SUPERBIA: A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS OF A KEY MORAL AND POLITICAL CONCEPT IN ROME’S LATE REPUBLIC

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of
The School of Continuing Studies
and of
The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Master of Arts in Liberal Studies

By

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Washington, D.C.
April 1, 2014
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ABSTRACT

Understanding that Livy, Cicero, and Sallust were rough contemporaries enmeshed in the same political turmoil of the late Roman Republic and aware of the same political terminology, this thesis will track the use of the word superbia, which translates to “proud” or “arrogant,” in select Late Roman Republican texts. More specifically, it will focus on the selected texts as they describe key moments in the beginning and ending of the Republic in an effort to determine why certain individuals or groups were described as proud or arrogant by the authors of the texts. In doing so, I will attempt to compare the use of the word by the selected authors and contrast the behavior of the individuals they are describing in an effort to determine if the use of the word superbia is neutral and descriptive or if there is a personal and political agenda at work within the respective texts and, if so, explore why that bias exists. And while the overwhelming majority of instances of the Latin word for 'arrogance' (and related terms like 'pride') will appear in the noun form superbia, there will be occasion to employ the adjectival form superbus (even in the superlative degree) and the comparative adverbial form superbius. The argument that I am advancing in this thesis will not be altered by the use of these non-noun forms.
DEDICATION

To my parents, who planted the acorn of intellectual curiosity within my mind at a young age and patiently waited for its emergence. Because of their efforts, the resulting tree will never cease seeking sunlight.

To my wife, best friend, and life partner. Our meeting and life together is not an accident and I will never stop trying….

And to my professors at Georgetown, the torchbearers. Please know that your efforts are appreciated more than you can ever know.
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CHAPTER 1

THE EMERGENCE OF SUPERBIA AND THE CHAOS OF THE LATE ROMAN REPUBLIC

Introduction

In 27 BC, the Roman historian Livy wrote:

Here are the questions to which I would have every reader give his close attention – what life and morals were like; through what men and by what policies, in peace and in war, empire was established and enlarged; then let him note how, with the gradual relaxation of discipline, morals first gave way, as it were, then sank lower and lower, and finally began the downward plunge which has brought us to the present time, when we can endure neither our vices nor their cures...For it is true that the less men’s wealth was, the less their was greed. Of late, riches have brought in avarice, and excess pleasures the longing to carry wantonness and license to the point of ruin for oneself and of universal destruction.¹

When Livy wrote the above passage around 27 BC,² Rome was emerging from a series of devastating civil wars that had lasted over seventy-five years and brought about the destruction of the Republic and the foundation of the Roman Empire. From the Battle Actium in 31 BC until its fall in 476, Rome was to be an empire ruled by an autocratic emperor. The Republic had died a slow death by suicide and for the Romans of the late Republic and early Empire, ascertaining exactly what type of poison had crippled the Republic and when it had been injected demanded the focus of that era’s most celebrated politicians and historians, who


grappled with the cause and meaning of their new reality. In doing so, their collective gaze turned to the subject of morality because, “the politics of the Roman Republic were social and personal” and “since politics at Rome were personal and social, the language of politics mirrors this condition. All Romans saw political issues in personal and social terms, that is, in morality.”

With morality as the foundation for late Republican Roman politics and politics the principle social issue, the language of politicians and historians becomes an important lens through which to gaze into the tumultuous political and social environment of that time. The study of language and what words were used by select authors to describe the good and bad alike provide valuable insight into the moral beliefs of late Republican society. This thesis aims to explore the use of the word “superbia,” meaning pride or arrogance, by key authors of the time. Understanding that the key authors Cicero, Sallust, and Livy were rough contemporaries enmeshed in the same political turmoil of the late Republic and aware of the same political terminology, this thesis will focus on selected texts as they describe key moments in the beginning and ending of the Republic in an effort to determine why certain individuals or groups were described as proud or arrogant by the authors of the texts. In doing so, this thesis will attempt to compare


the use of the word by the selected authors and contrast the behavior of the individuals they are describing in an effort to determine if the use of the word “superbia” is neutral and descriptive or if there is a personal and political agenda at work within the respective texts and, if so, explore why that bias exists.

The Emergence of Superbia and the Chaotic Roman World During the Late Republic

To understand the importance of the word superbia and why a study of it can provide so much insight into the morality and politics of the late Roman Republic, it is important to first explore the political and social events of that tumultuous time. Also, an introduction to the lives of the selected authors will assist in understanding their importance and why they are appropriate areas of study for this topic.

Though it translates into English as “pride or arrogance,” the use and context of the word superbia evolved throughout the Roman Republic. Though it was initially a minor word employed by the playwright Plautus around 200 BC, by the Late Republic it transitioned into a frequently used political arrow discharged by Roman leaders in an effort to damage the reputation of their political enemies and enhance their own prestige and power. Specifically, the word superbia was used a mere one time by the playwright Plautus,5 which was in the play Amphitryon, written around 200 BC,6 by the title character Amphitryon in a conversation the he


was having with his wife. The use of the word exploded one hundred and fifty years later, having been used once by Cicero in his speech *On Manilian Law*, composed in 66 BC, sixteen times by Sallust in his work *The War with Jugurtha*, written in the late 40s BC, and nineteen times by Livy in his *Histories*, begun around 29 BC.

This evolution of the meaning of *superbia* was consistent with the late Roman Republic political process of demeaning opponents by casting them as immoral figures. In Republican Rome, voters judged candidates for public office by analyzing the moral fiber and physical actions of the individual candidates. Substantive policy issues were not discussed and it was rare for a political candidate to make actual promises when canvassing for votes. Instead, candidates would sound aloud their virtues, whether they inherited them from their ancestors or earned them on their own, and explain to the people how these virtues qualified them to hold public office. As one’s own virtues were the basis of a campaign, it is easy to see how the

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disparaging of an opponent by announcing that he lacked virtue was the primary way to attack a political rival.\textsuperscript{11}

Living in a world in which oratory was the most effective manner in which to sway the opinions of the masses, “all Roman political invective shows an obsession with morality. It became obligatory to accuse your political opponent of all the more recondite forms of private vice. To take an already existing moral term and to redefine it for a political purpose was not to destroy the old but to add a new dimension to what already existed...all this makes the vocabulary of Roman politics singularly difficult to handle. Words are anything but fixed. Meanings will not stay in place but slip slide into each other. For the ancient publicist and propagandist this was a great advantage. Hence the continuous process of development, re-affirmation and re-definition which makes the Roman political language a truly living one down to the end of the Republic and beyond.”\textsuperscript{12}

To understand why the use of *superbia* exploded so dramatically in the late Republic, we must examine the constantly evolving political environment of the Roman Republic. According to Livy and the generally accepted traditions, Rome was founded by Romulus as a monarchy in middle of the 8\textsuperscript{th} century BC,\textsuperscript{13} and transitioned to a Republic following the disastrous rule of Rome’s seventh king.


Tarquin the Proud. Once the Republic had been established, Rome’s gradual expansion began with the conquest of its immediate neighborhood, as the early Republic needed to acquire more land for its citizens and to ‘put space’ between itself and its enemies. In the third century BC, that expansion put the interests of Rome into conflict with the other great power of the Western Mediterranean world, Carthage. Following three devastating wars, which we now know as the Punic Wars and during which Carthage was completely destroyed in 146 BC, and a series of wars in the Eastern Mediterranean, Rome found itself the sole superpower in the Mediterranean world.

However, this new position as the undisputed king of the ancient jungle did not lead to peace for the Roman people, as the city became engulfed in perpetual civil strife. Relatively free from serious outside threats to the expanding Republic and the city itself, the delicate social contract between the nobles and plebs, or common people, began to fray after the fall of Carthage when Rome’s success brought previously unimagined amounts of wealth into the city. With this wealth brought temptation and a gradual shift away from the morals which the Republic had been founded upon and which the Roman people credited for its success. Specifically, the demise of moderation and the subsequent influx of greed, first

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14. Ibid., 103-104.
among the nobility but then by the plebs, was seen by the Romans of the late Republic as a cause of the Republic's steady demise.¹⁶ Sallust stated that:

Before the destruction of Carthage the Roman people and senate together governed the republic peacefully and with moderation. There was no strife among the citizens for either glory or for power; fear of the enemy preserved the good morals of the state. But when the minds of the people were relieved of that dread, wantonness and arrogance naturally arose, vices which are fostered by prosperity. Thus the peace for which they had longed in a time of adversity, after they had gained it proved to be more cruel and bitter than adversity itself. For the nobles began to abuse their position and the people their liberty, and every man for himself robbed, pillaged, and plundered. Thus the community was split into two parties, and between these the state was torn to pieces.¹⁷

Centuries of war and the influx of wealth and greed instigated another crisis in Rome: a shortage of quality land which plebs could own, live on, and work. The burden of the successful expansion of the Republic fell disproportionately upon the back of the Roman soldiers, who were only recruited from the ranks of the land owning Roman men and were most typically farmers. Service in the army was a societal obligation that was expected to be borne by all eligible men. The expansion of the Republic, however, transformed what had previously been asked from the citizen-soldier. As wars moved away from Rome's immediate vicinity and across the Mediterranean, the fighting season grew from a few months in the summer to

¹⁶. For an excellent example of Roman Republican virtue and vice, look to the description of Scipio as the ideal Roman noble in Polybius, The Rise of the Roman Empire, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert, (London: Penguin Books, 1979), 528-534. Additionally, the words on the golden shield that was hung in the Curia to honor Augustus articulate the supreme virtues of a Roman ruler. The words on the shield were “virtus” (bravery), clementia (leniency), iustitia (justice), and pietas (piety, filial duty). Le Glay, Voisin, Le Bohec, A History of Rome, 216.

several months to, in some extreme cases, years. Because of this, a soldier of the mid to late Republic found himself away from his land for extended periods of time and unable to till that land and provide for himself and his family. If soldiers were fortunate enough to have survived the war and return home, many “came home to find that their farms had fallen into disrepair, or that, in their absence, their land had been sold off or expropriated by the wealthy.” Other soldiers were killed in battle or died of disease, leaving their families to fend for themselves in a world where women had few rights. Because of this, the rural poor began to migrate in large numbers to Rome where employment was scare and sporadic.18

With so many Roman landowners unable to maintain their land on account of their service in the Roman army and so much land in Italy the property of the Roman state on account of its conquest of its neighbors, aristocratic landowners took advantage of the situation and acquired large tracts of land called latifundia, or estates. In doing so, they compounded the land problem in two ways: first, by taking family farms away from the soldiers and the plebs, thus depriving them of the principle means from which they supported themselves. Secondly, the large landowners took advantage of the incredible number of slaves brought into the Roman Republic from conquered lands by buying enormous numbers of slaves and compelling them to them work on their latifundia. This influx of slaves eliminated

jobs for Roman citizens who would otherwise own their own land, or at a minimum, who would have worked as laborers for those that did.

This lack of land brought rise to the political crisis of the Gracchi in 133-121 BC, during which the brothers Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus brought forth legislation that was to benefit the plebs at the expense of the nobles. Tiberius Gracchus, as tribune of the plebs, first proposed legislation in 133 BC that would make it illegal for one citizen to own more than 300 acres of land and for a family to own more than 1000 acres. This was a direct attack on the nobles and their *latifundia*, and the nobles responded by killing Tiberius and approximately 300 of his followers in 132 BC. Gaius Gracchus followed his brother’s path to the tribune’s chair and was elected in both 123 and 122 BC. After proposing legislation intended to once again benefit the plebs, he attempted to stand for re-election in 121 for an unprecedented third term. Gaius lost his re-election bid and was killed, again, by senate supporters. According to Sallust, “the nobles then abused their victory to gratify their passions; they put many men out of the way by the sword or by banishment, and thus rendered themselves for the future rather dreaded than powerful.”

This had a chilling effect upon the people of Rome and was the first tear in the delicate fabric of the social contract. Politics were now a deadly serious game in

19. “The tribune of the plebs: college of 10 magistrates whose task was the protection of the plebs; they were inviolable and had the right of intercession over decision of other magistrates with exception of dictators.” Le Glay, Voisin, and Le Bohec, *A History of Rome*, 46.


the Roman Republic. Appian, the Roman historian of Greek origin, wrote in the mid-second century AD that “No sword was ever brought into the assembly, and no Roman was ever killed by a Roman, until Tiberious Gracchus” who “became the first man to die in civil unrest.”

Though Appian certainly bent the truth, as Roman citizens had been killing each other since the founding of the founding of the city, the murder of the Gracchi officially ushered in a new era of Republican politics where the murder of one’s political rivals was now a reoccurring part of the game.

In addition to the devastating precedent established with the murders of the Gracchi, their life and legacy had another profound effect on the Republican political landscape and represented a watershed in the political life of the Roman Republic. Henceforth, the political class was divided into two, often mutually hostile, factions: the *populares* ("populists") and their rivals, the *optimates* ("best ones"). These were not political parties in the modern sense, but rather unofficial and fluid groups within the wealthy elite. While the *populares* brought political issues directly to the popular assemblies, by-passing senatorial consultation and approval, the conservative *optimates* struggled to maintain the established order through a united senatorial front against popular demands.

This combination of prolonged wars abroad, the demise of the common peoples family farms, and the failed social efforts of the Gracchi placed the Roman

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Republic in a perilous position by the end of the second century BC. Compounding these issues were the troubles inherent in protecting and governing the burgeoning Republic, a complex enterprise that the primitive Roman government was not equipped to handle. Nowhere was the stress of governing the Republic more acutely felt that on the backs of its citizen-soldiers. By the second half of the second century BC the Roman government had to cope with a scarcity of recruits, a problem that threatened the Republic’s ability to defend and advance its interests across its vast territories. The Roman people quenched their thirst for domination over the Mediterranean world with the blood of its citizen soldiers and now the spigot was running dry.

The natural solution to this problem was to lower the standards for service, a politically daunting proposition in the tradition-based Republic. A novus homo, or new man, by the name of Gaius Marius was the leader who stepped forward and defiantly addressed the disturbing shortage of eligible citizen soldiers. He did so late in the second century BC while Rome was in the midst of a struggle with the Numidian King Jugurtha. Elected consul in 107 BC on the platform that he would bring a quick end to the war against Jugurtha, Marius eliminated the financial qualifications for enrollment in the army and allowed members of the capite censi, meaning “head count,” which referred to the lowest and poorest class of Roman citizens, to join the Roma army for the first time.

This new tactic had a profound social and political impact within the Roman Republic. Before Marius, Roman soldiers fought for the Republic and were repaid
through booty and, more importantly, with the respect and admiration of his fellow citizens. Now, “the soldiers of the new type were not only in this sense more professional, they were also more often full-time soldiers; most of them did not have farms to return to. They began to constitute masses separate from the people, disciplined to their kind of work, and to them, military service was a livelihood or a necessary evil, not a natural and normal part of a citizens duty.” Moving forward, “Rome’s legions would largely consist of poor citizens whose future after serving could only be assured if their general could somehow bring about land distribution on their behalf. This new circumstance resulted in a fundamental change in the relationship between the common soldier and the political system.”

The principle change in the social contract brought about by the inclusion of the capite censi was the pursuit of money and its procurement as the primary motivation for joining the army for potential soldiers. Having little or none, these new soldiers were no longer fighting for the Republic but for the chance of money, land, and advancement in Roman society. Because of this, the loyalty of the soldiers was no longer to the Republic itself but to the individual general who commanded the army. It was upon the individual general that all the hopes of common soldier were placed. A victorious general was expected to share the booty with his soldiers and secure land for them upon their retirement.


In the late Republic, military victories were the sole road to political power and once the general had achieved a significant level of power he could push through legislation to award land to his veterans. Land was the usually the sole means through which the soldiers could support themselves and their families and was the principle motivation for their service in the army. On the political spectrum, the land awarded to soldiers of an army had a profound and alarming effect on the Republic. Soldiers were settled in concentrated areas and provided a quasi-army for the general with which he could intimidate the Senate to advance his interests or, if necessary, easily summon to advance his own personal agenda. This “continuous military service and the proletarian make-up of the army, together with the fact that generals changed less frequently, began to create bonds which were either tighter than before or of a completely unprecedented nature, and these bonds joined the general and his soldiers together in a relationship which was now inseparably connected with the military career of the client.”

Once Marius admitted the *capite censi* into the army, the evolution of the relationship between the general and his soldier can be traced by looking at the two generals who took the previously unheard of action of marching a Roman Republican army on the city of Rome itself. “Down through the second century BC, it would have been literally inconceivable for a Roman commander to lead his troops against Rome. No matter how much a commander disagreed at that time with a

decision to recall him, there was absolutely no possibility that he could have appealed to his troops against the decision taken in Rome.”  

At the end of the Republic, however, the generals Sulla, in 88 BC, and Julius Caesar, in 49 BC, marched on the city to advance their own interests. When Sulla advanced his army upon Rome in 88 BC only one officer remained loyal to him. When Caesar led his army against the city four decades later in 49 BC, only one officer refused to follow him. Thus, Sulla was the first general to avail himself of the possibilities inherent in Marius’s method of recruiting the army from the poor and to use the army under his command for his own political purposes. The incredible transformation within Roman society, from Marius and the capite censi to Caesar crossing the Rubicon and marching with his army into Rome, took place within three generations.

The transformation of the Republic did not end when Caesar entered Rome, however. The next twenty years saw the assassination of Caesar in 44 BC and the eruption of full blown civil war within the Republic that lead to the death of Rome’s leading citizens, including Cicero, Brutus, and Antony, and ended with Caesar’s adopted son Octavian earning absolute power over Rome as her undisputed master. Octavian was granted the name Augustus and his transformation into the absolute

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28. Ibid., 98.
ruler of Rome officially signaled the end of Roman Republic and the establishment of the Roman Empire.\textsuperscript{29}

**Conclusion**

It was this tumultuous world that Cicero, Sallust, and Livy all lived in and wrote about. Cicero and Sallust were contemporaries and advisories to Caesar and Pompey. However, they were also bitter personal rivals who composed and delivered invectives, or scathing speeches, to the senate denouncing each other. Livy came of age during the height of the civil war wrote during the reign of Augustus. The history of the Roman people – from the establishment of the monarchy and the Republic, to the fall of that Republic and the establishment of the Empire - was the most significant event in the ancient world and these men felt the answers to why these events happened rested in examining the morality of the era’s politicians. The Romans did not distinguish morality sharply from politics or economics but looked at affairs from a point of view which may be termed ‘social,’ reflecting the personal and social nature of political life itself. Thus, where we would see the working of the process of economic change and sociological and political adjustment, they saw – or appeared to have seen – only ethical issues.\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{29} The period from Marius to Octavian, known as the Late Republic, is one of the more interesting in human history. Among the best modern sources are Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939) and H. M. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome from 133 BC to AD 68* (Oxon: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 1982). For primary sources, Appian’s “The Civil War” represent the sole surviving historical narrative of the era between 133-35 BC.

Therefore, the study of words used by politicians and of historians describing them is an important avenue from which to approach the moral compass of the time. In an era where accusations of avarice, greed, and indulgence were akin to devastating attacks against political opponents, the emergence of viewing an excess of pride, *superbia*, as akin to these most immoral of characteristics presents an interesting study that we will explore in the following chapters. To do so, we will examine the lives of Cicero, Sallust, and Livy to establish an understanding of who these men were. Next, we will take a detailed look at some representative works in order to construct a working knowledge of the basic premise and meaning of each offering. Once we have grasped an understanding of the men and their respective works we will explore their respective uses of *superbia* in each work and then move into our final analysis of the use of *superbia*. By doing so, an opinion of the why each author chose to use *superbia* will be offered and our examination of *superbia* and the morality of the late Roman Republic will come to a close.
CHAPTER 2

THE LIVES OF CICERO, SALLUST, AND LIVY

Introduction

To gain an understanding of an author’s inspiration for their literary efforts and theorize why they chose to construct certain works, it is necessary to examine the life and times during which they lived and worked. As we have already sketched a canvas of the events that lead up to and shaped the lives of Cicero, Sallust, and Livy, the natural evolution of our inquiry leads us to gain an understanding of the lives that they lived. By doing so, we will gain an greater understanding of the events that defined their respective lives and times and build a greater understanding of the men whose works we will be examining.

The Life of Cicero

Marcus Tullis Cicero is considered by many to be one of the most successful and persuasive orators who ever lived.¹ On account of his brilliant mind, his speeches, letters and philosophic works were preserved in an unprecedented manner and as a result we know more about him than any other man from ancient Rome. Born in 106 BC into a wealthy family of the equestrian class in the town of Arpinum, sixty miles south-east of Rome, he immediately distinguished himself as

an excellent student and by 97 BC he moved with his family to Rome. It was there that Cicero completed his studies and, though a knight’s son from a small town, succumbed to his ambition and used his talents to successfully enter into a life of politics.

Once he had decided to pursue a life as a public figure, Cicero took the only paths that nurtured such ambitions: the study of the law and service in the legions. Already recognized as a brilliant orator, Cicero joined the circle of the lawyer and politician Mucius Scaevola in 85 BC and gained useful knowledge of the law and the workings of the Roman political arena. For a short time he also did military service under Sulla in the war against the Marsians. Cicero, however, quickly learned that he was not suited for the life of a soldier and would not excel as a leader of a Roman army.

After returning from his time in the army, Cicero entered into public life in 81 BC by challenging one of Sulla’s men in court over a property dispute. Though he won the case and was greatly admired for what he had done, Cicero knew full well that Sulla had a penchant for murdering his rivals and feared such a fate. As a result, in 79 BC Cicero went abroad to “further his studies” in Athens, Asia, and Rhodes.

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Once he had satisfied his intellectual curiosity and, more importantly, Sulla had passed away, Cicero returned to Rome in 77 BC and for the next nine years he worked his way up Rome’s political ladder.\footnote{Cicero, \textit{Selected Political Speeches}, 19.} Eventually, he had made enough of an impression to stand for and win the office of praetorship in 66 BC.\footnote{Plutarch, \textit{Cicero}, 331: 9.} As a praetor, Cicero was elected by the people’s assemblies and served as a judiciary magistrate in Rome for a calendar year. In that capacity, he was in charge of hearing cases and dispensing civil justice and criminal jurisdiction. Also, it was during his time as a praetor that Cicero delivered his speech \textit{On The Manilian Law}, in which he advocated that Pompey assume command of the war against Mithridates. Cicero’s meteoric rise within the world of Roman politics had begun.

Cicero’s ascension up the senatorial ladder was swift and by 64 BC he had managed to build sufficient support to pursue the consul’s chair.\footnote{“The two consuls were in many ways the presidents of the Roman Republic. They held sovereign political, judicial, and coercive power within the sacred boundaries of Rome and sovereign military and judicial powers outside of it.” Le Glay, Voisin, Le Bohec, \textit{A History of Rome}, 57-58. Also, see Plutarch, \textit{Cicero}, 334: 11.} In a rare act of bipartisanship, both parties – that of the nobility and that of the people – combined together to raise Cicero to the consulship.\footnote{Plutarch, \textit{Cicero}, 333:10.} This election catapulted him to the top of the Roman political sphere and meant that as a \textit{novus homo} or ‘new man,’ he was now part of the noble class. This was a remarkable accomplishment, as some twenty families controlled Senatorial policy and very few ‘new men’ broke...
into the charmed, exclusive circle as Cicero had done. In fact, he pointed out that in the past thirty years he was the very first son of a knight, meaning not the son of a senator, to reach the consulship at all.\(^1^0\)

During his time as consul, Cicero needed all the powers afforded to his office as he dealt with what is known as the Catiline Conspiracy. Named after an impoverished and disgraced member of the patrician class, L. Sergius Catilina, the conspiracy threatened Rome’s republican form of government as Catiline and his allies sought to murder Cicero and rule Rome as an autocracy. After Cicero defeated Catiline for the consulship in 63 BC and Catiline was again defeated in 62 BC, Catiline aggressively moved to assassinate Cicero, set fire to Rome, and persuade slaves to rise up and march on the city.\(^1^1\) Fortunately for the Republic, Cicero was able to prevent the insurrection and, armed with written proof of their intentions, oversee the execution of a number of the conspirators. By doing so, he earned the esteem and gratitude of the Republic and was briefly celebrated as its savior.\(^1^2\)

Cicero was soon reminded of the fluid nature of Roman hero worship and learned that the tallest oak in the Roman political world was apt to serve as a

\(^1^0\) Cicero, *Selected Political Speeches*, 13.


\(^1^2\) “He was considered to have been without question the savior of his disintegrating country, and thanks and praise of every description were heaped on him by the people’s assembly. When Cato addressed him as the father of his country, everyone cheered.” Appian, *The Civil Wars*, trans. John Carter, (London: Penguin Group), II. 7. “Wherever he passed people shouted aloud and clapped their hands, calling him the savior and the founder of his country. At this time, then, Cicero was the most powerful man in Rome.” Plutarch, *Cicero*, 344: 22.
standard around which all other politicians would rally against. In late 58 BC, Cicero was exiled and his house burned to the ground as a result of trumped up charges advanced by a group of senators, led by Clodius, who sought to extinguish his influence. By 57 BC, however, the winds blew back in his favor and with the assistance of Pompey he was recalled to Rome and greeted as a returning hero.\footnote{13}

By the time Cicero returned to Rome the First Triumvirate of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus had seized power in Rome in 59 BC and the seeds of the civil war were being germinated. As a politician without an army, Cicero saw his influence wane and by the time that Caesar crossed the Rubicon and marched on Rome in 49 BC he had little real power. Initially thinking that he would remain neutral and let Pompey and Caesar settle things without having to choose a side,\footnote{14} he eventually joined Pompey until his defeat at Pharsalus in 48 BC. After the battle, Cicero joined Caesar's forces until the end of hostilities and remained there until Caesar defeated Pompey's son Sextus and took control of the government as dictator for life.\footnote{15}

\begin{footnotes}

14. "Cicero came close to being a neutral in the Civil War. Returning from his province in Cicilia, he made what efforts he could to avert hostilities. He showed both judgment and impartiality. It was too late. He had few illusions about Pompey, little sympathy with his allies. Yet he found himself, not unnaturally, on the side of Pompey, of the party of the constitution, and of the majority of the active consular. The leaders were Pompey and Cato. It was clearly the better cause – and it seemed the stronger." Syme, \textit{The Roman Revolution}, 137.

\end{footnotes}
Though he played no role in Caesar’s assassination in 44 BC, Cicero re-emerged from his quasi-retirement\(^\text{16}^\) to once again serve as the leader of the senate. However, his efforts to guide Rome back to its more traditional form of government where the senate confidently ruled the Republic were naïve and did not succeed. Eventually, his life was reduced to a mere bargaining chip amongst the leaders of the Second Triumvirate, Octavian (later known as Augustus), Marc Antony, and Lepidus. Though their relationship appears to have been cordial during Caesar’s lifetime, Cicero and Antony became bitter rivals after his death.\(^\text{17}^\) Eventually, Antony demanded Cicero’s death as part of the Second Triumvirate’s proscriptions and in 43 BC he was killed at Caieta, in southern Italy, by Antony’s men at the age of sixty-three.\(^\text{18}^\)

**The Life of Sallust**

Marius was the most consequential Roman of his era and 86 BC saw the end of his political career and his life. Elected by force to a record seventh consulship in 86 BC, Marius was once considered the savior of the Republic and the first man in Rome after he defeated the combined armies of the Germanic Teutones and Cimbri tribes in a series of remarkable battles. However, Marius proved to be ill-suited for the

\(^{\text{16}}\) "Afterwards, when the government had been changed to a monarchy, Cicero retired from public life and gave up his time to those of the young men who wanted to study philosophy.” Plutarch, *Cicero*, 363: 40.

\(^{\text{17}}\) "Antony refused to come to terms unless Cicero was marked down first for death; Lepidus sided with Antony, and Caesar held out against them both...both on the third day abandoned him.” Plutarch, *Cicero*, 370: 46.

\(^{\text{18}}\) See Plutarch, 372: 48 and Appian, 218, IV, 19. Though there are differences in how they both describe Cicero’s death, they both agree that Antony had both his head and his right hand cut off and placed upon the rostra in the Roman forum.
battlefield of Roman politics and his death in 86 BC was a welcome relief for the beleaguered, fledgling Republic.

Ironically, the man who would most effectively describe Marius’ ascension onto the pedestal of Roman leadership and used him to explain the evolution of Roman morality was born in the same year that Marius died. Saint Jerome tells us that Gaius Sallustius Crispus, known as Sallust, was born in the Sabine town of Amiternum, now a series of ruins in the western foothills of the Gran Sasso, in 86 BC.19 The distinguished scholar of Sallust’s life and works, Ronald Syme, notes that no evidence whatever exists concerning Sallust’s boyhood, education, political training and beliefs, and public career before he stood for tribune on 53 BC.20

What modern scholars generally accept about Sallust’s early years is drawn from knowledge of Roman life during the time and assumptions made from that information. Prior to his entrance into the Roman politics, Sallust’s family seems to have had no previous representation among Rome’s magistrates. However, it is likely that they were influential locally and by the historian’s day must have possessed considerable means. As evident by his works, Sallust was given an excellent education in both Latin and Greek and the fact that he eventually pursued a political career indicates the possession of a large income, as Roman public office was an unpaid profession.


Sallust probably came to Rome quite early in life and it reasonable to suggest that he settled in Rome shortly after assuming the toga of manhood around 70 BC. Whenever he arrived in Rome, he mused in his work *The War with Catiline* that he did so to pursue a career in politics. He wrote that as “a young man, my inclinations first led me, like many another, into public life.” However, his “youthful weakness was led astray and held captive by ambition.” Immersed in the world of Roman politics, he quickly learned that the moral compass of Roman politics pointed firmly to immorality. He wrote that in “public life...I encountered many obstacles; for instead of modesty, incorruptibility and honesty, shamelessness, bribery, and rapacity held sway.”

Sallust proved to be a poor politician and his political career is significant only because of its remarkable failures and his later success as a historian. He was removed from the senate once and barely escaped the ignobility of being kicked out a second time. On a personal level, politics corrupted his morals and left him a broken, confused man. However, these failures led to his career as a historian and moralist, which we continue to benefit from today. It was through his literary efforts that Sallust sought to make sense of the political world that temporarily skewed his morality and permanently destroyed the Roman Republic.

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22. Sallust, “*The War with Jugurtha*,” in *Sallust*, II, 4-5.

23. Ibid., II. 4.
When he did successfully enter politics, Sallust’s first attested office was the influential tribune of plebs in 52 BC. An office established to protect and advance the interests of the plebeians, or common people, the tribunes of plebs were magistrates separated from the hierarchy of the other magistrates. Tribunes enjoyed a sacrosanct or inviolable person and exercised a major power which only dictators or censors could escape. Their power of veto could be exercised against any decision by other magistrates, and their power of auxilium allowed them to safeguard any citizen who placed himself under their protection. While serving as tribune of plebs, however, Sallust joined the wrong side in a political dispute and was expelled from the senate in 50 BC by the censor Appius Claudius Pulcher.

Still hoping to pursue a life in politics, Sallust allied himself with Julius Caesar, who rewarded Sallust in 49 BC by appointing him to a quaestorship, an office of a minor magistrate whose principle purpose was administering the public treasury and issuing currency. In 48 BC he commanded one of Caesar’s legions in Illyricum. The following year Dio tells us that he was sent to quiet the mutinous legions in Campania and was again unsuccessful, narrowly escaping death at the hands of the troops. Sallust’s break came in 46 BC while he participated in Caesar’s African campaign and was placed in charge of logistical transportations.

27. Dio, Book 42, Chapter 52.
There, Sallust succeeded in securing much needed supplies from the island of Cercina. Caesar rewarded Sallust’s efforts by appointing him as the first governor, or praetor, of the province Africa Nova. His readmission to the senate was a consequence of this praetorship.²⁸

Sallust is said to have accepted bribes and plundered his province to such extremes that he was put on trial upon his return to Rome in 45 or early 44 BC, unfortunately not a rare occurrence for a returning provincial governor and a humiliating experience for the accused. During this process a damning invective was delivered, likely by Cicero (though disputed), against Sallust. And while the contents of the Invective Against Sallust reveal that Sallust had previously delivered his Invective Against Cicero, the Invective offers a devastating attack against the personal character of Sallust that likely brought great damage to his reputation.²⁹ Luckily for Sallust, Caesar came to his aid and he escaped condemnation.³⁰ And though Caesar’s assistance meant that Sallust was not expelled from the senate for a second time, the accusations against him did mean that his alliance was no longer beneficial to Caesar and Sallust’s political career was indefinitely put on hold. His career was permanently ended by Caesar’s assassination in 44 BC, after which Sallust wrote that he had “resolved to pass my life aloof from public affairs” because “greater profit will come to our country from my inactivity than from others’

²⁸. Sallust, The Histories, 2.

²⁹. Both the Invective Against Cicero and the Invective Against Sallust can be found in Sallust.

activities.” It was as an historian that Sallust lived out the rest of his days, writing his *War with Jugurtha* in 40 BC, passing away in 35 BC.

**The Life of Livy**

The Roman aristocrat was above all a political animal who defined his ideal way of life as one centered on the pursuit of and service in political office. *Virtus,* for the Republican noble, consisted in the winning of personal preeminence and glory by the commission of great deeds in the service of the Roman state. It was unheard of, then, for a man aspiring to serve his country to pursue any other line of work. This makes Livy all the more special and unique. For Livy seems never to have sought or held any public office, but to have given himself up entirely to literature. He was different and unique from the great majority of proceeding Roman historians in that he was not a public man and he did not turn to history as a recreation. For Livy, his *Histories* was the principle task of his life and defined his existence.

From entries in Jerome’s re-working of the *Chronicle of Eusebius* we learn that Titus Livius the Patvian was born in 59 BC, the year of Caesar’s first consulship. Though no knowledge of his parents have survived to this day, it is fair to offer that they were wealthy and provided their son with the best education

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34. Ibid., ix.
that the times afforded. His extensive knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages speaks to that, as does his ability to devote his life to writing his history of Rome.

Livy’s childhood witnessed the conquest of Gaul and Caesar’s rapid rise to the lordship over the Roman world. It is believed that he passed his formative years in his northern home, as the custom of the time held that a man would not strike out on his own until he had donned the toga upon reaching manhood around the age of sixteen.\(^{35}\) One tantalizing clue regarding his early adult life is found in a sepulchral inscription found in Padua, which mentions a Livy who fathered two sons - named Titus Livius Priscus and Titus Livius Longus – and that their mother’s name was Cassia.\(^{36}\) If this is in fact the celebrated Livy, it likely means that he married and started a family before heading to Rome.

When Livy went to Rome is also a mystery, as was his purpose. We do not know if he had decided to write his extensive history before he moved to the city, or if he moved there and, inspired by its greatness, decided to dedicate his life to telling its story. Either way, passages in his histories indicate that he was already very familiar with Roman history when he began his efforts and that he likely began writing around 27 BC.\(^{37}\) Once begun, his work was the principle focus in his life and,

\(^{35}\) Ibid., x.

\(^{36}\) Ibid., xi.

\(^{37}\) Ibid., xi.
in total, his *History* entailed 143 books, of which only 35 survive, and ranged from
the founding of Rome until 9 BC.\textsuperscript{38}

Once Livy published his works, his celebrity was both immediate and lasting.
There is a legend of a man who came all the way from Cadiz, in Spain, just to look at
Livy.\textsuperscript{39} As it was quickly established as a classic and accepted as such by two
eminent literary figures of the Roman Empire, the historian Tacitus and the critic
and rhetorician Quintilian,\textsuperscript{40} he shared with Virgil the honor of being the most
widely read of Latin authors of their generation. He was so well respected, in fact,
that his literary efforts brought him in contact with the Augustus,\textsuperscript{41} though opinions
on his relationship with Augustus vary. Tacitus wrote that the Emperor called Livy
“Pompeianus,” meaning perhaps not a republican so much as an admirer of
Pompey.\textsuperscript{42} However, Suetonius also tells us that Augustus thought highly enough of
Livy to solicit his services as a teacher for his grand-nephew Claudius, the future
emperor.\textsuperscript{43}

Whatever their relationship, Livy feared Augustus enough to refrain from
publishing Book 121, which concerned the rule of Augustus, until after the

\footnotesize
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{38} Livy, *The Early History of Rome, Books I-V*, 1.
\item \textsuperscript{39} Pliny, *Letters*, II. 3. 8.
\item \textsuperscript{40} Livy, *The Early History of Rome*, 6. For the Cadiz story, see Pliny, *Letters*, II 3.8, and for the Tacitus reference see CF e.g. *Agricola* 10.3.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Livy, *History of Rome*, xiii.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero*, 239.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Livy, *History of Rome*, xiii.
\end{enumerate}
Emperor's death in AD 14.\textsuperscript{44} Regardless, at some point later in his life Livy decided that he had experienced enough of Rome and returned to his native Padua. Saint Jerome says that he died there in AD 17 at the age of 76.\textsuperscript{45}

**Conclusion**

In the contents of this chapter we have learned that Sallust and Cicero were peers in the senate and political rivals to such a degree that they appeared to have delivered *Invectives* against one another. They both were attached to key leaders of their times, though Cicero was a far superior politician and the undisputed master of the senate chamber for the majority of his political career. Livy, on the other hand, was a member of the following generation who would have been intimately familiar with both the life and times of Sallust and Cicero. Though not a politician himself, Livy did have a marked impact on the politics of his day by influencing the moral thought process of the Roman world through his expansive and immediately successful *History*.

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.,1.

\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., xiv.
CHAPTER 3

AN ANALYZATION OF SELECTED WORKS BY CICERO, SALLUST, AND LIVY

Introduction

In this chapter, we examine the works from the authors in an effort to gain an understanding of the selected storylines, characters, and purpose of their respective efforts. In doing so, we will lay the groundwork for our transition, in the next chapter, to an examination of their respective use of the word superbia.

Cicero’s On The Manilian Law

66 BC was yet another turning point in the history of the Roman Republic. Relatively free from serious outside threats to the city itself, Rome was instead struggling to defend the burgeoning empire that it had built. Among the primary issues of the year that commanded the attention of state was the war against a collection of pirates, who had taken control of the Mediterranean Sea and had all but ceased Rome’s ability to govern its Republic. The other vexing issue was the ongoing war against its bitter enemy Mithridates, the King of Pontus, who had executed over 80,000 Roman citizens in his kingdom back in 88 BC and had been a scourge on Rome ever since.¹

In 67 BC Pompey had been given incredible powers by the Senate, at the urging of the people and the knights, to crush the pirates. In a mere three months he had accomplished his task, which sent Rome into a euphoric frenzy and made Pompey its most popular citizen. With his efforts against the pirates coming to a

close in 66 BC, the Roman people decided new leadership was needed to finally put an end to the war against Mithridates. Desperate to crush Mithridates and free the lucrative Cilicia province from his grip, the rich class of Roman knights and the plebs united behind their hero, Pompey. However, the nobles were reluctant to vest so much power once again in the hands a single man and were against Pompey leading another war and expanding his sphere of influence. Regardless, the politician G. Manilius proposed legislation, known as “Manilian’s Law,” that would give absolute command of the war against Mithridates to Pompey. It is Manilian’s law that Cicero advocated for in his speech *On The Manilian Law*, and it is Cicero’s speech that will be the focus of this section.

When Cicero delivered his speech *On The Manilian Law* in 66 BC, he was a member of the class of Roman knights and an up and coming politician that had just been elected as a praetor. The Roman knights were a wealthy group that belonged to the same social class as members of the senate; however, as they rarely actual senators, knights lacked their rank and prestige. Instead, the knights typically preferred comfort, secret power and solid profit to the burdens, the dangers and the extravagant display of a senator’s life. Cicero was a rare knight who actively sought political office and by 66 BC he had achieved remarkable success. As a praetor, he was a senior magistrate entrusted with civil jurisdiction and lawsuits between

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Roman citizens and foreigners. Additionally, his duties as a praetor meant that Cicero was also a member of the senate and, with the correct connections and careful, deliberate actions, a future consul.

As he was representing the interests of his fellow knights and supporting legislation that was popular to the plebeians, Cicero chose to offer his speech On The Manilian Law in front of an Assembly of the Roman People and not the senate. Speaking directly to the people was unusual, though not unheard of, in Republican Rome and speaks to the popularity of Pompey and of Manilius’s proposal to give him complete command of the war against Mithridates.

Cicero began his speech by informing the crowd that it is from them that he, a praetor, derives his power and that he is speaking to the people as a representative of the knights. He said that, “I, who am so closely associated with the knights, have been chosen as the recipient of their representations concerning the hazardous threat to their own personal resources: which is, at the same time, an equally grave menace to the interests of our country.” He then went on to offer to his audience the manner in which he would be presenting his argument to them, saying “I propose to speak first about the nature of war, then about its importance, and finally

4. Cicero, Selected Political Speeches, 33.
5 Ibid., 36-37.
6. Ibid., 37.
about the general who should be chosen to conduct it.” Having flattered the crowd, identified who he was representing, why the war merited the attention of his audience, and how he would present his speech, Cicero was free to present his argument to the crowd.

The nature of the war and its importance constitute the first half of Cicero’s argument and, as was his habit, he began that section of his speech by identifying exactly what his argument was. He did so when he said “nothing less than the glory of Rome itself is at stake... Endangered, too, is the safety of our allies and friends, on whose behalf our ancestors fought so many important wars. And solid, substantial resources are also involved. If you let these go, not only will the funds needed to pay for the war be lost, but your own peace-time comforts will go as well.”

Here are the key aspects of Cicero’s argument for the prosecution of the war and a key insight into the motivating morals of the time. Touching on the key moral principle of Republican Roman life, Cicero referenced the glory of the Republic and the need for the people to live up to the deeds of their ancestors, thus proving themselves as worthy successors to the glorious Republic that had been handed down to them.

Cicero built on the glorious and proud example of the people’s ancestors in the next phase of his argument when he highlighted the importance of defending the Republic’s allies and friends, offering that the audience should fight for their allies.

7. Ibid., 36-37.

8. Ibid., 37.

9. For more examples of Cicero’s appeal to Rome’s glory and ancestors, see 38-40.
because their ancestors once did.\textsuperscript{10} Cicero completed his argument about protecting friends and allies by highlighting the financial windfall that the allies bring to the city of Rome and its people, and by doing so he seamlessly transitions to the final phase of his this argument: the importance of money.

The financial implications of the war would have been extremely important to the knights, the group Cicero was primarily representing, but also to the Roman people at large. In his argument, Cicero makes it clear to his audience that the city is part of a global economy and the war against Mithridates adversely affects the finances of the city and the people’s quality of life.\textsuperscript{11} This would have been a new motivation to the people of Republican Rome and a departure from the values of their ancestors, who would have been abhorred with and eschewed the more materialistic Romans of Cicero’s time.

Having offered his argument on the nature and purpose of the war, Cicero then argued why Pompey was the man to lead it and why the current commander, Lucullus, was not. In doing so, he offers us tantalizing insight into Roman values and vices of the time. Cicero proclaims that “the ideal general, I submit, should possess four qualities – military knowledge, talent, prestige, and luck.”\textsuperscript{12} Additionally, Cicero

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 40-41.
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Ibid., 44.
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 47.
\end{itemize}
he says that a general needs to “possess complete integrity...moderation in all that he does...be trustworthy, and has to be accessible, intelligent, and civilized.”

Conversely, Cicero offers that Lucullus was not worthy to continue command because he was not able to control his men and because they lack restraint. He offers that “a leader who does not restrain himself cannot restrain his army.” Additionally, Cicero addresses the argument put forth by the politician representing the nobles, Hortensius, who offered that it was wrong to place such incredible powers in the hands of one man. Cicero then ends his speech by advocating for Pompey to have the right to choose his own quaestor, or second in command, and by declaring that “my one thought has been for the interests of Rome.”

Sallust’s War with Jugurtha

In 40 BC the Roman Republic was four years removed from Caesar’s death and beginning the final phase of the civil war that would destroy the greatest Republic of the ancient world. Around that time, we do not know definitively which year, Sallust wrote his War with Jugurtha to advance his belief that the Republic was falling as the result of the moral corruption of its people. By doing so, Sallust sought to shape and protect the future of the Republic by offering his War with Jugurtha as a guidebook to his fellow Romans to aid in their understanding of how the

13. Ibid., 52.

14. Ibid., 54.
devastating virus of avarice, and its offspring superbia, had been passed from the nobles to the plebs.\textsuperscript{15}

As the backdrop for his lesson on morality, which we know was the basis for Roman politics, Sallust chose to use a rather obscure conflict that took place from 111-105 BC in the Northern Africa country of Numidia. He tells us that the war was significant because it was “the first time resistance was offered to the insolence (superbia) of the nobles – the beginning of the struggle which threw everything, human and divine, into confusion, and rose to such a pitch of frenzy that civil discord ended in war and the devastation of Italy.”\textsuperscript{16} The conflict was also significant because it catapulted Marius onto the consul’s chair and it was during this war that Marius enlisted the capiti censi into the army for the first time. This radical move meant that Roman soldiers ceased to fight for the Republic and instead fought for their general and for booty.

Sallust began his War with Jugurtha by explaining how the war began. According to Sallust, it was a struggle for the crown between the offspring of the deceased Numidian king Micipsa. On one side there were Micipsa’s natural children, Hiempsal and Adherbal, and on the other was Micipsa’s adopted son Jugurtha. Following Hiempsal’s murder at the hands of Jugurtha, both Adherbal and then Jugurtha appealed to Rome in an effort to secure the protection of Rome as they battled one another for the throne. The Roman senate sought to quickly resolve the

\textsuperscript{15} Sallust, The War with Jugurtha, II. 2-3, XIII. 5-6.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., V.1-3.
emerging civil war and voted to divide the kingdom equally between both Adherbal and Jugurtha.\textsuperscript{17}

Jugurtha, however, was emboldened by the knowledge that everything in Rome was for sale and when he had returned to Numidia he invaded Adherbal’s territory\textsuperscript{18} and executed him.\textsuperscript{19} Jugurtha then brought the war to a stand-still by bribing a series of Roman officials\textsuperscript{20} which incurred the wrath of a virtuous Tribune of the Plebs by the name of Memmius. Enraged by the conduct of the nobles, Memmius delivered a scathing speech to the plebs in which he chided them for being “the sport of a few men’s insolence (superbia)”\textsuperscript{21} and urged them to stand up to the superbia of the nobles.

Several months after Memmius’s speech a patrician by the name of Metellus was elected consul and given command of the war against Jugurtha.\textsuperscript{22} When he arrived in Numidia, Metellus brought Marius as his legate\textsuperscript{23} and quickly turned the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid., XVI.1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid., XX.1-3.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid., XVI.1-2.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Jugurtha bribes nobles: XIII.7-8., XV.1, XVI.3-4, 25.8 (contingent of senators who arrived in Numidia), XXVII.5, Calpurnius is a good noble who cannot refuse a bribe, XXXIII.2, bribes Scars and the election to ensure peace, XXXIV.1, bribes Baebius trip of plebs, XXXVIII.3-6 bribed centurions and other soldiers.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid., XLII.5-6.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., XLIII.1
\item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid., XLVI.7
\end{itemize}
tide of the war, placing Jugurtha on the defensive. After a series of successful battles against Jugurtha, Metellus reluctantly allowed Marius to return to Rome and stand for the office of consul.

Marius’s candidacy was successful and the command of the war against Jugurtha was taken from Metellus and handed to Marius. Once elected, Marius gave a rousing speech to the plebeians extolling his virtues, damning the nobles as arrogant and slaves to avarice, and announced that he would alter the rules for enlistment in the army and allow the poor to serve. Once he returned to Numidia and assumed command of the army, Marius aggressively began pursuing Jugurtha across the entirety of the country. Finally, Marius’s quaestor and the future dictator of Rome, Sulla, bribed Jugurtha’s confidant Bocchus to turn Jugurtha over to Marius and both the war and Sallust’s’ book come to an end.

Now that the literal meaning of Sallust’s work has been presented, we can explore the purpose and symbolic meaning of his efforts. Sallust announces in his introduction that the Roman people are the master of their fate and at present the traditional avenues of Republican service, politics and the military, were so overrun with avarice that they were no longer honorable professions in the ancient Roman

24. Ibid., XLV.2-3.
25. Ibid., LXXIII.7.
26. Ibid., LXXXV-LXXXVI.
27. Bocchus agrees to turn over Jugurtha to Sulla: CXI.3, war ends, Jugurtha captured, CXIII.6.
28. Ibid., I.1-4.
sense. For Roman citizens seeking to serve the Republic, Sallust was indicating that it was no longer possible to attain honor or live a virtuous life while engaging in those professions because they were no longer adhering to and advancing the ancient Republican virtues. Additionally, the expulsion of virtuous men from Roman politics caused the Roman people to lose trust in their leaders and the political process of the Republic. As Sallust wrote in his Histories, “citizens were not called ‘good’ or ‘bad’ on account of their services to the commonwealth (the corruption being universal) but whoever was wealthiest and gained greater strength from injustice was regarded as good because he defended the situation.”

Sallust believed that the rival state of Carthage provided balance to the Roman people and as a result “the people and the senate of Rome together governed the republic peacefully and with moderation.” Following the fall of Carthage, however, “wantonness and arrogance naturally arose” and “the nobility began to rob the people their liberty, and every man for himself robbed, pillaged, and plundered. Thus the community was split into two pieces, and between these the state was torn to pieces.” According to Sallust, it was at that time that the delicate social contract between the patricians and the plebeians was cut. The nobles, their arrogance spawned from their ever-increasing possessions acquired on account of

29. Ibid., III.7.
31. Sallust, The War with Jugurtha, XLI.2
32. Ibid., XLI.3-5.
Rome’s unchallenged rule over the Mediterranean world, began to view the plebeians with contempt and rejected the ancient Roman belief that they derived their honor and power from the plebeians and were therefore obligated to serve them.33

It was because of the influx of avarice and the balance of power shifting unnaturally towards the nobles that Sallust used the *War with Jugurtha* as the backdrop for his lesson. He saw the election of Marius to the consulship and his admittance of the plebeians into the army as the means from which the initial “resistance was offered to the insolence (*superbia*) of the nobles – the beginning of the struggle which threw everything, human and divine, into confusion, and rose to such a pitch of frenzy that civil discord ended in war and the devastation of Italy.”34 To Sallust, this was the foundation for the civil war. He is very direct in his writings that the *people* elected Marius and that they did so because the nobles had become contemptuous of the plebeians on account of their *superbia* and sense of entitlement.

What Sallust makes clear in his *War with Jugurtha*, however, is that the election of Marius came too late. The vice of avarice, the father of both *superbia* and the pervasive sense of entitlement, had consumed the patricians and was the

33. “The people were burdened in military service and poverty. The generals divided the spoils of war with a few friends.” Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, XLI.8-9.


35. “Marius, as we have said, was chosen consul with the ardent support of the commons.” Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, LXXXIV.1.
guiding influence of everything they did. More importantly, this immorality hung over the nobility at large and infected all they came in contact with. Eventually, it consumed both Jugurtha and Marius and spread to throughout the Republic of Rome.

**Livy's Tale of the Fall of Tarquin the Proud and the Establishment of the Roman Republic**

In 31 BC the Battle of Actium was fought and served as the decisive battle in the Rome's final civil war. Octavian’s victory over Antony and Cleopatra paved the way for his ascension as the undisputed master of the Roman world. The suicides of both Antony and Cleopatra the following year, 30 BC, eliminated the final threat to Octavian’s rule and in 27 BC he had cemented his authority to such an extent that the Senate bestowed upon him, by decree, the title “Imperator Caesar Divi filius Augustus,” which was shortened to how we know him today: Augustus. By doing so, the Senate “ensured that his powers were superior to those of other magistrates.”

The Roman Republic was erased from the earth and the Roman world was in midst of its transformation into the Roman Empire.

According to modern historians it was in 27 BC, the same year that Octavian was given the title Augustus, that Livy set about writing monumental work. In his first book, Livy begins by telling the story of the founding of Rome and concludes the


book with the end of the monarchy, brought about by the expulsion of the Tarquins. As Augusts was the first absolute ruler that Rome had witnessed since the fall of the Tarquin the Proud, the timing of Livy’s work could not have been more ironic or apt.

It is the overthrow of Tarquin the Proud and the establishment of the Republic that is the interest of this section, and to grasp the meaning of Livy’s tale we must first establish an understanding of the story as the great historian told it. Livy introduced the future Tarquin the Proud as Lucius Tarquin, the son of the fifth king of Rome, Tarquinius Priscus. Following the murder of king Tarquinius Priscus, the husband of the late king’s daughter, a man by the name of Servius, assumed the throne and became the sixth king of Rome. To appease the two young sons of the slain king Tarquinius Priscus, Lucius Tarquin and Arruns, the new king Servius arranged for each to be married to one of his daughters.

In Livy’s story it was Fate that interceded to bring about the demise of King Servius and the Roman monarchy.38 Lucius Tarquin soon began an adulterous relationship with his brother’s wife Tullia, also his wife’s own sister and the daughter of King Servius, and soon he and his mistress conspired to murder of their respective spouses. Once their spouses were murdered Lucius and Tullia were married and “from that moment the insecurity of the aged Tullius (King Servius) and the menace to his authority increased with each succeeding day.”

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Tullia’s ambition knew no bounds and she harangued her new husband day and night to overthrow her own father and assume the throne as the king of Rome. By doing so, she was responsible for “exciting the young man’s ambition” and soon persuaded Lucius to overthrow Servius and assume the throne in an illegal coup. In the course of the coup king Servius was killed by Lucius’s assassins and Tullia, the king’s own daughter, ran over Servius’s body with her chariot. According to Livy, “now began the reign of Lucius Tarquinius, whose conduct procured him the surname Superbus, or the Proud.” 39

Because Tarquin the Proud had “no right to the throne but might, he was ruling neither by popular decree nor senatorial sanction” he “put no trust in the affection of the people and was compelled to safeguard his authority by fear.” 40 Not content to limit his autocracy to Rome, Tarquin the Proud sought to cement his rule throughout the region by “inspiring in the Latins the same terror with which he had broken the spirit of the Romans.” 41 To do so, he manipulated a council of Latin leaders and persuaded them to execute the leader of the Latin town of Aricia, Turnus Herdonius. He also sent his son, Sextus, to the subdue the town of Gabii by employing “the policy, so unlike a Roman, of deceit and trickery.” 42

39. See Livy, History of Rome, I,47-48 for the story of the overthrow of King Servius and the metamorphosis of Lucius Tarquin into King Tarquin the Proud.

40 Ibid., I, 49.

41. Ibid., I, 50.

42. Ibid., I, 53.
It was not until Tarquin’s son Sextus committed the most egregious of crimes that the full might of the Roman people finally joined together to confront the *superbia* of the Tarquins. Following a night of friendly soldierly debate over which officer was married to the most virtuous Roman woman, Sextus and his friend Collatinus unexpectedly road back from a neighboring town into Rome to surprise their respective wives in an effort to decide who truly was the most virtuous Roman woman. Collatinus’ wife, Lucretia, was found weaving at home with her maidens and was instantly declared the winner.

Consumed by his sense of entitlement and therefore unable to accept that a Roman of lesser rank could possess a wife far more virtuous than his own, Sextus road back to the home of Lucretia two nights later and raped her. Soon after the crime was committed Lucretia wrote to her husband and father to return home immediately. Collatinus quickly returned home with his friend, a military tribune by the name of Brutus, who had until this point in his life presented himself as a simpleton. Lucretia told the men what Sextus had done and, because her virtue had been taken from her, promptly stabbed herself in the heart.

Immediately after Lucretia killed herself, the true Brutus – a man of strong moral convictions and a natural leader - revealed himself and swore that he would pursue “Lucius Tarquinius Superbus and his wicked wife and all his children, with sword, with fire, aye with whatever violence I may; and that I will suffer neither
them nor any other to be king in Rome.”

Brutus then had Lucretia’s body carried to the center of the city and gave a rousing speech to the men of Rome to “take up the sword, as befitting men and Romans, against those who had dared to treat them as enemies.” Enraged by the conduct of the royal family and the years that the Tarquins had treated the Roman people like slaves, the people followed Brutus and successfully expelled the Tarquins from the city of Rome after twenty-five years of tyranny.

With the Tarquins expelled but still very much a threat to Roman liberty, Brutus immediately set about establishing the Roman Republic. He was soon elected as one of the first two consuls of Rome, and his first act as consul was to persuade the people to “swear an oath that they would suffer no man to be king in Rome.” Brutus then took the more radical steps of persuading Collatinus, the husband the slain Lucretia, to accept exile from Rome because he was related to the Tarquins. He then made the ultimate sacrifice upon the alter of Roman freedom by overseeing the execution of his own sons after they were caught in a plot to restore the Tarquins to the throne.

Brutus made his final gift to the Republic on the battlefield in which he eliminated the threat of Tarquins for all time and ensured the establishment of the Republic. After the Tarquins were expelled they sought refuge in the city of Veii and

43. Ibid., I, 54.
44. Ibid., II, 1.

45. For Brutus’s actions after the expulsion of the Tarquins, see Livy II, 1-6.
persuade the people of Veii to bring their army upon Rome in an effort to restore the Tarquins to the throne. In the battle, Brutus and Tarquin the Proud’s heir to the throne, his son Arruns, engaged each other in single combat and each fell dead. The Romans won the battle, the Tarquin’s line was extinguished, and their threat to the Roman Republic was eliminated forever. Livy’s story of the fall of the Roman monarchy and the establishment of the Republic is at an end as well.

Conclusion

We have painted a general picture of Cicero’s speech *On The Manilian Law*, Sallust’s *War with Jugurtha*, and Livy’s tale of Tarquin the Proud and the fall of the Roman monarchy. Now familiar with the works, their principle characters, and their general purpose, we are free to move into our examination of the use of word *superbia* by each author.
CHAPTER 4
THE USE OF SUPERBIA IN THE SELECTED WORKS OF CICERO, SALLUST, AND LIVY

Introduction

In this chapter, we will examine the use of the word *superbia* in our selected works and how it was used in its cogitative forms. Specifically, we will look at the use of *superbia* in its adjective and adverbial forms in the comparative degree to the host noun *superbia*. In doing so, we will be able to transition to our next and final chapter, where we will determine if the use of *superbia* was neutral and descriptive in nature or if there is a personal and political agenda at work within the respective texts.

* Cicero and His Use of Superbius in On The Manilian Law

When Cicero stood up before the Assembly of the People in 66 BC and delivered the speech that we now know as *On Manilian Law*, he did so in an attempt to enhance his own stature amongst the common people by aligning himself with their hero, Pompey. In doing so, Cicero followed the accepted Republican political idea of advancing the individual by extolling the moral virtues of the candidate, in this case Pompey, and how his superior moral fabric qualified him to assume a leadership position in the Roman Republic. And even though Cicero only used *superbius* once during his speech, it is an excellent vantage point from which to explore moral political values in the late Roman Republic because it is a political speech and because the timing and context of Cicero’s use of the world in his
argument provides a unique and revealing vantage point from which to explore late Republican opinions of moral vices and values.

Cicero used *superbius* early in his speech and did so when he was making the case for completing the war against Mithridates. As he did so often, Cicero chose to harken back to the actions of the people's ancestors in an effort to define Republican values and persuade his audience that his argument was grounded upon those values. For few arguments pulled at the heart of Republican Romans more than their obligation to live up to and earn the power and prestige that their ancestors had handed down to them. At the beginning of his speech, Cicero offers that one of the key reasons why the war against Mithridates was so important was because "nothing less than the glory of Rome is at stake. This is the mighty heritage that has been handed down to you by your forefathers – mighty in every field, but mightiest of all in war." 1 Cicero then makes this argument – that the gory of Rome is at stake - the foundation of the first phase of his speech and it is during this first phase that Cicero uses *superbius*.

Once he has completed his introduction and informed his audience of his qualifications and the purpose and method of his speech, 2 Cicero moves into the first phase of the oration. He begins this phase by saying that "No country has ever equaled yours in its appetite for glory, its passion for renown. It is therefore imperative that you should wipe out the blot which stained Rome's reputation in the


2. Ibid., 36-37.
first war against Mithridates and has now left untouched for so long that the blemish is deeply ingrained.” Here Cicero is referencing the events in 88 BC, when Mithridates massacred over eighty thousand Roman citizens and offering it up as proof that the people are not living up to the standards of their ancestors. By relaying events in this way, Cicero is appealing to his audiences’ sense of pride in both themselves and their ancestors. This would imply that for the Roman people, pride is a good thing and something that can motivate them to do the right thing, in this case maintain the glory of the Republic, and adhere to the lofty moral standards of their ancestors.

It is interesting, then, that it is in the midst of this appeal to pride that Cicero chose as the lone time to use superbius in his speech. He used it to describe the actions of a foreign people, the Greek citizens of the city Corinth, towards their ancestors which was so offensive that it was a justifiable reason to go to war and destroy Corinth. He stated:

Our forefathers often undertook wars to defend our merchants or ship-masters against any high-handed treatment: what, then, should be your feelings when, by a single order and at a single moment, so many thousands of Roman citizens have been put to death? Because their envoys had been somewhat arrogantly addressed (superbius), your ancestors decided on the extinction of Corinth, the light of Greece: will you allow to go unpunished the king who imprisoned, scourged, and put to death by every kind of torture a Roman envoy of consular rank?

3. Ibid., 38.

Cicero’s use of *superbius* in this passage is a fascinating choice and one that sheds significant light upon the morals of his time. By appealing to his audience’s sense of pride in the passage, Cicero seems to be saying that, when felt by the Roman people, pride is a good thing and can serve as an inspiration to do great and necessary deeds. But, when felt by foreign people during interactions with Romans, it is a tremendous insult and something that merits not only a declaration of war but also the destruction of one of the greatest cities in Greece. As a result, it appears that there are few, if any, actions that would be more insulting or threatening to the Republican Roman people than the *superbius* of a foreign people when directed at them, just as it was insulting for a Roman magistrate to behave in a similar fashion to his fellow citizens.

To reiterate Cicero’s argument, he offered that the Roman Republic was not only correct when it destroyed Corinth\(^5\) for the sole reason that its representatives were excessively prideful when dealing with the Roman envoys, but that the destruction of Corinth was the correct reaction to *superbius*. By tying the *superbius* of Corinth to Mithridates massacre of eighty thousand Roman citizens, Cicero is asserting that *superbius* is the most dangerous behavior of adversaries to the Roman people and one that must be dealt with immediately and without mercy. This, of course, is what their ancestors did in 146 BC and Cicero says that those actions were correct. Cicero is reminding his audience that their ancestors understood the

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5. Rome destroyed Corinth in 146 BC and the truth of Corinth’s demise, of course, is more complicated than Cicero presents here. See *A History of the Roman People*, Third Edition, by Ward, Heichelheim, and Yeo for more information.
dangers of *superbius* and correctly waged a proactive war of annihilation against those that behave in such a fashion.

Conversely, Cicero’s audience seems to lack an understanding of how lethal a threat *superbius* is and for this reason he ties it to Mithridates massacre in 88 BC. Cicero indirectly makes the claim that Mithridates would not have executed each Roman citizen, to include the Roman envoy Manlius Aquilius, in his kingdom if Mithridates did not possess *superbius* and that it was *superbius* that inspired him to act. In the sentence after he speaks of the *superbius* of the Corinthian envoys and the city’s subsequent destruction, he said:

Surely you, therefore, will not let off the king who compelled a Roman general of consular rank to endure imprisonment, beating, every kind of torture, and finally death” and that "the verbal infringement of an envoy’s privilege caused those ancestors of yours to retaliate. Your envoy, on the other hand, has been subjected to multiple agonies culminating in actual murder – and are you going to pay no attention? See to it that you do not earn a corresponding load of shame by failing to protect and safeguard the heritage you have received as their gift.

In short, *superbia* convinced Mithridates that he could get away with the massacre and the Roman people are capitulating to Mithridates’ *superbius* through their inaction. It is their response to their enemy’s arrogant behavior, then, that Cicero tells his audience that they are falling short of the example and values of their ancestors and that they should feel shame as a result.

Through his use of the word *superbius* and his description of how their ancestors responded to it, Cicero attempted to explain to his audience how grave a threat it was to them and the Republic. Conversely, his appeal to their sense of pride
in themselves, their ancestors, and their Republic is important because it allows for a balanced picture of how pride was viewed in the late Republic. Because Cicero promoted it as a powerful motive that inspired Romans to do their duty and adhere to ancient customs Cicero implies that, when properly harnessed, pride could be a formidable ally to the Roman people. However, Cicero also makes clear that excessive pride can be the most lethal of enemies to the Republic when its enemies possess a disproportionate amount of it. Because it can inspire enemies to wage war against Rome and is the greatest of threats to the Republic and its citizens.

Sallust and His Use of Superbia in the War with Jugurtha

In his War with Jugurtha, Sallust offers that superbia is the parent of the civil war that is tearing the Republic apart. More specifically, he repeatedly makes the case that the scourge of superbia has spread across the Roman landscape and that it is the principle vice of the Roman leadership that is overseeing the suicide of the Republic. In his efforts, he claims that superbia was introduced to the Republic after Rome’s principle advisory, Carthage, was destroyed. Once Rome was relieved from the threat of Carthage, Sallust says that superbia spread through the ranks of the nobles like a disease and filled them with such disdain for the plebeians that they

6. “I propose to write of the war which the people of Rome waged with Jugurtha...because then for the first time resistance was offered to the superbiae of the nobles...and began a struggle which threw everything, human and divine, into confusion, and rose to such a pitch of frenzy that civil discord ended in war and the devastation of Italy.” Sallust, The War with Jugurtha, 5: 1-2.

7. Ibid., 46: 2-5.
felt it was within their right to murder the Gracchi in 133 and 121 BC. The power of the noble’s *superbia* paralyzed the plebeians for the next fifteen years until the plebeian hero Marius rose up to lead them against the nobles and their *superbia* during the conflict with Jugurtha in Numidia. He did so by enrolling the *capiti censi* into the army, thereby organizing and arming the people and ensuring the noble leaders of the Republic heard their voice and that they had access to glory, honor, and the spoils of war. It was because of the *superbia* of the nobles that Marius rose up to lead the people and enrolled them into the army. That specifically – the rise of Marius and the enrollment of the people into the army - is what Sallust was talking about in his introduction when he said the conflict with Jugurtha was “the first time resistance was offered to the *superbia* of the nobles”. In doing so, Sallust is stating that *superbia* was the match that started the fire of civil war that was raging across the Republic and thus was the reason he wrote his *War with Jugurtha*.

To make the case that *superbia* is the cause of the civil war, Sallust uses that word fifteen times in his monograph and overwhelmingly uses it to describe the Roman nobles. And though the word is frequently directed at them, no Roman noble ever uses the word. Sallust never uses *superbia* to describe the plebeians. It is significant that throughout the *War with Jugurtha* it is only used by three characters:

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9. “Therefore do you, who are of military age, join your efforts with mine and serve your country.” Ibid., 85: 47.

Adherbal, Memmius, and Marius. Adherbal uses it once and is the only character that refrains from directly aiming it at the nobles and instead aims it at Jugurtha, though Sallust makes it clear that Jugurtha is arrogant (*superbia*) because of the nobles. Sallust himself chooses to use the word four times when speaking directly to his readers. To better understand its use throughout the *War with Jugurtha*, let us explore its use at key times by Sallust and each of his characters on an individual basis.

As previously mentioned, Sallust himself uses *superbia* in his introduction and it is there that it appears in the *War with Jugurtha* for the first time. The second time he uses it is in his description of erosion of Roman values following the fall of Carthage. The reason for its use in these two sections has been explained in detail in the proceeding pages of this section and need not be revisited. The next time that Sallust himself uses *superbia* is when describing Metellus, the commander of forces in Numidia, and the reasons why he will not allow Marius to return to Rome to stand for the consulship. Though Sallust has made it clear that Metellus “possessed in abundance valor, renown” he also “had a disdainful and arrogant (*superbia*) spirit, a common defect of the nobles” and that this arrogance (*superbia*) drove Metellus to

11. Ibid., 8: 1.
12. Ibid., 5: 1-2
insult Marius.13 This in turn caused Marius to “yearn for a greater desire for the honor” and “allowed himself to be swayed by the worst of counselors, ambition and resentment.”14 Sallust had previously mentioned that Marius “was driven headlong by ambition.”15 Thus, it is fair to say that Sallust was telling his audience that Metellus’s arrogance (superbia) pushed Marius to embrace ambition. This, in turn, led him to enroll the capiti censi into the army and challenge the arrogance (superbia) of the nobles, which was the first step towards civil war. Sallust is saying that exchange was literally the moment that the spark of the civil war was lit.

Memmius, the heroic tribune of plebs, is a minor character that Sallust uses to speak to his modern plebeian audience. His inclusion in the War with Jugurtha is limited to the fiery speech that he gives to the people in sections 30 and 31. The speech is described as one in which Memmius “urged the assembled people to vengeance, warned them not to prove false to their country and their own liberties, pointed out the many arrogant (superbia) and cruel deeds of the nobles.” Memmius is attempting to rouse the people from their cowardice16 because the nobles have

13 Metellus told Marius that “All men, he said, should not covet all things; Marius should be content with his own lot” and that “it will soon be enough for you to be a candidate when my son becomes one,” which would be in twenty years. Ibid., 64: 2-3.

14 Ibid., 64: 1-5.


16 Memmius: “Thus the more atrocious the conduct, the greater the safety. They have shifted fear from their crimes to your cowardice.” Ibid., 31: 14.
thrown the gauntlet down in an attempt to rule over the people as kings and are doing so through “arrogant (superbia) and cruel deeds.”

Memmius goes a step further when he refers to the nobles as “men of insolence (superbiae)" and “criminal beings” who have “seized upon our country.” In an important passage, Memmius says that “Men stained with crime, with gory hands, of monstrous greed, guilty, yet at the same time, full of pride (superbissumī) who have made honor, reputation, loyalty, in short everything honorable and dishonorable, a source of gain.” Here Sallust is saying through Memmius that the excessive pride (superbissumī) of the nobles is their inspiration for breaking Roman law and turning Roman values on their head and that because of this the people must stand up and defend themselves or the Republic will become unrecognizable and the plebeians slaves. Through Memmius, Sallust is telling his modern readers that they need to stand up to the arrogance (superbia) of the nobles and fight for their Republic, even if that means civil war.

Marius is the closest character to serve as a protagonist in War with Jugurtha, though Sallust makes it clear that he was wounded by the arrogance (superbia) of Metellus and after the period covered in the War with Jugurtha, he was “guided by

17. Memmius: “Unless cognizance is taken of these outrages, unless the guilty are punished, what will remain except to pass our lives in submission to those who are guilty of those acts? For to do with impunity whatever one fancies is to be a king.” Ibid., 31: 26-27.

18. Memmius: “Indeed, some things, indeed, I am ashamed to speak of: how during the past fifteen years you have been the sport of men's insolence (superbiae). Ibid., 31: 2.

19. Memmius: “They wish to be tyrants, you to be free; they desire to inflict injury, you to prevent it...the senate's dignity has been prostituted to a ruthless enemy, your sovereignty has been betrayed, your country has been offered for sale at home and abroad.” Ibid., 31: 23-26.
ambition.” Marius uses the *superbia* the most times of any character, seven overall, in the devastating speech he delivers to the plebeians after he is elected consul. In his speech, which he concludes by announcing that plebeians can now serve in the army, he rails on the nobles. Marius’s muse for delivering the speech is the insult he received from Metellus after Marius informed him that he wished to stand for the consulship. As previously discussed, arrogance (*superbia*) drove Metellus to insult Marius and in his speech Marius in turn makes the arrogance (*superbia*) of all nobles the main topic of his speech. In it, Marius asserts that it is the driving force behind the nobles’ intolerable treatment of the plebeians and the reason why the plebeians must stand up and fight the nobles for their rights and for the soul of Republic. As Sallust explains it, Marius’s speech is the “first time resistance was offered to the insolence (*superbia*) of the nobles.”

In his speech, Marius states that the nobles are betraying the memory of their ancestors by using the honor they passed on to them as sole justification for their right to honor and the leadership of the Republic. Marius categorically rejects this argument by saying that it is the plebeians and ‘new men’ like himself that are living their lives according to the ancient custom. Therefore, they deserve the chance to attain honor by serving as leaders of the Republic, as this was how their ancestors


22. “Now see how unfair these men are; what they demand for themselves because of others’ merit they do not allow me as a result of my own, no doubt because I have no family portraits and because mine is a new nobility.” Ibid., 85: 25.
earned the honor that their descendants, the modern nobles, now enjoy. To deny men like Marius that same opportunity is the epitome of hypocrisy and a betrayal to the men who built the Republic. Marius’s answer to this situation is for the plebeians to rise up and have their voices heard through their service in the army, which he is offering to them for the first time.

Marius places the blame for the nobles’ unwillingness to share power firmly upon their superbia. In his speech, superbia is the most commonly used noun and serves as a launching pad from which he offers further scathing critiques of patrician behavior. He says that nobles live lives of “indolence or arrogance (superbia)” because they are “spoiled by pride (superbia).” This, in turn, causes the nobles to worship “luxury and sloth.” As a result, the nobles are not only living their lives in the exact the opposite way that their ancestors did but they are looking down on those that do. Marius adds that the nobles reject “humble” lives of virtue,

23. “It was by conduct like this that your forefathers made themselves and their country famous; but the nobles, relying upon such ancestors though themselves of very different character, despise us who emulate the men of old.” Ibid., 85: 36-37.

24. Ibid., 85: 1.


26. Ibid., 85: 43.

27. "But if they rightly look down on me, let them also look down on their own forefathers, whose nobility began, as mine did, in manly deeds. They begrudge me my office; then let them begrudge my toil, my honesty, even my dangers, since it was through these that I won office. In fact, these men, spoiled by pride (superbia), live as if they scorned honors, but seek them as if they seek them as if their own lives were honorable.” Ibid., 85: 17-20.
industriousness, modesty, and action as these words serve to balance the
superbia-based life of nobles.

Through his use of superbia, Sallust clearly articulates when it was injected
into the Republic and how he believes it is responsible for tearing the Republic
apart. To Sallust, it was a disease that entered the Republic after the fall of Carthage
and spread like a virus amongst the nobles. Once infected, it shackles any virtues
they possess while encouraging a sense of entitlement towards the leadership of the
Republic while simultaneously breeding a disdain for the people from whom they
acquire the power to rule the Republic. Sallust saw the nobles superbia-infused
sense of entitlement and disdain for their fellow Romans as the reasons that a man
like Marius was able to rise to the consulship and enroll the capiti censi into the
army. This resulted in the demise of the virtuous Roman soldier and nurtured the
rise of the political general and the subsequent civil war. To Sallust, the influx of
superbia led the Republic to civil war and eventual destruction.

Livy and His Use of Superbus in the Tale of Tarquin the Proud

When Livy sat down to write his story of the Tarquin the Proud and the
downfall of the Roman monarchy, he did so with the basic premise of the story –
that a king known as Tarquin the Proud was the last monarch of Rome and a noble
by the name of Brutus led the revolution that ended with his downfall –already in

28. Ibid., 85: 37.
place. It is believed that no primary written record of Tarquin and his fall existed in Livy’s time, and if there had been it is unlikely that Livy would have referenced it. Instead, the general premise of the story was imbedded within the fabric of the Republican Roman identity and passed down through oral tradition. As long as Livy adhered to the general premise of the story – that the last king of Rome was named Tarquin the Proud and he was overthrown by a noble named Brutus – he was able to tell the story in any manner he wished.

Livy’s story of Tarquin the Proud is his tutorial on how *superbia* affects leadership and the subsequent perils of absolute power when it is placed in the hands of an unworthy individual. Additionally, Livy chose to depict how *superbia* can lead an absolute ruler to wage war on the precious social contract of the Roman monarchical world and lead to a fatal imbalance in the distribution of political power. To do so, Livy chose to present *superbia* as the defining feature of the last king of Rome and the invisible hand that guided each of his immoral actions. And these immoral actions, which sought to consolidate power solely amongst the royal family, led to a fatal imbalance within the Roman political world that necessitated the presence of the hero Brutus. In the end, this lack of balance and the battle between Brutus and the Tarquins led to the downfall of the Roman monarchy and the establishment of the Roman Republic.

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29. “Yet the fact that most of the flesh and blood of Livy’s narrative is fictitious should not lead one to doubt the bare bones.” Page ix of the introduction to Livy *Histories*.

30. See page viii of the introduction to Livy *Histories* for information on the lack of written sources available to Livy for events prior to the 4th century BC and the fact that he did not rely on primary sources for other periods when they did exist.
Livy is very careful to note that Lucius Tarquin does not assume the moniker “Tarquinius Superbus” or “Tarquin the Proud” until he took the throne and is clear in saying that Tarquin earned his new name by the manner in which he ruled. 31 Through this account, Livy is telling his reader how he will be presenting his narrative of Tarquin throughout the rest of his tale – as a man who illegally took the throne and whose actions justifiably earned him the name Tarquin the Proud – and immediately begins to do so. Paranoid that his illegal coup will make it impossible to rule, Tarquin the Proud “put to death the leading senators” and because he “put no trust in the affection of his people, he was compelled to safeguard his authority by fear.” 32

Fear was the most powerful ally that Tarquin the Proud and his family had during their rule, which is all the more remarkable when one considers that it was a disease that infected the new royal family and initially threatened their ability to rule. Soon after they took the throne, the Tarquins were haunted by the fact that they did not legitimately earn the authority that their superbia was convinced that they were entitled to through birthright. These insecurities were akin to the furies and fueled their immoral acts. As a result, Tarquin the Proud was not confident in himself and feared the wrath of the people. Soon after assuming the throne, the Tarquin’s fear and superbia did battle and in the end superbia won out and fear was made to serve the royal family. Because of this, Tarquin the Proud sought to

31. “Now began the reign of Lucius Tarquinius, whose conduct procured him the surname Superbus, or the Proud.” Livy, I, 48.

32 Ibid., I, 49.
discredit all other Roman Latin leaders and citizens in an effort to eliminate the moral high ground that others had over them.

The Tarquin’s most effective use of fear as a weapon is displayed during the emerging conspiracy of Turnus and the other Latin leaders during a conference of Latin leaders that Tarquin called early in his kingship. At this conference, Tarquin caught wind that other leaders were angered by his *superbia* – he called the conference and failed to show up – and was rightfully fearful of their indignation. Fueled by his fear that the other leaders would rise up against him and failing to see his hypocrisy, Tarquin chose to rally other Latin leaders against the leader of the Latin town Aricia, Turnus Herdonius, by claiming that Turnus was “planning to assassinate me and the leading men in all towns of Latium. His aim is the monarchy.”

In this remarkable scene, Tarquin was able to use his fear and an example of his own actions to persuade other Latin leaders to execute his rival and, fearing the wrath of Tarquin, to submit to Rome by surrendering their armies to Tarquin.

*Superbia* itself was in complete conflict with the rules of Roman politics and, as we have established, it is from the honorable service in politics that Roman virtue is won. The *superbia* that drove Tarquin propelled him to crave an ever-increasing and disproportionate amount of power and prestige – more than he could rightfully

33. Ibid., I, 50.

34. See Livy, *History of Rome*, I,52, for story of Tarquin and the renewal of Alban treaty that resulted in a proclamation that “Latins of military age should present themselves, fully armed, on a day fixed for the purpose” at Rome.
earn – and consequently prevented him from legitimately earning Roman virtue. He sought only to empower himself and his family and felt that the Roman people were meant to serve the royal family alone.\textsuperscript{35} Therefore, conventional Roman virtue could not exist in the Rome that the Tarquins ruled because the Tarquins themselves could not earn it. Instead of being a positive trait sought by Roman leaders, traditional Roman virtue became a scourge in the Rome of the Tarquins and something that the family sought out and destroyed because it threatened their legitimacy. In doing so, they strove to create the only Rome where they could legitimately rule: one where the excessively proud deserved to hold power because the citizens could not live up to the moral standard of the times.

This \textit{superbia}-driven attitude, however, led Sextus Tarquin to rape Lucretia and ushered in the revolutionary leader Brutus and the subsequent downfall of the monarchy. Furious that his subordinate Collatinus could possess such a virtuous wife and that he could not, Sextus felt entitled to take her virtue from Lucretia by raping her and then “rode away, proud of his \textit{success}.”\textsuperscript{36}

Enter Brutus, who bursts upon the scene at the exact moment – when he and Collatinus witness Lucretia’s suicide - that Rome needed a savior of his precise nature. Brutus is defined by his extreme humbleness and complete devotion to his service to the Roman people, which he demonstrated in how he humbly lived his life

\textsuperscript{35} See Livy, \textit{History of Rome}, I,57, for a description of how Tarquin treated the Roman people like “slaves” and forced them to engage in demeaning forms of manual labor.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., I, 58.
prior to the rape of Lucretia, how he conducted himself when leading the revolution, and how he quickly convinced the Roman people that they were ready to rule themselves after the Tarquins had been overthrown. Brutus sheathed his true self in a scabbard of simple man and did not draw out his true self until Rome truly needed him. He led every facet of the revolution and was willing to go to any lengths to ensure its success, even sacrificing his own sons to see the purity of the revolution through. He demanded that the Roman people rule themselves and convinced them that they could.

On one end of the political spectrum, Tarquin’s *superbia* led him and his family to believe that they family were entitled to the rule over all aspects of Roman life as absolute monarchs because they felt that the Roman people existed to serve and protect them. On the other is Brutus, who existed solely to serve the Roman people and was willing do anything for them; he feels he exists to serve them. Brutus is defined by his humble nature as Tarquin is by his *superbia* and because of this they are the complete opposite of each other in every way. He provides much-needed balance to the Roman political arena and facilitates the demise of the monarchy. More specifically, Brutus’s humility balances Tarquin’s *superbia* and together they cancel each other out and provide a blank slate from which the Roman people can write their own destiny.

37. For the story of how Brutus’s sons were caught in a plot to restore Tarquin to the throne and Brutus subsequrntly overseeing their execution, see Livy II, 6.

38. For the story of Brutus and the oath he administered to the people of Rome, in which they swore to never again allow a king to rule Rome, see Livy II, 1.
In Livy’s collective tale of Tarquin the Proud, the fall of the Roman monarchy, and the establishment of the Republic, *superbia* has been injected into the bloodstream of the Roman monarchy and is the cause of the coup against the Tarquins. Humility is the cure to the venom of *superbia* and is administered by Brutus at the exact moment that *superbia* threatened to consume the Roman people. Without *superbia*, there is no need for the humility of Brutus. Together, Tarquin and Brutus balance each other out and allow Rome to transition to a Republic which neither is capable of leading. Tarquin is incapable of leading the Republic because he is too proud; Brutus, because he is too humble and later because he is too zealous. With the expulsion of *superbia* from the Roman political arena, the Roman people are confident enough to lead themselves within the Republic that Brutus gave them and Livy’s story comes to an end.

**Conclusion**

We have now examined the use of *superbia* by the authors and established an understanding of when they used it in their respective works. By doing so, we are now able to transition to the final chapter of this thesis where I will state whether I believe each authors respective use of the word superbia, in whichever form they chose to use it, is neutral and descriptive in nature or if there was a political bias and, if so, why that bias exists.
CHAPTER 5

NEUTRAL, DESCRIPTIVE, OR POLITICALLY BIAS? A LOOK AT THE USE OF SUPERBIA BY THE AUTHORS IN THE SELECTED WORKS

Introduction

In this, our final chapter, we will combine the information presented in this thesis and the author will state his opinion of why each author chose to use the word *superbia* in their respective works. By doing so, I will present my answers to the questions presented in first chapter – was use of the word “*superbia*” neutral and descriptive or was there a personal and political agenda at work within the respective texts – and this thesis will come to an end.

Cicero’s Use of the Word *Superbius* in *On The Manilian Law*

Cicero’s speech *On The Manilian Law* was a political speech and one that he gave on behalf of Pompey because he, Cicero, was seeking to advance his own interests. Having recently been elected to the office of praetor, a remarkable achievement for new man, or *novus homo*, Cicero knew that the office of the consulship was the next logical step and within his reach. To achieve the highest office in the Roman Republic, Cicero would have to carefully navigate the treacherous political waters and align himself with the right groups of people. To that end, he sought to attach himself to the man of the hour and the common people’s hero, Pompey, during his pursuit of the command against the war with
Mithridates. In doing so, he gave his speech on behalf of his social class, the Roman knights, and took the rare step of delivering a speech directly to the Assembly of the Roman People and not the senate. Knowing this, it is suggested that the argument and values that Cicero presented in his speech were specifically tailored to the plebeians and a reflection of their values. Cicero was telling the audience what they wanted to hear so that they would think highly of him and support him as he moved forward with his political career. As a result, his use of the word *superbius* in his argument was not only political but also persuasive in nature and a reflection of plebian values.

The fact that Cicero’s use of *superbius* was political in nature is obvious – he was delivering his speech as a politician and the topic was a political appointment— and the information previously presented in preceding chapters explained to us Cicero’s career and the importance of the war against Mithridates. What does merit further explanation, though, is the claim that Cicero tailored his speech to his audience, as this directly relates to the assertion that his use of the word *superbius* was persuasive in nature and a reflection of plebian values.

The argument that Cicero tailored his speech to his audience begins with his choice of where to deliver his speech. Typically, Roman politicians delivered their speeches in the *curia*, or senate house, and spoke directly to the senate. Cicero, however, chose to deliver his speech *On The Manilian Law* directly to the Assembly
of the People and not to the senate.\textsuperscript{1} This is a key reason for the assertion that he was tailoring his speech to the people and not to the senate. He made this fact clear in his opening lines, when he said of the Assembly that "no place, it seemed to me, lends greater dignity to the proposal of a motion, no environment is more impressive for a speech."\textsuperscript{2} He then adds to his flattery of the crowd when he said "as to the influence, I am happy to exercise it in front of the men who bestowed it upon me."\textsuperscript{3} In addition to the location where he chose to deliver the speech, the various forms of flattery that he used to appeal to the people, the fact that he was speaking of a law that was sure to pass and wildly popular with the people, and that he was a politician attempting to highlight his abilities and advance his career, Cicero makes no mention of the senate or the nobles in his speech. Taken together, these facts imply that Cicero was tailoring his speech to his audience.

Because Cicero was a politician attempting to advance himself to higher office and ingratiate himself to his audience, the manner in which he chose to make his argument and the words that he used become more important and revealing. Specifically, the arguments and words that he chose to sway his audience’s opinion can teach us much about plebian values. From Cicero’s description of Pompey, we can discern that the audience valued leaders that “possess complete integrity. He must be a man of moderation in all that he does. He has to be trustworthy; and he

\textsuperscript{1} Cicero, \textit{Selected Political Speeches}, 33.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 35.

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., 36.
has to be accessible, intelligent, and civilized as well." In addition, we learn what circumstances constitutes a declaration of war against a foreign power in the eyes of the plebeians. Specifically, Cicero stated that "the glory of Rome is at stake" and that "endangered, too, is the safety of our allies and friends" and that, finally, "solid, substantial sources of national income are also involved. If you let these go, not only will the funds needed to pay for war be lost, but your own peace-time comforts will go as well." 

As we have learned, it is during the initial phase of his argument, when he is explaining why the glory of Rome is at stake, that Cicero used superbius. It is significant that he chose to use it at this time only and that it was in reference to the importance of defending the glory of the Republic. It is noteworthy because of how he spoke of superbius in such grave terms and likened the superbius actions of the Corinthians to Mithridates' execution of eighty thousand Romans. Cicero makes it clear that superbius is a clear and lethal threat to the glory of Rome and makes this claim the center of his argument when describing why the glory of Rome must be defended. Pride, it seems, is a powerful motive for the Roman people and a driving force of their actions. It is something that they alone must be allowed to feel if they are going to successfully lord over their expansive Republic. When possessed in abundance by foreigners, it is the most lethal of threats to the glory of Rome and the Republic itself. Thus, Cicero used an example of how the people's ancestors

4. Ibid., 53.
5. Ibid., 36-37.
responded to *superbius* to motivate his audience to finish the war against Mithridates.

What is also noteworthy is when Cicero chose not to use *superbia*. He does not mention it at any other point in the speech and as such does not believe that it is a threat to the finances of the state or the people when a Roman citizen possesses it. Instead, Cicero stated that the enemy of the state’s finances is disillusioned allies, who are often on the front lines of the wars and do business with Rome because of the promises Rome made to them to ensure their security. The importance of money speaks to the value the plebeians place on their possessions and comforts they provide, for which they are willing to go to war. Additionally, Cicero does not use *superbia* when describing an ineffective commander, which he does in some detail when making his argument for why Pompey is an effective commander. Instead, Cicero offers that an ineffective commander succumbs to “greed,” “lust,” “self-indulgence,” and is a man who likes to “relax.”

Cicero’s use of the word *superbius* was political in nature because he gave his speech *On The Manilian Law* to advance his own interests and promote himself in front of the Assembly of the People. It was persuasive in nature because he was attempting to educate his audience on the importance of finishing the war with Mithridates and therefore would have used language and arguments that would have appealed to their beliefs and values. In doing so, we learn about those beliefs.

6. Ibid., 40-42.

7. Ibid., 54.
and values and, subsequently, why the use of *superbius* appealed to the plebeians' sense of pride in themselves and why *superbius* is something that the plebeians felt only Romans could feel.

**Sallust's Use of the Word *Superbia* in his *War with Jugurtha***

It is my contention that Sallust's use of the word *superbia* in his *War with Jugurtha* was not political in nature and instead was educational, instructive, and therapeutic in nature. I contend that Sallust turned to a life of a historian, and in turn wrote the *War with Jugurtha*, in an effort to serve the people of Rome by providing a moral explanation for the tumultuous times that they lived in and why the Republic was being ripped apart by civil war. Through our examination of his life, we have learned that Sallust was a failure as a politician, having been forced out of the senate once and almost a second time. He had lived an immoral life and he knew it. Knowing this, he turned to writing as a way of serving the Republic in an honorable way and redeeming himself. He wrote it to redeem his honor through the only way he knew how: service to the Roman people. His effort is akin to a convicted felon admitting his guilt, justifying it, and trying to do penance. He turned to the life of a historian to serve the Roman people and thus to gain honor for himself. As he no longer saw politics or military service as a way to do this and he was approaching the twilight of his life, he reflected on it and saw one that was without honor because he failed to adhere to the ancient Republican virtues. Instead, he became intoxicated with the moral vices that were consuming the Republic and was swept up by them. The vices had replaced the virtues of their
ancestors and had infected the entire Roman Republic, turning its moral compass on its head. The worship of those vices was not only the reason for his complete failure as a politician, but as Sallust views it also reason for the demise of the Republic. Perhaps he was bitter that the rules were no longer fair, having been disgraced through his expulsion from the senate once and almost a second time. The only reason he escaped the shame of being expelled the second time was by engaging in another shameful act and bribing Caesar. He must have felt that it was no longer possible to live as an honorable man and achieve power while doing so. As a result, honorable Roman men could no longer compete with and surpass their ancestors and, just as importantly, no longer transmit an honorable legacy to their descendants.

To a Roman novus homo like Sallust in the final years of his life, this must have been the source of tremendous concern and perhaps led him to conclude that his life was worse than a failure because he had not only failed to live up to the standards set by his ancestors but also actually disgraced their memory through his actions. Additionally, he was inhibiting the ability of his descendants to achieve honor through the service of the Republic by actively contributing to the moral and physical decline of the Republic and by passing to them the dishonor of his actions, and an immoral Republic that was in shambles. In short, he had worked to ensure that the world inherited by his descendants was an unjust one where dishonorable people were the only ones capable of achieving power.
In writing the *War with Jugurtha* and featuring the rise and infection of *superbia* so prominently, he was reaching back to his own experiences to explain both his failures and those of the Republic. His use of *superbia* was not done in a political sense but in deeply personal one and as a means to explain his failures as a public figure. It that sense, it was therapeutic in nature. Sallust himself had been arrogant and haughty in how he lived his life, most notably when he pillaged the province he was sent to govern, and as he entered the twilight of his life he wanted to know why. His writings must then have been in a way a search of self-knowledge and discovery. Republican Romans believed that the individual was an extension of the Republic and Sallust stated in his introduction that he did not believe in Fate and that men were the authors of their own destiny. He wrote:

> False is the complaint which the human race makes about its nature, namely, that it is weak and of short duration and ruled by chance rather than by prowess. On the contrary, you find, after reflection, that nothing else is greater or more outstanding, and that what human nature lacks is industriousness on man’s part rather than strength or time.⁸

By beginning his *War with Jugurtha* this way, Sallust was telling his audience that they have the ability to shape their lives and guide the Republic through its troubling time. He was seeking to understand his world and thus himself. In doing so, he was seeking to provide the greatest form of public service and thus redeem himself, his ancestors, and the honor that he had taken from his descendants.

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As a result, it is clear that Sallust’s use of the word *superbia* was not political in nature nor was it biased towards one sect of Roman society. Instead, he proposes that it was the cause for the current state of the Republic and by writing his *War with Jugurtha* he was attempting to explain to his audience when it was injected to the Republic and how it spread from the nobles to the plebeians. He chose the war against Jugurtha to explain how *superbia* had been injected into Roman society because he saw Marius’s entrance in Roman politics as the time when *superbia* passed from the nobles to the plebeians. He used his story to justify to the Romans of his time why they have lived the vice-filled lives that they did and to explain how the Republic was on the verge of being torn apart by civil war. The use of *superbia* was in a sense therapeutic in nature because it provided justification for why the Republic and Roman people, and thus himself, lived lives of vice.

In essence, Sallust was saying that the arrogant Roman people were not fated to a future of vice. By learning how *superbia* had consumed the Republic – through human choice and weakness – he was telling Rome that it could also be overcome by human choice. He is saying that their arrogant ancestors had passed their corrupt way of life onto them, as their ancestors had passed the knowledge of a virtuous way of life onto them.

Sallust does not believe in fate and does believe in redemption. He rejects the hopelessness of fate by writing the *War with Jugurtha* and makes this clear in his introduction. As a result, he does believe in redemption because it is precisely this that he is seeking for Rome and her people. That is the main reason he is writing his
*War with Jugurtha* and why he uses *superbia* so frequently – to show his fellow Romans how they arrived at their current state of affairs. He was showing how destructive *superbia* has been to the Republic and in doing so is attempting to tell his audience that, just as Romans had gotten the Republic into the current mess, his fellow Romans could get the Republic out of it. Through the educational, instructive, and therapeutic nature of Sallust’s use of *superbia* in his *War with Jugurtha*, he was attempting to plant the seeds of redemption for himself, the Roman people, and the Republic.

**Livy’s Use of the Word *Superbus* in his tale of Tarquin the Proud**

Livy’s use of the word *superbus* in his story of the fall of the Roman monarchy was moral in nature and subsequently intended to be warning to both the Roman citizens and political leaders of his time. While not politically charged, it was in part aimed in the direction of the political class of the emerging Roman Empire. By using it as the impetus for the immoral actions of Tarquin the Proud, which in turn legitimized the actions that Brutus took to justifiably overthrow him, *superbus* was an avatar from which Livy offered a moral and political lesson. It was an aptly-timed warning of what can happen to an absolute ruler of Rome, and the Roman people, when that ruler seeks and achieves more power than any individual should rightfully claim. Given that Augustus had only recently cemented his authority as the first absolute ruler of Rome since Tarquin the Proud fell, the nervous Roman

9. While Rome certainly had been temporarily ruled by a dictator at points of crisis during the Republican age, dictators either voluntarily surrendered their powers like or, as was the case
world anxiously awaited signs of how Augustus would exercise his incredible power. Through his story of the last king of Rome and how he brought the Roman people to their knees because his *superbus*-fueled ego sought too much glory for himself, it is fitting that Livy would use his education and abilities to provide a warning of how an overly proud absolute ruler ascends to power and exercises his authority.

While Livy did not conjure up the moniker of Tarquinius Superbus, or Tarquin the Proud, it is fair to say that he did have to provide the details to tell the story of the fall of the monarchy and therefore had creative license to tell the story in most any manner he saw fit. Because he was writing in some five hundred years after the events described had taken place, it is accepted by modern scholars that Livy was not able to rely on any primary sources. When writing his *Histories* and retelling the stories of Roman history, Livy was following the method of the great Greek historian Thucydides. “It was one of the beliefs of the ancient world, first expressed by Thucydides, that human nature remains the same and, since men do the things that they do because they are the kind of people that they are, it was reasonable to expect that history would repeat itself in the past as well as in the future.”10 This method is how ancient Greek and Roman historians writing about events that took places centuries earlier were able to write speeches and verbal

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dialogue for the men and woman they were writing about. As long as historians like Livy understood human nature, which the highly educated Livy undoubtedly felt that he did, the precedent of the time accepted and even demanded that he confidently write dialogue for his characters.

While telling his story of Tarquin, Livy was adhering to his pledge in the beginning of his work when he wrote that he wanted his readers to give close attention to Roman history and “what life and morals were like...morals first gave way, as it were done, then sank lower and lower...which has endures us to our present time, when we can endure neither our vices nor their cure.”\(^{11}\) He also was remaining true to his expression that the study of history afforded the reader to learn from “lessons of every kind of experience set forth” so that “you may choose for yourself and for your own state what to imitate, from these mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result.” This is useful because it allows the reader to “find for yourself and for your country both example and warnings; fine things to take as models, base things, rotten through and through, to avoid.”\(^{12}\) These pledges are of particular importance when considering the purpose of his story of Tarquin and when examining his use of *superbus* because they enlighten us to Livy’s thought process and ultimate aim when writing his story.

With our exposure to the above lines and our understanding of the chaos Rome experienced just before and during Livy’s lifetime, along with the knowledge

\(^{11}\) Ibid., I, 9.\(^{12}\) Ibid., I, 10.
that Livy was adhering to the depiction of history first used by Thucydides, our
understanding of why Livy’s use of superbus was moral in nature and subsequently
intended to be a warning to both the Roman citizens and political leaders of his time
becomes more clear.

As a culture that revered its ancestors and their customs, the civil war that
had engulfed the Roman world for over two generations would have caused the
Roman people to question everything they believed in. While they felt that the
cause of their political troubles and the subsequent civil war ultimately lay in the
demise of their morals, the collapse of their Republic would have created deep
unease within society and made the future appear shrouded in mystery. Livy,
however, sought to remind his fellow Romans that they themselves were masters of
their futures and collective fate and that they could look to the past as a model from
which they could draw the blueprints of the Rome that they wanted to live in.

While looking into that future few areas would have been of greater concern
than the actions of Augustus, both because of the manner in which he had come into
power and because of the unprecedented amount of authority he had over the
Roman world. If the past was their guide to the future, then there was no greater
story to learn from than the fall of the last monarch of Rome, Tarquin the Proud,
who had a level of power comparable to that which Augustus currently possessed.
And since Livy believed that human nature was consistent and therefore predicable,
he would have felt that the Roman people, to include the plebians, nobles, and
Augustus himself, could learn from the story of Tarquin. Thus, while the very fabric
of the story was moral in nature, it had to be directed at the people at the political leaders of Livy’s time.

By using *superbia* as the cause for Tarquin’s immoral and illegal actions, which combined justified the efforts of Brutus to oust the king, Livy was not only satisfying the basic requirement of the narrative as it had been passed down to his time – that Tarquin was proud and overthrown by Brutus – he was also providing his fellow Romans with the characteristics and habits of a Roman tyrant. In doing so, Livy demonstrates what *superbia* could look like in an absolute leader and essentially provides the symptoms of the disease to the Roman people. Also, he is providing it to Augustus and likely hoped that the new leader of the Roman world would learn from the mistakes of Tarquin and avoid the mistakes that led to his justifiable, and even required, overthrow.

While Livy’s use of *superbia* was a reminder of what immoral activity looked like in an absolute leader of Rome, it was also a warning to both the people of Rome and its political leaders. Because all Roman political issues were moral in nature and Livy believed that they were the masters of their fate, Livy used the story of Tarquin the Proud to instruct his fellow Romans on what *superbia* does to a leader and also how it oppresses the Roman people. In doing so, he sought to instruct the people on how to identify the symptoms of *superbia* and to warn Augustus of what can legally happen to him if he were to succumb to it.

**Conclusion**
In this thesis, we have learned why the Late Roman Republic was among the most chaotic and consequential times in human history. Afforded the clarity that only centuries of study can provide, we were able to see how the fall of Carthage, the rule of Marius and his radical reorganization of the Roman army, the dictatorships of Sulla and Caesar, and the remarkable expansion of the Republic and the resulting influx of wealth combined together to tear apart the social and political fabric of the Roman Republic. And while Augustus eventually emerged as the man both willing and able to re-stitch the Roman world, he did so as its first Emperor and after nearly a century of civil wars had ensured the mortal end of the Roman Republic and the establishment of the Roman Empire.

To the Romans that lived during that tumultuous last century of the Republic, the struggles and near-constant civil wars that dominated their lives were a source of tremendous shame and confusion. As a society that venerated the values and examples of their ancestors above all else, the knowledge that they were unable to adhere to those ancient customs and subsequently pass on a better Republic to their descendants demanded the attention of their most celebrated minds. This, as we have learned, was because Romans viewed their society as a reflection of their political beliefs and their political beliefs were a reflection of their morality.

Taking all of the above facts together - the demise of the Republic, the shame that the Romans felt, and the search for exactly why this was happening to them – I feel that the explosion of the use of the word superbia was a natural result precisely because the Roman of the Late Republic had been both excessively proud and
arrogant. I agree with Sallust that it likely began with the fall of Carthage, later spreading from the nobles to the plebs after Marius reorganized the army, and with Livy that future Romans, both leaders and plebs, needed to be aware what *superbia* was capable of when practiced by Romans. Did the Romans of the Empire heed to warnings of Cicero, Sallust, and Livy? Was *superbia* also a key reason for the fall of the Empire? These important questions are for future works to consider.
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