

Saturae Menippeae and Varro Menippeus

Abstract

We know less about the dates of Varro's Menippeans and the manner in which the early collection circulated than is usually supposed. A reinvestigation of these questions, and the satirical epithet Menippeus bestowed upon Varro in antiquity, not only suggests that the Menippean corpus belongs to a date much later than that agreed upon by the current scholarly consensus, but also enriches our reading of Varro's contemporaries. The famous programmatic poem of Horace, *serm.* 1,10 and its apparent snub of Varro is read in light of the newly proposed dates for the collection and previously overlooked epigraphic evidence for the early reception of the Menippeans.

Varro – Menippean Satire – Horace – Republican poetry – Publication and Circulation of literature

Introduction

Ruminating on Varro's Menippeans, it appears to me that we know less than previously thought about the publication and early circulation of the collection. The dates generally accepted for Varro's Menippean activity must also be revised: there is absolutely no good evidence that Varro began work in this genre as early as the 80s or even 70s BC, but lots of evidence, both internal and external, for dating the vast bulk of the collection (and it truly was vast!) to the 50s BC: the Menippeans were not the works of Varro's youth, but of his retirement. Though doubted in the past, it is also likely that Varro, ever the literary innovator, used the terms *Saturae Menippeae* / *Satura Menippea* to describe his collection and the individual items within it. Re-evaluation of the dates of the Menippeans and the circumstances of their publication and circulation require a wholesale reassessment of their place in the cultural life of the late Roman Republic. To give a couple of examples, the satirical programme sketched in Horace, *serm.* 1,10, tendentiously denies a place to Varro's Menippeans, and instead names another Varro, the provincial upstart Varro «Atacinus», in their place. But Varro's Menippeans, on our revised dating, must have been among the formative works of Horace's own youth. Around the same time, two slaves also received their names: Varro and Menippus ...

Extent, Publication, and Circulation of the Menippeans

Entering upon his seventy-eighth year, Varro appended the pathetic comment to the preface of his *Hebdomades* that «he had [...] just entered on the twelfth hebdomad of his age (i.e. 78–84) and up to that very day had written seventy hebdomads of books (i.e. 490), of which many, following the destruction of his libraries when he was proscribed, were no longer extant.»¹ Varro's name had appeared on the proscription lists of the Second Triumvirate in late 43 BC;² born in 117 or 116 BC,³ and counting the first year of his life inclusively after the ancient fashion, Varro must have completed the *Hebdomades* in 40 or 39 BC.

From Jerome's famous catalogue of Varro's works, we know that Varro wrote 150 books of satirico-prosimetric Menippean satires.⁴ We also know that (most, if not all of) these books are included among the 490 noted in the *Hebdomades*, because in somewhat happier circumstances, back in the summer of 45 BC,⁵ the statesman Cicero had written a major part for

¹ Gell. 3,10,17: *addit se quoque iam duodecimam annorum hebdomadam ingressum esse et ad eum diem septuaginta hebdomadas librorum conscripsisse, ex quibus aliquammultos, cum proscriptus esset, direptis bibliothecis suis non comparuisse.* This and subsequent translations are by the author. This research has been conducted under the aegis of the project *Ordering, Constructing, Empowering: The Fragments of the Roman Republican Antiquarians (FRRAnt)*, ERC, consolidator grant 866400.

² See also App. *B Civ.* 4,47.

³ See R.M.A. MARSHALL, *Varro Nouus*, «CR» 62, 2016, pp. 412–17: p. 416.

⁴ Hier. *epist.* 33,2. Henceforth, citations of the Menippeans follow the numeration and text found in R. ASTBURY, *M. Terentii Varronis Saturarum Menippearum fragmenta*, Lipsiae 1985.

⁵ For the date, see M. GRIFFIN, *The Composition of the Academica. Motives and Versions*, in B. INWOOD and J. MANSFELD (eds.), *Assent and Argument*, Leiden and New York 1997, pp. 1–35.

Varro in one of his philosophical dialogues. Clearing the air for his own philosophical enterprise, Cicero has his Varro character refer to the Menippean satires in the following terms:

in illis ueteribus nostris, quae Menippum imitati, non interpretati, quadam hilaritate conspersimus, multa admixta ex intima philosophia, multa dicta dialectice: quae quo facilius minus docti intellegent, iucunditate quaedam ad legendum inuitati [...]

Cic. ac. 1,2,8

This reference provides a *terminus ante quem* of 45 BC for the existence of a corpus—perhaps notional rather than physical—of Varro’s Menippeans, and we know that many of the individual satires managed to survive the proscriptions: the lexicographer Nonius Marcellus still had direct access to more than fifty pieces from the collection in the late fourth century, and names seventy-one titles in total (the discrepancy is due to an uncertain number of citations that may have been borrowed from earlier lexicographical works).⁶ Other ancient sources preserve the titles of eighteen more.⁷ Whether the Menippeans ever circulated together in a (relatively stable) physical collection like the satires of Lucilius, however, seems extremely doubtful. No trace of book numeration remains in any ancient reference, while the disparate character of the three chief sources utilized by Nonius (disparate both in length and in format, in that only the «Varro i» collection included Greek subtitles⁸)—Table 1—,⁹ and lack of overlap between these and the selection of Menippeans known to Aulus Gellius (with the exception of Σκιαμαχία, *Testamentum*, and Τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον)—Table 2—, strongly imply that individuals interested in the Menippeans were forced to assemble their own collections.

Although it is often assumed that Varro wrote exactly 150 Menippean satires, this is certainly not the case: not all satires were co-terminus with a book. We know of at least one, the Περὶ πλοῦς that filled two books; the second may even have had an independent subtitle, περὶ φιλοσοφίας.¹⁰

Much confusion is caused by the often-unclear distinction in ancient sources between *liber* or «book» as physical unit, i.e. the amount of text contained within one papyrus roll (a *uolumen*), and *liber* the semantic or literary division, which need not be coextensive with a

⁶ See Table 1 below. The problematic cases are *Ajax stramenticus* (*Men.* 18); *Armorum iudicium* (*Men.* 42–3); *Baiae* (*Men.* 44); *Cras credo, hodie nihil* (*Men.* 77–8); *Idem Atti quod Tetti* (*Men.* 217); Ἴπποκῶν (*Men.* 220–1); Λογομαχία (*Men.* 242); *Longe fugit qui suos fugit* (*Men.* 244–5); *Oedipothyestes* (*Men.* 347); *Pappus aut index* (*Men.* 384); *Pransus paratus* (*Men.* 421–2); *Sardi uenales* (*Men.* 449). These cannot be assigned to one of the three Menippean sources used by Nonius by following the «Lex Lindsay». See W.M. LINDSAY, *Nonius Marcellus’ Dictionary of Republican Latin*, Oxford 1901, pp. 8–10, 117–20.

⁷ *Age modo* (*Men.* 15–17); Ἄλλος οὗτος Ἡρακλῆς (*Men.* 19–20); *Catamitus* (*Men.* 74); *Cynicus* (*Men.* 82); *De officio mariti* (*Men.* 83); *De salute* (*Men.* 84); Δὺς παῖδες οἱ γέροντες (*Men.* 91); *Dolium aut seria* (*Men.* 92); *Ecdemeticus* (*Men.* 93); *Κυνοδιδασκαλικός* (*Men.* 230); *Κυνίστωρ* (*Men.* 231); *Κυνορήτωρ* (*Men.* 232); *Magnum talentum* (*Men.* 246); *Nescis quid uesper serus uehat* (*Men.* 333–40); Περὶ ἐδεσμάτων (*Men.* 403–4); † *Postumi cui seplasia fetet* † (*Men.* 420); *Pseudaeneas* (*Men.* 437); Ὑδροκῶν (*Men.* 575). I exclude Τρικάρανος (*Men.* 556): see below.

⁸ For speculation regarding the origin of the subtitles, see R. ASTBURY, *Varroniana*, «RhM» 120, 1977, pp. 173–84.

⁹ On the character of the sources used by Nonius Marcellus, including some that correspond to surviving compilations found in later manuscripts, see P.L. Schmidt, ‘*De honestis et nove veterum dictis*’. *Die Autorität der ‘veteres’ von Nonius Marcellus bis zu Matheus Vindocinensis*, in W. V. VORKAMP (edited by), *Klassik im Vergleich*, Stuttgart 1993, pp. 366–88: p. 370; M. DEUFERT, *Zur Datierung des Nonius Marcellus*, «Philologus», 145, 2001, pp. 137–49: p. 148; R.M.A. MARSHALL, *Bi-Marcus? The two Varrones of Augustine and Nonius Marcellus*, «RPL» 39, 2016, pp. 180–203: pp. 185–7. On the citation of Varro by Nonius, see G. PIRAS, *Sulle citazioni di Varrone in Nonio*, «RPL» 39, 2016, pp. 140–66. The curious argument that the ‘Varro i’ collection was put together by Varro himself (F. DELLA CORTE, *La poesia di Varrone Reatino ricostruita*, Torino 1938, pp. 50–6) was tacitly later abandoned by its proposer (cf. F. DELLA CORTE, *Menippearum fragmenta*, Torino 1953, p. 135).

¹⁰ Not to be confused with the *de philosophia* known from Aug. civ. 19 (recognized long ago by F. OEHLER, *M. Terentii Varronis Saturarum Menippearum reliquiae*, Quedlinburgi / Lipsiae 1844, p. 193): this was likely one of the *libri* Λογιστορικῶν. See T. TARVER, *Varro and the Antiquarianism of Philosophy*, in J. BARNES AND M. GRIFFIN (edited by), *Philosophia Togata II*, Oxford 1997, pp. 130–64: pp. 145–50.

uolumen but may be shorter or even, on occasion, longer than any containing book roll.¹¹ We have no firm basis for measuring the length of a Varronian satire, but the remains of the best-preserved, *Eumenides*, total 563 words / 3,105 characters (excluding spaces and modern punctuation), fill around 80 lines in Astbury's Teubner edition, and clearly represent only a small fraction of the original whole (so little survives that a satisfactory reconstruction is still elusive). Even if we massively underestimate the extent of the corpus by using the figures from the *Eumenides* to stand for the usual complete length of one of Varro's satires, then sixteen such satires would match the length of Lucretius, *De rerum natura* Book 5, the longest surviving book in Latin poetry (1,457 verses, ca. 9,500 words, 54,000 characters).

Seneca's satirico-prosimetric *Apocolocyntosis*, early adduced by Franz Bücheler as a rough parallel for the length of one of Varro's own compositions,¹² in its imperfectly-preserved state still contains 3,000 words / 16,593 characters in Eden's edition.¹³ A little over three such satires would match the length of Lucretius, *De rerum natura* Book 5. If each of Varro's 150 books of Menippean satires—however we wish to construe the term «book»—contained on average 3,000 words (an estimate very likely far too low), then a complete collection, if one ever existed, would have encompassed at least 450,000 words. The complete Horatian corpus, by contrast, does not quite fill 44,000 words; Vergil's *Aeneid*, nearly 64,000; Pliny's *Naturalis historia*, barely 400,000. Varro's Menippeans, in other words, were a stupendous literary undertaking, though the sheer monumentality of the enterprise was likely masked, at least to some extent, by disjointed and gradual publication (see below). Given this manner of publication, and the lack of any evidence for a single, stable collection of Menippean satires in antiquity, it is legitimate to ask whether all of Varro's Menippeans actually survived the proscriptions. More significantly, if Varro had never got around to issuing a definitive, authorial version of the collection before 43 BC, the subsequent loss of his personal copies will have put the creation of such a collection permanently beyond his reach.

The piecemeal publication of the satires is suggested by the sheer size of the corpus and the type of literature it represents: individual pieces, self-contained under their unique titles, were most likely set before the public (or sent off to their lucky recipients) as soon as they were written.¹⁴ But when did all this take place?

Dating the Menippeans

In 1922, Conrad Cichorius published his «historische Studien zu Varro».¹⁵ The first section («zu Varros Lebensgeschichte») contained a highly speculative reconstruction of Varro's early biography, informed by and informing a second section, titled «chronologisches und autobiographisches aus den Menippeischen Satiren».¹⁶ Cichorius concluded from the latter study that Varro's satirical output dated from the end of the eighties to shortly after 67 BC, this period neatly coinciding with the lengthy period of military service conjecturally assigned to Varro in the first section of his study. The dates proposed by Cichorius inform all major modern treatments of Varro's Menippeans,¹⁷ but repay closer scrutiny, especially in light of a growing

¹¹ Cf. e.g. the use of *libelli* by Statius to describe individual poems in the first physical *uolumen* of his collection (Stat. *silv.* 1, pr.). See in general W. SUERBAUM, *Zum Umfang der Bücher in der archaischen Lateinischen Dichtung*, «ZPE» 92, 1992, pp. 153–73; ID., *Herculanensische Lukrez-Papyri*, «ZPE» 104, 1994, pp. 1–21; J. VAN SICKLE, *The Book-roll and Some Conventions of the Poetic Book*, «Arethusa» 13, 1980, pp. 5–42; W.A. JOHNSON, *Bookrolls and Scribes in Oxyrhynchus*, Toronto 2004, pp. 145–7. It may be the case that several satires could be copied into a single volume, but were still perceived as individual «books»; was the «Varro iii» collection of Nonius such a volume?

¹² F. BÜCHELER, *Bemerkungen über die Varronischen Satiren*, «RhM» 14, 1859, pp. 41–52: p. 447 n. 2.

¹³ P.T. EDEN, *Seneca: Apocolocyntosis*, Cambridge 1984.

¹⁴ So A. RIESE, *M. Terenti Varronis Saturarum Menippearum reliquiae*, Lipsiae 1865, p. 47.

¹⁵ C. CICHORIUS, *Historische Studien zu Varro*, in ID., *Römische Studien*, Leipzig 1922, pp. 189–241.

¹⁶ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, pp. 189–207, 207–226 respectively.

¹⁷ Accepted by H. DAHLMANN, *M. Terentius Varro (84)*, *RE Supp.* 6, 1935, cols. 1172–1277: col. 1268. U. KNOCHE, *Die römische Satire*, 2nd ed., Göttingen 1957, p. 35; E. WOYTEK, *Varro*, in J. ADAMIETZ (edited by), *Die römische*

body of evidence which suggests that Varro was still working on the Menippeans into the late fifties BC, if not beyond.

All attempts to date the Menippeans must begin with the passage of Cicero quoted above (ac. 1,2,8), in which Cicero's Varro character describes them as *uetera nostra*, «old things». Cichorius took this to imply that the format had been taken up (and subsequently set aside) long before 45 BC. There are two potential issues with this interpretation:

1) The comment of Cicero is not retrospective and was not made by Varro himself: Varro died in 27 BC, long after Cicero, and remained remarkably active to the very end of his life (see below). The stand-alone nature of the satires certainly favoured sporadic production; a relatively long hiatus in Varro's satirical output (between, say, 50–45 BC) is not only perfectly feasible, but would also justify Cicero's use of the term *uetera nostra* in conjunction with the perfect tense *at the particular moment that he was writing*.¹⁸ It is important to note that Cicero and Varro were never particularly close,¹⁹ and that Cicero had only limited insight into Varro's literary motives and activities in this period: though promised a book dedication by Varro in 47 BC, we know from the correspondence between Cicero and Atticus regarding the re-dedication of the *Academici libri* to Varro that Cicero still had no precise knowledge regarding the nature of the work or how it was progressing two years later (*Att.* 13,12,3). Significantly, there had been no direct contact between Cicero and Varro for some time: the re-dedication affair was entirely mediated by Atticus (*Att.* 13,12–19).

2) Given the lack of certainty regarding the existence of any authorial “collected edition” of Menippeans, it is by no means clear what work(s) Cicero actually has in mind in this passage. Above, I noted that Cicero provides evidence for the existence of a notional—not necessarily physical—corpus: perhaps, given the context in which Cicero was writing (the preface of a philosophical dialogue on Academic scepticism) and his specific reference to Varro's imitation of the Cynic philosopher Menippus of Gadara, he primarily had in mind those pieces from the collection—no doubt the earliest—in which Varro cleaved closest to his titular philosophical inspiration: an inner ‘Menippean’ core, as it were.²⁰ The life of Menippus by Diogenes Laertius attributes thirteen works to the philosopher;²¹ three more are known from other sources.²² At least

Satire, Darmstadt 1986, pp. 311–55: pp. 323–5; J.-P. CÈBE, *Varron, Satires ménippées*, 13 vols., Rome 1972–99, vol. 1, pp. xv–xvi; M. COFFEY, *Roman Satire*, 2nd ed., London 1989, pp. 151–3; more cautiously by E. ZAFFAGNO, *I problemi delle Satire Menippeae*, «Studi Noniani» 4, 1977, pp. 207–52: pp. 208–12. Composition extended to ca. 60 BC: W.A. KRENKEL, *Zur Chronologie der Menippeen des Varro*, «Myrtia» 11, 1996, pp. 9–15; ID. *Marcus Terentius Varro: Saturae Menippeae*, 4 vols., St. Katharinen 2002, vol. 1, pp. xvii–xxi. Other commentators accept the *terminus a quo* of ca. 80 BC but prolong composition to ca. 55 BC (L. RICCOMAGNO, *Studio sulle Satire Menippeae di Marco Terenzio Varrone Reatino*, Alba 1931, pp. 100–8; R. ASTBURY, *Select Menippean Satires of Varro*, Liverpool (MA Thesis) 1964, pp. 8–26), to 46 BC (C.M. LEE, *Varro's Menippean Satires*, Diss. Pittsburg 1937, pp. 6–7), or down to 45 BC and even later (E. BOLISANI, *Varrone Menippeae*, Padova 1936, pp. xlvi–l). A third group splits Varro's activity in two: an early stage ca. 80–55 (or 80–67 BC), and a later stage beginning ca. 46/45 BC (R. HIRZEL, *Der Dialog*, Leipzig 1895, vol. 1, p. 453; B. MOSCA, *Satira filosofica e politica nelle Menippeae di Varrone*, «Annali d. R. Scuola Norm. Sup. di Pisa» 1937, pp. 41–77: p. 41; F. DELLA CORTE, *Varrone. Il terzo gran lume romano*, 2nd ed., Firenze 1970, p. 147 n. 51 (cf. ID., *Menippearum fragmenta*, cit. n. 9, pp. 131–2); L. ALFONSI, *Le Menippeae di Varrone*, «ANRW» 1.3, 1973, pp. 26–59: p. 33); more cautiously A. ROLLE, *Dall'Oriente a Roma: Cibebe, Iside e Serapide nell'opera di Varrone*, Pisa 2017, pp. 17–18. A different position is taken by M. SALANITRO, *Le menippeae di Varrone*, Roma 1990, pp. 10–12: composition began in Athens ca. 84 BC and continued sporadically thereafter.

¹⁸ CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 1), cit. n. 17, pp. xvi–xvii rightly points out (against BOLISANI, *Varrone Menippeae*, cit. n. 17, p. xlvi) that Cicero's use of the perfect indicates that composition must have ceased at the time of writing.

¹⁹ On their complex relationship see: DELLA CORTE, *Varrone*, cit. n. 17, pp. 155–76; C. RÖSCH-BINDE, *Vom “δεινός ἀνὴρ” zum “diligentissimus investigator antiquitatis”*: *Zur Komplexen Beziehung zwischen M. Tullius Cicero und M. Terentius Varro*, München 1998.

²⁰ Cf. e.g. the evolution of Propertius's poetry away from close adherence to the themes of love elegy in Book I towards the inclusion of political, aetiological, anti-elegiac themes in Book IV. For a convenient (if somewhat dated) overview, see H.E. BUTLER and E.A. BARBER, *The Elegies of Propertius*, Oxford 1933, pp. xii–xvii.

²¹ Diog. Laert. 6.99–101, though only naming Νέκρια, Διαθήκαι, Ἐπιστολαὶ κεκομψευμένοι ἀπὸ τῶν θεῶν προσώπων, Πρὸς τοὺς φυσικοὺς καὶ μαθηματικοὺς καὶ γραμματικοὺς καὶ Γονὰς Ἐπικούρου καὶ Τὰς θρησκευομένας ὑπ' αὐτῶν εἰκάδας.

one of these authentically Menippean titles was duly recycled in Varro's collection,²³ while other items have a clear Cynic complexion,²⁴ but it is obvious that the pupil's productivity far outstripped that of the master, and that Varro sought inspiration from additional sources.²⁵ Is it certain that *all* of Varro's Menippean satires were sufficiently Menippean (or, indeed, philosophical) in Cicero's eyes to be included by his Varro character under the label of *uetera nostra*? Did Cicero have a complete overview of what the complete collection actually contained?

Putting the above issues aside, the earliest reference to a contemporary event identified by Cichorius—and his justification for dating the beginning of Varro's work on the Menippeans to *ca.* 80 BC—is provided by Varro's Κοσμοτορῆνη, περὶ φθορᾶς κόσμου, specifically *Men.* 225: *Africa terribilis; contra concurrere ciuis | ciui atque Aeneae misceri sanguine sanguen*. If Varro stopped work on the Menippeans long before 45 BC, this cannot be a reference to the Battle of Thapsus (Spring 46 BC), but to the engagement fought at Utica between a young Pompey and the Marians under Cn. Domitius in 81 BC.²⁶

Unfortunately, any early date proposed for this fragment is complicated by the entanglement of Varro's satires with the poem of Lucretius, which seems to have been published around 54 BC.²⁷ The groundbreaking study of Antonino Pittà has uncovered a remarkable number of intertextual points of contact shared by Varro and Lucretius, and argued persuasively that these are the result of Varronian dependence on Lucretius, not Lucretian dependence on Varro.²⁸ Building on the work of Pittà, Alessandro Schiesaro has recently detected a number of Lucretian parallels in the Κοσμοτορῆνη specifically, all drawn—tellingly—from the proem of *de rerum natura*, and cautiously concluded that the satire must have been written (or revised) in the forties BC.²⁹

If we need to revise the *terminus post quem* traditionally assigned to the Menippeans, we should also abandon the *terminus ante quem* of 67 BC. Cichorius argued for this date on the basis of *Men.* 579b:³⁰

ubi denique Apollo diuinus, cum a piratis maritimisque praedonibus et spoliatus ita est et incensus, ut ex tot auri ponderibus quae infinita congesserant saecula ne unum habuerit scripulum quod hirundinibus hospitis, Varro ut dicit Menippeus,³¹ ostenderet?

Arnob. nat. 6,23

Firstly, the attribution of this fragment to the Menippeans is based on Arnobius's reference (*Varro ut dicit Menippeus*). Though plausible, it is important to note that the epithet is also found in other contexts in late antiquity where no reference to Varro's Menippeans is intended: it is

²² Συμπόσιον and Ἀρκεσίλαος: Ath. 14,27 (629e–f), 14.85 (664e); Διογένηος πρᾶσις: Diog. Laert. 6.29.

²³ *Testamentum*, περὶ διαθηκῶν (*Men.* 540–3).

²⁴ *Cynicus* (*Men.* 82); Ἴπποκῶν (*Men.* 220–1); Κυνοδιδασκαλικός (*Men.* 230); Κυνίστωρ (*Men.* 231); Κυνορήτωρ (*Men.* 232); Ταφῆ Μενίππου; Ὑδροκύων (*Men.* 575).

²⁵ Cf. e.g. *Tithonus*, περὶ γήρωσ (*Men.* 544–8), apparently inspired by the Τιθωνός of Ariston of Ceos: CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 13), cit. n. 17, p. 2036. Note also that parody seems also to have been a fixture of the genre: E. COURTNEY, *Parody and Literary Allusion in Menippean Satire*, «Philologus» 106, 1962, pp. 86–100.

²⁶ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, pp. 208–9.

²⁷ See now K. VOLK, *Lucretius' Prayer for Peace and the Date of De rerum Natura*, «CQ» 60, 2010, pp. 127–31 and C.B. KREBS, *Caesar, Lucretius and the dates of "De rerum natura" and the "Commentarii"*, «CQ» 63, 2013, pp. 772–9, arguing for the restoration of the tradition date against G.O. HUTCHINSON, *The Date of De rerum Natura*, «CQ» 51, 2001, pp. 150–62 (in favour of 49 BC or later).

²⁸ A. PITTÀ, *M. Terenzio Varrone, de vita populi Romani*, Pisa 2015, pp. 517–35. Cf. L. DESCHAMPS, *Lucretius et Varron*, in K.A. ALGRA et al. (edited by), *Lucretius and his Intellectual Background*, Amsterdam and Oxford 1997, pp. 105–14 (arguing for Lucretian dependence on Varro, based on the traditional date ascribed to the Menippeans).

²⁹ A. SCHIESARO, *Varro and Lucretius on the End of the World*, «RFIC» 147, 2019, pp. 352–6.

³⁰ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, pp. 211–12.

³¹ *Varro ut dicit sethenipeus P* (the only witness).

used merely a learned ‘tag’.³² Secondly, only the words *hirundinibus hospitis* belong certainly to Varro;³³ the whole line is apparently quoted (anonymously) at *Aug. mus.* 4,15 (= *Men.* 579a) *uer blandum uiget aruis <et> adest hospes hirundo*, though note that even the attribution of this material to Varro, let alone the Menippeans, has been doubted.³⁴ Thirdly, Cichorius reads this passage as a reference to the destruction of the temple of Delian Apollo in 69 BC, following an emendation suggested by Bücheler: *Apollo Delius* (for the manuscript’s problematic—unless ironic?—*Apollo diuinus*).³⁵ If Varro *did* mention the sack of some temple of Apollo by pirates, and had a real event in mind, he had no lack of examples to choose from: *Plut. Pomp.* 24,5, for instance, also reports (but does not date) attacks on Didyma, Actium, and Leucas. Cichorius was clearly drawn to Bücheler’s emendation because the sack of Delos is datable (but see below) and because we have a biographical fragment that links Varro to Delos in 67 BC, in which year Varro commanded the Greek fleets operating between Delos and Sicily in the War Against the Pirates (Varro, *rust.* 2,pr.,6). Fourthly, the nesting of birds in neglected shrines appears to have been a commonplace: if Varro is alluding to an historical episode here, and did not merely suggest the phrase *hospes hirundo*, he may have drawn on a pre-existing motif, rather than personal experience.³⁶ Cichorius argues that Varro provides an eyewitness account of Delos in the aftermath of the pirate attack, and thus dates *Men.* 579b to 67 BC or very soon afterwards. All this, needless to say, is extremely uncertain, not to mention that Delos was actually plundered twice: the first occasion by Menophanes, an officer of Mithridates in 87 BC (*Paus.* 3,23,3), who presumably removed all the gold piled up through the ages; the second sack occurred in 69 BC, led by Athenodors, who contented himself with taking slaves and mutilating the cult statues (Plegon of Tralles, *FGH* F12).

On the basis of Varro’s naval command, Cichorius also hypothesises a Varronian visit to Crete, and uses this to give an approximate date to the satire Ὀνοϛ λῶραϛ, based on *Men.* 364.³⁷

non uidisti simulacrum leonis ad Idam eo loco, ubi quondam subito eum cum uidissent quadrupedem galli tympanis adeo fecerunt mansuem, ut tractarent manibus?

Non. p. 483,14–17

Given the presence of the priests of Cybele, the Ida in question is surely the mountain in Phrygia, not Crete.³⁸ Even if Varro himself is speaking (which is highly doubtful), and even if he is referring to his own experiences (again, doubtful), the passage and satire itself is undatable: we have no firm evidence that would allow us to date a Varronian visit to Asia Minor.³⁹

From the same satire, Cichorius provides a convoluted explanation for *Men.* 367: *uoces Amphionem tragoedum; iubeas Amphionis agere partis; | infantiolem quam meus est mulio*.⁴⁰ If Varro is speaking hypothetically (which seems almost certain, given the close identification between the mythical Amphion and poetry),⁴¹ there is no reason whatsoever to link his imaginary Amphion to an historical freedman of Q. Catulus known from Pliny, *nat.* 35,200.⁴²

³² Cf. *Symm. epist.* 1,4,1, referring to Varro’s *Hebdomades*; *Prob. Verg. Ecl.* 6,31, referring to the *Antiquitates rerum humanarum*; *Diom. GL* 1,371,26, discussing verbal conjugations.

³³ Thus CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 13), cit. n. 17, p. 2115–16 ignores the Arnobian frame in his commentary.

³⁴ H. HAGENDAHL, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, vol. 1: *Testimonia*, Göteborg 1967, p. 315.

³⁵ F. BUECHELER, *Petronii Satirae et liber Priapeorum*, 3rd ed., Berolini 1882, p. 223.

³⁶ Cf. *Iuv.* 1,16 with E. COURTNEY, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal*, 2nd edition, Berkeley Ca. 2013, p. 89.

³⁷ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, p. 212.

³⁸ See the discussion of ROLLE, *Dall’Oriente a Roma*, cit. n. 17, pp. 71–6.

³⁹ Varro certainly visited Lydia (Varro, *rust.* 3,17,4) and the temple of Marsyas (*Schol. Hor. ars poet.* 202), presumably at Celaenae in Phrygia (cf. *Hdt.* 7,26,3). CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, p. 205, conjectures that Varro governed Asia in 66 BC, but Pompey’s legates in the Pirate War seem to have retained their commands for at least three years (T.R.S. BROUGHTON, *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, vol. 2: 99 B.C.–31 B.C., New York 1952, p. 156 n. 4), in which case, Varro possibly served Pompey in the latter stages of the Third Mithridatic War, 66–3 BC (J.E. SKYDSGAARD, *Varro the Scholar*, Copenhagen 1968, pp. 96–7).

⁴⁰ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, pp. 215–16.

⁴¹ Cf. e.g. *Hor. epist.* 1,18,40–4; *ars* 394–6.

⁴² All we know of this individual is that he enriched himself in the Sullan proscriptions.

The date of *ca.* 73–1 BC given to the Γερωντοδιδάσκαλος rests on two fragments:

1) *Men.* 193: *utrum oculi mihi caecutiunt, an ego uidi seruos in armis contra dominos?* This is taken to be a contemporary reference to the Third Servile War,⁴³ but other scenarios are equally plausible.

2) The mention of Bithynian daggers in *Men.* 197 (*noctu cultro coquinari se traiecit; nondum enim inuecti erant cultelli empaestati e Bithynia*) is imaginatively linked to the bequest of Nicomedes IV, last king of Bithynia, whose treasure probably arrived in Rome in 73 BC.⁴⁴ However, the context is surely against such an interpretation: why should the exhibition of the Bithynian crown jewels at Rome influence the choice of such an implement? It seems more likely that the sarcastic mention of Bithynian knives forms part of a more generalised attack on imported foreign luxury, and that Bithynia is singled out for its notorious associations with Oriental excess.⁴⁵ The satire also mentions Lybian citrus (*Men.* 182) and peacock farming (*Men.* 183), the last word in extravagance: *ubi graues pascantur atque alantur pauonum greges*.

This final detail may actually provide, as Werner Krenkel has seen, a slightly later *terminus post quem* for this satire.⁴⁶ M. Aufidius Lurco is said to have pioneered the fattening of peacocks for the table «around the time of the most recent Pirate War», i.e. *ca.* 67 BC, while Q. Hortensius introduced their widespread consumption at the celebrations for his augural election (*Plin. nat.* 10,45; cf. *Varro rust.* 3,6,1–6); the latter event probably took place around the time of his consulship in 69 BC.⁴⁷

The date assigned to the *Eumenides* unfortunately relies on highly speculative attempts to identify individuals named in particular fragments:⁴⁸

1) *Men.* 136: *contra cum psalte Pisia et cum Flora lurcare ac strepis*. Nothing suggests the Flora of this fragment is the courtesan with whom the young Pompey had a passionate affair (*Plut. Pomp.* 2); besides, the action of the satire very likely takes place in Greece.⁴⁹

2) *Men.* 127: *quid dubitatis, utrum nunc sitis cercopitheci / an colubrae an † boluae an de albucibus labus † Athenis?* Cichorius adopts the reading proposed by Johannes Vahlen, *an uoluae [an] de Albuci subus Athenis*,⁵⁰ and so finds a reference to T. Albucius, exiled to Athens in 103 BC. Although the paradosis is clearly desperate, the reconstruction favoured by Cichorius is highly problematic,⁵¹ and a reference to e.g. the edible asphodel or *albus* (cf. *Plin. nat.* 26,21) cannot be ruled out.⁵²

The same issue undermines the attempt to date the *Virgula diuina* from *Men.* 570: «*ego nunc postulem, Agamemno, meum*»; | *tantis cothurnis accipit Critonia / caliandrum*.⁵³ the identification of this Agamemnon with a pirate king of the same name interned at Asculum in 91 BC (*Diod. Sic.* 37,16) is completely indefensible:⁵⁴ like the imaginary Amphion of *Men.* 367, Varro is clearly selecting mythical characters associated with particular literary genres (in this case, tragedy) to play his metatheatrical roles.

A general weakness of Cichorius's approach is to assign arbitrary identifications to individuals with servile (typically Greek) names and to ignore named Roman individuals entirely, presumably because the latter can usually be identified with two or more bearers of the

⁴³ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, pp. 213–14.

⁴⁴ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, p. 213.

⁴⁵ So ROLLE, *Dall'Oriente a Roma*, cit. n. 17, pp. 131–2.

⁴⁶ KRENKEL, *Chronologie*, cit. n. 17, pp. 10–12; ID. *Saturae Menippeae* (vol. 1), cit. n. 17, p. xx.

⁴⁷ See J. RÜPKE, *Fasti sacerdotum: A Prosopography of Pagan, Jewish, and Christian religious Officials in the City of Rome, 300 BC to AD 499*, trans. D.M.B. RICHARDSON, Oxford 2008, p. 720 n. 7.

⁴⁸ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, p. 214.

⁴⁹ CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 4), cit. n. 17, pp. 557–64.

⁵⁰ I. VAHLEN, *In M. Terentii Varronis Saturarum Menippearum reliquias coniectanea*, Lipsiae 1858, pp. 180–1.

⁵¹ See: G. ROEPER, *M. Terentii Varronis Eumenidum reliquiae*, vol. 2, Gedani 1861, p. 29; L. HAVET, *Varroniana*, «RPh» 7, 1883, p. 182.

⁵² So CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 4), cit. n. 17, pp. 690–4.

⁵³ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, pp. 216–18.

⁵⁴ CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 13), cit. n. 17, pp. 2092–3 («trop romanesque»).

same name and thus compromise the neatness of the proposed reconstruction. A reference to the home of a rich Crassus, for instance, in *Men.* 36 from Ἀνθροποπόλις, περὶ γενεθλιακῆς is just as likely to refer to Varro's notorious contemporary (died 54 BC) as to a Crassus of the second century BC.⁵⁵ The Serranus who gave his name to a satire (*Men.* 450–9) is presumably the exemplary Serranus from remote history,⁵⁶ but there might be a pointed contrast implied with the notorious actions of Sex. Atilius Serranus Gavianus, quaestor in 63 BC, tribune of the plebs in 57.⁵⁷ Another interesting case from the same satire is provided by *Men.* 453: *noster Atticus riualis, homo item lectus in curiam, cum macescebat*. The manuscripts of Non. p. 136,3 generally read *Atticus*; the reading *Accius* is provided by F¹, *Attius* by F³. Although the readings of the latter corrector are often of first importance,⁵⁸ the influence of F¹ cannot be ruled out in this instance. Eduard Vollbehr first proposed the obvious but unnecessary emendation *Atilius*, which unfortunately leaves *noster* unexplained.⁵⁹ Now, T. Pomponius Atticus was certainly the friend of Varro, but he famously refused to enter politics and, as Raymond Astbury has pointed out, if he was a senator, we should know this from Cicero's letters.⁶⁰ It is thus unclear whether Varro is talking *in propria persona*, if some hypothetical scenario is being played out, or if a different (but unknown) Atticus is meant.⁶¹ If this is a reference to Pomponius Atticus, it is important to note that the cognomen was only bestowed upon him in later life, clearly after his return from Athens *ca.* 65 BC.⁶²

Other names in the corpus pose similar problems.⁶³ Three in particular stand out. The first is a reference to the rhetor Plotius in *Men.* 257 (*Manius*): *Autumedo meus, quod apud*

⁵⁵ DELLA CORTE, *Menippearum fragmenta*, cit. n. 9, p. 155, reversing (without explanation) his earlier opinion: DELLA CORTE, *La poesia*, cit. n. 9, p. 60.

⁵⁶ CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 11), cit. n. 17, p. 1833 (cf. Cic. *Sest.* 72; Verg. *Aen.* 6,844; Val. Max. 4,4,5; Plin. *nat.* 18,20).

⁵⁷ So KRENKEL, *Saturae Menippeae* (vol. 3), cit. n. 17, p. 845. If Shackleton Bailey is right that the Serranus †Domesticus† who died in 54 BC (Cic. *Q. Fr.* 3,8,5) was adopted by the same Atilius Serranus as Gavianus, this may suggest the latter had died soon after his tribunate. See D.R. SHACKLETON BAILEY, *Two Studies in Roman Nomenclature*, 2nd edition, Atlanta, Ga. 1991, p. 22. Cf. Varro's *Orestes, de insania*, which seems to play on the mythical associations of the name Orestes, but is probably addressed to a contemporary Aurelius Orestes: B. ZUCHELLI, *Varro Logistoricus: Studio letterario e prosopografico*, Parma 1981, pp. 57–9.

⁵⁸ See W.M. LINDSAY, *The Lost Codex Optimus of Nonius Marcellus*, «CR» 10, 1896, pp. 16–18.

⁵⁹ E. VOLLBEHR, [Review of OEHLER, *Saturarum Menippearum Reliquiae*], «Zeitschrift für die Alterthumswissenschaft» 5.65–6, 1847, cols. 516–27, 529–32: col. 524.

⁶⁰ ASTBURY, *Select Menippean Satires*, cit. n. 17, p. 23.

⁶¹ Cf. R.M.A. MARSHALL, *Varro, Atticus, and Annales*, in V. ARENA and F. MAC GÓRÁIN, (edited by), *Varronian Moments*, «BICS» 60.2, London 2017, pp. 61–75: pp. 67–8.

⁶² In the biography by Cornelius Nepos, Atticus is referred to as Pomponius during his stay in Athens (*Att.* 2, 4), uniformly as Atticus thereafter. Cf. Cic. *Sen.* 1, *Fin.* 5,4 (cognomen acquired in adult life).

⁶³ A full prosopographical study is still a desideratum. Apollonius (*Men.* 221): not the Apollonius named in 56 BC by Cicero (*Att.* 4,7,1) as this man was implicitly not an equestrian. The name is likely fictitious or corrupt: C. NICOLET, *Le Cens Senatorial sous la République et sous Auguste*, «JRS» 66, 1976, pp. 20–38: pp. 27–8. (Heraclides) Tarentinus (*Men.* 445): can only be dated in general terms to the first half of the first century BC: F. STOK, *Hērakleidēs of Taras*, in P. KEYSER and G. IRBY-MASSIE (edited by), *Encyclopedia of Ancient Natural Scientists*, London and New York, 2008, pp. 370–1. Lepidus: the restoration of this name in *Men.* 252 (so CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 7), cit. n. 17, p. 1154) is very uncertain. Lucanius (*Lex Lucania: Men.* 67): *contra* ASTBURY, *Fragmenta*, cit. n. 4, p. 11, there is no reason to emend the reading of the paradosis to Licinia. A Lucanus served with Cosconius in Apulia in 89 BC (*Liv. Per.* 75); F. MÜNZER, *Lucanius*, *RE* XIII,26, 1927, cols. 1552–3 would emend this name to Lucanius, a name which also appears on Pompeius Strabo's staff (*ILS* 8888). Even if these are the same individuals, however, there is no way to date this law, and Varro's reference need not be contemporary. Manius (*Lex Maenia: Men.* 238, *tit. Men.* 233–41): none of the known *Leges Maeniae* seem to fit the context (so CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 7), cit. n. 17, pp. 1090–5); if a real bill is meant, we do not know when or by whom it was passed (for speculation see G. ROTONDI, *Leges publicae populi Romani: Elenco cronologico con una introduzione*, Milano 1912, pp. 286–7: a law of T. Maenius, pr. 186 BC, passed *ca.* 162 BC). Postumius (*tit. Men.* 420): impossible to single out an individual from so large a *gens*. Vitulus (*Men.* 411): a Vitulus is also named at Varro, *rust.* 2,9,12 (dramatic date 67 BC), the Pomponii Vituli at *rust.* 2,1,10; not otherwise identifiable. Volumnius (*Men.* 282): a senatorial L. Volumnius is named in Varro, *rust.* 2.4.11, but the scurrilous nature of the fragment has been thought to better suit the notorious equestrian Volumnius Eutrapelus, the lackey of Antony (the latter hostile to Varro: Cic. *Phil.* 2,100–5 with App. *BC* 4,47): BOLISANI, *Varrone Menippeo*, cit. n. 17, p. 159; DELLA CORTE, *Menippearum fragmenta*, cit. n. 9, p. 205, n. 11;

Plotium rhetorem bubulcitarat, erili dolori non defuit («my Automedon, because he had ranched at Plotius the rhetor's place, did not neglect his master's (or mistress's) pain»). The rhetor L. Plotius Gallus is the obvious identification—for once we are not troubled by homonyms—,⁶⁴ but he had a remarkably long career. He opened his school when Cicero was a boy (so the 90s BC) but was still active well into the fifties, if not beyond: he wrote a speech for Atratinus, accuser of M. Caelius, in 56 BC (Suet. *gramm.* 26).

A certain Seius is mentioned at *Men.* 60 (*Bimarcus*): *ebrius es, Marce; Odysseian enim Homeri ruminari incipis, cum περί τρόπων scripturum te Seio receperis* («you're drunk, Marcus, you're beginning to ponder the *Odyssey* of Homer when you promised you'd write a treatise περί τρόπων for Seius»). The obvious candidate is the equestrian M. Seius (Plin. *nat.* 10,52),⁶⁵ the mutual friend of Cicero and Varro (Cic. *Fam.* 9,7,1: sent May 46 BC), whose advice on farming looms large in the third book of Varro's *Res rusticae* (the dialogue is set in 50 BC), and who died in 46 BC (Cic. *Att.* 9,11,1).⁶⁶ In the reconstruction of Cichorius, however, we should have to suppose his father, an aedile in 74 BC, is meant.⁶⁷

Finally, we come to Varro's *Sesqueulixes* (*Men.* 460–84). Following Vahlen,⁶⁸ Cichorius reads this satire as autobiography and interprets the title as an allusion to the wanderings of Odysseus: an «Odysseus-and-a-half» must have spent thirty years away from home.⁶⁹ If Varro's military service began, as was usual, around his mid- to late-teens, i.e. ca. 100 BC, then this satire should have been written ca. 70 BC, and encompassed the entire period of Varro's previous military and political career. In particular, Cichorius believed that from 81 BC onwards, Varro had been almost continually occupied on active military service (the period to which he assigned the majority of satires).⁷⁰

Unfortunately, all we know for certain about Varro's early career is that he was *triumvir capitalis* (Gell. 13,12,6), likely in the late 90s BC, that he served as Pompey's legate in the Pirate War of 67 BC (Varro, *rust.* 2,pr.,6), and that he served on Caesar's agrarian commission in 59 BC (*rust.* 1,2,10; Plin. *nat.* 7,176). He was a tribune of the plebs (Gell. 13,12,6), praetor (Them. *or.* 34,8), and a provincial governor (cf. Varro, *ling.* 7,109), but when any of these offices were held is uncertain.⁷¹ In a dialogue set in 67 BC, Varro claimed to have earlier visited Liburnia and Illyria (*rust.* 2,10,8–9), but it is unclear just how scrupulously Varro avoids anachronism in the *De re rustica*, especially where his personal knowledge and experience can be brought to bear (see below);⁷² even if the anecdotes are chronologically sound, precisely when and in what capacity he visited these places is unknown. Cichorius postulated that Varro had served as the legate of C. Cosconius from 78 to the end of 77 BC,⁷³ but if so, it is unclear how Varro could have written an *Ephemeris* for Pompey before the latter set off for Spain to fight Sertorius in the Autumn of 77 BC.⁷⁴ Badian's conjecture, that Varro served as Cinna's quaestor in 84 BC, may well be correct: though his expedition to the north-eastern Adriatic was short, Varro's remarks

ASTBURY, *Select Menippean Satires*, cit. n. 17, pp. 183–4. On this individual see also M. PIERPAOLI, *P. Volumnius Eutrapelus*, «Arctos» 36, 2002, pp. 59–78. The authors *Quintipor Clodius* (*Men.* 59), *Pompilius* (*Men.* 356), and *Scantius* (*Men.* 142) can only be dated by reference to Varro (for Clodius see also Varro, *epist. ad Fufium* = Non. p. 117,4–7; for Pompilius see also Varro, *ling.* 7,28?). *Manius* («Mr. Good»: *Men.* 251 and tit., *Men.* 247–68) and *Petrullus* («Mr. Bumpkin»: *Men.* 304) are likely to be generic names.

⁶⁴ CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 2), cit. n. 17, pp. 1163–4; KRENKEL, *Saturae Menippeae* (vol. 2), cit. n. 17, p. 455.

⁶⁵ F. MÜNZER, *M. Seius* (4), *RE* IIA,4, 1923, cols. 1121–2.

⁶⁶ So CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 2), cit. n. 17, p. 221; KRENKEL, *Saturae Menippeae* (vol. 1), cit. n. 17, p. 100.

⁶⁷ F. MÜNZER, *M. Seius* (3), *RE* IIA,4, 1923, col. 1121.

⁶⁸ VAHLEN, *Coniectanea*, cit. n. 50, p. 111.

⁶⁹ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, pp. 218–25.

⁷⁰ Cf. CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, p. 226.

⁷¹ For Varro's biography, see now the important corrective study of A. DRUMMOND, *M. Terentius Varro*, in T.J. CORNELL et al. (edited by), *The Fragments of the Roman Historians*, vol. 1, Oxford 2013, pp. 412–15, to which much of the following discussion is indebted.

⁷² For another 'slip', see G.A. NELSESTUEN, *Varro the Agronomist*, Columbus Oh. 2015, p. 209 n. 90.

⁷³ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, pp. 191–3.

⁷⁴ DRUMMOND, *M. Terentius Varro*, cit. n. 71, p. 413.

suggest no long or deep acquaintance with the area, and no other military enterprise against Liburnia is known from this period.⁷⁵

Varro likely did serve with Pompey for a time in Spain, as suggested by his participation in the preparation of intelligence and by a reminiscence at *rust.* 3,16,10 (unless the latter is an anachronistic reference to his later service in the Civil War against Caesar?). However, the passage often adduced to support the claim that Varro served throughout the Sertorian war (*rust.* 3,12,7) may actually refer to Q. Axius, another of Varro's interlocutors.⁷⁶ Moreover, if Varro did serve continuously from 77 BC onwards, it is unclear why Pompey, on the eve of his consulship in 71 BC, should have asked Varro of all people for a manual on senatorial procedure (Gell. 14,7,2): Pompey's long period of military service abroad and unfamiliarity with the affairs of the city are explicitly noted as the motivations for his request.⁷⁷ If Varro served by Pompey's side from 77 BC onwards, there can have been few at his headquarters *less* suited to such a task. Pompey's request implies that Varro had spent a long time in the city recently: he cannot have been given such a commission purely on the basis of his antiquarian learning.

Besides the title of the satire itself, the claim that Varro held a quaestorship relies upon *Men.* 478: *in castris permansi; inde caballum reduxi ad censorem*; in a circular argument, this supposed reference to Varro's surrender of the *equus publicus* on entry into the senate is then taken to guarantee the autobiographical character, and temporal scope, of the satire. Cichorius dated this vignette and the quaestorship to 86 BC, the first year Varro was legally eligible to stand for this magistracy and last year that a full census was held before the time of Augustus.⁷⁸ However, as Hill has pointed out, *caballum reduxi ad censorem* is not necessarily equivalent to *equum reddidi*; if Varro is taking *in propria persona* here (again, far from certain), he may simply mean that he returned to Rome for the usual censorial inspection.⁷⁹ There are other ways for Varro to have entered the Senate: either following his (undated) tribunate in accordance with the provisions of the *Lex Atinia*,⁸⁰ or even as one of the three-hundred equestrians notoriously adlected by Sulla in 81 BC.⁸¹ To cap it all, *Sesqueulixes* is another of the satires in which Lucretian echoes have recently been detected.⁸²

In summary, contrary to *communis opinio*, there are absolutely no grounds for thinking that Varro began work on the Menippeans in the 80s or even 70s BC. Even if the Κοσμοτορόνη refers to the Battle of Utica rather than Thapsus, the looming war clouds of the late 50s BC will surely have prompted Varro to remind Romans of just what was at stake in a civil war. The introduction of peacock farming on a grand scale offers a rough *terminus post quem* of ca. 70 BC for the Γερωντοδιδάσκαλος, but the satire may have been composed many years thereafter. In addition to Κοσμοτορόνη and *Sesqueulixes*, potential Lucretian echoes have also been detected by Pittà in *Agatho*, *Andabatae*, *Ekatombe*, *Eumenides*, *Marcipor*, *Meleagri*, *Parmeno*, *Pransus Paratus*, *Quinquatrus*, and *Serranus*: even if some parallels are more speculative than others, their widespread diffusion in the tiny sample that survives from Varro's original Menippean corpus strongly suggests that the vast majority, if not all, of Varro's work on the satires actually took place in the 50s BC, a date consistent with some of the (more obvious) identifications

⁷⁵ E. BADIAN, *Studies in Greek and Roman History*, Oxford 1964, p. 230.

⁷⁶ See H. KEIL, *Commentarius in Varronis rerum rusticarum libros tres*, Lipsiae 1891, pp. 277–8.

⁷⁷ On this work, see now E. TODISCO, *Varro's Writings on the Senate: A Reconstructive Hypothesis*, in ARENA and MAC GÓRÁIN, *Varronian Moments*, cit. n. 61, pp. 49–60.

⁷⁸ CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, pp. 219–20.

⁷⁹ H. HILL, *Sulla's New Senators in 81 B.C.*, «CQ» 26, 1932, pp. 170–7: p. 175.

⁸⁰ See Gell. 14,8,2 with R. VISHNIA, *Lex Atinia de tribunis plebis in senatum legendis*, «MH» 46, 1989, pp. 163–76; E. BADIAN, *Tribuni plebis and res publica*, in J. LINDERSKI (edited by), *Imperium Sine Fine: T. Robert S. Broughton and the Roman Republic*, Stuttgart 1996, pp. 202–8; W.J. TATUM, *The Plebiscitum Atinium Once More*, «Res Historica» 29, 2010, pp. 189–208.

⁸¹ HILL, *Sulla's New Senators*, cit. n. 79, p. 175.

⁸² PITTÀ, *M. Terenzio Varrone*, cit. n. 28, p. 528.

proposed above for the Roman individuals named in the collection.⁸³ This date is also consistent with some of the stylistic features identified by Elena Zaffagno, especially the abundance of diminutives in the poetic fragments, which are certainly suggestive of Varro's familiarity with neoteric poetry.⁸⁴

Far from being a work of Varro's youth, the Menippeans were actually a work of his retirement: in 58 or 57 BC, Varro had already turned sixty.⁸⁵ All we can infer from Cicero, *ac.* 1,2,8 is that Varro had not published (or rather disseminated) any Menippeans for several years prior to 45 BC; whether he took up the genre again to any serious degree seems unlikely, if only because of the lack of prominent Roman names among the fragments that would be at home in the 40s BC, but given the present state of our knowledge, it is impossible to rule out the subsequent appearance of at least a couple of pieces (the strongest candidate being the Κοσμοτορύνη). Varro's declining interest in the genre, on the other hand, will not be unrelated to his development of an entirely new philosophical vehicle, the *libri Λογιστορικῶν*, in the years after 45 BC.⁸⁶

This new, much later dating can be corroborated by two additional pieces of evidence. Firstly, note the chronological horizon suggested by (and specific reference to *carmina* in) Vell. Pat. 2,36,2: *quis enim ignorat diremptos gradibus aetatis floruisse hoc tempore Ciceronem [...] auctoresque carminum Varronem ac Lucretium [...] Catullum.*⁸⁷ Secondly, note *Men.* 505 (*Sexagesis*): *erras, inquit, Marce, accusare nos; ruminaris antiquitates.* If this «Marcus character»—who may also appear in *Men.* 60 (quoted above)—can be identified with Varro's own satirical persona, then in the context of what is currently known about the chronology of Varro's learned pursuits, the reference to antiquarian ruminations (again, cf. *Men.* 60) makes most sense in the 50s BC or later: in this decade Varro certainly began work upon (and possibly published) his monumental *Antiquitates rerum humanarum et diuinarum*; earlier evidence for Varronian work in this field is entirely lacking, but afterwards, abundant.⁸⁸

⁸³ Scholars previously in favour of dating work on the satires later than Cichorius based their arguments on the supposition that *Sexagesis* (*Men.* 485–505) could only have been written when Varro himself had reached the age of sixty (in 57 or 56 BC); although their arguments, which rely on the identification of the narrator with Varro himself, are faulty (CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 12), cit. n. 17, pp. 1905–8), their conclusion may well be correct. Other late dates rely on identifying Varro's Τρικάρανος, a pamphlet of 59 BC that denounced the First Triumvirate (App. *BC* 2,2,9) as a Menippean, but see CICHORIUS, *Studien zu Varro*, cit. n. 15, p. 211 and CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 13), cit. n. 17, p. 2063. It has also been suggested that *Men.* 405, *quemnam te esse dicam, fera qui manu corporis feruidos / fontium aperis lacus sanguinis teque uita leuas / ferreo ensi?* refers to the suicide of Cato Uticensis in 46 BC (BOLISANI, *Varrone Menippeo*, cit. n. 17, p. xlix), but the fragment might apply to anyone who fell on their sword. The Κοσμοτορύνη has already been discussed at length.

⁸⁴ ZAFFAGNO, *I problemi*, cit. n. 17, pp. 211–12.

⁸⁵ Varro's Τρικάρανος is thus an experiment pointing towards the Menippeans, and not an awkward *intermezzo*. A *terminus ante quem* of 58 BC has been proposed for the *Nescis, quid uesper serus uehat* (*Men.* 333–41), based on *Men.* 334 (*nam multos, inquit, esse non conuenit, quod turba plerumque est turbulenta et Romae quidem stat, sedet Athenis, nusquam autem cubat*) and the construction date of the first permanent theatre with seating at Rome: KRENKEL, *Chronologie*, cit. n. 17, pp. 12–13. Unfortunately, it is far from clear that Varro is referring to theatrical performances here (why not a reception with canapés?). In any case, Roman audiences will have watched plays seated for most of the Republic, with only the briefest interruption following the senatorial decree of 154 BC: see G. MANUWALD, *Roman Republican Theatre*, Cambridge 2011, pp. 104–8. A *terminus ante quem* of ca. 74 BC for the Ἀλλ' οὐ μένει σε, περι φιλαργυρίας (*Men.* 21–4), based on a reference to the *uelites* in *Men.* 21, depends on the contested date of the disbandment of this unit (and on Varro's reference having been made contemporaneously): ZAFFAGNO, *I problemi*, cit. n. 17, pp. 210–11.

⁸⁶ On the significance of this term, see R. HEISTERHAGEN, *Zur literarischen Form der Logistorici*, in H. DAHLMANN and ID., *Varronische Studien I: Zu den Logistorici*, Wiesbaden 1957, pp. 5–15. On the collection in general, see C. BOLISANI, *I Logistorici Varroniani*, Padova 1937; ZUCHELLI, *Varro Logistoricus*, cit. n. 57. On the date, see M.G. MORGAN, *Three Notes on Varro's Logistorici*, «MH» 31, 1974, pp. 117–28.

⁸⁷ The Varro in question here is perhaps more likely to be Varro Menippeus rather than Varro Atacinus, if only because the former is conspicuously absent from Paternulus's corresponding (and much more extensive) list of contemporary prose authors (Vell. Pat. loc. cit.).

⁸⁸ The identification of Marcus with Varro and the detection here of a reference to the *Antiquitates* was made long ago by VAHLEN, *Coniectanea*, cit. n. 50, p. 137 (cf. the weak objections of CÈBE, *Varron* (vol. 12), cit. n. 17, pp.

Title of the Menippean corpus

Jerome states that Varro wrote *satirarum Menippearum libros CL*. This is not inconsistent with the argument that there was never a single, authorial collection of Varro's satires: the passage from the *Hebdomades* quoted above is sufficient to demonstrate that Varro kept records of his literary output and it is upon some Varronian list that Jerome's catalogue—via the mediation of Suetonius—must ultimately depend.⁸⁹ Jerome is not reporting the Varronian works that were still in circulation in the late fourth century AD.⁹⁰ This argument is also not inconsistent with the fact that 150 books of Varro's output are grouped—as a matter of bibliographical convenience—under the collected label of *Saturae Menippae*: this is simply a raw total, not a reference to a physical compilation.⁹¹

Is *Satura Menippea* / *Saturae Menippae* Varro's own appellation? The testimony of Gellius, unfortunately, is not necessarily decisive (2,18,7): *Menippus [...] cuius libros M. Varro in saturis aemulatus est, quas alii cynicas, ipse appellat Menippae*. This only guarantees the label *Menippae*, and may be nothing more than an inference based on the fact that «Varro» specifically refers to Menippus as his inspiration in *Cic. ac.* 1,2,8 (note the parallel use of *aemulare*).⁹² On the other hand, Gellius may also have found a cross-reference to the Menippeans in one of Varro's own voluminous writings. But did this take the form «*in Saturae Menippae meae quae inscribitur*» or simply «*in libris Menippeis meis*»?

Much ink has been spilled over the precise meaning and origin of the term *satura*,⁹³ it has even been doubted whether Varro could have used the term of his own compositions.⁹⁴ However, the poverty of early evidence for the literary use of the term should not be understood as a significant silence, but as pointed out long ago by Arthur Wheeler, fits into a broader pattern of

1907–8, ultimately prompted by his acceptance of a «high» date for the Menippeans). On the date of publication of the *Antiquitates*, see e.g. H. JOCELYN, *Varro's Antiquitates Rerum Diuinarum and Religious Affairs in the Late Roman Republic*, «BRL» 65, 1982, pp. 148–205 (favouring the 50s BC); DELLA CORTE, *Varrone*, cit. n. 17, pp. 123–34 (favouring the early 40s BC). The existence of Varro's supposed early treatise *De antiquitate literarum ad Accium* rests on the reconstruction of F. RITSCHL, *Die Schriftstellerei des M. Terentius Varro*, «RhM» 6, 1848, pp. 529–30, who combines references from *Prisc. GL II 7,27 (Varro in II de antiquitate literarum)* and *Pomp. GL V 98,20 (in libris ad Attium [attium BC : atium A : actium L] apud Varronem)* to create a work on the antiquity of writing supposedly dedicated to the poet and scholar L. Accius. The latter was born in 170 BC but lived long enough to converse with Cicero (*Cic. Brut.* 107), thus any dedication would make this Varro's earliest dateable work. However, Attius / Atius (so Pompeius) is also an attested Republican *nomen gentilicium*, and the corruption *attium* < *atticum*, the latter Varro's friend and certain recipient of other book dedications (see MARSHALL, *Varro, Atticus, and Annales*, cit. n. 61), cannot be ruled out.

⁸⁹ See RITSCHL, *Die Schriftstellerei*, cit. n. 88; DELLA CORTE, *Varrone*, cit. n. 17, pp. 237–59 (cf. G.L. HENDRICKSON, *The Provenance of Jerome's Catalogue of Varro's Works*, «CPh» 6, 1911, pp. 334–43).

⁹⁰ Many titles are known only from this catalogue, including *de descriptionibus libri III, de iure ciuili libri XV, de lectionibus libri III, de personis libri III, de Pompeio libri III, de principiis numerorum libri IX, ἐπιτομή antiquitatum ex libris XLI libri IX, ἐπιτομή ex imaginum libris XV libri IV, ἐπιτομή de lingua Latina ex libris XXV libri VIII, legationum libri III, orationum libri XXII, (poematum libri X?), pseudotragediarum libri VI, saturarum libri III, suasionum libri III.*

⁹¹ From Jerome's catalogue, compare the entries *singulares libri X* (presumably monobiblia on sundry topics: RITSCHL, *Schriftstellerei*, cit. n. 89, p. 545) and *Logistorici libri LXXVI*.

⁹² N. HORSFALL, *Some Problems of Titulature in Roman Literary History*, «BICS» 28, 1981, pp. 103–14: p. 108.

⁹³ Important surveys include B.L. ULLMANN, *The Present State of the Satura Question*, «SPH» 17, 1920, pp. 379–401; C.A. VAN ROOY, *Studies in Classical Satire and Related Literary Theory*, Leiden 1965; W. SUERBAUM, *Die Satire: Allgemeines und Überblick*, in ID. (edited by), *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike*, vol. 1: *Die archaische Literatur. Von den Anfängen bis Sullas Tod*, München 2002, pp. 297–304.

⁹⁴ HENDRICKSON, *Provenance*, cit. n. 87, pp. 342–3; HORSFALL, *Problems*, cit. n. 90, p. 108.

Roman indifference to precise literary terminology.⁹⁵ A Varronian gloss was famously used by later grammarians to explain the origin of the term:⁹⁶

satura autem dicta siue a Satyris [...] siue a lance [...] siue a quodam genere farciminis, quod multis rebus refertum saturam dicit Varro uocitatum. est autem hoc positum in secundo libro Plautinarum quaestionum: «satura est uua passa et polenta et nuclei pini ex mulso consparsi; ad haec alii addunt et de malo punico grana». alii autem dictam putant a lege satura [...]

Diom. *GL I* 485,34–486,11

Varro's etymology has won the general agreement of scholars.⁹⁷ While it is easy to see how Ennius, the first author for whom this title is attested, could have chosen *satura* as the name of a collection of poems in different metres («Medley»), it is difficult, if not impossible, to see how the generic sense of the word («satire»), clearly a subsequent development, could have encouraged some later grammarian to impose the term on the same collection: the title *Satura* must be authentically Ennian.⁹⁸ This is not to say, however, that references of the type *saturarum libro tertio*, associated with Ennius in Nonius, are not anachronistic: in the Ennian sense, *satura* must refer to a book containing multiple elements or to the collection as a whole, not an individual poem.⁹⁹ If Lucilius used the term as a title (which admittedly seems more doubtful), this will also have been the case.¹⁰⁰

While *satura* could not have been used as a label for an individual poem by Ennius, there is every reason to think that Varro did use the term in the singular to characterise his individual Menippean pieces: these were not only a medley of prose and verse, but different verse forms are used within the same Menippean.¹⁰¹ The use of the plural *in saturis* by Gellius is likely (if only inadvertently?) to reflect Varro's own usage.

To substantiate this claim, we should consider Varro's treatise *de compositione saturarum*—further proof, if any is needed, that *satura* was already used in a technico-literary sense by Varro and his contemporaries.¹⁰² Unless this work studied the way in which the collection of Ennius (and/or Lucilius?) had been put together (which seems unlikely), in the absence of further specification, it probably considered the composition of his own *saturae*.¹⁰³ If this work treated the topic concretely, rather than in the abstract, i.e. if it also discussed the context of or occasion for the composition of (some of) his individual *saturae*, this work may also have provided an important guide for readers on how to arrange their personal collections of Menippeans, how to combine (or recombine) the individual pieces for maximum profit and enjoyment in the absence of a single, authoritative, numbered collection. Consider e.g. Galen's

⁹⁵ A.L. WHEELER, *Satura as a Generic Term*, «CPh» 7, 1912, pp. 457–77.

⁹⁶ Following F. LEO, *Varro und die Satire*, «Hermes» 24, 1889, pp. 67–84, the whole passage is generally attributed to Varro (so e.g. VAN ROOY, *Studies in Classical Satire*, cit. n. 91, pp. 2–3), but on quite insufficient grounds: see G.L. HENDRICKSON, *Satura – The Genesis of a Literary Form*, «CPh» 6, pp. 129–43: pp. 135–8.

⁹⁷ See SUERBAUM, *Die Satire*, cit. n. 93, pp. 300–1, with additional bibliography.

⁹⁸ VAN ROOY, *Studies in Classical Satire*, cit. n. 93, pp. 1–49. See also B. ULLMAN, *Satura and Satire*, «CPh» 8, 1913, pp. 172–94; J.H. WASZIK, *Problems Concerning the Satura of Ennius*, in O. SKUTSCH (edited by), *Ennius: sept exposés suivis de discussions*, Genève 1971, pp. 97–137: pp. 101–5.

⁹⁹ See WASZINK, *Problems*, cit. n. 98, pp. 104–5; SUERBAUM, *Die Satire*, cit. n. 93, p. 301.

¹⁰⁰ On the vexed question of what title Lucilius gave to his compositions, see J.R.C. MARTYN, *Satis saturae?*, «Mnemosyne» 25, 1972, pp. 157–67, with HORSFALL, *Problems*, cit. n. 92, p. 108.

¹⁰¹ On the variegated form of the Menippeans, see B. RIPOSATI, *Su alcuni aspetti tecnici e formali delle Menippeae di Varrone*, in *Poesia latina in frammenti. Miscellanea filologica*, Genova 1974, pp. 45–55.

¹⁰² Non. p. 67,12: *pareutactoi Varro de compositione saturarum: pareutactae adsunt, mulier quae mulier, Venus caput*. Note HORSFALL, *Problems*, cit. n. 92, p. 108 n. 87, misattributes this title to Jerome's catalogue, implicitly dismissing it as the work of a later compiler.

¹⁰³ For the Ennian collection, it is unclear what Varro could have written except a manual of prosody. *Contra* U.W. SCHOLZ, *Der frühe Lucilius und Horaz*, «Hermes» 114, 1986, pp. 335–65: pp. 360–5, it is difficult to interpret the treatise as a work on the compositional habits of Lucilius when the question of what his collection was actually called in this period is still unanswered (see n. 100). Whatever the case, this was clearly not a cookery book: SUERBAUM, *Die Satire*, cit. n. 93, p. 301.

De Libris propriis liber and *De ordine librorum suorum liber*, or even Augustine's *Retractationes*, which likewise act as philosophical route-maps to similarly unwieldy corpora.¹⁰⁴

Note, finally, Varro's *saturarum libri IIII*, which seem to be attested only in Jerome's catalogue (*Hier. epist.* 33,2); if the collection of Ennius also filled four volumes,¹⁰⁵ this may be a hint as to the generic affiliation of Varro's own work.

Horace and (the) Varro(nes)

The revised dating proposed for the collection and greater awareness of the complexities of its publication necessitates a reevaluation of many facets of Varro's satirical writing and biography. To conclude, however, I would like to revisit a famous passage in Horace.

If much of Varro's Menippean output was composed *ca.* 55 BC and later, rather than *ca.* 80–65 BC, and if every reader had a rather different interaction with the corpus, thanks to its fragmented nature, this has a bearing on how we interpret the programmatic passages of Horace's own satirical poems, in particular, *Serm.* 1,10,1–2, 46–50:

*nempe inconposito dixi pede currere uersus
Lucili [...]
hoc erat, experto frustra Varrone Atacino
atque quibusdam aliis, melius quod scribere possem,
inuentore minor; neque ego illi detrahere ausim
haerentem capiti cum multa laude coronam.
at dixi fluere hunc lutulentum [...]*

Horace wrote and published this satire in the mid-30s BC,¹⁰⁶ the decade in which Marcus Terentius Varro turned 80. The latter was by now a living legend, the first living author honoured with a statue at Rome, set up in Rome's first public library.¹⁰⁷ The productivity boasted of in the *Hebdomades* showed no sign of slowing: in addition to the *Res rusticae*, published in Varro's eightieth year (*rust.* 1,pr.,1), he is also on record as authoring a cure for snakebites in his eighty-third year (*Plin. nat.* 29,65). One of the last pieces Varro will have written is a letter to a certain Oribilius, in which he undertook to reconstruct his lost manual on senatorial procedure—the one originally written for Pompey more than four decades earlier (*Gell.* 14,7,3). The new work, reflecting an entirely altered political reality, was composed in late 29 or early 28 BC,¹⁰⁸ in the final months of Varro's life (his death is dated by Jerome to 28 BC).¹⁰⁹ The claim of Valerius Maximus is thus not mere hyperbole «on the same bed [Varro's] breath and the run of his outstanding works was extinguished».¹¹⁰

Varro was not only alive and kicking, but on our revised dating of the Menippeans, many of his *saturae* had appeared no more than twenty years before Horace's own. These were not long-forgotten antiquarian curiosities dating to a time before Horace's own birth, but must have been the smash-hits of his youth. The revised chronology makes it all the more likely that they

¹⁰⁴ For the form of Varro's title, c.f. the Περὶ συνθέσεως ὀνομάτων of Dionysius of Halicarnassus. On auto-bibliography in antiquity, see O. REGENBOGEN, *Πίναξ*, 3) *Literarish*, *RE* XX,40, 1950, cols. 1409–82, at col. 1437, 1444–6.

¹⁰⁵ Against the positive statement of Porph. *Hor. epist.* 1,3,1 that the collection filled four books, one must balance an apparent reference to material from a sixth book in Don. Ter. *Phorm.* 339 (on the text of the latter, see M.D. REEVE, *The Textual Tradition of Donatus's Commentary on Terence*, «CPh» 74, 1979, pp. 310–26: p. 316).

¹⁰⁶ E. BURCK, *Nachwort und bibliographische Nachträge*, in A. KIESSLING and R. HEINZE, *Q. Horatius Flaccus*, vol. 2: *Satiren*, 7th ed., Berlin 1959, pp. 367–81: p. 385.

¹⁰⁷ *Plin. nat.* 7,115.

¹⁰⁸ TODISCO, *Varro's Writings on the Senate*, cit. n. 77, pp. 52–5.

¹⁰⁹ *Hier. Chron.* p. 248a Helm (= Abr. 1989).

¹¹⁰ Val. Max. 8,7,3: *in eodem enim lectulo et spiritus eius et egregiorum operum cursus extinctus est.*

are also the works hinted at by the anonymous author of *Catalepton* 5,1–5:¹¹¹ Vergil was only five years older than Horace.¹¹²

Horace's pointed reference to (P.) Varro Atacinus, the homonymous provincial upstart, at *serm.* 1,10,46 will have fooled no-one.¹¹³ Many a sniggering detractor will have inserted (at least mentally) an *et* between cognomen and epithet, notwithstanding the violence done to the metre: «What I—Horace—could write better is what Varro <and> Atacinus, together with a few others, had already attempted in vain [...]». The cognomen «Varro» is exquisitely redundant: the obscure geographical epithet Atacinus, coined from a river or hamlet in Gallia Narbonensis,¹¹⁴ is unique to this individual and would have been perfectly sufficient to identify Horace's target.¹¹⁵

The whole point of his epithet «Atacinus» was obviously to differentiate Publius Terentius Varro the literary newcomer from Marcus Terentius Varro the incumbent: Publius was over thirty years younger than Marcus.¹¹⁶ Although Marcus Varro is called «Reatinus», the usage is very late and hardly ever used,¹¹⁷ suggesting that it was actually coined by analogy with «Atacinus». The *recherché* character of the geographical reference, and the younger man's pressing need for a means to distinguish himself from his more famous literary rival, may imply that Publius Varro chose the epithet «Atacinus» for himself.¹¹⁸

Varro «Menippeus» only enters literary history in the final decades of the second century, and at first is usually confined to contexts where satirical literature is at issue: precisely those contexts, in other words, where one Varro might be confused with the other.¹¹⁹ A pedantic (and not wholly correct) explanation of the name survives from Late Antiquity: «Varro [...] was named Menippeus not from his teacher, whose lifetime had come long before, but from the affinity of his literary character, because he also polished his satires with every kind of poem».¹²⁰ The commentator either assumes that satire is a prose genre (unlikely), or had no first-hand familiarity with the collection: the point was that Menippus (and Varro) had not merely mingled verse forms, but also prose and poetry.¹²¹

As an antidote to Horace's tendentious impression of neglect and redundancy, the continuing (positive) reception of Varro's Menippeans can be demonstrated not only from an anthology created by Julius Florus, the friend of Horace, from the poems of Ennius, Lucilius, and Varro,¹²² but also from a wholly unexpected source: a funerary inscription found in Traglia (a hamlet near Lake Bracciano to the north-west of Rome), now housed in the Museo civico of Trevignano Romano:¹²³

CARTILIO P. L. MENIPPO / VARRO L. FECIT / P. CARTILIO L. VARRONI / ROIAE [.] F. POLLAE / CARTILIA P. L. HILARIA
AE 1975, 377

¹¹¹ *ite hinc, inanes, ite, rhetorum ampullae, | inflata rhoezo non Achaico uerba; | et uos, Selique Tarquitiue Varroque, | scholasticorum natio madens pingui, | ite hinc, inane cymbalon iuuentutis | [...]*

¹¹² Suet. *uita Verg.* 2 (born 70 BC).

¹¹³ Cf. R. G. M. NISBET, *The Survivors: Old-style Literary Men in the Triumviral Period*, in S. J. HARRISON, ed., *Collected Papers on Latin Literature*, Oxford 1995, pp. 390–413: p. 403–4.

¹¹⁴ On the disagreement between Schol. Hor. *serm.* 1,10,46 and Hier. *Chron.* p. 151g Helm (Abr. 1935), see E. COURTNEY, *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*, Oxford 1993, pp. 235–6.

¹¹⁵ *ThLL* II 2,1014,83–1015,7.

¹¹⁶ Varro Atacinus was born in 82 BC according to Hier. *Chron.* p. 235g Helm (Abr. 1935).

¹¹⁷ Attested only in Symm. *epist.* 1,2,2 and possibly Sidon. *epist.* 4,3,1 (restored by emendation).

¹¹⁸ So O. HEY, *Atacinus*, «Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie und Grammatik» 14, 1906, pp. 269–70.

¹¹⁹ Ath. 4,51c; Char. *gramm.* p. 151,8; Eutyech. *gramm.* V 468,2; Diom. *gramm.* I 371,26 (?); Arnob. *nat.* 6,23 (?). Note also an Antonine or Severan inscription from the south-eastern outskirts of Rome (archaeological context unknown): M. TERENTIO VARRONI | MENIPPEO L. CAECILIVS | RVFINVS HATERIANVS (*CIL* VI 41132). Did this plaque commemorate a bust or statue of Varro erected by a later admirer of the Menippeans?

¹²⁰ Prob. Verg. *Ecl.* 6,31 (p. 336,21–5 T.-H.): *Varro, qui sit Menippeus non a magistro, cuius aetas longe praecesserat, nominatus, sed a societate ingenii, quod is quoque omnigeno carmine satiras suas expoliuerat.*

¹²¹ Cf. Luc. *Bis Acc.* 33.

¹²² Schol. Hor. *epist.* 1,3,1: presumably Menippeus rather than Atacinus?

¹²³ First ed. F. BARBIERI, *Tre nuove iscrizioni di Trevignano e note sugli scribi*, «RAL» 30, 1975, pp. 145–51.

The inscription was created in two phases (lines 3–5 are a later addition) and can be dated to some time between end of the Republic and the early Principate.¹²⁴

Thanks to the strict naming conventions followed by Roman freedmen,¹²⁵ a bare narrative of the lives of the persons commemorated in the monument can be reconstructed. A certain Publius Cartilius owned three slaves—Varro, Menippus, and Hilaria—whom he eventually freed. In accordance with custom, the men adopted the praenomen and nomen of their former owner as their own, keeping their slave names as their cognomina. Menippus died first, and Varro set up an inscription for his comrade. On Varro's death, Hilaria added new lines to the inscription in his honour. Hilaria also commemorated Roia Polla. Hilaria was either the wife of Varro (in which case Roia Polla may have been their shared daughter), or Varro's freedwoman (in which case, Roia Polla may have been Varro's wife).¹²⁶

Menippus, though a slave-name in the Latin West, is very rare:¹²⁷ its discovery in association with a servile Varro, likewise an exceedingly rare slave-name,¹²⁸ is unlikely to be fortuitous. It seems that whoever named one or both of these slaves (probably Publius Cartilius) considered themselves something of a wit, and took the opportunity to play upon the (presumably popular) association between the names Varro and Menippus, stemming, quite obviously, from the former's Menippean satires. Hilaria («Merriment»), though a far more common servile name, may also be entangled with these literary associations.¹²⁹ The satirical (in more ways than one) onomastic pairing of Varro and Menippus by Cartilius may thus be compared e.g. with the names of Trimalchio's slaves,¹³⁰ or the African Brutuses and Cassiuses of the Antebellum American South.¹³¹

Though the inscription of Varro and Menippus cannot be securely dated, the freedmen it commemorates probably received their names several decades before it was carved, probably between *ca.* 60–30 BC, if not even later.

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«Varro i»

1) Εὐρεν ἢ λοπάς τὸ πῶμα, περὶ γεγαμηκότων; 2) Ἔχω σε, περὶ τύχης; 3) Περί ἐξαγωγῆς; 4) *Mutuum muli scabunt*, περὶ χωρισμοῦ; 5) Ἀνθρώποπολις, περὶ γενεθλιακῆς; 6) *Marcopolis*, περὶ ἀρχῆς; 7) *Cycnus*, περὶ ταφῆς; 8) Σκιαμαχία, περὶ τύφου; 9) *Synephebus*, περὶ ἐμμονῆς; 10) Τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον, περὶ εὐκαιρίας; 11) Ἄλλ' οὐ μένει σε, περὶ φιλαργυρίας; 12) *Papia papae*, περὶ ἐγκωμίων; 13) *Pseudolus Apollo*, περὶ θεῶν διαγνώσεως; 14) Κοσμοτορὸν, περὶ φθορᾶς κόσμου; 15) *Gloria*, περὶ φθόνου; 16) *Flaxtabula*, περὶ ἐπαρχιῶν; 17) *Testamentum*, περὶ διαθηκῶν; 18) Ἐκατόμβη, περὶ θυσιῶν; 19) Περίπλους, lib. II, περὶ φιλοσοφίας; 20) *Octogessis*, περὶ νομισμάτων; 21?) *Serranus*, περὶ ἀρχαιρεσιῶν; 22?) Ἔως πότε, περὶ ὥρων; 23) *Desultorius*, περὶ τοῦ γράφειν; 24?) *Deuicti*, περὶ φιλονικίας; 25) *Prometheus liber*; 26) Περί κεραυνοῦ; 27) *Tithonus*, περὶ γήρωτος; 28) *Est modus matulae*, περὶ μέθης; 29?) *Epitaphiones*, περὶ τάφων; 30) Τριοδίτης τριπύλιος, περὶ ἀρετῆς κτήσεως; 31?)

¹²⁴ See I. CARUSO and C. PISU (edited by), *Trevignano Romano, Museo Civico e area archeologica*, Trevignano Romano 2002, p. 23. Also the date ascribed to an associated villa structure: P. TARTARA, *Torrimpietra* (Forma Italiae XXXIX), Firenze 1999, pp. 230–2.

¹²⁵ See G. VITUCCI, *Libertus*, in E. DE RUGGIERO (edited by), *Dizionario epigrafico di Antichità Romane*, vol. 4 fasc. 30, Roma 1958, pp. 905–46.

¹²⁶ The latter interpretation favoured by BARBIERI, *Tre nuove iscrizioni*, cit. n. 123, p. 150.

¹²⁷ See H. SOLIN, *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom: ein Namenbuch*, vol. 2, 2nd edition, Berlin 2003, p. 110: of twelve occurrences of the name at Rome, nine are associated with slaves or freedmen, one with a peregrinus (the status of the remainder is uncertain). The same collection records 137 attestations of the name Diogenes, founder of Cynicism (pp. 248–50).

¹²⁸ There is only one occurrence of a servile Varro reported from Rome: H. SOLIN, *Die stadtrömischen Sklavennamen, ein Namenbuch*, vol. 1: *Lateinische Namen*, Stuttgart 1996, p. 22.

¹²⁹ Note the use of *hilaritas* in *Men.* 111 and 375.

¹³⁰ See J. PERKINS, *Trimalchio: Naming Power*, in S. Harrison et al. (edited by), *Metaphor and the Ancient Novel*, Groningen, 2005, pp. 139–62; pp. 141–5.

¹³¹ For examples of comparable naming strategies in later slave-owning societies, see S. BENSON, *Injurious Names: Naming, Disavowal, and Recuperation in Contexts of Slavery and Emancipation*, in G. VON BRUCK and B. BODENHORN (edited by), *The Anthropology of Names and Naming*, Cambridge 2006, pp. 178–99.

Triphallus, περί ἀρρενότητος; 32?) Περί αἰρέσεων; 33?) *Vinalia*, περί ἀφροδισίων; +? *Aborigines*, περί ἀνθρώπων φύσεως; +? *Columnae Herculis*, περί δόξης; +? *Caprinum proelium*, περί ἡδονῆς; +? Τοῦ πατρὸς τὸ παιδίον, περί παιδοποιίας

«**Varro ii**»

1) *Marcipor*; 2) *Andabatae*; 3) *Lex Maenia*; 4) *Mysteria*; 5) *Agatho*; 6) *Quinquatrus*; 7) *Endymiones*; 8) *Virgula diuina*; 9) *Gerontodidascalus*; 10) *Parmeno*; 11) *Hercules tuam fidem*; 12) *Meleagri*; 13) Ταφῆ Μενίππου; 14) *Sesqueulixes*; 15) *Hercules Socraticus*; 16) *Sexagesis*; 17) Γνωθι σεαυτόν; 18) *Eumenides*

«**Varro iii**»

1) *Bimarcus*; 2) *Manius*; 3) *Modius*; 4) Ὅνος λύρας

Table 1: The Sources consulted by Nonius Marcellus.

De officio mariti; Δις παῖδες οἱ γέροντες; *Ecdemeticus*; Ἴπποκύων; *Nescis quid uesper uehat*; Περί ἐδεσμάτων; Σκιαμαχία; *Testamentum*; Τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον; Ὑδροκύων

Table 2: The satires cited by Aulus Gellius