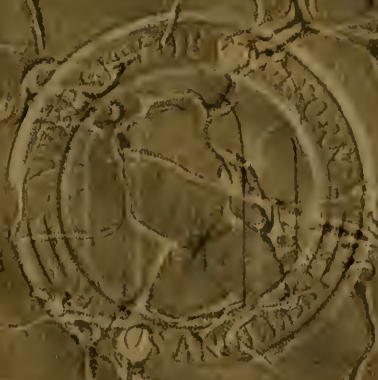
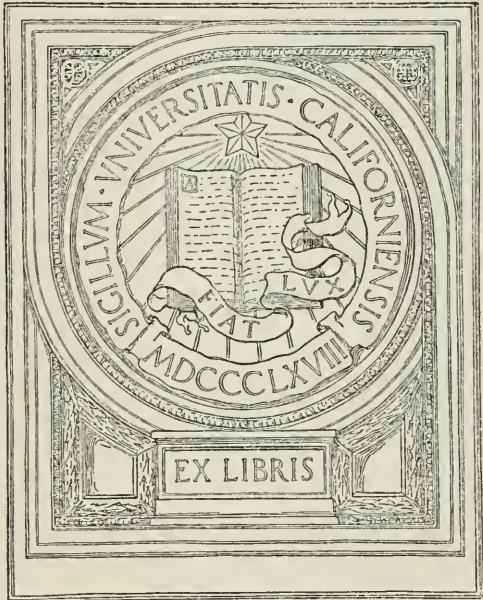


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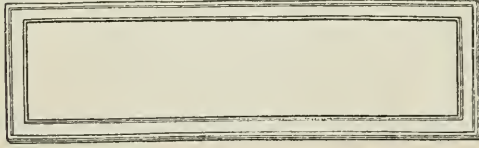
PIERCE — A ROMAN MAN OF LETTERS, GAIUS ASINIUS POLLIO



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# A ROMAN MAN OF LETTERS

GAIUS ASINIUS POLLIO



## DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
the Faculty of Political Science  
of Columbia University



BY

ELIZABETH DENNY PIERCE, A.B., A.M.

NEW YORK, 1922



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## CHAPTER I. Early Life.

75—54 B. C.

Gaius Asinius Pollio belonged to the *gens* of the Asinii, one of the old Italian families, who, although they had been granted Roman citizenship at the close of the Social War in 89 B. C.<sup>(1)</sup> had had no part in the public life at Rome. It was not until the confusion and civil struggles of the later years of the Republic made it possible for new men to enter the city's politics that Pollio and others from the Italian towns could become prominent<sup>(2)</sup>. The Asinii came from Teate<sup>(3)</sup> (modern Chiete) in the territory of the Marrucini who held a narrow strip of land running westward from the Adriatic coast along the river Aternus and almost due east of Rome. The Marrucian territory, together with that of their neighbors the Vestini and Frentani had been laid waste by Hannibal when he marched through this part of Italy after the Battle of Lake Trasimene in 217 B. C.<sup>(4)</sup> The Asinii apparently took a prominent part in the Marrucian contingents that aided Rome in this second Punic War<sup>(5)</sup> for Silius Italicus describes a very picturesque incident of the battle of Zama in 204 B. C.<sup>(6)</sup> where Herius, an ancestor of Pollio, meets Hannibal himself in mortal combat. Although Herius struggled desperately to defend himself with his spear and wound the Carthaginian commander, he was killed by Hannibal's sword thrust. Silius Italicus undoubtedly manufactured many of the details of this incident; yet the fact that the name of Herius was known to a writer who lived two hundred and fifty years later would indicate that he had been a soldier of some import-

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(1) Lex Plautia Papiria 89 B. C.

(2) Tac., *Ann.*, 6-7; Vell., II, 128.

(3) Sil. Ital., *Punica*, XVII, 453-458.

(4) Livy, XXII, 9.

(5) Polybius, II, 24.

(6) Sil. Ital., *Punica*, XVII, 453-458:

Continuo infesta portantem cuspide vulnus  
Impedit antevolans Herium; cui nobile nomen  
Marrucina domus, clarumque Teate ferebat.  
Atque illi magnum nitenti, et laudibus hostis  
Adrecto, capuli ad finem manus ilia fodit,

ance. Another Herius Asinius was one of the chief commanders of the allied forces of the Italians in the Social War,<sup>(7)</sup> and fell in the battle in which Marius and Sulla defeated the Marsians in 90 B. C.<sup>(8)</sup> As Pollio belonged to the second generation after this and further gave the name of Herius to one of his sons, it is quite possible that Herius Asinius was his grandfather.

The name of Pollio's father is given as Gnaeus Asinius in the inscriptions recording the triumph of his son over the Parthini<sup>(9)</sup>. This praenomen was doubtless handed down, according to custom, to his eldest son who may have been the Marrucinus Asinius immortalized in the poem of Catullus for stealing napkins at a dinner party, since his description in this poem would lead us to regard him as older than his brother Gaius who was called a *puer*. Catullus no doubt called the elder brother Marrucinus in order to emphasize the fact that he came from the country and was not familiar with the usage of polite society, for in the following lines he contrasts him with Gaius, who he says is a youth well educated in matters of taste and behaviour<sup>(10)</sup>. The name Pollio is probably allied with *Paullus* through a common earlier form<sup>(11)</sup> and was a popular cognomen among the Latin and Oscan-Umbrian peoples although it does not occur with any frequency at Rome until after the time of Asinius Pollio.

The date of Pollio's birth may be fixed as 75 B. C. by comparing the statement of Jerome that Gaius Asinius Pollio died

(7) Vell., II, 16. See also Appian, *B. C.*, I, 40; Eut., V, 3.

(8) Livy, *Per.*, LXXIII.

(9) *C. I. L.*, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 50, Acta Triumphalia Capitolina: Cn. Domitio M. f. Cal[vino] II, C. Asinius Cn. f. Pollion[*e* cos.]

(10) Catullus, 12, 1-9.

Marrucine Asini, manu sinistra  
 Non belle uteris in ioco atque vino:  
 Tollis lintea neglegentiorum,  
 Hoc salsum esse putas? Fugit te, inepte!  
 Quamvis sordida res et invenusta est.  
 Non credis mihi? Crede Pollioni  
 Fratri, qui tua furta vel talento  
 Mutari velit; est enim leporum  
 Disertus puer ac facetiarum.

Voss (*Catullus a. l.*) suggests that Catullus used the name Marrucinus in the poem to mark the contrast between Asinius and the Marrucini whom Cicero (*pro Clu.* 69, 197) calls *nobilissimi*.

(11) Lindsay, *Lat. Lang.*, p. 112.

in his eightieth year at his Tusculan villa in 4 A. D.<sup>(12)</sup> with that of Tacitus in which he says that Pollio, although only in his twenty-second year conducted the prosecution of C. Cato<sup>(13)</sup>. This case was tried in 54 B. C.<sup>(14)</sup> Gaius would, therefore, be a youth of sixteen at the time Catullus wrote his poem<sup>(15)</sup> which refers to him in terms of sufficient intimacy as to lead us to the conclusion that Pollio was then living in Rome where, like Ovid, Propertius and Horace, he had been sent to complete his education.

The first public appearance of Pollio was in 54 B. C. when at the age of twenty-two he prosecuted C. Porcius Cato for illegal actions during the latter's tribuneship in 56<sup>(16)</sup>. Pollio may have undertaken this difficult prosecution as his first public case in order to attract attention since (at that time) he had no political connections at Rome. This had been the method used by Calvus, Caesar and C. Cato to bring themselves before the public<sup>(17)</sup>. The latter, following the example of his great relative, Marcus Cato Uticensis, tried to interfere with the plans of the recently formed triumvirate by prosecuting for bribery in 59 B. C., Aulus Gabinius<sup>(18)</sup>, one of the triumvirs' henchmen and a candidate for the consulship<sup>(19)</sup>. When the inaction of the praetors prevented the progress of the prosecution, Cato denounced Pompey from the rostra in a public meeting, calling him an "unofficial dictator."<sup>(20)</sup> Between this time and his tribunate in 56 B. C., Cato apparently changed sides, for in Cicero's letters of this year he is mentioned as defending Pompey's interests in the Senate, not only trying to push through the settlement of the Campanian land dispute<sup>(21)</sup> in favor of Pompey's veterans but also urging his appointment as Roman

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(12) Hieronymus, *Chron. ad an. Abr.*, 2020.

(13) Tac., *Dial. de Or.*, 34.

(14) Asconius, in *Scaurianam*, 16.

(15) Cat., 12, 8-9 cited above. 60/59 B. C. For date of poem see Schwabe, *Quaest. Catull.*, p. 300.

(16) Tac., *Dial.*, 34.

(17) Quint., XII, 6, 1: Calvus, Caesar, Pollio multum ante quaestoriam omnes aetatem gravissima iudicia susceperint.

See Abbott, *Roman Political Institutions*, ¶173; minimum age for the quaestorship was thirty-one years at this time.

(18) Cic., *ad Q. Fr.*, I, 2.15.

(19) App., II, 14.

(20) Cic., *ad Q. Fr.*, I, 2.15.

(21) Cic., *ad Q. Fr.*, II, 1.2.

representative with two lictors, to aid in restoring Ptolemy Auletes to his kingdom<sup>(22)</sup>. The Senate opposed this measure as they feared it would give Pompey still greater power and they therefore appointed Cornelius Lentulus Spinther instead<sup>(23)</sup>.

Cato further used his power as tribune to delay the meeting of the comitia in order that the elections might not be held that year since the acting consuls Cn. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus and L. Marcius Philippus were hostile to the plan of the triumvirs to cause Crassus and Pompey to be elected consuls for the year 55 B. C.<sup>(24)</sup> Although Cicero had been won over and his opposition removed, yet Marcellinus and L. Domitius Ahenobarbus, a bitter enemy of Caesar, had influence enough to prevent the re-election of Pompey and Crassus if the voting were done in the usual way. Crassus therefore arranged with C. Cato and his colleague Sufenas to delay the elections<sup>(25)</sup> by introducing a measure in the comitia which involved a great deal of discussion and thus postponed the voting.

As a result, the year 55 began without consuls or praetors and the consular election was held at the end of January by an *interrex*. L. Domitius was the only rival who persisted in his candidature, and as he was driven off by armed violence, Pompey and Crassus became consuls.

Cato in carrying out his part in the plan violated the *Lex Iunia Licinia* which provided that a bill could not be brought before the comitia until it had been on public view in the *aerarium* and seventeen days' notice given of its proposal<sup>(26)</sup>. The *Lex Aelia Fufia* was also violated, for this enacted that the comitia for elections must be finished before any legislative proposals could be considered<sup>(27)</sup>. Cato was, therefore, prosecuted by Pollio for the violation of these laws in 54 B. C. when Pompey and Crassus had finished their year of office and were out of the city and L. Domitius Ahenobarbus was one of the consuls. Cato was successfully defended by C. Licinius Calvus and M. Aemilius Scaurus, friends of Pompey and Crassus<sup>(28)</sup>. Sufenas

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(22) Cic., *fam.*, I, 2.4.

(23) Dio, XXXIX, 16.

(24) Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 24; App., II, 17; Plut., *Crassus*, 14.

(25) Livy, *Per.*, 105.

(26) Cic., *ad Att.*, IV, 16.5; ed. Tyrrell, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 414.

(27) Cic., *ad Att.*, IV, 16.5; Tyrrell, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 409.

(28) Sen., *Contr.*, VII, 4, 7; Asconius in Cic., *pro Scauro*.

was also tried on the same charges and was acquitted. The case was evidently made notorious through the bribery and undue influence exerted by Pompey to free his two supporters since Cicero wrote to Atticus on the 27th of July as follows: "On the fourth of July, Sufenas and Cato were acquitted . . . From which we have learnt that our treble-distilled Areopagites care not a rush for bribery, elections, *interregnum*, *lèse-majesté*, or in fact, for the state generally"<sup>(29)</sup>. In a previous letter written before Cato had been acquitted, Cicero had predicted that he would not be convicted and that his acquittal would be "not so much to the satisfaction of his defenders as of his accusers"<sup>(30)</sup>.

We have no evidence to prove that Pollio was bribed not to press the prosecution, a thing which might very well have happened in those days of widespread corruption of juries and courts. From other information in regard to Asinius's character it does not seem likely. The great difference between the legal talent employed by the prosecution and the defense may have very easily determined the outcome of the case since Pollio was still a youth without experience while Calvus was six years older and had the reputation of being a remarkable forensic speaker, almost equal to Cicero<sup>(31)</sup>. Cato apparently was not depending entirely on the oratorical powers of his defender since Seneca in his *Controversiae* tells how Pollio was surrounded in the forum by an armed band of Cato's followers who would certainly have injured him if Calvus had not ordered them off<sup>(32)</sup>. Although there was no doubt of Cato's guilt, the prosecution was brought because of party politics rather than with any great desire for reform. Both sides were resorting to illegal methods to gain their ends and the courts were busy with trials resulting from corruption at elections, thus providing excellent opportunities for ambitious young men.

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(29) Cic., *ad Att.*, IV, 15.4.

(30) Cic., *ad Att.*, IV, 16.5.

(31) Calvus was born in B. C. 82; Sen., *Contr.*, VII, 4, 6. The oration of Calvus for Cato was written down but is now lost.

(32) Sen., *Contr.*, VII, 4, 7.

## CHAPTER II. Relations with Julius Caesar.

54—44 B. C.

Asinius Pollio, both at the time of the trial of Cato and in the letters written to Cicero after Julius Caesar's death<sup>(33)</sup>, showed that he was at heart a Republican and on the side of the Senate against any usurpers of their power. But when in 53 B. C. he saw Pompey allied with the Senate, he came to the conclusion that he would join Caesar rather than go to the other "camp" in which he was certain he would not be safe from the plots of his personal enemy<sup>(34)</sup>, since, as he himself says, it was impossible for him to remain neutral, because he had bitter enemies on both sides. There is no means of deciding whether the reference here is to C. Cato or to some other follower of Pompey but Pollio seems to have realized that there was no longer any hope of a Republic and since the choice lay between Caesar or Pompey as dictator, he preferred to secure his own safety and ally himself with the former. Therefore, in January, 49 B. C., we find Asinius among the men most closely associated with Julius Caesar at the historic crossing of the Rubicon. For when Caesar found that Pompey and the Senate would not make any satisfactory settlement with him in regard to his candidature for the consulship for 48 B. C. he quietly went on gathering friends and adherents about his camp in Gaul until it became a political centre of scarcely less importance than Rome. Pollio may have joined this group in 53 B. C. soon after the trial of Cato, or he may have waited in Rome until the actual break came in 50 B. C. In this year C. Curio, a tribune, having been won over to the Caesarian

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(33) Cic., *fam.*, X, 31; 32; 33.

(34) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 31. 2 and 3: Cum vero non liceret mihi nullius partis esse, quia utrobique magnos inimicos habebam, ea castra fugi, in quibus plane tutum me ab insidiis inimici sciebam non futurum; compulsus eo quo minime volebam, ne in extremis essem, plane pericula non dubitanter adii . . . . . Ita, si id agitur, ut rursus in potestate omnia unius sint, quicumque is est, ei me profiteor inimicum; nec periculum est ullum, quod pro libertate aut refugiam aut deprecet.

party by the settlement of his immense debts, vetoed every proposal brought up in the Senate for Caesar's recall<sup>(35)</sup> and when his tribuneship expired in December, went directly to Caesar at Ravenna and urged him to march at once on Rome<sup>(36)</sup>. Curio went back again to the capital as Caesar's emissary and at the meeting of the Senate on January 1, 49 B. C., presented the proposal that both Caesar and Pompey hand over their provinces to their successors and dismiss their armies<sup>(37)</sup>. The Senate not only rejected this proposal but expelled the tribunes, M. Antonius and Q. Cassius, who had vetoed the Senate's decree ordering Caesar to give up his province and army<sup>(38)</sup>. The tribunes then fled to Ariminum on their way to join Caesar at Ravenna.

When this news reached Caesar he decided to cross the Rubicon, and on January 11th passed from his province into Italy with one legion, having summoned the others from their winter quarters and ordered them to follow him<sup>(39)</sup>. In his account, Caesar does not mention crossing the boundary river but merely states that he proceeded to Ariminum. In all the later accounts, however, great emphasis was laid on this fact and dramatic stories are related of Caesar's hesitating on the brink of the river and discussing with his friends the evils and blessings that will come to him and to all mankind if he takes the step. Finally, with the words, "the die is cast", he crossed the river<sup>(40)</sup>. The three historians<sup>(41)</sup> are almost identical in details and even in words and are so explicit in their description of the incident that they must have used as their source the account of an eye-witness. Plutarch adds the fact that Asinius Pollio was one of the friends with Caesar on this occasion<sup>(42)</sup>. As he does not mention any other officers by name, Pollio's prominence in this account may be due to the fact that Plutarch drew his version of the story from the histories of

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(35) Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 29; App., *B. C.*, II, 26.

(36) App., *B. C.*, II, 31.

(37) App., *B. C.*, II, 32.

(38) Caes., *B. C.*, I, 5; App., *B. C.*, II, 33.

(39) Caes., *B. C.*, I, 8.

(40) App., *B. C.*, II, 35; Plut., *Caes.*, 31; Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 32.

(41) Appian, Plutarch and Suetonius.

(42) Plut., *Caes.*, 31.

Asinius, which we know he used as a source for many parts of his Lives of Caesar and Pompey<sup>(43)</sup>.

Although we thus know of Pollio's presence in Caesar's army, it is impossible to ascertain the nature of the position Asinius held, but as Caesar never mentions him by name he doubtless was one of a group of minor *legati* whom Caesar kept with him more for their social and literary companionship than for any great military qualifications.

As Caesar moved southward against Pompey, the towns surrendered one after the other and the Pompeian garrisons generally joined the advancing army. By the time Caesar reached Brundisium, Pompey had given up all idea of resisting him in Italy and was preparing to cross to Epirus. Caesar was unable to prevent this, and since he had no ships with which to pursue Pompey, he went to Rome for a few days and thence hurried to Spain to destroy the Pompeian army there, meanwhile sending *legati* to secure Sicily, Sardinia and Africa, the chief centres of the corn supply<sup>(44)</sup>. Quintus Valerius with his division of Caesar's army soon gained possession of Sardinia, while Sicily was handed over by Marcus Cato who was in charge of the Pompeian forces.

The sources do not agree in regard to Caesar's representative in Sicily, for while Appian (*B. C.*, II, 40) and Plutarch (*Cato Minor*, 33) say that it was Pollio, Caesar himself says that he sent "Curio as propraetor into Sicily with two legions, ordering him to take his army across to Africa as soon as he had subdued Sicily"<sup>(45)</sup>. The most natural solution of the question is that Curio was sent to Sicily, in command of the legions and Pollio was one of his officers, perhaps a *legatus legionis*. This is borne out by the fact that they filled similar positions a few months later in Africa, whither they went directly from Sicily<sup>(46)</sup>, and as Curio was the older and more influential man, he would be more likely to hold the command<sup>(47)</sup>. Pollio may have been sent ahead with a part of the

(43) Cf. *infra*, p. 52.

(44) *Caes.*, *B. C.*, I, 15-30; App., *B. C.*, II, 38-41; Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 34.

(45) *Caes.*, *B. C.*, I, 30.

(46) App., *B. C.*, II, 44-46.

(47) Curio was born about 84 B. C. He had given valuable support to Caesar for the last year or more before this appointment which was probably therefore a reward for his services.

See Abbott, *The Common People of Ancient Rome*, p. 234 *et seq.*



forces since Plutarch (*Cato Minor*, 53) says, "understanding that Asinius Pollio was arrived at Messina, with forces from the enemy, Cato sent to him, to know the reason of his coming thither: . . . . As for Asinius, he (Cato) said, he could drive him out of Sicily, but as there were larger forces coming to the assistance of Asinius he would not engage the island in a war." It might be inferred from this that Cato had already yielded the island to Pollio before Curio and the rest of the army arrived. The mistake of Appian and Plutarch may have come from using Pollio's histories or a Greek translation of them in which they learned that he was in Sicily at that time. If the name of the commander was not given, they may easily have jumped to the conclusion that Pollio was in charge of the entire expedition. Appian (*B. C.*, II, 41) later says that after Caesar went to Rome, in assigning his lieutenants to different provinces, "Outside of Italy he chose Curio to take command of Sicily in place of Cato and Quintus Valerius for Sardinia", probably failing to connect this appointment with the earlier one. From these statements and others made by Cicero and Caesar<sup>(48)</sup>, we are led to the conclusion that Curio must have had the supreme command of Caesar's forces in Sicily and although Pollio was present at the time, he occupied a subordinate position, perhaps as Aulard suggests, in charge of the Marrucinian cohorts mentioned in Caesar (*B. C.*, II, 34)<sup>(49)</sup>.

In the autumn of 49, after Sicily had been won over to the cause of Caesar, Pollio crossed to Africa with Curio and his army and landed near Utica where they found Attius Varus in command of the Pompeian forces, supported by Juba and his Numidian cavalry<sup>(50)</sup>. The ensuing campaign seems to have been marked by disaster from the very beginning, due in great part to the ignorance and mistakes of Curio who was more skilled in political manoeuvres than in military tactics. The Caesarians, enfeebled by the climate and tired out by frequent skirmishes with the enemy, were finally routed in a decisive battle at the river Bagradas.

Pollio was evidently still in charge of a part of the troops

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(48) Cic., *ad Att.*, X, 16; Caes., *B. C.*, II, 28, 32.

(49) Aulard, F. A., *de Caii Asinii Pollionis vita et scriptis*, p. 11, n. 1.

(50) Caes., *B. C.*, II, 23-24; App., *B. C.*, II, 44-45.

for "at the beginning of the trouble he retreated with a small force to the camp at Utica lest Varus should make an attack upon it<sup>(51)</sup>". Moreover, according to Appian, it was chiefly through the efforts of Asinius that even a few of the Roman forces were saved, for as soon as news of the disaster reached Utica, the Roman admiral sailed away without waiting for the land forces. But Pollio rowed out to some merchant ships, asked them to come closer in shore and take the remnant of the army on board; in this way a small number of the soldiers escaped<sup>(52)</sup>.

Caesar, in writing of these events, makes no mention of Pollio by name and further says that Marcius Rufus, the quaestor, who had been left in charge of the camp by Curio, ordered the captains of the ships to take the soldiers aboard<sup>(53)</sup>. Both accounts agree that in the general terror and confusion, most of the ships, disregarding this order, sailed away without waiting for the troops. A few captains were prevailed upon either by persuasion or money to save some of the soldiers, and Pollio may have been instrumental in securing these ships; but his exploit was scarcely great enough to demand recognition in Caesar's history of the war. He was merely one of the minor *legati* who, either through his own initiative or acting under Rufus's orders, was able to save himself and a few others from the general rout. From the point of view of Asinius himself, it did seem important enough to be included in his own histories of the civil war, and here Appian may have found the incident and included it in his account of the battle.

Aulard (pp. 11-12) suggests that the omission of Pollio's name from Caesar's detailed account of affairs in Sicily and Africa was intentional and was due to some misunderstanding between the two. This hypothesis seems hardly necessary, since it is evident from the sources that Asinius occupied a subordinate position, and Caesar could scarcely be expected to give the names of all his officers. Pollio may have been sent back to Utica to warn Rufus to be ready for flight, and in the midst of the confusion made himself useful in getting some of the soldiers aboard the ships.

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(51) App., *B. C.*, II, 46.

(52) App., *B. C.*, II, 46.

(53) Caes., *B. C.*, II, 43.

Of Pollio's movements for the next few months nothing is known—whether he returned to Italy to join Caesar or went at once to Illyricum. However, by early June, 48, he was with Caesar's army in Thessaly, since both Plutarch and Appian mention his presence at the battle of Pharsalia<sup>(54)</sup>. Asinius, who accompanied Caesar while they looked over the battlefield at the close of the struggle, noted down Caesar's saying about his enemies which is quoted in Suetonius and Plutarch—"They would have it so. Even I, Gaius Caesar, after so many great deeds, should have been found guilty, if I had not turned to my army for help." Plutarch adds Pollio's statement that he himself took these words down in Greek although Caesar had spoken them in Latin<sup>(55)</sup>.

After the battle of Pharsalia, Pollio returned to Rome and was elected tribune, an office of considerable importance during the absence of the dictator, since the tribunes and Mark Antony, Caesar's Master of Horse, were the only influential men in Rome<sup>(56)</sup>. Asinius with his colleague Trebellius opposed the schemes of Publius Cornelius Dolabella for cancelling debts, but their final success was mainly due to Antony who came to their aid and forced Dolabella to abandon his plans<sup>(57)</sup>. Pollio may have opposed Dolabella because as a conservative he objected to the extremes and excesses on which the "new Clodius" seemed bent, and moreover, he may have joined with Trebellius in an attempt to gain favor with Caesar, who was known to be opposed to the measure<sup>(58)</sup>. We have no indication of Pollio's real motives; Trebellius after Caesar's death brought forward this same law for cancelling debts which he had so vehemently opposed a few years earlier. Cicero asserts that it was because Trebellius was himself so overburdened with debts, and he taunts him with being a "turncoat."<sup>(59)</sup> Pollio's own opposition may have been sincere, but the subsequent

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(54) Plut., *Pomp.*, 72; App., *B. C.*, II, 82.

(55) Suet., *Divus Iulius*, 30: Quod probabilius facit Asinius Pollio, Pharsalica acie caesos profligatosque adversarios prospicientem haec cum ad verbum dixisse referens: 'Hoc voluerunt; tantis rebus gestis Gaius Caesar condemnatus essem, nisi ab exercitu auxilium petissem.'; Plutarch, *Caesar*, 46.

(56) Plut., *Ant.*, 8-9.

(57) Plut., *Ant.*, 9.

(58) Caes., *B. C.*, III, 1; III, 20; Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 42.

(59) Cic., *Phil.*, VI, 4.

action of his colleague suggests that policy rather than conviction may have been his motive as well.

At the opening of the next year (46 B. C.), Pollio was once again in Africa, this time with Caesar himself. In the course of the war there, the cavalry, who had dismounted, were taken unawares by the enemy and "had not Caesar himself and Asinius Pollio come to their assistance and put a stop to their flight, the war had been at an end<sup>(60)</sup>." This statement is perhaps an exaggeration of the value of Pollio's participation, but undoubtedly the cavalry were important factors in a campaign against the Numidian horsemen.

There is no mention of Pollio's presence either at the battle of Thapsus, which took place on April 4th, or at the capture of Utica which followed soon after<sup>(61)</sup>, although it is likely that he was with Caesar all through the campaign, for in the early part of April, Cicero wrote that it was rumored in Rome that Pollio had been captured by the enemy and the ships destroyed at Utica by a storm<sup>(62)</sup>.

In November of 46, Pollio accompanied Caesar to Spain where war was being waged against Pompey's two sons, Gnaeus and Sextus, aided by their father's former generals, Labienus and Varus who had escaped from Africa. The decisive battle was fought at Munda in March 45, and of the Pompeian leaders only Sextus Pompey survived<sup>(63)</sup>. The account of this war as given in the *Bellum Hispaniense* must have been written either by a man who was too great an admirer of Caesar to give a true account of this bitter struggle, or else one whose inferior position prevented his grasping the significance of the movements. For the accounts in all the other sources<sup>(64)</sup> show that this was the most difficult of all Caesar's campaigns, and in both Plutarch and Appian, Caesar is represented as saying "that he had often fought for victory, but this was the first time that he had ever fought for life."<sup>(65)</sup> There is no direct statement to prove that Pollio was present in this campaign, but the inference from the

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(60) Plut., *Caes.*, 52; App., *B. C.*, II, 95.

(61) The author of the *Bellum Africum* never mentions Asinius Pollio.

(62) Cic., *ad Att.*, XII, 2.

(63) App., *B. C.*, II, 104; Plut., *Caes.*, 56; *Dio*, XLIII, 36-37; Florus, IV, 78.

(64) See note 63.

(65) Plut., *Caes.*, 56; App., *B. C.*, II, 104.

passage in Suetonius, dealing with Caesar's speech "To his Soldiers in Spain" is that Pollio was with Caesar at the time, for he later wrote in his histories that the onslaught of the enemy was so sudden that Caesar did not have time to make the usual appeal to his troops,<sup>(66)</sup> and it may be his account of the battle that we find reflected in the later sources<sup>(67)</sup>. That Pollio was in Spain at this time is proved by a letter of Cicero's written in May, 45, in which he says that Pollio had sent him word concerning his nephew Quintus Cicero, who was in Caesar's camp<sup>(68)</sup>. In a letter written later in July, he refers to some rumor that had reached him concerning Pollio,<sup>(69)</sup> and although we do not know what it was, the letters show that Pollio had not yet returned to Italy. He must, however, have been in Rome not long after, since he was a *praetorius* when he was sent back to Spain in 44 B. C.<sup>(70)</sup> Caesar after his return to Rome in the autumn of 45 had resigned the consulship and had two successors elected for the rest of the year, and by raising the number of praetors to fourteen and that of quaestors to forty had created further openings for his followers<sup>(71)</sup>. Pollio was presumably among these praetors who held office for a term of less than a year, since he did not return to Rome until after July, and would therefore have entered upon his duties at least six months late<sup>(72)</sup>.

Pollio was sent to Farther Spain to supersede Carinas as commander of the Caesarian forces against Sextus Pompey<sup>(73)</sup>. Since his army was not a large one and the character of the country in Baetica rendered it impossible to do otherwise, he carried on a guerilla type of warfare against Pompey, with slight success; in fact in one battle he seems to have been completely routed. This defeat was due in part to the fact that Pollio had cast aside his general's cloak, in order to avoid being

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(66) Suet., *Divus Iulius*, 55: proelio, altera posteriore, quo Asinius Pollio ne tempus quidem contionandi habuisse eum dicit subita hostium incursione.

(67) *Cf. infra*, p. 64.

(68) Cic., *ad Att.*, XII, 38.2.

(69) Cic., *ad Att.*, XIII, 21.3.

(70) App., *B. C.*, IV, 84; Vell., II, 73.2.

(71) Dio, XLIII, 47.

(72) *Cf. supra*, n. 69. Praetors entered upon their term of office on January 1st.

(73) App., *B. C.*, IV, 84; Dio, XLV, 10.

recognized in his flight. As another officer of the same name had been killed, the soldiers thought themselves without a leader and surrendered<sup>(74)</sup>. But the death of Caesar and recall of Pompey to Rome in March, 43, left Pollio in control of Spain, where he remained for several months awaiting orders from Rome.

The statement of Velleius that Asinius had waged a most glorious war against Pompey does not seem to agree with the accounts of Dio, who makes this battle seem like a very ignominious defeat, and of Appian, who says that Sextus and Asinius Pollio were carrying on warfare on equal terms<sup>(75)</sup>. *Clarissimum* seems rather a strong word to use for merely holding one's own against the enemy. Thorbecke therefore does not think Dio's account can be true and he believes that Pollio, although at a disadvantage as to numbers, saved the province from the much stronger Pompeians, for he says that if Sextus had been so successful against Asinius he would not have accepted the terms of the Senate, which required him to dismiss his armies<sup>(77)</sup>. Thorbecke, however, does not seem to recall that in place of his armies, Sextus had his father's estates, which had been returned to him, and further that he was given the same sea power that his father had held<sup>(78)</sup>. Sextus made good use of this later. According to Thorbecke, shortly after the death of Caesar, Asinius Pollio had six legions in further Spain, and one at Cartagena, and for this reason he doubts Dio's statement that Pollio had merely a small force in Spain. But Pollio himself in writing to Cicero in March, 43 B. C. says that he has only three legions.<sup>(79)</sup>

The meagre details of the campaigns in Africa and Spain afford very slight grounds for an opinion of Pollio's military ability, but he appears to have shown personal courage when

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(74) *Ibid.*

(75) Dio, XLV, 10; Appian, *B. C.*, IV, 84; Vell. Pat., II, 73.2: ubi adversus eum clarissimum bellum Pollio Asinius praetorius gesserat.

(76) Thorbecke, J. R., *Commentatio de C. Asinii Pollionis Vita et Studiis Doctrinae*, p. 13.

(77) Cic., *ad Att.*, XVI, 4.

(78) Dio, XLV, 10; App., *B. C.*, IV, 84-85; Aulard, p. 16, agrees with Thorbecke that Dio must have been mistaken and that it was quite remarkable that Asinius Pollio withstood the attack of the enemy and held his province with only *two* legions.

(79) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 32.

with Caesar he rescued the cavalry during the second African campaign. Throughout all this period, Pollio was apparently on terms of great intimacy with Caesar, and in writing to Cicero after the death of the Dictator, he says that he had always served him with devotion, and that Caesar had always treated him as one of his oldest friends, although their acquaintance began only at the time when Caesar's fortunes were at their height<sup>(80)</sup>.

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(80) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 31: Caesarem vero, quod me in tanta fortuna modo cognitum vetustissimorum familiarium loco habuit, dilexi summa cum pietate et fide.

### CHAPTER III. Relations with M. Antony.

44—39 B. C.

Amid the general confusion that ensued at Rome after the death of Caesar, Pollio remained for at least a year and a half in comparative peace and seclusion in his province of Farther Spain. As far as actions were concerned, he maintained a strict neutrality in the struggle between Antony and the Republicans, or *Liberatores*, partly because by temperament and inclination he was a lover of peace<sup>(81)</sup> and not of an adventurous disposition, partly because he received little information as to the course of events in Rome since all dispatches sent to him by the senate had to pass through Hither Spain and Narbonese Gaul. Lepidus, a friend of Antony who was in control of these provinces intercepted the dispatches hoping in this way to force Pollio to side with his party<sup>(82)</sup>.

For a long time Pollio seems to have been unable to make up his mind which side he would join in the contest between Antony, the representative of autocratic government, and the Republicans some of whom had brought about the death of Caesar, his former friend. Although he began his political career as a Republican, he had nevertheless followed the fortunes of Caesar, being forced into this alliance, as he says, not as a matter of personal inclination, but because he expected to find fewer of his enemies in that party, and it was impossible for him to remain neutral much as he desired to do so<sup>(83)</sup>. This statement throws additional light on his peace-loving disposition, for the phrase *compulsus eo quo minime volebam* can mean

(81) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 31. 2: Natura autem mea et studia trahunt me ad pacis et libertatis cupiditatem.

*Ibid.*, 5: Quae re eum me existima esse, qui primum pacis cupidissimus sim—omnes enim cives plane studeo esse salvos.

(82) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 31. 4: quod, cum Lepidus contionaretur atque omnibus scriberet se consentire cum Antonio, maxime contrarium fuit; nam quibus commeatibus invito illo per illius provinciam legiones ducerem? Aut, si cetera transissem, num etiam Alpes poteram transvolare, quae praesidio illius tenentur? Adde huc quod perferri litterae nulla condicione potuerunt; sescentis enim locis excutiuntur, deinde etiam retinentur ab Lepido tabellarii.

(83) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 31. 2 and 3, cf. *supra*, p. 8, n. 34.



only that he preferred to keep out of the struggle altogether, since his loyalty to Caesar has already been seen. After Caesar's death, in three letters written to Cicero (*fam.*, X, 31-33) Pollio expresses great devotion to the Republic, and laments that, not having been recalled by the Senate, he could not come to its aid<sup>(84)</sup>. In spite of his protestations of loyalty, the Republicans did not count very much on his support, especially after he ignored the Senate's instructions of April, 43, that he should attack Antony, if he had the opportunity (Appian, *B. C.*, III, 74). These instructions may never have reached Pollio, and as Lepidus and Plancus who had been given the same orders did not move against Antony, it would have been impossible for Pollio to have obeyed the orders if they had come. Whether Pollio was left in Spain because he was needed there, or because the senate doubted either his devotion or his ability, it is difficult to say. Pollio's own feeling was that the Republic and Senate had not got as much advantage out of him as they should and would have done, had they known him better<sup>(85)</sup>. Octavian, who was at this time an ally of the Senate and the Republicans, also wrote to Asinius and Lepidus "that for the sake of appearance they should obey the Senate, but that they should confer together for their own safety while they could do so, and reproach Antony for his conduct; that they should follow the example of their own soldiers, who did not separate even when they were discharged from the service," but presented a united front to the assaults of their enemies. (Appian, *B. C.*, III, 81). This statement, which looks as if Octavian were already contemplating a reconciliation with Antony, probably produced the desired effect on the plans of the generals in Spain and Gaul. The only service that Pollio had rendered the Republic in the year following Caesar's death was in keeping his province at peace and his army from joining Antony. He refused to let any of his soldiers leave, although the emissaries of Antony entered his camps and attempted to win over the legionaries, and Lepidus demanded that the XXX<sup>th</sup> legion be

(84) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 33. 5: Itaque proximis litteris consilium meum expeditur; nam neque deesse neque superesse rei publicae volo. *Ibid.*, X, 33. 1: Atque utinam eodem senatus consulto, quo Plancum et Lepidum in Italiam accessistis, me quoque iussetis venire! profecto non accepisset res publica hoc vulnus . . . .

(85) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 32.

sent to him.<sup>(86)</sup> Even this service was in great part unintentional, for it was simply the result of his policy of remaining neutral until he saw which side would be victorious. By the spring of 43 Pollio apparently had decided to join Antony, for Decimus Brutus, a Republican and one of the *Liberatores*, writing to Cicero soon after the battle of Mutina, shows that in his opinion Pollio was already lost to their cause. This is shown with equal clearness by Pollio's own statement in a letter to Cicero in May, 43, when he says that it will be necessary to approach Lepidus with tact, as it is through his province alone that the army from Farther Spain can return to Italy<sup>(87)</sup>.

By September of 43, it was quite evident that the cause of the Republicans was lost and that Octavian, angered by their treatment, was about to form a coalition with Antony. Pollio therefore marched from Spain into Gaul and joined forces with Antony and Lepidus; Plancus also joined them at the same time<sup>(88)</sup> and soon after this union the Second Triumvirate of

(86) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 32. 4: Tres legiones firmas habeo, quarum unam, duodetricensimam, cum ad se initio belli arcessisset Antonius hac pollicitatione, quo die in castra venisset, denarios quingenos singulis militibus daturum . . . incitatissimam retinui, aegre mehercules; nec retinuissem, si uno loco habuissem, ut pote cum singulae quaedam cohortes seditionem fecerint . . . Nec vero minus Lepidus ursit me et suis et Antonii litteris, ut legionem tricensimam mitterem sibi.

(87) D. Brutus, ap. Cic., *fam.*, XI, 9. 1: In primis rogo te, ad hominem ventosissimum, Lepidum, mittas, ne bellum nobis redintegrare possit Antonio sibi coniuncto. Nam de Pollione Asinio puto te perspicere quid facturus sit. Multae et bonae et firmae sunt legiones Lepidi et Asinii.

(88) Livy, *Per.*, CXX: Quum M. Antonio vires Asinius quoque Pollio et Munatius Plancus cum exercitibus suis adiuncti ampliassent . . . Vell., II, 63: Plancus deinde dubia, id est, sua fide, diu quarum esset partium secum luctatus, ac sibi difficile consentiens et nunc adiutor D. Bruti, designati consulis collegae sui, senatuique se litteris venditans, mox eiusdem proditor; Asinius autem Pollio, firmus proposito et Iulianis partibus fidus, Pompeianis adversus; uterque exercitus tradidere Antonio.

Appian, *B. C.*, III, 97: "While pursuing Decimus, Antony was joined by Asinius Pollio with two legions." This seems contrary to Pollio's own statement (cited p. 16) that he had *three* legions in Spain, for there is no record of his having left one behind. Appian is probably mistaken in the number although he is followed by Firth (p. 49) "Gallia Narbonensis and Hither Spain were under the control of Lepidus and four legions, while Further Spain was in the hands of Pollio with two legions."

Gardthausen, p. 438: also follows Appian and says that the third legion was probably left in Spain, but there is no evidence of this.

On general principles Pollio's own statement may be accepted rather than Appian, who wrote 150 years later. Mistakes in numerals are of very common occurrence in manuscripts.

Antony, Octavian, and Lepidus was formed. In the course of the proscriptions which followed at Rome in November, 43, Pollio's father-in-law, L. Quintius, met his death. The first names on the list were those of the brother of Lepidus and the uncle of Antony; next came the brother and father-in-law respectively of Plancus and Pollio, the consuls elect<sup>(89)</sup>. The choice of victims among the relatives of those highest in power may have been due to the wish to inspire terror.

During the following year, Pollio was left in charge of Antony's province of Cisalpine Gaul, while the triumvirs were in the East pursuing Brutus and Cassius. On the return of Octavian in 41 B. C., Pollio was commissioned to arrange for the distribution of lands in Northern Italy among the veterans and it was at this time that he was able to save Vergil's farm from confiscation<sup>(90)</sup>. These land allotments had aroused a great deal of discontent and hostility against Octavian in Italy. Fulvia, the wife of M. Antony, with L. Antony his brother assumed the leadership of this disaffected element, and in the continued absence of M. Antony in the East, summoned his generals in Italy, Pollio among the others, to their assistance. Before hostilities had actually begun, Pollio, with seven legions under his command<sup>(91)</sup>, held the passes of the Alps and prevented the departure of the legions which Octavian was sending into Spain to quell a revolt there (Appian, *B. C.*, V, 20), but was finally forced to let them proceed in accordance with the pro-

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(89) Appian, *B. C.*, IV, 12: In mentioning the proscription of Pollio's father-in-law says that Pollio was consul elect for the next year, 42, with Plancus as his colleague; later (IV, 27) in relating the same incident, he says that Pollio was consul at that time 43 B. C. Both these statements are contrary to the official records for the years 42 and 43, (see *C. I. L.*, I<sup>2</sup>, pp. 63 and 64); the consuls for the year 43 were Pansa and Hirtius, then Octavian and Pedius and finally Carinas and Ventidius; for 42 they were Plancus and Lepidus. Pollio was consul in 40. This mistake may have arisen from the fact that the triumvirs in November 43, chose consuls for several successive years from among their followers.

(90) *Iun. Phil.*, ad Verg., *Buc.*, II, 1: si eium laudaret, cuius forma Pollio delectabatur, qui eo tempore Transpadanam Italiae partem tenebat et agris praeerat dividendis.

*Serv.*, ad Verg., *Buc.*, VI, 6: \*am legatum substitutum qui transpadanae provinciae etc. qui curavit ne ager, qui Vergilio restitutus fuerat, a veteranis auferretur. *Ibid.*, IX, 11: autem nonnulli quibus sibi Pollionem intercessorem apud Augustum conciliaverat, accipiunt.

(91) *Vell.*, II, 76: nam Pollio Asinius cum septem legionibus diu retenta in potestate Antonii Venetia, . . . . .

visions of an agreement between Octavian and L. Antony. As the other articles of this treaty were not carried out by either party, war broke out in the autumn of 41, and Pollio with Ventidius was sent by L. Antony to block the advance of Salvidienus who, being recalled by Octavian from his journey to Spain, was at this time in Gaul with a large army (Appian, *B. C.*, V, 27). Pollio and Ventidius apparently did not move with any alacrity as they were not sure whether M. Antony would approve of the war or not, and while they followed slowly after Salvidienus, L. Antony was forced to take refuge in Perugia where he was besieged by Agrippa and Octavian. Instead of hastening to his assistance, Pollio and Ventidius allowed Salvidienus to join Octavian and having thus effectually cut themselves off from Perugia and rendered impossible any attempts to rescue Lucius, they were forced to withdraw to Ravenna and Ariminum (Appian, *B. C.*, V, 32-33). A little later Pollio with Ventidius and Plancus, who had also come to relieve Lucius, made one last attempt to go to his assistance, but were turned aside and blockaded in Fulginium by Agrippa and Salvidienus. Asinius and Ventidius were for making a sortie and fighting their way to Perugia, but Plancus persuaded them to wait, as they were between the forces of Octavian and Agrippa, and were likely to be surrounded if they left their fortifications (Appian, *B. C.*, V, 35). This inaction on their part caused Lucius to blame them for his surrender, which took place in March, 40 B. C. (Appian, *B. C.*, V, 39).

As this surrender put a stop to any aggressive action, Pollio and the other generals withdrew to the Adriatic coast, and began to collect soldiers and provisions in the Po Valley, in readiness for M. Antony's return from the East. Meanwhile Asinius won over Domitius Ahenobarbus, a former follower of Brutus, and sent him in charge of a fleet to inform M. Antony of their preparations<sup>(92)</sup>. Since Pollio had thus used his posi-

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(92) Appian, *B. C.*, V, 50; Macrobius, *S.*, I, 11, 22: Asinio etiam Pollione acerbe cogente Patavinos, ut pecuniam et arma conferrent . . . ; Vell., II, 76: Antonium petens (Pollio), vagum adhuc Domitium quem digressum e Brutianis castris post caedem eius praediximus, et propriae classis, factum ducem, consiliis suis illectum, ac fide data, iunxit Antonio. Quo facto, quisquis aequum se praestiterit, sciat non minus a Pollione in Antonium, quem ab Antonio in Pollionem esse collatum.

tion in Cisalpine Gaul against the interests of Octavian, the latter sent Alfenus Varus to supersede him, and made an unsuccessful effort to win over his legions through the agency of Agrippa (Appian, *B. C.*, V, 50-51).

On the return of M. Antony to Italy and the renewal of hostilities between him and Octavian, the soldiers of both armies demanded that peace should be made between the triumvirs. Pollio, Maecenas and Cocceius were chosen to draw up a new agreement; Pollio as Antony's representative, Maecenas as Octavian's, and Cocceius as the friend of both (Appian, *B. C.*, V, 64). This treaty was concluded at Brundisium in the autumn of the year 40 B. C., after which the triumvirs and their followers returned to Rome.

Pollio had already been elected to the consulship for the year 40 B. C. with Cn. Domitius Calvinus<sup>(93)</sup>, in spite of the fact that he was not more than thirty-six years of age, while the legal minimum for a consul was forty-three<sup>(94)</sup>. Another irregularity connected with his tenure of office was the fact that he was not in Rome in January in order to enter upon his duties<sup>(95)</sup>, because he was occupied with the war in Northern Italy. It was usually considered necessary for a magistrate to be in Rome at the beginning of his official year for the observance of certain formalities, but under extraordinary circumstances he was permitted to take office *in absentia*<sup>(96)</sup>. This must have been the case with Pollio, because there is extant an inscription dated by his year of office<sup>(97)</sup>. The general state of confusion in this year would account for these two irregularities<sup>(98)</sup> for in this period men received office in return for services rendered to the party then in power, and earlier restrictions were often disregarded.

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(93) *C. I. L.*, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 60, Fasti Augurum: A. U. C. 714 (B. C. 40) Cn. Domitio M. f. Cal[vino. II] C. Asinio Cn. f. Pollion[*e* cos] L. Cornelio L. f. Balbo P. Ca[nidio P. f. Crasso suf.] Post R. C. an. DCCX [III]. *C. I. L.*, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 64, Fasti Colotiani: A. U. C. 714[C]n. Domitius M. f. C. Asinius Cn. f. [S]uf. L. Cornelius L. f. Suf. P. Canidius P. f. See also *C. I. L.*, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 65, Fasti Biondarii.

(94) See Abbott, *Roman Political Institutions* ¶173.

(95) See Abbott, *Ibid.*, ¶177.

(96) See Daremberg and Saglio, *Dict. des Ant.*, s. vv. *Consul, magistratus*.

(97) *C. I. L.*, X, 5159: An inscription found at Casinum in Latium, dated as follows: a. d. IIII Eid. Oct. Cn. Domit. C. Asinio Cos.

(98) Similarly, Pollio did not enter upon the duties of his praetorship until the latter part of July or August. Cf. *supra*, p. 15.

Pollio and Calvinus evidently did not complete their full term since two *consules suffecti*, L. Cornelius Balbus and L. Canidius Crassus were elected in the course of the year. This confused state of affairs in the political conditions of Italy stands in striking contrast to the prophecies and hopes expressed by Vergil in his Fourth Eclogue, written to celebrate the consulship of Pollio and to show his own gratitude for the saving of his Mantuan farm<sup>(99)</sup>.

In the following year Pollio was sent with proconsular powers to Dalmatia by Antony, who as triumvir had charge of the eastern provinces, in order to wage war against the Parthini, an Illyrian tribe living near Epidamnus (Dyrrhachium)<sup>(100)</sup>. Appian (*B. C.*, V, 75) says that Antony ordered this expedition because he wanted to "enrich as well as to exercise the soldiers who were to go with him into winter quarters", but the excuse was given that the Parthini, although generally friends rather than foes of the Romans,<sup>(101)</sup> had been very zealous supporters of Brutus. Pollio accordingly gathered together the legions in Northern Italy and marching around the head of the Adriatic<sup>(102)</sup> carried on a successful campaign against the Parthini, capturing from them the Dalmatian city of Salonae in the course of the war<sup>(103)</sup>. On his return to Rome Pollio celebrated a

(99) Vergil, *Buc.*, IV, 11: Teque adeo decus hoc aevi, te consule inibit,  
Pollio, et incipient magni procedere menses;  
Te duce, siqua manent sceleris vestigia nostri,  
Irrita perpetua solvent formidine terras.

(100) Dio, XLVIII, 42; Florus, IV, 12. 11.

(101) See Smith, *Dict. of Geog.*, s. v. Parthini.

(102) Verg., *Buc.*, VIII, 6: Tu mihi seu magni superas iam saxa Timavi,  
Sive oram Illyrici legis aequoris,

Serv., *ad Verg.*, *Buc.*, VIII, 6: ubi, ubi es, o Auguste, sive Venetiae fluenta transcendis—nam Timavus fluvius est. Venetiae vel Histriae—sive per Illyricum navigas mare id est per Dalmatiam.

(103) Pollio named a son who was born this year Saloninus in honor of the capture of Salonae. See Serv., *ad Verg.*, *Buc.*, IV, 1: Asinius Pollio, ductor Germanici exercitus, cum post captam Salenam, Dalmatiae civitatem, primo meruisset lauream, post etiam consulatum adeptus fuisset, eodem anno suscepit filium, quem a capta civitate Saloninum vocavit. Serv., *ad Verg.*, *Buc.*, VIII, 12: Quidam, sicut dictum est, in Pollionem dictum tradunt, qui tunc Illyricum petebat, expugnaturus Salonas et inde ad orientem ad Antonium profecturus. See also Schol. Acron, *ad Hor.*, *C.*, II, 1. 15.

triumph on October 25, 39 B. C.<sup>(104)</sup>, and with this honor ended his active military career, retiring at the age of thirty-seven to a life devoted to civil and literary pursuits.

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(104) *C. I. L.*, 1<sup>2</sup>, p. 77, *Tabula Triumphorum Barberiniana*; 715 C. Asinius ex Parthineis A. D. VIII K. Nov. triumphavit Palmam dedit. *C. I. L.*, 1<sup>2</sup>, p. 50=(I, p. 461) *Acta Triumph. Capitolina*, A. U. C. 715, C. Asinius Cn. f. Pollio Procos. An. (DCXIII) ex Parthineis VIII K. Novem.

It is impossible to understand how Ferrero's statement (III, 277) that Antony "divided into three bodies the army of Pollio and recaptured as he went Salona, which had revolted; at the same time he inflicted a defeat upon the Parthini" can find any support in the references to Servius and *C. I. L.* on which he claims that it is based.

## CHAPTER IV. Civil Life in Rome.

From 39 B. C. until his death in 4 A. D.<sup>(105)</sup>, Pollio was occupied by interests quite different from those that filled his early life. When Antony departed for the East to claim his half of the Roman world, Pollio had remained in Italy and, unwilling to humble himself by joining the supporters of Octavian, withdrew from active political life and devoted all his time and energy to literature and oratory. In 31 B. C. when Octavian summoned him to join the expedition against Antony which ended in the battle of Actium, Pollio refused on the ground of his former friendship with Antony, saying that he would keep out of their conflict and fall a reward to the victor. He had not seen Antony since his notorious career in the East and still pictured him as the able leader under whom he had served and to whom he was so greatly indebted<sup>(106)</sup>.

Through the leisure thus afforded, Pollio turned his attention to less dangerous pursuits, and showed his versatility by the distinction he achieved in poetry, history and oratory. In his own day he was even more noted as an orator than as an historian, and was classed with the foremost speakers of his time—Cicero, Caesar, Caelius, Calvus, Brutus and Messalla<sup>(107)</sup>. Pollio and Messalla, with whom he was frequently associated in cases, were successors of the earlier famous orators of this group, and by some of their contemporaries were believed not

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(105) Hieronymus, *Chron. ad an. Abr.*, 2020: Asinius Pollio orator et consularis, qui de Dalmatis triumphaverat, LXXX aetatis suae anno in Villa Tusculana moritur.  
See also Val. Max., VIII, 13. 4.

(106) Vell., II, 86: Non praetereatur Asinii Pollionis factum et dictum memorabile; namque cum se post Brundisinam pacem continuisset in Italia, neque aut vidisset reginam, aut post enervatum amore eius Antonii animum, partibus eius se miscuisset, rogante, Caesare, ut secum ad bellum proficisceretur Actiacum, 'mea inquit, in Antonium maiora merita sunt, illius in me beneficia notiora: itaque discrimini vestro me subtraham, et ero praeda victoris.'

(107) Tac., *Dial.*, 17. 1: Sed transeo ad Latinos oratores in quibus non Menenium, ut puto, Agrippam, qui potest videri antiquus, nostrorum temporum disertis ante ponere soletis, sed Ciceronem et Caesarem, et Caelium et Calvum et Brutum et Asinium et Messallam. See also *ibid.*, 25. 10.



only to have carried on the tradition but to have surpassed their predecessors in style. Their names are coupled almost as frequently as those of the Dioscuri and while both were distinguished by a certain archaic quality, Messalla was more elegant and graceful<sup>(108)</sup>.

Pollio's care and accuracy were regarded by some as excessive and the old-fashioned severity of his style formed so striking a contrast to the grace and elegance of Cicero that he seemed to be a generation older<sup>(109)</sup>. He had a fondness for archaic words and forms and drew on Accius and Pacuvius to such an extent that he appeared harsh and dry in style<sup>(110)</sup>. These defects were exaggerated by his imitators of a later day so that Quintilian could say the dry and jejune rivalled Pollio, just as the obscurely brief thought they surpassed Sallust and Thucydides and those who lacked embellishments considered themselves Attic purists<sup>(111)</sup>. Pollio's belief that the substance was more important than the form<sup>(112)</sup> led him to expend much time and care on working out his ideas and on the logical division and arrangement of the subject matter<sup>(113)</sup> but to pay little attention to the form of their presentation. His sentences

(108) Quint., X, 1. 113; XII, 11. 28; Sen., *Contr.*, III, Praef., 14; Tac., *Ann.*, IV, 34; XI, 6 and 7; *Dial.*, 12.

(109) Quint., X, 1. 113: Multa in Asinio Pollione inventio, summa diligentia, adeo ut quibusdam etiam nimia videatur, et consilii et animi satis: a nitore et iucunditate Ciceronis ita longe abest, ut videri possit sacculo prior.

Tac., *Dial.*, 21.

(110) Quint., I, 6. 42; nec 'hos lodices', quamquam id Pollioni placet . . . Tac., *Dial.*, 21; Asinius quoque, quamquam propioribus temporibus natus sit, videtur mihi inter Menenius et Appios studuisse. Pacuvium certe et Accium non solum tragoediis sed etiam in orationibus suis expressit; adeo durus et siccus est.

A remark of Livy's cited in Sen., *Contr.*, IX, 25, 26, is supposed to refer to Asinius Pollio; Livius de oratoribus qui verba antiqua et sordida consecantur et orationis obscuritatem severitatem putant aiebat Miliaden rhetorem eleganter dixisse:

(111) Quint., X, 2. 17: qui carent cultu atque sententiis, Attici scilicet, qui praecisis conclusionibus obscuro, Sallustium atque Thucydidem superant, tristes ac ieiuni Pollionem aemulantur,

(112) See Schol. Cruquian., ad Hor., *Ep.*, II, 3. 311; where he cites a remark of Pollio: "male hercule, eveniat verbis, nisi rem sequantur" when Pollio evidently had in mind a quotation from the elder Cato, the greatest exponent of old-fashioned oratory; "rem tene, verba sequentur" (*Libri ad Marcum Filium*, 15, Jordan, p. 80).

(113) Quintilian (X, 1. 113; 2. 25; XII, 10. 11) in mentioning the distinguishing characteristics of the various orators always refers to the *diligentia* of Pollio.

were, therefore, uneven, jerky and ineffective in places where a decided effect was most needed, usually ending abruptly except in occasional instances where they followed some conventional form. This resulted in a crabbed and ill-balanced style, but it is to be noted that Pollio is generally contrasted with Cicero and his flowing periods<sup>(114)</sup>.

Pollio delivered orations both in the law courts and in the rhetorical schools. We have allusions to seven of the first kind, six being speeches in defence of the accused, while the first one was the prosecution of Cato mentioned above<sup>(115)</sup>. An interval of twelve years had elapsed since that time and Pollio being now an older and more experienced lawyer appeared as attorney for the defence, a procedure considered more consistent with the dignity of the better lawyers as well as more honorable, since it enabled him to become the illustrious defender of the unfortunate<sup>(116)</sup>. In 43 B. C. Pollio undertook the defense of L. Aelius Lamia<sup>(117)</sup>, a man of equestrian rank and a friend of Cicero<sup>(118)</sup> who was prosecuted for a political offence and was acquitted.

Soon after the battle of Actium, 31 B. C., Pollio again acted in behalf of a political offender, M. Aemilius Scaurus, a follower of Antony who had been Pollio's opponent in the trial of Cato,

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(114) Sen., *Ep.*, 100, 7: *Lege Ciceronem: compositio eius una est, pedem servat lenta et sine infamia mollis, at contra Pollionis Asinii salebrosa et exsiliens et ubi minime expectes, relictura. Denique omnia apud Ciceronem desinunt, apud Pollionem cadunt exceptis paucissimis, quae ad certum modum et ad unum exemplar adstricta sunt.*

(115) *Cf. supra*, p. 5, *et seq.*

(116) Hor., *C.*, II, 1. 13.

Insigne maestis praesidium reis  
Et consulenti, Pollio curiae.

See Schol. Acro. et Porph., ad Hor., *C.*, II, 1. 13.

(117) Sen., *Suas.*, VI, 15: *Pollio vult illam veram videri; ita enim dixit in ea oratione quam pro Lamia edidit . . . . .*  
*Huic certe actioni eius pro Lamia qui interfuerunt negant eum haec dixisse . . . . .*

This trial must have taken place the latter part of 43 or early in 42 B. C. as it occurred after the death of Cicero and before Pollio became governor of Cisalpine Gaul.

(118) Cic., *pro. Sest.*, 12; *in Pison.*, 27; *post Red. in Sen.*, I, 5; *ad. Att.*, XIII, 45; *ad fam.*, XI, 16, 17.

but in this case Pollio was unsuccessful and Scaurus was condemned to death<sup>(119)</sup>.

The trials in which Pollio next figured involved men who were accused of poisoning; the first, in 20 B. C., was that of Moschus Apollodorus, a prominent rhetorician who was prosecuted by Torquatus and unsuccessfully defended by Pollio<sup>(120)</sup>; the second was that of Nonius Asprenas, a man of consular rank who, in 9 B. C. was accused by Cassius Severus of having poisoned a large number of guests<sup>(121)</sup>. This trial aroused a great deal of interest in Rome because of the prominence of the defendant and the protection given him by Augustus; Asprenas was acquitted<sup>(122)</sup>.

During the long-continued peace and quiet of the Augustan rule and the consequent decrease in political offenses against a well organized state, Pollio turned to civil cases. His first lawsuit before the *Centumviri*, the court for cases relating to property<sup>(123)</sup>, was the defence of the heirs of Urbinia against the claims of a slave Sosipater or Clusinus Figulus<sup>(124)</sup> who was

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(119) Quint., VI, 1. 21: Hoc quod proxime dixi, Cicero atque Asinius certatim sunt usi, pro Scauro patre hic, ille pro filio. *Ibid.*, IX, 2. 24: ut Pollio: numquam fore credidi, iudices, ut reo Scauro, ne quid in eius iudicio gratia valeret, precarer. Scaurus was afterwards pardoned for the sake of his mother Mucia, who had been the wife of Pompey. See Dio, LI, 2; LVI, 38; Appian, *B. C.*, V, 142.

(120) Sen., *Contr.*, II, 5. 13: Novi declamatores post Moschum Apollodorum, qui reus veneficii fuit et a Pollione Asinio defensus, damnatus Massiliae docuit

See also Schol. Porph., in Hor., *Ep.*, I, 5. 9.

(121) Pliny, *N. H.*, XXXV, 164; non illa foedior, cuius veneno Asprenati reo Cassius Severus accusator obiecit interisse convivas CXXX.

(122) Suet., *Aug.*, 56: Cum Asprenas Nonius artius ei iunctus causam veneficii, accusante Cassio Severo diceret, Augustus consuluit senatum, quid officii sui putaret; cunctari enim se, ne si superasset, eripere[t] legibus reum, sin deesset, destituere ac praedamnare amicum existimaretur; et consentientibus universis sedit in subsellis per aliquot horas, verum tacitus et ne laudatione quidem iudiciali data.

See also, Sen., *Contr.*, IV, Praef. 11; Quint., X, 1. 22; XI, 1. 57; Dio, LV, 4.

(123) Tac., *Dial.*, 38, 12: ut neque Cicronis neque Caesaris neque Bruti neque Caelii neque Calvi, non denique ullius magni oratoris liber apud centumviros dictus legatur, exceptis orationibus Asinii quae pro heredibus Urbiniae inscribuntur, ab ipso tamen Pollione mediis divi Augusti temporibus habitae, postquam longa temporum quies et continuum populi otium et assidua senatus tranquillitas et maxima principis disciplina ipsam quoque eloquentiam sicut omnia depacaverat.

(124) Quint., VII, 2. 26.

represented by Labienus<sup>(125)</sup>. This suit was a celebrated one, probably because it was so unusual for a prominent orator to try a case in this court. In another similar suit, Pollio successfully defended the heirs of Liburnia by suggesting, in the course of his plea an imaginary will, which parodied the one presented as evidence by the other side (Quint., IX, 2. 34-35). The laws forbidding fees bore rather heavily on poorer advocates (Tac., *Ann.*, XI, 6) but Pollio being a wealthy man could afford to undertake a large number of cases which brought him no financial remuneration. A remark of his quoted by Pliny seems to be a mournful reflection on his career as an advocate: "by pleading cleverly it came to pass that I pleaded frequently, and by pleading frequently that I pleaded less cleverly"<sup>(126)</sup>.

There are a few references to other speeches of Pollio, which seem to have been of the deliberative type and were delivered in the senate<sup>(127)</sup>. Although he had withdrawn from political life, Pollio still took part in the meetings of that body, for his name occurs as a witness of a *senatus consultum* in 17 B. C.<sup>(128)</sup> And in 12 B. C. he delivered a speech there against the *Troiae ludus*, a sham fight in which the combatants, boys of high rank, were mounted on horseback and carried on a contest supposed to have been introduced by Aeneas and the Trojans after their landing in Italy. These games, according to Vergil (*Aeneid*, V, 574 sq.) were later celebrated at Alba by Ascanius and were doubtless re-introduced by Augustus in connection with his revival of the old religion since they are mentioned only once in historic times before his Principate. Augustus had them performed twice, first in 27 B. C. and again in 12 B. C. in connection with the dedication of the theatre of Marcellus, where his grandson Gaius Caesar took part with better luck than Pollio's grandson Aeserninus who broke his leg in the games. Pollio, believing that so dangerous a sport

(125) Quint., IV, 1. 11: ut Asinius pro Urbiniae heredibus Labienum adversarii patronum inter argumenta causae malae posuit. IX, 3. 13: ut iam evaluit rebus agentibus, quod Pollio in Labieno damnat et contumeliam fecit. Pollio is said to have coined a new word, *figulatus* in connection with this trial. Quint., VIII, 3. 32.

(126) Plin., *Ep.*, VI, 29: Sed et illud, quod vel Pollionis vel tamquam Pollionis accepi, verissimum experior, 'commode agendo factum est ut saepe agerem, saepe agendo ut minus commode.'

(127) See Hor., *C.*, II, 1. 13; quoted above (p. 28).

(128) *C. I. L.*, VI, Pars I, 877 (a).

should be abolished, succeeded in having it forbidden for the future<sup>(129)</sup>. Among other speeches made by him before the Senate were certain against Plancus, which were not to be published until after the death of the latter<sup>(130)</sup>. We do not know the occasion for these speeches, but from a knowledge of Plancus's life, we may surmise that they related to his behavior in 32 B. C. when on his return to Rome, he tried to win favor with Octavian by spreading reports against Antony, whom he had formerly served. Some of Pollio's orations must have been published, and references to them in Tacitus<sup>(131)</sup> imply that they were extant at the close of the first century A. D.

Asinius Pollio is ranked with Messalla, Augustus and Maecenas as one of the greatest patrons of the *Declamationes*, which, although originally confined to the schools of the rhetoricians, where young Romans were taught the principles of public speaking, had in Pollio's day become the fashion among the older and more experienced orators, not only as recreation but as a means of keeping themselves in training<sup>(132)</sup>. Although Pollio encouraged others, both by his presence and criticisms, to take part in this public speaking, he himself would never declaim in public either because he felt that his style was not suited to speeches of this type, or because he felt it beneath the dignity of a great orator<sup>(133)</sup>. As these declamations were often improvised on the spot they were never written down or published, but L. Annaeus Seneca the elder in his old age composed

(129) Suet., *Aug.*, 43: Sed et Troiae lusum edidit frequentissime maiorum minorumque puerorum, prisci decorique moris existimans clarae stirpis indolem sic notescere . . . Mox finem fecit talia edendi, Asinio oratore graviter invidioseque in curia questo A[er]snerini nepotis sui casum, qui et ipse crus fregerat. See also Dio, LXIX, 43; LI, 22; LIII, 1.

(130) Plin., *N. H.*, Praef. 31: Nec Plancus inlepidè, cum diceretur Asinius Pollio orationes in eum parere, quae ab ipso aut libertis post mortem Planci ederentur, ne respondere posset: cum mortuis non nisi larvas luctari.

(131) *Dial.*, 21, 25 and 17.

(132) Cic., *Tusc.*, I, 47; XI, 2; Suet., *Rhet.*, 1.

(133) Sen., *Contr.*, IV, Praef. 2: Pollio Asinius numquam admissa multitudine declamavit, nec illi ambitio in studiis defuit . . . Et inde est quod Labienus, homo mentis quam linguae amarioris dicit; 'ille triumphalis senex ἀυροάσεις suas (id est declamationes) numquam populo commisit.'

*Ibid.*, IV, Praef. 3: Floridior erat aliquanto in declamando quam in agendo: illud strictum eius et asperum et nimis iratum ingenio suo iudicium adeo cessabat.

from memory a book of selections from the *declamationes* he had heard in his youth in the Augustan period<sup>(134)</sup>. The speeches in the rhetorical schools had been of two kinds, the *Suasoriae* where the subjects were taken from history and gave the pupils practice in deliberative eloquence<sup>(135)</sup> and the *Controversiae* which were an imitation of real pleading in the courts, but dealt with fictitious subjects and laws invented for the purpose. The latter were more popular since they provided training for future legal speeches. The range of subjects varied from politics to moral and philosophical reflections, including character drawing, pictures of customs, epigrams, etc. As the same subjects were used over and over again the speaker had to show his skill by rendering them in as novel a way as possible<sup>(136)</sup> and by adding piquant touches or else introducing romantic adventures, such as kidnapping by pirates. Seneca gives numerous examples of Pollio's opinions and comments on the different subjects of the *controversiae*<sup>(137)</sup>. These are generally concise, matter of fact and strictly logical rather than sympathetic, and expressed with a certain neatness of phrase, the opinions of a man sure of himself and sufficiently independent to disagree, in one case, with the common judgment<sup>(138)</sup>. Concerning some of the rhetoricians of his day, Pollio's opinions, reflected in Seneca<sup>(139)</sup>, appear to be for the most part sane and just, though tinged with self-assurance. That his criticisms were decidedly sharp and dogmatic may be judged from those extant, as well as from Seneca's statement that Pollio's own style in oratory "demanded a consideration which Pollio himself refused to others"<sup>(140)</sup>.

Pollio took certain grammarians under his patronage. Timagenes, a rhetorician and historian from Alexandria, having offended Augustus by his bitter sarcasms was forced to

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(134) Seneca, *Suasoriae et Controversiae*.

(135) Juv., *Sat.*, I, 16; VII, 152, 154; Pers., III, 45.

(136) Quint., II, 10. 5; Petron., *Sat.*, 1.

(137) Sen., *Contr.*, I, 6. 11; IV, 2 exc.; IV, 5. 6 exc.; VII, 1. 4.

(138) Sen., *Contr.*, I, 6. 11.

(139) Sen., *Suas.*, II, 10; *Contr.*, II, 3. 13; II, 3. 19; II, 5. 10; IV, Praef. 11; IV, 6 exc.; VII, Praef. 2; VII, 4. 3; IX, 2. 25.

(140) Sen., *Contr.*, IV, Praef. 3.

leave the imperial house and found a refuge with Pollio<sup>(141)</sup>. Although Augustus warned Pollio that he was "sheltering a wild beast," he did not demand that Timagenes be turned out, for he realized that Pollio had become reconciled with Timagenes only because of his own attitude towards him. Ateius Capito or Praetextatus was also befriended by Pollio and employed by him to compile a book of rules on the art of composition to be used in writing his historical works. Capito had previously been associated with Sallust in collecting material for his histories<sup>(142)</sup>.

It has been inferred from citations in the grammarians of the fourth and sixth centuries that Pollio wrote works on grammar, but all the citations, save one, are merely examples of Pollio's usage of certain forms about which there was evidently difference of opinion<sup>(143)</sup>. Whether he wrote any separate

(141) Sen., *de ira*, III, 23: Timagenes historiārum scriptor quaedam in ipsum, quaedam in uxorem eius et in totam domum dixerat nec perdiderat dicta . . . . Saepe illum Caesar monuit moderatius lingua uteretur; perseveranti domo sua interdixit. Postea Timagenes in contubernio Pollionis Asinii consenuit ac tota civitate direptus est . . . . Hoc dumtaxat Pollioni Asinio (Caesar) dixit: *θηριοτροφεῖς*. Paranti deinde excusationem obstitit et: "fruere, inquit, mi Pollio, fruere", et cum Pollio diceret: "si iubes, Caesar, statim illi domo mea interdiciam." "Hoc me, inquit, putas facturum, cum ego vos in gratiam reduxerim?" Fuerat enim aliquando Timageni Pollio iratus nec ullam aliam habuerat causam desinendi, quam quod Caesar coeperat.

(142) Suet., *de gram.*, X, 1. 20 *et seq.*: Coluit [Capito Ateius] postea familiarissime C. Sallustium et eo defuncto Asinium Pollionem, quos historiam componere aggressos, alterum breviario rerum omnium Romanarum ex quibus quas vellet eligeret, instruxit, alterum praeceptis de ratione scribendi. Quo magis miror Asinium credidisse, antiqua eum verba et figuras solitum esse colligere Sallustio; cum sibi sciat nil aliud suadere quam ut noto civilique et proprio sermone utatur, vitetque maxime obscuritatem Sallusti et audaciam in translationibus.

(143) Charis., *Gramm. Lat.*, I, 84. 11: eaque prisco saucia puer filia summam;  
ubi tamen Varro cum a puera putat dictum, sed Aelius Stilo, magister eius, et Asinius contra. *Ibid.*, I, 131. 3: Insequenti Asinius Pollio ad Caesarem I 'insequenti die'. Prisc., *Gramm. Lat.*, II, 513. 7: 'nanciscor' etiam 'nactum' facit absque n, ut Probor et Capro et Pollioni et Plinio placet. *Ibid.*, V, 574. 6: Caminus generis masculini, sicut Pollio Asinius. Charis., *Gramm. Lat.*, I, 100. 24: antistes habet antistitam, ut . . . . Polio 'Veneris antistita Cupra', . . . .

grammatical works as Haupt (*Op.*, II, 67 *et seq.*) believes, or whether his grammatical criticisms are found in his other writings as Bergk (*Op.*, II, 751, 94) and Steup (*De Prob. Gramm.*, 70) think, is not to be decided with certainty<sup>(144)</sup>. It is evident, however, that he was interested in the niceties of grammatical usage<sup>(145)</sup>, for the masculine *pugillares*, which he preferred, is contrasted in Charisius with the neuter form *pugillaria* used by Catullus<sup>(146)</sup>. Peter (*Jahrb. f. Philol.*, CXIX, 422) takes the view that Pollio wrote a separate work on the diction of Catullus, but such a conclusion does not necessarily follow from this passage.

In any case, Pollio was well known as a critic and his opinions of some of his contemporaries have been preserved to us by writers on grammatical and oratorical subjects. He did not hesitate to criticize the great writers of his day—Sallust, Caesar, Cicero and Livy. In a letter to Plancus, Pollio criticized Sallust for his inaccuracy of diction, because he used *transgredi*, which was strictly a land term, for crossing the sea, instead of the usual *transfretare*<sup>(147)</sup>. But his chief criticism of Sallust is provoked by that author's use of obsolete and archaic words in his history of the Jugurthine War, although Pollio lays most of the blame for this on the grammarian Ateius Capito, who had helped Sallust with his material, providing him with an

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(144) Pauly-Wissowa, s. v. Asinius, ¶1599.

(145) Tac., *Dial.*, 12. 24: Plures hodie reperies qui Ciceronis gloriam quam qui Vergilii detrectent, nec ullus Asinii aut Messallae liber tam inlustris est quam Medea Ovidii aut Varii Thyestes.

(146) Charis., *Gramm. Lat.*, I, 97: Hos pugillares et masculino genere et semper pluraliter dicas, sicut Asinius in Valer(ium), quia pugillus est qui plures tabellas continet in seriem sutas. At tamen haec pugillaria saepius neutraliter dicit idem Catullus in hendecasyllabis. Hor., *S.*, I, 10. 84:

Ambitione relegata te dicere possum,  
Pollio, te, Messalla, tuo cum fratre, simulque  
Vos, Bibule et Servi, simul his te, candide Furni,  
Compluris alios, doctos ego quos et amicos  
Prudens praetereo; quibus haec, sint qualiacumque,  
Arridere velim, doliturus si placeant spe  
Deterius nostra.

(147) Gell., X, 26. 1: Asinio Pollioni in quadam epistula, quam ad Plancum scripsit et quibusdam aliis C. Sallustio iniquis dignum nota visum est, quod in primo historiarum maris transitum transmissumque navibus factum transgressum appellavit eosque, qui fretum transmiserant, quos "transfretasse" dici solitum est, transgressos dixit.



epitome of all Roman history<sup>(148)</sup>. This criticism is interesting since Pollio himself was noted for his love of archaisms<sup>(149)</sup> and was also helped by Capito in the composition of his own histories of the Civil Wars; for after the death of Sallust, Pollio took Ateius Capito under his patronage<sup>(150)</sup>. Suetonius cannot understand how Asinius could believe that Ateius collected archaic words and expressions for Sallust, since the grammarian was recommended to Pollio as a writer who used familiar, unassuming, natural language, "especially avoiding Sallust's obscurity and boldness in translation<sup>(151)</sup>." It is probable, therefore, that the blame for the use of archaistic words lies with the author himself and not with Capito. Pollio's criticism of Sallust was concurred in by many other men of his day, for Augustus says that Sallust drew his vocabulary from the *Origines* of Cato<sup>(152)</sup>, and Quintilian quoting a famous epigram, "And thou, O Crispus, the author of the history of Jugurtha, who hast plentifully stolen words from old Cato" adds that this was an offensive kind of affectation and inclined to prevent a writer from suiting his words to his subject matter<sup>(153)</sup>. Other references to Sallust's use of Catonian words are in Suetonius (*de Gramm.*, 15) and in Gellius (*N. A.*, I, 15. 18 and IV, 15. 1), where he refers to Sallust as a renovator of words. Quintilian in another passage calls the words of Sallust *dicta sancte et antique*, and says that such words should be avoided, as they are no longer understood in their original meaning<sup>(154)</sup>. He later adds that brevity is very happy when it comprises much in few words, as Sallust does in some phrases, but that it often

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(148) Suet., *de gramm.*, 10. 4 *et seq.*: De eodem (Ateius) Asinius Pollio in libro, quo Sallustii scripta reprehendit ut nimia priscorum verborum affectatione oblita, ita tradit: "in eam adiutorium ei fecit maxime quidem Ateius Praetextatus"  
*Ibid.*, 10. 20 *et seq.* This criticism is interesting because Pollio himself was criticized for his love of archaisms.

(149) *Cf. supra* p. 27.

(150) Suet., *de gramm.*, 10.

(151) Suet., *de gramm.*, 10—end.

(152) Suet., *Aug.*, 86.

(153) Quint., VIII, 3. 29-30.

Quint., VIII, 3. 29:

Et verba antiqui multum furate Catonis,  
 Crispe, Jugurthinae conditor historiae:

(154) Quint., VIII, 3. 44.

leads to obscurity,<sup>(155)</sup> and for this same reason he blames Sallust for using phrases translated from the Greek<sup>(156)</sup>. The faults of Sallust thus appear to have been generally recognized, and Pollio's criticisms in this case were just and fair and in accordance with the judgments of other contemporary critics.

When we turn to Pollio's criticism of Livy we find that it is the latter's *Patavinitas* to which Pollio takes exception<sup>(157)</sup>. This was perhaps some peculiarity of diction, idiom, accent or usage which differentiated the speech of northern Italy from that of Rome<sup>(158)</sup>. These local differences, which were probably as distinct and varied in Italy as they are in the different parts of Italy, England or America today, were regarded as provincial by those accustomed to Roman usage. Tuscan, Sabine or Praenestine speech was as objectionable to Lucilius as was Patavian to Pollio<sup>(159)</sup>. Quintilian, himself a great admirer of Livy, does not deny the accusation, although he is willing to accept all Italian for Roman without making invidious comparisons as to their respective merits. A Roman accent was by no means conferred along with citizenship<sup>(160)</sup>.

Pollio's criticism of Caesar's *Commentaries*, on the other hand does not deal with the style but considers their historical accuracy. Suetonius quotes Pollio as saying that they were not written with sufficient care or strict regard for the truth, for the statements of others were rashly accepted and the deeds of Caesar himself were incorrectly reported either on purpose or

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(155) Quint., VIII, 3.82; he again mentions the brevity of Sallust in IX, 3. 12.

(156) Quint., IX, 3. 17.

(157) Quint., I, 5. 56: Pollio reprehendit in Livio Patavinitatem, *ibid.*, VIII, 1. 3: Et in Tito Livio, mirae facundiae viro, putat inesse Pollio Asinius quendam Patavinitatem.

(158) The view that Pollio's criticism of Livy's Patavinitas was due to his lavish praise of Pompey (Tac., *Ann.*, IV, 34) seems utterly untenable and is referred to by Thorbecke, (p. 138) only to be discarded.

(159) Quint., I, 5. 56 "Taceo de Tuscis et Sabinis et Praenestinis quoque: nam ut eorum sermone utentem Vettium Lucilius insectatus, quem ad modum Pollio reprehendit in Livio Patavinitatem, licet omnia Italica pro Romanis habeam."

(160) Quint., VIII, 1. 3.

through a slip of memory; moreover he believed that Caesar intended to rewrite and correct them<sup>(161)</sup>.

In a criticism of this kind it is necessary to consider whether Pollio wishes to imply that their inaccuracy is due to the method of composition, or to a deliberate disregard for integrity of statement on Caesar's part. Pollio was himself an eye-witness of many of the events described by Caesar, and therefore refers to matters which were known to him by personal investigation rather than hearsay. His own reputation for veracity was high and in some instances his statements were preferred to Caesar's by Appian and Plutarch<sup>(162)</sup>. It is true that Pollio's criticism of Caesar's veracity is the only one which has come down to us<sup>(163)</sup>, but he can scarcely have been the single one of Caesar's contemporaries who questioned his statements at a time when party and personal feelings ran high. Pollio in making such a criticism must have been expressing what he considered essential qualities for the writing of history, namely, accuracy and reverence for the truth, and in showing how far Caesar had fallen below these standards he need not have been making a deliberate attack upon him. This latter view would seem almost incredible had it not been maintained by one critic who believed that a breach of friendship between Caesar and Pollio led to this harsh judgment<sup>(164)</sup>. It has already been shown<sup>(165)</sup> that there is little or no evidence for this supposed breach, and it would seem to be entirely out of keeping with Pollio's character as an historian to be led astray by personal prejudice. Thorbecke believes that the very strength of his friendship with Caesar caused him to make this criticism lest he be thought to have allowed his feelings of loyalty to influence his impartial judgment<sup>(166)</sup>.

From whatsoever motive Pollio does question the absolute veracity of Caesar and in some specific instances contradicts

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(161) Suet., *Divus Iulius*, 56: Pollio Asinius parum diligenter parumque integra veritate compositos putat, cum Caesar pleraque per alios erant gesta temere crediderit et quae per se, vel consulto vel etiam memoria lapsus perperam ediderit; existimatque rescripturum et correcturum fuisse.

(162) *Cf. infra*, p. 54.

(163) Thorbecke, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

(164) See Schanz, *op. cit.*, I<sup>2</sup>, pp. 134-135.

(165) *Cf. supra*, p. 12, *et seq.*

(166) Thorbecke, p. 134.

him, but at the same time he explains that Caesar's work was unfinished and uncorrected. Carelessness, too much credulity, forgetfulness of detail, introduction of the personal element are faults which are characteristic of notes made hastily on the spot, but since records such as these may be revised, amended, expurgated and put into proper proportion in a completed work, there is no reason to believe that Caesar would not have followed the usual method of historians and worked over his material, had the *Commentaries* been given a final revision.

When we come to Pollio's criticism of Cicero we are on more difficult ground, for, although the extant material in this case is more extensive, it is necessary to explain the apparent change in Pollio's attitude toward the great orator. As a young man, Asinius Pollio had expressed deep admiration and affection for Cicero in the letters written from Spain where he says that if he is ever allowed to enjoy leisure again, he will "never budge a step" from Cicero's side<sup>(167)</sup>. This loyalty to Cicero may have been due to some professional kindness done him by the famous lawyer when his own career at the bar was beginning, for the tone of his letters seems to imply a closer bond of personal relationship than merely the interests of the republican cause common to them both. These letters<sup>(168)</sup> were written in 43, during Pollio's governorship and contain several allusions to his devotion to the Republic, with regrets that the party leaders had not made as much use of him as he desired or was capable of rendering<sup>(169)</sup>.

Pollio's return to Rome and his decision to cast in his lot with Antony, put him on the opposite side from Cicero and possibly the fact that the Republicans appeared ungrateful or unappreciative of Pollio's talents was the determining reason for his separation from one whose opinion he had valued so highly. Certainly Pollio's estimate of Cicero, which we are able to piece together on the basis of quotations from Seneca and Quintilian, is not that of an enthusiastically devoted admirer<sup>(170)</sup>. These criticisms were made after Cicero's death, and the most important passage is a summary of his character

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(167) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 31.

(168) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 31, 32, 33.

(169) Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 32.

(170) Seneca, *Suas.*, VI, 14-15, 24, 27; Quint., XII, 1. 22.

and ability quoted from Pollio's *Histories*<sup>(171)</sup> in which a description of the death of Cicero was also given, in a spiteful manner (*maligne*), according to Seneca who states in another place that Asinius was most derogatory to the reputation of Cicero (*infestissimus famae*<sup>(172)</sup>), and was the only man who believed the latter wished to save his life by promising Antony that he would burn the orations written against him. Pollio went even further and said that Cicero not only promised to forswear the *Philippics* but to write others in praise of Antony and read them in public. Seneca states that the charges were so false that Pollio did not dare include them in his *Histories* nor voice them publicly in his defence of Lamia, but inserted them in the later publication of this speech<sup>(173)</sup>.

Pollio, however grudgingly, seemed to Seneca to have given his full due to Cicero. He begins his tribute by saying that it is unnecessary to speak concerning the genius and industry of a man whose many great works will last through all ages, thus apparently recognizing the fact that he would endanger his own reputation as a critic if he tried to deny Cicero's greatness. However, he goes on to show that these achievements were chiefly due to nature and chance, since nature provided him with good health and strength down to his old age and fortune was kind in giving a peace of long duration favorable for his writings and an excellent opportunity for serving the state in his consulship. All of these are things which have nothing to do with Cicero's character but are simply the gifts

(171) Sen., *Suas.*, VI, 24.

(172) Sen., *Suas.*, VI, 14.

(173) Sen., *Suas.*, VI, 14-15: Nam quin Cicero nec tam timidus fuerit ut rogaret Antonium, nec tam stultus ut exorari posse [eum] speraret, nemo dubitat excepto Asinio Pollione qui infestissimus famae Ciceronis permansit et is etiam occasionem scolasticis alterius suasoriae dedit; solent enim scolastici declamitare: deliberat Cicero an salutem promittente Antonio orationes suas comburat.

Haec incepte ficta cuilibet videri potest. Pollio vult illam veram videri; ita enim dixit in ea oratione quam pro Lamia edidit. *Asini Pollionis*. 'Itaque numquam per Ciceronem mora fuit, quin ejuraret suas esse quas cupidissime effuderat orationes in Antonium; multiplicesque numero et accuratius scriptas illis contrarias edere ac vel ipse palam pro contione recitare pollicebatur'; adieceratque his alia sordidiora multo, ut cuilibet facile liqueret hoc totum adeo falsum esse, ut ne ipse quidem Pollio in historiis suis ponere ausus sit. Huic certe actioni eius pro Lamia qui interfuerunt negant eum haec dixisse—nec enim mentiri sub triumvirorum conscientia sustinebat—sed postea composuisse.

of kind fortune. The irony is perhaps more subtle than damning with faint praise, particularly when rounded off by the platitudinous statement that since no mortals are perfect, we must judge a man by his outstanding qualities! Pollio then ended by saying "And not even his death should I judge a pitiable thing unless he himself had thought death so wretched"—again giving a skilfully concealed thrust at Cicero's lack of fortitude<sup>(174)</sup>.

In commenting on this passage, Seneca adds that it was the cleverest part of Pollio's *Histories*, for he seems not to have praised Cicero, but to have become his opponent, and yet that the reader of this account will still have to yield the palm to Cicero over Pollio<sup>(175)</sup>.

Asinius Pollio manifestly regarded Cicero as unstable in character, a man who lost his sense of balance under both favorable and adverse conditions, and accepted either as inevitable. He thus laid himself open to his enemies' attacks, since he entered into a quarrel with more spirit than he pursued it<sup>(176)</sup>. These faults were doubtless apparent to other contemporaries, who it should be noticed are inclined to omit all reference to the character of Cicero and praise only his oratory and patriot-

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(174) Sen., *Suas.*, VI, 24: Pollio quoque Asinius, qui Verrem Ciceronis reum fortissime morientem tradidit, Ciceronis mortem solus ex omnibus maligne narrat; testimonium tamen quamvis invitum plenum ei reddidit. *Asini Pollionis*. 'Huius ergo viro tot tantisque operibus mansuris in omne aevum praedicare de ingenio atque industria superva[acu]m est. Natura autem atque fortuna pariter obsecuta est ei, [si] quidem facies decora ad senectutem prosperaque permansit valetudo, tum pax diutina cuius instructus erat artibus contigit. namque ad priscam severitatem iudicii exactis maxima noxiarum multitudo provenit, quos obstrictos patrocinio incolumes plerisque habebat. Iam felicissima consulatus ei sors petendi et gerendi magna munera deum consilio industriaque: utinam moderatius secundas res et fortius adversas ferre potuisset! namque utraeque cum evenerant ei, mutari eas non posse rebatur. inde sunt invidiae tempestates coortae gravissimae, eo certiorque inimicis adgrediendi fiducia; maiore enim similitates adpetebat animo quam gerebat. Sed quando mortalium nulli virtus perfecta contigit, qua maior pars vitae atque ingenii stetit ea iudicandum de homine est. Atque ego ne miserandi quidem exitus eum fuisse iudicarem, nisi ipse tam miseram mortem putasset.' Adfirmare vobis possum nihil esse in historiis eius hoc quem retuli loco disertius, ut mihi tunc non laudasse Ciceronem, sed certasse cum Cicerone videatur. Nec hoc deterrendi causa dico, ne historias eius legere concupiscatis: concupiscite et poenas Ciceroni dabitis.

(175) Cf. *supra*, n. 174.

(176) Sen., *Suas.*, VI, 24. Cf. *supra*, n. 174.

ism<sup>(177)</sup>. Quintilian says that Cicero is thought by some to have been deficient in courage, but that this was disproved by his death, to which he submitted with the noblest fortitude<sup>(178)</sup>. This opinion is strengthened by Seneca's statement that Asinius Pollio is the only man who does not admit that Cicero died bravely<sup>(179)</sup>. We know that Pollio was somewhat of a Spartan about such matters and never allowed his emotions to interfere with the routine of his life. For when Augustus complained that Pollio should have held a banquet so soon after the death of Gaius Caesar, Asinius wrote back that he had banqueted on the day that his own son Herius had died, and how could he be expected to show greater grief for a friend than for his own child?<sup>(180)</sup> Seneca adds that there are great men who do not know how to bend to fate, but make trial of their courage in adverse circumstances, for Asinius Pollio declaimed within four days after the death of his son, thus publishing abroad the defiance of a great spirit to its misfortunes. To a man of this temperament it is easy to understand how Cicero's death might seem ignoble. The undignified flight, the attempts at escape by land and by sea, the litter carried to and fro by his servants, the final ignominious death and decapitation by Herennius<sup>(181)</sup>, such incidents must have seemed unworthy to Pollio, who would doubtless have preferred to see Cicero stay at Rome and meet death bravely instead of flying from it.

Certain critics have attributed Pollio's criticisms to jealousy, but it scarcely seems possible that even a man of Asinius's self-assurance can have regarded himself as a serious rival of Cicero, and the high praise he awards the latter as a figure in literature who produced immortal works does not seem to give a sound basis for this theory. Seneca describes a *Recitatio* which took place in the house of Messalla, at which Asinius Pollio was present, when one of the minor poets was to recite the verses of Cornelius Severus about Cicero, and for an introduction used a line of his own—"Cicero must be mourned and the silence of the Latin tongue." Pollio rose and said that he

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(177) Augustus in Macrob., *Sat.*, II, 2, 4, 18; Plut., *Cic.*, 49; Suet., *Aug.*, 28.

(178) Quint., XII, 1, 17.

(179) Sen., *Suas.*, VI, 24. Cf. *supra*, p. 40 n. 174.

(180) Sen., *Contr.*, IV, Praef. 4.

(181) Plut., *Cic.*, 47-48.

would not listen to a man to whom he seemed dumb and thereupon left the house<sup>(182)</sup>. Pollio's action on this occasion does not appear to be due to jealousy of Cicero's reputation, but to the slight that had been put on his own oratory. That Asinius Pollio as well as Brutus and Calvus sometimes criticized Cicero's style is evident from Quintilian<sup>(183)</sup>, but since these criticisms are not quoted by either Seneca or Quintilian, they must have been on minor points of usage, which we have seen was a matter of particular concern to the fastidious Pollio. His son Asinius Gallus wrote a book comparing his father and Cicero<sup>(184)</sup>, and apparently his family pride got the better of his critical judgment for he rendered the verdict in his father's favor.

One of the great services of Pollio to the pursuit of literature in his time was his institution of *Recitationes* or public readings by authors of their works<sup>(185)</sup>. This was a marked innovation and served to introduce an author to the public, for although the interest in letters was very keen in Rome at this time the publication of books was difficult and expensive<sup>(186)</sup>. The writers were therefore eager to avail themselves of a means of becoming better known, and the readings rapidly gained success. At first these *Recitationes* took place only before friends, especially invited, but later they were publicly announced and were held before great assemblies, either in the theatre or at the public baths or Forum, admission being open to all. This led to a change in the character of the readings, since they had been introduced in the first place with the purpose of obtaining the criticisms of a select audience, to help the author in his final revision of his work; they now became

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(182) Sen., *Suas.*, VI, 27: Is (Sextilius Ena) hanc ipsam proscriptionem recitaturus in domo Messalae Corvini Pollionem Asinium advocaverat, et in principio hunc versum non sine assensu recitavit: Defendus Cicero est Latiaeque silentia linguae. Pollio Asinius non aequo animo tulit et ait: 'Messala tu quid tibi liberum sit in domo tua videris: ego istum auditurus non sum quoi mutus videor;' atque ita consurrexit.

(183) Quint., XII, 1. 22.

(184) Pliny, *Ep.*, VII, 4, says he read it. Suet., *Claud.*, 41, where mention is made of a book by Claudius—a "Defence of Cicero against the writings of Asinius Gallus."

(185) Sen., *Contr.*, IV, Praef. 2: Pollio Asinius . . . primus enim omnium Romanorum advocatis hominibus scripta sua recitavit.

(186) See Putnam, G. H., *Authors and their Public in Ancient Times*, Chap. V.



of such importance that they determined the success of the work so recited. By the time of Martial, they had degenerated into professional advertising. The author rented a hall, hired the chairs and not only issued invitations but paid some of his guests to come and applaud him. But during the Augustan Age, they were extremely fashionable and all the great men of the day attended; even the *Princeps* himself came and listened with interest not only to those who read their poems and histories, but also to the discourses and dialogues<sup>(187)</sup>. Pollio started the fashion by reading his own writings<sup>(188)</sup>, and he was followed by Horace, Vergil and the other great poets of the day.

Another important way in which Pollio stimulated the intellectual development of his times was by his patronage of literary men. The political changes which inaugurated the Augustan Age were reflected in literature and although this period followed closely on the preceding Ciceronian Age there was a marked change in the personnel of literary circles. This may be explained by the fact that remarkably few writers of the Ciceronian times survived to be the contemporaries of Vergil. The most famous one is Asinius Pollio, who in his youth had been a friend of Catullus, Cinna and Cornelius Gallus<sup>(189)</sup> and now became the patron of Vergil and Horace.

Augustan poets appear to have formed three groups; one around Maecenas,—those who were interested in praising the new order of things in Rome and were in a sense court poets. To this circle belonged Horace, Vergil and Propertius. The second group centred around Messalla, who with Pollio had fought for the Republic, and like him had now retired from public life. Messalla interested himself more in the niceties of

(187) Suet., *Aug.*, 89: Recitantes et benigne et patienter audiit, nec tantum carmina et historias sed et orationes et dialogos.

(188) Sen., *Contr.*, IV, Praef. 2.

(189) Catullus (87/84-54 B. C.) as a friend of Pollio, see *C.*, 12. Cinna (d. 44 B. C.) wrote a Propempticon to Pollio. See *Gramm. Lat.*, I, 124 K. This may point to a journey of Pollio to Greece to pursue his education. Cf. Kiessling on Hor., *C.*, II, 1. Cornelius Gallus (69/66-26 B. C.) was also a friend of Pollio. See Pollio, ap. Cic., *fam.*, X, 32 where Asinius writing to Cicero says, "if you will care to read a Roman drama ask my friend Cornelius Gallus for it." This was written in June, 43 B. C. when Asinius Pollio was in Spain and Gallus was acting as his literary representative in Rome.

language and became the patron of the circle of poets associated with Tibullus, which did not feel as strong imperial enthusiasm as the group under Maecenas's patronage. Asinius Pollio, the third great patron of literature, provided opportunities for readings from works either finished or in progress, and encouraged discussion and criticism, setting a very high standard of taste in such matters, since he was considered one of the best contemporary judges of poetry. Horace mentions him among the names of the few friends whose appreciation of his poems he values<sup>(190)</sup>, and Vergil in his third eclogue has one of his shepherds make the boast—"Pollio loves my verse, all rustic though it be"<sup>(191)</sup>. These two poets, although belonging to the imperial literary circle of Maecenas, were both indebted to Pollio for services he had rendered them, Vergil for the return of his Mantuan farm, which had been confiscated for allotment to veterans and restored to him through Pollio's influence as Antony's prefect in Transpadane Gaul in 41 B. C.<sup>(192)</sup> The numerous allusions to Pollio in the eclogues are noteworthy, since the formal type of poetry written by Vergil does not as readily admit references to friends as the more informal poems of Horace, who gives the place of honor at the beginning of his second book to an ode celebrating the undying laurels won by Pollio in his triumph in Dalmatia. Although the specific purpose of the poem is to praise Pollio's *Histories* with enthusiastic appreciation, Horace also emphasizes the distinction won by Asinius as a tragic poet and his noble defence of others both in court and senate<sup>(193)</sup>. Vergil, likewise, introduces his VIII<sup>th</sup> Eclogue with a preface addressed to Pollio, celebrating his triumphal return from the Dalmatian campaign and asking if he will ever be permitted to honor Asinius Pollio's deeds in song as well as to spread through all the world his verse, "the only verse that deserves the buskin of Sophocles"<sup>(194)</sup>. This praise of the tragedies of Asinius is carried farther when Vergil asks

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(190) Hor., *Sat.*, I, 10. 85.

(191) Verg., *Buc.*, III, 84.

(192) Verg., *Buc.*, 1. Cf. *supra*, p. 21. Pollio is also supposed to have given Vergil a slave whom the poet had admired. See *Buc.*, II and Scholia.

(193) Hor., *C.*, II, 1.

(194) Verg., *Buc.*, VIII, 10.

that Pollio allow the ivy of poetry to twine among the conqueror's bays upon his brow.

Pollio is again honored in the IV<sup>th</sup> Eclogue, for it is in his consulship that a wondrous child is to be born, who is to be king of the world in the coming golden age, or new era of peace. The language used in this poem is so vague and indefinite that the child has been variously identified as a son of Pollio, of Octavian, of Antony and Octavia, or as a Messiah, possibly Christ himself. It seems more probable that the child is to be the son of Octavian, who had lately married Scribonia, rather than of Pollio, whose chief glory would appear to consist in the fact that the child is to be born in his consulship, or of Antony; for the child born to Octavia in this year was that of her first husband, Marcellus. The great difficulty with this interpretation is that Vergil should have allowed his poem to stand unchanged after the child of Octavian was born a girl (Julia) instead of a boy. Because of the striking resemblance of the language of this eclogue to descriptions in the Hebrew prophets, especially Isaiah, it has been thought that Vergil was prophesying the coming of Christ. However, there does not seem to be sufficient reason to connect the legends employed by Vergil with the prophecies of the Old Testament, since the idea of the advent of a great and beneficent ruler of the world has been almost as universal as that of the coming of an age of peace. Vergil's language, as Warde Fowler points out, could scarcely apply to an abstraction but is particularly appropriate for a real mother and a real child<sup>(195)</sup>.

The generally accepted tradition that the child was a son of Asinius Pollio is doubtless due to the fact that the latter is the only mortal referred to by name in the poem and also to the story of Asconius that Asinius Gallus, the son of Pollio, asserted that he (Gallus) was the *puer* of this Eclogue<sup>(196)</sup>. Asinius Gallus was the eldest son of Pollio<sup>(197)</sup>, and was born in 39 B. C.

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(195) J. B. Mayor, W. Warde Fowler, R. S. Conway, *Virgil's Messianic Eclogue*, p. 79.

(196) Servius, *ad Ecl.*, IV, 11.

(197) Sometime before 43 B. C. Pollio had married Quintia the daughter of Lucius Quintus, a man of equestrian rank who seems to have been regarded as a popular demagogue in opposition to the senatorial party, Cic., *Brutus*, LXII, 223; *pro A. Cluent*, 28 *et seq.* He was fourth on the list of those proscribed in November, 43, and is

about the time of his father's capture of the city Salonae from the Parthini in Dalmatia and the name Saloninus was given to him as an *agnomen* to celebrate this victory<sup>(198)</sup>. As his brother Herius Asinius died when a boy<sup>(199)</sup>, Asinius Gallus was the only son left to succeed his father. He held many minor offices under Augustus and was consul in 8 B. C. serving as proconsul of Asia two years later (*C. I. L.*, III, 7118). He was a noted orator and writer, and one of his works was the comparison between his father and Cicero mentioned above<sup>(200)</sup>. By his marriage with Vipsania Agrippina, Gallus had five sons, C. Asinius Pollio, M. Asinius Agrippa, Sex. Asinius Celer, Asinius Gallus and Asinius Saloninus. As he had incurred the ill-will of Tiberius not only by his marriage but by certain remarks made in the Senate (*Tac., Ann.*, I, 12) he was condemned in 30 A. D., but kept in prison until his death by starvation in 33 A. D.<sup>(201)</sup>. Since Augustus when considering possible successors to the principate had discarded him as one who had ambition but inferior ability, and had chosen Tiberius instead, there

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mentioned by Appian in this connection as the father-in-law of Asinius Pollio, Appian, *B. C.*, IV, 12. 27. Also *supra*, p. 21. By this marriage Pollio had three children, two sons, C. Asinius Gallus Saloninus, Herius Asinius and a daughter, Asinia, who married M. Claudius Marcellus Aeserninus and whose son was a great favorite of his grandfather, Seneca, *Contr.*, IV, Praef., 3; *Tac., Ann.*, III, 11; XIV, 40; *Suet., Aug.*, 43.

(198) *Servius, ad Verg. Buc.*, IV, 1: Asinius Pollio, ductor Germanici exercitus, cum post captam Salonam, . . . eodem anno suscepit filium quem post captam civitate Saloninum vocavit, cui nunc Vergilius genethliacon dicit.

Schol. *Acron ad Hor.*, C. II, 1. 15: Salonas enim Pollio Dalmaturum ceperat civitatem, unde et filium suum eo quod natus ibi (est quando ibi) erat, Saloninum appellavit.

There seems to be some doubt as to whether these were two different sons or whether the name Saloninus was given to Asinius Gallus as an *agnomen*. In accepting this latter view, there is no explanation for the fact that Asinius Gallus never used the name; he did, however, give it as a cognomen to one of his sons.

(199) *Sen., Contr.*, IV, Praef. 4: Memini intra quartum diem quam Herium filium amiserat declamare eum nobis. Praef. 5: rescripsit Pollio: 'eo die cenavi quo Herium filium amisi.'

(200) *Plin., Ep.*, VII, 4. 4: Legebantur in Laurentino mihi libri Asini Galli de comparatione patris et Ciceronis. Cf. *supra*, p. 42.

(201) *Tac., Ann.*, VI, 23: Isdem consulibus Asinii Galli mors vulgatur, quem egestate cibi peremptum haud dubium, sponte vel necessitate, incertum habebatur.

*Suet., De Or.*, 11: Gaius Asinius Gallus orator Asini Pollionis filius, cuius etiam Vergilius meminit, diris a Tiberio supplicii enecatur.

had been friction between the rivals<sup>(202)</sup>. Gallus's marriage to Vipsania after Augustus had forced Tiberius to divorce her, had been another reason for hostility<sup>(203)</sup>. There is evidence that Gallus had made himself as disagreeable as he could to the second *princeps*<sup>(204)</sup>, and it would have been perfectly possible for him to add to the emperor's unpopularity by spreading the story that he himself had been destined to be the saviour of the world. Although this was only a generation after Vergil, the identification of the child of the poem was apparently so uncertain that Gallus could thus claim the honor for himself.

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(202) Tac., *Ann.*, I, 13.

(203) Tac., *Ann.*, I, 12.

(204) Tac., *Ann.*, I, 18.

## CHAPTER V. The Writings of Pollio.

Of Pollio's own writings very little remains—the only fragment of his poetry is the half-verse “Veneris antistita Cupris,” quoted by Charisius (*Gramm. Lat.*, I, 100, 24 K) in support of the feminine form *antistita*; the spelling *Cupris* for *Cypris* shows Pollio's fondness for archaisms.

Since we know from Horace and Vergil that Pollio in his later years<sup>(205)</sup> wrote tragedies modelled on the Attic drama, which were not only published but acted in the theatre<sup>(206)</sup>, it is quite possible that this half-verse may have come from one of these, and not from a lyric poem<sup>(207)</sup>. It is perhaps natural that little of his poetry has survived because Pollio was one of those who, like other public men, wrote verse as a relaxation from the cares of state<sup>(208)</sup>, but whose reputation as a poet diminished as time went on and he was no longer judged by the kindly estimate of his admiring friends.

Horace, who wrote that the glory of the Attic stage would be revived with the publication of Pollio's tragedies,<sup>(209)</sup> and Vergil, according to whom Pollio alone was worthy to be compared with Sophocles<sup>(210)</sup>, might naturally be expected to show some prejudice in favor of their patron. Vergil indeed refers

(205) From the approximate dates of the poems of Vergil and Horace referring to Pollio's tragedies, the latter must have been written between 39 and 29 B. C.

(206) Hor., *C.*, II, 1. 9:

Paullum severae Musa tragoediae  
Desit theatris: mox ubi publicas  
Res ordinariis, grande munus  
Cecropio repetes cothurno.

Hor., *S.*, I, 10. 42:

. . . . . Pollio regum  
Facta canit pede ter percusso;

(207) Hamaker, in Thorbecke, p. 128 suggests that perhaps it came from a chorus sung by the priests of Venus.

(208) Pliny, *Ep.*, V, 3. 5.

(209) Hor., *C.*, II, 1. 9.

(210) Verg., *Buc.*, VIII, 9:

. . . . . ut liceat totum mihi ferre per orbem  
Sola Sophocleo tua carmina digna coturno?

to Pollio as the author of "nova carmina"<sup>(211)</sup>, a phrase which might mean "original" in contrast to his patronage of poets, or new in subject matter or style.

Two or three generations later Pliny simply mentions him in a long list of more than twenty writers whose verse-making was secondary to other weightier matters; Tacitus<sup>(212)</sup> considers him dry and harsh because his style was modelled on Accius and Pacuvius, and says that none of Pollio's works is ranked with the *Medea* of Ovid or the *Thyestes* of Varius<sup>(213)</sup>. By the time of Quintilian, Pollio's tragedies must have been forgotten, at any rate Quintilian does not mention him when he gives a list of Roman tragic poets<sup>(214)</sup>.

The loss of these tragedies is perhaps not a very serious matter, but the similar fate of his *Histories* is a much greater calamity, as they covered the transition period from Republic to Principate and dealt with the civil wars between Pompey and Caesar from the point of view of a contemporary and an actual eye-witness of many of the events recorded. Since the *Histories* of Pollio have entirely disappeared, and there remains only a brief summary of the later books of Livy which dealt with this same period, the sole continuous contemporary narrative of the last days of the Roman Republic is that given by Caesar in his *Commentaries* on the Civil War. This account may be supplemented to a certain extent by the correspondence of Cicero, the histories of Appian and the Roman biographies of the later Greek writer Plutarch, both of whom, as we shall see, used the *Histories* of Pollio as one of their sources. These histories, according to Horace, began with the consulship of Metellus and Afranius in 60 B. C.<sup>(215)</sup>, this year doubtless, hav-

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(211) Verg., *Buc.*, III, 84-86:

Pollio amat nostram, quamvis est rustica musam:  
Pollio et ipse facit nova carmina;

(212) Tac., *Dial.*, 21. 29.

(213) Tac., *Dial.*, 12. 24: Plures hodie reperies qui Ciceronis gloriam quam qui Vergilii detrectent, nec ullus Asinii aut Messallae liber tam inlustris est quam Medea Ovidii aut Varii Thyestes.

(214) Quint., X, 1. 87.

(215) Hor., *C.*, II, 1. 1—

Motum ex Metello consule civicum  
Bellique causas et vitia et modos  
Ludumque Fortunae gravesque  
Principum amicitias et arma  
Nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,

ing been chosen because it marked the formation of the first Triumvirate by Caesar, Pompey and Crassus. We learn further from Suidas<sup>(216)</sup> that they were written in seventeen books and this is practically all the definite information we have from ancient writers in regard to the *Histories* of Pollio. It has, therefore, been left to modern critics to discover traces of these lost books in the later historians of Rome. The first in this field was J. R. Thorbecke, who wrote in 1820 a monograph on the life and writings of Asinius Pollio<sup>(217)</sup>. This work, which discussed the evidence in regard to the extent of Pollio's *Histories*, the arrangement of the material into books, and its use by later historians, has formed the foundation for many of the later studies on the same subject, especially those of Aulard and Thouret<sup>(218)</sup>. Thorbecke also considered in great detail the only existing fragment of Pollio's writings—that quoted by

Periculosae plenum opus aleae,  
Tractas et incedis per ignes  
Suppositos cineri doloso.

Schol. Porph. ad Hor., *C.*, II, 1: Haec ode ad Asinium Pollionem consularem virum et triumphalem scripta est, qua hortatur eum, ut, omisso tragoediarum scribendarum studio, inchoatum historiae opus consumet, ac deinde in parecbasi (id est in translatione) bellorum civilium calamitatem refert.

See also Val. Max., VIII, 13. 4.

- (216) Suidas, s. v. Ἀσίνιος Πωλλίων: Ἀσίνιος Πωλίων, Ῥωμαῖος, Ἱστορίας Ῥωμαϊκὰς συντάξεν ἐν βιβλίοις ἰζ! οὗτος πρῶτος Ἑλληνικὴν ἱστορίαν Ῥωμαϊκῶς συνεγράψατο.

Teuffel, (§221, 3) believes that the last part of this does not apply to Asinius Pollio but to some other author, possibly Pompeius Trogus. Under the name of Pollio of Tralles, a sophist and philosopher and perhaps a freedman of Asinius Pollio, Suidas says: *περὶ τοῦ ἐμφυλίου τῆς Ῥώμης πολέμου ὃν ἐπολέμησαν Καῖσάρ τε καὶ Πομπηῖος* which evidently refers to the *Histories* of Asinius Pollio.

Thouret, G., "De Cicerone, Asinio Pollione, C. Oppio rerum Caesarianarum scriptoribus", *Leipziger Studien*, I, 1878, pp. 325-6 does not agree with Teuffel that this Pollio of Tralles could be a freedman of Asinius Pollio, since he would then have had only the name Asinius. He could find no instance of an equestrian cognomen such as Pollio being given to a freedman.

- (217) Thorbecke, J. R., *Commentatio de C. Asinii Pollionis Vita et Studiis Doctrinae*, Leyden, 1820.
- (218) Aulard, F. A., *de Cuii Asinii Pollionis vita et scriptis*, Paris, 1877. Thouret, *op. cit.*, pp. 324-346.



Seneca<sup>(219)</sup>—in an attempt to form an opinion of his literary style and language. Since Thorbecke's day, however, a great advance has been made in the study of the sources of Appian's History of the Civil Wars and Plutarch's Biographies of Caesar and Pompey, and it has been established quite clearly, I think, that they both drew to a great extent on the writings of Asinius Pollio. We are, therefore, better able than Thorbecke to reconstruct the lost histories, even if in a more or less fragmentary manner.

Some of the later writers on the sources of Appian are J. A. Wijnne who wrote in 1855, and P. Bailieu, in 1874<sup>(220)</sup>. On Plutarch we have H. W. G. Peter's work written in 1865<sup>(221)</sup>. The best and the latest work on Appian is that of E. Schwartz<sup>(222)</sup>, but his article is concerned more with destroying the conclusions of his predecessors than in throwing any new light on the sources. In 1896, E. Kornemann published an article on the historical writings of Asinius Pollio<sup>(223)</sup>, which is the most complete and exhaustive handling of the subject so far written. His summing up of the views of the earlier writers on Pollio and the compilation of all the extracts from Appian, Plutarch and the other historians which he thinks were derived from Asinius, form the most valuable part of the work, for Kornemann's own conclusions often go beyond the bounds of probability. He has collected one hundred and thirty-one extracts which he claims can be traced back to Asinius Pollio. The only direct quotation is the estimate of Cicero repeated by Seneca (*Suas.*, VI, 24), which has been mentioned above<sup>(224)</sup>; an indirect quotation from the third book of Pollio's *Histories* occurs in Valerius Maximus (VIII, 1314). The other extracts are from Plutarch, Appian and Suetonius, and although none

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(219) Sen., *Suas.*, VI, 26.

(220) Wijnne, J. A., *De Fide et Auctoritate Appiani in Bellis Romanorum Civilibus Enarrantis*, Groningen, 1855.

Bailieu, P., *Quomodo Appianus in bellorum civilium libris II-V usu sit Asinii Pollionis historiis*, Göttingen, 1874.

(221) Peter, H. W. G., *Die Quellen Plutarchs in den Biographien der Römer*, Halle, 1865.

(222) Schwartz, E., "Appianus", Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*.

(223) Kornemann, E., *Die Historische Schriftstellerei des C. Asinius Pollio*, Leipzig, 1896. Reprinted from *Jahrbucher für Classische Philologie*, Supplementband 22, pp. 672-691.

(224) Cf. *supra.*, p. 39.

of these three states definitely that he used Asinius Pollio's *Histories* as a source for these particular passages, they very often mention Pollio in connection with the events described.

If the ancient historians had been more careful in giving the sources they used, there would doubtless be more traces of the *Histories* of Asinius Pollio among the later writers on Roman events. Plutarch mentions Pollio as a source in his lives of Pompey and Caesar, but he may also have drawn on him for the lives of Crassus, Cato the Younger, Cicero, Antony and Brutus. According to Kornemann<sup>(225)</sup> chapters 4-9, 11-14 of the Life of Antony which are more favorable to Antony than the latter part, where Plutarch has used Caesar, must have been from Asinius Pollio, especially since the resemblance between these chapters and Appian<sup>(226)</sup> gives an added reason for believing Pollio to have been the source, while Plutarch's mention of Pollio by name in the Battle of Pharsalia and in connection with the revolt of Dolabella<sup>(227)</sup> points in the same direction. Kornemann believes he can detect both the direct and indirect use of Pollio in the Lives of Brutus and of Cato Minor, the former where there is agreement between Plutarch and Appian<sup>(228)</sup>, the latter where the difference in detail or interpretation<sup>(229)</sup> may reflect Pollio's account through the medium of a later writer<sup>(230)</sup>. Since Kornemann does not consider the alternative that these later passages may have been derived from authors who made no use of Pollio, and since his reasoning is purely hypothetical, it hardly seems necessary to consider these passages in detail. From the many Latin writers whose accounts Appian had collected for the Battle of Pharsalia he refers to Asinius alone by name, as if he considered him more trustworthy than the others<sup>(231)</sup>. This book of Appian covers the period of the struggle between Pompey and Caesar, which formed the principal theme of Pollio's *Histories*. Appi-

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(225) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 579-580.

(226) Plut., *Ant.*, 5.

App., *B. C.*, II, 33.

Plut., *Ant.*, 7.

App., *B. C.*, II, 59.

Plut., *Ant.*, 13.

App., *B. C.*, II, 114.

(227) Plut., *Ant.*, 7.

(228) Plut., *Cato Min.*, 68-70.

App., *B. C.*, II, 98-99.

(229) Plut., *Brutus*, 16.

App., *B. C.*, II, 116.

(230) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 581-583.

(231) App., *B. C.*, II, 70 and 82.

an's fair-minded judgment of Brutus and the other conspirators recalls the respect and admiration with which Pollio mentioned them and may well be derived from his account. In Books III-V Appian includes Asinius Pollio among his sources, and must have followed him very closely, for he makes no mention of the defeat of Pollio in Spain<sup>(232)</sup>, which Dio narrates at great length, although Appian gives Pollio a very prominent part in the other events described<sup>(233)</sup>. The source of Appian, Books III-V, was undoubtedly the work of a follower of Antony, since Cicero's orations against the former are passed over in two Chapters (III, 52-53) while Piso's defence of Antony is elaborated to fill seven (III, 54-60)<sup>(234)</sup>. As Pollio was a supporter of Antony, this partisan attitude may probably be traced back to him. The discussion of Antony's giving up the siege of Mutina (Appian, *B. C.*, III, 72), contrary to the advice of those about him<sup>(235)</sup>, is almost identical in its estimate of this incident with the letter written by Pollio to Cicero<sup>(236)</sup>, in which he bewails the action of Antony. Again in Book V we find obvious traces of Pollio in the story of the Perusine War (V, 19-66), since the description gives such details and intimate knowledge of places and events that the writer must have not only taken part in the war but in the Council of the leaders<sup>(237)</sup>. The account also appears to have been written around Pollio as a central figure. Another argument in favor of regarding Pollio as the source of Appian's fifth book is the hatred and contempt with which Plancus is referred to all through the book (V, 35, 50, 55, 144), and Pollio's opposition to Plancus was well known<sup>(238)</sup>. The picture of Cicero given by Appian is anything but flattering, and we are led to the conclusion that the source of Appian must have treated Cicero with the same contempt which was skilfully concealed in Pollio's estimate of the great orator<sup>(239)</sup>. A great part of Appian's fifth book is drawn from the Commentaries of Octavian yet the pro-Antonian sentiments expressed

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(232) Wijnne, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

(233) App., *B. C.*, III, 46, 74, 81, 97; IV, 12, 27, 84.

(234) Bailieu, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-35.

(235) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 655.

(236) Pollio, *ap. Cic., fam.*, X, 33. 4.

(237) Bailieu, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38.

(238) *Cf. supra*, p. 31.

(239) *Cf. supra*, p. 39.

in this book could not have come from Caesar; Bailleu, therefore, believes that Appian drew these also from Pollio<sup>(240)</sup>.

Most critics believe that Appian and Plutarch used a common Greek source for this period of the civil war, as their words in relating the same episodes are almost identical, and it is quite improbable that they both translated the Latin by the same Greek words or combined two authors such as Livy and Diodorus. This agreement is found not only in their narration of events but also of reasons, thoughts and motives<sup>(241)</sup>. The grounds for believing that Pollio's history was this common source are that the incidents in which Pollio himself took part are told in great detail and were evidently based on the account of an eyewitness. Examples of such descriptions are the crossing of the Rubicon by Caesar (Plutarch, *Caes.*, 32; Appian, *B. C.*, II, 35); the departure of Cato from Sicily (Appian, *B. C.*, II, 40 *et seq.*; Plutarch, *Cato*, 53); the saving of the cavalry in the Second African campaign (Plutarch, *Caes.*, 52); the first African campaign under Curio (Appian, *B. C.*, II, 44-46) and the description of the battle of Munda (Appian, *B. C.*, II, 104; Plutarch, *Caes.*, 56). Other events in which Pollio did not take part are disposed of in a few summary sentences, even though they were evidently of greater importance than those which Appian and Plutarch narrate with such detail; an example of this is shown in the treatment of Caesar's first Spanish campaign,<sup>(242)</sup> where his own detailed account (*B. C.*, I, 37-87) was evidently not used by the later historians. Another reason for believing that Appian and Plutarch used Pollio as a source is that they continually mention his presence at different events of the wars, although he was not as prominent as many of Caesar's other officers. Asinius Pollio alone is mentioned by name in Plutarch (*Caes.*, 32) among the comrades of Caesar when he crossed the Rubicon. They both cite his statement as to the number of the dead after the battle of Pharsalia, as well

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(240) Bailleu, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

(241) App., *B. C.*, II, 102 and Plut., *Caes.*, 55. Appian could not have used Plutarch as a source, for although there are some similar passages there are many more that are not only dissimilar but openly contradictory. The resemblances, therefore, must be explained by the fact that they used the same sources—Pollio, Caesar and Livy. See Wijnne, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

(242) Appian, *B. C.*, II, 42-43; Plutarch, *Caes.*, 36.

as a question asked by Caesar of one of his centurions at that time<sup>(243)</sup>. A negative argument is that they did not use Caesar as a source, since their version of events differs from that in his writings. The remarkable similarity between Appian and Plutarch begins with the year of the formation of the first triumvirate which Horace tells us was the starting point for Pollio's *Histories*<sup>(244)</sup>.

Although there is general agreement that Appian and Plutarch used Asinius Pollio as a source, the critics divide into two main groups on the question of whether these Greek writers drew from Pollio's *Histories* directly (in Latin or full Greek translation), or through a Greek intermediate source<sup>(245)</sup>. Bailieu belongs to the first group who hold that Appian and Plutarch drew directly from Pollio and that he was the sole source for Book II of Appian's *Civil Wars*, whereas Plutarch used both Asinius Pollio and Livy<sup>(246)</sup>. Thouret on the other hand, believes that Appian and Plutarch in describing the events of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey used some Greek writer who had made a brief epitome of this particular part of Pollio's *Histories*, since both the Greek historians (App., *B. C.*, II, 102; Plut., *Caes.*, 55) make a stupid mistake about the census in Rome before and after the civil wars—a mistake which could not have been copied from any Roman contemporary writer<sup>(247)</sup>. Kornemann does not think this passage and the others cited by Thouret<sup>(248)</sup> prove that the mistakes imply an intermediate source, since they are chiefly found in places where Asinius Pollio was not an eye-witness of events, and therefore might have been misinformed, while other mistakes are those of incorrect chronology, which may be explained as due to a sacrifice of historical truth to artistic effect<sup>(249)</sup>, a common failing among ancient historians. Still another objection to Thouret's argument is that Appian is capable of making mistakes in his own version, for in comparing the accounts of Appian, (*B. C.*,

(243) Plut., *Pomp.*, 72; *Caes.*, 46; App., *B. C.*, II, 82.

(244) Cf. *supra*, p. 49.

(245) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 560.

(246) Bailieu, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-30.

(247) Thouret, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

(248) Plut., *Caes.*, 60.

App., *B. C.*, II, 107.

Plut., *Pomp.*, 80.

App., *B. C.*, II, 90.

Plut., *Ant.*, 7.

App., *B. C.*, II, 59.

(249) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 574.

II, 143-148) and Suetonius (*Caes.*, 84) on Caesar's funeral, it is evident that they came from the same source, since the oration of Antony is identical in both, even to the extent of quoting the same verse from Pacuvius, but Appian has exaggerations not found in Suetonius<sup>(250)</sup>. By transforming plans into actual deeds, to add interest<sup>(251)</sup>, Appian has apparently changed the account given in the source.

Thouret believes that, although in his later books (III-V) Appian drew from Pollio directly, he combined this material with some from other sources, in certain places reflecting the *Commentaries* of Octavian<sup>(252)</sup> and in others those of Messalla. These passages, he thinks, are written in a wordy style and are full of mistakes,<sup>(253)</sup> showing that Appian was not very successful in combining his sources, since these places form a contrast to the more accurate account in the early part of his histories. Thouret explains the difference by believing that the earlier books were taken from a compact epitome which was also used by Plutarch, since it is obvious that the latter had never seen the *Histories* of Pollio, as he thought they were written in Greek<sup>(254)</sup>. This might, however, be explained by the hypothesis that Plutarch used them in a Greek translation. Thouret's strongest point is the one he makes about the comparative length of the two accounts of the Civil Wars, Pollio's in seventeen books and Appian's in five, which proves to him that Asinius dealt with the civil war period much more fully than Appian,<sup>(255)</sup> and that if the latter had condensed his account, it would seem almost miraculous that both he and Plutarch should have cut the original down to almost identical lengths and made use of identical facts<sup>(256)</sup>. This leads him to believe that Appian for Book II of his Civil Wars drew from the same

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(250) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 576.

(251) App., *B. C.*, II, 147 represents the mob as actually burning the Curia instead of planning to do it as in Suet. and Dio, XLIV, 35-52; same true of houses of conspirators.

(252) Cf. App., *B. C.*, III, 95; Suet., *Aug.*, 27.

(253) Thouret, *op. cit.*, pp. 338-345.

(254) Thouret, *op. cit.*, p. 345.

(255) *Ibid.*, p. 342.

(256) Whether this similarity extended beyond the death of Caesar cannot be told, as we have none of Plutarch's Lives after the *Brutus* and *Antony* with which to compare App., *B. C.*, III-V.

source as Plutarch and that this was a Greek epitome of Pollio's Histories<sup>(257)</sup>.

Judeich and Otto<sup>(258)</sup> go beyond Thouret in identifying Strabo's *Hypomnemata* as the Greek intermediate source from which Appian and Plutarch drew, since Strabo is cited in Plutarch (*Caes.*, 63). Kornemann, however, has shown<sup>(259)</sup> that Plutarch used two or more contemporary sources, Livy and Strabo, as well as Asinius Pollio, and that in the passages where he used the two former, his account differs from that of Appian, who used only Pollio<sup>(260)</sup>. He, therefore does not believe that Judeich's hypothesis can be accepted.

Appian and Plutarch are the principal borrowers from the lost *Histories* of Pollio, but Kornemann finds traces of this same source in other historians of the years 60-44 B. C., namely Dio Cassius, Suetonius, Valerius Maximus, Nicolaus of Damascus and Lucan. Of these, Dio uses Livy as his principal source but draws also on the writings of Julius Caesar, but since Kornemann believes that Livy had seen the work of Asinius Pollio, he considers that he is thus reflected in Dio, especially in the latter part of the civil war and the battles in the East, particularly Pharsalia,<sup>(261)</sup> as well as in Suetonius, who also used Livy, but that there is evidence also for the direct use of Pollio's *Histories*<sup>(262)</sup>, since many quotations and opinions are attributed to him by Suetonius<sup>(263)</sup>. Bailieu agrees that Livy was used

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(257) Vollgraff, *Greek Writers of Roman History*, Leyden, 1880, follows Thouret.

(258) Judeich, *W. Cäsar im Orient*, Leipzig, 1885.

Otto, P., "Quaest. Straboniana", *Leipziger Studien*, XI, Suppl. (1889), pp. 245-268.

(259) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 566.

(260) App., *B. C.*, II, 116 Plut., *Caes.*, 63.

Kornemann pp. 566-572 argues that Plutarch was forced to use Strabo and Livy to fill in the gap between his first source, Sallust, who ended with the year 67 B. C. and Pollio, whose histories did not cover the events before 60 B. C. but that beginning with Ch. 13, Plutarch used Pollio as his chief source with only occasional incidents from the larger histories, since in this chapter there is a description of the formation of the triumvirate which reflects Pollio's view that with this the balance in the state was lost and it was therefore the cause of the later Civil War between Pompey and Caesar.

(261) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 504.

(262) *Ibid.*, p. 585.

(263) *Divus Iulius*, 30; *Ibid.*, 55, Suetonius quotes another remark of Pollio's about the Battle of Munda.

by both Dio and Suetonius and like Kornemann thinks that Suetonius used Asinius Pollio as well<sup>(264)</sup>.

Valerius Maximus used Pollio directly while Nicolaus of Damascus, as may be seen from his similarity to Appian and Plutarch, used not only Pollio but Livy, and consequently Nicolaus's account of Caesar's murder is more like that of Suetonius, embellished with a few additions from his own imagination<sup>(265)</sup>.

One famous version of the events of this period is Lucan's historical poem the *Pharsalia*. As it was written little more than a century after the events which it describes, and made use of sources now lost to us, the provenance of the historical incidents embedded in the poem has been the subject of many inquiries. All critics agree that Livy was the principal source, but Ussani<sup>(266)</sup> considers Pollio as one of the additional sources, since certain passages in the *Pharsalia* agree closely with Appian and Plutarch, especially in the description of the crossing of the Rubicon<sup>(267)</sup>. Pichon who does not consider this a strong argument for the use of an identical source suggests that such a striking anecdote may have been one of the *loci communes* of Roman historiography found everywhere, and may even have been a subject for the *suasoriae* of the rhetorical schools<sup>(268)</sup>. Ussani further detects the use of Pollio in the judgment of the character of Curio<sup>(269)</sup> but according to Pichon these characteristics were sufficiently well-known to have appeared in any contemporary historian, Livy as well as Pollio<sup>(270)</sup>, and he does not believe that it is possible to trace any source other than Livy in the *Pharsalia* of Lucan<sup>(271)</sup>.

If the question of the use of Pollio by other writers has

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(264) Bailleu, p. 23 shows that in regard to the hatred of the Optimates incurred by Caesar, their conspiracy and his death, the four sources, Appian, Plutarch, Dio and Suetonius divide into pairs—Plutarch and Appian giving one version and Dio and Suetonius another. App., *B. C.*, II, 106-117; Plut., *Caes.*, 57-66. Dio, XLIV, 1-19; Suet., *Caes.*, 76-82.

(265) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 587.

(266) Ussani, V., *Sul valore storico del poema Lucaneo*, Roma, 1903, pp. 25-42.

(267) Lucan, *Phars.*, I, 183-231; App., *B. C.*, II, 35; Plut., *Caes.*, 32.

(268) Pichon, R., *Les sources de Lucain*, Paris, 1912, pp. 95-97.

(269) Lucan, *Phars.*, IV, 799-824.

(270) Pichon, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

(271) *Ibid.*, p. 265.



given rise to much discussion, the question as to the exact length of time covered by Pollio's *Histories* is no less a disputed one. Since they were written in seventeen books<sup>(272)</sup>, the period from 60-44 B. C. would allow a book for each year, if Pollio adopted the same practice as Caesar followed in writing his *Commentaries*. For this reason, some critics have held the opinion that the *Histories* did not extend beyond the Ides of March, 44, especially since the death of the great dictator might seem to Pollio a suitable point at which to close his discussion of Caesar's part in the Civil Wars.

According to Thouret<sup>(273)</sup> the period covered by the extracts now extant is only seven years (49-43 B. C.) for he believes that the passage quoted by Valerius Maximus<sup>(274)</sup> referring to an incident in Spain, must belong to a narrative of Caesar's campaign there in 49 B. C. As this was in the third book of Pollio's *Histories*, the first two books must have covered a period of eleven years; this, however, involves a difficulty in the proportion of the *Histories*, for if Asinius Pollio had narrated the events of eleven or twelve years and was still only in his third book, what purpose could he have had in filling fourteen books with the events of the remaining eight years? Thouret surmounts the difficulty by assuming that Asinius treated the events beginning with 49 B. C. with more detail since they were the most important for the development of the Civil War between Pompey and Julius Caesar which was the immediate field of his *Histories*. His first two books would be, therefore, a mere introduction to the main events of the Civil War which filled Books III-XVII, and the incidents of the Gallic campaign would have been treated in a summary manner and only mentioned when the sequence of later events required it<sup>(275)</sup>. Kornemann thinks it most unlikely that Pollio would

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(272) Cf. *supra*, p. 50.

(273) Thouret, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-330.

(274) Cf. *supra*, p. 51.

(275) The suggestion made by Thorbecke, *op. cit.*, p. 118, that Asinius Pollio's remark about the width of the Rhine quoted in Strabo, *G.*, IV, 3. 3. must have come from a narrative of the events of the Gallic War is apparently disproved by the fact that the accounts of these wars given in later writers do not differ from Caesar's own account. As we know that these historians used both Caesar and Asinius as sources, there would in all probability have been some divergence in the accounts if they had dealt with the same events. It is, there-

have dealt with such important years as those from 60-49 B. C. in two books and he is, therefore led to the conclusion that the incident in Spain does not refer to Caesar's Spanish campaign in 49 B. C. but formed part of an account of his pro-consulship there in 61-60 B. C. This would make a much more reasonable division of the seventeen books of Pollio's *Histories* with Books I-II as a general introduction to his history of the civil wars and Books III-XVII for the main events of the struggle<sup>(276)</sup>. Whether it is possible to detect any traces of Pollio in later writers who deal with the period before 60 B. C. is a question which admits of no positive answer, but Kornemann agrees with the earlier view of Edouard Meyer that the introduction to Appian's Book I of the *Civil Wars* was taken from these first books of Pollio since the parallelism both in content and words between Appian and Plutarch does not begin with the period of Caesar's wars but occurs earlier in the accounts of the Gracchan period, the Mithridatic and Hannibalic Wars<sup>(277)</sup>.

Kornemann has already stated the case for the derivation of the parallel passages in Appian and Plutarch from Asinius Pollio,<sup>(278)</sup> and since the general tendencies of Appian's version of events is the same from Gracchan times through Caesar's death, it must have come from the same source even when it deals with a date before 60 B. C. Moreover the tone and attitude in the pre-Caesarian period are what might be expected from Pollio, since the treatment of the agrarian troubles and the Gracchan reforms in these passages is so sympathetic that it must have come from an account of an Italian rather than a man who was born and brought up in Rome, while the power of Gracchus is deliberately emphasized as foreshadowing the later one man rule of Pompey and Caesar.

Meyer in his more recent book claims that this common source of Appian and Plutarch could not have been Strabo,

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fore, more probable that for the period of the Gallic Wars they used the *Commentaries* of Caesar as their source, and for the succeeding years of civil strife, the *Histories* of Asinius Pollio. Cf. Thouret, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

(276) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 661-662.

(277) Meyer, Ed., *Hallenser Jubiläumsschrift*, 1894, p. 88, *et seq.*  
Meyer, Ed., *Caesars Monarchie und das Principat des Pompejus*, Stuttgart, 1919, p. 608.

(278) Cf. *supra*, p. 52, *et seq.*

Livy or Asinius, and refuses to commit himself on the question of the identity of this source<sup>(279)</sup>. His objection to Pollio is based on the statement of Horace that Asinius Pollio's *Histories* began with the year 60 B. C., but this may be met with the view that although the main account did begin in that year, the preliminary events were dealt with in an introduction in the first two books.

The *Histories* of Pollio undoubtedly extended beyond the death of Caesar, for one of the passages in Appian (III, 72) that may be traced back to Asinius relates the siege of Mutina by Antony which took place in 43 B. C. A further objection to the view that the *Histories* ended with March, 44 B. C. is made by Thouret on the strength of a statement quoted by Tacitus that Pollio in his *Histories* spoke of Brutus and Cassius with respect<sup>(280)</sup>. Thouret does not think this could have been in connection with the murder of Caesar, the friend and patron of Pollio, but more probably referred to their heroic deaths at Philippi<sup>(281)</sup>. After the lapse of some fifteen years Pollio might write about them from the point of view of a Republican rather than a friend of Caesar<sup>(282)</sup>. Thouret and Wölfflin believe that the *Histories* of Asinius included the Battle of Philippi and ended there, but Hendecourt and Kornemann hold that they extended through the Battle of Actium in 31 B. C.<sup>(283)</sup>, which to an ardent Republican was the logical consequence of the downfall of the Republic, and to Pollio who had predicted this in the beginning of his work when describing the formation of the First Triumvirate in 60 B. C., would be a natural ending for his *Histories*.

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(279) Meyer, Ed., *Caesars Monarchie*, pp. 614-615.

(280) Tac., *Ann.*, IV, 34, quoting from a remark of the historian Cremutius Cordus: hunc ipsum Cassium, hunc Brutum nusquam latrones et parricidas, quae nunc vocabula inponuntur, saepe ut insignis viros nominat. Asinii Pollionis scripta egregiam eorundem memoriam tradunt; . . . . .

(281) Thouret, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

(282) From the reference to the histories in Horace, *C.*, II, 1, and the approximate date of this ode, we know that these were probably not written before 30 B. C. as they were apparently not finished at the time of Horace's reference to them. Baillet's arguments (p. 8) in favor of an earlier date are not convincing.

(283) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 662-4; Thorbecke, *op. cit.*, p. 119, think they ran to the reign of Augustus; Aulard, remains silent on this point.

Although Bailieu argues that Pollio ended his *Histories* before the war with Antony, writing nothing beyond the campaigns waged against Sextus Pompey, since Appian also ends his *Civil Wars* in the same place and reserves the Battle of Actium for his *Egyptian Wars*,<sup>(284)</sup> Kornemann believes that Asinius would not have ended with the campaigns against S. Pompey as they were hardly important enough to form the conclusion of his work. If, as he believes, Appian drew his material from Pollio, it by no means necessarily follows that they stopped at the same place, and Appian who very often divides his material geographically may have taken the latter part of Pollio's *Histories* for his *Aegyptiaca* just as he put the few references to the Gallic Wars in his *Celtica*<sup>(285)</sup>. Nothing after Philippi was a real climax until Actium, which Pollio evidently considered as the logical conclusion of the civil wars, since in the introduction of his *Bellum Civile* Appian refers to it as the grand culmination of these conflicts<sup>(286)</sup>.

Only very general conclusions may be drawn in regard to the style of Pollio's *Histories*, as practically all information has to come secondhand from the passages reflected in later writers. Although critics disagree as to the use of Pollio's *Histories* by the later Roman writers, there can be no doubt that Appian and Plutarch used them. The *Histories* of Pollio were written in Latin,<sup>(287)</sup> and the use of similar Greek words in the parallel passages in Appian and Plutarch imply that they used a Greek translation of Pollio's *Histories*, which Kornemann claims was a word for word translation, and not an epitome, and that, therefore, the extracts in the Greek writers are close enough to Pollio's works for us to gain from them his characteristics as an historian<sup>(288)</sup>. In view of the detailed character of the extracts quoted by Appian and Plutarch this hypothesis of Kornemann's seems reasonable, for if they had drawn from

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(284) Bailieu, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

(285) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 662.

(286) App., *B. C.*, I, 6.

(287) Val. Max., VIII, 13 ext. 4; Sen., *Suas.*, VI, 27.; Suet., *Gramm.*, 10. Thorbecke, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-114, refutes the view of Casaubon on Suet., *Caes.*, 30 and Vossius, *Hist. Lat.*, I, 17 that Pollio wrote in Greek, by proving that Plutarch misunderstood the sources and applied the phrase to Pollio instead of Caesar.

(288) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 578.

an epitome they would scarcely have found in it such minute descriptions of minor incidents<sup>(289)</sup>. This hypothesis is further strengthened by the similarity between the parallel passages in these authors and the corresponding ones in Suetonius, whose resemblance to a direct Greek translation would be closer than to an epitome since he must have used Pollio's *Histories* in the original<sup>(290)</sup>. A further argument against the use of an epitome by Appian and Plutarch is indicated by a comparison of the parallel passages dealing with the crossing of the Rubicon, where Plutarch describes the incident in fuller form than Appian, who apparently selected several incidents, instead of repeating the complete version of the source<sup>(291)</sup>. Thouret's objection to recognizing a literal translation is based on the comparative number of books in Pollio's and Appian's *Histories*,<sup>(292)</sup> and may be met by assuming that Asinius included more of the local politics, which a Greek historian would not have found so interesting and therefore omitted.

One of the chief characteristics of Pollio's historical writing as gained from these sources is his habit of relating events in great detail, especially those in which he himself took part. This, of course, led the later historians to give undue importance to his exploits<sup>(293)</sup>, and to treat them with greater minuteness than they deserved. But since Pollio was a keen observer, who noticed the smallest details and later used them in his *Histories* in a very effective and realistic manner, he makes the events stand out clearly and sharply.<sup>(294)</sup> One of the best examples

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- (289) App., *B. C.*, II, 33; Plut., *Caes.*, 31; *Ant.*, 5-6 give descriptions of the flight of the tribunes in slave clothes.  
App., *B. C.*, II, 95; Plut., *Caes.*, 52; Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 62.  
App., *B. C.*, II, 61; Plut., *Caes.*, 39; Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 68; Famine in Caesar's army.  
Plut., *Caes.*, 38; Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 58.
- (290) Cf. preceding note.
- (291) Plut., *Caes.*, 32; App., *B. C.*, II, 34-35.
- (292) Cf. *supra*, p. 56.
- (293) Plut., *Caes.*, 52-53; Plut., *Caes.*, 32; App., *B. C.*, II, 82.  
Plut., *Pomp.*, 72; Plut., *Ant.*, 9 places Pollio's part in crushing Dolabella in 47 B. C. more in the foreground than that of Antony, while other sources Dio, XLII, 28-33 and Caesar, *B. C.*, III, 1, 20, do not even mention him.
- (294) App., *B. C.*, II, 44. Poisoning of water and symptoms of disease among Curio's soldiers.  
App., *B. C.*, II, 60. Heroic deed of Scaeva.

of this occurs in the description of the Battle of Munda (App., *B. C.*, II, 104; Plut., *Caes.*, 56) where we see Caesar running through the ranks of the soldiers urging them not to deliver him into the hands of boys, (the sons of Pompey), and finally when the enemy had been repulsed, turning to his friends and saying that though he had often fought for victory, this was the first time that he had ever fought for life. Another vivid passage describes the crossing of the Rubicon (App., *B. C.*, II, 35; Plut., *Caes.*, 32) where Pollio apparently was all eyes and ears to observe every word and movement of Caesar at this crucial moment. The narrative tells how Caesar excused himself from a banquet, and went forward with only a few friends and his cavalry escort to the Rubicon, where he hesitated and discussed with his followers the desirability of entering Italy under arms. Finally, the story goes, he made up his mind suddenly and dashed across, with the exclamation "let the die be cast"<sup>(295)</sup>. Then about daybreak he proceeded to occupy Ariminum and later all of Italy.

A further characteristic of Pollio was his desire for accuracy, particularly in giving figures<sup>(296)</sup>; thus he puts the losses at the battle of Pharsalia at a reasonable number, in decided contrast to the accounts of other writers (Appian, *B. C.*, II, 82). His desire for exactness is further shown by his criticism of Caesar's *Commentaries* for failure in this respect,<sup>(297)</sup> and by his evidence that the speeches supposed to have been made by Caesar to his army before the battle of Munda could not have been authentic, since he says that the attack of the enemy was so sudden as to leave no time for speeches<sup>(298)</sup>.

For the events in which he himself did not take part, Pollio used the testimony of reliable witnesses, and in places where he considers his own knowledge incomplete, he quotes the judg-

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(295) Menander, *Ἀρρηφόρος*, fr. 1. Duruy, *Hist. of Rome*, III, p. 420 n., doubts the story of Caesar's hesitation at the Rubicon as his letter to the Senate some time previous showed clearly what his intentions were. Other modern authorities also discredit this story.

(296) Plut., *Caes.*, 21; *Pomp.*, 51; App., *B. C.*, II, 17; App., *B. C.*, II, 20; Plut., *Caes.*, 29; App., *B. C.*, II, 29; Plut., *Pomp.*, 60; *Caes.*, 32; App., *B. C.*, II, 32; Plut., *Caes.*, 37; App., *B. C.*, II, 48; Plut., *Pomp.*, 64; App., *B. C.*, II, 49.

(297) Suet., *Divus Iulius*, 56.

(298) Suet., *Divus Iulius*, 55 et seq.

ment of someone else, such as Caesar on Pompey's flight to Illyria<sup>(299)</sup>, and again on Pompey's command to his troops at Pharsalia<sup>(300)</sup>, for both of which he uses as his source, Caesar's *Commentaries* on the Civil War<sup>(301)</sup>. He may have consulted the memoirs of Octavian as well as those of Messalla and Volumnius for events in the East in the later years of his *Histories*<sup>(302)</sup>. Pollio apparently had a high reputation for accuracy among later writers on Roman affairs, for Appian who is inclined to be conservative and often gives two conflicting statements rather than decide between them, accepts the testimony of Asinius in regard to the Battle of Pharsalia<sup>(303)</sup>, against that of the other historians. There are, however, chronological mistakes in Appian and Plutarch, for some of which they may themselves be responsible, while others probably may be traced back to the source<sup>(304)</sup>, since Pollio apparently classified events to get at the underlying causes and results and therefore changed the order of certain incidents. Appian completes the account of Pompey's flight and death (*B. C.*, II, 83-86), and then returns to Caesar where he had been left in chapter 82 after the battle of Pharsalia.

The criticisms and judgments on Pollio's contemporaries quoted in Appian undoubtedly go back to Pollio as source and show that he was extremely fair and open-minded, and not at all influenced by partisan feeling. In spite of Pompey's position as leader of the opposing party in the Civil War, his estimate of him is just and favorable<sup>(305)</sup> and the same may be said of the treatment of the death of Cato as given in Appian (*B. C.*, II, 99).<sup>(306)</sup> Pollio's great admiration for Caesar as a general and administrator is shown in the comparison of Julius and

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(299) Plut., *Pomp.*, 63.

(300) Plut., *Pomp.*, 69; Appian, *B. C.*, II, 79; Plut., *Caes.*, 44.

(301) Caesar, *B. C.*, III, 92.

(302) Cf. Kornemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 652-653. If, as is probable, Pollio's *Histories* were not complete when Horace wrote his poem (*C.*, II, 1) Asinius might easily have used Octavian's memoirs which were published before 23 B. C.

(303) Cf. *supra*, p. 54. Cf. also Val. Max., CIII, 13 ext. 4.

(304) Plut., *Caes.*, 21, Appian, *B. C.*, II, 32; Plut., *Caes.*, 22-23, Appian, *B. C.*, II, 39. App., *B. C.*, II, 20 in regard to Lanuvium and its distance from Rome, he confuses mythological and topographical material. Cf. Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 606.

(305) App., *B. C.*, II, 86; II, 66-67.

(306) Cf. Plut., *Cato Min.*, 68-70.

Alexander (App., *B. C.*, II, 149 *et seq.*), where similar events in the lives of the two great conquerors are emphasized; he was apparently very much impressed by Caesar's conquests in Britain and Gaul<sup>(307)</sup> but qualified his praise by saying that if Pompey and Julius Caesar had only combined, they could have conquered the whole world for Rome instead of plunging her into civil strife (Plut., *Pomp.*, 70). He apparently lamented the outbreak of the Civil War, but blamed the Optimates for it as well as for the subsequent fall of the Republic<sup>(308)</sup>.

The extracts from Pollio's *Histories* indicate also a certain dramatic quality due in part to the vivid narrative and in part to the use of direct discourse—the characters act and speak. The many short sayings he attributes to Caesar bring out the latter's personality more clearly than any description. Many of the longer orations in Appian can hardly go back to Pollio in their present form; Appian may have found the ideas for them in his source, but in elaborating these into long rhetorical speeches he has departed from the practice of Asinius who is supposed to have quoted only the real speeches spoken by Julius Caesar and others<sup>(309)</sup>. Horace characterizes him as marshalling his facts in the midst of the confused accounts of public affairs and setting them forth in orderly array and at the same time with a vividness which makes the crash of trumpets, the flash of arms, and the terror of fleeing cavalry unite to form a striking picture, while the very voices of the leaders seem to resound in the reader's ears.<sup>(310)</sup> The enthusiastic admiration of the poet for the historian shows a keen appreciation of the realism of Pollio's writings.

Kornemann's view that Pollio was not only a dramatist but also a poet, because he used many figurative expressions and metaphors, is more than a little difficult of acceptance, for these are anything but poetic in character—many of them

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(307) App., *B. C.*, II, 150; *Celt.*, fr., 1, 5; Plut., *Caes.*, 22.

(308) App., *B. C.*, II, 66-69; Plut., *Caes.*, 40-41; *Pomp.*, 66-67; Plut., *Caes.*, 28; *Ant.*, 6.

(309) App., *B. C.*, II, 33; Plut., *Caes.*, 31; Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 33. App., *B. C.*, II, 113; Plut., *Brut.*, 10; dialogue between Brutus and Cassius when Brutus was won over to the Conspiracy. App., *B. C.*, II, 115; Plut., *Brut.*, 15. App., II, 130-132.

(310) Hor., *C.*, II, 1. 10-11; 17-24.



are drawn from the arena,<sup>(311)</sup> while others are obvious and pedestrian to the last degree. Pollio, however, as far as we can judge, showed his wide knowledge of literature in the quotations he introduced,—a line from Pacuvius sung at Caesar's funeral<sup>(312)</sup>, Pompey quoting Sophocles as he enters the small boat which carried him to his death in Egypt,<sup>(313)</sup> and numerous other verses from both Greek and Latin writers<sup>(314)</sup>. Plutarch usually quotes these in full, but Appian more often paraphrases them or omits them altogether.

To summarize, then, we should say that the *Histories* of Gaius Asinius Pollio were written by one who had an excellent opportunity for observing the progress of the strife from the vantage point of a position on Caesar's staff, as well as unusual ability for narrating graphically the smallest episodes and details of what he saw, and who endeavored to represent the facts accurately and impartially. His chief failing lay in his tendency to magnify his own exploits at the expense of other more important incidents in which he did not figure. Thorbecke who has attempted to draw some conclusions in regard to Pollio's literary style<sup>(315)</sup> finds in the fragment preserved in Seneca (*Suas.*, II, 24) a desire for brevity, and too great care in composition which is doubtless the *diligentia* referred to by Quintilian<sup>(316)</sup>. In Thorbecke's judgment the placing of certain words such as *ei*, *in eum* at the end of clauses gives a harsh and broken effect and interferes with the easy flow of language, but the shortness of the fragment makes it difficult to gain any adequate idea of the general style of Pollio. His letters to Cicero are of little assistance as they were written in his younger days and in a more careless and informal style than he would consider appropriate for an historical work.

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(311) Plut., *Caes.*, 28; Plut., *Pomp.*, 53; Plut., *Pomp.*, 51; Plut., *Pomp.*, 67; App., *B. C.*, II, 69; Plut., *Caes.*, 53; App., *B. C.*, II, 79-80; Plut., *Pomp.*, 73; App., *B. C.*, II, 118; Plut., *Caes.*, 66; *Brut.*, 17.

(312) App., *B. C.*, II, 146; Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 84.

(313) App., *B. C.*, II, 85; Plut., *Pomp.*, 78.

(314) Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 84 quotes verses from the *Electra* of Attilius. Plut., *Pomp.*, 72 quotes from *Iliad*, XI, 543 which Appian (II, 81) does not quote but paraphrases.

(315) Thorbecke, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

(316) *Cf. supra*, p. 27.

It has been urged by Landgraf and Wölfflin<sup>(317)</sup>, chiefly on grounds of syntactical usage, that Pollio was the author of the *Bellum Africum* and the *Bellum Hispaniense*, two contemporary accounts of Caesar's campaigns in those countries. Wölfflin bases his argument on a comparison between the choice of words here and in the letters written to Cicero by Pollio,<sup>(318)</sup> but Kornemann contends that this use of old-fashioned words was typical of many of the writers of the day, and that the style of Caesar and Cicero was the exception and was not followed by all their contemporaries, not even by the best educated<sup>(319)</sup>. He further claims that the *Bellum Africum* could scarcely have been written by a man who was as scrupulous about language as Asinius Pollio<sup>(320)</sup> for the word *antecedere* is used about ships<sup>(321)</sup>, *abscedere* and *progredi* about horsemen<sup>(322)</sup>. Wölfflin apparently does not take into account the content of these histories, for if he had compared the political attitude expressed in the *Bellum Africum* with that of Asinius Pollio, he would have seen the impossibility of identifying him with its author. In Kornemann's<sup>(323)</sup> opinion the *Bellum Africum* was obviously written by a very enthusiastic officer of Caesar, whose blind loyalty led him to consider his leader as the only general who kept his head in difficult circumstances<sup>(324)</sup>, and who further believed that lasting peace could be realized only under the dictatorship of Julius Caesar<sup>(325)</sup>. This is quite different from the sentiments expressed by the self-sufficient Pollio in his letters to Cicero where his own independence and strong Republican principles are emphasized<sup>(326)</sup>. Furthermore the

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(317) Landgraf, G., *Untersuchungen zu Cäsar und seinen Fortsetzern insbes. über Autorschaft des Bellum Alexandrinum und Africanum*, Munich, 1888.

Wölfflin in Wölfflin, E., and Miodonski, A., *C. Asini Polionis de Bello Africo Commentarius*, Leipzig, 1889. Against this view see Duff, *Literary History of Rome*, p. 413; Sihler, *Annals of Caesar*, p. 283 *et seq.*; Kornemann, *op. cit.*, pp. 665-671.

(318) Wölfflin, *op. cit.*, pp. XXI-XXVI.

(319) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 666.

(320) Gell., X, 26. Cf. *supra*, p. 34.

(321) *Bellum Africum*, II, 2; LX, 5.

(322) *Bell. Afr.*, XXXIX, 5; LXI, 3.

(323) Kornemann, *op. cit.*, p. 670.

(324) *Bell. Afr.*, X, 2-4; XXXI, 4-6.

(325) *Bell. Afr.*, VII, 5.

(326) Pollio, *ap. Cic., fam.*, X, 31-33.

*Bellum Africum* is extremely partisan in tone<sup>(327)</sup> and does not waste any sympathy on Pompey whereas Pollio as reflected in Appian and Plutarch is inclined to represent the Pompeians as having some right on their side. Landgraf thinks that the unfinished work of Julius Caesar was taken over and edited by his best friend, Asinius Pollio<sup>(328)</sup>, and he believes that Pollio must have been a very modest man since he does not refer to his own deeds<sup>(329)</sup> although he took part in these campaigns, while four or five of Caesar's lieutenants are mentioned by name<sup>(330)</sup>. This idea appears incredible when we consider Pollio's criticism of Caesar's writings and the very prominent part he occupies in his own *Histories*.

The *Bellum Hispaniense* is chiefly a chronicle or diary of events from day to day without any perspective or proportion, and is plainly the work of a mere military officer and not an educated man of letters such as Pollio. The author's awkwardness in writing is apparent in the extremely limited vocabulary and repetition of the same phrases over and over again, and although it is clearly the account of an eye-witness, it does not go beyond the limits of his own particular field of vision. The writer was, apparently, someone who served in this war from the beginning in December, 46, until its end in April, 45, and later published a diary of the events without any attempt at literary composition or style. This obviously could not be Pollio. Suetonius's discussion of the authorship of these histories (*Bellum Africum* and *Bellum Hispaniense*) shows that in his time Pollio was not regarded as a possibility, for he does not mention him in this connection although he knew him to be one of the historians of the period<sup>(331)</sup>, and a few lines below cites Pollio's unfavorable criticism of the *De Bello Gallico* and *Bellum Civile*.

In addition to his own writings and his patronage of the great poets and writers of his day, Asinius Pollio did a further service to the development of literature by founding the first

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(327) *Bell. Afr.*, XC, 2; IV, 1.

(328) Landgraf, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

(329) Landgraf, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

(330) L. Munatius Plancus, (*Bell. Afr.*, IV) C. Sallustius Crispus, (*Bell. Afr.*, XXXIV), C. Messius, (XXXIII), Oppius, (LXVIII), Caninius, (XCIII).

(331) Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 55.

public library in Rome<sup>(332)</sup>, thus carrying out a project that Julius Caesar had inaugurated, but had not lived to realize<sup>(333)</sup>. Caesar had doubtless learned to appreciate the value of the public libraries already established in important literary centres of the East, such as Pergamon and Alexandria, and his plan as given by Suetonius was "to open to the public the greatest possible libraries of Greek and Latin books<sup>(334)</sup>." He assigned the collecting and classifying of these books to M. Terentius Varro, who was considered the most learned Roman scholar of the day. These plans, however, were ended by the murder of Julius Caesar and the inclusion of Varro in the list of the proscribed. Although Varro escaped with his life he lost his valuable estate and was therefore in no position to carry out the project for the library.

Out of the spoils of the Dalmatian campaign, Pollio rebuilt and equipped the old *Atrium Libertatis*, installing in it a library of both Greek and Latin books and adorning it with a valuable collection of art treasures.

It has been stated that Asinius Pollio in founding this library acted as a sort of administrator of Augustus and that Augustus transferred to him the uncompleted task of Varro<sup>(335)</sup>. There appears, however, to be no evidence to prove the connection of Augustus with any library before the one that he had built near the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine which was finished about 23 B. C. some years after the one in the *Atrium Libertatis*. The plan for such a project is entirely in keeping with Pollio's literary interests and since he used the spoils of his own campaign to defray the expenses, it would seem that he and not Augustus undertook the full responsibility in the matter. Although this was the first library devoted exclusively

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(332) Plin., *N. H.*, XXXV, 10: Asini Pollionis hoc Romae inventum, qui primus bibliothecam dicando ingenia hominum rem publicam fecit.

Ovid, *Tristia*, III, 1. 69:

Altera templa peto, vicino iuncta theatro:

. . . . . quae doctis patuerunt prima libellis,  
Atria Libertas tangere passa sua est.

Suet., *Aug.*, 29.

(333) Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 44.

(334) Suet., *Div. Iul.*, 44.

(335) Boyd, C. E., *Public Libraries and Literary Culture in Ancient Rome*, p. 49.

to the interests of the public, the nucleus of such an institution was already in existence at Rome in the historical and political archives, whose miscellaneous records had been used as sources by the ancient historians in their researches. But Pliny says that Pollio was "the first to make men's talents public property by dedicating a library<sup>(336)</sup>" a statement which seems to imply that a great variety of books and documents must have been brought together here. The collection included both prose and poetry in Greek and Latin<sup>(337)</sup>. That the library contained poetical works is clear from Ovid's lines in the *Tristia*<sup>(338)</sup> where his little volume of verse sought entrance to the three public libraries existing in his day: the *Atrium Libertatis*, the Temple of Apollo and the Porticus Octaviae.

The exact location of the *Atrium Libertatis* cannot be determined, but it is sometimes identified as the old *Aedes Libertatis*<sup>(339)</sup> which had been erected on the Aventine in 216 B. C. by T. Sempronius Gracchus out of money paid in as fines,<sup>(340)</sup> and rebuilt in 194 B. C. by the censors Paetus and Cethegus<sup>(341)</sup>. The Atrium which had contained the offices and archives of the censors,<sup>(342)</sup> was apparently remodelled and magnificently restored with two wings by Asinius Pollio, one for Greek books and one for Latin; the library also contained busts of men famous in literature, M. Varro being the only living man to receive this honor<sup>(343)</sup>. The date of the founding of this library has not been accurately determined though it is to be placed between 39 B. C. when the victory over the Parthini occurred and 27 B. C., the year of Varro's death. The anniversary date of its opening is given by Ovid as April 13th<sup>(344)</sup>.

The idea of having the library near a temple was borrowed from the Greeks as was also the idea of adorning the interior of the library in an artistic manner, for "Pollio with characteristic

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(336) Pliny, *N. H.*, XXXV, 2. 9.

(337) Cf. Isid., *Orig.*, VI, 52.

(338) Ovid, *Trist.*, III, 1. 59-72.

(339) Lanciani, *Ancient Rome in the Light of Recent Discoveries*, p. 184.

(340) Livy, XXIV, 16. 19.

(341) Livy, XXXIV, 44. 4, 5.

(342) Platner, S. B., *Topography and Monuments of Ancient Rome*<sup>2</sup>, p. 275.

(343) Pliny, *N. H.*, VII, 30. 115; see Boyd, *op. cit.*, p. 9 for further references.

(344) Ovid, *Fasti*, IV, 621-624.

enterprise was eager that his galleries should attract attention''<sup>(345)</sup>. Thorbecke<sup>(346)</sup> and Aulard<sup>(347)</sup> think that these art treasures may not have been in the library itself, but in the gardens of Asinius, which have been placed in the XII region of the city, near the Aventine and the later Antonine Baths, where the Farnese Bull was found in the 16th century A. D.<sup>(348)</sup>.

As these works of art are always mentioned in connection with the library, would this not be a strong argument in favor of identifying the *Atrium Libertatis* of Pollio with the old *Aedes* of that name on the Aventine? Pollio may have bought the surrounding land and laid out gardens to add to the beauty and comfort of his library, placing some of the larger sculpture in the gardens rather than in the building itself. The list of statues as given by Pliny<sup>(349)</sup> indicates that Pollio's taste was decidedly catholic, ranging from the Seilenoi of Praxiteles<sup>(350)</sup> to the group known as the Farnese Bull by the Rhodian sculptors Apollonios and Tauriskos, as well as including some works of his contemporaries. This fondness for groups with centaurs and nymphs and for terminal busts suggests that they may have been meant for gardens where they would be particularly appropriate.

The Baths of Caracalla were later built above these gardens of Asinius south of the Aventine, and since the level of the baths is higher than that of the gardens the buildings connected with them were not entirely destroyed but were used to support the platform of the subsequent structure. The remains of the lower floor of an elaborate house were discovered here by G. B. Guidi in 1860-67 and although Caracalla had had the upper floor removed to make way for his buildings, the ground floor was left almost unchanged<sup>(351)</sup>. It had a square peristylum with rooms around three sides; traces of fresco-paintings were still discernible on the walls and the pavements were of black

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(345) Pliny, *N. H.*, XXXVI, 33: Pollio Asinius, ut fuit acris vehementiae sic quoque spectari monumenta sua voluit.

(346) Thorbecke, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

(347) Aulard, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

(348) Lanciani, *Ruins and Excav.*, pp. 538-539.

(349) Pliny, *N. H.*, XXXVI, 33-34; see Jex-Blake and Sellers, *The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art*, pp. 205-207.

(350) Pliny, *N. H.*, XXXVI, 23.

(351) Cf. Lanciani, *Ruins and Excav.*, pp. 533-34.

and white mosaic with figures of sea-nymphs, tritons and other marine monsters. On either side of the door of the lararium, or chapel, were figures of Arpokras and Anubis, and above the altar the three Capitoline gods were represented in panels of terra cotta, while the labors of Hercules and a triumphal arch adorned the walls<sup>(352)</sup>. Since this obviously was not Pollio's Library but his own house, we may conclude that he had sufficient wealth to live comfortably and with a certain amount of elegance when he retired into private life. He had also a villa in the Alban Hills<sup>(353)</sup> where he spent part of his time and in which he died in his eightieth year<sup>(354)</sup>, reaching this advanced age in full possession of his mental and physical faculties<sup>(355)</sup>, the result perhaps of the carefully balanced system of work and recreation to which he adhered, for he arranged his day on a fixed plan, reserving the hours from the tenth to the twelfth for rest with which he would not permit anything to interfere. Even his letters were left unread lest they might contain something disturbing<sup>(356)</sup>.

## SUMMARY

Gaius Asinius Pollio lived a long life full of varied activities, in his younger years he passed through the difficult period of the decline of the Republic during which he saw the rise and fall of Pompey, the subsequent domination of Caesar followed by his death, and the final victory of Octavian over his rivals. Then as an older man he spent a quiet and retired life for thirty years under the rule of Augustus. Pollio's claim to greatness lies not so much in his military achievements during the period of the civil wars, but rather in his personality and his influence

(352) A visit to these excavations in August, 1921, showed that they have not been kept clear, but are overgrown with weeds, vines and rushes, while the water in the bottom adds to the inaccessibility of the ruins.

(353) Apparently he did his own brickmaking there for 15 bricks have been found at different places in this district inscribed with his name. Cf. *C. I. L.*, XIV, 4090, 4-9; XV, 2231-2234.

(354) Cf. *supra.*, p. 4.

(355) *Sen., Contr.*, IV, Praef. 5; *Val. Max.*, VIII, 13 ext. 4.

(356) *Sen., de tranq.*, 17: "quidam nullum non diem inter otium et curas dividebant. Qualem Pollionem Asinium (oratorem magnum) meminimus, quem nulla res ultra decumam retinuit. Ne epistulas quidem post eam horam legebat, ne quid novae curae nasceretur, sed totius lassitudinem duabus illis horis ponebat.

on the literary development of his day. As a mediator and ambassador, Pollio was most useful to both Caesar and Antony, and it may have been due to his diplomacy that Cato was persuaded to leave Sicily without any attempt at resistance.<sup>(357)</sup> Later he was instrumental in winning over Plancus and Ahenobarbus (App., *B. C.*, V, 50) to the side of Antony, and was one of the authors of the treaty of Brundisium between Antony and Octavian (App., *B. C.*, V, 64).

His lack of distinction in a military and political career may perhaps be traced to the fact that he was fitted by taste and temperament for the quiet life of the scholar. Forced out of this in his youth, and plunged into the turmoil of civil war, it is not surprising that Asinius forsook his Republican principles and allied himself with Caesar, because he believed him to be the most powerful factor in the politics of the times and the man best fitted to be dictator at a time when circumstances were forcing such centralized power upon Rome<sup>(358)</sup>. Although Pollio had great respect for Caesar's military abilities and owed to him his own rapid rise, yet he never felt the blind worship and admiration for Caesar that filled some of his fellow officers, and at heart he remained a Republican. If, after the death of Caesar, the senators had not failed to secure direct communication with Pollio, he might have found some way of handing over his legions to them, but since he thought they ignored him, he was forced partly through pique and partly through an instinct of self-preservation to unite with Antony.<sup>(359)</sup>

The relation between Pollio and Augustus has been the source of a great deal of discussion, since the German scholars, Gardthausen and von Rohden,<sup>(360)</sup> read into the Latin texts more animosity than can really be found there. Macrobius alludes to some Fescennine<sup>(361)</sup> verses written by Augustus against Pollio, and quotes the latter's answer with its clever play on words, but as we know nothing further about these verses, Augustus may have been merely engaged in friendly repartee in which he frequently indulged, being content to give and take

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(357) *Cf. supra*, p. 11.

(358) *Cf. supra*, p. 8.

(359) *Cf. supra*, p. 19.

(360) Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie*, sv. *Asinius*.

(361) Macrobi., *Sat.* II, 4. 2.



and not stand upon his dignity as Princeps, but to show his delight when a hit was scored against him. Pollio did oppose the wishes of Augustus in his speech in the Senate about the *Trojae ludus* but this implied no personal attack on the Princeps, it was a mere difference of opinion due to the fact that Pollio's grandson had sustained a serious injury in the course of the games while the grandson of Augustus had escaped without hurt.<sup>(362)</sup> The independence of Pollio is shown here, and in his refusal to join Augustus in the war against Antony, and again by his sheltering the rhetorician, Timagenes who had insulted some of the members of Augustus's family.<sup>(363)</sup> But on the other hand, Pollio did many things which could not fail to please Augustus, such as the founding of the Public Library and the institution of the *Recitationes*,<sup>(364)</sup> and although they differed in regard to their political beliefs they had much in common in their literary interests. It was in these pursuits that Pollio's abilities found their best expression, for he was not only an orator of note, but a writer of histories which provided the later historians with one of their most valuable sources for these crucial years of Roman history. For although the evidence in regard to the extent of the *Histories* is very meagre, we know from Suidas and Horace that they were written in seventeen books and dealt with the events of the Civil War between Pompey and Caesar, beginning with the year 60 B. C.<sup>(365)</sup> This may have been prefaced by an introduction which reviewed the earlier wars of Rome and served as a point of departure for the discussion of the more grievous civil strife. Pollio undoubtedly carried his history beyond the death of Julius Caesar, for the account of the Perusine War, as given in Appian and Plutarch, is obviously taken from the description of a participant and agrees closely in style with other passages derived from Pollio's *Histories*. Whether the Battle of Actium was included or not is a doubtful question, since Pollio's refusal to take part in this campaign made it impossible for him to follow his usual practice of narrating all the minor details and observations of an eye-witness, and an account which exhibited none

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(362) *Cf. supra*, p. 30.

(363) *Cf. supra*, p. 33.

(364) *Cf. supra*, p. 42.

(365) *Cf. supra*, p. 49.

of the distinctive qualities of his style could hardly be identified in the later writers. It would have been an extremely difficult subject to treat, because Pollio's sympathies were undoubtedly with Antony,<sup>(366)</sup> although the victory fell to the other side, and it seems more reasonable to assume that the *Histories* closed with the year 40 B. C. which was that of Pollio's own consulship. This date marked the year of the Peace of Brundisium between Antony and Octavian in which Pollio acted as arbitrator for Antony and with this service ended his association with the former Caesarian party and opponents of Octavian.<sup>(367)</sup> The only positive argument against this date is that Book V of Appian's *Civil War*, which from its similarity in style Kornemann thinks has been derived from Pollio, treats of the pursuit and capture of Sextus Pompey in the years following 40 B. C.<sup>(368)</sup> Pollio, however, may have included the narrative of Pompey's later career in his account of the Battle of Philippi, since in the person of Pompey the last leader of the opposing army was removed. Pollio then would continue his *Histories* with a discussion of the happenings in Italy in the years 41-40 B. C., closing with the Peace of Brundisium in the summer of the latter year. In taking events out of their chronological order to finish one episode before going on to another, Pollio was only following a usage common among ancient writers.

Thus the later historians of Rome found in Pollio's *Histories* an accurate, detailed, contemporary source for the years 60-40 B. C. which paved the way for the change from the Republic to the Principate. Since the *Histories* are now lost, it is impossible to judge their literary value, but we do know that Pollio could appreciate literary greatness in others, and as both critic and patron rendered incalculable service to the development of Roman literature.

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(366) *Cf. supra*, p. 26.

(367) *Cf. supra*, p. 23.

(368) *Cf. supra*, p. 62.

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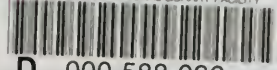


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