

## Late Antiquity and the Antiquarian

---

**ABSTRACT** Arnaldo Momigliano, the most influential modern student of antiquarianism, advanced the view that there was a late antique antiquarianism, but also lamented the absence of study of the history of antiquarianism in this period. Part of the challenge, however, has been to define the object of such a study. Rather than “finding” antiquarianism in late antiquity as Momigliano did, this article argues that a history that offers explicit analogies between late antique evidence and the avowed antiquarianism of early modern Europe allows a more self-conscious and critical history of late antique engagement with the past. The article offers three examples of this form of analysis, comparing practices of statue collecting in Renaissance Rome and the late Roman West, learned treatises on the Roman army by Vegetius and Justus Lipsius, and feelings of attachment to a local past as a modern antiquarian stereotype and in a pair of letters to and from Augustine of Hippo. **KEYWORDS** Antiquarianism, Arnaldo Momigliano, Renaissance, statue collections, Vegetius, Augustine of Hippo, comparative history, the past

---

The prominence of the past in Late Antiquity has become popular among students of the period as a distinguishing characteristic of late antique culture: Averil Cameron has suggested that “remaking the past” was a major cultural and intellectual preoccupation across society; Marco Formisano has proposed that the “processing not just of the past but of relation to the past” is a key to late antique literary aesthetics; and David Scourfield has advanced the idea that the special character of late antique culture was the multiplicity of ways that the past was integrated into the present.<sup>1</sup> In substantiating these arguments about

Early thoughts on this topic were presented in Ghent in May 2016. I thank the audience in Belgium, particularly Peter Van Nuffelen and Jan Willem Drijvers, Paul Kosmin, Cillian O’Hogan, Felipe Rojas, and Valeria Sergueenkova for feedback that was vital to the development of this argument. I particularly thank Elizabeth DePalma Digeser and the two referees at SLA for extremely helpful responses and advice that improved the final article.

1. Averil Cameron, “Remaking the Past,” in *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World*, eds. G. W. Bowersock, Peter Robert Lamont Brown, and Oleg Grabar (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

---

*Studies in Late Antiquity*, Vol. 1, Number 4, pps. 335–358. electronic ISSN 2470-2048. © 2017 by the Regents of the University of California. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press’s Reprints and Permissions web page, [www.ucpress.edu/journals.php?p=reprints](http://www.ucpress.edu/journals.php?p=reprints). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1525/sla.2017.1.4.335>.

the distinctive culture of the past in Late Antiquity, the dominant contemporary approaches are the renewed study of literary historiography and discussion of the role of religious identities in shaping interest in the past. To take the first of these, late antique historiography has become a hot topic in both anglophone and continental scholarship, with much fresh work both on established questions of sources and sincerity and on new areas like rhetoric and generic development.<sup>2</sup> So too, the question of whether and how religious outlook affected the reception of the past (or pasts, classical and biblical) has been very productive, perhaps most prominently as one of the central themes of Alan Cameron's *The Last Pagans of Rome*.<sup>3</sup>

This article takes a different approach to late antique engagement with the past, one focused on how inhabitants of the late Roman empire related to traces of former times, by looking for antiquarianism in Late Antiquity.<sup>4</sup> Taking a comparative approach to defining what might count as "antiquarian" in the late

---

University Press, 1999), 1–20; Marco Formisano, "Towards an Aesthetic Paradigm of Late Antiquity," *Antiquité Tardive* 15 (2007): 277–84; J. H. D. Scourfield, "Textual Inheritances and Textual Relations in Late Antiquity," in *Texts and Culture in Late Antiquity: Inheritance, Authority, and Change*, ed. J. H. D. Scourfield (Swansea: Classical Press of Wales, 2007), 1–32.

2. The breadth of recent scholarship on late antique historiography is difficult to encapsulate: there has been important work on specific historians, on historiographic genres, notably the chronicle, and on historiography in languages other than Greek and Latin. Brian Croke, "Historiography," in *The Oxford Handbook to Late Antiquity*, ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 405–36 provides bibliography and a quite recent state-of-the-field. Despite the range of the work being done, Peter Van Nuffelen has suggested that this topic is still marginalized in the study of Late Antiquity: "Introduction: Historiography as Cultural Practice," in *L'historiographie tardo-antique et la transmission de savoirs*, eds. Philippe Blateau and Peter Van Nuffelen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), 11–20.

3. Alan Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), arguing that the classical past, refigured as "secular," became a common property of both pagans and Christians. The thesis has not commanded universal assent: see Rita Lizzi Testa, ed., *The Strange Death of Pagan Rome: Reflections on a Historiographical Controversy* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013). For late antique literary views of the Roman past, see Hervé Inglebert, *Les Romains Chrétiens face à l'histoire de Rome: Histoire, Christianisme et Romanités en Occident dans l'Antiquité Tardive (IIIe-Ve Siècles)* (Paris: Institut d'études augustiniennes, 1996) and Ulrich Eigler, *Lectiones vetustatis: römische Literatur und Geschichte in der lateinischen Literatur der Spätantike* (Munich: Beck, 2003). For other religious pasts, see Annette Yoshiko Reed, "'Jewish Christianity' as Counter-History? The Apostolic Past in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and the Pseudo-Clementine *Homilies*," in *Antiquity in Antiquity: Jewish and Christian Past in the Greco-Roman World*, eds. Gregg Gardner and Kevin L. Osterloh (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 73–216, and the essays in Christopher Kelly, Richard Flower, and Michael Stuart Williams, ed., *Unclassical Traditions. Vol. 1: Alternatives to the Classical Past in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philological Society, 2010).

4. For pragmatic reasons this article concentrates on evidence from the western empire in the third to fifth centuries; there is no reason to think that the search for late antique antiquarianism must be limited to this time and place. For the breadth of the potential, see Richard Payne, "Avoiding Ethnicity: Uses of the Past in Late Sasanian Northern Mesopotamia," in *Visions of Community:*

Roman world, I put late antique archaeological and literary materials alongside more recent, self-consciously antiquarian phenomena. Through comparative method, we can avoid conceiving the late antique past only in terms of continuity or departure from classical or biblical historical consciousness, but instead think of it in relation to another society, early modern Europe. Christopher Celenza has already advocated for comparative work on Late Antiquity and the Renaissance on the grounds that both periods are defined by religious change and complexity and by a belatedness with respect to classical Roman antiquity.<sup>5</sup> This article, then, takes up this suggestion by using early modern antiquarianism to re-contextualize the evidence for forms of late antique interest in the past. I contend that such a comparison is a valuable heuristic for a broader understanding of late antique historical culture, beyond any specific literary genre or particular religious community. It allows us to be sensitive to social practices and literary texts that both take the past as past and, implicitly or explicitly, assert the possibility of a presence for that past in their contemporary moment.

In this article, I first address the problem of locating “the antiquarian” in Late Antiquity, particularly in the wake of the work of Arnaldo Momigliano. This discussion justifies the approach in the second part, where I offer three examples where we can find analogies between late antique and early modern practices, ideas and texts (statue collecting; learned study of military organization; antiquarian sentiment) as test cases for an explicitly comparative study of Late Antiquity and the antiquarian. This article is not intended as a full history of late antique Roman antiquarianism, but rather as a reflection on how this history has (not) been and could (still) be written.

### LOOKING FOR LATE ANTIQUE ANTIQUARIANISM

As for other periods and cultures, the possibility of late antique antiquarianism has been raised in recent scholarship, but it has received little exploration beyond use as a convenient label for particular texts or activities.<sup>6</sup> Paradoxically,

---

*Ethnicity, Religion, and Power in the Early Medieval West, Byzantium, and the Islamic World*, eds. Walter Pohl, Clemens Gantner, and Richard Payne (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012), 205–221.

5. See Christopher Celenza, “Late Antiquity and the Florentine Renaissance: Historiographic Parallels,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62 (2001): 17–35, and “Late Antiquity and the Italian Renaissance,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1172–1199.

6. Ghent and Groningen universities have initiated a funded research project on antiquarianism in Late Antiquity that will produce future dissertations and publications on the topic and organized a conference in 2016, at which an earlier version of this paper was presented. On late antique antiquarian writing, see G. Maslakov, “The Roman Antiquarian Tradition in Late Antiquity,” in *History and*

this lack of study may be due to the influence of the most distinguished historian of antiquarianism, Arnaldo Momigliano. His profoundly influential 1950 essay, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian," is an inviting history of antiquarianism from the fifth century BCE to the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> He charted it from its emergence in the form of Herodotean description, through the golden age of antiquarian erudition in early modern Europe and the ultimate incorporation of learned method into history proper in the age of Gibbon, and finally to the modern relegation of antiquarianism from respectable intellectual activity. What has made the essay enticing and valuable for so many scholars in the 67 years since it was published, however, is not simply the map of the antiquarian territory that it provided, but also the moments when the guide pointed out empty plots along the way.<sup>8</sup> Significantly for readers of this journal, in one of these moments, Momigliano asserts that "the whole history of Roman antiquarian studies from Fenestella to John Lydus is still to be written."<sup>9</sup>

---

*Historians in Late Antiquity*, eds. B. Croke and A.M. Emmett (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1983), 100–106, Peter Van Nuffelen, "There's Always the Sun: Metaphysics and Antiquarianism in Macrobius," in *Bilder von dem Einen Gott: die Rhetorik des Bildes in monotheistischen Gottesdarstellungen der Spätantike*, eds. Nicola Hömke, Gian Franco Chiai, and Antonia Jenik (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 127–43, and Michael Maas, *John Lydus and the Roman Past: Antiquarianism and Politics in the Age of Justinian* (London: Routledge, 1992). On late antique material antiquarianism, see John Curran, "Moving Statues in Late Antique Rome: Problems of Perspective," *Art History* 17 (1994): 46–58, Jaś Elsner, "From the Culture of Spolia to the Cult of Relics: The Arch of Constantine and the Genesis of Late Antique Forms," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 68 (2000): 149–84, especially at 162, and Carlos Machado, "Religion as Antiquarianism: Pagan Dedications in Late Antique Rome," in *Dediche sacre nel mondo greco-romano: Diffusione, funzioni, tipologie = Religious Dedications in the Greco-Roman World: Distribution, Typology, Use: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, American Academy in Rome, 19–20 Aprile, 2006*, eds. John Bodel and M. Kajava (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 2009), 331–54 for Rome, and Felipe Rojas, "Antiquarianism in Roman Sardis," in *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alain Schnapp (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013): 176–200 for Asia Minor. For an earlier study (a product of the 1950s) that sets Late Antiquity within the long history of historical preservation in northern Europe, see Wolfgang Götz, *Beiträge zur Vorgeschichte der Denkmalpflege: die Entwicklung der Denkmalpflege in Deutschland vor 1800* (Zürich: Hochschulverlag an der ETH Zurich, 1999), especially 11–14.

7. Arnaldo Momigliano, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 13 (1950): 285–315.

8. Anthony Grafton, "Momigliano's Method and the Warburg Institute: Studies in His Middle Period," in *Momigliano and Antiquarianism: Foundations of the Modern Sciences*, ed. Peter Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 97–126, at 100: "his articles [on antiquarianism] provided a schematic London Underground map of the early modern world of learning, rather than an Ordnance Survey map of its details." Momigliano himself called the paper "a very provisional map of a field" when it was reprinted in 1966.

9. Momigliano, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian," 289 n.4.

However, Momigliano's assertion that there was a late antique antiquarianism—represented, at least, by the later part of the period between Fenestella (first century CE) and John of Lydia (sixth century CE)—and his consequent assumption of a simple gap in scholarship are less straightforward claims than they might first appear. Previous histories of antiquarianism, often written as forms of self-justification by practitioners or from the perspective of archaeology, had tended to see antiquarianism as either a Varronian invention that had died and been reborn in fifteenth-century Italy or as a modern science: the absence of Late Antiquity in these accounts was symptomatic of the inward focus of these avowedly disciplinary histories.<sup>10</sup> Momigliano's "Ancient History and the Antiquarian" essay takes a very different position: it is focused on the specific problem of the role of antiquarianism in the history of historiography, especially the moment in the eighteenth century when history borrowed the erudition of antiquarianism in the face of Pyrrhonist historical scepticism.<sup>11</sup> Although he nods in the 1950 paper to a formal generic distinction between synchronic antiquarianism and diachronic history, it is clear ultimately that this was not for him the only distinguishing quality of antiquarianism.<sup>12</sup> Instead, as he makes especially clear in the version of his Sather lecture on antiquarian research published in *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, he also saw differences both between an antiquarian interest in historical facts *per se* and the historian's preoccupation with historical problems and between

10. The early histories of antiquarianism were written as prefaces for large-scale antiquarian works on Rome: in the sixteenth century, Onofrio Panvinio and Johannes Rosinus both placed antiquarianism in the tripartite temporality of Renaissance humanism (ancient origins – medieval decline – modern rebirth), which connected the decline of the Roman empire with the disappearance of antiquarian study. In the introduction of his *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Romanarum* (published 1694), Johannes Graevius suggested that antiquarianism was solely a modern science, the contingent product of the ruin of antiquity. Finally, early histories of archaeology tended to affirm the idea that antiquarianism, the putative disciplinary ancestor, was a modern proto-science: see Bernhard Stark, *Systematik und Geschichte der Archäologie der Kunst* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Englemann, 1880), 43–44.

11. Momigliano's article has been the subject of recent critical interest: see, especially, Markus Völkel, "Historischer Pyrrhonismus und Antiquarismus-Konzeption bei Arnaldo Momigliano," *Das Achtzehnte Jahrhundert* 31 (2007): 179–90 and Ingo Herklotz, "Arnaldo Momigliano's 'Ancient History and the Antiquarian': A Critical Review," in *Momigliano and Antiquarianism: The Foundations of the Modern Cultural Sciences*, ed. Peter Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 127–53.

12. Momigliano, "Ancient History and the Antiquarian," 286: "I assume that to many of us the word 'antiquary' suggests the notion of a student of the past who is not quite a historian because: (1) historians write in a chronological order; antiquaries write in a systematic order; (2) historians produce those facts which serve to illustrate or explain a certain situation; antiquaries collect all the items that are connected with a certain subject, whether they help to solve a problem or not."

the social and cultural interests of the antiquaries and the subject matter of political history.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, a later paper, “Storiografia su tradizione scritta e storiografia su tradizione orale,” restates the antiquarian-historian distinction as a difference in terms of sources: written versus oral.<sup>14</sup> In other words, rather than formal criteria, a conception of antiquarianism as an “other” to true history drove Momigliano’s story of the discipline.<sup>15</sup>

In making this distinction, Momigliano could call on predecessors like Francis Bacon, who distinguished normatively between history proper and history defaced (antiquarianism), but the Italian scholar went further in his insistence on the significance and persistence of the dichotomy.<sup>16</sup> Nino Luraghi has recently pointed out the very likely inspiration for this view in the historicism of Benedetto Croce.<sup>17</sup> In the opening pages of his *History as the Story of Liberty*, Croce makes a strong distinction between erudition and history: “Neither is an historical work to be judged by the greater or less number of historical facts it contains, if only for the obvious reason that there are very copious and correct collections of facts which are quite clearly not histories. . .neither the dull metal of the chronicles nor the highly polished metal of the philologists will ever be of equal value with the gold of the historian.”<sup>18</sup> For Croce, the central task of the historian was to solve historical problems, not to recover facts.<sup>19</sup>

13. Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 54: “Throughout my life I have been fascinated by a type of man so near to my own profession, so transparently sincere in his vocation, so understandable in his enthusiasms, and yet so deeply mysterious in his ultimate aims: the type of man who is interested in historical facts without being interested in history.” See also, at 59, the three traits of ancient and modern antiquarianism: erudition, systematic writing, non-political subject matter.

14. Arnaldo Momigliano, “Storiografia su tradizione scritta e storiografia su tradizione orale,” in *Terzo contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1966), 13–22.

15. Robert W. Gaston, “Merely Antiquarian: Pirro Ligorio and the Critical Tradition of Antiquarian Scholarship,” in *The Italian Renaissance in the Twentieth Century: Acts of an International Conference at Florence, Villa I Tatti, June 9–11, 1999*, eds. Allen J. Grieco, Michael Rocke, and Fiorella Gioffredi Superbi (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 2002), 355–73, at 364–366 for this sense of the “otherness” of antiquarianism in Momigliano and more recent studies of Renaissance antiquaries.

16. For Bacon’s judgment of antiquarianism, see *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), 2C2<sup>v</sup>, antiquities are “history defaced, or some remnants of history which have casually escaped the shipwreck of time” (quoted by Momigliano, “Ancient History and the Antiquarian,” 292).

17. Nino Luraghi, “Two (More) Books about Momigliano,” *Storia della Storiografia* 52 (2007): 113–23, at 118.

18. Benedetto Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty* (London: George Allen and Unwin Limited, 1941), 16.

19. Croce, *History as the Story of Liberty*, 23: “The unity of an historical work lies in the problem formulated by an historical judgment and in the solution of the problem through the act of

Momigliano's view of antiquarianism is founded on precisely this Crocean distinction and dehistoricizes it by applying to the whole history of western historiography the idea of a persistent antiquarian other for the historian.

This position, then, led him to assert that there was a history of antiquarianism from Fenestella to Lydus still to be written: an assumption that the historians in all periods had erudite companions who were interested in the past without truly writing history. For example, Momigliano, in his essay on pagan and Christian historiography in the fourth century, contrasts the "lonely" historian Ammianus Marcellinus with the "true pagans" of his age: Macrobius, Servius, Donatus, and Symmachus, who were dedicated to antiquarianism and old texts.<sup>20</sup> In characteristic terms, then, he found late antique antiquarianism among those who wrote about the past but stood, somehow, outside history proper.

However, given the lack of clear ancient evidence for such a distinction in antiquity, Momigliano's view has recently faced criticism as projecting a modern contrast onto the ancient past.<sup>21</sup> Students of early modernity too have raised questions about the reality of such a distinction even in the heyday of the antiquarians.<sup>22</sup> As in these other periods, it is very difficult for students of Late

---

formulation"; 133: history is "the answering of those questions and the resolution of those theoretical problems which the reality of life continually raises."

20. Arnaldo Momigliano, "Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century A.D.," in *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), 107–26 at 123–124. See Arnaldo Momigliano, "The Lonely Historian Ammianus Marcellinus," in *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1980), 143–57 for the exceptionality of Ammianus.

21. For criticism of the application of "antiquarianism" to classical and Hellenistic Greek writing, see S. C. Humphreys, "Fragments, Fetishes, and Philosophies: Towards a History of Greek Historiography after Thucydides," in *Collecting Fragments/Fragmente Sammeln*, ed. Glenn Most (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), 207–24 and John Marincola, "Genre, Convention and Innovation in Greco-Roman Historiography," in *The Limits of Historiography: Genre and Narrative in Ancient Historiographical Texts*, ed. Christina Kraus (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 281–324 at 308; for Republican Roman texts, see Duncan E. MacRae, "*Diligentissimus Investigator Antiquitatis?* 'Antiquarianism' and Historical Evidence between Republican Rome and the Early Modern Republic of Letters," in *Omnium Annalium Monumenta: Historical Writing and Historical Evidence in Republican Rome*, eds. Kaj Sandberg and Christopher Smith (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 137–156.

22. For recent work that has complicated the sharp historian-antiquarian distinction in early modernity and the Enlightenment, see Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, "Antiquarianism, the History of Objects, and the History of Art before Winckelmann," *Journal for the History of Ideas* 62 (2001): 523–541, William Stenhouse, "Georg Fabricius and Inscriptions as a Source of Law," *Renaissance Studies* 17 (2003): 96–107, Anthony Grafton, *What Was History? The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and Völkel, "Historischer Pyrrhonismus und Antiquarismus-Konzeption bei Arnaldo Momigliano."

Antiquity to operationalize this contrast between history and antiquarianism: is it useful to distinguish between, for example, Servius and Donatus as antiquarians and the *Origo Gentis Romanae* as an historical text, despite their clear overlaps in source material and outlook? Or to mark out Zosimus' treatment of Roman institutions as "antiquarian" digressions from his history proper rather than treat them as an integral part of his historical vision?<sup>23</sup> Instead of holding onto these distinctions, generated in modern debates on historical method, perhaps it is time we rethink what we are looking for when we seek the antiquarian in Late Antiquity.

On the one hand, it is widely assumed, in the wake of Momigliano, that an antiquarianism did exist in Late Antiquity; on the other hand, we lack any emic concept from the period that is easily translatable as "antiquarianism"—the Latin and Greek terms *antiquarius*, *antiquitates*, and *archaiologia* all have quite different meanings.<sup>24</sup> Looking for late antique antiquarianism, then, means making choices about how to identify particular late ancient texts, passages of texts, practices and people as antiquarian, given the inevitable modernity (and Eurocentrism) of the term. Recent work on world antiquarianisms has raised this problem, but with only a little explicit reflection on how it should be done.<sup>25</sup>

23. Momigliano does sharply distinguish the *Origo* from the Virgilian commentators ("Pagan and Christian Historiography in the Fourth Century A.D.," 121–123), but see C. J. Smith, "The *Origo Gentis Romanae*: Facts and Fictions," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 48 (2005): 97–136 at 101 and 110–111 for the common mentalities behind these works. For the significant connections between Zosimus' digression on the *pontifices* (4.36) and the work of John Lydus, see Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 647–649.

24. The Greek term might best be translated as "ancient history": in Plato's *Hippias maior*, the sophist defines *archaiologia* to include the genealogies of heroes and men, the foundations of cities and lists of magistrates (285d–e). Josephus' and Dionysius' histories are the only two surviving works by this name, but we have testimonies of the same title for books by Berossus, Cleantes, and Juba. The Latin terms: *antiquarius* means admirers of archaic diction in early imperial Latin (Tac. *dial.* 21.4, 37.2, 42.2; Suet. *Aug.* 86.2) and a copyist of manuscripts in late antique usage (Jerome *Ep.* 5.2; Cod. Theod. xiv. 9.2, see Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*, 495–496 for the new late antique *antiquarii*); Varro's *Antiquitates* is the only ancient work that we can confidently say had this Latin title and so is probably not probative of genre (*Antiquitates* as a title of works by Diophantus of Sparta and Ps.-Philo are both questionable).

25. The definition of antiquarianism is a theme in Alain Schnapp, ed. *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), though note the differing and often *ad hoc* definitions of antiquarianism between essays in the volume: Alain Schnapp, "Introduction: the Roots of Antiquarianism," in *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alain Schnapp (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 1–10 at 9, antiquarianism as collection; Lothar Von Falkenhausen, "Antiquarianism in East Asia: A Preliminary Overview," in *World Antiquarianism*, ed. Alain Schnapp, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 35–66 at 35, antiquarianism as systematic interest in the past; Peter Miller, "A Tentative Morphology of European



I suggest that we do not simply see comparison of ancient phenomena with the modern conceptions of “the antiquarian” as an error of the past, but as a useful foundational principle for the study of historical culture in Late Antiquity.<sup>26</sup>

### COMPARING THE ANTIQUARIAN

What does it mean to identify activities and texts as “antiquarian” in comparative terms? It is essential that this comparative move be explicit and disciplined (to use the preferred adjective of the theorist J. Z. Smith) and not simply stand as an appealing analogy.<sup>27</sup> This means that we should steer clear of global analogies that make either overstated claims about the essence of antiquarianism, which had a long and varied history even in Europe between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries, or rely on a general commensurability of Late Antiquity with European modernity. Following Smith, this comparativism is explicitly phenomenological and based on limited similarities within broader cultural and social differences. The aim is not to find a late antique antiquarianism that mirrors the later intellectual activity *in toto*, but rather to highlight the similarities between specific practices, texts, and ideas as antiquarian. Taking this approach in the second part of this article, then, I offer three brief comparisons between elements of modern European antiquarian culture and late antique phenomena: collections of “antique” statues; systematic treatises on military organization; and parochial antiquarian sentiment. Without doubt, we could find other comparanda, but my choice here is intended to highlight both the diversity of early modern antiquarianism and of possible late ancient equivalents. These examples are also inevitably partial, but can make the point about how our evidence for various late antique engagements with the Roman past might appear similar (from our perspective) to self-consciously antiquarian activity

---

Antiquarianism, 1500–2000,” in *World Antiquarianism: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. Alain Schnapp (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2013), 67–87 at 69, antiquarianism as reconstruction; Rojas, “Antiquarianism in Roman Sardis”, 192 n.3, antiquarianism as interest in the study or collection of the past. It is also a theme in a very recent volume edited by Benjamin Anderson and Felipe Rojas, *Antiquarianisms: Contact, Conflict, Comparison* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017), in which the essays by the editors, in particular, seek useable pasts for post-procedural archaeology at the cost of what seems to me to be a historically-conscious definition of antiquarianism.

26. For a similar approach—focused on art history rather than antiquarianism—see Jeremy Tanner, “Aesthetics and Art History Writing in Comparative Historical Perspective,” *Arethusa* 43 (2010): 267–88.

27. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1990), 51–53, drawing on F. J. P. Poole, “Metaphors and Maps: Towards Comparison in the Anthropology of Religion,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 54 (1986): 411–57.

and, so, locate these engagements within a more generous picture of late antique historical culture.

One of the most salient forms of early modern antiquarianism was the practice of collecting ancient art. In contemporary French and Italian, as a consequence, the nouns *antiquaire* and *antiquario* primarily mean “dealer of antiques.” Kathleen Christian’s recent *Empire without End*, a study of major early antiquities collections in Rome, shows how ancient sculpture, in particular, was the prime object of collecting in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.<sup>28</sup> Roman native aristocratic families collected reliefs and plastic sculpture for display in their urban properties. For some, like the arriviste Lorenzo Manlio, this sculptural display happened on the walls facing the city streets; for more secure families, gardens and courtyards were used for the presentation of classical art and, consequently, as venues for noble self-fashioning.<sup>29</sup> The most famous effort of this type was the statuary collection of Julius II (1503–1513) displayed in the Cortile del Belvedere, headlined by the *Laocoön* and the *Apollo Belvedere*.<sup>30</sup> This period also saw the beginning of public display of antiquities: in 1471 Sixtus IV moved a set of ancient bronze statues to the Capitoline as a gift to the *populo Romano* and as a “restoration.”<sup>31</sup> This Capitoline collection was later augmented when anxiety during the papacy of Pius V (1556–1572) about keeping idolatrous statuary in the Vatican led to the transfer of more statues from the Cortile del Belvedere.<sup>32</sup>

28. Kathleen Wren Christian, *Empire Without End: Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome, c. 1350–1527* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010). See also earlier work by Claudio Franzoni, “Rimembranze d’infinita cose. Le collezioni rinascimentali di antichità,” in *Memoria dell’antico nell’arte italiana*, Vol. 1: *L’uso dei classici*, ed. Salvatore Settis (Torino: Einaudi, 1984), 299–360; Sara Magister, “Censimento delle collezioni di antichità a Roma: 1471–1503,” *Xenia Antiqua* 8 (1999): 129–204, and Salvatore Settis, “Des ruines au musée: la destinée de la sculpture classique,” *Annales. Histoire. Sciences Sociales*. 48 (1993): 1347–80 and “Collecting Ancient Sculpture: The Beginnings,” *Studies in the History of Art* 70 (2008): 12–31.

29. Christian, *Empire Without End*, 74–78 for Lorenzo Manlio (the antiquities are still visible in the wall along the via del Portico d’Ottavia in the Roman Ghetto) and 48–52, 78–85, 208–211 for the collections inside the properties of noble families.

30. Adolf Michaelis, “Statuenhof im vaticanischen Belvedere,” *Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts* 5 (1890): 5–72; Christian, *Empire Without End*, 163–67 and 265–75.

31. Adolf Michaelis, “Storia della collezione capitolina di antichità fino all’inaugurazione del Museo (1734),” *Mitteilungen des kaiserlich deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Roemische Abteilung* 6 (1891): 3–66 at 11–19; Christian, *Empire Without End*, 103–113. Rome was not alone: see William Stenhouse, “Roman Antiquities and the Emergence of Renaissance Civic Collections,” *Journal of the History of Collections* 26 (2014): 131–44, which surveys some parallel early civic collections of Roman antiquities in Italy and southern France.

32. Michaelis, “Storia della collezione capitolina di antichità fino all’inaugurazione del Museo (1734),” 35–42; Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 14–15.

This collecting was antiquarian (rather than mere spoliation) in the sense that it was informed by increased knowledge of the Roman past and some measure of connoisseurship. The account of ancient sculpture in Pliny's *Natural History* shaped collections and was used for the identification of iconography and artists.<sup>33</sup> For example, Julius II pursued the purchase of the *Laocoön* in part because of the appearance of the statue in Pliny's text and its attribution to named artists.<sup>34</sup> It also fit with the clear Virgilian connections of the statuary in Julius' Belvedere display, which included a *Hercules*, *Venus Felix*, and "*Cleopatra*" beside the two famous statues already mentioned.<sup>35</sup> The bronzes placed on the Capitoline by Sixtus IV were linked by antique Roman symbolism: they included the famous statue of the wolf, imperial portraits, and a *Hercules Victor* that had been found in the Forum Boarium.<sup>36</sup>

There are good late antique comparanda for this antiquarian practice of intentional collection and display of ancient statues. Despite early Christian hostility to idolatry—shared with Renaissance Rome—and sometimes vivid stories of idol-smashing saints, there is tangible evidence of concern with preservation, recovery and display of pagan statuary.<sup>37</sup> The collection of Greek art

33. See Leonard Barkan, *Unearthing the Past: Archaeology and Aesthetics in the Making of Renaissance Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 65–117 for Pliny "as the central grounding text in the rediscovery of ancient art" (66).

34. Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, 2–7 discusses the reception of the *Laocoön* after its disinterment. The famous account of the discovery by Francesco da Sangallo makes the link clear: "immediately my father said, 'that is the *Laocoön*, which Pliny mentions.'" (quote from Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, 3). See also Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, 243–47.

35. For Julius' antiquarian Virgilian program, see Arnold Nesselrath, "Wissenschaftliche und nichtwissenschaftliche Beschäftigung mit der Antike," in *Hoch Renaissance im Vatikan 1503–1534* (Ostfildern: Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1999), 236–39 at 236–37 and Paolo Liverani, "Antikensammlung und Antikenergänzung," in *Hoch Renaissance im Vatikan 1503–1534* (Ostfildern: Verlag Gerd Hatje, 1999), 227–35 at 227–29. The entrance of the court was inscribed with the tag *procul este profani* (*Aen.* 6.258). The "*Cleopatra*" is now identified as a sleeping nymph or Ariadne, see Haskell and Penny, *Taste and the Antique*, 184–187.

36. Michaelis, "Storia della collezione capitolina di antichità fino all'inaugurazione del Museo (1734)," 12–19 and Barkan, *Unearthing the Past*, 53–54. Note the caution of Christian, *Empire Without End*, 116: not all the statues moved had clear political resonance, such as the genre sculpture of the *Spinario*.

37. This phenomenon of preservation and display has received significant attention in recent scholarship. See Curran, "Moving Statues in Late Antique Rome," Sarah Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and "Collecting and the Creation of History," in *Museum Archetypes and Collecting in the Ancient World*, eds. Maria Wellington Gahtan and Donatella Pegazzano (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 146–55, Lea M. Stirling, "Statuary Collecting and Display in the Late Antique Villas of Gaul and Spain: A Comparative Study," in *Statuen in der Spätantike*, eds. F. A. Bauer and Christian Witschel (Wiesbaden: Reichart, 2007), 307–21, Machado, "Religion as Antiquarianism: Pagan Dedications

by Constantine in order to populate his new capital at Constantinople with appropriate decoration is the most prominent example.<sup>38</sup> From Rome itself, a set of artist inscriptions, which attributed old statues to named artists, date to the third or fourth century and attest to connoisseurship.<sup>39</sup> For example, a statue base for Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, had the inscription “work of Tisicrates” (*opus Tisicratis*) added to it.<sup>40</sup> The other names are Praxiteles, Phidias, Bryaxis, Polyclitus, Timarchus, and Calamis. It is unlikely that the statues given these attributions were actual works by the artists. Rather, this phenomenon (whether sincere or not) was a display of learning and, perhaps, artistic appreciation: the artists were Greeks who lived in the Classical and Hellenistic period and appear in the Roman literary accounts of art, like Pliny’s *Natural History*, that shaped Renaissance engagement with ancient statues over a millennium later.

Elsewhere, we can find interest in old statues on a much smaller scale: Claude Lepelley has brought attention to how, by Late Antiquity, the west bath at Cherchel (ancient Iol Caesarea in Mauretania) contained a deliberate collection of statuary.<sup>41</sup> Some fifty statues were recovered in excavations during the

---

in Late Antique Rome,” Ine Jacobs, “Production to Destruction: Pagan and Mythological Statuary in Asia Minor,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 114 (2010): 267–303, Douglas Boin, “A Late Antique Statue Collection at Ostia’s Sanctuary of Magna Mater: A Case-Study in Late Roman Religion and Tradition,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* 81 (2013): 247–77. Curran and Machado call this activity “antiquarianism,” though without specifying what that means to them. The Oxford *Last Statues of Antiquity* project now provides a more global view of the evidence for statues in late antique culture (see R. R. R. Smith and Brian Ward-Perkins, *The Last Statues of Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) and the online database [laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk](http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk)).

38. Bassett, *The Urban Image of Late Antique Constantinople*, esp. 37–78; for the cultural consequences of this collection, see Cyril Mango, “Antique Statuary and the Byzantine Beholder,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 17 (1963): 55–75.

39. *CIL* 6. 10038–43. See also Eugenio La Rocca, “Sul Circo Flaminio,” *Archeologia Laziale* 12 (1995): 103–119 at 118 for *opus Calamidis*. The date of these inscriptions has been controversial: paleography points to the third century, but several scholars have preferred the fourth century for at least some of them, including the famous Quirinal horsetamers (or Dioscuri). For third century dating, see *CIL*, M. Kajava, “Cornelia Africana F. Gracchorum,” *Arctos* 23 (1989): 119–31, La Rocca, “Sul Circo Flaminio,” 118–119; for fourth century dating, see Theodor E. Mommsen, “Die Wiedergabe des griechischen  $\phi$  in lateinischer schrift,” *Hermes* 14 (1879): 65–76 (Quirinal horsetamers), Degrassi in *Inscr. Ital.* 13,3,72 (Tisicrates), Machado, “Religion as Antiquarianism: Pagan Dedications in Late Antique Rome,” 352 n.117 (Tisicrates).

40. *CIL* 6. 10043.

41. Claude Lepelley, “La musée des statues divines: La volonté de sauvegarder le patrimoine artistique païen à l’époque théodosienne,” *Cahiers archéologiques: fin de l’antiquité et moyen âge* 42 (1994): 5–15 at 10–11 (probably overstating the religious connotations of the movement of statues). Lea M. Stirling, “Patrons, Viewers, and Statues in Late Antique Baths,” in *Patrons and Viewers in Antiquity*, eds. Stine Birk and Birte Poulsen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2012), 67–81 puts this

nineteenth century, of various dates and quality; a set of late inscriptions on the bases of some of these statues—including images of Juno Regina and Hercules—records that they were moved from decrepit locations (*translata de sordentibus locis*).<sup>42</sup> Similar inscriptions, recording the relocation of statues from out of the way or ruined locations, are attested from elsewhere in Africa and Italy.<sup>43</sup> At Cherchel, however, this movement of statues was not merely *ad hoc* conservation: they were not placed haphazardly in their new locations, but were ordered into curated groups on the basis of iconography—matching gods and goddesses, a group of satyrs.<sup>44</sup> Among the sculpture was also a portrait of the last Mauretanian king Ptolemy, perhaps suggesting that local history was also a theme.<sup>45</sup> Like Sixtus IV's display of bronzes on the Capitoline for the Roman people, then, the west bath housed an antiquarian collection of statues for Cherchel.

As in Rome during the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the archaeologist Lea Stirling has shown that there are also signs that domestic collection of old statues in Late Antiquity existed alongside these more public efforts.<sup>46</sup> There are some challenges to identifying these collections, and it can be unclear from excavation (or old excavation reports) whether particular sculpture was on display during late antique occupation of houses. Even where it is possible to know what was visible, the processes of collection can be unclear, and it is difficult, without the epigraphic testimony available for public statues, to choose between gradual acquisition and intentional collection. In some cases, however, domestic

---

collection at Cherchel in the context of archaeological data from baths elsewhere in empire. Lepelley also identified a similar “museum” at Bulla Regia (11–12), but note the recent skepticism of Anna Leone, *The End of the Pagan City: Religion, Economy, and Urbanism in Late Antique North Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 169–176.

42. *CIL* 8. 20963 (= *ILS* 5482); 21076; 21078; 21079. The lack of a patron's name for these movements (unlike in other parallel cases) might be suggestive that this was a communal effort (though perhaps not a formally political action authorized by the *ordo* or similar body).

43. These inscriptions have been discussed by Lepelley, “La musée des statues divines,” and Curran, “Moving Statues in Late Antique Rome.” Examples are known from Beneventum (*CIL* 9. 1563 and 1588), Ostia (*CIL* 14. 4721), Verona (*CIL* 5. 3332), Liternum (*CIL* 10. 3714) and Thurbersicu (*CIL* 8. 25998).

44. According to Stéphane Gsell, *Cherchel, Antique Iol-Caesarea* (Algiers: Direction de l'intérieur et des beaux-arts, Service des antiquités, 1952): 112.

45. *CIL* 8. 9342.

46. See, in addition to works already cited, Lea M. Stirling, *The Learned Collector: Mythological Statuettes and Classical Taste in Late Antique Gaul* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005) and “The Opportunistic Collector: Sources of Statuary Decor and the Nature of Late Antique Collecting,” in *Museum Archetypes and Collecting in the Ancient World*, eds. Maria Wellington Gahtan and Donatella Pegazzano (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 137–45.

collections of old statuary are apparent. At a villa near Cordoba known as Casa del Mitra, recent archaeological work has established that a group of second-century statues, including the eponymous Mithras Tauroktonos, were put on display in the third and fourth centuries.<sup>47</sup> During the late third century—certainly after 248 CE—the villa was reconstructed; one of the new elements was the placement of two niches in a central court for the presentation of sculpture.<sup>48</sup> The gap between the date of the statues and the location of display suggests the owner's concern for these then-old objects. Similarly, at the villa at El Ruedo, in the same region, the excavators assigned a much larger collection of statuary, some of which dated to the early imperial period, to the fourth- and fifth-century phase of occupation, which was the most opulent period in the life of this building.<sup>49</sup> The most intriguing piece in this collection is a portrait of the emperor Domitian, recut from an earlier portrait of Nero. Given the posthumous unpopularity of Domitian, it is hard not to imagine that the fourth-century owner of the portrait did not make the same identification as modern art historians and held onto the antique sculpture for its value as an old object.<sup>50</sup> These Spanish examples are not exceptional, despite a general trend away from the display of statuary in late imperial Roman villas.<sup>51</sup> In this light, these late antique sculptural collections, public and private, are commensurable with the famous antiquarian collections of Renaissance Rome. Seeing the late antique collections as antiquarian should, in turn, highlight how much more historical culture in Late Antiquity we can find if we do not confine ourselves to seeing antiquarianism as the “not-history” written by authors like Macrobius or Servius.

47. Jose Luis Jimenez Salvador and Manuel Martin-Bueno, *La Casa del Mitra (Cabra, Cordoba)* (Cabra: Delegación de Cultura de Ilmo. Ayto. de Cabra, 1992), 77–78.

48. The dating is based on a coin of Philip the Arab found beneath a floor and the style of mosaics in the villa.

49. D. Vaquerizo Gil and José Miguel Noguera Celdrán, *La villa romana de El Ruedo (Almedinilla, Córdoba): decoración escultórica e interpretación* (Córdoba: Servicio de Publicaciones, Universidad de Córdoba; Diputación de Córdoba; Universidad de Murcia, 1997).

50. See Vaquerizo Gil and Noguera Celdrán, *La villa romana de El Ruedo*, 106–11. This portrait was found in the nineteenth century and only later associated with the villa. See Stirling, “Statuary Collecting and Display in the Late Antique Villas of Gaul and Spain”, 313 for the suggestion that the portrait did not hold specific iconographic relevance for its late antique owner.

51. Robert Coates-Stephens, “The Reuse of Ancient Statuary in Late Antique Rome and the End of the Statue Habit,” in *Statuen in der Spätantike*, eds. F. A. Bauer and Christian Witschel (Wiesbaden: Reichart, 2007), 171–87 at 178–81 records some possible private collections of old statues in Rome in fourth- and fifth-century contexts. For the limits of this practice, see Stirling, “Statuary Collecting and Display in the Late Antique Villas of Gaul and Spain,” on the diversity of domestic statue assemblages in the late antique West.

This does not mean that texts need fall out of the picture completely: two treatises on the old ways of war are worth reading in parallel. The first, Justus Lipsius' *De militia Romana* (1595–6), treated the Roman army, one of several antiquarian studies of that institution published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>52</sup> In his preface, Lipsius explains to his reader that the work is the first part of a bigger project, an “historical torch” (*fax historica*) that would illuminate Roman *mores* and the passages in Roman historians that touched on them.<sup>53</sup> The author had been exposed to the Italian antiquarian tradition during a stay in Rome in 1568–1570 and the text lives up to the style of his predecessors by offering a systematic treatment, based on the text of Polybius' sixth book.<sup>54</sup> The second text is the *Epitoma rei militaris*, composed in either the late fourth or early fifth century by an author we now know as Vegetius.<sup>55</sup> A comparison between these two texts might strike readers who know them well as eccentric: Lipsius' dismissal of Vegetius' book on the grounds that the latter mixed the military customs from different periods of Roman history was decisive for the (negative) modern reception of the *Epitoma* and implies a significant difference in approach.<sup>56</sup> Modern readers have also been ambivalent about the application of

52. See Jeanine de Landtsheer, “Justus Lipsius' *De Militia Romana*: Polybius Revived or How an Ancient Historian Was Turned into a Manual of Early Modern Warfare,” in *Recreating Ancient History: Episodes from the Greek and Roman Past in the Arts and Literatures of the Early Modern Period*, eds. Karl Enekel, Jan de Jong, and Jeanine De Landtsheer (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 101–22 for an introduction to the *de militia Romana* and Therese Schwager, *Militärtheorie im Späthumanismus: Kulturtransfer taktischer und strategischer Theorien in den Niederlanden und Frankreich (1590–1660)* (Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2012) for a full study of the place of the work in Lipsius' thought and in late Humanism. See also the collection of these treatises in the tenth volume of Graevius' *Thesaurus*.

53. Justus Lipsius, *De militia romana libri quinque: commentarius ad Polybium*, Editio tertia, Aucta variè & Castigata, (Antuerpiae: ex officina Plantiniana, apud I. Moretum, 1602), 9: *specimen et primitias nunc praebeo, quod FACEM HISTORICAM non ex superbia, sed ex proposito, appellavi. Id est, ut mores Romanos publicos privatosque proferam (alibi et Graecos) atque eos ita illustrem, ut simul loca scriptorum veterum, qui alludunt vel tangunt.*

54. See Jan Papy, “An Antiquarian Scholar between Text and Image? Justus Lipsius, Humanist Education, and the Visualization of Ancient Rome,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 35 (2004): 97–131 at 100–101 and Schwager, *Militärtheorie im Späthumanismus*, 99–102 for the antiquarian nature of Lipsius' *fax historica*. On Lipsius' antiquarian education, note the letter quoted by Papy at 103–104 for the stay in Rome during 1568–1570.

55. The author's full name is likely Flavius Publius Vegetius Renuus. The date has been the subject of much controversy – the work must have been written between 383 and 450, but further certainty seems out of reach. The introductions in N. P. Milner, *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996) and Michael D. Reeve, ed., *Vegetius: Epitoma rei militaris* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004) rehearse many of the arguments.

56. Lipsius, *de militia Romana*, 13: *Nam Vegetius quidem nihil habet meri, ac sui et superioris aevi instituta aut mores miscet ac confundit.* For the effect of this judgment on Vegetius' reputation, see Milner, *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, xiv. More recently, Schwager, *Militärtheorie im*

the antiquarian label to Vegetius' book: N.P. Milner, for example, calls it "an originally antiquarian account of Cato's army tricked out and rearranged as a commentary on present-day inadequacies."<sup>57</sup> A juxtaposition of the two books, however, shows greater similarities between the early modern antiquarian work and the late antique treatise than either Lipsius or modern scholars imply.

Both texts offer a systematic study of the Roman republican army. For Lipsius, it must be admitted, the structure of the book appears baroque: his *De militia Romana* is organized both as a five-book commentary on Polybius 6.19–42 and as a dialogue between himself and a student.<sup>58</sup> The Polybian text, however, is not treated in the order of the original, but is rearranged in the interests of a logical presentation, so that the internal speakers discuss recruitment in the first book, personnel in the second, armament in the third, battle in the fourth, and discipline in the last book.<sup>59</sup> Lipsius also outfitted the end of each book with Ramist epitomes—graphical summaries of the content—to guide the reader to his logical arrangement.<sup>60</sup> His use of Polybius also allows him to focus on the army of imperial conquest; he writes that after the civil wars of the first century only the name and shadow of the Roman army survived.<sup>61</sup> The *De militia Romana* is laden with extensive quotation from other Greek and Roman authors and, occasionally, illustration from inscriptions and coins to support interpretations of Polybius' text. The effect is a commentary by collage.

---

*Späthumanismus*, 171–182 argues against the idea that Lipsius actually effectuated a break from the Vegetian tradition of military thinking. Elsewhere in the *de militia Romana*, Lipsius both corrects Vegetius (17, 59, 76, 118–119, 141, 151–152) and cites him as an authority, though often only for late antique practice (44–45, 73, 75, 76, 79, 183–184, 215, 242, 244, 245–247, 262, 276, 305, 308–313, 363, 364). Vegetius also served as a prominent source in his earlier *Politica*, a Tacitean work on statescraft: see Schwager, *Militärtheorie im Späthumanismus*, 170–171.

57. Milner, *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, xxviii and 51 n.2: "not as an essay in antiquarian reconstruction"; OCD<sup>s</sup> *s.v.* "Vegetius Renatus, Flavius" (Campbell): "He took an antiquarian interest in the army, ignoring the detailed changes accomplished by Diocletian and Constantine"; and Yann Le Bohec, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Roman Army*. 3 Vols. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2015) *s.v.* "Writers: Late Empire" (Rance): "A significant part, however, may be classed as 'antiquarian,' in method if not in intention; Vegetius clearly aimed to resolve the problems of his day." See also Brian Campbell, "Teach Yourself How to Be a General," *Journal of Roman Studies* 77 (1987): 13–29 at 27 for an insistence that ancient military treatises not be viewed as antiquarian on the grounds that they had utility.

58. For the background to Lipsius' choice to use Polybius to examine the *militia Romana*, see Arnaldo Momigliano, "Polybius' Reappearance in Western Europe," in *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), 79–98. The choice to use a dialogue form may have been influenced by a famous predecessor: Machiavelli's *Arte della Guerra* (1521).

59. See Lipsius, *De militia Romana*, 13 for the order and de Landtsheer, "Justus Lipsius' *De militia Romana*," 119–121 for a tabulation of the sections of Polybius text treated in each book.

60. Lipsius, *De militia Romana*, 46, 97–98, 149, 209, 366.

61. Lipsius, *De militia Romana*, 12.



Similarly, Vegetius treats past Roman military practice in a systematic order: his four books address, in turn, recruitment and training, army organization, battle on land, and, together in a final book, sieges and naval battle.<sup>62</sup> The reader is guided through this four-book structure by an initial table of contents and then lists of chapters (*capitula*) appended to the front of each book.<sup>63</sup> In all parts of the book, Vegetius' primary interest is the military practice of what we would call the Republican period; he calls it *antiqua consuetudo* (1.praef.; 1.4; 1.8; 1.20), *antiqua virtus* (1.28), *vetus consuetudo* (2.8), and writes of the *antiqua legio* (2.4) and of the practices of the *antiqui* (1.11; 1.20; 2.13; 2.20; 3.6; 3.14; 3.24). As Lipsius noticed, this programmatic interest is not always matched in practice—often more contemporary customs are described and the author switches often between past and present tenses—but a clear retrospective gaze pervades the whole.<sup>64</sup> Vegetius' treatment of his sources is also comparable with Lipsius: ancient treatment of sources of information differed from early modern practices of quotation and citation, but the late antique author is explicit about his reliance on earlier writers. Although we might suspect that he actually engaged with the literary tradition through unmentioned epitomes, Vegetius valued the appearance of learning; he gives lists of sources at 1.8 and 2.3, claims to use documents (the *constitutiones* of Augustus and Hadrian), and quotes poets (1.6, 1.19, 2.1).<sup>65</sup>

Neither author, however, simply provides a description of the Roman army as an object contained within the deep past; instead, a clear thread of military revivalism runs through both texts. At the start of the treatise, Lipsius as dialogic character expresses some diffidence in the relevance of his topic: “for our soldiers look down at this sort of thing, thinking them to be the songs and games of boys.”<sup>66</sup> The student character immediately refutes this view by arguing that these soldiers simply do not yet know about the past, but they should learn; in

62. Vegetius tells us in the preface to the second book that the first book had been published to a favorable response by the emperor and that had led to the addition of the later books.

63. See Reeve, *Vegetius: Epitoma rei militaris*, xxxiv-xxxvi for the likelihood that these paratextual features are original.

64. At first glance, the fourth book may seem to diverge from the trend, but even there an interest in the past is apparent: see *Mil.* 4.33, a discussion of the *liburnae* used at Actium, and the declaration at *Mil.* 4.46 that modern *lusoriae* are superior to ancient practice so no description is needed.

65. Vegetius also makes clear his use of *libri* as a source for the *antiqui* at *Mil.* 1.11, 2.praef., and 3.9. On his use of sources, see Dankfrid Schenk, *Flavius Vegetius Renatus, Die Quellen der Epitoma rei militaris* (Leipzig: Dieterich, 1930) and Milner, *Vegetius: Epitome of Military Science*, xvi-xxv.

66. Lipsius, *De militia Romana*, 11: *Nam contemnunt nostri Martes haec talia, & naenias & ludos ea habent puerorum.*

a vatic mode, he then predicts a Prince who will reform his army on the Roman model (to be provided by Lipsius).<sup>67</sup> *De militia Romana* closes with a chapter that compares Roman practice with modern in favor of the former, even over objections regarding the superiority of firearms.<sup>68</sup> Lipsius thus elucidates the relevance of the whole book to his audience: European generals should return to the model of the Roman Republic.<sup>69</sup>

A similar attitude towards the value of the past for the present is legible in Vegetius' *Epitoma*. In the first book, for example, the author opens the text by claiming that he writes for the sake of *Romana utilitas* and closes it with a suggestion that imitation of the ancient practice set out in the book would easily strengthen the army (*facile corroborare possit exercitum*).<sup>70</sup> Similarly, in the second book, he promises that if someone persuades the emperor to restore (*reparare*) the legions in accordance with his book, they will soon match the *veteres* who conquered the world.<sup>71</sup> Indeed, it is precisely this aspect of the text that has led scholars to be hesitant to call the book "antiquarian," apparently under the assumption that contemporary or political relevance—so obvious in Lipsius' book—is somehow extrinsic to the concept.<sup>72</sup> This is the advantage of a comparative approach: rather than work from a generalized antiquarianism, Lipsius' avowedly antiquarian *fax historica* provides a specific standard to support reading the *Epitoma rei militaris* as an antiquarian text.

67. Lipsius, *De militia Romana*, 11–12.

68. Lipsius, *De militia Romana*, 355–365.

69. Remarkably, the actual reception of Lipsius' book validates his point: Maurits of Nassau used Lipsius' ideas in his reform of the Protestant Dutch army, a key event in the so-called Military Revolution and integral to the development of modern European state capacity. This reception is a key topic of Schwager, *Militärtheorie im Späthumanismus*, especially 187–239. For a less positive reception, see Anthony Grafton, "Rhetoric, Philology and Egyptomania in the 1570s: J. J. Scaliger's Inveictive against M. Guilandinus's *Papyrus*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42 (1979): 167–94 at 193–194 on Scaliger's critical marginalia in his copy.

70. Veg. *Mil.* 1.praef.: *ut quae apud diversos historicos uel armorum disciplinam docentes dispersa et inuoluta celantur pro utilitate Romana proferantur in medium*; 1.28: *Haec fidei ac devotionis intuitu, imperator invicte, de universis auctoribus qui rei militaris disciplinam litteris mandaverunt in hunc libellum enucleata congressi, ut in dilectu atque exercitatione tironum si quis diligens velit existere ad antiquae virtutis imitationem facile corroborare possit exercitum*. See Marco Formisano, "Auctor, Utilitas, Princeps. L'*Epitoma Rei Militaris* e il *De Rebus Bellicis* tra tecnica e letteratura," *Voces* 14 (2003): 155–64 on this theme of *utilitas* in Vegetius.

71. Veg. *Mil.* 2.18: *Si quis igitur pugna publica superari barbaros cupit, ut Divinitatis nutu, dispositione imperatoris invicti reparentur ex tironibus legiones votis omnibus petat. Intra breve autem spatium temporis iuniores diligenter electi et exercitati cotidie non solum mane sed etiam post meridiem omni armorum disciplina vel arte bellandi veteres illos milites qui orbem terrarum integrum subegerunt facile coaequabunt*.

72. This assumption apparently stems from the modern image of the politically disinterested antiquarian: see the following paragraphs.

A final example involves the image of the antiquarian rather than antiquarian scholarly practice. From the seventeenth century, the early modern European antiquarian had a social profile as a man with profound affection for the distant past. This image gave rise to innumerable satires, though none as pithy as John Donne's epigram, *The Antiquary*: "If in his study Hammon hath such care/ To hang all old, strange things, let his wife beware."<sup>73</sup> Following John Earle's neo-Theophrastan sketch of "The Antiquary" (1628) and Shackerly Marmion's play, *The Antiquary* (1641), the excessive lover of antiquity became a stock character on the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European comedic stage.<sup>74</sup> In the nineteenth century, Walter Scott's rather more sympathetic Jonathan Oldbuck, the eponymous character of *The Antiquary* (1816), embodied this social image of the antiquarian as lover of the past.<sup>75</sup> Although not central to the romantic plot, Oldbuck's emotional connection to his Scottish past—dramatized in a scene where the antiquary shows another character the supposed site on his land of a Roman fort constructed by the famous governor of Britannia, Gaius Agricola—makes him one of the most memorable characters in Scott's Waverley novels.<sup>76</sup>

Oldbuck is a caricature, but Rosemary Sweet's recent work on local antiquarians in England confirms that this mix of sentiment for the material past and parochialism was present beyond the pages of Scott's novel.<sup>77</sup> She quotes one such eighteenth-century antiquary who opened his work with the declaration that "a Natural Propension to the Study of Antiquities inclining my Thoughts

73. See Robin Robbins, ed., *The Poems of John Donne. Volume 1: Epigrams, Verse Letters to Friends, Love-Lyrics, Love-Elegies, Satire* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2008), 14–16 for text and commentary on this epigram.

74. Ingo Herklotz, "Der Antiquar als komische Figur. Ein literarisches Motiv zwischen Querelle und altertumswissenschaftlicher Methodenreflexion," in *Welche Antike? Konkurrierende Rezeptionen des Altertums im Barock*, ed. Ulrich Heinen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 141–82 is a very rich study of this stock character in European drama.

75. Scott's image of the antiquary was also strongly influenced by contemporary debates over the practice of history: see Ina Ferris, "Pedantry and the Question of Enlightenment History: The Figure of the Antiquary in Scott," *European Romantic Review* 13 (2002): 273–83 and Mike Goode, "Dryasdust Antiquarianism and Sappy Masculinity: The Waverley Novels and the Gender of History," *Representations* 82 (2003), 52–86, citing earlier literature.

76. Walter Scott, *The Antiquary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 40–44. Elsewhere in novel, Scott connects Oldbuck with antiquities in sentimental terms: it is a love affair (37), the cause of violent arguments (63–67) and his interest in the past is a "fever" (85).

77. Rosemary Sweet, "Antiquaries and Antiquities in Eighteenth-Century England," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34 (2001): 181–206, "John Nicols and His Circle," *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 74 (2000): 1–20, and "'Mere Dull Description': Antiquarianism and Local History in the Eighteenth Century," *The Local Historian* 38 (2008): 243–56.

that Way, an innate Affection to the Place of my Nativity did more particularly fix upon the present Subject.”<sup>78</sup> Later in the nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche elevated this type into one of three modes of relating to the past in his “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life” in 1874. As part of his argument about the ambivalence of history for modern societies, he understood the positive and negative effects of antiquarianism in terms of emotion. Connection with antiquities could be a suffocating devotion to the past but also provided local identity and self-recognition: “the history of his city becomes for [the antiquarian] the history of himself.”<sup>79</sup>

Although this literary type may be somewhat overstated, the idea of antiquarian feeling for a specifically local past has had a tangible impact in shaping the modern conception of the antiquarian and provides a useful heuristic for re-reading late antique texts for expressions of such affect. One such example might be the attachments to the past expressed in a pair of letters between Augustine and Maximus, an elderly pagan of Madauros, which are dateable to the early 390s CE (*Ep.* 16 and 17). Modern readers have focused on the rhetoric of the letters, the information they give about late antique North Africa, and the argument that Maximus seems to make for a pagan monotheism.<sup>80</sup> I suggest that we can use a comparison with the modern idea of antiquarian emotion to find another thread in the epistolary exchange.

Maximus, who is often identified as one of Augustine’s early teachers, opens his letter (*Ep.* 16) with a famous defense of the traditions of Madauros: “Greece tells

78. The quote is from Ralph Thoresby’s *Ducatus Leodiensis* (1715), a work on the antiquities of Leeds, quoted by Sweet, “‘Mere Dull Description’: Antiquarianism and Local History in the Eighteenth Century,” 247.

79. Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, Trans. R. J. Hollingdale. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 73. Elsewhere (75), he writes more critically that the antiquarian “is encased in the stench of must and mould; through the antiquarian approach he succeeds in reducing even a more creative disposition, a nobler desire, to an insatiable thirst for novelty, or rather antiquity and for all and everything.”

80. Paolo Mastandrea, *Massimo di Madauros (Agostino, Epistulae 16 e 17)* (Padova: Editoriale Programma, 1985) provides commentary on the letters. J. H. Baxter, “The Martyrs of Madaura, A.D. 180,” *Journal of Theological Studies* 26 (1924): 21–37 and Brent D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 235–239 place them in the historical context. Hans-Jürgen Horn, “Discordia concors? Zu einem Briefwechsel des Augustinus mit Maximus von Madaura,” in *Chartulae: Festschrift für Wolfgang Speyer*, eds. Ernst Dassmann, Klaus Thraede, and Josef Engemann (Münster: Aschendorff, 1998), 194–98, Sabine MacCormack, *The Shadows of Poetry: Vergil in the Mind of Augustine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 175–178 and Jennifer Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians: Correction and Community in Augustine’s Letters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 66–69 discuss their literary and rhetorical content.

an unreliable myth (*fabula*) that Mount Olympus is the home of the gods. But we see and approve (*nos cernimus et probamus*) that the forum of our city is the estate of a crowd of salutary deities.”<sup>81</sup> Like Jonathan Oldbuck or Nietzsche’s antiquarian, Maximus connects his civic identity with the remains of the past—the statues were almost certainly old by the time of Maximus.<sup>82</sup> This now is under threat, he says, from the new Christian cult of the martyrs:

Who would bear that Miggo should be preferred to Jupiter brandishing his thunderbolts or that Saname should be preferred to Juno, Minerva, to Venus, to Vesta, or – sacrilege!– the chief martyr, Namfamo, to all the immortal gods? Among them Lucitas is esteemed worthy of hardly less worship, as well as innumerable others – names hateful to the gods and to men!<sup>83</sup>

Maximus goes on to claim that the contest between the gods and the martyrs replays the Virgilian theomachy of Actium, “in which the Egyptian monsters, who will not last, dare to shake their spears at the gods of Rome.”<sup>84</sup> In place of the positive expression of approval (*probamus*) at sight of the statues, the contrast between the old (underlined by the reference to the *Aeneid*) and the new is framed in terms of passionate negative emotional response.<sup>85</sup> Through old material culture—Jupiter is described in terms of a statue’s iconography—and an old text, Maximus attaches himself to the local past.

Augustine’s reply (*Ep.* 17) denies the possibility of accepting Maximus’ pagan perspective, initially asking whether it is a joke (*iocari libet?*) and then by attacking the connections between Maximus’ declared identity and his antiquarian feeling for the material culture of Madauros: “In your forum I remember that there are two statues, one of Mars naked, the other of him in armor—demons, most hostile to the citizens, which a human statue, which was placed opposite

81. *Ep.* 16.1 (*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* 31.4.1, ed. Daur): *Olympum montem deorum esse habitaculum sub incerta fide Graecia fabulatur. At vero nostrae urbis forum salutarium numinum frequentia possessum nos cernimus et probamus.*

82. The *Last Statues of Antiquity* project has now documented the statue habit in late antique North Africa. Very few new dedications were made to deities after the reign of Constantine; from Madauros itself, inscriptions attest to honorary statues only for emperors and city patrons (*LSA* 1878, 1879, 2438, 2446, 2447).

83. *Ep.* 16.2: *Quis enim ferat Iovi fulmina vibranti praeferri Migginem; Iunoni Minervae Veneri Vestaeque Sanamem, et cunctis – pro nefas! – diis immortalibus archimartyrem Namfamomem? inter quos Lucitas etiam haud minore cultu suspicitur, atque alii interminato numero, diis hominibusque odiosa nomina. . .*

84. *Ep.* 16.2: *quo Aegyptia monstra in Romanorum deos audeant tela vibrare minime duratura.*

85. For *probare* in this sense, used for things and people, see *TLL* s.v. “*probo*”, 10.2.1464.3–72 (Spoth).

with three fingers extended, holds in check.”<sup>86</sup> Augustine rewrites the meaning of the statues in the forum, not as appropriate objects of civic sentiment but as a demonic drama. The lithic gesture of an orator becomes, in Augustine’s reading, a magical device to protect the town. His letter, though, is not a refutation of the very idea of connecting with the past. Instead, he adds another specious reason why Maximus must have been joking:

You could not forget yourself to the point that, as an African writing to Africans, when we both live in Africa, you reckoned that Punic names should be criticized . . . If you disapprove (*improbatur*) of that language, deny that much wisdom has been handed down in Punic books, as is pointed out by very learned men. You should certainly regret that you were born in the place where the cradle of that tongue is still warm.<sup>87</sup>

Augustine shows himself as a master polemicist.<sup>88</sup> In place of Maximus’ Madauran-Roman antiquarian identity, he offers a Punic-African one, founded not on old statues, but on old books, presumably including the famous agricultural writings of Mago.<sup>89</sup> It is Maximus now who risks forgetting (*te ipsum oblivisci*) and abstracting himself from his parochial identity. His approval of the statues of the gods becomes disapproval of the Punic language (*probamus ~ improbatur*). We might justly wonder about Augustine’s sincerity in this part of the letter—he has already decried Maximus’ argument as unserious—but his decision to counter with an alternative configuration of identity in terms of old culture suggests its significance for his interlocutor.<sup>90</sup> Feeling for the local past, in a way that is comparable with the modern image of antiquarian attachment

86. *Ep.* 17.1: *et in isto foro recordarer esse in duobus simulacris unum Martem nudum alterum armatum, quorum daemonium infestissimum civibus porrectis tribus digitis contra collocata statua humana comprimeret.*

87. *Ep.* 17.2: *Neque enim usque adeo te ipsum oblivisci potuisses, ut homo Afer scribens Afris, cum simus utrique in Africa constituti, Punica nomina exagitanda existimares . . . Quae lingua si improbatur abs te, nega Punicis libris, ut a viris doctissimis proditur, multa sapienter esse mandata memoriae! Paeniteat te certe ibi natum, ubi huius linguae cunabula recalent.*

88. See Caroline Humfress, “Controversialist: Augustine in Combat,” in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. Mark Vessey (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 323–35 on Augustine the polemicist.

89. See Mastandrea, *Massimo di Madauros*, 68 for this identification; note that Augustine knows these texts only at a remove and through (Latin-writing) *virii doctissimi*. This move from material to textual may have been “in the air”: Cillian O’Hogan, *Prudentius and the Landscapes of Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 165–166, argues for a similar displacement in the poetics of the contemporary Prudentius.

90. Ebbeler, *Disciplining Christians*, 68–69 points out that Augustine’s complaint about the jocular tone is part of his corrective discourse in the letter; this does not stop him from engaging with Maximus’ arguments.

to the old and the local, shapes both sides of this particular late antique correspondence alongside more salient religious and social factors.

All three of these examples point towards how we might see the forms of late Roman interest in their own antiquity as antiquarian. Without doubt, Roman Late Antiquity and European modernity are worlds apart: the particular personalities, social institutions, and texts that have appeared in the second half of this article are all products of their respective societies. Nevertheless, within these differences, we can find points of sufficient resemblance to allow us to speak of Late Antiquity and the antiquarian.

### LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE ANTIQUARIAN

This article has argued that writing the history of antiquarian activity—and, by extension, of historical culture—in Late Antiquity should be an explicitly comparative exercise. In fact, histories of antiquarianism have often been implicitly comparativist, as historians, including Momigliano, generalized some element of modern European learned engagement with the past as antiquarianism *tout court*. Instead, by offering more precise analogies between modern practices understood as antiquarian at the time and the late antique evidence, we both find justification for calling the latter antiquarian and avoid reductive generalization of the former. This approach, then, can be the basis for a more critical study of antiquarianism in societies outside the modern West.<sup>91</sup>

Roman Late Antiquity should be one of these societies; the historical culture of Late Antiquity need no longer stand alone. Instead, in at least the three ways adumbrated here, modes of relating to the past in the late Roman world had much in common with antiquarian practices, texts, and sentiment found in modern Europe, especially among those who identified themselves in this way. From the anonymous villa-owners of Spain, to the inhabitants of Caesarea and Madauros, and to the imperial official Vegetius, we can see evidence for how individuals made traces of the past—acknowledged as such—into decoration, reformist treatises, and sources of identity, just as antiquarians did a millennium later. Indeed, this comparison may also help us raise a question about periodization that underlies this journal and, more generally, modern study of western

91. On this point, I find myself in concord with a very recent essay by Peter Miller, “Coda: Not for Lumpers Only,” in *Antiquarianisms: Contact, Conflict, Comparison*, eds. Benjamin Anderson and Felipe Rojas (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2017), 210–219, at 214–216, who also advocates for explicit comparison between modern European antiquarianism, in all its historical contingency, and engagements with the past outside this time and space.

Eurasia between 150 and 750CE: what is “late” about Late Antiquity?<sup>92</sup> Through the comparison with early modern antiquarianism, the belatedness written into the term can be reclaimed as commensurable with the belatedness of modernity and so not stand as a remnant of the ideas of decline and decadence that “Late Antiquity” was intended to contest.<sup>93</sup> ■

92. The modern use of “Late Antiquity” owes much to the work of Peter Brown, especially his *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150–750* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), though it does not originate with him. On the intellectual history of the new “Late Antiquity,” see Mark Vessey, “The Demise of the Christian Writer and the Remaking of ‘Late Antiquity’: From H.-I. Marrou’s Saint Augustine (1938) to Peter Brown’s Holy Man (1983),” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998): 377–411. For some time now, the periodization has been under scrutiny, see: Andrea Giardina, “Esplosione di tardoantico,” *Studi Storici* 40 (1999): 157–180, Averil Cameron, “The ‘Long’ Late Antiquity: A Late Twentieth-Century Model,” in *Classics in Progress: Essays in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 2002), 165–191, Clifford Ando, “Decline, Fall, and Transformation,” *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008): 31–60. In a recent online forum at *Marginalia* (published September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015), Anthony Kaldellis has raised the possibility of dissolving Late Antiquity, as both a periodization and as a field with allegedly homogenous methodology: <http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/late-antiquity-dissolves-by-anthony-kaldellis/> (accessed 5/1/2017).

93. Note Giardina, “Esplosione di tardoantico,” 162–163 for a warning about seeing “roots” of modernity in Late Antiquity; phenomenologically-oriented comparison is intended to avoid such claims.