

Nordic Journal of Renaissance Studies

17

2020

Offprint



MEANINGFUL MEMORIES: A cultural memory perspective on humanist interaction with the past

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Meaningful Memories, eds. Lærke Maria Andersen Funder and Trine Arlund Hass
Nordic Journal of Renaissance Studies 17 • 2020
General Editor of *NJRS*: Johann Rammingner

(*NJRS* was formerly known as *Renæssanceforum: Journal of Renaissance Studies*)

ISSN 2597-0143. URL: www.njrs.dk/njrs_17_2020.htm

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* Due to the time constraints of the present publication this article is not included in the present volume. It will be added subsequently.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN THE *ANTIQUITATES* OF ANNIUS OF VITERBO



By Johann Ramminger

The Antiquitates of Anniius of Viterbo (Rome, 1498) presents a counter-narrative to the dominant cultural discourse of contemporary humanism. Embedded in Anniius's text is a linguistic system which emphasizes the connections between what he considers the earliest languages on Earth, such as Scythian, Egyptian, Hebrew/Aramaic, and Etruscan. From these, he formulates rules of language change which allow him to recognize the Etruscan substrate in historical and present-day toponyms and ethnonyms. Finally, basing himself on the (Biblical) name of the earliest city after the Flood, called "City four", Anniius elaborates a theory of urban development based on a new terminology expressing the hierarchy of settlements in the early world and in Etruria.

Introduction

The Antiquitates of Anniius of Viterbo

The *Antiquitates* of Anniius of Viterbo (Rome, 1498) is a collection of spurious interrelated texts and commentaries.¹ Some of these are supposedly historical texts (or translations of these), speciously attributed to early authors as diverse as the Chaldean Berosus (known from Josephus), Xenophon (a namesake of the author of the *Anabasis*), Fabius Pictor, and Cato (some

¹ The literature on Anniius has grown immensely in the last decades, and I can only mention those publications that had an impact on my research (individual documentation is provided in the notes): Baffioni 1981 (fundamental for the language and sources of Anniius), Ferrà 2002 and 2003, Fumagalli 1984, Grafton 1998 and 2019, Stephens 1989, 2004, 2011, 2013, Rowland 2016, Weiss 1962 and 1962a. A copious bibliography is in Nothaft 2016, 714–715, n. 8.

“new” fragments), as well as two fragments said to be from the *Itinerarium Antonini*, the survey of the roads of the Roman empire; all are fictitious.² Then there are Anniius’s commentaries on these and a commentary on Propertius’s *Carmen* IV. 2 (about the Etruscan deity Vertumnus), and several additional works on Etruscan antiquity.³

These “originals” were from early on seen as audacious (or inept) forgeries.⁴ Indignation at the credulity seemingly expected from readers of the newly “discovered” works overshadowed the brilliance of this alternative universe, proposed unabashedly at the heyday of humanist philology. Ironically, however, the methodological rigour of Anniius’s *Antiquitates* was instrumental in the development of a set of basic rules for source evaluation in philological and historical analysis.⁵ The early contempt has more recently made way for an appreciation of Anniius as “a conscious artist creating a coherent piece of work”.⁶

That the “originals” in the *Antiquitates* are works of fiction should be less troubling to the modern researcher; fictive texts were more integrated into the humanist cultural narrative than is usually emphasized.⁷ From (Pseudo-) Fenestella’s *De magistratibus* (a later attribution, probably to “upgrade” the little-known author Andrea Fiochi) to the numerous “unidentified” quotations in Perotti’s *Cornu copiae*, there is no lack of humanist texts from

² Stylometrically, source texts, commentaries and other texts in the *Antiquitates* are indistinguishable, see Ramming forthcoming. Anniius likes referencing quite obscure texts; some of these have been identified (recently in Grafton 2019), others may be just as fictitious as the larger source texts in the *Antiquitates* (e.g. the *vita S. Protogenis martyris* cited on sig. N5v).

³ A fine discussion of the “originals” is in Ferrà 2002, 159sq., n. 17. In the following I will quote from Anniius, Johannes, Viterbiensis, *Auctores vetustissimi*, Rome: Eucharius Silber, 1498, ISTC ia00748000. For a list of editions, see Stephens 1989, 344–45 (appendix 2); a detailed analysis of the content is found in the incunabula catalogue of the Bodleian Library, Oxford (URL: <http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/record/A-299>, seen on 24 June 2020). Anniius himself refers to his work collectively as *Commentaria antiquitatum* (e.g. sig. a2r, in the preface; naturally excluding the supposedly original works by other authors). In my quotations, punctuation and capital letters have been modified according to modern customs. “ę” is rendered as “ae”, otherwise the orthography of the quotations is unchanged. Letters turned upside down are corrected; if other emendations of the text are introduced, the original reading will be indicated with “ed.”. All translations, if not otherwise indicated, are my own. The texts given as earlier sources by Anniius will be quoted with double names (e.g. “Berosus-Anniius”), the other texts will be just quoted as “Anniius”. Abbreviations for ancient Latin sources will follow the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, those for Early Modern Latin sources the *Neulateinische Wortliste* (Ramming 2003–).

⁴ See Speyer 1993, 44 and n. 151.

⁵ Goetz 1974, Ligota 1987.

⁶ Grafton 1998, 16.

⁷ Partial overview in Kivistö 2015.

the Quattrocento that do not pass strict procedures of authentication.⁸ Historiographical fiction was a genre not restricted to Anniius; suffice it to mention Leonardo Dati's "Latin translation" of the *Gesta Porsennae* of one Vibius, a contemporary of the Etruscan king Porsenna, or the genealogies of princes going back to Venus or Troy, which could alternatively be believed or disbelieved as the situation demanded.⁹ On a more general level, fictitious source texts have often played a crucial role within "invented traditions" such as the one we will discuss in the following.¹⁰

Research on the *Antiquitates* is complicated by the fact that the text on which we have to rely, the Roman edition of 1498, is the work of typesetters who had little or no Latin and limited skill in deciphering the manuscript they typeset from. Judging from the typesetting mistakes (such as the elementary *corpera* for *corpora*, presumably from the customary abbreviation used for *per/por/par*), the manuscript exemplar of the print was written with even more abbreviations than the print still contains; this may have contributed to the lack of orthographic consistency – which in any case was normal at the time.¹¹ Since proper names are not only spelt inconsistently but often invented by Anniius or written in his particular orthography, emendations of the texts are often problematic. Improvements of the first edition in later printings may as often be corrections of Anniius's authorial intention as of the typesetters' ignorance.¹²

Cultural memory and language

Like the other papers in this volume, this study operates within the framework of cultural memory studies. Cultural memory will be generally understood as "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts", in which meaning is handed down.¹³

[Cultural memory] is "cultural" because it can only be realized institutionally and artificially, and it is "memory" because in relation to

⁸ For Fiocchi/Fenestella see Spagnesi 2006, for Perotti Charlet 2011, 32–33.

⁹ For Dati see Bertolini 2013. A perceptive account of literary forgery is in Ruthven 2004. Doll 2012 on the reception of falsifications.

¹⁰ See Hobsbawm 1983, 7 (Ossian).

¹¹ In some cases, we have to decide without much evidence between orthographical possibilities. The most egregious case is "Vertūnus", over a hundred times abbreviated thus and only in in some rare instances expanded to either "Vertunnus" or "Vertumnus".

¹² Stephens 1989, 344 argued that the Josse Bade edition of 1515 should be used because of its greatly improved text. Grafton 2019 prefers the Bade edition of 1512.

¹³ Erll 2008, 2. Assmann 1992/2011, 6. Although here I am not using Zerubavel's terminology, I have been influenced by his writings (esp. Zerubavel 2003).

social communication it functions in exactly the same way as individual memory does in relation to consciousness.¹⁴

It is a *mémoire volontaire*, a voluntary memory, which is socially constructed.¹⁵ Aleida and Jan Assmann introduced the distinction between “cultural memory” (with a longer historical perspective) and “communicative memory” (sometimes called “social memory”; relating to a timeframe close to the present).¹⁶ The latter had been termed by Halbwachs “collective memory”. Since cultural memory is unavoidably collective in a general sense, the term “collective memory” in cultural memory studies often stands for “cultural memory”.¹⁷ Cultural memory revolves around fixed points:

fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance). We call these “figures of memory”. [...] In cultural memory, such islands of time expand into memory spaces of “retrospective contemplativeness”.¹⁸

The term “figures of memory” was later replaced by “lieu(x) de mémoire” (sites of memory), a term popularized by the French historian Pierre Nora and (for the English publication of his *Lieux de mémoire*) defined as

any significant entity, whether material or nonmaterial in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community.

Jan Assmann concretizes Nora’s definition of *lieux de mémoire* as “things such as dishes, feasts, rites, images, stories and other texts, landscapes”.¹⁹ These are selected from a hypothetical repository of the maximum available historical knowledge and incorporated into what Aleida Assmann has called

¹⁴ Assmann 1992/2011, 9. See also n.19 below.

¹⁵ This is a term used by Proust in an interview from 1913 and introduced into cultural memory studies by Jan Assmann. The relevant passage is printed and translated in Cano 2010, 122. Assmann 1992/2011, 4 and 33 n. 41.

¹⁶ See Assmann, 1988/1995, Assmann 2008 and (revised) 2013. Burke 2017, 20 (social memory).

¹⁷ E.g. Pomian 1998.

¹⁸ Assmann 1988/1995, 129. It is not clear whether the plural “memory spaces” is just a rhetorical liberty on the part of the English translator or a genuine departure from the German text. It implies a series of memory constructs complementing each other that together form the “cultural memory”. The German original has the singular “Erinnerungsraum” (memory space, German version p.12), which signifies the opposite, a unitary construct containing the “figures of memory” (Erinnerungsfiguren).

¹⁹ Nora 1996, xvii. Assmann 2008, 111 (a reformulation of Pierre Nora’s definition from 1984; see den Boer 2008, 21). See also Rothberg 2010, 8: “sites of memory do not remember by themselves – they require the active agency of individuals and publics”.

“actively circulated memory” (“canon”), while other parts of historical knowledge are relegated to “passively stored memory” (“archive”).²⁰

I will discuss Annus’s cultural narrative against the background of a set of characteristics of cultural memory put forward by Aleida and Jan Assmann.²¹ Of these, it is the first two properties (1. It connects facts to a specific identity; 2. It rearranges the narrative of the past) that will be of interest to us, since these are functions that can be performed by an individual. The others are outside the scope of the present inquiry. I will pay special attention to the way Annus uses language; and in connecting language to collective/cultural memory, I will use a schema proposed by Jakub Mlynář:

(1) collective memory emerges from language [...], (2) collective memories are structured linguistically [...], and (3) the patterns of collective memory influence language [...]

The elements of Mlynář’s schema will, in adapted form, also provide the headings for the main part of this paper.²²

The cultural narrative of Italian humanism

The Italian cultural landscape of the Quattrocento contained, as Pomian has remarked, rival cultural memories (*mémoires collectives*) – of different accentuation and with overlapping constituencies. The Church, political entities and administrative bodies had their own cultural narratives.²³ The newcomer amongst them was the *respublica litteraria*, the humanists, who created a distinctive Italian intellectual identity within the late medieval culture of Europe.

The Italian humanism of the Quattrocento was Rome-centric in all respects: it is no accident that three of the four major works of Flavio Biondo have “Rome” in their title. The topography of Italy was for the humanists a landscape defined by the triumphs and defeats of a pre-ecclesiastical Rome. The (often lamented) ruins of ancient Rome provided concrete *lieux de mémoire*, and the whole was bound together by explanations extracted from a highly selective repertoire of Roman literature. The Etruscan roots of Italian cities such as Mantua and Bologna were acknowledged, but always within the

²⁰ Assmann 2008.

²¹ Assmann 1988/1995.

²² Mlynář 2014, 218–219. Mlynář focuses on “communicative memory”, but his schema, with some modifications, provides a convenient framework for language and “collective/cultural memory” as well. More generally for cultural memory and language see Samata 2014, 8–9, and Yelle 2014. Language as site of memory is discussed by Pade (this volume).

²³ Pomian 1998, 83–88.

context of Roman culture.²⁴ The language aggressively promoted by this cultural community was Latin – not the Latin of the Church, but a historicizing Latin anchored in a canon of Roman authors, assiduously mined (significantly, Sabellicus declared commentary on the works of the ancient authors to be the most significant achievement of the humanist *studia*).²⁵ Again, Latin was the language of Rome; *latine loqui* – if properly done – was *Romane loqui*, to cite a phrase favoured by Lorenzo Valla.²⁶ Against this background, Anniius invented a (supposedly submerged) cultural tradition that purported to attest to a culture of the Italian peninsula that was (far) older and consequently more glorious than the Greco-Roman past.²⁷ Such a tradition would have entailed the history of Rome becoming absorbed into the much older history of Etruria, with Viterbo as its centre (Viterbo at Anniius’s time was the capital of the Patrimonium Petri, the Papal States, and thus a city of some importance).

Humanism’s focus on language is adopted by Anniius in his methodology, text production and treatment of sources.²⁸ Where Ermolao Barbaro had devised more or less untrammelled “etymologies” to connect present-day vernacular words with the Latin or Greek of antiquity, Anniius enlarged the humanist “rules” of language change to allow much older connections to Assyrian, Egyptian, and Hebrew/Aramaic and other languages. Humanists had now and then encoded cultural information into Latin (e.g. Hellenizing orthography);²⁹ Anniius turned linguistic speculation, by way of orthography, into an art form. Disambiguation of homonyms (such as the Senecas or the

²⁴ See Bruni’s letter about the origins of Mantua to Francesco Gonzaga and the comments by Pade 2016, 43; for Bologna see Ramminger 2003a.

²⁵ Baker 2015, 205 and *passim* for the revival of Latin.

²⁶ Pade 2012, 11. For humanist Latin see Ramminger 2014; for the *Questione della lingua* concerning Latin and volgare both in the Rome of antiquity and the *Quattrocento* see Tavoni 1984; new bibliography in Schöntag 2017.

²⁷ For the concept of “invention of tradition” see Hobsbawm 1983. The concept has been variously criticized; see esp. Sarot 2001.

²⁸ This clash between the humanists’ and Anniius’s cultural narrative evokes Foucault’s “counter-memory” (*contre-mémoire*), which designates a marginalized discourse formulated in opposition to a dominant discourse within a society. This framework has been mainly used to describe the mechanisms of ideological/political oppression and resistance; Gowing 2005, 94–96, uses the term to describe Lucan’s *Pharsalia*. Anniius’s project in this context would be an attempt to reaffirm – through a thoroughly laicized reading of the Bible – the dominance of an ecclesiastical cultural narrative subverted by the humanists.

²⁹ An example of encoding cultural memory into language would be the spelling “Rhoma” (for *Roma*) frequently used by Italian humanists, which encoded the prestige of Greek into the name of the cultural capital of Italian humanism; cf. TORTELLI *Rhoma* and VOLPE *ep* 6 (1446). When Tortelli concluded from the evidence of coins and inscriptions that the Hellenizing spelling was wrong, Volpe encouraged him not to reject Greek wisdom for some stones with spelling mistakes.

Plinies) was a major achievement of humanist philology, but it pales next to a whole book of disambiguations (the *Equiuoca*) under the name of one Xenophon (not to be confused with the homonymous author familiar to classical scholars) and Anniius's accompanying commentary. Where Beroaldo and Poliziano had proposed miscellanies to discuss various – mostly philological – questions pertaining to Roman antiquity, Anniius used the same format for his “Questions of Anniius” (*Quaestiones Anniae*) concerning Etruscan antiquities. Just as countless humanists of the second half of the Quattrocento had composed commentaries on texts from antiquity, Anniius offered commentaries on the texts published by himself – and furthermore on a poem by Propertius which, as it turned out, entirely supported Anniius's understanding of the Etruscan deity Vertumnus. Where Calderini “found” an unknown Roman history in France, Anniius got his “Berosus” from Armenian monks.³⁰

The humanists had routinely embedded their ownership of Latin in their writings by using the first-person plural rather than an impersonal passive form (“as we say in Latin”). Anniius uses the same ploy to emphasize his Etruscan identity: “[...] as Cato writes and we Tuscans say” (“ut Cato scribit et Tusci proferimus”; Anniius, sig. s4v).³¹ Moreover, he adds, he himself is only one of “our” Tuscan authors. There still exists an Etruscan *génie* (“ingenium Thuscum”) among writers. This explains why some have more trustworthy information concerning Etruscan antiquity than others.³² Fazio degli Uberti, whose *Dittamondo* is one of the sources named by Anniius, is repeatedly called “Florentinus noster”,³³ another is “our” Giovanni Tortelli from the Etruscan Arezzo,³⁴ and then there are “our” two *Aquinates*, Juvenal and Thomas Aquinas.³⁵ Above all, there is “our Tuscan family, the Annii”, which in antiquity had brought forth several emperors.³⁶

³⁰ For Calderini's claim see Ramming 2014a. For the provenance of Berosus: “Frater autem Mathias olim prouincialis Armeniae ordinis nostri, quem existens prior Genuae illum comi hospitio excepi et a cuius socio magistro Georgio similiter Armeno hanc Berosi deflorationem dono habui”, Anniius, sig. P6r.

³¹ See the examples in notes 71–74.

³² “Fatius Florentinus illustrior Blondo fuit, ut qui ingenio Thusco excelluerit et explorata loca melius et certius tenuerit” (Anniius, sig. g5r). For Anniius's aversion to Biondo see Stephens 2013, 278.

³³ “Fatius de Vbertinis Florentinus noster in sua geographia uernaculo metro edita” (Anniius, sig. I8r); “noster Florentinus, Thusco sanguine natus atque noticia patriae doctior Fatius” (Anniius, sig. d6v).

³⁴ “Tortellius noster Aretinus”, Anniius, sig. V3r, sig. X3v.

³⁵ Juvenal: Anniius, sig. B2v, sig. B6r, sig. I2v, etc.; Thomas Aquinas: sig. I6r, sig. Z1r, sig. g3v, etc.

³⁶ “opus Anniae Tuscae familiae nostrae dicaui” (Anniius, sig. f4r); “Hec urbs Etruria [...] praecipuis Anniae uere antiquissime Tuscorum familiae augustis imperatoribus, Antonino, Vero et Comodo enituit” (Anniius, sig. h2v).

Memoria: the transmission of the past

Anniius's point of departure is what he sees as a faulty perception of Italy's past, consequence of an all-pervading Greek point of view in the cultural memory promoted by the humanists:³⁷

Therefore, since the origin and age of Italy go back to before the most ancient Ninus, when the Greeks were not even young yet, I was moved by the splendour of such antiquity to revive the history of old Italy. This endeavour will be hugely welcome to those judges who are the most learned. [...] For the rest, just as according to Cicero true philosophy is happy with few judges, if they are learned, and deliberately avoids the masses, so [are] all our works about history.³⁸

The irony of Anniius' appeal to Cicero will not have been lost on his humanist readers – the reference points to a passage in the *Tusculans* that criticises Greek intellectual life. Anniius proposes to expose the lies of the Greeks, and to introduce more reliable sources:

For my part I have decided to push the Greek fog away from Latin chronography and, with regard to the Etruscan times, which are better attested in Latin sources, to restore time lines and kings, antiquity and the most splendid origins to our homes.³⁹

Rescuing the dormant memory of Italy's greatness, Anniius presents himself as heir to a tradition going back to Cato. As we learn from a fragment from the *Origines* published (and invented) by Anniius, Cato was the first to record systematically the traditions of the Italian tribes:

Therefore, to show the way for other Latin writers, I intend now, by the grace of the Gods, to put down in writing all that has been recorded in memory by the peoples of Italy, now subject to Roman power.⁴⁰

³⁷ Anniius mentions *Grecia mendax* numerous times. See Tigerstedt 1964.

³⁸ “Quare cum ante Nynum uetustissimum – nedum nouellos Grecos – cepta sit origo et antiquitas Italiae, mouit me tantae splendor antiquitatis neglectae ad historiam antiquitatis Italicae suscitandam, cuius labor censoribus eruditissimis scio quam uoluptuosissime gratus erit atque ab eis probatus. [...] Ceterum, sicut teste Cicerone uera philosophia paucis est contenta iudicibus eruditissimis, tamen multitudinem consulto ipsa effugiens (Tusc. 2, 4), ita et cuncta nostra de antiquitatibus opera” (Anniius, sig. Z8v).

³⁹ “Equidem et ipse institui Grecas nebulas a Latina chronographia dissoluere, et per Etrusca [Etrusca *ed.*] tempora, quae magis certa in Latinis habentur, integra nostris laribus reddere tum tempora et reges, tum antiquitates et splendidissimas origines” (Anniius, sig. Z8v).

⁴⁰ “Quam ob rem nunc, ut caeteris Latinis uiam faciam, quaecumque memoria prodita gentibus Italiae sunt et nunc Romano imperio subditis, diis uolentibus scribere instituo” (Cato-Anniius, sig. B2r).

This is a carefully crafted programmatic declaration. Anniius enlarges on it in his commentary on this passage:

Cato [...] collected whatever was transmitted by memory amongst the individual tribes of Italy, especially amongst the Turreni who were the ancestors of the Umbrians and still remembered those ancient laws, letters, rites, customs, the time of the Flood and of Ianus.⁴¹

“Laws, letters, rites, customs”, in combination with a narrative about the distant past, is a quite precise description of “cultural memory”. The crucial term here is *memoria*. In the Latin of antiquity, *memoria* is a multi-faceted term.⁴² As well as the act of remembering, it is the (mostly) human faculty of remembering *something*, especially great deeds (often synonymous with “glory”); this seamlessly expands into a more general remembrance of the past conserved by human memory. In a further expansion, *memoria* can also be an artefact (book or monument) that transmits facts that are to be remembered; *memoria* can be the mention that records a fact; and finally, it is information about the past itself (which obviously still has to be remembered).

For Anniius, *memoria* is not individual memory, but the collective “knowledge about the past” (in phrases such as “*memoriā tradere*”). The polyvalence in the classical material, however, allows Anniius also to understand *memoria* in three further senses: as the historical message conferred onto an object, as the medium that transmits knowledge about the past (a book, an inscription), and as the contents of that medium (in the phrase “*memoriam facere*”, to mention).⁴³ Anniius is conscious of the fact that the cultural identity of a group is closely connected to its belief that it shares a common past (i.e. to a common cultural memory), and he sees it as his task to reset the cultural memory of his Etruscan fellow citizens by showing them that before their eyes lies a whole new (or rather old) world waiting to be discovered.

⁴¹ “Ipse (*sc. Cato*) [...] quecunq; memoria prodita erant apud singulas gentis Italiae collegit, potissime apud Turrenos qui patres Vmbrorum fuerunt et illas uetustissimas leges, litteras, ritus, mores, temporaque inundationis et Iani retinebant” (Anniius, sig. f4r).

⁴² See Prinz 1942. Most of the semantic development happened before or in Cicero’s writings, i.e. in texts that would have been readily available to Italian humanists looking for guidance from antiquity; obviously, absent semantic studies similar to the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* for antiquity, we do not know how close humanist use of *memoria* was to the Latin of antiquity, and whether Anniius’s usage was distinctive in any way. I have, however, found no indication that Anniius made changes to the semantic model of antiquity.

⁴³ “*memoriam facere*”: “de his omnibus memoriam facit [...] Plinius” (Anniius, sig. D1v). “De Bante inscriptio Grauisca memoriam facit” (Anniius, sig. &3r-v). ‘meaning’: “Cur uero primi reges deorum [...] nominibus cognominati fuerunt idem Lactantius ait ob propagandum fulgorem nominis et memoriam indidendam” (sig.H8v). ‘medium’: “neque uetusto auctore neque alia memoria” (i.e. archival material, sig.V6v); “excisa memoria” (i.e. inscription, sig.&2v); “ueterum titulorum et memoriarum (i.e. unspecified sources, sig.g6v).

Cultural memory emerging from language

Etruscan memoria and the languages of the Earth

For Anniius, the Etruscan cultural memory will emerge from language, if decoded properly. To access the *memoria* contained in *lieux de mémoire*, both material and immaterial, he proposes a theory about language diversification and the relative chronology of the languages involved that not only accounts for language development in early society, but connects it to the linguistic reality of contemporary Italy. Languages can be distinguished in two overlapping respects, sound system and derivation (*prolatio*, *deriuatio*).⁴⁴ *Prolatio* corresponds to pronunciation and – in the case of writing – orthography, while *deriuatio* designates the development of lexicon as well as pronunciation across different languages. Especially Latin and Etruscan differ from each other both in *prolatio* and in *deriuatio*.⁴⁵ The establishment of the *deriuatio prolationis* of a word can establish equations of meaning across languages:

Secondly, attention should be paid to the noun “saga”, as the Arameans pronounce it, and “sangni”, as the Etruscans and Sabini, and “sanctus”, as the Latins. These are not different in meaning, but only in the development of the pronunciation, because from “saga” is derived “sangni”, and from “sangni” “sanctus” with change of the letter “g” into “c”.⁴⁶

By identifying a word’s earlier form/orthography/pronunciation, we gain access to the message contained in it (in this case the meaning of Sagalbina, an early “Etruscan” city founded by Noah).

Deriuatio concerns also the etymology through which a word can transport the *memoria* of its origin: “All words that have the same derivation and origin have the same meaning” (“*quecumque eandem propriam deriuationem et originem nominis habent, eandem rem significant*”, Anniius sig.c4v).

⁴⁴ Examples of differences in *prolatio*: “Ita Phenissam et Lybissam Romana lingua profert Pheniscam et Lybiscam” (Anniius, sig. h1v); “Phesulai prolatione Aramea et Phesulae prolatione Romana” (Anniius, sig. B5v); *prolatio* is a powerful comparative feature that can establish some surprising connections: “Cydnus a diuersis gentibus aliter et aliter pronunciat. Babilionii cednum, Scythae cydnum, Greci cynum, Latini cygnum. Etrusci uero, ut sepe diximus, de more in compositione sineresim faciunt et consonantem litteram .d. uel .c. aut .g. abiiciunt” (Anniius, sig. T6r). *Prolatio* in the meaning of “pronunciation” is not classical; Banta 2000 records only examples from the fifth-century grammarian Consentius (1815, 27–31). It is frequent in Medieval Latin (see URL: <https://logeion.uchicago.edu/prolatio>, visited on 2 July 2020). For Early Modern Latin see Ramming 2003–, “prolatio”.

⁴⁵ Anniius, sig. M8v.

⁴⁶ “Secundo memoratu dignum est nomen saga, ut Aramei proferunt, et [ut *ed.*] sangni, ut [et *ed.*] Etrusci et Sabini, uel sanctus ut Latini. Hec non differunt significato, sed sola deriuatione prolationis, quia a saga sangni et a sangni sanctus deriuatur mutata littera .g. in .c.” (Anniius, sig. O6r).

To ensure the proper application of *derivatio*, Anniius posits two age groups for languages. There is an older group which contains Etruscan, but is otherwise is rather fluid; often it includes Aramaic (sometimes distinguished from Hebrew, sometimes not).⁴⁷ It is in Aramaic and the closely related Egyptian (in use in old Etruria!) that Anniius seeks the submerged *memoria* of the Italian peninsula.⁴⁸ In addition, Anniius also cites Scythian as a language related to Etruscan and consequently very similar to Hebrew and Aramaic.⁴⁹

The younger group consists of Latin and Greek. These cannot be used for eliciting the *memoria* preserved by words that predate them:⁵⁰

One has to know that the names of the twelve [Etruscan] cities predate any kind of Latin. Therefore, those who think in Latin terms are in profound error, such as those who explain “Fiesole” from “fia sola” (being alone), and “Arezzo” from “ara” (field) or “aratura” (ploughing) or from “ariditas” (drought). All these names predate the Latin language; they were given by the Etruscans and are of Aramaic origin.⁵¹

How old Latin is in Anniius’s view is difficult to discern, since Anniius mostly emphasizes its newness. Implicitly the date of origin seems to be approximately the fall of Troy, when also the name “Latins” came into use for the inhabitants of Rome.⁵²

⁴⁷ Hebrew and Aramaic identical: “Aranea enim et Hebraea lingua iain uinum dicitur” (Anniius, sig. A1v); “Apud Arameos simul et Hebreos malot dicitur uates angelus” (Anniius, sig. T3r). Hebrew differentiated from Aramaic: “Quod enim Hebraei sara, id Aramei para, idest principem [...] intelligunt” (Anniius, sig. I8r); “asserebat apud Arameos Man et Mon dici quod apud egyptios Myn, et quod apud Hebreos Maon idest habitatio” (Anniius, sig. K6r). Certainly the Hebrew scholar whom Anniius often quotes speaks Aramaic: “Sale autem Aranea lingua est origo et exitus alicuius: ut Rabi Samuel interpretatur” (Anniius, sig. A2v).

⁴⁸ Anniius, sig. i4r. For Anniius’s interest in Egyptian culture see Curran 1998-99, 167–181, Grimm 2007.

⁴⁹ “Neque tamen a luce latino uocabulo, sed potius eorum tum *Etrusco*, *Scythico sermoni cognato*, uerbo” (Anniius, sig. V2r; my emphasis). Examples: “Ianus non spectat ad originem Latinam uel Grecam, sed, ut ait Berossus, Scythicam, qui uti Hebraei uinum dicunt iain” (Anniius, sig. F4r); “tribus Scythicis et Arameis dictionibus” (Anniius, sig. V1r).

⁵⁰ “quoniam lingua barbara praecessit Latinam et Grecam” (Anniius, sig. g4r); “Iantum regiam suam quadriurbem statuisse, et ideo uocabulis Arameis et non Latinis nominasse, quia tunc non extabat lingua Latina uel Greca” (Anniius, sig. N2v).

⁵¹ “Sane sciendum est ante omnem linguam Latinam fuisse supradicta nomina urbium.xii. Et ideo qui Latine putant dicta, falluntur nimis, sicut qui Phesulas Fia sola et Aretium ab aris uel aratura uel ab ariditate exponunt. Hec enim nomina ante Latinam linguam ab Etruscis indita sunt Arameae originis” (Anniius, sig. B6r). The etymology for Fiesole had been proposed by Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica* 1, 7 “però fu nominata Fia sola, cioè prima, senza altra città abitata nella detta parte”.

⁵² Age of Latin: “Quare penultimum nomen Thybris inditum fuit Albulae ante ruinas Troiae sub Priamo, antequae urbem conditam annis quatrinentis quinquaginta et amplius, quando non extabat lingua Latina. Et multo minus ante Troiam conditam extabat lingua Latina, quando uetus uerum et priscum nomen Albula erat” (Anniius, sig. C1v); Age of

There was some transference between older and younger languages. Thus Greek contains many barbarian words, since barbarians inhabited Greece before the Greeks.⁵³ Similarly, Latin received words from Etruscan.⁵⁴ In the case of such words we should not accept etymologies derived from Latin because of a simple rule:

At this point, the following rule comes into play, that where there is a barbarian term, there is an earlier barbarian origin, even if the term later entered the Latin or Greek language.⁵⁵

The heterogeneity of Latin and the influx of Etruscan words had already been observed earlier by humanists, notably in the *questione della lingua*.⁵⁶ In addition to loanwords, there are according to Anniius also a number of loan translations from Etruscan into Latin, and these preserve traces of the cultural identity of the Etruscans.⁵⁷

Etruscan memoria in Roman authors

When, eventually, the Etruscans succumbed to decadence, The Romans according to Anniius played a crucial role in the preservation of Etruscan cultural memory. Anniius uses a two-pronged presentation. First, he has Manethon – as a “contemporary” observer – state the fact of the shift of power in Italy: “The Etruscans weakened by luxury are diminished, the Latins, on the other hand, grow” (“Turrheni delitiis eneruati decrescunt; econtra latini crescunt”, Manethon-Anniius sig. Z7v). Then Anniius, in his own voice, elaborates on the historical process. Etruscans kept their identity and wisdom alive until the end of the Republic.⁵⁸ Not only did Romans consult Etruscan specialists for

“Latins”: “Hoc tamen constat Eneam profugum domo uenisse ad Latinum Aboriginum regem, a quo primum Aborigines Latini dici ceperunt” (Anniius, sig. Z6v).

⁵³ “quia Greciam prius barbari incoluerunt, et multa his uocabula barbara remanserunt” (Anniius, sig. I3v).

⁵⁴ “Volturnus non spectat ad linguam latinam etiam si transit in usum latine linguae” (Anniius, sig. C2r)

⁵⁵ “Nunc uero regula succedit, quod ubi est nomen barbarum, ibi origo prius fuit barbara, etiam si id nomen postea effluerit in linguam Latinam uel Grecam” (Anniius, sig. C5r).

⁵⁶ E. g. by Poggio: “Mitto Gallos, Germanos, Aphros, Hispanos ac diversarum nationum gentes in seruitutem redactas, quorum lingua inter se dissidens erat, qui omnes in urbe recepti, necesse fuit ut suis verbis Latinam linguam inquinarent ex frequenti usu, ita ut plura a Tuscis reliquisque nationibus uerba in usum reciperentur praeter latina, ut sermo latinus, ex tam uariis uerbis commixtus, confusior esse uideretur” (POGGIO *ling com* 78–79).

⁵⁷ “Multa nomina Etrusca Romani in linguam suam transtulerunt, uti et aliarum gentium” (Anniius, sig. F5v). An example: “Est autem Arameae Horchia per interpretationem id quod Pomona latine” (Anniius, sig. F2r).

⁵⁸ “[...] cum ille Turrhenus ingenuus status et concordia cepit eneruari dissensionibus. xii. populorum. Quibus et delitiae et loci opulentia magno decidendi ab imperio et paulatim cedendi locum Romanis adiumento et fomento fuerunt. Perseuerauit tamen in eis que a Iano

various forms of divination; many Etruscan institutions were taken over wholesale by the Romans, often in improved form (“que [*i.e. some Etruscan institutions*] imitati postmodum Romani inque melius aucta, ad suam rem publicam transtulere”, Annius, sig. Z8r).

That Annius could consult Roman literature for information about the Etruscans was due to the fact that Romans, and especially Roman authors, for a long time had a knowledge of Etruscan. An example is Virgil, who according to Annius was actually Etruscan (“Virgil, who had a good command of Etruscan, since he was born in the Etruscan city of Mantua”).⁵⁹

For Annius, the most important author with knowledge of the Etruscan language is Varro. He is generally more learned (“doctior”), but, more importantly, older and thus more trustworthy than later authors. He is extremely knowledgeable on the region of Rome (“Romanam regionem plenius edoctus”, Annius, sig. M4r). Specifically, his information about Etruscan words and etymologies is based on Etruscan sources.⁶⁰ On the other hand, when Servius gives a Greek etymology for the word “Etruria”, he can safely be dismissed, because by his time the Etruscan language had already died out (“iam abolita lingua Etrusca”, sig. h2v). This had been a gradual process,

because the younger Roman and Latin writers – having renounced the Etruscan language which they earlier used to learn, as Livy mentions in the ninth book of *From the Foundation of the City* – wrongly turned to Greek or Latin etymologies when they did not know the etymologies of Etruscan words.⁶¹

A special case is Livy, whose contemporary Propertius was still steeped in Etruscan cultural knowledge (Annius sig. M8r). For Bruni and Biondo, Livy is “the father of Roman history”,⁶² for Annius, he is a bit simple-minded (“Liuus et alii simplices Latini”; Annius, sig. h2v). Because he was envious of the Etruscans, he acted maliciously to expunge them from his readers’ cultural memory:

tradita fuit philosophia et interpretatio fulgurum et effectuum naturalium atque Theologia usque ad etatem Diodori Siculi sub Iulio Cesare” (Annius, sig. Z8r).

⁵⁹ “Virgilius, qui probe linguam Etruscam nouerat ut qui Etruscorum urbe Mantua natus” (Annius, sig. f6v).

⁶⁰ “Varro his doctior et antiquior [...] testes[...] antiquissimos utriusque linguae, Latinae ac Etruscae, peritos produxit Iunium et Tolumnium tragediarum Tuscarum scriptorem” (Annius, sig. h2v).

⁶¹ “quia iuniores Romani et Latini scriptores dimissa lingua Etrusca, quam ante solebant addiscere, ut Liuus autor est in nono Ab urbe condita (9,36,3), cum uocabulorum Etruscorum origines ignorarent, falso ad Graeculas origines se conuertebant aut Latinas” (Annius, sig. h2v).

⁶² BRUNI *bell Pun praef*, BIONDO *Italia* 1,5, DECEMBRIO-A *pol* 1,5,1.

While all these origins of Rome are told in Fabius (Pictor), Propertius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, why did Livy alone in *From the Foundation of the City* suppress all mention of them? I am prepared to state and will prove if necessary that Livy was envious and jealous of the rival fame of the Etruscans. Wherever he can he conceals the fame of the Etruscans and piles on falsities in favour of the glory of others and adverse to these (i. e. the Etruscans).⁶³

In Alaida Assmann's terms, Livy is exercising an act of 'active forgetting'.⁶⁴

Etruscan memoria in the contemporary vernaculars of former Etruria

In the same way as the humanists believed that the vernaculars could attest to Latin words lost in the written tradition, Anniius considered the contemporary vernacular(s) of Etruria a repository of traces of old Etruscan.⁶⁵ These not only confirm his linguistic reconstruction, but also culturally connect the Tuscans to their common past (particularly the Tuscan youth, for whom the *Institutiones iuuentutis Etruscae* in the *Antiquitates* are written). The linguistic heritage is visible both in *prolatio* and in *derivatio*.⁶⁶ A feature of pronunciation connecting the present-day Etruscan to its antecedent is a shared sound system, such as the similar pronunciation of "u" and "o":

The Etruscan language formerly and in my time does not have a full "o", but a vowel between "o" and "u", and in several words it is closer to "u". For that reason, the Etruscan Faustulus pronounced "Rumulus" with an "u", the Sabini and the Latins pronounced "Romulus" with an "o".⁶⁷

The "o/u"-vowel is also sometimes pronounced as "o":

In Viterbo there are four "pont"; two of these are still used by (local) speakers: "pont Remolum" and "pont para Tussum", commonly "pont para Tossum", because the local language converts "u" into "o".⁶⁸

⁶³ "Que omnia cum incia Romana et Fabius, Propertius et Dionisius Halicarnasseus contineant, cur solus Liuius Ab urbe condita cuncta suppressit? Audeo dicere et cum opus fuerit probabo, inuidum et liuidum alienae Thuscorum gloriae enim [non *ed.*] Liuium fuisse. Qui ubicunque potest subticet Thuscorum gloriam et falsa pro aliena gloria his aduersa cumulanda adiecit" (Anniius, sig. M7v).

⁶⁴ See Pade (this volume), 12.

⁶⁵ See Ramminger 2019 on the vernacular research of Ermolao Barbaro.

⁶⁶ "ad hanc diem Aramea *prolatione atque uocabulis* dicimus Para Tussam" (sig. N3r, my emphasis).

⁶⁷ "Nam Etrusca olim lingua et etate mea non habet.o. integrum, sed inter.o. et.u. et magis appropinquat.u. in compluribus. Quare quod Faustulus Etruscus protulit per.u. Rumulus, ipsi Sabini et Latini pronunciabant [pronunciabunt *ed.*] per.o. Romulus" (Anniius, sig. L3r).

⁶⁸ "Viterbi autem pont sunt, quorum duo adhuc sunt in usu loquentium, pont Remolum et pont para Tussum – uulgo pont para Tossum, quia.u. in.o. conuertit uernacula lingua" (Anniius, sig. g2v)

Also, the pronunciation of the “J” in certain positions as /dʒ/ in Venetian dialect is an inheritance from the Etruscans:

All the mountains through which one travels to Aquileia are to this day called [alpes] “Zuliae” (Julian Alps) in the language and pronunciation of the Etruscans, but corruptly they are commonly called “Zeliae”. One usually pronounced as “z” the letter “i” of the common pronunciation, such as “Zasius/Iasius”, “Zulius/Iulius”, as we find in Etruscan inscriptions.⁶⁹

“T” and “c” are also pronounced similarly, leading in certain toponyms to a shift:

Our age pronounces this (the name of) this town – with a corruption of the “t” and insertion of a “c” because of the closeness of the pronunciation – not “Turrena”, but “Cursena”.⁷⁰

Equally important is the fact that some Etruscan words still survive:

To this day we say in the old Etruscan language “Corit Ny Enta” (i.e. Corgnenta), i.e. mountain and town Coritus.⁷¹

In addition to vowel and consonant changes, names also change through contractions. These are categorized into *syncopa* (truncation of the first syllable, as in “Oropitum” > “Orpitum”) and *syneresis* (initial truncation of the second word in compounds).⁷² Annus uses two semantic markers to indicate the continuity of the Etruscan language community, “adhuc” (still, until now) and “ad hanc aetatem” (to this day), often in combination.⁷³ The

⁶⁹ “omnes alpes per quos uersus Aquilegiam transibatur [transibat *ed.*] lingua et prolatione Thusca adhuc Zuliae, uulgo uero corrupto Zeliae dicuntur. Nam literam .z. .i. comuni prolatione proferebant, ut Zasius, Iasius, Zulius et Iulius, ut in inscriptionibus Etruscis inuenimus” (Annus, sig. K2r).

⁷⁰ “Hoc oppidum etas nostra corrupta prima littera.t. et posita.c. ob propinquitatem prolationis, non Turrenam sed Cursenam profert” (Annus, sig. B1r).

⁷¹ “quod usque ad hanc etatem dicimus ueteri lingua Etrusca Corit Ny Enta, idest Coriti mons et oppidum” (Annus, sig. N4r). The identification with Corgnenta is taken from Signorelli 1966, 82.

⁷² “compositio sineraica sepe adimit finem prime dictionis et principium secundae, ut patet in composito nomine Macto idest magis aucto” (Annus, sig. g5r). Examples of corruption (my emphasis in all examples): “Tertiam posuit Tarco: nomine patris Turrhnam dixit, et *per sincopam* Turrhnam: cuius partis *hodie* porta Torrhnia dicitur, quamuis *corrupte et rudius* quam Cortonienses Perusini pro.T. ponentes.B. dicant Burrhnam pro Turrhnam” (Annus, sig. f6r). “Vulturene siue *per sincopam* Volturine” (Annus, sig. f5r). “Arino siue *per sincopam* Arno” (Annus, sig. e2r). “*Tusca uernacula lingua* quae *sinaeresi* utitur Mar Scylliano uocamus” (Annus, sig. Z6r).

⁷³ (my emphasis in all examples): “montem iuxta Orpitum, quem *adhuc* Peliam dicimus, sed eius annem Peliam corrupte Paliam pronunciamus” (Annus, sig. A2r). “Vnde litem eius *adhuc* dicimus uulgo caduta di Sale vmbrone” (Annus, sig. A5r). “quod herbam illi olim

differences between what Anniius posits as old Etruscan and the present-day forms are – in the same way as humanists regarded language change in Latin – understood as corruptions.

The distinction between the speech of the educated (*grammaticae*, i.e. in Latin) and the common people (*vulgo* or *in sermone vernaculo*: Anniius sees the speech of the uneducated or *rustici* as a promising vein of Etruscan, as had the humanists in the case of Latin) is at the same time one between orality and written language.⁷⁴ In charters and other legal documents, oral phenomena may enter the written language:

Since notaries write place names as the common people pronounce them, therefore it has become customary to write and say “Viterbum” instead of “Veterbum”.⁷⁵

For this reason – which we can confirm from numerous testaments, inventories and similar documents – according to Anniius several old Etruscan toponyms occur in legal documents preserved in the archives of his order.⁷⁶

Cultural memory is structured linguistically

Linguistic artefacts can also provide important structural information for the (re)construction of Etruscan cultural memory. Anniius identifies two types of words that store structured *memoria*: toponyms and ethnonyms.

dicatam in similitudinem crinium albarum, capillos Ianae *ad hanc etatem* Volturreni uocamus” (Anniius, sig. M8r; not a toponym, but the name of a herb).

⁷⁴ (my emphasis in all examples): *vulgo-grammaticae*: “Exemplum possum accipere *in uernacula nostra lingua* quia ubi *grammaticae* scribit Phylippus, Nicholaus, [...] Osiricella, Veizus, et eiuscemodi, *uulgo* truncata prima syllaba pronunciamus Lyppus, Cholaus, [...] Syricella, Iuzus” (Anniius, sig. I6r). “Nam quae *grammaticae* dicimus Eliam, Estam, Annam, Annum, [...] *uulgo* profert Veliam, Vestam, Nannam, Nannum, [...]” (Anniius, sig. N6r; this is the rule that allowed Anniius to transform his name from *Nanni*). “usque ad oppidum quod ad hanc etatem Cap Abium *uernacula lingua, Latina* uero capud Abantum dicimus” (Anniius, sig. Z1v). *rustici*: “Et a Vetralla incipiunt *rustici* uocare planiciem Sale” (sig. A3r). “quod *mei rustici Viterbenses* dicunt” (Anniius, sig. K2v). “Est autem oppidum Arae Mutiae, quod *rustici* AreMuza uocant” (Anniius, sig. M3r). *orality*: “*grammaticae scribitur* – *vulgo* [...] *pronunciamus*” (Anniius, sig. I6r). “Etruscan” orthography means the spelling of Etruscan words in Latin: “Itaque dicimus Volturrenam esse *orthographiae simul et Etruscae originis* et compositum nomen ab “ol” et “Turrena”” (Anniius, sig. f5r).

⁷⁵ “Porro quoniam notarii loca scribunt plurimum ut *uulgo* profert: idcirco usus obtinuit ut Viterbum pro Veterbo scribatur et dicatur” (Anniius, sig. g5r).

⁷⁶ “ut contractus in archiuis nostri conuentus nominat” (Anniius, sig. S6v). “in testamento [...] seruato in archiuis conuentus” (Anniius, sig. T4r). “Stic Kity Arim *uetustissima Etrusca lingua* contractus nominant, quos in Archiuis seruant fratres nostri Heremitani” (Anniius, sig. h3v, my emphasis)

Toponyms

Historical topography as a field of study had been defined by Flavio Biondo, mainly in his *Italia illustrata*.⁷⁷ The *nominum mutatio* is commented upon by Biondo countless times:

I wanted to try if I, with the knowledge I have gained about the history of Italy, could attach to the older places and peoples a current name, to the recent ones an authentic one, to the obliterated ones a life of memory, and so clear up the fog of Italian history.⁷⁸

We notice that Biondo – like Annius later on – uses the metaphor of removing “fog” to describe his operation of restoring authentic toponyms. *Memoria* and the correct name are connected. For Biondo it is historiography (and the knowledge he brings as a historiographer) that validates (or provides) correct toponyms. Annius inverts Biondo’s paradigm: topography is the part of history (i.e. historiography) that inventories historical toponyms (“*pars localis historiae quam Greci uocant topographiam et chorographiam*”, Annius, sig. &1r). Historical place names are thus sources which validate, or invalidate, other historiographic texts:

Therefore we would not believe that this is Rome (i.e. the Rome mentioned in historical sources) if the Tiber and the hills and parts and places of Rome had no old names because these are living proofs drawn from historical topography.⁷⁹

Attention to toponyms is a failsafe means to keep antiquity alive (“*ut uiuam [...] antiquitatem teneas*”, Annius, sig. g2v), “because the old place names of antiquity are unfailing proofs of their origin” (“*quia nomina antiquitatis prisca locorum sunt argumenta infallibilia originis ipsorum*”, Annius, sig. i1r), because “in fact every people imposes names in their own language” (“*quaeque enim gens imponit nomina suae linguae*”, Annius, sig. c2r).

What kind of information toponyms carry had been explained by “Berosus” when he described the migration which took place after the Flood:

These are the ones who migrated after Nimbrotus, one by one with their families and colonies. They left their names in places as a sign of the

⁷⁷ See Laureys 2020, 203–204. I thank M. Laureys for letting me see an advance copy of the publication.

⁷⁸ My translation, with use of White’s translation in Biondo 2005, 5. “[...] tentare uolui, si per eam quam sum nactus Italiae rerum peritiam uetustioribus locis eius et populis nominum nouitatem, nouis autoritatem, deletis uitam memoriae dare, denique rerum Italiae obscuritatem illustrare potero.” (BIONDO *Italia praef* 3–4).

⁷⁹ “*Nam non crederemus Romam esse, si Thyberis et collium et partium locorumque Romae nulla uetusta essent nomina, quippe quia hec sunt uiua topographiae atque historiae argumenta*” (Annius, sig. g2v).

expedition their father Ianus had charged them with, and as a monument for their descendants, so that they would know who their founder was.⁸⁰

The information about the meaning of place names given by “Berosus” is taken up by Anniius in several passages:

[...] since the people in former times named mountains, rivers, and places after themselves, as Berosus says in the fourth book of his Antiquities and we have shown in the commentary to him. Thus, names provide a very strong proof of history, as Livy emphasizes concerning the extension of the realm of the Etruscans in the fifth book From the Foundation of the City.⁸¹

These toponyms carry the *memoria* of “memorable” incidents, such as accession to the throne by a ruler, victories, the death of a beloved parent or friend, and so on. More precisely, they are the metadata that ensure that the significance of various types of *lieux de mémoire* can be decoded:

At the start of a reign, on the day of the acclamation as king, the ancients customarily consecrated statues or composed inscriptions as a reminder, or built towns or founded colonies as a perpetual reminder of the event and to spread the glory of their name. Therefore the old names given to places are a very strong argument in historical research.⁸²

Decoding toponyms is, however, no trivial matter. *Derivatio* helps to distinguish between homonymous toponyms, as in the case of “Volturna” (either a river, the city of Capua, or the Etruscan city).⁸³ But a toponym can also have a number of different explanations, depending on different points of view. As an etymological approach, this was not new (see below on “Kyriat Arba” for an example from Nicolaus de Lyra), but Anniius develops the method much

⁸⁰ “Hii sunt qui egressi sunt post Nymbrotum singuli cum familiis et coloniis suis, relinquentes nomina sua locis in signum expeditionis a Iano patre commisse, et ad monumentum posteris, ut scirent quis eorum fuerit conditor” (Berosus-Anniius, sig. Q5v).

⁸¹ “[...] quia ad fulgorem ac memoriam rei gestae ueteres imponebant sua nomina montibus, fluminibus, et locis, ut in quarto antiquitatum Berosus dicit et nos in comentariis super eum probauimus. Et ideo a nominibus est ualidissimum historiae argumentum, ut Liuius (5, 33, 7) arguit de amplitudine imperii Thuscorum in.v. Ab urbe condita” (Anniius, sig. d4r).

⁸² “ueteres pro inito regno solitos die acclamationis regiae sua sacrare simulacra uel titulos inscribere ad memoriam, et oppida edificare, et colonias mittere suo nomine illustratas ad perpetuam memoriam gestae rei et ad fulgorem nominis propagandum; et ob id uetusta nomina locis indita faciunt in historia efficacissimum argumentum” (Anniius, sig. X5r).

⁸³ “Aut Volturna est nomen primitiuum sine compositione sincopaque, aut simplex et deriuatiuum, aut compositum sincopatam et deriuatiuum. Si est primitiuum simplex et sine sincopa, significat fluuium in Samnio [...]. Si uero sit simplex et deriuatiuum, significat Capuam, [...] quia deriuatur a cognomine fluuii Voltorni [oVlturni *ed.*] [...]. Ceterum si sit nomen compositum a uol et turrena et per sincopam in compositione dictum Volturna, tunc significat urbem, caput imperii Thuscorum [...]” (Anniius, sig. c1r).

further. An example are the etymologies for “Viterbum”. The toponym “Viterbum” first of all attests to its former power:

Therefore we find that ancient names expressing public power are compounds of two words; one of them expresses old age, the other the word (i.e. communication) and the state of authority. An example from the Hebrews is “zanedrim” (i.e. seventy elders), from the Romans “Decree of the Senate”, from the Greeks “paleologos”, from “paleos” “old” and “logos” “reason and word”, from the Etruscans “lucumonium”, from “lucu” “old” and “moni” “reason and word”, and finally “Viterbum” “old word or power”.⁸⁴

But the expression of its old power is not the only message “Viterbum” conveys. Annus uses medieval semantic theory, according to which a *nomen* (*noun* or *name*) can have multiple meanings:

Concerning this, what the blessed Thomas [Aquinas] teaches, should be noted; he says that it is one thing whence a name is imposed, another what it is meant to signify. As is asserted by the most learned Donatus, the noun/name signifies the substance and individual or common quality, and nevertheless it signifies the substance, i.e. another essence [...]. Therefore, when the most knowledgeable Desiderius [the Longobard king] gave the very old city a new name, he imposed the name “Viterbum” because of its individual and common properties, and nevertheless he signified something else. First, we have to see on which qualities the name “Viterbum” is based, then, what it signifies in respect to its substance. And we will proceed after grammatical rules as follows. Viterbum has several qualities, and therefore the name comes from several sources, and consequently all opinions are correct – except the first one.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ “Vnde nomina importantia publicam potestatem apud ueteres composita inuenimus ex duabus dictionibus, quarum altera uetustatem et senium, altera uerbum et rationem imperiosam importet, ut apud Hebreos zanedrim (*i.e.* septuaginta seniores, sig. H2r), apud Romanos senatus decretum, apud Grecos paleologum, a paleos uetus, et logos ratio et uerbum, apud Etruscos Lucumonium a ucu uetus et moni ratio et uerbum, et tandem Viterbum ueterum uerbum siue dictatura” (Annus, sig. H3r-v). For *dictatura* in the meaning of “power” in “Viterbum” cp. “Et hoc modo accipitur uerbum in nomine Viterbo pro dicto siue imperio et presidentia suffragiorum atque dictatura” (Annus, sig. e5r, my emphasis).

⁸⁵ “Pro quo notandum est quod in prima parte docet beatus Thomas dicens, aliud esse a quo nomen imponitur et aliud ad quod significandum imponitur. Nam teste peritissimo Donato, nomen significat substantiam et qualitatem propriam uel communem, quia nomina imponuntur a proprietate rei quae est eius qualitas propria uel communis, et tamen significat substantiam, idest aliam essentiam [...]. Itaque cum Desiderius litteratissimus adiecit urbi antiquissimae nouellum nomen, ab eius utique qualitibus propriis uel communibus Viterbum nomen imposuit, et tamen aliud significauit. Primo igitur uidendum est, a quibus qualitibus Viterbum nomen dicatur, deinde quid substantialiter significet. Et ita grammaticae

The wrong opinion referred to first afterwards is no more fanciful than the seven others that follow. Together they provide a unifying structure for the qualities of Viterbo's past, its heroes, its fortifications, its being a settlement of Roman veterans, and so forth. Concerning the substance of the *nomen*, the *uera significatio* (Annius, sig. e4v) of "Viterbum"/"Veterbum" preserves the *memoria* of the old political power of the city.

Ethnonyms

Ethnonyms are no less significant as markers of *memoria*; but they follow different rules, and rules that may contradict each other. They provide, however, strong structural indicators of the distant past, if deciphered correctly. Firstly, the immigrant takes the name of the indigenus.⁸⁶ Secondly, the defeated gets the name from the victorious.⁸⁷ Thirdly, ethnonyms can be derived from the names of the rulers:

The name of the Celts has often changed. First they were called Samothei, then after [their ruler] Celitus Celts, then after Galatus Galatians, thence after Beligius Belgians, afterwards by the Romans Gauls, finally descendants of Francus.⁸⁸

The same has happened to the Germans – according to Tacitus this last name was imposed on them by the Romans (*Germ.* 2,5) – whose dizzying name changes started out with one Tuyscon, a giant and son of Noah after the Flood, after whom they were first called "Tuyscones" ("Germanum quoque nomen sepe a ducibus uariatum fuit", Annius, sig. X2r).

procedemus. Qualitates plures habet Viterbum, et ideo a pluribus originem habet, et ob id omnes opiniones uerae sunt, excepta prima" (Annius, sig. e4r). Thomas discusses this several times, e.g. *Summa theologiae* II^a-IIae q. 92 a. 1 ad 2, *Scriptum super sententiis* lib. 1 d. 22 q. 1 a. 2 co. See corpusthomicum.org (consulted on 14.4.2020). "Donatus" means the *Ianua*. See Schmitt 1969, 74. The definition is often quoted by humanists, e.g. by Lorenzo Valla in the *Dialectica* and Niccolò Perotti in the *Cornu copiae* (see Pade 2000, 75).

⁸⁶ "et tunc quia indigenae non denominantur ab aduenis, et item ante Pelasgum regem Turrenum nomen et dominium inuenitur, consequens est ut antiqui Turreni non dicantur a Torebo nouitio neque sint proles lydorum, sed econtrario ipse aduena [aduene *ed.*] Torebus ab indigenis Turrenis cognominatus sit Turrhenus. [...] Item quia aduena ab indigenis cognominantur" (Annius, sig. B1r–B1v). On "Turrhenus" see Wifstrand Schiebe 1993, 389–396.

⁸⁷ "Ad hoc respondetur per id quod ait Seruius super primum Eneidos (1, 6), quia uicti a uictoribus nomen accipiunt. Et idcirco Etrusca Vmbria Pelasgia, licet parum durauerit, a uictoribus Pelasgis dicta fuit" (Annius, sig. B1v). Since the Phenicians were defeated by the Assyrians, Phenician letters are also called Assyrian: "Hoc omnes concedunt, quod Nynus [...] et totam Asiam [...] armis subegit [...]. Et quia teste Seruio super Eneida a uictoribus uicti denominabantur antiquitus, idcirco Assyrii omnes uocabantur, et ob id eadem sunt antiquae litterae Assyriae atque Phenices" (Annius, sig. I5v).

⁸⁸ "Sepe uariatum est Celtarum nomen. Nam principio Samothei dicebantur, inde a Celito Celte, post a Galate Galatii, hinc a Beligio Belgae, post a Romanis Galli, postremo Francigenae" (Annius, sig. X2r).

Patterns of cultural memory influence language

Annius's interest in historical toponymy leads him to identify a fundamental message embedded in the layout of cities as *lieux de mémoire*, as sites of memory of their (former) importance; and to describe this phenomenon adequately, he develops a new terminology.

“Four cities” in history

Medieval Bible commentaries (and Jerome before them) had long been interested in the name of an early city mentioned in Joshua 14, 15: “Cariatharbe”, later called Hebron. Jerome had in *De situ et nominibus* explained this as a compound noun meaning “city four”.⁸⁹ Nicolaus de Lyra, the early-fourteenth century postillator of the Bible, collected the various attempts to explain the meaning of the name:

The name Hebron: it was earlier called Cariatarbe, i.e. city four, because the four major patriarchs are buried there with their wives [...]. Or because of the four giants buried there, as is said in more detail in Gen. xxiii. Some say that it was called Cariatarbe, i.e. city of Arba, who was the ruler there and from whom other giants are descended. [...] One can bring all these explanations into agreement [by saying] that by the infidels it was called Cariatarbe because of the four giants buried there and because of the proper name of the ruler there. But by the faithful it was called Cariatarbe because of the four major patriarchs buried there.⁹⁰

Annius picks this up in a discussion of settlement history immediately after the Flood, where Hebron takes pride of place as the world's oldest settlement. Annius registers its earlier name as Chyriat Arbe and discusses its meaning:

⁸⁹ HIER. sit. et nom. p. 84, 10–12 “Arbe, id est quattuor, eo quod ibi tres patriarchae, Abraham, Isaac et Iacob, sepulti sunt, et Adam magnus”. p. 108, 32–33 “Cariatharbe, id est uillula quattuor, quae et Chebron: de qua iam supra dictum est”. See *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae Onomasticon*, lemma: Cariatharbe, vol. II col. 190,49–60 (Jacobsohn) Lipsiae 1907–1910. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, lemma: Arbee, vol. II col. 403,57–60 (Vollmer) Lipsiae 1900–1906.

⁹⁰ “Nomen Ebron: antea vocabatur Cariatarbe, idest ciuitas quattuor, eo quod quattuor Patriarche principales ibi sunt sepulti cum suis coniugibus [...], uel propter quattuor Gigantes ibi sepultos ut plenius dictum fuit Gen. xxiii. Aliqui uero dicunt quod uocata est Cariatarbe id est ciuitas Arbe qui dominatus fuit ibi, et a quo descenderunt alii Gigantes. [...] potest autem dici predicta concordando quod ab infidelibus uocata est Cariatarbe propter quattuor gigantes ibi sepultos et propter nomen proprium illius qui ibi dominatus fuit. A fidelibus uero uocata est Cariatarbe propter quattuor patriarchas principales ibi sepultos” (Nicolaus de Lyra, *Postilla super Bibliam*, ad Ios. 14, 15). Text from Nicolaus de Lyra, *Postilla super totam Bibliam*, ed. Johannes Andreas, Rome: Conradus Sweynheym and Arnoldus Pannartz, 1471–72, ISTC in00131000, (without page numbers).

Some Hebrews have a different view – followed by the brother de Lyra – wherefrom directly after the Flood (Hebron) was called “chyriat arbe”, that is in Greek “tetrapolis”, in Latin “urbs quadrata” or with one word in the manner of the Greeks “quadriurbs”, or – as the common commentators (of the Bible) say, – “city four”.⁹¹

Anniius agrees with earlier commentators that “Chyriat Arba” was *four city*, but four of what? Anniius rejects de Lyra’s interpretations. His own theory emerges slowly from other “four cities” known from the Bible:

And thus, every ruler of a people was four-cityish and royal like the ruler of Kyriat Arba. And Nimbrot, the ruler of the Chaldeans was four-cityish; as he himself attests, the royal seat was Babel, Arat, Acat, Calanne. The royal city of Ninus was a four city, Ninive, Fora, Cale, Resem. A four city was the royal Jerusalem, Sion, Moria, Iebus and Salem.⁹²

The constituent element of the “four city” is clear from these examples: it has four parts, and this defines its importance.

A theory of urban development and a new terminology

Out of the toponym of the earliest “four city”, Anniius develops a theory and terminology of urban layout as a *memoria* of the former importance of a town, since the earliest cities differed not in the size of their populations, but in the number of their parts.⁹³ Number of parts and importance of a city were closely correlated:

And therefore, Xenophon says in some fragment: “In old times a city which was a monopolis was rural, a dipolis rich, a tripolis was one that was the capital of a province, a tetrapolis was royal.”⁹⁴

Semantically, Anniius’s terminology is quite problematic. He treats the terms “tetrapolis”, “quadriurbs”, and “urbs quadrata” as synonymous, which they actually were not.

⁹¹ “Verum quidam Hebrei dissentiunt, quos frater de Lyra sequitur, unde ab inicio post diluuium dicta sit chyriat arba, idest Grece tetrapolis, Latine uero urbs quadrata siue uno Greci uocabulo quadriurbs, siue ut uulgares postillatores urbs quatuor” (Anniius, sig. I6v).

⁹² “Et ita singulos populorum duces fuisse quadriurbios regios, ut dux Kyriat Arba, et Nymbrotus dux Caldeorum fuit quatriurbus, quia ut ipse testatur sedes regia fuit Babel Arat, Acat, Calanne. Regia item Nyni quatriurbs fuit, Nyniue, Fora, Cale, Resem. Quatriurbs fuit regia Ierosolima, Sion, Moria, Iebus, et Salem” (Anniius, sig. I7v).

⁹³ “Differebant enim urbes antiquitus non multa magnitudine, sed multitudine partium eiusdem, quod aliae erant monopoles, aliae dipoles, aliae tripoles, regiae uero semper tetrapoles” (Anniius, sig. N6r).

⁹⁴ “Et ideo Xenophon in quodam fragmento, ‘Antiquitus’, inquit, ‘urbs monopolis rustica erat, dipolis uero opulenta, tripolis quae prouinciae caput esset, tetrapolis uero regia’ ” (Anniius, sig. I7r).

“Tetrapolis” is, like the other Greek loanwords “monopolis”, “dipolis” and “tripolis”, regularly formed. Similar compounds are in Latin already in Hugutio (though not “monopolis” and “dipolis”).⁹⁵ There, however, the terms designate regions with a certain number of cities (i.e. a tetrapolis is a region with four cities). In classical Latin we find only “tetrapolis”, though not in the meaning used by Anniius. The situation in Greek itself is similar. “Monopolis” is not attested (according to Liddell-Scott-Jones), “dipolis” is twice in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, though not in the Latin translation by Birago (see below for “urbs quadrata”), “tripolis” is somewhat more frequent, though with the meaning “league of three cities”, and “tetrapolis” has a number of Greek examples which also are not in Anniius’s meaning. It is also transliterated rather than translated in the Latin *Strabo* of Guarino and Tifernas, a text Anniius was well acquainted with (again in the meaning “region with four cities”).

“Tetrapolis” is the only one of the four types of city for which Anniius suggests terms with Latin roots, “quadriurbs” and “urbs quadrata”.⁹⁶ Anniius considers “quadriurbs” a loan translation from the Greek (“uno ut Greci uocabulo”, see above), but it is in a variant form attested in the *Breviarium* of Festus (in the *Epitome* by Paulus Diaconus):

Accius called Athens a four city, because the inhabitants had come together from four cities into one.⁹⁷

According to the *Epitome* the term refers to four groups of inhabitants of Athens, though nothing is said about a fourfold division of the city itself. There Again, Anniius – if he was aware of the passage in Festus – took over the word form, not the meaning.

“Vrbs quadrata”, too, is neither a synonym of “tetrapolis” nor does it otherwise designate a “city in four parts”. The binomial normally means quadrangular city, referring to its layout, and is usually applied to the layout of the mythical first settlement in Rome. The designation first appears in Solinus: “Rome is called quadrangular, because [*its layout*] was designed for balance” (SOLIN. 1, 17). In the same meaning it is used in humanist Latin, for example

⁹⁵ Hugutio, *Derivationes* P 102, 19 “Item componitur tripolis, tetrapolis, pentapolis, exapolis, neapolis, decapolis, idest regio in se continens vel civitas habens sub se alias III vel IIII vel V vel VI vel IX vel X civitate”.

⁹⁶ Other terms floating around in Quattrocento Latin are “biurbs” in Tifernas’s *Strabo* (14, 1, 43, gr. διπολις) and Piccolomini’s *Asia* (PICCOLOMINI *Asia* p.370), and “triurbs”, also in *Strabo* (16, 1, 24, gr. τριπολις).

⁹⁷ “Quatrurbem Athenas Accius appellavit, quod ex quattuor urbibus in unam civitatem se homines contulere” (PAVL. FEST. p.259). The orthography of the word oscillates. The codex Farnesinus of Festus has *quadrurbem*, the *Epitome* (in Lindsay’s 1913 edition) has *quatrurbem*, probably influenced by the “t” in *quattuor*. “Quadriurbs”, the form used by Anniius, would be the “normal” form, parallel to other compounds with *quadri-*. Anniius could have found the definition also in Perotti’s *Cornu copiae* (48, 5), which he cites elsewhere.

in the translation of Dionysius of Halicarnassus by Lampo Birago, often quoted by Anniius, where it serves as translation of the Greek “tetragonos” (with four angles).⁹⁸ The information from the (Latin) Dionysius is transformed by Anniius into a confirmation of his theory of urban development:

In the same book Dionysius says that Romulus on the Palatine hill established an “urbs quadrata” of the same size as Athens.⁹⁹

The mention of Athens, which is not in Dionysius, might suggest that Anniius was aware of the Festus passage quoted above. The “urbs quadrata” Rome of the preceding example is in fact a tetrapolis:¹⁰⁰

Also, Romulus developed the town Rome into a city by incorporating the Palatine hill and made it into a tetrapolis consisting of Rome, Vellia, Germallia, and the Forum, as Fabius Pictor says in his book *About the Origin of the City of Rome*, and as Varro implies in the first book *About the Latin Language* with the etymologies of these words.¹⁰¹

The information in “Fabius Pictor” is the following:¹⁰²

Romulus [...] converted in Latium the townlet Rome into a royal tetrapolis and put its foundations on the Palatine hill. He sent to Etruria for a seer and priest and established an olymp¹⁰³ and consecrated a

⁹⁸ DION. HAL. 2,64,3 τεκμήριον ὅτι τῆς τετραγώνου καλουμένης Ῥώμης; “quod is extra eam est quae quadrata dicta est Roma, quam Romulus muro cinxit” (trad. Lampo Birago)

⁹⁹ “In eodem dicit Romulum in Palatino colle quadratam fecisse urbem tantae quantitatis quantum habent Athene” (Anniius, sig. M3r).

¹⁰⁰ An overview is provided in Baffioni 1981, 331–2.

¹⁰¹ “Romulus item oppidum Romam in urbem conuertens totum collem Palatinum cinxit et tetrapolim reddidit constantem Roma, Vellia, Germallia, et Foro, ut exprimit Fabius Pictor De origine urbis Romae, et Varro in primo De lingua Latina (5, 53–54) per origines horum uocabulorum significat” (Anniius, sig. I7v).

¹⁰² The information is also in Sempronius-Anniius: “At Romulus solum ex oppidulo Roma in Palatino colle quadratam et regiam reddidit, cuius quatuor portiones erant Roma, Vellia, Germallia” (sig. L2v), although either by an oversight of Anniius or a loss of text only three parts of the four-part city are actually named.

¹⁰³ *Olympus* is here used in a meaning created by Anniius: “ ‘Olympus’ is not only the heavens and a very high mountain, but also the city boundary, i.e. the space which has been hallowed first in a city by an omen; this is told among the Greeks by Xenophon in the book *About Homonyms* and by Plutarch in the *Life of Romulus*, where he says: ‘The Etruscans hold sacred some writing, secret rites and a furrow which we call olymp’.” (“Est autem olympus non solum celum et mons quisque altissimus, sed et pomerium idest locus augurio primum in urbe sacratu, ut docent ex Grecis Xenophon in libro De Equiuocis [*i. e. Xenophon-Anniius*, sig. I3r], et Plutarchus in Vita Romuli dicens: ‘Etrusci sacrant litteris et mysteriis quibusdam et fossa, quam olympum dicimus’”, Anniius, sig. F6r). Plutarch (*vita Romuli* 11,2) actually says more or less the opposite, namely that the Etruscans called this furrow “mundus” and used the same word for the heavens (= *Olympus*). Of the two translations of the *Vita Romuli* available in print, by Lapo da Castiglionchio and Giovanni Tortelli, Anniius uses the translation by Lapo: “Vocant autem fossam ipsam eodem quo Olympum nomine mundum” (text

border; from the olymp in the vicus Thuscus over the Palatine he led the plough around from the foot of the hill to the top and (thus) marked the *urbs quadrata*.¹⁰⁴

Anniius's terminology shows its full potential in the description of the urban development of early Etruria:

You are asking about “tetrapolis”: what is a tetrapolis? Answer: It is a “quadriurbs” or “urbs quadrata” containing four big towns, such as Etruria [i.e. Viterbo] which contains Volturna, Vetulonia, Para Tussa, Arbanum.¹⁰⁵ A “tripolis” contains three large cities, such as Arezzo and Perugia which contains the towns Griphonium, Vibium Achaeum, and Meon Turrhenus. [...] A “dipolis” contains two big cities, such as Bagnoreggio which contains Ciuita and Roda. Similarly, Tuscanella contains Ciuita uetus and Ciuita noua. The same layout is found in Nuetum, now Cornuetum [...] which contains Castrum Nouum et Castrum Vetus. Finally there is the “monopolis” which contains one town, such as [...] Blera, Veianum and similar towns.¹⁰⁶

Thus Anniius arrives at an understanding of urban geography as a *lieu de mémoire* of cultural structures that are no longer visible otherwise. Since an appropriation of the cultural dynamic thus uncovered depends upon an adequate descriptive terminology, Anniius creates, partly by redirecting existing terms, partly by inventing new designations *ope ingenii*, a lexicon corresponding to what he sees as the urban realities of a pre-Roman and pre-Greek culture.

from: Plutarchus, *Vitae illustrium virorum* [Latin]. (Venice: Nicolaus Jenson, 1478), sig. a10v; ISTC ip00832000). The Tortelli-translation does not contain the word “Olympus”: “Quae quidem cum in orbem deducta esset mundum ut caelum appellabant” (Plutarchus, *Vitae illustrium virorum* [Latin], ed. J. A. Campanus ([Rome]: Ulrich Han, [1470]), sig. b2r; ISTC ip00830000 (besides the Campano edition I also checked the Tortelli translation in BAV Ottob. lat. 1863, fol. 160v; both at this point have an identical text).

¹⁰⁴ “Romulus [...] in Latio Romam oppidulum in regiam tetrapolim uertit inque Palatino colle fundauit. Ascito enim ex Etruria uate atque sacerdote olympum fecit pomeriumque sacrauit, et aratro ab olympo in uico Thuscho [!] per Palatium circumducens ab imo collis ad uerticem quadratam urbem signauit” (Fabius Pictor-Anniius, sig. M4v).

¹⁰⁵ cp. “Quod nunc Viterbum dicitur, olim regia tetrapolis Etruria dicebatur” (Anniius, sig. c7r).

¹⁰⁶ “Queris item de tetrapoli: quid est tetrapolis? Responsio. Est quadriurbs siue quadrata urbs continens quatuor magna oppida, ut Etruria quae continet Volturnam, Vetuloniam, para Tussam, Arbanum. Tripolis uero continet tres magnas urbes, ut Aretium, et Perugia quae continet oppida Griphonium, Vibium Acheum, et Meonem Turrhenum. [...] Dipolis uero continet duas magnas urbes, ut Balneoregium quod continet Ciuitam et Rodam. Similiter Tuscanella continet Ciuitam ueterem et nouam. Pari forma Nuetum nunc Cornuetum, latina uero interpretatione Grauisce, quae continet Castrum nouum et uetus. [...] Porro monopolis quae continet unum oppidum, ut [...] Blera, Veianum et eiuscemodi” (Anniius, sig. h3r).

Conclusion: the cultural memory of language

If we now return to Mlynář’s description of the interaction between language and collective memory – used, in adapted form, as my section headings – we see that it describes Annus’s *modus operandi* aptly. With considerable ingenuity Annus proposes rules of language change and etymology that allow him to bring forth the submerged memory of a forgotten language retained in a wide variety of sources: some of them also used, but “misunderstood” by humanists, some little used as historical sources (the Old Testament, arguably the most significant historical work outside the humanist orbit), some invented by himself. Once the desired “cultural memory of language” is established, a careful analysis of particular toponyms or ethnonyms can provide a structured approach to the cultural narrative encoded.¹⁰⁷ Finally, we have discussed a striking example where the discovery of certain patterns in the urban landscape of the old world leads to an innovation in Latin necessary to describe the new insights (“tetrapolis”, etc.). Weaponizing these methods, Annus presents what is probably the most thorough rearrangement of historical information available at his time.

The weaknesses of Annus’s cultural construct were, from the beginning, all too obvious. Still, the model was not altogether unsuccessful, and not only in Viterbo.¹⁰⁸ Countries such as Germany or France gleefully adopted a version of their past that allowed them to bypass the “Roman connection”.¹⁰⁹ Such successes had nothing to do with plausibility or philological and historiographical rigour, but everything with political and cultural identity politics at any one time – which made the “lightness of interpretation” of the Annian approach quite bearable, even welcome.¹¹⁰

We will forever remain in doubt whether Annus really hoped to replace the humanists’ version of the past with his own. What he did, beyond doubt, accomplish was to de-stabilize humanist historiography by showing that with the same methodology, given enough imagination, one could arrive at a very different, but overall hardly less meaningful memory.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ The term “cultural memory of language” is from Samata 2014, although she uses it in a different context.

¹⁰⁸ The speech of the Viterbese notary Tommaso Veltrellini before the French king Charles VIII (1994) contains one of the first echoes of the nascent cultural ideology of Annus (such as the origin of the Palaiologan emperors from Viterbo and the *Decretum Desiderii*). See VELTRELLINI *or ad Carolum VIII* p.37–38.

¹⁰⁹ Niutta 2018, 47–48. Lepschy 1998, 50. 52–53. Müller 2010, 260 and 261 n. 100. Nothhaft 2016, 716. Rhein 1996, 378.

¹¹⁰ The “unbearable lightness of interpretation” is a phrase often used in memory and mentality studies, coined by Cofino 2008, 83.

¹¹¹ See the considerations by McCaffery 2002 in his review of Ruthven 2001.

Whether Anniius of Viterbo was a compulsive liar and falsifier, a psychotic madman obsessed with false memories, an accomplished writer of scholarly fiction, a brilliant – if by our standards misguided – socio-historical researcher, or a satirist set on destabilizing the prevailing cultural narrative of his day, we will never know.¹¹² What is clear, however, is that the theoretical foundations he formulated had an impact that was much further-reaching than his intricate and often amusing reconstructions and imaginings of an Etruscan world at the beginning of time. His clarity concerning the evaluation of sources in historical research has been noted by Anniius researchers; and we can now add his achievements in language research. Many of his individual assumptions about etymology and language change are as muddled as those of his more respected contemporaries. Nevertheless, the cogency of his edifice of language development from the earliest times to the vernaculars of his day, its relation to social and political events and structure and, finally, his insights into the importance of language for the preservation of cultural memory are achievements that, even though largely based on imaginary sources, can be put side by side with the products of the humanists of his time.

¹¹² A similar madness was described by Beiner 2018, xvii. Curran 1998–99, 169 suspects “fits of madness”. Ligota 1987, 56 suggests that Anniius might have been “a sophisticated explorer of fictions”, comparable to the Argentine author Borges. Nothaft 2016, 715 calls the *Antiquitates* an “antiquarian hoax”.

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