

P.Herc. 817 and the Augustan Ideology*

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Abstract

P.Herc. 817 provides us with the remnants of an anonymous and anepigraphic poem about the capture of Egypt by Octavian in 30 B.C. In the last years, the surviving fragments have been interpreted as containing a critical text against Augustus. However, a correct reading of the text and, especially, a contextualization of the poem in relation to the motives related with the Augustan ideology, allows to truly understand the author’s point of view and his positioning towards the *princeps*. The author depicts the virtues of Octavian and of his soldiers, characterized positively in terms of *fides*, *potentia*, etc. Octavian restrains his soldiers from plundering the city of Pelousios, so that his *clementia* connects him to Julius Caesar directly.

Keywords

P.Herc. 817, Varius, Rabirius, Augustan ideology, Octavian, Marc Antony, Cleopatra

History of P.Herc. 817: discovery and opening of the scroll, attribution and dating

P.Herc. 817 provides us with the remnants of an anonymous and anepigraphic poem about the capture of Egypt by Octavian in summer 30 B.C. Very likely the poem contained the entire narrative of the civil war between Marc Antony and Octavian, and would therefore have depicted the battle of Actium as well.

* I wish to thank my friends Nicholas Bellinson and Michael McOsker who helped me to improve this article in many respects.

The text includes 8 columns and 26 fragments of different size for a total of approximately 65 verses, transmitted by the pieces of the papyrus and by the *disegni Oxoniensi* and *Napoletani*.¹ Only the lower part of the scroll remains, which constitutes about one third of the original height. The scroll from which the columns and the fragments come was opened with Piaggio's machine and drawn between October 1st 1805, when P.Herc. 817 was delivered to be opened, and November 29 of the same year.²

The remnants were edited for the first time by Nicola Ciampitti in 1809 in the second volume of the *VH collectio prior* (p. V-XXVI) but his edition, based exclusively on the *disegni napoletani*, contained only part(s) of the text; the editions by Walter Scott (Oxford 1885) and John Hayter (Oxford 1891) – actually by E. B. Nicholson under Hayter's name because he passed away in 1818 – were prepared using the copperplates taken to United Kingdom by the reverend Hayter and are based on the *disegni oxoniensi*, they also contain only part of the text.

Between the *editio princeps* and the last completed edition provided by Giovanni Garuti (Bologna 1958) – still the reference edition today – about ten editions appeared; furthermore, P.Herc. 817 despite its short text is the most studied Herculaneum papyrus. Other partial editions by Rosanna Immarco Bonavolontà, Maria Chiara Scappaticcio, and Jürgen Blänsdorf paradoxically worsened the textual reconstruction and even had detrimental effects on the literary-historical interpretation.³

To be thorough and offer a complete survey is to mention the discovery by Richard Janko who recognized some new fragments in other *disegni Oxoniensi* (MS Gr. class. c. 6, 1569, 1571-1572 + = P.Herc. 399 [?]) and claimed that they belong to the poem. Conversely, Mario Capasso has shown that Janko's hypothesis faces too many difficulties to be true. I can add *en passant* to Capasso's convincing objections that the text reconstructed by Janko is in metrical and semantic trouble since the sequence of 1569 frg. 1, v. 3 *per · emi* is not «to be killed» (perhaps *perimi!*), but *I killed*; v. 4 - - -]m [· a]nteā [·] plu. [(«before more») is a cretic (*āntēā*), 1571 fr. 2, v. 2 - - - s]ol [· uo]lať [·] alt[- - - («the sun flies on high») the *sol* does not *volat* in Latin poetry normally (Janko 2008, 60-61).⁴

The fragments identified by Garuti as related to the description of Marc Antony and Cleopatra's flight into Egypt after the battle of Actium are the smallest and in the worst state of preservation – they were probably the first to be detached and belonged to the central part of the scroll:

¹ The Oxonian apographs (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Gr. class. c. 7, 1618-1636) were drawn by Carlo Orazi. The Neapolitan apographs (Napoli, BNN, Officina dei Papiri, Disegni Napoletani dei Papiri 817) were drawn at various times by Giovan Battista Malesci (1805), Francesco Biondi (1863), Raffaele Biondi (1861) and Alfonso Cozzi (1907).

² BNN-AOP B^a XVII (7, 26r «Dato per isvolgersi al 1:° Ott:° 1805», see Blank 1999, 67; Blank / Longo Auricchio 2004, 42-44. Hayter 1811, 59 «Monday, November 29th, 1805. The “Papiro”, No. 817, which had been consigned to Don Camillo Paderni, was finished. There was no name, or title, at the end. It was the fragment of a Latin poem. Many entire verses in series were found. The poem appears to be historical. It speaks of Alexandria, Ægypt, Cæsar, th Battle of Actium, a Siege, the Queen &c.».

³ Scappaticcio 2010; Immarco Bonavolontà 1984; Blänsdorf 2011, 427-437, who listed many conjectures *praeter metrum* of Immarco Bonavolontà, but on his edition see footnote 5.

⁴ Janko 2008, 59-62 and Capasso 2013, 45-47.

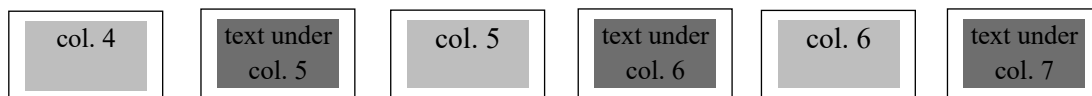
1/3 lost				
2/3 lost				
P.Herc. 817	Lost	fragments	columns I-VIII	<i>subscriptio</i> ἄγραφον

Battle of Actium

flight of Antony
and Cleopatra
into Egypt

arrival of Octavian
in Egypt and
siege of Alexandria

The columns 1-8 describe the events from the capture of Pelusium until the siege of Alexandria. The size of the *volute* and *sezioni* assures that the numbering of the columns reflects the order in which they were unrolled, however there were other textual portions between the preserved columns; such portions are on layers under the preserved columns:⁵



Mario Capasso rightly pointed out that the poem was at least in two books and was contained in two scrolls.⁶ I can add something more specific to his reflection. The poem dealt pretty surely with the battle of Actium and with the capture of Egypt.

In the 15th century Angelo Decembrio could still read an epic poem in the last copy that survived the Middle Ages; he provides us with information about the content and *incipit* (Pl. 1):⁷

⁵ A good example of a bad papyrological match that can have literary implications is given by Blänsdorf's *Versus aevi Augustei vel I p.C. saeculi* fr. 46 f. (2011, 431-432). He reconstructs the text of col. V and VI that contain the description of Cleopatra's experiments on human beings to discover the best way to commit suicide. As I said the extant pieces belong to the lower part of the scroll, but nevertheless Blänsdorf edited the col. V and VI as the VI col. would directly follow the V – i.e. as the col. V were from the middle of the scroll or the VI from the top – and accordingly numbers the verses from 1 to 17. Col. V shows the entrance of the prisoners (*noxia turba*) while col. VI shows the experiments: there were at least 16 verses (or, if underneath col. VI there is another text portion, 24+16 verses) depicting Cleopatra's macabre cruelty that are now missing. Such a long grand-guignolesque scene fits much better in the Ovidian age and anticipates Lucan. Another blunder of Blänsdorf is in the 1st verse of col. VI: «[hic i]acet [absumptus f]erro, tu[m e]t i[ll]e ven[eno]». Why a nominal sentence and a horrible hiatus that seldom occurs, e.g. in Gallus' papyrus, if the previous editors suggested the correct «tumet ille veneno»?

⁶ Capasso 2011, 45-46.

⁷ Archivio di Stato di Milano, fondo Autografi, sezione storica – uomini celebri – scienziati e letterati D cartella 125 fascicolo 16, f. 4. First published by Cappelli 1892, then Gualdoni 2015; for Angelo's reliability Sabbadini 1897; Sabbadini 1905 (= 1967), 373-374; Reeve 1991; Courtney 2003, 334; Gualdoni 2015, 170-171. Only Hollis 2007, 418 believes that the piece of information and the *incipit* provided by Angelo Decembrio are a humanistic forgery: «The credentials of this item are far from encouraging [...] I suspect, however, that the quoted words represent a Renaissance idea of how such a poem ought to begin. Compare the alleged opening(s) of Ovid, *Fasti* 7 (in the Teubner *Fasti*, pp. V-

«Donatus antiquissimus in Graeco et cum eo quoddam opusculum metricum quod dicebatur esse Virgilii de bello nautico Augusti cum Antonio et Cleopatra, quod incipit:

armatum cane, Musa, ducem belloque cruentam
Aegyptum et cetera»

A part from the poem's attribution to Virgil in which Angelo does not believe – he is quoting the title in the manuscript, but of course he distances himself from the wrong authorship through «quod dicebatur» – we learn from the description and the *incipit* that the poem's subject was the battle of Actium («de bello nautico Augusti cum Antonio et Cleopatra») and the conquest of Egypt («belloque cruentam Aegyptum»), probably the main subject of the narrative. We can add that the focus was on Octavian, the *dux* who brought bloodshed to Egypt («cruentam»), and on his war deeds («armatum»). It is not possible that the *armatum dux* is Marc Antony because according to Angelo the content was the war of Augustus against Marc Antony and Cleopatra. In passing, I note that the poem must have been written after Virgil's *Aeneid*: otherwise the Virgilian commentators would have underlined Virgil's *furtum*, as they did in several cases.

Furthermore, Seneca (*Benef.* 6. 3. 1) quotes the last words of Marc Antony before he committed suicide:⁸

«egregie mihi videtur M. Antonius apud Rabirium poetam, cum fortunam suam transeuntem alio videat et sibi nihil relictum praeter ius mortis, id quoque si cito occupaverit, exclamare:

hoc habeo quodcumque dedi»

Therefore, we can assume that the development and the sequence of the events contained in the poem was (1st scroll) from the battle of Actium (or more likely from the beginning of the civil war with an *excursus* about the reasons of the war) to (2nd scroll) Alexandria's capture, the death of Marc Antony and Cleopatra, and perhaps Octavian's triumph. How long the poem was is difficult to establish. Decembrio's description (*opusculum*) points out that the poem was short and probably Edward Courtney's assertion regarding the narrative (2003, 334 «moving at a quite fast pace») would surely be true, if we knew exactly how much text is hidden under the extant columns. The loss of the vast majority of the poem is for us all the more regrettable because it was probably one of the

VI)». Scappaticcio 2008, 85 goes beyond the pale and accuses Angelo of trying to obtain money from Borso d'Este: «egli, con il forte rammarico per la grossa perdita, ne cerca – in qualche modo – il risarcimento»; again p. 89, footnote 21 «La lettera non era un semplice inventario di codici, ma era la richiesta per un risarcimento, una richiesta di aiuto indirizzata al Duca di Ferrara e Decembrio avrebbe potuto volere caricare di enfasi la pura verità, alterando, probabilmente, anche l'effettivo valore del furto». Probably, Scappaticcio based her conclusion on misunderstanding Angelo's words: «pro cuius operis exhibitioe preclara tua magnanimitas aureos quinquaginta liberaliter elargita est. nunc autem dictus supplicans non causa pecuniam aucupandi aut vestem, more histrionico, tametsi pecuniae subsidio vehementer indigeat, sed summa necessitate sua recuperandi coactus». (Gualdoni 2015, app. I).

⁸ See Dahlmann 1984, 17-19.

short epic poems of the Graeco-Roman literature;⁹ the only extant example for this genre is Ps. Virgil's *Ciris*, which actually has quite a fast narrative pace and focuses on different elements than the traditional epic poems, like Scylla's love passion or the *Ammenszene* with Carme.

Immediately after unrolling P.Herc. 817, John Hayter suggested as the author Lucius Varius Rufus, the Augustan poet as well as Vergil's friend.¹⁰ Marcello Gigante¹¹ and Maria Chiara Scappaticcio¹² adopted this attribution. The former was deeply influenced by the idea that Virgil, Varius, Quintilius Varus and Tuca attended Philodemus' lessons in the *domus suburbana*, as P.Herc.Paris. 2 proved without doubt.¹³ Accordingly, if Varius wrote an epic poem – Blänsdorf comments on frg. 5 «*res admodum incerta*»! – and was in the *Villa dei Pisoni* personally, his book should have been in the library as well. The latter has taken up Gigante's attribution making of L. Varius Rufus – at an unspecified time of his life, but certainly after 19 B.C. the date of the *Aeneid*'s publication by Varius and Tuca – an author critical of Augustus.

The most probable attribution – because of Seneca's *testimonium* and for stylistic reasons – is nevertheless to Rabirius, an epic poet nominated by Ovid.¹⁴ Nicola Ciampitti proposed this first and the vast majority of critics agree (G. I. Montanari 1830; J. T. Kreysig 1835; T. Mommsen 1880; D. Comparetti 1883; M. Ihm 1897; L. Alfonsi 1944; G. Garuti 1958; A. Traglia 1987; G. Zecchini 1987). Other proposals have been made, but this is not the place to discuss them: these will be discussed in the *prolegomena* of my soon-to-be-published edition of P.Herc. 817.

“Anti-Augusteism” and “Pseudo-Augusteism”: Two New Interpretation Categories

Giuseppe Zecchini was the first who interpreted the remnants of the poem as containing a text critical of Augustus.¹⁵ His naive interpretation relied on the words *Italus hostis* (col. I, v. 8) especially. The fact that Octavian was defined in this way made Zecchini lean towards the definition of the

⁹ On the historical *epos* see Kroll 1916; Ziegler 1966², chapter III, and especially IV and VII.

¹⁰ An anonymous report that was published again some years later (= Engelbach 1815, 162-163) refers the words of «a learned gentleman now at Palermo» who is nobody else than John Hayter (Hayter 1809, 180): «The style of the poetry is excellent: the merit of the composition, and the nature of his subject, persuades me that the poem may with great probability be attributed to Varius as its author. I need not here repeat all those passages of ancient writers, which may be seen altogether in Lilius Giraldus, on this poet: he celebrated, it is well known, the deeds of Augustus. This fact, added to the lines of Horace, is favourable to my hypothesis. I must also add, that a gentleman, extremely well versed in literature and the fine arts, the Chevalier Seratti, one of the Neapolitan secretaries of state, approves my idea». Probably, the hand written note «Varius H» on Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Gr. class. c. 7, f. 1617 is by Hayter self, who attributes the poem to Varius. On Varius as author see Bickel 1950; Castorina 1974; Suerbaum 1983; Della Corte 1985; Feletti 1996.

¹¹ Gigante 1995; Gigante 1996 does not differ from the previous.

¹² Scappaticcio 2010, 131 f.

¹³ Gigante-Capasso 1989, the same content was published with very few variations in Gigante 1991 and again in Gigante 2001.

¹⁴ Ov., *Pont.* 4.16.5; Vell. 2.36.3; Quint. 10.1.90. See Courtney 2003, 332-333; Blänsdorf 2011, 298-300.

¹⁵ Zecchini 1987 chap. I and IV; Zecchini 1988.

carmen as of «tendenza antiottaviana» or «antiaugustea». One should appreciate the intellectual uprightness of the scholar who after reading some critics admitted that his interpretation was wrong.¹⁶

Even though Zecchini rejected the results of his previous researchers, Maria Chiara Scappaticcio has taken up this interpretation again without adding any new element and defined the poem in a very enigmatic way as «pseudo Augusteo».

It must be said that neither of them has tried to outline a view of the ‘anti-Augustean’ ideology and to contextualize the poem in a stream of ‘anti-Augustean’ literary products.¹⁷

After my proposal was accepted for the congress, Mario Capasso sent me his article “Poesia epica e propaganda augustea: il caso del *Bellum Actiacum*” published in 2019. He proposes some reflections in it that I also submitted in the abstract. Therefore, I will present my similar point of view, integrate some of his observations and propose others. I am glad that the same interpretative line on this text unites us in name of the *amicitia papyrologorum*.

A More Correct Method of Interpretation

At this point, it seems important to set some questions of method. One can analyze and then correctly define the content of a papyrus fragment or a fragment transmitted indirectly only based on the text that is conveyed, without speculating on what is not present because lost.

An interpretation that relies on elements *ex silentio* is admissible only for texts completely or almost completely transmitted. Thus, the fact that Virgil passes by Cicero in silence could be meaningful eventually – this obviously does not prove that it is meaningful: like all proofs *ex silentio* they have a different weight. In this regard Zecchini offered an excellent example of how one should not read a fragmentary text and use one’s imagination to fill *lacunae*.¹⁸

Furthermore, an even bigger issue arises when the *lacunae* in a fragmentary text are filled or readings are offered to prove an interpretative hypothesis. In the very same way, when one

¹⁶ Zecchini 1994, 44 «comincio, com’è giusto, con un’ammenda».

¹⁷ Suet., *Aug.* 31. 1 «postquam uero pontificatum maximum, quem numquam uiuo Lepido auferre sustinuerat, mortuo demum suscepit, quidquid fatidicorum librorum Graeci Latinique generis nullis uel parum idoneis auctoribus uulgo ferebatur, supra duo milia contracta undique cremauit ac solos retinuit Sibyllinos, hos quoque dilectu habito»; see Charlesworth 1933.

¹⁸ Zecchini 1987, 18 «Di solito si afferma che il contenuto di queste due colonne escluderebbe l’accoglimento nel *Carmen* della versione, secondo cui Pelusio sarebbe stata consegnata da Cleopatra ai Romani; ora, certamente nei frammenti del *Carmen* non vi è cenno di alcun accordo intercorso tra Ottaviano e la regina per la resa di Pelusio [...] nulla vieta di integrare la lacuna tra la I e la II colonna del *Carmen*, cioè tra la resistenza e la conquista di Pelusio proprio secondo la versione dionea, che appare sinora, in base ai già frequenti contatti rilevati tra i due testi, la più vicina alla ricostruzione dei fatti seguita nel *Carmen*. Se il *Carmen* presentava dunque la presa di Pelusio come avvenuta a causa della malafede di Cleopatra, si delineerebbe in esso una tendenza sfavorevole alla regina e indirettamente incline a scagionare Antonio per i ripetuti insuccessi militari».

reconstructs a poetic text in fragments – it seems almost an obvious truism – grammar and metric must be taken into account so as to avoid conjecture against the linguistic norm or *praeter metrum*.

Finally, when one offers an interpretation of a text, it is necessary to put the text into the historical frame, above all taking into account the contemporary texts and archaeological monuments that deal with the same themes.

By contrast, a correct reading of the text and, especially, a contextualization of the poem in relation to the motives linked with the Augustan discourse, helps to truly understand the author's point of view and his positioning towards the *princeps*.

A close and unbiased examination of the representation of Pelusium's siege conducted by Octavian and his soldiers (col. I-II) can bring an end to Scappaticcio's flabdoodle. The text of column I is (Pl. 2):

«quem iuvenem [g]ran[d]a[e]vos erat per [c]uncta [sec]u[tus] 5
bella, fide dextraque po[t]ens rerumque per us[um]
callidus, adsidu[us tra]ctando in munere M[arti]s.
imminet opsessis Italus iam turribus [ho]stis,
a[nt]e omnis [comit]es nec defu[it] impetus illis»

In it an elderly soldier and a young man appear; the former has followed the latter for *cuncta bella*. This *iuvenis* could have been another soldier or Octavian – born precisely in 63 B.C. The qualities of the elder soldier are exalted: he is not only «callidus» and «adsiduus», but also «fide dextraque po[t]ens».

The poet represented one soldier as old: he participated and contributed in all wars and probably was a veteran of Julius Caesar's armies.

The *potentia* of Octavian's soldier ensued from his *fides* as well as from his right hand: said in other words, without *fides* there is no power but brutality. Thus, by this term the author refers to the loyalty shown by the legions to Octavian. As we know, Marc Antony faced defections from his ranks.¹⁹

So the topic seems to be a positive depiction of the *princeps*' army and reflexively a negative one of Marc Antony's ranks.

The term *Italus hostis* was pivotal for Zecchini's and is for Scappaticcio's interpretation; the latter takes it as very critical of Augustus; otherwise she thinks that the poet would have used *Italus miles*,

¹⁹ D.C. 50. 11. 2 τοῦ δὲ δὴ ἦρος ὁ μὲν Ἀντώνιος σὺδαμῆ ἐκινήθη (οἷ τε γὰρ τριηρῖται, ἅτε καὶ σύμμικτοι ἐκ παντοδαπῶν ἔθνῶν ὄντες καὶ πόρρω ἀπ' αὐτοῦ χειμάζοντες, οὔτε τινὰ ἄσκησιν ἐπεποίητο καὶ νόσῳ αὐτομολίαις τε ἠλάττωντο [...]).

but that does not seem to me metrically possible «imminet opsessis Italus iam tūrrībūs miles» because the cretic is not a beloved foot in epic poetry.²⁰

However in my opinion, *Italus hostis* can be explained in poetical terms since it represents only the change of the point of view that does not imply any political judgment at all. In the very same way, Vergil uses *hostis* of the Trojans and even Aeneas several times! Since Aeneas was an ancestor of Caesar and Octavian, who could sincerely believe that Vergil is an anti- or pseudo-Augustan poet?²¹ Moreover, the anonymous poet underlines Octavian's «virtus a[nt]e omnis comites» in contrast with some attempts made by Marc Antony to discredit Octavian accusing him of cowardice.²² The hemistich «nec defuit impetus illis», whether it refers – more likely in my opinion – to Octavian's soldiers or their enemies, is appreciative of Octavian's army: his soldiers are valiant, and they fight against brave enemies.

In col. 2 Octavian restrains his soldiers from plundering the city of Pelusium. I present the text as Scappaticcio edited and Blänsdorf credulously accepted:

«cum [s]uper[are p]otens Pelusia [m]oenia Caesar 5
 [coep]erat im[pe]riis animos cohi[be]re su[o]rum:
 ‘quid [c]apitis iam [ca]pta, iacen[t] quae [praemia belli?]
 subruitis ferr[o me]a moenia. quondam er[at h]ostis
 haec mihi cum [caus]a plebes quoque: [de]ni[q]ue victrix
 vindicat h[anc fa]mulam Romana tot e[nsi]bus gentem». 10

Through the description of this act of *clementia* the poet aligns Octavian with the official narrative (*R. Gest. div. Aug.* 3 Scheid «uictorque omnibus ueniam petentibus ciuibus peperci. Externas gentes,

²⁰ Scappaticcio 2010, 114 «La scelta del sostantivo *hostis* potrebbe, infatti, non essere casuale: il sostantivo, enfaticamente collocato in clausola e in omoteleuto rispetto ai versi precedente e successivo (*sic!*), non solo contribuisce alla sequenza allitterante del verso, ma è velato di una patina polemica. Del resto si sarebbe potuto parlare di Ottaviano come di un *Italus miles*, o comunque si sarebbe potuto scegliere un sostantivo che non contenesse in sé un germe di negatività: non sembra adeguato che chi avrebbe voluto apertamente schierarsi dalla sua parte lo definisse *hostis*. Ancora una volta, dietro questo sostantivo potrebbe nascondersi un'eco del sentimento antiaugusteo del poeta, velato sotto un'apparente patina di adesione al regime». See the destroying remarks by Mario Capasso (Capasso 2019, 39-40) on Scappaticcio's thesis. Furthermore, the homeoteleuton of «hostis» (nom.) is only with «Martīs» (gen.) – not with «illīs» (dat.) because the quantity is different.

²¹ Verg., *Aen.* V 424 «i, soror, atque hostem supplex adfare superbum [...], 5. 548-549 tu lacrimis evicta meis, tu prima furem / his, germana, malis oneras atque obicis hosti; *Aen.* VII 467-470 ergo iter ad regem polluta pace Latinum / indicit primis iuvenum et iubet arma parari, tutari Italiam, detrudere finibus hostem: / se satis ambobus Teucrisque venire Latinisque».

²² Suet., *Aug.* 10. 4 «priore Antonius fugisse eum (scil. Octavianum) scribit ac sine paludamento equoque post biduum demum apparuisse, sequenti satis constat non modo ducis, sed etiam militis functum munere atque in media dimicatione, aquilifero legionis suae grauiter saucio, aquilam umeris subisse diuque portasse»; D.C. 50. 18. 2-4 Περὶ οὗ τὰ μὲν ἄλλα οὐδὲν δέομαι καθ' ἕκαστον ἀκριβῶς εἰπεῖν, κεφαλαιώσας δὲ ἐρῶ τοῦτο ὃ καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐπίστασθε, ὅτι τε ἀρρωστότατος τῷ σώματι ἐστὶ, καὶ ὅτι οὐδεμίαν πώποτε ἐπιφανῆ μάχην οὔτε ἐν τῇ ἠπειρῷ οὔτε ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ αὐτὸς νενίκηκεν. Ἀμέλει καὶ ἐν τοῖς Φιλίπποις ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἀγῶνι ἐγὼ μὲν ἐκράτησα ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἠττήθη. Τοσοῦτον μὲν ἀλλήλων διαφέρομεν, τὰ δὲ δὴ πολλὰ τῶν ἄμεινον παρεσκευασμένων καὶ αἱ νίκαι γίνονται.

quibus tuto ignosci potuit, conseruare quam excidere malui») and represents *Caesar* scil. *divi filius* as the heir of the paternal virtues as well.

Blänsdorf's remark on v. 10 (sic) is «*archaismus metricus negari non potest*». It is not a *s caduca*, it is only Scappaticcio's aberrant reading of the vers *praeter metrum et palaeographiam*. In the multispectral images there is no trace of the letters that Scappaticcio believes to see (Pl. 3).

Finally, an observation regarding Varius' alleged authorship of the anonymous *Carmen* and its position toward the *princeps*.²³

Varius was Vergil's friend, he was charged by Augustus to edit the *Aeneid* and was author of the *Thyestes*, a tragedy rewarded by the *princeps*. How could the same author write an anti-Augustan (or pseudo-Augustan) work and the (real) *de Morte* fr. 1 and 2 FPL that depict Marc Antony in this way?

fr. 1

Macrob., *Sat.* 6. 1. 39 (ad Verg., *Aen.* VI 621 sq.): Varius de morte:

«vendidit hic Latium populis agrosque Quiritum

eripuit, fixit leges pretio atque refixit».

fr. 2

Macrob., *Sat.* VI 1. 40 (ad Verg., *Georg.* II 506): Varius de Morte:

«incubet ut Tyriis atque ex solido bibat auro»

To sum up: in col. I and II that Zecchini and Scappaticcio considered critical toward Octavian Augustus the anonymous author of the *carmen* shows a precise consonance with the Augustan representation.

²³ This observation that is also present in Citroni's article from 2019, originated from the discussion with the audience. However, we reached the same conclusion independently, so I am honoured to agree with him.

Omnia opera eiusdem minoris in duobus voluminibus, vultu et pulcherrime scripta
 ac arcaica

Opera Horatii in praefatione pulcherrime transcrita

Herodotus et Thucydides: sed Thucydides non completus: traducti per Laurentium
 Vallam per A. H. 1540

Epistole plinij 55 xxij et tres libri plinij maioris de medicina

Item Iulij Caesaris per eundem traducta

Item Evangelij collecta et disputata per eundem contra Interpretes

Comedie plinij 22 non potest

Lucianus antiquissimus

Iustinus et Primus de viris illustribus in uno volumine

Martialis antiquissimus: adnotatur primus quatuordecim

Donatus antiquissimus in greco: et cum eo quoddam opusculum metricum quod dicitur esse Virgilij
 de bello navarico Augusti cum Antonio et Cleopatra quod incipit de morte eius multa duarum bellorum
 cruenta Egyptum etc.

Comitia super Tragedias Senecae

Declamationes Quintilianae: et cum eo libro de
 oratione quodam libri eiusdem Quintilianae non prius
 vult

Deo vocabularia in greco et latina simul

Serius antiquissimus adnotatur quodam chartae postremae

Iosephus antiquissimus cum Aegyptio in littera quae
 dicitur legendaria

Nullus Gallus cum optimo greco

Quaedam orationes Tullyi de oratore antiquissime

Plinij scripturae optimae grecae in grammatica
 propinqua et quaedam orationes demosthenis et aliorum metrica
 grecae optima

Plurimum quatuordecim ad quatuordecim ultra duarum voluminum
 papiri: in quibus auctoritate transcrita haec commentaria
 passim in hispania composita sunt super omnibus operibus
 horatii super Iulianum duo duodecim commentaria optima
 et super Terentio Virgilio primo optimo et brevis et
 super dante et petrarca

Non solum plinius meo scripto de oratore oratione
 primae epigrammata aliorum quae voluminibus greca et latina

Liber quem ego ampolius a omnibus reliquorum et antiquissimus nomen dicitur

Item liber mirabiliter incipit de arte Augustini et quid in quoque dicitur veteris consuetudine

Quintilianus chartae pro scribendo orator xxx et quaedam ornamenta pro scribendo pulcherrime
 ut patet hinc caldaria barbaris more et dante quaedam pigmenta quaedam
 vultu dicitur velle prodolium quod portabat eundem hispano studium bononie nunciam
 mea lamina

Pl. 1. Decembrio.



Pl. 2. P.Herc 817, col. 1.



Pl. 3. P.Herc 817, col. 2.

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