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## EARLY ROMAN EPIC AND THE MARITIME MOMENT

MATTHEW LEIGH

**I**N 264 B.C.E. ROMAN FORCES under the command of the consul Appius Claudius crossed the Strait of Messina and entered Sicily. The historian Florus notes that these straits were not just marked by the violence of their waters but were also notorious for the mythical monsters to which they played host (Flor. 1.18.5: *Appio Claudio consule primum fretum ingressus est fabulosis infame monstribus aestuque violentum*). Those monsters were, of course, Scylla and Charybdis.<sup>1</sup> Eleven years later, the consuls Gnaeus Servilius and Gaius Sempronius were conducting naval operations off the coast of Libya and in the region of the Lesser Syrtis when they found themselves grounded on the island of Meninx. Polybius, who is our source for this episode, states that Meninx was formerly the land of the Lotus-Eaters (Polyb. 1.39.1–2, cf. 34.3.12).<sup>2</sup> What both of these episodes, and the constructions put on them by their respective historians, have in common is the suggestion that the Romans of the First Punic War were following a course already charted by Odysseus. The aim of this article, therefore, is to think further about this pattern, to engage with what it meant for Rome suddenly to transform itself into a naval power,<sup>3</sup> and to ask how this relates to the development of Roman epic verse in the *Odusia* of Livius Andronicus and the *Bellum Punicum* of Naevius.<sup>4</sup> My contention is that, to a significant degree, the maritime moment and the epic moment are in fact one.

An earlier version of this paper was read to the 2008 Classical Association conference in Liverpool. I thank Gesine Manuwald for inviting me to speak and I would like to acknowledge the inspiring commentary of Nicholas Purcell. I have also gained a great deal from the comments of my colleagues Jonathan Prag, Ed Bispham, and Francesca Martelli, as well as from the anonymous *CP* readers. All Naevius citations are to Blänsdorf 1995.

1. Polyb. 34.2.12–3.11; Strabo 1.2.9, 14, 18, for Scylla and Charybdis, and 6.2.3 for the proximity of Charybdis to Messina. See also Verg. *Aen.* 3.410–32, 684–86; Plin. *HN* 3.89; Just. *Epit.* 4.1.11; Schol. Lycoph. *Alex.* 46.

2. For Meninx and the Lotus-Eaters, see also Eratosthenes apud Plin. *HN* 5.41; Strabo 17.3.17. For various ancient traditions locating the Lotus-Eaters at different points along the coast of North Africa, see Corcella 1993, ad Hdt. 4.177.2.

3. Leigh 2004, 156: “It is perhaps credible that the First Punic War was the first time that the Roman state took to sea.” The formulation is lazy and I hope that this paper can go some way toward putting things more accurately.

4. Neither poem is securely dated, but both authors are figures of the mid- to late 3rd century B.C.E. The only reliable dates for the career of Livius Andronicus indicate that he composed the first Greek-style dramatic works performed at Rome for the *Ludi Romani* of September 240 or 239 B.C.E. (Cic. *Brut.* 72–73, *Tusc.* 1.3, *Sen.* 50; Gell. *NA* 17.21.42; Cassiod. *Chron.* ad 239; *Glossae Salomonis* = *Gloss. Lat.* 1 Ansil. s.v. *comoedia*, 1:128 Lindsay) and a hymn for choirs of children performed in 207 B.C.E. (Livy 27.37.7; Fest. 446L). For cautious discussion of the dating of the *Odusia*, see Mariotti 1952, 19 and n. 1. Gell. *NA*

## 1. THE MARITIME MOMENT

In 311 B.C.E. the Roman senate voted to create two naval squadrons of ten ships each (Livy 9.30.3–4).<sup>5</sup> In the forty-seven years that followed, Rome is recorded as having undertaken but two naval expeditions: in 310/9, a raid was launched on Pompeii and Nuceria Alfaterna, but this ended in failure (Livy 9.38.2–3); and in 282 the fleet of Cornelius, entrusted with a survey of Magna Graecia, strayed contrary to treaty obligations into the waters of Tarentum, was met by the locals, and was sunk (Livy *Per.* 12; App. *Sam.* 7; Zonar. 8.2; Dio Cass. frag. 39.4–5; Oros. 4.1.1). Nuceria was duly taken in 308 and the Tarentine war brought to a successful conclusion in 272, but in both cases Rome prosecuted its campaign exclusively from the land.<sup>6</sup> This is not, on the face of it, the stuff of a major naval power. It will, however, be of value briefly to consider some further evidence for Roman activity in this area in order to gain a clearer view of how that nation related to the sea in this period and what it might mean to describe the years after 264 as its maritime moment.<sup>7</sup>

I have begun my account with the naval reform of 311 B.C.E., but it would be erroneous to suggest that the state did not equip itself with any naval resources before 311, or that it never undertook any mission indicative of overseas contacts or ambitions: a Roman state ship sailed for Delphi as early as 394, but fell into the hands of that major naval power, Lipara.<sup>8</sup> The colony alleged by Diodorus to have been sent out to Sardinia in 386 and a similar, if only vaguely dated, expedition to Corsica recorded by Theophrastus may be indicative of a more ambitious policy from which Rome retreated in the course of the later 4th century (Diod. Sic. 15.27.4; Theophr. *Hist. pl.* 5.8.2).<sup>9</sup> It is significant that when Antium was captured in 338, at least some of that city's ships were transferred to already-existing Roman dockyards, or *navalia* (Livy 8.14.12).<sup>10</sup> Another process begun before 311 and continued thereafter was the establishment of a network of maritime colonies: Antium in 338 (Livy 8.14.8), Anxur in 329 (Livy 8.21.11), on the island of Pontiae in 313 (Livy 9.28.7; Diod. Sic. 19.101.3), Sinuessa and

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17.21.45 records the claim of Naevius actually to have fought in the First Punic War, and places his first theatrical works in 235 B.C.E. Naevius is reported to have died in 204 or later (Cic. *Brut.* 60, cf. Hieron. ad ann. 201 B.C.E.), and Cic. *Sen.* 50 indicates that the *Bellum Punicum* was the delight of the poet's old age.

5. See Oakley 2005, ad loc.

6. Thiel 1954, 4–5, 23–26.

7. The sources for this period are often inadequate, not least after 292 B.C.E., with which Book 10 of Livy ends. The point is emphasized by Mitchell (1971, 639–40) and Steinby (2007, 55–56, 58–59, 67, 73), though the latter is perhaps too ready to assert the presence of the Roman navy when none is in fact recorded. For a possible third outing for the duumviral squadrons, see Lydus *Mag.* 1.27, on the fleet prepared in 267 B.C.E. as part of the war against the Sallentini. The emended text proposed first by Mattingly (1969, 510–11) and followed up by Harris (1976) implies the involvement of the duumviral squadrons. Though the other sources for the campaign (for which see Broughton 1951, 200) give no indication of what role the navy actually played, it may be significant that Flor. 1.15 and Zonar. 8.7 stress the excellence of the Sallentine port of Brundisium.

8. Diod. Sic. 14.93; Livy 5.28.1–5; App. *It.* 8; Plut. *Cam.* 8; Thiel 1954, 6–7.

9. Thiel 1954, 18–20, 54–56; Momigliano 1969, 357–61.

10. The beaks of the remaining ships formed the *rostra* in the Roman forum.

Minturnae in 296 (Livy 10.21.7–10), Cosa and Paestum in 273 (Livy *Per.* 14), and Ostia and Pyrgi at dates unknown.<sup>11</sup> Yet these were first and foremost concerned with coastal defense, that is to say, with preventing an enemy fleet from landing rather than providing a launching base for ships of Rome.<sup>12</sup> To quote the formulation of Russell Meiggs, they may have paved the way for sea power, but their primary aim was to postpone the need.<sup>13</sup>

The closer Rome came to the occupation of all of southern Italy, the closer she came to the established Carthaginian sphere of influence.<sup>14</sup> Treaties were made between Rome and Carthage in the first year of the Republic and again in 348, and both contained stipulations as to how far into Carthaginian waters Roman ships were allowed to sail (Polyb. 3.22.5–7, 3.24.4);<sup>15</sup> but perhaps the most interesting in this context are the disputed treaties of 306 and of 279/8.<sup>16</sup> The former, reported by the pro-Carthaginian historian Philinus and rejected as a forgery by Polybius, forbade Carthage to enter the Italian mainland and Rome the island of Sicily (Polyb. 3.26.3–4, cf. Livy 9.43.2; Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 4.628–29). That of 279/8 reaffirmed the terms of 306 and left to Carthage all responsibility to supply ships for the ongoing war with Pyrrhus (Polyb. 3.25.4–5). This stipulation is significant: on the one hand, it suggests that Carthage is willing to do a great deal to ensure that Rome should never wish to become a naval power; on the other, it suggests that Rome is, at least for now, ready to accept the landlocked condition that this implies.

The years immediately prior to the outbreak of the First Punic War offer some evidence suggestive of Roman preparation for naval warfare.<sup>17</sup> Yet the degree of such activity is put in question by Polybius' statement that the Roman troops sent by the senate in 264 to assist the Mamertine brigands occupying the city of Messina<sup>18</sup> actually had to be ferried across

11. For a skeptical account of various suggested dates for the foundation of the maritime colony at Ostia and argument in favor of a late date between 292 and 267, see Bispham 2000, 166–68.

12. Thiel 1954, 9–12; Hoyos 1998, 19–20. For the strategy of denying enemy naval forces the chance to make land, see Livy 7.25.4, 12; see 7.26.13–15 for Greek fleets attacking the coast of Latium in 348 B.C.E. Note esp. 7.26.13: *cum Graecis a Camillo nulla memorabilis gesta res; nec illi terra nec Romanus mari bellator erat.*

13. Meiggs 1973, 20. For what the network of maritime colonies came to signify, see Purcell 1996, 274.

14. Mitchell 1971, 655.

15. For Carthaginian readiness to act against ships caught in her waters, see Eratosthenes apud Strabo 17.1.19; see Fest. 484 L on the proverb *Tyria maria.*

16. The principal source for these treaties is Polyb. 3.22–26. See also the detailed note of Oakley (2005) ad Livy 7.27.2 and the ample bibliography appended.

17. Steinby (2007, 71) emphasizes the 273 B.C.E. creation of new colonies at Paestum and Cosa. Crawford (1985, 38–39) notes that “The enormous Minerva/Horse’s head issue . . . was certainly struck at Cosa during the First Punic War,” and suggests that the purpose was to pay for the construction there of the Roman fleet. Harris (1979, 184; cf. Steinby 2007, 71) points to Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 20.15 for the Romans’ 272 B.C.E. expropriation of half of the Sila forest and argues that this will have provided a vital resource for a ship-building program. Harris (1976) and Mattingly (1969) demonstrate that, though Livy *Per.* 15, Tac. *Ann.* 11.22.4–6, and Lydus *Mag.* 1.27 point to some increase in the number of quaestors in 267 B.C.E., these sources offer no basis for the traditional belief that what was involved was the creation of four *quaestores classici*. Yet Harris (1976, 97–99, 106) does date the emergence of the *quaestor Ostiensis* to this year and allows for this official’s likely role coordinating a ship-building program. See further Cassola 1962, 179.

18. Polyb. 1.7.1–5, 1.8.1–1.12.4; Thiel 1954, 136.

by craft supplied by the allied cities of Locri, Taras, Elea, and Naples.<sup>19</sup> The Mamertines themselves were notably unattractive associates (Polyb. 1.7.1–4, 1.10.3–4), and Roman willingness to intervene may be taken as evidence of acute anxiety in reaction to the 269/8 entry into Messina of the Carthaginians: without formally breaching the treaties of 348 and 306, they could get no nearer to the Italian mainland than this.<sup>20</sup> There is, therefore, some basis for arguing that the initial decision to cross the Strait of Messina had a very limited strategic aim, and one that could be achieved by land forces. By extension, it is evident that no sustained effort to contest Carthaginian control of Sicily could be contemplated without the corresponding readiness to challenge her role as the established thalassocracy of the western Mediterranean.<sup>21</sup> All must surely have understood this. How many cherished just such ambitions before the construction of the first great fleet of 261 must remain largely a matter for hypothesis.<sup>22</sup>

Rome's maritime moment is thus twofold: the first crossing of the sea to Sicily in 264 and the construction of the fleet of Duilius in 261.<sup>23</sup> Both episodes have their own rhetoric, their own mythology.<sup>24</sup> Consider, for instance, Florus, who emphasizes the exclusively terrestrial means by which the whole peninsula had been conquered, and asserts that in 264, Rome, the mistress of all Italy, a city drawing near to her five hundredth birthday, remained a rude, pastoral people and one wedded to the land (Flor. 1.18: *ille rudis, ille pastorius populus vereque terrester*).<sup>25</sup> The audacity of the first crossing also generates its stock of tales: Hanno, commander of the Carthaginian forces, boasts that his country will not even allow the Romans to wash their hands in the sea (Diod. Sic. 23.2.1; Dio Cass. frag. 43.9, cf. Zonar. 8.9); Appius Claudius insouciantly replies that his people are quick learners and offers a catalogue of military innovations that they have taken from their opponents and subsequently used against them (Diod. Sic. 23.2.1, cf. *FGrH* 839 [3]).<sup>26</sup> To Polybius the outbreak of the First Punic War represents the moment at which Rome first took to the sea.<sup>27</sup> It is, therefore, all

19. Polyb. 1.20.14. In this we see a clear example of an important pattern in the late fourth and early third centuries: the Roman willingness to look for key aspects of naval defense to the state's expanding body of *socii navales*. As the war developed, a key role for the *socii navales* will have been in crewing the new boats. The importance of and potential dangers represented by this resource is evident from the story in Oros. 4.7.12 and Zonar. 8.11 of the 259 B.C.E. conspiracy against Rome of three thousand slaves and four thousand *socii navales*. See further Thiel 1954, 73–75.

20. Polyb. 1.10.9; Thiel 1954, 128–29, 133, 139–40.

21. Polyb. 1.20.6 is important in this context: in the early years of the war, inland cities on Sicily defect to Rome but those on the shore join Carthage. For Carthaginian thalassocracy, see Polyb. 1.7.6, 1.16.7, 1.20.5; Diod. Sic. 23.2.1. For what this implies for Roman war aims, see Thiel 1954, 136.

22. Thiel 1954, 136; Hoyos 1998, 20–23.

23. For the fleet of Duilius, his victory at Mylae, and the subsequent celebration of his achievement, see the excellent Kondratieff 2004.

24. De Sanctis 1916, 125.

25. Cf. Eutr. 2.18.1–2, which erroneously attributes to 277 B.C.E. events properly dated to 264, and opens *anno quadringentesimo septuagesimo septimo, cum iam clarum urbis Romae nomen esset, arma tamen extra Italiam mota non fuerant*.

26. For this topos, see also Walbank 1957, ad Polyb. 1.20.15.

27. Polyb. 1.20.7; Flor. 1.18.7–9; and Oros. 4.7.7–8 date the decision to build the first fleet to 261 B.C.E. and the aftermath of the Roman seizure of Agrigentum. Diod. Sic. 23.2.1 implies that in 264, at the first crossing of Appius Claudius, the Romans were already ready to challenge Carthaginian control of the seas.

the more fortunate that the same Claudius is credited by Polybius with the capture during the crossing to Messina of a Carthaginian warship that formed the model for subsequent Roman shipbuilding (Polyb. 1.20.15–16).<sup>28</sup> The historian goes on to describe the debutant Roman oarsmen of the fleet of Duilius training eagerly on dry land before taking possession of their ships, and portions of a similar scene also appear among the fragments of Book 7 of the *Annals* of Ennius.<sup>29</sup> If that fleet was comfortably the largest that Rome had ever built, it was also created in double-quick time: Pliny, Florus, and Orosius state that the ships were built within sixty days of the cutting of the wood, while Florus adds that it was as if the trees had been metamorphosed into ships by divine aid.<sup>30</sup>

What is it about the events of 264 and 261 that inspires narratives of this sort? It is surely the perception that something very drastic had happened, that Rome had changed, had done so in a crucial way, and had done so very quickly.<sup>31</sup> This is the maritime moment. When even a historian as serious as Polybius asserts that Rome had never previously taken to the sea, it is indeed proper to assess all the available evidence and to demonstrate in which ways this claim is less than wholly true.<sup>32</sup> What no amount of such work can do, however, is to transform the duumviral squadrons of 311 into the giant fleets produced in the years after 261.<sup>33</sup> If Rome had long had some

28. This claim is somewhat at variance with accounts such as Polyb. 1.22.3 on Mylae, where Roman dependence on grappling irons and boarding bridges is a necessary response to the technical inferiority of their craft (φάλων τὰς κατασκευαῖς καὶ δυσκινήτων). Likewise Florus (1.18.8–9) emphasizes the scant maneuverability of the Roman ships at Mylae, but at 1.18.35 describes the Roman fleet at the Aegates Islands in 241 B.C.E. as *prompta, levis, expedita*, and compares the ensuing fight to a cavalry battle. For Rome at later points in the war ready to imitate Carthaginian naval design, cf. Polyb. 1.47.5–10 and 1.59.8; Zonar. 8.15, on the 250–249 B.C.E. capture of the quinquereme of the notorious “Rhodian” and its employment as the model for subsequent Roman shipbuilding. Much of this may be true even if the Romans had the *socii navales* to build ships for them from the outset of the war and could not otherwise have contemplated engaging in it.

29. Polyb. 1.21.1–3; Enn. *Ann.* 218 Sk. = Fest. 488 L: *poste recumbite vestraque pectora pellite tonsis*; 219 Sk. = Fest. 488 L: *pone petunt, exim referunt ad pectora tonsas*; Enn. *Ann.* 294–96 Sk. = Non. 151.23 L has also been attributed to this context, though such an attribution requires us to override Nonius’ statement that these lines come from Book 9 of the poem. The procedure is attested for Chabrias, training crews to man the Egyptian fleet (Polyaenus *Strat.* 3.11.7) and for Agrippa, preparing crews for the war against Sextus Pompeius (Dio Cass. 48.51.5).

30. Plin. *HN* 16.192; Oros. 4.7.8; Flor. 1.18.7. Lazenby (1996, 64) argues that the miracle is more likely to be due to centralized production and the use of prefabricated materials, and quotes archaeological evidence for such processes in Carthaginian shipbuilding. Note also Polybius’ amazement (1.38.6) at the ability of the Romans of 254 B.C.E. to build a fleet of 220 ships in only three months.

31. De Sanctis 1916, 125. Note also the stress on the sudden broadening of Rome’s horizons. Polybius (1.24.7) claims that Roman involvement in Sardinian affairs began immediately after the state took to sea. For Roman intervention on Corsica and Sardinia in 259 B.C.E., see Polyb. 1.24.5–7; Flor. 1.18.15–16; Eutr. 2.20.3; Oros. 4.7.11. The unprincipled annexation of this island in 238 was a major contributory factor to the outbreak of the war with Hannibal. More generally, Livy (*Per.* 16) and Polybius (1.5.1, 1.12.5, 18.35.1) represent the first undertaking of transmarine warfare as a key stage in Rome’s development as a state. For the speed of this transformation, note Flor. 1.18.15 on the events of 259: *Lucio Cornelio Scipione <console>, cum iam Sicilia suburbana esset populi Romani provincia, serpente latius bello Sardiniam adnexamque Corsicam transit.*

32. See esp. Le Bohec 2003; Steinby 2007, 1–77.

33. For analysis of the figures given in the ancient sources for the size of these fleets, see Tarn 1907; cf. Thiel 1954, 83–96. The key conclusion drawn by Tarn is that the maximum size of the Carthaginian fleet was approximately two hundred warships and that Roman strategy in the First Punic War was to compensate for inferior maritime technique by building fleets of greater size than this.

naval presence, it was only now that she had a *meaningful* naval presence, and this was a decisive change.<sup>34</sup> What Polybius and others here say for Rome is thus best compared with what Herodotus claims for Athens at 7.144.1–2, when he states that the 483/2 ship-building program of Themistocles compelled his people to become maritime (ἀναγκάσας θαλασσίους γενέσθαι Ἀθηναίους).<sup>35</sup> For Herodotus himself supplies ample evidence of Athenian naval activity in the years before this fleet was built and represents Athens in 489 as already possessed of a navy fifty ships strong.<sup>36</sup> What underpins his expression is again the sense of a drastic increase in naval resources, one that permitted Athens to take to the seas against Persia in 479. This was Athens' maritime moment. The First Punic War was Rome's.

## 2. WAR AT SEA, WAR WITH THE SEA

For a country ill-accustomed to maritime warfare and challenging so established a naval power, Rome proved remarkably adaptable.<sup>37</sup> The sources record significant defeats in 264 (Dio Cass. frag. 43.7, 11; Zonar. 8.8–9), and particularly off Drepanum in 249 (Polyb. 1.49–51),<sup>38</sup> and periodic Roman despair of the new undertaking is highlighted by the decisions of 253 and 247 to withdraw from naval warfare.<sup>39</sup> Yet Zonaras attributes the successful crossing of 264 to Appius Claudius' observation of the Strait of Messina and ability to learn from the factors that first brought near-disaster (Zonar. 8.9; cf. Flor. 1.18.5–6); Hannibal was defeated off the Cape of Italy in 260 (Polyb. 1.21.9–11); and in the same year C. Duilius followed this up with the first great Roman naval victory at Mylae (Polyb. 1.23).<sup>40</sup> Further significant successes followed in the early years of the war,<sup>41</sup> most notably off Cape Ecnomus in 256 (Polyb. 1.25.5–28.14),<sup>42</sup> and again when M. Aemilius Paulus and Ser. Fulvius Nobilior were sent out to rescue the survivors of the Bagrada a year later (Polyb. 1.36.11; Eutr. 2.22.1–2; Oros. 4.9.5–6; Zonar. 8.14); and Roman tenacity is evident from the repeated decision to build

34. This is essential to the subtle response to Thiel's thesis in Cassola 1962, 27–33 and in Le Bohec 2003, 63 and 65.

35. Purcell (1996, 270) draws this parallel. For other accounts of Themistocles' ship-building program, see Arist. [*Ath. Pol.*] 22.7 with Rhodes 1981, ad loc.; Plut. *Them.* 4.1–3; Nep. *Them.* 2.2 and 2.8. Aristotle and Plutarch indicate that only one hundred new ships were built in 483/2, and Rhodes suggests that Herodotus' figure may be a conflation of the figure for ships already held by Athens with those added by Themistocles.

36. See Hdt. 5.97 for twenty ships sent to assist the Ionian revolt. Hdt. 6.89 states that the Athenian fleet of fifty ships was supplemented by a further twenty rented from Corinth. See also 6.132 for a fleet of seventy.

37. Steinby (2007, 88) uses the fact that the Romans won the first five major naval encounters of the war to argue that "[t]he Romans were not novices at all." See also Le Bohec 2003, 65–67.

38. See also Diod. Sic. 24.1.5, 7–9, 11; Flor. 1.18, 29; Eutr. 2.26.1–2; Oros. 4.10.3; cf. Livy *Per.* 19; Zonar. 8.15 for the election of a dictator in response to this disaster.

39. Polyb. 1.39, 7–8, cf. Zonar. 8.14 for 253 B.C.E.; Polyb. 1.55.2, cf. Zonar. 8.16 for 247 B.C.E.

40. See also Diod. Sic. 23.10.1; Livy *Per.* 17; *ILLRP* 319; Sen. *Brev. Vit.* 13.3; Dio Cass. frag. 43.16–18; Zonar. 8.11.

41. Polyb. 1.24.6 and Oros. 4.7.11 describe a Roman naval victory during the 259 B.C.E. expedition to Sardinia and Corsica; Oros. 4.8.4 and Zonar. 8.12 describe a Roman victory in 257.

42. See also Diod. Sic. 23.11; Livy *Per.* 17; Eutr. 2.21.1; Oros. 4.8.6; Zonar. 8.12.

new fleets and resume the war by sea.<sup>43</sup> The final encounter of the entire campaign was that fought off the Aegates Islands in 241 (Polyb. 1.60–61).<sup>44</sup>

So much for the struggle against Carthage. What, though, of the fight against the sea itself? A revealing piece of evidence is furnished by *CIL* I.2.2.9, the *elogium* for L. Cornelius Scipio, Roman commander in Sardinia and Corsica in 259/8:

hunc oino ploirume consentiont R[omane  
duonoro optumo fuise viro.

Luciom Scipione. filios Barbati  
consol censor aidilis hic fuet [apud vos.

hec cepit Corsica Aleriaque urbe,  
dedet Tempestatibus aede merito[d.

This man Lucius Scipio, as most agree, was the very best of all good men at Rome. A son of Barbatus, he was consul, censor, and aedile among you; he it was who captured Corsica, Aleria too, a city. To the Storms he gave deservedly a temple.

The temple to the Tempestates dedicated by L. Cornelius Scipio is also mentioned by Ovid at *Fasti* 6.193–94, and the poet indicates that what motivated the decision was the lucky escape of Scipio's fleet when caught in a storm off Corsica (*te quoque, Tempestat, meritam delubra fatemur / cum paene est Corsis obruta classis aquis*).<sup>45</sup> Others were not so fortunate as Scipio and his men. Polybius identifies the first disaster off Camarina in 255 as the greatest naval catastrophe in history (Polyb. 1.37.3),<sup>46</sup> claims that only 80 out of 364 ships survived (Polyb. 1.37.2),<sup>47</sup> and contrasts Roman audacity on land and against human enemies with the periodic disasters facing their daring on sea (Polyb. 1.37.7–10). The same historian attributes the Roman decisions to abandon the sea in 253 and 247 to the losses incurred through storms (Polyb. 1.39.7–8, 1.55.2; cf. Eutr. 2.23.1–2; Oros. 4.9.10–12; Zonar. 8.14), and the figures are indeed sobering: the disaster that struck the fleet sailing home for Rome in 253 cost 150 ships (Polyb. 1.39.6; Diod. Sic. 23.19; Oros. 4.9.11), while 103 out of 105 warships and all transports were lost in the second Camarina disaster of 249 (Diod. Sic. 24.1.9).<sup>48</sup> In total it has been estimated that three-quarters of all Roman losses were due to storms.<sup>49</sup> No wonder that the cruel sea is a recurrent feature of narratives of this war.<sup>50</sup>

43. Polyb. 1.39.14–15; Diod. Sic. 23.18.3; Zonar. 8.14 describe the fleet built in 254 B.C.E.; Zonar. 8.15 describes that built in 249; see Polyb. 1.59.1–3 for the return to the seas in 243/2.

44. See also Diod. Sic. 24.11; Livy *Per.* 19; Flor. 1.18.33–37; Eutr. 2.27.1–3; Oros. 4.10.5–8; Zonar. 8.17. 45. For the cult of the Tempestates, see also Plaut. *Stich.* 403; Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.51; Hor. *Epod.* 10.23–24; Verg. *Aen.* 5.772; Ziolkowski 1992, 162–64, 253–54; Lazenby 1996, 74.

46. See also Eutr. 2.22.3; Oros. 4.9.8; cf. Flor. 1.18.30–32 erroneously transferring this sequence of events to 245 B.C.E.

47. Diod. Sic. 23.18.1 claims that 340 warships and 300 transports were lost.

48. See also Polyb. 1.54.8; Oros. 4.10.3.

49. See Thiel 1954, 94, who argues that “this proportion more than anything else should bring home to us the truth that the Romans were utterly unfamiliar with the sea and its problems.” See also Lazenby 1996, 111, 117–18; and Steinby 2007, 96–97, 100, though the latter does scant justice to this aspect of Roman experience in the war.

50. Polyb. 1.39.2–5, 1.39.6, 1.54.6–8; Diod. Sic. 23.15.4, 23.18.1–2, 23.19.1, 24.1.9; Livy *Per.* 18; Zonar. 8.8–9, 8.14 bis; cf. Flor. 1.18.17 for fear of the seas off Carthage.



Those who served, those who lost loved ones, can have been left in little doubt of what the sea could do.<sup>51</sup> This will be of some significance for the rest of my argument.

### 3. ROMAN EPIC AND THE MARITIME MOMENT:

#### VERGIL, LIVIUS, NAEVIUS

I turn now from history to epic, and in particular to the opening of Vergil's *Aeneid*. When first sighted, Aeneas and his men have just put Sicily behind them and sail onward in pursuit of their goal (Verg. *Aen.* 1.34–35: *vix e conspectu Siculae telluris in altum / vela dabant laeti et spumas salis aere ruebant*). The details of Aeneas' visit to this island are recuperated in the second half of Book 3 of the poem (3.410–32, 548–715), and it may be inferred on the basis of this narrative that the specific point of departure for the onward voyage is Drepanum in northwest Sicily, where father Anchises dies and is buried (3.707–15). In Book 5 a storm will drive Aeneas and his men back to the same spot (5.8–34, 56–57), and the ensuing encounter with the Trojan tribes of this part of the island will be rich with anticipation of the alliances of the First Punic War.<sup>52</sup> Yet the storm of Book 5 is not the first that Aeneas must face, for already in Book 1 the angry goddess Juno takes herself off to the kingdom of Aeolus, that is to say the Aeolian islands lying just north of Sicily (1.50–52), and induces the monarch to unleash the winds that he holds imprisoned in his cave (1.52–91). Death hangs all around; the hero's limbs give way in terror; and in desperation he hymns the good fortune of those whose destiny it was to die under the walls of Troy and before the eyes of their fathers (1.92–101). When finally Aeneas and his men are driven to land, they and their battered craft pitch up on the shores of Carthage (1.157–58, 3.715).

In much of this Aeneas is very much the successor to the Homeric Odysseus, sailing on from the land of Calypso and trapped in a storm sent against him by angry Poseidon (Hom. *Od.* 5.282–312). Yet at the moment that his limbs give way in chill (*extemplo Aeneae solvuntur frigore membra*, *Aen.* 1.92), his experience suggests not just the Odysseus of Homer's *Odyssey* (καὶ τότε Ὀδυσσεύος λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ / ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπε πρὸς ὃν μεγαλύτερα θυμόν, *Od.* 5.297–98), but also the Ulixes of the

51. For the scale of Roman citizen losses, see Thiel 1954, 95–96, who contrasts the census figures for 264 B.C.E. (*Livy Per.* 16; *Eutr.* 2.18: 292,234 citizens) and for 247 (*Livy Per.* 19: 241,212 citizens) and observes that, since losses in the naval sphere were particularly acute, the decisions of 253 to keep to a fleet of 60–70 and after 249 to withdraw from the sea were one way not to “risk provoking defections on the part of the Italian allies.” Note also *Diod. Sic.* 23.15.4 claiming that Roman and allied naval casualties exceeded 100,000 men, cf. *Polyb.* 1.26.7–9 for the manpower both Rome and Carthage were willing to expend on naval warfare. Enduring popular resentment at the loss of life at sea is perhaps encoded in the story told at *Livy Per.* 19, *Gell. NA* 10.6, and *Suet. Tib.* 2.3 regarding the infamous dictum of Claudia, daughter of Appius Claudius Caecus and sister of P. Claudius Pulcher, commander responsible for the disaster off Drepanum of 249 B.C.E. For good use of this anecdote, see Thiel 1954, 75–77; Lazenby 1996, 65–66.

52. For Rome's alliance with Trojan Segesta, see Zonar. 8.9. For *Aeneid* 5 and the alliances of the First Punic War, see Galinsky 1968; Leigh 2007.

first Roman epic, the *Odusia* of Livius Andronicus (*igitur demum Ulixi cor frixit prae pavore*, frag. 30 Blänsdorf = Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 1.92).<sup>53</sup> And whereas the text of the Homeric *Odyssey* itself offers no clear indication of where the cave of Calypso is to be found, the Roman of the time of Livius may well have adhered to one or other ancient tradition locating it either in the vicinity of Lake Avernus, on the Lacinian promontory, or on the island of Gozo.<sup>54</sup> The seas both heroes sail are broadly the same. They are also the storm-tossed seas of the First Punic War.<sup>55</sup>

If Vergil's Aeneas here becomes a version of the Homeric Odysseus and the Livian Ulixes, he is also a version of himself as presented in the second Roman epic, the *Bellum Punicum* of Naevius.<sup>56</sup> This poem, composed as a single continuous narrative and only later divided into seven books by the grammarian C. Octavius Lampadio,<sup>57</sup> eventually narrates the great struggle of the First Punic War, but only after inserting an extensive "archaeology" in which, *inter alia*, Aeneas gathers a group of companions including his father Anchises and their respective wives,<sup>58</sup> flees Troy in a single ship built for him by Mercury,<sup>59</sup> and is probably brought into contact with the Carthage of Queen Dido.<sup>60</sup> It is therefore a matter of some interest that Macrobius (*Sat.* 6.2.30–31 = Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 14 Blänsdorf) should offer the following account of the relationship between the opening books of the *Aeneid* and the *Bellum Punicum*:

sunt alii loci plurimorum versuum, quos Maro in opus suum cum paucorum immutatione verborum a veteribus transtulit . . . in primo Aeneidos tempestas describitur et Venus apud Iovem queritur de periculis filii et Iuppiter eam de futurorum prosperitate solatur. hic locus totus sumptus a Naevio est ex primo libro belli Punici. illic enim aequae Venus Troianis tempestate laborantibus cum Iove queritur et sequuntur verba Iovis filiam consolantis spe futurorum.

53. For subtle analysis of Livius' translation of Homer in this fragment, see Traina 1970, 18–20.

54. Altheim 1938, 298. For Gozo, see Callim. frag. 470 Pf. = Strabo 1.2.37, 7.3.6.

55. As regards the Vergilian Aeneas, these are the same seas in which the fleet of the young Octavian twice came to grief in 38 B.C.E. See esp. Suet. *Aug.* 16. 1–2; App. *B Civ.* 5.100.410–12; and the intriguing analysis of Powell 2008, 93–100.

56. For the extraordinary importance of Naevius' poem for the themes and structure of the *Aeneid*, see Buchheit 1963, 53; von Albrecht 1999, 59.

57. Suet. *Gram.* 2.

58. Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 5 Blänsdorf = Serv. Dan. ad Verg. *Aen.* 3.10 and frag. 6 Blänsdorf = Serv. Dan. ad Verg. *Aen.* 2.797. Note also Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 25 Blänsdorf = Prob. ad Verg. *Ecl.* 6.31 for evidence that in Naevius Anchises survives the voyage and reaches Italy.

59. Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 7 Blänsdorf = Serv. Dan. ad Verg. *Aen.* 1.170. For the apparent figuration of the voyage of Aeneas as a form of Argonautica, see Büchner 1957, 20–21. For the suggestion that Servius' note can be read as implying that only one of an unknown number of ships of Aeneas was built by Mercury, see Strzelecki 1935, 31.

60. The connection between Aeneas and Dido is inferred from Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 17 Blänsdorf, where Naevius is reported to have spoken of Dido and her sister Anna, and *B Pun.* frag. 20 Blänsdorf (*blande et docte percontat, Aenea quo pacto / Troiam urbem reliquit*), which may suggest the appeal of Dido to Aeneas at Verg. *Aen.* 1.670–71, 748–56, cf. 4.77–79. However, the fact that Nonius attributes this fragment to Book 2 of the *Bellum Punicum*, when frag. 12 Blänsdorf on the island of Prochyta suggests that Aeneas arrives in Italy as early as Book 1, has encouraged some to identify the questioner as an Italian host of the Trojans. That none of the ancient commentators on the *Aeneid* attribute the affair between Dido and Aeneas to Naevius is a strong objection to its alleged presence in the *Bellum Punicum*. For discussion, see Barchiesi 1962, 219–22, 477–82, with ample bibliography; Terzaghi 1963, 708–11; Waszink 1972, 912–15; Goldberg 1995, 54–55; von Albrecht 1999, 49–50; Suerbaum 2002, 113–14, with further bibliography.

There are other passages stretching over very many verses that Maro has transferred to his own work from the ancients with only a few words changed . . . in Book 1 of the *Aeneid* a storm is described and Venus complains before Jupiter of the perils facing her son and Jupiter consoles her with the prospect of the happiness of later generations. This whole passage has been taken from Book 1 of the *Punic War* of Naevius. For there no less does Venus complain before Jupiter as the Trojans struggle in a storm, and there follow the words of Jupiter consoling his daughter with the hope of what is to be.

What Macrobius here states is coherent with two further fragments of the *Bellum Punicum*, which appear to introduce and to give the first line of the appeal of Venus to Jupiter.<sup>61</sup> It is further supported by the statement of Servius Auctus at *Aeneid* 1.198 that the speech of Aeneas consoling his men after the storm derives from the *Bellum Punicum*.<sup>62</sup> It is therefore apparent that long before Vergil, Naevius had confronted Aeneas and his men with a catastrophic storm at sea,<sup>63</sup> and had thus established the allusive relationship between his hero, the Odysseus of Homer, and the Ulixes of Livius.<sup>64</sup>

Yet Naevius had also done something more than this. He had surely also suggested the connection between the hero struggling through the storms of his “archaeology” and the Roman mariners facing storm and shipwreck in the historical portion of his narrative.<sup>65</sup> Even in the absence of any textual confirmation, this would, I think, be a reasonable a priori assumption, but there is in fact rather more to go on than this. For one surviving fragment does in fact relate to the maritime aspect of the war.<sup>66</sup> That is fragment 48 Blänsdorf, *onerariae onustae stabant in flustris*, which E. H. Warmington aptly translates as “the freight-ships with their freights stood still upon the drifts.”<sup>67</sup> Our source for this fragment is Isidore, and his purpose is to define the meaning of the term *flustrum*, which he translates as the motion of the sea as it undulates when there is no storm (*sine tempestate fluctuantis*). Isidore further adds that to state that the boats are *in flustris* is the equivalent of stating that they are on the open sea (*in salo*).<sup>68</sup> In the fragment itself it

61. Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 15 Blänsdorf = Varro *Ling.* 7. 51 (*patrem suum supremum optimum appellat*) and frag. 16 Blänsdorf = Fest. 306 L (*summe deum regnator, quianam genus odisti*) are joined by L. Mueller, and this wins the approval of Barchiesi 1962, 332, and of Blänsdorf himself. Note that the last two words of frag. 16 are transmitted as *genus isti* at Fest. 306 L and emended to *genus odisti* by Leo. Other emendations: *genuisti* Scaliger, Merula; *me genuisti* Havet, Warmington; *genus ursisti* Baehrens; *genus sisti* Zander.

62. Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 13 Blänsdorf = Serv. Dan. ad Verg. *Aen.* 1.198: *et totus hic locus de Naevio belli Punicum libro translatus est*.

63. Terzaghi (1963, 704–5, 713–15) argues for Vergilian modification of the Naevian model, in that in the *Aeneid* Venus appeals to Jupiter only after Aeneas has been cast ashore, whereas in Naevius she does so while they still struggle in the storm. Terzaghi also draws attention to Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 5 Blänsdorf, in which the wives of Anchises and Aeneas quit Troy in tears, and asks whether Creusa and Eriopis are lost in the course of the storm.

64. Phillips 1953, 66–67. Phillips emphasizes Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 11 Blänsdorf = Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.6.7–9, which implies reference to the Cimmerian Sibyl and therefore to a *Nekyia* on the model of that in Hom. *Od.* 11. See also Goldberg 1995, 51.

65. For an important forerunner of this approach, though one that stresses not storm but the glorious conquest of the sea, see Büchner 1957, 21–22; Barchiesi 1962, 256 n. 1107.

66. Cf. Barchiesi 1962, 408–12, esp. 408.

67. Warmington [1936] 1982, 69.

68. Isid. *Nat.* 44: *flustrum motus maris sine tempestate fluctuantis velut Naevius in Bello Punico sic ait “onerariae onustae stabant in flustris,” ac si diceret in salo*.

is essential here to note the imperfect tense of *stabant*; for Naevius is clearly setting the scene before some further event supervenes. Two contexts have here been suggested, and with them two very different but equally catastrophic forms of crisis.<sup>69</sup> To Josef Mesk the transport ships described are those of the Carthaginian fleet making for Sicily in 241 and anchored off the Aegates Islands; the disastrous sequel is thus the attack of the fleet of Lutatius and the decisive combat of the war.<sup>70</sup> There is something to recommend this theory, not least the emphasis of the historians on the number of Carthaginian transports caught up in the battle.<sup>71</sup> Yet if *flustrum* does indeed suggest the billowing of a sea not touched by storm (*sine tempestate*), then the full force of the phrasing more likely resides in the idea that what the ships here experience is nothing to what will follow when suddenly the real storm breaks.<sup>72</sup> Hence the attraction of Cichorius' proposal that the fragment in fact relates to the Roman fleet, both warships and transports, at anchor before the second great disaster off Cape Camarina in 249, the catastrophic consequences of which for the Roman fleet have already been identified.<sup>73</sup> What Aeneas endures in the archaeology, the men of Rome endure in the First Punic War.

Attention has already been drawn to one fragment of Livius Andronicus relating to Ulixes' experience of a storm. Another may also here be considered.<sup>74</sup> I refer to Livius Andronicus, *Odusia* frag. 12 Blänsdorf, which translates the words of the Homeric Laodamas when confronted with the shipwrecked Odysseus:

namque nullum  
peius macerat humanum quamde mare saevum;  
vires cui sunt magnae toppe confringent  
inportunae undae.

For nothing torments a man worse than the savage sea; a man whose strength is great the shelterless waves will soon shatter.

Where the Homeric character merely affirms that there is nothing worse than the sea to break down a man, even if he be very strong (οὐ γὰρ ἐγὼ γέ τί φημι κακώτερον ἄλλο θαλάσσης / ἄνδρα γε συγγεῦαι, εἰ καὶ μάλα καρτερὸς εἶη, Hom. *Od.* 8.138–39), his Livian counterpart adopts a distinctively more

69. Barchiesi 1962, 408: "L'immota serenità della scena preludeva probabilmente alla violenza degli elementi o degli uomini."

70. Mesk 1900.

71. Polyb. 1.60.1–2, 61.4; Diod. Sic. 24.11; Zonar. 8.17; [Aur. Vict.] *De vir. ill.* 41.

72. Barchiesi (1962, 409–10) makes this point well and offers as a parallel Tert. *De pall.* 2 = p. 107, line 20 Bulhart: *sic et mari fides infamis, dum et flabris aequae mutantibus de tranquillo probum, de flustris temperatum, et extemplo de decimanis inquietat*. For the type of conditions implied, see also Plin. *HN* 18.359.

73. Cichorius 1922, 45–46. For the second Camarina storm, see n. 48 above.

74. Note that Fest. 482 L actually attributes these verses to Naevius, citing them with the phrase *sic in eodem* after quoting Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 60 Blänsdorf <toppe> *capesset flamma Volcani*. It would be foolish to build further arguments for thematic affinity between the *Odusia* and the *Bellum Punicum* on what is very probably a late grammarian's error, but Naevius does appear to borrow elsewhere from the *Odyssey*. See Mariotti 1955, 51–53, on Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 19 Blänsdorf, esp. *vestemque citrosam* as a translation of Hom. *Od.* 5.264 εἴματα θωόδεα.

pathetic register: the sea becomes first the savage sea (*mare saevum*) and the shelterless waves (*inportunae undae*);<sup>75</sup> break down (*συγχεῖναι*) becomes first torment (*macerat*), then shatter (*confringent*);<sup>76</sup> in Homer even a stout man's resistance will be broken, but in Livius the same will happen fast (*topper*).<sup>77</sup> Is pathos a function of history? To explain the heightened tone of Livius' translation in terms of the catastrophic loss of Roman life in the course of its first maritime campaign would be, to put it generously, somewhat mechanical.<sup>78</sup> Yet for those who have seen the cruel sea at first hand, the epic storm is more than just a stock trope of the poets.<sup>79</sup>

It will be evident that the works of Livius and Naevius have a great deal in common, and that their poetic reimagination of what it means to sail the seas between Carthage, Sicily, and Rome leaves its mark on the opening books of the *Aeneid*. It is, however, appropriate to identify some important differences between their works. For where Naevius could locate in the same seas first Aeneas, then the Romans descended from him and fighting to drive Carthage out of Sicily, Livius Andronicus more likely did no more than presuppose the knowledge that the seas sailed by Odysseus were those but lately entered by his nation's fleets. For just as antiquity could identify Meninx with the land of the Lotus-Eaters or the Strait of Messina with the perils of Scylla and Charybdis, so it was widely accepted that the Cyclops had lived in the region of Etna, and the Laestrygonians in the plains of Leontini,<sup>80</sup> that Aeolus made his home on Lipara or Strongule,<sup>81</sup> and the Sirens, if not at Surrentum, then at Cape Pelorias on Sicily;<sup>82</sup> and that the cattle of the Sun were pastured at Mylae.<sup>83</sup> All this was there within the intellectual world, even the lived experience of his audience,<sup>84</sup> even if—as the surviving fragments suggest—Livius himself did little more than faithfully translate the *Odyssey* as he found it.<sup>85</sup> Many have, and with good reason, emphasized the mass of myths identifying those places visited by Odysseus both in the *Odyssey* and in the *Telegony* with Sicily, southern Italy, and the

75. The nautical character of *inportunae* is to be observed. Maltby (1991, 297–98) cites Porph. ad Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.185; Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 11.305; Isid. *Etym.* 10.136, 14.8.39. See also Traina 1970, 24 and n. 1.

76. Note how Livius' compound *con-fringo* mimes the structure of Homer's *συγ-χέω*.

77. Mariotti 1952, 47–48; Traina 1970, 21–24.

78. See Mariotti 1952, 57–58, for interpretation of these changes in terms of a broadly Antimachean aesthetic.

79. For the fundamental literariness and unreality of sea storms in Vergil, Ovid, Seneca, Lucan, and Statius, see Friedrich 1956, esp. 78–79, 83, 87. The first Latin epic poets perhaps deserve to escape this censure. See also Camões, *Lusiads* 5.17–19, 86–90, 9.128, where both the poet and his hero Vasco da Gama assert the reality of the storms that they describe. Camões himself was shipwrecked off Cambodia in 1559.

80. Thuc. 6.2; Eur. *Cycl.* 20; Theopomp. *FGrH* 115 F225 = Polyb. 8.9.13; Strabo 1.2.9; Verg. *Aen.* 3.569–83; Schol. Lyc. *Alex.* 662; Plin. *HN* 3.89. For the alternative tradition locating the Laestrygonians at Formiae on the coast of Latium, see Cic. *Att.* 2.13.2; Plin. *HN* 3.59.

81. Polyb. 34.2.9–10, cf. 34.11.19–20; Strabo 1.12.18, 6.1.5, cf. 6.2.11; Timaeus *FGrH* 566 F164 = Diod. Sic. 5.7.7; Plin. *HN* 3.94.

82. Strabo 1.2.12; Plin. *HN* 3.62; Geffcken 1892, 35–37.

83. Timaeus *FGrH* 566 F37 = Schol. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 4.965; Sen. *Q Nat.* 3.26.7; Plin. *HN* 2.220.

84. Grimal 1953, 31.

85. The classic studies of Livius Andronicus as translator are Mariotti 1952 and Traina 1970, 11–28. For the substantial fidelity of the *Odusia* to its source, see Mariotti 1952, 35–38, 41, 51, 71, 82. See also Leo 1913, 73. Traina (1970, 28) refers to “sua traduzione, che è essenzialmente interpretazione.”

region around Rome.<sup>86</sup> Yet it is unnecessary—and indeed very probably wrong—to assume that Livius himself drew out any such connections.<sup>87</sup> They were already there for any readers who chose to make them for themselves.<sup>88</sup>

The substantial fidelity of the *Odusia* to the Homeric *Odyssey* has further implications for what claims can be made for it. On the one hand, while there is every reason to imagine that Livius' audience may have drawn connections between the Circe episode and those traditions locating Circe at Circeii on the coast of Latium,<sup>89</sup> it is implausible to imagine that the poet drew in material originally found in the epic *Telegony* or set out any of the local foundation legends associated with it.<sup>90</sup> On the other, the presumption that Livius did indeed offer a faithful rendition of the *Odyssey* makes the Homeric poem a crucial witness to the likely contents of the *Odusia* even where no direct evidence from the Latin poem survives. It is therefore no idle game to wonder how Livius the faithful translator can have handled the ship-famed, crafty Phoenicians who populate the stories Odysseus tells when back on Ithaca,<sup>91</sup> or what he made of the sudden influx of Sicilian slaves that is so striking a feature of the final books of the poem.<sup>92</sup> The household of Ulixes comes to bear a striking resemblance to that of Livius' elite Roman reader.<sup>93</sup>

## CONCLUSION

There was a Roman navy before the First Punic War, and the fragmentary nature of our sources necessarily leaves an incomplete picture of its activities.

86. Altheim 1938, 297–99; Phillips 1953, 66; Grimal 1953, 30–31; Gruen 1990, 85; Goldberg 1995, 50–51.

87. Whereas Naev. *B Pun.* frags. 12, 27, and 28 Blänsdorf demonstrate considerable interest in the aetiology of various Italian toponyms, the name of Livius is associated with no such claim. For Naevius and aetiology, see Mariotti 1952, 22, and 1955, 16, 38–40.

88. For the localization of various episodes of the *Odyssey* and the *Telegony* on the western coast of Italy and its connection to the earliest phases of Greek colonization in Italy, see Malkin 1998, 178–91.

89. Theophr. *Hist. pl.* 5.8.3; Schol. Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3.309–13b and 4.850; Vian 1961, ad Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 3.313; Strabo 5.3.6; Plin. *HN* 3.57, 15.119, 25.10–11. The association of Circe with the Tyrrhenian coast of Italy is as old as Hes. *Theog.* 1011–16.

90. For legends associating sons of Odysseus, particularly Telegonus, with the foundation of Ardea, Antium, Tusculum, Praeneste, and Clusium, see Phillips 1953, 66–67. Note also pp. 57–58, discussing Hellenicus *FGrH* 4 F84 = Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.72 and the claim that Odysseus founded Rome alongside Aeneas.

91. Hom. *Od.* 13.272, 14.288–89 (Φοῖνιξ . . . ἀνὴρ ἀπατήλια εἰδός, / τρώκτης), 15.415 (Φοῖνικες ναυσί-κλυτοι), 15.419 (Φοῖνικες πολυπαῖπλοι). See also *Od.* 4.83, 14.291 (Φοινίκην). Inasmuch as Greek uses Φοῖνιξ for both Phoenician and Punic or Carthaginian, but Classical Latin typically distinguishes between *Phoenix* for the former and *Poenus* for the latter, it might be reasonable to assume that Livius wrote *Phoenix*. However, Livius himself is no stranger to the tendency of preliterary Latin not to reproduce the consonantal aspiration typical of Greek φ (see, e.g., frag. 16 Blänsdorf *struppis* for στρόφοις and frag. 27 Blänsdorf *purpurea* for πορφυρέη, cf. Naev. *B Pun.* frag. 8.3 Blänsdorf *Purpureus* for Πορφυρίων), and it is therefore not inconceivable that he wrote *Poenus*, *Poenix* (as at Varro *Ling.* 8.65) or *Poenicius* (as at *CIL* 1.585.75 *bello Poenicio proxumo*). For these issues, see Bunnens 1983; Biville 1990–95, 1: 139, 151, 157 and 2: 341–43 and 381; Prag 2006.

92. Hom. *Od.* 20.383 with Russo 1992, ad loc.; 24.211 with Heubeck 1992, ad loc., 366, 389.

93. For Roman mass enslavement of the inhabitants of captured Sicilian cities, see Polyb. 1.19.15; Diod. Sic. 23.9.1; Zonar. 8.10; Oros. 4.7.6 for Akragas; Diod. Sic. 23.9.4 and Zonar. 8.11 for Mytistraton; Diod. Sic. 23.9.5 for Camarina; Diod. Sic. 23.18.5 for Panormus; Finley 1979, 115; Harris 1979, 63. It is not stated how many of these slaves ended up on the market in Rome.

Yet any detailed comparison of what can be known of those activities in the years before and during the First Punic War can only point to a quite radical transformation in Roman naval resources and ambitions. When Polybius indicates that the war represented the moment that Rome first took to the sea, it is indeed quite legitimate to list every indication of naval activity in the centuries before or to point to the ever-growing importance of the *socii navales*. Yet none of this can obscure the step-change represented by the mass Roman war fleets of the First Punic War, and the implications that they had for subsequent Roman ambitions. This is what I mean when I speak of the maritime moment.

The third century B.C.E. in Rome was an age of swift and decisive change, and our sources testify to more than one such moment. These too deserve our careful attention, and our sense of newness and of change should not be buried under the accumulation of qualifying evidence. When, for instance, we are told by those among our sources that follow the Varronian chronology that the performance of Greek-style plotted tragedy and comedy began at the *Ludi Romani* of 240,<sup>94</sup> one response is to emphasize all that elsewhere is indicated of the richness of Roman theatrical and musical life in the centuries before that time, be it convivial singing of heroic lays or theatrical performance of Atellan farce or *satura*.<sup>95</sup> Yet for all that a Roman song culture existed before 240 and clearly mattered very much, it remains true that we know of no other author of *tragoedia* or *comoedia* before Livius Andronicus and that the Roman games of the year after the First Punic War, that is, after the conquest of Sicily, represent an ideal opportunity for the Roman state to dramatize the fact of its entry into the Greek world.<sup>96</sup>

The men who invented Roman drama as we know it were the same men who invented Roman epic. Whereas the sources present very specific dates and occasions for the first theatrical performances of Livius and Naevius, there is next to no information on when exactly they took to epic verse. Yet the implication of my analysis is that, in a crucial sense, the epic and the maritime moments are in fact one. Writing at the start of the last century, the French scholar Henri de la Ville de Mirmont speculated on the contemporary appeal of Livius' *Odusia* and saw in his Laertes a Cato, in his Penelope a sturdy Roman matron.<sup>97</sup> Yet, to the same writer, principal among the poem's attractions must have been its ability to confirm the Roman landsman in the conviction that he had done well never to go to sea.<sup>98</sup> My own perspective is rather different. For in the years of the First Punic War that Roman landsman had, in fact, taken to sea, and had done so in quite unprecedented numbers. He now knew what it was to be an Odysseus, to be an Aeneas trapped in a storm. He may from this have concluded that it would be better

94. See n. 4 above.

95. Habinek 1998, 34–35; Suerbaum 2002, 83–87; Feeney 2005, 231.

96. The implications were not lost on the loyal King Hiero of Syracuse. According to Eutr. 3.1.2, he soon came to Rome to witness the games.

97. La Ville de Mirmont 1903, 83–90.

98. La Ville de Mirmont 1903, 85.

not to repeat the experience (Polyb. 1.64.1–2). For now, however, he had had his maritime moment and his epic moment too.

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