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Pliny's thanksgiving: an introduction to the Panegyricus

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CHAPTER I

PRECURSORS AND PREDECESSORS

On 1 September 100 CE, Pliny the Younger rose in the senate to deliver the oration we know as the *Panegyricus*. This was a *gratiamum actio*, a 'vote of thanks', offered up to the emperor Trajan (98–117). It was given on the occasion of Pliny's attainment of the consulship, the prime goal of regular senatorial ambition and the highest rung, albeit of sufferer status, on the normal *cursus honorum*.¹ Pliny claims as the pretext for his speech a *senatus consultum* which had recommended that a vote of thanks be rendered to the emperor by the consuls (*Pan.* 4.1, cf. 90.3; *Ep.* 3.18.1, 6.27.1). In the speech and in his letters, Pliny immediately subjoins to this recommendation a normative aim: to demonstrate through praise the behaviour and characteristics expected of a good *principes* (*Pan.* 4.1; *Ep.* 3.18.2). In offering praise to his emperor on this occasion, Pliny was participating in a vibrant rhetorical tradition. Its tropes and themes reflect a vital and continuous contemporary culture,² while its roots extended a very long way back into republican culture and politics on the one hand, and on the other into Greek traditions of praise which had been crystallized to a certain extent by Isocrates in the mid-fourth century BCE, but had predated him considerably.³

Special emphasis falls upon the *laudatio funebris*, or funeral oration, in Polybius' account of the aristocratic funeral (6.53–4). He recounts this institution to illustrate the republic's capacity to induce its youth to perform acts of bravery and to endure danger for the sake of reputation.⁴ The oration was given from the rostra in the Forum on the occasion of both public and private funerals. The laudand could be of either sex, although women are

¹ And more: 'the pinnacle of the Roman social and political order', as Pliny constructs it in the speech; see Noreña, p. 38 in this volume.

² See Gibson, pp. 104–24 in this volume.

³ See e.g. Braund (1998) 53–4.

⁴ On which: Vollmer (1925); Crawford (1941); Kierdorf (1980).

more commonly encountered as subjects of a *laudatio* in the last century BCE.⁵ A second oration might also be delivered before the senate in the case of an exceptionally important individual.⁶ The practice of delivering a funeral oration was apparently very early, and (naturally tendentious) claims were made for the venerable antiquity of the practice. Plutarch asserts, for instance, that P. Valerius Poplicola delivered the *laudatio* for L. Junius Brutus the liberator (Plut. *Pub.* 9.7.102). Likewise, Dionysius of Halicarnassus claimed that the Roman *laudatio* predated the Athenian funeral oration, the *epitaphios logos* (S.17.3). The *epitaphios logos* was in any case a distinct phenomenon on a number of counts. It had as the subject of its praise a collective of fallen warriors and its exclusive context was the public funeral. There was moreover a civic dimension to the *epitaphios logos* which was muted by comparison within the *laudatio funebris*. In the Athenian funeral oration, the virtues of the dead came before the achievements of the city. The speech also offered consolation to living relatives and an exhortation to the audience to imitate the virtues of the dead.⁷

In the *laudatio funebris*, the orator would be the son of the deceased, or another suitable relative. A serving magistrate within the family would be an especially appropriate choice (Polyb. 6.53.2). The speech would comprise two parts: praise of the individual's achievements, followed by praise of his or her ancestors. Sources underscore the simple and unadorned nature of the speech. This was an ideal which was in tension both with the practical political utility of the speech and with panegyric's broader tendency to embellish and adorn (i.e. to be *laeta et magnifica et sublimis*; Quint. *Inst.* 11.3).⁸ The object of a *laudatio funebris* was to locate and measure the contribution of the deceased to the reputation of his ancestors. In the imperial period, the emperor was eulogized by his successor, in accordance with a decree of the senate (Quint. *Inst.* 3.7.2). After the delivery of the *laudatio funebris*, it was preserved by the family of the deceased, and could be published more widely. Cicero writes of the enjoyment derived from reading *laudationes* (*Orat.* 11.37; *Brut.* 16.61–2).

There were other Roman precursors. The year 63 BCE saw Cicero's inaugural consular speech before the public assembly, the second *De Lege Agraria*. In it, he states that the first *contio* of a new consul was by tradition

⁵ See Crawford (1941) 21–2.

⁶ Cf. Augustus, praised by Tiberius in the Temple of Caesar and by Drusus from the rostra (Cass. Dio 56.34; Suet. *Aug.* 100.3).

⁷ On this see Loraux (1986) 1–3, 42–3.

⁸ On the style of the encomium, see Innes, pp. 69–70 and Hutchinson, pp. 125–41 in this volume.

devoted to (a) rendering thanks to the people in return for their *beneficium*, and (b) praising the consul's own family (*Agr.* 2.1). A similar function to that of the *laudatio funebris* thus emerges in Cicero's formulation, in that the type and measure of the contribution made by the speaker to his family's dignity were at issue.⁹ One significant departure from the funeral oration is that the praise in this context was explicitly self-reflexive. This custom was adapted in the imperial period. Now the new consuls rendered thanks, *ex senatus consilio* (*Pan.* 4.1, cf. 90.3), both to the gods and to the emperor, in essence, for the latter's gift of their office.¹⁰ This new manifestation of the consular thanksgiving was in place by the end of Augustus' principate,¹¹ and it endured throughout the early imperial period. This was, for example, the type of speech (it seems) that Verginius Rufus was rehearsing for his third consulship of 97 when he slipped and broke his thigh (Plin. *Ep.* 2.1.5). Each year of the imperial period, then, every ordinary and suffect consul – or perhaps a representative from each pair – delivered a speech in the senate whose basic form, theme and intent would have been identical to those of the *Panegyricus*. But we are not permitted to imagine that the published version of Pliny's speech is representative of this proliferation of thanksgiving speeches. Pliny's speech is, self-consciously, a radical extension of the generic norms obtaining in the first century CE.

Formally prescribed discourses of praise were not, of course, unique to the Romans. Isocrates makes a claim to being the original author of a prose encomium in his *Euzorgos* (c.370 BCE). The most important axes on which his claim rests are that his praise is expressed in prose rather than poetry, and that its subject is a human being rather than a mythological figure (*Euzorg.* 8).¹² He also qualifies his claim on primacy by a clause in which he claims to have anticipated 'those who devote themselves to philosophy'. Others then may have anticipated these men in authoring prose encomia. In any case, Isocrates' claim is almost demonstrably false. Aristotle writes of an encomium of Hippolochus of Thessaly (*Rhet.* 1368a7) and Isocrates' own *Buciris* displays through its tropes and methods that encomia were clearly subject to prescription by professional theoreticians.¹³ In fact, the restrictive concessions that Isocrates has to establish in order to make a claim on

⁹ Cf. *Agr.* 2.1: *Qua in oratione non nulli aliquando digni maiorum loco reperimus, plerique autem hoc perficimus ut tantum maioribus eorum debitum esse videtur, unde etiam quod posteros solvere non debent.* See further Manuwald, pp. 96–7 in this volume.

¹⁰ Cf. Talbert (1984) 227–9; Millar (1993) 14: 'the Emperor is the *author* of the *honors*, and the consulship itself is a gift (*res data*) which partakes of the *matestas* of the giver' (on the language of Ov. *Pont.* 4.9.65–70).

¹¹ Cf. Ov. *Pont.* 4.4.23–42 on the consul of 13, and *Pont.* 4.9.41–52, 65–70 on the consul of 17.

¹² A good, succinct overview at Hunter (2003) 13–15. ¹³ Hunter (2003) 14.

primacy in the *Enagoras* are indicative of the rich poetic and cultural traditions of epideictic praise feeding into prose encomia in his day. A close rhetorical and thematic nexus obtains between archaic (and especially Pindaric) praise poetry and the Athenian *epitaphios logos*. Isocrates' true claim to generic primacy might more helpfully be seen as his fusion of the two strands.¹⁴

The *Panegyricus* was thus the inheritor of a number of important cultural, political, rhetorical and literary contexts which had been developing in specific modes and circumstances in both Greece and Rome for over five hundred years prior to its delivery. The various functions and nuances attending these precursors do make their presence felt within the rhetorical fabric of Pliny's speech in the contexts of its delivery, and in its modes of production. But we are liable to mislead if we promote the importance of these similar but distinct genres at the expense of the specific cultural, social and political circumstances informing the moment of the speech itself.¹⁵ Each speech in the epideictic mode both constructs its own response to the immediate circumstances informing its delivery and signals its own relationship with its perceived or declared precursors.¹⁶ It is the function of this volume to examine Pliny's *Panegyricus* against precisely these tendencies.

SIGNIFICANCE

The *Panegyricus* is an exceptionally important speech. This is a fact more often conceded than celebrated in modern scholarship.¹⁷ It is 'our best example of imperial *eloquentia*'.¹⁸ It is the only complete speech to survive to us from the last of Cicero's *Philippics* in 43 BCE to the celebration of the emperor Maximian's birthday in 289 (*Pan. Lat.* x(2)), a speech which itself draws upon the language and imagery of Pliny's praise.¹⁹ We can also assign importance to the *Panegyricus* irrespective of the accident of its survival. It is innovative. Pliny's is apparently the first of the consular

¹⁴ Braund (1998) 54: 'Like Pindar in his epinician hymns, Isocrates praises an individual, as in the funeral oration, his subject is dead'; cf. Hunter (2003) 15. On Isocrates and Pindaric encomium see Race (1987).

¹⁵ Braund (1998) 55.

¹⁶ For a concrete illustration of this tendency see Rees, pp. 175–88 in this volume.

¹⁷ The expressed disappointment of Syme (1938) 217–24 (here endorsing and transmitting the aesthetic criteria of his nineteenth-century predecessors), Syme (1988a) 114, 94–5 and Goodyear (1982) 660 has become totemic of the speech's modern reception. For two representative examples see Seager (1983) 129 and Kraus (2000) 160.

¹⁸ Gowing (2005) 120.

¹⁹ Although the overall impact of the *Panegyricus* upon the *XII Panegyrici Latini* must not be overstated, see Rees, p. 187 in this volume.

gratum actones to be revised, expanded and published.²⁰ The reason for this revision and unusually wider dissemination is alluded to in a number of places within the speech and the letters which mention it. In a letter to Vibius Severus (*Ep.* 3.18) Pliny claimed that he believed it his duty as one of the *boni cives* to publish the speech in order to encourage Trajan along what he saw as the right path, and to offer instruction to future emperors through the content of this document (3.18.2). We might also add as an influence the Trajanic innovation of publishing senatorial acclamations in the *acta diurna* (*Pan.* 75, 95.1): publishing the *Panegyricus* was a decision very much in step with the spirit of its age. The immediate reception of the speech and its publication is difficult to gauge accurately, since all of the evidence for it comes from Pliny himself. One might tentatively consider as indices of the speech's perceived contemporary relevance the small clique of Pliny's friends who were not satisfied with two days of recitation of the *Panegyricus* and asked for a third (3.18.4). The success of the speech is unlikely to be unrelated to the fact that Vettienus Severus wrote to Pliny for advice on how to compose a related species of *gratum actio*, that delivered by the consul designate (*Ep.* 6.27). Finally, one aspect of Pliny's achievement can be measured by the fact that the literary genre of the prose panegyric was established by the 140s.²¹

PLINY'S PROGRAMME

The notion found in rhetorical treatises and endorsed by Pliny, that praise ought to persuade the recipient to a desirable course of action (*Arist. Rhet.* 1.9.36; cf. *Plin. Ep.* 3.18, *Pan.* 4.1), prompts a summary consideration of Pliny's programme of advice for his emperor. In Pliny's formulation, the speech was delivered 'so that good rulers should recognize what they have done and bad ones learn what they ought to do' (*ut... boni principes quae facerent recognoscerent, mali quae facere deberent*). Indeed, a consistent programme of advice is recoverable from the specific *loci* of praise within the speech. Viewed through this lens, the *Panegyricus* emerges as a manifesto in the true sense of the word. It offers admonitory guidance to Trajan not only on issues which were central to the concerns of the senatorial aristocracy, but on many other aspects of the principate besides. It is important, both because it offers a prominent senator's totalizing view of what an ideal

²⁰ Dury (1938) 3–8; see too Norcia, pp. 40–1 in this volume.

²¹ For the immediate generic impact of the speech, see Rees, p. 176 in this volume.

emperor should be, and because it embodies the values which a newly ennobled member of the senate wished to be seen to endorse.

The following suite of advice has been assembled from those moments in the *Panegyricus* when Pliny either commends Trajan's actions – whether real, alleged to have happened, predicted, or claimed for Trajan by Pliny – or is explicitly prescriptive regarding the ideal behaviour of the *princeps*. In order to arrive at this programme, Pliny's varying statements of approval have been recast into simple and impersonal admonitions. The following duties of the good emperor emerge.

The emperor ought to sustain the notion of his own social parity with his peers (2.3, 2.4, 22.1–2, 23.1, 24.2, 42.3, 48, 49.5, 60.4, 64.4, esp. 71, 78.4). His supremacy ought not to diminish or impair the *dignitas* of his subjects (19.1–2, 22.2, 24.5, 77.4). The emperor ought to be accessible (23.3, 24.3–4, 47.4–5). He ought to be prompt and present in his help (80.3). The emperor ought to prefer simplicity of appearance or taste, and cultivate the appearance of his former status as a private citizen; he ought to disdain artifices (3.5, 3.6, 20.1, 23.6, 24.2, 24.3, 43.2, 49.7–8, 81) and the extravagant blandishments of previous emperors (7.3, 82.6, 82.9).

The emperor ought to refuse, or remain reluctant to accept, further powers and titles (2.3, 3.5, 7.1, 9.4, 10.4, 11.4, 21.1, 55.9, 65.1) – for himself or for his family (84.6) – or an excessive number of consulships (56.3, 57.1–5, 58, 79); he ought to discourage extravagant praise (54.3–4, 55), or praise offered in or on inappropriate media, occasions, genres and contexts (54.2). He must not descend into tyranny (45.3, 55.7) or corruption (53.1–5) or inspire fear (46.1, 46.7). The emperor's words and promises ought to be trusted (66.5); he ought to be constant (66.6, esp. 74). He ought to bind himself to the laws (65).

The emperor ought to participate fully in civic and political functions, ceremonies and rituals (60.2, 63.1–3, 64, 77, esp. 77.8, 92.3). He must take the consulship seriously (59, 93.1) and observe constitutional regulations about the consulship (60.1, 63–77, 76). He ought to allow the senate a sensible and dignified function (54). He ought to listen to the senate's opinion; his choices and emotions ought to be mirrored in theirs (62.2–5, 73); he ought not to promote his own favourites against the senate's choice (62.6). He ought to encourage the senate to be free and to participate in the running of the state (66.1–2, 67, 69, 76, 87.1, esp. 93.1–2); he ought to treat the senate with respect (69.3, *reuerentiali*); he ought to allow ex-consuls to assist him freely and fully with their aid and counsel (93.3).

The emperor must attend to and accommodate senatorial requests or prayers (2.8, 4.3, 6.4, 33.2, 60.4, implied at 78.1, 86–7), and prayers in

general (79.6): this is an earthly reflection of the gods' accommodation of human prayers (3.5). Conversely, he must not accommodate the 'insinuating counsel' of self-interested parties, such as *delatores* (41.3): the emperor ought not to permit delation (34, 36, 37–9, 42, 62.9).

The emperor ought to embody selfless and unceasing service to the state (5.6, 7.1, 7.3, 21.1–4, 67.4, 68, 79.5). He ought to behave and administer the empire with maximum transparency and visibility (20.5, 21.4, 49.5, 56, 62.9, 83.1).

The emperor ought neither to buy peace, nor to claim undeserved triumphs, but should increase the empire in the best tradition of the middle republic (12.1–4, 16–17, 56.4–8). The emperor ought to be personally active with the army (13.1–5); he ought to increase their discipline (18.1, 19.3–4, 23.3), but not value them over the civilian population (25.2).

The emperor ought to recognize and commend the good deeds of his subordinates (15.5, 18.1 military; 44.5–8, 60.5–7 civilian), and not reward *uitia* (45.3); he ought to advance the good (61–2, esp. 62.10, esp. 70, esp. 88.3, esp. 91.2 (Pliny and Terullus)) and protect against the impact of the bad (46.8). The emperor ought to show respect to the genealogical claim to pre-eminence of the nobility, and he ought to advance them accordingly (69.5–6), but promote new men according to merit (70.1–2).

The emperor ought to be scrupulous in the delivery of his largesse (25–6, *congruam*). He ought to care for the poor as much as the *proceres* (26.6). The emperor's generosity ought not to be dependent upon the deprivation of others, or serve as a distraction from or recompense for any vice (27.3–4, 28); he ought not to expect remuneration *via* wills (43.5). The emperor ought to embody financial propriety and self-control (29.4, 36.3, 50, 55.5; implicitly criticized at 41).

The emperor ought to ensure *libertas* (27.1, 58.3, 78.3) and *securitas* (27.1, 29 for the corn supply, 30.5–32 for Egypt, 35.4 from delation, 36.4 for the working of the court, 43 for wills, 44.5, 48.2 at court). He ought to allow freedom of expression at the games (33.3).

The emperor ought not to be overly prescriptive in his guidance of morality (45.4–6). He ought to support the liberal arts (47). He ought to cultivate the continuing love of his subjects (49.3). He ought to discharge the functions of friendship as well as those of imperial rule (85).

The emperor ought to have simple piety towards the gods (52). His justice ought not to be compromised by a desire for self-enrichment (80.1–2). He ought to keep close control over his family (83.2–84.8) and freedmen (88.1).

A related matter is the abstraction of such behaviour into virtues.²² It has long been recognized that a fundamental characteristic of these imperial virtues is their celebration of differing nuances of the emperor's ability to moderate his own absolute power and to observe self-imposed limitations.²³ Trajan's virtues in the *Panegyricus* constitute the largest cluster of these abstractions attaching to a single human being in the early imperial period.²⁴ Many of them overlap in basic meaning or at least share nuances. They delineate, as it were, Pliny's view of the appropriate arenas in which an emperor should aspire to pre-eminence.

Consider the most commonly invoked virtues in the speech. Those appearing over ten times in the *Panegyricus* are *modestia* (16), *moderatio* (16), *fides* (16), *virtus* (16), *reverentia* (15), *cura* (14), *labor* (14), *liberalitas* (13), *securitas* (12), *pudor* (11), *pietas* (11), *benignitas* (10) and *maiestas* (10). It is completely consistent with Trajan's public imagery that *humanitas* and *diuinitas* (7 times each) receive the same emphasis within the speech.²⁵ We can clearly see Pliny's programme reflected *in nuce* in this emphasis. *Modestia* and *moderatio* form the bedrock of Pliny's prescription: synonymous terms treating Trajan's basic self-restraint (*TLL* s.v. *moderatio* 1206.5–9). *Pudor* is the inner quality which (positively put) compels such *moderatio*, or (negatively) prevents Trajan from transgressing it. The property of *reverentia* extends this basic notion of Trajan's self-regulation into an observable demonstration of it in his behaviour. This is the deference with which he chooses to treat august bodies such as the senate (*Pan.* 69.4); it also pertains to the deference owed to his standing as emperor, his *dignitas*, his *maiestas* (*Pan.* 95; *TLL* s.v. *maiestas* 156.1–52). *Securitas* (public security) is, in essence, the benefit accruing to the community as a result of both the emperor's self-moderation and his deferential dynamic. This is Trajan's maintenance of good faith in his relationships (*TLL* s.v. *fides* 675.10–676.45). But *fides* also has a civic dimension, by which magistrates

²² For an overview see Charlesworth (1937) 105–38; Weinstock (1971) 228–59; Pears (1981) 827–948; Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 298–323.

²³ Wallace-Hadrill (1981) 316: 'These are all social virtues, qualities of self-restraint. The focus is not on the possession of power, but on the control of it in deference to other members of society.'

²⁴ There appear to be fifty-one; some of the abstractions in the following list may not meet everyone's definition of a virtue. They are *abstinentia*, *auctoritas*, *benignitas*, *bonitas*, *canor*, *caritas*, *clementia*, *comitas*, *constans*, *continentia*, *cura*, *diuinitas*, *facilitas*, *familiaritas*, *felicitas*, *fides*, *fortitudo*, *fragilitas*, *grauitas*, *hilaritas*, *humanitas*, *indulgentia*, *incomptas*, *institia*, *labor*, *liberalitas*, *maiestas*, *magistratus*, *maiestas*, *mansuetudo*, *moderatio*, *modestia*, *munificentia*, *opes*, *patientia*, *pietas*, *providentia*, *pudor*, *reverentia*, *sanctitas*, *sapientia*, *securitas*, *seueritas*, *simplicitas*, *suauitas*, *temperantia*, *tranquillitas*, *ueritatem*, *ueritas*, *uigilantia*, *uirtus*.

²⁵ See Roche (2003).

²⁶ See Braund (2009) 180 on Sen. *Clem.* 11.8.

and judges equitably discharge their responsibilities (*TLL* s.v. *fides* 679.4–70).²⁷ *Liberalitas* and its near synonym, *benignitas*, encompass the personal generosity of the emperor (*TLL* s.v. *benignitas* 1899.21–1901.32),²⁸ while *cura* and *labor* speak to his industry. *Pietas* pertains to various aspects of his mediating role between the Roman state and the gods, his respectful devotion and attention to the duties owed to the gods and state, as well as his relationship with his family. All of these virtue terms are manifestations of his basic, all-encompassing excellence, his *uirtus*. The density as well as the variety of virtue terms in the *Panegyricus* is noteworthy and instructive: these 13 most frequent virtues appear a total of 174 times throughout the 95 chapters of the speech.

A comparison with other prominent documents which are parently concerned with promoting or evaluating imperial ideals – the *Res Gestae* (c.13), the *Senatus Consultum de Prisme Patre* (abbr. *SCPP*, 20 CE), Seneca's *De Clementia* (55–6 CE), and Suetonius' *De Vita Caesarum* (early second century CE) – will assist both in offering context to the imperial ideals featured in the speech and in measuring the degree to which Pliny's choice of virtues is either typical or idiosyncratic. Of the four virtues claimed for Augustus on the *clipeus uirtutis* of 27 or 26 BCE (*ILS* 8; *RGDA* 34.2) – *uirtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia* and *pietas* – both *uirtus* (sixteen times) and *pietas* (eleven times) are frequent in the *Panegyricus*, but neither could have been omitted in praise of any emperor (and *pontifex maximus*). Consider their frequency in the *SCPP* (*pietas* nine times; *uirtus* twice), in *De Clementia* (*pietas* twice; *uirtus* fifteen times) and Suetonius (*pietas* eleven times; *uirtus* twelve times). This would especially be the case for *uirtus* – in its military dimension (*OLD* 1b) – in one who self-consciously cultivated the image of himself as a *uir militaris*. It may surprise that *clementia* and *iustitia* occur with relative infrequency in the *Panegyricus* (three times each), but the discretionary and judicial nuances of *moderatio*,²⁹ *benignitas* (*TLL* s.v. *benignitas* 1899.21–1901.32) or *liberalitas*, upon which Pliny does place a great deal of emphasis, may have obviated the need for stressing *clementia*. Virtues which appear in Pliny as well as in the biographies of his friend and contemporary Suetonius, but do not appear in these earlier documents, are *reuerentia* (15), *labor* (14), *pudor* (11), *grauitas* (5), *facilitas* (4), *opes* (4), *sapientia* (3), *simplicitas* (3), *fortitudo* (3), *abstinentia* (1), *castitas* (1), *comitas* (1) and *munificentia* (1). Virtues which Pliny mentions in the speech but which do not rate a mention in Suetonius are *benignitas* (10), *fragilitas* (5),

²⁷ See too Hallgouarc'h (1963) 23–40.

²⁸ See Noreña (2001) 160–4.

²⁹ For which see Braund (2009) 189 on Sen. *Clem.* 1.2.2.

inglantia (4), *mansuetudo* (4), *temperantia* (2), *magnanimitas* (2), *bonitas* (2), *providentia* (1), *suavitas* (1), *candor* (1), *incunditas* (1) and *divinitas* (1). The only virtues mentioned by Pliny which are absent from all of these documents are *familiaritas* (2) and *continentia* (1). The wide semantic nuances of each of these terms would ensure that the basic meaning of each item is represented in one related virtue term or another in many of Pliny's predecessors. His innovation in terms of political thought is not at issue. But the fragmenting of these into an unprecedented array of properties and the heaping of them onto the emperor in (as far as we can see) unparalleled quantity is both a significant reflection of Pliny's rhetorical agenda and strategy in the *Panegyricus*, and a powerful index of the public centralization of all virtuous behaviour into the person of the emperor. The totalizing expression of these various virtues and the moral and ethical axes along which they are measured find form at 4.5:

Eniuit aliquis in bello, sed obsoleuit in pace; alium toga sed non et arma honorarunt; reuerentiam ille terrore, alius amorem humilitate captavit; ille quaestram domi gloriam in publico, hic in publico partem domi perdidit; postremo adhuc nemo exstitit, cuius vitiores nullo uitiorum confinio laederentur. At principi nostro quanta concordia, quantumque concentus omnium laudum omnisque gloriae contigit! Ver nihil seueritati eius hilaritate, nihil grauitati simplicitate, nihil maiestati humanitate detrahiunt! (Plin. *Pan.* 4.5)

One man may have been eminent in war but fallen into torpor in peace; another man may have been adorned with honour by the toga but not by weapons of war; one gains respect through fear, another gains love through pandering to the base; one man destroys in public the reputation he acquired at home, while another loses his public reputation through his private life. In sum, there has been no one whose virtues were not dimmed by the close proximity of his vices. But what great harmony, what a symphony of all praise and of every glory has fallen to our *princeps*! Nothing is detracted from his sternness by his good humour, nothing from his gravity by his lack of pretension, nothing from his majesty by his essential humanity!

The metaphor of the emperor's virtues existing in *concordia* within his person mirrors his exemplary function to his family (see esp. 83-4), the senate and the state as a whole.

PLINY ON THE NEGATIVE EXAMPLE

Trajan's superlative qualities are sharply offset by the negative example of previous emperors, especially (but not exclusively) Domitian. Pliny's Domitian is, very clearly, a rhetorical construction and a product of the persuasive

agenda of his speech.³⁰ It is instructive to compare the criticisms levelled against him by Pliny with the traditional *loci* of Ciceronian invective as established by Christopher Craig.³¹ Of the seventeen standard *loci* isolated by Craig,³² eleven are present in Pliny's remarks regarding Domitian.³³ This is a relatively high proportion by comparison with Ciceronian speeches: Cicero's *In Pisonem* has thirteen, his second *Philippic* features fifteen.³⁴

Thus, Pliny's description of Domitian locked away in the palace (*Pan.* 48.3-5) illustrates three set pieces of Roman invective: Domitian's hostility towards his own family, his cruelty towards his citizens, and his physical instantiation of his own vices (e.g. his arrogant brow, the *ira* in his eyes, the womanish pallor spreading across his body, and the blush indicating his *impudentia*). Consider also that the image (at *Pan.* 49.6) of Domitian's lonely gluttony (*distentus solitaria cena*), yielding to menacing surveillance and insults heaped upon his guests, before subsiding once more into secret feasting and unspecified private excesses, draws directly upon a standard generic marker of invective.³⁵ Pliny harps on Domitian's hypocrisy under a number of headings and nuances: that he deified Tiberius only to be a brother of a god (11.1); that his *congruaria* were offered up only to cover his *uitia* (28.1-2); that his attitude of respect before the senate was a show and that he cast off his consular obligations once outside the senate house (76.5). Pliny repeatedly returns to the notion of Domitian's avarice (41.2-3, 42, 43, 50.5 on his *detestanda auaritia*) and is expansive on the related *topos* of the plundering of private and public properties, whether en route to or from the provinces (20.4), in the areas around the city (50.1), or in the capital itself in abuse of his position as judge (80.1). Domitian is surely

³⁰ For further comments on Pliny's Domitian, see Hutchinson, pp. 128-31 in this volume, who also locates him within a rhetorical context (in the failed attempt at the sublime), and Henderson, pp. 158 and 165-2 in this volume, who discusses the figure of Domitian against the backdrop of historical exemplarity in the speech.

³¹ See Craig (2004) 189-92, who draws on Nisbet (1965), Siss (1975) and Merrill (1975).

³² *Viz.* embarrassing family origin; unworthiness of one's family; physical appearance; eccentricity of dress; gluttony or drunkenness possibly leading to cruelty and/or lust; hypocrisy for appearing virtuous; avarice; bribe-taking; pretentiousness; sexual misconduct; hostility to family (*misophibia*); cowardice; financial embarrassment or the squandering of one's patrimony; aspirations to tyranny or *regnum*; cruelty to citizens and/or allies; plundering of private and public property; oratorical ineptitude.

³³ Traditional *loci* of invective appearing in *Pan.* (first instances only follow in brackets): (1) physical appearance (48.4); (2) gluttony leading to cruelty (49.6); (3) hypocrisy for appearing virtuous (11.1); (4) avarice (41.2); (5) pretentiousness (24.5); (6) sexual misconduct (52.3); (7) *misophibia* (48.3); (8) cowardice (11.4-5); (9) aspirations to tyranny or *regnum* (2.3-4); (10) cruelty to citizens and/or allies (18.3); (11) plundering of private and public property (20.4).

³⁴ Craig (2004) 191. It is worth noting the comparable length of all three speeches: Cic. *Mil.*: 105 chapters; *Pis.*: 99 chapters; Plin. *Pan.*: 95 chapters.

³⁵ See too the vaguer references made at *Pan.* 63.3.

meant to be among those emperors who, in their scorn for the citizenry, were carried on the shoulders and bent backs of slaves to tower above their peers (22.1, 24.5): an index of the emperor's pretentiousness as well as his aspirations to tyranny. So too, the emperor's sexual misconduct, in the form of his incestuous relationship with his niece, is referred to explicitly and repeatedly (52.3, 63.7).

There are three *loci* upon which Pliny spends most space and time in the speech. Domitian's cowardice is illustrated with regard to foreign enemies (11.4–5, 12); rebellious governors (14.5); the citizens of the capital, in terror of whom he locked himself away in the palace (49.1); and even amid the *otium* of his retreat at Alba Longa (82.1). Domitian's aspirations to tyranny are likewise illustrated under a number of diverse headings: his appropriation of divine status (2.3–4, 52.3); the servitude of the senate (2.5); the adulation he demanded through shows (54.1); his extravagant honours (54.4, 58). Domitian's cruelty receives the most frequent attention in the speech: he unpredictably turned on and assaulted audience members at the games (33.3–4); *maiestas* trials filled the coffers of the *fiscus* and *aerarium*, the latter of which was a repository for the blood-soaked spoils of citizens (42.1); he was surrounded by *delatores* (45.1); he massacred the citizen body (48.3); he was armed with terror (49.3); he plotted exile and death for the consuls (63.3); he threatened Pliny and Terullus and massacred their friends (90.5).

Pliny's process of selection and his agenda in the *Panegyricus* emerge more clearly in the light of those traditional invective *loci* appearing in Suetonius' *Domitian* and Cassius Dio book 67. In Suetonius' biography and in the other Flavian lives, fifteen of the seventeen *loci* are deployed. Suetonius notes the obscurity of Domitian's family origin (*Vesp.* 1.1) and his early poverty (*Dom.* 1.1). He is completely explicit that he was unworthy of his family (*Vesp.* 1.1: *gens Flavia, obscura illa quidem ac sine ullis maiorum imaginibus, sed tamen rei p. nequaquam pauperenda, constat licet Domitianum cupiditatis ac saevitiae merito poenas haurisse*). He notes eccentricities of Domitian's dress at the *agon Capitolinus* (*Dom.* 4.4). Suetonius also claims that Domitian's letters, speeches and edicts were composed for him by others (*Dom.* 20.1), which can be classified under the *locus* of oratorical ineptitude. Two notable divergences occur between the *Panegyricus* and the *Life of Domitian*. Pliny develops the notion of his menacing gluttony, while Suetonius insists upon and illustrates his culinary moderation (*Dom.* 21). Perhaps most striking of all is Suetonius' use of the *locus* of financial embarrassment and the squandering of one's patrimony: he asserts that his *inopia* had made Domitian *rapax* (3.2). The nearest Pliny comes to availing

himself of the same *locus* is directed not at Domitian, but at Trajan, when he wonders whether the resources of the empire can cope with Trajan's refusal of gifts of money, his disbursement of donatives and *congiaria*, as well as his remission of taxes and dismissal of informers (*Pan.* 41). It is as close to criticism of Trajan as Pliny comes in the speech, and it is directly related to Pliny's own career and reputation as an expert at the treasury.³⁶

Because of his greater remoteness in time from the end of the first century and the epitomized state of his work, it is less significant that Cassius Dio also treats eight of the *loci* featured in the *Panegyricus*.³⁷ He cites the *locus* of gluttony leading to cruelty via an elaborate anecdote regarding Domitian's funeral dinner party, and widens the horizons of his sexual misconduct to include debauching aristocratic women, but he is otherwise consistent with the *loci* of invective found in Pliny. Of all seventeen *loci*, only bribery is unmentioned in all three sources; in fact Suetonius notes the lengths to which Domitian went to suppress it (*Dom.* 8.1–2, 9.3).

It is of course likely that the range of invective *loci* might have expanded beyond the limits of the seventeen found in the practice of Cicero a century and a half earlier. But most of Pliny's choices of invective *loci* in the *Panegyricus* are easily understood. His most insistently emphasized issues – cruelty, tyranny and rapacity – are obvious polar opposites of an ideal emperor. Perhaps Domitian's oratorical ineptitude was deemed to be not antithetical enough to the simple manner affected by the new emperor: one thinks of the well-publicized, well-meaning ignorance promoted in Trajan's exchange with Dio of Prusa (Philostratus VS 1.7.488). Also there was little scope in denigrating the Flavians as a family without drawing a comparison with the even more obscure *gens Ulpia*.

Arguably the most important issue to arise from this discussion – but ultimately the least easily answered – is that of sincerity and belief.³⁸ Craig assembled this list of invective *loci* in order to demonstrate the potentially marginal nature of credibility in Ciceronian invective. By invoking a critical number of these traditional *loci*, Cicero might well have expected his audience to recognize the formal rhetorical elements of an invective exercise. In key speeches where the veracity of the charges is very much at

³⁶ For more on this moment in the speech and on Pliny's programme of self-definition in the *Panegyricus*, see Noreña, pp. 30–1 in this volume.

³⁷ Gluttony leading to cruelty (67.6.3); hypocrisy for appearing virtuous (67.1.3–4, 67.2.6–7, 67.3, 67.12.1–2); avarice (67.5.5); sexual misconduct (67.3.2, 67.12.1–2); *misophilia* (67.2.1–2, 67.2.5, 67.15.2–4); cowardice (67.4.1, 67.6.3, 67.7.2); aspiration to tyranny (67.4.3, 67.5.7, 67.7.2); cruelty to citizens (67.1.1, 67.2.5, 67.3.3³, 67.8.3–4, 67.9.3–6, 67.11.2–4, 67.13.2–3, 67.14.1–3).

³⁸ A different aspect of the issue treated so well by Bartsch (1994) 148–87.

issue,³⁹ the absence of these *loci* seems also to suggest a desire to steer his audience away from conceiving the abuse as rhetorically informed rather than authentically reported. Where, then, does this leave us with Pliny's Domitian? Should we conceive of Pliny's audience as simply relishing the vigorous application of rhetoric's lash to the last of the Flavians? Or think of Pliny's rhetorical training as facilitating and framing his authentic memory of the Domitianic principate? Obviously this presentation of the issue self-consciously polarizes it; but it is well worth considering the difficulty of locating where along this spectrum a convincing compromise or combination of these two reactions might be constructed. The nature of the speech's relationship with rhetoric and reality naturally prompts a consideration of its more general evidentiary value.

THE PANEGYRICUS AND TRAJAN'S ROME

Pliny's *Panegyricus* has always been considered both a very important document for recovering Trajanic Rome, and at the same time an immensely problematic source of information on the events it purports to relate.⁴⁰ It provides us with a precious eyewitness report of a period which is documented with an almost singular poverty, and offers up a wealth of information – albeit immersed in an obscuring and often misleading rhetorical context – on Roman society, politics and public affairs. The following survey is representative rather than exhaustive.

Pliny alludes to Trajan's developing career in the emperor's service. This is in accordance with the emphasis upon biographical or chronological approaches to praise suggested in treatises and found in earlier examples of the genre.⁴¹ We learn in the *Panegyricus* of the triumphal ornaments of Trajan's father for service in Syria the mid-70s (14.1; attested but without context on *ILS* 8970); of Trajan's own military tribunate under his father; of the movement in January 89 from Spain to Germany of the *VII Gemina* (of which Trajan was legate) in response to the revolt of Saturninus (14.2). Note that we are misled by Pliny on Domitian's inertia during this crisis (cf. Cass. Dio 67.11.5). Enigmas, omissions and distortions remain. That Trajan spent ten years as a military tribune (15.3) is an astonishing claim:

unparalleled and patently untrue.⁴² Pliny suppresses mention of Trajan's ordinary consulship in 91 and says that he was 'found worthy of campaign upon campaign' after 89 (14.5 *cum aliis super aliis expeditionibus... dignus inveniretis*): he later appears to refer to Trajan living in the capital during the mid-90s (44.1). This may allude to operations in the aftermath of 89,⁴³ or else to an unknown proconsular appointment. It would have been noteworthy in the context of the *Panegyricus* had Trajan been passed over for proconsular service.⁴⁴ On the other hand, it is an extreme and unlikely solution to posit continuous commands from 92 to 96.⁴⁵

One of the speech's most valuable contributions is its adumbration of the events of the years 96–8, covering the reign of Nerva and the accession and reign of Trajan to 100. From the *Panegyricus* we learn of the full scale of the mutiny of the praetorian guard in 96 (5.6–6.4; cf. Cass. Dio 68.3.3). From Pliny we also have our best look at the actual mechanics of Trajan's adoption by Nerva (8.1–5): the ceremonial details of the public act; the crisis to which it formed a response; the contemporary association of this adoption and Galba's adoption of Piso in 69; and most tantalizingly of all, Nerva's motivation in choosing Trajan as his heir, including comments which may suggest coercion (e.g. 9.2). Beyond the adoption, Pliny provides information on Trajan's status, roles and actions under Nerva. Regarding Trajan's nomenclature and the public framing of his role, we learn that he took the titles *Caesar, imperator, Germanicus, was consors tribuniciae potestatis*, and that his role was compared to that of Titus under Vespasian (8.6; cf. 9.1 *successor imperii, particeps, socius*; 9.3). Pliny's speech offers information on Trajan's official response to Nerva's death: deification and priesthoods (11.2–3; the temple is uncorroborated; 89.1); both in high contrast to the unmistakably cool reception of Nerva by Trajan generally and his total absence from Trajan's early coinage.⁴⁶

Pliny is our best source on Trajan's decision to remain absent from Rome until late 99, and is easily our most detailed source of information on the early policies of Trajan's principate: e.g. his Danubian tour and diplomatic activities in 98–9 (12.2–4; 16.2) and his publication of his travelling accounts in 99 (20.5–6). Pliny is a brilliant witness to the ceremony attending Trajan's first entry as emperor into Rome (22.1–6), including the

³⁹ Such as *Cat. 1*; see Craig (2007) 355–9.

⁴⁰ See, most succinctly, the remarks of Edward Gibbon (ed. Bury) (1909–14) 1.82: 'we are reduced to collect the actions of Trajan from the glimmerings of an abridgement [i.e. Cassius Dio], or the doubtful light of a panegyric'.

⁴¹ See Innes, p. 78 in this volume.

⁴² The nearest precedent is service in three legions: Syme (1938) 220. ⁴³ So Bennett (1997) 43.

⁴⁴ Bennett (1997) 44–5; see below, p. 21.

⁴⁵ Bennett (1997) 43–6, relying upon the contemporary view of Trajan as a *vir militaris*, suggests either Germania Inferior or Superior in 92 or 93, followed by Pannonia in 95 or 96 (contra Cass. Dio 68.3.4).

⁴⁶ See Roche (2002) esp. 52–4.

triumphal nuances obtaining in the emperor's urban itinerary (23.4–6). We also observe court ceremonial and its political currency through the eyes of an ambitious contemporary outsider (24.2).⁴⁷ Pliny documents Trajan's gifts to the citizens and soldiers in his first years. We learn that the soldiers were paid their donative in instalments, but that the citizens received their *congiarium* in one payment (25.2), and that both the *congiarium* and *alimenta* were paid from the emperor's own funds (27.3). We know from Pliny that 5,000 new citizens were enrolled for the *congiarium* (28.4), that public works helped facilitate the influx of grain to the city (29.2), and that Trajan helped alleviate an Egyptian drought with shipments of grain from Rome (30–2).

Pliny documents Trajan's public actions against informers, as well as the precursors to this action under Titus and Nerva (34.1–35.5). He also states that Trajan discouraged charges of *maiestas* (42). Pliny offers copious detail on tax reform under Trajan, its antecedent in Nerva's reign (37–41),⁴⁸ and the abolition of debt-collection under Trajan for sums accrued before his accession (40.5). We also know from the speech that Trajan was selling the property of the *fiscus* to augment the treasury in this period (50.5), and that public building had effectively ceased (51.1).

Information on Trajanic policy aimed at moderating the emperor's veneration is problematically entwined with the persuasive agenda of the speech, but we note Trajan's refusal to place his statues in the inner sanctum of temples (52.2), his refusal of prayers to his genius (52.6), and his banning of *ludus imperatoris* at games (54.1–2). Pliny's remarks on the imperial family and their own publicly demonstrated moderation are relevant to this theme (83–4).⁴⁹ We note also the condition of his own public utility which Trajan added to public vows for his safety (67.4, 94.5), and a similar prerequisite underwriting his protection by the praetorian guard (67.8). Pliny misleads on Trajan's refusal of the title *pater patriae* (21.1; cf. 57.5).

On the senate and the emperor's relationship with it, Pliny is at once invaluable and problematic. Pliny overstates the newfound importance of topics for senatorial debate (54.4–7; cf. *Ep.* 5.4, 4.12, 3.20). He is detailed in his coverage of Trajanic consular policy, regarding both the emperor's own refusal and acceptance of that honour (56.3, 60.4, 78.1) and his distribution of it to supporters (60.4–7, 61.7). Pliny naturally misleads on the importance of the Nervan commission to reduce public expenditure and

its influence on Trajan's choice of consuls of 100 (62.2). On the emperor's relationship with the senate as a body, the *Panegyricus* is outstanding. Pliny records Trajan patiently enduring the various ceremonies associated with the consular elections (63–5, 77), that he took the regular consular oath (64–5, 71, 72) and urged candidates to court the favour of the senate (69). Pliny provides information on acclamations and political buzzwords (e.g. 74), and notes that these acclamations were now for the first time recorded in the *acta diurna* (75, 95.1).

Incidental information abounds. Trajan suppressed *pantomimi*, and thus resumed a Domitianic policy discontinued by Nerva (46.1–8). We naturally have details on the careers of Pliny and Cornutus Tertullus, and on their roles as *praefecti aeriarii* (90–2). A *terminus ante quem* for the death of M. Ulpius Traianus is provided by references in the *Panegyricus* (89.1). We know that Artius Suburanus' colleague in the praetorian prefecture retired upon Trajan's return to Rome (86). Amid the sustained exhortation of Domitian, we glimpse *inter alia* his negotiation with Decabalus in 89 (11.4; cf. Cass. Dio 67.7), the conservative reaction to his exotic court personnel (49.8), his execution of Epaphroditus (53.4), and the enactment of his *damnatio memoriae* (52.4–6). Pliny fabricates entirely the circumstances of Domitian's assassination (49.1–4). As a final consideration, Pliny publicly unpacks the resonances of the epithet *Optimus*, particularly its associations with Jupiter Optimus Maximus (2.7, 88.4, 88.8).

The *Panegyricus* regularly acts as a distorting mirror upon the events that it reflects for its various audiences (in the senate, at the recitation or in modern scholarship). Its inaccuracies, exaggerations and omissions are, however, (usually) easy to note, but we should bear in mind that this catalogue and its implications are continuously evolving, and that there is no total consensus on the value of Pliny's information on some key issues.⁵⁰ Atypically unhelpful as a control on this is the public nature of the delivery of the speech. Some of Pliny's audience in the senate in September 100 will have known differing and more accurate versions of the events he expounds upon. But the nature of the immediate post-Domitianic period, and the collective and explicit decision both to remember and to forget Domitian in a particular mode, render moot some of the expected controlling factors obtaining between a speech and the experience of its audience. There do, however, remain some controls for us, which can help us to understand and contextualize Pliny's motivation for misrepresenting an event, but

⁴⁷ See Noreña, pp. 31–2 in this volume.

⁴⁸ On some implications of this, see Noreña, pp. 30–1 in this volume.

⁴⁹ For example in Florina's rejection of the title *Augusta*; for other items, see Roche (2002).

⁵⁰ Consider e.g. the nature of Trajan's career under Domitian, as reconstructed from the *Panegyricus* in the works of Bennett (1997), Birley (2000) and Eck (2002).

these do not extend to offering a corrected version of the content of the speech: the execration of Domitian's memory (impacting upon e.g. the revision of both Pliny's and Trajan's career); Pliny's 'aspirational self-representation' (explaining e.g. the prominence of Nerva's commission on public expenditure and his comments on Trajan's court);⁵¹ and the generally admonitory nature of his praise (e.g. the senate's importance and role).⁵² In sum, for the historian of the early imperial period, the *Panegyricus* is an extremely valuable source of information, and yet it remains variously tantalizing, problematic and disquieting.

DOMITIAN, TRAJAN AND PLINY

Ten years separate the three men at the centre of the *Panegyricus*.⁵³ Domitian was born on 24 October 51 in his family home on the Quirinal in Rome (Suet. *Dom.* 1.1). Trajan was born on 18 September (Plin. *Pan.* 92.4) – in either 53 (Eutr. 8.2)⁵⁴ or 56 (Cass. Dio 68.6.3) – in Italica in Spain. Pliny was born in 61 or 62 (Plin. *Ep.* 6.16.4, 6.20.5). The three respective biological and adoptive fathers had been closely associated with each other: M. Ulpius Traianus and C. Plinius Secundus had been highly prominent at the courts of the emperors Vespasian and Titus. The Elder Pliny was an *amicus* of both emperors.⁵⁵ He served with Titus, probably in Germany in 57.⁵⁶ His career was advanced through the agency of Licinius Mucianus and the favour of Vespasian and Titus, whom he served as a courtier until his death in 79. His adoption of his nephew was apparently testamentary (*Ep.* 5.8.5). It is possible that M. Ulpius Traianus was the brother-in-law of Titus through his marriage to the sister of Marcia Furnilla.⁵⁷ In 67 he commanded the *legio X Fretensis* under Vespasian in the Jewish War (Joseph. *BJ* 3.7.31): the same war in which Titus commanded the *XV Apollinaris*. Traianus was suffect consul in the crucial year 70⁵⁸ and was adlected to patrician status by Vespasian and Titus in their censorship of 73–4 (Plin. *Pan.* 9.2). He may have governed the newly amalgamated Cappadocia-Galatia before his tenure of Syria, which brought him triumphal ornaments for a victory (perhaps diplomatic) over Parthia. His final appointment was the crowning achievement of the senatorial career, governance of Asia, in the late 70s.

Galba's adoption of Piso in January 69 was an unavoidable point of comparison for Nerva's adoption of Trajan in late 97. The failure of that earlier event to quell mutiny was the natural counterpoint for Nerva's successful averting of a civil war (*Pan.* 8.5), and Galba's failure set in train the events which would see Domitian as *Caesar* and *princeps iuuentutis* in the last days of December 69. Throughout the 70s, Domitian's role within the regime would be highly visible but junior to his brother, and solely honorific.⁵⁹ He was suffect consul in 71, 75, 76, 77 and 79; he was ordinary consul in 73, the year in which Vespasian and Titus would hold the censorship; and he held various priesthoods. Despite his best efforts, he was thwarted in his attempts to gain first-hand military experience in 69 and again in 75. In the same period, the first steps of Trajan's career coincided with the spectacular success of his father in Syria.⁶⁰ Trajan was military tribune of one of the Syrian legions in the period in which Traianus accrued *ornamenta triumphalia* (*Pan.* 14). After this post, Trajan may have taken the unusual step of a second military tribunate, in one of the Rhine legions in the last years of the decade (*Pan.* 14).⁶¹ His quaestorship ought to have been held when Trajan was around 25 years old, and so should be placed either in this same period in 78, or else in 81. During the 70s Pliny the Younger was in Rome under the tutelage of Verginius Rufus (*Ep.* 2.1.8), who had been offered the principate twice by his troops in 68–9, and was relegated to political obscurity during the Flavian period.

Upon the death of Vespasian in 79, Domitian's designated suffect consulship for 80 was upgraded by Titus to an ordinary consulship, and he was furthermore designated consul *ordinarius* for 82. Despite his expectations (Suet. *Dom.* 2.3), his brother bestowed neither tribunician power nor *imperium* upon Domitian: only the assurance of being his *successor* (Suet. *Tit.* 9.3). Domitian remained *princeps iuuentutis* (*CIL* 3.223), as he had been since 70, until the death of Titus on 13 September 81. Pliny the Younger's career at Rome begins under Titus. Now an adopted son of a prominent equestrian and Flavian *amicus*, he began to speak in the Centumviral Court in 80 or 81 (*Ep.* 5.8.8); at the same time it is probable that he held a post on the decemvirate *stibibus iudicandis*.⁶²

The nature of Trajan's career under Domitian in the 80s turns on the date of his birth. If he was born in 53, and therefore held his quaestorship

⁵¹ On which see Noreña, pp. 29–32 in this volume.

⁵² See above, pp. 5–10, on Pliny's programme.

⁵³ On Pliny's relationship with Domitian, and Trajan see Sovereini (1989).

⁵⁴ Syme (1958a) 1.31; Eck (2002) 214 n. 12.

⁵⁵ See Crook (1973) 179 with references.

⁵⁶ See Münzer (1899) 106; Jones (1984) 15–16.

⁵⁷ See Champlin (1983) 257–64; Jones (1992) II, 59.

⁵⁸ See Morris (1953) 79–80.

⁵⁹ See Jones (1992) 18–21.

⁶⁰ For Trajan's early career, see Houston (1971) 279–81 with references; Eck (2002) 213–17.

⁶¹ Eck (2002) 214 n. 10 doubts this. ⁶² So Birley (2000) 7.

in around 78 and his praetorship in 83 or 84, the fact that he did not hold the consulship until 91 is noteworthy. It would normally have been due to fall to him as a patrician a few years after his praetorship.⁶⁵ It may indicate a comparative cooling of affection between Domitian and the family of Trajan, especially by contrast with his father's spectacular career under Vespasian.⁶⁴ On the other hand, if he was born in 56, was quaestor in 81 and praetor in 86 or 87 (he was a *praetorius vir* by 87: SHA *Hadr.* 1.4), the appointment to the consulship of 91 came to him at 35 and thus would seem about right for a patrician *praetorius*. He was appointed as legate of the *legio VII Gemina* in Spain in 88, an appointment which could not have been expected to accrue him much glory.⁶⁵ In 89 he was summoned by Domitian to Germany to suppress the rebellion of Saturninus (*Pan.* 14). Saturninus had been killed and his mutiny dismantled by the time Trajan arrived. Nevertheless, his conspicuous loyalty earned him the ordinary consulship of 91, with M. Aelius Glabrio. If we accept an earlier dating for Trajan's birth, 89 may then mark a turning point in Trajan's career under Domitian.

Pliny is certainly careful to delineate his own career under Domitian into two phases. In the first phase he claims that it prospered, but only before that emperor 'demonstrated his hatred for good men' (*Pan.* 95.3). After this moment, Pliny claims that he halted his own advancement, preferring a slower ascendancy over the short cuts to *honores* which were then on offer (*Pan.* 95.4). In the early years of Domitian's reign, Pliny served as military tribune in the *legio III Gallica*, stationed in Syria. By about 84 he was back in Rome, and serving as a *sevir equitum Romanorum*, an appropriate post for a young and well-connected prospective senator.⁶⁶ From the mid-to late 80s (perhaps as early as 86⁶⁷), Pliny's career shows evidence of Domitian's favour. Pliny now held the quaestorship as the emperor's own candidate. This was an honour which, it seems, was restricted to only two of the twenty annual candidates (the other man in Pliny's year was his friend, Calpurnius Tiro).⁶⁸ Pliny retrospectively and inevitably sanitized the honour as *quaestor Caesaris* (*Ep.* 7.16.2). After a few more years had elapsed, Pliny ceased his activity in the court to be tribune of the plebs (in 88 at the earliest). Note that his rise was steady rather than fast: his friend Calpurnius

anticipated him by one year owing to the *ius trium liberorum* (*Ep.* 7.16.2). Nevertheless, with Domitian's favour and by his special dispensation, Pliny had closed the gap again in order to be praetor in the same year as Calpurnius (in 89 at the earliest).

After Trajan's consulship of 91, it is possible that he held a further appointment as a consular governor. One of the provinces of Moesia or Pannonia have been proffered as options,⁶⁹ but no evidence supports such an appointment,⁷⁰ and Eck is right to stress that Trajan's credentials in the 80s belie the notion that he was, in any sense of the word, a *vir militaris*.⁷¹ Pliny seems explicitly to indicate that Trajan lived in Rome in the mid-90s, when he states *nuxisti nobiscum, periclitans es, timuisti, quae tunc erat innocentium vita* ('you lived with us, you were in danger, you feared: things which at that time were the life of innocent men', *Pan.* 44.1). On the other hand, he speaks of 'campaign upon campaign' for Trajan after 89 (*Pan.* 14.5).⁷² It is difficult to see how the two statements can accommodate each other.

During the 90s Pliny served as prefect of the *aerarium militare*, the military treasury, although whether he did so under Domitian (i.e. from 94 to 96⁷³) or under Nerva (from 96 to 97⁷⁴) is not completely certain. The dating of this post is of the utmost importance for understanding Pliny's repeated claims to have been in danger in the last years of Domitian's reign. Pliny asserts that, with seven of his friends executed or banished, he could foresee the same fate for himself (*Ep.* 3.11.3); that he had been informed on by the *delator* Mettius Carus, and that Domitian would surely have tried him had he survived longer (*Ep.* 7.27.14); that he was in danger after the trial of Baebius Massa (*Ep.* 7.33.3); and that, in the evil years, he was counted among those who grieved and feared (*Pan.* 95.5). While his promotion to the prefecture of the military treasury need not *necessarily* be mutually exclusive with Domitian's displeasure, the earlier dating of this post would seem to point to Pliny's transparent revision of an earlier, successful career under Domitian. The very transparency of this public revision might give us pause. It seems simply not to have mattered (to

⁶⁵ See Birley (1981) 24–5.

⁶⁴ Thus Eck (2002) 214.

⁶⁵ Eck (2002) 214; 'commanders of this legion, so far as we can make out, had subsequent careers of no great significance'.

⁶⁶ Birley (2000) 8.

⁶⁷ Birley (2000) 14; he dates Pliny's career three to four years earlier than does Vidman in *PR²* P. 490.

⁶⁸ On the significance of being the emperor's candidate, see Cèbeillac (1972); Eck (1996) 88; Birley (2000) 8–9.

⁶⁹ Moesia: Syme (1982a) 33–4; Pannonia: Bennett (1997) 43–6.

⁷⁰ SHA *Hadr.* 2.2–4 is circumstantial.

⁷¹ For the term, see Campbell (1973) II–31. On Trajan's proconsular appointments, cf. Eck (2002) 215–16: 'Why should Domitian have entrusted this province [Pannonia], in which four legions were stationed, to a patrician without the necessary experience in provincial administration? There were other loyal senators with better qualifications.'

⁷² See above, p. 15.

⁷³ Sherwin-White (1966) 75; Vidman *PR²* P. 490.

⁷⁴ Birley (2000).

Pliny) – if we accept the earlier dating – that his contemporaries could see that this danger to which he laid claim was a fabrication.⁷⁵

Following the death of Domitian, Trajan is attested as governor of Germania Superior (when he was adopted by Nerva) in October 97 (SHA *Hadhr.* 2.5; Cass. Dio 68.3.4). His appointment is as remarkable as his adoption, given his career in the 80s and 90s. Several factors help to explain it. The immediate political catalyst for the adoption was the inherent instability of Nerva's rule, specifically the escalating tension between Nerva and his praetorian guard (who would mutiny against him in the autumn of 97), and the pressure being exerted by Cornelius Nigrinus, the governor of Syria, who was emerging as a potential successor to Nerva. The two groups may have colluded.⁷⁶ Clearly exerting contrary pressure on Trajan's behalf at this time were the consular senators Sex. Iulius Frontinus (cos. II with Trajan in February 98; cos. III *ordinarius* with Trajan in 100) and L. Iulius Ursus (cos. II with Trajan in March 98; cos. III with Trajan in January 100).⁷⁷ Pliny alludes to their services to Trajan *bene ac fortiter sed in toga* ('well and bravely, but as civilians') at *Pan.* 60.5. After his adoption, throughout his second ordinary consulship in 98, and even after the death of Nerva on 28 January of that same year, Trajan remained in the north with the armies. He toured Pannonia and Moesia, and only returned to Rome as sole emperor in late 99. In this period at Rome, Pliny was prefect of the treasury of Saturn, along with Cornutus Tertullus: from the first months of 98 until he delivered the *Panegyricus* as suffect consul on 1 September 100 (cf. *Pan.* 92.1–2).

THIS VOLUME

The following studies have emerged in response both to the importance of the *Panegyricus* and to a modern neglect of the speech that is disproportionate to this importance. The chapters in this volume address three broad areas of concern: the historical context of the speech; the rhetorical and generic contexts informing both this speech and panegyric more generally; and what might be styled its interpretative potential and literary fabric. These three categories are not to be conceived as hermetically sealed off from each other. Naturally any one of the following discussions may contribute to more than one of these areas or to other avenues of inquiry.

⁷⁵ For more on this revision see Noreña, p. 39 and refs there at n. 26 in this volume.

⁷⁶ The thesis of Schwarte (1979) 149–55.

⁷⁷ Eck (2002) 219 rightly draws attention to the speed of the iterated second and third consulships, unparalleled for persons outside the imperial family.

Under the aegis of these three broad headings, a wide range of critical approaches is represented. It is hoped that they collectively prompt further consideration and discussion of this key text.

The volume begins, appropriately, with the construction of the author himself. Carlos Noreña argues that the written text of the *Panegyricus* should be seen as an instrument for Pliny's own self-representation.⁷⁸ He underscores Pliny's role as an innovator in the sphere of self-representation, and lays emphasis upon the implication throughout the speech that he is an insider, close to the centre of power, and qualified to pass judgement on both 'good' and 'bad' emperors. A number of important dynamics within this programme of self-definition emerge. One is the display of technical expertise and the promotion of the illusion of intimacy with the emperor and the imperial court. Another is Pliny's subtle and flexible use of the first person plural, the rather fluid 'we'.⁷⁹ This is deployed to identify Pliny with various exclusive and politically prestigious groups: the highly cultured, landowning and (as Pliny constructs them) 'good' or 'innocent' groups (i.e., in both cases, those claiming opposition to Domitian) within the senatorial order. He thereby claims, along with membership of these various groups, the cultural authority and economic pre-eminence as much as the political, social and cultural capital attaching to them. Another key dynamic, isolated by Noreña is Pliny's representation of the consulship itself to develop and lay claim to a particular kind of political authority and status within the city as consul, a role which is developed from Trajan's own shifting status as citizen, senator, consul and emperor. Through developing this trope, Pliny can suggest equivalency between the emperor and the consul, and more: that, in high contrast to the emperor's social obligation to remain *civilis*, it falls to the consul to embody true pre-eminence over the citizen body. Most simply and most urgently, the *Panegyricus* offered to its author the opportunity to revise his own personal history, and to realign the association of his own flourishing career from the now excoriated Domitian to the new emperor Trajan: the *comparandum* offered in Tacitean posturing of independence underscores the options available to Pliny in this respect. In the light of this agenda, the *Panegyricus* can be seen as operating alongside other classic Plinian *loci* of public self-definition, such as *Ep.* 3.11, 7.33 and book 10.⁸⁰

We proceed from the author to his urban context. The reception of contemporary urban monuments in the *Panegyricus* offers the editor a

⁷⁸ Noreña, pp. 39–44.

⁷⁹ See p. 35.

⁸⁰ The public utility of this last item was established by Noreña himself (2007).

significant and discrete *locus* for examining the nature of Pliny's engagement in the speech with the public messages disseminated by Trajan and his government in their first years.⁸¹ In the period 96–100, Nerva, Trajan and his family made a number of public claims on Domitianic monuments in the city, since they could neither physically destroy the structures of Domitian's building programme, nor eclipse him as builder with public works of their own. Pliny unsurprisingly endorses the claim of his emperor on these structures. But my discussion draws attention to both the manner of his endorsement and its essential conditionality upon Trajan fulfilling and allaying a number of senatorial expectations and concerns. The rhetorical tradition in which Pliny was operating set the value of self-promotional monuments beneath both the subject's own inner qualities and the immortalizing potential of praise. Pliny extends, amplifies and innovates within this generic tradition by merging encomium's generic relationship with monuments with the specific political context of the period 96–100. His rhetorical reception of the city allows him to move beyond the mere commemoration of the emperor, and to widen the focus of his concern to encompass senatorial anxieties, such as the new emperor's continuing accessibility, moderation and social parity with his subjects.

Next, a sequence of chapters locates the speech in its various rhetorical and generic contexts. Initiating this sequence, Doreen C. Innes examines the correlation of the content and themes treated in the *Panegyricus* with the precepts espoused in rhetorical treatises and with rhetorical theory more generally.⁸² In the first half of her chapter, Innes tracks encomium's constituent elements, objectives and dominant style from its place in the educational curriculum, via the *progymnasmata* (elementary exercises from the school syllabus) and school texts, through to early exponents of encomium: Plato, Isocrates and Xenophon. Quintilian's prescriptions receive a detailed analysis, in keeping with both his own status as a teacher of Pliny, and encomium's greater profile in the socio-political culture and discourse of the period in which he wrote.⁸³ Quintilian's adherence to schoolroom examples stands in high contrast to the increasing profile of its use in Roman public life. Context is also supplied via the third-century theorist Menander II and a (perhaps) near-contemporary exponent of encomium, Pseudo-Aristides 35. In the second half of her chapter, Innes maps the organization of Pliny's speech against this theoretical backdrop and his creative engagement with the tradition of encomium. Pliny's foregrounding of moral qualities in the speech is completely consistent with what Innes

⁸¹ Roche, pp. 45–66.

⁸² Innes, pp. 67–84.

⁸³ See pp. 70–4.

terms 'the central core of panegyric theory'. A key notion emerging from this chapter is Pliny's judgement: his flexible adaptation of the precepts of rhetorical theory to suit his own specific context and agenda. This versatility is utterly in keeping with rhetorical theory's own insistence upon the pre-eminence of the orator's discretion.

Gesine Manuwald next examines the context offered by Ciceronian praise, and thereby isolates key material for assessing Pliny's *Panegyricus* as a successor to the epideictic culture of late republican Rome.⁸⁴ As the political landscape altered around him, Cicero's varied negotiation of his own position *vis-à-vis* the dominant political figures of his day represents an important transitional stage in the genre at Rome and exerts a structural influence on Pliny, who further develops and adapts Ciceronian methods and strategies within his own more stable, imperial context. *De Legibus Manilia* comprises fulsome praise of a third party who does not yet possess but is to receive unlimited powers. It aims to motivate to action not the laudand himself, but the audience of the *contio*, who can ratify his wide-ranging powers. *Pro Marcellis* marks a further step towards Pliny's own context. Now the laudand is already in power and the persuasive agenda of the speech turns on motivating Caesar to a course of action. Even in the *Philippics*, basic strategies of praise are continued, although the goal of dispensing power, the absence of the laudand, and the authorizing role of the audience return us to the rhetorical strategies of *De Legibus Manilia*. The liminal nature of these moments in the evolution of panegyric emerges from their form, application and underlying ideology. Cicero's career began with praise of individuals in clearly defined contexts (such as court cases); these were well within established Roman conventions. As he became more involved in political life, praise became for him a powerful political tool. When it met with his own political objectives, he did not demur at praising individuals in order to help endow them with power which transcended the limits of the republican framework, and to influence their wielding of this power.

The rhetorical contexts of the *Panegyricus* extend to more than a continuation of republican strategies and tropes. As Bruce Gibson demonstrates,⁸⁵ the *Panegyricus* must be located not only within the flourishing and ever-mutable contexts of praise and blame in the early imperial period but, more precisely and more urgently, within its more specific, Trajanic moment as praise oratory. The ubiquity of praise and blame in a very wide variety of genres and discourses speaks to its centrality at the turn of the first century.

⁸⁴ Manuwald, pp. 85–103.

⁸⁵ Gibson, pp. 104–24.

Tacitus' pessimistic appraisal of the vitality of oratory after Cicero (*Dial.* 1) must be weighed in the balance both with Tacitus' own repute as an orator, particularly of praise (*laudator eloquentissimus*, Plin. *Ep.* 2.1.6), and with the testimony of contemporary and later sources which indicate a concern with maintaining the standards of oratory and its prestige. Contemporary counterparts to the *Panegyricus* drawn from historiography, technical writing and oratory resonate consistently with the trends and strategies deployed by Pliny. Above all, this was a rhetorical culture of periodization, of demarcating the evil past from the benign present. Gibson now interrogates the notion of the contemporary in Trajanic praise. So far from the new modes of praise claimed by Pliny and his contemporaries, Gibson demonstrates, through examples drawn from Donitantic literature and from authors who were active continuously from the late Flavian period into that of Nerva and Trajan, that a significant continuity of discourse inevitably bridged the divide between past and present, and condemned any claims of a truly new beginning to failure.

The final sequence of chapters in this volume examines the aesthetic, literary and rhetorical fabric of the *Panegyricus* itself. Gregory Hutchinson interrogates the notion of the sublime in Pliny's master work.⁸⁶ Pliny's artful realization of aesthetic ideas within the speech is inextricably bound up with the political and ethical ideas expressed there. The sublime – and the nexus it frequently shares with history and politics in ancient thought – is marked early and often as the dominant aesthetic principal operative within the *Panegyricus*. Terms of height, size and divinity cue the reader/listener to the attempted rhetorical elevation, but this very attempt on the part of the orator to achieve sublimity is itself possessed of the sublime. Pliny's Domitian's own failed attempt to achieve sublimity stands out against both Demosthenes' Philip and, naturally, his own Trajan, for whom, paradoxically, the denial of his own grandeur – his 'self-effacing greatness'⁸⁷ – serves as its most basic guarantee. Hutchinson further offers up a close reading of an extended extract of the speech (*Pan.* 27.3–29.5) to illustrate how the ever-undulating presence of the sublime informs Pliny's prose, and its continuous dialogue with other modes and registers of speech.

John Henderson next examines Pliny's treatment of historical exemplarity in the *Panegyricus*.⁸⁸ Pliny almost continually invokes the past and figures from Roman history to underwrite his vision of an ideal present, actualized or prescribed. In the course of the speech Pliny's *exempla* extend backwards in time to the beginnings of the free republic and through to

the living memory of his audience. Particularly dense clusters of figures are drawn from the crisis of the Punic Wars and the last generation of the republic. But Pliny also provides a sequence – carefully edited in the selective mode of such imperial documents as the *Lex de Imperio Vestasiani* (*CHL* 6.930 = *ILS* 244) and Trajan's own, later (c.107) numismatic sequence of imperial commemorative or restoration issues⁸⁹ – of Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors. Henderson concentrates upon the rhetorical work invested in these appeals to the name in their context, as aspects of encomiastic propriety and technique. He attends with especial care to implied continuities and ruptures between the various pasts assembled in the speech. The notable absences within the speech are often as significant as presences invoked by Pliny. This is exemplarity in and by 'irreference'.⁹⁰ Henderson's chapter, in effect a reading of the whole speech, highlights the unusually vast horizons of historical exemplarity in the *Panegyricus*, to pursue with equal vigour the 'disappearing' of the proper name and its role within the speech as an index of Pliny's power as panegyrist to bestow or to withhold reification.

As a fitting epilogue to the volume, Roger Rees examines the afterlife of the *Panegyricus* in antiquity, and thereby decisively modifies commonly held scholarly assumptions regarding the degree of Pliny's influence over the *XII Panegyrici Latini*.⁹¹ By the middle decades of the second century, prose panegyric as a literary form was established, but Fronto maintains an evidently informed silence about Pliny's role in this establishment. Likewise it was Fronto and not Pliny who in 297 was lauded by the panegyrist of Constantius as 'the other ornament of Roman eloquence' (i.e. along with Cicero, *Pan. Lat.* VIII(4)14.2–3), an omission at odds with the transmission of Pliny's speech as the first of the *XII Panegyrici Latini*. In contrast, by 389, Pacatus had not only collected together what was for him the canonical group of panegyrics, and had placed Pliny's speech as the first item within that canon, but had alluded in a number of places within his own speech to Pliny's and had evidently intended his own oration to be understood against the backdrop of Pliny's. Trajan's pre-eminent status in late antiquity and the Spanish heritage he shared with Theodosius, may have helped galvanize Pacatus' reassessment of Pliny's speech. Nevertheless, the various allusions to the *Panegyricus* within the speeches of 289, 307 and 310 (*Pan. Lat.* X(2), VII(6) and VI(7)) share time and space with a host of other Latin authors of the classical period, and the overall 'Plinian character' of these speeches is subdued. A total absence of allusion occurs in the works of orators who

⁸⁶ Hutchinson, pp. 125–41.

⁸⁷ See p. 137.

⁸⁸ Henderson, pp. 142–74.

⁸⁹ See Martindale (1926) 232–78; Roche (2006) 204–8.

⁹⁰ See p. 143.

⁹¹ Rees, pp. 175–88.

demonstrably knew Pliny's work, and Pliny (in contrast to Cicero and Horrensus) is never cited by name in the collection. Pliny in fact never attained the status of 'a canonical archetype which demanded emulation' in late antique Gaul;⁹² rather his legacy was in the creation of a literary form out of imperial protocols. In Rees' summative formulation, Pliny's *Panegyricus* became in late antiquity 'a model example of what imperial panegyric could be, but not what it had to be'.⁹³

⁹² See p. 185.

⁹³ See p. 188.

CHAPTER 2

Self-fashioning in the Panegyricus

Carlos F. Noreña

Implicit in any formal speech in praise of a ruler is the putative authority of the speaker. To extol the ruler's background and lineage properly, to characterize his virtues in appropriate terms, to celebrate his accomplishments in convincing detail and to place them in the most impressive contexts – to offer a public verdict, in a word, on the legitimacy of the ruler's power – is not for everyone to do, and indeed stands as an ambitious assertion of one's own knowledge about, and capacity for judgement on, complex matters of state and high politics. And so it was with Pliny's *gratularia actio*. By delivering a speech that pronounces on everything from the deeper meaning of Trajan's adoption by Nerva and the legacies of Domitian's reign to the fiscal impact of the emperor's policy on inheritances and the current state of senatorial opinion on this or that issue, Pliny leaves little doubt that he is both close to the centre of power and well qualified to assess it. That the original speech was given on the occasion of his accession to a *suffect* consulship (100 CE) only underlines this impression.¹ He goes even further, however, systematically (and often superfluously) displaying 'insider' knowledge, characterizing the nature of political authority in imperial Rome to his own advantage, and reciting a number of carefully chosen chapters from his own biography. Though addressed to the current emperor, Trajan, and alluding constantly to previous emperors, especially Domitian, the speech is not really about emperors or imperial rule. It is ultimately, I will argue, about Pliny himself.

Speaking as a consul, and as one who had already held a number of administrative posts spanning several imperial reigns, Pliny could assume that his credentials as an authority on Roman government would be taken

¹ For the 'publication' of the text and the relationship between the written and spoken versions, including both the original *actio* and subsequent recitations of it to friends, see below, p. 40; in what follows, I will refer to the text as a 'speech', but will treat it primarily as a written document addressed to a community of readers.

into the superlative virtues Pliny would prescribe for his emperor. In each case, and taken collectively, the physical environment housing the people, senate and *princeps* is transformed into an exemplary metaphor of the integration of all three, and for the benefit of an emperor who at the moment of its delivery was very much an unknown quantity; after all, who could have predicted two years into his reign that the exemplary relations between Domitian and the senate would sour?³⁹

³⁹ For the harmonious relationship between Domitian and the senate in the period 81 to September 87, see Beck (1980) 55; Syme (1977–91) 7, 560.

CHAPTER 4

The Panegyricus and rhetorical theory

D. C. Innes

Pliny regularly calls the *Panegyricus a gratiarum actio*, insistently so in the opening sections, and that is pretty certainly its title.¹ Its traditional title, *Panegyricus*, has no support from Pliny and is too Greek for an occasion which Pliny emphatically presents as an old Roman custom in his opening words (the appeals to *maiores* and *mos* in the first two sentences).² In Pliny's description of the senatorial decree, his remit was to let good emperors review their actions (*quae facerent recognoscere*, 4.1), bad emperors their duty (cf. 75.3). But praise was what was expected and given, and in the published speech, a richly expanded version (*spatiosius et uberius*, Ep. 3.18.1), praise of the emperor is paramount (e.g. 3.3, 53.6 and 56.1). In a letter, Pliny rejects any advisory role; his aim is to praise the emperor for his excellence (*laudare optimum principem*, Ep. 3.18.2–3) and present him as a model for any successors. The speech is thus a prime example of classical panegyric and our only extant such speech in Latin from the early imperial period.

Together with invective,³ encomium constitutes the genre of epideictic, one of the three traditional genres of oratory alongside forensic and deliberative.⁴ But unlike them the audience of epideictic does not have

¹ The repeated use in the opening section acts as a marker to identify the speech: 1.2, 1.3, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3; cf. Ep. 3.13.1, 3.18.1.

² The Greek term *παινήριος* originally described a speech given at a public festival, *παινήριος*, but was also used more widely as a synonym of encomium, *ἐγκομιον*, to describe a formal speech of praise. Neither term is fully naturalized in Latin. Cicero uses *panegyricus* only as the title of Isocrates' speech (*De Orat.* 37), and Quintilian only to identify the title of speeches at 2.10.13, 3.4.14 and 10.4.4 (in the latter two cases referring to Isocrates' speech).

³ Invective is the mirror image of encomium, sharing the same headings and topics but reversing the content (e.g. Cic. *De Orat.* 2.349; Quint. *Inst.* 3.7.19). Panegyric exploits topics of invective in comparisons, as in Pliny's contrast of Trajan with Domitian.

⁴ The division is Aristotelian (*Rhet.* 1.3) and is the standard later theory. Quintilian, for example, supports it on the grounds of logic and best authority (3.4.11). But we know of broader definitions of epideictic, even to the point of including all literature except forensic and deliberative (Hermogen. *Id.* 404 Raabe). Modern discussions also rightly emphasize the flexibility and intermingling of the three genres of oratory from the beginning: see Carey (2007) 237–52. The forensic *De Corona* of Demosthenes, for example, includes extensive self-praise, while Isocrates' *Panegyricus* was formally

to take a decision (a judge or jury to acquit or condemn, a deliberative body to accept or reject a proposal). Its aim, Quintilian tells us, is to please the audience (3.4.6; cf. 2.10.11); it should amplify and embellish its subject (*res amplificare et ornare*, 3.7.6);⁵ it was associated with long-established patterns of structure, topics and style.⁶

Like every educated person of his time Pliny will have been familiar from an early age with the basic prescription of a simple encomium since it had a regular place in the school syllabus among the *progymnasmata*, the preliminary exercises which prepared the pupil for the later stage of composing declamations.⁷ Encomium was among the more advanced: e.g. *inde paulatim ad maiora tendere incipiet, laudare claros viros et vituperare improbos* ('He will next gradually progress to more demanding pieces, encomia of the famous and invective against the wicked', Quint. *Inst.* 2.4.20). Pliny provides a brief example in a letter, where he recommends the merits of a potential son-in-law (*Ep.* 1.14).⁸ He begins and ends with his own personal ties to the young man, but in the middle he gives an encomium, as he acknowledges in the final word of the letter, *laudibus* ('praises'). He recommends the young man for the worth and respectability of his hometown and relatives on both the father's and the mother's side; he praises his virtues of energy, application and modesty in pursuing a successful public career; and he notes his attractive appearance and considerable wealth.

This little eulogy echoes the basic headings of encomium, as we find them in school texts like Theon and throughout the ancient theory of rhetoric. For example, in Cicero's *De Oratore* we find origins, physical qualities such as beauty and strength, external qualities such as wealth, and, most important of all, virtue (2.342). Similar lists go back at least

deliberative but in practice a panegyric of Athens (Quint. *Inst.* 3.4.14, Nicolaus §8 Felten). Eulogy was useful in all forms of oratory (e.g. Cic. *De Or.* 2.349).

⁵ Cf. Plin. *Ep.* 2.5.3 *ornare partium ac amplificare* (in praise of his hometown Comum). For Ar. *Rhet.* 1688a26–9 amplification (*αὐξησις*) is particularly suited to epideictic since the content is uncontroversial, so you need only invest it with grandeur and beauty.

⁶ Basic rhetorical texts: Ar. *Rhet.* 1.3, 9; *Rhet. Alex.* 35; *Rhet. Her.* 3.10–15; Cic. *De Inv.* 2.17–8, *De Orat.* 2.43–7, 341–9, *Part.* 70–82; Quint. *Inst.* 2.4, 3.7; Theon, *Progymnasmata* 8 (see next note); Pseudo-Dionysius, *Art of Rhetoric* 1–7; Menander I and II, *On Epideictic Speeches*. General surveys: Russell and Wilson (1981) x–xxxiv; Pernot (1986, 1993); Russell (1998); Rees (2007a).

⁷ For Theon see Patillon and Bolognesi (1997), conveniently keeping Spengel's pagination. It has the original order of the exercises and substantial additional content from the Armenian. For English translation of Theon and others, see Kennedy (2003). Theon is very probably the earliest extant Greek author of *progymnasmata*, roughly contemporary with Quintilian (but for a much later date, in the fifth century, see Heath (2003) 141–9). On *progymnasmata* see Bonner (1977) 250–76; Critchere (2001) 220–30; Reinhardt and Winterbottom (2006) 74–7.

⁸ Hoffer (1999) 177–93; Rees (2007b). This letter of recommendation is the closest to a formal eulogy but 2.9, 2.13, 3.2 and 7.22 suggest a template of family, money and qualities of character and a greater amount of detail than is found in Cicero (so Rees (2007b); cf. also Hor. *Ep.* 1.9, 12, 22–4).

as early as *Rhet. Alex.* 35 and draw on still earlier speeches which served as models. Particularly influential were Agathon's praise of Love in Plato's *Symposium* (194e–197e) and two speeches in praise of a recently dead king, Isocrates' *Eucorgias* and Xenophon's *Agasilanus*.⁹ Agathon's speech is clearly articulated into separate headings, including the four cardinal virtues of justice, modesty, courage and wisdom, and runs riot with a richness of style said to echo Gorgias (*Symp.* 198c).¹⁰ Isocrates claims to be the first to write a prose encomium of a contemporary (8), begins with Evagoras' origins and early life, shapes much of the praise to show his virtues, and sets him up as a model for his son to imitate.

Isocrates also established the panegyric style, a style characterized by pleasing elaboration and richness, especially in sentence structure. It has a smooth flow (hiatus between words is avoided) and an abundance of prose rhythm, rounded periods and clearly patterned assonance and antithesis. Again our sources agree, as in Cic. *Orator* 37–42 and already Ar. *Rhet.* 3.12, where epideictic suits the λέξις γροφικῆ, the style for written texts (cf. Quint. *Inst.* 3.8.63). But such a style might readily become flat and monotonous and was not suited to emotion, as Dionysius warns (*Dem.* 20). So too for Longinus (*On the Sublime* 9.3), panegyric may be grand and sublime but for the most part it lacks emotion. It is a style which needs to be varied, as is stressed by Pseudo-Dionysius (260 U–R), for example by simplicity for narrative and grandeur for emperors or gods.¹¹ Richness, grandeur and sublimity also characterize the delivery advised by Quintilian (11.3.153 specifically including the *gratum actio*).

Pliny echoes this tradition in his two letters on the revision of the *Panegyricus*. In *Ep.* 3.18.8–10 the genre of epideictic supports his own preference for a richer style (*laetioris stili*), even if others admire his passages in a plainer style (which he may someday come to appreciate). And in *Ep.* 3.13.3–4, he complains that there can be no originality in content and the reader will therefore concentrate on style (*eloquio*).¹² But he hopes

⁹ See Russell and Wilson (1981) xiv–v; Pernot (1993) 19–25; for *Eucorgias* Braund (1998) 56–8.

¹⁰ Prose encomium began with the fifth-century sophists, who were in turn influenced by earlier poetry of praise, as Gorgias implicitly acknowledges (*Helen* 2). Poetic encomium continued: for praise of a ruler see e.g. Stat. *Silv.* 4.1 on Domitian's seventeenth consulship (with Coleman (1988) esp. 62–5); and Gibson in this volume.

¹¹ Cic. *Orator* 96 is only an apparent exception in categorizing it under the middle style. It aims to please (cf. *Orator* 37) and that is why it has been rejected by the grand style, which Cicero has defined in terms of exciting emotion.

¹² He makes obvious use of the traditional five parts of rhetoric (cf. e.g. Quint. *Inst.* 3.3.0). He ignores memory but refers to content (*invenio*), structure (*dispositio*), style (*eloquio*) and delivery (*pronuntiatio*).

his structure, transitions and figures will also attract attention.¹³ After all, even the uneducated can sometimes find good material and deliver it impressively (*immemore praeflare, emittunt magnifice*), whereas skilled expertise is needed for appropriate arrangement and a varied use of figures (*disponere apte, figurare varie*). Variety of style is also needed: it cannot always be grand and sublime (an indication it mostly will be) but needs some lower tones just as light needs some shadow. Pliny clearly prided himself on his mastery of style and organization. I shall focus on the latter and say little on style.¹⁴

Since he was Pliny's teacher (*Ep.* 2.14.9, 6.6.3), it is natural to look more closely at Quintilian's discussion of epideictic (3.7). Within a dialogue setting of 91 BCE Cicero had seen panegyric as essentially Greek (*De Orat.* 2.341), and for *Rhet. Her.* 3.15 it was rarely found in real life. But by Quintilian's time epideictic was a regular feature of Roman public life and he begins by recognizing this change, emphasizing that Roman custom (*mos Romanus*) has found a practical use (3.7.2). The senate may, for example, assign a magistrate to give a funeral oration, as Pliny illustrates in a letter describing the funeral of Verginius Rufus in 97: the oration was given by the consul Tacitus, 'a most eloquent eulogist' (*laudator eloquentissimus, Ep.* 2.1.6). Speeches, Quintilian continues (3.7.3), do exist which are purely for display, such as the praise of gods and heroes of the past. But even here he refers to a conspicuous and recent Roman example, the praise of Jupiter Capitolinus at the sacred contest (which Domitian established in 86).¹⁵ He does not mention *gratiarum actiones*, though there might be up to a dozen each year by consuls elect and consuls entering office: it was indeed while he stood rehearsing one that Verginius Rufus fell, broke his hip and never recovered.

Yet within his actual analysis of encomium Quintilian scarcely touches on real oratory. In his main account, on praise of men (3.7.10–18), he notes only that 'sometimes we praise the living' (3.7.17); so too in invective (3.7.22).¹⁶ But the final item, honours after death, is unusually long and the initial group of examples, deification, decrees and statues at public expense, suggests real public oratory (3.7.17–18).¹⁷ This may then recall the end of the preceding section, praise of gods, where he refers to mortals who were deified because of their virtue and pays a cautiously worded compliment

to the piety of the current emperor (3.7.9). This overt flattery of Domitian is itself parallel to the earlier allusion when he cited the sacred contest at the end of his introductory section on Roman public oratory (3.7.4). If we include the examples of honours after death we have three clausal allusions to imperial panegyric, a subject under Domitian much too sensitive for the schoolroom.

One further example is from real oratory, within the brief account of praise of places (3.7.26–7). Quintilian cites Cicero's praise of Sicily (*Verr.* 2.2–8), and since Cicero cites this very passage (*Orator* 210) to prove the usefulness of the epideictic style within real (i.e. forensic) oratory, Quintilian can expect his readers to recall that context. It proves an earlier point (2.1.11): that encomium and invective are useful within forensic oratory. He also terms it a digression at 4.3.13 and 11.3.164.

With these exceptions Quintilian keeps to the usual schoolroom menu of Greek and Roman gods and heroes, the type of encomium he described as composed for show and not practical use (3.7.3). This disjunction between adult use in Roman public life and schoolroom training recurs in his more extensive account of deliberative oratory (3.8). The analysis and examples are again geared to the schoolroom, but Quintilian explicitly draws attention to its usefulness in later life: his pupils will be able to apply what they have learnt *cum advocari coeperint in consilia amicum, dicere sententiam in senatu, suadere si quid consulat princeps* ('once they begin to be called into consultations by friends or deliver an opinion in the senate or advise the emperor if he consults them', 3.8.70). The same will be true for epideictic, and since it is a simpler genre, it is suitably studied before the student progresses to deliberative and forensic. This may be why in 3.7 Quintilian does not mention the poem or the style of epideictic, reserving them till he turns to deliberative and can compare the differences (3.8.7–9, 63).¹⁸

The basic form of eulogy, the default case as it were, is the praise of famous men (3.7.10–18), and this includes praise of kings and emperors (*ut in regibus principibusque, 3.7.13*).¹⁹ I will compare especially Quintilian's main source, *Cic. De Orat.* 2.342–8, and Theon.²⁰ I have already

¹⁸ Theon 111 Sp. mentions the poem but gives no details.

¹⁹ Cf. Patillon and Bolognesi (1997) 152: 'Il ser de modle à tous les aures'. It is the only type listed in *Suet. Gram.*, *et Rhet.* 25.8–9: *ac vitos illustres laudare vel vituperare*.

²⁰ Differences in detail serve only to reinforce the impression of a homogeneous body of tradition. Since it is so important in Pliny, take comparison: Quintilian omits it from 3.7 but he had already linked it to encomium at 2.4.21 (it may be relevant that in 3.7 it does not fit easily into his three chronological periods). Theon omits it from encomium, though he noted its usefulness at 61 Sp., but his next exercise is comparison, and that is said to use the topics of encomium (113 Sp.). At *De*

¹³ On the skilful use of transitions in epideictic see Pernot (1993) 315–19.

¹⁴ On Pliny's style see Hutchinson in this volume and Gamberti (1983) 337–448.

¹⁵ Praise of Domitian may well have been the main theme: Bartsch (1994) 270 n. 115; Coleman (1986) 3097–100.

¹⁶ Theon 109 Sp. similarly lists it without discussion.

¹⁷ Cf. Pernot (1993) 176.

summarized Cicero's list at 342, and all three share the same standard headings of origins and other external circumstances, things to do with the body and things to do with the mind. This trio appears already in *Ar. Rhet.* 1360b24–8, and Pliny deploys it at *Pan.* 82.6. But Quintilian adds an overarching structure of a different set of three headings: things before, during and after the person's life. This is unusual in extant texts, though hardly original;²¹ it usefully recognizes that the standard list of separate items is in its skeleton a biographical approach, a laudatory or invective review of a life from beginning to end.²²

Quintilian lists the following:

- (a) *things before birth* (i.e. origins): the traditional items of country, parents and ancestors;²³
- (b) *things during life*, listed under three headings:
- (i) qualities of the mind ('courage, justice, modesty and all the other virtues'),
 - (ii) qualities of the body (e.g. beauty and strength), and
 - (iii) external circumstances (luck, power, wealth and influence);
- (c) *things after death* (this is rarely available): honours such as deification, decrees and public statues, the verdict of posterity and fame from descendants.²⁴

He emphasizes, as do Cicero and Theon, that we will praise origins, qualities of the body and external circumstances not for their possession but as a test of character in how they are used (so already *Ar. Rhet.* 1367b28–30; *Rhet. Alex.* 35). Praise of the mind, virtue, is the true praise. In later writers particularly this is often treated under the four cardinal virtues of courage, justice, modesty and wisdom (the four already used by Agathon in Plato's *Symposium*), but this was not universal. Quintilian lists three of them but implies a longer list. Theon *in* *Sp.* lists the four cardinal virtues but then adds others, 'piety, generosity, greatness of mind and the like'. Cicero, in *De Oratore* 343–7, discusses a long and varied list.

For this, the most important part, praise of the mind, Quintilian outlines two approaches. Neither is intrinsically better than the other; the

Orat. 2.348 Cicero may list it either as a standard heading of eulogy in standard position at the end (so already *Isoc. Evag.* 65–9) or as the next independent item as in Theon.

²¹ He shares some common source with Menander II (see below on 413 and 435 *Sp.*).

²² See Pernot (1986) on this crucial point.

²³ He includes omens of birth: cf. e.g. *Isoc. Evag.* 21; Menander I 371.9 *Sp.* Omens and the like are also among the embellishments (*ornamenta rerum*) in *Cic. Part.* 73. Pliny uses this *topos* in the omens surrounding Trajan's rise to power; see below.

²⁴ Honours after death: already *Isoc. Evag.* 70–2, *Ar. Rhet.* 1367a2–2. But it is not in *De Oratore* and gets only brief mention at *Part.* 82, *Rhet. Her.* 3.14. Theon *in* *Sp.* On Quintilian's unusually lengthy treatment, see above, p. 70.

choice depends on who is being praised and what the audience will find most congenial. There may be a chronological narrative, beginning with the early years, another standard item (cf. *Isoc. Evag.* 22; *Cic. Part.* 82), or alternatively there may be a list of separate individual virtues, each in turn supported by acts from the person's life. Division by virtues is more usual, but Theon is aware of the alternative, rejecting narrative as more appropriate to history, and Cicero (*Part.* 75) gives two chronological methods as well as division under the virtues: we may move forward from the past or move back from the present. Cicero had himself chosen a chronological structure only a few years earlier in *Philippics* 2.44–119, an invective against Antony from boyhood onwards (*a puero*, 44). He used the alternative, a list of virtues, in the inset praise of Pompey at *De Lege Manilia* 28: the ideal general has four qualities, namely knowledge of military matters, courage (*virtus*), authority (*auctoritas*) and good luck.²⁵

Quintilian's emphasis on flexibility is repeated in Pliny's advice to the consul elect Severus (*Ep.* 6.27) on how Severus might handle his *gratiarum actio*. Pliny recalls his own (never published) *gratiarum actio* as consul elect. Trajan's virtues give abundant material for praise, and Pliny chose to highlight Trajan's hatred of flattery (a key theme also in the *Panegyricus*). But there can be different approaches, to suit personal taste and changed circumstances, and Severus may find scope for new material in Trajan's recent exploits (the conquest of Dacia). Pliny chose from the emperor's personal nature, Severus might choose deeds of war. The importance given here to different approaches is a useful corrective to any over-reliance on the lists of theory. The need to adapt to the audience is also important, and is again something Pliny will have learned from Quintilian: in Sparta, for example, an interest in literature will be less honoured than in Athens, and endurance and courage will appeal more (cf. *Ar. Rhet.* 1367b7–11); and there are similar differences between individuals (Quint. *Instr.* 3.7.23–5).

When he discussed the *progymnasmatia*, Quintilian postponed the treatment of encomium and invective (2.4.20–1), and he gives the promised fuller account when he discusses the whole epideictic genre (3.7). At the end of his general preface (61 *Sp.*) Theon conversely calls his account of encomium a simplified schoolroom version, reserving a precise technical analysis, τεχνολογία, to its appropriate place.²⁶ Yet the shared links

²⁵ See Steel (2001) 130–5; Rees (2007a) 140–1.

²⁶ The *Aristides Prolegomena* (161.12–262.6 *Lenz*) claim that, at the end of his *Progymnasmatia*, Theon the technical writer (τεχνολογικός) referred to an example of a subtype or partial class (μερικὸν εἶδος), like those of encomium, 'kinship, wedding and funeral speeches and many others'. This does not appear at the end of our text (now known from the Armenian), but it may be truncated. Or

between Quintilian and Theon indicate that the basic theory of encomium was already learnt at the earlier stage. Quintilian also cites no sources in his treatment of the headings of encomium and invective (3.7.6–22), a sign that the content was uncontroversial and unoriginal.²⁷

What then was this more advanced τεχνολογία? The obvious answer is the detailed handling of specific types of encomia. This is strongly supported by a passage in a fifth-century Greek writer of *progymnasmata*, Nicolaus (49 Felten).²⁸ He notes that the elementary schooling did not tackle the headings for individual subtypes (εἶδη), speeches suitable for occasions such as 'weddings, address to a provincial governor, praise of Apollo at the Sminthia festival, or any other festival speech or hymn to a god' (ἑπιθεόλιμος ἢ προσφώνητικὸς ἢ σμινθιακὸς ἢ ἑλλαοῦ ἑλαος ἐπι ἑορταῖς λεγόμενος λόγος ἢ ὕμνος θεῶν, Nicolaus 49 Felten). Such treatises survive only much later than Quintilian and Pliny, in Menander I and II (third century) and Pseudo-Dionysius (not earlier than the late second century). But similar texts will have been known already by the time of Pliny and Quintilian.

Quintilian in fact already gives a separate analysis of two of these later subtypes, the hymn and praise of places.²⁹ For both, he is our earliest extant source but he was hardly the originator. He begins with the praise of gods (3.7.7–9), a topic with abundant comparative material from the conventions of hymns in poetry and Agathon's praise of Love in Plato's *Symposium*.³⁰ He also outlines how to praise places like cities (3.7.26–7), and some common Greek source will lie behind the essential similarity with the later accounts of Menander I 344–67 Sp., Menander II 382–8 Sp. and Pseudo-Dionysius 257 U-R.³¹ Quintilian tells us that it is handled on similar lines to the praise of men, except that it has its own individuating characteristics (*illa propria*), its position and its buildings. Significantly, he already knows the principles underlying the subtypes found in the later critics: identify the individuating topics (τὸ ἴδιον or τὸ ἰδιόζον . . . κεφάλαιον), then adapt them as appropriate to the basic

these may be a garbled memory of Theon's reference to the funeral speech (top Sp.) and his promise of a more technical work: Heath (2003) 152–3 is cautious. Even so, the subtypes of encomium need not be attributed to Theon.

²⁷ Elsewhere, on the nature and audience of epideictic, he does cite sources: 3.7.1, 23, 25, 28.

²⁸ See Russell and Wilson (1981) xxxvi and Heath (2004) 220. Inclusion of the Sminthia festival suggests Nicolaus knows or shares a common tradition with Menander II, who ends with this example (437–46 Sp.).

²⁹ But Quintilian need not know praise of place as an independent speech, since his example is an inset praise, that of Sicily at Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.8 (see above).

³⁰ On prose hymns see Pernot (1993) 216–38 and Russell (1990a) esp. 207–15.

³¹ Full discussion in Pernot (1993) 178–215.

encomiastic structure for praise of men. Compare the claim in Menander I 332 Sp. that he will show 'how the same headings underlie them all'.

We may have to wait for Menander II (368–77 Sp.) for the specific praise of a ruler as such, the βασιλικὸς λόγος, but he was not original and earlier theory was in any case influenced by Isocrates' *Enagoras* and Xenophon's *Agésilas*, each an example of a βασιλικὸς λόγος.³² Menander II sets out the following list of headings: proem; country; family; birth; early years; physical appearance (φύσις); upbringing, education and accomplishments; deeds (πρόξεις), illustrated according to the four cardinal virtues of courage, justice, modesty and wisdom; good fortune (τύχη); final comparison; epilogue, ending with prayers for his safety, long life and succession by his descendants. The headings for origins and early years will be adapted or omitted to fit the case. Deeds of war precede deeds of peace, and for both there must always be division according to the virtues, each of which must have an explicit introduction. Each heading should include a comparison, and the final comparison should review the whole reign with that of predecessors, not criticizing them but presenting the current ruler as perfect.³³ The headings are presented in a fixed order, and phrases such as 'next', 'add after this', 'then divide' and 'link this with' abound, sometimes with advice on how to provide a link.

Menander II gives a longer and more prescriptive list than Quintilian but these are the familiar headings for the wider category, praise of famous men. To produce a βασιλικὸς λόγος the basic scheme is just amplified with details on how each heading is handled to fit an emperor. It is Menander II's first subtype and he presents a straightforward, full-scale model with no specific context or occasion. In the case of the other subtypes the occasion itself is important (as in Pliny) and brings with it a greater flexibility since each has its own appropriate features and individuating heading (τὸ ἴδιόν . . . κεφάλαιον). For example, if there is a festival, start with that since it is the primary theme (424 Sp.). A speech of arrival must express joy; while its other headings are the usual ones (385 Sp.). In the invitation speech the reason for the invitation is central and you must keep repeating

³² Menander II is made much of in the influential study of Cairns (1972) 100–20. He analyses Theocritus 17 (the *Encomium of Prohery*), a poem in praise of a living ruler, in terms of acceptance or rejection by Theocritus of Menander's headings. Against his over-schematic and anachronistic approach, see Hunter (2003) 8–24 and Russell and Wilson (1981) xxxi–xxxiv.

³³ Compare the speech on the arrival of a new governor: any comparison of the situation under his predecessor should not criticize him but simply describe the previous suffering (378 Sp.). But what is prudent for a Greek (cf. Dio 3.12) is different for Pliny, who openly compares Trajan and Domitian, a contrast sanctioned by Domitian's *dementia memoriar* and its use a few years earlier in Tac. *Agr.* 44.5–45.2.

it (429 Sp.), and in the speech of an envoy pleading before the emperor a single virtue, his moderation ($\phi\lambda\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\tau\tau\iota\varsigma$), will be amplified throughout (423 Sp.).³⁴ The advice of such repeated themes is an interesting parallel for Pliny.

The order of the headings may also vary. The informal speech ($\lambda\alpha\lambda\iota\acute{\alpha}$) lacks the regular textbook structure ($\tau\acute{\omicron}\xi\iota\varsigma$... $\acute{\epsilon}\kappa$ $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\chi\upsilon\eta\eta\varsigma$, 392 Sp.), and on any theme you can order the virtues as you see fit and as suits the sequence of your argument (380 Sp.). Strikingly, in the consolation speech and the funeral monody (413, 435 Sp.), the need for emotion changes the usual order and the sequence of the four virtues is replaced by the three chronological periods, past, present and future.³⁵ You should begin with the present since it will be more emotive to start with the age or manner of death (435 Sp.). Clearly the very conspicuous fourfold division under the virtues is too overtly artificial for such emotion. Panegyric also has its own brief inset encomia, such as praise of a city (396, 417 Sp.), praise of the emperor within the praise of a provincial governor (379, 415, 426, 429 Sp.), or praise of the emperor's wife (376 Sp.). Compare Pliny's praise of Trajan's wife and sister at *Pan.* 83–4.

The choice of speaker and the reason for that choice can also be significant. There is little in Menander II, mostly on the more private occasions of departures, weddings and funerals (399, 407, 419, 434 Sp.). But the envoy bringing a golden crown to the emperor or pleading before him for a city in trouble represents his city (179, 181 Sp.). The speaker issuing an invitation to a governor will begin 'The city has sent me', and if he is a man of some distinction ($\acute{\omicron}\xi\iota\omega\iota\varsigma$) he will refer to himself (424, 426–7 Sp.). Pseudo-Dionysius is more interested in the choice of speaker and says that in addressing a governor you should explain at the beginning why you have been chosen and come back at the end to add some personal note (273, 276 UR). It is a common *topos* in Greek panegyric proems, as often in Aristides, and Pliny makes significant use of his own role as consul in the proem and epilogue.

A relatively close following of Menander's advice is found in Pseudo-Aristides 35.³⁶ Like Pliny, the unknown author praises an emperor who

³⁴ $\Phi\upsilon\lambda\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\tau\tau\iota\alpha$ is also variously translated as generosity and humanity. It is the virtue of a superior who treats others fairly, and it covers much of the same range as Latin *moderatio*, including accessibility. It is listed under justice at 385 Sp., perhaps also at 374 Sp. (but see Russell and Wilson (1987) 279).

³⁵ See above on chronological structure allowed by Quintilian and Cicero.

³⁶ Author and date are disputed. Aristides can be excluded on linguistic grounds, and it is most often dated to the third century (Körner 2002). Librale (1994) links it to Trajan, but Trajan had no son and the address to a son at the end cannot plausibly refer to Trajan himself, as Librale suggests (276–8).

has become emperor by acclamation after a time of disasters. The proem is conventional, with a setting at a sacred feast and general *topoi* on the greatness of the theme and the speaker's inadequacy (1–4). No details are given of origins (country, family, birth) or physical appearance, and the praise begins with his accession and life before he became emperor (5–13).³⁷ He achieved a smooth succession unmarked by the bloodshed of predecessors, and he is a ruler worthy of ruling as one would expect from his character, and as fits (11–13) his education and earlier career. He has all the virtues (15). These are then treated in turn: justice (16–20), moderation ($\phi\lambda\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\tau\tau\iota\alpha$, 21–6), modesty (27–9) and courage combined with wisdom (30–7). Each has its comparison: he surpasses Rhadamanthus and Aeneas in justice (17), is unlike Pausanias in moderation (25), unlike Agamemnon and Achilles in modesty (27–9) and like Themistocles defeating Xerxes (both unnamed) in wisdom in war (33). Courage is the virtue which most reveals an emperor (Menander II, 372 Sp.),³⁸ it is delayed from its usual initial position to show the true exemplar of Homer's praise of 'the good king and mighty spearman' ($\beta\epsilon\omicron\tau\upsilon\lambda\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$ τ' $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\theta\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ $\kappa\alpha\tau\epsilon\pi\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ τ' $\alpha\lambda\chi\upsilon\eta\eta\eta\varsigma$, *Hom. Il.* 3.179) and provide a climax in exalted style as the emperor triumphs over Germans and Parthians. The epilogue (38–9) is brief, praising his good fortune and distinction (he surpasses all in wisdom, bravery, piety and good fortune), and telling his son to follow his father's example.

If we turn now to consider Pliny in the light of all this background, epideictic theory encouraged rather more flexibility than Pseudo-Aristides 35 might suggest.³⁹ What it could give was a checklist of headings and *topoi*, but an orator of Pliny's standing and experience will then exercise his own judgement.⁴⁰ Knowledge of that theory also lets us in turn form a better understanding of Pliny's strategy and the reasons behind the organization of his material. I stress organization since Pliny himself drew attention to its structure and transitions (see above on *Ep.* 3.13.3–4).

A striking lack of specific detail makes it impossible to identify any specific emperors, and I incline to see it as a real speech pruned or adapted to provide a generic model, and this pruning would explain the clumsiness of the abrupt beginning and end. The setting is baldly 'a feast and sacred festival' (1), but near the end it is clearly a festival to Demeter; now festivals are more splendid and feasts dearer to the gods, now the fire of Demeter is brighter and more sacred' (37).

³⁷ Pliny and Pseudo-Aristides both use a preliminary narrative to show that the emperor deserved to become emperor, following the model of Xen. *Aggr.* 1.5–2.

³⁸ Cf. Tac. *Agr.* 39.2: military leadership is the imperial virtue (*imperatoriam virtutem*).

³⁹ There is also considerable variety in the panegyrics of Aristides: see Renout (1993) esp. 321–31, a comparison of Aristides 1 (*Panathenaisus*) and 26 (*To Rome*).

⁴⁰ Quint. *Inst.* 6.5.1–2 notes the impossibility of teaching judgement. All he can do is guide judgement by his advice on what to do or not do in specific cases. For Pseudo-Dionysius 363.11–20 U-R (of argumentation), it shows a schoolmaster ($\psi\omicron\kappa\alpha\upsilon\tau\iota\sigma\tau\iota\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ $\acute{\alpha}\nu\eta\eta$) to follow the traditional headings from alpha to omega.

To anticipate, he deploys significant manipulation of the epideictic headings to produce a closely interwoven web of key themes. These run through the whole speech and are carefully prepared in the proem and brought together at the end. Trajan is the ideal best emperor, *optimus princeps*, and as such he has all the virtues. He shows courage in war, and among his civic virtues particularly moderation. A series of antitheses dominate the praise. He is not a god or tyrant but a fellow-citizen, 'one of us', sharing and respecting the values of the senate (e.g. *Pan.* 2.3–4). He is favoured by Jupiter but behaves like a traditional senator and consul. He is the best, Domitian the worst of emperors. These various antitheses have been well treated elsewhere,⁴⁴ and I will not rehearse them all here, but they concern the central core of panegyric theory: the moral qualities. Instead I shall focus on how Pliny helps build up that portrayal of Trajan as the ideal emperor by his use of the other panegyric headings, proem and epilogue, family, physical qualities, comparisons and good fortune.

Pliny chooses a roughly chronological structure (the alternative structure we saw allowed by Cicero and Quintilian).⁴² This allows greater flexibility for repeating and interweaving key points at various stages of the narrative, and it fits the constant antithesis of present and past, Trajan and Domitian.⁴³ I would also suggest that it seems more natural and straightforward. Had Pliny chosen carefully separated individual headings and a formal parade of specific virtues, his speech would have been overtly artificial and instantly recognizable as panegyric. This might weaken his claim to tell the truth without flattery to an emperor who dislikes flattery. Apparent spontaneity is desirable (*Pan.* 3.1).

In an important and stimulating study, Bartsch discusses Pliny's repeated emphasis on truth and flattery in terms of a problem whether praise can ever be distinguished from flattery after the excessive and hypocritical adulation of Domitian.⁴⁴ But literature of praise was too normal and acceptable a literary form for such public anguish.⁴⁵ Pliny does not, I think, reveal a credibility gap but simply exploits the contrast of truth and flattery to

serve his own rhetorical purposes. The content of imperial praise is, as Pliny recognizes, conventional and banal (*nota vulgata*, *Ep.* 3.13.2), and his problem is to find an original twist or *color*. A new and very different emperor allows him to emphasize sincerity and lack of flattery, and by the choice of this particular *color*, truthful speech is made a proof of Trajan's worth.⁴⁶ For example, Trajan's refusal to allow private *gratiarum actiones* (*Pan.* 4.2) is no mere detail: Pliny uses it to turn to address the emperor for the first time, and he does so in a significant juxtaposition with what will be Trajan's prime virtue, moderation, *Cassia Auguste, moderate* (*Pan.* 4.3). A standard proem *topos* becomes a major theme, and this is why Pliny repeats it, deploying it later to mark out important transitional points (53–5, 71–5).

The proem begins from the occasion, audience and speaker: an address to the senate by the consul as its representative. Pliny emphasizes the traditional Roman nature of his initial prayer, and links speaker, senate and the whole state in offering thanks to the best of emperors, *optimus princeps* (1.1–2).⁴⁷ The proem introduces many of the major themes, the role of Jupiter, the contrast of truth and flattery, and particularly the emperor's virtues. Right from the beginning he is set up as *optimus princeps* (1.2) and contrasted with the unnamed Domitian: his courage and a sense of duty, clemency and moderation entitle him to be called *optimus* (2.6), and, in a longer list of virtues and contrasting vices (3.4), he earns honest praise for civic virtues like moderation and, in final position, energy and courage. These two lists of virtues also serve a structural purpose. Courage is first and singled out on its own at 2.6, and it ends the list at 3.4.⁴⁸ Pliny begins his narrative with Trajan's military career, with particular emphasis on his courage and energy (5–19).⁴⁹ Only then does he turn to Trajan's civic virtues, especially moderation, as Trajan arrives in Rome.

The consulship is another major theme introduced in the proem and used in the overall structure. It serves as a linking thread throughout 56–79, particularly the extended treatment of Trajan's third consulship. Trajan shows moderation by his respect for the consulship (and by extension for the senate and good constitutional government) in his behaviour both as consul himself and towards those he appointed consul. But it is particularly

⁴² See Fearns (1981); Wallace-Hadrill (1981, 1982); Braund (1996, 1998) 58–68; Levene (1997); Rees (1998, 2001).

⁴³ Add a wish to emulate Tacitus' *Agricola*? Biography was a genre strongly influenced by epideictic, and after the shared opening headings of origins and early life the main account was essentially chronological, as in the *Agricola* and Plutarch's *Lives*, or a list of independent headings, as in Suetonius.

⁴⁴ Similarly (see above, p. 76) present sorrow and happy past shape the structure of funeral speeches in Menander II.

⁴⁵ Bartsch (1994) 148–87.

⁴⁶ For contemporary contexts of praise, see Gibson in this volume.

⁴⁶ See above, p. 73 for the same strategy in another *gratiarum actio* (*Ep.* 6.27); for Trajan's dislike of flattery cf. Cass. Dio 1.26, 3.2.

⁴⁷ Prayer also ends the speech. Compare Dem. *De Cor.* I and 324 for this conventional *topos*, and for concluding prayers e.g. Menander II 377 5p. Pliny's initial prayer also echoes Cicero, who as consul similarly began his *Pro Murena*.

⁴⁸ Courage is also set apart from the rest in the epilogue, *optimus principum fortissime imperatorum* ('best of emperors and most courageous of generals', 91.1).

⁴⁹ But also moderation: see 16.1–2.

prominent at the end (90–5) when Pliny returns to his own role as consul in a double epilogue, first (90–3) the traditional personal debt of the two consuls and then (94.1–95.5) a final prayer to Jupiter for the emperor's safety (94) and a final address to the senate with his personal pledge of service as consul (95). Yet even in the more personal details of his career Pliny emphasizes that things are no longer as they were under Domitian (90.5–6, 92.4, implicitly at 93.1), and at the very end of the speech he links himself to his recurrent contrast of the best and worst of emperors: 'I love the best of emperors as much as I was hated by the worst' (95.4).

A proem alerting us to the main themes of the speech seems unusual for epideictic.⁵⁰ Pliny may have been influenced by Cicero's invective *Philippic II*, which followed his usual forensic and deliberative practice. As Cicero advised in *De Oratore*, you should begin from the very entrails of the case, *ex ipsius visceribus causae* (2.318–19).

After the proem we might expect origins, physical appearance and early years. Pliny follows rhetorical theory in showing that it is their use, not their possession that matters, and the only true praise is praise of the mind. But he avoids the usual series of independent early sections, weaving them instead into his wider narrative. On physical appearance Pliny is very brief,⁵¹ but places it conventionally enough near the beginning (4.7).⁵² Trajan is a consistent whole, embodying the inner qualities but also the outer qualities of a true emperor. He is tall and dignified, he has a fine head and noble face, he has the strength and vigour appropriate to his age, and his premature white hairs add a dignity which shows divine favour. But his strength then becomes a recurrent theme, both literal and symbolic. Thus after his adoption the elderly Nerva leans on him, putting the weight of empire on his shoulders, drawing on his youth and strength (8.3–4), and these symbolically strong shoulders recur in the speech (at 10.6, 57.5, 82.6).

⁵⁰ It is not in the relatively detailed list of proem *topoi* in *Rhet. Her.* 3.11–12, and Pernot (1993) 303 cites only Menander II 378 Sp. There a speech welcoming a new governor may begin 'You have arrived with favourable omens from the emperor, brilliant like a ray of the sun sent down from on high. Pernot takes this to anticipate a tripartite structure: the occasion, praise of emperor, praise of governor. But this gives too much weight to a simple proem *topos*, a conventional comparison between governor and emperor. Quint. *Instr.* 3.8.7–9 notes only that epideictic proems can be very loosely relevant.

⁵¹ Menander II 372 Sp. is also brief and mentions only beauty at birth. But beauty fits a young man (cf. Isoc. *Evag.* 22), and when at 2.6 the unnamed Domitian is acclaimed for beauty and Nero for his actor's gestures and voice (cf. Dio 3.134), these are inappropriate for an emperor. Barsch (1994) 276 n. 18 wrongly sees a contradiction between 2.6 and 4.7: Trajan has the right physical qualities, Domitian (and Nero) the wrong.

⁵² Cf. e.g. Plut. *Cic.* 3.7, *Ant.* 4.1–3. In biography it may appear late, as in Tac. *Aggr.* 44.2 and regularly in Suetonius (except for *Tiber.* 3), but in early position, as in Pliny, it seems to be linked to character. Cf. Wadman (1967).

Since Trajan displays courage in military service in his rise to becoming emperor, Pliny's narrative follows the traditional order of placing war before peace and praising courage first of the virtues (9–13).⁵³ His narrative of Trajan as a soldier neatly picks up on his physical qualities. Height, strength, vigour and stamina mark him out (13.1–2), and, deftly introducing the traditional topic of early years (14–15), Pliny records Trajan's military career as a youth when he already displayed the same characteristics of strength and energy.⁵⁴ On the march he was always in the lead, forcing speed on all, and stuck in camp he would gallop off for exercise (14.3). Towards the end of the speech, his courage, vigour and stamina are again displayed in his recreations of dangerous hunting and sailing (81–2). Trajan's energetic recreations show his moral worth, in contrast to the gambling, sexual licence and luxury of so many of his predecessors (81.9). At this point, within the wider topic of the modesty of Trajan's private life (81–4),⁵⁵ Pliny makes explicit the panegyric *topos* that physical strength and external qualities (luck and wealth) do not deserve praise unless the mind is in control (82.6). Outer and inner strength, private and public life all march and contribute to present the ideal emperor. Domitian, in careful contrast, is a coward afraid even of calm waters (82.1), he is pale as a woman and the red colouring on his face only masks his shamelessness (48.4),⁵⁶ while Trajan shows his sincerity with tears and a modest blush (2.8, 73.4).

Family is also made a unifying thread. If there was no distinguished ancestry, the whole topic could be omitted (Menander II 369–71 Sp.; cf. Pseudo-Aristides 35), and Pliny ignores Trajan's Spanish origins: it was no basis for praise that Trajan was the first emperor to come from outside Italy. Pliny is also brief in praise of Trajan's birth-father, noting only in passing at 9.2 that he had noble birth, was of consular rank and won a triumph (the same points recur at 58.3).⁵⁷ Instead Pliny highlights Trajan's peaceful accession by adoption and divine favour (5.1). Nerva is the father who provides the usual heading of family; and two sets of omens take the place of the conventional omens of birth, confirming the favour of Capitoline Jupiter (invoked already in the proem). Omens from Jupiter surround Trajan's departure to war (5.2–4) and he is adopted by Nerva in

⁵³ The date of delivery excludes Trajan's Dacian triumph but Pliny introduces it as an imagined future (16.3–17.4).

⁵⁴ Cf. Menander II 372 Sp., which cites Isoc. *Evag.* 22–3.

⁵⁵ See Braund (1996) and Rees (1998) 79–83. Accessibility and even humility mark out the good ruler, as in Trajan's modest entry into Rome for the first time as emperor (*Phn.* 22–4).

⁵⁶ Cf. Tac. *Aggr.* 45.2. Red colouring is an attractive feature of the proposed bridegroom cited at p. 68 in Plin. *Ep.* 1.14.

⁵⁷ They are also what Agricola achieved (Tac. *Aggr.* 44.3).

the Temple of Jupiter, supported by a further omen, the arrival of laurels of victory (7–8). At the end Pliny returns to this same topic of omens and adoption, invoking Capitoline Jupiter to give Trajan a son or guide him to adopt a son similarly worthy to be adopted in his temple on the Capitoline (94.4–5).

Pliny does not use Trajan's family name until the very end of his praise of the emperor, when it appears twice in closely following significant positions. At 88.4–5 the senate confers the new title of *optimus* ('the best'), and with it the family name Traianus joins and surpasses the aristocratic senatorial families of the republic. Piso Frugi, Laelius Sapiens and Metellus Pius.⁵⁸ The title also outdoes that of the emperor Augustus, since *optimus* is the title of Jupiter Optimus and can be the true title only of the good emperor. Then at 89.1–2 Pliny turns to invoke the adoptive father, 'deified Nerva' (*diue Nerva*), alongside the birth-father, 'father Trajan' (*pater Traiane*), in friendly rivalry over the glory he gave them: the son won a triumph for one (a detail picking up 14.1) and deified the other. This best of emperors is thus presented in a dual role, a Traianus who recalls the heroes of the Roman past, and son of a god, a quasi-divine figure of glory.

Comparisons are regular in panegyric (cf. Menander II), sometimes in isolated single references, as in Pseudo-Aristides 35; and sometimes a major theme, as in Isocrates' *Panathenaiscus*. In Pliny's presentation of Trajan two are particularly important, and both highlight Trajan as *optimus princeps*, the parallel with Jupiter Optimus and the contrast with Domitian, *peissimus princeps* (*Pan.* 92.4, 94.3, 95.5).⁵⁹ Pliny even draws attention to its traditional use with the comment that panegyric is insufficiently pleasing without comparison (53.2). He also shows selective care in his less conspicuous comparisons. Thus the comparison of Trajan to three republican families near the end (88.6) balances a list of three near the beginning (13.4), where Trajan displays the same courage as the families of Fabricius, Scipio and Camillus, re-embodiment of Roman ancestral tradition and courage (*patrio more patria virtute*, 13.5). Pliny also avoids naming Greek heroes, perhaps to link Trajan closely with true Roman values, but he compares Trajan to the unnamed Heracles near the beginning and again at the end (14.5, 82.7), a delicate hint that Trajan too will earn deification.

One final panegyric heading: good fortune, *felicitas*, traditionally placed towards the end of a speech (Menander II 376 Sp.), and an example of the external qualities like wealth, which, along with physical qualities, rhetorical theory subordinated to the moral virtues, as Pliny himself asserts at 82.6 (see above). Similarly at 74.1 the senate's acclamation of Trajan as *felix* recognizes not an external benefit but his mind, and at 88.5 the title of *optimus* is superior to *felix*, since *felix* recognizes luck, not character (*non moribus sed fortunae*). Yet again Pliny openly manipulates a conventional topic of praise to present Trajan as the ideal emperor with the right moral character to be *optimus*.

As *optimus princeps* Trajan has an exemplary advisory role for the future, warning future emperors in advance (33.5 *praemonere*; cf. 20.6, 59.2, 63.1, 73.6, 75.5). This is what Pliny claimed for his speech (Plin. *Ep.* 3.18.3 *praemonentur*); it is a standard epideictic point (e.g. Isoc. *Evag.* 73–7); and again it is a theme woven through the speech.

But does Pliny also advise Trajan? This whole issue is complicated by the multiple addressees, whether Trajan (the object of praise), the senate (the formal addressee) or the wider readership of the published speech (Plin. *Ep.* 3.18.9 *omnibus scripsit*). If Gorgias and Isocrates praise pan-Hellenism at a Greek festival, the underlying message to their audience is the need for Greek unity against a background of disunity. Pliny's portrayal of a *princeps* with divine sanction and all the right moral qualities indicates there has been a need for such an emperor after the rule of Domitian. It does not tell us if Pliny intends advice for Trajan's future behaviour, and Pliny denies any advisory role (*Ep.* 3.18.2). He does use verbal forms of advice, but only in the form of encouragement to continue similarly (43.3, 45.6, 61.10, 62.9). This can be a form of advice that conceals criticism; it might be the proper caution required in advising rulers;⁶⁰ and the speech has also been interpreted as a tactful way of telling Trajan what the senate would like from him in the future.⁶¹ But it is at least equally likely that Pliny knew and made public what the emperor himself wished to be said by way of reassurance.⁶² Imperial ideology and senatorial advice are not

⁵⁸ The three families embody three virtues, modesty, wisdom and piety: the title *optimus* embraces these and every virtue. For more on historical exemplarity in the speech, see Henderson in this volume.

⁵⁹ For comparison with Zeus/Jupiter, cf. e.g. Theocritus 17.1–4 (Prolemy); Cic. *Pro Rosc. Am.* 131 (Sulla) or Hor. *Carm.* 3.5.1–4 (Augustus).

⁶⁰ On indirect advice and covert criticism see Ahl (1984); Schouler (1986); Bartsch (1994) on Pliny. Basic ancient texts: Demetrius, *On Style* 287–95; Quint. *Instr.* 9.2.66 (writing under Domitian, he is significantly silent on contemporary politics) and Pseudo-Dionysius 295–358 U-R.

⁶¹ E.g. Syme (1958a) 31–42, 57–8 'a senatorial manifesto'; Braund (1998) 66.

⁶² Fears (1981) 910–24 notes the close links between Pliny and the relicts on the arch of Trajan near Beneventum, such as Trajan's arrival on foot in Rome and the figures of Freedom, Concord and Moderation. Fears argues also that the use of the title *optimus* is aimed and tried out first in Pliny before it appears on coins.

easily distinguished and I see no cogent internal evidence.⁶³ Pliny himself gives only praise, and I have analysed the speech as such, highlighting his adaptation of traditional panegyric theory to the praise of a very Roman ideal ruler.

⁶³ Katherine Clarke reminds me of the varying interpretations of the senate's praise of the emperor in the Tiberian decrees (e.g. Cooley 1998). I should like to thank her and Donald Russell for their helpful comments.

CHAPTER 5

Ciceronian praise as a step towards

Pliny's Panegyricus

Gesine Mannwald

The *Panegyricus* is rightly regarded as an important specimen of early imperial panegyric: it is frequently singled out as a special text, defined as the only extant oration from ancient Rome between Cicero's *Philippics* and the imperial panegyrics of the third and fourth centuries.¹ As it is the only surviving example of a panegyric oration from the early empire, it is sometimes even seen as inaugurating a new literary genre in that this speech became a paradigmatic model that started off a series of imperial prose panegyrics.² The claim to novelty with respect to Pliny's *Panegyricus* is certainly true in the sense that, obviously, imperial panegyric did not exist prior to the establishment of the principate and Pliny's text is the earliest extant specimen in prose dating to this period. However, this focus on new features and later developments may not be sufficient for a full assessment of Pliny's *Panegyricus*. For it is *a priori* unlikely that any social and cultural customs or the corresponding literary texts in this period were entirely new creations rather than developments of conventions already established in Rome. Indeed, panegyric seems to have existed in Roman society from its inception, appearing in a variety of contexts that are not even restricted to the spoken or written word (cf. e.g. ancestors' masks, triumphal processions). In textual form panegyric may feature in self-contained pieces or as an element in almost any literary genre in both poetry and prose. The best-known examples from early Rome are perhaps the *laudationes funebres* and the shadowy *carmina conuivialia*; from later periods praise of patrons or dedications of poetic works come to mind.

Above all, panegyric acquired a generic identity in separate, self-contained prose texts as a form of epideictic oratory (according to ancient

¹ See Roche, pp. 4–5 in this volume.

² Cf. e.g. Kühn (1985) 1–2; Morford (1992) 578; Fantham (1999) 229; and Rees in this volume.