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THE MSS OF THE HISTORIA AUGUSTA

BY SUSAN H. BALLOU

A fresh illustration of the disadvantage under which text-criticism of the so-called *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* labors in not having as a basis an accurate report of the Palatine MS, now that it is recognized as the only early source for the text, appears in a recent article by Rühl in *Rh. Mus.* LXII (1907), p. 1, in a note on *Commodus* 14. 1. Peter reports there the reading: *cum fruges et non deessent* in PB, and suggests *fortasse: tum non*, though in the text he merely omits *et*. Baehrens proposed *etiam* as an emendation for *et*, and Petschenig ingeniously changed *et non deessent* to *emendae essent*. Rühl now offers *fruges et oleum non d*. In point of fact the troublesome *et* does not occur at all in P, but only in B, which alone is not sufficient authority. This is only one of many false reports by Peter (Jordan-Eyssenhardt have here the correct report), which have given rise to similar waste of time and ingenuity on the part of scholars in emending readings which do not exist. A number of other examples might be cited, e. g., *Avid. Cass.* 14. 3: P and B read: *dum clemens dici cupit*, and in 14. 5, *de clementes* (*clementiis* P³). In his apparatus Peter's report: "*clementes* PB," etc., including the reading of M, applies to 14. 5, and the conjectures of Salmasius and Petschenig, which he quotes, apply to 14. 3; but Peter, having failed to prefix the numbers of the lines, confuses the two reports, as does also Petschenig, who proceeds to emend the supposedly unreadable place in 14. 3 to *clementem se dici cupit*. This Peter then adopts in his text; whereas, emendation was unnecessary for 14. 3, and quite obvious and easy in 14. 5.

Again, *Heliog.* 14. 8, Peter reads in the text *et* before *sacramenti*—absence of italics implies its presence in PB. Vielhaber, feeling that a word must have fallen out, suggests three possible ways of filling the gap. In reality *et* occurs in neither MS. Also, *Opil. Macr.* 14. 3, both Peter and Jordan-Eyssenhardt report

ex translati in PB (and Peter adds *ex Graeco* in M). Peiper emends *ex* to *exinde*, adding that *ex Graeco* does not fit the sense, and “glücklicher Weise entbehren die HSS dieses Zusatzes.” Unfortunately, however, *Graeco* does occur after *ex* in both P and B. In still another case, in *Ant. Pius* 5. 1, P’s *cum aduixit* // is emended by Vielhaber to *quoad vixit*, which already exists in P in a correction by P³, which was not reported by Peter.

To prevent such misapprehensions as these, the need seems obvious of a revised critical apparatus, such as may serve as an accurate basis for future text-criticism. Lessing’s newly completed *Lexicon Scriptorum Historiae Augustae* will indeed be of much service in avoiding errors of this kind, since Lessing made use of Dessau’s new collation of P. For example, he has the correct reading at *Avid. Cass.* 14. 3. His work, however, does not attempt to be exhaustive in giving examples, but is rather illustrative, and in only this one of the above-cited cases would the new lexicon have been of service in correcting the error. And even though, as pointed out by Mommsen (*Hermes* XXV. 228 ff.), the text itself will not be greatly altered by a new report of P (it happens that in three of the above cases it would be), there should be at hand an exact report of the actual condition of P, together with all its corrections and additions, but simplified and cleared of all superfluous and confusing reports of B, except where they assist us in arriving at the original writing in the case of changes in P, or even where its correctors offer anything of value for the text. Furthermore, the matter of correctors’ hands in P is one of considerable importance and has never had adequate treatment. Their respective contributions to the history of the text emendation of the *Historia Augusta* come to be of special interest and value if the most numerous and important can be identified as the work of the great pioneer humanist, Petrarch.

This question also is touched on in the above-mentioned article of Rühl, when in a comment on *Gord.* iii. 27. 10, he states that the corrections in P, *praetori totius urbis* and *tutori reip.* (of which Peter ascribes the first to P³, the second by implication to P²), are “Conjecturen Petrarca’s.” Only the first of the corrections is really involved, for the second, being by erasure, offers no evidence

as to hand. This identification of Peter's P³ with Petrarch has indeed been made by De Nolhac (*Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, 1st ed., p. 255), as far as concerns a large number of marginal notes and comments and in a very general way some correction of the text ("quelquesunes, 1st ed.; plusieurs, 2d ed.—dés corrections du Palat. lui appartiennent aussi"), but no details in illustration of the latter are given by him and there is certainly no ground for believing that he intends this remark to apply so widely to Peter's P³ as Rühl attributes to him in a review of the first edition of De Nolhac's book (*Berl. Wochenschr.*, 1893, p. 52). He must have been quoting from memory when he represents him as saying, "dass er (Petrarch) es war, der die nötige Umstellung in den *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* angab, s. 255." If De Nolhac had meant this he would hardly have referred to the author of the marginal notes involved as "un lecteur du XIV^e siècle" (1st ed., p. 254), and two lines farther on as, "cet anonyme." Certainly Dessau (in *Hermes* XXIX. 402-5) does not understand De Nolhac to have said that. My own belief in regard to the identification of Petrarch with this "anonyme" of the fourteenth century, and the extent to which he coincides with Peter's P³, I hope soon to show in connection with a complete discussion of P's correctors and their significance for the question of the value of the minor MSS.

How complicated in general the matter of the correctors' hands is in P and how difficult it is, without a full and exhaustive study of them throughout the whole extent of the codex, to assign definitely their respective contributions to the true source, appears from a mere glance at the collation of the first twenty pages of the life of Alex. Sev., made for Mommsen by his correspondent in Rome and published in *Hermes* XXV. 282 ff. Within this short portion 17 changes in the body of the text are marked P^{em}, that is, of uncertain authorship. Of these 4 are concerned with erasures, where there is no evidence as to hand (though that fact is stated in regard to one only). Of the rest, 7 are by P² and 6 are by P³. The marginal note at 247. 1 (Peter's ed. of 1886, Vol. I) is also by P², as is perhaps to be inferred from the remark. Of the changes attributed to P², 5 are by P³; of those attributed to

P³, 1 is by P², and 1 is by P^b; and 1 other assigned to P^b belongs to P². Besides these points in the identification of the corrector—for the sake of completeness—the following inaccuracies in the report should be corrected:

248. 3: *ciuiaseuerat* P^a; *ciui^{li}aseuerat* (i. e. *ciuilia seuerat*; so B) P^b; *ciui^{ha}aseuerat* (i. e. *ciuilia aseuerat*, so about half of the minor MSS) P²; 26: *tam* P^a *qam^v* (*t* is still legible under *q*) P^b.

249. 24: *ceniiui* P¹ B; *coniiuia* P³.

251. 25: *contaminator* PB^b; *contra(ætra)minator* B^a.

253. 21: *luxurie* P¹B; *luxuria* P³ (the only erasure is of *e* to make place for *a*).

256. 17: *purpureae* (*purpuree* B) *colores* P¹B; *purpurei/* (*i* in eras.) P²; *coloris* (by eras.) P^{em}.

258. 10: *rei p̄* P¹B; *re/ p̄* (by eras.) P^{em}.

259. 25: *septimius* PB (*sep* in eras., but by the first hand, leaving a space of one letter before *t*—much blurred but legible).

267. 4: *seruisngenuis* P^a; *seruisingenuis* B^a; *serui ingenuis* P^{em}B^{em} (eras. only in both cases, probably by P^bB^b).

These corrections which I suggest serve for the most part merely to add weight to the evidence sought, namely that B is an early copy of P. But the bit of collation, while accurate enough to prove the point, is far from being so trustworthy as it would have been if made on the basis of a thorough acquaintance with the MS as a whole.

Having devoted much time and labor to making a complete and, I trust, accurate collation of P and B, together with a more or less thorough examination of all of the minor MSS to which I could get access—including especially the very interesting and valuable copy which, as DeNolhae shows, was made for Petrarch, viz., Paris 5816, which was not examined by Peter and has never been fully reported—I hope in the near future to publish a full and accurate report of P, together with such information in regard

to the minor MSS and their relation to P as shall settle several now open questions concerning their value for the text.¹

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¹In making this announcement I am of course not unaware that a collation of the two oldest MSS has already been made by the learned scholar of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*, H. Dessau, partial results of which were published by him in *Hermes* XIX. 393 ff. But there being no immediate prospect of the appearance of the long-expected edition from his hand, I have felt at liberty to put out at least such a basis for a new critical apparatus as can be obtained from the MSS, and as, it seems to me, is imperatively and immediately needed. For to an inquiry on the part of my former teacher and present colleague, Professor F. F. Abbott, of The University of Chicago, by whom my study of this collection was first inspired, Dessau most generously responded in a letter of November 11, 1902, as follows:

“Ich habe allerdings im Winter 1892/3 die beiden ältesten Handschriften der *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* mit der Absicht verglichen, einmal eine Ausgabe dieser Schriftsteller zu veranstalten. Ich bin aber im Folge vieler anderer Beschäftigungen bis jetzt nicht dazu gekommen, und glaube auch nicht dass ich in den nächsten Jahren dazu kommen werde. Unter diesen Umständen wäre es durchaus unzulässig, wenn ich gegen die Herausgabe der *Scriptores* durch irgend einen anderen Einspruch erheben wollte. Im Gegentheil ich begrüsse Ihren Entschluss die Biographien der Kaiser Tacitus und Probus herauszugeben oder durch einen Ihrer Schüler bearbeiten zu lassen, mit Freuden, und bitte Sie, sich dabei nicht zu kümmern um das was ich hätte schreiben können oder etwa noch schreiben werde, sondern nur um das was ich geschrieben habe.”