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Publishing in Laurentian Florence

Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini's edition of Poggio's *Historiae Florentini populi*

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(Jyväskylä)

1. Introduction

Poggio Bracciolini's eldest son, Jacopo (1442–1478), was not only an author in Latin and the vernacular but also an accomplished scribe. His probably most important project was the Latin edition (1472) and vernacular translation (1476) of his father's last, incomplete work *Historiae Florentini populi*, an alternative history of Florence. This article will examine the publication in manuscript and print of the Latin and Italian texts.

Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459),¹ apostolic secretary from 1403 until 1418 and again from 1423 until 1453, is known not only for his role in developing the humanist book script, *antiqua*, from the late 1390s onwards² and the sensational, well-publicised manuscript discoveries during the council of Constance between 1414 and 1418, but also for his extensive literary output comprising letters, moral dialogues such as *De avaritia* (1429)³ and works in dialogue form pertaining to contemporary history, such as *De varietate fortunae* (1447-1448),⁴ as well as a collection of novellas, *Facetiae* (1452).⁵ Furthermore, he made some translations from Greek (Diodorus Siculus as well as Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*). From early on a staunch Medicean, his career seemed to be crowned with the appointment to the chancellorship of the Republic of Florence in 1453 at the age of 73. In 1456, however, the chancery was in such a chaos that Poggio was siderailed to his great embitterment towards the Medici regime.⁶

¹ Part of the research for this article was carried out thanks to the Academy of Finland and University of Jyväskylä project Lamemoli no. 307635 (2017-2021). I have the pleasure of thanking David Speranzi (Florence), Ada Labriola (Florence), Iolanda Ventura (Bologna) and Susanna Niiranen (Jyväskylä/Lamemoli) for kind help in providing access to indispensable materials manuscript and printed. – The classic biography is E. WALSER, *Poggius Florentinus: Leben und Werke*, Leipzig, 1914.

² See now T. DE ROBERTIS, "Humanistic Script: Origins", in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin Palaeography*, ed. by F.T. COULSON, R.G. BABCOCK, Oxford, 2020, pp. 511-522.

³ See P. Bracciolini, *Dialogus contra avaritiam*, ed. by G. GERMANO, Livorno, 1994.

⁴ See P. Bracciolini, *De varietate fortunae, edizione critica con introduzione e commento*, ed. by O. MERISALO, Helsinki, 1993 (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae, B 265).

⁵ See e.g. P. Bracciolini, *Facéties: Confabulationes*, ed. and transl. by S. PITTALUGA, É. WOLFF, Paris, 2005.

⁶ For Poggio and the Medici, see O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, p. 25, with bibliography, n.1.

Poggio's extensive correspondence⁷ indicates that he was working on a lengthy text in the last years of his life. In 1458 he wrote to his friend Domenico Capranica:

But while many things may be listed as having delayed my writing, one thing has been left unsaid. It has rather long kept me particularly busy, as, the end approaching, I willingly and industriously set out to finish the work that I had begun and for which, as it happens with weaving a web, I had only put the threads in place. It is still lacking a well-defined structure, but I hope to complete it soon. Of course, we are told to revise our text several times before publication in order not to expose ourselves to slanderers. This reason has kept me from attending to other business.⁸

The only extensive text that seems to come into question here is Poggio's history of Florence, *Historiae Florentini populi*, which was published posthumously by his son Jacopo Bracciolini. The official, state-sponsored history of the city from Antiquity to the fifteenth century, also entitled *Historiae Florentini populi*, had been written by Poggio's friend Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444) between 1415 and 1442.⁹ As indicated by the title *Historiae*, Poggio's work, while shortly touching upon Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, concentrates on the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, from the wars against Archbishop Giovanni Visconti of Milan (c. 1290-1354) to the peace of Lodi (1454). It is not a straightforward continuation of Bruni's work but rather an alternative history of Florence.¹⁰

2. Jacopo di Poggio: life and works

The short life of Poggio's eldest son, Jacopo di Poggio, was heavily marked by his Republican convictions, a love-hate relationship with the Medici regime and activity to promote his father's literary legacy. Exiled in 1466 for anti-Medicean activities, he was allowed to return to Florence on paying a fine of 2000 florins. In the late 1460s and early 1470s he was definitely

⁷ See P. Bracciolini, *Lettere* 1-3, ed. by H. HARTH, Firenze, 1984-1987.

⁸ My translation. The original Latin text: "Sed cum multa recenseantur, a quibus proficisci potuerit scribendi tarditas, una omissa res est, que precipua me occupatum tenuit diutius in scribendo, ut cum finis iam adesset, cupidus ac studiosus incubui ad absolvendum inceptum opus, quod, tanquam in tela accidit, tantummodo sum orsus. Textura adhuc caret; sed ea brevi, ut spero, perficietur. Sepius enim repetere iubemur que scribimus antequam edantur, ne qua detur detractoribus obloquendi occasio. Hec causa extitit que me ab reliquis distraheret curis", Letter to Domenico Capranica, *Ep.* 9.45.7-19, P. Bracciolini, *Lettere* 2, ed. by H. Harth, Firenze, 1984. For an analysis of this passage, see O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini: Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, p. 26.

⁹ See L. Bruni, *History of the Florentine people* 1-3, ed. and transl. by J. HANKINS, Cambridge, Mass., London, 2001-2007 (The I Tatti Renaissance Library, 3).

¹⁰ For Poggio's friendship with and somewhat complex attitude to Bruni, see A. FIELD, *The Intellectual Struggle for Florence: Humanists and the Beginnings of the Medici Regime, 1420-1440*, Oxford, 2017, p. 293.

mixing with the highest echelons of Florentine society.¹¹ By 1477, however, a progressive estrangement from the Medici, no doubt due to his political views, led him to approach Lorenzo's political enemies. In that year, he entered the service of cardinal Raffaele Riario (1461-1521), great-nephew of Pope Sixtus IV. One of the leaders of the Pazzi conspiracy against Lorenzo and his brother Giuliano on 26 April 1478, Jacopo was among the first to be hanged at the Bargello.¹²

In addition to his scribal activities, Jacopo wrote some original texts in Latin, such as the dialogue *Contra detractores* dedicated to Lorenzo probably at the end of the 1460s, and a life, of which only the *volgarizzamento* by Battista Fortini has been preserved, of the *condottiero* Pippo Spano, a friend of Poggio's.¹³ Jacopo's edition of Poggio's *Historiae Florentini populi*¹⁴ was the most important of his Latin-language works (cf. below p. 00). Imitating Petrarch and Brunetti, who had translated novellas from Boccaccio's *Decameron* into Latin, Jacopo also made a Latin version of the novella of Quintus Fulvius and Gisippus (*Decameron* 10.8.). On the other hand, Jacopo also specialised in translations from Latin to Tuscan. Texts included lives of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* as well as Poggio's Latin translation of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* dedicated to Ferdinand I of Aragon, King of Naples, a connection inherited from Poggio and again no friend to the Medici. An even more important project was the *volgarizzamento* of his own edition of Poggio's history of Florence (see below pp. 00-00). In

¹¹ A. DE LA MARE, "New Research on Humanistic Scribes in Florence", in *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento 1449-1525, Un primo censimento*, 1, ed. by A. GARZELLI, Firenze, 1985, p. 448 (Inventari e cataloghi toscani, 18), identified him as Lorenzo's Secretary A, active between 1469 and 1471. Another possible identification of Secretary A is, however, with ser Luigi di Andrea Lotti of Barberino, Lorenzo's first chancellor, see V. Arrighi, "3.35 Le origini della cancelleria medicea: Luigi Lotti", *Consorterie politiche e mutamenti istituzionali in età laurenziana. Catalogo della mostra*, ed. by M.A. MORELLI TIMPANARO, R. MANNO TOLU, P. VITI, Firenze, 1992, pp. 98-100. I have the pleasure of thanking David Speranzi of the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence for providing copies of this article; also see D. SPERANZI, "Palatino Baldovinetti 62", in *I manoscritti datati della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, III. Fondi Banco Rari, Landau Finaly, Landau Muzzioli, Nuove Accessioni, Palatino Capponi, Palatino Panciatichiano, Tordi*, ed. by S. PELLE, A. M. RUSSO, D. SPERANZI, S. ZAMPONI, Firenze, 2011, p. 100 (Manoscritti datati d'Italia, 21).

¹² For Jacopo's biography, see O. MERISALO, "Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini, traducteur des *Historiae Florentini populi* du Pogge", in *Passages : déplacements des hommes, circulation des textes et identités dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. by J. DUCOS, P. HENRIET, Toulouse, 2013, pp. 57-64, and O. MERISALO, "Il concetto di *libertas* individuale da Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini", *Studi umanistici piceni*, 33 (2013), pp. 131-36, with bibliography.

¹³ See O. MERISALO, "Il concetto di *libertas* individuale da Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini", *Studi umanistici piceni*, 33 (2013), p. 131 and n. 5, with bibliography. The dedication copy of the dialogue is Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, 46.2 (ff. 71-92).

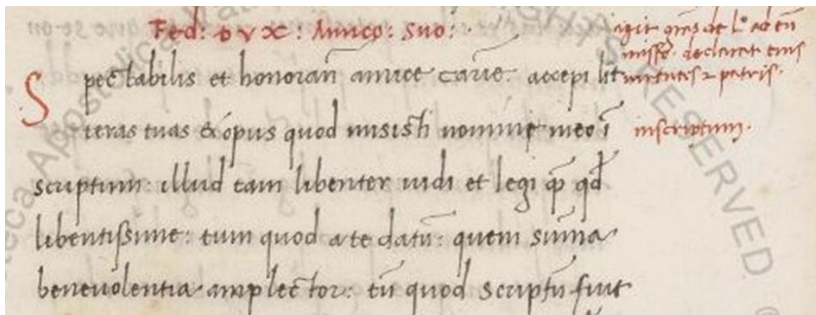
¹⁴ This is the title transmitted by both the dedication copy to Frederick, Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 491 and Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, lat. Z. 392 (=1684). The Urbino manuscript once gives the variant "Iacobi Poggii Florentini in historias Florentinas Poggii patris. prohemium" (f. 1r).

1469-71, Jacopo dedicated to Lorenzo a commentary on the chapter *Nel cor pien d'amarissima dolcezza* (TF Ia) of the first redaction of Petrarch's *Trionfo della fama*.¹⁵

3. Editing the *Historiae Florentini populi*

a. Jacopo's edition of Poggio's text

Judging by the preface to the dedicatee, Frederick of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino (1422-1482), another high-placed contact of inherited from Poggio, Jacopo had finished his edition of Poggio's unfinished history in eight books by 1472.¹⁶



Beginning of the copy of Frederick's letter of thanks in Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 1198, f. 81rv. © BAV

Furthermore, Jacopo gives important information on the genesis of Poggio's treatise and his own role in editing the text:

Poggio, getting on in years, retiring, as it were, from business, was given leave by the Pope to return from Rome to his native country. In order to enhance the memory of such an eminent city he wrote the first draft of a history of Florence from the first war with John, Archbishop of Milan, until the peace made with Alfonso through the mediation of

¹⁵ O. MERISALO, "Il concetto di *libertas* individuale da Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini", *Studi umanistici piceni*, 33 (2013), p. 132, with bibliography. The commentary circulated in both manuscript (e.g. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ashburnham 965) and print: GW M34531 (Poggius, Jacobus: *Sopra il trionfo della fama di Francesco Petrarca*, ital. [Rom: Apud S. Marcum (Vitus Puecher), vor 15.X.1476), ISTC ip00851000, and GW M34528 (Poggius, Jacobus: *Sopra il trionfo della fama di Francesco Petrarca*. Florenz: Francesco Bonaccorsi für Alexandro di Francesco Varrochi, 24.I.1485), ISTC ip00852000.

¹⁶ In the preface, Frederick's successful siege of Volterra in 1472 is referred to: "And since this year, thanks to your valour, the Volterrans, a most ancient people of Etruria, who, trusting the difficult mountain ground and the very nature of the site, had rebelled against us, were subjected to our power", in Latin "Cumque hoc anno tua uirtute Volaterrani, antiquissima Etrurie ciuitas, montis asperitate et loci natura freti imperio nostro rebelles sub iugum uenerint", here quoted according to Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, lat. Z.392(=1684), f. 4. Frederick's letter of thanks has been preserved in Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 1198 ff. 81rv; Frederick refers to Jacopo as *amicus suus*; cf. also Jacopo's 1472 letter of presentation to Frederick added to his brother Battista's life of condottiero Niccolò Piccinini in Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 916, f. 58v mod.: "I am not establishing a new friendship [with you] but taking over my father's friendship – yours with Poggio was excellent". In Latin: "Non nouus venio in amicitiam. sed paternam resumo. quae tibi egregia cum Poggio fuit".

Pope Nicholas. He left this work incomplete at his death. My main occupation, as soon as my age would permit it, has been to preserve the memory of our state and the memory of many famous men. Thus, I have built up a text **out of one divided into eight books** and handed it over to posterity to read.¹⁷

Jacopo's contribution is even more important according to his own translation of the preface:

as soon as [my] age and many occupations would permit me, in order to preserve the memory of our city and the deeds of many excellent men in Italy, I have concentrated on making a continuous narrative of [the text], and **after having divided it into eight books** with the greatest care, publishing it and giving a copy of it to whomever would wish to be informed.¹⁸

While the Latin text is somewhat vague as to the origin of the division of the text into eight books, the vernacular text attributes it to Jacopo. Interestingly enough, the vernacular version also explicitly refers to a very concrete operation of publishing (*mandarla in luce*) and distributing the text to those wishing to understand the subject (*farne copia a ciascuno desideroso d'intendere*). Considering the existence of Bruni's *Historiae*, the official state-sponsored history of Florence, it is safe to assume that Poggio-Jacopo's treatise aims at presenting a fresh view on the latest period of the glorious and tormented history of the city-state. The public targeted will consist of not only Florentine readers but all those interested in expanding their knowledge of the subject.

That Jacopo carried out a thorough revision of Poggio's text, at least part of which might have remained at a very sketchy stage at the author's death, has been demonstrated elsewhere.¹⁹

¹⁷ Latin text: "Poggius enim ingrauescente etate tamquam emeritis stipendiis, cum Roma, ubi magna cum laude uixerat, uenia a Pontifice impetrata in patriam reuertisset, ut memorie tante urbis consuleret, inter priuata publicaue negocia commentaria rerum Florentinarum, a primo bello cum Iohanne Mediolanensi Archiepiscopo usque ad pacem cum Alfonso per Nicolaum pontificem factam, morte preuentus reliquit. Mihi uero, ut primum per etatem licuit, ne nostre rei publice plurimorumque clarorum uirorum memoria deperiret, nihil fuit potius quam omnia in octo digesta libros summa cum diligentia in unum corpus redigere ac legenda posteris tradere", Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, lat. Z.392 (=1684), f. 3v. For a detailed analysis of this passage, see O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini: Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, pp. 30-31.

¹⁸ "come prima et per l'eta et per molte occupationi m'e stato licito, achioche la memoria della cicta nostra et le opere di molti prestantissimi huomini per Ytalia non manchassi, a nessuna altra cosa o piu dato opera che a ridurla insieme, et diuisola con somma diligentia in octo libri, mandarla in luce et farne copia a ciascuno desideroso d'intendere", Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatino Baldovinetti 62, f. 2v.

¹⁹ For a detailed analysis, see O. MERISALO, "*Terranovam natale meum solum*. Remarks on the Textual History

Jacopo's edition has been preserved in four manuscripts, of which two, Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. Lat. 491 and Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, lat. Z. 392(=1684) were written in the fifteenth, and two other, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. LXV, 40 and Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, V.G. 34, are from the sixteenth century. Jacopo's *volgarizzamento*, variously entitled *Historie fiorentine/Istoria fiorentina* circulated in both manuscript and print in the fifteenth century (see below p. 00). In addition, there is a very interesting fifteenth-century fragment with the first four of the books, Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Pal. Capp. 64 (see below p. 00).²⁰

4. Publishing the *Historiae Florentini populi* in Latin

a. *Vespasiano da Bisticci*

The celebrated publisher of luxury manuscripts, active between 1440 and 1480, Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421-1498), author of *Vite* of important personalities encountered during his long professional life, was responsible for the dedication copy of Jacopo's edition presented to Frederick of Montefeltro, the Vat. Urb. lat. 491.²¹ It was written by Gundissalvus Fernandez de Heredia (d. 1511), apostolic protonotary, bishop of Barcelona (1478) and Tarragona (1490), who worked for Vespasiano da Bisticci between 1469-1482 producing volumes for Frederick of Montefeltro, Lorenzo and Pierfrancesco de' Medici, Alfonso di Ferdinando, Duke of Calabria, as well as Matthew Corvinus, king of Hungary. The sumptuous programme of illumination and decoration was carried out by the Master of the Hamilton Xenophon, active

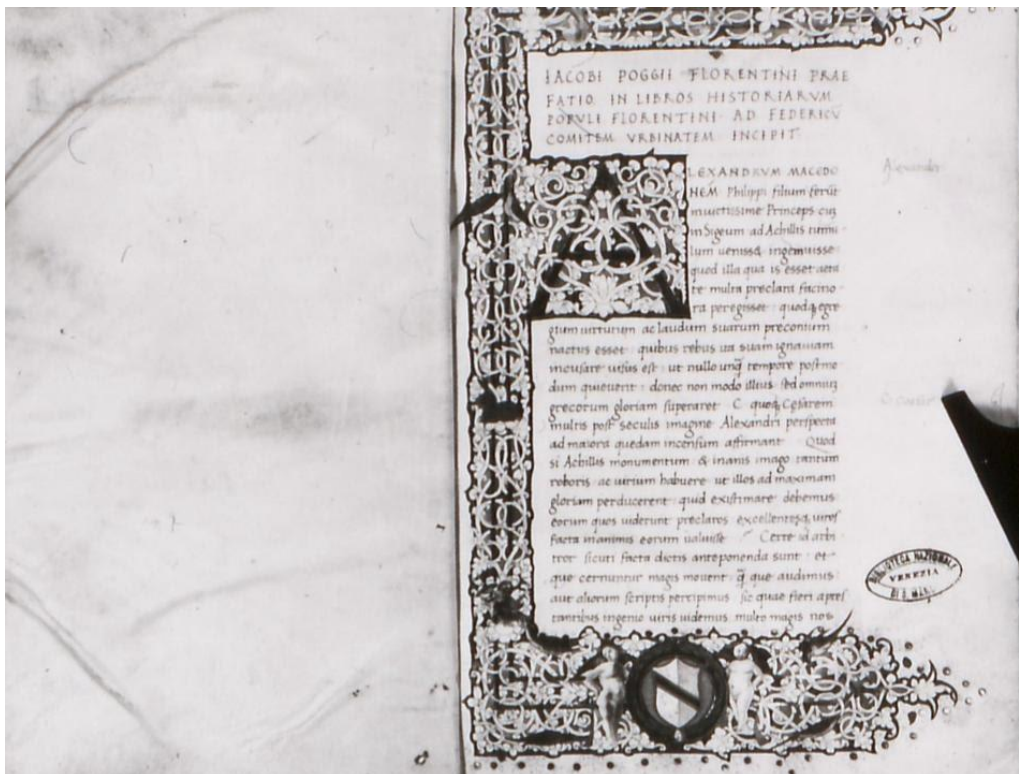
of Poggio Bracciolini's *Historiae Florentini populi*", *Renaissanceforum*, 3 (2007), http://www.renaissanceforum.dk/rf_3_2007.htm, 31 January 2021, and more concisely, O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini: Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, pp. 32-34

²⁰ For a detailed analysis of this manuscript, see O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini: Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, pp. 33-34.

²¹ For a detailed description of this manuscript, see *La biblioteca di un principe 'umanista'. Federico da Montefeltro e i suoi manoscritti*, ed. by M.G. CRITELLI, https://spotlight.vatlib.it/it/humanist-library/catalog/Urb_lat_491Urb.lat.491, 2 February 2021, as well as A. Labriola, "7. Poggio Bracciolini, *Historia Florentina* [sic]. Libri I-VIII", in *Federico Da Montefeltro and His Library*, ed. by M. Simonetta, J.J.G. Alexander, C. Martelli, Milan, 2007, pp. 152-161. Frederick's arms on f. IVv, just as the emblem F(redericus) C(omes) on f. 1, date the manuscript to the time before August 1474 when he was created Duke of Urbino. Thanks to Ada Labriola for kindly providing a copy of her article (October 2020).

from 1460 until 1480, who was a member of the workshop of Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico until 1478, Pietro del Massaio, and Francesco Rosselli, among others.²²

Even the second fifteenth-century manuscript, now Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, lat. Z. 392(=1684), is probably connected to Vespasiano's enterprise. This luxury manuscript on parchment, maybe decorated by Mariano del Buono and workshop, employed by Vespasiano between 1470-1480.²³ The script is a vertical antiqua; the arms on f. 1 still not identified.



Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, lat. Z 392 (=1684), f. 1 © BNM

The text conforms to that of Frederick's dedication copy. The manuscript was acquired by 1715 by G.B. Recanati (1687-1734), who used it for the first printed edition of the Latin text in that year.²⁴

²² *La biblioteca di un principe 'umanista'. Federico da Montefeltro e i suoi manoscritti*, ed. by M.G. CRITELLI, https://spotlight.vatlib.it/it/humanist-library/catalog/Urb_lat_491Urb.lat.491, 2 February 2021.

²³ O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, p. 31, with bibliography.

²⁴ For this learned patrician, friend of Apostolo Zeno, among others, who bequeathed his important manuscript library to the Marciana in 1734 and edited the Latin version of Poggio-Jacopo's *Historiae Florentini populi* in 1715, see O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material*

b. *The informal circuit: copying as an exercise?*

The publication history of Jacopo-Poggio's *Historiae* in manuscript ends with the Venice volume. There is, however, some dissemination of the Latin text in the sixteenth century. A volume, now Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. LXV, 40, on paper datable to the early years of the century, shows a series of more and less inexperienced hands seemingly without esthetical ambition either in the script nor in the general appearance of the volume. It belonged to the learned Canon Antonio Petrei (d. 1570), a noted bibliophile and teacher, who bequeathed the volume to the private library of the Medici in 1568.²⁵ Unsurprisingly, it is the only volume containing Poggio-Jacopo's *Historiae* in the Medici collections. The text contains the full Urbino version. Writing the long text might have been a school exercise. Another similar volume, slightly later, is Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, V.G. 34. It was written on Italian paper from the 1510s until the 1530s, with several hands, mostly inexperienced, both Italian and Transalpine (at least one Germanic). The scripts are both Gothic *hybridae* and *all'antica* cursives, with all the marginal hands Italian.²⁶ The volume belonged to the Farnese library in the time of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (1520-1589) and was found among the books in the *Guardarobba del S(ignor) Cardinale Farnese* at Palazzo della Cancelleria, Rome, listed at his death.²⁷ This volume might be another school exercise.

c. *The informal circuit: circulating in a draft*

Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, p. 31, with bibliography, and 36-37, as well as *Archivio dei possessori, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana*, <https://marciana.venezia.sbn.it/immagini-possessori/1130-recanati-giambattista>, 6 February 2021.

²⁵ O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, pp. 31-32.

²⁶ For this manuscript, see O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, p. 32, and O. MERISALO, "Jacopo di Poggio Bracciolini (1442-1478), traducteur des *Historiae Florentini Populi* du Pogge", in *Passages. Déplacements des hommes, circulation des textes et identités dans l'Occident médiéval*, ed. by J. DUCOS, P. HENRIET, Toulouse, 2013 (Études médiévales ibériques. Méridiennes), p. 60 n. 18.

²⁷ See O. MERISALO, "I codici in scrittura latina di Alessandro Farnese (1520-1589) a Caprarola e al Palazzo della Cancelleria nel 1589", *Progressus* 3,1 (2016), pp. 202-203 and bibliography, <https://www.rivistaprogressus.it/wp-content/uploads/outi-merisalo-codici-scrittura-latina-alessandro-farnese-1520-1589-caprarola-al-palazzo-della-cancelleria-nel-1589.pdf>. For the manuscript, see the list of books in the Naples, Archivio di Stato, Farnese, 1853, f. 104. A list of manuscripts in the Latin script from the 1589 inventory contained in the Naples volume on ff. 99v-109 was published by F. Fossier, *La bibliothèque Farnèse. Étude des manuscrits latins et en langue vernaculaire*, Rome, 1982 (Le palais Farnese, III, 2), pp. 39-40, who introduced numbering of volumes not present in the original. I have the pleasure of thanking the personnel of the State Archives of Naples for excellent working conditions in January 2020.

The first codicological unit (ff. 1-88), datable to the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, of the paper manuscript now Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatino Capponiano 64,²⁸ contains the first four books of the treatise in a version attributable to Poggio himself.²⁹ It must consequently be a copy of an earlier draft by Poggio now lost. The other texts in the volume are part of Bruni's translation of the *corpus Demosthenicum* and part of a volgarizzamento of Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortunae*.³⁰

5. Publishing *Historiae Florentini populi* in vernacular

a. In manuscript

Jacopo did not only edit the Latin-language treatise but also made a *volgarizzamento* of his own edition, variously entitled *Historie fiorentine/Istoria fiorentina*, most probably by August 1474 (see below p. 00). The translation had a limited circulation in manuscript at the end of the fifteenth c. and a considerable success in print from 1476 onwards.

The manuscript tradition presents some interesting details as regards the overall publishing history of the treatise either in Latin or in vernacular. The luxury manuscript, now Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatino Baldovinetti 62³¹ was copied by Francesco di Niccolò di Berto de' Gentiluzzi,³² as stated by the colophon on f. 151: "MCCCLXXIII Fra<n>ciscus

²⁸ See O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, pp. 32-34.

²⁹ For the differences between this version and the Poggio-Jacopo text, see O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, pp. 33-34. The short preface describes the chronological limits and the structure of the work on f. 1: "paulo na(m)q(ue) supra centesimum annum florentini bella p(o)p(u)li tum repulsa tum illata recensere institui que sunt in otto libros digesta".

³⁰ The volume belonged to the extensive library of Canon and marquis Giovan Vincenzo Capponi (1691-1748), which passed on to marquis Vincenzo Capponi, an important bibliophile in his own right. In 1854 Vincenzo Capponi's library entered the Grand Ducal library, Biblioteca Palatina, see O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, p. 32 and bibliography.

³¹ For a detailed description of this ms. see D. SPERANZI, "Palatino Baldovinetti 62", in *I manoscritti datati della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze*, III. *Fondi Banco Rari, Landau Finaly, Landau Muzzioli, Nuove Accessioni, Palatino Capponi, Palatino Panciatichiano, Tordi*, ed. by S. PELLE, A. M. RUSSO, D. SPERANZI, S. ZAMPONI, Firenze, 2011, p. 100 (Manoscritti datati d'Italia, 21). The initial on f. 4 had been cut out by the eighteenth century as stated in the note on f. IVv. The Baldovinetti library entered the Biblioteca Palatina in 1852, *ibid.*

³² This scribe, active from 1460 until 1503, notary to the Signoria in 1475, was a specialist of vernacular manuscripts. He also copied Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plutei XLIII, 15 for the Capponi, see A.

me scripsit”. In the midst of the Florentine vinestem decoration of the left margin on f. 1, there is Jacopo’s portrait probably by Francesco d’Antonio del Chierico, who frequently worked for Vespasiano da Bisticci’s publishing house (see above p. 00). The other texts are the chronicle on the Ciompi rebellion of 1378 by Alamanno Acciaiuoli and two 1446 letters of Neri di Gino Capponi.³³ The manuscript bears the Capponi arms.³⁴



BNCF, Palatino Baldovinetti 62, f. 1, with Capponi arms. Photo © MDI

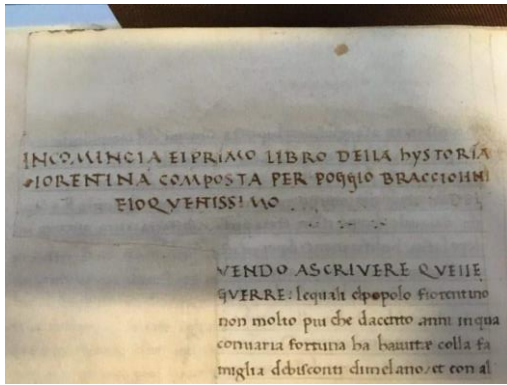
The production of the volume was carefully supervised by Jacopo, who entered a number of annotations in the margins. It also points to an interesting development in the publication history of the *volgarizzamento*, since the title of the first book on f. 4 has been partly erased.

Incomincia ei [sic] primo libro della hystoria <f>lorentina composta per poggio
bracciolini // [-----]eloquentissimo ag[-----] del[-----]

DE LA MARE, “New Research on Humanistic Scribes”, in *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento 1449-1525, Un primo censimento*, 1, ed. by A. GARZELLI, Firenze, 1985, pp. 425 and 494. (Inventari e cataloghi toscani, 18).

³³ Cf. D. SPERANZI, “Palatino Baldovinetti 62”, in *I manoscritti datati della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, III. Fondi Banco Rari, Landau Finaly, Landau Muzzioli, Nuove Accessioni, Palatino Capponi, Palatino Panciatichiano, Tordi*, ed. by S. PELLE, A. M. RUSSO, D. SPERANZI, S. ZAMPONI, Firenze, 2011, p. 100 (Manoscritti datati d’Italia, 21).

³⁴ Although the Capponi were not yet involved in anti-Medicean activities in the 1470s. They emerged as major opponents in the 1494 events that led to the exile of the Medici from Florence For the Capponi and the Medici, see O. MERISALO, “The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence”, in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, p.35 n. 44.



BNCF, Palatino Baldovinetti 62, f. 4. The incipit of the first book, with erased lines and the initial of the text section cut out. Photo D. Speranzi © BNCF

In his description of the manuscript, David Speranzi read the erased text as follows: line 3, beg. “doctore”, end “agli [...] del popolo fiorentino”. Even the explicit of f. 151 has been written in erasure, the lower text on line 6 reading “a excelsa et gloriosa signoria del popolo fiorentino”.³⁵ It would thus seem that Jacopo might have cherished the hope of dedicating the volgarizzamento to the Signoria of Florence, a hope squashed before the Baldovinetti manuscript was finished. All manuscripts and the printed version of the volgarizzamento bear the dedication to Frederick known from the Latin version. Since Frederick is not yet titled Duke but simply “s(ignore) di Urbino” (f. 1) and “s(ignore) di Urbino” as well as “conte d’Urbino” (f. 151), August 1474 is most probably the *terminus ante quem* of the volgarizzamento.³⁶

The ms. BNCF, II.III.86, *Hystoria fiorentina*, is another Florentine luxury manuscript, probably written by no lesser a scribe than Niccolò di Giampiero Fonzio.³⁷ It bears the

³⁵ See D. SPERANZI, “Palatino Baldovinetti 62”, in *I manoscritti datati della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze*, III. *Fondi Banco Rari, Landau Finaly, Landau Muzzioli, Nuove Accessioni, Palatino Capponi, Palatino Panciatichiano, Tordi*, ed. by S. PELLE, A. M. RUSSO, D. SPERANZI, S. ZAMPONI, Firenze, 2011, p. 100 (Manoscritti datati d’Italia, 21).

³⁶ Frederick of Montefeltro was solemnly invested with the Duchy of Urbino by Sixtus IV in August 1474, G. BENZONI, “Federico da Montefeltro, duca di Urbino, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, 45 (1995), [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/federico-da-montefeltro-duca-di-urbino_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/federico-da-montefeltro-duca-di-urbino_(Dizionario-Biografico)/), 11 February 2021. It is of course possible, though rather unlikely, that Jacopo for some reason did not wish to update the title of the dedicatee. – David Speranzi also noted that the remains of the apparently original binding point to Francesco di Amedeo, a Florentine cartolaio active c. 1475, D. SPERANZI, “Palatino Baldovinetti 62”, in *I manoscritti datati della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze*, III. *Fondi Banco Rari, Landau Finaly, Landau Muzzioli, Nuove Accessioni, Palatino Capponi, Palatino Panciatichiano, Tordi*, ed. by S. PELLE, A. M. RUSSO, D. SPERANZI, S. ZAMPONI, Firenze, 2011, p. 100 (Manoscritti datati d’Italia, 21).

³⁷ For the identification of the hand, see A. DE LA MARE, “New Research on Humanistic Scribes in Florence”, in *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento 1449-1525, Un primo censimento*, 1, ed. by A. GARZELLI, Firenze, 1985, p. 458 and Appendix I no. 19 (Inventari e cataloghi toscani, 18). More recently, L. HELLINGA, “Poggio Bracciolini’s *Historia Fiorentina* in manuscript and print”, *La Bibliofilia*, 115,1 (2013), pp. 123-124 argued that both this volume and New Haven, Beinecke Library, 321 (see below p. 00) would have been written by a Ser Antonio di Jacopo, an otherwise unknown scribe, mentioned in Girolamo Strozzi’s accounts as having produced a copy of the *volgarizzamento* (see below p. 00). While the two hands resemble each other, the Nazionale one, characterised by De La Mare as Fonzio’s cursive hand, is more inclined to the right, and also differs from the

Strozzi arms.³⁸ The Strozzi connection runs deep in the publishing history of the *volgarizzamento* (see below). This wealthy dynasty that had only recently, in 1466, been allowed to return to Florence, continued to be one of the most powerful opponents of the Medici.³⁹



Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II.III.86, f. 1. Photo D. Speranzi © BNCF.

A third manuscript, now New Haven, CT, Beinecke Library, 321, was most probably also copied for the Strozzi. It was written on paper by a very professional Humanist cursive hand that Albinia de La Mare identified with Niccolò Fonzio, who frequently worked for the Florentine merchant Girolamo di Carlo Strozzi (1441/2-1481/2), writing him e.g. a copy of Bruni's *Historiae Florentini populi* in the translation of Donato Acciaiuoli ordered by Marco di Carlo, his younger brother, in 1474.⁴⁰ In fact, in the 1474-1475 accounts of Girolamo di

Beinecke one as regards the morphology of the *e*, the *g* and the ligature *ct*. While there is no conclusive evidence to contradict the Nazionale hand's identification as Fonzio's, the Beinecke hand might well be that of Ser Antonio di Jacopo. Further research is needed.

³⁸ The volume subsequently belonged to the library of the learned Florentine Jacopo Gaddi, was acquired by Emperor Francis Stephen I, Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1755. Francis Stephen donated it to the Biblioteca Magliabechiana, see O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, p. 100.

³⁹ O. MERISALO, "The *Historiae Florentini populi* by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence", in *Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity. Textual and Material Traditions: Proceedings of the Symposium Held at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9, 2016*, ed. by R. RICCI with assistance from Eric L. PUMROY, Firenze, 2020, p. 35 and n. 45.

⁴⁰ See A. DE LA MARE, "New Research on Humanistic Scribes", in *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento 1449-1525, Un primo censimento*, 1, ed. by A. GARZELLI, Firenze, 1985, pp. 458 and no. 295; for the patron, 516, Appendix I, no. 40A (Inventari e cataloghi toscani, 18). The manuscript was part of the Strozzi library until at least the nineteenth century; it then passed on to Prince Piero Ginori-Conti (1865-1939) and was in the end acquired by the Beinecke in 1964. For a detailed description, see B. S. SHAILOR, "Beinecke ms. 321", in Yale University, *Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. General Collection of Rare Books and Manuscripts*.

Carlo Strozzi figures a payment for a copy of Jacopo's *volgarizzamento* of the *Historiae Florentini populi*.⁴¹ It was finished by June 1475. The scribe is, however, identified in the accounts as Ser Antonio di Jacopo (cf. above n. 37).⁴²

b. In print

It is probable that the Beinecke manuscript is indeed the model for the printed version of the *volgarizzamento*.⁴³ Girolamo di Carlo's accounts show that he would send books from Florence to Marco di Carlo Strozzi to be sold in London in the 1470s (cf. above). In the end, the copy of Acciaiuoli's *volgarizzamento* was not sent to London but taken to Venice. There Girolamo spent eleven months between June 1475 and May 1476 not only doing business with Filippo and Lorenzo Strozzi & co. of Florence and Naples but also setting up an ambitious printing project of Brunetti's and Poggio's histories in Acciaiuoli's and Jacopo's *volgarizzamenti*. He also ordered a new vernacular translation of Pliny the Elder by the renowned Florentine humanist Cristoforo Landino, most probably completed in February and printed in June 1476 by Nicolas Jenson, a famous printer of French origin, in Venice, and paid for by Girolamo and his associate Giambattista di Luigi Ridolfi.⁴⁴ Jacopo di Poggio was consulted on the choice of the translator.⁴⁵

Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, <https://pre1600ms.beinecke.library.yale.edu/docs/pre1600.ms321.htm>, 11 February 2021. There is a digital copy at <https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3592316>, 11 February 2021.

⁴¹ See F. EDLER DE ROOVER, "Per la storia dell'arte della stampa in Italia. Come furono stampati a Venezia tre dei primi libri in volgare", *La Bibliofilia*, 55 (1953), p. 108. Girolamo began his career in Naples in the enterprise of Filippo and Lorenzo di Matteo Strozzi and co. before 1466, then proceeded to do business on his own or occasionally in collaboration with other merchants in Flanders and England, prevalently Southampton (in Italian *Antona*), also on behalf of Filippo and Lorenzo Strozzi and his younger brother Marco di Carlo who had settled in Southampton, then in London at the end of the 1460s. Girolamo was often in Venice in the 1460s and 1470s, sending merchandise from Italy to Marco di Carlo who entrusted him merchandise from England, see F. EDLER DE ROOVER, "Per la storia dell'arte della stampa in Italia. Come furono stampati a Venezia tre dei primi libri in volgare", *La Bibliofilia*, 55 (1953), pp. 107-108. Girolamo Strozzi's accounts are now Florence, Archivio di Stato, Carte Stroziane V, 52 and 53.

⁴² See F. EDLER DE ROOVER, "Per la storia dell'arte della stampa in Italia. Come furono stampati a Venezia tre dei primi libri in volgare", *La Bibliofilia*, 55 (1953), p. 108 and n. 3.

⁴³ L. HELLINGA, "Poggio Bracciolini's *Historia Fiorentina* in manuscript and print", *La Bibliofilia*, 115,1 (2013), pp. 125-129 gives a convincing comparative analysis of the manuscript and the print bearing out this conclusion. The use of the Beinecke manuscript as the model for the print had already been argued for by C. MEYERS, *The Transition from Pen to Press*. Unpublished Master's thesis, Yale University, 1983, and endorsed by B. S. SHAILOR, "Beinecke ms. 321", in Yale University, *Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. General Collection of Rare Books and Manuscripts. Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts*, <https://pre1600ms.beinecke.library.yale.edu/docs/pre1600.ms321.htm>, 11 February 2021.

⁴⁴ F. EDLER DE ROOVER, "Per la storia dell'arte della stampa in Italia. Come furono stampati a Venezia tre dei primi libri in volgare", *La Bibliofilia*, 55 (1953), pp. 108-110. The Pliny is GW M34342 Plinius Secundus, Gaius: *Historia naturalis*, ital. Übers. Christophorus Landinus. Venedig: Nicolas Jenson, 1476. 2° , ISTC ip00801000.

⁴⁵ F. EDLER DE ROOVER, "Per la storia dell'arte della stampa in Italia. Come furono stampati a Venezia tre dei primi libri in volgare", *La Bibliofilia*, 55 (1953), p. 109 and n. 3.

Acciaiuoli's translation of Bruni's *Historiae*, the *Historia florentina*,⁴⁶ was printed in Venice on 12 February 1476, whereas Jacopo's *volgarizzamento*, the *Istoria florentina*, came out on 8 March 1476.⁴⁷ Both were printed by "messer Iacopo de' Rossi di natione gallo",⁴⁸ i.e. Jacques Le Rouge aka Jacobus Rubeus, a productive printer of French origin active in Venice between 1473 and 1478, then in Pinerolo from 1479 until 1483; his types are still used in Embrun in 1489/1490 and there is a print attributed to him in 1505. Le Rouge printed Classical and Humanist authors but also Roman and Canon law as well as e.g. breviaries. The two *volgarizzamenti*, in addition to the 1505 print, are his only vernacular texts.⁴⁹

According to Girolamo di Marco's accounts, both *volgarizzamenti* were printed in c. 600 copies, prevalently on paper, and normally sold together. Considering the differences of the two histories (see above p. 00), this is an interesting development and no doubt contributed to Poggio-Jacopo's dissemination also in pro-Medicean circles even after Jacopo's disgrace. A few copies on parchment have been preserved; they of course catered for the taste of more upscale customers. The initial price for Bruni's 12-book work was two florins and for Poggio's 8-book text, one florin. Copies were sent out to booksellers not only to Italy but also to London and Bruges, the large Florentine merchant community of which was a likely target. Florence itself was rightly expected to provide a good market for both prints.⁵⁰ The Strozzi continued to sell the *volgarizzamenti* even beyond the death of Girolamo di Carlo in 1481/2, at least until 1483, though at a discount. It is not known when the 1476 run went out of print.⁵¹ Of Jacopo's translation, more than 150 copies still survive in public holdings.⁵²

7. Conclusion

The publishing history of Poggio's last work, the *Historiae Florentini populi* is interesting from a number of points of view. Reflecting Poggio's conflict with the Medici regime in the last few years of his life from 1456 until 1459, he set out to compose a non-official history of Florence that could be seen as a counterpart of Bruni's official, state-sponsored. *Historiae Florentini*

⁴⁶ GW 5612, Brunus Aretinus, Leonardus: *Historiae Florentini populi*, ital. von Donatus Acciaiolus. Venedig: Jacobus Rubeus, 12.II.1476 2°; ISTC ib01247000.

⁴⁷ GW M34604, Poggius, Johannes Franciscus: *Historia Florentina*, ital. Übers. Jacobus Poggius. [Venedig]: Jacobus Rubeus, 8.III.1476 2°; ISTC ip00873000.

⁴⁸ GW M34604, f. <n.vii>.

⁴⁹ See ISTC, <https://data.cerl.org/istc/search?query=Jacobus%20Rubeus&size=10&mode=default&from=0>, 11 February 2021.

⁵⁰ F. EDLER DE ROOVER, "Per la storia dell'arte della stampa in Italia. Come furono stampati a Venezia tre dei primi libri in volgare", *La Bibliofilia*, 55 (1953), pp. 112-113.

⁵¹ F. EDLER DE ROOVER, "Per la storia dell'arte della stampa in Italia. Come furono stampati a Venezia tre dei primi libri in volgare", *La Bibliofilia*, 55 (1953), p. 113.

⁵² ISTC, <https://data.cerl.org/istc/ip00873000>, 11 February 2011.

populi. Poggio did not complete his text, which was heavily edited and brought to conclusion by his son Jacopo, whose short life was marked by his Republican ideals that put him on a collision course with the Medici regime. Poggio-Jacopo's *Historiae*, dedicated to Poggio's friend Frederick of Montefeltro, Count and later Duke of Urbino, who was to be one of the backers of the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478, reflect Jacopo's political stance as regards both content and publishing history. A few Florentine luxury volumes, of which at least the dedication copy to Frederick, now Vatican City, Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana, Urb. lat. 491, was produced by Vespasiano da Bisticci's publishing house catering for princes and kings, under the close supervision of Jacopo himself, represent the short-lived upscale circulation, or commercial circulation *tout court*, of the Latin work in the fifteenth century. The Poggio-Jacopo Latin text is only transmitted in the sixteenth century in two paper manuscripts written by a series of more and less inexperienced hands which suggest that the copies were made as writing exercises. Poggio's incomplete text is transmitted as a draft in a paper manuscript from c. 1500. The Latin text was first printed in 1715 by G.B. Recanati, whose operation starts a true Poggio renaissance, leading to the publication of other important treatises such as *De varietate fortunae* (1723). Jacopo's publishing project was not limited to the Latin text but also comprised the dissemination of the work in his own vernacular translation. Jacopo again closely supervised one of the luxury manuscripts, now Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Palatino Baldovinetti 62, and seems to have entertained the possibility of dedicating the translation not to Frederick but to the Signoria of Florence, thus conferring it a new municipal status vying with that of the state-sponsored Bruni text. In the end, Frederick was not dislodged from the position of dedicatee. Jacopo was also in close contact with the international Florentine merchant Girolamo di Carlo Strozzi, member of a dynasty with a track score of long-time conflicts with the Medici, who decided to print both Donato Acciaiuoli's vernacular translation of Bruni's *Historiae Florentini populi* and Jacopo's *volgarizzamento* of his own edition, *Istoria fiorentina*, in Venice in 1476. The two histories were also normally sold together, which no doubt contributed to diminishing their differences in the public perception and probably conferred some aura of officiality to Poggio-Jacopo's text, ensuring its success well beyond Jacopo's political disgrace in 1478.