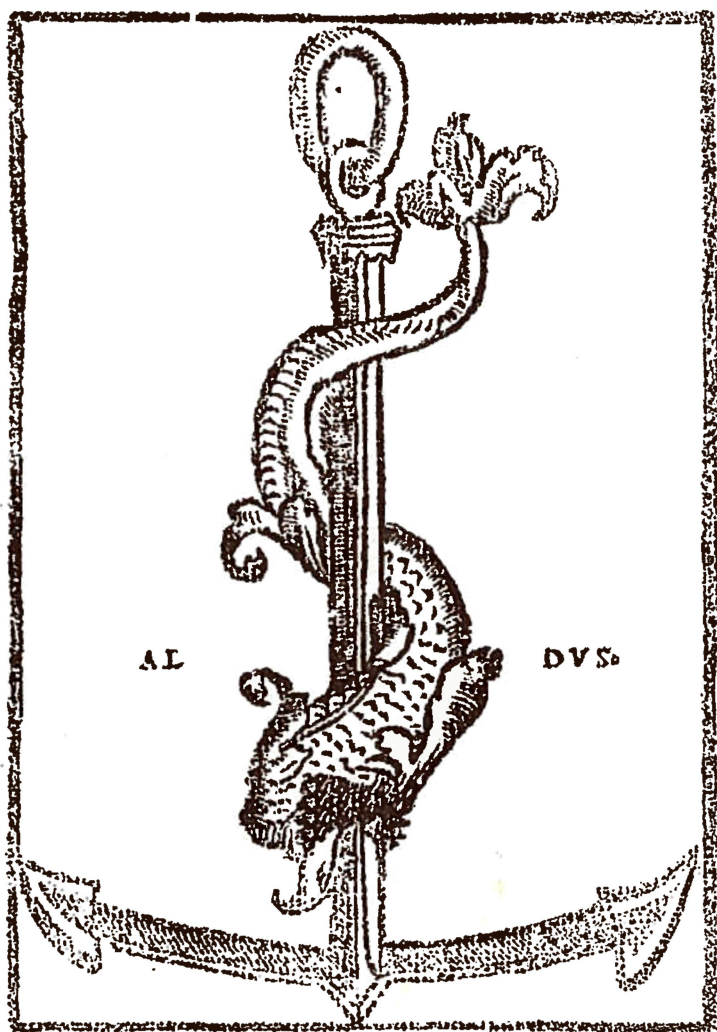


ISTITUTO INTERNAZIONALE DI STUDI PICENI

# SASSOFERRATO



STUDI UMANISTICI PICENI  
**XXXIII** **2013**

# The *Vita Lucani* of Pomponio Leto and Perotti's *Cornu copiae*

Johann Ramminger

This paper started as an attempt to clear up the source of a passage in the *Cornu copiae* containing biographical information about the Senecas and Lucan. It is hoped that it will not only be possible to add another item to the vast collection of sources of the *Cornu copiae*, but also to make an (albeit modest) contribution to the famous and vexing problem of the unidentified citations in the same work.

In the first book of *epigrams* of Martial we read the following verses (1,61,7-8):

Duosque Senecas unicumque Lucanum  
Facunda loquitur Corduba.

«Of the two Senecas and the one Lucan  
talks eloquent Cordoba».

Perotti comments on verse 61,7 in the *Cornu copiae*, in a passage in the seventh volume of the critical edition edited in collaboration by J.-L. Charlet, M. Furno, M. Pade, F. Stok, G. Abbamonte and myself. My edition of Perotti's comment is as follows (90,6, vol. VII, p. 160; bold text signifies the lemmata in the margin of the ms. BAV Vat. Urb. Lat. 301)<sup>1</sup>:

DUOS SENECAS. M. Anneus **Seneca** Cordubensis Romam uenit, declamator egregius, quamuis opera eius ad posteros non peruenerint. Hic statim eques factus honores meruit habuit que liberos, quos in Hispania suscepit ex Elbia uxore, L. Anneum Senecam, Iunium Annaeum Gallionem et Annaeum Melam. Seneca philosophus simul et declamator et poeta insignis euasit, sub Nerone mortuus est solutis uenis. LUCANUM. **Annaeus Mela** Senecae frater 5

<sup>1</sup> The bibliography concerning Perotti can be found in J.-L. Charlet, *Niccolò Perotti, humaniste du Quattrocento: Bibliographie critique*. «Renaissanceforum» 7 (2011), pp. 42-43, URL: [www.renaissanceforum.dk](http://www.renaissanceforum.dk). Lines 1-6 of the passage from the *Cornucopiae* have been discussed by L. Gualdo Rosa, *La fortuna – e la sfortuna – di Seneca nel Rinascimento europeo e il contributo alla ricerca della verità dell'umanesimo romano da Lorenzo Valla a Marc-Antoine Muret, Pomponio Leto tra identità locale e cultura internazionale*, in A. Modigliani – P. Osmond – M. Pade – J. Ramminger (a cura di), *Atti del convegno internazionale (Teggiano, 3-5 ottobre 2008), RR inedita, 48 saggi*, Roma 2011, pp. 57-78: 67.

antequam in Urbem uenisset, donatus equestri ordine, ex C. **Acilia** filia Acilii Lucani oratoris filium suscepit **M. Annaeum** Lucanum. Hic Neroni principi gratus fuit, quaestor que ante aetatem factus gladiatorum munus aedidit. Scripsit Saturnalia, Siluarum libros decem, Medeam, Orpheum, Incendium 10 Urbis, Incendium Troianum cum Priami calamitate, Pharsaliam non finiuit. "Varius", ut **Quintilianus** inquit, "copiosus, sublimis, concitatus, oratoribus magis quam poetis imitandus".

1 Mart. 1,61,7 | 6 Mart. 1,61,7 | 6-8 ex *Vita Lucani* p. 334,1-8 ? | 8-9 ex *Vita Lucani* p. 335,14-15 ? | 12-13 Quint. *inst.* 10,1,90\*

«THE TWO SENECA. M. Annaeus Seneca came to Rome from Cordoba. He was an excellent declamator, his works, however, did not come to posterity. He was made *eques* forthwith, served with honour and had as children – whom he had had with his wife Elbia in Spain – L. Anneus Seneca, Iunius Annaeus Gallio, and Annaeus Mela. Seneca became famous as philosopher as well as declamator and poet, and died under Nero by opening his veins. LUCAN. Before Seneca's brother Annaeus Mela had come to town and received equestrian rank, he had a son with C. Acilia, daughter of the orator Acilius Lucanus, M. Annaeus Lucanus. The latter had the favor of the emperor Nero, was made *quaestor* before the legitimate age and gave a gladiators' show. He wrote *Saturnalia*, ten books of *Silvae*, a *Medea*, *Orpheus*, *The Burning of the City*, *The Burning of Troy* with the sufferings of Priam. The *Pharsalia* he did not finish. "He was varied", as Quintilian says, "rich of expression, sublime, agitated, to be imitated more by orators than by poets"».

The passage is important under many aspects, not least because it contains the first attestation since antiquity of the correct onomastic distinction between the two Senecas, the father Marcus and the son Lucius (even though all the surviving works of both are falsely attributed by Perotti to the son)<sup>2</sup>. As one sees from the *apparatus fontium*, there is hardly any certainty where the material used by Perotti stems from. For lines 1 to 6 and 11 to 12 I could indicate no source at all. Lines 7 to 10 show some tenuous similarity («ex ... ?») with the anonymous *Vita Lucani*.

### *The quotation from Quintilian*

The quotation attributed to Quintilian, even though identifiably from the *Institutio*, is quite different from the text we read today, as indicated by the asterisk in the *apparatus* (*inst.* 10,1,90). It is even further removed from the text

<sup>2</sup> Gualdo Rosa, *La fortuna e la sfortuna di Seneca*, p. 67.

circulating contemporarily with Perotti, which contained a significant corruption, *numerandus* instead of *imitandus* (e. g.: Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, Venetiis: Jenson, 1471, f. 174<sup>r</sup>, or: Venetiis: n. d. [ca. 1480], sig. y6<sup>r</sup>).

<i>Cornu copiae</i>	modern text <sup>3</sup>	Venetiis : Jenson, 1471, f. 174 <sup>r</sup> , modern punctuation
<b>Varius, [...] copiosus, sublimis</b> , concitatus, oratoribus <b>magis</b> quam poetis imitandus.	Lucanus ardens et concitatus et sententiis clarissimus et, ut dicam quod sentio, magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus.	Lucanus ardens et concitatus et sententiis clarissimus et, ut dicam quod sentio, magis oratoribus quam poetis <b>numerandus</b> .

Comparison of three versions of Quintilian, *Institutio* 10,1,90, with differences from the modern text highlighted.

The quotation from Quintilian serves a double diagnostic purpose: Perotti's *imitandus* is the correct reading and vastly superior to *numerandus* of the contemporary editions<sup>4</sup> and thus points to a source other than those. Secondly, there are the four adjectives which are vaguely paraphrasing Quintilian; again they point to an alternative tradition incorporating considerable modifications; naturally, if no such text can be found, we would have to admit the possibility that Perotti himself has modified the text.

### *The Lives of Lucan of [Vacca] and Pomponio Leto*

Leaving for the moment Quintilian, let us turn to the source mentioned in the *apparatus*, the anonymous *Vita Lucani* (in the ms-tradition attributed to a certain Vacca, an otherwise unknown *expositor Lucani*):

Vita M. Annaei Lucani ex Vaccae qui dicitur commentario sublata.

<sup>3</sup> Text following: M. Winterbottom (ed.), *M. Fabi Quintiliani Institutionis oratoriae libri decem*, II, Oxford 1970. Winterbottom does not register any variant for *imitandus*.

<sup>4</sup> Even though in the variant *annumerandus* it survives long in early modern poetological discussions. Cornelius Tacitus, *A Dialogue Concerning Oratory, Or The Causes Of Corrupt Eloquence. The Works Of Cornelius Tacitus*, vol. 8, [with An Essay On His Life And Genius, Notes, Supplements by Arthur Murphy], London 1811, p. 135: «As a writer, Quintilian says, that he possessed an ardent genius, impetuous, rapid, and remarkable for the vigour of his sentiments: but he chooses to class him with the orators, rather than the poets. *Lucanus ardens, et concitatus, et sententiis clarissimus; et, ut dicam quod sentio, magis oratoribus quam poetis annumerandus*. Lib. x cap. 1».



M. Annaeus Lucanus patrem habuit M. Annaeum Melam ex provincia Baetica Hispaniae interioris Cordubensem equitem Romanum, inlustrem inter suos, notum Romae et propter Senecam fratrem, clarum per omnes virtutes virum, et propter studium vitae quietioris, quod sequens magis a turba recedebat, minus latebat. Matrem habuit et regionis eiusdem et urbis Aciliam nomine, Acilii Lucani filiam ... Gessit autem quaesturam, in quam cum collegis more tunc usitato munus gladiatorium edidit secundo populi favore (*Vita Lucani*, p. 314, 1-8 and p. 315, 14-15, ed. Hosius<sup>5</sup>).

The similarities – as far as they exist at all – mainly regard the contents; verbal points of contact are as good as absent. Nevertheless, the *Vita Lucani* is not completely irrelevant for our research, if only because it offers a direction for further research: there is also a *Vita Lucani* in the intellectual milieu in Rome which Perotti was part of, the Roman Academy, written by its *princeps*, Pomponio Leto, at the end of the 1460s<sup>6</sup>, precisely at the time when Perotti and Leto collaborated on several projects concerning the Flavian poets. The close rapport between the two humanists is well known: Perotti introduces Leto in the preface to his *Cornucopiae* as the *princeps academiae Romanae* and as the one on whose insistence the work was published. Leto's *vita Lucani* is contained in an autograph version in a manuscript written by Leto for the young Fabio Mazzatosta, his pupil at the end of the '60s (today ms. BAV Vat. Lat. 3285). It has been published in the form printed in 1469 by Weber in 1858<sup>7</sup>; in 1904 Ussani proposed a close analysis of the divergences between the Mazzatosta-Martial and the *editio princeps*<sup>8</sup>. For the ms-text we still depend on the Vatican manuscript.

### *Comparison of Leto and Perotti*

Returning now to the quotation from Quintilian, we see at once that we are on the right track; Leto has put it as a summary of sorts at the end:

<sup>5</sup> M. Annaei Lucani *Belii civilis libri decem*, tertium edidit C. Hosius, Lipsiae 1913, pp. 334–336.

<sup>6</sup> 1469/70, s. R. Bianchi, *Due citazioni attribuite a Festo nel commento a Lucano di Pomponio Leto*, «AMArc», s. III, 7 (1980-81), pp. 235-62: 236.

<sup>7</sup> C. F. Weber (ed.), *Vitarum M. Annaei Lucani collectarum particula III. Indices lectionum et publicarum et privatarum quae in Academia Marburgensi per semestre hibernum ... 1858–1859 habendae proponuntur*, Marburgi s. d. [1858], pp. 19-22.

<sup>8</sup> V. Ussani, *Le annotazioni di Pomponio Leto a Lucano*, «RAL», ser. V, 13 (1904), pp. 366-385.

“Varius, copiosus, sublimis, concitatus”, ut Quintilianus ait, “oratoribus magis quam poetis imitandus”.

Also in the rest of the *vita* there is an overwhelming amount of similarities (parallels are underlined):

DUOS SENECA. M. Anneus Seneca Cordubensis Romam uenit, declamator egregius, quamuis opera eius ad posteros non peruenerint. Hic statim eques factus honores meruit habuit que liberos, quos in Hispania suscepit ex Elbia uxore, L. Anneum Senecam, Iunium Annaeum Gallionem et Annaeum Melam. Seneca philosophus simul et declamator et poeta insignis euasit, sub Nerone mortuus est solutis uenis. LUCANUM. Annaeus Mela Senecae frater antequam in urbem uenisset, donatus equestri ordine, ex C. Acilia filia Acilii Lucani oratoris filium suscepit M. Annaeum Lucanum. Hic Neroni principi gratus fuit, quaestor que ante aetatem factus gladiatorum munus aedit. (*Cornu copiae* 90,6)

Leto, *Vita Lucani* (the ‘e caudata’ is rendered as ‘ae’), ms. BAV Vat. Lat. 3285, ff. 135<sup>v</sup>-136<sup>r</sup>

M. Annaeus Seneca e corduba ciuitate Betice romam uenit: statimque eques factus. cuius declamationes et si celebratae, neglegentia temporum ad nepotes non peruenerunt. suscepit in patria ex elbia uxore liberos tris. L. Annaeum Senecam, Iunium Annaeum Gallionem et Annaeum Melam. ... Mela cum adoleuisset iubente patre rem domesticam gubernauit. Donatus ut ceteri fratres amicicia caesarum equestri ordine C. Acilium Filium Acilii Lucani oratoris duxit uxorem Acilii tunc non mediocre nomen apud prouincie proconsules erat. Ex ea iiii Nonas Nouembris C. Caesare Iterum et Lucio Cesiano consulibus M. Annaeum Lucanum Imposito Socris nomine genuit. ... Neroni cuius etas patruo seneca commissa erat diu gratus. Quaestor ante etatem gladiatorum munus aedit.

The whole list of Lucan's works in Perotti corresponds to Leto's *Vita*:

Scripsit Saturnalia, Siluarum libros decem, Medeam, Orpheum, Incendium Urbis, Incendium Troianum cum Priami calamitate, Pharsaliam non finiuit. “Varius”, ut Quintilianus inquit, “copiosus, sublimis, concitatus, oratoribus magis quam poetis imitandus” (*Cornu copiae* 90,6).

Scripsit Saturnalia Siluarum libros X, Medeam, Orpheum, Incendium urbis et incendium Troianum Sub titulo Ilie conitae adiecta Priami calamitate. Oratione sua Ottauium sagittam qui pontiam confoderat damnavit. Pharsaliam cuius primos tris libros cum uxore correxerat. Varius copiosus. Sublimis concitatus ut quintilianus ait oratoribus magis quam poetis imitandus (Leto, *Vita Lucani*, ms. BAV Vat. Lat. 3285, f. 137<sup>r</sup>).

There are some differences: in the *Cornu copiae* there is no mention of that mysterious work, the *Ilia conita*; absent is also the speech against Octavius Sagitta and the collaboration with his wife on the *Pharsalia*. On the other hand Perotti asserts that the epic is unfinished, which is not said in the Mazzatosta-manuscript.

To sum up: Leto's *Vita Lucani*, as transmitted in the ms. BAV Vat. Lat. 3285, and the life of Lucan in the *Cornucopiae* have much in common; some divergences may or may not be significant. At one point in my research, I hoped this would thus add another piece in the mosaic of the personal and professional connection between Leto and Perotti, but further research lead me into another direction.

### *Leto's Vita Lucani in Bussi's editio princeps*

Leto's *Vita Lucani* (in contrast to the *Pharsalia*-commentary in the same ms.) had a wide distribution, since it was commonly included in editions of Lucan's epic from the *editio princeps* by Sweynheym and Pannartz undertaken by Giovanni Andrea Bussi in 1469 onwards. The relationship between the Mazzatosta-Lucan, written after Leto's discharge from prison in March or April 1469 and the *editio princeps*, which has only 1469 as date, as at this point unclear; the text of the print may have been taken from the Mazzatosta-Lucan or a copy; equally likely there may have been an earlier manuscript which served as exemplar for the Mazzatosta-Lucan as well as for the print<sup>9</sup>.

The printed vita differs in several points from the ms., and these differences may either signify an evolution of the thought of the author or an intervention by somebody else. One such difference is the absence of the *Ilia conita* in Bussi's edition. Certainly Leto had not given up on this work: he mentions it again in the later *Vita Statii*, written after the *editio princeps* of the *Thebais* and *Achilleis*<sup>10</sup> printed in 1470 or 1471 (before July 1471, the death of Paul II). The deliberate absence of this piece thus does not represent an change of mind of Leto, but is with some likelihood due to the editor Bussi. The same may be true for a sentence which appears in the print before the quotation from Quintilian:

<sup>9</sup> This latter scenario would only be possible if we assume that the marginal addition *oratione-damnauit* in the Mazzatosta-Lucan had its counterpart in the hypothetical earlier manuscript.

<sup>10</sup> GW M4329910, ISTC is00700600. See H. Anderson, *The Manuscripts of Statius. Revised edition*, III: *The Vitae and Accessus*, Arlington (VA) 2009, pp. 106-108.

Quos inscitia deprauatos cum reliquis septem Io. Andreas Antistes Aleriensis diligentissime nostro tempore emendauit rogantibus Conrado et Arnolddo, qui, ne lingua romana pereat, libros laudabili inuentione imprimunt.

«These [*i. e. the Pharsalia*] which had been corrupted by lack of knowledge are with the greatest of care restored in our time by the bishop of Aleria, Giovanni Andrea [*Bussi*]; he was asked to do this by Conrad [*Sweinheim*] and Arnold [*Pannartz*] who with a praiseworthy invention print books so that the Roman language may not perish».

The coincidences do not leave any room for doubt that we have found the source for Perotti's notice on the Senecas and Lucan: the perverse *Ilia conita* is eliminated, the notice about the unfinished state of the epic is added; even small details agree, such as the absence of *et* after *urbis* and *cum Priami calamitate* instead of *adiecta Priami calamitate*.

Perotti's mode of operation is quite clear: he does not want to write another life of Lucan, but pegs his notes to a verse of Martial. An explanation of the identity of the two Senecas – given their widespread confusion – was crucial for understanding the verses of Martial, and Leto/Bussi offered a time-saving shortcut to some relevant material.

If we now return to the citation form Quintilian, we see how the erroneous text in the *Cornucopiae* was born:

**Variuſ. copioſuſ. ſublimiſ concitatuſ. ut Quintilianuſ  
ait: Oratoribuſ magiſ q̃ Poetiſ imitanduſ. Mela pater**

Lucan, *Pharsalia* (Rome: C. Sweynheym & A. Pannartz, 1469), s. n. [f. 2<sup>r</sup>].

In the print there are two signs of punctuation, a single point and a colon, with the former being the weaker of the two and used for separating adjectives (absent after *sublimis*), but also for concluding the whole sentence. The colon seems to be a bit stronger, separating not only (in other passages of the print) paratactical elements of the sentences, but here also used to indicate the subordinate clause. Obviously our understanding of 'weak' and 'strong' punctuation depends on our understanding of the text and vice versa and is thus to some extent circular. The vagueness of the punctuation admits two different syntactic possibilities. Leto (if we give him the benefit of the doubt) may never have intended to falsify Quintilian's text, but may just have given his

own opinion of Lucan's stylistic qualities, rounding it off with a quotation from Quintilian:

Varius, copiosus, sublimis, concitatus; ut Quintilianus ait: "oratoribus magis quam poetis imitandus".

«[Lucan was] varied, rich of expression, sublime, agitated; as Quintilian says: "to be imitated more by orators than by poets"» (Leto, *Vita Lucani*, ms. BAV Vat. Lat. 3285, f. 137<sup>r</sup>).

Perotti (*Cornu copiae* 90,6), however, may have understood this quite differently:

"Varius, copiosus, sublimis, concitatus", ut Quintilianus ait, "oratoribus magis quam poetis imitandus".

and, in a slight stylistic twitch, transposed the *ut Quintilianus ait* to the more comfortable initial position:

"Varius", ut Quintilianus inquit, "copiosus, sublimis, concitatus, oratoribus magis quam poetis imitandus".

Thus, we can also absolve Perotti from having falsified a quotation of Quintilian, which has turned out to be a simple misunderstanding. Still, it is a testimony to the felicity of Leto's appraisal of Lucan's style that it survived for a considerable period of time<sup>11</sup> and was only gradually supplanted by versions closer to what Quintilian had really said.

<sup>11</sup> The first after Perotti to quote Quintilian in Leto's version seems to be Paolo Pompilio in his *Vita Senecae* (1490), where he writes in chapter XVII "De ingenio Lucani Poetae et de morte Gallionis et fato Melae": *Scriptor fuit uariis, copiosus, sublimis, concitatus et, ut Fabius Quintilianus censet, magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus* (ed. in P. Faider, *Études sur Sénèque*, III *Contribution à l'étude de l'Humanisme. Paulus Pompilius Vita Senecae*, Gand 1921, pp. 269–323: 307). A representative from the next century is the *Vita Lucani* in the Cologne-edition of 1560 (quoted by B. Méniel, *Renaissance de l'épopée: la poésie épique en France de 1572 à 1623*. Travaux d'Humanisme et Renaissance, 389, Genève 2004, p. 64 note 156). The worst of both worlds is combined in a *vita* in the edition of F. Oudendorp (Lugduni Batavorum 1728), p.\*\*\*\*\*2 (*italics from the original*): «Varius, copiosus, sublimis, concitatus, ut Quintilianus ait, *Oratoribus magis, quam poetis numerandus*».