

REVIEW–DISCUSSION

A NEW COMMENTARY ON SALLUST'S
HISTORIAE I

Antonio La Penna and Rodolfo Funari, edd., *C. Sallusti Crispi Historiae I: Fragmenta 1.1–146. Texte und Kommentare. Bd 51*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2015. Pp. 387. Hardback, €139.95. ISBN 978-3-11-019566-8.

The *Histories* of Sallust are among the most tantalizing lost works in the Latin canon. Two late antique manuscripts were in the right place at the right time to have been copied and preserved—but were instead re-used for bindings and, in one case, to provide parchment for Jerome's *Commentary on Isaiah*. Four orations and two letters survive in an anthology of historiographic speeches, and there are in total more than 500 fragments, the vast majority preserved indirectly in citations from later authors. Enough survives to tempt historians and literary scholars to make fuller use of the work. The *Histories* would give us a detailed account of the little-known but crucial decade following Sulla's dictatorship, and also contain a host of, arguably, the most dissonant figures represented in the Roman historiographic tradition, Sertorius, Spartacus, and Mithridates, all portrayed by one of its most acute and distinctive stylists at the very height of his power. They were perhaps the first Roman history whose events played out on a truly global scale, from the Islands of the Blessed to Colchis, and where geography itself seems to have had an important structural function. And yet their apparent potential to rewrite the history of the late republic, of the development of Roman historiography, and of the intellectual parameters of the Ciceronian/triumviral era stands in tragically inverse proportion to the security of our evidence.

For a long time this was a relatively difficult work for the non-specialist to get to know. There is simply too much material to include in collections of fragments of Latin historians, and it requires too complex treatment to integrate easily into editions of the monographs. Maurenbrecher's standard edition from 1893 was last reprinted in 1967 and is only now becoming widely available online. Its organization of the fragments into a serviceable historical schema, drawing on the earlier work of Kritz, Dietzsch, and even the much-maligned De Brosses, constitutes one of the great collective achievements of patient *Quellenkritik*. It has an extensive preface and a bare-bones commentary, both in Latin, but one failing that especially limits its usefulness as a research tool: since the citations are not presented in full it is difficult for scholars to make their own assessment of how to use them and where quotation becomes

paraphrase. (There have also been important commentaries on the speeches and letters alone, such as Jacobs–Wirz–Kurfess (1922), Pasoli (1967), and Paladini (1968).)

Since the nineties, the picture has changed dramatically: Reynolds' 1991 *OCT* of Sallust put a new edition not only of the speeches but of the most notable fragments into a lot more hands. McGushin (1992–4) presented a translation and commentary on all the fragments, which corrected many of Maurenbrecher's assumptions about Sallust's ordering of the material. But his work was tragically hamstrung by the exclusion of the Latin text, even though the commentary often makes reference to it. One of the co-editors of this edition, Rodolfo Funari, produced an edition with commentary of the fragments, excluding the speeches, in 1996 (complemented by a 2008 edition of the papyrus remains, recently reviewed by Ast, *Histos* 10 (2016): xcv–xcix). In some ways, the closest substitute for Maurenbrecher, also appearing in the Sallustian *annus mirabilis* of 2015, will be Ramsey's. That exceptionally useful volume presents an updated text, an English translation, enough introductory commentary on each fragment to allow the reader to place its substance, and a brief indication not only of the source(s) for each quotation but the reason why it was quoted. At the standard Loeb price of 26.00 USD, Ramsey's work will put the *Histories* on the intellectual map for many readers and provide them with all the tools they need to build a deeper understanding of their promise and difficulties.

The book under review, the first of a multi-volume edition (with no indication of the number envisioned), promises something more comprehensive. As the blurb describes, it will be the first full commentary on the fragments. The text has been re-edited and in important ways re-ordered, and, crucially, all the sources for the indirectly preserved fragments have been cited from the most authoritative recent editions. There is also an Italian translation. This work has been shared by two scholars of unmatched authority. Antonio La Penna has been engaged with Sallust for over half a century and is responsible for the most multi-faceted book ever written on the historian, while Funari's extensive work on the text has already been described. In this case Funari turns from the indirect transmission to the speeches, providing text, translation, and commentary; while La Penna does the same for the material that Funari himself covered in his 1996 edition. Thus when this work is concluded there will be a complete Funari commentary on all the fragments, but it will be spread over two separate editions. (On the other hand, since that 1996 work itself was much influenced by La Penna's earlier publications, and La Penna in turn draws on the observations on style and Latinity that are a special strength of Funari, this new edition will provide an acceptable substitute. Funari (1996), however, provided an even fuller citation of the quoting texts and is by no means rendered obsolete. So if Hakkert is listening, please don't be put off from reprinting it!).

La Penna's 1963 (*SIFC* 35: 5–68) assessment of Maurenbrecher's edition, essentially reproduced in the Prolegomena here, recognizes the extraordinary knowledge of the historical sources on which he based his arrangement of the fragments, but also criticizes the optimism this expertise inspired, which tempted Maurenbrecher to assign specific contexts to fragments on too little evidence. Thus it is no surprise that this instauration of book one comprises 146 fragments (seventeen of them *incertae sedis*) to Maurenbrecher's 153 (sixteen assigned to no specific location); however, he adds two fragments to the preface, which I will discuss below. McGushin though is even more cautious, assigning locations to only 122 of 139 fragments.

Adequately reviewing a commentary on this scale would practically require writing another, or at least living with it for a long time. What I propose to offer here will be instead more of a description of its ambitions and a few soundings, followed by a general reflection on what a (i.e., this) user might ask of an edition on such a substantial fragmentary text, given that it is also, well, substantially fragmentary.

The preface describes the commentary as 'literary, historical, and philological', its balance and aims therefore will be more ecumenical than either the largely historical/historiographic McGushin or the 'linguistic and literary' Funari. A comparison of what one learns from the comments on the first fragment reveals in fact quite striking differences. The immediate announcement of the subject, together with the advertisement of the annalistic form, mark a salient reversal of Sallust's method of beginning the monographs. McGushin notes this and gives a pretty full discussion of the rhetorical background for this change, directing the reader especially to Lucian's treatise *How to Write History*. He also adds, on *ac deinde*, a lucid summary of what this implies about the crucial problem of the intended scope of the work, to which Funari refers. (La Penna's restriction of his comments on this word to the statistics for Sallust's use of *dein* and *deinde* before consonants seems a little disappointing.) Funari notes the echo of Cato's preface (*populi Romani gesta*); on the other hand he does not stress, as La Penna does, the importance of this echo as 'an initial sign of his devotion to Cato' (although La Penna offers Jordan's reading of the Catonian fragment without explanation). Also in Funari are the really interesting arguments of Pasoli (*Stud. Urb.* 49 (1975): 367–80, at 373–6) on the verb *componere*, and the observation that the asyndetic presentation of the consuls' names is archaizing. He also suggests, on the basis of its reappearance in a speech of Valerius Publicola at Livy 7.32.16, that the inversion of the expected *domi militiaeque* in the fragment may be a 'democratic' usage. La Penna includes these two points, but his discussion of *composui* is less extensive. In sum, Funari still offers the most complete treatment of Sallust's language, but La Penna the more comprehensive synthesis and a more explicit literary interpretation. Neither perhaps expects his audience to need the sort of big picture information

about historiography that McGushin provides. None, and this is of course not surprising in McGushin's case, mention the metrical form of the opening, nor the striking hyperbaton of *gestas*, both of which are highlighted in Kraus and Woodman's brief discussion of the fragment (*Latin Historians* (Cambridge, 1997) 31). Being a hoarder, I still want them all, and each makes some uniquely important points about the sentence that would be valuable for a student to know and should not be taken for granted.

Another aspect of this volume that might be something of a surprise for Anglophone scholars will be the kind of prefatory material included. There are brief sketches of the contents both of the work as a whole (with the perhaps overbold claim that book five was unfinished) and of book one, and an account of the manuscript evidence for the speeches and letters, but the bulk of the introduction consists of La Penna's forty-two page *Prolegomena* on the evidence for the indirectly transmitted fragments. I am neither a textual critic nor a specialist on scholarship in antiquity, but I learned a great deal from this essay. While its fundamental purpose will be to orient the reader about the kinds of material on which our knowledge of Sallust's work can be based, it necessarily also provides a rich picture, perhaps the fullest available, of Sallust's importance and influence in antiquity, and indeed of the range of ways historiographic texts were read. What there is not, however, is any extensive introduction to the work in its own terms, beyond the problems of reconstructing it. The model of the 'Green and Yellow' can so mold expectations about what to expect even of a commentary not addressed primarily to students, that it seems strange to find so little prefatory material. And while it is fair to say that if you need to know why the *Histories* are important you wouldn't be reading this commentary, nevertheless, given the expertise of these scholars, and how much less known the *Histories* are than they should be, I would have welcomed a 'big picture' introduction to the significance and the central problems of the work. The reader interested in how the *Histories* fit in to the landscape of Roman historiography, or their value as a source, or their relation to the literary history of the late Republic will find all sorts of interesting material in the pages of this book, but will have to know where to look for it. (And this task too will become easier when the project is complete since the separate volumes do not have their own indices, although they do have concordances.)

Some readers may also have to adjust slightly their expectations for a 'literary' commentary on a historiographic work. To put it in its broadest terms, scholarship on historiographic texts as texts, especially in the UK and the US, has in general complemented its investigation of the 'hows' of writing history with a re-examination of the 'whats' and 'whys'. Sallust, whose comments in the monographs about his own turn to history have come to be read as provocatively ambiguous, seems (to some) to be relentlessly probing the very possibilities for historiography at a time when the divisive rhetoric of civil wars has torn apart the language in which any history was written. To see how this

kind of self-reflexivity emerges in the fragments of the *Histories* will be an important project. It is, however, understandably, not a problem that much engages the authors of this commentary, and the works of, say, Woodman, Kraus, Wiseman, Batstone, and Levene, none of whom to be sure have written extensively or explicitly on the *Histories*, have left little trace on the kinds of analysis pursued here (a point also adumbrated in Gerrish's review at *BMCR* 2015.10.5). Yet for anyone wanting to understand Sallust's language and its echoes and influences, the material it provides will make it an essential resource. Indeed the *Histories* have always been much less marginal in Italian philology, and one of the particular benefits of this commentary will be to direct readers to the important work produced by this tradition, which sometimes appeared in rather out of the way places.

My more general reflection involves the way in which a fragmentary text like this should be most productively presented to its audience. Richard Tarrant's recent book on textual criticism highlights how scholarly arguments in favor of a particular reading almost necessarily obscure the reality that the evidence available allows for many persuasive reconstructions (*Texts, Editors, and Readers* (Cambridge, 2016) 40–1). In the case of fragments, where the coherence of that evidence is exponentially reduced, no ordering can ever approach certainty. As new editions re-examine Maurenbrecher's arrangement, while, to paraphrase Sallust's Cato, we may never have had the *veros numeros rerum*, coherent communication becomes more and more difficult. In Ramsey's Loeb, his own number for each fragment is followed by the designations of Maurenbrecher, McGushin, Dietsch, and Kritz (the last two may be overkill). Since his edition and this one were produced simultaneously, anyone wanting to see what La Penna or Funari have to say about a particular fragment they encounter in Ramsey must start by visiting the reverse concordance in the back of their commentary to look up the fragment by Maurenbrecher number.

This may seem to be simply an inconvenience resulting from bad timing. But in some particularly disputed portions of the text, more is at stake. One such passage is, paradoxically, the one about which we have the most evidence, the preface. Maurenbrecher's fragments 1–10 have the following sequences in Ramsey (1, 4, 5, 3, inc. 49, 6, 8, 2, inc. 45, 7), and in La Penna and Funari (1, 10, 11, 7, 9, 12, 13, 6, 14, 2). In other words, other than the first fragment, none are ordered the same way by the three editions most likely to be used for consulting the Latin text (McGushin's order predicts Ramsey's with the reversal of the latter's 6 and 7). Even when, as La Penna clearly does, the editor fully acknowledges the degree of speculation involved in his reconstruction, it is an open question whether such speculation should be the basis for re-structuring the presentation of the text itself or remain confined to the notes. On the one hand, after sixty years of reflection on how the preface should go, La Penna should not be confined by Maurenbrecher's ordering just because it

has become standard. But on the other, even a careful student meeting the text in La Penna's edition will have a difficult time reconciling what he finds there with any previous discussion.

And in this case, I do believe that La Penna has gone too far, especially in light of his own criticisms of Maurenbrecher. All reconstructions agree that the work opened with a basically tri-partite preface, offering, first, a statement of the theme and a justification for the author's work with reference to earlier writers, then an 'archaeology' with a précis of earlier Roman history, finally focusing in on the Social and Civil wars. It is in his treatment of the first of these components, which he designates as the 'proem', that this edition is most radical. In 1973 (*RFIC* 101: 88–91), La Penna re-examined the following fragment: *canina, ut ait Appius, facundia exercebatur*. Because Lactantius had applied the Sallustian phrase to Cicero, Maurenbrecher had optimistically assumed that it described the prosecution of Verres and placed it in book four (4.54). La Penna, however, noticed that two later authors, Columella and Firmicus Maternus, seem to allude to the passage, in terms that themselves resemble the Sallustian citation, as part of a proem in which they defend their own literary occupation against the alternative of rhetoric. Ten years before, La Penna had also tentatively suggested that a fragment of Fronto, describing how 'many are delighted by the *voculi* of those who murmur in the grove of eloquence', belonged not to some 'oration' of Sallust's, but that Fronto simply meant 'style' or 'prose' and that the passage belonged in the *Histories* (*SIFC* 35 (1963): 5–68, at 21). The combination of this fragment, the Appian dictum, and another assigned to the first book by Servius relating an Alexandrian sounding aesthetic (?) rejection of something by the 'few who possess experience and real talent', now yield a full blown rejection of rhetoric as a component of Sallust's defense of historiography, along the lines of *BC* 3.1. While I find La Penna's 1973 arguments in particular brilliant and tempting, even on their basis to introduce this whole complex into the text of the author's proem seems like over-reaching. I stress that La Penna's comments make the highly conjectural and 'risky' nature of this arrangement perfectly clear, so the issue involved is simply how the text should be presented. One might feel that the obviously high degree of uncertainty in a fragmentary work actually liberates the editor to use the text as a kind of chalkboard to sketch out an arrangement that is more plausible as a whole than any of its individual components. Such a text assumes the readers will be active participants in sorting and evaluating the evidence. But a more casual user may well be led to overestimate the security of the arrangement, and I might have preferred simply an ample discussion of the possibility, setting out these three fragments as the 'spare parts' from which such a reading could be developed.

After this defense of history writing against rhetoric, in La Penna's reconstruction, comes the sketch of the development of Roman historiography, comprising his fragments 6 through 11. One aspect of this sketch has always

somewhat surprised me and may deserve a little more comment or investigation than it has yet received (it is noted, as far as I know, only by Scanlon, in C. Deroux, ed., *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History IX* (Brussels) 201). While the contrast with earlier historians has many parallels, esp. Livy *Praef.* 2–3, which seems specifically to echo La Penna’s frag. 11, and Tacitus *Hist.* 1.1, and a key predecessor in Thucydides 1.22, in all of those places the preceding historians are anonymous. Thucydides never names Herodotus, if that is indeed whom he intends, as a rival, nor does Tacitus specify either the *magna ingenia* before Actium nor the *infensi* and *obnoxii* of the Julio-Claudian age. Sallust’s own treatment of Roman historiography in the *Catiline* conforms to this practice, and he only refers to one historian by name in either monograph, Sisenna (*Bf* 95.2) who though ‘the best and most diligent [of the writers about Sulla] ... seems not to have spoken with a free mouth’. (Perhaps this exceptional naming, occurring in what one might regard as a counterfactual preface for a work on Sulla Sallust will not write, functions explicitly as a mark of Sallust’s own *libertas*, and the necessary contentiousness such a project would involve was itself as much a reason not for undertaking the work as for signaling his dissent from Sisenna here.) When Marius Victorinus (*Rhet.* 1.20, p. 203 Halm) quotes fragment 7 (La Penna), in the context of a discussion of the particular virtues of historiographic writing, he says that Sallust in the *Historiae*, as opposed to the *Catiline* where he claimed them all for himself, attributed each of the virtues to a different writer, singling out Cato for brevity. Despite the fact that his own citation of Sallust’s words does not include the name, his testimony almost certainly rules out a possibility, about which I had wondered, that Sallust had highlighted the historiographic qualities themselves and that the identifications of Cato as the paradigm of brevity, and Fannius of verity were not made explicit. If he did name names, though, that would itself seem noteworthy. One tentative explanation involves a comparable recent sketch of the development of Roman history that spelled things out very clearly, the one in Cicero’s *De Or.* 2.51–4, re-echoed at *Leg.* 1.5–6, whose importance as an inspiration for Sallust’s account has been suggested by McGushin (I.69–70), and Scanlon (*ibid.*), and argued in greater detail by Petrone (*Pan* 4 (1976): 9–67, at 62–3). There Cato was credited only with brevity, and was among those said to lack the tools ‘by which *oratio* is adorned’; yet Sallust by contrast seems to have made brevity synonymous with eloquence, simultaneously claiming that he wrote economically (*paucis absolvit*) and calling him *Romani generis disertissimus*. That adjective indeed, while it appears nowhere else in Sallust, is quite common in Cicero, and the description was even appropriated for Cicero by Arnobius (*Nat.* 3.6), as La Penna observes. Perhaps the re-assertion of a historiographic canon of style deliberately countered a Ciceronian alternative based

on an ideal approximation to oratory. This might give extra point to the contrast between historiography and rhetoric as *praxeis*, which La Penna conjectures came just before.

The rhetorical acts represented within the book, the speeches of Lepidus and Philippus, are treated by Funari, in meticulous detail. Thus Lepidus' speech, on which I will focus, receives over fifty pages of commentary for a little more than two pages of text, with four pages on the first sentence alone. Historical figures and problems are fully noted, but most of Funari's attention falls on the language and the text. There is not a construction that is not identified and paralleled, nor a textual choice that is not fully explained. And I learned a huge amount from his learned discussion, especially about the nuances of Sallust's diction. But as is natural given the expansiveness of the presentation, sometimes it is hard to see the forest for the trees, or indeed the bark. (Again, because of the scale of the treatment, the lasting usefulness of this work will depend especially on indices that can help the reader sort through the information presented.) In this case, the focus on individual features can obscure just what a bizarre oration this is. Indeed the historical problems of having Lepidus speak as consul (and therefore in 78 BCE) yet attacking a still living and apparently very powerful Sulla, led to a now obsolete debate about the oration's authenticity, fully treated in the introduction to the speech. The most convincing contextualization of the work, I believe, depends less on a reappraisal of chronology than a re-definition of Sulla's retirement, such as that offered by Keaveney (see McGushin 112): 'in reality, there was no retirement' (*Klio* 65 (1983): 185–208, at 198), echoed in a rather diluted form by Funari (171). A stronger statement of this view, to my mind, provides a more compelling understanding of the speech than to imagine Lepidus revivifying the dead horse of Sullan tyranny only to give it a more dramatic rhetorical flogging. But two other aspects of the speech still require more 'big picture' treatment: one is the style, and the other is its historiographic significance, that is, the role it plays in shaping the audience's understanding of Sallust's work as much as the events it records. Funari describes the first period of the speech as 'tortuoso'. That is perhaps an understatement for a sentence that, with its labored and attenuated dualities and discontinuities, suggests Sallust's style after an unfortunate experiment with performance enhancing drugs. How does this period work? And what would it mean for Sallust to begin, what many have taken as the first direct speech in the *Histories*, with such an uncharacteristically 'tortuous' construction? A larger, but related question involves the many points of correspondence between the language and imagery assigned to Lepidus and those that appear elsewhere in the work, especially in the preface. Not just the language of domination and servitude, but the sense that those are the only alternatives available (53.2 and 10), recalls the analysis of Roman history we meet in the preface of the work. Is this just because such *topoi* were inevitably

in the air? Does Sallust use Lepidus as a mouthpiece to reinforce his own diagnosis, if not his own prescription, for the historical crisis? Or does the re-appearance of this language in the speech of a failed revolutionary invite re-evaluation of Sallust's claim that 'his being on the other side in civil war has not moved him from truth'?

Of course no commentators can predict the particular questions a reader will bring to a text, and it might well make their work date more quickly if they tried. The appearance of a full commentary on the *Histories* on this scale and accompanied by such a comprehensive presentation of the available evidence should be unambiguously celebrated. It is no less than miraculous that the greatest expert on Sallust of the last century should have this context for bringing together a lifetime's reflection and scholarship on the author's ruined masterpiece, and that this should be complemented by Funari's learned and fine-grained commentary on the speeches. Their work will by no means subsume all previous editions and commentaries, nor is it likely to be as conveniently accessible as Ramsey's Loeb, but it will become an indispensable point of reference for a text that may finally get more of the sustained attention it deserves.

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