

# Foreword

This tiny volume was conceived within the ERC project Purism in Antiquity (grant agreement no. 865817) at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Although it was not initially planned, researches on the manuscript tradition of the *Onomasticon* soon proved to be far more complicated and extensive than expected, to the point that, instead of an article, it was decided to write this small book. After all, who could ever say no to Pollux? I must confess that, absorbed as I was in the *scholia* on Euripides, I never thought I would ever begin studying the *Onomasticon* (although, not being persuaded by Philostratus I had no prejudice against Pollux), but the strange and unfathomable paths of Fate led me to do so. Now, at the end of these pages, I must say that it has been an extremely interesting experience. First of all, Pollux's text is by no means a dry expanse of words, as one might expect; it is rather a refined tool and, why not, often an entertaining one. One which allows us to immerse ourselves in the depth of classical world and culture in all their elements, and how that world was interpreted in the lexicographer's time. With his honeyed voice that once enchanted emperor Commodus and – I admit – perhaps even me, Pollux guides the reader through ancient temples during festivities for some deity, into the *polis* and its institutions, into the workshops of artisans and merchants, across fields and landscapes surrounding the city, on a hunt to observe the animal domain, at a lively symposium, through the sciences and the arts, into medicine, and among the everyday objects that filled the homes at that time. In short, the reader will truly find in Pollux a *cornucopia*! I think there is still much to say and write about the *Onomasticon* from countless perspectives. Nonetheless, the purpose of these pages is simply to shed new light – and I hope I have succeeded at least in part – on the textual tradition of the *Onomasticon* and the various issues concerning it, from epitomisation to the division into families and subgroups, and to the different redactions. In any case, without diminishing the importance and value of Bethe's finest work, this study aims to lay the groundwork for a possible future revision and re-edition of the text. But all of this will be discussed in the book itself, and I will not linger here on topics that are examined more thoroughly in the following pages.

I would like to heartily thank all the people – a very long list – who have helped and advised me during the writing of these pages (and who encouraged me to turn them into a book), and with whom I had the opportunity to discuss the most problematic points: Filippomaria Pontani, Olga Tribulato, and all the members of the Pura project: Roberto Batisti, Federica Benuzzi, Federico Favi, Giulia Gerbi, Elisa Merisio, and Andrea Pellettieri. To them I add the two anonymous reviewers, and all De Gruyter's staff: Jessica Bartz, Torben Behm, Florian Ruppenstein and Carlo Vessella. But – alas! – I fear I am surely forgetting someone. Any remaining errors or omissions are solely my own. I also extend again my gratitude to the staff of

all the libraries where I was able to study and to consult manuscripts. And as is customary, I would like to thank the reader who has followed me thus far and has chosen to dedicate their time to these pages. I hope they will find them both pleasurable and interesting.

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