

*SUBERAT IMAGO SYLLII ITALICI... :**



Pomponio Leto and fifteenth-century

Lives of Silius Italicus

By Frances Muecke

This paper examines the construction of a Life of Silius Italicus in the milieu of the Roman Studium from c. 1467–1483, and in the context of the intense contemporary interest in exegesis of Silius and Martial. Some of the Lives discussed demonstrate close connections between their authors – Giulio Pomponio Leto, Domizio Calderini and Pietro Marso. Also influential was the first printed Life, of uncertain authorship. Leto's and Calderini's Lives, preserved in dictata, to a certain extent remain sketches, but Marso, in the first printed commentary, attempts not only to synthesize the sources but also to compose a literary biography.

For all intents and purposes, before the rediscovery by Poggio in 1417 of the text of the *Punica*, the epic poet Silius Italicus did not exist.¹ The construction of his Life therefore was a task shared by a number of notable figures of the fifteenth century. In the 1460s and 70s Pomponio Leto, following Pietro Odo, did a great deal to bring Silius to the fore at Rome. The honour of the first complete commentary, however, goes to his colleague Domizio Calderini and of the first published commentary to their common student Pietro Marso, both of whom prefaced their commentaries with Lives.² I shall therefore treat the assembling of the facts of the Life as a virtual collaboration, especially as the two surviving Lives securely attributable to Pomponio Leto come from student *dictata*.

* Giraldis 1545, 527.

¹ Reeve 1983 (2); cp. Abbamonte 1997, 9–10.

² See Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976. If Odo was responsible for a Life it has disappeared with the outer sheet of the first fascicle of the manuscript containing his notes for a commentary (BAV, Vat. lat. 2779), *ibid.*, 370. Calderini's *Life of Silius Italicus* has been known since a version of Calderini's Commentary on Silius Italicus was identified in Harvard's Houghton Library in 2006. See Muecke & Dunston 2011, 75–76, and, with corrections, below; Muecke 2010, 419–421.

As is the case with other ancient authors, the fifteenth-century Lives of Silius we have were written either as contributions to literary history, on the model of Suetonius' *De poetis*, or as prefaces or epilogues to texts in manuscript, or print, or to commentaries, following the ancient and medieval tradition of the *accessus ad auctores*.³ The earliest surviving Life is that of Sicco Polento in the revised version of his *Scriptorum Illustrium Latinae linguae libri XVIII*.⁴ This Life appears to be representative of the state of knowledge (c. 1437), before the wider dissemination of the text itself, which Sicco knew of, but had probably not seen.⁵ Not that the *Punica* itself adds any facts to the biography,⁶ though some parts of it, such as the praise of Cicero in Book 8 (405–411), can be read as confirming the account of Silius that Pliny the Younger gives in his “death notice” addressed to Caninius Rufus (*epist.* 3,7).⁷ The crucial first step in the construction of the biography was the identification of Pliny's Silius Italicus, a writer of *carmina*, with the epic poet Silius.⁸ This equation, attested first by Sicco, depended not only on the discovery of the *Punica*, but also on the contemporary dissemination of texts of Pliny's *Letters*.⁹ Pliny's letter, grudging about the epic, which he does not even name, but rich in information about Silius' career and interests, henceforth became the main quarry for subsequent Lives, with the necessary rearrangement, as we shall see. A Life should begin with the parents and place of birth, whereas Pliny's letter begins with the place and cause of death and has nothing about Silius' origins.¹⁰ Sicco rephrased and paraphrased Pliny, adding historical detail for the benefit of his readers, and a slightly moralising tone, which nevertheless conveys more approval than Pliny. Later authors were more willing to quote from Pliny verbatim.

³ See Rizzo 1978, 765 n. 2.

⁴ Polento 1928, 121–122.

⁵ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 361.

⁶ For these see Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 341–344; McDermott & Orentzel 1977, 24–27; Augoustakis 2010 (1), 5–6.

⁷ Cp. Calderini's commentary ad 8,411: “Poeta plures versus in honorem Ciceronis dixit, quoniam prima aetate instituto Ciceroniano causas oravit et eius praedium possidebat una cum Virgiliano” (The poet said several verses in honour of Cicero, since in his youth in the manner of Cicero he made speeches in court and he used to own his farm along with Virgil's), Muecke & Dunston 2011, 492.

⁸ In the manuscripts and commentaries his name appears (as Silius Italicus) in a variety of spellings: Syllius, Sillus, Scyllius.

⁹ In manuscripts of these from the 1450s and 1460s the discovery of Silius Italicus is mentioned in marginal notes, Mynors 1963, xii n. 1.

¹⁰ Lambinus in his *Life of Lucretius* (1570) summarized the topics as: “[...] patria, genus, vitae studium, ingenium, mortis genus et tempus [...]” (fatherland, descent, profession, natural talent, kind of death and its time), Solaro 2000, 71; cp. Hägg 2012.

Before embarking on discussion of the sources and some of the details of the various Lives, I shall quickly survey those associated with Pomponio Leto.¹¹ Two surviving commentaries recorded by students begin with Lives. One dated 1467–1468 is included in Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 8413 fol. 204r, the other by a student in Florence, Bibl. Laur. plut. 52.8, fol. 105r.¹² Both of these manuscripts are miscellanies. The first contains *inter alia* a student's notes from a private course given by Leto in Venice (*Punica* 1,1-89 and 3, 311-606), while the second includes longer portions of a Pomponian commentary from a slightly later date (*Punica* 1,9–4,562). BAV, Borg. lat. 417 (c. 1470), which has thick autograph notes by Leto for the earlier books of the poem, is defective until Sil. 3,531. It may have begun with a Life. The second printed edition of the *Punica* (Rome 1471 ISTC is00504000), “edited” by Leto, contains a brief Life. Leto's interest in Silius and his Life persisted later in his career. Vatican Inc. I 4 is a copy of the *editio princeps* (Rome, 1471 ISTC is00503000), into which readings and notes from Pietro Marso's printed commentary (first edition 1483 ISTC is00507000) have been copied in a hand that appears to be that of Leto.¹³ Between folios 9 and 10 were inserted 2 manuscript folios, in the same hand. They contain a transcription of the Pliny letter¹⁴ as well as of five of the six epigrams in which Martial mentions Silius or his family,¹⁵ with occasionally useful marginal comments.

The next step in the story of the assembling of materials for the Life was in fact the bringing together of the Pliny letter and the Martial epigrams, themselves as it were “new” sources. Pliny's *Epistles* began to circulate more widely in Italy after the beginning of the fourteenth century,¹⁶ and Martial, while available to a certain extent in the Middle Ages, does not seem to have had an ancient or medieval commentary tradition.¹⁷ In the 1460s and 1470s, in the Roman *Studium*, there was intense and competitive interpretation of these Silver Age authors. But earlier than this, the combination of Pliny and Martial on Silius is seen in rudimentary Lives in a commentary attributed to “Anonymus B” and recorded in BAV, Urb. lat 358 fol.

¹¹ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 361–364.

¹² Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 374–375, 378; Delz 1966; Dunston 1967.

¹³ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 376–377; Muecke 2005 (2).

¹⁴ Pliny's letter to Cornelius Priscus on the death of Martial (*epist.* 3,21) is printed after the *Life of Martial* in Calderini's Martial commentary, Hausmann 1980, 263.

¹⁵ MART. 4,14; 7,63; 8,66; 9,86; 11,48; 11,50 (the other is 6,64). See Nauta 2002, 148–150.

¹⁶ For example, in 1395 Coluccio Salutati praised Geri d'Arezzo (c. 1270 – ante 1339) for having used Pliny the Younger as a model for letter-writing, Witt 2003, 224–226; cp. Reynolds 1983 (1).

¹⁷ Hausmann 1980, 250; Reeve 1983 (1).

4 and Vat. lat. 3301 fol. 1.¹⁸ In contrast to Pliny, Martial praises Silius fulsomely as an epic poet (4,14; 7,63),¹⁹ and, with hindsight, it can be inferred from 4,14,1–5 that he composed an epic on the Punic wars.²⁰ References to the consulship of Silius' elder son (8,66,4, if correctly read), and the death of his younger (9,86), confirm information in Pliny, and add the name of the younger, Severus. Pliny mentioned the ownership of numerous villas. Martial (11,48; 50) tells us that one of these belonged to Cicero, and that Silius owned the tomb of Virgil, which, according to Pliny, he treated as a temple.²¹

In this paper my main focus will be the three versions of the *Vita* of Silius Italicus coming from sources close to Pomponio Leto and dating from around the same time (1467–1471). During the same period, for an autumn and winter (1469–1470), Pomponio Leto and Niccolò Perotti worked together on the exegesis of Martial.²² Since Martial became an indispensable source for the Lives, we cannot neglect contemporary interpretation of Martial, soon to become a battleground involving Perotti, Domizio Calderini and others.²³ Accordingly, we shall observe the Lives by Domizio Calderini and Pietro Marso giving more space and weight to what can be elicited from Martial.

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My earliest *Vita*, now in the manuscript in Paris mentioned above, was taken down by Pietro di Celano when, in exile in Venice, he attended a course given by Pomponio Leto.²⁴ The Life is embedded in a sort of *accessus* which deals with the history of epic in Rome in a way that suggests

¹⁸ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 366.

¹⁹ As Domizio Calderini says in his Life (below): “summis ubique effert laudibus” (everywhere he exalts him with the utmost praise).

²⁰ Calderini in his commentary on Martial *ad loc.* does not explicitly refer to the *Punica*. On the Commentary on Martial see Dunston 1968, 111–123; *Bibl. Med. Laur*, Laur. 53.33 (*L*) must be consulted, as well as the first Roman (1474 ISTC ic00036000) and Venetian editions (1474 ISTC ic00037000).

²¹ Cp. Leto's *Life of Statius* “unde cognoscimus Virgilii [...] sepulchrum coluisse” (from which we learn he worshipped Virgil's tomb); cp. *STAT. silv.* 4,4,54 with Calderini's commentary *ad loc.*: “qui erat in Neapolitano et possidebatur a Sylio poeta” (which was on his Neapolitan estate and owned by the poet Silius). See Brugnoli 1990, 578 on the question of whether Silius owned the tomb and Trapp 1988, 784–785 on visits to the tomb by Petrarch, Boccaccio and Biondo. For a recent edition Pomponio's *Life of Statius* see: Pomponius Laetus, *Papinii Statii vita*, ed. Marianne Pade, *Repertorium Pomponianum*, URL: www.repertoriumpomponianum.it/textus/leto_vita_statii.htm, (visited on 3/8/2014).

²² This collaboration is discussed in Johann Ramminger's article in this volume: “Perotti's *Life of Martial* and its literary context”.

²³ Campanelli 2001, 13–20.

²⁴ For the little that is known about Pietro di Celano see Delz 1966, 418–420.

Pietro did not manage to catch accurately everything he heard. Similar lapses occur in the Life. What seem to be the teacher's explanatory comments or off-the-cuff remarks have been incorporated into it, possibly at the expense of the main point. For example, the definition of the illness (*clavus*) may have displaced something more explicit on how that led to Silius' death. There are errors and infelicities in the Latin (especially the anacoluthon in the opening sentence) and a few oddities in the information, some of which we shall discuss below (e.g. the second consulship). There is some logic to the ordering of the material. As is appropriate for the genre, the birth and its date, general family information and early education come first, and the deaths of Silius himself and his son towards the end. Several of Pliny's more negative comments survive in this Life alone: the belief that he was a *delator* (an informer) and the attribution of *emacitas* (a mania for buying). A further comment in the same vein, "adamatisque novis, priores negligebat" (falling in love with the new, he neglected the old), is not quoted again until the Life by Pietro Crinito (1505).²⁵ Later, however, Pomponio Leto did note this in the margin of his transcription of the Pliny letter: "Nimis emax et luxuriosus Silius" (over indulgent in buying and in pleasure).²⁶

1. Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 8413 fol. 204

[...] ²⁷ An Silius natus sub fine principatus Tiberii²⁸ e gente Siliorum primis annis pedestri oratione post sumpta coniuge suscepit filium et postea Silium Severum.²⁹ et salutabatur lectulo propterea quod erat delicatissimus.³⁰ nec edebat carmina nisi adhibito aliorum consilio.³¹ Villam quam habuit Virgilius et quam habuit Cicero maxime possedit³² quae appellata est Academia. Unde extat opus illud:³³ et multas alias villas in Campania et emacitate studuit emere³⁴ quas possederant prestantissimi viri. Coluit statuam Virgilio. Solebat et adire monumentum Virgilio tamquam templum.³⁵ Lesit famam sub Nerone propterea quod existimatus fuit delator quod devicit tempore

²⁵ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 362–363; Crinitus 1543, 491–493.

²⁶ BAV, Inc. I 4 unnumbered folio.

²⁷ The remarks on poetry and other poets that precede and follow the Life are printed in Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976 377–378. I have normalized capitalization.

²⁸ An inference from the age at death. McDermott & Orentzel 1977, 24 put the date of birth around AD 28. Tiberius died AD 37.

²⁹ The name of the younger son comes from MART. 9,86,1.

³⁰ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,4; cp. 9.

³¹ Id. *epist.* 3,7,5.

³² MART. 11,48; cp. *maxime frequentabat* in Life 2.

³³ PLIN. *nat.* 31,6: *ibi compositis voluminibus eiusdem nominis* (i.e. *Academica*).

³⁴ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Vitellii³⁶ et Galbae, qui insequabantur amicos Neronis. In senectute secessit in Campania³⁷ emptis novis villis contemnebat³⁸ vetustas.³⁹ Quoniam non fuit revocatus in electione Traiani⁴⁰ annotatum fuit, unde natum proverbium Traiane regnis [*lege -as?*] non revocatis civibus.⁴¹ Ultimus consul constitutus a Nerone⁴² in secundo consulatu.⁴³ *Clavus* est morbus perforans manus et pedes; si in aliquem inderit [*lege invaserit?*] evadere non potuit ut ait Cor. Celsus:⁴⁴ hoc morbo laboravit Silius post LXV annos quem constanter tulit:⁴⁵ et ante quam decederet vidit filium primum consularem, Severum vero ante mortem suam vidit mortuum.⁴⁶ Cuius mortem conquestus est Martialis endecasyllabo carmine.⁴⁷ composuit et versu et prosa. Sed tantum extat hoc opus. [...]

(Or⁴⁸ Silius was born just before the end of Tiberius' principate from the family of the Sili. In his first years he engaged in prose oratory. Later he took a wife and produced a son and afterwards Silius Severus. And he received visits on his couch because he was very soft. He did not publish his poetry unless encouraged by the opinion of others. He owned the villa which Virgil had and especially the one Cicero had, called "Academia" (that work comes from there), and many other villas in Campania and out of a mania for buying he was keen to buy ones the most illustrious men had owned. He worshipped Virgil's statue and used to visit Virgil's tomb as though it were a shrine. In Nero's time he damaged his reputation because he was considered to be an informer. He overcame this in the time of Vitellius and Galba who censured Nero's friends. In his old age he retired in Campania and when he had bought new villas he despised the old. Since he was not recalled on the election of Trajan it was observed, whence came the proverb "Trajan, you rule [?] but not after recalling citizens". In his second consulship he was the last consul instituted by Nero. *Clavus* is an illness making holes in the hands and feet. If it attacked [?] anyone, he could not easily escape, as Cornelius Celsus says. Silius suffered from this disease which

³⁶ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,3.

³⁷ *Campanea cod.*

³⁸ *contendebat cod.*

³⁹ *Id. epist.* 3,7,6.

⁴⁰ Cp. PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,6.

⁴¹ I cannot explain this.

⁴² Cp. *Id. epist.* 3,7,10.

⁴³ The only consulship now known is that of AD 68.

⁴⁴ CELS. 5,28,14?

⁴⁵ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,1, 9.

⁴⁶ *Id. epist.* 3,7,2.

⁴⁷ MART. 9,86 (in elegiacs).

⁴⁸ The reading is clear but not its meaning.

he bore with tranquillity from the age of 65. Before he died he saw his first son a consul and before his own death that of Severus, whose death Martial lamented in a poem in hendecasyllables. He composed in both verse and prose. But only this work survives.)

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We now turn to the Life from the Pomponian *dictata* from about 1470 in the Florence manuscript. These *dictata* are a fair copy written by a scribe who seems to have had a limited understanding of his material, judging by the mistakes made in the Life. This Life is comparable to the first, and, apart from some fanciful ideas about the parents at the beginning, reproduces Pliny more accurately. It too rearranges the Plinian material in a less than logical manner, ending, for example, with the ill fame belonging to the Neronian period and the recovery from it, but putting the material on the death together near the beginning. Some family names are offered without very good evidence, perhaps under pressure of generic expectations.⁴⁹ There is no ancient source for “Fulvia”, or for the *praenomen* “Publius” given to the older son.⁵⁰

2. Florence, Bibl. Laur. plut. 52.8 fol. 105r

Silius patre Silio viro consulari natus⁵¹ sub Tyberio Germanico imperatore extitit matre Fulvia.⁵² Filios duos habuit Severum⁵³ et P. [*cod. post correcturam*; P. et *ante correcturam*] Silium.⁵⁴ Silius maior natu fuit. Severum⁵⁵ natu minorem amisit, Silium [*cod. post correcturam*; Silvium *cod. ante correcturam*] virum consulare moriens reliquit.⁵⁶ Silius pater insanabili morbo i.e. clavo periit annum aetatis agens .V. et .LXX.⁵⁷ A Nerone consulatum accepit, isque postremus omnium qui creati sunt consul decessit.⁵⁸ Causas egit et quidem opulenter.⁵⁹ In

⁴⁹ Cp. Pomponio Leto’s Lives of Statius and Seneca.

⁵⁰ Perhaps from the P. Silius Nerva (consul-designate AD 48) famous for his “marriage” with Messalina (Suet. *Claud.* 26, Tac. *ann.* 10,12,1). Calderini, however, knows enough to distinguish, at the beginning of his Life, that Silius from Silius Italicus père, Muecke & Dunston 2011, 75 and below.

⁵¹ An incorrect inference, as he was a *nouus homo*.

⁵² There is no ancient evidence for this name. Could there be some confusion with SHA *Severus* 1,2 (*mater Fulvia Pia*) or the *Vita Persi* attributed to M. Valerius Probus?

⁵³ MART. 9,86,1.

⁵⁴ The elder son of Silius Italicus is generally considered to be L. Silius Decianus, suffect in AD 94.

⁵⁵ MART. 9,86,1.

⁵⁶ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,2.

⁵⁷ *Id. epist.* 3,7,9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Neapolitano suo obiit.⁶⁰ Multum ubique librorum [laborum *cod.*], multum imaginum, multum statuarumque habuit quas reverebatur.⁶¹ Virgilii imaginem prae ceteris colebat, cuius natale[m] non minus religiose quam suum celebrabat Neapoli maxime ubi monumentum eius erat, ut templum adire solebat.⁶² Villam Ciceronis Academiam Puteolanam [Academicam Putedanam *cod.*]⁶³ maxime frequentabat et Virgilii, emptas enim has habebat.⁶⁴ Delicato magis corpore quam infirmo fuit.⁶⁵ Hoc consule Nero obiit.⁶⁶ Sub Nerone famam laesit; in Vitellii amicitia se sapienter et comiter [communem *cod.*] gessit. Ex proconsulatu Asiae gloriam reportavit.⁶⁷

(Silius was born to his father Silius, a man of consular status, and his mother Fulvia, in the time of the emperor Tiberius Germanicus. He had two sons, Servius and Publius Silius. Silius was the elder. He lost Severus, the younger. When he died he left behind Silius, as an ex-consul. Silius (the father) died of an incurable tumour, aged 75. He got a consulship from Nero, and he passed away as the last consul of all who were made consul by him. He pleaded cases and indeed richly. He died on his Neapolitan estate. Everywhere he had an abundance of books, an abundance of portrait busts, an abundance of statues, to which he paid honour. Before all others he worshipped Virgil's portrait and he used to celebrate his birthday more devotedly than his own, especially at Naples where his tomb was, he used to visit it as though it were a shrine. He spent much time at Cicero's villa at Puteoli, the Academia, and that of Virgil, for he had bought them. His physique was more soft than weak. Nero died when he was consul. In Nero's time he damaged his reputation. As Vitellius' friend he behaved wisely and sociably. He came back from his proconsulship in Asia covered with glory.)

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In their article on Silius Italicus, Bassett, Dunston and Delz regard the authorship of our next Life, the first to be printed, as “uncertain”, because they

⁵⁹ Cp. MART. 7,63,6–8.

⁶⁰ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,1.

⁶¹ *Id. epist.* 3,7,8.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Cp. PLIN. *nat.* 31,6. This villa of Cicero's is now thought to have been the *Cumanum* (D'Arms 1970, 198–200).

⁶⁴ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,8, MART. 11,48.

⁶⁵ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,9.

⁶⁶ *Id. epist.* 3,7,10.

⁶⁷ *Id. epist.* 3,7,2.

suspect that at least one of the two existing manuscript versions may be earlier than the printed edition. One is found in Florence, Naz. II X 43 (fol. 138v), in which “the last scholar to whom something is assigned before the Silian item is Guarino Veronese”. He died in 1460. The other is in Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 10806 (fol. 49), where “the last scholar to whom something is assigned before the life of Silius is Angelo Tifernate”.⁶⁸ As he was active 1474–1491, this would suggest a date after that of the printed edition. It is not unusual to find manuscript copies of Lives from printed editions. However that may be, simply by being in one of the early printed texts (there is no Life in the *editio princeps*) the unattributed Life gained circulation and, as it is immediately followed by the colophon mentioning his name, it would have been associated with Pomponio Leto. When Marso came to compose his Life he had it before him. Not so the unknown editor of the Parma edition of 1481, who adapted Sicco Polento’s Life.⁶⁹ This is strange as there are aspects of the text of this edition that betray acquaintance with Calderini’s work, and scholarly developments in Rome.⁷⁰ Perhaps Sicco’s Life was supplied by the printer.

3. Rome: Printer of Silius Italicus, between 26 Apr. and Aug. 1471, Vatican City, BAV Inc. III. 4, fol. 180v

Syllius Italicus, cuius Maiores Italica hispanie urbe orti fuere, prima Etate declamavit. Mox foro vacavit.⁷¹ Inter primores urbis sine potentia, Sine inuidia fuit. Salutabatur et visitabatur.⁷² Auspiciis eius consulatus caede Neronis orbis libertatem cepisse visus est.⁷³ In villis suis inter quas & Ciceronis Tusculanum & Virgilii Neapolitanum⁷⁴ multum librorum ac statuarum possedit. Maronis sepulcrum ut sacrosantum adire solebat. Cuius imaginem venerabatur ante omnes & Natalem religiosius quam suum celebrabat.⁷⁵ Emeritam senectutem in ocio campano musis tradidit.⁷⁶ Bellum Punicum Secundum carmine scripsit.⁷⁷ Severum minorem ex liberis dolore inexplicabili tumulavit.

⁶⁸ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 361.

⁶⁹ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 361. It was copied from there by the scribe of Florence, Bibl. Laur., Laur plut. 37.14 (fols. 176–177). Similarly the *Life of Sallust* in Squarzaficus 1478 was based on Sicco Polento’s.

⁷⁰ On the Parma edition see Muecke 2005 (1), 53, 61, 64.

⁷¹ Cp. MART. 7,63,5–6; PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,6?

⁷² *Id. epist.* 3,7,4.

⁷³ *Id. epist.* 3,7,9–10; MART. 7,63,9–10.

⁷⁴ Cp. MART. 11,48; DON. *vita Verg.* 13.

⁷⁵ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,8.

⁷⁶ *Id. epist.* 3,7,6, MART. 7,63,11.

⁷⁷ Cp. MART. 4,14,1–5.

Sillium maiorem natu consularem reliquit.⁷⁸ Tedio insanabilis clavi In Neapolitano abstinentia cibi uita functus est,⁷⁹ An. agens .Lxx.⁸⁰

(Silius Italicus, whose forefathers came from the Spanish city Italica, in his youth practised oratory. Presently he freed himself from the courts. Among the city's foremost men he was without power, without ill will. He was greeted and visited. Under the auspices of his consulship it appeared that the world obtained freedom by the killing of Nero. In his villas, among which were both Cicero's Tusculan estate and Virgil's Neapolitan, he owned an abundance of books and statues. He used to visit Maro's tomb as though it were sacred. He revered his portrait before all and celebrated his birthday more devotedly than his own. In his leisure in Campania he devoted his old age in retirement to poetry. He wrote a poem on the second Punic war. He buried Severus, his younger son, with inexpressible grief. He left behind Silius, his older son, as an ex-consul. Through disgust with an incurable tumour he ended his life on his Neapolitan estate by starving himself. He was 70.)

In this brief and lapidary Life information given by Pliny is rearranged to follow a chronological order, from youth to retirement to death. But while a temporal order of events is suggested, there is hardly any attempt to situate Silius historically, Nero being the only emperor mentioned. The rather negative account Pliny gives of Silius' early career in the courts, with the rumour that he was a *delator*, is drastically toned down. For the most part the Life is closely based on the Pliny letter but it also contains elements not from Pliny,⁸¹ some of which also present differences from the Pomponian Lives we have examined, differences that may suggest that this Life is not by Pomponio Leto. The first of these is the explanation of the cognomen *Italicus*, that is, that the poet's forebears came from the Spanish city Italica.⁸² This point, for which we can find no earlier source, is included or discussed subsequently by Calderini, Marso, Raffaele Maffei of Volterra, Ambrosio [de] Victoria, Pietro Crinito and Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, to go no further.⁸³ Another difference is the claim that Silius owned Cicero's Tusculan villa and Vergil's villa at Naples. As Martial in 11,48 and 50 did not specify which of Cicero's several villas Silius owned, the issue became one

⁷⁸ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,2; MART 9,86,1.

⁷⁹ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,1–2.

⁸⁰ *Id. epist.* 3,7,9 (aged 75).

⁸¹ The names of the sons and the mention of the *Punicum*.

⁸² Campbell 1936; Vessey 1984.

⁸³ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 362–364, cp. 342. The Spanish Ambrosio [de] Victoria (Ambrosius Nicander) was the only biographer to claim that Silius was born in Spain, Nicander 1515, 2v: “Nascitur in Italica”.

for speculation in the Lives, the consensus developing that it must have been one in Campania,⁸⁴ not in the *colli Romani*. For Marso it was the Formianum *inprimis*,⁸⁵ and, though Calderini ignores the question in his Life, in his commentary on Mart. 11,48 he brings in the passage of Pliny the Elder on Cicero's villa named the Academia, which the encyclopaedist says was near Puteoli (*nat.* 31,6). As we have seen, Pomponio Leto, drawing on this same passage, plumps for the Academia. Cicero's villa at Tusculum, offered by this Life, was one of his better known, bought in 68 BC and used as the setting for his *Tusculan Disputations*.⁸⁶ There is nothing, however, to associate it with Silius. Another difference, though this may simply be a slip, is the age at death – 70. More significant is the lesser interest in Silius' political career, reduced to the coincidence of his consulship with Nero's death in AD 68: "Auspiciis eius consulatus caede Neronis orbis libertatem cepisse visus est".⁸⁷ The assertion that this "freed the world" seems to come from Mart. 7,63,9–10: "postquam bis senis ingentem fascibus annum/rexerat adserto qui sacer orbe fuit" (after with twelve fasces he had presided over the momentous year which was sacred by the liberation of the world). Contemporary commentaries on Martial explain that *adserto* means *liberato*. Pomponio Leto in London, BL, King's 32 fol. 83 says "asserto id est liberato orbe"⁸⁸ and, slightly later, Calderini ad loc. "quia tanto tyranno liberatus est totus orbis".⁸⁹

* * *

In analysing these three Lives we have identified the sources, and especially the details from Martial that are woven into the underlying base, Pliny's letter. But rarely is there an acknowledgement that these are the sources being used. Calderini's approach, in the Life that accompanies the student notes from his commentary in a copy of the second Roman edition of 1471, is quite different. He acknowledges Pliny at the point where he begins to use him⁹⁰ and he quotes whole passages explicitly from Martial where they are relevant. Strikingly, he reports on his search for new sources to supplement

⁸⁴ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 343: "maybe Cicero's Cumanum", cp. D'Arms 1970, 198–200; Sherwin-White 1966, 228 on "plures isdem in locis villas possidebat" (PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,8): "All presumably in Campania".

⁸⁵ He is followed by Raffaele Maffei (1st ed. Rome 1506), Volterranus 1603, Book XIX col. 706.

⁸⁶ It also had a part named "Academia" (CIC. *Tusc.* 2,9).

⁸⁷ *caedes* is a strange word to use for Nero's suicide (SUET. *Nero* 49,3).

⁸⁸ Dated 1469–1470. See Pade 2008.

⁸⁹ I cite here and subsequently from the Roman edition dated 22 March 1474 (BAV, Vat. Inc. Ross. 1133, ISTC ic00036000).

⁹⁰ As does Sicco.

those already known, adding a good new reference, Tacitus hist. 3,65,2 on Silius' presence at a meeting between Vitellius and Flavius Sabinus, but also a bad one. In our edition of Calderini's commentary I did not realise that, when he mentioned a consulship with a certain "Aethicus" as colleague, he was referring to Tacitus ann. 15,48, on the consulship of Publius Silius Nerva and Atticus Vestinus at the beginning AD 65, the year of the Pisonian conspiracy, and so wrongly identifying Silius Nerva with Silius Italicus, a connection he was also led to make in his commentary on Mart. 7,63,8: "eo anno quo Nero interfectus est Silius consulatum gerebat collega Attico, ut scribit Tacitus" (in the year in which Nero was killed Silius held a consulship with Atticus as colleague, as Tacitus writes). Later, Pomponio too writes that the year of the consulship of Silius Nerva and Atticus Vestinus was the year of Nero's death (AD 68), in his marginal note on Mart. 7,63,9–10 in Vatican Inc. 1.4: "Nero periit Silio et Attico Coss.". It was rather the year of the poet Lucan's death (AD 65), as given in Vacca's life: "periitque pridie Kal. Maias Attico Vestino et Nerva Siliano coss." and then in Leto's *Life of Lucan*: "Decessit pridie Kal. Mai Silio Nerva Attico Vestino consulibus. Quo consul designatus cum Plaucio Laterano erat."

4. Domizio Calderini (c. 1473) Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Library Inc. 3431 (A) fol. 1v

Domitius Veronensis in Syllii Italici vitam

Duos Syllios eodem fere tempore Romae fuisse invenio, quorum alter ille est cui nupsit Messalina quemadmodum et Suetonius⁹¹ et Cornelius Tacitus⁹² apertius tradiderunt. Cuius meminit Iuvenalis "Cui nubere Caesaris uxor destinat"⁹³ et reliqua ibi in satyra "Omnibus in terris",⁹⁴ alter Syllius Italicus dictus est quem ut Romanum potius quam Hispanum affirmaverim. Ea abducor coniectura quoniam Martialis cum ad eum saepius scribat nusquam Hispanum appellat, non praetermissurus sub silentio si Hispanus fuisset et in eo epigrammate, cuius initio [inditio *cod.*] "Verona docti [doctas *cod.*] syllabas amat <vatis>"⁹⁵ cum singulis vatibus suam patriam assignavit, de Syllio nullam fecit mentionem. Sub Nerone infamiam contraxit quoniam sponte accusare credebatur, ut inquit Plinius, sub Vitellio secundiore fama fuit nam proconsulatum Asiae gessit, ex quo laudem et gloriam

⁹¹ SUET. *Claud.* 26.

⁹² TAC. *ann.* 10,12,1.

⁹³ IUV. 10,330–336.

⁹⁴ *Id.* 10,1.

⁹⁵ MART. 1,61,1.

reportavit.⁹⁶ Cuius et ut arbitror meminit Cornelius Tacitus: “Vitellius et Sabinus pepigerunt. Voces et scripta habuerunt testes Cluvium [Plinium *cod.*] Ruffum et Syllium Italicum”.⁹⁷ Declamavit in foro magno nomine et causas egit [legit *cod.*].⁹⁸ Temporibus vero Domitiani relicto foro se contulit in otium⁹⁹ in quo bellum secundum Punicum versibus complexus est. Fuerat consul eo anno quo Nero est interfec-tus¹⁰⁰ collega Aethico quod vix uno in loco repperio;¹⁰¹ quam omnem historiam Martialis quattuor versibus comprehendit:

postquam bis senis ingentem fascibus annum
rexerat asserto qui sacer orbe fuit,
emeritos Muis et Phoebos tradidit annos
proque suo celebrat nunc Heliconas foro.¹⁰²

Insilit in morbum cuius taedio vitam finire cupiebat.¹⁰³ Suadentibus ergo et annis et amicis secessit Neapolitanum suum nam habuit in Campania praedia Vergilii et praedia Ciceronis multum ibique statuarum. natalem imprimis Vergilii religiosius colebat quam suum.¹⁰⁴ Martialis:

Silius haec magni celebrat monumenta Maronis
iugera facundi qui Ciceronis habet.
heredem dominumque sui tumulique larisque [*sic*]
non alium [*alio cod.*] mallet nec Maro nec Cicero.¹⁰⁵

Ingravescente quotidie morbo tandem inedia mori voluit LXV aetatis anno. Reliquit filium consularem. Amiserat antea Severum de quo extat epigramma Martialis.¹⁰⁶ Magnae apud omnes aestimationis [*sic*] suae apud Martialem potissimum qui eum summis ubique effert laudibus.¹⁰⁷ Haec vita; operis argumentum hoc est. Gesserunt bellum Carthaginenses cum Romanis et Syllius nunc in hoc opere de secundo bello Punico tractat.¹⁰⁸

(I find there were two Siliuses in Rome at about the same time, of whom the first is the one whom Messalina married as both Suetonius

⁹⁶ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,3.

⁹⁷ TAC. *hist.* 3,65,2.

⁹⁸ Cp. MART. 7,63,6–8.

⁹⁹ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,6.

¹⁰⁰ *Id. epist.* 3,7,10.

¹⁰¹ TAC. *ann.* 15,48.

¹⁰² MART. 7,63,9–12.

¹⁰³ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,2 and 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Id. epist.* 3,7,8.

¹⁰⁵ MART. 11,48.

¹⁰⁶ *Id.* 9,86,1–2.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. *Id.* 4,14,1; 6,64,10; 7,63,1–2.

¹⁰⁸ My punctuation and capitalization.

and Cornelius Tacitus have explicitly related. He is remembered in Juvenal's "Whom Caesar's wife plans to marry" etc. there in the satire "In all the world", the second is called Silius Italicus and I would affirm he was Roman rather than Spanish. I am attracted by this reasoning, since though Martial writes to him very often he never calls him "Spanish" and he would not pass him over in silence if he had been Spanish and, in that epigram at the beginning of which "Verona loves the syllables of the learned poet", when he assigns to each poet his native land, he makes no mention of Silius. Under Nero he incurred dishonour because he was believed to make deliberate accusations, as Pliny says, but under Vitellius he had a better reputation for he carried out a proconsulate in Asia from which he came back covered with praise and glory. I think Cornelius Tacitus referred to him too: "Vitellius and Sabinus made a pact. Cluvius Rufus and Silius Italicus witnessed their words and documents". He made speeches in the forum with great renown and pleaded cases. But in Domitian's time he left the forum and went into retirement, during which he treated all the Second Punic War in verse. He had been consul in the year in which Nero was killed, with Atticus as colleague, something I scarcely find in one place. All this history Martial covers in four lines: "After with twelve fasces he had presided over the momentous year which was sacred by the liberation of the world, he devoted the years of his retirement to Phoebus and the Muses and now instead of the forum frequents Helicon". He fell into a disease from disgust at which he desired to bring his life to an end. So at the urging both of years and friends he took refuge in his estate at Naples for in Campania he had Virgil's farm and Cicero's farm and an abundance of statues there. He observed Virgil's birthday above all, more devoutly than his own. Martial: "Silius celebrates this monument of great Virgil, he who owns the acres of eloquent Cicero. Neither Maro nor Cicero would wish any other as heir and master of his tomb and house". As the illness grew worse day by day, finally he chose to die through fasting in his 65th year. He left a son as an ex-consul. Previously he had lost Severus, about whom there is an epigram of Martial. He was valued highly among all, especially in Martial, who everywhere exalts him with the utmost praise. This is the Life; the topic of his work follows. The Carthaginians waged war with the Romans and Silius now deals with the Second Punic War in this work.)

Calderini has written as much "Notes towards a Life" as a "Life". Marso's Life too is self-conscious about collecting and interpreting sources, and, as we have mentioned earlier, in Vatican Inc. I 4, rather than inserting a Life, Leto transcribed the ancient sources themselves. But, as we have also seen, it is not enough to collect the sources. They have to be correctly understood.

One of the Martial epigrams (8,66) is a case in point. In BL, King's 32 fol. 96v it has the heading "consulatus Silii Italici" (Silius Italicus' consul-

ship),¹⁰⁹ in Calderini's commentary on Martial in the Venice 1474 edition, "De consulatu Siliii" (On Silius's consulship) and in Leto's later transcription, "Eiusdem de tertio Siliii consulatu" (the same on Silius' third consulship). As understood by Calderini and perhaps by Pomponio Leto in Vatican Inc. I 4,¹¹⁰ the poem is to congratulate Silius on having been made consul for the third time, by Domitian. We now know that Silius, having been consul in AD 68, "apparently ended his official career as *proconsul Asiae* about 77/78".¹¹¹ A further consulship under Domitian is highly unlikely and modern scholars, with texts that read in line 4 "nato consule" (with son as consul) rather than "noto consule" (to a known consul [?]),¹¹² have no trouble in seeing the poem as a panegyric request, dated AD 94, on the occasion of the older son's consulship, for the younger son too to be so honoured.¹¹³ What is more intriguing is that no one before Pietro Crinito attempted to insert the third consulship into the Life (first published 1505). And he does so without mentioning any previous consulship:

Domitiano Augusto gratissimus fuit: eo autore perductus est ad tertium consulatum honestissimis suffragiis. De quo leguntur adhuc versiculi poetae Martialis¹¹⁴ [...].¹¹⁵

(He was very much beholden to the favour of the emperor Domitian, having been raised by his sponsorship to a third consulship with most honourable recommendations. The poet Martial's verses on this are still read [...].)

It would be possible to construct a series of consulships, with AD 65 and 68 as the dates of the first two. None of our humanists spells this out explicitly, though our first Life refers to a mysterious "second consulship".

* * *

The last Life I shall discuss is that of Pietro Marso, firstly because it uses the Life included in Pomponio Leto's printed edition and secondly because

¹⁰⁹ With the notes: "Syllius Italicus consul iterum sub Domitio. in primo eius consulatu Nero periiit" (Silius Italicus was consul for the second time under Domitian. Nero died in his first consulship.) and on l. 8 "Optat fieri consul tertium" (he wishes to become consul for a third time).

¹¹⁰ Pomponio Leto would have been able to consult Calderini's printed commentary on Martial.

¹¹¹ McDermott & Orentzel 1977, 24.

¹¹² This corruption is not recorded in modern editions. Calderini comments *ad loc.*: "Noto consule id est ad Silium qui bis fuerat cons" (to a known consul: that is, to Silius who had been consul twice).

¹¹³ Schöffel 2002, 553–562.

¹¹⁴ MART. 8,66,1–8.

¹¹⁵ Crinitus 1543, 492–493.

of its influence as the Life in the first, and for many years only, printed commentary.¹¹⁶

5. Petrus Marsus (1483) BAV Inc. 427 a ii

⟨S⟩yllius Italicus ab Italica urbe Hispanie cognominatus a qua originem habuit per suos maiores Romanus fuit. Quippe si in Italica natus fuisset, Martialis Hispanus et in patriae suae suorumque laudem propensus, tanti viri natale solum eo epigrammate primi libri, quo non modo poetarum, verum et historicorum patriam celebret, audivisse ornasset,¹¹⁷ cum sepius ad eum scribat, eumque tanti faciat, quanti Catullus Veronensis Virgilium poetarum principem fecisset.¹¹⁸ Prima aetate Ciceronem sibi proposuit imitandum, veterum praecepta sequutus, qui optimum quenque censuerunt eligendum quem imitemur, facundo declamavit ore, clientum causas secundo eventu in foro egit, centumvir fuit¹¹⁹ proconsulatum Asiae prudentissime integerrimeque administravit. Sub Nerone infamia notatus, nam quosdam principi, seu verius saevissimo tyranno, sponte insimulasse vulgo creditum est. Sub Vitellio comiter et sapienter se gessit,¹²⁰ a Nerone consul creatus est, cuius felicissimi consulatus auspiciis Nero e vita sublatus est et orbis libertatem adeptus.¹²¹ Post consulatum Maronem Latinorum poetarum sydus imitatus est, quamvis carmina maiore cura quam ingenio scriberet, quae saepius recitavit et auditorum iudicia recitationibus expertus est.¹²² Bellum Punicum secundum hoc opere prosecutus est, quod in manibus habetur, variumque est elegans multiplex, ut quid divinum esse videatur. Suadentibus annis urbe, foroque cedens in Campania se continuit ocio non abusus [absus *ed. 1483*].¹²³ Multum villarum possedit et M. Tullii Formianum inprimis, multum statuarum, multum imaginum quas studiose venerabatur, Maronis potissimum cuius natalem religiose celebrabat, sepulchrumque Via Puteolana ad ii. lapidem ut cellam Iovis Capitolini frequentabat.¹²⁴ Duos habuit filios. Minorem Saeverum nomine incredibili dolore sepelivit maiorem aetate florentem et consularem reliquit. Adversa valitudine insanabilis clavi la-

¹¹⁶ See Dykmans 1988, 71. Raffaele Maffei's "Formianum" shows his dependence on Marso, Volterranus 1603, col. 706.

¹¹⁷ MART. 1,61.

¹¹⁸ For the phrase "poetarum princeps" see, e.g., Petrarch, *Rerum familiarum libri* 24,11 and Sicco Polento's first Life of Virgil, Ziolkowski & Putnam 2008, 133, 328. The remark is strange as Catullus belonged to the generation before Virgil.

¹¹⁹ MART. 7,63,5–6,8–9.

¹²⁰ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,3.

¹²¹ *Id. epist.* 3,7,9–10; MART. 7,63,9–10.

¹²² PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,5.

¹²³ *Id. epist.* 3,7,6.

¹²⁴ *Id. epist.* 3,7,8; DON. *vita Verg.* 36.

boravit, cuius tedio et dolore ut Plinius in Epistolis scribit quinque et .lxx. annos natus in Neapolitano suo inedia vitam finivit magis delicato corpore quam infirmo usque ad extremum diem beatus et felix.¹²⁵

(Though Silius Italicus got his cognomen from Italica, the city in Spain from which he had his origin through his forefathers, he was Roman. Because, if he had been born in Italica, Martial, a Spaniard and ready in his praise of his native land and own people, in that epigram of his first book in which he celebrates the native land, not only of poets but of historians too, would have been very eager to have honoured the native soil of so great a man, since he often writes to him and makes as much of him as Catullus had made of Virgil, the prince of poets. In his youth he gave himself the aim of imitating Cicero, following the teachings of the ancients, who judged that all the best should be imitated. He declaimed with fluency, he successfully pleaded his clients' cases in the forum, he was a member of the centumviral court, he administered his proconsulship in Asia with great good sense and integrity. Under Nero he was censured with loss of reputation, for it was commonly believed that he deliberately accused certain people to the emperor, or, more accurately, the cruel tyrant. Under Vitellius he behaved prudently and in a friendly manner. He was made consul by Nero, and under the auspices of his most fortunate consulship Nero was removed from the living and the world obtained freedom. After his consulship he imitated Maro, the star of Latin poets, although he wrote his poems with greater care than talent, and he often recited them and tried out the judgements of hearers by recitations. He went on to describe the Second Punic War, in the work we have in hand, and it is diverse, felicitous and complex, so that it seems something divinely-inspired. When years urged, leaving the city and the courts, he confined himself to Campania, making good use of his leisure. He owned many villas and above all Cicero's villa at Formiae, an abundance of statues, an abundance of portraits, which he keenly revered, and above all that of Virgil, whose birthday he devotedly celebrated. He used to go to visit Virgil's grave (on the Via Puteolana, near the second mile post) as if it were Jupiter's shrine on the Capitol. He had two sons. The younger, Severus by name, he buried with incredible grief, the other he left behind in the flower of his age and an ex-consul. He suffered from ill health with an incurable tumour, and, from disgust and the pain of it, as Pliny writes in his *Epistles*, he ended his life.)

Underlying Marso's Life we can discern the skeletal order of our third life. For example, after the reference to the *maiores* from Italica, that continues

¹²⁵ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,1,9. My punctuation and capitalization.

with “prima etate declamavit”, presumably a summary of the legal career. Similarly, but at greater length, Marso begins with the *cognomen*, repeating an argument about the Spanish origins first found in Calderini, and then continues with “prima aetate”. What follows however is an account of Silius’ oratory and advocacy, probably based on Mart. 7,63,5–6: “Sacra cothurnati non attigit ante Maronis/implevit magni quam Ciceronis opus” (He did not set his hand to buskined Maro’s rites before he had carried out great Cicero’s work). It is worth quoting from Calderini’s commentary on these lines:

Non ante proposuit sibi imitandum Maronem [...] implevit magni quam Ciceronis opus. quia fuit causidicus et declamavit. Hos sibi proposuit imitandos Maronem carmine et Ciceronem in causis et utriusque habuit praedia.

(He did not have as his purpose that he should imitate Virgil “before he had carried out great Cicero’s work”. Because he was a lawyer and made speeches. He had the purpose that he should imitate them, Virgil in poetry and Cicero in court cases and he had farms belonging to each.)

Success in the courts leads logically to the political career. Marso does not suppress Pliny’s damaging rumour of Silius having acted as a *delator* but he defuses it first by the praise given the proconsulship and then by the attack on Nero and the addition of *vulgo* (commonly). We recognise the sentence on the fortunate coincidence of the consulship as an expanded version of that in the Life in the Pomponian edition. The turn to poetry follows the end of the political career, as in Martial, and Marso finally gives it the emphasis we expect in the Life of a poet, by the introductory reference to imitating Virgil,¹²⁶ *sidus poetarum*, not suppressing Pliny’s notorious evaluation (which he is the first to cite) but countering it by introducing and praising the *Punica*, using critical terminology borrowed from ancient rhetoric and

¹²⁶ He is followed by Maffei and Crinito. Crinitus 1543, 492, introducing his citation of PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,8 (on the villas and veneration of Virgil): “quo facilius atque cumulatus percipiatur, quam eleganti ingenio fuerit, atque studioso, in prosequendis optimis exemplis.” After the citation he continues: “Opus composuit libris xvii. de bello Punico secundo, non vulgari, neque absurdo carmine; etsi illud maiore cura, ut traditur, quam ingenio perfecit. Praecipue Maronem imitatus est, cuius ingenium, atque felicissimam maiestatem admirabatur in describendis carminibus.” (So that it may be the more easily and copiously perceived how he showed elegance, talent and application in following the best examples [...] He composed a work in 17 books on the Second Punic War, in verse that is not common, or inappropriate, though he brought it to an end “with greater care than talent”, as we are told. He imitated Virgil above all, and he admired his talent and very happy dignity in composing poetry).

later exegesis.¹²⁷ Marso is the first of our biographers to include his own assessment of Silius as a poet.

Retirement to Campania follows the summary of the literary side of Silius' life. Here the order is different from that of the Life in the Rome 1471 edition, for that implies that the poetry was written during Campanian *otium*, but Marso's order is better, especially since according to Pliny the move was *novissime*, that is, not very long before the death, but before Trajan's advent in AD 99. Somehow Marso manages to leave out the books¹²⁸ but from the VSD *Life of Vergil* (36) he quotes the supposed location of Virgil's tomb.¹²⁹ As in the unattributed Life, children, sickness and death follow, but Marso ends on a more positive note by his closing deployment of the Plinian "usque ad extremum diem beatus et felix" (happy and fortunate to his final day). While the two Lives are similar in the ordering of the material, Marso follows Pliny's actual words far less closely and develops details of the Life by informed extrapolation.

To round out the picture of fifteenth-century Lives by stretching it a bit to 1505, Crinito's is essentially a rewriting of Marso's in an even more expansive style. It includes verbatim quotation from both Martial and Pliny. As I have already mentioned, it highlights the third consulship, and is the first since "Anonymus B" to quote the lines from Mart. 4,14 on the *Punica*. In contrast to all the previous Lives it makes no mention of the sons. From the early sixteenth century it became the dominant Life, probably by virtue of being included in the Aldine edition of 1523, and it was even in Lemaire's edition of Rupert's commentary (1823).¹³⁰

What seems to have caught the interest of these authors is family matters (in which birth at Rome for the author of a quintessentially Roman epic seems to be important), the mode of death, the well-provided and stately retirement to Naples, and the devotion to Vergil. There is no need to stress that villas with libraries, collections of statues and busts would appeal to Renaissance emulators of antiquity. Greater or lesser attention is paid to the political career, which was not well understood. Martial is increasingly used as a source but the problem of reconciling his admiration (noticed by Calderini) with Pliny's lack of enthusiasm does not arise.¹³¹ To conclude, the

¹²⁷ CIC. *ac.* 1,17 (Plato): "uarius et multiplex et copiosus fuit" (he was diverse, complex, and eloquent); DON. *Vita Verg.* 21: "argumentum uarium et multiplex" (a diverse and complex subject); PLIN. *epist.* 4,20,2: "opus pulchrum, validum, acre, sublime, varium, elegans" (a work that is glorious, strong, energetic, sublime, diverse, elegant).

¹²⁸ As does Calderini.

¹²⁹ Brugnoli & Stok 1991, 438. See Trapp 1988.

¹³⁰ II 473–474. Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 363. His *Life of Lucretius* enjoyed a similar success, Solaro 2000, 37.

¹³¹ Augoustakis 2010 (1), 3–4; Dominik 2010, 431–432.

unpublished Lives of Silius Italicus stemming from Pomponio Leto and Domizio Calderini give us insight into different phases of the construction of the Life in the milieu of the Roman Studium. The Life printed in the second Roman edition of 1471, even if not by Pomponio Leto, by default became his Life, I suggest, and it is the only Life associated with him with a clear influence on subsequent Lives in the fifteenth century.

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