia classica

Herausgeber: Schweizerische Vereinigung für Altertumswissenschaft

Band: 15 (1958)

Heft: 1

Artikel: Pseudo-Sallust

Autor: Syme, Ronald

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-15279>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 04.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Pseudo-Sallust

By Ronald Syme, Oxford

The last fifty years have seen much effort lavished on the two *Suasoriae*, and an abundance of words. With so devout and intensive a cultivation of those pamphlets, the historical writings of Sallust tend to suffer. That is not the worst. Other subjects lapse and languish, notably the evolution of style and technique in the Roman annalists or the appraisal of what Livy achieved and Tacitus surpassed.

To proclaim the authenticity and value of the *Suasoriae*, impressive names are on parade. Historians led off. Launched by Pöhlmann, the thesis was taken up by Edward Meyer and authoritatively commended to a multitude in the sequel. Students of style and language also concurred. To name only the most illustrious: Norden, Kroll, Löfstedt and Funaioli brought a strong conviction or documentation in support. Hence a formidable bibliography¹.

The *Epistulae ad Caesarem senem de re publica* (such is the entitlement) were transmitted by the *Codex Vaticanus* along with the speeches excerpted from the two monographs and the *Historiae* of Sallust. To prove them genuine and contemporary, two paths offer. The approach through history seeks to show that only a partisan of Caesar could be the author, so cogent is the advice tendered, so closely does each *Epistula* correspond to atmosphere and situation. The first presupposes Caesar victorious in the Civil War and should go (it appears) in 46 B.C. The second (to keep to the manuscript order) reflects an earlier state of affairs: 49, so most assume, through 51 and 50 have had their advocates.

Next, the linguistic approach. A cautious enquirer might hesitate to accept all the historical arguments². No matter: doubts could be allayed or circumvented by appeal to the language, which is patently Sallustian, to be confirmed (if need be) by a thorough investigation³. The two paths seemed to converge: pertinent counsel to Caesar, and Sallust by the style.

Confidence was premature. I failed to allow for one of the normal features of

¹ See H. M. Last, CQ XVII (1923) 88 ff.; M. Chonet, *Les lettres de Salluste à César* (1950) XIII ff.; A. D. Leeman, *A Systematical Bibliography to Sallust* (1879-1950), Mnemosyne, Supplementum Quartum (1952) 47 ff.; A. Kurfess, *Appendix Sallustiana*⁴, fasc. 1 (Teubner 1955) V ff.

² B. Edmar, *Studien zu den Epistulae ad Caesarem senem de re publica* (Lund 1931) 11 ff.

³ B. Edmar, op. cit. 29 ff. See also A. M. Holborn Beltmann, *De Sallustii Epistulis ad Caesarem senem de re publica* (Diss. Berlin 1926) 33 ff.; W. Kroll, Hermes LXII (1927) 385 ff.; E. Skard, Symbolae Osloenses X (1931) 61 ff.; M. Chonet, op. cit. 9 ff. Skard produced an *Index Verborum* (Symbolae Osloenses, Suppl. III 1930), and the edition of Kurfess has a catalogue of *Congruentiae Sallustianae* (21 ff.).

ancient education and training—rhetorical exercises in the form of speeches or letters⁴. These essays were often composed for the fun of the thing, not for political ends and not even with intent to deceive. All manner of *pseudepigrapha* were circulating at Rome in the time of Augustus, from orations on classic and Ciceronian themes to the erotic missives exchanged by clever Q. Dellius and the Queen of Egypt⁵.

The *obtrectatores Ciceronis* were now in fully employ. Cestius Pius, one of the most notorious, made up a counterblast to the *Pro Milone*⁶. There were also spurious orations purporting to have been delivered by Catilina and C. Antonius in the electoral contest of 64: Asconius dismisses them contemptuously⁷. Not everybody was as alert and scholarly as Asconius. The historian Fenestella believed that Cicero had in fact defended Catilina in 65⁸. Was he perhaps taken in by the *Pro Catilina* of some elegant or malicious parodist?

Instructive on several counts is the invective of "Sallust", *In Ciceronem*. The dramatic date is 54, patently; and there have not been wanting scholars to hold the speech contemporary, with Sallust for author (which is absurd), or, better, L. Piso. That cannot be⁹. Nor is there anything in the notion that the *Invective* is a document of the propaganda war of 33, composed by an agent of Octavian, to discredit the memory of Cicero¹⁰. There could be no greater misconception. Events had moved swiftly. Cicero, dead only ten years before, belonged to a distant past. Other issues dominated the eve of Actium¹¹. Moreover, an easy solution is to hand. The author of the pasquinade is out to show what manner of answer L. Piso could (and should) have retorted against *In Pisonem*¹².

More tricky is the homiletic letter of Q. Cicero, the *Commentariolum Petitionis*: if it is fraudulent, its design is not at once obvious. Mommsen ended by rejecting this document, but did not state his reasons¹³. It has, however, been adduced in the recent age as welcome and valid evidence by writers on Roman political life¹⁴, encouraged no doubt because it was firmly and authoritatively vouched for in a

⁴ On which see especially M. J. Henderson, JRS XL (1950) 8ff., discussing the *Commentariolum Petitionis*.

⁵ Seneca, *Suas.* I, 7: *hic est Dellius cuius epistulae ad Cleopatram lascivae feruntur*. The word *feruntur* implies disbelief in authenticity. These letters are not noted in RE IV 2447f. or in PIR¹, D 29 (the man was omitted from PIR²).

⁶ Quintilian X 5, 20. Cestius was flogged at a banquet by order of the orator's drunken son, proconsul of Asia (Seneca, *Suas.* VII 13).

⁷ Asconius 84: *feruntur quoque orationes nomine illorum editae, non ab ipsis scriptae sed ab Ciceronis obtrectatoribus*.

⁸ Asconius 76.

⁹ See the acute and comprehensive study of G. Jachmann, *Miscellanea Academica Berolinensia* (1950) 235ff.

¹⁰ As argued at great length by O. Seel, *Klio Beiheft XLVII* (1943).

¹¹ This is highly relevant to the thesis of Carcopino that the correspondence of Cicero was published at this time as propaganda in the interest of Octavian.

¹² G. Jachmann, op. cit. 262f. Cf. R. Syme, JRS 37 (1947) 201, reviewing E. H. Clift, *Latin Pseudepigrapha* (Baltimore 1947).

¹³ *Röm. Staatsrecht* III (1887) 484. 497.

¹⁴ e.g., R. Syme, *Rom. Rev.* (1939) 11; L. R. Taylor, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* (1949) 64ff.

sober and standard work¹⁵. Yet the *Commentariolum* turns out to be highly vulnerable. It has had to face a powerful attack¹⁶. The operation, conducted with masterly strategy, will command admiration and respect even if all the arguments do not carry instant conviction. Something of a prepossession could subsist in favour of the *Commentariolum* (its matter is not contemptible). When was it written, however, and with what purpose? If not by Q. Cicero, and not contemporary either, it might belong to the Augustan age¹⁷.

Adepts of style and language, writing only twenty or thirty years after the transactions they purport to illuminate, had the benefit of a clear advantage, for they were in personal and intimate touch with the recent past. And there could be practitioners of no mean quality, good enough to impress a literary critic in later ages. Quintilian saw no reason for distrusting "Sallust", *In Ciceronem*¹⁸ and he cites a speech of C. Antonius¹⁹.

Men familiar with the Augustan schools had reason to be on their guard. The elder Seneca, for example, was able to detect and condemn a declamation that had been attributed to his old friend and fellow-townsmen, Porcius Latro²⁰. Not everybody was fortified by accurate knowledge, critical sense and the will to disbelief.

Caesar Augustus instituted public libraries at Rome. Hence (it has been argued) a firm check and control on questionable writings, if the government was alert, if the custodians of books knew their duty²¹. The Princeps (it stands on record) wrote a little letter to the chief librarian telling him not to admit certain *juvenilia* of Julius Caesar²². Authenticity was not the issue. Nor is there any trace of any work being excluded from the public collections precisely because it could not stand up to historical or literary criteria. On the other hand, genuine works were banned, like those of M. Antonius or the poet Ovid.

That is not all. Royal libraries at Alexandria and at Pergamum encouraged a veritable deluge of *pseudepigrapha*²³. Augustus' librarian was Pompeius Macer, the son of the political agent from Mytilene. Nothing suggests a keen and discriminating taste in the Latin language. Conceit and cupidity in librarians was an invitation to forgers. Furthermore, men were growing curious about the personal history or first literary essays of deceased authors who had attained the rank of classics. Notably Virgil—hence in due course the *Culex*²⁴.

¹⁵ H. M. Last, CAH 9 (1932) 894: "undoubtedly an authentic work written by Quintus Cicero."

¹⁶ M. J. Henderson, JRS 40 (1950) 8ff.

¹⁷ M. J. Henderson concedes that "the later-Augustan period cannot be excluded" (op. cit. 21).

¹⁸ IV 1, 68; IX 3, 89.

¹⁹ IX 3, 94.

²⁰ *Controv.* X *prae*f. 12.

²¹ The thesis of E. H. Clift, *Latin Pseudepigrapha* (1945).

²² Suet. *Divus Julius* 56, 7.

²³ Galen XIX p. 8 K.

²⁴ E. Fraenkel, JRS 42 (1952) 1ff.

Fraud or parody apart, the argument from language can be turned inside-out. Catalogues have been compiled of words and usage to demonstrate how Sallustian are the Sallustian *Suasoriae*²⁵. Too much, and in vain. By paradox the Sallustian manner and vocabulary go to prove that the pamphlets are not by Sallust.

They are composed in a style suitable not to oratory or persuasion but to history. Sallust did not take to the writing of history until he forswore public life after the assassination of Caesar. He forged a manner all of his own, innovations along with the archaic. He was a slow and deliberate worker, as the products showed²⁶; and (as Pollio alledged) he had enlisted the aid of a grammatical expert²⁷. Sallust achieved a heroic act of creation in the literature of the Latins, a performance of classic order valid for ever²⁸. Nothing could be the same again. A fashion spread at once, and even a mania²⁹. It follows that nobody could have been composing in the Sallustian manner in 46, let alone earlier³⁰.

Hence firm guidance at last. For all the weighty names as well as numbers mustered on the side of belief, some had qualms but very few dissented openly. One reasoned and energetic protest was made twenty-five years ago, but unfortunately attracted scant attention³¹. More recently, doubts began to percolate, and more than doubts³². Perhaps (so one scholar suggested in 1947) a new and resolute assault might bring down the whole edifice³³. And now the erstwhile strong champions waver, they break the ranks or make their dispositions for retreat³⁴.

The general and negative argument from the creation of Sallust's style (as adumbrated above) might well seem enough to render further effort superfluous. How can it be controverted? However, some modest item of independent proof would help, such as patent anachronism.

First of all, the problem can be clarified. Is there any independent evidence? A passage in Cassius Dio has sometimes been invoked as showing that, whether or no the *Suasoriae* be genuine, Sallust had composed pamphlets before he became a historian. Dio stigmatizes the extortions practised by Sallust when he governed a province in Africa (46/5), and adverts upon behaviour that contrasted so sharply

²⁵ Cf. above, note 3. These studies were held to have outweighed the disturbing linguistic peculiarities adduced by H. Jordan, *De Suasoriis quae Ad Caesarem Senem de Re Publica inscribuntur commentatio* (Berlin 1868) 23 ff.

²⁶ Quintilian X 3, 8.

²⁷ Suet. *De gramm.* 10.

²⁸ Cf. E. Norden, *Die röm. Literatur*⁵ (1955): "die Prägung dieses Stils muß als eine Großtat der römischen Literatur bezeichnet werden."

²⁹ Seneca *Ep.* 114, 17 ff.

³⁰ Cf. K. Latte, JRS 27 (1937) 300, reviewing G. Carlsson, *Eine Denkschrift an Cäsar über den Staat* (Lund 1936); E. Fraenkel, JRS 41 (1951) 192 ff., reviewing M. Chonet, *Les lettres de Salluste à César* (1950).

³¹ H. M. Last, *CQ* XVII (1923) 87 ff. 151 ff.

³² e.g. A. Ernout in his edition of Sallust (Budé, 1946) 33 ff.; M. L. W. Laistner, *The Greater Roman Historians* (1947) 170.

³³ H. Fuchs, *Mus. Helv.* 4 (1947) 189.

³⁴ Thus A. Kurfess in the latest edition of his *Appendix Sallustiana* (1955) IV: "nunc haesito".

with the tone and subject of what he had written³⁵. The passage does not in fact constitute a proof. The best explanation is ignorance—Dio had in mind the historical works of Sallust with their lavish denunciation of greed and rapacity³⁶. Indeed, and further, the epoch at which Dio wrote (and his own career) predisposed him to make that unconscious assumption—the Antonine practice of awarding public honours or provincial governorships to persons who had achieved distinction as authors.

Next, ought a distinction to be drawn between the two *Suasoriae*? The second is patently inferior to the first. A searching investigation produced a conclusion not easy to deny—the authors are different. The second imitates and expands the first³⁷. It might still (it then seemed) be possible to retain the first³⁸.

The second *Suasoria* contains sundry peculiar items difficult to explain, or explain away. For example, the forty senators who were “massacred” by Cato and Domitius (4, 2), or the description of Domitius in phraseology all but identical with the attack on Cicero in the *Invective*—*an L. Domiti magna vis est, quovis nullum membrum a flagitio aut facinore vacat. lingua vana manus cruentae pedes fugaces; quae honeste nominari nequeunt, inhonestissima* (9, 2)³⁹. No need, however, to linger on them is elsewhere in the pamphlet there lurks a clear sign that the writer was using extant works of Sallust. Such a sign is there. What it proves escaped notice until quite recently. Impersonating Sallust, the author refers to the beginnings of his political career—*sed mihi studium fuit adulescentulo rem publicam capessere*, etc. (1, 3). That is clearly modelled on the *Bellum Catalinae*—*sed ego adulescentulus initio sicuti plerique studio ad rem publicam latus sum, ibique multa mihi advorsa fuere* (3, 3). That passage was written by Sallust when looking back to the past, his own career in public life now terminated. Very different the situation in 49. For Sallust, quaestor perhaps in 55, tribune of the plebs in 52, his début lay only a few years back—that is, if he was inditing this epistle in 49. Therefore not Sallust⁴⁰.

After a demonstration so plain and cogent, nothing more needs to be said. If, however, the second *Suasoria* could further be persuaded to disclose an anachronism of a different order (not seen so far and not suspected), it would be a pity not to show it up. Various advantages might accrue.

The author comes quickly to one theme, and (be it added) takes a long time to

³⁵ Dio XLIII 9, 2: ἀμέλει καὶ ἐδωροδόκησε πολλὰ καὶ ἤρπασεν, ὥστε καὶ κατηγορηθῆναι καὶ αἰσχύνῃν ἐσχάτην ὀφλεῖν ὅτι τοιαῦτα συγγράμματα συγγράψας καὶ πολλὰ καὶ μικρὰ περὶ τῶν ἐκκαρπομένων τινὰς εἰπὼν οὐκ ἐμιμήσατο τῷ ἔργῳ τοὺς λόγους.

³⁶ For this possibility, H. M. Last, CQ 17 (1923) 93; B. Edmar, op. cit. 14. More firmly, F. E. Adcock, JRS 40 (1950) 139, reviewing L. R. Taylor, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* (1949).

³⁷ H. M. Last, CQ 17 (1923) 151 ff.

³⁸ H. M. Last, CQ 18 (1924) 84: “The evidence in its favour, which to me appears almost conclusive.” But the same scholar later came to “greater scepticism”, *Mélanges Marouzeau* (1948) 357.

³⁹ Cf. *In Ciceronem* 3, 5: cuius nulla pars corporis a turpitudine vacat, lingua vana, manus rapacissimae, gula immensa, pedes fugaces: quae honeste nominari non possunt, inhonestissima.

⁴⁰ As demonstrated by A. Dihle, *Mus. Helv.* 11 (1954) 126 ff.

get away from it. It is the dominant group in the oligarchy, the *factio nobilitatis*⁴¹. He assails them repeatedly; and he condemns them in conventional language for sloth and incapacity⁴². Of Caesar (he says) *sin in te ille animus est qui iam a principio nobilitatis factionem disturbavit* (2, 4). Next, he describes the behaviour of *illi factiosi* (3, 3). They are *homines inertissimi* (3, 6). Misdeeds are registered of Cato and Domitius and the rest *eiusdem factionis* (4, 6). Then, after mooted various proposals for reform in the Roman State, the author warns Caesar that he will have to contend *cum factione nobilitatis* (8, 6). Their *desidia et inertia* is roundly denounced (8, 7). He passes in review their leaders, Bibulus (9, 1), Domitius (9, 2) and Cato (9, 3). Cato earns praise of a kind—*unius tamen M. Catonis ingenium versutum loquax callidum haud contemno*. But, he adds, these qualities derive from the teachings of the Greeks, and what have the Greeks to teach an imperial people—*quippe qui domi libertatem suam per inertiam amiserint, censesne eorum praeceptis imperium haberi posse?* (9, 3). On this follows a general characterization of the rest of the oligarchs, with two names singled out for depreciation—*reliqui de factione sunt inertissimi nobilis, in quibus sicut in titulo nihil est additamenti. L. Postumii M. Favonii mihi videntur quasi magnae navis supervacuanea onera esse: ubi salvi pervenire usui sunt; si quid adversi coortum est de illeis potissimum iactura fit quia pretii minimi sunt* (9, 4).

The sequence of thought and language runs clear. Bibulus, Domitius and Cato are the leaders of the *factio*. The rest are *inertissimi nobiles*, represented by L. Postumius and M. Favonius—mere passengers, the first to be thrown overboard. They have a good label, but no substance.

These two names challenge scrutiny. No perplexity, to be sure, about M. Favonius, the loyal and fanatical adherent of Cato. He belongs to history, commemorated in abundant and repetitive record; and he passed into literature and propaganda, legend and travesty⁴³. One item can suffice for testimony. Tacitus, bringing the prosecutor Cossutianus Capito into the presence of Nero, and equipping him with a conventional and declamatory invective against enemies of the Caesars, duly furnishes him with Favonius as a stock example⁴⁴.

In a writer of the Empire it took no especial knowledge or insight to call up M. Favonius in the context or sequel of Cato. L. Postumius is another matter, obscure and barely known. He occurs in two other passages only of Latin literature. First, he is presumably to be identified with T. Postumius mentioned by Cicero in the *Brutus* (the *praenomen* might have been wrongly transmitted here or in the

⁴¹ Observe the frequency of the words *factio* (7), *factiosus* (2), *nobilis* (5), *nobilitas* (5). None of them in *Ep. I*.

⁴² Note *iners* (2), *inertia* (4), *desidia* (1), *ignavus* (2), *ignavia* (2), *socordia* (4). *Ep. I* has one instance each of *ignavia* and *socordia*—and also one of the typically Sallustian *incuria* (which does not occur in *Ep. II*).

⁴³ F. Münzer, RE 6, 2074ff. To be assumed *praetor* in 49, cf. T. R. S. Broughton, MMR 2, 257.

⁴⁴ *Ann. XVI 22, 4: ista secta Tiberones et Favonios, veteri quoque rei publicae ingrata nomina, genuit.*

Suasoria): this man was a spirited orator and strong partisan in the Civil Wars, which he did not survive⁴⁵. Secondly, a letter describing consultations among the Pompeians at Capua on January 25, 49, names a senator called Postumius. The Senate had enjoined that he should proceed to Sicily (no doubt as legate) to take over from Furfanius, but he refused to go there unless Cato also went. He had a high opinion of his own weight and value⁴⁶.

The registering of a minor character like Postumius has been pounced upon with pardonable alacrity as a sure indication that the pamphlet is a contemporary document: who knew or cared about Postumius in later ages⁴⁷?

Caution is requisite. Genuine or false, the *Suasoria* is perplexing enough in its choice of names. Would a supporter of Caesar have omitted to note among leaders of the *nobiles* the Marcelli, suddenly emergent in those years to the consulate, loud for action in defence of the Republic but braver perhaps in word than deed—*Marcellusque loquax et nomina vana Catones*⁴⁸?

Perhaps. But who could neglect the great Ap. Claudius Pulcher (*cos.* 54)? This man was the hinge (it could be claimed) of the governmental coalition that brought on the Civil War—one of his daughters was married to the elder son of Pompeius Magnus, another to Brutus, the nephew of Cato. Arrogant, unpopular and highly vulnerable (magical practices and unnatural vice) Ap. Pulcher operated detrimentally, driving partisans into the arms of Caesar⁴⁹. Why spare Ap. Pulcher? Why indeed? This was the censor who in 50 expelled Sallust from the Senate⁵⁰.

Alert attention to names and persons can reap enormous benefit in all epochs of Roman history. At first sight Postumius seems sheer gain and straight proof of authenticity. Reflection inspires a doubt. It can happen that late, poor, or fraudulent writers exhibit curious particulars of recondite learning. The *Historia Augusta* alleges that the Emperor Balbinus traced his descent from the famous Cornelius Balbus⁵¹. That is nonsense. But the author, by mentioning "Balbus Cornelius Theophanes", displays knowledge out of the ordinary—namely the fact that Cornelius Balbus was once adopted by Theophanes of Mythilene, the client and agent of Pompeius Magnus. That fact is registered by Cicero in a speech and in a letter, and nowhere else⁵². It did not (apparently) pass into the historical tradition. If the author of the *Suasoria* can couple a Postumius with M. Favonius in the *factio nobilitatis*, he may have got the names from that letter of Cicero (referred to above) which not only has Postumius in the context of Cato but also happens to record Favonius as obdurate against any concessions to Caesar.

⁴⁵ *Brutus* 269. For identity, P. Willems, *Le Sénat de la République romaine* 1 (1878) 514; E. Meyer, *Cäsars Monarchie und das Principat des Pompejus*³ (1922) 572f.; F. Münzer, *RE* 22, 898.

⁴⁶ *Ad Att.* VII 15, 2: *suam in senatu operam auctoritatemque quam magni aestimat.*

⁴⁷ E. Meyer, *op. cit.* 573; L. R. Taylor, *op. cit.* 185f. 234.

⁴⁸ *Lucan* I 313.

⁴⁹ Cf. *Rom. Rev.* (1939) 41. 45. 61. 63.

⁵⁰ *Dio* XL 63, 4.

⁵¹ *Maximus et Balbinus* 7, 3.

⁵² *Pro Balbo* 57; *Ad Att.* VII 6, 7.

So far so good. The mention of Postumius cannot safely be taken as attestation of contemporaneity. On the contrary, the passage that links him with Favonius conceals a damaging revelation. So far the *Suasoria* has been speaking only of *nobiles*. Not all adherents of the *factio* would have to be *nobiles* themselves. That is clear, and a later entry refers to ordinary senators as hangers-on (11, 6, cf. further below). Now comes the crux and point. In the present passage Postumius and Favonius are designated, not as mere followers but as members, themselves *nobiles*. Observe the phrase which leads up to their names—*reliqui de factione sunt inertissimi nobiles* (9, 4). So the passage is understood by translators or in paraphrase⁵³.

How stand the facts about the birth and extraction of these two senators? Postumius may well descend from the illustrious patrician house now in eclipse—no consul since 99, and none ever again. Perhaps not—and certainly not, if his *praenomen* is “Titus” (as in the *Brutus*), not Lucius. No member of the patrician Postumii ever owned to Titus. Whatever be the truth about Postumius, Favonius belongs to a new stock. No consul previously of that *nomen*, no praetor even. Perhaps the first senator of his family.

What the terms *nobilis* and *nobilitas* connote in the last age of the Republic is clear: descent from a consular house⁵⁴. It is valid even if that house, after acquiring the consulate, lapsed from the *Fasti* for a century. The negative test is conclusive. Though there were senators of no small distinction, who numbered praetors among their ancestors for several or even for many generations, Cicero, saying all that he can on their behalf, never styles them *nobiles*.

A decayed patrician can qualify, such as a Postumius. Not a Favonius. His name cries aloud his *novitas*. The *gentilicium* is exceedingly rare⁵⁵. Tarracina has produced a dedication in honour of M. Favonius, and Tarracina is beyond doubt the home town of this *municipalis*⁵⁶. No man of the time, and nobody in the epoch of Augustus, could fancy that a Favonius was a *nobilis*. Neglect of nomenclature and social categories can furnish amusing or damaging disclosures in any age—as when, for example, a historian labels a certain L. Fufidius as “cet aristocrate incapable et pusillanime”⁵⁷. The *nomen* was enough to show the fellow no aristocrat, even had not Sallust damned him to all eternity as *omnium honorum dehonestamentum*⁵⁸.

An important consequence follows. A number of the spurious orations extant

⁵³ e.g. H. Jordan, op. cit. 26f.; E. Meyer, op. cit. 571; L. R. Taylor, op. cit. 156.

⁵⁴ As demonstrated by M. Gelzer, *Die Nobilität der röm. Republik* (1912).

⁵⁵ In CIL X on four inserr. (two at Tarracina and two in Sardinia); in V, one; IX, one; XI, three.

⁵⁶ CIL X 6316 = ILS 879: *M. Favonio M. f. / leg. / popul. Agrigent*. The other Favonius at this town duly exhibits the tribe *Onfentina* (6362). Apart from Cato's friend, the only *Favonii* of consequence are the priestess Favonia M. f. (CIL I² 974 = ILS 3342), presumably his daughter, and the enigmatic Favonius, proconsul of Asia under Tiberius (ILS 9483, cf. PIR², F 121).

⁵⁷ J. Carcopino, *Histoire romaine* II (1936) 503.

⁵⁸ *Hist.* I 55, 22 (*oratio Lepidi*).

or on record were probably composed in the time of Augustus. Not this one. It is later. How much later? With the passage of years, terms that had a precise connotation in the social and political system of the old Republic tend to become blurred. The usage of imperial writers is instructive. Thus Juvenal has *patricius* in reference to the aristocratic C. Silius (*cos. des.* in 48)⁵⁹. Not adequate to prove that the Silii had been adlected into the patrician order. Nor is it certain that Suetonius, though scholarly, is always accurate⁶⁰. It is another matter with senators. Tacitus and Pliny restrict *nobilis* to descendants of Republican consular families.

The second *Suasoria* might be a scholastic exercise of the Antonine age, when Sallust enjoyed high favour and admiration, as Fronto and Gellius so abundantly attest. The latter writer has a delightful anecdote, how the learned Sulpicius Apollinaris mocked and unmasked a pretentious fellow—*iactatorem quempiam et venditorem Sallustianae lectionis*⁶¹. The author of the *Suasoria* cannot be regarded as a forceful or elegant performer. To discover one who had assimilated the *sanguinem quoque ipsum ac medullam verborum eius* (as Gellius says), the Antonine arbiters of taste could have appealed to Cornelius Tacitus—had they studied and valued that writer.

The historian puts his model to varied employ. Not only consummate grace and propriety when he describes how a Piso was assassinated by a native in Spain⁶², or adapts Sallust on Africa to the waste lands of the Pontic shore⁶³. He composes freely in the manner. And he can improve Sallust, taking a phrase from the *Bellum Jugurthinum* and rewriting it in the later style of that author⁶⁴.

Indeed, a single word might show up the incompetent imitator. There is a passage mentioning *homines nobiles cum paucis senatoriis* (11, 6). Now the adjective *senatorius* is common and normal, especially in the phrase *senatorius ordo*, as three times in Sallust⁶⁵. Used alone, as a noun, the word provokes disquiet. There is no parallel in all the literature of the Latins⁶⁶. The historians are careful to evade or modify the technical terms of Roman public life. Tacitus has multiple devices—and Tacitus had a predecessor in Sallust⁶⁷. Tacitus sometimes seems to go too far. Thus *equestres* as a designation for the prefects of Egypt, and *Julius Densus equester*⁶⁸. These instances lack parallel anywhere⁶⁹. Tacitus wilful use of *equester*

⁵⁹ Juvenal X 332.

⁶⁰ Thus *duos patricii generis convictos in adfectione imperii* (*Divus Titus* 9, 1).

⁶¹ Gellius XVIII 4, 1.

⁶² *Ann.* IV 45, cf. *Cat.* 19.

⁶³ *Ann.* XII 20, cf. *Jug.* 17, 5; 54, 9.

⁶⁴ *Ann.* I 9, 4: *postquam hic socordia senuerit, ille per libidines pessum datus sit*. Compare *Jug.* 1, 4: *ad inertiam et voluptates corporis pessum datus est*. Patently, *socordia* is more "Sallustian" than is *inertia* (the latter like *iners* not in his *Historiae*).

⁶⁵ *Cat.* 17, 3; *Jug.* 62, 4; 104, 1.

⁶⁶ Information courteously supplied by the Direction of TLL. B. Edmar unfortunately failed to discuss the word in his detailed commentary.

⁶⁷ W. Kroll, *Glotta* 15 (1927) 299.

⁶⁸ *Ann.* XII 60, 2; XIII 10, 2.

⁶⁹ Cf. TLL.

for *eques Romanus* might (it is true) counsel caution and a suspension of doubt about *senatorius*. None the less, that word can hardly fail to arouse the gravest suspicions. Surely not Sallust. And not a writer of the better epoch. The word *senatorius* looks more like a vulgarism than a conscious effort of stylistic variation.

To conclude. The foregoing remarks have concentrated on the second *Suasoria*, with an attempt to establish a flagrant anachronism, namely Favonius taken for a *nobilis*. What of the first *Suasoria*? It is better product, and it does not stand convicted of material anachronisms. Could it be kept? Apparently not. The overriding argument from Sallust's creation of a style for history ought to sweep it away along with the second. Nobody was writing Sallustian in 46 B.C.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ To have made that clear is the abiding merit of Latte and of Fraenkel. Nobody should now desire to augment the "literature of the subject" without some excuse. When writing in 1937 and 1938, I assumed on the evidence of Dio (as did many) that Sallust in fact had composed some pamphlets (Rom. Rev. 248). Not being convinced one way or the other about the *Suasoriae*, and dubious (52f. 460), yet rating them higher than they deserved, I cited them as "Sallust" (26. 57). By 1947, however, I had felt the force of Latte's argument (cf. JRS 37, 201).