

The Unity of Roman Italy: Anomalies in Context

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SCI was kind enough to print two notes of mine on ‘some anomalies’ in the unity of Roman Italy XVI (1997, 71-6); discussion,¹ thought and further research² suggest that readers of *SCI* are owed an explanation of just where those two notes in the end have led, along with at least an introduction to the abundant (and mysteriously neglected) evidence of comparable character that my earlier article did not discuss.

In ‘the second age of Empire,’ according to the epitomator Florus, the Roman people *totam inter Alpes fretumque Italiam subegit* (1.17.9; cf. 1.3.34, 1.13.4); Arnold Toynbee put the matter even more strongly: ‘the political unification of the Peninsula by Rome ... led eventually to the population of the whole Peninsula becoming uniform in language and culture.’³ That is unassailably enshrined as the ‘standard view’ of the topic;⁴ thus Togo Salmon wrote a useful book in the same determinist spirit, entitled ‘The making of Roman Italy.’⁵ But the very name *Italia* changed meaning

¹ Notably with Dr. Emma Dench, Birkbeck College London, to whom my warmest thanks.

² To n. 20 of my 1997 article, add the Apulian woman *moribus bonis* at Varr. *Men.* 554, the southern slopes of the Matese *aspera et montuosa et fidelis et simplex ... regio*, Cic. *Planc.* 22, hardy virtues of Ligurians at Cic. *Agr.* 2.95, of Sabines and Marsi, *Vat.* 36, *Lig.* 32; cf. the severe respectability of Padua, Plin. *Ep.* 1.14.6, Mart. 11.16, Laurence in Laurence, Berry (n. 5), 104f.

³ *Hannibal's Legacy* 1 (London 1965), 93.

⁴ G. Bradley in (ed.) T. Cornell and K. Lomas, *Gender and Ethnicity in Ancient Italy* (London 1997), 61: ‘by the late first century B.C. the ethnic groups of Italy had become both politically defunct and culturally indistinguishable’; ‘homogenisation’ is the term he employs.

⁵ London 1982; cf. now J.M. David, *La romanisation de l'Italie* (Paris 1994); even T.J. Cornell, an historian peculiarly aware of the diversity of the distant Italic past, writes (*Beginnings of Rome* [London 1995], 31) of that diversity as lapsing between the Roman conquest and the fall of Rome. Cf. E. Gabba, *CAH* 8², 231; M. Crawford, *CAH* 10², 424ff. offers a minimalist presentation of the

repeatedly down to the middle Republic⁶ and the *tota Italia* which swore allegiance to Octavian before Actium⁷ was a recent political slogan: though Lucilius had used it to express Hannibal's *complete* withdrawal from Italy in 203 (825M), it is Cicero, who (along with the variation *Italia cuncta*), gives the expression its first political and historical context and thus helps us identify the chronological and presumably contextual origins of Octavian's memorable catch-phrase.⁸ Those who paused to consider an area's, or a town's loyalty in the face of Hannibal, or even Pyrrhus, or in the Social War may have gone on sometimes to seek explanations, just as the loyalties (sometimes inherited) of regional *clientelae* may likewise have provoked rewritings of the record.⁹ Cato (*Orig.* fr. 85P) had read his Polybius (3.54.2), or, perhaps, *vice versa*: the Alps protect Italy like a wall, *muri uice*. So what of Brennus, or Hannibal? Later invaders, down to Napoleon, found the wall just as permeable! But we can hardly claim for Cato¹⁰ the intellectual invention of *tota Italia* and its implicit unity, for not only did *Origines* 2-3 enumerate *unde quaeque ciuitas orta sit Italica* (*Nep. Cat.* 3.3), not merely cataloguing legendary founders but inevitably anticipating Miss Rawson's impeccable remarks on the irregular spread of Romanisation (date, means, terms and pre-existent culture are all relevant), with reasons and results;¹¹ the Censor was also explicitly aware (inevitably, like any acute observer, then or now) of regional variations in manufacture (*Agr.* 135), agriculture (*ib.* 1.2) and *mores* (*orig. fr.* 31, 32, 34). Perhaps high moral standards were the simplified exception: Cato's commemoration of *Italiae disciplina et*

evidence. K. Lomas in Cornell and Lomas (n. 4), 3, and *ead.*, *Roman Italy. A Sourcebook* (London 1996), 1ff. at least allows for an element of tension between Romanisation and older loyalties. See too R. Laurence in (ed.) R.L. and J. Berry, *Cultural Identity in the Roman Empire* (London 1998), 95ff.

⁶ Cf. my note on Virg. *Aen.* 7.178, with further bibliography (see below n. 19).

⁷ *RG* 25.2, R. Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford 1939), 284f., T. Rice Holmes, *Architect of the Roman Empire* 1 (Oxford 1929), 144f. and A. Keaveney, *Rome and the Unification of Italy* (Beckenham 1987), 189ff.; cf. too Suet. *Aug.* 17.2.

⁸ *Italia cuncta* 11x, or *cuncta Italia* 15x; *tota Italia* 36x; *Italia tota* 10x. Note too *Comm.Pet.* 34, Sall. *Cat.* 52.15, 5x in *Caes. BC.*, 16x. in Livy; see in particular 1.2.5.

⁹ Cf. E. Badian, *Foreign Clientelae* (Oxford 1958), 168ff.

¹⁰ Note too *orat.* fr. 230 Malc. on the areas of Roman growth.

¹¹ *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (London 1985), 19f.; on A.E. Astin, *Cato the Censor* (Oxford 1978), 229, cf., approvingly, E. Rawson, *JRS* 70 (1980), 198.

*uita*¹² must perforce have taken account of endlessly virtuous Sabines, rather than of lying Ligurians, and witty warlike Cisalpines.¹³ No more unified were the Italic insurgents in the Social War, despite their coin-legends *Italia/Vitelio* and their valiant attempt at federal organisation.¹⁴ We might wish to compare the role and end of the Austro-Hungarian army, 1914-18. Quite what degree of mutual understanding there existed between Rome's Italic foes is unclear;¹⁵ *in extremis*, one supposes, they could have used Latin!

Virgil

It has naturally been claimed that Virgil had a key role in establishing Italy as an 'entità ideologica',¹⁶ but we have learned that Virgil is a peculiarly complex poet and his Italians are not simply there to be led into war, united, by Augustus Caesar, against Antony's barbarian hordes, despite the appearance of comforting certainty conveyed, in isolation, by *Aen.* 8.678.¹⁷ To understand Virgil's position — and he was a Cisalpine transplanted to Campania, with, perhaps, a house in Rome¹⁸ — we have first to glance at Varro, beyond any question his principal source in matters Italic:¹⁹ *enumerans*, Macrobius tells us of Varro, with welcome specificity (*Sat.* 3.16.12), in Book 11 of the *Res humanae, quae in quibus Italiae partibus optima ad uictum gignuntur*. It was long ago seen by Geffcken and Bauck, and has not since been questioned, that this was the lost source of (e.g.) both Varro's

¹² Serv. on *Aen.* 9.603, *Orig.* fr. 76P, followed by Varro in the *de gente*, fr. 34 Fraccaro; note the Augustan Hyginus' *Urbes Italicae*, or whatever the title actually was.

¹³ Cf. C. Letta, *Athen.* 62 (1984), 3ff., 416ff., *id.* in *Preistoria, storia e civiltà dei Sabini* (Rieti 1985), 15ff. on the Sabines; *Orig.* fr. 31, 32, 34.

¹⁴ E.T. Salmon, *Sannium and the Samnites* (Cambridge 1967), 73ff. (coins) and 348f., after DS 37.1.4f.; cf. my remarks in *Aion* (Sez.ling.) 13 (1991), 17ff., revised from *Athen.* 77 (1990), 523ff. for Roman understanding of Italic constitutional terminology.

¹⁵ Cornell (n. 5), 41ff., Salmon, *Making* (n. 5), 1ff.

¹⁶ See e.g. A. Bernardi, *Enciclopedia Virgiliana* 3, 49.

¹⁷ *RFil.* 117 (1989), 57ff. traces some of the issues involved.

¹⁸ On Don. *Vita Suet.* 13, cf. my discussion in *Companion to the Study of Virgil* (*Mnem. Suppl.* 151, 1995), 8.

¹⁹ Cf. my commentary on *Aen.* 7 (*Mnem. Suppl.* 198, 2000), xx and ff., 417ff. (see above n. 6).

own later, surviving panegyric in *RR* 1.2 and Virgil's *laudes Italiae*.²⁰ A few words, then, on each of the poems.

Fifty years after the Social War, it is to Rome that Tityrus went to save his own land.²¹ His sense of wonder is one amply attested elsewhere; Rome will have been full not only of those who had fled the countryside (Sall. *Cat.* 37.4-7, Cic. *Leg. agr.* 2.71), but of those who had to visit the capital, from every corner of the peninsula, for reasons of business, elections, tourism, or family.²²

Though affinities between farming techniques mentioned in the *Georgics* and those attested specifically for Cisalpine Gaul and Campania in antiquity have been noted, we cannot infer that Virgil had those local realities in mind, though he does seem to have known both areas directly; even had he said, explicitly, *uidi*, that could just as well mean, as we now realise, 'I saw in a book'!²³ Variety of soil, and consequently of crops, was a topic hallowed by discussion in both Cato and Varro (and earlier too); Virgil's treatment²⁴ was to be expected, and though an understanding of the nexus of causes between geology, climate and diet as a whole was not to be expected, still we shall see that all the elements in the chain are in some sense recognised. The *laudes Italiae* (2.136-76) are given specificity and diversity by the use of geographically precise instances, perfectly in keeping with Menander Rhetor's analysis of good Greek literary usage.²⁵ Virgil's mentions of the wine of Mons Massicus and the cattle of Clitumnus are exactly in keeping with that distribution of prizes which Macrobius attributes to Varro *Res hum.* 11 (*supra*) and with what we read in the summary at *RR* 1.2.6f.²⁶ More to our point, for a line and a half, 2.166-7, Virgil dwells explicitly upon Italy's ethnic diversity: *haec genus acre uirum Marsos pubemque Sabellam/*

²⁰ Mynors on *G.* 2.136-76, R. Thomas, *Lands and Peoples* (PCPhS Suppl.7, 1982), 39.

²¹ *Buc.* 1.19ff. and see I.M. Le M. Du Quesnay, *PLLS* 3 (1981), 114.

²² Cf. Petr. 69.9, Claudian *carm.min.* 20, with *Invig. Lucern.* 13-4 (1991-2), 169ff., Calp. Sic. 7.4ff.; note 7.1: Corydon is away for twenty days. At Rome, even murders are not all that surprising, Varr. *RR* 1.69.3. We might also want to consider the country mouse, Hor. *Serm.* 2.6, who, alas, is more concerned with luxury than with the city itself. Juv. *Sat.* 3 is an interesting reversal of the theme: the countryman who no longer wants anything to do with Rome.

²³ Plin. 18.20, *Companion* (n. 18), 71f.

²⁴ 1.51ff., 2.109ff., 177ff., where see Mynors and note 2.226ff. on the testing of soil-types.

²⁵ Cf. my discussion at *Ancient History* 27 (1997), 11, citing e.g. Men. Rhet. 387.22, 392.23.

²⁶ Cf. *Anc. Hist.* 27 (1997), 10ff.

adsuetumque malo Ligurem Volscosque uerutos. The common feature of these four peoples²⁷ is martial prowess.²⁸ The sequence of names carries mind, eye and historical memory up, down and across central Italy. Significantly, Virgil opens the *Laudes* with *Italiae* (2.138) and closes them with *Romana* ... *oppida* (2.176) and it is Rome that rules the towns of Italy, in relative tranquillity;²⁹ that is indeed progress, in measured counterpoint to the profound variety in terrain and ethnic characteristics symbolised by the poet's choice of names, and to the agricultural diversity and difficulties round which the prize-list of 143-50 skirts, as the rhetorical context here requires.³⁰

Carlo Levi read *Aen.* 7-12 as an epic of the country's resistance to the city, of peasants against army, of South against Rome, of people against power; in an anti-Fascist context, that is historically comprehensible.³¹ Perceptions, though, have changed: 'brave but backward, simple but savage, hardy, heroic and hopeless; the terminology follows a fundamental and unresolved ambiguity in Virgil's approach' was offered recently as a definition of Aeneas' Italian opponents, after thirty years' struggle with the issue and the large bibliography it has generated.³²

Virgil declares he will sing of *totam* ... *Hesperiam* driven to take up arms (7.43f.); in the next internal proemium, he asks the Muses to help him sing *quibus Itala iam tum/ floruerit terra alma uiris, quibus arserit armis* (7.643-4). The Catalogue which follows should in part be read as a great commemoration of Italic diversity (far more strikingly so than the *laudes*): we note explicit variations in dress, arms and armour (from the bizarrely primitive to the conventionally legionary), landscape, and *mores*, snake-charmers among the Marsi (still there), bandits among the Aequi (still not unknown), and wearers of a single shoe among the Hernici (apparently unattested!). Add Etruscan haruspicy in the second catalogue (10.175-7) and

²⁷ Sabelli are Samnites, not Sabines, we recall; cf. my summary in *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*, s.v. *Sabini*.

²⁸ *Acre*; cf. App. *Civ.* 1.203, no Roman triumph against or without the Marsi.

²⁹ Cf. my n. on Hor. *Ep.* 1.7.86, B. Shaw, *Past and Present* 105 (1984), 9ff., Plin. *Ep.* 6.25 for endemic banditry even in imperial Italy.

³⁰ Notoriously, to the annoyance of David Ross ('lies') and Richard Thomas ('serious deficiencies'): see *Companion* (n. 18), 76f.

³¹ *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*, ch. 14; cf. Horsfall, *Virgilio: l'epopea in alambicco* (Napoli 1991), 87.

³² In my note on Virg. *Aen.* 7.681; that will be expressed too coolly *sine ira et studio* for many readers today, but the ambiguity in the poet's position has been noted by others, notably J. O'Hara, *Colby Quarterly* 30 (1994), 216.

the fire-walkers of Mount Soracte (11.785-8), not to mention oracular groves,³³ the typically Italic assembly of elders,³⁴ possibly the dedication of arms hung from a tree (10.423, 11.5ff.) and Turnus' three feathers.³⁵ That and more, let us note, despite an author working from written texts and in formalised rhetorical traditions and a *princeps* (*supra*) profoundly concerned with Italian unity.³⁶ Though the poet's choice of toponyms in the Italic Catalogue is at times curiously unevocative,³⁷ it was long ago noted that among the sources for the poet's choice of names for his native warriors were the toponyms of Italy: Messapus, Umbro, Ufens, Metabus all evoke associatively areas other than those with which they are explicitly connected;³⁸ not, alas, so much a systematic expansion of the epic's toponomastic riches and erudition, as has been thought, but rather an ingenious technique for expanding the extremely limited range of local hero-names available to the poet.³⁹ Juno asks Jupiter (12.820-7) that the Latins shall keep name, language and clothes (the outward signs of national identity) after they synoecise with the Trojans; so Rome's *propago* shall one day be powerful thanks to *Itala uirtute*. Jupiter agrees (*do quod uis*; the Latins shall retain name, *sermo* and *mores*, 12.833-5).⁴⁰ Emasculated, Phrygian-speaking, trouser-wearing Trojans were understandably not to inhabit the *tot congesta manu praeruptis oppida saxis*; beside Turnus' death that was the Italians' greater victory.

Then and Now

It might also be as well to offer an historical analogy in support of the notion, compatible, we might think, with the text of Virgil, that we should look a little more carefully before we assume with convenient conviction that *tota*

³³ E.g. Nemi, Feronia, and the one authentic Italic element in the erudite construct that is Albunea: *Aen.* 7.81-106 with my introduction in *Companion* (n. 18).

³⁴ Cf. the articles cited in n. 14, and notes on *Aen.* 7.611, 617, 727.

³⁵ 7.785, with *Companion* (n. 18), 254, n. 49.

³⁶ Cf. Salmon (n. 5), 143-7, Keaveney, *op. cit.* (n. 7).

³⁷ Less interesting, in short, than it need have been: contrast the brilliant use of *Algido* at *Hor. C.* 4.4.58. See too C. Edwards, *Writing Rome* (Cambridge 1996), 27ff., admirably, on evocative toponyms within the city.

³⁸ Cf. L.A. Holland, *AJPh.* 56 (1935), 202ff.

³⁹ Cf. C. Saunders, *TAPA* 71 (1940), 537ff.; Horsfall, *GR* 34 (1987), 48. Note also such names as Erulus and Dercennus, possible hints of lost local mythologies: cf. my remarks at *BICS* Suppl. 52 (1987), 4.

⁴⁰ Cf. my remarks, *RFil.* 117 (1989), 60f., *Vergilius* 35 (1989), 22-5.

Italia was totally homogenized and uniform, and was thought by the Romans to be so, apart from some technical details of agriculture! I refer to the situation in Italy today, a hundred and thirty years after Unification: government is central, as under Augustus, but also, in the Napoleonic tradition, strongly centralised. Powerful impulses to uniformity have been offered by compulsory military service (now moribund) and by modern communications technology, in particular by television. That said, homogenised centrality and geocultural diversity are irresolubly in conflict. There still remain vast differences (and what follows derives from personal observation over thirty-five years and some relevant reading), in accent, in lexicon,⁴¹ in diet and names for foodstuffs (see below, n. 45), in agricultural produce and building materials, in architecture, saints venerated, in daily *mores*, in climate, microclimates and geology, in the plants and even in the animals that you see. That is but one observer's list of variations that are, personally, interesting. No surprise: not only is it over a thousand miles from Palermo to Trieste, by train (as it once was by chariot), and the effect, in terms of environmental divisiveness, of the geography of the Appennine valleys, can hardly be overestimated;⁴² exactly the same, naturally, is true of the Valais in Switzerland, or of the Pennine valleys in England. Microclimate, altitude, and soil still have a dramatic impact on what can and cannot be grown, as Lucretius 5.1370-7 already sensed. For those who farmed to live, these tiny local variants could be crucial (as they still are, *mutatis mutandis*, to the gardener); many veteran settlements will have learned to rue bitterly their imagined good fortune. Even the Northern plain, from Bologna to Como, from Turin to Trieste, is divided by linguistic substrata⁴³ and interfaces (French in Piedmont, Austrian and Slovene in Friuli, Ladino in some Alpine valleys), just as much as by dialect.⁴⁴ The expert ear can still distinguish inhabitants of Agosta, Marano and Anticoli, three villages within three miles, between Monti Ruffi and Monti Simbruini; variations in diet are not just an interest of the author's, but, still, objectively exist and serve as a key

⁴¹ Cf. *SCI* 16 (1997), 73, n. 12.

⁴² Louise Adams Holland, *Lucretius and the Transpadanes* (Princeton 1979), 4.

⁴³ For the Celtic element in Emilia, cf. Toynbee (n. 3), 2, 664, n. 1, etc.; G. Devoto and G. Giacomelli, *I dialetti delle regioni d'Italia*⁵ (Firenze 1991), 54f.; T. De Mauro, *Storia linguistica dell'Italia unita* (Bari 1986), 299f.; B. Migliorini, *Storia della lingua italiana* (repr. Milano 1994), 19-22; G. Devoto, *Storia della lingua di Roma* (repr. Bologna 1983), 2, 305; note too likely Etruscan elements in Tuscan, notoriously the 'gorgia,' or strongly guttural pronunciation of c.

⁴⁴ It remains most illuminating to cross a significant dialect-boundary, slowly, and listen! Cf. de Mauro (n. 43), 298f.

socio-cultural indicator.⁴⁵ The old boundary between the Papal State and the Kingdom of Naples remains significant, if you know what to look for; centuries of subjection (e.g.) to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany are still vastly more significant in understanding a town's character than a few decades in a given province under unified Italian rule; Venice and Trieste are great ports, worlds, and ninety miles, apart. 'North' and 'South' remain almost valueless generalisations.

New Evidence

We turn then to the neglected evidence for significant variables within Roman Italy, variables that go far deeper than authors' formal bows to their several *patriae* of origin⁴⁶ and range far more widely than Strabo's passing laments on the decline of Greek ways in S. Italy.⁴⁷ Here, after all, we are talking about explicit evidence in prose authors of the late Republic and early empire about ample and specific instances of regional diversity within 'Romanised' Italy; why this notable bulk of evidence should have been so completely ignored remains something of a mystery. The myth of *tota Italia*, however, is powerful, and I realise that this evidence, whose bulk could easily be extended, is inconvenient:

1) Geology and soil. We have already seen how important soil-types were to Virgil (p. 42); so already to Varro (local variations, *RR* 1.20.4, *res hum. supra* pp. 41f.), and likewise later to Columella, in ample detail: see 4), 6) below and note e.g. 3.3.2f. (the general principle, with specific instances), 5.8.6 (olive), 9.13.2 (bees). We may also compare Plin. 36.175 (quarry sand) and Vitr. 2.6 (with 5.12.2) on pozzolana. Cf. 10) below: the facts are just as significant for builders as they are for farmers.

⁴⁵ As Stephen Mennell so beautifully showed, for England and France: an approach now eloquently taken up for antiquity by P. Garnsey, *Food and Society* (Cambridge 1999). For modern Italy, cf. P. Camporesi, *Le vie del latte* (Milano 1993), 105ff.; F. Cùnsolo, *La gastronomia nei proverbi* (Milano 1970); A. Capatti and M. Montanari, *La cucina italiana* (Roma-Bari 1999), 3ff.; Alan Davidson in id. (ed.), *Oxford Companion to Food* (Oxford 1999), 409f.

⁴⁶ Ovid on Sulmona (*Trist.* 4.10.3, etc.), Horace on Venosa and neighbourhood (see e.g. D. West in [ed.] C.D. Fonseca *Non omnis moriar* [Potenza 1993], 110ff.), Virgil on Mantua (*Aen.* 10.198ff., etc.); Lomas (n. 4), 3 well points to Cic. *Leg.* 2.3f. on Arpinum. It is easy to extend the list: see e.g. Prop. 4.1; W.J. Watts, *GR* 18 (1971), 91ff.

⁴⁷ 5.4.4., 5.4.7, 6.1.2, Laurence (n. 5), 99.

2) Water. On local variations, one reads with interest and respect Vitr. 8.3, written with full awareness of their relationship to both soil and crops. Cf. Varr. *LL* 6.69, and Plin. 2.224-34 (with 37.44, Vitr. 2.6.5), for some instances of local oddities.

3) Climate. On the agricultural implications of climatic variation, cf. Varr. *RR* 1.6.3 (Apulia as against mountain areas such as Vesuvius, hill against plain in general). Cf. Cato *Agr.* 1.2f., Colum. 3.2.10f., 5.8.5 (for growing olives), Plin. 17.20f. for viticulture in general and 14.60 for the consequences in selecting vine-types; see too Colum. 11.3.14f., Plin. 18.205 for the implications for sowing-times.

4) Agricultural products in general. A vast topic (cf. Mynors on 2.109ff., 177ff. for an introduction to the Greek sources), here only for passing notice, for it was perceived under significantly diverse headings, such as that of local oddities,⁴⁸ of regional superiority, as in the instances of cheese, wine, honey, figs, wheat, oil and all farm animals (see below, 5), 6), 7), 8), 13)), and of limitless local diversity.⁴⁹ Cato (*Agr.* 1.2) wisely advised the potential purchaser to go and look at the neighbouring farms: *in bona regione*, their holdings gleamed or glowed (*nitere*). Plautus, Eduard Fraenkel taught us, wrote about food just as you would expect of a true pork-fed Romagnolo.⁵⁰ Terrain determines agriculture, agriculture diet, and diet, *mores!* Poet and pedant both knew, and both listed, what the very best areas were for a given range of crops. Naturally, categories, classification and consequences could all have been developed far more fully. Plin. *Nat.* 19.16 refers to the Transpadanes' delicious linseed porridge; he was himself a native of Como.

5) Cheese. For excellence by milk-type and area, cf. Plin. 11.240-2.

6) Wine. Cf. Vitr. 8.3.12 (taste and soil), Colum. 3.2.6 (taste, climate and terrain; the whole of Book 3.1-2 is indeed devoted to this very topic and we may compare Plin. 14.21-39; see too 14.124).

7) Oil. For Pliny, the very, very best is from the Campi Phlegraei (18.111), though Varr. *RR*. 1.2.6 did not agree. See Colum. 5.8.3.

8) Honey. Specially good for its wax among the Paeligni and in Sicily (Plin. 11.33). Cf. Plin. 15.70 for excellence in figs and Varr. *RR* 1.2.6, Colum. 2.6.2 for wheat.

⁴⁸ Plin. 16.17, 19.146, 21.97, 25.86, on a medicinal herb recently discovered in Marsic territory, 26.87. Note 10.135 arrival of a new (and edible) bird *trans Padum*, ca. 70 A.D.

⁴⁹ Note particularly flax, Plin. 19.9, vines, below, and cabbages, Colum. 10.130ff. in hexameters, and Plin. 19.141. Turnips in Transpadana, Plin. 18.128.

⁵⁰ *Elementi plautini in Plauto* (trans. F. Munari, Firenze 1960), 408ff. Cf. n. 45 for modern analogies.

9) Agricultural techniques. Distinctive regional variations are noted: Varr. *RR* 1.8.6 (wine-making near Reate); 1.51.2 (reaping in (?) Liguria); 1.57.3 Apulian grain-storage, 1.29.2 Apulian ploughing, use of mule-transport in Apulia and the Salento 2.6.5; pitch used for sealing wine-jars in some areas, Plin. 14.120, 18.205 (sowing; better follow the weather, not the calendar). So too is the existence of limitless regional diversity in the specially significant cases of viticulture (Varr. *RR* 1.8.10, Plin. 14.22) and harvesting cereals (Plin. 18.296). We have already seen (p. 42) that distinctively Padane and Campanian techniques have been discerned in *Georgics* and will shortly, 15), come to the relationship between variation in technique and variation in terminology. Italy on her own was quite complex enough for the agronomist (as though we still needed arguments against the view that the *Georgics* were written to teach farming! Farming just where?) and Colum. 1.1.6 remarks on the unsuitability of Punic precepts to Italian soil. Ways of pruning olive-trees remain, in the country, a topic almost as contentious as football.

10) Building materials. In part a natural consequence of 1); cf. Plin. 36.166f. on local varieties of tufa and other stone, *ib.* 135 (after Varro), Vitruv. 2.7.1, 9.14; likewise in the case of building timber: Vitruv. 2.9.16 (larch), 10.1.1ff. (pine). Cf. Plin. 16.66 on local varieties of maple and their uses.

11) Metallurgy. Itself rooted in Varronian panegyric (Verg. *G.* 2.165f., *Aen.* 10.173, Plin. 3.138, 34.2, etc.); variation likewise in working techniques: for Capuan and other local techniques in the smelting of bronze, cf. Plin. 34.95.

12) Animals. Only in one part of the *Maesia silua*, in Veientine territory, were 'wild' dormice found (Plin. *Nat.* 8.226); in Italy, the shrew-mouse is venomous, but it is not found east of the Appennines (*ib.* 227). 'The best' areas for breeding the principal farm animals are commonplaces of panegyric and catalogue (*G.* 2.144-7, Varr. *RR* 2.1.14, 6.2: asses, Strab. 5.1.4); note Colum. 3.8.3, 6.1.1f. on the best areas for cattle, by characteristic required (*ipsa quoque Italia partibus suis discrepat*), Varr. *RR* 2.7.5 for horses and Colum. 7.2.3, Plin. 8.190 for sheep.

13) The farmer with time and money went to particular areas, even particular makers, if he was concerned to acquire the best equipment (Cat. *Agr.* 135). Note also that in Etruria *far*, emmer, (still eaten particularly in Tuscany and Umbria) was ground with a special kind of pestle (Plin. *Nat.* 18.97).

14) Units of measurement. Cf. Varr. *RR* 1.10.1 *in Campania uersibus, apud nos in agro Romano ac Latino iugeris*. See Hyg. *Grom.* p.147.7 Thulin. There were local variations in the weight of grain (Plin. 18.66).

15) Names for things. My earlier discussion (1997, 72f.) concentrated on cases of local names; the issue of regional names should not have been ignored, for vine-props,⁵¹ names for vine-types,⁵² for equipment,⁵³ in the sense of *agger* and *muris in agro Reatino* (Varr. *RR* 1.14.3), in the names used for boundary-markers (Sic. Flacc., p. 102.18 Thulin), for mounds of soil in Campania heaped round newly-planted elms (Plin. *Nat.* 17.77), for a local mineral water (*ib.* 18.141), for a poor Piedmontese kind of rye (*ib.* 18.141), for soil-types, as in the case of Campanian *pulla* (Colum. 1 *praef.* 24, 2.10.18), for boundaries, which, specifies Frontinus (*Limit.* p. 12.16ff. Thulin), may be archaic, or astronomical, or local, even limited to one town. Linguistic variation is exacerbated by levels of technicality, as in the references made to the language of *mechanici* (3.10.2) or *pastores* (7.3.17) and very frequently to that of *rustici* by Columella.⁵⁴ Local variations in terminology are a natural consequence of the variations in the objects themselves.

16) Land-tenure. Even non-specialists know that *condiciones agrorum per totam Italiam diuersas esse*; naturally, given the difference between *colonia*, *municipium* and *praefectura*, given too variations in an area's relations with Rome and in the degree of *fides* displayed. So, sagely, Siculus Flaccus begins his *de condicionibus agrorum*;⁵⁵ such variation leads to differences of *consuetudo*;⁵⁶ ditches and boundaries differ⁵⁷ as does centuriation itself.⁵⁸ To talk about the 'unità giuridica' of Italy⁵⁹ is at least in this respect problematic.

⁵¹ Varr. *RR* 1.8 *passim*; note 1.8.3 *opuli*, a name for maple at Mediolanum.

⁵² Nothing surprising in the wide range of vine types, but some change name when transported and thus *uicinae nationes nominibus earum discrepant uariantque uocabula*, Colum. 3.2.30.

⁵³ Scythes: *hae in Campania seculae a secundo*, Varr. *LL* 5.137.

⁵⁴ So too Plin. *Nat.* 16.94; cf. H.D. Jocelyn, *PLLS* 2 (1979), 116.

⁵⁵ P. 98.6ff. Thulin; in much greater detail, 99.9ff.; cf. 124.19, 129.6. Note in similar terms Cic. *Balb.* 31, *Off.* 1.35.

⁵⁶ Sic. Flacc. pp. 104.1, 106.22, 107.1, 111.20, etc.; Hyg. *Contr.* 92.13, 96.1; Grom. 83.7, 23.

⁵⁷ Sic. Flacc. 114.16, 115.6ff., 118.4, 122.18; Hyg. *Contr.* 88.4; Grom. 136.11ff.

⁵⁸ Sic. Flacc. 120.20f., 123.19f., 125.12; Frontinus *art.mens.* p.16.5, on account of terrain.

⁵⁹ E. Gabba in *La cultura italiana* (Pisa 1977), 21f.

Conclusions

Italy, we have remarked, is a long country; the standardisation of clocks is generally found to be a consequence of the introduction of railway-timetables, while the Romans wrestled with the problems of the variation in latitude between the Veneto and Sicily, in terms of the length of the shadow cast by the gnomon of a sundial.⁶⁰ On the Po, boatmen used rush skiffs (Plin. 16.178) and in Transpadana women wore amber amulets, for the obvious reason of vicinity to the Baltic trade-route (Plin. 37.44). *Italia partibus suis discrepat* remarked Columella, as we saw (6.1.1). The topic still arouses strong passions: diversity or difference does not entail dispute or division; it does not help to pretend that the differences are not there and it is perhaps a surprise to discover that they always were, and were known to be, despite the virtual consensus among historians of Roman Italy. *Tota Italia* and the modern state survive despite, or perhaps because of their elements of diversity, individually trivial perhaps, but cumulatively of moment, and to diversity it is possibly now time that historians of Roman Italy faced up. At least there is now perhaps a slightly more ample notion of what evidence there is to be found, and where.

Rome

⁶⁰ Plin. *Nat.* 6.215ff., 7.182, with Beaujeu (ed. Budé), 235f.; cf. Vitr. 9.7.1.