Summary

ISIDORE OF SEVILLE ON SHIPS AND BUILDINGS (EYMOLOGiae XIX,1–19), AND HIS POSSIBLE SOURCES

In this paper, the possible sources of Isidore of Seville in his book 19 of the Etymologies are reexamined. First, the topics dealt with in book 19 are subsumed under the so-called artes mechanicae or artes minores. The main focus, then, is on Isidor’s account of ships (Etymol. XIX,1–6): as possible sources, Aulus Gellius, the mosaic of Althiburus (CIL VIII, 27790) and Nonius Marcellus are mentioned, as well as the Prata of Suetonius Tranquillus which could be considered a shared starting point for all mentioned authors dealing with naval themes. The second part of the article focuses on the architecture and construction engineering (Etymol. XIX,8–19): as possible sources, Vitruvius, M. Cetius Faventinus and Palladius are named. Although none of these authors is directly quoted by Isidore, his description of a square (norma) derives, demonstrably, from the similar passage of Faventinus. As far as Vitruvius’ treatise De architectura is concerned, a close interconnection between this work and Isidore’s account is stated; however, it remains unclear whether Isidore knew this work directly or through his reading of Faventinus.

Keywords: Isidore of Seville; Etymologiae XIX; Quellenforschung; ancient Roman ships; ancient Roman architecture; Suetonius Tranquillus; Vitruvius; M. Cetius Faventinus