

Some Notable Manuscripts Misattributed or Imaginary

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I

Maximus Planudes and a Famous Codex of Plutarch

IT IS WELL KNOWN that Maximus Planudes (1255–1305) contributed more than any other Byzantine scholar to the preservation of Plutarch's works. His activity is attested by three magnificent and bulky manuscripts containing the writings of the author he so much admired: *Ambrosianus* 859=C 126 *inf.*, *Paris.gr.* 1671 and 1672. The first of these can be dated to *ca* 1294/5,¹ the second to 1296, and the third is usually said to have been written under Planudes' direction a little after 1302.²

This last manuscript, the largest of all and the only complete copy of Plutarch surviving, is my concern here. It is an enormous volume of 945 parchment folios, each measuring 400×275 mm. One would gladly believe this handsome book to be the last and greatest monument of Planudes' devotion to his favourite author. In that case it would belong to the years 1302–05, a view adopted by the great majority of the experts who have discussed it.³ Occasionally one finds the more guarded statement that the book cannot be proved to date from Planudes' own lifetime.⁴

¹ A. Turyn, *Dated Greek Manuscripts of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries in the Libraries of Italy* (Urbana-London 1972) 81–87 and plates 59–68.

² Cf. e.g. D. A. Russell, *Plutarch* (London 1973) 147.

³ M. Treu, *Zur Geschichte der Überlieferung von Plutarchs Moralia* (Programm Waldenburg 1877) iii ff; P. Maas, *BZ* 16 (1907) 676–77 (reviewing Mehwaldt in *SBBerl* 1906.824–34); C. Wendel, *RE* 20 (1950) s.v. PLANUDES, cols. 2223–26; K. Ziegler, *RE* 21 (1951) s.v. PLUTARCHOS, cols. 951–53; P. A. Hansen, *The Manuscript Tradition of Plutarch's De malignitate Herodoti* (Copenhagen 1969) [*Cahiers de l'institut du moyen âge grec et latin* 2]. The reason for the date is that the ms. contains more of Plutarch than Planudes was able to list at the end of his copy of the Greek Anthology (*Marcianus gr.* 481). The date of the latter was stated by Treu as 1302, and is now more usually given as 1301, but the correct interpretation of the colophon is that it was written in 1299; see my observations in A. Cameron, *Porphyrius the Charioteer* (Oxford 1973) 96 n.1, and A. Turyn, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 91–92 and plate 231(c).

⁴ M. Pohlenz, ed. *Moralia*, I (BT, Leipzig 1926) xi.

On investigation of the book itself one finds that the style of script employed in the main part (folios 2–875) belongs at the very earliest to the middle of the fourteenth century and might well be assigned to the fifteenth. There is not the slightest possibility that Planudes had anything to do with it. In this part of the book there are probably two hands, not three as Treu claimed, and they are very alike. Two pages have been reproduced by Hansen,⁵ and the hand shown has a superficial resemblance to the script associated with the Hodegoi monastery in Constantinople in the second half of the fourteenth century. But the scribe of the Plutarch writes a considerably more elegant hand. There seems also to be some affinity between this hand and that of a scribe named Chariton, whose script might be regarded as a forerunner of, or model for, the style practised in the Hodegoi scriptorium. Chariton's career is known to have extended from 1319 to 1346.⁶ His hand again appears rather large and clumsy in comparison with the Plutarch. Another hand which has been compared with that of the Plutarch is seen in Ms. *Naples* III C.19, dated 1335, but once again this is no more than an approximation.⁷

The next section (folios 876–936), containing the *Symposiaca*, is written in a different type of hand which I should be inclined to date in the second half of the fourteenth century.

The third section (folios 937–45) consists of excerpts from Appian, and was written in what looks like a fifteenth century hand; the same hand wrote a list of contents for the whole volume on folio 1.

Planudes therefore loses the distinction of having commissioned the only complete Plutarch surviving. It belongs instead to one or more unknown scholars who lived at least half a century later. The scribes of the second and third sections of the book are the most likely candidates for the honour, and it may one day be possible to identify them from their hands.

One might be tempted by the hypothesis that Planudes instructed his pupils to produce a complete Plutarch which will have been the ancestor of the Paris codex. But this will not do, since the Paris codex

⁵ *Loc.cit.*(*supra* n.3).

⁶ On Chariton and the Hodegoi scriptorium in general see L. Politis, *BZ* 51 (1958) 261–65 with pl.13 illustrating Ms. *Vatopedi* 299, dated 1332. See also the plate from Ms. *Paris.gr.* 311, dated 1336, in H. Omont, *Facsimilés des manuscrits grecs datés de la Bibliothèque Nationale du IX^e au XIV^e siècle* (Paris 1890–91) 16 and pl.82.

⁷ See Turyn, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 185.

does not exhibit the text in its latest state after Planudes' editorial work. Its exemplar therefore was not Planudes' final text and would not have been chosen by him for his complete edition, unless by some unlucky chance Planudes was deprived of his final edition and had to make do with an earlier one.

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II

Some Lost Greek Authors

MYTHS DIE HARD everywhere, and not least in the academic world. One such myth is that certain classical authors now lost survived until the Renaissance and were to be found in the library of King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary. A recent publication,¹ which surveys the history of that library and draws up a catalogue of the titles as far as they can be inferred from the evidence, accepts at their face value certain reports which ought to be taken with more than a grain of salt.

Although the purpose of this note is to create or strengthen scepticism, I will begin by admitting that the Corvinian library evidently contained some rare items. Its text of the church history of Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos is the unique copy of that work (Ms. *Vienna, hist.gr.* 8). It owned one of the few codices containing some part of the work of the Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (Ms. *Leipzig University, Rep.* I.17). I do not see any reason to doubt its possession of a Corippus, now lost.² And I would go so far as to admit that it may have owned a set of fourteen homilies on *Genesis* by Severianus of Gabala,³ a considerably larger number than is now preserved.

But more surprising claims have been made and are still sometimes accepted. I begin with the most striking. A Florentine humanist called Naldo Naldi wrote a eulogy of Corvinus in four books of hexameters⁴ in which he said that the library could boast of copies of Sappho and Alcaeus. To anyone familiar with the history of Greek texts during the middle ages it can only seem extraordinary that such works could have survived, been acquired by a king of Hungary after the fall of Constantinople, and yet remained unpublished and uncopied in his collection up to the time of its destruction. Examination of Naldi's

¹ C. Csapodi, *The Corvinian Library: History and Stock* (Budapest 1973). I refer in subsequent notes to items in his catalogue.

² Item 205.

³ Item 595.

⁴ Edited by M. Bel, *Notitia Hungariae novae* III (Vienna 1737); pp.611–20 contain the passages we are concerned with.

poem shows that no one has read it with proper care. His second book describes the room in which the books were housed. At line 101 he begins to list some authors as follows:

*Ergo vides illum, tabulae qui primus inhaeret
qui loca prima tenet, veteres vocitare solebant
Hermen; sed qui Mercurius ter maximus idem
dictus ob ingenium.*

It is not particularly surprising that Hermes Trismegistus is first in the list, given the significance accorded to his apocryphal works by such leading figures of the Renaissance as Pico della Mirandola. Hermes is followed by Orpheus, a reference to another pseudonymous author popular in the Renaissance, and then in line 114 we read:

*Proximus in tabula, tantoque affectus honore
Musaeus cunctosque veterrimus ante poetas
incedens teneros Hero memoravit amores,*

and at 148, after a paragraph about Homer:

*Quis post hunc sequitur? quis vir tabulata per ampla
adiacet? aut pulchro quis dicitur ordine quintus
esse?*

He turns out to be Pindar. By verse 183 we reach Alcaeus:

*Nec nunc Alcaeus tanto fraudatus honore
dicitur; auratis namque in penetralibus ille
appendet tabulae, paries quam sustinet, altae,*

and he is accompanied by Sappho, who is addressed in verses 196–97 as follows:

*Nam tu consorti patriae coniuncta lyraeque
haesisti merito simul una sedilibus altis.*

The reader who has had the patience to follow me up to this point will not need to be told that Naldi's poem has nothing to do with books on shelves but is a description of extensive fresco paintings portraying famous literary figures. An example of such a fresco is Raphael's Parnassus in the Stanza della Segnatura in the Vatican.

Less exciting but equally implausible is the report that the library owned a copy of Hyperides. This statement is recorded without com-

ment in the standard history of classical scholarship.⁵ It is ultimately derived from the preface to an edition of Salvianus, *De vero iudicio et providentia Dei*, by J. A. Brassicanus, published in 1530.⁶

Brassicanus went to Buda in 1525 as a companion of an ambassador to the king of Pannonia. He was allowed to enter the library and assures us that he there saw a complete Hyperides with a very rich collection of scholia (*integrum Hyperidem cum locupletissimis scholiis*). Here too a knowledge of what happened to classical texts in the middle ages must make us deeply suspicious of the good faith or the accuracy of Brassicanus. The enthusiastic addition of two details to the author's name is what must arouse doubt. If *integrum* is to be taken as meaning 'complete' (I suppose 'undamaged' is also a possible rendering, unlikely though it seems in the context), we have to ask how many speeches Hyperides was credited with; the answer is 56 according to the *Suda* lexicon (*s.v.*). Though a single manuscript could contain a full corpus of this magnitude I am unable to believe that 56 speeches would have left no trace of their existence in Byzantium. But the wealth of scholia alleged could only have come into existence if Hyperides had been a school author, and I doubt if he had that status even in late antiquity.

While dealing with Brassicanus it may be as well to discuss by way of appendix other points from his preface (pp.20–21). It is he who mentions the copy of Severianus of Gabala alluded to above. While not ruling out of court the possibility that the report is true, I should equally not wish to exclude the idea that Brassicanus was misled by a false ascription or was deluded by wishful thinking about the contents of a manuscript which had no title. He also mentions scholia on Hesiod: *Procli, Io. Philoponi cognomento Grammatici, ac Manuelis Moschopouli commentarios in Hesiodum*. I suspect that there is a slip of the pen or of the memory here; if John Pediasimus is substituted for John Philoponus the book in question may be supposed to have contained the same series of commentaries on Hesiod as Ms. *Marc.gr.* 464.

Finally, Brassicanus tells us elsewhere⁷ that he saw in Buda a work by Simplicius in four books about the Pythagoreans. It is to be hoped that Professor Dörrie⁸ will edit this, along with a commentary on the

⁵ Sir J. E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship II* (Cambridge 1908) 275.

⁶ I quote from the Paris reprint of 1573.

⁷ A note in Ms. *British Museum Add.* 21,165.

⁸ *Der kleine Pauly V* (1974) 205 *s.v.* SIMPLIKIOS.

Techne of Hermogenes, from the manuscripts. In the meantime we will note that K. Praechter⁹ was content to be sceptical, referring to Fabricius-Harles, *Bibliotheca Graeca* 9.567, where the existence of the work is doubted.

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⁹ RE 3A (1927) s.v. SIMPLICIUS 10.