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PETER WHITE

Julius Caesar and the Publication of *Acta* in Late Republican Rome*

Scholarly discussion of the way in which information circulated in Late Republican Rome has long been colored by a belief that from 59 B.C. on, a journal or gazette published under state auspices reported on proceedings in the senate and on other activities of public life.¹ This belief is based on references in our sources to *acta* of various sorts and above all to a statement by Suetonius that when Julius Caesar became consul in 59, he arranged to have the *acta* of the senate made public as well as the *acta* of the people (Iul. 20.1). That happenings of certain kinds along with documents and other matters of general interest were brought to the attention of the Roman public is undeniable. But I will argue that at least during the period of the Late Republic, statements about the *acta* cannot be reconciled with circulation of a gazette. I will not attempt to discuss the situation after that. It is less clear, both because Augustus seems to have altered existing practice and be-

* I am grateful to R. A. KASTER and D. R. SHACKLETON BAILEY for comments on an earlier draft of this argument.

¹ The modern consensus can be traced from E. HÜBNER, *De senatus populi que Romani actis*, Neue Jahrbücher für classische Philologie, Suppl. 3, Leipzig 1859, 559–632 (with references to earlier studies) and W. RIEPL, *Das Nachrichtenwesen des Altertums*, Leipzig 1913, 376–429, down through B. BALDWIN, *The acta diurna*, *Chiron* 9, 1979, 189–203 (with additional bibliography). In a lengthy contribution (*Contribution à l'étude des sources d'Asconius dans ses relations des débats judiciaires*, Paris 1925, 9–62), J. HUMBERT argued as I do that the *acta diurna* could not have been a published journal. But his argument was so hard to follow and at times so arbitrary that his study has had little impact on subsequent discussion (it is not cited in BALDWIN). – The following sampler of references to the *acta* may help to illustrate the widespread acceptance of the notion that they were a publication of some sort: «journal» or «journals» R. J. A. TALBERT, *The Senate of Imperial Rome*, Princeton 1984, 308; «journaux» G. ACHARD, *La communication à Rome*, Paris 1994, 189; «César avait inventé la presse» J. CARCOPINO, *Les secrets de la correspondance de Cicéron*, Paris 1947, vol. 2, 185; «Staatszeitung» M. GELZER, *Caesar der Politiker und Staatsmann*, Wiesbaden 1960, 64; «questa pubblicazione» E. GABBA, *Appiani Bellorum Civilium Liber Quintus*, Florence 1970, xxi; «gazette» D. R. SHACKLETON BAILEY, *Cicero's Letters to His Friends*, Harmondsworth 1978, vol. 2, 222; M. REINHOLD and P. M. SWAN, *Cassius Dio's Assessment of Augustus*, in: K. A. RAAFLAUB and M. TOHER (ed.), *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and His Principate*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1990, 173; P. WHITE, *Promised Verse*, Cambridge, Mass. 1993, 118.

cause the evidence is more problematic (the *Historia Augusta* being now a prominent source). I begin with testimony about the ways in which Romans abroad received news from home, then discuss references to *acta* in Cicero, and finally consider the evidence of Suetonius.

The chief obstacle to believing that Caesar established a publication to disseminate news of the senate and the city is that there is no sign of its having found its way into anyone's hands in subsequent years. Persons away from Rome always had to turn to private informants if they wanted news from home. When Cicero's brother Quintus was serving in Gaul in 54, he asked Cicero to have his secretary Tiro write up reports on public affairs (*publica negotia*) in Rome if Cicero was too busy to pass along that news himself (QFr. 3.1.10). Caesar too gathered information through private channels when he was away from the capital. Writing in 46, Cicero says that even his quips and casual remarks to Caesar's friends in Rome were reported back to Caesar «along with the rest of what goes on, for so he has instructed» (Fam. 9.16.4).

Our clearest glimpse of an arrangement for reporting the news comes from an exchange of letters between Cicero and his friend Caelius Rufus. When Cicero went out to govern Cilicia in 51, Caelius promised to keep him current with events in the capital. He complied by writing the letters that now make up book 8 of the *Ad Familiares* and by attaching to them much longer digests of information taken from various sources.² Although none of Caelius' supplementary reports survives, the letters that accompanied them make clear what they contained. He sent off the first instalment with a boast that Cicero would find there «all the senate decrees, edicts, stories, and rumors» (Fam. 8.1.1). For his part, Cicero complained on receiving it that it was a raft of trivia concerning gladiatorial programs, court calendars, and petty thefts.³ But Caelius evidently stayed with his recipe nevertheless. One of the last instalments is described as containing details about games and funerals in Rome as well as about senatorial debates (Fam. 8.11.4).

² Note the word *volumen* by which Caelius characterizes one of his news supplements at Fam. 8.1.1. In Cicero's correspondence, *volumen* always indicates an unusually lengthy dispatch: see Att. 10.4.1, Fam. 3.7.1, 12.30.1.

³ *Tu mihi hoc tibi mandasse existimas, ut mihi gladiatorum compositiones, ut vadium dilata et Chresti compilationem mitteres?* (Fam. 2.8.1). In older discussions of the *acta*, the *compilatio Chresti* mentioned here was often understood to be a collection of news assembled either directly or indirectly by Chrestus; see, for example, RIEPL (above, note 1) 384–86. So far from functioning as a Latin cognate of our word «compilation», however, *compilatio* in Cicero's letter is a hapax. It is derived from the verb *compilare*, which regularly denotes an act of theft, and the structure of Cicero's sentence suggests that Chrestus' *compilatio* should be an item of news on a par with *gladiatorum compositiones* and *vadium dilata* rather than a medium of news. Hence the OLD and Cicero's modern translators CONSTANS and SHACKLETON BAILEY interpret *compilatio Chresti* as a theft committed by a slave.

Caelius' reports contained much the range of news that is believed to have filled the Caesarian *acta senatus* and *acta populi*. Yet they were the product of an initiative that was entirely private and, so far as we know, unique. Caelius indicates that he hired his own team of writers to prepare the reports,⁴ and he emphasizes that what took time was not just drafting them but tracking down material.⁵ There is nothing to indicate that he could draw on material already compiled in an urban journal. Nor is it plausible to credit Caelius himself with having invented the equivalent of a newspaper, since his reports had a circulation of only one, went out sporadically, and ceased when Cicero returned from Cilicia.

What letters reveal about the way in which Cicero, Caesar, and Quintus obtained information when they were away from Rome can be generalized for the whole of Cicero's correspondence. The only channels for news which Cicero identifies are letters, oral messages, and rumors.⁶ Unless evidence emerges from some other quarter to show that another source existed alongside them, the *acta* to which his letters refer are better understood as the news that arrives through these three channels than as issues of a gazette. «Actions», «proceedings», or «goings-on» is always the primary sense of the word *acta* in Latin. Writers who want to distinguish the written record of events from the events themselves will refer to *libri actorum* or *commentarii* or the like; *commentarii* is what Caelius called his reports.⁷ Yet the meaning of *acta* can slip so that it does at times stand for the report as well as the events reported (as happens with our own words «news» and «proceedings»). It is the ambiguity of the word *acta* that has allowed allusions to a gazette to be read into certain passages of Cicero's letters.

Acta together with other forms of *agere* is the word most often used when Cicero and his correspondents talk about exchanging news. Since that is one of the principal forms of interaction members of the Roman elite can practice when they are separated, it is a very well-documented epistolary convention. Often context excludes the possibility of reference to a gazette, as in this passage in which Cicero speaks of information available from three separate correspondents: *etsi diligenter ad me Quintus frater et Piso quae essent acta scripserant, tamen vellem tua te occupatio non impedisset quo minus . . . ad me quid ageretur et quid intellegeres perscribas*.⁸ And obviously no secondary source is involved in those letters in

⁴ *Data opera paravi qui . . . omnia persequerentur* (Fam. 8.1.1).

⁵ *Nescio quous otii esset non modo perscribere haec sed omnino animadvertere* (Fam. 8.1.1).

⁶ As he says to Caelius, *scribent alii, multi nuntiabunt, perferet multa etiam ipse rumor* (Fam. 2.8.1); compare *certior factus eram litteris, nuntiis, fama denique ipsa* (Fam. 3.11.1), *aut scribantur tibi aut nuntientur* (Att. 4.3.1).

⁷ Fam. 8.2.2 and 8.11.4.

⁸ Att. 3.22.1. Compare *tu velim litteras Cephalioni des de omnibus rebus actis, denique etiam de sermonibus hominum* (Att. 9.19.4); *quae sint acta quaeque agantur domesticorum tibi litteris declarari puto* (Fam. 5.8.3).

which Cicero undertakes to transmit news himself, as when he tells his brother: *scripsi ad te antea superiora; nunc cognosce postea quae sint acta*.⁹

In other cases Cicero writes more elliptically, leaving it uncertain whose reportage is in question. These are the passages in which a reference to the urban gazette has been most frequently surmised:

- (1) *quod suades ne longius discedamus dum acta mensis Mai ad nos perferantur, puto me esse facturum* (Att. 3.8.3);
- (2) *exspecto Thessalonicae acta Kal. Sext.* (Att. 3.15.6);
- (3) *habebam acta urbana usque ad Non. Mart.* (Att. 6.2.6);
- (4) *de Ocella parum ad me plane scripseras et in actis non erat* (Fam. 2.15.5);
- (5) *quoniam acta omnia mitti ad te arbitrabar, nihil erat quod singulis de rebus scriberem* (Fam. 10.1.2);
- (6) *nisi res urbanas actaque omnia ad te perferri arbitrarer, ipse perscriberem* (Fam. 10.28.3);
- (7) *quid scriberem non habebam (acta enim ad te mitti sciebam)* (Fam. 11.25.1);
- (8) *scelus adfinis tui Lepidi . . . ex actis quae ad te mitti certo scio cognosse te arbitrator* (Fam. 12.8.1);
- (9) *nostras res in actis perferri ad te satis scio* (Fam. 12.9.1);
- (10) *rerum urbanarum acta tibi mitti certo scio* (Fam. 12.23.2).

In some of these cases, a closer scrutiny of context would yield internal reasons to doubt that Cicero could have been speaking of a gazette. Two of the items cannot have appeared in any conceivable version of an official publication. The Ocella of (4) was the principal in a scandal: he had just been caught twice within three days in bed with somebody else's wife.¹⁰ The news which Cicero assumes that Cornificius has heard in (10) was also scandalous: it concerned a supposed attempt on Antony's life by Octavian in the year 44. But that story would hardly have broken in an official gazette while Antony was consul and present in Rome, and in defiance of Antony's desire to hush up the episode.¹¹ In items (1), (2), and (3) it is partly the attachment of a date that has suggested a journalistic source (since the gazette tends to be conceived in the image of a modern periodical). Yet Cicero can date news received from an ordinary correspondent in the same way: *acta quae essent usque ad VIII Kal. Iun. cognovi ex tuis litteris* (Att. 3.10.1).

⁹ QFr. 2.3.1; compare *avere te certo scio cum scire quid hic agatur, tum a me scire* (Att. 4.3.1); *de ceteris rebus quicquid erit actum, scribam ad te* (Fam. 1.2.4).

¹⁰ As Caelius had related at Fam. 8.7.2. SHACKLETON BAILEY concluded that, given the content of the Ocella story, Cicero's reference to *acta* had to have been meant as a joke. But even if one prefers to take it as literally referring to a chronicle, in this context the urban gazette is unlikely to be the chronicle Cicero had in mind. Since the news about Ocella originally came from Caelius, and since we know that during this period Caelius was sending Cicero compilations of news as well as letters, *acta* should refer to one of Caelius' compilations if it refers to anything.

¹¹ *Antonius . . . tanto se odio esse intellegit ut . . . rem proferre non audeat* (Fam. 12.23.2).

If cumulatively these passages still seem to point to an official gazette, it is because they have been isolated from the myriad other passages in the letters concerning the exchange of news and because the noun-form *acta* that occurs in them happens to be attested elsewhere as a word for documentary sources. In Cicero's parlance, however, the noun *acta* seems rarely if ever to be used of texts. From all the speeches and dialogs in the Ciceronian corpus, the Thesaurus cites only one instance in which the noun *acta* may refer to something cast in written form: it is found in the wording of a law that Cicero frames at Leg. 3.11: *ensores fidem legum custodiunt. privati ad eos acta referunt*.¹² The other examples cited from Cicero for this sense all come from the letters, and they are none other than the passages in the list we are considering. This pattern of distribution is so bizarre as to be suspicious on the face of it.

There is no doubt, on the other hand, that Cicero often uses the word *acta* where he is describing simple communication between individuals. He tells Atticus, for example, that he counts on him for forecasts of the political future, adding that the *acta* – what *has* happened – he can hear from everybody else.¹³ In a letter to his brother he winds up a lengthy narrative of a senate meeting with the words, «there you have the *acta* of one day».¹⁴ Writing to Atticus, he notes that in a recent letter «you give an account of the *acta* in the senate», whereas his friend Axius, «relating the *acta* of the same day», presents them in a somewhat different light (Att. 3.15.1 and 3). This last pair of cites is noteworthy because it comes from the same letter as item (2) in the list of supposed attestations of the gazette. A meaning obviously impossible in the first two mentions of *acta* has been foisted onto the third although nothing in the latter context suggests that Cicero's frame of reference has changed. In none of the ten passages listed, in fact, does context require the word to mean anything more concrete than «news». Wherever Cicero mentions *acta* in his letters, if he adds particulars about them, it invariably turns out that he is referring to private reports from friends and associates.

One way to salvage Suetonius' testimony about the publication of official *acta* despite contemporary letter-writers' obliviousness of them would be to conclude that Caesar's initiative lapsed after 59, as some scholars have suggested.¹⁵ That a measure which Caesar took in his executive capacity as consul would have lapsed

¹² TLL, vol. 1, col. 1409, line 45; even in the passage from the *De legibus*, it is far from certain that Cicero is referring to documents.

¹³ *Acta omnibus nuntiantibus, a te expecto futura* (Att. 7.13.4). In Cicero's categorization of news sources (see note 6 above), *nuntiare* and *nuntius* normally indicate oral informants, so that in this case the *acta* are not even connected with an epistolary source, let alone a documentary one.

¹⁴ *Habes acta unius diei* (QFr. 2.1.3). Note the resemblance of phrasing to item (3), where a reference to the gazette has been inferred.

¹⁵ J. W. A. RENSSSEN, *Disputatio de diurnis aliisque Romanorum actis*, Groningen 1857, 39, emphasized this possibility.

when he stepped down is indeed not unlikely. But before addressing that issue we need to reexamine Suetonius' statement, which is the only reason we have to believe that Caesar established a gazette in the first place.

In his biography of Caesar, the notice about the *acta* is the first of several details related under the topic heading of Caesar's consulate: *inito honore primus omnium instituit ut tam senatus quam populi diurna acta confierent et publicarentur* (Iul. 20.1).¹⁶ Suetonius' method of excerpting, rearranging, and drastically compressing data found in disparate sources often makes his statements difficult to interpret. Almost every element of this short passage has been the subject of controversy. The crux of it is *publicarentur*, which more than anything else has suggested that Suetonius may be talking about a «published» news medium. The verb *publicare* can refer to the act of putting a text into circulation, which happens to be a favorite use of the word in the younger Pliny. But among other writers that sense is atypical (the normal term being *edere*) and there is no clear example of it in the fifteen occurrences of the word in Suetonius (a possible exception is discussed in the next note). The core idea of *publicare* is to make something accessible or known to the public or to make it public property. In most cases it has to do not with texts, but with the confiscation of private property, the opening of public spaces or the setting up of monuments, or the advertisement of information.

When Suetonius does use the word in connection with texts, its meaning does not correspond to what we mean by publication.¹⁷ Towards the end of his life of Caesar, he reports that Augustus forbade «publication» of certain works that Caesar had written in youth. But what he means is not that they were not to be reproduced and distributed – he indicates that they were already in circulation – but that they were not to be included in the holdings of a library that Augustus was preparing to open to the public.¹⁸ In a biographical sketch of the grammarian Verrius Flaccus, Suetonius notes that Verrius «published» a calendar by inscribing it

¹⁶ Let it be noted here that Suetonius' statement has a sequel at Aug. 36, where it is said that Augustus *auctor . . . fuit . . . ne acta senatus publicarentur*. Whatever is meant by publication of the *acta* in one place must also be meant in the other.

¹⁷ Apart from the correlative passages in the life of Caesar and the life of Augustus that are in dispute, there is only one instance in which *publicare* in Suetonius can be construed to refer to publication in a literary sense. At Cl. 3.1 he writes that Claudius *disciplinis . . . liberalibus ab aetate prima non mediocrem operam dedit ac saepe experimenta cuiusque etiam publicavit*. Conceivably he means that Claudius circulated copies of his early literary endeavors. But *saepe* makes it more likely that he is thinking of recitations, Claudius' penchant for which is noted later in the life at 41.1-2. Performance in public is definitely what Suetonius has in mind when he uses *publicare* at Nero 21.2 (compare Tac. Ann. 16.4.3).

¹⁸ *Feruntur . . . ab adulescentulo quaedam scripta, ut Laudes Herculis, tragoedia Oedipus, item Dicta collectanea, quos omnis libellos vetuit Augustus publicari in epistula quam brevem admodum ac simplicem ad Pompeium Macrum cui ordinandas bibliothecas delegaverat misit* (Iul. 56.1).

on a marble wall in the forum at Praeneste.¹⁹ Finally, in a statement from the life of Caligula that seems particularly relevant to the notice about Caesar and the *acta*, we are told that Caligula «published financial accounts of the empire that Augustus had been accustomed to put up in public but that Tiberius had neglected to post».²⁰ As in the case of Verrius' calendar, the act of publication here is seen to consist in the setting up of a text in a public place. But this time the terms *publicare* and *proponere* are explicitly correlated, and (like publication of the *acta*) in a context of on-again, off-again decisions by the executive power.

If *publicare* at Iul. 20.1 is understood to mean that the *acta* were posted on notice boards, Caesar's action has a more comprehensible background in Roman practice than if it is understood as publication of a gazette.²¹ Texts of many sorts were regularly displayed in public – the infamous proscription lists, edicts, the pontifical chronicle, drafts of pending legislation, and calendars, to instance a few.²² The only official *acta* known in detail today, in fact, are known because they were posted. The records we have relating to the celebration of the Ludi Saeculares and to the activities of the Arval College were originally written for display, though on stone panels meant to stand in perpetuity rather than on the temporary notice boards that were the norm.²³

¹⁹ *Statuam habet Praeneste in superiore fori parte circa hemicyclium in quo fastos a se ordinatos et marmoreo parieti incisos publicarat* (Gr. 17.3).

²⁰ *Rationes imperii ab Augusto proponi solitas sed a Tiberio intermissas publicavit* (Cal. 16.1).

²¹ It is a curious aspect of RIEPL's account (above, note 1) that although he speaks throughout of the *Staatszeitung* published by Caesar and of privately published *Zeitungen* that coexisted alongside it, he nevertheless recognizes (391, 394) that when Suetonius wrote *publicarentur* he must have meant that the *acta* were posted on billboards. HÜBNER too (above, note 1) at the very end of his discussion observes that «Romae actorum exemplaria in libellorum formam redacta atque ita edita esse veri simile non est» (621) and goes on to suggest that the master-copy of the *acta* was posted on a *tabula* like other Roman documents.

²² Posted texts in Rome have attracted much attention recently: for fuller accounts, see M. CORBIER, *L'écriture dans l'espace public urbain*, in: *L'Urbs: Espace urbain et histoire* (I^{er} siècle av. J. C.–III^e siècle ap. J. C.), Rome 1987, 27–60, and G. SUSINI, *Le scritture esposte*, in: G. CAVALLO et al. (ed.), *Lo spazio letterario di Roma antica*, vol. 2: *La circolazione del testo*, Rome 1989, 271–305. For notice boards specifically, see G. S. BUCHER, *The Annales Maximi in the Light of Roman Methods of Keeping Records*, *AJAH* 12 (1987), 1995, 21–24.

²³ For the *acta* of the Ludi Saeculares, see G. B. PIGHI, *De ludis saecularibus populi Romani Quiritium*², Amsterdam 1965, and L. MORETTI, *Frammenti vecchi e nuovi del commentario dei Ludi Secolari del 17 A. C.*, *RPAA* 55–56, 1982–84, 361–79; for the *acta* of the Arval Brethren, W. HENZEN, *Acta Fratrum Arvalium quae supersunt*, Berlin 1874, and A. PASOLI, *Acta Fratrum Arvalium quae post annum MDCCCLXXIV reperta sunt*, *Studi e ricerche* 7, Bologna 1950. A fragment which purports to contain the *acta urbana* for seven days at the end of March and the beginning of April in the year 168 B. C. and which has long been dismissed as a Renaissance forgery has been partly rehabilitated by A. LINTOTT, *Acta Antiquissima: A Week in the History of the Roman Republic*, *PBSR* 54, 1986, 213–

The billboards recording the *acta senatus* and the *acta populi* did not survive and so almost any pronouncement about what they contained must rest on conjecture. The one assertion that seems relatively safe if unremarkable is that the *acta* were recorded as entries for specific dates. This I take to be what Suetonius has in mind when he labels them *diurna acta*.²⁴ Not only is the organization of text by days a salient feature of *acta* like those just mentioned that have survived, but for Roman readers it was a hallmark which instantly distinguished them from serious attempts at historical writing.²⁵

For the rest, I want to stress how little is known about the *acta* that Caesar posted. The state of our ignorance can best be adumbrated by posing a series of questions for which cogent answers are still lacking:

(1) We know that records of some sort were kept by at least some Roman magistrates including the consuls before Caesar's innovation in 59, and we also know that senate decrees were on file before then.²⁶ The question therefore arises: did the *acta senatus* that Caesar published contain a fuller or a different sort of report of senatorial business than existing records, or did Caesar's innovation consist essentially in displaying records that had previously languished out of public view?

28. It is a fascinating text, though (as LINTOTT indicates) its provenance remains much too dubious for any arguments to be founded on it. Any modern is apt to be wary of a purported textual find that is organized around the date of April 1.

²⁴ The word *diurna* here has been discussed almost exclusively in context of the debate over the urban gazette, the apparent implication being that the gazette was a daily. But if it is difficult to believe that Caesar published a newspaper, it is just about impossible to believe that he published a daily newspaper. RIEPL (above, note 1), a proponent of the gazette hypothesis, pointed out for a start that neither the senate nor the people met to conduct business every day (401) and he therefore concluded that Suetonius was misusing the term *diurna*. But if *acta* refers to official proceedings rather than to a gazette, one can afford to take a more tentative view of what *diurna* means. We have too few attestations of the word to know whether it is applied strictly to things that occur every day or whether it can also apply to things that happen day by day but not every day. The two ideas are not far apart and Latin – like English, for that matter – appears to have no fixed way of distinguishing the second from the first. Cicero has recourse to a Greek word, describing a newsy letter he had sent as written ἡμερολογιδόν (Att. 4.15.3). Servius Auctus on Aen. 1.373 says that in the pontifical chronicle the pontifex was accustomed to note *digna memoratu . . . domi militiaeque terra marique gesta per singulos dies*. I assume that in a similar context at Iul. 20.1 Suetonius made do with the word *diurnus*.

²⁵ Note Tacitus' distinction between important and less important sources at Ann. 3.3.2, *non apud auctores rerum, non diurna actorum scriptura reperio*, and his remark at Ann. 13.31.1 that it is in keeping with the dignity of the Roman People to treat *res illustres* in annals but to relegate trivial details about large buildings to the *diurnis urbis actis*.

²⁶ At Att. 13.33.3 Cicero assumes that it will be possible for one of Atticus' agents to consult a *liber* which contained the *senatusconsulta* of 146 B.C., and the *senatusconsultum de Oropius* of 73 B.C. refers to notebooks kept by the consuls (BRUNS, FIRA, 7th ed., Tübingen 1909, 180–85 no. 42).

(2) Did the notice boards contain the substance of what was later on file in archives (where we must assume that Asconius and the elder Pliny found the data they cite from Late Republican *acta*²⁷), or do archival *acta* represent a record of events that was distinct from the beginning? If we can assume that posted records and archived records were identical, a further problem arises. Like the term *annales* and a number of other Latin appellations for texts, *acta* is a generic or lower-case title rather than a specific one. Just as we cannot determine whether a mention of *annales* refers to Tacitus' work or Calpurnius Piso's or Ennius' without some clue from context, so the mere mention of *acta* does not pinpoint any one specific set of records. That *acta* is not a title proper is evident from the variety of ways in which our sources refer to them (*acta*, *acta diurna*, *acta publica*, *acta populi Romani*). The problem, however, is that not every writer may have had recourse to the word *acta* when talking about the records in which we are interested. I have argued that with one doubtful exception Cicero never uses the word in this sense. Yet perhaps some of his allusions to *tabulae publicae*, *publica monumenta*, and even *fasti* refer to the same body of material. Past accounts of the urban gazette have focused almost exclusively on occurrences of the word *acta* in our sources. But if the *acta* were posted records which were later transferred into archives, then the argument about them cannot be divorced from a reconsideration of Roman archives generally.²⁸

(3) How much detail did the *acta* which Caesar posted contain? The tendency in discussions of the urban gazette has naturally been to assume that the *acta* were extensive. The format of a *procès-verbal* is a model often invoked. But in a parallel case MARY BEARD has shown that the *acta* of the Arval Brethren «contrary to common assumption . . . are not rigidly standardised».²⁹ More particularly, she has emphasized that the earliest entries, from the Augustan period, are selective and spare in comparison with entries later on. Nor is the question about the

²⁷ Asconius p. 18.18–19.6 CLARK, 31.12–15, 44.9–45.1, 46.26–47.9, 49.6–8, Pliny NH 2.147 and perhaps 7.186. The handiest collection for all testimonia concerning the *acta* remains HÜBNER (above, note 1).

²⁸ The most helpful collection of evidence about Roman archives is G. CENCETTI, *Gli archivi dell'antica Roma nell'età repubblicana*, *Archivi* 7, 1940, 7–47, with good references to earlier discussions. By the term «archives», let me add, I mean nothing more than stored documents, with no implications regarding either the purpose or the manner of their storage. I would not dispute PHYLLIS CULHAM's contention that scholars have too readily equated Roman archives with the archives of a modern bureaucratic state, though it seems to me that she unduly minimizes the amount of record-keeping in which the Romans did engage (*Archives and Alternatives in Republican Rome*, CPh 84, 1989, 100–15). For a partial challenge to the minimalist view, see N. J. AUSTIN and N. B. RANKOV, *Exploratio: Military and Political Intelligence in the Roman World from the Second Punic War to the Battle of Adrianople*, London and New York 1995, 155–60.

²⁹ *Writing and Ritual: A Study of Diversity and Expansion in the Arval Acta*, PBSR 53, 1985, 114–62; the quote is from page 115.



The Myth of the <Damareteion>*

This article examines the evidence of Diodorus Siculus and others for a coin said to have been named a <Damareteion> after Damarete, consort of Gelon who was tyrant of Syracuse between 485 and 478 B.C. In it I hope to advance the discussion not only of a complex and controversial problem of Sicilian numismatics and art-history, but also of the historical methods and attitudes of Diodorus himself, who gives us the most detailed and, as it seems, the most circumstantial account of the <Damareteion>.

The ancient texts on the Damareteion are as follows:

1. Diodorus Siculus, 11,26,3: οἱ δὲ Καρχηδόνιοι τῆς σωτηρίας παραδόξως τετευχότες ταῦτά τε δώσιν προσεδέξαντο, καὶ στέφανον χρυσοῦν τῇ γυναικὶ τοῦ Γέλωνος Δαμαρέτῃ προσωμολόγησαν. αὕτη γὰρ ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἀξιωθείσα συνήργησε πλεῖστον εἰς τὴν σύνθεσιν τῆς εἰρήνης, καὶ στεφανωθείσα ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἑκατὸν ταλάντοις χρυσοῦ νόμισμα ἐξέκοψε τὸ κληθὲν ἅπ' ἐκείνης Δαμαρέτειον· τοῦτο δ' εἶχεν Ἀττικὰς δραχμὰς δέκα, ἐκλήθη δὲ παρὰ τοῖς Σικελιώταις ἀπὸ τοῦ σταθμοῦ πεντηκοντάλιτρον. Because they had unexpectedly gained their deliverance the Carthaginians agreed to give this and offered in addition a gold crown to Gelon's wife Damarete. The reason was that at their request she contributed a great deal to the making of the peace; she was crowned by them with 100 talents of gold, and struck the coin that was called after her a Damareteion. This coin was worth 10 Attic drachmae, and because of its weight was called among the Sicilian Greeks a fifty-litra piece.
2. Pollux, Onomasticon 9,84–5: ἴσως δὲ τῶν ὀνομάτων καταλόγῳ προσήκουσιν οἱ Κροίσειοι στατῆρες καὶ Φιλίππειοι καὶ Δαρεικοί, καὶ τὸ Βερενίκειον νόμισμα καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρειον καὶ Πτολεμαϊκὸν καὶ Δημαρέτειον, ὧν τοὺς ἐπωνύμους γνωρίζοντων ἅπαντων, ἡ Δημαρέτῃ Γέλωνος οὕσα γυνὴ κατὰ τὸν πρὸς τοὺς

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On present information, then, almost everything about Caesar's action in 59 remains obscure: exactly which *acta* he arranged to have made public and in what detail, how that innovation related to existing practice, and how long it endured. But it is a near certainty that he did not publish anything resembling a modern newspaper. And lest I seem to be quibbling over merely formal distinctions between newspapers and notice boards, let me point out a serious limitation on the capacity of Roman notice boards to organize the news. A modern newspaper defines news by closing a set of data: it presents (or aspires to present) all that its intended audience deems worth knowing about a particular time segment. But notice boards, as running tallies of events, were necessarily open-ended, and there is no reason to think that they aggregated news as a newspaper does. The *acta senatus* were separate from the *acta populi*, which in turn presumably consisted of separate subsets. Since notice boards tended to stand in the vicinity of the body whose *acta* they recorded,³⁵ a Roman who sought the news from posted sources would have had to gather it on foot, visiting the senate house, the Rostra, the seats of the various courts, and perhaps for some electoral news even the Campus Martius. Even if we could suppose that notice boards contained enough detail to make them worth consulting in the eyes of people like Cicero and his peers, the effort of gathering and sifting information from them would have been extremely tedious – as Caelius Rufus discovered.

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³⁵ For the «lieux d'affichage», see CORBIER (above, note 22) 43–46. The *acta* of the Arval Brethren were inscribed in the grove of the Dea Dia where their cult was chiefly celebrated and the *acta* of the Ludi Saeculares of 17 B. C. were set up in the Campus Martius on the site where the *ludi* were held.