
General Introduction

Dress is a most complex subject matter despite seeming trivial at first. The following remarks concerning aims, content, and applied methods try to reduce complexities and should be read in conjunction with the introductions to the individual parts (A–D). A more theoretical statement can be found in the epilogue. Talking about Roman dress culture seems easy and is often done by scholars in an off-handed manner. Things get difficult when it comes to precise terminology and to writing a sourced-based and methodical cultural history.

1 Scope

“No man ever steps in the same river twice.”¹ Heraclitus’ riddling remark about identity also applies to Roman (dress) culture. Fortunately, the puzzling contradiction depends on words and not on objects. If we define the term ‘Roman dress culture’ in the broadest sense, it includes all the garments which Roman people (if we also allow for a broad definition of the term ‘Roman’) wore from the beginnings of Rome until the year 476 CE, when the Western Roman Empire officially ended. If we divide the subject matter into different parts, such as when we talk of *the* Roman dress culture of a given period, linguistic identity dissolves, and we find a Roman dress culture I and a Roman dress culture II etc. that differ from each other. This allows us to search for *ur*-Roman costume as opposed to garments acquired through acculturation, most notably the garments added through Hellenization. In this book, the term ‘Roman dress culture’ is used in both the general sense of ‘worn by Romans at some point’ and the particular meaning of ‘worn during a specific period.’ The particular Roman dress culture that is the focus of this book concerns the garments worn by the Romans in the third century BCE, which were later considered traditional dress by the first century BCE. Beyond any labelling, ‘Roman’ dress was very likely a heterogenous mix of ethnic garments from the start. However, creating the sub-set ‘traditional Roman dress’ helps to elucidate the great changes Roman dress style underwent after the end of the Punic Wars.

The following study focuses on female Roman dress worn in the time from 200 BCE to 200 CE for which we have direct literary evidence. It also ventures some hypotheses on early Roman dress that all rest on linguistic inferences, specifically etymology. The year 200 BCE was chosen as a starting point for the following reason: As regards political history, Rome started to transform from a medium-sized regional power into *the* political capital of the Ancient Mediterranean world after the Second Punic War (218–201 BCE), a process culminating in the conquest of Egypt. The contact between Rome and other dress cultures led to an important evolution. Rome, the new rich capital of the oikumene, attracted all sorts of luxury products and luxury clothing (Greek, Oriental, Celtic) from its ever-growing empire, galvanized them, and created a

¹ Heraclitus F 91 D.-K.

new cosmopolitan Mediterranean dress style. ‘Traditional’ Roman style disappeared under the foreign cultural influences, but ‘new’ Roman style became the standard against which any regional style has to be judged. We can discern such social and cultural developments more clearly in Rome than in any other part of the ancient world. We can even watch something like ‘fashion’ and see how it transformed into a new dress style. Rome is thus a unique example from antiquity for processes we find in modern times in cultural capitals like Paris, London, and New York.

Cultural evolution itself is, of course, a never-ending process. However, the year 200 CE was chosen as the endpoint for this book because the first major transformation of ‘traditional’ Roman to ‘cosmopolitan’ dress style came to an end at about that time. Afterwards, we can observe a second transformation towards Late Antique dress style. In the third century, Rome’s cultural lustre was declining. Various political reasons led to the transference of the imperial court first to Milan (and other centres) and then to Byzantium, which is the veritable successor of Rome as to culture and dress and which bequeaths its dress culture to the medieval courts. The third century, which is rather transitional, thus seemed a beginning or a new story rather than the end of an old one. In addition, literary evidence begins to fade out at the end of the second century CE, and the description of Late Antique dress culture is based on a completely different set of sources. For these reasons, the historical period from 200 BCE to 200 CE seemed to form a suitable self-contained narrative unity as regards dress history. In an Aristotelean sense, it is a *mia praxis* that we can describe.

2 Sources

The study relies on all existing Latin evidence on female dress in Republican and Imperial times until the end of the second century CE. I have assembled the corpus by reading the relevant authors extensively and by consulting modern dictionaries and indices. As to Republican times, the list of texts is complete. As to Imperial times, the book focuses on all important passages. It also includes some Greek sources, mainly to explain the meaning of Latin words borrowed from Greek, or, if there are only few Latin examples, to broaden the evidentiary base. This also applies to texts in which male dress is mentioned.

In contrast to the literary, the archaeological sources, which have been collected by Joachim Raeder, are used in a more limited manner. The evidence is not intended to be complete, but is provided only to the extent that is necessary to identify a respective piece of dress and to determine its social usage and history. Apart from a few exceptions, only depictions representing *Roman* women have been included, which stands in contrast to existing works on the subject. Mythological works of art have also been used for the sake of illustration when no other sources are available.

3 Aims

In essence, the study is meant to be basic research in the field of Classical philology and cultural history. It is more philosophical than it may seem at first glance considering its rather profane subject. It is not only about words (*nomina*) and objects (*res*), but also about the different discourses on Roman dress. It is about social continuity and change, and it implicitly addresses the basic epistemic questions: What *can* we actually know about Roman culture, and where are the limits of our knowledge? What is the basis of our inductions? And finally: What kinds of conclusions are we permitted to make based on the available evidence? In general, the book is thus about how cultural history should be written today. As regards the female Roman dress in the period in question, it has the following specific aims:

- collect all extant evidence on the subject matter.
- restore all early Latin texts and provide a thorough source analysis (A).
- define all Latin dress terms in neutral language (B).²
- describe the garments designated by them and elucidate social dress codes (B).
- describe the history of female Roman dress (B).
- reconstruct the theory of ancient scholars regarding early Roman dress (C).
- explain all dress glosses and trace them back to their origin (D).³

4 Research

Many great scholars wrote about Roman dress. The following remarks are only meant to outline the history of scholarship. They try to characterize the respective works that are—withstanding their deficiencies—scholarly milestones that mirror the periods in which they were written. In fact, most of the books that will be mentioned are outdated by now, but they laid the foundations we still build on, and the erudition of their authors evokes admiration.

While Latin dress terms had been used throughout the Middle Ages, research on Roman dress started about 500 years ago in the age of Humanism. Latin dress terms came easily to the lips of medieval authors when describing the dress of their own times.⁴ In the 16th century, however, it was the historical Roman costume that was at stake. It was also the time when print started to become normal. Bits of information hence got detached from the original texts and were reprinted in thematical collections. In the field of Classics, we find the first editions of fragments and all sorts of *Cornucopiae*.

² For a definition of neutral language cf. Introduction to part B p. 227.

³ For a definition of gloss, cf. Introduction to part D p. 587.

⁴ Cf. on medieval dress and dress terminology, for example, J. Bumke, *Höfische Kultur. Literatur und Gesellschaft im hohen Mittelalter*, Munich 1986), 172–197.

In the same way, texts mentioning Roman garments were collected and revised into a handbook. The first to do this was the French Humanist St. Lazare de Baïf (1496–1547), or as he would have called himself in Latin, Bayfius.⁵ In 1526, at the age of thirty, Bayfius published his treatise *De re vestiaria*. Classical studies were in their heydays by that time, and Bayfius was not a social nobody. He was the son of a French knight, and his book on clothing served him well as his entrance card to the world of diplomacy. In 1529, the French king Francis I sent him to Venice as an ambassador. The great Erasmus of Rotterdam had already praised Bayfius for his fine book: *Lazarus Bayfius, qui unico libello de Vestibus, eoque non magno, magnam laudem meruit summamque spem de se praebuit*.⁶

However, despite the eulogy from Erasmus, who in turn was praised by Bayfius, the shape of *De re vestiaria* can be described as highly idiosyncratic. Bayfius starts from the statements on dress in the Digests⁷ and, commenting on them, evolves his own narrative. His account is structured only in a superficial way. It meanders through its sources, including texts from Latin and Greek authors, as Bayfius came across them. No wonder that already the printer Robert Estienne (Stephanus) (1536) felt the need to shorten and to rearrange the material according to the functions of the garments. And yet, Bayfius' work held the ground. It remained influential for the next hundred years to come and saw many reprints in both its original and revised forms.

It was only more than hundred years later, about the middle of the 17th century, that the next two authors on Roman clothing turned up, whose works were to remain standard until the 19th century. The first is Ottavio Ferrari (1607–1682),⁸ who was an Italian scholar who taught Greek and Roman Classics at the University of Padua. In 1642, Ferrari published his *De re vestiaria* in three books. In 1654, he enlarged this by four further books, which took—as he complains—ten years to write. He dedicated his new edition to Christina, the famous queen of Sweden, who abdicated the year the new volumes were published, converted to Catholicism, and went to Rome. Christina was a patroness of arts and a great collector, and she appears on the title page of Ferrari's book dressed most suitably as Minerva. It is the Baroque period, and Ferrari's work is in tune with his times. His final version of *De re vestiaria* comprises more than five hundred pages in total in the beautiful Paduan editions. It is not the hastily written *primitiae* of an aspiring candidate, but the mature work of learned man who has pondered his subject for some time. Ferrari focuses on the male costume, but he also includes a few pages on the female one. In accordance with the bias of the ancient sources, he begins with the *toga* (1) and the *praetexta* (2) before turning to the common *tunica* (3). A short chapter on the female tunic (*de tunica muliebri*) is the starting point for

⁵ See on him L. Pinvert, Lazare de Baïf, Paris 1900.

⁶ Erasmus I 1012 A.

⁷ Cf. Digest. 34.2.

⁸ See on him Francesco Piovan, art. Ottavio Ferrari, in: Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, vol. 46 (1996).

Ferrari's comprehensive remarks about female dress at the end of the first volume. In the second volume, he proceeds with the *lacerna* (4), the *paenula* (5), the *chlamys*, and the *sagum* (6), and he ends with the *pallium* (7). Again, the focus is on male costume.

In comparison to Bayfius, Ferrari's work marks a great progress. The number of sources has increased, and Ferrari uses them in a more judicious way. He takes time to explain his texts and also adduces archaeological evidence. However, since he does not yet fulfil modern standards as to source analysis, he gets mixed results. He correctly distinguishes, for example, between the *toga* and the *pallium*, but erroneously identifies the *stola* with the *tunica*. He also follows Pseudo-Asconius (fifth century CE), whom he believes to be the Julio-Claudian scholar Asconius, in stating that the *toga* was worn by both men and women at an early time, and in this way he helps corroborate a myth that still pervades modern scholarship.⁹

In the year 1665, a scholar with a famous family name disturbed Ferrari's peace of mind. It was Albert Rubens, in Latin Albertus Rubenius, son of the painter Peter Paul Rubens (as his printer remarks on the title page).¹⁰ Albert Rubens, who dedicated his life to scholarship and politics, had already died in 1557, but a collection of his treatises was published posthumously. It contained his treatise on the famous Gemma Augustea, which had also been drawn by his father Paul Rubens, and two books *De re vestiaria*, *praecipue de lato clavo*. From a modern perspective, the character of this work is quite odd. Rubens touches on all major garments, but views them mainly from the angle of the *latus clavus*, the ornament that distinguished the senator's tunics and, as Rubens believed, other garments. It is also highly antagonistic and criticizes existing scholarship, especially Ferrari's *De re vestiaria*.

For this reason, Ferrari took up the plume again. In 1670, he published his *Analecta de re vestiaria siue exercitationes ad Alberti Rubenii commentarium de re vestiaria et lato clavo*. This time, he dedicated his work to Jean Chapelain (1595–1674), a sort of minister of culture of Louis XIV, who lavished the king's stipends on worthy scholars. The *Analecta* are written with the express purpose of refuting Rubens' *De re vestiaria*, but one gets the impression that money and cultural politics (France against Habsburg Netherlands) might have occasioned them as well. In any case, the *Analecta* did little more than restate Ferrari's former hypotheses on Roman dress. In the end, time healed all scholarly rivalry. In 1697, Johann Graevius' reprinted both Ferrari's and Rubens' works side by side in his *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Romanarum* (vol. 6), which was a kind of anthology of research. By that time, their books had become classics. They provided the 'philological' basis for the scholarship on dress in the hundred years to come.

⁹ Cf. on this C 2.

¹⁰ See on him M. van der Meulen, in: *Encyclopedia of the History of Classical Archaeology*, s.v. Rubens, Albert (2015).

The next work on dress to be mentioned here stood in marked contrast to its predecessors. It was composed by Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741) and was published about seventy years after Rubens and Ferrari. Montfaucon was an aristocrat turned Benedictine monk and a great scholar who, among other things, brought the tapestry of Bayeux back to French memory. His oeuvre is stupendous and makes him look like a modern Varro. In collaboration with Jean Mabillon (1632–1707), Montfaucon worked on an edition of the Greek church fathers, dedicating his spare time to antique monuments. Like Graevius' *Thesaurus*, his contribution on dress was part of a multivolume encyclopaedia (1719–1724). However, his *L'Antiquité expliquée et représentée en figures* was written with another purpose and in another style than Graevius' work. We may call it the first 'archaeological' work on dress. Up to that point, Classical scholars had focused on texts. Now the attention turned to the monuments. According to Montfaucon, his *Antiquité* contained 1220 tables with about 30–40,000 figures. It had taken him about twenty-six years to collect the evidence. In his preface, Montfaucon complains that there was a mass of increasingly specialized scholarly work that had made it difficult to not lose track. He was especially bothered by the many meandering and fruitless textual discussions. Therefore, he intended to cut short on this and to include only the most significant texts. His own encyclopaedia was to provide a comprehensive overview of antiquities on the basis of the monuments. In 1722, Montfaucon published a volume (3.1) containing *Les usages de la vie: Les habits, les meubles, les vases, les monoyes, les poids, les mesures, des Grecs, des Romains, et des autres nations*. In 1724, there also appeared a supplement to this.

We are in the age of enlightenment by now, in an age of beginning social reform and general education, and Montfaucon's work is very typical for it. He wished knowledge on Antiquity to leave the ivory tower of universities. In order to make it accessible to a broader public, Montfaucon did not only turn to visual depictions, but also provided a bilingual edition that was written in French and Latin. According to him, the Latin version (printed below the French text in smaller letters) was meant for foreign scholars who did not know French, while the French version was for French students who lacked sufficient command of Latin. We see Montfaucon in a balancing act here. Non-knowledge of Latin still needed the excuse of young age, and there had to be a Latin version to stress the scholarly quality of his enterprise. On the other hand, the aristocratic reading public in France only read in French. Montfaucon was among the first to use a national European language for scholarship. In the next centuries, this became the new norm. He also created what can anachronistically be called a 'best seller' that was found in the libraries of the well-off. Very typically, in his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Goethe makes the learned society of a little court consult Montfaucon for information on Minerva's dress.¹¹ Reading the work, Montfaucon's success is very understandable. His books are written in a French style that is both elegant and

¹¹ Cf. *Lehrjahre* p. 171.5 (Hamburg edition).

accessible. The preface is unpretentious and appears quite ‘modern.’ In his description of Roman clothing, Montfaucon judiciously adduces the specialist literature (Ferrari, Rubens), but he refrains from bothering his readers with its pettifogging aspects. There are also the many impressive depictions of the monuments that make what he says very plastic, and they give a vivid impression of ancient Roman life. Scholarly reception of Montfaucon’s encyclopaedia, on the other hand, was rather cold. It was simply not ‘academic’ enough, and Montfaucon himself had not spared criticism against scholars. Some shortcomings of his work were undeniable, and they seem to have lent a welcome pretext to disregard the work completely. The rediscovery of Pompeii (1738) also brought to light a lot of new monuments shortly afterwards. Hence Montfaucon is mentioned but rarely in subsequent scholarly literature on dress, even though his books were translated into English and German.

As time went on, research on Roman dress changed places. In Germany, Romanticism fostered new intellectual interest in what was called *Privataltertümer* (private antiquities). The milieu we find it in now was that of German high school (*Gymnasium*) and university. Humanist *grandezza* and French *illumination* have given way to bourgeois homeliness. In 1803, Karl August Böttiger (1760–1835), director of the Museum of Antiquities at Dresden and an archaeologist, published his *Sabina, oder Morgenszenen im Putzzimmer einer reichen Römerin* (Sabina, or morning scenes in the boudoir of a wealthy Roman lady). His *Scenes in the boudoir* was what we would call a coffee table book. However, it inspired the scholar Wilhelm Adolf Becker (1796–1846), professor of archaeology and Classical studies at the University of Leipzig, to do similar things on a more serious scale. Romanticism was transforming into Biedermeier, and the atmosphere of German *Gemütlichkeit* hang in the air. People at the time liked historical novels, and Becker decided that this was the best way to promote Classics. He therefore wrote two novels on Greek and Roman private life. In 1838, he published his novel *Gallus or Roman scenes of the time of Augustus*.¹² The hero of this book is the historical poet Cornelius Gallus (70–26 BCE), whom we follow moving about in Rome. In 1840, the novel *Charicles or illustrations of the private life of the ancient Greeks* followed suit.¹³ In these works, Becker combined fictional scenes with scholarly notes and excursions. Since Becker was aiming at historical lessons, the action of the novel is a bit forced in order to include all possible *Privataltertümer*. In the eighth scene of the *Gallus*, for example, we first see Gallus’ mistress Lycoris in her full attire and then watch Gallus himself dressing, leaving the house, and buying some gifts (among them garments) for Lycoris at the market. In a long excursus (about sixty pages), Becker then tells us everything we need to know about female Roman dress. All in all, Becker’s *Gallus* makes for bad literature and good scholarship. It nevertheless found much public acclaim. It

¹² *Gallus oder römische Scenen aus der Zeit Augusts. Zur Erläuterung der wesentlichsten Gegenstände aus dem häuslichen Leben der Römer.*

¹³ *Charikles, Bilder altgriechischer Sitte. Zur genaueren Kenntnis des griechischen Privatlebens.*

was translated into English and reprinted several times. In 1880/2, the scholarly part was enlarged and updated by Hermann Göll, thus finding its final form.

In the long run, however, another scholarly initiative of Becker proved even more important than his novels. In 1843, Becker started the *Handbuch der römischen Alterthümer* (Handbook of Roman Antiquities) which was to contain a volume on Roman private life as well. Becker himself died before it came to that, but the project was taken up by the historians Theodor Mommsen and Karl Joachim Marquardt (1812–1882). In 1864, Marquardt, who by then was the head of a *Gymnasium* at Gotha, published the respective two volumes on *Das Privatleben der Römer* (The private life of the Romans). In 1886, these volumes were updated by the archaeologist August Mau (1840–1909). By then, it was the high time of historicism. Classics had become more methodical and ‘scientific.’ Against Nietzsche’s protest, history (including cultural history) had taken an antiquarian turn. Many voluminous handbooks and encyclopaedias appeared in Prussian dominated Germany. In 1885, the multi volume *Handbuch für Altertumswissenschaft* got started, which was to contain contributions on every aspect of antiquity. The respective volume on dress *Die römischen Privataltertümer* written by the archaeologist Hugo Blümner was published in 1911. In 1890, Wissowa’s ‘revision’ of Pauly’s *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* got under way, which was to comprise articles on (nearly) all Roman and Greek garments in the next decades.¹⁴

The conceptual reconstruction of female Roman dress, as it presents itself today, dates back to these times and is highly influential even now.¹⁵ However, female dress only formed a small part of a broad description of Roman private life in the comprehensive studies mentioned above. The scholars who wrote these books were all more or less ‘all-rounders’ in Classical studies. They knew Greek and Latin well and relied most on written sources for their descriptions despite being inclined towards the archaeological side. The evidence they present in long footnotes is nearly complete and very impressive. It is clear that methodological skill and knowledge had advanced considerably since Ferrari and Rubens.

However, in spite of all its merits, the approach towards literature that pervades these later works has serious methodological flaws that affect the results in a negative way. It is, in a word, too ‘factual.’ All statements in the literary sources are taken at face value and used indiscriminately, as if they were all unbiased reports on Roman costume. In particular, there are four aspects where these studies are prone to fail:

1. The textual transmission of many texts is difficult. Especially the texts dating to the Pre-Classical period suffer from corruption and can only be restored by means of conjecture. Textual criticism had been a thriving business in the epoch of Humanism—the 16th century. In the 19th century handbooks, many of the early

¹⁴ These were often written by leading archaeologists, like for example Walther Amelung or Friedrich Goethert (*toga*).

¹⁵ In Germany, for example, the book of Marquardt/Mau, which is indeed most comprehensive and provides the most source-based over-all access to the subject matter, has been reprinted in 2016.

emendations had already acquired a canonical dignity and were mistaken for the text of the ancient authors themselves. However, quite a lot of the emendations, as well intentioned as they were, are questionable and need rethinking.

2. Our sources refer either to dress the authors themselves witnessed in daily life (primary sources) or to dress they did not know from personal experience (secondary sources). There was both a literary and a scholarly discourse on Roman costume already in Antiquity. However, ancient scholars (*grammatici*) often went wrong in their explanations. They also endowed obscure words (glosses) with a meaning these words never had. Taking up their opinions without reserve, 19th century scholars mix up real and fantastical terms and garments.
3. Our sources are not technical dress inventories. Most are fictitious texts, mainly poetry. Ancient authors use both literary and neutral language, and they make no factual self-contained statements on clothing, but only mention garments to characterize the wearer. In addition, they are influenced by literary genres and by social stereotypes. Disregarding different registers of language and neglecting auctorial intentions led to lexicographical error and social bias in 19th century scholarship.
4. Our sources date to different historical periods. In the old handbooks, they are often combined without discrimination to form one synchronous entity and to prove a single state of dress. This leads to an unjustified homogenous image of female Roman dress (similar to that established in Augustan times) and camouflages the great changes Roman clothing underwent in the first century BCE. It turns out that the handbooks accomplished what Augustus could only dream of. They homogenized Roman dress into a fixed, ahistorical ideal that shaped outward perception of Roman culture for centuries.

Nevertheless, the handbooks of the 19th century still evoke admiration for their erudition and for erecting the great building of what we consider 'Roman culture' today.

In the 20th century, enthusiasm and scholarly capability for such comprehensive enterprises dried up with the First World War. In Germany, Classical studies completely retired to universities and split up into the different branches we know today (Latin and Greek language, history, archaeology). In the process of specialization, Roman clothing became an exclusive subject of study for archaeologists, while scholars of Latin were more inclined to read the poet Stefan George and to muse about the aesthetics of literature. Women now also entered into what had been a man's reserve. The first one to mention is Margarete Bieber. Her personal history is similar to that of the great Hannah Arendt and shows what life was like for intellectual women and for persons of Jewish faith in Germany and central Europe in the 20th century. In the Weimar Republic (1923), after much struggle, Bieber was the first woman to become a professor of archaeology in Germany. Under Nazi terror (1934), she had to emigrate to the United States, never to return again. In two monographs, called *Griechische Kleidung* (1924) and *Entwicklungsgeschichte der griechischen Tracht* (1967), Bieber dealt with Greek

clothing. In addition, she wrote several RE-articles on ancient garments. Her studies mainly concern Greek dress, but include important remarks on Roman dress as well. In contrast to Bieber, the American archaeologist Lillian May Wilson focused on Roman clothing in her books *The Roman Toga* (1925) and *The Clothing of the Ancient Romans* (1938). Written with sound judgement, her books set standards in their time and are still influential among English scholars today. Her book on Roman clothing is still one of the best contributions on the subject matter. In contrast to their predecessors, Bieber and Wilson again concentrated on the archaeological sources. Like Montfaucon, they banned literary sources to the margins, relying on the existing handbooks, and they thus initiated the trend that still prevails today.

Finally, some short remarks on our own times. The computer age saw and is seeing a steady increase in articles and monographs on specific garments and collective works on (female) dress. There are several important archaeological contributions, like F. Kolb, *Römische Mäntel: Paenula, Lacerna, Mandye* (1973), H. R. Goette, *Studien zu römischen Togadarstellungen* (1990), and B. I. Scholz, *Untersuchungen zur Tracht der römischen Matrona* (1992). Cultural history is written on a small scale by J. L. Sebesta, L. Bonfante (eds.), *The World of Roman Costume* (1994), A. Croom, *Roman Clothing and Fashion* (2000), and K. Olson, *Dress and the Roman Woman* (2008). Most recently, archaeobotany also begins to make its impact felt. In contrast to all this progress in other fields, a modern analysis of the written sources is completely missing. Montfaucon's visual way of approaching Antiquity has won the day, and literary texts are largely ignored. All this leads to a strange Janus-faced appearance of current research. There are many very skilful studies as to archaeological details that apply 19th century methodical standards when it comes to the generalities of Roman dress and to interpreting texts. One might describe the present situation in the following comparison: You have an old castle that has much water in the basement, but instead of securing the foundations, you prefer putting solar panels on the roof in order to power the newest trends in home electronics.

5 Method and structure

The present study does builders' work in order to secure the stability of the tottering, but beautiful building for some time. It focuses on the single written sources and proceeds from there to a more extensive theory of what Roman costume looked like. Current trends in historical research of how to interpret Roman culture are most conveniently examined by A. Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (2008), to whom readers are referred for more discussion.¹⁶ However, the book's theoretical approach owes

¹⁶ Cf., especially, pp. 3–37, 441–454. In addition, see D. Maschek, *Die römischen Bürgerkriege. Archäologie und Geschichte einer Krisenzeit*, Darmstadt 2018, 10–20. My views largely concur with Wallace-

more to several books that do not belong to the world of Classical scholarship, but to the world of philosophy. Readers will find their names and more detailed remarks on abstract concepts of thought in the epilogue.¹⁷ The following section is *not* about theory, but rather on its practical consequences and on what is done in this book.

The basis of the entire work is the textual reconstruction and interpretation of *all* Latin literary evidence on female Roman dress in the period from about 200 BCE to 200 CE. This statement applies in particular to the sources dating to the time of the Roman Republic, whose wording is quite often reconstrued in a new way. Furthermore, all important texts are interpreted in accordance with their place in time, the literary intention of the author, and the social context.

The analysis distinguishes between primary evidence and secondary evidence, i.e. between the literary and the scholarly discourse. This principle is already applied in other parts of ancient history, like that of philosophy.¹⁸ However, the situation is somewhat different as regards the history of dress and other parts of cultural history (e.g. death rituals, marriage). Here a sufficient distinction between primary and secondary sources has not been made so far.¹⁹ In this respect, the present study breaks new ground. The methodological distinction serves to sort out genuine facts and ancient hypotheses and to make room for an objective analysis of the primary sources that has often been blocked by false preconceptions derived from secondary evidence.

Within the literary discourse, the following study keeps in mind the individual nature of our texts and the different registers and functions of language. Beyond definitions of neutral dress terms, it enquires into social dress codes and the social changes that are expressed in them. Doing this, it proceeds from words to historical reality. On the other hand, it explores the ancient scholarly theory on early Roman dress and examines the various dress glosses that belong to the fictional world created by ancient scholarship.

The general distinction between primary and secondary sources produces the overall structural dichotomy of this book (A B vs C D). Parts A and B are about the literary sources and the knowledge we can gain from them. Parts C and D deal with secondary sources, i.e. the discourse ancient scholars had about the early Roman garments and their character. In short, parts A and B concern reality, parts C and D fiction. Within

Hadrill's, though I would refrain from using the word 'revolution.' Cultural change may speed up in consequence of a social crisis, but is in general a process of *longue durée* and hence better termed an 'evolution.'

17 For a recent overview of the methodological ideals pursued in this book, cf. P. Hoyningen-Huene, *Systematicity. The Nature of Science* (Oxford Studies in Philosophy of Science), Oxford 2013.

18 No one would try to explain the philosophical thought of Pythagoras (6th century BCE) by relying on the comments of the Neoplatonist philosopher Iamblichus (3rd–4th century CE), instead of using only the most ancient evidence. In case of Pythagoras, who did not write down any of his doctrines, this also presents formidable challenges for interpretation.

19 Isidor of Sevilla (6–7th century CE), for example, is often thought to be a valuable witness for Classical Roman dress.

this general framework, part A discusses all literary texts there are on women's dress in the period in question, and it keeps to the literary discourse. The authors are dealt with in chronological order, emphasis being on the correct interpretation of the respective texts. In the case of the authors of the early and middle Republic (up to 80 BCE), the discussion of the transmission is in the foreground because it poses many difficulties. As regards the late Republican authors (80–40 BCE), the main focus is on literary interpretation. In contrast, Imperial literature is only presented in an overview since its discussion is at the core of the next part. Part B considers Roman female dress as it might have shown itself in daily life. It is centred on dress terms in neutral language (excluding literary and scholarly language). The enquiry is carried out against the background of the corresponding archaeological evidence, without which the literary sources would be blind. Part B is perhaps the most important part of the present study and took the most time to write. Part C then deals with the ancient theory on female Roman dress. It is about the (secondary) discourse of ancient scholars who no longer knew the garments they were discussing. The Romans began to take interest in their costume as a part of cultural history in the second half of the second century BCE. The *grammatici*—the word can be rendered with grammarian, antiquarian, philologist, or scholar—tried to explain the meaning of difficult words they found in literature to their students. This was done orally during lessons, in commentaries, or in annotated editions. In the first century BCE, the grammarians' work turned itself into 'literature' and was socially upgraded. For us, this process is associated above all with the name of the senator and polymath Varro (117–26 BCE). Accordingly, part C will discuss his views on early Roman dress. It is in his works that the ancient discourse can be systematically put together for the first time. However, grammarians' research on obscure dress terms (glosses) continued after Varro for a long time. In the Augustan period, a transition to the lexicographic form took place. Part D follows this post-Varronian scholarly discourse. It deals with all the words which were already obscure in their meaning to scholars in Classical Antiquity and disregards those that became difficult only in Late Antiquity. In addition, it includes some new glosses created by Antique and Late Antique scholars which affect modern research.

The entire study focuses on the written evidence. However, archaeological sources play an important role in it. Both words and depictions are signs that refer, though in a different way, to the same historical object: Roman dress. Statues and pictures allow us to understand the ancient texts more precisely, and they fill the gaps our texts leave as to the outer appearance of garments. At the same time, they bolster up what our texts indicate as to the garments' social function and history. The short archaeological contribution of Joachim Raeder is included to remedy the partial neglect of archaeological sources in this book. It is based on the same principles of source distinction and precise definition as the study of the written evidence.

6 The limitations of approach

After all this, a final word about the limitations of the book's approach is appropriate here, as it suits our sceptical times and the character of its author. Part D of this book contains several cautionary tales that should be kept in mind. Our sources only allow a certain degree of approximation as regards (female) dress because there are no material remnants of Roman clothing from the Italian heartland from the period in question. In short, we know only as much about Roman dress as our texts and depictions allow us to know. Where there is no dress term and no picture, Roman dress culture is completely lost to us. Since most specific technical terms are missing, we have at best a rough idea of both the diversity of everyday fashion and of the multi-faceted terminology of dress. In addition, there are aesthetic and social limitations. Average dress only rarely finds its way into the literary and visual arts. Our written sources mainly deal with festive clothing. There is no description of a normal Roman tunic, the everyday garment *par excellence*, in all of Latin literature. The deformation that results from this trend even extends to the most basic level of lexicography, and it has sometimes deformed the modern perspective.²⁰ Conversely, we do not find everyday footwear—such as the *soccus* and the *solea*—with ordinary women in visual art. We see it with men, goddesses, and deified women. Given the bias of our sources, we have few sources on the trivial items of undergarments. Normal dress is always at the fringes of our evidence. Moreover, since our written sources are mostly concerned with fine clothing, they deal more with the attire of the elite and less with the costume of the common people. It is the same with the archaeological evidence. This all leads to a lopsided scholarly perspective. The present book counteracts this as best as possible, although certain distortions could not be avoided due to the nature of the material. The same applies to the gender perspective. With few exceptions, the texts offer the male point of view and reduce women to the opposite stereotypical pair of either matron (*matrona*) or prostitute (*meretrix*). They often talk about female costume only as it either relates to the dress of the matron (*stola*) or the *meretrix* (*toga*) and tend to classify female clothing in these categories. This book replaces the stereotypes with a social perspective as far as possible and eradicates the moralizing pattern of thought that is omnipresent in our sources.

In the end, there are great gaps in our knowledge, and it seems better to identify them than to hide them and to create an idealized ahistorical world. I hope that this book will give a realistic image of what we can and what we cannot know about specifically *female* and specifically *Roman* dress. The final epigram taken from Horace that Ferrari addressed to his readers in 1654 still holds good in the 21st century:²¹ 'Farewell! If you

²⁰ Cf. on this phenomenon, the chapters B 1 p. 243; B 2 p. 277.

²¹ *Vive, vale; si quid novisti rectius istis || candidus imperti: si non, his utere mecum.*

know something that is more correct than what I have written, be so kind and let me know. If not, use my book together with me.' (= Hor. epist. 1.6.67–68)