From 1846 to 1951 everyone knew that codex Laurentianus LXVIII.2, commonly known as the Second Medicean of Tacitus, was the unique source of Annales XI–Historiae V, and no dictum in the Überlieferungsgeschichte of classical texts was more generally accepted as unquestioned orthodoxy. Heretical doubts were first aroused\(^1\) by C. W. Mendell, who discovered in Leidensis 16.B the manuscript that unkind souls had thought a fiction imagined by Theodorus Ryckius in 1687 to lend authority to his own ingenious conjectures. Mendell’s work culminated in his Tacitus (1957) and in the photographic reproduction of the Leidensis in the monumental series Codices Graeci et Latini photographice depicti (1966).

Few were convinced by Mendell’s arguments, but among the few was Erich Koestermann, who had the courage to use the Leidensis as a witness independent of the Medicean in his next editions of the Annales (1960) and the Historiae (1961). His temerity, as he wryly remarked in 1964, “animos virorum doctorum magnopore movit nec non paululum perturbavit.” It brought down upon him a landslide of reviews and articles, most of them sceptical, many of them hostile, and some denunciatory. One gentleman went so far as to describe Koestermann’s work as “well-intentioned idiocy,”\(^2\) and a number of others were content to intimate as much in

\(^1\) It is true that Félix Grat, Mélanges d’archéologie et d’histoire, XLII (1925), 31–66, argued that Vaticanus 1958 was a copy independent of the Second Medicean, but no one paid any attention to him. His subsequent publications, so far as I know, dealt chiefly with the methodology elaborated by Dom Quentin. Since it is now customary to follow fashion or indulge vanity by citing and discussing every publication conceivably relevant to the subject that one has seen or heard about, I remark that, in the interests of the reader’s patience and the printer’s time, I have strictly limited myself to citations that seemed to me essential to the argument.

more decorous terms. Considerable heat was generated, but not enough light for the disputants to see that Mendell had imposed on the learned world an obligation, regrettable, perhaps, but inescapable, to make a thorough collation of all the extant manuscripts of this part of Tacitus' great work and to establish, if possible, a *stemma codicum*. This task, arduous but imperative, was at last undertaken by Rudolph Hanslik, who set his doctoral candidates to work on the compilation and publication of complete collations of portions of the text. Two of these, *Historiae* II and *Annales* XI-XII, are now available.³

It would be premature to attempt at this time to outline, even tentatively, the interrelationship of manuscripts which show a dismaying amount of "horizontal transmission," but it may be apposite to call attention to certain aspects of the problem that I have discussed with my seminars on Tacitus and in private correspondence since 1958 and 1961 but which, so far as I know, have not yet appeared in print.

I

The Second Medicean was copied at Monte Cassino between the years 1038 and 1058,⁴ and if it was not copied directly from what remained of an ancient codex in rustic capitals, there cannot have been many intermediaries between it and that unique archetype.⁵ The fate of this manu-

³ *Historiarum* liber II, adnotationibus criticis ex omnibus codicibus qui extant haustis instruxit Ingeborg Schinsel. Wien (= *Wiener Studien*, Beiheft 3), 1971. *Annales* libri XI–XII,... instruxit Horst Weiskopf. Wien (= *Wiener Studien*, Beiheft 4), 1973. Rudolf Hanslik contributed prefaces to both; see his admirably judicious and concise summary of the manuscript-tradition of all of Tacitus' works in the *Anzeiger der österreichischen Akademie*, CIV (1967), 155–162. It is not clear to me whether Kenneth Wellesley's edition of Book III of the *Historiae* (Sydney, 1972), which contains an excellent and extremely valuable historical commentary (far more useful than Heubner's), was also intended to fulfill his agreement with Hanslik and provide adequate collations for that book; it certainly does not provide them, as Wellesley would surely admit (p. 29).


⁵ This is still true. In my study of the First Medicean and the early history of the Tacitean corpus in *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, LXXXII (1951), 232–261, I very tentatively accepted (notes 4, 87, and 88) the orthodox view of the Second Medicean as a unique source of Books XI–XXI of the consolidated work, to which someone had given the title, *Historia Augusta*. I now think it certain that there was at least one intermediary between the ancient codex in rustic capitals and the Second Medicean. Hanslik (in the article cited above) agrees that the one copy of Tacitus to survive the Dark Age must have been a codex of the Fourth Century in *capitalis rustica*. He believes that the surviving parts of it reached Fulda and were there copied, which is quite
script during the next four centuries has been confidently determined on
the basis of conjectures and inferences that we shall consider later, but we
have no positive information about what happened to it between the time
it was written and September 1427, when it was in the possession of the
famous Florentine collector, Niccolò de' Niccolì, who had obtained it
clandestinely as stolen property or, at least, as property of disputed
ownership. That Niccolò had obtained the manuscript surreptitiously is
quite clear from the letter written to him by Poggio Bracciolini, who was
then in Rome and wanted to borrow it: "Cornelium Tacitum, cum
venerit, observabo penes me occulte. Scio enim omnem illam cantilenam,
et unde exierit, et per quem, et quis eum sibi vindicet, sed nil dubites: non
exibit a me ne verbo quidem."6 On October 21, Poggio acknowledged
receipt of the manuscript in terms that permit us to identify it: "Misisti
mihi . . . Cornelium Tacitum, quod est mihi gratum, at is est litteris
Longobardis et maiori ex parte caducis, quod si scissem, liberassem te eo
labore."7

Poggio's description of the manuscript as one written in the Beneventan
script and with ink that had flaked off in various places, and as having
possible, even if we insist (as he does not) on an Insular intermediary between the ancient
codex and the Carolingian minuscules of the First Medicean and of the lost copy from
Fulda that, on this hypothesis, was sent to Monte Cassino, and became the source of the
transfer the honor of preserving what we have of Tacitus from Germany to Naples. I fear
that at least her reliance on a reference to "Historiam Corneli cum Omero" is illusory;
as Lowe saw long ago (*Palaeographical Papers*, Vol. I, p. 292), the reference is to the Latin
version of Dares Phrygius. She certainly errs in assuming that the ancient codex was in
uncials and comparable to the extant manuscripts of Livy. Of the examples of misreadings
that she gives, the only one that would not fit rustic capitals better than uncial is a single
P/C, and this, if significant, would raise the question of transmission of the text at some
point through the so-called "cursive majuscule" script, as was suggested long ago by
Miss Zelzer finds traces of "cursive majuscules" in the text of Livy: *Antidosis, Festschrift für

6 *Epist. III.14* (Vol. I, pp. 212 f., in the standard edition by Thomas de Tonellis,
Florentiae, 1832–1861).

7 *Ibid.*, III.15. *Litterae Longobardae* are, of course, what we now call the Beneventan
script. The humanists, naturally, did not use such terms with the precision of modern
palaeography, but we now have the invaluable work of Silvia Rizzo, *Il lessico filologico
degli umanisti*, Roma, 1973, based on a very extensive reading of the Humanists, and
wherever possible, identification of the codices to which they refer. The references in
Poggio are to Beneventan, but other Humanists occasionally call "Lombard" writing in
Insular minuscules and in a cursive hand now assigned to the Fifth or Sixth Centuries.
Although we deduce from the First Medicean that there must have been a copy of
Tacitus in an Insular hand at Fulda in the Ninth Century, we can scarcely imagine that it
came into the hands of Niccolò!
several lacunae,\(^8\) entitles us to identify it as the Second Medicean, which, as is attested by an endorsement on it, was owned by Niccolò de' Niccoli, who left it by will to the library of San Marco, whence it eventually passed into the Medicean Library. To be sure, it is theoretically possible that more than one copy of Tacitus was made at Monte Cassino. One thinks at once of the possible analogy of the two major manuscripts of Apuleius, of which the first, cited as \(F\) in critical editions, was copied at Monte Cassino a few decades after our Second Medicean, with which it is now bound in Laurentianus LXVIII.2, while the second, known as \(\phi\), was copied from \(F\) around the year 1200 in Beneventan script and probably at Monte Cassino and is now Laurentianus XXIX.2.\(^9\)

Since we have mentioned the two manuscripts of Apuleius, we may here notice in passing two facts about them that may be relevant to our own study, viz., (1) unless the editors of Apuleius\(^10\) are grievously mistaken, one or more manuscripts now lost were copied from \(F\), presumably at Monte Cassino, before one leaf of that manuscript was mutilated and before \(\phi\) was copied from it, so that the portions of the text lost in the mutilation can now be supplied from the extant descendants of those copies and (2) the scribe of \(\phi\), when he, presumably at Monte Cassino, copied from \(F\), which was then more than a century old, was often negligent and impatient and, as Lowe remarked, "did not hesitate to write what he did not actually see."\(^11\) Therefore, we cannot exclude the possibility that Tacitus was similarly copied (and miscopied) at Monte Cassino.\(^12\)

Although there may have been two Beneventan copies of Tacitus, we are surely justified in considering it highly improbable that both would have come into the possession of Niccolò de' Niccoli between 1427 and his death in 1437 and that one of them would have disappeared without

---

\(^8\) *Ibid.*, III.17: "in tuo Cornelio deficienti plures chartae variis in locis."


\(^10\) See D. S. Robertson's preface to his edition of the *Metamorphoses* in the Budé series (1940), pp. xxxviii–liv; Robertson's conclusions are accepted by Frassinetti in his revision of Giarratano's edition in the Corpus Paravianum (1961). Neither editor considers the theoretical possibility that the later manuscripts were derived from the lost codex that was the ancestor of \(F\) rather than from \(F\) itself.

\(^11\) Note that this scribe more or less consistently imposed his own notions of orthography (usually erroneous) on the text and frequently transposed words. Lowe identifies some of his changes as ignorant emendations rather than mistakes in reading his exemplar.

\(^12\) The superimposed writing that on some pages of the Second Medicean restores the text where the original writing had become evanid is identified by Lowe as "thirteenth-century Cassinese characters." If this is correct, one could imagine that the need for such restorations was perceived when a copy was to be made.
leaving some trace of its existence. We may conclude, therefore, that the
manuscript borrowed by Poggio was the Second Medicean.

As is well known, Poggio, unable to find a scribe who could decipher
the Beneventan script and unwilling to undertake himself a task which he
thought unnecessarily arduous, returned the manuscript to Niccolò
without copying it, since it was not the manuscript that he had intended
to borrow: "Legi olim quemdam [sc. codicem Taciti] apud vos manens
litteris antiquis, nescio Coluciine esset an alterius. Illum cupio habere vel
alium qui legi possit... Cura ut alium habeam, si fieri potest; poteris
autem, si volueris nervos intendere."\(^{13}\) So far as I know, the significance
of this request has not hitherto been understood.

Like all the Humanists of his time, Poggio was not an impeccable
Latinist, but he was accurate and consistent in his use of tenses. He said
\textit{esse}, not \textit{fuisset}. It follows, therefore, that he saw the manuscript, which
he describes as written \textit{litteris antiquis}, during the lifetime of Coluccio
Salutati, who died in 1406, and furthermore that he saw the manuscript
before the end of November 1403.\(^{14}\) when he, then an obscure youth of
twenty-two, left Florence armed with letters of recommendation from the
influential Chancellor to seek his fortune in Rome, whence he did not
return to Florence until long after the death of Salutati.

The date is of great importance. As has long been known, in the usage
of the early Humanists the term \textit{litterae antiquae} designates either (1) the
Carolingian minuscule or (2) the revival of that style of writing by the
Humanists, who properly disdained the Gothic and semi-Gothic hands
that the late Middle Ages had called \textit{litterae modernae}.\(^{15}\) Now B. L. Ullman
has shown in his fundamental study, \textit{The Origin and Development of the
Humanistic Script},\(^{16}\) that the Carolingian minuscule was revived by Poggio
himself under the patronage of Coluccio Salutati, that the oldest known
manuscript in the new \textit{litterae antiquae} is a copy of Salutati's essay \textit{De

\(^{13}\) \textit{Epist}. III.15. Whether Niccolò exerted himself with success is not known.

\(^{14}\) On 23 December, 1403, Salutati replied to a letter (now lost) in which Poggio
announced his success in making the acquaintance of certain prominent men and,
characteristically, enclosed a copy of his first collection of ancient inscriptions. Salutati's
letter may be found in Vol. III, pp. 653-656, of his \textit{Epistolario}, a cura di Francesco
Novati, Roma, 1891-1911. Novati's copious notes and appendices are a mine of infor-
mation about the earliest Humanists.

\(^{15}\) Silvia Rizzo, \textit{op. cit.}, 114-122.

\(^{16}\) Roma, 1960; in this fundamental study Ullman notes (12-19) that Petrarch and
Salutati preferred and sought Carolingian manuscripts, and complained that the con-
temporary Gothic and \textit{bastarda} were ugly and hard on the eyes—a complaint with which
we may certainly sympathize. It seems to have remained for Poggio to denounce the
\textit{moderna} as barbarous.
verecundia made by Poggio in 1402 or 1403, and that other scribes do not use that new style in datable manuscripts before 1405.17

It is obvious that if Poggio had himself copied in 1402 or 1403 the Tacitus to which he refers, he would know more about it, and if, as is not likely, he trained other scribes to write in that elegant style before he left Florence, he would in all probability have known what important commissions they had executed and for whom. We are thus forced to conclude that unless Poggio’s memory was sadly at fault or he used the term litterae antiquae with some unparalleled meaning in 1427, long after the designation had become standard in the Humanists’ vocabulary, there was extant in Florence between 1401 and 1403 a manuscript of Tacitus that had been copied between the ninth and the twelfth centuries and may well have resembled the First Medicean, which is the unique source of Annales I–VI.18

There are other indications that a manuscript of Tacitus containing Annales XI–Historiae V became known in Florence at the very end of the fourteenth century. In a letter that was probably written in 1392, Salutati lists Tacitus among the great historians whose works had perished, an “inexcusabile damnum... de quo quidem mecum nequeo consolari.”19 Given Salutati’s known interests and the high position he held as Chancellor of Florence, we may be certain that he would have been told, had any literate Florentine known that, as we shall see later, there was a copy of Tacitus somewhere in a heap of unwanted books stacked up in some obscure lumber room of a Florentine monastery. In August 1395, however, Salutati described Tacitus as a decadent writer, “qui, licet eruditissimus foret, ... a Livio, quem non sequendum solum historiae serie, sed imitandum eloquentia sibi proposuit, longe discessit.”20 Salutati is not given to making judgements without knowledge, and I can call to mind no ancient or Mediaeval writer whose opinion he could have been echoing.21 I think it likely, therefore, that Salutati had either seen some

18 The only escape from this conclusion, it seems to me, is to posit that Poggio could have applied the designation litterae antiquae to some particularly clear Gothic or bastard hand, but Poggio, who was an accomplished calligrapher himself, was so proud of his revival of the Carolingian minuscule and so conscious of its elegant contrast to the scripts that he called barbarous that I cannot believe that he, of all Humanists, would have used the term so loosely.
19 Epistolario, Vol. II, pp. 296 ff. For the date, see Novati’s closely reasoned discussion in his note, pp. 289 ff.
21 The short quotations in Orosius would surely have been an insufficient basis for this stylistic judgment. After Tacitus, who is his prime example, Salutati lists en bloc later writers (Suetonius, Pliny, the Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Apuleius, Macrobius)
text by Tacitus or heard a report from someone who had and in whose
stylistic sense he had confidence. Since Salutati does not later mention
Tacitus—not even in his tractate De tyranno written around 1400—it is
unlikely that he ever owned such a manuscript, although he must, at the
very least, have had an opportunity to see one in 1403, when it must have
been available to two of his close associates. His pupil and protégé,
Leonardus Arretinus (Bruni), quoted from it in the Laudatio Florentinae
urbis which he composed in the summer of 1403, i.e., a few months before
Poggio left Florence. And it was probably in the same year that Salut-
tati’s friend and intellectual parasite, Domenico di Bandino, doubtless
using the same manuscript, quoted Tacitus in his discursive De civitatibus.

The manuscript that was available in Florence in 1403 is almost
certainly the one that Poggio saw and remembered, and if, for example,
he saw it when it was temporarily in the hands of his fellow protégé,
Leonardus, who must have borrowed it, since he was then too young and
poor to own many books, we can understand why Poggio was uncertain
who owned it. That manuscript cannot have been the Second Medicean,
whose works show “quantum maiestas illa prisci sermonis, quae cum Cicerone summum
apicem tenuit, imminuta est.” It is to the point that he owned copies of all the later
writers he names (see B. L. Ullman, The Humanism of Coluccio Salutati, Padova, 1963,
pp. 215–252) and so is presumably expressing his own opinion.

22 Ullman, op. cit., p. 252, repeating an earlier conclusion, says that it is not likely that
Salutati ever saw any part of Tacitus, but, apart from the general consideration that
Salutati probably would not have named as his prime example of stylistic decline an
author of whom he knew nothing, it seems to me that his statement that Tacitus intended
to continue Livy was most probably suggested by the exordium of the Historiae, supple-
mented by either an inference drawn from the part of the Annales transmitted with them
(how he could have supposed that the missing Books I–X began where Livy had stopped) or
from Jerome’s statement in his commentary In Zachariam (of which Salutati owned a
copy) that Tacitus’ work began post Augustum. I think it likely that Salutati read at least
enough of Tacitus—a page or two would have sufficed—to see the great difference of his
style from Livy’s.

23 Most conveniently available in Francesco Ercole’s editio minor, Bologna, s.a. (1942).
24 The date of Bruni’s treatise was determined by Hans Baron, Humanistic and Political
25 Miss Hankey, in her article on Domenico in Rinascimento, VIII (1957), says (p. 182)
that the work was “written c. 1400,” but later (p. 207) decides that certain chapters of it
“were presumably written about 1403.” It cannot have been completed earlier if Domenico
used in it the information supplied, evidently for this particular work, by Salutati in a
have pumped Salutati for the erudition that he displays (without acknowledgment) in his
dismayingly voluminous writings. (He may have felt that he repaid the debt by writing a
eulogy in which he concludes that “Conclusu . . . solus est arcanae naturae conscius, qui
divina solus et humana complecti animo et eloqui stilo possit adeo exuberanter quod [1]
onnes laudatos veteres antecedat.”)
which Poggio obviously did not see before he borrowed it from Niccolò de' Niccoli and which is written in the Beneventan script that neither Leonardus nor Domenico di Bandino is likely to have been able to read with any ease; and if the manuscript was correctly described by Poggio as written litteris antiquis, it could have been as old as the Ninth Century and could not have been produced later than the Twelfth.

That is a fact that should give pause to the most obstinate votary of the Second Medicean.

II

It is now universally believed that the Second Medicean migrated from Monte Cassino to Florence in the way that Rostagno described in his introduction to the lithographic reproduction of that manuscript (1902), which is concisely summarized by Koestermann in the preface to his latest edition of the Annales (1965): "... codex Laurentianus 68.2, quem medio saeculo XI monasterio in Casinensi formis litterarum Longobardis scriptum ... Johannes Boccaccius ante a. 1370 inde surripuisse videtur, cuius bibliotheca postea in possessionem Nicolai de Nicolis (1363-1437) pervenit, qui codicem una cum reliquis suis libris Conventui S. Marci Florentino legavit; inde codex in bibliothecam Laurentianam transiit."

This is the accepted story and, at least until Mendell came to disturb orthodoxy, it was further believed that the Second Medicean, saved from Monte Cassino by Boccaccio's glorious theft, was the exemplar from which in the fifteenth century all other extant manuscripts of this part of Tacitus' work were copied, with many strange corruptions, presumably caused by the difficulty of reading a Beneventan hand, and with some very strange mutilations of some of those copies early in the fifteenth century, so that the extant manuscripts now fall into three clearly defined classes: (I) those which end where the Second Medicean ends, (II) those which end abruptly in Hist. V.23.2 with the word potiorem, which occurs in the middle of line 16 of the second column of f. 103 of the Medicean—there being no perceptible reason why a copyist should have stopped at that point, and (III) those which end in Hist. V.13.1 with the word evenerant, which occurs in line 8 of the first column of f. 102 of the Medicean—there being no conceivable reason why a copyist should have thrown down his pen after transcribing the first word of a sentence.

26 The word bibliotheca is, of course, merely a lapsus calami, for as Koestermann well knew (see his article in Philologus, CIV [1961], p. 94), Boccaccio's library was left to the convent of Santo Spirito, and it was never supposed that more than a few of his books had been obtained by Niccolò.
This codicological tale has always been intrinsically implausible. Since 1961 it has been demonstrably false.

Fairly early in his career, Boccaccio was inspired by the example of Petrarch, for whom he conceived the utmost admiration and veneration, to turn from vernacular poetry and prose to Latin and scholarship, and it was probably not long thereafter that he began to compile the work that he was to regard as his surest claim to immortality, the De genealogia deorum, which was to be at once a comprehensive manual of mythology and a contribution to Latin literature. He completed his first version of that work before 1359, but after he learned as much Greek as the Calabrian adventurer, Leonzio Pilato, could teach him in 1360–1362, he undertook a thorough revision of his work to incorporate information from the parts of Homer that he had read and from such other instruction as Pilato had given him. He doubtless intended this revision to be the definitive text, because his autograph manuscript, now Laurentianus LII.9, must have been written slowly and laboriously, with the most painstaking effort to produce regularly formed characters, precise margins, and uniform columns on each page. In this fair copy, Boccaccio made no use of Tacitus and probably had not yet read him.

27 He dedicated the work to Hugo IV of Lusignan, King of Jerusalem and Cyprus, who died in 1359. It is characteristic of Boccaccio that he preserved that dedication in all of his subsequent revisions of his work, and although he continued to improve the text for fifteen years thereafter, he neither replaced the dedication nor altered the passages in which he addressed the king as alive.

28 I saw the manuscript at a time when I had no particular interest in it and even noticed the marginal addition that I am about to mention, but without perceiving its significance. Photographs of some pages, with enlargements of small portions to show changes in Boccaccio's handwriting, are included in P. G. Ricci's article, "Studi sulle opere latine e volgari del Boccaccio," Rinascimento, X (1959), 3–32, and in Ricci's half of the book that he wrote in collaboration with Vittore Branca, Un autografo del Decameron, Padova, 1962. The autograph manuscript is the basis of the edition, Genealogie deorum gentilium libri, a cura di Vincenzo Romano, Bari, 1951, which contains, Vol. II, pp. 789–864, a detailed discussion of the various manuscripts and of the stages of composition shown by Boccaccio's revisions in the autograph. Romano believes that the fair copy was begun late in 1363 and completed early in 1366 but that Boccaccio probably began to make further revisions in the early books, by erasure and rewriting, before he completed the later books.

29 That is Romano's conclusion (p. 843), which I see no reason to doubt. That Boccaccio knew Tacitus much earlier was believed by Hecker and other scholars, whom Rostagno followed in his preface to the photographic reproduction of the Second Medicean, and this has most recently been maintained by Ricci, who has identified ("Studi," pp. 12–21) six successive revisions and rewritings of Boccaccio's De mulieribus claris and assigns a date before 1362 to the version that contains stories based on Tacitus. That Boccaccio dedicated his work to Andreola Acciaiuoli at an opportune time, when he hoped for favors from her brother, I can well believe but, with the example of his dedi-
This recension, however, was far from definitive. Boccaccio soon felt impelled to make revisions and additions and, indeed, he continued to review and improve his work until his death. He erased and rewrote long passages in his fair copy, and when this would no longer serve he added supplements in the once ample margins. In one such marginal addendum he cites Tacitus as his authority for information taken from Hist. II.3. This addition must have been made before 1371, because Boccaccio, when he set out on the last of his journeys to Naples in search of his vanished youth, took with him either the extant autograph or a copy of it now lost, and near the end of his brief sojourn in Naples lent it to Hugo, Count of San Severino who, violating a promise, permitted the making of copies from which, it is agreed, were derived numerous manuscripts and the early printed editions, all of which contain the passage derived from Tacitus. It follows, therefore, that Boccaccio obtained and used a manuscript of Tacitus before January 1371. (Whether this was the manuscript that was in his possession when he arrived in Naples is a question that we shall consider later.)

In Chapter 23 of Book III of his De genealogia, Boccaccio, after some discussion, concluded that the story that Venus had been born from the sea near Paphos was if not exactly an allegory a mythical expression of the fact that the inhabitants of the island of Cyprus were reputed to be most extraordinarily addicted to erotic pleasures. After he read Tacitus, it

cation of the De genealogia (note 27 supra) before me, I cannot see why the presence of that dedication (which Boccaccio never cancelled) suffices to date that version. I think the stories from Tacitus were added long after the dedication was written, because it seems to me unlikely that Boccaccio was so tactless as to present to the lady, who had become by her second (or third) marriage the Countess of Alteville, a version of his book that included his sketch of Pompeia Paulina (wife of Seneca) which he obviously elaborated from Tacitus only because it gave him an opening for a long digression on the libidinosa prurigo of women who marry a second time and, like whores, take pride in having had sexual relations with more than one man, which proves that they are whores at heart, even though they go through a marriage ceremony to keep up appearances. As for Ricci’s extremely minute and discerning analysis of changes in Boccaccio’s handwriting, the dating of those changes is partly based on the supposed date of the autograph manuscript dedicated to the Countess of Alteville and containing the stories from Tacitus.

30 Which it was does not matter for our purposes, so we need not enter into a question that has been the subject of long and lively debate between Romano, G. Martellotti, D. Peraccioni, P. G. Ricci, and perhaps others whose contributions I have not seen.

31 The circumstances are stated by Boccaccio in a letter published in his Opere latine minori, a cura di Aldo Massera, Bari, 1928, pp. 198–203.

32 This I infer from Romano’s study of the manuscripts and early printings cited in note 28 supra. Texts derived from the copies made by Hugo of San Severino are easily recognized because they contain certain passages (none of which concerns us here) that are not in the autograph manuscript.
occurred to him that the myth might reflect an historical event, so he added in the margin the passage which I quote from the text edited from the autograph manuscript by Vincenzo Romano, who has introduced modern capitalization and punctuation, but has retained Boccaccio’s ugly misspellings.33

Verum hoc potius ad hystoriam quam ad alium sensum pertinere ex Cornelio Tacito sumi potest. Qui velle videtur Venerem auspitio doctam armata manu conscendisse insulam bellumque Cynare regi movisse; qui tandem, cum inissent cordium, convenere ut ipsa rex Veneri templum construeret, in quo eidem Veneri sacra ministrarent, qui ex familia regia et sua succederent. Confecto autem templo, sola animalia masculini generis in holocaustum parabantur, altaria vero sanguine maculari piaulum cum solis precibus igneque puro illa adolerent. Simulacrum vero dee nullam humanam habere dicit effigiem, quin imo esse ibidem continuum orbem latiorem initio et tenuem in ambitu ad instar methe exurgentem, et quare hoc nullam haberi rationem.

A strange story, certainly, and one more worthy of Semiramis than of the golden Aphrodite. I now transcribe the relevant passage in Tacitus (Hist. II.3) from f. 60r of the Second Medicean, resolving contractions but making no other change.

Conditorem templi regem uerianus · uetus memoria · quidam ipsius deae nomen Idperibent · fama recentior tradit · acinya sacratum templum · deamque ipsam conceptam mari hoc adpusam · sed scientiam artemque aruspicum accitam · et cili centamiram Intulisse · atque Ita pactum ut familiae utriusque posteri caerimonii praesiderent · mox ne honore nullo region genus peregrinam stirpem antecelleret · ipsam quam Intulerat scientia hospites cessere · tantum cinyrades sacerdos consultur · hostiae ut quisque auuis& · mares deliguntur · certissima fides haedorum fibris · sanguinem aerae offundere uetitum · precibus et Igne puro altaria adolentur · nec ullis Imbribus quamquam Inaperto madescent,- Simulacrum deae · non effigie humana · continuus orbis latiore Initio tenuem Inambitu meta modo exsurgens · et ratio in obscuro,-

It is quite obvious that Boccaccio could not have extracted his story from that text—not even with the aid of a flagon of spumante.

I now transcribe the text from f. 110r of Mendell’s Leidensis.

Conditorem templi regem venerianum vetus memoria · quidam ipsius deae nomen id perhibent · fama recentior tradit a cinara sacratum templum deam que ipsam conceptam mari hoc adplusam · sed scientia arte que aruspicum accitam et cinarae certamina intulisse atque ita pactum ut familiae utriusque posteri cerimoniis presiderent · mox ne honore vlo region genus peregrinam stirpem antecelleret · ipsa quam intulerant scientia hospites cessere · tantum cinarides sacerdos consultur · hostiae ut quisque vouisset mares deliguntur · certissima fides edorum fibris · sanguinem aerae offundere uetitum · precibus et igne puro altaria adolentur. nec villis imbribus quamquam in aperto

madescunt · simulacrum deae non effigiae humana continua orbis latiore initio tenue in ambitu metae modo exurgens. et ratio in obscuro.

Now we see whence Boccaccio derived the notion of a bellicose Venus, who practiced augury, led an army against a king named Cynara, and founded a family on Cyprus. His manuscript of Tacitus was not the Second Medicean: it was a manuscript that could have been the ancestor of the Leidensis.

I consider this one example probative, and I accordingly refrain from adducing the supporting evidence that could be elicited from the stories derived from Tacitus that Boccaccio added in some revision of his De mulieribus claris, but only at the expense of a long analysis of his literary purposes and techniques to distinguish between details that he probably derived from readings not in the Second Medicean and details that he added to make more vivid and dramatic stories that he selected as illustrations of the wide variety of feminine character and conduct.

The glaring discrepancies between Boccaccio’s account of the Paphian Venus and the accepted text of Tacitus must have been apparent to most readers of the De genealogia deorum since the Renaissance, but they probably assumed (as I did) that Boccaccio had contaminated the report in Tacitus with information drawn or inferred from some source now lost, perhaps the strange mythology or theology of the mysterious Theodontius. It was

34 Cf. note 29 supra.
35 For example, in his story of the younger Poppaea Sabina, taken from Ann. XIII.46, Boccaccio suggests, as one of the alternative explanations of Otho’s fulsome praise of his wife to Nero, a wish to be rid of her (“seu nequiens petulcae mulieris tolerare mores et ob id eam in Neronis concupiscientiam trahere conaretur”). He could have deduced this from the readings of the Leidensis, si ... feminam potiretur ... eam duceret, understanding the subject of the verbs to be Nero. In the absence of complete collations for this part of Tacitus, I do not know whether Boccaccio could also have found in his manuscript vitium impotentiam instead of vinculum potentiam, which would have clinched the matter.
36 For example, he expands Tacitus’ brief mention of what quidam said about Triaria (wife of Lucius Vitellius) into the story of a woman who, with Amazonian courage, took up sword and shield and fought amid the vividly described horrors of a city taken and sacked by night. He attributes this conduct to a determination to assure her husband’s victory, and he thus can expiate on the nature of women, who, though often terrified by the sight of a mouse, can be inspired by their devotion to a man and so find the courage to confront perils and horrors that would daunt many a robust and valiant soldier. He concludes that Triaria, who showed the devotion that he had read into a few words in Tacitus, must have been longe alis meritis spectabilis, although history has failed to record her other virtues.
37 I commented briefly on the problem of Theodontius in Speculum, XXXIII (1958), 150–153, but I now think that we should consider the possibility that this work, whether or not related to the Theodontius mentioned by Servius, was circulated in late Byzantine times in the interests of the secret Neo-Platonic religion, on which see François Masai, Pléthon et le platonisme de Mistra, Paris, 1956.
not until 1961, when Koestermann's new edition of the Historiae made available the readings of the Leidensis, that it became apparent that Boccaccio was merely interpreting the text of Tacitus that he had before him.

I will confess that when Koestermann's edition reached me, I thought the problem solved and Mendell's position vindicated—and that ten years later, when I examined Ingeborg Schinzel's collations for Book II, I felt a sensation of mild vertigo.

I list below the decisively disjunctive readings that underlie the elements in Boccaccio's story shown in parentheses, and then, for each of the three classes of manuscripts,\(^38\) I give Hanslik's sigla for the manuscripts that show all three of the readings, and I indicate, after a plus sign, the number of other manuscripts of that class that have the one reading under consideration:

- **cinara (= Cinara)**
  - I. YO\(_3\) + 10
  - II. L + 2
  - III. N\(_{21}\), O\(_{48}\) + all four of the others.

- **deam . . . scientia arteque aruspicum accitam (= Venerem auspicio doctam)**
  - I. YO\(_3\) + 2
  - II. L + 7
  - III. N\(_{21}\), O\(_{48}\) + 1

- **Cinarae certamina intulisse (= bellum . . . regi movisse)**
  - I. YO\(_3\)
  - II. L
  - III. N\(_{21}\), O\(_{48}\) + 2

Even allowing for extensive "horizontal transmission" between classes, it seems clear that if the manuscript that was the source of these readings belonged to Class I, its text was apocopated in some of its descendants, and if it belonged to Class II or Class III, the text was supplemented in one or two of its descendants.

**III**

We have shown that Boccaccio's manuscript was similar to the Leidensis and others. We have yet to consider the possibility that he may also have had his hands on the Second Medicean at some time.

Of the three bits of evidence that have been used to connect him with

---

\(^38\) See above, p. 197. Note that I use the classification given by Koestermann in the preface to his edition of the Historiae and followed in the collations by Hanslik's pupils and not the classification given by Mendell in his Tacitus (pp. 337–342) and Hanslik in the article cited above (p. 159), in which the order is reversed. In other words, in the classification that I use here, the Second Medicean belongs to Class I, not III.
that manuscript, one may be summarily dismissed. The Second Medicean
is now bound with the Beneventan manuscript of Apuleius known as F,
and there is also in the Laurentian Library (LIV.32) a copy of Apuleius
in Boccaccio's handwriting. It is certain, however, that F was not Boccac-
cio's exemplar. On the basis of a minute study of all the major manu-
scripts, D. S. Robertson concludes39 that Boccaccio's copy was made
from a contaminated copy of a manuscript now in the British Museum
which was a direct copy of Ambrosianus N.180 sup., which in turn is an
early fourteenth century copy of a copy of F that had been made before
1200.

It is certain that Boccaccio visited Monte Cassino and inspected its
library at least once. For this we have his own statement as reported by
his younger friend and pupil, Benvenuto da Imola, who succeeded him
in the lectureship that Florence tardily established for him. Benvenuto,
who venerated Boccaccio as a new Chrysostom40 and was proud of having
had a praeceptor so illustrous for wisdom and eloquence, reports the story
in the execrable Latin of his commentary on Dante:41

Venerablis praeceptor meus, Boccaccius de Certaldo, dicebat... quod
dum esset in Apulia, captus fama loci, accessit ad nobile monasterium
Montis Cassini... et avidus videndi librariam, quam audiverat ibi esse
nobilissimam, petivit ab uno monacho humiliter, velut ille qui suavissimus
erat, quod deberet ex gratia aperire sibi bibliothecam. At ille rigide respondit,
ostendens sibi altam scalam, "ascende quia aperta est." Ille lactus ascendens
invenit locum tanti thesauri sine ostio vel clavi, ingressusque vidit herbam
natum per fenestras, et libros omnes cum bancis ['bookcases'] coopertos
pulvere alto; et mirabundus coepit aperire et volvere nunc istum librum,
nunc illum, invenitque ibi multa et varia volumina antiquorum et pere-
grinorum [pagan'] librorum, ex quorum aliquibus detracti erant aliqui
quaterni, ex aliis recisi margines chartarum, et sic multipliciter deformati.
Tandem, miseratus labores et studia tot inclitissimorum ingeniorum devenisse
ad manus perditissimorum hominum, dolens et illachrimans recessit, et
occurrens in claustro petivit a monacho obvio quare libri illi pretiosissimi
essent ita turpiter detruncati. Qui respondit quod aliqui monachi, volentes
lucrari duos vel quinque solidos, radebant unum quaternum et faciebant
psalteriolos, quos vendebant pueris, et ita de marginibus faciebant evangelia
et brevia [i.e., short quotations, used as periaptts and charms], quae vend-
ebant mulieribus. Nunc, vir studiose, frangere tibi caput pro faciendo libros!

39 Op. cit., p. xlvii. Frasinetti reprints the preface of Giarratano, who dismisses Boccac-
cio's manuscript as a much contaminated copy of the Ambrosian codex. At all events,
it is certain that Boccaccio cannot have copied from either of the Beneventan manuscripts
and, so far as I know, there is no indication that he could even read the Beneventan
script.

40 Benevenuti de Rambaldis de Imola Comentum super Dantis Aldigherij Comodiam,
editum sumptibus Guilielmi Vernon, curante Jacobo Lacaita, Florentiae, 1887, Vol. V,
p. 164.

41 Ibid., pp. 301 f.
The story is, of course, as well known as Poggio’s account of the German *ergastula* from which he liberated classical authors, but it is worth citing in the original. It certainly suggests that a man of Humanistic piety should have abstracted what he could from the moldering library or, if very scrupulous, have given some monk a few *solidi* or even a florin to carry selected manuscripts out and load them on his sumpter-horse, but it does not say that Boccaccio did so. On the contrary, since Benvenuto is writing some years after Boccaccio’s death but before ancient manuscripts became so valuable as to incite strenuous efforts to reclaim what might have been taken from Monte Cassino, we may suppose that Benvenuto would not have failed to report an act that he would certainly have regarded as highly creditable to his teacher.

Despite Benvenuto’s silence, it has been assumed Boccaccio “liberated” Tacitus on this visit, because (1) the probable occasion for such a visit was one or another of his journeys to Naples and (2) on the last of these, he certainly arrived in Naples with a Tacitus in his possession, and one, moreover, that seems to have been unbound, whence we could infer that he had removed the manuscript from its binding to facilitate asporation or to lighten his luggage.

To estimate the probabilities, we must take some notice of one aspect of Boccaccio’s mentality. As every reader of his early works in the vernacular, especially the *Filostroto*, *Amorosa visione*, and *Fiammetta*, well knows, Boccaccio regarded Naples as a land of felicity. It was the land in which he, supported by his wealthy father, had spent the greater part of his adolescence, and the combination of youth and prosperity had made his life a season of happiness to which he ever afterward looked back as to a lost paradise. When his father suffered financial reverses, probably as an aftermath of the bankruptcy in 1339 of the great Florentine banking houses of the Bardi and Peruzzi, who had rashly lent Edward III of England the then prodigious sum of 1,075,000 florins, Boccaccio, who was probably

42 In middle life Boccaccio traveled extensively in northern Italy and southern France on special diplomatic errands for the Florentine Republic (some of the diplomas accrediting him as ambassador are extant and were published by Francesco Corazzini in his edition of Boccaccio’s *Lettere edito e inedito*, Firenze, 1877, pp. 387-411), but none of these errands took him as far south as Rome. Monte Cassino was situated on what was at that time the principal road between Rome and Naples, hence its strategic importance to both the Papacy and the Norman kings and their successors, and Boccaccio must have passed it, at least, every time that he traveled to and from Naples.

43 According to Vittore Branca, P. G. Ricci, and other Italian scholars, Boccaccio embellished his ostensibly autobiographical statements with poetic licence, but it does not matter to us whether his most cherished mistress in Naples was really the illegitimate daughter of King Robert, nor need we inquire whether she discarded him or was left disconsolate by his departure.
twenty-eight, was compelled by sheer economic necessity to leave Naples, the home of light and life and laughter, where men and women lived in elegant leisure and devoted themselves to love, poetry, and learning; and he had to return home to Florence, a gloomy city inhabited by money-grubbing businessmen, saturnine, uncouth, dishonest, greedy, and pusillanimous. If the contrast seems overdrawn, remember that Boccaccio was young and a poet.

He returned to Naples as soon as a revival of the family fortunes permitted, but that visit was abruptly terminated when his father, whom he had never forgiven, inconsiderately died and left an inadequate estate. In 1362, when he was forty-nine, Boccaccio received cordial but perhaps insincere invitations from two of his friends, and he delightedly set out to recapture his youth. He appears to have packed up all of his books and valued possessions and, taking his young brother with him, to have migrated to Naples with roseate expectations that were bitterly disappointed. His hosts, probably embarrassed by his acceptance of their invitation, did not receive him with the cordiality that was due a friend, a poet, and a scholar. They gave him lodgings that he describes as a stinking hole, permitted their servants to be insolent, and neglected him themselves. Boccaccio left in April 1363 and went to Venice, whence he addressed to his former friends a vehement and mordant letter of denunciation.44

He could have visited Monte Cassino on the way either to or from Naples, but there is no mention of Tacitus, an author whom he evidently did not know when, after his return home, he made the fair copy of his De genealogia that we mentioned above.

We might suppose that Boccaccio would have learned a lesson from his disappointment and chagrin in 1362, but late in 1370, when he was vexed by some act of "in GRATITUDE" on the part of the Florentine government, he remembered cordial invitations from his old friend, Niccolò da Montefalcone, who had become Abbot of San Stefano in Calabria, and he set out again. Whether he stopped at Monte Cassino on the way, we do not know, but he had a copy of Tacitus with him when he descended on his surprised and doubtless embarrassed host's home in Naples.

History repeated itself. Niccolò, probably dismayed by the acceptance of his invitations and even more by the contrast between his status as abbot of a poor monastery and the glowing descriptions of his prosperity that he had evidently sent his friend, after a day or two, in which there

44 Only a small part of Boccaccio's text has survived, but the substance of the letter is preserved in a fifteenth-century Italian translation, which occupies thirty pages of small type in Massèra's edition of the minor Latin works cited in note 31 supra.
must have been some time for literary conversation, stole out of his own
house by night and had a boat carry him off to his monastery. Boccaccio
sent after him an indignant letter which concludes with the demand,
"Quaternum quem asportasti Cornelli Taceli quaeso saltem mittas, ne
laborem meum frustraveris et libro deformitatem ampliorem addideris."\(^45\)

It was generally assumed that this manuscript was the Second Medicean,
which Boccaccio had acquired on the way. But is it not conceivable that
the aging man, when he again sought the place of his happy youth, again
traveled with a mass of impedimenta, including at least his most prized
books? I think it is, if we consider the state of mind that we have adum-
brated above. It is true that Boccaccio, after he had returned to his
\textit{patrius agellus}, no doubt chastened by his second humiliating disappoint-
ment, pretended that his short sojourn in Naples had been merely a casual
visit,\(^46\) but his irate letter to Niccolò da Montefalcone leaves no doubt but
that he had intended or hoped to make the supposedly opulent monastery
his \textit{latebra}, in which he could reside indefinitely and enjoy the "nemorum
amoenam solitudinem, quorum circumsaep tum aiebas coenobium tuum,
librorum copiam, fontes limpidos, et ipsius loci devotionem et commoda—
sino rerum abundantiam et caeli benignitatem."\(^47\) It would have been
only reasonable to bring with him at least the books that he could not
expect to find in even the well-stocked library he had been led to expect.
We have, therefore, no reason to suppose that the Tacitus of which the
runaway abbot abstracted a fascicle was other than the manuscript we
have described as similar to the Leidensis.

\textbf{IV}

When Boccaccio returned to Florence and his home in Certaldo, he
undoubtedly took with him his Tacitus (with or without the purloined
\textit{quaternus}), and we have every right to assume that it remained in his
possession until his death and was among the books that he willed to the
monastery of Santo Spirito with the proviso that they be catalogued and
placed in a library.\(^48\) The holy men of Santo Spirito evidently saw no
profit in the bequest, and the books were simply piled up in chests and

\(^{46}\) E.g., in a letter of 1372 (p. 189): "quia laboriosam magis quam longam anno
praeterito peregri nationem intraverim et casu Neapolim delatus sum."
\(^{47}\) Pp. 183 f.
\(^{48}\) Whether Boccaccio intended to establish a public library, as is sometimes stated, is
uncertain. In the autograph draft of his will in Italian (\textit{op. Corazzini, op. cit.}, p. 416), the
custodian of his library "debba . . . far copia ad qualunque persona li volese di quegli
libri," but the text of what appears to have been the legal document (\textit{ibid.}, p. 428)
closets,\textsuperscript{49} no doubt in out-of-the-way places, so that it is not remarkable that in 1392, eighteen years after Boccaccio’s death, Salutati, although he had friends in Santo Spirito whom he frequently visited, did not know that the works of Tacitus had not been totally lost.

Boccaccio’s books may have lain unnoticed in some lumber room until Niccolò de’ Niccoli, probably a number of years after 1400, insured their preservation by having a special room added to the monastery and fitted up to house them suitably,\textsuperscript{50} stipulating that all learned men have access to them, and doubtless making provision for their safekeeping.\textsuperscript{51} The Tacitus, as we shall see in a moment, was among the books placed in that library, and since we have decided that it was not the Second Medicean, we have eliminated a point that always troubled me and, I hope, others. While I have no doubt but that Niccolò would have had no scruples about buying the Second Medicean as stolen property, I did not like to think

\begin{multicols}{2}

restricts the privilege of consultation to the monks of Santo Spirito (“ut quilibet de dicto conventu possit legere et studere super dictis libris”). This may correspond to a lacuna in the draft.

\textsuperscript{49} In “casae e armari,” according to Vespasiano da Bisticci in the passage quoted below. Vespasiano, who spent almost all of his life in Florence, where he was said to be the world’s largest and most highly reputed producer of beautiful manuscripts, especially accurate copies of Greek and Latin books, retired from his business when it was ruined by the banausic and vulgar art of printing, and around 1485, when he was sixty-four, settled down in his country villa to write his \textit{Vite di uomini illustri del secolo XV}, which is now regarded as one of the minor Italian classics and is available in many editions. He knew personally and intimately the literary world of his time, and his evidence about matters pertaining to books cannot reasonably be questioned. He distinctly implies that Boccaccio’s books were preserved only by the intervention of Niccolò de’ Niccoli. In his life of Pope Nicholas V, §8, he says: “È ancora oggi in Santo Spirito . . . una libreria che si chiama del Boccaccio . . . la fece far Nicolao Nicoli, e fecevi mettere i libri del Boccaccio, acciocchè non si perdessino.”

\textsuperscript{50} Vespasiano, “Nicolao Nicoli,” §7: “sendo morte messer Giovanni Boccaccio, e avendo lasciati tutti i sua libri a Santo Spirito, sendo posti in casse e armari, parve a Nicolao ch’egli stessino bene in sua libraria che fusse publica a ognuno; e per questo delle sue sustanze fece fabricare una libraria, a fine che così potessino mettere i detti libri, si per loro conservazione, il simile ancora per onore di messer Giovanni, e a fine che fusino comuni a chi n’avesse di bisogno; e fece fare le panche da tenere i libri, le quali si veggono infino al presente di.”

\textsuperscript{51} Francesco Novati, in his rigorous study of the fortunes of this library, \textit{Giornale storico della letteratura italiana}, X (1887), 413-425, notes that in the contemporary list of books in the library of the monastery itself there is listed a manuscript of one of the polemical diatribes of St. Augustine which the monks particularly prized because it was given them by a Pope, and the entry is followed by the notation, “Propter periculum latronum positus est in parva libraria.” If the little library built by Niccolò was a safer place for a valuable book, there must have been some provision for what is now called “security.”
\end{multicols}
that he would have had the manuscript stolen from the very library that he had established in honor of Boccaccio and for the use of scholars.

The library that Niccolò established seems at first to have borne Boccaccio's name, but it later became known as the Parva Libreria, probably, I conjecture, because it was housed in a small building adjacent to the monastery.\(^{52}\) It included Boccaccio's Tacitus, which was still there in September 1451 as is attested by an inventory made at that time and preserved in Laurentian manuscript, from which it was first published by A. Goldmann in 1887.\(^{53}\) The inventory is quite explicit: "Istud est inventarium parve librie... in quo scribentur omnes libri qui ibi reperientur. Factum et inceptum die XX\(^8\) mensis Septembris m.\(^{6}\)ccc.c.\(^{0}\)LI."

Note the future tenses: we have no reason to doubt but that the compiler did proceed to enter the titles of the books that he actually found on the shelves.\(^{54}\) Books from other gifts and bequests had been added to the collection, but Boccaccio's books remained together as the central part of the library, and we may be certain that the contents of Bancus \(V\) came from his bequest: of the twelve books in it, six are by Boccaccio, four are by Petrarch. Book No. 7 is thus described "Id quod de Cornelio Tacito reperitum conpletus copertus corio rubeo cius principium est 'nam valerium agiaticum.'\(^{55}\) Finis vero in penultima carta 'machina accessura

---

\(^{52}\) Novati refers to it as an aula and says that it was demolished ("l'aula eretta in S. Spirito dalla pietà del Niccolì, caduta da qualche tempo [i.e., prima del anno 1570] sotto il piccone demolitore"), doubtless in the course of some alterations in the conventual buildings. No large structure would be necessary to house less than two hundred books.

\(^{53}\) Centralblatt für Bibliotheksweisen, IV (1887), 137-155. The inventory, which begins on p. 144, lists 107 codices, of which about fifty certainly come from Boccaccio's collection, and about thirty-five more probably do. Novati believes that a considerable part of Boccaccio's collection disappeared before Niccolò de' Niccolì arranged for the preservation of what was left.

\(^{54}\) Goldmann reports changes in the color of the ink, which show that the entries were not made at one sitting. It is absurd to suggest that the compiler merely copied an earlier inventory and that the Tacitus was the Second Medicean, which had therefore been missing for a quarter of a century in 1451.

\(^{55}\) The spelling is not a mistake in Goldmann's transcripion; Oskar Hecker, Boccaccio-Funde, Braunschweig, 1902, minutely collates Goldmann's printing against the manuscript (pp. 38–42), noting that the penultimate word in the entry I quote is spelled acessura, but does not question this word. Most of his corrections of Goldmann's text merely show that the compiler's spelling was even worse than appears from Goldmann's printing, and it would be mere fantasy to deduce from agiaticum anything about the hand in which Boccaccio's manuscript was written. The numerous misspellings show that the compiler had an assistant, and that one wrote while the other read from the books and dictated the entries. It is worthy of note, however, that Boccaccio's manuscript evidently bore the title (as distinct from a colophon) that, according to Mendell's descriptions, is now found only in Vat. Lat. 2965 (Hanslik's V65): Cornelii Taciti quod reperitur. This manuscript belongs
erat.’” The explicit has been recognized as coming from Vitruvius, X.16.7. It is obvious, therefore, that Boccaccio’s Tacitus was bound with an incomplete copy of Vitruvius; it is also obvious that the compiler of the inventory merely examined the first and last pages of the volume and that we can attach no significance to his statement that the Tacitus was “conpletus,” which probably means no more than that the binding was unbroken.

How long after 1451 Boccaccio’s Tacitus remained in the library, we have no means of knowing. The little building that housed the collection, and perhaps the entire convent, escaped damage when the church was completely destroyed by fire in 1471,56 and Boccaccio’s books could still be consulted in Santo Spirito at the end of the century, but the collection was largely or entirely dispersed, for reasons and in circumstances unknown, before 1570, perhaps when the structure that Niccolò de’ Niccoli had built was demolished.57 Some of Boccaccio’s books have been found in the Laurentian and various other libraries, but many seem to have disappeared, Boccaccio’s Tacitus among them. Barring the remote possibility that it may still be found in some obscure and uncatalogued collection, we must assume that, since all known manuscripts of this part of Tacitus’ work, with the sole exception of the Second Medicean, have

to Class III, and of the disjunctive readings I listed above, it lacks only the third, for which it has e mare certamina intulisse, which would less precisely fit Boccaccio’s paraphrase, but would not exclude it.

56 This is certain from the evidence presented in Novati’s article, to which Hecker, op. cit., pp. 7 f., adds a few details. Goldmann’s statement (p. 138) that Boccaccio’s books were destroyed in the fire, though based on statements made by a number of earlier Italian cognoscenti (who copied one another), is a gross error—and one that should never have been made, given the explicit statement of Vespasiano da Bisticci, quoted above, that the library built by Niccolò de’ Niccoli was still there when he wrote, in 1485 or later. Hecker himself located and identified (pp. 29–37) a number of codices still extant that came from Boccaccio’s library and were in Santo Spirito. He believes that Boccaccio’s books were zealously protected by the monk to whose care Boccaccio had left them, and only after that man’s death thrown into some corner in conditions which fully account for the fact that many of them did not reach the shelves of Niccolò’s library: “So blieben denn die Bücher, die Boccaccio mit so opferfreudigem Eifer gesammelt und mit so warmer Liebe gehagt und behütet hatte, in mangelhaft verwahrten Kisten der Habgier und den Mäusen und Würmern zur willkommenen Beute jahrzehntelang unbeachtet liegen, bis im ersten Viertel des XV. Jahrhunderts ...”

57 It is possible that some of the books may have been destroyed in 1497 and 1498, when Savonarola’s followers had particularly acute fits of piety in the carnival season, but that seems unlikely, because quite a few of Boccaccio’s autograph copies of his own works are still extant. No disaster to the city or to Santo Spirito between 1485 and 1570 is recorded, so the most reasonable assumption is that priors of Santo Spirito sold the books, quietly and a few at a time, no doubt to raise money for pious purposes.
been identified as of the fifteenth century or later, it is no longer extant.

We have shown, however, that this lost manuscript had a text similar to that of the Leidensis, and I hope that we have permanently deleted from the record the generally accepted\(^\text{58}\) and incredibly fantastic story that the Second Medicean was stolen from Monte Cassino by Boccaccio; presumably went to Santo Spirito, whence it was stolen for Niccolò de' Niccoli; was not bound with any other work when it was lent to Poggio in 1427, but was bound with Apuleius before it passed to San Marco in 1437 or shortly thereafter; was amazingly taken from San Marco and hustled back to Santo Spirito to be bound with a Vitruvius before 1451; and was thereafter carted back to San Marco and rebound with the Apuleius before it, together with many other books in San Marco, was transferred to the Medicean Library. Pro deum atque hominum fidel! 

V

But the Second Medicean? If not Boccaccio, who?

A new candidate was brought forward in 1953 by the learned Giuseppe Billanovich: Zenobi da Strada.\(^\text{59}\) Billanovich seems to take it for granted that the Second Medicean reached Florence in the time of Boccaccio, but he argues that Boccaccio was not a man of sufficient prestige and authority to remove manuscripts from Monte Cassino—although no prestige, other than a handful of soldi, would have been needed, according to Boccaccio's report, which we have quoted in full above, and of which we have no reason to doubt the essentials, although it may well be that Boccaccio yielded to the universal human impulse to make a good story better by pointing up some of the details. Zenobi da Strada, we are told, lived at Monte Cassino from 1355 to 1357 and, since he had status as the vicar of a bishop, could have carted off codices to which he took a fancy. And finally, Zenobi has been identified by his handwriting as the author of marginal notes in both of the Beneventan manuscripts of Apuleius,\(^\text{60}\)


\(^{59}\) *I primi umanisti e le tradizioni dei classici latini*, Friburgo, 1953; pp. 29–33, 40. If the promised work on Zenobi has been published, I have missed it. Billanovich's conclusions were accepted by Ricci, "Studi," p. 20, who thinks them confirmed by his dating of the *De mulieribus claris* (cf. note 29 supra), i.e., Zenobi must have brought the Second Medicean to Florence in time for Boccaccio to use it for that work.

\(^{60}\) So Billanovich, *loc. cit.*, who recognizes Zenobi's handwriting also in the margins of the surviving portions of a third Beneventan manuscript of Apuleius, which Luigi Pepe, *Giornale italiano di filologia*, IV (1951), 214–225, 279–280, thought independent of F. He is to be credited with having provoked a masterly refutation by D. S. Robertson, *Classical Quarterly*, L (1956), 68–80, whose model exploration of the relevant phase of the text
including the so-called *spurcum additamentum*. If the handwriting of Zenobi can be identified with such assurance, it is still possible that Zenobi made the annotations while residing at Monte Cassino and decorously left the two codices there when he departed.

Boccaccio certainly knew Zenobi, and while it may not be fair to judge from the few letters that have survived of Boccaccio’s correspondence, I note that in one letter, written while Boccaccio was in Forli in 1348, Zenobi, then in Florence, was in some way concerned in having some book copied for Boccaccio by a scribe named Dionysius, who evidently wanted assurance that he would be paid. It was Boccaccio who had found somewhere a copy of Varro—possibly, though not necessarily, the Beneventan manuscript, now Laurentianus LI.10, that is believed to be the unique source of what remains of the *De lingua Latina*—and was having it or an apograph of it sent to him in Forli.62 In later life Boccaccio described Zenobi as an elementary school teacher who, after winning undeserved honor with a few verses, “intractus auri cupidine in Babylonem occiduum abiit et obmutuit,”63 i.e., abandoned literature and went where the money was, in the service of the Papacy, then in Avignon. Granted that there may have been some personal rift between the two men that still rankled in Boccaccio’s mind eleven years after Zenobi’s death, I doubt that Boccaccio

---


62 In Massëra’s edition, p. 128. It would be interesting to know whether the Varro that Boccaccio was expecting was the Beneventan manuscript or an apograph. He made a copy that he gave to Petrarch, who thanked him in his *Ep. de rebus fam.*, XVIII.4: “Recepi . . . a te librum ex Varronis ac Ciceronis opusculis [sc. Pro Cluentio, etc.] . . . Accessit ad libri gratiam quod manu tua scriptus erat.” Boccaccio would surely have kept a copy for himself, but nothing of the sort appears in the inventory of 1451. Boccaccio has been credited with having “liberated” Varro, too, from Monte Cassino (cf. Lowe, *Papers*, Vol. I, p. 296), and Billanovich would transfer the aureole to Zenobi’s head, but if the copy that Boccaccio says he was *habitatus in brevi* was the Laurentian manuscript, his letter to Zenobi proves (1) that Zenobi had nothing to do with it and (2) Boccaccio did not himself take it from Monte Cassino. He does not say whence the copy of Varro is to come, but he says that he may not be in Forli to receive it because he is likely to go south to the Campania (i.e., much nearer Monte Cassino) as a military observer, and that suggests that the expected copy was coming from some other direction.

63 Massëra’s edition, p. 196.
would have spoken with such disdain of a man whom he knew to have been a great student and discoverer of ancient literature.

Pending further studies, therefore, I remain unconvinced, and I think prudence requires us to conclude that, so far as we now know, the Second Medicean could have been taken from Monte Cassino soon after it was copied around 1050 \(^{64}\) or it could have remained there until 1427 when it passed into the possession of Niccolò de’ Niccoli.

VI

Since Boccaccio’s Tacitus is no longer extant and the few readings that we can identify are common to a number of manuscripts of different classes, we can know nothing more about it. It could have been a copy made around the middle of the fourteenth century or one made much earlier; it could conceivably have been the copy in Carolingian minuscules that Poggio saw in Florence around 1403. We do not know whether the deformitas of which Boccaccio complained was the incompleteness of the Tacitean text, as seems likely, or referred to deterioration or mutilation of the parchment. It may have been unbound when Boccaccio brought it to Naples; if it was bound, the fact that a fascicle was loose enough to be detached would suggest that the codex was fairly old—or that it had been severely damaged.

In the absence of facts, one may spin theories; so come, let us speculate together.

It is highly improbable that Boccaccio ever recovered the quaternus that had been removed from his manuscript. Unless Niccolò da Montefalcone had the temperament of either an angel or a slave, the verbal flaying that he received in Boccaccio’s letter cannot have disposed him to return pages that he had thought worth filching in the first place.

We do not know enough about Niccolò’s character to discern his motive. It could have been one of the most common of human motives, malice—a desire to injure as best he could a friend who had disconcertingly accepted an unmeant invitation and to frustrate the labor on which he was then engaged, which could have been anything from transcribing the text to finding material for further additions to the De genealogia, the De mulieribus claris, or other literary works. Even so, how-

\(^{64}\) K. J. Heilig, *Wiener Studien*, LIII (1953), 95–110, has shown that Paulinus Venetus, Bishop of Pozzuoli, who died in 1344, used in his own work extracts from Tacitus, most of which correspond to marginal marks in the Second Medicean. Granting that he made the marks, this does not prove that he went to Monte Cassino to consult the codex, which he could have seen elsewhere. Or perhaps it was he who stole it!
ever, it seems likely that Boccaccio exhibited his Tacitus to Niccolò soon after he arrived, and that when they parted, perhaps for the night, Niccolò retained a loose fascicle that particularly interested him, perhaps on the plea that he wanted to copy all or part of it.

We have no means of knowing what would particularly interest Niccolò but, given his occupation, one distinct possibility is Hist. V.13, in which Tacitus enumerates the *prodigia* that kept the Jews in Jerusalem agog during the siege by Vespasian and Titus, and particularly the statement that even during that siege the Jews entertained notions of world conquest: "pluribus persuasio inerat antiquis sacerdotum litteris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore ut valesceret Oriens prefectique Iudaeæ rerum poti- rentur." With only a modicum of imagination, Niccolò could have seen in that statement a veridic prophecy of the ultimate victory of Christianity or, for that matter, Boccaccio, who had in him a strain of highly emotional religiosity, could have proudly claimed to have discovered that meaning in the passage. If that happened, we can understand why the abbot purloined the *quaternus* containing that part of the text, and carried it off to his monastery, either as substance for his own pious meditations or to dazzle his monks.

Now if, for the sake of an hypothesis, we assume that Boccaccio's manuscript belonged to Class I and had as much of the text of Tacitus as is preserved in the Medicean and in Hanslik's YO3, the amount of text from the beginning of V.13 to the end was equivalent to 253 lines of Teubner text. In the Second Medicean, this text begins near the top of the first column on f. 102r and extends to near the bottom of the first column on f. 103v, i.e., occupies four pages with a blank space at the end. The number of pages that would be needed in other formats is easily calculated. If we assume that in Boccaccio's manuscript one quaternion or

---

65 It is a little odd that Orosius did not think of this when, with Tacitus before him, he composed his anamorphosis of Roman history.

66 As Hecker observes, *op. cit.*, p. 300: "Boccaccio ist sein lebenslang religiös gewesen," but with emotional fluctuations. When he was in his late forties he was visited by some holy man who claimed to be a messenger sent from on high to threaten him with death and damnation if he continued to read the wicked pagan writers, who were then being fried for their sins, and the message was evidently delivered in such thunderous tones that poor Boccaccio was frightened into a kind of nervous prostration, from which Petrarch had to rescue him with a vigorous letter (*Epistulae seniles*, L.4) that concluded with an ironic offer to buy the baneful books. Our knowledge of the incident comes entirely from Petrarch's letter, which Hecker could have used as the most dramatic proof that Boccaccio's protestations of Christian faith in the *De genealogia* are to be taken seriously. It would have been quite in keeping with Boccaccio's character to have discovered with excitement a prophecy in Tacitus' text, and the labor of which he speaks could have been some plan to exploit his sensational discovery. If so, Niccolò neatly frustrated it.
other gathering ended with the last word of V.12, then, if each page
contained as much text as an average page of the Leidensis, the remaining
part of the Historiae would have required seven full pages with four to seven
lines on the eighth page. If the manuscript resembled the First Medicean,
in which the Carolingian minuscule shows some variation in density, the
remaining text would have required either ten or eleven pages, with only
a few lines left blank on the last page.67

Now unfortunately we do not know how many pages were in the
quaternus that Niccolò da Montefalcone purloined. In the usage of the
Middle Ages and early Renaissance, quaternus does not mean quaternion:
it designates sheets folded in the middle as for binding in a codex, and it
was even applied to a single sheet folded to form four pages, although
there are only a very few instances of its use in this sense, possibly only
with reference to such a sheet when associated with larger signatures in a
bound book, or possibly only in error.68 Although the word was used with

67 I am stating the problem in its simplest terms, considering only the loss of the text
after V.12, and accordingly I do not complicate this speculation by adding a second, viz.,
that if Boccaccio’s manuscript in its original state corresponded in length to Class I, it
contained the text of Hist. IV.16–52, which is now missing in all the manuscripts of
Class III, which, however, have at the very end (i.e., following evenerant) two separated
“excerpts” from that missing portion (the facts are summarized by Mendell, Tacitus,
pp. 305, 309–311, 315–317, 337–338). Since Boccaccio’s manuscript was in such a state
that the quaternus stolen by Niccolò was detached, it is likely that other gatherings were
loose from the binding, and it is possible that the gatherings that contained IV.16–52
were lost except for the pages containing the “excerpts,” which are of about equal length,
so that each presumably corresponds to one leaf (two pages) or one sheet (four pages)
of the manuscript. From this datum we could proceed to calculate from the amount of text
lost before, between, and after the “excerpts” the size of the pages in Boccaccio’s manu-
script, which we would thus regard as the origin of Class III. This is quite likely, if the
speculation in which I here indulge has merit, but the two losses are not necessarily con-
ected, so I avoid what would be a circular argument.

68 It may well mean a single sheet in the passage from Benvenuto (Boccaccio’s pupil)
quoted on p. 203 above; the palimpsest psalterioli that the monks sold for a few coppers
obviously contained only a few selected psalms, perhaps those that the pueri were to
memorize, and to make one of them it would have sufficed to remove from a codex and
erase a single sheet of parchment (four pages), so it seems likely that that is what is meant
by unum quaternum. Silvia Rizzo, op. cit., pp. 42–48, has an example that shows that as
early as the sixth century quaternio had come to mean a gathering of sheets folded for
binding and had lost a numerical meaning. She notes the Mediaeval use of the word even
“per un solo foglio,” but she gives no example in which that meaning is indubitable, nor
do I find one in the works that she cites, although in some, as in the passage from Ben-
venuto I have mentioned, it is quite probable. If we could be sure that Boccaccio would
not have used quaternus to refer to an unio, we could disregard the chances that his manu-
script contained some text after Tacitus and thus infer that the manuscript was not written
in a dense hand with two columns to a page, such as we find in the Second Medicean
precise meaning in commerce and a few library catalogues, \textit{quaternus} in Mediaeval usage was applied to any gathering of from two to six sheets folded in the middle to form from eight to twenty-four pages. The portion of the text that Niccolò da Montefalcone abstracted according to our hypothesis could easily have been a gathering of two or three sheets at the end of the book, and Boccaccio could have called it a \textit{quaternus}. It could, of course, have been a quaternion in the correct sense of that word, with the pages following the end of Tacitus utilized, as was customary, for some short text in prose or verse that Boccaccio did not mention.

In other words, if the last gathering of Boccaccio’s manuscript began with \textit{Evenerant prodigia}, with \textit{evenerant} as the \textit{custos} at the bottom of the last page of the preceding quaternion, or if it simply began with \textit{prodigia}, Niccolò da Montefalcone’s theft could have been the origin of Class III of the manuscripts and would explain the strange apocopation of their text at that point.

So far as we can tell from the little that we know of its readings, Boccaccio’s manuscript could have been the archetype of Class III. As is obvious from the many readings they have in common as well as from the apocopation of the text, the six manuscripts of this class are closely related. Although, as I have indicated above, only two of them have all three of the crucial readings presupposed by Boccaccio’s story of Venus, the only significant difference is found in the last instance, where four of the manuscripts (N21, O48, V64, O22) have \textit{et cinaræ certamina} and one (V65) has \textit{e mare certamina}, which obviously came from \textit{et cinare} misread as \textit{exinare/exmare} and corrected.\footnote{V65 is the manuscript that has the title, \textit{Cornelii Taciti quod reperitur}, that was on Boccaccio’s copy; see note 55 above. If that copy was the source of Class III, the misreading \textit{e mare} could, of course, have come from some intermediary.} $K'$, however, has \textit{e cilicenta miram}, which must be a correction of the reading \textit{e cilicenta miram} that is common to the manuscripts of the Genevan group (V58, BO5, G, H, Mal, Prm, J). This is not remarkable,

and in Boccaccio’s autographic \textit{De genealogia}, but was instead in some hand and format that would have required more than an unio to transcribe the remaining part of the \textit{Historiae}, and therefore could have resembled the First Medecian. This, I fear, we cannot do. Any codex might have had an unio at the end, and if in Boccaccio’s mind \textit{quaternus} meant nothing more than a signature (i.e., a unit of one or more sheets folded for binding), he could have used that word instead of \textit{folium}, which would probably have been his usual term for a single sheet.

\footnote{I do not understand why this group of manuscripts is commonly called “Genoan” or “Genoese,” as though there were some connection with Genoa in Italy. The locative \textit{Genuae} found in colophons is, of course, ambiguous, but V58 and some others have the marginal note that is quoted by Mendell, \textit{Tacitus}, p. 316: “generales nundinae ut \textit{genuæ} allobrogum urbis hodie sunt.” \textit{Genua} \textit{Allobrogum} is, of course, Geneva in Switzerland, which was so designated by the Humanists, who believed \textit{Genua} to be the correct name
however, because $K$ is clearly a copy of a Class III manuscript now lost (conceivably Boccaccio's!) which Ludovicus Rex of Imola revised in 1488 by collating some manuscripts of the Genevan group and using his own ingenuity.\textsuperscript{70} So far as we can test it, therefore, our hypothesis is valid.

Our theoretical exercise has produced what is, so far as I know, the first plausible explanation of Class III. I need not remark, however, that unless the hypothesis can be supported with evidence that I cannot now adduce, it is mere speculation.

VII

The foregoing discussion, I believe, has demonstrated that in addition to the Second Medicean there were manuscripts which had a markedly different text and which we may call “Mediaeval” to distinguish them from the thirty-two that are now collectively called Humanistenhandschriften. One such manuscript, which was certainly written before 1370 and could have been the ancestor of Class III was, during the second quarter of the fifteenth century and probably for a few years earlier and several decades thereafter, in a public library in Florence in which it was presumably available to anyone who wished to use it. In the first years of the fifteenth century there was in Florence and (at least temporarily) in private possession a manuscript in Carolingian minuscules and, although we cannot be certain, the chances are that this was not the same as the one we have just mentioned. Given the existence of one or more “Mediaeval” manuscripts now lost, it is, of course, possible that there were others.

From this determination follow four obvious consequences:

(1) It is probable that most, if not all, of the “Humanist” copies were derived from the “Mediaeval.” In 1427 Poggio could not find in Rome a professional scribe who could read Beneventan, and it is not likely that there were many scribes in fifteenth century Italy who learned to copy of the city, because it is so spelled in all of the old manuscripts of Caesar (where the text is corrected to Genava by modern editors) and in the Cosmographia of the Anonymus Ravennas (ed. M. Pindar & G. Parthey, Berolini, 1860, p. 237). The Swiss city was sometimes designated as simply Genua, but Allobrogum was added (Caesar describes it as an oppidum Allobrogum) when necessary to distinguish it from Genoa, which, in turn, was sometimes distinguished as Genua Ligurum, Genua Superba, or Ianua Ligurum (following the reading in some manuscripts of Mela).

\textsuperscript{70} Rex's editorial note, copied by the scribe of $K$, is quoted by Mendell, Tacitus, p. 305: "Hic liber visus et ut accuratus ex incuria temporum potuit emendatus est per me" etc. His use of a Genevan manuscript will be evident from even a cursory inspection of the apparatus provided by Hanslik's pupils. Since the Genevan manuscripts are all of Class I, we are left with the mystery why Rex did not use his to supplement the curtailed text.
from that script. As for the Humanists themselves, they certainly shared Poggio’s preference for a manuscript “qui legi posit,” and would not have transcribed a text from Beneventan when they had available a copy in a more familiar and less “barbarous” hand.

(2) It is no longer certain that the second sheet in the eighth quaternion of the Second Medicean, containing Hist. I.69–75 and I.86–II.2, became detached and lost after 1452. On the contrary, it is highly probable that those folia were lost before Poggio noticed that pluralia chartae were missing and that our text of the chapters now wanting in the Medicean comes from the “Mediaeval” manuscripts.

(3) In the numerous passages on the flesh side of sheets in the Second Medicean where the original writing became evanid and was “retraced” in a thirteenth century Beneventan hand or supplied interlinearly by a Humanistic hand, it now becomes possible that the restorations were made with the aid of another manuscript and that the errors in those restorations come from that manuscript rather than a misreading of the faint characters of the original. In those passages, therefore, it would be desirable to ascertain whether the original writing can be read by application of the techniques now used with palimpsests.

(4) It is no longer true that “il est absolument démontré que le Mediceus II est notre source unique.” The “Humanist” manuscripts are not oddly garbled and interpolated copies of the Medicean; some of their peculiar readings certainly come from the “Mediaeval” manuscripts, and it thereby becomes probable that many of those lections come from the same source. In this sense Mendell, Koestermann, and the other defenders of the Leidensis have rendered an inestimable service to Tacitus, because although the collations by Hanslik’s pupils have now shown that the Leidensis does not have the unique value that Mendell attributed to it, they have also shown that some of the fifteenth century manuscripts, especially the Genevan group but including the Leidensis, preserve readings that are certainly right and could not have been derived from the Medicean. The most reasonable explanation is that there was at least

72 See Hanslik’s preface to Horst Weiskopf’s collations, pp. viii–xi, and his Versuch einer Wertung der Handschriften von Tacitus” in the Festschrift for Walther Kraus (Wien, 1972), pp. 139–149, which became available after the present article had been accepted for the press. Although one or two of his numbered theses may require support from further collations (which I hope his pupils will provide for all of the remaining books of this part of Tacitus’s work), it is impossible, I think, to dispute his conclusion that all existing editions of the Annales and Historiae are now obsolete, and that the long condemned and disregarded recentiores represent at least one tradition of the text that is independent of the Second Medicean.
one other "Mediaeval" manuscript—one that was in Geneva around 1440 and had a text that differed markedly from the text of the "Mediaeval" manuscript then in a public library in Florence.\textsuperscript{73}

Now that we have regretfully consigned to oblivion the long accepted story about the Second Medicean which was, in its way, as romantic as anything that Boccaccio imagined in his \textit{Amorosa visione}, it becomes imperative that we determine the relation of the "Mediaeval" manuscripts to the Medicean. It is likely that it will be years before we are able to rewrite the \textit{Überlieferungsgeschichte} of this part of Tacitus's work, but in the meantime it may be profitable as well as interesting to consider the possible source or sources of the "Mediaeval" tradition.

I. It is certain that each of the two parts of Tacitus's historical work that we now have come from a single archetype, and it is virtually certain that archetype was a codex in rustic capitals of the fourth or possibly even of the third century and represented an edition in which the \textit{Libri ab excessu Divi Augusti} and the earlier work that we call \textit{Historiae} had been combined, probably in the third century,\textsuperscript{74} into a single sequence of thirty or more\textsuperscript{75} consecutively numbered books. If we wish gratuitously to assume that there were two such codices, both of which had been dismembered, so that the first part of one and a section from the middle of the other survived the Dark Ages, our problem is not significantly changed. It is not likely that any extant manuscript was copied directly from that archetype.\textsuperscript{76}

\textsuperscript{73} Where we can check, the Genevan MSS. have a text different from Boccaccio's: p. 202, \textit{supra}.

\textsuperscript{74} See the article cited in note 5 \textit{supra}. C. Poghirc, in an article in the Rumanian periodical, \textit{Studii Clasice}, VI (1964), 149-154, writing independently of my article (his note 16), concluded that the two works of Tacitus were most probably combined when the emperor, M. Claudius Tacitus, gave orders for the preservation of the works of his supposed ancestor; he neatly impugns Syme's objections to that hypothesis. Poghirc further observes that the phrase in the biography of the emperor (10.3), "\textit{librum ... scribi publicitus . . . iussit,"} implies that the works had been united in a single corpus, i.e., \textit{librum scribi} must stand for \textit{codicem describ}.

\textsuperscript{75} We must remember that the number thirty depends entirely on the reference in Jerome's \textit{Commentarius in Zachariam}, 3.14. We must regret that the new edition of that work by M. Adriaen in the Corpus Christianorum, Turnholti, 1970, has what is obviously a \textit{very} select apparatus and has no note on the passage that interests us, so that we are still left in ignorance whether all the manuscripts read \textit{triginta} or \textit{XXX} or show variations that would render the figure suspect. It would be easy, for example, to conjecture that the archetype may have read \textit{XXXVOLUMINA}.

\textsuperscript{76} Lowe's theory that the Second Medicean was copied directly from the rustic-capital archetype must be discarded, since the inversions in the text, caused by misplacement of sheets when the exemplar was bound, could scarcely have occurred in such an archetype. There also are errors of the eye that could scarcely have occurred in copying from rustic capitals, e.g., \textit{uervian(us)} for \textit{aerian} in the passage quoted above, p. 200.
II. Since there are indications, which we need not now reexamine, that the First Medicean was copied from an exemplar in Insular script,\textsuperscript{77} we may posit that the ancient codex, doubtless sadly mutilated and fragmentary by that time,\textsuperscript{78} was copied by an Insular scribe whose work, possibly after mutilation, reached Fulda in the ninth century. This manuscript was presumably the ancestor of all extant manuscripts. It is possible that some of the “Mediaeval” manuscripts were derived from the Insular copy through intermediaries of which there is now no trace. That does not now seem very likely, but we are not yet in a position to estimate the likelihood with any confidence.

III. Since the observation of Dom Quentin was confirmed and amplified by Walter Allen, Jr.,\textsuperscript{79} it seems certain that the well-known inversions in the Medicean text came from an exemplar that closely resembled the First Medicean in format, so that it seems probable that the Second Medicean was copied from a manuscript in Carolingian minuscule that had been brought from Fulda. Since it is unlikely that Fulda would not have retained a copy, it is obviously possible that there was at Fulda a manuscript that could have been the copy in Carolingian minuscules that was seen by Poggio in Florence around 1403 or the copy, of unknown date and script, that was in Geneva around 1440 or earlier.\textsuperscript{80}

IV. The copy in Carolingian minuscules that was presumably sent to Monte Cassino also could have reached Florence in the early years of the fifteenth century. Since it was presumably the exemplar from which the

\textsuperscript{77} The examples given by Rostagno in his preface to the photographic reproduction of the First Medicean seem probative.

\textsuperscript{78} Walter Allen, Jr., in his searching analysis of the readings of the Leidensis, \textit{T.A.P.A.}, CI (1970), 1–28, argues that “the losses in \textit{Annales V} and VI” indicate “a time when the text was in the form of a volumen for each book and when each volumen confronted its own destiny.” I do not follow the argument. Those parts of text could easily have been lost when folia became detached from a codex or the surviving portion of a codex that had already been dismembered, whereas it seems to me that a papyrus roll that had been broken or torn would have been copied or discarded at a time when the \textit{volumen} was still the normal (and inexpensive) form of books.


\textsuperscript{80} Hanslik’s B72, according to Mendell, \textit{Tacitus}, p. 299, bears the date “MCCCCX,” but “the Bodleian interprets this . . . as originally MCCCCXL.” I do not know whether that “interpretation” is based on traces of an erased L or merely on the assumption that this manuscript should have been written about the time of the other dated manuscripts of the Genevan group. In the \textit{Festschrift} cited in note 72 above, Hanslik says (p. 143) that in B72 “als Jahreszahl 1410 angegeben ist, war aber wahrscheinlich richtig 1490 heißen muß,” but does not explain why he assigns so late a date. If he is right, V58 is the earliest Genevan manuscript that is specifically dated in the colophon (Mendell, p. 316); it was copied at Geneva (\textit{Genuæ}) in 1449 from an exemplar that its scribe describes as “inter cetera de quibus scitur non est neque pessimum neque mendosissimum.”
Second Medicean was copied, it cannot have been the manuscript in Geneva, which had a markedly different text.

V. It is entirely possible that the Second Medicean was not the only copy made at Monte Cassino from the codex sent from Fulda. Such a copy, not necessarily in a Beneventan hand, could have had correct readings at points where the scribe of the Second Medicean erred, and if its text was at other points corrupted in passing through several intermediaries, it could have been the parent of the Genevan manuscripts and, perhaps, others.

VI. Although it has come to seem unlikely, it is still possible that the Second Medicean was, after all, the ancestor of all extant manuscripts and that we need revise the orthodox view only to the extent of deriving the fifteenth century copies from "Mediaeval" copies that were in turn derived from one or more copies of the Second Medicean made in the twelfth, thirteenth, or possibly the early fourteenth century. The principal objection is that this hypothesis requires us to assume the existence of Mediaeval Bentleys and Housmans, who emended correctly the text where it is corrupt in the Second Medicean.81

VIII

The possibility that we last suggested is, of course, the crucial one, and I shall conclude by suggesting one test by which we may tentatively estimate its probability. Mendell’s famous “third inversion” remarkable for its absence in the Leidensis and Koestermann’s “Titios, Vettios, Plautios” from the same source, have not, indeed, lost their relevance to the problem, but there are other readings that are now more conspicuous criteria.

One of these is at Ann. XI,4.1, where, according to the generally received text, we are told that after the judicial murder of Valerius Asiaticus

81 We may seriously underestimate the likelihood of sound emendations before the time of Valla and Pontanus. I am impressed by what D. S. Robertson, C.Q., L (1956), 74, reports of an obscure fourteenth-century secretary, Antonio da Romagno (c. 1360–c. 1408), whose manuscript of the Apologia of Apuleius contains emendations of which "the number and quality...is, indeed, astonishing," including an "admirable correction" that Robertson particularly discusses. He says that H. E. Butler adopted about seventy of Antonio’s emendations in his text of the Apologia (1914), some of which had previously been attributed to "such scholars as Casaubon and Lipsius." Butler’s apparatus is selective, but he reports from the same source some very stupid emendations, especially rubram spinam in Apol. 59. Robertson, for reasons not apparent to me, says that "it is impossible to doubt that Antonio da Romagno is responsible" for the emendations that first appear in a manuscript written in his hand. Could he not have copied from a lost exemplar corrections made at an earlier date?
and the maliciously induced suicide of Poppaea Sabina, "Vocantur post haec patres, pergitque Suillius addere reos equites Romanos illustres, quibus Petra cognomentum. At causa necis ex eo, quod domum suam Mnesteris et Poppaeae congressibus praebuissent. Verum nocturnae quietis species alteri obiecta, e.g.s." Here we have what seems to be at first sight a perfect example of corruption and interpolation that we can trace clearly through Horst Weiskopf's collations. The original presumably read MNESTERIS, and we assume that it is only by coincidence that the fullest traces of that reading appear in a manuscript (YO1) that was written around 1475: in nesteris. The Medicean has nesteris, which was corrupted to the uesteris and nestoris of certain other codices, and some sagacious scribe, seeing that those readings were meaningless, studied the context and boldly wrote Valerii, which is the reading of the Genevan manuscripts (V58, BO5, G, H, Mal, Prm, J, B72), the Leidensis, and some others. By no sequence of hands known to palaeography could nesteris have come by successive corruptions from valerii, so the latter must be an interpolation. Q.E.D.

The case, however, is not really so simple, and it was not without reason that Mendell thought Valerii the correct reading and Koestermann reported it in his apparatus with the comment, "nescio an rectius." It is easy to accept Mnesteris and then infer, with the confidence for which we censure such scholiasts as the Pseudo-Asconius, that in the lost part of Book XI Tacitus must have explained that Messalina suspected that Poppaea was sharing Mnester's probably phenomenal services and then, invoking the well-known adage that Hell hath no fury, etc., to use that guess to explain Messalina's animus against Poppaea and Asiaticus, thus attributing to her a pathological jealousy that she may also have shown in her demand that Silius divorce his wife—unless the latter was merely preparation for her marriage to him. As Mendell points out, however, there is no slightest indication of all this in the later references to Mnester; on the contrary, we are told that the actor, believing himself under orders from a crack-brained ruler of the world, was at Messalina's disposal until her downfall. What is more, Cassius Dio (LX.28.3) informs us that she τὸν Μνηστῆρα ἀποσπάσασα ἀπὸ τοῦθεάτρου εἶπε, and that when people complained that the actor had disappeared, Claudius fatuously swore ὅτι μὴ συνείη αὐτῶ—a statement which (since a pun is most unlikely in the circumstances) must be a denial that the actor was living in concealment in the imperial household. The implication certainly is that Messalina kept him virtually in confinement at home as a domestic convenience so that he could come running whenever she whistled. Furthermore, one

82 A.J.P., LXXV (1954), 258; Tacitus, 331.
need not venture far into the turbid murk of sexual pathology to see in our
evidence indications that Mnester was so precious to Messalina because
he added a special variety to her multiplex amusements and enabled her
to savor a sadistic spice that other paramours could not provide; and the
most likely identification of Mnester’s peculiarity is one that would render
a liaison with Poppaea or any other women most unlikely.83

It is also relevant to the reading Mnesteris et Poppaeae congressibus that
congressus is not an euphemism for sexual intercourse. According to Gerber
and Greef’s Lexicon, this is one of the thirteen occurrences of the word in
Tacitus, and in all of the other twelve a sexual implication is categorically
excluded by the context. The word, however, does fit perfectly the kind
of statement that we should normally expect to find at this point.

In the first century, as today, when judicial procedures are used to
eliminate persons whom it would be simpler to assassinate, the trials are
staged to mislead public opinion, and some specious allegations of criminal
conduct are obviously requisite for the performance. At Rome the need
for such pretexts was felt so strongly that Augustus, when he exiled Ovid
by use of a discretionary power and without even a semblance of a public
trial, felt obliged to publish the absurd story that he was belatedly ex-
pressing disapproval of the Ars amatoria. For public proceedings in the
Senate, more plausible pretexts would be needed, especially when the
action was initiated by a delator.

It is quite obvious that the formal charge against Valerius Asiaticus

83 At the end, Tacitus tells us (XI.36.1), Mnester pled for his life, “dilaniata veste
clamitans, adspiceret verberum notas.” This, of course, is long after the beginning of his
services to Messalina, so she obviously has had him whipped frequently. Although in our
progressive society some fashionable males who can afford the fun find females much more
appetizing after they have been well bloodied with a buggy whip, sadism in females seldom
takes the form of thus inflicting pain on a submissive male—and we have no reason to
suppose that tastes differed in cosmopolitan Rome. In such societies, however, certain
females find a morbid satisfaction in obtaining sexual services from reluctant or resisting
males. Noteworthy, therefore, is Mnester’s initial and extreme reluctance to entertain
Messalina who, according to Dio (LX.22.4), was unable to seduce him by any means
until she obtained an order from Claudius: ἐπεὶ γε μηδένα τρόπον μηθ’ ὑποχαμαίην τι μήτε
ἐκβοδεύα αὐτὸν αὐγγενέσθαι αὐτῇ ἀναπείσα τι καρδία, τι καὶ ἀνθρώπος, ἐκείνη τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, κ.τ.λ. Messalina was,
by all accounts, an attractive and superficially elegant woman and, given her notorious
promiscuity, it is hard to believe that the popular pantomime’s obduracy was caused by
mere timidity or prudence. He had been one of Caligula’s playmates (Suet. Cal., 36.1:
“M. Lepidum, Mnesterem pantomimum, quosdam obsides dilexisse fertur commercio
mutui stupri.” 55.1: “Mnesterem pantomimum etiam inter spectacula osculabatur,”
e.q.s.), and Dio tells us, in the passage cited above, that Messalina was particularly aware
of Mnester’s relations with Caligula. All this suggests that Mnester may have had a
morbid aversion to sexual relations with women and that this accounted for Messalina’s
extraordinary interest in him.
Second Medicean Ms. and the Text of Tacitus

when he was arraigned in Claudius’s star chamber was treason: a plan for a military revolt, possibly involving use of Claudius’s son, Britannicus.\(^{84}\) This much is clear from Tacitus; Cassius Dio (LX.29) adds the interesting detail that, as sometimes happens today, the prosecutors were inefficient in coaching the perjurers whom they had hired to support their case. Poppaea can have been involved only through a claim that she was Valerius’s confederate, and this is further implied by the statement that she was driven to suicide terrore carceris, i.e., the fear that she would be strangled in the carcer by an executioner, the traditional punishment for perduellio. The talk about her sexual irregularities and those of Valerius was clearly no more than rhetorical embellishment by Suillius and can have had no legal force.

Now when Suillius before the Senate involved the brothers Petra\(^{85}\) in the case against Valerius and Poppaea (addere reos), both of whom were dead, he must have accused the two men of complicity in treason, and he must have supported the allegation with some circumstantial evidence, however flimsy. According to the accepted text, Tacitus does not tell us of what Suillius accused the brothers, because it is obvious, of course, that whether or not Poppaea had really sampled Mnester’s private artistry, Suillius would not have dared to mention an allegation that was not only irrelevant to his case but would inevitably have focused attention on Messalina’s own patronage of the esoteric arts. The most obvious accusation that Suillius could have brought against the two brothers was that it was at their home that Valerius and Poppaea met for the conferences (congressus) at which they plotted a revolt against Claudius, doubtless following the business meeting with a recreational hour of adulterium. To support a claim that the brothers knew that the object of those private meetings was more than fun, Suillius would have adduced the dream,

\(^{84}\) The rôle of the boy’s educator, Sosibius, in the plot against Valerius Atticus, and the lavish reward given him “quod Britannicum praecepsis, Claudium consiliis iuvaret,” may be some indication that the scenario that Suillius composed for his accusation made some mention of the child, and a scheme to present Britannicus to the German armies as the eventual heir could have been made the subject of a plausible tale. On the other hand, Sosibius’s warning about opes principibus infestas suggests an effort to “restore the Republic,” which might have seemed plausible in the light of the prominence of Valerius in the effort to restore Senatorial rule after the assassination of Caligula, although Valerius, as an intelligent man, must have learned from that experience. As an Allobrox, Valerius, however wealthy and influential, could not rationally have aspired to the principate himself.

\(^{85}\) Koestermann in his commentary ad loc. is wrong in saying “Ritter mit dem Namen Petra sind sonst unbekannt.” It is possible that the two brothers were sons of T. Pomponius T.f. Petra, who was “praefectus equitum Germanici Caesaris,” and is commemorated by an inscription, C.I.L., XI, 969.
described by Tacitus, to which one of the brothers had superstitiously and
imprudently given an interpretation unfavorable to Claudius when he
assuaged his human itch to narrate his dreams to others.

Now can we believe that Tacitus failed to mention the principal charge
against the two brothers, inserting instead a parenthetical explanation that
the true reason for their condemnation was Messalina's secret and (at the
time) unmentionable animus, and then gave considerable space to the
dream, which can have been only a secondary and merely substantiating
part of the official accusation? Having looked through all of Tacitus's
reports of trials before the Senate without finding a parallel for such an
illogical sequence of statements, I think it unlikely that he did. Every
consideration of historical probability, it seems to me, is in favor of
Valerii as the correct reading.

I have elaborated this point because I think we must, sooner or later,
choose between the two alternatives, with all that they imply:

(1) Valerii is the true reading. Since nesteris cannot be a palaeographical
corruption of that word,\footnote{Subject to the proviso that scribes are sometimes capable of what surpasseth all understanding. In T.A.P.A., LXXXIX (1959), 216, I give a collation of a fifteenth-century manuscript in which a simple statement of commonplace Stoic doctrine reads: "Si personam induisti supra Aesopi vires, neque cam substines et quod implere poteras omisisti." Aesopi is, of course, an error for tuas, and there is nothing in the entire discourse that even remotely suggests Greek fables or Roman actors. Obviously, the blunder cannot be palaeographic, and the only possible explanation is that the scribe inadvertently wrote down a word that he heard spoken in the room in which he worked or that was brought to his mind by some private train of thought that engaged his consciousness while he performed the mechanical task of copying from his exemplar. With that example before me, I shall call no scribal aberration impossible.} it must either (a) have entered the text from
some marginal comment, and that is unlikely because we have no reason
to believe that the text was annotated or commented upon before modern
times, or (b) be an alteration intentionally or inadvertently made by
someone who had the histrio much on his mind, and there seems to be no
good reason for such preoccupation, or (c) be a remnant of a considerable
lacuna in our text, coming from some mention of Mnester, perhaps as an
informer or as having some relation to the brothers Petra or, conceivably,
as having met Messalina at the home of the indulgent pair, and all these
suggestions seem rather farfetched, or (d) be a chance collocation of
syllables that were merely the débris of two or more words in a statement
defining the location of the house or the time of the meetings or of a
statement preceding at, and it would be a remarkable coincidence that
thus produced a reading so closely resembling the name of Mnester.

(2) Valerii is an interpolation. In this case, I think we should still pay
sufficient regard to historical probability to assume a lacuna before at, i.e.,
the loss of a passage in which Tacitus indicated the basis of Suillius's
accusation, whether or not that had anything to do with the house in
which the Petras resided—an accusation that certainly involved Valerius
and possibly Poppaea in some way. This statement disappeared by
homoeoteleuton or in some other way before our archetype was copied,
leaving only the statement about Mnester and Poppaea that Tacitus
added to show that the principal charge was so flimsy that it succeeded
only because Messalina had a secret reason for using her influence against
the brothers. This is possible, of course, but if Valerii is an interpolation, it
was no impulsive scribal expedient. It must have been a change de-
liberately made after careful study of the context by someone who either
did not recognize the name of Mnester or, more probably, decided, by
following the reasoning that we set forth above, that the historical
situation required mention of Valerius. A man who gave that much
thought to the text would also have been capable of making such emen-
dations as capiendis pecuniis 〈posuit〉 modum in XI.7.4, 〈bo〉leto〈rum〉 in
XII.67.1, and 〈vi an〉 violentia in the same section and, so far as I can see,
he could have made all the other emendations required to make the Gene-
van manuscripts give an apparently correct text in place of the corruptions
that appear in the Medicean. On this hypothesis, however, we are faced
with the paradox that a scholar so competent and diligent was also too
stupid, indifferent, or lazy to do anything about the gross corruptions in
the same manuscripts, where a patently unintelligible text could have
been mended with much less effort.

Either alternative, in other words, is open to objections so grave as to
make it seem improbable. It will require prolonged, meticulous, and
discriminating work to extricate us from this dilemma.

University of Illinois at Urbana

87 See Hanslik's preface to Weiskopf's Annales XI-XII, pp. viii–xi.