

Valerie M. WARRIOR

A marked use of religio in Livy's account of the Hannibalic War

Several instances of *religio* as the subject or object of verbs denoting strong and even violent action (*incedere*, *incurere*, *invadere*, *obicere*) coincide with critical junctures of the struggle to get Hannibal out of Italy. D. S. Levene, *Religion in Livy* (1993), is overly simplistic when he views the Roman response to divine manifestations in terms of "piety." Livy uses *pietas* but twice in the third decade (23.9.5 and 10), whereas twenty-eight instances of *religio* reveal an active, often dangerous and negative force that creates fear and an obligation on the part of the recipient to react, be it the state or an individual.

In 213, after the alliance of Philip V of Macedon with Hannibal and the defection of Syracuse and Capua, *religio* assailed (*incessit*) the *civitas* (L. 25.1.6) and was a renewed problem (*religio deinde nova obiecta est*) in the following year. A prophecy recommending the institution of games to Apollo to rid Italy of Hannibal (L. 25.12.1-9) was implemented, but Hannibal still remained. Later, in context of Scipios' projected invasion of Africa, Livy develops the attack metaphor with the apparently authorial comment that *repens religio* had invaded (*invaserat*) the *civitas*. On the recommendation of a Sibylline oracle, the Senate decided to adopt the Magna Mater in order to get Hannibal out of Italy (L. 29.10.4-5).

In the following year, in context of sacrilege in the temple of Proserpina at Locri by Scipio's troops, Locrian envoys told the Senate of an occasion when *religio* was shaken (*incussa*) into their people by a voice from Proserpina's shrine (L. 29.18.16). These words recall an incident before the battle of Cannae when recollection of Rome's past defeats struck (*incussit*) *religio* into the mind of the consul Varro, causing him to postpone battle (L. 22.42.8). Varro heeded the divine warning and survived the slaughter of Cannae. Specifying that *religio* was the primary concern (L. 29.21.4), the Senate did the maximum to make amends to the Locrians. Scipio's invasion went ahead. In the following year, Hannibal evacuated Italy.

These instances of *religio* marked by verbs of violent action are an intertextual device that underscores the need to maintain the *pax deorum*, the favor of the gods that was so vital to Rome's success.