

## Chapter 12

### Major Trends in European Antiquarianism, Petrarch to Peiresc

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Writing a history of antiquarianism is difficult because so many of the key figures are still not studied. But writing the history of antiquarianism is also difficult because there is little agreement on what antiquarianism means. There is, of course, the narrow view, that antiquarianism is carried out by antiquaries whose subject is antiquities—from the Latin *antiquitates*. But since this word derived from the title of an encyclopaedic study of Rome produced by a first-century Roman, Marcus Terrentius Varro, *Antiquitatum rerum divinarum humanarumque libri* (*Divine and Human Antiquities*), it also licensed a much broader interpretation. *Antiquitates*, could refer, as it did for Varro, to the entire lived culture of a people or a period. This, in turn, meant that it could be tracked down through philology, law, natural history, and politics, among others.

The narrower approach, which is closely bound up with our understanding of the revival of antiquity first in Italy and then across the Alps, has already borne many fruits, even though our knowledge remains limited to a small number of the texts produced by a small percentage of those who concerned themselves with antiquity. The broader approach, which might prove crucial to understanding the shape of learning in the late Renaissance (or early Enlightenment), has been less taken, perhaps because most of those who study antiquarians and antiquarianism are art historians—and are interested first and foremost in the objects being studied rather than *how* they were being studied.

But whether we choose the narrower or the wider field of view, writing a history of early modern antiquarianism at this point, despite being a desiderata of the highest degree, remains impossible. Arnaldo Momigliano, more than fifty years ago, at just this point in an essay, acknowledged ‘I wish I could simply refer to a History of Antiquarian Studies. But none exists’.<sup>1</sup> This statement remains true today, despite the real renewal of studies in early modern antiquarianism.<sup>2</sup> There are occasional efforts to plumb national traditions of antiquarianism, especially for northern Europe. But on the whole many of the histories of antiquarianism that we do possess—histories written of, by, and for antiquaries—are those we might not wish to read.

The outline of what such a comprehensive history would look like is clear enough. It would begin with Petrarch, not as an ideologist of antiquity but as a student of its material remains, especially in verbal form (manuscripts, epigraphy, numismatics). The next highpoint—though perhaps this judgment is a function of the limited scholarship on the intervening period?—occurs a century later, in the 1440s, with Poggio Bracciolini, Flavio Biondo, and Cyriac of Ancona. A century later still, the lead is taken by a group of scholars circling around the household of Cardinal Alexander Farnese, including Pirro Ligorio and Onofrio Panvinio. Their breakthrough, towards an intensive engagement with ancient visual and material culture in its fullest extent, was picked up in the next generation by the Frenchman Peiresc and his colleagues in the circle of Cardinal Francesco Barberini. With Peiresc it is possible to see the outlines of that ‘broader’ history of European antiquarianism, as it intersects with natural history, medicine, and

astronomy, as well as oriental languages and literature. Some of Peiresc's wide interests were shared by the great contemporary northern antiquaries, William Camden and Ole Worm, as well as by some of the students of biblical antiquities, such as Jean Morin and William Lightfoot. Another aspect of Peiresc's focus on material evidence was carried on through Mabillon and on towards Gatter's creation of a curriculum for the *historische Hilfswissenschaften*. The Italian tradition of object-based studies led on towards Winckelmann through Bellori and Bianchini, but also towards Caylus and Barthélemy in Paris. Then there would be a fascinating, long, and rich coda, that would carry us on into what Donald R. Kelley once termed 'the old cultural history' of the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>3</sup> And, finally, there would be the complex question of the relationship of the old cultural history to the newer forms created by Jacob Burckhardt and Karl Lamprecht in the next decades. Without any sense of the morphology of antiquarianism the history of cultural history will remain an exercise in genealogy only.

Big stories require solid foundations, and even the narrow definition of antiquarianism and the antiquarian age requires careful definition: is antiquarianism the study of antiquities, the fascination with antiquity, or the inspiration by antiquity? Each of these takes us in a very different direction, and each is significant to an understanding of early modern European cultural life. But even these broad categories admit of significant omissions, in particular the relationship between antiquarianism and history. Bacon was only the most famous of those to distinguish between history and antiquities. The latter he described as 'history defaced, or remnants of history which have casually escaped the shipwreck of time'. These remnants took different forms, and Bacon's catalogue

bespeaks a more intimate familiarity than the tone of disparagement might otherwise suggest.

*Antiquities*, or remnants of histories, are (as was said) like the spars of a shipwreck: when, though the memory of things be decayed and almost lost, yet acute and industrious persons, by a certain perseverance and scrupulous diligence, contrive out of genealogies, annals, titles, monuments, coins, proper names, and styles, etymologies of words, proverbs, traditions, archives, and instruments as well public as private, fragments of histories scattered about in books not historical, —contrive, I say, from all these things or some of them, to recover somewhat from the deluge of time; a work laborious indeed, but agreeable to men, and joined with a kind of reverence; and well worthy to supersede the fabulous accounts of the origins of nations; and to be substituted for fictions of that kind.<sup>5</sup>

It might be simpler to follow Bacon in positing a sharp division between ‘ancient historians’ and ‘antiquarians’, but Anthony Grafton’s recent work on the *Ars historica*, and in particular on the works of François Baudouin and Francesco Patrizi suggests that any hard-and-fast division between silver-tongued historians and club-footed antiquaries is misleading.<sup>6</sup>

On the other hand, one may fairly ask whether ‘antiquarianism’ actually belongs in a history of historical writing, not because it isn’t intimately related to history, but because its written expression is extrinsic to its identity. That is to say, literary style, *per se*, is not

central to the practice of antiquarianism in the way that it was for history. (Thus, by extension there could be no Hayden White for antiquarianism.) Research methods, evaluation of evidence, questions—these were more characteristic of antiquarianism, and better guides to its practice. Perhaps the metaphor would be the comparison between a traditional building, with an attractive ‘skin’ or curtain wall, and the Pompidou Centre or Lloyd’s Building, with no skin hiding the machinery of the building from its spectators. The historian of antiquarianism must be a connoisseur of questions and tools, rather than literary style. Perhaps this why the revival of study of antiquarianism has coincided with a rising interest in history of scholarship rather than, more generally speaking, intellectual history.

With so much still unknown, still unexplored, there is a logic to establishing, in so far as it is possible, the beginnings. Much has been said about Petrarch’s antiquarianism—probably more has been said about him on this subject than he actually wrote himself. Of Petrarch, we could do worse than begin with Peter Burke, who observed that despite being a poet and tuned in to words ‘he was, one might say, the first modern antiquarian, in the sense of someone who is interested in the reconstruction of the past from its physical remains’.<sup>7</sup> Yet Petrarch’s interest in the other chief sorts of remains, they were real, but superficial and very imperfectly acted upon.<sup>8</sup> And because it is often forgotten that he began his career as a lawyer—or at least this was his father’s vision for him—it is almost always forgotten that he was a contemporary of the great Bartolus. At a time when lawyers paid no attention to the fact that the Roman law they were implementing had been made in and for a different Rome, Petrarch was chiding that ‘it never occurs to

them that the knowledge of arts and of origins and of literature would be of the greatest practical use for their very profession'.<sup>9</sup>

The main loci for his antiquarian ventures are *Letters on Familiar Matters* (*Rerum Familiarium Libri* c.1366) (V.4) on Roman ruins in the bay of Naples, *Remedies for Both Kinds of Fortune* (*De remedis utriusque fortunae* (c.1366) on ancient buildings destroyed by time, *Letters on Familiar Matters* (XIX.3) on Romans coins and, especially, *Letters on Familiar Matters* (VI, 2 of 1341), which we will have more to say about, as well as Book 8 of his *Africa* (c.1351) epic. Yet the reconstruction of Carthage in the latter was entirely from books while the reconstruction of Rome in the former affects the pose of autopsy only in order to deny its power relative to books.

He, like most everyone else in his day, and certainly before—and most since, too—simply preferred literary to material sources. He found them easier to work with, of more meaningful content, and more familiar. On top of that, what had survived was often broken, or at least so damaged as to require exquisite powers of remediation. Books by contrast, seemed to come more whole. ‘Seek in books and you will find authorities. Explore the entire city and either you will find nothing or the tiniest signs of great works.’<sup>10</sup>

What the physical remains of the past did for Petrarch, however, was provide him with the food his imagination needed. And so it was less the learned, precise reconstruction of ancient Rome that he sought—not, of course, that it would have been possible at that

time—so much as to use the remains that were there to evoke and stimulate interest in a Roman past that was much richer than just the physical survivals.<sup>11</sup> This is the way to understand the importance of Petrarch's famous description of a walk in Rome, sent to Francesco Colonna in 1341 or 1337. Indeed, few walks have ever had such an impact. For, strolling across a landscape hallowed by memory, loss, and survival, Petrarch saw physical Rome as a gigantic kind of looking glass: reconstructing it from its broken fragments was a form of self-examination.

And so, in that famous letter to Francesco Colonna, it was 'not so much because of what I actually saw, as from the recollection of our ancestors, who left such illustrious memorials of Roman virtue so far from the fatherland'.<sup>12</sup> Indeed, Petrarch actually feared the consequences of too great a familiarity with the 'real' remains of ancient world: 'Fearing that my eyes, and a presence ever hostile to great personages, would lessen the thing which I had fixed in my mind.'<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, in making space, and the movement through space, the axis of his quest, Petrarch was creating a new way of studying and thinking about the past. The *locus classicus* for the spatialization of history at least for the European Renaissance—might well be in Cicero's *De Finibus*: 'Such powers of evocation are inherent in those places. . . . And in this City there is no end to them: wherever we go we walk over history.'<sup>14</sup> The topos of movement through space was, then, more than just a literary tool—the spatialization of antiquity, not just as scattered pieces but the vision of a whole fabric, provided a model for reconstruction. Petrarch might have been a great manuscript hunter,

but ancient manuscripts, wherever they were found, were found decontextualized. By contrast, spatializing antiquity created a model for its reconstitution that would shape the study of the past to our very day.

These two lines of access to the ancient world launched by Petrarch had rich *fortunae* afterwards: space as a prompt for the learned imagination, and words on monuments as the preferred kind of antiquity (favouring numismatics and epigraphy). In the decades after Petrarch some followed him in these interests. But they were, actually, few in number. And they complained about the difficulty of the work, even of reading inscriptions in a language they thought they knew. The difficulties of Odofredus with the ‘lex de imperio’ show this. Or Magister Gregorius, who couldn’t read inscriptions, viz. ‘In hac tabula plura legi, sed pauca intellexi’.<sup>15</sup> Or Buoncompagno da Signa, author of *The Rule of Learned Letters (Formula litterarum scholasticarum)*, who noted the marvels of ancient epigraphy ‘which today we cannot clearly read or understand’.<sup>16</sup> Giovanni Dondi, a doctor and friend of Petrarch’s old age, wrote that on the triumphal arch ‘are sculpted many letters but they are read with difficulty’.<sup>17</sup> Yet it was also during this time that people began to make the first collections of inscriptions (*syllogae*).<sup>18</sup> Truth be told, we still know very little about the century between Petrarch and the three giants of the fifteenth century generally credited with the real beginning of antiquarianism in Europe: Cyriac of Ancona, Poggio Bracciolini, and Biondo Flavio.<sup>19</sup>

Poggio is the figure singled out as key by both Roberto Weiss and Grafton.<sup>20</sup> But Grafton went on to also give Poggio credit for creating the model of a community of collaborating



scholars, the so-called *Respublica literaria*, or Republic of Letters.<sup>21</sup> Poggio follows Petrarch in using the convention of the walk through Rome—the topographical framing of time—as a way of presenting the fruits of his study of Roman inscriptions in Book 1 of *On the Variability of Fortune (De Varietate Fortunae)* (1448).<sup>22</sup> But from our perspective what is interesting about this project is that it is *not* dedicated to antiquarian study. It is *not* a volume about Roman antiquities, even though its fame has come to be identified very much with that Book 1.<sup>23</sup> In fact, this book is followed by three others, one illustrating changing fortune by looking at the period 1377–1431 and the death of Pope Martin V, the next giving a short history of the pontificate of Eugenius IV (1431–47) and attempts to create union of the Eastern and Western churches, concluding with a discussion of Eastern Christians (those living under Islamic rule) then in Italy, including Armenians, Copts, and Ethiopians. The final book discusses the lands beyond Islam, Poggio’s famous retelling of Nicolò Conti’s tales of India and Ethiopia.

The section on India rearranges Conti’s narrative into a structural presentation, not so different from what people were asking at that time about ancient Rome. What are the categories discussed? The geographical division of India, inhabitants, buildings and furniture and lifestyle, food manners, hairstyle, sleep style, shoes, ornament, funeral rites and mourning rites, priests and Brahmins, navigation techniques, shipping, gods/idols and their rites including a section on self-sacrifice to the gods, weddings, legend about where diamonds come from, calendar, zodiac, money, weapons and technology, writing, languages, slaves, penal practices, and diseases. This is a long and fascinating list. Many of these areas of interest were the same ones that caught the eye of Poggio the epigrapher.

But probably the key figure, at least from the point of view of his impact on what came later, was Biondo Flavio. He copied inscriptions and visited Rome, but used it all to virtually reconstruct the lost city. His *Rome Restored (Roma Instaurata)*, 1444–6) ‘is a book of fundamental importance in the history of historical thought. It is a topographical account of ancient Rome’ describing all the monuments and buildings, using literary sources as well as information from walking the site.<sup>24</sup> What we might say of this project is that it represents the formalizing into *scientia* of what Petrarch began as a frame for the imagination, and which still survived as such, in part, in the work of Poggio. In Biondo, by contrast, the imaginative, personalized, and reflective context is gone, but the vision of Rome from a walker’s perspective is retained, though now filled in and overwhelmed by a great body of facts. This is historical chorography, and as such influenced Conrad Celtis and William Camden in the two centuries to come, but it is also what we might term today ‘cultural geography’. The physical space provides the setting and the prompts for the telling of that story.

But we might add to Peter Burke’s judgment that *Rome Triumphant (Roma Triumphans)*, 1453–59) represents the point of departure from the Petrarchan tradition in that it shifts from reconstruction based on spatial to one based on conceptual apperception. In other words, instead of being modelled on a possible perambulation through the physical city, it reflects an abstract division of Rome by function, with parts of the book devoted to religion, public administration, military, private institutions, and triumphal marches. Each large category serves as the rubric for an occasionally—and inevitably—overlapping but

ambitiously encyclopaedic survey of Roman public, private, military, and religious matters.<sup>25</sup> Yes, sometimes Biondo is led to discuss Roman institutions in the *Instaurata* just as he sometimes presents archaeological data in the *Triumphans*, but these exceptions to form confirm his general effort to adopt distinct vantage points in the two projects.

With his new four-fold division into public, private, military, and sacred antiquities, Biondo also broke with Varro's way of chopping up the encyclopaedia. Varro had thought and organized in terms of human and divine matters, and then divided these big rubrics into people, places, times, and things, or institutions. Perhaps Biondo even thought he was following Varro, so close are they in point of fact. But Biondo has shifted still further away from narrative history (Varro's 'people') signalling a movement that would have real consequences over the subsequent three hundred odd years.

We can presume Biondo's thorough acquaintance with physical Rome—he was a member of the Curia for many years, after all—but *autopsia* figures less often than one might expect in these works. More typical is the text-driven vision of the city, even in the *Roma Instaurata*. Its three books are divided into the physical space of Rome, its aqueducts, arenas, and even its churches.

Interestingly, even in the discussion of Rome's physical space in *Roma Triumphans* Biondo signals his awareness of what he was facing. He writes that 'having described those parts of the city of Rome for which we possess the terms that name and capture it, it will be necessary that in describing the rest we take another way. Because who can give

an account of things of such great age, and of almost infinite parts and buildings? We will therefore take this path', and will divide what follows into discussions rather of categories than of space: what pertains to religion, public administration, spectacles, and, fourth, more specialized matters.<sup>26</sup>

But in Book 3, when entering the abandoned quarters of the ancient city, where only modern buildings lay, Biondo acknowledged feeling insecure,

because not having for them neither the testimonies, nor any certainty, because to see with the eyes, or only with the mind, what is today very inhabited in Rome, one would say that I haven't touched anything, which did not occur because of any negligence of ours, nor by accident, but for not wanting to affirm what we do not know . . . without ancient testimonies, worthy of faith.<sup>27</sup>

Archaeology does not appear to satisfy this condition of a trustworthy testimony since it is so little drawn upon. Even in the fascinating account of Roman villa life in Book 9 of the *Roma Triumphans* the entire discussion of decorative arts, domestic objects, useful objects, glass, marble, porphyry, architecture—everything—is culled from literary sources.

And yet, lest we feel that Biondo should be demoted from his position of honour alongside Cyriac and Poggio, there is also the fact that he preserves for us, in several different versions, the most elaborate account of an archaeological 'dig' that has survived from the fifteenth century. This is the fascinating narrative of the underwater excavations at Lake Nemi, south-east of Rome, in 1447, an expedition made with Alberti. After a

long description of the excavation and then of the ship itself, down to how they figured out from the remains themselves how it was originally built (the fusing of clay and iron ‘just as today we make a sealant of brick and iron’), Biondo then gives Alberti’s views on the relationship between the pipes found at the bottom of the lake and the springs nearby—that water was piped in for the houseboats on the lake.<sup>28</sup> Grafton has made this episode the key to defining not only part of the early modern antiquarian venture, but also his man, Alberti:

In studying the way the ship’s hull was made, the bonds between the pieces of lead pipe, and the forms of the letters on them, Biondo—whose forte lay in the analysis of texts—adopted an object-oriented approach. It seems altogether likely that he reported, in such passages, exactly what Alberti told him. It also seems probable that Alberti inspired Biondo’s effort to compare modern ships with those of the Romans in his later *Rome Triumphant*.<sup>29</sup>

For Grafton, Alberti emerges as an ideal of antiquarianism, alongside his many other talents. It is Alberti who in fact presents himself as the modern antiquary, in learning from direct contact with the physical remains of the past. Though others before him, like Donatello and Brunelleschi, and many others after, would turn to physical remains for information and inspiration, what Alberti offered was a combination of interest in ancient material culture *and* in the ‘expressive capabilities of ancient sculpture’, as Grafton terms it.<sup>30</sup>

The *Italy Illuminated* (*Italia Illustrata*, c.1453) was the first begun and last finished of Biondo’s works. Technically, it is chorography, including a genealogy of ruling houses of

each settlement, their chronology, antiquities, local history, and topography. It is a mostly bookish treatment, though Biondo's personal acquaintance with the topography of Italy is on display in almost every section, even if not quite as hands-on as in the dig at Lake Nemi.<sup>31</sup> There are accounts of human history drawn from ruins, as at Ostia, and accounts of human history drawn from the appearance of the landscape, as at Incisa in the Val d'Arno.<sup>32</sup> There are discussions of the customs of local people, as in the two means of fouling practiced through the year near Anzio and much more, showing the depth of Biondo's knowledge.<sup>33</sup> There is also a kind of self-consciousness about space that is very intelligent. In describing Lazio, Biondo explained,

we shall not be able to adhere to the plan used in other regions, orienting ourselves by the mouths, sources and course of rivers. We shall adopt another method (one suited to this region alone) which will meet our needs better, by proceeding along three roads, the Appian, Latin, and Tiburine which lead indifferent ways to the river Liri and to Sinuessa and Gaeta.

And so, oriented in this way, he begins a section, for example, 'present-day travellers from Rome to Terracina come first to. . .'.<sup>34</sup> We will want to note again the similarity to Chinese geographies, though perhaps all this demonstrates is the inevitability of choosing amidst a limited number of chorographic options.

In addition to the physical space, Biondo also retells some of the events that occurred within that space, as he explains: 'So this work will be not just a description of Italy, but also a catalogue of her famous and outstanding men, as well as a summary of no small part of Italian history.'<sup>35</sup> Biondo marks a crucial transition in what a history of

antiquarianism would look like were it ever written. Through his *Roma Instaurata* we can trace the impact of Petrarch's imaginative convention of the movement through the physical space of Rome as a mnemotechnique. But with *Roma Triumphans* Biondo advances the situation, moving starkly away from the individual experience as vector for the propagation of knowledge, and towards a pre-digested, pre-determined form. It was this decision that changed the shape of antiquarian studies in the centuries to come. We can trace this immediately in the titles of works that were produced in the sixteenth century, both through the use of the term *antiquitates* and in the selection of a particular subject to investigate.

The third great figure of these decades was Cyriac of Ancona, a larger than life merchant made larger, paradoxically, by the near-complete disappearance of his literary corpus, of which only fragments and copies survive. The first period of his life covers forty-five years, from 1391 to 1435—a period covered in Scalmonti's *Vita*.<sup>37</sup> We know of his middle period (1435–43) from two extensive excerpts from his travel diaries that were printed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries from now-lost manuscripts and letters.

Cyriac's letters are extraordinary. But what contemporaries read most carefully, and copied out even more attentively, were his transcriptions of inscriptions, and his architectural drawings with inscriptions. Cyriac is recognized so widely as the founder of epigraphy because of this influence. Mommsen said that his manuscripts were snapped up by princes and then disintegrated. De Rossi said it was not the book, but the *excerpta* that Cyriac had made for friends which spread so widely. Sabbadini said the *Commentaria* were destroyed in a fire of the Sforza library at Pesaro in 1514. There is

evidence from the 1660s of an editing project in Rome, began by Holstenius under Barberini's inspiration, and then taken over by Carlo Moroni, Holstenius's follower as keeper of the Barberini library, to do the inscriptions of Cyriac of Ancona. But the manuscript, if it ever reached that stage, has since disappeared.

In Europe, the next key step in consolidating the century of antiquarian exploration after Biondo occurred more than a full century later. Johannes Rosinus's *Roman Antiquities* (*Romanorum antiquitatum libri decem* (1583) is organized in terms of subjects that Biondo had separated out into *Roma Instaurata* and *Roma Triumphans*. It is also true that Rosinus's handbook was almost totally untouched by archaeology, with a few illustrations, all from coins.<sup>38</sup> His ten books are divided into the City and Populace; Gods, Temples; Priests; Calendar; Games and Rituals; Nobility; Magistrates; Laws; Judges; and Militia. According to Mazzocco, this represents a shift away from Biondo's four-fold classificatory system and a closer identification with the approach of sixteenth-century scholars such as Panvinio, Sigonio, and Lipsius.<sup>39</sup>

What is especially important about Rosinus is his self-consciousness. He understood his place in the history of the study of *antiquitates*. And so, for instance, in his dedicatory letter to the Dukes of Saxony, Rosinus points to the ancient Romans, who wrote 'so that the origins and causes of the old ways, rites, and ceremonies' would be understood by posterity. The figure of Varro loomed large for Rosinus. He enumerated what he took to be the content of the latter's 'Human Antiquities': 'de civibus Romanis, eorum divisionibus, de patriciis & Plebeiis, Patronis, Clientibus, de Tribubus, Curiis, Classibus



& Centuriis: de Urbe, de Senaculis, Rostris, Foris, Campis, & aliis aedificiis: de anni ratione, mensibus, diebus & eorum divisionibus, fastis, nefastis, comitialibus, praeliaribus: de pace & bello: de Comitibus, Magistratibus, legibus, iudiciis, ludis, & aliis'.<sup>40</sup> But after the death of Varro, 'the study of antiquities and of humane letters' dwindled, until Biondo Flavio 'rescued it out of darkness'. Many have since followed him 'so that the study of antiquities as if buried have been called back to life'—attributing to a whole field of study what Cyriac spoke of for individuals.<sup>41</sup>

Rosinus explained that he diligently studied four classes of material that tended all to the same end. He compared monuments of ancient writing with manuscripts 'and pulled out many vestiges of antiquity from the darkness and brought them into the light'. He also read various writers. And, finally, that he '[i]nvestigated the other ancient monuments, stones, coins, trophies, buildings etc and in this way the image of ancient Rome was known, as if placed before our eyes'.<sup>42</sup>

Rosinus's publisher had high hopes for the volume. Beyond simply referring to his author as 'the new Varro of our age' ('a novo nostro aetatis Varrone'), Johannes Freigius even imagined Rosinus as having 'brought antiquarian learning into the form of some kind of art' ('antiquitatis cognitionem in quendam artis formam redigi'). 'I hope', he continued, 'for a future in which among the liberal arts of Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, Astronomy and others, the knowledge of antiquities will be placed as an art'. Nor was it necessary to add to what others had so much noted, that is, the utility

of antiquarian knowledge for poets, historians, and legists. Thus,, he concluded ‘to the other liberal arts is added the science of antiquities’.<sup>43</sup>

But for all the publisher’s claims of novelty, Rosinus himself, writing to his readers, starts from the very familiar foundation of pedagogy: when young eyes read Cicero they encounter many terms and concepts ‘which without knowledge of the histories and antiquities of the Romans cannot be understood’.<sup>44</sup> He gathered up all this material to assist teachers in their task.<sup>45</sup> Rosinus therefore represents a real turning point in the story we have been surveying so far. On the one hand, his ten-book survey picks up where Biondo had left off, in scope and in organization. It represents both the climax of the earlier Petrarch-to-Biondo moment, the crystallization of a vision of *antiquitates* in which careful and wide reading of texts, combined with some familiarity with material remains was used to present the panorama of ancient Roman culture—though with categories which themselves emerged from that textual tradition. And Rosinus would have an impact on the future too. For his approach is nominally the same one embodied in the tradition of the *Handbucher* that would become so prominent in the nineteenth century.

But in between—and this is where Rosinus does seem more an end than a beginning—and especially in the South, and especially among independent scholars rather than school teachers, we see the dominance of a different kind of study of antiquities, one that is just as well-read but much more attentive to material culture, and much more interested in the information-laden character of images. Rosinus, for all his reading, has very few

images, and nearly all of them come from coins, and nearly all relate to public life, such as altars, weapons, clothing.

Rosinus really does represent one line of development, one that can trace itself back through Biondo to Petrarch and which while making a gesture towards the material reality of the ancient world is actually drawn substantially from the textual. And really, this represents the bulk of what antiquarianism in Europe was: extrapolating from texts to the reconstruction of diverse aspects of ancient life. The single best treatment of this line of development comes in the second half of Ingo Herklotz's masterly study of Cassiano dal Pozzo 'and archaeology in the seventeenth century'.

It is against this backdrop that the achievements of the antiquarians of the Farnese group in the sixteenth century, and the Cassiano group in the seventeenth, really stand out. For it is with them that images and objects emerge as key documents in themselves. (From Herklotz's perspective, indeed, which focuses most closely on the study of *mores et instituta*, Cassiano represents the very climax of the sixteenth-century project.<sup>46</sup>) Yes, it is certainly true that very often these scholars came to their things with questions derived from texts, questions that they were seeking to answer in new ways with new evidence, but still questions from texts. But sometimes it was the direct encounter with the puzzling newness of an artefact—either disinterred or translated from another place—that provoked the questioning. And this, too, was new.

The big, new, visual turn came from Pirro Ligorio, in the first instance, and then from Onufrio Panvinio, Girolamo Mercuriale, Fulvio Orsini, and Alfonso and Pedro Chacón. The actual courtiers were Mercuriale, Panvinio, and Orsini, but the others were part of the circle. All of them represent the flowering of antiquarianism in the protective shelter of Cardinal Alexander Farnese. It was the presence of such a volume of remains in Rome, especially, but also elsewhere in Italy, that gave Italian scholars such a leg up over their northern competitors and partners. In his *Instructions for Making a Library (Advis pour dresser une bibliothèque*, 1627), Gabriel Naudé wrote that one could buy Chacon, Panvinio, Agustin, and Mercuriale with one's eyes closed, their work was that good.<sup>47</sup>

Herklotz argues, however, that around 1600 failing patronage and Counter-Reformation narrowness worked against the newly developing union of textual and visual material. This was true in Rome and in Padua and led to a turn back towards new textual material—though of course, he adds, this shifting of gears appears more abrupt and less gradual from our perspective than it would have seemed from theirs.<sup>48</sup>

Having said all that, we must not undersell the contemporary awareness and self-consciousness about the power of things. Philip Rubens, the painter's brother and Lipsius's star student, wrote, 'It's incredible how much the study of coins, epigraphy and other ancient monuments adds to the fuller understanding of antiquity. Indeed, I would dare to assert that these things, scarcely able to be grasped from ancient writers, can be properly understood from these physical sources and indeed well explained.'<sup>49</sup>

Herklotz argues that Biondo's *Roma Triumphans* was so ambitious—we might say: such a break from the relatively new spatial structure—that nobody followed it for a century. But then, first Robertello tried to reach back to Roman ways in his *On the Life and Manners of the Roman People* (*De vita et victu populi romani*, 1559) and then Pirro Ligorio tackled it in his giant opus of fifty manuscript books. And with Ligorio, a practicing architect and autodidact as opposed to philologist or *érudit*, the importance of the art object moves to the center. . With him, and with various vicissitudes up through the present, deciphering the specific languages of prior art works emerges as a key way of accessing the past. No antiquary of the century put text and image closer together than did Ligorio. His early fifty-volume project was followed, at the end of his life, by an eighteen-volume one, this organized purely alphabetically, as if a gazetteer of ancient art. This approach had no followers.

Ligorio's impact on his contemporaries was great. It was Ligorio who inspired Panvinio's plan for an *Antiquitatum romanarum*, which grew from sixty books in 1565, to eighty, and then to one hundred. Book 1 was devoted to topography; Book 2 to four classes of institutions—private (including domestic life, speech, coins, metrology, libraries, transport, baths, medicines), public (including, estates, representatives, offices), religion, and, finally, the circus and games; and Book 3 was devoted to 'Imperii Romani extra urbem declaratio'. Interestingly, in all this presentation of Roman institutions of empire, there is only one chapter on the military—compared to Biondo, it appears much less important to Panvinio. Book 4 was devoted to inscriptions, and Book 5 to chronology.

The scholars of the Farnese circle present us with a model of antiquarian scholarship. Were we to believe that the ‘narrower’ vision of antiquarianism was, in fact, all that there was to say about antiquarianism, then our story could end here. But it is not. Indeed, across the threshold of the seventeenth century we find scholars building on the techniques and research agendas of these very Romano-centric and reconstruction-oriented scholars to ask very broad questions about the shape and meaning of ancient, but also distant, societies. Ingo Herklotz, in his landmark study of Cassiano dal Pozzo, who sat at the heart of the great Barberini *équipe* of the 1620 and 1630s, casts this scholarship in terms of the study of culture—*mores et instituta*—through visual imagery—*illustratione*.<sup>50</sup>

Probably the best example of the possible reach of the antiquary into the domain later colonized as cultural history is provided by the work of Fabri de Peiresc. A lawyer, astronomer, and naturalist as well as a numismatist and historian, Peiresc’s interests and questions ranged farther and wider than those of many contemporary antiquaries. What he may have sacrificed in depth—publishing almost nothing in his lifetime—he more than made up in breadth, and for cultural history, breadth is key. (This is one of the reasons why historians of more easily masterable subjects have always been somewhat sniffy about ‘cultural history’: for them breadth = shallowness.) For Peiresc, this range had direct methodological consequences. It led him to rely on the art of comparison. Peiresc learned from the numismatists and philologists of the ancient world (perhaps most of all from Joseph Scaliger) who used texts to make sense of objects and objects to

make sense of texts. But Peiresc extended this practice to other material, places, times, and things. His archive shows him comparing the orbital tracks of Jupiter's satellites over time, the ritual processions at French funerals, different versions of medieval maritime law, among others. Comparison, for this scholar, as for others in his wider circle with more libertine philosophical pursuits, opened up new worlds of questions.

If we can indeed think about antiquarianism as a 'philology of things' (*Sachphilologie* was an aspirational term coined by August Boeckh in the first half of the nineteenth century, but a practice already in the sixteenth and seventeenth) then we can immediately perceive how it could also link up with the broader cultural historical impulses of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. From an epistemological point of view we find parallels in the antiquarian approach to antiquities, and the contemporary jurist's approach to law, or the doctor's to medicine.<sup>51</sup> The Peiresc who studied the past, nature, and peoples was not unique in early modern Europe; he rested on the shoulders of figures like Ulisse Aldrovandi, he was inspired by Francis Bacon, imitated Galileo, created Pierre Gassendi and Jacob Spon.<sup>52</sup> This story, too, takes us out of Italy, and all the way to places like Franklin's Philadelphia or, even, Goethe's Frankfurt.

But the line from Peiresc forward also takes us to figures such as Mabillon, whose diplomatics were founded on close reading but which opened up wider horizons of social and political change, and on to Vico who saw history in mythology, to Montesquieu who built a history of society and social change out of close reading of legal history and on to

Caylus, Winckelmann, Gibbon, and Dégérando. Within this trajectory we can track the slowly spiralling union of *antiquitates* and *historia*.

The long century from Peiresc to Winckelmann—not the years from Colocci and Raphael to Peiresc—was the one that Momigliano, so many decades ago, referred to as ‘the Age of Antiquaries’.<sup>53</sup> Elisabeth Décultot’s fine study of Winckelmann as a humanist reader confirms Momigliano’s judgment of the age, and reveals that its hero was a reader of Peiresc’s manuscript letters, as well Kircher’s and Pietro della Valle’s published works.<sup>54</sup> Scholarship has still clustered on the earlier period, but for our understanding of the wider implications of the new methods of historical research for the emergence of the historical and cultural sciences, it is antiquarianism in the age of enlightenment, ironies, awkwardnesses and all, that marks the next frontier of research.

### *Key Historical Dates*

### *Bibliography*

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<sup>1</sup> Arnaldo Momigliano, ‘Ancient History and the Antiquarian’, in *Contributo alla storia degli studi classici* (Rome, 1955), 69.

<sup>2</sup> Momigliano’s second-best source was K. B. Stark’s *Handbuch der Archäologie der Kunst* (Leipzig, 1880). On Stark see Miller, ‘Writing Antiquarianism: Prolegomenon to a History’, in Miller and François Louis (eds.), *Antiquarianism and Intellectual Life in Europe and China, 1500–1800* (Ann Arbor, , 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Donald R. Kelley, “The Old Cultural History,” *History and the Human Sciences*, 9 (1996), 101-26.



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<sup>5</sup> Francis Bacon, *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (City?, year?), bk. 2, ch. 6. Bacon's words—and Cyriac of Ancona's thoughts—remained current, and perhaps even commonplace, at the end of the seventeenth century. See by John Aubrey: 'These Remaynes are *tanquam tabulata naufragii* (like fragments of a Shipwreck) that after the Revolution of so many yeares and governments have escaped the teeth of Time and [which is more dangerous] the hands of mistaken zeale. So that the retrieving of these forgotten things from oblivion in some sort resembes the Art of a Conjuror who makes those walke and appeare that have layen in their graves many hundreds of yeares: and represents as it were to the eie, the places, customs and Fashions, that were of old Time. It is said of Antiquaries, they wipe off the mouldinesse they digge, and remove the rubbish'. Quoted in Stan A. E. Mendyk, '*Speculum Britanniae*': *Regional Study, Antiquarianism and Science in Britain to 1700* (Toronto, 1989), 174.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (London, 1969), 23.

<sup>8</sup> Roberto Weiss, 'Petrarch the Antiquarian', in Charles Henderson, Jr. (ed.), *Classical, Medieval and Renaissance Studies in honor of Berthold Louis Ullman*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1964), 199–209 at p. 207; and Angelo Mazzocco, 'The Antiquarianism of Francesco Petrarca', *The Journal of medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 7 (1977), 203–24.

<sup>9</sup> Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past*, 24.

<sup>10</sup> "Quaere in libris, invenies nomina. Quaere urbem totam, aut nihil invenies, aut perexigua tantorum operum vestigia." *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (Bern, 1605), i. 118, pl. 350; quoted in Angelo Mazzocco, 'Petrarca, Poggio, and Biondo: Humanism's

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Foremost interpreters of Roman Ruins’, in Aldo Scalgione (ed.), *Francis Petrarch, Six Centuries Later: A Symposium* (Chapel Hill, 1975), 353–63 at pp???

<sup>11</sup> Mazzocco, “The antiquarianism of Francesco Petrarca”, 208.

<sup>12</sup> These words are actually drawn from *Letters on Familiar Matters* 1.5, writing about his daytime and nighttime wanderings around Cologne

<sup>13</sup> “Metuens ne quod ipse michi animo finxeram, extenuarent oculi et magnis semper nominibus inimica presentia.” *Fam.* 2.14

<sup>14</sup> Cicero’s *De Finibus*, V.i.2

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Angelo Mazzocco, ‘Biondo Flavio and the Antiquarian Tradition’, Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1973.

<sup>16</sup> “olim fiebant sculpture mirabiles in marmoribus electissimis cum litteris punctatis, quas hodie plenarie legere vel intelligere non valemus.” Cited by G. B. De Rossi, *Le prime raccolte d’antiche iscrizioni compilate in Roma tra il finire del secolo DIV e il cominciare del XV* (Rome, 1852); and quoted in Roberto Weiss, *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity* (Oxford, 1969), 18.

<sup>17</sup> “sunt multae literae sculptae, sed difficiliter leguntur.” Quoted in Mazzocco, ‘Biondo Flavio and the Antiquarian Tradition’, 219.

<sup>18</sup> Weiss, *Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*, 145.

<sup>19</sup> viz. Weiss, *Renaissance Discovery*, 207: “The Renaissance antiquarians were the Descartes of archaeology. A new methodology was introduced by them into their field of study, which was really the new methodology pursued in the various provinces of humanist learning.”

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<sup>20</sup> Anthony Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti: Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), 229.

<sup>21</sup> “And he suggested that this sort of scholarship—unlike the writing of narrative history—must rest on the work not of a single gifted and experienced individual, but of a community whose members collaborated with and corrected one another.

Antiquarianism, as Poggio practiced it, seemed to have been given a firm new set of standards and a well-developed set of methods, which would undergo refinement as each generation corrected and improved upon the work of the last.” Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti*, 229.

<sup>22</sup> Twenty-three of the fifty-two inscriptions copied out by Bracciolini, and preserved in a sylloge that passed through the hands of Cyriac and Coluccio Salutati before eventually finding a place in the Vatican Library, were used in *De Varietate*’s first book. Poggio Bracciolini, *Les Ruines de Rome: De varietate fortunae*, bk. I, ed. Philippe Coarelli and Jean-Yves Boriaud; trans. Jean-Yves Boriaud (Paris, 1999), p. xiii.

<sup>23</sup> So much so that this recent bilingual French edition *only* included Book 1.

<sup>24</sup> Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past*, 25.

<sup>25</sup> Some commentators, such as Georg Voigt, also recognized the unprecedentedness of this work, though for other reasons: Voigt, for example, emphasized the *Roma Triumphans* and saw it as an unprecedented work. See his *Il risorgimento dell’antichità classica ovvero il primo secolo dell’umanesimo*, trans. Diego Valbusa, 2 vols. (Florence 1888–90), ii. 491); quoted in Mazzocco, ‘Biondo Flavio and the Antiquarian Tradition’, 8.

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<sup>26</sup> Paribus urbis quae facilius promptiusque certis terminis & finibus designari undique potuerunt descriptis, aliam ostendendi reliqua cogimur inire rationem. Nam in tanta rerum vetustate, & infinitarum tantae urbis paritum, innumerabiliumque aedificiorum, à nullo dum etiam integra fuerunt (quod quidem legerimus) descriptorum multitudine: certum ordinem servare nec posse speramus, neque etiam ducimus id tentandum. Itaque ut singula sparsim quodam tamen ordine comprehensa possimus explicare, quadripartita distributione quicquid est reliquum complectemur. Ut primo loco sint quae ad religionem cerimonisque: SEcundo quae ad rei publicae administrationem, Tertio quae ad spectacul & ludos pertinuerunt: Quarto minutiora quaedam partim superiorum declarationi, partim implendae intentioni nostrae plurimum facientia.” Biondo Flavio, *Blondi Flavii forliviensis de Roma Triumphante Libir Decem, priscorum scriptorum lectoribus utilissimi, ad totiusque Romaane antiquitatis cognitionem pernecessarii* (Basel, 1531), bk. 2, 245–6, no. xxxix.

<sup>27</sup> “Amplum & Vastum nunc ingressi sumus campum, dispersa per urbem loca describendi, cui parti tantum abest, ut plene satis posse facere confidamus: quem licet ea quae hactenus sunt scripta, multo maiora iis quae forent reliqua existimamus futura, tamen paucissima in posterum certa ostendere speramus. Si quis enim urbis Romae aetatis nostrae partes isngulas vel mente, vel oculis lustrando pervagabitur, ea quae populo nunc & domibus frequentata sunt, à nobis pene intacta intelliget: quod quidem nulla a nobis negligentia aut inadvertentia magis factum est, quam ne ignota imprudenter affere, aut impossibilia vane & leviter conari compelleremur. Libet tamen aliquae ex parte ipsam scribendi sine antiquis & dignis fide testibus audaciam, qualis futura fuerit ostendere...” Biondo, *Roma Triomphante*, (city, year), 270. Or Fauno: “Ma noi siamo

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entrati in un gran pelago, a volere descrivere i luoghi dispersi de la città, percioche se ben quello, che habbiamo fin qua detto, sia il piu principale, e maggiore di quell'altro, che restasse a dire, pure in questo popco restante non mi confido di potere sodisfare, per non havervi su ne testimoni, ne certezza veruna, perche a riguardare con gli occhi, o pure con la mente quel che è hoggi molto habitato in Roma, e si dirà, che io non habbia tocco nulla, il che non aviene ne per negligentia nostra, ne per inavertenza, ma pe rnon volere à la sciocca affermare quello, che non sappiamo, pure non lasceremo di toccarne un poco, quantunque senza testimoni antichi, e degni di fede” (59r-v).

<sup>28</sup> Biondo, *Italy Illuminated*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey A. White (Harvard, 2005), no. 49, pp. 191–3.

<sup>29</sup> Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti*, 251.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>31</sup> Ottavio Clavuot, in the only monograph-length study of *Italia Illustrata*, devotes the greatest part of his efforts to discussing Biondo’s use of the literary sources. See Clavuot, *Biondos ‘Italia Illustrata’—Summa odern Neuschöpfung? Über die Arbeitsmethoden eines Humanisten* (Tübingen, 1990).

<sup>32</sup> Biondo, *Italy Illuminated*, no. 22, p. 63 and no. 36, p. 79.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 7, pp. 127-9.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 19, p. 149.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, #10, p. 19.

<sup>37</sup> Francesco Scalamonti, *Vita Viri Clarissimi et Famosissimi Kyriaci Ancontinanti*, ed. and trans. Charles Mitchell and Edwawrd W. Bodnar (Philadelphia, 1996).

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<sup>38</sup> Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1999), 248.

<sup>39</sup> Mazzocco, 'Biondo Flavio and the Antiquarian Tradition', 119 n. 20.

<sup>40</sup> Johannes Rosinus, *Romanarum Antiquitatum Libri Decem: Ex variis Scriptoribus summa fide singuarique diligentia collecti* (Basel, 1583), )(2v-)(3r.

<sup>41</sup> "Post obitum Varronis, humaniores literae et antiquitatis studia sensim labi coeperunt, et tandem prorsus iacuerunt, donec patrum nostrorum memoria flavius Blondus Foroliviensis ea ex tenebris eruere, et ab interitu vindicare primus studuerit, cuius vestigia multi sunt secuti. Nostra vero tempestate, ubi omni literarum & artium studia effloruerunt, plures etiam in hoc incubuerunt, ut antiquitatis studia aqusi sepulta in vitam revocarent, maxima cum industriae suae laude." Rosinus, *Romanarum Antiquitatum Libri Decem*, )(3r.

<sup>42</sup> "Quorum quidem mihi ista diligenter perquirenti & investiganti quatuor videntur esse quasi classes, qui diversa incedentes via omnes ad eundem tendunt finem. Alii enim vulgata veterum Scriptorum monumenta cum manuscriptis exemplaribus conferentes illustriora illa reddunt, & multa antiquitatis vestigia e tenebris eruunt, atque in lucem proferunt: idque nonnulli in uno aliquo & altero faciunt auctore: quidam passim varios scriptores perlustrantes modo huius, modo illius, ut quiscque occurrit, locum quendam de vitio suspectum, rationibus in medium allatis corrigunt. Alij vetera monumenta, lapides, numismata, trophaea, aedificia, & alia investigant, & ita antiquae romae imaginem quasi ob oculos nobis ponere conantur." Rosinus, *Romanarum Antiquitatum Libri Decem*, )(3v.

<sup>43</sup> "Spero enim futurum, ut inter ares liberales Grammaticam, Rheetricam, Logicam, Arithmetiam, Geometriam, Musicam, Astronomiam, et alias, Antiquitatis cognitio pro

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arte reponatur...Nec vero necesse est, ut prolixius exponam, quantum utilitatis haec ars habeat ad antiqua Poetarum, Historicorum & Iureconsultorum scripta intelligenda & interpretanda. Haec enim omnibus nota & in confesso sunt. Iucunditas cere tanta est, ut ex omnibus studiorum generibus, (quae tamen plurimum habent admistum suavitatis) nullum hoc genere antiquitatis cognoscendae suavius, aut iucundius deprehenderim...& ad caeteras artes liberales, Antiquitatis scientiam adiungas.” Ioannes Thomsa Freigius Benevolo Lectori S., [(6)r.

<sup>44</sup> “quae sine historiarum & antiquitatum Romanarum cognitione intelligi non possent” Ibid., [(6)v].

<sup>45</sup> “Optabam igitur extare aliquem librum, quo praecipuae Romanae antiquitates comprehenderentur, ut iuvari eo discentes possent.” Ibid., [(6)v.

<sup>46</sup> Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo*, 225.

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 225.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>49</sup> “Incredibile est, quantum ad pleniorum antiquitatis notitiam valeat observatio numorum, lapidum, aliorumque veterum monumentorum. \*and moreover...\* Equidem affirmare ausim, haud parum in scriptoribus esse, quae vix aliter, quam ex illis cum intelligi tum explicari recte possint.” Philip Rubens, *Electorum Libri II* (Antwerp, 1608), 20; quoted in Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo*, 253.

<sup>50</sup> See Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo*, ch.13.

<sup>51</sup> Donald R. Kelley, *Foundations of Modern Historical Scholarship: Language, Law and History in the French Renaissance* (New York, 1970); and Nancy Siraisi, *History, Medicine, and the Traditions of Renaissance Learning* (Ann Arbor, 2007).

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<sup>52</sup> Peter N. Miller, ‘Description Terminable and Interminable: The Past, Nature and Peoples in Peiresc’s Archive’, in Nancy Siraisi and Giana Pomata, “*Historia*”: *Empiricism and Erudition in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass, 2005), 355–97.

For more on Peiresc in particular and the seventeenth-century world of erudition in general see the references there and in Miller, *Peiresc’s Europe: Learning and Virtue in the Seventeenth Century* (New Haven, 2000).

<sup>53</sup> Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian,” 68.

<sup>54</sup> Élisabeth Décultot, *Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Enquête sur la genèse de l’histoire de l’art* (Paris, 2000).