

The Epigraphical Legacy of Cyriac of Ancona: Felice Feliciano's Trace in a Fake Inscription from Tarragona (*CIL* II 383* = II²/14, 43*)¹

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Abstract

This paper analyses the presence of three Spanish fake inscriptions (*CIL* II 382*, 383* and 410*) belonging to the tradition of Cyriac of Ancona. In many manuscripts, a farewell sentence is incorporated at the end of *CIL* II 383*, and was finally included by Hübner as part of the text. We present evidence that the interpolation would have been committed by Felice Feliciano through the Bern manuscript of Giovanni Marcanova.

Keywords: Cyriac of Ancona; Felice Feliciano; epigraphic manuscripts; epigraphical fakes.

Resum. *El llegat epigràfic de Ciriaco d'Ancona: el rastre de Felice Feliciano en una inscripció falsa de Tarragona (CIL II 383* = IP/14, 43*)*

Aquest article analitza la presència de tres inscripcions falses d'Hispania (*CIL* II 382*, 383* i 410*) pertanyents a la tradició de Ciriaco d'Ancona. Molts manuscrits afegeixen una clàusula de comiat al final de *CIL* II 383*, que finalment fou inclosa per Hübner com a part integrant del text. Presentem proves que aquesta interpolació hauria estat comesa per Felice Feliciano a través del manuscrit de Berna de Giovanni Marcanova.

Paraules claus: Ciriaco d'Ancona; Felice Feliciano; manuscrits epigràfics; falsos epigràfics.

Summary

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Introduction | 4. Conclusion |
| 2. The Spanish inscriptions
of Cyriac's archetype | Bibliography |
| 3. The interpolation of <i>CIL</i> II 383*,
the work of Felice Feliciano? | |

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1. Introduction

Since the editors of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (*CIL*) made the effort to compile, study and put into a draft stemma the epigraphical manuscripts dating back to the beginning of the fifteenth century, not much work has been done in pursuing this task. On the other hand, the context in which the copying of inscriptions took place is now much better known: we have a better insight into the humanists who wrote them and their heterogeneous academic interests; autograph manuscripts have been discovered, scribes identified; and the study of epigraphy has been put in relation to the broader antiquarian sensibility that swept Europe for two centuries.

And yet few are the times this knowledge has been used to shed new light on the transmission of epigraphy, as the editors of *CIL* first intended.² Regarding the subject of this paper, the lost collection of inscriptions by Cyriac of Ancona (1391-1453?)³ and its tradition, the great study that summarized the research conducted by the editors of *CIL* was published in 1905 by Ziebarth;⁴ after that, only one attempt has been made to tackle the matter, when Bodnar proposed a stemma for the inscriptions copied by Cyriac in his journey to Greece between 1435 and 1437.⁵

Our present research on the Spanish fake inscriptions forged during the Renaissance has led us to unveil a very concrete yet highly paradigmatic episode of the transmission of epigraphy in the Italian humanism of the second half of the Quattrocento. We believe that it documents not only the epigraphic culture of this period, but also the wider phenomenon of the antiquarian culture in the Renaissance.

2. The Spanish inscriptions of Cyriac's archetype

There are three Spanish inscriptions that seem to belong to the tradition of Cyriac of Ancona.⁶ All of them are fake and are reported to have been found in Catalonia, one in Barcelona (*CIL* II 410*) and the other two in Tarragona (*CIL* II 382* = II²/14, 35* and *CIL* II 383* = II²/14, 43*).⁷ Moreover, *CIL* II 382* appears in two different formats, one as a funeral inscription and the other as a dialogue (which we

2. This contradiction was first noted by SAXL 1940-41: 19-20. In the second half of the century there have been some important exceptions, such as the works of H. Solin, M. Buonocore and G. Vagenheim.

3. It is impossible to offer a bibliography for all humanists mentioned in this note; for a survey on Cyriac, however, see PACI-SCONOCCHIA 1998, with significant contributions in the field of epigraphy.

4. ZIEBARTH 1905.

5. BODNAR 1960: 73-120.

6. I have argued the presence of these inscriptions among the ones copied by Cyriac (which does not imply he was the actual author), but not of other Spanish fakes also associated to him in the 15th and 16th centuries; see GONZÁLEZ GERMAIN 2010. The Catalan humanist Jeroni Pau connected *CIL* II 410* to Cyriac already in 1491; the first modern author to defend they indeed belonged to his tradition was G. B. de Rossi (*ICVR*, II, p. 374).

7. The recent new edition of *CIL* II²/14 (*fasc.* 2) is based on Hübner's original edition, to which we will still refer throughout this note. The only recent work on these inscriptions is GUZMÁN ALMAGRO 2004. The author does not refer to the aspects discussed here.

refer to as *CIL* II 382a*), even if it is usually copied among inscriptions. Hübner, as editor of the second volume of *CIL*, wrote down the dialogue as a version of Pietro Cennini, from whose manuscript he knew it, but in fact *CIL* II 382a* appears in at least 11 different manuscripts, sometimes in addition to *CIL* II 382* and sometimes alone.⁸

Truth be told, we do not know a single document by Cyriac himself that alludes, directly or indirectly, to these three inscriptions. And yet all evidence points out that they indeed were part of his corpus of inscriptions, as they appear in both the oldest and the best manuscripts deriving from it. In particular, their presence in the manuscript written by Cyriac and presented to the bishop of Padua Pietro Donato (d. 1447),⁹ who filled the spaces left blank with more inscriptions (such as the Spanish fakes), proves that they were forged before 1447, when Cyriac still lived, and in a very early stage of the epigraphic development. This date should also exclude the possibility that the fake was forged in Spain, as the first signs of epigraphical interest in the Iberian Peninsula will not appear until the 1480s.

Apart from their presence in Donato's manuscript, another strong piece of evidence that they come from Cyriac's collection is that all four texts return in the *codex Angelicanus*, used by Ziebarth as one of the two main manuscripts for the reconstruction of Cyriac's inscriptions from Rome.¹⁰ The other one, the *codex Parmensis*, contains *CIL* II 382a*, but outside the main corpus, so it may have come from another source.¹¹ Furthermore, *CIL* II 382*, 383* and 410* (sometimes with the addition of 382a*) can be found in the collections of Giovanni Marcanova (1460-65), Felice Feliciano (ca. 1463), Michele Fabrizio Ferrarini (from 1477), Giovanni Giocondo (ca. 1489), Bartolomeo Fonzio (ca. 1490) and in a number of anonymous and minor fifteenth century collections, and throughout the majority of Spanish collections of the sixteenth century.¹²

8. The copy of Cennini (1471-75) can be found in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Naz. II.IX.14, f. 255v. The oldest copy (ca. 1463) of *CIL* II 382a* is that of Feliciano (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. Lat. X 196 (3766), f. 126r); it also appears in Ferrarini's first recension (Utrecht, Bibliotheek der Universiteit, ms. I. K. 9, f. 107r), the *codex Angelicanus* (Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, ms. 430, f. 43r) and the *codex Parmensis* (Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, ms. Parm. 1191, f. 102r); these manuscripts are further discussed below. The other copies are found in Fonzio's collection (Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Lat. misc. d. 85, f. 54v; Siena, Biblioteca Municipale, ms. C VIII 4, f. 45v; Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, ms. Ashb. 1174, f. 42v), in a copy made by Jean Calvet (Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, ms. 1010, f. 48v) and in two anonymous manuscripts (Barcelona, Biblioteca de Catalunya, ms. 1582, f. 19v; Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Canon. misc. 349, f. 82r).
9. Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, ms. Hamilton 254, ff. 88v-90v. See MOMMSEN 1883, ZIEBARTH 1905: 197-198, BODNAR 1960: 104-105 and CASU 2003: 143-144 (*scheda* n. I.15), with previous bibliography.
10. Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, ms. 430, ff. 33v and 43r. See ZIEBARTH 1905: 189-191 and 198, and BODNAR 1960: 104-106.
11. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, ms. Parm. 1191, f. 102r. See ZIEBARTH 1905: 189-191, BODNAR 1960: 106-110 and KRISTELLER 1965-97: II, 40.
12. Some of them are to be found in the edition of *CIL* II (pp. 38* and 40*). For general references to the collections of Marcanova, Feliciano, Ferrarini and Giocondo, see the *indices auctorum* of *CIL* (*praes.* III, VI and IX-X), ZIEBARTH 1905 and BODNAR 1960. For Fonzio, see SAXL 1940-41.

3. The interpolation of *CIL* II 383*, the work of Felice Feliciano?

One of the major textual variants in our fakes is found at the end of *CIL* II 383*, the funeral inscription of Clodius. The inscription reads: ‘To the gods Manes. I, Clodius, expelled by the fury and the envy of the citizens, went to *Terra agonum* [sc. the land of combats].¹³ Approaching death, I ordered that my ashes be put inside this tomb. The most pious matron Clodia looked after the funeral as ordered by her brother’s testament, with a mournful lament.’¹⁴ At the end of this text, a large number of manuscripts (but not the oldest ones) add the sentence: ‘Farewell, whoever you are’ (*bene valeas quisquis es*). Hübner included the sentence as part of the text of the inscription, but commenting that ‘some omit the clause b. v. q. s.’, without further specification.¹⁵ In fact, the final sentence is not part of the original text, and it is absent in the copies of Pietro Donato, the *codex Angelicanus* and other important manuscripts.

We have identified the origin of the error in the Bern manuscript containing the first recension of Marcanova’s collection, which dates from 1457-60.¹⁶ Just after the text of our inscription (f. 128v), which does not include the final sentence, the ink from the recto of the sheet has soaked through and it is possible to read the second line of a fake inscription from Rome (*CIL* VI 15*). This line, which of course appears to be written from right to left and with inverted letters, reads ‘*bene valeas quisquis es C*’ (see Fig. I and II).¹⁷

There is no doubt that this is the source of the interpolation. The line was added for the first time to the Spanish text only a few years after the compilation of this manuscript, the first testimonies dating from the mid 1460s. On the other hand, the incorporation of a line clearly from the other side of the page, which must be read backwards and is half obscured by the location of the next epigraph, is not a mistake which could be easily committed by different copyists. It is our belief that only one hand copied it, and that it was this copy that allowed the diffusion of the inter-

13. This false etymology for ‘*Tarraco*’ (usually spelled ‘*Terraco*’ in Medieval times) is not an innovation of the inscription’s forger, but appears in a Catalan epitome of Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada’s *Historia de rebus Hispaniae*, transmitted and modified through the XIII and XIV centuries; see BADIA 1997: 241-42. The etymology is mentioned in Lorenzo Valla’s *Gesta Ferdinandi regis Aragonum* (ed. O. Besomi, Padova, 1973, p. 17), written in Naples in 1445-46; that confirms that the epitome was known in Italy in the same years the inscription would have been forged.

14. ‘Dis Manibus. Clodius rabia civium invidia item pulsus Terram Agonum petii. Vita decedens tumulo isto cinerem locari iussi. Pientissima matrona Clodia relicta ex testamento fratris funera lamentabili fletu curavit.’ The text is the result of my PhD dissertation (*Estudi i edició de les inscripcions llatines falses d’Hispania (ca. 1440-1550)*, Bellaterra, 2011), and presents some differences with respect to the one edited by Hübner.

15. *CIL* II, p. 38*: ‘nonnulli (...) omittunt *fratris* et *clausulam b. v. q. e.*’.

16. Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. B 42. Both dates appear in the manuscript; the first is believed to be the ending date of the compilation of inscriptions, and the second one the ending date of the compilation of the whole manuscript. See ZIEBARTH 1905: 191-192, BODNAR 1960: 98-101, KRISTELLER 1965-97: V, 88, BARILE 2006: 186-187 and CARTWRIGHT 2007: 72-85.

17. The whole inscription, also from Cyriac’s tradition, says: ‘Dedicated to the gods Manes. Farewell, whoever you are. To my wife Gaia Marcia, who well deserves it, who with great difficulties lived virtuously until an advanced age.’ (‘d.m.s. / bene valeas quisquis es C. / Marciae coniugi bene merita quae multis cum sudoribus matura aetate vixit virtuose’).

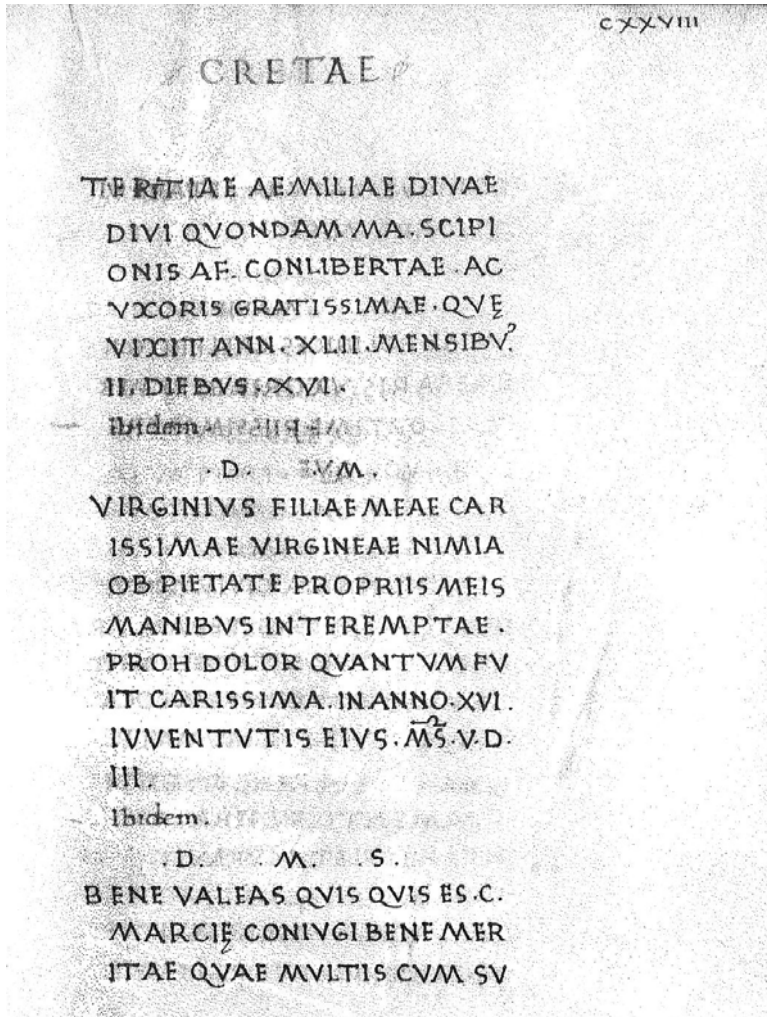


Figure 1. Burgerbibliothek, Bern, Cod. B 42, f. 128r

EPI

DORIBVS MATVRA AETATE VIT
 CIT VIRTV OSE
 I VLIAE POLINICES CAELERE G. I.
 CAESARIS VICTORIS BENEMER
 ITAE. OPTIME PISSIMAE ERG
 A SE SVOS QVE.

ARAGONIE
 . DANICOR M REINIA .

CLODIVS RABIA CIVIVM INVI
 DIA ITEM PVLSVS TERIAM ARA
 GONVM PETII. VITA DECEDENS
 TVM VLO ISTO CINEREM LOCA
 RI IVSSI. PIENTISSIMA MATR
 ONA CLODIA RELICTA EXTE
 STAMENTO FVNERA LAME
 NTABILI FLETV CVRAVIT.

QVO VADAM NESICIO INVITVS
 MORIOR VALET E POSTVM I.

Figure 2. Burgerbibliothek, Bern, Cod. B 42, f. 128v

polation. Furthermore, we believe that we can individuate the interpolator in the figure of Felice Feliciano, as all textual and contextual evidence seems to suggest.¹⁸

It is widely known that Feliciano worked together with Marcanova during 1460-65, after the Bern manuscript had been compiled,¹⁹ but contributing decisively (both in giving new inscriptions and as a scribe) in the second recension,²⁰ found in a manuscript in Modena dating back to 1465.²¹ In the same period he wrote the most known recension of his own collection, found in two copies (not from his hand, as the editors of *CIL* believed) kept in Verona and Venice.²² Interestingly enough, Marcanova's second recension does not contain the interpolated version, but both copies of Feliciano's collection do.

The next manuscripts to include the interpolated version are linked to the Veronese humanist. A collection of inscriptions by *Franciscus Cynthius Anconitanus* (i.e., the poet F. Cinzio Benincasa, c. 1450-1507)²³ is dedicated to Feliciano himself.²⁴ Michele Fabrizio Ferrarini used Feliciano's corpus as one of his main sources since his first recension, dated 1477.²⁵ And the unknown Roman humanist *Publius Licinius* (the name is believed to be a pseudonym) is also bound to Feliciano, even if the nature of this relationship is still to be determined: the oldest copy of his collection is written in the hand of Feliciano, who is also mentioned as a source for his inscriptions.²⁶ It is possible that they worked together in Rome from 1478 until Feliciano's death (ca. 1479), where they coincide in the circle of the patron Francesco Porcari;²⁷ and it is clear that Feliciano was the one to give him the interpolated version of the Spanish fake.

Publio Licinio seems to be another central point in the chain of transmission of epigraphic material. Apart from Feliciano's, another copy kept in Trento includes

18. For a survey on Feliciano, see CONTÒ - QUARELLI 1995.

19. The hand of Feliciano appears in some *marginalia* in the last section of the Bern manuscript (ff. 194r-201r); see BARILE 2006: 186.

20. This mutual influence was first noted by Mommsen in *CIL* III, p. XXIV.

21. Modena, Biblioteca Estense, ms. Lat. 992 (alpha L 5 15); *CIL* II 383* appears on f. 197v. This magnificently written and illustrated manuscript has been much more studied than the one in Bern; see RICCI 2006, CARTWRIGHT 2007 and TRIPPE 2010, with previous bibliography.

22. Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. Lat. X, 196 (3766); Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare, ms CCLXIX (240); *CIL* II 383* appears respectively on ff. 64 and 101v. See ZIEBARTH 1905: 194-195, PRATILLI 1939-40: 48-51, MITCHELL 1961: *praes.* 211-213, KRISTELLER 1965-97: II, 238 and 294, and CONTÒ 2006.

23. The connection is confirmed by the presence of two poems by Cinzio in a manuscript of letters composed by Feliciano (Brescia, Biblioteca Queriniana, ms. C II 14, ff. 74v-75r) where the Veronese is named; see POZZI - GIANELLA 1980: 475-476.

24. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. Lat. 5251, f. 50; see KRISTELLER 1965-97: II, 374. PRATILLI 1939-40: 55 considers the ms. autograph of Feliciano. MITCHELL 1961: 215 and 220, on the contrary, believes it to be a copy of a Felicean manuscript.

25. Utrecht, Bibliotheek der Universiteit, ms. I. K. 9 (*olim* 765 = Lat. 57), f. 72v. See *CIL* III, p. XX and XXV; ZIEBARTH 1905: 196-197; KRISTELLER 1965-97: IV, 383, and ESPLUGA 2009: 138-139.

26. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. Lat. 3616, f. 50v; see KRISTELLER 1965-97: II, 321. For the collection of Licinio and its copies, see HÜLSEN 1923: 138-57. Hülsen thought that beneath this pseudonym could be hidden a member of the Roman family de Lallis, whose palace provided for an important number of inscriptions in Licinio's collection.

27. See MOMIGLIANI 1994: 468-469.

a first draft of the collection of the architect and antiquarian Giovanni Giocondo.²⁸ It could indicate that he used Licinio's collection in the beginning of his epigraphical research, and it explains the presence of the interpolated version of the inscription in most of the many copies he ordered to make.

The Trento copy and another one in Darmstadt²⁹ ended up in the hands of the humanist Conrad Peutinger, the first through Johannes Fuchsmagen (who owned the manuscript) and the second one through Petrus Jacobi (to whom it was dedicated), both in direct relationship to the German scholar.³⁰ This also marked an important step in the diffusion of the fake, as the epigraphical material of Peutinger was used by P. Apianus and B. Amantius to compile their *Inscriptiones sacrosanctae vetustatis*, published in 1534, which ensured the final spread of the interpolated version through the sixteenth century and beyond.³¹

4. Conclusion

With its access to printing, we reach the end of our journey through the 'life' of the inscription, which had begun eighty years earlier in Cyriac's manuscripts. However, there are still two observations that we would like to make. First of all, we are taken aback by the lack of scruples shown by the interpolator, supposedly Feliciano, in sticking to the historical evidence; even if, as in this case, the evidence should be an older forgery. It's impossible, at this point, not to recall the words with which Charles Mitchell described Feliciano's passion for the antique: 'he had no hesitation about brightening up the colour or design of a monument if it was weak or unimpressive in the version before him (...). But Felice's principles of "falsification" were not meaningless (...). His changes were always in the direction of making the antique look more antique still. He wanted to bring it up to the pitch of the brilliant colours and sharp-edged outlines of the antique world as it lived in his imagination'.³² There is little doubt that the farewell clause would have seemed, in Feliciano's eyes, a good way to improve an already extraordinary inscription.

But there is still another point to be noted: over the flood of epigraphical manuscripts, there are some lines of transmission which can certainly be traced, and from which we should be able to obtain new information about the relationships between humanists and how they worked. We hope that this note might hopefully contribute, in some measure, to this final aim.

28. Trento, Biblioteca Comunale, ms. 3569; the manuscript however does not contain *CIL* II 383*. See HÜLSEN 1923: 140.

29. Darmstadt, Hessische Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, ms. 2533, f. 65. See HÜLSEN 1923: 139-140 and KRISTELLER 1965-97: III, 515-516.

30. There are two copies of *CIL* II 383* in his epigraphical manuscripts: Augsburg, Staat und Stadtbibliothek, 2° cod H. 24, f. 50v and *ibid.*, 2° Cod H. 23, f. 45r. See HÜLSEN 1921 and KRISTELLER 1965-97: III, 456.

31. See HÜLSEN 1923: 139-40 and BILLANOVICH 1969: 248-249.

32. MITCHELL 1960: 480-481.

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