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Conspiring against the State? Livy's account of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE used as a warning against decadence and decay in 1st century BCE Rome

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Livy's account of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE has been extensively discussed by scholars in the past. Earlier scholars have focused on whether Livy described an actual conspiracy against the state or rather a crisis in 1st century BCE Rome. When analysing Livy's account within the field of imagological studies, valuable new insights will become available. It will be shown that in writing his account of the Bacchic festival, Livy wanted to warn his readers of the dangers of indecent behaviour – not just on an individual level, but also for the Roman state. If too many people (especially young eques who were trained for political office) were led astray, this would have unforeseeable consequences. Finally, it will be shown that we are not simply dealing with a conspiracy or a crisis, but rather a scenario showing how a (party fictional) conspiracy against decent moral behaviour could have led to a crisis in the state.

Keywords: Livy, Bacchanalia, *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus*, senatorial reforms of 186 BCE, imagology

Introductory remarks

Throughout the 20th century (especially in the first part), scholars have analysed Livy's account on the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE. A lot of earlier scholarship is, therefore, rather outdated. Moreover, Livy's account has not yet been analysed within the field of imagological studies. When looking at Livy's account from this perspective, valuable new insights will become available. This article is divided into

four parts. First, I will present previous scholarship on Livy's account of the events – starting with recent contributions and going back to earlier works. It will be stated what themes have already been discussed, the conclusions drawn from previous research and the approaches used. Secondly, I will investigate religious and social circumstances of Livy's own time, as well as Livy's historiographical methods as a contextual basis for my interpretation of Livy's account of the Bacchanalia. Thirdly, I will discuss how analysing Livy's characters in his account of the Bacchanalia fits into the field of imagological studies, and how we can benefit from analysing the account in this way. Finally, I will analyse whether the events described by Livy could be seen as a conspiracy against the state or rather a crisis. It will be shown that previous scholars seem to have overlooked the fact that we can see that the author had obvious reasons for describing the events in the way he did: Livy's story was a warning towards his fellow Romans to behave decently.

Methodology

Previous scholars, who analysed Livy's account of the Bacchanalia, simply concluded that Livy does not describe an actual conspiracy, but rather a crisis in the senate (Pailler 1988; Gruen 1990; van Son 1960; Walsh 1996). The following study will analyse Livy's account once more, but now for the first time within the field of imagology studies. It will also analyse the work of previous scholars on Livy's account. The study starts with an analysis of previous scholarship on Livy's account of the Bacchanalia to show from which viewpoints Livy's account has been analysed before. This will be followed by an analysis of the religious and social circumstances in Livy's own time to provide background information.

After providing the reader with this background information, I will move on to discussing Livy's account of the Bacchanalia within the field of imagology studies. Imagology or imagological studies is a field of study that looks at the attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices about one's own and others' national characters. Within the field of imagology, the representation of national stereotypes is known as 'ethnotypes.' These ethnotypes are regarded as discursive objects rather than objectively existing phenomena, and are defined against an 'Other,' generating an opposition between auto-images and hetero-images. An auto-image is the representation of the self, while a hetero image is the representation of the 'Other' (Leerssen 2000: 267–292). These representations stress difference, in keeping with the assumption that a nation is most characteristically itself in precisely those aspects in which it is most different from others (Leerssen 2016). In this article Livy's account of the Bacchanalia will be analysed from the point of view of these national representations. In doing so, it will be shown that every character in Livy's story plays a (stereotypical) role, and that every event within the story was added for a reason. We will see how Livy did not simply describe a conspiracy against

the Senate or a crisis in Rome. Instead, he provided us with a scenario showing how a partly fictional conspiracy against decent moral behaviour could lead to a political and socio-economic crisis in the early Empire.

Previous scholarship on Livy's account of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE

Before analysing Livy's account of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE, the social and religious circumstances in Livy's days, and his historiographical methods, it is important to briefly present and analyse previous scholarship on Livy's account of the events. I will start with recent contributions and go back to earlier works. It will be stated from which viewpoints Livy's account has already been discussed, and what conclusions were drawn from previous research. All but a few works on Livy's description of the events are written in the early 20th century and are therefore outdated. Moreover, so far scholars have mainly focused on literary aspects of the account, on religious practices related to the Bacchanalia, or on similarities and differences between the account and the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus* – as becomes clear from a short literature review.

To start with, Baldini, in her 2015 chapter *The Politics of Ecstasy: the Case of the Bacchanalia Affair in Ancient Rome* focuses on politics in 2nd century BCE Rome – the time in which the Bacchanalia were first introduced to the city. The same focus appears in Flower's 2002 chapter *Rereading the Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus of 186 BC. Gender roles in the Roman middle republic*, in Takács article *Politics and Religion in the Bacchanalian Affair of 186 B.C.E.* (2000), Bauman's 1990 article *The Suppression of the Bacchanals: Five Questions*, and Astin's 1989 article *The Atinii*. We should also consider Rouselle's 1982 dissertation *The Roman Persecution of the Bacchic Cult*, and finally McDonald in his article *The Bacchanalian Conspiracy* (1961).

Cancik-Lindemaier – writing in 2006 – analyses the similarities and differences between Livy's account and the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus (CIL*, i2 2, 581) from a literary perspective to understand the two distinct types of text that we are dealing with, namely Livy's account and a physical decree. In Kunkel's 1962 work *Kleine Schriften: zum römischen Strafverfahren und zur römischen Verfassungsgeschichte* the author analyses the decree from a historical and legal perspective, as did van Son in his 1960 dissertation *Livius' Behandeling Van de Bacchanalia,* Krause in his 1936 article *Zum Aufbau der Bacchanal-Inschrift*, Keil in his 1933 study *Das Sogenannte Senatusconsultum De Bacchanalibus*, and finally Fraenkel in his 1932 article *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus.* Walsh's 1996 article *Making a drama out of a crisis: Livy on the Bacchanalia* is a review of Livy's account of the events, primarily from the literary aspect, concentrating in particular

on the opening chapters which describe how the alleged conspiracy was detected. Gildenhard and Zissos, in their 2016 study *The Bacchanalia and Roman Culture*, analysed the text from a historical and cultural perspective, while Gelzer in his 1936 article *Die Unterdrückung der Bacchanalien bei Livius* analysed the text from a historical and linguistic perspective, as Cavaignac already did in 1915 (*Quelques remarques sur l'historicité de Tite-Live, XXI-XLV*), and Weissenborn & Müller in their 1911 commentary on Livy's work (*Titi Livi ab urbe condita libri*). Cichorius in his 1922 work *Römische Studien, historisches, epigraphisches, literargeschichtliches aus vier Jahrhunderten Roms*, also analyses the Bacchanalia in relation to Livy's work.

Works on the Bacchanalia from a religious perspective include Bruhl's 1953 work *Liber Pater: origine et expansion du culte dionysiaque à Rome et dans le monde romain*, followed by Tierney's 1947 article *The Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*, Méautis' 1940 monograph *Les aspects religieux de l'affaire des Bacchanales*, and Frank's 1927 study *The Bacchanalian Cult of 186 B.C.* More general studies on religion in ancient Rome that analyse the Bacchanalia include Altheim's various studies on Greek and Roman religion (1930; 1931; 1938; 1956), Reitzenstein's 1919 *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, Fowler's *The religious experience of the Roman people, from the earliest times to the age of Augustus* (1911), and Cumont's 1906 monograph *Les religions orientales dans le paganisme romain*.

General studies on politics in Livy's days in Rome, in which the political aspects of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE are briefly discussed, include Bauman's 1983 work *Lawyers in Roman Republican Politics: A Study of the Roman Jurists in Their Political Setting, 316–82 B.C.*, Scullard's *Roman Politics 220–150 B. C.* (first edition 1951; second edition 1973), Toynbee's 1965 study *Hannibal's Legacy: the Hannibalic War's effects on Roman life*, and finally McDonald's 1944 article *Rome and the Italian Confederation (200–186 B.C)*.

Yet another group of scholars has looked at Livy's account of the Bacchanalia from an archaeological perspective. These works include Massa-Pairault's and Pailler's report on archaeological excavations in Bolsena (*Bolsena V. La Maison aux Salles Souterraines* 1979), Massa-Pairault's 1981 report *La restauration du trône en terre cuite de Bolsena: Confirmations et nouveautés*, Carcopino's 1927 study *La Basilique Pythagoricienne De La Porte Majeure*, Gianelli's 1924 work *Culti E Miti Della Magna Grecia*, and Taylor's 1923 study *Local cults in Etruria.* Finally, we have Quagliati's *Ausonia: rivista della Società italiana di archeologia e storia dell'arte* (1909), and Orsi's reports of archaeological excavations in Italy undertaken between 1884 and 1926.

[1] Interestingly, Taylor only finds evidence for the Dionysian cult in the Etruscan town of Populonia (Taylor 1923: 207). Yet, also in cities in the south of Italy, including Paestum, Medma, Tarentum and Locri did archaeologists find evidence for Dionysian worship – already in the early 20th century (Gianelli 1924; Osri 1884; 1895; 1897; 1899a; 1899b; 1900; 1904; 1906; 1907; 1910; 1912; 1926; Quagliati 1909).

Finally, broader surveys on Livy's description of the *Bacchanalia* include Erich Gruen's collected papers entitled *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy*, which has contributed a long essay on the political aspects with a full bibliography (1990), as well as Pailler's *Bacchanalia: la repression de 186 av. J-C. a Rome et en Italie*, a monograph containing a chapter of sixty pages reviewing the bibliography of the past hundred years (1988).

Religious and social circumstance in Livy's own time and Livy's historiographical methods

Before analysing Livy's account of the Bacchanalia and before analysing whether we are dealing with an actual conspiracy, we must investigate the religious and social circumstances in Livy's own time, as well as Livy's historiographical methods.

Livy lived from about 59 BCE to 17 CE. As a young man living at the end of the republican period, he must have experienced changes in the political and social systems of his days. The period from Octavian's final victory over Athony and Cleopatra (30 BCE), via Octavian's settlement as the Emperor Augustus (27 BCE), until the time of succession by Tiberius in 14 CE was a time of uncertainty and political unrest. In the same period (the last 15 years of Augustus' life and reign; 1 BCE–14 CE), there were signs that economic advance in the provinces was slowing after a period of peace and the confidence this peaceful situation brought. Overspending and ruthless taxation involved the provincials in debt and brought unrest, complaints and rebellions throughout the empire. Military expenditure would hardly be out weighted by revenues from acquisitions east of the Rhine and the Danube (Levick 2014: 27–29, esp. 29). The fact that less revenues were coming in, is something that the citizens of Rome must have felt too – especially the higher classes who were used to living up to certain standards. Even the life of Augustus' daughter Julia (the Elder) was full of scandal, leading to divorce and exile. Livy came to Rome around the time in which Augustus got into office. And therefore, Livy must have experienced the unrest and uncertainty that was a result of all economic, social, and political issues. As Levick puts it, there was a moral sickness in Roman society that troubled Livy (Levick 2014: 29; see also Hölkeskamp 2010; Linke & Stemmler 2000). This idea of moral decay – or rather Livy trying to fight against it – is something we can clearly see in Livy's account of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE as will be discussed in further detail later in this article.

As the first author with no military or political experience who was putting together Rome's history, Livy teaches us about moral and decent behaviour. Before the Augustan era, historiography in Rome had never been regarded as the exclusive task of a scholar. In fact, in Republican Rome, only a small group of highly literate men was needed to guide all state policies, to conduct diplomatic

missions, to give leadership on the battlefield and to administer the law (Sall. *Cat*. VIII, 5). Livy's predecessors like Sallust and Asinius Pollio, both served the state in an active capacity before they wrote history (Walsh 1963: 20). With Livy, Roman historiography becomes a more academic pursuit. The author never served the state in any capacity, nor did he travel much. Instead, he spent time reading the extensive discussions on the theory of historiography which had preoccupied Roman intellectuals for years. In fact, in Livy's works we find many of the virtues which Cicero in his treatises (especially *De Oratore*) demanded of an ideal historian. And as Levick argues, Livy's time of writing extended over decades and only the last part of his extensive work corresponds with the time in which the author lived (Levick 2014: 24). When we look at the *Ab Urbe Condita*, we see that the work covers the period from the legends concerning the arrival of Aeneas and the refugees from the fall of Troy, via the city's founding in 753 BCE, and the expulsion of the Kings in 509 BCE, down to Livy's own time, during the reign of the emperor Augustus. The last event covered by Livy is the death of Drusus in 9 BCE. The fact that Livy starts his work all the way back in mythical times, obviously means that the author could not use any historical records concerning this period. Badian and Levick argue that some of Livy's arguments seem fragile, resting on linked mistakes of his sources – like the chroniclers (e.g. Livy, IV, 19; IV, 30–34; Badian 1993: 10ff; Levick 2014: 25–26; 32). In fact, in XXI, 15, 3–6 the author confesses himself that the chronology of his story is incorrect. And as Luce argues, there are many examples of carelessness and elementary mistakes in Livy's work. The prime cause for this has been assumed to be Livy's habit of rapid composition (Luce 1977: 139).[2]

In the words of Luce, the chief cause for errors in Livy's work is:

> […] the failure to prepare himself more thoroughly, prior to beginning composition. If [Livy] had reviewed all the evidence carefully, and in detail at the start, errors such as doublets and contradictions would have been eliminated (Luce 1977: 140)

And as Walsh argues, Livy's methods of using his sources cannot be acclaimed with enthusiasm. Livy follows one source in the description of an event, and in transcribing it he introduces his own motivation, and political, religious and moral ideas. Moreover, the author reorganises the material to his own stylistic requirements. It is only at the end of a story that Livy usually quotes the view of other sources who voice other interpretations of the course of events (Walsh 1963: 141). However, I believe that we should not look at the errors in Livy's work. Instead, we should look at what sources were available to the author, and to us as modern

[2] It has been argued that Livy wrote an average of three books per year – perhaps even one book in just a couple of weeks (Bayet 1940: xix; Cavaignac 1915: 6; Hellman 1939: 96–97; Luce 1977: 139; Syme 1959: 41).

scholars. When looking at Livy's sources we see that the author probably came to Rome around 30 BCE to consult books that were unavailable in his hometown Padova. The author must have spent considerable time in preliminary research before writing his history of Rome (Walsh 1963: 5). Moreover, we should keep in mind that the last extant book of Livy's work goes no further than 167 BCE, more than a hundred years before the author was born. The rest of his works – the books that focus on later periods – have only survived fragmentarily. This is also the case with many other ancient sources, including Livy's sources. In case of Livy's account of the Bacchanalia, for example, the only other available source (or rather probably the only source that has survived) is the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus* – a senatorial decree that was drawn up after the events of 186 BCE[3]. Yet, it is plausible that Livy used other sources too. According to Flower, Livy's narrative on the events seems to be based on sources close to Spurius Postumius Albinus, the consul dealing with the Bacchic events in 186 BCE, and one of the main characters in Livy's story. Livy could have used senatorial decrees passed as Albinus presided, as well as Albinus' propaganda against the Bacchic cults that did not find their way into official documents (Flower 2002: 81, esp. note 6). One of these sources could have been Postumius Albinus' *Annales*. This Albinus had family connections with the consul Albinus (Musiał 2010: 5). However, only references to these *Annales* have survived.[4] Therefore, we cannot say with certainty that Livy used sources (either written or oral) coming from the consul Albinus' inner circle, but this seems plausible given the amount of detail the author added to the story. However, Riedl disagrees, and adds the possibility that Livy made up the consul Albinus' speech to the Senate himself (Riedl 2012: 117). This idea of making up a speech or adding detail (or flavour) to the story, fits in perfectly with Livy's reasons for discussing certain events, like the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE, as warnings towards his fellow Romans to behave decently, and as a sort of longing back to the times of the Republic. Livy's reasons for writing his account of the events in this way will become clearer.

Livy's account of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE

After briefly analysing religious and social circumstances in Livy's own time, as well as Livy's historiographical methods, I will discuss how Livy's account fits into the field of imagology or imagological studies. It will also be shown how analysing the account in this way will provide valuable new insights into Livy's reasons for

[3] Various other authors give us some details of relevant events in the years following 186 BCE (Augustine, *De civ. D.* VII, 34; Lactantius, *Div. inst.* I, 22, 5–8; Pliny the Elder, *HN*, XIII, 84–88; Plutarch, *Num.*, 12; Valerius Maximus, I, 1.12).

[4] Macrobius quotes a passage from the first book of the *Annales* of Albinus regarding Brutus, and as he uses the words of Albinus, it has been supposed that the Greek history may have been translated into Latin (*Sat. II. 16).*

writing such a detailed account of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE. Imagology is the study of cross-national perceptions and images as expressed in literary discourse, a field of study that is part of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies. Its focus lies in the attitudes, stereotypes and prejudices about one's own and others' national characters, attitudes which govern our rhetoric, discursive representation, literary activity and international relations at large. Research within the field has led to the idea of 'national characters' as textual (frequently literary) constructs. While imagology adopts a constructivist perspective on national stereotypes, it emphasises that these stereotypes may have real social effects (Beller & Leerssen 2007; Leerssen & Rodríguez Pérez 1991). This is exactly what we can see in Livy's account of the Bacchanalia. Livy depicts all the stereotypical characters in the story in the way they fit in best. Moreover, I would argue that Livy's way of using his characters in his story also fits in well with his reasons for writing his works. Livy regards history as pre-eminently concerned with individuals (especially leaders of the community), and in his analysis of their achievements and failures Livy draws attention to the moral attributes or defects which he considers solely responsible for such eventualities (Walsh 1963: 82).

According to Musiał, Livy's narrative breaks into three parts, each of which includes information of a different type. The first part provides information about the Bacchic rites and the circumstances of their introduction in Rome. Next, there is a testimony of Hispala Faecinia, by reason of which the authorities discovered the plot, and the description of her love affair with Aebutius. The third and last part of the account refers to the actions of the authorities and the decisions of the Senate (Musiał 2010: 6). Yet, Nousek argues the story can be divided into two parts. The first part is the 'domestic drama' of Aebutius and his courtesan girlfriend Hispala Faecinia, while the second part is the senatorial reaction to the information provided by the couple regarding the threat posed by the Bacchic cult worshippers (Nousek 2010: 157). The speeches and remarks made by a character in Livy's story give the reader an insight into the figure's character. Here Livy, as the author of the stories, allows himself by convention some freedom in the reporting of speeches. And it is exactly this freedom in reporting that has its greatest opportunity to influence us as readers (Walsh 1963: 82). In Livy's account of the Bacchanalia, we clearly see different characters and their roles in the story. On the one hand, the Campanian priestess Paculla Minia, who introduced men into the rites of Bacchus was depicted as evil and immoral (XXXIX,13, 8; see also Cicero, *Leg*. II, 9, 21) While on the other hand, the freedwoman Hispala Faecinia who begged her lover Aebutius never to get initiated into the Bacchic rites (XXXIX, 10, 2–4), Aebutia, aunt to Aebutius,

[5] On the Bacchic rituals see e.g. Tierney 1947: 108–113.

who urged her nephew to report the affairs to the consul Albinus (XXXIX, 11, 3–4), and Sulpicia, mother-in-law to the consul Albinus, who acted as a counsellor for her son-in-law (XXXIX, 11–12) were all depicted as shy, friendly, decent ladies – perfect examples of the Roman *matrona*. Moreover, the attitudes of contemporaries towards the figure characterised, as expressed in their speeches, are important. Here, Livy can subtly introduce rearrangement and change the emphasis. When Hispala Faecinia is led before consul Albinus to give a statement about the events, she is terrified because of the man's position, character, and behaviour. Yet, when the consul's mother-in-law Sulpicia tells him off, the girl eventually starts telling her story.

Finally, we see in Livy's work that the effect which a figure has on other people in the story can be depicted by describing either their mental reactions on encountering the figure, or the courses they subsequently adopt (Walsh 1963: 83). We see this perhaps most clearly in the conversations of Aebutius with his lover Hispala Faecinia and his aunt Aebutia. The two women function as advisers for the young men. And their advice changes his mind. First, Aebutius' mother and stepfather want the boy to be initiated into the rites of Bacchus, but Hispala Faecinia can change his mind. The boy decides to run away to his aunt. His aunt, in turn, convinces Aebutius to report everything he knows about the Bacchic rituals to the consul Albinus. From the story it also becomes clear that Livy draws attention to moral attributes by indirectly pointing out the dangers of initiating young men into the rites of Bacchus. Once aristocratic figures, like the sons of senators, were initiated into the rites of Bacchus, they were seen as unable to perform political and military tasks in a way decent Roman men would (XXXIX, 16, 3; 18, 4; Bauman 1990: 336). This fits in perfectly with the fact that Livy's work is imbued with a traditionally pro-Republican outlook, and it has an emphasis on the strict moral code which regulated the lives of decent Republican leaders (Walsh 1963: 2). In fact, in a passage from Tacitus, we see Augustus making fun of Livy by calling him a 'Pompeian' (*Ann*. IV, 34). As Mineo argues, this could be seen as clear proof for Livy's hostility towards Augustus' empirical regime (Mineo 2014 /II/: 139). Although it probably goes too far to speak of hostility towards Augustus' politics, we can see clear references indicating that Livy preferred the time of the Republic over the Early Empire.

Mineo – in analysing Livy's political and moral preferences and values – speaks of political principles associated with an organicistic representation: the necessity for a dualistic contribution of political and social roles, and the essential nature of national unity – *concordia* – in order to ensure the good health of the civic body (Mineo 1997: 45–60; Mineo 2014 /I/: 125). The smooth and proper functioning of the Roman political organism implies the distinction between political and social categories and functions. Enemies of Rome often depart from this basic

principle, leading their ventures to fail and to the establishment of Roman political supremacy (Mineo 2014 /I/: 128). In Livy's account of the Bacchanalia, the enemy was not a foreign army that had to be defeated, instead it was the followers of the Bacchic cult in Rome. When the numbers of followers of the cult increased, this formed a threat to the Roman political organism. Therefore, to make sure that the situation would not get out of hand, the senators had to establish supremacy again. Followers of the Bacchic rituals were persecuted by the *triumviri capitales* – a sort of police commission charged with looking after prisons, prisoners, and executions (XXXIX, 14, 10; see also Yardley 2018: 246–247) – and by the *quinqueviri* – official commissioners that were appointed for special tasks (XXXIX, 14, 10).[6] Next to this, the two consuls of 186 BCE Quintus Marcius, and Spurius Postumius Albinus, address the Roman public to warn them against the dangers of the Bacchanalia (XXXIX, 14)[7]. The consuls are depicted by Livy as political leaders who should have an aptitude for reflecting reality in speeches when addressing the general public. By doing so, Livy makes these characters keepers of a political wisdom (*prudentia*) based on the triptych of knowledge of the past (*memoria*), the ability to analyse reality (*intelligentia*) and foresight (*providentia*; Mineo 2014 /I/: 127–128). By depicting influential figures with all these qualities that a proper Roman should have, we see Livy indirectly reminding his readers of the 'good old days' in which people behaved decently. The dichotomous principle is also depicted and reflected in the military domain. In XXV, 19, 12, XXV, 21, and XLIV, 34 we read about the dangers caused by entrusting command to subordinate officers or by yielding to pressure from ordinary soldiers in decision making (Mineo 2014 /I/: 128). Livy depicts Paculla Minia as the main subordinate figure, since she was the one who introduced men to the rites of Bacchus (XXXIX, 13, 9). All the followers of the cult, especially the men, were like soldiers who did no longer follow their commander. And, as Livy seems to argue in his story, that could only result in chaos. In the preface to Livy's work, we read that the author's aim for writing it was to describe the mechanisms that had led to Rome's development and later its gradual decline, ending in absolute chaos. This decline and chaos seemed unavoidable. Livy, namely, saw patterns and cycles throughout history. This is related to the city of Rome seen as a living organism (10), which goes through cycles of decline and renewal (Mineo 2014 /II/: 143). By

[6] As Yardley argues, the archaic uses of the words *uls* and *cis* (later *ultra* and *citra*) in this sentence may suggest that the office was an old one (*adiutores triumviris quinqueviri uls cis Tiberim suae quisque regionis aedificiis praeessent*; XXXIX, 14, 10; Yardley 2018: 246–247).

[7] As becomes clear from Livy's account, it is most likely one of the consuls addresses the Roman citizens at the time. However, it is unclear which of the consuls is speaking here (since Livy does not provide us with the name), I would argue that the consuls perhaps took turns and addressed the Roman citizens together. Therefore, I am using the plural form 'consul' in this case. Bauman, however, is certain that Albinus gave the whole speech (Bauman 1990: 335 (note 5)).

the time Livy is writing, the city of Rome and its territories are going through a period of chaos (the decline; Preface 9; Mineo 2014 /II/, 139). We see this chaos in Livy's story of the Bacchanalia in Rome, an event that included the intermingling of males and females, older and younger, the elimination of all moral judgment, and even bloodshed, murder and violence (XXXIX, 8, 6–8). Since this decline as a result of the Bacchanalia, was obviously not profitable for the city in any way, the senators had to bring back stability in order to progress into a period of renewal – and individuals could help in maintaining this order by behaving decently, as the consuls make clear in their speech – or rather we see Livy warning his readers for the dangers of indecent behaviour.

Renan argues that citizens can choose to affiliate themselves to a particular group or nation (Renan 2019). Beller and Leerssen in turn speak of a national identity as an independently existing entity (Beller & Leerssen 2007). In Livy's account we can compare this to a person choosing to behave as a decent Roman or become a supporter of the Bacchanalian cults (affiliation to a group). From Livy's account it becomes clear how a decent Roman should behave and what the consequences are for the Roman state if people are led astray. This brings us back to the city of Rome being seen as a living organism (10), which goes through cycles of decline and renewal (Mineo 2014 /II/: 143).

We know from sources other than Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, that the consul Albinus was a historical figure (Eutropius, III, 4; Orosius, IV, 13; Polybius, II, 11 ff., III, 106, 108; Cicero, *Tusculanae Quaestiones*, I, 37). Yet, in Livy's story the consul is not just a political figure, instead he is the protagonist who reveals the conspiracy to the senate. Unfortunately, in case of many of the other characters in the story, we only have Livy's account. Therefore, we cannot analyse them as 'more than historical figures'. Yet, other elements of the account can be analysed in other ways: by looking at stereotypical views and ideas, like love stories. Ratti indicates that the love affair between Hispala and Aebutius consists of a few layers that can be read from different points of view. The author collates the story of a freedwoman with a certain episode inserted by Livy in the narrative about the military actions undertaken in 187 BCE in Asia, where the Romans fought the Galatian tribe of the Tectosagi. After one of the clashes the wife of Orgiago (one of the chieftains of the Galatians) was given to a Roman centurion, because of the loot division. When the centurion's attempts to seduce the woman (who has no name in Livy's account) proved to be in vain, he then raped her. Subsequently, the centurion concluded that he could gain much more, if he ransomed the woman back to her family. As he did not want to share the profit with other soldiers, he organised the handover of the captive in secret. However, the women managed to set a trap on the Roman centurion: on her signal the Galatians who arrived to collect her, killed the centurion and cut of his head. This rather macabre requisite helped the woman

to regain the trust of her husband. She confessed to him what happened, and she tossed the Roman's head at his feet as a proof that she had wreaked vengeance. This act restored her lost honour, and she spent the rest of her life as a generally respected woman, comparable to a Roman *matrona* (XXXVIII, 24; Musiał 2010: 6–8; Ratti 1996).[8] Livy collates the story about Orgiago's wife and the story about Hispala Faecenia to indicate a pattern that appears in both accounts. In the first case, a woman from a barbaric tribe, a dishonoured war captive, is presented as an honourable matron. She is ennobled by confessing the truth to her husband, which was authenticated by the cut-of head of the Roman. This act purifies her and restores the lost honour (Musiał 2010: 8–9; Ratti 1996). When describing a new chapter of the woman's life, Livy uses two terms that in Roman literature characterise an ideal wife: purity (*sanctitas*) and dignity (*gravitas*). Livy then constructs the story of Hispala Faecenia according to a similar pattern and shows the way that led her to change in her social status – as had happened to Orgiago's wife. Initially, Hispala was a slave, then a freedwoman working as a prostitute, and finally she became an honourable woman by preventing Aebutius from becoming initiated into the cults of Bacchus (Musiał 2010: 8–9; Ratti 1996). Livy makes it clear that the relationship between Aebutius and Hispala Faecina was in fact the relation between a client and a prostitute (*scortum*). However, as Musiał points out, Livy calls Hispala a *scrotum nobile*: a noble prostitute (Musiał 2010: 9). The figure of Hispala is a prostitute who deserved more respect than her profession would normally generate. As Musiał argues, this remark is understandable considering the role that Livy assigned to Hispala in his narrative: it was her testimony that triggered the repressive procedures against the followers of the Bacchic cult. Hispala was in a way an intermediary between the strange world of the Bacchic cult, and Roman society represented by the consul. Therefore, Livy considered it appropriate to equip her with attributes that were important to this society. This is why at the beginning of the narrative we can find information about respect due to Hispala. In a sense, it is anticipation of the forthcoming situation because she gained the right to this respect only as

[8] Livy repeated the story after Polybius (XXI, 38) omitting however the name of the heroine, who Polybius calls Chiomara. It is worth noticing that in this story the act of courage was the actual admission of being raped, not the successful escape from the captivity (Musiał 2010: 6–8; Ratti 1996).

[9] According to Musiał, one more interesting conclusion springs to mind when reading the story of Hispala and Aebutius' affair. The freedwomen Hispala did not abandon her profession, in which she reminds independent courtesans known from, for example, the comedies of Plautus, like the *Bacchides*. However, the situation presented drifts from the comic stereotype and what we have here is the exact reversion of the roles. Unlike in Plautus, Hispala pays his lover for sexual services, which means that she supports him, and what is more, she makes him her heir. Therefore, she behaves like free men who make their courtesans their beneficiaries. Moreover, one can have an impression that Hispala plays a parental function for Aebutius, maybe even more paternal than maternal. This is why she decides to intervene when, in her opinion, the life and honour of her lover are at stake. She is rewarded for saving a citizen: she is released from any dependence resulting from her status of a freedwoman. Consequently, when choosing a husband, she is no longer restricted to the family of her patron (*enuptio gentis*), and this, in turn, allows her to enter the citizen sphere (Musiał 2010: 10).

a prize for her attitude. An indirect indication of this fact is the way that Hispala had to take to envisage the consul (Musiał 2010: 6–10).[9]

What we also see in Livy's account is the idea of one's own against other's national characters. Rome – as a state – can be seen as one's own character, while those initiated into the Bacchanalian cult are the (dangerous) others. Other divisions that can be made are the Senate (the ones in charge) against the Roman people (who should be warned), or the Senate against the followers of the Bacchic cults. This idea of 'us against them' can also in a way be found in theatre in which we can find many stereotypes. The presence of elements of theatre in Livy's account of the Bacchanalia is clear. Most episodes resemble artfully composed dramatic scenes – like Hispala begging her lover Aebutius to not get initiated into the rites,[10] the consul Albinus giving an emotional speech before the Senate about his role in uncovering a plot against the state, or the two consuls warning the citizens of Rome against the dangers of following the Bacchic cult. As Musiał points out, this is exactly what was expected by the readers of Livy's work. Everything what happened around a Roman, and in which he participated as a citizen, took the form of a play, and Rome was a stage on which this play was performed. In this 'theatre,' the inhabitants of the city were both the actors and the audience, and the mutual interpenetration of the roles shaped their imagination and specific sensitivity. In this sense, theatricalization in Livy's work was a kind of an announcement addressed by the author to the audience. The account provides more information about the interests and the expectations of the public to whom it was directed than about the actual course of the presented events (Musiał 2010: 10–11). All of this again shows how every part of Livy's story, and every character was added for a reason: Livy wrote a work that his audience could relate to – and they could compare it to Roman society in their own days. And since Livy's audience could relate to his account, they would probably value Livy's views towards decadence and decay in Rome around the beginning of our modern era. As a result, they could have taken up Livy's advice to behave as proper Romans in the Republic, instead of living a life of decadence beyond their means.

Conspiracy or crisis?

I will now look into whether or not Livy's account describes an actual conspiracy against the state – as Livy makes clear when using the word *coniurationis* (XXXIX, 8) or if we are rather dealing with chaos in Roman society, that led to a state of crisis. I will argue that Livy did not simply describe a conspiracy against the Senate

[10] When we look at the love story of Aebutius and Hispala Faecinia, for example, we see an example of how rather complicated relations in the family of young *eques* (like Aebutius), bear resemblance to the intrigues from the comedies of Plautus and Terrence that are literacy fiction (Musiał 2010: 6–7; Scafuro 1989; Walsh 1996).

or a crisis in Rome. Instead, he provided us with a scenario showing how a (partly fictional) conspiracy against decent moral behaviour could lead to a political and socio-economic crisis in the early Empire. From reading and analysing Livy's account of the Bacchanalia and the *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus*, it may seem as if the events related to the Bacchanalia in 186 BCE, were the sole cause for moral decay in Rome. However, as other authors in Livy's days and before him show us, this moral decay was something that already started in the years before the events of 186 BCE took place. Lucius Piso dates the beginning of moral decline to the period 187–183 BCE, associating it especially with the luxury articles brought back by Manlius Volso's army from Asia (Piso fragment 34P; Pliny the Elder, *HN*, XXXIV, 14). Yet, Polybius only sees the slackening in Roman behaviour after the fall of Macedon in 167 BCE (VI, 57, 5; XXXI, 25, 3). And Sallust even argues that moral decay in Rome only started after the fall of Carthage in 146 BCE, since the Roman victory over the Carthaginians released Rome from external physical challenges, which led to a decline in moral standards. In fact, according to Sallust, the rot really set in with Sulla's return from Asia in 83 BCE (*Iug.* 41f.; see also *Cat.* 10; 11.4ff; *His.* 11–12M). As Levick puts it, in Livy's days (ca. 59 BCE–17 CE), there was a moral sickness in Roman society that troubled the author. This deteriorating situation had already started with the destruction of Carthage in 146 BCE (Levick 2004: 29) – and perhaps even earlier around 200 BCE. It is at this time that the Bacchic cults were most likely first introduced in Rome, after already being firmly established in the rest of Italy (Pailler 1988).[11] As McDonald shows:

> The general discussion of the social position about 186 B.C. is undistinguished; it is scarcely necessary to talk about seditious social propaganda or prophetic ideas of world-conflagration when the [Bacchic] cult practices appear in the form of personal degeneracy (McDonald 1961: 241).

As Nousek points out, almost twenty percent of Book 39 is related to the events, and the events are described in much detail. However, the events themselves cover less than a year. This suggests that Livy chose these events for special treatment, presumably as an episode relating to the larger historiographical theme of Roman moral decline and its dangers (Nousek 2010: 159; see also Chaplin 2000; Moles 1993; Ogilvie 1965; Woodman 1988). It is as if Livy wants to show his readers that if one would not behave decently, like Augustus' daughter Julia (in the personal sphere) or like those Romans who destroyed Carthage (the larger political and military sphere), then this would lead to unforeseeable consequences, including unrest and divorce (in the personal sphere), and political chaos (in the empire; 16, 3; 18, 4). Therefore, as Livy shows in his account of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE, young aristocratic figures – like Albinus, the protagonist of Livy's story – should

[11] We can also see this negative view towards decadence, decay and deterioration in Rome in other sources, including Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

never get initiated into the rites of Bacchus. Since once these young men were initiated into the rites, they were seen as unable to perform political and military tasks in a way decent Roman men would. The senators in Livy's story, therefore, were concerned that their sons (the next generation) would be unsuitable for office. Bauman adds to this that an even greater evil was the exposure of these young men to crime (Bauman 1990: 336; see also Livy, 16, 3; 18, 4). In both cases, the indecent and criminal behaviour of the senators' sons would harm their name, fame and prestige in the Senate. Nousek adds an interesting theory here, about similar events leading to a conspiracy – or rather the punishment with conspirators – that took place in the Senate about 120 after the Bacchanalian scandal. Nousek argues that Livy's story of the Bacchanalian conspiracy is in fact an account of Cicero's speech against Cataline in the Senate in 63 BCE. Using linguistic and thematic allusions Livy created a kind of 'literary shorthand' through which his readers could recognise Cicero as their recent saviour from Cataline's conspiracy and interpret the actions of consul Albinus in 186 BCE in this light. Cicero's successful campaign to provide an authoritative version of the events, together with the literary and historical accounts of Sallust, offered later author – including Livy – a 'linguistic register which they could use to describe anyone who plotted against the state' (Nousek 2010: 158). It could be that this is the conspiracy against the state that Livy described – not the Bacchanalian scandal of 186 BCE. However, even though it is plausible that Livy used the events concerning Cicero and Cataline as a springboard for his account of the Bacchanalia, I do not believe that Livy described a completely different conspiracy. Instead, I would argue that indirectly referring to Cicero and Cataline fits in perfectly with Livy's purpose of writing the account as a warning for his fellow Romans to behave decently. Some of Livy's elder readers might still have experienced the Catalinarian conspiracy as young men, and they would have remembered Cicero's speeches. Cicero, as a decent Republican warning the Senate against the dangers of following Cataline, can be compared to the consul Albinus warning the Senate against the Bacchanalian conspiracy. Livy has Albinus echo Cicero's repeated exhortations to vigilant action and combines with it a further theme which also has its origins in Cicero. Livy's elder readers, who remembered these events, would have warned their sons and grandsons of the dangers of leading astray and behaving indecently, with the consequences of being unable to take up official posts, just like the senators in Livy's account of the Bacchanalia were afraid that their sons would be unsuitable for office if they got involved into the Bacchic rites. At the point in Livy's story where Albinus shares his views on the Bacchanalia with the Senate, he implies that the Bacchanalian conspiracy is not yet able to overpower the Roman state. However, with the number of followers growing daily, the cult had to be suppressed, just like the Catalinarian conspiracy had to be suppressed (XXXIX, 16, 3–4; Nousek 2010: 165). Moreover, Livy describes

the Romans who were initiated into the Bacchanalia as treacherous, conspiring, and indecent figures – just like Cicero described Cataline (Cicero, *In Cat.*). And just like measures had to be taken against Cataline and his conspirators, measures had to be taken against the followers of the Bacchic cult.[12] In fact, as North argues:

> It was not that the senate discovered something that it did not know, but that it decided to act against something it knew all too well (North 1979: 88ff).

While Gruen adds that:

> It was a staged operation [..] The *coniuratio* was not that of the Bacchants, but of those who sought to make an example of them […]; it was a demonstration, a posturing to exhibit senatorial authority, to declare dominion in Italy [whereby the senate was seeking] to claim new prerogatives in the judicial sphere, in the regulation of worship, and in the extension of authority in Italy (Gruen 1990: 65, note 3).

I would go a step further by arguing that it was not the senators in the story who tried to set an example by persecuting the followers of the Bacchic cults, but instead it was Livy showing his readers what would happen to the state in case immoral behaviour got the upper hand. We know from the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus* that the senators during and directly after the year 186 BCE took measures against the followers of the rites.[13] However, Livy added dozens of juicy details to the story – as becomes clear when we analyse the differences between the decree and Livy's account. There are obvious differences between the decree and Livy's story since we are dealing with two distinct types of texts that differ in genre, function and style and are separated from each other by approximately 170 years (Cancik-Lindemaier 2006: 47). While Livy authors a story full of drama, with references to conspiracy against the state, men and women in ecstasy and senators fearing for their lives, the decree simply mentions that certain measures were taken after the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE in Rome. Of course, the decree is also much shorter than Livy's narrative. While Livy dedicates twelve full chapters of book 39 to the story (XXXIX, 8, 3–19, 7), the decree is only 30 lines long (*CIL*, i2 2, 581). And finally, as Cancik-Lindemaier points out, the decree and Livy's history converge in the conception of state and religion and the relationship between

[12] Livy narrates that about 7000 people fell victim to the campaign, and most of them were executed (XXXIX, 17, 4–18, 9). Yet, as Riedl points out, the measures against the Bacchic cult lasted five years altogether. In the end, the cult was not eliminated, but instead reduced to a manageable size and subjected to strict regulations (Riedl 2012: 113). It seems plausible, therefore, that this rather large number of 7000 victims is again added by Livy to his story both as a juicy detail, and to add more weight to his quest for returning to the decent times of the Republic.

[13] Throughout time, scholars have even taken up different stances on the authenticity of this decree. Gelzer, for example, refuses to accept the decree as historical (Gelzer 1936; see also Fraenkel 1932; Keil 1933; Krause 1936). However, Gelzer is incorrect here, since the physical decree has been discovered in 1640 at Tiriolo, in Calabria (southern Italy; *CIL*, i2 2, 581). Moreover, Cicero, in his *On the Laws*, also mentions the decree (II, 37; see also Augustine, *De civ. D.* VI, 9; Plato, *Ion* 534; Tertullian, *Apol.* 6).

these two different but diversely linked elements of Roman culture and in the instrumentalization of gender relations (Cancik-Lindemaier 2006: 47).

The decree is divided into three parts. It starts with protocolar notes, including which consuls and senators were present at the time of writing. An obvious difference with Livy's story is that in the first part of the decree we cannot read anything about any of the women involved. Instead, the decree states that the consuls Marcius and Postumius consulted the senate on the Nones of October (7th),[14] at the temple of the Bellona. Claudius, Valerius, and Minucius were on the committee for drawing up the report (*CIL*, i2 2, 581). In the second part of the decree, we read about the decisions made regarding the restrictions of Bacchanalian worship. As stated in the decree and in Livy's story, the cult of Bacchus was seen as a threat to the security of the state, and therefore, serious measures had to be taken – especially against men who were initiated into the cult. Finally, in the third part of the decree we find the implementation of the regulations. The decree goes even a step further than Livy's account. While in Livy's account the Bacchanalia were banned throughout Italy, the decree states that any male living in Rome or Italy (literally someone 'carrying a Latin name'; *neve nominis Latini*; *ILS*, 18: 7), or any men being an ally of Rome was forbidden to follow the cult of Bacchus (*neve sociorum*; *ILS*, 18: 7; see also Dessau 1892: 5–6). Moreover, as decreed, no men could be a priest of Bacchus, while no men or woman, could be an official related to the cult (*ILS* 18: 9–10; see also Dessau 1892: 5–6). Instead, Livy only mentions how the priestess Paculla Minia introduced men to the cult of Bacchus (Livy, XXXIX, 13, 9). Another crucial point on which the decree seems different from Livy's story, is the last point concerning exceptions to the rule. Interestingly, while Livy mentions that there could not have been common funds, a master of ceremonies, or a priest (XXXIX, 18, 8–9), the decree simply states that:

> No one in a company of more than five persons altogether, men and women, shall observe the sacred rites, nor in that company shall there be present more than two men or three women, unless in accordance with the opinion of *the praetor urbanus* and the senate as written above *ILS*, 18: 19–22).[15]

Finally, where in Livy's story we see two consuls giving a speech warning the citizens of Rome for the dangers of the Bacchic cults (XXXIX, 14) – while the decree reads that officials receiving it should read out the whole document at market days

[14] Cancik-Lindemaier mentions the 9th of October (Cancik-Lindemaie 2006: 35). However, the nones is the notional first-quarter day of a Roman month, occurring on the 7th day of the four original 31-day months (March, May, Quintilis or July, and October) and on the 5th day of all other months.

[15] The common funds mentioned by Livy (XXXIX, 18, 8–9) cannot be found in the decree at all. This is most likely the case the financing of official religious cults was very important to the Romans, but the cult of Bacchus was not seen as one of these official cults (Birk & Poulsen 2012; Longfellow & Perry 2018; Russell 2016; Wojciechowski 2021). Therefore, the funding of this cult should not have been mentioned in an official decree.

to inform the public in their respective towns (*ILS*, 18: 22–30). This shows that there must have been a number of these decrees or documents that were sent out to towns throughout Italy – and perhaps even further into Roman territories, a point that is further proved by the fact that the decree itself states that no men living in Italy or any men being an ally of Rome was allowed to participate in the cult (18:7). Livy instead does not mention the sharing of the decree in another town outside Rome. On the one hand, this is interesting given the fact that Livy advocated for a Roman society (potentially throughout Roman territories) that held on to the old republican values. Yet, on the other hand, since the centre of Roman politics (the heart of the empire) was the city of Rome, it would make sense for Livy to focus on the suppression of the Bacchic cults in and around the city. Once the heart of the empire functioned well, the rest of the empire would follow. This is also probably why Livy describes in detail how the Bacchic rites, as festering elements, entered the city of Rome. As Livy further argues, it was the Campanian priestess Paculla Minia who introduced the festival to Rome. Moreover, she opened the rites to men (until then only women were involved), as well as adding more days to the festival, and the introduction of wine-drinking to excess, drunkenness and the free mingling of the sexes and classes (XXXIX, 8–13). However, it seems unlikely that no men participated in the festival until Paculla Minia introduced her sons to the rites. As Walsh argues, namely, the original festival had long been celebrated by all the Greeks of Magna Graecia in mixed gatherings (Walsh 1996: 188). And mingling of sexes and classes does not necessarily involve excessive violence. Yet, Plato tells us that at Tarentum the Dionysia was the occasion for riotous celebration among all the citizens (Plato, *Laws*, 637B). As Livy argues, other alterations made by Paculla Minia include the changing of the time of celebration, from day to night; and, instead of the festival being celebrated only three days in the year, the priestess apparently appointed five days of initiation in each month (XXXIX, 13, 9; see also Takács 2000: 301–310; Tierney 1947: 107). Although it may seem (in Livy's account) as if these negative elements of the Bacchanalia were first introduced in Rome when men and women came together, nothing seems further from the truth. Wine, for example, was used without stint at the Dionysiac festivals of Tarentum (Plato, *Leg.* 637B), while pederasty, yet unknown at Rome, had not been unusual in the cities of Magna Graecia. In fact, sacred prostitution seems to be well vouched for in connection with Persephone's famous shrine at Locri (Gianelli 1924: 247; Oldfather 1913: 1259). And, as Frank argues, if the curse upon betrayal of the rites was at times impressed with human aid, we can hardly be surprised, since the initiates must have known that the perils resulting from betrayal were very real at

[16] As Frank further argues, it ss not surprising that the practices of the Dionysian cults should have combined the vicious tendencies of the various cults of the various cities in which these were introduced, since the devotees were now in miserable slavery in a foreign country and largely removed from the restraining influence of their old social and political ties (Frank 1927: 131).

Rome, especially to slaves and freedmen (Frank 1927: 131).[16] Yet, as Livy argues, the 'pernicious scourge' spread through Rome like an infection (39.9.1). And the festivities in 186 BCE got so out of hand, that the two consuls were diverted from the care of armies, wars, and provinces, to the punishing of an internal conspiracy (XXXIX, 8, 1; see also Gildenhard & Zissos 2016: 65–68; Mathisen 2019: 147; Riedl 2012; 113–133; Takács 2000: 301-310). Livy even speaks of the task of investigating clandestine seditious activities (XXXIX, 8, 3).

When Albinus informs the Senate about the events (XXXIX, 15), we are still not dealing with an actual conspiracy. Yet, as the consuls in the story argue, all the depravity and treachery, and all criminal behaviour that had terrorised Rome at that time, was a result of the Bacchic rituals being introduced into the city (XXXIX, 16, 3). As a warning – or perhaps even to scare the citizens of Rome – the consuls even suggests that those involved in the rites, will continue to grow in numbers and strength, up to the point at which they can completely take over the state, something that would have disastrous consequences. Therefore, the Senate took measures against the 'conspirators'. As Livy tells us, soon after proclamations were made to ban the Bacchic rituals from Rome, many fugitives were captured, including the ring leaders of the conspiracy (XXXIX, 18, 6). The investigations, trials and executions that were subsequently conducted had such an effect on everyday life in the city, that no other case was brought before the magistrates for thirty days (XXXIX, 18, 2).[17] This is again Livy adding juicy details to his story, to warn his readers about indecent behaviour. And again, it is something we can see as a crisis in the state, but not a full conspiracy. I would argue that Livy did not simply describe a conspiracy against the Senate or a crisis in Rome. Instead, he provided us with a scenario showing how a (party fictional) conspiracy against decent moral behaviour could lead to a political and socio-economic crisis in the early Empire.

Conclusion

Livy wrote his *Ab Urbe Condita* between circa 27 BCE and 9 BCE. This was a time of social and political unrest, and changes in society when Rome transformed from a republic to an empire under the emperor Augustus. As becomes clear from Livy's writings, the author instead preferred society as it was under the late Republic, the time in which Livy grew up (ca. 57 BCE–30 BCE). By analysing Livy's account from the viewpoint of imagology studies, with a focus on stereotypes and the idea of national heroes and figures of importance, it has become clear that Livy's account of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE and the subsequent measures taken by the

[17] As Briscoe argues, no judicial business could be properly conducted while the magistrates were preoccupied with the Bacchanalia. It was therefore decided that all other legal business should be suspended for this thirty-day period (Briscoe 2007).

consuls against the followers of the Bacchic cult are perfect examples of how and why Livy wrote his account in the way he did. By pointing out how treacherous and dangerous it was to follow the cult of Bacchus, Livy wants to warn his readers about the dangers of indecent behaviour, as well as indirectly shows his longing to the time of the (Late) Republic, when decent Romans were still in charge. If too many people (especially young *eques* who were trained for political office) were led astray, this would have unforeseeable consequences. This in turn could lead to a crisis in the Roman state – like the crisis of the late 1st century BCE, the time in which Livy grew up. And this is exactly what Livy describes in his account of the Bacchanalia: Livy did not simply describe a conspiracy or a crisis in the state. Instead, he provided us with a scenario showing how a (party fictional) conspiracy against decent moral behaviour could have led to a political and socio-economic crisis in the early Empire.

List of abbreviations

CIL - Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum
FIRA - Fontes Iuris Romani Anteiustiniani
MRR - The Magistrates of the Roman Republic

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Urota protiv države? – Livijev narativ o bakanalijama 186. g. pr. Kr. kao upozorenje protiv dekadencije i propadanja u Rimu 1. st. pr. Kr.

Sažetak

Livijev narativ o bakanalijama iz 186. g. pr. Kr. dosad nije analiziran unutar polja imagoloških studija, polja proučavanja koje se bavi stavovima, stereotipima i predrasudama o karakteristikama vlastitog, ali i drugih naroda. Vidjet ćemo da su svi ovi elementi iz posve očitih razloga uključeni u Livijevu priču. Dosadašnji znanstvenici koji su analizirali ovaj izvještaj zaključili su da Livije ne opisuje stvarnu zavjeru, nego krizu u senatu. Iako se s ovime slažem, ustvrdit ću da su oni, čini se, previdjeli činjenicu da je Livije svoju priču napisao kao upozorenje svojim rimskim sugrađanima da se trebaju ponašati kao što su se ponašali istinski republikanci nekoć. Možemo čak razaznati i osjećaj nostalgije za starim republikanskim vremenima. Livije je živio od otprilike 59. g. pr. Kr. do 17. g. n. e. Kao mladić je na kraju republikanskog razdoblja doživio promjene u političkom i društvenom sustavu svog vremena. Razdoblje od Oktavijanove konačne pobjede nad Antonijom i Kleopatrom (30. g. pr. Kr.), preko Oktavijanova nastupa kao cara Augusta (27. g. pr. Kr.), do Tiberijeva dolaska na vlast 14. g. n. e. bilo je vrijeme neizvjesnosti i političkih nemira. U istom razdoblju (posljednjih petnaest godina Augustova života i vladavine; 1. pr. Kr. – 14. n. e.) bilo je znakova da se nakon razdoblja mira i povjerenja koje je ta mirna situacija donijela ekonomski napredak u provincijama usporava. Pretjerano trošenje i nemilosrdno oporezivanje uvukli su stanovnike provincija u dugove i donijeli nemire, pritužbe i pobune u cijelom carstvu. Vojni izdaci teško da bi se mogli nadoknaditi prihodima od širenja istočno od Rajne i Dunava. Činjenicu da su pristizali manji prihodi morali su osjetiti i građani Rima – posebno viši slojevi koji su navikli na viši životni standard. Za vladavine cara Augusta prisutna je i moralna dekadencija. Čak je i život Augustove kćeri Julije (Starije) bio pun skandala, što je dovelo do njezina razvoda i progonstva. Livije je došao u Rim otprilike u vrijeme kad je August stupio na dužnost. Stoga je i Livije morao iskusiti nemir i neizvjesnost koji su

bili posljedica svih tih ekonomskih, društvenih i političkih problema. Kako kaže Levick, u rimskom društvu je postojala moralna bolest, i to je Livija mučilo. Ta je bolest bila rezultat moralnog propadanja koje je počelo već uništenjem Kartage 146. g. pr. Kr. Ova ideja o moralnom propadanju – ili bolje rečeno Livijev pokušaj borbe protiv toga – nešto je što jasno možemo vidjeti u njegovu prikazu bakanalija 186. g. pr. n. e.

Prilikom analize Livijeva izvještaja sa stajališta imagoloških studija, s fokusom na stereotipe i ideje o nacionalnim herojima i značajnim ličnostima, postalo je jasno da je Livijev izvještaj o bakanalijama 186. g. pr. n. e. i o kasnijim mjerama koje su konzuli poduzeli protiv sljedbenika bakantskog kulta izvrstan primjer kako i zašto je Livije napisao svoj izvještaj upravo na način na koji je to učinio. Ističući koliko je podmuklo i opasno bilo slijediti kult Bakha, Livije želi upozoriti svoje čitatelje na opasnosti raskalašenog ponašanja i posredno iskazati svoju čežnju za vremenom (kasne) Republike, kad su pristojni Rimljani još uvijek dominirali. Ako bi previše ljudi (osobito mladih vitezova pripremanih za političke dužnosti) zalutalo, to bi imalo nesagledive posljedice, što bi pak moglo dovesti do krize u rimskoj državi – poput krize kasnog 1. stoljeća pr. Kr., vremena u kojem je Livije odrastao. A to je upravo ono što Livije opisuje u svojem izvještaju o bakanalijama: Livije nije jednostavno opisao zavjeru ili krizu u državi. Umjesto toga, pružio nam je scenarij koji pokazuje kako je (djelomično izmišljena) zavjera protiv pristojnog moralnog ponašanja mogla dovesti do političke i socio-ekonomske krize u ranom Carstvu.

Ključne riječi: Livije, bakanalije, *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus*, senatorske reforme 186. g. pr. Kr., imagologija