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***Victus Victor*: Remembering Cato Uticensis in the Age of Augustus**

**Summary**: By considering not only the texts from the Augustan period that specifically mention Cato the Younger but also the wider memory environments of ancient Rome that helped shape his journey into becoming a full-fledged site of exemplarity, we may better understand the flexible and complex nature of his ongoing appeal during the period after Augustus’ victory at Actium. In particular, Cato is continually recalled in close connection with Caesar. This fact sheds needed light on Cato’s notable association with the vocabulary of victory and defeat: he is the defeated foe (*victus*) of Caesar who in Roman memory continues to triumph (*victor*) over Fortune—as well as any attempt by the Caesarian victors to control his memory. The survivors of the Roman civil wars found in Cato an especially useful figure who could function as a kind of ‘memorial workshop’ for coming to grips with the cataclysmic defeat of the Republic and its victorious ‘restoration’ under Augustus.

**Passages**: (*all translations my own***)**

**1) Valerius Maximus 2.10.8 – The crowd’s respect of Cato’s *maiestas* at the Floralia festival**

quibus opibus, quibus imperiis, quibus triumphis hoc datum est? exiguum viri patrimonium, astricti continentia mores, modicae clientelae, domus ambitioni clausa, paterni generis una illustris imago, minime blanda frons, sed omnibus numeris perfecta virtus. quae quidem effecit ut quisquis sanctum et egregium civem significare velit, sub nomine Catonis definiat.

To what personal resources, magisterial commands, or triumphs was this due? The man’s inherited estate was meager, his life habits kept in check by self-restraint, his patron-client relationships modest; his door was shut to vote-seekers, his paternal line boasted but a single celebrated ancestral *imago*, and his appearance was not very pleasing. But his *virtus* was perfect on all counts! This is why when someone wishes to identify a blameless and outstanding citizen, that person calls him by the name ‘Cato.’

**2) Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 53.4, 6; 54.2**

ac mihi multa agitanti constabat paucorum civium egregiam virtutem cuncta patravisse … (53.4)

Sed memoria mea ingenti virtute, divorsis moribus fuere viri duo, M. Cato et C. Caesar. (53.6)

Caesar beneficiis ac munificentia magnus habebatur, integritate vitae Cato. (54.2)

After pondering many factors, I came to the conclusion that [the glorious achievements of the Roman people] had been accomplished by the outstanding virtue of a few citizens…

But within my memory, there were two men of immense virtue yet different natures, Marcus Cato and Caius Caesar.

Caesar was considered great because of his *beneficia* and lavish generosity, whereas Cato was considered great for the way he lived his life with integrity.

**3) Valerius Maximus 3.1.2b – Cato as a youth offered to slay the victorious Sulla if nobody else would**

interrogavit quapropter nemo inveniretur qui tam crudelem tyrannum occideret. cumque is non voluntatem hominibus sed facultatem deesse, quod salus eius magno praesidio militum custodiretur, respondisset, ut ferrum sibi daret obsecravit, adfirmando perfacile se eum interfecturum, quod in lecto illius considere soleret.

nihil hoc admirabilius: puer in officina crudelitatis deprehensus victorem non extimuit.

[When Cato came to Sulla’s house and saw numerous severed heads of the proscribed,] He asked [his paedagogus] why nobody could be found who would slay such a cruel tyrant. He responded that people lacked not the desire but the opportunity, because a great number of soldiers were on guard for his protection. To this Cato pleaded that he be given a sword, arguing that he could easily kill him since he was already in the habit of sharing his couch.

Nothing could be more wondrous than this! A *boy*, though caught in the workshop of cruelty itself, was not afraid of the *victor*.

**4) Valerius Maximus 3.2.14 – In praise of Cato’s glorious death at Utica**

tui quoque clarissimi excessus, Cato, Utica monumentum est, in qua ex fortissimis vulneribus tuis plus gloriae quam sanguinis manavit.

Utica, O Cato, is the *monumentum* of your illustrious death! More glory than blood flowed from your most courageous wounds.

**5) Valerius Maximus 5.1.10 – Caesar on hearing of Cato’s death**

Catonis quoque morte Caesar audita et se illius gloriae invidere et illum suae invidisse dixit… et hercule divinorum Caesaris operum non parva pars Catonis salus fuisset.

When Caesar also heard about the death of Cato, he said that he envied Cato’s glory and Cato had envied his own… And by Hercules, what a great part of the divine deeds of Caesar the safety of Cato [i.e. preventing suicide] would have been!

**6) Seneca the Elder *Suasoria* 6.2 – Cato used as a model to advise Cicero not to beg Antony for pardon**

M. Cato, solus maximum vivendi moriendique exemplum, mori maluit quam rogare—nec erat Antonium rogaturus—et illas usque ad ultimum diem puras a civili sanguine manus in pectus sacerrimum armavit.

Marcus Cato, by himself the greatest *exemplum* of living and dying, preferred to die than beg—and it wasn’t Antony he would have had to go begging to! He placed a sword into those famous hands that had stayed pure from civil bloodshed up to that final day and drove them into his most sacred chest.

**7) Horace, *Odes* 1.12.25-27, 33-36 – Cato concludes the first stanza of famous Romans to remember in song**

Dicam et Alciden puerosque Ledae, I will sing also of Hercules and the sons of Leda, famous

Hunc equis, illum **superare** pugnis for their **being victorious** in horsemanship and boxing…

nobilem…

Romulum post hos prius an quietum After these, should I remember Romulus first, or peaceful

Pompili regnum memorem an superbos Pompilius, or the haughty fasces of Tarquinius or—

Tarquini fascis, dubito, an Catonis I hesitate—Cato’s famous death.

nobile letum.

**8) Horace, *Odes* 2.1.21-24 – Cato invoked while praising Pollio’s civil war history**

videre magnos iam videor duces [While reading your work] I can practically *see* the leaders,

non indecoro pulvere sordidos, soiled with dust that is not lacking in glory,

et cuncta terrarum **subacta** and the whole world conquered

praeter atrocem animum Catonis. Except the fierce spirit of Cato.

**9) Vergil, *Aeneid* 8.626-8, 666-70 – A deceased Cato on the Shield of Aeneas [right before Actium]**

Illic res Italas Romanorumque **triumphos** There the lord of fire [Hephaestus], hardly ignorant of

haud vatum ignarus venturique inscius aevi the prophecies or unaware of the age of come

fecerat ignipotens… fashioned Italy’s history and the triumphs of the Romans…

hinc procul addit At a distance from this he also adds the foundations

Tartareas etiam sedes, alta ostia Ditis, of Tartarus, the lofty gates of Dis, and the punishments

et scelerum poenas, et te, Catilina, minaci of evil-doers; and you too, Catiline, hanging from a menacing

pendentem scopulo Furiarumque ora trementem, cliff and terrified by the faces of the Furies; and also apart

secretosque pios, his dantem iura Catonem. from these the pious, and Cato giving them laws.

**10) Jerome, *Commentary on Hosea* 2 praef. – recounts Livy’s praise of Cato**

Cumque tuo laeter adminiculo, et in prima urbe terrarum, primum et nobilitate et religione habere me gaudeam defensorem, tamen magis optarem illud mihi contingere, quod Titus Livius scribit de Catone, cuius gloriae neque profuit quisquam laudando, nec vituperando nocuit.

And although I am gladdened by your support and rejoice that in the foremost city of the world I have the one who is foremost in nobility and religious devotion as my defender, nevertheless I would rather wish that I obtain that same thing which Titus Livius wrote about Cato: whose glory nobody could add to by praising him nor could anybody harm it by disparaging him.

**11) Manilius 1.793-800 – Cato among the worthy souls of heroes who inhabit the Milky Way**

Pompeiusque **orbis** **domitor** per trisque **triumphos** Pompey [is there] the conqueror of the world who through

ante diem princeps, et censu Tullius oris a triple triumph became chief citizen before his proper time;

emeritus fasces, et Claudi magna propago, and Cicero who earned his [consular] fasces through his

Aemiliaeque domus proceres, clarique Metelli, elegance; and the great clan of the Claudii, and the foremost

et **Cato fortunae victor**, fictorque sub armis men of the house of the Aemilii, and the famous Metelli,

miles Agrippa suae, Venerisque ab origine proles and Cato the victor over his fortune, and Agrippa the maker

Iulia. descendit caelo caelumque replebit, of his fortune as a soldier under arms, and the Julian

quod reget, Augustus, socio per signa Tonante… descendant of Venus [Julius Caesar]. Augustus descended

from heaven and will fill it again, for he will rule, with

the Thundere [Jupiter] as his companion through the

constellations.

**12) Manilius 4.86-87 – In a universe guided by Fate, not every age can produce a Cato**

quod Decios non omne tulit, non omen Camillos Not every age has produced the Decii, not every age the

tempus et **invicta devictum mente Catonem**. Camilli or a Cato, conquered with an unconquered mind.

**13) Velleius Paterculus 2.35.2 – Cato remembered with great praise for his exemplary life**

Hic genitus proavo M. Catone… homo virtuti simillimus et per omnia ingenio diis quam hominibus propior… omnibus vitiis immunis semper fortunam in sua potestate habuit.

This Cato, descended from his great-grandfather Marcus Cato,… was most like the embodiment of Virtue herself, and in every aspect he was closer in his innate character to the gods than mortals… He was immune to all vices and always kept Fortune under his control.

**14) Macrobius, *Saturnalia* 2.4.18 – Augustus ‘praises’ the memory of Cato**

non est intermittendus sermo eius, quem Catonis honori dedit. venit forte in domum qua Cato habitaverat. dein Strabone in adulationem Caesaris male existimante de pervicacia Catonis ait: ‘quisquis praesentem statum civitatis commutari non volet, et civis et vir bonus est.’

His [Augustus’s] statement should not be left out, which he gave in Cato’s honor. He came by chance into the house where Cato had lived. Then, after Strabo expressed a negative view of Cato’s obstinance [i.e. resistance to Julius Caesar] to flatter Caesar, he said: ‘Whoever does not desire that the current system of government be changed is a good citizen and a good man.’

**15) Suetonius, Augustus 85.1 – Augustus near the end of his life worked on a rebuttal to Brutus’s *Cato***

Multa varii generis prosa oration composuit, ex quibus nonnulla in coetu familiarium velut in auditorio recitavit, sicut ‘Rescripta Bruto de Catone,’ quae volumina cum iam senior ex magna parte legisset, fatigatus Tibero tradidit perlegenda.

He composed in prose many works of various sorts, of which some he read aloud to a gathering of friends and family as if in a recital hall, as for example his ‘Response to Brutus on Cato.’ When he would read these volumes, due to his advanced age, after getting through the majority of the work he would grow weary and then hand it over to Tiberius to finish.