

## ‘WE WILL GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN’: FIRST THOUGHTS ON *FRHist*

*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.

**2**013 was a good year for slightly early Christmas presents. The publication of *FRHist* on 19 December made for an appropriately festive conclusion to the year. The months since then have been a scarcely adequate space in which to formulate a comprehensive response to this monument of scholarship, and its central labour *omne aeuum tribus explicare chartis*.<sup>1</sup> My own impressionistic response has formed itself around two main themes. The first of these has been to examine the affinities and contrasts between how *FRHist* has conducted its business and how another heavyweight of twenty-first-century historiographical scholarship, *Brill's New Jacoby*, has faced its own comparable but distinct challenges. For the idea of pursuing this line of attack, I am indebted to Professor Pelling, who suggested that my experience in playing a small part for that latter enterprise might thus be put to good use.

I shall be arguing, amongst other things, that a potentially interesting topic for a twenty-first-century collection of historiographical fragments is that of where its data *live*: how they are stored, and the consequences for their future deployment of that storage. I shall be sketching out some ideas about how the new information age might afford opportunities, in future, for the interactive display of data in a fashion that illustrates how provisional are many of the decisions that the editor of fragments may find himself or herself making about them. In the second half of my paper, I shall be suggesting that a preoccupation with the issue of where exactly a work of history resides once it has been brought into the world is, *mutatis mutandis*, one that has Classical precedent. This will arise from an examination of what we know about Titus Labienus, the sixty-second subject of *FRHist*, and an endeavour to see what riches may be released through thoughtful scrutiny of the collection's testimonia. The conclusion, as might be expected,

<sup>1</sup> Catullus 1.6 (= *FRHist* 45 T1).

will be that one element in the massive achievement of *FRHist* is the diversity of the lines of future research which it enables.

### **The Collector Collector: Comparing *FRHist* and *BNJ***

An enterprise on the scale of *FRHist* leaves few possible *comparanda*. An obvious exception is *Brill's New Jacoby*, the on-going mission to re-edit and bring up to date Felix Jacoby's *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*. Since the present writer contributed to the latter enterprise, it seemed an appropriate foil for thinking about how *FRHist* set out to fulfil its allotted task.

It is imperative to state some significant caveats from the outset. The first concerns relative scale. *FRHist* is an enormous enterprise. Its triumphant conclusion is a testament to chalcidic endurance almost as much as to philological acumen. Yet the task of *BNJ* remains hair-raisingly vaster. *FRHist* contains 1,203 fragments,<sup>2</sup> of 110 lost historians.<sup>3</sup> Jacoby reached 856 historians before his death, his labour uncompleted. If *FRHist* might be likened in scale to the boxing-gloves of Eryx, the mere sight of which later made the watching Trojans quail,<sup>4</sup> then *BNJ* would be the gloves that Hercules is reported to have brought against him.<sup>5</sup>

The other significant consideration, in comparing *BNJ* to *FRHist*, is that the former is still very much a work-in-progress. Major entries remain (as of May 2014) eagerly anticipated. Theopompus of Chios is an obvious example.<sup>6</sup> Any remarks about the state of *BNJ* must therefore be aimed at its provisional form, with due awareness that there may well be significant changes before the close. *FRHist* is a completed opus. Finally, *BNJ* is explicitly a *revision* of Jacoby, albeit a comprehensive one, in a way that *FRHist* is not a revision of, say, Peter. *FRHist* speaks rather in terms of 'replacement', and this self-characterisation seems entirely fair.<sup>7</sup>

With such provisos in mind, we may consider the affinities and disparities between the two collections. In some ways, their respective contributions to the progress of historiographical scholarship are quite

<sup>2</sup> *FRHist* 1.38.

<sup>3</sup> *FRHist* 1.10.

<sup>4</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 5.401–5.

<sup>5</sup> Verg. *Aen.* 5.410–11.

<sup>6</sup> Theopompus of Cnidus (*BNJ* 21) is already present and correct.

<sup>7</sup> *FRHist* 1.3: 'Although it has remained a standard work of reference, Peter's edition has long been outmoded, and the need for a replacement is well recognized'.

similar. One of their salutary effects has been to dislodge many instances of tralatician speculation that had begun to usurp the place of fact. *FRHist* notes from the outset its concern ‘to make clear the distance that separates the lost originals from the surviving remnants, and to emphasize the uncomfortable fact that, all too often, the latter are inadequate to reconstruct the former, even in the most basic outline’.<sup>8</sup> *BNJ* already affords many instances where the reconstructions of Jacoby, repeated elsewhere with a confidence that their originator had not always entertained himself, have been subjected to stringent scrutiny. As a very minor example, in which I must confess a personal stake, one might note the case of the almost vanished historian Menodotus of Perinthus. Jacoby’s notion that Menodotus might have been a continuator of Psaon was by no means beyond the bounds of possibility, but had no evidential support at all, beyond the fact that Menodotus probably (though not certainly) began his narrative in 218/7 BCE.<sup>9</sup> This did not stop Jacoby’s theory doing the scholarly rounds, often without acknowledgment of its lack of any robust textual support.<sup>10</sup> Of course, the obscurity and unimportance of Menodotus in the grand scheme of things help to explain how this particular factoid endured for so long. It does, however, serve to illustrate how easily such hypotheses can take on a lustre to which their evidential basis does not truly entitle them. Even to a cursory reading, *FRHist* quickly starts yielding up equivalent instances, where hypotheses enshrined by tradition are shown to be less secure than intervening scholarship has always acknowledged. To take an example from a historian much more significant than Menodotus, we may note *FRHist*’s re-examination of the evidence for the internal structures of Books 2 and 3 of Cato’s *Origines*.<sup>11</sup>

It might be expected that one obvious difference between *BNJ* and *FRHist* would be significant. *BNJ* is an on-line resource. *FRHist*, at present, is just a paper one, though the possibility of extension into e-media has not

<sup>8</sup> *FRHist* 1.7.

<sup>9</sup> *BNJ* 82 T1 and Biographical Essay.

<sup>10</sup> E.g., *DNP* s. v. ‘Menodotos [I]’: ‘M. ... um 200 v.Chr., verfaßte eine ‘Griech. Gesch. (Hellenikáí pragmateíai) in 15 B., die wohl das Werk des Psaon von Plataiai (FGrH 78) fortsetzte und die Ereignisse ab 218/7 behandelte (Diod. 26,4)’ [my underlining].

<sup>11</sup> *FRHist* 1.7: ‘Scholars have not infrequently gone astray by taking as established some features of Peter’s ordering which are in fact merely conjectural (the organization of books 2 and 3 of Cato’s *Origines* is a notable instance).’ 1.207: ‘Turning now to the organization and content of books 2 and 3, we need once again to acknowledge that we are very poorly informed by external testimonia, and that the information provided by the fragments is severely limited by the fact that they are almost all quoted out of context’.

been ruled out. John Marincola has already examined the advantages and disadvantages of *FRHist*'s distribution of material between its three volumes.<sup>12</sup> In what other respects does the dead-tree nature of *FRHist* set it apart from *BNJ*'s ghost in the machine?

The answer, I think, is 'not as many as one might expect'. *BNJ*, for the most part, retains the feel of a dead-tree operation transferred part and parcel to the Internet. This has many and significant advantages in terms of easy operation and speedy delivery, which are considerations of paramount importance when co-ordinating a global team of scholars processing more than eight hundred fragmentary historians. The fact that *BNJ* is (as we have already noted) explicitly founded on Jacoby, to whom the resources of cyberspace were not available, is another pertinent factor.

There is no shame in an Internet enterprise that mostly restricts itself to the representational possibilities of the world off-line. One would be bold to say otherwise in the virtual pages of *Histos*. This does mean, however, that *BNJ* (by choice) and *FRHist* (by necessity) do not explore some of the more signal ways in which the Internet can empower the reader. *FRHist*, as we have seen,<sup>13</sup> notes the spurious authority which Peter's presentation imposed upon the ordering of Cato's fragments. The Internet opens up the possibility of a resource wherein, for example, the reader could order fragments at her or his discretion, without detriment to the storage of the underlying data (always a clear and present danger with paste and scissors).

*BNJ* does exploit some possibilities unique to on-line publication. Hyperlinks make for speedy navigating, whereas users of *FRHist* will still have to rely on fingers and the balancing of tomes. The tagging of the entries in *BNJ* potentially facilitates collection of thematically organised material. One might argue, however, that *BNJ*'s system of tagging can be, under certain circumstances, as much of a hindrance as a help, since the selection of tags is far from value-neutral. In particular, *BNJ*'s collection of 'genre' tags ('geography', 'ethnography', et al.) are, as one might expect, deeply indebted to Jacoby's rather schematic vision of how genre applied to ancient historiography.<sup>14</sup> This vision has not survived well in all respects.<sup>15</sup> The fact

<sup>12</sup> Marincola, *Histos* Working Paper 2014.05, pp. 1–2. Cf. Luke Pitcher, *Writing Ancient History: An Introduction to Classical Historiography* (London, 2009) 77–8.

<sup>13</sup> See n. 11 above.

<sup>14</sup> F. Jacoby, 'Über die Entwicklung der griechischen Historiographie und den Plan einer neuen Sammlung der griechischen Historikerfragmente', *Klio* 9 (1909) 80–123; repr. in id., *Abhandlungen zur griechischen Geschichtsschreibung*, ed. H. Bloch (Leiden, 1956) 16–64.

<sup>15</sup> John Marincola, 'Genre, Convention, and Innovation in Greco-Roman Historiography', in C. S. Kraus, ed., *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historical Texts* (Leiden, 1999) 281–324 (cited at *FRHist* I.5 n. 9).

that it is, to an extent, encoded into *BNJ* as an enterprise is a little problematic. There again, there is nothing to prevent individual contributors from contesting these categories, and we should recall, once more, that the project as a whole is uncompleted.

There is one respect in which the organisation of *FRHist* does seem to me clearly superior to that of *BNJ* (and, indeed, to that of every other such collection with which I am familiar). This is with regard to its overview of the character of its citing authorities.<sup>16</sup> It is now a common-place of collecting fragments that the character of the citing authority, and what that authority is seeking to achieve, may have a profound impact upon what that authority transmits. Some recent treatments have dubbed an awareness of this possibility the ‘cover-text method’,<sup>17</sup> although its recognition long preceded that appellation: one of its most thoughtful and thorough-going explorations was Catherine Osborne’s study of how the fragments of several Presocratic philosophers were affected by their presentation in Hippolytus of Rome’s *Refutation of All Heresies*.<sup>18</sup>

Awareness of the potential issue, however, is by no means the same as making a systematic attempt to do something about it. *FRHist* attempts this on a heroic scale. Just short of a hundred pages in its first volume are devoted to a systematic catalogue of the citing authors, their interests, and their particular quirks of citation. It is true that the comparatively limited number of these authorities makes such a register doable in a way that it would certainly not have been for Jacoby or those engaged upon the revision of his work; there are only (if that is the right word) ninety-nine sources for the fragments of *FRHist*.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, it seems appropriate to dwell upon the advantages which this structure affords. It can never sufficiently be praised. Quoting authorities can be a rum bunch. It is pleasant, therefore, to be able to turn to a deft summary of the kind of rum that, say, the *Historia Augusta* is wont to serve.<sup>20</sup> One cannot yet do so in the case (to give another example that is close to home) of John Tzetzes.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *FRHist* I.38–137.

<sup>17</sup> G. W. Most, ed., *Collecting Fragments / Fragmente Sammeln (Aporemata: Kritische Studien zur Philologiegeschichte 1*; Göttingen, 1997). See also G. Schepens and J. Bollansée, edd., *The Shadow of Polybius: Intertextuality as a Research Tool in Greek Historiography: Proceedings of the International Colloquium, Leuven, 21–22 September 2001 (Studia Hellenistica 42*; Leuven, 2005) x.

<sup>18</sup> C. Osborne, *Rethinking Early Greek Philosophy: Hippolytus of Rome and the Presocratics* (London, 1987).

<sup>19</sup> *FRHist* I.38.

<sup>20</sup> *FRHist* I.74–80.

<sup>21</sup> As for example at *BNJ* 108 T 4.

Contrariwise, *BNJ*'s coverage is perhaps the more helpful with regard to the question of testimonia, which John Marincola has already addressed.<sup>22</sup> The testimonia which *FRHist* has collected offer the possibility of rich pickings. In the second half of this article, I shall be using the test-case of Titus Labienus, a slight and little-regarded figure in the annals of classical historiography, to illustrate the usefulness of the contextual reading, in light of the citing authority, which *FRHist* so elegantly encourages.

### **How to Save a Life**

Where does a work of historiography exist? The question has already arisen in the course of this article. It might be held to exist on the printed page, like the entries in *FRHist*. It might be regarded as a static collection of data in cyberspace. It might even (if we envisage the more interactive models of Internet fragment-collection described in the previous section), be seen as different actualisations of a collection of data, which the reader is invited to arrange.

Other answers are possible. A striking one appears in the story of Titus Labienus. Labienus is the sixty-second entry in *FRHist*. What we know about him is appropriately minute. It is not even altogether certain that he was a historian at all, though a work of his is described as a 'historia' by the Elder Seneca,<sup>23</sup> and a passage in Suetonius (besides bracketing his work with that of Cremutius Cordus, about whom we shall have more to say in a moment) suggests that his writings contained 'facta' which might be transmitted to 'posteris'.<sup>24</sup>

Labienus survives to us almost solely in the five passages which *FRHist* prints for him. There are three testimonia,<sup>25</sup> and two 'possible fragments' ('possible' because he was also a declaimer, and it is not certain that these two fragments came from the work of his described by Seneca as the 'historia').<sup>26</sup> My focus here is on the longest continuous passage describing

<sup>22</sup> Marincola, *Histos* Working Paper 2014.05, pp. 4–6.

<sup>23</sup> Sen, *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 8 (= *FRHist* 62 T2): '... cum recitaret historiam'.

<sup>24</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 16.1 (= *FRHist* 62 T3): [of Gaius] *Titi Labieni, Cordi Cremuti, Cassi Seueri scripta... esse in manibus lectitarique permisit, quando maxime sua interesset ut facta quaeque posteris tradantur.*

<sup>25</sup> *FRHist* 62 TT 1–3.

<sup>26</sup> *FRHist* I.473, 62; III.551. Cornell says of the first fragment 'The context can only be conjectured, but may be historical; the reference may therefore be to Labienus' *History*', and of the second (a reference to a condemnation of Labienus by Pollio) that while it could have come from 'one of Labienus' private declamations ... equally likely, if not

him, which appears in *FRHist* as the second of the testimonia.<sup>27</sup> This passage from the Elder Seneca, writing in the preface to the tenth and final Book of his *Controversiae*, presents Labienus' characteristics as a declaimer, before reflecting upon the fact that all his books were burnt by decree of the senate.

*FRHist*, in accordance with its stated policy, does not give this testimonium a separate commentary, although it does use the passage to hypothesise attractively about the likely character of the 'historia' mentioned therein in the Volume 1 introduction to Labienus.<sup>28</sup> In light of what *FRHist* is setting out to achieve, the disposition of material in this particular case cannot be faulted. *FRHist* is interested primarily in what Seneca can tell us about Labienus and his work. Seneca's testimony is duly mined to that end in *FRHist's* analysis of the lost declaimer. *FRHist* is not so concerned with the other characteristics of the testimonium itself, which are pertinent not so much to the reconstruction of the historical Labienus, as to the uses to which Seneca as an author is putting him.

These uses have an interest of their own. Especially striking is Seneca's treatment of the book-burning to which Labienus was latterly subjected. Some emphases of this account are quite familiar commonplaces of Roman moralising. The relish, with which Seneca describes how the man who pronounced the verdict on the works of Labienus later saw his own works suffer a similar fate,<sup>29</sup> fits easily into the tradition of ancient (and modern) glee at instances of individuals hoist thus with their own petard.<sup>30</sup>

In other respects, however, Seneca's handling of this theme is not altogether what one might anticipate. It is thought-provoking to set this episode alongside another with which it seemingly has much in common: Tacitus' account of what happened to Cremutius Cordus. The temptation

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more so, is that Pollio as a historian found fault with Labienus' use of a vulgar expression in his *History*'.

<sup>27</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 4–8 (= *FRHist* 62 T 2).

<sup>28</sup> *FRHist* I.472: '... a history ... which evidently contained passages so offensive that even their outspoken author regarded them as too dangerous for recitation during his lifetime ... This almost certainly means that the work dealt (in whole or in part) with recent events, and probably that it was flagrantly "Pompeian".' Seneca characterises Labienus earlier in the passage (5) as one 'qui Pompeianos spiritus nondum in tanta pace posuisset'; the juxtaposition of *Pompeianos* and *tanta pace* there is suggestive.

<sup>29</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 7: *eius qui hanc in scripta Labieni sententiam dixerat postea uiuentis adhuc scripta combusta sunt, iam non malo exemplo, quia suo.*

<sup>30</sup> The handling of the story of Perillus, creator of the bronze bull of Phalaris, is an obvious comparandum here. Cf. Ovid *Tr.* 3.11.51–2: *At Phalaris 'poenae mirande repertor, | ipse tuum praesens imbue' dixit 'opus'*. Ovid, of course, is far from straightforward here; cf. L. Roman, *Poetic Autonomy in Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 2014) 259–60.

to couple the two cases was already strong in antiquity. The third and last of *FRHist*'s testimonia for Labienus brings together the names of Labienus, Cremutius, and Cassius Severus as individuals whose works had been banned by decree of the senate, 'Titi Labieni, Cordi Cremuti, Cassi Seueri scripta senatus consultis abolita'.<sup>31</sup>

The fate of Cremutius Cordus' books in the *Annals* affords the narrator the opportunity to draw an appropriate moral. Cremutius commits a dignified suicide, while his books go, in contemporary parlance, underground.

uitam abstinentia finiuit. libros per aedilis cremandos censuere patres: set manserunt, occultati et editi. quo magis socordiam eorum inridere libet qui praesenti potentia credunt extingui posse etiam sequentis aevi memoriam.<sup>32</sup>

For Tacitus, the attempt to suppress the written word fails, and serves only to indicate the impotence of authority when it seeks to overrule the commemorative power of posterity.

Seneca, on the other hand is, and is not, telling a story about literary survival. Like Tacitus, he follows a narrative of his subject's suicide with an account of how that subject's works fared in the face of official suppression. Cassius Severus, an enemy of Labienus', declares that burning Labienus' books will entail burning Cassius Severus himself, who has them all by heart:

Cassi Seueri, hominis Labieno inuisissimi, belle dicta res ferebatur illo tempore quo libri Labieni ex senatus consulto urebantur: nunc me, inquit, uiuum uri oportet, qui illos edidici.<sup>33</sup>

Seneca notes of this sally that it was well said ('belle'), and it is hard not to see some of its impact as upbeat and affirming. Cassius has shown, at least in assertion, that an author's work need not live only in vulnerable ink and paper (or parchment, or papyrus)—it can survive beyond the reach of such easy destruction, internalised within its readers. The Senate can no more stamp out Labienus' legacy by fire than Sherlock Holmes can open the Appledore Vaults to public scrutiny; what exists in memory is beyond the

<sup>31</sup> Suet. *Calig.* 16.1 (= *FRHist* 62 T3).

<sup>32</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 4.35.4–5. For Tacitus's use of Cremutius Cordus, see the commentary of A. J. Woodman and R. H. Martin ad loc., and also J. Moles, 'Cry Freedom: Tacitus *Annals* 4.32–35', *Histos* 2 (1998) 95–184, especially 152–5.

<sup>33</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10. *praef.* 8.

reach of flame. The fact that this feat has been achieved by Labienus' devoted enemy (and Labienus' personal obnoxiousness has been a leitmotif in Seneca's account of him)<sup>34</sup> only makes the situation more piquant.<sup>35</sup>

But matters are not really quite so simple, especially to a reader who has been following the *Controversiae* from the beginning. A work that exists in memory is vulnerable (again, like the Appledore Vaults) in a way that a written text is not. It lasts only so long as the mind and body that contain it. A work that lives in a person is subject to all the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to. It does not really escape what Seneca, with significant emphasis, has depicted as the horror of book-burning, that what should be beyond the reach of physical contingency (i.e., works of genius) are subjected to the afflictions of the *body*:

si quid ab omni patientia rerum natura subduxit, sicut ingenium memoriamque nominis, inuenite quemadmodum reducatis ad eadem corporis mala.<sup>36</sup>

A careful reading of this passage shows that Seneca is playing, throughout his coverage of Labienus, on ideas of the corporeality of the text. At the climax, as we have already seen, Labienus' work is equated with the person of its hypermnesiac reader, Cassius Severus. Elsewhere, Labienus' authorial attitudes are evoked in terms of his body. An eyebrow expresses his affected stance of disdain for frivolity: 'adfectabat enim censorium supercilium.'<sup>37</sup> His savagery in argument is depicted, as often in classical genres that dwell upon a rebarbative persona, through allusion to his teeth: 'suspicietis adolescentis animum illos dentes ad mordendum prouocantis.'<sup>38</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10. *praef.* 4: *summa infamia, summum odium ... nemo erat qui non, cum homini omnia obiceret, ingenio multum tribueret.*

<sup>35</sup> This may also explain why Seneca may have been suppressing the information that Cassius Severus was one of those responsible for the attack on Labienus (*FRHist* I.472 n. 3); that observation would spoil this affecting climax to the story. On the other hand, there is in fact no certainty that Cassius Severus *was* the anonymous individual whom Seneca describes as subsequently being hoist with his own petard at 7 (n. 29 above). Cassius Severus' works were burnt, too (*FRHist* 62 T 3), and he was an enemy of Labienus, but there is no reason to suppose that he was the only person who fell into both those categories.

<sup>36</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 6.

<sup>37</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 4.

<sup>38</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 8. For an example of similar imagery in depicting a fierce controversialist who should not lightly be goaded by opposition, cf. Hor. *Epod.* 6.3–4: *quin huc inanis, si potes, uertis minas | et me remorsurum petis?*

He retains the vital breath of a Pompeian, ‘qui Pompeianos spiritus nondum in tanta pace posuisset’.<sup>39</sup> His suicide is presented as a deliberate decision to equate the fortune of his ‘nomen’ and ‘ingenium’ with that of his body:

Non tulit hanc Labienus contumeliam nec superstes esse ingenio suo uoluit ... ueritus scilicet ne ignis qui nomini suo subiectus erat corpori negaretur.<sup>40</sup>

Viewed against this back-drop, Cassius’ quip retains its felicity and splendid insouciance, but can be seen to be the brighter side of a line of thought that is ultimately rather depressing. The question naturally arises, then, of why Seneca should choose to deploy the story of Labienus in this way, and at this particular point in his opus. I would argue that the story of Labienus, replete with meditation on the relationship between text and body, and both the resources and the frailties of memory, is being used by Seneca at the preface to the last book of his *Controversiae* to come full circle, and finish his work with the preoccupations that began it. It is worth recalling Seneca’s claims at the very opening of the *Controversiae* as to how he completed it. He relied (or so he claims) on the resources of his memory—once prodigious, but now, like the rest of his bodily resources, greatly enfeebled by advancing age:

sed cum multa iam mihi ex me desideranda senectus fecerit, oculorum aciem retuderit, aurium sensum hebetauerit, neruorum firmitatem fatigauerit, inter ea quae rettuli memoria est, res ex omnibus animi partibus maxime delicata et fragilis, in quam primam senectus incurrit.<sup>41</sup>

The last preface of the *Controversiae* retails an epigram about a feat of prodigious memory. That epigram survives for us because that story about a feat of prodigious memory has been preserved—through the medium of a work that itself purports to rest upon a feat of prodigious (but failing) memory. In case the reader fails to spot this, Seneca helps to advertise it, by dropping a reference in his account of Labienus to his own position as focalising remembrancer (‘*Memini aliquando, cum recitaret historiam ...*’)<sup>42</sup>, a

<sup>39</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 5.

<sup>40</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 7.

<sup>41</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 1 *praef.* 2.

<sup>42</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 8. Notably, this introduces a story about what Labienus *refused* to read from his ‘historia’. This part of the text is as much about silence as about speech.

status which has also been brought back into focus near the very start of this tenth book.<sup>43</sup> The work whose first book opens with an account of memory and corporeal limitations revisits these themes at the beginning of its last one: memory can achieve impressive things, but things corporeal are fragile, and subject to the vicissitudes of time or malice.<sup>44</sup>

Such analysis tells us a lot more about the Elder Seneca and his strategies in organising the *Controversiae* than it does about the life and works of Titus Labienus. As such, it goes well beyond the remit of *FRHist*. I hope, however, that this test-case has helped to show how this splendid collection helps to stimulate thought about its contents, even beyond the reach of its stated aims.

### **Conclusion**

In David Lodge's novel *Trading Places*, the formidable scholar of English Literature, Morris Zapp, is said to have envisaged a commentary on all the novels of Jane Austen.

The idea was to be utterly exhaustive, to examine the novels from every conceivable angle, historical, biographical, rhetorical, mythical, Freudian, Jungian, existentialist, Marxist, structuralist, Christian-allegorical, ethical, exponential, linguistic, phenomenological, archetypal, you name it; so that when each commentary was written there would be simply *nothing further to say* about the novel in question. The object of the exercise, as he had often to explain with as much patience as he could muster, was not to enhance others' enjoyment and understanding of Jane Austen, still less to honour the novelist herself, but to put a definitive stop to the production of any further garbage on the subject ... After Zapp, the rest would be silence.<sup>45</sup>

It is perhaps the greatest of the tributes that these three new formidable volumes deserve that no such sequel can be envisaged to the publication of *FRHist*. In the months since their delivery, it has already become clear how fruitful this enterprise has been, not just for its great achievement in advancing the understanding of the fragmentary Roman historians itself, but also for the avenues of further research that it has suggested. In this

<sup>43</sup> Sen. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 1: *sinite ergo me semel exhaurire memoriam meam.*

<sup>44</sup> The opening of the last book lays significant emphasis on Seneca's age and weariness: *sinite me ab istis iuuenilibus studiis ad senectutem meam reuerti* (Sen. *Contr.* 10 *praef.* 1).

<sup>45</sup> David Lodge, *Changing Places* (Vintage Edition, 2011) 35.

article, I have attempted to sketch out just one of these further possible lines of attack: how citing authorities use, as it were, the ‘micro-lives’ of these historians for their own purposes. There are many more. We owe it to *FRHist* that we are now in such a good position to get cracking.

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