

Emma Louise Maier

A Roman Hero Revived

Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Horatius* (1842) as a Poetic Guide to Empire

Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, published in 1842, was an extraordinary success and among the most popular works of the nineteenth century. *Horatius*, the first of the four *Lays* – i.e. “popular historical ballad[s]” (OED)¹ – will be considered an example of Victorian celebratory reception of ancient Rome and the heroic element within that reception will be analysed. For the Victorians, and in particular for Macaulay, an Indian colonial administrator, ancient Rome was a source of constant fascination and also a foil for the British Empire. *Horatius* evoked an ideal Roman hero – and thereby showed what kind of heroes were needed, according to Macaulay, to hold the British Empire together.²

The Victorians and Ancient Roman Heroes

Ancient Rome was constantly evoked in Victorian times, in politics as well as in philological, textual and historical scholarship. However, ancient Rome was not only a topic for the learned and privileged. Occurring in many popular novels, essays and poems, it provided a rapidly expanding reading public “with literary models, matters for dreams and fantasies, versions of civility and successful living” (Vance, *A Companion* 87). ‘Ancient Rome’ has to be understood as an abstract bundle of ideals and ideas which the Victorians constructed when looking at what was once a mighty empire.³

What the Victorians admired most about ancient Rome was its “imperial discipline” that had been “a major component of the enduring idea of Rome” and was “at least notionally extended over many nations” (Vance, *The Victorians* 5; Butler 19). A cultural myth was shaped proclaiming that Britain was the new Rome: Britain as the new mighty empire should spread its language and laws all over the world (Simmons

106), in terms of a *translatio imperii*.⁴ The comparison of Britain to the Roman Empire mostly concerned the British imperial possessions in India (Butler 20; Lucht 19; Kumar 98). When Earl Granville, a liberal statesman, in a speech in the House of Lords spoke about the power of men employed as ‘collectors’ by the East India Company, he equated it to that of the ‘proconsules’ of ancient Rome (Butler 20). Also within the so-called ‘Don Pacifico debate’ in 1850, Foreign Secretary Palmerstone referred to the right of Roman citizens to count on Roman law in order to defend Don Pacifico, who, as a British subject, should feel confident that England would protect him against injustice and wrong (ibid; Vance, *A Companion* 96). As these examples show, Rome stood as a metaphor for a “resolutely interventionist and even assimilationist stance” (Kumar 83),⁵ and, therefore, Roman heroes could provide role models for subjects acting in the British Empire.

Indeed, a “natural affinity between proto-Roman or early Roman heroic individualism [...] and the heroic individualism of Victorian liberals” (Vance, *The Victorians* 70) was perceived: As Rome had celebrated its heroes, Britain stimulated the heroisation of individuals standing up for their country, such as James Brooke (1803–1868), Rajah of Sarawak, whose evaluation depicts impressively how ancient Roman notions of the heroic had legitimizing power in Victorian Britain.⁶ One of the most vigorous popularisers of the Roman idea was Thomas Babington Macaulay (Simmons 106), who argued in 1835 in his *Minute on Indian Education* that anglicizing the Indians would have the same beneficial effects as the Romanization of the Roman provinces, i.e. the Romanization of Britain, in the Roman Empire (Macaulay, *Prose and Poetry* 719-730). Britain was built on Rome, a Rome which gave the Victorians a rich and flexible vocabulary for private and public debate, a Rome that with its decline had taught a tragic lesson the Victorians could learn from.

Horatius Revived

Of the four *Lays of Ancient Rome*,⁷ *Horatius* was widely praised by Macaulay's contemporaries (Review 54). Set in 514 BC, *Horatius* tells the heroic deed of Horatius Cocles, who defended the Pons Sublicius, the bridge leading to the heart of Rome, and thereby the whole city from the attack of the Etruscan commander Lars Porsena. *Horatius* and the other *Lays* became a staple of the curriculum for many generations of British school boys (Edwards, *Translating Empire* 70; Hall, *Macaulay and Son* 250-253).⁸ Their recitation was a common pastime of the era (Lucht 82) and, as Edwards points out, especially *Horatius* "offered many people their first encounter with Roman antiquity" (*Translating Empire* 70). Written as a pastiche of an early Roman ballad, *Horatius* not only told about ancient times, but vividly evoked them representing a "supposedly [...] authentic national spirit" (Hall, *Macaulay and Son* 251). *Horatius* personifies the brave Roman hero who is loyal to Rome up to the point of giving his life – but his will and his belief in the idea of Rome, in his culture and his people finally save him.

Horatius Cocles and his heroic deed were not inventions of Macaulay, and although the ballad is an "original poem" (Arnold 187), it is mainly based on the account in Livy's *History of Rome* (Liv. II 10).⁹ For Macaulay, to choose the ballad form for his retelling of the Roman hero was not only a matter of aesthetics. In the preface to his volume, he refers to the Dutch scholar Jacobus Perizonius and the German scholar Barthold Niebuhr, who had both argued that the foundations of early Roman history were merely fictitious and based on popular ballads (Macaulay, *Lays* 12-13).¹⁰ Macaulay saw these (presumed) ballads as expressions of a fundamental human need, as "[a]ll human beings, not utterly savage, long for some information about past times" (ibid. 15). These old ballads had, unfortunately, been lost in the course of history, which Macaulay, although a fervent believer in the progress of history, deeply regretted. He believed that these lost ballads represented "a literature truly Latin", a literature "abounded with metrical romances" and "pictures to the eye of the mind" (ibid.).¹¹ *Horatius* was therefore a rewriting of one of Rome's lost ballads, a pastiche supposedly written by a poet whom Macaulay characterized as "an honest citizen, proud of the military glory of his country, sick of the disputes of factions, and much given to pining after good old times which never really existed" (Macaulay, *Lays* 56).¹² This bard was supposed to have lived about 120 years after *Horatius'* deed and his lay resembled the

kind of source Livy would have taken his information from. Thus, the use of this poetic persona has to be read as a distancing strategy that enabled Macaulay to – seemingly uncritically as well as nostalgically – praise and heroise a military figure.

Livy wrote history out of a patriotic attitude: he wanted the reminiscences of his people to stay alive (Hillen 587). He believed that his history was, if not in every detail, more or less 'true', up to the point that it was part of a shared cultural memory, as facts and fiction were heavily interwoven in the depiction of the early stages of ancient Rome (Hillen 628-633; Phillips 120). The three purposes of his historiography were laid down in the *praefatio*: searching for historical truth, an appropriate depiction and the creation of an effect on the reader by showing examples of good and bad behaviour (Liv. praef. 1-13).¹³ Livy wanted to instruct people by presenting a good example, thus one covering several aspects: It had to be *spectacular*, the primary, i.e. intradiegetic, audience had to *evaluate* the deed positively. It had to be *commemorated*, which could include both written and material forms of commemoration. Finally, the exploit should be the foundation for further *imitation* (Roller 2-23). In order to be exemplary, the deed had to be heroic. Such heroic exemplarity is evident in Livy's note of *Horatius Cocles*.

Although Macaulay acknowledged that Livy showed "so complete an indifference to truth", he still valued the created "picturesque effect" and Livy's aim to honour his country (Macaulay, *History* 192). This evaluation reveals an important fact: that although Macaulay was also a historian, he never understood this vocation in exclusivist terms.¹⁴ For him, there were two "rulers of history" namely "reason and imagination" (ibid. 168, my emphasis). He argued that history could never be "[p]erfectly and absolutely true", as "[n]o picture [was] exactly like the original" (ibid. 176-177). Therefore, he valued Livy's approach to place the question of truth on a secondary level. For Livy as well as for Macaulay, authenticity was based on testimony (ibid. 216).¹⁵ However, while Livy's *Horatius* was a mere example of a Roman hero, Macaulay gave him blood and soul. Macaulay's *Horatius* was meant to be a heroic example, too, but a highly vivid one – *Horatius* and his two fellows had to be evoked¹⁶ and presented colourfully and in an animated way before the reader's inward eye. McKelvy is right when he notes that in the *Lays*, Macaulay wanted to show "how literary performances became historically important events in the life of a nation" (McKelvy 289). He wanted "to make the past present, to bring the distant near"

(Macaulay, *Hallam* 221). Still, Macaulay did not want to evoke the past for the past's sake. He strongly believed that reasons and lessons from the past could be applied to the present.¹⁷

It is revealing to locate both Livy's and Macaulay's historiographies within the framework of cultural memory by Aleida Assmann. She argues for the strong connection between identity and memory (Assmann 130), which can be applied to Macaulay's and Livy's views of history. Assmann distinguishes two modes of cultural memory – a functional and an archival memory.¹⁸ Livy's account of history has to be seen as a mixture of these two modes. He wanted to archive the history of the Roman Republic, but he also, and this has to be seen as his primary purpose, wanted to present an example and therefore gave a specific function to history: Horatius' heroic deed was to be seen as a spectacular and admired one, therefore commemorated and hopefully often imitated. It is, however, remarkable that at a time in which historiography became more and more scientific, in which history as an academic discipline evolved, which in Assmann's model contributed to the archival memory, the great historian Macaulay wrote a ballad that was not at all about archiving, but primarily about functionality: The Roman hero Horatius was to become a new role model. Proof for Macaulay's *Horatius* functioning as an example can be found in Roosevelt Basler's *The Modern Horatius*. Explicitly referring to Macaulay, he asks "if there [was] a Modern Horatius?" and, at the end of his essay aimed at teachers, he resumes triumphantly: "You are!" (Basler 234-236).¹⁹

Macaulay believed that one could learn a lot from history, and therefore history had to be evoked vividly. The iambic meter²⁰ of *Horatius* adds speed and pulsating rhythm to the ballad. It seems as if the speaker wanted to evoke Lars Porsena of Clusium himself, sitting on his horse with his heart beating as he heads, surrounded by his fellow Etruscans, towards Rome. Still, not only are the Etruscans evoked, the ballad also vividly transmits the Romans' fear when they, shivering, have to acknowledge that Lars Porsena is on his way:

And nearer fast and nearer
Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still, and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpets' war-note proud,
The trampling and the hum.
And plainly and more plainly
Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
The long array of spears.
(*Horatius* stanza 21, ll. 162-173)²¹

The vibrant heroic atmosphere of the ballad is created not only by the meter, but also by the rhyme pattern: The majority of this ballad's 70 stanzas are octaves that follow the alternate rhyme scheme *xaxaxbxb*. This rhyme pattern adds to the sense of speed and action and allows several repetitions of words and phrases, contributing to a better memorability of the ballad. Yet, – as it is the case in the above-cited stanza 21 – the scheme is alternated in several stanzas:²² Whenever the penultimate line is doubled or tripled and the rhyme pattern used twice or thrice respectively, a sense of even more intensity and action of events is contributed to the lines due to a notion of simultaneity. Thus, in stanza 21, the recipient is given an involving picture of the "loud" "cloud" moving "proud[ly]" towards Rome, occupying the whole picture from left to right, immersed in a "dark-blue light" and showing off "bright" helmets.²³ In stanza 19 ("ye well may guess" [l. 148]) the speaker even addresses the listener/reader in order to involve her or him directly in the narrative. Devices like these are absent in Livy's text and have to be interpreted as Macaulay's vision of ancient bardic poetry that, however, had the power to reach the hearts and minds of Macaulay's contemporaries.

Livy, too, had tried to present an animated narration of Horatius' heroic deed,²⁴ however, in contrast to Macaulay's version, Livy's appears relatively pale. Highly influenced and impressed by Walter Scott,²⁵ Macaulay used the techniques of the novel and evoked a lively and picturesque narration, so that "little visualizing power [was] required to bring it vividly before the mind's eye" (Rolfe 574).²⁶ When Lars Porsena is at the gates of Rome, Livy states solely that "the enemy appear[s]" (Liv. II 10, 1), as to inform the reader that the enemy is approaching. In Macaulay's version, the whole preparation is presented in powerful detail: Lars Porsena swears "That the great house of Tarquin / Should suffer wrong no more" (*Horatius* ll. 3-4) and mobilizes all Etruscans to fight for him (ibid., ll. 7-17). As from a bird's-eye view, the Etruscan cities are evoked: "lordly Volaterræ, [...] seagirt Populonia, [...] the proud mart of Pisæ, [...] [and] Cortona [who] lifts to heaven / [h]er diadem of towers." (*Horatius* ll. 26-41) By showing that all men come to join Lars Porsena, explaining that therefore "[t] his year, the must shall foam / [r]ound the white feet of laughing girls" (*Horatius* ll. 63-64), a noble enemy is portrayed,²⁷ except for "false Sextus / [t]hat wrought the deed of shame" (*Horatius* ll. 199-200) – interestingly, in Livy's version, the violator of Lucretia²⁸ is not mentioned as following Lars Porsena in his "march for Rome" (*Horatius* l. 17). Macaulay, however, uses him to illustrate the Romans' collective moral integrity and

their clear values by telling that “On the rooftops was no woman / But spat towards him and hissed, / No child but screamed out curses, / And shook its little fist” (*Horatius* ll. 205-208) as soon as they see Sextus arriving.

As the Etruscans are about to enter Rome and the consul, with sad brow and low speech, states the desolate situation of Rome, the hero of the *Lay*, “brave Horatius” (*Horatius* l. 217), is introduced. Livy tells us that “he was the *bulwark of defence* on which that day depended the fortune of the City of Rome. He *chanced to be on guard at the bridge* when Janiculum was captured by a sudden attack of the enemy.” (Livy. II 10, 2-3, my emphasis) What could be perceived as a contingency is different in Macaulay. His Horatius is not accidentally on guard, but he is the “Captain of the Gate” (*Horatius* l. 218). There is no mention of chance. Instead, Horatius bravely steps forward and gives a solemn speech²⁹ that reveals his innermost convictions:

To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds
For the *ashes of his fathers*
And the *temples of his gods*,

And for the *tender mother*
Who dandled him to rest,
And for *the wife* who nurses
His baby at her breast,
And for *the holy maidens*
Who feed the eternal flame, —
To save *them* from false Sextus
That wrought the deed of shame?
(*Horatius* ll. 219-232, my emphasis)

The polysyndetic as well as anaphoric structure intensifies Horatius’ reasons and marks his disposition to die during his forthcoming deed. His decision to intervene is a consciously reasoned one that he makes by pointing out what is really important to him in his life: his history, his religion, his family, his people and his values. By evoking the ‘holy maidens’, the vestal virgins, Horatius commemorates the foundation of Rome, as the mother of Rome’s founders Romulus and Remus, Rhea Silvia, was a vestal virgin herself (Livy. esp. I 4, 2-3). The ‘holy maidens’ together with their ‘eternal flame’ thus personify the assumed perpetuity of Rome. Again, ‘false Sextus’ is a model *ex negativo* which shows what kind of behaviour is not included in Roman values. By explicitly placing Rome’s integrity above his personal one, Horatius paves the way for his own heroisation. As opposed to this moving speech full of significant implications, Livy’s Horatius is, literally, more prosaic. He sees the Etruscans arriving

while his own people behav[e] like a frightened mob [...]. Catching hold first of one and then of another, blocking their way and conjuring them to listen, he called on gods and men to witness that *if they forsook their post it was vain to flee*; once they had left a passage in their rear by the bridge, there would soon be more of the enemy on the Palatine and the Capitol than on Janiculum.

(Livy. II 10, 3-4, my emphasis)

Thus, in Livy’s text, the inevitability of Horatius’ deed is underlined. The Roman calls for the gods and men not in order to evoke the Roman’s holiest ideals, but to witness the instance. At least, he can convince two men “who were prevented by shame from leaving him. These were Spurius Larcius and Titus Herminius, both famous for their birth and their deeds.” (Livy. II 10, 7) However, in Livy’s version of events, this remains a side-comment as soon afterwards Horatius “forced even these two to leave him and save themselves, for there was scarcely anything left of the bridge, and those who were cutting it down called to them to come back.” (Livy. II 10, 8) In Macaulay’s version, these secondary characters are promoted. Both Spurius Larcius and “strong Herminius” (Macaulay, *Lays* 58), who, in Macaulay’s ballad, stand as “the representatives of one of the three patrician tribes” (ibid.),³⁰ are given a voice, and the bravery of these “dauntless Three” (*Horatius* l. 252) is celebrated. Macaulay’s Romans stand together: the patricians in particular, as the social and religious elite, work together to protect their people. Horatius, thus, is not a loner; Macaulay’s ballad shows that heroes need assistants – and that only if a community collaborates, heroic deeds are possible.

Yet, in the end, also Macaulay’s Horatius remains alone. Ogilvie might be right when he states that “Livy gives a vivid drama, stressing Cocles’s courage and culminating in his appeal to the god” (258), but how much more does the reader suffer with “brave Horatius” (*Horatius* l. 476) when he invokes “father Tiber” (*Horatius* l. 492) and “plunge[s] headlong in the tide” (*Horatius* l. 499)?³¹ The quintuple anaphoric incipit “and” in stanza 61 imitates the breathless tenseness of Horatius and the spectators – not only Romans but also Etruscans:

But fiercely ran the current,
Swollen high by months of rain;
And fast his blood was flowing,
And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armor,
And spent with changing blows;
And oft they thought him sinking,
But still again he rose.
(*Horatius* ll. 510-517, my emphasis)

Indeed, when Horatius rises, also Lars Porsena is impressed by this “gallant feat of arms” (*Horatius* l. 532).³² In Livy’s version, “[t]he state was grateful for so brave a deed” (Liv. II 10, 12) – what Lars Porsena thought about it is not mentioned at all. In both, a statue is set up for Horatius that commemorates his deed and shall stir the generations to rise and imitate it. The deed of Horatius is a representation of clear values, which stanza 32 best demonstrates:

Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great;
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.
(*Horatius* II. 257-264)

Macaulay’s version stresses the integrity of the Roman people; their commitment to Rome was beyond limits – heroism against all odds evolving from a simple patriotism was celebrated by an uncorrupted people (Young 38). While Livy solely *told*, Macaulay *evoked* by implying narrative patterns as heroisation devices – Horatius was to be a glorious hero, and he was to come to life also in Victorian Britain.³³

A Roman Hero for the British Empire

‘In the brave days of old’, the final verse of the ballad, the world was as it should be – this was what *Horatius* proclaimed. But in Macaulay’s conception, as a convinced Whig politician, “[t]he history of England [was] emphatically the history of progress. [...] In the course of seven centuries [...] [the English] ha[d] become the greatest and most highly civilised people that ever the world saw.” (Macaulay, *Sir James Macintosh* 442-443) Therefore, he did not long to live in ancient times. Nevertheless, as he strongly believed that ancient times could still provide answers to questions of the present, the brave old days of Horatius, according to Macaulay, had something to say (Simmons 109; Vance, *The Victorians* 5).³⁴ *Horatius* has at least three significant implications: First, it is a reference to antiquity, second, *Horatius* was a vivid example of Roman virtue and third, combining the first two implications, *Horatius* transported the vision Macaulay had of empire: Culture and literature on one side and moral integrity and his idea of community on the other were the hallmarks of his view of empire.

Macaulay strongly believed in the classics as a point of reference as well as a refuge.³⁵ As a Member of the Supreme Council of India, Macaulay played an active part in the proceedings of the recruiting of new members for the Indian Civil Service (Edwards, *Macaulay* 19). There had been a patronage system before 1855, but Macaulay inaugurated competitive examinations which were also open to native Indians and not only, as had been the case before, to British students. Within these examinations, the importance of classical studies was placed four times higher than knowledge about India and its languages (Lucht 10; Kumar 95). *Horatius* was part of the classic canon; however, it presented a new version of the old classic by directly and immediately addressing the readers and vividly evoking the action told.

The reason for elevating the classics within the educational canon was their assumed civilizing effect (Kumar 94; Osterhammel 330). Macaulay’s hope was to anglicize the whole empire; his aim was cultural assimilation (Hall, *Macaulay and Son* 333). As *Horatius* laid out what had made Rome so great, i.e. the devotion of Roman individuals who were prepared to die for Rome, it had the power to translate this to the British Empire. Edwards is right when she points out that the time in which *Horatius* is set is not imperial (Edwards, *Translating Empire* 78). However, the deed of Horatius Cocles showed exactly what kind of people and what kind of spirit Rome needed to be able to one day become “the greatest empire of ancient times” (Kumar 78). Not only Rome, but also Britain, needed people like Horatius: individuals who stood up for their people and who were prepared to give their lives for an idea that was greater than themselves; also Britain needed heroes. Horatius is an ideal role model for the subjects of the British Empire, as *Horatius* shows that a community is strong only if individuals care for it.

It has been argued that in *Horatius*, Macaulay celebrated military power (Lucht 83). However, Macaulay’s vision of empire was not primarily about military power. In the preface to the *Lays*, he explicitly states that

[t]he old Romans had some great virtues, – fortitude, temperance, veracity, spirit to resist oppression, respect for legitimate authority, fidelity in the observing of contracts, disinterestedness, ardent patriotism; but Christian charity and chivalrous generosity were alike unknown to them. (Macaulay, *Lays* 49)

Therefore, the “author [of *Horatius*] seems to have been [...] proud of the military glory of his country” (ibid. 55), but this was not Macaulay

himself who in the *Lays* “speaks not in his own person” (ibid. 48).³⁶ As Hall notes, “Britain’s empire as he represented it was an empire of language and letters rather than of violence and coercion.” (*Macaulay’s Nation* 515) Literature had ‘saved him’ and he thought that it could do the same for society (Hall, *Macaulay and Son* 337).³⁷ Macaulay did not believe the non-English to be categorically inferior, be it in a biological or cultural sense (Osterhammel 328-330). What Macaulay was convinced of was the superiority of the English civilization and culture; a culture progressively formed over time, a culture which had led a “wretched and degraded race” (Macaulay, *Sir James Macintosh* 443) to “the new Roman Empire” (Kumar 93). This culture was rooted in the Roman classics and in the idea that a community could be great if the people were ready to sacrifice themselves for it and to identify with it. Imagining the future of the Indian people, Macaulay liked to think of a people “Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in moral and in intellect” (Macaulay, *Prose and Poetry* 729). Horatius Cocles, the hero who defended Rome, functioned as integrative role model for the imperial subject and *Horatius*, therefore, has to be read as a heroic guide to empire.

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1 The noun ‘lay’ has its etymological origins in Old French *lai* (recorded from the 12th cent.). However, a connection with Germanic **leupo-* (Old English *léoð*, German *Lied*) is “out of question” (OED).

2 Edward Said is certainly right when he classifies Macaulay’s views about non-European cultures as “simple-minded” (Said 196), especially when met by a contemporary reader. Yet, this paper does not provide a postcolonial critique of Macaulay’s cultural and political positions, but instead employs them in order to shed light on the receptive-aesthetic implications of Macaulay’s classical adaptation, comparing *Horatius* to its major source, Livy, as well as locating it within the cultural framework of the Victorian era.

3 For Ancient Rome as reassuring refuge as well as model *ex negativo* see Lucht. For a thorough overview see Vance, *The Victorians*.

4 Certainly, the connection of the British Empire with the story of Rome was not a new idea. Rome had been the reflecting image in which almost all medieval and early modern empires in the West saw themselves, but having created the greatest empire of modern times, Britain could not think of a more fit comparison (Kumar 77-78).

5 However, in his paper Kumar shows that not only Rome, but also Greece was an important role model for the British empire, yet implying a different style of empire in contrast to Rome (Kumar esp. 84-91).

6 For a discussion of Victorian celebration but also criticism of Brooke see Stuchtey.

7 The four lays are: *Horatius, The Battle of the Lake Regillus, Virginia* and *The Prophecy of Capys*.

8 As Edward notes, the *Lays* retreated from their entrenched position in the school curricula only following the Second World War (Edwards, *Translating Empire* 70).

9 As Macaulay explains in the preface to the *Lays*, the version by Livy is not the only one (cf. Moormann/Uitterhoeve 355-357). There is another version by Polybius (Pol. 6,54-55), which provides a different ending with Horatius drowning in the Tiber, and one by “tasteless” Dionysius of Halikarnassos (Dion. Hal. 5,23), in which Horatius, like in Livy’s version, swims safely to the shore. In his heroic catalogue, Valerius Maximus (Val. Max. 3,2,1) celebrates Horatius Cocles as the first example of virtue. Yet, it was Livy’s version in which Macaulay saw the most “genuine character” (Macaulay, *Lays* 7-50).

10 In a letter to his friend Napier, Macaulay addressed this theory and stated: “I have myself not the smallest doubt of its truth.” (Trevelyan, II 114) In a later letter to his friend Ellis, he underlined this again: “By the way, I have discovered another curious fact which may serve to illustrate the neglect of the old Latin ballads. Are you aware that the Nibelungen lied [sic!] of which the Germans are so proud was never printed till 1784, and was found among the manuscripts of a noble family?” (Macaulay, *The Letters* 53)

11 As Kinne points out, Macaulay regarded Roman literature to be inferior to Greek literature. The natural development that could have led to a genuine Roman literature was prohibited by the enormous Greek influence, hence, to Macaulay the remaining Roman literature (i.e. what had not perished) was derivative, artificial and secondary (Kinne 159).

12 Edwards sees within this bard “a plebeian Tory”, whom he regards as the “most lovable” of all the bards of the *Lays* (Edwards, *Macaulay* 62).

13 In this paper, I use Benjamin Foster’s English translation of Livy’s text. As for Macaulay’s *Horatius*, I directly refer to the specific sections using the standard quotation system of classical studies. The full account of Horatius’ deed is to be found in Livy 249-253.

14 When Macaulay was offered the Regius Chair of Modern History at Cambridge by Prince Albert in 1849, he rejected the opportunity, which was, as Osterhammel argues, suggestive of Macaulay’s attitude and a proof that he never wanted to practice history as a sheer scientific discipline of a hermetically closed expert group (Osterhammel 293).

15 Vance attests that for Macaulay, “legendary heroes were ultimately impervious to critical scrutiny because their authority did not depend on their historicity” (Vance, *The Victorians* 69).

16 Indeed, Phillips sees “Macaulay’s focus on evocation as a central purpose of *all* historical writing” (Phillips 119, my emphasis).

17 This was also the way Macaulay dealt with contemporary problems in his speeches and essays. Cruikshank underlines Macaulay’s special character by noting that “[t]he mood of doubt found in many Victorian poems and prose work is not conveyed by Macaulay” (Cruikshank 148).

18 Assmann calls these two modes *Funktionsgedächtnis* and *Speichergedächtnis*. The functional memory is always connected with a specific group; it is selective, bound to certain values and oriented towards the future. The archival memory, however, is not connected to a specific group and not selective, but interested in everything equally. Neither is it concerned with values nor with any connection of the past with the present. This latter mode of memory is typical for academic historical scholarship. However, this is beginning to change (Assmann 130-142).

19 Of course, Basler's "Modern Horatius" has a more concrete problem to ponder, but "[t]he opportunity is as great; the obligation is as grave" (Basler 235). Lucht is to be agreed with when she characterizes Basler's enthusiasm as "obviously disproportionate", but she is also right in seeing that this "proves the effect and importance of [the] exemplary discourse" (Lucht 84).

20 As he wrote in a letter to his friend Ellis, Macaulay remembered "that in all probability the old Roman lays were in the Saturnian metre" (Macaulay, *The Letters* 49), an "acatalectic dimeter iambic, followed by three trochees" (ibid.). However, he did not use a pure Saturnian metre, as this would have demanded the use of trochees "which really would be displeasing to an English ear" (Macaulay, *The Letters* 49).

21 For improved transparency, I directly indicate the lines I refer to in *Horatius*. The full ballad is to be found in Macaulay, *Lays* 59-96.

22 Namely, stanzas 1, 21, 23, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 44, 49, 50, 56 and 60.

23 Another example is to be found in the first stanza, where the penultimate line is doubled: "Lars Porsena of Clusium / By the Nine Gods he swore / That the great house of Tarquin / Should suffer wrong no more. / By the Nine Gods he swore it, / And named a trysting-day, / And bade his messengers ride forth, / East and west and south and north, / To summon his array." (*Horatius* ll. 1-9, my emphasis)

24 Indeed, Livy's account of Horatius is described as "animated and delightful" (Review 53), the speech of Cocles is said to be "in powerfully coloured tones" (Ogilvie 259).

25 Macaulay often emphasized his admiration of Sir Walter Scott, "the great restorer of our ballad-poetry" (Macaulay, *Lays* 50).

26 Young hints at the fact that this aim of a vivid narration "differed not at all from the primal, private urge that drove Macaulay towards writing the *History*" (Young 38). It is therefore to be seen as a general characteristic of Macaulay's writing.

27 Therefore, O'Gorman is to be agreed with when he states that Macaulay's Horatius "assails a nobler enemy" than Livy's does (O'Gorman 1).

28 Yet, Sextus is mentioned in other contexts, especially when he is told to rape Lucretia (Liv. esp. I, 57-58).

29 This speech is sometimes referred to as "memento-mori lyric" (Lucht 83). However, the memento mori is not the most relevant part of it. It is primarily about Roman, and therefore fundamental, ideals, as I am going to show.

30 Macaulay, in the preface to *Horatius*, notes that he adopted this supposition from Niebuhr, as he regarded it as "both ingenious and probable" (Macaulay, *Lays* 58).

31 Edwards argues that it was the "primitive worship of the Ganges" Macaulay encountered in India that "made it easier for him to convey primitive worship of the Tiber" (Edwards, *Macaulay* 66-67).

32 "[F]alse Sextus", however, is not (*Horatius* ll. 526-527). Also Edwards attests this respect for the enemy shown in Horatius (Edwards, *Macaulay* 75).

33 And the Victorians perceived this. A Review of the *Lays* from 1843 is confident that the ballads "will add to Mr. Macaulay's great reputation", however, it is also acknowledged that their "manner is now and then too modern; the air leaves the Tiber once or twice and comes as with a breeze from a Scottish border" (Review 54). What is meant here is the influence of Walter Scott: With that said, the narrative approach of Macaulay was noticed.

34 In a letter to his friend Ellis, Macaulay wrote: "For, I dare say you have observed, the difficulty is to keep these lays from being too modern; and, do what I can, they have a less antique air than I could wish." (Macaulay, *The Letters* 56)

35 Macaulay, in a letter from 1835, underlined that literature, especially in times of confusion and sorrow, had "saved [his] life and [his] reason" (Trevelyan, I 450).

36 Hall interprets the tensions between Macaulay's and the narrator's political views as "Macaulay's way to explore feelings and sentiments to which he was sympathetic but which sat uncomfortably with his Whiggish opinion" (Hall, *Macaulay's Nation* 517). Yet, Macaulay did not want to return to former times; instead, he used the nostalgic narrator to underline the heroic dimension of *Horatius*.

37 Also Macaulay's nephew, Trevelyan, believed India to be "fortunate [...] that a man with the tastes, and the training, of Macaulay came to her shores" (Trevelyan, I 408).

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