

# The Narrating Procedure of the Historiographer Titus Livius\*

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This dissertation focuses on analysis of the narrating procedure in the first pentad of Titus Livius' history, which constitutes a separate entity: from the earliest times of Roman history (Aeneas's arrival on Italic ground) to the Gauls' invasion of Rome in 390 B.C.

The paper consists of eight chapters. The introduction encompasses biographic data about Titus Livy, a brief description of his main works, a modern Macedonian translation of the *periochae* from 1 to 5, and a general review of *studia Liviana* through the centuries.

The first chapter considers and emphasizes Titus Livius' motive in writing a Roman history. This motive is explained by Livy himself in his introductory text preceding the historical narration. Livy enumerates (by order of seriousness) many diseases of contemporary Roman society. He is not the first to have noticed these diseases and their destructive impact, but he is the first to offer a means of remedying the sick society. The solution Livy offers is complementary to the huge *restoratio rei publicae Romanae* of the first *princeps*, Augustus. Thus Livy's method is to narrate the entire Roman history, to draw examples from Roman history, and to advise his fellow-citizens.

The sicknesses of Roman society in Livy's time were *avaritia, luxuria, libido*; while the Romans in the past had possessed the crucial Roman virtues of *paupertas, parsimonia, disciplina*. These vices have entered Roman society, causing degradation of moral norms. But Roman magnificence was founded precisely on the Roman virtues, the original gods, Fortune, and the actions of individuals at critical moments for the state.

The second chapter takes a closer look at Livy's text of the first pentad from the aspect of the sources. It treats the original documents existing during Livy's lifetime (*Annales maximi, Libri lintei, Senatusconsulta*) and the deeds of previous historiographers whose texts Livy was following and using while he was composing his magnum opus. Even though Livy could have found original documents referring to the time he narrates, he uses the histories of other, earlier historiographers. For Livy, the term "source" meant a literary work of earlier writers. In the first pentad, he refers to Fabius Pictor, Lucius Calpurnius Piso Frugi, Valerius Antias, Licinius Macer, and K. Aelius Tubero.

The third chapter deals with the literary principles and methods of Livy's history, separated in two subchapters treating his historiography and literary methods.

The following chapter analyzes the narrating procedure itself and the annalistic principle of recounting events year by year is explored. This is a central element of Livy's history in moving through time. The essential parts in his history are the short stories (episodes), which are Livy's original contribution to literature. These episodes, in fact, contain the examples and instructions which are the most important message of Livy's history. The structure of the short episodes was diligently formed and arranged by Livy so

that some of them are true artistic works. Some stories are narrated plainly, wherein Livy's persona is present as a narrator, while others are *mimesis tes praxeos*.

In episodes dedicated to Horatius Cocles, Mucius Scaevola there is typically plain (epic) narration. Episodes with a dramatic effect are the fortune of Gnaeus Marcius Coriolanus, the destiny of the first Roman consul, Lucius Iunius Brutus and his sons. A true tragic conflict is presented in the episodes of Horatius and Horatia and the premature and cruel death of the young Verginia by the hand of her own father. Each of these episodes has as its main motif some of the Roman original virtues.

While narrating, Livy inserts many speeches spoken by the protagonists of the events, usually the consuls speaking to soldiers before battles or before the senate. It should be emphasized that Livy's speeches are not all historically accurate (especially those from the first pentad), but are structured by Livy himself on the basis of the rhetorical education he had gained: they are artistically created by Livy and inserted in the historical path of his narration.

The purpose of Livy's history is explained in the following chapter: to correct his fellow-citizens through examples (taken from original Roman history). The word 'example' has a crucial meaning in Livy's history (as it had in Augustus' *restoratio*). The word example, its use and role in his history, associate Livy with Augustus. Augustus himself emphasizes his role as an instigator of examples (this fact he himself wrote in his testamentum). Augustus created examples in two ways: taking them from the past and making them obvious to the citizens, while he himself offered new examples. The examples are *res gestae*, accomplished deeds in the past, but the consequences were visible in the past and present. It is worth mentioning that Livy gives good and bad examples in his history and, on the basis of the consequences, one could plainly realize what should be encouraged and what avoided.

The historical examples point out that the aim is not only to understand history, but to take from it fruitful benefits. According to Livy, the examples are models of conduct. Every event or individual having an aim could serve as a guide to behaviour and creates the possibility of learning social and moral benefits from the past. The purpose of the history, according to Livy, is pedagogic and didactic. Obviously, Livy's aim was to write a literary rather than a historical work (*opus maxime oratorium*, as per his words). Historians, and hindsight, appraise Augustus' restoration as unsuccessful. In this respect, Livy's Roman history—as it was conceived to correct people's conduct—did not achieve its goal. On the other hand, it seems that the audience in Rome did not understand the main intent and purpose of Livy's historical work. As ancient authors say, when Livy read his writings *in publice*, there were only a few who listened—and those were attracted by the beauty of his narration. This shows that Livy's history was understood by his fellow-citizens as a story of ancient irrecoverable times, and not as a work whose main intent should be focused on the present time. Instead of being a compulsory manual of deeds which every citizen should have with him, it became a wonderful description of the deeds of glorious *duces Romani* from ancient times.

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