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The Use of Exempla from Cicero to Pliny the Younger

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Abstract

This dissertation expands our picture of Roman exemplarity by focusing on *exempla* as they are used to construct arguments. In contrast to recent studies of the practice, instead of focusing on repeatedly cited instances in a series of different texts, my argument centers on repeated patterns in which authors deploy *exempla*. I suggest that Roman exemplarity constructs a mode of moral and practical reasoning that conditions its users to repeat a pattern of imbuing and responding to meaning in the *exempla* they select for themselves. I focus on texts that present themselves as dealing directly with contemporary society: in particular forensic oratory, epistolography and satire. Cicero and Pliny the Younger provide the central anchors for my discussion. The chapters of this dissertation frame and supplement the current discussion by exploring several of the most prominent uses of *exempla*. The first chapter builds on Quintilian's discussion of exemplary comparison to demonstrate the malleable nature of moral arguments based in comparisons between narratives. The second chapter focuses on *exempla* featuring nameless figures which consequently emphasize patterns of action rather than the authority of the actor. Such *exempla* display close connections with declamations and fables, creating a triangle of relationships through which factual and fictional narratives influence one another. In my third chapter, I demonstrate that *exempla* which claim to illustrate how things are provide a powerful means to forestall judgment or obscure status distinctions. The final chapter explores the frequently superficial deployment of *exempla* as emblems: where anonymous *exempla* emphasize actions as opposed to actors, *exempla* deployed as emblems foreground the status and authority of the actor while downplaying the narrative details of the action. Exemplarity provides a useful window onto the patterns of Roman moralism.

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David C. Urban

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation expands our picture of Roman exemplarity by focusing on *exempla* as they are used to construct arguments. In contrast to recent studies of the practice, instead of focusing on repeatedly cited instances in a series of different texts, my argument centers on repeated patterns in which authors deploy *exempla*. I suggest that Roman exemplarity constructs a mode of moral and practical reasoning that conditions its users to repeat a pattern of imbuing and responding to meaning in the *exempla* they select for themselves. I focus on texts that present themselves as dealing directly with contemporary society: in particular forensic oratory, epistolography and satire. Cicero and Pliny the Younger provide the central anchors for my discussion. The chapters of this dissertation frame and supplement the current discussion by exploring several of the most prominent uses of *exempla*. The first chapter builds on Quintilian's discussion of exemplary comparison to demonstrate the malleable nature of moral arguments based in comparisons between narratives. The second chapter focuses on *exempla* featuring nameless figures which consequently emphasize patterns of action rather than the authority of the actor. Such *exempla* display close connections with declamations and fables, creating a triangle of relationships through which factual and fictional narratives influence one another. In my third chapter, I demonstrate that *exempla* which claim to illustrate how things are provide a powerful means to forestall judgment or obscure status distinctions. The final chapter explores the frequently superficial deployment of *exempla* as emblems: where anonymous *exempla* emphasize actions as opposed to actors, *exempla* deployed as emblems foreground the status and authority of the actor while downplaying the narrative details of the action. Exemplarity provides a useful window onto the patterns of Roman moralism.

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Introduction

Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else's opinions, their lives a mimicry, their passions a quotation.

Oscar Wilde, *De profundis*

Most Romans were other Romans. By tradition and education, they were acculturated to adapt and adopt for themselves the behaviors, attitudes and opinions they approved in others. As a central element of this practice, Romans used *exempla* — examples of particular acts or attitudes they identified as models for emulation, illustrations, or symbolic emblems. Roman exemplarity constitutes a form of cultural modeling that unites both moral and practical decision-making under the belief that individual behavior should reflect and emulate that of other members of society.

To explain the particularity of Roman exemplarity, we must examine how they used *exempla*. In this dissertation, I primarily discuss *exempla* of human actions, because such instances form the basis for moral reflection and argument. Central to the function of *exempla* is the process of analogy. Such comparisons may be direct, implied or merely potential. An *exemplum* may provide an example that serves as a model for emulation, or as an illustration. It may also serve in a more symbolic mode as an emblem that carries cultural authority. Virtually everyone, of course, uses examples as a method of argument. But the Romans are exceptional in the degree to which they promoted examples themselves as the core of their understanding of morality. Contrast this focus on examples as the basis for ethics with other methods used elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean such as the proverbs of wisdom literature or the abstract definitions of philosophy. Romans often contrasted themselves with the Greeks, describing themselves as men of action, the Greeks as men of words.¹ They consequently formed their ethics through the analysis and comparison of particular actions, typically expressed in narrative form. The Roman attitude toward these models of behavior is primarily

¹ *E.g.* Vergil, *Aen.* 6.847-53; Hor. *Ars* 323-330; Quintilian, *IO* 12.2.27-30.

practical; categorization or systemization only occur at a secondary level, removed from the day-to-day arguments and decisions in which *exempla* found their primary use. This emphasis on action paradoxically produces a more malleable value system than the supposedly slippery emphasis on the word. The Roman focus on actions — and consequently on narratives of those actions — in effect allows storytelling devices such as framing and editing to shape the ethical content of such acts. Cicero's discussion of friendship in his dialogue *De amicitia* provides a cogent demonstration of the Roman tendency to approach even theoretical definitions through the medium of *exempla*: the central speaker in the dialogue, Laelius, is useful to Cicero as a voice not only for his philosophical reputation, but far more for his well known friendship with Scipio Aemilianus that provides the spur for discussion in the dialogue.

This preference for inculcating moral instruction through the use of *exempla* provides a useful point of entry for thinking about the Roman moral universe. The fragmentation of moral ideas into discrete, portable units mimics the *ad hoc* character of the underlying moral system. Exemplarity reveals a sort of detail-oriented or particularist ethics. It focuses attention on the practical effectiveness of particular observed, remembered or proposed behaviors rather than on the relationship of those acts to some broad abstract system. While Roman moral discourse often suggests that its various injunctions represent elements within a broader, coherent ethical code — the *mos maiorum* — in actual practice authors and speakers draw their responses to immediate issues from a vast smorgasbord of potential actions and attitudes that find their expression in the array of moral *exempla* available for use on any given topic. Of course, exemplarity involves both ethical and practical concerns.² In fact the indefinite boundary between practical and moral *exempla* helps to maintain the entire system by grounding the concept of imitation in clearly valid practical comparisons. Romans

² See also Roller (2009) 215.

deployed *exempla* to provide instruction in eminently practical matters such as military command, laying primary attention on efficacy.³ The Roman use of *exempla* is at its heart the deployment of comparisons between discrete actions with the goal of gauging the relative effect — whether practical or moral — of those particular acts. Identifying acts as representing particular ethical categories, or collecting groups of stories under particular rubrics, are secondary accretions on the core functionality of exemplary comparison. Roman exemplarity is interested far more in practical application and patterns of action than in abstract definition. The story of Fabricius, to cite a famous *exemplum*, does not explain what frugality is, but rather how to perform frugality.

As the core element of a popular, practical ethics, this analogical pattern of thought creates a system that is amazingly supple and resilient, but at the same time susceptible to rhetorical manipulation and ethical opportunism. Nameless *exempla* could serve in place of the more obvious historical names, activating similar habits of thought while drawing the deployment of their narratives closer to fable and fiction than to evocations of historical memory. Authors and speakers could manipulate the boundaries between illustrative and extraordinary acts either to reassure or to castigate their audience. When they function as illustrations, *exempla* may sometimes take on a role in encouraging moderation or a relaxation in standards. Speakers and writers may in fact use them to argue against a too strict application of moral standards or judgment. Such illustrations may demonstrate the advantages obtained by maintaining a careful balance between the good and the bad, or may promote an understanding of the common fallibility of both the judge of morals and the object of judgment. At times, Romans could deploy *exempla* simply as emblems of cultural authority with little concern for the particular details of their original context. Frequently recasting well-known narratives risks creating cognitive dissonance for an audience unprepared to

³ *E.g.* Frontinus, *Strategemata*. See Campbell (1987) on the use of this and other such military manuals in the instruction of military commanders during the Imperial period.

accept such narrative flexibility. The assumption of ethical continuity between various retellings of any particular *exemplum* allowed audiences subconsciously to protect themselves from an uncomfortable sense of the implicit relativism of such appeals to tradition.⁴ By rooting their system of ethical thought in a practice of comparison and analogy, Romans provided themselves with a malleable and adaptable means of promoting and evaluating themselves and their actions.

The Roman practice of exemplarity encompasses a far more diverse range of activities than has sometimes been noted. Much of the recent work on *exempla* has focused on their role in cultural memory and the Roman conception of, and relation to, their own history. In illuminating those subjects, however, scholars have artificially separated the narratives of well-known historical actors from the pattern of practical ethical reflection in which they functioned. Though historical *exempla* of famous persons and events constitute a salient element of Roman exemplarity, such narratives do not exhaust the range of material for analogical reflection. The primary advantage to the study of well-known historical *exempla* is simply the ease with which they can be recognized in texts and monumental constructions. Restricting critical focus to such *exempla* artificially limits and thereby distorts our understanding of the functioning of *exempla* themselves. This practice also encourages circular argument: we begin with frequently attested figures because they offer a fuller picture, then conclude that fame and repeated citation are core elements of exemplarity because our examples are frequently attested. While it often makes use of historical actors and events, Roman exemplarity is not about history *per se*. In fact, as I discuss in the following section (section 0.1), Roman sources repeatedly identify current events and figures within living memory as the primary source of *exempla*.

This introduction falls into four sections. In the first, I demonstrate the emphasis

⁴ For the term 'ethical continuity,' see Roller (2004) 34-38.

placed on the use of contemporary sources by several ancient authors in describing the educational function of *exempla*. As these accounts reveal, personally observed contemporary references provide the essential frameworks through which Romans approached their social and political world. Next, I outline the history of modern scholarship on this topic which frequently turns to Roman historiography, rather than the educational texts, to provide the core of their theoretical explanations for exemplarity. The third section argues that immediate context or local understandings provide the central force in determining the range of *exempla* available for use in any given text. Authors thus select their examples with reference not to some stable canon of culturally approved figures but rather to the references they expect to appear most familiar or resonant to their audience. Finally, in closing, I outline the structure of this dissertation as a whole.

0.1: The Foundation of Exemplary Knowledge: Personal Observation

This section serves primarily as a reading of representative texts designed to highlight the centrality of local *exempla* collected by personal observation. In contrast to most modern treatments of exemplarity which focus on well known *exempla* drawn from history, here I argue that Romans regarded instances within their living memory as the most effective source of *exempla*. They saw examples as educational tools, focused sometimes on moral development, sometimes on practical skills. Some of the most frequently cited statements about moral education focus specifically on imitating models within the local community or whom one has personally observed (*e.g.* Ter., *Ad.* 414-19; Hor., *Ser.* 1.4.105-21; Seneca, *Ep.* 1.6.5). The institutions of *contubernium* or *tirocinium fori* – educating adolescent aristocrats by means of apprenticeship to respected military or political figures – demonstrates a more formal aspect of this practice (*e.g.* Cic. *De off.* 2.46; Pliny, *Ep.* 8.14.4-5; Tac., *Dialog.* 34.1). Even when this practice is directed toward the formation of character, practical consequences tend to be heavily emphasized. In the

story Horace tells about receiving moral education from his father, for example, he focuses primarily on material or social consequences — poverty, gossip, etc. — of the indicated vices (*Serm.* 1.4.105-21). Above all, these accounts of exemplary learning should encourage us to focus on the imitator rather than the original actor in understanding the function of *exempla*.

A frequently cited passage from Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* emphasizes living persons as the primary sources for *exempla*. Seneca deploys the term *exemplum* to represent a mode of learning by personally observing an authoritative model: "Nevertheless the living voice and social interaction will benefit you more than discussion; you ought to come to the scene of action, first because people trust their eyes more than their ears, second because the journey through precepts is long, but the one through *exempla* is quick and efficient" (*Plus tamen tibi et viva vox et convictus quam oratio proderit; in rem praesentem venias oportet, primum quia homines amplius oculis quam auribus credunt, deinde quia longum iter est per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla*, Sen., *Ep.* 6.5). In making this claim, Seneca clearly defines *exempla* not as historical instances known through books or other monuments, but rather as living persons with whom the observer is personally acquainted. He describes this method as a sort of apprenticeship, illustrating his claim with *exempla* drawn from the salutary effect of the founders of philosophical schools on their immediate disciples, for example: "Cleanthes would not have thoroughly imitated Zeno, if he had only heard him: he took part in his life, he examined his secrets, he observed whether that man lived by his own rule." (*Zenonem Cleanthes non expressisset, si tantummodo audisset: vitae eius interfuit, secreta perspexit, observavit illum, an ex formula sua viveret*, *Ep.* 6.6).⁵ Thus in this letter Seneca privileges face-to-face interactions as the core of exemplary education.

⁵ Seneca also cites Plato and Aristotle as students of Socrates, and Metrodorus, Hermarchus and Polyaeus as students of Epicurus.

Although Seneca chooses to illustrate his argument with examples of Greek philosophers, such master-student relationships also constitute an core element in training the Roman elite. The forms of apprenticeship that prepared aristocratic youths for their military and political careers – the *contubernium* and *tirocinium fori* – demonstrate the importance of observing and emulating contemporary models. Instructing his son on how to be a good Roman aristocrat, Cicero discusses such relationships as a means for a young man to shape his public reputation through aspirational modeling: “Moreover young men become known most easily and in the best way, who devote themselves to famous and wise men who take good care for the republic, and if they are frequently with them, they convey to the people the belief that they are going to be similar to those men whom they have assigned to themselves for imitation” (*Facillume autem et in optimam partem cognoscuntur adulescentes, qui se ad claros et sapientes viros bene consulentes rei publicae contulerunt, quibuscum si frequentes sunt, opinionem populo adferunt eorum fore se similes, quos sibi ipsi delegerint ad imitandum, Cic. De off. 2.46*).⁶ Cicero uses such relationships as evidence for character in some of his speeches. In his defense of Cn. Plancius, for instance, he claims that Plancius’s service under A. Torquatus in Africa provides evidence of his good character (*Planc. 27*). Likewise he attempts to counter attacks on M. Caelius’s character based on the younger man’s association with both M. Crassus and Cicero himself (*Cael. 9*). In the same manner, Tacitus uses his father-in-law Agricola’s service under Suetonius Paulinus in Britain to demonstrate Agricola’s good character (*Agr. 5*).

⁶ See Cic. *De am. 1*, *Brut. 305-306*, and Quint. *Inst. 12.6.7* on Cicero’s own education with Q. Mucius Scaevola *augur* and others. At Tac. *Dial. 34.1*, Messalla claims that the practice has ceased, but compare *Dial. 2.1* (on Tacitus’s own education) and 20.4. Pliny, *Ep. 2.14.10* mentions Quintilian’s attendance on Domitius Afer for this sort of training, and *Ep. 8.14.4-5* discusses the practice as the preferred method for learning Senate procedure. See Campbell (1987) 20-22 on this practice, focusing primarily on military training, and Mayer (1990) 143-44. Van der Blom (2010) 311-315 discusses Cicero as ‘An exemplum and teacher to the younger generation.’

The younger Pliny offers an extensive comment on this form of education by apprenticeship to and consultation with established authoritative figures. In an obituary letter for a younger friend, Pliny complains that young men of his day have abandoned the practice of taking their elders as models: “This is rare among our young men. For how few yield as the lesser either to the age or authority of another? Straightaway they are wise, straightaway they know everything, they revere no one, they imitate no one, and they themselves are *exempla* for themselves” (*Rarum hoc in adolescentibus nostris. Nam quotus quisque vel aetati alterius vel auctoritati ut minor cedit? Statim sapiunt, statim sciunt omnia, neminem verentur, neminem imitantur, atque ipsi sibi exempla sunt*, Pliny, *Ep.* 8.23.3). Notably, these young men have not actually stopped using *exempla*, but rather have chosen to look only to themselves for models. Pliny’s complaint, then, is not that they have ceased to model themselves on observed examples, but rather that they have chosen to ignore older contemporaries, like Pliny himself, as sources for those examples. He directs his criticism at the young men who refuse to learn from the sources he would prefer, not at the elders or the system of education.⁷ Pliny’s young friend, of course, is different: “But not Avitus, who possessed this particular prudence, that he judged others to be wiser, [and] this particular learning that he wanted to learn” (*Sed non Avitus, cuius haec praecipua prudentia, quod alios prudentiores arbitrabatur, haec praecipua eruditio quod discere volebat*, *Ep.* 8.23.3). Pliny’s account identifies Avitus’s guides not as historical figures, but as older contemporaries. In addition to Pliny himself, these models include his superiors in military service and political office: “What obedience he offered to Servianus, a most precise man! [Avitus] in the office of tribune so understood and charmed that commander that not as a fellow-soldier but as a companion and assistant he followed him traveling from Germany to Pannonia. With what diligence, what modesty as a quaestor was he no less delightful and

⁷ Contrast Riggsby (1995) 132 who interprets this comment as a reference to historical *exempla*.

welcome to his consuls (and he served many) than he was useful!” (*Quod ille obsequium Serviano exactissimo viro praestitit! quem legatum tribunus ita et intellexit et cepit, ut ex Germania in Pannoniam transeuntem non ut commilito sed ut comes adsectorque sequeretur. Qua industria qua modestia quaestor, consulibus suis (et plures habuit) non minus iucundus et gratus quam utilis fuit!*, *Ep.* 8.23.5). Pliny combines two ideas in praising Avitus: imitating his superiors makes him a better person, and also makes him better liked by those he thus flatters.

While Pliny describes a relatively elevated stratum of Roman society, Horace’s well-known lines on his father teaching him how to behave demonstrate the same analogical process of exemplarity occurring in less exalted circumstances (*Serm.* 1.4.105-121).⁸ Horace, like Seneca and Pliny, asserts the primacy of personal observation, not reading, for collecting examples of behavior. In this passage, Horace’s father indicates several negative examples by name, but these names—the son of Albius (*Albi... filius*, 109), Baius (110), Scaetanus (112) and Trebonius (114)—do not belong to known individuals.⁹ Indeed Horace appends brief comments to each name to indicate the exact nature of that man and the lesson to be drawn from his actions, for example: “So that I would not pursue adulteresses, when I could engage in permitted sex, he used to say, ‘the rumor about Trebonius, who was caught in the act, is not good’” (*ne sequerer moechas, concessa cum venere uti | possem, ‘deprensi non bella est fama Treboni,’ | aiebat*, *Serm.* 1.4.113-15).¹⁰ Such names allow Horace to present the process of drawing ethical judgments from analogies between oneself and other social actors without actually attacking identifiable persons. His description of his father’s lesson itself functions as an *exemplum* for the identification and interpretation of *exempla*, as well as a model for

⁸ This passage has sometimes been cited in discussions of exemplarity, cf. Skidmore (1996) 19, Chaplin (2000) 11-12.

⁹ See Rudd (1966) 132-59 on names in Horace, esp. 137 on the names in these lines.

¹⁰ Cf. Val. Max. 7.3.10: an anonymous father dissuades his son from a dangerous love affair by encouraging him to visit prostitutes.

training children through the use of *exempla*. Consequently the form of this lesson is at least as important as its specific content, particularly for readers to whom the specific examples – the son of Albius, Baius, Scaetanus, and Trebonius – are no more than anonymous names attached to a series of moral commonplaces.¹¹ The very process of exemplary reflection provides the central content of Horace’s education from his father. By observing the behaviors of others and the social reactions they provoke, individuals can thereby reflect on their own actions and intentions through the mirror of analogies drawn both from others and from their own past history.

Expanded to the level of Roman society as a whole, Tacitus’s description of the atrophy of republican sentiment through the principate of Augustus likewise stresses the importance of personal observation for creating social views. In the opening paragraphs of his *Annales*, he claims that the passage of time eliminated those who personally remembered the republic and thus ruptured the tradition of government: “The younger men had been born after the victory at Actium, most old men as well had been born during the civil wars. How few were there remaining who would have seen the republic? Therefore, since the circumstances of the state had changed, there was nothing anywhere of the old, unchanged custom” (*iuniores post Actiacam victoriam, etiam senes plerique inter bella civium nati. quotus quisque reliquus qui rem publicam vidisset? igitur verso civitatis statu nihil usquam prisca et integri moris*, Tac. *Ann.* 1.3-4). As Richard Alston comments on this passage: “Indeed, the process only seems complete when the politics of the republic had become a purely historical phenomenon, not something about which living Romans had experience.”¹² Tacitus’s statement may appear to suggest a rupture

¹¹ Chaplin (2000) 11-12 cites both this passage of Horace and Terence *Ad.* 414-19 in order to demonstrate “the singular emphasis within the Roman aristocratic world on the past as all that was worthy of imitation and emulation, particularly in the guidance and training of the young” (11). Just as in the Horace passage, however, Demea in the *Adelphoe* seems to teach his son through the observation of immediate, local examples and to present this activity as a continuing process: *denique | inspicere, tamquam in speculum, in vitas omnium | iubeo atque ex aliis sumere sibi* (414-16).

¹² Alston (2008) 151. He suggests a link between this and the transition between *saecula*.

between Republican exemplarity and that under the Principate, but such a rupture only appears if you focus on content rather than process: Tacitus in fact explains the rupture specifically in terms of a continuous practice of exemplarity that centers on *exempla* within living memory. In the opening sentences of the *Annales*, the historian suggestively emphasizes the brevity of earlier interruptions in the republican government: “Dictatorships were appointed at times; neither did the power of the *decemvirs* last longer than two years nor did the consular power of the military tribunes hold sway for long. Cinna’s rule was not long, nor was Sulla’s; and Pompey’s and Caesar’s power quickly passed to Caesar, Lepidus’s and Antony’s military might quickly passed to Augustus” (*dictaturae ad tempus sumebantur; neque decemviralis potestas ultra biennium, neque tribunorum militum consulare ius diu valuit. non Cinnae, non Sullae longa dominatio; et Pompei Crassique potestas cito in Caesarem, Lepidi atque Antonii arma in Augustum cessere*, Tac. *Ann.* 1.1). In contrast to the extended rule of Augustus, the brief periods during which these alternate governments held power were insufficient to erase the Republic from living memory. Tacitus thus implicitly builds his explanation for the shift from Republic to Principate on the idea that personal observation of living examples provides the determining lens through which the exemplary view of the world takes shape.

0.2: Exemplary History and Cultural Memory in Theories of Roman Exemplarity.

Modern studies of exemplarity generally look to the programmatic claims of Roman historians in order to ground their explanations of the role of *exempla* in Roman society. These accounts of the Roman practice often focus on well-known, frequently attested anecdotes and authorized interpretations of those events displayed through monuments,

official decrees and public ceremonies.¹³ In one common approach, scholars focus on historiographical justifications for the utility of history. Evoking the exemplar theory of history, developed from claims by ancient historians that their works provide models for imitation, they thus adopt those arguments for history's relevance to explain exemplarity as a method of learning from history.¹⁴ Modern scholars also frequently cite the "custom of the ancestors" (*mos maiorum*) as a concept to explain Roman exemplarity. In deploying this idea, they likewise privilege historical models over contemporary ones by focusing on the identity of the "ancestors" or "elders" (*maiores*): Who were these "ancestors"? Which people were eligible to become "ancestors"? How did they become "ancestors"? By treating the "ancestors" (*maiores*) as if they were a gradually expanding but essentially fixed library of culturally authorized models, scholars consequently assume that transmitting the *mos maiorum* involves a relatively straightforward process of selecting from the official canon of *exempla* provided by these "ancestors," or from some subset of this canon such as the ancestors in one's own family. In contrast, by focusing on the transmission of the *mos* rather than the identification of the *maiores*, and by locating that process within the practice of modeling personal behavior on older contemporary figures discussed in the previous section, a more vibrantly engaged pattern emerges for the transmission of tradition. I argue that, rather than seeing Roman actors as reaching back into history to discover models for their actions, we should instead understand them as looking to their immediate elders and superiors as transmitters of tradition. These figures from living memory serve as the last link in a chain of imitation that stretches back to those famous names from history which modern studies usually treat as the primary objects of exemplarity. Those figures, which we might term 'ur-*exempla*,' often serve as emblems for the process of analogical reasoning

¹³ Cf. Litchfield (1914); Maslakov (1984); Hölkeskamp (1996); David (1998a); Lehmann (1998); Loutsch (1998); Chaplin (2000); Stemmler (2000); Roller (2004); Gowing (2005); Bartsch (2006).

¹⁴ On the exemplary theory of history, see Nadel (1964).

rather than as models for direct emulation. Thus historical *exempla* represent more the idea of Roman tradition (*mos maiorum*) than the substance of tradition itself.

Henry Wheatland Litchfield in an influential early article discussing national *exempla virtutis* approaches the use of historical examples as a sort of moral code. He transposes exemplary history directly into a sort of moral philosophy and attempts to describe a systematized depiction of virtues through *exempla*. Oddly, his naively Christianist attitude toward pagan moral thought may have distracted attention from his identification of the essential importance of *exempla* for individual ethical reflection. In cataloging these ‘examples of moral virtues’ (*exempla moralium virtutum*), he dismisses contemporary references from primary consideration.¹⁵ His work consequently privileges the traditional, generally Republican, *exempla* most frequently cited by extant Roman writers over a broad span of time. Litchfield thus played an important role in structuring the modern approach to this subject. His criteria for defining what constitutes an *exemplum* and the conclusions he draws from his compilation of references seem to have created some basic — and distorting — assumptions about the history of the Roman culture of exemplarity. In particular, his identification of an apparent fossilization of the cultural stock of *exempla* in the early Empire has been enormously influential on later critics as the frequent limitation of studies to the period of the Republic demonstrates. The frequent appearances of this limited number of Republican figures also affects the later work on exemplarity by Hölkeskamp, Roller and others who focus heavily on figures whose frequent appearance in the extant literary and monumental record allows greater scope for comparison among separate instances of citation.¹⁶

¹⁵ Litchfield (1914) 25, 58.

¹⁶ Hölkeskamp (1996) concentrates almost exclusively on the Early and Middle Republic. Roller (2004) and (2009) focuses on the late Republican and Imperial audiences for *exempla*, but the examples he discusses are drawn almost exclusively from the Republic, most from the early Republic.

Recent studies also link exemplarity to the concept of cultural memory.¹⁷ These discussions focus primarily on the pre-existing elements of the original narrative and privilege the force of *exempla* themselves in the process of memorialization and imitation. Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, in a seminal article for these recent discussions, stresses the sense – fostered by the profusion of monuments and other sites of memory throughout the city of Rome – in which every Roman citizen lived both with and within the history of their city.¹⁸ Frequent reminders of the deeds of various cultural heroes produce a sense of their continuing presence and guidance. Hölkeskamp presents a vision of Rome in which reminders of famous, authoritative men and their deeds were everywhere, but were frequently separate from any broader sense of their original context. He describes an atomizing impulse within Roman treatments of history: “the actual interest directs itself above all not toward ‘History’ as a chronologically structured *connection* between events, but toward the happenings themselves, concrete events, even individual ‘histories’.”¹⁹ In this view, as these histories of individual events are transformed into *exempla*, they become disconnected from their particular contexts and their places within the broader course of history, and thus are reduced into mere type-figures of particular virtues.²⁰ This process of reduction could likewise allow individual names of particular historical figures to function as evocative markers of one or more values: “The name alone then evokes directly, practically without digression through *res gestae*, one certain key concept – or even, as in the case of Curtius Dentatus, Fabricius and other individual ‘household names’ – an entire catalog of values, concentrated in one

¹⁷ Hölkeskamp (1996); Gowing (2005) focuses primarily on memory, but includes a fair bit of discussion concerning *exempla*. On Roman memory, see also Farrell (1997).

¹⁸ Hölkeskamp (1996) 305. Cf. Roller (2004) 8-9.

¹⁹ Hölkeskamp (1996) 309. “Das eigentliche Interesse richtet sich überhaupt nicht auf ‘die Geschichte’ als chronologisch strukturierten Geschehens*zusammenhang*, sondern auf das Geschehen selbst, konkrete Ereignisse, eben einzelne ‘Geschichten’.” Cf. Roller (2004) 31-32 who also compares this narrative decontextualization to that created by an encounter with a historical monument.

²⁰ Hölkeskamp (1996) 314, cf. David (1998a) 10 and 12-13.

individual representative figure.”²¹ As I discuss in section 1.2 of the following chapter, however, writers and speakers could use small additions or exclusions in the context of an anecdote to mold the exemplary meaning of that event in sometimes dramatic ways.²² While any given citation of an *exemplum* necessarily includes only a limited number of details, the particular details present in any specific version define the meaning of the example in that passage.

Matthew Roller’s 2004 article on exemplarity outlines a four-part schema for the creation, recognition and imitation of socially or politically important actions in the Roman community. His model heavily emphasizes the original instance: the first three elements involve the first instance directly, namely the action itself, the audience that witnesses and judges that action, and the commemoration of the event through a monument that reports both the deed itself and the original audience’s evaluation. The final element, imitation, appears in this account as an attempt to replicate or improve upon the previous model.²³ This model attempts to describe the process by which the Romans themselves believed they identified and transmitted social values. Roller states that, “Romans *assumed* that actions, audiences, monuments, and social value were or should be linked in these ways. They often acted with a view toward being observed, evaluated, monumentalized, and imitated, and assumed that other people did likewise.”²⁴ This model can potentially describe a variety of levels on which exemplary discourse operated, although Roller’s 2004 article concentrates on the most public level of discourse, focusing on two well-known mythistorical figures from the earliest years of

²¹ Hölkeskamp (1996) 315, “Allein der Name evoziert dann direkt, praktisch ohne Umweg über *res gestae*, einen bestimmten Leitbegriff – oder sogar, wie im Falle des Curtius Dentatus, des Fabricius und einiger anderer ‘household names’ – einen ganzen Katalog von Tugenden, konzentriert in einer einzigen repräsentativen Figur.”

²² Cf. Gowing (2005) 76-81, which discusses Seneca’s idiosyncratic transformation of Cato into a purely moral *exemplum* (*Ep.* 14) and of Scipio Africanus into a figure of political quietism (*Ep.* 86).

²³ Roller (2004) 4-5 and (2009) 216-17.

²⁴ Roller (2004) 7, emphasis in the original.

the Republic — Horatius Cocles and Cloelia. In a later Companion article on the same topic, he examines the tradition concerning C. Duilius in similar fashion.²⁵ He devotes a good deal of attention to the interaction between Romans and the physical representations of famous men and women that filled the city, as well as to the interaction between textual and physical representations.²⁶ In line with his focus on the broadest, most public level of exemplary discourse, Roller takes the *populus Romanus* as a whole to be the community that evaluates and determines the meaning of individual *exempla*.²⁷ This emphasis on the people as a unit leads him to concentrate more on contestation directed toward producing a unified meaning at a specific point in time than the potential for multiple coexisting divergent traditions of meaning. The primary engine for coexisting variations of a single *exemplum* within this model is the assignment of an act to multiple ethical categories.²⁸ While Roller discusses the productive potentials of the contestation of exemplary meaning, his view of such contestation and change is almost always closely tied to the progression of time, whether explicitly or implicitly.²⁹

A recent collection focused on *Role Models in the Roman World* attempts to expand the study of exemplarity beyond the literary sources produced by and focused on the upper reaches of the office-holding aristocracy.³⁰ In his introduction to the volume, Bell suggests that art and archaeological remains provide an alternative to the literary focus of most studies and may allow us to reconstruct the relationship of the lower classes to the use of *exempla*. Bell's overview of the volume's purpose assumes that *exempla* enjoy some stable existence external to their use, and thus concentrates on questions about their transmission and selection. For example, the first question Bell

²⁵ Roller (2009), especially 219-29.

²⁶ Roller (2004) *passim*, esp. 5, 8-9, 10-23, 33-37, 44-50. Cf. Hölkeskamp (1996) 305-8, 320-26.

²⁷ Roller (2004) 6.

²⁸ Roller (2004) 44: "Many deeds admit of evaluation in multiple ethical categories, with conflicting results."

²⁹ Roller (2004) 7.

³⁰ Bell and Hansen (2008).

sets forth to describe the aims of the collection emphasizes variety in the means of transmission as a means to expand the field of evidence: “What are the different media for disseminating *exempla* (e.g., oral, visual, epigraphic), and how do their target audiences vary accordingly?”³¹ The collection thus treats these role models as representations drawn from a common cultural library of forms. Another path of discussion emphasizes *exempla* as models for particular social roles — patterns of behavior appropriate to certain social circumstances — rather than for individuals constructing a cohesive individual identity.³² One line of inquiry pursued by several contributions to the volume, in particular those which discuss visual representations, connects these exemplary models to artistic archetypes or stock scene types.³³ This conception of role modeling nicely expresses something of the particularist approach to moral and practical reasoning that I identify in the Roman use of *exempla*: the attention to these examples as models for certain discrete categories of social interaction highlights the typical character of *exempla* not as type-figures for abstract virtues, but rather as pattern narratives for particular types of action.

Another approach to exemplarity starts from rhetorical theory, although this at times has a tendency to emphasize the Greek-ness of rhetorical theory, ignoring the central importance of understanding the audience in ancient rhetorical training.³⁴ Although referring to parallel elements in Greek discourse, rhetorical approaches to Roman exemplarity are not substantially distorted for that reason. Scholars such as Alewell and Stemmler begin their discussions by attempting to define the difference between Greek and Roman rhetorical definitions of examples (*παράδειγμα* vs. *exemplum*) and thus to discover the particularly Roman character of the *exemplum*.³⁵

³¹ Bell (2008) 19.

³² See especially Bell (2008) 20-24 and Hölscher (2008) 52-54; *contra* Alston (2008).

³³ *E.g.* Davies (2008), Hansen (2008), Hölscher (2008), Von Hesberg (2008). See also Imber (2008), who focuses on declamation.

³⁴ *E.g.* Alewell (1912), Gazich (1990), Stemmler (2000).

³⁵ Alewell (1912) and Stemmler (2000).

Both authors build their arguments primarily on the brief definitions given in Cicero's *De inventione* and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, using Quintilian's later, but more detailed and expansive discussion only to supply a few scattered bits of additional information.³⁶ Gazich, on the other hand, focuses on Quintilian's discussion in order to determine that text's unique contribution to the discussion. These attempts to isolate the distinctively Roman elements in ancient definitions of the rhetorical example, while illuminating some interesting features of the practice, tend to limit themselves at the same time through their focus on the peculiarity itself, rather than the integration of those distinctive elements into the broader argumentative use of examples.

Also useful to consider are critical treatments of particular important texts for our understanding of *exempla*. The critical work on Valerius Maximus done by Maslakov (1984), Bloomer (1992), Skidmore (1996) and David *et al.* (1998) provides another point of access for understanding the influence of these examinations on our understanding of exemplarity. In addition, the singularity and importance of Valerius Maximus's collection for our understanding of *exempla* may introduce selection criteria more closely linked to Valerius's own project and historical moment than to the broader intellectual and cultural practice of exemplarity.³⁷ Even Valerius, however, occasionally introduces a more personal, contemporary *exemplum*, in particular his references to his own patron Sextus Pompeius as a model for imitation (2.6.8, 4.7.ext.2b). Cicero likewise provides a major focus for studying the use of examples by a single prolific author. In recent years several book-length studies have appeared on *exempla* in various categories of Cicero's work: Opperman has discussed the use of examples in the letters, Bücher in the speeches.³⁸ Van der Blom has approached the use of *exempla* throughout Cicero's

³⁶ Cic. *De inv.* 1.49 and *Rhet ad Her.* 4.62. See Quint. *Inst.* 5.11 for his discussion of *exempla*.

³⁷ Litchfield (1914) 62-63 suggests that Valerius's collection and other parallel works from the late Republic and early Principate led to a fossilization of the exemplary cannon.

³⁸ Opperman (2000) and Bücher (2006).

corpus of work, focusing on the orator's use of such references as a *novus homo* to construct an alternative to the ancestral *exempla* of officeholders from established aristocratic families.³⁹ Mayer has written an overview of Seneca's use of Roman historical *exempla* throughout his work. Although Mayer directs his discussion at historical examples, he does repeatedly note Seneca's participation in a vibrant tradition that uses contemporary instances as well as established ones.⁴⁰ Shelton and Wilcox have both written articles focused more narrowly on Seneca's use of *exempla* in his *consolationes*.⁴¹ Shelton discusses the use of examples as a means of persuasion in the *ad Marciam*, while Wilcox examines the relationship of gender to the understanding of virtue (*virtus*) in the two *consolationes* that Seneca addresses to women, the *ad Marciam* and the *ad Helviam*. Some recent work has also examined the use of *exempla* in Silius Italicus's historical epic.⁴²

Jane Chaplin's work on the use of *exempla* within Livy's history presents in some ways an earlier version of my project to shift the focus in studies of exemplarity from the original instances to their deployment by speakers and writers in later circumstances. Her project, however, remains (for obvious reasons) tethered to the concept of *exempla* as a form of specifically historical material. For the same reasons, it also tends to focus only on the use of *exempla* in important political and military discussions rather than on the broader use in day-to-day decisions. In her introduction, she suggests that in examining Livy's use of *exempla* we should shift away from the creation of these instances to the manner in which later people put them to use: "Yet focusing solely on characters or events that are identifiable as *exempla* within their immediate context (such as Lucretia) does not do full justice to Livy's statement about the value of history

³⁹ Van der Blom (2010). For earlier work on Cicero's use of *exempla*, see *e.g.* David (1980) and Brinton (1988).

⁴⁰ Mayer (1990) 147, 149.

⁴¹ Shelton (1995) and Wilcox (2006).

⁴² Spentzou (2008) and Tipping (2010).

because this approach encourages a concentration on the first part of his claim — that history is a storehouse of beneficial lessons — to the detriment of the second — that people can tailor their actions according to what they have learned from the past.”⁴³ In the course of her study she makes a particularly important observation about the pattern in which speakers cite earlier examples: the internal speakers and audiences in the history typically prefer references drawn from their own living memory.⁴⁴ Chaplin’s discussion of several speeches in the work explores the tension between Livy’s historiographical claims about the utility of history and the more contemporary focus displayed by the actors within the historical narrative.

0.3: *Exempla* as Local Knowledge.

The emphasis on discovering *exempla* by personal observation in one’s local community (discussed above in section 0.1) suggests that, rather than limiting themselves to a fixed communal collection of *exempla*, individual Romans would build their own mental libraries of models drawn from a variety of sources: local, literary and monumental. The prominence of historical *exempla*, particularly in public discourse, merely reflects the need to use recognizable figures in any argument that hopes to evoke an emotional effect. The central position of comparison within this discourse, however, encourages a continual practice of expanding and supplementing personal collections of *exempla*. Writers of the early Imperial period, after the supposed fossilization of or revolution in the exemplary tradition, provide a useful corrective to that critical view. Pliny’s letters, for example, are filled with references to his contemporaries as models for behavior, and Tacitus’s *Agricola* and *Historiae* both announce themselves as accounts containing virtuous deeds and thereby as sources for imitation (*e.g. Agric. 1; Hist. 1.3*). The preference for ‘local’ *exempla* also helps to explain the commonly noted emphasis on

⁴³ Chaplin (2000) 2.

⁴⁴ Chaplin (2000) 108, 120-31.

using *exempla* from an individual's own family as each person's family forms an obvious local grouping. The transmission of behaviors by imitation from one generation to the next provides a clear path for the continuity of particular traits within families. The presence of wax images of ancestors (*imagines*) in the *atria* of family residences would reinforce this direct emulation of behaviors from generation to generation.⁴⁵

Exemplary thought functioned both on the level of public interventions by authoritative groups and on a more localized or individual level, although obviously there could be a great deal of communication between the more personal and more public manifestations of the practice. This communication operates in both directions, the public discourse providing formulations to the private one and personal views molding the public statements of individual actors. Seneca's use of *exempla* to structure moral thought provides one vision of the application of this discourse on an individual level. He recommends using memories of men perceived as virtuous to guide one's own actions, and in particular he suggests choosing one single individual to act as a personal model and overseer.⁴⁶ Seneca, of course, takes Cato the Younger as his personal model for virtuous living. This choice of a well-known Republican *exemplum* may seem to confirm the emphasis on a limited set of exemplary figures forming the core of exemplary discourse, but I would suggest that this emphasis distorts our picture of the typical Roman's use of the analogical process of exemplary thought.⁴⁷

The process of personal reflection through analogy exists at the opposite end of a continuum from the more public discourse centered on monuments, oratory, histories and other vehicles of collective memory. An ethical system defined and transmitted through social, political and historical instances cannot remain limited to a

⁴⁵ I discuss the emblematic function of the *imagines* in section 4.3.

⁴⁶ E.g. *Ep.* 11.8-10 (Seneca recommends that one choose a particular outstanding individual to act as a model and guardian of personal morality) and 52.7-8. Roller (2001) 88-97 and Gowing (2005) 72-76 discuss Seneca's attitude toward and use of *exempla*.

⁴⁷ Seneca also made rather idiosyncratic use of both Cato and other Republican *exempla*, cf. Gowing (2005) 76-81 on his treatment of Cato and Scipio Africanus.

predetermined set of authorized examples: the underlying logic of evaluating various acts by comparison with one another encourages individuals to extend their own mental collections of *exempla* through personal observation and memory. Public commemoration in fact is more likely to be secondary to the individual practice than the other way around. Such observation, as we have seen with Horace's *Satire* 1.4, forms a central part in Roman ethical education. Quintilian in fact recommends that an orator should not only know both historical examples and those from his daily life, but even those drawn from well-known poetry as well.⁴⁸ While recent studies of *exempla* have focused primarily on historical examples at the public level of discourse, this wider discourse acts more as a common store of references than as the primary intellectual and emotional force behind exemplarity as a practice. A speaker who uses *exempla* as vehicles of rhetorical persuasion before an audience must evoke examples that are meaningful and familiar to that audience. While obscure examples may easily describe technical details of a proposal, they cannot carry the emotional impact of a familiar model. Many modern accounts follow the ancient rhetorical handbooks in describing the importance for orators of building a large store of *exempla*, but they do not note as clearly the necessity for the audience to possess similar training.⁴⁹ If orators must train themselves to possess an extensive store of *exempla*, their audience must be equally familiar with the same body of references. The rhetorical training shared among orators and their aristocratic audiences constitutes a necessary medium for communication. An orator's choice of available *exempla* is conditioned by his expectations of his audience's

⁴⁸ *In primis vero abundare debet orator exemplorum copia cum veterum tum etiam novorum, adeo ut non ea modo quae scripta sunt historiis aut sermonibus velut per manus tradita quaeque cotidie aguntur debeat nosse, verum ne ea quidem quae sunt a clarioribus poetis ficta neglegere* (Inst. 12.4.1).

⁴⁹ Cf. Loutsch (1998) 29; Chaplin (2000) 13-15. For representative ancient descriptions of *exempla* as elements in an orator's arsenal, see: Cic. *de Or.* 1.18 and 256, *Orat.* 120, Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.34 and 12.4.1-2.

collective store of references. Broader audiences thus may restrict the variety of examples available for use.

A provocative suggestion by Mary Beard that declamation might function as a sort of Roman mythology provides an avenue for reading something mythopoetic in the process of abstracting, then emulating particular observed forms of action that characterizes exemplarity.⁵⁰ Margaret Imber has discussed declamation as training students to perform an aspect of the role modeling behavior that underlies the use of *exempla*, and she highlights Beard's claim that declamations "offer an arena for learning, practicing and recollecting what it is *to be and think Roman*."⁵¹ Imber would prefer to characterize this activity as ideological rather than mythopoetic, but her redefinition seems to ignore Beard's use of Barthes's model of mythology as a kind of depoliticized speech that naturalizes the arbitrariness of ideological claims.⁵² Expanding Beard's suggested link between mythological discourse and declamation to encompass the practice of exemplarity as a whole, we might even characterize the educational practice of inculcating morality through the observation of other persons as a method by which individuals were acculturated to mythologize the actions of those around them. As Terence's Demea describes his method of teaching his son: "I bid him to look into the lives of everyone as if into a mirror and to take from others an example for himself" (*inspicere, tamquam in speculum, in vitas omnium | iubeo atque ex aliis sumere exemplum sibi, Ad. 415-16*).⁵³ Unlike Barthes's focus on widely shared texts produced as elements of mass culture, or Beard's more Hellenic/Levi-Straussian adaption of this to apply to the "traditional tales" of declamation, by centering this

⁵⁰ Beard (1993). I discuss Beard's work on declamation further in sections 2.2 and 2.3.

⁵¹ Beard (1993) 56, emphasis in the original, quoted and discussed at Imber (2006) 166.

⁵² Beard (1993) 45 n. 2, 63. See Barthes (1972) 109-58, esp. 142-45 for his characterization of myth.

⁵³ This passage is frequently paired with Horace, *Serm.* 1.4.103-126; see e.g. Mayer (1991) 145-46 and Chaplin (2000) 11-12. I discuss the Horace passage above in section 0.1.

discourse on personal observation of behaviors and the social judgments about those behaviors within local social circles, I suggest, Roman exemplarity constructs a mode of moral and practical reasoning that maintains its stability not by the repetition of “traditional stories” or the mass diffusion of images through public speeches and monuments — though, of course, both those methods of communication do play a role — but rather by conditioning its users to repeat a consistent pattern of imbuing and responding to meaning in the *exempla* they each select for themselves. Conforming one’s own actions to behaviors approved in others mythologizes this method of creating and acting on contemporary moral judgment as adherence to traditional patterns of behavior.

In building my argument I have focused on texts and genres that present themselves as dealing directly with contemporary society. Forensic oratory, epistolography and satire thus play central roles. In particular, Cicero and Pliny the younger provide perhaps the most important anchors for my discussion. Although earlier scholars have treated Cicero’s use of examples extensively,⁵⁴ Pliny’s use of *exempla* has received relatively little direct attention in discussions of exemplarity. Historiography and historical epic serve a more supplementary function in my argument. I have used evidence from those sources where parallels have suggested themselves, but overall I have treated those genres as secondary. In this work I also adopt a synchronic approach to presenting the practice of exemplary reasoning. I believe that the basic process of reasoning through particular observed actions remained essentially the same throughout the period under discussion, stretching from the time of Cicero to that of Pliny and Juvenal. While particular applications of *exempla* may appear, develop or disappear over time, I interpret such changes as a consequence of the importance of personal observation in assembling individual libraries of examples. In parallel to the emphasis

⁵⁴ See *e.g.* David (1980), Brinton (1988), Opperman (2000), Bücher (2006), Van der Blom (2010).

on contemporary individuals as models, the deployment of *exempla* is also keyed to contemporary concerns. Although the sources of exemplary observation shift over the time, the methods in which authors use these instances remains generally stable.

A number of recent scholars on exemplarity have attempted to expand our understanding of the practice beyond the most immediately visible elite discourse, that is, the use of aristocratic male *exempla* by aristocratic authors for an audience of their peers.⁵⁵ Even within the literary sphere, however, scholars have focused primarily on the highest end of the spectrum. When they have tried to expand the focus, they tend to leap rather vertiginously down the social scale, bypassing the available *exempla* from equestrians and municipal aristocrats. My work attempts to expand our understanding of the range of exemplarity in Roman culture in a slightly different manner. The use of personal observation in Roman moral education, which I discussed above in section 0.1, presents a clear illustration of how Romans of various classes could adopt the practice of exemplary reasoning by observing those around them for examples of behavior either to adopt or to avoid. A number of passages, particularly in the letters of Pliny, demonstrate this practice extending at least to the lower reaches of the elite — minor equestrians and local municipal elites — and consequently focusing on concerns in private life — dining, family life and similar concerns.⁵⁶ Although this approach cannot definitively demonstrate the extension of this form of moral observation to the lowest end of the social hierarchy, it does offer a possible pattern in which to understand members of the lower classes as discovering *exempla* directly relevant to their own concerns rather than focusing solely on how they might relate to the aristocratic models displayed through the speeches and monuments of the political elite. For this reason I emphasize the

⁵⁵ See esp. Roller (2004) and the various contributors to Bell and Hansen (2008). Wilcox (2006)'s examination of *exempla* of and for women demonstrates another method of expansion.

⁵⁶ E.g. Pliny *Ep.* 6.24, 7.25, 9.17.

importance of equestrians and other more peripheral aristocrats as a means to expand the study of exemplarity beyond the pinnacle of the senatorial elite.⁵⁷

Pliny the Younger's treatment of his friends and other contemporary figures as models for imitation provides an illuminating source for exploring the form and operation of exemplary thought. This author's use of examples has been particularly useful for my project of expanding the range of what we should view as Roman *exempla*. His focus on contemporary society and use of recent figures allows us to glimpse some elements of exemplarity that have only a limited presence in more historically focused texts. In particular he frequently introduces instances that do not possess the spectacular character of those *exempla* that have typically provided the basis for earlier studies.

Throughout his collection of letters, Pliny describes a range of figures as notable or as models for his own conduct. Some letters present obituaries for various individuals or offer consolations that cast the dead persons as exemplary citizens, often good (*Ep.* 1.12, 2.1, 3.21, 4.21, 5.5, 5.16, 5.21, 6.16, 8.5, 8.23, 9.9), but sometimes bad (*Ep.* 3.14, 4.2), sometimes equivocal (*Ep.* 3.7, 7.24, 8.18).⁵⁸ A small number of other letters use a friend's illness as an occasion to offer a similar summary and praise of that person's life (1.22, 7.19, 9.22). Pliny frequently cites a small number of older senators as outstanding citizens and models for his own conduct — Corellius Rufus (1.12, 4.17, 9.13.6), Vestricius Spurinna (1.5.8-10, 2.7, 3.1), Verginius Rufus (2.1, 6.10, 9.19), Julius Frontinus (4.8, 9.19), and Pliny's own consular colleague Cornutus Tertullus (4.17.9, 5.14) — as well as a group of figures banished or executed under Domitian — among them Herennius Senecio (1.5.3, 3.11.3, 4.7.5, 7.19.5, 7.33), Arulenus Rusticus (1.5, 1.14, 3.11.3), and Fannia (3.11, 7.19, 9.13).⁵⁹ Occasionally Pliny introduces a negative figure, most prominently the

⁵⁷ See especially sections 2.1 and 3.3.

⁵⁸ Rather than focusing solely on formal obituaries, I have selected all those letters that report or mention a death and comment on the character and/or actions of the dead person, so there are also a few more casual reports of deaths (e.g. 4.2) and a few *consolationes* (e.g. 9.9).

⁵⁹ The fullest individual list of the anti-Domitianic group appears at *Ep.* 3.11.3.

former *delator*⁶⁰ Regulus who serves as one of the primary targets for his attacks on supporters of the Domitianic regime (1.5, 1.20.14-15, 2.11.22, 2.20, 4.2, 4.7, 6.2). Some individuals serve as examples for non-political activities, often intellectual, for example, Titinius Capito as a model for historical scholarship (1.17, 8.12)⁶¹ and Passenus Paulus as a model poet (6.15, 9.22). In some cases Pliny links his descriptions with the official discourse described by Roller's quadripartite model (*e.g.* his report in *Ep.* 2.7 of statues decreed by the Senate for Spurinna and his dead son Cottius⁶² or his criticisms of the official honors for Pallas in *Ep.* 7.29 and 8.6⁶³), but often he focuses on less official, more private qualities and activities (*e.g.* his description of the daily activities of Spurinna in *Ep.* 3.1, those of his uncle in 3.5, and his own daily life in 9.36 and 9.40).⁶⁴ Pliny not infrequently presents his own conduct, both private and public, as a model for his reader (*e.g.* *Ep.* 1.18, 1.23, 2.6, 3.18.1-3, 6.27, 7.1, 7.33).

The majority of exemplary figures in Pliny's letters are not the Republican heroes who have formed the focus of much recent work on exemplarity, but are instead near contemporary figures who allow Pliny to reflect upon modes of living and acting in the current social and political circumstances. Pliny's use of contemporary figures, along with similar practices in other writers stretching back to Cicero and including Seneca, Horace, Ovid (especially in the exilic poetry), and Martial, demonstrates a vibrant use of contemporary *exempla* operating in addition to the traditional set.

⁶⁰ Cf. Goldberg (1999) 227-28 on Regulus's career and the tendentious nature of Pliny's attacks on his character and oratory.

⁶¹ Cf. also *Ep.* 5.8, addressed to Capito himself. Pliny's letters on Capito are discussed in sections 4.1 and 4.2.

⁶² This example is complicated somewhat by the youth of Cottius, whose statue is more an honor and consolation for his father than a monument to the young man himself. Pliny's language suggests that Cottius's honor is more a reflection of the forestalled potential of his life than a commemoration of anything he actually accomplished in his short life. Pliny's praise for the young man both here and at *Ep.* 3.10 provides an interesting contrast with his mockery of Regulus's effusive attempts to commemorate his own dead son at *Ep.* 4.7.

⁶³ For discussions of Pliny's criticism of Pallas's honors see Bartsch (1994) 174-75 and Roller (2001) 270-71.

⁶⁴ See also Henderson (2002) 58-66 on *Ep.* 3.1 and 69-102 on *Ep.* 3.5.

By basing moral judgment on particular instances that refer not so much to reified abstract concepts as simply to other particular actions, Roman exemplarity creates a moralist discourse that can readily adapt itself to any particular set of circumstances while nevertheless maintaining a sense of coherence with a stable tradition. The ability to tailor evidence for particularist arguments while avoiding cognitive dissonance constitutes a central strength of the exemplary mode of argument. Essentially, by emphasizing individual cases over idealist definitions, the use of *exempla* enables social actors to utilize confirmation bias as a means to project an advantageous interpretation of both tradition and the current circumstances without risking contradiction when judged against a stable rule. This pragmatic approach to understanding human actions is almost custom tailored to allow those who use it not only to find evidence to confirm their own points of view, but also to assemble such evidence to appeal to others. Consequently such a deployment of examples defines a mode of moral and practical argument that presents situational adaptability within a discourse of traditional stability. It is, in fact, the process of reasoning through *exempla* rather than the specific content, identity or meaning of those *exempla* that remains constant over time. Roman traditionalism thus is here expressed through a traditional method of interpretation rather than through an authoritative canon of traditional judgments.

0.4: Outline of Chapters.

This dissertation expands our picture of Roman exemplarity by focusing on *exempla* as they are used at particular moments to construct arguments, not as cultural artifacts with a stable history beyond the moment of citation. The following chapters do not offer an exhaustive outline of the practice of exemplarity, but rather seek to frame, supplement and complicate the current scholarly discourse by exploring several of the most prominent — and sometimes rather unexpected — uses of *exempla*. Individual

chapters respond to various assumptions that underlie the models proposed by Hölkeskamp, Roller and others. For example, I demonstrate that spectacular actions do not constitute a necessary element of exemplarity in a couple ways: in chapter 2, I examine the seemingly paradoxical idea of nameless or anonymous *exempla* which emphasize the action itself in place of the actor, and, in chapter 3, I discuss how authors use examples of everyday activities to illustrate ideas of general fallibility or shared humanity. Instead of focusing on the manipulation of repeatedly cited instances in a series of different texts, I construct my argument around patterns in which authors deploy *exempla*. Each of the following chapters centers on an idea or tactic for using examples that reveals an facet of the practice that has received little attention in the earlier, content-focused studies of Roman exemplarity.

The first chapter, “*Exempla* as Arguments from Comparison,” lays the groundwork for my study. I begin from Quintilian’s discussion of *exempla* as a method of argument. This is the most extensive individual treatment of examples from a Roman writer on rhetoric. He provides a broad and flexible definition of term as the citation of a narrative to support an argument (*Inst.* 5.11.6). Quintilian links the *exemplum* to many other forms of comparison. Building on this discussion, I illustrate how the narrative flexibility of the *exemplum* allows authors an equivalent flexibility in constructing ethical arguments. This quality of the narrative form ensures social actors the opportunity to mold ‘tradition’ to conform with their current needs. Through this device, authors are enabled to represent interpretations based in their local time and circumstances as continuations of a stable tradition.

In the second chapter, “Anonymous *Exempla*,” I push back against the previous scholarly emphasis on spectacular action and monumental commemoration in theories of exemplarity. I focus first on anonymous or nameless *exempla*, in particular those in which the author neither wants nor needs the audience to know the exemplary actor’s name. Such examples, although they lose the opportunity to use the cultural authority of

the actors, possess other advantages. For instance, by suppressing the name, they may make the *exemplum* a more effective illustration of a purportedly universal idea or, in the case of negative examples, they may avoid giving offense to the subject of the narrative. In such *exempla*, the nameless actors become almost stock figures. This movement toward abstraction draws such examples close to the form of declamation themes and fables. In the later sections of the chapter, I argue that these three forms of narrative — anonymous *exempla*, declamations and fables — form a network in which they each influence the others. Exemplary materials provide the basis for some declamations and fables. The creative arguments speakers create in their declamations may filter back into their source material. Authors may also use fully fictional stock figures to supply exemplary material, as Cicero does when he introduces comic fathers as models for behavior in his defense of Caelius (*Cael.* 37-38). The narratives of declamations and fables also establish patterns into which observed materials may be fitted to create *exempla*. The interaction between these different forms of narrative demonstrates the permeable boundary between fiction and factual material that authors may manipulate in constructing their arguments.

The third chapter, “Illustrating Moderation, Tolerance and Social Authority,” shifts the emphasis in characterizing exemplarity away from the strict idea of moral judgment, that is, the idea that all *exempla* are assigned to a moral category in which they are judged either good or bad. I demonstrate how authors deploy examples to militate against moral judgment by illustrating human fallibility through representative instances. My discussion focuses on rhetorical tactics used to avoid or prevent judgment. As these illustrations often present their actors in a rather negative light, authors may deploy anonymous *exempla* in constructing such arguments. I also demonstrate how such illustrations may argue for similarity across other divisions. For instance, authors use illustrative examples to suggest unity across class boundaries.

In the final chapter, “*Exempla* as Emblems,” I turn to the use of well-known, authoritative figures as suggestive emblems rather than as fully activated role models. Unlike the other uses of *exempla* that I describe, this emblematic form emphasizes the actors rather than the actions. I argue that Romans made use of superficial connections to famous figures in order to claim that those figures illustrate something about themselves. These connections avoid detailed comparison in favor of simply asserting a relationship of emulation. Such connections relied on the assumption that people should imitate behaviors that they approve in order to claim these emblems as models for those who display them, whether or not any evidence supports such a claim. Thus aristocrats could claim that the statues in their art collections demonstrated their own good character, or that publishing a laudatory biography provided a means of imitating the subject of that biography. In the later sections of this chapter, I describe how large collections of exemplary figures deployed the same occlusion of narrative content in building impressionistic depictions of abstract ideas.

Exempla as Arguments from Comparison

The Roman use of examples is notable less for its peculiarities than its pervasiveness and expansiveness. Thinking and arguing through *exempla* imbues a Roman's engagement with the world. As a consequence the impulse to reason through particular instances, to compare the effects of various acts energizes decision-making and analysis in both the practical and ethical spheres. This pattern infuses the social and political world of Rome, coloring thought-patterns in nearly every area of Roman life—both those we would expect and those we might not. The stress Romans laid on understanding the world through *exempla* creates an inexorable seepage into any and all forms of discussion. The centrality of exemplarity to the Roman worldview cannot permit this manner of intellectual engagement to remain neatly confined to some separate reservoir of cultural knowledge; analogical reflection through examples leaks into and saturates every stream and current of thought.

The diffusion of this form of reasoning does of course produce some concepts recognizable as distinctively Roman. Most prominent is the idolization and emulation of historical culture heroes, perceived as representing a tradition collectively identified as the *mos maiorum*. But singling out this one specific peculiarity of Roman exemplarity for study risks obscuring its wider engagement in the thought world of Rome. At its source exemplary thought functions by the process of comparison. Building on observations and memories, exemplary patterns of thought configure contexts and perceptions of tradition through the juxtaposition of particularities. Any available material might become grist for the mill of analogical reasoning. The acts of political, military and moral heroes are merely the most obvious and identifiable objects of this process of reasoning. Understanding the process of comparison then is the most fundamental element for understanding the Roman use of *exempla*.

Ethical arguments built on structural analogies between particular actions allow a great deal of flexibility in their application. In this chapter I focus on the rhetorical understanding and use of *exempla* that allowed Roman speakers and authors consciously to manipulate such material in opportunistic ways while nonetheless presenting their arguments as gestures toward a stable tradition. This discussion focuses on the core processes and tendencies that characterize exemplary thought. In the first section of this chapter, I examine the rhetorical discussions on the use of *exempla* to lay the groundwork for the remainder of my discussion. In particular, Quintilian's chapter on *exempla* (5.11) provides us with a flexible and broadly applicable means of treating exemplarity as a species of comparison. The second section describes how the emphasis on particular instances enables speakers and writers to manipulate the terms and context of comparison by recasting the narrative framework to their best advantage. Finally, I argue that the plasticity of memories allows social or political actors to present a version of tradition which accords with their immediate rhetorical purpose or ideological desiderata. By seeing comparison as the motive force of exemplarity we may better comprehend the diffusion of this habit of thought throughout the Roman mental world.

1.1: Comparison as a Source of Flexibility in Arguments from *Exempla*.

Quintilian gives a broad and flexible definition of the *exemplum* that provides a useful starting point for this discussion: "*exemplum*, that is the citation of an event that has happened, or one treated as if it has happened, that is useful for making what you are arguing convincing" (*exemplum, id est rei gestae aut ut gestae utilis ad persuadendum id quod intenderis commemoratio*, 5.11.6). This definition identifies several essential features of an *exemplum*: it consists of a (1) narrative, whether alluded to or directly reported, (2) of some action or event (3) used to supplement the discourse within which it is embedded. The definition has received relatively little critical treatment. Skidmore's

brief discussion of Quintilian's approach is fairly typical of the general trend, focusing almost entirely on the brief impressionistic comments from books one and twelve about the use of *exempla* in education but ignoring the detailed technical discussion of their actual use in book five.⁶⁵ Among discussions of rhetorical definitions, only Gazich, who is particularly interested in Quintilian's contribution to rhetorical theory in this area, engages in an extensive study of this material.⁶⁶

The term *exemplum* of course can refer to a number of different social, intellectual and linguistic phenomena, including artistic models, legal precedents, models of behavior, and acts of historical figures.⁶⁷ Critics have often reacted to this term by narrowing the definition of what really counts as an *exemplum* or sectioning off a selection of historical *exempla* that adhere to certain criteria. Typically they select their evidence by concentrating on the content of *exempla*. By carving out a particular type or types critics enable themselves to create a more focused picture of a particular social or intellectual phenomenon, but at the same time they introduce a certain degree of circularity to their arguments, in that their chosen definitions guide the conclusions.

Earlier examinations of Roman *exempla* have focused on the actors or events used as examples as if they could effectively function as independent units of thought. It is important to note here that modern scholars have typically assumed or created definitions of *exemplum* that insist on precise distinctions between parts of the ancient usage. Litchfield, for example, in his seminal article explicitly announces that he has created a category of *exempla virtutum moralium* ("examples of moral virtues") that

⁶⁵ Skidmore (1996) 22-25. Only Skidmore (1996) 87 cites anything from book 5, and there it is only to a comment about the utility of "argument from unlike" for exhortation (Quint. *Inst.* 5.11.10).

⁶⁶ Gazich (1990) 97-141. Cf. Alewell (1914) 24-26. Stemmler (2000), who is primarily interested in Republican understandings of the device, makes brief references to Quintilian only when necessary to supplement the material in Cicero and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*.

⁶⁷ *OLD* s.v. supplies nine separate definitions. *TLL* s.v. divides its definitions into four major categories, most having multiple sub-types. See also Chaplin (2000) 138, n. 4 on the range of meaning covered by *exemplum*.

cannot be identified within our ancient sources as a distinctive class.⁶⁸ Karl-Joachim Hölkeskamp, despite the prominence of *exempla* in the title of his 1996 article “*Exempla und mos maiorum*,” does not actually introduce *exempla* as a category of interest until nearly halfway through his discussion.⁶⁹ Instead he progresses from the modern concept of “collective memory” through the profusion of monuments within the city of Rome to the individual deeds and actors that those monuments commemorated. Only then does he introduce *exemplum* as a theoretical term, using it to describe particular well-known acts or actors and linking them explicitly to the social establishment of moral principles.⁷⁰ Michael Stemmler attempts to discover some quality that would define a specifically Roman type of *exemplum*. To this end, he seizes on brief references to *auctoritas* in two extant definitions of the term.⁷¹ The close attention that Stemmler gives to the element of *auctoritas* in these passages, however, mistakes a potential advantage of a subtype for a theoretically significant distinction between divergent types. Contrasting this emphasis with Aristotelian treatments of this form of argument, he argues for two separate understandings of *exempla*: a Greek conception that saw instances as building blocks for logical argument and a Roman version that emphasized the authority and normative power of historical examples.⁷²

⁶⁸ Litchfield (1914) 8. See p. 25 for a more detailed discussion of his chosen criteria for filtering what is or is not an *exemplum*.

⁶⁹ Hölkeskamp (1996) 312 presents the first use of the term *exempla* as an important element in his discussion. Previous to this, the word only appears in the title and once as an unremarked part of a list of various historical materials quoted from various passages of Cicero, p. 309. And even this quotation does not appear until nearly a third of the way through his argument.

⁷⁰ Hölkeskamp (1996) 312.

⁷¹ Stemmler (2000), esp. 151-67. He relies particularly on two brief statements about *exempla*, one from Cicero that includes *auctoritas* as one possible basis for an *exemplum* (*Exemplum est quod rem auctoritate aut casu alicuius hominis aut negotii confirmat aut infirmit, De Inv.* 49), the other from the Auctor ad Herennium that instead stresses the author (*auctor*) of the source (*Exemplum est alicuius facti aut dicti praeteriti cum certi auctoris nomine propositio, ad Herr.* 4.62).

⁷² Stemmler (2000) 157-58. See section 1.3 below for more extensive discussion of the relationship between *exempla* and the power of tradition and the *mos maiorum*.

Many scholars have adduced Valerius Maximus's collection of famous words and deeds (*facta ac dicta*) as a model for descriptions of how Romans regarded *exempla*. Alewell devotes a full chapter to Valerius and other compilers of *exempla*.⁷³ David places the genre to which Valerius's work belonged as a feature central to the basic understanding of Roman exemplarity.⁷⁴ Maslakov treats the collection as fully representative of the rhetorical understanding of *exempla* and emblematic of the tenuous and imprecise grasp average Romans had of their collective past.⁷⁵ While the compilation is certainly different from many other genres focused on historical content, Valerius himself presents his work not so much as an intellectual or moral touchstone, but more as a convenient reference guide: "The deeds and words worthy of memory of the city of Rome and of foreign peoples, which in other authors are too widely scattered to be learned quickly, I have decided to select from famous authors and to set in order so that the trouble of a long search would be forestalled for those wishing to gather instances" (*Urbis Romae exterarumque gentium facta simul ac dicta memoratu digna, quae apud alios latius diffusa sunt quam ut breviter cognosci possunt, ab illustribus electa auctoribus digerere constitui, ut documenta sumere volentibus longae inquisitionis labor absit, 1.praef.1*).

My approach to Roman *exempla* represents a reversal of the typical patterns followed by scholars of Roman exemplarity. My use of the term *exemplum* resists two common tendencies of modern scholarship on the subject: (1) the insistence on an excessively hermetic separation between the *exemplum* and other forms of comparison, and (2) a conception of a fixed canon of historical *exempla* as a reified thing with a continuous existence outside the social and literary contexts within which examples are cited. I focus less on the possible content of *exempla* and more on the process of

⁷³ Alewell (1914) 36-53.

⁷⁴ David (1980) 67.

⁷⁵ Maslakov (1984) 445, 454-55

comparison in which they are used. I assume that, outside of a few technical contexts, Romans did not insist on precise, inflexible definitions but instead made use of various understandings of what *exempla* were and how they could function. The precise character of an exemplary citation depends far more on internal factors within a particular text—its context and the purposes to which it was deployed—than on any pre-existing external criteria.

Ancient rhetorical treatments of *exempla* typically link them with other forms of comparison and often discuss the effects produced by the similarity between a particular case and a well-known event.⁷⁶ The process of comparison between two narrative instances constitutes the primary engine of exemplarity in Roman legal and social discourse. In order to understand the function of *exempla* in Roman culture, I start foremost from the actual use of *exempla* in their contexts rather than focusing on the content of the particular excerpted narratives. I shift the focus away from attempting to explain *exempla* as independent phenomena towards understanding them within their typical contexts. I therefore treat the difference between *exemplum* and *similitudo* or other types of comparison as primarily involving a movement along a qualitative scale, rather than as a concrete distinction between objectively measurable types.⁷⁷ *Exempla* were embedded within broader contexts, exerting their intellectual or persuasive force on, and deriving their meaning from, the actions—actual or proposed—with which they were compared.

Quintilian's attitude toward such proofs seems eminently practical rather than dogmatic. What emerges from his discussion is less an affirmation of the stable moral

⁷⁶ For Republican examples, cf. Cic. *De Inv.* 1.49; *Top.* 41-45; *Ad Herennium* 4.62.

⁷⁷ Gazich (1990) 112 notes that Quintilian's treatment of the subject has a tendency to swing back and forth between specific and broad definitions of *exemplum*, between a comprehensive understanding of comparisons and distinctions between sub-types; 112-120 discusses the overlap and distinction between the terms "*exemplum*" and "*similitudo*." Cf. Chaplin (2000) 138, n. 5 discussing the mutability of the term *exemplum* and the inconsistent usage made of it by both Cicero and Quintilian.

force of previous models than an encouragement to careful parsing of the details and suitability of particular precedents. Quintilian's chapter on *exempla* (5.11) — as well as the surrounding chapters that discuss other technical proofs and their refutation — emphasizes the malleable force of arguments built upon similarities or dissimilarities. As I discussed at the opening of this section, his definition of *exemplum* resists an overly detailed and schematized subdivision of types. While he recognizes that various attempts to define particular types of comparison describe recognizable types, he nevertheless insists on the overall unity of proofs utilizing similarities. The opening of the chapter recognizes two definitions of comparison that overlap in nomenclature, one broad, another specific:

The Greeks call the third sort, out of those things that are introduced into a case from outside, *παράδειγμα*. They use this name both generally for every comparison of similar things and particularly for those things that rely on the authority of *res gestae*. Our authors typically prefer to name the former type, which is labeled *parabole* by the Greeks, *similitudo*, the latter *exemplum*, although the latter also is a simile, the former an *exemplum*. So that we may more easily explain the subject, let us understand that each type is a *παράδειγμα* and let us use the term *exemplum*.

Tertium genus, ex iis quae extrinsecus adducuntur in causam, Graeci vocant παράδειγμα, quo nomine et generaliter usi sunt in omni similitudine et specialiter in iis quae rerum gestarum auctoritate nituntur. Nostri fere similitudinem vocare maluerunt quod ab illis parabole dicitur, hoc alterum exemplum, quamquam et hoc simile est, illud exemplum. Nos, quo facilius propositum explicemus, utrumque παράδειγμα esse credamus et ipsi appellemus exemplum.

(5.11.1-2)

Thus, while Quintilian recognizes that comparisons may be classified into those that draw on history and those that don't, he treats that distinction as more nominal than functional.⁷⁸ In particular, the concession that *similitudo* and *exemplum* possess much the same character as one another highlights the centrality of comparison to this conception of *exempla*. As Gazich notes, "Quintilian is thoroughly conscious of speaking about an *exemplum* not simply as the citation of an ancient event, but as an

⁷⁸ Gazich (1990) 106-108 discusses this passage.

argumentative proof that exactly compares, on the basis of a simile (*similium adpositione*), two events, the particular one under examination and the exemplary one.”⁷⁹

Quintilian repeats similar preferences for broader definitions several times in this and the following chapter, insisting on the general unity of these types against attempts at minute classification into sub-types (e.g. 5.11.30-31, 34; 5.12.1, 15-17). He views the division into different types as reflecting qualitative rather than functional differences: all types perform the same functions, but each may have particular advantages or disadvantages. For example, he identifies the citation of *res gestae* as the “most powerful” (*potentissimum*) of the types belonging to the broader category of similarity (5.11.6). Less particularized comparisons are nearly as effective: “similarity has nearly the force of an *exemplum*, especially one which is drawn without any coloring of metaphor from things that are almost equal” (*Proximas exempli vires habet similitudo, praecipueque illa quae ducitur citra ullam tralationum mixturam ex rebus paene paribus*, 5.11.22). Fables like those of Aesop, however, “are accustomed to draw the minds particularly of rustics and the ignorant who both listen to things that have been made up more simply and, having been captured by pleasure, consent easily to the things they enjoy” (*ducere animos solent praecipue rusticorum et imperitorum, qui et simplicius quae ficta sunt audiunt, et capti voluptate facile iis quibus delectantur consentiunt*, 5.11.19).⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Gazich (1990) 107 “Quintiliano è ben consapevole di parlare di *exemplum* non semplicemente come della citazione di un fatto antico, ma della prova argumentative che appunto confronta, in base ad una somiglianza (*similium adpositione*), due fatti, quello particolare in esame e quello esemplare.”

⁸⁰ Cicero gives a ranked list of types of comparison at *Part. or.* 40: *Maximam autem fidem facit ad similitudinem veri primum exemplum, deinde introducta rei similitudo; fabula etiam non numquam, etsi sit incredibilis, tamen homines commovet*. Gazich (1990) 82-83 discusses this passage and others indicating similarities between *exemplum* and *similitudo* in various technical works of Cicero. I discuss the relationship between *exempla* and fables in section 2.3 of the following chapter.

Quintilian's definition of *exemplum* defines both content and purpose in broad terms: "an *exemplum*, that is the citation of an event that has happened or one treated as if it has happened useful for making what you are arguing convincing" (*exemplum, id est rei gestae aut ut gestae utilis ad persuadendum id quod intenderis commemoratio*, 5.11.6). He allows a broad understanding of what might count as an exemplary event: he only describes it as "an event that has happened" (*rei gestae*) or even an event that is merely "treated as if it has happened" (*ut gestae*). The second term in particular implies that non-historical deeds might be included in this category.⁸¹ Quintilian does not identify any more specific quality such as authority, antiquity or familiarity as necessary to defining an instance as an *exemplum*. Such qualities may certainly increase the impact of an *exemplum*, but Quintilian at least does not view such qualities as core elements of the rhetorical figure. This lack of specificity allows the boundary between historical *exempla* and fables to become blurred.⁸² (I discuss this phenomenon further in chapter 2.)

Users of *exempla* mold their arguments not only through the selection of particular instances, but also through the selection of the point of comparison. For example, Chaplin notes an interesting feature of *exempla* that serve as precedents in passages of both Livy and Tacitus: constitutional or legal innovations can provide *exempla* for further innovations.⁸³ The similarity between the *exempla* and the proposed changes in these cases is not always the content of the changes themselves, but may simply consist of the simple fact of change itself. Canuleius, arguing for opening the

⁸¹ Cf. Gazich (1990) 112, 115 discusses historical examples as the *primary* type, rather than the *only* type. At 115 he discusses the shift from the definition offered at *ad Herennium* 4.62 in particular. In contrast Alewell (1914) 26 treats historical *exempla* as the only possible type.

⁸² Gazich (1990) 115 suggests that the list of various exemplary materials that Quintilian advises the orator to be familiar with at 12.4, including both old and new *exempla*, daily events and poetic fictions, provides a good idea of what the phrase *rei gestae aut ut gestae* would encompass.

⁸³ Chaplin (2000) 159-60.

consulship to plebeians and allowing intermarriage between patricians and plebeians, adduces Rome's foreign-born kings and several religious and constitutional innovations in support of his two proposals (Livy 4.3.1-5.6). Likewise Tacitus's version of Claudius's speech urging the addition of Gauls to the Senate make the same argument: "All things, conscript fathers, which now are believed to be extremely ancient, were once new: plebeian magistracies followed patrician ones, Latin magistracies followed plebeian ones, those of all the other peoples of Italy followed the Latin ones. This too shall become ancient, and what today we consider using *exempla*, one day will be among the *exempla*" (*Omnia, patres conscripti, quae nunc vetutissima creduntur, nova fuere: plebeii magistratus post patricos, Latini post plebeios, ceterarum Italiae gentium post Latinos. inveterascet hoc quoque, et quod hodie exemplis tuemur, inter exempla erit, Ann. 11.24*).⁸⁴

The logic of comparison may even allow specific instances when an event did not occur to function as counterfactual *exempla*.⁸⁵ Roman speakers and writers often refocus the meaning of exemplary events through the analogies drawn between the earlier and later events.⁸⁶ Sometimes they even introduce "*exempla*" that have no independent existence prior to the moment of their citation. These examples may be *ad hoc* creations derived from an analogy with a topic currently under discussion. Such *exempla* may be tangentially connected to a well-known event, but have not previously been a focus of interest. For example, in his defense of T. Annius Milo, Cicero uses the absence of violent popular reactions to the actual, alleged or attempted assassinations of several men—M. Drusus, Scipio Aemilianus, M. Papirius, Pompey and himself—to ridicule the popular

⁸⁴ Chaplin (2000) 159, n. 59 discusses this passage. The original speech using similar reasoning is preserved (*CIL* 13.1668).

⁸⁵ See also Van der Blom (2010) 135 on references to non-existence of *exempla*; she emphasizes the use of such examples in prosecution and invective speeches.

⁸⁶ Cf. Roller (2004) 34-35 on a speech in Dio Cassius (31.1) comparing Marc Antony to Horatius Cocles and Cloelia solely on the basis of their clothing (or lack thereof), rather than any resemblance between their actions. Roller (2004) 35 labels this type of linkage the "principle of performative analogy."

reaction to the death of Clodius (*Mil.* 16-20). Although these deaths and assaults were widely known, Cicero focuses instead on the public reaction. His central point in this comparison is the lack of an *exemplum* for the special tribunal occasioned by Clodius's death: recounting the public grief at the death of Scipio, he asks, "Was any inquiry about the death of Africanus decreed for this reason? Certainly not." (*num igitur ulla quaestio de Africani morte lata est? certe nulla, Mil.* 16) In this passage, a group of events that didn't happen serve as counterfactual *exempla*. These non-events only take recognizable form through analogy with the special court established to try Milo for Clodius's murder. The identities of the victims used here also play a role in the broader argument. Three of the five men—Papirius, Pompey and Cicero—were victims, whether actual or intended, of Clodius himself. Through his choice of counterfactual instances, Cicero reinforces his attack Clodius as a thug who receives special consideration never granted to his victims and whose murder, consequently, is beneficial for the Republic.

Let us return again to Quintilian's capsule definition of *exemplum* for a moment: "*exemplum*, that is the citation of an event that has happened or one treated as if it has happened useful for making what you are arguing convincing" (*exemplum, id est rei gestae aut ut gestae utilis ad persuadendum id quod intenderis commemoratio*, 5.11.6). The final point to notice is the attention Quintilian gives to the purpose of the citation: it must be "useful for making what you are proposing convincing" (*utilis ad persuadendum quod intenderis*). This requirement firmly anchors the identity of an instance as an *exemplum* to some immediate persuasive purpose.⁸⁷ The definition Cicero offers in *De Inventione* likewise emphasizes the importance of persuasion to the deployment of *exempla*: "An *exemplum* is a thing that strengthens or weakens the subject by means of

⁸⁷ Cf. Gazich (1990) 131.

the authority or happenstance of some person or event” (*Exemplum est quod rem auctoritate aut casu alicuius hominis aut negoti confirmat aut infirmat*, 1.49).⁸⁸

Quintilian emphasizes the careful parsing of details against definite moral content in his discussion of *exempla*. His initial introduction of comparisons indicates that the points of comparison must be carefully chosen: “Therefore we must consider whether it is similar completely or in part, so that from it we may mention either everything or just what will be useful” (*Intuendum igitur est totum simile sit an ex parte, ut aut omnia ex eo sumamus aut quae utilia erunt*, 5.11.6). Several times Quintilian cautions his reader to be careful in the choice and deployment of *exempla* in order to insure that the terms of comparison are valid and the logical progression does not lead somewhere unintended. “The appearances of similarities, however, are apt to be deceptive, and therefore judgment must be applied in these matters. For though a new ship is more useful than an old one, the same is not true of friendship. Though a woman who is generous with her money should be praised, the same is not true of a woman who is generous with her body. In these examples the words ‘old’ and ‘generous’ are similar, the meanings far different” (*Solent tamen fallere similitudinum species, ideoque adhibendum est eis iudicium. Neque enim ut navis utilior nova quam vetus, sic amicitia, vel ut laudanda quae pecuniam suam pluribus largitur, ita quae formam. Verba sunt in his similia vetustatis et largitionis, vis quidem longe diversa*, 5.11.26).⁸⁹ Quintilian suggests that arguments from dissimilarity or contraries are often effective at disproving such comparisons (5.11.35).

Quintilian’s advice on refuting *exempla* cited by an opponent provides a clear picture of how the value of a particular instance can be contested: “*Exempla* of events must be treated in various ways, if they are damaging: if they are very old, one may call

⁸⁸ See David (1980) 68-69, Gazich (1990) 82, and Stemmler (2000) 151-52 for discussion of this passage.

⁸⁹ Cf. Gazich (1990) 124.

them mythical, if they are undoubted, one may emphasize the dissimilarities; for it cannot happen that everything will be the same” (*Exempla rerum varie tractanda sunt, si nocebunt: quae si vetera erunt, fabulosa dicere licebit, si indubia, maxime quidem dissimilia; neque enim fieri potest ut paria sint omnia*, 5.13.24). To illustrate potential arguments against a damaging *exemplum*, Quintilian details a set of objections that could be mounted against a hypothetical speech using the example of Servilius Ahala to defend Scipio Nasica: “if after Tiberius Gracchus was killed [P. Scipio] Nasica were defended by the *exemplum* of [Servilius] Ahala by whom [Spurius] Maelius was killed, it would be stated that Maelius had been striving for kingship, but Gracchus only passed popular laws, that Ahala had been *magister equitum*, but Nasica was a private citizen” (*si Nasica post occisum Ti. Gracchum defendatur exemplo Ahalae a quo Maelius est interfectus, Maelium regni adfectatorem fuisse, a Graccho leges modo latas esse popularis, Ahalam magistrum equitum fuisse, Nasicam privatum esse dicatur*, 5.13.24).⁹⁰ This careful parsing of legal status and exact characterization of action demonstrates the tendentious nature of the similarities or dissimilarities highlighted by the hypothetical speaker. The contrasting characterization of Maelius and Gracchus is perhaps most revealing, given that the traditional story of Maelius identified the distribution of grain to the plebs as the primary evidence for his regal ambitions. The hypothetical argument suggested by Quintilian thus suppresses the details of the Ahala *exemplum* while concurrently insisting on only the most limited and straightforward account possible of Gracchus’s political activities.

Juxtaposing multiple analogical relationships may allow a speaker to manipulate a comparison between two persons even beyond what a direct analogy would allow. This tactic relies on carefully shifting the terms of comparison between the constituent pairs

⁹⁰ Interestingly within his list of examples of the major types of comparison Quintilian 5.11.12 quotes the opening of the *prosopopeia* at Cic. *Pro Mil.* 72 which uses the same two killings as *exempla* to defend the murder of Clodius.

within the multi-step analogy. The speaker may alternate between structural and categorical analogies in order to mold the cumulative effect. In the post-exilic speeches *pro Sestio* and *de Haruspicum Responsis*, Cicero uses a historical comparison within his discussion of the conflict between the *populares* and the *boni* in order to widen the apparent moral divide between the two groups. By juggling several comparisons — current *populares* versus current *boni*, current *populares* versus earlier *populares*, previous *populares* versus previous *boni* — he attempts to create the impression of an ever expanding divide between the two groups. These comparisons hinge on a few different features: the political positions and activities of the various groups, the popular reaction to each group, and the moral character of the various men, seen largely through the contrast between masculinity and effeminacy. Cicero disapprovingly contrasts the popular politicians of his own day with their predecessors. He subdivides the *populares* into two distinct groups: the earlier politicians who were merely bad for the Republic, and the current ones who are not only bad citizens, but also bad men. In these speeches, he describes the Gracchi and others as public minded, differing from the senatorial party of their own time, but receiving genuine support from the people.⁹¹ These men work through the voting assemblies, not through mobs of hired supporters (*Sest.* 105). Cicero generally approves the elements of their public *persona*, including both their speech and their bodily *habitus* that was the focus of oratorical training. In contrast to how he treats current *populares* such as Clodius, Cicero praises the oratorical abilities of the Gracchi and their immediate successors: his comments lament the misapplication of their talents rather than disparaging their skill.⁹² While the relationship between the early *populares* and the people focuses on their self-presentation — “men loved their name, their speech, their face, their walk” (*horum homines nomen, orationem, vultum, incessum amabant*,

⁹¹ Cf. the harsher presentation of C. Gracchus and Saturninus at e.g. *Rab. Perd.* 12-24.

⁹² E.g. *Secutus est C. Gracchus, quo ingenio, qua eloquentia, quanta vi, quanta gravitate dicendi! ut dolerent boni non illa tanta ornamenta ad meliorem mentem voluntatemque esse conversa* (*Har. Resp.* 41); cf. *Brut.* 103-4, 125-26.

Sest. 105) – the earlier *boni* in contrast “were not pleasant to the multitude” (*multitudini iucundi non erant*, *Sest.* 105). The influence of these “serious and great men” (*graves et magni homines*) relies on the more intangible notion of *auctoritas*. Cicero’s description of these two types of relationship with the people suggests that popular support derives from an affective basis. He thus defines the opposition between the two groups as a conflict between physical style and philosophical substance. He does not explicitly describe the appearance of the Gracchi and their successors, but the contrast he establishes between them and the *graves et magni homines* suggests that their *habitus* presented a more amiable effect than the severity of the supporters of the senate. This contrast suggests that those who adopt an amiable *persona* do so as a conscious tactic to court popular support while those who present themselves as severe and restrained are merely enacting the innate character of a Roman senator. Such a division is, of course, a false distinction: the severity of the *optimates* is as much as stylistic choice as the geniality of the *populares*.⁹³

Cicero uses public applause in the theater as another metric to reinforce the distinction in his comparison between the two types. While he describes applause for the *populares* with a simple statement of fact — “There was applause for them in the theater” (*his in theatro plaudebatur*, *Sest.* 105) — he highlights the negative connotations of such applause through the suspicions of the senatorial party: “indeed even if one of them received applause at some time, he was very afraid he had done something wrong” (*plausum vero etiam si quis eorum aliquando acceperat, ne quid peccasset pertimescebat*, *Sest.* 105). This account demonstrates a deep anxiety concerning the collective decisions of the general populace.⁹⁴ As a venue for evaluation of

⁹³ See Gunderson (2000) and Connolly (2007) 132-36 on the carefully trained and disciplined nature of the orator’s public *persona*.

⁹⁴ Connolly (2007) 234-36 discusses the problematic balance created by the orator’s use of emotion to persuade the populace at large. On the negative side, the interaction between the orator and his audience creates a “terrifying spectacle of the republican citizenry as a collective of unreason.”

political figures, the theater firmly links popular political activity with performance. The juxtaposition of comparisons between the senatorial party, the early *populares* and the *Clodiani* thus creates a threefold division based on the combination of masculinity and political orthodoxy. While he assigns the *optimates* of both the Gracchan era and his own time to the single category of right-thinking masculine men, he divides the politically objectionable *populares* between the Gracchi – personally upright, though politically suspect – and the *Clodiani* whom he represents as effeminate monsters.⁹⁵ The distinction between the political and the gendered components of these identities, however, is not so secure as this schematic outline suggests. As we have seen, in Cicero’s representation the political conflict between the senatorial party and the early *populares* already shades into a conflict between style and substance, suggesting that the masculine-effeminate opposition characteristic of the conflict with Clodius in Cicero’s rhetoric already underlies the battles between the Gracchi and their opponents. By shifting between the various comparisons that compose this discussion – *optimates* vs. Gracchi and Gracchi vs. *Clodiani* – Cicero reinforces the abuse of Clodius and his allies. The relatively composed and masculine demeanor of the Gracchi, Saturninus and the others allows Cicero to shift his portrayal of Clodius, Piso, Gabinius and his other opponents even further down the represented scale of gender conformity than a simple opposition between his own party and the *Clodiani* would. In his attacks on his political opponents, Cicero shifts repeatedly back and forth between scales of “proper” political position and gender performance. The combination of multiple analogies in the *pro Sestio* and other such speeches aims less at creating a coherent evaluative framework than at manipulating a series of relative evaluations, linked by juxtaposition rather than logical coherence. Slipping between subtly different presentations of a common point of

⁹⁵ Unacknowledged within these comparisons is a potential fourth category: the effeminate conservative. The alleged character of the current *populares* is depicted perhaps most vividly in the capsule biography and description of Clodius at *de Haruspicum Responsis* 41-44.

comparison allows the orator to build a more damning contrast between the contemporary senatorial party and their popular opponents than a direct comparison would.

1.2: The Standard of Credibility Enables the Manipulation of Narrative.

In addition to the choice of objects and terms for comparison, speakers and writers are also able to manipulate the material that comprises each of those terms. In this section I argue that the character of *exempla* as narratives plays a vital role in the methods authors use to build arguments with them. The form in which an exemplary citation appears has important implications. Quintilian's identification of the content of an *exemplum* as "the citation of an event that has happened or one treated as if it has happened" (*rei gestae aut ut gestae... commemoratio*, 5.11.6) implies that *exempla* are built upon narrative content.⁹⁶ Sometimes a speaker should narrate the full content of an *exemplum*; sometimes he should simply allude to it (5.11.15-16). Quintilian indicates that the choice between these alternatives depends on three elements: familiarity, utility and taste. "These things will be reported according to how well they are known, or how their usefulness for the case or suitability demands" (*Haec ita dicentur prout nota erunt vel utilitas causae aut decor postulabit*, 5.11.16). Gazich notes the close similarity between the definition that Quintilian provides for *narratio* and the one, cited above, for *exemplum*: "narration is the exposition of an event that has happened or one treated as if it has happened that is useful for persuasion" (*narratio est rei factae aut ut factae utilis ad persuadendum expositio*, 4.2.31).⁹⁷ Perhaps the most salient difference is the shift between the central terms used to describe the two elements: "exhibition" (*expositio*)

⁹⁶ Cf. Quint. *Inst.* 4.2.17 where he includes among the types of narrative relevant to but not intrinsic to the case itself those related *exempli gratia*.

⁹⁷ Gazich (1990) 131-32. Cf. "*exemplum*, that is the citation of an event that has happened or one treated as if it has happened useful for making what you are arguing convincing" (*exemplum, id est rei gestae aut ut gestae utilis ad persuadendum id quod intenderis commemoratio*, 5.11.6).

and “citation” (*commemoratio*). While a *narratio* must in general relate the narrative of the event in question, the citation (*commemoratio*) may simply allude to the exemplary narrative, provided that is well known.

Various techniques allow speakers and writers to manipulate the effect of the anecdotes that they deploy as *exempla*. It is important to recognize that credibility rather than veracity serves as the standard for the judgment of narratives—and consequently for the judgment of *exempla*.⁹⁸ An audience’s acceptance of both the details of events and moral or pragmatic judgments about those events depends upon the credibility of the narrative. The rhetorical device of *distinctio* – drawing tendentious distinctions between near synonyms with divergent ethical connotations – provides a useful point of entry to thinking about the credibility of moral judgments. The difference between virtuous frugality and vicious miserliness, for example, is often little more than a matter of narrative framing.⁹⁹ The selection, arrangement or even invention of tangential details may color the effect of a particular event.¹⁰⁰

Anecdotes that may be deployed as *exempla* sometimes display dramatic shifts in meaning from one telling to another. The distinction between different interpretations is often a matter of focus and framing. For example, Cicero and Suetonius report the action of the Vestal Virgin Claudia, who rides in her father’s chariot during his triumph and prevents a tribune from interfering with it, in order to illustrate very different qualities. For Cicero, speaking in the voice of Appius Claudius Caecus, she serves as a model of

⁹⁸ Quint. *Inst.* 4.2.52-60 discusses credibility as one of the three essential virtues of narrative. Cf. Cic. *De Inv.* 1.28-29.

⁹⁹ Cf., for example, Quintilian’s remarks on the substitution of positive and pejorative adjectives at 3.7.25 and 5.13.26.

¹⁰⁰ *E.g.* the coloring lent by the location of Tiberius’s death in Lucullus’s villa, or Augustus’s death in his father’s bed, cf. Gowing (2005) 65.

filial piety to contrast with the target of his speech, Clodia Metelli (*Cael.* 34).¹⁰¹ Suetonius on the other hand uses Claudia to illustrate the arrogance of the *gens Claudia* and their contempt for the Roman *plebs* (*Tib.* 2).¹⁰² Cicero focuses on the relationship between father and daughter. Claudia embraces her father — *patrem complexa* (*Cael.* 34) — narrowing the picture to the father-daughter pair riding in the chariot. The tribune appears solely as an external threat; the orator does not describe his motives, only his physical aggression — “she did not allow her father to be dragged for his chariot by the hostile tribune of the people” (*patrem... ab inimico tribuno plebei de curru detrahi passa non est*, *Cael.* 34). Claudia’s reason for riding in the chariot is not revealed, only her defense of her father. With one additional detail Suetonius expands the frame to reveal the external political situation. Claudia’s act in fact helps her father (or brother) celebrate a triumph forbidden by the people — *iniussu populi* (*Tib.* 2) — and her presence provides religious sanction to prevent the tribunes from enforcing the will of the people — “so that it would not be possible for any of the tribunes to forbid or interfere” (*ne vetare aut intercedere fas cuiquam tribunorum esset*, *Tib.* 2). Where Cicero prioritizes the relationship between father and daughter, Suetonius highlights the conflict between the Claudian family and the people. Both of these interpretations may exist simultaneously: Cicero reproduces the attitude of the *gens Claudia* and those sympathetic to them, Suetonius that of the common people. Neither version then

¹⁰¹ *Nonne te, si nostrae imagines viriles non commovebant, ne progenies quidem mea, Q. illa Claudia, aemulam domesticae laudis in gloria muliebri esse admonebat, non virgo illa Vestalis Claudia, quae patrem complexa triumphantem ab inimico tribuno plebei de curru detrahi passa non est* (Cicero, *pro Caelio* 34). Cicero’s account of this anecdote appears within the *prosopopoeia* of Appius Claudius Caecus, using a series of *exempla* from the *gens Claudia* to castigate Appius’ descendant Clodia. Cf. Val. Max. 5.4.6, who gives a slightly different version of this story.

¹⁰² *Etiam uirgo Vestalis fratrem iniussu populi triumphantem ascenso simul curru usque in Capitolium prosecuta est, ne uetare aut intercedere fas cuiquam tribunorum esset* (Suetonius, *Tiberius* 2). Suetonius identifies the Vestal Claudia’s relative as her brother rather than her father as in the accounts of Cicero and Valerius.

produces an “official” authorized meaning, and likewise neither can be fully discounted.¹⁰³

The careful selection of vocabulary and narrative detail allows speakers to present persons and events in whatever way they feel will prove most effective for their arguments. They must conceal, however, the inherent flexibility of the narrative apparatus. Quintilian, for example, cautions that speakers must be careful to conceal their art in order to avoid arousing the judges’ suspicions (*e.g.* 4.2.58-59, 125-27). Speakers constantly mold their descriptions and arguments to reflect the assumptions of their audience, all the while acting as if they were presenting a stable face.¹⁰⁴ Citing “a certain closeness between virtues and vices” (*quaedam virtutibus ac vitiis vicinitas*, *Inst.* 3.7.25), Quintilian suggests that positive and pejorative synonyms can be substituted for one another as the speaker’s purpose dictates.¹⁰⁵ He takes care, however, to set what may initially appear to be strict limits on his ideal orator’s use of this practice: “And indeed the orator, that is the good man, will never do this, unless by chance he is led on by the general good” (*Quod quidem orator, id est vir bonus, numquam faciet, nisi forte communi utilitate ducetur*, 3.7.25). The qualification that Quintilian appends to his strong denial appears limiting, but by identifying the “general good” or “common utility” as the prerequisite for allowing this practice he leaves open a very wide field for the use for this sort of linguistic flexibility. His apparent injunction may even be read as little more than a *pro forma* protest that fails to disavow such opportunistic uses of language and ultimately has little other purpose than to insist that the moral authority of the

¹⁰³ Cf. Loutsch (1998) 33-35 who discusses variant traditions concerning Regulus’s capture by the Carthaginians.

¹⁰⁴ *E.g.* Corbeill (2004) 111-12 discusses Cicero’s varying use of the *popularis* label both against his opponents while speaking to the Senate and for himself while speaking to the people—*popularis consul* (*Leg. Agr.* 2.6-7, 9, 15, 102). Also cf. Santoro L’Hoir (1992) 28 on both the inconsistent application of *popularis* and similar context-driven shifts between the terms *vir* and *homo* in Cicero’s speeches.

¹⁰⁵ This thought appears multiple times in the *Institutio*, *e.g.* *est praeterea quaedam virtutum vitiorumque vicinia* (2.12.4) in a discussion of popular preferences for faulty oratory. On this practice, labeled *distinctio*, cf. Brink (1989) 480.

orator authorizes his use of such potentially deceptive devices. The orator's use of speech effects that threaten the reception of his speech as authoritative find defense in the moral character ascribed to the orator himself. Quintilian here calls upon the moral authority suggested by the definition of the orator as a "good man" (*vir bonus*) in order to ameliorate the ethical instability suggested by this discussion of linguistic flexibility. This *quaedam virtutibus ac vitiis vicinitas* presents a potential ethical crisis for Quintilian's *vir bonus*. Rather than resolving this crisis, however, he baldly asserts the ethical goodness of the ideal orator and thus justifies the speaker's manipulation of ethical boundaries through confidence in that goodness. A tendentious translation of Quintilian's caution might render his claim simply as "the orator will never do this, unless it is useful." The argument here assumes that, as a good man, the orator must have a good end in view and consequently that those ends justify his use of ethically dubious means.¹⁰⁶

On a more technical level, Quintilian applies this same attention to the language used in describing events to the refutation of opposing arguments. An orator should consider the effect of an opponent's words when quoting or paraphrasing them. "The manner in which an accuser has stated each thing is important to consider for this reason that, if he has spoken less effectively, his very words should be quoted; but if he has given a sharp and forceful speech, we should report the same matter with milder language" (*referre quo quidque accusator modo dixerit, huc pertinet ut, si est minus efficaciter elocutus, ipsa eius verba ponantur: si acri et vehementi fuerit usus oratione, eandem rem nostris verbis mitioribus proferamus*, 5.13.25). Here Quintilian again suggests the substitution of positive for pejorative near-synonyms in order to alter the characterization of the defendant: "If we must speak on behalf of a voluptuary: 'his lifestyle has been called a little too generous.' In the same way it will also be permitted to

¹⁰⁶ Gunderson (2000) 8 discusses the circularity of such formulations of oratory as the practice of good men.

call a man ‘thrifty’ instead of ‘mean,’ or ‘free-spoken’ instead of ‘abusive’” (*si pro luxurioso dicendum sit: ‘obiecta est paulo liberalior vita.’ Sic et pro sordido parcum, pro maledico liberum dicere licebit, 5.13.26*).¹⁰⁷ An orator must always be aware of what an opponent has said or might say. Quintilian even suggests that students should be rewarded as much for thinking up ideas damaging to their own cases as for discovering advantageous ones (5.13.44). The flexibility of language allows speakers and writers to manipulate the details and characterization of actors to confirm the picture they want to create.

In *Satire 1.3* Horace discusses the use of such distinctions either to alienate or to conciliate friends and relatives. He compares the relationship between friends to that between a father and son. In the satirist’s example, the father gives nicknames that indicate various physical shortcomings less harshly than the specific name: “A father calls a squinter ‘blink-eyed’ (*paetus*) and, if anyone has a too small son, he calls him ‘chick’ (*pullus*)” (*strabonem | appellat paetum pater, et pullum, male parvus | si cui filius est, S. 1.3.44-46*). Different problems with the legs receive the names “knock-kneed” (*varum, 47*) and “twisty-legged” (*scaurus, 48*). All four of these euphemisms — Paetus, Pullus, Varus and Scaurus — were also used as *cognomina* in famous families. The choice of these specific names may imply that such instances of Roman naming practices could function as *exempla* for this type of euphemism.¹⁰⁸ Horace suggests that one should label the character faults of one’s friends in the same fashion:

This man lives very parsimoniously: let him be called ‘thrifty’ (*frugi*). This man is tasteless and a little too boastful: he wants to appear agreeable to his friends. But he is very harsh and free-spoken beyond reason: let him be considered direct (*simplex*) and brave. He is very fierce: let him be counted among the spirited.

*parcius hic vivit: frugi dicatur. ineptus
et iactantior hic paulo est: concinnus amicis*

¹⁰⁷ Cf. also 4.2.77 on the use of such vocabulary substitutions in the narrative of a defense speech.

¹⁰⁸ See Corbeill (1996) 57-98 on Roman *cognomina*. Corbeill focuses on abusive names or names used or adapted for abuse.

*postulat ut videatur. at est truculentior atque
plus aequo liber: simplex fortisque habeatur.
caldior est: acris inter numeretur.*
(1.3.49-53)¹⁰⁹

As with the names for children, the first euphemism offered here, Frugi, was also the *cognomen* of an important family.¹¹⁰

Horace first introduces this idea through the commonplace of the lover's blindness to the faults of the love object.¹¹¹ He wishes that this beneficial mistake could extend to other areas of life: "I might wish that we made this mistake in friendship, and that virtue had given an honorable name to this mistake" (*vellem in amicitia sic erraremus, et isti | errori nomen virtus posuisset honestum*, 1.3.41-42). The younger Pliny, accused of exaggerating his friends' virtues, assigns this "most happy mistake" (*felicissimo errore*, *Ep.* 7.28.2) just such a name: "You say that certain people in your hearing have found fault, as if I praise my friends beyond their due on every occasion. I know the charge; I even embrace it. For what is more honorable than the crime of affability?" (*Ais quosdam apud te reprehendisse, tamquam amicos meos ex omni occasione ultra modum laudem. Agnosco crimen, amplector etiam. Quid enim honestius culpa benignitatis?* 7.28.1-2). In Pliny's eyes, such self-deception provides a great benefit. Those who would see their friends as they actually are apply accuracy to the detriment of amicable relations: "For though they may not be the sort of men as they are proclaimed by me, nevertheless I am blessed because they seem so to me. Therefore

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Ovid *Ars* 2.657-662:
*Nominibus mollire licet mala: fuca vocetur,
nigrior Illyrica cui pice sanguis erit;
si straba, sit Veneri similis; si rava, Mivervae;
sit gracilis, macie quae male viva sua est;
dic habilem, quaecumque brevis, quae turgida, plenam,
et lateat vitium proximitate boni.*

See Lucretius 4.1149-70 for a negative variation on this trope.

¹¹⁰ Simplex is also attested as a *cognomen* during the first century CE, but that is too late to be known by Horace.

¹¹¹ *Illuc praevertamur, amatorem quod amicae
turpia decipiunt caecum vitia, aut etiam ipsa haec
delectant, veluti Balbinum polypus Hagnae.* (*S.* 1.3.38-40)

let them bring this perverse attentiveness to others; if there are not very many who call slandering your friends ‘judgment’” (*Ut enim non sint tales quales a me praedicantur, ego tamen beatus quod mihi videntur. Igitur ad alios hanc sinistram diligentiam conferant; nec sunt parum multi, qui carpere amicos iudicium vocant*, 7.28.2-3). Accurate observation thus paradoxically produces a false sort of judgment: for Pliny optimistic hypocrisy greases the wheels of social intercourse. Misrepresentation provides the basis for aristocratic gentility.

Events may acquire meaning simply from circumstantial details that narrators emphasize, a practice that could be described as creative contextualization. Accounts of the death of Tiberius, for example, use the location of the event in a villa at Misenum that once belonged to the Republican voluptuary Lucullus to suggest something about the character of the emperor (*Tac. Ann.* 6.50; *Suet. Tib.* 73). As Gowing notes, “Despite the fact that Lucullus was neither the first owner of the villa nor perhaps even the most famous, it is nonetheless the association with *Lucullus* that the sources wish to stress in narrating the emperor’s death.”¹¹² The linkage created between Tiberius and Lucullus does not function directly as an *exemplum*, but the implicit association between the two figures functions in what might be termed as a “para-exemplary” mode. Although neither Tacitus nor Suetonius draws a specific analogy between the two men, the connection implies such a comparison, most immediately between Lucullus’s luxurious life in retirement and Tiberius’s on Capri. This connection between Tiberius and Lucullus, however, may not rest as much on their actual activities as on the sort of activities that a Roman audience was disposed to imagine that public figures who withdrew from public life engaged in. As Shadi Bartsch comments concerning the stories of Tiberius’ life of sexual depravity, “What the rumors definitely reveal is not so much whether Tiberius

¹¹² Gowing (2005) 65, emphasis in the original. Cf. Bodel (1997) 13-14 on Lucullus as potentially the first “eponymous’ villa owner.” D’Arms (1970) 113, 184-86, 113 reviews the evidence on Lucullus’s Campanian estates.

had a kinky side, but that removing oneself from public view itself may produce such allegations!”¹¹³ While residence in a popular resort region would not create quite the same level of isolation as the *princeps*’ retreat on Capri, Lucullus’ retirement from Rome nevertheless removed him from frequent public observation.¹¹⁴ The implied analogy between the retired general and Tiberius thus may find its suggestive force through the shrouded private space in which would-be observers could imagine various scandalous acts.

At times speakers may present radically disparate pictures of events. The most common version of Tiberius Gracchus’s death in the extant sources describes Scipio Nasica, the leader of the mob that killed the tribune, as a valiant defender of the Roman state. Valerius Maximus, for instance, labels Nasica as an example of “bravery in a toga” (*togae... fortitudo*, 3.2.17).¹¹⁵ In this account, Gracchus appears solely as an enemy of the Senate and the Republic, bribing the people to abolish the Senate and take control of everything (3.2.17). The resistance of the consul Mucius Scaevola to taking violent action against Gracchus and his followers is nearly as important to the anecdote as the attack on the tribune himself. Valerius characterizes Nasica almost entirely through direct speech, implicitly endorsing his claim to defend the Republic: “Then Scipio Nasica said, ‘because the consul, while he follows the letter of the law, brings it about that Roman power will collapse along with all the laws, I myself, a private citizen, offer myself as a leader for your will. ... Let those who wish the Republic to be safe follow me’ (*tum Scipio Nasica, ‘quoniam,’ inquit, ‘consul, dum iuris ordinem sequitur, id agit ut cum omnibus legibus Romanum imperium corruat, egomet me privatus voluntati vestrae ducem offero,’ ... ‘qui rem publicam salvam esse volunt me sequantur,’* 3.2.17). In

¹¹³ Bartsch (2006) 135-36.

¹¹⁴ D’Arms (1970) 47-48 discusses privacy among the qualities of such seaside villas.

¹¹⁵ Plutarch *TG* 16-19 and Appian 1.14-16 provide the two most complete extant accounts of the events leading up to the fatal assembly. The sources discussed here—Val. Max. 3.2.17, Velleius 2.2-3 and *Rhet. ad Herr.* 4.68—focus almost exclusively on the assembly itself.

Valerius's version of the event, a rhetorical act of self-presentation defines the protagonist's act as a valiant and public-spirited defense of the state.

Velleius Paterculus presents nearly the same outline of events, but focuses instead on ancestry and public recognition to affirm Nasica's good character: "Although he was a cousin of Ti. Gracchus, he preferred his fatherland to kinship and judged whatever was not beneficial for the state to be foreign to his own interest (because of these virtues he was the first man of all elected *pontifex maximus* when he was not present)" (*cum esset consobrinus Ti. Gracchi, patriam cognationi praeferens et quidquid publice salutare non esset, privatim alienum existimans (ob eas virtutes primus omnium absens pontifex maximus factus est)*, 2.3). Velleius grounds Nasica's moral worth in the official recognition provided by his selection to priestly office. The historian ignores the conflict with the consul concerning the use of violence against Gracchus, paraphrasing only Nasica's exhortation that "those who wish the Republic to be safe should follow him" (*qui salvam vellent rem publicam, se sequerentur*, 2.3.1). In his version of events, Velleius contrasts Gracchus's "selfish" sense of offense at the rejection of a treaty he had negotiated — "bearing harshly that anything settled by him was invalidated" (*graviter ferens aliquid a se pactum infirmari*, 2.2.1) — with Nasica's "selfless" choice to murder his cousin.

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, however, dramatically reverses the descriptions of the two men within an illustration of the rhetorical technique of vivid description (*demonstratio*). The Auctor depicts Scipio Nasica as a rabid beast while presenting Gracchus as a model of the dignified Roman politician. Nasica, here left unnamed,¹¹⁶ receives an extensive, colorful description: "overflowing with crime and evil thoughts... sweating, his eyes burning, his hair on end, his toga twisted about... that man, slaving villainy from his mouth, panting out cruelty from the depths of his chest" (*scelere et*

¹¹⁶ Sordi (1978) 318 suggests that the absence of the name serves as a sort of *damnatio memoriae*.

malis cogitationibus redundans... sudans, oculis ardentibus, erecto capillo, contorta toga... iste, spumans ex ore scelus, anhelans ex infimo pectore crudelitatem, 4.68). Gracchus, in contrast, appears at the moment of his death as the consummate dignified Roman politician: “that man, not marring his innate courage with any word, fell silently” (*ille, nulla voce delibans insitam virtutem, concidit tacitus*, 4.68). The Auctor closes with a picture of Nasica rejoicing over the murder. He characterizes Nasica’s self-presentation as a savior of the Republic, which we saw most prominently in Valerius’s account, as a terrible delusion: “that man, splattered with the piteous blood of the most courageous man, looking about as if he had done the most noble deed, and cheerfully extending his criminal hand to his flatterers, went into the temple of Jupiter” (*iste viri fortissimi miserando sanguine aspersus, quasi facinus praeclarissimum fecisset circum inspectans, et hilare sceleratum gratulantibus manum porrigens, in templum Iovis contulit sese*, 4.68). These pro- and anti-Gracchan accounts present the same figures and the same basic events in dramatically different lights. The meaning of the killing and the political view espoused follow from the prevailing view of Nasica’s intentions and emotional state. Whether he is a valiant, club-wielding defender of the Republic or a rabid, club-wielding murderer depends on the particular narrator’s political sympathies.¹¹⁷

1.3: Manipulating Tradition to Fit Current Arguments.

As the previous section has demonstrated, the framing of an exemplary narrative, the additions and omissions, serve an important function in structuring the effect of that narrative. This capacity for recasting the material of comparison enables authors to recreate the conception of Roman tradition to meet the needs of their current

¹¹⁷ For a parallel instance in which the view of an actor’s private intentions colors the understanding of an event, compare the pro-Caesarian view of Caesar’s sorrowful reaction to the death of Pompey at *e.g.* Val. Max. 5.1.10, with the anti-Caesarian view of Caesar’s feigned sorrow given at Lucan 9.1010-1108.

circumstances. In this section, I demonstrate how the standard of credibility used to judge the effectiveness of *exempla* permits the recasting of memory through the lens of current interests.

As the discourse around a given event develops, writers and speakers may draw on circumstantial elements to present a various interpretations. Complete historical veracity is not necessary in many circumstances: credibility becomes the central concern in the availability of circumstantial elements with which to mold the meaning of an *exemplum*. Sometimes details would be omitted to alter the meaning of a narrative, as we saw with the different versions of the Vestal Claudia's defense of her father.¹¹⁸ Likewise details could be added to a narrative to color the effect of the anecdote. Quintilian, for example, advises prospective orators that even fictional elements have a place in forensic speeches, provided that such details appear reasonable: "We will make things apparent if they are like the truth, and it is even permitted to invent falsely whatever usually happens" (*Consequemur autem ut manifesta sint si fuerint veri similia, et licebit etiam falso adfingere quidquid fieri solet, Inst. 8.3.70*).¹¹⁹ Following the standard of credibility, conventional tropes may easily become entwined in narratives as various speakers and writers shape and reshape them.¹²⁰ The misidentifications and composite figures that appear in Valerius Maximus's collection of *exempla* demonstrate one form of mutation that a narrative of an event may undergo.¹²¹ Such changes may be the result of either careless mistakes or deliberate manipulation on the part of a writer or speaker seeking to mold the narrative to further a particular purpose. Over time, various

¹¹⁸ Cf. Gowing (2005) 76-81 discussing Seneca's transformation of the figures of Cato and Scipio Africanus in *Epp.* 14 and 86 respectively.

¹¹⁹ Cf. *Inst.* 4.2.88-100 on the use of false narratives, or false elements within narratives, for forensic speeches.

¹²⁰ Cf. Quintilian 4.2.57-58 on Cicero's introduction of a domestic scene to the narrative of his speech for Milo (*Mil.* 28).

¹²¹ *E.g.* Maslakov (1984) 444 with n. 15 and Bloomer (1992) 2, 19, 39, 67, 120, 135-36 – the latter mostly dealing with individual historical errors – discuss misidentifications and composite figures in Valerius's collection.

accretions or associations may become integral or optional parts of some “standard” version of an event, and may consequently influence the range of associations available to later speakers and writers.¹²² Cultural shifts may create a similar effect, where shifts between different times, places, languages and social groups change the audience’s interpretive framework.

Writers and speakers must perform a delicate balancing act between invoking tradition and manipulating exemplary materials. Despite the flexibility with which they could treat *exempla*, to some extent these authors and their audiences must believe that these narratives represent gestures toward some stable body of tradition. A central motivation for encouraging such a balance is the need to avoid any sense of cognitive dissonance with common beliefs about the figures discussed. Such avoidance, however, does not imply that the possibility for mistakes or shifts in knowledge went unrecognized. The interest in antiquarian research that flowered at various times, notably in the late Republic and later in the second century CE, demonstrates an awareness at some level that current understandings about the past might not be accurate representations.¹²³ As Wallace-Hadrill notes in connection with the activities of scholars such as Varro during the later part of the first century BCE, “Antiquarianism presented a frontal challenge to the authority on which the nobility based their claim to power. It was now the antiquarian, by his laborious study of obscurely worded documents, and displaying the credentials of Greek academic learning, who ‘knew’ what the ‘real’ Roman tradition was.”¹²⁴ This conflict over who possessed more “accurate” knowledge of customs and traditions provides a productive opening for speakers and

¹²² Cf. Roller (1997) discussing the influence of declamation on the historiographical tradition surrounding Cicero’s death (I discuss the relationship between exemplary thought and declamation in section 2.2).

¹²³ Rawson (1985) 233-49 discusses antiquarianism in the late Republic, focusing primarily on the work of Varro.

¹²⁴ Wallace-Hadrill (1997) 14.

writers to proclaim their own interpretations as traditional and thus to bolster their own authority as reporters of culture.

Roller identifies an important tendency of exemplary thought that he labels the “principle of ethical continuity.” This phrase describes an underlying assumption that judgments about the value of *exempla*, even when later evaluations vary from the original, are made on the basis of persistent ethical standards shared between the evaluating audiences at all points in time.¹²⁵ Roller limits his treatment of this concept to shifts along the temporal axis, but the assumption of a single consistent ethical system operating throughout the various sub-groups of the Roman populace—or even simply throughout the aristocracy taken as a unit—is equally as fictional as the assumption that a late Republican or an Imperial audience would recognize the same moral standards as one in the early Republic. The image of a consistent, shared system of ethical standards provides a comforting sense of legitimacy and group or cultural solidarity that allows individual actors to employ exemplarity to create powerful rhetorical effects in their immediate circumstances. This principle of ethical continuity may operate across a wide variety of axes: temporal, social, political, economic, regional and so on. Even within moments of direct conflict it is advantageous for each of the competing actors to depict his/her own evaluative framework as consistent with that assumed to exist throughout the *populus Romanus* at all times and in all places. *Exempla* as atomized, decontextualized tokens of cultural and ethical authority provide flexible tools for advancing almost any goal while nevertheless appearing to adhere to a persistent, shared moral tradition.

Of course the moralizing stance taken by many extant texts complicates the understanding of continuity between various times or groups. Romans often assumed

¹²⁵ Roller (2004) 34, cf. Roller (2001) 21 where he describes traditional Roman ethical discourse as “traditional” because aristocrats regarded it as passed down from their *maiores*.

that their contemporary society had declined from an earlier, more virtuous time.¹²⁶ Since, as we have seen in the previous section, ethical meaning depends on the narrative setting of the *exempla* or other media used to express it, a moral stance espoused as traditional could shift from one situation to another depending on the views of the involved parties and audience. As a consequence speakers and writers could treat ideological desiderata as “traditional” whether or not such beliefs had actually existed in earlier times. Thus the concept of “ethical continuity” may authorize writers and speakers to represent their own ideological preferences as “tradition.” In other words, a practice that was neither adhered to by contemporaries nor authentically archaic could be treated as “traditional” without any sense of dissonance. The familiarity of an idea could reinforce its credibility as a “traditional” understanding. A concept or opinion that seemed familiar would more readily attain acceptance from an audience not intent on historical accuracy.¹²⁷

Cicero’s dialogue *Brutus* depicts an interesting interchange between Cicero himself and his friend Atticus concerning the factual content of a pair of anecdotes. Comparing the death of the Roman general Coriolanus to that of Themistocles — he claims that both men committed suicide rather than carry through on plans to attack their own city — Cicero admits that his representation of events differs from that set out by his friend’s work on Roman antiquity. Atticus laughs and excuses the lapse, claiming that: “it is allowed for orators to make false claims in historical narratives so that they may state something more clearly” (*concessum est rhetoribus ementiri in historiis, ut*

¹²⁶ E.g. Sallust, *Cat.* 6-13, *Iug.* 4; Livy, *praef.* 11-12; Seneca, *Contr.* 1.*praef.*6-10. On Roman moralism see Edwards (1993), esp. 1-5 on the persistence of the trope of moral decline.

¹²⁷ See Quintilian *IO* 4.2.52-60 on the importance of familiarity and audience expectation in fostering the credibility of a narrative.

aliquid dicere possint argutius, Brutus 42).¹²⁸ He remarks that some historians treated the death of Themistocles in very similar fashion, providing an elaborate narrative in which the Athenian general sacrificed a bull and drank a bowl of its blood. Atticus claims that these historians preferred this fantastical story for the opportunity it allowed to engage in rhetorical display: “Indeed they were able to adorn this death in rhetorical and tragic fashion, but that common sort of death offered no material for elaboration,” (*Hanc etiam mortem rhetorice et tragice ornare potuerunt, illa mors vulgaris nullam praebebat materiem ad ornatum, 43*). Atticus here identifies sensationalism as the driving force behind such revisions of history, but the choice to use more exciting narratives may also have an ethical intent. The interest in sensationalism described by Atticus contrasts with Cicero’s more ethically driven interest in recasting Coriolanus’s death. The antiquarian focus on accuracy not only reduces the rhetorical interest of the anecdote, but also diminishes its utility as a moral *exemplum*. Cicero in fact had asked his friend to excuse his deformation of death of Coriolanus on precisely such an ethical basis: “For even if the story about Coriolanus is told differently in your book, Atticus, nevertheless allow me to approve rather this sort of death” (*Nam etsi aliter apud te est, Attice, de Coriolano, concede tamen ut huic generi mortis potius assentiar, 42*). The antiquarian concern for accuracy thus impinges on the orator’s ability to build an ethical argument: lies here may provide the motive force for moral edification.¹²⁹

Given the example of this parallel, the antiquarian lightheartedly offers to allow his friend to add the bowl to Coriolanus’s death and even offers to supply a sacrifice to

¹²⁸ Stemmler (2000) 174-75 briefly introduces this episode solely to illustrate the point that: ‘Die Kategorie der *historia* und der historischen Wahrheit wird somit den Maßstäben der Wahrscheinlichkeit und Glaubwürdigkeit untergeordnet, die Fakten werden dem Vorverständnis des Zuhörers angepaßt und, bezogen wiederum auf die *exempla*, die Geschichten gegebenenfalls nach Maßgabe des jeweiligen gesellschaftlichen Bildes vom *mos maiorum* korrigiert – allerdings mit der Einschränkung, daß keine schriftlichen Zeugnisse oder eine *firma auctoritas* der Wahrheitskorrektur in Weg stehen dürfen.

¹²⁹ In contrast, however, Rawson (1985) 243 identifies moralism as a much more central concern for Roman antiquarianism in contrast to Greek antiquarian scholarship.

further the similarity between the two men.¹³⁰ A fictional embellishment of the death of Themistocles thus becomes an *exemplum* excusing Cicero's rewriting of a historical event. By limiting the purpose of rhetorical embellishment to mere "ornament" (*ornatus*, 43), however, Atticus gently corrects Cicero's desire to revise history to adhere to his preferred moral view. He shifts the basis of comparison from the actors of the two anecdotes (Themistocles and Coriolanus) to the narrators of the anecdotes (Clitarchus and Stratocles concerning Themistocles, and Cicero concerning Coriolanus). As Atticus frames the event, by creating a parallel between the Athenian and Roman generals, Cicero creates a parallel between himself and the two Greek historians. This identification at least partially vitiates the moral message that the orator preferred in his version. In response Cicero promises to be more cautious about his use of Roman history, at least when Atticus is there to correct him: "I will mention history more carefully after this when you are listening, whom I can praise as the most careful teacher of Roman affairs" (*ego cautius posthac historiam attingam te audiente, quem rerum Romanarum auctorem laudare possum religiosissimum*, 44).¹³¹ The problem Cicero seeks to avoid in the future, then, is not so much fabricating historical falsehood as it is the possibility of being caught while doing so. Antiquarian knowledge such as that possessed by Atticus presents an obstacle to the orator's deployment of historical materials.¹³² The flexibility of an anecdote is more important for the orator than accuracy of detail.

¹³⁰ "Therefore because it suits you to make all things alike in this way for Themistocles and Coriolanus, you may also take the bowl from me; I will provide a sacrificial victim as well, so that Coriolanus may clearly be a second Themistocles" (*Qua re quoniam tibi ita quadrat omnia fuisse Themistocli paria et Coriolano, pateram quoque a me sumas licet, praebebo etiam hostiam, ut Coriolanus sit plane alter Themistocles*, 43).

¹³¹ On Atticus's antiquarian work see also Cic. *Orat.* 120 and Nepos, *Att.* 18.

¹³² Cf. Wallace-Hadrill (1997) 14 (cited above) on the challenge presented by academic antiquarianism to the Roman *nobiles'* claim to cultural authority. His article as a whole makes a case for the shift from traditional knowledge to technical skill during the late first century BCE as a form of cultural revolution.

The manipulation of tradition in spoken and written discourse relies on an inherent plasticity of memory. As anecdotes are adapted to fit new contexts, they must nevertheless maintain some resemblance to previous versions. Joseph Farrell, commenting on Cicero's use of an anecdote concerning the discovery of memory techniques by Simonides of Ceos (*De orat.* 2.351-53), identifies a concerted effort to downplay the poet's professionalism and well-known desire for money.¹³³ After Simonides performed a poem comparing his host Scopas with the Dioscuri, the host paid only half the agreed fee, instructing the poet to obtain the rest from the gods. Simonides is called out of the house, and the house collapses, killing all inside. The poet discovers the importance of place for memory through his ability to identify the bodies from the places they had been sitting. Antonius, the narrator of this anecdote, structures his account to postpone the revelation of the poet's role as a hired entertainer for as long as possible. In fact it is only when Scopas refuses to honor his contract with Simonides that the economic basis of the transaction is revealed. Farrell interprets this effort as an attempt to accommodate the example more clearly to the situation of the Roman *patronus* for whom explicit material remuneration was both legally forbidden and socially distasteful.¹³⁴ He introduces the concept of performing rather than simply recalling a memory in order to describe the manner in which Cicero adapts this anecdote for the requirements of his dialogue: Cicero's narrator Antonius depicts Simonides as "the ideological ancestor of the Roman orator. ... Antonius' commemoration of Simonides' discovery is thus given a form specific to the cultural pressures that limit and define the professionalism of the orator as a craftsman who is compensated for his work."¹³⁵

¹³³ Farrell (1997)

¹³⁴ Farrell (1997) 377-83.

¹³⁵ Farrell (1997) 382-83.

This evocation of a remembered anecdote demonstrates the same sort of manipulation that speakers would apply to *exempla*, adapting the details of the narrative to accommodate the argumentative purpose. The connection created between two events or acts that are defined as repetitions of a pattern can exert a defining force on the interpretation of both events. This analogical practice may sometimes serve less a conservative or iterative function than a creative one. *Exempla* acquire meaning within the context when they are cited, not at the moment of their origin or their first textual, oral or monumental iteration. Farrell's closing comments offer a useful observation on the primacy of the skeletal outline of a narrative over accuracy of detail or the preservation of meaning: "Handing on an accurate memory of whatever 'originary event' inspired this tale clearly takes second place to the story's plasticity, its capacity for adaptation to needs that change over time and across cultures. ... memories are not simply retrieved but are actually produced in unprecedented versions that bear a family resemblance to earlier performances without conforming to a single unvarying type or, indeed, bearing the same meaning, produced as they are in ever differing social contexts."¹³⁶ Successive references to the same anecdote may build on earlier interpretations or may introduce entirely new material to shape the effect of the story as an *exemplum*. The family resemblance between variations maintains the identity of the anecdote, but does not limit its plasticity. The process we have seen with Cicero's sarcastic use of the lack of previous *exempla* for the extraordinary reaction to Clodius's death (section 1.1) presents a related facet of the potential for exemplary thought to generate analogical patterns. When Cicero sets the creation of the new court to try Milo in contrast to the absence of such activity following the deaths of Scipio and other earlier figures, he not only creates a negative analogy with a set of earlier non-events, but in so doing he also grants exemplary status to that series of previously unremarkable non-

¹³⁶ Farrell (1997) 383.

events. In contrast to the reproduction of culturally and politically authorized models highlighted by previous critics (and often by the Romans themselves), the actual act of “imitation” could define (or redefine) the meaning of the *exemplum* it purported to emulate. *Exempla* act as fluid carriers of cultural authority rather than as unchanging ideological messages. Through a range of processes that we might describe collectively as “creative contextualization,” individual Romans could harness culturally resonant instances to legitimate novel, unusual, sometimes outright illegal actions or to urge others to pursue such courses. Such appeals use the rhetoric of continuity and reproduction enabled by the citation of previous models to disguise the creativity of new proposals within a social and political environment that valorized tradition and stability. The family resemblance between references to the same event provided a sense of familiarity, even when the ethical meaning created by the details and context shifted radically from one citation to the next.

A passage in Tacitus’s *Dialogus* demonstrates how the process of creative contextualization may graft anachronistic material into a discussion of the past. Within the dialogue’s comparison between oratory at the time of Cicero and during the reign of Vespasian, the educational views attributed to the earlier time are inflected by contemporary theoretical developments. Vipstanus Messalla, the speaker who most fully represents the view that oratory had declined from greatness into decadence, describes the form of rhetorical education that existed under the Republic in order to argue that a shift in training and social expectations underlies the change in oratory. C. O. Brink argues that Messalla’s depiction of education during the late Republic does not in fact reflect the actual practice of the earlier time, but instead substitutes Quintilian’s

moralistic neo-Ciceronian educational program.¹³⁷ Like Quintilian, Messalla emphasizes the necessity for a true orator's good moral character far more strongly than Cicero did. Quintilian himself claims that his moral purpose is one area in which he goes beyond Cicero.¹³⁸ Messalla's first speech on the causes opens with a lengthy moralizing account of changes in child-rearing and household life (28.1-30.2). As Brink notes, these concerns with the character of the mother and that of the slaves assigned to care for the child, and with the ignorance of the *grammatici* hired to teach him are most closely paralleled in Quintilian's discussion of the same issues, even employing some of the same *exempla*.¹³⁹ Only when he has established this moralistic framework does Messalla introduce Cicero himself as an *exemplum* of proper education, explicitly citing the orator's account of his own education included toward the end of the *Brutus*.¹⁴⁰ In this way Tacitus's Messalla imports more recent educational concerns into a framework he connects with Cicero and his contemporaries. The attribution of Cicero's own educational history and Ciceronian views to the general practice of the late Republic,

¹³⁷ Brink (1989) 486-90, following and developing arguments in Barwick (1929) and (1954). Brink sets out several points of close contact between the two views of proper oratorical training: the importance of traditional nurture at home, the centrality of the *grammaticus* to establishing the necessary universality of knowledge, the objection to the unreality of current training through declamation. See also Luce (1993) 20-21 and Dominik (1997) 61 on the connection between Messalla and Quintilian. Fairweather (1982) 546-47 describes a similar confusion in the accounts of the development of declamation where the logically prior abstract theses are therefore erroneously assumed to have been historically prior.

¹³⁸ Cf. Winterbottom (1964) 90. See Quintilian *IO* 12.praef.4: *Unum modo in illa immensa vastitate cernere videmur M. Tullium, qui tamen ipse, quamvis tanta atque ita instructa nave hoc mare ingressus, contrahit vela inhihetque remos et de ipso demum genere dicendi quo sit usurus perfectus orator satis habet dicere. At nostra temeritas etiam mores ei conabitur dare et adsignabit officia. Ita nec antecedentem consequi possumus et longius eundum est ut res feret.*

¹³⁹ Brink (1989) 486-87. Quintilian discusses character of a student's parents at 1.1.6-7 and 1.2.4-8, that of the nurses, *paedagogi* and other slaves at 1.1.4-5 and 1.1.8-11, and the choice of *grammatici* at 1.4-10. The most prominent shared *exemplum* is Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi, although she is of course a very conventional model of the ideal Roman mother. The *Graecula aliquis ancilla*, used to depict the dangers of the household at 29.1, might be seen as an *exemplum* of an anonymous figure of the type I discuss in chapter 2.

¹⁴⁰ Tac. *Dial.* 30.3-30.5, referring to Cic. *Brut.* 301-325.

however, does not even accurately reflect the views of the time. Cicero's own training and his support for extensive education in numerous subjects was in fact exceptional as even Cicero himself noted in his dialogues.¹⁴¹ In fact the educational views expressed by M. Aper, the champion of contemporary oratory in the *Dialogus*, in some fashion echo the same sort of conventional views that some of Cicero's dialogues put in the mouths of important orators from the generation before his own: M. Antonius and Q. Hortensius.¹⁴² The Ciceronian model for Aper's role in the *Dialogus* may thus align his position with current conventional beliefs. Consequently Messalla's traditionalism becomes unlinked from common practice despite widespread reverence for the past.

The use of Quintilian's neo-Ciceronianism to represent Republican views has a further effect: by assigning this educational paradigm to an earlier era, Messalla may cast doubt on the potential efficacy of Quintilian's educational reforms. As Brink argues, "by an adroit use of Quintilian's educational theories, Tacitus' Messala rejects by implication the basic teaching of the same contemporary master. ... On the surface he expresses approval of (neo-)Ciceronianism. Below the surface, subtly and indirectly, its rejection is being prepared."¹⁴³ This importation of anachronistic material would thus become a means of invalidating that theory within its original temporal setting. The sense of ethical continuity between these two eras allows neo-Ciceronian educational theory to appear at home in a late Republican setting, but is then disregarded in the removal of Quintilian's reform program from the view of contemporary education. Messalla's use of Quintilian's program to represent the general practice of the late Republic thus would

¹⁴¹ See, e.g., Luce (1993) 20-21 and Goldberg (1999) 233-34 on the exceptionality of the view expressed by Crassus in the *de Oratore* that the orator should have extensive knowledge of the law (*De orat.* 1.57-59, 165-200).

¹⁴² Goldberg (1999) 233-35 discusses parallel between Aper's second speech and Antonius's speech arguing against too much emphasis on technical knowledge at *De orat.* 1.213-262. Mayer (2001) 45 notes Aper's similarity to both Antonius in the *de Oratore* and Hortensius in Cicero's *Hortensius* as "robustly practical men, who despised formal doctrine."

¹⁴³ Brink (1989) 491. See also Dominik (1997) 60-61. In contrast, Luce (1993)

have the double effect of making the oratory of Cicero's time both that much more remote from that of contemporary Flavian speakers and consequently of raising the barrier to any possible recovery yet further. Messalla's performs the memory of late Republican education as refracted through the lens of Quintilian and uses the temporal dislocation of the later rhetorical theory to cement his depiction of the change in taste and practice as an irreversible moral decline. The treatment of educational theories in the *Dialogus*, while not specifically deployed as an *exemplum*, demonstrates the profound effects that the manipulation of content and ideas could produce.

Various authors under the Principate adapted the memories of stridently Republican figures such as the younger Cato to the new political environment by focusing on the more immediate or personal aspects of their aspects. Alain Gowing identifies instances of this pattern in the treatment of the younger Cato in both Valerius Maximus and the younger Seneca.¹⁴⁴ Valerius presents an anecdote describing Cato as an *exemplum* of free expression (*libertas*), but provides no context, no details of the external political situation. In this brief account, while serving as a judge, Cato dismisses from court documents showing Pompey's support for the defendant (Val. Max. 6.2.5). Other sources (Plutarch, *Cato* 40, *Pomp.* 55; Dio 40.52.2, 55.2) provide a date for this event — 52 BCE while Pompey was consul — and present the event as a calculated move to damage Pompey's power. Valerius's Cato, however, demonstrates only Cato's free expression with a good deal of verbal embellishment: "What am I doing? Is there freedom without Cato? No more than than there would be Cato without freedom" (*Quid ego? libertas sine Catone? non magis quam Cato sine libertate*, 6.2.5).¹⁴⁵

Seneca presents another version of a depoliticized Cato, remembered as a model of fortitude in the face of adversity rather than as an opponent of authoritarianism.

¹⁴⁴ See also Bloomer (1992) 188-91 on the depoliticized and abstracted Cato as he appears in Valerius.

¹⁴⁵ Gowing (2005) 60-61.

Discussing the incompatibility between the wise man (*sapiens*) and the life of politics, Seneca addresses the position of Cato during the civil war. He rejects any useful role for a Cato in a contest for authoritarian power, addressing Cato directly: “It is being determined whether Caesar or Pompey should possess the republic: what business do you have with this dispute? No side is yours. A master is being chosen.” (*quaeritur utrum Caesar an Pompeius possideat rem publicam: quid tibi cum ista contentione? nullae partes tuae sunt. dominus eligitur, Ep. 14.13*). Noting confusion over who is speaking in this passage, Gowing argues that: “the editorial confusion underscores how seamlessly Seneca can move from a past event to the present. Moreover, regardless of who utters these words, they seem readily applicable to Seneca’s own situation. ... The literal blurring of time in this section forces us to confront the dilemma as though it demands a resolution *now*, in the present rather than in the past.”¹⁴⁶ Just as Cicero’s Antonius reconfigures Simonides to meet his current interests, and Tacitus’s Messalla reconfigures Cicero, Seneca adapts his favorite *exemplum* to render him a more useful tool for exploring his current concerns, in this case the place of a Stoic wise man in politics.

A depoliticized Cato is of course not the only version available to writers under the Principate. Cato, along with the Brutus and Cassius, becomes at times an emblem for resistance to various emperors. The Stoic opposition to the Flavians, and to Domitian in particular, used these figures as emblems.¹⁴⁷ The adoption of these figures by these factions, however, seems to center solely on the particular detail of Cato’s opposition to

¹⁴⁶ Gowing (2005) 78.

¹⁴⁷ Freudenberg (2001) 219-21 on several figures in the first century CE – most prominently Cremutius Cordus and Thrax Paetus – who were condemned from publishing works on Cato, Brutus and Cassius, or other later Stoic martyrs. In Tac. *Dial.*, it is the performance of a tragedy *Cato* that motivates Aper to visit his friend Maternus out of concern: *postero die quam Curvatus Maternus Catonem recitaverat, cum offendisse potentium animos diceretur, tamquam in eo tragoediae argumento sui oblitus tantum Catonem cogitasset, eaque de re per urbem frequens sermo haberetur, Dial. 2*. I discuss this method of using historical figures as personal emblems in section 4.2.

Caesar as an individual, not on Cato's broader political philosophy. The force of Cato and other related Republican icons is directed more at individual emperors, foremost among them Nero and Domitian, than at the institutional position of emperor.

Under some emperors, toleration of devotion to Cato and other Republican heroes could also serve as a mark of the *princeps's* magnanimity: Pliny's letters include references to almost cult-like private veneration of Cato to depict the emergence of a new era of freedom under Trajan.¹⁴⁸ Martial, in an epigram describing the reverence that a series of major historical figures would feel for the new emperor Nerva, even claims that: "if Cato returns, he will be a Caesarian" (*si Cato reddatur, Caesarianus erit*, 11.5.14). This comment caps a list of historical icons – Numa, Camillus, Fabricius, Brutus, Sulla, Caesar, Pompey and Crassus – who, if they should return from the dead, would happily welcome the new *princeps*. The epigram clearly engages in flattering hyperbole; as Gowing notes, "Martial does have a sense of the absurd, here playing on the familiar trope of the emperor who surpasses even the greatest of his Republican forebears."¹⁴⁹ Cato and the other Republican figures here become more historical props than vibrant ideological beacons.¹⁵⁰ Cato and other historical figures played an important part in discourse under the Principate, but the meaning of such figures shifted and contracted to meet the needs of the context into which they were introduced.

1.4: Conclusion.

Ethical arguments built on structural analogies between particular actions allow a great

¹⁴⁸ *E.g. Ep.* 1.17 concerning Titinius Capito's collection of images of Cato, Brutus and Cassius. I discuss this letter at length in chapter 4. See Tac., *Agr.* 1-3 on the revived ability to speak and write what you feel under Nerva and Trajan.

¹⁴⁹ Gowing (2005) 105.

¹⁵⁰ Gowing (2005) 105-6 sees this as a common tendency in Flavian and later writers, displayed by examples like this poem of Martial and Statius *Silvae* 1.1 of the equestrian statue of Domitian where "the references to Republican topography and history are little more than props; he summons neither Republican places nor events with which he wishes to connect the emperor in any meaningful way."

deal of flexibility in their application. Quintilian provides us with a flexible and broadly applicable means of treating exemplarity as a species of comparison. The emphasis on particular instances enables speakers and writers to manipulate the terms and context of comparison by recasting the narrative framework to their best advantage. The plasticity of memories allows social or political actors to present a version of tradition which accords with their immediate rhetorical purpose or ideological desiderata. At its source exemplary thought functions through the process of comparison. Building on observations and memories, exemplary patterns of thought configure contexts and perceptions of tradition through the juxtaposition of particularities. Any available material might become grist for the mill of analogical reasoning. By seeing comparison as the motive force of exemplarity we may better comprehend the diffusion of this habit of thought throughout the Roman mental world. The next chapter will expand this picture and explore the extension of this pattern of thought away from specific historical instances into the realm of anonymous or even fictional actors. The logic of analogy provides a productive and opportunistic basis for transferring and co-opting any variety of material into an ethical dialogue.

Anonymous Exempla

The third doctrine is that Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life. This results not merely from Life's imitative instinct, but from the fact that the self-conscious aim of Life is to find expression, and that Art offers it certain beautiful forms through which it may realize that energy. It is a theory that has never been put forward before, but it is extremely fruitful, and throws an entirely new light upon the history of Art.

Oscar Wilde, *The Decay of Lying*

Historically specific *exempla* are only one potential instantiation of the exemplary mode of thought. The less historical particularity an *exemplum* exhibits, the more that instance resembles evidently fictive forms of narrative such as those enacted in declamatory cases and Aesopic fables. Moralizing narratives of these types rehearse mental structures within which Romans learned to shape and interpret exemplary narratives. These educational fictions enact forms through which exemplary events may realize an ethical meaning. The influence of declamation and fable on the patterns of exemplary thought demonstrates how fictional narratives create patterns into which observers may subsequently fit events they have observed in their own lives. This is one sense in which Wilde suggests that Life (and even Nature) imitates Art. Such less prestigious forms of Art display particularly close relationships with *exempla*, revealing the borders between them as porous and indistinct. We may understand these abstracted fictions as mythologized analogues of the exemplary mode of observation and evaluation. This chapter will chart the vague borders between exemplarity and mythologized fictions, where the importance of particular persons, times and places dissolves, and attention shifts toward underlying moral attitudes and motivations.

This chapter works against the artificial limitation on exemplarity that would focus solely on named figures as *exempla*. The seemingly paradoxical notion of anonymous *exempla* offers a path to expand our map of the field of exemplarity. I explore the possibilities enabled by anecdotes that disregard or downplay the individual identities of the actors. Some *exempla* conceal the individual identity of the actor(s) and

consequently focus more closely on the act itself. While the lack of personal identifiers prevents these examples from drawing on the cultural authority that actors from important families would bring, the anonymity of the actors presents different advantages. The absence of particular names may avoid causing offense or forestall debate about a particular instance in order to focus on the broader issue. Such anonymity may at times simply reflect the lack of wide recognition for the names of lower class or non-local figures. The omission of such a name may occur even in cases when the act itself is fairly well known: for example, the story of a Roman soldier at Cannae who bites off the nose of his Carthaginian killer appears several times in extant literature, but only in one, fairly late instance does the soldier receive a name.¹⁵¹

The first section of this chapter focuses specifically on the citation of the actions of nameless figures as *exempla*. Such unnamed figures display varying degrees of anonymity, ranging from persons who are nameless but nevertheless clearly recognizable to those who are truly unidentifiable and thus completely anonymous. By discouraging focus on the particular character of the actor, such anecdotes offer several potential advantages to speakers or writers who use them. In the following section, I discuss the dialogue and exchange between exemplarity and the practice of declamation. At times declamations on historical themes seem to influence and even supplement or alter the historical tradition on those events. Performing *suasoriae* or *controversiae* may also allow speakers to create fictional *exempla* for themselves or their audience. In addition, declamations acculturate their participants to a variety of social expectations and beliefs, producing a range of narratives and character types to become familiar parts of the mental furniture of the Roman mind. On a more fundamental level, the practice of declamation may function as a sort of mythology within which Romans learned to think with and negotiate their social rules. The third and final section approaches Aesopic

¹⁵¹ Livy 22.51.9; Val. Max. 3.2.11; Sil. Ital. 6.41-53. Only in Silius Italicus does the soldier receive a name.

fables, particularly those of Phaedrus, as occupying an analogous position to declamation in both rhetorical education and the formation of the Roman thought world. Phaedrus explicitly labels his fables as educational *exempla*, aimed at improving the character of their readers. Like declamation, fables provide abstract, mythologized enactments of social conflicts. Even anecdotes from lived experience may take a place in a collection of literary fables (*e.g.* Phaedrus 2.5; 3.10; 5.7; *App.* 10). The three sections of this chapter as a whole map out a triangle of interactions and relationships between the discourses of exemplarity, declamation and fable. Exemplary narratives that purport to represent the life of Roman reality display the marks of influence from these fictional analogues and thus in some sense should be seen as imitating Art.

2.1: The Indefinite Actor, or Someone Did Something.

Speakers and writers sometimes adduce narratives of anonymous individuals as *exempla*. Such anonymity contrasts with the memorializing concerns commonly identified by scholars as the motive force behind the preservation and imitation of exemplary models.¹⁵² The absence of named actors centers attention more closely on the narrative itself, freed from the external concerns or preconceptions that attach themselves to well-known figures. Nameless *exempla* thus may trade the greater notice drawn by a famous name for a model less encumbered by referential debris. Narratives involving unnamed actors appear even further divorced from their original contexts than the average *exemplum*, but thereby offer writers and speakers a different form of utility. Sometimes writers or speakers may use anonymous *exempla* to avoid giving direct offense to another whose negative act or quality they cite. Other times anonymous models gesture toward a more universalizing understanding of the act or characteristic portrayed, particularly in the introduction of lower class exemplars. Such anecdotes,

¹⁵² *E.g.* Hölkeskamp (1996) and Roller (2004).

however, also draw closer to the use of stock figures of the sort that appear in Roman comedy and reoccur in satire and other genres. These stories at times blur the line between factual and fictional narratives. Various sources could provide exemplary material usable in different contexts. Cicero's use of comic models of fatherhood in his speech *pro Caelio*, for example, suggests the potential for speakers to use analogies with fictional characters to shape their appeals to an audience (*Cael.* 37-38).¹⁵³ To an extent, when used as an element in a larger work, any *exemplum* may function as a sort of type figure. Historical authority is merely one among a variety of potential secondary characteristics that influence the impact of an *exemplum*. Narratives of well-known historical figures are easily identifiable as *exempla*, but they do not constitute the sole potential content of that rhetorical figure. Stories of nameless persons do not announce themselves in the same way as those bearing a name like Cato, Brutus or Fabricius, but such anonymous *exempla* extend the potential field of exemplarity.

Unfortunately there exists no simple or consistent identifier to find exemplary anecdotes that feature anonymous figures. Pliny the Younger offers a good source to see a number of anonymous *exempla* in action. Valerius Maximus also includes a limited number of nameless examples that may give us some idea of the range of possible uses and types of such nameless figures. Authors may identify the actors in nameless *exempla* in various ways. Pliny sometimes uses indefinite pronouns such as *quidam* or *quaedam* to introduce such anecdotes (*e.g.* 2.6, 7.26, 8.22, 9.12, 9.27). Valerius Maximus occasionally uses *quidam* as well (*e.g.* 7.3.10, 7.6.3, 7.7.1), but more often uses a simple noun or brief phrase to indicate the social status or role of the central character(s) in the *exemplum*.¹⁵⁴ The use of indefinite pronouns and social types to identify the nameless

¹⁵³ Compare Val. Max. 5.8.praef. who also uses a theatrical metaphor to contrast the characters of different fathers: *Comicae lenitatis hi patres, tragicae asperitatis illi*.

¹⁵⁴ *E.g. pater* (5.9.4, 7.7.1); *filius* (5.9.4, 7.3.10); *miles* (3.2.10-11, 5.5.4); *frater* (5.5.4); *sanguinis ingenui mulier* and *filia* (5.4.7).

figures grants these anecdotes an innately wider range of applicability than their more individually fixed counterparts.

Similar identifiers appear frequently in the declamatory themes that provide the narrative skeletons around which declaimers mold the details of their arguments. The invention of circumstantial details and the use of *colores* to shape the emotional impact of these exercises model the manipulation of exemplary material within a larger work. Rhetorical theory at times encouraged speakers to invent plausible details in this fashion to build their arguments, even in actual trial speeches. Quintilian, for example, suggests an orator may even use fictional material to enhance the vividness of images: “We will make things apparent if they are like the truth, and it is even permitted to invent falsely whatever usually happens” (*Consequemur autem ut manifesta sint si fuerint veri similia, et licebit etiam falso adfingere quidquid fieri solet*, 8.3.70).¹⁵⁵ The development of declamatory themes into full speeches thus trains speakers to mold exemplary material into effective forms. In a 1997 article, Matthew Roller explores the possible effect of declamatory exercises on the historical tradition surrounding Cicero’s death. He suggests that references to Cicero’s previous defense of his murderer Popillius on a charge of parricide may originate in declamatory fictions concerning the death of Cicero.¹⁵⁶ Given the possibility that declamatory exercises might have shaped the historical tradition surrounding a major figure such as Cicero, it may not be unreasonable to suggest that such exercises could influence – or even become a potential

¹⁵⁵ Cf. 4.2.53 where Quintilian compares a credible forensic *narratio* to comedies and mimes. At 4.2.57 he cites the domestic scene with which Cicero opens the *narratio* of the *pro Milone* (28) to demonstrate the introduction of apparently casual details in order to shape audience expectations. Skidmore (1996) 93-99 discusses the importance of credibility for Valerius Maximus’s selection of *exempla*.

¹⁵⁶ Roller (1997) *passim*. At 124-25 Roller discusses Seneca’s claim that declaimers invented the earlier charge of parricide: *Popillium pauci ex historicis tradiderunt interfectorem Ciceronis et hi quoque non parricidi reum a Cicerone defensum, sed in privato iudicio: declamatoribus placuit parricidi reum fuisse* (*Contr.* 7.2.8).

source for – moralizing *exempla* featuring stock figure types.¹⁵⁷ (I discuss this possibility further in section 2.2.) While such stories would carry less cultural authority than those linked to famous names, narratives of nameless figures prove useful in a number of contexts.

There are a number of factors to consider when examining an anonymous *exemplum*. Are the actors' names deliberately suppressed? Or are they simply unknown or felt to be unimportant? Does the author expect the audience to recognize the identity of the unnamed figures? Does the speaker or writer call attention to the absence of names or not? Do the anonymous figures function primarily as distinct individuals or general social types? Such considerations enable the reader to gauge the purpose served by the absence of the name and, in addition, help to map out a range of potential degrees of anonymity, ranging from unnamed yet clearly identifiable individuals who are essentially the same as named actors to purely anonymous type figures equivalent to the characters of many declamation themes or even fables.

Valerius Maximus caps his chapter on villainous words and criminal deeds (*Dicta improba aut facta scelerata*, 9.11) with an example of the first type, a parricide whose crime, he claims, surpasses all other crimes.¹⁵⁸ Valerius leaves this villain unnamed, although it is clear that he is the emperor Tiberius's regent and would-be usurper Sejanus. The suppression of his name might seem to offer an outstanding model for an anonymous *exemplum*, but this passage is in many ways closer to a conventional evocation of a named figure than it is to one in which the actors appear as more general types. This passage departs little from the character it would have as a named *exemplum*. The absence of Sejanus's name in no way conceals his identity or reduces the specificity

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Val. Max. 7.7.1: An anonymous soldier, disinherited by his father due a false report of his death, recovers his inheritance in court. This *exemplum* echoes declamation's frequent interest in disputes concerning inheritance and the rewards of military service.

¹⁵⁸ *Sed quid ego ista consector aut quid his immoror, cum unius parricidii cogitatione cuncta scelera superata cernam?* 9.11.ext.4.

of the event. Valerius denounces his target in rhetorically elaborate fashion.¹⁵⁹ The omission of the name appears to function as a sort of *damnatio memoriae*, although the author says nothing explicit to highlight the omission. Direct address is the primary device Valerius uses to avoid naming Sejanus. The author couches the bulk of his abuse in the form of direct invective: “Would you, more ferocious than the monstrosity of savage barbarity, have been able to seize the reins of Roman power which our prince and father holds fast in his salutary hand? Or, when you obtained your mad desire, would the world have remained in its place?” (*tu videlicet efferatae barbariae immanitate truculentior habenas Romani imperii, quas princeps parensque noster salutari dextera continet, capere potuisti? aut te compote furoris mundus in suo statu mansisset?* 9.11.ext.4). By elaborating the abuse of Sejanus, Valerius attempts to reinforce the enormity of the averted disaster. He here omits the name not to disguise his subject’s identity or offer a more universal model, but to strengthen his invective against a clearly recognizable target. Sejanus in this *exemplum* is merely unnamed rather than anonymous.

More truly anonymous *exempla* allow writers and speakers to avoid giving direct offense to contemporary individuals whom they cite as negative examples. In a few cases, by suppressing names a speaker or writer may avoid repeating a libelous claim, as in an anecdote in which a physical resemblance between two unrelated men leads them to trade jokes impugning the chastity of each other’s mother.¹⁶⁰ Discussing the topic of expected youthful transgressions, writers and speakers also use anonymity both to present such acts as commonplace occurrences and to avoid singling out any member of their audience for a shared fault. In his defense of Caelius, Cicero draws on the permissive attitudes of Roman comedy to approach the topic of his client’s youth.¹⁶¹ In

¹⁵⁹ Bloomer (1992) 228-29 discusses this passage as a fusion between the denunciation of Sejanus and imperial panegyric.

¹⁶⁰ Val. Max. 9.14.ext.3. Cf. Macrobius 2.4.20 and Pliny *NH* 7.55

¹⁶¹ For further discussion of this passage see section 3.1.

order to prove the unexceptional character of youthful indiscretions, he claims to be able to cite many *exempla* of men who became respectable citizens following a dissolute youth, but he refrains from naming names, explaining: “I do not want to link even the smallest error with the highest praise of any brave and well-known gentleman” (*Nolo enim cuiusquam fortis atque inlustris viri ne minimum quidem erratum cum maxima laude coniungere*, *Cael.* 43). Cicero indicates the presence of supporting *exempla* among the members of his audience, but leaves it to them to find specific instances either in themselves or their fellow jurors.¹⁶²

Anonymity could also offer protection to authors of the more aggressive genres. Roman satirists, for example, often expressed concerns about retaliation from the targets of their poetic attacks. Horace and Juvenal each discuss using stock figures or deceased individuals in place of contemporary targets in order to prevent social or legal reprisals.¹⁶³ In the closing section of his programmatic first satire, Juvenal determines to take the safer path by attacking dead persons instead of live ones (1.151-71).¹⁶⁴ Horace presents himself debating similar risks with Trebatius, who acts as a legal advisor, in the first satire of his second book.¹⁶⁵ At one point his interlocutor suggests that even when the poet uses pseudonyms for his targets, his listeners may still apply the attacks to their own conduct and thus take offense: “How much better is this [to praise Caesar in verse], than to wound Pantolabus the parasite and Nomentanus the profligate with severe verse, when each person fears for himself, though he is untouched, and resents it” (*Quanto rectius hoc, quam tristi laedere versu | Pantolabum scurram Nomentanumque*

¹⁶² Cicero uses the same tactic in the opening of the second *Phillipic*, omitting the names of his previous opponents: *nec vero necesse est quemquam a me nominari; vobiscum ipsi recordamini*, *Phil.* 2.1. This later omission, however, is more likely made for the sake of brevity and pacing than politeness.

¹⁶³ Pliny uses deceased men as examples in one letter for the opposite reason, namely to avoid the appearance of fawning: *neminem viventium, ne quam in speciem adulationis incidam, nominabo* (*Ep.* 5.3.5).

¹⁶⁴ See Bartsch (1994) 90-92 and Freudenberg (2001) 234-36, 242-44.

¹⁶⁵ See Freudenberg (2001) 73-82 and Oliensis (1998) 42-46.

nepotem, | cum sibi quisque timet, quamquam est intactus, et odit, Serm. 2.1.21-23). Whether or not these poets intentionally use their stock figures and deceased punching bags as stand-ins for specific contemporary figures, their rhetoric adopts the pose that their readers will seek to build parallels between themselves and the targets of the satire. The poets claim to present these characters as representatives of common, widespread faults, but they depict their audience as seeking correlations with identifiable individuals.

The visible absence of some portion of a narrative can also excite curiosity about the information that has been withheld. Pliny comments on this sort of public refusal to criticize an individual in letter 9.27. He describes a public recitation of a history that the author cut short on the request of the friends of a certain individual whose disreputable actions appeared in the passage not read.¹⁶⁶ Pliny censures the willingness to perform acts that one will later be ashamed to hear narrated. In addition he argues that the interruption of the reading will ultimately make people more eager to read the written account and thereby discover the story that had been withheld (9.27.2). By postponing the end of this “most truthful book” (*verissimum librum*), the writer clearly defines his performance within the space of the recitation as incomplete. The availability of a written version of this history here allows this break in the reading to emphasize the missing passage: “nevertheless the book like the deed itself remains, will remain and will be read always, the more so because it was not read right then” (*liber tamen ut factum ipsum manet manebit legeturque semper, tanto magis quia non statim, 9.27.2*). The elder Seneca recalls a similar event during a recitation given by the notoriously outspoken historian T. Labienus: “I remember that once, when he was reciting his history, he rolled up a large portion of the book and said: ‘The things that I pass over will be read after my death.’ How great was the outspokenness in them that even Labienus was

¹⁶⁶ On the potential dangers of writing or reciting histories under the Principate, see Bartsch (1994) 80-88; Freudenberg (2001) 219-25; Gowing (2005) 26-27, 51.

afraid!” (*memini aliquando, cum recitaret historiam, magnam partem illum libri convolvisse et dixisse: haec quae transeo post mortem meam legentur. Quanta in illis libertas fuit quam etiam Labienus extimuit! Contr. 10.praef.8*).¹⁶⁷ Seneca here emphasizes the danger of outspoken criticism for the speaker rather than the disgrace for the persons described. Emphasizing the potential dangers incurred by reciting or publishing, in this account Labienus’s confidence in the posthumous appeal of his history appears ironic given the fate of his own works: this anecdote immediately follows a discussion of the burning of his histories – the first such book-burning according to Seneca – and the historian’s suicide in response (*Contr. 10.praef.5-7*).¹⁶⁸ This pair of unrecited passages demonstrates the reciprocal dangers that published narratives could present for both narrator and narrated. Though not usual in history, anonymity offers a means for authors in other genres to mitigate the potential for offense or reprisal.

By depicting types rather than individuals, anonymous *exempla* may communicate general lessons more efficiently than those featuring high-status named figures. In such cases the generalizing impulse behind the citation of the model may outweigh the memorializing tendency in the more institutional forms of the practice. In letter 7.26, Pliny mentions a “certain friend” (*cuiusdam amici*) whose recent illness sparks the oxymoronic observation that “we are best while we are ill” (*optimos esse nos dum infirmi sumus, 7.26.1*).¹⁶⁹ Pliny skips directly from the mention of this friend to general reflections on the attitudes and activities of sick persons without providing the specific details or narrative that led to his observations. In effect, he has replaced the typical narrative content of an *exemplum* with ethical prescriptions urging emulation of

¹⁶⁷ On Labienus’s outspokenness, see Sen. *Contr. 10.praef.5: Libertas tanta ut libertatis nomen excederet, et quia passim ordines hominesque laniabat Rabienus vocaretur.*

¹⁶⁸ Cf. Tac. *Agr.* 1-3 on the dangers of writing history.

¹⁶⁹ The unnamed friend of 7.26 is sometimes identified with Rosianus Geminus, to whom Pliny sends advice on dealing with a persistent illness in letter 7.1.

the elided model.¹⁷⁰ In another letter defending the lofty tone of some passages in a speech he has been revising, Pliny cites “a certain orator of our time” (*quodam oratore saeculi nostri*, 9.26.1) to demonstrate the problems of the opposite fault, an overly cautious rhetorical style. He describes this unnamed speaker in broad terms — “correct and sensible, but insufficiently grand and ornate” (*recto quidem et sano, sed parum grandi et ornato*) — and then quotes his own judgment of the man’s abilities: “He does nothing wrong except that he does nothing wrong” (*Nihil peccat, nisi quod nihil peccat*, 9.26.1). Given that both this letter and the earlier 2.5 also addressed to Luperus concern oratory, it is possible that this judgment would be sufficient to identify the orator in question to the recipient.¹⁷¹ His identity, however, is not integral to the content of the letter. This figure serves simply as an occasion for reflection on rhetorical style rather than as an object of evaluation in his own right. As a named figure, this orator might encourage argument concerning Pliny’s personal evaluation, but as an anonymous type-figure, he is simply a device to contrast restrained simplicity with a more varied style. Preserving the anonymity of the initial model allows Pliny to focus the reader’s attention on the theoretical discussion of style, rather than on the particular characteristics of his chosen *exemplum*.¹⁷²

Anonymous *exempla* can also allow authors and writers to imply a broad continuity of values between various social classes or other segments of society. By limiting the available context even more than is already typical in *exempla*, such figures promote the use of the principle of ethical continuity to bridge variations along social or

¹⁷⁰ Pliny adopts a similar tactic in letter 8.22 to criticize hypocritical complaints about the faults of others. (I discuss this letter below).

¹⁷¹ Within the context of the published collection of letters, however, this possibility is far less certain. See, however, Riggsby (1995) 126-27 who suggests that this *quodam oratore* is a rhetorical substitute allowing polite disagreement with the addressee, *i.e.* a ‘certain orator’ represents Luperus himself.

¹⁷² Cf. Pliny’s use of Regulus to contrast his own rhetorical practice at *Ep.* 1.20.14-15. There, however, Regulus provides a far more particular and individual model than the broad figure of the restrained orator in 9.26.

political axes. In one letter Pliny comments on the effect of the social importance of the actors on the distribution of *exempla*. He contrasts an unnamed local woman with the well-known figure Arria, narrating the former's death while evoking the latter's only using her name (*Ep.* 6.24). He reports the story of a woman from Comum whose actions establish her as a model of wifely devotion equivalent to the elder Arria: "And I, a fellow townsman, did not even hear of this deed except recently, not because it was less important than that very famous deed of Arria, but because the woman herself was less important" (*Quod factum ne mihi quidem, qui municeps, nisi proxime auditum est, non quia minus illo clarissimo Arriae facto, sed quia minor ipsa, 6.24.5*). Although he reports this woman's assistance and companionship to her husband in suicide, nevertheless Pliny accedes to the preference for more exalted *exempla* and leaves her unnamed. The lack of fame connected with her name is more a curiosity to be remarked upon than an omission to be corrected.¹⁷³ This brief letter highlights the connection between the transmission of exemplary actions and the social status of their actors: "the same deeds by the fame or anonymity of the actors are either raised to the highest peak or pressed down into the lowest pit" (*Eadem enim facta claritate vel obscuritate facientium aut tolluntur altissime aut humillime deprimuntur, 6.24.1*).¹⁷⁴ Pliny's description of the event is spare but complete. In reporting this obscure *exemplum*, he treats the narrative itself as the focus of exemplary discourse; names function here as

¹⁷³ This despite the fact that his addressee may be a fellow inhabitant of the region: cf. *per Larium nostrum* (6.24.2), along with Sherwin-White (1966) *ad loc.* It is possible that Pliny had originally reported the name to his addressee but removed it when he edited the letter for publication. On the other hand, the description of Pliny's inquiry about the event may indicate that he never even asked for or learned the woman's name: the woman is described only as *municeps nostra* (6.24.2), and Pliny's sole question is described in the short clause, *Causam requisivi*. (6.24.3).

¹⁷⁴ Compare letter 3.16 where Pliny uses the acts of Arria herself to illustrate a similar observation about deeds rather than persons: "I seem to have observed that some deeds and words of men and women are more famous, others are more important" (*Adnotasse videor facta dictaque virorum feminarumque alia clariora esse alia maiora, Ep.* 3.16.1). Unlike his letter about the anonymous wife from Comum that fails to give her a name, this letter about Arria corrects the obscurity of her 'greater' deeds by narrating them at length. See also Wilcox (2006) 91-92 on Pliny, *Ep.* 3.16.

mere adjuncts that either help or hinder transmission of the anecdote. Pliny's chance encounter with a notable local *exemplum* indicates both the wide diffusion of exemplary modes of thought and some of the circumstantial considerations that condition the transmission and preservation of *exempla*. Through this pairing he comments on the importance of social position as a determinant for the distribution and preservation of exemplary narratives. By presenting this local woman as an anonymous figure, he implicitly approves the tendency to prefer socially or politically important figures as exemplary models. But at the same time his report of the local woman's devotion to her husband levels her with the more famous Arria on the ethical plane, suggesting that social importance serves more to encourage distribution of the anecdote than to guarantee the moral worth of the actor. Pliny thus uses anonymity as a tool to manipulate the supposed connection between virtue and social class. The replication of Roman senatorial *mores* by a woman of the minor municipal aristocracy¹⁷⁵ implies an ethical continuity between the values of the senatorial elite and those of other social classes. Pliny's use of this anonymous local *exemplum* thus justifies a preference for senatorial *exempla* while purporting to demonstrate the universality of the aristocratic values they represent.

An *exemplum* of fraternal *pietas* in Valerius Maximus approaches the same sort of comparison from a slightly different direction. Following a series of *exempla* drawn from famous generals that concludes with the future *princeps* Tiberius rushing to see his dying brother Drusus, Valerius introduces a final *exemplum* of two nameless brothers with the following apology: "But it will certainly not be unwelcome to the most famous commanders in all memory if the highest piety of a soldier toward his own brother appears in this section of the book" (*Sed omnis memoriae clarissimis imperatoribus*

¹⁷⁵ The reference to the lakefront villa suggests that this woman and her husband belong to the local nobility, while Pliny's unfamiliarity with this couple from his own hometown may imply their relatively low status within that group.

profecto non erit ingratum si militis summa erga fratrem suum pietas huic parti voluminis adhaeserit, 5.5.4). This concluding example contains the most violent and dramatic illustration of fraternal piety among the four in the section: during the Sertorian War in the 70s BCE, one of Pompey's soldiers unwittingly kills his own brother. When the man discovers his mistake, he carries out the funeral rites for his brother and then commits suicide over the pyre (Val. Max. 5.5.4).¹⁷⁶ This anecdote both provides a vivid climax to the examples in Valerius's chapter and broadens the representation of this quality to include the general populace.

A few other anonymous *exempla* in Valerius's collection also feature anonymous Roman rank-and-file soldiers (3.2.10-11, 7.7.1). One of these presents a soldier disinherited due to a false report of his death. When he returns home and finds strangers in possession of his father's house, this soldier successfully sues to recover his patrimony (7.7.1). Unlike the *exemplum* of fraternal piety, this nameless *exemplum* leads off a series of named ones. The same anecdote appears in Cicero's *de Oratore*, but Valerius shifts the emphasis away from the technical point for which Cicero uses the story – “in this case the question concerned civil law: whether a son could be disinherited from his paternal goods if his father had recorded him in his will neither as disinherited nor as an heir” (*in ea causa quaesitum est de iure civili, possetne paternorum bonorum exheres esse filius, quem pater testamento neque heredem neque exheredem scripsisset nominatim*, Cic. *de Oratore* 1.175) – towards a declamatory elaboration comparing the patriotic soldier to the self-interested false heirs – “Indeed what is more shameless than those men? He had used up the flower of his youth for the state, he had endured the greatest labors and many dangers, he was displaying scars received on the front of his body, and they, idle burdens to the city itself, were demanding to possess his ancestral home” (*quid enim illis inverecundius? florem iuventae pro re publica absumpserat, maximos labores ac*

¹⁷⁶ A more abbreviated account of the event appears at Livy *Per.* 79.

*plurima pericula toleraverat, adverso corpore exceptas ostendebat cicatrices, et postulabant ut avitos eius lares otiosa ipsi urbi onera possiderent, Val. Max. 7.7.1).*¹⁷⁷ For Cicero this *exemplum* demonstrates the need for technical legal knowledge; for Valerius it serves as a stirring rhetorical introduction to the theme of inheritances restored by courts. This anonymous soldier provides a central instance through which to explore the protection of familial inheritance by Roman legal institutions.

The younger Pliny uses anonymous *exempla* at times to comment on certain social attitudes. In a small number of letters that have received little critical attention (2.6, 8.22, 9.12), he uses anonymous *exempla* to dispense advice to some of his friends.¹⁷⁸ Although he does not explicitly identify them as such, Sherwin-White seems to recognize these letters as a connected group. Aside from identifying the recipients of the letters and providing parallels for the advice Pliny offers, the primary observation his commentary makes is to cross-reference these letters with one another for their deployment of *exempla*.¹⁷⁹ Through these letters Pliny presents himself as an arbiter of manners and attempts to establish himself as an *exemplum* for how to give advice.

In letter 8.22 Pliny compares two social types – those who criticize others for the same vices they themselves engage in and those who avoid vices themselves but tolerate them in others. In the closing lines, however, he hesitates to include the example that spurred his comments: “Recently a certain person – but it’s better in person; rather not even then. For I fear that to report the attacking and biting that I condemn will conflict with the lesson I am teaching above all. Let that man, whoever and whatever sort he is, remain unnamed. To point him out offers no *exemplum*, not to point him out expresses much decency” (*Nuper quidam – sed melius coram; quamquam ne tunc quidem. Vereor enim ne id quod improbo consecrari carpere referre huic quod cum maxime*

¹⁷⁷ Cf. Sen. *Contr.* 1.8.

¹⁷⁸ *Ep.* 7.26 (discussed above) and 7.1 (in which Pliny presents himself as an *exemplum*) also belong to this group.

¹⁷⁹ Sherwin-White (1966) *ad loc.*

praecipimus repugnet. Quisquis ille qualiscumque sileatur, quem insignire exempli nihil, non insignire humanitatis plurimum refert. 8.22.4). The choice to refrain explicitly from narrating this unnamed person's criticisms and hypocrisy suggests that Pliny intends to portray himself as a model of the tolerance for faults of others, but the language of this passage makes his disapproval clear. By ostentatiously refusing to provide the name of this anonymous figure, Pliny depicts himself as tolerant of this behavior while still registering his criticism of it. He clearly conveys the criticism he pretends to disavow. Other anonymous negative exemplars are more straightforward. In letter 9.12 Pliny simply recounts a *post factum* observation about the ubiquity of faults that he had made to an unnamed individual who had treated his son too harshly. He offers this story to his addressee as protreptic advice against the possibility that he might overreact in response to his son's minor faults, although notably Pliny himself appears solely in the role of advisor in both scenarios.¹⁸⁰

Letter 2.6 presents its author even more clearly as a positive model compared to the anonymous object of his criticism. Here Pliny, offering advice to his younger friend Junius Avitus, voices a common criticism against the practice of highlighting status distinctions at banquets by dividing different grades of food and wine among different categories of guest.¹⁸¹ Within the context of a banquet given by an unnamed acquaintance, he registers his disapproval of the arrangements made by his current host and defines himself in contrast as a more egalitarian sort of host, serving the same modest dishes and wine to himself and all of his guests. Pliny assumes that his host sees himself as fair and generous: in his words, he dines "at the home of a certain man –

¹⁸⁰ I discuss both of these letters further in section 3.2. Pliny himself was childless, which may partially explain his purely advisory role here. This circumstance may also partly underlie the apparent conventionality of his advice here. Cf. Hor. *Serm.* 1.3.1-37. Horace discusses the same theme but introduces himself as a potential object of criticism at ll. 19-20.

¹⁸¹ Sherwin-White (1966) 152 identifies this as a commonplace moral opinion. For parallels see Pliny, *NH* 14.91; Suet. *Iul.* 48, SHA, *Hadr.* 17.4; Juv. 5; Mart. 1.20, 3.60, 4.68.

refined and attentive, as he seemed to himself, [but] vicious and extravagant, as he appeared to me” (*apud quendam, ut sibi videbatur, lautum et diligentem, ut mihi, sordidum et sumptosum, 2.6.1*). Pliny explicitly defines his practice as limiting his own wine to that appropriate for his freedmen guests: “my freedmen do not drink the same thing I do, but I drink the same thing the freedmen do” (*Quia scilicet liberti mei non idem quod ego bibunt, sed idem ego quod liberti, 2.6.4*). Pliny thus accepts the mapping of food quality onto social status distinctions as partly natural, but defines his choice of simple food as a consequence of his personal appetite. By what he presents as a providential coincidence, his personal abstention allows him to define himself as both virtuously moderate in his culinary desires and also graciously egalitarian in his treatment of guests. It is not that his freedmen guests receive better food than elsewhere, but that Pliny does not flaunt the gap between what they receive and what he could afford to serve to his higher status guests. While Pliny does suggest that preserving modest eating habits will ensure that Avitus will not offend his guests, his central warning is simply to avoid the blatant show of unequal treatment: “It is appropriate for my love towards you, whenever some such thing happens, to advise you by the *exemplum*, what you should avoid. Remember that nothing is more to be shunned than the recent combination of extravagance and meanness. Although these things are most shameful when distinct and separate from each other, joining them together is even more shameful” (*Convenit autem amori in te meo, quotiens tale aliquid inciderit, sub exemplo praemonere, quid debeas fugere. Igitur memento nihil magis esse vitandum quam istam luxuriae et sordium novam societatem; quae cum sint turpissima discreta ac separata, turpius iunguntur, 2.6.6-7*). Sherwin-White suggests that the use of an *exemplum* here “softens the edge of advice and criticism.”¹⁸²

¹⁸² Sherwin-White (1966) 153. He gives parallels at Pliny, *Ep.* 7.1.7, 8.22.4, 9.12.2. For 8.22 and 9.12, see the discussion above.

As we have seen, omitting the name of an *exemplum* can produce a number of effects. A suppressed name may highlight moral disapproval or avoid giving direct offense. Anonymous figures may draw closer to general types and thus focus attention more on the action than the actor. They may avoid arguments concerning specific details to focus on underlying issues. And as with Pliny's letters of advice, the deployment of nameless *exempla* may allow a writer to shift some of the emphasis away from the content of the instance cited onto the act of citation itself, depicting the author as a model for how to cite *exempla* and to give advice. As these differing uses draw away from the more particular focus created by *exempla* of named figures, they move closer to the stock figures defined by familial or social roles who play an important part in Roman comedy, as well as declamation and fables. It is to the fuzzy border between nameless generalizing *exempla* and declamatory fictions that we turn in the next section.

2.2: *Exempla*, Declamation and the Mythologization of Narrative Models.

Historical episodes were one source for the themes used in the declamation exercises of rhetorical education. As Matthew Roller has argued using the example of Cicero's death, sometimes inventions of the rhetorical schools could become important elements within supposedly historical narratives.¹⁸³ Likewise we should note the similarity between the features of anonymous *exempla* and declamatory themes. The use of professional or familial roles to identify the actors resembles the use of such labels in setting declamations. Scholars such as Mary Beard and Erik Gunderson characterize Roman declamation as a form of mythic discourse, suggesting the potential for such themes to function as elements of a rhetorically educated individual's mental universe.¹⁸⁴ Training in the use of *colores* — attitudes, intentions or even completely external events introduced into a declamation to change the perception of the characters and their

¹⁸³ Roller (1997). I discuss Roller's article on this episode further below.

¹⁸⁴ Beard (1993) and Gunderson (2003).

relationships — to shape the arguments on these themes may encourage a creative approach to the deployment of such resources. Quintilian’s caution against the too eager or thoughtless use of wholesale inventions encouraged by school declamations (5.13.45-46) suggests something of the care necessary to employ such devices effectively.

Roller demonstrates how, in the interest of augmenting the moral point of an event, declaimers could alter or even create “historical” events such as Cicero’s defense of Popillius on a charge of parricide.¹⁸⁵ Roller positions his article as a reaction to earlier source criticism on the death of Cicero tradition, in particular the work of Homeyer. He criticizes her for minimizing the role of the declaimers in the development of historical accounts of the orator’s death, noting that the temporal proximity between the actual event and the appearance of these declamatory themes makes it unlikely that some earlier written source served as the basis for the rhetorical exercises.¹⁸⁶ In addition, Roller suggests that the political arguments put forward by the declaimers seem to develop arguments put forward by Cicero himself in the *Philippics* and other elements derived from Octavian’s propaganda campaign against Marcus Antonius during the conflict between the triumvirs in the 30s BCE.¹⁸⁷

Roller bases his discussion primarily on the declamations and commentary concerning Cicero’s death recorded by Seneca the Elder.¹⁸⁸ In his discussion of the *controversia* accusing Cicero’s killer of misconduct (*Contr.* 7.2), Seneca reveals that the details on which the declamation rests have little basis in evidence: “Few of the historians have reported Popillius as Cicero’s killer, and these also do not report that he was defended by Cicero on an accusation of parricide, but in a private trial; the declaimers decided that he had been accused of parricide” (*Popillium pauci ex historicis*

¹⁸⁵ Roller (1997).

¹⁸⁶ Roller (1997) 115; he argues against Helene Homeyer (1964) *Die antiken Berichte über den Tod Ciceros und ihre Quellen*. Baden-Baden. (= Deutsche Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft, Bd. 18).

¹⁸⁷ Roller (1997) 116-117.

¹⁸⁸ Sen. *Contr.* 7.2; *Suas.* 6, 7.

tradiderunt interfectorem Ciceronis et hi quoque non parricidi reum a Cicerone defensum, sed in privato iudicio; declamatoribus placuit parricidi reum fuisse., Contr. 7.2.8). There exists no record of any such court case involving Cicero's murder, as Seneca himself admits.¹⁸⁹ This is not an uncommon pattern in declamations that refer to historical events: while the event itself has an attested existence independent of the declamatory theme, the hypothetical trial attaches itself only tangentially to the historical material.¹⁹⁰ Roller argues that not only the parricide trial but any previous relationship between Cicero and his killer may be fictitious. He suggests that, "the entire tradition that Cicero defended Popillius, on any charge, and delivered a speech of his behalf, is a declamatory fabrication that originated as a *color*. For while this court case is securely attested no less than six times, every attestation occurs in a treatment of the death of Cicero; the court case has no existence whatsoever outside of the death-of-Cicero tradition. This close connection strongly suggests dependence: that the story of the court case emerged within, or as part of, the death-of-Cicero tradition."¹⁹¹ Roller's interpretation of this episode positions the practice of declamation not as some intellectual cul-de-sac that draws on historical and cultural material without feeding back into the broader flow of contemporary historical discussions, but rather as a vibrant and influential arena within the broader conversation.

Roller identifies two tendencies in the practice of declamation as central to the creation of events and relationships such as Cicero's defense of Popillius for parricide: first an emphasis on ethical justifications in building declamatory arguments, and second the practice of inventing new actions and details in the form of *colores*.¹⁹² As Roller notes: "For the declaimers... and for other ancient writers who appropriated the

¹⁸⁹ *Sic autem eum accusant tamquam defendi non possit, cum adeo possit absolvi ut ne accusari quidem potuerit.* (Sen. *Contr.* 7.2.8)

¹⁹⁰ See Beard (1993) 52 on the lack of attestation for this trial and others attached to "historical" themes.

¹⁹¹ Roller (1997) 125-26.

¹⁹² Roller (1997) 112-14.

death-of-Cicero narrative from declamation, history is for the most part a record of the moral significance of events.”¹⁹³ Writers and speakers select, adapt and supplement the details of a declamatory narrative – or of an exemplary one – in the service of moral – or, perhaps more accurately, moralizing – arguments. A sense of familiarity, whether with some portion of the narrative frame or with the moralizing stance taken, can reinforce the credibility of the supplementary material. (I discussed the importance of familiarity to the credibility of narrative in section 1.3 of the previous chapter.) Historical narratives directed toward a moral point require a different relationship with the details of the event than do those concerned with documentary verifiability. Moralizing history produces another sort of truth from that produced by antiquarian research: the truth of a moralizing narrative – such as those produced by declaimers and users of *exempla* – rests in the meaning it projects, not in the accuracy of its details.

In a less spectacular fashion, declamation trains its participants to mold the character of their subjects in accordance with useful conventional models or concepts. For instance, in a biographical sketch of Seneca the Elder, Janet Fairweather notes that the picture that the younger Seneca offers of his father is inconsistent with some of the elder’s expressed views in the extant works. Noting a similar tendency to idealize his mother in the *Consolatio ad Helviam* along the lines of standard female types from declamation, Fairweather suggests that the younger Seneca may model his portrayal of his father more on certain ideal types rather than his actual character: “maybe his references to his father similarly give us not so much a reliable description of the man as he really was, as a conventional portrait of what a Roman father of the old school ought to have been like.”¹⁹⁴ As we have seen in the previous chapter, Pliny the Younger proudly

¹⁹³ Roller (1997) 128.

¹⁹⁴ Fairweather (1984) 522-23. She further suggests that the Elder’s depiction of his sons in the *Controversiae* as almost exclusively interested in *sententiae* may be a similar distortion with the goal of aligning them more completely with the interests he assigns to the younger generation in general.

admits to distorting and exaggerating the merits of his friends, a practice he claims as a mark of good will and friendship.¹⁹⁵ Declamation develops character types that persist in other genres and which may alter the presentation of “real” historical figures. The use of these exercises ensures that the character types on which most declamations were built would be a familiar part of the mental furniture of the Roman elite.¹⁹⁶ Building on the elder Seneca’s advice to his son Mela in the preface to *Controversiae* 2, where he argues from the example of Fabianus, a declaimer who became a philosopher, that rhetorical training is useful for everyone no matter what field of study they wished to pursue, Fairweather summarizes Seneca’s attitude concerning rhetorical education – an attitude she sees as characteristic of the time – as follows: “rhetoric – that is, given the curriculum standard in schools of that period, declamation – is the central literary discipline, which not only provides a training for orators, but also supplies those who would venture into any other branch of literary composition with aids to effective expression which it would be most unwise to forgo.”¹⁹⁷ Among these “aids to effective expression” are the *personae*, the character types with which both speakers and audiences trained through declamation would be familiar. The practice of declamation defines various categories of person and varieties of relationship, which are then inculcated in those who practice it.

Another way in which a declamation can act in place of an *exemplum* is to enact an abstract version of a current problem. In this fashion, speakers could essentially generate *exempla* for themselves. In a letter to his friend Atticus written in March of 49 BCE during the turmoil following Pompey’s departure from Italy and Caesar’s seizure of the city of Rome, Cicero describes himself engaging in a series of rhetorical exercises,

¹⁹⁵ *Ep.* 7.28. See the discussion in section 1.2.

¹⁹⁶ See Bloomer (1997) on rhetorical education teaching its students to recognize the social positions and conventional characters of many of the common classes of person they would encounter and deal with in their adult lives.

¹⁹⁷ Fairweather (1984) 556.

which he labels theses (θέσεις, *ad Att.* 9.4.1).¹⁹⁸ These exercises are essentially forerunners of the *suasoriae* practiced by students of declamation. Claiming that he is at a loss to find anything to write about, Cicero states that he has begun practicing abstract arguments to avoid giving in to despair: “But nevertheless so that I may not surrender myself totally to sorrow, I have taken up for myself certain theses as it were that are both concerned with politics and the current times, so that I may both draw my mind away from complaints and I may practice in the very issue about which there is concern” (*sed tamen ne me totum aegritudini dedam, sumpsi mihi quasdam tamquam θέσεις quae et πολιτικαὶ sunt et temporum horum, ut et abducam animum ab querelis et in eo ipso de quo agitur exercear, ad Att.* 9.4.1). Cicero repeats this same thought in the concluding paragraph of the letter with similar though slightly varied wording.¹⁹⁹ As Gunderson notes, Cicero figures this activity as providing two distinct things: “The exercise offers a sort of spiritual relief (*abduco parumper animum a molestiis*), and it also allows Cicero to deliberate on questions whose relevance is very much to hand (τῶν προύργου τι *delibero*).”²⁰⁰ Engaging in abstract rhetorical exercises serves as a distancing gesture by which Cicero removes himself from current political difficulties, but the choice of subject allows him nevertheless to work through his possible response to the situation in an indirect manner. Gunderson suggests that these theses perform a sort of playacting rehearsal for life, but the two distinct advantages that Cicero identifies in this activity – the relaxation from troubles and the simultaneous deliberation about those troubles – imply that the orator himself sees this activity as firmly separated from his own political options, even as it offers insight into those exact questions. The translation of his

¹⁹⁸ See Bonner (1949) 1-11 on the development of declamation in Rome and the character of these theses. Gunderson (2003) 105 follows Bonner’s work.

¹⁹⁹ *et abduco parumper animum a molestiis et τῶν προύργου τι delibero, ad Att.* 9.4.3. The repetition of *abducam animum* and *abduco... animum* calls attention to the repetition of thought in the two paragraphs.

²⁰⁰ Gunderson (1993) 107. The two quotations are from Cic. *ad Att.* 9.4.3.

situation into the abstract as well as into Greek offers not just political cover but also emotional distance. Cicero does not practice ways to act as himself, but instead gives advice to an exemplary figure who is parallel to, yet distinct from himself. Only by understanding these theses to depict a *persona* that is not himself, no matter how clearly parallel they are to his own circumstances, can Cicero explore his political options while nevertheless removing his mind from the attendant anxieties. Addressing an abstract analogy provides emotional distance from the pressing political troubles he considers.

The content of these theses, expressed in Greek perhaps as a means to suggest a greater level of abstraction from the current political situation,²⁰¹ nevertheless clearly parallel Cicero's situation and options in reacting to Caesar's seizure of dictatorial power in Rome.²⁰² In particular, the last topic in the list clearly transforms Cicero himself into an abstract figure that he may advise as if he were another person: "If a man has done great things for his fatherland and on account of this has suffered irreparable things and suffered reproach, should he willingly take a risk on behalf of his fatherland or must it be allowed to him to give thought to himself and the members of his family, leaving political affairs to those in power?" (εἰ ὁ μέγαρα τὴν πατρίδα εὐεργετήσας δι' αὐτό τε τοῦτο

²⁰¹ Gunderson (1993) 107 makes a similar comment, but focused on the abstraction of the content of these theses: "The specific has been made strategically generic. Rather than offering the ὑπόθεσις 'Should I help kill Caesar?' Cicero instead engages the θέσις 'Should a tyrant be slain?'"

²⁰² Εἰ μενετέον ἐν τῇ πατρίδι τυραννουμένης αὐτῆς. εἰ παντὶ τρόπῳ τυραννίδος κατάλυσιν πραγματευτέον, κὰν μέλλῃ διὰ τοῦτο περὶ τῶν ὅλων ἢ πόλις κινδυνεύσειν. εἰ εὐλαβητέον τὸν καταλύοντα μὴ αὐτὸς αἰρηται. εἰ πειρατέον ἀρήγειν τῇ πατρίδι τυραννουμένη καιρῷ καὶ λόγῳ μᾶλλον ἢ πολέμῳ. εἰ πολιτικὸν τὸ ἡσυχάζειν ἀναχωρήσαντά ποι τῆς πατρίδος τυραννουμένης ἢ διὰ παντὸς ἰτέον κινδύνου τῆς ἐλευθερίας πέρι. εἰ πόλεμον ἐπακτέον τῇ χώρῃ καὶ πολιορκητέον αὐτὴν τυραννουμένην. εἰ καὶ μὴ δοκιμάζοντα τὴν διὰ πολέμου κατάλυσιν τῆς τυραννίδος συναπογραπτέον ὅμως τοῖς ἀρίστοις. εἰ τοῖς εὐεργέταις καὶ φίλοις συγκινδυνευτέον ἐν τοῖς πολιτικοῖς κὰν μὴ δοκῶσιν εὖ βεβουλευσθαι περὶ τῶν ὅλων. εἰ ὁ μέγαρα τὴν πατρίδα εὐεργετήσας δι' αὐτό τε τοῦτο ἀνήκεστα παθῶν καὶ φθονηθεῖς κινδυνεύσειεν ἂν ἐθελοντῆς ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος ἢ ἐφετέον αὐτῷ ἑαυτοῦ ποτε καὶ τῶν οἰκειοτάτων ποιείσθαι πρόνοιαν ἀφεμένῳ τὰς πρὸς τοὺς ἰσχύοντας διαπολιτείας. (Cic., *ad Att.* 9.4.2)

Cicero reveals his choice to use Greek in this letter to be a strategic decision by his subsequent comment that he practices these deliberations in both Latin and Greek (*tum Graece tum Latine, ad Att.* 9.4.3).

ἀνήκεστα παθῶν καὶ φθονηθεὶς κινδυνεύσειεν ἂν ἔθελοντῆς ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος ἢ ἐφετέον αὐτῷ ἑαυτοῦ ποτε καὶ τῶν οἰκειοτάτων ποιείσθαι πρόνοιαν ἀφεμένῳ τὰς πρὸς τοὺς ἰσχύοντας διαπολιτείας, *ad Att.* 9.4.2).²⁰³ Erik Gunderson reads this practice through the lens of Lacanian psychoanalysis and the language of technologies of the self. He characterizes these fictional performances as a means of exploring potential ways of being:

The varieties of self-employment for the statesman in his civic life are found to be rhetorical, and this rhetoric has as its occasion the idle hours of declamation. This is an earnest sort of leisure in which one studies how best to be oneself. The rhetoric of the self has as its training ground this world of fictional opportunities beyond which beckon virtual, potential selves. The many declamatory cases act as so many occasions for the constitutive call of interpellation, occasions that are multiplied within themselves as they split into *pro* and *contra*. The answers are not simple, nor is the genre reducible to allegory. Nor may one freely take up and set down whatever mask one pleases. The masks constrain even as they enable. The techniques of the self herein practiced produce a more elaborate self-relation than that presupposed by a simple discourse of authenticity. Style, comportment, and flair enter into the game.²⁰⁴

Gunderson's description of rhetorically enacting possible modes of action delineates both the flexibility and the limitations of this mode of deliberation, but at the same time his interpretation of this mode as encompassing "techniques of the self" distorts the relationship between the declaimer and his declamation. What Gunderson expresses as re-imagining oneself through the medium of declamatory play-acting can just as easily be seen as a process of creating *exempla* to think with. Such an interpretation may in fact be closer to how Cicero or his contemporaries would understand the practice. The theses he declaims concentrate not on concerns such as "How should I feel?" or "What should I think?" but instead relentlessly focus on the question "What must be done?" or perhaps "What should a good man do?" Cicero does not here explore "how best to be oneself," but rather considers patterns of action that he may then adduce as *exempla* either to imitate

²⁰³ Gunderson (2003) 107: "Cicero's final proposition is long, complicated, and undisguisedly autobiographical."

²⁰⁴ Gunderson (2003) 109-110. Gunderson's discussion (104-110) involves this letter as well as *ad Att.* 14.22 written in another perilous time for Cicero during the turmoil following the death of Caesar.

or to avoid in his subsequent political life. As Cicero performs hypothetical variations on his political future, he observes himself not as an *exemplum* of something that has been done but as a wide variety of *exempla* of things that might be done.

Shadi Bartsch's discussion of the ancient attitude towards mirrors as a tool for gaining self-knowledge sheds useful light on this distinction between considering "how best to be oneself" and creating *exempla* to explore what one should do. She contrasts the ancient use of mirrors to gain self-knowledge with the modern view of the mirror as a metaphor for introspection. For the Romans, the self-knowledge gained through the use of mirrors was obtained by way of identification with the judgment of the community: a mirror allows its user to see what others see.²⁰⁵ Bartsch builds on a repeated link between the concept of *sophrosyne* – moderation and self-control in line with social expectations – and the well-known dictum "Know yourself" in order to suggest that mirrors help to build self-knowledge by allowing the viewer to perceive his or her appropriate social position:

Although the idea of 'self-knowledge' suggests, for us, a Romantic introspection into the hidden depths of the soul, or a Freudian uncovering of the unconscious desires of the id, the ancient notion of *sophrosyne* was directed toward moderation and control of the social behavior of the individual, toward the approbation of his peers rather than the flowering of an inner potential. This provides the crucial link between *sophrosyne* as a set of practices and the notion of self-knowledge in antiquity, and also explains why, for us, the employment of the mirror as a tool to those ends might seem empty or superficial, while for our Greco-Roman writers it provides a significant view onto the self.²⁰⁶

Bartsch observes that ancient writers neither discuss nor describe the mind as observing and reflecting on its own operations.²⁰⁷ This understanding of the relationship between the viewer and his or her own image in the mirror as mimicking the position of an external observer prepares a person accustomed to this form of self-observation to

²⁰⁵ Bartsch (2006) 24.

²⁰⁶ Bartsch (2006) 25.

²⁰⁷ Bartsch (2006) 16. At 232-36 she uses Christopher Gill's model of the "objective-participant" self as a way to think about the ancient self: She primarily references Christopher Gill (1996) *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy: The Self in Dialogue*. Oxford.

consider the performance of a declamation in some manner as an external phenomenon. In practicing his theses on responding to tyranny, Cicero essentially creates a mirror analogue to himself whom he can advise and imagine as a model for himself. He is at least as concerned to understand the broader social responses to the abstract possibilities for action he debates as he is to try on the different masks that his potential responses to Caesar offer.

As Cicero's declamatory creation of *exempla* for himself suggests, declamation at times can substitute for the use of historical instances. But the connection between these rhetorical exercises and exemplarity also operates on a more fundamental level. Mary Beard has provocatively suggested that declamation acts as a form of mythological discourse. Just as with the frequent citation of *exempla*, the combination of historical themes with quasi-contemporary ones is one method of weaving historical time into the present moment: "Declamation was one important means of turning dead and buried myth-history into an issue of the present: constant re-*presentation*."²⁰⁸ Beard emphasizes what she defines as the traditional character of declamatory exercises in terms that are also suggestive of the Roman treatment of *exempla*:

These scenarios form a group of *traditional* themes – "traditional" in the sense that they are presented without concern for origin or authorship, but are focused instead on *repetition*, *re-telling*, *re-elaboration*. This is a part of Roman cultural production in which a nucleus of stories is repeated, slightly reworked, varied or extended, time and time again – not just in the surviving collections of declamatory texts, but also in the life-history experience of those who participated in the "declamatory arena."²⁰⁹

The description of declamations as stories "repeated, slightly reworked, varied or extended, time and time again" is clearly resonant with exemplarity, in particular the well known, oft repeated stories most commonly recognized as *exempla*. The parallel between the repetition and manipulation of famous historical episodes, and the

²⁰⁸ Beard (1993) 62. Beard 61 explicitly opposes the exemplary understanding of history to the declamatory, although in doing so she follows a very limited definition of exemplarity.

²⁰⁹ Beard (1993) 58, emphasis in the original.

repetition and manipulation of often melodramatic disputes between stock character-types demonstrates, I believe, the kinship between these two practices as instantiations of a single underlying mode of thought. As Beard suggests, the declamations that concern specific historical events encourage the contestation of historical meaning: the juxtaposition of historical themes and abstract family or social conflicts “served to reinforce the *debatability* of Roman history; just as the issues surrounding the blind boy’s conflict with the stepmother were obviously up for negotiation, so also was the conduct of the heroes (and villains) of the Graeco-Roman past.”²¹⁰ Declamation and exemplarity both create arenas in which narrations and re-narrations of events serve as material to debate ethical values and plans of action.

More broadly, declamation acts as a sort of fairy-tale discourse for the Romans, allowing them to think through social or psychological issues. Describing the practice as a variety of mythopoesis, Beard offers the following overview of declamations as characterized through an eclectic mix of theoretical concepts:

They construct a fictional world of “traditional tales” for negotiating, and re-negotiating, the fundamental rules of Roman society; they “naturalize the arbitrariness” of those rules by setting them in the context of *legal* sanction; they offer a vision of *higher authority* – defined not in terms of divine intervention, but in terms of the social sanction of Roman *law*; they provide a focus for the representation and constant re-resolution of central Roman/human conflicts that everyday social regulations do not (and *can* not) solve; they offer an arena for learning, practicing and recollecting what it is *to be and think Roman*.²¹¹

This focus on “what it is to be and think Roman” suggests congruence between the practices of declamation and exemplarity. Declamation offers almost a fantasy extension of exemplarity, widening the field of reference to fantasies of legal or political debate. As Gunderson argues, “Declamation allows Romans to allegorize reality, to play with it, and comment upon it.”²¹² The practice of arguing *controversiae* and *suasoriae* trains

²¹⁰ Beard (1993) 62, emphasis in the original. The mention of “the blind boy’s conflict with the stepmother” refers to the theme of Ps.-Quintilian, *Decl. Mai.* 2, which Beard uses as a model declamation throughout much of her article.

²¹¹ Beard (1993) 56, emphasis in the original.

²¹² Gunderson (2003) 90

declaimers in the art of negotiating the conflicts of legalism, social expectations and realities. As Beard argues, “It was in the repeated re-arguing of these traditional cases (of rape, disinheritance, domestic murder) that the Roman elite learnt to *think with* their own social rules and to negotiate the problems, inconsistencies and paradox that any such system of rules necessarily throws up.”²¹³ Through the practice of declamation, Romans acquired a range of expressive resources – familiar character types and narrative forms, patterns of argument and tactics for negotiating conflicts – that were easily portable to other genres and contexts.

2.3: The Cross-Pollination of *Exemplum* and Fable in Phaedrus’ Fables.

Fable, like declamation, presents a fantasy extension of exemplary thought. Phaedrus repeatedly describes his poetic fables as offering *exempla* to his readers (1.3.3, 1.26.12, 2.*prol.*1, 2.1.11, 2.2.2, 3.10.2, 4.3.6, 4.7.20, 5.*prol.*10). The typical structure of a fable with its tightly focused narrative and clearly stated lesson often explicitly encourages readers to adduce the characters as *exempla* either for themselves or for those around them. In addition to the more typical animal stories, several of Phaedrus’s fables claim to be taken from his own experiences and involve named historical figures.²¹⁴ Approaching the connection from the opposite direction, some anonymous *exempla* even in a historically focused collection such as that of Valerius present fable-like narratives. Valerius 7.6.3, for example, offers a lesson against war profiteering through the story of a man who sold a mouse as food for an enormous sum during the siege of Praeneste, but who subsequently starved to death.

²¹³ Beard (1993) 60, emphasis in the original.

²¹⁴ Phaedrus claims that 2.5 (Tiberius Caesar), 3.10 (Augustus) and 5.7 (the tibia-player Princeps) come from his own memory. Other fables including historical figures include: 3.9 and *App.* 27 (both concerning Socrates), 4.23 and 4.26 (both concerning Simonides), 5.1 (Demetrius and Menander) and *App.* 10 (Pompey). Fairweather (1984) 499 provides an overview of the contents of the collection.

The identification of such stories as *exempla* in collections ranging from Valerius's primarily historical compilation to Phaedrus's fables should remind us that the limitation of exemplary content to the historical acts of well-known figures is more a product of modern scholarship on exemplarity than of the Roman conception of *exempla*. Quintilian, for example, extends the range of potential *exempla* well beyond the purely historical: "First of all an orator ought to abound in a store of *exempla* both old and recent, to such a degree that he ought not only to know things that are written in histories or handed down as it were in tales and things that are done daily, but he even ought not to neglect those things that are created by the better-known poets" (*In primis vero abundare debet orator exemplorum copia cum veterum tum etiam novorum, adeo ut non ea modo quae scripta sunt historiis aut sermonibus velut per manus tradita quaeque cotidie aguntur debeat nosse, verum ne ea quidem quae sunt a clarioribus poetis ficta neglegere, Inst. 12.4.1*). This description distinguishes between references to historical events and poetic fictions only as sub-types of a common practice.

Likewise, Quintilian includes fables as a sub-type in his chapter on the use of *exempla* (5.11.17-20; I discuss this passage in section 1.1). Here Aesopic fables appear as one among a variety of possible arguments from comparison. Quintilian suggests that such stories have their greatest effect on less educated audiences: fables "are accustomed to influence the minds particularly of rustics and the inexperienced, who both listen to fictional things more simply, and, when they have been captured by pleasure, easily agree to the things that delighted them" (*ducere animos solent praecipue rusticorum et imperitorum, qui et simplicius quae ficta sunt audiunt, et capti voluptate facile iis quibus delectantur consentiunt, 5.11.19*). The example that follows seems to confirm this class bias: Quintilian cites the story of Menenius Agrippa who used a fable in which the body's limbs revolt against the stomach to convince the *plebs* to end their first secession

against the Senate in 494/3 BCE.²¹⁵ Quintilian's other references, however, somewhat mitigate this effect. Horace in particular offers an example of an animal fable used in sophisticated poetry (Quint., *IO*. 5.11.20). In the opening poem of the *Epistles*, he uses the reply of a cautious fox to a lion as a model for the reply he would give to those who encourage him to engage in a more conventional occupation.²¹⁶ Horace adduces the exchange between the two animals as an explanatory *exemplum* to defend his poetic vocation. He closes this fable by likening his interlocutor, the personified Roman people, as a beast more terrible than the lion: "You are a monster with many heads" (*belua multorum es capitum*, *Ep.* 1.1.76). Thus he delineates the metaphorical relationship in which the beast fable provides an *exemplum* for the poet's refusal to fulfill the social expectations of average citizens. The use of a beast fable here also has a further advantage: in depicting the dangers of conformity through the image of two predators, Horace defines the potential for violence as a part of the natural world and thus beyond the strictures of social rules. This fable reveals the dangers without stressing moral culpability.

Some anonymous *exempla* become so focused on the moral message portrayed through type figures that they become virtually indistinguishable from fables by any measure other than their context. As I mentioned in the introduction to this section, in his chapter on necessity, Valerius Maximus includes an anecdote about the siege of Praeneste. Among the starving defenders, a man who had captured a mouse chose to sell it for an exorbitant sum of money rather than eat it himself. Valerius renders this event

²¹⁵ *Menenius Agrippa plebem cum patribus in gratiam traditur reduxisse nota illa de membris humanis adversus ventrem discordantibus fabula*, Quint. *IO* 5.11.19. Versions of this story are recorded at Livy 2.32 and Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 6.86.1ff.

²¹⁶ *Quodsi me populus Romanus forte roget, cur non ut porticibus sic iudiciis fruar isdem, nec sequar aut fugiam quae diligit ipse vel odit, olim quod volpes aegroti cauta leoni respondit, referam: 'Quia me vestigia terrent, omnia te adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum.'* (Hor., *Ep.* 1.1.70-75)

as a clear moral lesson: the seller subsequently starves to death while the buyer emerges from the siege with glory.²¹⁷ In this telling, the story of the greedy mouse-seller emerges almost as a fable, whose central purpose is to impart a moral lesson rather than preserve a memorable and exemplary deed. The unusual primary act of the *exemplum* – mouse-vending – further emphasizes the moral character of the two figures in contrast to their specific actions. As the likelihood of encountering parallel circumstances decreases, the emphasis on the underlying attitudes and motivations increases: the unusual narrative content shifts the emphasis of comparison from practical imitation to moral character.²¹⁸ The conveniently moralistic dual outcome – the profiteer starves to death, the mouse-buyer not only survives but performs heroically – suggests that at least that portion of the narrative may be fiction. As I discussed in the previous section, Roller has demonstrated that declamations on the death of Cicero seem to have undergone a similar elaboration in order to reinforce a moralizing argument.²¹⁹ Another example I discussed in the previous chapter displays the same reasoning: Cicero’s wish to emend the death of Coriolanus to express a more desirable lesson demonstrates the same impulse that could motivate the creation of this sort of ending (*Brut.* 42-44. I discuss this passage in section 1.3 above). This *exemplum* thus reveals the border between *exempla* and fables as indistinct and porous.

At the beginning of his second book, Phaedrus proclaims that fables belong to the category of *exempla*. The opening line of the prologue bluntly declares: “Aesop’s type [of story] is composed of *exempla*” (*Exemplis continetur Aesopi genus, 2.prol.1*). As if to

²¹⁷ *avaro enim [et] fame consumpto manubiis sordium suarum frui non licuit, aequi animi vir ad salutarem inpensam faciendam care quidem, verum necessarie comparato cibo vixit* (Val. Max. 7.6.3).

²¹⁸ Compare Beard (1993) 60 on the use of fictional laws in declamation: “The symbolic validation for these mythic debates is being provided not by the everyday legal code, but by legalism itself and by the *idea* of law in its purest (because imaginary) form.”

²¹⁹ See Roller (1997) 112-13 on the primacy of moral arguments, and 124-26 on the potential that not only the charge of parricide, but any relationship between Cicero and his killer was a declamatory invention.

confirm the exemplary function of fables, the poet explicitly labels the next two poems as *exempla* (2.1.11; 2.2.2). He thus asserts that fables are equivalent to *exempla*, or at least constitute a type of *exemplum*. But what type of *exempla* are they? The following lines define ethical education as the purpose of these exemplary fables:

Nor is anything else sought through fables
than that the mistakes of mortals may be corrected
and that careful diligence may exercise itself.

*nec aliud quicquam per fabellas quaeritur
quam corrigatur error ut mortalium,
acuatque sese diligens industria.*

Phaedrus, 2.prol.2-4

The fabulist aligns his work with the educational function of *exempla* rather than with forensic or deliberative uses.²²⁰ Phaedrus does not limit this function to the education of children, but extends it to encompass the correction and improvement of all people (*mortalium*). The talking animals, the anonymous social or professional types, and occasional named figures offer his readers models that ostensibly will train them to understand and interpret the world correctly.

Fables, of course, also have a place in formal rhetorical education, a role that prefigures the use of declamation for training more advanced students. Quintilian suggests that, among the first exercises in speaking taught by the *grammaticus* (*quaedam dicendi primordia*, 1.9.1), students should learn to paraphrase and rewrite Aesop's fables.²²¹ These fables are in verse, and are thus likely to include those written by Phaedrus, as Quintilian's description of the increasingly complex tasks to be assigned to the students shows: "First [they should learn] to break the verses, soon to expound them with changed words, then to change them more boldly in paraphrase, in which it is permitted both to abbreviate and to adorn certain things provided that the poet's

²²⁰ For the use of *exempla* in education, see e.g. Horace, *Ser.* 1.4.105-21; Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.4.20 and 12.2.29-30. I discuss this function of *exempla* in section 0.1.

²²¹ *Igitur Aesopi fabellas, quae fabulis nutricularum proxime succedunt, narrare sermone puro et nihil se supra modum extollente, deinde eandem gracilitatem stilo exigere condiscant.* (*IO* 1.9.2)

meaning is maintained” (*Versus primo solvere, mox mutatis verbis interpretari, tum paraphrasi audacius vertere, qua et breviare quaedam et exornare salvo modo poetae sensu permittitur*, 1.9.2).²²² This exercise of rewriting fables does not simply train students in oral and written expression. Quintilian’s stipulation that the meaning of the story be preserved (*salvo modo poetae sensu*) reveals a deeper function of this practice, namely training the participants to convey moral meaning effectively through narrative. As declamation will at a later stage of rhetorical education, the use of fables acculturates students “to *think with* their own social rules and to negotiate the problems, inconsistencies and paradox that any such system of rules necessarily throws up.”²²³ Despite Quintilian’s dismissal of fable as only one step beyond the stories told by children’s nurses,²²⁴ such stories are a powerful tool for inculcating ethical attitudes and

²²² Some scholars, troubled that Quintilian never mentions Phaedrus’s name, suggest that the source for these fables must be some other collection. Perry, for example, argues that Quintilian here refers to the fables of Babrius written in Greek verse. Perry’s argument rests on two main bases. (1) Babrius claims to be the first poet to write Aesopic fables in Greek verse. Phaedrus, however, is probably the first to put Aesop into verse (Perry 1965, xi). Because Quintilian states elsewhere that children should learn Greek before Latin (1.1.12), he must intend these fables for practice in writing Greek. Therefore Quintilian here refers to Babrius or his imitators (Perry 1965, l-li). (2) Phaedrus, who is unknown to Seneca and called *improbus* by Martial (*Ep.* 3.20.5), must therefore be considered too inferior to be known by Quintilian (Perry 1965, li-lii). The second objection is easily dealt with: Quintilian consistently refers to fables as suited primarily for children or the ignorant (1.9.2; 5.11.19), so his failure to name any writer of verse fable – Phaedrus, Babrius or any other – does not indicate much. The general silence on Phaedrus may simply reflect the negative attitudes the fabulist himself repeatedly argues against in his work (*e.g.* 3.*prol.*23; 3.12; 4.*prol.*15-16; 4.7; 4.22). On the first point, in his insistence on the primacy of Greek in Quintilian’s recommendations on early education, Perry ignores the remainder of the rhetorician’s advice on education in the two languages. While Quintilian does suggest that Greek should precede Latin, he explicitly cautions against continuing Greek-only instruction for too long (*Non tamen hoc adeo superstitiose fieri velim ut diu discat, sicut plerisque moris est. IO* 1.1.13). The goal, in fact, is to build bilingual facility: “So Latin ought not to follow at a distance and quickly it should go at the same pace. In this way it will bring it about that, when we begin to look to each language with equal care, neither will hinder the other” (*Non longe itaque Latina subsequi debent et cito pariter ire. Ita fiet ut, cum aequali cura linguam utramque tueri coeperimus, neutra alteri officiat*, 1.1.14). Rather than assuming that paraphrasing fables is an exercise in Greek alone, it seems far more likely to be a bilingual exercise. Consequently both Phaedrus and Babrius would be likely candidates for the sources of these verse fables.

²²³ Beard (1993) 60 discussing the mythical function of Roman declamation.

²²⁴ ...*Aesopi fabellas, quae fabulis nutricularum proxime succedunt*, Quint. *IO* 1.9.2

frameworks. In a way that parallels the expansion of the educational exercise of declamation into the broader social and intellectual life of the early Principate as chronicled by the elder Seneca, Phaedrus's fables attempt to create a reciprocal relationship between the spheres of rhetorical education and poetic art.

Phaedrus combines a number of Roman anecdotes with his more conventionally Aesopic material to create a sketch of the contemporary Roman thought-world. His work explores the conflict between abstract morality and social power. As Currie comments, "the moral and social presuppositions of Phaedrus are much more important and varied than the formal moral attached to any particular fable as the conclusion to be drawn from it. Phaedrus adopts the old Aesopic conception of the non-moral and individual forces that conflict with the morality which he accepts. This conflict he expresses in the very fabric of his fables, fictions which demonstrate how precarious is the existence of virtue in a world of force."²²⁵ Through these fables the fabulist attempts to mythologize Roman reality in a manner much like that of declamation. Although Phaedrus initially defines and presents his work as a polished verse translation of Aesop – "The material that Aesop the author discovered, I have refined in senarian verse" (*Aesopus auctor quam materiam repperit, | hanc ego polivi versibus senariis, 1.prol.1-2*)²²⁶ – in the successive books he proclaims his own contributions to the genre with increasing boldness.²²⁷ By the time he reaches the prologue to book four, he distinguishes his production of "Aesopic fables" from "Aesop's fables," claiming that his poems offer new

²²⁵ Currie (1984) 508. Henderson (2001) approaches the same interaction in a more circumscribed framework, focusing on the exploration of the position of the *princeps* in the post-Augustan world, and reading the collection as *Telling Tales on Caesar*.

²²⁶ The content of the first book accords well with this description, consisting almost entirely of brief animal fables.

²²⁷ Henderson (2001) 60-62 discusses the increasing authorial self-assertion from book 1 through 3, defining 3.*prol*, the most extended of the direct authorial statements, as a 'Centerpiece Prologue.'

material in the older form.²²⁸ John Henderson argues that, in bringing Aesop into Latin verse, Phaedrus concurrently builds Aesopic fable into a model of Julio-Claudian Rome: “the fabulist is ‘Romanizing’ *all* the tales he tells—not just because he puts them into Latin, but by his choice of material, by his editorial framing, by his *montage* of the collection (as the design of a controlling ‘author’, and a ‘poet’, at that...). Turn this round, and you’ll see that this mock-empire of narratives authorizes a distinctive take on Rome and Roman cognition.”²²⁹ Like Horace, to whom he makes repeated allusion, Phaedrus uses his fables to dramatize problems of social power relations in contemporary Rome. At times the fabulist illustrates these conflicts by contesting the morals offered by his fables.

After the confident declaration that his work offers morally improving *exempla* (2.prol.1-4), Phaedrus quickly moves to complicate the relationship between *exemplum* and social reality. The second book’s prologue lead directly into the following fable, with the closing lines acting as a sort of *promythium*, an introductory statement of the lesson to be drawn from the fable: “Learn why you ought to say no to greedy people, but even offer to modest people what they have not asked for.” (*attende cur negare cupidis debeas, | modestis etiam offerre quod non petierint*, 2.prol.14-15). The poet then illustrates this lesson with a brief animal fable (2.1.1-10). A lion has killed a cow; he chases away a robber who wants a portion of the meat, but then offers a portion to a traveler who is afraid to approach. Essentially this story is nothing more than a slightly elaborated version of the initial lesson, dressed up as a narrative rather than a precept. Phaedrus confidently praises the example this talking lion offers: “an absolutely outstanding and praiseworthy *exemplum*” (*exemplum egregium prorsus et laudabile*,

²²⁸ ...*fabulis*,
quas Aesopias, non Aesopi, nomino,
quia paucas ille ostendit, ego plures sero,
usus vetusto genere sed rebus novis (4.prol.10-12)

²²⁹ Henderson (2001) 2.

2.1.11). But he immediately undermines this statement, acknowledging that the exact opposite is most often true: “but in truth avarice is rich and modesty poor” (*verum est aviditas dives et pauper pudor*, 2.1.12). Henderson interprets this progression from lesson through fable to contradicted moral as “satirizing the very Theory of Fable—‘out to straighten out people’s mistakes | and get them to pitch themselves into hard work’ (2 *Prol.* 3f.)—that it was supposed to be implementing without more ado.”²³⁰ But this contradiction also complicates the application and interpretation of *exempla* themselves: a declaration of what people should do runs directly into a statement of how things are.

Phaedrus makes a similar gesture in fable 3.4, where he again reverses the lesson of the story in his closing comments. The fabulist labels the fable of the ape hanging in the butcher’s shop – “It tastes just like it looks” (*‘quale’ inquit ‘caput est, talis praestatur sapor’* 3.4.4) – as being more a joke than a statement of truth (*ridicule magis hoc dictum quam vere aestimo*, 3.4.5). Just as in 2.1, the poet closes the poem with a lesson opposed to his narrative. He describes this commentary as the result of his own personal observation: “since I have often found beautiful people to be the worst, and I have learned that many with ugly faces are the best people” (*quando et formosos saepe inveni pessimos, | et turpi facie multos cognovi optimos*, 3.4.6-7). The actual lesson of this fable, then, is antithetical to its content. The fabulist opposes one category of *exemplum* – his personal social observations – to another – the exemplary potential of fable. His presentation of the lesson thus foregrounds the variations in interpretation produced by the choice of material for comparison. Phaedrus here reverses a commonplace of elite social judgment. Seneca the Younger, for instance, introduces this common assumption to help explain the perceived decline of oratory: “just as men’s speech was, so was their life” (*talis hominibus fuit oratio qualis vita*, Seneca, *Ep.* 114.1). In twisting the lesson of this fable, Phaedrus may provide a subtle argument against the public disdain for his

²³⁰ Henderson (2001) 71.

poetry: “I am received into the company [of poets] with disgust” (*fastidiose tamen in coetum recipior, 3.prol.23*).²³¹ He thus suggests that the negative reaction to his poetry relies on unreflective attitudes toward his status as a freedman rather than an unbiased evaluation of this work.

Phaedrus 3.10, the longest poem in the collection, describes a declamation-like trial – or perhaps a declamation dressed up as a trial – argued before Augustus. This work illustrates the incorporation of Roman life and the Imperial court into the medium of fable, and suggests a connection between this judicial fable and the mythopoetic activity of declamation. The concern with adultery and domestic violence mirrors one of the primary concerns in declamatory cases.²³² As Beard argues about declamation, the presentation of a fictionalized legal contest at the core of this fable mythologizes the process of conflict resolution through the medium of law: “The symbolic validation for these mythic debates is being provided not by the everyday legal code, but by *legalism* itself and by the *idea* of law in its purest (because imaginary) form. ... Law is operating not so much as a model *science*, or even as a practical guide to proper everyday behaviour – but as a culturally embedded way of thinking, as part of the mythic field.”²³³ In this fable, the trial before Augustus enacts the authority of legalism just as in the practice of declamation.

The fabulist frames the lengthy narrative of domestic murder and a subsequent trial with several gnomic pronouncements about his theme: the necessity to balance trust and suspicion. The poem opens with a one-line statement of the general topic – “It is

²³¹ Most of Phaedrus’s remarks against his critics are far more blunt (*e.g.* 2.10-11, 3.12, 4.7). See Perry (1965) lxxv-lxxvi and Currie (1984) 501-502 on Phaedrus’s defensiveness about his poetry.

²³² On declamation’s interest in “family and sexual conflict (adultery, rape, bastardy, the ransoming of kidnapped relatives, disinheritance, parricide, the support or neglect of needy parents)”, see Beard (1993) 52.

²³³ Beard (1993) 60, emphasis in original. Henderson (2001) 39 also quotes Beard to discuss Phaedrus 3.10, but he focuses on the role of Augustus as “the genie who watches over the narrativity of Rome.”

dangerous to believe and not to believe” (*Periculosum est credere et non credere*, 3.10.1) – and illustrates these two lessons with brief references to the mythological *exempla* of Hippolytus and Cassandra.²³⁴ In contrast to these mythological figures, Phaedrus presents the central narrative as a true incident that, he implies, he himself witnessed: “But, lest you should make light of mythical antiquity, I will tell you a story that happened in my own memory” (*sed, fabulosam ne vetustatem eleves, | narrabo tibi memoria quod factum est mea*, 3.10.7-8). In contrast to the cultural power of tragic figures like Hippolytus and Cassandra, the poet claims that the story of a domestic dispute among anonymous type figures will be more persuasive to his readers because he, the narrator, remembers it.²³⁵ Essentially he attempts surpass a pair of *exempla* from Greek myth with an anonymous *exemplum* supposedly drawn from contemporary society. This preference for more recent *exempla* mirrors the pattern displayed in other genres; for example, Chaplin identifies a consistent preference for recent *exempla* in Livy and other historians.²³⁶ Notably, in adding an *exemplum* from his own memory to his mythic-literary pair, Phaedrus corrects only half of the potential objection to “antiquity celebrated in fables” (*fabulosam... vetustatem*): his tale of familial intrigue and Augustus’s judgment is contemporary, but in generic terms it too is “celebrated in fables” (*fabulosum*).²³⁷ The poet transforms this first familial, then legal dispute into a fable on believing stories. He caps his narrative with a triple rehearsal of the moral of the fable, first stated by Augustus as a character within the narrative itself (3.10.47-50),

²³⁴ *utriusque exemplum breviter adponam rei.*

Hippolytus obiit, quia novercae creditum est; Cassandrae quia non creditum, ruit Ilium. (Phaedrus 3.10.2-4)

²³⁵ The hypothetical objection Phaedrus imagines here follows a tactic that Quintilian recommends for dealing with archaic *exempla*: *Exempla rerum varie tractanda sunt, si nocebunt: quae si vetera erunt, fabulosa dicere licebit*, 5.13.24. I discuss this passage in section 1.1. Henderson (1993) 37 reads this as a contest in cultural one-upmanship between Greek myth and Roman ‘myth.’

²³⁶ Chaplin (2000) 124-26.

²³⁷ Henderson (2001) 43-44 seems to make a similar point about Phaedrus’s claims to honesty in these lines.

followed by two variations in the author's own voice (3.10.51-53, 54-58). The final observation of the third iteration of the lesson reflects back on the preference for personal observation that introduced this story: "That man will be known whom you have come to know through personal experience" (*erit ille notus quem per te cognoveris*, 3.10.51).²³⁸ The fable thus reaffirms the centrality of direct observation in justifying belief.

The events leading up to the murder-suicide read like the theme for a declamation.²³⁹ The characters are identified solely by their roles in the household: "a certain husband" (*maritus quidam*, 3.10.9), his wife (*coniugem*, 3.10.9), their son (*filio*, 3.10.10), and the husband's freedman (*liberto... suo*, 3.10.11). By limiting the identification of the various characters – husband, wife, son, freedman – solely to their domestic roles, the poet both establishes them primarily as types rather than individuals and reinforces the similarity to declamation. As declamations were performed before Augustus and his circle, it is possible that this performance was in fact a declamation dressed up here as a real trial.²⁴⁰ In describing the complexity of the case as the basis for referring it to Augustus – "because the winding of the charge had tied them [the judges] in knots" (*quod ipsos error implicuisset criminis*, 3.10.41) – the fabulist may in fact be describing the intricate arguing and re-arguing of a declamatory theme more than the activity in an actual law court. By presenting a (potential) declamation as a trial in a fable, Phaedrus suggests the similarity between the mythologizing functions of fable and

²³⁸ This is not, however, the final line of the poem. Phaedrus follows his variations on a theme with a two-line excuse for his lack of brevity.

²³⁹ A man loves his wife and his son (3.10.9-10). His freedman, hoping to become his master's heir, makes many accusations against the wife and son, most importantly accusing the wife of adultery (3.10.11-17). The man pretends to leave town, but sneaks back into his house the same night (3.10.19-21). Finding his son sleeping next to his wife in the dark, the father unknowingly kills his son (3.10.25-28). When lights are brought in, the father realizes what he has done and kills himself (3.10.29-33). The wife is accused (*Accusatores postularunt mulierem*, 3.10.34).

²⁴⁰ For Augustus as an audience for declamation, see *e.g.* Seneca the Elder *Contr.* 2.4.12-13; 2.5.20; 4.*pr.*7; 6.8; 10.5.21-22.

declamation. Henderson links the subject matter of this dispute to that of declamation as described by Beard, but nevertheless maintains the reality of the event as a judicial proceeding despite the difficulties of understanding legal procedure as described by Phaedrus.²⁴¹ Particularly revealing of Henderson's attitude is the following comment: "We, or at any rate I, need not puzzle out how a civil case might develop from a testamentary charge."²⁴² The claim that Phaedrus represents an actual civil case in this fable, however, misses the parallel with legal procedure as depicted in declamation. In both treatments of the operation of law, the divergence from real legal procedure helps to describe (again borrowing Beard's formulation) "legalism ... and the *idea* of law, in its purest (because imaginary) form."²⁴³

Whether a declamation or a trial dressed up to sound like declamation, however, Phaedrus's poem enacts several accumulated layers of mythmaking. The accusation and defense of the sole surviving member of this family enacts the same mythopoetic processes as declamation. Augustus then inserts himself into the declamatory conflict as the guarantor of legalism, the higher power of Roman myth as read by Beard. Finally Phaedrus the fabulist frames these layers of mythic negotiation within his moralizing translation of Julio-Claudian Rome into a collection of fables. As we have seen in the previous section, Cicero uses declamation to build *exempla* for himself in order to explore his possibilities for action in the conflict between Caesar and Pompey. In similar fashion, both the narrative content and the frame of Phaedrus 3.10 build *exempla* as they mythologize the role of legalism and the *princeps* in the maintenance of familial order.²⁴⁴ By dressing up a declamation as a real trial in a fable (or else configuring a real trial as a

²⁴¹ See Henderson (2001) 47-48, 49-51 and 199 n. 4 on the parallels to declamation. See p. 49 with 203 n. 38 and 51-52 on the relevant legal forms and potential difficulties of the account as an actual court case.

²⁴² Henderson (2001) 203, n. 38.

²⁴³ Beard (1993) 60.

²⁴⁴ Henderson (2001) 39-41 reads Augustus as the defender of the Roman family through his attempts to prevent and punish adultery.

declamation within a fable), Phaedrus reveals the replication of modes of thought between these discourses, both fictional and factual. As Roman law and morality are rehearsed in mythologized forms, so do those moralizing discourses train their participants in patterns of judgment and evaluation that structure social and political interactions.

We might view *exempla*, fables and declamation as forming a triangle of relationships, each relating in some fashion to the others. *Exempla* become the basis for declamations and (at least in Phaedrus) fables. The arguments and inventions of declamation mold and supplement the content of *exempla*. Fables act as exemplary models and, like declamation, they function as repeated, traditional stories (as per Beard's reading), rehearsing patterns of thought that are replicated in 'real world' situations. The educational fictions enable students to acculturate themselves to Roman reality through the mythologized forms of discourse. *Exempla* imitate both fables and declamation, as observers recast factual events in the molds provided by these fictional narratives.

2.4: Conclusion

The seemingly paradoxical notion of anonymous *exempla* productively expands our map of the field of exemplarity. As we have seen, the less historical particularity an *exemplum* displays, the closer the figure draws to more abstract forms of narrative such as those enacted in declamation and Aesopic fables. Unnamed figures in *exempla* may display varying degrees of anonymity, ranging from persons who, though nameless, remain completely recognizable to those who cannot be identified and are thus truly anonymous. As nameless *exempla* approach the less particular end of the scale they offer increasing advantages against the more historically specific types. They may avoid causing offense, forestall debate about details of the particular instance or present the actors more readily as general types. In their focus on general type-figures, such *exempla* enter into an

exchange with the practice of declamation.

Both declamations and fables enact forms through which exemplary events may realize an ethical meaning. Moralizing narratives, whether exemplary, declamatory or fabulous, rehearse mental structures within which Romans learned to interpret and negotiate social conflicts. *Suasoriae* or *controversiae* enable speakers to create fictional *exempla* for themselves. At times declamations based on historical events may alter or expand the historical tradition in pursuit of moral meaning. This practice of fictive debate acculturates its participants to a range of social expectations. Fable likewise trains its readers think through social conflicts. Through repetition and rehearsal, the narrative patterns and character types of declamation and fable become familiar parts of the mental furniture of the Roman mind. On a more fundamental level, these practices function as varieties of mythological discourse within which Romans learned to think with and negotiate their social rules. This chapter has mapped out a triangle of interactions and relationships between the discourses of exemplarity, declamation and fable. Exemplary narratives that purport to represent the Life of Roman reality display the marks of influence from these fictional analogues and thus in some sense should be seen as imitating Art.

Illustrating Moderation, Tolerance and Social Authority

Roman writers and speakers sometimes use *exempla* to demonstrate general patterns of activity rather than specific individual actions. Such illustrations serve a primarily descriptive function rather than a directly prescriptive one: they provide representative samples of human behavior, not models for imitation. When they function as illustrations, *exempla* sometimes encourage moderation or a relaxation in standards. Speakers and writers may in fact use them to argue against too strict an application of moral judgment. Such illustrations may demonstrate the advantages obtained by maintaining a careful balance between the good and the bad, or promote an understanding of the common fallibility of both the judge of morals and the object of judgment. But illustrations of shared qualities may reinforce positive claims as well. *Exempla* that demonstrate the shared possession of laudable traits or attitudes enhance the position of a social group as a whole and consequently reflect on the personal reputations of its individual members. In a further development of this line of argument, by illustrating the excellence of more obscure or less important members of the elite or another social group, writers and speakers may enhance the position of the group and consequently their own reputations as members of that group. In part, this chapter will build on the idea of anonymous *exempla* to demonstrate how these illustrations could be used to depict the unity of a particular social group or even a commonality between different social groups.

Roller labels this type of *exemplum* as “illustrative” in comparison with the “injunctive” type on which his model focuses: “An example deployed illustratively is, or purports to be, an utterly typical instance of a series of similar objects, a ‘one among many.’ Conversely, an example deployed as an injunction is singled out as distinctive, as crucially *unlike* other objects, especially in its ethical import (that is, it is uniquely good or bad), and to single it out amounts to demanding that other objects *should* be like or

unlike this one.”²⁴⁵ His brief discussion, however, even here focuses on the reproduction of exemplary content, rather than other functions that illustration may serve. In contrast, this chapter charts some strategies that use such *exempla* precisely to argue for their accuracy as illustrations. Romans sometimes used this approach to excuse the actions of an individual as manifestations of universal human failings. In many cases broad claims of human fallibility serve as a defense against *ad hominem* attacks by defusing moralistic claims within a broader sense of ethical flexibility. The exceptional character attributed to many exemplary figures may also reveal the general diffusion of faults and consequently urge moderation in judgment concerning less exalted individuals. The contrast between a few outstanding individuals and the general mass of humanity emphasizes the gap between the typical Roman citizen and such figures as Fabricius and Curius, and thus encourages an audience to exercise leniency in judging others. The satirists’ concerns with potential audience reactions to their criticisms demonstrate the flexibility of the line between exceptional and universal. These poets attempt to manipulate the tendency of their readers to identify themselves with the objects of satiric criticism. Finally, speakers and writers may use illustrative *exempla* to enhance the overall reputation of a social group (typically their own social group). In one application of this tactic, authors praise the less respected or more obscure members of their audience, and so improve their own reputation by reflection. As a whole, these strategies encourage their readers to understand themselves as part of a homogenous group and consequently to judge themselves and others on the basis of that perceived commonality.

3.1: Average vs. Extraordinary: Moral Decline or Moderation?

Roman writers and speakers were frequently concerned with a decline that they claimed

²⁴⁵ Roller (2004) 52. Emphasis in the original. He describes this division as useful, but nevertheless recognizes that the two modes often intermingle.

to identify in their society's moral standards.²⁴⁶ Joy Connolly describes this sort of moralizing as an important catalyst for creating an atmosphere of political consensus within the entire Roman people despite political and economic inequality.²⁴⁷ Such discussions, however, do not always take negative form. Sometimes, the perceived relaxation from ancestral severity could be interpreted instead as a welcome moderation. Speakers and writers sometimes insist on the rarity of exceptionally virtuous *exempla* in order to emphasize the fallibility of everyone else. The vast majority of average people, so the argument goes, cannot justly be held to the standard established by exceptional cultural heroes. The contrast between average people and exceptional individual *exempla* depicts ethical lapses as requiring tolerance in all but the most egregious instances. Such an argument may be used to argue against the desire to act upon harsh judgments, as Cicero does in his defense of Caelius (*Pro Caelio* 39-40). This tactic positions the major historical-mythical *exempla* as nearly unachievable ideals. A related pattern of argument uses the less reputable acts of otherwise idolized cultural figures to demonstrate the rarity of complete perfection. Valerius Maximus, for example, includes a chapter that focuses on various men – including Scipio Africanus, Fabius Maximus Allobrogicus, Catulus and Sulla – who left behind dissolute youths to become important military and political figures (6.9). This idea exerts a leveling influence, insisting that even those who might be considered exceptional were neither always nor completely free of human failings.

At times, the assumption of widespread moral decline could be directed less toward moralistic judgment than to excusing contemporary individuals for lapses in behavior. In his defense of Caelius, for example, Cicero defends the training he gave his protégé by contrasting what he paints as an unobtainable ideal established by the great

²⁴⁶ Edwards (1993) discusses the patterns taken by this frequent concern. See 1-33 for an overview of the Roman focus on immorality and moral decline. See also Corbeill (1996) 104-5, 128-31.

²⁴⁷ Connolly (2007) 58-65.

political and military figures of the Roman past with the best that may be expected from the people of his time. He builds his argument on the idea of applying moderation, both in the course of living one's own life and in judging others (here Caelius). Cicero distinguishes between the few who are able to remove themselves completely from pleasure in their pursuit of duty and the general body of people, stating about the former: "Of this sort I reckon were those men like Camillus, Fabricius, Curius and all those who made this city so great from the smallest beginnings. But these sorts of virtue are scarcely found now not only in our own characters but even in books" (*Ex hoc genere illos fuisse arbitror Camillos, Fabricios, Curius, omnisque eos qui haec ex minimis tanta fecerunt. Verum haec genera virtutum non solum in moribus nostris sed vix iam in libris reperiuntur, Cael. 39-40*). Cicero stresses the exceptional character of the named exemplars to draw a clear distinction between such individual cultural heroes and the general mass of good but imperfect men.

Prior to making this specific contrast, Cicero carefully depicts the abstract version of the ideal represented by Camillus, Fabricius and Curius in such strict terms as to render the idea of being such a person incredibly onerous:

If, judges, there were any man with such strength of mind and such an innate disposition for manliness and restraint that he would spurn all pleasures and complete the whole course of his life in exertion of the body and striving of the mind, a man whom neither rest nor relaxation nor the inclinations of his contemporaries nor diversions nor feasting would delight, who would think that nothing in life should be sought except that which is bound together with praise and with worthiness, in my opinion I think that this man has been endowed and equipped with some sort of divine gifts.

Ego, si quis, iudices, hoc robore animi atque hac indole virtutis ac continentiae fuit ut respueret omnis voluptates omnemque vitae suae cursum in labore corporis atque in animi contentione conficeret, quem non quies, non remissio, non aequalium studia, non ludi, non convivium delectaret, nihil in vita expetendum putaret nisi quod esset cum laude et cum dignitate coniunctum, hunc mea sententia divinis quibusdam bonis instructum atque ornatum puto.
(*Cael. 39*)

Cicero begins with broad terms of praise before narrowing the picture by enumerating the limits these incredible men impose upon themselves. He tempers general types of

praise — “such strength of mind and such an innate disposition for manliness and restraint” (*hoc robore animi atque hac indole virtutis ac continentiae*) — with descriptions of what must be rejected to devote oneself so completely to public service — “he would spurn all pleasures” (*respueret omnis voluptates*) and be “a man whom neither rest nor relaxation nor the inclinations of his contemporaries nor diversions nor feasting would delight” (*quem non quies, non remissio, non aequalium studia, non ludi, non convivium delectaret*).²⁴⁸ While these requirements do align with traditional Roman notions of virtuous service to the city and its people, Cicero focuses relentlessly on the negative aspects of the definition. He lists at length what this man must not do, what he must reject, but elides almost all positive aspects. In this almost grotesquely exaggerated construction, such cultural heroes become little more than joyless workhorses, forever toiling away without rest. Cicero presents the virtues of these great men of Roman history in a manner that is consonant with familiar moralizing tropes, but he amplifies and combines them in such a way as to make the composite image an unattractive model for living.

This emphasis on rejecting any sort of pleasure leads into a brief answering discussion of how various philosophical schools find a role for pleasure in a virtuous life. As I noted above, Cicero describes the disappearance of such single-minded refusal as encompassing both the social and intellectual spheres: “these sorts of virtue are scarcely found now not only in our own characters but even in books” (*haec genera virtutum non solum in moribus nostris sed vix iam in libris reperiuntur, Cael. 40*). In the following sentence, Cicero notes that in line with the decline in personal behaviors the sentiments

²⁴⁸ Edwards (1993) 23 briefly discusses the linkage between intellectual activities, such as literature and contemplation, and pleasure as a moral problem for Romans.

expressed in Greek philosophy have changed as well.²⁴⁹ On another level, this movement from observable social activities to descriptions in books mirrors the ranking of *exempla* described by many ancient texts. Seneca, for example, argues that, while reading books provides a substitute should live *exempla* be unavailable, personal observation is the most effective and direct path to knowledge: “Nevertheless the living voice and social interaction will benefit you more than discussion; you ought to come into the actual presence, first because people trust their eyes more than their ears, second because the journey through precepts is long, but the one through *exempla* is quick and efficient” (*Plus tamen tibi et viva vox et convictus quam oratio proderit; in rem praesentem venias oportet, primum quia homines amplius oculis quam auribus credunt, deinde quia longum iter est per praecepta, breve et efficax per exempla*, Sen., *Ep.* 6.5).²⁵⁰ As Cicero presents his contemporary world in the *pro Caelio*, nearly everyone has ceased to reproduce or even represent models of strict, ascetic service to the Republic. His statement describes a growing lack of ascetic *exempla* that might inhabit the thought world of his contemporaries. As his account subsequently progresses from lived Roman reality to Greek philosophy and finally to the enticements of nature, he renders this concept of ascetic devotion to duty increasingly remote from his audience. Of course, the argumentative thrust of this passage requires that the judges still recognize models like Fabricius, Camillus and Curius, but also that they be prepared to imagine such men as incompatible with modern life. By defining such figures with the extreme image of a man who rejects any and every form of pleasurable sensory

²⁴⁹ Cicero expands this description to include both Romans and Greeks in the general decline, although with typical Roman condescension Cicero claims the Greeks only ever obtained those virtues in words, not in deeds: *Chartae quoque quae illam pristinam severitatem continebant obsoleverunt; neque solum apud nos qui hanc sectam rationemque vitae re magis quam verbis secuti sumus sed etiam apud Graecos, doctissimos homines, quibus, cum facere non possent, loqui tamen et scribere honeste et magnifice licebat, alia quaedam mutatis Graeciae temporibus praecepta exstiterunt*, *Cael.* 40. On the contrast between Greek words and Roman deeds, see also Edwards (1993) 22-23 with n. 75.

²⁵⁰ I discuss this letter more extensively in section 0.1.

experience, Cicero exaggerates a traditional moralizing suspicion of pleasure into the image of an almost pathological refusal. He pushes the image of such model citizens toward the idea of fanatical asceticism in order to create a wider space in which to depict Caelius as a moderate man who has been reasonable in his pursuit of youthful pleasures, rather than as the libertine described by his opponents.²⁵¹

Having established this sense of remoteness from his contemporary world, Cicero imagines the reaction such a figure would occasion if one existed. Here he describes essentially an absent *exemplum*, a model who cannot be observed in society but rather is almost purely theoretical. What would such a contemporary figure look like, and how would others react to his existence? Once again Cicero defines this person in negative terms, enumerating each of the five senses to depict someone who rejects any pleasant experience: “Therefore if by chance you will find anyone who would reject the beauty of things with his eyes, who would not be captivated by any scent, touch or taste, who would shut out everything that is sweet from his ears, I perhaps and a few others will think that the gods are kind to this person, but most people will think that they are angry at him” (*Quam ob rem si quem forte inveneritis qui aspernetur oculis pulchritudinem rerum, non odore ullo, non tactu, non sapore capiatur, excludat auribus omnem suavitatem, huic homini ego fortasse et pauci deos propitios, plerique autem iratos putabunt, Cael. 42*). Cicero frames his description of this ascetic wonder with the two most prominent senses — sight and hearing — and defines their objects with widely applicable, morally neutral terms of aesthetic value: “the beauty of things” (*pulchritudinem rerum*) and “everything that is sweet” (*omnem suavitatem*). In this way he positions the idea of such cultural heroes as rejecting one system of values

²⁵¹ Compare Edwards (1993) 179. At 189-90 she discusses the same argument for moderation in satire, focusing on the financial aspects of pleasure and vice: “Roman satirists, in particular, do not condemn all pleasures in themselves but offer an alternative model of the life of pleasures (in moderation) which does not require ruinous expense.” She cites Hor. *Sat.* 2.2, 2.7; Juv. 11 and 14.

(aesthetics) in favor of complete devotion to another. In depicting these competing claims, however, he casts the conflict almost entirely in aesthetic or sensual terms, and thus ensures that the traditional ideal of devoted service to the Republic appears inadequate. While Cicero is careful throughout this passage to figure his remarks ostensibly as praise for the traditional model of citizenship — note for example how he includes himself in this final statement among the few who would recognize the true value of this ascetic workhorse: “I perhaps and a few others will think that the gods are kind to this person” (*huic homini ego fortasse et pauci deos propitios... putabunt*) — he focuses his comments in such a way as to render this model decidedly uncomfortable as a pattern of living. In conclusion he recommends rejecting the narrow definition of virtue he has so carefully crafted — “Therefore let this deserted and untended path, now shut in with boughs and thickets, be left behind” (*Ergo haec deserta via et inculta atque interclusa iam frondibus et virgultis relinquatur, Cael. 42*) — in favor of a moderation that allows time for relaxation and pleasure, provided no real harm is done.²⁵² He urges that such license should be given to youth, in particular to Caelius’s activities as a youth. Through this discussion, Cicero has managed to transform the *exempla* of Camillus, Fabricius, and “all those who made these things so great from the smallest beginnings” (*omnisque eos qui haec ex minimis tanta fecerunt, Cael. 39*) into an unpleasantly narrow path of living in contrast to a more modern idea of moderate balance between duty and recreation, all the while claiming to praise ancient austerity and to accept pleasure only grudgingly. Thus in his defense of Caelius, Cicero transforms the Roman trope of moral decline into a welcome relaxation toward a balanced life of moderation.

²⁵² *Cael. 42*. This thought echoes an earlier statement of the idea at *Cael. 28*. See also Edwards (1993) 179 on this theme and the measurement of the damage caused by pleasure throughout the speech primarily in financial terms.

In his defense of the consul-designate L. Licinius Murena, Cicero mounts a similar defense of moderation in order to refute the authority of Cato the Younger. This passage relies more on a gently satirical presentation of its target than on the strictly circumscribed praise that provided the motive engine in the *pro Caelio*. Once again the overall argument encourages moderation, but here the orator caricatures his opponent as a rigid doctrinarian. Just as in the *pro Caelio*, Cicero combines ostensible praise for a highly respected figure with a strategy designed to undercut that respect. In a strategy unlike that in his defense of Caelius where Cicero twists about the image of moral decline, the orator here ignores any such notion, focusing instead on the importation of Stoic doctrine as overriding a more beneficial Roman comity and thus fostering an overly severe morality expressed through Cato's public bearing. Cicero distinguishes Cato's innate character from the supposedly external influence of Stoicism: "In the case of M. Cato, judges, know that these good things, that we view as divine and outstanding, belong to the man himself; the things that we sometimes find lacking, all of these are not derived from his nature, but from his teacher" (*In M. Catone, iudices, haec bona, quae videmus divina et egregia, ipsius scitote esse propria; quae nonnumquam requirimus, ea sunt omnia non a natura, verum a magistro, Mur. 61*). This comment leads into a satirical exposition of several Stoic paradoxes and doctrines, phrased in such a way as to accentuate the apparent absurdity of these propositions (61-62). In one of the more broadly comic touches, for example, Cicero illustrates the Stoic claim that all crimes are equal by equating parricide with untimely pulicide: "And the man who strangles a poultry-cock when it is not necessary does no less wrong than the man who strangles his father" (*nec minus delinquere eum, qui gallum gallinaceum, cum opus non fuerit, quam eum, qui patrem suffocaverit, Mur. 61*).

Cicero suggests that the teachings of the Academic or Peripatetic schools would have proven more beneficial to Cato, although, in a construction he repeats several times throughout the passage, he defines the potential change as very slight in comparison to

the innate virtues of Cato's character: "If some chance had led you with that nature of yours to these teachers, indeed you would not be a better man nor a braver nor a more sober nor a juster one (for you could not be better), but you would be slightly more inclined to mildness" (*Hos ad magistros si qua te fortuna, Cato, cum ista natura detulisset, non tu quidem melior esses nec fortior nec temperantior nec iustior (neque enim esse potes), sed paulo ad lenitatem propensior, Mur. 64*).²⁵³ In this manner, Cicero repeatedly insists on the perfection of the younger Cato's innate virtues, but he devotes a much larger portion of his argument to the veneer of supposed Stoic doctrine that, he claims, has marred Cato's otherwise perfect character. These protestations of admiration dress up the satire of the younger man's Stoic beliefs as generally respectful advice from an older friend.²⁵⁴ Cicero even uses his advantage in age to present philosophical precepts as merely a device used by youth to bolster its uncertainty about its own abilities. In a condescending bit of mock advice, he presents himself when he was younger as having done the same thing he implies that Cato is doing: "Indeed I will confess, Cato, that I also in my youth mistrusted my own ability and sought the aid of doctrine" (*fatebor enim, Cato, me quoque in adulescentia diffisum ingenio meo quaesisse adiumenta doctrinae, Mur. 63*). Just as in the *pro Caelio* where Cicero presents his discussion ostensibly as praise for antique austerity while undermining it,

²⁵³ Cicero makes comments of this form three other times in the passage from *Mur.* 60-66: *verissime dixerim peccare te nihil neque ulla in re te esse huius modi, ut corrigendus potius quam leviter inflectendus esse videare, 60; In M. Catone, iudices, haec bona, quae videmus divina et egregia, ipsius scitote esse propria; quae nonnumquam requirimus, ea sunt omnia non a natura, verum a magistro, 61* (cited above); *Sed si illius comitatem et facilitatem tuae gravitati severitatisque adperseris, non ista quidem erunt meliora, quae nunc sunt optima, sed certe condita iucundius, 66* (discussed below).

²⁵⁴ Cicero in fact opens this section of the speech with a reference to the instruction of Achilles by either Chiron or Phoenix: *'Non multa peccas,' inquit illi fortissimo viro senior magister, 'sed peccas; te regere possum.'* *Mur.* 60. The quotation is ascribed to Attius's tragedy *Myrmidones* (Freese 1967, *ad loc.*). Cato (b. 95 BCE) was just over a decade younger than Cicero (b. 106 BCE).

here he constantly praises Cato while concurrently mocking his overly careful devotion to living by philosophical doctrine.²⁵⁵

Through a comparison with Cato's great grandfather, Cato the Elder, Cicero defines moderation and affability as native and necessary parts of the Roman character.²⁵⁶ His depiction of the well-known censor strongly contrasts with the frequent representations of him as a model of strict Roman morality. Valerius Maximus, for example, refers to the elder in one passage as "both Censor and Cato, a twofold *exemplum* of severity" (*et censor et Cato, duplex severitatis exemplum*, 2.9.3).²⁵⁷ Cicero, however, reverses this depiction through his contrast between the censor and his great grandson. He argues that the younger Cato has exceeded the normal bounds of severity through his adherence to Stoic doctrine. Cicero briefly mentions several famous Romans of earlier generations — Scipio Aemilianus, C. Laelius (cos. 140 BCE), L. Furius Philus (cos. 136 BCE) and C. Sulpicius Galus (cos. 166 BCE) — as models for uniting interest in Stoic philosophy with a more reasonable and pleasant demeanor (*Mur.* 66). He then introduces the elder Cato as a domestic, and therefore particularly powerful, *exemplum* in order to instruct the younger man in the proper balance between severity and moderation. Cicero's language here suggests that this reference replies to Cato's own use of his great-grandfather in his speech for the prosecution.²⁵⁸ Cicero's comparison

²⁵⁵ Cato is reported to have responded to this speech with a comment, perhaps sarcastic, on Cicero's wit: τὸν οὖν Κάτωνά φασι διαμειδιάσαντα πρὸς τοὺς παρόντας εἰπεῖν· ὁ ἄνδρες, ὡς γελοῖον ὑπατον ἔχομεν, *Plut. Cat.* 21. The Latin translation *consul urbanus* suggests a pun on the office of *praetor urbanus*.

²⁵⁶ Later in the speech Cicero will identify and praise the Roman ability to properly mix work and pleasure by comparison with the more severe customs of Sparta and Crete: *Neque tamen Lacedaemonii, auctores istius vitae atque orationis, qui cotidianis epulis in robore accumbunt, neque vero Cretes, quorum nemo gustavit umquam cubans, melius quam Romani homines, qui tempora voluptatis laborisque dispertunt, res publicas suas retinuerunt; quorum alteri uno adventu nostri exercitus deleti sunt, alteri nostri imperii praesidio disciplinam suam legesque conservant*, *Mur.* 74.

²⁵⁷ The typical picture of Cato the Elder's severity is also reflected in the use modern scholarship makes of him as a representative early font of Roman moralism, e.g. Edwards (1993) 1-2.

²⁵⁸ *De cuius praestanti virtute cum vere graviterque diceres, domesticum te habere dixisti exemplum ad imitandum*. *Mur.* 66.

between the characters of the two Catos positions the elder in a somewhat unexpected role as a model of comity and affability.²⁵⁹ He describes the relationship between the two men as more than simply the one emulating the *exemplum* of the other, and he links the younger Cato's innately virtuous nature to his descent from his great-grandfather.²⁶⁰ Consequently an even closer resemblance to his revered ancestor will smooth the Stoic's rough edges: "But if you sprinkle that man's courtesy and social ease on your gravity and severity, those qualities of yours at least will not be better, which are already the best, but certainly they will be more happily seasoned" (*Sed si illius comitatem et facilitatem tuae gravitati severitatisque adperseris, non ista quidem erunt meliora, quae nunc sunt optima, sed certe condita iucundius, Mur. 66*). Cicero thus replies to Cato's use of his great grandfather as an *exemplum* of severe judgment, by highlighting those other qualities which the young Stoic has failed to imitate. While the strictness and severity of the elder form the basis for his more frequent role as an *exemplum* elsewhere, Cicero here implicitly suggests that by too close adherence to those qualities alone his descendant may fail to truly emulate his ancestor's greatness.

Cicero returns to this theme later in the speech, introducing another *exemplum* to illustrate the incompatibility between the strictest representatives of Stoicism and success in Roman politics. In 129 BCE, Q. Aelius Tubero offended the Roman people during a public funeral banquet for his maternal uncle Scipio Africanus Aemilianus by

²⁵⁹ Perhaps, however, we might consider Cato's reaction to meeting a man leaving a brothel with praise for the benefits of visiting prostitutes at Hor. *Serm.* 1.2.31-35 as an example of this comity. In this brief anecdote, Horace portrays Cato as upholding Roman morality not by stern reproof but rather by ratifying the other man's choice of sexual partner:

*quidam notus homo cum exiret fornice, 'macte
virtute esto' inquit sententia dia Catonis;
'nam simul ac venas inflavit taetra libido,
huc iuvenes aequom est descendere, non alienas
permolere uxores.'*

²⁶⁰ See Hölkeskamp (1996) 319-21 and Roller (2004) 24-25 on the Roman view that character traits run in families. Suetonius, *Tiberius* 2 on the arrogance of the *gens Claudia* provides a clear illustration of the perception of particular traits as family characteristics.

the extreme simplicity of the way he decorated the table: “That man, a very educated person and a Stoic, covered Punic-style wooden benches with goatskins and set out Samian earthenware vessels, as if Diogenes the Cynic had died and it was not the death of the divine man Africanus being honored” (*ille, homo eruditissimus ac Stoicus, stravit pelliculis haedinis lectulos Punicanos et exposuit vasa Samia, quasi vero esset Diogenes Cynicus mortuus et non divini hominis Africani mors honestaretur, Mur. 75*). Cicero uses this earlier exponent of Stoic strictness to illustrate the potential conflict between Cato’s Stoicism and his future success in election to political office.²⁶¹ He labels Tubero’s cheapness “perverse philosophy” (*perversam sapientiam, 75*), and proceeds to explain that there is a time and place for everything: “The Roman people hate private luxury, but love public magnificence; they do not love extravagant banquets, but they love stinginess and incivility much less; they distinguish the interchange of work and pleasure by the measure of duties and occasions” (*Odit populus Romanus privatam luxuriam, publicam magnificentiam diligit; non amat profusas epulas, sordes et inhumanitatem multo minus; distinguit ratione officiorum ac temporum vicissitudinem laboris ac voluptatis, Mur. 76*).

Valerius Maximus develops this argument into a brief rubric. He uses an abbreviated paraphrase of Cicero’s discussion of Tubero in the *pro Murena* as the first instance in his section on electoral defeats (7.5.1). Cato the Younger’s defeat in running for the praetorship (55 BCE) provides the final *exemplum* (7.5.6). Tubero’s position at

²⁶¹ Sen. *Ep.* 95.72-73 makes rather different use of this *exemplum*. He includes Tubero in a list of other great men who should be imitated and claims that his earthenware vessels will live for all time. His argument seems to come in direct reply to Cicero’s emphasis in the *pro Murena* on acting in such a way as to increase or maintain popularity: ... *Tuberonis ligneos lectos, cum in publicum sterneret, haedinasque pro stragulis pelles et ante ipsius Iovis cellam adposita convivii vasa fictilia. Quid aliud paupertatem in Capitolio consecrare? Ut nullum aliud factum eius habeam quo illum Catonibus inseram, hoc parum credimus? Censura fuit illa, non cena. O quam ignorant homines cupidi gloriae quid illa sit aut quemadmodum petenda! Illo die populus Romanus multorum suppellectilem spectavit, unius miratus est. Omnium illorum aurum argentumque fractum est et [in] milliens conflatum, at omnibus saeculis Tuberonis fictilia durabunt.*

the opening, somewhat outside the otherwise roughly chronological sequence of this section, along with the closing position of Cato's defeat may derive from the influence of Cicero's comments on the difficulties in reconciling Stoic severity with electoral success. Cicero's use of Tubero's *exemplum* to advise Cato is answered by the result of Cato's failure to heed that advice. Valerius describes this section as encouraging equanimity and comforting those who are attempting to obtain political office. These events are not primarily models to be imitated, but illustrations of how things are. By recalling the setbacks suffered by men who later accomplished great things, Valerius provides a model for hope: "Depicting the circumstances of elections will usefully prepare those embarking on a political path to endure electoral defeats more bravely, because, with the rejections of very famous men placed before their eyes, they will seek office not so much with less hope as with more sensible judgment of mind" (*Campi quoque repraesentata condicio ambitiosam ingredientiem viam ad fortius sustinendos parum prosperos comitorum eventus utiliter instruxerit, quia propositis ante oculos clarissimorum virorum repulsis ut non minore cum spe honores ita prudentiore cum animi iudicio petent, 7.5.praef.*). The instances that follow do not for the most part emphasize continued determination following a defeat, but instead simply contrast the fact of defeat with subsequent accomplishments.²⁶²

Valerius provides similar comforting illustrations in other sections. Sometimes the less admirable or successful actions of well-known figures could foster a sense of calm or reduce anxiety about such matters, including disreputable youthful behavior.²⁶³

²⁶² The one exception to the general pattern of this section is Val. Max. 7.5.3: *Nullus error talis in L. Aemilio Paulo conspectus est, sed tamen aliquotiens frustra consulatum petiit, idemque, cum iam campum repulsis suis fatigasset, bis consul et censor factus amplissimum etiam dignitatis gradum obtinuit. cuius virtutem iniuriae non fregerunt sed acuerunt, quoniam quidem ipsa nota accensam cupiditatem summi honoris ardentiorum ad comitia detulit, ut populum, quia nobilitatis splendore et animi bonis movere non potuerat, pertinacia vinceret.*

²⁶³ *Multum animis hominum et fiduciae adicere et sollicitudinis detrahere potest morum ac fortunae in claris viris recognita mutatio, sive nostros status sive proximorum ingenia contemplemur, Val. Max. 6.9.praef.*

For example, under the rubric “Concerning the change of character or fortune” (*de mutatione morum aut fortunae*, 6.9), Valerius includes a series of famous men who become important political or military figures following disreputable youths, notably the elder Scipio Africanus, Q. Fabius Maximus Allobrogicus (cos. 121), Q. Lutatius Catulus (cos. 78) and Sulla (Val. Max. 6.9.2-6).²⁶⁴ These narratives provide comforting patterns by which people may hope for future improvements: “for when by witnessing the fortunes of others we see that fame has emerged from humble and despised circumstances, what will result except that we will always think better about ourselves, remembering that it is foolish to condemn ourselves beforehand to unhappiness and meanwhile to change hope, which rightly is cherished even when it is uncertain, into certain despair?” (*nam cum aliorum fortunas spectando ex condicione abiecta atque contempta emersisse claritatem videamus, quid aberit quin et ipsi meliora de nobis semper cogitemus, memores stultum esse perpetuae infelicitatis se praedamnare spemque, quae etiam incerta recte fovetur, interdum certam in desperationem convertere?* 6.9.praef.). Throughout this section, Valerius treats change in personal character and change in external circumstances as almost equivalent. This combination likely reflects the potential field of concerns that Valerius describes in his introduction: “whether we examine our own situations or the natures of those closest to us” (*sive nostros status sive proximorum ingenia contemplemur*, 6.9.praef.). These illustrations of change in character are most probably directed toward those concerned about relatives or friends. Because these *exempla* would thus alleviate anxiety about the character or actions of someone else, such narratives do not present an opportunity for conscious emulation in the way *exempla* in a more injunctive mode do. The possibility of

²⁶⁴ Cf. Gell. 7.8.5, Plut. *Sull.* 1f., Sall. *Iug.* 95, Firm. *Math.* 1.7.28. Concerning Fabius Maximus, Shackleton Bailey (2000) *ad loc.* suggests that his presence in this passage may be a confusion with another Fabius: “His earlier bad reputation is attested only here, perhaps by confusion with his cousin by adoption Eburnus, if Eburnus is indeed the Fabius Maximus of VM 2.7.3.”

repetition may encourage a sense of hope, but the reader cannot directly effect a outcome parallel to the illustration.

Whether these arguments transform exemplary figures into unobtainable ideals or bring them down to earth as more maculate figures, they foreground a process of reevaluating the moral expectations for the conduct of Roman citizens. The Ciceronian passages I discuss above represent an argumentative form of exemplary illustration, while Valerius Maximus provides illustrations in more of a ‘self-help’ mode. We have previously seen a similar practice of undercutting exemplary conclusions in Phaedrus’s tactic of contradicting the lessons of his own fables (*e.g.* Phaedrus 2.1 and 3.4. I discuss these poems in section 2.3 of the previous chapter).²⁶⁵ These discussions emphasize the wide diffusion of imperfection by carefully circumscribing the possibility of moral achievement. In the following section I discuss the mirror image of this argument: illustrating the prevalence of human fallibility through typical examples.

3.2: *Exemplum Hominis*: Describing Human Fallibility through *Exempla*.

In discussing Roman views on immorality, scholars have more often focused on condemnations of immoral behavior than on the corresponding defenses arguing either against overly severe judgments or for more lenient acceptance of human foibles. As I have discussed in the previous section, Roman writers and speakers sometimes mitigate the perceived strictness of archaic morals either by depicting such severity as alien to contemporary life or by diluting the aura of Rome’s cultural heroes with less admirable aspects of their life. In this section I examine another aspect of such ameliorative arguments: *exempla* of imperfect people used to illustrate the wide diffusion of such behavior. Writers and speakers use such *exempla* to argue for an exchange of mutual

²⁶⁵ Compare Martial 1.8, where the poet advises a friend to imitate the beliefs of Cato and Thræsea Paetus, but not their deaths: *Nolo virum facili redemit qui sanguine famam, | hunc volo laudari qui sine morte potest*, Mart. 1.8.5–6

tolerance in social situations when different tastes or attitudes result in varying reactions to persons or events. Likewise broader discussions of human faults may structure social interactions around the shared recognition of the need for patience with one another's weaknesses.

Writers and speakers who urge moderation in judgment frequently figure fallibility as an integral aspect of human nature. Depending on the structure of their arguments, these authors may label their subjects, their audience and also themselves as *homines*, that is "people" in an ethically neutral sense.²⁶⁶ Texts urging moderation in judgment often define a reciprocal relationship between the notion of fallibility inherent in the term *homo* and the idea of humane conduct (*humanitas*) that they sometimes adduce as the correct response to such failings. Within such arguments, average persons engaged in common failings demonstrate the universality of human frailty. *Exempla* used in this fashion may feature unnamed actors in order to avoid a blatant show of hypocrisy in condemning others while arguing for moderation. References to groups of type figures or even to all of humanity play a similar role by diffusing the implied blame across a wide number of persons. At times writers or speakers explicitly signal that their refusal to name names forms an integral part of their argument: by offering the mask of anonymity to these *exempla* of ethical failure, the authors model the moderation of judgment they encourage.²⁶⁷ In making such arguments, writers and speakers stress the

²⁶⁶ See Santoro-l'Hoir (1992), esp. 1-2, 9-10 and 158-59 on contrast between the status word *vir* and the neutral or pejorative *homo*, and on the various uses of *homo*.

²⁶⁷ We have already seen part of this pattern in Cicero's reference to important men who had disreputable youths in the *pro Caelio*. (I discuss this passage in section 2.1 of the last chapter.) There Cicero left it to his audience to find examples for themselves, rather than single out anyone for judgment: *Ac multi et nostra et patrum maiorumque memoria, iudices, summi homines et clarissimi cives fuerunt, quorum cum adulescentiae cupiditates defervissent, eximiae virtutes firmata iam aetate extiterunt. Ex quibus neminem mihi libet nominare; vosmet vobiscum recordamini. Nolo enim cuiusquam fortis ac illustris viri ne minimum quidem erratum cum maxima laude coniungere.* Cic. *Cael.* 43. The anonymity of the actors here may also allow auditors or readers to imagine themselves more easily in the position of the negative exemplar. Pliny also makes frequent use of this tactic: see e.g. my discussions of *Ep.* 8.22, 9.12 and 9.26 which also appear in section 2.1.

fallibility that both the moral judge and the object of criticism share. Horace, for example, defines the problem as an exchange of tolerance for personal blemishes: “A person who asks a friend not to find fault with his boils should pardon that man’s warts: it is just that someone seeking pardon for faults grant pardon in return” (*qui ne tuberibus propriis offendat amicum | postulat, ignoscet verrucis illius: aequum est | peccatis veniam poscentem reddere rursus*, Hor. *Sat.* 1.3.73-75). The need for such tolerance and leniency forms a significant strand in advice on friendship and other social relationships.

Giving advice, moral or otherwise, is a common activity in Roman writing. One aspect of this, of course, is the concern with the public regulation of personal behavior which is connected above all with the office of the censor. Citing Plutarch’s description of the office, Edwards notes that “concern for what might be termed private morality was seen by Greeks familiar with Roman culture, as well as by Romans themselves, as a distinctively Roman characteristic.”²⁶⁸ In a slightly less formal capacity, Anthony Corbeill identifies an “ethical basis” to oratorical invective that provides “an extralegal means of enforcing social codes.”²⁶⁹ Focusing more on the secondary functions of this sort of ethical discourse in the Roman republic, Joy Connolly describes moralism in political speech as essential both for transmuting political disagreement into moral difference and for creating a perception of equality between the crowd and the elite speaker.²⁷⁰ Reflecting their interest in invective speech, these discussions of moralism in

²⁶⁸ Edwards (1993) 30-31, citing Plut. *Cat. mai.* 16.1-2. See also 1-2 on the Roman view of themselves as correctors of morals.

²⁶⁹ Corbeill (1996) 19-20, along with 5-6. See, however, Arena (2007) 157-58 who qualifies Corbeill’s insistence on the reality and effectiveness of such invective in defining its target as a deviant and thus destroying his identity as a Roman citizen.

²⁷⁰ Connolly (2007) 59: “moralist speech, by remaking the assembly in the forum or the crowd around the jury in the forum into a living microrepublic of virtue, constructs the ostensible equality of liberty in the republic, *by rendering citizens as equal in their capacity as moral judges*. This is the full significance of moralism in political discourse: it is proof and guarantor of republican liberty, because it creates the perception of equality.” See 58-65 for her full discussion of the function of moralism in political oratory.

the political sphere focus almost exclusively on moralistic condemnation. Theoretical discussion of free speech in poetry and private contexts sometimes takes a more balanced view, partly through an interest in the topic of flattery and friendship. Letters, such as Seneca's *Epistulae Morales* and Pliny's collection, constitute an obvious medium in which to advise others. We might also consider the genre of satire, concerned as it often is with a performance of moralistic reproach or admonition, to function frequently as a form of advice poetry.²⁷¹ *Exempla* frequently play a role in giving advice. Augustus, for instance, reportedly culled his reading for useful sayings and *exempla* to send to friends, relatives and subordinates (Suetonius *Div. Aug.* 89).²⁷² In a private context, both Seneca the younger and Pliny the younger sometimes introduce *exempla* to provide themselves with opportunities for dispensing advice.²⁷³ One recurrent topic of advice centers on the need to moderate judgments or tolerate minor offenses in order to encourage social and familial concord. These arguments follow two basic patterns: an argument from similarity (we too have done or might do the same sort of actions we judge) or from mutual tolerance (tolerate others so that they will tolerate you in turn). These two forms construct the relationship between people and their faults or vices in somewhat different ways. The argument from similarity tends to assume that most

²⁷¹ See e.g. Freudenberg (1993) 72-108 on Horace's relationship to the iambic tradition and to theoretical discussions of invective or admonitory speech and Oliensis (1998) 19-21. See also Hunter (1985), esp. 481-86 on Horace *Epist.* 1.18 in relation to philosophical theories of friendship.

²⁷² See also Feldherr (1998) 35 on Vell. Pat. 2.126.4 discussing Augustus himself as an *exemplum* "stressing precisely the relationship between the exercise of *imperium* and instruction through *exempla*." Braund (1988) 92-100 discusses advice given to provincial governors by both emperors and others from a number of sources including Cic. *Q. Fr.* 1.1 and Pliny, *Ep.* 8.24 and the *Panegyricus*. Damon (1997) centers on the use of the stock figure of the parasite to express negative views of hierarchal social relationships in satire as well as comedy and oratory.

²⁷³ For Seneca, see e.g. Shelton (1995) on the use of *exempla* in the *ad Marciam* (She primarily deals with consolation as a form of instruction or therapy, but these are easily assimilated to the category of advice) and Ker (2009) 90-103, 105, 108-110 on consolation more broadly in Seneca's work and 147-74 on philosophical instruction in the *Epistulae Morales*, focusing on the topic of death. For Pliny, see e.g. *Ep.* 2.6, 7.26, 8.22, 9.12, 9.17. I discuss these letters in both section 2.1 of the previous chapter and this section.

people are generally good but will make mistakes from time to time. The argument for tolerance, on the other hand, assumes that minor faults or conflicting preferences are constants of human nature and therefore that everyone should accept these minor annoyances in one another for the sake of social harmony.

As we have seen in the previous chapter (section 2.1), the younger Pliny repeatedly uses *exempla*, mostly anonymous, as occasions for dispensing advice to his friends. In letter 8.22 Pliny discusses the relationship between judgment and personal fallibility in general terms. (I also discuss this letter in section 2.1 of the previous chapter.) As he reveals in closing, the immediate inspiration for these reflections was an encounter with a certain man whose identity Pliny leaves ostentatiously unmentioned in order to depict himself as virtuously refraining from judgment.²⁷⁴ He introduces this discussion by referring to a broad class of people, instances of whom he expects his readers to recall from their own experience: “Are you acquainted with those men who, though they are slaves to every passion, rage at the vices of others in such a way as if they envied them, and punish most severely those whom they most imitate?” (*Nostine hos qui omnium libidinum servi, sic aliorum vitiis irascuntur quasi inuideant, et gravissime puniunt, quos maxime imitantur?* 8.22.1). Pliny here frames the discussion in vivid terms with the characterization of these men as “slaves to every passion” (*omnium libidinum servi*) and the pair of superlative adverbs that structure the closing thought: “they punish most severely those whom they most imitate” (*gravissime puniunt quos maxime imitantur*). He emphasizes the apparent envy (*quasi inuideant*) demonstrated by this class of people in order to set hypocrisy and not moral judgment itself as the central problem. By stressing the conflict between immoral speakers and moralizing

²⁷⁴ *Nuper quidam—sed melius coram; quamquam ne tunc quidem. Vereor enim ne id quod improbo consectari carpere referre huic quod cum maxime praecipimus repugnet. Quisquis ille qualiscumque sileatur, quem insignire exempli nihil, non insignire humanitatis plurimum refert. Ep. 8.22.4. Sherwin-White (1966) ad loc.* “Pliny gives Rosianus a delicate lesson. The story is not taken up in any other letter.” My discussion of this letter in section 2.1 focuses primarily on this closing passage.

criticism, Pliny thus insulates the expression of moralism itself from the thrust of his critique. Speakers of this type are the central problem, not the content of their speech. This form of hypocrisy is also recognized elsewhere, as in Valerius Maximus's chapter on those who themselves committed the same vices that they condemned in others (*qui quae in aliis vindicant ipsi commiserunt*, 8.6). In a letter to Cicero, Caelius reports Appius Claudius's hypocrisy in the exercise of the censorship in 50 BCE (Cic. *ad Fam.* 8.14.4). Quintilian also discusses accusing someone for the same acts the accuser has committed (11.1.78).²⁷⁵

In his general treatment, Pliny defines the best type of person as one who never uses personal character as a license for castigating others: "I judge best and most refined the man who forgives others as if he himself daily does wrong, [and] refrains from wrongs as if he himself would forgive no one else" (*Atque ego optimum et emendatissimum existimo, qui ceteris ita ignoscit, tamquam ipse cotidie peccet, ita peccatis abstinet tamquam nemini ignoscat*, *Ep.* 8.22.2). This "best and most refined" person exactly reverses the qualities that Pliny cites to identify the class of men he condemns. As in his opening question, Pliny once again defines his best man in superlative terms in order to delineate as incisively as possible the behavior he recommends. The closer his readers are able to approach this ideal in their own behavior, the better and more refined they will be. In the overall structure of his argument as well, Pliny links the categories of tolerance and personal action to emphasize only the furthest ends of the spectrum: tolerant wrongdoers and virtuous scolds disappear within the rhetorical structure of this discussion. By limiting the identified categories of evaluation, he attempts to mold his own self-presentation. As discussed in the preceding chapter, Pliny's comments on the anonymous man who inspired these reflections risk portraying himself as judgmental, thus placing him in the

²⁷⁵ Sen. *Contr.* 2.6 presents a more dramatic version of this conflict in which a father and son accuse each other of luxurious living.

unnamed category of virtuous scold. To avoid such an impression, he frames his observations in the most abstract, universalized form available, using an anonymous *exemplum* to avoid identifying a particular target. This care for self-presentation reflects Pliny's implicit purpose to present himself as an *exemplum* of the correct way to convey moral judgment.

Pliny cites Thrasea Paetus as an authority for such leniency toward the faults of others: “let us entrust to memory what the most gentle and because of this also the greatest man Thrasea was frequently accustomed to say: ‘A person who hates vices, hates people’” (*mandemusque memoriae quod vir mitissimus et ob hoc quoque maximus Thrasea crebro dicere solebat: ‘Qui vitia odit, homines odit’, 8.22.3*).²⁷⁶ Thrasea's statement defines vice as a necessary part of being human. Pliny's superlative praise for this Stoic hero defines his greatness as a product of his gentleness: “the most gentle and because of this also the greatest man” (*vir mitissimus et ob hoc quoque maximus*). Concerned as he is throughout this letter with harmonious social dynamics, Pliny singles out gentleness — *lenitas* (8.22.1) or *humanitas* (8.22.4) — as a core value in human interaction and assigns this value first to Thrasea and then in closing to himself.²⁷⁷ As faults are an integral aspect of being a human person (*homo*), a sense of shared humanity (*humanitas*) necessarily mitigates the need to judge others. Instead, Pliny suggests that moral judgment is best applied only to oneself: “Therefore let us hold this idea at home or in public in every sort of life, that we should be implacable to ourselves, but easily entreated even by those people who do not know how to give pardon except to themselves” (*Proinde hoc domi hoc foris hoc in omni vitae genere teneamus, ut nobis implacabiles simus, exorabiles istis etiam qui dare veniam nisi sibi nesciunt,*

²⁷⁶ Pliny also cites Thrasea elsewhere as an authority: *Ep.* 6.29 (on what types of cases a speaker should undertake). Quintilian *Inst.* 5.11.36-39 presents the use of such authoritative pronouncements as closely related to the use of *exempla*.

²⁷⁷ *Quisquis ille qualiscumque sileatur, quem insignire exempli nihil, non insignire humanitatis plurimum refert.* 8.22.4.

8.22.3). He thus redirects moralist discourse into a practice of self-criticism. Pliny recommends policing oneself here as the logical conclusion of his definition of the most refined man who “refrains from wrongs as if he himself would forgive no one” (*ita peccatis abstinet tamquam nemini ignoscat*, *Ep.* 8.22.2). By maintaining this distinction between self-criticism and the judgment of others, he attempts to reconcile moralism and moral tolerance. Pliny’s ideal person would act as if subject to the most severe criticism while nonetheless adopting the posture of broad permissiveness. Everyone should focus judgment upon themselves and thus take up the role of their own personal moral critic as a substitute for wider social criticism. In defining this attitude through the contrast between self-judgment and the judgment of others, Pliny establishes this practice as a means of forestalling external judgments by preempting opportunities for criticism. Not only will refraining from criticizing others encourage reciprocal tolerance, but severe self-criticism limits the potential material for others to judge while simultaneously forestalling the possibility of descending into complete amorality.

In *Satire* 1.3 Horace frames this issue as an economy of vices in which everyone must balance their own faults against those of others. Mutual forbearance is necessary in order to avoid social tension or hypocrisy: “it is just that someone seeking pardon for faults grant pardon in return” (*aequum est | peccatis veniam poscentem reddere rursus*, *Hor. S.* 1.3.74-75). This version of the argument for tolerance assumes some degree of vice as a constant for all people: “For no one is born without vices: best is that man who is burdened by the least” (*nam vitiis nemo sine nascitur: optimus ille est | qui minimis urgetur*, 1.3.68-69). Catherine Schlegel describes *Satire* 1.3 as concerned with “limits to behavior in terms of the desires of others and in terms of social interaction.”²⁷⁸ In her interpretation, Horace concerns himself with the proper way of negotiating the boundaries between ourselves and others. Reading the three diatribe satires that open

²⁷⁸ Schlegel (2005) 30. See 30-37 for her full commentary on the poem.

the first book of *Satires* as describing an expanding series of limits on the self and its desires,²⁷⁹ she takes the self as the central term of analysis and the primary model for understanding others: “self-love is the guide to understanding the other: our own self-love teaches us about the self-love of others; our own self-love then has to accommodate the self-love of another.”²⁸⁰ In her focus on the self and its desires, Schlegel, while substantially correct in her outline of the social dynamics under discussion, transmutes the external, often physical focus of Horace’s satire into a more psychologically oriented framework.²⁸¹ The use of physical characteristics like warts and boils (*Serm.* 1.3.73-74) as analogues for behavioral faults aligns the satirist’s advice more closely to a vision of faults as ambient environmental factors rather than personal affronts. While such blemishes may evoke a sense of distaste in observers, they do not actively impinge on the individual person of a bystander. In this satire an image of habitual but annoying behavior replaces the idea of chosen or intentional wrong-doing. This characterization implicitly configures the basis mutual tolerance as a recognition of inadvertent flaws.

Horace treats the subject of mutual tolerance as correcting an imbalance between self-criticism and criticism of others: “Since you survey your own faults with cloudy, ointment-smearred eyes, why do look as sharply at your friends’ faults as an eagle or an Epidaurian snake?” (*Cum tua pervideas oculis mala lippus inunctis, | cur in amicorum vitiis tam cernis acutum | quam aut aquila aut serpens Epidaurius?* *Serm.* 1.3.25-27).²⁸²

²⁷⁹ Schlegel (2005) 20: “Each of the first three satires explores the context of a certain limit on human desire, and the discussion moves outward from the narcissistic situation of own’s relation to desires for objects that gratify the self, to one’s relation to the desires of other human beings.”

²⁸⁰ Schlegel (2005) 34.

²⁸¹ For the external focus of this satire, see *e.g.* 1.3.29-32, 38-40, 44-53, 63-66, 73-74, 80-83, 85-95. Compare Braund (1988) 90 on the similar focus on “public men” within the discussions of noble character in *Hor. Sat.* 1.6, *Persius* 4 and *Juv.* 8. Edwards (1993) 24-27 discusses the almost exclusive focus by Roman moralists on the behavior of the elite, and 173-206 describes the permeability between ideas of moral and financial profligacy.

²⁸² *Catullus* 22.18-21, *Persius* 4.23-24 and *Phaedrus* 4.10 provide other versions of this same theme.

The poet universalizes the lesson by addressing it to his reader in the second person. The second person in this “chat” (*sermo*) thus treats each individual reader as the actor in a negative *exemplum* in a similar but more direct variation on Cicero’s suggestion that the jurors recall for themselves *exempla* of men who have left youthful faults behind in the *pro Caelio*.²⁸³ In this satire, Horace also provides a named figure who serves as an *exemplum* of the judgmental wrongdoer: “While Maenius slanders the absent Novius, ‘Look you,’ someone says, ‘do you not know yourself, or do you think to deceive us as if you were unknown?’ ‘I forgive myself’ Maenius says” (*Maenius absentem Novium cum carperet, ‘heus tu’ | quidam ait, ‘ignoras te, an ut ignotum dare nobis | verba putas?’ ‘egomet mi ignosco’ Maenius inquit. Sat. 1.3.21-23*). Maenius here demonstrates the attitude of someone who fails to recognize the necessary reciprocity in social interactions. The imbalance between his self-regard and harassment of others activates the response of satiric censure.²⁸⁴ As Pliny does in letter 8.22, Horace urges his readers to become their own moral critics: “Finally examine yourself to see whether nature or even bad habits have at some time implanted any faults” (*Denique te ipsum | concute, num qua tibi vitiorum inseverit olim | natura aut etiam consuetudo mala, Serm. 1.3.34-36*).²⁸⁵ As with Pliny’s advice, this recommendation also has the potential to forestall criticism from others. Horace includes himself in his depiction of unequal standards of judgment, but with humorous understatement he suggests that his own faults may be less consequential than those of others. “Now someone may say to me: ‘What about you? Do you have no faults?’ Certainly I have other, perhaps smaller ones” (*Nunc aliquis dicat mihi: ‘quid tu? | nullane habes vitia?’ immo alia et fortasse*

²⁸³ *Ac multi et nostra et patrum maiorumque memoria, iudices, summi homines et clarissimi cives fuerunt, quorum cum adulescentiae cupiditates defervissent, eximiae virtutes firmata iam aetate exstiterunt. Ex quibus neminem mihi libet nominare; vosmet vobiscum recordamini. Cic. Cael. 43.*

²⁸⁴ Cf. Schlegel (2005) 32, 34.

²⁸⁵ Edwards (1993) 32 describes “a shift towards a more internalized morality” as a product of the first centuries CE, but this satire of Horace seems to indicate that such a concept was fairly developed already at the beginning of the Augustan principate.

minora, 1.3.19-20). In this admission, he slyly adopts a lesser version of the self-regard he criticizes. Through this display of similar fallibility, Horace presents his poetic *persona* as both advisor and object lesson, and thus positions his role as a satirist, a corrector of morals, within a wider view of general fallibility.²⁸⁶ His performance here becomes an *exemplum* demonstrating partial success in following his own advice: his poetic voice becomes a sort of non-specific, universal conscience that urges his readers to examine their own lives while nevertheless remaining tethered to a fallible human speaker. In this poem he presents his role as a satirist as being both an exponent of self-criticism and a model for the moral blindness he works to overcome.

Pliny demonstrates how this claim of general fallibility may function in a communication among friends. He opens one letter with an anecdote in which he offers unrequested advice to an acquaintance on treating his son's faults with greater leniency (*Ep.* 9.12). His letter, however, reports little more about the relationship between father and son than a minimal statement of the circumstances.²⁸⁷ The bulk of this narrative in fact is occupied by Pliny's own advice to the anonymous man, which adopts an *ad hominem* approach to encourage that man to recognize himself as an *exemplum* of moral imperfection. He is careful not to intervene directly in the relationship between father and son, but instead offers advice to the father alone (*Huic ego iuvene digresso*). As Pliny reports the lecture he gave to the man, he expands the notion of fallibility from a characteristic of youth to a constant aspect of being human: "Hey you, have you never done something that could be reproached by your father? Do I say 'Have you done'? Don't you sometimes do something that your son, if suddenly he were the father and you the son, would censure with equal severity? Are not all people led on by some error?"

²⁸⁶ Schlegel (2005) 31, 34-35 links the criticism of others as discussed in the poem to the practice of satire itself, and describes Horace in *Sat.* 1.3 as discussing the underlying impulses and proper limits of satiric poetry.

²⁸⁷ *Castigabat quidam filium suum quod paulo sumptuosius equos et canes emeret. Ep.* 9.12.1

Does not this man indulge himself in that thing, another man in this thing?" (*Heus tu, numquamne fecisti, quod a patre corripere posset? "Fecisti" dico? Non interdum facis quod filius tuus, si repente pater ille tu filius, pari gravitate reprehendat? Non omnes homines aliquo errore ducuntur? Non hic in illo sibi, in hoc alius indulget?* 9.12.1). These questions press the addressee to view himself as an *exemplum* of human fallibility. With each successive question, Pliny widens the number of fallible persons while narrowing the moral authority to reproach their errors. From a request to the father to recall his own youth, Pliny suggests that the moral positions of son and father might sometimes reverse themselves and then closes with broad statements about the universal nature of error.²⁸⁸

Pliny's anecdote serves little purpose other than as an excuse to repeat this lecture to his reader. In the second half of the letter, he repeats this advice directly to his addressee for the treatment of his own son and again stresses the universality of such faults: "Consider that he is a boy and you were one, and act as a father in such a way as to remember that you are a human being and the father of a human being" (*Cogita et illum puerum esse et te fuisse, atque ita hoc quod es pater utere, ut memineris et hominem esse te et hominis patrem*, 9.12.2).²⁸⁹ Once again he implicitly urges a father to take himself as an *exemplum* that provides the proper standard by which to judge his son. This letter offers a double rehearsal of the same lesson, first through Pliny's lecture to the anonymous father in the opening anecdote, then in the transference of this lesson to the recipient of the letter. Once again the idea of common human fallibility expressed

²⁸⁸ Sen. *Contr.* 2.6 (*quidam luxuriante filio luxuriari coepit. filius accusat patrem dementiae*) works through variations on the theme of shared faults between father and son in the context of a declamatory contest. On this declamation, see Gunderson (2003) 120-21 and 125-29. See also Quint. *Inst.* 11.1.78 where the rhetorician mentions the problem of accusing another for the same faults you yourself practice, including a reference to this declamatory theme.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Santoro L'Hoir (1992) 159 on the use of *homo* to discuss human failings. Pliny's closing remark *ut memineris et hominem esse te et hominis patrem* may recall Terence's line *homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto* (*Heauton Timorumenos* 77).

through the repeated use of the word *homo* — “you are a human being and the father of a human being” (*et hominem esse te et hominis patrem*) — equates the various persons involved with one another. The repetition itself echoes the advice in the lecture to the overly severe father: “Are not all people led on by some error?” (*Non omnes homines aliquo errore ducuntur?*). Just as in Horace’s satire, the use of the second person to deliver this advice helps universalize the suggestion, and implies that any reader would supply an illustrative *exemplum* of this problem. The wider application may be more muted in this case as, unlike the satire, this letter has a named addressee.²⁹⁰ In publishing this letter in a collection of such correspondence, however, Pliny effectively widens the audience for his advice to include any reader.

In this letter, Pliny expresses the idea of gentleness in response to human faults through his argument against its opposite, labelled “an *exemplum* of unmeasured severity” (*immodicae severitatis exemplo*, 9.12.2). Notably, however, Pliny includes almost no details of the criticism that occasioned his advice: “A certain man was reproaching his son because he had spent money on horses and dogs a little too lavishly” (*Castigabat quidam filium suum quod paulo sumptuosius equos et canes emeret*, 9.12.1). His expressed fear for his addressee’s behavior — “I have written lest at some time you also should treat your son too sharply and harshly” (*scripsi, ne quando tu quoque filium tuum acerbius duriusque tractares*, 9.12.2) — offers nearly as much detail about this imagined transgression as the opening anecdote did about the anonymous father. Rather than focus on his “*exemplum* of unmeasured severity” Pliny instead highlights his own role as advice-giver. He presents this practice as a mark of affection (*pro amore mutuo*, 9.12.2). Thus he almost entirely elides the *exemplum* of severity in favor of presenting himself implicitly as an *exemplum* of the correct method of dispensing moral advice and correction.

²⁹⁰ The letter is addressed to Terentius Iunior, whom I discuss in section 3.3 below.

This strategy for encouraging mutual tolerance translates easily to discussions of personal taste in less moralistic conflicts. Adapting this pattern to a less moralistic argument, Pliny suggests that a sort of social exchange of tolerance is necessary to encourage gracious acceptance of one's own preferences. In epistle 9.17, Pliny replies to the rhetor Julius Genitor who has complained that an otherwise excellent dinner party (*quamvis lautissimam cenam*) was ruined "because jesters, sissies, and fools were wandering about the tables" (*quia scurrae cinaedi moriones mensis inerrabant*, 9.17.1).²⁹¹ Rather than simply agreeing with his correspondent's complaints, however, Pliny instead counsels the rhetor on the advantages in tolerating other peoples' tastes. He defines himself as a model for the proper response: "Indeed I have no such entertainment, but nevertheless I tolerate people who do" (*Equidem nihil tale habeo, habentes tamen fero*, 9.17.2). Although, like Genitor, he views such entertainments as vulgar,²⁹² he defines his preference as a matter of taste rather than reason (*Non rationem sed stomachum tibi narro*, 9.17.2). Thus he deflects the potentially moralistic tone of the complaint toward the more neutral field of personal aesthetic preferences. His discussion of the two types still implies a ranking between the two groups — the refined Pliny and Genitor compared to the more vulgar lovers of jesters, sissies and fools — but by figuring the conflict in terms of taste, he decouples judgment of others' entertainments from any necessary condemnation.

Pliny encourages tolerance for others' pleasures by contrasting Genitor and himself with a far larger anonymous crowd which holds the opposite preference: "And indeed think how many people there are whom the things by which you and I are captivated and enticed offend, partly as being tasteless, partly as very annoying! How

²⁹¹ Here I borrow the term "sissy" which I use to translate *cinaedus* from a term used to describe a class of witty, effeminate characters in some early films. See *e.g.* Russo (1987) *The Celluloid Closet. Homosexuality in the Movies*. Rev. Ed. New York.

²⁹² *Cur ergo non habeo? Quia nequaquam me ut inexpectatum festivumve delectat, si quid molle a cinaedo, petulans a scurra, stultum a morione proferatur.* 9.17.2

many people, when a reader or lyre-player or comic actor is brought in, ask for their shoes or lie back with no less disgust than you suffered those monsters (for that's what you called them)!" (*Atque adeo quam multos putas esse, quos ea quibus ego et tu capimur et ducimur, partim ut inepta partim ut molestissima offendant! Quam multi, cum lector aut lyristes aut comoedus inductus est, calceos poscunt aut non minore cum taedio recubant, quam tu ista (sic enim adpellas) prodigia perpessus es!* 9.17.3). The repeated emphasis on the size of the other group — "how many... how many..." (*quam multos... Quam multi...*) — positions Pliny and his friend as a small minority compared to those who enjoy other forms of entertainment, and consequently implies that, rather than being able to dictate standards of taste, they must instead hope for the tolerance of others. Although he maintains a positive tone, Pliny's closing suggestion clearly delineates the exchange of tolerance he hopes to encourage: "Therefore let us give pardon to others' delights so that we may obtain the same for ours" (*Demus igitur alienis oblectationibus veniam, ut nostris impetremus*, 9.17.4). Pliny's argument suggests that he and his audience represent a minority who must encourage tolerance for their own interests rather than dictate to others. While this claim is rather disingenuous given the pervasiveness of Roman moralizing discourse, the argument demonstrates how the frequent picture of widespread immorality could become a means of presenting the moralists as an isolated and besieged group.

Such arguments for mutual forbearance do not pass unnoticed in moralizing discourse. In several of his satires, Juvenal reacts against these arguments and labels the acknowledgment of common faults as a problem. In satire 8, he places strict limits on such a line of defense: "An apologist for the fault will tell me 'We too did these things as young men.' Granted, but you certainly ceased your error and did not pursue it further. Let your shameful darings be brief; certain crimes should be cut off with your first beard. Give pardon to boys" (*defensor culpae dicet mihi 'fecimus et nos | haec iuvenes.' esto, desisti nempe nec ultra | fovisti errorem. breve sit quod turpiter audes, | quaedam cum*

prima resecentur crimina barba. | indulge veniam pueris, 8.163-67). In contrast to Horace, Juvenal uses a strict metric of age to distinguish between faults that should or should not be indulged. He thus defines a two-tiered system of ethical evaluation, making allowance for boys while strictly dividing men into the good and the bad.²⁹³ Where Cicero in his defense of Caelius defines *exempla* of the type of Fabricius or Curius as exceptional rarities compared to the general mass of good but fallible men,²⁹⁴ Juvenal refuses to allow for such a permissive category. While Cicero urges his audience to be lenient, especially to young men, Juvenal only acknowledges two possible categories for adults: the thoroughly wicked and the good. By creating segregated evaluative systems for boys and mature men, he attempts to construct a wall against the diffusion of leniency toward common faults. The satirist ties this view of wrongdoing to an expectation of successive moral decline: “What? Do we never offer *exempla* so foul and so shameful that even worse ones will not remain?” (*Quid si numquam adeo foedis adeoque pudendis | utimur exemplis, ut non peiora supersint?* 8.183-84).²⁹⁵ In this pessimistic depiction, rather than offering partial excuse for similar activities in the next generation, each successive wrongdoer strives to surpass his predecessors in villainy.

Toward the close of his first satire, however, Juvenal claims that his contemporaries have already reached the most depraved state possible: “There will be nothing further that posterity may add to our character. Our descendants will do and want the same things. Everything has come to stand at the pinnacle of vices” (*nil erit ulterius quod nostris moribus addat | posteritas, eadem facient cupientque minores, | omne in praecipiti vitium stetit, 1.47-49*). Just as in the eighth satire, he emphasizes the

²⁹³ Cf. Braund (1988) 116-17. She suggests that the shift from the first person *‘fecimus et nos | haec iuvenes’* to the second person *desisti nempe nec ultra | fovisti errorem* attempts to define the speaker of the poem as occupying a superior moral position to his addressee.

²⁹⁴ Cic. *Cael.* 39-40. See section 3.1. above.

²⁹⁵ See Braund (1988) 118-21 on the function of this statement and the subsequent series of *exempla* in the structure of the poem and Juvenal’s parody of a moralist here.

broad diffusion of vice: in these arguments, blameworthy actions cannot justify other equally blameworthy actions by analogy. As he argues elsewhere, failure to regulate one's own actions undermines the moral authority to judge others. Juvenal harshly questions the type-figure of a father who provides the pattern for his son's vices, but then attempts to criticize those vices: "Where do you find the expression and frankness of a father, when you do worse things as an old man and for a long time now the windy cupping-glass²⁹⁶ seeks this head devoid of understanding?" (*unde tibi frontem libertatemque parentis, | cum facias peiora senex vacuumque cerebro | iam pridem caput hoc ventosa cucurbita quaerat?* 14.56-58). Shared personal fallibility undermines the basis for moralistic reproach. This observation, of course, adduces the same pattern that Pliny did in his letter encouraging fathers to recognize themselves as *exempla* of human imperfection and thus to be lenient toward their sons' faults (9.12), but the satirist uses it to draw the opposite conclusion. Where Pliny encourages tolerance through recognition of common fallibility, Juvenal instead laments the diminution of moral authority. The satirist's role as moralist (or as a parody of a moralist) encourages this anxiety about the basis of moral authority.²⁹⁷ Pliny's congenial and (at least outwardly) confident social commentary assumes an optimistic view of the writer and his friends; Juvenal's satire in contrast finds vice and degeneracy everywhere. These opposing attitudes structure the differing responses to the diffusion of human fallibility. The satirist's voice must attempt to assert its moral authority while Pliny's letters, speaking with an assumed confidence in the underlying rectitude of both writer and addressee, easily admit fault with the implicit understanding that such faults are no more than minor flaws in an otherwise praiseworthy character. Both encourage their readers to see moralists as *exempla* of

²⁹⁶ A medical device used for letting blood; see Pliny, *NH* 32.123; Scribonius Largus, *Comp.* 46, 67.

²⁹⁷ See *e.g.* Braund (1988) 108-111 on the speaker in Juvenal's satires as a pseudo-moralist and various models for this pose.

moral imperfection, but the one offers an optimistic interpretation, the other an unmitigatedly pessimistic one.

3.3: Equestrian *Exempla*. Encouraging Unity within the Roman Elite.

Just as authors use *exempla* of mistakes or vices to demonstrate shared human fallibility, they also may introduce *exempla* to depict values shared within or between social groups. *Exempla* that describe comparable acts performed by actors who occupy different grades in the social scale follow the same pattern by which similar behavior affirms ethical similarity. This line of thought encourages a view of the aristocracy as a harmonious group by emphasizing common interests or cooperation in contrast to the conflicts that may arise between individual aristocrats over matters of prestige. Connolly describes an analogous effect at the level of mass politics: moralistic discourse recruits the effectively disenfranchised lower classes into joining the elite speaker in judging another elite figure. This equality of moralistic judgment then obfuscates the political, ideological structures of domination that underlie the relationship between the lower class and the elite: “Moralism creates a world of meanings all its own, a master fiction that conceals the reality of economic, social, and political inequality, that offers the moralist equality as a compensatory replacement for political equality.”²⁹⁸ In this section, I am concerned less with such collective ideological functions than with those on a more interpersonal level. I focus primarily on relationships among aristocrats ranging from the cosmopolitan senatorial elite to the lower, more rustic sections of the equestrian order. A sense of moralistic equality may be built upon positive similarities as well as negative judgments.

²⁹⁸ Connolly (2007) 64. For her full discussion of moralist equality in contrast to modern, liberal moral equality, see p. 56-65. Connolly builds her discussion on Achille Mbembe’s postcolonial analysis of political life in Cameroon: Mbembe, Achille (1992) “Provisional Notes on the Postcolony.” *Africa* 62: 1-37.

A comparison between actors of differing social status may suggest an ethical similarity between disparate social groups. Such comparisons encourage the perception of a shared moral vision that binds disparate groups together. For example, as I discussed in the previous chapter (section 2.1), Valerius Maximus links a pair of anonymous lower class brothers to several well known aristocratic and imperial pairs (most prominently the future emperor Tiberius and his brother Drusus) in his chapter on fraternal piety (5.5.4). By capping the sequence of anecdotes with an illustration of the same quality in a pair of common soldiers, he broadens the representation of this quality to include the general populace. Pliny the younger likewise praises an anonymous woman from Comum as equal to Arria the elder, except in social importance (*Ep.* 6.24). As he interprets the contrast between the two *exempla*, social importance serves more to encourage distribution of the anecdote than to guarantee the moral worth of the actor. The replication of Roman senatorial *mores* by a woman of the minor municipal aristocracy implies an ethical continuity between the values of the senatorial elite and those of other social classes. Pliny's use of this anonymous local *exemplum* thus justifies a preference for senatorial *exempla* while purporting to demonstrate the universality of the aristocratic values they represent.²⁹⁹

The Roman aristocracy itself, despite its relatively small size, did not form a naturally harmonious group. Competition for offices provides one frequently cited source for internal conflicts. But other sources of power and prestige also play a role in intra-elite competition. Family importance or connections may encourage conflicts. Some families have more prestigious ancestries than others.³⁰⁰ Additionally various members of the aristocracy may possess widely varying levels of wealth. There are also

²⁹⁹ I discuss both of these *exempla* in section 2.1 of the previous chapter.

³⁰⁰ Van der Blom (2010) 35-41 discusses the history of scholarship on the terms *nobilis* and *homo novus* in defining members of the Roman elite. See also Millar (1988) 47, who suggests that *generosus* may be the key term we should look for in examining the element of aristocracy-by-birth in the Roman elite.

potential tensions between those who follow the path of magistracies to membership in the Senate, and those who engage in commerce or other financial activities barred to their senatorial compatriots.

In the last couple of decades, critics have emphasized the theatrical or performative aspect of such conflicts and in Roman political life in general.³⁰¹ This concept of theatricality often highlights aggressive interactions among competing individuals within the elite and, in work on post-Augustan Rome, on the ways in which the upper reaches of the aristocracy dealt with the curtailment of their public influence by the new authority of the emperor. While this emphasis clearly reflects an important trend in Roman politics, it tends to privilege the roles of the most powerful or otherwise most visible political actors.³⁰² Other, less publicly oriented forms of political involvement receive correspondingly less critical emphasis. The emphasis on the spectacular has likewise narrowed the field of figures and actions that have been studied as *exempla*. This theoretical bias is reinforced by the limited body of our extant sources, whose survival displays a strong congruence to the fame either of the author or of its subjects.³⁰³ Both the preservation and the interpretation of the extant sources for the Roman world, then, tend to privilege the most spectacular, the most self-advertising, or, best of all, those who combine both of those qualities.³⁰⁴

In this section, I focus on the roles of the less spectacular or obviously influential members of the aristocracy and the use of such figures in building or encouraging an

³⁰¹ See *e.g.* Bartsch (1994). In studies of exemplarity, Hölkeskamp (1996) 320-26 and Roller (2004) 3-5, 8-9 emphasize the importance of spectacularity or the theatricality of Roman society on the culture of exemplarity.

³⁰² See also Millar (1988) 46-47 who argues that the senatorial and equestrian classes are much more closely interrelated than they often appear in modern work on the period and that membership was more commonly a matter of personal choice of role than unvarying family tradition.

³⁰³ See Millar (1988) 41 on the bias of our evidence for rank in Roman society towards a view from above, and the rare opportunity presented by Nepos's biography of Atticus to examine the subject from a different angle.

³⁰⁴ Cicero and Augustus are salient examples of this third type.

image of elite unity. My two primary examples in the following discussion are the influential equestrian banker and scholar T. Pomponius Atticus and Terentius Iunior, a former provincial procurator who subsequently retired to his villa and who surprised Pliny the younger with his erudite conversation (*Ep.* 7.25).³⁰⁵ Writers, in particular Cornelius Nepos in the case of Atticus and Pliny in the case of Terentius, find *exempla* in the lives of these two men that they use to encourage a vision of elite consensus. Atticus, with his close links to many of the leading figures during the last decades of the Republic, not only illustrates a type of relationship among aristocrats that prefers mutual cooperation to competition, but also demonstrates the potential of such cooperative relationships to protect both himself and others in periods of violent strife such as the triumviral proscriptions. Thus, as he is presented in Nepos's biography, he models an alternate path of political involvement that becomes increasingly important under the principate. Terentius Iunior, on the other hand, has much less individual significance than Atticus, but represents a social type that Pliny adduces to illustrate the diffusion of educated culture within the elite beyond the limited group who actively participate in literary life. These two men provide *exempla* that bookend a range of possible social roles separate from the striving for individual prominence that critics have described as central to Roman exemplarity.

In his biography of Atticus, Cornelius Nepos presents his patron as a model for social harmony: "He behaved himself in such a way that he seemed familiar to the lowest and equal to the leading men" (*Hic autem sic se gerebat, ut communis infimis, par principibus videretur, Atticus* 3.1). As Nepos characterizes him, this respected Roman knight exemplifies accessible social grace. Though this statement specifically describes his behavior while living in Athens, it establishes a pattern repeated many times in his later life. Throughout the biography, Nepos emphasizes Atticus's ability to retain the

³⁰⁵ Terentius later becomes one of Pliny's correspondents, receiving letters 8.15 and 9.12, the latter of which I discuss in the preceding section.

respect and good will of everyone.³⁰⁶ He defines Atticus's social sense (*humanitas*) as the basis for his easy relations with widely varying persons: "I can offer no greater testimony of his social sense, than that the same man when he was young was very agreeable to Sulla who was an old man, as an old man he was very agreeable to the young M. Brutus; moreover with his contemporaries Q. Hortensius and M. Cicero he lived in such a way that it is difficult to decide to which generation he was best fitted" (*Humanitatis vero nullum adferre maius testimonium possum, quam quod adulescens idem seni Sullae fuit iucundissimus, senex adulescenti M. Bruto, cum aequalibus autem suis Q. Hortensio et M. Cicerone sic vixit, ut iudicare difficile sit, cui aetati fuerit aptissimus*, 16.1). Nepos here uses the metric of age to demonstrate the wide range of friendships Atticus maintained, but the events related throughout the biography also demonstrate his ability to maintain positive relationships among the varying factions of the civil wars of the first century BCE.³⁰⁷ This description encourages readers to strive for social concord through a demonstration of the benefits of such a social strategy. As other writers have noted, Atticus's method of ensuring his security through friendships with a wide range of powerful aristocrats exemplifies a form of political involvement that

³⁰⁶ Central among his motivations for fostering general good will, Nepos presents Atticus as continually concerned to remain neutral in the civil wars. In the first of only two instances of direct speech in the biography, Atticus asks Sulla not to attempt to get him to return to Italy: "Do not, I beg you," said Atticus, "desire to lead me against those men. I left Italy so that I would not bear arms with them against you." (*noli, oro te, inquit Pomponius adversum eos me velle ducere, cum quibus ne contra te arma ferrem, Italiam reliqui.* Att. 4.2). The most notable success of this strategy would likely be his escape from the triumviral proscriptions, from which Antony exempted both Atticus and at his request Q. Gellius Canus in gratitude for the aid he gave to Antony's wife Fulvia and his friends following his defeat at Mutina (Att. 9-10). See also Millar (1988), especially 42-45 and 52-53.

³⁰⁷ See especially 7-12 on Atticus's activities from the conflict between Caesar and Pompey down to the conflict between Antony and Octavian. Most prominent among the figures whose relationships with Atticus Nepos discusses are: Cicero (1, 4-5, 9-10, 16), Sulla (Att. 4, 16), Julius Caesar (7), Brutus (8-10, 16), Marc Antony (9-10, 20), Agrippa (12, 21-22), and Augustus (19-20).

becomes increasingly important with the diminution of the primacy of the Senate under the Principate.³⁰⁸

In interpreting *exempla* that discuss social status it is important to remember the complexity of the Roman hierarchy. Some modern discussions of rank within Roman society focus heavily on the formal criteria of political office.³⁰⁹ Other factors such as ancestry, wealth and friendship networks, however, also play an important role in calculating the hierarchical distinctions between social actors. Atticus again provides a useful example. Although he never pursued any public office, he nevertheless enjoyed a highly respected and influential position in society. A passing comment in Thomas Habinek's otherwise perceptive discussion of the role of candor in Roman friendship displays the dangers of such an overly simple assumption of congruence between political office and social rank. Habinek finds candid criticism to be a traditional characteristic of relationships between friends of unequal rank, and includes within this category the friendship between Cicero and Atticus. He adduces a letter that Cicero wrote to Atticus in December 61 BCE (*ad Att.* 1.17 = SB 17) to discuss the importance of the relationship between the two men for Cicero's theoretical treatment of friendship in the *de Amicitia* and elsewhere.³¹⁰ In this letter Cicero attempts to dispel tension between the two friends arising from a squabble between Atticus and Cicero's brother Quintus.³¹¹ To this end, he assures his friend of the essential likeness he perceives between them, despite their different modes of life: "I have never considered there to be any difference between me and you except the choice of our plan of life, except that a certain desire for honor led me to a desire for offices, but a different, not to be censured judgment led you

³⁰⁸ See Millar (1988), especially 53-54, and Welch (1995) 471.

³⁰⁹ See *e.g.* van der Blom (2010) 35-41 describing various attempts to define *nobilis* and *homo novus*. The emphasis on political office in her discussion is of course strongly related to her central interest in Cicero's political career and tactics as a *homo novus*.

³¹⁰ Even on a formal level, Atticus plays an important role in the *de Amicitia*: Cicero addresses the treatise to him (*de Am.* 4).

³¹¹ On the murky details of this quarrel, related to Atticus's refusal to join Q. Cicero's staff as governor of Asia, see Shackleton-Bailey (1965-1970) *ad loc.*

to respectable leisure” (*neque ego inter me atque te quicquam interesse umquam duxi praeter voluntatem institutae vitae, quod me ambitio quaedam ad honorum studium, te autem alia minime reprehendenda ratio ad honestum otium duxit, ad Att. 1.17.5*). Noting Cicero’s subsequent praise for Atticus’s frank advice, Habinek sees here a conflict between the free advice typical of unequal friendships and Cicero’s protestations of absolute equality. Habinek relies entirely on the criterion of political office in defining “the absurdity of his claim of equality between the two men”: “Cicero, it should be remembered, had two years earlier held the consulship at the earliest legal age and during his term of office suppressed the Catilinarian Conspiracy primarily by civilian means; Atticus, in contrast, had turned down a much lower position in the retinue of Cicero’s brother.”³¹² This contrast, however, ignores the ties of dependence that also run in the opposite direction: Cicero as a “new man” (*novus homo*) from outside Rome relied on Atticus’s connections to more traditionally active politicians from established families in his political activities.³¹³ Shackleton Bailey, in the introduction to his monumental edition of the *ad Atticum*, in fact describes the ties of dependence as running in the opposite direction, beginning around the time of Cicero’s consulship (63 BCE).³¹⁴ The letter under discussion here displays some sign of this vector of influence: as Hall reads this letter, Cicero adopts an unusual degree of formality in addressing Atticus as a demonstration of respect in order to dissolve the tension created by the quarrel between Quintus and Atticus.³¹⁵

³¹² Habinek (1991) 180.

³¹³ For early activities prior to Cicero’s consulship, see *e.g. ad Att. 1.10.6 = SB 6* and especially *1.2.2 = SB 11*. See also *ad Att. 3.7.1* and *3.20.2* on Atticus’s aid to Cicero during his exile. Atticus came from a very old Roman family: *T. Pomponius Atticus, ab origine ultima stirpis Romanae generatus, perpetuo a maioribus acceptam equestrem obtinuit dignitatem*. (Nepos, *Att. 1.1*)

³¹⁴ Shackleton-Bailey (1965-70) 13. See also Millar (1988) 43-44 on Atticus’s refusal of the office of *legatus* as a means of preserving his own *dignitas*, and Welch (1995) who describes Atticus as an enormously influential and well-connected “back room” political operator.

³¹⁵ Hall (2009) 64-65.

Habinek suggests that Cicero here makes two innovations in his relationship with Atticus that contribute to the views he expresses later in the *de Amicitia*. In effect he argues that the relationship between the two men provides an *exemplum* on which Cicero bases his philosophical view of friendship. First is the insistence that moral equality between the two men rather than political rank constitutes the essential basis for judging each other's worth; second is the division between their spheres of activity that, Habinek argues, removes the potential for competition between the two friends and thus allows them to engage in the frank discussion more commonly ascribed to friends of divergent status: "In terms of traditional Roman ideology, Cicero's argument here is an interesting combination of conservatism and innovation. Conservative in its insistence on ranking and assessment, even within a supposedly intimate friendship; yet innovative both in its recognition of standards other than mere success and in its solution to the problem of competition between equals through a recognition of a possible distribution of honors or separate spheres of influence."³¹⁶ This argument for innovation, however, implicitly treats an important but politically inactive equestrian like Atticus as if he were an unprecedented social type. Consequently what innovation may exist here (if in fact there is any innovation) should perhaps be assigned to Atticus rather than his correspondent Cicero.³¹⁷ The orator's view of friendship certainly may derive from the example of his relationship with Atticus, but the apparent novelty of such a relationship may reflect nothing more than the absence of extant earlier parallels.

But what is novel in the case of Atticus may be less his resolutely uncommitted political stance than his wealth and unusual visibility in the extant sources. It is precisely for this reason that Atticus provides an important source for understanding how Romans could consider an essentially private figure as an *exemplum*. Consider that, if not for Cicero's letters and other works addressed to him, and to a lesser extent Nepos's

³¹⁶ Habinek (1991) 180.

³¹⁷ See Welch (1995) 451-52 on Atticus's choice to forego a political career.

biography, we might know little more than his name.³¹⁸ For example, despite his interactions with most of the major figures during the fighting between Antony, Octavian, Brutus, Cassius and the rest following Caesar's assassination (Nepos, *Att.* 8-12), Atticus appears, if at all, as a peripheral figure in most accounts of those events. It is not that he was unimportant, but rather that he was resolutely unspectacular in his public activities.³¹⁹ Atticus, as Nepos describes him, is exemplary precisely in his ability to remain both innocuous and unharmed throughout the chaos of the civil wars by adhering to the ideals of disinterested goodwill and friendship.³²⁰ Given how near to historical invisibility Atticus would likely be without his correspondence with the best known orator in Roman antiquity, it may be that rather than being innovative, his relationship with Cicero and his influence with a broad circle of aristocratic friends are unusual simply in being well attested. The letters that Cicero sent to Atticus are, of course, a major source for the political history of the late Republic, but they are far more often read for the simple reason that Cicero wrote them.³²¹ Atticus functions on most readings solely as the occasion and the original archivist. Considered in and of himself, however, Atticus demonstrates how other factors may level some equestrians with those who follow a political career. His life as recorded by Nepos provides unspectacular *exempla*, demonstrating how to navigate the society of the powerful and treacherous political conflicts without incurring anyone's ill will.

³¹⁸ Welch (1995) 451 suggests that Atticus in his choice of private *otium* may represent a large group of equestrians at the time.

³¹⁹ A few articles have discussed Atticus's role in the events of the time. Millar (1988) spends a good deal of space discussing what Atticus did and did not do in the political turmoils. Welch (1995) constructs a persuasive account of Atticus as a powerful and influential background political actor who used his relationships with other, more traditionally active politicians to further his own interests.

³²⁰ See especially *Att.* 11.3-6.

³²¹ Welch (1995) 452 remarks on the same trend even in recent discussions of Nepos's biography in which critics focus more on Nepos's treatment of Atticus than on the subject himself.

Atticus's efforts to ensure his personal safety and to further his own interests, financial or otherwise, through cooperative political relationships in many ways presuppose a climate of strife. But the exemplary features that Nepos identifies in his activities argue for fostering a political atmosphere of the opposite character in which senators and equestrians would see themselves connected to one another by bonds of mutual interdependence. His success encourages a wider diffusion of this less directly competitive political practice through elite cooperation or, to put it in more cynical terms, collusion. This potential shift from interpersonal competition for offices to collaboration between aristocrats with divergent interests expresses in individual terms a view that seeks to unify the elite in furthering their own particular interests through mutual aid. Such advocacy for political quietism probably should not be divorced from the frequent eruptions of political violence beginning most spectacularly with the conflicts between Marius and Sulla, and continuing not only through the last decades of the Republic but also through the first century of the principate.³²² This re-imagined mode of political interaction bolsters the importance of figures such as Atticus as models for aristocratic accommodation to the evolving autocracy of the Principate.³²³ Nepos's biography advertises the banker and scholar as an *exemplum* worthy of notice, and thus demonstrates the basic operation of exemplarity: everyone's activities were open to observation, judgment and emulation should they provide a useful model. As the value of political advancement through the traditional magistracies declines in the face of the winner-takes-all military conflicts of the late Republic, the life of Atticus demonstrates how an aristocrat can adopt an ancillary role as both a financial and a cultural authority that affords him great influence while nonetheless avoiding direct competition with

³²² Atticus himself is an important example: Nepos, of course, identifies the violence of the era as the primary impetus for Atticus's political quietism. See also Millar (1988) 42-45 and Welch (1995) 451-52.

³²³ See Millar (1988), especially 53-54, and Welch (1995) 471 on other aristocrats adopting similar strategies for self-preservation.

those striving for political dominance.³²⁴ Atticus may not have intended to furnish an *exemplum*, but his success at personal survival enabled others to treat him as one, just as Nepos implicitly does in publishing his biography. In the development of such an accommodative practice, an emphasis on aristocratic cohesion encourages members of the elite to shift the basis of their self-construction at least in part from their individual political position to their share in the collective authority of the elite as a whole. Such a reevaluation, of course, does not eliminate the importance of hierarchy in social determinations of worth, but rather reduces the weight of formal office-holding in comparison to a variety of less easily quantifiable factors.

The concept of a unified, pan-elite interest runs counter to the emphasis, identified in much scholarship on exemplarity, that individuals should strive to equal or to surpass accomplished predecessors.³²⁵ In this division lies a conflict between individual and collective views of the elite. The concept of individual emulation encourages aristocrats to view personal distinction primarily in relation to other aristocratic actors. In contrast, by locating social importance within a broader view of the elite as an interdependent group, members of the elite may recognize that in absolute terms their own social importance depends on the authority of the upper class as a whole. Of course, neither view is completely definitive. While the various subsets of the aristocracy do form a relatively homogenous group within the full spectrum of the

³²⁴ Both Millar (1988) 48-54 and Welch (1995) 468-70 emphasize the role of Atticus's antiquarian scholarship in providing some of the foundations for Augustan cultural authority. See also Habinek (1995) who discusses Cicero's philosophical prefaces as co-opting Greek philosophy in order to bolster the authority of elite culture workers and thus to balance the power of military and to maintain cultural cohesion.

³²⁵ This is not to say that previous discussions ignore the relationship between exemplarity and the political dominance of the elite. For discussions of the ideological role of the culture of *exempla* in reinforcing and naturalizing elite dominance, see Hölkeskamp (1996) 326-27.

Roman people,³²⁶ when viewed from an intra-elite perspective, distinctions between various grades and ranks of aristocrats spring into view. Most interesting in this context is the perception of disparity between various grades of senators, equestrians and local municipal elites against which authors may use *exempla* to argue for the essential homogeneity of those who possess landed wealth. Pliny the younger, for example, explicitly sets out the idea that personal reputation depends on magnifying the status of others. In discussing the importance of praise at literary recitations, he urges that those in attendance should praise everyone without regard to their relative worth (*Ep.* 6.17). Riggsby notes that Pliny presents this encouragement with an expectation that standards of judgment are portable across different conceptual categories: “Pliny expects the same kinds of rules of judgment to apply in what we might distinguish as moral and literary spheres.”³²⁷ Thus members of the elite should recognize that their personal reputations depend directly on those with whom they are in direct competition: “Finally whether you are more or less or equally distinguished, praise your inferior, your superior or your equal: your superior because, unless he is praised, you yourself cannot be praised, your inferior or your equal because it matters for your own reputation that a person you surpass or equal appear as great as possible” (*Denique sive plus sive minus sive idem praestas, lauda vel inferiorem vel superiorem vel parem: superiorem quia nisi laudandus ille non potes ispe laudari, inferiorem aut parem quia pertinet ad tuam gloriam quam maximum videri, quem praecedis vel exaequas, Ep.* 6.17.4). Consequently the collective reputation of the upper classes becomes a concern for each individual member of the aristocracy. In this context, unspectacular *exempla* such as

³²⁶ See *e.g.* Millar (1988) 46-47 who, in a discussion of Atticus’s social and political activities, emphasizes the social continuity between the senatorial and equestrian orders. As he describes the situation, members of the Senate form less a separate social class than a sub-group within a relatively homogenous moneyed elite.

³²⁷ Riggsby (1998) 88.

those in the life of Atticus demonstrate how those who choose a life of honorable leisure (*honestum otium*, Cic. *ad Att.* 1.17.5) nonetheless may exemplify core aristocratic values.

Education and literary interests may establish a clear connection between those from the upper and lower strata of the elite. Here relatively unknown figures provide useful *exempla* for illustrating shared qualities or interests. In some cases their very obscurity enhances their utility as they are thus able more easily to represent a wide range of similarly undistinguished persons. For example, in one letter Pliny the younger describes meeting a gentleman-farmer who challenged his expectation that an equestrian who chose a retired life at a villa would be interested primarily in agricultural matters (*Ep.* 7.25). Pliny implicitly characterizes the description of this man as an *exemplum* by identifying his observations about him as the basis for his claims: “Having experienced it myself I write what I write” (*Expertus scribo quod scribo*, *Ep.* 7.25.2). As he describes this meeting, he minimizes the economic and political considerations that underlie his assumptions, emphasizing instead only the criteria of educated speech and intellectual pursuits. Pliny’s opening exclamation sets the focus: “O, how much renown of educated men either their unassuming conduct or quiet life conceals and removes!” (*O quantum eruditorum aut modestia ipsorum aut quies operit ac subtrahit fama*, 7.25.1). His concern is more with reputation (*fama*) than with actual character. The public estimate of an individual’s intellectual attainments provides a more vital metric for their reputation than their actual abilities do. By identifying unassuming conduct (*modestia*) or a quiet life (*quies*) as the cause of their obscurity, he defines the situation primarily as a matter of individual preference, rather than financial resources or location.

Pliny’s new acquaintance Terentius Iunior had held equestrian rank in the army and later served as a provincial procurator before retiring to his villa.³²⁸ Expecting to

³²⁸ *Terentius Iunior, equestribus militiis atque etiam procuratione Narbonensis provinciae integerrime functus, recepit se in agros suos, paratissime honoribus tranquillissimum otium praetulit. Ep.* 7.25.2. See Sherwin-White (1966) 434 on the probable identity and some possible family connections of this Terentius Iunior.

meet a farmer, Pliny is surprised by their conversation: “Invited as a guest, I viewed this man as a good head of a family and as a diligent farmer, intending to speak about those matters in which I believed he was involved; and I began to do so, when he recalled me to study with the most learned speech” (*Hunc ego invitatus hospitio ut bonum patrem familiae, ut diligentem agricolam intuebar, de his locuturus, in quibus illum versari putabam; et coeperam, cum ille me doctissimo sermone revocavit ad studia, 7.25.3*). Pliny is careful to present his preconceptions about Terentius within the positive view of archaic Roman rustic virtue. Prior to his visit, he expects Terentius to be a good farmer and *pater familias* in line with the stereotypical figure of the rustic Roman of older times, and thus he expects his host to be culturally rustic as well. Consequently he is surprised by Terentius’s “most learned speech” (*doctissimo sermone, 7.25.3*). Although Pliny’s expectations of rusticity prove unfounded, he characterizes Terentius as an exception: “You would think that the man lived in Athens, not in a villa” (*Athenis vivere hominem, non in villa putes, 7.25.4*).³²⁹ He thus defines two potential modes of life outside public service: a scholarly leisure conducted in an established center of learning such as Athens, and a rustic life overseeing one’s own land. This dichotomy assumes that intellectual pursuits function primarily as a social endeavor conducted through face-to-face interaction with others.

It is instructive to compare this equestrian former procurator who turned down prospects for advancement, preferring a quiet life at his villa, to the older senator Vestricius Spurinna, whose lifestyle in retirement provides the subject for *Ep. 3.1*.³³⁰ As

³²⁹ Pliny’s use of *homo* rather than *vir* to refer to Terentius here is a conventional way to discuss equestrians and more modest members of the elite. See Santoro-l’Hoir (1992) 158-59 on Pliny’s use of the term *homo*.

³³⁰ Henderson (2002) 58-66 offers some comments on old age and life plans in Pliny *Ep. 3.1*, although his discussion is colored by his distaste for Pliny’s attitude toward his older predecessors; see, for example, 62 for a disparaging comparison between Pliny’s relationship with Spurinna and that between Mr. Collins and his patroness Lady Catherine in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*.

Pliny describes a typical day for his model of life in old age,³³¹ he notes several times when Spurinna listens to readings or holds discussions with visiting friends (3.1.4-5, 9). The retired senator also demonstrates his linguistic facility by composing lyric poetry in both Latin and Greek.³³² Pliny explicitly labels Spurinna's relaxed life as a reward for his earlier political service: "That man also, for as long as it brought him honor, discharged duties, performed public offices, ruled provinces, and by much labor deserved this leisure" (*nam ille quoque, quoad honestum fuit, obiit officia, gessit magistratus, provincias rexit, multoque labore hoc otium meruit, Ep. 3.1.12*).

Aside from the obvious status difference that separates the ex-consul Spurinna from the former procurator Terentius, another factor encourages Pliny's mistaken expectations of rusticity: more frequent access to recitations and learned discussion. His new friend Terentius, who excels in his flawless speech in both Latin and Greek, dissolves this misapprehension by appearing through his conversation to have been involved in extensive intellectual discussion.³³³ It is precisely Terentius's bilingual facility that demonstrates his intellectual attainments to his visitor: "he recalled me to study with the most learned speech. How nice everything was, both in Latin and in Greek! For he is so fluent in each language that he seems to excel more in the one he is speaking at the current moment" (... *ille me doctissimo sermone revocavit ad studia. Quam tersa omnia, quam Latina, quam Graeca! Nam tantum utraque lingua valet, ut ea magis videatur excellere, qua cum maxime loquitur. Ep. 7.25.3-4*). Only in following does Pliny remark on Terentius's extensive reading and great memory.³³⁴ The vision of educated life, as the focus here on spoken language demonstrates, centers around social interactions through recitations and conversation. While such exchanges may be carried

³³¹ *neminem magis in senectute, si modo senescere datum est, aemulari velim, Ep. 3.1.1.*

³³² *Scribit enim et quidem utraque lingua lyrica doctissima; mira illis dulcedo, mira suavitas, mira hilaritas, cuius gratiam cumulat sanctitas scribentis. 3.1.7.*

³³³ Compare Pliny *Ep. 3.1.4, 6-7* on Spurinna's conversations with visiting friends.

³³⁴ *Quantum ille legit, quantum tenet! 7.25.4.*

on through letters and more formal written texts,³³⁵ the primary engine of such discourse remains face-to-face communication.³³⁶ In addition to Terentius's restricted ability to attend cultural events, he also has fewer opportunities to display his own abilities in the way he is able to do for Pliny as a guest. In forming Pliny's initial expectations, a retired senator like Spurinna would have two apparent advantages over Terentius: he spent a good deal of time in Rome during the course of his long political career, and he likely has more frequent visitors. In the contrast between his description of the retired senator and his expectations for a former procurator living at a rural villa Pliny assumes a basic reality of elite social interaction in the Roman world: a more eminent person will have more frequent visitors than an equestrian farmer like Pliny's new friend.³³⁷ Though they offer a less formal intellectual interaction than a recitation would, the visits Spurinna receives offer a means to remain connected to the broader literary community of the Roman aristocracy. This view of intellectual life figures an education less as a static attainment than a continuing engagement with others. The importance of recitations and other literary-social interactions both for developing and for displaying education is reaffirmed by a figure such as Titinius Capito, another equestrian friend of Pliny who encourages literary life primarily through hosting and attending recitations.³³⁸

The lesson Pliny derives from this *exemplum* of a rural intellectual is that a rustic appearance does not necessarily imply limited education. He sets this idea in the context

³³⁵ For an example of the exchange of books and letters, Pliny, *Ep.* 8.15 shows an exchange of books between Pliny and this same Terentius. See Hall (2009) 15-27, focusing on the letters of Cicero, on the normative expectation of face-to-face interaction that underlies the formality of Roman letters. At 26-27 he comments briefly on the later development of letters from the late Republic to the times of Pliny and Fronto.

³³⁶ The second sentence of Pliny's letter focuses specifically on verbal interaction in the space of the recitation hall: *At nos eos tantum dicturi aliquid aut lecturi timemus, qui studia sua proferunt, cum illi qui tacent hoc amplius praestent, quod maximum opus silentio reverentur*, 7.25.1.

³³⁷ See e.g. White (1978) 76-78; Hall (2009) 16. Dupont (1997) 52-54 describes attendance at *recitationes* as another indication of social status.

³³⁸ Pliny, *Ep.* 8.12. See also *Ep.* 1.17 and 5.8. I discuss Capito further in sections 4.1 and 4.2 of the following chapter.

of literary recitations, linking an erudite but unknown figure like Terentius Iunior to those who listen silently and do not voice their opinions. Terentius's rural retirement and the recitation audience's reticent silence are, of course, rather different, but Pliny relates the two things around the role of self-assertion in social evaluation. In framing this anecdote, he comments on the potentially misleading connection between public reputation and self-advertisement: "But we, when we are going to speak or read something, only fear those who broadcast their own studies, while those who keep quiet offer this more generous thing, that they honor the greatest work with silence" (*At nos eos tantum dicturi aliquid aut lecturi timemus, qui studia sua proferunt, cum illi qui tacent hoc amplius praestent, quod maximum opus silentio reverentur*, 7.25.1).³³⁹ Pliny here encourages those preparing a recitation to consider the entire audience, not just those who they know will voice an opinion.³⁴⁰ Within this letter, intellectual or social reticence becomes a problem that must be solved in order to ensure an accurate estimate of audience response. To correct this imbalance, Pliny recommends supplementing public reputation through an active investigation of cultural ability. In this letter he approaches the issue as someone who gives recitations speaking to others who do the same. Consequently he recommends that speakers should concern themselves with improving their audience's reputation through close observation: "He increased my concern and made me respect those retired and apparently rustic men no less than those whom I know to be very learned. I recommend the same thing to you: for just as in military service so also in our letters there are many men of rustic appearance, but if you look carefully you will find them girded and armed and indeed endowed with the most glowing talent" (*Auxit sollicitudinem meam effecitque ut illis quos doctissimos novi, non*

³³⁹ As I noted above, the opening sentence sets out this idea even more clearly: *O quantum eruditorum aut modestia ipsorum aut quies operit ac subtrahit famae*, 7.25.1.

³⁴⁰ Dupont (1997) 54 cites Pliny *Ep.* 6.17 to argue that some laudatory or critical response was expected from all in attendance, but this letter seems to assume that different portions of the audience were expected to react in different ways.

minus hos seductos et quasi rusticos verear. Idem suadeo tibi: sunt enim ut in castris sic etiam in litteris nostris, plures cultu pagano quos cinctos et armatos, et quidem ardentissimo ingenio, diligenter scrutatus invenies, 7.25.5-6). Pliny here assigns speakers a new task: closely investigating their audience to assure a fuller understanding of their response. As their reputations are linked to one another, by supplying through careful observation (*diligenter scrutatus*) the lack created by others' modesty, the observer may consequently enhance his own position. As he augments the intellectual estimate of the audience, the reciter increases his own reputation by assigning a higher value to their silence: they "offer this more generous thing, that they honor the greatest work with silence" (*...hoc amplius praestent, quod maximum opus silentio reverentur*, 7.25.1). Pliny's description of Terentius implicitly demonstrates how a speaker or writer may deploy this closer knowledge of more obscure but accomplished persons. Unfolding as if it were a fortuitous discovery, the narrative of Pliny's meeting with his new friend implicitly supplies a template for reevaluating modest or otherwise obscure members of the elite.

3.4: Conclusion.

In this chapter, I have examined a series of strategies that use *exempla* to assert the existence of a moral similarity or other shared quality within a group of people, or among different groups. Whether these strategies function by emphasizing the divide between the average person and revered cultural heroes, or by encouraging the audience to recognize the similarities between themselves and figures who represent the average person, they differ from the typical critical views of *exempla* in purporting to describe people as they are rather than demonstrating how they should or should not act. In particular I would like to emphasize that these uses are not simply describing a common perception, but attempting to convince their audiences of the veracity of the illustrations.

Exempla as Emblems

“We’ll be like those Indian women who go into the forest to have babies,” said Suzanne, “only we have no forest, we have no babies, and we’re not Indians. Otherwise, the resemblance is stunning.”

Carrie Fisher, *Postcards from the Edge*

In 65 BCE while serving as aedile, Julius Caesar had a statue of Marius along with Victories bearing trophies erected overnight on the Capitol. The accompanying inscription recalled Marius’s victory against the Cimbri. According to Plutarch, as word of this gesture and of who had made it spread, people gathered to see the new monument. Some viewers accused Caesar of aiming at tyranny, others wept with joy at the sight of the statue (Plut. *Caes.* 6). Andrew Gregory, using this episode to illustrate “the assertion of political allegiance and political sympathy through images,” comments that: “Plutarch speaks mistakenly of Caesar’s intentions to revive a Marian party; what Caesar was trying to do was to assert his own familial connections with Marius, widely revered as a great general, and to carve out a political identity as anti-Sullan.”³⁴¹ By erecting this statue, Caesar publicly adopted Marius as an emblem for himself.³⁴² Unlike an *exemplum* that functions in a categorical or structural comparison between narrative accounts of two actions, the emblematic linkage here largely eschews such narrative details and instead bluntly asserts a connection between the two men by the simple display of an emblem. Although in retrospect we might connect the emphasis on Marius’s campaign against the Cimbri to Caesar’s subsequent one against the Gauls, at the time neither Caesar nor his contemporaries could have anticipated his later career, and consequently Caesar’s gesture was concerned less with imitating the earlier dictator than with claiming the social and political authority of his image.

³⁴¹ Gregory (1994) 90.

³⁴² He had done this on a previous occasion as well when he delivered the funeral oration for Marius’s wife Julia in 69 BCE.

Essentially what I am describing is a division of *exempla* into two separate but symbiotically linked forms: example and emblem. The two modes are of course not mutually exclusive, but they do fulfill separate roles that function in tandem less often than previous descriptions of exemplarity would imply. In the earlier chapters of this dissertation I have concentrated on the use of exemplary narratives as examples, deployed either to provide practical models for future actions or to build rhetorical arguments. In this chapter, I turn to the other major function of *exempla* as emblems of cultural authority. While examples draw primarily on particular actions, emblems most often are specific authoritative persons. Two central factors characterize exemplary emblems: (1) observers assume that the owner or the author of an emblematic representation shares the emblem's character, whether or not evidence supports such a claim of similarity, and (2) the emblematic figure itself evokes little or no narrative detail in order to better facilitate its function as an emblem. It is not that the audience of an emblematic representation could not bring a deeper knowledge of the figure to bear, but rather that they simply do not do so. An emblem tends to function independently of careful interpretation, and may even work to discourage close consideration of its imagery.

In this chapter, I situate various forms of monument (including statues, houses and biographies) in relation to the alternate model of exemplary thought that I describe in this dissertation.³⁴³ The first two sections of this chapter argue that people use relationships with the emblems they display to shape their position in society, while the final section focuses on emblematic messages constructed by assembling multiple figures into collections. In the opening section, I discuss less public emblematic displays.

³⁴³ Such monuments are core elements in the discussions of Hölkeskamp and Roller: see Hölkeskamp (1996) 301-308 and Roller (2004) 5-6, 8-9, 10-23 on theories of cultural memory and the importance of monuments in their conceptions of Roman exemplarity. Roller 10-12 provides an overview of the variety of cultural products that may function as monuments; see also Jaeger (1997) 17-18.

Aristocrats could be seen to embody the qualities symbolized by objects in their art collections. Likewise, portrait rings indicate an emotional or intellectual connection between the portrait and the wearer.³⁴⁴ The second section of the chapter expands this focus to more public assertions of connections with well known emblematic figures. Authors, especially biographers, may acquire for themselves the ethical value they assign to their subjects. The final section examines the effect of compilations of emblematic figures. I argue that the composite effect of a collection of exemplary figures tends to set aside the particular details of each member of the collection in favor of an impressionistic collective message. Some of these compound emblems simply attempt to impress their audience by the sheer magnitude or number of the component figures. Textual forms of this practice range from brief lists of names (*e.g.* Cic. *Cael.* 39; Quint. *Inst.* 12.2.30; Juv. 2.153-55) to extended catalogues of figures (*e.g.* Verg. *Aen.* 6.756-859; Manil. 1.777-804; Tac. *Ann.* 15.50.1, 15.71.3-5), and even to book-length collections of biographical or exemplary accounts such as Valerius Maximus's collection as well as other lost works by Varro, Atticus and others.³⁴⁵ Physical representations include monumental sculpture programs such as the statues of the *summi viri* that lined the Forum of Augustus. The monuments that filled the public spaces of Rome, viewed as a collection, could evoke the same sense.³⁴⁶ All these forms of emblematic representation tend to deploy widely recognized figures to assert some notion of value.

4.1: You Are What You Own.

Romans assigned ethical value to the possession of images of particular figures. Such

³⁴⁴ For instance, writing from exile Ovid mentions a group of friends who wear rings bearing his image (*Tr.* 1.7.5-10). See also Zanker (1995) 206 on rings bearing portraits of Greek poets or philosophers, and Gregory (1994) 92-93 on the recognizability of the images on seal rings.

³⁴⁵ Bloomer (1992) 18, David (1998a) 13-16 and Skidmore (1996) 44-48 discuss the evidence for Valerius' predecessors.

³⁴⁶ Cf. Hölkeskamp (1996) 305-8, 321-26; Roller (2004) 32.

connections could be either negative or positive. On the negative side we may consider various condemnations based on the possession of images of previously condemned persons. In some cases these are the images of family members, in others these are images of political allies, for example the condemnation of Sex. Titius for possession of a bust of Saturninus (Cic. *Pro Rab. Perd.* 24; Val. Max. 8.1.damn.3), or the condemnation of C. Silius, in part for possessing an image of his own father (Tac. *Ann.* 11.35).³⁴⁷ On the positive side, authors may offer praise for possessing images of culturally approved figures, as Pliny praises Titinius Capito for his collection of images of Cato, Brutus and Cassius (*Ep.* 1.17). In this section I focus less on the meaning of art objects in and of themselves than on the meaning created by the relationship between an object and its owner. Private art collections and other such personal symbolic displays encourage comparison between owners and their possessions. A physical representation of a well-known person such as a statue or bust allows great latitude for interpretation. The symbolic meaning of these figures often draws on vague or partial impressions of the figures rather than the whole range of specific details about them. When they encounter an exemplary emblem, observers may perform what I have previously described as ‘creative contextualization,’ framing a narrative and its particular details to arrive at a particular desired meaning. (I discuss this process in section 1.3.) This interpretive flexibility also extends to the relationship between the owner and the emblematic image. Physical objects could function as signifiers of personal character in ways that might or might not be intended by their owner. Representations of exemplary figures frequently serve as emblems of cultural authority, and social actors appropriate *exempla* for purposes that have only tangential relationships to their initial content (*e.g.* Cato, Brutus and Cassius as emblems of anti-Neronian, anti-Flavian, or anti-Domitianic positions).³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ See also Tac. *Ann.* 16.7 for an accusation against C. Cassius for keeping an image of his ancestor who had killed Caesar among his *imagines*.

³⁴⁸ I discuss the variety of uses to which a figure like Cato was put in section 1.3.

Romans could also recognize such deployments of *exempla* and other symbolic gestures as pretenses, as some attitudes toward philosophers, for example, indicate (e.g. Quintilian 1.*proem.*15, 12.3.12; Juv. 2.4-7).

The possession of an image of a well-known figure may serve as proof of an ethical sympathy between the possessor and the person depicted. Cicero's speech *pro Rabirio perduellionis* cites the condemnation and exile of Sextus Titius for the possession of an image of L. Saturninus as a demonstration of the dangers in having a bust or picture of a disapproved figure.³⁴⁹ The orator claims that this judgment creates a precedent for treating possession of an image of a hostile citizen as evidence for hostility toward the city.³⁵⁰ In Cicero's description, keeping such a representation indicates three possible intentions: (1) honoring the death of this proclaimed "enemy of the state" (*aut mortem eius honestaret*), (2) stirring up resentment among the "ignorant" (*aut desideria imperitorum misericordia commoveret*) — "ignorant" here implicitly designating those who disagree with the political position that Cicero and his audience are imagined to share — or (3) imitating the wicked acts of the earlier figure (*aut suam significaret imitandae improbitatis voluntatem*, *Rab. Perd.* 24).³⁵¹ The third and final option in this list of increasingly dangerous possibilities ties possession of an image to the exemplary pattern of modeling one's own actions on those of another. Cicero claims that owning a representation of a person indicates an intent to imitate that person. The orator's argument in this passage makes the partisan political basis of this condemnation clear: "And indeed we see that the following three things were in the realm of possibility,

³⁴⁹ Val. Max. 8.1.*damn.*3 describes Titius as innocent and assigns the entire cause for his condemnation to the possession of the image. Bartsch (2006) 124 briefly discusses the role of the *imago* in the condemnation of Sex. Titius. For a later example, cf. Tac. *Ann.* 11.35 where the condemnation of C. Silius under Claudius is accelerated by his possession of a statue of his condemned father.

³⁵⁰ *Statuerunt equites Romani illo iudicio improbum civem esse et non retinendum in civitate, qui hominis hostilem in modum seditiosi imagine aut mortem eius honestaret, aut desideria imperitorum misericordia commoveret, aut suam significaret imitandae improbitatis voluntatem.* Cic. *Rab. Perd.* 24.

³⁵¹ See also Gregory (1994) 90-91 on Cicero's comments about this statue.

that either he would be with Saturninus, or with the good men, or that he would keep out of sight.” (*Atqui videmus haec in rerum natura tria fuisse, ut aut cum Saturnino esset, aut cum bonis, aut lateret, Rab. Perd. 24*). The political use of the adjective *bonus* to describe the conservative senatorial faction starkly divides potential political allegiances into either being “good” or being with Saturninus. Just before this, Cicero establishes the political force of the faction aligned against Saturninus, listing the names of nearly two dozen individual *consulares*, as well as half a dozen important families.³⁵² As he builds this list, the accumulation of names takes on an almost incantatory quality as the orator drives home his point through the sheer number of authoritative names. Listing these persons, most without any individual comment, deploys these persons as emblems of political authority with little connection to any more specific purpose than representing the idea of “good” or “right-thinking” citizens (*boni*). This emblematic catalogue of aristocratic names offers a convenient means to represent the conservative political position without tying it to anything more specific than the cultural authority of old families.

In contrast to the negative meaning Cicero assigns to Titius’s possession of a bust of Saturninus, Pliny the Younger claims that possessing statues of Brutus, Cassius and Cato demonstrates the virtuous character of Titinius Capito (*Ep. 1.17*). In the case of Capito, the possession of images of exemplary men initially suggests little more than a

³⁵² *Cum ad arma consules ex senatus consulto vocavissent, cum armatus M. Aemilius, princeps senatus, in comitio constitisset, qui cum ingredi vix posset, non ad insequendum sibi tarditatem pedum sed ad fugiendum impedimento fore putabat, cum denique Q. Scaevola confectus senectute, perditus morbo, mancus et membris omnibus captus ac debilis, hastili nixus et animi vim et infirmitatem corporis ostenderet, cum L. Metellus, Ser. Galba, C. Serranus, P. Rutilius, C. Fimbria, Q. Catulus omnesque qui tum erant consulares pro salute communi arma cepissent, cum omnes praetores, cuncta nobilitas ac iuventus accurreret, Cn. et L. Domitii, L. Crassus, Q. Mucius, C. Claudius, M. Drusus, cum omnes Octavii, Metelli, Iulii, Cassii, Catones, Pompeii, cum L. Philippus, L. Scipio, cum M. Lepidus, cum D. Brutus, cum hic ipse P. Servilius, quo tu imperatore, Labiene, meruisti, cum hic Q. Catulus, admodum tum adulescens, cum hic C. Curio, cum denique omnes clarissimi viri cum consulibus essent: quid tandem C. Rabirium facere convenit? (Rab. Perd. 21).*

general sense of goodness. As Pliny reports it, Capito's relationship to these famous Romans is more suggestive of cultish devotion than active emulation: "It is wonderful with what care, with what enthusiasm he keeps portraits of Brutus, Cassius, Cato at home, where he is able to do so. This same man celebrates the life of each very famous man with outstanding poems" (*mirum est qua religione quo studio imagines Brutorum Cassiorum Catonum domi ubi potest habeat. Idem clarissimi cuiusque vitam egregiis carminibus exornat, Ep. 1.17.3*). Capito, as other letters make clear, is primarily a literary figure (*Ep. 5.8* and *8.12*). His poetry and art collection displays a set of figures that meet with general approval within Pliny's social circle, but this grouping of *exempla* suggests little more than adherence to a set of commonly approved opinions.³⁵³ These figures, of course, were not always safe objects for veneration under the principate as demonstrated, for instance, by the enforced absence of the images of Brutus and Cassius at Junia Tertulla's funeral (*Tac., Ann. 3.76*), by the burning of Cremutius Cordus's history praising Brutus and Cassius (*Tac., Ann. 4.34-35*) or by the concerns Tacitus represents Maternus's visitors as voicing about their host's recitation of a tragedy *Cato* (*Tac. Dial. 2-3*). A comment in Juvenal depicts Brutus and Cassius as emblems of the Stoic opposition to Nero and Domitian when the satirist describes a bottle of wine as "... the sort of thing Thrasea and Helvidius used to drink while wearing wreathes on the birthdays of Brutus and Cassius" (...*quale coronati Thrasea Helvidiusque bibebant | Brutorum et Cassi natalibus, 5.36-37*). As central figures among those executed or exiled under Nero, Domitian and the other Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors, Thrasea and Helvidius themselves become emblems of opposition to the previous regime and support for the new order of Nerva and Trajan.³⁵⁴ This final element suggests an important factor

³⁵³ The image of Cassius is perhaps more unusual than the others. Litchfield (1914) 45, noting the general absence of Cassius as an *exemplum* in the literary sources, suggests that the suppression of Cremutius Cordus' histories may help to explain his infrequent appearance.

³⁵⁴ Cf. Freudenberg (2001) 271 on the wine in *Juv. 5.36-37* and the evocation of Republican freedom here.

in Titinius Capito's devotion to these icons of the Republic: like many who had prospered under Domitian (Capito held the trusted position of secretary *ab epistulis* under Domitian, a position he later held under both Nerva and Trajan), Capito may use these figures to suggest alignment with the opposition to his erstwhile imperial patron.³⁵⁵ Pliny himself had also enjoyed political success under Domitian, although his later attempts to present himself as part of the opposition focus more on aligning himself with the friends and surviving relatives of the Domitianic martyrs Herennius Senecio, Helvidius Priscus and Arulenus Rusticus (*e.g. Ep.* 1.5.3; 1.14; 3.11; 7.19; 9.13).³⁵⁶ Capito's devoted care for these emblematic images of Cassius, Brutus and Cato provides one means to "prove" his allegiance with those who had openly opposed Domitian. (I discuss Capito's cultural activities further in the following section.)

Pliny's obituary for Silius Italicus reports a similar cult of objects and images, this one focused on the poet Vergil: "He not only possessed many books, many statues, many images, but even used to worship them, those of Vergil above all. And he used to celebrate that man's birthday more religiously than his own, above all in Naples, where he was accustomed to approach Vergil's tomb as if it were a temple" (*Multum ubique librorum, multum statuarum, multum imaginum, quas non habebat modo, verum etiam venerabatur, Vergili ante omnes, cuius natalem religiosius quam suum celebrabat, Neapoli maxime, ubi monimentum eius adire ut templum solebat, Ep.*

³⁵⁵ See Syme (1958) 92-93 and Freudenberg (2001) 225-28 on Capito's career and professed Republican sentiments. *ILS* 1448 provides the details of Capito's career. I discuss Capito's activities further in the following section (4.2).

³⁵⁶ See Bartsch (1994) 167-69; Ludolph (1997) 45-47, 142-44, 149-51, 155-56; Hoffer (1999) 5, 8-9, 72-75; Freudenberg (2001) 229-34; Dominik (2007) 329. I discuss these figures further in section 4.2 below.

3.7.8).³⁵⁷ Silius’s cultish devotion allows him to enact his poetic emulation of the earlier poet in the physical world as well.³⁵⁸ Where Capito’s care for images of famous Republican heroes like Brutus, Cassius and Cato demonstrates for Pliny a general sense of virtuousness and implicitly attempts to position him retroactively in the opposition to the “bad” emperor Domitian, Silius’s devotion to Vergil expresses a more focused connection between the two men. Unlike Capito, whose public career displays no personal connection with the subjects of his art collection, the Flavian poet’s epic poem suggests that his cult of Vergil functions as a secondary means to establish himself as poetic heir to the earlier author. By collecting and venerating the works of his model, Silius Italicus uses physical objects to reinforce the artistic filiation that he labors to establish through allusions in his poetry. Pliny, of course, does not equate Silius’s poetic production to that of his idol, as we shall see Martial do in several encomiastic epigrams. Pliny’s verdict on Silius’s poetry, in contrast, stresses the modesty of his accomplishment: “He used to write poems with greater care than talent” (*Scribebat carmina maiore cura quam ingenio*, 3.7.5). Although he describes the cult, Pliny structures his account to avoid linking his comments on Silius’s poetry and Silius’s veneration for his poetic model.

Accounts of Silius Italicus and his extensive purchases of villas in Campania demonstrate the symbolic possibilities of real estate to construct a similar connection between two persons. A villa or other site that once belonged to a well known person may evoke the memory of that figure just as an image does, albeit in a less direct manner. As

³⁵⁷ Martial 11.50 also describes Silius’s devotion to Vergil’s tomb: *iam prope desertos cineres et sancta Maronis | nomina qui coleret, pauper et unus erat. | Silius optatae succurere censuit umbrae, | Silius et vatem, non minor ipse, colit*. See Henderson (2002) 116-17 for some discussion of Martial’s epigrams concerning Silius Italicus. Henderson (2002) 30-31 and 115 comments more specifically on Pliny *Ep.* 3.7.8, but focuses mostly on Pliny’s remark about Silius’s consumerism: *Erat φιλόκαλος usque ad emacitatis reprehensionem. Ep.* 3.7.8.

³⁵⁸ *E.g.* Hardie (1993) 64-65 briefly connects Silius’s devotion to Vergil’s tomb with the Vergilian resonances surrounding Hannibal taking the impetus for his vendetta against Rome from Dido’s shrine in Carthage.

with artwork and books, possessing a house or other piece of property that once belonged to another may suggest a personal similarity between the current and previous owners. Numerous scholars have explored the idea that “for Romans of the educated and propertied classes a man’s country house, like his manner of speech, was a reflection of his character.”³⁵⁹ These discussions tend to focus on the connection between a single owner and a house, devoting little attention to the relationship between successive owners through the medium of the villa. The texts I examine here in fact mention almost nothing about the house aside from the identity of the former occupant. In some cases, details about the villa may be widely known, but what I primarily want to focus on is the equation between the former and current occupants. Of course, this is not to say that the two approaches to understanding the character of a house’s owner cannot influence one another. It is precisely the idea that a house reveals indications of its owner’s character which enables a villa to act as an emblem linking the current and previous owners: if the features of an estate reflect the character and lifestyle of the occupant, then it is a small step to the assumption that subsequent occupants will display the same character. Houses are generally not exemplary in themselves, but rather serve as tokens to evoke the memory of an associated emblematic figure. We have seen an instance of this phenomenon in the emblematic or “para-exemplary” emphasis our sources place on the location of the emperor Tiberius’s death in the villa that once belonged to Lucullus (Tac. *Ann.* 6.50; Suet. *Tib.* 73).³⁶⁰ Neither the account of Tacitus nor that of Suetonius draws any direct connection between the men, but the care they take to connect the place to the Republican voluptuary suggests an implicit link between the two.

³⁵⁹ Bodel (1997) 5. See also Baroin (1998) Treggiari (1999), Hales (2003) and Henderson (2004). Bodel 6 n. 4 provides earlier references. For some ancient views on houses as index’s of their owner’s character, see *e.g.* Cic. *De off.* 1.138-40 and Nepos, *Att.* 13.

³⁶⁰ I discuss the linkage between these two figures in section 1.2. See Gowing (2005) 64-65 on the references to this villa in obituaries for Tiberius.

In a more explicit fashion, an epigram of Martial connects Silius Italicus with both Cicero and Vergil. Silius had purchased a Campanian villa that once belonged to the former and had restored and celebrated the latter's tomb.³⁶¹ Even though no one alive at the time of Silius and Pliny would have been old enough to have personally known Cicero as the owner of the villa in question, nonetheless the association remains available to be called upon.³⁶² Martial connects Silius's possession of properties associated with famous predecessors to a claim that he is heir not only to their property, but also to their work. Silius Italicus, who has acquired possession of both Vergil's tomb and a Campanian villa previously owned by Cicero is described as the preferred successor to both men:

Silius, who possesses the acres of eloquent Cicero,
 honors this monument of great Maro.
 Neither Maro nor Cicero would prefer another
 as heir and master of his tomb or his house.

*Silius haec magni celebrat monumenta Maronis,
 iugera facundi qui Ciceronis habet.
 Heredem dominumque sui tumulive larisve
 non alium mallet nec Maro nec Cicero.*
 Mart. 11.48

As with the perceived connection between Tiberius and Lucullus, the connection that Martial draws between Silius and his models substitutes property ownership for evidence of similar character or talent.³⁶³ As it appears, Silius attempts to use his wealth to purchase the appearance of being heir to two of the most accomplished cultural

³⁶¹ As Pliny reports, Silius bought numerous villas in the area: *Plures isdem in locis villas possidebat, adamatisque novis priores neglegebat*, *Ep.* 3.7.8. Henderson (2002) 30-31 and 115 comments on Silius's "buyingitis." See also Henderson (2004) 160-63 where he comments on the relationship between Scipio Africanus and Vetulenus Aegialus, the freedman owner and caretaker of his villa at the time of Nero. Bodel (1997) argues that Romans assumed a close link between villas and tombs; see 22 for a brief comment on Silius and Vergil's tomb.

³⁶² Likewise Tacitus's readers could not have personally known either Lucullus or Tiberius.

³⁶³ See also Mart. 7.63 which again connects Silius to Vergil and Cicero, but focuses directly on his activities as an advocate and as a poet rather than his possession of properties connected with his two predecessors. Pliny's obituary on the other hand is even more dismissive of Silius's oratorical accomplishments than his poetic ones: *Laeserat famam suam sub Nerone (credebatur sponte accusasse) and maculam veteris industriae*, *Ep.* 3.7.3.

figures from the Roman past.

Other geographical connections provide parallel explanations for literary succession. Pliny, for example, claims that a poet friend of his, Passennus Paulus, derives his talents in the field of elegy from his origin in the same town as Propertius, in addition to his family relationship with the Augustan elegist.³⁶⁴ In the letters that describe Paulus, Pliny seems to emphasize the family connection and the geographical connection as two separate things. In the first letter that mentions this friend, he explains Paulus's composition of elegies with the following statement: "This activity is native to that man: for he is a fellow-townsmen of Propertius and even numbers Propertius among his ancestors" (*Gentilicium hoc illi: est enim municeps Properti atque etiam inter maiores suos Propertium numerat, Ep. 6.15.1*). In this explanation the family relationship intensifies a connection already created by their shared municipal origin. The second letter does not offer quite as clear a division between shared citizenship and family origin, but it does emphasize the importance of location in molding Paulus's poetic output. Pliny explicitly connects the quality and character of Paulus's elegies to their composition in Propertius's house: "If you take his elegies into your hands, you will read a pure, delicate, delightful work, and one clearly written in the house of Propertius" (*Si elegos eius in manus sumpseris, leges opus tersum molle iucundum, et plane in Properti domo scriptum, Ep. 9.22.2*). Similarity of style thus springs from the shared location "in the house of Propertius" (*in Properti domo*). The poet is the emblem, his house is the vehicle for activating the association. The house's actual appearance may thus be essentially immaterial for its function in these letters. It is even possible that the house is

³⁶⁴ See *Passennus Paulus, splendidus eques Romanus et in primis eruditus, scribit elegos. Gentilicium hoc illi: est enim municeps Properti atque etiam inter maiores suos Propertium numerat*, Pliny *Ep. 6.15.1*, and *praeterea in litteris veteres aemulatur exprimit reddit, Propertium in primis, a quo ducit, vera suboles eoque simillima illi in quo ille praecipuus. Ep. 9.22.1*. Sherwin-White (1966) 370 cites a dedicatory inscription from Asisium (*ILS 2925*) to give Paulus's full name as C. Passennus Paullus Propertius Blaesus.

purely metaphorical. Pliny assumes his reader is familiar with Propertius's poetry. Because a house was thought to reflect the character of its owner, therefore the reader should assume that the appearance of the house agrees with what he or she knows about Propertius. By the same assumption, the house should reflect the current occupant as well. As both men share the same relationship to the same house, Paulus clearly must produce poetry like that of Propertius. As Martial cites Silius Italicus's acquisition of property to reinforce his praise for the ex-consul as heir to Cicero and Vergil, Pliny uses Paulus's residence in the house of Propertius to reinforce his praise for his friend's imitation of the earlier elegist.³⁶⁵

To close this section, I would like to turn now to several instances in which Roman authors themselves recognize and argue against the artificial nature of such emblematic connections. Some of our sources attack the use of statues or images as a means of molding one's public *persona*. Authors sometimes accuse others of using such figures to misappropriate their cultural prestige. Such attacks demonstrate that the Romans themselves recognize the somewhat arbitrary nature of the relationship between an owner and the objects he puts on display. In general, however, speakers and writers only deploy this recognition as an isolated tactic in order to paint particular opponents as hypocrites. As we have seen above, in many other situations authors willingly assume that exemplary emblems represent the sincere intentions or character of their owner, that is they treat these emblems as if they were accurate models for who their owners are, who they intend to become, or what they intend to do. In the remainder of this section, I focus on two instances where writers attack opponents for falsely appropriating the cultural authority of images. Cicero's invective against Piso offers perhaps the more

³⁶⁵ Compare, however, the later part of *Ep.* 9.22 where Pliny mentions that Paulus has begun to imitate Horatian lyric as well: *Nuper ad lyrica deflexit, in quibus ita Horatium ut in illis illum alterum effingit: putes si quid in studiis cognatio valet, et huius propinquum, Ep.* 9.22.2. In mentioning this shift toward emulating Horace, Pliny narrows the focus to the criterion of family relationship alone, leaving aside the idea of geographical connection he has stressed with emulation of Propertius.

dramatic illustration in which the orator claims that Piso has used his own family's *imagines* — the wax masks of his ancestors — to inflate his political standing. In the opening tirade of Juvenal's second satire, the speaker likewise attacks a group of hypocritical moralists for attempting to purchase moral rectitude with busts of Greek philosophers.³⁶⁶ Both cases involve speakers who attempt to drive a wedge into the assumed ethical connection between persons and the art they display.

In his speech against Piso, Cicero charges that his target has falsely claimed the cultural authority of his ancestors, represented by the masks (*imagines*) displayed in the entry to his house. He argues that Piso's perceived resemblance to these masks creates a false impression of his character. He renders his target almost as a sinister beast in this misappropriation of his ancestral reputation: "You crept up to office by a mistake of the people, by the recommendation of your smoky *imagines*, to which you have no resemblance except in color" (*Obrepsisti ad honores errore hominum, commendatione fumosarum imaginum, quarum simile habes nihil praeter colorem, Pis. 1*). This argument relies on the possibility for misusing exemplary figures, claiming their social authority without reproducing the moral content of their actions that supposedly authorizes their use. Rather than emulating their character and actions, the orator claims, Piso merely mimics their appearance.³⁶⁷ But even his resemblance may be distorted: Cicero emphasizes the effect that age has had on the *imagines* when he specifies their "smoky" appearance (*fumosarum imaginum*) and then claims that Piso resembles these masks only in color (*quarum simile habes nihil praeter colorem*). At the opening of this paragraph in fact he labels his target's complexion as "that slavish color of yours" (*color iste servilis, Pis. 1*) and compared him to a Syrian slave (*Syrum nescio*

³⁶⁶ Similar attacks on contemporary philosophers appear in other imperial writers, e.g. Quintilian *IO* 1.*proem*.15 and 12.3.12.

³⁶⁷ Likewise Cicero also compares Piso's public career to his own, arguing that the Roman people elected Piso to office based solely on respect for his family name rather than any knowledge of or admiration for Piso himself as Cicero claims was the case with his own electoral success (*Pis. 1*).

quem de grege noviciorum, Pis. 1). Thus he suggests that Piso's resemblance is not to the *imagines* themselves, but only to the smoke that has discolored them over time. Arguing that his target's reputation derives solely from the public respect given to his ancestors, Cicero depicts Piso's reputation as a fiction built over a void.³⁶⁸ Only limited public activity preserves his façade of nobility unbroken. This attack does not, however, discount personal appearance as evidence for inner character: only Piso himself fails to embody the expectations created by his appearance. Piso's appearance is a mere mask, paradoxically unlike the literal masks of his ancestors (*imagines*). This contrast depicts wax portraits as reliable witnesses to the character of men now dead but denies the validity of appearance as a witness for a living man. Cicero acknowledges the possibility for purely self-interested use of *exempla*, but he carefully limits this negative potential to an individual who appears as an incomplete actor in the social and political world of Rome.

Cicero's description of Piso's public inactivity glances broadly over the traditional activities of Roman aristocrats: "Your voice was never heard in the forum, no trial was ever made of your advice, not only did you not do any outstanding act either in military service or at home, but not even anything noticed at all" (*Numquam erat audita vox in foro, numquam periculum factum consili, nullum non modo inlustre sed ne notum quidem factum aut militiae aut domi, Pis. 1*). These activities emphasize public observation as the central means of evaluating action: Piso's voice is never heard; his advice is never tried; his actions neither call attention to themselves (*nullum... inlustre*) nor even attract casual notice (*ne notum quidem*). Visible and audible activity forms the basis for accurate judgment of character. Public activity is characterized as a sincere communication between the speaker and his audience: it is simply Piso's lack of public activity that preserves the fiction created by his perceived resemblance to his *imagines*.

³⁶⁸ For other instances of people failing to live up to their family's reputation, see Val. Max. 3.5 and Juv. 8.231-35.

The opening tirade against the false Stoics in Juvenal's second satire presents a number of parallels to Cicero's representation of Piso using his *imagines* to present a false image of social authority. These fake moralists differ from the Republican aristocrat in the choice of cultural markers used to create their façade of respectability.³⁶⁹ Where Piso's social and political standing rests on the portraits of his ancestors preserved through his family's *imagines*, these false Stoics attempt to purchase respectability with statues of Greek philosophers: "For he is the most complete representative of them, if someone buys a likeness of Aristotle or Pittacos and bids his bookshelf to hold original statues of Cleanthes" (*nam perfectissimus horum, | si quis Aristotelen similem vel Pittacon emit | et iubet archetypos pluteum servare Cleanthas. 2.5-7*). Portraits and statues of Greek philosophers and poets, of course, constitute a common element in the decoration of the homes of the Roman elite. Zanker states that their purpose was "to conjure up an impression of learning," claiming that "In the overly competitive climate of the Late Republic and Early Imperial period, cultural pretensions quickly became a vehicle for winning distinction."³⁷⁰ Thus Juvenal in fact targets a widespread element of elite home decor in his attack on these hypocritical moralists. This tactic forces his audience into an uncomfortable position where they may be forced to recognize something of themselves in the satirist's targets. In an article on the poem, Jonathan Walters argues that the speaker attempts to create a "community of the righteous" united through common disapproval of the various behaviors put on view.³⁷¹ But by suggesting that his audience may share certain behaviors with the targets of his invective, the satirical speaker goes beyond merely recruiting his audience in this community and

³⁶⁹ Quintilian 1.*proem*.15 and 12.3.12 attacks those who attempt present themselves as moral by adopting the pose of philosophers, but his criticisms focus primarily on their style of clothing and personal grooming.

³⁷⁰ Zanker (1995) 206. Connected to this claim, Zanker offers an oddly reductive reading of Juv. 2.1-7, focusing solely on lack of education but ignoring the false claims of morality: "Soon Juvenal would complain that you could not go to the home of the most uneducated man without seeing plaster casts of the great philosophers and wise men."

³⁷¹ Walters (1998) 149-50.

instead forces them either to search actively for an external target for the attack or to risk identifying themselves with the position of the hypocritical philosophers.³⁷² The speaker attempts to compel each auditor or reader to accept the ethical framework of his attack by placing the audience in a position where they must choose either to join the speaker in condemning this hypocrisy or to discover themselves to be a fellow hypocrite among the condemned. The satire seizes on a common practice — but one that in many cases may have received little serious attention from its practitioners³⁷³ — in order to trap such unreflective art collectors into endorsing the speaker's attacks and thus deflecting the invective away from their own potentially embarrassing emblematic baggage. Presenting these hypocrites as examples, Juvenal demonstrates the potential for deception inherent in the display of emblematic images. His argument, however, does not attack the use of emblems as a practice, but rather directs his invective at these particular users of emblems. The satire thus combines both varieties of *exemplum*: Juvenal here presents the false Stoics as examples depicting the deceptive use of emblems.

4.2: You Are What You Publish.

While owning a statue of an exemplary person merely suggests a connection between the owner and the subject, by publishing a biography, reciting a eulogy or dedicating a monument to an emblematic figure, a speaker or writer could publicly declare his admiration for the subject and thus assert his connection to that person. A number of sources link the moral worth of authors of exemplary accounts to that of their subjects. Pliny, for example, ascribes moral worth to authors, such as C. Fannius and Titinius Capito, who wrote biographies of Domitianic and Neronian martyrs. Capito in particular appears to follow the same pattern of activity as T. Pomponius Atticus, both as a recorder

³⁷² The shift to the second person at Juv. 2.9-10 in this passage produces a similar effect. Concerning this tactic, see Gunderson (2000) 70 discussing Quintilian *IO* 5.10.23-25 on the ability of a rhetorically adept speaker to find vices even within positive traits.

³⁷³ See Zanker (1995) 207.

of accomplished men and as a patron of literary activity. In this view of writing history and biography, the writer imitates in some sense the acts he narrates and may also himself take on the status of a model for imitation. Publishing a laudatory narrative of the actions of a previous figure or setting up an honorific statue to that person acts as a public declaration and suggests an intent to imitate. The simple act of narration, in fact, sometimes seems to substitute for literal imitation. It is in this way that Atticus can become “the greatest imitator of the character of our ancestors” (*maiorum... moris summus imitator*, Nepos, *Att.* 18) through his antiquarian and genealogical research, while Titinius Capito and C. Fannius imitate the Neronian and Domitianic martyrs through the recitation and publication of death (*exitus*) narratives (Pliny, *Ep.* 1.17; 5.5; 8.12).

In one letter, Pliny clearly combines giving praise with a desire to be like the object of praise. The opening epistle in his third book of letters announces the author’s intent to imitate its subject, the elder senator Vestricius Spurinna: “I don’t know whether I have spent any more delightful time than when I was with Spurinna recently. It was so delightful in fact that I would prefer to emulate no one else in old age, if only it is granted to me to grow old” (*Nescio an ullum iucundius tempus exegerim, quam quo nuper apud Spurinnam fui, adeo quidem ut neminem magis in senectute, si modo senescere datum est, aemulari velim*, *Ep.* 3.1.1). Henderson describes Pliny in this letter as adopting Spurinna’s career and retirement as a blueprint for his own life.³⁷⁴ At the close of the epistle, Pliny repeats his desire to model his own retirement on Spurinna’s current lifestyle, and further he expands the comparison between himself and the older senator to encompass their parallel attitudes toward political service: “Meanwhile I am worn down by a thousand labors, for which the same man, Spurinna, is both a solace and a model to me; for he also, for as long as it brought him honor, discharged duties,

³⁷⁴ I also discuss this letter in section 3.3 of the previous chapter. See also Henderson (2002) 59, 62-66 on Pliny’s prospective modeling himself on Spurinna.

performed public offices, ruled provinces, and by much labor deserved this leisure” (*Interim mille laboribus conteror, quorum mihi et solacium et exemplum est idem Spurrinna; nam ille quoque, quoad honestum fuit, obiit officia, gessit magistratus, provincias rexit, multoque labore hoc otium meruit, Ep. 3.1.11-12*). Pliny’s letter describing the retired senator’s lifestyle both presents Spurrinna as an emblem and expresses a desire to adopt him as a model.

Such authorial self-projection could take on much more politically aggressive forms. A number of figures during the first century CE became political martyrs by publishing eulogies of earlier opposition figures. In most of the following cases, the biographies these men published have not survived, but this loss has the perhaps unexpected benefit of allowing us to consider the emblematic function of the book as a discrete object without the distraction of its textual content. When considering a eulogy as an emblematic gesture rather than as a narrative, it is instructive to consider that in some sense the book as an object is always less than the sum of its contents. Thus, it may be enough to know that a particular book contains, for example, a ‘praise of Thræsea’ to understand the core of its function as an emblem.

Just as Cicero claimed that displaying a bust of Saturninus indicates an intent to imitate his acts (*Rab. Perd. 24*),³⁷⁵ narrating the acts of another person suggests a desire to imitate that person, and in a number of cases results in the author’s martyrdom as well. Where it is a hostile prosecutor who uses the bust as an emblem to attack Titius, however, these eulogists actively invite the comparisons that eventually leads to their deaths. For instance, among those executed by Domitian in 93 CE, two men were charged, at least in part, because they praised earlier icons of opposition to the principate. One, Arulenus Rusticus, wrote eulogies (*laudes*) of both Thræsea Paetus and Helvidius Priscus (*Tac., Agr. 2.1; Suet., Dom. 10.3*). The other, Herennius Senecio, also

³⁷⁵ I discuss Cicero’s comments on Sex. Titius’s statue of Saturninus in the previous section 4.1.

wrote a biography of Helvidius at the request of Helvidius's widow Fannia (Tac., *Agr.* 2.1; Pliny, *Ep.* 7.19.5). In the introduction to the *Agricola*, Tacitus states that not only were these two authors executed but Domitian had their books burned as well.³⁷⁶ A. J. Turner suggests that Tacitus exploits a potential ambiguity between the subjective and objective genitive within the description of these books as “the monuments of the most famous talents” (*monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum*, *Agr.* 2) in order to tie the original actors together with the authors of their biographies.³⁷⁷ Dylan Sailor develops this point, focusing on the fame shared by writer and subject: “through the text, the authors themselves share in the *claritudo* (*monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum*) that is the quality of persons worthy of memory (*clarorum virorum facta moresque ...*); and what were imagined before as simple acts of ‘handing on’ the lives of illustrious men have become *monumenta*, physical testaments of the *ingenia* that composed them, preserving their *auctores* as well as their subjects.”³⁷⁸ This idea is representative of a widespread assumption, particularly in evidence during the first century of the principate, that objects of praise serve as emblems for the authors of their praise. Publishing a laudatory account of some person often is treated as evidence that the author takes his subject as an exemplary model.

Herennius Senecio and Arulenus Rusticus come at the end of a chain of authors killed for publishing laudatory accounts of earlier opposition figures. Freudenburg remarks that: “the making of martyrs *in stories*, according to Tacitus, in the first century CE became a sure and regular means for the making of new martyrs *in fact*.”³⁷⁹ Cremutius Cordus, who committed suicide in 25 CE, was among the earliest of these

³⁷⁶ *Legimus, cum Aruleno Rustico Paetus Thrasea, Herennio Senecioni Priscus Helvidius laudati essent, capitale fuisse, neque in ipsos modo auctores, sed in libros quoque eorum saevitum, delegato triumviris ministerio ut monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum in comitio ac foro urerentur.* Tac. *Agr.* 2.1.

³⁷⁷ Turner (1997) 590-91.

³⁷⁸ Sailor (2004) 148.

³⁷⁹ Freudenburg (2001) 220, emphasis in the original.

authors: he published annals praising Brutus and calling Cassius the “last of the Romans.”³⁸⁰ After he was accused for publishing these opinions, Cremutius starved himself to death, and the Senate ordered his books burned. In the closing lines of his defense speech to the Senate as written for him by Tacitus, Cremutius claim that his conviction will solidify his connection with Caesar’s killers: “Posterity repays their own honor to each person; if condemnation falls on me, those who will remember not only Cassius and Brutus but me as well will not be lacking” (*suum cuique decus posteritas rependit; nec deerunt, si damnatio ingruit, qui non modo Cassii et Bruti set etiam mei meminerint*, Tac. *Ann.* 4.35). Thrasea Paetus, whom Rusticus later eulogized, himself wrote a biography of the younger Cato (Plut. *Cat. Min.* 25, 37). Thrasea’s treatise may have been only one among a series of gestures linking himself emblematically to Cato. For instance, Juvenal describes Thrasea, along with his son-in-law Helvidius, celebrating the birthdays of Cato and Brutus (Juv. 5.36-37).³⁸¹ Martial treats the two men as a pair in an epigram where he advises a friend to imitate the lives of Cato and Thrasea, but not their deaths.³⁸² Tacitus describes a parallel connection of this sort in the *Dialogus* when Maternus’s friends express concern for his safety on the day after he has recited a

³⁸⁰ *Cremutius Cordus postulaturo novo ac tunc primum audito crimine, quod editis annalibus laudatoque M. Bruto C. Cassium Romanorum ultimum dixisset.* Tac., *Ann.* 35. See also Dio 57.24.2-4; Suet. *Tib.* 61.3, *Cal.* 16.1. Modern critics frequently cite the accusation against Cremutius and his suicide: see e.g. Bartsch (1994) 84-86, 106; Freudenburg (2001) 219-20; Gowing (2005) 26-27, 32-33, 131. Bartsch (1994) 105-6 points out that Cremutius’s comments were not the only accusation made against the historian and suggests that Tacitus exaggerates the role of such writings in this condemnation.

³⁸¹ Such birthday celebrations could sometimes even become the basis for accusations: according to Suetonius, Domitian had Salvius Cocceianus executed for celebrating the birthday of his uncle, the emperor Otho (*Dom.* 10). Silius Italicus’s celebration of Vergil’s birthday provides less politically fraught example (Pliny, *Ep.* 3.7.8; I discuss this passage in section 4.1 above).

³⁸² *Quod magni Thraseae consummatique Catonis | dogmata sic sequeris salvos ut esse velis, | pectore nec nudo strictos incurris in ensis, quod fecisse velim te, Deciane, facis.* Martial 1.8.1-4.

tragedy *Cato* (*Dial.* 2-3).³⁸³ In all of these cases, publishing or reciting a biographical account of an iconic figure—Cato, Brutus, Cassius, Thrasea, or the like—serves as a gesture claiming moral and political filiation from that model.

Titinius Capito provides another example of this type of emblematic act. The letter in which Pliny praises Capito's character by means of his statue collection takes another, more public gesture as its frame. In the opening of the letter, Pliny announces that Capito obtained permission from the emperor to erect a statue of Lucius Silanus in the Roman forum (*Ep.* 1.17.1). In the closing sentences, he equates the dedicator and the subject of the honorific statue as recipients of the fame ensured by the monument: "The honor that was owed has been repaid to Silanus; Capito has provided for that man's immortal fame at the same time as for his own. Indeed it is no more fine and distinguished to have a statue in the forum of the Roman people than to erect one" (*Redditus est Silano debitus honor, cuius immortalitati Capito prospexit pariter et suae. Neque enim magis decorum et insigne est statuam in foro populi Romani habere quam ponere*, Pliny, *Ep.* 1.17.4). By dedicating a statue in the forum, Capito engages in a form of self-advertisement that both asserts his own status and establishes Silanus as an emblem of his relationship to the principate.³⁸⁴ In honoring Silanus, Capito takes part in a widespread pattern following Domitian's assassination of honoring the persons killed or exiled by the 'bad' emperors such as Nero and Domitian. Situating Capito's gesture within this trend, Freudenburg writes: "Like the made-to-order hero-stories of Pliny,

³⁸³ Maternus's intention to write a tragedy on Thyestes carries a similar danger as a statement against the principate, but does not suggest the same exemplary identification between author and subject that the *Cato* does (Tac., *Dial.* 3). For a parallel to Maternus's proposed *Thyestes*, see Tac., *Ann.* 6.29 and Dio 58.24 (on an accusation against Aemilius Scaurus supposedly motivated by verses directed against the emperor Tiberius in his play *Atreus*), and Suet. *Dom.* 10.3 and Dio 67.13 (on the younger Helvidius Priscus, executed for writing a play on Paris and Oenone that was interpreted as criticism of Domitian's divorce).

³⁸⁴ Compare Caesar's erection of a statue of Marius on the Capitol in 65 BCE as a declaration of a political position (Plut., *Caes.* 6). See Gregory (1994) 90 on Caesar's statue of Marius and 92 on Capito's statue of Silanus.

Tacitus, and so many others, Capito's statue-work is instrumental not only in defining Lucius Silanus, whom the statue portrays, as a hero who dared to stand up to Nero. More importantly, it says something about who Capito is, what he values and, most importantly, how he relates to the events of Rome's recent, traumatic past."³⁸⁵ Pliny precisely calibrates the meaning of this statue dedication by positioning it as categorically equivalent to Capito's possession of busts of Brutus, Cassius and Cato (*Ep.* 1.17.3).³⁸⁶ The implied parallel between Silanus and the revered heroes of the fading Republic colors the significance of Capito's request in this letter by suggesting that Silanus himself may belong to this group. Freudenburg argues that the emblematic link between Capito and the Neronian nobleman allows the former to assume some portion of his political force: "By erecting the statue, and putting his name on it, he claims some small share in Silanus's defiance."³⁸⁷

There is, however, one problem with this claim: Silanus never stood up to Nero. Although Pliny's letter implies a connection between Silanus and Caesar's killers, this connection is tenuous at best. In Tacitus's account of his death, Silanus emerges as more victim than hero (*Ann.* 16.7-9). Although modern critics consistently identify him as the

³⁸⁵ Freudenburg (2001) 226; see 215-34 for Freudenburg's full discussion of these martyr tales.

³⁸⁶ The inclusion of Cassius in this list of Republican heroes may refer to the Neronian juriconsult Gaius Cassius, who was married to Silanus's aunt Iunia Lepida and who was accused and exiled along with Silanus (*Tac., Ann.* 16.7-9). The charge against Cassius was keeping an image of Caesar's killer Cassius among his family's death masks: *obiectavitque Cassio quod inter imagines maiorum etiam C. Cassii effigiem coluisset, ita inscriptam 'duci partium'*, *Tac., Ann.* 16.7; see also *Suet., Nero* 37.

³⁸⁷ Freudenburg (2001) 226; Freudenburg continues on to claim that Pliny's letter writes him into the chain of ethical links as well. In publishing a letter about this particular statue, Pliny may even indirectly hint at his own family connections to this victim: *Tacitus Ann.* 16.8 mentions that Pliny's grandfather-in-law Calpurnius Fabatus was among those accused as *conscii* in Silanus's purported incest with his aunt, but he ultimately escaped condemnation because he was too unimportant to pursue. Compare this to Pliny's 'innocent' references to his close relationship with the family of Helvidius: see *e.g.* Hoffer (1999) 4, 8, 177-; Ludolph (1997) 147-51; Freudenburg (2001) 219 with n. 15; Henderson (2002) 138. This connection would not have been active at the time the original letter would have been sent because Pliny would not have yet married Calpurnia (Pliny's previous wife died in 97), but it would come into play when Pliny revised and published this letter.

L. Iunius Silanus who was exiled and later murdered on Nero's orders in 65 CE, they do not discuss the details of his death beyond the simple fact that he was a victim of Nero.³⁸⁸ Treating him as a cypher, some critics suggest that Silanus was part of the opposition to Nero. As we have just seen, for example, Freudenburg claims that Capito's statue "[defines] Lucius Silanus... as a hero who dared to stand up to Nero."³⁸⁹ Pliny's letter, which never mentions any details about Silanus aside from his name, encourages such speculation by equating this dedication and Capito's private devotion to the memory of Brutus, Cassius and Cato. According to Tacitus, however, Nero attacks Silanus without provocation because of the "fame of his family and his modest youth" (*claritudine generis generis et modesta iuventa*, *Ann.* 16.7).³⁹⁰ Tacitus labels the charges against the young man as "both empty and false" (*inania simul et falsa*), explaining that "Silanus was very threatened by fear and driven by terror at the death of his uncle to be on his guard" (*Silanus intentior metu et exitio patrum ad praecavendum exterritus erat*, 16.8).³⁹¹ Only at the moment of death does this victim become anything like the heroic figure Freudenburg suggests, but this act of resistance is not directed against either Nero

³⁸⁸ See e.g. Freudenburg (2001) 225, who describes Silanus simply as "one of Nero's victims in 65 CE", footnoting the paragraph in Tacitus describing his death (*Ann.* 16.9), but omitting the previous two that introduce the young man and the false charges against him. In a possibly revealing omission one sentence later on the same page, Freudenburg (2001) 225 n. 31 also omits to include in a list of men condemned for possessing statues of martyrs or tyrannicides that Silanus's fellow defendant C. Cassius was charged for possessing an image of the killer of Caesar among his *imagines* (*Tac., Ann.* 16.7). Syme (1958) 92 mentions the statue of Silanus but identifies the subject only as "a nobleman who had been put to death by Nero."

³⁸⁹ Freudenburg (2001) 226.

³⁹⁰ Silanus is not even the first target in this prosecution; that honor goes to the well-known juriconsult Gaius Cassius who was married to Silanus's aunt Iunia Lepida (*Tac., Ann.* 16.7-8). Silanus's political passivity is in fact typical of the rather numerous family of the Iunii Silani under the Julio-Claudians: Syme (1986) 188 comments, "Few Silani ever made an impact through personality or talent, or from any action."

³⁹¹ In response to his boasting of his descent from Augustus, Silanus's uncle Torquatus had been compelled to commit suicide the year before Silanus was charged (*Tac. Ann.* 15.35).

or the principate in general. Silanus merely struggles against the centurion sent to kill him as best he can before he is cut down.³⁹²

Interpreting Silanus's attitude toward Nero as "resistance" thus confuses the categories of opposition figure and victim. This confusion collapses the possible range of meanings that these various executed and exiled persons may represent through their individual narratives. So, why would Silanus be a useful *exemplum* for Capito to monumentalize? Capito may have chosen Silanus precisely because he has no other public significance than as a victim: his exile and murder represents tyrannical violence in its purest form because it is essentially arbitrary.³⁹³ The innocuous character of Silanus also insulates Capito against appearing to endorse resistance to the principate itself as an institution rather than merely against particular 'bad' emperors. While establishing a symbolic connection to Silanus does not offer Capito a direct path to claiming to resist Domitian, it does carry the suggestion that Capito might have imitated Nero's victim by becoming himself a victim of Domitian.³⁹⁴

Capito's engagement with honoring such 'martyrs' extends beyond the public monument to Silanus and his private statue collection. As Pliny informs us, Capito also wrote laudatory poems and *exitus* narratives (*Ep.* 1.17.3; 8.12.4-5). Pliny's personal

³⁹² *Silanus tamquam Naxum deveheretur Ostiam amotus, post municipio Apuliae, cui nomen Barium est, clauditur. illic indignissimum casum sapienter tolerans a centurione ad caedem misso corripitur; suadentique venas abrumpere animum quidem morti destinatum ait, sed non remittere percussori gloriam ministerii. at centurio quamvis inermem, praevalidum tamen et irae quam timori proprio cernens premi a militibus iubet. nec omisit Silanus obniti et intendere ictus, quantum manibus nudis valebat, donec a centurione vulneribus adversis tamquam in pugna caderet.* Tac. *Ann.* 16.9.

³⁹³ Except, of course, that Silanus was a descendant of Augustus and thus a potential dynastic threat to Nero. His father and both his uncles had been murdered or forced to suicide, most recently his uncle Torquatus who committed suicide in 64 (Tac., *Ann.* 15.35 and 16.8). Syme (1986) 188 describes Silanus's immediate family as "foredoomed to splendour and tribulation" by their descent from Augustus.

³⁹⁴ Pliny repeatedly describes himself as a potential victim of Domitian in asserting his connections with the families of Arria, Fannia and Iunius Mauricus (*e.g.* *Ep.* 3.11.3, 7.19); Tacitus suggests a similar potential in the biography of his father-in-law Agricola (*Agr.* 39, 41-43). See also Freudenburg (2001) 223-24.

affinity for the subjects of these works underlies his enthusiastic description of these activities: “He writes of the deaths of famous men, among these of certain ones very dear to me” (*scribit exitus inlustrium virorum, in his quorundam mihi carissimorum, Ep. 8.12.4*).³⁹⁵ For Pliny, Capito’s recitations act like funeral rites in honoring and commemorating the dead: “Therefore I seem to perform a dutiful service: and for those men whose rites it was not possible to celebrate, I seem to be present as if for their funeral praises – late, it is true, but so much the more true” (*Videor ergo fungi pio munere, quorumque exsequias celebrare non licuit, horum quasi funebribus laudationibus seris quidem sed tanto magis veris interesse, Ep. 8.12.5*). Like Pliny himself and many other writers of the time, Capito studiously affirms his allegiance to Trajan’s new order through the posthumous praise of these victims. His enthusiasm attempts to suppress his earlier advancement by Domitian, under whom he had served as secretary *ab epistulis*.³⁹⁶ Syme suggests that funeral orations provide the original basis for this type of biography, although he disparages the expansion of the practice beyond the family and close friends of the deceased: “If the practice took its origin from the funeral oration, it was soon exploited by persons extraneous to the deceased, avowedly as a genre intermediate between oratory and history.”³⁹⁷ Syme interprets Capito’s publicly displayed enthusiasm for the Republican past as a blatant exercise in fakery,

³⁹⁵ Pliny also provides an obituary for another writer of *exitus* narratives whose work he describes as *pulcherrimum opus*: Gaius Fannius “used to write about the ends of those killed or exiled by Nero and he had completed three fine, careful books in good Latin, halfway between conversation and history” (*scribebat tamen exitus occisorum aut relegatorum a Nerone et iam tres libros absoluerat subtiles et diligentes et Latinos atque inter sermonem historiamque medios, Pliny, Ep. 5.5.3*).

³⁹⁶ Freudenberg (2001) 228 discusses Capito’s ability to accommodate himself to the changes in government from Domitian to Trajan. Cf. also Syme (1958) vol. 1, 93 on the incongruity between Capito’s public life and his literary activities. Our evidence for Capito’s public career derives from *ILS 1448: Cn. Octavius Titinius Capito | praef. cohortis, trib. milit., donat. | hasta pura corona vallari, proc. ab | epistulis et a patrimonio, iterum ab | epistulis divi Nervae, eodem auctore | ex s. c. praetoriis ornamentis, ab epistul. | tertio imp. Nervae Caesar. Traiani Aug. Ger., | praef. vigilum, Volcano d. d.*

³⁹⁷ Syme (1958) 91-92.

labeling him “a document of social mimicry.” In making this judgment, he places great importance on family connections and social class to justify a preference for using representations of aristocratic figures for their symbolic capital: “No suspicion of Republican sentiments incriminates the life and career of Titinius Capito, nor does any link of propinquity with the aristocratic houses explain or extenuate his behavior. ... Undue subservience to the prestige of rank and station transforms imitation into parody, involuntarily exposing the inner falsity of conventional beliefs and pious observances.”³⁹⁸

This dismissal of Capito’s activities as a literary variety of social climbing, however, ignores an important model for both the production of such historical works and the encouragement of other writers: the late Republican banker and antiquarian scholar T. Pomponius Atticus. Like Capito, Atticus was an equestrian who proved himself adept at surviving the political upheavals of his lifetime.³⁹⁹ Cicero heralds his friend’s scholarly works as a rich source for historical instances.⁴⁰⁰ According to Nepos, in at least some of his works Atticus achieved epigrammatic brevity in his accounts of the deeds and offices of his subjects.⁴⁰¹ Nepos, himself a probable recipient of Atticus’s encouragement, describes his historical interests in terms that anticipate Capito’s adopted cultural role: “He was also the greatest imitator of the character of our ancestors (*mos maiorum*) and a lover of antiquity, which he knew so thoroughly that he explained

³⁹⁸ Syme (1958) vol. 1, 92. Freudenberg (2001) 227-28 discusses Capito and Syme’s interpretation of his social, literary and intellectual role as “the Maecenas of Trajan’s Rome” [Syme (1958) vol. 1, 93].

³⁹⁹ V. Nep. *Vit. Att.* 6-12, 16. I discuss Atticus as an exemplary model for personal survival in section 3.3 of the previous chapter.

⁴⁰⁰ *Nunc vero, quoniam haec nos etiam tractare coepimus, suppeditabit nobis Atticus noster e thesauris suis quos et quantos viros! (de Fin. 2.67).* The phrase *e thesauris suis* may pun on Atticus’s notable wealth. Nepos likewise comments on Atticus’s histories of various noble families: *quibus libris nihil potest esse dulcius iis, qui aliquam cupiditatem habent notitiae clarorum virorum (Vit. Att. 18).* Cf. David (1998a) 15 on Atticus’s historical works.

⁴⁰¹ *namque versibus, qui honore rerumque gestarum amplitudine ceteros populi Romani praestiterunt, exposuit ita, ut sub singulorum imaginibus facta magistratusque eorum non amplius quaternis quinisque versibus descripserit: quod vix credendum sit tantas res tam breviter potuisse declarari (Nep. Vit. Att. 18).*

it in its entirety in that volume, in which he enumerated the magistracies” (*moris etiam maiorum summus imitator fuit antiquitatisque amator, quam adeo diligenter habuit cognitam, ut eam totam in eo volumine exposuerit, quo magistratus ordinavit, Vit. Att. 18.1-2*). Atticus as a collector and publisher of such historical and cultural material, as well as a supporter of others’ scholarly activity, may provide a model for later scholars and patrons: the recorder of the deeds of famous men himself becomes an *exemplum*, as does Capito in turn.

By recording famous acts, both Atticus and Capito assume something of the cultural authority belonging to the persons whose lives they record.⁴⁰² In his biography of Atticus, Nepos suggests that recording an act in writing becomes almost a means of re-enacting it as if imitating an *exemplum*. Atticus’s antiquarian publications form much of the basis for his appearance as imitator: the passage in the biography passes in a smooth progression from Atticus as “imitator of the character of our ancestors” (*moris etiam maiorum summus imitator*), to his love for and complete knowledge of antiquity, and finally to his composition of a book on Roman magistracies (*Att. 18.1-2*). Reading this sequence in reverse order reveals the underlying logic of this progression: Atticus’s book demonstrates his antiquarian knowledge, and this in turn demonstrates his love for and thus his perceived imitation of the ancestral practices of Rome. Nepos links the antiquarian symbolically with the content of his work: publishing his knowledge of the past demonstrates his love for ancestral practices. Atticus shows that the connection between an author and his work can encompass a much broader range than the relatively focused connections between the *exitus* writers and the various Imperial victims. As I discussed near the beginning of this section, the introduction to Tacitus’s *Agricola* also suggests this connection between historical actors and the recorders of their acts through

⁴⁰² Compare Wallace-Hadrill (1997) 13-14 who suggests that antiquarianism replaced the idea of the inherited tradition of the nobility as a basis of authority in the late Republic and Augustan era.

the echo between the opening words—“The deeds and practices of famous men” (*Clarorum virorum facta moresque, Agr. 1*)—and the description of the books written by Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio as “monuments of the most famous talents” (*monumenta clarissimorum ingeniorum, Agr. 2*).⁴⁰³ In this echo, Tacitus establishes fame as a transferable property between political actors and their literary narrators. Pliny’s summary praise for Capito’s statue collection and laudatory poems evinces the same pattern: “You may know that the man who loves others’ virtues in this way abounds in many of his own” (*Scias ipsum plurimis virtutibus abundare, qui alienas sic amat, Pliny, Ep. 1.17.4*). Within this conception of biographical writing, a public declaration of praise by means of recitation or publication establishes the subject of the eulogy as an emblem for the author’s own character. Such a public declaration implies that the attitude expressed about the emblematic figure also demonstrates something about the character of the author, whether or not the latter’s life or actions support the connection. The Roman assumption that people should imitate actions they approve thus enables individuals to claim that those whom they adopt as emblems for their moral or political views serve as proofs of their own character.

4.3: Collecting the *Mos Maiorum*.

In the final section of this chapter, I shift my focus to the emblematic function of collections of *exempla* rather than the one-to-one correspondences between an emblem and its owner or author that occupied the previous sections. Groups of exemplary representations in textual or sculptural form could evoke an impressionistic vision of Roman accomplishments, traditional morality as a system (*mos maiorum*) or some particular moral quality. Some collections impress their audiences simply by the multitude of figures collected in them. In more compressed form, bare lists or catalogues

⁴⁰³ See Sailor (2004) 148.

of names within a passage from a larger work also act as allusive representations of character or morality.⁴⁰⁴ Such collections of *exempla* represent something at once more limited and more abstract than any individual instance. Of course, just as authors may mold individual *exempla* to fit a particular argument or circumstance, the selection and arrangement of individual components guides the potential meaning of such lists of names and sculptural programs.⁴⁰⁵ Just as with the transformation of individual exemplary figures into cultural emblems, the constituent figures of these collections lose much of their specificity as they are subsumed by the collection as a whole. The reader of a compilation like that of Valerius Maximus cannot simultaneously apprehend both the collective force of the whole and the particular details of its constituent elements. Even within a single chapter of the work, a reader must choose between viewing the whole or its parts at any one time. Likewise sculptural programs—whether gradually assembled over time like the monuments scattered through the Roman Forum, or consciously planned like those in the Forum of Augustus or the Portico and Theater of Pompey—can only be experienced by an observer either as a collection or as individual works at any one time. The audiences for such collections must choose to view them on either the particular or the composite level, and likely will switch back and forth between the two viewpoints over time. Unless they consciously refuse to view a collection as whole, instead isolating each component as a discrete unit, they will experience the totality of the list or monument as a representation of an abstract that cannot fully assimilate the

⁴⁰⁴ E.g. Cicero, *pro Caelio* 39, *Par. Stoic.* 11-12; Vergil *Aeneid* 6.756-886; Horace, *C.* 1.12.33-48; Manilius 1.777-804; Quintilian 12.2.29-30; Pliny, *Ep.* 1.17. Ovid *Fasti* 1.590-608 provides a similar list primarily using indirect references rather than names. Cf. Martial 11.5. Cf. Hölkeskamp (1996) 316 “Zugleich sind alle Figuren dieses ‘Schatzhauses der Erinnerung’ auch Mitglieder und Repräsentanten einer besonderen Art von Kollektiv, nämlich der Gesamtheit aller *maiores*.” Hölkeskamp, however, concentrates on the Republican exemplars as forming a sort of library of both moral and practical patterns for action.

⁴⁰⁵ E.g. Gowing (2005) 144-45 discusses the potential criteria for inclusion or omission among the *summi viri* of Augustus’s forum. See Bloomer (1992) 17-54 and Skidmore (1996) 83-92 on Valerius Maximus’s choice and arrangement of *exempla*.

particular details of each component *exemplum*. Authors and monument builders deploy collections of images or lists of names to represent the city of Rome, the body of its citizens or some aspect of their character in broad strokes, creating an impressionistic sense of the object of representation that downplays the messy particular details of its components in favor of the broader emotional or cultural vision.

Perhaps the most clearly emblematic textual form such collections may take is that of a bare list of names cited to evoke some ethical or cultural claim. Quintilian, for example, uses this type of list to proclaim the efficacy of Roman exemplarity itself as a method of moral instruction: “Will others teach Bravery, Justice, Trust, Self-Control, Frugality, Contempt for Pain and Death better than the Fabricii, the Curii, the Reguli, the Decii, the Mucii and countless others? As strong as the Greeks are in precepts to the same extent the Romans are strong in examples, which is a greater thing” (*An fortitudinem, iustitiam, fidem, continentiam, frugalitatem, contemptum doloris ac mortis melius alii docebunt quam Fabricii, Curii, Reguli, Decii, Mucii aliique innumerabiles? Quantum enim Graeci praeceptis valent, tantum Romani, quod est maius, exemplis*, IO 12.2.30). Through the list at the center of this passage, Quintilian valorizes a system that teaches abstract qualities through circumstantially limited instantiations of those qualities, but what is notable here is the identification of these qualities purely with family names, eliding references even to particular deeds. Just on the level of the individual names, this oblique form of reference shifts the emphasis in evaluating morals from actions to actors, from examples to cultural emblems. In addition, it emphasizes the traditional authority of aristocratic families as a group through the use of names in a generic plural.⁴⁰⁶ But in the wider view, by collecting these names as a list, Quintilian creates a sort of collective emblem for traditional Roman

⁴⁰⁶ While in some cases the plural name describes a group of clearly linked men of the same name—the two famous Decii form a clear pair that would occasion the use of plural—in other cases the plural name describes a well-known individual as a generic type—Regulus would be a model of this type.

morality. Note that the list of virtues that opens the passage—“Bravery, Justice, Trust, Self-Control, Frugality, Contempt for Pain and Death”—do not correspond in any direct fashion to the list of names that follows—“the Fabricii, the Curii, the Reguli, the Decii, the Mucii and countless others.” The phrase “countless others” that closes the list in fact enables this group to extend indefinitely: the preceding five names act as emblems for an assumed vast collection of other Roman examples. Quintilian lists these particular names not so much because they themselves are active parts of every Roman’s moral decision process, but because their citation as *exempla* symbolizes the concept of exemplarity.

Numerous lists of this type appear in Roman texts.⁴⁰⁷ Monuments such as the Forum of Augustus and imitations of its sculptural program at Arretium, Lavinium and Pompeii function as architectural equivalents of these written collections.⁴⁰⁸ The Forum of Augustus both presented a collective representation of exemplars with its sculptural program of *summi viri* and also allowed for the inclusion of more recent figures alongside its gallery of Republican Roman heroes.⁴⁰⁹ Within this public space the sculptural representation of leadership designed by Augustus could continually

⁴⁰⁷ E.g. see Cic., *Cael.* 39, *Par. Stoic.* 11-12, *Tusc. Disp.* 1.89; Vergil *Aeneid* 6.756-886; Horace, *C.* 1.12.33-48; Manilius 1.777-804; Pliny, *Ep.* 1.17. Juvenal 8.1-23 weaves a similar list through a condemnation of contemporary *mores*.

⁴⁰⁸ For scholarly treatments of the Forum of Augustus, see Zanker (1968), Spannagel (1999). Flower (1996) 224-36 discusses the Forum as a monumental development of the display of *imagines* intended to supersede the family displays of the traditional senatorial families; Chaplin (2000) 174-87 discusses the Forum in relation to Augustus’s attitude toward and use of *exempla*; Gowing (2005) 138-45 discusses the shaping of memory through the construction of the Forum.

⁴⁰⁹ Cassius Dio reports that the *ornamenta triumphalia* were expanded after the construction of this Forum to include the erection of a statue there beside the *summi viri* (55.10.3). Chaplin (2000) 188-92 discusses the substitution of the *ornamenta* for the triumph itself under Augustus and the role of the statues in establishing this changed form as a desirable honor.

incorporate new figures into the collective portrait.⁴¹⁰ Gowing links Vergil's parade of Roman heroes (*Aen.* 6.756-886) and Ovid's passage on Republican figures worthy of the title 'Augustus' (*Fasti* 1.590-608) with Augustus's own Forum to claim that: "The period gives rise, in other words, to a canonical list of acceptable Republican *exempla*, a list that would set the standards by which the emperor himself wished to be judged."⁴¹¹ Although he does not cite the passage, Gowing here reproduces Augustus's own edict about the purpose of his forum: "he declared by proclamation that he had devised this in order that the citizens would judge him, while he lived, and the princes of the following generations by the standard of those men's lives as if according to a model" (*professus edicto commentum id se, ut ad illorum <vitam> velut ad exemplar et ipse, dum viveret, et insequentium aetatium principes exigerentur a civibus*, Suet. *Aug.* 31.5).⁴¹² Thus, Gowing seems to read the explicit purpose of a single collective emblem as representing a binding, culture-wide development. T. J. Luce, however, identifies numerous disagreements between the extant inscriptions from Augustus's forum and the parallel accounts in Livy's history. He argues that Augustus and Livy present two very different views of *exempla*: "for Livy the emphasis was on imitation or avoidance in the conduct of one's personal life and public career, whereas for Augustus it was on the achievements against which he and succeeding *principes* should be measured in the judgment of posterity. But in all else there is little common ground."⁴¹³ In Luce's reading, then, Augustus's forum presents a vision of Augustus's place in Roman history that

⁴¹⁰ *Professus edicto commentum id se, ut ad illorum <vitam> velut ad exemplar et ipse, dum viveret, et insequentium aetatium principes exigerentur a civibus* (Suet. *Aug.* 31.5). Chaplin (2000) discusses the role of the Forum as a collection of *exempla*. See e.g. Tac. *Agr.* 40 on the triumphal honors for Agricola's victory in Britain; Pliny *Ep.* 2.7 for a triumphal statue erected to commemorate Vestricius Spurinna's victory over the Bructeri; and *AE* 1972, 174 recording triumphal statues erected in Augustus's forum for L. Volusius L. f. Saturninus, *cos.* 3 CE.

⁴¹¹ Gowing (2005) 144. For similar interpretations, see also Litchfield (1914) 53-61; David (1998) 10, 15-17; and Chaplin (2000) 171-72.

⁴¹² Gowing (2005) 144 n. 33 on this passage does, however, cite Chaplin (2000) 173-96 who discusses the passage from Suetonius. See also Flower (1996) 232.

⁴¹³ Luce (1990) 137.

emphasizes magnitude of accomplishment as much as a canon of acceptable conduct. Although Augustus's forum was undoubtedly an influential monument, treating it as establishing "a canonical list of acceptable Republican *exempla*" is unlikely to be accurate for anything beyond a narrow span of time.

Other emblem lists demonstrate that the content of such compilations in fact displays a significant flexibility. In a passage written toward the end of Augustus's principate, for instance, Manilius describes a gallery of heroes inhabiting the Milky Way.⁴¹⁴ Even more than Augustus's forum, this list emphasizes magnitude, both in the number of heroes and the scale of the accomplishments the poet references. The Roman heroes in this list appear in loosely chronological order proceeding from the kings, to the early Republic, then the Punic wars, followed by a scattering of figures from the late Republic and finally ending with praise of Augustus, although there are frequent local reversals within this larger frame.⁴¹⁵ Toward the end of the passage, the poet cites three important aristocratic families collectively, instead of identifying individual members of each clan: "the great descendants of Claudius, and the chiefs of the Aemilian house, and the famous Metelli" (*et Claudii magna propago, Aemiliaeque domus proceres, clarique Metelli*, 1.795-96). The inclusion of these familial references reinforces the emphasis that Manilius places on the unparalleled quantity of Roman heroes: "Roman men, the number of whom is now the largest" (*Romanique viri, quorum iam maxima turba est*, 1.777). Most relevantly for comparison with the Forum of Augustus, this catalogue of the Milky Way's inhabitants includes several figures from the civil wars, at least two of whom — Cicero and Cato the younger — are unlikely to have appeared in the Forum. First,

⁴¹⁴ Manilius 1.777-804 comprises the list of Roman heroes. The preceding lines 760-76 include a range of mythological and historical Greek heroes.

⁴¹⁵ E.g. 1.784-86 which names Camillus and Brutus in reverse order (*et Iove qui meruit caelum Romamque Camillus | servando posuit, Brutusque a rege receptae | conditor*) and 1.787-88 which names Marcellus and Cossus, the third and second dedicators of the *spolia opima*, in reverse chronological order (*et tertia palma | Marcellus Cossusque prior de rege necato*).

Pompey and Cicero follow immediately after the two Scipiones Africani in the list: “Pompey the conqueror of the world and through three triumphs the first citizen before its day, and Tullius [Cicero] who attained the fasces by the wealth of his mouth” (*Pompeiusque orbis domitor per trisque triumphos | ante diem princeps, et censu Tullius oris | emeritus fasces*, 1.793-95). Even more interesting is the trio of figures who immediately precede the appearance of Augustus: “Cato the conqueror of fortune, and Agrippa the creator of his own fortune as a soldier under arms, and the Julian offspring from the lineage of Venus” (*et Cato fortunae victor, fictorque sub armis | miles Agrippa suae, Venerisque ab origine proles | Iulia*, 1.797-99). Of these five figures, Cicero and the younger Cato are unlikely candidates for inclusion in the sculptural program.⁴¹⁶ Within the odd progression from Cato to Agrippa and then Caesar, the linkage between Cato and Agrippa as respectively “conqueror of fortune (*fortunae victor*) and “creator of his own [fortune]” (*fictor... suae*) reveals that Manilius here adopts a sort of the ‘great man’ approach to history that focuses on individual ability and force of will rather than selecting particular figures for ideological consistency. Likewise the earlier references to Pompey’s triumphs and Cicero’s oratory accentuate the fact of success in and of itself, untethered from any particular political purpose. What this approach produces, however, is not a de-politicized view of emblematic figures, but rather one that affirms Augustus’s position by the sheer magnitude of his accomplishment.

Martial provides a strikingly different example in an epigram praising the emperor Nerva. The poet assembles a number of famous Republican figures who would, he claims, reverse their best known acts to welcome Nerva as supreme ruler (11.5).⁴¹⁷ This epigram works precisely on the assumption that most readers would not expect

⁴¹⁶ Gowing (2005) 145. See Luce (1990) 129-30 on the likely inclusion of Pompey in the sculptural program as “a nonpartisan gesture of which Livy doubtless would have approved.”

⁴¹⁷ See also Gowing (2005) 105 on this poem.

these figures to support such a ruler. For example, Martial claims that “Brutus will rejoice with you as leader” (*te duce gaudebit Brutus*, 11.5.9) and that, setting aside their competition for supremacy, “[Pompey] the Great along with Caesar as a private citizen will love you” (*et te privato cum Caesare Magnus amabit*, 11.5.11). The epigrammatist caps this recitation with the paradoxical claim that: “Also if Cato himself should return, called back from the infernal shadows of Dis, he will be a Caesarian” (*Ipse quoque infernis revocatus Ditis ab umbris | si Cato reddatur, Caesarianus erit*, 11.5.13-14). This compilation of flattering hyperbole thus parades a series of ideologically troublesome figures whom it playfully converts into supporters of Nerva’s principate. It is precisely because these statements are not really credible that the poet’s praise for Nerva works. That Martial’s claims cannot be literally true does not undermine his purpose; rather their incredibility is necessary for his paradoxical assertions to function as paradox. This epigram, then, stresses the incompatibility of these authoritative figures with the contemporary principate. Rather than reconciling these emblematic figures to the current political regime, in this poem Martial chooses to recognize their essential alienation from that system, instead deploying them to illuminate Nerva with their reflected glory. This paradox in fact is a central element in contemporary characterizations of the ‘restoration of freedom’ following the assassination of Domitian; Tacitus, for example, claims: “immediately from the very birth of this most blessed era Nerva Caesar has combined once incompatible things, the principate and liberty” (*et quamquam primo statim beatissimi saeculi ortu Nerva Caesar res olim dissociabiles miscuerit, principatum ac libertatem*, *Agr.* 3).⁴¹⁸ The epigrammatist’s playful hyperbole and the inversions of these emblematic figures establish a frame of reference in which to consider Nerva that, despite parading its own absurdity, nevertheless works as praise for the emperor.

⁴¹⁸ See also Rimell (2008) 162-64 on Martial 11 and the new principate of Nerva.

Like the more succinct lists of names, compilations of exemplary figures such as Atticus's genealogical volumes, Valerius Maximus's *Facta et Dicta Memorabilia* and Fannius's collection of martyr biographies may function as unified structures rather than simply compilations of fragmented sub-units. These collections that begin to appear in the late Republic and the Augustan era from authors including Varro, Atticus, and Nepos continue in various forms through the first century C.E.⁴¹⁹ Valerius Maximus provides the primary extant example of this genre in literature, but Pliny's reports of Capito's and Fannius's works demonstrate similar, albeit more focused activity continuing under the principate. Pliny's own collection of letters with its frequent obituaries and other discussions of recent and contemporary persons resembles in part collections of this sort.⁴²⁰ In contrast to the claim that the canon of available *exempla* and their potential meanings became fixed during the early principate following the publication of various *exempla* collections during the Triumviral and Augustan periods, the emphasis on Neronian and Domitianic martyrs that dominates much of literary production from the time of Trajan demonstrates continuing interest in more recent exemplary figures.⁴²¹

Some emblem collections represent sub-groups within Roman society. For example, aristocratic families, especially under the Republic, used several types of emblematic display, often involving collections of figures, to affirm their inherited authority. The family genealogies (*stemma*) and masks (*imagines*) of famous ancestors displayed in the atria of aristocratic homes impressed the family's social importance on those entering the house.⁴²² At the most basic level, these objects served as 'status

⁴¹⁹ David (1998) provides an overview of the *exempla* collections preceding that of Valerius Maximus. He divides these into two broad types: (1) collections of *exempla* proper and (2) books *de viris illustribus*.

⁴²⁰ Freudenberg (2001) 215-17, who uses Pliny *Ep.* 4.11 on the exile of Valerius Licinianus as a primary example of this activity.

⁴²¹ Litchfield (1914) 63-64. Hölkeskamp (1996) 327-28 sets the shift in the function of exemplarity earlier, toward the end of the Second Century BCE, with what he sees as the expansion of the primary audience beyond the *nobiles* to the entire people.

⁴²² See Flower (1996) for the most recent full-scale examination of the *imagines*.

symbols' for those who had held a magistracy and their descendants.⁴²³ In discussing the exemplary function of these displays earlier critics have typically focused on the idea that these masks act as spurs to imitation for their descendants.⁴²⁴ However, the influence of these emblems on the behavior of later generations was likely more often an unrealized ideal than a frequent source of guidance. An anecdote about T. Manlius Torquatus (*cos.* 165 BCE) in Valerius Maximus provides a revealing illustration (Val. Max. 5.8.3). In 140 BCE, Torquatus condemned his son D. Iunius Silanus for abuse of office in Macedonia.⁴²⁵ In response the younger man committed suicide. The father refused to attend the funeral, instead offering legal consultation to his clients during the ceremony. While he was doing this, Torquatus "saw that he had taken his seat in that atrium where the image, conspicuous by its severity, of that well known Torquatus Imperiosus was placed, and it occurred to that very prudent man that the portraits of ancestors with their labels were accustomed to be placed in the front part of the house for the purpose that their descendants would not only read of their virtues, but would also imitate them" (*videbat enim se in eo atrio consedissee, in quo Imperiosi illius Torquati severitate conspicua imago posita erat, prudentissimoque viro succurrebat effigies maiorum [suorum] cum titulis suis idcirco in prima parte aedium poni solere, ut eorum virtutes posterii non solum legerent, sed etiam imitarentur*, Val. Max. 5.8.3). Citing this passage, Flower describes this anecdote as indicating that the example of Torquatus's *imagines* "had encouraged him in the severe stance he had adopted."⁴²⁶ A close attention to the narrative, however, reveals that those steps occur in reverse order: Torquatus only notices the *imago* after he has demonstrated his own severity. Although Valerius defines imitation of ancestral *imagines* through the voice of Torquatus as the way things should

⁴²³ Flower (1996) 10.

⁴²⁴ See *e.g.* Hölkeskamp (1996) 308, 316-323.

⁴²⁵ Torquatus had emancipated the son for adoption into the Iunii Silani; see Cic. *De fin.* 1.24.

⁴²⁶ Flower (1996) 218; compare, however, her translation of the passage on p. 323-24 which indicates that the observation about imitating the ancestors comes after the fact.

work, it is notable that this anecdote does not enact this expectation. As the narrative appears in Valerius, the father's reflection about his ancestor's severity providing an *exemplum* for his own appears only after the fact, more as a confirmation of his judgment than a model for it.⁴²⁷ Although one might argue for the ongoing influence of the *imagines* in inculcating Torquatus with an attitude of severity, Valerius's account of the event leaves little room for conscious imitation of his ancestor's precedent.

The aristocratic funeral projected the family image of the participants more directly into the center of public life, both through the public parade of *imagines* and through the speech from the *rostra* praising both the deceased and his or her ancestors. Individuals or families sometimes published written versions of these eulogies, often when a public funeral could not be held due to the circumstances, as in cases when the person had died abroad or the body were otherwise unavailable for the funeral.⁴²⁸ Romans viewed these speeches in praise of the ancestors as an ancient, indigenous practice. Dugan labels the funeral oration (*laudatio funebris*) a "mainstay of aristocratic image-production."⁴²⁹ Cicero describes speeches of this sort as one of the earliest extant forms of Roman oratory: "for the families themselves used to preserve them like marks of their own honor and monuments to be used, if anyone of the same family had died, to recall praise for the household and to illustrate their own noble birth, although by these eulogies the history of our affairs has become more filled with errors" (*ipsae enim familiae sua quasi ornamenta ac monumenta servabant et ad usum, si quis eiusdem*

⁴²⁷ Cic. *Fin.* 1.23-24 could be taken to imply a causal connection by recounting the deeds of the two Torquati in succession, but Cicero does not link the second episode to the first as a conscious imitation and the statement *cum illam severitatem in eo filio adhibuit* could apply equally either to direct imitation or an inherited family characteristic. The only direct reference to the *maiores* in this passage is in fact Torquatus's judgment about the dissimilarity between his son and their ancestors: *pronuntiaret eum non talem videri fuisse in imperio, quales eius maiores fuissent* (*Fin.* 1.24). See also Livy, *Per.* 54, but the epitome retains no reference to the *exemplum* of the previous Torquatus, if such appeared in Livy's text.

⁴²⁸ See Flower (1996) 91-150, especially 146-47 on published *laudationes*.

⁴²⁹ Dugan (2005) 28. See e.g. Dion. Hal. *Rom. Ant.* 5.17.3.

generis occidisset, et ad memoriam laudum domesticarum et ad illustrandam nobilitatem suam. quamquam his laudationibus historia rerum nostrarum est facta mendosior, Brut. 62). In particular, the third purpose Cicero suggests — illustrating the family’s nobility — explicitly characterizes such speeches as a means of projecting authority through images.

Cicero’s explanation for how these speeches distort history suggests that their preservation has less to do with factual accuracy than projecting the family’s importance through the accumulated citation of honors and offices: “For many things are written in them which did not happen: fake triumphs, extra consulships, even fake family relationships and transitions to the plebeians, since people of lower birth are mixed into an unrelated family of the same name; as if I were to say that I am descended from Manius Tullius, who was a patrician consul along with Servius Sulpicius in the tenth year after the kings had been driven out” (*multa enim scripta sunt in eis quae facta non sunt: falsi triumphi, plures consulatus, genera etiam falsa et ad plebem transitiones, cum homines humiliores in alienum eiusdem nominis infunderentur genus; ut si ego me a M. Tullio esse dicerem, qui patricius cum Ser. Sulpicio consul anno X post exactos reges fuit, Cic., Brut. 62*).⁴³⁰ Notice that the types of additions that are specified do not generally involve narratives of actions but instead prioritize the multiplication of honors — triumphs, consulships, family relationships. Flower states that, “The impressiveness of a funeral speech depended partly on the length of the lists of offices and honors.”⁴³¹ As with some interpretations of the Forum of Augustus and Manilius’s gallery of heroes who inhabit the Milky Way, the sheer size of the list becomes an argument for its importance. We have also seen this tactic in Cicero’s speech *pro Rabirio perduellionis* where the orator recites a barrage of authoritative names of those who were aligned against Saturninus to demonstrate the authority of the conservative faction (in section 4.1

⁴³⁰ On fabrications introduced through funeral orations, see also Livy 8.40.3-5.

⁴³¹ Flower (1996) 149.

above). In the competition between aristocratic families, the length of their funeral laudations becomes a marker of their success.

Varro's *Hebdomades* and Atticus's similar collection of *imagines* demonstrate a development on these familial displays of images. Although neither of these works is now extant, ancient descriptions state that both authors published works pairing images of numerous well known figures with capsule accounts of their individual accomplishments.⁴³² David links Atticus's works on individual families to the *laudatio funebris* and the *imagines*.⁴³³ This 'picture book' or catalogue approach to history presents a compilation of emblematic figures rather than an extended narrative of events. In such works, concise description is likely a necessity. Nepos's description of Atticus's works emphasizes the extreme brevity of the texts: "... under the images of individuals he described the acts and offices of those men in no more than four or five verses: and this is scarcely to be believed, that such great things can be declared in so brief a fashion" (... *sub singulorum imaginibus facta magistratusque eorum non amplius quaternis quinisque versibus descripserit: quod vix credendum sit, tantas res tam breviter potuisse declarari, Att. 18*). Such collections thus unite visual images with extremely abbreviated narratives. By compressing deeds and offices into such a limited space, Atticus directs his audience toward experiencing the history of Rome as an illustrated parade of emblematic figures whose individual roles appear only in brief outline. As with funeral laudations, the interest in large collections asserts itself here as well: Varro's collection included images and descriptions of seven hundred persons (Pliny, *NH* 35.11). As with other lists of emblems, then, the quantity of figures may become an end in itself. Such collections of images allow their readers to choose between contemplating one or more selected persons or marveling at the collective prestige of the multitude.

⁴³² See Pliny, *NH* 35.11 on both works; See also Nepos, *Att. 18* on that written by Atticus.

⁴³³ David (1998) 15.

4.4: Conclusion.

As I have argued in this chapter, Romans sometimes deploy *exempla* simply as tokens of cultural authority; that is, they introduce exemplary figures not for practical or ethical guidance or illustration, but simply for the prestige or notoriety connected to those figures. Figures whose acts were frequently cited as *exempla* could themselves become emblems that represent an abstract value or simply convey broad cultural authority. When they symbolize abstract qualities, the narrative details behind exemplary figures tends to fade into obscurity. In some cases the composite form may present a broad sense of a particular abstract quality, as the Forum of Augustus was designed to represent leadership.⁴³⁴ In other cases these collections could suggest a impressionistic vision of Roman identity or the *mos maiorum*. Sometimes lists impress simply by the multitude of figures they include. These collective forms serve as cultural shorthand to evoke an image of Roman society either in part or as a whole. Obviously viewers and readers are free to approach any such compilation at different times either as the totality or its particular individual elements.

⁴³⁴ Suet. *Aug.* 31.5.

Conclusion

As I argued in the introduction, exemplarity provides a useful window onto the structure of the Roman moral universe. By locating the basis for judgment in examples of particular acts or events rather than in a collection of abstract rules or an expressed moral code, the use of *exempla* encourages a compartmentalization of ethical thought. Where earlier scholarship has tended to treat these instances as fairly direct representatives of externally defined moral categories, this dissertation argues that, aside from their instantiation in contingent narratives, these categories maintained only a nebulous abstract existence in Roman thought. Traditional Roman moralism classified instances within moral categories not by adherence to a set rule, but by a sort of family resemblance within these groups. The casuistic character of traditional moralism insulates those who engage in this discourse from perceiving the contradictions between assessments made under differing circumstances. Moralism rooted in the particular details of narratives rather than abstract definitions is well adapted to conceal or absorb potential conflicts and paradoxes that may arise from the circumstantial application of moral judgment.

The traditional complaints in ancient texts about the degeneration of morals actually demonstrate the resilience of this form of moralism.⁴³⁵ As a consequence of the compartmentalization of ethical material into circumstantial narratives, questioning the current efficacy of exemplary imitation does not compromise the underlying system, nor does it produce any real alteration in behavior. People simply agree with the complaints, and then go on as they had before. Most people assume that they themselves have chosen 'good' models (hence why they agree with the criticism); in contrast to this optimistic self-assessment, it is only the people with whom they disagree who have failed to

⁴³⁵ See *e.g.* Cic. *De rep.* 5.1-2; Livy 1.*pr.*12; Sallust, *Cat.* 11-13. See Edwards (1993) 1-33 for an overview of Roman moralism, including the trope of decline.

emulate the tradition of the ancestors (*mos maiorum*). Without a stable abstract code to which judgments can be referred, the ability to recast ‘tradition’ to match current needs and ideological preferences allows individuals of various views all to present themselves as the exponents of traditional morality. (I discussed this ability to manipulate the understanding of tradition in chapter 1.)

The permeable boundary between factual and fictional narratives enables what seems credible — and therefore what appears to be credibly traditional — to serve as historical fact. As I argued in the second chapter, the ability to treat observed actions as the acts of stock figures and the converse ability to transform stock characters and narratives into specific *exempla* allows the process of exemplary comparison itself to provide a mythical or ideological basis for justifying the expediency of moralistic judgments. The practice of exemplarity locates the true ground for its stability in the method of making ethical decisions rather than in the content of those decisions. Moral ideas must consequently remain rooted in circumstantially bound enactments, not in reified abstractions. For this purpose, anonymous *exempla* are particularly useful for transforming anecdotes into abstract representations of acts, without thereby transforming them fully into figures for abstract concepts. Thus, rather than enabling an idealist understanding, narrative-based moralism retains the focus of ethical assessment entirely in the world of contingent circumstances.

Given this focus on a practical ethics located firmly in the realm of human action, it is necessary to understand not only how exemplarity structures arguments for which behaviors to imitate and which to avoid, but also how it generates illustrations of the general condition of the world against which those behaviors are to be judged. As I argued in the third chapter of this dissertation, writers and speakers may in fact adopt this approach to using *exempla* to argue against making judgments, or against making excessively harsh judgments. Illustrations treat examples not as material for morally charged comparisons but rather as purportedly typical representatives of a type. Instead

of positioning *exempla* as objects for direct imitation, such arguments employ them as rhetorical premises for a related idea.

Finally, it is important to realize that Romans could frequently make rather superficial use of the mechanisms of exemplarity. They may suggest that a pattern of comparison or imitation is applicable to a particular situation without any definite logical or evidentiary basis. Prominent among such superficial deployments of *exempla* is the use of emblems to claim the social or moral authority of an important figure by means of a tangential connection. Such emblematic assertions pare down the relationship between the exemplary figure and the object of comparison to a simple assertion of their connection. Despite the shallow character of these associations, however, they could serve as powerful declarations of intellectual or political allegiance.

Looking forward, I see three primary vectors for continuing work on this project: (1) more broadly and much more thoroughly incorporating evidence from material culture and the work that has been done on such sources; (2) integrating theoretical material derived from recent studies of human moral psychology; and (3) further elaborating the view of exemplary thought as a method of mythologizing the activities observed in everyday life to become the basis for this variety of moral and practical discussion. In combination, these paths may provide first illustrations for the extension of this practice of moral reasoning to the lower echelons of society both within and beyond the elite who dominate the literary sources that have provided the basis for my work in this dissertation, and second a more comprehensive theoretical basis for interpreting how lower status persons might understand themselves as participants in a system shared between themselves and the elite.

A wider incorporation of various evidence from material culture — artistic representations, graffiti, etc. — provides a means to expand my work to cover a broader swath of Roman society. Although my discussion has incorporated some small concerns with visual representations, primarily in my chapter on emblems, I have largely focused

on reinterpreting literary evidence to demonstrate the centrality of a more *ad hoc* mode of creating and recreating exemplary material to meet current needs than what the earlier discussions focused on well-known enduring exemplars have described. The work that others have done on exemplarity expressed through visual media has typically built on the consensus that I have argued against. Often working from the assumption that *exempla* were necessarily drawn from widely recognized elite figures, a number of scholars have attempted to extend our understanding of Roman exemplarity to the lower ranks of society using various sorts of material evidence to demonstrate how members of the lower classes might understand themselves in relation to those aristocratic figures, or how they might model themselves after those figures.⁴³⁶ This body of scholarship, thus, offers an opportunity to begin supplementing and extending my work with a broader range of evidence by building on and reorienting those discussions to align more closely with my focus on the users rather than the creators of *exempla*. In particular, the work that some scholars have done on the use of type scenes and type figures as a form of engagement with the traditions of exemplarity⁴³⁷ indicate a potentially fruitful path for further extending my discussion in Chapter 2 of the cross-pollination of narrative outlines derived from both fictional and factual sources. The use of stereotyped figures and scenes in artistic representations suggests a parallel to the repetition of narrative patterns between *exempla*, declamations and fables. A wider attention to non-literary evidence provides the best possibility for illustrating the extension of the pattern of observation and recollection that I have described into the lower classes of Roman society.

Modern studies into the psychological bases for moral thought provide another path to expand my work to encompass a broader understanding of the place of exemplary thought in the operation of Roman moralism. My description of the use of

⁴³⁶ See especially the essays collected in Bell and Hansen (2008).

⁴³⁷ *e.g.* Davies (2008), Hölscher (2008), and von Hesberg (2008)

exempla has revealed various practices that seem to enact largely unmediated expressions of a number of the innate tendencies of moralism that have been identified by recent psychological studies. For example, social psychologists have demonstrated a typical human tendency toward hypocritical application of moral standards, including the strong predilection for “motivated reasoning” to reach conclusions dictated by personal advantage; the tendency to judge ourselves by more lenient standards than we use to judge others, even to the extent of using potentially negative information as a standard only for making judgments about others, not ourselves; “naive realism”, the tendency to assume that we see things as they truly are while others do not; and the tendency to interpret conflicts in such a way as to produce clear-cut, black-and-white oppositions between the opposing sides.⁴³⁸ These predilections appear to suggest an innate psychological basis for many of the patterns in which Roman speakers and writers adapt exemplary materials to serve their best advantage in their contemporary circumstances. By identifying the activities I have described in the use of *exempla* for moral argument as consistent with a human predisposition toward certain patterns of moral judgment, I would seek to provide an underlying theoretical explanation for the potential diffusion of the exemplary mode of moral argument and decision making beyond the Roman elite. Although this work cannot directly prove the extension of the practice of exemplary moral argument as I have described it to a broader portion of Roman society, it does suggest a potent means for understanding how members of the lower classes might buy into the system that we find in elite literature, whether they adopted these forms of reasoning for themselves directly or in some adapted form.

Finally, a broader and more thorough integration of the concept that exemplarity acts as a sort of constantly recreated mythology based in the observation of everyday life

⁴³⁸ The chapter on “The Faults of Others” p. 59-80 in J. Haidt (2006) *The Happiness Hypothesis*. New York, provides an overview, in a relatively popularizing format, of several of the conclusions about the psychological bases for moralism derived from recent studies in moral psychology.

in each individual's local communities provides another vector for enriching the theoretical foundations of my model for the use of *exempla*. Through this concept, based in Beard's adaption of Barthes' model of "Mythology Today" to discuss the mythological role of declamation in ancient Rome,⁴³⁹ I suggest that the process of identifying by personal observation models for emulation or avoidance encouraged a practice through which individuals would transform the acts and events they had observed into the substance of a form of mythology, that is, they would engage in a process by which they mythologized the behaviors and attitudes that they had identified as significant during the course of their everyday life. Thus, in the practice of exemplarity, the material of living memory served not simply as a mental record of actions, but also as a vibrant source for the creation of moral meaning, the core in fact of what served as the Roman moral code. While integrating this theoretical argument more thoroughly into my description of exemplarity, I hope to enrich my model of the interaction between individuals and the various local communities with which they interacted, through which they passed during the course of their activities, and from which they assembled their personal libraries of remembered *exempla*. A vital element of this practice of observation was the mental recording not only of observed actions, but of the various reactions to those actions which could provide patterns to predict the potential responses to repetitions of particular *exempla*. A more thorough integration of this understanding of exemplarity as a means to mythologize everyday life may enable us to reveal more clearly the means by which Roman society maintained the perception of a stable ideology through the medium of an ever-shifting body of exemplary material that was perpetually liable to be recast or replaced in accord with current demands.

These three vectors for further study — the incorporation of evidence from material remains, the observations derived from recent studies of moral psychology, and

⁴³⁹ Beard (1993) and Barthes (1972).

the interpretation of exemplarity as a form of mythological discourse — offer an opportunity to create a socially broader and theoretically richer picture of the Roman use of *exempla* than the primarily literary focus in this dissertation has so far achieved. My work here has attempted to reorient our view of exemplarity to understand the essential importance of the use of *exempla* rather than the creation of *exempla*. I have demonstrated the ancient authors deployed a wider variety of examples in more varied ways than has generally been recognized. In particular I emphasize the malleability of both the material and the forms of argument through which individuals could deploy it. The concepts of the anonymous *exemplum* and the exemplary emblem represent probably the two most significant expansions to our previous picture of exemplarity. Each of these two forms is essentially the inverse of the other: nameless *exempla* emphasize the narrative of the action to the exclusion of the identity of the actor, exemplary emblems the actor's identity and social authority to exclusion of the narrative details. These opposing concepts provide a cogent illustration of the wider range of exemplarity that I have sought to demonstrate through my discussion.

By focusing on the use of *exempla* in building moral and practical arguments, I have attempted to reorient our understanding of Roman exemplarity. Rather than being primarily limited to an established canon of important historical figures, *exempla* emerged on an *ad hoc* basis within a vibrant tradition centered around the identification of useful models within one's local community. With its emphasis on supporting moral judgments through particularist argument, exemplarity is well attuned to mold itself to the opportunism of traditional, non-rigorous moralism. The Roman use of *exempla* provides a supple and powerful means to combine the ability to evolve and adapt in response to emergent circumstances with a firm sense of adherence to tradition.

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