

MISCELLANEA

THE RENAISSANCE EDITIONS OF FESTUS:
NOTES ON THE TITLE¹

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Introduction

No full title for the historical-linguistic compendium of Sextus Pompeius Festus can be found in his manuscript tradition, because the first half of the *Codex Farnesianus*, the only organic witness of this work, has been missing since it was discovered in 1457.² Festus' text was an abridged version of *De verborum significatu*, the extensive treatise of Verrius Flaccus, and was subsequently abridged during the early Middle Ages by Paul the Deacon in an epitome known as *De verborum significatione*.³ These two titles and the lack of a reliable formulation for Festus' work brought about variations in the head titles used throughout its entire editorial history. This phenomenon began to emerge during the Renaissance, when some scholars appear not only to have perceived semantic differences between Paul's epitome and the *Codex Farnesianus*, but also attempted to represent these in the title. The purpose of this study is to investigate the reasons behind the different Renaissance titles for Festus, which could offer an interesting overview on how this author was perceived in the history of Classical tradition.

¹ *Notes on the Title* is the last of a series of three articles on the Renaissance editions of Festus; see Acciarino 2016a and 2016b.

² On the tradition of Festus, see La Regina 2010:216; Glinister *et al.* 2007; Mancini 2007; Ammirati 2007; Rizzo 1997; Gutiérrez González 2002; Moscadi 2001: introduction; Bracke 1995; Cesarini Martinelli and Perosa 1996; Grafton 1983:134-61; Lindsay 1913: *praef.*

³ Munk Olsen 2009:237-38; North 2008; Ammirati 2007:17-22; Lendinara 2000; Holtz 1996; Dionisotti 1996; Villa 1984; Cervani 1978; Neff 1891; Waitz 1878:10-11; Müller 1839:32.

The modern debate

The most recent critical editions each adopted different solutions when naming this work: *De verborum significatione* by Karl Otfried Müller (1839) followed the model put forward in Paul's epitome;⁴ Emil Thewrewk (1889) and Wallace Martin Lindsay (1913) used *De verborum significatu* as the basis, recalling Verrius Flaccus.⁵ This discordancy received fresh attention years later (1979-2001), stimulating debate on the original title of Festus' work. Although this question remains open, some very interesting theories have been proposed thus far.

Since several different titles had been proposed throughout the editorial history of Festus' work, but were not in agreement with the nature of the *Farnesianus*, Alessandro Moscati began raising questions about its title.⁶ He argued that there were two different traditions regarding the title in Latin literature, both of which had been transmitted indirectly: the first, via Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, was *De verborum significationibus*, which represented the earliest reference to Festus' title in Latin literature (*Iulius Festus de verborum significationibus libro tertio decimo*);⁷ the second, on the basis of Paul's abridgement, was *Excerpta Pauli ex libris Festi Pompeii de significatione verborum*.⁸ Moscati hypothesised that a metaplasm had occurred in the title *significationibus* → *significatione*, offering an intriguing interpretation of the spirit in which Paul the Deacon had dealt with the text of the Roman grammarian. He assumed that all of the changes carried out by Paul in Festus' original had been intentional and calculated and that they were intended to simplify the work for the purpose of conferring on it the structure of an encyclopaedic dictionary. It is likely that the title also received the same treatment.⁹ In fact, a comparison between Paul's epitome and the *Codex Farnesianus* clearly demonstrates how Festus had sought to offer an overview that ranged from the study of language to the history of culture, whereas Paul limited his exposition merely to a lexical level. When taken from this perspective, the singular form of the title (*significatione*) provided by Paul would explain the one-to-one interaction he had sought to establish between the lemma and its definition; the intention behind the plural form (*significationibus*) found in Macrobius, however, was for each term to act as

⁴ Müller 1839.

⁵ Thewrewk 1889; Lindsay 1913.

⁶ Moscati 2001, 1999 and 1979.

⁷ Macrob. *Sat.* 3.8.9; Kaster 2011 defines 'Iulius' Festus as *lapsu nostri*.

⁸ Moscati 1999:11.

⁹ Grafton 1983:141-42.

a doorway to an understanding of the plurality of meanings they had gained over time.

Upon their publication, Moscati's views were immediately and widely criticised. Giuseppe Morelli¹⁰ led the way by attempting to diminish the relevance of Macrobius' authority in the debate on Festus' title, using as his philological basis the fluctuation of the singular and plural forms in the title of an analogous work, *De significatione verborum quae ad ius civile pertinent*, which was written by another Roman grammarian, Gaius Aelius Gallus. Taking all this into account, Morelli proposed that a similar variation of the title could also have been possible for the citations of Festus' work in other ancient sources (including Macrobius). In this way, he defended the singular form, as transmitted by the epitome of Paul the Deacon, who is very likely to have had the opportunity to read the original title himself.

Mario De Nonno¹¹ then added further palaeographical arguments, making reference to the *explicit/incipit* between Books 18 and 19 of the *Farnesianus*, the only part in which a script in red lettering refers to the abbreviation of the title: SEX POMPEI FES/TI DE VERBOR(um) SIGNIFICAT · LIB XVI/II · INCIPIT LIB · XVIII. According to De Nonno, the abbreviation SIGNIFICAT must not be read as *significatu*, since there is little sense in abbreviating only one letter – V; it should instead be read as *significatione*, given the fact that Festus himself used the word in this text: in the *Farnesianus*, the term *significatio* appears eleven times, but *significatus* only once – and this increases the credibility of the formulation *De verborum significatione* handed down by Paul the Deacon. Moreover, De Nonno assumes that the title *De verborum significatu* adopted by Thewrewk and Lindsay was not directly inspired by Verrius Flaccus' work, but that it derived from an incorrect reading of the word SIGNIFICAT, which, owing to the mutilated state of the manuscript, may have appeared as SIGNIFICATV to those who worked exclusively on photographic reproductions, as was the case for the two editors in question.

An analogous attention to Festus' title could be discovered also during the Renaissance, but with different dynamics, which could sound somehow as forerunning compared to these modern ideas.

The Renaissance titles of Festus

It is now clear that the *Codex Farnesianus* had been accessible to scholars for at least 20 years prior to the publication of Festus' first incunabula

¹⁰ Morelli 1984:23 n. 1; Morelli 1988.

¹¹ De Nonno 1992.

between 1471 and 1478 (approximately 14 editions).¹² However, these works reproduced only the abridged version of Paul the Deacon's text; and only two, which were edited by scholars who were part of the circle of the *Academia Romana* and certainly had access to the *Codex Farnesianus*, bear a title other than the general eponymous attribution, *Fest.* The first, *De interpretatione Linguae Latinae*, which was edited in 1471 by Giulio Pomponio Leto, was perhaps inspired by Varro's *De lingua Latina*.¹³ The second, *Collectanea priscorum verborum*, which was published in 1475 by Manilius Romanus, apparently referred to a passage from the *Codex Farnesianus* that reports the same syntagm (*priscorum verborum cum exemplis*), even though no influence from this manuscript can be identified in the text.¹⁴

In 1489 Angelo Poliziano was the first scholar to question the veracity of the title, doing so in a famous passage of his *Miscellanea*. He argued that the antigraph from which he had transcribed his copy bore no title and was simply referred to through the name of its author (*fragmentum quoddam Sexti Pompeij Festi – nam ita erat in titulo –*).¹⁵ Even if Poliziano's statement could have been interpreted in various ways,¹⁶ it represents a noteworthy shift in the perspective towards Festus, where the philological approach to the title of his work demonstrates how scholars sought to cast the work in a different light after the rediscovery of the *Farnesianus*.

In fact, the *editio princeps* that combined Paul and Festus, which was published in 1500 by Giovanni Battista Pio and Conagus, was untitled; there was simply a note at the end of the letter addressed to the reader stating that the work included fragments of Festus (*Fragmenta Sexti Pompei Festi*), alluding somehow to the discovery of the *Farnesianus*.

The first title that intentionally showed the combination of the *Codex Farnesianus* and Paulus's epitome was published in 1513 by Aldo Manuzio.¹⁷ This is the only edition that divided Festus' work into books (*libri*), with each corresponding to an alphabetical entry (19 letters in all). The general title given to the book was *Sexti Pompeij Festi undeviginti librorum fragmenta*, while each book had the same subtitle, *Sexti Pompeii Festi De verborum veterum significatione*; however, this did not apply to Books 4 (*liber quartus*) and 6 (*liber sextus*), which were referred to as *Antiquitatum Romanarum libri*. As was the case in the previous edition, this text was an

¹² Lamers 2014.

¹³ Pomponius Laetus 1471; Accame Lanzillotta 1998 and 1980.

¹⁴ Manilius Romanus 1475; Bracke 1995:196.

¹⁵ Poliziano 1489:LXXIII.

¹⁶ Moscadi 2001:XVI.

¹⁷ Manuzio 1513.

indiscriminate blend of Paul's epitome and the *Codex Farnesianus*,¹⁸ with the double title indicative of how the work was conceived: the word *Fragmenta* implied the existence of the *Farnesianus* and expressed its difference to the abridgement; the second title, *de verborum (veterum) significacione*, recalled Paul, indicating how the two traditions coexisted according to a dual scheme. *Antiquitatum Romanarum libri*, on the other hand, which was probably an interpolation and could be interpreted as an alternative title, was almost certainly developed for the purpose of casting Festus' work in a new light, given the new information transmitted in the *Farnesianus*.

The repercussions of this formulation are also evident in a letter by Ottavio Pantagato to Onofrio Panvinio dated 28 May 1558. Pantagato supported the *de verborum significacione* version over Aldo Manuzio's *Antiquitatum Romanarum*, arguing that the former was more reliable while the latter was neither credible nor suitable ('In Festo è più proprio il titolo e più vero De verborum significacione che Antiquitatum Romanarum il quale non è né vero né proprio').¹⁹ Pantagato believed the first formulation to be more compatible with tradition than *Antiquitatum Romanarum* (hence the adjective 'vero') and therefore more suitable for this type of work (hence 'proprio'). Despite having no textual evidence to support his belief, he took the view that the latter drew attention to the cultural content the work may have included, displaying a polysemy which was so distinctive as to modify the perception of the work itself and to represent a break point with tradition.²⁰ This all served to demonstrate the vitality of the debate on the title and its potential solutions.

This situation remained unchanged during the course of the following decades until the emergence of a new philological awareness prompted Antonio Agustín to begin preparing his edition of Festus (1559) on the basis of *Farnesianus*, other manuscripts and Paul's work.²¹ Agustín drew a distinction between the two 'authors' since he considered the abridgement and the original text to represent two separate works that could only be fully understood together.²² The title assigned was *Sex. Pompei Festi De Verborum Significacione, lib. XX*; however, owing to the nature of the *Codex*, Agustín also sought to propose an alternative formulation that would reveal the clear

¹⁸ The edition printed by Aldo Manuzio was also integrated with the files deducted by Pomponio Leto, which have been lost; see Lindsay 1913:22.

¹⁹ Soler i Nicolau 2000:199-201.

²⁰ Agustín 1559: *praef.*

²¹ The collaboration between Panvinio and Pantagato and the role of Gabriel Faerno in Agustín's edition was already analysed by Ceretti 1953.

²² Agustín 1559.

discrepancies between the ancient manuscript and the epitome. In fact, in the introduction of his edition, he gave credence to a reliable second possibility, taken directly from the *Farnesianus*, stating that Festus had written a book entitled *De verborum significatione* or (*sive*) *Priscorum verborum cum exemplis*. Agustín did not realise that these two titles, in fact, referred to two different works, and this became known only soon after.²³ Instead, by using the conjunction *sive*, he observed a mutual link between the two versions, suggesting that they could have been used alternately. *Priscorum verborum cum exemplis* was therefore considered to be an appropriate replacement for *De verborum significatione*, with Agustín perhaps alluding to the spirit perceived by Aldo Manuzio in his *Antiquitatum Romanarum*: in fact, the examples accompanying the entries could have offered an opportunity for antiquarian digressions and cultural analyses to be made.²⁴ Although Agustín did not use *Priscorum verborum cum exemplis* as a title, it may have struck him as being worthy of consideration, at least from a methodological perspective, since it derived directly from the *Codex Farnesianus*.

Only through the subsequent critical analysis carried out on Festus by Joseph Scaliger was it possible to understand that these two titles referred to two different works, of which the only survivor was *De verborum significatione*. Scaliger rejected Agustín's opinion on different grounds, arguing that there was insufficient evidence to link *Priscorum verborum cum exemplis* with the version transmitted to his times (*libros Priscorum verborum cum exemplis non esse eosdem cum his nostris De verborum significatione*).²⁵ Beyond the philological analysis undertaken, the Frenchman also alluded to the passage by Macrobius which clearly referenced Festus' work (*haec est librorum inscriptio, cum a Macrobio vetere auctore, de verborum significatione citentur*),²⁶ presenting this reference as evidence for his position (*His, et pluribus rationibus, [...]*).²⁷ An analogous formulation, *Sex Pompei Festi De*

²³ Scaliger 1575:135; Dacer 1681: *praef.*; Lindemann 1832:285; Grafton 1983:148-49.

²⁴ Lindsay 1913:218.

²⁵ Scaliger 1575:135.

²⁶ Scaliger 1575:135.

²⁷ Scaliger 1575:135. However, it is worthy of note that he cited Festus' title taken from Macrobius in singular form, in contrast to what is actually attested in Renaissance and modern editions of this author. It is difficult to say whether Scaliger referred to a variant in the manuscript tradition or if he deliberately converted Macrobius' plural tense into the better-known singular form; however, this led to him adopting the same title used in Agustín's version, *De verborum significatione*, which also appeared in his edition of 1576.

verborum significatione fragmentum, was applied in each of the three editions published by Fulvio Orsini (1581, 1582 and 1583).²⁸

In 1584 the philologist and editor Arnault Sittart raised the matter again,²⁹ arguing that the title *De verborum significatione* had derived directly from Verrius Flaccus, as confirmed by many ancient authors (*veteres in testimonium advocarunt*). In addition, Sittart appears to have revived and accepted Agustín's hypothesis for the alternative title *Priscorum verborum cum exemplis*, affirming that several archaic and obsolete words (*intermortua et sepulta verba*) featured in Festus' books (*in ijs [libris]*) that were explained through literary examples (*scriptorum antiquorum adductis exemplis*), following the method of grammarians (*quod grammatici erat, interpretari conabatur*) – not taking Scaliger's rejection into account. Sittart considered this version, taken directly from the *Codex Farnesianus*, to be a credible alternative to *De verborum significatione*. To buttress this position, he added that an analogous title, *Expositio sermonum antiquorum cum testimoniis*, which was found in a short glossary compiled by Fabius Planciades Fulgentius in the 5th to 6th centuries, used Festus' example as a basis (*quo sane exemplo ... librum suum ... vocavit*).³⁰ In this light, *Priscorum verborum* and *Sermonum antiquorum* were considered correspondent forms, in the same way that *cum exemplis* matched *cum testimoniis*, implying that the definitions of the words had all been acquired from literary sources and that a parallel method could have generated a parallel title.

The titles of Fulgentius' work published during the Renaissance did not correspond to that which was reported by Sittart; however, there are at least two versions which may have inspired it, both edited by Giovanni Battista Pio:³¹ *Voces antiquae cum testimonio* (1498) and *Expositio sermonum antiquorum* (1513). It is therefore likely that Sittart blended these two titles in order to draw a direct link to *Priscorum verborum cum exemplis*, thereby strengthening support for an alternative title to Festus' work.³²

²⁸ Scaliger 1576; Orsini 1581, 1582 and 1583.

²⁹ Sittart 1584: *praef.*

³⁰ Pizzani 1968:18-19; Lersch 1844.

³¹ Pio 1498 and 1513; Vitali 1505; Herwagen 1535; Plantin 1565; and Godefroy 1586.

³² The same denomination of Fulgentius' work was taken from Dacer; not to substitute *De verborum significatione*, but in order to justify the possible circulation of the second of Festus' works, *De priscis verbis*; see Dacer 1681: *praef.*

Conclusions

All of these titles pave the way for further considerations to be made. The antiquarian culture of the late-sixteenth century seems to have been aware that the title transmitted in Paul's epitome (*De verborum significatione*) did not fully represent the spirit of Festus' work and so attempted to follow other pathways in order to restore the essence of the original. However, since there was no textual evidence to support possible alternatives, no further emendations were made. It is possible that the citation made by Sittart to Fulgentius³³ represented an important confirmation in favour of *Prisorum verborum cum exemplis*, even if it was not taken into consideration in the editions that followed. However, it is reasonable to assume that this formulation was re-modified at least once in Festus' editorial history – in the version *Collectanea prisorum verborum* of Manilius (1475) – thereby demonstrating how the title of *Codex Farnesianus* had been debated since its discovery: it would be more difficult to explain Manilius' formulation if the role of the Farnesianus were excluded from consideration (*Prisorum verborum cum exemplis* → *Collectanea prisorum verborum*). Not only because he read the *Farnesianus* manuscript himself (the only incunabula that added an original title were those of Manilius and Pomponio Leto, who both could access the *Farnesianus*), but also because the genitive form (*prisorum verborum*) of the syntagm *prisca verba/verba prisca* rarely features in Latin literature,³⁴ and one of these occurrences is found referring directly to a title in the *Farnesianus*.³⁵

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³³ Sittart 1584: *praef.*

³⁴ See also Suet. *Gramm.* 14.3.

³⁵ Fest. 218.43.

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