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## When tiny scraps cause new chapters of Latin literature to be written

In the spring of 2014, the binders of the archive of Robert Marichal were dusted off in response to Tiziano Dorandi's recollections of a series of unpublished notes on Latin texts on papyrus. Among these was an in-progress edition of the Latin rolls from Herculaneum, together with Marichal's intuition that one of them had to be ascribed to a certain '*Annaeus Seneca*'.

In that period, the project PLATINUM was taking shape, and the support of the European Research Council soon brought into existence a long planned project on Latin texts on papyrus. PLATINUM – *Papyri and LATin Texts: INsights and Updated Methodologies. Towards a philological, literary, and historical approach to Latin papyri* (ERC-StG 2014 n°636983) is a project dealing with texts in the Latin language on papyrus, both documentary and literary.<sup>1</sup> It is a project that moves from the technicalities of the writing material itself to a textual and contextual exegesis of these texts, in order to open new perspectives on the history and culture, especially in its literary forms, of Roman society. The writing material of papyrus obviously implies documents of Eastern provenience – mainly from Egypt – coming from a multilingual and multicultural literate society. With the exception of Late Antique Ravenna, the only Western context preserving papyrus *volumina* – albeit charred – is the Library of the Herculaneum Villa.

Taking these texts as a focus, PLATINUM followed the unpublished intuition by Robert Marichal as one path of investigation in its own research and work. This work on the Latin *P.Herc.* 1067, including its *editio princeps*, was published in the specialist review *Cronache Ercolanesi* in 2017. Working on this papyrus led us to confirm Marichal's intuitions and to go beyond it: *P.Herc.* 1067 is the only extant direct witness to Seneca the Elder's *Historiae*.

Bringing a new and important chapter of Latin literature arise out of a charred papyrus is significant. It is a further demonstration how, with up-to-date methodology, an undervalued research speciality can produce impressive results, in this case by identifying an historiographical work only known from a

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1 On the project PLATINUM and its major outputs on literary Latin texts on papyrus see Scappaticcio (2019); more has been and is being done, and the status of the research of the ERC-project PLATINUM can be followed on the website [www.platinum-erc.com](http://www.platinum-erc.com).

very few direct references and perhaps used as a source by later early-imperial historians.

The International Colloquium “Seneca Padre e la storiografia riemersa. Nuove prospettive di ricerca sulle *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*” was held in Naples on the 7th to the 8th of June, 2018, and it represented the largest scholarly event that PLATINUM organized around this discovery. It was not a colloquium on *P.Herc.* 1067. It was a colloquium on how a newly edited roll can open new perspectives on Latin historiography of the early-imperial age. Its success depended on the distinguished scholars who contributed to the colloquium itself. Their contributions, which are gathered here, examine several elements of the same central topic, and are destined to initiate future historiographical and literary debate.

The present volume is made up of two complementary sections, each of which contains seven contributions. They are in close dialogue with each other, or perhaps in an osmotic relationship, which allows each section to gain from the other. Looking at the same literary matter from several points of view yields undeniable advantages and represents an innovative and fruitful step in Latin literary criticism. These two sections express the two different but interlinked axes along which the contributions were developed. On one side, the focus is on the starting point of the debate, namely the discovery of the papyrus roll transmitting the *Historiae* of Seneca the Elder and how such a discovery can be integrated with prior knowledge about this historiographical work. On the other side, there is a broader view on early-imperial Roman historiography, to which the new perspectives opened by the rediscovery of Seneca the Elder’s *Historiae* greatly contribute. This is why some papers do not at first glance deal with Seneca the Elder but with contemporary and comparable historiography.

The volume is opened by two introductions, with a key role played by Timothy J. Cornell’s paper, “Roman historical writing in the age of the Elder Seneca”. It is an invaluable contribution to the knowledge we have of the reconstructed trends in historiography as a literary genre in a historical period where ‘absence’ – and the so-called known unknowns – play a decisive role. In fact, what have been supposed to be mere names of historians – 28 in total for the age covered by the paper – are revealed to have a key-role when trying to reflect on the reasons of absence. This is an insufficiently explored theme, now finally highlighted by the editor of the *FRHist.* Such a paper is a necessary introduction to the matter – and to several matters – highlighted and further developed in the contributions gathered in both sections of this book. It is a necessary *status quaestionis* critically introducing the subsequent historiographical debate.

Section I – “Seneca the Elder’s *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*: integrating new discoveries with old knowledge” – contains all the contributions strictly concerned with the historiographical work of Seneca the Elder, from the discovery of the fragmentary roll from the Herculaneum library to the way in which the scanty textual portions it preserves can contribute to reshaping our knowledge of the *Historiae*. Thus the new discovery leads to dialogue with ‘old’ knowledge.

Valeria Piano published the *editio princeps* of *P.Herc. 1067*, to which she was assigned within PLATINUM as one of its post-doctoral collaborators (2016–2017). Her “A ‘historic(al)’ find from the library of Herculaneum: Seneca the Elder and the *Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium* in *P.Herc. 1067*” is a reference-quality contribution in terms of its clarity and effectiveness in presenting the bibliological, paleographical, and papyrological work leading to the edition of the roll itself, summarizing and updating the results she previously published. Piano’s impeccable volumetric reconstruction of the roll is the necessary basis for its textual reconstruction, and the paper makes such a technical work understandable even to non-experts, showing the impact a papyrological investigation can have on the text transmitted by *P.Herc. 1067*.

The next paper, Tiziano Dorandi’s “Un libro dell’*Ab initio bellorum civilium* di Seneca il vecchio e il fondo latino della biblioteca della Villa dei Papiri a Ercolano” provides a *status quaestionis* and a complete panorama of Latin papyri from the Library of the Herculaneum Villa. In the process, it also opens new perspectives on both the reading of the *subscriptio* of *P.Herc. 1067* and its possible link with the so-called *Carmen de bello Actiaco* of *P.Herc. 817*. It thus shows the contribution that Seneca the Elder’s historiographical work in *P.Herc. 1067* can make to debates on the most ancient Latin rolls from Herculaneum, the developmental phases of the Villa and its library, and the dating and function of the library itself.

“*Historiae ab initio bellorum civilium*: Exegetical Surveys on the Direct Transmission of Seneca the Elder’s Historiographical Work” by Maria Chiara Scappaticcio highlights the importance of the philological work on unpublished Latin literary papyri in order to open new perspectives on the study of Latin literature and to write new chapters of it. In particular, the text of the *Historiae* of *P.Herc. 1067* is compared to the Tiberian chapters from Tacitus’s *Annales*, the historical work of Cassius Dio, and the *Lives* of Suetonius, in order to recover possible outlines of the plot of a specific section of Seneca the Elder’s *Historiae*.

Giancarlo Mazzoli’s paper “*Unde primum veritas retro abiit*. Riflessioni sull’inizio delle *Historiae* di Seneca Padre” first exhaustively addresses the confusion generated by the identical *tria nomina* held by Seneca the Elder and Seneca the Younger. This has finally been settled thanks to the *subscriptio* of *P.Herc.*

1067, which also shed lights on what remains of Seneca the Younger's fragmentary *De vita patris* on the historical work of his father. This discussion leads to the core of the paper, focused on the role played by references to *veritas* as a possible starting point for Seneca the Elder's *Historiae* (and historical reflection more generally). He considers a complex play of echoes in the *Suasoriae* and *Controversiae*, as well as in other works produced by the family of *Annaei*, namely the *De ira* of Seneca the Younger and the *Bellum civile* of Lucan. The reconstructed starting point of Seneca's historiographical work often comes up in the present volume, and the different hypotheses beginning to emerge highlight the complexity of such an issue and encourage further investigation.

The theme of the civil wars and their origins is dealt with in “*Semina belli. Seneca il Vecchio e le cause delle guerre civili*”, through which Emanuele Berti is able to demonstrate how the model of the lost historiographical work by Seneca the Elder must have been followed by Lucan and Florus. Lucan and Florus drew heavily on Livy but also on another source from which they would have absorbed a moralizing historiographical approach. Accordingly they are key authors for reconstructing the moralizing, rhetorical historiography of Seneca the Elder, who was himself influenced by Sallust.

One of the fragments generally accepted as belonging to the historiographical work by Seneca the Elder is known through Suetonius's *Life of Tiberius*. Cynthia Damon's paper, “Looking for Seneca's *Historiae* in Suetonius' *Life of Tiberius*”, explores Suetonius' biography of the Emperor in order to investigate its sources, and suggestively, intuitively and effectively offers possible connections with Seneca the Elder's work when dealing with equestrian jury lists and when revealing a certain sympathy towards Caligula (against Tiberius), which could have led to its apparent neglected by subsequent historians.

The publication of our proceedings also provides the opportunity to put into circulation a hitherto unpublished work by Lewis A. Sussman. His “The lost *Histories* of the Elder Seneca” remained an unpublished article in typescript since 1972, only a minor part of whose conclusions made it into his fundamental monograph *The Elder Seneca* (1978). His contribution surveys Seneca the Elder's historiography, its scope and chronology (and dates of publications), its conception and philosophy of history, its view of the Republic and the Principate emerging from such a moralistic approach, and the history of its *Quellenforschung*. Biagio Santorelli's “Bibliographical updates” brings Sussman's paper up to date and highlights how each issue discussed by Sussman in the 70's has developed. This paper and its direct follow-up concludes Section I. It is undeniable that many points developed by Sussman in 1972 have been further discussed by scholars in the last forty years, but readers will keep in mind that the pages of Sussman were pioneering in their time.

Section II “Seneca’s *Historiae* in context: new perspectives on early Imperial Roman Historiography” focuses on the relationship between Seneca’s *Historiae* and the complex field of early imperial historiography, showing how renewed attention to the one prompts re-evaluation of the other.

Despite the evident difficulty of working with the fragmentary remains of early imperial historiography, Stephen P. Oakley’s “Point and periodicity: the style of Velleius Paterculus and other Latin historians writing in the early Principate” offers an impressive and exhaustive attempt to analyse common stylistic features. In particular, Lucius Arruntius, Pompeius Trogus, Fenestella, Cremutius Cordus, Bruttidius Niger and Aufidius Bassus, on one side, and Velleius Paterculus, on the other side, show that the influence of Sallust and declamation were relevant features shaping the style of historians between August and Tiberius.

Olivier Devillers’s “La place de Sénèque le Père parmi les sources possibles des *Annales* 1–6” investigates the sources used by Tacitus, a topic explored by the author in several important articles. While identifying the possible sources of the first section of the *Annales*, Devillers has established an internal subdivision, and he emphasizes the contribution that Seneca the Elder’s historiographical work might have made to Tacitus’ perspective. The two final addenda offer a concise but exhaustive panorama of the possible employment of the *acta senatus* and of further subsidiary sources behind *Annales* 1–6.

Arturo De Vivo in “Seneca Padre, Tacito e Germanico” offers an in-depth analysis of the portrait of Drusus and Antonia Minor’s son and Tiberius’ rival, Germanicus, arising from the often indirect judgments on him in Early Imperial literature. In such a perspective, the role played by Seneca the Elder is strengthened by the Tiberian link reconstructable in the text of *P.Herc.* 1067, where the reference to Germanicus is possible. The portrait of Germanicus by Seneca the Elder is undoubtedly negative: references to him are registered both in the *Suasoriae* and the *Controversiae*, but his oratorical talent is never mentioned, and the parallelism with two prototypical tyrants, Alexander the Great and Antonius, in *Suasoria* 1 emphasises only negative traits. This possibly influenced the negative opinion also held by Seneca the Younger, implied indirectly by his reminiscences of Germanicus.

Autocracy and ‘tyrants’ are the key concepts of the analysis of Seneca the Elder’s historiographical approach in Antonio Pistellato’s “Seneca Padre e il ‘canone dei tiranni’ romani: una questione di famiglia?”. The family of the *Annaei* undoubtedly played an important role in shaping what we know as a ‘canon’ of Roman tyrants during the imperial age, and the possible link between the family

of the *Pisones* and Seneca the Elder in their library could represent a further proof of what is otherwise reconstructable through the texts.

“Seneca vs Seneca: generazioni e stili a confronto tra oratoria, filosofia e storiografia” by Chiara Torre has Seneca the Elder and Seneca the Younger as main protagonists, who offer contrasting images of Papirius Fabianus respectively in *Controversiae* 2 and *Epistulae ad Lucilium* 100. The rhetor and philosopher Fabianus stands as generational point of contact, and an in-depth analysis of Seneca the Younger’s letter reveals how the historiographical credo and approach of the father was later kept alive thanks to his son.

The *Historiae* of Seneca the Elder as a source for the historiographical work of *Annaeus* Florus are investigated by Chiara Renda in her “Di *aetas* in *aetas*: considerazioni sulla storiografia di Seneca Padre e Floro”. Reading Florus leads to reconstructing one of his sources and his possible divergences from it – for example, addressing the transition from the Republic to the Principate. This strengthens the hypothesis that Seneca the Elder’s historiographical work likewise began with the Gracchan crisis.

A different perspective on the relationship between Florus and Seneca the Elder is illustrated by John Rich. His paper “Appian, Cassius Dio and Seneca the Elder” moves in the field of Greek historiography. It aims to analyse thoroughly the sources of Appian and Cassius Dio in order to highlight how Seneca’s historiographical work can be numbered among them and to minimise the view that Seneca’s *Historiae* represented the model for structural elements shared by Appian and Florus.

A new chapter of the history of early imperial historiography and Latin literature has emerged, and it strengthens the hypothesis that further efforts in editing unpublished Latin rolls from the Library of Herculaneum could lead to equally relevant discoveries. The enthusiasm animating a research project such as PLATINUM is productive: *membra disiecta* can still help to sketch out a literary culture.