

Moreover, P. Hochart and J. Ross succeeded in finding rather explicit indications which, in their opinion, speak of forgery.

“In London, he (Poggio—A. F.) lived, very much deceived in his expectations of Beaufort’s generosity ... In 1422 ... Piero Lamberteschi offers him a project of some historical work which has to be done from Greek sources, and kept strictly secret, in a three-year term, during which Poggio will be provided with 500 golden ducats.

‘Let him give me six hundred, and it’s done!’ writes Poggio, entrusting Niccolo de’ Niccoli with concluding this little deal. ‘The way to pass the time offered by him is very much to my taste, and I hope that we’ll create a trick worth of being read’. A month later, he writes: ‘If I see that Piero’s promises turn from words to business, then I shall be glad to get not only to the Sarmatians, but also to the Scythians for the sake of this job ... Keep secret all the projects I am telling you about. If I go to Hungary, this must be kept in the dark for everyone except several friends’, and in June, ... ‘be sure that if I am given time ... I will compose a thing with which you will be satisfied ... When I compare myself with the ancients, I again believe in myself. With a good approach, I will not disgrace myself before anyone ...’ Where he was afterwards is unknown. According to Corniani, he did, in fact, live for some purpose in Hungary. According to Tonnelli, he came straight to Florence. We do not know whether his enigmatic deal with Lamberteschi was concluded. Lamberteschi’s name vanishes from Poggio’s correspondence, which P. Hochart explains by Poggio’s being the editor of his own letters ... But even if the deal had not occurred, then what after-taste would this episode leave? Here it is: Lamberteschi offered Poggio to create some secret historical work. It was assumed to be so secret that Poggio had to work in Hungary; meanwhile, he should have been thought of as still being in England. For this job, he had to study the Greek authors ... He had to compete with the ancient historians, which was what he wanted, and which he was afraid of. And, finally, the whole secret required of him, and accepted by him, shows that the suggested little deal was, though both literary and scientific, not at all a nice one” ([247], p. 393 and further).

Lamberteschi was morally right to approach Poggio with such an offer, since the latter had already been caught red-handed once while making a falsification. Several years earlier, Poggio published, with Niccolo de’ Niccoli, *Asconius Pedianus’ Commentarii*.

“No one has ever seen the original from which the *Commentarii* were made, and Niccolo de’ Niccoli has also copied from the manuscript sent to him by Poggio from Constanz. The success was enormous, though ... the scientific community immediately understood that something was wrong here. It seemed that Poggio did not pay much attention to covering his fabrication ... The success of the forged *Asconius Pedianus* made possible a whole series of other fabrications on behalf of the same fantastic author, but they all were too rough, and immediately discovered. Poggio ... was only more cunning than the others. Before starting his Tacitus swindle, he attempted to sell some magnificent copy of Livy to Cosimo de Medici and Leonello D’Estais, and again in a mysterious environment, viz., again a faraway monastery on an island in the North Sea, Swedish monks, etc. The matter hardly concerned the fabrication of the work, but could be, possibly, related to forgery of the manuscript. It is known that Poggio had mastered the Lombardy hand-writing perfectly; and