

The Greek Translations of Latin Vocabulary in Fabius Pictor

My paper will analyze the range and distribution of the translations of Latin vocabulary within the fragments of Fabius Pictor. I take as a given our inability to distinguish whether any individual instance of a term in the fragments is truly Fabian or is chosen instead by the author employing him (Kidd 1997; Brunt 1980); the homogeneity of the Greek translations of Latin across the centuries of Greek historiography precludes it. Yet this same homogeneity is itself an argument for the preservation of Fabius' Greek, writ large, since we have no cause to suspect that any Greek or Roman historian writing after Fabius would need to revise the translations that he had inherited from Fabius. We can be reasonably confident that the general scope and distribution of terms within the fragments can provide us a fair idea of the use of these terms in Fabius' original work.

Taking the Latin and Greek fragments together, the more recent editions of Chassignet (1996) and Beck and Walter (2001) count 32 fragments in all. Jacoby (1969) counts 36 fragments in FGrHist, including three that he labels dubious. From these fragments I have collated 66 terms that I believe might refer to a specifically Roman concept. The distribution of the terms is quite uneven. Over 80% of the vocabulary, comes from the three longest fragments, which are Dionysius' narrative of the *pompa circensis* (Ant. Rom. 7.71.1–7.73.4), the foundation narrative of Plutarch *Romulus* 3.1–8.9, and the longer and quite different foundation narrative in Dionysius (Ant. Rom. 1.79.4–1.83.3). The most significant contributions after these three come from the discussion of Sextus Tarquinius' genealogy (Dionysius Ant. Rom. 4.64.2–3) and the debate over Tarpeia's actions (Dionysius Ant. Rom. 2.38.1–2.40.2).

The categories of Roman vocabulary translated within the fragments are also represented unevenly. Social terminology, such as family relations (θυγατήρ, ἀδελφός), social relations (πελάτης, ἐπιστάτης), and clothing (ζωστήρ, χιτών φοινίκεος), fare best. Religious terms like βωμός and θυσία are also prevalent. Nearly as common are political terms like βουλή, συνέδριον, and ἄρχων, and names like Ἀμόλιος and Τύλλιος. Topographical vocabulary (Καπιτώλιον, Τέβερις) and military vocabulary (μανίπλα, τάξις) are somewhat less frequent. Finally, there are a pair of financial terms (μναῖ, τίμημα) and one from the Roman calendar (Ἀπρίλιος).

Keeping in mind the paucity of our evidence, the variety and range of the data are impressive. Most of the categories I describe above contain a broad array of quite different concepts. The religious terms, for instance, in addition to the items already noted also comprise implements (ἀρχαιϊκὸς ἀλίσκος), officials (ιερεὺς), gods (Πάν), and festivals (Λαυρενταλία). The topographical names range from the extremely particular (σκηνὴ Ῥωμυλοῦ; μέγας ἵππόδρομος), to the merely local (Βήλαβρον; Τέβερις). There are even oddities like equestrian terminology (παραβάτης, παρήγορος) and a description of an obscure ritual dance (εἰδοφορέω; προκελευσματικός). And these are sifted from a tiny fraction of Fabius' original narrative. If the breadth of his interests was as wide throughout as it is in the surviving fragments then his work must have comprehended several hundred transliterations at the very least.

Given the evident range of his contributions, Fabius' importance to the process of translating Roman concepts and terminology into Greek would be difficult to overstate. Whatever aspects of the language he invented or inherited from earlier Greeks, he granted to an extensive range of vocabulary the imprimatur of his authority and native expertise.

In doing so he established so firmly the language of Greek historiography on Rome that it remained fixed for centuries to come. Exceptions like the shift from Polybius' πεζός to Plutarch's μανπλάριος—where an evolution in Greek understanding made new vocabulary preferable—are all the more striking for their rarity. Where we might have expected dozens or hundreds of such discrepancies we find only a very few. This is evidence not only of Fabius' influence but of the linguistic conservatism of his successors, two factors that together enabled him to perform the same service for the Greek historiography of Rome that Cicero later would for Roman philosophy. Fabius established the language of discourse within the genre.

Bibliography

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