

Historiography, ethnography and the case of the Sabina

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This essay uses the ancient construction of accounts of the Sabines as an illustration of ways in which the Romans used the ethnography of Italy to reflect on their own history and their own values. The essay considers the nature of Roman accounts of Italy, of their approach to ethnography more generally, and specifically how the fact of Curius Dentatus' conquest of the Sabina, and his renowned frugality, became a key moment in the development of the specific historical framing of the Sabines.

Italy, Sabina, Cato the Elder, M'. Curius Dentatus, identity, historiography

Cet article utilise la construction antique des récits sur les Sabins comme illustration de la manière dont les Romains ont utilisé l'ethnographie de l'Italie pour réfléchir sur leur propre histoire et sur leurs propres valeurs. L'article examine la nature des récits romains sur l'Italie, leur approche de l'ethnographie en général et, plus particulièrement, comment la conquête de la Sabine par Curius Dentatus, ainsi que sa frugalité renommée sont devenues un moment clé dans le développement de la caractérisation historique des Sabins.

Italie, Sabine, Caton l'Ancien, M'. Curius Dentatus, identité, historiographie

INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to offer some thoughts around the development of an ethnography of Italy in the ancient period. The topic is vast, and has recently been brilliantly treated by Stéphane Bourdin, so this can only be an introduction to a complex subject, and my case study is the Sabines where Emma Dench's ground-breaking book of 1995 has already delineated the argument¹. However, in the context of the volume's theme of 'savoirs, contacts et interconnaissance dans la péninsule italienne', I want to argue that the conquest of the Sabina in the early third century constituted a moment in which the Romans were able to develop a certain kind of image of themselves and others, and that this continued as an important theme within the Roman national

autobiography through the very specific context of the development of villa agriculture in the late Republic and empire, and via the intermediation of Cato the Elder's own version of Sabine history. Thus the specifics of actual Roman conquest, the ideologically freighted world of the villa, and a Roman but hellenized moral discourse which developed in the second century BC, all contribute to the way the discourse of Sabine ethnicity developed and was repeatedly reconstructed by the Romans and others.

It will be useful to set out the overall picture at the outset. Looking back from the Augustan period, the Sabines occupy a relatively well-defined position in Roman history. They were Rome's neighbours, and Sabine women were stolen by the Romans under Romulus to form the first community. This act led to war, which the parties then reconciled, and the communities joined, with the Quirinal hill being regarded as especially Sabine. One of the most famous scenes in this episode is the attempted betrayal of Rome

1. Bourdin 2012; Dench 1995. See also for an overlapping treatment of this material Smith 2014.

by the daughter of the garrison, Tarpeia. This was variously represented a thwarted love story, or a story of greed, and the Sabines are presented in different ways according to the author, with some accounts focusing on their rich armour, and others on their rejection of the act of betrayal. Rome's second king Numa came from the Sabina, as did the Claudian *gens*².

The Sabines continue in an uneasy relationship with the Romans in the fifth century, as attested by a strange story of Appius Herdonius' assault on Rome, and a more traditional account of a conclusive triumph in 449 BC over the Sabines. The settlements closer to Rome may have been increasingly assimilated and the interpenetration of Sabine families into Rome may have assisted. The endgame is the conquest by the Romans in 290 BC, but this can only be fully understood by an explanation of what was happening further inland, where the Sabines meet the Apennine peoples³.

In the Augustan Regio IV, the Sabines and Samnites were united. This unification of the two peoples may be indicated by the Roman invention of the term *Sabelli*, and seems to have come from the period of the Social War, when various realignments of identity were taking place⁴. However, others have suggested degrees of relationship at a much earlier stage, and a fundamental linguistic community⁵. The critical issue seems precisely to be the contrast between lowland Sabina, with relatively strong economic development and equivalent levels of wealth, and upland Sabina which will be closer to the world of the Samnites, and, whilst neither they nor the Samnites are unconnected to wider trade networks, their patterns of settlement are distinctively different from those on the Latin plain⁶.

The Samnites were in regular conflict with the Romans in the fourth century BC, and in 290 BC the Romans attacked the Sabina under M'. Curius Dentatus, conquering a huge range of territory from the nearby settlements right into the uplands. It was the largest acquisition of territory

thus far in Rome's history. Lowland Sabine towns received *civitas sine suffragio*; there were large-scale confiscations of land; and in due course, by the middle of the third century BC, the citizenship had been further extended. Clearly, early in the third century, and as their dominance over the more distant Samnites was reinforced, the Romans chose to move aggressively against the Sabina.

We may not be able to trace the evolving picture of the Sabines all the way back to Curius Dentatus' conquest, but as we shall see there is evidence from Fabius Pictor to suggest that the consequence of the conquest were well understood at that time. This paper will show ways in which Cato's account of himself, and of his relationship with the great Curius Dentatus, may have used aspects of these tensions to explore contemporary concerns. In other words, the developing ethnographic picture of the Sabines, as we can trace it, including their complex relationship with the wider world of central Apennine Italy, is also a story of self-reflection on Rome itself.

WRITING ITALY: ETHNOGRAPHIES

Edith Hall's important work *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition through Tragedy*, alerted us to the necessity of reading ancient accounts of other peoples more carefully, and it extended the field in which we looked for ethnographic readings. Coupled with the impact of Said's exploration of the implications of discourses of the other on the one hand, Hartog's application of a structuralist model, and more critical approaches to the study of ethnicity generally, and in the Greek world specifically, it was part of a development in ancient world studies which led to a more focused and energetic debate on ancient ethnography. That debate has itself now arrived at a degree of self-reflection and self-criticism⁷.

The role of early Italy in this argument is not insignificant because the key building block for our

2. Poucet 1967 and 1972 are important accounts of the legendary relationship between Rome and the Sabines.
3. For the fifth century, see Ampolo 1996.
4. Dench 1995, p. 175-217; Bourdin 2012, p. 729-38.
5. Bourdin 2014 and Aberson – Wachter 2014.
6. Musti 1988, p. 235-258.

7. Hall 1989; Hartog 1988; Said 1978. For the Greek world, Hall 1997 and 2002 were important interventions which have provoked significant rethinking. Woolf 2011 offered an important revision of our understanding of ancient ethnography. The field as a whole has been surveyed by Almagor and Skinner in their introduction to Almagor – Skinner 2013.

received understanding of ancient ethnography was Jacoby's taxonomical definition in the development of his massive project on the fragmentary Greek historians⁸. There are a number of fragments in Jacoby's volumes which are in fact about early Sicily and some about Italy (in its later broader sense)⁹. This has encouraged a special place to be given to Sicilian historiography, and for some this relates to the position between Greece and the rest of the Mediterranean world, perhaps as the most authentic version of the middle ground¹⁰. Katherine Clarke has refined this argument, insisting on the specific adoption of Greek notions of time within the matrix of Sicilian history, an argument to which I will return¹¹. It is into this context that I want to turn to the Sabines.

Two fragments which survive from the *Origines*, written by Cato the Elder in the second century BC, begin to help us tease out the problem of ancient historiography and ethnography, and to answer the question of how the Romans began to write a history of Italy. In these passages Cato refers to various traditions about the origins of the Sabines, which include a potential connection with the Spartans¹².

*F50 (= Jordan I F6, Peter F50, Chassignet II F21, Cugusi F58)

D.H. 2, 49, 1-5.

Ζηνόδοτος δ' ὁ Τροιζήνιος συγγραφεὺς Ὀμβρικοὺς ἔθνος αὐθιγενὲς ἰστορεῖ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον οἰκῆσαι περὶ τὴν καλουμένην Ῥεατίνην· ἐκεῖθεν δὲ ὑπὸ Πελασγῶν ἐξελασθέντας εἰς ταύτην ἀφικέσθαι τὴν γῆν ἔνθα νῦν οἰκοῦσι καὶ μεταβαλόντας ἅμα τῷ τόπῳ τοῦνομα Σαβίνους ἐξ Ὀμβρικῶν προσαγορευθῆναι. [2] Κάτων δὲ Πόρκιος τὸ μὲν ὄνομα τῶ Σαβίνων ἔθνεϊ τεθῆναι

φησιν ἐπὶ Σάβου τοῦ Σάγκου δαίμονος ἐπιχωρίου, τοῦτον δὲ τὸν Σάγκον ὑπὸ τινῶν πίστιον καλεῖσθαι Δία. πρώτην δ' αὐτῶν οἰκῆσιν ἀποφαίνει γενέσθαι κώμην τινὰ καλουμένην Τεστρουῖναν ἀγχοῦ πόλεως Ἀμιτέρνης κειμένην, ἐξ ἧς ὀρμηθέντας τότε Σαβίνους εἰς τὴν Ῥεατίνην ἐμβαλεῖν Ἀβοριγίνων ἅμα Πελασγοῖς κατοικούντων καὶ πόλιν αὐτῶν τὴν ἐπιφανεστάτην Κοτυλίας πολέμῳ χειρωσαμένους κατασχεῖν. [3] ἐκ δὲ τῆς Ῥεατίνης ἀποικίας ἀποστείλαντας ἄλλας τε πόλεις κτίσαι πολλάς, ἐν αἷς οἰκεῖν ἀτειχίστους, καὶ δὴ καὶ τὰς προσαγορευομένας Κύρεις· χώραν δὲ κατασχεῖν τῆς μὲν Ἀδριανῆς θαλάττης ἀπέχουσαν ἀμφὶ τοὺς ὀγδοήκοντα καὶ διακοσίους σταδίους, τῆς δὲ Τυρρηνικῆς τετταράκοντα πρὸς διακοσίους· μήκος δὲ αὐτῆς εἶναι φησιν ὀλίγῳ μείον σταδίων χιλίων. [4] ἔστι δὲ τις καὶ ἄλλος ὑπὲρ τῶν Σαβίνων ἐν ἰστορίαις ἐπιχωρίοις λεγόμενος λόγος, ὡς Λακεδαιμονίων ἐποικισάντων αὐτοῖς καθ' ὃν χρόνον ἐπιτροπεύων Εὐνόμον τὸν ἀδελφιδοῦν Λυκοῦργος ἔθετο τῇ Σπάρτῃ τοὺς νόμους. ἀχθομένους γάρ τινες τῇ σκληρότητι τῆς νομοθεσίας καὶ διαστάντας ἀπὸ τῶν ἐτέρων οἴχεσθαι τὸ παράπαν ἐκ τῆς πόλεως· ἔπειτα διὰ πελάγους πολλοῦ φερομένους εὐξασθαι τοῖς θεοῖς ἴσθαι γάρ τινα ὑπελθεῖν αὐτοὺς ὁποιασδήποτε γῆς· εἰς ἣν ἂν ἔλθωσι πρώτην, ἐν ταύτῃ κατοικήσειν. [5] καταχθέντας δὲ τῆς Ἰταλίας περὶ τὰ καλούμενα Πωμεντῖνα πεδία τὸ τε χωρίον, ἐν ᾧ πρῶτον ὤρμισαντο, Φορωνίαν ἀπὸ τῆς πελαγίου φορήσεως ὀνομάσαι καὶ θεᾶς ἱερὸν ἰδρύσασθαι Φορωνίας, ἣ τὰς εὐχὰς ἔθεντο· ἦν νῦν ἐνὸς ἀλλαγῆ γράμματος Φερασίαν καλοῦσιν. ἐκεῖθεν δ' ὀρμηθέντας αὐτῶν τινες συνοίκους τοῖς Σαβίνοις γενέσθαι· καὶ διὰ τοῦτο πολλὰ τῶν νομίμων εἶναι Σαβίνων Λακωνικά, μάλιστα δὲ τὸ φιλοπόλεμον τε καὶ τὸ λιτοδίαιτον καὶ παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ βίου σκληρόν. ὑπὲρ μὲν δὴ τοῦ Σαβίνων γένους ταῦθ' ἱκανά.

(1) Zenodotus of Troezen the historian ... reports (*FGrHist* 821 F3) that the Umbrians, an indigenous race, first occupied the territory around Reate, as it is now called; from there they were expelled by the Pelasgians and moved to the land which they now inhabit, and changing their name at the same time as their place of residence, were called Sabines instead of Umbrians. (2) But Cato Porcius says that **the Sabine nation took its name from Sabus, the son of Sancus, a local divinity, and that this Sancus is by some called Dius Fidius. He points out that their original place of residence was a certain village called Testruna, situated near the city of Amiternum; setting out from there the Sabines then invaded Reatine territory,**

8. Discussed by Skinner 2012.

9. This is true right from the beginning - *FGrHist* 1 Hekataios F53-89; see Braun 2004.

10. On Sicilian historiography, see Pearson 1987; Vattuone 2007; Baron 2012. A strong statement of the uniqueness of Sicily is made by Momigliano 1990, p. 59: "If the historians of Sicily are considered real historians, [...] it is because Sicily is a world in itself, and the conflicts between Greeks and Carthaginians were of general political importance. The historians of Sicily were more than local historians." For the middle ground, see Woolf 2011, p. 8-31; Malkin 2011; cf. Antonaccio 2010.

11. Clarke 2008, p. 230-243.

12. The passages are cited from Cornell 2013; the entry on Cato was written by T. J. Cornell. See also Chassignet 1986; Sciarrino 2011.

which was inhabited by the Aborigines, and occupied their most famous city, Cutiliae, after defeating them in war. (3) Sending out colonies from the territory of Reate, they founded many other cities, in which they live without walls, including the one called Cures. The territory they occupied was distant from the Adriatic about two hundred and eighty stades and from the Tyrrhenian two hundred and forty; its length, he says, was a little less than a thousand stades. (4) But there is a further story told of the Sabines in the local histories, namely that some Lacedaemonians settled amongst them at the time when Lycurgus, acting as guardian to his nephew Eunomus, gave his laws to Sparta. For some were displeased with the rigidity of his law-code and, separating from the rest, left the city entirely; and then, being borne across a great stretch of sea, vowed to the gods that they would settle in the first country they came to, for they were overcome with a desire for any land whatsoever. (5) Having been driven to the part of Italy around the so-called Pomptine plains, they named the place where they first landed Foronia, from the fact of their having been borne (Gk *phoresis*) across the sea, and they established a shrine of the goddess Foronia, to whom they had addressed their prayers; she is the one whom they now call Feronia, after the change of one letter. And some of them set out from there and became fellow-settlers with the Sabines. For this reason many of the customs of the Sabines are Laconic, especially their love of war, their frugality, and their austerity in all their daily actions. But this is enough about the Sabine race.

*F51 (= Jordan I F7, Peter F51, Chassignet II F22, Cugusi F59) = Gellius 14 F20, cf. Hyginus 63 F9 Serv., *Aen.* 8, 638

(V) ... *nouum consurgere bellum*

Romulidis Tatiaoque seni Curibusque seueris

(DS) *aut 'seueris' disciplina, aut rem hoc uerbo reconditam dixit, quia Sabini a Lacedaemoniis originem ducunt, ut Hyginus ait... Cato autem et Gellius a Sabo Lacedaemonio trahere eos originem referunt. porro Lacedaemonios durissimos fuisse omnis lectio docet. Sabinorum etiam mores populum Romanum secutum idem Cato dicit: merito ergo 'seueris,' qui et a duris parentibus orti sunt, et quorum disciplinam uictores Romani in multis secuti sunt. a Sabo Daniel: asco F | mores Daniel: maiores F*

(V) a new war arose for Romulus' sons and old Tatius and austere Cures

(DS) Either 'austere' in their upbringing, or by this word he meant something recondite, namely the fact that the Sabines trace their origins back to the Lacedaemonians, as Hyginus says ... Cato and Gellius report that they derive their origin from Sabus the Lacedaemonian. Furthermore, everything we read teaches us that the Lacedaemonians were the toughest of men. Again according to Cato the Roman people followed the customs of the Sabines: and so they deserve the epithet 'austere', since they were born from tough parents, and the Romans who defeated them followed their mode of upbringing in many respects.

There is much that can be gleaned from these two fascinating fragments, but equally a great deal that is unknown, and in particular we have several contradictory versions of the origins of the Sabines and it is not so easy to disentangle who exactly said what, given that the citing authority, the Servian commentary on Virgil, may have been using intermediary sources, and collapsing different accounts¹³. What is absolutely clear is that Cato the Elder was concerned with the origins of the Sabines and how they related to the Greek world, and this represents an important moment in the construction of a history of the Italian world. To explicate the background to these fragments, we need to look at Cato's own attitudes, and the intellectual context of thinking about the peoples of Italy.

The interactions between Rome and other identity groups within Italy have been the subject of long debate, and Cato the Elder's opinions have been at the heart of many of them. His own apparent distaste for Greek culture is not entirely borne out by what survives of his work, which has led to a re-evaluation of his position. As Gruen noted, the more extreme complaints about the Greeks are found in his writing addressed to his son, and the *Libri ad filium* seem to have exaggerated for effect didactic warnings against an unthinking fascination with the Greek world. For Gruen, Cato's engagement with the Greek world was part of a cultural strategy to identify where Roman culture was distinctive. This then

13. On the commentaries see Garcea – Lhommé – Vallat 2016 and specifically on their citations of Cato, see Lloyd 1961; Smith 2017.

permitted a clearer appreciation of Roman and Italian virtues: "Cato's mission was neither to resist Hellenism nor to liberate Rome from its influence but to highlight its features, both admirable and objectionable, in order to give clearer definition to the qualities and values that set Rome apart. Mastery achieved in the world of politics and war should now be matched by a comparable sense of esteem in the cultural world. Cato prodded his countrymen toward an articulation of their own national character¹⁴."

So we can devise a version of the Catonian account of the Greek world which fits into his historical intention to give an account of the origins, *Origines*, of the cities of Italy. Insofar as we can tell, the *Origines* proceeds through Italy, and in a regular order. Along the way, Cato discusses variant readings and possibilities for understanding the development of Italy, and it is clear that he has quite a deep chronology¹⁵ and a broad range of information¹⁶. The way he engages with the Greek world can be deconstructed as a plea for Roman distinctiveness; does the same work for his engagement with the Italic world?

There is some reason to believe this may be the case. The Servian commentary certainly characterizes the work as effectively laudatory¹⁷. There are few indications of a Roman chauvinism, and even the most obvious, the complaint about the unlettered Ligurians who failed to remember their own history, is not a sign of a generalized disapproval¹⁸. Jonathan Williams' convincing account of Cato's references to northern Italy and the Gauls locates them in a discourse over imperialism, in which the Veneti for instance were safely of Trojan ancestry

and therefore part of the Roman world, but the Gauls were simply invaders¹⁹.

An obvious question is whether Cato was the first to show an interest in Italy. There is no other work which operates in quite the same way before Cato. Some possible fragments of Fabius Pictor (*FRHist* 1 Fabius Pictor F28, F32) might encourage us to believe that Rome's first historian was capable, at least in digressions, of bringing forward accounts of origins and the distant past, and both Fabius (F7) and Cincius Alimentus (*FRHist* 2 F3, both cited alongside *FRHist* 9 Piso F7 by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 2, 38, 2-40, 2) dealt with the Sabines in the context of the betrayal by Tarpeia.

Moreover, and here we return to the passages cited above, there was a general interest in who the original Italians were, which extends beyond the foundation of Rome, and is also found in Greek writers. There are significant challenges in trying to understand the Greek image of early Italy, but one clue is the suggestion that the early peoples were given various names by the Greeks which perhaps reflected some local reality but were applied broadly and then concretised into complex stories of descent. Hesiod, *Th.*, 1013 speaks of Agrios and Latinus ruling the Tyrsenoi²⁰. The Sicilian digression in Thucydides, 6, 2 shows that he was already aware, as were the Sicans, of a variety of traditions of their origins (they claimed autochthony but Thucydides insists they were Iberians, and interestingly Thucydides seems to have a tradition of Oscan expansion in Italy, if we accept that Greek *Opikoi* translates the early Italian *Opscus*²¹. "Ausones" seems to have been a general term used by Greeks, and the same has been argued for the Oinotrians²². On the latter, a key passage is Aristotle, *Pol.*, 1329b:

According to the historians one of the settlers there, a certain Italus, became king of Oenotria, and from him they took the name of Italians instead of that of Oenotrians, and the name of Italy was given to all

14. Gruen 1992, p. 83. See also Gruen 2011 for a series of essays exploring the "fashioning of a collective self-consciousness" in a "multicultural world par excellence", which indicates the general direction of intellectual travel. For Cato more specifically, see the bibliography cited in *FRHist* 5 Cato, and recently Jefferson 2012.

15. F13, whilst problematic, implies that Cato accepted that the foundation of Alba Longa was significantly earlier than that of Rome; Grandazzi 2008, p. 801-803. On Cato's notions of time, see Feeney 2007, p. 99-100.

16. For all this, see *FRHist* 5 Cato the Elder, Introduction (T. J. Cornell).

17. T11e = Serv. Auct., *ad V. Aen.*, 9, 603-4: *Italiae disciplina et vita laudatur, quam et Cato in originibus et Varro in gente populi Romani commemorat*, to which we return later.

18. F34; see Smith 2017.

19. Williams 2001, p. 52-8, 73-81. For the archaeology of this region, see most recently Govi 2016, with references to previous literature.

20. On this passage, see West 1966; Jameson – Malkin 1998; Wiseman 1995, p. 46-48; Martinez-Pinna 2005; Debiasi 2008.

21. Hornblower 2008, p. 262-272, with useful bibliography.

22. Musti 1999; Pagliara 1999; 2000.

that promontory of Europe lying between the Gulfs of Scylletium and of Lametus, which are half a day's journey apart. It was this Italus then who according to tradition converted the Oenotrians from a pastoral life to one of agriculture and gave them various ordinances, being the first to institute their system of common meals [*syssitia*]; hence the common meals and some of his laws are still observed by certain of his successors even today. The settlers in the direction of Tyrrhenia were Opicans, who today as in former times bear the surname of Ausonians; the region towards Iapygia and the Ionian Gulf, called Syrtis, was inhabited by the Chones, who also were Oenotrians by race²³.

An intriguing aspect of this passage, given the references to Sparta above, is the reference to *syssitia*, which are characteristic of Sparta, and which Aristotle, or his assistant (since the passage has been thought to be an interpolation), regarded as an important element of the good city.

Much has been written about the interweaving of these different stories of origins, and it may be that we seek vainly for consistency in a tradition that was always accreting new stories and refining old ones²⁴. However, Roman historians right from the beginning were clearly familiar with Greek historiography, and can hardly have missed a theme which seems frequent in the earlier historiography, that is the nature of the origins of the Italians, and how they related especially to the Trojan movements²⁵. From the outset therefore,

23. φασὶ γὰρ οἱ λόγοιοι τῶν ἐκεῖ κατοικούντων Ἰταλόν τινα γενέσθαι βασιλέα τῆς Οἰνωτρίας, ἀφ' οὗ τὸ τε ὄνομα μεταβαλόντας Ἰταλοὺς ἀντ' Οἰνωτρῶν κληθῆναι καὶ τὴν ἀκτὴν ταύτην τῆς Εὐρώπης Ἰταλίαν τοῦνομα λαβεῖν, ὅση τετύχηκεν ἐντὸς οὕσα τοῦ κόλπου τοῦ Σκυλλητικοῦ καὶ τοῦ Λαμητικοῦ: ἀπέχει δὲ ταῦτα ἀπ' ἀλλήλων ὁδὸν ἡμισείας ἡμέρας. τοῦτον δὲ λέγουσι τὸν Ἰταλὸν νομάδας τοὺς Οἰνωτροὺς ὄντας ποιῆσαι γεωργούς, καὶ νόμους ἄλλους τε αὐτοῖς θέσθαι καὶ τὰ συσσίτια καταστήσαι πρῶτον: διὸ καὶ νῦν ἔτι τῶν ἀπ' ἐκείνου τινὲς χρῶνται τοῖς συσσιτίοις καὶ τῶν νόμων ἐνίοις. ᾠκουον δὲ τὸ μὲν πρὸς τὴν Τυρρηνίαν Ὀπικοὶ καὶ πρότερον καὶ νῦν καλούμενοι τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν Αὔσονες, τὸ δὲ πρὸς τὴν Ἰαπυγίαν καὶ τὸν Ἰόνιον Χῶνες, τὴν καλουμένην Σύρτιν: ἦσαν δὲ καὶ οἱ Χῶνες Οἰνωτροὶ τὸ γένος. This passage clearly relates to, but is not identical with the ideas of Antiochus of Syracuse, *FGH* 555. See Lombardo 1994; Ameruso 1992; Nafissi 2014. For the wider context of drinking in Magna Grecia, see Lombardo – Frisone 2011. For Oenotrian culture, see Horsnaes 2002; Bugno *et al.* 2001.

24. Musti 1988; Genovese 2009.

25. Good discussion in Gruen 1992, p. 6-51.

the historiography of Italy is likely to have had to address a debate between autochthony and external influence, for which the Roman case would become archetypal but by no means unique.

The nature of the external influence was evidently not straightforward. The Trojan story catapulted Aeneas into the west, but several other founding heroes were Greek, notably Odysseus and Diomedes, so historians of Italy had to navigate a variety of possible solutions, conscious from the beginning of the various characterizations of the participants²⁶. An example of an early conflation of different strands may be hidden in Dionysius of Halicarnassus' citation of Hellanicus of Lesbos' view that Aeneas founded Rome with Odysseus²⁷. This early version seems already to countenance both a Greek and a Trojan element in early Roman history.

In the case of the Sabines, the tradition as we see it in the fragments cited is best understood as itself reflecting exactly this world of competitive myth-making and history-writing²⁸. In F50 Cato appears to give an indigenous origin to the Sabines, and to attribute to them the colonization of others through the practice of the *ver sacrum*, which is well-attested for the Sabellic peoples. But in F51, he is associated with another author, the annalist Gellius, for the idea of a Spartan origin; and it has been argued that F50 may reflect Cato's own telling of several variants or a sequence, with the local origins and then a Spartan settlement. In any case, Cn. Gellius is a near contemporary of Cato the Elder²⁹, so by the later part of the second century, both an indigenous story and one of Spartan origins are in circulation.

Why Sparta? The explanation lies almost certainly in a more distant argument. In the 330s and 320s, as Dench has shown, as the contest between Samnium and Rome grew more tense, Tarentum, Sparta's colony, sided with the Samnites. There are hints of the way in which this

26. Genovese 2009.

27. *FGH* 4 F84 = fr. 160 Ambaglio (*ap.* D. H., 1, 72, 2); Solmsen 1986.

28. See Edmonds 2005, p. 5 who defines myth as "an agonistic form of cultural discourse, a traditional language for the communication of ideas from the author to his audience, in which competing versions vie for authority", though the notion of the "author" may need to be deconstructed.

29. *FRHist* 14 (J. Briscoe).

rapprochement could be spun even at the time into a myth of Spartan connectedness; Strabo, 5, 4, 2 = 250C gives the clearest account of Tarentine motives, attributing the myth of Spartan origins to an attempt to win Samnite friendship³⁰.

However, the story acquired a cultural element in the intriguing account in Cicero's *de senectute*, 41 where Cato the Elder recounts having heard his host in Tarentum, Nearchus, telling the story of when the Pythagorean Archytas met Plato and Pontius Herennius, father of the Samnite victor at the Caudine Forks. Despite the problems, the story may have come genuinely from some sort of Tarentine source, as part of the broader attempt to bring disparate parts of the Italic world together, and another contextual element was perhaps the story of Tarentum's peace brokerage after the Caudine Forks, reported by Livy at 9, 14. The account of this mediation is unsatisfactory, but not therefore to be dismissed out of hand³¹.

So the Roman accounts, and the Tarentine version we dimly discern, permit us to understand the possibility of Spartan origins of one part of Italy as part of a debate in the later fourth century BC, picked up by Cato the Elder and contemporary historians, and then preserved in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who has his own interests in the Greek origins of Rome, and potentially through intermediary sources, in the Servian commentaries.

What remains for this section is to ask whether this interest betokened any wider conception of the nature of Italy before the Social War. Here the evidence is scanty but Timaeus of Tauromenium derived the name from the quantity of cattle (Greek *italos*, Latin *vitulus*), and the story goes back to Hellanicus of Lesbos and was remembered all through to the Social War, even if Cato himself prefers to associate the name with a king, Italus, who is not easy to pin down³². Despite significant

disagreements however there is a tendency to see the earliest « Italy » as relating to Sicily or some part of the south of the peninsula, and perhaps even narrowing over time, until it extends out in the fourth and third centuries to include central Italy, and finally, at least according to Polybius, reaches the Alps, although appears to exclude anything off the mainland, including even very small islands³³.

Cato's account of the Sabines then places them within a tradition of a shifting definition of Italy as a whole, as part of a specific discourse over relationships with Tarentum and with Sparta, and within a debate over the relationship with the wider world, Greek and Trojan, which was already several centuries old by the time he began to write. Many of these debates are reflected in his own work. It is difficult for us to discern the extent to which Cato presented this as a matter of tension and conflict, or as a seamless narrative of Italic unity in diversity, but the debate over his attitude to Hellenism, which we discussed at the outset, implies that he was acutely aware of the stakes in this game of competitive identity politics. Moreover, this was not the only way in which a history of the Sabines could be written, and Cato is part of a different, non-ethnographic tradition too, to which we will turn now.

WRITING ITALY: THE INVENTION OF GREAT MEN

Cato's *Origines* are often thought to be the most extreme version of a presentation of Rome as a community in which the individual is to be submerged; this is based on comments in Nepos' life and Pliny's *Natural History* which indicate that he did not include the names of generals in his account³⁴. Yet there is evidence for Cato having preserved accounts in other works of the

30. Dench 1995, p. 53-61, with bibliography.

31. Powell 1988, *ad loc.* and p. 279 on the awkward chronology. On the Tarentine intervention, see Oakley 1997-2005, vol. 2, p. 780 for general relations and vol. 3, p. 156-157 for the intervention; see also Ager 1996, p. 52-4. See also Russo 2005a for a complex interweaving of Pythagoreanism, the legends of Numa, and the tensions between Rome and Tarentum in the later fourth century; cf. Russo 2007; Humm 2017, esp. p. 50-8.

32. See *FRHist* 5 Cato F74 with commentary for details; *FGrHist* 566 F42a and b for Timaeus; *FGrHist* 4 F111 for Hellanicus; *FRHist* 9 Piso F1 for the same account. Italus:

Antiochus of Syracuse, *FGrHist* 555 F2,5,6 (= D.H., 1, 12, 3; 35, 1; 73, 4); Thuc., 6, 2, 4; Philistus *FGrHist* 556 F46 (= D.H., 1, 22, 4); Arist., *Pol.*, 1329b; cf. Virg., *Aen.*, 1, 533 (= 3, 166); 7, 178; Serv., *Aen.*, 1, 2; Servius Danielis, *Aen.* 1, 533. See Russo 2012; for the Social War history of Italia, see Pobjoy 2000.

33. See conveniently Bourdin 2000, p. 206; Humm 2010. *Plb.*, 2, 14, 4-6; 3, 54, 2, and *FRHist* 5 Cato F48, F150 with commentary. For the exclusion of islands, see *FRHist* 9 Piso F3 with commentary.

34. *FRHist* 5 Cato T1, T20. See discussion in Jefferson 2012.

contributions of specific individuals. Leaving aside the problematic passage on Plato's visit to Tarentum mentioned above, one of Cato's heroes seems to have been M'. Curius Dentatus, who was responsible for the conquest of the Sabina. This section then looks at history as presented through the deeds and character of great men, and how these portrayals reveal contemporary concerns.

It is difficult to say much about Dentatus because we do not have the relevant books of Livy³⁵. He is often paired with C. Fabricius Luscinus, his contemporary, and both were renowned for their austerity³⁶. It is likely that Curius' conquest of the Sabina is referred to in the enigmatic passage of Fabius Pictor where he says that the Romans first perceived wealth at the time when they became masters of the Sabines³⁷. However there is little doubt that it was the immense authority and influence of Cato the Elder which shaped the story of Curius Dentatus, and indeed Berrendonner enumerates the occasions on which Cato's speeches refer to themes which come up in what we know of the life of Curius, especially related to the stern refusal to accept gifts, determined levels of austerity, and the display of good faith towards other peoples³⁸.

Cicero's *de senectute*, 51-2 gives a remarkable insight into the potential myth-making around Curius, with another story of Cato³⁹:

Well, then, it was in this sort of life that Manius Curius passed his remaining years after he had triumphed over the Samnites, the Sabines, and Pyrrhus; and, as I gaze upon his country house (for it is not far from mine), I cannot sufficiently admire the frugality of the man or the spirit of the age in which he lived. When the Samnites had brought him a great mass of gold as he sat before the fire, he declined their gift

with scorn; "for", said he, "it seems to me that the glory is not in having the gold, but in ruling those who have it." Think you that such a mighty soul could not make old age happy?

This same story is referred to in Cicero's *de republica*, 3, 40, and retold at length in Plutarch's *Life of Cato*, 2, and became a staple of the tradition. Berrendonner shows the popularity of Curius Dentatus and Fabricius Luscinus into the imperial period, and Plutarch includes both of them in his *Apophthegmata Romana*⁴⁰. As for where the story comes from, at the very least this belongs to the same sort of myth-making which gave us Cato's account of the Tarentum meeting. Cornell and Pasco-Pranger place this story in particular firmly in the context of Cato's own autobiographical references⁴¹, but I would like to suggest that we can also extract them from a specific chronological context and think rather of the spatial context. The critical aspect of the story is that Cato the Elder went specifically to Curius Dentatus' villa and farm – he physically visits a place which a century on still evokes its famous owner and his moral values.

In the context of various recent work on exemplarity and memory, this is a striking passage⁴². Whenever the story was created, it was constructed with the expectation that one might travel to see a place to be reminded of the exemplary virtue of the person who had inhabited it, and this is tightly connected with the extent to which Curius Dentatus, a *novus homo* like Cato, was also to some extent Sabine.

The *Scholia Bobiensia* to Cicero's *Pro Sulla* (80, 34 Stangl) claims that *Manius ... Curius ... Sabinus oriundus videtur*. Forni dismisses this brutally: "essa si rivela quindi priva di ogni fondamento e di ogni valore documentario." He believes that the scholiast had the other passages of Cicero in mind, where Cato visits the farm, which is said to be near his own farm, near Reate, and concludes that Curius was a Sabine. However, as Forni's argument goes on, it becomes clear that he bases this in part on Curius' attachment to the Roman *plebs*, and

35. Forni 1953, for an historical interpretation.

36. Berrendonner 2001, p. 117-129. See another story at Cic., *de sen.*, 43, with Powell 1988 *ad loc.* for variants in Plut., *Pyrrhus*, 20 and Val. Max., 4, 3, 6.

37. *FRHist* 1 Fabius Pictor F24; Gabba 1989; cf. Musti 1988, p. 235-258.

38. Berrendonner 2001, p. 101-102.

39. *Ergo in hac vita M'. Curius, cum de Samnitibus, de Sabinis, de Pyrrho triumphavisset, consumpsit extremum tempus aetatis; cuius quidem ego villam contemplan, abest enim non longe a me, admirari satis non possum vel hominis ipsius continentiam vel temporum disciplinam.* Pasco-Pranger 2015 gives an excellent account of this story.

40. On Plutarch's life see Carsana 2014.

41. Cornell 2009; Pasco-Pranger 2015.

42. Exemplarity: Roller 2004; Hölkeskamp 1996; David 1998; Stemmler 2000; Haimson Lushkov 2015. Memory: Walter 2004; Bücher 2006; Galinsky 2014.

the unlikelihood of Curius having gained access to office at Rome at so early a period. Forni goes on to argue that because Cato's home town was Tusculum, he was only Sabine, in the same way as Curius, if Sabine were to be defined in relation to a distant past where Sabine territory pressed further into Latium.

However, Forni's argument needs to be nuanced a little. Taylor suggested that Curius Dentatus may have come from Nomentum, which was often described as Sabine, and Gary Farney suggests the town may have had a large number of Sabines but been enfranchised after 338 BC⁴³. Curius' Sabinity was partly elective perhaps, and partly related to his success in war, but also reflected something which Cato the Elder seems to have felt about his own identity.

Setting the brutal conquest of a vast swathe of central Appenine Italy alongside the gentler arts may seem perverse, but I want to argue that there is a form of cultural mediation and translation at play here. There are two very different pictures of the Sabines/Samnites, one of a people which is capable of excessive display and love of gold, and the other of a stern morality⁴⁴. The argument that the Sabines/Samnites are rich is an intriguing variant, and it crops up in the Curius story, where after their defeat the Samnites arrive with gifts. They are behaving like clients before their patron perhaps, but are rebuffed. Yet the Sabines would become identifiable with the same virtues which Curius himself displays; Cato derives from Curius his own values; and somewhere along the line these are equated with the values of the Spartans. This is a complex work of translation and happens at around the same time as the work of literary translation which Feeney has recently explored⁴⁵. Some part of this is a redescription of the Sabines as a moral mirror for the Romans, and whether one calls this ethnography or not, it was certainly a mechanism whereby the Romans thought about themselves.

My final point is to insist on the relevance of the villa as the place where Cato reminds himself of the austerity of Curius Dentatus' life, and the

importance of his example. Becker and Terrenato's recent volume reminds us of the paradox of the Catonian villa, that it is hard to find in the archaeology of the second century BC, but that in his *de agricultura*, Cato if anything overstates the misery of his model – as Terrenato points out, few aristocrats will have made cabbage soup or coated their clothes with *amurca*, boiled down olive oil sludge. Bodel's conclusion in the same volume is helpful; "as a coherent manual Cato's handbook may be found wanting, but it exhibits considerable cogency as a social statement"⁴⁶.

It is also true that there is an apparent major contradiction between the expectation of substantial agricultural income, the relatively inefficient villas prescribed by Cato, and the limited nature of the demand for product, as discussed recently by Rosenstein⁴⁷. Whilst there may well have been a hope and an aspiration to generate income from the small pre-Catonian and Catonian villas, we have little archaeological evidence for them in the second century BC in the Sabina⁴⁸. Areas within the *suburbium* may be different, and here Rita Volpe's work at Centocelle may be demonstrating areas where productivity did permit an upward trajectory from the small-scale to the larger luxury villa, and at precisely the time that Cato was writing⁴⁹.

The model of Curius Dentatus cooking his turnips and rejecting the gifts of the Samnite ambassadors is specifically situated in the context of villaculture⁵⁰. It is of a piece with the treatise, and may fit it into an economic model of small-scale and frugal farms generating small profits across a wide area – in other words a steady agricultural development. Cato was witnessing on the one hand an admirable model of peasant resilience and on the other a tendency (even in himself perhaps) towards the *villae expolitissimae*, from which behaviour Curius' example summoned him back.

That phrase, *villae expolitissimae*, is interesting. It comes from a speech made by Scipio Aemilianus against Claudius Asellus, who had been expelled

43. Virg., *Aen.*, 7, 712; Strabo, 5, 3, 1; Pliny, *NH*, 3, 107; Taylor 2013, p. 209; Farney 2007, p. 109-10.

44. Musti 1988, p. 235-258, Dench 1995.

45. Feeney 2016.

46. Becker – Terrenato 2012; quote from Bodel 2012, p. 53. Cf. Reay 2005.

47. Rosenstein 2008.

48. The archaeological picture continues to develop however; see Simone – Formichetti 2014 and Cavalieri 2017.

49. Volpe 2004; 2009; 2012; Witcher 2016.

50. Bodel 2012.

from the senate by Scipio⁵¹. Asellus is accused of wrecking well-ordered houses and farms, and Purcell suggests that the context may have been the construction of the Aqua Marcia in 144 BC⁵². Asellus was therefore presumably part of the team which delivered the contract, but paid scant attention to the agricultural activity he was destroying. The quote runs as follows:

eius contra Claudium Asellum quinta haec sunt : ubi agros optime cultos atque villas expolitissimas vidisset, in his regionibus excelsissimo loco grumam statuere aiebat ; inde corrigere viam, aliis per vineas medias, aliis per roborarium atque piscinam, aliis per villam.

When he had seen the highly-cultivated fields and well-kept farmhouses, he ordered them to set up a measuring rod on the highest spot in that district; and from there to build a straight road, in some places through the midst of vineyards, in others through the roborarium and the fish-pond, in still others through the farm buildings.

Elsewhere, Cato uses *expolitae* rather less positively of villas:

Dicere possum, quibus villae atque aedes aedificatae atque expolitae maximo opere citro atque ebore atque pavimentis Poenicis sient ...

I can state that, those who might have villas and houses built and embellished to the most impressive degree, with citrus wood and ivory and 'Punic pavements' ...⁵³

This is a long way from Cato's own prescriptions, but we can be sure that it was what was being constructed in the *suburbium* of Rome. Yet it was even further from Curius Dentatus' experience, or at least the experience which was conjured up as a historical scene when Cato imagined his fellow-quasi-Sabine. Yet it was precisely in the villa, as the most contested site in the cultural and economic landscape of the second century BC, and

in the Sabina (or at least what could be construed as the Sabina), that this tension was productively explored.

The reason is the specific ethnographic value of the Sabines in terms of their potential ambiguity between greed and poverty – they are a mirror image, but they are also an entrance way into the perception of wealth, if we take Fabius Pictor's indication seriously. Curius Dentatus seated at his hearth, refusing gifts, is an exemplary condensation into the person of an individual great man of an ethnographic paradox and a historical challenge. The *exemplum* is the self-abnegating hero; the paradox is the transformation of the Sabines from enemies to morally admirable partners in empire; and the challenge was the danger of Rome travelling the same route as the Sabines but in reverse, from austerity to luxury.

WRITING THE SABINA: TIME AND TURNIPS

By way of a conclusion, I want to return to Katherine Clarke's argument about the particular interest of Sicilian historiography in establishing a parallel timeline to the Greek versions, and think about how it applies to the world of the Sabina. Sabine time is imprecise of course until it becomes Roman time, but we can see precisely the sorts of interlacing which Feeney looks at in his account of "the dialectic between myth and history", starting with the impact of the Trojan War and even more distant movements across the Mediterranean, and then becoming inextricable from that of Rome first with the rape of the Sabine women and the construction of the dual community, and then with the summoning of Numa to the kingship⁵⁴.

For the rest, one might well accept that the Sabines fade into a sort of undifferentiated ethnographic past, which as Woolf argues represented an unchanging world, and renders ethnography, as a way of thinking, unhelpful in revealing genuine history⁵⁵. However, we might want to say a little more about the transformative nature of the moments of incorporation of Sabine ethnographic models into Roman history, and give a little more

51. *ORF*⁴ P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus Minor F20 *ap. Gell., NA*, 3, 4.

52. Purcell 1995, p. 161. The suggestion is attractive, but needs to explain the word *via* in the actual quotation.

53. *Ne quis item consul fiat* (c.152 BC): *ORF*⁴ 8, 185 = 139 Cugusi. On this and discourses on the villa generally, see Nichols 2010, p. 39–61.

54. Clarke 2008; Feeney 2007, p. 107.

55. Woolf 2011.

thought to the radical rethinking which we appear to see in the fourth century.

The Marcii are very much in the same sort of category as the Curii⁵⁶. They claim Sabine connections back to Numa. C. Marcius Censorinus was pontifex and augur in 300 BC, and may have been the origin of the story that King Numa made Numa Marcius the first *pontifex maximus*⁵⁷. Ancus Marcius is Rome's fourth king, and the *Marcii Reges* claim descent. Major building work takes place on the Quirinal in the later fourth century, potentially reviving, reshaping or inventing the Sabine elements of the hill, at a time when the Samnite wars were coming quite close to Latin and Sabine territories⁵⁸. Quintus Marcius Rex builds the Aqua Marcia in 144 BC, as we have seen, and claims it was a renewal of the bridge built by Ancus Marcius⁵⁹. Its origin near Carsioli is in the territory of the Aequi, who were the people adjacent and to the south of the Sabines, and finally defeated only in the Second Samnite War; Carsioli is included in Regio IV. This vaunting of a distant ancestry is in some ways as far as possible from Cato's position as a new man, but it drew on the same resources, geographical and moral, for different ends⁶⁰.

The ethnography of the Sabines conceals the actual reworking of their history into a usefully austere pattern for Rome, but at the same time, the two kings Numa and Ancus offer both contingent family possibilities, but also opportunities for the looping back and forth of Roman history, for its eternal return to origins, cycling and circling through archetypal patterns which justify action and exemplify morality. It is important to read both Cato the Elder and Marcius Rex not simply as claiming their exemplary forebears and predecessors for themselves, but also as part of a national story.

56. Russo 2005b.

57. Liv., 1, 20, 5-7; Rüpke 2008, p. 787-788; Storchi Marino 1992; 1999, p. 117-124.

58. Curti 2000.

59. *RRC*, n° 425 for coins showing arches, an equestrian statue, and the legend *Aqua Marcia*; see Bieber 1967, p. 194-196; Morgan 1978; Rodgers 1982, p. 174-177.

60. On Cato as a new man, see Astin 1978, p. 1-10; Sciarrino 2011, p. 117-160; but see the important scepticism of Dondin-Payre 1981, noting the huge impact of Cicero on the use of the term, and its rarity before him; and see Reay 2005, who insists on the traditional aspects of Cato's self-fashioning.

However, this picture was open to being undercut. Ennius portrayed Romulus in heaven with the other gods, and this must have been a popular scene since Ennius' line *Romulus in caelo* appears several times in Pompeian graffiti⁶¹. Lucilius, however, satirizing the Ennian account almost certainly pictured Romulus eating turnips in heaven⁶². The uncouth Roman, eschewing ambrosia for a root vegetable, offers an oppositional reading, and the endpoint of this ethnography of austerity is inevitably a challenge; the exaggeration of Cato's "rustic-shtick" led to parody⁶³.

There is a final complex hint of this in the Servian commentary on Virgil. Commenting on the speech of Numanus Remulus in Book 7, the commentators say *Italiae disciplina et uita laudatur (sc Virgilius), quam et Cato in originibus et Varro in gente populi Romani commemorat*. Cato's praise of the discipline and way of life of the Italians sums up so much of his ethnography, as far as we can see it in the fragments of the *Origines*, and also supports the argument we have made here that his identification of the potential contribution of the Italians to the Roman success lay in their preserving qualities of austerity, and inspiring the Romans to hold on to their own virtues, in the face of increasing luxury.

For the most part, Virgil would seem to be taking the same line. However, with that Lucilian parody in mind, the speech of Numanus Remulus becomes even more interesting. His home is not specified, although Numanus is presumably meant to give us a hint. It could be the Picene city of Numana⁶⁴ or, more plausibly I think, a connection to Sabine Numa; Remulus hints at Rome's founding story and his insult to the Trojans' walls has an obvious connection to Remus' insult to Romulus' wall.

The speech takes a high but not entirely successful moral tone. Faced with the young Ascanius, Numanus Remulus, related to Turnus by marriage, vaunts the values of his Italian

61. *CIL* IV, 3135, 7353, 8568, 8995; Cugusi 2008, p. 51 argues the quote is Ennian not Lucilian; see also Gigante 1979, p. 153-4; Milnor 2014, p. 247.

62. See Connors 2005, p. 125-127; Skutsch 1985, on *Annales* frg. 110.

63. The phrase comes from Terrenato 2012, quoting McMahon 2004, p. 19.

64. Hardie 1994, *ad loc.*

background (Virg., *Aen.* 9, 590-637). Ascanius kills him with a single arrow. The passage has understandably divided its interpreters. Numanus Remulus picks up tropes rooted in Latin and wider literary culture – the condemnation of the exotic, of the effeminate, of luxurious clothing, of the archer against the spearman; but he is proud, boastful, rude, and his hard primitivism lurches into brigandage. Rather than try to pin down a single meaning, we must admire Virgil’s brilliant ambiguities⁶⁵. However Nelsestuen’s interpretation which relates the passage back to Cato the Elder seems to me to be a valuable new reading⁶⁶, and in particular the parallel with *ORF*⁴ F32 = F93 Cugusi is striking:

Ego iam a principio in parsimonia atque in duritia atque industria omnem adulescentiam meam abstinui agro colendo, saxis Sabinis, silicibus repastinandis atque conserendis.

From the very beginning of my life, I spent my entire adolescence in parsimonia, duritia, and industria, tending my fields, amongst the Sabine stones, digging up in *parsimonia*, *duritia* and *industria* rocks and sowing seed.

Nelsestuen seems to me to be right to note the highly overwrought nature of the rhetoric here, and the contrast with Ascanius’ simple riposte – an arrow and less than a line of verse – is surely telling.

At one level, Virgil kills off Cato as the author of the alternative tradition in which Ascanius kills Mezentius; at another he emphasizes the importance of the mixture of races which is so much the final lesson of the *Aeneid*, with Jupiter’s final prophecy. We are not however obliged to assume that the complexity of the readings stops there. As Miller points out, Apollo also warns Ascanius from further battle, perhaps to restrain an otherwise excessive rampage⁶⁷.

Numanus Remulus is not Cato the Elder, but he reflects aspects of the widely accepted critique of luxury, and also parodic elements of where that critique could take one. In both cases, he is a dead end. Archaeological evidence for the Romanization of the Sabina in the later first century BC abounds⁶⁸. Even Horace’s supposed villa at Licenza is a grand affair⁶⁹. We are in a completely different world from that of Cato’s musings on Curius Dentatus, and yet at the same time we can still find Sabine ethnography being used in Virgil subtly to uncover contemporary perceptions and self-awareness. As a recently published collection of sources for the Sabina has shown, interest in the Sabina continued long into the imperial period, even if increasingly along rather fossilized lines⁷⁰. It is no surprise therefore to discover that Vespasian never forgot his Sabine roots⁷¹, and that Marcus Aurelius’ family claimed to be descended from the Sabine king Numa⁷².

65. Horsfall 1971; Dickie 1986, p. 165-221; Lyne 1987, p. 200-6; Keith 2000, p. 19-22; Pogorzelski 2016, p. 74-8.
66. Nelsestuen 2016, p. 79-97.

67. Miller 2009, p. 150-70.

68. Sternini 2004; Verga 2006; Marzano 2007; Alvino 2009a, p. 95-98; 2009b, p. 67-72; Cavalieri 2017.

69. Frischer – Crawford – De Simone 2006.

70. Maras *et al.* 2020.

71. See Cascino – Gasparini 2009.

72. SHA, *Vit. Aur.* 1, 6. On other elements of M. Aurelius’ claims to participate in Italian country life, see Fentress – Goodson – Maiuro 2016, p. 203-10.

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