

good looks, and that the *unguentum*, used as a skin-soap, inflamed the women of Lesbos with passion for him. Phaon's legendary sex appeal may have been comic invention.⁷ Plautus (*Miles* 1246–7) used that without reference to *unguentum*:

nam nulli mortali scio obtigisse hoc, nisi duobus,
tibi et Phaoni Lesbio, tam mulier ut amaret.

Pliny the Elder recounts one tradition in which Phaon used the pale variety of the herb *eryngion* as an aphrodisiac to fire Sappho's passion for him (22.20). Her subsequent leap from the famous rock is referred to by Ovid (*Her.* 15) and by Statius (*Silv.* 5.3.154), and it appears in the stuccoes in the apse of the Underground Basilica at the Porta Maggiore in Rome.⁸

In accepting this allusion as central to the poem's interpretation, one would conclude that Catullus' *puella* has simply come into the possession of a wondrous new aphrodisiac perfume or mixer, his own extravagant claims for which are put forward with amusing and delicate sophistication in allusions to Sappho and comedy. Perhaps it serves also as an invitation to Fabullus to try it on his own *candida puella*, as well as a pretty compliment—a gift from 'VENUS & SONS PERFUMERS'. Sapphic echoes in Catullus can provide a lyric filtre for his deepest feelings, both *for* (Poem 51 is a delicate and tender translation of Sappho)⁹ and *against* (11) Lesbia.

The introduction of Phaon's *unguentum Veneris* into the invitation to Fabullus produces two rhetorical effects: (1) enticing Fabullus to the otherwise scanty fare at Catullus' party with the promise of sensory delights, and (2) complimenting his *puella* on her own irresistible charm, sophistication, and allure—her *venustas*. Like the *puella* of Caecilius in poem 35, Lesbia too could be *Sappica puella doctior musa* (35.16–17). If Catullus' pomade is presented in an alabaster box like Phaon's (it must be in *something*), Fabullus would be even more likely to catch the allusion.¹⁰ A phallic *double entendre* in *totum . . . nasum* (15) would add an epigrammatic sting to the poem.

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⁷ Also a theme on Etruscan mirrors: E. Gerhard, *Etruskische Spiegel*, bearb. A. Klügmann und G. Koerte (Berlin, 1884–97), III, Taf. CDVII; IV, Taf. CCCXXIII; V, 5, 40–2, Taf. 32.

⁸ See *inter alios* G. Lugli, *Itinerario di Roma Antica* (Milan, 1970), p. 525 (fig. 365).

⁹ Sappho, frag. 31L–P.

¹⁰ Cf. the *onyx* in Cat. 66.83 and Horace *Carm.* 4.12. Pliny the Elder (36.20) refers to the use of this stone: 'quem cavant et ad vasa unguentaria, quoniam optime servare incorrupta dicitur'.

HEBDOMADES (BINAE)?¹

Varro's *Hebdomades vel de imaginibus*² contained 700 pictures of illustres³ accompanied by short descriptions in verse and prose,⁴ all arranged by the number seven: Gellius provides a detailed excerpt from the first book on the significance of this

¹ I am greatly indebted to the Editor and the anonymous referee of CQ for their helpful suggestions.

² Exact title in Gell. 3.10.1.

³ Plin. *N.H.* 35.11.

⁴ Epigrams: Gell. 3.11.7; Symm. *ep.* 1.4.2; Non. Marc. p. 528M; for prose texts see F. Ritschl, *Opuscula Philologica* (Lipsiae, 1877), vol. iii, p. 453. For a recent short discussion of the verse and prose inscriptions of the *Imagines* see H. I. Flower, *Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 182–3, 207.

number.⁵ Speculation on the arrangement and content of the fifteen books abounds.⁶ On the other hand explicit attestation of personages included in Varro's list is relatively scarce: the discussions in the passage of Gellius on the ages of Homer and Hesiod, and of the former's birthplace in the epigram attached to his portrait certify the rather obvious choice of the two oldest Greek poets, presumably part of a canon of seven.⁷ Other safely attested persons are the five Greek architects—likewise out of seven—Daedalus, Philo of Athens, Menecrates (?), Ictinus, and Dinocrates,⁸ and a number of Greek philosophers and Roman generals and statesmen: Demetrius of Phaleron,⁹ Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Curius, both Catos, the gens Fabia, the Scipios, 'totus ille triumphalis senatus'.¹⁰ Aeneas was probably included as one of seven Alban kings.¹¹ Certain pre-existent groups of seven, though not explicitly attested for Varro, are not likely to have been lacking: the Seven Sages, the Seven against Thebes,¹² the poets of the Pleiad, and the Kings of Rome. In the present note I shall discuss three groups of (multiples of) seven which may conceivably have formed part of Varro's collection: one of these has been often considered in relation to Varro (though rarely in the immediate framework of Varronian studies), the other two to my knowledge have never been mentioned in this connexion. The probabilities that any of these groups were contained in the *Hebdomades* may vary: it is the main

⁵ Gell. 3.10. A. Grilli, 'Sul numero sette', *Studi su Varrone sulla retorica storiografia e poesia latina. Scritti in onore di B. Riposati* (Rieti, 1979), p. 203, names the possible source of Varro (Antiochus of Ascalon) and discusses later developments. Cf. also R. Gelsomino, *Varrone e i sette colli di Roma* (Roma, 1975), who argues that this canon was established by Varro. See now also T. Tarver, 'Varro and the antiquarianism of philosophy', in J. Barnes and M. Griffin (edd.), *Philosophia Togata ii: Plato and Aristotle at Rome* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 130–64, for the significance of numbers and classification for Varro.

⁶ The fountainhead is Ritschl (n. 4), pp. 508–22, with all the other contributors in the debate (Mercklin, Brunn, Urlichs, and Moriz Schmidt, all printed in Ritschl) actively participating; see also H. Dahlmann, *RE Suppl.* vi, 1228; F. Della Corte, *Varrone. Il terzo gran lume romano*² (Firenze, 1970), pp. 190–3.

⁷ Gell. 3.11.1–3, 7. In some of the *recentiores* and in some older editions of Gellius variations of the Greek epigram on the seven cities contending for the birthplace of Homer (*AP* 16.297, 298) appear, sometimes with a Latin translation; see e.g. the editions of Ant. Thysius and Jac. Oiselius (Lugduni Batavorum, 1666), Joh. Fr. & Jac. Gronovius (Lugduni Batavorum, 1706) and Hertz (Berlin, 1893). No doubt the epigram was introduced from the *AP* and has nothing to do with Varro's interest in the number seven.

⁸ Aus. *Mos.* 298–404 and cf. e.g. Ritschl (n. 4), pp. 512–4, for his reconstruction of the hebdomad.

⁹ Non. Marc. p. 528M; cf. L. Herrmann, 'Notes de lecture', *Latomus* 27 (1968), 203.

¹⁰ Symm. *ep.* 1.4.1. Since there is no reference here to illustrations, Ritschl (n. 4), p. 527, opined that Symmachus may have had access only to the epitome in four books, attested in the catalogue of Varro's writings. For a spirited discussion of the Roman heroes included in Varro's work and the connexion between these and the galleries of heroes in Virgil and in the forum of Augustus see E. Norden, *Varro's Imagines*, ed. B. Kytzler (Berlin, 1990), and, independently, N. Horsfall, 'Virgil, Varro's *Imagines* and the Forum of Augustus', *AncSoc* (Macquarie) 10 (1980), 20–3.

¹¹ Ioh. Lyd. *mag.* 1.12 and Norden (n. 10), p. 17.

¹² These two groups, together with the Seven Wonders of the World, were discussed in Varro's exposition in book 1: see Gell. 3.10.16. On the Seven Sages and the development of their canon, as well as on its possible oriental connexions, see now R. P. Martin, 'The Seven Sages as performers of wisdom', in C. Daugherty and L. Kurke (edd.), *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 108–28. I am indebted to Deborah Gera for drawing my attention to this article; she also suggests that there may conceivably have been a double hebdomad of the Seven against Thebes and the Seven Champions in Thebes.

purpose of this note to elicit from other scholars' card-indexes/databases more possible groups of candidates.¹³

1. The famous so-called Vienna Dioscurides,¹⁴ med. gr. 1, olim Constantinopolitanus (C),¹⁵ the only early Byzantine illuminated manuscript securely dated—the dedication (6^v) describes it as a gift to the princess Anicia Juliana and can be dated close to 512—contains an alphabetized version of Dioscurides' *materia medica*, with all the herbs illustrated in colour, followed by a number of other works by various authors. The codex starts with seven miniatures, including the dedication with a picture of Anicia Juliana, the earliest dedicatory picture in book history. Two of the others (2^v, 3^v) contain seven portraits each of doctor-pharmacologists, arranged in horseshoe fashion. These are Chiron, Machaon, Pamphilus, Xenocrates, Sextius Niger, Heraclides, and Mantias on the first picture, and Galen, Crateuas, Apollonius, Andreas, Dioscurides, Nicander, and Rufus on the second. The *terminus ante quem non* for the collection of these portraits as a group is the early third century (the date of Galen), and it has indeed been suggested that they were prepared for a luxury edition of works of the great doctor.¹⁶ Nevertheless it has been proposed¹⁷ that the groups were inspired by Varro's *Hebdomades*: the assumption is that some older figures in Varro's groups have been replaced by more modern ones, perhaps for an edition of Galen. This attractive suggestion can be adopted only conditionally because of the chronological difficulty. The absence of the greatest doctor of all, Hippocrates, has also been remarked on, as well as of the great Alexandrian Herophilus¹⁸—perhaps these were replaced by later doctors for the Galen text. On the other hand, I find pedantic objections based on the arrangement of the pictures,¹⁹ which of course could easily be changed. The alternative offered (disregarding pure coincidence) is the direct influence by the well-attested motif in art of the Seven Sages: in fact we are made to choose between a highly plausible group of doctors in Varro

¹³ Jerzy Linderski, who very kindly read and commented on this paper, points out the numerous writers on agriculture contained in *de re rustica* 1.1.8–10 and suggests that Varro must have produced a hebdomad of these, even though we are not aware of any canonical group among them. The prominence given there to Mago the Carthaginian, and elsewhere in the work to the Latin writers Cato and the two Sasernae, would concur with the conclusion suggested at the end of this paper.

¹⁴ Both the MS evidence and the epigraphic attestations of the name strongly suggest that this, rather than the now-fashionable Dioscorides, is the correct form. I am grateful to Heinrich von Staden for discussing this point with me.

¹⁵ There exist two facsimile editions: J. de Karabacek *et al.*, *Dioscurides, Codex Aniciae Julianae, picturis illustratus, nunc Vindobonensis Med. gr. 1, phototypice editus* (Lugduni Batavorum, 1906), and *Dioscurides, Codex Vindobonensis medicus graecus 1* (Graz, 1970), with H. Gerstinger, *Kommentarband zu der Faksimileausgabe*.

¹⁶ P. Buberl, 'Die antiken Grundlagen der Miniaturen des Wiener Dioskurideskodex', *JbDAIR* 51 (1936), 114–36 at 124–9.

¹⁷ E. Diez, 'Die Miniaturen des Wiener Dioskurides', *Byzantinische Denkmäler* (Wien, 1903), vol. iii, p. 36; Mantuani (n. 15), p. 243; Buberl (n. 16), p. 128.

¹⁸ A. v. Salis, 'Imagines illustrium', *Eumusia. Festgabe . . . E. Howald* (Erlenbach-Zürich, 1947), pp. 11–29 at 14–17. At pp. 21–4 he discusses representations of the Seven Sages and at 24–5 he suggests that it is their number that may have suggested Varro's arrangement; also the seven poets of the tragic Pleiad are suggested as included in the *Hebdomades*.

¹⁹ H. Gerstinger, 'Zu den Hebdomades des M. Terentius Varro und den Ärzte- und Pharmakologenbildern des "Wiener Dioskurides"', *JOeByzG* 17 (1968), 269–77, repeated by him in his commentary (n. 15), p. 29, followed by O. Mazal, *Pflanzen, Wurzeln, Säfte, Samen. Antike Heilkunst in Miniaturen des Wiener Dioskurides* (Graz, 1981), p. 27. The contention that the *Vorlage* of the codex had to be a codex rather than a roll, and thus to be dated in the fourth or fifth century, seems to me irrelevant to the present investigation.

with some persons altered and seven of them joined on one page to accommodate the circumstances of the manuscript and the alteration by an illuminator of a Galen manuscript of the traditional group of sages to doctors. Clearly, the question of the derivation of the portraits in the Vienna Dioscurides does not admit a decisive solution, though the inclusion of twice seven doctors in Varro's work receives some support from the attested presence of Greek architects. Varro included both medicine and architecture in books 8 and 9, respectively, of his *Disciplinae*,²⁰ and thus the inclusion of architects in his *Imagines* would support the assumption that this work too contained doctors.²¹

2. Nepos' book on foreign generals ended with the enumeration and brief description of the careers of fourteen kings: the Persians Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, Artaxerxes Macrochir, and Artaxerxes Mnemon, the Macedonians Philip and Alexander, Pyrrhus, Dionysius I of Syracuse, and the Successors Antigonus, Demetrius, Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy. It has been shown²² that Nepos never wrote a separate book on kings and that these very short biographies formed only an appendix to the book on generals. Varro's *Hebdomades* were completed in 39,²³ but he was working on them already in November 44;²⁴ the scheme of the composition of Nepos is more complicated, and it is quite possible that the two men, who must have been acquainted,²⁵ were working for a time simultaneously on their biographical compilations.²⁶ On balance it seems to me highly likely that Nepos copied his list from Varro, where it may have been divided into two groups. It has been mentioned above that the seven kings of Rome would have been an obvious choice for Varro, and that the attested presence of Aeneas in Varro's work is best explained by taking him as a member of a group of Alban kings: since the juxtaposition of Romans with Greeks and other foreigners seems to have been part of the scheme,²⁷ Nepos' kings would fit well in Varro's work.

3. An anonymous treatise on warrior women, printed in Westermann's *Paradoxographoi* (213–18, xli–xlii), relates short biographies of fourteen women: the barbarians Semiramis, Zarinaia, Nitocris of Egypt, Nitocris of Babylon, Theiosso (=Dido), Atossa, Rhodogyne, Lyde, Tomyris, and Onomaris, and the Greeks Argeia, Pheretima, Thargelia, and Artemisia. In most instances the text expressly states its sources, among them Herodotus and Ctesias. The text has been very recently, and for the first time, the subject of an exhaustive, and excellent, investigation.²⁸ Unfortunately it cannot be dated with any precision, and all that can be said about its date is that it was composed 'at the very earliest at the end of the second century or the beginning of the first century B.C.'²⁹ Accordingly it could be earlier than,

²⁰ Ritschl (n. 4), pp. 352–402. Architecture is safely attested by Vit. 7.praef.14, medicine is persuasively argued by Ritschl (n. 4) at pp. 366–8.

²¹ Cf. also Ritschl (n. 4), p. 516; the illuminated Dioscurides codex is adduced by H. Brunn, *ibid.*, p. 580.

²² J. Geiger, 'Cornelius Nepos, de regibus exterarum gentium', *Latomus* 38 (1979), 662–9.

²³ Gell. 3.10.17. ²⁴ Cic. *Att.* 16.11.3 and Shackleton Bailey *ad loc.*

²⁵ E. Jenkinson, 'Genus scripturae leve: Cornelius Nepos and the early history of biography at Rome', *ANRW* i.3 (Berlin, 1973), p. 704.

²⁶ J. Geiger, *Cornelius Nepos and Ancient Political Biography*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 47 (Stuttgart, 1985), pp. 81–2.

²⁷ Ritschl (n. 4), pp. 514–15. Strong circumstantial evidence is the construction of the work of Nepos on such a juxtaposition.

²⁸ D. L. Gera, *Warrior Women. The Anonymous Tractate De Claris Mulieribus* (Leiden, 1997).

²⁹ Gera (n. 28), p. 30. Though there is a dearth of obvious Roman candidates, one still wonders whether the total exclusion of Roman women does not suggest some *terminus post quem non*.

contemporaneous with, or later than Varro. As the Greek text states its sources, it can hardly be derived from the Latin of Varro.³⁰ On the other hand we cannot rule out the possibility that it served as one of Varro's sources (in this case the dating of the text would be narrowed down very considerably) or reliance on a common source. If so, whether it was the number fourteen³¹ that suggested to Varro this list must remain an open question. Gera³² argues that the text belongs in the catalogue tradition and such collections would obviously figure among Varro's sources. Also the length (or rather, brevity) of the entries must have been very similar to that of the entries in the *Imagines*.

None of the above suggestions is safe, though they do seem to have more for them than the shared number (twice) seven. Nor does the correctness or otherwise of any of these cases necessarily influence that of the others. If, however, all are connected with Varro, a more accurate picture of his work emerges and our existing list is very considerably lengthened. First, it should be obvious that 700 pictures arranged by groups of seven would yield 100 groups—a very high number, so that both subdivisions and groups of multiples of seven may be postulated: in fact we know that Varro toyed with such multiples in his introductory discussion of the number seven.³³ As to those included, one observes that Varro may have accorded barbarians and women a prominent place. Ritschl had already wondered³⁴ whether Varro could have omitted 'Hannibalum, Mithridatum similiumque clarissima nomina', and in this context one should also note the addition of the barbarians Datames, Hamilcar, and Hannibal to the second edition Nepos' book on generals.³⁵ In the case of women it may be significant that Pliny speaks indeed of *illustres*, without specifying them as *vir*i:³⁶ we know that Charon of Carthage composed four books each of illustrious men and women,³⁷ and Varro may have taken—figuratively—a leaf from his book.³⁸

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³⁰ Even if Varro stated his sources, it seems highly improbable that the author of *de claris mulieribus* would always repeat these.

³¹ One cannot refrain from mentioning the coincidence that Odysseus enumerates by name fourteen of the wives and daughters of heroes he encounters in the *Nekyia* (*Od.* 11.225ff.): Tyro, Antiope, Alcmene, Megara, Epicaste, Chloris, Leda, Iphimedeia, Phaedra, Procris, Ariadne, Maera, Clymene, and Eriphyle.

³² Gera (n. 28), pp. 40–2.

³³ Gell. 3.10.16–7 and cf. e.g. L. Holford-Strevens, 'The harmonious pulse', *CQ* 43 (1993), 475–9.

³⁴ Ritschl (n. 4), p. 514.

³⁵ Geiger (n. 26), pp. 85, 97.

³⁶ *Hominum* was inserted in Detlefsen's edition but dropped in the Teubner of Mayhoff. Among those reading *hominum* is Norden (n. 10), at p. 6, n. 4.

³⁷ Cf. Geiger (n. 26), pp. 39–40, with perhaps excessive skepticism: the warrior women may indeed well have belonged in the paradoxographic tradition. Id. (n. 22) at pp. 662–4 suggests possible books on women by Nepos.

³⁸ The playwright Thomas Heywood (d. 1641) published, a year before his death, *The Exemplary Lives and Memorable Acts of Nine the Most Worthy Women of the World: Three Jewes. Three Gentiles. Three Christians*. (They were Deborah, Judith, Esther; Bunderca [=Boudicca], Penthesilea, Artemisia; Elpheda [=Aethelflaed], Margaret of Anjou, and Elizabeth. Each entry started with a page of verse with an opposing portrait, followed by a prose text of between a dozen and two dozen pages. I found no evidence that Heywood was aware of Varro's *Hebdomades*. On Heywood's book, apparently never reprinted in a modern edition, see also E. M. Waith, 'Heywood's Women Worthies', in J. Reagan and N. T. Burns (edd.), *Concepts of the Hero in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Albany, 1975), pp. 222–38.