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‘Statius, Poggio, and Politian.’

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bella quietus go very well together. 'Late in life' (better than 'late in Roman history'), 'in the leisure that followed the Punic Wars, Pacuvius, having his attention turned to Greek literature, began to enquire whether Sophocles, Thespis, and Aeschylus were of any use to him. He also tried his hand at translation,' etc. The scholarship here attributed to Pacuvius explains the compliment already paid to him (v. 56):

aufert Pacuvius docti famam senis;
compare also *senis* with *serus*.

Reconstructions which postulate a long series of blunders are rarely acceptable, and I hardly dare expect acceptance of this one. It is published in the hope that some critic, better versed in the mysteries of the craft, may reach a more satisfactory conclusion from the same starting-point.

C. A. VINCE.

'STATIUS, POGGIO, AND POLITIAN.'

UNDER the above heading Mr. Garrod in 1913 contributed to this Review¹ what he described as 'a new piece of evidence,' which, after being singled out for special notice by Professor A. C. Clark in *The Year's Work* for 1914 (p. 56) as an interesting statement, has now made its way into Professor Phillimore's new edition of the *Silvae* (S.C.B.O., Praef. p. xii) as an ascertained fact, '... id quod felicissimus harum tenebrarum explorator Garrodus comperit.'

For students of Statius the mystery of Poggio's *V(etustissimus)* and what became of it has the same perennial fascination that the mystery of Edwin Drood has for students of Dickens; and any scholar might well be forgiven if in dealing with it he let his imagination run away with him. But just for that reason sober criticism should be on the alert to test every 'piece of evidence' propounded. To some of us the new theory is particularly attractive, for it brings in Heinsius.

Mr. Garrod begins with a supposition. (a) 'It is usually supposed that the *Vetustissimus* ... was found by Poggio in the monastery of St. Gall. ...' 'This is not certain,' he adds, 'but it is probable, and only so far as it is probable ... is the piece of evidence of which I speak cogent.' He then proceeds (b) to argue from three passages in Burmann's *Sylloge*² (1) that *V.* was still at St. Gall in the time of Nicolaus Heinsius and that N.H.

secured access to it for Lucas Langermannus in the year 1651: (2)—this is not explicitly stated, but it appears to be clearly implied—that the MS. was duly collated by Langermannus for N.H., who in 1655 was 'still³ meditating an edition of the *Silvae*,' when the collation was unfortunately lost at sea, with other papers, in a shipwreck.

What an 'intriguing' theory! It reads like a page from a romance. First the rediscovery of the long-lost *V.*, then four years of full fruition (which yet have 'left not a wreck behind'), and then—then the shipwreck, and the precious collation goes down, carrying with it all the fruits of study to the bottom of the deep blue sea. Even the memory of the treasure-trove perishes so completely from the not unretentive mind of Heinsius that fourteen years afterwards we find him asking a friend to examine for him, not the *Vetustissimus* at St. Gall, but the *deteriores* in the Vatican, to clear up his *dubitationes* on a score of passages from the *Silvae*. But to resume.

On (a) Mr. Garrod, while regarding the supposition as probable, speaks—be it noted—with the utmost caution. But it is and it remains a mere supposition, nothing more. Professor Clark—a very weighty authority on all that relates to the literary discoveries of Poggio—takes the opposite view, and with far less reserve: 'I have never,' he writes,¹ 'seen any reason for supposing that

¹ C.R. vol. xxvii. p. 265 f.

² Vol. iii. pp. 283 and 345, and vol. v. p. 532.

³ Why 'still'? Is there any definite statement that he ever did meditate an edition?

Poggio got his copy' [of the *Silvae*] 'from St. Gall.' A verdict of 'Not Proven' is the only verdict possible on the facts.

In regard to (b) it would seem that (1) is the crucial point. 'Langermannus,' writes Mr. Garrod, 'had collated a MS. of the *Silvae*' (my italics) 'lent him by the monks of St. Gall.' But Heinsius does not say so. Mr. Garrod quotes the *ipsissima verba* himself; and here they are: 'Statium etiam vetustissimum contulit,' *e.g.s.* 'Statium'—so scholars constantly wrote in referring to the *Thebaid*—not 'Silvas Statianas,' the phrase which elsewhere—*e.g.* in Mr. Garrod's other passages from the *Sylloge* (III. 345 and V. 532)—N.H. uses to describe the less known and less quoted work, the *Silvae*. And a *Statius Vetustissimus* there was and is still at St. Gall—a MS. of the *Thebaid*, not of the *Silvae*—bound up with a mediaeval poem (*Oedipus on the Death of his Sons*), No. 865, saec. xii. For² this information and for what follows about St. Gall I am indebted to the kindness of Professor Clark, to whom, being deeply interested myself in the problem of V, I went for enlightenment, and who instituted an inquiry into the matter on the spot. The monastery, he tells me, also possessed in the ninth century³ both a *Thebaid* and an *Achilleid*, and later another twelfth-century *Thebaid*, now at Zurich,⁴ which might also be entitled, 'vetustissimus.'⁵

As for 'vetusti'—let alone a 'vetustissimus'—of the *Silvae*, Heinsius

speaks for himself in the third of Mr. Garrod's passages from the *Sylloge*, viz. v. 532, to which allusion has already been made. The letter is undated but seems to belong to 1669. It is addressed to a friend in Rome, 'Falconerius,' and the relevant sentences run thus: 'Percurrerebam *Silvas* Statianas nuper, ad quas iam olim complura observavi, sunt enim mendosissimae etiamnum. *Codices vetustos eius Poematis nullos omnino in Bibliothecis inveniri opinor*; notae recentioris nonnullos, et si rariores et illos, scio hic illic extare. Vaticanos quinque cum vulgatis libris in meos usus Langermannus commiserat ante annos xv. sed schedae illae naufragio nobis paullo post periire. Cum Vaticanum alia de causa adieris, rogo, codices illos, et si qui alii postea accessere, inspicias, consulasque super locis hic a me annotatis," *e.g.s.* Not a word about the *Vetustissimus*. Not a hint of what might have been. No suggestion 'that there hath passed away a glory from the earth,' only a pathetic request for the *littera scripta* of inferior copies, as the best evidence the writer can hope to obtain on the text.

In regard to (b) 2, it is self-evident that the chief *Silvae* papers lost in the wreck were the collations of these Vatican copies 'notae recentioris,' which in 1659 N.H. is seeking to replace. What the 'meae aliaeque illius lucubrationes' (*Sylloge* III. 345) were, we can only conjecture, but after what has been said it would seem to be in the highest degree improbable that they included anything at all relating to the 'Vetustissimus Poggii.'

The *Sylloge* is a badly indexed book, and between the covers of its five bulky volumes it may contain other evidence on the point.⁶ My inquiry has been confined to the three passages indicated at the outset. It is a thankless task to spoil a good story which one would be only too happy to believe; but on the evidence before us Mr. Garrod cannot yet be said to have made out a case.

D. A. S.

¹ In a letter (dated November 21, 1915) which he permits me to quote.

² Cf. *Verzeichnis der MSS. der Stiftsbibl. von St. Gallen.* G. Scherrer (Halle, 1875), p. 298.

³ Cf. Weidmann, *Bibliothek von St. Gallen* (St. Gallen, 1821), p. 422: 'Statius in Thebaide. . . . In alio libello idem in Achilleidos.'

⁴ 'The Zurich MS. C. 62 (saec. xii.) has the St. Gall mark on ff. 195, 207, and appears to be the MS. which is described by Scheuchzer (1713) in a MS. catalogue (c. 366) of books removed from St. Gall to Zurich. It contains *Stat. Thebais, Servius Honoratus de finalibus, Theobaldus de natura primarum syllabarum, Martyrologium Bedae.*'

⁵ Thus N.H. describes as '*veterrimi*,' *Urbinas* 341, saec. xi.-xii.; and *Vatican. Palat.* 1669, saec. xii. *partis prioris*; and as *antiquissimus Paris.* 8001 (olim Berneggerianus), saec. xii.-xiii. The dates given for the three MSS. are

those assigned to them by Dr. H. M. Bannister, Mr. J. P. Gilson, and M. Omont respectively.

⁶ Professor Phillimore in a footnote refers to '*Sylloge* v. p. 265'; but this must be a misprint; v. p. 265 contains no mention of Statius.