



The Fate of Varius' Thyestes

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THE FATE OF VARIUS' *THYESTES*¹

I

Two minuscule codices carrying collections of grammatical and rhetorical treatises and extracts from such treatises, one written at Monte Cassino between A.D. 779 and 796 (Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 7530 (CLA V 569)),² the other at Benevento towards the middle of the following century (Rome, Bibl. Casanatense 1086),³ contain among their uncial *tituli* the three words INCIPIIT THVESTES VARI. There follows in both codices a twenty-four-word sentence stating the full name of Varius, the literary character of the *Thyestes*, an aesthetic judgement on the work, the date of a public performance in a Roman theatre, and the price paid: *Lucius Varius cognomento Rufus Thyesten tragoediam magna cura absolutam* (Quicherat: *absoluto* codd.) *post Actiacam uictoriam Augusti* (Mommsen: *aug . . . Par.*¹: *augusto Par.*², Cas.) *ludis eius in scaena edidit pro qua fabula sester-tium deciens accepit.*

The *titulus* is of a type found in two extant fifth-century capital codices

¹ I am grateful to the authorities of the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Biblioteca Casanatense for permitting me to inspect cod. Lat. 7530 and cod. 1086 respectively and to C. O. Brink for criticizing an early draft of this paper.

² Fo. 28^r, ll. 1-5. On this codex in general see J. Quicherat, 'Fragment inédit d'un versificateur latin ancien sur les figures de rhétorique', *Bibliothèque de l'école des Chartes* 1 (1839/40), 51-78, Th. Mommsen *ap. Th. Bergk, Zeitschr. f. d. Alt.* 2. 3 (1845), 81-8 (= *Gesammelte Schriften* vii (Berlin, 1909), 217-18), H. Keil *ap. F. A. Eckstein, Anecdota Parisina rhetorica* (Halle, 1852 (Programm der Lateinischen Hauptschule zu Halle für das Schuljahr 1851-2)), pp. III-VI, *Grammatici Latini* iv (Leipzig, 1864), p. xli note, H. Usener, 'Vier lateinische Grammatiker: IV. Paulus von Constantinopel', *RbM* 23 (1868), 497-503, 543-4 (= *Kl. Schr.* ii. 179-92), P. Lejay, 'Notes Latines V: B. N. Lat. 7530. VI Paulus Constantinopolitanus', *RPh* 18 (1894), 42-59, E. A. Lowe, *Die ältesten Kalendarien aus Monte Cassino* (Munich, 1908 (*Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinischen Philologie des Mittelalters*, iii. 3)), pp. 4-6, *Scriptura Beneventana* (Oxford, 1929), plate IX, W. M. Lindsay, *Notae Latinae* (Cambridge, 1915), pp. xv, 12, 41, 46, 47, 51, 53, 55, 56, 69, 77, 100, 'Palaeographical Notes', App. II to H. J. Lawlor, 'The Cathach of St. Columba', *Proc. Royal Ir. Ac.* 33 (1916), 399 n. 2, C. H. Beeson, 'Paris, Lat. 7530. A Study in Insular Symptom', *Raccolta di scritti in*

onore di Felice Ramorino (Milan, 1927), pp. 199-211, P. Lehmann, 'Fulda und die antike Literatur', *Aus Fuldas Geistesleben*, ed. J. Theele (Fulda, 1928), pp. 9-23, 'Die alte Klosterbibliothek Fulda und ihre Bedeutung', *Aus der Landesbibliothek Fulda* 2 (1928), 5 (= *Erforschung des Mittelalters* i (Stuttgart, 1941), 220), A. Campana, 'Per la storia della Biblioteca della Cattedrale di Benevento', *Bull. Arch. Pal. It.* N.S. 2-3 (1956-7), part I, 152-63, F. Brunhölzl, *Zum Problem der Casineser Klassikerüberlieferung* (Munich, 1971 (Abhandlungen der Marburger Gelehrten Gesellschaft, 1971, no. 3)), p. 114, B. Bischoff, 'Die Bibliothek im Dienste der Schule', *La scuola nell' Occidente latino dell' alto medioevo, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull' Alto Medioevo* xix (Spoleto, 1972), 396, G. Cavallo, 'La trasmissione dei testi nell' area Beneventano-Casinese', *La cultura antica nell' Occidente Latino dal VII all' XI secolo, Settimane di Studio* xxii (Spoleto, 1975), 363-5, L. Holtz, 'Le Parisinus Latinus 7530, synthèse cassinienne des arts libéraux', *Studi Medievali*, 3 ser. 16 (1975), 97-152.

³ Fo. 64^v, col. b, 17. 14-18. See on this codex C. Morelli, 'I trattati di grammatica e retorica del cod. casanatense 1086', *Rendiconti della Reale Accad. dei Lincei, Cl. Sc. Mor. Stor. e Filol.*, Ser. V, vol 19 (1910), 287-328, E. A. Lowe, *Scriptura Beneventana*, plate XVI, A. Campana, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-63, G. Cavallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 363-5, 367-8.

carrying Latin dramatic texts, the 'Bembine' Terence and the 'Ambrosian' Plautus.⁴ The subjoined note has both similarities to and dissimilarities from the accounts of stage performances which sometimes accompany titles in these codices, in the medieval ('Calliopian') tradition of Terence, in a set of second-third century rolls carrying tragedies by Aeschylus,⁵ in a third-fourth-century codex carrying comedies by Menander,⁶ and in the medieval traditions of Aristophanes, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Some have called it a *διδασκαλία*,⁷ others a *σχόλιον*.⁸ L. Traube⁹ declared it to be a passage from the account of L. Varius Rufus in Suetonius' *De uiris illustribus*.¹⁰ Mommsen wrote with more circumspection, describing the *titulus* and referring simply to 'die kurze Notiz, die unter diesem prächtigen Titel steht.'¹¹ Although the terms *διδασκαλία*¹² and *σχόλιον*¹³ are both open to abuse, something more than terminological confusion underlies the variety of the descriptions. The relationship between script and explanatory matter in the traditions of the classical dramatists has become much clearer during the course of the last forty years¹⁴ and we may legitimately ask whether the words transmitted by the two South Italian codices form the beginning of an individually designed edition of the script of the *Thyestes* or the combination of an ancient *titulus* with an annotator's extract from another book; in other words, whether the subjoined note is of the

⁴ Cod. Rome, Bibl. Vat. Lat. 3226 fos. 5^r/5^v TARENTI ANDRIA FINITA/INCIPIIT EVNVCHVS TARENTI, 29^r/29^v, 52^v/53^r, 76^r/76^v, 96^r/96^v and cod. Milan, Bibl. Ambros. G. 82 ord. sup. fos. 224^v T. MACCI PLAVTI CASINA EXPLICIT INC. CISTELLARIA FELICITER, 280^r, 432^v are not exactly similar.

⁵ P. Oxy. 2256, frs. 1-7.

⁶ P. Bodmer 4.

⁷ Cf. H. Keil, *Zeitschr. f. d. Alt.* 2. 6 (1848), 551 ('eine Art von Didaskalie'), M. Schanz, C. Hosius, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* ii (Munich, 1935), 163, H. Bardon, *La littérature latine inconnue* ii (Paris, 1956), 31, L. Holtz, op. cit., pp. 98, 113, 139.

⁸ Cf. F. W. Schneidewin, *RhM* 1 (1842), 108, O. Ribbeck, *Tragicorum Latinorum Fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1852), p. 347, W. Kroll and F. Skutsch, *W. S. Teuffels Geschichte der römischen Literatur*⁶ ii (Leipzig-Berlin, 1910), 21, E. A. Lowe, *The Beneventan Script* (Oxford, 1914), p. 17, R. Helm, *RE* ii.8.i (1955), 413, A. Campana, op. cit., p. 161, G. Cavallo, op. cit., p. 364, E. Lefevre, *Der Thyestes des Lucius Varius Rufus* (Wiesbaden, 1976 (Abh. Mainz Ak. 9)), p. 38.

⁹ *Arch. f. Stenogr.* 53 (1901), 207 (= *Vorlesungen und Abhandlungen* iii (Munich, 1920), 271). W. M. Lindsay wrote (*CQ* 16 (1922), 180) of a 'vita Varii'.

¹⁰ The entry at *Ol. exc 4* in Jerome's *Chronica* shows that Suetonius included Varius among his poets.

¹¹ *Zeitschr. f. d. Alt.* 2. 3 (1845), 84 (= *Ges. Schr.* vii.218). Cf. A. E. Housman's 'prefatory note' (*CQ* 11 (1917), 42) (= *Classical Papers* iii, Cambridge, 1972, 941).

¹² There is no clear case of *διδασκαλία* signifying 'note of performance' in recorded Greek. On the contents of Aristotle's *Διδασκαλία*, the use made of this work by students of particular Attic scripts and continuations of it see G. Jachmann, *De Aristotelis didascalii* (Diss. Göttingen, 1909), A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, ed. 2 John Gould and D. M. Lewis (Oxford, 1968), p. 71, R. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship from the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford, 1968), p. 81. *Didascalia* does not occur in recorded Latin (*TbLL* V 1, 1015. 8 appears to have been misled by the format of Schlee's edition of the medieval Terence scholia).

¹³ On the use and misuse of the term *σχόλιον* see G. Zuntz, *Byzantion* 14 (1939), 548 ff. (= *Die Aristophanes-Scholien der Papyri* (Berlin, 1975), 64 ff.).

¹⁴ See G. Zuntz, *Byzantion* 13 (1938), 631-90, 14 (1939), 545-614 (= *Die Aristophanes-Scholien der Papyri* (Berlin, 1975)), *An Enquiry into the Transmission of the Plays of Euripides* (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 272-5, N. G. Wilson, 'A Chapter in the History of Scholia', *CQ* N.S. 17 (1967), 244-56, E. G. Turner, *Greek Papyri. An Introduction* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 112-24, J. E. G. Zetzel, 'On the History of Latin Scholia', *HSCP* 79 (1975), 335-54.

character of what in similar capital lettering follows INCIPIT TERENTI PHORMIO on fo. 53^r of the Bembine Terence – ACTA LVDIS MEGALEN-SIBVS Q. CASPIONE CN. SERVILIO COS. GRAECA APOLLODORV EPI-DICAZOMENOS. FACTA EST IIII¹⁵ – or of the character of what has been copied in cursive script from Donatus' commentary into the top margin of fo. 53^v – [*haec acta*] *st ludis Megalensibus Chorinto Merula aedile curuli et L. Postumio alſro [. . .] agentibus in rebus Cassio Atilio et Bambio, modificante Flacco Claudi filio tibiüs Serranis [. . .]; tota deuerbiis quoque facetissimis et gestum disiderantibus scaenicum et suauissimis ornata [cant]icis fuisse dictaque est quarto loco comoedia, Valerio et G. Fannio consulibus.*¹⁶

At first sight the Latin traditions look as if they ought to be interpreted entirely in the light of the Greek. Great care however needs to be taken with the actual evidence. The so-called 'didascalical' notes in the Bembine Terence and the Ambrosian Plautus¹⁷ cohere firmly with the titles. Their succinct archival manner suggests that the format was designed by someone used to recording the acts of bodies of magistrates and priests. Lists of titles in chronological order of performance would have been already in existence when the design was effected¹⁸ but a fairly early date is probable.¹⁹ Apparently similar Greek texts provide no sure indications of a design made by an individual of a precise format and on the other hand some quite clear indications of a long and haphazard development. The prose intervening between the title Λουκιανού Ὠκύπους in cod. Rome, Bibl. Vat. Gr. 90 (Lucian: X cent.) fo. 314^r and 173 verses of iambic dialogue –

Ἠκύπους Ποδαλειρίον καὶ Ἀστασίας υἱὸς ἐγένετο, κάλλει καὶ δυνάμει διαφέρων, γυμνασίῳ τε καὶ κνηγεσίῳ μὴ ἀμελῶν. πολλάκις δὲ θεωρῶν τοὺς ἐχομένους ὑπὸ τῆς ἀτέγκτου Ποδάγρας κατεγέλα φάσκων μηδὲν ὄλως εἶναι τὸ πάθος. ἡ θεὸς ἀγανακτεῖ καὶ διὰ ποδῶν εἰστρέχει. τοῦ δ' εὐτόνως φέροντος καὶ ἀρνούμενου, ὑπτίῳ ὄλως τίθησθαι ἡ θεός. τὰ τοῦ πρόσωπα Ποδάγρα, Ὠκύπους, Τροφεύς, Ἰατρὸς, Πόνος, Ἄγγελος. ἡ μὲν σκηνὴ τοῦ δράματος ὑπόκειται (edd. ἀνάκειται) ἐν Θῆβαις. ὁ δὲ χόρος συνέστηκεν ἐξ ἐπιχωρίων ποδαγρῶν, συλληγόντων τὸν Ὠκύπου. τὸ δὲ δράμα τῶν πάντων ἀστείων

– is a parody of what must have been a common way of presenting a dramatic text. Unfortunately a certain date cannot be assigned to the parody. Some have argued that the author of the verses was not Lucian of Samosata but a friend of

¹⁵ Unlike the other four surviving Bembine notes this one fails to give the actors, the musician, the type of music or the date of composition. The Calliopian note, on the other hand, is formally intact.

¹⁶ See J. F. Mountford, *The Scholia Bembina* (London, 1934), pp. 119 ff., on the question of whether the original commentary or the extant *commentum Donati* was the annotator's source.

¹⁷ See F. Ritschl, 'Die Plautinischen Didaskalien', *RhM* 1 (1842), 29–88 (= *Parerga zu Plautus und Terenz* (Leipzig, 1845), pp. 249–336), W. Wilmanns, *De didascalii Terentianis* (Diss. Berlin, 1864), K. Dziatzko, 'Ueber die Terentianischen Didaskalien', *RhM* 20 (1865), 570–98, 21 (1866), 64–92, U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Euripides: Herakles i: Ein-*

leitung in die Attische Tragödie (Berlin 1889), 145, G. Jachmann, op. cit., pp. 52–60. Bibliographies list D. Klose, *Die Didaskalien und Prologe des Terenz* (Diss. Freiburg, 1966).

¹⁸ Hence FACTAST TERTIA CN. CORNELIO MARCO IUVENIO (Bemb. Ter. *Heaut.*) and the like.

¹⁹ The behaviour of Verrius Flaccus in citing one Plautine script under the titles *Mostellaria* (Fest. p. 166. 19) and *Phasma* (pp. 158. 33, 394. 18) and another under *Cistellaria* (p. 512. 10) and *Synaristosae* (pp. 390. 8, 480. 23 – see E. Fraenkel, *Philologus* 87 (1932), 117 ff. (= *Kleine Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* (Rome, 1964) ii. 33 ff.) – suggests that his texts were prefixed with notes naming the Greek originals.

the fourth-century rhetorician Libanius.²⁰ The general structure of the kind of learned note parodied is visible in material adhering to titles of dramatic scripts in both ancient and medieval manuscripts. It may go back to Aristophanes of Byzantium²¹ but it was surely one designed to introduce a learned *ὑπόμνημα* rather than the actual script of a play. Significantly the material on subject matter, performance, and masks in P. Oxy. 2256, fr. 1-7 (Aeschylus: II-III cent.) was added to the margins of otherwise clean scripts.²² That in P. Bodmer 4 (Menander: III-IV cent.) was copied along with the script from an older exemplar but its position, in front of the title to which it pertains, reveals that in origin it was a secondary addition. Codd. Florence, Bibl. Laur. 32.2 (Euripides: XIV cent.), 32.9 (Aeschylus, Sophocles: X-XI cent.), Venice, Bibl. Marc. Gr. 47 (Euripides: XII cent.), Gr. 474 (Aristophanes: XI-XII cent.), Paris, Bibl. Nat. Gr. 2713 (Euripides: XIII cent.) often have similar material in the same tell-tale position.²³

It is not to be supposed that all ancient Latin dramatic texts resembled the Ambrosian *Pseudolus* and *Stichus* or the Bembine Terence comedies. The Ambrosian *Trinummus* was accompanied by nothing except its title. If the extant *Commentum Donati* reflects truly the form of the grammarian's teaching his pupils would have had before them texts of Terence's comedies with nothing between title and actual script. Donatus felt obliged to preface his comments on the words and phrases of each script by means of a brief discussion of the title of the script, its species within the genus *comoedia*, the author of the Greek original, the character of the action, the verbal style, the personages, the construction of the plot, the date and musical mode of the first performance, the reception accorded by the public, the overall literary quality, and the chronological relationship to other works, together with an account of the content of the plot and the divisions of the action.

In assessing the nature of the note on the *Thyestes* several possibilities have therefore to be considered.

The verbal style of this note contrasts very strongly with that of the 'didascalical' notes in the Bembine Terence and the Ambrosian Plautus, particularly where the

²⁰ e.g. J. Zimmermann, *Luciani quae feruntur Podagra et Ocyprus praefatus edidit commentatus est* (Leipzig, 1909); pp. 79 ff. Zimmermann also argues, p. 39, that the prose comes from a learned man who thought the *Ποδάγρα* and the *Ἔγκυπος* to be by the one author.

²¹ Similar items to those which compose the Lucianic essay collect under the rubrics *ὑπόθεσις Ἀριστοφάνους γραμματικῆς* et sim. in P. Bodmer 4 and the medieval traditions of the dramatists. P. Oxy. 1235 (early second century AD.) carries a work perhaps the *περιοχὰς τῶν Μενάνδρου δραμάτων* by Homerus Sellius, which provided for a number of Menandrian comedies information on the first performance, a summary of the plot, and a brief aesthetic judgement. A work on Euripides' tragedies carried by a number of first, second- and third-century-AD. papyri provided much longer plot summaries and perhaps also aesthetic judgements (see

R. A. Coles, *A New Oxyrrhynchus Papyrus: The Hypothesis of Euripides' Alexandros* (Univ. of London, Inst. of Classical Studies, Bull. Suppl. 32 (1974)), pp. 69-70). Despite the access of new material F. W. Schneidewin, 'De hypothesibus tragoediarum Graecarum Aristophani Byzantio uindicandis commentatio', *Abb. Kön. Ges. Wiss. Göttingen* 6 (1856), remains fundamental. See also D. L. Page, *Euripides: Medea* (Oxford, 1938), pp. liii-lvii, G. Zuntz, *The Political Plays of Euripides* (Manchester, 1955; corr. repr. 1963), pp. 129-52, W. S. Barrett, *Euripides: Hippolytos* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 153-4, R. Pfeiffer, *History*, pp. 192-6, P. T. Stevens, *Euripides: Andromache* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 26-8.

²² See E. G. Turner, *Greek Papyri*, p. 122.

²³ The situation is, of course, often rationalized; cf. P. Cair. 43227 (Menander: V cent.).

account of the *ludi* at which the tragedy was performed is concerned.²⁴ It contrasts almost as strongly with that of references to performances in P. Oxy. 2256, P. Bodmer 4, and the Byzantine traditions of Aristophanes, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.²⁵ Two material elements of the note, the judgement on the literary quality of the script and the statement of the price paid for it, have no counterparts in the Bembine and Ambrosian notes. They are not however totally without parallel elsewhere.

Conjectures rather than tradition produce the aesthetic judgement *tragoediam magna cura absolutam* but conjectures which can scarcely be avoided. Syntax like *tragoediam magna cura absoluto post Actiacam uictoriam Augusto ludis eius in scaena edidit* is intolerable. The general attitude implicit in the judgement resembles that in the denunciation of the carelessness of Plautus' comic scripts made by Varius' young friend Horace.²⁶ Aristophanes of Byzantium²⁷ and Donatus²⁸ issued global judgements of this kind on particular scripts. Although Aristophanes did not set his judgements between scripts and titles but rather at the head of separate *ὑπομνήματα*, nevertheless by the fourth century these judgements had passed in at least some traditions to the vicinity of script titles.

Nothing like *pro qua fabula sestertium deciens accepit* appears in connection with a script originally composed for performance in Athens. The Athenian tragic and comic poets enjoyed a high social status and did not receive specific payments for services.²⁹ A dramatic poem was not something to which a price could be attached. Recognition by the judges at one of the annual competitions provided sufficient reward. Aristophanes felt it necessary in commenting upon

²⁴ These are usually said to have been *ludi* performed by Octavian after his triumph in 29 (Dio 51. 21. 7–9) but stage plays would have been odd at such *ludi*. The dedication of the Palatine temple of Apollo in 28 (Aug. *Res gest.* 19, Fast. Amit. (*Inscr. It.* 13. 2. 195), Fast. Ant. min. (*Inscr. It.* 13. 2. 209), Sueton. *Aug.* 29. 1, 3, Dio 53. 1. 3) offered a more likely occasion. Mimes by Publilius and Laberius had been performed at Caesar's dedication of the temple of Venus Genetrix in 46 (Cic. *Fam.* 12. 18. 2).

²⁵ P. Oxy. 2257, fr. 1 however, looks like part of an introductory note to Aeschylus' *Αἰθναῖαι* (see E. Fraenkel, *Eranos* 52 (1954), 61–75 (= *Kl. Beitr.* i. 249–62)). It is tempting to speculate that a more specific version of *Vit. Aesch.* 9 ἐλθῶν . . . εἰς Σικελίαν Ἰέρωνος τότε τὴν Αἴθνην κτίζοντος ἐπεδείξατο τὰς Αἰθναίας stood in the part lost.

²⁶ *Epist.* 2. 1. 168–76.

²⁷ In the *Ἀριστοφάνους γραμματικῶ ὑπόθεσις* attached to Euripides' *Ὀρέστης* occurs the statement τὸ δράμα τῶν ἐπὶ σκηπῆς εὐδοκμοῦντων, χερίστον δὲ τοῖς ἡθεσι· πλὴν γὰρ Πυλάδου πάντες φαῦλοι ἦσαν.

²⁸ For the overall literary quality of par-

ticular Terentian scripts see *Eun. praef.* i. 9 'in hac Terentius delectat facietis, prodest exemplis et uitia hominum paulo mordacius quam in ceteris carpit. exempla autem hic morum trina praecipua proponuntur: urbani moris, parasitici, militaris', *Ad. Praef.* i. 9 'in hac spectatur, quid intersit inter rusticam uitam et urbanam, mitem et asperam, caelibis et mariti, ueri patris et per adoptionem facti. quibus propositis ad exemplum imitanda perinde fugiendaque Terentius monstrans artificis poetae per totam fabulam obtinet laudem', *Hec. praef.* i. 9 'in tota comoedia hoc agitur, ut res nouae fiant nec tamen abhorreant a consuetudine: inducuntur enim beniuolae socrus, uerecunda nurus, lenissimus in uxorem maritus et item deditus matri suae, meretrix bona.' For the verbal skill shown in particular scripts see *Ad. praef.* i. 3 'prodest autem et delectat actu et stilo', *Hec. praef.* i. 3 'multumque sententiarum et figurarum continet in toto stilo. unde cum delectet plurimum, non minus utilitatis affert spectatoribus', *Phorm. praef.* i. 3 'et in affectibus constituta paene maioribus quam comicus stilus posceret, nisi quod arte poetae omnia moderata sunt.'

²⁹ This underlies the abuse at Aristoph. *Pax* 696–9.

an Attic script to record the name and date of the festival at which the first performance took place, the name of the χορηγός, the prize won in the competition and the names of the other competitors. What motivated the provision of such information is not altogether clear.³⁰ In part it would have been because the circumstances of poetic production in third-century Alexandria were quite unlike those in Athens and all oddities were thought worthy of record. Yet another cultural situation obtained in Republican Rome. Those who adapted the classical tragedies and comedies of Athens for performance at the festivals had a low status in a very status-conscious community. They were slaves, ex-slaves, or foreign hirelings, not even permitted to participate in competitions as chariot-drivers and gladiators were.³¹ When grammarians came to compose commentaries and the like on the Latin scripts in the Alexandrian manner they substituted, I suggest, for a record of a jury's verdict an account of the payment made to the poet by the magistrates and the reception accorded to the performance by the spectators. The evidence is late and scanty but sufficient. In Donatus' preface to the *Andria* we find 'deuerbiis autem et canticis lepide distincta est et successu spectata prospero hortamento poetae fuit ad alias conscribendas'; in that to the *Eunuchus*: 'et acta est tanto successu, plausu et suffragio, ut rursus esset uendita et ageretur iterum pro noua proque ea pretium, quod nulli ante ipsam fabulae contigit, octo milibus sestertium, numerarent poetae'; in that to the *Hecyra*: 'cantica et deuerbia summo in hac fauore suscepta sunt.' First-century-B.C. commentaries on Plautus' scripts providing similar information would have given the impetus to Horace's sneer at Plautus' love of money.³² An item of Suetonius' biography of Terence – 'et hanc [sc. *Andriam*] autem et quinque reliquas aequaliter populo probauit . . . *Eunuchus* quidem bis die acta est meruitque pretium, quantum nulla ante cuiusquam comoedia, id est octo milia nummorum. propterea summa quoque titulo ascribitur'³³ – shows that by the beginning of the second century AD there were comic texts in circulation prefixed with statements of the price originally paid but at the same time also that such texts were unusual.³⁴

Where the content and style of *Lucius Varius cognomento Rufus Thyesten tragoediam magna cura absolutam post Actiacam uictoriam Augusti ludis eius in scaena edidit pro qua fabula sestertium deciens accepit* are concerned, there is thus little positive to show that anyone consciously designing an edition of the *Thyestes* might have set the note between the title and the text. On the other hand the absence of a syntactic link with INCIPIT THVESTES VARI, ³⁵ the

³⁰ It was much more appropriate in works like the *Πύρακες* of Callimachus, doubtless one of Aristophanes' sources (see Pfeiffer on fr. 456).

³¹ The scripts of Plautus and Terence thus have nothing to correspond with the prayer for victory which regularly concluded fourth- and third-century Athenian comic scripts (cf. Menan. *Dysc.* 968–9, *Misum.* 465–6, *Sam.* 736–7, *Sicyon.* 422–3, Posidippus, fr. 218 *CGF*, Com. anon. fr. 249. 20–1 *CGF*). The anecdote related at Macrob. *Sat.* 2. 7. 7–8 shows how unusual dramatic competitions were even at the end of the Republic.

³² *Epist.* 2. 1. 175. Also perhaps to the

story about Plautus' financial activities related by Varro in his *De comoediis Plautinis* (Gell. 3. 3. 14).

³³ Donat. *Vit. Ter.* 3.

³⁴ The 'didascalie' notice to the *Hecyra* in the Bembine records three performances, with *non est placita* against the second and *placuit* against the third. The Calliopian notices have nothing of the sort. It is likely that Suetonius drew his information from a set of commentaries rather than a set of texts and remembered in passing an unusual text of the *Eunuchus*.

³⁵ Contrast the *incipit* . . . *acta* format of the Bembine and Calliopian notices.

concentration upon the author rather than his work and the provision of the author's full name betray unmistakably the activity of a reader anxious to penetrate an opaque title (doubtless in his time spelled as INCIPIT THVESTA³⁶ VARI³⁷). A roll carrying the tragic script may have once been associated with carriers of other works by Varius³⁸ but by the time of our hypothetical reader and note-maker stood either alone or in the company of works by other poets.³⁹ Suetonius' biography of Varius is as likely a source as any for the sentence he attached to the title.⁴⁰ The terms *διδασκαλία* and *σχόλιον* both suggest an improbable genesis for the note and both should be avoided.

II

It has often been said that the *Thyestes* survived into the eighth century and fell victim to a lack of interest in fine literature on the part of a scribe of that century. The tragedy's imagined fate has inspired considerable eloquence. In 1839 J. Quicherat lamented:

On reconnaît là un de ces courts préambules dont se contentaient les éditeurs, dans l'antiquité. Malheureusement les magnifiques promesses du manuscrit se bornent à ce peu de mots. Le texte continue sans interruption par un chapitre des Origines d'Isidore de Séville. Cette brève notice . . . elle démontre qu'au huitième siècle de notre ère ce chef-d'oeuvre de la tragédie latine existait encore. L'auteur du manuscrit 7530 en avait un exemplaire sous les yeux; il en commençait la transcription, lorsqu' une circonstance bien fatale, on peut dire, lui fit interrompre ce travail par lequel une des plus grandes gloires du siècle d'Auguste eût été sauvée.⁴¹

³⁶ For the form *Thuesta* see Charisius, p. 85 Barwick. *Tuesta* would probably have been the Ennian spelling, despite the *in Thyeste* entries in the lexica of Festus and Nonius. The metre of *Agam.* 4 shows that Seneca formed the nominative as *Thyestes*.

³⁷ The *-ii* genitive does not begin to spread in inscriptions until towards the end of the reign of Augustus. The VARII of the extant *titulus* would have been introduced by a copier with one eye on the subjoined note. If anyone before Iunius Philargyrius attributed a *Thyestes* to Alfenus Varus (see below, p. 398), a titular VARI had surely assisted in the error. It is of interest that early first-century-BC scholars tried to interpret the PLAVTI of some comic *tituli* as pertaining to a Plautius rather than a Plautus (Varr. ap. Gell. 3. 3. 10). The problem of distinguishing persons who operated under the one name much exercised ancient scholars (see Demetrius Magn. ap. Diog. Laert. 1. 38 *et alibi*, Sueton. ap. Donat. *Vit. Ter.* 8).

³⁸ Porphyrio describes L. Varius as 'et epici carminis et tragoediarum et elegiarum auctor' (Hor. *Carm.* 1. 6. 1).

³⁹ A number of *agrimensores* are collected in the fifth-sixth-century cod. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-Aug. Bibl. 2° 36. 23 (CLA IX 1374); a number of *grammatici* in the fifth-century cod. Naples, Bibl. Naz. Lat. 2, fos. 76-111,

140-56, 159 (CLA III 397a). A single codex contained Cicero's *De inuentione*, Quintilian and Fortunatianus in Cassiodorus' library (*Inst.* 2. 10). Where poets are concerned, the satirists Persius and Juvenal were already united in the sixth century (cod. Rome, Bibl. Vat. Lat. 5750, pp. 63-4, 77-8 (CLA I 30)). So too must have been the elegists Tibullus, Lygdamus, and Sulpicia.

⁴⁰ Not that we have an actual sentence from a chapter of the *De uiris illustribus*. The poet's full name would have come at the beginning and the account of a patron's munificence towards the end. Too much should not be made of the substance of the sentence. Comparison of Donat. *Vit. Verg.* 13 'possedit prope centiens sestertium ex liberalitatibus amicorum' with [Prob.] *Vit. Verg.* p. 324. 14-16 Hagen 'Aeneida ingressus . . . ab Augusto usque ad sestertium centies honestatus est' shows what could happen even in formal scholastic writing to talk of money.

⁴¹ Op. cit., p. 52. Cf. F. W. Schneidewin, *RbM* 1 (1842), 107: 'Wer grollte nicht dem bösen Schreiber, dass er die durch sein INCIPIT erregte Hoffnung auf das köstliche Stück so bitter täuschen konnte! Hätte ihm doch gern Jedermann für nur 25 Verse des Varius seinen ganzen in allen Bibliotheken steckenden Isidorus so gern geschenkt'. A. E. Housman, *CQ* 11 (1917), 42 (*Collected*

In 1956 H. Bardon repeated Quicherat's erroneous attribution of the matter which followed the explanatory note on INCIPIT THVESTES VARIII to Isidore's *Origines*⁴² and indulged in a similar lament:

Le manuscrit . . . porte, à la page 28, en grandes onciales . . . puis, vient la phrase de la didascalie, et commencent les *Origines* d'Isidore de Séville. Ainsi, au VIII^e siècle de notre ère, lorsque fut écrit le Parisinus 7530, l'on possédait encore le Thyeste — à moins que le scribe ne fût passé aux *Origines* parce que son archétype ne lui fournissait pas la tragédie de Varius: pourtant, eût-il, en ce cas, recopié le titre? A quoi tiennent les destinées des chefs-d'oeuvre de l'esprit! L'inconséquence d'un copiste a peut-être privé le monde moderne de la pièce qui fut, avec la Médée d'Ovide, également disparue, la meilleure réussite du théâtre latin.⁴³

Scepticism has on occasion been expressed with a blunt but unavailing curtness.⁴⁴

The content of cod. Rome, Bibl. Cas. 1086, first made known to scholars in 1910 and still not fully studied, does not affect the issue. The exemplar which this manuscript shared with cod. Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 7530 could not have long antedated 779–96.⁴⁵ It may therefore be useful to reconsider both the general probabilities and the particular evidence.

During the eighth century there were undoubtedly to be found in Southern Italy a number of literary and semi-literary works absent from the libraries of the rest of Europe. The texts of works which survived in the two areas often diverged in remarkable ways.⁴⁶ But if such classics of pagan poetry and literary prose as Terence's comedies, Ovid's *Fasti*, Juvenal's satires, Cicero's *De natura deorum*, *De diuinatione*, and *De legibus*, Seneca's dialogues, books I–V of Tacitus' *Historiae* and books XI–XVI of his *Annals*, Apuleius' *De magia*, *Metamorphoses*, and *Florida* were actually copied in southern Italy earlier than the eleventh century, the copies do not survive. The minuscule ancestry which has been argued for many codices written during the eleventh century in the 'Beneventan' hand⁴⁷

Papers iii.941): 'One day towards the end of the eighth century the scribe . . . began to copy out for us . . . the *Thyestes* of Varius. He transcribed the title and the prefatory note. . . . Then he changed his mind; he proceeded with a list of the *notae* employed by Probus and Aristarchus, and the masterpiece of Roman tragedy has rejoined its author in the shades'; R. Helm, *RE* ii.8.i (1955), 413, s.v. Varius 20: 'das incipit *Thyestes Varii* in dem Scholion des Parisinus deutet doch darauf hin, dass es bis in das 8 Jhd. noch erhalten war.'

⁴² Quicherat's error, repeated by Schneidewin and Schneidewin's publisher, F. G. Welcker, *Die griechischen Tragödien* iii (Bonn, 1841), 1429 n. 24, was nailed by Th. Mommsen ap. Th. Bergk, *Zeitschr. f. d. Alt.* 2. 3 (1845), 85 (*Ges. Schr.* vii.218).

⁴³ Op. cit., p. 31. Cf. H. D. Jocelyn, *The Tragedies of Ennius* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 49 n. 1: 'Varius' *Thyestes* may have reached the age of Charlemagne.'

⁴⁴ See Th. Bergk, *Zeitschr. f. d. Alt.* 2. 3 (1845), 84 n. (= *Kleine Schriften* i (Halle, 1884), 585) 'Wie übrigens Schneidewin . . . die Behauptung aussprechen kann . . . das begreife, wer es kann; ich sollte meinen,

das Blatt des Codex bewiese gar nichts oder vielmehr das Gegenteil.' Cf. H. Keil, *Zeitschr. f. d. Alt.* 2. 6 (1848), 550–1, O. Ribbeck, op. cit., p. 347, W. M. Lindsay, *CQ* 16 (1922), 180, L. Holtz, op. cit., p. 114.

⁴⁵ See C. Morelli, op. cit., pp. 321–2.

⁴⁶ The case of the text of Juvenal's sixth satire offered by cod. Oxford, Bodl. Lib. MS. Canon. 41 is famous. For the existence of a distinct South-Italian text of Servius' commentary on the poems of Virgil see A. F. Stocker, *HSCP* 52 (1941), 65–97; for Priscian's *Institutiones grammaticae* see M. de Nonno, *RFIC* 105 (1977), 385–402.

⁴⁷ See the works of Brunhölzl and Cavallo cited on p. 387 n. 2. Northern sources could in theory have supplied exemplars and 'insular' symptoms would betray some of these. The very number however of texts unique to Southern Italy is significant and palaeographers are not as eager as they once were to detect 'insular' symptoms. On cod. Florence, Bibl. Laur. 68. 2 (Tacitus: XI cent.) see M. Zelzer, *WS* 86 (1973), 185–95.

need not go back as far as the eighth. It may be foolishly romantic to imagine the existence of eighth-century predecessors of Desiderius as cultivated as he was or to suppose that teachers like Paul the Deacon, Hilderic, and Ursus encouraged any very deep interest in the pagan classics.⁴⁸ Those who ordered the making of cod. Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 7530 and cod. Rome, Bibl. Cas. 1086 were interested in grammar and rhetoric only in so far as these were likely to prove useful to servants of the Church. The exemplar from which the title of the *Thyestes* and the attached note came⁴⁹ would have served similar interests. The possibility must be considered that a complete text of the famous Augustan tragedy lay in a library like that of the Abbey on Monte Cassino through the eighth century unread and uncopied except for its title.

It is only a possibility. Close consideration of the seven items common to cod. Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 7530 (P) and cod. Rome, Bibl. Cas. 1086 (C) reveals no degree of real probability. The failure of Quicherat and his followers to think about the overall character of P made them pose a wrong question. The right question to pose was not why the scribe failed to copy out a text of the *Thyestes* script but rather why he bothered even with the title. We must now of course talk about the parent grammatical miscellany rather than about that in P but the question abides. There is no reason to suppose that the parent miscellany was less carefully designed than the two extant.⁵⁰ It would have had no place for the text of a tragic poem.

The seven items may be considered in the order in which they appear in C.⁵¹ The first, titled DE SCHEMATA LOGV IDEST FIGVRAE ORATIONIS, was an

⁴⁸ On literary culture in Italy in the dark ages see B. Bischoff, 'Scriptoria e manoscritti mediatori di civiltà dal sesto secolo alla riforma di Carlo Magno', *Centri e vie di irradiazione della civiltà nell' alto medioevo, Settimane di studio del Centro italiano di studio sull' alto medioevo XI* (Spoleto, 1964), 485-92 (= *Mittelalterliche Studien* ii (Stuttgart, 1967), 316-20); on the time of Charlemagne id. 'Panorama der Handschriftenüberlieferung aus der Zeit Karls des Grossen' in W. Braunsfels, *Karl der Grosse. Lebenswerk und Nachleben* ii (Düsseldorf, 1965), 233-54; on Monte Cassino in particular H. Bloch, 'Monte Cassino's Teachers and Library in the High Middle Ages', *La scuola nell' Occidente latino dell' alto medioevo, Settimane di studio* xix (Spoleto, 1972), 563-605; on South Italy Cavallo, op. cit., pp. 357-414. The classical works copied in Beneventan script can be found in E. A. Lowe, *The Beneventan Script* (Oxford, 1914), pp. 16-18 (*Pal. Papers* i.87-8), 'A new list of Beneventan manuscripts', *Collectanea Vaticana in honorem Anselmi M. Card. Albareda*, vol. 2 (Vatican City, 1962 (*Studi e Testi* 220)). The lists of M. Huglo, 'Liste complémentaire de manuscrits bénéventains', *Scriptorium* 18 (1964), 89-91, and C. E. Finch, 'Beneventan

Writing in Codices Vat. Lat. 3032, 5951 and 7277', *AJPh* 87 (1966), 455-7, and 'More Beneventan Manuscripts', *Class. Bull.* 52 (1975), 8-10, have not altered the appearance of the situation.

⁵¹ It is commonly held that this exemplar was made in South Italy but certainty seems unobtainable. C. H. Beeson, op. cit., pp. 202-3, claimed to find a small number of insular symptoms in the Paris manuscript's text of the SCHEMATA DIANOEAQVAE AD RHETORES PERTINENT and the DE LAVDIVBVS VRBIVM. L. Holtz, op. cit., pp. 146-7, pointed out that the parts of the former dependent on Isidore relate to the 'French' rather than the 'Italian' tradition of the *Origines* but nevertheless maintained a South-Italian origin for the exemplar. See also Brunhölzl, op. cit., p. 114, and Cavallo, op. cit., pp. 363-5.

⁵⁰ On the design of the miscellany in P see Holtz, op. cit., pp. 142-5. The maker of that in C sought to supplement the exposition of Latin morphology which Ursus (elected Bishop of Benevento in 833) had based on books I-XVI of Priscian's *Institutiones grammaticae*.

⁴⁹ C at one time possessed at least one other quaternion. On the order of items common to P and C in the exemplar see Holtz, op. cit., p. 141.

extract from a treatise on figures of speech obtainable through grammatical substitution;⁵² the second, titled DE COLA ET COMMATA, an extract from the account of the structure of the period in Pompeius' commentary on Donatus;⁵³ the third, titled SCEMATATA DIANOEAES QVAE AD RHETORES PERTINENT, a treatise on figures of thought;⁵⁴ the fourth, titled DE LAVDIBVS QVARVMQVE RERVVM, an extract from a treatise on epideictic speech;⁵⁵ the fifth, titled DE LAVDIBVS VRBIVM, an extract from the same treatise;⁵⁶ the sixth, titled DE FIGVRIS VEL SCEMATIBVS, a hexameter poem on figures of thought;⁵⁷ and the seventh an extract from an account of the signs placed by Greek and Latin grammarians in the margins of their copies of literary works in order to indicate the way they understood and judged the texts before them. The title borne by this seventh item was INCIPIT THVESTES VARIII and no mark of division stood between the adjoining sentence about the first performance of the *Thyestes* and the account of the critical signs. The item concluded with the words *F de notis probianis*. EXPL. NOTE.⁵⁸

The title of the seventh item and the content of its first sentence have no imaginable connection with the other six items. On the other hand its remainder fits quite comfortably. The symbolic annotation of texts was recognized at Rome from the first century B.C. onwards as one of the characteristic activities of the literary scholar.⁵⁹ M. Valerius Probus won a special fame for his *notae*.⁶⁰ Christian scholars were to adapt systems of marginal signs along with other parts of the pagan grammatical apparatus. Jerome applied the 'obelus' and the 'asteriscus' to holy writ in the manner of the Greek Origen.⁶¹ Cassiodorus used the '✕' ('chresimon') and a sign of his own (the 'achreston'/'achresimon') to distinguish the acceptable and the unacceptable in certain writings whose value to the faithful was disputed.⁶² In antiquity the number of texts in circulation actually marked with signs was always relatively small. Book collectors preferred clean copies. Annotation was an individual and perhaps slightly eccentric activity.⁶³

⁵² Fos. 53^v, col. a, 35-54^r, col. b, 15 (= P fos. 38^r, 16-38^v, 34 DE FIGVRIS FACTIS PER GENETIVVM CASVM).

⁵³ Fos. 54^r, col. b, 27-54^v, col. a, 11 (= P fos. 62^v, 1-17 without title but separated by blank space from previous summary of Pompeius' account of vices and figures of speech = Keil, *Gramm. Lat.* V. 133, 13-134. 2).

⁵⁴ Fos. 60^r, col. b, 27-63^r, col. b, 6 (= P fos. 221^r, 18-224^v, 3 SCEMATATA DIANOEAES QVAE AD RHETORES PERTINENT = Halm, *Rhet. Lat.* 71-7).

⁵⁵ Fo. 63^r, col. b, 6-14 (= P fo. 224^v, 3-8 DE LAVDIBVS QVARVMQVE RERVVM = Halm, *Rhet. Lat.* 587-8).

⁵⁶ Fos. 63^r, col. b, 15-63^v, col. a, 13 (= P fo. 224^v, 9-29 = Halm, *Rhet. Lat.* 588).

⁵⁷ Fos. 63^v, col. a, 13-64^v, col. b, 13 (= P fos. 224^v, 30-228^v, 5 = Halm, *Rhet. Lat.* 63-70 = Riese, *Anth. Lat.* 485 = Baehrens, *Poet. Lat. Min.* iii.273-85).

⁵⁸ Fo. 64^v, col. b, 14-18 + 18-37 (= P fo. 28^r, 1-5 + fos. 28^r, 5-29^r, 6 = Keil,

Gramm. Lat. vii.533-6). A later hand has attempted to mark a division in P. The end of the item is missing from C.

⁵⁹ See Cic. *Pis.* 73, *Fam.* 9. 10. 1, Hor. *A.P.* 447-50, Quintil. *Inst.* 1. 4. 3, Front. p. 180. 3-5 Van den Hout, Auson. *Epist.* 13. 30, *Opusc.* 13. 1. 11-15.

⁶⁰ See Sueton. *Gramm.* 24. 3, DS Virg. *Aen.* 1. 21, Serv. Virg. *Aen.* 10. 444.

⁶¹ See *Epist.* 106. 7, 112. 19, *Interpr. Pent. praef.* pp. 64 ff. ed. Rom., *Iob* pp. 69 ff., 74 ff., *Psalm.* pp. 3 f., *Salom.* p. 6, Augustine in Jer. *Epist.* 104. 3.

⁶² See *Inst.* 1. 1. 8, 1. 9. 3. For other uses of *notae* see *Inst.* 1 praef. 9, 1. 26.

⁶³ Correctors seem to have been responsible for the sporadic signs visible in the margins of texts of Juvenal's satires (C. H. Roberts, *Journ. Egypt. Arch.* 21 (1935), 199-207, E. A. Lowe, *CLA Suppl.* 1710) and Gaius' *Institutiones* (P.S.I. 1182 (CLA III 292)) written in Constantinople in the late fifth or early sixth century and transported to Egypt, as of a text of Hilarius' theological treatises written some-

During the Middle Ages copyists did not normally transcribe marginal or inter-linear signs from their exemplars⁶⁴ but the practical use of a small number remained alive.⁶⁵ Systematic accounts of the ancient signs and their use were sought out and copied in many centres, usually in conjunction with other grammatical and rhetorical material.⁶⁶ The account which comes from the exemplar of P and C is the most extensive and most detailed of those surviving. The importance it attributed to M. Valerius Probus would have made it particularly interesting to the compiler of the miscellany. Probus was the ancient authority most frequently cited by Servius and Priscian, two grammarians studied with close attention in medieval South Italy.⁶⁷

The conjunction of the title of the *Thyestes*, the sentence about the play's first performance and the account of the critical signs used by the classical grammarians cannot, it is clear, result either from eighth-century design or, at least entirely, from eighth-century carelessness. It must have already existed in an old codex, one so revered that everything had to be copied, whether or not it would make sense in its new context. A similar unthinking reverence for things ancient caused scribes in several medieval centres to copy along with

where in South Italy during the sixth century and preserved there (cod. Vienna, Nat. Bibl. MS. 2160 (CLA X 1507)). Many more annotated Greek texts survive (see E. G. Turner, op. cit., pp. 113–18, *Greek Manuscripts of the Ancient World* (Oxford, 1971), p. 17) than do annotated Latin. There may be nothing in this. The number of unannotated Greek texts surviving is also far greater; against, for example, P. Oxy. 3224 (Hesiod, *Erg.* and (?) associated works: II cent.) with its obelos, dipole, asteriskos, and chi (see M. L. West in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Vol. xlv (London, 1977), pp. 51–2) must be placed fifty-three other ancient copies of the same set of Hesiod's poems apparently unannotated. In some cases the signs seem to have been copied from the same exemplar as the text, in others to have been added by a corrector. An expert study of all the evidence would be useful.

⁶⁴ None of the signs used by Flavius Iulius Tryfonianus in correcting a text of Persius in the year 402 (see cod. Montpellier, Bibl. Med. 212, fo. 79^r) has survived in the medieval tradition. Some of Jerome's signs however are preserved (see A. Rahlfs, 'Der Text des Septuaginta-Psalteris', *Septuaginta-Studien* 2 Heft (Göttingen, 1907), pp. 124–34). Features of cod. Rome, Bibl. Vat. Pal. Lat. 1615 (Plautus: XI cent.) have been interpreted as remnants of an ancient system of signs (see F. Schoell, *T. Macci Plauti Truculentus* (Leipzig, 1881), pp. xxxv–vi, W. M. Lindsay,

Ancient Editions of Plautus (Oxford, 1904), pp. 82–3).

⁶⁵ See L. Traube, *Textgeschichte der Regula S. Benedicti*, ed. 2 H. Plenkers (Munich, 1910 (*Abb. d. hist. Cl. d. K. Bayer. Ak. d. Wiss.* 25. 2)), pp. 65–6, 121, W. M. Lindsay, 'Collectanea Varia II. Correction of MSS', *Palaeographica Latina* Part II (Oxford, 1923), pp. 10–15.

⁶⁶ Isidore, *Orig.* 1. 21 (*de notis sententiarum*) was excerpted for cod. Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 7530, fos. 154^v col. 2, 1–155^v col. 2, 11, and for cod. Cava, Arch. della Badia di S. Trin. 3 (misc. XI–XII cent.), fos. 247^r–248^v. On other accounts of signs in the latter codex see A. Reifferscheid, *RbM* 23 (1968), 127–33. On cod. Munich, Bayer. Staatsbibl. CLM 14429 (misc. X cent. from S. Emmeram in Regensburg) see H. Kettner, 'Kritische Bemerkungen zu Varro und lateinischen Glossaren', *Progr. d. Klosterschule Rossleben* 1868, pp. 33 ff., P. Weber, *Quaestionum Suetoniarum capita duo* (Diss. Halle, 1903), pp. 8–13. The Bobbio library had a volume containing among various grammatical works a treatise *De emendatione et notis ueterum librorum* (item 102 of the 1461 inventory: see A. Peyron, *M. Tullii Ciceronis Orationum pro Scauro, pro Tullio, et in Clodium fragmenta inedita . . . idem praefatus est de Bibliotheca Bobiensi, cuius inuentorium . . . edidit* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1824), pp. 29–30).

⁶⁷ See above, p. 394 n. 46. One of the works excerpted for cod. Paris, Bibl. Nat. Lat. 7530 was Servius' commentary on Donatus' *Ars grammatica* (fos. 156^v–183^v).

ancient texts, pagan and Christian, the commemorations of their efforts added by earlier readers and correctors.⁶⁸ The content of P thus gives no reason for supposing that a complete text of the *Thyestes* survived into the eighth century at Monte Cassino or anywhere else in Europe.

We can only speculate about how and when the conjunction took place.

A sentence in a note on Virgil, *Buc.* 8.6 in the commentary by Iunius Philargyrius⁶⁹ has seemed to many modern scholars evidence that the text of the *Thyestes* of L. Varius Rufus survived in at least one library in fifth-century Milan.⁷⁰ This sentence is nothing of the sort. It should be considered along with the rest of the note:

TV MIHI SEV MAGNI SVPERAS et reliqua. Asinium Pollionem petit Salonitarum uictorem, qui praecipuae, non minus poeticae quam oratoriae, uel imperatoriae laudis audius fuit; nam et multa carmina et uaria poemata scripsit, unde est illud 'sola Sophocleo' et reliqua. huic post uictum Antonium aput Perusiam successor datus est Alfenus Varus qui iratus Mantuanis agros eorum parti Cremonensium iunxit. causa autem iracundiae haec fuit. Octavius Musa enim, cuius Mantuanus, idemque magistratus, cum tributum ab Augusto fuisset indictum, pecora Vari capta pignori tamdiu in foro clausa tenuit (nam Varus possessor Mantuanus erat), donec inedia morentur, unde molestiam Mantuanis super amittendis agris intulit Varus; Vergilio tamen pepercit, quoniam condiscipulus eius fuerat. eiusdem autem Vari est tragoedia Thyestes omnibus tragicis praefenda; aliud nihil eius legitur. Thyestes nomen + artis + Iunilius dicit.⁷¹

Philargyrius' account of how Alfenus Varus succeeded Asinius Pollio is significantly less accurate than that in the DS commentary⁷² and is in any case irrelevant to the question of the person addressed at *Buc.* 8.6.⁷³ Even more irrelevant is the statement that Alfenus Varus wrote a *Thyestes*. Clearly, this had been made long before the fifth century by defenders of the reading VARO

⁶⁸ See in P itself fo. 40^r, 10–12 (at end of brief treatise on Horace's metres) Seruii grammatici scripsit d(e)o propitius papulus cons theyderichi indic. ii mensis februarrii. xxv dies saturni hora iiii die (i.e. 25 Feb. 674; see P. Lejay, *RPh* 18 (1894), 53–9); fo. 46^r, 3–4 EXPLICIT. Feliciter Iuliano scolastico sardiano Seruii grammatici maximae et antiquae Romae. On subscriptions copied in the traditions of Latin poets and prose-writers see O. Jahn, *Ber. Verb. Sächs. Ges. d. Wiss. z. Leipzig, Phil.-hist. Kl.* 3 (1851), 327–72. C. O. Brink, *Horace on Poetry. The 'Ars Poetica'* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 30–1, J. E. G. Zetzel, *HSCPb* 77 (1973), 225–43. For the same phenomenon in the Greek and Syriac bible traditions see G. Zuntz, *The Ancestry of the Harklean New Testament* (London, 1945 (The British Academy. Suppl. Pap. 7)), pp. 11–33, 'Die Subscriptionen der Syra Harclensis', *Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. Morgenl. Ges.* 101 (1951), 174–96, *The Text of the Epistles* (London, 1953), p. 72.

⁶⁹ On Philargyrius (or Filagrius) see K. Barwick, 'De Iunio Filargyrio Vergillii

interprete', *Comm. philol. Ien.* 8. 2 (1909), 1–66, P. Wessner, *BPhW* 29 (1909), 1366–71, 47 (1927), 454–60, 51 (1931), 206–9, G. Funaioli, *Esegesi Virgilians antica* (Milan, 1930 (reprinting articles published between 1915 and 1920)).

⁷⁰ For Milan as the place in which Philargyrius taught see Schol. Bern. Virg. *Georg.* p. 169 Hagen, Funaioli, *Esegesi*, pp. 400–1.

⁷¹ So Schol. Bern. p. 145 Hagen.

⁷² Cf. DS *Buc.* 6. 6 '... fugatoque Asinio Pollione, ab Augusto Alfenum Varum legatum substitutum, qui transpadanae prouinciae et agris diuidendis praeeset: qui curauit ne ager, qui Vergilio restitutus fuerat, a ueteranis auferretur'; 9. 11 "'carmina'" autem nonnulli quibus sibi Pollionem intercessorem apud Augustum conciliauerat, accipiunt: quo fugato, rursus de praediis suis fuerat Vergilius expulsus'; 9. 27 'sane blanditur Alfenus Varo, qui, Pollione fugato, legatus transpadanis praepositus est ab Augusto.'

⁷³ It was conceivably relevant at 6. 6–7 (where Philargyrius also has it), 9. 27, and 9. 35.

at *Buc.* 9.35. Equally clearly, it had long been refuted by defenders of the reading *VARIO*.⁷⁴ The former may have known a roll or a codex with a title like *INCIPIIT THVESTES VARI* and found comfort in the genitive *VARI* for their theory.⁷⁵ It is unlikely however that Philargyrius did more than stitch together statements he found in older commentaries.⁷⁶ The *Thyestes* of L. Varius Rufus does not figure with certainty even among the second- and third-hand quotations of once studied poems which pullulate in the scholastic literature of late antiquity.⁷⁷

Copies of Varius' tragedy, like other rarities,⁷⁸ could have survived a long time in the odd library, little consulted and gradually rotting away. I suggest that the surviving parchment of one such copy was at some stage washed along with bits of other unused or unusable ancient books in order to provide material for copying a collection of works on grammar,⁷⁹ and the title and its explanatory note, because of their position either at the bottom⁸⁰ or at the top⁸¹ of a relatively unused page escaped the wash, and that the first copier of an account of the critical signs used by Aristarchus and Probus let the unwashed (or perhaps only lightly washed) words stand.⁸² A subsequent copier either wrote out the title of

⁷⁴ Cf. DS *Buc.* 9. 35 'nonnulli sane Alfenum Varum uolunt, qui, licet iuris consultus et successor Servii Sulpicii esset, etiam carmina aliqua composuisse dicitur; sed hoc teste Horatio falsum est, qui Varium poetam laudat.'

⁷⁵ See above, p. 393, on the ambiguity of this genitive.

⁷⁶ A tragedy *Thyestes*, a Varus and Virgil are associated in a strange story at Servius, *Buc.* 3. 20 (cf. DS *Buc.* 6. 3). A Quintus Varus figures in yet another at [Acro], *Hor. Epist.* 1. 4. 3 ('Quintus Varius' according to Porphyrio). The statement at [Acro], *Hor. Carm.* 1. 6. 8 – 'tragoediam Varus scripsit' – may be simply the result of palaeographical error.

⁷⁷ The attribution to this tragedy of an anapaestic fragment cited by Philargyrius on *Virg. Buc.* 2. 70 (*sic auarus . . . inquit* codd. *sic Varus . . . inquit* J. H. Vossius) made by A. Weichert, *Commentatio III de L. Vario poeta* (Grimma, 1831), p. 20 (cf. Th. Bergk, *Commentatio de fragmentis Sophoclis* (Leipzig, 1833), pp. 12–13) and now commonly accepted ought to be reconsidered against the general background of what we know about the ancient commentators.

⁷⁸ Some books of the *Annales* of Ennius were still available in the fifth century or perhaps even later to provide marginal supplements for a copy of Orosius' *Historiae* (on cod. St Gall, Stiftsbibl. 621 (IX cent.) and the eleventh-century notes on pp. 108, 143, 157 see E. Norden, *Ennius und Vergilius. Kriegsbilder aus Roms grosser Zeit* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1915), pp. 78–86). I

should guess that the extracts from Cornelius Nepos' *De historicis Latinis* on fo. 1^r of cod. Wolfenbüttel, Herzog-August Bibl. Gud. class. Lat. 278 (*Cic. Phil.* XII cent. – see P. K. Marshall, *The Manuscript Tradition of Cornelius Nepos* (London, 1977. BICSL Suppl. 37), pp. 8–9) were originally made around this period.

⁷⁹ Cod. Rome, Bibl. Vat. Pal. Lat. 24 used bits of Seneca, Lucan, Hyginus, Fronto, Gellius, Livy, and Cicero manuscripts (CLA I 68–77) to carry the Old Testament; St. Gall, Stiftsbibl. 912 bits of grammatical, medical and biblical manuscripts and a Terence manuscript (CLA VII 967–75) to carry the 'Abba, abauus' glossary; Milan, Bibl. Ambros. E 147 ord. sup. + Rome, Bibl. Vat. Lat. 5750 bits of Fronto, Symmachus, Persius and Juvenal manuscripts, a commentary on Cicero's orations and two obsolete Christian works (CLA I 26a–31) to carry the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon.

⁸⁰ Cf. the 'incipit's on fos. 224^v and 280^r of the Ambrosian Plautus (Milan, Bibl. Ambros. G 82 ord. sup.) and some of those of the Medicean and Roman codices of Virgil (Florence, Bibl. Laur. 39. 1; Rome, Bibl. Vat. Lat. 3867).

⁸¹ Cf. fo. 593^r of the Ambrosian Plautus, where the metrical arguments were set by a later hand in the space left blank after the *titulus* and 'didascalie' note.

⁸² It may have been because the original texts had been only lightly washed that parts of pp. 11, 12, and the whole of pp. 78, 166 of cod. Rome, Bibl. Vat. Lat. 5750 were not reused. For a different explanation,

the account of the signs in the same style of script as that in which he copied the note on the first performance of the *Thyestes* or omitted it altogether,⁸³ leaving INCIPIT THVESTES VARIII to head the curious amalgam of material which survives in the two South-Italian codices.

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however, see F. Ehrle, *M. Cornelii Frontonis aliorumque reliquiae quae codice Vaticano 5750 rescripto continentur* (Milan, 1906 (*Codices e Vaticanis selecti phototypice expressi*, VII)), pp. 7, 21.

⁸³ The words *notae xxi quae uersibus apponi consuerunt* look like a defective

sentence belonging to the account rather than a title. The words *F.* (? = *finis de notis Probianis*) preceding EXPL. NOTAE very likely once formed a title (cf. the way in which the list of signs in cod. London, Brit. Libr. Harley 5693 is titled *περὶ τῶν παρ' Ἀριστάρχου παραθεμένων τῶ Ὀμήρω*).