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WHO'S ANTI-ROMAN? SALLUST AND POMPEIUS TROGUS ON MITHRIDATES*

*Abstract: Contemporary scholars of Roman imperialism have discussed the ways in which ancient historians denigrate non-Romans and thereby present intellectual justifications for Roman conquest. This paper offers a case study that questions this position's validity: an examination of Sallust's *Epistula Mithridatis* (Hist. 4.69M) and Pompeius Trogus' speech of Mithridates (Justin 38.4–7). I argue that Sallust offers a more powerful attack on Roman foreign policy than does Trogus, whom many scholars have deemed "anti-Roman," and conclude that Roman historians are capable of using speeches of foreigners to engage in Roman self-criticism.*

In the last few decades, scholars of ancient history have grown increasingly critical of earlier views of Roman imperialism.¹ During the late 19th century, as well as the early- and mid-20th century, many ancient historians believed that Rome's foreign policy was essentially "defensive" in nature.² That is to say, the Romans, who were traditionally hesitant to annex territory, did not intend to become masters of a huge empire; rather, they stumbled into a series of wars that compelled them to take control of a large number of provinces and a vast dominion. Since the 1970s, numerous Roman historians have come to question this thesis. In part as a result of more negative views of modern imperialism, scholars have criticized the

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¹ For examples of more recent views of Roman imperialism, see Harris (1971) and (1979); Brunt (1978); North (1981); Hingley (1982) and (1993); Jal (1982); Miles (1990); De Souza (1996); Freeman (1996) and (1997); Mattingly (1996) and (1997b); Hanson (1997); Whittaker (1997). For a survey of scholarly approaches to Roman imperialism, see Frézouls (1983).

² See Mommsen (1894); Frank (1912) and (1929); Holleaux (1921); Badian (1968); Errington (1972), esp. 3–5. Badian (1958) has been associated with the notion of "defensive imperialism," due to the recurring argument that Rome shunned annexing foreign territories in favor of a loose-ended patron-client relationship between itself and the states it had conquered. Yet Badian's thesis is more nuanced than the label "defensive imperialism" allows: he argues that for strategic purposes Rome preferred nebulous bonds of patronage with its defeated enemies to assess its own obligations and lack of obligations to the conquered areas in question.

notion of "defensive imperialism" as an elaborate exoneration of Roman conduct. This has especially been the case among British historians of Rome who came of age during their own country's post-imperial period.³ And, given the current political situation, discussions of American imperialism are likely to have a great influence on such conclusions in the years to come.⁴

According to many contemporary scholars, the Romans were far from "reluctant imperialists." On the contrary: their history demonstrates a great eagerness on the part of Roman elites to win impressive victories in war, to conquer new territories and thereby to bring honor both to themselves and to the Roman state. Much recent discussion of Roman imperialism has centered on the ways in which ancient historians of Rome consciously or unconsciously denigrate non-Romans.⁵ Such scholarship has highlighted the fact that this casting of non-Romans as inferior served as an intellectual justification for Roman conquest and for Roman rule. In some cases, contemporary historians have even perceived ancient authors' seemingly trenchant criticisms of Rome as subtly undermining the anti-imperialist positions they superficially appear to support.⁶ By this means, some of the most glaring examples of anti-Roman sentiment have been cast as pro-Roman in effect.

This paper takes for granted that these more modern views of Roman imperialism have much to recommend them. After all, the notion that the Romans unwittingly came to control a vast empire rightly strikes contemporary scholars as farfetched. But I will argue that more modern views of Roman imperialism can overlook ways in which ancient historians of Rome were capable of deep-seated criticisms of Roman society. Although it would be foolish to assert that these ancient historians were stalwart anti-imperialists, it seems incorrect to assume that they were incapable of presenting serious reflections on the failings of Roman imperialism.

In order to demonstrate this point, the paper offers a case study: an examination of two compositions Roman historians put in the mouth and pen of Mithridates VI Eupator—Sallust's *Epistula Mithridatis* (*Hist.* 4.69M = EM) and Pompeius Trogus' speech of Mithridates, found in Justin's epitome of Trogus' *Historiae Philippicae* (Justin 38.4–7).⁷

³ For discussions of this topic, see Hingely (1993) and (2000); Freeman (1996). Cromer (1910) offers an explicit comparison between Roman and British imperialism.

⁴ On this topic, see Vasunia (2003) 93–6.

⁵ E.g. Webster (1994) and (1996b), esp. 116–19; Alston (1996); Rutledge (2000); Clarke (2001).

⁶ E.g. Rutledge (2000); Clarke (2001) 103; Fincham (2001), esp. 31.

⁷ Justin himself, in the preface of his work, claims that he has made a *florum corpusculum*—a *florelegium*, not an epitome (*Praef.* 4). Perhaps Jal (1987) 196–7 offers the best description of this "epitome": "une sorte d'adaptation abrégée."

Sallust hailed from Sabine country; he was born in the town of Amiternum.⁸ Trogus, the author of a 44-book world history and a natural scientist in the age of Augustus, was from Gallia Narbonensis.⁹ Unlike the Italian Sallust, Trogus was only a third- or fourth-generation Roman citizen.¹⁰ It is chiefly for this reason, it seems, that numerous scholars inspecting their respective Mithridatic compositions consider Trogus' oration "anti-Roman,"¹¹ whereas they never claim that the *EM*'s vehemence proves its composer's hatred of Rome.¹²

Modern historians have expatiated on Sallust's criticisms of contemporary Roman politics. After all, the decay of Roman society after the Third Punic War is among the most prominent themes in Sallust's monographs.¹³ Even so, scholars tend to conclude that Sallust's discussions of Roman failings can be chalked up to what A.O. Lovejoy and G. Boas termed "chronological primitivism"—uncritical lauding of the past at the expense of the present.¹⁴ Sallust, that is to say, believed that the destruction of Carthage in 146 BC marked the end of Roman virtue and the beginning of Roman moral degeneration (see *Cat.* 10). To numerous modern historians, then, Sallust's criticism of Rome in the *EM* does not betray any hatred of Rome; rather, it conforms to Sallust's framework of Roman decline.

Those who perceive a distinctly negative attitude toward Rome in Pompeius Trogus' speech of Mithridates, however, generally do not conclude that this resulted from an intellectual framework we might also label "chronological primitivism." Rather, modern histo-

⁸ *Jer. Chron.* 151 H.

⁹ Justin 43.5.11. Justin specifies that Trogus was of Vocontian origin.

¹⁰ Some manuscripts of Justin offer the reading *avum* in 43.5.11, and thus claim that Trogus' grandfather received citizenship from Pompey the Great. Others read *proavum*. From a chronological standpoint, it is more likely that *avum* is correct. See Klotz (1952) 2301.

¹¹ E.g. von Gutschmid (1894 [1882]) 223; Kaerst (1897) 653–5; Schanz and Hosius (1935) 322; Sanford (1937) 438–9; Swain (1940) 17 n. 44; Mazzolani (1976 [1972]) 172; Santi-Amantini (1981) 30–1; Alonso-Núñez (1987) 68. Some scholars claim that Trogus' choice of sources are chiefly to blame for his history's anti-Romanism. A few scholars believe that Trogus did his best to limit the anti-Romanism he found in these sources (e.g. Jacoby (1926) 221). Still, Trogus selected these sources—and not others—for his world history, and thus remains implicated in the supposed anti-Roman elements in his speech of Mithridates.

¹² Those scholars who believe that Sallust, to a certain extent, has sympathy for the arguments offered in the *EM* posit that the letter criticizes only specific elements of Roman society—not Roman society wholesale. E.g. Bickerman (1946) 148–51; Pasoli (1965) 139; Mazzarino (1968) 374–5; Mazzolani (1976 [1972]) 41; Sherwin-White (1984) 181 n. 82; Vazquez (1989) 151.

¹³ For an extended discussion of this topic, see Earl (1966).

¹⁴ Lovejoy and Boas (1997 [1935]) 1–7.

rians often consider Trogus genuinely “anti-Roman.”¹⁵ This is odd, since Trogus’ description of early Rome, at least as it survives in Justin’s abridgement, is generally positive.¹⁶ Trogus may have presented a view of Roman history similar to that of Sallust, but contemporary historians have not perceived it as such.

Modern scholarly discussion of Sallust’s *EM* and Trogus’ speech of Mithridates, then, presents us with an assortment of views that appear to fit current positions on Roman imperialism. For many classicists argue that Trogus’ speech of Mithridates is genuinely “anti-Roman”; the same argument, however, is never made about Sallust’s *EM*. A discussion of the compositions at hand appears to be of secondary consideration to the details of their authors’ biographies. Too often the assumption is made that Trogus, the Gaul, can be anti-Roman; Sallust, the Italian, cannot. Accordingly, the argument this paper puts forward—that Sallust’s *EM* is in fact far more condemning of Roman actions than is Trogus’ speech of Mithridates—will do much to prove that Roman historians did not always cast foreigners as inferior; they did not incessantly denigrate non-Romans. In the *EM*, the “Roman” Sallust was capable of criticizing Romans and even valorizing barbarians’ complaints against Rome. In his corresponding speech of Mithridates, the “foreigner” Trogus, however, pulled most of his punches. It is thus incorrect to assume that Roman historians inevitably discussed barbarians with the implicit motive of justifying Roman conquest. On the contrary: at times Roman historians present deep-seated criticism of their own society. Such criticism, by no means confined to the periphery of Rome’s territory, is detectable in an array of ancient historians’ works.

I

To prove this point, we must take up a comparative examination of these two compositions. First, Sallust’s *EM*. The *EM* purports to be a letter addressed to Phraates III Theos, the twelfth Parthian King of the Arsacid line.¹⁷ It requests Parthian aid against Lucullus and his

¹⁵ See above, n. 11. Rambaud (1948) 182–4 is an exception and links Trogus’ view of Mithridates to what we might call “chronological primitivism.” Yet Rambaud sees Sallust as Trogus’ intellectual influence regarding this idea.

¹⁶ See Justin 43, esp. 1.1–2; 2.5. Admittedly, Justin’s Book 43 only discusses early Italy and the Roman Kingship. It is possible that Trogus believed Rome decayed earlier than Sallust thought.

¹⁷ In the *EM* (1), Sallust refers to Phraates simply as Arsaces. This prompted von Carosfeld (1888) 75 to claim that the *EM* was written to Sinatruces, Phraates’ predecessor. Phlegon 12.7, however, informs us that Phraates succeeded Sinatruces in 70/69 BC, before the Battle of Tigranocerta; it is to the former, then, that the *EM* is addressed. For the dramatic date of the letter, see below, n. 18.

troops, most likely shortly after the Battle of Tigranocerta in 69 BC.¹⁸ The *EM* presents a series of arguments in favor of the Parthians joining an alliance with Mithridates and Tigranes, the King of Armenia. Some of these arguments are based on selected examples from the history of Roman foreign policy in the East—more specifically, from Roman treatment of Eastern kings. In reality, any diplomatic correspondence between Mithridates, Tigranes and Phraates proved ineffective, since Phraates ultimately decided to remain neutral in the conflict, even though he had apparently made some sort of deal with both sides.¹⁹ The *EM* comes to us in the form of a collection of Sallustian speeches and letters (Vatican Lat. 3864) probably originally produced in the first or second centuries AD.²⁰ This means that the context of the *EM* is wholly lost to us.

Before we can conclude that the letter of Mithridates offers us the opportunity to glean sentiments concerning Roman imperialism that are Sallust's invention, we must determine that this composition is largely of his own making. A few scholars have asserted that the *EM* owes its origin to a document culled from the archives of Mithridates, which Sallust somehow acquired and translated or adapted into Latin.²¹ Some claim that Pompey discovered this epistle in a secret archive after the Third Mithridatic War, and then presumably brought it to Rome.²² Others have supposed that the *EM* is an expression of authentic Pontic propaganda, and thus based on arguments that are not Sallust's own.²³ In the opinion of such scholars, Sallust explicitly consulted sources that favored Mithridates in order to write the *EM* and repeated elements of actual Eastern propaganda in the letter.

¹⁸ De Broses (1777) 528 offers 69 and 68 BC as potential dates for the composition of the *EM*. Debevoise (1938) 70 dates the letter to shortly before the Battle of Tigranocerta in 69 BC. Von Carosfeld (1888) 75 and Pasoli (1965) 136 claim that the *EM* was composed after Tigranocerta. In view of the ancient evidence regarding Mithridates' and Tigranes' diplomatic contact with the Parthians, it is unlikely that Sallust had Mithridates write the *EM* before the battle.

¹⁹ For contradictory views regarding Mithridates', Tigranes' and Lucullus' diplomacy with Phraates after the Battle of Tigranocerta, see App. *Mith.* 87; Dio 36.1; Plu. *Luc.* 30.1–2; Memnon 38.7–8. For opposing modern assessments of this situation, see Reinach (1890) 365–6; van Ooteghem (1959) 136; Keaveney (1981) 203; Dabrowa (1982) 24–5, who mistakenly believes that Sinatruces is part of the negotiations; Bulin (1983) 81–5; Sherwin-White (1984) 180; Keaveney (1992) 116.

²⁰ For the date at which the collection was made, see Geckle (1995) 12, 21; McGushin (1992) 6.

²¹ E.g. de Broses (1777) 527–8 n. 1; Sanford (1937) 438–9; Stier (1969) 447.

²² See Richter (1987) 178–9.

²³ E.g. Volkmann (1964) 10–11; Mazarino (1968) 374; Raditsa (1969) 6–9, 310–14; McGing (1986) 154–61; Vazquez (1989) 148.

There are a number of reasons to doubt these assertions, and it seems more reasonable to assume that the letter is a free invention—a composition of Sallust with, at best, minimal concern for any historical missive or genuine pro-Pontic propaganda.²⁴ First, Fronto mentions the *EM* as one of the letters in Greco-Roman historiography that is not the work of an actual historical subject.²⁵ In addition, all of our supposed sources for pro-Pontic propaganda amount to very little. We possess one inscription of a Mithridatic letter (Welles #74)²⁶ and a few purported mentions in our Greek and Roman literary sources of a pro-Mithridatic tradition.²⁷ None of these examples, however, has much in common with the text of the *EM*; in fact, the inscription's discussion of the Romans is far more reminiscent of Sallust's *oratio obliqua* speech of Jugurtha to King Bocchus (*Jug.* 81.1).²⁸ In addition, as A.N. Sherwin-White has noted,²⁹ the *EM* makes it appear as if Tigranes, the King of Armenia, was uninvolved in negotiations with Phraates and Mithridates, even though we know that he played an integral part in these deliberations.³⁰ Overall, the tone of the *EM*, with its insults to Tigranes, does not seem particularly authentic: Are we to believe that Tigranes or one of his representatives never laid eyes on such a letter? This appears farfetched, given that Tigranes would be compelled to return territories he had captured from Parthia if he were to enter into an alliance with Phraates.³¹ In short, Sallust would not have needed to examine any Mithridatic propaganda or explicitly pro-Pontic sources in order to compose his diatribe against Rome—even though it is possible that he consulted

²⁴ This in fact appears to be the majority view. See Sellge (1882) 54–8; von Carosfeld (1888) 75; Schneider (1913) 54; Bickerman (1946) 131–2; Earl (1966) 109–10; Mazzolani (1976 [1972]) 60; Sherwin-White (1984) 180–1; Ahlheid (1988) 67; McGushin (1994) 174; Geckle (1995) v, 68.

²⁵ Fronto *Ad Verum* 2 p. 124 van den Hout (1988): *Ex<s>tant epistulae utraque lingua partim ab ipsis ducibus conscriptae, partim a scriptoribus historiarum vel annalium compositae, ut illa Thucydidi nobilissima Niciae ducis epistula ex Sicilia missa; item apud C. Sallustium ad Arsacem regem Mithridatis auxilium implorantis litterae crinosae...* (“There are letters in both languages partly written by the leaders themselves, partly composed by the writers of histories or annals, such as Thucydides’ most dignified epistle of the commander Nicias that was sent from Sicily; likewise the reproachful letter of Mithridates to King Arsaces asking for help in the work of C. Sallustius”).

²⁶ Welles (1934) 297.

²⁷ Dio 36.1; Cic. *Man.* 23; Posidonius *FGrH* 87 F 36 = fr. 253 Edelstein-Kidd (Ath. 5.211d–15b).

²⁸ In the inscription, Mithridates refers to the Romans as τούς κοινούς πολεμίους (“the common enemies of mankind” 6–7). In *Jug.* 81.1, Jugurtha calls the Romans *communis omnium hostis* (“the common enemy of all men”). Are we to assume that Sallust studied Pontic propaganda in order to craft a short speech by the Numidian Jugurtha? Hardly. More likely, this phrase is a rhetorical commonplace.

²⁹ Sherwin-White (1984) 180–1. See also Junge (1949) 1984, who sees Tigranes as the negotiator with Phraates.

³⁰ Plu. *Luc.* 30.1; Memnon 38.8.

³¹ Memnon 38.8; Dio 36.1.

pro-Pontic histories during his research for the *Histories*.³² We can be reasonably certain, then, that the *EM* is the creation of Sallust and is the product of a Roman historian's attempts to reconstruct the likely arguments of an anti-Roman Eastern king.

On to the letter itself. After a rhetorically elaborate introduction and a discussion of the details pertaining to Phraates joining Mithridates (1–4),³³ Sallust has Mithridates begin the composition's overarching anti-Roman thesis. This commences with a broad indictment of Roman imperialism (5):

Namque Romanis cum nationibus populis regibus cunctis una et ea vetus causa bellandi est: cupido profunda imperi et divitiarum.

For the Romans, there is a single age-old cause for instigating war on all nations, people and kings: a deep-seated lust for empire and riches.³⁴

This sentiment amounts to a direct attack on Roman foreign policy. Roman fetial law specified that wars were justifiable only if it could be demonstrated that they were fought defensively.³⁵ It is unsurprising that Mithridates' description of Roman martial motives—*cupido profunda imperi et divitiarum*—has been the most memorable quotation from the entire *EM*: it is a powerful phrase, reminiscent of Calgacus' quip in the *Agricola*: ...*ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant* ("when the Romans make desolation, they name it peace" 30.5). The main argument in the *EM*, that is to say, starts strong: it begins with a general indictment of Roman foreign policy. L.F. Raditsa correctly notes that Sallust has Mithridates offer a distinctly moral argument, not a tactical one; he aims to undercut Roman moral superiority.³⁶ As

³² For a more thorough discussion of the historicity of the *EM* and the problems with considering it the product of an in-depth analysis of a pro-Pontic tradition, see Adler (2005) 106–19.

³³ For a useful discussion of this *exordium*, see Bickerman (1946) 134–7. Bickerman demonstrates that the *exordium* follows Greco-Roman rhetorical commonplaces and establishes the questions to be discussed in a standard manner, with its focus on the categories *possibile, iustum, tutum* and *laudibile*. See also McGushin (1994) 174. Section 1 of the *EM* bears some similarities to the Corcyreans' speech to the Athenians in Thucydides (1.32.1).

³⁴ The text of the *EM* used here is that of Kurfess (1976). The translations are my own.

³⁵ On Roman fetial law, see Frank (1912); Gelzer (1964); Brunt (1978); Wiedemann (1986). Admittedly, Roman regard for fetial law may have waned by the time Sallust wrote. See Watson (1993) 54–61. Yet, as McGushin (1994) 180 notes in regard to this section of the *EM*, "according to Livy (38.45.3–6) the eastern wars which Mithridates uses to illustrate his statement of motive were declared in strict compliance with fetial procedure." As a result, McGushin concludes that "This explanation for Roman reasons for going to war is in sharp contradiction to Roman pretensions."

³⁶ Raditsa (1969) 73–4.

such, the letter seems directed more to a Roman audience than to its supposed recipient, the King of Parthia. It focuses on Roman hypocrisy at the expense of tactical matters that would have been pressing to a potential martial ally.

Mithridates' general indictment of Roman foreign affairs then gives way to a number of specific examples of Roman misconduct in Rome's experiences with the East—the very part of the world both Mithridates and Phraates inhabit. To some modern historians, these examples are filled with exaggerations and distortions.³⁷ And to a certain extent, as we shall see anon, this is true. Yet when examining these examples, we must recognize a few essential facts. First, we do not possess any of the numerous historical sources that were sympathetic to Mithridates.³⁸ Accordingly, we can test Mithridates' sentiments only against Roman sources. With the pro-Pontic tradition of historiography lost to us except in name, it is often difficult to pronounce upon the distortions that can be gleaned from an inspection of the surviving Greco-Roman sources. Second, the historical examples that Mithridates introduces in his letter to Phraates were mostly beyond the scope of Sallust's *Histories*, since the large majority of them occurred earlier than the starting-date of this work's narrative. In order for the ancient reader to recognize the exaggerations in Mithridates' letter, then, he would have to possess an encyclopedic knowledge of Roman foreign policy in the East. It is hard to believe that many ancient Romans could have immediately discovered the distortions Sallust's Mithridates offers—distortions that modern scholars detected only after extended careful research.³⁹ And third, most of the arguments that Mithridates presents have at the very least a kernel of truth. They cannot, that is to say, be dismissed as utter fabrications.

For example, let us turn to sections 5 and 6 of Sallust's *EM*, which present the first of his historical examples: Roman treatment of Philip V of Macedon.⁴⁰ Sallust has Mithridates charge that:

Qua primo cum rege Macedonum Philippo bellum sumpsero, dum a Carthaginensibus premebantur, amicitiam simulantes.

³⁷ Above all, see Stier (1969), who offers the most thorough criticism of the view that the *EM* was composed to denounce Rome and its foreign policy. See also Schneider (1913).

³⁸ We know of the existence of such sources, however: Metrodorus of Scepsis, Aesopus, Teucerus of Cyzicus, Heracleides of Magnesia, Hysicrates of Amisus, Apollonides. For a fuller discussion of pro-Pontic sources concerning Mithridates, see Richter (1987) 179–82.

³⁹ This is particularly important in regard to Sallust, who was even capable of informing the reader that he knew that some details he recorded were not generally accepted as true (*Jug.* 17.7).

⁴⁰ According to Bickerman (1946) 137–41, section 5 is the first part of the letter's *argumentatio*. Ahlheid (1988) 72–4, however, views sections 5–15 as a *narratio*. See also McGushin (1994) 177–8.

They [the Romans] first took up a war with Philip, the King of the Macedonians, while faking friendship with him as long as they were hard pressed by the Carthaginians.

To be certain, the argument that Sallust has Mithridates present is simplified and distorted.⁴¹ Philip had in fact intensified Rome's difficulties through his alliance with Hannibal, and the Romans felt justified in their actions against him, since they were obliged to give aid to allies whom Philip had wronged.⁴² Accordingly, Mithridates' claim that the Romans had proved disloyal to an ally seems farfetched. Yet, as E.J. Bickerman has suggested,⁴³ the Romans eventually decided to attack Philip *both* because he had become an ally of a mortal enemy of Rome *and* because there was a danger that he would dominate Greece.⁴⁴ The Roman annalistic tradition, Bickerman demonstrates, forged a pretext for the Second Macedonian War.⁴⁵ This does not mean that Sallust necessarily agreed with this take on the origin of the Second Macedonian War. Philip, after all, supplied his own pretexts.⁴⁶ Still, Mithridates' complaints of Roman treatment of Philip underline an essential point about Roman dealings with him: the Romans did *not* fight Philip merely for defensive reasons. In many respects, despite the rationalizations of the Roman annalistic tradition, they had been the aggressors.

Accordingly, Sallust's first example of Roman perfidy is powerful.⁴⁷ In addition, we should note that Sallust's *Histories* did not discuss the Second Macedonian War, at least in the course of the main narrative. Thus ancient readers would not have happened upon any corrective to Mithridates' claims about Roman treatment of Philip in the *Histories*. It would require an impressive background in Roman foreign policy to detect the conflations, simplifications and distortions in Mithridates' argument.

Sallust's Mithridates next excoriates Rome for its purported maltreatment of Antiochus III (*EM* 6). The letter charges the Romans with diverting Antiochus from aiding Philip and then plundering his land. By presenting the situation in this manner, Sallust's Mithridates quickly passes over an important point: Livy attests that Anti-

⁴¹ See Stier (1969) 442-3.

⁴² See Liv. 31.2.1-4; 18.1-3; Plb. 16.27; Justin 30.3.5.

⁴³ Bickerman (1935) and (1945).

⁴⁴ Cf. Justin 29.4.11; 30.3.6; App. *Mac.* 2-4; Paus. 7.7.3-7; Zonar. 9.15.1-2.

⁴⁵ Bickerman (1935) 60 and (1945) 144.

⁴⁶ See Bickerman (1945) 145. Raditsa (1969) 87-90, moreover, reasonably points out that Mithridates' description of Philip as a trustworthy friend of the Romans is farfetched.

⁴⁷ Raditsa (1969) 94 agrees with this assessment.

ochus made a pact with Philip.⁴⁸ The Romans considered Antiochus' aid to Philip tantamount to aggression. Even so, it is reasonable to consider Mithridates' take on these events a likely view on the part of the enemy; Antiochus would naturally have denied that he betrayed Rome. Although distorted, the point Sallust has Mithridates put forward highlights Roman military action against a king who could not reasonably be considered a dire threat to Roman security. And it offers an example of the Romans alienating monarchs from one another in order to conquer each one individually. Accordingly, it serves as a dramatic example of the letter's main thesis: Phraates should join Mithridates because the Romans aim to demolish him anyway. Again, the *Histories* would not have discussed Rome's conflict with Antiochus in its narrative, so the ancient reader would have required a strong background in Roman history to recognize the unfairness of Mithridates' characterization.

The letter moves on to discuss Roman perfidy in regard to yet another Hellenistic monarch, Perseus. Rome, Mithridates argues, promised Perseus protection, but then killed him by depriving him of sleep (*EM* 7). As Raditsa notes, the *EM* here conflates two distinct historical occurrences: Perseus' escape to Samothrace and his *in fidem* relationship with Rome.⁴⁹ And, to be sure, Mithridates exaggerates the case against Rome in this instance. Still, this view of Roman treachery, albeit greatly oversimplified, is not ridiculous.⁵⁰ Though the *EM* presents the more unpleasant version of Perseus' death, Sallust has not concocted it: Plutarch (*Aem.* 37) informs us that it was held by a minority of authorities. Also, as Raditsa argues, Diodorus Siculus highlights the fact that the Romans did have some qualms about their actions in regard to *in fidem* relations (30.7.1; 31.9.4–5).⁵¹ Once again, the *Histories* did not cover the historical events mentioned here, so the lay reader would have to be very aware of Roman history to criticize this oversimplified—though not absurd—view. All the same, Sallust's letter demonstrates a degeneration in the strength of the historical illustrations presented. Whereas the *EM*'s account of the treatment of Philip is a powerful deflation of Roman concern for defensive warfare, the discussions of Antiochus and Perseus, though not baseless, are increasingly tendentious.

This degeneration continues in section 8, where the subject turns to Eumenes, the King of Pergamum. Mithridates claims: Eumen<en>, quouis amicitiam gloriose ostentant, initio prodidere Antiocho pacis mercedem; post, habitum custodiae agri captivi, sumptibus et contu-

⁴⁸ Livy 33.39.5. For this reason, Stier (1969) 442–3 considers the argument in section 6 distorted.

⁴⁹ Raditsa (1969) 123.

⁵⁰ *Pace* Stier (1969) 443.

⁵¹ Raditsa (1969) 131–2.

meliis ex rege miserrimum servorum effecere, simulatoque inopio testamento filium eius Aristonicum, quia patrium regnum petiverat, hostium more per triumphum duxere; Asia ab ipsis obsessa est.

They betrayed Eumenes, whose friendship they boastfully exhibited, first to Antiochus as a price of peace; afterwards, they transformed him, as guardian of a captured territory, from a king to the most wretched of slaves through charges and insults, and they led his son Aristonicus in a triumph in the manner of enemies, after a wicked will was counterfeited, because he aimed at his ancestral realm; Asia was besieged by them.

The specifics of the *EM*'s argument here contradict our tradition, which does not mention betrayal to Antiochus.⁵² This, however, is no different in the case of the claims found in sections 5–7 of the letter, which the bulk of our received tradition contradicts. Yet this argument is distinctly weaker: Mithridates leaves out essential information regarding Roman dealings with Aristonicus, and refers to a forged will that our sources never mention. His assertion that Eumenes only nominally controlled his territory, moreover, is merely polemical. Although Raditsa notes a sentiment in Livy 44.24.1–7 akin to the *EM*'s criticisms,⁵³ we must conclude that Mithridates' contentions here are weaker than those regarding Philip, Antiochus and Perseus.

The growing weakness of the examples Mithridates proffers intensifies in section 9, which concerns Nicomedes IV Philopator of Bithynia. Here Mithridates avers that Rome, having taken all of Asia, then seized Nicomedes' territory, even though the late king had a legitimate heir to the throne. According to H.E. Stier, this claim is an outrageous fib.⁵⁴ Our tradition asserts that Nicomedes had disowned his children and thus left Bithynia to Rome in his will.⁵⁵ Mithridates' concern for Nicomedes' kingdom seems particularly duplicitous, given the King of Pontus' own history of scheming against Bithynia. It is also likely that Sallust discussed the will of Nicomedes in the narrative of the *Histories*, since its contents pertain to the time period it covered. The ancient reader, then, would likely have a sign of Mithridates' distortion in Sallust's very text. Overall, section 9 does not contain a strong argument.

When Mithridates takes up his own dealings with the Romans, however, his arguments become more compelling. For, in this part of the letter, Sallust has Mithridates assert (10):

⁵² See Raditsa (1969) 141–2.

⁵³ Raditsa (1969) 139.

⁵⁴ Stier (1969) 445.

⁵⁵ Cic. *Agr.* 2.40; Liv. *Per.* 93; Vell. 2.4.1; 39.2; App. *Mith.* 7 and 71; BC 1.111.

Nam quid ego me appellem? Quem diiunctum undique regnis et tetrarchiis ab imperio eorum, quia fama erat divitem neque servitutum esse, per Nicomedem bello lacesiverunt, sceleris eorum haud ignarum et ea, quae addidere, testatum antea Cretensis, solos omnium liberos ea tempestate, et regem Ptolemaeum.

Truly, why should I mention myself? They provoked me, separated on all sides by kingdoms and tetrarchies from their empire, into war through Nicomedes, because of the rumor that I was rich and would not be a slave; I was not ignorant of their crimes, and I previously appealed to the Cretans—the only free people at that time—and to King Ptolemy about the things that had happened.

According to Sallust's *Mithridates*, then, Rome provoked the First Mithridatic War by forcing Nicomedes to raid his territory. Although *Mithridates* has conveniently omitted key details of the story, his case is essentially strong, and is close to that of Appian (*Mith.* 11). D. Magie, discussing the outbreak of the First Mithridatic War, contends that M'. Aquilius and C. Cassius made a tactical blunder when they compelled Nicomedes to raid Pontus: this would allow Mithridates to contend that he was fighting against Roman aggression.⁵⁶ Sallust, then, has Mithridates seize upon this strong argument, instead of compelling him to legitimize his less upstanding conduct.⁵⁷ He has proffered a damaging argument against Roman righteousness in its foreign policy.

Having presented a polemical account of Rome's unfair treatment of various Eastern powers, Sallust's *Mithridates* uses this account to bolster his overall conclusion: Rome will never end its lust for the spoils of empire, and, as a result, it is most sensible for Phraates to join battle with this enemy while Mithridates is on his side. Since war with the Romans is inevitable, he says, Parthia might as well fight Rome while it is strategically beneficial.⁵⁸

It is possible that Sallust's *EM* was written partially to criticize Rome's treatment of Parthia in Sallust's own day.⁵⁹ In a sense, Mithridates' predictions of Roman desire for a larger empire proved true: Rome continued to menace Parthia after Mithridates' death. After all, 53 BC marked the ignominious defeat and death of Crassus in his

⁵⁶ Magie (1950) 209–10. Raditsa (1969) 179–80 also finds fault with the Romans and argues in favor of Mithridates' view. App. *Mith.* 11 refers to Cassius' *praenomen* as "Lucius." The correct *praenomen*, however, is Gaius: see Broughton (1951–86) ii.38 n. 6. Glew (1977) 398 believes that Mithridates was acting defensively against Aquilius and Cassius.

⁵⁷ It is peculiar that Mithridates specifically mentions the Cretans and Ptolemy in section 10. Perhaps Sallust discussed them because they play a part in earlier portions of the narrative, which are now lost.

⁵⁸ See esp. *EM* 16.

⁵⁹ See Bickerman (1946) 148–51.

unprovoked attack on Parthia. Only assassination in 44 BC deterred Julius Caesar's intended campaign against the Parthians. By 41 BC, Q. Labienus had defected to Parthia and was inciting them to invade the Roman East. And Mark Antony suffered great losses at the hands of the Parthians in 36 BC. Sallust appears to have composed the *EM* shortly after this,⁶⁰ and thus this epistle could signal—among other things—his criticism of Roman foreign policy vis-à-vis Parthia.

This does not mean that each and every argument Sallust has Mithridates offer in his letter to Phraates strikes us as powerful and condemning. In fact, the *EM* offers a number of decidedly inferior points. In addition, Sallust's Mithridates incessantly blames others for his own poor performance in his battles against the Romans.⁶¹ For instance, in section 14 of the letter, Sallust's Mithridates concludes that shortages of provisions and shipwrecks have crippled his fighting force in the Third Mithridatic War. He conveniently manages to overlook the fact that Lucullus routinely outwitted and outfought the Pontic army.⁶² Given that Sallust's *Histories* treated these battles in the course of its narrative, it is likely that the *Histories* directly contradicted these claims. This brand of argument, moreover, would be unlikely to induce self-reflection on the part of a Roman readership. By the time Sallust began composing his *Histories*, Mithridates had lost his run-in with Rome; he was dead. It would make no difference, then, if Mithridates' rationalizing of Pontic military defeats were true.

Sallust's *EM*, in short, presents a hodgepodge of arguments of varying strength.⁶³ Overall, it tends to proffer the stronger arguments first.⁶⁴ The overarching theme of Roman perfidy is polemically presented but persuasive. The same is true to a lesser extent of Mithridates' take on Roman maltreatment of Philip V. And the argument regarding Rome's commencement of hostilities with Mithridates via Nicomedes may be the most powerful point in the letter. The letter

⁶⁰ Bickerman (1946) 147–8 claims that Sallust wrote the *EM* circa 35 BC. La Penna (1968) 291 agrees.

⁶¹ See *EM* 12, 14–15.

⁶² Even Plutarch, who is hostile to Lucullus' conduct soon before his replacement in 66 BC (*Luc.* 30.2), notes Lucullus' impressive string of victories in this war.

⁶³ For this reason, it is unfortunate that many scholars who have examined the *EM* appear to have missed its nuances. To Stier (1969) *passim*, esp. 449, for example, the distortions in the *EM* prove that Sallust had no sympathy for Mithridates' position. Schneider (1913) 449, Earl (1966) and 110 Mazarino (1968) 374 hold similar views. At the other extreme, Bickerman (1946) 148–51, Leggewie (1975) 59 and Maz-zolani (1976 [1972]) 60–1 conclude that Sallust had sympathy with the arguments expressed in the *EM*, even though these scholars do not agree on what Sallust was criticizing.

⁶⁴ *Rhet. Her.* 3.18 states that the strongest arguments in an oration should be placed at the beginning and end. Quint. *Inst.* 7.1.10–11 offers essentially the same advice, albeit in regard to judicial oratory.

focuses mostly on moral concerns; it contains several forceful denunciations of Roman greed, treachery and lust for empire. At the same time, it must be admitted that some of the arguments in the letter are weak and do not appear to be designed to elicit self-reflection on the part of the Roman reader. Mithridates' excuses for Pontic military losses seem particularly feeble. More generally, his complaints about Roman hostility to monarchies may be more likely to encourage Roman pride than self-doubt.

Even so, the *EM* offers a consistent denunciation of Roman foreign policy in the East—with occasional lapses into less substantial complaints. This does not imply that Sallust himself entirely agreed with this criticism any more than he agreed with Catiline's criticism of Rome in his monograph on the Catilinarian conspiracy. We do not possess the requisite evidence to conclude whether Sallust's aim in the *EM* was to criticize current dealings with Parthia, or, as R.P. Geckle suggests, to lambaste the corruption of the Republic while highlighting the hypocrisy of Mithridates himself.⁶⁵ Perhaps there is a bit of both. Even so, it is clear that the *EM*, overall, presents a cogent criticism of Roman foreign policy: Sallust has chosen pertinent historical examples, proffered arguable (though distorted) readings of these examples and consistently harped on the general moral failings of Rome's conduct in the East. We cannot say that Sallust agreed with the *EM*'s arguments, either in part or in whole. Still, as we shall see, in comparison with Trogus' speech of Mithridates, this is strong criticism indeed.

II

In fact, the arguments Sallust offers in his letter of Mithridates prove more powerful than those put forth in Pompeius Trogus' Mithridatic speech to his Pontic troops. To a certain extent, we can glean this because we possess Justin's abridgement of Pompeius Trogus' discussion of the Mithridatic Wars. Accordingly, as E. Schneider has pointed out,⁶⁶ we know that Trogus discusses how Mithridates, from the start of his reign, desired a large empire (37.3.1), and that he contemplated a battle with Rome well before the first outbreak of hostilities (37.3.4; 38.3.5, 7). Readers of Trogus' history, then, immediately had reason to suspect the claims that Mithridates makes to his soldiers. Still, half-correct and fudged arguments could influence some readers; accordingly, numerous scholars have considered Mithri-

⁶⁵ Geckle (1995) 156–7.

⁶⁶ Schneider (1913). This unjustly neglected work, to an extent akin to Stier (1969), offers a thorough debunking of the notion that Trogus' speech of Mithridates is anti-Roman. Although Schneider's conclusions can be overly strong, his argument is more sound than Stier's.

dates' oration a truculent example of Trogus' anti-Romanism.⁶⁷ As such, it remains important to demonstrate that the arguments contained in Pompeius Trogus' speech of Mithridates are often—though not always—inferior to those presented in Sallust's letter.

First, however, we must discuss the historicity of the oration itself. As is the case with the *EM*, our conclusions regarding Trogus' speech of Mithridates will be drastically weakened if the composition was not the invention of the historian. Justin informs us that Mithridates' oration, found in Trogus' /Justin's 38th Book, was suitably important to merit word-for-word inclusion (38.3.11). The speech, by far the longest in Justin's abridgement, is in *oratio obliqua*; Justin tells us that Trogus was critical of Sallust and Livy for offering numerous speeches in *oratio recta* (38.3.11).⁶⁸ The oration was supposedly delivered by Mithridates to his troops sometime around the beginning of the First Mithridatic War.⁶⁹

There is no consensus regarding the historicity of the oration.⁷⁰ A few scholars believe it is based on an actual harangue.⁷¹ Others consider the speech at least partly based on pro-Pontic sources.⁷² Still others posit that Trogus invented it.⁷³ The latter contention is the most probable. First, M.H. Hansen has justly questioned the historicity of battle exhortations in Greco-Roman historiography on the basis of logistics: without modern amplification systems, generals could not have addressed the troops in one gathering.⁷⁴ Further, it is improbable that Trogus had good evidence for an actual speech of Mithridates, since he was unlikely to be acquainted with informants who were present at its delivery. Moreover, at points a clear kinship

⁶⁷ See above, n. 11.

⁶⁸ Only two speeches in Justin's abridgement are in *oratio recta*: 14.4.2 and 18.7.10. On Trogus' use of *oratio obliqua*, see Schlicher (1933) 293.

⁶⁹ In 38.4.4, Trogus has Mithridates refer to his victories against M'. Aquilius in Bithynia and Mallius Maltinus in Cappadocia (whom Justin refers to as "Malthinus" both here and in 38.3.8). Whereas Maltinus was driven from Cappadocia in 89 BC (Justin 38.3.8; App. *Mith.* 15), Mithridates did not ultimately put Aquilius to flight until 88 BC (see Broughton (1951–86) ii.43; App. *Mith.* 17, 19). Although it is possible that Mithridates refers merely to an earlier defeat of Aquilius, it is far more likely that Trogus has conflated the fates of the two Romans, since Justin mentions their defeats in tandem in 38.3.8. The speech, then, belongs to the dramatic date of 88 BC, not 89 BC, although Justin may not have realized this when he presented it in his text.

⁷⁰ It is true, however, that the issue of this speech's historicity has not been as widely discussed as has that of the *EM*. Most likely, this is because scholars are more inclined to presume that Trogus' speech is a free invention.

⁷¹ E.g. de Brosses (1777) 528 n. 1; Sanford (1937) 438–9.

⁷² E.g. McGing (1986) 160; Richter (1987) 178–82.

⁷³ E.g. Sellge (1882) 27; Kaerst (1897) 654–6; Schneider (1913) 54.

⁷⁴ Hansen (1993).

exists between the *EM* and Trogus' speech of Mithridates.⁷⁵ This should lead us to conclude that Trogus has the *EM* in mind more than any pro-Pontic sources.

We can point to another problem with concluding that the Mithridatic oration is not a free invention. There is an obvious kinship between Trogus' speech of Mithridates and two other sizeable orations in *oratio obliqua* found in Justin's abridgement: the speech of the Aetolians (28.2.1–13) and that of Demetrius, King of Illyria (29.2.2–6). All three Trogan compositions offer a range of historical examples of supposedly perfidious Roman conduct. The Aetolians' speech and the Mithridatic oration both discuss the Gallic sack of Rome and Roman incompetence in the face of the Gauls.⁷⁶ Both the speech of Demetrius and Mithridates' oration, moreover, harp on the purported Roman hatred of kingship.⁷⁷ The kinds of historical *exempla* offered in all three speeches correspond more often than do those in Mithridates' speech and the *EM*. It is unlikely that all three speakers—Mithridates, the Aetolians, Demetrius—presented strikingly similar arguments. It is also improbable that Aetolian and Illyrian propaganda (if they existed) were similar to Pontic propaganda. As a result, it seems safe to conclude that Trogus' speech of Mithridates is essentially the product of its author.

On to the oration itself. It commences with a rhetorical *exordium* (38.4.1–3) that appears indebted to the *EM*. Interestingly, Trogus, like Sallust in the *EM*, has Mithridates start with a moral point, albeit of a less elevated sort: in 38.4.2, Trogus' Mithridates likens the Romans to a *latro* ("robber"). He then presents a series of historical examples that attempt to prove that Rome is by no means invincible (4.5–16). One of his first *exempla* pertains to Pyrrhus of Epirus, who, Mithridates claims, routed Rome on three occasions (4.5).

First, we should note that Trogus does not have Mithridates commence with an argument related to the Roman East, or one that was chronologically close to the dramatic date. Trogus himself, moreover, covered the history of the Roman war with Tarentum, and thus the astute reader may have recognized that Mithridates is fibbing: Justin 18.1 and 23.3.11 make clear that Rome lost to Pyrrhus only twice. Also, we should note that this is not a strong line of argument if Trogus' aim was to encourage Romans to criticize their nation's imperialism. The Roman reader, after all, already recognized that

⁷⁵ Numerous scholars have noted the similarities in the two compositions. E.g. de Brosse (1777) 539 n. 1 (who believes, however, that both the *EM* and the speech of Mithridates are genuine); Sellge (1882) 42–58 (who puts too much stock in Trogus' borrowing from Sallust: the speech of Mithridates is not close to a transcription of the *EM*); Rambaud (1948) 182, 186; Leeman (1963) 245–6; Syme (1964) 284; Nicolet (1978) 905; McGing (1986) 160; Vazquez (1989) 149; Geckle (1995) 153.

⁷⁶ Aetolians' speech: 28.2.4–7; speech of Mithridates: 38.4.7–10.

⁷⁷ Speech of Demetrius: 29.2.2; speech of Mithridates: 38.6.7.

Mithridates was dead, and that Sulla, Lucullus and Pompey were more than capable of handling his onslaught. Accordingly, the mention of Pyrrhus is weaker than Sallust's panoply of historical examples in the *EM*.

Having briefly related Carthaginian successes against Rome in the third century BC (4.6), Trogus' Mithridates eschews a chronological arrangement to mention the Gallic sack of Rome of 390 BC (4.7–10). Trogus relates that (4.7–8):

Audire populos transalpinae Galliae Italiam ingressos maximis eam pluribusque urbibus possidere et latius aliquanto solum finium, quam in Asia, quae dicatur inbellis, idem Galli occupavissent. Nec victam solum dici sibi Romam a Gallis, sed etiam captam, ita ut unius illis montis tantum cacumen relinqueretur; nec bello hostem, sed pretio remotum.

He [Mithridates] heard that the people of Transalpine Gaul had invaded Italy and possessed most of the greatest of its cities, and that the same Gauls had seized a somewhat broader territory than that in Asia, a place that is called unwarlike. And it was said to him that Rome had not only been conquered by the Gauls, but even captured, so that only the top of a single hill was left for them; and that the enemy was removed by a bribe, not by war.⁷⁸

Pompeius Trogus spends a comparatively lengthy time discussing Gaul, and this may stem from his own Gallic background. It seems as if Trogus, when crafting a speech for Mithridates to deliver to his troops, was intent on engaging in regional cheerleading. The historical example of the Gauls, moreover, would hardly rouse Mithridates' troops into a bellicose frenzy: Trogus' Mithridates argues that his Pontic forces should not fear the Romans because the Gauls had sacked Rome *a full three hundred years earlier*. Unlike the points found in Sallust's *EM*, this is a bookish argument—one obviously fashioned by a Roman historian, not by a Pontic king. It would be odd if Mithridates offered a potted discussion of remote portions of Roman history to encourage his troops.

Even when touching upon more recent historical events, Trogus' Mithridates offers weak arguments. After mentioning the Social War and civil strife in Rome (4.13–14), he attempts to prove that the Romans are bogged down in a sufficient number of conflicts to render his undertaking successful. To this end, he claims that the invasion of the Cimbri speaks to the Romans' inability to maintain control in Italy (4.15). This rationale seems strange: the Romans had pacified the Cimbri by 101 BC, more than a decade before the war with Mithridates began. Like the other historical examples Trogus of-

⁷⁸ The text of Justin used here is that of Seel (1972). The translations are my own.

fered,⁷⁹ that of the Cimbri was featured elsewhere in his world history (32.3.11; 38.3.6). It appears, then, that Trogius selected examples for the speech from the research he did for the rest of his work, without much concern for the potency of the examples he chose.

This does not mean that all of the arguments Trogius' Mithridates presents are feckless. Like Sallust, Pompeius Trogius proves capable of offering what can be taken as strong criticism of Roman conduct. When turning to the matter of the origin of the war between himself and the Romans, for instance, Trogius' Mithridates mentions Rome's purloining of Greater Phrygia, which it had granted to his father (5.3). Appian (*Mith.* 56–7) offers evidence that this was the case. Originally, Rome granted this land to Mithridates as the result of a bribe (57). Though this does not make Mithridates' conduct unassailable, it casts aspersions on the corruption and greed of Roman dealings in the East, since a Roman politician was involved in this sordid deal.

The majority of the points made in Trogius' speech of Mithridates, however, likely strike the reader as weaker. For instance, Trogius' Mithridates dilates on the Roman hatred of kings, asserting (6.7–8):

Hanc illos omnibus regibus legem odiorum dixisse, scilicet quia ipsi tales reges habuerint, quorum etiam nominibus erubescant, aut pastores Aboriginum, aut aruspices Sabinorum, aut exules Corinthiorum, aut servos vernasque Tuscorum, aut, quod honoratissimum nomen fuit inter haec, Superbos; atque ut ipsi ferunt conditores suos lupae uberibus altos, sic omnem illum populum luporum animos inexpleribiles sanguinis, atque imperii divitiarumque avidos ac ieiuos habere.

They [the Romans] affirmed this law of the hatred for every king, of course, because they had such kings that they even blush at their names: either Aboriginal shepherds, or Sabine soothsayers, or Corinthian exiles, or Etruscan slaves (those captured and those bred at home), or—that name that was most honored among them—the Superbi; and they themselves say that their founders were nourished by the teats of a wolf, and thus their whole population has the spirit of wolves, insatiable of blood and sordidly greedy for power and riches.

The end of this passage calls to mind Sallust's *EM*, which excoriates the Romans for their lust for empire (5).⁸⁰ Yet Trogius' Mithridates has diluted a potentially forceful argument by combining it with snootiness. This harsh commentary appears neither genuinely Mithridatic nor designed to incite Roman self-doubt. Rather, Trogius has

⁷⁹ For instance, the speech mentions the Samnites (4.11–12), whom Justin discusses in 18.1.1 and 20.1.14. And the speech discusses the causes of the Jugurthine War (6.4–6), which Justin touches upon in 33.1.2.

⁸⁰ The wording is close to that of the *EM*. Cf. ...*atque imperii divitiarumque avidos ac ieiuos habere* (Justin 38.6.8) and ...*cupido profunda imperi et divitiarum* (*EM* 5). Trogius appears to have made a deliberate nod to the Sallustian letter.

watered down Sallust's powerful criticism with a bookish discussion of Rome's early origins.⁸¹ We can also tell from Justin's lauding of early Italy that Mithridates' insults were not supported by the speech's author.⁸² Trogus appears more interested in highlighting the arrogance of Mithridates and his own learning than eliciting Roman self-reflection.

The same is true of the peroration of Trogus' speech of Mithridates. In this section of the harangue, Trogus' Mithridates encourages his troops by listing his military successes and giving witness of his fairness and generosity. He boasts (7.9–10):

Sequantur se modo fortiter et colligant, quid se duce possit efficere tantus exercitus, quem sine cuiusquam militum auxilio suamet unius opera viderint Cappadociam caeso rege cepisse, qui solus mortalium Pontum omnem Scythiamque pacaverit, quam nemo ante transire tuto atque adire potuit. Nam iustitiae atque liberalitatis suae ne ipsos milites quin experiantur testes refugere et illa indicia habere, quod solus regum non paterna solum, verum etiam externa regna hereditatibus propter munificentiam adquisita possideat, Colchos, Paphlagonia, Bosphorum.

Only let them follow him [Mithridates] bravely and consider what so great an army might be able to accomplish with him as a leader—whom they had seen seize Cappadocia without the aid of anyone's soldiers by his own work alone, with its king slaughtered, who alone of mortals had subdued all of Pontus and Scythia, which no one had been able to cross and enter safely. As for his fairness and generosity, he did not object to his soldiers being called as witnesses to give evidence that he, alone of kings, not only possessed his paternal territory, but also external land that he had obtained through inheritance on account of his munificence, namely Colchis, Paphlagonia and the Bosphorus.

Although this amounts to a reasonable exhortation to his soldiers, it contains a fib about Mithridates' patrimony that readers of Trogus' history would have recalled. The ancient reader of Trogus' history, already alert to the machinations of Mithridates highlighted in Books 37 and 38, would see through this palaver: Paphlagonia had hardly been Mithridates' willing subject. In addition, the peroration of the speech serves as an opportunity for Mithridates to indulge in self-congratulation. It does not, unlike Sallust's *EM*, focus on Roman perfidy.

⁸¹ It is possible that Trogus' research for his 43rd Book, which focused on early Rome, provided him with the fodder for this line of argument.

⁸² E.g. 18.2.7; 31.8.8–9; 43.1.3.

III

From our preceding examination, it seems clear that Sallust's *EM* is a far more powerful indictment of Rome than is Trogus' corresponding speech of Mithridates. Sallust's letter maintains a tight focus on matters specifically related to Roman malefactions in the East, Roman greed and Roman lust for power. It offers a number of potent historical examples to support its claims. Although many—if not all—of these illustrations are simplistic and propagandistic, they often possess a kernel of truth. Most of the arguments offered in the *EM*, moreover, were probably not taken up in the narrative of the *Histories* proper. Thus ancient readers, in order to recognize the mistakes and tendentiousness of the letter, would require a deep knowledge of Roman affairs in the East. This does not imply that Sallust had a great deal of sympathy for Mithridates. It seems, however, that Sallust—whether due to his belief that his contemporaries were morally inferior to Romans of old, or because of his concern for recent dealings with the Parthians—offered a mix of criticism of Rome with residual tendentiousness. Without the survival of Sallust's *Histories*, it is difficult to draw a stronger conclusion. Still, we can be reasonably sure that Sallust presents valid criticism of Rome in the *EM*.

Pompeius Trogus' speech of Mithridates appears comparatively uninterested in offering such criticism, although a few examples of it are found therein. Overall, Trogus harps on Roman lowliness—a charge unlikely to lead to introspection on the part of the Romans. And Trogus makes Mithridates appear like a braggart. His historical examples seem bookish, and are almost all undercut by the text of Justin's abridgement. Although Trogus' Mithridates offers a few forceful examples of Roman misconduct, Trogus, unlike Sallust, sees no need to place these examples in powerful places in the oration; rather, the speech both begins and ends with weak points.⁸³ Even though Trogus appears interested in presenting a few passages critical of Roman foreign policy in the East, other concerns seem to interest him as well. He probably composed his speech of Mithridates with Sallust's letter in mind: the oration contains a number of tips of the cap to Sallust. At the same time, Trogus seems to have gone out of his way to mention historical examples that Sallust did not discuss. He did this even though it dramatically undercuts the force of his speech of Mithridates. Trogus likely included this oration partly as a tribute to Sallust's rhetorical powers in the *EM*, and partly to demonstrate the knowledge he acquired in researching his world history. Still, the overlap detectable in this speech and those of Demetrius and the Aetolians suggests that Trogus wanted to convey

⁸³ See above, n. 64.

anti-Roman arguments to his readership.⁸⁴ All in all, though, it is the historian who hails from a town close to Rome—Sallust—who seems more concerned with presenting criticism of Roman conduct than does the man from Gallia Narbonensis. Criticism of Rome, that is to say, did not only appeal to those on the periphery of the Roman world; rather, it is detectable in a broad range of historians.

It remains difficult to discern how much this self-critical cast of mind, if you will, affected Roman readers of history. It is instructive to recall that Justin, who made our version of Pompeius Trogus' history, considered the speech of Mithridates so important that—alone of all the orations in his abridgment—he offered it word-for-word (38.3.11). Similarly, the preservation of Sallust's *EM* in a collection of orations of the first or second century AD likely intended for educational purposes demonstrates that many Romans may have been comfortable studying rhetoric from a letter filled with anti-Roman arguments.⁸⁵ In order for the *EM* to serve as a rhetorical example, moreover, it was wrenched from its historical context, and would likely seem stronger on its own than in the text of Sallust's *Histories*. Accordingly, the prominence given to both Trogus' speech of Mithridates and Sallust's letter of Mithridates after their original composition suggests that ancient readers welcomed—if they did not openly seek out—criticism of Rome.

All of this calls into question some modern scholars' views of Roman attitudes toward their empire. More importantly, it suggests that some Romans were interested in discussions of their society's collective failings. Far from inevitably undermining anti-Roman arguments, Roman historians appear capable of powerful criticism of Roman conduct. More specifically, Sallust does in the *EM* what he does elsewhere in his monographs:⁸⁶ use a foreigner to assail Roman political, diplomatic and military conduct. Pompeius Trogus was also capable of presenting cogent anti-Roman arguments. Although this by no means implies that either Sallust or Pompeius Trogus were die-hard anti-imperialists, it does intimate that they could see both the blessings and the curses of Roman expansionism.

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⁸⁴ See above, p. 62.

⁸⁵ Quint. *Inst.* 2.5.19 recommends studying Sallust's speeches. In 3.8.67, he seems to suggest that Sallust's orations were studied in school.

⁸⁶ E.g. *Jug.* 35.10; 81.1.

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