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## Horatius, *Ode* 2.10 and the Crassus Affair

### Henrik Gerding

Rectius vives, Licini, neque altum  
semper urgendo neque, dum procellas  
cautus horrescis, nimium premendo  
litus iniquum.

5 auream quisquis mediocritatem  
diligit, tutus caret obsoleti  
sordibus tecti, caret invidenda  
sobrius aula.

10 saepius ventis agitur ingens  
pinus et celsae graviore casu  
decidunt tures feriuntque summos  
fulgura montis.

15 sperat infestis, metuit secundis  
alteram sortem bene praeparatum  
pectus: informis hiemes reducit  
Iuppiter, idem

20 submovet; non, si male nunc, et olim  
sic erit: quondam cithara tacentem  
suscitat Musam neque semper arcum  
tendit Apollo.

rebus angustis animosus atque  
fortis adpare, sapienter idem  
contrahes vento nimium secundo  
turgida vela.

### *The problem of Licinius Murena*

Who is the Licinius of *Ode* 2.10? This question is intimately related to a range of other problems which have been frequently discussed over the years: What happened to A. Terentius Varro Murena, the mysterious consul of 23 B.C.?<sup>1</sup> Is this consul identical with Licinius Murena, defender of the accused M. Primus and accomplice in the conspiracy of Fannius Caepio?<sup>2</sup> When did the trial and the conspiracy take place, and when were the *Odes* of Horatius first published? Sometimes these different issues have been introduced in order to provide arguments for a correct identification of the addressee of *Ode* 2.10, but more often the presupposed identification of Licinius has been used as evidence in the other discussions. It is the intention of the present author to deal solely with the question of the addressee, arguing for a suggestion made by O. D. Watkins in 1985 which has been forgotten or ignored since.<sup>3</sup>

From early on the addressee of this ode has been recognised as a certain Licinius Murena, and this is still the generally accepted solution to the problem.<sup>4</sup> What then is the evidence supporting this view? The identification is basically due to the heading inserted in some of the extant manuscripts (group Ψ):<sup>5</sup> “ad Licinium Murenam optimum esse medium vitae statum.” There is also another scholium on this ode by Porphyrio, providing us with the name Licinius

<sup>1</sup> A. Terentius Varro Murena appears in *Fasti Capitolini* but not in the other consular lists, and he was evidently replaced by Cn. Calpurnius Piso. *Inscriptiones Italiae* 13.1 (1947), 59.

<sup>2</sup> Cassius Dio 54.3. In other sources the advocate/conspirator is also known as only Murena (Strabo 14.5.4; Velleius Paterculus 2.93.1; Seneca, *De brevitate vitae* 4.5, *De clementia* 1.9.6; Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 66.3), L. Murena (Velleius Paterculus 2.91.2), Varro (Tacitus, *Annales* 1.10) and Varro Murena (Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 19.1, *Tiberius* 8.1).

<sup>3</sup> O. D. Watkins considered M. Licinius Crassus as “a plausible candidate”. Watkins 1985, 126–27.

<sup>4</sup> See for example *Enciclopedia Oraziana* I (1996), s.v. “Licinius Murena” (G. Vogt-Spira), 773–74.

<sup>5</sup> Botschuyver 1935, 99.

Valgius.<sup>6</sup> The latter information is most likely corrupt, though, and in this case the heading seems to have taken precedence over the scholia of Porphyrio.<sup>7</sup> Because of the name given in the ode itself a Licinius had to be inferred and a Murena is explicitly mentioned elsewhere by Horatius.<sup>8</sup> The argument is further elaborated by the general content of the poem. The ominous tone of the ode has put the spotlight on the Licinius Murena who figured in the trial of M. Primus. Murena was defending M. Primus against accusations of unauthorised warfare in the Balkan, but lost the case to a large extent because of the unsolicited testimony of Augustus. Shortly afterwards Murena was implicated in a conspiracy led by Fannius Caepio against the *princeps*, and he was put to death after having tried to escape. According to a large number of scholars, these were the dangers that Horatius warned against: “The catastrophe which struck down the subject of Horace’s poem resulted; then, from his involvement in the Primus case and climaxed soon thereafter in the Caepio conspiracy ...”<sup>9</sup> However, there is a considerable chronological problem, which has been fiercely debated in modern commentaries. In keeping with the most widely spread theory, the first three books of Horatius’ *Carmina* were published in 23 B.C.,<sup>10</sup> but the conspiracy appears to have taken place in 22 B.C.<sup>11</sup> Neither of these dates is secure, though, and attempts have also been made to assign the publication to the year 22, and the conspiracy to 23 B.C.<sup>12</sup>

Even if the chronological problem can be circumvented, there still remain some question marks regarding the content of the ode. The advice in the ode does hardly apply to someone who has re-

<sup>6</sup> *Pomponii Porphyrii commentarii in Horatium Flaccum*, Ode 2.10.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Arkenberg 1993, 487.

<sup>8</sup> Horatius, *Carmina* 3.19.11; *Satirae* 1.5.38. The true identity of this Murena is not entirely clear.

<sup>9</sup> Daly 1978, 91.

<sup>10</sup> See for example Nisbet–Hubbard 1970, p. xxxvi; West 1995, p. xi.

<sup>11</sup> Cassius Dio 54.3.

<sup>12</sup> Stockton 1965. For early references see Atkinson 1960, 440, n. 4.

cently been exposed as a conspirator, nor to someone about to be executed. Thus, in order to solve these problems, an otherwise unknown discord between Murena and Augustus had to be conjectured, slightly predating the trial and the conspiracy. Such a theory was constructed by R. Hanslik in linking the conspirator with the mysterious consul of 23 B.C.<sup>13</sup> The suggested scenario was further supported by the observations that *Ode* 2.10 seems to carry a Peripatetic message, and that the fleeing Murena was caught together with a philosopher friend belonging to the Peripatetic school.<sup>14</sup> This and other related hypotheses all depend on the assumption that A. Terentius Varro Murena, the supposedly removed consul of 23 B.C., and the conspirator are one and the same—a conjecture that can only be made by the use of some highly imaginative prosopography. In sum, the ode is believed to comfort a man disappointed over a missed out consulship shortly before he turned into a conspirator. However, all the arguments in favour of this theory were recently seriously challenged by J. S. Arkenberg, who after a thorough prosopographic investigation concluded that A. Terentius Varro Murena most probably died as consul designate and anyway could not be the same as the conspirator.<sup>15</sup> Even before that, R. Heinze found the inconsistencies so disturbing that they led him to doubt the veracity of the title in the manuscripts altogether.<sup>16</sup>

I would like to introduce a further objection: Since the conspirator was known to all writers as a Murena (except Tacitus who only called him Varro),<sup>17</sup> and Horatius otherwise also called him Murena<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Hanslik 1953; Nisbet–Hubbard 1978, 155–58.

<sup>14</sup> Strabon 14.5.4. Nisbet–Hubbard 1978, 152–53; Holtermann 1997. Contra Tränkle 1994, 208–9.

<sup>15</sup> Arkenberg 1993. K. M. T. Atkinson also rejected this identification and even questioned whether the advocate Licinius Murena was the same as the conspirator Murena. Atkinson 1960, 460–61.

<sup>16</sup> Kiessling 1930, 198–99. Cf. Watkins 1985, 126, n. 10.

<sup>17</sup> See above n. 2.

<sup>18</sup> See above n. 8.

(according to the traditional hypothesis), why did he suddenly address him as Licinius? It could not be for metrical reasons, as the name Murena is equally possible in the verse, although not in the same position. The most reasonable explanation would be that we are dealing with at least two different persons. Consequently, the scholia mentioning a Licinius Murena should be questioned and may even have to be considered erroneous. These headings are claimed to have originated in late antiquity,<sup>19</sup> but this does not mean that some of them could not have been based on poorly made conjectures. To quote R. Syme: "Scholiasts are often bold or silly in their assertions."<sup>20</sup> Heinze concluded that the Licinius of *Ode* 2.10 remains unidentifiable. However, in my view the political events of the early Augustan period provide the basis for an alternative interpretation.

It may be noted that the ode is not treating all extremes in life with equal concern. Rather it focuses on the dangers of too high ambitions (2.10.9–12) and the necessity of caution in plotting out one's course (2.10.1–4).<sup>21</sup> Thus, it may be seen as a warning against too rash and desirous behaviour but hardly the opposite (lethargy). The poem indicates a temporary misfortune or disappointment (2.10.15–20), though not a full-fledged catastrophe, and the menacing gods responsible for these adversities have previously been interpreted as allegorical for Augustus.<sup>22</sup> The last four verses neatly summarise the general content along the same lines and apparently address someone who has suffered a set-back but may still keep his station and respectability if he is prepared to sacrifice his ambitions and show some modesty. I would like to argue that there is one man who fits the description well and who constitutes a considerably more likely candidate than Murena. That man is M. Licinius Crassus (cos. 30 B.C.). He had reached the summit of a glorious career when he re-

<sup>19</sup> Klingner 1935, 267–68.

<sup>20</sup> Syme 1986, 390.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Tränkle 1994, 209.

<sup>22</sup> Nisbet–Hubbard 1978, 157; Holtermann 1997, 80, n. 5.

turned to Rome as a victorious commander, and actually surpassed the *princeps* in military achievements. As a former (pardoned) partisan of M. Antonius, he was definitely crossing some dangerous waters and Augustus apparently begrudged him his rightfully earned prize, the *spolia opima*. Crassus' good luck could easily change and he would be wise to swallow his pride and shorten his sail. It should also be considered that Horatius addressed other former adherents of the Antonian party and turncoat Republicans with similar pieces of advice.<sup>23</sup> By laying out the details of the so-called Crassus affair I hope to demonstrate that this episode constitutes a more plausible background to *Ode* 2.10 than the ones suggested before.

#### *The career of M. Licinius Crassus*

There must be no doubt that Crassus<sup>24</sup> belonged to the highest ranking aristocracy of his time. Through his parentage he combined two of the wealthiest and most prestigious plebeian families, the Licinii Crassi and the Caecilii Metelli.<sup>25</sup> Being the sole descendant of the exceedingly wealthy *triumvir* M. Licinius Crassus (*RE* no. 68), he must have had considerable financial assets, unless his family property had been confiscated during the civil wars.

It is possible that M. Licinius Crassus' first involvement in the civil wars should be dated to 41 B.C., when we hear of a Crassus fighting at Perugia together with L. Antonius against Octavianus.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Horatius, *Carmina* 1.7 (L. Munatius Plancus), 2.1 (C. Asinius Pollio), 2.2 (C. Sallustius Crispus), 2.3 (Q. Dellius), 2.7 (Pompeius). Cf. Syme 1986, 384–85.

<sup>24</sup> For the sake of convenience from now on M. Licinius Crassus (*RE* no. 58), the son of Caecilia Metella and consul in 30 B.C., will be called only Crassus.

<sup>25</sup> This appears to have been a consciously designed alliance, taking in view that both the sons of the *triumvir* married women of the Metelli. The father of Cornelia, Publius' wife, had been adopted by a Metellus. Cf. Syme 1939, 36, n. 3; Ward 1977, 112, n. 53; Syme 1986, 271.

<sup>26</sup> Appianus, *Bella civilia* 5.50.1. This identification was advocated for example by H. Dessau, but it is also possible that the passage refers to P. Canidius Crassus (*RE* no. 2). Dessau 1906, 150, n. 2.

He would then have been between 22 and 29 years of age.<sup>27</sup> Despite defeat and flight his military career continued: the troubled times presented plenty of opportunities.<sup>28</sup> After having sided with both Sex. Pompeius and M. Antonius, Crassus at some point shifted his allegiance and joined with the Octavian cause.<sup>29</sup> This took place perhaps as late as 31 B.C.<sup>30</sup> In 30 B.C. he became consul together with Octavianus without first having held the praetorship. Possibly this appointment was a reward for his new stance, perhaps it was a precondition.<sup>31</sup> He held this office for the first six months, and may have left for his allotted province later the same year.<sup>32</sup> As governor of Macedonia and Achaia he embarked upon a war against various tribes in Thracia and Moesia, which was fought in two consecutive campaigns. The war is best described by Cassius Dio.<sup>33</sup> As the details of the chronology have been questioned, we will look closer at these events.

The Bastarnae, probably a Germanic tribe,<sup>34</sup> had previously crossed the Ister (modern Danube) and subdued parts of Moesia, including the land of the Triballi. When they began advancing further south and assaulted the Dentheleti, who were under treaty with the Romans, Crassus took his legions to the field to meet them.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps the main reason was to repulse the invaders before they

<sup>27</sup> For a discussion on the age of Crassus see Gerding 2002, 67, 70–71.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Syme 1939, 216.

<sup>29</sup> Cassius Dio 51.4.3.

<sup>30</sup> Syme 1939, 296.

<sup>31</sup> Groag 1926, 271–72.

<sup>32</sup> So Charlesworth 1934a, 117.

<sup>33</sup> Cassius Dio 51.23–27. See also Livius, *Periochae* 134–35, Florus 2.26, Aurelius Victor, *Epitome de Caesaribus* 1.7, Zonaras 10.32 (Dindorf II. 435). For modern accounts of the war see Groag 1926, 272–80, Charlesworth 1934a, Danov 1979, 123–26, Reinhold 1988, 160–64.

<sup>34</sup> Strabon, 7.3.17; Plinius maior, *Naturalis historia* 4.14.100; Tacitus, *Germania* 46. Cassius Dio, though, calls them Scythians (51.23.3).

<sup>35</sup> The strength of his army is often estimated as four legions. See for example Wilkes 1996, 550.

threatened the Roman province. A reasonable guess would be that he marched north along the Strymon valley, probably in the spring or early summer of 29 B.C.<sup>36</sup> The Bastarnae fell back and were pursued to the river Cebrus (present Cibrica/Tzibritza), a small tributary to the Danube. In his pursuit Crassus was met by Moesian resistance but it was easily swept aside. In the ensuing battle the Bastarnae were decisively beaten and their king, Deldo, was killed by the hand of Crassus himself. In the mopping-up operations the Romans were aided by Roles, king of a tribe of the Getae. Crassus continued his campaign by subduing a majority of the Moesian tribes until winter forced him to withdraw south. On its way back to the Macedonian province the Roman army was greatly harassed by various Thracian tribes, which previously were believed to be friendly.

The war against the Bastarnae and the Moesians was regarded as a great success by the Romans and would have ended here. Soon, however, the Bastarnae took to the field again, perhaps already the same winter (early in 28 B.C.).<sup>37</sup> Once again they attacked the Dentheleti, and once again Crassus came to their assistance. Very quickly he fell upon the Bastarnae and defeated them. This operation was also extended by a lengthy punitive campaign, this time directed against the Thracians who had assaulted his troops the previous year. Thus, he subdued the Maedi, the Serdi and the Bessi, but spared the Odrysae. Then he turned his forces against the Getan king Dapyx, who was fighting the Roman ally Roles. Crassus overwhelmed and crushed his opponent and also reduced many other tribes of the Getae. Perhaps the most notable achievement of this second campaign was the retrieval of the Roman standards which C. Antonius (cos. 63 B.C.) had lost to the Bastarnae/Getae in 60 B.C. These were kept in

<sup>36</sup> Groag 1926, 272–75; Charlesworth 1934a, 117. It has also been suggested that the first campaign took place already in 30 B.C., but the proposal is hardly convincing.

<sup>37</sup> Groag 1926, 278. The division of the Thracian war into two distinct campaigns is supported by Livius, *Periochae* 134–35.

the strongly defended fortress of Genucla on the Ister, which was now besieged and captured by the Roman soldiers. It is quite possible that the recovery of the lost standards was the principal aim of Crassus in turning upon the Getae. Crassus finished his campaign by enforcing Roman authority throughout the territory and putting down revolts among the Moesians. He may have returned to Rome late in 28 B.C., before the winter storms.<sup>38</sup>

For the accomplishments of his first campaign Crassus was voted *supplicationes* and a triumph. From two inscriptions we also learn that Crassus was saluted as *imperator*, at least in his own province.<sup>39</sup> However, according to Cassius Dio,<sup>40</sup> Octavianus alone assumed this title, which has led many scholars to suppose that Crassus was first hailed as *imperator* by his legions but was later deprived of this title.<sup>41</sup> Recently it has been argued that Cassius Dio must have got it wrong. Augustus' seventh imperial appellation, which was previously attributed to the Thracian war, has now been shown most likely to represent the capture of Alexandria.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, it is quite unreasonable that a commander should be awarded a triumph but not be entitled to an imperial salutation. We know that Crassus did celebrate his triumph *ex Thraecia et Geteis* on the 4th of July in 27 B.C.,<sup>43</sup> and strangely this is the last we hear of him.

#### *Crassus and the spolia opima*

*Spolia opima* was the armour of an enemy commander, who was killed by his Roman counterpart on the battlefield in single combat. To de-

<sup>38</sup> So Syme 1986, 274.

<sup>39</sup> *ILS* 8810 = *IG* II/III<sup>2</sup> 4118 (Athens); *BCH* 50, 1926, 441–42 no. 78 = *AE* 1928, 44 (Thespieae).

<sup>40</sup> Cassius Dio 51.25.2.

<sup>41</sup> For example Syme 1939, 308. Others have suggested that both took the title simultaneously. Schmitthenner 1962, 34.

<sup>42</sup> See Schumacher 1985, 209–11; Reinhold 1988, 162–63; Rich 1996, 95–97; Flower 2000, 52. Cf. Badian 1982, 38–41.

<sup>43</sup> *Inscriptiones Italiae* 13.1 (1947), 87.

dicate these spoils in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius on the Capitolium was the highest military honour a Roman could be awarded.<sup>44</sup> Tradition had it that only three persons dedicated the *spolia opima*: Romulus, A. Cornelius Cossus (in 437 B.C.) and M. Claudius Marcellus (in 222 B.C.). According to Cassius Dio, Crassus killed Deldo, king of the Bastarnae, with his own hands during the first Thracian campaign.<sup>45</sup> The authenticity of this account has never been questioned and more than one scholar have stressed the tremendous feat of Crassus, among them H. I. Flower.<sup>46</sup>

In trying to understand Crassus' position in 27 it is essential to consider the magnitude of his achievement both as a general and a warrior. In an age when single combats had become largely a thing of the past, he personally killed the enemy leader, although it does not seem to have been in a formal pitched battle. He was the first and apparently the only Roman general ever to come close to repeating Marcellus' feat at Clastidium.

However, there are no indications that he ever made the exclusive dedication. Cassius Dio made a point of stating that Crassus never got to deposit the captured armour in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, as he did not hold the supreme command.<sup>47</sup> The events concerning Crassus, Augustus and the *spolia opima* have been the subject of a major scholarly debate lasting for almost a century.<sup>48</sup> The issues concern the exact qualifications for winning this honour, whether Octavianus was instrumental in denying Crassus his reward, the treatment of the topic by contemporary writers, and the significance of this affair for the Augustan settlement in January, 27 B.C.

<sup>44</sup> For the nature and origin of this institution, as well as relevant sources, see Versnel 1970, 306–13.

<sup>45</sup> Cassius Dio 51.24.4.

<sup>46</sup> Flower 2000, 50.

<sup>47</sup> Cassius Dio 51.24.4.

<sup>48</sup> For a recent summary of this debate see Rich 1996, 85–92.

Although the *spolia opima* had been a topic before, the discussion really started with the article "Livius and Augustus" by H. Dessau in 1906, treating a passage from Livius (4.20). Here Livius tells us that Cossus dedicated the *spolia opima* to Jupiter Feretrius as consul, not *tribunus militum*, as was previously believed. The crucial evidence was supplied by Augustus himself, who had personally found an instructive inscription on the actual spoils (a linen corslet) hanging in the temple. Dessau argued that the story had a political side to it. The princeps could not allow a successful general, springing from the most renowned and politically prominent families, to enter Rome as a new Romulus. Thus, Augustus had a personal interest in depriving Crassus of his award. By eliminating Cossus as an important precedence the nature of Crassus' command could be questioned: as proconsul he did not fulfil the prerequisites for the *spolia opima*.<sup>49</sup> Dessau was the first to recognize the connection between the digression of Livius and the "Crassus affair".<sup>50</sup> Of equal importance was the article of E. Groag on Crassus in Pauly's *Real-Encyclopädie* twenty years later.<sup>51</sup> Groag emphasized the sensitive political situation in 30–27 B.C. and brought up the possibility that Crassus might have competed for the ultimate power with arms, being commander of a seasoned and victorious army. According to Groag this potential threat was eliminated by Octavianus through his "re-instalment" of the Republic,<sup>52</sup> thus providing an ulterior motive for the settlement of 27 B.C. The ideas of these two scholars have since gained support from numerous others.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Dessau 1906, 144–45.

<sup>50</sup> A previous author had already recognized a political tension between Crassus and Augustus, though: Furtwängler 1904, 403.

<sup>51</sup> Groag 1926.

<sup>52</sup> Groag 1926, 283–85.

<sup>53</sup> E.g. Charlesworth 1934b, 125–26; Syme 1939, 308–10; Springer 1954–55, 29–30; Mócsy 1966; Earl 1968, 55–56; Cartledge 1975; Maxfield 1981, 104; Daly 1981, 50–51.

S. J. Harrison has pointed to the fact that according to Cassius Dio, Julius Caesar was awarded the right to dedicate the *spolia opima* in 45/44 B.C., although he did not meet the conditions required.<sup>54</sup> That is, he had not killed an enemy commander in single combat, but his achievements were held to be equivalent. Whether this is true or not, Julius Caesar never got around to making use of this honour before his untimely death.<sup>55</sup> S. J. Harrison continued by suggesting that Octavianus probably was not reluctant to exploit any relaxation of the rules concerning the *spolia opima*, and that his restoration of the temple of Jupiter Feretrius in the late 30s B.C. was the first step in an attempt to secure that honour for himself.<sup>56</sup> When Crassus killed the king of the Bastarnae with his own hands in 29 B.C., Octavianus, according to this theory, frustrated his claim on the *spolia opima* by pressing the case of more rigorous rules and personally produced the essential evidence. Thereby, Octavianus also forfeited his own chances of winning the ultimate martial honour. This could be one reason for his new politics in 27 B.C. (see below). Octavianus could no longer uphold a position based on his status as *triumvir* and former military glories, especially as he now risked being surpassed by braver and more successful generals. The suggestion by J. W. Rich that Octavianus had a genuine antiquarian interest in the Cossus problem and that this was the real reason for taking on the restoration of the temple of Jupiter Feretrius is somewhat farfetched and also disregards the political consequences of his remarkable "findings".<sup>57</sup> It should also be considered that the inscription on the linen corslet hardly

<sup>54</sup> Cassius Dio 44.4.3; Harrison 1989, 408–9. The authenticity of this episode has been questioned, though: see Syme 1979, 419, n. 1.

<sup>55</sup> That the *spolia opima* was a current propagandistic topic is further illuminated by a coin depicting the dedication made by M. Claudius Marcellus. Crawford 1974, no. 439. The exact date of the coin is disputed but generally recognised as 50 or 45 B.C.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Flower 2000, 48–49.

<sup>57</sup> Rich 1996, 116.

could have been authentic,<sup>58</sup> and that even the historicity of Cossus' dedication rightly should be questioned.<sup>59</sup> Rich further stated that Crassus may have chosen not to dedicate the *spolia opima* of his own accord in order to avoid offending Augustus, and that this surely was Augustus' preferred outcome.<sup>60</sup> However, should we not rather ask ourselves: What did Crassus prefer? To seek out the enemy leader on the battlefield with the purpose of forcing him into single combat would have been an extremely dangerous undertaking and the outcome of such a fight highly uncertain. The act speaks of a clear ambition and a strong determination.<sup>61</sup> It is unlikely, to say the least, that Crassus would just give up any rewards that were his due.

#### *The reforms of Augustus*

Since the article of E. Groag on Licinius was first published in 1926, it has been fiercely debated to what degree this affair lay behind the Augustan settlement in January 27 B.C.<sup>62</sup> E. Badian has argued that the restoration of the Republic began in 28 B.C., perhaps even in 29 B.C.,<sup>63</sup> and that the question of *spolia opima* probably was not raised before the preparations for Crassus' triumph had commenced in 27 B.C.<sup>64</sup> Thus, there would have been no "crisis" and the so-called

<sup>58</sup> See for example Springer 1954–55, 30; Ogilvie 1965, 563–64; Daly 1981, 53–54; Reinhold 1988, 162; Miles 1995, 40–46; Flower 2000, 53. For the contrary view Cassola 1970. This would not be the first accusation of forgery raised against Octavianus. Cf. the testament of M. Antonius. See Syme 1939, 282; Daly 1981, 54.

<sup>59</sup> Flower 2000.

<sup>60</sup> Rich 1996, 126.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. the similar ambition of Augustus' stepson, Nero Claudius Drusus (*RE* "Claudius" no. 139, III. 2703–19), to win the *spolia opima*. For sources and discussion see Rich 1999; Flower 2000, 58.

<sup>62</sup> In recent years P. Cartledge (1975) has strongly defended Groag's ideas. Positive at first, R. Syme turned hesitant: Syme 1939, 308, 310; Syme 1986, 274–75.

<sup>63</sup> Similarly R. Syme notes that the reforms which culminated with the settlement in January 27 B.C. were initiated already in the beginning of 28. Syme 1979, 409.

<sup>64</sup> Badian 1982, 24–27.

"Crassus affair" could not have constituted the motivating reason for the Augustan settlement. This line of reasoning is hardly convincing, though. As has already been shown, Crassus won the victory that earned him his triumph in 29 B.C., probably in the early summer, and it was in the same battle that he killed king Deldo single-handedly. The news of his achievement would have reached Rome soon afterwards and it would have been clear to everyone what ambitions this might prompt in the general. The sources do not reveal how Augustus reacted to these news at the time, but perhaps we might judge from the actions that he took from then on and the reforms that he initiated.<sup>65</sup> In effect, from 28 B.C. to 23 B.C., Augustus took every conceivable measure in order to prevent a similar incident to occur again.

Even after the battle of Actium Octavianus had opponents in the senate, and many *nobiles* would be glad to see someone else in power.<sup>66</sup> The military oligarchy was not to be trusted.<sup>67</sup> The rise of yet another victorious general, favoured by the gods, was the last thing that the remaining *triumvir* wanted. The single most important precaution was the division of the provinces achieved in the settlement of 27 B.C.: All the armed provinces (Gaul, Spain and Syria) fell to Augustus and his legates; those that the senate was allowed to keep were stripped of their legions.<sup>68</sup> Thus, any future promagistrate was rendered incapable of conducting large-scale military operations. In 28 B.C. he reintroduced an interval of five years between the consulate and the

<sup>65</sup> The narrative of Cassius Dio (51.25.2) implies that the triumph of Crassus was voted in his absence, even before the end of his first campaign. Octavianus returned to Italy in the summer of 29 B.C., and did not enter the city until the 13th of August. Thus, it is possible that the senate awarded Crassus a triumph without the *triumvir* being present. During the middle Republic generals had had to apply for a triumph when they got back to Rome. However, Octavianus set a new precedent.

<sup>66</sup> Schmitthenner 1962, 31; Raaflaub & Samons 1990, 447.

<sup>67</sup> Syme 1939, 308.

<sup>68</sup> Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 47.1; Cassius Dio 53.12.1–7. Syme 1939, 310, 326–27; Syme 1986, 274–75.



proconsulate, thereby hampering too quick and splendid careers.<sup>69</sup> He retained a firm grip on the consulship year after year.<sup>70</sup>

Although Octavianus first “bestowed triumphs quite lavishly upon his generals”,<sup>71</sup> after 27 B.C. fewer of these honours were allowed until they were finally restricted to the imperial family. This tendency has already been fully recognised as a calculated policy on the part of Augustus. Crassus, M. Valerius Messalla Corvinus and Sex. Appuleius all had their triumphal celebrations granted before 27 B.C. After that the number of triumphs dwindled drastically.<sup>72</sup> According to F. H. Hickson the achievements of Crassus lay behind this new policy, which aimed at stopping potential rivals.<sup>73</sup> Instead the triumph was deliberately transformed into a symbol of succession. However, the restrictions were not confined to formal honours and festivities:<sup>74</sup>

Thus it was very early on that Augustus deprived potential rivals of a critical means of self-enhancement. But at the same time he struck at the other means by which many *triumphatores* had sought to prolong the recollection of their victory beyond its immediate celebration and thereby to bestow permanence on their own person: by the display of booty or the erection of buildings.

The triumph, triumphal buildings, and the festivals linked with their completion thus already disappear at the start of the Augustan period from the repertoire of senatorial self-advertisement.

<sup>69</sup> Cassius Dio 53.14.2.

<sup>70</sup> Earl 1968, 68.

<sup>71</sup> Maxfield 1981, 103.

<sup>72</sup> The number of imperial titles also declined from 27 B.C., and Augustus confined the right to *auspicia militaria* in his own hand. Syme 1939, 404; Rich 1996, 101.

<sup>73</sup> Hickson 1991, 127–28.

<sup>74</sup> Eck 1984, 139–40, 142.

In 28 B.C. the senate was purged by Octavianus, allegedly of unworthy elements, in practice of opponents.<sup>75</sup> On a general level the old and prestigious *nobilitas* was suppressed and kept from the important positions, whereas new men were favoured.<sup>76</sup> But even these were kept at bay. In 27 B.C. C. Cornelius Gallus was severely punished for over-advertising his military exploits in Egypt: the imprudence cost him his life.<sup>77</sup> In 24 or 23 B.C. M. Primus stood trial for high treason as he had waged war in Thracia without proper authority (see above).<sup>78</sup> Augustus also eradicated the Greek custom of exalting Roman officials with divine honours.<sup>79</sup> However, the *princeps* could not be content with staving off potential contenders. Perhaps the campaigns in Spain 27–25 B.C. should be regarded as an attempt from Augustus to improve his military reputation and thus strengthen his position in Rome.<sup>80</sup>

As many writers have noted before, the recovery of C. Antonius' standards by Crassus is ignored in the *Res Gestae*.<sup>81</sup> This accomplishment was probably at least as important as the killing of Deldo. In taking back lost Roman standards Crassus partly restored the family's military honour, which had been smudged by the defeat of his grandfather. It is also conceivable that Crassus, with his Thracian war, sought to equal the old *triumviri* by adding a new large province to the Roman realm. The alleged threat of the Bastarnae might have

<sup>75</sup> Syme 1939, 349.

<sup>76</sup> Syme 1939, 310, 327–28; Syme 1986, 387. *Viri triumphales* and *nobiles* of consular rank were shunned in particular.

<sup>77</sup> Cassius Dio 53.23.5–7. Syme 1939, 309–10.

<sup>78</sup> Cassius Dio 54.3.2. Syme 1939, 333; Syme 1986, 387. It has also been argued that M. Primus acted on the direct orders of Augustus but was later sacrificed in the courts by his patron. B. Levick even suggested that M. Licinius Crassus was behind the prosecution of M. Primus in order to get to Augustus: “...to expose the constitutional impropriety of Augustus' behaviour”. Levick 1957, 159.

<sup>79</sup> Syme 1939, 404–5; Price 1984, 51.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Schmitthenner 1962, 31.

<sup>81</sup> Groag 1926, 280; Charlesworth 1934a, 118; Schmitthenner 1962, 34, n. 27; Reinhold 1988, 163.

been a convenient pretext for initiating the war.<sup>82</sup> The nature of his second campaign in particular indicates that he ultimately strove to subdue and conquer the entire region, rather than just secure the borders of his province. Perhaps the senate rejected a proposal from Crassus to mount a permanent Roman authority over Thracia and Moesia.<sup>83</sup> But what did Crassus strive for? He could not challenge Augustus directly, but in order to establish himself as an independent political power he had to retain his military *imperium*. It is a reasonable supposition that he sought a renewed proconsular command, something that had already been granted several other generals. The best place to fulfil those ambitions would probably be in Syria. This province offered possibilities for great conquests, rich bounty, honour and fame. The thought of retrieving the standards that his grandfather lost to the Parthians in 53 B.C. must have crossed Crassus' mind. A victorious campaign by Crassus against the Parthians might have proven disastrous to Augustus, though, and could not be allowed. In the late summer of 28 B.C. Crassus constituted a powerful agent in the civil strife that had persisted for more than half a century. A year later his assets were useless and it would have been futile to stake everything on the basis of them: "...the era of rival military leaders had closed."<sup>84</sup>

#### Conclusions

There are no compelling reasons to believe that Crassus' triumph was obstructed or purposely delayed.<sup>85</sup> It is possible that the celebration would have needed some time for preparations. Nevertheless, the situation was exceptionally favourable for Octavianus. He

<sup>82</sup> Groag 1926, 275–76.

<sup>83</sup> The provinces Moesia and Thracia were established in A.D. 6 and A.D. 46 respectively.

<sup>84</sup> Syme 1939, 324.

<sup>85</sup> The question is intimately connected to the date of Crassus' return from the province, which is uncertain. Still, R. Syme favoured this view (1939, 303).

could bring about his reforms and consolidate his position without facing the personal involvement/opposition of Crassus. A magistrate invested with *imperium* hoping to become a *triumphator* could not enter the city before the actual celebrations without losing his right to a triumph.<sup>86</sup> Thus, he could not show up in the senate but had to wait complaisantly outside the *pomerium*. It must also be emphasised that we have no direct evidence of any uprising, political opposition or even animosity towards Augustus from the part of Crassus after the battle of Actium. We only know for certain that they had previously been fighting on opposite sides in the civil wars, and that Crassus is never heard of again after his triumph in 27 B.C.<sup>87</sup> Still, the construction of an ostentatious victory monument is an indication that he was reluctant to play down his military prominence—a behaviour which easily might lead to discord.<sup>88</sup> The accomplishments of Crassus must have caused his "superior" some embarrassment, reminding the Roman people of the *spolia opima* that Augustus could not win for himself. No wonder Augustus chose to leave Rome before the event took place.<sup>89</sup> Thus, Crassus got to celebrate his triumph after the princeps' departure to Spain but was deprived of the *spolia opima*. To press on for this award or flaunt his achievements was probably in accord with Crassus' aristocratic pride and ambition, but might also prove to be politically unwise or even dangerous. Horatius' advice to shorten his sail and steer clear of dangerous waters would have served him well.

It has been put forward, in the case of A. Terentius Varro Murena, that Horatius never would have addressed a member of the highest

<sup>86</sup> Cicero, *Ad familiares* 8.6.1. Cf. M. Andreussi in *LTUR* IV (1999), s.v. "Pomerium", 99.

<sup>87</sup> R. Syme regarded the silence in contemporary sources, e.g. Velleius Paterculus, as an indication of discord. Syme 1939, 310.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. C. Cornelius Gallus above. The arguments for interpreting the tomb of Caecilia Metella as a monumental *tropaicum* raised by Crassus are presented in detail in my dissertation. Gerding 2002.

<sup>89</sup> Syme 1986, 274.

nobility with disrespect, nor openly meddled in politically sensitive affairs.<sup>90</sup> These objections might also have a bearing on M. Licinius Crassus. However, leaving aside the actual date of writing, it can be noted that the *Odes* were published several years after the Crassus affair had expired. This would make the content less explosive than if it had treated the contemporaneous trials of M. Primus or Licinius Murena. The ensuing silence in the literary sources after the triumph of Crassus may be interpreted as an indication that the *triumphator* chose to follow a more cautious route, or that he was fatally struck by the spiteful arrows of Apollo, but the basic proposition still holds: Crassus might well be the Licinius of Horatius *Ode* 2.10.

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<sup>90</sup> See for example Tränkle 1994, 208.

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