

FRHist AND OUP

The Fragments of the Roman Historians. Volume 1: Introduction; Volume 2: Texts and Translations; Volume 3: Commentary. T. J. Cornell, General Editor. Editorial Committee: E. H. Bispham, T. J. Cornell, J. W. Rich, C. J. Smith. Contributors: E. H. Bispham, J. Briscoe, T. J. Cornell, A. Drummond†, B. M. Levick, S. J. Northwood, S. P. Oakley, M. P. Pobjoy, J. W. Rich, C. J. Smith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 1 + 662, viii + 1159, viii + 829. ISBN for the set: 978-0-19-927705-6.

The *Fragments of the Roman Historians* weigh in at three volumes, 2650 pages and 4.3 kilograms. No-one could doubt that their publication is a scholarly landmark, and the volumes duly formed the subject for a discussion-panel at the 2014 Classical Association meeting in Nottingham, with papers by John Marincola, Luke Pitcher, and Simon Malloch; Tim Cornell then replied on behalf of the editorial team. Those presentations form the basis for the papers that *Histos* is now posting. I was asked to chair that panel and then to introduce these papers, not least because I act as Classics Delegate for Oxford University Press, and indeed it is a great pleasure to say something to mark our pride in the production. It so happened too that the publication came just a few months before the retirement of Hilary O'Shea, who had served as OUP's Classics commissioning editor for twenty-seven years. It was a triumphant conclusion to a highly distinguished career.

The proposal first came to OUP Delegates in January 2003, several years before my own term as Delegate started. It was originally envisaged as two 500-page volumes and 750,000 words (which would actually have meant rather small print). There were already some thoughts, though, that it might end up as rather more, and the final word-count is something like twice as much.

Delegates' meetings are rather strange affairs. We meet every two weeks in Oxford term for about an hour and a half or two hours, plus a couple of further meetings every year in the summer. There is individual discussion of every academic book that Oxford publishes, introduced by the Delegate nearest to its topic with, usually, some additional comments by those with neighbouring interests. These are fascinating meetings, rather like an oral version of *Times Literary Supplement*, and one finds out all sorts of extraordinary things: in one meeting I remember discovering within five minutes first that 56% of living creatures have six legs, then that *Alice in Wonderland* has been translated into over sixty languages including (so it seems) Glaswegian Scots. Most of the time books go through smoothly and

swiftly, as many hurdles have been leapt before they get to this stage; but every meeting will have several cases where we do linger over a proposal, perhaps because of its importance, perhaps because of a difficulty in contents or title, and perhaps just because one of us thinks of a particularly witty thing to say about a colleague behind his or her back. This would have been one of those occasions, for (I hasten to add) the first reason: it was always predictable that this would be a massive enterprise, and the parallel of Jacoby's *FGrHist* would surely have been mentioned, along with the evident need for a Roman equivalent. There would have been much appreciative nodding, led from the chair by the vice-chancellor of the day, a distinguished historian. Delegates tend not to mince their nods.

Publishing has moved on a good deal in those eleven years, and these days a good deal of the discussion would centre on the online potential. It is no surprise that this possibility is raised in the papers that follow. There are in fact now firm plans to include *FRHist* in Oxford Scholarly Editions Online as one of the first cluster of Latin prose texts, with a launch currently planned for autumn 2015; by then the first Latin verse texts will already have come in spring 2015, and the first Greek ones are scheduled for 2016. That will go some way to meeting some of the very fair points about consultation raised by John Marincola in his paper, allowing readers to have each volume on-screen and searchable in separate windows—a happy case where dead-trees technology, as Luke Pitcher calls it, may map very neatly on to online potential. E-book possibilities are less clear, but are not being ruled out. The editors have also responded enthusiastically to a suggestion made at the Nottingham conference, and are planning to produce a shorter, one-volume print version for student use.

The comparison to *FGrHist* comes up several times in these papers, and to *BNJ* in Luke Pitcher's: I suppose it would make a good interview question to explore the differences between Greek and Roman historiography, or at least between their historiographic remains, that may make some sort of generic organisation more appropriate for the one and *FRHist*'s chronological one more appropriate for the other. There is a further comparison that readers will soon be able to make, and that is with another large-scale ambitious project that OUP will be delighted to have on its list. This is the *Fragments of the Roman Republican Orators* (the title is still provisional), under production by a team of editors headed by Professor Catherine Steel of Glasgow. From the outset, an eye is being kept there on the digital as well as the print possibilities. One important further difference will be in the balance between testimonia and fragments, as the *FRRO* editors observe that often we hear more about the quality of an orator's speeches through those general descriptions than from the fragments themselves: that clearly applies in particular to their effect in performance.

Thus testimonia as well as fragments will receive commentary, unlike in *FRHist*, and there will be times when several testimonia and fragments hang together so closely that commentary will be combined into a single item. Whether this reflects any deeper difference between historiography and oratory, apparently such neighbouring genres—well, that would be a good interview question too, but one can certainly see that the focus on ‘public speech’, as *FRRO* defines its target, immediately points to a genre that was not primarily textual, and whose ‘fragments’ therefore raise particular presentational issues.

The choice of the *FRHist* editors to include testimonia but without a commentary is itself an interesting one, and is questioned in several of these papers. The introductory comments on each author do of course cover much of the same ground, but it might still have been helpful to address, for instance, what exactly there was about Sisenna that gave rise to the idea that he was imitating Clitarchus (*FRHist* 26 T 6 = Cic. *de leg.* 1.7): there is something on that in John Briscoe’s introduction (I.33), but that is necessarily rather brief. The same goes for as important a passage as Tac. *Ann.* 4.34.2–4, mentioning the praise given to Brutus and Cassius by, among others, Asinius Pollio; this duly figures among Pollio’s testimonia (*FRHist* 56 T 5). A passing remark in Andrew Drummond’s commentary on F 7 (= Sen. *suas.* 6.24–5, the obituary of Cicero) makes it clear that he was tempted to take the Tacitus passage as pointing to a laudatory obituary notice for Brutus and Cassius as well; but there are other possibilities, and these might have been raised in a commentary on the testimonium itself. And what of that most quoted passage of all on Roman historiography, figuring here as General Testimonium 2, Cicero’s *quippe cum sit opus (ut tibi quidem uideri solet) unum oratorium maxime (de leg. 1.5)*? *FRHist* translates this to make history ‘a pursuit that is especially suitable for an orator’, and the *unum* makes it clear that it is ‘more than any other, suitable for [or ‘calling for’] an orator’, rather than (say) ‘mostly’ (but not always) calling for an orator, or ‘more suitable for an orator than anyone else’; but what is the exact nuance of the *ut tibi quidem uideri solet*, given that it is Atticus speaking? Just ‘as you indeed are wont to maintain’, as in the *FRHist* translation? Or an edgier ‘at least in your view’, with a suggestion that the meticulous fact-quarrier Atticus might have taken a different angle? Is Cicero slyly acknowledging that not everyone would agree in making historiography so distinctively rhetorical?

Still, of course such commentary would have swollen the bulk even more, along with the price; and anyway one should not cry for the moon, as in these three volumes we certainly have enough that is stellar. By its nature, the project called for a balance between caution and decisiveness. Caution, because scholarship has become increasingly aware of the difficulty of pinning down the extent of a ‘fragment’, as it is moulded or adapted by a

deft author to suit a particular argumentative context. More than that, our whole impression of a work can depend on what happened to catch a successor's quirky interest: Jackie Elliott's recent book on Ennius shows clearly how the reconstruction of a lost work can look very different if we look at the fragments preserved by different authors in turn, with each text dwelling on the features it found most congenial.¹ It is evidently a great strength that *FRHist*'s first volume gives so much space to those 'cover-texts', and it will give special delight to some of us that the longest entry falls to Plutarch, just outdistancing the ante-post favourite Cicero. But any edition calls for decisiveness too, as the editors have eventually to determine what to print; in the case of fragments, they also have to decide what to mark out as a verbatim quotation (or whatever the nearest equivalent of 'verbatim' was for ancient prose, which is not an altogether straightforward question). All one can hope for is exactly what the editors have done: adopt a particularly clear set of typographical conventions (bold italic for 'verbatim', bold for paraphrase, regular type for quoting context), and set out the reasoning in the commentary. As Simon Malloch comments, the clarity here and the frankness about the uncertainties can be seen as encouraging debate rather than closing it down, and disagreement will of course continue: I have already produced some myself, I hope courteous, over several cases in the lost memoirs of Augustus (*FRHist* 60), thanks to the generosity of the editors, in particular Christopher Smith, in allowing early access to their material.² But such debates are now bound to be better-informed than in the past, and time and again I felt that the editors' decisions were right, even on such a nice conundrum as that presented by what is now Coelius Antipater (*FRHist* 15) F 23: should one count this as a fragment, given that it specifies only what Coelius did *not* say? Well, why not: that too adds to our knowledge of the author.

I had a further personal reason for opening these volumes with both interest and trepidation, as I had been responsible for about ten of the relevant entries in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (third edition, 1996), and then for updating those for *OCD*⁴ (2012). This allowed me to sample how much difference it would have made had *FRHist* been available at the time. Here too there are plans for *OCD* to be made available online, with the possibility of continuous updating if contributors wish; I could count how many alterations I had to make and send to Sander Goldberg, who has agreed to

¹ Jackie Elliott, *Ennius and the Architecture of the Annales* (Cambridge 2013).

² In *The Lost Memoirs of Augustus*, ed. C. Smith and A. Powell (Classical Press of Wales, 2009) 48–57.

act as overall editor for this project—*OCD*^{4,5}, shall we say. Just for those few entries, the answer was twenty-five, plus several more that had already been incorporated in *OCD*⁴. About half of those were simply adding *FRHist* to the bibliography or giving the new numeration for particular fragments, but the other half were more substantial. A lot were adding a ‘perhaps’ or a ‘probably’ or putting a question-mark before a date, but one or two went in the other direction, taking a qualifier out. In one case (Cornelius Sisenna, *FRHist* 26), rather embarrassingly, ‘certainly from 90 to 82’ had to change to ‘certainly from 91 to 82’. In another (C. Fannius, *FRHist* 12), ‘The history ... was anti-Gracchan’ had to go. So much for the certainties of yesteryear. Other alterations boiled down meticulous and acute scholarship into just a change of nuance: thus with Aufidius Bassus (*FRHist* 78), ‘probably treating the campaigns of AD 10–16 as a unity’ becomes ‘probably presenting that “war” as finished in AD 16’. These things add up, and they matter.

A further sampling I exercised was to take a classic exposition, that of Badian’s 1966 essay that has been the first stop for so many of us as we approached this field, and see how it now read.³ I looked at his four pages on Fabius Pictor (*FRHist* 1) in particular, and a lot of it stands up pretty well: perhaps 70% can survive unscathed, either as true or as perfectly reasonable speculation. But about 30% would have to look fairly different, and more important the whole emphasis might change. There would be not so much on a presumed Greek audience and what and when any propaganda impact would fit best, but much more on Fabius’ relation to Hellenistic historiography, perhaps indeed Fabius as *part* of Hellenistic historiography. Badian does mention that aspect, and Timaeus in particular; but there is a lot more to say.

Still, I shall leave the more detailed reviewing to the other contributors. My task is simply to set the OUP scene, and express its immense gratitude to, and admiration for, the team of contributors.

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³ E. Badian, ‘The Early Historians’, in T. A. Dorey, ed., *Latin Historians* (London, 1966), 1–38, discussing Fabius Pictor on pp. 2–6.