

PROCEEDINGS – ATTI

RECONSTRUCTING THE REPUBLIC: VARRO AND IMPERIAL AUTHORS (ROME, 22ND & 23RD SEPTEMBER 2016)

PREFACE.

TOWARDS AN EDITION OF THE FRAGMENTS OF THE ROMAN REPUBLICAN “ANTIQUARIANS”

The present volume contains the proceedings of a workshop held at the British School at Rome and University of Rome «La Sapienza» on 22nd and 23rd September 2016. It follows the Colloquium *Back to the Future: Varro, the State, and Antiquarianism* held at University College London in January 2015 (to be published as a special issue of the «Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies», edited by Valentina Arena and Fiachra MacGóráin). Together, these two events make the first forays into some interpretative and methodological aspects concerning the constitution of the first scholarly edition of the fragments of the Roman Republican antiquarians.

Such an edition is a great desideratum, invoked by numerous quarters, «[...] a modern edition of the fragments of these important writers remains an urgent need [...]. It is our hope», states Tim Cornell in his introduction to the excellent edition of the *Fragments of the Roman Historians*, «that another team of scholars will undertake the taxing but important task of producing an edition of the fragments of these [“antiquarian”] works, which meets modern standards and needs». ¹ Benefitting from the digitisation of many Latin and Greek corpora as well as the advancements in editing techniques and criteria, we decided to take up this challenge and made prelim-

1. *The Fragments of the Roman Historians*, T.J. Cornell General Editor, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press, 2013, 1 pp. 8–9. See also, for example, *M. Terenti Varronis Fragmenta omnia quae extant, collegit recensuitque M. Salvatore, 1. Supplementum*, Hildesheim-Zürich-New York, Olms, 1999, pp. 4–14; A.J. Stevenson, *Gellius and the Roman Antiquarian Tradition*, in *The Worlds of Aulus Gellius*, edited by L. Holford-Strevens and A. Vardi, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press, 2004, pp. 118–55, and C. Smith, *On the Edges of History*, in *Omnium Annalium Monumenta: Historical Writing and Historical Evidence in Republican Rome*, edited by K. Sandberg and C. Smith, Leiden-Boston, Brill, in press.

inary steps towards this edition by exploring the most effective and profitable *modus operandi*.

It seemed to us that the best course of action was to take as starting point the reconstruction and analysis of the works by Varro, the great intellectual, general, and politician of the first century BC, from whose *Antiquitates rerum humanarum et divinarum* the very name of antiquarianism was first coined in the Renaissance. His corpus, in fact, will provide a guideline to understand more clearly what, if anything, is distinctive about ancient antiquarianism and will shed light on its later appropriation and re-elaboration in early modern and modern times.² However, «the multiplicity of his Varro's [scil. works, his opinions] and his organizations of knowledge, the awkwardness of the transmission of his work, the highly mediated and contingent nature of the arrival of "Varro" into later centuries, and the real difficulty of understanding the shape of any given Varronian work are all serious challenges» to his endeavour.³

Of these the first and perhaps the greatest consists in the identification of fragments as opposed to their *testimonia*. As Carlotta Dionisotti put it, «classical fragments are made rather than born, but they can of course be made in several different ways».⁴ Contrary to the assumptions of Scaliger and his contemporaries, which informed also the practices of the first German philologists of the first half of the nineteenth century, fragments are now recognised as the result of a constant negotiation between the original and the «citing source» — or, as Schepens puts it, «cover-texts» — as well as the ancient texts and modern scholars.⁵ As Graffon shows, these earlier philologists worked on the assumptions «that only the fragment, not its wider context, mattered; that the compilatory writers who preserved fragments were idiots whose own opinions should not be studied but ignored; that the

2. On the absence of a distinctive character of antiquarianism in Varro's work see D. McRae, *Diligentissimus investigator antiquitatis? Antiquarianism and Historical Evidence between Republican Rome and Early Modern Republic of Letters*, in Sandberg-Smith, *op. cit.*

3. Smith in this volume (p. 106).

4. A.-C. Dionisotti, *On Fragments in Classical Scholarship*, in *Collecting Fragments/Fragments sauvés*, edited by G. W. Most, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997, pp. 1-33: 1. See also P.A. Brunt, *On historical fragments and epitomes*, in «Class. Quart.», xxx 1980, pp. 477-98.

5. On the notion of cover-texts see G. Schepens, *Jacoby's FGtHist: Problems, Methods, Prospects*, in Most, *op. cit.*, pp. 144-72: 168-69: cover texts fulfil the following functions: they preserve (that is, protect from being lost) texts drawn from works that are no longer extant; they often conceal the precursor text, so that, fragments seem to hide in the cover text; and they insert or envelop the original in a new con-text, which may impose interpretations that differ considerably from the original writer's understanding of his text.

chief questions of interest in the study of the fragments were problems of textual and historical authenticity».⁶ However, building on the philological advancement of the XX century, recent years have seen an flourishing of important studies on the assumptions and methodological rationale behind the collections of fragments and the writing of commentaries.⁷ These show a clear shift towards «an approach which aims at relocating the fragments in the lively political, intellectual, and artistic process of intertextual exchange that once took place and to which the survival of these very fragments is testimony».⁸

Working on these methodological premises, our aim in establishing the first edition of the fragments of the Roman Republican «antiquarians» is twofold: first, to deconstruct the citing text to identify the meaning, if not the wording, of the original fragments and to return them to their reconstructed contexts; second, to challenge the current assumptions of what counts as antiquarian work and to investigate the functions it fulfilled in its historical contexts.

In line with these principles, we decided to make the first explorative incursions in some, albeit not all, major «cover-texts» of Varro's so-called «antiquarian» works by organising a colloquium in September 2016 in Rome. This collection of essays grew out of that event. Our wider goal was to take the first investigate step towards identifying the key issues we will confront when fully embarking on a scholarly edition of the Republican «antiquarian» fragments. Within this wider intellectual framework, our more immediate goal was to investigate the intertextual relation between Varro and some of his citing authors and consider also the physical parameters that made possible or, potentially, hindered such a relation. In addition to contributions printed here — which cover Pliny the Elder, Gellius, the grammarians of the third and fourth century AD, Nonius, St. Augustine, Macrobius, and Priscianus — Servius and St. Augustine received additional full treatment by respectively Maria Luisa Delvigo and Gillian Clark, who

6. A. Graffon, *Fragmenta Historiconum Graecorum: Fragments of Some Lost Enterprises*, in Most, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-43: 143.

7. See in particular S. Mariotti, *Tradizione diretta e indiretta*, in *Scritti di filologia classica*, Roma, Salerno Editrice, 2000, pp. 531-58; Most, *op. cit.*; *The Classical Commentary: History, Practices, Theory*, edited by R.K. Gibson and C.S. Kraus, Leiden, Brill, 2002; J. Davies, *The Historical Commentary*, in *Classical Commentaries: Explorations in a Scholarly Genre*, edited by C.S. Kraus and C. Stray, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press, 2016, pp. 233-49. See also J. Marincola, *Shored Against Our Ruins — Aildendum*, in «Journ. of Rom. Studies», cvi 2016, pp. 247-48.

8. Schepens, *art. cit.*, p. 169.

both gave papers and contributed generously to our discussion. Four PhD students and early career researchers, Biagio Gatto (Greek and Latin, UCL), Samuel Sigure (History, UCL), Irene Leonardis (Paris, La Sorbonne–Roma Tre, Rome), and Antonino Pittà (Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa), shed further light on the relation between Varro and later ancient authors (with particular regard to St. Augustine, Nonius, Servius, Macrobius, and Priscian), providing a window on the most recent approaches to the subject. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed to our lively discussion. Unfortunately, Michael Crawford and Philip Burton were prevented from joining us to discuss the role of Varro in Festus.

One of the main outcomes of this collection is to begin a mapping of the historical moments when, as well as of the reasons why, Varro went in and out of fashion. The study of his cover-texts and the identification of the presence, or indeed absence, of Varro's citations in later ancient authors, provide us with an interesting and useful window on «the shifting boundaries of canon formation over time».⁹ As well known, since his own time, Varro acquired extraordinary fame as one of the greatest intellectuals of Republican Rome, rising almost immediately to the role of «il terzo gran lume romano» (Petrarch, *Trionfo della fama*, in 38). However, at some point, part, if not all, of his copious literary production must have fallen out of interest and, as a result, has come to survive solely in form of excerpts or fragments. Only six books of *de lingua Latina* and *de re rustica* survived. A full history of the fortune of Varro is still a desideratum.¹⁰

In the first century AD, as De Nonno shows, Varro was widely read and cited by authors, such as Pliny the Elder, mainly by virtue of their interest in Varro's *Fachliteratur* and *usus scribendi*, which they deemed worthy of being recorded. This Varroian fortune seems to continue in the second century AD, at least with Gellius, who, as Smith illustrates, extensively read Varro because of his status as great authority of the past with whom Gellius himself wished to enter in intellectual competition. However, later grammarians, such as Charisius, for example, became familiar with Varro's works

9. Most, op. cit., p. IV.

10. V. Brown, *Varro, Marcus Terentius*, in *Catalogus Translationum et Commentationum*, IV, Editor in Chief F.E. Cranz, Washington D.C., Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1980, pp. 451–500; G. Piras, *Per la tradizione del 'De lingua Latina' di Varro*, in *Manuscripts and Tradition of Grammatical Texts from Antiquity to the Renaissance: Proceedings of a Conference Held at Erie, 16–23 October 1997*, edited by M. De Nonno-P. De Paolis-L. Holtz, Cassino, Edizioni dell'Univ. di Cassino, pp. 747–72, and Marshall's dissertation (*The Reception of Varro in Late Antiquity*, Diss. Oxford, s.c., 2013) address the issue.

mainly through citations in Flavius Caper and Julius Romanus, to the extent that Priscian, as Rosellini revealingly illustrates, hardly ever cites Varro, and when he does, it is for his linguistic peculiarities, which he has read mostly in Flavius Caper. The reasons why Varro raised less interest are not exclusively dependent upon his perceived individual quality or specific features of his citing authorities, but also on issues of genres and transmission. As Smith argues, we should endeavour to understand not only the intellectual *stimuli* that Gellius took from Varro, but also the pragmatic parameters of the survival of Varro's works. According to Marshall, as a result of Alaric's invasion of Italy in AD 408, his sack of Rome in 410 AD and the ensuing refugee crisis, Varro's works came to be dislocated in north Africa and became widely available to authors such as St. Augustine and Nonius Marcellus. While St. Augustine took Varro as representative of that pagan culture he fiercely opposed and thereby very frequently referred to his works in a highly critical fashion, Nonius looked at him as one of the most authoritative figures of Latin language and culture. As Piras shows, he, in fact copiously cites his work in a methodical, albeit, not always pedantic, manner. A not dissimilar attitude is also attested in Macrobius, who, Goldlust illustrates, cites classical authors differently according to their status, either with quotations from specific texts or simply with mentions of their opinions or even names as authoritative, although with Priscian, as Rosellini shows, the fortune of Varro seems considerably in decline.

As already shown by these preliminary studies, this approach, that gives pride of place to the Varro's "cover-texts", bears fruits in three different ways: first, as Smith clearly shows, it allows us to identify potentially new fragments which so far had gone unregistered in past editions; secondly, it sheds some light on the shifting boundaries of canon formation and their dynamics; thirdly, and most importantly, it shows us that by collecting Varro's "antiquarian" fragments, often cited not because of their exact wording, but rather because of either their arguments (often to be refuted) or the historical facts or information they convey, we are bound not to identify the exact wording of the original, but rather its paraphrase – something of significant importance when considering the form that an edition of Varroian "antiquarian" fragments might take.

Considering the enormous – almost constitutive – influence of antiquarian studies over the course of early modern and modern cultural history, it is remarkable how little attention has been paid to the nature of these works in their original context of ancient Republican Rome. It was indeed Arnaldo Momigliano who, in a famous article of 1950, first established the mod-

ern field of antiquarian studies by referring to changes introduced by disciplinary knowledge and in particular in relation to history, and whose work has since functioned as that history of the field, whose very absence Momigliano himself lamented.¹¹

However, Momigliano's brilliant essay has also tended to constrain subsequent scholarship in its interpretative framework. Building on the Saussean distinction between the synchronic and the diachronic, Momigliano advocated that ancient antiquarianism was characterised by a distinctive interest in remote changes along a synchronic axis. However, overemphasising this distinction has created too sharp a dichotomy between history and antiquarianism, setting up the historian against the antiquary. As a result, two main consequences in the investigation of different ways of recording and narrating the past followed: first, a focus on the issue of the definition of antiquarianism vis-à-vis history; second, a disregard of the pivotal role played by philology in the development of antiquarian studies.¹²

Current scholarly debates on Roman antiquarianism concentrate on its distinction from history and the related issue of literary genre. The relation between subject taxonomy and chronology is at the centre of current investigation,¹³ and attempts to identify the most distinctive characteristics of antiquarianism, which would unify this intellectual phenomenon providing it with a distinctive identity, are consistently pursued to no avail: «the dividing line between historian and antiquarian», writes Schnapp in his latest collection on antiquarian works, «is anything but clear».¹⁴ However, any question about the definition and the very essence of Roman antiquarianism – as well as its relation with later permutations of the phenomenon – cannot be properly addressed without an authoritative edition of all surviving evidence, providing for the first time an overview of those texts that may be ascribed to this tradition. Such a focus discussion would also allow us to see more clearly those shared interests which the term antiquarianism, and its dissolution, may have concealed.

The second outcome of investigating antiquarianism primarily through

its antagonism with history is that its relationship with philology has not been given the full consideration it deserves. Not only did textual exegesis combine philology with an understanding of the history of religion, legal practices, and literary works, but also classical lexicography took precisely the form of the study of etymology.¹⁵ Whether investigating Roman history, language, family genealogy, jurisprudence, religious lore, or political procedure, antiquarian tools were historical research and etymology; a genealogical-reconstructive method which was substantially inductive and aimed to work back from the present to the past.¹⁶ It was a clear confidence in the possibility of recovering the meaning, the principle of unchanging truth, which, informed by Greek philosophy of language, supported their morpho-etymological analysis of Latin words, which at least Varro believed had real world relevance.¹⁷ The Greek underpinning is critical, but these scholars, who, like Caesar, were also the main actors of the political scene of the time, were elaborating a system of knowledge that was directly connected to their course of public actions.¹⁸ At the heart of this connection between philosophy and antiquarianism lies the relation between Greek thought and Roman social, religious, and political life. Not only did the Romans of the late Republic compose philosophical texts and adopt conceptual categories that were informed by Greek philosophy when arguing their cases before the senate and the people, but they also adopted principles inspired by Greek linguistic philosophy when composing works that aimed to systematic knowledge.¹⁹

Stemming from Momigliano's account of antiquarianism, a second main intellectual trajectory of investigation has been source criticism. Momigliano had observed how the insufficiency of literary evidence as well as their unreliable nature had led scholars of antiquities in the sixteenth century to

15. Herklotz, art. cit.

16. See Ptas, Arena and MacGóráin in the forthcoming issue of «Bull. Inst. of Class. Stud. Univ. London».

17. Cf. D. Blank, *Varro and the Epistemological Status of Etymology*, in «Histoire, épistémologie, langage», xxxv 2008, pp. 49–73; A. Garcea, «*Consule veritatem: Cicéron, Varro et un chapitre de l'histoire de la vérité à Rome*», in «Rev. de métaphysique et de morale», LVII 2008, pp. 93–110; and A. Götner, *Varro Aedilicus: Latin's affiliation with Greek*, in *Varro Varius: The Polymath of the Roman World*, edited by D.J. Butterfield, Cambridge, Cambridge Philological Society, 2015, pp. 33–50.

18. V. Arena, *Varro and Italia*, in *Nos sumus Romani qui fuimus ante... Memory of Ancient Italy*, edited by M. Aberson, M.C. Biella, M. Di Fazio, M. Wullschleger (forthcoming, Peter Lang).

19. On antiquarianism as a way of doing philosophy within the context religion see P. van Nuffelen, *Varro's Divine Antiquities: Roman Religion as an Image of Truth*, in «Class. Philol.», cv 2010, pp. 162–88.

11. See Momigliano and Antiquarianism. *Foundations of the Modern Cultural Sciences*, edited by P.N. Miller, Toronto, Univ. of Toronto Press, 2007, and R. Gould, *Antiquarianism as Genealogy: Arnaldo Momigliano's Method*, in «History and Theory», LIII 2014, pp. 221–33.

12. I. Herklotz, *Arnaldo Momigliano's Ancient History and the Antiquarian: A Critical Review*, in Miller, Momigliano and Antiquarianism, cit., pp. 127–53.

13. Stevenson, art. cit.; Smith, *On the Edges*, cit.

14. *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives*, edited by A. Schnapp, Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2014, p. 1.

consider visual and material evidence, so that a shared method of handling evidence had become the distinctive trait of antiquarianism. It follows that much scholarly discussion has been focused on the role that different sources have played in reconstructing the past and to what extent the inclusion of material evidence should be considered a constitutive peculiarity of antiquarianism.²⁰

As a result of this emphasis on source criticism, two main outcomes followed: first, scholarly interests concentrated on the handling of evidence and the resulting accumulation of knowledge; second, being so preoccupied, as Momigliano was, on the question of *Quellenforschung*, they omitted to ask any question with the purpose and function of this form of writing.²¹

Scholars have focused their attention on the criteria applied to order such knowledge. They agree that a sensible and systematic organisation of the material, which required a rejection of the «principle of the hodgepodge», as Rawson called it, in favour of the Greek principle of logical division, was the key factor for antiquarian specialisation to flourish.²² However, scholars disagree as to both the historical moment and the agency which they identify as responsible for this shift, and have not focused on the socio-political as well as cultural dynamics that supported it.²³ Only recently have scholars begun to address a wider intellectual vision underlying antiquarianism, interpreting this scholarly genre variously as the result of a period of crisis and perceived moral decay,²⁴ of the developments of encyclopaedism as indica-

tive as well as imitative of confident imperial expansion,²⁵ or even as literature of subversion against the constituted political order.²⁶

Once we acknowledge that these particular ways of “textualising knowledge” were entwined with the social and political practices as well as cultural developments of the time — and, in turn, that the Roman Republic brought with itself distinctive ways of ordering knowledge — these works can be recognised as much more than compilatory in form and conservative in aim.²⁷ The collection and recording of their own tradition, the intensive use of what was seen as a radically new and productive philological methodology, the ordering and fixing of the *mos maiorum* in texts, and the making of collective memories enacted as well as informed a process of Roman self-definition.²⁸

It is only through a rigorous review of the “antiquarian” fragments that we will be able to explore how these “antiquarian” texts are intrinsically political: their lamentations about the decline of tradition, at the origins of the study of the past, ultimately encouraged criticism of the present and therefore became a form of activism in the contemporary world.²⁹ Relying on scholarly research, where grammar and etymology played a central role, Roman antiquarianism developed a powerful discourse about the past. By selecting, ordering, at times even inventing, their traditions, these texts relocated the legitimising authority of the ancestors in a remote past, providing the present with much greater freedom to innovate.³⁰ As Cicero famously put it, it was thanks to Varro’s books on Roman antiquities that the Romans had been able to learn about their past and their identity: «we were like strangers abroad and lost in our own city, your books led us back home» (*Cic. Ac. Post. 9*).³¹

25. *Encyclopaedism from Antiquity to the Renaissance*, edited by J. König and G. Woolf, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2013, pp. 37 ff., and C. Smith, *Varro’s Encyclopaedia*, forthcoming.

26. A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome’s Cultural Revolution*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008, pp. 213–58.

27. *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire*, edited by J. König and T. Whitmarsh, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007, pp. 3–39.

28. *Mos maiorum. Untersuchungen zu den Formen der Identitätsstiftung und Stabilisierung in der römischen Republik*, herausgegeben von B. Linke–M. Stemmler, Stuttgart, Steiner, 2000.

29. Wallace-Hadrill, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

30. C. M. Bettrini, *Antropologia e cultura romana. Parentela, tempo, immagini dell’anima*, Roma, Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1986; V. Arena, *Informal Norms, Values, and Social Control in the Roman Participatory Context*, in *A Companion to Greek Democracy and the Roman Republic*, edited by D. Hammer, Oxford–Malden, MA, Wiley-Blackwell, 2014, pp. 217–38.

31. Arena and MacGóráin, *art. cit.*

20. See A. Schnapp, *The Discovery of the Past: The Origins of Archaeology*, London, The British Museum, 1996; Id., *World Antiquarianism*, *cit.*; Sandberg-Smith, *op. cit.*

21. See P.N. Miller, *Introduction: Momigliano, Antiquarianism, and the Cultural Sciences*, in Id., *Momigliano and antiquarianism*, *cit.*, pp. 3–65, and Herklotz, *art. cit.*

22. E. Rawson, *The Introduction of Logical Organization in Roman Prose Literature*, in «Papers British School at Rome», xvi 1978, pp. 12–34 (= *Roman Culture and Society*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991, pp. 32–4–51).

23. E. Rawson, *Cicero the Historian and Cicero the Antiquarian*, in «Journ. of Rom. Studies», LXXI 1972, pp. 33–45 (= *Roman Culture and Society*, *cit.*, pp. 58–79); Ead., *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic*, London, Duckworth, 1985, pp. 233–49; T. Tarver, *Varro and the Antiquarianism of Philosophy*, in *Philosophia Togata II: Plato and Aristotle at Rome*, edited by J. Barnes and M. Griffin, Oxford, Oxford Univ. Press, 1997, pp. 130–64; Stevenson, *art. cit.*

24. C. Moatti, *La crise de la tradition à la fin de la République Romaine à travers la littérature juridique et la science des antiquaires*, in *Continuità e trasformazioni fra repubblica e principato: istituzioni, politica, società. Atti dell’Incontro di Studi (Bari, 27–28 gennaio 1989)*, a cura di M. Pani, Bari, Edipuglia, 1991, pp. 31–45; Ead., *The Birth of Critical Thinking in Republican Rome*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 2015, pp. 94–163, esp. 128 ff.; Tarver, *art. cit.*

The ambition of our project is to launch the study of these texts as a major new departure for the study of the ancient world and of the classical tradition from the Renaissance onwards. This material, collected and analysed together for the first time, will radically transform our understanding of Roman Republican culture by firmly establishing a new textual and contextual framework for the elaboration of knowledge and the establishment of the religious and institutional framework, and its Greek philosophical underpinnings in the Republic.

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