



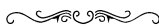
*From Ancient Mourning to Sardinian Traditions: Plutarchan Re-readings in an Annotated Copy of Giulio Cesare Scaligero's Translation of the Parallel Lives**

Valeria Melis

Abstract

L'articolo esamina la traduzione cinquecentesca della seconda parte delle *Vite Parallele* realizzata da Giulio Bordon (Giulio Cesare Scaligero) e stampata da Zoppino nel 1525, ricostruendone contesto, fonti e progetto editoriale. A partire dall'unica copia sarda conservata a Cagliari, ne ripercorre la storia materiale e le tracce dei diversi lettori, con particolare attenzione a un anonimo annotatore settecentesco. Le sue note, che modernizzano il testo e valorizzano temi legati al lutto e alle pratiche rituali locali, offrono un raro esempio di ricezione sarda. L'analisi filologica e storico-culturale delle annotazioni mette in luce il dialogo tra Plutarco, la tradizione umanistica e le pratiche memoriali della Sardegna moderna.

The article examines the sixteenth-century translation of the second part of the *Parallel Lives* produced by Giulio Bordon (Giulio Cesare Scaligero) and printed by Zoppino in 1525, reconstructing its context, sources, and editorial project. Drawing on the only Sardinian copy preserved in Cagliari, it retraces the book's material history and the marks left by its various readers, with particular attention to an anonymous eighteenth-century annotator. His notes, which modernise the text and highlight themes linked to mourning and local ritual practices, offer a rare example of Sardinian reception. The philological and historical-cultural analysis of these annotations brings to light the dialogue between Plutarch, the humanistic tradition, and the memorial practices of early modern Sardinia.



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1. *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho* translated by Giulio Bordon for Niccolò Zoppino (Venice, 1525)

In 1482, Battista Alessandro Iaconelli brought out, through the press of Adam of Rottweill, *La prima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho traducte de Latino in vulgare in Aquila*.¹ From both the table of contents and the *explicit* it is evident that he had already planned a continuation, namely a second volume comprising the *Lives* omitted from his first translation.² Yet, even by the time Giorgio de' Rusconi issued the Venetian reprint of 1518,³ no sign of this projected sequel had appeared.

The task of completing the enterprise eventually fell to the physician and man of letters Giulio Bordon, also known as Giulio Cesare Scaligero.⁴ He produced the second and concluding part, entitled *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho di greco in latino et di latino in volgare nouamente tradotte et historiate*.⁵ This work was

¹ B.A. IACONELLI, *Vite de Plutarcho traducte de latino in vulgare in Aquila al Magnifico Lodovicho Torto per Baptista Alexandro Iaconello de Riete*, L'Aquila 1482. References: ISTC ip00836000; IGI 7926 GW M34492.

² Included in Iaconelli's vernacular translation are the *Lives* of Theseus, Romulus, Lysander, Sulla, Eumenes, Sertorius, Cimon, Lucullus, Nicias, Crassus, Agesilaus, Pompey, Alexander, Caesar, Phocion, and Cato the Younger. In the second part, translated by Bordon, we find the *Lives* of Solon, Publicola, Alcibiades, Marcus Coriolanus, Pelopidas, Marcus Claudius Marcellus, Hannibal, Pericles, Fabius Maximus, Philopoemen, Titus Quinctius Flamininus, Aristides, Marcus Porcius Cato, Agis, Cleomenes, Scipio Africanus, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, Dion, Demosthenes, Cicero, Demetrius, Mark Antony, Artaxerxes, Aratus, Galba, Otho, and the Ps.-Plutarch treatise *On Homer*.

³ B.A. IACONELLI, *Le Vite di Plutarcho, vulgare, nouamente impresse, et historiate*, Venezia 1518. References: EDIT 16 CNCE 47461.

⁴ On the complex question of the author's identity, recent critical studies, especially those of Myriam Billanovich (M. BILLANOVICH, *B. Bordone e G.C. Scaligero*, in «Italia medioevale e umanistica», 11 [1968], pp. 187-256), show that the figure later known in France as Giulio Cesare Scaligero (Della Scala) is in fact identical with Giulio Bordon. Born probably in Padua in 1484, he was the son of the Paduan miniaturist Benedetto Bordon, referred to in contemporary documents as *Benedictus Bordonius* and, at his death in 1530, leaving to his son Giulio his philosophical and scientific books. Giulio's early works – including the *Elysium* and the 1525 translation of Plutarch – appear under the name *Julius Caesar Bordonius* or Giulio Bordon. Giusto, Giulio Bordon's son, wishing to defend the family's aristocratic claims, later argued that *Bordonius* was a typographical error. Only after his departure from Italy in 1524–25 did he permanently adopt the appellation Della Scala or Scaligero, a name promoted above all by Giusto in order to construct a noble Veronese lineage. See E. BRINKSCHULTE, *Julius Caesar Scaligers kunsttheoretische Anschauungen und deren Hauptquellen*, Bonn 1914; V. HALL JR., *Life of J.C. Scaliger (1484-1558)*, Philadelphia 1950; B. WEINBERG, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance*, vol. II, Chicago 1961, at pp. 743-750; C. BALAVOINE – P. LAURENS (éds.), *La Statue et l'Empreinte. La poétique de Scaliger*, Paris 1986, pp. 1-412; J. CUBELIER DE BEYNAC – M. MAGNIEN (éd.), *Acta scaligeriana. Actes du colloque international organisé pour le cinquième centenaire de la naissance de Jules-César Scaliger* (Agen, 4-16 septembre 1984), Agen 1984; G. PATRIZI, *Della Scala, Giulio Cesare*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* [DBI] 37, Roma 1989, pp. 426-432 [[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/della-scala-giulio-cesare_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/della-scala-giulio-cesare_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)]; R. SAKAMOTO, *Julius Caesar Scaliger, Renaissance Reformer of Aristotelianism*, Leiden 2016.

⁵ G. BORDON, *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho di greco in latino et di latino in volgare nouamente tradotte et historiate*, Venezia 1525. References: EDIT 16 CNCE 41051 (duplicate 74888).

printed in Venice by Niccolò Zoppino in March 1525, in conjunction with the second reprint of Iaconelli's first part of the *Lives*.⁶

Bordon does not translate from the original Greek, but from a Latin version, perhaps from the collection of humanist translations edited by Giovanni Antonio Campano, published in Rome in 1470.⁷ According to recent studies, this collection may already have been used by Iaconelli for *La prima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho*.⁸ However, one should not exclude the possibility that the translators drew on several Latin versions.

The innovation and value of Bordon's translation are explicitly stated, using a standard formula, in the *privilegium* granted to Zoppino by Pope Leo X on 5 June 1521: Plutarch's excellent works, never before printed or published, were translated from Latin into the vernacular "for the common benefit of all" (*pro communi omnium utilitate*).⁹

Iaconelli had already been aware of this utility when, in the dedication to Lodovico Torto, he explained that he wished "to bring these lives to uneducated people" («far note a genti indotte queste vite»)¹⁰ so that the fame and memory of the magnanimous men described by Plutarch would not remain the exclusive domain of learned men.

In Bordon's volume, the significance of completing the work is further underlined in the dedication of the book to Francesco Maria I Della Rovere, which states that the *Lives*, already fully translated into Latin "by several learned men" («da più

⁶ B.A. IACONELLI, *La prima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho di greco in latino & di latino in volgare tradotte & nouamente con le sue historie ristampate*, Venezia 1525. References: EDIT 16 CNCE 74888. For Iaconelli's vernacular translation and the subsequent reprints of the work, see V. COSTA, *Sulle prime traduzioni italiane a stampa delle opere di Plutarco* (secc. xv-xvi), in *Volgarizzare e tradurre dall'Umanesimo all'Età contemporanea*. Atti della Giornata di Studi (Università di Roma 'Sapienza', 7 dicembre 2011), ed. by M. Accame, Roma 2013, pp. 83-107, at pp. 84-88.

⁷ G.A. CAMPANO, *Plutarchus. Vitae illustrium virorum*, Roma 1470. References: ISTC ip00830000. See F.R. HAUSMANN, *Campano, Giovanni Antonio*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani [DBI]* 17, Roma 1974, pp. 424-429 [[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-antonio-campano_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovanni-antonio-campano_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)]; M. PADE, *The Reception of Plutarch from Antiquity to the Italian Renaissance*, in *A Companion to Plutarch*, Malden, MA 2014, ed. by M. Beck pp. 531-543.

⁸ M.A. PASSARELLI, *Iaconelli, Battista Alessandro*, in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani [DBI]* 62, Roma 2004, pp. 17-19 [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/battista-alessandro-iaconelli_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/].

⁹ G. BORDON, *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho di greco in latino et di latino in volgare nouamente tradotte et historiate*, cit. n. 5, *Privilegium*; on "copyright" and *privilegia* in Renaissance see C.L.C.E. WITCOMBE, *Copyright in the Renaissance: Prints and the Privilegio in Sixteenth-Century Venice and Rome*, Leiden-Boston 2004; E. SQUASSINA, *Privilegi librari ed edizioni privilegiate nella Repubblica di Venezia (1527-1565)*, Milano 2022. For a digital archive of primary sources on copyright from the invention of the printing press (c. 1450) to the Berne Convention (1886) and beyond, see *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)*, L. Bently, M. Kretschmer (eds.), www.copyrighthistory.org.

¹⁰ B.A. IACONELLI, *La prima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho di greco in latino & di latino in volgare tradotte & nouamente con le sue historie ristampate*, cit. n. 6, Prologue, f. 2.

huomini dotti»)¹¹ needed to be entirely rendered into the vernacular “with the utmost care, study, and skill” («con ogni cura, studio et arte sommi»)¹² and that this arduous undertaking gave rise to a “new translation” («nuoua tradottione»)¹³.

The *privilegium* underscores the Renaissance view of biography as a tool for moral and political instruction.¹⁴ Plutarch’s works, offering moral exemplars, encouraged Western readers to engage with Greek and Latin literature in pursuit of *humanitas*, linking virtue to practical knowledge, as noted by early humanists like Coluccio Salutati.¹⁵ Dedications such as Bordon’s to Francesco Maria I Della Rovere emphasize that the *Lives* provide both literary pleasure and guidance for conduct.

In Bordon’s translation, the dedication is followed by the *Lives*, arranged according to the order indicated in the table, except for those of Philopoemen and Titus Quinctius Flamininus, which are reversed. Each biography is preceded by a printed engraving depicting one or two episodes from the subject’s life.

The vernacular translations of Plutarch’s *Lives* by Iaconelli and Bordon gained considerable success. The dedication of the second part to Francesco Maria accounts for this favourable reception: the ancients admired Greek and Latin letters as the source of all knowledge and transmitted the deeds of “famous and worthy men” («huomini famosi et degni»);¹⁶ among them, Plutarch holds pre-eminence for his elegant style and for portraying the lives of Greek and Roman rulers. His work deserves admiration both for its literary refinement and its exemplary moral value. The Prince is praised as surpassing the virtues of those figures and will find

¹¹ G. BORDON, *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho di greco in latino et di latino in volgare nouamente tradotte et historiate*, cit. n. 5, Dedication, f. 2.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ By the late Middle Ages, Plutarch was known in the West – though inaccurately – as Trajan’s educator, a reputation that endured into the fourteenth century when Petrarch cited him as a great teacher and author of *Lives*. Following the Ciceronian principle *historia magistra vitae* (Cic. *de orat.* 2.9.36), Renaissance humanists prized learning from examples over precepts, seeing history and biography as more effective than philosophy in shaping character (see T. HAMPTON, *Writing from History. The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature*, Ithaca – London 1990, at pp. 31-47; 120; 137-139; 145-154; 206-236; M. PADE, *The Reception of Plutarch’s Lives in Fifteenth-Century Italy*, vol. I, Copenhagen 2007, at pp. 16-17, 24-25; V. COSTA, *Sulle prime traduzioni italiane a stampa delle opere di Plutarco (secc. xv-xvi)*, in *Volgarizzare e tradurre dall’Umanesimo all’Età contemporanea*, cit. n. 6, at pp. 87, 89-90, 92; M. PADE, *Plutarch in the Italian Renaissance*, in *The Cambridge Companion to Plutarch*, ed. by F.B. Titchener, A.V. Zadorojnyi, Cambridge 2023, pp. 323-339, at pp. 337-338). Moreover, as Schein (S.L. SCHEIN, *Our Debt to Greece and Rome: Canon, Class and Ideology*, in *A Companion to Classical Reception*, ed. by L. Hardwick, C. Stray, Chichester 2011, pp. 75-85, at p. 77) notes, during the Renaissance – just as had occurred for the ecclesiastical, legal, and educational elites of antiquity and the Middle Ages – humanists skillfully exploited the knowledge, techniques, and prestige of the classical world to consolidate their positions of power. Between the 14th and 15th centuries, the *studia humanitatis* (together with mastery of classical Latin, and to a lesser extent Greek) became a means of social mobility, opening up opportunities for scholars to serve as secretaries and ambassadors for city-states or as tutors in noble households.

¹⁵ R. WEISS, *Medieval and Humanist Greek: Collected Essays*, Padova 1977, at. pp. 216-220.

¹⁶ G. BORDON, *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho di greco in latino et di latino in volgare nouamente tradotte et historiate*, cit. n. 5, Dedication: f. 2.

great satisfaction in recognising himself in them.¹⁷ Other readers too will find the work particularly pleasing, not only for its quality and novelty but also because it was produced under the patronage of such an illustrious lord.¹⁸

2. *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho* preserved at the University Library of Cagliari

The University Library of Cagliari houses the only copy in Sardinia¹⁹ of *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho* translated by Bordon. The handsome volume is listed under the shelf mark 'S(ala) N(uova) 11.6.31' in the fifth book of a general catalogue, *Inventario Sala Grande III e Sala Nuova I*, which began to be compiled in 1871.²⁰ As evidenced by the oldest ownership stamp, the book originally belonged to the Library of the Mercedarians of Bonaria, and it must therefore have arrived at the University Library sometime between 1866, the year of the Order's suppression, and around 1871. Likely following a more recent reorganisation of the Library, the volume was re-shelved and catalogued; indeed, it is recorded on 18 June 1959 in a register entitled *Fondo Antica Provenienza*.²¹

On the frontispiece (figure 1), in addition to the stamp of the Library of Buonaria (referring to the Library of the Convent of Our Lady of Bonaria, *i.e.*, the Order of the Mercedarians)²² and that of the University Library of Cagliari (at the time known as 'Biblioteca Governativa di Cagliari'),²³ there are traces of three different inks, each corresponding to a different hand: the first ink, a now-faded black, belongs to a cursive inscription – probably an *ex libris* – which is now illegible due to erasure and paper deterioration, located above the frame; the second ink, thicker than the first and brownish in colour, belongs to the *ex libris* inside the frame; the third ink, a more vivid brown tending towards reddish, corresponds to a brief indication of price («costho 20») situated inside the frame in the lower right corner. Within the frame, just above the title of the work, there was another inscription, also illegible due to erasure.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ None of the Sardinian libraries appears to hold the first part translated by Iaconelli.

²⁰ On the front cover, the current shelf mark is indicated (D.B. 68/2), and in addition to the shelf mark reported in the *Inventario*, there is evidence of another placement: S(ala) N(uova) 25.2.85.

²¹ The accession number corresponds to the current inventory number (171.417).

²² The stamp of the Buonaria Library is also present in the *colophon*.

²³ R.D. No. 5368/1869 [<https://www.normattiva.it/atto/caricaDettaglioAtto?atto.dataPubblicazioneGazzetta=1869-12-13&atto.codiceRedazionale=069U5368&tipoDettaglio=originario&qId=&tabID=0.2761747911026664&title=Atto%20originario&bloccoAggiornamentoBreadCrumb=true>]

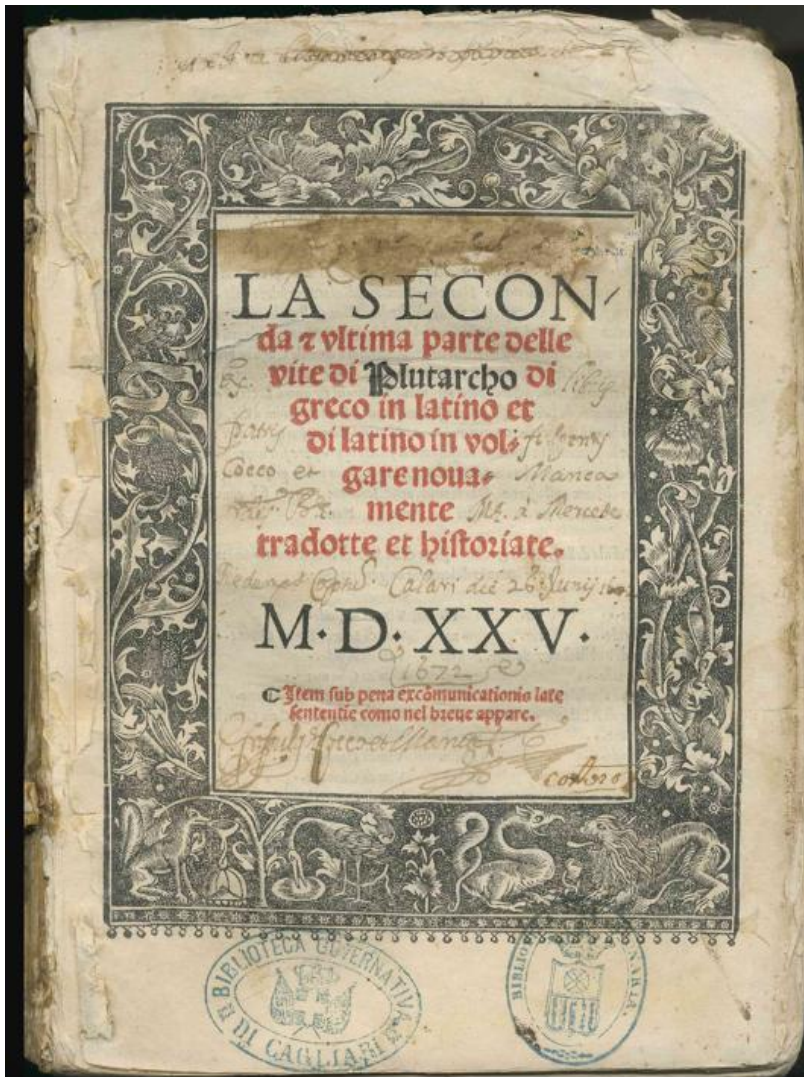


Figure 1. Frontispiece of the second part of the printed edition of Plutarch's Parallel Lives translated by Bordon (1525) and preserved at the University Library of Cagliari. URL: [<https://opac.regione.sardegna.it/SebinaOpac/resource/la-prima-seconda-vltima-parte-delle-vite-di-plutarcho-di-greco-in-latino-di-latino-in-volgare-tradot/CAG2146529?sysb=CINQUECENTINE>]

From the *ex libris*,²⁴ dated 26 July 1672, it is known that the book belonged to Father Fulgenzio Cocco Manca (Cagliari, 1645 – [?], 1690), a monk of the Order of St

²⁴ *Ex libris Patris Fulgentij Cocco et Manca ordinis Beatae Mariae à Mercede Redemptionis Captiuorum Calari die 26 Iunij 1672. 1672 / P(a)t(e)r Ful(enti)us Cocco et Manca.*

Mary of Mercy²⁵ at the Cagliari convent of Bonaria,²⁶ where he had conducted his studies and taken his vows, serving for several years as prior. Known as a distinguished theologian and orator,²⁷ Father Fulgenzio, who travelled extensively to educate himself in Italy, Spain, France, Flanders and Germany,²⁸ was a scholar of history and the author of several works, notably two texts in Castilian: *Arbol genealógico de la esclarescida casa Egmondana*,²⁹ published in 1679 in Brussels, and *Historia de Buenayre*, printed in 1690 in Cagliari by the press of the Mercedarian convent of Bonaria.³⁰

From the title page onwards, the *folia* of the Plutarch edition are numbered in Arabic numerals written in black graphite. This numbering follows that of the original edition – which uses printed Roman numerals – up to f. 208, after which f. 209 is wanting.

The Arabic numerals were therefore presumably added in more recent times, possibly to compensate for Roman numerals lost through paper deterioration or – less probably – to assist readers less familiar with Roman numbering. The inside

²⁵ The Order, approved on 17 January 1235 by Pope Gregory IX, who assigned it the fundamental rule of Saint Augustine, was founded in Barcelona on 10 August 1218 by Peter Nolasco with the aim of freeing Christian prisoners who had become slaves of Muslims. See Y. DOSSAT, *Les ordres de rachat, les Mercédaires, in Assistance et charité*, «Cahiers de Fanjeaux», 13 (1978), pp. 365–387; A. RUBINO, *Mercedari*, in *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, vol. V, Roma 1978, coll. 1219–1228; D. LE BLÉVEC, *Mercedari*, in *Dizionario Enciclopedico del Medioevo*, ed. by A. Vauchez, Italian ed. edited by C. Leonardi, vol. II, Roma 1998, pp. 1179–1180; D. LE BLÉVEC, *Pietro Nolasco (santo)*, in *Dizionario Enciclopedico del Medioevo cit.*, vol. III, Roma 1999, p. 1480; L. HERTLING – A. BULLA, *Storia della Chiesa. La penetrazione dello spazio umano ad opera del cristianesimo. Edizione riveduta, aggiornata e ampliata*, trans. C. Vivaldelli, G. D'Alessandro, Roma 2001⁷ (or. tit.: *Geschichte der katholischen Kirche. Vierte, verbesserte und ergänzte Auflage*, Berlin 1967⁴), at p. 209.

²⁶ On the Convent of Our Lady of Bonaria of the Order of Mercy in Cagliari: [https://suisa.archivi.beniculturali.it/cgi-bin/suisa/pagina.pl?TipoPag=comparc&Chiave=365717].

²⁷ P. TOLA, *Dizionario biografico degli uomini illustri di Sardegna*, vol. I, A-C, ed. by M. Brigaglia, Nuoro (or. ed.: Torino) 2001² (1837¹), at. 359.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ The *Arbol genealógico*, in prose, was intended to illustrate to the Sardinian nobility the lineage and merits of the Flemish Count Philip of Egmont, who one year later (specifically on 30 March 1680) would be officially appointed Viceroy of Sardinia by the court of Madrid. From this work, and the subsequent *Arbol florido de el héroe perfecto el Excellentissimo Señor Don Phelipe Conde de Egmond & c...*, Juan Efis Esquirro likely drew inspiration for the *Loa* ('*Encomium*') in verse dedicated to Count Egmont. Like its (presumed) models, the *Loa* also employs the semantic field of vegetation and the Greco-Roman mythological world to praise Count Philip and his house. See G. SIOTTO-PINTOR, *Storia letteraria di Sardegna*, vol. IV, Bologna 1844b, at pp. 72–73; R. CIASCA, *Bibliografia sarda*, vol. I, Bologna 1931, p. 407, 3920 and 3921; F. FLORIS, *La grande enciclopedia della Sardegna*, vol. III, *Cimbali-Enna*, Moncalieri (TO) 2007² (2002¹), p. 42, s.v. Cocco Manca, Fulgenzio; T. PABA, *Loas palaciegas nella Sardegna spagnola*, Milano 2015, at pp. 153–172.

³⁰ Giovanni Siotto-Pintor (G. SIOTTO-PINTOR, *Storia letteraria di Sardegna*, vol. III, Bologna 1844a, at pp. 104–105) places the *Historia de Buenayre* among the historical writings "of little or no weight" (p. 105, «di poco o nullo peso») published between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. A more favourable evaluation is expressed by the politician and man of letters of Cagliari regarding the *Arbol genealógico*, written, in his opinion, with "somewhat more temperate spirits" (*Ivi*, p. 208, «spiriti alquanto più temperati») compared with contemporary authors of genealogies, such as Efisio Siotto and Giacinto Arnaldo di Bolea, whom he reproaches for excessively laudatory tones (*Ivi*, pp. 208–209).

front and back covers are reinforced with two waste sheets, each bearing a hand-written text on its verso.

3. An Anonymous Annotator

In addition to the previously identified hands, a fourth hand can be discerned.³¹ It writes almost exclusively in cursive, using a dense black ink of fine stroke, and is more recent than both Father Fulgenzio's faded *ex libris* and the enigmatic notes – comprising dotted letters, symbols, and numbers – found on ff. 125v, 126r, and 127r, which, on palaeographical grounds, may likewise be attributed to Father Fulgenzio himself. This fourth hand, which palaeographical analysis places in the late eighteenth century,³² is indeed later than those notes as demonstrated by the fact that, on f. 125v, one of its *marginalia* is written over them (figure 2).

Perhaps annoyed by the outdated editing and language, this mysterious annotator almost systematically added line breaks and accentuation marks, entirely absent in the print, capitalised titles («re» is corrected to «Re», «dio» to «Dio»),³³ and in many cases erased endings, vowels, consonants, and combinations, overwriting them to replace obsolete forms with current forms (e.g., «crodelate» is corrected to «crudeltà», «cittate» to «città», «lochi» to «luogi» (*sic*), «adunque» to «dunque»). Moreover, the annotator almost systematically marked, by underlining, direct³⁴ and indirect speech or quotations from texts,³⁵ the names by which places, things, and people are called,³⁶ sayings,³⁷ names and/or their explanation.³⁸

³¹ On annotated printed books, see G. FRASSO, *Libri a stampa postillati: riflessioni suggerite da un catalogo*, in «Aevum», 69.3 (September–December 1995), pp. 617–640 (on annotated books relating to classical literatures, see pp. 619–620 and n. 7); *Nel mondo delle postille. I libri a stampa con note manoscritte. Una raccolta di studi*, ed. by E. Barbieri, pref. by G. Frasso, Milano 2002; *Libri a stampa postillati*. Atti del Colloquio internazionale (Milano, 3–5 maggio 2001), ed. by E. Barbieri, G. Frasso, Milano 2003; G. PETRELLA, *Scrivere sui libri. Breve guida al libro a stampa postillato*, Roma 2022.

³² I am grateful to Professor Bianca Fadda (University of Cagliari) for helping me to date the hand.

³³ There are various examples on f. 46 coll. 1 and 2, and on f. 102 col. 2.

³⁴ If the text continues over several lines, the annotator sometimes underlines only the first and last words (e.g., f. 15 col. 3 «Trecento giouani congiurati in la tua morte [...] che più di ciò è degno che di esserli nimico», f. 94 col. 1 «Il senato et popolo romano, et Tito Quintio imperatore et [...] Euboici, Achei, Phthioti, Magnesii, Thessali, Perebi»). The underlinings on these pages are mine and correspond to those made by the anonymous annotator on the original sixteenth-century Sardinian edition.

³⁵ E.g., f. 14, col. 1 «Fece una lege: si potesse lo reo, quello che hauea alcuna cosa ad patire, appellarse dal giudicio de consoli al popolo»; f. 139, col. 1 «Et essendogli poi stata fatta la statua in memoria sua, fuui scritto di sotto, questa è Cornelia matre di Gracchi».

³⁶ E.g., f. 5, col. 2 «Salamina era Ionia detta»; f. 177, col. 3 «Demetrio fu sforzato a fuggire, et con ueloce passo peruenne ad Pylas Amoni».

³⁷ E.g., f. 6, col. 1 «E diuolgato uno detto suo celebre, la equalità essere madre della concordia».

³⁸ E.g., f. 6, col. 3 «Sisachthia [...] alleuiamento di peso»; f. 78, col. 4 «Et oltra di questo lo dimandarono ouicula, che è a dire pecorella»; f. 125, col. 1 «La madre Idea cioè Cybele».

In no case do the underlinings serve to highlight concepts. For this purpose, in fact, the anonymous annotator used simple crosses or crosses characterised by a dot at each corner. He also supplemented the text with *marginalia*, except in the case of the *Life of Otho*, which curiously bears no trace of ink. It is, therefore, possible that the anonymous annotator completely omitted reading that *Life*.

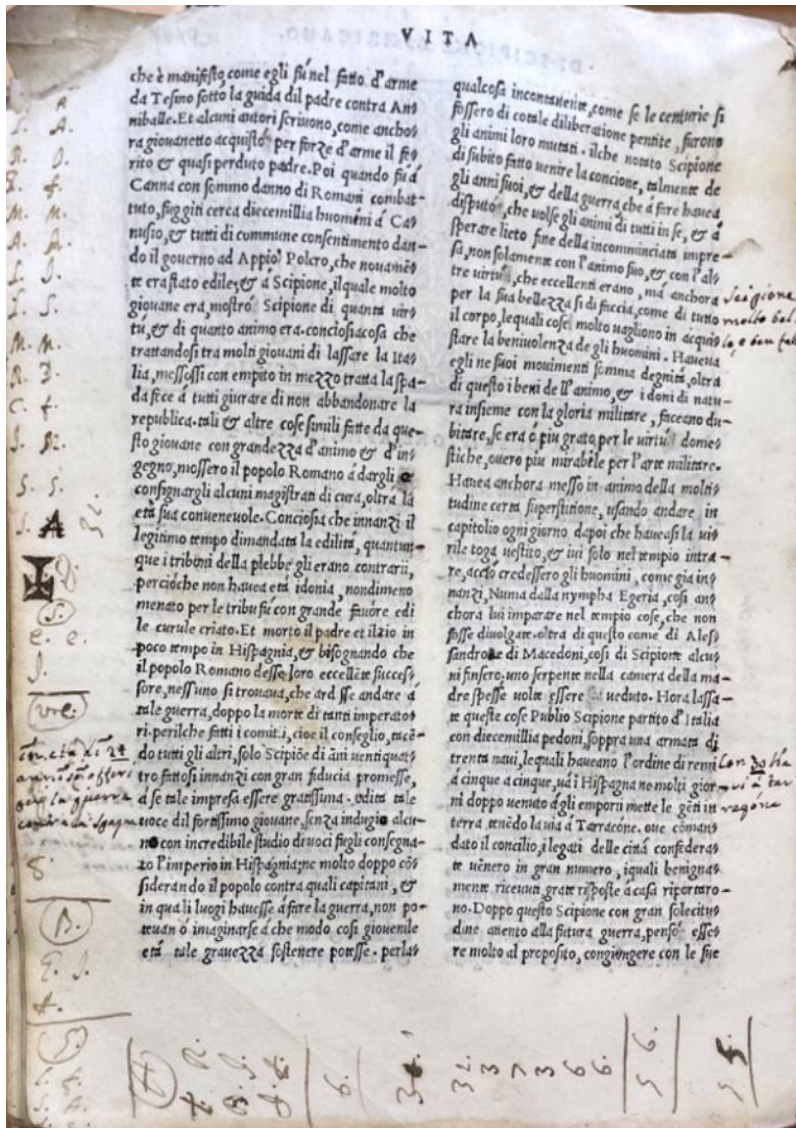


Figure 2. Folium 125v. One of the marginalia is superimposed over some notes clearly written by an earlier hand.

4. Tracing Sorrow: The “*veste segno di luto*”

The *marginalia* written by the anonymous reader consist of brief summaries or comments on individual portions of text. The nature of these annotations suggests that the volume was used for study purposes – a systematic and attentive study that, for reasons unknown to us, appears not to have involved the biography of Otho.

Connected with this system of notes are two remarks written on the inside back cover (figure 3), the second of which is not fully legible because of a lacuna caused by a hole in part of the left margin of the page.

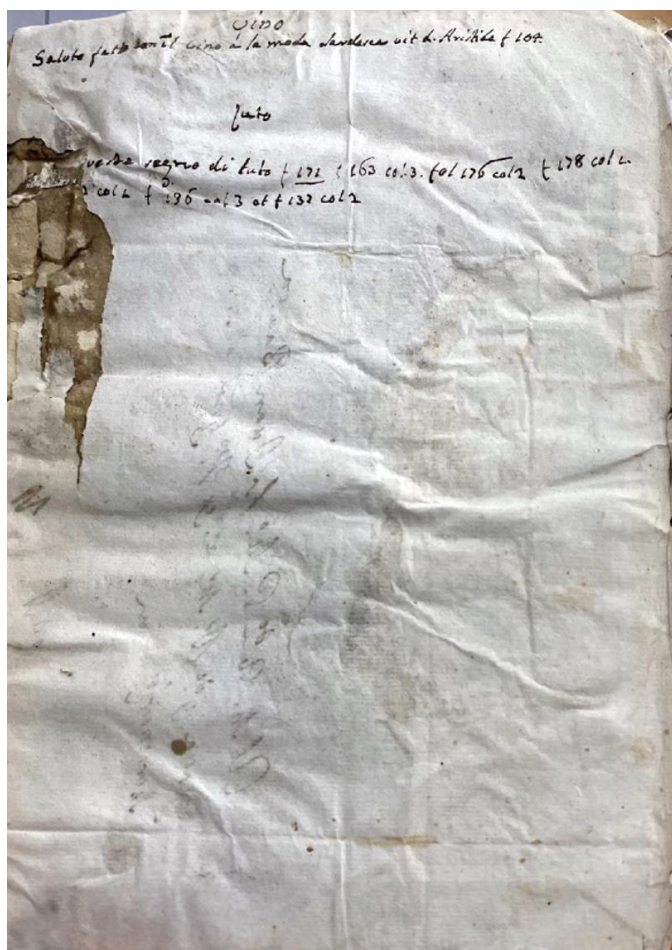


Figure 3. The inside back cover of *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho* translated by Bordon (1525) and preserved at the University Library of Cagliari, bearing some notes by the anonymous annotator.

Vino

Saluto fatto con il vino á la moda Sardesca vit(a) di Aristide f(olio) 104.³⁹

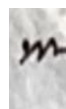
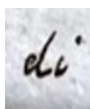
Luto

[nera] veste segno di luto f(olio) 171 f(olio) 163 col(onna) 3. fol(io) 176 col(onna) 2 f(olio) 178 col(onna) 2.

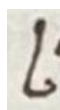
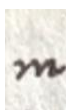
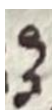
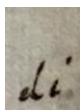
[***]2 (?) col(onna) 1 (vel 2) f(olio) 136 col(onna) 3 et f(olio) 137 col(onna) 2⁴⁰

A comparison between the two notes on the inside back cover and the marginal comments to the text shows that they were all written by the same hand. In the following scheme I present the most significant comparisons, namely those between the grapheme ‘a’ with an acute accent, ‘di’, the grapheme ‘g’, the grapheme ‘m’, and the capital ‘L’:

Hand on the
inside back
cover

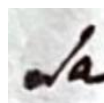
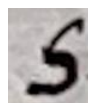


Hand of the
annotator on
the text

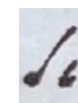
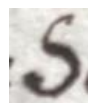


Worthy of particular note is the form of the grapheme representing the capital s, which in some cases shows a pronounced curve, and in others an oblique stroke:

Hand on the inside
back cover



Hand of the annotator
on the text



From the perspective of content, three issues need clarification: what the «saluto fatto con il vino á la moda sardesca» (“toast made with wine in the Sardinian fashion”) and the «veste segno di luto» (“garment as a sign of mourning”) refer

³⁹ “Wine. Toast made with wine in the Sardinian fashion *Life of Aristides* f. 104”.

⁴⁰ “Mourning | [Black] garment as a sign of mourning f. 171 f. 163 col. 3. f. 176 col. 2 f. 178 col. 2 | [***] 2 (?) col. 2; f. 136, col. 3; and f. 137, col. 2”.

to; whether wine and mourning are in some way connected; and why the anonymous annotator was interested in these aspects. A useful point of departure is the textual references appended to the two notes.

The note on the «saluto fatto con il vino á la moda sardesca» refers to *f.* 104 of the *Life of Aristides*. In this section of the *Life*, dealing with the events of the Second Persian War, Plutarch recounts how, after the Greek victory over the Persians at Plataea (479 BC), the Plataeans commemorated each year the fallen in battle with funeral rites.⁴¹ Among the substances used for libations was wine: the magistrate in office (ὁ ἄρχων), after slaughtering a bull and praying to Zeus and Hermes Chthonius, addressed the fallen as though they were present, inviting them to banquet and to drink the blood of the victim. He then offered them a toast (PLU. *Arist.* 21.1-6):⁴²

ἔπειτα κρατῆρα κεράσας οἴνου καὶ χεάμενος ἐπιλέγει προπίνω τοῖς ἀνδράσι τοῖς ὑπὲρ τῆς ἐλευθερίας τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀποθανούσι.⁴³

Bordon translates:

Et temperando il uino et gustandolo, dice: «Io assaggio questo uino a gil (*sic*) huomini che p(er) diffendere la greca libertate morirono».⁴⁴

It is significant that this portion of text is marked by a cross placed in the margin and distinguished by a dot at each corner (figure 4), a sign that the reader was interested in the passage.⁴⁵

⁴¹ On funerary rites in ancient Greece, see I. MORRIS, *Death-ritual and Social Structure in Classical Antiquity*, Cambridge 1992; K. STEARS, *Death Becomes Her: Gender and Athenian Death Ritual*, in *The Sacred and the Feminine in Ancient Greece*, ed. by S. Blundell, M. Williamson, London 1998, pp. 113-127; C. SOURVINOU-INWOOD, *Gendering the Athenian Funeral: Ritual Reality and Tragic Manipulations*, in *Greek Ritual Poetics*, ed. by D. Yatromanolakis, P. Roilos, Cambridge (Mass.) 2004, pp. 161-188; A. PROVENZA, *Sirene nell'Ade: l'aulo, la lira e il lutto*, in *Tra lyra e aulos: Tradizioni musicali e generi poetici*, ed. by L. Bravi, L. Lomiento, A. Merlani, G. Pace, «Quaderni della Rivista di Cultura Classica e Medioevale», XIV, Pisa 2016, pp. 103-118; *Mortuary Variability and Social Diversity in Ancient Greece: Studies on Ancient Greek Death and Burial*, ed. by N. Dimakis, T.M. Dijkstra, Oxford 2020.

⁴² In the present contribution, the Greek text of Plutarch is cited from K. ZIEGLER's editions of *Plutarchi Vitae Parallelae*, vols. 1.1 (Leipzig 1969), 1.2 (Leipzig 1964), and 3.1 (Leipzig 1971).

⁴³ «Then he fills a crater with wine and pours it out, pronouncing these words: "I drink to the men who died for the freedom of the Greeks"».

⁴⁴ Here and in the following quotations, I reproduce Bordon's text largely as it appears in the 1525 edition, with only minimal typographic additions (colons, quotation marks, and capital letters).

⁴⁵ As has been remarked (see p. 27), underlining serves mostly to highlight direct speech. It therefore has no significance on the semiotic level.

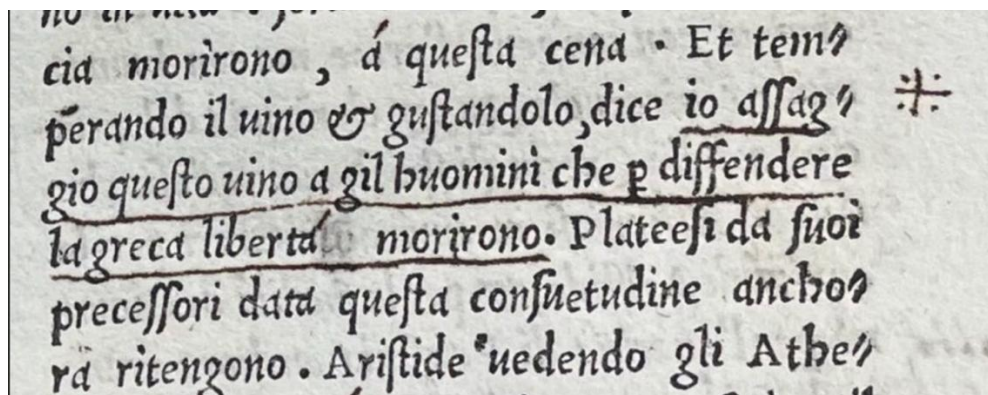


Figure 4. *PLU. Arist. 21.6* in *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho* (f. 104 col.2), translated by Bordon and preserved at the University Library of Cagliari.

But what does it mean that the «toast made with wine» took place «in the Sardinian fashion»? To obtain a clearer picture, it is first necessary to examine the note relating to the «garment as a sign of mourning». In all the passages indicated by the annotator, the episodes narrated concern the wearing of a garment as a sign of mourning, with the exception of f. 176, where the donning of a dark cloak is linked to Demetrius' disguise during his flight rather than to any mourning practice. The only true exception to this pattern is f. 171 col. 1, where the anonymous annotator summarises the episode of the young Democles' suicide⁴⁶ to escape the lusts of Demetrius Poliorcetes: in this case Plutarch makes no mention of any garment associated with mourning. Notably, this is also the only reference in which the column number is omitted in the notes on the inside back cover of the Cagliari edition, the folio number being underlined to indicate that the omission had likely been corrected *inter scribendum*.

At this point, it is necessary to address another difficulty: the lacuna affecting the beginning of the second line of the note on «luto», where both the final digit of the folio number and the column numeral are uncertain. This lacuna is more difficult to resolve. The final digit of the folio number is only partially visible, while the column number is most likely '2' or '1', assuming the lower horizontal stroke of the numeral is elongated.

Using column 2 as a reference, the term 'uesta' appears at f. 181, where Marcus Antonius, after Caesar's murder, «mutata la uesta occultossi», and at f. 205, in the description of Aratus' funeral in the *Life of Aratus*. In the first case, the context is

⁴⁶ *PLU. Demetr. 24.2-5*.

unrelated to mourning, resembling Demetrius' disguise during his flight (f. 176 col. 2), while, in the second, it corresponds to a case of 'luto'. However, the colour of the 'uesta' covering Aratus' corpse is white («il corpo morto di uesta bia[n]ca [...] ornato»), not black, and the annotator only notes the solemnity of Aratus' funeral in Achaia.

If the column number is instead 1 (with an elongated lower stroke), a passage from the *Life of Marcus Antonius* is pertinent. At f. 182, Marcus Antonius, fallen from grace, attempts to elicit pity from Lepidus and his army, approaching them in a «uesta lugubre». Here, the occasion is not a funeral or mourning more generally, but resembles episodes at f. 163 col. 3 (*Plu. Cic.* 30.6–31.2) and f. 137 col. 2 (*Plu. TG* 16.3), where Cicero and Tiberius Gracchus wear the suppliant's garment. The anonymous annotator of the Cagliari edition offers no marginal remark on this passage.

Accordingly, the most plausible solution to the lacuna is f. 182, col. 1 of the *Life of Marcus Antonius*, where the protagonist, having fallen from favour, approaches Lepidus and his troops in a «uesta lugubre» in an attempt to arouse their compassion. This passage aligns more closely than any of the alternatives with the annotator's consistent interest in garments associated with mourning or supplication, as attested in the passages on Cicero (f. 163 col. 3) and Tiberius Gracchus (f. 137 col. 2). By contrast, the other potential references (f. 181 col. 2, concerning Antonius' disguise, and f. 205 col. 2, describing the white garment covering Aratus' corpse) do not match the semantic pattern that governed the annotator's selection, either lacking any connection with mourning or involving a colour (white) at odds with the repeated emphasis on dark or lugubrious clothing. Moreover, the palaeographical uncertainty regarding the column number, whose lower horizontal stroke may indicate an elongated '1', further supports the restoration of col. 1. Taken together, these considerations suggest that the missing reference originally pointed to f. 182 col. 1, where the thematic and lexical convergence with the heading «ueste segno di luto» is clearest.

At f. 163, col. 3, is recounted an event from the *Life of Cicero* in 58 BCE. Cicero, accused by Clodius of having condemned the Catilinarian conspirators Lentulus and Cethegus without due process, sought to avoid exile by donning the suppliant's garment. In solidarity with him, the knights dressed in mourning and, shortly afterwards, the people followed suit at the decree of the Senate (*Plu. Cic.* 30.6–31.2).

[ὁ] Κικέρων [...] κινδυνεύων οὖν καὶ διωκόμενος, ἐσθῆτά τε μετέλλαξε καὶ κόμης ἀνάπλεως περιῶν ἰκέτευε τὸν δῆμον. πανταχοῦ δ' ὁ Κλώδιος ἀπῆντα κατὰ τοὺς στενωπούς, ἀνθρώπους ἔχων ὑβριστὰς περὶ αὐτὸν καὶ θρασεῖς, οἱ πολλὰ μὲν χλευάζοντες ἀκολάστως εἰς τὴν μεταβολὴν καὶ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ Κικέρωνος [...]. οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τῷ Κικέρωνι πρῶτον μὲν ὀλίγου δεῖν σύμπαν τὸ τῶν ἱππικῶν πλῆθος

συμμετέβαλε τὴν ἐσθῆτα [...]. ἔπειτα τῆς βουλῆς συνελθούσης, ὅπως ψηφίσαιτο τὸν δῆμον ὡς ἐπὶ πένθει συμμεταβαλεῖν τὰ ἱμάτια.⁴⁷

Here is Bordon's translation:⁴⁸

Onde di tal cosa Cicerone accusato, et no(n) da huomini mediocri oppresso, prese la nera uesta et supplicheuolme(n)te p(re)gaua la plebbe in aggiunto suo, no(n)dimeno Clodio da gra(n) moltitudine acco(m)pagnato p(er) la citta ne giua co(n) quella audacia et ingiuria che dire si puo co(n)tra Cicerone et sequaci suoi [...]. Insieme con Cicerone quasi tutta la moltitudine dell'ordine equestre mutò le ueste [...]. Il senato era freque(n)te p(er) uolere fare mutare la nera uesta, significatiua di pubblica mestitia.

Bordon's translation states that the garment worn by Cicero and his supporters was 'black'.⁴⁹ This detail is noteworthy, as it is absent both from the original Greek text and from Leonardo Bruni's Latin *Vita Ciceronis*,⁵⁰ which is probably (but not certainly) Bordon's source. This may suggest that Bordon occasionally translates with a degree of freedom, adding embellishing elements; alternatively, it may indicate that his model was not, or not exclusively, Bruni's version. In any case, the detail of the colour does not escape the anonymous annotator of the sixteenth-century edition preserved in the University Library of Cagliari, who noted succinctly in the margin: «Nera veste Cicerone, e molti altri, prova di mestitia» ("Cicero in a black garment, and many others, evidence of sorrow") (figure 5).

⁴⁷ "Cicero (...), then, feeling himself in danger, changed his clothing, and went about unkempt, begging the people. Everywhere, in the streets, Clodius confronted him with violent and daring men, who insolently and mockingly made fun of his altered clothing and appearance (...). Out of solidarity with Cicero almost the whole class of knights dressed in mourning (...). Then the Senate met to decree that the people should dress in mourning, as happens in cases of calamity".

⁴⁸ If the text from which Bordon translated were indeed the collection of Campano (G.A. CAMPANO, *Plutarchus. Vitae illustrium virorum*, cit. n. 7), the Latin version of the *Life of Cicero* would be that of Leonardo Bruni (called Aretino).

⁴⁹ For black clothing as a sign of mourning, or more generally of sorrow, see, e.g., EUR. *Alc.* 216; IA 1438, 1448; *Hel.* 1186; PLU. *Cons. ux.* 609B; LUC. *Philops.* 32; PAUS. 8.42.2. In continuity with the past, in modern Greece too the colour black is used as a sign of mourning. In some contexts, widows dress in black for life, while relatives and kin wear black clothing for variable periods ranging from forty days to three years, gradually returning to ordinary colours through shades of brown and dark blue. In the region of Mani, in the Peloponnese, and in Macedonia, by contrast, men merely wear a black armband for forty days or more. The use of black is also found in other ritual contexts, such as in the decoration of churches on Holy Thursday, where dark hues accentuate the funerary dimension of the celebration. On these aspects, see G.F. ABBOTT, *Macedonian Folklore*, Cambridge 1903, at p. 4; E.J. HÅLAND, *Rituals of Death and Dying in Modern and Ancient Greece: Writing History from a Female Perspective*, Newcastle upon Tyne 2014, at pp. 200-202.

⁵⁰ For the passage relevant to our enquiry, see ms. Arch.Cap.S.Pietro.C.130 (*saec.* XV^m), f. 146v, available online at the following address: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Arch.Cap.S.Pietro.C.130

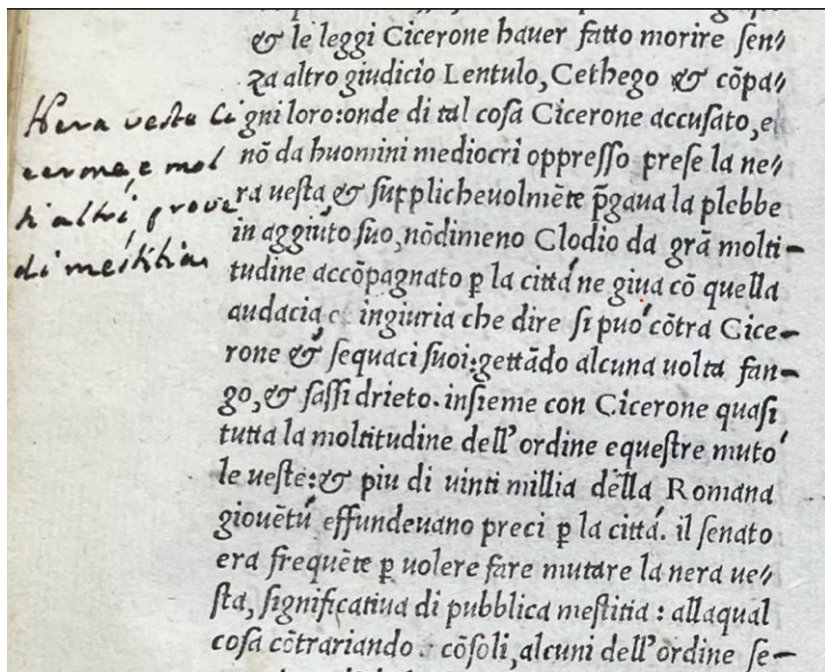


Figure 5. *PLU. Cic. 30.6-31,2* in *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarco* (f. 163 col. 3), translated by Bordon and preserved at the University Library of Cagliari.

F. 176 col. 2 and f. 178 col. 2⁵¹ refer to two episodes in the *Life of Demetrius*. In 287 BCE, Demetrius Poliorcetes, son of Antigonos Monophthalmus and king of Macedonia, failed in his attempt to reconquer Asia. His soldiers, preferring Pyrrhus to him, revolted, and some advised him to flee. Demetrius then abandoned his royal attire, put on a dark cloak, and fled in secret (*PLU. Demetr. 44.9*):

παρελθὼν ἐπὶ σκηνήν, ὥσπερ οὐ βασιλεύς, ἀλλ' ὑποκριτής, μεταμφιέννυται
χλαμύδα φαιὰν ἀντὶ τῆς τραγικῆς ἐκείνης, καὶ διαλαθὼν ὑπεχώρησεν.⁵²

Bordon, completely disregarding the 'theatrical' characterisation of the figure and the refined semantic play on the word σκηνή ("tent", but also "stage", "scene"), translates bluntly:⁵³

⁵¹ The reference to the garment worn as a sign of mourning is found in the third line from the top of column 3.

⁵² "(Demetrius) returned to his tent, not as a king, but as an actor, donned a dark cloak instead of the theatrical one he was accustomed to wearing, and went away in secret".

⁵³ If the text from which Bordon translated were indeed the collection of Campano (G.A. CAMPANO, *Plutarchus. Vitae illustrium virorum*, cit. n. 7), the Latin version of the *Life of Demetrius* would be that of Donato Acciaiuoli.

Demetrio intrato nel pauglione deposta la regia uesta et di negra uestito, con pochi fuggite⁵⁴ uia.

Here too the anonymous annotator of the edition from Cagliari intervenes in the margin, briefly summarising the events and noting the dark colour of Poliorcetes' clothing at the time of his flight: «Soldati Macedoni disimparano á Demetrio; il quale fugge vestito di Nero, lasciata la veste Reggia» ("Macedonian soldiers turn against Demetrius; who flees dressed in black, having left behind the royal garment") (figure 6).

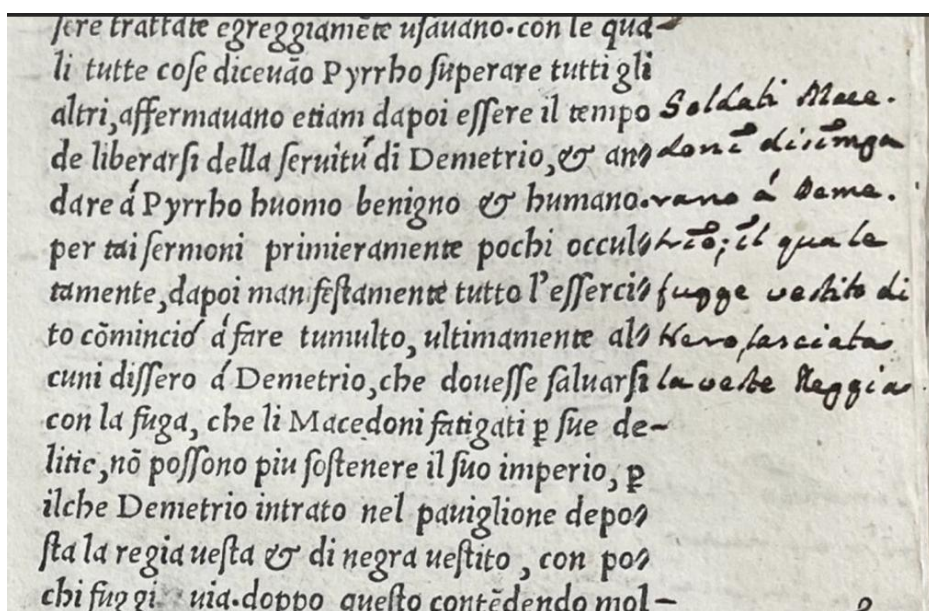


Figure 6. PLU. Demetr. 44.9 in La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho (f. 176 col.2), translated by Bordon and preserved at the University Library of Cagliari.

While the first passage has nothing to do with mourning as the donning of a dark cloak associated with Demetrius' disguise during his flight, the episode of the *Life of Demetrius* narrated at f. 178 concerns his funeral, which – as Plutarch notes – was conducted with a touch of theatrical *pathos*, consistent with the Macedonian

⁵⁴ In the original 1525 edition of Bordon's text, the form «fuggite» (perhaps for 'fuggitte', a past-tense form also attested in Tuscany) is printed, whereas in the copy preserved in the University Library of Cagliari the anonymous annotator emends the reading to 'fuggi'.

ruler's taste for the spectacular display of his power. On that occasion, the garments of mourning were worn by the envoys of the cities who came to pay homage to his ashes (PLUT. *Demetr.* 53.3).

αἱ δὲ πόλεις, αἷς προσεῖχον, τοῦτο μὲν στεφάνους ἐπέφερον τῇ ὑδρίᾳ, τοῦτο δ' ἄνδρας ἐν σχήματι πενθίμῳ συνθάψοντας καὶ συμπαραπέμψοντας ἀπέστελλον⁵⁵.

Bordon translates:

Le città a lui sotto poste, alcune poneuano corone per mettere sopra de l'urna, et alcune ma(n)dauano huomini con lugubri ueste per fare honore al defunto corpo di Demetrio.

The anonymous annotator merely wrote a general note in the margin at the beginning of the account of the funeral honours (PLU. *Demetr.* 53.1-2): «Solemni funerali che il figlio Antigono fece a Demetrio suo Padre» (“Solemn funeral that the son Antigonus gave to Demetrius his father”) (figure 7). Therefore, in this case, only the note on the inside back cover is evidence of the reader's interest in the garment as a sign of mourning.

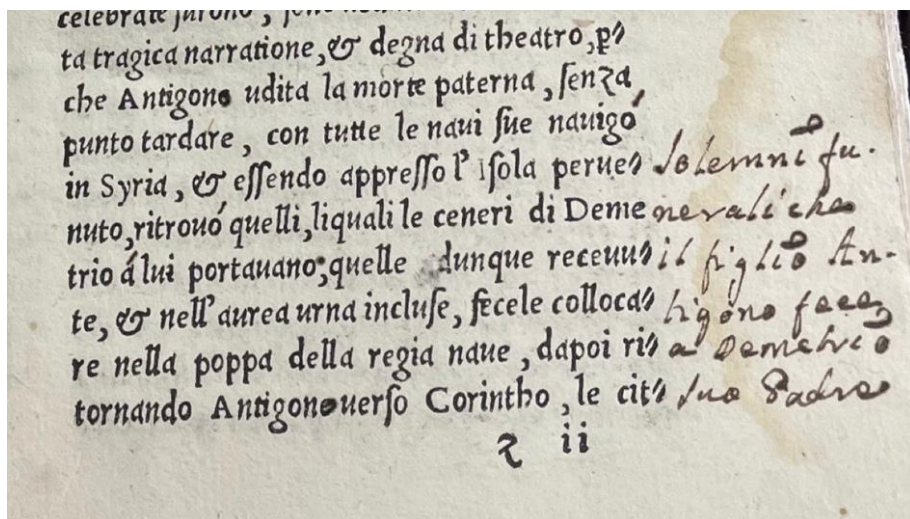


Figure 7. Plut. *Demetr.* 53.1-2 in La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho (f. 178 col. 2), translated by Bordon and preserved at the University Library of Cagliari.

⁵⁵ “The cities to which (scil. the ships of Antigonus) drew near either laid crowns upon the urn, or sent men dressed in mourning to take part in the funeral and to escort it”.

We now come to the last two passages marked by the anonymous annotator, PLU. TG 13.6 and 16.3, which in Bordon's volume are found at f. 136 col. 3 and f. 137 col. 2 respectively. Plutarch recounts how, in 133 BCE, after the approval of the agrarian law that redistributed the *ager publicus* in favour of the less wealthy citizens, Tiberius Gracchus, the law's promoter, became hated by the *nobilitas*. The aristocrats' hostility towards the tribune aroused popular anger, which flared up all the more after the murder of one of Tiberius' allies. Tiberius took advantage of the occasion to inflame passions further (Plu. TG 13.6):

πρὸς ταῦτα τοὺς πολλοὺς ἔτι μᾶλλον ὁ Τιβέριος παροξύνων μετέβαλε τὴν ἐσθῆτα, καὶ τοὺς παῖδας προαγαγὼν ἐδεῖτο τοῦ δήμου τούτων κήδεσθαι καὶ τῆς μητρός, ὡς αὐτὸς ἀπεγνωκῶς ἑαυτόν.⁵⁶

Bordon translates:

Oltra di questo accio che Tiberio tanto piu eccitasse la plebbe, mutata la uesta et menando seco i fanciulli del morto amico suo,⁵⁷ come di se medesimo diffidatosi, cercando la salute delli fanciulli et parimente della matre alla plebbe raccomanda.

In the margin of the text⁵⁸ the annotator writes nothing, being more attracted to the rivalry between rich and poor («continua l'odio de poveri a richi e di questi a quegli», “the poor's hatred of the rich continues, and of these against the former”), to the inheritance left by the king of Pergamum («Attalo Ré di Pergamo lascia herede de suoi beni al Popolo Romano: e anche a città e castelli», “Attalus, king of Pergamum, leaves the Roman people as heir of his wealth: and also cities and castles”) and to the reproach addressed by the Senate to Tiberius for his attempt to allocate the inherited property to the people («Improperato Tiberio de Senatori», “Tiberius reproached by the senators”]). The reference to the garment, however, is present in the note to TG 16.3, where Plutarch describes a scene very similar to the previous one. Tiberius, indeed, wishing to persuade the people to re-elect him as tribune, appeared in the suppliant's garment (PLU. TG 16.3):

καὶ πρῶτον μὲν εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν καταβὰς ὁ Τιβέριος ἰκέτευε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ταπεινὸς καὶ δεδακρυμένος, ἔπειτα δεδοικέναι φήσας, μὴ νυκτὸς ἐκκόψωσι τὴν οἰκίαν οἱ ἐχθροὶ καὶ διαφθείρωσιν αὐτόν, οὕτω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους

⁵⁶ “Then Tiberius, to excite the crowd even more, dressed in mourning and, taking his children with him, begged the people to care for them and for their mother, as though he despaired of his own life’.

⁵⁷ At this point Bordon's translation is not correct. In fact, according to Plutarch's original text, Tiberius brings his own children before the people, not the children “of his dead friend”. APP. BC. 1.14.62 e D.C. 24 fr. 83.8 Boissevain refer the stratagem to Tiberius' attempt to be re-elected tribune.

⁵⁸ F. 136 col. 3.

διέθηκεν, ὥστε περὶ τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ παμπόλλους τινὰς αὐλίσασθαι καὶ διανυκτερεῦσαι παραφυλάττοντας.⁵⁹

Bordon, perhaps influenced by the scene described in 13.6, adds the detail of the character's change of clothing, absent in the Greek original:

Il di seguente mutata la uesta lacrimoso et miserabile se ne uenne in piazza, referendo al popolo se grandemente temere che li suoi nimici no(n) l'amazzassero una notte, onde la moltitudine per tal parole mossa, parte di quella intorno alla casa di Tiberio faceano la guardia di notte.

This time the annotator does not miss the opportunity to highlight the mention of the «garment as a sign of mourning»: «Tiberio posta lugubre veste si presenta in Piazza implorando l'ausilio dil Popolo» (“Tiberius dons mourning garment and appears in the square imploring the people's aid”) (figure 8).

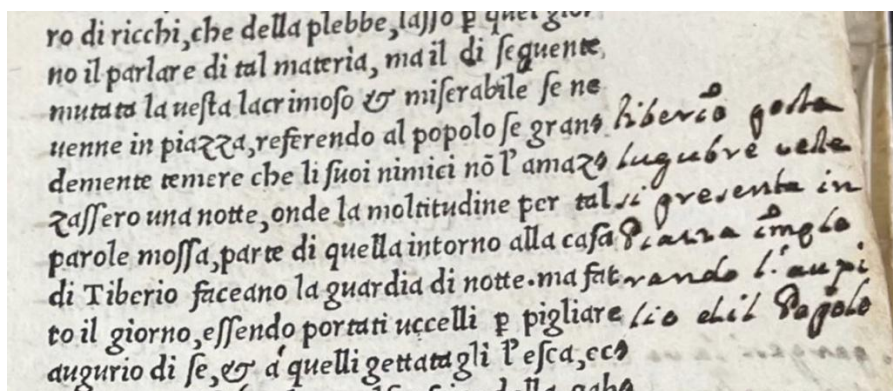


Figure 8. Plut. TG. 16.3 in *La seconda & ultima parte delle Vite di Plutarcho* (f. 137 col. 2), translated by Bordon and preserved at the University Library of Cagliari.

5. Plutarch «à la moda sardesca»

The notes written on the inside back cover refer to episodes recounted in some of the *Parallel Lives*, in which a certain character or group of people dresses in black as a sign of mourning or, in some cases, on the occasion of supplications or un-

⁵⁹ “Tiberius first went down into the Forum and began to beg the people, humble and in tears, then said that he feared his enemies might break into his house at night and kill him, and he stirred such emotion among the people that very many camped out and spent the night around his house to guard it”.

pleasant events. The direct link between wine and mourning, to which the reference to f. 104 alludes, appears only in the *Life of Aristides* (21.1-6), in the description of the annual commemoration of the fallen at Plataea. In this passage, wine features among the ingredients of the libations and is included in the banquet to which the minister of the rite summons even the dead to participate, dedicating a toast to them. Thus, the black garment and the wine point to occasions that were genuinely or even only symbolically mournful.

But why did the annotator of the sixteenth-century edition from Cagliari note that the «saluto fatto con il vino» was «á la moda sardesca»? To answer this question one must turn to Sardinian folk customs. It is indeed possible that the annual rite described by Plutarch triggered in the reader of the *Lives* the memory of the custom, widely diffused in Sardinia (as well as in other regions, both Italian and non-Italian), of setting a table with food, water and a glass of wine for the feast of All Saints, or of offering wine (or coffee) to those visiting the family of the deceased⁶⁰ and of drinking «po s'anima de su biadu», “to the soul of the departed”.⁶¹

It cannot, however, be excluded that more localised customs may also have prompted in the anonymous annotator's mind the connection between the Plutarchan passage and Sardinian funerary practices.⁶² For example, in the villages of Gallura, during the wake, «gli uomini (...) vestiti di nero, mettono il cappottino d'orbace sulle spalle, senza infilarlo, e, se devono uscire, si incappucciano anche

⁶⁰ Delitala (E. DELITALA, *Morire in Sardegna: documenti sugli usi funebri tra Ottocento e Novecento*, in «Lares», 71.3 [2005], pp. 613-631, at p. 627) describes this custom by adducing several testimonies dating from the period between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It is, however, in all probability much older.

⁶¹ [<https://sardiniamood.com/tutti-i-morti-in-sardegna/>]; [<https://www.ilpuntosociale.it/index.php/cultura-e-spettacolo/40-cultura/1282-cultura-sarda-e-tradizioni-la-morte-tra-mistero-e-superstizione-di-stefania-cuccu>].

⁶² Wine plays a central symbolic role in the funerary rites of several folkloric traditions. The cult of saints in the modern Greek world takes up elements typical of the ancient heroic cult: the veneration of real people who once lived, the link with tombs and springs, processions and offerings to obtain fertility and protection. An emblematic case is the Easter rite of Olympos (Karpachos), in which icons are carried to the cemetery and the faithful place food and drink – including wine, a central component of sharing – on the graves, later consumed in a symbolic banquet with the dead. Here wine, together with eggs, cheeses and fruit, fulfils a ritual role of mediation between the living and the dead, integrating with animal sacrifices and agricultural rites to ensure rainfall, prosperity and protection. Similar motifs emerge in festivals such as those of Agios Gerasimos in Cephalonia or Agios Nektarios in Aegina, where processions and relics safeguard the communal space. In this way, the cult of Saints updates ancient models, blending heroes, nymphs, tombs, springs and wine in practices aimed at purity, fertility and collective protection (on this aspect, see E.J. HÅLAND, *Rituals of Death and Dying in Modern and Ancient Greece: Writing History from a Female Perspective*, cit. n. 49, at pp. 132-136). In Roccanova, Lucania, the ritual requires some women to pour a little red wine on a large slice of dark bread using a small bottle of soda water (E. DE MARTINO, *Morte e pianto rituale. Dal lamento funebre antico al pianto di Maria*, Torino 2008⁴ [1958¹], p. 77). In a different context, but with analogous ritual meanings, in Ceriscior, Romania, it is customary to pour wine over the coffin once it has been lowered into the grave (Ivi, p. 174).

quando dardeggia il sole»;⁶³ after midnight, when only the men – relatives, friends or dependants of the deceased – remain in the mourning chamber, «anche per reagire contro il freddo che procurano la notte e le emozioni subite durante il giorno, i familiari offrono da bere bevande alcooliche a quelli che vegliano con loro».⁶⁴

At this point, the reason why I have supplied ‘nera’ in the lacuna on the first line of the note on ‘luto’,⁶⁵ written by the anonymous annotator on the inside back cover, also becomes clearer. In his translation, Bordon explicitly emphasises the dark colour of the garment worn as a sign of mourning, even when this detail is absent from the original Greek text. It is therefore plausible that the reader, following Bordon’s rendering, used in his note an adjective such as ‘nera’ (“black”) or ‘lugubre’ (“gloomy”), terms that also appear in the *marginalia* referring to the «veste in segno di luto» (“garment as a sign of mourning”).

6. From Venice to Cagliari: Re-reading Plutarch in Sardinia

The translation of Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives* by Giulio Cesare Scaligero, published in Venice in 1525 by Niccolò Zoppino, represents an important moment in the history of the reception of Plutarch’s work in the Italian Renaissance. The work not only completed the vernacular initiative begun by Iaconelli, but also reaffirmed Plutarch’s cultural and educational importance in a context dominated by the re-discovery of the classics. The success of this translation, highlighted by the papal *privilegium* and by its immediate reception by the public and cultural institutions, testifies to Plutarch’s centrality as a model of style and civic virtue. The attention devoted to the exemplary humanity of the biographical subjects, as much as to the

⁶³ “The men (...) dressed in black, put the little orbace coat on their shoulders without putting their arms through it, and, if they must go out, they put on the hood even when the sun is blazing” (M. AZARA, *Tradizioni popolari della Gallura dalla culla alla tomba*, Roma 1943, at p. 249). In Gallura (with some differences between countryside and town, where the old traditions have disappeared or are disappearing), completely black clothing is worn in mourning by men and women for a long time: the widow remains in mourning all her life, unless she remarries; the husband wears the black shirt, and in some places for at least three months he must not change it. The women turn over their black skirt at the back, already covering their heads with two black kerchiefs, or one black and one white (Ivi, pp. 266-267).

⁶⁴ “Also in order to counter the cold of the night and the emotions suffered during the day, the family members offer alcoholic drinks to those who keep vigil with them” (M. AZARA, *Tradizioni popolari della Gallura dalla culla alla tomba* cit. n. 63, p. 250). In Nuoro, according to popular custom, a widow had to dress in black for her entire life, unless she remarried; the closest female relatives of the deceased must wear a black band or kerchief. Widowers, too, were required to dress entirely in black. See G. DELEDDA, *Tradizioni popolari di Nuoro*, Nuoro 2024 (1st ed. Roma 1894), at pp. 193-194. More generally, on the use of black garments as a sign of mourning in the inland villages of Sardinia, see M.L. WAGNER, *La vita rustica*, ed. by G. Paulis, Nuoro 1996 (or. tit.: *Das ländliche Leben Sardiniens im Spiegel der Sprache*, Heidelberg 1921), at pp. 346, 350.

⁶⁵ See p. 29.

quality of the translation, made the text not only an educational tool for princes, but also a source of inspiration for a wider readership.

The discovery of annotated copies, such as the one held in the University Library of Cagliari, in Sardinia, provides further insights for understanding the ways in which the work was read and interpreted. In particular, the analysis of the marginal notes shows how the anonymous reader paid special attention to details that transcend philological reading, engaging with cultural and ritual aspects tied to custom and the representation of mourning. The annotations on the passages in which characters wear black garments reveal a constant interest in the symbolic function of clothing as a sign of grief or of collective participation in sorrow, from Cicero accused by Clodius to the funerals of Demetrius Poliorcetes, passing through the vicissitudes of Tiberius Gracchus. The link between wine and mourning also emerges in a circumscribed way, as in the commemoration of the fallen at Plataea in the *Life of Aristides*, where the wine libation assumes a ritual and symbolic function, evoking parallels with contemporary Sardinian customs.

These elements suggest that the interest of the anonymous (Sardinian?) reader of Bordon's translation was not solely antiquarian but also ethnographic, understood through the lens of local practices and an appreciation of symbolic rites. The annotations thus testify to an active appropriation of the text, in which history and biography become instruments for reflecting on customs, ritual gestures and mourning practices, opening new perspectives for the study of the interaction between classical texts, editorial tradition and local cultural sensibilities.

The ancient Plutarchan narrative of the lives of great men thus finds, in translators such as Bordon and in readers such as the anonymous annotator of the Cagliari edition, new pathways along which it acquires renewed life and values, shaped by the chronological and cultural context that receives it and 'rethinks' it in accordance with its own worldview.

