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**Review of Roberta Berardi, Martina Filosa  
and Davide Massimo (eds.):  
*Defining Authorship, Debating Authenticity.  
Problems of Authority from Classical Antiquity  
to the Renaissance***

De Gruyter (Berlin/Boston 2020) (= Beiträge zur  
Altertumskunde 385), ix + 339 pp., 6 fig. ISBN: 978-3-11-  
068455-1, € 129,95 (hardback; ebook also available).

Since its inception as a discipline, the study of the authorship and authenticity of ancient texts has played a crucial role in Classics. Indeed, it could be said that philologists tend to define themselves by their ability to determine the authorship (and quality) of texts. The second half of the twentieth century, and reception theory in particular, marked an epistemological turn in our perspectives on the process of textual creation and reception. Its implications for author-

ship studies are still not fully discussed, making this volume valuable and promising.

It brings together sixteen articles on different case studies of attribution, authorship and authenticity. These three A's serve as the structure of the volume. Each section is organised chronologically from Greek antiquity to the Renaissance. The introduction (pp. 1–10) announces the shift in focus to the cultural and historical contexts of textual

production in recent decades (p. 3). Unfortunately, the editors miss the opportunity to develop a theoretical framework for the following papers. As a result, the notions of attribution, authorship and authenticity are described but not critically discussed.

### Attribution

In the first article, Elisa Nuria Merisio (pp. 11–24) deals with an archaic Greek lyric fragment of 13 lines (Simonides, fr. 8 W. = fr. 19–20 W.<sup>2</sup>), which was on the one hand transmitted in an anthology and on the other hand found on a papyrus. It has been attributed to various poets since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Merisio summarises the history of scholarship on the fragment and discusses the impact of the discovery of the papyrus on the criteria for attribution. In the conclusion, she rightly points out that the distribution of poems in the context of symposia in particular challenges traditional notions of authorship (p. 23).

The second article, by Linda Rocchi (pp. 25–46), also focuses on a papyrus containing fragments of at least 18 unknown speeches by the Attic orator Lysias (P. Oxy. 31.2537). Rocchi has analysed the original papyrus and is interested in its purpose and readership, also contributing to the ὑποθέσις as a (sub) literary genre (p. 26). In her conclusions, Rocchi discusses the pros and cons of the various possible literary and cultural contexts of P. Oxy. 31.2537, such as public libraries, bookstores, etc.

The co-editor Davide Massimo (pp. 47–66) analyses a corpus of 31 epigrams attributed in antiquity to the philosopher Plato, now generally regarded as pseudepigrapha. Massimo discusses the authenticity of these epigrams using different categories of pseudepigraphic works (p. 48), highlighting the complex network of scenarios behind the label ‘pseudo-Plato’, e.g. in terms of authorship, dating or reason for attribution to Plato.

The 1<sup>st</sup> century BC scholar Demetrius of Magnesia and his lost work *On Poets and Authors of the Same Name* is discussed in Pietro Zaccaria’s article (pp. 67–83). He uses the 30 extant fragments of the text to analyse how Demetrius dealt with the problem of pseudepigraphy. Zaccaria shows that he adopted critical perspectives on questions of attribution and authorship, doubting, for example, the Xenophonian authorship of the *Constitution of the Spartans* (and perhaps also of the *Constitution of the Athenians*). A strength of this paper, in my view, is the discussion of ancient and modern hypotheses on authorship, which tend to be mutually dependent.

Anna Dorotea Teofilo devotes her contribution (pp. 85–99) to an anonymous Latin epitaph discovered in Brindisi in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is remarkable for its metrical style, themes and literary motifs and probably dates from the late 1<sup>st</sup> or early 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Teofilo provides a translation, an intro-

duction to the text and a verse-by-verse commentary with particular emphasis on intertextual comparisons. In her conclusion, she briefly discusses the puzzling question of why the identity of the deceased merchant is not mentioned in the epitaph.

The first section 'Attribution' concludes with Rosa Lorito's short article on the so-called Volcei land register (pp. 101–108). This inscription, which is not completely preserved, lists various census entries. Lorito argues that the author of the inscription was the provincial governor L. Turcius Apronianus, who is listed as a landowner. On this basis, she reconstructs the chronology of governors in 4<sup>th</sup>-century Italy and their different Latin terms (*praesides, correctores, rectores, consulares*, p. 107).

The last article in particular highlights the diversity of the contributions in this section, which focus on very different types of texts and analyse the attribution of these texts in literary, linguistic and also historical contexts. The papers are not woven together by main questions or approaches but stand side by side as smaller case studies.

### Authorship

The second part of the volume opens with Sara De Martin's article (pp. 111–138) on the so-called *Theognidea*, a collection of archaic elegies attributed to Theognis. De Martin discusses the role of the presumed author in the Greek literary culture of the 4<sup>th</sup> cen-

tury BC and the later reception of some passages. This diachronic approach allows her to reflect convincingly on processes of canonicity and anonymity without falling into the trap of supposed direct references from one text to another.

Federica Nicolardi (pp. 139–149) works on a copy of Philodemus' work *On Rhetoric*, Book 1, found in the *Villa dei Papiri* in Herculaneum. She is interested in the editorial phase of the copy and argues for the provisional status of the text by analysing various corrections. Nicolardi presents a detailed study of the papyrus, supported by photographs.

Still on Greek literature, Elena Bonollo's article (pp. 151–164) is devoted to a collection of γνῶμαι μονόστιχοι attributed to Menander. These lines have undergone significant changes during their reception as *sententiae*. Bonollo analyses these variations in a comparative study, paying particular attention to the so-called 'co-authors' who elaborated and arranged the gnomological work over the centuries. She points to the central role played by pupils and teachers who made their own copies of the collection, and provides a typological classification of the existent variations. Bonollo constantly reflects on the modification of quotations as a practice of reception that examines ancient concepts of authorship.

Nicola Reggiani studies ancient Greek medical papyri and their literary con-

texts (pp. 165–173): As medical science was constantly evolving, medical texts reflected authorship and authority differently from other literary genres. The article examines some famous examples, such as the *Corpus Hippocraticum* or the works of Galen, and analyses their literary strategies for conferring authority on prescriptions and remedies.

Turning to Latin, in particular Christian literature, Gianmario Cattaneo concludes the second section with his remarks on the 15<sup>th</sup> century theologian Giorgio Benigno Salviati and his lost *Defensio Bessarionis* (pp. 175–188). Cattaneo analyses traces of the alleged topic, the Plato-Aristotle controversy, in other scholastic philosophical works of the time.

In summary, the second section on ‘Authorship’ is also very diverse in terms of topics. While there are some common underlying themes in the Greek part, such as concepts of authorship, Cattaneo’s contribution on Christian philosophy in the early modern period stands rather alone.

### **Authenticity**

The first contribution by Pietro Bertocchini is devoted to the old philosophical question of whether virtue can be acquired, and its traces in the so-called spurious and dubious Platonic dialogues, namely *On Virtue*, *Eryxias*, *Clitophon* and *Theages* (pp. 191–203). Bertocchini analyses the various passages and outlines some observations

on their authenticity and attribution to Plato or other Socratics.

Marco Donato also deals with Socrates and Pseudoplatonic dialogues: His contribution (pp. 205–221) examines the reception and canonisation of the figure of Socrates with reference to three post-Platonic dialogues in which Socrates is the main character (*Eryxias*, *Theages*, *Clitophon*). Donato convincingly shows how Plato as author and Socrates as protagonist become vehicles for later philosophical debates and reflections.

The co-editor Roberta Berardi devotes her article (pp. 223–233) to the six letters attributed to Demosthenes. She first establishes an internal chronology by correlating the content of the letters with historical information. Then, she analyses the prayer at the beginning of the first letter, identifying it as a later interpolation to introduce the corpus.

Turning to the New Testament, Anna Mambelli examines the pseudonymous Second Epistle of Peter (pp. 235–256) and proposes a new approach to its lexical analysis. The aim is to compare the wording not only in the biblical context but also in the scope of Greek and Jewish-Hellenistic literature. The article consists of a classification and a list of rare words in Peter 2, providing a framework for hypotheses on the literary and geographical background of its author.

Chiara Calvano works on epigraphic collections of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (pp. 257–271), in particular the *Inscriptiones anti-*

*quae totius orbis Romani* (1601). Calvano examines its section on *spuriae*: She follows the humanists' discussions on the authenticity of inscriptions and analyses their sources, pointing out the lack of research on the historiography of epigraphy in the Renaissance and beyond.

The volume concludes with a bibliography, a list of contributors and three helpful indexes (names, material sources, ancient sources). The complete absence of a conclusion underlines the observation that the sixteen contributions, although presented side by side, ultimately stand for themselves.. They summarise the material, the problems and the current state of research on various smaller texts and topics without posing overarching questions on the subject. The Greek and Latin texts themselves do, however, tend to challenge categories such as authenticity or authority, thus opening up debates, for example on concepts of authenticity in oral cultures, beyond the framework of the volume. It is particularly commendable that lesser-known texts, such as *On Poets and Authors with the Same Name*, are also brought into focus. It is precisely these texts from different times and genres that can broaden and enrich our perspectives on one of the greatest and most difficult questions in Classics.

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