

Expansionism or Fear: *The Underlying Reasons for the Bacchanalia Affair of 186 B.C.*

The Bacchanalia Affair has sparked much debate on the part of numerous prominent scholars. As a result, two very polarized opinions have emerged. Erich S. Gruen and Jean Marie Pailler have argued that the Bacchanalia Affair was a conspiracy on the part of the Senate, and that behind the veil of religion lay a desire to extend Roman hegemony across the whole of Italy. Pailler argues that the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus* found at Tiriolo is concrete proof that the suppression of the Bacchanalia was a result of Rome's desire for expansion rather than fear of the cult. Henrik Mouritsen, on the other hand, argues that the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus* was erroneously believed to pertain to all of Italy, when in fact it concerns only the areas under Roman jurisdiction. He argues that Livy's narrative is further evidence that the repression of the Senate pertained only to the *ager Romanus*. Mouritsen states that there is no evidence to suggest that the allies were included in the ban. As both opinions are equally valid, it will be necessary to examine the context in which the Bacchanalia occurred in 186 B.C.¹

By the end of the Second Punic War (201), the Roman state had arguably become the most powerful entity in the Mediterranean. Once the Carthaginians no longer constituted a serious threat, Rome established her dominance militarily throughout the eastern Mediterranean. In 188, with the Peace of Apamea, Rome brought Antiochus III into submission, thus significantly reducing the power of the Seleucid Empire.² Such political and military dominance on the part of Rome has led some scholars, such as Erich Gruen, to argue that the Bacchanalia could not have been repressed due to fear of the cult. Others, such as A.H. McDonald, argue that the cult could indeed have threatened the state since as a "popular form of degeneracy," it had the power of "weakening Roman military power."³ McDonald's statement suggests that such perceived danger, whether real or not, would have warranted suppression by the Senate in order to uphold the stability of the state. Several important questions arise from this debate, namely, what were the underlying causes of the repression, to whom was the repression aimed, and finally, what were the consequences of the actions taken by the Senate?

There are two main sources for this event. Livy dedicates twelve chapters in Book XXXIX to the incident, and the inscription found in Tiriolo sheds light on what the Senate actually decreed. This inscription contains a written version of the senatorial decree which was set out following Postumius Albinus' presentation of the Bacchanalia to the Senate. It is not a treaty and should not be seen as such; rather, it contains a number of clauses restricting Bacchic worship and outlining the consequences for failure to adhere to these provisions. The inscription is complete, as is suggested by the language used throughout the decree and the nature of the last clause. It is important to compare both documents, thus verifying Livy's accuracy with regards to the decree passed by the Senate, a test which he succeeds in rather well. We must therefore look to Livy's narrative to determine the underlying causes of the re-

¹ All subsequent dates B.C.E.

² App. *Syr.* 38-39; Erich S. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (New York: Brill, 1990), 65-66.

³ A.H. McDonald, "Rome and the Italian Confederation," *JRS* 34 (1944): 27.

Expansionism or Fear: *The Underlying Reasons for the Bacchanalia Affair of 186 B.C.*

pression and to explain the suddenness of its outbreak.

In Book XXXIX, Livy describes a number of politically charged events, including the Bacchanalian affair, the Third Macedonian War, the censorship of Cato and the death of Hannibal. Due to the structure of his work, Livy had to get through approximately eight and a half years in Books XXXIX and XL. His arrangement of events in Book XXXIX however is quite particular. The most important events were placed first within the narrative, and all other events were relegated to but a few chapters at the end of the book, thus ignoring the chronology.⁴

Although Livy seems to have had access to the *SC de Bacchanalibus*, it is certain that he used another source for his narrative; this source however does not seem to have been Polybius, who also wrote an important narrative covering this time period. Livy indeed put Polybius aside for the years 187 and 186, and a comparison between the extant fragments of Polybius for this time period demonstrate how selective Livy was regarding what he included in his own narrative.⁵ He may have used the family archives of the Postumii, but for this to have been the case would have been rather problematic. A. Postumius Albinus, consul in 151, wrote a history in Greek based on his family annals which were evidently biased and aimed at glorifying his relative, Sp. Postumius Albinus, consul in 186.⁶ As is well known, Livy did not consult archival material himself, but it appears that he used a Latin source for the events he describes.⁷ It is most likely that Livy was using a translation of Postumius' history which was originally written in Greek. There is no direct evidence however that this is the source Livy used; nonetheless, he seems very well acquainted with the Postumii, and so it seems safe to infer that he either used Postumius' history or the Postumii family annals.

Livy wrote his history under the auspices of the Augustan regime, during which a religious revival was taking place. P.G. Walsh notes that Livy, Virgil and Horace were all influenced by this revival, and that each included ancient religious practices and customs within their works.⁸ These writers all took a somewhat Stoic view of religion, but Livy especially seems to have believed that religion should be both rational and objective. The Stoics sought to rationalize myth, but at the same time maintained that popular notions about the gods should not be dismissed. Livy's belief is especially evident in his discussion concerning *fortuna*, equivalent to the Greek *tyche*. Livy believed that providential protection and a continuation of the *pax deorum* would be granted to the Romans if ritual procedures were carefully observed. This would seem to be in accord with the Stoic belief in determinism. Furthermore, his ambivalence between Stoic tendencies and the religious revival of the Augustan period seems to fit well with the neo-Stoic trend.⁹ What is most important regarding Livy's religious beliefs is that he ad-

⁴ T.J. Luce, *Livy: The Composition of his Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 106. Luce points out that in Livy's account of the year 186, the Bacchanalian affair occupied twelve chapters, leaving only three for other events of the same year. The conspiracy, however, was not so long in duration as to have merited such a large proportion of that year's narrative.

⁵ Luce, 105-106.

⁶ John Briscoe, "A. Postumius Albinus, Polybius and Livy's Account of the *Bacchanalia*," in *Hommage a Carl Deroux 4: Archeologie et Histoire de l'Art*, ed. Defosse and Pol (Bruxelles: Latomus, 2002), 302.

⁷ Briscoe, 308. Briscoe suggests that the resemblance between Livy's narrative and the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus* means simply that he must have used a Latin source since he did not consult archival material himself.

⁸ P.G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 60-61.

⁹ Walsh, *Livy* 59-61.

hered to Stoic principles especially when dealing with providence and providential guidance for Rome. It is this philosophical belief which contributed to Livy's particular severity concerning foreign religions. Such religions were seen as superstitious and subjective, and their worshippers prone to mental illness and bodily corruption.¹⁰ It is in this light that one must study the Bacchanalia Affair of 186. Livy's biases evidently shaped much of his narrative, especially as he believed that the origin of Rome's moral degeneracy occurred within this time period.¹¹

Livy introduces the Bacchanalia in the following terms:

A nameless Greek came first to Etruria [...] a dabbler in sacrifice and a fortune-teller [...] a priest of sacred rites performed by night [...] There was not one form of vice alone, the promiscuous matings of free men and women, but perjured witnesses, forged seals and wills and evidence, all issued from this same workshop: likewise poisonings and secret murders, so that even at times not even the bodies were found for burial. This violence was concealed because amid the howlings and the crash of drums and cymbals no cry of the sufferers could be heard as the debauchery and murders proceeded. The destructive power of this evil spread from Etruria to Rome like the contagion of a pestilence.¹²

Thus Livy begins his narrative of the most renowned religious repression in Republican history, and accords to it a large part of Book XXXIX (chapters 8-19). It is odd that a cultic movement that had been present for a number of years prior to this event would merit such unsympathetic treatment, especially as other foreign religions were simultaneously flourishing in Rome. The Egyptian cult of Isis notably had good standing, as did that of the Magna Mater from Pergamum, even though Livy gives the opposite impression.¹³ The cult of the Magna Mater however differed considerably from that of the Bacchants and retained its good standing for much longer; this suggests that there was something particular to the Bacchic cult which led to its repression. The cult of Bacchus had in fact spread in Italy *outside of the control* of the authorities, while the Magna Mater had been introduced by Roman authorities themselves.¹⁴ This is one of the underlying reasons why the cult was suppressed by the Senate.

Livy writes that a youth, Aebutius, whose father had died, was tricked out of his inheritance by his mother and his stepfather by being initiated into the Bacchic Mysteries. His lover, the freed-

¹⁰ D.S. Levene, *Religion in Livy* (New York: Brill, 1993), 34. Levene believes that while it is impossible to determine Livy's religious inclinations, one merely has to look at his views of the Bacchanalian Affair and the advent of the Magna Mater to see that he had a profound disdain of foreign religions, which he saw as corrupting Roman youths and encouraging moral degeneracy.

¹¹ Liv. *Epon.* 39.6. P.G. Walsh, "Making a Drama out of a Crisis: Livy on the Bacchanalia," *G&R* 43 (1996): 190.

¹² *Ibid.*, 39.8-9.

¹³ Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York: Dover, 1956), 48-49, 55; cf. Richard A. Horsley, *Religion and Empire* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003), 28. Horsley argues that Isis was very prominent in Graeco-Roman antiquity; initiation into the cult's rights was deemed an extremely prestigious act and a mark of the highest piety for the Roman elite. Horsley does point out however that the Romans altered the cult of Isis in order to fit their construct of religion.

¹⁴ Marja-Leena Hänninen, "Conflicting Descriptions of Women's Religious Activity in Mid-Republican Rome: Augustan Narratives About the Arrival of Cybele and the Bacchanalia Scandal," in *Aspects of Women in Antiquity*, ed. Lena L. Loven and Agneta Stromberg (Jonsered: Paul Astroms Forlag, 1998), 119.

Expansionism or Fear: *The Underlying Reasons for the Bacchanalia Affair of 186 B.C.*

woman Hispala, begged him not to be initiated since she had witnessed many evils relating to the cult of Bacchus as a slave attending to her mistress, an initiate.¹⁵ There is something out of place already at the beginning of Livy's narrative; in a patriarchal system, it would have been unlikely that the young Aebutius would have been entrusted to a step father instead of a male relative such as an uncle or a grandfather.¹⁶ It is highly unlikely that all of Aebutius' male relatives would have died prior to his father's death.

When Aebutius told his aunt about his dilemma, she sent him to the consul Sp. Postumius Albinus, who verified Aebutius' story by questioning his own mother-in-law.¹⁷ The consul then ordered Hispala to be brought before him. She divulged all the secrets of the cult of which she was aware: it had originated in Campania where a priestess, Paculla Annia, had changed the cult's solely female worship to one of mixed attendance by initiating her two sons. Furthermore, she had changed the number of initiation days from three days a year during the daytime, to five nights a month.¹⁸ Hispala then said that nothing was considered wrong or unlawful by Bacchic cult members, including the murder of objectors, homosexual behavior, orgies, frenzy, nor the initiation of young men not older than twenty years of age.¹⁹ Especially alarming was the fact that their numbers were very great and included men and women of high rank.²⁰

In this first part of the narrative, the only truly salvageable incident is that regarding Paculla Annia; it is likely that the priestess of a cult would have wanted to initiate her own sons, and would have changed the cult regulations to those that had been common in the earlier practice of Dionysiac worship in Greece.²¹ The number of Bacchantes can also be kept as an estimation of how widespread the cult had become. The entire narrative of Aebutius and Hispala, of Aebutia and of the consul's mother-in-law, however, is most likely an invention of Livy's. It seems probable that Livy would have inserted such a storyline in order to present his beliefs regarding the danger and degeneracy of the cult.

Livy writes that Postumius then presented the Senate with the information he had received; the senators were gripped by fear that these nocturnal rituals were promoting treason and that senators were involved. The consuls were promptly given the duty of performing a full investigation, a *quaestio extra ordinem*, which was outside of their regular duties.²² Subsequently a decree was composed which stated that Aebutius and Hispala were to be rewarded, that Postumius was to be thanked for his service to the state, that all Bacchic priests were to be sought out not only in Rome but also in the *ager Romanus*, and finally that the decree should be sent throughout Italy to prevent an assembly of initiates.²³

¹⁵ Liv. *Epon.* 39.9-10.

¹⁶ Walsh, "Drama" 195.

¹⁷ Liv. *Epon.* 39.11.1-7.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 39.13.1-10.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.13.10.14.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 39.13.14.

²¹ Martin P. Nilsson, *The Hellenistic Mysteries of Greece and Rome. Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age* (Lund, Sweden: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1957), 17.

²² This seems to be a reference to the consuls' sphere of influence, which was restricted to the city of Rome and the *ager Romanus*.

²³ Liv. *Epon.* 39.14.4-9.

Postumius told the *contio* that the Mysteries had been known for a long time; one can therefore affirm that “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.”²⁴ Postumius then called an assembly of the people to inform them of the senate’s decision, and to declare that they must pray to the ancestral gods and not foreign ones. The decree of the Senate was then read and put into effect.²⁵

This latter part seems to be the most accurate section of Livy’s narrative. Postumius’ speech could have been found in the Postumii annals, or perhaps in the *acta senatus*. It is possible that the senate demanded a thorough investigation because it was actually anxious with regard to the size and prevalence of the cult, if we are to accept the figures given by Livy as a rough estimate. There is, however, debate as to the accuracy of Livy’s account of the *quaestio extra ordinem*. Some scholars argue that it is a fabrication of Livy’s. S. Reinach writes,

Aujourd’hui, le récit de Tite-Live en main, l’histoire constate qu’il n’y eut pas d’enquête sérieuse, mais une dénonciation unique, peut-être extorquée, à coup sûr mensongère, qui donna prétexte à l’établissement d’un régime de terreur; ce ne fut pas le salut des mœurs romaines, mais la ruine de l’hellénisme en Italie.²⁶

This is not the only incidence however in which the Senate conducted a *quaestio*; it also did so in Etruria in 209 during the Second Punic War. When Etruria revolted, Marcellus was dispatched by the Senate to determine whether military intervention would be necessary following the arrival of a letter from C. Calpurnius, the *propraetor* of Etruria, who wrote that unrest had erupted in Arretium.²⁷ This incident set a precedent for the investigation that took place in 186.

The Senate’s repression of this facet of Hellenistic culture does nonetheless seem quite out of place since during this time the Romans had been increasingly open to Hellenistic influences. The repression thus fits oddly with the general atmosphere of the time.²⁸ It is clear, however, that the repression was linked to Hellenistic influences; it was very popular in Southern Italy, especially in the cities of Magna Graecia, as well as in Etruria, where it was brought, according to Livy, by a Greek priest.²⁹

The cult of Dionysos had grown stronger in Magna Graecia as a result of its ties to other cults such as those of Demeter and Persephone; furthermore, Greek influence in this region had increased during the Hannibalic war.³⁰ Even though there seemed to be an increase of such cults in areas that had been more or less rebellious during the Second Punic War, an attack by the Romans on a foreign cult was nev-

²⁴ Walsh, “Drama” 199 (see above for the inclusion of men and women of high rank in the rites); Liv. *Epon.* 39.13.14.

²⁵ This decree will be discussed later in comparison with the one found in Tiriolo.

²⁶ S. Reinach, “Une ordalie par le poison à Rome et l’affaire des Bacchanales,” as cited in Jean Marie Pailler, “Bacchanalia : la répression de 186av. J.-C.,” (Rome: École Française de Rome, 198), 129.

²⁷ Liv. *Epon.* 27.21.6-8.

²⁸ Katryn Lomas, *Rome and the Western Greeks 350 BC to AD 200* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 87. Lomas attributes the repression, occurring within the framework of a general acceptance of Hellenistic culture, to the cult’s secrecy and widespread popularity.

²⁹ See 5; cf. Liv. *Epon.* 39.8-9. Etruria was not Greek *per se* as Magna Graecia was, but it was associated with the Hellenistic trend that paved the way for the inclusion of the Bacchic mysteries by Greek priests.

³⁰ Macdonald, 26.

Expansionism or Fear: *The Underlying Reasons for the Bacchanalia Affair of 186 B.C.*

ertheless out of the ordinary. Rome had previously been quite welcoming of such cults and ritual practices; Aesculapius, Venus Erycina, and the cult of the Magna Mater were all immediately accepted, in fact, the Romans performed an *invocatio* to Venus Erycina, and their acceptance of the Magna Mater in 205 helped establish ties with Asia Minor which would later be useful during the Macedonian Wars. Rome even integrated itself into Hellenistic tradition by establishing ties with the Oracle of Delphi.³¹ Most importantly, however, it had integrated into its own prophetic tradition the Sibylline Oracles which had been sold to Tarquinius Superbus; these oracles were still in use during the Middle Republic, and were consulted during the late years of the Second Punic War in order to determine what to do to rid Italy of the Carthaginian menace.³² Although in this case the Sibylline books demanded the introduction of a foreign deity into Rome, this would seem to have been the exception rather than the rule, since most of the cults that the Oracles requested were actually Italian deities rather than foreign ones.³³ The Romans were not hostile to foreign cults and practices; another factor must therefore have contributed to the downfall of the cult of Bacchus.

It has been suggested that the Bacchanalia Affair was in some way related to the existing hegemony of the Roman Senate over Italy as a whole. The idea of an Italian-Roman state established by the third century is a construct of nineteenth century German scholarship;³⁴ T. Mommsen's view of a unified Italy, for example, had been discarded by scholars such as K.J. Beloch. Beloch argues that the state of affairs in the second century was that of an Italian confederacy under Roman hegemony.³⁵ Although Mouritsen points out correctly that the idea of an Italian confederacy is overestimating the unity of the allies, one cannot discard the analysis of a hegemonic Rome trying to extend her powers outside of the *ager Romanus*.

During the early second century, Rome extended her control throughout Italy by making separate treaties with each of the allies; this was seen to be in the common interest of the Italians.³⁶ It is evident however that the Romans had gained by such a negotiation. The Italians were forced to send troops, but shared little in the glory of overseas campaigns or in the economic gains that accompanied them.³⁷ Indeed, the allies contributed between one half and two thirds of the Roman army, a sizeable percentage to be denied the glory of military victory. On the other hand, one might ask whether active Romanization throughout Italy was enough of a success that the allies would have disregarded the expanding hegemonic political role that Rome wanted to pursue.

It seems clear that Rome was seeking opportunities which would permit an expansion of its political power not only with regard to the foreign policy, but also the local administration of its allies.

³¹ Gruen, 39; cf. Franz Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion*, trans. Harold Mattingly (London: Methuen, 1938), 255-266.

³² H.W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 76, 201-202.

³³ Eric Orlin, *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Middle Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 99-100. Orlin gives a number of examples of deities towards which the Oracles were favorable and only three were foreign: Aesclepius, the Magna Mater and Venus Erycina.

³⁴ Henrik Mouritsen, *Italian Unification: A Study in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998), 39.

³⁵ Julius Beloch, *Der italische Bund unter Roms Hegemonie* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1880), 194; cf. Mouritsen, 39.

³⁶ Macdonald, 11.

³⁷ See Arthur Keaveney, *Rome and the Unification of Italy* (Exeter: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2005), 3-44; Mouritsen, 43.

The Bacchanalia Affair provided such an opportunity. In order to determine if political motivations superseded religious ones in this circumstance, it will be necessary to analyze Livy's use of the word *Italia*. This analysis will help to determine if Livy meant the whole of peninsular Italy, or rather only the *ager Romanus*, two very different spheres of influence.

The Romans would not have had jurisdiction throughout all of Italy, but they certainly would have in the *ager Romanus*. Livy wrote under the reign of Augustus, at a time when all of Italy was already under Roman control; *Italia*, therefore, would have roughly meant the whole of the Italian peninsula rather than the *ager Romanus*.³⁸ In fact, Livy's understanding of the concept of *tota Italia* seems deeply entrenched in the Augustan vision of Roman supremacy throughout the peninsula.

The first instance in which Livy uses the word *Italia* is in 1.2.5 to describe the extent of the renown of the Etrurians:

*Etruria erat ut iam non terras solum sed mare etiam per totam Italiam longitudinem ab Alpibus ad fretum siculum fama nominis sui implesset.*³⁹

Italiam in this context cannot refer only to territory controlled by Rome simply because this section of Livy's narrative takes place before Rome had extended its hegemony to any area outside of Latium. *Totam Italiam* would mean the whole of Italy as understood in the Augustan era rather than during the Republic. Indeed, *per totam Italiam*, in the whole of Italy, meant all of Italy from the Alps (*Alpibus*) to the Straits of Sicily (*fretum siculum*). Clearly, the breadth of this distance cannot be seen as pertaining only to Rome, especially not during this period of Roman history.

Another instance in which Livy uses the word *Italia* is in 1.18.2; this example is even more telling than the prior one:

*quia non exstat alius, falso Samium Pythagoram edunt, quem Servio Tullio regnante Romae centum amplius post annos in ultima Italiae ora circa Metapontum Heracleamque et Crotona iuuenum aemulantium studia coetus habuisse constat.*⁴⁰

Here, Livy uses the word *Italiae* in order to describe the area of Metaponto, Heraclea and Croton, all three of which were Greek colonies. Roman antipathy towards Croton was evident in the following passage: "The people of Capua, in Campania, becoming wealthy through the fertility of their soil,

³⁸ Jean Marie Pailler, *Bacchus: Figures et Pouvoirs* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1995). Pailler states that Galsterer argued unconvincingly that *Italia* would only have referred to the *ager Romanus*; cf. Mouritsen, *Italian Unification: A Study in Ancient and Modern Historiography* 50. Mouritsen argues that what Livy meant by *Italia* is irrelevant but then proceeds to discuss a number of instances in which *Italia*'s meaning is of prime importance.

³⁹ "So great was the power of Etruria that the renown of her people had filled not only the inland parts of Italy but also the coastal districts along the whole length of the land from the Alps to the Straits of Messina."

⁴⁰ "His master is given as Pythagoras of Samos, as tradition speaks of no other. But this is erroneous, for it is generally agreed that it was more than a century later, in the reign of Servius Tullius, that Pythagoras gathered round him crowds of eager students, in the most distant part of Italy, in the neighbourhood of Metapontum, Heraclea, and Crotona."

Expansionism or Fear: *The Underlying Reasons for the Bacchanalia Affair of 186 B.C.*

degenerated into luxury and extravagance surpassing even the common report about Croton and Sybaris.”⁴¹ It would seem unlikely that Rome and Croton would be on friendly terms with each other, as Croton is clearly described as the luxurious “other” hated by Rome. It can be assumed that, since Croton, Metaponto and Heraclea are lumped together, the same feeling was extended to the other two poleis in Southern Italy.⁴² Yet Livy still includes them when using the word *Italiae*, which suggests again that all of peninsular Italy was included when he spoke of *Italia*.

In 5.33.5, when narrating the sack of Rome by the Gauls in 390, Livy states that:

*ducentis quippe annis ante quam Clusium oppugnarent urbemque Romam caperent, in Italiam Galli transcenderunt; nec cum his primum Etruscorum sed multo ante cum iis qui inter Appenninum Alpesque incolebant saepe exercitus Gallici pugnauere.*⁴³

The fact that Livy mentions that the Gauls had traversed the Alps and arrived in Italy would point to a geographical understanding of *in Italiam* rather than that prominent in the Republican era. Across the Alps one would encounter Etruria long before the *ager Romanus*, which was by no means part of the Roman sphere of influence.⁴⁴

In 21.2.1, Livy discusses Carthaginian plans to invade Italy prior to Hannibal’s attack:

*His anxius curis ita se Africo bello quod fuit sub recentem Romanam pacem per quinque annos, ita deinde novem annis in Hispania augendo Punico imperio gessit ut appareret maius eum quam quod gereret agitare in animo bellum et, si diutius vixisset, Hamilcare duce Poenos arma Italiae inlaturos fuisse quae Hannibalis ductu intulerunt.*⁴⁵

It is very clear in this passage that Livy uses *Italia* to describe the whole of peninsular Italy rather than simply the *ager Romanus*. Hannibal did not only invade the *ager Romanus*, but had to pass the Alps in order to get to Italy; it was this crossing which was seen as a hostile gesture by Livy, since Hannibal was entering Roman territory.

Furthermore, in 39.13.6, Livy has the courtesan Hispala ask for safety in the following manner: *ut se extra Italiam aliquot ablegarent, ubi reliquum vitae degree tuto posset.*⁴⁶ In this case, it seems

⁴¹ Polyb. 7.1.

⁴² R.M. Peterson, *The Cults of Campania* (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1919), 282.

⁴³ “But it is quite clear that those who attacked that city were not the first who crossed the Alps. As a matter of fact, Gauls crossed into Italy two centuries before they attacked Clusium and took Rome”.

⁴⁴ Pailler, *Bacchanalia* 330.

⁴⁵ “Smartering under these wrongs, he made it quite clear from his conduct of the African War which followed immediately upon the conclusion of peace with Rome, and from the way in which he strengthened and extended the rule of Carthage during the nine years’ war with Spain, that he was meditating a far greater war than any he was actually engaged in, and that had he lived longer it would have been under his command that the Carthaginians effected the invasion of Italy, which they actually carried out under Hannibal.”

⁴⁶ “That they [Sulpicia and the consul Postumius] would banish her somewhere outside Italy, where she could pass the rest of her life in safety.”

clear that *extra Italiam* does not mean outside the *ager Romanus*, since many Bacchic cult members resided there.⁴⁷ It is much more probable that this refers to a request to be sent to one of the provinces, which would be a safeguard against “Italian” groups angered at her denunciation of the cult. Another passage again points to such an interpretation: *Si quis eorum, qui tum extra terram Italiam essent, nominaretur, ei laxiorem diem datus.*⁴⁸ This passage directly implies a reference to geographical area; a similar treatment of the word *extra terram Italia* can be found in official documents, as demonstrated by Pailler.⁴⁹

Although Livy did not use Polybius as a source, the Greek historian can be used to determine the sphere of influence of the Senate during the time of the Bacchanalian Affair and to uncover the Republican understanding of the word *Italia*. Polybius describes the Roman constitution, as well as the area of influence of the consuls and the Senate, by writing that “the consuls [...] remain in Rome and exercise supreme authority over all public affairs.”⁵⁰ This would seem to mean that the consuls did not have authority over private matters. As for the Senate, Polybius writes that “any crimes committed in Italy which require a public investigation, such as treason, conspiracy, poisoning and assassination, also come under the jurisdiction of the Senate.”⁵¹

Badian argues, however, that it is highly unlikely that the Italian allies would have allowed such an intrusion into internal affairs.⁵² Indeed, it is implausible that the treaties between the Romans and the allies would have included a clause which allowed such intrusion, and it is also implausible that the Senate would have been interested in intruding unless there was a threat to the treaty between the allies and Rome.⁵³ When discussing the powers of the Senate, Polybius uses the term “Italy” on account of its convenience versus the term “Roman territories outside of Rome.”⁵⁴ This would seem to imply that Polybius was not referring to the Italian allies, but rather to the *ager Romanus*; furthermore, he uses the term “all over Italy” to describe areas which clearly are in the *ager Romanus*.⁵⁵ He writes, “all over Italy an immense number of contracts, far too numerous to specify, are awarded by the censors for the construction and repair of public buildings [...] in a word every transaction which comes under the control of the Roman government.”⁵⁶ Therefore, the Senate would not have had jurisdiction outside the *ager Ro-*

⁴⁷ Pailler, *Bacchanalia* 331.

⁴⁸ “If anyone was named of those who were at that time outside the land of Italy, they would fix a more elastic date if he wished to come to plead his cause” (39.17.2).

⁴⁹ Pailler comments on the similarity between this passage in Livy and the *Lex Agraria* of 111BC: “L’expression à caractère indubitablement géographique *terra It.* se retrouve, comme l’observe Galsterer, dans des documents officiels de la République, notamment dans ces passages très explicite de la *lex agraria* de 111 : *civis Romanus sociumve nominisve Latini, quibus ex formula togatorum milites in terra Italia imperare solent*” (*Bacchanalia* 41).

⁵⁰ Polyb. 6.13.

⁵¹ Polyb. 6.13.

⁵² Ernst Badian, *Foreign Clientelae, 264-70 BC* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 142, 145.

⁵³ Mouritsen, 46.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 47. Mouritsen mentions that his claim is highly contested, however, he does make the interesting point that if indeed Livy used Polybius as a source, he would have read the word *Italia* as describing the *ager Romanus* and would have thus believed that it meant the whole of peninsular Italy and not the regions intended by Polybius. Indeed, this would have worked perfectly within Livy’s frame of mind, since he was living under a unified Italy.

⁵⁶ Polyb. 6.17; cf. Mouritsen, 47 n.30.

Expansionism or Fear: *The Underlying Reasons for the Bacchanalia Affair of 186 B.C.*

manus, and the reason why Polybius does not specify this is that his audience would have known what he was referring to when he said “Italy” instead of “Roman territories outside of Rome.” Livy, however, seems to have understood the term as it would have been used under Augustus; his *Italia* resembles much more the *tota Italia* propaganda of Augustus’ time. It is by comparing these two historians that we see where the problem of terminology lies.

Now we turn to the Bacchanalian Affair itself. We know that the cult had been present in and around Rome for quite some time; the courtesan Hispala states that she had been initiated when still a child, which would suggest that the cult had been present prior to 200.⁵⁷ There is also much physical evidence which points to the antiquity of the cult, most notably in the form of coins, statuettes, sarcophagi and frescoes found throughout Southern Italy, Campania and Etruria, that is, the regions in which the cult of Bacchus had originated, according to Livy, in its corrupted form.⁵⁸ Livy also mentions that the cult had ancient standing: *Bacchanalia tota iam pridem Italia et nunc per urbem etiam multis locis esse*.⁵⁹ Thus, it is safe to say that the cult was certainly not new in Italy. It had however been introduced by Italians rather than by Romans; this may be a reason why the Senate feared the spread of the cult.

The second century has been seen as a period of growing Roman interventionism amongst its Italian allies. Mouritsen discredits this view by arguing that during the second century Rome needed her allies due to a shortage of manpower needed to fill the ranks of the Roman army.⁶⁰ Mouritsen’s theory has recently been discredited by N. Rosenstein who argues that there was in fact a surplus of manpower in the *ager Romanus* owing to evidence that Rome’s farm economy relied on the family unit, and that there would therefore be no need for such a great allied contribution.⁶¹ Thus the argument that in the second century Rome would not have dared to expand her hegemony and infringe on the jurisdiction of her allies due to a need for allied military support no longer holds sway. However, Rome did generally try to avoid intervention into allied affairs, but there may very well have been exceptions. For the sake of military cooperation, Rome had no choice but to intervene in allied affairs that might threaten the treaties that they honoured.⁶² There are several incidents however which do not fit this realist analysis in which the Romans intervened only when the security of an ally, or their own security, was in danger. In both 198 and 196, the Romans crushed slave rebellions in Latium and Etruria, although these did not directly threaten the treaties that Rome had with its allies. These are but two of many instances in which Rome intervened directly into allied affairs without repercussions; in these instances, the allies needed

⁵⁷ Liv. *Epon.* 39.12.6.

⁵⁸ Gruen, 50. Gruen further mentions an Etruscan inscription of a priest of Bacchus, Laris Puleas, c.a. 200 BC, which states that the cult was well established and publicly accepted in Etruria by this time.

⁵⁹ “As to the Bacchanalia, I am assured that you have learned that they have long been celebrated all over Italy.” This is part of Postumius’ speech to the Senate in which he discusses the dangers of the cult in their present form, that is, nocturnal and uncontrolled. Liv. *Epon.* 39.15.6.

⁶⁰ Mouritsen, 44-45. Mouritsen states that the allies need not have been antagonized since they contributed between forty-two and forty-five percent of soldiers in the Roman army; cf. footnote n.24 in which Harris states that Rome was constantly placing troops to fill its ranks, and therefore Rome would not have tried to expand its influence in order to avoid a larger shortage.

⁶¹ Nathan Rosenstein, *Rome at War*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004) 26-63.

⁶² Macdonald, 13.

⁶³ Gruen, 44-45.

Roman support, even though neither had asked for such support before the Romans intervened.⁶³ The Romans sent out magistrates with special powers to calm these rebellions in order that the allies would not perceive such an action as a breach of treaty, which would lead to significant military and economic difficulties. Furthermore, many of the cities that were thus encroached upon would have to surrender hostages, see a number of their citizens executed, and in the most extreme of cases, would have a garrison placed within their city walls.⁶⁴ At any time the rights of war could be declared in order to guarantee the allied treaties. In the early second century, however, it would nonetheless seem that benevolent relations prevailed between the Romans and the Italians; a number of *civitas sine suffragio* were given the status of full Roman citizenship, and allies were given the right to marry Roman women and have legitimate Roman children.⁶⁵

In comparison to this cooperative atmosphere, the repression of the Bacchanalia seems rather out of place. Later Roman authors in fact mention the Bacchanalia as an example of Roman severity. Cicero, for instance, wrote:

C'est un sujet sur lequel la sévérité de nos ancêtres se marque dans la décision du Sénat relative aux Bacchanales ainsi que dans l'enquête et répression exécutée par les consuls avec l'appui de l'armée. Mais pour qu'on ne trouve pas que nous sommes trop sévères, rappelons qu'au cœur de la Grèce, Diagondas de Thèbes a supprimé les sacrifices nocturnes par une loi valable à perpétuité.⁶⁶

Similarly, Valerius Maximus, who viewed the scandal as a disgrace which tarnished the reputation of Rome, wrote:

The Senate was equally severe when it ordered the consuls Spurius Postumius Albinus and Quintus Marcius Philippus to hold an investigation into those women who had abandoned chastity and joined the Bacchic cult. Many of the women were found guilty by the consuls, and they were all out to death by their relatives in their homes. The disgrace of this scandal spread far and wide, but it was atoned for by the severity with which it was punished. If these women, by their disgraceful behaviour, had caused such great embarrassment to our state, their heavy punishment won us equally great praise."⁶⁷

As is demonstrated by these two authors, later views regarding the repression were approving of its severity; the eruption of the affair demonstrated that good Republican values that had gone into disrepair or had been corrupted. Thus both consuls were seen as having protected Roman youths and Roman moral standards by repressing the cult.

Some scholars, including Mouritsen, have argued that the Senate dealt with a Bruttian mag-

⁶⁴ Macdonald, 13.

⁶⁵ Gruen, 45. Both the Roman Senate and the people of Rome had allowed for these privileges to be given to both the Latins and the Italians.

⁶⁶ Cic. *Leg.* 2.15.37.

⁶⁷ Val. Max. 6.3.7.

⁶⁸ Mouritsen, 53.

istrate when writing the decree to ensure that they would not overstep their political boundaries.⁶⁸ There is no evidence however for such a magistrate being present, and certainly the decree would have been formulated differently had a Bruttian inscribed it; for example, there would have been no need to include the clause that “Chez les Bacchantes qu’aucun homme ne se présente, ni citoyen romain, ni citoyen de droit latin ou allié à moins de s’être présenté au préteur urbain et que celui-ci, sur avis du Sénat.”⁶⁹ Similarly with the line that has brought much debate amongst scholars: “Participaient à la rédaction M. Claudius M. f., L. Valerius P. f., Q. Minucius C. f. – Au sujet des Bacchanales des alliés.”⁷⁰ This last line has been quite controversial because it would seem to suggest direct infringement into allied affairs. The main opponents of this theory have tried to play around with the word *foideratei*. Mouritsen provides no evidence to disprove the theory that this can be translated to “allies,” except for stating that “the latter solution does not conform with the status of the *ager Teuranus*, apparently a Roman prefecture, or with the Latin language used in the inscription.”⁷¹ Without concrete evidence, Mouritsen applies Mommsen’s equally unproven analysis, which argues that the word simply means “Bacchants”.⁷² Mouritsen, although he points out importantly that if Tiriolo was indeed a prefecture, then it would legally have been under Roman jurisdiction, does not to prove that the treaty was aimed only at those over which Rome had authority. The decree is clearly aimed at the allies, as is evidenced by the use of word *foideratei*.⁷³ Furthermore, the decree mentions Latins, allies, and Roman citizens; if it had been aimed solely at the *ager Romanus* as has been suggested, this distinction would not have been necessary since all Latin, and many allied peoples living within the *ager Romanus*, could be made Roman citizens relatively easily. Furthermore, the decree states that any contravention of any of the clauses could be punishable by death, and there is no mention of imprisonment as a punishment, as in Livy’s narrative. It is possible that in the case of Tiriolo, the Senate was not overstepping its boundaries because the inscription was found in a prefecture. However, the language of the decree suggests that it was aimed at all of the allies, as opposed to only those that were in the Roman sphere of influence, such as the prefectures. There is nowhere else a description of a Bacchant as an ally, and it is clear that the term translates quite literally to “of the allies,” as it is in the genitive form. Furthermore, it would have been redundant to say the Bacchanal of the Bacchants, when one is clearly included in the other. This analysis thus discredits Mouritsen and Mommsen’s theory, which has no evidence on which to base itself.

The most telling aspect of the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*, however, is what is not included in the decree. Nowhere is there mention of the moral justification which Livy employs in his narrative. The inscription makes no mention of imprisonment for lesser crimes, as Livy does in 39.18.2-

⁶⁸ *SC de Bacchanalibus* lines 7-8. *Bacas vir nequis adiese velet ceivis romanus neve nomen latinum neve socium quisquam nisei PR urbanum adiesent isque de senatus sententiad.*

⁶⁹ *SC de Bacchanalibus* line 2. *Duelonai SC. ARF. M. Claudii M. f. L. Valerii P. f. Q. Minucii C. f. de Bacchanalibus quae foederatei.*

⁷¹ Mouritsen, 54.

⁷² Theodor Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*, 249 n.3, as cited in Mouritsen, 54.

⁷³ See discussion on the controversial nature of this line in the decree; it has been made clear that this meant “of the allies” as opposed to any other suggested translation, which would be out of place in the context of the decree.

5:

Those who had merely been initiated and had made their prayers in accordance with the ritual formula, the priest dictating the words, in which the wicked conspiracy to all vice and lust was contained, but had committed none of the acts to which they were bound by the oath against either themselves or others, they left in chains; upon those who had permitted themselves to be defiled by debauchery or murder, who had polluted themselves by false testimony, forged seals, substitution of wills or other frauds, they inflicted capital punishment.

The *SC de Bacchanalibus* only mentions the death penalty: “les Sénateurs ont décidé qu’il seraient passibles de la peine de mort.”⁷⁴ These small differences, in conjunction with the nebulous sources Livy uses, as well as his moralizing tendency and a religious zeal fitting of his time, leaves room for a loose interpretation of the events surrounding the repression in 186. It would indeed seem that the Senate wanted, among other things, to extend its influence amongst the Italian allies; the *SC de Bacchanalibus* seems to corroborate this analysis in light of the controversial clause suggesting that the decree was indeed directed towards the allies.⁷⁵

The *quaestio extra ordinem* decreed by the Senate gave the consuls power not only in their sphere of influence, that is, Rome and the *ager Romanus*, but also amongst the allies of Rome.⁷⁶ It has been suggested that after the Second Punic war, the allies gave up much of their independent authority to the growing hegemony in the Mediterranean, Rome. Roman dominance stifled the allies’ influence, and the treaties between them no longer restricted Rome’s powers. The concept of Rome as a centralized government is by far an exaggeration for this time period, as Italy was nowhere near united in the Middle Republic, but Rome nevertheless acted on several occasions as a patron in foreign relations and in local politics.⁷⁷ During the Bacchanalia, Roman influence was extended through the *quaestio*, and all rights that the allies had previously held were set aside during this “state of emergency.”⁷⁸ The *quaestio* allowed the Senate to annul all federal rights by suspending constitutional guarantees to the allies and intervening directly in local affairs.⁷⁹ Rome’s extending influence was seen most prominently among the Italian cities of Southern Italy and Magna Graecia, which saw their jurisdiction encroached upon by the Roman administration in the early second century.⁸⁰ By the second century, the Romans were in a position of such great power that they could infringe upon civic authority without much resistance; Rome could therefore regulate a foreign cult which had been corrupted by Campanian and Etruscan, but also feminine, influences.

The presence of women is striking in Livy’s narrative; Aebutius is tricked by his mother, but

⁷⁴ *Scriptum est eis rem capitalem faciendam censuere*; see Pailler, *Bacchanalia*.

⁷⁵ See n. 61.

⁷⁶ Gruen, 35.

⁷⁷ Mouritsen, 40.

⁷⁸ Pailler, *Bacchanalia* 173.

⁷⁹ Macdonald, 16.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 13. Macdonald states that this encroachment was seen as especially tyrannical and caused great resentment since these cities treasured their civic identities, which differentiated them inherently from the rest of Italy.

Expansionism or Fear: *The Underlying Reasons for the Bacchanalia Affair of 186 B.C.*

saved by his lover Hispala. He goes to see his aunt Aebutia who speaks with the consul's mother-in-law Sulpicia about a cult perverted by the Campanian priestess Paculla Annia. Livy's dichotomy between good and evil women is at the heart of the Bacchanalian Affair and should be dealt with in detail when studying the repression. The fear that this cult produced within the Senate was a determinant factor with regard to the cult's repression.

Sulpicia is referred to as *gravis* or *gravissima* and these adjectives are constantly used when she is spoken of. She may be the same Sulpicia who was chosen in the Second Punic War as the chastest of women and who received the cult image of Venus Vericordia.⁸¹ Aebutia was also a well respected matron, renowned for her decency and for her adherence to ancient traditional customs.⁸² As for Hispala, she is not particularly brave, but she has a good heart and is eventually rewarded by the Senate and declared an honourable lady. These are the three women who helped the consul and the Senate uncover the Bacchanalian scandal.

In opposition to these women who uphold traditional Roman values are the Bacchantes, portrayed by Livy as wicked and cunning women who try to distort such values. Paculla Annia is the villain of the story, since she dared to change an exclusively female cult into one which accepted men. This is no doubt one of the reasons why the cult was feared by senatorial authorities: it had been changed drastically from its original form which had posed no threat to the Rome. Furthermore, the Bacchantes portrayed by Livy are madwomen who evoke the image of the frenzied Maenads of Greek literature. Interestingly enough, they acted outside of the private sphere, and outside official control, and created laws of their own. This is another important reason why the authorities were fearful of the cult, which had only recently developed into something that the Senate could no longer control. As long as it had been exclusively female, it had been tolerated, but as soon as men became involved, the Senate felt it had to act.

The idea that young men were initiated before the age of twenty meant that they were getting initiated at exactly the same time as they were supposed to obtain their *toga virilis*; this could not be tolerated by the Senate. In addition, the young men were required to begin their military service between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. The initiations of the cult would have interfered with this, and thus directly with the Roman Senate.⁸³ Furthermore, "for the authorities, the most alarming aspect of this gathering of marginals [...] was the fact that very young men were initiated by their mothers [...]. In short, women were taking the place of both the father and the city."⁸⁴ This statement points to a growing problem of the second century, that is, the rise of maternal power,⁸⁵ although Livy does not seem to point much towards this at all. Livy, however, saw not only women as a source of evil, but also effeminate men: "a great number are women, and they are the source of this evil; next there are men most like women."⁸⁶

This internal hierarchy within the Bacchic cult undermined the established, traditional, patri-

⁸¹ Hanninen, 116.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 115-116.

⁸³ Sarolta A. Takacs, "Politics and Religion in the Bacchanalian Affair of 186 BCE," *HSCP* 100 (2000): 306.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ J. Scheid, "The Religious Role of Roman Women," as cited in Takacs, 306.

⁸⁶ Liv. *Epon.* 39.15.9.

archal hierarchy of the Romans. Furthermore, the young men were initiated prior to their military service and to their grant of citizenship. This seemingly unimportant aspect of the cult is in fact extremely significant when compared to the importance of the allies in the Roman military; although it was argued previously that the Romans were not at this time in dire need of the allies in order to fill their ranks, it would have been impossible for the Roman army to continue to levy legions at the same rate without the allies entirely, was cult membership to grow to such an extent.

If the cult had thus threatened both the institution of Rome and its military, the Senate would hardly have needed more of an incentive to intrude into allied jurisdiction to prevent Bacchic worship from spreading. By establishing impossible requirements for the legal worship of the cult, the Senate discouraged the practice of Bacchic rituals entirely.⁸⁷ It has been suggested that it was the highly structured group hierarchy that was truly feared by the Senate, and that they genuinely saw it as threatening to the Roman social order.⁸⁸ The cult may be seen as a form of public degeneracy that would have threatened the established order; with numbers only in the thousands, however, one can still hardly believe that the cult was threatening enough to justify the Senate's severity. As the Senate was able to dictate religious terms, it was in a good position to ensure and crystallize its political control over the whole of Italy. It is very important to note that the Senate exerted control over religious activities pertaining to the *res publica*;⁸⁹ senators became the religious officials and its leaders would make decisions that guided the behaviour of the citizens, whether they pertained to sacrifices, festivals or traditional cult rituals. In this context, one can see that both unsanctioned religious cults and popular foreign unregulated cults would make the Senate rather uneasy.

Livy's narrative is highly romanticized and on many occasions he undermines his own credibility by contradicting himself, as can be seen in Postumius' speech, in which the consul states both that the cult is widely known, but yet none know what it is.⁹⁰ If indeed the cult was widely known, and the senators were afraid of finding conspirators amongst their ranks, then it hardly seems necessary for Postumius to have waited for Hispala to confide in him in order to find out about the Bacchic rituals. Furthermore, it must be understood that speeches are generally fabricated by the historian; while this fabrication is not detrimental to the narrative, the speeches surely furthered a point which Livy wanted to make. It is also important to note that as Livy developed as a writer, his work became more mature; at the same time however it was increasingly filled with speeches which the historian felt made his point stronger.

In Livy's account, there is no senatorial debate regarding what to do about the Bacchanalia; even when the Magna Mater was to be brought to Rome the Senate held a debate concerning the cult.⁹¹ This is extremely telling since the introduction of the Magna Mater was made at the demand of the

⁸⁷ The *SC de Bacchanalibus* sets a requirement of one hundred senators in order for the demand of assembly of a Bacchant be granted; it is highly unlikely that such a trivial matter would interest one hundred senators, and even less that more than this number would show up to the hearing. Therefore, it was practically impossible for the Bacchants to get permission to assemble, and if by a slim chance they were granted permission, their freedom of assembly and ritual performance was incredibly restricted.

⁸⁸ Mary Beard et al., *Religions of Rome*, Vol. I, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 95.

⁸⁹ Gruen, 55.

⁹⁰ See Liv. *Epon.* 39.15.6-8 for an elaboration of the speech of Postumius; also see above for discussion on the speech itself.

⁹¹ Liv. *Epon.* 29.10.4.11.

Expansionism or Fear: *The Underlying Reasons for the Bacchanalia Affair of 186 B.C.*

Sibylline Oracles, which was a much more reliable source of information than a courtesan present at but a few rituals during her youth as a slave.

It is evident that the debate surrounding the Bacchanalian Affair may never be resolved. However, I have made an attempt to present the opinions of both sides of the debate in order to highlight a more nuanced understanding of the underlying factors of the repression. On the one hand, the Senate was genuinely fearful of the cult in the form in which Paculla Annia had transformed it. Not only did it offer women much more power in society due to its internal hierarchy, but it also hindered the political and military training of Roman citizens. Furthermore, membership of the cult seems to have been quite widespread, with both lower and upper class citizens mingling in nocturnal orgies. The fact that the cult was highly hierarchical and very well organized can also be seen as threatening Roman authority. The cult furthermore had originated outside of Rome and, in addition to being foreign, it had not been brought into Italy under the auspices of the Senate, as was the case for the cults of Asclepius, Venus Erycina and the Magna Mater. These were all determining factors in the repression of the cult of Bacchus. The *SC de Bacchanalibus* however does not seek to abolish the cult completely, but only to have the Senate regain authority and control over it. Granted, the Senate makes it very difficult to hold Bacchic rituals, but there is no clause suggesting that it aimed to destroy the cult of Bacchus in Italy.

On the other hand, the Senate may have acted more rashly than necessary because it saw an opportunity to expand its hegemony throughout Italy. As has been mentioned, there is no doubt that the Senate feared the cult, however, this would not rule out their desire to expand their hegemony. It has been proven that the decree was in fact aimed at all of the allies as opposed to those under Roman jurisdiction or having the status of prefecture. The term *foederatei* is proof that the Senate had sent this decree throughout Italy and imposed its decision over all its allies. This was a breach of allied jurisdiction, and the Senate was fully aware of what it was doing. We have no record of the allies complaining of this encroachment simply because Livy would not have felt the need to record such complaints in his narrative. Rather, he believed that the Senate had acted properly in crushing a foreign, immoral and degenerate cult.

The Bacchanalian Affair was the result of both fear and an opportunity for expansion; neither explanation is in itself sufficient. Gruen, Pailler and Mouritsen's arguments are all flawed since they dismiss important elements which might contradict their theses. The repression was much more complicated than either side claims it to be. It is, in fact, an excellent example of Roman ingenuity. Although the Senate feared an attack on their authority, they used such an attack to expand their hegemony. The Senate reacted rapidly to threats from within Italy. Indeed, if the change in cult membership was made relatively late, then the Senate in fact acted as soon a threat was presented. It can be argued that because the Senate believed that the cult posed a dangerous threat, it acted for the common good by expanding Rome's hegemony. Rome was the most powerful political entity in the Mediterranean, so surely it was in a position to protect Italy from such a debauched and perverted cult. The extent to which the Senate reacted may have been excessive, but the reaction itself was warranted. Gruen, Pailler and Mouritsen are all too radical to grasp the true motivations behind the Bacchanalian Affair; hopefully the debate will be more nuanced in the future.

Sarah Limoges

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Appian. *Syrian Wars*. Translated by Horace White. New York: Macmillan, 1899.
- Cicero. *De Legibus*. Translated by Georges de Plinval. Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1959.
- Livy. *Ab urbe condita*. Translated by Evan T. Sage. Edinburgh: Loeb Classical Library, 2000.
- Polybius. Translated by Ian Scott-Kilvert. London: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Valerius Maximus. Translated by Henry John Walker. Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2004.

Secondary Sources

- Althiem, Franz. *A History of Roman Religion*. Translated by Harold Mattingly. London: Methuen, 1938.
- Badian, Ernst. *Foreign Clientelae, 264-70 B.C.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.
- Beard, Mary et al. *Religions of Rome*. Vol. I. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Beloch, Julius. *Der italische Bund unter Roms Hegemonie*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1880.
- Briscoe, John. "A. Postumius Albinus, Polybius and Livy's Account of the Bacchanalia." In *Hommage a Carl Deroux 4: Archeologie et Histoire de l'Art*, edited by Defosse and Pol. Bruxelles: Latomus, 2002.
- Cumont, Franz. *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*. New York: Dover, 1956.
- Gruen, Erich S. *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy*. New York: Brill, 1990.
- Hanninen, Marja-Leena. "Conflicting Descriptions of Women's Religious Activity in Mid-Republican Rome: Augustan Narratives about the Arrival of Cybele and the Bacchanalia Scandal." In *Aspects of Women in Antiquity: Proceedings of the First Nordic Symposium on Women's Lives in Antiquity*, edited by Lena L. Loven and Agneta Stromberg. Jonsered: Paul Astroms Forlag, 1998.
- Horseley, Richard A. *Religion and Empire*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003.
- Keaveney, Arthur. *Rome and the Unification of Italy*. Exeter: Bristol Phoenix Press, 2005.
- Levene, D.S. *Religion in Livy*. New York: Brill, 1993.
- Lomas, Kathryn. *Rome and the Western Greeks 350 BC to AD 200*. New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Luce, T.J. *Livy: The Composition of his Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Macdonald, A.H. "Rome and the Italian Confederation." *JRS* 34 (1944): 11-33.
- Mouritsen, Henrik. *Italian Unification: a study in ancient and modern historiography*. London: Institute of Classical Studies, 1998.
- Nilsson, Martin. *P. Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age*. Lund, Sweden: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1957.
- North, J.A. "Religion and Rusticity." In *Urban Society in Roman Italy*, edited by Tim Cornell and

Expansionism or Fear: *The Underlying Reasons for the Bacchanalia Affair of 186 B.C.*

- Kathryn Lomas. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.
- Orlin, Eric M. *Temples, Religion, and Politics in the Middle Republic*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Pailler, Jean Marie. *Bacchanalia: La répression de 186 av. J.C. à Rome et en Italie*. Rome: École Française de Rome, 1988.
- Pailler, Jean Marie. *Bacchus: Figures et Pouvoirs*. Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1995.
- Parke, H.W. *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity*. New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Peterson, Roy Merle. *The Cults of Campania*. Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1919.
- Rosenstein, Nathan. *Rome at War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.
- Takacs, Sarolta A. "Politics and Religion in the Bacchanalian Affair of 186 BCE." *HSCP* 100 (2000): 301-310.
- Walsh, P.G. *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963.
- Walsh, P.G. "Making a Drama out of a Crisis: Livy on the Bacchanalia." *G&R* 43 (1996): 188-203.