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VITAE POMPONIANAE:

**Lives of Classical Writers
in Fifteenth-Century
Roman Humanism**

ed. Marianne Pade

Preface

The present volume contains the proceedings of the conference “*Vitae Pomponianae*: Biografie di autori antichi nell’Umanesimo romano/Lives of Classical Writers in Fifteenth-Century Roman Humanism” held at the Danish and American Academies in Rome 23–24 April 2013. The conference was organised by Giancarlo ABBAMONTE (Università di Napoli Federico II), Chris CELENZA and Marianne PADE (of the American and Danish Academies in Rome respectively), Johann RAMMINGER (Thesaurus linguae Latinae, München/Wien), Fabio STOK (Università di Roma Tor Vergata, which covered participants’ travel expenses), and by the *REPERTORIUM POMPONIANUM*.

The aim of the conference was to investigate the extraordinary surge in the production of lives of ancient Roman writers which we find in late fifteenth-century Roman humanism. Many of these lives either break with the medieval tradition or deal with writers of whom no previous lives existed. The majority of them were compiled by Pomponio Leto (1428-1498) and his circle, a group that has been the object of renewed scholarly interest during the last fifteen years. Suffice it here to mention the 2008-monograph by Maria Accame, *Pomponio Leto. Vita e insegnamento*, Biblioteca pomponiana (Tivoli), the conference held to celebrate Pomponio’s life and work in Teggiano in 2008, the proceedings of which have been published as *Pomponio Leto tra identità locale e cultura internazionale*, edd. Anna Modigliani, Patricia Osmond, Marianne Pade, Johann Ramminger, RR inedita 48, saggi. Roma 2011), and last but not least, the on-line bio-bibliographical *Repertorium Pomponianum* (www.repertoriumpomponianum.it).

It is well known how Pomponio for teaching purposes compiled biographical sketches of the more important writers he lectured on at the Roman *Studium*. In the works of his pupils and collaborators we find the same interest. The participants in the conference were invited to discuss *how* an ancient writer was depicted in these lives, *which* biographical models they followed, and *to what degree* the lives in question might be said to be innovative, to break with a medieval biographical tradition of the *accessus*. At the conference, papers were presented on the lives of Theocritus (Trine Johanne Arlund HASS, Aarhus University), Varro (Maria ACCAME, Sapienza Università di Roma), Sallust (Patricia OSMOND, Iowa State University),

Virgil (Fabio STOK, Università di Roma Tor Vergata), Lucretius (Ada PALMER, then Texas A&M University, now University of Chicago), Ovid (Frank COULSON, Ohio State University), Seneca (Lucia GUALDO ROSA, Sapienza Università di Roma), Lucan (Elettra CAMPERLINGO, Università di Salerno), Silius Italicus (Frances MUECKE, University of Sydney), Statius (Marianne PADE, Accademia di Danimarca), Martial (Johann RAMMINGER, Thesaurus linguae Latinae – München/Wien), and Juvenal (Giancarlo ABBAMONTE, Università di Napoli Federico II). The papers were all followed by lively discussions from which this volume has profited immensely. At the end of the two days the main issues that had been debated were lucidly summed up by Concetta BIANCA (Università di Firenze): though each life is unique in the problems it poses, the conference showed that the approach of Pomponio and his circle was indeed novel and that the texts discussed in the present volume for the most part constitute a critical review of the medieval tradition and an *iter ad fontes*. This we hope will also be evident from the individual articles in this volume. Not only do they discuss one or more ‘Pomponian’ lives of an ancient writer; as some survive only in manuscript form and others in early imprints, many articles also contain critical editions of these texts, with English or Italian translation and – as far as possible – an extensive *apparatus fontium*. A number of these *Lives* will be also published in the *Repertorium Pomponianum*.

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Marianne Pade
Rome, 23 June 2015

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PASTORAL CONVENTIONS IN MARTINO FILETICO'S *DE VITA THEOCRITI*



By Trine Arlund Hass

Martino Filetico (1430–1490) recounts the life of Theocritus in De Vita Theocriti, a brief text of thirty verses. In the traditional description of Renaissance pastoral poetry, Virgil is considered the primary model and the best example, and the authoritative commentators praise his qualities by comparing them to Theocritus': Servius describes Theocritus' style as plain and simple, whereas Virgil has added an allegorical layer to the bucolic verses, which makes his poetry more complex. This paper examines how Filetico describes Theocritus' status and poetry, and how these descriptions relate to normative views on bucolic poetry in general, and on Theocritus.

Martino Filetico (c. 1430–c. 1490) worked as a teacher.¹ He was a student of Guarino Veronese. On Guarino's recommendation, he went to Urbino around 1454 or 1455 to teach the oldest son of Federico da Montefeltro, Buonconte, and Bernardino, son of Ottaviano degli Ubaldini. It was probably during this stay in Urbino that he translated the first seven *Idylls* of Theocritus, preserved in MS. 84 in the Biblioteca del Seminario di Padova.² The translation was revised, and this revised edition was first published in Rome by the publishing house of Eucharius Silber between 1480 and 1482.³

¹ On the life and works of Martino Filetico, I follow Bianca 1997.

² Dedicated to Alfonso V of Aragon, who died June 27 1458. Consequently, this date is a *terminus ante quem* for the translation (Bianca 1997). On this first edition of the translation, see Arbizzoni 1993.

³ Editions accompanied by the *Vita*, all in print:

Rome: Eucharius Silber, c. 1480-1482, ISTC it00146000 (the imprint does not have a kolophon; the attribution to Silber is confirmed by a poem of fourteen verses at the end of the little volume "Idem Phileticus ad Eucharium Argirion impressorem". For the dating, see Dell'Oro 1983, 429 note 9).

Milan: Simon Magniagus?, c. 1483, ISTC it00146400 (*Vita* before translation. Contains poem to Eucharius Silber and is suggested to have been printed by him in GW M45830);

Venice: Bernardinus Venetus de Vitalibus, c. 1498-1500, ISTC it00145000 (*Vita* missing. The last words of the edition is: "FINIS// Phileticus de vita Theocriti in libro de poetis antiquis", f. 22a. As Dell'Oro writes, the last page must not have been printed by mistake. Dell'Oro 1983, 429);

In Eucharius Silber's edition, as well as in several other printed editions, the translation is accompanied by a dedication to Federico da Montefeltro, and by the text that will be the focus of this paper, a short biography of Theocritus, which is presented as an excerpt from a work entitled *De Poetis Antiquis*.

After both his students died of the plague in 1458, Filetico left Urbino for Pesaro and the court of Alessandro Sforza to tutor Battista and Constanzo Sforza, but he returned to Urbino with Battista Sforza in 1460 and stayed there until 1467, as tutor for her and for Federico's illegitimate son, Antonio. During this time, he probably began to work on the *De Poetis Antiquis*.⁴ The work was most likely intended to have a didactic purpose, just as his *De Viris Illustribus*, also written in Urbino between 1460 and 1462.⁵ Filetico went to Rome in 1467, where he came in contact with Pomponio Leto and Bessarion, among others, and where he published his translation of Theocritus with Silber, the publisher closely connected to the Roman academy.⁶

De Poetis Antiquis is not extant as a complete work, and it is uncertain whether Filetico ever completed it.⁷ We know that it included his life of Theocritus, since the *Vita* is introduced as part of *De Poetis Antiquis*, in the edition of Filetico's translation printed by Eucharius Silber – the headline reads: "Phileticus de vita Theocriti in libro De poetis antiquis".⁸ Similarly, the introduction to a life of Horace at the end of a commentary on the *Ars Poetica* attributed to Filetico⁹ states that it comes from "liber De poetis antiquis",¹⁰ and the same commentary mentions a life of Homer, also as part of

Venice: Bernardinus Venetus de Vitalibus, 1499, ISTC it00145400 (*Vita* after translation).

Paris: Petit & Ascensius, 1503 & 1510 (*Vita* before translation).

Ms. ÖNB cod. lat. 9977, ff. 123r-141v (16th cent.) contains Filetico's translation and *Vita*.

Editions not accompanied by the *Vita*: ms. 84 in the Biblioteca del Seminario di Padova (first version of the translation), and Urb.lat. 369 (same text as in the printed editions of the translation).

⁴ I follow Dell'Oro's account of the texts of *De Poetis Antiquis* and their fortuna, in Dell'Oro, 1983, 429–431.

⁵ Preserved in manuscript form only: ms. D 262 in the Biblioteca Forteguerriana in Pistoia, and ms. V C 39 in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli (Dell'Oro 1983, 430 note 18).

⁶ See Farenga 2007 in Repertorium Pomponianum s.v. Silber, www.repertoriumpomponianum.it/pomponiani/silber.htm

⁷ That a humanist published specimina of a work yet to be written, would not be unusual; Calderini's *Observationes* would be an example contemporary with Filetico, see Campanelli 2001.

⁸ See note 3.

⁹ Ottob. Lat. 1256, attributed to Filetico by Card. Mercati, see Dell'Oro 1983, 430.

¹⁰ Ottob. Lat. 1256, f. 103v (Dell'Oro 1983, 430 note 15).

the *De Poetis Antiquis*.¹¹ Although there are no statements about it, it is quite likely that the transmitted lives of Ovid and Virgil, too, were intended to be part of *De Poetis Antiquis*. The lives of Horace, Theocritus, Ovid, and Virgil were collected and published by Emy Dell'Oro in 1983, with a discussion of their composition and transmission.¹² Previously, the life of Theocritus was published by Pecci, in 1912.¹³

Filetico's interest in Theocritus reflects his own intellectual focus on Greek language and literature and the growing interest in Greek among the humanists in general. His translation of the first seven *Idylls* makes Theocritus accessible to a much broader audience. Theocritus was not completely unknown, since he is mentioned and described by Aelius Donatus and Maurus Servius Honoratus in their biographies of Virgil and in the commentary on the *Eclogues*, but the text of the *Idylls* would have been inaccessible to many. Thus, in *De Vita Theocriti*, Filetico presents a Greek poet and his poetry, well known from secondary sources, but not in his own right. In terms of genre theory, as presented by Maria Corti,¹⁴ one would describe Theocritus' poetry as the *archetype*¹⁵ of bucolic poetry: this is where it all began. Corti argues that genre norms are formed in a dynamic exchange between *great writers*,¹⁶ who do not feel constrained by the genre system, but break it and set new standards, and *minor writers*,¹⁷ who follow the course set by the great writers, consolidating their changes to the genre systems into new conventions. In this perspective, Theocritus and Virgil are both great writers, but in a Renaissance context there can be no doubt that Virgil was the *normative model*, especially in the case of bucolic poetry. Corti does not mention the commentaries in her account of genres, but since they affect how the great writers are read and understood, it seems relevant to consider them as a factor in the consolidation of genre norms. This seems particularly necessary in this case, since there is a normative reading, Donatus-Servius', of the normative model.

In the following sections, the way in which Filetico presents and describes Theocritus and his poetry in his *De Vita Theocriti* is examined. I fo-

¹¹ Dell'Oro 1983, 431.

¹² The life of Virgil is also in Klecker 1994, 318-322.

¹³ Pecci 1912, 113-208.

¹⁴ The following is based on Corti 1978, especially 115-116.

¹⁵ "As Genot has already shown, the principle of imitation of this kind of poetics is the result of an act in which 'the historic, generative, and relatively psychological notion of the archetype' is transformed into the notion of a practical normative model." Ibid., 116 (Corti refers to G. Genot 1970, *Analyse structurelle de Pinocchio*, Florence).

¹⁶ Ibid., 136-137.

¹⁷ Ibid., 133.

cus mainly on passages of the *Vita* in which the poetry is described, and in which Theocritus is described as a poet.

Content and Arrangement

The most evident characteristic of *De Vita Theocriti* may be that it is in verse, a feature of all four extant *vitae* by Filetico. It consists of fifteen elegiac couplets, which makes it the shortest of the four.¹⁸ The text concerns the life of Theocritus, his poetry, and his status as a poet. The information about Theocritus' life seems to be deduced from the *Idylls* themselves, especially the seventh, and from the scholia.

The arrangement of the *Vita* follows a roughly chronological plan. We are told in vv. 3–4 that Theocritus was born in Syracuse on Sicily, and in the last verse, that he died before his time. However, there is also a distinct difference between the poet's status at the beginning and the end of the poetic *Vita*, which makes it a narrative about the poet's progression from the modest social status of his family ("Nascitur hac tenui de stirpe Theocritus urbe/ paupere Simicho [...]", vv. 5–6) to a position as a prominent and successful poet. Toward the end of the *Vita*, Filetico writes that he was celebrated by famous contemporary poets and intellectuals, such as Aratus,¹⁹ Arastis, Callimachus, and Nicander (vv. 25–28), and that he had the status of an intellectual and a physician, as well as that of a poet (vv. 23–24).

As the text progresses, the sense of difference between the beginning and end of the *Vita* is strengthened. The description of the humble birth of Theocritus is followed, in vv. 7–10, by a description of Theocritus' upbringing. Here, Filetico writes of how the muses delivered the infant Theocritus ("Pierides cepere manu de matre cadentem", v. 7), and how they took him into their sacred grotto and taught him the precepts of poetry while he was still a boy. The mythical character of this explanation of the origin of Theocritus' poetic skills stands in contrast to a very concrete localization of the poet in time found in the penultimate verse ("Floruit hic laeto Philadelphi tempore regis.", he flourished in the happy time of king Philadelphus, v. 20).

¹⁸ The life of Ovid consists of 94 verses, the life of Virgil of 134 verses, and the life of Horace of 42 verses.

¹⁹ As Dell'Oro points out in her apparatus, Aratus and Aristis are mentioned in Theocritus, *Idyll* 7.98–100. Whereas Aratus is also the name of a still-famous Hellenistic poet, the identity of Aristis is unclear to us. In his comment on v. 99, Gow writes: "Since T. chooses to play upon it [*i.e. the name*] in l. 100, it is clear that the name is not fictitious. Its owner, from what is subsequently said of him, would seem to have been a singer of some reputation in Cos." (Gow 1950, 156).

The middle section of the *Vita*, vv. 11–22,²⁰ is concerned first with the nature of Theocritean poetry, then with its quality: Theocritus' poetry is described as poetry for flute (v. 11) and lyre (v. 15), about shepherds and pastures (vv. 11–12), and Theocritus is described as the first to compose poetry of this sort (v. 11). The *Vita* claims that he surpassed other, unspecified, Greek bucolic poets (v. 18), and even Virgil, who is mentioned explicitly (*Maro*, v. 17). In fact, Filetico claims that Theocritus is a better poet than anyone who ever was or ever will be: “Aptius invenies nullum, qui luserit ante/ hoc carmen; nec, qui concinat, alter erit.” The reason why he takes precedence over everyone else must be what is stated in vv. 21–22: that Theocritus' poetry seems to render not his own voice, but the voices of actual shepherds (“Ore quidem non ipse suo, sed turba videtur/ pastorum propriis vocibus ipsa loqui.”).

The recognition of Theocritus, so firmly expressed by Filetico in the middle part of the *Vita*, is reinforced by the documented, contemporary recognition of Theocritus in vv. 25–28 of the final section, but it is also anticipated in the first part of the *Vita*. The first four lines, which I address in the following section, contain an indirect comparison to Virgil; in v. 6, Theocritus is called “the glory of the muses” (*gloria Thespiadum*), and in v. 10 it is revealed that the boy who is mentored by the muses will become a poet who is famous all over the world (“qui toto insignis orbe poeta foret”).

Status I: Homer, Hesiod, and Theocritus

As mentioned in the introduction, Filetico's *Vita* is included in most printed editions of his translation of Theocritus' *Idylls* 1–7. Although the headline of the printed edition of the *Vita* makes it clear that the text was intended for a different context, and therefore was not composed with the purpose of introducing the translation, we must accept that, as it is included in the printed edition as a paratext, it does, in that context, serve as an introduction to the poetry of Theocritus. Furthermore, the fact that the first point of the model for exegetic commentaries, the Servian *accessus* (Servius in Aen. 1 pr. 1), is the life of the author indicates that this is where the understanding of a text begins, for a Renaissance reader. In this section, Filetico's statements about

²⁰ I should stress that there is no sharp division in the text between the first and the middle part. Syntactically, vv. 11–12 depend on v. 9, and content-wise vv. 13–16 have more in common with vv. 7–10 than with the surrounding verses, since they contain a description of how Apollo and Bacchus appreciated Theocritus. My reason for this division is thematic. Following the argumentative structure of the text, it may be more appropriate to talk about a division of the *Vita* in two sections, consisting of vv. 1–16 (birth, genealogy, upbringing) and 17–30 (status compared to other poets, and recognition by contemporaries), but there are weaknesses in such a division too, e.g. the first four lines are, as suggested below, more closely connected to the themes defined for the second section.

Theocritus' poetry and status as a poet will be examined, and compared to expressions of pastoral conventions, especially those found in Servius' commentary on Virgil's *Eclogues* and the *Vita Vergilii*. Filetico does not follow the order of a Servian *accessus* in his *Vita*. As demonstrated, the information is limited to the life of the author and the quality of his work. It includes no reflection on title, number of poems, order of poems, or the like.

The first two couplets of the *Vita* argue for the high quality of the work, by comparing the poet in question to two other ancient poets of indisputably high status, Homer and Hesiod:

Quantum Smyrnaei magno laetantur Homero,
Hesiodo quantum nobilis Ascra suo,
culta Syracusiae tantum quoque moenia terrae
Simichida campis, Sicilis ora, tuis.

(Just as much as the people of Smyrna delight in great Homer, just as much as noble Ascra delights in her Hesiod, so much, Simichidas, do the celebrated walls of the Syracusan region, the Sicilian coast, delight in your fields.)²¹

In her apparatus to these lines, Dell'Oro refers to the *Epitaphium Bionis* vv. 86–93, where we find a similar comparison describing the hometowns of six famous Greek poets, Pindar, Alcaeus, Archilochus, Anacreon (indirectly), Sappho, and Theocritus, lament the death of Bion far more than the deaths of their own poets.²² Hence, there is a clear similarity of concept: the pride of their hometown is used as measure of the poets' popularity. Furthermore, the *Epitaphium* is a bucolic poem lamenting a bucolic poet, and Theocritus is one of the poets mentioned in the comparison, all of which makes describing it as a possible hypotext relevant. However, there are also dissimilarities between the two: Filetico mentions only two poets besides Theocritus, whereas the *Epitaphium* enumerates six, and of these two, only Hesiod is mentioned in the *Epitaphium* (v. 53). At the end of Filetico's biography, more Greek authors are mentioned, but they are not among the six poets in the *Epitaphium*, and they are not part of a comparison, as they serve a different purpose.

If we shift our attention from the way in which the comparison in the *Vita* is presented to whom it presents, it may prove constructive to consult the late antique commentators for yet another parallel concept. In Donatus' *vita*, as well as in the introductions to the *Eclogues* in Servius' commen-

²¹ Unless otherwise noted, translations are my own.

²² Transmitted as Moschus 3 (see Gow 1958).

tary,²³ we find the systematization of Virgil's works following the rhetorical levels of style. I quote from Donatus:

Restat, ut, quae causa uoluntatem attulerit poetae Bucolica potissimum conscribendi, considerare debeamus. aut enim dulcedine carminis Theocriti ad imitationem eius illectus est, aut ordinem temporum secutus est circa uitam humanam, quod supra diximus, aut cum tres modi sint elocutionum, quos χαρακτήρας Graeci uocant, ἰσχνός qui tenuis, μέσος qui moderatus, ἄδρός qui ualidus intellegitur, credibile erit Vergilium, qui in omni genere praeualeret, Bucolica ad primum modum, Georgica ad secundum, Aeneidem ad tertium uoluisse conferre.

(58. We still need to consider what cause primarily prompted the poet's desire to write a bucolic poem. For either he was enticed to imitate Theocritus by the sweetness of his song, or he followed the order of the ages with regard to human existence (as we said above). Or, since there are three styles [*modi*] of speech – what the Greeks call *charaktêrai*: *ischnos*, which is understood to mean “meagre” [*tenuis*]; *mesos*, “moderate” [*moderatus*]; and *hadros*, “powerful” [*validus*] – 59. one might think that Virgil desired to devote his *Bucolics* to the first mode, his *Georgics* to the second, and the *Aeneid* to the third, in order to distinguish himself in every kind [*genus*] of poetry.)²⁴

In this passage, Donatus considers various reasons why Virgil may have composed his works in the order he did. This results in his presentation of the famous and influential classification of Virgilian genres that became a model for the ideal poetic career: one should begin with the pastoral, move on to the didactic, and attempt to write heroic epic poetry only when one had developed expert skills. Due to the popularity of Donatus' commentary, it may be worth considering its influential description of this hierarchical system of genres - known in the Middle Ages as the *Rota Vergiliana* - as an additional hypotext for the comparison in the beginning of Filetico's *Vita*. Donatus' text also describes how Virgil's wish to imitate Theocritus is considered one of the two possible reasons why Virgil began his poetic career with bucolic poetry. Servius describes this, without any alternative, as Virgil's intention with the *Eclogue*.²⁵

It is generally accepted including by the late antique commentators, that the primary model for the *Aeneid* is Homer, and Virgil states clearly in the *Georgics* 2.176 that he follows Hesiod in this work. With this in mind, it

²³ The passage is quoted in the following section.

²⁴ Donatus, *Vita* 58–59, my emphasis. Translation by Wilson-Okamura (see Donatus 2008), with minor modifications.

²⁵ Servius, *Prooemium* p. 2 l. 14.

seems that Filetico may be constructing a Greek parallel to the *Rota Vergiliana*, using the models of Virgil's poetry at the beginning of his *De Vita Theocriti*.

Turning to one of the manuscripts of Filetico's translation of Theocritus, Urb.lat. 369, we find a similar example of how heroic, didactic and bucolic epic is joined together. In addition to Filetico's translation of Theocritus, the manuscript contains a translation of the didactic poem by Oppianus, *De Piscibus*, and an excerpt of the *Iliad* translated by Niccolò della Valle.²⁶ Since there is a list of content on f. 1v that mentions all three texts, and since all three texts are written in the same hand, it seems that the manuscript was intended to form an entity consisting of Greek bucolic, didactic, and heroic epic poetry. This may be taken as another indication of how the conception of bucolic poetry is defined by the conception of Virgil's bucolic poetry, even when it comes to bucolic poetry written by the predecessor who inspired him.

The identification of a possible hypotext for the first four lines of Filetico's *Vita* may not, at first glance at least, contribute to the understanding of the textual level of the *Vita*, but it may be taken as an indication of the paradigm within which Filetico reads and understands Theocritus' poetry. According to my suggestion, this would mean that he understands Theocritus within a framework defined by the conventions of the pastoral, developed on the base of Virgil's poetry, as it is described in the authoritative commentaries. In this connection, it is worth noting that if this is the case, Filetico may be seen to challenge the Virgilian paradigm slightly, since his triad of epic poems is not structured as a hierarchy; the three poets are described according to the criterion of popularity, which allows them to be equals.

The Character and Quality of Theocritean Poetry

As mentioned earlier, the middle section of the *Vita* is where we may find information about the nature of the Theocritean poems. However, the only actual description of Theocritus' poetry is this rather short passage:

Pascua qui gracili primus cantaret avena:
et pecoris plenos simplicitate duces

²⁶ Theocritus, *Idyllia*, translated by Martino Filetico (fols. 2r–24v); Oppianus, *De piscibus*, translated by Lorenzo Lippi (fols. 24v–91v); Niccolò della Valle's translation of Homer's *Iliad* (fols. 101v–194r). Fols. 99v–101v contain the dedicatory letter of Teodoro Gaza to Lelio della Valle.

([He] who first sang of pastures on his graceful flute, and about the simple leaders of flocks.)²⁷

This couplet informs us, at what seems to be a quite general level, about the themes, *pascua* (pastures), and persons, *pecoris duces* (leaders of flocks), in the poems, and about one of the instruments, *avena* (flute), accompanying the songs. But if we look more closely at the possible text-external and -internal allusions in this passage, they may contribute to the discourse suggested in the previous section.

The wording of the description of the pastoral instrument, *gracilis avena* (graceful flute), is not unusual, as such. *Avena* appears quite frequently in bucolic poems, and *gracilis* is one of many Latin synonyms for the Greek term defining the ideal of Hellenistic poetry, λεπτός (small, fine). *Tenuis* is a more frequent Latin term for this concept,²⁸ and we will meet yet another synonym later in this section. But as suggested by Dell'Oro,²⁹ it seems plausible that a reader, well-informed about Virgil and familiar with his works and their exegeses, would recall the construction, *gracili avena*, from the very first verse of the *Aeneid* that Varius was supposed to have removed, along with three other lines preceding *arma virumque cano*:

Ille ego, qui quondam gracili modulatus auena
carmina, et egressus siluis uicina coegi,
ut quamuis audio parerent arua colono,
gratum opus agricolis, at nunc horrentia Martis
arma uirumque cano.

(I am he that once played a song on the slender pipe;
Leaving the forests, I marked off the lands nearby,
That the fields might yield as much as possible to the eager husbandman—
A labor that pleased the farmers. But now Mars' shuddering
Arms and a man I sing [...])³⁰

That this line is considered the possible *incipit* of no less than the *Aeneid* makes it plausible as a hypotext for Filetico's *gracili avena*. The Virgilian line is part of an introductory passage in which the poet summarizes his own career in much the same way as we saw Donatus do previously, but in his description, Virgil remains on a figurative level. The use of this model underlines how Filetico's description of Theocritus is determined by the traditional understanding of Virgilian pastoral as a component in a system of

²⁷ Vv. 11–12.

²⁸ For *tenuis* see Donatus, *Vita* 58 (quoted above).

²⁹ Dell'Oro 1983, 441, on v. 11.

³⁰ Quoted from Donatus, *Vita* 42. Translated by Wilson-Okamura (see Donatus 2008).

three genres. The tendency is even more clear here, since Theocritus' poetry is described with Virgilian words.

If we compare the Virgilian *incipit* and Filetico's v. 11 closely, we find that their grammatical structures are similar, with minor exceptions: The correlate of Filetico's *qui*-clause is found outside of the line (*puerum*, v. 9) and not in the first foot, as in the Virgilian line (*ille ego*). Instead, Filetico has added an object to the sentence, *pascua*, and placed it in the first foot. This position is emphatic in itself, but since *pascua* is an addition from Filetico's hand that differs from the hypotext, it stands out even more. The Virgilian *modulatus* is replaced by a synonym, *cantaret*, and the tense has been changed slightly. Lastly, the Virgilian indicator of time has been moved and changed: the adverbial *quondam* has become the adjective *primus*, and it has been placed immediately after *gracili*, instead of immediately before. The new position means that *primus* is not only emphasized by a caesura, which is also the case with *quondam*, it also attracts attention to the word in that it is given a new position which creates a greater distance between the two components of the hyperbaton, *gracili avena*.

It is remarkable that Filetico uses a Virgilian expression to emphasize what may be considered Theocritus' best-known attribute, that he was the inventor of pastoral poetry. One may consider whether the direct interaction between Filetico's and Virgil's texts has an argumentative or a provocative function, meaning something along the lines of, "Virgil may have composed pastoral poetry, and with great success, but Theocritus was the inventor of the genre." This would mean that the comparison between Virgil and Theocritus, which is explicitly presented in vv. 17–18, had already begun. I would suggest that it continues in v. 12, with Filetico's use of *simplicitate*.

Servius' version of λεπτός is not *tenuis*, as is Donatus', but *simplex*. In his general classification of bucolic poetry, as opposed to the didactic and the heroic epic, he uses the noun *simplicitas* to characterize the persons featured in bucolic poetry:

tres enim sunt characteres, humilis, medius, grandiloquus: quos omnes in hoc invenimus poeta. nam in Aeneide grandiloquum habet, in georgicis medium, in bucolicis humilem pro qualitate negotiorum et personarum: nam personae hic rusticae sunt, simplicitate gaudentes, a quibus nihil altum debet requiri.

(there are, namely, three kinds: humble, middle, and grandiloquent, each of which may be found in this poet's works. For in the *Aeneid*, he uses the grandiloquent, in the *Georgics*, the middle, and in the *Bucolics*, the humble, regarding the nature of things and persons, for the

persons here are rustic, they take joy in simplicity, and nothing lofty should be sought from them.)³¹

Thus, this resembles Filetico's use of the word which is also part of a qualification of the persons featured in Theocritean poetry. But there is a difference: Servius' use of *simplicitas* is part of a restrictive description of bucolic character, in the sense that it is expanded with an emphasis of their lacking grandness, whereas Filetico combines *simplicitate* with *plenos* in his characterization giving it a positive semantic connotation.

The contrast between simplicity and refinement is developed later in Servius' preface. In the following quotation, the adjective *simplex*, modified by *ubique*, is used to characterize Theocritus in a comparison between him and Virgil:

in qua re tantum dissentit a Theocrito: ille enim ubique simplex est, hic necessitate compulsus aliquibus locis miscet figuras, quas perite plerumque etiam ex Theocriti versibus facit, quos ab illo dictos constat esse simpliciter. hoc autem fit poetica urbanitate

(in this respect, he differs a lot from Theocritus: for the latter is simple in every respect, whereas Virgil sometimes, forced by necessity, mixes in figures that he makes cleverly and often even out of verses by Theocritus, which people in general agree to be uttered in a simple manner by him. This becomes poetry with an elegant manner.³²

Here, the meaning of *simplex* is consistent with the use of *simplicitas* in the previous quotation, but its function as a literary term is specified, it becomes a term designating non-allegoric text. The distinction between "simple" and "lofty" presented above is now applied to Theocritus and Virgil, and it becomes the way in which Servius characterizes their respective poetry and the argument for Virgil's poetry being more refined than Theocritus'.

The use of *simplex* and *simplicitas* to designate non-allegoric phrases is found throughout the commentary, wherever Servius considers it best to not read a passage allegorically,³³ and Donatus uses the term in the same way, in his description of allegory, in Virgil:

illud tenendum esse praedicimus, in Bucolicis Vergilii neque nusquam neque ubique aliquid figurate dici, hoc est per allegoriam. uix enim propter laudem Caesaris et amissos agros haec Vergilio conceduntur, cum Theocritus simpliciter conscripserit, quem hic noster conatur imitari.

³¹ Servius, *Prooemium* p. 1 l. 16–p. 2 l. 5, my emphasis.

³² Servius, *Prooemium* p. 2 l. 19–23, my emphasis.

³³ E.g. Servius on Virgil, *Eclogue* 1 v. 5: "et melius est, ut simpliciter intellegamus: [...]" (and it is better that we understand it literally).

(We say at the outset, keep this in mind: in the *Bucolics* of Virgil, something is said figuratively (that is, allegorically) on occasion and not everywhere. These things are conceded to Virgil only so far as the praise of Caesar and the loss of his lands. For Theocritus (whom our poet was striving to imitate) composed in a manner that was plain and simple.)³⁴

In her apparatus, Dell'Oro offers Quintilian 10.1.55 as a parallel to this passage: "Admirabilis in suo genere Theocritus, sed musa illa rustica et pastoralis non forum modo, verum ipsam etiam urbem reformidat" (Theocritus is admirable in his own way, but the rustic and pastoral muse shrinks not merely from the forum, but from town-life of every kind).³⁵ Here, Quintilian praises Theocritus in his own right, but most of the texts of the period are concerned with the limitations of this poetry. However, based on the analyses above, I suggest the texts of the late antique commentators, particularly Servius', as hypotexts for this passage in Filetico's *Vita*. When Filetico characterizes the persons featured in Theocritus' idylls as *pleni simplicitate*, in v. 12, I consider this a paraphrase of the first Servian quotation, "nam personae hic rusticae sunt, *simplicitate gaudentes*", but with the noted difference that he attempts to avoid the restrictive connotations of Servius' text. We may discuss whether we should read Filetico's text as a statement that the leaders of flocks are not only "full of simplicity" but "fulfilled by their simplicity", or even perceive the words as a hypallage meaning "fully simple" – this may be taking the interpretation to its limits. However, since Servius and Donatus apply the characteristic *simplicitas* to Theocritus, I suggest regarding this as Filetico's negotiation of the traditional view of Theocritus, as expressed in the late antique commentaries, and, again, consider these verses as paving the way for the comparison of Theocritus and Virgil in vv. 17–18.

Status II: Virgil and Theocritus Compared

After the description of Theocritus' poetry in vv. 11–12, which is connected syntactically to the description of his upbringing by the muses, we have two elegiac couplets describing how Apollo and Bacchus crowned Theocritus, and bestowed musical skills upon him. This means that two more divine sanctions of Theocritus' skills and talent are added to the thorough description of the muses' recognition of him, before we reach the comparison in vv. 17–18, and the subsequent discussion of his status.

³⁴ Donatus, *Vita* 66, my emphasis. Translation by Wilson-Okamura (see Donatus 2008).

³⁵ Translated by Butler (see Quintilian 1922).

In the comparison, we find a clear expression of Filetico's loyalty to Theocritus. He begins in v. 17 by making it clear that there is no competition; Virgil and everyone else in Latium are inferior to Theocritus: "Pace loquar Latia, cessit bona musa Maronis,/ cesserunt Siculae, cetera turba, lyrae" (I shall speak with the permission of the Latins; Maro's good muse was inferior, the Sicilian lyres, the rest of the lot, were inferior, vv. 17–18).

As we have seen, it is not unusual to compare Virgil and Theocritus. In fact, it is almost what we would expect, since it is what Servius and Donatus do in their authoritative commentaries. But Filetico's conclusion does not conform to the conventional conclusions that we saw in the section above. Furthermore, his unusual conclusion is presented in a quite bold manner: before the argument, which makes it appear more like a proclamation than a comparison. However, an argument does follow in the next couplet: "Aptius inuenies nullum, qui luserit ante/ hoc carmen; nec, qui concinat, alter erit" (You will find no one who had earlier played this type of song more appropriately, neither will there be another who will sing on the same level as him, vv. 19–20). The keyword that makes this an argument, and not just yet another assertion about Theocritus, is *aptius*: Theocritus' poetry is measured by its appropriateness. Filetico elaborates in vv. 21–22: "Ore quidem non ipse suo, sed turba videtur/ pastorum propriis vocibus ipsa loqui" (For he does not sing on his own with his own mouth, but it seems like the very crowd of shepherds speaks with their own voices).

According to Filetico, Theocritus' poetry is such a close imitation of its object, the shepherds, that one almost forgets that it is fiction. It is more appropriate than any previous and any future pastoral poetry, exactly because it manages to imitate its object so precisely. In other words, Filetico draws the opposite conclusions from the authorial commentaries, but bases them on the same argument: Theocritus' poetry is superior to Virgil's, precisely because the characters speak about rustic themes in a manner resembling the speech of actual shepherds – because it is simple, and not allegorical. This means that Filetico reevaluates the conventional criteria of bucolic poetry, as well as inverting the conventional view of the relationship between the primary Latin and Greek models, with regard to status.

The use of the term *aptum*, which inevitably connotes Horace's *Ars Poetica* and its emphasis on *decorum* as a criterion for successful poetry, underlines that this is, indeed, a bold attempt to reevaluate bucolic poetics.

A Parallel

Filetico is not the only one who challenges the conventional classification and qualification of the classical bucolic poets. If we examine one of the paratexts introducing the first Latin translation of the entire corpus of

Theocritus,³⁶ we find that the German translator Helius Eobanus Hessus displays a similar predilection for Theocritus, when comparing him to Virgil. The following passage is not from a *vita*, but from Hessus' verse dedication (vv. 29–32):

Tam uaria Andino non est sua Musa Maroni
 Materiae cultor simplicis ille fuit
 Et tamen agnoscas hinc magni furta Maronis
 Plurima, sed nullo digna pudore legi.

(The muse of Maro from Andes is not as diverse; he was a cultivator of simple material. And yet, one could identify the great Maro's excessive theft here, but I have found it worthy of no shame.)

In this quotation, we see the way in which Hessus emphasizes that the variety of themes is far larger in Theocritus' poems than in Virgil's. Using the term *furtum* (theft) to designate Virgil's intertextual loans from Theocritus may suggest a play on expectations, since it omits the Servian point that Virgil adds a new layer of refinement to the Theocritean passages included in his poetry, and dwells on the unoriginality of the "theft" itself. *Furtum* was the term used by Donatus to describe Virgil's intertextual loans from Homer (*Vita* 46) in an often quoted passage about critical accusations against Virgil emphasizing the difficulty of the transfer and the skill required to carry it out. When Hessus applies this term to Virgil's loans from Theocritus, he appears to problematize Virgil's position and emphasize the superiority of the Greek model. But just as Virgil, according to Donatus, defended himself against his critics' accusation of theft, so Hessus mitigates his accusation in the following line. However, in this playful manner he does manage to bring focus to the value of Virgil's Greek model.

V. 30 is particularly interesting. Here, Virgil is called a cultivator of *simple* material. This means that Hessus uses the term attributed to Theocritus in the late antique commentaries, but instead of describing Theocritus' poetry, it is used about Virgil's. Thus, Hessus moves within the same framework as Filetico, but in this last example, he takes the negotiation of conventional classifications one step further. The tone of Hessus' inversions is different, it is more playful than Filetico's assertive rejection of all other bucolic poets, but the mechanisms are the same. The quoted passage indicates that Hessus' conceptions of the pastoral are influenced by Virgil and

³⁶ The translation is published with Joachim Camerarius's edition of the Greek text. The first edition appeared in 1531. I quote from the 1545 edition.

his commentators, but, like Filetico, he attempts a reappraisal of Theocritus by renegotiating the conventional genre descriptions.³⁷

Conclusion

Genre norms and conceptions are formed by normative models in cases such as that of the pastoral, where we have no theoretical description of genre norms in the poetics, and even if it is widely known that Virgil drew on Theocritus for his bucolic poems, Virgil's *Eclogues* and their presentation in the commentaries shaped the ideals and conventions of the pastoral during the Renaissance.

In Filetico's text we see that the conception of genre is formed by the normative model and that the conception of the author of the normative work affects the way the life of Theocritus is narrated. From the very beginning of the *Vita*, Theocritus is made part of a triad of poets together with Hesiod and Homer, a Greek mirror of the Virgilian *rota*'s three components, which may be taken as an indication of how the way Theocritus is portrayed is determined by the traditional portrayal of Virgil. Whereas Donatus and Servius construct a hierarchical system, Filetico's equalizes: Theocritus is claimed to be as popular among his own people as Homer and Hesiod were among theirs. Thus, even at the very beginning of the *Vita*, we have an acceptance of the generic paradigm as defined by tradition, as well as a negotiation of it. The metaphoric description of Theocritean poetry as "fields" (*campis*, v. 4) is resumed in v. 11, where *pascua*, with its emphatic position, is the first word used to describe the theme of Theocritean poetry. The description of theme is expanded: in addition to "from what", we are told of "whom" Theocritus sang. On the basis of the Virgilian hypotext, *pascua* and the description of the shepherds as *plenos simplicitate* challenge the normative view of the ideal type of bucolic poetry, where the pastures and shepherds are considered signifiers of a higher level of meaning, the allegorical layer and message. Filetico insists that the simple, literal level is ideal and praiseworthy, and he "teases" Virgil by using a Virgilian verse, the incipit of the *Aeneid*, to stress the indisputable fact that, although Virgil may have been the defining, normative, poet of this genre, Theocritus was the inventor, his poetry is the archetype.

The climax of Filetico's negotiation of the generic norms is reached in vv. 17–22, where we find the reevaluation set out in a resolute manner. New conclusions about status are reached by reevaluating the intent and, consequently, the success criterion of bucolic poetry. The validity of the statement that Theocritus' way of writing bucolic poetry is *aptius*, more **appropriate**,

³⁷ See Hass 2013 for a more elaborate examination of Hesus and poetics.

than every other attempt depends on this new conception of intention. In the reappraised view, the intention underlying the composition of bucolic poetry is not literary imitation, but the imitation of actual shepherds and the depiction of actual pastures. Judged by this measure, Theocritus is invincible, Filetico states. The argument is prepared by the statement of popularity in vv. 1–4, mentioned above, and it is supported by listing, in vv. 25–28, prominent contemporary poets who recognized Theocritus' special gift.

In the examined passage of Helius Eobanus Hessus' dedicatory poem, we find the same mechanisms at work: In both texts we found a dependence on the traditional genre conception, which defines the focal points of the description of Theocritus and the terminology applied, but we also detected an attempt to liberate the description of Theocritus from the conventional conclusions about his poetry. Both texts attempt what may be regarded as a very conscious paradigm shift in pastoral genre conventions.

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LE VITE DI VARRONE NEI CORSI DI POMPONIO LETO



Di Maria Accame

This article discusses the Lives of Varro compiled by Pomponio Leto in connection with his courses on De Lingua Latina. For the study of these Lives the dictata (i.e. the notes taken by Pomponio's students during his lessons) preserved in cod. Vat. lat. 3415 are of primary importance. The autograph Life found in cod. Vat. lat. 3311 is especially interesting for us, since it offers a much shorter version of the text. According to a widespread tradition, some dictata portray Pomponio apologizing in advance to his listeners for the mistakes he may commit in his lectures on Varro.

I corsi sul *De lingua Latina* tenuti da Pomponio Leto sono preceduti da una vita sull'autore antico che non possiamo a rigore considerare un *accessus* all'autore, ma che vuole essere una introduzione autonoma al commento in cui sono fornite varie informazioni sulla figura dell'autore, sulla sua opera ed anche sul significato che questa ha avuto tra gli stessi antichi. Penso per es. al bellissimo passo degli *Academica* (1,3,9) citato da Pomponio in cui Cicerone si rivolge all'antico erudito come a colui che in certo modo ha ricondotto i romani in patria. Ricorrono nella vita varie citazioni di classici, oltre a Cicerone sono ricordati Plinio e Quintiliano.

I corsi varroniani sono tramandati negli appunti degli allievi che in ambiente romano prendono il nome di *dictata* che equivale a *recollectae* (raccolta di appunti per lo più scolastici). Escluso il codice Vat. lat. 3311 che reca il testo dei libri VIII–X del *De lingua Latina* autografo di Pomponio con annotazioni nei margini, gli altri testimoni sono appunto *dictata*, alcuni originali, altri copie, presi dagli allievi durante le lezioni. Gli otto manoscritti più un incunabolo sono stati accuratamente descritti da Virginia Brown nel *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum* la quale ha restituito anche il testo delle *Vite* che precedono i corsi.¹

¹ Brown 1980, 467–474. I testimoni sono i seguenti: Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale IV A 1 (= N); Trier, Stadtbibliothek 1110 (2037) (= T); Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana 47, 15 (= L); Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3415 (= V); Roma Biblioteca Angelica 1348 (T 4 13) (= A); El Escorial g. III. 27 (= E); Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3311 (= V¹); Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostoli-

Secondo Vladimiro Zabughin il commento ad *De lingua Latina* rappresenta “il momento culminante di tutta l’opera scientifica di Pomponio”, lo studioso inizia il suo capitolo dedicato ai corsi varroniani con la citazione di una frase della lettera di Marcantonio Sabellico al Morosini: “Cum Varrone diu luctatus est” (Si confrontò a lungo con lo studio di Varrone) e il Sabellico aggiunge: “ut in integrum restitueret” (per riproporlo nella sua integrità).²

Il carattere enciclopedico di un’opera come il *De lingua Latina* dovette suscitare in modo particolare l’interesse di Pomponio: l’origine delle parole, la loro evoluzione, e presenti un po’ ovunque i riferimenti mitologici, geografici, storici, osservazioni sul mondo della natura. Una serie svariata di interessi che spinge Zabughin ad osservare: “Nelle sue lezioni Pomponio parla di tutto, dalla cosmogonia e dall’origine degli dei giù fino alle ricette culinarie”,³ e condivide persino l’interesse per ciò che riguarda le vite e le abitudini degli animali. Queste ultime sono integrate dalle osservazioni personali che aveva potuto ricavare dall’esperienza del viaggio in Scizia.⁴

Una delle versioni più complete della vita è quella presente nel *dictatum* originale conservato nel codice V, f. 1v.⁵ Questo *dictatum* e quello trasmesso nel codice E sono gli unici appunti originali, cioè presi direttamente dagli allievi durante il corso delle lezioni. Presentano infatti le varie caratteristiche degli originali, come per es. la frequenza delle cancellature, frasi che talvolta rimangono sospese, numerosi interventi correttori ecc., errori particolari della trasmissione orale come per es. gli errori di udito. Nel codice V, f. 1v la vita inizia con queste parole:

M. T(erentius Varro) longe omnium nostrorum eruditissimus habitus est Graecis et Latinis litteris^(a). Bello pyratice sub Pompeio militavit, a quo ob res bene gestas navali corona donatus^(b), bello civili ductor exercitus fuit^(c). Publicis negociis occupatus studia litterarum non praetermisit, omne genus scribendi tentavit, quo nemo unquam apud nos excepto Didimo Calcentero plura scripsit.

(a) cfr. Quint. *inst.* 10,1,95 (b) Plin. *nat.* 7,115 (c) Caes. *civ.* 2,17

(Marco Terenzio Varrone è stato ritenuto di gran lunga il più erudito di tutti nelle lettere greche e latine. Durante la guerra piratica militò

ca Vaticana, Vat. lat. 1522 (= V²); Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Inc. IV 136 (Arm. 367. 1209) H 15858[I], HC 5953, ISTC iv00096000.

² Zabughin 1910–1912, 112. Per l’epistola del Sabellico vd. Dell’Oro 2008, 201–219: 216 § 30.

³ Zabughin 1910–1912, 115.

⁴ Accame 2011, 39–55.

⁵ La vita di Varrone tramandata in V è edita in Accame 2008, 193–200. Il copista che ha vergato la maggior parte del codice è stato identificato nell’allievo di Pomponio e professore presso lo *Studium Urbis* Paolo Pompilio, vd. Chiabò 1986, 503–514.

sotto Pompeo, dal quale per le sue meritevoli azioni ricevette l'onore della corona navale. Nella guerra civile fu capo dell'esercito. Impegnato nelle funzioni pubbliche non trascurò lo studio delle lettere. Si cimentò in ogni genere d'opera e nessuno scrisse più di lui all'infuori di Didimo Calcentero.)⁶

Purtroppo il codice **E** comincia dal commento a *Ling.* V 85 (la parte iniziale è andata perduta) e non reca quindi una vita di Varrone. Nei codici **N**, **T** (scritto da Riccardo Gramano di Nickenich nel 1480), **L** questa parte della vita si presenta pressoché simile. Diverso è invece il testo recato dagli altri testimoni: questa prima parte è omessa nel codice **A**, è riassunta e rielaborata nei margini del codice autografo **V**¹ (ovviamente anche in **V**² che è copia dell'autografo), è diversa da quella contenuta nei margini dell'Inc. IV 136 della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

Nel passo iniziale della vita del codice **V**: “M. T(erentius Varro) [...] Latinis litteris” Pomponio tiene a ricordare la grande erudizione di Varrone sia nelle lettere greche che nelle latine a proposito della quale citerà più avanti il passo di Quintiliano *Inst.* 10,1,95. Nel riferimento alle *Latinae litterae* c'è probabilmente oltre all'influenza di Quintiliano anche la consapevolezza dell'argomento del suo corso, il *De lingua Latina*. Tra gli autori classici citati esplicitamente nel codice Vat. lat. 3233, autografo di Pomponio con note ad alcune orazioni di Cicerone, sono ricordati Varrone e il *De lingua Latina* (f. 61v). Così nelle annotazioni autografe al Lucano del codice Vat. lat. 3285 Pomponio ricorre a *Ling.* V 83–84 e VII 45 per notizie sui *pontifices* e i *flamines*,⁷ e reminiscenze del *De lingua Latina* le incontriamo in molti altri luoghi dei suoi commenti.

Zabughin, dopo aver tradotto un passo della vita varroniana che precede il corso sul *De lingua Latina* nel codice **V**, si sofferma a definire la personalità di Pomponio sottolineando il contrasto insito in lui tra la “modernità delle idee” e la “fiacchezza decrepita del metodo umanistico”, tra lo “scienziato anelante ad un sapere tutto nuovo” e “la sua erudizione [...] vasta, ma ingombrante, poderosa, caotica”. E aggiunge “Il capo dell'Accademia romana è uno degli uomini più moderni del Rinascimento [...] studia la lingua perché la vuole forte e severa, sobria, un po' arcaica, degna delle austere virtù degli antichi Quiriti”.⁸ Quale opera incarnava meglio del *De lingua Latina* gli intenti, il gusto, la ricerca delle austere virtù degli antichi? Dietro l'espressione “eruditissimus Latinis litteris” troviamo il riconoscimento dell'idea varroniana di *antiquitates*, come osservava Arnaldo Momigliano, che non si limita al recupero dell'antica lingua latina, ma è rivolta ad un si-

⁶ Per la vita tramandata nel codice **V** cito la traduzione data in Accame 2008, 195–197.

⁷ Per il passo sui pontefici cfr. Zabughin 1909, 221.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 250–251.

stematico studio della vita Romana attraverso la testimonianza offerta dalla lingua, ma anche dalla letteratura e dal costume. Nel Medioevo si era persa proprio l'idea varroniana di *antiquitates* nel senso di una civiltà recuperata per mezzo di una sistematica ricerca delle reliquie del passato. Il concetto di "antiquario" come appassionato collezionista e studioso delle tradizioni antiche – sebbene non "storico" –, osserva Momigliano, è uno dei concetti tipici dell'Umanesimo del XV e del XVI secolo.⁹

Poco dopo, nella vita del codice V, f. 1v, Pomponio riprende le parole citate all'inizio riportando un noto passo di Quintiliano (*inst.* 10,1,95) in cui è celebrata, oltre alla perizia nella lingua latina, la conoscenza di ogni antichità sia Greca che Latina e viene attribuito a Varrone il merito di aver contribuito più alla scienza che all'eloquenza, nella scienza era naturalmente compresa la conoscenza della lingua e della sua storia:

Consideratus vir et Romanorum litteratissimus auctore Fabio Quintiliano "peritissimus linguae Latinae et omnis antiquitatis et rerum Graecarum nostrarumque plus scientiae collaturus [collativus *cod.*] quam eloquentiae".

(Fu considerato il più letterato tra i Romani come afferma Fabio Quintiliano "espertissimo nella lingua latina, in ogni antichità e nelle questioni greche e nostre, contribuì di più alla scienza che all'eloquenza".)

E Pomponio ammirava proprio questa *scientia* delle antichità più che l'eloquenza di Varrone sul quale forse amava plasmare la propria vita e la propria opera. Anch'egli come Varrone non era oratore né poeta, ma si limitava a fare l'insegnante universitario. Nel commentare l'*Ars poetica* di Orazio (codice Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. lat. 1496), a proposito dei vv. 47–48:

dixeris egregie notum si callida verbum / reddiderit iunctura novum]
Antiquis magis utar quam delecter – ut ait Varro (*ling.* 5, 9) – poeticis
magis delecter quam utar

(sarai egregiamente stimato se un costrutto attento darà nuovo aspetto a parole comuni] delle parole antiche mi servo più che dilettermi – come dice Varrone – delle poetiche mi diletto più che servirmene)

Pomponio sente la necessità di richiamare un'osservazione di Varrone a proposito delle parole poetiche che sembrano quasi messe alla pari o certamente considerate di minore utilità dei termini antichi ai quali Varrone dava notevole importanza. Sulla linea di Varrone a quali parole doveva essere prevalentemente rivolta l'attenzione dell'insegnante Pomponio? Probabil-

⁹ Momigliano 1955, 73–75.

mente agli *antiqua verba*. Col richiamare il passo di Varrone Pomponio confermava l'interesse per la lingua in quanto storia del linguaggio, studio dei termini.

Nelle prime parole della vita e poi nella citazione del passo di Quintiliano (*inst.* 10, 1, 95) viene lodata la perizia di Varrone sia nelle lettere greche che nelle latine: “eruditissimus [...] Graecis et Latinis litteris”, in Quintiliano: “peritissimus linguae Latinae [...] quam eloquentiae”. Pomponio vuole qui ricordare le vaste conoscenze che Varrone aveva delle lettere e delle antichità greche, nel *De lingua Latina* sono numerose le ricorrenze di parole greche di cui spesso viene dato il corrispondente termine latino. Di fatto Pomponio si mostra innamorato della Grecia, non solo per le lunghe “catene” che costellano i margini dei suoi codici (penso per es. alle citazioni di Erodoto e Diodoro Siculo sulla geografia e mitologia greche), ma soprattutto per la dichiarazione con cui si apre la vita di Stazio nel codice Mazzatosta Vat. lat. 3279 f. 1r che rivela l'importanza data da Pomponio allo studio della lingua e della letteratura greca. In questo passo è riconosciuta l'importanza della lingua greca considerata salvatrice delle memorie dei Romani che altrimenti sarebbero andate perdute:

Scripsere veteres sed neglegentia quadam talia posteris contempsere.
Nec mirum: nam illustria Romanorum monumenta paene extincta sunt
et, nisi graeca lingua opem tulisset, de tam magna re p(ublica) atque
imperio maior pars desideraretur.

(Scrissero gli antichi, ma per una sorta di trascuratezza i posteris tennero queste cose in poco conto. Non c'è da meravigliarsi, infatti le illustri memorie dei romani si sono quasi estinte e se la lingua greca non avesse portato aiuto si sarebbe lamentata la perdita della maggior parte di una così grande repubblica e di un tale impero.)

Pomponio pensava forse a quegli autori greci che hanno scritto di storia romana come Diodoro Siculo che doveva leggere nella traduzione di Poggio,¹⁰ a Dionigi di Alicarnasso a cui poteva accedere nella versione di Lapo Biraghi,¹¹ alle *Vite* romane di Plutarco o alle *Storie* di Polibio? Nella lode rivolta a Varrone ritenuto da Pomponio, sulla scorta di Quintiliano, ma anche in base alle personali conoscenze, espertissimo nelle lettere greche c'è forse oltre ad ammirazione un recondito desiderio di emulazione che però Pom-

¹⁰ La traduzione di Poggio Bracciolini, edita a Bologna nel 1472, presentava una divisione dei libri diversa da quella delle edizioni moderne di Diodoro.

¹¹ Lapo Birago (Lampugnino Birago) dedicò a Paolo II la sua traduzione in latino delle *Antiquitates Romanae* di Dionigi di Alicarnasso che fu utilizzata spesso da altri traduttori; vd. Miglio 1968.

ponio non avrebbe potuto pienamente esaudire. La conoscenza che l'umanista aveva del greco rimaneva alle nozioni di base.

Sono importanti per la storia degli studi greci di Pomponio i codici ciceroniani Vat. lat. 3233 e Vat. lat. 3229. Nel primo, autografo, che contiene alcune orazioni di Cicerone si incontrano disposte in fila nove parole greche accompagnate dalla corrispondente traduzione latina, alcune di queste provengono dalle *Antiquitates* di Dionigi di Alicarnasso (*ant.* 1, 67, 3): “αἰτέω (= αἰτέω) peto; μυχὸς penetrare; ἑρκείος (= ἑρκείος) Iuppiter quia intra vallum colebatur ἑρκίος (sic, per ἑρκος) septum” (αἰτέω chiedo, μυχὸς interno, ἑρκείος Giove perché era venerato all'interno del vallo, ἑρκος recinto). Più avanti a proposito dei Penati Pomponio propone alcune spiegazioni delle loro denominazioni greche non prive di errori: accenti sbagliati, strane traslitterazioni in latino (va comunque tenuto presente che alcune grafie sono dovute alla diversa pronuncia del greco nel Quattrocento).¹² Con i chirografi ciceroniani siamo negli anni 1470–80. Nel commento dello Stazio Mazzatosta (Vat. lat. 3279), databile probabilmente al 1470–71, notiamo che spesso le parole greche sono tradotte in modo corretto o ci sono osservazioni sulla resa in latino, come per es. nel caso del dittongo οἰ (*Theb.* 7,268, f. 102v):

Schoenon habent notique colunt vestigia campi] hic Schoeneus schoenon condidit: multi dicunt “schineum” ignorantes quod οἰ graeca diphthongus vertitur apud latinos in oe ut οἶνευς (= Οἶνευς) oeneus (= Oeneus).

(Schoeneus dà schoenon: molti dicono “schineum” non sapendo che il dittongo greco οἰ è reso presso i latini con *oe*, come Οἶνευς (= Oineo) Oeneus (= Eneo).)

Nel 1467 Pomponio era partito per Venezia, dove era già stato alcuni anni prima, nel 1461–64, sperando di poter salpare per la Grecia: nella sua *Difesa*, scritta in occasione delle accuse che lo vedevano coinvolto con l'Accademia nella congiura contro il Pontefice, dirà ricordando l'affetto di uno dei suoi allievi: “Sequebatur vestigia mea, adhaerebat, amabat, diligebat, venerabatur, et discessum meum in Greciam revocare et expugnare saepenumero tentavit” (Egli seguiva le mie orme, mi stava vicino, mi amava, mi apprezzava, mi adorava, e tentò spesso di dissuadermi dal partire per la Grecia).¹³ Questo amore dunque per il mondo greco penso che lo avesse spinto a mettere in evidenza nel delineare la figura di Varrone la sua cono-

¹² Dati interessanti per la pronuncia del greco nel Quattrocento si possono ricavare dagli appunti degli allievi, come nel caso dei codici del commento varroniano V ed E che conservano *dictata* originali, vd. Accame Lanzillotta 1993, 322–323; Martellotti 1983, 241–248, 250–253.

¹³ Tra le accuse vi era anche quella di eresia e di sospettata sodomia nei confronti di uno dei giovani che gli era stato affidato, un Michiel o un Contarini; cfr. Carini 1894, 186.

scenza delle antichità greche, e proprio questo apprezzamento contribuisce a smentire le “dicerie intorno al preteso misellenismo del Leto”.¹⁴

Nella vita del codice V, dopo avere elogiato la dottrina di Varrone, Pomponio vuole metterne in evidenza l’attività politica col ricordare la partecipazione al seguito di Pompeo alla guerra contro i pirati ricevendo come premio l’onore della corona navale. Fonte di questa notizia è Plinio *nat.* 7, 115 “quam (*coronam*) cum eidem Magnus Pompeius piratico ex bello navalem dedit” (la corona navale che gli conferì Pompeo Magno per i meriti da lui conseguiti nella guerra contro i pirati). Ricorda poi il suo coinvolgimento nella guerra civile tra Cesare e Pompeo in Spagna (le fasi della guerra sono narrate dallo stesso Cesare nel *Bellum civile* 2, 17–21). Quasi fosse un vanto personale, Pomponio ci tiene ad aggiungere che, nonostante gli impegni delle cariche pubbliche, Varrone era riuscito a non trascurare gli studi, anzi si era cimentato in ogni genere d’opera e nessuno in questo lo aveva superato all’infuori di Didimo Calcentero, noto per la sua erudizione e l’immensa dottrina, a cui fu attribuito un gran numero di opere. Su questo autore che aveva colpito molti per la tradizione della sua versatilità, in una delle redazioni della sua *Ars grammatica*, quella conservata nel codice Vat. lat. 2727, Pomponio parlando delle origini della parola grammatica aggiunge un aneddoto secondo il quale Didimo Calcentero avrebbe osato muovere delle critiche a Cicerone e ricorda la quantità delle sue opere:

(f. 4r) Didimus Calcenterius ausus Ciceronem reprehendere de observatione artis grammaticae duo milia librorum aedidit et de minutissimis rebus volumina integra, de haspirationis nota multis chartis diseruit.

(Didimo Calcentero avendo osato riprendere Cicerone sull’arte grammatica scrisse duemila libri e su molti particolari interi volumi, discusse in molte carte del problema dell’aspirazione.)

Non ci deve meravigliare che Didimo riuscisse a scrivere tante opere grammaticali, probabilmente l’espressione (V, f. 1v) “quo nemo unquam apud nos excepto Didimo Calcentero plura scripsit” (e nessuno scrisse più di lui all’infuori di Didimo Calcentero) deriva da una simile considerazione presente in Quintiliano (*inst.* 1, 9, 20): “Nam Didymo, quo nemo plura scripsit” (Infatti a Didimo, che nessuno superò nello scrivere ...).

Più avanti nella vita tramandata nel codice V Pomponio osserva come delle numerose opere di Varrone rimangano soltanto tre volumi sull’agricoltura integri e sei mutili e corrotti sulla lingua latina e l’analogia, e aggiunge “quae si ut fuere corrigenda forent revocandus esset ab inferis M(arcus) Varro” (se dovessero correggersi secondo la loro forma originaria

¹⁴ Zabughin 1910–1912, 46.

si dovrebbe richiamare dagli inferi Marco Varrone). Pomponio aveva curato l'*editio princeps* del *De lingua Latina* che non reca indicazione di luogo e di data, ma che uscì molto probabilmente a Roma presso il tipografo Georg Lauer nel 1471 (HC 15852*), ebbe più di una ristampa a Roma intorno al 1472 (C 5954) e a Venezia nel 1474 (H 15858 [I], C 5953), a Parma nel 1480 (HC 11903*), ed altre. Sembra che Pomponio per la ricostruzione del testo abbia tenuto presente un codice affine per le lezioni a quello conservato nella Biblioteca Universitaria di Torino n. 1394 (I, III, 10).¹⁵

Nella lettera di dedica a Bartolomeo Platina presente nell'edizione da lui curata (1471) Pomponio, dopo aver citato Varrone come *togatorum* (tra i cittadini romani) *litteratissimus*, ricorda la sua grande produzione e la statua eretta in suo onore nella biblioteca palatina, elenca brevemente il contenuto del *De lingua Latina* distinto per libri e aggiunge alcune precisazioni relative ai suoi eventuali emendamenti:

Eos (*libros*) monitu Laelii Vallensis magnae et singularis doctrinae legi summa cura ac diligentia. Ubi librarii litteras mutaverant correxi, in his quae inscitia penitus corruptit non ausus sum manum imponere ne forte magis depravarem. Addidi tamen indicem per ordinem litterarum ut qui non nimis curiosi sint facilius inveniant.

(Seguendo il monito di Lelio Vallense, uomo di grande e singolare dottrina, ho letto (*i libri di Varrone*) con grande cura e diligenza. Dove i copisti hanno cambiato le lettere ho corretto, nelle cose che l'ignoranza ha corrotto del tutto non ho osato apporre le mani per non corromperle di più. Ho aggiunto poi un indice secondo l'ordine alfabetico perché i più interessati potessero orientarsi più facilmente.)¹⁶

Nella vita del codice V, dopo aver accennato agli scritti superstiti di Varrone e aver dichiarato che per correggerli veramente si sarebbe dovuto richiamare dagli Inferi lo stesso autore, si esprime in modo da richiamare il tenore del passo della lettera al Platina:

Nos in praesentia non audemus, <non ita> temerarii (non adeo temerarii *corr. Brown*) sumus ut omnia aut emendar<e> aut interpretari pol-

¹⁵ Ferrero 1949–1950, 130–160.

¹⁶ Varro, *De lingua Latina*, cura Pomponii Laeti, Romae 1471, lettera di dedica a Bartolomeo Platina; in Botfield 1861, 138. Lelio Vallense (della Valle), giurista e letterato, ebbe contatti con l'ambiente dotto romano della seconda metà del Quattrocento e richiamò l'attenzione di Pomponio sul *De lingua Latina* di Varrone; vd. Gatta 1989, 757–758. Silvia Rizzo (Rizzo 1973, 229–230 nt. 2) nota che Pomponio nella lettera prefatoria dell'edizione dichiara di aver corretto “ubi librarii litteras mutaverunt” (quindi le corrotte meccaniche aventi origine paleografica) e di non essere intervenuto, nel timore di peggiorare il testo, sulle corrotte più profonde.

liceamur [pollicemur *cod.*]; verum ea quae penitus inscitia non depravavit, si pervenire eo poterimus, aperire conabimur.

(Noi al momento non osiamo, non siamo così temerari da promettere di emendare o interpretare tutto; ma le cose che l'ignoranza non ha interamente corrotto, se riusciremo ad arrivarci, cercheremo di spiegarle.)

Nella sottoscrizione dell'edizione di Varrone (1471) troviamo il solito invito al lettore a correggere i luoghi rimasti poco chiari, qui ricorre di nuovo l'espressione cara a Pomponio *manum imponere* per "emendare" presente nella lettera di dedica al Platina:

Parce qui legeris, si aliqua minus polita inveneris. Nam ita ex omni parte, sive saeculum fecerit sive librarii, volumen quodvis corruptum erat, ut necesse fuerit aucupari hinc inde sententias. Ideo sine rubore veniam dabis et errorum manum inponas Pomponius tuus orat. Vale

(Perdona tu che leggi, se trovi qualcosa di meno corretto. Infatti in ogni parte, sia colpa del tempo o dei copisti, ogni volume era corrotto per cui è stato necessario raccogliere qua e là i significati. Perciò il tuo Pomponio ti prega di perdonare senza arrossire e di intervenire sugli errori.)¹⁷

Anche nella conclusione della vita del codice V ricorre questa richiesta di venia al lettore a cui si unisce una citazione tratta dalla *Rhet. Her.* (4,3,4): si fa riferimento all'atleta che è invitato a correre comunque la sua gara piuttosto che desistere rimanendo ai cancelli di partenza:

Si non tanti ingenii vires attigerimus, ignoscite queaso. Laudabilis enim est in Olympias aliquam partem stadii conficere quam territorium in ipsis carceribus, ut aiunt, desistere.

(Se non ci sarà possibile raggiungere il vigore di un così grande ingegno, vi prego di perdonarci. È più lodevole percorrere ad Olimpia una qualche parte dello stadio che impauriti rinunciare, come dicono, rimanendo ai cancelli di partenza.)

All'inizio della vita presente nel codice V vediamo che, dopo il ricordo di Didimo Calcentero, Pomponio fa riferimento alla scultura raffigurante Varrone che Asinio Pollione, reduce dal trionfo sui Parti volle inserire tra le *imagines* dei più celebri poeti del passato, all'interno della biblioteca pubblica eretta nel tempio della Libertà nei pressi del Foro. Al riguardo Pomponio cita Plinio (*nat.* 7,115) e mette in evidenza come solo l'immagine di Varrone rappresentasse un uomo ancora vivente:

¹⁷ Botfield 1861, 138. Per l'espressione *manum imponere* vd. Rizzo 1973, 261, 284.

In singularis doctrinae praemium huius viventis Varronis imago in biblioteca posita est quae prima, ut inquit Pli(nius) “de manubiis Romae a Marco Asinio Pollione publicata fuit”.

(Come premio della sua singolare dottrina un’immagine di questo Varrone ancora vivente fu collocata nella biblioteca che per prima, come racconta Plinio “col ricavato del bottino di guerra a Roma fu aperta al pubblico da Asinio Pollione”).

Subito dopo ci dice quanto durò la sua vita e ci informa che Dionigi di Alicarnasso è stato suo liberto:

Vixit supra centesimum annum^(a), cuius libertus fuit Dionisius Alicarnasseus historicus cuius indicio historias scripsit^(b).

(a) cfr. Val. Max. 8,7,3 (b) cfr. Dion. Hal. *ant. rom.* 1,7

(Visse oltre i cento anni; fu suo liberto lo storico Dionigi di Alicarnasso, il quale dietro sua indicazione scrisse le storie.)

La notizia riguardante la morte di Varrone che sarebbe avvenuta oltre i cento anni (la stessa età ricorre in altre redazioni della vita: nei codici N, T, L) è dovuta forse a una considerazione di Valerio Massimo il quale afferma “non annis, quibus saeculi tempus aequavit, quam stilo vivacior fuit” (Non fu più longevo per gli anni, nei quali raggiunse il secolo che per lo scrivere), anche se Valerio Massimo dice soltanto che Varrone raggiunse l’età di un secolo mentre Pomponio afferma che avrebbe superato i cento anni. Nel manoscritto V¹ autografo di Pomponio, nella vita disposta sul margine destro è detto “Vixit C et IX annos. Nemo plura scripsit [...]” (Visse centonove anni. Nessuno scrisse più di lui [...]) e la stessa dichiarazione troviamo nella vita dell’Inc. IV 136 “Vixit C et VIII annis; quo nemo plura scripsit [...]”, questa notizia relativa ai 109 anni appare alquanto insolita.

Che Dionigi di Alicarnasso sia stato liberto di Varrone ed abbia scritto la sua opera seguendo il suo suggerimento (osservazione presente anche nella vita dell’Inc. IV 136 e negli altri testimoni) non è attestato nelle fonti. Dionigi si limita a dire di essere stato a Roma per un periodo di ventidue anni, di aver imparato la lingua dei Romani e conosciuto i loro scritti, ma non ricorda Varrone tra i suoi benefattori (*ant.* 1,7,2). Nella traduzione delle *Antiquitates* eseguita da Lapo Biraghi consultata molto probabilmente da Pomponio troviamo riportate fedelmente le notizie del testo greco senza alcun riferimento al rapporto con Varrone.¹⁸

¹⁸ Birago 1532, 5: “Ego in Italiam traiciens quum dissolutum est sub Caesare Augusto bellum civile centesima octogesima septima Olympiade ac deinde tempus illud omne quod est anni duo et viginti usque ad hoc Romae commoratus sermonemque vernaculum Romanum ediscens et litterarum indigenarum scientiam omni eo tempore iis quae spectarent ad hanc materiam intendi, alia ex doctrina eloquentissimorum virorum cum quibus versabar

Nel codice **V**¹ la vita si presenta alquanto più concisa:

(f. 1r) Familia Varronum plebeia fuit, nobilis tamen et rebus gestis clara; in ea natus est M. Varro, litteris et militiae incubuit, pyratice bello sub Pompeio militavit et initio civilis belli in Hispania post Caesaris partium fuit. Villam habuit in Casinate quam vicia M(arci) Antonii profanarunt. Vir consummatus et togatorum litteratissimus habitus^(a). Vixit C et IX annos. Nemo plura scripsit; omnes materias fere tentavit. Hic liber est linguae Latinae septimus,¹⁹ in quo et in sequentibus duobus de analogia et anomalia et quae contra eas dicantur disputat.

(a) Cic. *Phil.* 2,104–105.

(La famiglia di Varrone fu plebea, nobile tuttavia e illustre per le imprese compiute; in questa è nato M. Varrone, attese alle lettere e alla milizia, militò nella guerra piratica al seguito di Pompeo e quando iniziò la guerra civile in Spagna seguendo il partito di Cesare. Ebbe una villa nel cassinese profanata dai vizi di Marco Antonio. Fu ritenuto un uomo perfetto e tra i Romani molto erudito. Visse centonove anni. Nessuno scrisse più di lui; affrontò tutti gli argomenti. Questo è il settimo sulla lingua latina, qui e nei seguenti due discute sull'analogia e l'anomalia e delle obiezioni a questi principi.)

Sono tralasciate le notizie tratte da Plinio riguardanti la statua di Varrone, la definizione della dottrina varroniana presente in Quintiliano (*inst.* 10,1,95), il noto passo degli *Academica* di Cicerone (*ac.* 1,3,9) e la domanda di venia da parte di Pomponio qualora fosse incappato in alcuni errori nel tentativo di chiarire e interpretare il testo. La diversità più evidente rispetto alla vita di **V** e degli altri testimoni è nella notizia, data qui in una breve frase, della villa di Varrone a Cassino profanata da Marco Antonio. La fonte è Cicerone *Phil.* 2, 104 “At quam multos dies in ea villa turpissime es perbacchatus! Ab hora tertia bibebatur, ludebatur, vomebatur” (E per quanti giorni in quella villa ti abbandonasti alle più invereconde gozzoviglie ! dalle otto del mattino si cominciava a trincare, a giocare, a vomitare).

percipiens, alia vero ex historiis cunctorum sumens quicumque laudatissimi Romanorum scripsere” (Essendo arrivato in Italia quando Cesare Augusto aveva terminato la guerra civile nella centottantesima Olimpiade ed essendomi trattenuto a Roma per ventidue anni fino ad ora, imparando la lingua romana e la scienza delle lettere del luogo attesi per tutto quel tempo alle cose che riguardavano questa materia, ricevendo alcune conoscenze dalla dottrina di uomini molto eloquenti con i quali mi intrattenevo, altre ricavandole dalle storie scritte dai più stimati Romani).

¹⁹ Qui Pomponio indica come settimo il libro ottavo, era allora diffusa una diversa numerazione dei libri forse perché il libro quinto, che è il primo dei libri che ci sono stati tramandati, veniva considerato un prologo ed escluso quindi dalla numerazione.

La citazione del noto passo della *Philippica* è riportata in parte testualmente nella vita che precede il corso nel codice N dopo il ricordo del passo degli *Academica* (1,3,9):

(f. 1r) Cicero actionum sexta in Antonium de villa Varronis occupata ab Antonio: “O tecta ipsa misera ‘quam dispari domino’ – quamquam quo iste dominus – sed tamen quam a dispari tenebantur. Studiorum enim suorum M. Varro voluit esse illud, non libidinum deversorium. Quae in illa villa ante dicebantur, quae cogitabantur, quae litteris mandabantur! Iura populi Romani, monumenta maiorum, omnis sapientiae ratio omnisque doctrina”.^(a)

(a) Cic. *Phil.* 2,104–105

(Cicerone nella sesta orazione contro Antonio a proposito della villa di Varrone occupata da Antonio dice: “O casa proprio sventurata, ‘da un padrone quanto diverso’ – sennonché, come chiamare costui padrone? –, ad ogni modo, da una persona quanto diversa era occupata! Ché un ritiro per i suoi studi, non già per le dissolutezze, volle farne M. Varrone. Che conversazioni si tenevano prima in quella villa, in quali meditazioni era occupata la mente, che opere si scrivevano! Opere di diritto, di antichità romane, di filosofia e di ogni altro ramo del sapere.)

Pomponio sembra essere stato colpito anche in questo caso dalle parole di Cicerone in cui viene elogiata la dedizione agli studi che regnava in quella villa quando era amministrata da Varrone e sembra condividere il rimpianto di Cicerone per tutto ciò che era ormai scomparso “Quae in illa villa antea dicebantur, quae cogitabantur, quae litteris mandabantur”, e Cicerone ricorda gli argomenti di quelle opere “iura populi Romani, monumenta maiorum, omnis sapientiae ratio omnisque doctrinae”.

La vita presente nell’Inc. IV 136 inizia con le stesse parole del testo tramandato dal codice autografo **V**¹ (con qualche variante formale: es. “piratico bello sub Pompeio militavit” **V**¹; “bello pyratice sub Pompeio praefectus quarundam navium fuit” **Inc.**), entrambe le vite ricordano che Varrone all’inizio della guerra civile aveva seguito il partito di Cesare.

L’estensore della vita dell’incunabolo si sofferma in modo diverso nel fare riferimento alla villa di Varrone: non è citato per esteso il passo di Cicerone richiamato nel codice di Napoli, ma vi si accenna appena, anche se qui si dice che la casa fu ritenuta *sacrosancta* proprio per il tipo di vita condotta da Varrone il quale *litteratissimus continentissimae vitae fuit*:

(Inc. IV 136, f. 44v) Villam habuit in agro Casinate quam Marcus Cicero domicilium et ruris et omnis sanctimoniae appellat^(a). Mar(cus) enim Varro praeter litteras in quibus appellatus est omnium togatorum litteratissimus continentissimae vitae fuit adeo ut eius domus sacro-

sancta fuerit habita, quam Marcus Antonius mortalium immodestissimus profanavit.

(a) Cic. *Phil.* 2,104.

(Ebbe una villa nel cassinese che Cicerone chiama residenza di campagna e di ogni santità. Marco Varrone infatti, oltre ad essersi dedicato alle lettere nelle quali fu ritenuto il più dotto tra i romani, condusse una vita talmente sobria da far definire la sua casa ‘sacrosanta’, casa che Marco Antonio uomo senza ritegno profanò.)

Verso la fine della vita, l’estensore del commento dell’Inc. IV 136 fa riferimento alla grande conoscenza che aveva Varrone delle lettere greche e latine, e ricorda come Cicerone avesse dichiarato che Varrone era capace di declamare *ex tempore* in greco, notizia quest’ultima che non troviamo nelle opere di Cicerone. Anche qui c’è il ricordo della permanenza di Dionigi di Alicarnasso nella casa di Varrone per 35 anni e del suo affrancamento dalla schiavitù.

Non posso non ricordare il famoso passo degli *Academica* (1,3,9) che è riportato in alcuni dei nove testimoni (i codici **N**, **T**, **L**, **V**) ed è richiamato anche nell’orazione scritta dall’allievo Pietro Marso in occasione della morte del maestro,²⁰ in cui Cicerone celebra l’antico scrittore con parole ricche di pathos:

(V, f. 1v) M(arcus) Tu(ullius) cum multis in locis tum precipue in IV Achademicorum libro in haec verba doctrinae Varronis testis locupletissimus est: “Nos in nostra Urbe peregrinantes errantesque tanquam hospites tui libri quasi domum deduxerunt, [et] ut possemus aliquando qui et ubi essemus agnoscere; tum aetatem patriae tum descriptiones temporum tum domesticam et bellicam disciplinam tum sedes regionum locorum tum omnium humanarum divinarumque rerum nomina genera officia causas (causis *cod.*) aperuisti, plurimumque et poetis nostris omnino Latini<s> et litteris et verbis luminis attulisti atque ipse varium et elegans omni fere numero poema fecisti philosophiamque multis locis incohasti”.

(Noi eravamo come forestieri, in certo modo vaganti e sperduti nella nostra città e i tuoi libri ci hanno come ricondotti a casa in modo che potessimo riconoscere una buona volta chi siamo e dove siamo; ci hai mostrato sia l’età della patria sia la cronologia sia le istituzioni familiari e militari sia l’ubicazione delle regioni e dei luoghi sia i nomi, i generi, gli uffici di tutte le cose umane e divine, e hai portato molta luce alla comprensione dei nostri poeti e senza dubbio alle lettere e alla lingua latina e tu stesso hai composto versi vari ed eleganti quasi in

²⁰ Dykmans 1988, 85.

ogni metro e hai iniziato in molti luoghi delle tue opere lo studio della filosofia.)

Credo che Pomponio abbia declamato spesso questo elogio di Varrone nell'aula dell'antica Sapienza affollata di studenti che venivano da ogni parte d'Europa ad ascoltare le sue lezioni.

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POMPONIO LETO'S LIFE OF SALLUST:

between *vita* and *invectiva**



By Patricia J. Osmond

Pomponio's vita Salustii appeared in both the first printed edition of Sallust's opera (Rome: Eucharius Silber, 1490) and the presentation copy written for Agostino Maffei (BAV, Ms. Ottob. lat. 2989), and was frequently reprinted thereafter. It was by no means the first or only vita of Sallust in this period, for alongside the medieval vita auctoris that survived in manuscript and print, we also have the lives by Girolamo Squarzafico, Giovanni Crisostomo Soldi and Pietro Crinito. Pomponio's stands out, nevertheless, as the most critical of the author, perhaps because much of it was based on anti-Sallustian sources, especially the (ps.-) Ciceronian Oratio in Sallustium.

Sallust was one of Pomponio's favorite authors – or so it would appear from the considerable time and effort he devoted to his two monographs, the *Conspiracy of Catiline* and the *Jugurthine War*. In 1480 Pomponio taught a course on the *Jugurtha* at the *Studium Urbis*, from which we have the *dictata* taken down by a German student.¹ In 1490 he published at the press of Eucharius Silber what, for the times, might be called the first critical edition of Sallust's *opera*, including the two monographs, the surviving set of speeches and letters from the *Historiae* and the letters to Caesar: a work that, he tells us, had taken him some three years to complete, collating old manuscripts and carefully emending the text.² A handsome presentation copy of the manuscript, in the hand of Giacomo Aurelio Questenberg, was made for his patron, Agostino Maffei.³ In addition, Pomponio filled his own

* I thank Patrick Baker for his helpful comments on the original draft of the paper and Marianne Pade and Robert Ulery for many improvements in the editing and the translations of the *vitae* included in this article.

¹ See Osmond & Ulery 2003, 291–292.

² Rome: Eucharius Silber, 3 April 1490.

³ Ullman 1973 (2) and Pade 2011 (2). After the *editio princeps* of 1490 we find the *vita* in some 12 other reprints or new editions of Sallust in the last decade of the fifteenth century: 1492.6, 1492.7, 1493.1, 1493.8, [1493], 1494.11, 1495.1, [c. 1496–97], [c. 1497–99], 1497.1, [1497], 1500.7. It also appeared in numerous editions of the sixteenth century and later (1502, 1513, 1514, 1546, 1547, 1564). In these later editions, however, it often appears

copy of the 1490 edition of Sallust (BAV Inc. Ross. 441) with extensive annotations in the margins and in additional blank quires bound with the printed text, a commentary that is also found in the same or similar form in some four other copies of the 1490 edition of Sallust that belonged to his students or members of his humanist circle: New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 51414.2; Modena, Biblioteca Estense, gamma B 6 25; Fermo, Biblioteca Comunale “Marco Speziali”, 4C8 395-34390; and Glasgow, University Library, Sp Coll. BD7-e.1. Another copy in the Royal Library of Copenhagen, Inc. 3587, contains only a few notes from Pomponio’s commentary but at present it is the only one that, thanks to its coat of arms, can be traced to a specific owner, a member of the Stati family of Rome, perhaps Alessio Stati, a member of Pomponio’s circle.⁴

And yet, despite all the evidence we have of Pomponio’s interest in Sallust’s monographs and the importance they had in his teaching and editing, the *Vita Sallusti*, appended to his 1490 edition of Sallust’s *opera*, and also included, in a more correct version in the presentation manuscript to Maffei, gives the impression that he had little or no use for either the author or his work. Not only is it very short – shorter than most of his other lives – but it reads more like an *invectiva* than a *vita*.

C. Crispi Sallusti vita*

Crispus Sallustius genus ex Amiterno Sabinorum ducit,^a C. Sallustio patre genitus. Ex liberalibus artibus, in quibus educatus erat, praeter eruditionem nihil accepit: omnibus voluptatibus turpissime indulgit; paternam domum vendidit ut crimine adulterii se redimeret.^b Ex questura & tribunatu nullam laudem est adsecutus.^c Favente C. Caesare praetor Aphricam sortitus;^d provinciam expilavit et exhausit tantumque inde pecuniarum reportavit ut amoenissimos hortos sub Quirinale extra pomerium ad Collinam Portam titulo sui nominis empto loco habuerit^d atque adornaverit, non vulgares illius seculi & posterorum aetatibus delitias atque secessum,^f usque ad exactam aetatem libidinis avidus & potens. In amicitia varius & inconstans, saepius tamen livido dente momordit. Habitus est ore improbo & animo inverecundo.^g Manis Pompei Magni, existimans hac via se Cæsari gratiorem fore, lace rare ausus est, unde in Sallustium Laeneus Pompei libertus scripsit moresque eius sigillatim paucis vocabulis expressit: nebulonem, lurconem, popinionem, et lastaurum appellans.^h Vox postrema indicat

anonymously, under the title “C. Crispi Sallusti vita”, sometimes followed by the words “incerto auctore” (by an unidentified author). In fact, as Ullman 1973 (2), 366–367, pointed out, this led a modern scholar, A. Kurfess, to mistake it for an *ancient* life of Sallust.

⁴ See Osmond 2003, 2010, 2011 (1), 2011 (2) and 2011 (3); Farenga 2003; and Ulery 2003.

fuisse hominem validae libidinis. Scripsit stilo non abhorrente a veteribus.ⁱ Extant Coniuratio Catilinæ & bellum Iugurthinum & quaedam contiones [-cionem *ed.*] e libris bellorum Civilium. Ut secreta inimici fidelius intelligeret [-gere *ed.*], Terentiam a Cicerone repudiatam duxit uxorem [-re *ed.*], quae [et quae *ed.*] tertio nupsit Messalae Corvino.^j

*BAV, Ms. Ottobonianus lat. 2989, fol. 146. Readings from the *editio princeps* (Rome: Eucharius Silber, 3 IV 1490) are in square brackets.

^a Hier. chron.a. ann. Abr. 1930. ^b Ps. Cic. *in Sall.* 13-14. ^c *Ibid.* 15. 17. ^d *Bell. Afr.* 8,3. 97,1. ^e Ps. Cic. *in Sall.* 19. ^f Cf. Pomponius Laetus, *Excerpta a Pomponio dum ... reliquias ac ruinas Urbis ostenderet*, in de Rossi (ed.) 1882, 61, ll. 13-17, and in Valentini-Zucchetti (eds.) 4 (1953), 429, ll. 22-26. ^g quod eum [*i.e.*, Pompeium] oris probi, animo inverecundo [*sc.* Sallustius] scripisset Svet. *gramm.* 15. ^h *Ibid.* ⁱ Cf. Svet. *Aug.* 86. ^j Hier. *adv. Iov.* 1,49.

(Crispus Sallustius was born into a family of Sabine Amiternum, the son of Gaius Sallustius. From his study of the liberal arts, in which he had been educated, he received nothing other than (mere) learning; he indulged disgracefully in all pleasures; he sold the paternal home in order to save himself from the charge of adultery. From his quaestorship and tribunate he won no renown. As praetor, with the favor of Caesar, he obtained the province of Africa, which he plundered and drained and from which he carried away so much money that he became owner, after purchasing the site, of the very valuable gardens behind the Quirinal outside the *pomerium* near Porta Collina, which he adorned as a place of no ordinary delights and retreat for his own times and for posterity, greedy for pleasure and powerful right up to the end of his life. In friendship variable and inconstant, he often bit, however, with a spiteful tooth. He was considered to have an impudent face and shameless character. He dared tear to pieces the shade of Pompey the Great (believing this to be the way of pleasing Caesar), whence Lenaeus, Pompey's freedman, took up his pen against him, describing his character and habits in a few succinct words, calling him a good-for-nothing, glutton, tavern-goer and debauchee. The last term shows that he was exceedingly dissolute. He wrote in a style not unlike that of the ancients. His extant works are the *Conspiracy of Catiline*, *Jugurthine War*, and certain speeches from the books on the civil wars. In order that he might learn more faithfully the secrets of his enemy, he married Terentia, whom Cicero had divorced; her third husband was Messala Corvinus.)

We'll come back to this *vita* later but first, in order to see Pomponio's life in the context of other biographical sketches of Sallust, we need to take a look at the major *vitae Sallustianae* that existed in manuscript or print in the sec-

ond half of the fifteenth century. The field is vast, for Sallust had a virtually uninterrupted *fortuna* from antiquity through the Renaissance. He was read in the schools as a model of elegant Latinity, a source of historical and antiquarian information and a repository of moral precepts and *exempla*. He also provided a model for the writing of monographs (on a single historical event); and, especially during the age of the communes and in republican Florence, his account of Rome's rise to power (and subsequent decline) inspired many of the arguments promoting the ideals of civic humanism.⁵ More than 200 manuscripts of his work have survived from the late ninth to the late fifteenth century, of which close to 50 contain an *accessus*. With the advent of printing Sallust immediately led the bestsellers list of Roman historians: between 1470 and 1500 some 69 editions of his works were printed (according to current figures in the *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue*, including translations in modern European languages), compared with 21 of Livy, 10 of Florus and 16 of Caesar, and many of these editions of Sallust contained some kind of biographical sketch in dedicatory letters, prefaces or postfaces.

Given the abundance of material we can select only a few samples even from Pomponio's own time, but these may give us an idea of what readers of Sallust were learning about the author and, in turn, a better perspective on Pomponio's own contribution. I present them in chronological order, according to the sequence in which they were written.

Starting with the *accessus*, an introduction to the reading of an author that is found in a large number of Sallust manuscripts throughout the Middle Ages, we can see from the typology developed by Robert Ulery in the article on Sallust in the *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum* 8 (2003) that it can be divided into five different groups, depending upon the choice of topics (or questions), their number and order.

I. The traditional requirements of the *accessus* are stated, and each is then briefly answered for Sallust and the particular text (*Catilina* or *Iugurtha*). There are basically two forms: (a) traditional (up to early s. XI) with 6–8 requisites, and (b) "modern" (c. s. XI) reduced to 3 or 4. Either set may be named in one of three ways: (1) *auctor, titulus, materia, numerus librorum, qualitas* or *genus, intentio, utilitas, cui parti philosophiae*; (2) *quis, quid, ubi, cur, quomodo* etc.; and (3) *causa efficiens, causa materialis, causa formalis* etc.

II. (*Catilina*) *accessus* in four parts beginning directly with either (a) *materia*, (b) *intentio*, (c) *vita*, or (d) *ordo*.

⁵ See, for instance, the section on Sallust's *fortuna* in Osmond & Ulery 2003, 186–217, and the earlier articles by Osmond 1995 and Osmond 2000.

III. (*Iugurtha*) *accessus* beginning directly with (a) *materia*, (b) *materia* followed by *prologus*, (c) *materia* of *prologus*, (d) *intentio* of *prologus*.

IV. *Vita auctoris* alone

V. Historical introduction (perhaps arising from discussion of *ordo*).⁶

The *vita auctoris*, which was meant to provide a few facts (or conjectures) regarding origins, family and education, usually begins the series but not always, and in some cases even stands alone. *Titulus*, *materia*, *ordo librorum* and *qualitas* or *genus* deal briefly with the titles, subject matter, sequence and genre of the author's works, while *intentio* and *utilitas* seek to explain the purpose and utility of the works, especially in terms of moral philosophy. A few samples from the many *accessus* from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries illustrate some of the different typologies: type I.a.3, the traditional model with a full set of topics in what might be called the "scholastic" tradition; type II, which begins directly with *materia* and *intentio* but then moves into the *intentio* of the prologue; and type IV, which deals only with the life of the author.

Type I.a.3. Naples, Bibl. Nazionale, IV C 3, fol. 1r (s. XIV-XV)⁷

Circa istum librum salustii sex requiruntur, viz. causa efficiens, causa materialis, causa formalis, causa finalis, quis titulus libri, cui parti philosophie supponatur. Causa efficiens salustius fuit. Causa materialis est coniuratio Cateline [...] Titulus libri est Incipit liber salustii.

(Regarding this book of Sallust there are six requirements, that is, efficient cause, material cause, formal cause, final cause, the title of the book and the part of philosophy to which it belongs. Sallust was the efficient cause. The material cause was the conspiracy of Catiline. The title of the book is "Here begins the book of Sallust".)

Type II (abbreviated form). Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14515, fol. 125r (s. 12)⁸

In hoc opere intentio est Salustii describere bellum quod fuit inter Catilinam et Romanum populum. Causa autem intentionis [i.e., intentio] est hortari bonos ad defensionem patriae per exemplum Ciceronis et aliorum, malos vero deterrere ab impugnatione patriae per exemplum Catilinae. Et quia quidam imposuerant pigritiae quod maluit dicendo quam faciendo vitam parare, facit hunc prologum, in quo contra tales

⁶ Osmond & Ulery 2003, 194, with further bibliography on the medieval *accessus*.

⁷ On the manuscript see *ibid.*, 234: "Anonymus Italus (M. Ambrosius?)" and 241: "Laurentius Valla (?)".

dilaceratores excusat se, et extollendo omnibus modis ingenium ostendit callide suum otium hortando ad virtutem rei publicae plus profuisse quam aliorum negotium.

(In this work the intention [that is, the subject] of Sallust is to describe the war between Catiline and the Roman people. However, the cause of his intention [that is, his intention] is to exhort the good to defend the homeland through the example of Cicero and others, but to deter the bad from attacking the homeland by the example of Catiline. And because certain persons attributed to laziness that he preferred to pass his life in speaking rather than doing, he wrote this prologue in which he defends himself against such detractors, and, extolling the intellect in every way, cleverly shows that his leisure, by exhorting to virtue, had brought greater benefit to the republic than the public engagement of others.)

Type IV. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14477, fol. iv (s. 11)⁹

Mos erat Romanorum ut unusquisque nobilis apponeret filium suum studiis per XV annos. Quibus finitis interrogabantur utrum vellent manere in studiis an morari in re publica. Similiter iste Salustius fuit nobilissimus et tali modo a studiis retractus est et consul effectus. Qui cum diu mansisset in dignitate vidit maiorem laudem acquirere scribendo quam consulatum regendo. Qua de re verum retraxit se ad studium et complures historias composuit, de quibus tamen non utimur ulla nisi *Catilinaria* et *Jugurthina*.

(It was the custom of Romans that every noble would have his son educated for 15 years. When this period was over, they were asked whether they wished to continue their studies or engage in public life. Similarly this Sallust was very noble and thus was removed from his studies and made consul. When he had remained for a long time in a position of dignity, he saw that he acquired greater glory by writing than by holding the consulship. Doubtless for this reason he returned to his studies and composed several histories, none of which we use, however, except for the *Catilinaria* and *Jugurthina*.)

One especially interesting case is the *accessus* introducing a commentary attributed to the humanist scholar Ognibene da Lonigo at the time it was printed in Venice in 1500 but which Ulery has identified with a version already found in a manuscript dated s. XII–XIII (Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 411)

⁸ *Ibid.*, 228: “Anonymus Ratisbonensis B”.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 231: “Anonymus Monacensis B”.

and in several manuscripts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹⁰ The moralizing intent is obvious, as the author states that Sallust wrote his two works in order to refute those who attack their homeland out of ambition or avarice and to praise those who defend their homeland by good counsel. In the *Conspiracy of Catiline* the Roman revolutionary Catiline embodies the former; Cicero, consul in the year of the conspiracy (63 B.C.), the latter, and the lesson we must draw from the text is thus quite simple: seeing what a terrible end Catiline came to, we should not attack our homeland, and seeing the rewards that were bestowed on Cicero, we should defend our homeland. It is also a good example of the many pseudepigrapha, that is, writings, and in this case commentaries, that were mis-attributed to humanist scholars. Most likely, the printer of the 1500 edition believed that it would sell more copies if it were published under the name of a prominent humanist like Ognibene than as the anonymous work of an unknown medieval school teacher. It is possible, of course, that Ognibene himself may have used the commentary in his own classroom. What is surprising, nevertheless, is that no one, until Ulery pointed it out some ten years ago, recognized its medieval origins.

Various forms of the *accessus* continued to appear in Sallust manuscripts even in the early sixteenth century.¹¹ In the meantime, however, a new type of *vita* had already made its appearance in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries in the first humanist collections of “famous men”, that is, the lives of illustrious poets, orators, historians and other writers, which in turn had their models in the ancient collections of lives from Nepos and Suetonius to Jerome. In Avignon Petrarch’s friend Fra Giovanni Colonna composed his “De Salustio” for his (still unpublished) *libri de viris illustribus* (c. 1330–1338).¹² Petrarch himself included a little portrait of Sallust in his *Rerum memorandarum libri*, 1,17 (1343–1345).¹³

Crispus Salustius, nobilitatae veritatis historicus [AVG. civ. 1,5] – sic enim de illo apud auctores verissimos scriptum video – quo fidelius res Africae complecteretur, libros punicos perquisivit peregrinamque

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 225–227: “Anonymus Bernensis” (later attribution: “Omnibonus Leonicens”) and Ulery 2005. On the attribution of other commentaries to Ognibene, see Monfasani 1988.

¹¹ Some fifteenth-century manuscripts contain a collection of different *accessus* side by side with the new humanist *vitae*, as was the case in a manuscript that once belonged to Aulo Giano Parrasio, now Naples IV C 3 (see Osmond & Ulery 2003, 234). In the early sixteenth century one can still find traces of the *accessus* in Badius’s *De historia et eam concernentibus collecta per Ascensium* (see Osmond & Ulery 2003, 246–247).

¹² BAV, Barb. lat. 2351, fols. 121v–122v. See Ross 1970.

¹³ Copies of Sallust’s monographs and the two invectives were in Petrarch’s library, and it seems that another copy or copies of Sallust belonged to his friend, Fra Giovanni Colonna. Sabbadini 1967, 1, 24 and 27; 2, 56, and Ullman 1973 (3), 118–119.

linguam per interpretem flagranti studio scrutatus est; quin et maria transgressus dicitur, ut oculis suis crederet de conditionibus locorum. Bellum Iugurthinum coniurationemque Catilinae compendioso et ad unguem, ut dici solet, castigato complexus est stilo. Sed nullo famosior quam Historiarum libro, qui aetati quoque nostrae – ne tertium eius sileam dedecus – amissus est: veterum quidem testimonio illustris et apud nos solo iam nomine superstes.¹⁴

(Crispus Sallustius, historian of ennobled truth – for so I see written about him in the works of the most truthful authors – in order that he might comprehend more faithfully the affairs of Africa, eagerly searched for Punic books and through an interpreter accurately examined the foreign language with great passion; and furthermore, he is said to have crossed the seas in order that he might see and believe with his own eyes the local conditions. He encompassed the Jugurthine War and Conspiracy of Catiline in a style that is neat and compact, “down to a hair”, as one is accustomed to say. But [the book] of Histories, than which none was more famous, was lost to our age – lest I keep silent regarding its third cause of shame – [a book] illustrious indeed by the testimony of the ancients and now extant among us only in name.)

In the early fifteenth century the Paduan notary Sicco Polenton included a biography of Sallust in his *Scriptores illustres latinae linguae* (c. 1437), what has been called the first history of the major Latin authors. Although it was published only in 1928 by B.L. Ullman in the Papers and Monographs of the American Academy,¹⁵ it circulated widely in manuscript. One of the most popular lives of Sallust in Pomponio's own time was, in fact, an abridged version of this biography, printed under the title *Crispi Sallusti oratoris clarissimi vita* (Appendix, no. 1).¹⁶ It first appeared anonymously in an edition of Sallust's works printed in Venice in 1471 by Wendelin of Speyer. In a later edition of 1478 it was attributed to Gerolamo Squarzafico, a humanist scholar who was working chiefly in Venice in this period, collaborating with Venetian printers and publishers.¹⁷ Squarzafico was the author, or editor, of other lives (Catullus, Tibullus and Propertius; Petrarch and Boccaccio) and he probably was responsible for adapting Sicco's *vita* to a format suitable for a printed edition. Alongside the traditional categories of

¹⁴ Petrarch, ed.: Billanovich 1943, 1,17. Diphthongs have been added. The other two “causes of shame” are perhaps to be identified with the loss of the books of Varro and of Cicero's *De re publica* (see 1,15). Older editions have the reading “certum” instead of “tertium”.

¹⁵ Polenton, ed.: Ullman 1928.

¹⁶ Osmond & Ulery 2003, 250–252.

¹⁷ On Squarzafico see Allenspach & Frasso 1980, 277–278.

biography – the name and family origins of the author, his education and career, the titles, sequence and subject matter of his literary works – we see evidence of the new humanist interests and tastes: the frequent citation or paraphrasing of ancient, especially classical, sources; a greater attention to Sallust's language and style; and a shift from the rigid, schematic organization of the *accessus* to a more discursive approach, one that attempts to weave the various topics into a fuller, composite portrait of the author's life and work (with some pretensions of literary elegance) and to convey a sense of the author's personality and fame.

The ancient sources on Sallust's life and work presented a dilemma, however, to anyone intending to compose a *vita*. Since we have no ancient biography of Sallust, one had to rely on the widely scattered *testimonia* for the various aspects of his career or writing.¹⁸ More seriously, these sources reflected very divergent views, influenced largely by the personal and partisan rivalries of the late Republic, ranging from Sallust's own "apologia" for his youthful excesses and misguided political ambition in the prologues to the *Catilina* and *Jugurtha* to the viciously *anti*-Sallustian *Oratio in Sallustium*. (This invective, which today is considered the work of the rhetorical schools, probably of the early first century A.D., was widely believed in Pomponio's time to be a *genuine* work of Cicero, in response to the (ps.) Sallust *Oratio in Ciceronem*.)¹⁹ As for Sallust's historical writing, there were also mixed reactions. A few ancient writers criticized his fondness for archaisms; in general, however, the judgments on his work as historian and stylist were favorable, much more positive in any case than those on his personal life or political career.

The Polenton-Squarzafico *vita* attempted to solve the problem of the contradictory accounts by trying to balance the negative with the positive and, where possible, to construct the image of a "morally reformed" Sallust, even if this meant blatantly ignoring or arbitrarily re-interpreting parts of the sources. We thus read that Sallust had begun his career as an extravagant and dissipated young man, had been expelled from the senate on charges of adultery and had been forced to sell the family home to pay his debts, thus driving his aged father to his death. In his later years, however, as the following passage relates, after he had changed his way of life (*mutatis moribus*), he not only recovered those things he had squandered, but was even managing his finances so wisely (it is implied) that he was able to purchase

¹⁸ See Osmond & Ulery 2003, 186–192. The first published collection of ancient sources on Sallust's life and work appeared in the Venice 1563 edition of Sallust's *opera* by Aldo Manuzio the Younger (*ibid.*, 265–266). For modern collections of *testimonia*, one may consult the Teubner editions of Sallust.

¹⁹ On the pseudo-Ciceronian invective, see Santangelo 2012, 29ff.

the very valuable estate of Caesar, the *horti Caesariani* (later known as the *horti Sallustiani*) and Caesar's villa in Tivoli! If he ultimately abandoned politics in order to return to his studies and devote himself to the writing of history it was because (as a loyal republican) he disapproved of Caesar's autocratic rule and the growing influence of "barbarians", especially the Gauls, with whom Caesar had packed the Senate.

Quae sane Crispus mutatis moribus iam gravescente aetate per libidinem atque flagitia prodegisset non modo recuperavit sed pretiosissimos in urbe hortos Tiburtinamque villam ab ipso Iulio emit [Ps. Cic. *in Sall.* 19]. Cuius nutu, bello civili iam peracto, omnia regebantur, nec leges maiorum amplius in re publica administranda servabantur. Sic (Si *ed.*) externo atque barbaro cuique, si Caesari lubebat, in senatum aditus patebat ac sententiam non consularis sed Gallus aut ignobilis ac sordidus quisque dicebat. Quibus rebus indignatus Sallustius rem publicam deseruit atque ad intermissa studia rediens quaeque a populo Romano praeclare gesta fuissent scribere decrevit, ne id ipsum otii quod elegerat ignavia atque desidie tereret [*Catil.* 4,1].²⁰

Our next life of Sallust (Appendix, no. 2: Lorenzo Valla?) also originated as an anonymous *vita*. It introduces a school commentary on the *Catilina* and begins as a gloss on the *incipit* of the text, *omnis homines*. It is found in two different versions in manuscripts probably dating in at least one case to the mid-1460s.²¹ At the time the commentary was first printed in Venice in 1491 alongside Pomponio's text of Sallust's *Catilina*, it was attributed to Lorenzo Valla, another leading humanist who could guarantee good sales. Whether or not it was written by Valla is doubtful, but the *vita*, if not the commentary that followed it, shows affinities with various themes in Valla's work and, too, some of his polemical spirit.²²

Here, as well, traces of the *accessus* persist, especially in the observations towards the end of the *vita* on the purpose and utility of the monograph, in which the author draws upon Sallust's prologue to the *Catilina* to explain his withdrawal from politics and decision to devote himself to intellectual pursuits, in particular the writing of history. But otherwise there is only a passing reference in the first and last sentences to Sallust's life and controversial political career. The bulk of the life is devoted instead to the nature and importance of Sallust's work as historian: his distinctive style, which Quintilian compared with that of Thucydides and contrasted with that of Livy and Herodotus; the relevance of his so-called "philosophical" pro-

²⁰ Venice: Vindelinius de Spira, 1471. For the full text see Appendix, no. 1.

²¹ For the manuscripts containing versions of the "Valla" commentary and relevant bibliography, see Osmond & Ulery 2003, 237–241.

²² For a discussion of the question of Valla's authorship, see Osmond 2005 (2).

logues to the actual history of the *Catilina* and *Jugurtha* (despite the objections that Quintilian had reported, *inst.* 3.8.9); the unfortunate loss of his major work, the *Historiae*, which has survived only in fragments (many of which, he says, were collected by Nonius); and the characteristically humanist appeal, as the following passage emphasizes, to preserve, study and especially to disseminate the few remains that had escaped the destruction of invading armies and the ravages of time.

Quod si tantorum virorum testimonio primum in historia locum obtinet, summa nos ope niti decet ut praeclara eius monumenta, si qua adhuc restant, non tantum ipsi studio condiscamus sed, si fieri etiam possit, quam plurimis nostra industria omni sint ex parte conspicua.

At the end the *vita* resumes its initial function as a gloss on the *incipit* and expands into a typical pedagogical commentary, paraphrasing words and phrases and explaining points of grammar, rhetoric and simple matters of Roman history.

Another biographical sketch that originated in this period is the *vita* by Giovanni Crisostomo Soldi of Brescia (Appendix, no. 3), prefacing his commentary on the *Jugurtha*. Written, or at least begun, in Verona in 1469–70 and dedicated to the author's brother, who was preparing to teach a course on Sallust's *Jugurtha*, it was printed in Brescia some 25 years later, in 1495, alongside the text edited by Pomponio Leto and revised by Giovanni Britannico. Here we find further references to Sallust's reputation for loose morals and particularly his womanizing, notably ps.-Acro on the charges of adultery that reportedly led to his removal from the senate (50 B.C.). But Soldus also reports Sallust's own reasons for abandoning politics, paraphrasing parts of the proems to the *Catilina* (3) and *Jugurtha* (3–4), and praises his historical work, in which, as he tells us, the historian had achieved great renown ("in qua re [...] claruit"). Citing Quintilian, he calls attention to Sallust's "mira brevisitas quaedam et affectata rerum ubertas" (a certain wonderful brevity and studied abundance of subject matter).

It was also with a view to introducing his lectures on Sallust that the Roman humanist Pietro Paolo Pompilio (Appendix, no. 4), former student of Pomponio and teacher in Rome, prefaced his *Dictata* on the *Catilina* and *Jugurtha* (c. 1481) with a *vita Sallustii*. Unlike the previous *vitae* this one was unfortunately never printed – unfortunately, because it contains some interesting observations regarding Sallust's language and style. Along with traditional features of the *accessus*, e.g., a summary of Sallust's life and *cursus honorum*, a list of the titles and subjects of his works and at the end a brief explanation of the author's purpose, we find, for instance, a long series of quotations or paraphrases illustrating the various characteristics of his writing. From Quintilian and Suetonius he cites Sallust's predilection for

archaisms (antique words or forms borrowed or “stolen” from Cato); from Seneca’s *Controversiae*, his *brevitas*; from Quintilian again, the comparison with Thucydides and contrast with Livy, along with his imitation of Isocrates in regard to the writing of prologues apparently unrelated to the subject of his histories. As we read in the following passage, the poet Martial called Sallust the first, or foremost, among Roman authors in the writing of history; as the Elder Seneca recognized, his brevity was as perfect as Cicero’s riches; and as Quintilian pronounced, reporting the words of Servilius Nonianus, Livy and Sallust excelled in equal measure, albeit in different ways.

Martialis [14,191] historicorum principem facit cum inquit: Crispus Romana primus in historia. Cicero et Sallustius diversum dicendi genus secuti sunt atque ita ut merito illud vulgatum sit bonis rationibus utrimque placere. Cum Sallustianae brevitati nihil addi concinne possit [cf. SEN. *contr.* 9,1,13], Ciceronis vero divitiis si quid demas statim aliquid desiderari. Ideoque immortalem illam Sallustius velocitatem [QUINT. *inst.* 10,1,102] diversis rationibus consecutus est, nec minus egregiae eiusmodi differentiae, cum dixisse videtur Servilius Nonianus [*ibid.*] Titum Livium et Sallustium pares esse magis quam similes [...]

Especially interesting is Pompilio’s comment on Sallust’s family at the end of the first section of his *vita*:

Demum cum tribunus plebis fuisse dicitur, patricii generis non fuit; nam aliud est esse patricium, aliud esse senatorem; patricii enim fieri tribuni plebis non poterant nisi se in optionem plebei hominis traderent. Quod de Sallustio nusquam comperi.

(Finally, when it is said that he was a tribune of the plebs, he was not of patrician rank; for it is one thing to be a patrician and another to be a senator; for patricians could not become tribunes of the plebs unless they gave themselves over to the choice of plebian status.)

Here, in fact, for the first time we find a trace of historical criticism: a response, it might seem, to the incorrect statements in the Valla *vita* and in Squarzafico’s epitome that Sallust was a patrician, *vir patricius*. Clearly Pompilius had a better understanding of Roman political and social history than most of his contemporaries.

Finally, if we extend our survey of *vitae* just a few years beyond the death of Pomponio in 1498, we have the biography of Sallust by Pietro del Riccio Baldi (Petrus Crinitus), (Appendix, no. 5). Although intended for his work on Latin historians and orators, the *De historicis ac oratoribus latinis*, which was evidently lost or never finished, the life was published separately in 1503 in a Giunta edition of Sallust’s *opera* and again by Aldo Manuzio in

his edition of 1509, along with the life by Squarzafico.²³ Of all the *vitae* from this period it is the most comprehensive and the most critical – not surprisingly, given the fact that Crinitus had been a pupil of Poliziano. Although he repeated the stories of Sallust's supposedly wild and dissolute youth, he took into account the widespread corruption of the times, that is, the contemporary social and moral climate. He related the accusations against Sallust by Lenaeus, Pompey's freedman, but pointed out that Lenaeus had been provoked by Sallust's offensive remarks about his former master, whom he naturally felt obliged to defend. The invectives exchanged between Sallust and Cicero furnished few facts, he observed, since neither author appeared to have taken sufficient account of himself while attacking the other. He also raises for the first time the question of the authorship of the two Invectives, an issue that was just beginning to emerge, although in the end he accepted both of them as genuine works on the authority of Quintilian and Jerome. As for Sallust's reputation as historian, Crinitus reported both the criticisms of Livy and Asinius Pollio and the (far more numerous) praises of Aulus Gellius, Seneca the Elder, Quintilian and others, adding: "est enim eius oratio tam absoluta, tam casta, innocens, ut merito ab eruditis divina brevitatis censeatur" (his speech is so perfect, so chaste, blameless, that it is deservedly judged divine brevity by the learned).

* * *

If we now go back to Pomponio's life, it appears to be something of an anomaly. Aside from the various *accessus* that introduced Sallust manuscripts, it is the shortest of all the lives. It is also the most one-sided in its appraisal of Sallust, focused as it is on his life and character, rather than the nature and reputation of his work, and at the same time the most negative, even hostile. By contrast, the other authors cite not only the ps.-Cicero *Oraatio in Sallustium* but a variety of sources in an attempt to set out side by side the various accounts, including Sallust's own defense. Or they balance the negative accounts of his private and political life with praises of his work as historian and stylist. Pomponio, on the other hand, devotes the entire *vita* to cataloguing his vices and crimes, allowing only a few words of (dubious) appreciation to his archaizing style – "not unlike that of archaic writers of Latin", he says (which is hardly much of a compliment) – although in the dedicatory letter of his *Romanae Historiae Compendium* (1499) he warmly praises his *brevitas*.²⁴ As for the description of Sallust's very beautiful gar-

²³ Ricciardi 1990, however, mentions only a later edition of 1527.

²⁴ Laetus 1499, "Praefatio": "Laudatur etiam in historia brevitatis: quae sit aperta ac lucida ut illa Crispi Sallustii". (Brevity is also to be praised in history, of the kind that is clear and lucid like that of Crispus Sallustius.)

dens, which could have been based on his own explorations of the imposing ruins (*cf.* the *Excerpta*),²⁵ as well as on the reference in the *Oratio in Sallustium*, 19,²⁶ it serves only to underscore the historian's greed for pleasure and luxury.

What, then, can we make of Pomponio's *vita*? At this time I cannot propose any single answer, especially since we need to compare this life with the many others that he wrote, and also, I suggest, with his treatment of biography in the *Romanae Historiae Compendium*. But in conclusion I would like to indicate a couple of areas that we might continue to explore: (1) the way Pomponio shapes his portrait of Sallust and how it may reflect his personal attitudes and self-image, and (2) the more general cultural and moral issues regarding the relationship between a person's private life and his/her identity as an author.

First, in regard to Pomponio's interest in or understanding of biography, we notice a very selective use of sources, a feature that distinguishes his *vita* from the others we have examined. Does this mean that, rather than set forth various, divergent reports, which would have provided a more complete and "rounded" portrait of Sallust's complex and contradictory life – as, it seems, the other authors attempted to do – Pomponio chose only those he felt would bring out the *essential* nature of the man? In biography, it is often said, the truth resides in the particular: the particular trait or anecdote, a particular bit of gossip ("il pettegolezzo"), which may reveal better than any lengthy account of a person's words and deeds his "real" character. Nor does it necessarily matter if the detail is factually true – as long as it is *verisimile*. In a recent book, *The art of biography in antiquity*, Tomas Hägg sums up this point:

Biography, if it is to be more than a bare *curriculum vitae*, must try to gain insight into an historical person's mind to connect and explain the person's doings and give an impression of a living character, of a 'life' [...] The biographer has to rely on conjecture, interpretation, reconstruction, in the end on his or her own creative imagination [...] [The search for any] form of higher truth – be it poetic, psychological,

²⁵ Laetus, ed.: Valentini & Zucchetti 1953, 429: "Intrinsecus a porta Salaria a sinistris est vallis longa, ubi fuerunt horti Sallustiani, versus ventum Libym, circumdati pulcherrimis aedificiis qui fuerunt non modo pomorum, sed etiam propter sumptum et ornamentum aedificiorum satis amoeni: aquae subterraneae manu factae irrigabant hortos". (On the inside of the Salarian gate, to the left, is a long valley, where the *horti Sallustiani* were, facing south-west, surrounded by very beautiful buildings, gardens which were not only of fruit trees but quite pleasant on account of the expense and decoration of the buildings; subterranean waters [in channels] made by hand irrigated the gardens.)

²⁶ "hortos pretiosissimos" (very valuable gardens).

philosophical, or religious – overrules demands for the truth of facts”.²⁷

Still, we have to ask why Pomponio selected only the most *negative* evidence – producing what might almost be called a “vituperative” or “iconoclastic” portrait.²⁸ Petrarch, too, as we saw, had written a very short sketch, but of an entirely different tone, praising Sallust as a trustworthy source of historical information, a mine of *exempla* and a model for historical writing.

Was it the moral reputation and authority of Cicero that determined the importance Pomponio gave to the *Oratio in Sallustium*? Certainly, Cicero was one of Pomponio's favorite authors and he cites him frequently in his notes on the art of history that are bound with his copy of the 1490 Sallust. He also figured prominently among the authors studied and published in Pomponio's circle. Agostino Maffei, to whom Pomponio dedicated his 1490 edition of Sallust, had commissioned an edition of Cicero's Letters in the same year, a work undertaken by Bartolomeo Saliceto and Ludovico Regio, to which Pomponio also contributed.²⁹ Was it, therefore, a way of identifying himself with Cicero and at the same time distancing himself from the “disreputable”, “dissolute” Sallust, whose personal life style, at least in his youth, seemed to violate traditional moral values and social norms? In this respect we might recall that in 1467 Pomponio had been interrogated by the Consiglio dei Dieci in Venice on charges of sodomy (for writing an “immoral book”) and for a long time remained the target of accusations ranging from Epicureanism to heresy.³⁰

Sallust's *Catilina*, moreover, could be read as both a condemnation of conspiracies against the state and, in some conservative circles, as a possible incitement to young revolutionaries. As the medieval *accessus* never tired of repeating, Sallust taught the importance of obedience to established government: “follow the example of Cicero, who had defended his homeland; eschew the example of Catiline, who had perished as a traitor to his homeland”! But, as Machiavelli was soon to point out in *Discorsi* 3,6, the *Catilina* could also provide lessons for young men conspiring to overthrow a government.³¹ A later Italian writer, the Jesuit Agostino Mascardi, author of the *La congiura del conte Gio. Luigi de Fieschi* (1629) went so far as to consign Sallust's *Catilina*, Tacitus' *Annals* and Machiavelli's *Prince* all to

²⁷ Hägg 2012, 3–4.

²⁸ On these types of biography, see *ibid.*, 6.

²⁹ M. Tullius Cicero, *Epistolae ad Brutum, ad Quintum fratrem, ad Atticum*. (Ed: Bartholomaeus Salicetus and Ludovicus Regius. With additions by Pomponius Laetus), Rome: Eucharius Silber, [after 17 July?] 1490.

³⁰ See Accame 2008, 46ff.

³¹ See Osmond 1997 and Osmond 2005 (1).

the same category of potentially dangerous books.³² Reading about conspiracies and revolts, he believed, might put subversive ideas into the minds of young men, encourage disobedience and revolution. Here, too, Pomponio's own experience – his imprisonment in Castel Sant'Angelo in 1468 on charges of participating with other members of the Roman Academy in the conspiracy against Pope Paul II – may have left its mark. Was it simply safer (more politically-correct) to take his stand with Cicero as *pater patriae* and defender of public order?

The second point involves our view of the relationship between a subject's private life and his/her public career, in this case the relationship between Sallust's *mores* and his identity as author and, specifically, historian. Today, as in Pomponio's own time, we are still inclined to ask how one might reconcile the scandalous stories of Sallust's life (assuming they contain some elements of truth) with the generally high esteem for his historical work and, in particular, with the sternly moralizing tone of his histories. And yet we might also ask if it is *necessary* to try to reconcile these apparent contradictions. Does it really matter, in assessing his achievements as historian, whether Sallust was a corrupt and disreputable politician, adulterer and "harlot", as his enemies alleged? By the seventeenth century, scholars were, in fact, beginning to separate the two strands of his biography. Summing up the reports on Sallust's private life and *cursus honorum* in his *Vita Sallustii* (1627), Gerardus Johannes Vossius declared: "Haec ostendunt vitam eius laudari a nemine posse. Nempe omnis eius gloria a praeclaris scriptis proficiscitur" (These show that his life cannot be praised by anyone. Truly all his glory springs from his most outstanding writings.)³³

³² See Osmond 1997.

³³ Vossius 1627, 71.

Appendix

1. [Hieronymus Squarzafricanus] *Crispi Salustii oratoris clarissimi vita* in C. Sallustius Crispus, *Opera*. Venice: Vindelinus de Spira, 1471.*

Crispus Salustius vir patricius ab ineunte aetate bonis artibus imbutus ad rem publicam gerendam animum applicuit in qua non pauca adversa passus prudentia sua superavit. Et res publica, iam Carthagine atque Numantia eversa Asiaque domita <...>, ut nec nobilitati nec virtuti sua redderentur praemia [*Iug.* 3,1] atque impudenti atque audacissimo cuique plebs obsequeretur. Hinc dominatus L. Syllae et proscriptionis tabula Romanis civibus prius ignota prolata est, hinc flagitiosa Catilinae coniuratio, hinc bellum civile inter Caesarem et Pompeium exortum libertatem civitati ademit. His igitur hominum moribus conflictatum Crispi ingenium suapte natura integrum iuvenili ac flagranti aetate proclivem ad adulteria libido rapuit atque corrumpit [*cf. Catil.* 3,3–4] neque id impune diu admisit. Nam, ut Varro tradit [*GELL.* 17,18], ab Annio Milone domi deprehensus et grandi pecunia multatus est; bis ad subsellia accusatus atque absolutus a iudicibus non sine pecunia, ut fertur [*Ps. Cic. in Sall.* 14], discessit; domum avitam tanto patris dolore iam aetate confecti vendidit ut vita decedere cogeretur. Consumptis igitur opibus patriis et quaestura prius functus, deinde tribunus plebis creatus est. Ac postremo praetorem ulterioris Africae designatum eum proconsulem cum exercitu regno Iube, rege necato, Caesar [*BELL. Afr.* 97,1] praefecit atque in provinciam redegit.

Quae sane Crispus mutatis moribus iam gravescente aetate per libidinem atque flagitia prodegisset non modo recuperavit sed pretiosissimos in urbe hortos Tiburtinamque villam ab ipso Iulio emit [*in Sall.* 19]. Cuius nutu, bello civili iam peracto, omnia regebantur, nec leges maiorum amplius in re publica administranda servabantur. Sic (Si *ed.*) externo atque barbaro cuique, si Caesari lubebat, in senatum aditus patebat ac sententiam non consularis sed Gallus aut ignobilis ac sordidus quisque dicebat. Quibus rebus indignatus Salustius rem publicam deseruit atque ad intermissa studia rediens quaeque a populo Romano praeclare gesta fuissent scribere decrevit, ne id ipsum ocii quod elegerat ignavia atque desidia tereret [*Catil.* 4,1], aut illiberalibus officiis intentus minus utilis rei publicae foret quam antehac extitisset [*Iug.* 4,4]. Agressus igitur bellum contra Catilinae coniurationem atque Iugurtham Numidarum potentissimum ac prudentissimum gestum, tanta cura atque diligentia perscripsit, ut non annales Romanos modo sed Punicos et Aphros ac peritos illius linguae <perquirens?> Romanorum gesta diligenter evolveret, atque in Africam traiecit, neque <ut?> legeret (legerat *ed.*) tantum sed visu certiora etiam facta posteris

narraret [*cf.* PETRARCH *rer. mem.* 1,17]. In hoc autem genere scribendi tantum laudis assecutus ut Quintilianus [*inst.* 10,1,101], gravis atque severus iudex <eum> Thucydidi graeco historiarum scriptori adequet, quem Cicero [*De orat.* 2,13,56] tantopere laudat atque sententiis crebrum autumat, ut pene verborum copiam sententiarum frequentia consequatur.

Amicos habuit Cornelium Nepotem eodem scribendae historiae studio delectatum ac P. Nigidum Figulum omnium doctrinarum genere non inferiorem Varroni. Cicero vero ex familiari inimicus factus nescio qua de causa. Terentiam uxorem ab eodem Cicerone repudiatam in uxorem duxit, ut ab ea quamdiu summa benivolentia cum Cicerone vixerit atque suorum consiliorum non ignara aliquid turpe eliceret [*cf.* HIER. *adv. Iov.* 1,49], quo acrius atque turpius in eum inveheretur, cuius in Ciceronem extat Invectiva quam frequenti senatu habuisse fertur. Natus Amiterni in Sabinis bello Iugurtino Romae educatus, Crispus habitavit iuxta Minervam ubi nunc templum Sanctae Mariae veneratur. Atque in hunc usque diem Salustiana domus vocatur. Vixit usque ad sexagesimum secundum annum septimum post Caesaris obitum. Cuius Terentia uxor postea Messalae Corvino praestantissimo sua aetate oratori nupsit.

* Based on the copy at the Vatican Library, Inc. Ross. 570. The *vita* appeared for the first time in print under the name of Hieronymus Squarzafricanus in the edition of [Venice]: Filippo di Pietro, 22 June 1478. The text printed in the edition of Haguenau, 1529, with the *scholia* of Melanchthon, was published in Osmond & Ulery 2003, 252.

2. Laurentius Valla (attrib.) in *Laurentii Vallensis in C. Crispi Salustii Catilinarium Commentarii*. Venice: Philippus Pincius, 11 May 1491.*

Omnis homines (*Catil.* 1,1). Patricia gente Crispus Salustius Romae natus, post rem publicam civili discordia concussam, cum nulla illius administrandae ratio bonis superesset amplius, se ad scribendi otium contulit [*ibid.* 4,1–2]. In quo genere, Quintiliani iudicio [*inst.* 10.1.101], qui eum Thucydidi in historia eminentissimo opposuit, praecipuam inter eos qui res Romanas litterarum monumentis tradidere est laudem adeptus. Etenim quo Thucydides est Herodoto maior, cui secundae tribuuntur partes, eo certe hic noster Livio praestantior, quem Herodoto ille comparat. Accedit et Martialis [14,191] urbanissimi poetae carmen: Hic erit, ut perhibent doctorum corda virorum // Primus Romana Crispus in historia, quo haud dubie apparet doctorum hominum iudicio Crispum ceteris Romanarum rerum scriptoribus praelatum. Quod si tantorum virorum testimonio primum in historia locum obtinet, summa nos ope niti decet [*cf.* *Catil.* 1,1] ut praeclara eius monumenta, si qua adhuc restant, non tantum ipsi studio condiscamus

sed, si fieri etiam possit, quam plurimis nostra industria omni sint ex parte conspicua. Atque id ipsum hoc enixius praestandum, quod post tantam nostratium litterarum iacturam, quantam Gothicis temporibus factam fuisse constat, paucissima quaedam vestigia, ne fragmenta dicam, ac illa ipsa paene evanescentia ex locupletissima Crispi ornatissimaque historia ad haec tempora pervenere et, quod iniquius ferat aliquis, fuerunt haec progymnasmata quaedam, ut graeco utar verbo, castissimae illius Minervae, quae nobis reliqua cum temporis tum (tamen *ed.*) hominum fecit iniuria. Nam quod plenissimam Crispus scripserit historiam, quae non res Romanas solum sed externarum etiam gentium sit complexa, abunde constat, verum a Catilinae coniuratione, quasi ingenii experientiam daturus, eam videri potest auspiciatus, quod et ipsum operis prooemium haud dubie demonstrat, cui ad stili consummationem credibile est Iugurthae bellum subiecisse. Sed quanti illa momenti fuerint, quae prorsus interiere, ex iis quae hodie exstant facilis est coniectura, quippe cum nulla possit virtus in historia elucere, cum non in hac vel illa meditatione facile recognoscas, sed quo eius sunt virtutes altiores minusque vulgo proximae, eo maiore nobis studio, ut dixi, est nitendum, ne illae nostra vel inertia vel negligentia diutius in obscuro sint.

Etenim quam cognitu sint difficiles, vel ex eo potest intelligi, quod non pauci, ut video in prooemii fronte, allucinati dant illi vitio quod nefarium Catilinae scelus scripturus inde potissimum sit exorsus, ut dixerit animum corpori et ingenium viribus praestare [*Catil.* 1,3], velut nihil magis ab eo quod dicturus erat alienum dici potuisset [*cf.* QVINT. *instit.* 3,8,9], sed accurate omnia ac magis erudite quam verbis explicari possit. Redditurus namque sui consilii rationem quod a re publica digressus se ad historiam scribendam contulisset, nulla potuit honestior causa demonstrari quam eo se consilio id fecisse ostenderet, ut ea parte corporis uteretur quae potissima in homine esset, nec ita multo post non magis se ratione quam necessitate, ut id consilii caperet, adduci oportuisse demonstrat, quoniam ambitione malisque artibus civitate corrupta nullus videretur innocentiae locus huic qui ad eam capiendam accederet relictus. Verum quia (qua *ed.*) praeclara ingenia aut domi consulendo suorumque facta illustrando aut foris rem publicam administrando patriae videri possunt utilia [*Catil.* 3,1–4,2], sublata optimatum administratione omnique recte vivendi ratione mutata, merito unum hoc scribendi officium quod reliquum erat, quia et potuit et debuit, non minori ingenio quam pietate patriae civibusque suis, optime de ea benemeritis, praestitit Crispus.

* Based on the text published in Osmond & Ulery 2003, 237–238.

3. Johannes Chrysostomus Soldus in C. Sallustius Crispus, *Opera*. Bre-
scia: Bernardinus de Misintis, for Angelus and Jacobus Britannicus, 13 Jan.
1495.*

Salustius civis Romanus Senatorii ordinis fuit. Hic primo se ad rem publicam contulit et in ea aliquamdiu versatus est. Postea cum ei in senatu, ut tradit Acron [SCHOL. HOR. *serm.* 1,2,49] a censoribus obiectum esset, quod libertinarum sectator esset, tum ille non se matronarum sed libertinarum sectatorem esse testatus est, atque ideo senatu repulsus est, quod et in principio belli Catilinarii et in praesenti exordio excusat [*Catil.* 3,3–5; *Iug.* 3,1–4]. Dicit enim aliam fuisse causam quamobrem se ab administratione rei publicae removeret, quod videlicet virtuti honos non daretur, sed ambitio omnia virtutis praemia possideret [*Iug.* 3,1]. Sed revera constat Salustium infamia circa feminas laborasse. Nam, ut idem Acron refert [SCHOL. HOR. *serm.* 1,2,41], in Faustae [Faustinae *ed.* 1496] Syllae filiae et Milonis uxoris adulterio deprehensus ab ipso Tito Annio Milone flagellis caesus est. Igitur Salustius ob eiusmodi flagitia a senatu remotus.

Cum intelligeret sibi ob tantam ignominiam aditum ad honores penitus interclusum, omissa cura rei publicae, se ad historiam scribendam contulit. In qua re ita claruit, ut omnibus qui historiam scripserunt omnium iudicio anteponatur. Et quemadmodum apud Graecos Thucydides Herodotum ceterosque qui historiam scripserunt nobilitate et artificio dicendi superavit, sic apud Latinos Salustius Livium ceterosque historicos facile vicit. Unde Quintilianus [*inst.* 10,1,101] Thucydidi Salustium comparat, Livium Herodoto. Porro tam in Thucydide quam in Salustio mira brevis quaedam et affectata rerum ubertas commendatur. Nam uterque ita rerum frequentia creber est, ut verborum prope numerum sententiarum numero consequatur, genus autem dicendi pressum et nitidum et omnino rebus magis quam verbis redundans [*cf.* Cic. *de orat.* 2,13,56]. In hoc autem opere bellum quod Romani cum Iugurtha rege Numidiae gesserunt conscribit. Sed ante praemittit exordium in quo causam (ut diximus) ostendit quamobrem se ab administratione rei publicae ad historiam scribendam contulit, ne forte ignaviae daretur si vel taedio laboris vel metu periculi potius quam iusto iudicio animi rem publicam reliquisset videretur. Dicit enim sic [*Catil.* 3,1–4,2; *Iug.* 4]: cum multa sint studia et exercitia animi quibus summa laus et claritudo comparari possit, veluti consilio rem publicam regere, dare operam litteris et alia huiusmodi, hoc tempore mihi non placuit per administrationem rei publicae laudem et gloriam comparare, quia videbam hoc tempore imperia et honores et magistratus dari hominibus indignis et non virtute praeditis sed ambitione corruptis. Et propterea aliud studium atque aliud exercitium animi quaerendum esse putavi in quo laudem et gloriam comparare possem.

Sed ex omnibus studiis quae exercentur animo atque ingenio, utilissimum visum est historiam scribere et memoriae mandare res gestas. Et ideo ad hoc studium atque exercitium me contuli, ommissa cura rei publicae. Sed videamus quomodo paulatim veniat ad exponendam hanc causam atque ad hunc sensum explicandum.

* Based on the text published in Osmond & Ulery 2003, 293.

4. Petrus Paulus Pompilius, *C. Salustii Crispi Vita: mores et mors* (c. 1481) in *Commentarii Pauli Pompilii in historias Sallustii Catilinianam et Iugurthinam. Lectione publica Romae anno aetatis sue XXVI* (Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, Ms. 1351, fols. 1v–3r)*

Crispus, natus Amiterni in Sabinis quo tempore in Iugurtam bellatum est, vixit annum circiter sexagesimum secundum; moritur septimo anno post obitum Caesaris. Terentiam quam Cicero repudiavit uxorem duxit, quae etiam ad tertium virum Messalam Corvinum, clarissimum sui temporis oratorem, Sallustio mortuo transiit. Prius quaestor, deinde tribunus plebis, tum praetor ulterioris Africae; Caesar proconsulem mortui Iubae regno praefecit. Atque ita primus Sallustius regno illi in formam provinciae redacto tum primum praefuit. Obicit Cicero [*in Sall.* 21] bis fuisse senatorem, ergo quandoque Senatu per ignominia [*sic*] amotus est. Item bis quaestorem, sic etiam quaestor longo post intervallo iterum fuit; hoc fieri potuit cum bis ad subsellia iudicum adulterii reus protractus est. Praeterea in Faustae filiae Cornelii Sullae adulterio a Tito Annio Milone domi deprensus, prius bene caesus est, deinde magna pecunia multatus [SCHOL. HOR. *serm.* 1,2,41]. Cicero in Sallustium [15]: Sumus diligentes in tuenda pudicitia uxorum nostrarum, sed ita experrecti non sumus ut a te cavere possimus. Sallustio censores in senatu obiecerunt quod moecharetur, dum ille non se matronarum sed libertinarum sectatorem esse testatus est et ideo senatu motus est. Ad historiam alludere videtur Horatius cum inquit: Ille flagellis ad mortem caesus, in primo Sermonum [SCHOL. HOR. *serm.* 1,2,41]. Demum cum tribunus plebis fuisse dicitur, patricii generis non fuit; nam aliud est esse patricium, aliud esse senatorem; patricii enim fieri tribuni plebis non poterant nisi se in optionem plebei hominis traderent. Quod de Sallustio nusquam comperi.

Scrpsit libros aliquot qui perpetuae historiae dicti sunt; de coniuratione Catiliniana librum unum, bellum contra Iugurtham. Perpetua historia vitio temporum amissa est. Distichon in hunc legitur apud Quintilianum tale [*inst.* 8,3,29]: Et verba antiqui multum furate Catonis. Crispae [*sic*] Iugurthinae conditor historiae. Ex quo intelligi potest Sallustium nimis imitatum fuisse Catonem Censorinum [*sic*]. Augustus ad M. Antonium in epistola haec [SVET. *Aug.* 86]: Tu quoque dubitas, Cimber ne Annaeus an Veranius Flaccus imitandi sint tibi, ut verbis,

quae Crispus Sallustius excerpserit ex originibus Catonis, utaris. Leneus item Pompei Sallustium appellare solitum [*sic*] est furem eruditissimum [ineruditissimum SVET. *gramm.* 15]. Quintilianus [*inst.* 10,1,101] Sallustium Thucydidi parem non veretur. Martialis [14,191] historicorum principem facit cum inquit: Crispus Romana primus in historia. Cicero et Sallustius diversum dicendi genus secuti sunt atque ita ut merito illud vulgatum sit bonis rationibus utrimque placere. Cum Sallustianae brevitati nihil addi concinne possit [*?cf.* SEN. *contr.* 9,1,13], Ciceronis vero divitiis si quid demas statim aliquid desiderari. Ideoque immortalem illam Sallustius velocitatem [QVINT. *instit.* 10,1,102] diversis rationibus consecutus est, nec minus egregiae eiusmodi differentiae, cum dixisse videtur Servilius Nonianus [*ibid.*] Titum Livium et Sallustium pares esse magis quam similes [...]. Gorgias Isocratis magister [...] laudat in Olympico eos qui primi conventus tales in sacris Olympii Iouis instituerunt; Isocrates etiam in Panegyrico vel in Laude Helenes conqueritur plus honoris corporum quam animorum virtutibus dari; Caius Sallustius et in Bello Iugurthino et in Catiliniana coniuratione utrimque [*sic*] secutus est, nam principiis ex aliqua rei vicinia sed nihil ad historiam pertinentibus orsus est maximeque etiam argumento in Catiliniana Isocratem imitatus est [*cf.* QVINT. *inst.* 3,8,9]. Agitur peculiariter in hac praefatione de ingenii et corporis viribus utrae praestantiores, et quod qui fecere et qui facta aliorum scripsere laudantur, paulo tamen plus benefacere quam benedicere decoris promerere videtur [*Catil.* 3,1]; denique in calce de rei publicae fluctibus et aerumnis suis paulum conquestus, cur hanc potius quam aliam quampiam historiam aggrediatur aperit.

* Based on the text in Osmond and Ulery 2003, 244–245. Source references are supplied in part from the transcription kindly made available by Rasmus Gottschalek (2006).

5. Petrus Crinitus, *Ex libris Petri Criniti de historicis ac oratoribus latinis*
in C. Sallustius Crispus, *Opera*, ed. Benedictus Philologus. Florence: Philippus Giunta, 1503.*

C. Crispus Sallustius Amiterni natus traditur in agro Sabino, quo anno Atheniensium urbs a L. Sylla devicta atque vastata est, [ut *add. ed.* 1509] Romani annales referunt. Ex nobili Sallustiorum familia ortus est, quae diu in secundo ordine dignitatem servavit. Idem in urbe educatus creditur et a teneris annis operam ac studium impendisse optimis disciplinis. Sed cum in ea tempora incidisset, quibus corrupti civium mores variis partibus atque factionibus forent, neque virtuti praemia aut bonis ingeniis adessent in tam depravata civitate, quod idem Sallustius fatetur [*Iug.* 3,1], victum eius ingenium voluptatibus facile succubuit. Itaque cum ad rem publicam pro aetate foret delatus propter civium improbitatem et factiones multa adversa pertulit [*Catil.* 3,3].

Nam tum praecipue Syllanis partibus infecta civitas aestuabat. Constat ex veterum commentariis Sallustium ipsum ingenio fuisse acri et in studiis litterarum accurato, tum maxime in scribenda historia. Praeceptorem habuit inter alios Atteium Praetextatum, qui Philologum se appellavit et ab eo edoctus est de ratione recte scribendi, ut a Suetonio Tranquillo traditur [*gramm.* 10], qui et Asinium quoque Pollionem scribit ab eodem Praetextato eruditum atque instructum. Maxime autem M. Catonis studiosus fuit, ex cuius commentariis verba excerpserit et velut breviarium ad usum proprium habuit [*ibid.*], quod Octavius quoque Augustus in epistola ad Marcum Antonium refert [SVET. *Aug.* 86,2–3], in qua ipsum Antonium ceu insanientem increpat, quod ea scribere vellet quae mirentur potius homines quam quae intelligant.

Sed interim ad Sallustii commentarios. Historiam composuit de L. Catilinae coniuratione contra Romanum Senatum et item de bello Iugurthae, qui Numidiae rex factus diu contra Romanos strenue rem gessit. Historiam praeterea de Romanorum gestis, ut de Mario et Sylla necnon de Pompeio contra regem Mithridatem, quod opus libris aliquot a Sallustio absolutum traditur. Et adhuc supersunt quaedam, veluti absolutissimi operis reliquiae, in quibus Sallustii diligentia in historia describenda atque gravitas appareat. In parte operis de rebus Punicis tanto animi studio incubuit ut a quibusdam scriptum sit eum regionem adiisse ac maxima solertia perlustrasse quo maiore fide atque officio veritatem exploraret [*cf.* PETRARCH *rer. mem.* 1,17]. Avienus certe Ruffus plurimum Sallustii diligentiam atque studium commendavit [*or.* 36ff.], sed et Gellius [4,15,1], vir Romanus, qui veterum eruditionis Aristarchus habetur, ita de Sallustii oratione disserit: Elegantia, inquit, Sallustii verborumque facundia et novandi studium, cum multa prorsus invidia fuit, plures non mediocri ingenio viri conati sunt reprehendere pleraque et obtrectare, in quibus plura inscite aut maligne vellicant. Quin et hunc proprietatis servantissimum vocat [*ibid.*, 10,2,20]. T. autem Livius tam iniquus Sallustio fuit, sicuti ab Annaeo Seneca scribitur [*contr.* 9,1,14], ut quaedam ex Historia Thucydidis translata et eleganter assumpta velut depravata et corrupta illi obiecit. Idque ipsum non in Thucydidis gratiam effecit, ut Arellius Fuscus dicebat, verum putavit se facilius Sallustium vincere si prius Thucydidem ipsum praeferret [SEN. *ibid.*]. Asinius quoque Pollio librum scripsit, quo Sallustii scripta reprehenderet quod in his nimia quidem affectatione antiquitatem sequeretur [SVET. *gramm.* 10]. Fabius vero Quintilianus [*inst.* 10,1,32], vir maturo et gravi iudicio, asseruit oratione Sallustii atque brevitate nihil fieri posse perfectius praesertim apud vacuas et eruditas aures. Neque veritus est idem Fabius [*ibid.* 10,1,101] auctori Thucydidi, in scribenda historia apud Graecos principi, Sallustium ipsum opponere, sicuti T. Livium Herodoto, quo

factum est ut, cum plures voluerint dicendi genus Sallustianum sequi, minime sint assecuti. Est enim eius oratio tam absoluta, tam casta et innocens, ut merito ab eruditis divina brevitatis censeatur. Nam et Aruntius [SEN. *ep.* 19,5 (114,17–19)], qui belli Punici historiam scripsit, Sallustio tantum concessit ut eius orationem maximo studio sequeretur, quod alibi diximus. Nec illud ignoratur consuevisse Sallustium magno labore ac studio scribere, ut nihil non absolutum atque perfectum videri posset, quod ex ipsa lectione facile colligitur.

Amicos in primis habuit doctrina et ingenio nobiles, ut Cornelium Nepotem, Messalam, et Nigidium Figulum, qui periisse in exilio traditur. Iulium praeterea Caesarem magno studio dilexit, a quo etiam, ut creditur, dignitate praefecturae honestatus est. Illud item a Suetonio refertur [*gramm.* 15], Lenaeum grammaticum, Pompei libertum, saturas contra Sallustium composuisse eumque mordaci et virulento carmine lacerasse, ut qui lurconem illum popinonemque et nebulonem ac lastaurum appellaret, tum vita scriptisque monstrosum ac M. Catonis (verborum *add. ed.* 1503] furem ineruditissimum, quod ipsum non alia ratione a Lenaeo factum creditur quam, ut studium suum atque officium erga patronum Pompeium probaret, quem virum Crispus Sallustius ore probo, animo autem inverecundo esse scripserat. Itaque mirandum non est si tam acerbe atque satirice libertus Lenaeus contra Sallustium aciem stili exacuit. Quantum odii atque inimicitiae inter hunc et M. Ciceronem extiterit notissimum est, quod utriusque violentae atque acerrimae orationes ita demonstrant, ut neuter videri possit satis sui rationem habuisse dum alteri male diceret. Qua in re non sunt multa referenda, cum ex Hieronymi [*?adv. Iov.* 1,148] ac Fabii [*inst.* 4,1,68; 9,3,89] auctoritate constet eos homines longe aberrasse qui confictas magis orationes ab aliis quam a Sallustio et Cicerone habitas crediderint. Et sane tam corruptis moribus Sallustius ingenio tam proclivi ad luxum fuit, ut paternam domum, vivente adhuc patre, turpissima ratione venalem haberet, quod illi inter alia vitia a Marco Cicerone exprobratur [*in Sall.* 14]. Sed a Varrone etiam et Gellio [17,18] traditum est eundem fuisse in adulterio deprehensum ab Annio Milone lorisque caesum ac data pecunia dimissum. Qua ratione factum est ut M. Cicero appellare illum non dubitaverit mensarum asseclam, cubiculorum pellicem et adulterum [*in Sall.* 21].

Dignitates publicas gessit et quaesturae et tribunatus honorem assecutus est. Sed nulla quidem laude aut commendatione, adeo libidine magis quam ratione et publice et privatim vixisse, nam et bis vocatus est in iudicium et ad iudicium subsellia abstractus, fortuna extrema, ut inquit Cicero [*ibid.* 19], stetit. Scribunt autem grammatici ea causa de senatu eiectionem fuisse a censoribus, quod ingenti libidine matronas consecraretur [SCHOL. HOR. *serm.* 1,2,49]. Illud quoque de Sallustio

relatum est [*ibid.* 19–20], patrocínio et favore C. Caesaris, consecutum fuisse praeturam Africae interioris, ex qua dives factus, cum in urbem rediret, pretiosissimos atque amoenissimos hortos in regione ad Malum Punicum comparavit ac Tiburti villam, quae a Cicerone itidem illi obiciuntur. Neque desunt qui scribant [*cf.* *HIER. adv. Iov.* 1,49] Terentiam M. Ciceronis uxorem ab eo repudiatam Sallustio nupsisse ac deinceps Messalae Corvino, viro in eloquentia clarissimo, quod etiam suo loco scripsimus.

Sciendum est fuisse plures Sallustios. Nam et Gn. a M. Tullio celebratur, in Sallustiorum familia insignis et M. Ciceroni ac Gnaeo Pompeio maxime familiaris, quod ex his epistolis colligitur quas Cicero ad Pomponium Atticum scribit. Qua in re imprudenter quidam decepti sunt, cum Sallustii Empedoclea ignorarent, ut alibi demonstravi. Sunt qui tradant ad annum secundum et Lx eum vixisse et in patria annis aliquot post obitum C. Caesaris diem extremum obiisse, quod ex veterum commentariis colligitur. Illud praeterea de hoc ipso Crispo Romae circumlatum est, ut multi testantur:

Hic erit, ut perhibent doctorum corda virorum
Crispus Romana primus in historia [MART. 14,191].

* Based on the copy at the Vatican Library, Inc. Ross. 570. The text printed in the edition of Haguenau, 1529, with the *scholia* of Melanchthon, was published in Osmond & Ulery 2003, 250–251.

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VIRGIL'S BIOGRAPHY BETWEEN REDISCOVERY AND REVISION



by Fabio Stok

This article examines the Life of Virgil written by Laetus. For the text of the Life, the two manuscript versions of it and the Lives of Virgil written by some of Laetus's pupils (Cinthius of Ceneda, Petrus Marsus, and the anonymous compiler of the Vat. lat. 2739) have been collated. The sources of the Life and Laetus's preferences and objectives, connected with Rome's cultural milieu and with his personal experiences, are examined.

1. The text of the *Vita Pomponiana*

Pomponius Laetus's interest in the biography of Virgil is shown by his *Vita Vergili*, which Dykmans called *Pomponiana*¹ (henceforth: VPomp.). It was copied in two manuscripts: the first is BAV Vat. lat. 3255 (= V), an illuminated codex containing the *Georgics*, the *Appendix Vergiliana* and some poetic compositions of Virgilian colour, with marginal and interlinear annotations.² VPomp., attributed to Laetus in the *inscriptio*, is copied (ff. 76v–78r) between the text of the *Priapea* and that of *Anthologia Latina* 672. The second manuscript containing VPomp. is Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Class. lat. 54 (= C), a manuscript that Zabughin³ believed to have been copied by Laetus himself, but which was probably transcribed by one of his pupils.⁴ VPomp. is copied (ff. 177r–178v) without title and attribution between the commentary on the *Georgics* and that on the *Aeneid*.

As has already been pointed out by Dykmans,⁵ the version of C shows additions and corrections and is therefore later than the version of V. I offer here a text based on C; the readings of V are recorded in the apparatus:

Iul. Pomponii de Vita P. Vir. Maronis succincta collectio

[1] Publius Virgilius Maro natus Idibus octobris M. Licinio Crasso et Gn. Pompeio Magno consulibus, patre Virgilio rustico matre Magia

¹ Dykmans 1987, 93–98 published the *editio princeps*. Independently from Dykmans the text of the *Vita* was also published by Gioseffi 1991, 222–28.

² See Bianchi 1996.

³ Zabughin 1918, 136–37.

⁴ See Reeve 1976, 234.

⁵ Dykmans 1987, 92: but the text provided by him is that of V.

Polla, vico Andico, qui abest a Mantua milibus passuum triginta. Tenui facultate nutritus puer Cremonae degit, in extrema pueritia Mediolani sub Grillo grammatico.

[2] Post Actiacam victoriam agrum amisit: nam volente Augusto veterani Cremonensium et Mantuanorum agros inter se divisere. [3] Romam inde se contulit et sub Marco Epidio rhetore, qui fuerat Augusti praeceptor, multum profecit eiusque industria in amicitiam Asinii Pollionis receptus est. Cuius beneficio et Alfeni Vari et Corneli Gallii, quem unice dilexit, heredium patrum occupatum a Milieno Torone primipilari recuperavit. [4] Deinde per Maecenatem Caesari Augusto cognitus, usus familiaritate Quintilii Tuccae et Sulpitii Vari, puerum amavit Alexandrum, a Pollione donatum, quem Alexim in Bucolicis appellat.

[5] Lydiam puer admodum in agris suis dilexit. [6] Plotiae, formosissimi scorti, domum aliquando adivit. Nec, ut Pedianus Asconius⁶ refert, confitente illa, cum ea coivit. [7] Domum habuit in Exquilina regione prope Maecenatis hortos. [8] In Neapolitani sui, ad quod secedebat, hortulo, liberali in otio vixit, secutus Epicuri sententiam. [9] Parentes ipse tumulavit et ex tribus fratribus duos, Silonem pene infantem et Flaccum natum annos XX, quem in Bucolicis sub Daphnidis nomine deflevit.

[10] Bello Cantabrico cum cepisset scribere Aeneida, usque ad sestertium centies ab Augusto honestatus est et in summam gratiam venit, neque apud populum Romanum notitia caruit. Testes sunt Augusti epistolae ad eum scriptae, testis ipse populus, qui auditis in theatro Virgilii versibus, ut Cornelius Tacitus scribit, surrexit universus et forte praesentem spectantemque Virgilium veneratus est, sic quasi Augustum.⁷ [11] Quinquagenarius Atticam rursus petiit gratia visendi Asiam. Ubi redeunti principi ex victoria occurrit orientis et aestu solis defatigatus in tertianam duplicem incidit neque voluit pati Megaris curari, quare fastidio navigationis gravius aegrotavit. [12] Decessit Brundisii annum agens quinquagesimum et primum Gn. Pontio Sextio et Q. Lucretio consulibus XI^o Kal. Octobris, relictis heredibus Augusto et Mecenate et Virgilio Proculo minore fratre. Filium quem ex Galla suscepit, sibi ad omnia dissimilem, exheredavit: nam intemperatae libidinis fuit popinariusque et parum eruditus. [13] Sepultus fuit via Puteolana ad secundum lapidem ex sinistris. [14] In cuius monumento, referente Valerio Probo, tale legebatur epigramma: "Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc / Parthenope, Cecini pascua, poma, duces".⁸

⁶ Asconius Pedianus, frg. 5 Funaioli ap. Suetonius-Donatus, *Vita Vergili* 21 (p. 22.5–7 Stok).

⁷ Tacitus, *dial.* 13.

⁸ *Vita Vergili Probiani* (p. 199. 5–6 Brugnoli).

[15] Statura fuit procera, colore subpallido, natura debili et imbecilla, praeter distillationem ad pectus dolore capitis laborabat, sanguinem frequenter sput, proclivis ad phtisim. Cibi ac vini continentissimus, amoris vero impensissimi usque ad suspitionem, sine avaritia, sine invidia: nam pollicenti Augusto cuiusdam proscripti agrum renuit. Aliorum bene scripta ita probavit, ut anteponeret suis et imitari minime negligeret. [16] Medicinae et magicae operam dedit. Plinius ait: "Catulli apud nos" et "proxime Virgilii amatoria imitatio".⁹ [17] Scripsit eo stilo ut vetustate semper redoleret, cuius amantissimus erat. Curiosus, diligens, ingeniosus, eminens atque sublimis et prope divinus. [18] De eo sic Domitius Afer interroganti Quintiliano quem Homero crederet maxime accedere, respondit: "secundus est Virgilius, propior tamen primo quam tertio".¹⁰ [19] Aeneis admirationem omnibus fecit et si ipse in testamento damnavit, Augustus tamen contra testamenti verecundiam cremari vetuit maiusque ita vati testimonium contigit quam si ipse probasset. [20] Virgili viventis opera primus publice legit Romae Quintus Caecilius Epirota, de quo Marsus poeta monostichon edidit: "Epirota tenellorum nutricula vatum"¹¹. Nos ad Caecillii imitationem remotissimi a nostro saeculo Virgilii ingenium inspecturi antiquos imitabimur et incipiemus ab eo opere quod inscribitur Aeneis.

inscriptio om. C. [1] ublius C, P. V; octobribus V; et *om.* C; CN V; coss V; pass. mill. XXX V [3] M. V; Alpheni V [4] buccolicis C [5] Plociae V; famosissimi V; aliquando domum V; refert] ait V; eo C [7] prope] post V [8] hortulo ad quem sedebat V; ortulo C; liberali ocio V [9] annis V; quem in Bucolicis sub Daphnidis nomine deflevit *om.* V; buccolicis C; dampnidis C [10] sextertium C; notitia] industria V [11] Acticam V; rursus *om.* V; gratia] causa V; videndi V; orientis occurrit V; et aestu solis defatigatus in tercianam duplicem incidit neque voluit] aestu solis defatigatus in tercianam duplicem incidit et noluit V; quare fastidio navigationis] et dum in italiam navigat V [12] CN V; conss V; calennis C; fratre minore V; sibi] patri V; exeredavit C [13] fuit *om.* C; puttolana C [15] inbeccilla C; dolori V; proclivis ad phtisim *om.* V; temperantissimus V; vero *om.* C; vixit sine avaritia et V; cuiusdam] cuius V; probabat V [17] vetustatem V; et prope divinus *om.* V [18] apher V; respondit secundus est Virgilius, propior] secundum esse Virgilium respondit, propiorem V [20] opera primus publice legit Romae Quintus] publice primus opera legit Q. V; epyrota (bis) V; monasticon C; Nos ... Aeneis *om.* V.

(Iulius Pomponius, brief representation of the life of Virgil Maro.

[1] P. Virgil Maro was born on the Ides of October, during the consulship of M. Licinius Crassus and Gn. Pompeius the Great, in the village of Andes, thirty miles from Mantua; his father was Virgil, a peasant, and his mother Magia Polla. Raised in modest circumstances he spent

⁹ Plinius, *nat.* 28.19.

¹⁰ Quintilianus, *inst.* 10.1.86.

¹¹ Suetonius, *gramm.* 16.3.

his childhood in Cremona. As a young boy he lived in Milan, studying with the grammarian Grillus.

[2] Virgil lost his farm after the victory of Actium, because Augustus distributed the farms of the Cremonese and the Mantuans among the veterans. [3] He then went to Rome and profited greatly from the teaching of the rhetor Marcus Epidius, who had been Augustus's tutor, and through whom he was received into the circle of Asinius Pollio. Thanks both to him and to Alfenus Varus and Cornelius Gallus, who was especially dear to him, Virgil recovered his father's farm, which had been expropriated by the primipilaris Milienus Toro. [4] He then came to the attention of Augustus, thanks to Maecenas. He was on intimate terms with Quintilius Tucca and Sulpitius Varus, and loved the boy Alexander, given him by Pollio, whom he calls Alexis in the *Bucolics*.

[5] He loved Lydia when he was still a boy, living on his farm. [6] He sometimes visited the home of Plotia, a most beautiful prostitute. But, as she admitted, according to Asconius Pedianus, he did not have sex with her. [7] He owned a house on the Esquiline, close to the gardens of Maecenas. [8] Whenever he withdrew to his garden in Naples, he lived in honorable leisure, following the teachings of Epicurus. [9] He buried his parents and two of his three brothers, Silo, still a boy, and Flaccus, at the age of twenty, whom he mourned in the *Bucolics* under the name of Daphnis.

[10] When he began to write the *Aeneid* at the time of the war in Cantabria, he was rewarded by Augustus with as much as hundred sesterces and exceptional favour, and he did not go uncelebrated by the citizens of Rome. We know this from Augustus's letters to him, and from the behaviour of the citizens themselves, for on hearing Virgil's verses in the theatre, as Cornelius Tacitus writes, they all rose and paid homage to the poet, who happened to be present at the play, almost as if he were Augustus himself. [11] At the age of fifty he went to Attica again, with the intention of visiting Asia. There he met the *princeps*, who was returning victoriously from the East, and weakened by the heat of the sun became ill with tertian malaria. He did not want to be treated in Megara and therefore grew worse because of the unpleasant sea voyage. [12] He passed away in Brindisi at the age of fifty-one, eleven days before the calends of October, during the consulship of Gn. Pontius Sextius and Q. Lucretius. He appointed as heirs Augustus, Maecenas, and his younger brother Virgil Proculus, and disinherited the son he had had from Galla, who was different from him in every respect: he was a poorly educated innkeeper of immoderate sexuality. [13] He was buried on the road to Pozzuoli, two miles from the town, on the left. [14] On the tomb, as Valerius Probus relates, there was this

epigram: "Mantua gave birth to me, the Calabrians snatched me away, Parthenope now holds me; I sang of pastures, orchards, and leaders".

[15] He was tall, pale of complexion, of weak and delicate constitution: as well as from phlegm in the chest he suffered from headaches. He often coughed up blood, and was prone to phthisis. He was very temperate with regard to wine and food, but his libido was suspiciously strong. He was neither mean nor envious: in fact when Augustus offered him the farm of an exile, he refused it. He so valued the well-written works of others that he put them before his own and eagerly imitated them. [16] He was interested in medicine and magic. Pliny said: "Catullus and quite recently Virgil, among us, have represented love charms in their poetry". [17] He wrote in a style that exuded the antiquity he loved very much. He was curious, diligent, ingenious, distinguished, sublime, and almost divine. [18] Asked by Quintilian who came closest to Homer, Domitius Afer replied: "Virgil is second, but nearer to the first than to the third". [19] The *Aeneid* was admired by all and, even though Virgil rejected it in his will. Augustus overrode his modesty and forbade its burning and thus paid the bard a greater tribute than if he himself had approved of the work. [20] Quintus Caecilius Epirota first gave a public reading of Virgil when the latter was still alive. Of him the poet Marsus wrote this verse: "Epirota, the dear nurse of delicate little bards". Imitating Caecilius, so far from our time, we will look at Virgil's genius, imitate the ancients and begin with the work entitled *Aeneid*.

C differs from V in adding:

[9] the identification of Flaccus with Daphnis: *quem in Bucolici sub nomine Daphnidis deflevit* (from Donatus); [11] *rursus* referring to Virgil's departure for Greece. The version of C presupposes that Virgil had already travelled in Greece. In his commentary to the *Ciris* Laetus states that Virgil, before writing this work, was studying philosophy in Athens. That Virgil studied in Athens is declared by several medieval Lives, which drew this information from Horace, *Odes* 1.3.5–6;¹² [15] to the information on Virgil's health that he was *proclivis ad phthisim*; [17] to the qualities of Virgil that he was also *prope divinus*; [20] that Caecilius Epirota worked in Rome; the final statement *Nos ... Aeneis* (in C VPomp. is copied before the commentary to the *Aeneid*)

In some cases C changes single words of V:

[5] *formosissimi* (*famosissimi* V); [11] *gratia visendi* (*causa videndi* V); [12] *sibi* (*patri* V); [15] *continentissimus* (*temperantissimus* V).

In other cases the changes of C concern several words or the syntactic structure:

¹² See Brugnoli 1987.

[8] *Neapolitani sui ad quod secedebat ortulo liberali in otio* (*Neapolitani hortulo, ad quem secedebat, liberali otio V*); [11] *neque voluit pati Megaris curari, quare fastidio navigationis* (*et noluit pati Megaris curari et dum in Italiam navigat V*); [12] *fratre minore* (*minore fratre V Vita Probiana*); [18] *respondit: secundus est Virgilius, proprior* (*secundum esse Virgilium respondit propriorem V*).

In addition to the above-mentioned manuscripts, VPomp. is partly copied in the Lives of Virgil compiled by some of Laetus's pupils:

1) the *Vita Virgili* of Cinthius of Ceneda (Piero Leoni), copied before his commentary on the *Aeneid* in Ms. Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, R 13 sup., ff. 1r–2r (a. 1478), published by Mai¹³ and Dozio¹⁴ (a more reliable transcription of the *Vita* is provided by Gioseffi¹⁵).

2) Petrus Marsus inserted large extracts of VPomp. in the inaugural lecture he held in Bologna around 1480 (copied in Ms. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, lat. 414, ff. 111v–115r).¹⁶

3) a *Vita Vergili* based on VPomp. is copied twice in BAV Vat. lat. 2739 (ff. 1r–2r and 159r–160r.), which contains a commentary on Virgil.¹⁷

Marsus and the anonymous compiler of the Vat. lat. 2739 used the version of C, of which they reproduce the additions (and also some errors, such as *monasticon* in § 20). In some instances Cinthius seems to render the version of V (§ 6 *famosissimi*; *ait*; § 11 *petiit*; § 15 *probabat*; § 17 *vetustatem*); in other cases, and mainly in the second part of the Life, he reproduces the version of C (§ 8 *Neapolitani ... otio*; § 11 *neque ... navigationis*; § 15 *continentissimus*; § 20 *opera ... Romae*). Cinthius attended the school of Laetus at the beginning of the 1470s (in 1477 he was in Spilimbergo, in Friuli, and he wrote his commentary before 1478, the date of the manuscript of the Ambrosiana).¹⁸ His *Vita Vergili* suggests the existence of a version of VPomp. intermediate between V and C, in which only part of the innovations in C were introduced. The version of C is however datable to the end of the 1470s: it was used, as we have seen, by Marsus around 1480.

2. The sources of the *Vita Pomponiana*

The main source of VPomp. is the so-called *Vita Probiana*, the Life of Virgil transmitted together with the commentary on the *Bucolics* and the *Georgics* attributed to Probus.¹⁹ This commentary was first published in

¹³ Mai 1835, 321–94.

¹⁴ Dozio 1845.

¹⁵ Gioseffi 1991, 222–27.

¹⁶ See Dykmans 1987, 100–04.

¹⁷ See Dykmans 1987, 108–11.

¹⁸ See Casarsa 2006.

¹⁹ On the *Vita Probiana* see Deufert 2009.

Venice in 1507 by Johannes Baptista Egnatius who in his preface writes that he used a very old manuscript (*vetustissimus codex*) found in Bobbio by Giorgio Merula. Actually, in 1493 Merula had discovered several old manuscripts in the monastery of Saint Colomban.²⁰ But Laetus already knew this work around 1470: the *Vita Probiana* was first published by Sweynheim and Pannartz in their edition of Virgil printed in Rome in 1471.²¹ In the preface of this edition Giovanni Andrea Bussi writes that he used a very old copy (*antiquissimum exemplar*) of Virgil that he knew thanks to Laetus: it was the manuscript known as *Mediceus* (today Plut. 39.1 of the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence), probably brought from Bobbio to Rome by Abbot Gregory of Crema, and then in 1467 transferred to the Basilica of Saint Paul's-Outside-the-Walls in Rome²² (in 1461 the manuscript was still in Bobbio; it is registered in the catalogue of the library compiled in that year). Considering this event, it seems very probable that Laetus told Bussi not only about the *Mediceus* but also about the *Vita Probiana* published in the same edition. Gregory of Crema had therefore probably given him not only the *Mediceus*, but also a copy of Probus's commentary (in these years Laetus frequently used it in his own commentaries²³). This commentary was moreover copied in Rome in the last decades of the fifteenth century.²⁴ It remains uncertain if the volume brought to Rome by Gregory was the manuscript subsequently used by Egnatius or a copy of it.

The name of Valerius Probus is mentioned by Laetus in VPomp. 14, with reference to Virgil's epitaph, for which the *Vita Probiana* gives a version that differs slightly from the traditional one, replacing *rura* with *poma* in the second line of the distich. As we saw, Laetus actually attributed the Life and the Commentary to Valerius Probus, a grammarian of the early imperial age (c. AD 35–100)²⁵ and therefore considered these texts much older than the homologous texts hitherto available in the fifteenth century, that is the *Vita Vergilii* by Aelius Donatus (fourth century) and the Virgil commentary written by Servius (late fourth-early fifth century). And because he believed it to be the oldest, Laetus reproduced almost the entire *Vita Probiana* in his VPomp. (the text reproduced is that published by Bussi in 1471; the bolded lines are in VPomp.):

²⁰ See Ferrari 1979.

²¹ On this edition see Venier 2001, 27–29.

²² See Mercati 1937, 525–26 (and Buonocore 2012).

²³ See Zabughin 1910–1912, 30 (Lucanus), 38 (Statius), 71 (Virgil).

²⁴ See Wheelock 1935; Gioseffi 1991, 41–134.

²⁵ Angelo Poliziano expressed some doubts regarding Probus's authorship; later it was questioned by Stephanus (see Gioseffi 1991, 279).

[1] **P. Vergilius Maro natus Idibus octobr. Crasso et Pompeio conss. matre Magia Polla, patre Vergilio rustico vico Andico, qui abest a Mantua milia passuum XXX, tenui facultate nutritus** (V. Pomp. 1). [2] Sed cum iam summis eloquentiae doctoribus vacaret, in belli civilis tempora incidit, quod Augustus adversus Antonium gessit. Primumque bellum veteranis post Mutinense²⁶ **postea restitutus beneficio Alpheni Vari, Asinii Pollionis et Cornelii Galli quibus in Bucolicis adulatur, deinde per gratiam Maecenatis in amicitiam Caesari ductus est** (VPomp. 3–4). [3] **Vixit pluribus annis liberali in otio secutus Epicuri sectam, insigni concordia et familiaritate usus Quintilii, Tuccae et Vari.** (VPomp. 8 e 4) [4] Scripsit *Bucolica* annos natus octo et XX, *Theocritum* secutus; *Georgica* Hesiodum et Varonem. [5] **Aeneida ingressus bello Cantabrico – hoc quoque ingenti industria – ab Augusto usque ad sestertium centies honestatus est** (VPomp. 10) [6] **Decessit in Calabria annum agens quinquagesimum et primum heredibus Augusto et Maecenate cum Proculo minore fratre** (VPomp. 12) [7] **Cuius sepulcro, quod est in via Puteolana, hoc legitur epigramma: “Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenent nunc / Parthenope: cecini pascua poma duces”** (VPomp. 14) [8] **Aeneis servata ab Augusto, quamvis ipse testamento damnat** (VPomp. 19) ne quid eorum, quae non edidisset, extaret, quod Servius Varus hoc testatur epigramma: “Iusserat haec rapidis aboleri carmina flammis / Vergilius, Phrygium quae cecinere ducem. / Tucca vetat Variusque simul, tu, maxime Caesar, / non sinis et Latiae consulis historiae”.

([1] P. Virgil Maro was born on the Ides of October during the consulship of Crasus and Pompeius, son of Magia Polla and the farmer Virgil, in the village Andes, which was thirty miles from Mantua. He was raised in modest circumstances. [2] But when he was already studying with the most prominent teachers of eloquence, the civil war, which Augustus waged against Antonius, impinged on his life. At first <after losing his father's farm > to the veterans after the first war of Modena and afterwards having recovered it through the kindness of Alfenus Varus, Asinius Pollio, and Cornelius Gallus, whom he praises in the *Bucolics*, he was then, by the favour of Maecenas, brought into the circle of Caesar's friends. [3] He lived many years in in honourable leisure, following the Epicurean creed, enjoying the remarkable friendship and intimacy of Quintilius, Tucca, and Varius. [4] He wrote the *Bucolics* when he was twenty-eight years old, and followed Theocritus. He wrote the *Georgics* in the manner of Hesiod and Varro. [5] Having begun the *Aeneid* during the war with the Cantabrians – and this also with great enterprise – he was honored by Augustus to

²⁶ *Primumque post Mutinense bellum veteranis <agros cedere coactus> Brugnoli.*

the extent of ten million sesterces. [6] He died in Calabria in his fifty-first year; Augustus and Maecenas were his heirs, with Proculus, his younger brother. [7] This epigram is to be read on his tomb, which is along the road to Pozzuoli: "Mantua gave birth to me, the Calabrians snatched me away, Parthenope now holds me; I sang of pastures, orchards, and leaders". [8] The *Aeneid* was saved by Augustus, although Virgil himself had stipulated in his will that nothing that he had not published should survive. Servius Varus also attests to this in the following epigram: "Virgil had ordered that those songs, which sang of the Phrygian leader, be destroyed in flames. Tucca and Varius both forbid it; you, greatest Caesar, do not allow it and you take heed of Latium's history".²⁷)

In comparison with the Life of Donatus, the *Vita Probiana* gives the following original information on Virgil's life: a) the name of Virgil's mother, Magia Polla (it seems to have combined the name of Magia given by Servius with that of Polla in the *Vita Vergili* by the grammarian Phocas²⁸); b) Virgil's Epicureanism, omitted by Donatus but noticed by Servius in his Commentary²⁹ and confirmed by the papyrus of Herculaneum Paris 2³⁰; c) the distance of Andes from Mantua, given generically by Donatus (*non procul*) and Hieronymus (*haut procul*). But the number of miles given by "Probus" is uncertain: in the manuscripts we read XXX, in the edition of Egnatius III (only the latter number is compatible with the medieval identification of Andes with Pietole).³¹

All this information is used by Laetus, who omits only a few parts of the *Vita Probiana*. Virgil's age when he composed the *Bucolics* (§ 4) is omitted in VPomp., but included by Laetus in his Commentary³². The epigram by "Servius Varus" (§ 10) was probably considered doubtful by Laetus because a larger version of it, provided by Donatus, is attributed to Sulpicius Carthaginiensis.³³ The part of the *Vita Probiana* concerning civil wars and the confiscation of Virgil's farm (§ 2) is omitted by Laetus because the text of this part is corrupt and quite unreadable (as in the reproduced edition of Bussi;

²⁷ Translation by Danielle Joyner and Jan M. Ziolkowski, in Ziolkowski & Putnam 2007, 226–27; I have used their translation with a few modifications.

²⁸ That "Probus" used the Life of Phocas was shown by Brugnoli 1964; see also Stok 1996.

²⁹ See *ad ecl.* 6, 13 (a reference to Siron also in *ad Aen.* 6, 264).

³⁰ See Gigante 2004, 84–87 (the most recent edition of the papyrus is that provided by Delattre 2004).

³¹ See Lehnus 1982, 196–201.

³² Laetus's commentary on the *Bucolics* is transmitted by C and by the edition published by Daniele Caetani around 1490 (see Abbamonte & Stok 2008, 139–44). I reproduce henceforth the text of Caetani's edition.

³³ See Stok 2007–08.

modern editors correct it in various ways). Laetus replaced this part with the corresponding account provided by the preface of the Ps.-Probus Commentary:

quem [*scil.* Antonium] persecuturus Augustus exercitus in Orientem ducebat eumque superavit apud Actiacum Apollinem. Italiae ergo civitatibus diversas partes sequentibus Cremonenses et Mantuani neutri sunt auxiliati: sed hoc Augustus indignatus veteranis, quorum operam in bello habuerat, agros Cremonensium dividi iussit et, si non suffecissent, Mantuanos adiungi (p. 327, 28–33 Hagen).

(Augustus, about to pursue Antonius, led his armies to the East and overcame him near the temple of Apollo in Actium. While the Italian towns supported the one or the other part, the citizens of Cremona and Mantua did not help either one. Augustus, who was indignant, ordered that the veterans who had supported him in the war should be given the farms of the inhabitants of Cremona and, if they were not sufficient, also those of Mantua.)

From Probus's preface Laetus also derived the name of the veteran who took possession of Virgil's farm (VProb. 3): "concitaverat in se veteranos adeo, ut a Milieno Torone primipilari paene sit interfectus, nisi fugisset" (p. 328, 3–5 Hagen; he provoked the veterans and would have been killed by the primipilaris Milienus Toro if he had not escaped).

In addition to the *Vita Probiana* Laetus also uses two other Lives of Virgil, that of Donatus and the so-called *Vita Bernensis*. The use of the latter was probably suggested to Laetus by the reference in the *Vita Probiana* to some eminent masters of eloquence (*summi eloquentiae doctores*) with whom Virgil had studied before losing his father's farm. The only other ancient Life which refers to Virgil's oratorical studies is in fact the *Vita Bernensis*, according to which Virgil attended the Roman school of the rhetor Epidius together with the Emperor Augustus: "ut primum se contulit Romae studuit apud Epidium oratorem cum Augusto" (as soon as he betook himself to Rome, he studied under the orator Epidius with Augustus). That Augustus attended this school is also recounted by Suetonius *gramm.* 28 (probably the source of the *Vita Bernensis*), who however does not refer to Virgil: "M. Epidius [...] ludum dicendi aperuit docuitque M. Antonium et Augustum" (M. Epidius [...] opened a school of oratory and taught M. Antonius and Augustus). It is noteworthy that Laetus knew not only the *Vita Bernensis*, but also the work of Suetonius, because VPomp. 3 gives the first name of Epidius, omitted by the *Vita Bernensis*. Laetus furthermore does not present Octavian and Virgil as fellow students, like the *Vita Bernensis*, but makes a chronological mistake, attributing to Octavian an older age (*fuerat*); Augustus was actually seven years younger than Virgil.

Regarding Donatus, Laetus decidedly used the so-called *Donatus auctus*, that is the enlarged version compiled in the fifteenth century (in the milieu of Guarinus of Verona, as I have argued elsewhere³⁴). But he knew not only this widespread version, but also the original version of the Donatian Life of Virgil, which had circulated, to a certain extent, in the first half of the fifteenth century. VPomp. 6 presupposes in fact the original Donatian Life³⁵:

Vulgatum est consuesse eum et cum Plotia Hieria, sed Asconius Pedianus (= frg. 5 Funaioli) affirmat ipsam postea maiorem natu narrare solitam invitatum quidem a Vario ad communionem sui, verum pertinacissime recusasse

(it was commonly said that he also frequented Plotia Hieria. But Asconius Pedianus maintains that she herself in her maturity was accustomed to tell the story that Virgil had indeed been invited by Varius to share her but that he had obstinately refused).

In *Donatus auctus* 21, instead, it is Virgil himself who testifies to his own chastity, not the woman:

Asconius Pedianus affirmat ipsum postea maioribus natu narrare solitum invitatum quidem a Varo ad communionem mulieris, sed pertinacissime abstinuisse – where the replacement of ipsam with ipsum changes the identity of the witness heard by Asconius

(Asconius Padianus maintains that Virgil himself used to relate afterward to his elders that he had indeed been invited by Varus to share her but that he had obstinately refused).

Laetus also omits another piece of information given in *Donatus Auctus*, that Plotia was the wife of Varius Rufus, and instead presents the woman as a prostitute (*scortum*).

The story is also told by Laetus in his commentary on the *Bucolics* (on 2.14), where we read that Plotia appears in this work under the name of Amarillis: “Amarillia fuisse volunt Plotiam Hieriam, cum qua vulgatum fuit poetam coisse. Sed Pedianus Asconius scribit illam affirmasse iuramento invitatum Virgilium ab Alphenio Varo ad talem libidinem pertinacissime recusasse” (Amarillia was Plotia Hieria, with whom it is circulated that the poet had a sexual relation. But Asconius Pedianus writes that she asserted upon oath that Virgil had been invited to this lust by Alphenius Varus, but that he had obstinately refused). In contrast to VPomp., where Laetus does not mention the name of Varius and presents Virgil as a brothel-goer, in the

³⁴ See Stok *forthcoming*.

³⁵ Here and further on, I reproduce the Latin text of the Donatian Life and *Donatus auctus* by Brugnoli & Stok 1997 and the English translation by Ziolkowski & Putnam 2007.

commentary he mentions Varius as a partner of sexual adventures but identifies him not as Varius Rufus, but as Alfenus Varus, the dedicatee of *ecl.* 6. It is worth noticing that whereas in the version of V Plotia is a *famosissimum scortum* (very famous prostitute), in that of C she becomes *formosissimum* (very lovely), an appraisal perhaps more fitting to her profession.

Laetus also uses the interpolations of the *Donatus auctus* in some other cases. VPomp. 3, *quem* [scil. *Cornelium Gallum*] *unice dilexit*, echoes *Donatus auctus* 38, *miro amore dilexit* (whom he prized with a remarkable love).³⁶ VPomp. 15 “*Aliorum bene scripta ita probavit, ut anteponeret suis et imitari minime negligeret*”, summarizes *Donatus auctus* 65: “*refert etiam Asconius Pedianus benignum cultoremque omnium bonorum atque eruditorum fuisse et usque adeo invidiae expertem, ut, si quid erudite dictum inspiceret alterius, non minus gaudere ac suum fuisset*” (Pedianus also reports that he was kindly and devoted to all good and learned men, and that he was so free of envy that, if he beheld a well-educated phrase from another, he was no less happy that if had written it himself).³⁷

In the other cases VPomp. uses topics in which *Donatus auctus* does not differ from the Donatian Life (I shall therefore simply speak of “Donatus”). VPomp. 1 integrates the *Vita Probiana* with Donatus 1, using the latter for the first names of the consuls and for Virgil's studies in Cremona and Milan. VPomp. 4 takes the story of Alexander / Alexis from Donatus 9: “*maxime dilexit Cebetem et Alexandrum, quem secunda Bucolicorum ecloga Alexim appellat, donatum sibi ab Asinio Pollione*” (he loved Cebes and Alexander exceedingly. The latter, whom he calls Alexis in the second eclogue, was a gift to him from Asinius Pollio). The source of VPomp. 7 is Donatus 13: “*habuitque domum Romae in Esquilis iuxta hortos Maecenatianos*” (he owned a house in Rome on the Esquiline, next to the gardens of Maecenas). VPomp. 8 echoes Donatus 13: “*quamquam secessu Campaniae Siciliaeque plurimum uteretur*” (although he most often used a retreat in Campania and Sicily), but connects this source with the Epicurean persuasion of the poet, ignored by Donatus. In speaking of *hortulus*, Laetus was perhaps thinking of Ps.-Vergil *catalepton* 8, where the *villula* of Siron inherited by Virgil included a small field (*pauper agellus*): in his commentary on *Bucolics* 6.14, referring to Siron, Laetus says that the Epicureans lived in rustic simplicity and were satisfied with a small garden (*Epicurei hortulo*

³⁶ Regarding C. Asinius Gallus, the son of Asinius Pollio (mentioned by Hieronymus, *chron. ad Ol.* 196.2), wrongly identified by the compiler of *Donatus auctus* with the author of the *Amores*, that is Cornelius Gallus.

³⁷ That the compiler of *Donatus auctus* knew an authentic work of Asconius Pedianus seems very doubtful; it is more probable that this is a case of forgery, as frequently happened in Humanistic culture.

contenti vixerunt rusticana simplicitate). VPomp. 9 echoes Donatus 14: “parentes iam grandis amisit, ex quibus patrem captum oculis et duos fratres germanos, Silonem impuberem, Flaccum iam adultum, cuius exitum sub nomine Daphnidis deflet” (Virgil lost his family when he was grown up, among them his father, who had lost his eyesight, and two full brothers: Silo, who was a boy, and Flaccus, an adult, whose passing he lamented under the name Daphnis). Laetus paraphrases *ipse tumulavit* (the expression does not necessarily refer to a funeral, to which there are no references in the sources), interprets *iam adultum* by assigning to Flaccus the age of 20, and adds to the two brothers mentioned by Donatus the third younger step-brother Valerius Proculus, mentioned by Donatus 37 as heir in Virgil’s will (see below). VPomp. 12 on Virgil’s death and will uses the *Vita Probiana* but has the names of the consuls from Donatus 37 (36: *Cn. Sentio Q. Lucretio cons.*): the name of Pontius Sextius seems to mirror variant readings found in manuscripts of *Donatus auctus*, where the original *Sentio* is corrupted in some manuscripts to *Sextio* or *Sestio*, in others to *Pontio*.³⁸ The location of Virgil’s tomb (VPomp. 13) is drawn from Donatus 36: “via Puteolana intra lapidem secundum” (on the road to Pozzuoli less than two miles out of the city). The portrait of Virgil (VPomp. 15) from Donatus 8–9:

corpore et statura fuit grandi, aquilo (*aquilino* Don. auct.) colore, facie rusticana, valetudine varia: nam plerumque a stomacho et a faucibus laborabat, sanguinem etiam saepe (*saepius* Don. auct.) reiecit. Cibi vinique minimi, libidinis in pueros pronioris.

(he was large in person and stature, with a swarthy complexion, the face of a peasant. His health was variable, for he often had stomach aches and pains in the throat, and he often spat up blood. He was most frugal with regard to food and wine, but given to erotic pleasures with boys).

Laetus omits in VPomp. the Donatian reference to Virgil’s pederasty, but mentions it in the *Commentary* to the *Bucolics*; the more generic *amoris impensissimi* echoes the expression *impenso amore* used by Virgil *Aen.* 4, 54 with regard to Dido (from *Lucr.* 5, 964; see also the *impensa libido* of *Cicero Sest.* 130). The source of VPomp. 15 is Donatus 12: “bona autem cuiusdam exsulantis offerente Augusto non sustinuit accipere” (when Augustus offered him the property of a certain exile, Virgil could not bear to accept it). VPomp. 16 echoes Donatus 15, “inter cetera studia medicinae quoque ac maxime mathematicae operam dedit” (among other studies, he devoted himself to medicine and especially to mathematics), but replaces mathematics with magic, introducing the following reference to Pliny the

³⁸ See Brugnoli & Stok 1997, 100.

Elder, *nat.* 28.19: “hinc Theocriti apud Graecos, Catulli apud nos proximeque Vergili incantamentorum amatoria imitatio” (so Theocritus among the Greeks, Catullus and quite recently Vergil among ourselves, have represented love charms in their poems).³⁹

As we have already seen, Laetus uses in VPomp. 3 the *De grammaticis* by Suetonius. This work had been rediscovered together with the minor works of Tacitus thanks to manuscripts of Hersfeld brought to Italy by Enoch of Ascoli, probably in the autumn of 1455.⁴⁰ Laetus uses Suetonius's work also in VPomp. 20, on Caecilius Epirota and the epigram of Domitius Marsus (*gramm.* 16.3): “primusque Vergilium et alios poetas novos praelegere coepisse [scil. *Q. Caecilius Epirota*], quod etiam Domitii Marsi versiculis indicatur: Epirota tenellorum nutricula vatum” (and the first to begin lecturing on Virgil and other modern poets; the latter point is also suggested by Domitius Marsus' line, Epirota: the dear nurse of delicate little bards [transl. by R. A. Kaster]). That Virgil was still alive (*Virgili viventis*) when Caecilius started lecturing on his work (obviously, the *Bucolics* and *Georgics*) in his own school was probably suggested to Laetus by Suetonius's reference to the death of his patron Cornelius Gallus, after which Caecilius had opened his school.

Together with the *De grammaticis* the lost *Hersfeldensis* also contained the *Dialogus de oratoribus* by Tacitus. This work is used by Laetus in VPomp. 10:

malo securum et quietum Vergilii secessum, in quo tamen neque apud divum Augustum gratia caruit neque apud populum Romanum notitia. Testes Augusti epistulae, testis ipse populus, qui auditis in theatro Vergili versibus surrexit universus et forte praesentem spectantemque Vergilium veneratus est sic quasi Augustum (*dial.* 13).

(for my part I would rather have the seclusion in which Virgil lived, tranquil and serene, without forfeiting either the favour of the sainted Augustus, or popularity with the citizens of Rome. This is vouched for by the letters of Augustus, and by the behaviour of the citizens themselves; for on hearing a quotation from Virgil in the course of a theatrical performance, they rose to their feet as a man, and did homage to the poet, who happened to be present at the play, just as they would have done to the Emperor himself [transl. by W. Peterson]).

Pliny's *Naturalis historia* is used by Laetus not only in the above-mentioned VPomp. 16, but also in VPomp. 19, to expand information from Ps.-Probus

³⁹ Laetus mentions this passage of Pliny also in his commentary to *ecl.* 8.96: “apud Latinos duo fuerunt magici, Virgilius et Catullus, ut ait Plinius”.

⁴⁰ Kaster 1992, 1–2.

on Virgil's testamentary disposition concerning the burning of the *Aeneid*: "Divus Augustus carmina Vergilii cremari contra testamenti eius verecundiam vetuit, maiusque ita vati testimonium contigit quam si ipse sua probavisset" (*nat.* 7.114; the divine Augustus overrode the modesty of Virgil's will and forbade the burning of his poem, and thus the bard received a greater tribute than if he had commended his own works himself [transl. by H. Rackham]). It is noteworthy that Pliny and Ps.-Probus (and Macrobius *Sat.* 1.124.6) agree that Virgil ordered the burning of the *Aeneid* in his will; Donatus and the other sources relate that Virgil expressed his will orally, before his death.

VPomp. 17 echoes Quintilian, *inst.* 1.7.18 "Vergilius amantissimus vetustatis" (the antiquarian enthusiasm of Virgil). For Virgil's *curiositas* Laetus probably relies on Servius *ad Aen.* 1.44: "Italiae curiosissimum fuisse Vergilium" (Virgil cared intensely about Italy). The addition of C, *prope divinus*, was perhaps suggested by Macrobius, *Sat.* 5.1.18: "non mortali sed divino ingenio praevidisse" (with a prescience born of a disposition divine rather than mortal). Quintilian is also used in VPomp. 18: "utar enim verbis quae ex Afro Domitio iuvenis excepi: qui mihi interroganti quem Homero crederet maxime accedere, secundus, inquit, est Vergilius, propior tamen primo quam tertio" (let me quote the words I heard from Domitius Afer when I was a young man. I had asked who he thought came nearest to Homer; "Virgil is the second", he replied, "but nearer to the first than to the third," *inst.* 10.1.86).

Finally, another source used by Laetus is the grammarian Priscian, whose reference to Grillius: "Grillius ad Virgilium de accentibus scribens" (Grillius to Virgil on accents," *gramm.* 1.47), suggested to Laetus that he could have been a teacher of Virgil. But Priscian's Virgil is not the poet, because Grillius is a commentator of Cicero who lived in late antiquity. That "Grillius" taught in Milan was suggested by Donatus's information that Virgil studied in this city before going to Rome.

3. Laetus's innovations?

Some information provided by Laetus in VPomp. is not confirmed by known sources. In some cases Laetus may have taken suggestions from his sources and then arrived at his own conclusions. That Grillus was a teacher of Virgil (VPomp. 1) was probably suggested, as we have seen, by Priscian. The name of Galla, from whom Virgil had a degenerate son (VPomp. 12), was suggested perhaps by the *Epigrams* of Martial, where Galla is the name of a prostitute (e.g. 2.25; 3.51). It seems more difficult to understand why, for Laetus, Asinius Pollio was presented to Virgil by Epidius (VPomp. 3).

The name of a woman loved by Virgil in Mantua, Lydia (VPomp. 5), was certainly suggested by the *Dirae*, the work of the *Appendix Vergiliana* which is united in the manuscript tradition with the part published later as *Lydia*. In the commentary to the *Dirae* Laetus says that Virgil gave Lydia the name of the sister of Bianor, the founder of Mantua: another piece of information of unknown origin. In the commentary to the *Bucolics*, Lydia is identified with Galatea, a character of the first eclogue. That Galatea was a woman loved by Virgil is also stated by some medieval commentaries, e.g. by the one attributed to Philargyrius where we read that “Virgil had two women, Amaryllis and Galatea, the former from Rome, the latter from Gallia or another country in which he lived” (*ad ecl.* 1, 64, p. 60 Hagen), but this work was supposedly unknown to Laetus.

That Virgil suffered from pthysis (VPomp. 15) seems to be deduced from the symptoms described by Donatus (pain in the throat and hemoptysis). Another surprising diagnosis given by Laetus is that of the disease that caused the death of Virgil, a malaria fever (VPomp. 11).

4. A Virgil without a Prince

The overall outline of VPomp. is roughly that of Suetonius, characterized by “biographical” chapters on the poet, his personality and his work. This is not surprising if we consider that Laetus uses not only the *Vita probiana* but also, as we have seen, that of Donatus, largely based on the lost biography of Suetonius.

In contrast to the Donatian Life, Laetus does not speak of Virgil’s works: in fact he does not mention the works of the *Appendix* (despite having written a commentary on them⁴¹) and he does not seem interested in the composition of the *Bucolics* and the *Georgics*. Only with regard to the *Aeneid* does he recall briefly that the poem was unfinished and that Virgil wanted to burn it. It is probable that Laetus intended to expound these topics in the commentary and deal with the life in the poet’s biography.

In order to see more accurately the objectives and peculiarities of VPomp. it is useful to compare it with the best known and most widespread of Virgil’s biographies in the Renaissance, that is, the already mentioned *Donatus auctus*⁴².

An important difference between VPomp. and the *Donatus auctus* regards the role of Virgil in the court of Augustus. Laetus omits the several

⁴¹ Laetus commented “Culex, Dirae, Copa, De est et non, De institutione viri boni, De rosis, Moretum, Elegiae in Maecenatem, Ciris”. Only of the *De est et non* he affirms that “these lines are not by Virgil” (*non sunt Virgilii hi versus*).

⁴² From the time of the *editio princeps* of 1471 (in the Venice edition of the Commentary of Servius) the *Donatus auctus* was regularly printed in the editions of Virgil.

episodes in which Virgil is depicted as the Prince's confidant and adviser (he only mentions the information in the *Vita Probiana* about the money given to Virgil by Augustus). Laetus emphasizes instead Tacitus's episode about Virgil being applauded as if he were a prince by the Roman people: an episode that suggests an image of Virgil as an "independent" poet, different from the medieval and Renaissance tradition in which the prince is the only interlocutor of Virgil. It is not surprising that this image of Virgil was born not in a Renaissance court (like the *Donatus auctus*), but in the peculiar milieu of Papal Rome.

Another difference between VPomp. and the *Donatus auctus* regards Virgil's philosophical conviction. For Laetus, as we have seen, Virgil was Epicurean and VPomp. 8 connects this position with the poet's preference for a quiet life. According to *Donatus auctus*, Virgil was not an Epicurean but a Platonist: "audivit a Silone (sic) praecepta Epicuri, cuius doctrina socium habuit Varum, et quamvis diversorum philosophorum opiniones libris suis inseruisset, de animo maxime uideatur ipse Academicus: nam Platonis sententias omnibus aliis praetulit" (from Silo he heard the precepts of Epicurus, in whose doctrine he had a companion in Varus. And although he inserted into his books the opinions of different philosophers, on questions about the soul he most seems to be an Academic; for he preferred the opinions of Plato to that of all others).

A further difference between VPomp. and *Donatus auctus* (and the whole medieval tradition regarding the life of Virgil) is Laetus's interest in Virgil's sexual life. Donatus's embarrassing reference to Virgil's pederasty (*libido pronior in pueros*) had been censored as early as late antiquity: Servius omits the reference to boys (*pueri*) and presents Virgil's sexual impulse as a disease: "omni vita probatus uno tantum morbo laborabat, nam impatiens libidinis fuit" (excellent in all his life, he suffered from only one disease, namely, that he was not able to control his lust). The *Donatus auctus* considers Virgil's pederasty as gossip and interprets the *libido* in a Platonic sense desexualizing it: "fama fuit libidinis pronioris in pueros fuisse, sed boni ita eum pueros amare putaverunt, ut Socrates Alcibiadem et Plato τὰ παιδικά" (rumor had it that he had a strong sexual desire towards boys. But men of the good sort think he loved boys the way Socrates loved Alcibiades and Plato his favorites). Laetus omits the reference, in VPomp., to homosexuality, but presents Virgil as a man of surprising sexual activity (*amoris impensissimi usque ad suspicionem*) and confirms this portrait with the sexual relationships he attributes to the poet: with Lydia, Plotia, and Galla, and also with his competence in love potions. Regarding the affair with Plotia, Laetus accepts Plotia's exculpatory testimony related by Asconius Pedianus, but presents the woman as *scortum*, that is a prostitute (in the exegetical tra-

dition she is a friend or wife of Varius Rufus), and Virgil, as a visitor to his home, not behaving in a completely upright way. Moreover, the mysterious Galla does not seem to have been a gentlewoman, as we have seen, and is also the mother of a lustful son (*intemperans libidinis*).

Virgil's pederastic homosexuality is not censored by Laetus in his commentary to the *Bucolics*, where he develops the traditional identification of the character Alexis with the boy Alexander given to Virgil by Asinius Pollio:

Asinius Pollio, qui et propraetor fuit Galliae Cisalpinae, puerum forma praestantem nomine Alexandrum habebat. Eum cum cognosceret amari vehementissime a Virgilio, poetae dono dedit. Maecenas puerum habebat domi Cebetem natione Egyptium, ut scribit Apronianus, quem dono dedit Virgilio amanti eum. Virgilius nunc appellat Alexim et se ipsum appellat Coridonem, ut scribit Apulegius, ego tamen puto Alexim, ut videbimus paulo post, intelligi pro Alexandro Pollionis. Legimus Virgilium fuisse proclivem in amores puerorum: nam aiunt, cum recitaret quartum librum Aeneidos, non potuisse se continere ab osculo Marcelli nepotis Octavii (commentary on *ecl.* 2.1).

(Asinius Pollio, who was also propraetor of Gallia Cisalpina, had a very beautiful boy whose name was Alexander. Knowing that he was loved very passionately by Virgil, he gave him to the poet. Maecenas had in his home an Egyptian boy whose name was Cebes, as Apronianus writes, and gave him to Virgil, who loved him. Virgil names him Alexis and himself Coridon, as Apuleius writes: but I think that Alexis, as we will see a bit later, is to be identified as the Alexander given to him by Pollio. We read that Virgil was prone to love boys: in fact, it is said that when he recited the fourth Book of the *Aeneid* he could not stop himself from kissing Marcellus, the nephew of Augustus.)

The reported text is that of the 1490 edition. C (f. 33r) before *amores puerorum* adds *pios* (chaste): we read that Virgil's love for children was chaste (*pius*): for Dykmans this was Laetus's actual opinion,⁴³ but it seems more probable that *pios* was an addition by the pupil who wrote this manuscript, concerned about the morality of the poet. On the allegorical identifications of *ecl.* 2 Laetus quotes Apuleius *apol.* 10: "puerum amici sui Pollionis bucolico ludicro laudans et abstinens nominum sese quidem Corydonem, puerum vero Alexin vocat" (praising the slave-boy of his friend Pollio in playful pastoral song, and omitting their names, he calls himself Corydon but the boy Alexis). Laetus seems to correct Apuleius. He agrees, however, with Apuleius that Virgil in the *Bucolics* named the slave-boy of Pollio Alexis

⁴³ Dykmans 1987, 94.

and himself Corydon. Cebes is mentioned by Servius, *ad ecl.* 2.15, who does not, however, speak of his ethnicity. Why does Laetus present him as Egyptian? We do not know the source quoted by Laetus as “Apronianus”: usually this name refers to Virgil’s *Mediceus*, but the first folios of this manuscript, containing the first *Bucolics*, are lost, and therefore we do not know where Laetus read this information. Servius identifies Cebes with Menalcas, and Virgil, *ecl.* 2.16, writes that Menalcas was black (*niger*). In his commentary on *Bucolics* 2.1 Laetus again mentions “Apronianus”, but he also quotes Martial 4.42.4, where the poet lusts after an Egyptian boy: “no land knows better how to bestow wantonness” (*nequitias tellus scit dare nulla magis*).

The statement about the young Marcellus, kissed by Virgil while Book 4 of the *Aeneid* was being read, is also surprising and enigmatic. The source should be the Life of Donatus 32, where we read that Virgil “tres omnino libros recitavit, secundum quartum et sextum; sed hunc notabili Octaviae adfectione, quae, cum recitationi interesset, ad illos de filio suo versus ‘Tu Marcellus eris’ [6.883], defecisse fertur atque aegre focilata” (Virgil recited three whole books for Augustus, the second, fourth, and sixth – but this last one to the evident distress of Octavia who, being present at the recitation, is said to have fainted at the lines about her son that begin “You shall be Marcellus”, and to have been revived only with difficulty). Laetus seems to imagine a previous reading of Book 4, before the composition of Book 6, where the death of Marcellus is mentioned.

This episode and several references to Virgil’s sexual life seem to contain some allusion to the experiences of Laetus himself, who had been accused in 1468 of homosexuality and paganism (also Epicureanism: another point of similarity with Virgil). For Zabughin, Laetus’s insistence on sexual matters intended to remove the last traces of the infamous accusation directed against himself, “I do not know if rightly or wrongly” (so Zabughin), by the Venetian Council of Ten.⁴⁴ In Venice, before his incarceration in Rome, Laetus was indeed accused of having sexually corrupted some of his pupils.

A similar allusion can also be read in the final part of VPomp., where Laetus identifies himself, as we have seen, with Cecilius Epirota. This grammarian, as we (and Laetus) read in the work of Suetonius, was a freedman of Atticus who had seduced the daughter of his master and the wife of Agrippa, entrusted to him as a student (*gramm.* 16, 1: “cum filiam patroni nuptam M. Agrippae doceret, suspectus in ea et ob hoc remotus”). Sent away by Agrippa, Caecilius was protected by Cornelius Gallus and lived familiarly with him. The event was one of the reasons for Gallus’s

⁴⁴ Zabughin 1918, 142–43.

misfortune (“quod ipsi Gallo inter gravissima crimina ab Augusto obicitur”).⁴⁵ Proposing himself as a new Caecilius Epirota, the leader of a school devoted to Virgil, Laetus could hardly have been unaware of the similarity between his own Venetian experience and that of the freedman of Atticus.

Another self-identification is finally suggested by the portrait of Virgil depicted by Laetus: “amantissimus vetustatis, curiosus, diligens, ingeniosus, eminens” (great lover of antiquity, attentive, diligent, ingenious, distinguished). It is very probable that Laetus applied this portrait to himself, and to the image of himself he was giving his pupils.

5. Laetus's pupils rewriting the life of Virgil.

It is not surprising, considering the above-mentioned features, that Laetus did not publish VPomp., and that its circulation was limited to the milieu of his students. The biography was too innovative, for its risqué details and also in the new versions it gave of traditional features of the life of Virgil: a location of Andes incompatible with its traditional identification with Pietole and a modified version of the famous epitaph of Virgil.

Actually these parts of VPomp. were omitted or modified by the above-mentioned pupils of Laetus who wrote, like their master, Lives of Virgil. Petrus Marsus confirmed the identification of Andes with Pietole, ignoring the distance in miles stated by VPomp.: with good reason, as Dykmans observed,⁴⁶ because in those years Marsus worked under the patronage of Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, a member of the family ruling Mantua. Probus's version of the Virgilian epitaph, *pascua poma duces*, is corrected both by Cynthius of Ceneda and by the compiler of the Vat. lat. 2739, who replace the traditional *pascua rura duces*.

Another topic of VPomp. modified by the pupils is the one regarding the sexual behaviour of Virgil. Petrus Marsus omits the words *amoris vero impensissimi*. The compiler of the Vat. lat. 2739 paraphrases *amoris impatientissimus* and replaces *cum ea coivit* (that is with Plotia) with the more chaste *cum qua numquam rem habuit*. Cynthius of Ceneda omits the information on the illegitimate son of Virgil and Galla, and the quotation of Pliny on the *Virgilii amatoria imitatio*.

Cynthius and Petrus Marsus furthermore add a section about Virgil's works (including the *Appendix*), a topic omitted, as we have seen, by VPomp. Petrus Marsus adds to the localisation of Virgil's house *prope hortos Maecenatis* a further piece of topographical information: “et aedes Corneliorum, quorum vestigia et conspicui fornices adhuc extant” (and the house of the Cornelii, of which there remain today ruins and monumental

⁴⁵ See Kaster 1995, 183–86.

⁴⁶ See Dykmans 1987, 104–08.

archways). The *aedes Corneliarum* are probably the so-called “domus Corneliarum” already known to Biondo Flavio (*Roma instaurata* I 87) and identified by de Rossi with a church demolished in 1589.⁴⁷ It is interesting to observe that it was, as de Rossi himself states, very near to the house of Laetus.

We do not know if the manuscript used by Daniele Caetani for the edition printed in Brescia in 1490 included VPomp. or if Caetani himself, in editing the commentary, preferred to omit it. However, the non-inclusion of VPomp. in the printed edition of “Pomponius Sabinus” caused its disappearance, until its rediscovery thanks to Zabughin and Dykmans.

6. Conclusion.

As is the case with his work on other Latin authors, Laetus's *Vita Virgilii* testifies to his efforts to identify the oldest sources and to compile a biography from which erroneous information from medieval sources is weeded out – information that is still present, for instance, in the Life compiled by Sicco Polenton (1437). Among the sources used by Laetus was Donatus's Life, which in the fifteenth century circulated with later interpolations in the form now known as *Donatus auctus*.

To Laetus, the most authoritative version of Virgil's Life was the one that preceded Ps.-Probus's commentary. He was the first humanist to use it, believing it to be a genuine work of Valerius Probus. The information Laetus found in Ps.-Probus's Life and in the commentary constitute the core of the Life he compiled.

Apart from the *Vita Probianae*, Laetus also used the Life of Donatus and the so-called *Vita Bernensis*, incorporating, however, only the most plausible information in his own text. Other authors quoted by him include Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius and Quintilian. Laetus also made ample use of the allegorical interpretation found in Ps.-Probus's commentary on the eclogues. And not only in the Life but also in own commentary on the works in the *Appendix Virgiliana*.

Laetus's work on the Life of Virgil is of considerable interest. It evokes an image of the poet that differs profoundly from that found in *Donatus auctus* or in other Lives circulating at the time. Some of the peculiarities of his Life may probably be explained by its very restricted circulation: it was used only by his students during his university lectures on Virgil.

Leto si interessò della Vita di Virgilio, come di quella di altri autori latini,

⁴⁷ de Rossi 1890, 87–88.

ponendosi il problema di individuare le notizie più antiche ed autorevoli, e di costruire così una biografia depurata dalle notizie dubbie presenti nelle biografie ereditate dalla tradizione medievale e basate su essa (come quella di Polenton). Fra queste rientrava anche la Vita di Donato, che circolava nel secolo XV nella forma interpolata nota come *Donatus auctus*.

Leto individuò come fonte più autorevole della biografia di Virgilio la Vita egli leggeva in testa al commento pseudo-probiano, che egli utilizzò per primo fra gli Umanisti e che considerava ovviamente opera di Valerius Probus. Le notizie tratte da questa Vita ed anche dal commento costituiscono il nucleo centrale della Vita Pomponiana.

Oltre alla Vita Probiana Leto utilizzò anche quella La Vita di Donato e la cosiddetta Vita Bernensis, ma selezionando con attenzione le notizie sulla base della loro verosimiglianza. Egli inoltre inserì nella propria Vita notizie tratte da alcuni autori che fanno riferimento a Virgilio e alla sua opera (Tacito, Plinio, Suetonio, Quintiliano). Nella costruzione della biografia Leto si avvale largamente dell'interpretazione allegorica delle Bucoliche, che costituisce un tratto peculiare del commento pseudo-probiano, e che Leto estese anche alle opere dell'Appendix.

Il risultato della ricerca biografica di Leto è di notevole interesse, in quanto delinea un'immagine di Virgilio notevolmente diversa da quella che caratterizza il *Donatus auctus* e le altre biografie in circolazione in età umanistica. Alcuni tratti particolari di essa sono probabilmente riconducibili all'uso ristretto che Leto fece di questa Vita: la sua circolazione restò infatti limitata alla cerchia dei suoi allievi, quale sussidio nelle lezioni di esegesi virgiliana che egli teneva nello *Studium* romano.

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THE USE AND DEFENSE OF THE CLASSICAL CANON



in Pomponio Leto's Biography of Lucretius

by Ada Palmer

Leto's is the oldest vita of Lucretius, and an apologetic text carefully structured to counter the stigmas of suicide and atheism which dogged this Epicurean poet. Uniquely among scholars of Lucretius, Leto proposes a male lover "Astericon" as the cause of Lucretius' suicide, but defuses this suggestion of sin with classical endorsements and Christian allusions. Leto uses the vita to advertise his own scholarly prowess, crafting intentionally ornate sentences packed with rare Latin constructions and deliberately obscure classical references. A final direct address to Cicero admonishes the orator for misunderstanding Epicureanism, effectively blaming him for the sect's bad reputation.

Leto's fingerprints are all over the Lucretian textual tradition, in the form of annotations surviving in four different volumes. The manuscript now in Naples contains thousands of notes in Leto's hand, evidently written over a long period of reading and rereading, correcting and commenting on the language and content of the *De Rerum Natura*.¹ A manuscript at the Vatican, Ottob. lat. 2834, contains more notes, in a hand which is either Leto's or that of an associate, which appear extensively on the first folio, and sparsely thereafter. A manuscript at the University Library of Basel, with an owner's note of Bonifacius Amerbach dated 1513, boasts, in an inscription tooled into its leather cover, the fact that it contains Leto's annotations.² In fact, it contains a partial transcription of Leto's notes from the copy in Naples, but the existence of this transcript establishes that his annotations were highly valued at the end of the fifteenth century. Finally, another extensive set of annotations on the whole poem, written in Leto's hand, sur-

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¹ Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele III. IV E 51. 1458; cf. Palmer 2014, chapter 2.

² Basel, Öffentliche Bibliothek der Universität. F.VIII.14. Written between 1458 and 1513, likely circa 1470.

vives in a copy of the 1486 Verona imprint of Lucretius preserved in Utrecht, which also contains Leto's short biography of the poet on its fly-leaves.³

This *vita*, and its accompanying annotations, date to sometime shortly before 1492, so seventy-five years after Poggio brought the *De rerum natura* back to Italy, but less than sixty years after it had started to genuinely circulate, since Niccolò Niccoli guarded it so jealously into the 1430s. The 1486 edition was the second printed version of the poem, but the text was still in terrible shape, badly in need of correction, in particular because its comparatively archaic Latin and unusual vocabulary made it especially prone to accumulating scribal error. The text also needed explication and promotion, since the poem was, as Quintilian had observed,⁴ difficult and, as Saint Jerome had hinted,⁵ best read with a commentary, while Lucretius himself was still very much a newcomer to the classical library, and not always welcome one. The association of Epicureanism with hedonism, depravity and atheism had been popularized in the Middle Ages by the criticisms of Arnobius, Isidore of Seville and especially Lactantius,⁶ and by broader European tendencies to associate heterodox philosophy with irreligion, wantonness and, especially, sodomy.⁷ These factors combined to make the *De rerum natura*, even in printed form, an exceptionally difficult and, to no small extent, dangerous text to work on. By 1517, only twenty-five years after

³ Universiteitsbibliotheek, Litt. Lat. X fol. 82 rar., reprinted in Leto 1993; see Dixon 2011, 191–216. The volume contains annotations by Leto, Sebastiano Priuli, Francesco Cerreto and at least one other person, but Dixon does not believe that the notes provide sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis (see Solaro 1998 and Campanelli 1993) that it was used in conjunction with a set of Lucretian lectures by Leto. On this volume and Leto's hand see also Paladini 1996.

⁴ "Nam Macer et Lucretius legendi, sed non ut phrasin idest ut corpus loquentiae faciant, elegantes, in sua quisque materia, sed alter humilis, alter difficilis" (For instance, Macer and Lucretius should be read, but not for forming phrasing, that is the body of eloquence; each is elegant in his own subject, but the former is shallow and the latter difficult), *inst.* 10.1.87.

⁵ "Puto quod puer legeris Aspri in Virgilium et Sallustium commentarios, Vulcatii in orationes Ciceronis, Victorini in dialogos eius et in Terentii comoedias, praeceptoris mei Donati aequae in Virgilium, et aliorum in alios: Plautum videlicet, Lucretium, Flaccum, Persium atque Lucanum. Argue interpretes eorum, quare non unam explanationem secuti sint: et in eadem re quid vel sibi, vel aliis videatur, enumerent" (I imagine that as a boy you read Asper's Virgil and Sallust commentaries, Vulcatius' on Cicero's orations, Victorinus' on his Dialogues and Terence's Comedies, my teacher Donatus's on Virgil, and others on others, such as Plautus, Lucretius, Flaccus, Persius and Lucan. Will you fault their commentators, because they have not backed a single explanation but enumerate both their views and others' on a particular passage?), *adv. Rufin.* I, 16.

⁶ See Panizza 1978, 76–107.

⁷ See Hunter & Wootton 1992, especially Wootton's chapter "New Histories of Atheism," 54 and Davidson's "Unbelief and Atheism in Italy, 1500–1700".

Leto's Lucretian activities, Lucretius would be banned from classrooms in Florence as an exemplar of lascivious literature likely to corrupt the youth,⁸ and Lucretius would remain a topic of particular concern for those responsible for drawing up the Index.⁹ This makes Leto's *vita* of Lucretius a telling window on his concerns as he introduces an author so strongly associated with all the most controversial aspects of the ancient world.

Unlike the cases of Virgil and Sallust, there are no medieval *accessus* of Lucretius, so Leto's is the earliest life of the poet, the first of eight treatments written before 1600. Leto's *vita* is extremely brief, 1,000 words in length, but even that is expansive given how little real information we have about Lucretius' life. He was born between 99 and 93 BC,¹⁰ probably to an aristocratic Roman family, but this is conjecture based largely on his skill with Latin, and the fact that he was friends with Gaius Memmius, son-in-law of the dictator Sulla. He wrote an Epicurean epic poem, and probably died before February of 54 BC, when we know Cicero read the work which, unfinished as it is, presumably would not have been circulated before the poet's death.¹¹ That Lucretius was well known in antiquity we deduce from a dozen references to his name in corners of the classical canon.¹² We know nothing more.

A little more was thought to be known in Leto's day, when the juiciest sources had not yet been discredited. We now do not believe St. Jerome's claim, in his translation of Eusebius,¹³ that Lucretius committed suicide after going mad from drinking a love potion, because, setting aside any argument about the efficacy of Roman love potions, it is precisely the sort of scandalous accusation which an enemy of Epicureanism would likely invent. We have also largely dismissed Jerome's claim that Cicero posthumously edited the *De rerum natura*; this has been discredited in many ways,

⁸ Mansi (ed.) 1901–1927, vol. 35, 270.

⁹ See Prosperi 2004, ch. 2.

¹⁰ See D'Anna 2002, 189–97.

¹¹ “Lucreti poemata (ut scribis) ita sunt, multis luminibus ingeni, multae tamen artis; sed, cum veneris, virum te putabo, si Sallustii Empedoclea legeris, hominem non putabo” (Lucretius' poems are, as you wrote, containing many ingenious highlights, but much formal technique; but, when you return, I will think you a hero, if you have read Salustius' *Empedoclea*, though not human), *ad Q. fr.* 2.10.3.

¹² See Palmer 2014, ch. 3.

¹³ “Olympiade CLXXI anno secundo Titus Lucretius poeta nascitur, qui postea amatorio poculo in furorem versus, cum aliquot libros per intervalla insaniae conscripsisset, quos postea emendavit Cicero, propria se manu interfecit, anno aetatis quadragesimo tertio” (In the second year of the 171st Olympiad, Titus Lucretius the poet was born, who was later driven mad by a love potion, and having written some books in the intervals of his insanity, which Cicero later corrected, killed himself in his forty-fourth year), *HIER. chron.a.Abr.* 1923–4.

not least because we can see how easily such a conclusion might be jumped to by someone reading the letter of 54 BC in which Cicero mentions that he was reading the poem. We similarly no longer credit Donatus, who places Lucretius' death on the day Virgil assumed the *toga virilis*, both because we cannot find Donatus's source, and because it is too convenient a conjunction, early Latin dying as Virgilian Latin assumes the limelight, and pagan Epicureanism destroying itself to be replaced by the heavily Christianized pseudo-prophet figure which the Middle Ages made of Virgil.¹⁴

These non-facts, as we hold them, were inescapable problems for scholars working in a period when Jerome's story about Lucretius' suicide circulated far more widely than the *De rerum natura* itself. We must not forget the degree to which Renaissance readers tended to connect the quality of a work to the moral character of its author. A virtuous person produced good and edifying works, and if it was safe for a Christian reader to study the pagan classics it was safe because the ancients were paragons of nobility, honesty, moderation, etc. Petrarch and others advocated the study of the classics for moral self-improvement, and humanist attempts to carve out a safe space for pre-Christian works in Christian education largely depended on the ancients being morally good in a Christian sense: not the sort of people who get involved with love scandals, and go mad, and kill themselves. Jerome's suicide story thus had to be mitigated if the recently-recovered Lucretius was to be presented as an author safe for Christian contact.

Leto's *vita* uses nine ancient references to Lucretius: Jerome, Cicero's letter, both of Quintilian's references to Lucretius, which were transmitted independently, the reference in Ovid's *Amores*, the references in Macrobius and Marcus Terentius Varro, the fact that Virgil copies lines from Lucretius, and a medieval gloss on Ovid's *Ibis*, treated below. Leto does not use the references to Lucretius in Donatus and Statius, nor several others common in later treatments. With nine sources, Leto ties Lucretius' second biographer Avancius for the title of least sources used in a Lucretius *vita*, but this is a good thing, since later biographers such as Johannes Baptista Pius (1511), Hubert van Giffen (1565) and Denys Lambin (1570), who will boast eighteen, nineteen, even twenty-two citations, achieve these numbers by adding increasingly spurious sources, gathered by such tricks as treating instances of the names Lucilius or Lucullus as scribal errors intended to be Lucretius. This is a vivid case of what Patricia Osmond discussed in her pa-

¹⁴ "Initia aetatis Cremonae egit usque ad virilem togam, quam [XV] anno natali suo accepit iisdem illis consulibus iterum duobus, quibus erat natus, evenitque ut eo ipso die Lucretius poeta decederet" (He spent the beginning of his life in Cremona, until he put on the toga of adulthood when he received fifteen years after his birth, when those same two were consuls, and it happened that the poet Lucretius died that same day), *Vita Virg.* 6.

per, philologists filling biographical gaps in their sources by using the same guesswork they used in correcting texts, in this case using the fact that the name Lucretius can be mis-transcribed as Lucullus or Lucilius as *carte blanche* to treat any reference to Lucullus, Lucilius or even Lucilia as a reference to Lucretius. That Leto does not do this as much as his successors does him credit.

Leto's *vita* begins with a general discussion of wisdom and the arts of language, framed around a quotation from Marcus Terentius Varro, whom he introduces as the "Father of Roman Letters".¹⁵ This quotation, which states that three aspects must be treated in discussing subject: *origo*, *dignitas* and *ars* (roughly origin or ancestry, dignity or merit and skill or technique), sounds from its subject as if it should come from Varro's *De Lingua Latina*, but it actually comes from the much less relevant *De Re Rustica*, and in it Varro is not discussing lofty philology and philosophy but agriculture and animal husbandry. This peculiar and obscure opening reference contributes nothing to our understanding of Lucretius, and, in fact, Leto does not use the *origo*, *dignitas* and *ars* in the remainder of the *vita*. Leto cites Varro as mere ornament, a way to connect Lucretius to a lofty and more acceptable figure in the Latin canon who was also recently returned. Lucretius' name, meanwhile, is absent from the opening section. This reference also reminds the reader of Leto's own scholarly achievement in overseeing the 1471 edition of Varro's *De lingua latina*¹⁶.

Leto goes on to tell that wisdom and knowledge come from God, an implicit declaration that Lucretius' wisdom and knowledge too must derive from God, downplaying Epicureanism's unchristian associations. He then discusses the conviction that it is mankind's possession of wisdom and language which separates us from the beasts. This implies that the office of philosopher-poet held by Lucretius is the ideal manifestation of the divine gifts which raise man above the animals. Philosophy, Leto says, is essential to the path to merit and Reason, and on this he cites another obscure early Roman, Gaius Fannius, a passing reference which, combined with the Varro passage, frames Lucretius as the colleague of a number of early Roman authors indispensable to the education of an ambitious man. As is typical of humanist prose, while later portions of the *vita* are comparatively simple, these opening sentences employ intentionally overcomplicated grammar, packing in unusual constructions, especially the passive periphrastic and

¹⁵ Leto begins: "M. Varro, Romanae linguae parens, tria observanda rebus omnibus tradit: origo, dignitas et ars." Solaro (2000), 26 lines 2–3; VARRO, *De re rustica* II, i, 1.

¹⁶ M. T. Varro, *De lingua latina* (Rome: Georgius Lauer, about 1471–72. ISTC iv00094000).

complex uses of the subjunctive, in an effort to display Leto's mastery of the Latin language.

The prologue segues into a dense pastiche of facts, beginning the claim that Lucretius condensed the thirty-seven books of Epicurus, mentioned on Book X of Diogenes Laertius, into six books. Leto states here that Varro claims there were originally not six but twenty-one books of the *De rerum natura*. This refers to part of the *De lingua latina* which states that Lucilius (sometimes mistranscribed as Lucretius) wrote twenty-one books on the division of Earth and sky.¹⁷ This is a possibility we now dismiss, but it was discussed by most of Lucretius' Renaissance biographers, among whom Leto is unusual in not voicing a firm opinion pro or con. Leto then says that Cicero edited the poem after the *furiosus* Lucretius killed himself, "for love of a boy, whom [Lucretius] called Astericon because of his paleness and extraordinary figure".¹⁸ This male lover named Astericon is not mentioned in any other Lucretian source, before or after Leto, but Giuseppe Solaro has traced it to a medieval gloss on a line 419 of Ovid's *Ibis*, which contains a pseudo-Lucretian line lamenting the author's unrequited love for this young man.¹⁹

The absence of Astericon from later Renaissance treatments of Lucretius, which discuss instead an equally spurious female lover or wife usually called Lucilia, is one of our strongest indicators that Leto's *vita* was not known to any of Lucretius' later Renaissance biographers. The printed biographies especially tend to always include every source or pseudo-fact in previous ones, and facts the new biographer disagrees with are particularly prized as opportunities to criticize and outshine a predecessor, so it is hard to believe any later scholar would have omitted such an exciting detail. The fact that Leto is the only biographer to propose a homosexual relationship is striking given the charges of sodomy which so plagued his own life and studies. The association of classical philosophy with homoeroticism was so powerful in the Renaissance, particularly due to the preeminence of Plato, that we might expect stereotypes of the age to lead most of Lucretius' biographers to presume a philosopher-poet would have a male lover, not female, so the heterosexual relationship described by all Leto's successors is itself remarkable. Of course, there are obvious advantages to proposing a female

¹⁷ "A qua bipertita divisione Lucilius suorum unius et viginti librorum initium fecit hoc: Aetheris et terrae genitabile quaerere tempus," *De lingua latina*, 5.17.

¹⁸ "Asserunt id ei accidisse ob amatum puerum, quem ab candore et forma egregia appellabat Astericon," Solaro 2000, 27 lines 25–27. Since this passage does not directly state that Astericon gave Lucretius the potion, it has sometimes been interpreted as suggesting that the potion was administered by a jealous third party, possibly female; see Holford-Strevens 2002, 5.

¹⁹ See Solaro 2000, 13; Solaro 1999, 153–9.

lover rather than a male one when one is trying to defend Lucretius' moral character in Renaissance Italy, and the substantially heterosexual nature of the erotic sections of the *De rerum natura* could be used to support such an assumption. That Leto did not do this shows either his confidence in his reading of the *Ibis* gloss, or a remarkably different attitude toward the defense of Lucretius than that taken by his successors.

Next, perhaps as an antidote to the negative associations of suicide and sodomy, Leto presents a dense mash of antique quotations recommending Lucretius, stringing together references to his name from Cicero, Quintilian and Ovid, and including Macrobius' discussion of the fact that Virgil copied lines from Lucretius.²⁰ This last fact is much touted by Lucretius scholars since, in an era when Virgil was the measure of all poetry, if the prince of poets copied Lucretius he must have thought him, not only worth reading, but of nearly equal skill. This, combined with the claim that the prince of prose Cicero edited the poem gives the *De rerum natura* a double stamp of highest quality; in fact, later biographers will exaggerate these connections, some going so far as to claim that Virgil himself was an Epicurean, and that Cicero hosted Epicurean philosophical meet-ups weekly at his house at which he gave Lucretius feedback on fresh verses, acting as a virtual co-author.²¹ Leto is, for his era, modest in making no further jumps than to claim that Cicero was a posthumous editor and Virgil an admiring plagiarist. Leto also chooses not to address the suggestion that Virgil was himself an Epicurean and a sensualist. Many later biographers of Lucretius will cite the famous Georgics quotation, "Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas/ atque metus omnis et inexorabile fatum/ subiecit pedibus strepitumque Acherontis avari," (Happy is one who has been able to understand the causes of things/ and has crushed underfoot all fears and inexorable fate/ and the clamors of greedy Acheron). and use it to argue that Virgil was a philosophical Epicurean—never a sensualist, just a philosophical Epicurean—but Leto touches only on Virgil's theft of Lucretian verses, edging strangely around the charge of Epicureanism which he handled so particularly in his own life of Virgil.²²

In his paraphrase of Quintilian, whom Leto calls the balance who judges letters, Leto uses an unusual reading of Quintilian's text to add yet another obscure Latin figure to those he has already presented as peers of Lucretius' pre-Virgilian era. This passage from Book X of Quintilian, "Empedoclea in Graecis Varronem ac Lucretium in Latinis qui praecepta sapientiae versibus tradiderunt," (Empedocles among the Greeks and Varro and Lucretius

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 27 lines 28–43.

²¹ Palmer 2014, ch. 4.

²² *Georgica* 2.490–2.

among the Latins, who handed down the precepts of philosophy in verse) is usually read as a statement that Empedocles, Varro and Lucretius all transformed the principles of wisdom (i.e. philosophy) into verse.²³ Reading *tradiderunt* as a literal act of translation, Leto instead tells us that Quintilian says Marcus Varro Atacinus translated the four books of Empedocles out of Greek into Latin.²⁴ This expansion of Quintilian's statement allows Leto to frame Varro Atacinus and Lucretius as translators of Greek wisdom, reinforcing his earlier claim that Lucretius' poem was more a condensation of Epicurus' writings than an original work, and generally presenting Lucretius as a scholar and commentator, like Leto himself. It also lets him further display his erudition by demonstrating his familiarity with both Varros.

This genuinely biographical segment of Leto's biography concludes very quickly, so that only 350 words out of roughly 1,000 treat Lucretius directly. The final biographical claim is that Lucretius wrote love poems in his youth, now lost. This too appears in no later biography. It has no clear source, but may be an imaginative reading of Statius' *docti furor arduus Lucretii* (the lofty madness of learned Lucretius), combined with the assumption that, since we hear about the lost youthful works of Ovid and Catullus, Lucretius must have had some too. Juvenilia is part of a stock narrative of the life of a Roman Poet. This willingness to state as fact guesses based on stock models about an ancient author's life will be responsible for introducing many new non-facts into the Lucretian tradition over the following decades. At the end of the biographical section, Leto states that it is not necessary to discuss Lucretius' skill at this point, since it will be made clear during his explication of the work, a clear indication that this *vita* was meant to introduce a longer examination of the poet, likely a critical edition, or possibly, as suggested by Solaro, a course of lectures.

Leto next treats the allegorical, physical and cosmological functions of Venus, and the etymology of her name and related words. This section draws upon M. T. Varro yet again, making Varro far more prominent in Lu-

²³ "...nec ignara philosophiae, cum propter plurimos in omnibus fere carminibus locos ex intima naturalium quaestionum subtilitate repetitos, tum vel propter Empedoclea in Graecis, Varronem ac Lucretium in Latinis, qui praecepta sapientiae versibus tradiderunt: eloquentia quoque non mediocri est opus, ut de unaquaque earum quas demonstravimus rerum dicat proprie et copiose" (Nor can the grammarian be ignorant of philosophy, when in almost every poem so many passages repeat the subtlest of natural questions, and in particular we have Empedocles among the Greeks and Varro and Lucretius among the Latins, who handed down the precepts of philosophy in verse; no middling eloquence is enough for the teacher to speak appropriately and thoroughly about the subjects we have just recommended), *inst.* I.4. 4–5.

²⁴ The absence of a translation of Empedocles from the works of Varro listed by Cicero in *Brutus* 60 did not deter Leto from reading the passage this way.

cretius' biography than Lucretius himself. It also cites Lucilius, an opportunity for Leto to display the fact that he does not subscribe to the tendency of others to conflate Lucretius and Lucilius. Leto also draws on Tacitus, and Cicero's *De natura deorum*. Venus' beauty and her birth from the sea and foam are presented as representations of the roles of heat, cold, wetness and dryness in forming generative powers of living things. Venus' union with Vulcan and adultery with Mars are allegorical descriptions of the motions of planets central to the functioning of the cosmos and animal reproduction. A passage from Homer is artfully repurposed as what was, for the late 1400s, the cutting edge of medical and cosmological science, reinforcing how indispensable useful knowledge of natural philosophy is hidden in the poets and especially the Greeks (Lucretius enjoying the status of honorary Greek for his connection with Epicurus). Leto uses sections from Book II of Pliny's *Natural History* to attribute the discovery of these generative powers of the planets to Pythagoras, and to claim that Juno, Isis and Cybele were also descriptions of the same astronomical phenomenon. This gives greater weight to Lucretius' own description of the rites of Cybele in Book II, and the invocation of Pythagoras and Egyptian wisdom calls to mind the syncretic claims made by Ficino and others about the divine wisdom, scientific and theological, possessed by the pre-Socratic sages who disseminated it in southern Europe, northern Africa and the Near East.²⁵ Leto succeeds admirably in reframing Epicurean *voluptas* and the Venus-Vulcan-Mars triad as, not licentiousness, but a divine topic which even Cicero considered worthy of philosophical treatment.

Next, as a single line alone, Leto presents a quotation from Traversari's translation of Diogenes Laertius' life of Epicurus, which states that there are two disturbances in the soul, *voluptas* and *dolor*, the first being natural to the human creature and the second foreign. This elegant summary of the Epicurean project to free the soul from pain by achieving the philosophical tranquility of *ataraxia* is notable for its compatibility with the moral projects of other less stigmatized ancient sects, such as the Stoics and Platonists. Following on the heels of Leto's treatments of medical and cosmological wisdom and his invocation of syncretism and the ancient sages, this passage reinforces the feeling that Epicurus' critics committed a grave injustice when they placed him in a less savory category than Seneca and Plato.

Chief on the list of those who have offended against Epicurus is, in Leto's depiction, Cicero. The final sixth of Leto's *vita* is a direct address to Cicero, accusing him of inconsistency for praising Epicurus in some parts of

²⁵ Ficino, *Theologica Platonica*, XVIII.1; Copenhaver 1992, esp. p. xlvi; Allen 1998, esp. ch. 1.

his work and criticizing him in others.²⁶ Leto reminds Cicero of the good accounts of Epicurus given by Seneca²⁷ and Diogenes Laertius, and the good things Cicero himself reported. He cites Epicurus' fasting and vegetarianism, combatting the stigma of hedonism, and his rejection of lovers male and female, defusing to some extent the negative impact of the Astericon story. Leto had enormous respect for Cicero and used him as a primary model in both his writing and his life, as highlighted in the papers of Patricia Osmond and Fabio Stok. That makes this invective against Cicero in defense of Epicurus even more striking. If Leto did self-identify with Cicero when he wrote his fiercely critical *vita* of Sallust, here he has turned on the Orator completely. We can perhaps see him here identifying with Petrarch's self-identification with Cicero, since, just as Petrarch felt betrayed by seeing the inconsistencies in Cicero's personal letters, so Leto may feel betrayed by Cicero's negative opinion of Epicureanism now that he has been able to digest it more thoroughly thanks to the *De rerum natura*. By imitating the accusations of philosophical inconsistency which Petrarch voiced in his letters to Cicero, Leto has good precedent here for daring to disagree with Cicero's negative descriptions²⁸. The criticisms which Lactantius and Arnobius voiced about Epicurus now seem to originate from Cicero's own lack of tranquility, rather than any reality of Epicurean thought.

Leto concludes with another invocation of Petrarch's attitude toward Cicero, in a final sentence in which Leto states that Epicurus only believed that the highest good lay in earthly, mortal things because he had the misfortune of being born before the advent of Christianity which proved, conclusively, the immortality of the soul. Just as Petrarch claimed Cicero would have instantly converted had he encountered the truth of revelation, so Leto attributes Epicurus' errors to innocent ignorance. This is the only acknowledgment anywhere in the *vita* of the genuinely unorthodox core tenets of Epicureanism, but instantly defuses them. A closing reference to Christianity also reinforces Leto's own orthodoxy, bringing the *vita* full circle to the opening treatment of divinely-inspired wisdom.

By ensuring that Lucretius himself features very little in his own biography, Leto turns this *vita* into a broader defense of Epicureanism, and the study of philosophical classics. Leto's Epicurus and Lucretius are no more unchristian than Cicero, and lived the same stock life as other wholesome Roman poets. The pagan gods Lucretius discusses are actually sophisticated ways of understanding natural philosophy, evidence of his connection to the

²⁶ The criticisms appear primarily the *De finibus* and *Tusculanae disputationes*, some in the *De natura deorum*.

²⁷ *Epistulae* 2.21.10.

²⁸ *Familiares* 24.3.4.

wisdom of the Greeks and the great pre-Socratic sages who were in such vogue in the late 1400s. Pagan and Christian sages are, in this framework, coequally stepping stones on the path toward the lofty intellectual realm, and part of one ongoing, elevated conversation. Anyone who claims that pagan and Christian authorities contradict each other is guilty, like a crabby Cicero, of introducing false inconsistencies where only harmony exists. Denial of the immortality of the soul is a simple error and, as Leto paints it, easily removable. Removing the soul's mortality from Epicureanism, and with it removing atomistic physics and Epicurus' denial of divine ordering in Nature, in order to retain *ataraxia* and mystical ideas about Venus may seem to modern eyes like throwing out the baby to keep the bathwater. Yet it is this declawed Lucretius, maximally compatible with Christianity, Stoicism, Platonism and especially Neoplatonism, who will fit easily into humanist syncretic projects, and thereby earn a place in every nobleman's library. A reading which makes the book seem safe in turn ensures its safe survival and dissemination, while also safeguarding Leto and his circle, as they themselves struggled to avoid persecution due to the same stigma of irreligion and perversion which had so long dogged Epicureanism.

Text and Translation:

Pomponio's life of T. Lucretius Carus

This short treatment of the life and character of Rome's premier Epicurean survives only on the flyleaves of a copy of 1486 Verona imprint of the *De rerum natura*, whose margins are filled with Leto's manuscript annotations. The *vita* was not printed in the Renaissance.²⁹ Other sets of Leto's corrections of the poem, mainly those in the Neapolitanus manuscript, were certainly known to later Renaissance scholars, notably Bonifacius Amerbach, whose manuscript transcription of Leto's notes survives in the University Library of Basel.³⁰ Johannes Baptista Pius, editor of the 1511 annotated edition, and the anonymous annotators of the Bodleianus manuscript³¹ and of a much-discussed copy of the 1495 edition preserved in Paris;³² but the presence of several claims in Leto's *vita* which are absent from all subsequent treatments of the poet show that this volume, and its brief biography, remained unknown.

²⁹ Verona: Paulus Fridenperger. ISTC il00333000. Utrecht Universiteitsbibliotheek Litt. lat. X fol. 82 (Rariora).

³⁰ Basel Univ. F.VIII.14.

³¹ Bodl. Can. lat. 32. Some notes and the text of the Bodleianus are reproduced in Parker's edition of 1855.

³² Paris BN M YC 397, V95.

Only tiny fragments of information about Lucretius' life survive from antiquity, almost all of them extremely suspect, making any biography of the poet rather like the constellations which once decorated celestial globes, connecting scattered specks into figures far too elaborate to be said to derive from the stars they are supposed to depict. Leto employs the reference to Lucretius in Jerome's translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, which gives the most information we have about the poet's death and the creation of the poem, though Jerome's account is discounted by modern historians as too contaminated by Christian anti-Epicurean stereotypes. Leto also refers to the passing references to Lucretius in Cicero's letter to Quintus, Ovid's *Amores*, Quintilian, Macrobius, Marcus Terentius Varro, and points out Virgil's debts to Lucretius. He frames his treatment with Cicero's discussions of Epicurus, and an opening reference to Varro, which bears no relation to Lucretius, but advertises Leto's masterful knowledge of Varro's rare and difficult work. A closing direct address to Cicero chastises him for his inconsistency in portraying Epicurus as a voluptuary in some references and an ascetic in others. The most exceptional biographical addition is Leto's unprecedented claim that Lucretius had a male lover, Astericon, a reference traced by Solaro (2000) to a medieval gloss on Ovid's *Ibis*.

Pomponius Laetus, untitled *vita* of Lucretius, in Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, X fol. 82 rar., flyleaf *recto* and *verso* and fol. ai *recto*.

Pomponius Laetus.

M. Varro, Romanae linguae parens, tria observanda³³ rebus omnibus tradit: origo, dignitas et ars.³⁴ In praesenti opere, quum de philosophia nobis dicendum esset, necessarium videri potuit de singulis disserere; et quoniam unde coepit sapientia³⁵ veteres ignoraverunt, et qui apud Graecos et qui apud nos scribunt, historice de ea re loqui, ut auctoritas illorum vel nostrorum poscit, non possumus. Sophia, quae est sapientia, a deo³⁶ mundi opifice venit, qui ante nostri salvatoris ortum ab Israelitis tantum intellectus est; de quo paulo post³⁷ dicemus. Si dignitas requiritur, pene totum genus humanum, quod sapere in eo consistit, philosophiae³⁸ dare operam conatur: aliter solo sermone a brutis dif-

³³ Left margin: M. Varro

³⁴ *rust.* 2.1.1.

³⁵ The word "philosophia" appears crossed out before "sapientia."

³⁶ Right margin: Sophia.

³⁷ Right margin: Israelitae.

³⁸ "Philosophiae" is underlined and "Sophiae" written in the margin as a substitute.

ferret, quod ubi esset ratio ignoraret.³⁹ Eius rei, ut de caeteris omittamus, inter quos maxima contentio est, primus Romanorum praecepta Latina ostendit soluta oratione C. Fannius.⁴⁰ Et eodem fere tempore, ut facilius⁴¹ ad eam pernoscendam iuventus alliceretur utque tenacius numerorum delinimento memoriae inhaereret⁴² T. Lucretius carminibus exametris descriptam⁴³ ostendit secutus Epicuri sectam, quocius⁴⁴ volumina XXXVII in sex libros redegit,⁴⁵ quamvis M. Varro unum et XX fuisse adfirmat, quorum⁴⁶ principium non praetermisit, quod est: “Aetheris et terrae genitabile quaerere tempus”.⁴⁷ Quae volumina ipse auctor posthabuit, et aliud initium postea dedit.⁴⁸ Libri qui in manibus habentur a M. T. Cicerone, Romanae eloquentiae principe, emendati fuere: nam poeta, poculo⁴⁹ hausto paulatim tabescens, tandem furiosus factus manum sibi iniecit.⁵⁰ Asserunt id ei accidisse ob amatum puerum, quem ab candore et forma egregia appellabat Astericon.⁵¹ Cicero in epistulis⁵² ad Q. fratrem summopere Lucretium laudat.⁵³ Et Quintilianus, trutina litterarum, nos admonet ne ignari⁵⁴ simus philosophiae “propter Empedoclem in Graecis” quocius⁵⁵ volumina quatuor transtulit M. Varro Atta cinius⁵⁶ cognominatus, “tum propter Lucretium”: hi tres “praecepta sapientiae versibus tradiderunt”.⁵⁷ Et in X libro sic ait: “Macer et Lucretius legendi quidem, sed⁵⁸ non ut Phrasin, id est corpus eloquentiae, faciant,⁵⁹ elegantes in sua quisque materia, sed alter humilis, [Page 2] alter difficilis.”⁶⁰ Attacinius Varro in his, per quae nomen est adsecutus, interpretis operis alieni non spernendus quidem,

³⁹ CIC. *off.* 1.50; QUINT. *inst.* 2.20.9.

⁴⁰ CIC. *Tusc.* 4, 6; CIC. *ac.* 1, 5; cf. Leto 1993, 56.

⁴¹ Left margin: C. Fannius.

⁴² QUINT. *inst.* 3.1.3–4 (LUCR. 936–41; 4.11–16).

⁴³ Left margin: T. Lucretius.

⁴⁴ Left margin: Epicurus.

⁴⁵ DIOG. LAER. 10.27.

⁴⁶ Left margin: M. Varro

⁴⁷ VARRO, *ling.* 5.17.

⁴⁸ Left margin: M.T.C.

⁴⁹ Right margin: T. Lucretii mors.

⁵⁰ HIER. *chron.a.Abr.* 1923–4.

⁵¹ Mss. Schol. in OV. *Ibis* 419; cf. Solaro 2000, 13.

⁵² Left margin: M.T.C. Right margin: Astericon.

⁵³ CIC. *ad Q. fr.* 2.10.3.

⁵⁴ Left margin: quintilianus.

⁵⁵ Left margin: Empedocles:

⁵⁶ “Attacinius” is split over two lines and underlined, and the name “Atratinus” is written in above the first half. Left margin: M. Varro Attacinius.

⁵⁷ QUINT. *inst.* 1.4.4.

⁵⁸ Left margin: Macer.

⁵⁹ Right margin: Phrasin.

⁶⁰ QUINT. *inst.* 10.1.87.

verum ad augendam facultatem dicendi parum locuples. Et Ovidius de Lucretio sic meminit:⁶¹ “Carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucreti, exitio terras quum dabit una dies.”⁶² Virgilius, lectione⁶³ ne Lucreti saepius repetita, maiestatem carminis in compositione adsecutus est. Ubi enim adsurgere licet, materia non repugnante, ita sublimis est ut heroicam dignitatem impleat. Scripsit in primo iuventutis ardore, forte ut iuvenile ingenium et ludendo exerceret, libros de amore, qui iam multis saeculis interciderunt. De arte dicere in praesentia necesse non est: in expositione operis, pro facultate atque viribus ingenii nostri, aperiemus. M. Cicero libro II de deorum natura sic ait: “quae autem dea ad⁶⁴ res omnis veniret Venerem nostri nominaverunt, atque⁶⁵ ex ea potius venustas quam Venus a venustate.”⁶⁶ Apud⁶⁷ Varronem:⁶⁸ ‘causa nascendi duplex: ignis et aqua, ab quouis vinctione foetus sumit Venus, quae victrix⁶⁹ vincere non⁷⁰ vinciri cupit; ipsaque victoria est quod superati⁷¹ vinciuntur. Et dicitur Caeligena: Poetae semen igneum⁷² cecidisse dicunt in mare ac natam e spumis Venerem, coniunctione ignis et humoris, quam haberent vim significantes Veneris. A qua vi natis dicta vita.⁷³ Lucilius: “vis est vita, vides, nos quae facere diva cogit”.⁷⁴ Quidam aiunt Venerem nominatam quod ei Venerius,⁷⁵ rex mortalium primus Paphi urbe Cypria, templum condidit; eo namque mari concepta concha vecta est. Id⁷⁶ templum postea Cynira exquisitissimis cerimoniis et⁷⁷ sacris sanctum et venerabile fecit, et

⁶¹ Right margin: Ovidius:

⁶² OV. *am.* 1.15.23–24.

⁶³ Right margin: Virgilius.

⁶⁴ Right margin: M.T.C.

⁶⁵ Left margin: Venus [unde].

⁶⁶ CIC. *nat.deor.* 2.69.

⁶⁷ Left margin: Venustas [unde]; Right margin: Varro.

⁶⁸ VARRO *ling.* 5.60–63.

⁶⁹ Right margin (faintly): nō

⁷⁰ “non” is underlined and “sed” written in above it. This reflects the fact that the Varro passage being paraphrased reads “non quod vincere velit Venus, sed vincere” leading the reader to expect “sed” rather than “non” before the second word in the comparison, and to expect that the second, not the first, of the two contrasted terms be the preferred one, but Leto is saying that Venus prefers *vincire* (to bind) to its passive *vinciri* (to be bound), instead of repeating Varro’s statement that she does not like *vincere* (to conquer) but *vincire* (to bind).

⁷¹ Left margin: Venus victoria.

⁷² Left margin: Venus Caeligena.

⁷³ Left margin: Venus vitae.

⁷⁴ Right margin: Lucilius. LUCIL. Fr. 1340 Marx.

⁷⁵ Left margin: Venerius Rex

⁷⁶ Left margin: Paphos cypria.

⁷⁷ Left margin: Cynira

oraculum ibi esse coeptum est.⁷⁸ Venus est generandi vis virtusque et causa: quumque nihil pulchrius generatione habeatur, ideo ei attributa est eximia forma; et quum nihil sit magis delectabile quam generare, dia voluptas nominatur vitae, rerum omnium parens et dux.⁷⁹ Nutrimiento praeest, unde ubera et genitalia sub eius numine esse censentur.⁸⁰ Et rursus e mari genita fertur, quod est humidum et calidum et crebro spumas elicit, ut semen ex animalium genitalibus. Plinius ait⁸¹: “infra solem ambit⁸² ingens sydus appellatum Veneris, alterno meatu vagum, [Page 3] ipsis cognominibus aemulum solis et lunae: ante matutinum Lucifer, ab occasu refulgens Vesper nuncupatur. Naturam⁸³ eius Pythagoras Samius primus deprehendit⁸⁴ anno Urbis conditae CXLIIo. Ipso nomine non caret ambitione:⁸⁵ alii Iunonem, alii Isidem, alii Cybelen vocant.” Et item Plinius in haec verba: “huius natura cuncta generantur in terris, namque in alterutro exortu genitali rore conspargens, non terrae modo conceptus implet, verum animantium quoque omnium stimulat.”⁸⁶ Nupsit Vulcano,⁸⁷ qui est ignis; quodius humani simulachri caput tegit pileus, unde significatur motus in quo est ignis; et is, quum minus potens est ad generandum, a debilitate fingitur claudus, et ab assidue volvendo, qui est perpetuus motus, Vulcanus⁸⁸ appellatur. Qui quum superna habitet uxoremque longius intueatur, adulterum invenit, qui est vehemens et concitatus ardor, Mars appellatur, qui, ne torpesceret materia atque ociosa esset (Venus est), eam adamavit suaque diligentia succendit, a quo undique late generatio visitur.⁸⁹ Sabina vox est Mamers,⁹⁰ detractis litteris Mars remanet,⁹¹ quodius virtus est ignea, vehemens et plena sanguinis, hoc est vivacitatis.

Perturbatio est duplex, voluptas et dolor, quae in⁹² omne animal cadunt: alterum est proprium, alterum alienum.⁹³

Idem.

⁷⁸ TAC. *hist.* 2.3.1.

⁷⁹ LUCR. 2.172–3.

⁸⁰ Left marginal bracket lines 77–78 with “ubera et genitalia sub venere.”

⁸¹ PLIN. *nat.* 2.6. (or is it 36–8?)

⁸² Right margin: Plinius

⁸³ Right margin: Lucifer

⁸⁴ Left margin: Pythagoras; right margin: vesper.

⁸⁵ In right margin: Ven[us] multiplic[ibus] app[ellatur]

⁸⁶ PLIN. *nat.* 2.36–8.

⁸⁷ In right margin: Vulcanus ignis

⁸⁸ An “o” is written in above the first “u” in “Vulcanus.”

⁸⁹ HOM. *Od.* 8.266–366.

⁹⁰ Right margin: Mamers (Sabina vox.

⁹¹ VARRO *ling.* 5.73.

⁹² Right margin: Perturbatio duplex

⁹³ Traversari trans. DIOG. LAER. 10.34.

Miror Ciceronem, qui modo laudat modo vituperat Epicurum, illiusque voluptatem vitiorum incitamenta effingit. Tecum, M. Tulli, contendendo, quia [*vel fortasse quis; vox male legitur*] in deliciis ciborum et potus et cuiusvis genere libidinis Epicuri voluptatem ponas, et in hanc sententiam alios auctoritate tua traxeris. Dic, oro, qua ratione vir divitiarum spreto holeribus et aqua contentus erat? Nonne appetitum omnem abnegavit, dum consuetudine puerorum et foeminarum abstinuerit?⁹⁴ Quum ieiunio corpus artaverit, a caeteris vero rebus quae ambitionem⁹⁵ tangunt adeo perseverantissime se alienavit ut portione exigui hortuli quosvis ad eum accedentes sit impertitus: ubi nam erat illius voluptas?⁹⁶ Video quod summum beatumque et aeternum bonum est in mortalibus, id esse minime putavit: quod vir scientiae plenus multo melius existimasset, si et deum optimum maximumve cognovisset et animas non interire con⁹⁷ optatissima resurrectione intellexisset.

Translation

Marcus [Terentius] Varro, father of Roman letters, taught that three things must be treated for all subjects: ancestry, merit and skill. In the present work, since we must discuss philosophy, it may seem necessary to treat each of these topics; yet since the ancients, both Greek authors and [we Latins], did not know whence understanding began, we cannot address these issues historically, as their precept and ours demands. Wisdom, that is understanding, comes to the world from God the Creator, this much was understood before the birth of our savior among the Israelites, as we will discuss shortly. If one seeks merit, as nearly the whole human race does, one tries one's hand at philosophy, upon which understanding depends: otherwise one differs from brutes only by language, because one is ignorant of where Reason lies. The first Roman to treat this topic in freestyle oratory, we omit many others by whom it was most passionately discussed, was Gaius Fannius, and at almost the same time Titus Lucretius expounded in hexametric poetry—so the youth would be more easily enticed to study it thoroughly, and so it would cling more fiercely to memory thanks to the enticement of meter—a description following the sect of Epicurus, whose thirty-seven books he reduced to six, although Marcus Terentius Varro asserts that were twenty-one, whose

⁹⁴ SENECA *epist.*, 2.21.10

⁹⁵ Left margin: [aliter] amicerit (alternative for artaverit)

⁹⁶ DIOG. LAER. 10.10–11.

⁹⁷ Ambiguous. Solaro 2000 suggests “concessa” (cf. Cappelli, *Lexicon abbreviaturarum* 59). Or possibly the Italianate “con” is intended, a quasi-vernacular marking the sudden shift from Ciceronian classical Latin language and themes to this final culturally-mandated declaration of Christian piety.

incipit he included, which is: "To seek the fruitful time of air and earth". The author himself thought these volumes unworthy, and later gave it a different incipit. The books which we have in hand were edited by Marcus Tullius Cicero, the prince of Roman eloquence: for the poet, wasting away little by little because of a potion he drank, was finally driven mad killed himself with his own hand. Some claim he killed himself for love of a boy, whom he called Astericon because of his paleness and extraordinary figure. Cicero in a letter to his brother Quintus praises Lucretius enormously. And Quintilian, the balance who measures letters, warned us to avoid ignorance of philosophy "using Empedocles among the Greeks," whose four volumes Marcus Varro nicknamed Atacinus translated, and "using Lucretius," these three who "related the principles of wisdom in verse." And in Book X Quintilian said: "Macer and Lucretius should be read, but not for the formation of phrasing, which is the body of eloquence; each is elegant in his own subject, but the one is shallow and [Page 2] the other difficult." Varro Attacinius is in the works, for which he has found fame, a translator not to be spurned, although not rich enough to augment one's speaking skills. And Ovid commemorated Lucretius thus: "The poems of the sublime Lucretius will perish only/ when one day gives the world over to destruction." Virgil, who often repeated Lucretius' phrasing, sought to imitate his grandness in the composition of his own poem. Because whenever it is possible to soar, when subject matter permits, he is so sublime that he attains heroic style. He wrote books on love in the first ardor of youth, since vigorous youthful inclination trains itself even in play, but now many ages have blocked their transmission. It is not necessary to discuss skill at present: we will highlight that during our explication of the work, through our skill and the force of our natural inclination. Marcus Cicero in Book II of *De natura deorum* said this: "Our predecessors named this goddess who *veniret* (came) to all things *Venus*, and more probably the word *venustas* (attractiveness) derives from her than the name *Venus* from *venustas*." M. T. Varro writes: "The cause of birth is twofold: fire and water, from whose binding Venus brings forth the fetus. This *victrix* (conqueress) desires *vincire* (to bind) not *vinciri* (to be bound); and victory itself is so named because the conquered are bound. And she is called Heaven-born: Poets say a seed of fire fell into the sea and Venus was born from the foam, a compound of fire and liquid, by which they mean that the *vis* (force) which these elements have is that of Venus. What is born from this *vis* (force) is called *vita* (life). Lucilius writes: '*vis* (force) is *vita* (life), you see, *vis* (force) compels us to do everything'." Some say Venus is so named because Venerius, first king of the people of Paphus in Cyprus, consecrated a temple to her at the place to which she was carried from the sea by a shell at her con-

ception. The lyre later made this temple revered and venerable with most exquisite ceremonies and rites, and oracles were conceived there. Venus is the force, strength and cause of conception: since nothing is considered more beautiful than conception, extraordinary beauty is attributed to her; and since nothing is more delightful than conception, the goddess is called the pleasure of life, parent and leader of all things. Nourishment is primary, hence breasts and genitalia are considered her domain. And again she is said to be begotten from the sea, because it is wet and warm and repeatedly produces foam, like semen from the sex organs of animals. Pliny the Elder said: "The huge star called Venus circles around the sun, wandering a variable course, with names rivalling the Sun and Moon: for when heralding early morning she is called Lucifer, and when shining from the west at sunset Vesper. Pythagoras of Samos first discovered her nature in 612 BC. She does not lack grandeur in name: some call her Juno, others Isis, others Cybele." Pliny writes more: "By her nature all things on Earth are generated, for she sprays dew in her alternating ascents, and not only fills up Earth's generative reservoir, but stimulates all animate things." She married Vulcan, who is fire; a cap of human likeness covers his head, by which is signified that the motion within is fire; and he is formed misshapen by lameness, since his generative power is weak, and since he must always *volvere* (roll along), which is perpetual motion, he is called *Volcan*. When he dwells high above and views his wife from a great distance, he discovers an adulterer, who is fierce and rash passion, called Mars, who, lest the nutritive material stagnate and fall idle (this is Venus), made love to her passionately and burns with her industry, after which generation is seen far and wide in all directions. His Sabine name is *Mamers*, with some letters removed *Mars* remains, whose force is fiery, violent and full of blood, that is vigorous.

Disturbance, which falls upon every animal, is dual, pleasure and pain: the first is proper to our nature, the second foreign.

The same.

I marvel at Cicero, who sometimes praises sometimes curses Epicurus, and depicts his pleasure as an enticement to sin. I take issue with you, Marcus Tullius, since you assert that Epicurus' pleasure lies in luxurious habits of food and drink and whatever kinds of wantonness you care to allege, and by your authority you drag others into this opinion. Explain, pray, exactly by what reasoning this spurner of riches was content with vegetables and water? Did he not deny all appetites, while he abstained from relations with boys and women? While he curbed his body with fasting, he actually estranged himself from anything which touched upon ambition so persistently that anyone who approached him was granted a portion of his meagre garden:

where then was his pleasure? I see that he only barely believed that the greatest blessed and eternal good lies in mortal things, because a man full of wisdom would have judged much more rightly, if he had both known the best and greatest God, and had understood that souls do not perish, thanks to the most-hoped-for Resurrection.

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THE LIFE OF OVID BY POMPONIUS LAETUS



By Frank T. Coulson

Laetus' life of Ovid, which prefaced his glosses to Ovid's Fasti, has received little scholarly attention. The life is quite different in approach from most humanistic lives of Ovid and is noteworthy for its brief, pithy and scholarly account of the poet. The life continued to be read and was influential well into the age of print.

Ovid's calendar poem, the *Fasti*, was the object of intense and sustained study in Rome throughout the second half of the Quattrocento.¹ The two major printed commentaries on the poem, and no doubt the commentaries which had the most influence, are those of Paulus Marsus, printed in 1482 at Venice, and Antonius Constantius, printed in 1489 at Rome.² These two commentaries were subsequently combined in the edition printed in 1497 at Venice. Politianus, of course, also delivered his magisterial lectures on the poem in Florence in 1481–82.³ Nevertheless, there is also much as yet unedited manuscript evidence for the glossing and commenting on the *Fasti* from about 1450 to 1490, most of which is centered at Rome in the scholarly ambience of Pomponius Laetus. In this article, I wish first to examine the evidence for Laetus's scholarly interest in the *Fasti* – an interest which seems to have started around 1469–70 and continued to around 1490; I shall then focus more closely on his life of Ovid and detail how the life may be considered a truly revolutionary biography in the cultural and intellectual milieu of late fifteenth-century Italy.

As early as the 1450s, we have evidence that Laetus's teacher, Pietro Odo da Montopoli, glossed the *Fasti*. In Vatican City, BAV, Vat. lat. 1595, fols. 254r–351v, we find rubrics for the study of the *Fasti* in Pietro's hand.⁴ The comments in this manuscript do not amount to a full commentary but rather serve as divisions and titles to help the reader structure his reading of the poem. Nevertheless, they are an indication of the scholar's interest in the

¹ I am most grateful to Angela Fritsen for sharing with me her vast knowledge of the printed commentary tradition on the *Fasti* in the Renaissance. I am also indebted to the participants of the colloquium for their comments on an earlier draft of this article.

² See, in particular, Fritsen 1995.

³ Edited in Lo Monaco 1991.

⁴ Fritsen 1995.

poem and of his views on its presumed division and structure. Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, R 59 also contains a substantial commentary on the *Fasti*, unpublished and to my knowledge unstudied, attributed to Antonius Volscus.⁵ But undoubtedly Laetus was one of the leading lights in Rome for the study of Ovid, and evidence for his work can be found in multiple manuscripts to which I now turn in greater detail.

Vatican City, BAV, Vat. lat. 3264, a deluxe manuscript with glosses on the *Fasti* in the hand of Laetus on the first five folios, dated to 1469–1470, does not have his life of Ovid.⁶ It was produced for a private pupil of Laetus and a member of his Academy, Fabio Mazzatosta, and contains the earliest known comments of Laetus on the *Fasti*. The glosses are fairly full on the first five folios and certainly go well beyond the earlier work of Laetus's teacher, Pietro Odo da Montopoli. The glosses have not been edited or fully studied.

Vatican City, BAV, Ottob. lat. 1982 (ca. 1485), fols. 71v–73v, contains notes on the *Fasti* that are not in the hand of Laetus, but are probably written by a student of Laetus and in his scholarly orbit.⁷ The glosses remain unedited and unstudied.

Vatican City, BAV, Vat. lat. 3263, autograph, post 1488, contains the life and glosses of Laetus.⁸

Ferrara, Biblioteca Comunale Ariostea, II.141 was identified by Lo Monaco as being in the hand of Laetus (Lo Monaco 1992). The manuscript has Laetus's glosses on the *Fasti* but not the life. Though the manuscript is undated, Lo Monaco, in a private conversation with Angela Fritsen, seemed of the opinion that it may be dated to late in Laetus's career.

Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, IV F 8 is a direct copy of Vat. lat. 3263. The manuscript was identified by Lo Monaco (Lo Monaco 1992).

One other manuscript, Vatican City, BAV, Ottob. lat. 1526, fols. 68r–119v, has a life of Ovid and glosses to the *Fasti* (incomplete) which are largely drawn from the commentary of Laetus, though they seem to have a few modifications.⁹

Let us now turn to a closer examination of Laetus's life of Ovid.

⁵ The manuscript is briefly mentioned in Kristeller 1963–1997, 2.134. Volscus's commentary on the *Heroides*, on the other hand, was printed and widely disseminated. See Moss 1982 and White 2009.

⁶ Catalogued in Fohlen, Jeudy & Riou 1975–, 3.2, 185–186 and Buonocore 1994, 208.

⁷ See Bracke 1992, 21.

⁸ Catalogued in Fohlen, Jeudy & Riou 1975–, 3.2, 184–185 and Buonocore 1994, 207–208.

⁹ Catalogued in Buonocore 1994, 100–101.

Life of Ovid, transcribed from Vatican City, BAV, Vat. lat. 3263, fol. 1r:

Publius Ovidius Naso ante XII Kalendas Aprilis Sulmone in Pelignis natus est, quo anno bello Mutinensi P. Hirtius et C. Pansa consules diem obiere. Honoribus Romae functus. Fuit enim arbiter et triumphator et iudicium inter centumviros dixit. Sub Plotio Grippo litteris eruditus, deinde apud Marcellum Fuscum rhetorem, cuius auditor fuit, optime declamavit. Admirator plurimum [plurimum *MS*, *quod dubitanter conservavi*]¹⁰ Porcii Latronis fuit, quem adeo studiose audiuit ut multas eius sententias in uersus suos transtulerit. Bonus declamator et ingeniosus habitus est et carmine prosa<m>¹¹ licenter dixit. Ingenii sui adeo amator ut ex hiis que dixit, etiam precantibus amicis, nihil mutauerit. In carminibus uitia [uitia *scripsi*: uitam *MS*] sua non ignorauit sed amauit. Militauit sub M. Varrone; Iulio Grecino grammatico familiaris [Fuscum–familiaris *cf. SEN. contr.*, 2.2.8–9 et 12]. Tandem cum uenisset in suspitionem Augusti, creditus sub nomine Corinnae amasse Iuliam, in exilium missus est. Exulauit Tomis ibique decessit annum agens quinquagesimum. Nouissimum opus lingua Romana scripsit *de Piscibus*, ἀλιεῦτικα appellauit.

(Publius Ovidius Naso was born on the twelfth day before the calends of April [i.e. March 21] at Sulmo in the territory of the Paeligni in the year in which the consuls Hirtius and Pansa lost their lives at the battle of Mutina. He discharged duties at Rome. For he was a judge and a triumvir and as one of the centumviri he pronounced judgement. He was instructed in grammar under Plotius Grippus and then he declaimed superbly in the school of the rhetor Marcellus Fuscus, whose pupil he was. He greatly admired Porcius Latro, whom he listened to so carefully that many of Latro's aphorisms were carried over into Ovid's own verses. He was considered a good declaimer and quite witty, and he freely spoke prose in verse. He was such a great lover of his own intellect that he refused to alter anything he had said, even if his friends begged him to do so. In his poetry he was not unaware of his faults but embraced them. He served in the military under Marcus Varro and was an intimate of the grammarian Julius Graecinus. At length, he fell under suspicion with Augustus, who believed that he had an affair with his daughter Julia under the pseudonym of Corinna, and he was sent into exile. He was exiled to Tomi and died there in his

¹⁰ The use of the adverbial form *plurimum* with a noun seems to be rather unusual syntax and I have not been able to find any parallels for it.

¹¹ *prosa<m>*: seems to echo two verses of Ovid from the *Tristia*: sponte sua carmen numeros ueniebat ad aptos/ et quod temptabam dicere uersus erat (*Tr.* 4.10.25–26) and what Seneca the Elder says about Ovid's prose: oratio eius iam tum nihil aliud poterat videri quam solutum carmen (Seneca the Elder, *Contr.* 2.2.8). Laetus's use of *licenter* at line 7 also picks up Ovid's *sponte sua* from *Tr.* 4.10.25.

50th year. His last work written in Latin he called the *Halieutica*, *On Fish*.)

Laetus's life of Ovid is a remarkable achievement. Short, pithy, concise and chock full of factual information, the life is quite different in its approach and format from the majority of Ovidian biographies circulating during the later fifteenth century. First, unlike his contemporaries, Laetus does not use Ovid's own autobiographical poem, *Tristia* 4.10, as the basis for the structure of his life. On the contrary, he employs secondary sources such as the *Controversiae* of the Elder Seneca to provide details of Ovid's education and schooling missing in other accounts. In particular, the reader is given the names of his early teachers and of the declaimer Porcius Latro for whom he had a great admiration. The teacher Plotius Grippus appears only in the life of Laetus (at the beginning).¹² It may be worth mentioning that Jean Masson, who wrote a 257 page life of Ovid entitled *P. Ovidii Nasonis Vita ordine chronologico sic delineata*,¹³ was also troubled by this reference, as was Henri de La Ville de Mirmont, who in 1905, in his biography of Ovid entitled *La jeunesse d'Ovide*, wrote:

D'autre part, tout s'accorde pour démontrer qu'Ovide n'a pas été à l'école de Plotius Grippus, quoiqu'on l'ait prétendu sur la foi d'un érudit calabrais du xv siècle, Pomponius Laetus.¹⁴

(Moreover, everything indicates that Ovid was not the pupil of Plotius Grippus, although one assumed it on the testimony of the 15th-century scholar Pomponius Laetus.)

Among fifteenth-century biographers of Ovid, only Laetus's life maintains that Ovid soldiered under Varro, though Hercules Ciofanus also asserts this fact in his life of Ovid published in 1575.¹⁵ Laetus's statement that Ovid was an intimate of the circle of Julius Graecinus may be a misquotation, as he is probably thinking of Julius Hyginus, who Suetonius, *De Gram.* 20 identified as an intimate friend of Ovid (*fuitque familiarissimus Ovidio poetae*). In one respect Laetus follows the time-worn exegesis of the medieval *accessus* to Ovid, namely in treating of the reasons for exile, where Laetus alleges that Ovid had an affair with Julia, Augustus's daughter, described in the *Amores* under the pseudonym of Corinna. During the Middle Ages, various and sundry reasons were given for Ovid's *error*, including an affair with Julia, an affair with Livia, or the unwitting viewing by Ovid of August-

¹² I have not been able to find the source for this statement.

¹³ Masson 1708, 26–27.

¹⁴ La Ville de Mirmont 1905, 58.

¹⁵ Ciofanus 1581–1583, 27.

tus engaged in pederasty.¹⁶ The life of Laetus, nearly alone amongst the lives of Ovid circulating in Renaissance Italy, references Ovid's fragmentary work, the *Halieutica*, whose rediscovery is generally credited to the scholar Sannazaro in the year 1501.¹⁷

In order to shed more light on just how revolutionary Laetus's life may be deemed, let us compare briefly his life with two other Ovidian biographies composed roughly contemporaneously with him. In the mid to late Quattrocento, there are some six named biographers of Ovid, including, most prominently, Franciscus Puteolanus, Bonus Accursius, Paulus Marsus, Antonius Volscus, Bernardus Moretus, Raphael Regius, and several biographies which circulate anonymously in manuscript copies.¹⁸ For the purposes of this article, let us examine more closely the two lives of Ovid of Bonus Accursius and Bernardus Moretus.

Bonus Accursius's life of Ovid, first printed in the 1475 edition of the *Metamorphoses* published at Milan by Ph. de Lavagnia (ISTC io00178000), may be considered one of the fullest, nay exhaustive treatments of Ovid's life and poetic career.¹⁹ Accursius asserts in the introduction to his life that unlike some of his predecessors, who were more prone to invention than to the pursuit of truth, he will rely upon Ovid's own factual statements:

Qua quidem in re nihil equidem noui ex me ipso afferam, id quod facere nonnulli consueruerunt, ostentationis magis cupidi quam ueritatis. At ego ita de hoc poeta uerba facturus sum ut quicquid dixero, id ex eiusdem operibus a me collectum liquido appareat.

(In which matter, indeed I shall bring forth nothing new myself, which many, more desirous of show than truth, have done. Rather, whatever I say in my biography shall clearly be drawn by me from Ovid's own works.)

We learn of Ovid's birthplace (Sulmona), his birthdate, the existence of an older brother, of his early rhetorical training in Rome and subsequent civic duties, and of his rejection of politics for poetry.

Unlike Laetus who is much more objective, Accursius strikes a somewhat personal chord in his biography, mentioning Ovid's kindness, his character, his abstemiousness and horror of homosexuality. The reader is encouraged to empathize with the plight of the poet and to be personally moved by his great misfortunes, since Ovid, such a cultivated poet, was compelled to spend his last years among barbarians lacking any refinement.

¹⁶ See, in particular, Hexter 1986.

¹⁷ See Reynolds 1983, 181.

¹⁸ For a complete list of Renaissance biographers of Ovid, see Coulson 1997.

¹⁹ The life is edited in Coulson 1997.

Accursius's biography concludes with a list of Ovid's known extant and lost works in the order written. The list of authentic Ovidian works includes: *Amores* (original version in five books), *Heroides*, *Amores* (revised version in three books), various youthful works, *Ars amatoria*, *Remedia amoris*, *Fasti*, the lost tragedy *Medea*, *Metamorphoses*, and the works composed in exile, *Tristia*, and the *Epistulae ex Ponto*. The *Epistula Sapphus* is deemed to be an authentic work of Ovid.

What is perhaps most striking about Accursius's biography, when compared to Laetus's, is its close structural adherence to *Tristia* 4.10, the semi-autobiographical poem written by Ovid from exile. Some brief excerpts from the opening of the life should serve to illustrate this affinity quite clearly:

Fuit igitur poeta noster claris parentibus ex ordine exquestri procreatus, eodem quarto sic scribente:

Si quid id, a proavis usque est vetus ordinis heres
Non sum fortunae munere factus eques.

Et secundo Fastorum ad Octavianum:

Sancte pater patriae, tibi plebs, tibi curia nomen
Hoc dedit, hoc dedimus nos tibi nomen, eques.

Quod etiam in Ponto ita confirmavit:

Si genus excutias, equites ab origine prima
Usque per innumeros inueniemur auos.

(Our poet therefore was born from renowned parents of the equestrian order, as he himself writes in the same fourth book:

Heir, if that is of any value, to an ancient family,
No new knight created just yesterday for his wealth.

And in the second book of the *Fasti* to Octavian:

Sacred father of the country, the plebs, the senate,
We, the equestrian order, gave you this name.

Which he even thus confirms in the poems from Pontus:

If you check on my background, you will find
An unbroken equestrian pedigree.)

Our second Ovidian biographer, Bernardus Moretus, composed the life in 1459 to serve as an introduction to his commentary on the *Ibis*. Moretus's life is the earliest of the lives of Ovid composed in Italy between 1450 and 1500. Moretus was a rhetorician at Bologna in the third quarter of the Quattrocento and seems to have been particularly interested in Ovid, for he com-

posed two prose lives, one versified life, and a full commentary on the *Ibis*.²⁰ The structure of his life is essentially the same as that of Accursius discussed above. Moretus organizes his life in two parts: the events of Ovid's life and a survey of his poetic corpus. As in Laetus's life, Ovid's birthdate is assigned to 43 BC when the consuls Hirtius and Pansa lost their lives at Mutina. In treating of the causes for exile, Moretus displays a note of skepticism when compelled to iterate the timeworn gossip of his predecessors: he concludes that the infamous *Ars amatoria* was the primary reason for banishment and frankly confesses that the traditional reasons advanced are pure guesswork, namely Ovid's unwitting viewing of Augustus engaged in sodomy.

Moretus draws a sympathetic portrayal of the poet, stressing his prodigious talents and congenial mores. Great care is taken to provide a list of genuine Ovidian works, while only those that can with certainty be ascribed to Ovid are admitted into the canon. Such spurious compositions as the *De cuculo*, *De pulice*, the *Nux*, the *De limace*, and the *De vetula* are passed over in silence. Nor does Moretus know of the *Halieutica*. The *Amores*, which was generally referenced in the Middle Ages by the title *De sine titulo*, regains its proper title.

While Laetus's life of Ovid is structured quite differently from the majority of lives circulating in Renaissance Italy and so marks a rather distinct and novel departure, it does not appear to have profoundly altered the approach of later commentators in composing the life of the poet. Aldus Manutius produced about 1502 a detailed life of Ovid along the same lines as those exploited by Bonus Accursius and Bernardus Moretus;²¹ and Hercules Ciofanus, born in Ovid's own birthplace of Sulmona, again follows closely the structure of Ovid's autobiographical poem in the life which prefaces his complete edition of the works of Ovid published in 1581–1583. In my rather vast survey of the printed and manuscript sources for Ovidian biography down to 1600, I have found only one prose life of Ovid which in its approach is similar to Laetus's, that found in a manuscript now housed in the University library of Jena with the shelf mark Q.b.q.20.²² Laetus's life of Ovid, however, does seem to have experienced a second life in the printed editions of Ovid published in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for it makes a reappearance in the edition of Ovid published in London in 1821

²⁰ Moretus's commentary is discussed in Frank T. Coulson, "Bernardo Moretti, A Newly Discovered Commentator on Ovid's *Ibis*" (forthcoming from the Warburg Institute). Moretus's verse life of Ovid will receive its editio princeps in this article, while the two prose lives of Ovid have been edited in Coulson 1987.

²¹ Manutius 1502–1503, vol. 1.

²² Edited in Coulson 1997.

(on p. 24) from the Burmann edition, originally published in Amsterdam in 1727. In the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries, when Ovidian biography reached its zenith with the biographies of Jean Masson in Latin and Henri de La Ville de Mirmont in French, Laetus's life was still being read and consulted.

In conclusion, Laetus's work on Ovid's calendar poem the *Fasti*, first undertaken in the last years of the 1460s and continued to around 1490, seems to be relatively neglected in the scholarly literature. His life of Ovid, which circulated in various late fifteenth-century manuscripts both as an introduction to his commentary on the *Fasti* and as a life detached from the commentary proper, marks a distinct and noteworthy evolution in Ovidian biography in the humanistic period, since it moves away from the traditional format and structure, which had relied upon Ovid's own autobiographical poem *Tristia* 4.10, to present a more objective, clinical analysis founded on such secondary sources as Seneca the Elder. The commentary on the *Fasti*, which exists in at least four identified manuscripts, certainly deserves a fuller study and edition.²³

²³ A desideratum now being filled by Michael Jean of the Department of Classics of the Ohio State University.

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*SUBERAT IMAGO SYLLII ITALICI... :**



Pomponio Leto and fifteenth-century

Lives of Silius Italicus

By Frances Muecke

This paper examines the construction of a Life of Silius Italicus in the milieu of the Roman Studium from c. 1467–1483, and in the context of the intense contemporary interest in exegesis of Silius and Martial. Some of the Lives discussed demonstrate close connections between their authors – Giulio Pomponio Leto, Domizio Calderini and Pietro Marso. Also influential was the first printed Life, of uncertain authorship. Leto's and Calderini's Lives, preserved in dictata, to a certain extent remain sketches, but Marso, in the first printed commentary, attempts not only to synthesize the sources but also to compose a literary biography.

For all intents and purposes, before the rediscovery by Poggio in 1417 of the text of the *Punica*, the epic poet Silius Italicus did not exist.¹ The construction of his Life therefore was a task shared by a number of notable figures of the fifteenth century. In the 1460s and 70s Pomponio Leto, following Pietro Odo, did a great deal to bring Silius to the fore at Rome. The honour of the first complete commentary, however, goes to his colleague Domizio Calderini and of the first published commentary to their common student Pietro Marso, both of whom prefaced their commentaries with Lives.² I shall therefore treat the assembling of the facts of the Life as a virtual collaboration, especially as the two surviving Lives securely attributable to Pomponio Leto come from student *dictata*.

* Giraldis 1545, 527.

¹ Reeve 1983 (2); cp. Abbamonte 1997, 9–10.

² See Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976. If Odo was responsible for a Life it has disappeared with the outer sheet of the first fascicle of the manuscript containing his notes for a commentary (BAV, Vat. lat. 2779), *ibid.*, 370. Calderini's *Life of Silius Italicus* has been known since a version of Calderini's Commentary on Silius Italicus was identified in Harvard's Houghton Library in 2006. See Muecke & Dunston 2011, 75–76, and, with corrections, below; Muecke 2010, 419–421.

As is the case with other ancient authors, the fifteenth-century Lives of Silius we have were written either as contributions to literary history, on the model of Suetonius' *De poetis*, or as prefaces or epilogues to texts in manuscript, or print, or to commentaries, following the ancient and medieval tradition of the *accessus ad auctores*.³ The earliest surviving Life is that of Sicco Polento in the revised version of his *Scriptorum Illustrum Latinae linguae libri XVIII*.⁴ This Life appears to be representative of the state of knowledge (c. 1437), before the wider dissemination of the text itself, which Sicco knew of, but had probably not seen.⁵ Not that the *Punica* itself adds any facts to the biography,⁶ though some parts of it, such as the praise of Cicero in Book 8 (405–411), can be read as confirming the account of Silius that Pliny the Younger gives in his “death notice” addressed to Caninius Rufus (*epist.* 3,7).⁷ The crucial first step in the construction of the biography was the identification of Pliny's Silius Italicus, a writer of *carmina*, with the epic poet Silius.⁸ This equation, attested first by Sicco, depended not only on the discovery of the *Punica*, but also on the contemporary dissemination of texts of Pliny's *Letters*.⁹ Pliny's letter, grudging about the epic, which he does not even name, but rich in information about Silius' career and interests, henceforth became the main quarry for subsequent Lives, with the necessary rearrangement, as we shall see. A Life should begin with the parents and place of birth, whereas Pliny's letter begins with the place and cause of death and has nothing about Silius' origins.¹⁰ Sicco rephrased and paraphrased Pliny, adding historical detail for the benefit of his readers, and a slightly moralising tone, which nevertheless conveys more approval than Pliny. Later authors were more willing to quote from Pliny verbatim.

³ See Rizzo 1978, 765 n. 2.

⁴ Polento 1928, 121–122.

⁵ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 361.

⁶ For these see Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 341–344; McDermott & Orentzel 1977, 24–27; Augoustakis 2010 (1), 5–6.

⁷ Cp. Calderini's commentary ad 8,411: “Poeta plures versus in honorem Ciceronis dixit, quoniam prima aetate instituto Ciceroniano causas oravit et eius praedium possidebat una cum Virgiliano” (The poet said several verses in honour of Cicero, since in his youth in the manner of Cicero he made speeches in court and he used to own his farm along with Virgil's), Muecke & Dunston 2011, 492.

⁸ In the manuscripts and commentaries his name appears (as Silius Italicus) in a variety of spellings: Syllius, Sillus, Scyllius.

⁹ In manuscripts of these from the 1450s and 1460s the discovery of Silius Italicus is mentioned in marginal notes, Mynors 1963, xii n. 1.

¹⁰ Lambinus in his *Life of Lucretius* (1570) summarized the topics as: “[...] patria, genus, vitae studium, ingenium, mortis genus et tempus [...]” (fatherland, descent, profession, natural talent, kind of death and its time), Solaro 2000, 71; cp. Hägg 2012.

Before embarking on discussion of the sources and some of the details of the various Lives, I shall quickly survey those associated with Pomponio Leto.¹¹ Two surviving commentaries recorded by students begin with Lives. One dated 1467–1468 is included in Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 8413 fol. 204r, the other by a student in Florence, Bibl. Laur. plut. 52.8, fol. 105r.¹² Both of these manuscripts are miscellanies. The first contains *inter alia* a student's notes from a private course given by Leto in Venice (*Punica* 1,1-89 and 3, 311-606), while the second includes longer portions of a Pomponian commentary from a slightly later date (*Punica* 1,9–4,562). BAV, Borg. lat. 417 (c. 1470), which has thick autograph notes by Leto for the earlier books of the poem, is defective until Sil. 3,531. It may have begun with a Life. The second printed edition of the *Punica* (Rome 1471 ISTC is00504000), “edited” by Leto, contains a brief Life. Leto's interest in Silius and his Life persisted later in his career. Vatican Inc. I 4 is a copy of the *editio princeps* (Rome, 1471 ISTC is00503000), into which readings and notes from Pietro Marso's printed commentary (first edition 1483 ISTC is00507000) have been copied in a hand that appears to be that of Leto.¹³ Between folios 9 and 10 were inserted 2 manuscript folios, in the same hand. They contain a transcription of the Pliny letter¹⁴ as well as of five of the six epigrams in which Martial mentions Silius or his family,¹⁵ with occasionally useful marginal comments.

The next step in the story of the assembling of materials for the Life was in fact the bringing together of the Pliny letter and the Martial epigrams, themselves as it were “new” sources. Pliny's *Epistles* began to circulate more widely in Italy after the beginning of the fourteenth century,¹⁶ and Martial, while available to a certain extent in the Middle Ages, does not seem to have had an ancient or medieval commentary tradition.¹⁷ In the 1460s and 1470s, in the Roman *Studium*, there was intense and competitive interpretation of these Silver Age authors. But earlier than this, the combination of Pliny and Martial on Silius is seen in rudimentary Lives in a commentary attributed to “Anonymus B” and recorded in BAV, Urb. lat 358 fol.

¹¹ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 361–364.

¹² Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 374–375, 378; Delz 1966; Dunston 1967.

¹³ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 376–377; Muecke 2005 (2).

¹⁴ Pliny's letter to Cornelius Priscus on the death of Martial (*epist.* 3,21) is printed after the *Life of Martial* in Calderini's Martial commentary, Hausmann 1980, 263.

¹⁵ MART. 4,14; 7,63; 8,66; 9,86; 11,48; 11,50 (the other is 6,64). See Nauta 2002, 148–150.

¹⁶ For example, in 1395 Coluccio Salutati praised Geri d'Arezzo (c. 1270 – ante 1339) for having used Pliny the Younger as a model for letter-writing, Witt 2003, 224–226; cp. Reynolds 1983 (1).

¹⁷ Hausmann 1980, 250; Reeve 1983 (1).

4 and Vat. lat. 3301 fol. 1.¹⁸ In contrast to Pliny, Martial praises Silius fulsomely as an epic poet (4,14; 7,63),¹⁹ and, with hindsight, it can be inferred from 4,14,1–5 that he composed an epic on the Punic wars.²⁰ References to the consulship of Silius' elder son (8,66,4, if correctly read), and the death of his younger (9,86), confirm information in Pliny, and add the name of the younger, Severus. Pliny mentioned the ownership of numerous villas. Martial (11,48; 50) tells us that one of these belonged to Cicero, and that Silius owned the tomb of Virgil, which, according to Pliny, he treated as a temple.²¹

In this paper my main focus will be the three versions of the *Vita* of Silius Italicus coming from sources close to Pomponio Leto and dating from around the same time (1467–1471). During the same period, for an autumn and winter (1469–1470), Pomponio Leto and Niccolò Perotti worked together on the exegesis of Martial.²² Since Martial became an indispensable source for the *Lives*, we cannot neglect contemporary interpretation of Martial, soon to become a battleground involving Perotti, Domizio Calderini and others.²³ Accordingly, we shall observe the *Lives* by Domizio Calderini and Pietro Marso giving more space and weight to what can be elicited from Martial.

* * *

My earliest *Vita*, now in the manuscript in Paris mentioned above, was taken down by Pietro di Celano when, in exile in Venice, he attended a course given by Pomponio Leto.²⁴ The *Life* is embedded in a sort of *accessus* which deals with the history of epic in Rome in a way that suggests

¹⁸ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 366.

¹⁹ As Domizio Calderini says in his *Life* (below): “summis ubique effert laudibus” (everywhere he exalts him with the utmost praise).

²⁰ Calderini in his commentary on Martial *ad loc.* does not explicitly refer to the *Punica*. On the Commentary on Martial see Dunston 1968, 111–123; Bibl. Med. Laur, Laur. 53.33 (*L*) must be consulted, as well as the first Roman (1474 ISTC ic00036000) and Venetian editions (1474 ISTC ic00037000).

²¹ Cp. Leto's *Life of Statius* “unde cognoscimus Virgilii [...] sepulchrum coluisse” (from which we learn he worshipped Virgil's tomb); cp. STAT. *silv.* 4,4,54 with Calderini's commentary *ad loc.*: “qui erat in Neapolitano et possidebatur a Sylio poeta” (which was on his Neapolitan estate and owned by the poet Silius). See Brugnoli 1990, 578 on the question of whether Silius owned the tomb and Trapp 1988, 784–785 on visits to the tomb by Petrarch, Boccaccio and Biondo. For a recent edition Pomponio's *Life of Statius* see: Pomponius Laetus, *Papinii Statii vita*, ed. Marianne Pade, *Repertorium Pomponianum*, URL: www.repertoriumpomponianum.it/textus/leto_vita_statii.htm, (visited on 3/8/2014).

²² This collaboration is discussed in Johann Ramming's article in this volume: “Perotti's *Life of Martial* and its literary context”.

²³ Campanelli 2001, 13–20.

²⁴ For the little that is known about Pietro di Celano see Delz 1966, 418–420.

Pietro did not manage to catch accurately everything he heard. Similar lapses occur in the Life. What seem to be the teacher's explanatory comments or off-the-cuff remarks have been incorporated into it, possibly at the expense of the main point. For example, the definition of the illness (*clavus*) may have displaced something more explicit on how that led to Silius' death. There are errors and infelicities in the Latin (especially the anacoluthon in the opening sentence) and a few oddities in the information, some of which we shall discuss below (e.g. the second consulship). There is some logic to the ordering of the material. As is appropriate for the genre, the birth and its date, general family information and early education come first, and the deaths of Silius himself and his son towards the end. Several of Pliny's more negative comments survive in this Life alone: the belief that he was a *delator* (an informer) and the attribution of *emacitas* (a mania for buying). A further comment in the same vein, "adamatisque novis, priores negligebat" (falling in love with the new, he neglected the old), is not quoted again until the Life by Pietro Crinito (1505).²⁵ Later, however, Pomponio Leto did note this in the margin of his transcription of the Pliny letter: "Nimis emax et luxuriosus Silius" (over indulgent in buying and in pleasure).²⁶

1. Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 8413 fol. 204

[...] ²⁷ An Silius natus sub fine principatus Tiberii²⁸ e gente Siliorum primis annis pedestri oratione post sumpta coniuge suscepit filium et postea Silium Severum.²⁹ et salutabatur lectulo propterea quod erat delicatissimus.³⁰ nec edebat carmina nisi adhibito aliorum consilio.³¹ Villam quam habuit Virgilius et quam habuit Cicero maxime possedit³² quae appellata est Academia. Unde extat opus illud:³³ et multas alias villas in Campania et emacitate studuit emere³⁴ quas possederant prestantissimi viri. Coluit statuam Virgilii. Solebat et adire monumentum Virgilii tamquam templum.³⁵ Lesit famam sub Nerone propterea quod existimatus fuit delator quod devicit tempore

²⁵ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 362–363; Crinitus 1543, 491–493.

²⁶ BAV, Inc. I 4 unnumbered folio.

²⁷ The remarks on poetry and other poets that precede and follow the Life are printed in Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976 377–378. I have normalized capitalization.

²⁸ An inference from the age at death. McDermott & Orentzel 1977, 24 put the date of birth around AD 28. Tiberius died AD 37.

²⁹ The name of the younger son comes from MART. 9,86,1.

³⁰ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,4; cp. 9.

³¹ Id. *epist.* 3,7,5.

³² MART. 11,48; cp. *maxime frequentabat* in Life 2.

³³ PLIN. *nat.* 31,6: *ibi compositis voluminibus eiusdem nominis* (i.e. *Academica*).

³⁴ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Vitellii³⁶ et Galbae, qui insequabantur amicos Neronis. In senectute secessit in Campania³⁷ emptis novis villis contemnebat³⁸ vetustas.³⁹ Quoniam non fuit revocatus in electione Traiani⁴⁰ annotatum fuit, unde natum proverbium Traiane regnis [*lege* -as?] non revocatis civibus.⁴¹ Ultimus consul constitutus a Nerone⁴² in secundo consulatu.⁴³ *Clavus* est morbus perforans manus et pedes; si in aliquem inoderit [*lege* invaserit?] evadere non potuit ut ait Cor. Celsus:⁴⁴ hoc morbo laboravit Silius post LXV annos quem constanter tulit:⁴⁵ et ante quam decederet vidit filium primum consularem, Severum vero ante mortem suam vidit mortuum.⁴⁶ Cuius mortem conquestus est Martialis endecasyllabo carmine.⁴⁷ composuit et versu et prosa. Sed tantum extat hoc opus. [...]

(Or⁴⁸ Silius was born just before the end of Tiberius' principate from the family of the Sili. In his first years he engaged in prose oratory. Later he took a wife and produced a son and afterwards Silius Severus. And he received visits on his couch because he was very soft. He did not publish his poetry unless encouraged by the opinion of others. He owned the villa which Virgil had and especially the one Cicero had, called "Academia" (that work comes from there), and many other villas in Campania and out of a mania for buying he was keen to buy ones the most illustrious men had owned. He worshipped Virgil's statue and used to visit Virgil's tomb as though it were a shrine. In Nero's time he damaged his reputation because he was considered to be an informer. He overcame this in the time of Vitellius and Galba who censured Nero's friends. In his old age he retired in Campania and when he had bought new villas he despised the old. Since he was not recalled on the election of Trajan it was observed, whence came the proverb "Trajan, you rule [?] but not after recalling citizens". In his second consulship he was the last consul instituted by Nero. *Clavus* is an illness making holes in the hands and feet. If it attacked [?] anyone, he could not easily escape, as Cornelius Celsus says. Silius suffered from this disease which

³⁶ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,3.

³⁷ *Campanea cod.*

³⁸ *contendebat cod.*

³⁹ *Id. epist.* 3,7,6.

⁴⁰ Cp. PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,6.

⁴¹ I cannot explain this.

⁴² Cp. *Id. epist.* 3,7,10.

⁴³ The only consulship now known is that of AD 68.

⁴⁴ CELS. 5,28,14?

⁴⁵ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,1, 9.

⁴⁶ *Id. epist.* 3,7,2.

⁴⁷ MART. 9,86 (in elegiacs).

⁴⁸ The reading is clear but not its meaning.

he bore with tranquillity from the age of 65. Before he died he saw his first son a consul and before his own death that of Severus, whose death Martial lamented in a poem in hendecasyllables. He composed in both verse and prose. But only this work survives.)

* * *

We now turn to the Life from the Pomponian *dictata* from about 1470 in the Florence manuscript. These *dictata* are a fair copy written by a scribe who seems to have had a limited understanding of his material, judging by the mistakes made in the Life. This Life is comparable to the first, and, apart from some fanciful ideas about the parents at the beginning, reproduces Pliny more accurately. It too rearranges the Plinian material in a less than logical manner, ending, for example, with the ill fame belonging to the Neronian period and the recovery from it, but putting the material on the death together near the beginning. Some family names are offered without very good evidence, perhaps under pressure of generic expectations.⁴⁹ There is no ancient source for “Fulvia”, or for the *praenomen* “Publius” given to the older son.⁵⁰

2. Florence, Bibl. Laur. plut. 52.8 fol. 105r

Silius patre Silio viro consulari natus⁵¹ sub Tyberio Germanico imperatore extitit matre Fulvia.⁵² Filios duos habuit Severum⁵³ et P. [*cod. post correcturam*; P. et *ante correcturam*] Silium.⁵⁴ Silius maior natu fuit. Severum⁵⁵ natu minorem amisit, Silium [*cod. post correcturam*; Silvium *cod. ante correcturam*] virum consularem moriens reliquit.⁵⁶ Silius pater insanabili morbo i.e. clavo periit annum aetatis agens .V. et .LXX.⁵⁷ A Nerone consulatum accepit, isque postremus omnium qui creati sunt consul decessit.⁵⁸ Causas egit et quidem opulenter.⁵⁹ In

⁴⁹ Cp. Pomponio Leto's Lives of Statius and Seneca.

⁵⁰ Perhaps from the P. Silius Nerva (consul-designate AD 48) famous for his “marriage” with Messalina (SUET. *Claud.* 26, TAC. *ann.* 10,12,1). Calderini, however, knows enough to distinguish, at the beginning of his Life, that Silius from Silius Italicus père, Muecke & Dunston 2011, 75 and below.

⁵¹ An incorrect inference, as he was a *nouus homo*.

⁵² There is no ancient evidence for this name. Could there be some confusion with SHA *Severus* 1,2 (*mater Fulvia Pia*) or the *Vita Persi* attributed to M. Valerius Probus?

⁵³ MART. 9,86,1.

⁵⁴ The elder son of Silius Italicus is generally considered to be L. Silius Decianus, suffect in AD 94.

⁵⁵ MART. 9,86,1.

⁵⁶ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,2.

⁵⁷ *Id. epist.* 3,7,9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

Neapolitano suo obiit.⁶⁰ Multum ubique librorum [laborum *cod.*], multum imaginum, multum statuarumque habuit quas reverebatur.⁶¹ Virgilii imaginem prae ceteris colebat, cuius natale<m> non minus religiose quam suum celebrabat Neapoli maxime ubi monumentum eius erat, ut templum adire solebat.⁶² Villam Ciceronis Academiam Puteolanam [Academicam Putedanam *cod.*]⁶³ maxime frequentabat et Virgilii, emptas enim has habebat.⁶⁴ Delicato magis corpore quam infirmo fuit.⁶⁵ Hoc consule Nero obiit.⁶⁶ Sub Nerone famam laesit; in Vitellii amicitia se sapienter et comiter [communem *cod.*] gessit. Ex proconsulatu Asiae gloriam reportavit.⁶⁷

(Silius was born to his father Silius, a man of consular status, and his mother Fulvia, in the time of the emperor Tiberius Germanicus. He had two sons, Servius and Publius Silius. Silius was the elder. He lost Severus, the younger. When he died he left behind Silius, as an ex-consul. Silius (the father) died of an incurable tumour, aged 75. He got a consulship from Nero, and he passed away as the last consul of all who were made consul by him. He pleaded cases and indeed richly. He died on his Neapolitan estate. Everywhere he had an abundance of books, an abundance of portrait busts, an abundance of statues, to which he paid honour. Before all others he worshipped Virgil's portrait and he used to celebrate his birthday more devotedly than his own, especially at Naples where his tomb was, he used to visit it as though it were a shrine. He spent much time at Cicero's villa at Puteoli, the Academia, and that of Virgil, for he had bought them. His physique was more soft than weak. Nero died when he was consul. In Nero's time he damaged his reputation. As Vitellius' friend he behaved wisely and sociably. He came back from his proconsulship in Asia covered with glory.)

* * *

In their article on Silius Italicus, Bassett, Dunston and Delz regard the authorship of our next Life, the first to be printed, as "uncertain", because they

⁵⁹ Cp. MART. 7,63,6–8.

⁶⁰ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,1.

⁶¹ *Id. epist.* 3,7,8.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Cp. PLIN. *nat.* 31,6. This villa of Cicero's is now thought to have been the *Cumanum* (D'Arms 1970, 198–200).

⁶⁴ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,8, MART. 11,48.

⁶⁵ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,9.

⁶⁶ *Id. epist.* 3,7,10.

⁶⁷ *Id. epist.* 3,7,2.

suspect that at least one of the two existing manuscript versions may be earlier than the printed edition. One is found in Florence, Naz. II X 43 (fol. 138v), in which “the last scholar to whom something is assigned before the Silian item is Guarino Veronese”. He died in 1460. The other is in Paris, Bibl. Nat. lat. 10806 (fol. 49), where “the last scholar to whom something is assigned before the life of Silius is Angelo Tifernate”.⁶⁸ As he was active 1474–1491, this would suggest a date after that of the printed edition. It is not unusual to find manuscript copies of *Lives* from printed editions. However that may be, simply by being in one of the early printed texts (there is no *Life* in the *editio princeps*) the unattributed *Life* gained circulation and, as it is immediately followed by the colophon mentioning his name, it would have been associated with Pomponio Leto. When Marso came to compose his *Life* he had it before him. Not so the unknown editor of the Parma edition of 1481, who adapted Sicco Polento’s *Life*.⁶⁹ This is strange as there are aspects of the text of this edition that betray acquaintance with Calderini’s work, and scholarly developments in Rome.⁷⁰ Perhaps Sicco’s *Life* was supplied by the printer.

3. Rome: Printer of Silius Italicus, between 26 Apr. and Aug. 1471, Vatican City, BAV Inc. III. 4, fol. 180v

Syllius Italicus, cuius Maiores Italica hispanie urbe orti fuere, prima Etate declamavit. Mox foro vacavit.⁷¹ Inter primores urbis sine potentia, Sine invidia fuit. Salutabatur et visitabatur.⁷² Auspiciis eius consulatus caede Neronis orbis libertatem cepisse visus est.⁷³ In villis suis inter quas & Ciceronis Tusculanum & Virgilii Neapolitanum⁷⁴ multum librorum ac statuarum possedit. Maronis sepulcrum ut sacrosantum adire solebat. Cuius imaginem venerabatur ante omnes & Natalem religiosius quam suum celebrabat.⁷⁵ Emeritam senectutem in ocio campano musis tradidit.⁷⁶ Bellum Punicum Secundum carmine scripsit.⁷⁷ Severum minorem ex liberis dolore inexplicabili tumulavit.

⁶⁸ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 361.

⁶⁹ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 361. It was copied from there by the scribe of Florence, Bibl. Laur., Laur. plut. 37.14 (fols. 176–177). Similarly the *Life of Sallust* in Squarzaficus 1478 was based on Sicco Polento’s.

⁷⁰ On the Parma edition see Muecke 2005 (1), 53, 61, 64.

⁷¹ Cp. MART. 7,63,5–6; PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,6?

⁷² *Id. epist.* 3,7,4.

⁷³ *Id. epist.* 3,7,9–10; MART. 7,63,9–10.

⁷⁴ Cp. MART. 11,48; DON. *vita Verg.* 13.

⁷⁵ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,8.

⁷⁶ *Id. epist.* 3,7,6; MART. 7,63,11.

⁷⁷ Cp. MART. 4,14,1–5.

Sillium maiorem natu consularem reliquit.⁷⁸ Tedio insanabilis clavi In Neapolitano abstinentia cibi uita functus est,⁷⁹ An. agens .Lxx.⁸⁰

(Silius Italicus, whose forefathers came from the Spanish city Italica, in his youth practised oratory. Presently he freed himself from the courts. Among the city's foremost men he was without power, without ill will. He was greeted and visited. Under the auspices of his consulship it appeared that the world obtained freedom by the killing of Nero. In his villas, among which were both Cicero's Tusculan estate and Virgil's Neapolitan, he owned an abundance of books and statues. He used to visit Maro's tomb as though it were sacred. He revered his portrait before all and celebrated his birthday more devotedly than his own. In his leisure in Campania he devoted his old age in retirement to poetry. He wrote a poem on the second Punic war. He buried Severus, his younger son, with inexpressible grief. He left behind Silius, his older son, as an ex-consul. Through disgust with an incurable tumour he ended his life on his Neapolitan estate by starving himself. He was 70.)

In this brief and lapidary Life information given by Pliny is rearranged to follow a chronological order, from youth to retirement to death. But while a temporal order of events is suggested, there is hardly any attempt to situate Silius historically, Nero being the only emperor mentioned. The rather negative account Pliny gives of Silius' early career in the courts, with the rumour that he was a *delator*, is drastically toned down. For the most part the Life is closely based on the Pliny letter but it also contains elements not from Pliny,⁸¹ some of which also present differences from the Pomponian Lives we have examined, differences that may suggest that this Life is not by Pomponio Leto. The first of these is the explanation of the cognomen *Italicus*, that is, that the poet's forebears came from the Spanish city Italica.⁸² This point, for which we can find no earlier source, is included or discussed subsequently by Calderini, Marso, Raffaele Maffei of Volterra, Ambrosio [de] Victoria, Pietro Crinito and Lilio Gregorio Giraldi, to go no further.⁸³ Another difference is the claim that Silius owned Cicero's Tusculan villa and Vergil's villa at Naples. As Martial in 11,48 and 50 did not specify which of Cicero's several villas Silius owned, the issue became one

⁷⁸ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,2; MART 9,86,1.

⁷⁹ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,1–2.

⁸⁰ *Id. epist.* 3,7,9 (aged 75).

⁸¹ The names of the sons and the mention of the *Punicum*.

⁸² Campbell 1936; Vessey 1984.

⁸³ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 362–364, cp. 342. The Spanish Ambrosio [de] Victoria (Ambrosius Nicander) was the only biographer to claim that Silius was born in Spain, Nicander 1515, 2v: “Nascitur in Italica”.

for speculation in the Lives, the consensus developing that it must have been one in Campania,⁸⁴ not in the *colli Romani*. For Marso it was the Formianum *inprimis*,⁸⁵ and, though Calderini ignores the question in his Life, in his commentary on Mart. 11,48 he brings in the passage of Pliny the Elder on Cicero's villa named the Academia, which the encyclopaedist says was near Puteoli (*nat.* 31,6). As we have seen, Pomponio Leto, drawing on this same passage, plumps for the Academia. Cicero's villa at Tusculum, offered by this Life, was one of his better known, bought in 68 BC and used as the setting for his *Tusculan Disputations*.⁸⁶ There is nothing, however, to associate it with Silius. Another difference, though this may simply be a slip, is the age at death – 70. More significant is the lesser interest in Silius' political career, reduced to the coincidence of his consulship with Nero's death in AD 68: "Auspiciis eius consulatus caede Neronis orbis libertatem cepisse visus est".⁸⁷ The assertion that this "freed the world" seems to come from Mart. 7,63,9–10: "postquam bis senis ingentem fascibus annum/rexerat adserto qui sacer orbe fuit" (after with twelve fasces he had presided over the momentous year which was sacred by the liberation of the world). Contemporary commentaries on Martial explain that *adserto* means *liberato*. Pomponio Leto in London, BL, King's 32 fol. 83 says "asserto id est liberato orbe"⁸⁸ and, slightly later, Calderini ad loc. "quia tanto tyranno liberatus est totus orbis".⁸⁹

* * *

In analysing these three Lives we have identified the sources, and especially the details from Martial that are woven into the underlying base, Pliny's letter. But rarely is there an acknowledgement that these are the sources being used. Calderini's approach, in the Life that accompanies the student notes from his commentary in a copy of the second Roman edition of 1471, is quite different. He acknowledges Pliny at the point where he begins to use him⁹⁰ and he quotes whole passages explicitly from Martial where they are relevant. Strikingly, he reports on his search for new sources to supplement

⁸⁴ Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 343: "maybe Cicero's Cumanum", cp. D'Arms 1970, 198–200; Sherwin-White 1966, 228 on "plures isdem in locis villas possidebat" (PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,8): "All presumably in Campania".

⁸⁵ He is followed by Raffaele Maffei (1st ed. Rome 1506), Volterrano 1603, Book XIX col. 706.

⁸⁶ It also had a part named "Academia" (CIC. *Tusc.* 2,9).

⁸⁷ *caedes* is a strange word to use for Nero's suicide (SUET. *Nero* 49,3).

⁸⁸ Dated 1469–1470. See Pade 2008.

⁸⁹ I cite here and subsequently from the Roman edition dated 22 March 1474 (BAV, Vat. Inc. Ross. 1133, ISTC ic00036000).

⁹⁰ As does Sicco.

those already known, adding a good new reference, Tacitus hist. 3,65,2 on Silius' presence at a meeting between Vitellius and Flavius Sabinus, but also a bad one. In our edition of Calderini's commentary I did not realise that, when he mentioned a consulship with a certain "Aethicus" as colleague, he was referring to Tacitus ann. 15,48, on the consulship of Publius Silius Nerva and Atticus Vestinus at the beginning AD 65, the year of the Pisonian conspiracy, and so wrongly identifying Silius Nerva with Silius Italicus, a connection he was also led to make in his commentary on Mart. 7,63,8: "eo anno quo Nero interfectus est Silius consulatum gerebat collega Attico, ut scribit Tacitus" (in the year in which Nero was killed Silius held a consulship with Atticus as colleague, as Tacitus writes). Later, Pomponio too writes that the year of the consulship of Silius Nerva and Atticus Vestinus was the year of Nero's death (AD 68), in his marginal note on Mart. 7,63,9–10 in Vatican Inc. 1.4: "Nero periit Silio et Attico Coss.". It was rather the year of the poet Lucan's death (AD 65), as given in Vacca's life: "periitque pridie Kal. Maias Attico Vestino et Nerva Siliano coss." and then in Leto's *Life of Lucan*: "Decessit pridie Kal. Mai Silio Nerva Attico Vestino consulibus. Quo consul designatus cum Plaucio Laterano erat."

4. Domizio Calderini (c. 1473) Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Library Inc. 3431 (A) fol. 1v

Domitius Veronensis in Syllii Italici vitam

Duos Syllios eodem fere tempore Romae fuisse invenio, quorum alter ille est cui nupsit Messalina quemadmodum et Suetonius⁹¹ et Cornelius Tacitus⁹² apertius tradiderunt. Cuius meminit Iuvenalis "Cui nubere Caesaris uxor destinat"⁹³ et reliqua ibi in satyra "Omnibus in terris",⁹⁴ alter Syllius Italicus dictus est quem ut Romanum potius quam Hispanum affirmaverim. Ea abducor coniectura quoniam Martialis cum ad eum saepius scribat nusquam Hispanum appellat, non praetermissurus sub silentio si Hispanus fuisset et in eo epigrammate, cuius initio [inditio *cod.*] "Verona docti [doctas *cod.*] syllabas amat <vatis>"⁹⁵ cum singulis vatibus suam patriam assignavit, de Syllio nullam fecit mentionem. Sub Nerone infamiam contraxit quoniam sponte accusare credebatur, ut inquit Plinius, sub Vitellio secundiore fama fuit nam proconsulatum Asiae gessit, ex quo laudem et gloriam

⁹¹ SUET. *Claud.* 26.

⁹² TAC. *ann.* 10,12,1.

⁹³ IUV. 10,330–336.

⁹⁴ *Id.* 10,1.

⁹⁵ MART. 1,61,1.

reportavit.⁹⁶ Cuius et ut arbitror meminit Cornelius Tacitus: “Vitellius et Sabinus pepigerunt. Voces et scripta habuerunt testes Cluvium [Plinium *cod.*] Ruffum et Syllium Italicum”.⁹⁷ Declamavit in foro magno nomine et causas egit [legit *cod.*].⁹⁸ Temporibus vero Domitiani relicto foro se contulit in otium⁹⁹ in quo bellum secundum Punicum versibus complexus est. Fuerat consul eo anno quo Nero est interfectus¹⁰⁰ collega Aethico quod vix uno in loco repperio;¹⁰¹ quam omnem historiam Martialis quattuor versibus comprehendit:

postquam bis senis ingentem fascibus annum
rexerat asserto qui sacer orbe fuit,
emeritos Musis et Phoebo tradidit annos
proque suo celebrat nunc Helicon foro.¹⁰²

Insilit in morbum cuius taedio vitam finire cupiebat.¹⁰³ Suadentibus ergo et annis et amicis secessit Neapolitanum suum nam habuit in Campania praedia Vergilii et praedia Ciceronis multum ibique statuarum. natalem imprimis Vergilii religiosius colebat quam suum.¹⁰⁴ Martialis:

Silius haec magni celebrat monumenta Maronis
iugera facundi qui Ciceronis habet.
heredem dominumque sui tumulique larisque [*sic*]
non alium [alio *cod.*] mallet nec Maro nec Cicero.¹⁰⁵

Ingravescente quotidie morbo tandem inedia mori voluit LXV aetatis anno. Reliquit filium consularem. Amiserat antea Severum de quo extat epigramma Martialis.¹⁰⁶ Magnae apud omnes aestimationis [*sic*] suae apud Martialem potissimum qui eum summis ubique effert laudibus.¹⁰⁷ Haec vita; operis argumentum hoc est. Gesserunt bellum Carthaginenses cum Romanis et Syllius nunc in hoc opere de secundo bello Punico tractat.¹⁰⁸

(I find there were two Siliuses in Rome at about the same time, of whom the first is the one whom Messalina married as both Suetonius

⁹⁶ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,3.

⁹⁷ TAC. *hist.* 3,65,2.

⁹⁸ Cp. MART. 7,63,6–8.

⁹⁹ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,6.

¹⁰⁰ *Id. epist.* 3,7,10.

¹⁰¹ TAC. *ann.* 15,48.

¹⁰² MART. 7,63,9–12.

¹⁰³ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,2 and 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Id. epist.* 3,7,8.

¹⁰⁵ MART. 11,48.

¹⁰⁶ *Id.* 9,86,1–2.

¹⁰⁷ E.g. *Id.* 4,14,1; 6,64,10; 7,63,1–2.

¹⁰⁸ My punctuation and capitalization.

and Cornelius Tacitus have explicitly related. He is remembered in Juvenal's "Whom Caesar's wife plans to marry" etc. there in the satire "In all the world", the second is called Silius Italicus and I would affirm he was Roman rather than Spanish. I am attracted by this reasoning, since though Martial writes to him very often he never calls him "Spanish" and he would not pass him over in silence if he had been Spanish and, in that epigram at the beginning of which "Verona loves the syllables of the learned poet", when he assigns to each poet his native land, he makes no mention of Silius. Under Nero he incurred dishonour because he was believed to make deliberate accusations, as Pliny says, but under Vitellius he had a better reputation for he carried out a proconsulate in Asia from which he came back covered with praise and glory. I think Cornelius Tacitus referred to him too: "Vitellius and Sabinus made a pact. Cluvius Rufus and Silius Italicus witnessed their words and documents". He made speeches in the forum with great renown and pleaded cases. But in Domitian's time he left the forum and went into retirement, during which he treated all the Second Punic War in verse. He had been consul in the year in which Nero was killed, with Atticus as colleague, something I scarcely find in one place. All this history Martial covers in four lines: "After with twelve fasces he had presided over the momentous year which was sacred by the liberation of the world, he devoted the years of his retirement to Phoebus and the Muses and now instead of the forum frequents Helicon". He fell into a disease from disgust at which he desired to bring his life to an end. So at the urging both of years and friends he took refuge in his estate at Naples for in Campania he had Virgil's farm and Cicero's farm and an abundance of statues there. He observed Virgil's birthday above all, more devoutly than his own. Martial: "Silius celebrates this monument of great Virgil, he who owns the acres of eloquent Cicero. Neither Maro nor Cicero would wish any other as heir and master of his tomb and house". As the illness grew worse day by day, finally he chose to die through fasting in his 65th year. He left a son as an ex-consul. Previously he had lost Severus, about whom there is an epigram of Martial. He was valued highly among all, especially in Martial, who everywhere exalts him with the utmost praise. This is the Life; the topic of his work follows. The Carthaginians waged war with the Romans and Silius now deals with the Second Punic War in this work.)

Calderini has written as much "Notes towards a Life" as a "Life". Marso's Life too is self-conscious about collecting and interpreting sources, and, as we have mentioned earlier, in Vatican Inc. I 4, rather than inserting a Life, Leto transcribed the ancient sources themselves. But, as we have also seen, it is not enough to collect the sources. They have to be correctly understood.

One of the Martial epigrams (8,66) is a case in point. In BL, King's 32 fol. 96v it has the heading "consulatus Silii Italici" (Silius Italicus' consul-

ship),¹⁰⁹ in Calderini's commentary on Martial in the Venice 1474 edition, "De consulatu Silii" (On Silius's consulship) and in Leto's later transcription, "Eiusdem de tertio Silii consulatu" (the same on Silius' third consulship). As understood by Calderini and perhaps by Pomponio Leto in Vatican Inc. I 4,¹¹⁰ the poem is to congratulate Silius on having been made consul for the third time, by Domitian. We now know that Silius, having been consul in AD 68, "apparently ended his official career as *proconsul Asiae* about 77/78".¹¹¹ A further consulship under Domitian is highly unlikely and modern scholars, with texts that read in line 4 "nato consule" (with son as consul) rather than "noto consule" (to a known consul [?]),¹¹² have no trouble in seeing the poem as a panegyric request, dated AD 94, on the occasion of the older son's consulship, for the younger son too to be so honoured.¹¹³ What is more intriguing is that no one before Pietro Crinito attempted to insert the third consulship into the Life (first published 1505). And he does so without mentioning any previous consulship:

Domitiano Augusto gratissimus fuit: eo autore perductus est ad tertium consulatum honestissimis suffragiis. De quo leguntur adhuc versiculi poetae Martialis¹¹⁴ [...].¹¹⁵

(He was very much beholden to the favour of the emperor Domitian, having been raised by his sponsorship to a third consulship with most honourable recommendations. The poet Martial's verses on this are still read [...].)

It would be possible to construct a series of consulships, with AD 65 and 68 as the dates of the first two. None of our humanists spells this out explicitly, though our first Life refers to a mysterious "second consulship".

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The last Life I shall discuss is that of Pietro Marso, firstly because it uses the Life included in Pomponio Leto's printed edition and secondly because

¹⁰⁹ With the notes: "Syllius Italicus consul iterum sub Domitio. in primo eius consulatu Nero periit" (Silius Italicus was consul for the second time under Domitian. Nero died in his first consulship.) and on l. 8 "Optat fieri consul tertium" (he wishes to become consul for a third time).

¹¹⁰ Pomponio Leto would have been able to consult Calderini's printed commentary on Martial.

¹¹¹ McDermott & Orentzel 1977, 24.

¹¹² This corruption is not recorded in modern editions. Calderini comments *ad loc.*: "Noto consule id est ad Silium qui bis fuerat cons" (to a known consul: that is, to Silius who had been consul twice).

¹¹³ Schöffel 2002, 553–562.

¹¹⁴ MART. 8,66,1–8.

¹¹⁵ Crinitus 1543, 492–493.

of its influence as the Life in the first, and for many years only, printed commentary.¹¹⁶

5. Petrus Marsus (1483) BAV Inc. 427 a ii

⟨S⟩yllius Italicus ab Italica urbe Hispanie cognominatus a qua originem habuit per suos maiores Romanus fuit. Quippe si in Italica natus fuisset, Martialis Hispanus et in patriae suae suorumque laudem propensus, tanti viri natale solum eo epigrammate primi libri, quo non modo poetarum, verum et historicorum patriam celebret, audisse ornasset,¹¹⁷ cum sepius ad eum scribat, eumque tanti faciat, quanti Catullus Veronensis Virgilium poetarum principem fecisset.¹¹⁸ Prima aetate Ciceronem sibi proposuit imitandum, veterum praecepta sequutus, qui optimum quenque censuerunt eligendum quem imitemur, facundo declamavit ore, clientum causas secundo eventu in foro egit, centumvir fuit¹¹⁹ proconsulatum Asiae prudentissime integerrimeque administravit. Sub Nerone infamia notatus, nam quosdam principi, seu verius saevissimo tyranno, sponte insimulasse vulgo creditum est. Sub Vitellio comiter et sapienter se gessit,¹²⁰ a Nerone consul creatus est, cuius felicissimi consulatus auspiciis Nero e vita sublatus est et orbis libertatem adeptus.¹²¹ Post consulatum Maronem Latinorum poetarum sydus imitatus est, quamvis carmina maiore cura quam ingenio scriberet, quae saepius recitavit et auditorum iudicia recitationibus expertus est.¹²² Bellum Punicum secundum hoc opere prosecutus est, quod in manibus habetur, variumque est elegans multiplex, ut quid divinum esse videatur. Suadentibus annis urbe, foroque cedens in Campania se continuit ocio non abusus [absus *ed. 1483*].¹²³ Multum villarum possedit et M. Tullii Formianum inprimis, multum statuarum, multum imaginum quas studiose venerabatur, Maronis potissimum cuius natalem religiose celebrabat, sepulchrumque Via Puteolana ad ii. lapidem ut cellam Iovis Capitolini frequentabat.¹²⁴ Duos habuit filios. Minorem Saeverum nomine incredibili dolore sepelivit maiorem aetate florentem et consularem reliquit. Adversa valitudine insanabilis clavi la-

¹¹⁶ See Dykmans 1988, 71. Raffaele Maffei's "Formianum" shows his dependence on Marso, Volterrano 1603, col. 706.

¹¹⁷ MART. 1,61.

¹¹⁸ For the phrase "poetarum princeps" see, e.g., Petrarch, *Rerum familiarum libri* 24,11 and Sicco Polento's first Life of Virgil, Ziolkowski & Putnam 2008, 133, 328. The remark is strange as Catullus belonged to the generation before Virgil.

¹¹⁹ MART. 7,63,5–6,8–9.

¹²⁰ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,3.

¹²¹ *Id. epist.* 3,7,9–10; MART. 7,63,9–10.

¹²² PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,5.

¹²³ *Id. epist.* 3,7,6.

¹²⁴ *Id. epist.* 3,7,8; DON. *vita Verg.* 36.

boravit, cuius tedio et dolore ut Plinius in Epistolis scribit quinque et .lxx. annos natus in Neapolitano suo inedia vitam finivit magis delicato corpore quam infirmo usque ad extremum diem beatus et felix.¹²⁵

(Though Silius Italicus got his cognomen from Italica, the city in Spain from which he had his origin through his forefathers, he was Roman. Because, if he had been born in Italica, Martial, a Spaniard and ready in his praise of his native land and own people, in that epigram of his first book in which he celebrates the native land, not only of poets but of historians too, would have been very eager to have honoured the native soil of so great a man, since he often writes to him and makes as much of him as Catullus had made of Virgil, the prince of poets. In his youth he gave himself the aim of imitating Cicero, following the teachings of the ancients, who judged that all the best should be imitated. He declaimed with fluency, he successfully pleaded his clients' cases in the forum, he was a member of the centumviral court, he administered his proconsulship in Asia with great good sense and integrity. Under Nero he was censured with loss of reputation, for it was commonly believed that he deliberately accused certain people to the emperor, or, more accurately, the cruel tyrant. Under Vitellius he behaved prudently and in a friendly manner. He was made consul by Nero, and under the auspices of his most fortunate consulship Nero was removed from the living and the world obtained freedom. After his consulship he imitated Maro, the star of Latin poets, although he wrote his poems with greater care than talent, and he often recited them and tried out the judgements of hearers by recitations. He went on to describe the Second Punic War, in the work we have in hand, and it is diverse, felicitous and complex, so that it seems something divinely-inspired. When years urged, leaving the city and the courts, he confined himself to Campania, making good use of his leisure. He owned many villas and above all Cicero's villa at Formiae, an abundance of statues, an abundance of portraits, which he keenly revered, and above all that of Virgil, whose birthday he devotedly celebrated. He used to go to visit Virgil's grave (on the Via Puteolana, near the second mile post) as if it were Jupiter's shrine on the Capitol. He had two sons. The younger, Severus by name, he buried with incredible grief, the other he left behind in the flower of his age and an ex-consul. He suffered from ill health with an incurable tumour, and, from disgust and the pain of it, as Pliny writes in his *Epistles*, he ended his life.)

Underlying Marso's Life we can discern the skeletal order of our third life. For example, after the reference to the *maiores* from Italica, that continues

¹²⁵ PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,1,9. My punctuation and capitalization.

with “prima etate declamavit”, presumably a summary of the legal career. Similarly, but at greater length, Marso begins with the *cognomen*, repeating an argument about the Spanish origins first found in Calderini, and then continues with “prima aetate”. What follows however is an account of Silius’ oratory and advocacy, probably based on Mart. 7,63,5–6: “Sacra cothurnati non attigit ante Maronis/implevit magni quam Ciceronis opus” (He did not set his hand to buskined Maro’s rites before he had carried out great Cicero’s work). It is worth quoting from Calderini’s commentary on these lines:

Non ante proposuit sibi imitandum Maronem [...] implevit magni quam Ciceronis opus. quia fuit causidicus et declamavit. Hos sibi proposuit imitandos Maronem carmine et Ciceronem in causis et utriusque habuit praedia.

(He did not have as his purpose that he should imitate Virgil “before he had carried out great Cicero’s work”. Because he was a lawyer and made speeches. He had the purpose that he should imitate them, Virgil in poetry and Cicero in court cases and he had farms belonging to each.)

Success in the courts leads logically to the political career. Marso does not suppress Pliny’s damaging rumour of Silius having acted as a *delator* but he defuses it first by the praise given the proconsulship and then by the attack on Nero and the addition of *vulgo* (commonly). We recognise the sentence on the fortunate coincidence of the consulship as an expanded version of that in the Life in the Pomponian edition. The turn to poetry follows the end of the political career, as in Martial, and Marso finally gives it the emphasis we expect in the Life of a poet, by the introductory reference to imitating Virgil,¹²⁶ *sidus poetarum*, not suppressing Pliny’s notorious evaluation (which he is the first to cite) but countering it by introducing and praising the *Punica*, using critical terminology borrowed from ancient rhetoric and

¹²⁶ He is followed by Maffei and Crinito. Crinitus 1543, 492, introducing his citation of PLIN. *epist.* 3,7,8 (on the villas and veneration of Virgil): “quo facilius atque cumulatius percipiatur, quam eleganti ingenio fuerit, atque studioso, in proseque optimis exemplis.” After the citation he continues: “Opus composuit libris xvii. de bello Punico secundo, non vulgari, neque absurdo carmine; etsi illud maiore cura, ut traditur, quam ingenio perfecit. Praecipue Maronem imitatus est, cuius ingenium, atque felicissimam maiestatem admirabatur in describendis carminibus.” (So that it may be the more easily and copiously perceived how he showed elegance, talent and application in following the best examples [...] He composed a work in 17 books on the Second Punic War, in verse that is not common, or inappropriate, though he brought it to an end “with greater care than talent”, as we are told. He imitated Virgil above all, and he admired his talent and very happy dignity in composing poetry).

later exegesis.¹²⁷ Marso is the first of our biographers to include his own assessment of Silius as a poet.

Retirement to Campania follows the summary of the literary side of Silius' life. Here the order is different from that of the Life in the Rome 1471 edition, for that implies that the poetry was written during Campanian *otium*, but Marso's order is better, especially since according to Pliny the move was *novissime*, that is, not very long before the death, but before Trajan's advent in AD 99. Somehow Marso manages to leave out the books¹²⁸ but from the VSD *Life of Vergil* (36) he quotes the supposed location of Virgil's tomb.¹²⁹ As in the unattributed Life, children, sickness and death follow, but Marso ends on a more positive note by his closing deployment of the Plinian "usque ad extremum diem beatus et felix" (happy and fortunate to his final day). While the two Lives are similar in the ordering of the material, Marso follows Pliny's actual words far less closely and develops details of the Life by informed extrapolation.

To round out the picture of fifteenth-century Lives by stretching it a bit to 1505, Crinito's is essentially a rewriting of Marso's in an even more expansive style. It includes verbatim quotation from both Martial and Pliny. As I have already mentioned, it highlights the third consulship, and is the first since "Anonymus B" to quote the lines from Mart. 4,14 on the *Punica*. In contrast to all the previous Lives it makes no mention of the sons. From the early sixteenth century it became the dominant Life, probably by virtue of being included in the Aldine edition of 1523, and it was even in Lemaire's edition of Ruperti's commentary (1823).¹³⁰

What seems to have caught the interest of these authors is family matters (in which birth at Rome for the author of a quintessentially Roman epic seems to be important), the mode of death, the well-provided and stately retirement to Naples, and the devotion to Vergil. There is no need to stress that villas with libraries, collections of statues and busts would appeal to Renaissance emulators of antiquity. Greater or lesser attention is paid to the political career, which was not well understood. Martial is increasingly used as a source but the problem of reconciling his admiration (noticed by Calderini) with Pliny's lack of enthusiasm does not arise.¹³¹ To conclude, the

¹²⁷ CIC. *ac.* 1,17 (Plato): "uarius et multiplex et copiosus fuit" (he was diverse, complex, and eloquent); DON. *Vita Verg.* 21: "argumentum uarium et multiplex" (a diverse and complex subject); PLIN. *epist.* 4,20,2: "opus pulchrum, validum, acre, sublime, varium, elegans" (a work that is glorious, strong, energetic, sublime, diverse, elegant).

¹²⁸ As does Calderini.

¹²⁹ Brugnoli & Stok 1991, 438. See Trapp 1988.

¹³⁰ II 473–474. Bassett, Delz & Dunston 1976, 363. His *Life of Lucretius* enjoyed a similar success, Solaro 2000, 37.

¹³¹ Augoustakis 2010 (1), 3–4; Dominik 2010, 431–432.

unpublished Lives of Silius Italicus stemming from Pomponio Leto and Domizio Calderini give us insight into different phases of the construction of the Life in the milieu of the Roman Studium. The Life printed in the second Roman edition of 1471, even if not by Pomponio Leto, by default became his Life, I suggest, and it is the only Life associated with him with a clear influence on subsequent Lives in the fifteenth century.

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THE *VITAE STATII* OF NICCOLÒ PEROTTI AND POMPONIO LETO



By Marianne Pade

*This article contains an analysis and comparison of the almost contemporary lives of Statius compiled by the two Roman humanists, Niccolò Perotti and Pomponio Leto, respectively. It argues that the life by Perotti may be slightly earlier than the one by Pomponio. Exploiting for the first time Statius' *Silvae*, both lives break new ground: Perotti is primarily concerned with correcting the mistakes of the biographical details found in the medieval *accessus* to Statius' two epic poems; Pomponio, on the other hand, rewrites the poet's life completely on the basis of information gleaned from the *Silvae*.*

1. Perotti's commentary on Statius and the letter to Pirro

By the end of the 1460s, Niccolò Perotti (1430–1480) had been in the service of Cardinal Bessarion for almost two decades. Born in Sassoferrato, he had come to Rome as a young man not yet twenty years of age, and he had launched his career as a humanist with a number of successful translations from the Greek, dedicated to Pope Nicholas V. During his years in Rome, he had formed acquaintances with several prominent curial intellectuals, notably Lorenzo Valla and Giovanni Tortelli. Then, with very few exceptions, for years Perotti stopped publishing under his own name and worked almost exclusively as Bessarion's trusted secretary – and ghostwriter. However, around 1470 this period had clearly come to an end. Bessarion, and with him Perotti, had returned to Rome in 1464 after several foreign legacies. Perotti then became papal governor of Viterbo, a position that allowed him to cultivate Roman humanist circles.¹

We have evidence of this in the letter of dedication of his 1470 commentary on the *Silvae* of Statius. The commentary is not preserved in its entirety; the text breaks off at *Silv.* 1,5,33 and the last gloss is on 1,5,21–22 *arida luctu flumina*. Like several other works of Perotti, the commentary is dedicated to his beloved nephew Pirro. In the letter, Perotti first expresses

¹ For Perotti's life, see Charlet 1997. There is a bibliography of Perotti scholarship until 2011 in Charlet 2011. For Perotti's time in Viterbo, see Pontecorvi 2011, and for the commentary on the *Silvae*, see Abbamonte 1997.

some anxiety that people would fault him for returning, after 20 years, to the study of poets, since he was now both a grown up man and a bishop. He was, in fact, archbishop of Siponto. The sentence is interesting, because it presupposes that the study of poetry became only the young, and by way of explanation or excuse, Perotti emphasized that he had undertaken the work for the young Pirro, who would profit from the reading. As to the other obstacle, his being a bishop, Perotti referred to Jerome:

Nec nos deterruit, quod lascivius plerisque in locis hic poeta uideretur, quum diuum Hieronymum uirum sanctissimum non modo eum legisse, sed plerumque etiam testimonio eius usum esse uideremus (cf. Hier. *epist.* 130,19).²

(And it did not put us off that this poet in many places appears lascivious, since we know that Saint Jerome, the holy man, did not only read him, but also used him as witness.)³

Perotti would expand on this in his later commentary on Martial, the *Cornu copiae*, where he acknowledges that his work on the poet reveals his thorough familiarity with subjects of which an archbishop, such as he, ought perhaps to be ignorant!⁴

In the Statius preface, Perotti then goes on to tell that after he had finished his grammar, the extremely successful *Rudimenta grammatices*, and dedicated it to Pirro while he was still governor of Viterbo, he spent the entire winter and most of the autumn correcting and annotating Martial together with Pomponio Leto:⁵

Hinc post Rudimenta grammatices, quae tibi nuper, quum Thusciae prouintiae praeessem, dedicaui, omnem hanc hyemem et maximam partem autumnii in corrigendo atque exponendo Martiali unà cum Pomponio meo Fortunato consumpsi (Mercati 1925, 156).

² The dedication to Pirro is edited in Mercati 1925, 156–158 (here 157); I have however restored Perotti's orthography from the autograph Vat. lat. 6835. For this manuscript see below.

³ The English translations from the letter are by Johann Ramminger.

⁴ "Si opus aederet, non defuturos qui se reprehenderent, quod iam et aetate grandior et dignitate Pontifex ad studia Poetarum, a quibus ante uigesimum annum sese ad caelestem philosophiam transtulerat, nunc temere uideretur reuersus; tum multa esse apud hunc Poetam uulgi iudicio obscena quae interpretari Pontificem indecens putaretur" (if he published the work, there would surely be some who would fault him for returning to the study of poetry at his age and a then bishop. Having turned to heavenly philosophy more than twenty years previously, he seemed to have returned rashly; and there is much in this poet which is commonly regarded as obscene and which it would seem indecent for a bishop to explain), Perotti 1989–2001, I, proh. 3, in the following CC.

⁵ For the collaboration between Perotti and Leto, see Campanelli 1998, Ramminger 2001, Charlet 2006 and Pade 2007 and 2008.

Pomponio's and Perotti's collaboration on the text of the *epigrammata* took place in Rome, in the winter of 1469–70, just after Perotti had left his post as governor of Viterbo.⁶

After the two humanists had finished the daunting task of emending Martial's text and annotating it, they decided they wanted to go on working on a poet from the same period, even if completely different from Martial, but valuable and no less difficult to emend and expound:

Caeterum hoc opere non contenti, alium quoque eiusdem aetatis poetam, etsi minime huic similem, bonum tamen nec minus uel corruptum uel difficilem emendandum exponendum que suscepimus (Mercati 1925, 157).

We have here an interesting testimony of the special interest of the Roman Academy in the Latinity of the Silver Age.⁷ Perotti and Pomponio chose to work on Statius, not because his *Silvae* in any way resembled the sexually explicit epigrams of Martial, but because the two poets were more or less contemporary. Also, Perotti wanted to give Pirro the opportunity to study a different kind of text: "Solent enim uel delicatissimi cibi, si semper eosdem sumas, fastidio esse, et uiliores quoque epulae subinde mutatae delectant" (for even the most sumptuous food becomes distasteful if one always has the same, and so a more plain fare will please, Mercati 1925, 157). The implication of this must be that Perotti's commentary on Martial, which eventually became the *Cornu copiae*, was originally meant for Pirro.

Perotti enjoined on Pirro to read the *Silvae* carefully and make a note of everything; the humanist expressed the hope that his work would be useful also to his friends, the members of the so-called *Academia Bessarionea*, of whom he gives a list, and even to Bessarion himself. The members of the *Academia Bessarionea* comprised not only Pomponio, but also several of the Pomponiani who had been imprisoned together with him in Castel St Angelo, and so as Fabio Stok has shown, the list, all in all, places the *Silvae* commentary solidly in the context of Pomponio's circle.⁸

So in a way does the autograph manuscript of the commentary that is part of the present Vaticanus latinus 6835, a volume that contains a number of autograph copies of Perotti's works.⁹ At the beginning of both the letter to Pirro (ff. 54^r–55^v) and the text itself (ff. 56^r–94^v), with its surrounding commentary, space is left for a 7–8 lines tall initial – that was never filled in. Perotti also planned a coat of arms to be painted at the bottom of the

⁶ For the date of the commentary, see note 13 below.

⁷ On this see Stok 2011 (3).

⁸ Stok 2011 (1–2) and Bianca 2012. For Pomponio, see § 4 below.

⁹ See Reeve 1977, 209–210.

page where the text begins, but that did not happen either. We do not know which style Perotti would have chosen for these decorative elements, but we can still see that the rubrics, which he himself executed, are written in fairly confident epigraphic capitals, without a hint of uncials. Moreover, he used alternating purple and green ink for them and after the first text he filled up the line with an ivy leaf. All this is in a style that began to be *en vogue* in Rome in these years, especially in books connected with the Roman Academy.¹⁰

2. Statius in the Middle Ages

In qua re nec dictu facile est nec credibile auditu quos sustinuerimus labores, tum propter multarum rerum ac reconditarum uarietatem, quarum etiam uocabula uix aut nullo modo intelligi poterant, tum propter errorum multitudinem, quibus undique totus liber scatebat. Quos emendare pene supra uires hominis fuit. Superauit tamen difficultatem omnem studium et diligentia, talemque ad extremum reddidimus hunc poetam, ut, qui iam supra mille annos á nemine intellectus fuit nec in praesentem usque diem nobis exceptis intelligitur, iam ab adolescentibus quoque mediocriter eruditis possit intelligi (Mercati 1925, 156–157).

(In that endeavour it is neither easy to say nor credible when you hear what difficulties we encountered: in the first place on account of the great variety and obscurity of the content expressed in a vocabulary which could be understood only with difficulty or not at all, secondly because of the great number of corruptions which afflicted this text throughout; their emendation nearly exceeded our ability. Still, all difficulty was overcome by zeal and diligence, and in the end we accomplished that this poet – who has not been understood by anybody for over thousand years and to this day is understood only by us – can now be understood also by youngsters with moderate education.)

As this passage from the letter to Pirro shows, Perotti emphasized that the task he and Pomponio undertook was daunting – and indeed it would have been. Statius was one of the most widely read classical Latin poets during the Middle Ages when his two epics – the *Thebais* and *Achilleis* – were very influential, whereas the *Silvae* was virtually unknown.¹¹ Poggio had found a copy of the work during the Council of Constance that he sent back to Italy early in 1418, but it seems not to have circulated before 1453 when Poggio

¹⁰ Cp. on this style of manuscript, see Maddalo 1996, 83–85, Pade 2007 and Piacentini 2007.

¹¹ There is a good outline of the medieval commentary tradition to Statius' works in Berlincourt 2013, 50–58.

took up his final residence in Florence. The earliest dated descendant of Poggio's manuscript was written at Rome in 1463. Poggio's manuscript is now Matritensis 3678.¹²

Apart from what can be gleaned from the *Silvae*, practically the only source for Statius' life is a passage from Juvenal (6.82–87). For this reason Statius, in spite of his popularity during the Middle Ages, did not have a traditional *vita*, although biographical data are included in the various *accessus*. So when Perotti and Pomponio began their intense study of the *Silvae* – more or less at the same time as the *editio princeps* of the *Thebais* and *Achilleis* appeared in Rome around 1471 – they were fairly unencumbered by earlier commentaries.

3. Perotti's life

Perotti's *vita Statii* was edited by Harald Anderson, together with that of Pomponio, in the third volume of his revised edition of *The Manuscripts of Statius* from 2009.¹³ The volume treats the reception of Statius, especially with regard to *vitae* and *accessus*, and Anderson presents a great amount of valuable material that greatly facilitates the study of individual *vitae*. However, with regard to the two lives composed by Perotti and Pomponio, his treatment contains a number of mistakes that need to be corrected and jeopardize some of his conclusions. Since Anderson's book is so far the standard-treatment of the two lives, I shall here briefly touch upon these points.

Anderson maintains (p. 107) that Pomponio's *vita* and commentary are composed between the spring of 1469, when he was released from prison, and 26–27 July 1471, when Paul II died. He moreover relies on Mercati's monograph from 1925 for the date of Perotti's commentary on the *Silvae*, i.e. 1472 (p. 106), and if so later than Pomponio's work on Statius. Both *vitae* could then be composed as a reaction to the *accessus* printed with the presumed Roman *editio princeps* of Statius' two epics, for which Anderson tentatively accepts a date of 1471 (p. 84). However, as John Monfasani has shown, Perotti's commentary on Statius was compiled during the summer of 1470,¹⁴ whereas Pomponio's, as Silvia Maddalo has demonstrated, was copied between 1470 and 1471.¹⁵ Perotti's *vita* may accordingly be slightly earlier than that of Pomponio – but both may contain material from the other,

¹² On the transmission of Statius, see Reeve 1977 and 1983.

¹³ Anderson 2009, 106–111.

¹⁴ Monfasani 1986 and 2005. Reeve 1977, 210 also argues that Pomponio's Statius manuscript must be dated 1470; in his life of Statius in Vat. lat. 3279 (see below), Pomponius refers to his life of Lucan, printed in Rome in 1469, as written *superiore anno*, and he mentions that Perotti *emendat aperitque* Statius.

¹⁵ Maddalo 1991.

as the two humanists had worked together on Statius. As to their being written in reaction to the *accessus* in the *editio princeps*, we cannot decide for sure. The date of the *princeps* may be as early as 1470, but we do not know. Its *accessus* and the commentary as a whole are copied from a late fourteenth-century manuscript now in Carpentras.¹⁶

With regard to Anderson's edition of Perotti's *vita*, the first difficulty is that the text, as printed by him, may not be *one* text. The first 13 lines of his transcription (p. 109) are copied from a long gloss, written in green ink, in the margin above and to the right of Perotti's rubric to the proem of the *Silvae* (Vat. lat. 6835 f. 56^r; see Illustration 1). Below that, in the right margin opposite the beginning of the proem is a note on the dedicatee of Book One of the *Silvae*, the poet Stella, in purple ink, and then again in green ink, the last eleven lines of Anderson's transcription. At the bottom of the page, leaving space for a coat of arms, is a note in purple ink on the opening words of the proem, *diu multumque*. There are also several interlinear glosses and a number of *notabilia* in red in the left margin. Now, if we would assume that the two long glosses in green were intended, on Perotti's part, to form one continuous *accessus*, one could explain the present mise en page as a result of lack of space, or bad planning. Perotti would then have copied first Statius' text, then the purple gloss on Stella, and then begun his *accessus* at the top left corner of the page. When he discovered that there wasn't space enough, he continued it below the gloss on Stella. The problem with this theory is that there is no indication – perhaps apart from the color – that Perotti wanted us to read the two passages in green as a continuous text. All portions of the text are neatly placed on the page, which looks as if it had been carefully planned; and there are no diacritical signs inviting us to connect the two green passages. Moreover, on careful inspection of the lower green passage we see that it is in fact placed opposite the lines where Statius talks about the *subito calore*, about how he composed the work in the heat

¹⁶ *Editio princeps* of Statius, *Thebais* & *Achilleis*, with commentary. Rome: Printer of Statius, about 1470. ISTC: is00700600 and IGI 9154. The *accessus* is copied from the present Carpentras, Bibliothèque municipale, 369. Anderson 2009, 112 ff., also discusses the *accessus* in BAV, Ottob. lat. 1261. As Anderson says (p. 112), the *accessus* in the Ottobonianus rewrites the Carpentras *accessus* by adding details from the *Silvae*. However, Anderson curiously maintains (*ibid.*) that it is dated 1435 – and thus earlier than the *vitae* of Perotti and Pomponio that according to Anderson are the first to make use of the information found in the *Silvae*. This chronological problem is resolved by an examination of the Ottobonianus, which is a composite manuscript: the codicological entity dated 1435 (ff. 23–43) contains the *Polistoria* and *De virtutibus Romanorum* by Johannes Caballinus, written in a cursive bastarda, whereas the two quaternions (ff. 7–22) containing the *vita Statii* and the beginning of a commentary on the *Achilleis* are written in an elegant, late fifteenth-century humanist cursive hand.

of the moment – and Perotti’s text is simply a gloss on that. So we need to examine the two texts separately.

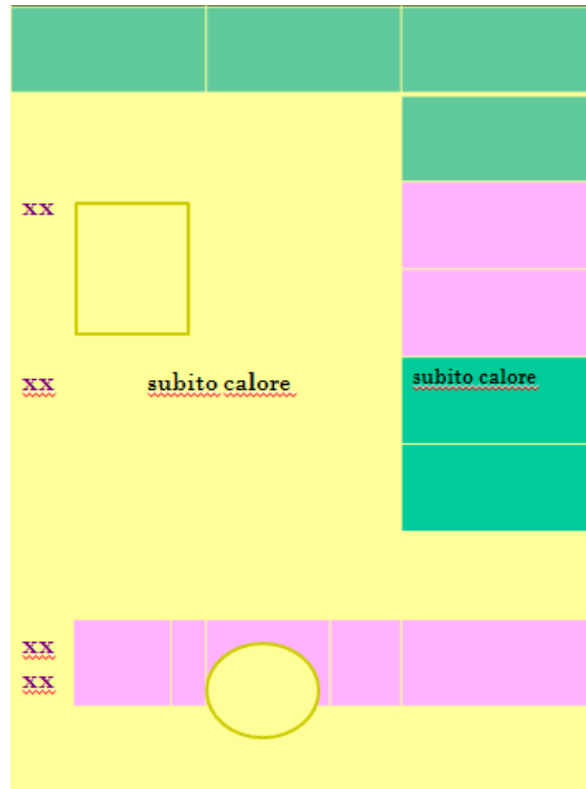


Illustration 1: Layout of Vat. lat. 6835 f. 56r.

Anderson (p. 106) rightly says that the first *accessus* that realized the scholarly importance of the *Silvae* poems sought to incorporate the poems into old and respected traditions. The best example of this is Perotti’s *accessus* – which according to Anderson mimics the style and language of the so-called *Quaeritur accessus* that Anderson dates to the ninth century (pp. 1–2). Perotti’s only contribution was the correction of Statius’ nationality and the discussion of the genre *silvae* at the end of the *accessus* – which as we have seen is not really part of the *accessus*, but a separate gloss.

If we look more carefully at the two texts, I think it will become evident that although Perotti did base his life on the *Quaeritur accessus* (= *Qa*), his interventions are more thorough than what Anderson gives him credit for.

Perotti does indeed correct Statius’ nationality, and not only in the *accessus*. In his rubric to the proem, written in purple epigraphic capitals that spring to the eye, Perotti states that Statius is from Naples: “P. Papinii Statii neapolitani poetae Silvarum liber primus incipit foeliciter” (Vat. lat. 6835, f.

56^v). This is a piece of information found only in the *Silvae*; earlier *accessus* had claimed that Statius was *Tholossensis*, i.e. that he came from Toulouse.¹⁷

Perotti: ¹P. Papinius Statius poeta Neapolitanus fuit, ut ipse diuersis in locis testatur.

(the small letters before the quotations refer to their place within the two lives)

Qa: ⁷Dictus est autem proprio nomine Statius, Papinius autem cognomine, Surculus autem agnomine quasi sursum canens

Perotti's *Vita* thus opens with the statement that *Publius Papinius poeta* was a Neapolitan poet, as he himself tells in several passages. Anderson, as already mentioned, said that this correction was about Perotti's only independent contribution. However, on closer inspection Perotti does more than correct the nationality. At the end of the *Queritur accessus* we read that the poet "was called Statius by name, that his *cognomen* was Papinius and his *agnomen* Surculus, 'singing upwards', as it were". This explanation of Statius' name is found in most earlier *vitae*, together with the etymology of Surculus, but Perotti transmits the correct form of the poet's name. I shall return to this further on.

Perotti: ²Claruit tempore Domitiani imperatoris, quanquan Vespasiani temporibus Thebaida incepisset

incoep- *a.c.*

Qa: ¹Queritur quo tempore fuerit iste Statius, sed constat ueraciter fuisse eum temporibus Vespasiani imperatoris et peruenisse usque ad imperium Domitiani fratris Titi, qui etiam et Titus iunior dictus est

Perotti's next sentence to some degree echoes the opening of the *Queritur accessus*, but it would be wrong to say it mimics its language, as Anderson maintained – quite the contrary, I would say. Perotti briefly states that Statius had achieved fame at the time of Domitian, although he began to write the *Thebais* under Vespasian. The medieval *accessus* is much longer. It has the formulaic language common to many *accessus*, *queritur* etc. (it is asked), and much unclassical phrasing, like the clumsy *constat ueraciter* (it is truly certain). Perotti left out that Domitian is the brother of Titus – perhaps it was banal – but instead he adds that Statius began the *Thebais* under Vespasianus' reign. The *Queritur accessus* mentions that too, but almost at the end of the text, and with a phrasing that no fifteenth-century humanist would be caught dead using: "Scripsit autem Thebaiden supra ta-

¹⁷ E.g. "Si quis autem unde fuerit querat, inuenitur fuisse Tholosensis", *Queritur accessus* l. 4, ed. Anderson 2009, 6. All quotations from this text are from Anderson.

xati imperatoris tempore” (However, he wrote the *Thebais* in the time of the afore-mentioned emperor). Perotti gives *Thebaiden* a correct Greek accusative, *Thebaida*, and he would of course never use the verb *taxo* with the meaning ‘to mention’ that it acquired during the Middle Ages. In the *Cornu copiae* Perotti explains the meaning of *taxo* as *aestimo*, *apprætio*, that is to estimate (CC 33,3).

Perotti: ³Nobili ortus est prosapia et magno in honore habitus.

Qa: ⁴Fuit autem nobili ortus prosapia, clarus ingenio et doctus eloquio.

in *om. Anderson*

Perotti’s information about Statius’ family, that he was *nobili ortus prosapia* (of noble family), is clearly derived from the medieval *accessus*, and a case in which Perotti is may be wrong to retain it, because Statius’ father was not a nobleman. We know that Statius was crowned by Domitian, which might be what Perotti refers to with *magno honore habitus* (held in great honour). The reason why he omits the *clarus ingenio et doctus eloquio* (famous for his intellect and a trained orator) from the medieval *accessus* may be that this is a description of a teacher of rhetoric with whom Statius the poet was confused for centuries – I shall return to that further on.

Both texts next quote the lines from Juvenal which are the only external source for his life – and repeated in most medieval *accessus* to Statius’ two epics.

Perotti: ⁵Huius satyrus noster ita meminit: Curritur ad uocem iocundam et carmen amicae Thebaidos, lætam quæ fecit Statius urbem: Promisitque diem. Tanta dulcedine captos Afficit ille animos tantaque libidine uulgi Auditur. sed cum fregit subsellia uersu Exurit, intactam Paridi nisi uendat Agauen (Iuu. *Sat.* 7.82–86).

Quum *Anderson*

The next passage in Perotti’s *vita* concerns earlier, erroneous identifications of Statius’ birthplace. According to Anderson, the correction of these mistakes was Perotti’s only independent contribution in his life of the poet.

Perotti: ⁶Quidam ignari eum Tholossensem dixerunt fuisse, ducti in errorem similitudine nominis alterius Statii Ursuli oratoris qui Tholossensis fuit et Neronis tempore rhetoricam in Gallia celeberrime docuit.

Qa: ²Si quis autem unde fuerit querat, inuenitur fuisse Tholosensis, quæ ciuitas est Galliæ.

³Ideoque in Gallia celeberrime docuit rethoricam, sed postea ueniens Romam ad poetriam se transtulit.

rheticum *Anderson*

The *Queritur accessus* first explained when Statius had lived and then it goes on to his birthplace, again using the formulaic language of questions: “If anyone asks where Statius was born, he will find out that he was from Toulouse, a city in Gaul. Therefore he achieved fame as a teacher of rhetoric in Gaul, but afterwards he came to Rome and changed to poetry” – *ad poetriam se transtulit* is the most unclassical wording. Perotti ends his *vita* by correcting this: “Ignorant people have asserted that Statius is *Tholossensis*, from Toulouse, misled by the similarity of his name to that of another Statius, namely Statius Ursulus. The latter was an orator from Toulouse who was a famous teacher of rhetoric in Gaul under Nero’s reign”. This last piece of information is derived from St Jerome’s chronicle and a L. Statius Ursulus is also mentioned by Suetonius in his work on grammarians and orators.¹⁸ It was the confusion of the two *Statii* that at some time during the Middle Ages lead to the poet’s being saddled with the *agnomen* Surculus, as we saw, a name that is clearly a corruption of Ursulus. Perotti was of course aware of the importance of having sorted this out, and one of the marginalia in the Vat. lat. 6835 draws attention to this passage in the *vita*, saying *Duo Statii* (indicated by “xx” on Illustration 1 above).

Perotti was proud of his work on Statius. In the *Cornu copiae* he recalls how he had cleared away mistakes regarding Stella, the dedicatee of Book 1 of the *Silvae*, and how he had been the first to get Statius’ nationality right. Before him, everybody had though he came from Toulouse!¹⁹

4. Pomponio’s life

Let us now turn to Pomponio’s *vita Statii*.²⁰ As mentioned above, it is probably slightly later than Perotti’s.²¹ It is written in the form of a letter to Gaspare Biondo, from 1466 head of the Registry of the Apostolic Chamber, member of the Roman ‘Academy’; Pomponio’s c. 1470 edition of Nonius Marcellus opens with a letter to him.²² Gaspare was the son of the more famous Flavio Biondo, whom Leto refers to in the letter, and whose *Roma Instaurata* (Rome before 22.6.1471) and *Italia Illustrata* (Rome 1474) he edited. Anderson tentatively identifies Gaspare as the editor of the *editio*

¹⁸ “L. Statius Ursulus Tolosensis celeberrime in Gallia rhetoricam docet,” Hier. *a.* 2073.

¹⁹ “Quem errorem nos primi sustulimus in commentariis in Papinii siluas a nobis editis, in quibus et Papinium ipsum Neapolitanum fuisse declarauimus, qum antea ab omnibus Tolossanus existimaretur,” CC 90,3.

²⁰ The latest general treatment of Pomponio’s life and work is Accame 2008.

²¹ Maddalo 1991, 48 draws attention to a marginal note in Vat. lat. 3279, f. 191^r that mentions Paul II as *clemens* (mild). She argues that the adjective may allude to the fact the Paul had reinstalled Pomponio at his post of the *Studio* after his release from prison in 1470. Paul II died in 1471. See also Ruyschaert 1968, 75.

²² Text in Laetus 2005.

princeps of Statius' *Thebais* and *Achilleis* which is by the same printer as the edition of the *Roma Instaurata*.²³ However that may be, it is not mentioned by Pomponio in the passage of the opening of the letter containing his *vita Statii* where he may allude to the *accessus* printed in the *princeps*.²⁴

The letter is copied before Pomponio's commentary on the *Thebais* in Vat. lat. 3279, ff. 1^r–2^v,²⁵ one of the manuscripts he wrote for the young nobleman Fabio Mazzatosta who was among his favourite pupils.

Nuper de Papinii vita sermo fuit quae ignota est ut aliorum fere poetarum. Scripsere ueteres sed neglegentia quadam talia posterius contempserunt. Nec mirum, nam illustria Romanorum monumenta pene extincta sunt et nisi Graeca lingua opem tulisset de tam magna re publica atque imperio maior pars desideraretur. Necesse ergo est hinc inde colligere, ut faciunt agricolae in inculto campo, plerumque tamen si quae bone herbe sunt sub insalubribus, ita latent, ut inueniri nequeant (Pomponius, *vita Statii* Vat. lat. 3279, f. 1^r = PvS).²⁶

(Recently there has been talk about Statius' life, unknown as that of most other poets. The ancients wrote about it, but later generations carelessly did not treasure what they wrote. One should not wonder at that, since the glorious records concerning the Romans were almost lost, and if there had not been assistance from Greek works, most facts regarding a state and empire of such magnificence would be missing. So one has to collect material here and there, as farmers in an untended field, even though good herbs may be irretrievably hidden under unwholesome ones.)

Pomponio thus begins the *vita* by stating that he sets out to correct mistakes made by earlier writers, which, Anderson suggests, could be an allusion to the *vita* in the *editio princeps* that was based on the so-called *Carpentras accessus*. Anderson's argument for this is that the details discussed by Pomponio are identical with the issues found in the *princeps* (p. 107). It may be the case that Pomponio wrote in reaction to the *princeps*, but I find the negative relation between his *vita* and that of the *princeps* difficult to prove. Nor

²³ Anderson 2009, 106.

²⁴ On Gaspare see Fanelli 1968 and Bianca 2011, 51.

²⁵ Vat. lat. 3875, again written by Pomponio for Fabio Mazzatosta, contains *Silvae* and *Achilleis*. There is a thorough description of the two manuscripts in Maddalo 1991, 58–61 n. 51. Pomponio's interest in Statius' work is also evidenced by the exemplar of Vat. lat. 3875, now Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, Ms. C 95, copied by Pomponio sometime during the 1460s. The date of the manuscript is based on Pomponio's hand which does not yet show the characteristics of the period after 1470, as for instance the uncial 'g'; Piacentini 2007, 88–91; see also Reeve 1977, 207.

²⁶ See my edition of the complete *vita*, with *apparatus criticus* and *apparatus fontium*: Laetus 2014.

am I convinced that Pomponio “associates himself with the Greek tradition as opposed to the *posterī* who have allowed Rome to perish” (Anderson 2009, 106). I believe that he simply refers to what had become almost a topos at the time, namely that the return of Greek studies to Italy earlier in the century had brought about a cultural reawakening.²⁷ The material he collected for the compilation of the life did not come from a large number of sources. Most of what he writes that is new, compared to earlier *vitae*, comes from the *Silvae* that he had studied with Perotti.

P. Papinius Statius pater Greca et Romana lingua eruditus ad nouissimum usque diem professus est. summo honore apud Domitianum habitus. [...] adeoque claruit, ut quod Homero, ei contigit; due enim urbes, Selle Epyrotarum et Neapolis Campanorum de natali solo certabant (PvS).

Pomponio first discusses the poet’s father, Publius Papinius Statius pater, a learned grammarian who taught until he died and was held in the greatest esteem by Domitian. Indeed, two cities claimed to have been his native city, Selle (modern editions *Hyele*) and Naples. All this is found in *Silv.* 5,3 which is an *epicedion*, a funeral poem for the Elder Statius.²⁸ It can, however, hardly be a correction of the information found in the *princeps*, in so far as the *accessus* there does not mention Statius’ father at all. As already mentioned, the part of the *princeps*’ *accessus* that talks about the poet’s life is derived from the *Queritur accessus*.

Pomponius next mentions the poet’s mother, Agelina, who was the only wife of his father who outlived her: “Ex Agelina uxore, quam unicam habuit, et cuius superstes fuit, P. Papinium Statium suscepit”. This is perhaps the only place where Pomponio shows an indebtedness to the medieval tradition. Statius mentions his mother as the only wife of his father in the *epicedion* (5,3,240–241) but he does not mention her name. This Pomponio must have found in one of the medieval lives. Again the *accessus* of the *princeps* does not mention any of this, nor does it mention how Statius’ father supported the studies of their son and how he died of a sleep that could not be interrupted:

P. Papinium Statium suscepit, cuius pueritiam ac iuuentutem litteris fouit, copia uarietateque rerum refert, et omne eius studium, quoad

²⁷ For this, see Pade 2014, 11–12.

²⁸ The inclusion of so much material about the Elder Statius made Gerardus Iohannes Vossius say that Pomponio had actually written lives both of the father and of the son and dedicated both to Gaspare Biondo. The two lives were later used by Giraldis who had corrected some errors: “Etiam ad Gasparem, Blondi filium, vitam scripsit Statii poetæ, uti & patris eius. Utramque Gyraldus Historiæ suæ de poetis inserit; sed ita ut, ubi erret, eum emendet,” Vossius 1627, III, 555.

vixit, iuuit operaque castigauit. Senex uicio inexpergibilis somni periit.

All this Pomponio extracted from the *epicedion* (5,3,210–214, 233–237 and 260–261).

Papinius filius, iuuenis admodum, Claudiam Claudii Apollinaris filiam impatiens amoris uxorem duxit, cui tanta modestia atque castitas et amoris obseruantia fuit ut matrimonialem fidem absentia mariti XX annis non fraudarit. Vergens ad senium eam Neapolim comunem patriam reuocauit (PvS).

Pomponio next turns to the poet himself. The younger Statius, the poet, married Claudia, the daughter of Claudius Apollinaris, as young man, for love. This virtuous women bore a 20 years absence of her husband without breaking her marriage vows; when old age approached, Statius called her back to Naples, their common fatherland. Most of this is found in the third book of the *Silvae* (5,6–10), in the preface (3. Proem.) and in the fifth poem which is dedicated by Statius to his wife (3,5,6–8 *et passim*) – but I haven’t found out where Pomponius got the information about Claudia’s father. A Claudius Apollinaris is mentioned by Tacitus, he was a fickle admiral under Vespasian (*hist.* 3,57,1).

Albe, Domitianus Cesar, eadem qua patrem qui præsens erat, filium corona munivit, et auro insigniuit. Qua ex re non ingratus, poeta Thebaisa et Achillem dignissimo Cesaris numini consecrauit (PvS).

It was again in the *epicedion* to the Elder Statius that Pomponio found the information that the poet was crowned by Domitian in Alba, in the presence of his father who had received the same honour (5,3,227–229). Grateful for the honour, Pomponio goes on, Statius dedicated the *Thebais* and *Achilleis* to Domitian. This last piece of information is curious. Statius himself certainly says nothing of the kind, and I have not seen it in any of the older *accessus*. However, we find it repeated in the rubric of book 1 in the Mazzatosta *Thebais* that says “P. Papinii Statii Thebais Domitiano Augusto”. The manuscript is, as I mentioned written by Pomponio, but the multicolored rubrics are by Bartolomeo Sanvito, and the decoration by Gioachino de’Gigantibus.

Pomponio then mentions Statius’ three main works, the *Thebais*, the *Achilleis* and the *Silvae* – where, as he says, one reads about the poet’s friends and his life. In connection with the last, he mentions Perotti’s work on the text:

Hos ex omni parte corruptos multa uigilia et laudabili industria Nicolaus Perotta Pontifex Sipontinus, in quo ut mea fert opinio tantum a-

cuminis atque doctrine ad interpretandum est, quantum ueteres habuerunt, emendat aperitque.

(Corrupt in every passage, these books are being emended and annotated by Niccolò Perotti, bishop of Siponto, with endless and laudable industry. In my opinion he shows such acumen and learning in his commentaries that he equals the ancients.)

High praise indeed!²⁹

At the end Pomponio sums up: “Habes non de filio tantum sed et de patre que legi; perquire tu, forte aliquid amplius adicies, nam elucubratio duorum maior est quam unius” (Here you have what I read not just about the son but also about the father. Try to add anything, if you can, for two see more than one). Since this comes immediately after his mentioning of the *Silvae* and of Perotti’s work on the poems where one could read about the poet’s life and friends, I think Pomponio is actually telling us that his life of Statius is based on information gathered during his reading of the *Silvae* – a conclusion we also reached. The Greek sources Pomponio mentioned at the beginning do not seem relevant in this context.

5. Conclusion

The two lives by Perotti and Pomponio respectively were composed at almost the same time, and it is not inconceivable they discussed what they were doing. But they evidently had very different goals. Perotti took one of the medieval standard-lives which recurs in innumerable contexts and corrected the errors there, based on insights gained from his reading of the *Silvae* and from other authors, notably St Jerome. He also carefully rephrased the medieval *vita* into humanist Latin.

Pomponio, on the other hand, does something new. Perhaps he knew that his friend had cleared the ground, correcting the errors about Statius that had been repeated for centuries, and so he saw no need to argue in detail with earlier lives. Instead he profited from the wealth of biographical information he found in the *Silvae*. He extracted the bare facts of Statius’ and his father’s lives from the poets rather florid narrative, and presented a coherent picture that was used repeatedly by later writers.

²⁹ On this passage see Fera 2002, 75 and Stok 2011 (3), 162.

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PEROTTI'S *LIFE OF MARTIAL* AND ITS LITERARY CONTEXT



By Johann Ramminger

In his Life of Martial Perotti applies a structure of biography formulated by Servius and often used in medieval accessus with the following elements: the poet's life, title of the work, its characteristics, intention, structure, and explanation. Within this framework Perotti discusses two problems of Martial's epigrams: the crass obscenity to which the reader was exposed, and the unrestrained flattery of Domitian, that might show Martial's character in an unfavourable light. According to Perotti, however, it is the intention of the author to influence the depraved tyrant for the better by showing him an ideal version of himself. The disturbing language - an inappropriate object of study for a bishop such as Perotti himself - is part of the characteristics of the poems which express a wide range of contents in a fitting - at times lofty, at times obscene - idiom. Thus the reader, even if a prince, was to be subtly educated and lead onto a path of virtue.

All this winter and the greatest part of fall I have spent together with my fortunate Pomponius correcting and explaining Martial. In that endeavour it is neither easy to say nor credible when you hear what difficulties we encountered: in the first place on account of the great variety and obscurity of the content expressed in a vocabulary which could be understood only with difficulty or not at all, secondly because of the great number of corruptions which afflicted this text throughout; their emendation nearly exceeded our ability. Still, all difficulty was overcome by zeal and diligence, and in the end we accomplished that this poet – who has not been understood by anybody for over thousand years and to this day is understood only by us – can now be understood also by youngsters with moderate education.

And it did not put us off that this poet in many places appears lascivious, since we know that Saint Jerome, the holy man, did not only read him, but also used him as witness. Nor did we think the licentiousness of his jokes to be important enough to deter anybody from reading this excellent poet: no one – if my opinion is worth anything – in either language is his equal as regards invention, splendour, elegance, precision or range of expression. Not to mention that if he writes lasciviously, it is for the purpose of censure; this he says openly when he de-

clares: "This is the way our booklets know to follow: spare the persons, speak out about the vices".

This passage from the preface of Perotti's commentary to Statius's *Silvae* records a collaboration between Pomponio Leto and Perotti which took place in the fall and winter of 1469–1470;¹ one of the results is a text of Martial written by Pomponio Leto for his pupil, Fabio Mazzatosta, with an extensive commentary in both Leto's and Perotti's hand (now BL King's 32). That Perotti felt that they had encountered nearly unsurmountable difficulties, is not just a rhetorical exaggeration; since knowledge of the complete text of Martial at that point was a relatively recent phenomenon, there was as yet no interpretive tradition.

Biographies of Martial before Perotti

The Middle Ages had known Martial's epigrams only through florilegia;² in these the obscenity which troubled Perotti was greatly reduced, since the most offensive words had been replaced by a blander vocabulary.³ In addition, as only a limited number of epigrams were known, a comprehensive examination of the oeuvre was not possible; this in turn hindered the production of paratextual material such as an *accessus*. Understanding the characteristics of Martial's poetry was further hampered by the fact that he was not differentiated from his imitator, Godfrey of Winchester⁴ (ca. 1050–1107; both were indiscriminately referred to as *Martialis coquus*⁵). Not even the barest facts about his life and works had been established by the time Giulielmo Pastrengo (ca. 1290–1362), a correspondent of Petrarch, wrote about Martial in his *De viris illustribus*:

Martialis Cocus opus morale metro composuit, cui nomen suum imposuit. Item alium quem Epigrammaton dixit.⁶

(Martial the cook composed a moral work in verse, to which he gave his own name. Also another one which he called *Epigrammaton*.)

What Pastrengo may have meant with the metrical *opus morale* I have not been able to ascertain; Godfrey of Winchester's poetry circulated under *De*

¹ Monfasani 1986, n. 8 and Monfasani 1988 n. 36. The preface is transmitted in Perotti's autograph ms, Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 6835, fol. 54r–55v, the quotation is on fol. 54v–55r. For the Latin text, see Pade 2014 and 2015 (1).

² Hunger 1975, 410–412; Reeve 1983.

³ See Lindsay 1929, preface, n. pag., concerning the archetype of the class aA.

⁴ For Godfrey's life see Rigg 2004.

⁵ See Schneidewin 1840 and Hausmann 1980, 250.

⁶ Guglielmo da Pastrengo 1991, 152.

moribus et vita instituenda and similar titles,⁷ and it may be that this is Pastrengo's *opus morale*. The very supposition that Pastrengo's 'Martial the cook' may actually not be Godfrey, but the poet from antiquity (or an amalgam of both), rests on the fact that he appears in a series of other writers from antiquity; the neighbours in the alphabetical list are Macrobius, Martianus Capella, and Messala Corvinus.

The situation improves once complete manuscripts of Martial's poetry with a better text begin to circulate (already among the early Paduan humanists);⁸ the progress, even if modest, is quite clear in the *vita* contained in Sicco Polenton's *De scriptoribus illustribus* of 1437:

Versu item ludit Valerius Martialis, cognomine Coquus etiam appellatus. Marsum patria se fatetur iste ac vixisse sub Traiano dicit. Poema vero suum epigrammaton inscribit. Libri sunt XII epistolis iocosis eisdemque brevibus ad diversos pleni. Sequuntur eas disticon, hoc est versus bini multi. Xeniorum est id opus inscriptum.⁹

(Another writer of verse is Valerius Martialis, also known under the byname 'cook'. He asserts that he comes from the Abbruzzi and says that he lived under Trajan. His poetry he called *epigrammaton*.¹⁰ These are twelve books containing letters to various people both witty and short. They are followed by *disticon*, that is a great number of double verses. This work has the title *xenia*.)

Polenton's *vita* is a mixture of incorrect biographical information such as the Abbruzzese origin of the poet and his surname 'cook', and of a vastly improved knowledge of his oeuvre, even if it is still somewhat vague.

The designation of Martial as 'Martialis coquus' shows Polenton's reliance on medieval sources. Resulting from a misunderstanding of a verse of the epigrams, the byname was slow to fade away; the last one to use it, was – as far as I have been able to ascertain – Biondo Flavio in the *Italia Illustrata* in the middle of the fifteenth century (1454; *Italia ill.* 2.21 quoting *Martial* 13.54.1).¹¹

⁷ Manitius 1931, III, 769–771. The *incipits* in the app. crit. of Godefrid von Winchester 1974 give the title (if at all) as *Liber proverbiorum*; none of the mss. seems to have a significant *explicit*. The authorship attribution switches between Godefridus, Martial, Horace, and no author (*ibid.* p.7).

⁸ Witt 2012, 460.

⁹ Polenton script. ill. 2; see Polentonus 1928, 71.

¹⁰ I leave the greek genitives *epigrammaton* and *disticon*, as it is not clear from the sentence structure how Polenton understood them.

¹¹ This is leaving aside isolated later instances such as in Theodorus Marcilius's commentary on the *Liber spectaculorum* of 1601 (see Hausmann 1980, 281); note that the first edition of 1584 does not contain the passages quoted by Hausmann; equally Jacob Balde in his *Satyrice* (Balde 1660, III p.21): "Sub Domitiano Martialis Coquus ollarem

Perotti and his contemporaries

By the 1450s Perotti was already annotating a ms of Martial that he had copied in his youth (now BAV Vat. lat. 6848) and some years later he distinguished himself as the only one to quote Martial in the controversy between Bessarion and George of Trapezunt at the end of the 1460s.¹² The 1470s saw an explosion of philological interest in the poets of the Silver Age of Latin poetry in general and Martial specifically which brought forth three influential biographies: The first was the *Life* written by Giorgio Merula and printed in his edition of Martial published by Vindelinius de Spira in Venice between 1471 and 1473, the second one was by Domizio Calderini, professor at the *Studium Urbis*, who published his *Vita Martialis* with his commentary in 1474, the third was Niccolò Perotti's *Brevis commemoratio vitae M. Valerii Martialis*, written towards the end of the decennium. Perotti's *Life of Martial* is the second introductory text in the *Cornu copiae*, after the dedication letter of the work to Federico di Montefeltro, and before the main text, the explanation of Martial's verse.

It should be noted that Pomponio Leto himself, despite his interest in Martial, did not produce a *vita* (neither BAV Ottob. lat. 1188,¹³ whose glosses are to a large part written by Leto, nor BL King's 32, the ms which is a result of Perotti's and Leto's cooperation on the text of Martial contain a *vita*).

For the sources of the *Life*, Perotti did not do much original research, but mined Calderini's piece, which contained more than enough information on Martial's life, the editorial history of the epigrams, and the literary history of the genre.¹⁴ The only source Perotti did add is the letter by Pliny the Younger about the death of Martial, curiously enough only vaguely known to Calderini. The title of the *Life*, "brevis commemoratio" (short presentation), already signifies a selective approach, and Perotti ignored or at least greatly reduced information about those parts of the epigrams which were not contained in the *Cornu copiae* (e. g. Calderini's detailed explanation of the editorial chronology of the later books). Otherwise the selection criteria are not immediately obvious.

There was a framework for the interpretation of poetry from antiquity which – after being used in early medieval accessus – gained renewed

Poesin intendit" (Under Domitian the cook Martial cultivated pot-poetry), clearly with jocular intent.

¹² Refutatio Georgii Trapezuntii (Mohler 1942, 355), Mart. 1, 45 "Edita, ne brevibus pereat mihi cura libellis, / dicatur potius τὸν δ' ἀπομειβόμενος".

¹³ See Pade 2011 (2) and forthcoming. I would like to thank Marianne Pade for an advance copy of the publication.

¹⁴ The verbal parallels are registered in my edition of the *Life*, Ramminger 2014.

popularity in humanistic commentaries.¹⁵ It goes back to the commentary on Virgil's *Aeneid* by the fourth century grammarian Servius who at the beginning of his work also provided its most succinct formulation:

In exponendis auctoribus haec considerata sunt: poetae vita, titulus operis, qualitas carminis, scribentis intentio, numerus librorum, ordo librorum, explanatio. (Serv. in *Aen.* 1 pr. 1)

(In explaining an author the following have to be included: the life of the poet, the title of the work, the character of the poetry, the intention of the author, the number of the parts, the arrangement of the parts, the explanation.)

There can be no doubt that Perotti knew and used the interpretive method of Servius, as the Servian terminology appears numerous times in the *Cornu copiae*.¹⁶ Perotti may have known it from secondary sources as well as from Servius directly.¹⁷

In the *Life* itself, Perotti never once uses the Servian terminology. This was a conscious decision, probably to avoid any semblance to a medieval *accessus*: at one point we will see that an analysis formulated within the *Cornu copiae* in Servian terms is repurposed in a generic garb in the *Life* (which is chronologically later than the main commentary of the *Cornu copiae*). Nevertheless, the Servian parameters help to explain the selection of the content (with the presence of some peripheral information while more weighty material from Calderini has been left out). The structure of the *Life* is somewhat opaque; sometimes items which thematically belong together are spread out over different parts of the biography. Still, the sequence of the topics loosely follows Servius, and the Servian terminology will in the

¹⁵ Minnis & Scott 1988, 12–15; examples of the Servian type of *accessus* in humanistic commentaries are given *ibid.*, p. 14 n. 10.

¹⁶ Perotti *Cornu copiae* 45, 1 vol. VI p. 253 (parallels to Servius are in italics) “Hanc enim diximus a principio esse *authoris intentionem*: hortari ad uirtutem et saeculi sui uitia notare.” *Cornu copiae* epist. (ante 29) 63 vol. VI p. 159 “Item *titulus libri* dicitur, qui uel *qualitatem operis* uel *nomen auctoris* uel *numerus librorum* ostendit”. *Cornu copiae* 30, 1 vol. VI p. 166 “Hoc epigramma pro indice libri hoc est *pro titulo* ponitur. Indicat enim *auctoris nomen et qualitatem operis*”. Perotti is also aware of another framework for the medieval *accessus*, the rhetorical *circumstantiae* (see Minnis & Scott 1988, 13 and n.6): “Locus [...]. Ponitur que a dialecticis inter accidentia substantiae, et est una de septem circumstantiis quae ita numerantur: persona, qualitas, negocium, facultas, causa, modus, tempus, quae hoc uersu clauduntur: ‘Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando’” (*Cornu copiae* 2, 776 vol. II p. 291). All citations from the *Cornu copiae* are from Perotti 1989–2001.

¹⁷ Perotti had a thorough knowledge of Servius; in the apparatus fontium of Perotti 1989–2001 (see the *Index auctorum* in vol. VIII p. 379–383) Servius’ commentary to the *Aeneid* is named approx. 850 times, a further 420 instances are from the commentaries to the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*.

following be used as a framework for the analysis of Perotti's *Life of Martial*.

poetae vita – the life of the poet

The life of Martial is split into three passages:

M. Valerius Martialis in Hispania Bilbili nobili Celtiberiae oppido natus est, patre Frontone, matre Flacilla; uenit ad urbem Romam studiorum gratia, tenui que supellectile contentus, in litteris duntaxat uersatus est.

Floruit temporibus Domitiani, Neruae et Traiani [...]

Amicos habuit Plynium Secundum oratorem, Stellam que et Syllium poetas, ad quos saepe numero scribit. Publicis quoque honoribus functus est: donatus equestri dignitate, praetura et iure trium liberorum. Ingrauescente demum aetate, tedio que urbanarum rerum affectus, in Hispaniam rediit. Obiit in natali solo inter suos, magno doctorum omnium maerore, praesertim Plynii, cuius epistola extat in qua audisse scribit Martialem decessisse, idque moleste ferre, quia “uir erat ingeniosus, acutus et qui plurimum in scribendo salis haberet et fellis nec candoris minus”.

The biographical information is taken over from Calderini in a condensed form, but otherwise with very little variation. Unavoidably, here as elsewhere, some points get lost in the transfer. Thus Calderini had made the point that Martial's origins were low, with parents who were barely known, and he seems to insinuate that their Roman names were just ad-hoc creations by their son:¹⁸ “Parentes Romana appellatione Frontonem et Flacillam nominat, obscuros quidem ac filii tantum testimonio uix cognitos” (For his parents he gives the Roman names Fronto and Flacilla; they are of no distinction, and only known at all because their son mentions them). Only the parents' names remain in Perotti: “patre Frontone, matre Flacilla.”

The ultimate source of nearly all information about Martial's life are his epigrams. The only outside testimony used by the humanists is a letter by Pliny the Younger that describes their encounter before the poet returned to Spain (*epist.* 3. 21). Since the letter was written by a distinguished witness, it was often printed in its entirety in editions of Martial (in Merula as well as

¹⁸ Here and in the following I quote Calderini's *Vita* from the edition Venetiis: Iohannes de Colonia & Iohannes Manthen, 1474, sig. (a_v) v– (a_{vi}) r. I consulted the copy of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, where the signature a is used twice; the *Epistula ad Laurentium Medicen* (sig. a3r–a5r) and the *Vita Martialis* (sig. a5v–a6r) are in the first one. I have standardized capitals and punctuation. For the *vita* I have also compared the dedication copy for Lorenzo de' Medici, Firenze, BML plut. 53.33, fol. 4v–6v. There are only minor variants.

in later editions of Calderini). It describes their contact in Roman sociocultural terms as a transaction between client and patron: the client, Martial, offers a poem that praises the patron; the latter, Pliny, accepts it at surface value and remunerates the client accordingly. So far there is nothing unusual. What should, however, have made the letter toxic to humanist readers of Martial, is the fact that the patron in private was rather dismissive of the worth of the gift and did not hesitate to disparage it:

he gave me the most he could, and he would have given me more, if it had been in his power [...] his poems probably won't last, but he wrote them as if they would. (Plin. *epist.* 3. 21. 6)

Regarding this unwelcome piece of information our humanists found their own solution: they simply ignored it. Calderini, in any case, seems to have been unaware of the contents of the letter and only refers to it in circumstantial terms:

In Hispania obiit non sine Plinii etiam moerore; qui epistola quadam sua<m> cum poeta familiaritatem testatus eum et deflet et laudat summopere.

(He died in Spain and was mourned also by Pliny, who in a letter confirms his acquaintance with the poet, grieving for him and praising him highly.)

Perotti enlarges Pliny's role in Martial's life considerably:

Amicos habuit Plinium Secundum oratorem, Stellam que et Syllium poetas, ad quos saepe numero scribit. [...] Obiit in natali solo inter suos, magno doctorum omnium maerore, praesertim Plinii, cuius epistola extat in qua audisse scribit Martialem decessisse, idque moleste ferre, quia "uir erat ingeniosus, acutus et qui plurimum in scribendo salis haberet et fellis nec candoris minus".

(Amongst his friends was the orator Pliny the Younger, and the poets Stella and Silius, to whom he writes often. [...] He died in his native country amongst his own, deeply lamented by all who were learned, especially by Pliny; from him we have a letter where he writes that he was sad to hear about Martial's death, "because he was a man of a sharp and lively disposition, and his writings abound in both wit and bile, combined with equal lustre".)¹⁹

Perotti completely ignores the patron-client relationship between Pliny and Martial, even though it figures prominently in the letter; rather, Pliny

¹⁹ Tr. Melmoth 1931, I, p.267, with adaptations.

morphs into a learned friend.²⁰ He is one of the *docti* who mourn Martial's death. *Doctus* is a code-word for membership in the elite of the learned, which humanists liked to apply to themselves;²¹ and with it, Perotti puts the emphasis not on Pliny as a rich patron, but on Pliny as a member of the republic of letters. We might even push this further: Pliny is thus put into an intellectual continuum with Perotti himself who on another occasion used a letter of Pliny as a subtext when describing his own friendship with a fellow humanist.²²

authoris intentio – the intention of the author

Perotti goes on to explaining the intention of the author:

Scripsit librum Epigrammaton ut laudaret honesta, hortaretur homines ad uirtutem, et uitia sui temporis notaret, quod admistis²³ semper salibus et fere cum risu facit.

(He wrote a book of epigrams to praise honorable conduct, exhort people to virtue, and to censure the vices of his age; he does this always wittily and usually with laughter.)

This is the *intentio autoris* that Perotti emphasized repeatedly: “si quid in eo lasciui est, reprehendendi gratia scripsit” (if he writes lasciviously, it is for the purpose of censure), he had already said about Martial in the preface of the *Silvae*-commentary in 1469/70,²⁴ and he repeats this in the dedication letter of the *Cornu copiae* to Federico: “Nihil apud hunc poetam esse non religiosum et sanctum, reprehendi ab eo obscenitate quadam uerborum uitia, non laudari” (Nothing in this poet is not written conscientiously and reverently, he offers condemnation of vices, not praise, with a certain kind of crass expression. *Cornu copiae*, ep. ad Federicum 4 vol. I p. 14), and he

²⁰ Perotti could have easily varied or enlarged the list of friends, another friend of Martial is named in *Cornu copiae* 78, 43. On the term *amicus* see Kipf 2009.

²¹ In the preface Pomponio Leto is *uir saeculo nostro doctissimus*; Calderini usually is the opposite: “Item ad manus uenire similiter est prelium siue contentionem incipere. Quo modo loquendi doctissimi uiri uti fuere, licet rabula nescio quis id negare ausus fuerit, ut est in omnibus imperitus ac rudis” (Also *ad manus uenire* similarly means to start a fight or quarrel; this expression has been used by the most learned people, even though a certain brawler [Calderini!] dared to deny this, as he is clueless and uneducated in everything; *Cornu copiae* 4, 138 vol. IV p. 53). For Perotti *doctus* is also a linguistic / stylistic category: “Morem gerere docti usurpant pro eo quod est obsequi et obedire” (*Morem gerere* is used by the learned for ‘to obey’; *Cornu copiae* 10, 114 vol. V p. 63).

²² Pade 2011 (1).

²³ For this and other orthographical characteristics of the *Brevis commemoratio* see Ramminger 2014.

²⁴ BAV, Vat. lat. 6835, fol. 55r.

comes back to the same topic later in the *Cornu copiae*.²⁵ “Hanc enim diximus a principio esse auctoris intentionem: hortari ad uirtutem et saeculi sui uitia notare”. (As we have said, this is the author’s intention from the outset: to invite people to virtue and reprehend the vices of his century; *Cornu copiae* 45,1 vol. VI p. 253). This passage is important, because it refers to the *Life* (*diximus a principio*),²⁶ including verbal parallels (*hortari ad uirtutem* and *uitia notare*), and connects these with the Servian terminology so conspicuously absent from the *Life* (*auctoris intentionem*).

Calderini, too, saw a connexion between the crassness of expression and the moral objective of the epigrams:

in obscena incidit saepissime, ea tamen obiurgatione, ut alienae potius turpitudinis quam eius uitae testimonium accipias. (Calderini, *ep. ad Laur. Medicen* sig.a4v)

(he often slides into crass expressions, but with the intent to reprimand; thus you have to understand this more as a sign of the turpitude of others than a characteristic of his own life.)

For Calderini, however, the moral purpose in the sometimes graphic detail of Martial’s poetry was not in the foreground; the genre, he says, simply tends to the excessive:

Cuius (*epigrammatis*) lex est ut iocandi cauillandi deridendi licentia lasciuat, nudis uerbis prope satyricum, urbanitate ciuile, denique nihil sit quod aut felle non aspergat aut risu non condat.

(It is the law of epigrammatic poetry to be frisky, with a licence to joke, mock, deride; with its frank vocabulary²⁷ it is close to satire, with its sophistication it is smart, in sum there is no topic which it does not sprinkle with bile or season with laughter.)

It may be that because Calderini defined epigrammatic poetry as close to satire, Perotti sharply differentiated between the two genres, when he formulated the defining objectives of Martial’s epigrams (Perotti emphasizes the importance of this passage by adding two *notabilia* in the margin of the

²⁵ In British Library King’s 32 the epigram 1, 16 (*Sunt bona*) follows 1, 103 (*Si dederunt*) on fol. 15r, but there are no notes either by Leto or Perotti.

²⁶ The undetermined position of *a principio* (we have said from the beginning/this was the author’s intention from the beginning) cannot be imitated in the translation.

²⁷ This is an expression from Pliny: *nuda uerba*, unveiled, i. e. obscene words, Plin. *epist.* 4. 14. 4 “summos illos et gravissimos viros, qui talia scripserunt, non modo lascivia rerum, sed ne uerbis quidem nudis abstinuisse” (those great and venerable names, who without scruple have employed not only the warmest descriptions, but the plainest terms; translation from Melmoth 1931, I, 317).

presentation copy, BAV Urb. lat. 301: "Quid scriptores epigrammatum a satyris differant", "Epigrammata"):

hoc enim [*sc. epigrammata*] a satyris differunt quod illi uitia tantum carpunt, hi etiam honesta laudant et ad uirtutem hortantur. Illi graui atque aspera oratione stomacho semper pleni, hi blando sermone atque iucundo scelera suorum temporum notant. Illi longo plerunque lemmate et uerborum copia id faciunt, hi carptim et breui sermone atque collecto; unde haec Epigrammata, hoc est inscriptiones dicuntur. Illi in personas etiam propriis nominibus inuehuntur, hi fingunt noua nomina, propriis parcunt, quod de se hic poeta testatur, dum inquit: "Hunc seruare modum nostri nouere libelli, Parcere personis, dicere de uitis".

(Epigrams are different from satires in the following ways: satire just harps on vice, epigrams also praise honorable conduct and exhort people to virtue; satire has a rough and harsh style and is always full of disapproval, epigrams criticise the crimes of their times in a pleasant and agreeable manner; satire achieves its goal in a lengthy discourse with a richness of expression, epigrams are concise, with short and focused diction – therefore they are called epigrams, i.e. inscriptions; satires attack people under their real names, epigrams invent new names and spare the real ones – which is what this poet affirms about himself, saying: "This is the way our booklets know to follow: spare the persons, speak out about the vices".)

Another aspect of Martial's life as expressed in his poetry needed explaining: the political opportunism with which he had praised Domitian to the sky, only to condemn him after his death. Calderini had simply said that this was the emperor's own fault:

[...] quibus (*Domitiani temporibus*) seruili ferme adulatione blanditus fuerat non suo magis ingenio quam imperatoris arrogantia, qui diuinam adorationem a suis exegit. (Calderini, *vita Martialis*)

([...] when in the times of Domitian whom he had courted throughout with servile flattery, not by his own inclination but because of the emperor's arrogance who demanded divine worship from the people around him.)

Not so, says Perotti; the matter of Martial's politics is much more complicated:

Floruit temporibus Domitiani, Neruae et Traiani, quibus uariis modis in hoc opere assentatur, id que ea ratione facit, ut per ea quae in his esse commemorat, quales et ipsi et caeteri Principes esse debeant, ostendat. Hinc saepe aedificia, porticus, templa, uenationes, ludos, strategemata imperatorum aliorum que uirorum ac mulierum com-

memorat. Et enim mos apud ueteres fuit, quoniam monere simpliciter principes periculosum uidebatur, per ironiam eos, hoc est assentando, docere.

(He lived under Domitian, Nerva and Trajan, and all of these he flatters in various ways in this work. The strategy behind this is the following: by mentioning their achievements he wants to show how they and other princes ought to be. Thus he continuously mentions buildings, galleries, temples, hunts, games, and the pursuits of emperors and other men and women. And, because it was considered dangerous to simply admonish princes, it was a habit in ancient times to teach them through dissembling, that is flattery.)

Thus, contrary to Calderini's assumptions, Martial had flattered not only the vicious Domitian, but also the subsequent emperors; his flattery has a much larger significance: according to Perotti the epigrams are nothing less than a mirror of princes, designed to improve those whom it is impossible to reach by conventional moral teaching.

qualitas carminis – character of the work

Calderini had identified a series of characteristics of the style of Martial's epigrams, such as the insertion of Greek words, or the rare occurrence of an epic cadence. In general, however, Calderini says, "Verba sunt nec figuris poeticis sublimia nec humilitate quotidiana depressa, ita mediam quandam elocutionem seruantia" (His expressions are neither lofty with poetic figures nor lowly with an everyday humble style, rather, they adhere to a middle kind of eloquence).

According to Perotti this definition misses the mark, because the epigrams have been designed to support the intention of the author, as explained before:

Sic omnia huius Poetae Epigrammata aut bona sunt, in quibus uidelicet simpliciter atque aperte ad uirtutem hortatur, aut mediocria, in quibus ea laudat quae turpia non sunt sed aliquid habent honesti, aut mala, in quibus uitia hominum carpit obscenis uerbis et turpibus. Hoc est quod Poeta ipse ad Auitum libro primo scribit: "Sunt bona, sunt quaedam mediocria, sunt mala plura Quae legis hic: aliter non fit, Auite, liber".

(Thus all the epigrams of this poet fall into three groups: either they are positive [*bona*], insofar as they simply and openly adhort to virtue, or they occupy a middle position [*mediocria*], in which he praises what is not disgraceful but has some honorable element, or they are negative [*mala*], in which he attacks peoples' vices with obscene and foul words. This is what the poet himself writes to Avitus in the first

book: "What you read here, is sometimes good, sometimes middling, quite often bad. In no other way, Avitus, a book is made".)

Thus style and intention are parallel: dishonest behaviour is attacked with dishonest words. For the first two categories of epigrams Perotti gives examples in the *Cornu copiae*, when he in the course of his commentary comes to this epigram:

SUNT BONA. Hoc disticho qualia sint epigrammata sua poeta declarat. Quaedam bona esse dicit, in quibus uirtutem laudat et ad uitae frugem hortatur, quale fuit superius 'ad Iulium de tranquillitate animi', quae esse, ut diximus, sine uirtute non potest. Quaedam mediocria, ut ea, quae ad aedificia, uenationes, naumachias et ludos pertinent, in quibus honesta quaedam animi oblectatio est. Quaedam mala, in quibus uitia hominum iocando carpit. Hanc enim diximus a principio esse auctoris intentionem: hortari ad uirtutem et saeculi sui uitia notare. Itaque magna ex parte in hoc uersatur, propterea plura esse mala epigrammata dicit. (*Cornu copiae* 45, 1 vol. VI p. 253)

(GOOD THINGS. In this distich the poet explains the nature of his epigrams: some are positive [*bona*], in which he praises virtue and invites to a temperate life, such as the one 'to Julius about peace of mind' – which as we have said cannot be attained without virtue;²⁸ some occupy a middle ground [*mediocria*], such as the ones about buildings, hunts, sea-battles and games, from which one can derive some honest pleasure; some epigrams are negative [*mala*], in which the peoples' vices are attacked through jokes. As we have said, this is the author's intention from the outset: to exhort people to virtue and reprehend the vices of his century. Therefore he focuses mostly on the latter, which is why he says that negative epigrams are prevalent.)

Thus obscenity is not a pervasive fault and unsavoury feature of Martial's poetry, but a stylistic device in a type of epigrams which have a precise moral purpose, and if obscene epigrams abound, it is just because the correction of vice was the main intention of Martial. The style of the epigrams therefore is not at all uniform, as Calderini had claimed; rather, it changes with the nature (*qualitas*) of the epigrams. The phrases *qualia sint epigrammata* at the beginning of the passage and the *auctoris intentio* make the

²⁸ Perotti emphasizes similar interpretations elsewhere, e. g.: "Hortatur Iulium sodalem suum, ut reiectis laboribus quieti et uoluptati uitae indulgeat, quam ueram uitam esse Martialis affirmat. Quippe finem in honesta uoluptate hoc est uitae foelicitate constituit, quam nemo assequi, nisi per uirtutem, potest" (He exhorts his comrade Iulius to leave his busy life and devote himself to quiet and pleasure, which according to Martial is the real life. For he sees the destiny of life in honest pleasure, that is in happiness, which nobody can attain if not through virtue; *Cornu copiae* 44, 1 vol. VI p. 245).

provenance of Perotti's interpretational approach from Servius quite clear; Perotti redacted them out when he quoted from this passage in the *Life*, probably to avoid any reminder of the medieval form of biography, the *accessus*.

***numerus librorum, ordo librorum* – the number and arrangement of the parts**

The conclusion of the *Life* addresses another aspect of the epigrams: their sequence and transmission:

Librum hunc Epigrammaton eo ordine scripsit quo in praesentia legitur, primis epigrammatibus exceptis, in quibus spectacula et ludos sui temporis describit. Haec in antiquis codicibus non reperiuntur. Haud tamen dubium est Martialis esse.

(He wrote this book of epigrams in the order in which it is now read, with the exception of the first epigrams which describe the spectacles and games of his time. These are not found in the old manuscripts; still they are undoubtedly by Martial.)

As a statement of fact this was uncontroversial for Perotti's contemporaries; Merula as well as Calderini (as well as Perotti's working ms of Martial) included the *spectacula* in the first book of epigrams. Already Calderini had speculated on the genesis of the *Liber spectaculorum* and suggested that originally the epigrams about the *spectacula* might have been composed separately for the respective performances. Perotti thinks this argument to the end by suggesting that if the *spectacula*-epigrams originally had not been part of the edition, their attribution to Martial might be questioned and therefore had to be emphasized.²⁹ Obviously neither Perotti nor any subsequent editor could propose a definitive solution to this uncertainty.³⁰ But this statement is important less for its factual contents, than because it provides the last piece of the interpretive structure which Perotti has built into his *Life of Martial*: the proof of unity of the work of Martial which the *Cornu copiae* subsequently went on to explain, which would incidentally also be the last part of Servius' scheme, the *explanatio*.

* * *

²⁹ Perotti also occasionally engages in Echtheitskritik otherwise: "Quatuor uersus, quos sequentes multi codices habent, non sunt Martialis, nec ad ludos Caesaris aut gloriam pertinent" (the four verses which follow in many manuscripts are not by Martial, nor have they to do with the *ludi* of the emperor or his glory; *Cornu copiae* 25, 2 vol. VI p. 74). Calderini says nothing about those verses being spurious.

³⁰ For a succinct statement of the aporia of Martial-scholarship see Coleman 2006, p. XIX.

According to Perotti the epigrams are only in appearance a collection disparate in topics and style. In reality they are united by a lofty common purpose; in their variety they hold a mirror up not only to princes, but to all readers, in which they can see not only the moral turpitude that they will be inspired to leave behind, but also the honest conduct of everyday life and the lofty goals of a life of virtue to which they will aspire. The threefold purpose of the epigrams is, as Perotti shows, mirrored by a corresponding stylistic diversity: the descriptions of virtue and of the examples of respectable and decorous conduct have a vocabulary different from the ones describing examples of moral turpitude. Thus the *Life* complements the letter of dedication of the *Cornu copiae*. The dedication of the *Cornu copiae* to Federico da Montefeltro had centred on the work as a commentary, its genesis, its literary characteristics, and had discussed the text of Martial only insofar as its well-known obscenity might reflect badly on the commentator who had spent considerable effort on understanding what was probably better left obscure. The *Life* showed that in reality the text to be commented upon was a sophisticated poetic work with a moral aim of the highest order, thus well worthy to be explained by a bishop and understood by a prince.

Appendix

Niccolò Perotti, *Life of Martial*, edited from Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 301, fol. 3v–4r.

The *Life* has earlier been edited in Perotti 1989–2001, I, ed. Jean-Louis Charlet et Martine Furno, 18–19, and Ramminger 2014 (where a fuller commentary can be found). The chapter numbering is the same as in the earlier editions. Except for the use of capitals (which cannot always be recognized with certainty), u/v, and punctuation, I have maintained the orthography of the Urbinas. Single and double superscript letters refer to the *notabilia* (which are given below the Latin text).

BREVIS COMMÉMORATIO VITAE M. VALERII MARTIALIS

M. Valerius Martialis in Hispania Bilbili nobili Celtiberiae oppido natus est, patre Frontone,^a matre Flacilla.^b Venit ad urbem Romam studiorum gratia, tenui quae suppellectile contentus in litteris duntaxat uersatus est. Scripsit librum epigrammaton, ut laudaret honesta, hortaretur homines ad uirtutem, et uitia sui temporis notaret; quod admistis [-s- p. c.] semper salibus et ferè cum risu facit, ut mos est scribentium epigrammata: hoc^{aa} enim a satyris differunt quod illi uitia tantum carpunt, hi etiam honesta laudant et ad uirtutem hortantur. Illi graui atque aspera oratione stomacho semper pleni, hi blando sermone atque iucundo scelera suorum temporum notant. Illi longo plerunque lemmate et uerborum copia id faciunt, hi carptim et breui sermone atque collecto; unde haec epigrammata,^{bb} hoc est inscriptiones dicuntur. Illi in personas etiam propriis nominibus inuehuntur, hi fingunt noua nomina, propriis parcunt, quod de se hic poeta testatur, dum inquit: “Hunc seruare modum nostri [*add. in mg.*] nouere libelli, Parcere personis, dicere de uitiiis” [Mart. 10, 33, 9–10].

- 2 Excessit facundia, acumine, copia, suauitate, salibus omnes qui ante et post eum carmina scripsere. Laudat simul atque reprehendit acriter et ardentem, nec minus polite et ornate. Habet ueluti in numero sententias aptas semper et crebras, grauem et decoram structuram, sonantia uerba et antiqua; quaedam ipse fingit aptissime. Sunt plerunque in sermone eius latentes aculei. Suspensum etiam aliquando lectorem relinquit, et aliquid uult illum augurari potius quam legere. Tanta praeterea in eo copia, tanta rerum uarietas est atque cognitio, quantam apud nullum uel graecum uel latinum autorem esse contenderim.
- 3 Floruit temporibus Domitiani, Neruae et Traiani, quibus uariis modis in hoc opere assentatur, id quae ea ratione facit, ut per ea, quae in

his esse commemorat, quales et ipsi et caeteri principes esse debeant, ostendat. Hinc saepe aedificia, porticus, templa, uenationes, ludos, strategemata imperatorum aliorum que uirorum ac mulierum commemorat. Et enim mos^{cc} apud ueteres fuit, quoniam monere simpliciter principes periculosum uidebatur, per ironiam eos, hoc est assentando, docere. Sic omnia huius poetae epigrammata aut bona sunt, in quibus uidelicet simpliciter atque aperte ad uirtutem hortatur, aut mediocria, in quibus ea laudat quae turpia non sunt sed aliquid habent honesti, aut mala, in quibus uitia hominum carpit obscenis uerbis et turpibus. Hoc est quod poeta ipse ad Auitum libro primo scribit: “Sunt bona, sunt quaedam mediocria, sunt mala plura Quae legis hic; aliter non fit, Auite, liber” [Mart. 1, 16].

- 4 Amicos habuit Plynium^c Secundum oratorem, Stellam^d que et Syllium^e poetas, ad quos saepenumero scribit. Publicis quoque honoribus functus est: donatus equestri dignitate, praetura et iure trium liberorum. Ingrauescente demum aetate tedio urbanarum rerum affectus in Hispaniam rediit. Obiit in natali solo [natali solo *p. c.*] inter suos, magno doctorum omnium maerore, praesertim Plynii, cuius epistola extat in qua [inqua *ms.*] audisse scribit Martialem decessisse, idque moleste ferre, quia “uir erat ingeniosus, acutus et qui plurimum in scribendo salis haberet et fellis, nec candoris minus” [Plin. *epist.* 3, 21, 1].
- 5 Librum hunc epigrammaton eo ordine scripsit quo in praesentia legitur, primis epigrammatibus exceptis, in quibus spectacula et ludos sui temporis describit. Haec in antiquis codicibus non reperiuntur. Haud tamen dubium est Martialis esse.

Notabilia in Vat. Vrb. lat. 301

in mg. interiore: ^a Fronto ^b Flacilla ^c Plynius ^d Stella ^e Syllius
in mg. exteriori: ^{aa} Quid scriptores epigrammatum a satyris differant
^{bb} Epigrammata ^{cc} Mos ueterum in laudandis principibus

(Short presentation of the life of Martial.

Marcus Valerius Martialis was born in Spain, in the famous town of Bilbilis in Celtiberia; his father was Fronto, the mother Flacilla. He came to Rome to study; content with modest circumstances he devoted himself exclusively to literature. He wrote a book of epigrams to praise honorable conduct, exhort people to virtue, and to censure the vices of his age; he does this always wittily and usually with laughter, as is the custom with writers of epigrams. In fact, epigrams are different from satires in this respect: satire just harps on vice, epigrams also praise honorable conduct and exhort people to virtue. Satire has a rough and harsh style and is always full of disapproval, epigrams criti-

zise the vices of their times in a pleasant and agreeable manner. Satire achieves its goal in a lengthy discourse with a richness of expression, epigrams are concise, with short and focused diction – therefore they are called epigrams, i.e. inscriptions. Satires attack people under their real names, epigrams invent new names and spare the real ones – which is what this poet affirms about himself, saying: “This is the way our booklets know to follow: spare the persons, speak out about the vices”.

- 2 He surpassed all other poets before and after him in eloquence, subtlety, abundance, sweetness, and dexterity. He praises and criticizes at once, sharply and with passion, nevertheless exquisitely and elegantly. He is always ready with fitting and compact expressions, a grave and decorous structure, resounding old words; some he also invents himself most fittingly. Frequently there are hidden stings in his speech. Also, sometimes he leaves the reader in suspense, and wants him to guess rather than to read something. For the rest, he has such richness of expression, such a variety of topics and knowledge, as I would claim never to have seen in any Greek or Latin author.
- 3 He lived under Domitian, Nerva and Trajan, and all of these he flatters in various ways in this work. The strategy behind this is the following: by mentioning their achievements he wants to show how they and other princes ought to be. Thus he continuously mentions buildings, galleries, temples, hunts, games, and the pursuits of emperors and other men and women. And, because it was considered dangerous to admonish princes directly, it was a habit in ancient times to teach them through dissembling, that is flattery. Thus all the epigrams of this poet fall into three groups: either they are positive, insofar as they simply and openly adhort to virtue, or they occupy a middle position, in which he praises what is not disgraceful but has some honorable element, or they are negative, in which he attacks peoples' vices with obscene and foul words. This is what the poet himself writes to Avitus in the first book: “What you read here, is sometimes good, sometimes middling, quite often bad. In no other way, Avitus, a book is made”.
- 4 Amongst his friends were the orator Pliny the Younger, and the poets Stella and Silius; to them he writes often. He also received public recognition, he was awarded equestrian rank, the pretorship, and the three-children privilege. With the burden of age increasing, he became weary of city life and returned to Spain. He died in his native country amongst his own, deeply lamented by all men of learning, especially by Pliny; from him we have a letter where he writes that he was sad to hear about Martial's death, “because he was a man of a sharp and lively disposition, and his writings abound in both wit and bile, combined with equal lustre”.

- 5 He wrote this book of epigrams in the arrangement in which it is read now, with the exception of the first epigrams which describe the spectacles and games of his time. These are not found in the old manuscripts; still they are undoubtedly by Martial.)

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MATERIALI BIOGRAFICI ANTICHI SU GIOVENALE RECUPERATI DA DOMIZIO CALDERINI



Di Giancarlo Abbamonte*

At the turn of the fifteenth century, the content of the Vitae Iuvenalis dramatically changed. The lives compiled by Guglielmo da Pastrengo, Giovanni Colonna, and Domenico di Bandino (s. XIV ex. – s. XV in.) are still deeply influenced by the medieval tradition, but even so they tend to reduce anecdotal material. Collecting information on Juvenal culled from the poet's contemporaries (Suetonius, Martial, Tacitus, the Elder and the Younger Pliny) Sicco Polenton, Ognibene Leonicensino, and Giovanni Tortelli (s. XV medio) departed even more radically from earlier Vitae. Only in the 1470s did Domizio Calderini stop this trend; he published a Vita that was simply taken from the oldest biographical tradition. Calderini's model was followed by the later commentators (e.g. Cantalicio and Mancinelli).

Le satire di Giovenale furono lette e apprezzate, senza soluzione di continuità, dal IV al XV secolo: più di Orazio e Persio, lo scrittore di Aquino divenne un *auctor* studiato nelle scuole medievali e costituì il modello per chiunque volesse scrivere satire nel Medioevo e nell'Umanesimo, almeno fino all'ultimo trentennio del XV secolo, quando il tono medio e lo stile più bonario dei *Sermones* oraziani tornarono alla ribalta.¹ A questa attenzione verso l'opera poetica corrispose sin dalla Tarda Antichità una produzione di *Vitae Iuvenalis* (di seguito, *VI*), studiate e catalogate da Julius Dürer in un lavoro pubblicato nel 1888, ma che resta ancora oggi fondamentale.

Proprio a causa dell'ininterrotta fortuna di Giovenale, le *VI* prodotte nel corso del Quattrocento non presentano le caratteristiche delle *Vitae* di altri autori realizzate nell'ambiente pomponiano: i lavori presentati su questo

* Desidero ringraziare Giovanni Polara e Fabio Stok che hanno avuto la pazienza di leggere questo lavoro e di discuterne con me molte parti. Resto naturalmente io il solo responsabile di eventuali errori ed omissioni.

¹ Sulla fortuna di Giovenale a partire dalla Tarda Antichità, vd. Sanford 1960, in part. 176–178, e più recentemente i lavori di Hooley 2012 e Sogno 2012. Notizie ancora utili si ritrovano in Wessner 1931, v–xiv. Il modello giovenaliano agì anche nella produzione satirica in latino del Medioevo e dell'Umanesimo: cf. per la satira umanistica Marsh 2014, 413–414, e per entrambe Abbamonte 2015 (1) e (2).

fascicolo di *Renæssanceforum* hanno mostrato come per Silio Italico e Lucrezio si siano costruite biografie in assenza di tradizioni medievali,² mentre nel caso di Virgilio e Stazio, di cui pure era stata larga e continuativa la fortuna medievale, a stimolare Pomponio Leto e i suoi adepti a comporre nuove biografie erano venute le scoperte di materiale antico fino ad allora sconosciuto (ad es., il commento virgiliano dello ps. Probo, l'antico manoscritto di Virgilio oggi noto come *Mediceus* o la riscoperta delle *Silvae*, che avevano rivelato l'origine napoletana di Stazio³).

Il commento di Domizio Calderini a Giovenale

La situazione degli studi su Giovenale non risponde che parzialmente a questi nuovi stimoli: tra gli anni '60 e la fine del Quattrocento l'Umanesimo romano confermò il vivo interesse per le *Satire* di Giovenale, perpetuando la secolare tradizione del commentario continuo e giovandosi dell'arrivo della stampa a Roma che permise la pubblicazione e diffusione dei lavori esegetici su Giovenale nati nell'ambiente dello *Studium Urbis*, come quelli di Angelo Sabino (1474), Domizio Calderini (1475) e Antonio Mancinelli (1492);⁴ tuttavia, nessuno di questi umanisti elaborò una *VI* nuova rispetto al materiale trasmesso dall'Antichità e dal Medioevo.⁵ Inoltre, dal panorama di studi giovenaliani è assente proprio la figura di Pomponio Leto, il quale dovette sicuramente insegnare un testo scolastico come le satire di Giovenale, ma non dedicò al poeta di Aquino alcun lavoro esegetico di rilievo che sia giunto fino a noi, né mostrò attenzione verso la sua biografia.⁶

² È anche il caso di Quintiliano, per cui Leto rimaneggiò una vita abbozzata da Lorenzo Valla: ringrazio Fabio Stok per avermi permesso di leggere in proposito un suo lavoro in c.d.s.

³ Su Virgilio, vd. Stok 2014 (1) e il lavoro di F. Stok qui pubblicato. Analogamente, su Stazio, cf. Anderson 2009 e Pade 2014 oltre al lavoro della studiosa danese qui pubblicato, mentre non appare in questo fascicolo la relazione letta al convegno da Elettra Camperlingo sulla *Vita Lucani* di Pomponio Leto, in cui la studiosa aveva osservato l'uso dell'antichissima *Vita Lucani* attribuita a Vacca da parte dell'umanista romano.

⁴ Antonio Mancinelli (1452–1505) pubblicò commenti ad Orazio, Virgilio e Giovenale, in cui confluivano il proprio commento e quelli di umanisti che in precedenza si erano dedicati all'autore commentato: ad es., il suo lavoro su Giovenale riunisce i precedenti commenti di Domizio Calderini e Giorgio Valla: D. Iunius Iuvenalis, *Satyræ cum commentariis Antonii Mancinelli, Domitii Calderini, Georgii Vallæ, Venetiis, Johannes Tacuinus de Tridino*, 2.XII.1492, HC 9709* IGI 5597 ISTC ij00662000. Su Mancinelli vd. Lazzari 2005 e Mellidi 2007.

⁵ Si è scelto di utilizzare l'espressione "Materiali biografici" nel titolo del presente lavoro per segnalare la distanza tra quanto alcuni umanisti romani abbiano riutilizzato circa la biografia di Giovenale e il contributo originale e coerente che invece Leto e alcuni suoi sodali diedero alle biografie di autori antichi.

⁶ Non ci risultano testimonianze pomponiane su Giovenale, che è citato solo due volte, ma per ragioni estrinseche, nella monografia di Zabughin (cf. Zabughin 1909–1910, I, 158,

Tra le poche testimonianze di un interesse di Leto per Giovenale si può annoverare un epigramma che compare nel ms. BAV Urb. lat. 662, codice di dedica del commento a Giovenale offerto a Guido di Montefeltro, duca di Urbino, da Giovanni Battista Valentini detto il Cantalicio, allievo di Calderini:⁷

POMPONIVS LAETVS

Fertur ab Eoo iam mitis Iunius astro
et liber fruitur candidiore nota,
ut tandem optato caperet stata praemia circo,
Cantalycus grato munere iunxit equos.
Tutus inoffensa, qui uis, decurrat harena
quod noceat nil est certior aura uocat (BAV Urb. lat. 662, f. 1^v).⁸

L'epigramma è seguito nella stessa pagina da quelli di Pietro Marso, Sulpicio da Veroli e Agostino Almadiano da Viterbo, mentre ai ff. 5^v–6^r compaiono sei epigrammi di risposta del Cantalicio, di cui il primo fu inviato agli intellettuali romani:

AD ROMANOS POETAS

Vates qui Latiam docetis urbem,
quorum Pierides colunt cathedras,
uestro Cantalyco fauete cuncti.
Vnus de grege sum fuique, uestro
quamuis de grege sum malus poeta. 5
Vrbini domino meo benigno,
Guido munera mitto dedicata.
Longe liuida sed uerentur ora
et quae sunt solitae nocere linguas
imploro auxilium: fauete uestrum, 10
quod si contigerit, timore tutum
laudabunt tacitae librum coronae (BAV Urb. lat. 662, f. 5^v).⁹

e II 62), mentre il nome di Giovenale non compare nel sito del *Repertorium Pomponianum* (<http://www.repertoriumpomponianum.it/index.html>).

⁷ Il ms., cart. e membr., di ff. II + 344, porta al f. 342v una *subscriptio* dell'autore: "Absolutum Perusiae I°CCCC°LXXXVIII° die XXVI^a mensis Iulii. Ibi eodem Cantalycio publice profitente, editum autem Viterbii I CCCC° LXXXII°". Cf. Stornajolo 1912, 172–173. Su Cantalicio (1450–c. 1515) vd. Monti Sabia & Germano 1996, 9–46.

⁸ Leto saluta l'apparizione del libro di Cantalicio nel mese di giugno e paragona lo sforzo dell'autore nel redigere quest'opera ad una gara ippica.

⁹ Cantalicio si rivolge ad alcuni non meglio identificati poeti di Roma, che insegnano nell'Urbe e coltivano le Muse, affinché si mostrino benevoli verso il poeta, che si presenta come uno di loro, anche se di livello inferiore. A partire dal v. 6, Cantalicio ricorda Guido da Montefeltro, dedicatario del commento, e chiede aiuto ai poeti romani contro eventuali malevoli detrattori della sua opera.

Il secondo epigramma è, invece, indirizzato a Pomponio Leto:

AD POMPONIVM

Redde uicem nobis, Pomponi maxime uatum,
qualibet extulimus nomen in urbe tuum.

Nam tua Romanis quicquid cortina recludit
oraclum Clarii credimus esse dei.

Si mereor laudis quicquam, suffragia praesta, 5
non sine numinibus scripsimus ista tuis.

(BAV Urb. lat. 662, f. 1^v).¹⁰

Anche da questa risposta del Cantalicio non traspare alcun riferimento che metta in qualche modo a contatto Giovenale e Leto.

Tornando alla tradizione delle *VI*, l'unica novità introdotta dall'ambiente romano rispetto al materiale biografico su Giovenale ereditato dal Medioevo e dal primo Quattrocento, fu il recupero di dati provenienti dalla tradizione biografica considerata dagli umanisti più antica, allo scopo di limitare una certa ipertrofia aneddótica, che si era prodotta nei filoni più tardi delle *Vitae* e da cui, come vedremo, non seppe tenersi a distanza neanche la tradizione biografica tardo-trecentesca e primo quattrocentesca: la riduzione delle notizie e il ritorno ad una presunta tradizione antica su Giovenale sembrano essere novità introdotte da Domizio Calderini e si inquadrano nel medesimo atteggiamento osservato in Niccolò Perotti a proposito della *Vita Statii* o nel recupero del *Mediceus* e del commento dello ps. Probo per Virgilio.¹¹

Il presente lavoro si concentrerà, dunque, sulla figura di Domizio Calderini, un umanista che, pur lavorando nella cerchia di Bessarione, mostrò sempre una certa autonomia rispetto al magistero pomponiano e non mancò di polemizzare aspramente con alcuni intellettuali vicini a Leto, come Angelo Sabino, il collega allo *Studium Urbis* che si era occupato di Giovenale, e Niccolò Perotti, ex-segretario e amico del cardinale Bessarione.

Domizio Calderini (Torri del Benaco c. 1446 – Roma ante 22.VI.1478), dopo gli studi a Verona e poi a Venezia con il celebre maestro Benedetto Brugnoli, arrivò ventenne a Roma (1466 – 1467), dove entrò in contatto con il circolo del cardinale Bessarione, prendendo parte alla disputa tra Platonici e Aristotelici, in cui fu coinvolto il cardinale (1470), e divenendo segretario dello stesso Bessarione (c. 1471). In quegli anni cominciò anche ad insegnare presso lo *Studium*

¹⁰ Cantalicio chiede a Leto di ricambiarlo con quelle qualità poetiche per cui è considerato il primo tra gli intellettuali romani e che, a suo avviso, derivano al famoso professore romano da un qualche dono divino. Se Cantalicio ha acquisito qualche merito presso Leto, questi dovrà dare il proprio assenso ad un'opera che è stata scritta sotto l'influenza del magistero pomponiano.

¹¹ Vd. ancora i contributi menzionati *supra* alla nota 3.

Vrbis: da questa attività nacquero molti commenti di autori latini che poi pubblicò profittando dell'impetuoso sviluppo che ebbe la stampa in Italia, e a Roma in particolare, negli anni '70 del Quattrocento. Morì giovanissimo di peste alla metà del 1478.¹²

La *Vita* di Giovenale si trova all'inizio del commentario continuo alle satire realizzato da Domizio Calderini: l'opera era il frutto di uno dei suoi corsi universitari, ma anche il risultato delle polemiche che egli ebbe a Roma:¹³ il lavoro fu pubblicato a Venezia nell'aprile del 1475 con una dedica a Giuliano de' Medici,¹⁴ pochi mesi dopo l'apparizione dei *Paradoxa in Iuuenali*, un'opera esegetica sulle satire del poeta di Aquino che il suo collega e avversario Angelo Sabino aveva dato alle stampe nell'agosto del 1474, dedicandola a Niccolò Perotti. I *Paradoxa* di Sabino si presentano come una difesa dagli attacchi e, a suo dire, dai *furta* che Sabino aveva subito ad opera di Domizio Calderini, il quale gli avrebbe sottratto esegesi giovenaliane che Sabino aveva spiegato a lezione e che aveva elaborato nel corso degli ultimi sette anni.¹⁵

La vicenda editoriale del commento di Calderini è resa abbastanza complessa dalla struttura del testo edito e da alcune contraddizioni nelle datazioni fornite sia da Calderini sia dal suo primo stampatore, che confondono il quadro cronologico: risulta quindi difficile stabilire con certezza se la stesura del commento di Calderini si possa considerare una risposta a Sabino o se esso abbia preceduto i *Paradoxa*. In effetti, l'*editio princeps* fu stampata a Venezia (*apud Iacobum de Rubeis* HC 9688* IGI 5575 ISTC ij00642000) e riporta la data del 24.IV.1475 nel colofone di [f. 86^v], alla fine del commento e prima di un'altra opera contenuta nell'incunabolo, la *Defensio aduersus Brotheum*.¹⁶

¹² Sulla biografia di Calderini vd. Levi 1900, Perosa 1973 e Ramminger 2014; alcuni aspetti della vita di Calderini si leggono anche in Campanelli 2001, 3–34. Sulle opere e il metodo di Calderini cf. Dunston 1968, Campanelli 2001, 8–9 (con le precisazioni di Fiesoli 2003) e, per quanto riguarda il commento a Silio Italico, Muecke & Dunston 2011, 13–73.

¹³ Sull'insegnamento di Calderini e sul rapporto tra la sua attività didattica e le pubblicazioni cf. Campanelli-Pincelli 2000, 122–124, 131–140, Campanelli 2001, 11–38.

¹⁴ Sui problemi della datazione vd. *infra*.

¹⁵ Angelus Sabinus, *Paradoxa in Iuuenali*, Romae, Georgius Sachsels et Bartholomaeus Golsch, 9.VIII.1474 H 14063* IGI 8493 ISTC is00013000. Accanto alla stampa esiste un ms., attuale Vat. Ottob. lat. 2850, che è autografo di Sabino e contiene una redazione del suo commento anteriore alla stampa; tracce della sua esegesi si trovano anche nel ms. Perugia Biblioteca Augusta 500 (anonimo): vd. Sanford 1948, 103. Su Angelo Sabino vd. Mercati 1939 (1), che ricorda il passo in cui Sabino afferma di aver studiato Giovenale per sette anni; vd. anche Canali 1961, Bianca 1998, 460, mentre sulla polemica tra Calderini e Sabino relative alle loro opere su Giovenale vd. Campanelli 2001, 21–34.

¹⁶ Per questo lavoro si sono confrontati i due esemplari dell'*editio princeps* presenti nella Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (segnatura Stamp. Ross. 246 e 247), quello della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli (segnatura S. Q. XI.D.11), la copia disponibile *online* della Baye-

Iunii Iuuenalis Aquinatis Satyrarum Libri
Impressi Venetiis Diligentissimi Arte et In/
genio Iacobi De Rubeis Natione Gallici VIII.
KL. Maias Anno Christi M. CCCCLXXV. In/
uictissimo Et Inclito Duce Petro Mocenico.¹⁷

Nel colofone dello stampatore non è indicato l'autore del commento, né il titolo dell'opera, che invece si leggono in una sorta di secondo colofone, collocato nelle ultime tre linee della stessa pagina, in cui si dice in maniera ambigua che il commento sarebbe stato "pubblicato" (*editi*) a Roma il 1° settembre del 1474:

Domitii Calderini Veronensis Secretarii Apostolici In Satyras
Iuuenalis Ad Clarissimum Virum Iulianum Medicen (*sic*) Laurentii
Fratrem Petri Cosmi Filium Florentinum Editi Romae : Quom Ibi
Publice Profiteretur. Kl. Septembris M.CCCCLXXIII.¹⁸

La data del 1° settembre 1474 è ribadita in un terzo colofone che compare alla [c. 96^r], dove termina la *Defensio aduersus Brotheum* (di seguito *Adu. Broth.*), un'orazione in cui Calderini attaccava l'edizione della *Naturalis historia* curata da Perotti¹⁹ e difendeva dalle accuse dello stesso Perotti il suo commento a Marziale, che era stato pubblicato il 22 marzo 1474.²⁰

Domitii Calderini Veronensis Commentarii in Iuuenalem Cum De-
fensione Commentariorum Martialis Et Recriminatione Aduersus Bro-
theum Grammaticum, ad Iulianum Medicen (*sic*) Florentinum. Editi
Romae . Kal . Septembris . MCCCCLXXIII (f. 96^r).²¹

Da questo passo si deduce che anche la giustapposizione dell'*Adu. Broth.* al commento doveva essere un'idea già chiara non solo a Calderini, che ricor-

rische Staatsbibliothek di Monaco di Baviera (segnatura Inc. c.a.64 K, e indirizzo internet: <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00054880-2>). La numerazione è posta tra parentesi quadre, in quanto non è originale, ma segue quella a matita dell'esemplare vaticano Stamp. Ross. 247.

¹⁷ "Libri di satire di Giunio Giovenale da Aquino, stampati a Venezia grazie alla perizia e all'ingegno del precisissimo Giacomo De Rubeis, gallico, il giorno 24 aprile dell'anno 1475, sotto il governo dell'invitto e famoso doge Pietro Mocenigo".

¹⁸ "Commentari alle satire di Giovenale, scritti da Domizio Calderini di Verona, segretario apostolico, e dedicati al più famoso degli uomini, Giuliano de' Medici di Firenze, fratello di Lorenzo e figlio di Cosimo. Stampati a Roma, mentre lì insegnava a spese dello stato, il giorno 1° settembre 1474".

¹⁹ Roma, Sweynheim e Pannartz, 7.V.1473, HCR 13090 IGI 7881 ISTC ip00789000.

²⁰ Roma, Johannes Gensberg per Johannem Aloisium Tuscanum, 22.III.1474 HC 4235 IGI 2356ISTC ic00036000.

²¹ "Commentari a Giovenale, scritti da Domizio Calderini di Verona, con la difesa del proprio commentario a Marziale e le accuse contro il grammatico Broteo, dedicati a Giuliano de' Medici di Firenze. Stampati a Roma, il giorno 1° settembre 1474".

da la presenza dell'*Adu. Broth.* nella dedica a Giuliano e nella sua *VI*,²² ma anche allo stampatore, che qui menziona entrambe le opere come dedicate a Giuliano de' Medici.²³

Nondimeno esistono alcuni aspetti di questo incunabolo che suscitano qualche perplessità circa le sue parti compositive: appare inconsueta la presenza di tre colofoni, di cui due si trovano alla fine del commento e prima dell'*Adu. Broth.*, quasi fosse prevista una vendita separata delle due parti – e in effetti, in alcuni esemplari l'*Adu. Broth.* è assente.²⁴ Le due parti che compongono l'incunabolo non hanno le stesse dimensioni della gabbia tipografica: nella dedicatoria [f. 2^r] le dimensioni sono mm. 121x189, nel commento (ad es. [ff. 5^r, 52^r]) sono costantemente mm. 155x226, mentre nella parte dell'*Adu. Broth.* la gabbia tipografica misura mm. 125x205/8 [ad es., ff. 87^r e 92^r]; inoltre, anche la fascicolazione, per cui l'*Adu. Broth.* è contenuta nel quinion finale [ff. 87–96], rende quest'opuscolo un pezzo in qualche modo indipendente dal resto dei fascicoli del commento, che sono quasi tutti quaternioni ad eccezione del penultimo, dell'ultimo con l'*Adu. Broth.* e dei primi due.²⁵

Infine, l'ultimo colofone, alla fine dell'*Adu. Broth.*, presenta aspetti di trascuratezza o lacune significativi: manca il titolo di segretario apostolico e l'assenza farebbe pensare che Calderini abbia qui fatto stampare il colofone che aveva inserito alla stesura della sua prima *Defensio*, che era stata scritta nell'aprile del 1473, durante il suo corso su Marziale tenuto allo *Studium*

²² Vd. il passo della dedica: “Hic est ille Brotheus, Iuliane, qui lucubratione nostra in Martialem, quam Laurentio fratri dicaui, tantopere offensus est, ut contumeliis, calumniis, cauillationibus non aliter me insectetur, quam si in eo omnis uitae et dignitatis rationes positas haberet. Huius aliquot epistulis hactenus respondi, quod in fine huius operis leges” ([f. 2^v] = Campanelli 2001, 32), mentre per il riferimento all'*Adu. Broth.* nella traduzione vd. *infra*.

²³ Un'altra stranezza dell'incunabolo consiste nel fatto che alla lettera di dedica a Giuliano [ff. 2^r–3^r] segue la *VI* [f. 3^v] e poi un'altra dedica a Giuliano in forma di *Argumentum* [f. 4^r], intitolata “Domitii Calderini Veronensis Secretarii Apostolici Commentarii in Satyras Iuuenalis ad Clarissimum Virum Iulianum Medicen Petri Cosmi Filium Florentinum”.

²⁴ Ad es., l'*Adu. Broth.* è presente nell'esemplare napoletano della *princeps* [ff. 87^r–96^r], ma manca nella copia monacense. Esiste anche il caso opposto di alcuni rari incunaboli che contengono solo la *Defensio* nell'edizione di Iacobus de Rubeis: cf. ISTC ic00043500, che menziona tre esemplari (Parigi BnF e Biblioteca Mazzarino, Copenhagen, Det kongelige Bibliotek), dove si ipotizza che si tratti di fascicoli che furono separati dall'edizione del commento.

²⁵ La fascicolazione dell'incunabolo è la seguente: 1⁵ [ff. 1–10], 2⁵ [ff. 11–20], 3⁴ [ff. 21–28], 4⁴ [ff. 29–36], 5⁴ [ff. 37–44], 6⁴ [ff. 45–52], 7⁴ [ff. 53–60], 8⁴ [ff. 61–68], 9⁴ [ff. 69–76], 10⁵ [ff. 77–86], 11⁵ [ff. 87–96]: due quinionii all'inizio e alla fine e sette quaternioni in mezzo..

Vrbis:²⁶ tale datazione giustificerebbe l'assenza del titolo, in quanto Calderini fu nominato Segretario apostolico partecipante numerario il 27.VI.1474;²⁷ mancano poi nel secondo colofone i riferimenti al padre e al fratello di Giuliano de' Medici.

Tutti questi elementi, pur se significativi in sé e nel loro complesso, non consentono tuttavia di trarre conclusioni certe da queste mancanze e imprecisioni, perché l'*Adu. Broth.* compare anche nel ms. di dedica a Giuliano del commento a Giovenale (Firenze BML Laur. 53,2) a dimostrazione del fatto che fosse intenzione di Calderini tenere insieme le due opere (cf. ff. 142^r–154^v): più probabilmente, i tre colofoni, la doppia dedica, l'assenza dell'*Adu. Broth.* in alcuni esemplari dell'*editio princeps*, le difformità editoriali nelle dimensioni della gabbia e della fascicolazione e una certa sciattezza espressiva nell'ultimo colofone suggeriscono l'ipotesi che l'intero incunabolo sia stato assemblato di fretta, forse nei convulsi mesi intercorsi tra la pubblicazione dei *Paradoxa* di Sabino (9.VIII.1474) e quella del commento di Calderini (24.IV.1475).

Quanto alla data del 1° settembre 1474 che compare nei due colofoni, essa faceva forse riferimento al momento in cui l'opera fu materialmente consegnata nelle mani di Giuliano de' Medici, ad un anno esatto dalla consegna del commento a Marziale che pure attese la primavera dell'anno successivo prima di essere stampato.²⁸ Nel caso del commento a Giovenale, però, l'aver anticipato la data di pubblicazione nel doppio colofone della stampa serviva a ribaltare l'accusa di plagio mossagli da Angelo Sabino.

La data di consegna a Giuliano è confermata da documenti che attestano la presenza di Calderini a Firenze nel settembre del 1474;²⁹ essa coincide anche con quanto Calderini afferma all'inizio della lettera di dedica a Giuliano, pubblicata nella *princeps* veneziana, in cui l'umanista veronese nell'elogiare le numerose virtù del suo dedicatario e del fratello, Lorenzo, ricorda il suo soggiorno a Firenze dell'anno precedente (1473):

Etsi multa de prudentia, humanitate, uirtute tua olim saepe afferebantur, Iuliane, tamen quom superiore anno isthic (*sic*) essem, ea omnia ita in te prospexi et admiratus sum, ut ad eam fidem et obseruantiam mortalem, quam in Laurentium fratrem contuli et locaui, tu quoque magna ex parte impuleris (c. aii = [f. 3^r]).

²⁶ Cf. Perosa 1973, 600. Circa l'elaborazione della prima *Defensio*, apparsa nei lavori su Marziale, e della redazione connessa al commento a Giovenale, qui denominata *Adu. Broth.* cf. Campanelli 2001, 19 nota 34 (che conferma per altre vie la medesima datazione della prima redazione), 27–28 (sulle due redazioni di questa risposta a Perotti).

²⁷ Cf. Perosa 1973, 598.

²⁸ L'ipotesi è di Perosa 1973, 600–601.

²⁹ I documenti sono menzionati da Perosa 1973, 600.

Mentre, però, del commento a Marziale consegnato a Lorenzo de' Medici esiste ancora l'esemplare di dedica (BML Laur. 53,33), la situazione per quanto riguarda il manoscritto contenente il commento a Giovenale è più complessa: una prima stesura, più ampia ma in forma provvisoria e priva di dedica, del commento a Giovenale si conserva nel ms. fiorentino BML Gadd. 165, che presenta aggiunte marginali autografe di Calderini;³⁰ il manoscritto di dedica del commento calderiniano che è giunto fino a noi (Firenze BML Laur. 53,2), esemplato da Bartolomeo Sanvito, pone qualche problema a questa ricostruzione, in quanto esso potrebbe essere stato consegnato a Giuliano de' Medici un certo tempo dopo l'apparizione della stampa.³¹

La fama del commento giovenaliano di Calderini è legata soprattutto alle edizioni a stampa: l'opera ebbe uno straordinario successo, testimoniato dalle numerose ristampe eseguite fino alla fine del Quattrocento e nel corso del Cinquecento e del Seicento: fino al 1498 si contano 24 edizioni, di cui quattordici contengono l'*Adu. Broth.*, mentre le restanti dieci lo ripubblicano insieme ai commenti di Giorgio Valla, Merula e Antonio Mancinelli;³² il commento di Calderini a Giovenale era ancora elogiato nell'edizione delle satire pubblicata nel 1685 a Utrecht dal von Hennin.³³

La *princeps* veneziana contiene, subito dopo la lettera di dedica, una *Vita Iuuenalis ex antiquorum monumentis* (c. aii^v [=3^v]), che fin dal titolo chiarisce la sua origine da fonti antiche. Essa sarà l'oggetto del presente studio, che intende mettere in luce le caratteristiche di questa *VI*, pubblicata da Cal-

³⁰ Vd. Perosa 1973, p. 600, e Campanelli 2001, 31 nota 48.

³¹ Sul ms. Firenze BML Laur. 53,2, cf. Dunston 1968, 77, il quale osserva che in una nota autografa del ms. posta nel margine sinistro del f. 86v, Calderini rimanda al passato al suo commento alla *Silvae*, che sarà pubblicato il 1° agosto 1475: "vide quid praeterea de hoc scripserim in illud carmen primae Siluae Papinii: 'Famosique lacus nomen memorabile seruat' (Stat. *Silu.* 1,1,67)". Tuttavia, Blasio 1986, 491 nota 51, e Campanelli 2001, 21–22 nota 36, non considerano l'allusione al commento alle *Silvae* un *terminus post* e confermano la data di consegna a Giuliano de' Medici, in quanto "[...] Calderini tende sempre ad anticipare i tempi, parlando con i verbi immancabilmente al perfetto di commenti che in realtà non erano ancora né sarebbero mai giunti in tipografia, anche se trattandosi di autori già oggetto dei suoi corsi universitari, poteva ormai ritenere che l'inevitabile diffusione delle *recollectae* avesse reso di pubblico dominio i contenuti [...]" (Campanelli 2001, 22 nota 36). Nonostante il lodevole sforzo argomentativo dei due studiosi, non si vedono prove decisive di questo atteggiamento di Calderini: perciò, l'ipotesi di Dunston resta ancora quella più solida; si aggiunga che l'elegante veste del manoscritto avrà richiesto all'*atelier* del Sanvito una progettazione assai più lunga delle poche settimane che separano la pubblicazione dei *Paradoxa in Iuuenali* del Sabino (9.VIII.1474) dall'ipotetica data di presentazione di questo prezioso codice di 154 fogli a Giuliano (1° IX.1474).

³² Dati ricavati dal sito dell'*Incunable Short Title Catalogue* della British Library: URL <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/istc/>.

³³ Cf. Campanelli 2001, 7 e nota 9.

derini, e le differenze tra essa e la tradizione biografica giovenaliana che si era sviluppata nel corso dei decenni precedenti. In effetti, per la storia delle *VI*, il commento di Calderini rappresenta uno spartiacque, in quanto grazie al suo successo editoriale riuscì ad oscurare la tradizione biografica precedente. Non è un caso, dunque, che i successivi commenti a stampa, che incorporarono quello calderiniano, si limitarono a ripubblicare la *VI* che era presente nel commento dell'umanista veronese. Per comprendere la novità dell'operazione compiuta da Calderini, è necessario delineare in breve il percorso compiuto dall'esegesi giovenaliana dall'Antichità all'Umanesimo.

La tradizione medievale

Dopo un silenzio di quasi tre secoli successivi alla morte, Giovenale fu "riscoperto" alla fine del IV secolo, forse anche grazie al magistero di Servio, il cui ruolo è ricordato in alcune *subscriptions* di manoscritti giovenaliani ed è attestato dalle circa ottantadue citazioni di satire nel suo commento virgiliano.³⁴ Nel corso del VI sec. d.C., un anonimo compilatore radunò alcuni scoli (i cd. *Scholia veteriora*) che si ritrovano in manoscritti di età successive.³⁵ Tra la fine del IX e l'inizio del X secolo, questa scoliastica antica su Giovenale fu rimaneggiata ed integrata con un nuovo apparato di scoli: gli studiosi sono d'accordo nel ritenere che questa nuova fase, generalmente conosciuta come *Commentario di Eirico – Remigio o recensio* φ e χ, risalga a Remigio d'Auxerre (c. 841–908) sulla base delle lezioni su Giovenale del suo maestro, Eirico d'Auxerre (c. 841–876), di cui è stata di recente ipotizzata la presenza in un manoscritto di Cambridge.³⁶

Dal IX secolo si assiste ad un vero *revival* di Giovenale, che diviene tra gli autori latini più copiati nel corso del Medioevo, arrivando a contare circa cinquecento manoscritti sopravvissuti fino a noi.³⁷ Nel X secolo, al materiale di Remigio si sovrappose uno strato di scoli elaborato in Germania nella cerchia di Bruno di Colonia (925–965).³⁸ A partire da questo nucleo si sviluppò una vasta produzione scoliastica che arrivò fino al XV secolo, alla

³⁴ La *scriptio* è nel Ms. Firenze BML Laur. 34,42 (IX sec.): "Legi ego Niceus apud M. Serbium Romae et emendavi" (il testo è tratto da Tarrant 1983, 200 n. 1, che riporta anche la versione rimaneggiata del ms. Leiden P.B.L. 82, di X–XI sec.), mentre Monno 2009 ha esaminato le citazioni giovenaliane nel commento serviano.

³⁵ Questi *Scholia veteriora* furono pubblicati in Wessner 1931, sulla base dei manoscritti elencati successivamente nella prima lista di Tarrant 1983, 201. Sulla loro natura cf. Zetzel 1984, 179–181.

³⁶ Si tratta del ms. Cambridge, King's College 52: cf. la rec. di Zetzel 2012 a Grazzini 2011. Questa *recensio* è parzialmente edita da Grazzini 2011, cui si rimanda, ma vd. anche Wessner 1931, xxiii–xxxii, Sanford 1960, 176, Tarrant 1983, 202 nota 15, Zetzel 2012.

³⁷ Vd. Tarrant 1983, 200.

³⁸ Vd. Grazzini 2011, xxxi–xxxiii.

quale i manoscritti, a partire dal XII secolo, hanno dato il nome di *Cornutus*, confondendo il maestro e commentatore di Persio con un improbabile allievo di Remigio d'Auxerre.³⁹ All'interno dei diversi strati della scoliastica giovenaliana appena delineati era presente una vita, che spesso era inserita nella sezione dell'*accessus*: tuttavia, le nostre conoscenze su queste *Vitae* medievali restano ancora lacunose.⁴⁰

Trasmessa con molti rimaneggiamenti per tutto il Medioevo, questa congerie di materiale biografico ed esegetico su Giovenale arrivò fino alla seconda metà del XIV secolo, quando in diverse zone d'Italia si verificò una ripresa del genere *De viris illustribus*, con cui le *Vitae* si emancipavano sia dagli *Accessus* (e dunque dai commenti) sia dalle *Summae*, entrando a far parte di raccolte biografiche che si differenziavano per finalità, genere e struttura dalla tradizione medievale. Sebbene allo sviluppo di questo genere non fosse estraneo Francesco Petrarca, autore di un'omonima raccolta, gli studiosi sono ormai d'accordo nel ritenere che il grande poeta italiano abbia colto un fermento umanistico e un interesse verso le biografie di autori del mondo greco e latino che era iniziato prima di lui.

La *Vita Iuuenalis* di Giovanni Colonna

A differenza di Petrarca, interessato solo a figure eroiche dell'Antichità, altri scrittori, come il domenicano Giovanni Colonna (c. 1298–c. 1343/1344), avevano ormai assegnato un valore di esemplarità anche a personaggi 'pagani' del mondo antico, sia greco sia latino, tra cui spiccavano appunto i poeti.⁴¹ Giovanni Colonna fu a stretto contatto con il Petrarca nel periodo del suo soggiorno ad Avignone (c. 1332–1336), in cui è da collocare presumibilmente la stesura della sua opera *De viris illustribus*, una raccolta di circa trecentotrenta biografie in ordine alfabetico, che resta ancora inedita;⁴² i rapporti tra i due rimasero sempre cordiali, tanto che Petrarca gli

³⁹ Sanford 1960, 177, collega il nome del *Cornutus* alla credenza carolingia secondo cui Giovenale sarebbe vissuto all'epoca di Nerone e sarebbe stato un contemporaneo di Persio; tale fraintendimento trovava una conferma nelle VI Ib, IIb, IIc, IIIa, IIIb, IIIc, IIId Dürr e indirettamente nei numerosi manoscritti che trasmettevano insieme le opere dei due autori di satire.

⁴⁰ Per le *Vitae* di Giovenale bisogna rifarsi ancora a Dürr 1888 e alle notizie della Sanford largamente dipendenti da Dürr: il recente Grazzini 2011, dedicato a pubblicare gli scoli della *recensio* ϕ e χ , non affronta deliberatamente il problema delle biografie presenti in questo materiale scoliastico (cf. Grazzini 2011, xxx nota 55), né riferisce dati sulla presenza o meno di *Vitae* nella descrizione dei manoscritti che precede l'edizione.

⁴¹ Le notizie su Giovanni Colonna sono tratte da Gianola 1980–1981, Surdich 1982, Barone 1985.

⁴² Per la datazione cf. Gianola 1980–1981, 510. L'opera si conserva nei mss. Bologna Bibliot. Univ. lat. 296 [491], Venezia, Marc. lat. X 58 [3173], Roma Casanat. XX.VI.34 [2396] che è copia del Marciano, Vat. Barb. lat. 2351 e Firenze Bibl. Naz. Conv. Soppr. G.

indirizzò otto delle sue *Epistulae familiares*, nel 1337 si fece accompagnare dal Colonna nella sua visita archeologica di Roma e andò a salutarlo a Palestrina poco prima che il frate domenicano morisse (c. 1343). Nella sua opera Giovanni Colonna dedica al poeta di Aquino una biografia più lunga del solito, nella quale raccoglie anche alcuni versi gnomici di Giovenale, a dimostrazione del valore morale che alla figura del poeta satirico e alla sua vita veniva ormai data. Si fornisce di seguito una trascrizione della VI di Giovanni Colonna che si basa sul solo ms. Vat. Barb. lat. 2351:⁴³

Iuuenalis poeta satiricus Rome claruit, librum de uitis Romanorum maxime composuit pluraque menti commendanda in eo scripsit et notabilia ad uitiorum detestationem et sobrietatis atque paupertatis commendationem.

Ex quibus hec paucula inserenda putavi: “Hispidi membra quidam [quidem *edit.*]” et dura brachia sepe promittunt atrocem animum.⁴⁴ Nemo repente fit summus.⁴⁵ “Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se Quam [quam quod *edit.*] ridiculos homines facit”.⁴⁶ “Intollerabilius nil est quam femina diues”,⁴⁷ “Quae non faciat quod principis uxor”.⁴⁸ “Summum crede nefas animam praeferre pudori Et propter uitam uiuendi perdere causas”.⁴⁹ “Torrens dicendi copia multis Et sua mortifera est facundia”.⁵⁰ “Pauca licet portes argenti uascula puri Nocte iter aggressus [ingressus *edit.*], gladium contumque timebis Et nocte [var. : mota *edit.*] ad lunam trepidabis arundinis umbra: Cantabit uacuuus coram latrone uiator”.⁵¹ Rara est concordia atque pudicitie (*sic*).⁵² “Maiores tumultu Planguntur nummi quam funera”.⁵³

Iste Iuuenalis fuit ex opido (*sic*) Aquino Campanie, qui uidens in curia Domitiani (*sic*) imperatoris quendam, qui Paspantonomius (*sic*) dicebatur qui, quamquam fuisset ystrion, adulationibus tamen et blanditiis ad tantum honorem deuenerat, quod uniuersis uiuentibus in Domi-

4. 1111 (copia acefala dell’opera del Colonna): cf. Gianola 1980–1981, 511–512 e la postfazione a 540 per il ms. fiorentino, Surdich 1982, 337.

⁴³ A differenza del ms. di Venezia che divide in biografie di pagani e cristiani, il ms. Barb. lat. 2351 riporta le biografie in ordine alfabetico, come il testimone bolognese: su questa distinzione cf. Gianola 1980–1981, 513–514.

⁴⁴ et dura brachia–animum] cf. Iuv. 2,11–12.

⁴⁵ Nemo–summus] cf. Iuv. 2,83: “Nemo repente fuit turpissimus”, forse contaminato con Iuv. 10, 110: “Summus nempe locus nulla non arte petitus”.

⁴⁶ Iuv. 3,152–153.

⁴⁷ Iuv. 6,460, ma il v. è espunto da molti editori moderni.

⁴⁸ Iuv. 6,617.

⁴⁹ Iuv. 8,83–84.

⁵⁰ Iuv. 10,9–10.

⁵¹ Iuv. 10,19–22.

⁵² Cf. Iuv. 10,297–298: “Rara est adeo concordia formae Atque pudicitiae”.

⁵³ Iuv. 13,130–131.

ciani curia praecelebat (erat enim cancellarius imperatoris), celo uirtutis in extirpatione tanti monstri miro modo utebatur.

Insuper scripta poetarum precio mirabatur, quae nondum fuerant recitata, ut ex alienis laboribus, sic honorem et gloriam impetraret, dum se auctorem operis testabatur. Ideo Iuuenalis non immerito in huius ystrionis et imperatoris ignominiam opus satirum componens tres scripsit uersiculos, quos in satira collocauit.

Quo scripto, cum se Domitianus redargui comperisset, odium et indignationem non modicam in Iuuenalem exercuit. Et quibus modis ipsum perderet scrutabatur. Sed quoniam Iuuenalis potentia inter Romanos tam excelsa fuerat, quod eum sine causa ledere non audebat, sub specie tamen dilectionis statuit sumendam de iniuriis ultionem. Ipsum enim prefecit militibus, quos in Egiptum illo tempore in expeditionem mittebat, quatenus ipsum conspectu suo penitus remoueret, sperans quoque quod et in conflictu casu belli perimeretur.

Post multum uero temporis expeditionis regressione, petiit libertatem, quam cum minime obtineret, se deceptum sibi spem amicitiae et honoris cognouit. Ideoque langore (*sic*) affectus et tedio uitam in externis partibus exalauit.

Ob hanc igitur causam librum composuit, cuius titulus talis est: Iunii Iuuenalis Aquinatis satirarum liber. Fuit enim Iuuenalis binomius dictus Iunius Iuuenalis (Giovanni Colonna, *De vir. ill.*, ms. Vat. Barb. lat. 2351, f. 69^r).

Nella prima parte, Giovanni insiste sul valore morale dell'opera poetica di Giovenale ("ad uitiorum detestationem et sobrietatis atque paupertatis commendationem") e giustifica in questo modo la successiva antologia di versi gnomici tratti dalle satire. Solo dopo i versi comincia la vera e propria parte biografica, nella quale Giovanni Colonna insiste sul rapporto tra Giovenale e Domiziano, assegna un ruolo fondamentale al pantomimo, che diviene qui un funzionario imperiale e annovera tra i vari difetti di questo personaggio anche quello di essere un plagiatore. L'allontanamento, in forma di incarico militare in Egitto, sarebbe venuto a Giovenale da alcuni versi scritti contro il pantomimo e l'imperatore Domiziano. Infine, Giovanni ricorda l'aneddoto secondo cui Giovenale avrebbe dato alla raccolta di satire un titolo grosso modo corrispondente al proprio nome. Questi elementi risalgono ad una tradizione contaminata di *Vitae* del poeta, che mescola alcuni elementi della *VI* Ila Dürr (*floruit* sotto Domiziano, potere del pantomimo a corte che plagiava versi di altri poeti comprandoli, Giovenale pubblica alcuni versi che Domiziano avverte come critica a sé stesso e al pantomimo, cautela nell'esiliare Giovenale per il suo successo, allontanamento da Roma dietro il pretesto della promozione) e altri della *VI* contenuta nel *Cornutus*

(vd. Dürr 1888, pp. 27–28), come ad esempio il titolo della raccolta di satire che conteneva il nome dell'autore.⁵⁴

La *Vita Iuuenalis* di Guglielmo da Pastrengo

Il secondo biografo della metà del Trecento è Guglielmo da Pastrengo (c. 1290 – 1362), il quale fu autore di una *summa* (*De origine rerum*), la cui parte principale è un *De viris illustribus*, che iniziò probabilmente dopo il 1348 forse sotto l'influsso di precedenti opere, oggi perdute, di autori attivi a Verona (Benzo d'Alessandria e Giovanni de Matociis il Mansionario). Il *De viris illustribus* di Guglielmo presenta in ordine alfabetico le vite di figure dell'Antichità e del Medioevo, tra cui compare anche Giovenale.⁵⁵

Iuuenalis, Aquinas poeta, ut Romanorum carperet uitia, librum satiricum, qui auctoris uocabulo nominatur, sub Domitiano heroyco metro conscripsit. Missus in Scotiam prefectus militum a Traiano, tedio finiuit uitam (Guglielmo da Pastrengo, *De vir. ill.*, p. 117,11–14 Bottari 1991).⁵⁶

1. ut Romanorum carperet uitia] cf. VI IIb IId et fort. IV 1.–3. carperet uitia, librum satiricum-conscripsit] cf. VI IId 3. Missus in Scotiam prefectus militum] cf. VI IV Schol. in Iuv. 7,92 ex Dürr 1888, p. 26 3.–4. tedio finiuit uitam] cf. VI IIa (taedio et angore uitam finiuit) : angore et taedio periit VI Ia IIIc : taedio et langore periit VI IIb IIc

Pur nella sua brevità, il testo di Guglielmo mescola elementi di diverse tradizioni biografiche giovenaliane: dominanti sembrano le notizie desunte dalla multiforme tradizione delle VI II,⁵⁷ quale il *carpere uitia* e la morte dovuta a *taedium*. Più complesso il rapporto con la VI IV a proposito del suo allontanamento da Roma per combattere gli Scoti, perché il resto della tradizione parla di Egitto: come si nota dall'apparato, la notizia sulla Scozia è presente anche nella tradizione scoliastica e nella VI IV, scritta da Ognibene Leonicensi nel XV secolo, ma la si ritroverà anche nella VI di Domenico di Bandino e in quella di Sicco Polenton (vd. *infra* su Ognibene, Domenico e Sicco Polenton): potrebbero perciò essere stati i tre umanisti a desumere da Guglielmo l'accento al trasferimento in Scozia come *praefectus militis* (*sic*)

⁵⁴ Cf. “Titulus talis est: Iunius Iuuenalis satirarum primus liber incipit. Iunius nomen est auctoris, sicut et Iuuenalis; fuit enim binomius”, in Dürr 1888, 27.

⁵⁵ L'edizione critica è curata da Bottari in Guglielmo da Pastrengo 1991. Sulla vita di Guglielmo da Pastrengo si rimanda alla ricca introduzione di Bottari e a Cerroni 2004.

⁵⁶ Nel seguente apparato e in quelli successivi l'abbreviazione VI significa *Vita Iuuenalis*, mentre i numeri fanno riferimento alla classificazione presente in Dürr 1888. Si fornisce di seguito la traduzione della VI di Guglielmo: “Giovenale, poeta di Aquino, scrisse un libro di satire in esametri, che prende il titolo dal nome dell'autore, per denigrare i vizi dei Romani. Inviato in Scozia come prefetto militare da Traiano, si tolse la vita per la noia”.

⁵⁷ Vd. Dürr 1888, 23–24.

ovvero le quattro *Vitae* potrebbero aver derivato la notizia dalla tradizione scolastica. Infine, è interessante che Guglielmo condivida con la *VI* del *Cornutus* e con Giovanni Colonna la notizia secondo cui il titolo della raccolta di satire avrebbe contenuto il nome di Giovenale (“librum satiricum, qui auctoris uocabulo nominatur”).⁵⁸

Forse a causa dell’origine delle *Vitae* di Guglielmo e Giovanni Colonna dalla tradizione enciclopedica della *Summa*, in entrambe si osserva una tendenza a ridurre le notizie biografiche a pochi elementi, che non concedono molto all’aneddotica che si era invece andata sviluppando nella tradizione medievale delle *Vitae* e in quella degli *Accessus* del *Cornutus*. In Giovanni è, altresì, evidente la tendenza alla moralizzazione della figura di Giovenale.

Le *VI* tra fine Trecento e inizio Quattrocento

Tra la fine del Trecento e la prima metà del Quattrocento, alcune testimonianze biografiche su Giovenale cominciano ad apparire anche nell’area toscana e in particolare a Firenze, dove si andava raccogliendo attorno al Salutati la cerchia dei primi umanisti toscani: tra questi si interessarono a vario titolo a Giovenale Carlo Marsuppini e Leonardo Bruni.⁵⁹ Per la biografia giovenaliana interessa soprattutto la figura di Domenico di Bandino (1335–1418), autore di un’opera enciclopedica in 34 libri intitolata *Fons memorabilium universi*,⁶⁰ che occupò l’intera sua vita, se è vero che egli l’abbia mostrata in una prima redazione allo stesso Petrarca durante una visita nel 1374 e che essa rimase incompleta alla morte di Domenico nel 1418.⁶¹

Domenico fu professore a Firenze dal 1381 al 1399 e amico del Salutati: dovette perciò trarre profitto dei progressi compiuti dagli intellettuali fiorentini nel campo delle conoscenze di testi latini poco noti per ampliare il bagaglio di fonti che traspaiono nella sua opera, in cui sono menzionati Livio, Tacito e gli scrittori dell’*Historia Augusta*.⁶²

⁵⁸ I rapporti tra l’opera di Guglielmo e quella di Giovanni Colonna sono ancora dibattuti: è possibile che Guglielmo abbia potuto vedere ad Avignone l’opera di Giovanni Colonna nel corso di una sua visita nel 1339: cf. Gianola 1980–1981, 535.

⁵⁹ Carlo Marsuppini e Leonardo Bruni non scrissero un commentario perpetuo alle satire di Giovenale, ma le loro opinioni sono menzionate dal compatriota Giovanni Tortelli (*Orthographia De Y littera s.v. Sylla*) e da Gaspare da Verona (su cui vd. *infra*): cf. Sanford 1951, 210.

⁶⁰ Su Bandini vd. Hankey 1957 e 1963.

⁶¹ Vd. Hankey 1960, 3.

⁶² Una descrizione delle fonti classiche e medievale presenti nel *De uiris claris* è in Hankey 1957, 178, in cui si sottolinea il ruolo di Salutati nella costruzione della “biblioteca” di Domenico di Bandino, il quale si giovò anche dell’apporto dei testi greci tradotti a Firenze dai primi allievi del Crisolora con l’aggiunta del trattato plutarco *De cohibenda*

Il più ampio libro del *Fons memorabilium universi* è il trentesimo, una vasta sezione *De uiris claris* che contiene tra le altre anche una breve biografia di Giovenale:⁶³

Iuuenalis, prout scribit Sycardus (*sic*) in suo de temporibus, fuit Aquinas, poeta satyrarum, qui dum imperaret Domitianus satyras componebat, et scribebat Ricobaldus in Cesarino, dum tractaret de 13° Augusto, cum a Traiano in Scotyam prefectus militum missus erat, vite tedio uitam exiuit (ms. Vat. Urb. lat. 300, f. 234^v).⁶⁴

La breve biografia nomina esplicitamente due fonti medievali: si tratta di Sicardo da Cremona († c. 1215) e Ricobaldo da Ferrara, autori di testi storici e cronachistici universali, che erano ben noti nell'area padana e centrale dell'Italia. Tuttavia, i riferimenti a Giovenale che troviamo nelle opere a noi pervenute di Sicardo e Riccobaldo sono assai scarni e non contengono l'informazione fornita da Domenico di Bandino. Nel caso di Sicardo, la notizia su Giovenale data dal *Chronicon* si limita ad affermare: *Iuuenalis satyram scripsit*.⁶⁵

Più complesso da ricostruire è il secondo riferimento, a Ricobaldo da Ferrara (c. 1245 – c. 1318), autore di testi di storia universale come il *Pomerium* (c. 1302) in sei libri, dedicato soprattutto alla storia biblica, il *Compendium historie Romane* (c. 1318) in dodici libri sulla storia degli imperatori romani e una serie di compendi di queste due opere maggiori come la *Chronica parva Ferrariensis* e la *Compilatio chronologica*.⁶⁶ A partire dagli studi della Hankey, risulta ormai accertata l'esistenza di un'opera intermedia elaborata da Riccobaldo tra il 1302 e il 1318, che rappresentava una versione *amplior* del *Pomerium* e del *Compendium*: di essa, che Hankey e

ira, la cui traduzione latina ad opera di Simone Atumano era stata rimaneggiata dal suo amico Salutati (Hankey 1957, 178–179).

⁶³ L'opera di Domenico di Bandino *Fons Memorabilium Universi* resta inedita nel ms. parzialmente autografo Vat. Urb. lat. 300, di ff. I + 301, cart. e membr. di XV sec., due colonne, grafia scolastica: vd. Stornajolo 1902, 269, Hankey 1960, 26–27. Altri testimoni sono Vat. Chigi G. VIII. 236 e Firenze Laur. Edili 170–172: cf. Hankey 1957, 179 nota 1.

⁶⁴ “Secondo le notizie che scrive Sicardo nel suo *De temporibus*, Giovenale fu un autore di satire di Aquino, che compose le sue satire mentre governava Domiziano e (scriveva Ricobaldo nel *Cesarinus*, mentre trattava del tredicesimo imperatore), essendo stato spedito in Scozia da Traiano come prefetto militare, si suicidò per il fastidio della vita”.

⁶⁵ L'edizione di Sicardo è quella di Holder-Egger 1902. Il testo su Giovenale è alla p. 107,25 dell'edizione. Già Hankey 1957, 197 e nota 5 aveva osservato che il testo di Sicardo a nostra disposizione sembra più povero di quello che consultava Domenico di Bandini, e ipotizzò che sia giunta a noi una versione lacunosa. Su Sicardo cf. Aris 1995.

⁶⁶ Sulle opere di Riccobaldo da Ferrara cf. Hankey 1958, 211; sulla vita di Riccobaldo cf. Hankey 1984 vol. I, xvi–xxii, e Prelog 1995, mentre l'esistenza di un testo che conteneva in versione *amplior* le notizie del *Pomerium* e del *Compendium*, è stata persuasivamente ricostruita in Hankey 1958.

Monti denominano *Historie*, Giovanni Boccaccio trascrisse una copia personale e oggi adespota nei primi 53 fogli del suo *Zibaldone*, mentre Domenico di Bandino sembra averne tenuto conto sia a proposito di Giovenale⁶⁷ sia in altri passi del suo *De viris claris*,⁶⁸ in cui la ricorda con il titolo di *Cesarianus*.⁶⁹

Accanto alle incertezze sulle fonti medievali, la *VI* di Domenico di Bandino si collega indirettamente alla tradizione di Guglielmo da Pastrengo, che contiene la notizia dell'allontanamento di Giovenale in Scozia con il titolo di *praefectus militum* e la sua successiva morte per *taedium*: tali notizie sono riprese dopo Domenico nella *VI* IV Dürer, scritta da Ognibene, e in quella di Sico Polenton.

Le *Vitae Iuuenalis* della metà del secolo: Ognibene Leoniceno, Sico Polenton, Tortelli e Gaspare da Verona

Un ambito che aveva favorito la produzione di *Vite* di Giovenale era il mondo della scuola, in cui le satire dell'Aquinate avevano goduto di una fortuna duratura nel corso del Medioevo: nella prima metà del Quattrocento, seppur faccia capolino qualche scrupolo morale, l'uso scolastico delle satire permane;⁷⁰ altrimenti, non si potrebbe spiegare l'enorme fortuna a stampa di cui godettero Giovenale e i commenti a lui dedicati da Calderini, Giorgio Valla e Antonio Mancinelli. Prima della stampa, le satire furono cautamente

⁶⁷ Riccobaldo accenna solamente a Giovenale nel *Compendium*, l'unica opera edita: "per hec tempora claruerunt uiri : Iosephus Iudeus... Iuuenalis poeta satyricus" (Hankey 1984, vol. II, 580).

⁶⁸ Nel *De uiris claris* alla voce dedicata a Riccobaldo, Domenico di Bandino menziona un'opera storica sugli imperatori: "edidit anno gracie 1300 singularem librum Cesarum initium faciens a Gayo Cesare perpetuo dictatore seriatimque ponens 116 usque ad sua tempora. Hoc est usque ad tempus imperatoris Henrici VII" (testo in Hankey 1958, 213 nota 24). Essa è ricordata nelle vite di Gallione (vd. Monti 2010, 120–121) e Lucano: vd. l'edizione e il commento in Monti 2010, 120 (testo) e 125–126 (commento). La studiosa ritiene che il testo *amplior* di Riccobaldo corrisponda all'*Historia Romana* trasmessa dai primi 53 fogli dello *Zibaldone* di Boccaccio (Firenze BN Banco rari 50) e dal ms. Trento, Mus. naz. 1358. Tuttavia, poiché in entrambi i testimoni non è riportata la notizia attribuita a Riccobaldo da Domenico di Bandino (vd. Monti 2010, 126), resta ancora valida, a mio avviso, la sfumatura argomentativa proposta da Hankey 1958, che pensava ad un testo di Riccobaldo assai ampio, le *Historie* (corrispondente alle *Historie* ipotizzate da Massera, su cui vd. Hankey 1958, 214), cui avrebbero attinto Boccaccio per redigere il suo *Zibaldone* e Domenico di Bandino.

⁶⁹ L'espressione *in Cesarino* dovrebbe forse essere corretta in *Cesariano* sulla base della citazione presente nella vita di Lucano, su cui vd. Monti 2010, 125 e Stok 2015; tuttavia, Hankey 1958 214, menziona un passo in cui compare la lezione *in Cesarino suo*. Come si è detto, già Hankey 1984, vol. I, xiii e nota 6, osservava che le *Historie* sono denominate proprio dal Bandino *Liber Caesarum*.

⁷⁰ Cf. Cian 1945, 409–411.

inserite nel programma d'insegnamento da Vittorino da Feltre,⁷¹ mentre il suo successore a partire dal 1449, Ognibene Leonicensi (1412–1474),⁷² compose un commentario continuo della raccolta giovenaliana, ancora inedito,⁷³ cui era premessa una *Vita*, che è stata invece pubblicata da Muccioli e Dürr e che qui si ripropone:⁷⁴

Cuius uita huiusmodi est. Cum ex Aquino municipio Romam se contulisset et ad dignitatem equestris ordinis peruenire sua uirtute meruisset,⁷⁵ ad mediam fere⁷⁶ aetatem declamauit et in Paridem pantomimum, qui⁷⁷ in deliciis apud imperatorem habebatur,⁷⁸ quaedam carmina fecit, quae deinde inseruit in eam satyram: “Et spes et ratio studiorum” (Iuv. 7,1).⁷⁹ Sunt autem haec: “Quod non dant procures, dabit⁸⁰ histrio.⁸¹ Tu Camerinos, Tu Bareas, tu nobilium⁸² magna atria curas?⁸³ Praefectos: Pelopea facit, Philomela tribunos” (Iuv. 7,90–92). Quae cum ad aures tyranni⁸⁴ uenissent, sui temporis uitia carpi intellexit, qua ex re commotus nulla⁸⁵ occasione reperta struendae mortis in Iuuenalem, sub honoris praetextu fecit eum praefectum militis⁸⁶ contra Scotos, qui bellum contra Romanos mouerant, ut ibi interficeretur Iuuenalis. Sed tamen paulo post, ut sciret iratum sibi⁸⁷ esse principem, in codicillis suis ad eum in exercitu mittendis inseruit: “Et te Philome-

⁷¹ Cf. ancora Cian 1945, 514 nota 348, che ricorda gli scrupoli morali anche di Leonardo Bruni, Tommaso Parentucelli (Niccolò V), Angelo Decembrio e Paolo II nei confronti di Giovenale.

⁷² Su Ognibene vd. Ballestreri 1971.

⁷³ Si conserva nei mss. Cesena, Malatest. S XXII,2, San Daniele del Friuli 89, Bologna, Monast. S. Salvatore, 114,40, London BL Addit. 22,158, Oxford Bodleian Arch. Selden B 50: cf. Sanford 1948, 97.

⁷⁴ La vita si legge nella descrizione del ms. Malatest. S XXII,2 data da Muccioli 1784, 147, e nell'edizione di Dürr 1888, 24 (= VI IV). In apparato *Caes.* indica il ms. malatestiano, mentre *Mucc.* l'edizione del Muccioli, che coincide con *Caes.*

⁷⁵ et–meruisset] ad dignitatem equestris ordinis peruenit. Cum uirtute sua meruisset *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁷⁶ Fere] ferme *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁷⁷ qui om. *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁷⁸ apud imperatorem habebatur] apud Traianum imperatorem uicitantem *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁷⁹ Et spes et ratio studiorum in Caesare tantum *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁸⁰ dabis *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁸¹ histrio] historia *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁸² nobilium] magnorum *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁸³ curas] seruas *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁸⁴ tyranni] Traiani *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁸⁵ Nulla alia *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁸⁶ militiae *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁸⁷ iratum sibi] iratum sibi esse *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

la⁸⁸ promouit”. Quo effectum est ut ipso animo consternatus ex mentis aegritudine diem suum obierit. Et haec de uita eius reperiuntur.⁸⁹

I dati significativi della *VI* di Ognibene possono essere così riassunti:

- 1) Giovenale giunse alla *dignitas* equestre;⁹⁰
- 2) Paride era un pantomimo caro ad un imperatore non specificato (Traiano nella versione di *Caes.*);⁹¹
- 3) L'imperatore lo spedisce a combattere gli *Scoti* (come in Guglielmo da Pastrengo, Domenico di Bandino e Sicco Polenton);
- 4) Non si tratta di un esilio: l'allontanamento è coperto dietro una finta promozione (cf. *VI* Ia, Ib, IIa, IIc, IIId);⁹²
- 5) La morte sarebbe stata prodotta da una frase sarcastica indirizzata-gli dall'imperatore.⁹³

Mentre queste notizie saranno corrette o completamente rigettate dal successivo Umanesimo romano, esse costituiscono un nucleo che si collega al più illustre precedente biografico di Ognibene: i diciotto libri *Scriptorum illustrium Latinae linguae* pubblicati a Padova intorno al 1437 da Sicco Polenton (1375/6–1447), il quale dedicò una lunga e aneddotica vita a Giovenale

⁸⁸ Philomena *Caes.* (= *Mucc.*).

⁸⁹ “La vita di costui è la seguente: dopo essersene andato dal municipio di Aquino a Roma, per il suo valore meritò di raggiungere il livello sociale dell'ordine equestre; recitò declamazioni fino alla sua mezza età e compose alcuni poemi contro il pantomimo Paride, che era annoverato tra i piaceri dell'imperatore, e li inserì in seguito nel suo volume di satire: ‘speranza e ragion di studio’ (Iuv. 7,1). Vi sono anche questi versi: ‘Ciò che non assegnano i maggiorenti, l'assegnerà l'attore. Tu coltivi i Camerini, i Barea, i grandi atri dei nobili? Ma è un *Pelopea* a nominare i prefetti, una *Filomela* i tribuni’ (Iuv. 7,90–92). Quando questi versi vennero alle orecchie del tiranno, questi capi che essi denigravano i vizi della sua epoca: agitato da questa vicenda e non riuscendo a trovare alcuna occasione per pianificare la morte di Giovenale, con il pretesto di gratificarlo lo nominò prefetto militare contro gli *Scoti*, che avevano mosso guerra ai Romani, affinché Giovenale fosse lì ucciso. Tuttavia, poco dopo, affinché gli fosse chiaro che il principe era arrabbiato con lui, inserì nei suoi decreti per inviarlo al suo reparto la frase: ‘Anche tu sei stato promosso da *Filomela*’. L'effetto di queste parole fu che sconvolto nel suo animo (*scil.* Giovenale) terminò i suoi giorni in uno stato di malattia mentale. E queste sono le notizie che si ritrovano sulla sua vita”.

⁹⁰ Questo dato manca nel resto della tradizione esaminata in Dürr 1888.

⁹¹ Ma l'apparato della *VI* IV di Dürr 1888, 25, osserva che la lezione “apud Traianum” è presente in altri due testimoni (Vat. Regin. 1724 e un *Codex Mediolanensis* 112, citato da Achaintre 1810, 3–4).

⁹² In tutte queste vite, la pretestuosa promozione consiste nello spedire Giovenale in Egitto; inoltre, in *VI* Ib, IIa sarebbe Domiziano ad allontanarlo, mentre in *VI* IIc, IIId l'autore dell'allontanamento è Nerone.

⁹³ La notizia è anche negli scolii a Iuv. 7,92: cf. Dürr 1888, 26.

nel quarto libro della sua opera.⁹⁴ L'edizione di Ullman e la mole del testo sconsigliano di riportare in questa sede la *VI* di Sicco Polenton, di cui invece si elencano i nuclei tematici caratterizzanti:

1) Sicco Polenton avverte all'inizio della biografia che il materiale biografico su Giovenale è pieno di notizie inverosimili:

“[...] adeo sentenciis variis certatum invenio quod magis credere quod putem verius quam affirmare || quod sit verum certa ratione possim” (Sicco *Script. ill.*, IV, pp. 122,33–123,1 Ullman).

2) Giovenale visse all'epoca di Marco Aurelio, chiamato *Antoninus Verus* da Sicco, il quale menziona anche le altre ipotesi di *floruit* (Domiziano, Traiano o Antonino Pio), per concludere con un auto-schediasma, tanto logico quanto errato, che il personaggio nominato da Giovenale nella prima satira: “Frontonis platani convolsaque marmora clamant” (Iuv. 1,12) sarebbe il retore Frontone, maestro di Marco Aurelio e Lucio Vero (cf. Sicco *Script. ill.*, IV, p. 123,1–17 Ullman);

3) Sul padre, liberto ma ricco oppure di famiglia illustre ma che fece adottare il figlio da un liberto, Sicco non prende posizione (cf. Sicco *Script. ill.*, IV, p. 123,18–21 Ullman).

4) La patria è Aquino, di cui ricorda anche l'altro famoso figlio, Tommaso (cf. Sicco *Script. ill.*, IV, p. 123, 21–25 Ullman);

5) Giovenale fu maestro di retorica e recitò declamazioni in pubblico. All'inizio, la sua attività poetica sarebbe stata tenuta nascosta dal poeta stesso, il quale avrebbe scritto i famosi versi della settima satira (“Quod non dant proceres, dabit histrio. tu Camerinos Et Barteas [Bareas *edd.*], tu nobilium magna atria curas? Praefectos Pelopea facit, Philomena tribunos”, Iuv. 7,90–92) contro un personaggio di cui, secondo Sicco, sarebbe poco chiara l'identità: Paride, il pantomimo preferito da Domiziano, un altro pantomimo, o uno degli imperatori – in ogni caso, Giovenale per prudenza non avrebbe pubblicato questi versi troppo mordaci (cf. Sicco *Script. ill.*, IV, pp. 123,26–124,5 Ullman);

6) Successivamente, pubblicò le sedici satire in cinque libri: nel terzo compaiono i versi summenzionati, di cui si sarebbe sentito offeso un imperatore, che avrebbe spedito Giovenale presso gli Scoti con il pretesto di una promozione, ma di fatto in esilio (cf. Sicco *Script. ill.*, IV, p. 124,6–19 Ullman):

⁹⁴ Vd. l'edizione curata da Ullman 1928, 122,32–125,16. Su Sicco Polenton cf. Coppini 1995, mentre sulla struttura e le fonti della sua opera cf. Viti 1976 e Piacente 1992.

“Ducendos quidem ad ordines ipsum propalam tribunum militum designavit eundemque in Scotiam ut exularet hac sub honoris umbra proficisci iussit” (Sicco *Script. ill.*, IV, p. 124,17–19 Ullman).

7) Sicco Polenton coglie l’occasione per fare un *excursus* geografico sulla Scozia, l’Inghilterra e le loro popolazioni, basato su Cesare, Solino e Beda (cf. Sicco *Script. ill.*, IV, pp. 124,20–125,1 Ullman),⁹⁵

8) Giovenale si recò con piacere in Scozia, perché pensava che si trattasse di una promozione e solo quando capì che era stato di fatto mandato in esilio, ne morì di crepacuore all’età di cinquant’anni.⁹⁶

“Ubi vero se tandem in exilio esse cognovit, tantus dolor tantaque moesticia mox eius animum occupavit, afflixit, oppressit quod mortem (necdum quinquagenarius erat) gravi letalique contracta valetudine obiit” (Sicco *Script. ill.*, IV, p. 125,11–14 Ullman).

Ritornano in Sicco Polenton alcuni elementi visti nelle *Vitae* fin qui esaminate: l’allontanamento in Scozia (come negli scoli, in Guglielmo da Pastrengo, Domenico di Bandino e Ognibene) e la parvenza di promozione, data da un imperatore sconosciuto, a questo esilio. In generale, la biografia di Sicco rappresenta una novità non tanto negli eventi raccontati, ma nel modo di procedere, per cui l’umanista patavino tende ad accumulare e ampliare i dati biografici (cf., ad es., l’*excursus* su Scozia e Inghilterra o il riferimento a S. Tommaso d’Aquino⁹⁷), a presentare più versioni di uno stesso episodio e a non distinguere tra elementi chiaramente fantasiosi e aneddotici, prodotti dalla tradizione successiva, e notizie autoschediastiche, spesso create da interpretazioni di versi di Giovenale.⁹⁸

Allo stato attuale delle nostre conoscenze, che resta invero assai lacunoso vista la massa di materiale inedito, non sembra che le *VI* del tardo Trecento o quelle di Ognibene e Sicco abbiano avuto una qualche influenza su Calderini o gli umanisti romani dell’ultimo trentennio del Quattrocento. Diverso è invece il discorso che riguarda la generazione di umanisti attivi a Roma che precedette l’attività di Leto e Calderini e che si radunò attorno a papa Niccolò V (1447–1455). Tra loro vanno ricordati Gaspare da Verona e Giovanni

⁹⁵ Cf. Stok 2015, che osserva un analogo *excursus* sulla Spagna nella *Vita Lucani* di Sicco Polenton.

⁹⁶ Il dato dell’età “giovanile”, sottolineato da Sicco, è in contrasto con una parte consistente della tradizione biografica, che invece ripete la notizia secondo cui l’esilio-allontanamento sarebbe caduto quando Giovenale era assai anziano: cf. *VI* Ia, Ib (“quamquam octuagenarius urbe summotus”), IIb (“periit anno aetatis suae altero et octuagesimo”), IIc (“cum octogenarius esset factoque principe unius cohortis”).

⁹⁷ Cf. Viti 1976, 250, 265–268.

⁹⁸ Le novità delle biografie di Sicco sono state messe in luce da Viti, 1976, Godman 1997, e confermate da Stok 2015.

Tortelli che si interessarono a lungo al testo di Giovenale: nel 1448 Gaspare da Verona (in. XV–1474) compose un commento alla sesta satira (*Contro le donne*), che dedicò a Niccolò V, quando già lavorava a Roma come insegnante privato e nella speranza di ottenere qualche beneficio dalla sua antica amicizia con il pontefice e con Giovanni Tortelli (il commento di Gaspare alla sesta satira, ancora inedito, si conserva nel ms. autografo 397 della Biblioteca Casanatense di Roma); in seguito, Gaspare portò avanti un commentario a Giovenale, che è rimasto anch'esso inedito nel ms. autografo Vat. lat. 2710, e che contiene una vita di Giovenale.⁹⁹

Sulla base di un'allusione di Gaspare, che nelle due lettere di dedica a Niccolò V premesse ai suoi commenti accenna ad un presunto lavoro esegetico sulle satire di Giovenale scritto da Giovanni Tortelli, Remigio Sabbadini ipotizzò più di un secolo fa l'esistenza di un commentario perpetuo, redatto dallo stesso Tortelli e identificato erroneamente dallo stesso Sabbadini nel ms. Nizza, Bibliothèque Municipale n. 85.¹⁰⁰ L'ipotesi fu accreditata anche dal biografo di Tortelli, Girolamo Mancini, e per decenni si cercò quest'opera perduta fino a quando Eva Sanford (nel 1951) non dimostrò che questo commento non era mai stato scritto da Tortelli e che Gaspare si riferiva ai *Commentarii de orthographia*, il lessico ortografico composto da Tortelli, in cui sono assai frequenti le citazioni da Giovenale.¹⁰¹

Sfortunatamente, sia il commento di Gaspare da Verona sia la presenza di Giovenale nel *De orthographia* di Tortelli restano ancora da studiare; altrettanto sconosciuto resta il loro influsso sugli studi giovenaliani di umanisti delle generazioni successive: Calderini, Sabino, Landino, Giorgio Valla, Cantalicio e Mancinelli.¹⁰² Tuttavia, l'apporto di Tortelli può cominciare

⁹⁹ Su Gaspare da Verona e i suoi lavori giovenaliani, cf. Sanford 1951, Sanford 1960, 202–204, che pubblica parte della lettera di dedica a Niccolò V *iuxta* il ms. Vat. lat. 2710, e Viti 1999, che ricorda le parole dello stesso Gaspare, il quale scriveva a Niccolò V che il commento giovenaliano sarebbe nato dopo un suo viaggio nel Regno delle due Sicilie e a seguito della delusione che avrebbe provocato in lui la vista delle condizioni miserevoli in cui giaceva la cultura nel Mezzogiorno. Nel Vat. lat. 2710 non c'è una *VI*.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Sabbadini, 1893, 97–99, e le obiezioni di Sanford 1951, in part. 207–209 e 215–216, che data il ms. di Nizza dopo la morte di Tortelli.

¹⁰¹ L'esistenza di questo commento è assunta da Mancini 1920, 234–235, e sembra ancora presupposta da Viti 1999, 468.

¹⁰² Vd. in proposito le parole di Cantalicio nella lettera di dedica a Guido, duca d'Urbino, del suo commento a Giovenale conservato nel ms. BAV Urb. lat. 662 (vd. *supra*): “Scripsere ante nostra tempora in suauissimi huius poetae nostri satyras permulti, qui certe non aliter quam Arcadica pecuria quibusdam ineptiis strepuerunt. De Laurentio, Tortelio, Gaspare meo Veronensi, Porcello, Philelpho caeterisque eius aetatis clarissimis uiris uerba non facio, qui sicut Romanas litteras e tenebris deque barbarie eripuerunt, ita huius praeclarissimi satyri argutissimas || sententias ignorarunt. Quod nulla alia ratione euenisse putauerim quam ut huic nostrae aetati aliquid gloriae reseruaretur” (BAV Urb. lat. 662, ff. 2^v–3^r).

ad essere valutato, in quanto parti biografiche su Giovenale compaiono soprattutto nella voce *Prologus* del suo lessico *De orthographia*, un'opera che fu ben nota e apprezzata dagli umanisti dell'epoca di Leto, Perotti e Calderini anche grazie alla stampa romana del *De orthographia* avvenuta nel 1471.¹⁰³

Nella voce *Prologus* l'umanista aretino si sofferma a lungo (più di venti colonne dell'edizione romana del 1471) su alcuni aspetti relativi alla storia della satira e, arrivando a parlare di Giovenale, fornisce alcune precisazioni sulla sua biografia, di cui si discutono di seguito i passi più significativi per collocare le notizie date da Tortelli all'interno dei diversi rami della tradizione delle *VI*:

Nam, teste Suetonio, Domitianus, sub cuius imperio Iuuenalis florere ac scribere contigit [...]. Nam ut caetera facilius ostendamus, constat eum temporibus fuisse Domitiani principis, quem sub nomine Neronis manifestissime ille nonnumquam acriter insecutus est, ut in satyra Crispini (*scil.* Iuv. 4) contra quem et Domitianum de luxuria et ingluvie aperte inuehit, licet sub cognomine Neronis principis exprimat (Tort. *Orth.* s.v. *Prologus*).¹⁰⁴

Tortelli colloca il *floruit* di Giovenale all'epoca di Domiziano, che il poeta avrebbe appellato *Nero* solamente per nascondere le sue critiche agli occhi del vendicativo imperatore flavio. Partendo dalla famosa quarta satira sull'enorme triglia di Ancona regalata a Domiziano, l'umanista spiega che l'interesse di Giovenale verso il genere della satira sarebbe stato provocato dalla corruzione dei costumi e dal servilismo imperante in età domiziana.

Il passo è significativo del modo di procedere di Tortelli, il quale da una parte discute elementi che traeva dalla tradizione biografica, come il *floruit* all'epoca di Domiziano (cf. *VI* Ib IIa, V, VI e *accessus* al *Commentum Cor-*

¹⁰³ Su Giovanni Tortelli (c. 1400–1466) la bibliografia è ormai consistente, anche se manca ancora un'edizione del *De orthographia*: le principali informazioni sono raccolte in Charlet 1994 e Donati 2006. Mentre l'edizione romana è datata Roma, Ulrich Han (*Udalricus Gallus*) e Simon Nicolai Chardella, *post* 10.VIII.1471, HC (+ Add) 15563 IGI 9682 ISTC it00394000, quella veneziana apparve in una data imprecisata dello stesso anno (Venezia, Nicolaus Jenson, 1471, HC 15564* = HC 15568 IGI 9681 ISTC it00395000), donde la difficoltà a stabilire quale sia stata la *princeps* – esistono anche varianti testuali significative tra i due incunaboli.

¹⁰⁴ Le citazioni sono tratte dall'*editio Romana* citata alla nota precedente. Di seguito la traduzione: "Infatti, secondo la testimonianza di Svetonio, si tratta di Domiziano, sotto cui toccò a Giovenale di vivere e scrivere [...]. Inoltre, affinché lo si mostri più facilmente, si sa che costui visse all'epoca dell'imperatore Domiziano, che egli ha spesso violentemente attaccato sotto la maschera evidentissima di Nerone, come fa nella satira di Crispino, in cui si scaglia chiaramente contro costui e Domiziano a proposito dei vizi di lussuria e gola, sebbene riferisca il nome del principe Nerone".

*nuti*¹⁰⁵), dall'altro arricchisce gli smilzi dati delle *Vitae* attraverso il confronto con le fonti antiche che descrivono il periodo domiziano (Plinio, Svetonio, Quintiliano e Marziale)¹⁰⁶ o con interpretazioni dei versi di Giovenale. Sembra frutto di ricerche personali l'ipotesi avanzata da Tortelli, secondo cui i riferimenti di Giovenale a Nerone sarebbero serviti al poeta per nascondere il vero obiettivo polemico delle sue satire, Domiziano. È probabile che in questo modo Tortelli abbia cercato di conciliare i versi del poeta satirico riferiti e l'ampia tradizione biografica che voleva Giovenale vissuto all'epoca di Nerone, di cui avrebbe attaccato il pantomimo preferito, Paride (cf. *VI* Ib, IIb–c, IIIa–d).

Nel seguito, Tortelli interviene anche sulla questione dei versi della settima satira relativi a Paride (Iuv. 7,90–92), individuando il personaggio nascosto dietro questi versi con un pantomimo famoso all'epoca di Domiziano:

Quos uersus cum legisset Paris dolore intrinsecus concepto curauit
Iuuenalem sub nomine dignitatis ab urbe depellere et nihil de satyra se
legisse ostendens praefecturam illi militum in Aegyptum a Domitiano
dari curauit (Tort. *Orth.* s.v. *Prologus*).¹⁰⁷

Tortelli introduce qui una novità priva di riscontri nella tradizione biografica: se l'umanista si adegua alla maggioranza delle *VI*, in cui si parla di allontanamento/esilio in Egitto, Giovenale sarebbe stato lì spedito, secondo Tortelli, per ordine dello stesso pantomimo, che avrebbe chiesto all'imperatore Domiziano di allontanare il poeta satirico dietro l'apparenza di una promozione. Questo intervento diretto di Paride non compare nella tradizione delle *VI*.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Dürr 1888, 27.

¹⁰⁶ Ad es., Tortelli cita la *Vita Domitiani* di Svetonio a proposito della calvizie di Domiziano e dell'espressione *caluo Neroni* (Iuv. 4,38): "Nam, cum ipsius Domitiani staturam idem Suetonius explicaret et eum toto corpore decentem fuisse ac pulchrum ostendisset subdit: 'Postea quoque caluitio deformis eant [*sic pro erat*]' et ut parum infra pergit: 'Caluitio ita offendebatur ut contumeliam suam traheret' (Suet. *Dom.* 18)" (Tort. *Orth.* s.v. *Prologus*). Marziale è, invece, ricordato a proposito di Crispino (Iuv. 4): "Ad quem (*scil.* Crispinum) Martialis, quia ex primoribus erat, benignissime scribit dicens in libro epigrammatum: 'Sic placidum uideas semper, Crispine, Tonantem Nec te Roma minus quam tua Memphis amet: Carmina Parrhasia si nostra legentur in aula, (Namque solent sacra Caesaris aure frui) Dicere de nobis ut lector candidus aude: Temporibus praestat non nihil iste tuis, Nec Marso nimium minor est doctoque Catullo. Hoc satis est: ipsi cetera mando deo' (Mart. 7,99)" Tort. *Orth.* s.v. *Prologus*.

¹⁰⁷ "Dopo aver letto questi versi Paride, avendo concepito un dolore profondo, fece in modo che Giovenale fosse cacciato dalla città dietro l'apparenza di una promozione e mostrando di non aver letto niente della satira, lo fece assegnare da Domiziano alla prefettura militare d'Egitto".

In conclusione il materiale biografico su Giovenale accumulato da Tortelli non costituisce una vera e propria *Vita*, ma fornisce notizie biografiche raccolte e commentate sulla base del confronto tra la tradizione delle *Vitae* del poeta di Aquino, alcuni passi delle satire e i testi coevi a Giovenale.

La *Vita Iuuenalis* del commento di Calderini

A grosse linee, questo è il quadro degli interventi che precedono gli studi su Giovenale svoltisi a Roma negli anni '70 del Quattrocento, di cui fu protagonista Domizio Calderini. Come si è già detto, Calderini era stato mosso a pubblicare in forma di commento il testo delle sue lezioni su Giovenale per rispondere all'apparizione nel 1474 sul mercato dei *Paradoxa in Iuuenali* di Angelo Sabino, collega presso lo *Studium* e avversario di Calderini.¹⁰⁸

Il testo di Sabino interessa solo in parte il nostro discorso sulle *Vitae* giovenaliane, in quanto i *Paradoxa* non prevedevano al loro interno una sezione dedicata alla vita del poeta e separata dal commento. Nondimeno, si trovano numerose notizie biografiche distribuite nel corso del lavoro, che mostrano l'interesse del Sabino anche verso questo punto dell'esegesi giovenaliana. In particolare, alla fine del commento alla prima satira, l'interlocutore misterioso dei *Paradoxa*, un tale *Praxiteles*, monaco abitante in Sabina, che avrebbe dato lo spunto alla stesura di quest'opera ponendo al Sabino varie domande su Giovenale, afferma:¹⁰⁹

PRA. Gratias habeo, mi Sabine, quod tam abstrusas et reconditas historias ac sententias Iuuenalis aperuisti. Vnum tamen mihi restat dubium, ut sub quo Iuuenalis principe scripserit melius intelligam [f. 17^v].¹¹⁰

La risposta del Sabino, lunga e articolata, non si può considerare una vera e propria biografia giovenaliana, ma è importante per il nostro ragionamento, in quanto l'umanista interviene all'inizio su uno dei punti più discussi di essa: l'epoca e l'imperatore sotto cui si sarebbe svolta l'attività poetica di Giovenale, per poi toccare altri aspetti controversi della biografia giovenaliana. Si riporta di seguito la risposta di Sabino, ma non integralmente per ragioni di spazio:

¹⁰⁸ Vd. *supra* nota 15.

¹⁰⁹ Desidero qui ringraziare Maria Farina, giovane e valente studiosa del Sabino, che ha portato la mia attenzione su questo passo dei *Paradoxa in Iuuenali*. La copia dell'opera del Sabino da me utilizzata è quella conservata nella Biblioteca Universitaria di Napoli, segnatura Inc. 219.

¹¹⁰ "PRA.: Ti ringrazio, Sabino, perché hai spiegato fatti ed espressioni tanto astrusi e misteriosi di Giovenale. Tuttavia, mi resta solo un dubbio: comprendere meglio sotto quale imperatore abbia scritto Giovenale".

1. SAB. Faciam profecto. Nam res digna mihi uidetur quam litteris mandetur. Itaque, quantum ego sentio, temporibus fuit Domitiani, quem saepe sub Neronis nomine acriter est insecutus, presertim (*sic*) in satyra Crispini, contra quem et Domitianum de ingluvie inuehitur, cum ait: || “Cum iam semianimem (*var.*) laceraret Flavius orbem Ultimus et caluo seruiret Roma Neroni” (Iuv. 4,37–38).¹¹¹

2. De domo enim Flauia et caluus fuit Domitianus, unde Suetonius, cum eum decentem et pulchrum ostendisset, subdit: [...] (Suet. *Domit.* 18 *var.*). At Nero ille sextus imperator nec de domo Flauia nec caluus fuit, immo capillo sufflauo, ita ut nec minima in eo caluities annotaretur. [...] Domitianus autem Nero per ironiam est dictus uel morum similitudine, cum neque fortis neque praestans esset [...]. Neque igitur in Neronem, sextum imperatorem, sed in Domitianum scripsit suo tempore regnantem, sed ut rem ipsam satyricis uelamentis et solis eruditatis ostenderet pulcherrima arte cum Montanus de rombo sententiam suam dixisset, ait Iuuenalis: “uicit digna uiro sententia. Nouerat ille Luxuriam imperii ueterem” (Iuv. 4,136–137), a Domitiano ad Neronem rem transferens, et subdit: “noctesque Neronis iam medias” (Iuv. 4,137–138).¹¹²

3. [...] Ideoque ipse semper duxi Iuuenalem secreto scripsisse nec nisi amicis quibusdam ostendisse, ut Quintiliano. Quare, cum de satyris VII (*sic*) libro de institutione oratoria loqueretur, de Iuuenali intelligens, “Sunt clari hodie et qui olim nominabantur (nominabuntur *edd.*)” (Quint. *Inst.* 10,1,94) inquit. Quod ostenderit Martialis per epigramma, ubi de primorum dictis et factis curiosus Iuuenalis ostendi-

¹¹¹ La parafrasi, assente nell'originale, è qui inserita per ripartire le traduzioni in più note. “1. SAB. Lo farò senz'altro, perché mi sembra un argomento degno di essere messo per iscritto. Dunque, per quanto ne so, Giovenale visse all'epoca di Domiziano, che il poeta ha spesso duramente bersagliato sotto i panni di Nerone; soprattutto nella satira di Crispino, in cui inveisce contro Crispino e Domiziano a proposito della loro ghiottoneria, quando afferma: “Mentre ormai l'ultimo dei Flavi faceva a pezzi un mondo già mezzo morto e Roma era schiava di un calvo Nerone” (Iuv. 4,37–38)”.

¹¹² “2. Si riferisce alla casa dei Flavi, mentre ad essere calvo fu Domiziano: da qui Svetonio, dopo aver mostrato che questi era aggraziato e bello, aggiunge: [...] (Suet. *Dom.* 18). Nerone, invece, fu il sesto imperatore e non fu membro della *gens Flavia*, né calvo, ma biondo, sicché non si poteva addebitare a lui in alcun modo la calvizie [...]. Domiziano, invece, è qui chiamato ‘Nerone’ per ironia o per la somiglianza di costumi, dal momento che non era né coraggioso, né prestante [...]. Dunque, Giovenale non scrisse contro Nerone, il sesto imperatore, ma contro Domiziano, che regnava alla sua epoca, ma per mostrare ai soli eruditi quest'argomento dietro i paraventi propri della satira dice con una raffinatissima arte, quando Montano esprime la sua opinione sul rombo: ‘Prevalse questo parere degno del suo autore. Era esperto dell'antica tradizione di lussuria dell'impero’ (Iuv. 4,136–137), trasferendo l'argomento da Domiziano a Nerone, e aggiunge: ‘(*scil.* era esperto) delle notti tirate fino a tardi di Nerone’ (Iuv. 4,137–138)”.

tur, potest intelligi. Ait enim: “Cum (*var.*) tu forsitan [...]” (Mart. 12,18,1–4) [...].¹¹³

4. Ostendisse (*scil.* Le sue satire) et aliis creditur, ex quibus aliqui fallaces captandae benivolentiae gratia Paridi accusauerunt uersusque illos ostenderunt, qui in satyra “Et spes ratio” (Iuv. 7,1) habentur: “Quod non dant procures, dabit istrio (*sic*)” (Iuv. 7,90). || Igitur Paris nil sciuisse ostendens sub nomine dignitatis ut eum depelleret, praefecturam ei in Egiptum dari a Domitiano curauit. Vnde est: “Quis numerare queat felicis praemia Gallae (Galli *edd.*)” (Iuv. 16,1). Ductus ergo in Egiptum aliam satyram de superstitione illorum scripsit, hoc est: “Quis nescit, Volusi” (Iuv. 15,1).¹¹⁴

5. Sed artificio Paridis a dignitate deiectus se deceptum uidens dolore interiit. Quod uero ad mediam aetatem declamauisse et octogennarium urbe summotum et libertini locupletis filium aut alumnum quidam prodit, ex se finxisse uidetur nec in monumentis vetustis, ut ipse ait, legisse, nisi apud Siconem Polentorum (*sic*), magnum ignorantiae torcular.¹¹⁵

6. Nulli ergo, mi Praxiteles sit dubium quin Domitiani temporibus Iuuenalis scripserit haec. Ego ut morem tibi gererem mandasse litteris uolui, simul ut tuus Cornutus quam norit historias intelligeres. Vale¹¹⁶ [f. 17^v–18^v].

¹¹³ “3. [...] Perciò, io ho sempre ritenuto che Giovenale abbia scritto in segreto e che non abbia mostrato i suoi versi a nessuno, se non a qualche suo amico, come Quintiliano. Perciò, quando questi parla delle satire nel settimo libro (*sic*) libro dell’*Educazione dell’oratore*, alludendo a Giovenale, dice: ‘Ci sono anche al giorno d’oggi scrittori eccellenti, che un giorno saranno rinomati’ (Quint. *Inst.* 10,1,94). Che cosa abbia mostrato Giovenale, può essere inteso grazie ad un epigramma di Marziale, in cui Giovenale è rappresentato come un uomo curioso dei fatti e detti dei potenti. Dice infatti: ‘Mentre tu [...]’ (Mart. 12,18,1–4) [...]”.

¹¹⁴ “4. Si ritiene che abbia mostrato le sue satire anche ad altri, tra cui alcuni intriganti, che lo denunciarono a Paride per ottenerne i favori e gli mostrarono quei versi che si trovano nella satira ‘La speranza e il sostegno’ (Iuv. 7): ‘Ciò che non assegnano i maggiorenti, lo assegnerà un attore’ (Iuv. 7,90). || Di conseguenza, Paride, facendo mostra di non sapere nulla, si adoperò affinché gli fosse assegnata da Domiziano la prefettura militare in Egitto, in modo che lo si espellesse dietro le vesti di un incarico ufficiale. Da qui i versi: ‘Chi potrebbe enumerare, Gallo, i vantaggi della vita militare’ (Iuv. 16,1). Condotta poi in Egitto, scrisse un’altra satira sulla superstizione di quei popoli, cioè: ‘Chi ignora, Volusio’ (Iuv. 15,1)”.

¹¹⁵ “5. Rimosso dalla sua condizione grazie alle manovre di Paride, resosi conto di essere stato ingannato morì per il dolore. Quanto al fatto che qualcuno affermi che avrebbe recitato declamazioni fino alla sua mezza età e che sarebbe stato allontanato da Roma all’età di ottant’anni e che sarebbe stato figlio o allievo di un ricco liberto, sembra che costui l’abbia inventato di sana pianta e che non si legga nei monumenti antichi, come egli stesso afferma, ma solo presso quel grande torchio produttore di ignoranza che è Sicono Polentone”.

¹¹⁶ “6. Non c’è nessun che dubiti, Prassitele, che abbia scritto questi versi all’epoca di Domiziano. Io ho voluto metterlo per iscritto per assecondarti, ma anche affinché tu comprenda quanto quel tuo Cornuto se ne intenda di storia”.

In questo lungo passo, Sabino interviene con precise annotazioni circa alcuni aspetti della biografia di Giovenale e trova il modo, alla fine, di polemizzare con Calderini, come vedremo. La prima parte è dedicata al *floruit* del poeta, che Sabino colloca decisamente all'epoca di Domiziano, sulla base di alcuni versi della quarta satira di Giovenale sulla calvizie riferiti a Nerone, che però Sabino giudica allusivi dell'imperatore Domiziano, la cui calvizie era evidenziata anche da Svetonio. Subito dopo, l'umanista commenta un passo di Quintiliano, che allude alla poesia satirica di Giovenale senza nominarlo, per concludere che il poeta diffondeva le proprie satire solo in un ristretto numero di conoscenti. Si tratta però di un'opinione personale di Sabino, come l'umanista evidenzia con l'espressione "ipse semper duxi Iuvenalem secreto scripsisse", e infatti subito dopo aggiunge che all'interno di questo ristretto pubblico ci dovessero esser alcuni cortigiani del potente mimo Paride, che riferirono a costui i versi famosi della settima satira "Quod non dant proceres, dabit histrio". Questa soffiata spiegherebbe l'esilio di Giovenale in Egitto con una funzione militare, notizia cui Sabino presta fede anche perché l'episodio sarebbe, secondo l'umanista, testimoniato dalla sedicesima satira sulla vita militare e dalla quindicesima sulle superstizioni degli Egiziani.

Appare, dunque, evidente come Sabino abbia delineato un profilo biografico del poeta che si basava esclusivamente sulle testimonianze del poeta stesso e delle notizie che provengono da autori coevi a Giovenale (Marziale, Quintiliano, Svetonio): questo metodo appare molto simile a quello che si è visto in precedenza adoperato da Tortelli. Proprio sulla base di questo confronto di fonti Sabino si sente autorizzato a mettere in dubbio alcune notizie che erano invece presenti nella biografia che andava all'epoca diffondendo Calderini (vd. § 5 di Sabino): l'attività declamatoria di Giovenale, la sua origine o il suo discepolato presso un ricco liberto, l'esilio in tarda età. Sabino non nomina l'estensore di queste notizie ("quidam prodit"), ma questi è facilmente riconoscibile nel Calderini, in quanto, come vedremo, nel suo commento a stampa l'umanista veronese si vantava di aver riportato una *VI* tratta da documenti antichi. Credendo che l'annuncio fosse una delle solite *boutades* calderiniane, Sabino respinge come invenzioni dell'umanista tutte queste notizie biografiche e accusa l'anonomo avversario di non aver avuto a disposizione alcun documento antico, ma di essersi in realtà servito della *VI* di Sicco Polenton. Vedremo fra poco che su quest'ultimo punto Sabino si era sbagliato e che invece Calderini aveva davvero fatto ricorso consapevolmente ad una *VI* antica.

In effetti, sin dalla dedica a Giuliano de' Medici, Calderini mostra di essere cosciente della distanza che esisteva tra il suo lavoro, la cui ricchezza

esegetica ne faceva un'autentica novità nel panorama della sua epoca, e quelli che l'avevano preceduto:

Nam Iuuenalis satyras noua commentatione tuo nomine explicare conatus sum. In quibus interpretandis non ignoras quam multi bonarum artium studiosi operam posuerint et tamen aliquando ingenue sint professi se multa non assecutos esse uel carminis obscuritate uel temporum ignoratione [f. 2^r].¹¹⁷

Con la consueta presunzione, Calderini ricorda lavori esegetici precedenti e trova così l'occasione di liquidarli in due battute, affermando che questi non avevano compreso molti luoghi delle satire per l'oscurità dello stile di Giovenale o per ignoranza di riferimenti storici¹¹⁸ – non è chiaro se qui l'umanista di Verona si riferisca a qualche commentatore in particolare o se faccia riferimento alla congerie di materiale esegetico medievale su Giovenale che circolava ancora alla sua epoca.

Pur tenendo conto della volontà di pubblicizzare un testo da vendere, il commento di Calderini rappresentò effettivamente una novità per molti aspetti, tra cui si può annoverare anche la biografia che Calderini scelse di inserire: l'umanista veronese è il primo a pubblicare all'inizio del suo commento, dopo la dedicatoria a Giuliano de' Medici, una *VI* che deriva dalla tradizione più antica, quella che Dürr denominò *Ia*, allontanandosi tanto dalla tradizione biografica medievale, quanto dalle precedenti biografie umanistiche.¹¹⁹

IVVENALIS VITA EX ANTIQVORVM MONVMENTIS

IVNIVS Iuuenalis libertini locupletis incertum^a alumnus an filius^b, ad mediam fere aetatem declamauit animi magis causa quam quod scholae^c aut foro praepararet. Deinde^d paucorum uersuum satyra non absurde composita in Paridem pantomimum poetamque eius^e semestribus militiolis^f tumentem^g, genus scripturae industrie^h excoluit. Et tamen beneⁱ diu, ne modico quidem auditorio quicquam committere ausus est^j. Mox magna frequentia tantoque successu bis aut^k ter auditus est, ut ea quae^l prima fecerat, inferciret nouis scripturis^m.

¹¹⁷ “Ho provato a spiegare con un nuovo commento a te dedicato le satire di Giovenale. Tu sai bene quanti studiosi di letteratura si siano impegnati a interpretarle e come tuttavia essi abbiano talvolta candidamente ammesso di non aver raggiunto un gran risultato vuoi per l'oscurità del poema vuoi per ignoranza del periodo storico”.

¹¹⁸ Si tratta dei due aspetti dell'esegesi calderiniana che saranno sottolineati anche dal Cantalicio: vd. *infra* pp. 209–211.

¹¹⁹ L'apparato delle varianti riporta le lezioni presenti nell'edizione e nell'apparato della *VI Ia* edita Clausen 1969, che si basa su quattro mss.: Leid. Voss. 64 (B), Paris. lat. 9345 (H), Flor. Laurent. 34,42 (K), Vat. Urb. lat. 661 (U). Il *siglum Ia* indica l'accordo di questi testimoni nelle edizioni di Dürr e Clausen, *Dü* il testo edito da Dürr, *Cl* quello di Clausen. Un accurato esame delle sezioni di questa *VI* è fornito da Brugnoli 1963.

“Quod non dant proceres, dabit histrio. Tu Camerinos et Bareas, tu nobilium magna atria curas?

Praefectos Pelopea facit, Philomela tribunos” (Iuv. 7,90–92).

Erat tamenⁿ in delitiis aulae histrio^o multique fautorum eius quotidie prouehantur. Venit ergo Iuuenalis in suspicionem, quasi tempora figurate^p notasset, ac statim per honorem militiae quanquam octogenarius urbe summotus^q est missusque ad praefecturam cohortis tendentis in extremam Aegypti partem^r. Id supplicii genus placuit, ut leui atque ioculari delicto par esset. Verum intra breuissimum tempus angore et taedio periit.

Temporibus Domitiani floruit ad Neruaeque tempora peruenit, quod quoniam eius carmen plane indicat multa praeterea testimonia, a nobis non est longa disputatione confirmandum.

In fine operis defensio aduersus Brotheum grammaticum calumniatorem commentariorum Martialis cum recriminatione.

Opus totum in xvi satyras diuiditur, neque iis assentior qui in libros distribuunt. Sed iam de satyra dicamus [f. 3^v = ms. Firenze BML Laur. 53,2 ff. 3^v–4^r].

^aincertum est *Ia* ^bfilii an alumnus *Ia* ^cscholae *BK* : se scholae *H Cl.* : scholae se *U Dū* ^dDeinde *Cl.* : et dein *U Dū* ^eEius] *om. K* ^fmilitioli *corr. ex Dū* : militioli *ed. Cald.* ^gtumentem *Cl.* : emitantem *Dū* ^hindustriose *Cl.* : industrie *Dū* ⁱtamen bene *Dū* : tamen *B Cl.* : tam *H* : bene *U* ^jest ausus *Ia Dūrr* ^kaut *H K U Dū* : ac *B Cl.* ^lquae] quoque *Dū* : quoque quae *Cl.* ^mscripturis *H U* : scriptis *Dū Cl.* ⁿtunc *Dū* : tum *Cl.* ^ohistrio] *om. Ia Dūrr* ^pfigure *Cl.* : figure *Dū* ^qsemotus *U* ^rtendentis in e. A. p.] in e. A. p. tendentis *Dū* : in e. p. A. tendentis *Cl. B K* : in e. p. tendentis *H* : in e. A. p. occidentis *U*

VITA DI GIOVENALE TRATTA DAI DOCUMENTI DEGLI ANTICHI

Non è chiaro se Giunio Giovenale sia stato allievo o figlio di un ricco libertino; pronunciò declamazioni fin quasi alla mezza età più per piacere che perché le approntasse per la scuola o per il tribunale. In seguito, dopo aver composto una satira non spregevole di pochi versi contro il pantomimo Paride e contro un poeta che si entusiasmava della breve leva militare di sei mesi di quello; coltivò con passione questo genere letterario. E tuttavia per lungo tempo non ebbe il coraggio di affidare alcunché nemmeno ad una piccola cerchia di ascoltatori. In seguito, le sue recitazioni vennero ripetute due o tre volte con una grande folla e un tale successo che ampliò con nuove parti quel testo che aveva composto per primo: “Ciò che non assegnano i maggiorenni, l’assegnerà l’attore. Tu coltivi i Camerini, i Barea, i grandi atri dei nobili? Ma è un Pelopea a nominare i prefetti, un Filomela i tribuni”.

Quell'attore era però tra i divertimenti della corte e di giorno in giorno venivano promossi molti dei suoi sostenitori. Perciò, Giovenale fu considerato sospetto di aver voluto in un modo per così dire allusivo criticare la sua epoca e immediatamente attraverso una promozione militare fu allontanato da Roma, sebbene già ottantenne, e spedito al comando di una coorte che si dirigeva verso le zone più lontane dell'Egitto. Fu deciso questo tipo di punizione, perché corrispondesse a una colpa lieve e scherzosa. Tuttavia, nel giro di pochissimo tempo morì per l'affanno e il fastidio.

Fiorì ai tempi di Domiziano e giunse fino all'epoca di Nerva, e questo fatto non deve essere confermato da noi con una lunga discussione, perché lo indicano chiaramente la sua poesia e in più molte altre testimonianze.

Alla fine dell'opera c'è la difesa con una replica contro il grammatico Broteo, calunniatore del mio commento a Marziale

L'intera opera si divide in sedici satire, e dissento da coloro che la distribuiscono in libri. Ma ora parliamo della satira.

Come risulta evidente dall'apparato, la prima parte della presente edizione della *VI* pubblicata da Calderini, fino a *taedio periit*, si può far rientrare tra le testimonianze che riportano la *VI* Ia di Dürr, che è riferita da mss. medievali collocabili tra XI e XIII secolo.¹²⁰ Essa si allontana dalle tradizioni umanistiche che abbiamo fin qui esaminato su punti essenziali della biografia del poeta: in particolare, la *VI* "di Calderini" si differenzia da quelle di Ognibene e Sicco Polenton circa il luogo di nascita del poeta, in quanto non menziona Aquino, e quello di destinazione dell'esilio, camuffato da promozione, che è l'Egitto; inoltre, la *VI* usata da Calderini precisa che i versi contro Paride non furono pubblicati fino a quando il successo non indusse Giovenale ad inserirli nell'attuale settima satira.

A partire dal quarto paragrafo (*Temporibus...*), Calderini inserisce alcune considerazioni sul *floruit* di Giovenale all'epoca di Domiziano e la morte negli anni del principato di Nerva, che sembrano un'aggiunta dell'umanista, come mostra l'uso di *a nobis*. Nel paragrafo successivo è ancora Calderini che ricorda la presenza dell'*Adu. Broth.* alla fine del commento e che conferma la volontà dell'umanista, nonché dello stampatore, di pubblicare un incunabolo in cui convivessero il commento a Giovenale e l'*Adu. Broth.*¹²¹ Infine, nell'ultimo paragrafo, Calderini polemizza anche contro la distribuzione in cinque libri delle satire giovenaliane, che è presente in numerosi

¹²⁰ Un elenco è in Dürr 1888, 22.

¹²¹ Il problema della progettazione dell'*editio princeps* del 1475 è discusso *supra* alle pp. 181–185.

manoscritti medievali, e preferisce considerare le sedici satire prive di divisione in libri.

Appare dunque chiara, deliberata e netta la scelta fatta da Calderini, che determina un cambio di metodo rispetto al comportamento dei precedenti umanisti. Egli pubblica una *VI*, in cui non sono le singole notizie a costituire una novità rispetto alla tradizione umanistica: il dato originale è invece costituito dall'essersi astenuto dal comporre una propria biografia, decidendo di mettere a disposizione dei lettori per intero una *VI* dal sapore antico e priva di interpolazioni personali, circoscrivendo con grande evidenza nella parte finale della *Vita* la propria opinione personale a proposito del *floruit* tra Domiziano e Nerva e dell'antica divisione in cinque libri delle sedici satire. In questo modo, si sfrondeva la tradizione delle *VI* da una congerie di materiali incontrollati, molti provenienti dagli *Accessus* o dalle glosse del *Cornutus*, non si rielaboravano materiali precedenti, né si sceglieva la strada di un'accumulazione di notizie alla Sicco Polenton, o una costruzione biografica basata sui dati interni alle satire (autoschediasma) e sulle notizie degli autori contemporanei di Giovenale (Svetonio, Marziale, Plinio), come avevano fatto Tortelli e alla sua epoca Sabino.

Di fronte ad una tradizione, come quella delle *Vitae* di Giovenale, in cui emergevano troppi dati tra loro contrastanti, Calderini procede consapevolmente ad un recupero dal sapore quasi archeologico della testimonianza biografica da lui orgogliosamente definita EX ANTIQVORVM MONVMENTIS. Si tratta di un approccio in linea con gli interessi e l'atteggiamento dell'Umanesimo romano dell'epoca: esso ricorda i summenzionati recuperi operati da Leto dell'antica *Vita Lucani* di Vacca o del venerabile ms. Mediceo e del commento attribuito al grammatico Probo per la *Vita Vergilii*; questo ritorno all'antico è, a sua volta, figlio del magistero di Lorenzo Valla, il quale aveva illustrato nelle *Elegantie* e nelle altre sue opere di linguistica che per dirimere questioni di lingua e usi latini bisognava mettere da parte le *auctoritates* medievali e tornare ad ascoltare la voce degli antichi.¹²²

Se questa ricostruzione delle cause che sottendono la soluzione offerta da Calderini ha una sua verisimiglianza, bisognerebbe spiegare come Calderini sia venuto in qualche modo a contatto con il materiale della *VI* Ia di Dürer e perché l'abbia ritenuto antico e degno di essere pubblicato nel suo commento. Sfortunatamente, però, non siamo in grado di ricostruire questo aspetto della storia, sia perché non è noto su quali manoscritti di Giovenale abbia

¹²² In questo caso, la lezione di Valla sarebbe stata assorbita dagli umanisti romani anche nell'ambito delle biografie di autori antichi a partire dagli anni '70 del Quattrocento, mentre un Tortelli, che sceglieva di rielaborare materiale ampio, composito e di diversa provenienza, pur con l'ausilio di fonti coeve a Giovenale, si colloca ancora al di qua dell'esperienza filologica di Valla.

lavorato Calderini, né si sono conservati documenti che attestino l'uso di uno dei manoscritti antichi di Giovenale in quanto la biblioteca dell'umanista veneto andò dispersa alla sua morte precoce e inaspettata.¹²³ l'unico appiglio che ci resta è una notizia fornita dallo stesso Calderini, il quale a proposito del suo viaggio in Francia, svolto nel 1472, accenna nell'*Adu. Broth.* al fatto che lì sarebbe venuto in possesso di un manoscritto di Giovenale *perantiquus* che avrebbe portato con sé a Roma, ma di cui non è rimasta traccia.¹²⁴

Il successo di questa scelta fatta da Calderini, che evidentemente rispondeva alle aspettative di un pubblico educato da Valla e da Pomponio Leto a richiamarsi agli antichi, fu immediato: il Cantalicio, che era stato suo allievo e che dedicò a Guido da Montefeltro, duca d'Urbino, il suo commento a Giovenale scritto tra il 1488 e il 1492 e conservato nel già menzionato ms. BAV Urb. lat. 662,¹²⁵ ricorda nella lettera di dedica al Duca il debito che la sua esegesi giovenaliana aveva contratto con l'insegnamento di Calderini:

Scripsere autem de nostris, quos scierim, in hunc poetam Domitius Veronensis, Alexandrinus Merula, Georgius Valla et Angelus Sabinus. Ex quibus omnibus Domitius, uir nostra aetate ad bona studia et Graeca et Latina ingeniosissimus, optime ac perspicacissime omnium scripsit. Ex Latinis enim Graecisque auctoribus diligentissime argutissimeque plurima expiscatus, satis peruium, ut multa alia, hunc satyrum reddidit. Cuius ego immaturam mortem molestissime fero. Pro fuit enim studiis nostris permultum, plus multo profuturus, si licuisset.

Quem ego in hac mea interpretatione ita sum emulatus in his quibus mihi uerus uidetur interpres, ut multa per eadem uerba, multa ab eius uerbis parum immutata protulerim. Quae autem aut nimis obscura aut frequentius intacta reliquit, adeo clara atque adeo explanata reddidi-

¹²³ Dall'elenco fornito da Munk Olsen 1982, I, 553–597, la *Vita* Ia Dürr è presente nei seguenti venti testimoni: Bruxelles BR 9973 (XI s.), Einsiedeln Stiftsbibl. 365-IV (XI s.), Firenze BML 43,42 (XI s.), Leiden BPU Voss. lat. F.64 (X s.); London BL Addit. 15600 (IX/X s.), London BL Royal 15.B.xvii (XI s.), London BL Royal 15.B.xviii (XI s.), Montpellier Fac. de médecine 125 (IX s.), München Staatsbibl. Clm 408 (XI s.), Napoli BN IV.F.45 (XII/XIII s.), Pamplona Iglesia Catedral 38 (XI/XII s.), Paris BnF lat. 8070-I (X s.), Paris BnF lat. 9345-II (XI–XIII s.), Vaticano BAV Ottob. lat. 1031-II (XI s.), Vaticano BAV Palat. lat. 1701 (X s.), Vaticano BAV Reg. lat. 2029 (XI s.), Vaticano BAV Urb. lat. 342 (IX–X s.), Vaticano BAV Urb. lat. 661-I (X s.), Vaticano BAV Vat. lat. 2810 (X s.), Wien Österreich. Nationalbibl. 277-I VIII/IX–XVI s.).

¹²⁴ “Atque ut inde incipiam: codex meus perantiquus, quem ex Gallia attuli, uobisque ac multis aliis iam ostendi” (*Adu. Broth.* [f. 91^r]), su cui cf. Levi 1900, 33 nota 1, e Perosa 1973, 599. Non si è qui proceduto al confronto tra il testo della *VI* Ia Dürr presente nei mss. elencati da Clausen 1969, da Munk Olsen 1982, I, 553–597 e dallo stesso Dürr e quello di Calderini, compito che ci si prefigge di svolgere in un lavoro successivo.

¹²⁵ Vd. *supra* pp. 179–180.

mus, ut rudes quoque iam pueri Iuuenalis satyras ualeant intelligere
(BAV Urb. lat. 662, f. 3^f).¹²⁶

Non si tratta solo di parole scritte in omaggio alla memoria del maestro, ch  Cantalicio mise in pratica gi  prima del commento alcune delle scelte che erano state compiute dal Calderini. Cos , alla fine della sezione successiva alla lettera di dedica, che conteneva la tradizionale storia del genere letterario della satira ed   intitolata “De satyra unde sit appellata”,¹²⁷ Cantalicio, arrivato alla raccolta di Giovenale, riprende la considerazione di Calderini circa la divisione in libri delle satire:

Scripsit satyras sexdecim, quae non satis apte a plerisque in tria librorum uolumina distinguuntur (BAV Urb. lat. 662, f. 5^v).¹²⁸

Dopo questa sezione di critica letteraria vengono i summenzionati epigrammi di risposta, che si concludono con un epigramma in distici sulla vita di Giovenale, che precede il commento alla prima satira:

POETAE VITA

Hic est ille tibi satyrus, quem misit Aquinum,
Iunius in patria qui Iuuenalis erat,
qui libertini fuerat locupletis alumnus
(hunc nisi credideris forte fuisse patrem).
Claruit et uates caluo sub principe Romae 5
“iudice me” (Iuv. 8,188), satyri gloria prima chori. ||
Aetatis medios iam declamauit ad annos
audiuitque frequens uis numerosa uirum.
“Quod non dant proceres, dabit histrio” dixerat olim
feruidus in Paridem, tempora saeua notans, 10
principis hoc patulas sed cum peruenit ad aures,
optimus ingrata migrat ab urbe senex,

¹²⁶ “Su questo poeta (*scil.* Giovenale) scrissero tra quelli della nostra epoca, che abbiamo conosciuto, Domizio da Verona, Alessandrino Merula, Giorgio Valla e Angelo Sabino. Di tutti questi Domizio, l’uomo pi  dotato della nostra epoca negli studi di greco e latino, ha scritto le cose migliori e le pi  penetranti di tutti. Dopo aver cavato moltissimo materiale dagli autori latini e greci grazie alla sua straordinaria perseveranza e intelligenza, ha reso questo poeta satirico abbastanza accessibile, come ha fatto con molte altre opere. Di costui io sopporto a stento l’immatura scomparsa: egli infatti contribu  moltissimo ai nostri studi, e ancor di pi  avrebbe contribuito, se gli fosse stato permesso.

In questo mio commento io l’ho emulato, per quelle parti in cui mi sembra che lui sia stato il vero interprete, in modo da riferire molte spiegazioni con le stesse parole, molte altre cambiando di poco le sue parole. Quelle espressioni (*scil.* di Giovenale) che egli lasci  in una forma un po’ troppo oscura o pi  spesso priva della sua spiegazione, le abbiamo rese e illustrate cos  chiaramente che anche dei ragazzi ignoranti sarebbero ormai in grado di comprendere le satire di Giovenale”.

¹²⁷ La sezione compare anche nel commento di Gaspare da Verona: cf. Viti 1999, 468.

¹²⁸ “Scrisse sedici satire che sono distribuite dai pi  in modo poco congruo in tre libri”.

iussus in Aegyptum perducere. Nanque cohortem,
triste sub exilium missus honore tulit.

Mox octoginta cum iam numeraret aristas 15
clausit eo factus languidus urbe diem (BAV Urb. lat. 662, ff. 6^{r-v}).

(Eccoti il poeta satirico che inviò Aquino, e che in patria era Giunio Giovenale, il quale era stato allievo di un ricco liberto (a meno che tu non voglia credere che costui sia stato suo padre). Fu un poeta famoso all'epoca del principe calvo (cf. Iuv. 6,38), "essendo io giudice" (Iuv. 8,188), fu la prima gloria del coro di satirici.

Pronunciò declamazioni fino alla mezza età e una folla numerosa e continua gli prestò ascolto. "Ciò che non assegnano i maggiorenti, l'assegnerà un attore", disse una volta infervorato contro Paride, mettendo alla berlina i tempi difficili; ma quando questo verso giunse alle orecchie tutte tese del principe, quel vecchio straordinario dovette lasciare l'ingrata Urbe, dopo che gli fu comandato di raggiungere l'Egitto. In effetti, dovette sopportare la vita della coorte, dove era stato inviato in un triste esilio con una promozione. Quindi terminò i suoi giorni, dopo aver contato già ottanta raccolti, per la nostalgia dell'Urbe.)

Pur in uno stile poetico in cui non mancano echi virgiliani (vd. v. 15), l'epigramma segue da vicino la *VI* Ia Dürer, che era stata edita da Domizio Calderini, aggiungendo la notizia dell'origine del poeta da Aquino: Cantalicio aveva, dunque, recepito a suo modo la lezione calderiniana, adottando la *VI* 'antica', scelta dal maestro, a modello di un epigramma, che nella sua forma versificata intendeva depotenziare ulteriormente la tradizione dell'*Accessus* medievale, che inseriva una propria *VI* all'inizio del commento e che era già stata pesantemente incrinata dalla decisione di Calderini di rinunciare a costruire una propria *VI*.

L'ultimo protagonista 'romano' e 'pomponiano' per formazione di questa fase dell'esegesi di Giovenale fu Antonio Mancinelli da Velletri,¹²⁹ che insegnò per un certo periodo nello *Studium Urbis* e fu un prolifico commentatore di testi antichi: pubblicò i suoi commenti oraziani e quelli alle *Bucoliche* e alle *Georgiche* apprezzati e lodati da Leto stesso con un epigramma che apparve nell'*editio princeps* del commento di Mancinelli (Venezia 1491–1492). Sempre a Venezia nel 1492, Mancinelli stampava un suo commento alle *Satire* di Giovenale, che ebbe un successo editoriale strepitoso per l'epoca, in quanto era un *commentarius plurimus*, che radunava accanto

¹²⁹ Su Mancinelli vd. supra nota 4.

al suo i commenti di Calderini e Giorgio Valla.¹³⁰ In questo incunabolo, Mancinelli fa sua la scelta di Calderini e pubblica solamente la medesima *Vita ex antiquorum monumentis* del commento calderiniano a dimostrazione del fatto che la decisione dell'umanista di Verona era ormai considerata irreversibile.

¹³⁰ I dati dell'incunabolo sono ancora forniti alla nota 4.

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