

# THE FOUND AND LOST MANUSCRIPTS OF TACITUS' *AGRICOLA*

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OF THE two manuscripts with which this paper will deal, neither is currently available to scholars. The Hersfeldensis, discovered in the middle of the fifteenth century, seems to have vanished from sight shortly thereafter; the Aesinas, discovered in Iesi at the beginning of the current century by Cesare Annibaldi, was apparently taken from its owners during World War II, and I have been unable to locate any scholar who knows its present whereabouts. It was Annibaldi's belief<sup>1</sup>—and that of most scholars after him<sup>2</sup>—that he had rediscovered, in the Aesinas, a fragment of the lost Hersfeldensis. I think that the weight of evidence now available is heavily against this conclusion; but, as received opinion lies ponderous on the other side, I shall be required to reproduce much of the evidence, almost all of which is available elsewhere, in order to demonstrate what is known and what is not.

Reconstruction of the Hersfeldensis, with which we shall deal first, is a problem more properly historical than paleographical. The first clear mention of it is in a letter of Poggio Bracciolini dated November 3 (1425), in which he informs Niccolò Niccoli that "quidam monachus amicus meus ex quodam monasterio Germaniae"<sup>3</sup> has some books that he is willing to trade; "inter ea volumina est Iulius Frontinus et aliqua opera Cornelii Taciti nobis ignota."<sup>4</sup> The news caused some excitement in humanist circles<sup>5</sup> and a certain amount of competition to get hold of the manuscript. A letter of

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1. *L' "Agricola" e la "Germania" di Cornelio Tacito nel MS. latino N. 8 della biblioteca del Conte G—Balleani in Iesi* (Città di Castello, 1907), pp. 75–78.

2. G. Wissowa, introduction to *Taciti "Dialogus,"* etc. (Leyden, 1907), *non vidi*; R. P. Robinson, *The "Germania" of Tacitus: A Critical Edition* (Middletown, Conn., 1935), pp. 12–13; P. Lehmann, "Paläographische Beurteilung des Codex Hersfeldensis," in R. Till, *Handschriftliche Untersuchungen zu Tacitus "Agricola" und "Germania"* (Berlin–Dahlem, 1943), p. 11. All editors of Tacitus' minor works have repeated this judgment, but not, so far as can be told, after any particular consideration of the matter. The lone, but firm, dissenter is C. W. Mendell, "Manuscripts of Tacitus' Minor Works," *MAAR* 19 (1949): 133–45; his views are repeated in his *Tacitus: The Man and His Work* (New Haven, 1957), pp. 241–54.

3. That the monastery was Hersfeld is stated in other letters, reproduced in R. Sabbadini, *Storia e critica di testi latini* (Catania, 1914), pp. 272, 275, n. 2; a more readily available summary of the documents bearing on the Hersfeld manuscript will be found in G. Brugnoli (ed.), *Suetoni "De grammaticis et rhetoribus"* (Leipzig, 1963), pp. viii–xiv. For a bibliography of modern discussions of the Hersfeldensis, see Brugnoli, p. xxviii, and E. Koestermann, *Taciti "Germania," "Agricola," "Dialogus de oratoribus"* (Leipzig, 1964), pp. xxxi–xxxiii.

4. Sabbadini, *Storia e critica*, p. 263.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 264–73.

*il Panormita* (Antonio Beccadelli) of the following April<sup>6</sup> describes the discovery in more detail:

Compertus est Cor. Tacitus de origine et situ Germanorum. Item eiusdem liber de vita Iulii Agricolae isque incipit: "Clarorum virorum facta" caeterave. Quinetiam Sex. Iulii Frontonis liber de aquaeductibus. . . . Item eiusdem Frontonis liber alter. . . . Et inventus est quidam dyalogus de oratore et est, ut coniectamus, Cor. Taciti, atque is ita incipit: "Saepe ex me requirunt" et caetera. Inter quos et liber Suetonii Tranquilli repertus de grammaticis et rhetoribus: huic incitium est: "Grammatica Romae."<sup>7</sup>

It is clear that Panormita is describing the same find that Poggio had mentioned; but he was to be disappointed in his expectation of seeing the manuscript *proxime et de repente*. When, in fact, Poggio's connection returned, he brought with him an "inventarium plenum verbis, re vacuum";<sup>8</sup> this was in 1427. In 1429, again, he arrived in Rome *absque libro*,<sup>9</sup> and in 1431, when the cardinals Cesarini and Albergati were about to travel to Germany and France on ecclesiastical business, Niccoli prepared for them a list of valuable books to be sought out. The second item in his *Commentarium* reads:

In Monasterio hispildensi haud procul ab alpibus continentur haec opuscula. videntur licet.

Iulii Frontini De aquae ductis quae in urbem inducunt liber .j. Incipit sic. "PER-SECVTVS ea. . . ." &c. Continet hic liber xiiij.

Item eiusdem frontini liber incipit sic. "Cum omnis res. . . ." &c. Continet .xi. folia. Cornelii taciti de origine & situ germanorum liber incipit sic. "Germania omnis a galiis rhetiisque & pannoniis rheno & danubio fluminibus a sarmatis datisque & mutuo metu a montibus separatur" etc. Continet autem xij folia:—Item in eodem codice:—

Cornelii taciti De uita Iulii agricolae Incipit sic. "Clarorum uirorum facta moresque posteris tradere antiquitus usitatum, ne nostris quidem temporibus, quamquam uniuersa suorum etas obmisit." Qui liber continet .xiiij. folia. Item in eodem codice:—

Dialogus De oratoribus qui incipit sic. "Sepe ex me requiris iuste fabi, cur cum priora secula tot eminentium oratorum ingeniis, gloria, floruerint: nostra potissimum etas deserta & laude eloquentiae orbata:" qui liber continet xvij. folia. Item in eodem codice continetur liber—

Suetonii Tranquilli De grammaticis & rhetoribus, qui incipit sic. "Grammatica romae ne in usu quidem olim nedum in honore ullo" &c. Continet hic liber folia vij.

Ammiani Marcellini rerum gestarum libri xvij. Qui peruenerunt usque ad obitum Valentis imperatoris: qui est finis hystoriae.<sup>10</sup>

6. Ibid., p. 270, n. 6. Panormita was, in this matter, Poggio's competitor rather than his associate, and it is probable that his information came from the monk himself, not from Poggio (C. W. Mendell, "Discovery of the Minor Works of Tacitus," *AJP* 56 [1935]: 114–16).

7. Sabbadini, *Storia e critica*, p. 270.

8. Ibid., p. 272.

9. Ibid., p. 275, n. 2.

10. Ibid., pp. 4–7; more accurately in R. P. Robinson, "The Inventory of Niccolò Niccoli," *CP* 16 (1921): 251–55, from whom my text is taken.

Four of the items, as Niccoli indicates, all belong to one codex; so it is apparent that the Frontinus and the Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>11</sup> were separate. There can be no doubt that Niccoli is describing the same "Iulius Frontinus et aliqua opera Cornelii Taciti" that Poggio and Panormita had mentioned; the detail in which he is able to describe the works shows that he had before him, either in the original or in a copy, the inventory—*plenum verbis* indeed—that his friend Poggio had gotten from the Hersfeld monk. This being the case, we may be confident that his description is reasonably accurate, being derived from a firsthand apograph; since, however, the monk himself was apparently a man of small talent and little scholarship,<sup>12</sup> there are numerous mistakes in detail, not all of which were necessarily in the manuscript itself.

Nothing came of Niccoli's list; although Cesarini did indeed reach Nuremberg, he did not, apparently, search out the codices. But the manuscript did reach Rome, for the papal secretary Pier Candido Decembrio saw it there in 1455, and described it in detail in his notebook.

Cornelii taciti liber reperitur Rome visus 1455 de Origine et situ Germanie. Incipit: "Germania omnis a Gallis retisque et panoniis Rheno et danubio fluminibus a Sarmatis daciisque mutuo metu aut montibus seperatur. cetera oceanus ambit." Opus est foliorum XII in columnellis. Finit: "Cetera iam fabulosa helusios et oxionas ora hominum vultusque corpora atque artus ferarum gerere. quod ego ut incompertum in medium relinquam." Utitur autem cornelius hoc vocabulo "inscientia" non "Inscitia."

Est alius liber eiusdem de Vita Iulii agricolae soceri sui. in quo continetur descriptio Britanie Insule nec non populorum mores et ritus. Incipit: "Clarorum virorum facta moresque posteris tradere antiquitus usitatum. ne nostris quidem temporibus quamquam incuriosa suorum etas ommissit." Opus foliorum decem et quattuor in columnellis. Finit: "Nam multos veluti inglorios et ignobiles oblivio obruet. Agricola posteritati narratus et traditus superstes erit."

Cornelii taciti dialogus de oratoribus. Incipit: "Sepe ex me requiris iuste fabi cur cum priora secula tot eminentium oratorum ingeniis gloriaque floruerint, nostra potissimum etas deserta et laude eloquentie orbata vix nomen ipsum oratoris retineat." Opus foliorum XIII in columnellis. Post hec deficiunt sex folia. nam finit: "quam ingentibus verbis prosequuntur. Cum ad veros iudices ventum." Deinde sequitur: "rem cogitare nihil abiectum nihil humile." Post hec sequuntur folia duo cum dimidio. et finit: "Cum adrisissent discessimus."

Suetonii tranquilli de grammaticis et rhetoribus liber. Incipit: "Grammatica rome nec in usu quidem olim nedum in honore ullo erat. rudi scilicet ac bellicosa etiam tum civitate necdum magnopere liberalibus disciplinis vacante." Opus foliorum septem in columnellis. Finit per prius: "Et rursus in cognitione cedis mediolani apud lucium pisonem proconsulem defendens reum. cum cohiberent lictores nimias laudantium voces ita exanduisset. ut deplorato Italie statu quasi iterum in formam provincie redigeretur. M. insuper brutum cuius statua in conspectu erat invocaret legum

11. Of which a fragment, rediscovered in 1876, is preserved in the Marburger Staatsarchiv. According to Lehmann, "Beurteilung," p. 12, it has no "graphic relation" to the Aesinas.

12. A number of his letters, "in naiver Form und wirrer Gedankenfolge, sprachlich eine Mischung von Rhönddeutsch und Latein," have been published in L. Pralle, *Die Wiederentdeckung des Tacitus* (Fulda, 1952), a book whose extremely tendentious theses have somewhat obscured the interest of the documents reproduced in it. The monk's name was Heinrich von Grebenstein (*ibid.*, p. 24).

ac libertatis auctorem ac vindicem." Ultimo imperfecto columnello finit: "diu ac more concionantis redditus abstinuit cibo." Videtur in illo opere Suetonius innuere omnes fere rhetores et Grammaticae professores desperatis fortunis finivisse vitam.<sup>13</sup>

The description matches Niccoli's,<sup>14</sup> but where Niccoli had ascribed eighteen pages to the *Dialogus*, Decembrio mentions fourteen, then six folia missing, then two and a half folia at the end. The difference may be ascribed simply to the carelessness of the monk who was Niccoli's ultimate source;<sup>15</sup> or, more elegantly, we may suppose that the six missing folia were represented in the manuscript itself by six blank columns—that is, one and a half folia—to bring the total to eighteen.<sup>16</sup> No one, at any rate, will suppose (at least, no one has supposed) that Decembrio saw some other codex, identical with the Hersfeldensis in all but the number of blank pages in the *Dialogus*.

I am sure that at this point the reader will grant me that the existence and content of this manuscript have now been established beyond a doubt: it contained the *Germania*, the *Agricola*, the *Dialogus*, and Suetonius, in that order. The number of folia, for all but the third item, is also established, nor is there any reason to doubt Decembrio's comment that all the works were written in columns. One of our descriptions, that of Niccoli, derived from an eyewitness account, while Decembrio was himself an eyewitness. The accounts of Niccoli and Panormita, while independent of each other, presumably have a common source in the monk who provided the information; Decembrio's is independent even of the monk.

If I seem to be belaboring the obvious, it is because the subsequent history and contents of this manuscript are by no means so clear. In a manuscript containing the *Germania*, the *De grammaticis*, and the *Dialogus* (in that order, which is not the order attested for the Hersfeldensis), we find a note saying, "Hos libellos Iovianus Pontanus excripsit nuper adinventos et in lucem relatos ab Enoc Asculano quamquam satis mendosos. MCCCCLX Martio mense."<sup>17</sup> Enoch of Ascoli, who is here credited with the discovery of these works, had been commissioned in 1451 by Pope Nicholas V to search for manuscripts in northern Europe; he had traveled as far as Denmark, and perhaps farther, returned through Germany, and arrived in Rome in the spring of 1455 with a number of codices.<sup>18</sup> Whether the Hersfeldensis was among them is a question which has generated no

13. Sabbadini, *Storia e critica*, pp. 279–80, reproduced with insignificant variations in Robinson, "*Germania*," pp. 8–9.

14. Except for a number of variants of transcription, for which see Robinson, "*Germania*," pp. 9–13.

15. Sabbadini, *Storia e critica*, p. 282.

16. Robinson, "*Germania*," pp. 12–13, modifying K. Barwick, "Umfang der Lücke in Tacitus *Dialogus de oratoribus*," *RhM* 68 (1913): 279–85 (cf. *ibid.*, pp. 638–39), who thought Decembrio had simply been mistaken (cf. Robinson, "*Germania*," p. 14, n. 5). For another suggestion, see Koestermann's edition, p. viii, n. 2.

17. Leidensis XVIII Perizonianus Q. 2, f. 1, reproduced photographically in Wissowa's edition of the *Dialogus* and (Pontano's notes only) in B. L. Ullman, "Pontano's Handwriting and the Leiden Manuscript of Tacitus and Suetonius," *IMU* 2 (1959): 309–335.

18. Sabbadini, *Storia e critica*, pp. 276–78.

small debate among scholars;<sup>19</sup> it need not concern us here. What is worth noting is that the manuscript took more than four years to reach Pontano, who was no backwoods scribe but an important humanist; and that, when it did, he failed to copy—or to mention the existence of—the *Agricola*.

More striking, however, is a letter of Poggio's son Jacopo, not published until 1958.<sup>20</sup> The letter is a description of manuscripts already found and manuscripts still to be sought, and most of it is a recapitulation, practically verbatim, of Niccoli's commentary.<sup>21</sup> The section dealing with the Hersfeldensis reads:

Cornelii taciti de origine: et situ germanorum: item in eodem codice  
Cornelli taciti de Vita Iulii agricolae. Incipit sic. "Clarorum virorum facta moresque  
posteris tradere antiquitus usitatum: ne nostris quidem temporibus: quanquam  
Universa suorum aetas omisit." Continet xiiij. folia. Item in eodem codice Suetonii  
tranquilli de grammaticis: et rhetoribus: verum nostris temporibus Pii Pontificis  
opera in Italiam venit. Suetonius hic: et Cornelius de situ et origine germanorum:  
et de oratoribus. Sed corruptus: et laceratus.<sup>22</sup>

In the first section of this note (up to the words *et rhetoribus*), Jacopo gives us the information from Niccoli's list, omitting three items: he does not mention the *Dialogus de oratoribus*, nor does he give the *incipit* or the number of folia for any work except the *Agricola*. The first omission is apparently a scribal slip;<sup>23</sup> the reason for the other two omissions (the *incipits* and the number of folia) is made clear by the words added by Jacopo himself (*verum nostris temporibus*, etc.), listing all the works except the *Agricola* and saying that they have "come to Italy." If we take Jacopo's words at their face value, he seems to have known of a Hersfeld codex (or group of codices, if *corruptus et laceratus* refers to the *De oratoribus* alone)<sup>24</sup> which contained all the material except the *Agricola*. Indeed, from his care in transcribing the entire description of the *Agricola*, one might reasonably suppose that he thought himself to be describing a still unknown work—that he was, in 1475,<sup>25</sup> entirely unaware that the *Agricola* was in Italy. The whole note is very carelessly written and is far from certain evidence,<sup>26</sup> but it does provide further grounds for believing that the manu-

19. Robinson, "*Germania*," pp. 351–56, denied it; and Mendell, "Manuscripts," thought Enoch had brought to Rome a different manuscript of the *Germania*, the Suetonius, and the *Dialogus*—a view which has not found supporters, particularly since it is now clear that the Hersfeld *Agricola* disappeared early. Most scholars accept Pontano's account, though Koestermann, in his edition, pp. vii–viii, hesitates.

20. N. Rubinstein, "An Unknown Letter by Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini on Discoveries of Classical Texts," *IMU* 1 (1958): 383–400.

21. He seems, however, not to be copying Niccoli's commentary, but Poggio's own notes (or the monk's inventory itself); for he shares many readings with Panormita (*ibid.*, pp. 389–90).

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 398–99.

23. Perhaps not by Jacopo, but by a copier: our text is not Jacopo's original.

24. The *item in eodem codice*, like the present tense of *continentur*, is mere mechanical copying of his source, not independent testimony.

25. Rubinstein, "Letter," p. 386, n. 2. The Toletanus had in fact already been copied by this time (see n. 41).

26. At the end he writes: "Nam post patris mortem omnia hec reperta sunt: Donatus super eneidis Frontinus de aqueductibus: et aliud opus suum. . . . Cornelius tacitus. Suetonius. . . ." from which we might as easily draw the opposite inference, that both Tacitean works had been

script, once it became available, no longer contained the *Agricola*; it may, in fact, have been dismembered completely.<sup>27</sup> There is no extant manuscript in which the *Agricola* is joined to any of the Hersfeldensis material except for Vat. Lat. 4498; but this is a miscellaneous collection including many different works, among which are these four, in a different order and not consecutive. It is surely not a copy of the entire Hersfeldensis, nor have we any such copy.

Now Decembrio had surely seen the entire manuscript in 1455—but other humanists do not seem to have had access to it immediately. Pontano, in a note to the manuscript mentioned above,<sup>28</sup> says that Bartolomeo Fazio's *mors immatura* prevented him from seeing the Suetonius: Fazio died in November 1457. When Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini published his own *Germania* in 1458, he seems to have had some idea of the contents of Tacitus' work, but no firsthand knowledge.<sup>29</sup> If it was indeed Aeneas Sylvius (who became Pope Pius II that August) who made the Hersfeld works available,<sup>30</sup> he will hardly have done so until he saw them himself. But for this period, at least, there is nothing to suggest that he, or anyone else, managed to get his hand on the Hersfeld *Agricola*.

When the *editio princeps* of Tacitus appeared in 1472, it did not include the *Agricola*. But a copy did reach Italy; it was copied by 1474 at the latest, and before the end of the century it had been printed. If the preceding discussion were all we knew of *Agricola* manuscripts, we should surely presume that the Hersfeld *Agricola* had turned up at last, to form the basis for the printed text. To indicate why that cannot be so, we must consider another found and lost manuscript, the Aesinas.

The Aesinas is a parchment manuscript of seventy-six folia containing "Dictys'" *Bellum Troianum* (fifty-one folia, of which the first one and a half are blank), the *Agricola* (fourteen folia), and the *Germania* (ten folia). Most of the *Bellum Troianum*, and one gathering (eight folia) of the *Agricola*, are in a Carolingian minuscule of the ninth or tenth century;<sup>31</sup> a few folia at the beginning and end of the first two works are in a fifteenth-century hand, as is all of the *Germania*. Annibaldi attributed this hand to Stefano Guarnieri, the founder of the library which later passed by marriage to the counts Balleani, in whose possession it was when it was discovered. A few leaves which are now blank or written over in Guarnieri's hand had on them Carolingian writing which has been erased: among these, the outer folia of the last quaternion were originally a *unio* constituting the last two

found. Jacopo is at any rate wrong about Frontinus, which had been found by his own father in 1429, not to mention the Hersfeldensis, which Decembrio had seen before Poggio's death.

27. As argued by G. Brugnoli, "La vicenda del codice hersfeldense," *RCCM* 3 (1961): 68–90.

28. Leidensis XVIII Perizonianus Q. 2, f. 47v. Cf. p. 31.

29. See J. Perret, *Recherches sur le texte de la "Germanie"* (Paris, 1950), pp. 146–51.

30. See R. Wuensch, "Zur Textgeschichte der Germania," *Hermes* 32 (1897): 56; Ullman, "Pontano's Handwriting," p. 323; Brugnoli, "Vicenda," p. 87. As the CP referee points out, Jacopo's words ("Pii Pontificis opera in Italiam venit. Suetonius hic . . .") may as easily mean that Aeneas Sylvius had a hand in arranging Enoch's trip.

31. This was Annibaldi's judgment. Wissowa in his edition considered it to be "certainly" tenth-century; while Lehmann, "Beurteilung," p. 12, says that this date "für den Kenner kann . . . gar nicht zur Debatte gestellt werden, sondern nur die Zeit von etwa 830–850."

folia of the *Agricola*. One of these two folia—the last, which has not been written over—was read entirely by Annibaldi.

Since the codex as we have it is a mixture of medieval and Renaissance hands, it obviously was not bound in its current binding until Guarneri's time; presumably he bound it himself, having first recopied missing or illegible parts. Since the repaired parts include the juncture of the *Bellum Troianum* and the *Agricola*, it is not immediately clear whether these two works had been bound together when Guarneri obtained them. The fact that the *Agricola* ended with a *unio* suggests strongly that it was written to be the last item in the codex; but it surely does not prove that more items had not been added before Guarneri's time, as he himself added the *Germania*.<sup>32</sup> It cannot, therefore, be used as evidence for the state of the manuscript before Guarneri bound it.

The *Agricola* quaternion, considered by itself, fits Decembrio's description almost perfectly. It is *in columnellis*; and, if continued in the same format (as it was by Guarneri), it would make an *opus foliorum decem et quattuor*.<sup>33</sup> This, really, is all the information Decembrio gives us, except for the *incipit* and *explicit*. The *incipit* of the ninth-century manuscript is lost. As for the *explicit*, it is indeed visible, though erased, on folio 76v of the Aesinas; and though it differs in two words from Decembrio's copy (Decembrio wrote *multos veluti ingloriosos* where the Aesinas reads *multos veterum velud ingloriosos*), these are easy copyists' inaccuracies which hardly indicate that Decembrio had a different manuscript in front of him.<sup>34</sup> Decembrio, not being a modern paleographer, did not leave an account that would tell us in what sort of script his manuscript was written; but the Aesinas, which appears to have been written in the vicinity of Fulda,<sup>35</sup> would be a likely enough candidate for a manuscript found at nearby Hersfeld six hundred years later.

The sum of these facts, as Annibaldi recognized but his successors did not, is no more than a presumptive indication that the Aesinas is Decembrio's manuscript. The number of pages in so short a treatise would probably be nearly the same in any manuscript of roughly the same style; and the disposition into columns, while never the rule, was common throughout the Middle Ages. The approximate agreement of the *explicit*s, in the absence of any other known manuscript tradition, proves nothing positive; that the

32. On the question of whether Guarneri had before him a medieval *Germania*, see Koestermann's edition, pp. xxi–xxii, and more recently M. Winterbottom, "The Manuscript Tradition of Tacitus' *Germania*," *CP* 70 (1975): 4.

33. Robinson, "*Germania*," p. 17, also observed that the Hersfeldensis, if it began on page 1 and was bound in quaternions, will have begun a new gathering, as the Aesinas does, on the fifth folium of the *Agricola*.

34. Mendell, "Manuscripts," p. 138 and Tacitus, p. 285, argued that Decembrio's reading was the better one and therefore, perhaps, independent; but the omission of *veterum* before *veluti*, even if it should be correct, hardly demonstrates an independent source.

35. Robinson, "*Germania*," pp. 26–30, and Lehmann, "Beurteilung," pp. 12–13. It should be noted that both consider the script more French than German, and they choose Fulda chiefly because of the influence of Lupus of Ferrières there, and because of the assumption that the Aesinas is the manuscript that was in Hersfeld in the fifteenth century.

script may come from Fulda<sup>36</sup> is also only suggestive, since we do not know, after all, in what script the Hersfeldensis was written.

Nevertheless, if nothing stood in the way, we should surely accept these correlations as an adequate proof—the more so as we know of no manuscript of the *Agricola* except the Hersfeldensis that survived the Middle Ages. It has become clear in recent decades that the *Agricola* was not, as had been believed, completely unknown from Cassiodorus to Poggio; it was imitated by Adam of Bremen in the eleventh century<sup>37</sup> and by Peter the Deacon at Monte Cassino in the twelfth.<sup>38</sup> But there is nothing to indicate that either of their manuscripts, or any manuscript except the Hersfeldensis, reached the humanists of the fifteenth century.

We should like, then, to identify the Aesinas with the Hersfeldensis, if nothing stood in the way. There is, in fact, only one matter that stands in the way, but it is rather a bulky one: the fifty-one folia of Dictys' *Bellum Troianum* which make up two-thirds of the Aesinas manuscript and which cannot have been in the Hersfeldensis. For, if there is one thing that the numerous testimonia about the latter establish with certainty, it is the contents and disposition of the codex. Had we only one such testimony, we might suggest that the Italians were not interested in the Dictys, which was well known; but the Frontinus had been found by 1431, and Niccoli cited it anyway. The Suetonius, too, had turned up by Decembrio's time, but he did not for that reason neglect to note that it existed in his manuscript. It is in the highest degree unlikely that both the uncultured monk—from whose catalog Panormita, Niccoli, and Jacopo derived their information—and Decembrio, who recorded even the number of blank pages in the *Dialogus*, independently reached the same decision to omit all mention of a work that, if it were there, would comprise fully half the codex. If we can believe anything at all about the codex Hersfeldensis, we must believe that it did not contain Dictys' *Bellum Troianum*; and scholars have, sometimes grudgingly, recognized this.<sup>39</sup>

It follows that the Aesinas *Agricola*, if it is in truth a relic of the Hersfeld *Agricola*, cannot have been bound with the Dictys at the beginning of the fifteenth century. But the contrapositive is: if it was bound with the Dictys at the beginning of the fifteenth century, it was *not* part of the Hersfeld manuscript, whatever its other points of similarity with Decembrio's account.

The matter cannot be judged from the present binding (see p. 34). As for the whereabouts of the Aesinas before the fifteenth century, we have no testimonia—unless, of course, it is the Hersfeldensis. We have no account of

36. "Typisch fuldisch," however, "ist der Aesinas nicht" (Lehmann, "Beurteilung," p. 13).

37. Mendell, *Tacitus*, pp. 284–85. Adam may be imitating Einhard, in which case Einhard knew the *Agricola*.

38. Herbert Bloch, "A Manuscript of Tacitus' *Agricola* in Monte Cassino about A.D. 1135," *CP* 36 (1941): 185–87.

39. Thus Robinson, "*Germania*," p. 20, with some hesitation; Mendell, *Tacitus*, pp. 280–83, with some vehemence.



how the ninth-century manuscript got into Guarnieri's hand,<sup>40</sup> nor of what manuscript he did get. Of our Renaissance manuscripts of the *Agricola*, all, apparently, derive from the Aesinas in either its present state or its pre-Guarnieri form, but none indicates any connection with either the Dictys or the Hersfeldensis.<sup>41</sup>

We must, then, judge the Aesinas entirely by its internal evidence. If this evidence indicates that the Dictys and the *Agricola* were originally two independent manuscripts, we shall surely presume that they remained independent until they reached Guarnieri, who consolidated them; the *Agricola* will have been part of the Hersfeld manuscript, separated (as we saw) before it was published, and eventually rebound into the Aesinas. If, on the other hand, the evidence requires us to believe that they originally formed part of a single codex, we shall have no choice but to conclude that they continued to do so until they reached Guarnieri, and that he merely repaired the codex. It is surely too much to presume that two parts of a single codex, separated before it ever reached Italy and rebound in different bindings, happened independently to fall into the hands of the same provincial humanist six hundred years after they were written, and that he chanced to bind them again into the same book!

Most of the paleographical evidence has already been published,<sup>42</sup> and it suggests strongly that the two parts belonged originally together. The size of the page (220 × 273 mm.), the style of writing, the disposition into columns, the size of the columns (60 × 203 mm.), the number of lines per page, the space between the columns (17 mm.), the method of ruling (hard point, with prickings at the outer margin) are all identical.<sup>43</sup> The two parts were not, apparently, written by the same hand; but, since there are a number of different hands within the Dictys itself,<sup>44</sup> the appearance of yet another hand (perhaps even two additional hands<sup>45</sup>) is not particularly notable. R. P. Robinson, indeed, believed that the marginal notes in the *Agricola* were written by the same scribe who wrote folia 27v, 28, and 29r of the Dictys,<sup>46</sup> though P. Lehmann disagreed;<sup>47</sup> Robinson also "suspected" that the hand that wrote the text of the *Agricola* appears on folium 29v of the Dictys,<sup>48</sup> a matter on which Lehmann did not express an opinion.

On the face of it, the identity between the two parts of the Aesinas is much stronger than the identity between the Aesinas *Agricola* and the Hersfeld *Agricola*. About the latter we can say only three things: that it was divided into columns (the Dictys is as well); that it ran fourteen folia (which

40. We first hear of Guarnieri as being interested in manuscripts in 1462 (Annibaldi, *L' "Agricola,"* p. 10, n. 1) and the repair was probably done sometime between this date and 1474 (1471?), when the Toletanus (see n. 41) was copied from Guarnieri's codex.

41. Vat. Lat. 3429 and 4498, and Cod. Toletanus 49, 2 in the capítular library of Toledo. For a description, see E. de Saint Denis (ed.), *Tacite: "Vie d'Agricola"* (Paris, 1967), pp. xxiii-xxvi. On Vat. Lat. 4498, see p. 33.

42. By Annibaldi, Robinson, and Lehmann, qq. v.

43. Lehmann, "Beurteilung," p. 11, who saw the manuscript, adds that both use the same type of parchment.

44. Robinson, "Germania," pp. 20-22.

45. Ibid., pp. 23-24.

46. Ibid., p. 21.

47. Lehmann, "Beurteilung," p. 11.

48. Robinson, "Germania," pp. 22-24.

is equivalent to saying that the number of words per page is approximately the same in the Hersfeld *Agricola*, the Aesinas *Agricola*—and the Dictys); and that it was, at the beginning of the Renaissance, in the general area of Germany in which the Aesinas seems to have been written. Of the Dictys and the Aesinas *Agricola* we can with certainty say that they were, at the least, produced in the same scriptorium at the same time.<sup>49</sup> Since, as we argued earlier (p. 35), the two possibilities are mutually exclusive—the Aesinas *Agricola* cannot be identical with the Hersfeld *Agricola* and also have been originally bound together with the Dictys—the weight of probability would seem to be in favor of the Dictys as an original part of the Aesinas, and therefore against the likelihood that the Aesinas *Agricola* is a remnant of the Hersfeldensis. C. W. Mendell<sup>50</sup> had already come to that conclusion; and B. L. Ullman, though he expressed himself more cautiously, did consider the possibility.<sup>51</sup>

In point of fact, though, the connection between the Aesinas *Agricola* and the Dictys is closer than has been noticed hitherto. The manuscript, as was mentioned, appears to be lost; and a complete facsimile edition (that is, one including the Dictys) has never been published. But a set of photographs was made in Rome in the early years of World War II by the Istituto di Patologia del Libro. At least two complete sets of these copies are still in existence: one was used, and partially published, by Rudolf Till;<sup>52</sup> and later Werner Eisenhut used it in preparing his Teubner edition of Dictys.<sup>53</sup> The other was obtained by Harvard University from the American Embassy in Rome, through the agency of Professor (now emeritus) Mason Hammond, in 1947. I was privileged some years ago to examine the Harvard photographs, and I observed, in addition to the information already published elsewhere and summarized here, a pattern which could hardly be coincidental.

The manuscript, as has been noted, was pricked in the margin at regular intervals and ruled from margin to margin<sup>54</sup> with a hard point—a normal practice designed to keep the lines straight. The prickings are reasonably plain in at least one folium of each quaternion; and, as the reader can see for himself by comparing the figures on pages 38–40,<sup>55</sup> the prickings all

49. On this everyone is agreed: cf. Annibaldi, *L' "Agricola,"* p. 74; Robinson, "*Germania*," p. 19; and Lehmann, "Beurteilung," p. 11. In fact Lehmann ("auf einem mehr als 35 jährigen paläographischen Studium von vielen Codices der verschiedensten Länder, Stätten und Zeiten in Original und in Reproduktionen fussend," as he boasted) could apparently find no other manuscript so close to the Aesinas *Agricola* as the Aesinas Dictys.

50. Mendell, "Manuscripts," pp. 133–45, and *Tacitus*, pp. 282–85.

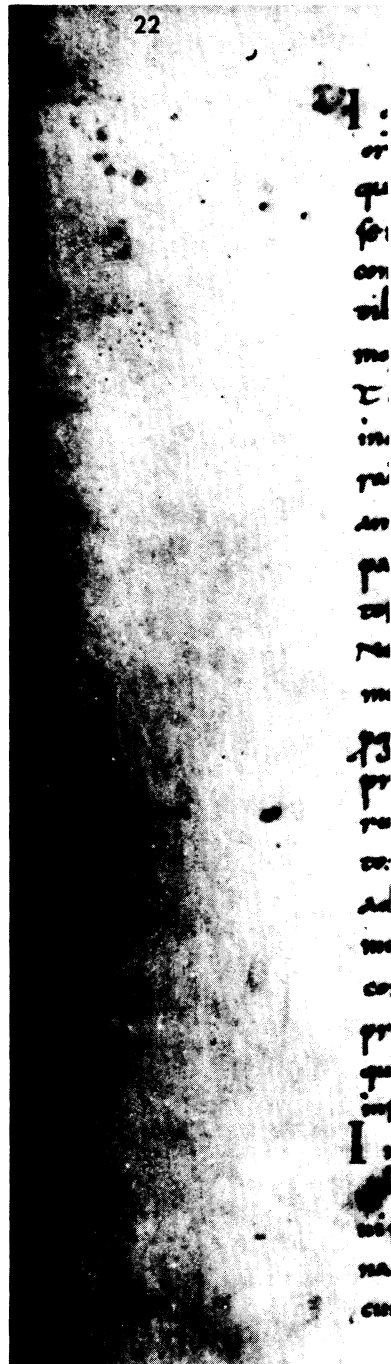
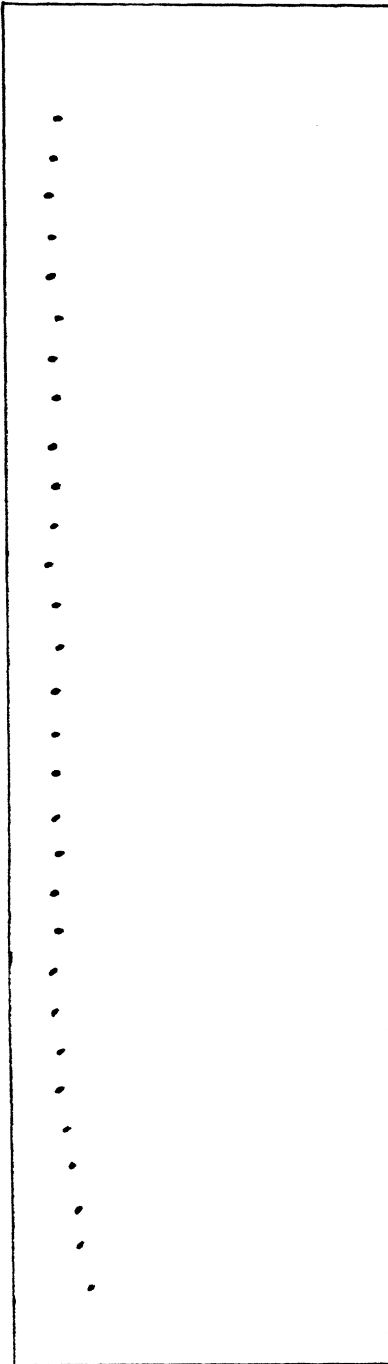
51. "Robinson believed that one of the Dictys scribes entered marginal notes in the *Agricola*. Lehmann in denying this made it possible to assume that the Dictys was combined with the *Agricola* after the latter was torn away from its fellows in the Hersfeld book. But if the two were together from the beginning the Iesi manuscript is hardly likely to have been the Hersfeldensis" (Ullman, "Pontano's Handwriting," p. 324).

52. In his 1943 edition (cf. n. 2). A later edition omitted the photographs—and the dedication to Heinrich Himmler.

53. *Dictyis Cretensis "Ephemeridos belli Troiani libri,"* ed. W. Eisenhut (Leipzig, 1958), p. ix.

54. That is, in our case, from outer margin to outer margin of each *bifolium*. On the practice in general, see L. W. Jones, "Pricking Manuscripts," *Speculum* 21 (1946): 389–403.

55. The folia whose margins are shown are 22 and 41 (both from the Dictys), 62 (*Agricola*), 69 (*Agricola* palimpsest), and 76 (*Agricola* erased). The prickings are clearer on some folia than on



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uesti  
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show the same irregular pattern. Starting from the top, they approach the edge of the page, coming closest somewhat more than halfway down; then they turn markedly inward toward the bottom. Details, too, correspond: for example, if we draw a line through the top pricking and the one immediately below it, we will find, continuing our line downward, that it will always fall to the right of the third pricking. Examples can be multiplied according to the reader's ingenuity.

Normally, books were pricked one gathering at a time; a few cases are known of the same pattern being repeated throughout an entire book.<sup>56</sup> No case, as far as I have heard or read, is known of the same pattern being repeated in two different books. In view of the other paleographical evidence, all of which shows the closest connection between the *Dictys* and the *Aesinas Agricola*, there is surely no temptation to believe that we have before us the first such case. The book, apparently, was pricked and ruled in one sitting: one gathering at a time, to be sure, and with at least two different awls—but with the same jagged measuring rod<sup>57</sup> from start to finish.

It is a coincidence that the *Aesinas Agricola* has fourteen folia and is divided into columns, as was the *Hersfeld Agricola*; and, as Ullman observed, "Scholars do not like to resort to coincidence as an explanation. Usually there is a relationship between coincident facts."<sup>58</sup> But this coincidence is naturalness itself compared to the chance that would be required for a single book, which had been written six hundred years earlier and five hundred miles away, and which had been torn apart and rebound with other material, to arrive in two halves in Italy at the same time, for the two halves to find their way into the hands of the same collector, and for them to be bound together, purely by accident, into the same codex once again. If our numerous testimonies about the contents of the *Hersfeldensis* mean anything at all, there is no third possibility, and between the two theories there is little room for doubt.

This conclusion means that we are ignorant of three things we thought we knew: the original composition of the *Aesinas*, its medieval home, and the fate of the *Hersfeldensis*. For the first, it is worth pointing out that, although we have been forced to the conclusion that the *Aesinas Dictys* and *Agricola* were originally bound together, it does not necessarily follow that there was nothing else in the book. In fact, the opposite seems nearly certain; for both the *Dictys* and the *Agricola* were bound (as far as we can tell) in quaternions, but there is not sufficient material between the last

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others, but for each gathering there is at least one folium that allows us to ascertain the pattern, which is the same wherever the prickings are visible. Space prevents me from offering more examples than the five here given.

My thanks to Ms. Donna Moseman of Widener Library's Photographic Service for her help in obtaining the photographs, and to the Classics Department of Harvard University for permission to publish them.

56. Jones, "Pricking Manuscripts," pp. 395–96. Jones's explanation for the repetition of the irregularity—a spiked double frame—is not the only one that can be given, nor is it possible for the *Aesinas*, where two different points have been used, one flat (as at 41 and 62) and one round (as at 22); see the figures.

57. Or, perhaps, the jagged edge of an old ruled parchment.

58. Ullman, "Pontano's Handwriting," p. 318.

Carolingian page of the Dictys and the first such page of the *Agricola* to fill a quaternion (Guarnieri's binding has only five folia between these two places). At least one other work probably stood between the Dictys and the *Agricola*; if it was one that interested its readers more than the other two items, it may well have fallen out in part or entirely, leaving the other two works mutilated as Annibaldi found them. This work, if it was there, might conceivably have been the *Germania*, if it was written slightly broader than Guarnieri's; for eleven folia, with the other five, would give us an even two quaternions. But it might just as well have been any other work, and speculation on the matter is probably vain.

Nor is there much basis on which to decide where the Aesinas was until it reached Guarnieri's hands. Perhaps in the place where it had been written, which may have been Fulda; but perhaps not. Mendell thought the Aesinas was the manuscript that Peter the Deacon saw at Monte Cassino; this hypothesis is as possible as anything else, but Mendell's attempt to prove the point was a failure.<sup>59</sup> We should do better, in the current state of our knowledge, to admit that we do not know.

As for the Hersfeld *Agricola*, so long sought after, brought to Italy after three decades only to be removed from the codex and lost—we have no evidence at all that it was ever found. All our manuscripts of the *Agricola* descend from the Aesinas, not the Hersfeldensis; except for the lucky Decembrio, and perhaps Enoch of Ascoli, we know of no Italian who ever saw it. It may have been destroyed in the years that have passed since that time; or it may be sitting unnoticed on the shelf of an Italian library, waiting for its Annibaldi.

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59. He claimed ("Manuscripts," pp. 139–40, and *Tacitus*, pp. 283–85) that the words *Historiam Cornelii cum Omero* in a Cassinese booklist referred to the Aesinas, but (a) the order of the items in the entry is the reverse of their order in the Aesinas; (b) the *Agricola* is not a *historia*, but a *vita*, and calls itself such; (c) this is a list of books copied at Monte Cassino under the abbot Desiderius (1058–67), which the Aesinas certainly was not. E. A. Lowe, "The Unique Manuscript of Tacitus' *Histories*," *Casinensia* (Monte Cassino, 1929), pp. 260–61 = *Palaeographical Papers*, ed. Ludwig Bieler (Oxford, 1972), 1:291–92, was presumably right in understanding that the reference was to Cornelius Nepos' translation of Dares.