

FACTIO: SOME OBSERVATIONS

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When the word 'party' became obscene in the context of the history of the Roman republic, it was frequently replaced by 'faction'—or *factio*, to give an air of authenticity.¹ It is the purpose of this paper to examine the occurrences of *factio* in writers of the republic and early principate in order to discover to what extent the usage of modern historians is justified by the sources. It will not be denied that there are numerous occasions when *factio* functions as a collective, with the meaning 'group, clique, faction'. But originally *factio* had a verbal force, sometimes active—'way of doing things'—sometimes potential—'capacity to do things or get things done'. This verbal force is retained in many instances, including some where the rendering 'faction', i.e. 'group', has become standard. The precise shade of meaning may vary, but three principal connotations can be discerned: influence, concerted action, and intrigue. In any given passage one of these notions usually predominates, though one or both of the other two may also be present. There is also a handful of passages where *factio* means something close to 'dissension', because the effect of the intrigue or concerted action of a small group on the political organism as a whole is uppermost in the writer's mind.

I

The simple verbal sense of *factio*, 'way of acting', occurs twice in Plautus.² But the usual meaning in comedy is that later defined by Nonius: 'factio . . . significat opulentiam abundantiam et nobilitatem'.³ It is in this sense that *factio* may be roughly translated as 'influence': the ability to get things done that is based on birth and wealth. In the *Aulularia*, *factiones* are associated with the material trappings of power.⁴ The respective influence of two families is compared in the *Cistellaria* and *Trinummus*, and the link between *factio* and *opes* is repeatedly brought out: 'neque nos factione tanta quanta tu sumus/neque opes nostrae tam sunt ualidae quam tuae'; 'non esse aequiperabilis / uostras cum nostris factiones atque opes'; 'hic factiones atque opes / non esse'.⁵ Similarly in fragments of other comedians: 'ex tanta factione atque opibus'; 'nobilitate factione fretus'.⁶

In all these instances the word does not seem to have any pejorative flavour, but the next time that *factio* certainly occurs with the meaning 'influence' it is, significantly enough, in a catalogue of themes that may be used to rouse *inuidia*: 'in inuidiam trahemus, si uim, si potentiam, si factionem diuitias incontinentiam nobilitatem clientelas hospitium sodalitatem adfinitates aduersariorum proferemus'.⁷ The connection with wealth is again apparent, and it is surely clear that *factio* is not a collective embodying some or all of the elements listed in the rest of the sentence. Cicero himself has two passages where the sense of *factio* is probably 'influence', though the meaning 'group' cannot be completely excluded. In describing the virtuoso performance of L. Crassus in support of Q. Caepio's judiciary law of 106, he says: 'inuidia concitatur in iudicium et in accusatorum factionem, contra quorum potentiam populariter tum dicendum fuit'.⁸ That all jurors and prosecutors could be considered, even rhetorically, as a single group or faction is unlikely.⁹ The link with *potentia* suggests that 'influence' is the primary meaning. The other passage is the famous definition: 'cum autem certi propter diuitias aut genus aut aliquas opes rem publicam tenent, est factio, sed uocantur illi optimates'.¹⁰ It is easy to say that, because

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¹ A moderate statement of orthodox doctrine: L. R. Taylor, *Party Politics in the Age of Caesar* 8 ff.; much more extreme: D. C. Earl, *Tiberius Gracchus* 7 ff.; a mild caveat, unfortunately little observed later in the book: E. S. Gruen, *Roman Politics and the Criminal Courts* 4 f. Objections, many of them cogent: C. Meier, *Res publica amissa* 163 ff.; more briefly: T. P. Wiseman, *JRS* 60, 1970, 212 f.

² Plaut., *Bacch.* 843; *Rud.* 1371.

³ Non. 304; cf. J. Hellegouarc'h, *Le Vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la république* 106 f.

⁴ Plaut., *Aul.* 167 ff.

⁵ Plaut., *Cist.* 493 f., *Trin.* 466 f., 497 f., cf. 452, 490 f.

⁶ Titin., fr. 108; Turpil., fr. 208.

⁷ Auct. Her. 1, 8.

⁸ Cic., *Brut.* 164.

⁹ The plurals of Cic., *QF* 3, 1, 15 and Tac., *Ann.* 4, 21 provide no parallel.

¹⁰ Cic., *Rep.* 3, 23.

optimates is a collective, *factio* must be one too. But the corresponding place in the following definition is occupied by an abstract, *libertas*, while here the idea of the exercise of improper influence, based on factors already familiar—wealth and birth—is also obviously present. The meaning ‘influence’ is probably paramount again in Sallust’s characterization of Cato, where the connection with wealth is brought out once more: ‘non diuitiis cum diuite neque factione cum factioso, sed cum strenuo uirtute, cum modesto pudore, cum innocente abstinentia certabat’.¹¹ Hirtius offers an important case where *factio* retains its verbal force despite the fact that it is conjoined with *pauci*. Caesar, he says, was campaigning to secure the augurate for Antonius ‘contra factionem et potentiam paucorum’.¹² The logical parity of *factio* and *potentia* makes the meaning ‘group’ highly unlikely; ‘influence’ (again undesirable) is the obvious sense.¹³ It is worth stressing that the magic words *factio paucorum* need not mean ‘a group, faction or clique composed of a few men’, though of course the charge that Hirtius is making presupposes the existence of such a group. Livy also has the meaning ‘influence’ in speaking of Ap. Claudius: ‘sed factione respectuque rerum priuatarum . . . Appius uicit’,¹⁴ and the sense is probably the same in the statement of L. Valerius and M. Horatius: ‘dicturos ad populum, si in senatu per factionem non liceat’.¹⁵

In a number of the passages just examined, where the primary meaning of *factio* is ‘influence’, the idea of concerted action is also present.¹⁶ This connotation is uppermost in another definition offered by Nonius: ‘factio dicitur malorum consensus et conspiratio’.¹⁷ The tone here is manifestly hostile, as it is when Sallust lists the motives for such concerted action: ‘quos omnis eadem cupere, eadem odisse, eadem metuere in unum coegit. sed haec inter bonos amicitia, inter malos factio est’,¹⁸ where, although he is speaking of what causes individuals to coalesce into a group, *factio* does not mean ‘clique of bad men’ any more than *amicitia* means ‘group of friends’. It is also Sallust who provides the most striking instance of this sense of *factio*: ‘nobilitas factione magis pollebat, plebis uis soluta atque dispersa in multitudine minus poterat’.¹⁹ Here what is said of the plebs indicates that *factio* means something like ‘cohesion, acting jointly’,²⁰ and the tone may be neutral rather than pejorative. Similarly in the second epistle: ‘factio contra hostis parabatur’, where the word seems to have a positive flavour that might almost be rendered ‘unity’.²¹ *Factio* also has the connotation ‘concerted action’ in Cicero: ‘illi autem Massiliensium paucorum et principum administrationi ciuitatis finitimus est qui fuit quodam tempore apud Athenienses triginta <uirorum illorum> consensus et factio’.²² The conjunction of *factio* with *consensus* and their logical parity with *administratio* make the meaning clear, while the fact that the Thirty were archetypal *malii* suggests a pejorative tone. In Nepos’ life of Atticus we are told that he refused to take part in a movement to raise funds among the *equites* for the ‘Liberators’, ‘qui officia amicis praestanda sine factione existimaret’.²³ It is the idea of concerted action, not merely political involvement in general, that Atticus is here rejecting.

In a number of passages *factio* seems to be poised between its verbal and collective senses. Thus in Caesar’s famous declaration of motive: ‘ut se et populum Romanum factione paucorum oppressum in libertatem uindicaret’,²⁴ it would be hard (and for practical purposes pointless) to choose between ‘by a group of a few men’ and ‘by the concerted action of a few men’. Caesar’s heir was to use *factio* as a pure collective when making a similar claim,²⁵ but the contrast between his formulation and Caesar’s suggests that the word retains something at least of its verbal force, just as it did for Caesar’s secretary when he too spoke of *factio paucorum*.²⁶ So too Livy says of Ap. Claudius: ‘cum pacis ipse auctor a turbatoribus belli premeretur nec par factioni esset’.²⁷ Appius the isolated indi-

¹¹ Sall., *BC* 51, 40.

¹² Hirt., *BG* 8, 50, 2.

¹³ ‘La puissance qui résulte de leurs *opes*’: Hellegouarc’h, o.c. 106, though he prefers ‘le groupe des *pauci*’.

¹⁴ Liv. 2, 30, 2.

¹⁵ Liv. 3, 41, 1.

¹⁶ Thus particularly in Cic., *Brut.* 164, *Rep.* 3, 23; Hirt., *BG* 8, 50, 2; Liv. 3, 41, 1.

¹⁷ Non. 304.

¹⁸ Sall., *BY* 31, 15.

¹⁹ Sall., *BY* 41, 6.

²⁰ Thus rightly Hellegouarc’h, o.c. 101.

²¹ Ps.-Sall., *Ep.* 2, 10, 8; the idea of combined action seems to be uppermost again in the following section: ‘nobiles . . . domi factione instructi’, this time in a pejorative sense.

²² Cic., *Rep.* 1, 44.

²³ Nep., *Att.* 8, 4.

²⁴ Caes., *BC* 1, 22, 5.

²⁵ *RG* 1, 1.

²⁶ Hirt., *BG* 8, 50, 2.

²⁷ Liv. 2, 16, 4.

vidual was unable to resist the concerted efforts of the *turbatores* as a group: the link between the verbal and collective senses of *factio* is very obvious here. A similar example is offered by Suetonius, who remarks of Claudius: 'et a singulis et per factionem et denique ciuili bello infestatus est', where 'per factionem' might be taken as indicating principally the manner of attack, 'by concerted action or intrigue', as opposed to 'ciuili bello', or the numbers involved, 'by a group', as opposed to 'a singulis'.²⁸

Just as in several passages the ideas of influence and concerted action are simultaneously present, so too, when the action is viewed with disapproval, are the senses 'concerted action' and 'intrigue'.²⁹ The earliest instance where the principal connotation of *factio* is probably 'intrigue' occurs in a fragment of C. Gracchus: 'utrum inimicorum meorum factio an magis sollicitudo te impulit ut in me industriior sis quam in te?'³⁰ The logical parity of *factio* with *sollicitudo* suggests that its force is not collective ('the clique of my enemies') but verbal, and 'the intrigues of my enemies' is the natural interpretation. *Factio* has the same meaning in a fragment of another orator, Calvus, who dismisses Vatinius as 'hominem nostrae ciuitatis audacissimum, de factione diuitem, sordidum, maledicum'.³¹ Cicero too has a striking example in his imaginary apostrophe to Caesar: 'tenuisti prouinciam per annos decem non tibi a senatu sed a te ipso per uim et per factionem datos'.³² The meaning is plainly not 'through violence and your faction': *factio* is on a logical par with *uis*, not with *senatus*, with which it could easily have been contrasted if the sense in Cicero's mind had been 'group'.³³ The primary meaning may be the same in Sallust's 'quoniam factioni inimicorum resistere nequieuit',³⁴ where the tone is again strongly pejorative, though this is another instance where the verbal and collective forces of *factio* cannot really, and probably should not, be distinguished. In Livy there are interesting cases where the notions of intrigue and concerted action are more or less equally present. First the struggle for the monarchy: 'necdem ad singulos, quia nemo magnopere eminebat in nouo populo, peruenerat; factionibus inter ordines certabatur'.³⁵ It might be claimed that 'factionibus' here means 'groups', contrasted with 'ad singulos', but the true contrast is surely between 'ad singulos' and 'inter ordines'. Then the claim: 'non factionibus nec per coitiones usitatas nobilibus sed hac dextra mihi tres consulatus summamque laudem peperit', where the association with *coitiones* underlines the theme of joint activity.³⁶ The same conjunction occurs again in Livy's description of the fate of the *quaestio Campana*: 'coitionibus factionibusque aduersus quas comparata erat oppressa est'.³⁷ Here the verbal and collective senses of *factio* are once again virtually indistinguishable. This ambivalence recurs in Valerius Maximus, who states that Metellus Numidicus was 'populari factione patria pulsus'.³⁸ This may be a unique reference to a *popularis* 'party' at Rome, but the absence of a preposition might suggest that sufficient verbal force remains in *factio* to justify the rendering 'by *popularis* intrigue'. One later passage deserves notice if only because so much has been built on it. That is the statement of the scholiast on M. Antonius' command against the pirates in 74: 'gratia Cottae consulis et Cethegi factione in senatu curationem infinitam nactus'.³⁹ 'Factione' is logically on a par with 'gratia' and plainly means both 'influence' and 'intrigue'—not 'the faction of Cethegus', whose mysterious position as a party-boss thus evaporates: his influence will have been based on a multiplicity of individual contacts, not on the ability to mobilize and direct an organized group.

Finally those passages where *factio* is almost synonymous with *dissensio*, with which it is frequently associated. The earliest is a fragment of the elder Cato: 'Samnites Lucanos inter se natinari atque factiones esse'.⁴⁰ Two clearer examples come from Sallust in his observations on the decline of Rome: 'postquam res publica adoleuit et multitudine ciuium factiones ualere' and 'mos partium et factionum'.⁴¹ In the former instance the meaning

²⁸ Suet., *Claud.* 13, 1; the same may be true of Suet., *Nero* 2, 2: 'successorque ei per factionem nominatus'.

²⁹ Thus Caes., *BC* 1, 22, 5; Liv. 2, 16, 4; Suet., *Claud.* 13, 1, *Nero* 2, 2.

³⁰ C. Grac., fr. 55 *ORF*³.

³¹ Calv., fr. 26 *ORF*³.

³² Cic., *Att.* 7, 9, 4.

³³ Contra Hellegouarc'h, o.c. 104, n. 3: 'le groupe des *populares* dirigé par César'.

³⁴ Sall., *BC* 34, 2.

³⁵ Liv. 1, 17, 1.

³⁶ Liv. 7, 32, 12.

³⁷ Liv. 9, 26, 22.

³⁸ Val. Max. 4, 1, 13.

³⁹ Ps.-Ascon. 259 St.

⁴⁰ Cato, fr. 126 P.

⁴¹ Sall., *BC* 51, 40, *Bj* 41, 1.

of 'factiones' is indicated by the reason given for their growth: the increase in the number of citizens was obviously destructive of unity; in the latter the idea of division is manifest. Caesar offers another reason for the development of such a situation: the lust for money, 'qua ex re factiones dissensionesque nascuntur'.⁴² Livy provides a clear case where *factio* is virtually equivalent to *dissensio*, when he remarks that 'nullae deinde urbanae factiones fuere', shortly after insisting on the *concordia* that at that time reigned between *patres* and *plebs*.⁴³ So too when he describes the situation at Carthage, 'in ciuitate aliorum alias partes fouentium et factionibus discordi', the notion of dissension is present as well as that of intrigue.⁴⁴ But the most frequent user of *factio* in this sense is Tacitus. In the *Dialogus* he speaks of 'procerum factiones et assidua senatus aduersus plebem certamina'.⁴⁵ The verbal force of *factiones* is guaranteed by *certamina*, and the connotation 'dissension' is probably more important than 'intrigue'; the idea of joint action is also present. In the *Agricola* Tacitus writes: 'nunc per principes factionibus et studiis trahuntur'; whatever precise rendering may be chosen for *factionibus*, the idea of division is again paramount.⁴⁶ So too in the *Annals* the 'patrum factiones' are opposed by the people for reasons one of which is 'firmandae concordiae',⁴⁷ while among the Cherusci the individual *potentia* that might be strong enough to impose unity and put an end to dissensions is suspect to those 'qui factionibus floruerant'.⁴⁸

II

The transition from the verbal to the collective sense of *factio* is easy and inevitable; from 'concerted exercise of influence by a group' to 'group engaged in concerted exercise of influence' is a simple step. Of the passages in which *factio* indisputably means 'faction, group, clique', by far the larger category is that which deals with political divisions in communities other than Rome. Caesar offers several examples in the *Bellum Gallicum*: both the whole of Gaul and individual *ciuitates* are split into two factions.⁴⁹ Similarly in the *Bellum Ciuile* Thessaly is said to be divided between two *factiones*.⁵⁰ Caelius, writing to Cicero, speaks of two *factiones* at Intimilium.⁵¹ Nepos presents a similar picture of Thebes in his *Pelopidas* and of Athens in his *Phocion*: two *factiones*, i.e. political groups with leaders.⁵² The initial stage in the growth of such a situation is described in the *Dion*: 'orta dissensio est inter eum et Heraclidem, qui quod ei principatum non concedebat, factionem comparauit'.⁵³ But it is Livy who supplies the overwhelming majority of instances of this usage. The political context is almost always the same: dissension over a particular issue, usually that of loyalty to Rome in the Hannibalic and Macedonian wars, also support of the house of Barca at Carthage.⁵⁴ Tacitus twice employs the word in this way, once of civil strife in Jerusalem, once of discord among the Cherusci.⁵⁵

The passages that fall into this category have a striking common feature: in the vast majority of cases it is clearly stated that there are two *factiones*, while in others this is implied, and there are never more than two.

Passages where *factio* means 'faction' or 'group' with reference to politics at Rome are much rarer. In Cicero's *De Re Publica* the kind of men who form a *factio* are described as 'audaces, genus aliud tyrannorum'. When *optimates* become corrupt, they too deserve the label *factio*, just as a bad king may earn the name of tyrant.⁵⁶ Again in the third book a *factio* is conceived of as a group capable of exercising *potestas*: a state that is wholly *in factionis potestate* does not deserve the name of *res publica* at all.⁵⁷ Such a dominant group

⁴² Caes., *BG* 6, 22, 3.

⁴³ Liv. 2, 48, 4, cf. 1.

⁴⁴ Liv. 33, 48, 11.

⁴⁵ Tac., *Dial.* 36, 3.

⁴⁶ Tac., *Agr.* 12, 1.

⁴⁷ Tac., *Ann.* 3, 27.

⁴⁸ Tac., *Ann.* 11, 16.

⁴⁹ Caes. *BG* 1, 31, 3; 6, 12, 1; stated as a principle in 6, 11, 5, an example in 5, 56, 3, cf. 5, 3 f.

⁵⁰ Caes., *BC* 3, 35, 2.

⁵¹ Cic., *Fam.* 8, 15, 2.

⁵² Nep., *Pel.* 1, 2; 1, 4; 2, 4; *Phoc.* 3, 1 f.

⁵³ Nep., *Dion* 6, 3.

⁵⁴ Liv. 1, 51, 2; 4, 9, 2; 9, 16, 6; 21, 2, 4; 3, 2; 9, 4; 23, 1, 2; 8, 2; 12, 6; 24, 23, 11; 26, 39, 15; 29, 6, 5; 8, 2; 30, 7, 7; 42, 12; 32, 19, 2; 32, 2; 33, 45, 6; 46, 4; 47, 4; 48, 11; 34, 21, 4; 48, 2; 61, 11; 35, 31, 6; 33, 7; 34, 7; 12; 37, 5; 36, 12, 4; 37, 9, 3; 38, 31, 5; 39, 36, 5; 41, 25, 3; 27, 3; 42, 63, 12; 43, 17, 7; 22, 3.

⁵⁵ Tac., *Hist.* 5, 12; *Ann.* 1, 58.

⁵⁶ Cic., *Rep.* 1, 68 f., esp. 69; 'ut existat ex rege dominus, ex optimatibus factio'.

⁵⁷ Cic., *Rep.* 3, 44. Cicero's use of the plural (*QF* 3, 1, 15) has a specialized sense.

resembles the *factio nobilitatis* that is a target of tribunician eloquence in Sallust. C. Memmius sees as his chief opponents the *factio* of the *nobilitas*, with its *opes* and *potentia*, which has clung to power for fifteen years.⁵⁸ For another tribune, C. Licinius Macer, the *nobilitas* is again a *factio*: 'neque me praeterit', he says, '... quantoque tutius factio noxiorum agat quam soli innocentes'.⁵⁹ From the heart of the group comes C. Cotta, 'ex factione media consul'.⁶⁰ In the second epistle the *factio nobilitatis* is a group whose members can be described and categorized.⁶¹ So too for Augustus his enemies were a *factio*, a group that exercised *dominatio*: 'rem publicam a dominatione factionis oppressam in libertatem uindicauit', where the Greek version offers for *factionis* τῶν συνομοσασμένων.⁶² Sallust also offers two examples of a faction centred on an individual: the supporters of Catilina constitute a faction: 'mandat quibus rebus possent opes factionis confirment',⁶³ and M. Scaurus too is credited with leadership of a *factio*.⁶⁴ Livy uses *factio* to characterize a group at Rome seven times. The earliest instance makes clear the place of *factio*, the small group, between individuals on the one hand and larger units on the other: 'neque se... nec factionis suae alium nec denique patrum aut ciuium quemquam'.⁶⁵ A little later Tarquinius has a *factio*, the members of the *minores gentes*, for whom he had secured entry into the senate: 'factio haud dubia regis cuius beneficio in curiam uenerant'.⁶⁶ This *factio Tarquiniana* appears again in the second book, which also offers a *factio nobilium*.⁶⁷ A *factio* may have the consuls among its members.⁶⁸ Much later Livy alludes to that faction, 'quae aduersa Scipionibus erat'.⁶⁹ His most puzzling use, however, is in the ninth book, where he contrasts the *integer populus*, which was *fautor et cultor bonorum*, with *forensis factio*.⁷⁰ The Epitome has a faction of Sulpicius Rufus and Marius, which Sulla expelled from Rome, and a faction of Carbo.⁷¹ Other writers of the early principate provide similar examples. Sulpicius has a faction in Velleius, C. Gracchus has one, called *scelestas*, in Valerius Maximus, while Florus ascribes factions to Saturninus and Sulpicius.⁷² In Suetonius the *optimatum factio* opposes Caesar, while the assassins of Livius Drusus also constitute a faction.⁷³

Whereas in references to states other than Rome there are almost always two rival *factiones*, in all the passages dealing with Rome considered so far only one *factio* is said to exist at one time. This may be a ruling clique, as in the case of Cicero's corrupted *optimates*, Sallust's *factio nobilitatis*, or the *factio* from which Octavianus 'liberated' Rome; in this last instance the article before συνομοσασμένων in the Greek underlines that there was only one group of conspirators who merited the label *factio*: not a faction, but *the* faction. Or it may be a smaller group centred on an individual: Tarquinius, Scaurus, Catilina and so on. But even where a division of the state into two is posited, so that it would in theory be possible for our sources to speak of *factiones*, they do not. Livy alludes to the *factio* that was hostile to the Scipiones, but he does not call the Scipiones and their adherents a rival faction, nor are the opponents of Tarquinius so described. The clearest instance of the division of the state into two occurs in the mention of the *forensis factio*, and it is this passage that gives the key. The opponents of the *forensis factio* are devoted to the *boni*; since *factio* is generally pejorative, they could not therefore be so labelled. In virtually all the passages where *factio* is used in the context of Roman politics, the writer, even when he is not personally involved, is usually committed to one side or the other and so cannot call the defenders of the cause that in his eyes is good by the opprobrious term *factio*. The earliest clear case of two *factiones* comes from Tacitus. It refers to a specific ephemeral issue, the succession to Galba, from which Tacitus no doubt felt sufficiently detached to write, with something of a sneer: 'circa consilium eligendi successoris in duas factiones scindebantur'.⁷⁴ In narratives of the doings of foreign communities a greater detachment prevails; even where one side is good

⁵⁸ Sall., *Bj* 31, 1 ff., cf. 30, 3.

⁵⁹ Sall., *Hist.* 3, 48, 3M.

⁶⁰ Sall., *Hist.* 3, 48, 8M.

⁶¹ Ps.-Sall., *Ep.* 2, 2, 4; 4, 2; 8, 6; 9, 4; 11.6.

⁶² *RG* 1, 1.

⁶³ Sall., *BC* 32, 2.

⁶⁴ Sall., *Bj* 29, 2.

⁶⁵ Liv. 1, 18, 5.

⁶⁶ Liv. 1, 35, 6.

⁶⁷ Liv. 2, 18, 4; 2, 27, 3.

⁶⁸ Liv. 3, 64, 3.

⁶⁹ Liv. 38, 55, 3.

⁷⁰ Liv. 9, 46, 13, cf. 10.

⁷¹ Liv., *Per.* 77; 84.

⁷² Vell. 2, 18, 2; Val. Max. 3, 2, 17; Flor. 2, 4, 6; 2, 9, 8.

⁷³ Suet., *Dj* 11; 20, 5; *Tib.* 3, 2.

⁷⁴ Tac., *Hist.* 1, 13.

in the sense that it is pro-Roman, it may still, like its opponents, be described as *factio*. Indeed it is fair to say that in non-Roman contexts *factio* loses much of its pejorative force.

In conclusion the practical limits on the use of *factio* should perhaps be summarized. No republican source speaks of the existence of more than one *factio* (in the sense of 'political group') at any one time at Rome; even in other communities not more than two *factiones* ever appear simultaneously. No family at Rome is credited with a *factio* to parallel the *factio Barcina* at Carthage; there is no trace of 'the competing factions of the nobility'.⁷⁵ This does not of course mean that to view the history of the late republic in terms of factional struggles within the senatorial oligarchy is necessarily false, or that such terminology must be totally eschewed. But let us not imagine that simply by writing about factions we must automatically come closer to the truth than those who once wrote about parties.⁷⁶

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⁷⁵ Earl, o.c. (n. 1) 7.

⁷⁶ The adjective *factiosus* presents no problems. On its earliest occurrence it is associated with wealth and clearly means 'influential': 'ted esse hominem diuitem / factiosum' (Plaut., *Aul.* 226; cf. Plin., *Ep.* 1, 5, 15). Later it always has the pejorative flavour of

'factious, given to intrigue': thus Sall., *BC* 18, 4; 51, 32; 54, 6; *Bj* 8, 1; 15, 4; 28, 4; 77, 1. The links with nobility and wealth are frequent; cf. also Cic., *Off.* 1, 64. For the association with *potentia*, cf. Auct. *Her.* 2, 40; Nep., *Ages.* 1, 5; *Lys.* 1, 3.