Antiquarian Voices

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OVID AS GUIDE TO THE CITY

In his 1503 dialogue *De Culice*, Pietro Bembo dramatizes the corollary relationship between textual and archeological inquiry in Renaissance Rome. The interlocutor Ermolao Barbaro decries the hidden and obstructed physical layout of the City: “Not only those things which till now had been able to remain standing have been neglected,” he notes,

but also those very things which still do stand and remain. The circular Pantheon, one building of all in particular which should stand out and be seen far and wide in the surrounding cobblestoned square, they have gradually so hedged in with houses and taverns up to the very temple walls, that it is now only scarcely and poorly viewed from the north.

... non ea modo quae stare adhuc potuerant negliguntur, sed illa ipsa etiam quae stant quaeque permanent ... Pantheum quidem ipsum, quae profecto aedes una omnium maxime, quoniam rotunda est, late circumstrato foro patere undique prospicique debuerat, ita paulatim domibus tabernisque ad templi paries ex aedificatis obsepiunt, ut ab aquilone tantum nunc vix aegreque conspiciatur.
He equally rues the fate of the Vatican Obelisk, which has also been blocked from view, and he inquires of his friend Pomponio Leto:

What about writings which have been lost from sight, which are not just a pleasure and a delight, but also relief and medicine, food and drink for the soul as it were? Such a large number indeed in every genre of learned ancient authors whether Greek or Roman, the Poets especially—how must they be made public?

*Quid illa vero, Pomponi, quae non oblectamenta modo et delectamenta sed levatio etiam et medicina et quasi potus aliquis cibusque animorum sunt, scripta videlicet illa tot in omni quidem doctrinarum genere antiquorum hominum, vel Graecorum vel nostrorum, maxime autem Poetarum, quae perierunt, quomodo sunt ferenda?*

This exchange typifies Roman humanism, colored with an archeological tint. Prompted by the impressive ruins that protruded everywhere and served as a reminder of the past, humanists uncovered the physical fabric of Rome and recovered the manuscripts of lost authors. The one endeavor in Rome complemented the other; nowhere better could this dual activity go on than *in* Rome.

The restoration of antiquity in both a literary and visual sense accounts for the Renaissance attraction to the *Fasti*. In treating Ovid’s text—editing, emending, and glossing it—the humanists at the same time had a guide to the City. The status of the *Fasti* as an antiquarian handbook, wherein the fabric of the city and its underlying civilization might be investigated, is evoked by Antonio Costanzi. In the preface to his commentary, after a programmatic defense of the poem for its benefit to the readers’ morals, Costanzi clarifies:

Add to this that many of the most magnificent temples and buildings of Rome, once the display of Roman majesty, of which either only the ruins of the foundations remain or no traces are visible at all to today’s earnest explorer, appear nearly whole and undestroyed in this work of Ovid’s, so that the zealous can easily see and contemplate those things which are barely discernible to their eyes.

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1. Pietro Bembo, *De Virgili Calice et Terentii fabulis liber in Omnia quotquot reliqua, praeter Venetam Historiam et Epistolam, extant opuscula* (Argentorati, 1609), 782–83. Written in 1503, the dialogue was first published in 1530. The setting ideally dates it between June 1490 and July 1493, during Barbaro’s last sojourn in Rome. See Danzi (2005, 27).
Accedit ad haec quod pleraque urbis tempia magnificentissima et aedificia olim Romanam ostentantia maiestatem, e quibus hac aetate fundamentorum tantum reliquiae manent aut certa nulla vestigia vel diligentem explorantibus sese offerunt, in eodem opere paene integra et inviolata monstrantur, ut eius modi rerum studiosis quae cernere minime possunt ea facile et videre et contemplari liceat.

In his recommendation of Ovid’s verbal witness to the former splendor of Rome, Costanzi has reversed a commonplace of antiquarian writing, which said that it is the ruins themselves, though but a fraction of the whole, that reveal the original. In 1411 Manuel Chrysoloras had insisted that the “heaps of stones show what great things once existed, and how enormous and beautiful were the original constructions.” In the Fasti, the humanists had a literary counterpart to tell them about the visual. The importance of Ovid’s work as a manual was even more pronounced for outsiders to Rome such as Costanzi, who did not have the day-to-day experience of living in the cityscape.

For the feel of the ancient city, there is much in the Fasti to suggest the role of Ovid as tour guide. The poet’s frequent collocation of “here where” (hic ubi) lends an aura of immediacy and local presence. One can imagine Ovid pointing out the site of the former naumachia, for example, at F. 2.391–92: “here you might see boats moving about where the fora are now, and where your valley lies, Great Circus” (hic, ubi nunc fora sunt, lintres errare videres, / quaque iacent valles, Maxime Circe, tuae). He could be gesturing to a shrine on the slope of the Caelian hill at 3.836–37: “here where the road is not level but almost level, you may see the little shrine of Minerva Capta” (hic, ubi non plana est, sed prope plana via, / parva licet videas Captae delubra Minervae).

It is no surprise that before the humanists revived the Fasti, a precedent existed for regarding Ovid as a guide to the City. Many reminiscences, especially from Book 2, appear in Petrarch’s description of the monuments of Rome (Fam. 6.2). Petrarch even uses Ovidian language while pointing out a Vergilian route: “here was the palace of Evander, here the temple of Carmenta, here the cave of Cacus” (hic Evandri regia, hic Carmentis edes, hic Caci spelunca). Information from Ovid similarly

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5. See Marcozzi (2010, 183–85). See also how Ovid points out landmarks in Tristia 3.1.27–34, where Ovid’s book timidly asks for the way in Rome from a passerby. For the itinerary when Evander takes Aeneas on a tour of future Rome, see Aen. 8.314–69.
appears in topographical treatises of the Middle Ages. The twelfth-century *Mirabilia urbis Romae*, written ca. 1143 by a “Benedictus Canonicus” of St. Peter’s, contains several allusions and many unacknowledged parallels to Ovid’s *Fasti*. Although it was the standard medieval handbook for pilgrims to the Eternal City, the *Mirabilia*’s itinerary of churches is in reality a chart to the ancient monuments and aims less to infuse the devout with religious fervor than to point out former temples and palaces. The *Fasti*’s function and influence are evident, considering the fact that the author of the *Mirabilia* seems to have had little or no acquaintance with the classics or the “classical,” other than Ovid’s work. The early fifteenth-century *Tractatus de rebus antiquis et situ Urbis Romae*, a topographical catalogue by an “Anonymus Magliabechianus,” likewise cites the *Fasti* as a literary source. The *Fasti* serves as a handy reference work for the Roman monuments that are no longer clearly recognizable in the late Middle Ages. For example, the author directs the reader to Ovid for the ruined apsidal hall known as the Temple of Venus and Cupid off to the left of the basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme:

At Santa Croce in Gerusalemme there was a temple of Venus and Cupid. It is not right for me to speak of these temples otherwise or expound on them further, since pointing them out is not acceptable for a presbyter of the Lord. But may those who read Ovid on the *Fasti* be able to forgive me, since he treats them at length in his work.

*Ad Sanctam Crucem in Iherusalem fuit templum Veneris et Cupidinis, de quibus templis non licet me aliter dicere nec largius extendere, quia non esset dominis presbyteris grata ostensio, sed legentes Ovidium de Fastis possent me habere excusatum, in suo volumine tractantem ad plenum.*

The allusion is vague, since Ovid does not specifically discuss the Temple of Venus and Cupid. As in the similar cases in the *Mirabilia*, what we see here is the general recognition and appreciation of the *Fasti* as a repository of information on Roman monuments, their location and meaning. The *Fasti* was a *vademecum* of sorts.

Ovid was essential for the newly transformative guide to Roman topography by Flavio Biondo, who was more precise in his citations. His

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Roma Instaurata of 1446 is interdisciplinary in method; Biondo correlated the history, regions, and landmarks of Rome with the sources available to him. He still greatly depended on literature, however. Biondo favored Livy, but he had frequent recourse to Ovid, and the Fasti is cited thirty times in the Roma Instaurata. In deliberating and solving problems of topography, Biondo often says that an ancient author "shows," "imparts," or "makes apparent" (ostendit, edocet, manifestum facit) a location or the identity of a building. These are turns of phrase he also applies to Ovid. Ovid maps out the city; he "shows that the temple of Vesta was near the Tiber" (Vestae templum Tyberi propinquum fuise ostendit, R. I. 2.56; F. 2.11), for example, and “in Book 3 clearly shows that the Asylum was at the foot of the Tarpeian Rock” (in III clare ostendit Asylum fuisse sub saxo rupis Tarpeiae, R. I. 2. 69; cf. F. 3.431). This sentiment that the Fasti can be read as a blueprint of Rome is still echoed by Pomponio Leto, who uses vocabulary similar to Biondo’s. Commenting on the gated temple of Janus, which served as an index of peace and war, Leto told his students in 1484, “Ovid instructs where the gate was” (docet Ovidius ubi porta erat; cf. F. 1.257 ff.).

Ovid was read not only as a guide to the City’s physical landmarks and history. Indeed, Ovid assumes more than this simple role in the Fasti. Christian Hülsen many years ago pointed out Ovid’s debt to Varro, whose De lingua Latina, Book 6, Ovid consulted in particular for its etymologies and aetiological approach. As the “father of modern antiquarian studies,” Varro left his trace on Ovid: Varro codified the word “antiquarianism” in his systematic survey of Roman life documented through language, literature, and custom, the Antiquitates Rerum humanarum et divinarum (AD 47); and Ovid’s reconstruction of Roman society, his portrait of religious rites and political protocol, is developed with the Varronian framework in mind. In fact, Ovid is justifiably called “a kind of poetic Varro.” Subsequently, it is not just the topography of Rome—the seven hills, the locations and descriptions of altars and temples, physical traces and tangible remains—that the humanists sought in the Fasti, but the entire legacy of society. The twofold nature and historical meaning
of antiquarianism was understood by the humanists. It was reflected in their own antiquarian works, such as Biondo’s *Roma instaurata* (1446) and *Roma triumphans* (1459), complementary in nature; the analysis of ancient structures in the one treatise and of public administration and private institutions in the other has been said to reflect two halves of a Varronian ideal. Similarly, in the foreword to his *De Urbe Roma*, a description of classical monuments in Rome, Bernardo Rucellai promised a future series of studies on Roman institutions. The evidence of archeological remains helped antiquarians better understand the society that they were trying to reconstruct, and it was this total objective that the humanists brought to their reading of the *Fasti*.

**CONTEXT: THE ROMAN ACADEMY**

In his twofold scholarly approach to the city which he so loved, studied, and explored, Pomponio Leto well fits the description of the Renaissance antiquarian. He composed a regionary catalogue of Rome, gave walking tours of the ancient sites, and carried with him a field notebook for recording classical inscriptions, some of which he also collected and displayed in his home on the Quirinal hill. These activities all testify to Leto’s interest in Rome’s physical feel and form. But Leto was no less interested in the fabric of Roman society; he compiled a survey of the Republican legal and political system (*De Romanis magistratibus, sacerdotiis, iurisperitis et legibus*), revived the ancient custom of the Palilia or celebration of Rome’s founding on April 21, and made visits to the paleo-Christian catacombs on the Via Appia with members of his Academy. He reportedly was so enthusiastic about the former civilization of the city that he dressed in a toga and gardened according to the precepts of Columella. Much of the information about the city he gleaned from its writers. Among the authors Leto edited, emended, or taught were Frontinus, Sallust, Varro, Columella, Festus, Vergil, Lucan, and Ovid. His commentary on Sallust, in its explanation of the City’s founding and the glosses on the names *Roma*,

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17. For the catalogue see de Rossi (1882, 49–87), also in Valentini and Zucchetti, *Codice topografico* vol. 1 (1940), 193–258. The walking tour, recorded by a student (*Excerpta a Pomponio dum inter ambulandum cuidam domino ultramontano reliquias ac ruinas urbis ostenderet*), has been published in *Codice topografico* vol. 4 (1953), 423–36, and again in D’Onofrio (1989, 273–90). Surviving fragments of Leto’s inscriptions are in Vatican City, BAV, Vat. lat. 3311.


It is well known that Pomponio Leto in his position as head of the Academy assumed the title “Pontifex Maximus.”\(^{19}\) Apparently, similar titles were bestowed on other members of the Academy during the appropriate years of their tenure. Arnaldo Della Torre has identified the prefect “Pontifex Firmanus,” someone of ecclesiastical rank (\textit{pontifex}), as Giovanni Battista Capranica, who was appointed bishop of Fermo on July 27, 1478;\(^{20}\) his name can also be found under the pseudonym “Pantagathus sacerdos academiae [sic] Romanae,” scratched on the catacomb walls of San Callisto.\(^{21}\) At the annual observance of Rome’s birthday in 1484, Capranica’s colleagues mourned his recent and violent death (\textit{Infelix etiam non aequa sorte peremptus / Panthagatus}).\(^{22}\) The prefect Malvisius is Nestore Malvezzi, a Bolognese nobleman and chamberlain to Pope Sixtus IV, and close friend of Fausto Andrelini, the first Academy member to be awarded the laurel crown at the Palilia or birthday celebration in 1483. Malvezzi most likely helped Andrelini to his appointment of service to the bishop

\(^{18}\) See Osmond (2011).
\(^{19}\) POMPONIV.PONT.MAX. is found on the walls of the catacombs of San Callisto; Lumbroso (1890, 218).
\(^{21}\) Lumbroso (1890, 218), and Palermino (1980, 141, fn. 71).
of Mantua, Ludovico Gonzaga, then resident in Rome. Domenico della Rovere, cardinal and brother of Sixtus IV, we are told acted as guardian of the Academy after its reinstatement along papal lines in 1479. He was awarded the titular church of San Clemente on August 13 of that year. Finally, the censors of the Academy in 1482 were Leto, Marsi, and Publio Astreo. We know the latter, a Perusine poet, as a collegial member of the sodality. In 1476 he was in Rome at Pacifico Massimo’s birthday celebration, which was attended by many humanists from Leto’s circle. Astreo’s correspondence with Marsi (either Paolo or Pietro) is preserved in Vatican City, BAV, Ottob. lat. 1982, a manuscript attributed to a Pomponian “ambience.” Furthermore, he recited the funeral elegy for the academician Bartolomeo Platina. Quite clearly from the evidence that Marsi has left behind in the colophon, his scholarship on the Fasti can be situated within the context and pursuits of the Roman Academy.

Although he was not a Roman humanist, even Costanzi was tied to and indirectly honored by the Roman Academy because of his Fasti commentary. In the 1497 and later composite editions of the commentaries, the editor’s preface is followed by a poem composed by Domizio Palladio and dedicated to Costanzi. Among the epigrams that form Palladio’s œuvre, we find one addressed Ad Pomponium Laetum excellentissimum and another full of unbridled enthusiasm Ad Academiam. Palladio was a student of Leto’s and an avid member and supporter of the Academy, and when Leto reinstated the rite of the Palilia, Palladio composed a Carmen in Romae Urbis Genethliacon for the 1484 celebration. Palladio may even have tried to initiate similar annual, antiquarian proceedings for Venice.  

24. Eubel (1914, 62, 65; see fn. 20 above); see also Dykmans (1988, 17, fn. 43). Della Rovere was made cardinal on February 10, 1478 (Lovito 2005, 69).

Sulmo tumet Nasone suo, Verona Catullo.
Gloria Romani magna Tibulle laris,
Umbria Callimacho gaudet, Cos ipsa Philetha
latentur patriae moenia clara tuae.

27. On Palladio see Martini (1969). Palladio also wrote an epitaph for Leto, found at the end of Leto’s Romanae historiae compendium (Venetiis: Bernardinus Venetus, 1499) and reprinted on p. 79 of Paolo Giovio’s Elogia Virorum literis illustrium (Basil: Petrus Perna, 1577).
29. See Tournoy-Thoen (1972, 213).
While it is true that the Roman Academy “was probably a rather loosely organized group of humanists, acquaintances and students” with fluid boundaries and changing participation, many who belonged to the group, especially those in Leto’s inner circle, felt that they were part of the initiated, or “members.”"\(^{31}\) Paolo Marsi is certainly one such man with a strong personal affiliation. From the colophon’s “in the fourth year from the sodality’s foundation” (\textit{a constituta sodalitate anno III}) it is evident that Paolo Marsi was a member of the so-called second Roman Academy, dating from 1479. Although associated with the Academy earlier, he had no direct involvement before the 1479 phase. Marsi courted the patronage of Paul II,\(^{32}\) who had outlawed the group in 1468 on the dubious charges of sodomy, paganism, and republican plots.\(^{33}\) More to the point, Marsi was out of Rome from about 1464 to 1474; at the moment of the Academy’s suppression, he was in Venice, where Leto most likely had helped him to opportunities of academic instruction.\(^{34}\)

But the Roman Academy in this first period was already dear to Paolo Marsi’s heart. Leto taught privately in Venice in 1467–68, and in the summer of 1468 he was ready to embark for the East. Marsi had planned to accompany Leto on this journey exploring monuments and culture, until Leto’s unforeseen extradition from Venice by papal decree. The turn of events so affected Marsi that he accepted a secretarial commission to foreign parts, setting sail for Spain in the middle of August with the ambassador Bernardo Bembo. In his poetic travelogue, the \textit{Bembica Peregrina} or \textit{Bembic}, Marsi expresses his thoughts on the Roman imprisonment of his friends, whom he calls \textit{fratres academici}. He laments Leto’s seizure and incarceration in Castel Sant’Angelo, and he describes the imprisonment of other Academy members.\(^{35}\) Marsi mentions that from the group

\(^{31}\) See de Beer (2008, 192; 2013, 159–60).
\(^{32}\) Marsi dedicated his \textit{De crudeli Europontinae urbis excidio} to Paul II, about the debacle of June 15, 1470, the wasting of the Adriatic island of Negropont by the Turks. Printed in della Torre (2003, 287–95); see furthermore Ventura (1974, 666).
\(^{33}\) A readable and dramatic tale of the conspiracy (but a not entirely scholarly account) is provided by D’Elia (2009). A summary of the events and a review of Platina’s role is given in the introduction to \textit{De Honesta Voluptate et Valetudine} in Milham’s 1998 edition, 18–23.
\(^{34}\) See della Torre (1903, 52) on the school that Marsi may have established in Venice prior to 1468. Leto may have also introduced Marsi to the Cornaro family.
\(^{35}\)

\textit{Heu! meus a Venetis fuerat Pomponius undis raptus, et Iliacas tractus adusque domos abditaque in tristi doctissima pectora cella, et secum in Stygio docta caterva sinu.}

Lines 7–10 of \textit{Ad fratres Academicos Romae captivos}; see della Torre (1899, 64–65). For a full discus-
Then Campano, sweet child of the Muses, was confined: woe! tender petitions were of no avail.

*Cumque hoc Pieridum Campanus dulcis alumnus clauditur: heu! mites nil potuere preces.* (ll. 13–14)

In his commentary on the *Fasti*, Marsi interrupts his gloss on the Janiculum hill at 1.246 with

> . . . there is the church of S. Onofrio, well-known for both its crowd of worshippers and for the tomb of my brother Antonio Campano the younger. If the fates had advanced him to a riper age, he would have equaled the fame of the ancient poets with his verse, but envious of his talents, fortune snatched him away from us while he was still in his youth.

> . . . *ubi est templum divi Onophrii clarum tum ipsa religione et hominum frequentia, tum etiam Antonii Campani iunioris fratris mei sepulcro, quem si in maturiorem aetatem fata provexissent, suo carmine antiquorum poetarum famam adaequasset, sed fortuna bonis invidens eum nobis in ipsa adolescentia surripuit.*

Antonio Settimuleio Campano, called “il Campanino” (to distinguish him from Giannantonio Campano, also affiliated with the Roman Academy), was one of the major suspects of the “conspiracy.” A talented poet, he composed sixty-eight epigrams, some of them addressed during his incarceration to such kindred Academy members as Platina, Lucido Fosforo Fazino, and Lucilio.\(^{36}\) While in prison he also acted as copyist for Leto,\(^{37}\) who later composed an epitaph for him, which was placed in the church of Sant’Onofrio.\(^{38}\) Campano died at the age of twenty, allegedly because of the tortures he was submitted to while in Castel Sant’Angelo. Platina writes, “Campano, a most surpassing youth and a unique adornment to the times, when you consider his literary talent, was tortured; I dare believe that he died afterwards from his wounds and grief-stricken spirit” (*torquentur . . . Campanus, optimus adolescentis et unicum saeculi nostri decus, si ingenium et litteraturam inspicis; quibus cruciatibus et dolore animi mortuum*

\(^{36}\) Masotti (1984, 458).

\(^{37}\) Ibid., 456; Masotti (1987, 170–71); Campanelli (1993, 17).

\(^{38}\) Recorded in della Torre (1903, 99–100).
postea crediderim). By referring to this whole episode in his Ovid commentary, Marsi reveals how closely he himself was associated with the first Roman Academy and the influence its setting and milieu had on his study of the Fasti.

In the first four reprints of Marsi’s commentary, the reference to the re-established sodality is maintained in some form in the colophon, a fairly common type of occurrence in books by Academy members at this time. Maria Grazia Blasio has made note of the fact that the humanists teaching in Rome at the end of the quattrocento—these were for the most part Pomponio Leto and his colleagues in the renovated Academy—infuenced the editorial choices and production of books. The humanists worked closely with printers, delivering to them transcriptions of lectures, which were often course notes taken by the students. The Fasti was therefore not simply a subject for study in the Academy, but for pupils at the Studium Urbis as well.

The boundary between the Academy and students at the university was a fine one, not so surprising perhaps in light of recent scholarship by intellectual historians, who question the very idea of the academy. While the existence of Leto’s Academy, for which we have specific and first-hand accounts, is proven and recognized, the notion of a Platonic Academy in Florence has been discredited. James Hankins dissects the Latin meaning of academia and notes the word’s application not only to regular gatherings of Renaissance literary intellectuals, but also to humanist schools, the gymnasium. Concetta Bianca argues that the identification of academia with a school as well as a coterie began in the 1470s. Pomponio Leto may have associated academia with his and his fellows’ imprisonment in 1468 (cf. Marsi’s poem written that year Ad fratres Academicos Romae captivos). However, the encyclopedist and humanist Raffaele Maffei records that it was Leto who implemented the distinctive term sodalitas to refer to the group of intellectuals and friends who gathered around him (domunculam in Quirinali sibi paraverat, ubi sodalitatem litteratorum, ut ipse appellabat, instituit). Academia, perhaps as a result, became synonymous with public

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39. In Garin (1952, 702). Doubt has been cast on the supposition that Campano died as a direct result of his tortures; he lived for another year after he had been freed from prison. See di Bernardo (1969, 219).
40. Usually the initial phrase Litterariae Sodalitati Viminali . . . is repeated, although in the 1485 Venetian edition even the information about the Academy’s membership is replicated.
41. Blasio (1986); see also Bracke (1992a).
42. Hankins (1991, 433–35); Hankin's article is evaluated by Chambers (1995). The definition and the history of academies were first considered by Frances Yates; see in particular “The Italian Academies” (Yates 1983).
(and private) instruction. Richardus Graman de Nekenich, a German pupil of Pomponio Leto, marks his 1480 transcriptions of a course on Sallust as completed in Pomponio’s Roman Academy (Pomponii Achademie romane principis in Salustii Iugurthinum Bellum explanationes finiunt).43

The distinction between sodalitas and academia is clear in the colophon of Marsi’s 1482 Fasti commentary, where we find the statement that the commentary was produced Litterariae sodalitati viminali et universae academiae Latinae.44 However, the two “institutions” are grammatically linked and not designed to be mutually exclusive. There was surely a conflation of the activities of intellectual exchange and teaching, of social gathering and instruction. The identification of academia with gymnasium (or Studium) sometimes confused the humanists themselves, as we see in the complaint of Paolo Pompilio to Sulpizio da Veroli, both members of Leto’s circle; Pompilio reproaches his colleague for his inattention to proper nomenclature “when,” he says, “you publicly lecture at the gymnasium, which you ineptly call the academia” (at etiam palam cum profiteris in gymnasio, quod tu ineptissime academiam appellass).45 This statement bears witness to an overlap of terms and also an overlap in the composition of two scholarly establishments. Students were, as a matter of fact, sometimes present at Roman Academy gatherings. The observance of the Palilia, for example, was a university-wide celebration. The diarist Jacopo Gherardi da Volterra has left a record of the day’s events for the year 1483. Paolo Marsi read the opening speech; Fausto Andrelini was awarded the laurel crown; and in the church of San Salvatore “the sodality had prepared a sumptuous banquet for the lettered men and university students” (Pransum est apud Salvatoris sacellum, ubi sodalitas litteratis viris et studiorum studiosis elegans convivium paraverat).46

Ovid’s poem was a subject of study for Leto’s pupils and Academy members in a frequently overlapping context, as we know from a witness to Leto’s work on the Fasti, Var. lat. 3264. The recipient of the codex, Fabio

44. Pomponio Leto purchased his house on the Quirinal hill in 1479. Academicians confused the Quirinal and Esquiline hills and the smaller Viminal in between, as witnessed by Marsi’s excursus at Fasti 1.259, correspondence between Academy members, and even Leto’s own writings. See Dykmans (1987, 106–7); Bracke (1992b, 59, 124); Magister (1998, 167–96); Accame (2007, 19–20).
46. Il Diario romano di Jacopo Gherardi da Volterra in RIS 23.3. Academy and university functions coincided likewise during the Pasquinalia. The Pasquinalia included a poetic contest in which students attached epigrams to the “talking statue” of Pasquino (actually Menelaus holding the body of Patroclus), who was dressed up each year as a thematic Roman divinity. Reynolds (1985, 179); D’Onofrio (1990, 49, 54).
Mazzatosta, was a wealthy young man tutored by Leto, though not a student at the university. Leto produced other fine manuscripts of ancient authors for Mazzatosta, notably a Lucan, Statius, Martial, and Silius Italicus. The educational intent of the group of manuscripts is obvious from the remark at the end of the Lucan, in which Leto hopes to have assisted Mazzatosta’s intellectual growth. In a letter in 1471, Giovanni Antonio Campano had expressed his personal hope that Mazzatosta would take in the precepts of Leto. Mazzatosta’s interest in illuminated manuscripts and the extent to which he himself was involved in their production were seen as the mark of an antiquarian and a reason for congratulations by Academy member Filippo Buonaccorsi (“Callimachus Experiens”). Mazzatosta was also a member of the Roman Academy. The classicized version of his name, “Fabius Ambustus,” has been found scratched on the catacomb walls of Ss. Marcellino e Pietro. (Giovanni Antonio Campano can be found there as “Antistes Percutinus”)

The importance of the Fasti as text for the Roman Academy—students, members, and all—is also testified by the ownership of Leto’s glossed manuscript, today II. 141 in the communal library of Ferrara. The coat of arms, a gold deer rampant against a blue background with gold and blue bands underneath, identifies it as having belonged to Agostino Maffei. José Ruysschaert, who had indirect testimony that in 1581 the manuscript existed, lists it as number 115 in his inventory of the famous library of the Maffei family in Rome. A glance at this catalogue reveals that Leto himself borrowed many of the codices of classical authors that the Maffei possessed, and other codices were annotated by Academy members. Maffei was one of the first Academy members to be imprisoned with Leto, commemorated in the verses of the Bembice by Paolo Marsi. After lamenting, “Woe! My Pomponio was seized from Venetian waters / and hauled all the way to the Ilian abode” (Heu! meus a Venetis fuerat Pomponius undis / raptus, et Iliacas tractus adusque domos), Marsi continues a few lines later,

47. Lucan, Bellum Civile: Vatican City, BAV, Vat. lat. 3285; Statius, Thebaid: Vat. lat. 3279; Martial, Epigrammata: London, British Library, King’s 32 (with the collaboration of Niccolò Perotti); Silius Italicus, Bellum Civile: Vat. lat. 3302. See Pade (2011); Maddalo (1991); Zabughin (1909/1910–12), vol. 2 (1910), 18–27; Zabughin (1906, 228–34); Ussani (1904). Piacenti (2007) attributes seven deluxe codices to Mazzatosta (103, fn. 32).
51. Lumbroso (1890, 216); di Bernardo (1969, 222).
52. Ruysschaert (1958, 354).
“the young and venerable Agostino Maffei / now also has been oppressed in a murky dwelling” (atque Augustini juvenis veneranda Maphaei / pectora in obscura nunc quoque pressa domo).

Leto addressed epigrams to Maffei while both were in prison; Maffei was finally released from Castel Sant’Angelo in July, 1470.

Although the date of composition of the Ferrara manuscript is uncertain, it may have been produced ca. 1490, in the period when Leto dedicated his edition of Sallust to Agostino Maffei. Maffei has been called “one of the leading antiquarians of the Roman Academy.” In addition to his bibliophile leanings, he owned an impressive collection of coins, sculptures, and other antiquities. The discussion of ancient Roman sites and topography was of special interest to him; he had Giovanni Tortelli’s section about Rome in the 1449 De Orthographia separately transcribed as a book for him.

Pomponio Leto’s house, the Studium Urbis, the collection of the Maffei family—all came to be established in the same rione. Add to this the creation of the Vatican library by Pope Sixtus IV in 1475 and the very accessibility of the topographical landscape of Rome, and it is no wonder that Paolo Marsi would boast about the swift completion of his work in the preface of his Fasti commentary.

While Marsi had the good fortune to live and work in Rome, and to avail himself of the ruins that lay all around him, Antonio Costanzi had to take in what he could during visits to the City. He found the time for a guided tour in 1471, while serving as ambassador of Fano among curial circles; at Fasti 1.245, he notes: “the shrine of [the] god [Janus] was pointed out to me on the Janiculum, when I went to the City on an oratorical mission from the senate of Fano to Pope Sixtus IV” (Ostensum enim mihi est in Ianiculo huius dei sacellum, cum ad Urbem me contulissem orator missus a senatu Fanensi ad Sixtum Quartum Pontificem Maximum). Costanzi’s schedule allowed for only a glance at the major attractions, but he again eagerly took in what he could, as is apparent at Fasti 1.709 on the Ara Pacis (for the Templum Pacis):

53. della Torre (1899, 64–65) (revised).
54. Two compositions, one to Maffei, another to Platina and Maffei in tandem, have been published by Masotti (1982, 202).
where, as Josephus says, “all rarities were collected as men in their zeal previously wandered all over the world to see.” When I was on the Via Sacra in Rome I wanted to gaze on the temple’s enormous ruins, from which I could not be torn away, even though I was encumbered by the most serious business. I could not satisfy my curiosity, and in my contemplation of the ruins grew angry that fortune had allowed the sight of such a great thing to be stolen from us.

qua ut inquit Iosephus [Bellum Iud. 7.5.7] “omnia collata sunt quorum visendorum studio antea per totum orbem homines vagabantur.” Eius ego ruinas ingentes cum essem Romae in Via Sacra volui contemplari, unde avelli non poteram, quamvis gravissimis negotiis impeditus, cum expleri mentem nequirem exardesceremque tuendo tantum licet ut fortunae tantae rei nobis spectaculum subtraxisset.

The enormous ruins of the Basilica of Constantine—commonly known as the Templum Pacis—were majestic and awe-inspiring to Costanzi, who wanted to linger upon the sight or marvel (spectaculum).

Costanzi’s survey of the ruins was hurried, as he sorrowfully admits; one can picture him being rushed around by a local guide, as happened to the traveler Giovanni Tolentino in 1490, who had only four days in Rome and left errors in his travelogue. As a papal diplomat and visitor to Rome, Costanzi did not have the time for indulgent wanderings that Leto and his group did. Costanzi was interested in both the physical layout of Rome and the writing of Ovid, as his interjections in his Fasti commentary suggest; the one corroborated the other. Ovid’s Fasti would have to stand in for the monuments when Costanzi could not see them firsthand.

THE EARLIER GENERATION OF ANTIQUARIANS

To understand the humanists’ nostalgia for ancient Rome in general, and the Roman Academy members’ methods of antiquarian study in particular, one must take a look back at their cultural inheritance, beginning with Petrarch (1304–74). Petrarch wandered among the ruins of Rome in 1337

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60. Costanzi glossed Ara Pacis, but ara and templum were evidently interchangeable terms. Note Antonio Volso’s gloss at Fasti 1.709: deduxit nos ad aram: ad templum Pacis (fol. 30v). The Temple of Peace was built after the capture of Jerusalem in AD 71 and filled with the spoils of the Jewish war. Its identification with the contiguous Basilica of Constantine was common in the Middle Ages and Renaissance; see Shofield (1980, 253, fn. 55).
with his friend Giovanni Colonna. Petrarch’s Rome, however, was one of the literary imagination. His letter to Colonna recalling their stroll is not as much a descriptive account of the monuments as it is an evocation of Rome’s glorious past seen through literature. When he writes to Colonna, “here was the palace of Evander, here the temple of Carmenta, here the cave of Cacus” (*hic Evandri regia, hic Carmentis edes, hic Caci spelunca*), he echoes passages from Book 8 of Vergil’s *Aeneid* where Evander conducts Aeneas to his home and shows him places that will become famous. The overlay of routes only points out how diminished the existing Rome is in Petrarch’s eyes. Petrarch trusted literary sources more than monuments, for “search out the entire City: you will find either nothing, or the faintest traces of such great buildings” (*quaere Urbem totam, aut nihil invenies, aut perexigua tantorum operum vestigia*) as the Baths of Diocletian or the Septizonium.61

Petrarch’s “digging” into the past would instruct and inspire a new generation of antiquarians, who compared text with object: Poggio Bracciolini, Ciriaco d’Ancona, Leon Battista Alberti, and Flavio Biondo. These humanists were in turn the precursors of Pomponio Leto and his circle, and of Antonio Costanzi. Despite the urge to strike out a new path, the antiquarians often replicated each other’s mistakes, repeated information from medieval sources, relied on common opinion and folklore, and ignored the physical evidence that confronted them. There was no direct line of development in what was a “lively, rapidly evolving discipline.”62

Poggio Bracciolini’s inspection of Roman ruins from close at hand has been said “to [mark] the beginnings of systematic field archeology in Rome,” and his *De varietate fortunae*, a treatise on the ruins of Rome written between 1431 and 1448, was “a charter of the new scholarship.”63 Poggio’s words in the opening of his *De varietate fortunae* invite comparison with Petrarch’s. Poggio reminds his interlocutor, Antonio Loschi, with whom he shared excursions in Rome, of their astonishment over

the mutability of fortune, completely astounding and a thing to be deplored, whether on account of the erstwhile enormity of fallen structures and vast ruins of the ancient city, or the immense decay of such a great empire.

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61. The quotation is from *De Remediis utriusque fortunae* 1.118. See Weiss (1964); Mazzocco (1975, esp. 355–56); Greene (1982, esp. 88–93). In the *Mirabilia*, baths were mistakenly regarded as the ruins of palaces, and the Septizonium was the so-called seat of the seven sciences or a temple of the sun and the moon (Stinger 1998, 67).
tum ob veterem collapsorum aedificiorum magnitudinem et vastas urbis antiquae ruinas, tum ob tanti imperii ingentem stragem, stupendam profecto ac deplorandum fortunae varietate.

After dismounting their horses and taking in the view from the Tarpeian Rock, Loschi had lamented

how different the Capitol Hill [was] from the one which Vergil prophesied, “golden now, formerly bristling with forested thickets;” indeed, how the verse [could] deservedly be changed to the Capitol “once golden, now squalid, filled with thorn and briar-bushes.”

Quantum . . . haec Capitilia ab illis distant, quae noster Maro cecinit, “Aurea nunc, olim silvestribus horrida dumis” [Aen. 8.348]. Ut quidem is versus merito posit converti: “Aurea quondam, nunc squalida, spinetis vepribusque refta.”

Like Petrarch, Poggio evokes the grandeur of Augustan Rome. Citing from the same passage in the Aeneid about Evander’s survey of the landscape, Poggio is similarly nostalgic for the classical past and distressed over time out of joint. Rome is now a wilderness, and the ruins are a symbol of decay, not only of buildings but also of humankind. The degeneration of the body here hinted at is just the reverse of the anthropomorphic vocabulary of architecture. Poggio decries how Rome “stripped naked of all ornament, [was lying] prostrate like a giant rotten corpse” (ut nunc omni decore nudata, prostrata iaceat instar gigantei cadaveris corrupti). In applying the metaphor of the body, Poggio emphasizes his aversion to deterioration.

Poggio ventured into that wilderness and urban decay, however, in order to scrutinize monuments and copy down inscriptions, and in this investigative approach he foreshadowed the practices of Pomponio Leto. In the De varietate fortunae Poggio identifies the pyramid near the Porta Ostiense as the tomb of Caius Cestius from the carved letters that were revealed when he swept aside the brambles. Since the inscription was nearly intact, Poggio is surprised that “the most learned Francesco Petrarca wrote

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64. Latin extracts (and facing Italian translation) of De varietate fortunae can be found in D’Onofrio (1989, 67–90, here 67). For all four books of De varietate fortunae, whose date of composition and method of compilation are troublesome, see Poggio Bracciolini. De varietate fortunae, ed. O. Merisalo (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1991).

65. The common belief that the air close to ruins was unhealthy is thereby more understandable. Hansen (1996, 100–101 and 114, fn. 97). See furthermore de Caprio (1991).
in a certain letter of his that this was the tomb of Remus” (doctissimum virum Franciscum Petrarcham in quadam sua epistola scribere, id esse sepulcrum Remi; cf. Fam. 6.2), and he supposes that by “adopting popular opinion, [Petrarch] had not given much weight to careful investigation of the inscription” (secutum vulgi opinionem, non magni fecisse epigramma perquirere).66 The medieval Mirabilia urbis Romae had conveyed the information that the pyramid was the tomb of Remus, and it was this tradition that Petrarch followed but Poggio corrected by inspection.

Poggio himself repeated some stories about the ruins of Rome. Nonetheless, he was among the first to collect inscriptions as well as to transcribe those of others, and his sylloge (or epigraphical compilations) were in turn consulted, tested, and added to by his successors.67 Poggio also used recently discovered classical texts for his antiquarian enterprise. He learned about the Roman system of aqueducts after locating a manuscript of Frontinus’s De aquis urbis Romae in 1429, and he put the new knowledge to use in the De varietate fortunae.68 Pomponio Leto himself co-edited the editio princeps of Frontinus post-1483.69 Literary sources would always continue to complement field work.

The adventure-seeking antiquarian Ciriaco d’Ancona embraced the ideals of Petrarch and Poggio both. According to his friend Francesco Scalamonti, in 1424 Ciriaco “eagerly set out for the famous city of Rome in order to view the world’s greatest and most significant historical monuments” (se statim Romam inclytam ad urbem, ut ex ea primum maxima rerum atque potissima nobilium in orbe monumenta videret, quam avidissime contulit). On a return trip in 1433, Ciriaco again visited the ruins and told the Holy Roman Emperor that “these are the shining witnesses the ancients left behind them, and they possess particular power to fire the minds of noblemen to the greatest deeds and to the pursuit of undying glory” (ea praeclara sunt veterum monumenta, virorumque nobilis praeertim animos ad res maximas gerendas et ad gloriae et immortalitatis studium vehementer accendunt).70 Ciriaco emerges as a wide-eyed enthusiast for the past, who believes that relics are sigilla historiarum or “validating seals of history.”71

70. See Mitchell and Bodnar’s 1996 edition of Scalamonti (hereafter Mitchell and Bodnar), 15, 17, 47, 68, 117, 131.
These relics are “as for Petrarch, . . . living voices crying across the waste for the torn fabric of the empire to be reknit.”

It was not just the political past that needed saving but the physical past. Ciriaco complained to the emperor how ancient sculptures and fragments were being destroyed by Rome’s citizens as scrap material for the lime kilns. He wanted to see Rome whole again; his drawings of monuments from his travels show them complete, staving off erosion and decay, as it were.

Flavio Biondo memorialized Ciriaco thus: “by his investigation of ancient monuments [Ciriaco d’Ancona] restored the dead to the memory of the living, as he used to put it” (qui monumenta investigando vetustissima mortuos, ut dicere erat solitus, vivorum memoriae restituebat).

Ciriaco took advantage of travel from a young age from his home on the Adriatic coast. He sojourned not just in Italy but all around the Aegean and in the Levant as well. He “converted” to antiquarianism after viewing the inscription and images on Trajan’s arch in the Ancona harbor in 1421, and documenting ancient monuments soon became his life’s passion. Examining the ruins of Rome in 1424, it seemed

that the stones themselves afforded to modern spectators much more trustworthy information about their splendid history than was to be found in books. He accordingly resolved to see for himself and to record whatever other antiquities remained scattered about the world.

Everywhere he went, he copied inscriptions, coins, gems, sculpture, and architecture into his sketchbooks, which numbered six large volumes by the time of his death. In this way, Ciriaco preserved testimony from the past. However, it would be incorrect to think that he turned his back

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72. Mitchell (1960, 471).
73. Mitchell and Bodnar, 18, 68, 131.
76. Mitchell and Bodnar, 48, 117.
on literary tradition. On his journeys he looked for manuscripts too, and along with his sketchbooks he carried his own copies of Pliny, Thucydides, Ptolemy, Pomponius, and Strabo, essential aids for the study of natural history and geography.\(^8\) Finally, ancient texts could be just as much a source of inspiration as physical remains. In his personal manuscript of Ovid’s \textit{Fasti}, dated May 13, 1427, Ciriaco recorded inscriptions which he saw in Philippi. Scalamonti writes,

\begin{quote}
I know that what particularly inspired the young man to visit this region was the passage he had read in Ovid’s \textit{Fasti} about the death of Julius Caesar: “Be witnesses, Philippi, \textit{l} and those whose scattered bones make the ground white.”
\end{quote}

Ovid could be not only a guide to the monuments of Rome, but also a guidebook more generally, an inspiration and complementary source for the study of the ancient past. Significantly, Antonio Costanzi received his early schooling in Ancona from Ciriaco, who had finished copying out Ovid’s \textit{Fasti} (with calendar) in 1427 (see figure 7).\(^8\)

Leon Battista Alberti’s interest in carved inscriptions is in large part attributable to Poggio and Ciriaco as well.\(^8\) As with his friends, his experiential knowledge cannot be separated from his literary background. Alberti was steeped in classical learning, and in his technical writings he wove in quotes from ancient authors, often refashioning them.\(^8\) But he proclaimed his intention to put equal weight on the close reading of ancient monuments. In his \textit{De re aedificatoria}, completed ca. 1452, he describes his antiquarian method thus:

\begin{quote}
No building of the ancients that had attracted praise, wherever it might be, but I immediately examined it carefully, to see what I could learn from it. Therefore I never stopped exploring, considering, and measuring everything, and comparing the information through line drawings . . .
\end{quote}

\(^{78}\) Bodnar and Foss, xii–xiii.  
\(^{79}\) Mitchell and Bodnar, 58, 125, 154. The inscriptions from Philippi are \textit{CIL III}, 647 and 7337.  
\(^{80}\) Buonocore (1994, 226); Formichetti (1984, 370); Mitchell and Bodnar, 15.  
\(^{82}\) Regoliosi (2005).
Nihil usque erat antiquorum operum in quo aliqua laus elucesceret quin ilico ex eo pervestigarem siquid possem perdiscere. Ergo rimari omnia, considerare, metiri, lineamentis picturae colligere, nusquam intermittebam . . .  

Elsewhere in the *De re aedificatoria*, however, he remarks with regards to engineering methods:

> We shall . . . deal with the materials suitable for constructing buildings, and we shall relate the advice handed down to us by the learned men of the past, in particular Theophrastus, Aristotle, Cato, Varro, Pliny, and Vitruvius: for such knowledge is better gained through long experience than through any artifice of invention; it should be sought therefore from those who have made the most diligent observations on the matter.

Atqui nos quidem in huiusmodi rebus quae ad opus aedificiorum commoda sunt recensendis ea referamus quae docti veteres tradidere, præsertim Theophrastus, Aristoteles, Cato, Varro, Plinius Vitruviusque. Nam ea quidem longa observatione magis quae ullis ingenii artibus cognoscuntur, ut ab his qui istius modi summa diligentia adnotarunt petenda sint.  

Ancient writers thus do more than provide a textual frame of reference; they are sources of inspiration and themselves models for the practice of direct study and observation (*longa observatione*), even though a slightly pejorative tone toward the discussion taken up by the ancients does intrude (*istius*). Alberti continues by proposing to compare personal field work and modern techniques to authoritative texts: “we shall add whatever observations are in any way relevant to the discussion from those which we have made ourselves by studying the works of our ancestors or by listening to the advice of artists with experience” (*Addemus . . . sigua ipsi ex maiorum operibus aut ex peritorum artificum monitis adnotarimus quae uilla ex parte dicendis conferant*).  

With his combination of classical learning and technical skills, Alberti was able to be something of a personal tour guide. He gave walking tours of Rome to his Florentine patrons the Rucellai. From the records left behind by Giovanni and Bernardo Rucellai, it is evident not only that father and son were shown famous sites in Rome, but also that they themselves took part in measuring structures and examining inscriptions up close. Giovanni Rucellai spent the mornings of the Jubilee year 1450 in church, but in the afternoon he inspected antiquities. Every evening, he wrote down what had left an impression on him. His diary varies in accordance with his pilgrimage, from a description of the relics of saints and of marvels such

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84. *De re aed.* 2.4. *On the Art of Building*, 38–39; *De re aedificatoria*, 44.  
85. Note here also Alberti’s confidence in craftsmen (Grafton 2000, 76–83).  
86. Ibid., 258.
as the Scala Sancta, to classical monuments such as the meta Romuli near Castel Sant’Angelo. Giovanni gives measurements for the meta Romuli, but the very name for this pyramid, thought to be the tomb of Romulus, reveals the influence of the Mirabilia urbis Romae. The information on the meta Romuli reflects the counsel of Alberti, who had set out problems of measurement and developed surveying techniques in his Ludi matematici, but who could not combat long-held opinion and who also surely retold some of the oral traditions passed along by Rome’s inhabitants.

Antonio Costanzi would have relished the time and opportunity for such a tour as Alberti might give. His devotion to the classical past was reinforced, if not awakened, by Ciriaco. But arguably the greatest influence on Costanzi, Paolo Marsi, and Pomponio Leto was the antiquarian scholarship of Flavio Biondo. An extraordinary number of traces and direct quotations of his thought and work appear in the Fasti comments written by Pomponian scholars. Biondo’s tools for uncovering antiquity included coins, inscriptions and sylloge, toponyms, and literature. He made a very conscious attempt to distance himself from the Mirabilia urbis Romae, and he set out to repudiate the medieval treatise in his attempts to correct the names and locations of monuments. In fact, in the 1446 Roma Instaurata he is unique in his analysis of toponyms.

For Biondo, place names were a key to the history associated with places. We can take as a case study the Theater of Pompey complex. Poggio had already detected some of the ruins of the Theater of Pompey lying underneath private homes (because of local lore, he had known to look in the Campo de’ Fiori neighborhood). Further ruins—fallen columns of a portico—were visible slightly to the east, in a small area then called Piazza Satro or Satrio, probably from two statues of satyrs discovered there. Next to the portico, which served as a park and a shelter from rain for theater-goers, was a curia. The latter site, better known today as the site of Julius Caesar’s assassination, was used into Augustus’s time for pleasant strolls. In Roma Instaurata 2.112 Biondo writes about the area: “we ought


89. Fubini (1968, 547–48); Brizzolara (1979–80, 30).
to believe the atrium of Pompeii was there, where it is now commonly known through a corruption of language as Satrum and where now a semi-intact portico is discernible” \( (\text{Atriumque vero Pompei credere debemus fuisse ubi nunc corrupte Satrum vulgo appellant et porticus est nunc semintegra cernitur}) \). Popular nomenclature has become a capable antiquarian tool, for Biondo is able to correctly relocate the Theater from San Lorenzo in Damaso, its position in the \textit{Mirabilia urbis Romae}.

By using toponyms as a type of evidence, Biondo could refute common misconceptions, but etymology could also be misleading. From several literary sources Biondo knew the legend of Romulus’s extension of asylum to fugitives. In the \textit{Fasti}, Ovid had located the Asylum \textit{sub rupis Tarpeiae} (3.43). Combining this reference with an area of Rome occupied by prostitutes, a place of refuge for runaway women (\textit{nunc asylum institutum}), Biondo incorrectly put the Asylum in the Forum Boarium, at the Temple of Portunus (converted to a church and rededicated at the end of the \textit{quattrocento} to Santa Maria Egiziaca, patron saint of penitent prostitutes). Etymology did not always yield successful results, although we do see the attempt by Biondo to untangle strands of legend.

Moreover, this example shows that Biondo employed not only toponymy but also philology in his investigations. He consulted many authors, including but not limited to Cicero, Varro, Livy, Ovid, Pliny, and Suetonius, along with writers of the late antique and early Christian era. His familiarity with the classics began at an early age under the Veronese Guarino Guarini, who promoted the circulation and dissemination of texts, and who was Biondo’s lifelong mentor. Biondo gained a reputation of his own among the humanists in northern Italy, and accordingly he was entrusted with transcribing a manuscript of Cicero’s rhetorical works in 1442 (discovered in the cathedral library in Lodi in 1421). Because of Poggio’s generosity, Biondo could make use of the recently discovered work of Frontinus on aqueducts for his \textit{Roma Instaurata}. And, of course, Biondo drew upon the \textit{Fasti} for both sides of the antiquarian enterprise, the investigation of monuments on the one hand, and of customs and institutions on the other. The \textit{Fasti} confirmed the location of the temple of Venus outside the Porta Collina and bare witness to the magnificence of the temple of Mars in the Campus Martius. It provided information for the religious festivals of the Agonalia and Februa. As we have seen, it also helped Biondo

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identify (if inaccurately) both the location and the custom of the Asylum Romani.\textsuperscript{94}

Biondo has been noted for his “devotion to collecting and preserving the textual monuments of antiquity.”\textsuperscript{95} As with so many of the well-trained and well-versed humanists, he often paraphrased his literary sources from memory (the more citations the better), and the lapses in memory, when he has paraphrased incorrectly, do not undercut the overall impression of his powerful knowledge and recall.\textsuperscript{96} The manifold references to ancient authors reveal Biondo’s trust in auctoritas: the perfect wisdom and eternal truths of the auctores, the writers of the Greeks and Roman world. But such dependence on the ancients could certainly stifle creativity. Indeed, where there was no answer to a vexing question of archeology or topography, Biondo often deferred to authority. Only where there was a disagreement between sources or where a tradition was obviously erroneous or untrustworthy did he engage in a critical assessment by comparing the textual witness with outside evidence. Even then, he did not always try to resolve a problem. Either older auctores were given preference to more recent ones, or Biondo sometimes recorded divergent written opinions without taking a position.\textsuperscript{97} An example from Roma Instaurata, on the development of Rome’s topographical layout, is typical. Biondo begins by asserting,

It is thereupon a well-known fact that only the Capitoline or Tarpeian mount and the Palatine and Aventine hills, with those valleys which we see in between, had encompassed the city, because Livy shows that all five other mountains and hills were added. For these are the words on the matter in Book 1 about the deeds of Tullius Hostilius: “Rome meanwhile grows on the ruins of Alba; the number of citizens is doubled. The Caelian hill is added to the town and that it might become more populated, Tullus chose it for the site of his palace and lived there.”

\textit{Eam Capitolinum sive Tarpeium et Pallatinum Aventinumque montes solum, cum is quas intercedere videmus convallibus comprehendisse hinc constat, quod omnes alios quinque montes et colles additos Titus Livius ostendit. Sunt}

\textsuperscript{94} Tommasini (1985, 35).

\textsuperscript{95} Tommasini gives an exhaustive list of authors cited by Biondo in the \textit{Roma Triumphans} in the appendix on pages 79–80. Scholars have also remarked on the way in which Biondo detached sources from their context, so that they became moveable pieces disposed of at will for his antiquarian work. This observation has been made in particular with reference to the \textit{Italia Illustrata}, Biondo’s attempt to do for all of Italy what he had done in the \textit{Roma Instaurata}. Castner (2005, xviii [for quotation], xxi); White (2005, xv).

\textsuperscript{96} White (2005, xiv–xv).

\textsuperscript{97} Brizzolara (1979–80, 41, 43); Clavuot (1990, 182, 183).
enim illius de Tulii Hostilii rebus gessis haec verba libro primo “Roma interim crescit Albae ruinis, duplicatur civium numerus. Caelius additur urbi mons, et quo frequentius habitaretur eam sedem Tullus regiae capitis, ibique habitavit” [1.30].

Biondo goes on with “the second hill added to the new city was the Janiculum” (secundus novae urbi additus mons fuit Ianiculensis) and quotes from Livy 1.33, and in similar fashion continues, “the other three were afterwards added by King Servius all at the same time” (alii tres postea simul a Servio rege additi), quoting from Livy 1.44. Biondo next remarks without concern, “Tacitus seems to think differently about the borders of the first town; these are his words: ‘from the forum Boarium the trench for marking out the town was begun . . . and the Capitoline was added not by Romulus, but by Titus Tatius’” (sed Cornelius Tacitus aliter de urbis primae ambitu sentire videtur; cuius sunt haec verba: “A foro Boario . . . sulcus designandi oppidi coeptus . . . et Capitolium non a Romulo, sed a Tito Tacio additum”). He cites from Tacitus’s Annales 12.24 in full. Nothing about the discrepancy over how the city and its boundaries grew is further said. Biondo simply ignores the variance in the accounts, and he shows no preference for one textual authority over the other. He switches to an immediate “let’s continue,” announcing his intention to discuss what are now the eight hills and the points of interest on them (progressuri ad eam inquam tendimus aedificiorum locorumque urbis descriptionem, qui nunc sunt octo montes).98

While this methodology of giving equal weight to ancient testimony is fairly standard for Biondo, there are plenty of instances where Biondo cites the testimony of authors who had lived at the time of construction of a particular monument. Along with his allegiance to ancient texts is the realization that the city-plan of Rome is not static. Certainly this sense of history enabled him to compare material objects with textual sources, which we see him doing throughout his work.99

Finally, in 1444 Biondo accompanied Cardinal Prospero Colonna, an admirer and collector of antiquities, to see some remains from two ships that had belonged to the emperor Caligula. Colonna later commissioned the salvage of the galleys from the bottom of Lake Nemi in a move called “the first attempt at archeological recovery.” Biondo was able to closely inspect one of the ships, which was raised from the waters under Alberti’s supervision.100

98. R. I. 1.72, punctuation and orthography slightly adapted from D’Onofrio (1989, 137).
99. Brizzolara (1979–80, 40–41, 51); for Biondo as a historian, see Hay (1939).
Biondo shared with his humanist friends the antiquarian practice of book study and examination of physical evidence. However, just like the men of his generation, and much like Pomponio Leto after him, Biondo employed a method that was not a perfect blend of textual and visual comparison. Perhaps nowhere can this better be seen than in the 1474 historical geography _Italia Illustrata_. One revision to this work shows Biondo relying entirely on his own recently discovered fragment of Ammianus Marcellinus for a description of the Umbrian settlement Oriculum. Oriculum had been rebuilt closer to the Tiber river in Roman times, but Biondo neglected first-hand evidence of the ruins at Oriculum and on the Via Flaminia nearby. Biondo cites classical authors for the existence of a lethal spring on Mount Soracte, but he proves it through personal observation:

I believe this all the more, since the Most Eminent Roman Cardinal Prospero Colonna and I together wandered all through the ruins of the city of Antium. When we had entered the woods there, we came upon a small spring and on its edge two little birds lay dead, apparently from drinking the water.

_Quod quidem nos certius ea ratione credimus, quia cum vir summus Prosper cardinalis de Columna Romanus nosque simul Antiatis urbis ruinas perstraremus, silvas ibi quibus ingressi fonticulum offendimus, in cuius labris aviculae duae post gustatam, ut apparebat, aquam occubuerant._

Scholars have commented on Biondo’s indiscriminate method in the _Italia Illustrata_. Perhaps he was simply faced with where to put his trust most: the wisdom of the ancients, or his own senses.

**THE FASTI AND FIRST-HAND OBSERVATION IN ROME**

The influence of the previous generations of antiquarian scholars on members of the Roman Academy cannot be underestimated. Flavio Biondo was honored directly as a shining light. In his _oratio_ for the celebration of the 1484 Palilia, Alessandro Farnese pays special tribute to the two recipi-

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102. The seemingly random method may have been due to Biondo’s haste (the _Italia Illustrata_ was an overwhelming project) and Biondo’s unsteady source of livelihood in the Roman Curia (Castner 1998, 101). Cf. White (2005, xiv–xvii) for a gentler view.
ents of that year’s *laurea poetica*, Pomponio Leto and “Gaspare Biondo, son of Flavio [Biondo]. The prefect of our sodality, [Gaspare] adorns the name and deeds of his famous father with all his study of the liberal arts” (*Gaspari B[londo] Flavii filio, nostre sodalitati praefecto, qui praeclari genitori sui nomen et acta omni bonarum artium studio exornat*).\(^{103}\) Gaspare Biondo, apostolic secretary, oversaw the publication of his father’s works, as he says in a prefatory letter of the Rome 1474 *editio princeps* of the *Italia Illustrata*.\(^{104}\) Both Gaspare Biondo and his father held a place of honor among those in Pomponio Leto’s circle; even Leto’s daughter Nigella read the *Roma Instaurata*.\(^{105}\) Antiquarianism—Flavio Biondo’s domain—suffuses the intense study of Ovid’s *Fasti* by Leto and his colleagues.

Walks around Rome by humanists who were both students of Leto and teachers themselves are quite obvious in the *Fasti commentaries*. Often the Christian churches in Rome acted as markers for the topography and ancient edifices which the Academicians saw, and which they wanted to make come alive for their students in lectures. In a gloss on *Fasti* 3.522, Volsco identifies the Caelian hill as the site of Santo Stefano Rotondo (*Célius Mons ubi est S. Stefanus Rotunnus*, fol. 94v), echoing Leto as well as his predecessor Flavio Biondo, and ultimately, the *Mirabilia Urbis Romae*: “the Caelian [is] where the Church of Santo Stefano in Monte Caelio is” (*Célius mons ubi est ecclesia sancti Stephani in Celio monte*).\(^{106}\)

Christian landmarks are again pointed out at *Fasti* 4.345, in a passage about the heroine Claudia Quinta, who escorted the goddess Cybele through the Capene gate after drawing the ship with the divinity’s statue up the Tiber river. Antonio Volsco clarifies, “through the porta Capena, which goes to the church of San Paolo” (*per Portam Capenam quae itur ad templum divi Pauli*, fol. 127v). He also glosses “Porta Capena is the gate which leads to Porta San Paolo” (*Porta Capena est quae ducit ad Portam divi Pauli*), echoing the identification made by Pomponio Leto in his *Excerpta*, a record of his walking tours.\(^{107}\) Paolo Marsi mentions the same church at

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\(^{103}\) The *oratio* is reproduced in Tournoy-Thoen (1972, 226–28, here 228).


\(^{105}\) Zabughin (1906, 234).


\(^{107}\) *ubi est porta Capena, et ad moenia ubi est porta Sancti Pauli* (D’Onofrio 1989, 288).
Fasti 2.601 when he glosses “Almo,” a tributary of the Tiber, as “the stream is a little outside the city, along the Via Ostiense; its source is the basin not far from the church of San Paolo” (Almo fluvius est paulo extra urbem Via Hostiens, qui ex paludibus oritur non longe a templo divi Pauli).

Christian churches are the modern landmarks of ancient Roman sites. Their inclusion in Fasti comments does not differ in purpose from the parallels Leto draws (for example) between Catholic bishops, prelates, and abbeys, and ancient flamines in the De lingua Latina. Modern equivalents, in fact, make the classical world more recognizable. The Christian references also attest to the paleo-Christian interests of the Roman Academy, whose members made excursions to the catacombs. Perhaps Leto even led visits to churches, if we take into consideration his Latin poem on the succession of Lenten Station Churches of Rome. Certainly Biondo’s love for the City was great enough to incorporate Christian Rome and modern monuments in his Roma Instaurata, and the inclusion of churches was part and parcel of the Mirabilia urbis Romae as well.

Comparative methodology can be seen at work in Marsi’s Fasti gloss at 6.396. After recording information from Varro (DLL 5.43) and Plutarch (Camillus 14.2) on the Via Nova, Marsi notes that the street

connected to the Forum and the Via Sacra and passed along the Palatine, where even now there is the church of Santa Maria in Via Nova. By linguistic corruption people call [the church] Santa Maria Nova, since it is on the Via Nova.

iungebatur foro et viae Sacrae tendebatque prope Palatium, ubi et nunc aedes est sub appellatione divae Mariae in Via Nova, quamquam vulgus corrupte divam Mariam Novam vocat, cum in Via Nova sit.

Varro and Ovid suggest that a slope or staircase joined the Via Nova to the Forum Romanum on the forum’s southwest side, and Marsi paraphrases Varro correctly on this account. In the fashion of Flavio Biondo, Marsi cites auctores on the matter before he adds modern evidence as proof. And

108. DLL 5.84: Flamines: sunt quemadmodum nostro tempore episcopi, protonotarii, et abates.
111. qua Via Nova: per quam a Velabro ad Romam ascendent, ut Varro ostendit; cf. DLL 5.43: Velabrum, et unde ascendent ad infimam Novam Viam. In the late Republican and Augustan period, this stretch of the street was obliterated. Even modern attempts to correlate literary evidence with archeological remnants of the Nova are frustrating; see Wiseman (2004).
also in the manner of Biondo he uses place names, but these ultimately fail him in this example. The church Marsi has identified is Santa Francesca Romana, which impinges on the Temple of Venus and Rome on the northeast side of the Forum and is also known as Santa Maria Nova, to distinguish it from Santa Maria Antiqua, which was abandoned due to structural damage in AD 847.\(^{112}\) The church is indeed close to the Via Sacra, a street that had a more reliable archeological history than the Via Nova. Marsi mentions the Via Sacra in his gloss; perhaps he was hearing an echo of Horace’s “by chance I was walking along the Sacred Way” (*ibam forte Sacra Via; Sat. 1.9.1*) in Ovid’s “by chance I was returning [on the route] which now joins the New Way to the Roman Forum” (*forte reverterem . . . illa / quae Nova Romano nunc Via iuncta foro est*, 6.395–96). However, the church in question did go by the name Santa Maria Nova, which Marsi himself notes is common parlance. This is how we find it called in the *Mirabilia*, Poggio’s *De varietate fortunae*, and Leto’s *Excerpta*.\(^{113}\) Marsi mis-corrects when he emphasizes that the church is S. Maria in Nova, but like Biondo he uses philology as a tool; he believes that the church shares an integral connection with its location, instead of with its foundation history.

Of course, neither the antiquarians of Marsi’s generation nor the antiquarians of the previous one were archeologists. They were not involved in excavations (the raising of a galley from Lake Nemi notwithstanding), and they limited themselves to what they could see on and above ground. Entire structures could therefore be confused. For example, Marsi mis-identifies the temple of the Mater Matuta or Portunus (*F. 6.479*), occupied in his time by the church of Santa Maria Egiziaca, when he tells his audience “that the temple, circular in form and with upright columns around it, still intact, is on the very bank of the Tiber and on the edge of the Forum [Boarium]—the church of Saint Stephen Martyr” (*Quod templum rotundae formae erectis in ambitu columnis integrum adhuc est in ipsa ripa in extrema parte fori sub titulo divi Stephani martyriris*). From the description, it is clear that Marsi has in mind the round temple of Hercules Victor, dedicated to Santo Stefano alle Carozze.\(^{114}\)

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112. Francesca de’ Ponziani was buried in S. Maria Nova in 1440; however, the name change to S. Francesca Romana did not occur until after the saint’s canonization in 1608 (Hülsen 1927, 352).

113. The *Mirabilia* states: *palatium Romuli inter sanctam Mariam novam et sanctum Cosmatem as well as arcus Titi et Vespasiani ad sanctam Mariam novam* (Parthey, 5, 6). From *De Var. fortunae Book 1*: *locus editio in Via Sacra, altera occidentem, altera orientem versus, hodie Mariam Novam appellant . . .* (D’Onofrio 1989, 70). See Leto’s *Excerpta*: *In horto Sanctae Mariae Novae est vestigium templi Aesculapii et Concordiae* (ibid., 273).

114. Compare Poggio, *De var. fortunae Book 1*: *Exstat et Vestae templum iuxta Tiberis ripam ad*
Still, sometimes archeological discoveries were made, or rather, stumbled upon; it was to the antiquarian’s advantage to be alert. From the previous example, it appears that the Forum Boarium was an area of particular interest and activity for Marsi. He gives news of the recent unearthing of a prized ancient artifact at F. 1.582 on the legend of Hercules Victor, so named because Hercules had slain Cacus and his divinity had consequently been recognized by Evander:

Who would believe, now that so many ages have passed since that altar was famous, that in my time, while I was teaching in Rome, the marble quarriers found the Ara Maxima in a far corner of the forum Boarium, and they dug up the bronze statue of Hercules, along with various inscriptions. These were all immediately taken to the Capitoline and placed in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, so that everyone could see them.

Verum quis crederet tot iam elapsis saeculis ab eo tempore quo celebris erat illa ara, illis diebus quo haec Romae profitebar, in ultimo angulo fori Boarii ab his qui marmora inquirebant reperta est ara Maxima, et effossa aerea Her­culis statua, cum multis circa eam epigrammatibus, quae omnia delata mox fuere in Capitolium et in atrio dominorum Conservatorum collocata, atque omnibus visenda patent?

The colossal bronze statue of the demi-god was found during the demolition of the remains of a round temple near the Ara Maxima (which Marsi seems to confuse with the Ara Maxima itself). The destruction of the temple and subsequent unearthing of the bronze Hercules occurred during the pontificate of Sixtus IV and has been dated to ca. 1474, which was the first year of Marsi’s teaching.115 The excavation caused a stir in the Roman Academy, as the reports by both Leto and Marsi attest. Moreover, several second- through fourth-century inscriptions dedicated to Hercules were found in the area and transferred along with the bronze statue to the Palazzo dei Conservatori.116 Both Marsi and Leto refer to their discovery,

115. Pomponio Leto had not dated the discovery to anything more specific than the papacy of Sixtus IV: *Post muros aedificiorum scolae Graecae statim non longe fuit templum Herculis in foro Boario, rotundum cum multis antiquitatum vestigiis et dirutum tempore Xisti IIII* (Excerpta in D’Onofrio 1989, 288). On the basis of Marsi’s account I have modified the date *prima del 1474* as suggested by Presicce (2000, 195). See furthermore Richardson (1992, 188–89; “Hercules Victor, Aedes”); Bober and Rubinstein (2010, 129–30); and Michaelis (1891, 15).

116. *CIL* VI, 312–18; Platner and Ashby (1926, 253).
as well. One can imagine Academy members hurrying over to the dig in the Forum Boarium as news travelled. About fifteen years later, tourists to Rome were still breathlessly reporting on the statue of Hercules that was part of Sixtus IV’s collection.117

The excitement over the unearthing of the bronze Hercules is reminiscent of another spectacle that caused a big stir: the discovery of a preserved body of a Roman girl in a sarcophagus along the Via Appia on April 16, 1485. At least twelve contemporary accounts of the incident remain, among them one by Roman Academy member Paolo Pompilio, who characterized the event as truly prodigious. Leto conjectured that the body was Tulliola, daughter of Cicero. As with the statue of Hercules, the corpse was brought over to the Palazzo dei Conservatori.118 Such finds were the stuff of legend, and in the late-quattrocento Fasti notes and commentaries, we frequently see a will to believe, a hope to turn up something unexpected. A revealing example occurs at Fasti 1.521, care nepos Palla, where Marsi remarks: “yet I never saw any tomb of Pallas at Rome, nor was I able to find out anything about the Parentalia or anything else from the customary rites, such as raised altars etc. for Evander and other heroes and Carmenta” (ego tamen neque sepulchrum Romae Pallantis ullam vidi, neque parentalia neque aliud ex consuetis sacris cognoscere quicquam potui, velut Evandro et aliiis heroibus et Carmenti aras erectas et reliqua). Marsi’s declaration exemplifies the two corresponding aspects of antiquarianism: the search for material remains and the reconstruction of society. Marsi wants to find a relic, the tomb of Pallas (Marsi was no longer living when the sarcophagus with the female corpse was discovered), and because Pallas was the grandson of Carmenta (her prophecy of his death occurs at F. 1.521), he wants to know more about Roman family funeral rites. The Parentalia was especially significant as an annual ceremony at family tombs lining the roads. Of course, it is specifically noble and well-augured Roman families in whom Marsi is interested. We can infer this not only by his reference to heroes (heroibus) but also from the Ovidian context, a prophecy that culminates in the house of Augustus (529–36) and echoes Vergil’s Aeneid.119 Rome’s mythic origins and destined glory are the subtext of Marsi’s Fasti excursus, and his search is for the “embodiment” of the past.

117. Shofield (1980).
119. Green, 234–35.
Marsi was presumably not the only person to have looked for Pallas. He clearly knew the story recounted by William of Malmesbury that in the preceding eleventh century a farmer digging in his fields found the colossal body of Pallas, an eternal lamp still burning inside the coffin by his head. The supposed epitaph read:

Here lies Pallas, son of Evander, whom the soldier
Turnus killed after his fashion, with a spear.

_Filius Evandi Pallas, quem lancea Turni
militis occidit more suo, iacet hic._

Popular legend left its imprint on the humanist Paolo Marsi. Moreover, the idea of an authenticating inscription may have inspired him. Of final note are the elements of a perfect, undecomposed body and an eternal flame. The desire is to find a Rome that is whole, whether it be through her visual or literary monuments.

Traditional lore still had its hold on the Renaissance antiquarians. Indeed, what was Costanzi looking at when he was shown a temple of Janus during his tour of Rome in 1471? Costanzi’s gloss at _Fasti_ 1.2.45 that “there are some who read my altar is on a hill, which is agreeable” (_sunt qui legant ara mea est colli, quod non displicet_) is revealing. At this same juncture, Marsi explains:

Some read _my hill is a citadel_; but the better reading is _my altar is on a hill_, for the words make sense, since a shrine dedicated to this divinity is still supposed to stand on that hill, which he inhabited and was called the Janiculum after him.

_Aliqui legunt arx mea collis erat; melius ara mea est colli, nam fidem facit verbis suis, quod sacellum suo numini dedicatum adhuc extet in eo colle quem incoluit et qui ab eo Ianiculus nuncupatur._

According to the critical apparatus of the Teubner edition of the _Fasti_, the reading _ara mea est colli_ for _arx mea collis erat_ does indeed occur in some manuscripts that follow the tradition of the eleventh-century Ursianus codex (Vatican City, BAV, Var. lat. 3262). However, Marsi appears to

have consulted popular legend rather than manuscripts. Leto’s reading of the *Fasti* also shows *ara mea est colli* (Vat. lat. 3263, fol. 7r; Vat. lat. 3264, fol. 5r).

Modern topographers have debated whether or not there was a cult of Janus on the Janiculum.¹²¹ There is no archeological evidence, yet etymology has led to speculation. *Ianus* and *colo* together would suggest the Janiculum as “the place where Janus lives” and substantiate the accepted reading of *Fasti* 1.2.45, *arx mea*. A variety of classical sources also report that Janus ruled as king from a citadel on the hill.¹²² Through analogy with terms such as *terricola*, *caelicola*, and *monticola*, however, one could interpret the compound of *Ianus* and *colo* to mean “Janus worshipper” and infer the presence of a Janus temple on the hill, rather than a stronghold.¹²³ Marsi himself interprets according to sense: *fidem facit verbis suis*, he says; therefore there must be a shrine on Janus’s hill. He agrees with Flavio Biondo, who asserts that

> the principal name of the more established place in the region [Trastevere] deceived even many of the most learned men of our age, who do not know that on the crest of that hill, where now nuns live, there was a temple of Janus.

> *fallit vero plaerosque etiam aetatis nostrae doctissimos editoris ea in regione loci prima appellatio, quod ipso in collis cacumine ubi nunc sacrae inhabitant virgines, Ian i templum fuerit.*¹²⁴

Intuition counted, and a layperson was sometimes a more trusted source of information than the pedant. Biondo had a convent in mind for the Janus temple, possibly the contemporary San Pancrazio, a monastery for Cistercian nuns, and this is perhaps the site Costanzi was shown.¹²⁵ While the existence of a temple to Janus on the Janiculum is fantasy, it still appears in illustrated Renaissance topographies of Rome, most notably Marco Fabio Calvo’s *Antiquae urbis Romae cum regionibus Simulachrum* (*editio princeps* 1527), where one finds a *templum Ian i* depicted on the *mons Janiculus*.¹²⁶

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¹²¹. Preller (1881, 1:176) still assumed the existence of a Janus temple.
¹²². Among others Vergil Aen. 8.357 and Servius; Pliny NH 3.68; Macrobius Sat. 1.7.23. See Holland (1961, 230).
¹²³. Ibid.
¹²⁶. See Jacks (1993, 198, 204).
The influence of Biondo and his methodology—reliance on literary sources, visible remains, and traditional lore—are evident again in Marsi’s comment at Fasti 2.201 (Carmentis portae dextro est via proxima iano), where Biondo’s suppositions are continued. The passage is cited as a locus difficilior in the Teubner edition of the Fasti.\(^{127}\) Biondo had equated the Porta Carmentalis (or Scelerata), which Ovid refers to, with the right-hand arch (or western face) of the Janus Quadrifons. On the Janus Geminus, a temple with a double doorway, founded at the lowest point of the Argile tum by Numa as an index of peace and war, Biondo says:

That is now the temple which, constructed of white marble with its four open-sided gates, stands nearly whole next to San Giorgo in Velabro. From elsewhere: Livy mentions the temple when he says “the Fabii set out from the right-hand arch.”

\[\text{Id est nunc templum quod candido marmore extructum patentiibus quadri-}
\text{fariam portis ad sanctum Georgium in velo aureo extat pene integrum, cuius}
\text{alio loco diximus Livium meminisse quom Fabios dextro iano profectos dicit.}\]\(^{128}\)

Biondo confuses the no longer extant Janus Geminus with the visible ruins of the Janus Quadrifons in the Forum Boarium. He recalls the passage in Livy 2.49.8 where the ill-fated Fabii march through the Carmental Gate to meet the Veii (Infelici via, dextro iano portae Carmentalis, profecti). The line of reasoning and mistaken identity, conflating the arch of the Carmental gate with that of the Janus Quadrifons on the authority of Livy, is echoed by Marsi. He explains Ovid’s dextro iano in the passage on the routing of the Fabii at F 2.201 as follows:

On the right-hand: because he considers it to be near the right side. In many manuscripts it is written “the right-hand road is the nearest path,” but “from the right-hand arch” is better. According to Livy “they set out from the right-hand arch of the Carmental gate.” You should not understand this as applying to the Janiculum, which was outside the city boundary, but to the temple of Janus, which was situated between the two fora, as I have said above.

\[\text{Dextro: quod ad dextra habet. In multis codicibus scriptum “dextra est via}
\text{proxima,” melius est dextro iano, nam et Livius inquit de hoc eodem “a dextro}\]

\(^{128}\) R. I. 2.46 in D’Onofrio (1989, 180).
Marsi instructs his audience not to confuse the Janus arch mentioned in this verse with the “temple of Janus” on the Janiculum, but rather to identify it with the Janus Quadrifons discussed at F.1.258 (*iuncta foris templo duobus*):

Numa had founded the Janus temple at the lowest point of the Argiletum, and it was . . . where now those four enormous, marble arches stand, facing the four poles of the earth. There also is the church of San Giorgio in Velabro.

The confusion between the Janus Geminus and Quadrifons, and the Porta Carmentalis as one of its arches, first appears in Biondo. The mistake is repeated by Marsi, who similarly quotes Livy as evidence. Biondo’s antiquarianism carried such weight that its influence was still felt. Biondo was not quite upstaged by the later humanists, and he was held in esteem by Leto’s circle.

Biondo did resort to epigraphy as a source for critical historical inquiry. He utilized inscriptions which for the most part were already well-known. Here he was surpassed by Leto and his generation of antiquarians, whose works display a fascination with epigraphy. We might note to begin with the colophon to the 1482 *editio princeps* of Marsi’s *Fasti* commentary, where the information about Leto’s sodality is rendered in Roman capitals in a structure with a pediment. Ovid could be considered paradigmatic for the antiquarian researcher consulting epigraphical sources, since in the *Fasti* he himself four times refers to ancient calendars and once to an inscription.  

Leto copied inscriptions into a notebook, fragments of which still survive. He discovered a Roman rustic calendar on stone, now known as the *Menologium rusticum vallense*, which was printed by Jacopo Mazzochi ca. 1509. Leto furthermore kept a sizeable epigraphical collection in his house on the Quirinal hill, whether in the garden or lodged in the walls.  

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129. F. 1.7, 1.657, 3.87–96, and 3.844.
classical epitaph, and composing epitaths was, in fact, a nostalgic exercise in his circle.\footnote{131} The Academician Giovanni Antonio Campano composed an epigram about a sleeping nymph, not only inspired by, but possibly written for, a sculpture to be set in a Roman statuary garden.\footnote{132}

Adopting ancient customs and (re)inventing inscriptions made their way into Leto’s \textit{Fasti} commentary and his collection of epigraphy. On fol. 90v of Vat. lat. 3263, at \textit{F}. 5.294, Leto glosses \textit{Publiciumque} as follows: “The Publician road is on the Quirinal, facing west. Better said, it is northwest. At the lower end there is the temple of Apollo and Clatra, at the upper end there was the Capitol in antiquity. . . .” (\textit{Clivus PUBLICIVS in Quirinali colle est occasum versus. Melius inter occasum et boream. Ex parte inferiore habet templum Apollinis et Clatrae, ex superiore Capitolinum vetus. . . .}). The single word in Ovid prompts Leto to make a topographical and archeological excursus. The so-called temple of Apollo and Clatra appears in Leto’s regionary catalogue of Rome and (with an alternate spelling) in the record of his walking tours of the ancient sites of the city. It is a monument of Leto’s own imagination and the result of error; there is, after all, no known goddess \textit{Clatra}.\footnote{133} However, Leto may have found on the Quirinal the fragment of an inscription that contained (in some form) the words \textit{fores clatratae}, which are known from actual epigraphical collections. Perhaps Leto then turned the \textit{fores clatratae} (barred / latticed gates: from \textit{clathro}) of a temple of Apollo into a goddess affiliated with Apollo. In fact, a stone slab with Apollo and Clatra was owned by Angelo Colocci, who had inherited Leto’s collection in the first half of the sixteenth century. Somewhat later the antiquarian Pirro Ligorio documented a more fanciful inscription, perhaps inspired by Leto’s “find.”\footnote{134} Leto believed in his fragment: he told students about it not only in his lectures on Ovid’s \textit{Fasti}, but also in the course on Varro’s \textit{De lingua Latina}, and he seems to have pointed out the site of a destroyed temple associated with the divinities Apollo and Clatra on walking tours.\footnote{135} The inscription was no conscious forgery on Leto’s part; rather, we see evidence of the desire to see Rome reconstructed and whole again. And indeed, the epigraphical label

\footnotesize{\begin{thebibliography}{133}
\bibitem{131} N. Petrucci (1994).
\bibitem{132} Wren (2006, 108–10).
\bibitem{133} De Rossi (1882, 72–76); . . . \textit{mons a sinistris habet domum cardinalis Neapolitani} [Oliviero Carafa], \textit{et est pars Quirinalis montis, et vocatur mons Clatiae et Apollinis} (Leto’s \textit{Excerpta} in D’Onofrio 1989, 280).
\bibitem{134} de Spirito (1993; 1996); Hackens (1960–61, 185–96). See also Fanelli (1979). Cf. the false inscription recorded in \textit{CIL} VI, 5, 128*.
\bibitem{135} Leto’s reference to the temple of Apollo and Clatra appears in a gloss to \textit{DLL} 5.51 (Accame 2007, 19, fn. 44).
\end{thebibliography}}
and toponym lasted: *Mons cum templo Clitrae et Apollinis* appears in the 1551 Bufalini map of Rome.

Leto’s *Fasti* manuscript Vat. lat. 3263 shows additional, even direct, evidence of manufacturing inscriptions. On folio 68r, in a passage on the envoys sent to ask for the cult statue of Cybele from Attalus I of Pergamum (F. 4.265–66), Leto has inserted the gloss: INTERPRAETATIO ex libro xxix T.Livii. -M. VAL. LEVINVS. COSRIS M. CAECIL. METEL. PR RIOUS .L. SVLPLICIVS GALBA AEDILCAVS C. TREMEL. FLAC M. VAL. FALCO QRII. Leto makes reference to Livy 29.11.3, where the five members of the delegation to King Attalus are named (a former consul, praetor, aedile, and two quaestors). However, rather than paraphrase Livy, Leto has written the names and ranks of the ambassadors as if in a classical inscription; no doubt Leto is creating a visual counterpart to Livy. In another example, Leto more realistically balances Livy and stone carvings to illustrate grammar and spelling (F. 4.223): “Attis, Attinis, found on marble and in Livy, is written in Latin with two letters i and an I” (Attis, Attinis, ut marmora testantur et Livius utitur et scribitur per duplex T et i Latinum; fol. 67r of Vat. lat. 3263). We see Leto calling upon material witness to support philology. The observation of what the Romans left behind—not in manuscripts but in inscriptions, a more tactile and immediate form—appears as well at *Fasti* 3.667. Here, Leto’s gloss is in the first person, increasing the appeal to the senses. On Anna of Bovillae, Leto writes: “Bovillae is twelve miles distant from Rome. On the left side of the Via Appia I saw a marble with the inscription S. P.Q:BOVILLANUS” (Bovillae oppidum distans ab urbe duodecim milia passuum. Ego a sinistra parte viae Appiae vidi marmur in quo scriptum erat S. P.Q:BOVILLANUS; fol. 57r of Vat. lat. 3263).

But possibly the most interesting piece of epigraphical evidence in Leto’s *Fasti* occurs at 2.119–148, the February 5 anniversary of the day when the Senate conferred upon Augustus the title *Pater Patriae*. A temple to Concord was dedicated on this day in 216 BC, and in witness of this fact Leto draws upon a fragment of the calendar of Praeneste (modern Palestrina), quoting “CONCORDIAE IN ARCE.” Leto and other members of the

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136. For another example of Leto’s illustrative antiquarian techniques, see Gwynne (1995). The author demonstrates how Leto may have had at his disposal a coin of Jupiter Stator from the reign of Antoninus Pius, and drawn the figure from this coin in the margin of a Cicero manuscript.

137. Cf. CIL XIV, 2408, a dedicatory inscription found in the area around Bovillae, and once owned by Leto (according to P. Ligorio); Magister (1998, 188 [no. 81]).

138. The full gloss on fol. 22v of Vat. lat. 3263 reads: Nonis Febr. die nefasto sacrificia in monumentum Augusti sacrificia fiebant in arce in templo Concordiae, cuius rei memoria legitur Praeneste in marmore: NON NP CONCORDIAE IN ARCE FERIAE EX S C QVOD EO DIE IMPERATOR CAESAR AVGVSTVS PONTIFEX MAXIMVS TRIB POTEST XXI COS XIII A
Academy, it turns out, participated in active searches for the Roman antiquities at Praeneste, and they were among the first to “discover” this ancient city of Latium. In his De antiquitate Latii, Antonio Volsco documents having seen the mosaic of the Nile from the Temple of Fortune in Praeneste, which redates the mosaic’s discovery in the 1620s to at least 1507.\textsuperscript{139}

**TRAVEL AND TESTING AUCTORITAS**

The humanists engaged in an interdisciplinary scholarship: text and object updated the known ancient world; empirical observation both clarified and substantiated what was read. The disparity between classical texts and antiquities could be disquieting, however. Scholars, including teachers and examiners of Ovid’s *Fasti*, were often uncomfortable contradicting auctores. The regard for Pliny the Elder is a case in point. Admired for his encyclopedic thirty-seven books on natural history, Pliny was the model and source *par excellences* for first-hand, empirical observation, but it was Pliny who was often more trusted than the kind of science he represented. Moreover, the restoration of a correct text of Pliny was of as great importance as his approach.\textsuperscript{140}

Much of what Pliny mentioned verged on the marvelous. His scrutinizing words stimulated the imagination; he made the unimaginable seem possible. Flavio Biondo certainly put his faith in Pliny. He believed in the powerful and toxic effect of a spring on Mt. Soracte, as discussed above, because in his own observations, “on [the spring’s] edge two little birds lay dead, apparently from drinking the water” (*in cuius labris aviculae duae post gustatam, ut apparebat, aquam occubuerant*). This corroborated Pliny, who said: “Varro claims that at Soracte there was a spring, four feet wide, which at sunrise pours forth steam as if it is boiling. And birds which had drunk from it lay dead next to it” (*Plinius ad Soractem Varro asserit fontem esse, cuius sit latitudo quattuor pedum, soleque oriente eum exundare ferventis similem. Avesque quae gustaverint iuxta mortuas iacere.*\textsuperscript{141} [NH 31.27]).

\textsuperscript{139} See La Malfa (2003).

\textsuperscript{140} Nicolò Leoniceno found himself in the middle of a debate in 1492 when he claimed that many of Pliny’s errors, especially in the medical and pharmacological books, were due to Pliny himself instead of technical faults introduced by copyists, editors, and printers. See Tateo (1995), Nauert (1979), Reeds (1976), Castiglioni (1953), and Thorndike (1934).

\textsuperscript{141} Castner (1998, 96–97); White (2005, 108–9).
On the mysterious effects of a spring, one might compare Biondo’s remark with something similar by Paolo Marsi. In an excursus at Fasti 1.708 Marsi argues for the location of the lacus Juturnae, no longer visible in the Roman forum as it had been in antiquity. Even though he knew from Dionysius of Halicarnassus (6.13.4), Livy (2.20.12; 2.42.5), and Valerius Maximus (1.8.1) that the spring-fed pool “where Castor and Pollux were seen bathing the sweat from their horses” (in quo Castor et Pollux abluere sudorem equorum visi sunt) was near the temple of Vesta, Marsi places it in the Forum Boarium. “Later generations can now see [the pool] a little further away” (quae nunc paulo illinc remotior cernitur a posteris), he says,

For indeed, at the church of San Giorgio under a half-ruined tower is that very spring with its healing waters. I wanted to test this and make sure this was the spring of Juturna, particularly since Varro spoke of “the nymph of Juturna who gives aid, and therefore many who are ill customarily seek her water, on account of that name.” And so five times I took one of my students with dermatitis to bathe there, and immediately he was relieved of all his infection.

Est enim apud templum divi Georgii turris semiruta sub qua est ipse fons et aquae quidem salubres. Quod ego experiri volui, quo certior fierem an ea esset aqua Juturnae, praeertim cum Varro diceret “nympha Juturna quae iuvaret itaque multi aegroti propter id nomen hinc aquam petere solent” [cf. DLL 5.71]. Duxi igitur illuc ad abluendum quinquies discipulum scabium, protinusque ab omni scabie liberatus est.

Marsi has put together several literary sources to discover a site mentioned in Ovid, and he substantiates the textual evidence with external, “scientific” proof. Through Varro’s etymological explanation that Juturna (like the twins Castor and Pollux) was a helper of men, Marsi finds the additional authoritative link that he needs. He then tests the salubrious powers which, according to Varro, the fountain of Juturna possessed. He tests the restorative effects of a spring in front of San Giorgio in Velabro, the conduit of an ancient, underground aqueduct, where women still came to do their wash (see figure 8). A marginal note in a manuscript of Leto’s Varro lectures also locates Juturna’s pool at the same church (hec fons est

142. Marsi’s passage is also noted in Grafton and Jardine (1986, 84–85) and Muecke (2003, 220, fn. 43).
prope templum Sancti Georgii; Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, MS 1348, fol. 42v), and the identification also appears in Bufalini’s 1551 map of Rome.

In unraveling Ovid’s lacus Iuturnae by assembling and comparing literary sources on the one hand, Marsi was able to distinguish between the lacus Iuturnae near the Temple of Castor and Pollux and the Aedes Iuturnae in the Campus Martius. By an appeal to personal experience on the other hand, Marsi was able to verify what he believed to be the actual lacus Iuturnae, even if it had oddly moved location. Direct observation and authoritative truth could co-exist; they had to. But what happened when the antiquarians’ beliefs were more greatly challenged? What happened when classically trained humanists travelled outside of Rome, outside of Latium, and outside of Italy? What did exposure to the customs, cultures, and landscapes foreign to their own teach the humanists? In the generation before Leto, Ciriaco already travelled extensively, and his experiences still led him in essence to “restore the dead.”

Pomponio Leto travelled relatively little, preferring his life in Rome and at the Studium urbis. He had planned to go to the East in 1468 to learn Arabic and Greek, a plan that was disrupted by his extradition from Venice. Leto made only two voyages subsequently: to Eastern Europe in 1480 (included on his itinerary were Germany, Hungary, and Russia), and to Germany again in the winter of late 1482/early 1483, when he received the privilege to crown poets from the emperor Frederick III. Leto referred to his 1480 trip as his iter Scythicum, and many “Scythian notes” appear in his manuscripts on classical authors. The Scythian notes reflect Leto’s curiosity and interest in what he saw. Thus, at Vergil Geor. 3.461–62, Leto paused to consider the Tartar custom of drinking the blood of horses, mixed with or without milk; at Geor. 3.383 (and in his Sallust commentary), Leto marvelled on the use of fox pelts for warm clothing. He comments on a porridge eaten throughout the Black Sea region (Valerius Flaccus Arg. 2.448), as well as on a fermented beer made

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143. Marsi anticipated Andrea Fulvio in the Antiquaria Urbis (Rome, 1513); see Muecke (2003, 220, fn. 43). See also Laureys (2006, 212).
144. In the Italia Illustrata, Biondo rued the passing of Ciriaco of Ancona, “who by his investigation of ancient monuments restored the dead to the memory of the living, as he used to put it” (qui monumenta investigando vetustissima mortuos, ut dicere erat solitus, vivorum memoriae restituebat); White (2005, 260–61). See further Mitchell (1960, 470); Neuhausen (1996).
146. Toward the end of his life, Leto enjoyed an active correspondence with Peter Martyr, who provided him with information about voyages to the New World and answered questions about new lands and their inhabitants. Leto continued to be interested in cultures not his own despite his own limited travels. See Eatough (1998, 3, 18, 509–16).
by the addition of milk to the porridge (Georg. 1.154). He refers to what he observed in Russia at Fasti 1.693 (Vat. lat. 3263, fol. 18v), inserting the first-person singular in his gloss. He comments on the method of grinding and toasting spelt (farra: QUOMODO FAR TORRETVR . . .): “the Scythians do the same thing for oats and wheat . . . I saw it, I was there and I tasted it” (sciωae idem faciunt in avena et tritico . . . vidi ego inter-
fuique et gustavi), he says. Leto draws on personal experience to expand upon what Ovid mentions in the Fasti. At the same time, there is a wariness of overstepping boundaries. At Fasti 4.409 (fol. 71v) Leto glosses farra deae, “spelt for the goddess,” as “salted flour, of which I spoke in Book 1, on the authority of Pliny (mola salsa est de quo diximus libro primo ex Plinii auctoritate).” Direct observation could not replace the mantle of wisdom of auctoritas.

The introduction of empirical observation is also apparent in the exegesis of Leto’s pupils. First let us look at Leto’s gloss on Arion and his lyre in Fasti 2.79–118, where Arion’s strumming is compared to the mournful notes of a dying swan. Leto writes (Vat. lat. 3263, fol. 22v):

Pierced with a feather: aging swans have a small, hard, inborn feather in the down on their forehead. Some write that the swan’s brain is injured by this feather; they are of the opinion that the swan then sings most sweetly, when he is about to die. I myself have heard the swans singing in the Scythian marshes. The inhabitants of Scythia do not know that the singing swan is about to die.

Traiectus penna [2.110]: cyenis senescentibus penna exigua dura in pluma
frontis innascitur. Sunt qui scribunt ea penna cerebrum oloris ledi suavis-
sume canere; existimant eum tunc moriturum. Audivi ego canentis cycnos in
paludibus Scytharum. Incolae ignorabant an ille esset moriturus qui canebat.

The legendary “swan song,” attributable to the ancient Greeks, was a commonplace among the Romans. Cicero noted how swans, sacred to Apollo, sang with exceptional sweetness at the moment of their death (cygni . . .

\textit{providentes quid in morte boni sit cum cantu et voluptate moriantur, Tusc.}
1.30.73), and Pliny also acknowledged the tale (olorum morte narratur fle-
bilis cantus, \textit{NH} 10.32). Leto makes reference to the tradition (existimant) but ignores the correction by the natural historian himself. Pliny main-

\textsuperscript{147} Vat. lat. 3263, fol. 18v: mola teruntur et sive in sacris sive in cibus iterum et iterum admoventur; cf. Pliny, \textit{NH praef.} ii; 18.83–84; 18.112.
tains that the “swan song” is not borne out by observation or experiment (falso, ut arbitror, aliquot experimentis, NH 10.32). In fact, Leto has construed Ovid’s penna, the shaft of a hunter’s arrow, as quite literally a fatal feather in the swan’s head (see chapter 2). How, then, to uphold Ovid? Perhaps expanding on what the thirteenth-century philosopher Bartolomeo Anglico had remarked, that upon death the swan “sings with a shaft stuck in his brain” (morte penna infixa cerebro canit), Leto inserts his own Plinian observation and substantiates his reading of the Fasti with what he witnessed on his trip abroad. Moreover, he passed his “scientific” explanation along to his students and to members of the Roman Academy such as Antonio Volsco. Volsco’s notes to Fasti 2.110–11 appear on fol. 35v; the glosses read “as the swan: a swan who sings most sweetly and sorrowfully at the point of death. pierced: who has things stuck . . . hard feather: with an old feather, which is very hard” (veluti olor; cingnius [sic] qui mortis tenpore dulicissime et miserabiliter canit. traiectus: qui habet infixa . . . penna dura: senili quae durior est). Volsco has repeated the notion that mature swans die from a lethal feather, effecting a last, beautiful song. And Paolo Marsi, in his Fasti comment at dura penna (2.110), writes about the swan’s melodious dying note:

This is because swans when they are old have a kind of hard little feather on their forehead, as though they had been pierced at birth; Pomponio noticed this in the far confines of Germany and so did I in Ionia. Indeed, the older swans have that pierced brow, others don’t. Therefore Ovid does not say dura penna without reason; I am only amazed that others have not observed this.

Quia in senecta pennam quandam habent duriusculam frontem [sic] natam velut traiectam, quod observavit Pomponius in extrema Germania et ego in Ionia. Seniores enim cycni illam traiectam habent, ceteri non. Poeta igitur non sine ratione hoc dixit, sed miror ab alis non fuisse observatum.

Marsi wishes to prove Ovid correct; after all, the auctor did not say what he did “without reason” (sine ratione). Marsi refers to Leto’s trip to Germany, which interestingly enough occurred just before Marsi’s editio princeps went to press. Marsi himself had gone to Ionia—the coastal Aegean region of central Turkey—in the entourage of the condottiere Nicolò Canal

149. Stocchi (2003, 185).
in 1469.\textsuperscript{150} Leto’s experience was legitimization for Marsi’s own encounters, as well as the gold standard for comparing text and realia. Leto’s news might have made it to the ears of Antonio Costanzi as well, and the thesis of the lethal feather and the swan song remained active into the middle of the next century in the work of Vincenzo Cartari, \textit{Le imagini de i dei de gli antichi}.\textsuperscript{151}

Elsewhere in his commentary on the \textit{Fasti}, Marsi reveals that he employed his powers of observation while abroad but that he, too, in the end applied his experience to substantiate traditional authority. At \textit{F. 1.76} Marsi debates the nature of the aromatic \textit{spica Cilissa} (see chapter 3).\textsuperscript{152} Marsi claims Ovid’s reference must be to a plant with a flowering top, “Cilician bistle (\textit{spica}),” and from this we must understand nard, of which Pliny says ‘all kinds have a pleasing scent’” (\textit{spica Cilissa, et de nardo intelligit, de quo Plinius “odoris gratia omnibus maior” [NH 12.44]}). As Pliny talks about many species of nard, personal experience comes to Marsi’s aid. Marsi again refers to his empirical observations while on the coast of Turkey in 1469. “Even if you do not read in Pliny about the nard of Cilicia,” Marsi explains, that does not matter. For truly, Pliny does not say that nard does not grow in Cilicia, but he praises especially Syrian nard and next after it the Gallic and the Cretan [kind]. Furthermore, remember that Syria borders on Cilicia, so that what grows in Syria can also sprout in that part of Cilicia which borders on Syria. Moreover, I picked spikenard on the coast of Cilicia with my very own hands, and I showed it to my audience when I lectured on this line.

\begin{quote}
\textit{Etsi Cilissum nardum non legas apud Plinium, non refert. Non enim inquit Plinius non nashi in Cilicia nardum, sed in primis laudat Syriacum, proxime Gallicum et Creticum [NH 12.45]. Adde quod Syria iuncta est Ciliciae, ut}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{150} Marsi joined the entourage of Canal in order to record Canal’s deeds as Captain General against the Turks. Canal was unsuccessful in defending the island of Negropont, the ancient Euboea (June 15, 1470). See della Torre (1903, 170–91); Ventura (1974, 666).

\textsuperscript{151} Costanzi’s \textit{Fasti} comment at 2.110 is as follows: \textit{dum imminente morte cantum flebilem facit penna eius cerebrum laedi, Magnus Albertus et Isidorus litteris mandaverunt, quaevis Aristoteles et Plinius ea de re nihil scripsersint} (emphasis mine). Albertus Magnus (\textit{De Animalibus} 8.72) and Isidore of Seville (\textit{Ethym.} 12.7.18–19) mention only the legend that the swan sings sweetly at the point of death, and nothing more. Stocchi (2003, 186, fn. 22). For preliminary comparisons between Leto’s and Marsi’s remarks on the swan song, see Bracke (1989, 298), and Bianchi (1981, 80).

\textsuperscript{152} This passage has also been remarked upon in Grafton and Jardine (1986, 84–85).
Marsi betrays his empirical spirit: that he examined nature in the places he visited, and even brought plant specimens back to Rome, is significant to note. In this regard Marsi may be said to resemble the late-sixteenth-century naturalist Ulisse Aldovrandi (1522–1605), who collected and pasted in his notebooks dried plants from his travels, while at the same time recording pertinent passages from classical botanical authors. But of course Marsi roamed the Turkish shore with a certain expectation, based upon his reading of Ovid; in investigating nature, he saw what he wanted to see. Marsi notes that this discussion came about

while I was lecturing on this passage and father Sabinus, who then was alive, and others were railing against me, because I wished the spikenard to be understood, while they were of the opinion that the most highly-praised saffron from Cilicia was meant. Nor did they notice the error in which they were engaged.

The issue consumed Marsi, who wished to be proven correct. He continued the debate in the *Emendatio locorum* appended to his *Fasti* commentary, when he was in Venice supervising the printing of his first edition. Marsi’s new corroborative evidence was the recently begun translation of Dioscorides by the Venetian Ermolao Barbaro. Marsi applauds Barbaro, a “most erudite young man, upon whom all praise of letters has been heaped” (*eruditissimus iuvenis et omni litterarum laude cumulatissimus Hermolaus Barbarus*). From Barbaro, Marsi’s opponents “will positively find that nard

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154. It is unclear who Marsi means when he refers to *pater Sabinus*; Pomponio Leto died in 1498. Another *Sabinus* could be Angelo Sabino, active as a scholar ca. 1468–76; we do not know when he died, however. He was a professor at the *Studium Urbis*, and his commentary on Juvenal was published in Rome in 1474. He was engaged in a contentious rivalry with Domizio Calderini. See Sanford (1948, 102–5).
also grows in Cilicia” (*invenient certe et in Cilicia nasci nardum*). Barbaro as a scholar must have been an influential example for Marsi. A great philologist, more interested perhaps in determining the original words of a classical author than their scientific accuracy (as the *Castigationes* on Pliny imply), Barbaro also appealed to direct observation, as demonstrated in his accompanying commentary on Dioscorides.

Marsi’s obsession with *spica Cilissa* reveals his own interdisciplinary outlook and a methodological interdependence between text and object. He relied on a variety of research tools, both philological and empirical, and his voyages gave him another source for reflection. One need only read the *Bembice*, twenty poems in two books detailing events and the sites Marsi visited in 1468, to see the challenges that travel presented to the Classics-colored *status quo*. Marsi’s reliance on ancient auctoritas is evident on the one hand in the poem recording his stopover in Malta, “*Inter navigantes quod ad inclytam urbem et illius portum applicuimus*”; his experience of the island is colored by classical literature. Marsi counsels

After having come here by an error of our way, hear by what name the island is called, Bembo father.

‘There is a fertile island Melita close to the barren Cosyra’ which lies between the Phoenicians and the Sicilians ‘whence,’ as the ancients said, ‘come the little dogs called Melitaean’; so be you my witness, Book 6 of Strabo, for some deny [this interpretation]: it behooves them to introduce their witness.

*Huc errore viae postquam devenimus, audi insula quo dicta est nomine, Bembe pater.*

“*Fertilis hec Melytæ sterili vicina Cosyreæ*” [cf. Ovid, *F. 3.567*]

*Sidonios inter Trinacriosque iacens “unde Meliteos” veteres dixere “catellos;” Strabonis testis sis mihi sexte liber* [6.11.3; cf. Pliny, *NH* 3.152] *nanque negant alii: testem his adducere fas est.*

In this poem Marsi makes evident his deference to authority, claiming that

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155. Leto later came to agree with Marsi about the nature of *spica Cilissa*; in his post-1488 *Fasti* notes, he writes, “*nard produces a spike, not a blossom*” (*nardus spicam emittit non florem*; Vat. lat. 3263, fol. 2v). By this time Leto may also have read the work of Barbaro, his own former student.

156. Nauert (1979); Riddle (1980, esp. 8, 46–48); Ramminger (1999).

157. Vatican City, BAV, Reg. lat. 1385, fol. 32r.
whoever disagrees with his explanation of Malta’s nomenclature should find his own classical witness for support. For Marsi, it is fitting and proper to describe the island according to ancient testimony; one need not look beyond the parameters of Greek and Latin literature. In fact, he moves on to the story of the escape of Dido’s sister to Malta, borrowed again from the *Fasti*, 3.523–656.

On the other hand, in this poem it is also evident that Marsi compared what he read with what he saw and that he determined that the classical text was a static and incomplete picture of the real world. Marsi’s first description of Malta had been in Ovid’s words, “there is a fertile island Melita close to the barren Cosyra” (*F.* 3.567); however, in the second half of the poem Marsi relates in part his own personal experience:

Formerly bountiful, now the island remains barren
and there is no honoring the poor farmer,
because already the fourth season has borne a dry harvest
and no rain shower has fallen.

_Fertilis hec quondam nunc infecunda quiescit,
agricultae et miseris nullus habetur honos,
quarta quod arenas iam contulit area messes_
_et nullus pluviae decidit hymberaque._ (fol. 32v)

While simultaneously modeling his words on those of Ovid (cf. *tertia nudandas acceperat area messes*, *F.* 3.557), Marsi makes an implicit judgment about the discrepancy between Ovid’s idyllic view of the island and the current facts of the matter. Certainly in a creative genre such as poetry, and in a travelogue at that, a slight quibble with a classical author would not seem inappropriate. A commentary on the author would be an entirely different case. But when Marsi later taught students the text of the *Fasti* in Rome, he interpolated his observations, clearly not just to explain the text but also to point out the truth in light of his experience. “I myself passed over to that island,” Marsi writes in his commentary on Ovid, “and in the year 1468 it was not fertile, on account of the drought. For a whole four years it had been without rain. Still, its soil is fertile when it rains” (*nos ipsi in eam insulam traiecimus, nec eo anno qui fuit Mcccclxviii a natali Dominico erat fertilis, propter siccitatem. Quadriennio enim integro aquas pluviis caruerat. Fertile tamen solum habet cum aquatur*).

Yet, in the end, Marsi and so many of the humanists could not completely disengage from the classical learning that they imbibed and the lens
of *auctoritas* through which they viewed much of the world. Marsi agrees, for example, with Ovid that Malta’s “soil is fertile when it rains.” And Antonio Costanzi betrays an even greater fidelity to *auctoritas*. One cannot simply read what one wants into the text or twist an author’s words. He offers advice in his explanation of *cetera ne simili caderent labefacta ruina* at *Fasti* 2.59, where Ovid recounts that Augustus had “seen to it that the rest of the temples should not suffer the same collapse and ruin” as the temple of Juno Sospita. In Ovid’s time, no temple to Juno Sospita remained. Therefore, Costanzi says, “you will not find a temple to Juno Sospita restored by Augustus anywhere, although I remember when I was young, many disagreed” (*Sospitae Iunonis templum ab Augusto refectum nusquam invenies, quamvis memini me adulescente multis contra sentire*). Attentive to Ovid’s very words, Costanzi says the poet “would not be saying ‘Sospita is said to have been enhanced with new shrines’” (*nec diceret “Sospita delubris dicitur aucta novis,” F. 2.56*). Be vigilant, Costanzi tells his students: “we must pay careful attention, so that we do not interpret this line in such a way as to seem to disagree with the poet” (*diligenter itaque animadvertendum est ne ita interpretemur hunc locum [2.59] ut a poeta dissentire videamur*).158

What we finally witness here is a desire to see Rome whole, either in the mind’s eye or in the writings of the Romans themselves. Observing, indeed comparing, ruins or any range of natural phenomena with what could be read in Ovid was a means to supplement classical antiquity. Nothing could completely replace antiquity; nevertheless, as we will see in the next chapter, new life could be breathed into antiquity through its reuse by the moderns.

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158. Ovid seems to think that a temple to Juno Sospita once existed on the Palatine hill, but there is no evidence that one ever did; for the confused identity of possible coterminous temples and controversial discussion thereof, see Richardson (1992, 217–18) and Coarelli (1996). Leto and Marsi are silent on the matter.