

Dante as Political Theorist

Dante as Political Theorist:

Reading Monarchia

Edited and with an Introduction by

Maria Luisa Ardizzone

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THE *STEMMA CODICUM* OF DANTE'S *MONARCHIA*: A REFUTATION OF RENELLO'S HYPOTHESIS*

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Two very different kinds of dantista work on Dante's texts today: Italians and Americans. For Italians, the validity of neo-Lachmannian methodology in producing a critical text of a medieval work might almost be called an article of faith; for Americans, the idea of trying to reconstruct texts of the past to make them as close as possible to the author's lost original, reflecting his supposed intention, has been unfashionable for decades, and is perhaps even a lost cause.

This article is an old-fashioned exercise in philological methodology *all'italiana*: it aims to show that a view recently advanced about the transmission history of the *Monarchia* is, quite simply, wrong and that it is not supported by, and indeed not compatible with, the evidence. A chief concern is to clarify questions of principle for scholars who are unaccustomed to thinking about these questions, or thinking in this way: to show what weight certain kinds of evidence might have in the broad context of all the surviving evidence and what that surviving evidence tells us about the textual transmission of Dante's treatise.

The opening paragraph of my introduction to the *edizione nazionale* of the *Monarchia* (henceforth *EN*) sets out a principle which informs the work of textual scholars editing medieval texts:

* I would like to thank scholars and friends who have read this paper and made valuable comments: Patrick Boyde, Judy Davies, John Dickie, Giulio and Laura Lepeschy, Peter Marsh, Paolo Pellegrini, Michael Reeve, David Robey.

A critical text of any medieval work which survives in multiple manuscript copies is, as Gianfranco Contini was in the habit of saying, *un'ipotesi di lavoro*, a working hypothesis. Assuming that we have no autograph copy and that, as is almost invariably the case, surviving copies are already several (and often many) generations removed from the original, the text reflects or embodies the best hypothesis the editor is able to construct to explain the inter-relationships among the individual extant copies, and the relationship of all of them to the author's original. This hypothesis, formulated after scrupulous analysis of all the available evidence, should ideally account for the facts as economically as possible (respecting the principle of parsimony), and leave as little as possible unaccounted for.¹

The introduction goes on explicitly to acknowledge the possibility that the discovery of new evidence may require an editor to modify that hypothesis: "The discovery of additional evidence in the form of new manuscripts may well provoke a need to re-examine and refine the hypothesis, or, in extreme cases, abandon it and attempt to formulate a new one."²

Two new pieces of evidence have come to light since the publication of the *EN* in 2009: a new manuscript, British Library ms. Add. 6891 (henceforth Y), and the 1559 German translation by Johannes Heroldt.³ Ms. Y dates from the mid-fourteenth century, and perhaps even earlier; it may well be the oldest surviving manuscript of the treatise. For this reason, if for no other, its coming to light is an event of great importance in Dante scholarship. I analyzed the manuscript and assessed its relationship to the other extant witnesses in an article published in *Studi danteschi* in 2011.⁴ The Heroldt translation had been consulted by Witte in preparing his 1874 edition of the *Monarchia*, where he described it as very

¹ Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia*, ed. Prue Shaw, vol. 5 of *Le opere di Dante Alighieri. Edizione Nazionale*, edited by the Società Dantesca Italiana (Florence: Le Lettere, 2009).

² *Ibid.*, 3.

³ London, British Library, MS Add. 6891, fols. 1r-17v [=Y]; Dante Alighieri, *Monarchey Oder Daß das Keyserthumb, zu der wolfart diser Welt von nöten: Den Römern billich zugehört, unnd allein Gott dem Herren, sonst niemands, hafft seye, auch dem Bapst nit. Herren Dantis Aligherij des Florentiners, ein zierlichs büchlein, in drey teyl außgeteilt. Durch Basilius Joannem Heroldt.* (Basel: Nicolaus Bischoff, 1559).

⁴ Prue Shaw, "Un secondo manoscritto londinese della *Monarchia*," *Studi Danteschi* 76 (2011): 223-64. See also Diego Quagliani, "Un nuovo testimone per l'edizione della *Monarchia* di Dante: il Ms. Add. 6891 della British Library," *Laboratoire italien* 11 (2011): 231-279.

rare.⁵ Since then it has not been used by editors of the treatise, until, very recently, it became available and easily consultable online. Like the *editio princeps*, the German translation was published in Basle in autumn 1559. The *princeps* editor, Oporino, had close working ties with Heroldt, and the relationship between these two high-functioning German-speaking intellectuals has some bearing on the issues I will be examining.

So we have two remarkable new pieces of evidence. It is not only understandable, but welcome, that scholars should look closely at the *EN* hypothesis about manuscript relationships in the light of this new evidence.

The hypothesis I examine in this article is the one put forward by Gian Paolo Renello in articles published in 2011 and 2013.⁶ Both of them concern the textual transmission of the *Monarchia*. The first article suggested that K, the *editio princeps*, does not represent an independent line of transmission from the archetype, as the *EN* argues, but instead is to be located within the β family of manuscripts. The second article returned to this thesis with new arguments based on the new evidence, and, in a refinement of the 2011 thesis, now placed K close to the subgroups β_2/β_3 within β . The abstract of this article gives a précis of his conclusions:

L'autore, prendendo spunto dal recente ritrovamento di un testimone del trattato dantesco, sviluppa una serie di considerazioni che si oppongono alla ricostruzione stemmatica proposta dall'ultima edizione critica di Prue Shaw, in particolare per quel che riguarda la posizione dell'*editio princeps* (K). Essa infatti, benché presenti, a suo giudizio, evidenti elementi di contaminazione con la famiglia α , viene ora ricondotta all'interno della famiglia β . L'autore prende in esame, assieme all'*editio princeps*, anche la prima traduzione tedesca ad essa coeva e il volgarizzamento di Ficino su cui si basa quest'ultima. Partendo dalle dichiarazioni del volgarizzatore tedesco, secondo il quale la sua traduzione è stata ricontrollata su un ms. latino, e dall'esame comparato delle tre versioni, l'autore ipotizza che tale ms. sia interno a β e sia lo stesso servito come base della *princeps* K.⁷

My aim in this article is to look at Renello's arguments in support of his hypothesis and to assess their validity. It should be emphasized at the outset that this is not an exercise in point-scoring; on the contrary, it

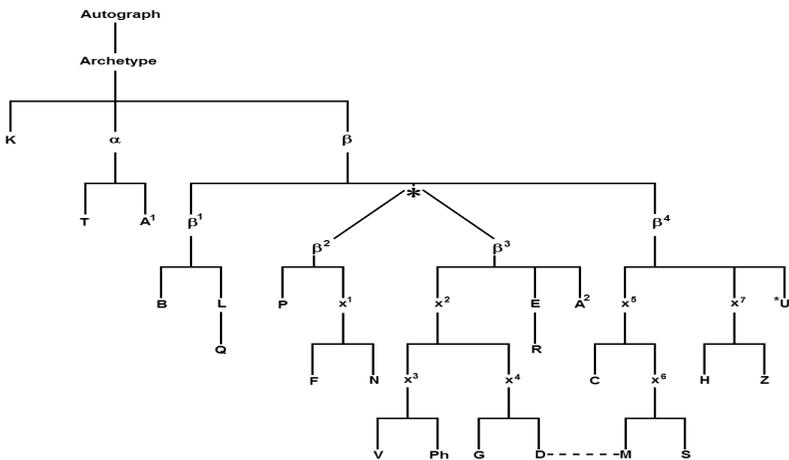
⁵ *Dantis Alligherii de Monarchia libri III, codicum manuscriptorum ope emendati*, ed. Carolus [Karl] Witte (Vienna: Braumüller, 1874), lxxii.

⁶ Gian Paolo Renello, "L'Edizione critica della *Monarchia*," *Italianistica* 40.1 (2011): 141-80; Renello, "A proposito della *Monarchia*. Note in margine al ritrovamento del ms. Additional 6891," *L'Alighieri* 41 (2013): 115-156.

⁷ Renello, "A proposito della *Monarchia*", 115.

touches on fundamental questions of methodology and the weight to be attributed to certain kinds of evidence when formulating a hypothesis about manuscript relationships. In the case of the *Monarchia* we now have 22 witnesses: 21 manuscripts, including Y, and the *editio princeps*. It is important to note that the editor of the *princeps* used a manuscript which does not survive and of which his printed text is our only, albeit indirect, record.

The hypothesis represented in the *EN* stemma shows three lines of descent from the archetype (K, α and β):



How does our new manuscript Y relate to the stemma? Quite independently, Diego Quaglioni and I reached an identical conclusion on where Y goes in the stemma: namely, within the sub-branch β_2 . This is a gratifying confirmation, were one needed, of the functionality of neo-Lachmannian methodology and the value of applying it to the textual tradition of the *Monarchia*. Why does Y go in β_2 ? because it shares some 70 errors and characteristic variants with these manuscripts and these manuscripts alone. These four manuscripts have a shared ancestor (β_2), which represents the point at which those errors and variants were introduced into the tradition.

Some key facts about the Heroldt translation will prove important when we come to assess the light it throws on the transmission history of the treatise. Heroldt translated not from a Latin text, but from Ficino's 1467 Italian version, which he tells us he then checked against a Latin manuscript. Ficino's translation was based on a poor-quality Latin

manuscript close to manuscripts in the β_4 and β_3 subgroups. Furthermore—a crucial point—Ficino translates very freely, cutting and simplifying the Latin original, pruning it of rather heavy-handed and repetitious phraseology, often using concrete rather than abstract language, meeting his reader half way in terms of making Dante's argument accessible to a lay public not versed in Latin or in the technicalities of syllogistic argument.

The following table shows the sorts of intervention Ficino makes in the text: in bold are some Latin words, phrases, clauses, and even whole sentences omitted in his Italian version.

analetice; liberrime atque facillime; simpliciter; similiter; pariter; subtiliter; aperte; quasi equaliter; dupliciter; typice; omnino; saltem

ut in principio huius capituli est probatum; ut dictum est; ut iam tactum est; ut superius est ostensum; ut iam declaratum est; quod de se patet; ut manifestum est de se; ut patet; ex quo sequitur quod; propter quod sciendum; sed constat quod

- I iv 6 **Quod erat necessarium, ut dictum fuit**, velut signum prefixum
...
- I vii 1 Est enim quoddam totum ad regna particularia et ad gentes, **ut superiora ostendunt**; et est quedam pars ad totum universum. **Et hoc est de se manifestum.**
- I vii 2 ... per unum principium tantum, **ut ex superioribus colligi potest de facili:**
- I vii 3 ... per unum principium tantum, scilicet unicum principem. **Ex quo sequitur Monarchiam necessariam mundo ut bene sit.**
- I ix 3 Monarchiam esse, **sive unicum principatum qui 'Imperium' appellatur.**
- I x 5 **et hic erit Monarcha sive Imperator. Est igitur Monarchia necessaria mundo.**
- I xi 20 **Satis igitur declarata subassumpta principalis, quia conclusio certa est: scilicet quod ad optimam dispositionem mundi necesse est Monarchiam esse.**
- I xiii 8 **Bene igitur dictum est cum dicitur in subassumpta quod Monarcha solus est ille ...**
- I xiv 10 **et sic per Monarcham qui unicus est princeps;**
- I ii 1 ... **typo ut dicam et secundum intentionem.**

- II iii 13 ... **'eius', idest Affrice, quia de ipsa loquebatur.**
- II x 9 Reducitur enim sic: omne iniustum persuadetur iniuste; Cristus non persuasit iniuste: ergo non persuasit iniustum. **A positione antecedentis sic: omne iniustum persuadetur iniuste; Cristus persuasit quoddam iniustum: ergo persuasit iniuste.**
- II iii 6 Titus Livius, **gestorum romanorum scriba egregius, ...**
- II v 15 ... **ut Livius, non quantum est dignum, sed quantum potest glorificando renarrat;**

As is clear from these examples, Ficino cuts not just isolated words, or small phrases which form the scaffolding of the argument, but sometimes larger portions of text which are part of its substance; he has little time for the deference and rhetoric used in the citing of authorities. This limited sample aims to give a sense of Ficino's approach to Dante's original, but perforce gives no inkling of the extensive scale of his interventions, which operate over the whole length of the treatise.⁸ Potentially there is a great deal of material where Heroldt might have amended his translation from the Italian by consulting a Latin manuscript. This is a fruitful area of enquiry, and Renello has made a useful start on analyzing the situation.

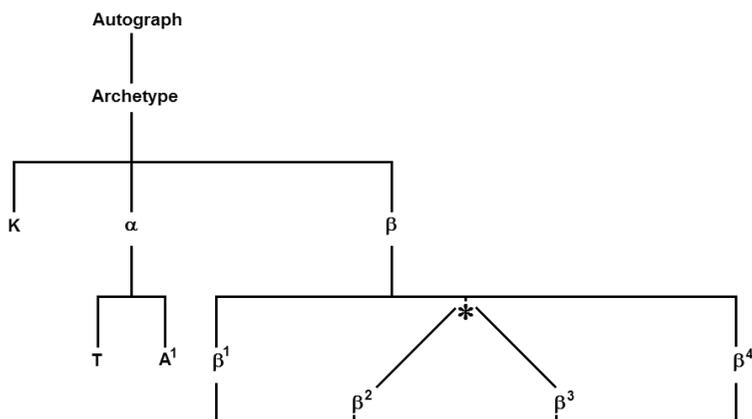
But the situation, it must be emphasized, is extremely complicated: the manuscript on which the *princeps* is based does not survive; Heroldt is translating from Ficino, but not from any of the eleven surviving manuscripts of Ficino's version; Ficino translates from a Latin manuscript which also does not survive. And we have three very independent and enterprising editors and translators (Oporino, Heroldt, Ficino), each in his own way demonstrably taking liberties with his base text to produce what he thinks is a version true to Dante's thinking yet accessible to a contemporary audience. There is a great deal of room for speculation here. Speculation is of course perfectly legitimate as long as it is not at odds

⁸ To appreciate fully the scale of Ficino's interventions in the text, see Prudence Shaw, ed., "La versione ficiniana della *Monarchia*," *Studi danteschi* 51 (1978): 308–24. Ficino's cuts to the text are noted systematically in the recent reprint of my critical text by Francesco Furlan, who retains the original orthography. See Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia con il Commentario di Cola di Rienzo e il volgarizzamento di Marsilio Ficino*, ed. Francesco Furlan (Milan: Mondadori, 2004). The cuts are also noted by Diego Ellero, who offers the text with modernised spelling. See Marsilio Ficino, *La Monarchia di Dante*, ed. Diego Ellero, in Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia*, ed. Paolo Chiesa and Andrea Tabarroni (Rome: Salerno, 2014), 451–536.

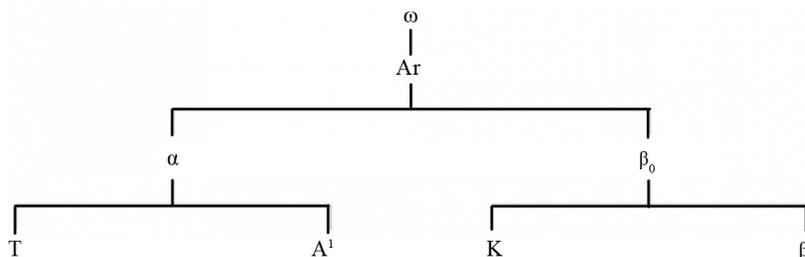
with basic considerations of probability and logic and philological methodology.

One of Renello's conclusions, and I think he is very likely to be right about this, is that the manuscript Heroldt consulted to check his translation of Ficino's Italian—his Latin "manoscritto di controllo"—was the one used by Oporino as the basis for the *princeps*. But that, of course, is a very different thing from saying that that Latin manuscript is "all'interno della famiglia β ". The place of that manuscript within the stemma is the point at issue.

A comparison between the *EN* stemma in its upper levels and Renello's proposed stemma will help to clarify the point. If K descends directly from the archetype, we have a three-branched tree:



If it is "all'interno della famiglia β ", as Renello believes, we have a two-branched tree:⁹



⁹ Renello, "L'Edizione critica della *Monarchia*," 159.

To create his two-branched tree, Renello has introduced an extra stage into the transmission, a hypothetical β_0 .

The fundamental principle of manuscript classification, which lies behind the creation of a stemma, is vertical descent established by the sharing of common errors. What is the case for thinking that K descends independently from the archetype? It has no errors in common with α (as I was at pains to demonstrate in the *EN*—Pier Giorgio Ricci in his 1965 edition had placed it in α);¹⁰ and it has none of the fifteen errors which link all the manuscripts of β .

How does Renello explain the absence of β errors and lacunae in the *princeps*? Renello asserts repeatedly, but without ever discussing the implications of his claim, that the absence of these readings in K is a result of K's contamination with the α ms. T (either the scribe of the manuscript on which the *princeps* is based, or the editor of the printed version itself—he does not say which—introduced these correct readings by taking them from T).¹¹ This is asserted almost casually, *en passant*, then repeated, without ever being discussed or considered in depth. What starts as speculation seems to harden into certainty with repetition. Thus K is described as “contaminato con T” as if this were an established fact.¹² But, of course, if the manuscript on which K is based is not a β manuscript, we do not have to make this assumption about contamination with T. In the same way Renello refers to “il manoscritto β di controllo”, as if that too were a fact, when it is precisely the affiliation of the control manuscript that he is trying to establish.¹³

There is a vanishingly small chance that if Oporino, or the scribe of his exemplar, had contaminated with T he would have introduced exactly and precisely and only the corrections to the β errors. A much simpler and more economical explanation for the presence of *all* the correct readings in K is that K inherited these good readings by direct descent from the archetype. Renello's thesis offends against the principle of parsimony

¹⁰ Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia*, ed. Pier Giorgio Ricci, vol. 5 of *Le opere di Dante Alighieri. Edizione Nazionale*, edited by the Società Dantesca Italiana (Milan: Mondadori, 1965).

¹¹ In the last footnote to his article Renello seems to imply that the contamination happened in the manuscript rather than in the edition: “Se l'*editio princeps*, come credo, era contaminata con testimoni di entrambe le famiglie, allora lo era senz'altro anche il suo antigrafo.” See Renello, “A proposito della *Monarchia*,” 153n123. The 2013 hypothesis about contamination of K with T makes the 2011 notion of a β_0 redundant, but Renello does not spell out this methodological point.

¹² *Ibid.*, 152.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 139.

(Occam's razor): we do not need the hypothetical entity β_0 to explain the data, nor do we need the notion of contamination. The fact that in his second article Renello does not reproduce the diagram and indeed seems to have abandoned the notion of a β_0 , perhaps suggests that he has come to see the weakness of this position.

If we look at the stemma which represents Renello's hypothesis about K being "all'interno della famiglia β ", then the difficulties with his view are easy to see. While both for α and for β we have a substantial list of incontrovertible errors shared by all manuscripts in the family,¹⁴ for Renello's hypothetical β_0 we have a short list of very problematical readings. Renello admits candidly that most of these readings are certainly polygenetic: "in molti casi si tratta di indubbi errori poligenetici."¹⁵ One could add that in the second half of the treatise, where T alone represents α , an alternative explanation is that these are archetype errors corrected in T. It seems worth reiterating this key point: there are no clear, unequivocal errors linking K and β .

Let's move on to Renello's hypothesis as it is laid out in his 2013 article, where K is said to be based on "un esemplare vicino a β_2/β_3 ". Renello has two arguments to support this assertion: a shared chapter break at II v 18, and a very small number of errors shared by K with just one β_3 manuscript, ms. E. A supplementary argument, presented very tentatively, is that the state of the cross-reference to *Paradiso* at I xii 6—notoriously missing in K—is a possible textual link between K and β_2 .

We can begin with the chapter break argument. It is true that there is a chapter break at II v 18 in K and in the manuscripts of β_2/β_3 , a break not found in other manuscripts. Before moving on to the general question of the validity of an argument for manuscript affiliations based on chapter breaks, a couple of small factual points seem relevant.

II v is the longest chapter in the treatise, and by a very considerable margin. It is almost half as long again as the next longest chapter. It has 142 lines of text in the *EN*; the next longest chapter is II ix at 106 lines, the third longest is I xi at 86 lines. The average chapter length is 48 lines. Chapter II v is a *very* long chapter; it is perhaps not unlikely that a copyist or editor might think it time for a break.

It seems worth pointing out also that the readings are not identical in K and in the β manuscripts which start a new chapter here. The β_2/β_3 manuscripts, in line with the text of the *EN*, have (with slight variations) *Declarata* (FP *Declarat*, Ph *Declaratum*) *igitur duo sunt*, looking back to

¹⁴ See *EN*, 81–82 for α ; *EN*, 69–78 for β .

¹⁵ Renello, "L'Edizione critica della *Monarchia*," 155.

the argument already articulated; K by contrast has *Declaranda igitur duo sunt*, which looks forward, not back. *Declaranda* does not make much sense in context, suggesting that the *princeps* editor (or the copyist of the Latin manuscript he was using) did not track the development of the argument. But it does suggest that the motivation for introducing a break here was a different one, however muddled. And we can just note in passing that where there is a chapter break at III xi which does not fit Renello's thesis, because it suggests that K does not go with β , he explains it away, saying that Oporino will have introduced that break independently, off his own bat.¹⁶

But the important point is a general one: what weight does a shared chapter break have in establishing manuscript relationships? There are many chapter breaks (or indeed missing chapter breaks) which considered on their own might suggest manuscript affiliations which are not supported by textual evidence, but if there is no textual evidence linking the manuscripts, we attribute no weight to the chapter breaks at all.

Let us briefly consider this broader picture. There are numerous cases of otherwise unrelated manuscripts sharing or omitting a chapter break: thus, A¹ and D have no division at I vi 1 *Et sic se habet* and there is no reason to think this is by anything but chance. D and S introduce a division at II x 4 *Dico ergo quod*: again, the convergence is fortuitous. There is no new chapter at III ix 1 *Accipiunt etiam illud Luce* in C H L P Y Z, but this is not an argument for a close link between these six manuscripts, except in the case of H and Z, where it fits the pattern revealed by a long list of common errors and variants. Where A² and β 2 (PFNY) introduce a chapter break at III x 12 *Amplius*, this is not evidence of a link between A² and β 2, since they have only a single variant in common (*habentes* for *abeuntes* at I xii 5). But when A² and the core manuscripts of β 3 (DGPhV) introduce a break at II ix 12 *Sed romanus populus*, and another at II x 1 *Maxime enim fremuerunt* (instead of at *Usque adhuc* one sentence earlier), this double break, which sets these witnesses apart from the remaining manuscripts, confirms a connection already established by a network of shared variants.

For anyone who has worked on the manuscripts of the *Monarchia*, the general fluidity or malleability of the text in relation to chapter breaks is quite striking. It can be further illustrated by the many points where isolated manuscripts omit breaks found in all the other witnesses: at I iv 1 *Satis* there is no new chapter in ms. V; at I vii 1 *Amplius humana universitas* there is no chapter break in ms. D; at I ix 1 *Item* there is no break in ms. A; at I x 1 *Et ubicunque* again there is no break in ms. A; at I

¹⁶ Renello, "A proposito della *Monarchia*," 135.

xvi 1 *Rationibus* there is no new chapter in ms. V; at II iv 1 *Illud* there is no break in ms. A. At other points anomalous chapter breaks are introduced in isolated manuscripts: at I v 7 *Si vero* only in ms. A; at II ix 15 *Cumque duo populi* only in S; at III xvi 16 *Et iam* only in P. In the Hyères manuscript of the Ficino volgarizzamento there is a chapter break at III x 10 *Ancora* (Latin: *Preterea*) which has no counterpart in any other manuscript, Latin or vernacular. In the volgarizzamento anonimo there is a new chapter at I xiv 5 *Habent nanque nationes* (*Anno però le nazioni*); again, there is no counterpart in any surviving Latin manuscript, or in Ficino's version. And the volgarizzamento anonimo starts a new chapter at III xi *Adhuc dicunt*, like KTMD and no other Latin manuscript (and again this chapter break is not in Ficino).

There are even more surprising anomalies and convergences in the way the text is divided in different manuscripts. In ms. P, Book II begins not at II i, but at II ii, which has a splendid decorated initial fully thirteen lines deep and a scribal note to the effect that this is *Monarchie secundus*, whereas II i (the authentic first chapter of Book II) has a marginal note by the copyist to the effect that *In hoc ultimo capitulo dantes invehit in principes et reges terre contra Romanum Imperium insurgentes etcetera*. The same thing happens in ms. S, a manuscript which has no connection to ms. P, where again Book II starts not at II i, but at II ii, with a large capital letter. But P and S share only three variants not found in other manuscripts (II i 5 *ad rumpendum* for *ad dirumpendum*; II v 15 *quam* for *quantum*; III iii 6 *genera hominum* for *hominum genera*; see below for a discussion of such chance convergent readings). The shared idiosyncrasy in layout and textual division, striking though it is, is not evidence of a link between mss. P and S.

The complexity of the data in respect of chapter breaks in the treatise cautions against any simplistic assumption that the shared break at II v 18, on its own and unsupported by any other evidence, constitutes proof of a link between K and $\beta 2/\beta 3$. The *Monarchia* is a text which introduces chapter breaks or loses them very easily: this is a fact that Renello does not consider. A striking example of a shared chapter break which has no probative force at all is the one at II x 1, shared by just three witnesses: Latin ms. T *Usque adhuc*; the Heroldt translation, *BIß hieher*;¹⁷ and the Hyères manuscript alone among the eleven surviving manuscripts of the Ficino version, *Infino quy*. No other manuscript (Latin or vernacular) has a chapter break here, nor does the *princeps*. But it would be unwise to argue on this basis that there is a link between these three witnesses. Only when

¹⁷ Dante, *Monarchie Oder Daß das Keyserthumb*, 121.

a chapter break fits in with the pattern of distribution of errors and variants does it become a significant piece of evidence.

Chapter breaks in the Ficino and Heroldt translations show how easily breaks are introduced or ignored, yet Renello specifically makes the chapter breaks in the two translations a part of his argument, and discusses them at some length. Most of what he says is factually true and interesting, but I'm obliged to point out that it does not support his argument in any way.

The table below shows chapter breaks in the Latin text, in Ficino, and in Heroldt, in Book I of the *Monarchia*:

Latin	Ficino	Heroldt
Book I		
	proemio	Vorrede
i	i	Vorrede
		<i>Epitaphium</i>
ii	ii	Das erste Capitel
	iii [=Latin ii, 5-8]	
iii	iv	Das ander Capitel
iv	v	Das dritt Capitel
	vi [=Latin iv, 5-6]	
v	vii	Das iiij. Capitel
vi	viii	Das v. Capitel
vii	ix	Das sechßt Capitel
viii	x	Das vii. Capitel
ix	xi	Das neündt Capitel
x	xii	Das ix. Cap.
xi	xiii	Das x. Capitel
xii	xiv	Das xj. Capitel
xiii	xv	Das xij. Capitel
xiv	xvi	Das xij. Capitel
xv	xvii	Das xiiij. Cap.
xvi	xviii	Das xv. Cap.

A glance at the table shows that Ficino has introduced breaks that are not in the Latin, and that Heroldt has, in these instances, corrected them but that his numbering is erratic. What is less apparent from the table is that Heroldt has radically rethought the textual organization of the opening section of the treatise.

Heroldt has taken notable liberties in the way he structures the layout of the argument. He calls chapter i a foreword (*Vorrede*), so that chapter ii of the Latin text becomes his chapter i. He moves a sentence from the beginning of one chapter to the end of the previous one, and moves another sentence from the end of one chapter to the beginning of the next one. He introduces Dante's epitaph, in Latin and German, to occupy a whole page between his foreword and his chapter i, in other words between what we know as chapters i and ii of the Latin text. (No manuscript does this, although ms. C adds the epitaph at the end of the treatise.) The German translation of the epitaph specifically identifies Dante as author not just of the *Monarchia*, but of *Hell*, *Purgatory* and *Paradise* as well, a point we will come back to:

Lebend bschreyb ich, das Keyserthumb,
Hell, Fegfewr, Pardiß umb und umb.

Renello draws attention to these Ficino and Heroldt anomalies in chapter divisions, but he still feels able to say: "la struttura dei capitoli dei testimoni latini, del volgarizzamento di Ficino e della traduzione di Heroldt ci ha portato ad affermare che sotto questo aspetto K sembra appartenere alla famiglia β ." This conclusion is baffling; there is no link between the evidence he has given and what he deduces from it. Most of what he has said about chapter divisions in his detailed analysis has no bearing on the question. The only relevant fact is the chapter break at II v 18; none of the additional data leads to his conclusion. The wealth of detail is interesting in itself for establishing Heroldt's *modus operandi* (and Renello surely underestimates the German translator's autonomy); but it has no bearing at all on the argument about the position of K.

To summarize: when a chapter division is shared by witnesses that share other errors and variants, it is likely to be part of a shared pattern of innovation, and can be considered a confirmation of the existence of a common ancestor for the manuscripts which share it. When there are no shared errors and variants, the shared chapter division may be, is indeed likely to be, a chance convergence. The *Monarchia* is a text which both splits and joins easily: scribes (and editors) introduce new chapter breaks, or fail to do so, not necessarily following their exemplar. As the table shows, Ficino introduces breaks where no Latin manuscript does so: Latin

I ii becomes Ficino's I ii and iii, Latin I iv becomes Ficino's I v and vi. Heroldt does the same thing at yet other points: Ficino's III xv becomes Heroldt's xv, xvi and a final unnumbered chapter.

A final argument involving chapter breaks is used by Renello to establish the supposed closeness of the "manoscritto di controllo" to $\beta 3$. It goes as follows:

Siamo dunque di fronte a un nuovo e interessante indizio: solo i manoscritti della famiglia $\beta 3$ con l'esclusione di D, presentano contemporaneamente un nuovo capitolo a II v 18 e, come visto sopra, non hanno la suddivisione di capitolo a III xi. Possiamo in tal modo restringere ulteriormente l'area di collegamento del manoscritto di controllo a quest'ultima famiglia.¹⁸

This is both factually inaccurate and beside the point. Factually inaccurate, because the $\beta 2$ mss. share these same characteristics, which are thus not exclusive to $\beta 3$. Beside the point, because, as Renello fails to mention, the Ficino version, on which Heroldt's translation is based, has these same divisions. (The chapter divisions in Ficino and Heroldt in books II and III of the *Monarchia* are set out in a table in the Appendix to this article.) The shared pattern might be an argument for linking Ficino (and thus Heroldt) to $\beta 2/\beta 3$, but it tells us nothing at all about the "manoscritto di controllo". Heroldt often follows Ficino when the Ficino reading differs from K, as it does here, of course: K has the chapter break at III xi. Once again, Renello's conclusion does not follow from the facts. Those facts do not allow us to conclude anything at all about the "manoscritto di controllo".

In short, the evidence about chapter breaks across the tradition as a whole suggests precisely the opposite conclusion to the one reached by Renello: the shared break at II v 18 is *not* evidence of a close relationship between K and $\beta 2/\beta 3$.

Renello's second argument in support of his hypothesis about the position of K is based on a small number of errors shared by K with ms. E. I mentioned these errors in the *EN*, precisely to illustrate the point I am now going to elaborate, that the textual material in the extant witnesses is not "razionalizzabile al 100%".¹⁹ My explanation of the small number of errors shared by K and E is contamination of K by E, or perhaps of E by K, in a small section of the text: the two striking errors occur within a few lines of one another, at III xii 8 and III xii 9. We must appeal here to a sense of what this tiny number of anomalous variants counts for when set

¹⁸ Renello, "A proposito della *Monarchia*," 134.

¹⁹ *EN*, 62–63.

against the weight of the overall distribution of variants across the tradition. I discounted these variants as being of insufficient weight or substance when set against the overwhelmingly persuasive lists of variants which establish the existence of α , of β , and of β_1 , β_2 , β_3 and β_4 .

What Renello makes no attempt to explain is how a manuscript can be close to β_2 when it has none of the errors on the basis of which we identify these manuscripts as forming one branch of the stemma (of the seventy-odd such errors and variants listed in my analysis of ms. Y, K has not a single one);²⁰ or how it can be close to β_3 when, likewise, it shares none of the errors characterizing the manuscripts which constitute that family.²¹

The errors K shares with E must be seen against this background; they cannot count for more than the many identifying errors of these two groups *not* present in K. Renello never mentions this countervailing evidence. Also, as noted, he does not attempt to draw a stemma or diagram to show how K relates to β_2 and β_3 . This is not surprising: it would be impossible to devise a graphic representation of the relations he posits, a situation which defies genealogical and pictorial logic.

There is something else that Renello never takes into consideration. It is surely relevant that E is not unique in sharing isolated errors and variants with K: every other manuscript with the exception of L (and its *descriptus* Q) has a small number of such shared readings, some of them quite striking.²² By picking out isolated readings which do not fit the overall pattern of errors, we could construct an alternative hypothesis just as plausible to someone not familiar with the whole tradition, and just as baseless. One could, for example, posit a special link of K to the manuscripts M, D and G. Let us consider this hypothesis, for the sake of argument, not to suggest that it has any merit, but to show that the hypothesis advanced by Renello about a K link to ms. E has no more substance than the alternative that he does not consider. It is instructive to weigh the evidence which might link K to these manuscripts against the evidence Renello puts forward for a link between K and ms. E.

First, a singular correspondence. Only K and M have the interpolated phrase *Et hoc simul accipe dictum* inserted into the middle of the quotation from Cicero (who in his turn is quoting Ennius) at II ix 8. (The phrase is

²⁰ See Shaw, "Un secondo manoscritto," 228–31.

²¹ *EN*, 114–21, 136–40.

²² The figures and readings are easily obtained using Vbase on the DVD-Rom. See Dante Alighieri, *Monarchia* [DVD-ROM], ed. Prue Shaw (Birmingham and Florence: Scholarly Digital Editions—Società Dantesca Italiana, 2006); the figures are listed in Shaw, "Un secondo manoscritto," 247n42.

an interpolation in Dante's text, since he cites the lines from Ennius omitting these words.)

Vosne velit an me regnare Hera, quidve ferat sors,
virtute experiamur. Et hoc simul accipe dictum:
Quorum virtuti belli fortuna pepercit,
eorundem me libertati parcere certum est.

This is surely just as remarkable as the errors shared by K with E. As well as this shared interpolation, found in no other manuscript, there are two other less significant variants found only in K and M (at II iii 6 *veterum testimonia* for *testimonia veterum*; at II ix 8 *horundem* for *eorundem*).

There is in addition a series of errors and variants, including three omissions, present only in K and ms. D (the shared readings are in the left-hand column, the readings in the right-hand column are those of the *EN*):

I xi 17	est magis est causa	magis est causa
II vii 8	<i>om.</i> secundo Paralipomenon	
II viii 6	cum intentione	et intentionem
II ix 190	<i>om.</i> quidem	
II x 6	<i>om.</i> homo	
III iii 7	grecorum	gregum
III iv 11	sompniis	sompnis
III x 5	facile	de facili

This is, incidentally, a more impressive list of correspondences than the one Renello produces for K and E.

And just as K shares a chapter break at II v 18 with β_2/β_3 , so too it shares a chapter break at III xi 1 with MD and T only, a break found in no other manuscript. Does this justify a hypothesis that K is “vicino ad un esemplare β_4/β_3 ”, and particularly close to the contaminated manuscripts M and D? No, it does not. These shared variants go against the overall picture, just as the K + E readings do. And if we look at possible links between K and ms. G, the manuscript to which D is closely related, we find another interesting list of shared variants found in no other manuscript (again the shared readings are in the left-hand column, the readings in the right-hand column are those of the *EN*):

I iv 5	opera nostra	nostra opera
I xi 20	declarata est	declarata
II v 3	<i>om. sunt</i>	
II v 5	aversa	adversa
II viii 12	qui	que (twice)
II ix 15	<i>om. hinc</i>	
III iii 2	<i>om. vero</i>	
III iv 18	in libro de Doctrina	in Doctrina

Another indicator, it could be argued, that K's affiliations with β , such as they are, are with MDG.

All these anomalous readings linking K with M, with D, and with G, just like the others I have listed elsewhere, are readings which do not fit the pattern suggested by the preponderance of the evidence.²³ They form part of the complexity of the picture to which I referred when in the *EN* I used the phrase I have already quoted, pointing out that the textual tradition of the *Monarchia* is not "razionalizzabile al 100%". Renello, seizing on a possible link with E—to which I myself drew attention as the most obvious example of data which did not quite fit—overlooks similar possible links with other manuscripts which must be ruled out in order to have a workable view of the material.²⁴

To summarize on the issue of textual substance: there are scores of chance agreements between manuscripts not stemmatically related, as anyone browsing the Word Collation on the DVD-Rom *Monarchia* will immediately appreciate. These exist alongside the far larger number of errors and variants which unequivocally establish family groupings and enable us to orientate ourselves within the textual tradition, and prove the existence of α , of β , and of β_1 , β_2 , β_3 and β_4 and their smaller subgroups. Disconcerting though the anomalous readings sometimes are, the point is that there are not large numbers of them: there are not enough of them to be significant or to invalidate the main hypothesis.

How do we account for these anomalous correspondences which do not fit the larger pattern? There are two possible explanations: either polygenetic error (to which the *Monarchia* text is notoriously prone), or contamination (and where the readings are particularly striking, this seems the most likely explanation). Contamination is a necessary

²³ Shaw, "Un secondo manoscritto," 247n42.

²⁴ *EN*, 63.

explanatory concept for the textual critic; it is certainly true that K seems to be a very contaminated witness. But it is playing fast and loose with the notion of contamination to use it as Renello does in relation to K, to explain away the absence of β errors, but not to accept that it must account for the small number of random coincidences in readings on which he bases his argument. Contamination cannot be invoked as an all-purpose get-out to explain away anything that does not fit an eccentric hypothesis.

It is perhaps worth restating the usefulness and limitations of neo-Lachmannian methodology. That methodology gives an orientation among surviving witnesses; it will not necessarily be able to account for *all* the data, some of which may remain puzzling. The process by which a text is copied through many generations does not operate according to rules of mathematical precision: we are not talking about mathematically watertight certainties when we produce a stemma. Contamination, scribal conjecture, polygenetic error are explanatory tools the philologist perforce uses, but they must be used with a respect for the elementary logic of evolutionary descent and with methodological sobriety and propriety.

By basing his stemmatic hypothesis on a small number of anomalous readings and avoiding the overwhelming preponderance of the evidence, Renello ignores the necessary logic of vertical descent and the formation of a stemma. The argument based on textual substance (a tiny number of shared errors in K and E) is no more persuasive than the argument based on a shared chapter break for believing that there is a relationship of descent between K and β , and that K is to be positioned “all’ interno di β , vicino ad un esemplare β^2/β^3 ”.

A third argument developed at some length by Renello in his 2013 article involves the notorious cross-reference to *Paradiso* at I xii 6. That cross-reference is missing in the *princeps*; Oporino in his *lettera dedicatoria* tells us that the author of the *Monarchia* is not Dante, the famous old poet, but a contemporary of Poliziano’s: “Sunt autem quos adiunximus, primùm DANTIS Aligherii, non vetustioris illius Florentini poetæ celeberrimi, sed philosophi acutissimi atque doctiss. viri, & Angeli Politiani familiaris quondam, de *Monarchia libri tres*”²⁵.

²⁵ Dante Alighieri, *Andreae Alciati iure consulti clariss. De formula Romani Imperii Libellus. Accesserunt non dissimilis argumenti, Dantis Florentini “De Monarchia” libri tres. Radulphi Carnotensis De translatione Imperii libellus. Chronica M. Iordanis, Qualiter Romanum Imperium translatum sit ad Germanos. Omnia nunc primùm in lucem edita* (Basel: Ioannes Oporinus, 1559), 51.

Perhaps the single most striking fact about ms. Y is that it carries the cross-reference in a garbled form, with an unintelligible phrase (*inminuadiso*) in place of the words *in Paradiso*, and the word *immediate* instead of *Commedia*. Renello suggests that this garbled state of the inciso in ms. Y constitutes a textual link between K, where it is missing, and $\beta 2$, where it is problematic in two of the manuscripts. In $\beta 2$ mss. P and F it is present only in part, with a blank space left where the missing words should be. Renello describes this situation in a tendentious way, saying, for example, that K and F “non riportano l’inciso” and that F is “totalmente lacunoso”, turns of phrase which fudge the very real difference between a witness where the phrase is entirely absent and a witness where there is a blank space left for some missing words.²⁶ I am not going to talk here about the substance of the Y reading.²⁷ I want rather to track Renello’s argument, showing how he links the Y reading to K, and then connects both of them to Heroldt, in ways that in my view raise more problems than they solve.

Renello believes the K ms. may have had the inciso in a garbled form similar to Y. He repeats this conjecture often, as though by dint of repetition a conjecture becomes a fact.²⁸ If it were true that the K manuscript had the inciso in a garbled form (and it is a big if), this would constitute a textual link between K and $\beta 2$; Renello has not so far given us any such textual links, for the very good reason that none exist. His next point is that *if* the K ms. had a garbled inciso, that could explain why Oporino cut it in the *princeps*. That makes perfect sense. But he seems to be saying more than this: that a garbled inciso in his exemplar will have confirmed Oporino’s belief that the author of the treatise was not Dante, the famous old poet. This is harder to accept: an unintelligible phrase would surely have no bearing on the identity of the author.

There are also difficulties with Renello’s position which, ironically, his own findings highlight. His article throws interesting light on the relationship between Oporino and Heroldt, showing it to have been one of collaboration, esteem, and even friendship, with Heroldt referring to Oporino in print as “Oporinus ille noster”, “benemerito homini Oporino

²⁶ Renello, “A proposito della *Monarchia*,” 130.

²⁷ I plan to deal with the subject elsewhere. See Annalisa Belloni and Diego Quaglioni, “Un restauro dantesco: *Monarchia* I xii 6,” *Aevum* 88 (2014): 493–501.

²⁸ Thus: “lacunoso o oscuro,” 152; “guasta, o lacunosa, o comunque illeggibile,” 153; “forse difficilmente leggibile e quindi inutilizzabile, o comunque non credibile,” *ibid.*; “illeggibile o non affidabile,” 154; “una frase forse lacunosa, incomprensibile, o addirittura assente,” *ibid.* (Renello, “L’Edizione critica della *Monarchia*”).

nostro.”²⁹ He shows that Heroldt helped Oporino with the preparation of the *princeps* volume, and surmises that in exchange Oporino let Heroldt see the *princeps* Latin manuscript: “Come non pensare, allora, che il curatore della traduzione tedesca abbia avuto il permesso di consultare il ms. latino”.³⁰ This also makes perfect sense.

But this hypothesis (that Oporino lent Heroldt the K manuscript as his “manoscrito di controllo”, to check his translation from Ficino), far from throwing light on Oporino’s conviction that the *Monarchia* is not by Dante, surely makes the situation even more puzzling, because Heroldt, of course, knows very well that the author of the *Monarchia* is Dante, the famous old poet.

Indeed, one might almost think that Heroldt goes out of his way to underline Dante’s authorship of the treatise. He includes the cross-reference to the *Paradiso* at I xii 6: *wie ich dann inn meinem Büch von dem Paradeis ettwa gemeldet hab*. He translates Ficino’s *proemio*, which leaves Dante’s identity in no doubt and speaks of him in highly laudatory terms as the author of the *Commedia*. He adds within the text, and translates, the epitaph which spells out Dante’s authorship of *Monarchia* and *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*. In his own foreword he gives a lively account of the banning and burning of the political treatise in Bologna by Bernard du Poujet, conveying a sense of outrage that the Cardinal wanted to dig up Dante’s bones and throw them on the pyre as well (all the details are taken from Boccaccio’s *Trattatello*):

Da was Bertrand von Castenet, der Cardinal Portuensis, ein hochtragender roher freueler Frantzose Bäpstlicher zu Bononien Legat, der selbig verfolget allen anhang, menschen unnd schriffte, so Keyser Ludwigen beigstanden, unnd so fleysigst auch wie vil er diser büechlin erfahren unnd zwegen bringen kundt, ließ er sye alle alß ketzerisch offentlich in fewr verprennen on allen widerstand, dann mänigcklich war erhaset. Also das er so freuel, unn das grab Dantis zu Ravenna, dorein jne der herr daselbst Guido Novello da Polenta, ehrlich bestattet hatt, auffbrechen lassen wolt, unnd den todten cörpel Dantis oder das gepeyn als eins kätzers zu äschen machen. Und das ward jhme hart abgebetten, durch zwen fürstmässig Herren, die dem Cardinal gar wol an, dero der ein Pino delle [*sic*] Tosa, der ander Astigo von Polenta gnannt.³¹

²⁹ Dante, *Andreas Alciati iure consulti clariss.* 259, 260.

³⁰ Renello, “A proposito della *Monarchia*,” 151.

³¹ The opening pages of the Heroldt translation, including all the introductory material, are unnumbered in the printed volume. For the convenience of readers wishing to view this material on the website, I list here the image numbers of the

And evidently unaware of Dante's reluctance to name himself, in accordance with the rules of medieval rhetoric, unless it is absolutely essential to do so, he adds Dante's name within the text of the treatise, at III iii 10, for rhetorical emphasis: "noch darff man sich sollicher jünglingen nit verwundern. dann **ich Dantes** hab selbs von iro eynem gehört, das er unverschämpter weiß kain blatt für den mundt genommen, schwören dorfft, die Decret und solliche satzungen der kirchen wäre eyn grundvestin Christliches glaubens." It seems no exaggeration to say that Heroldt's little book is not just a translation of Dante's political treatise, but also a celebration of its author's life and works.

But Renello is forced by the logic of his own position to say that Oporino will not have known about Ficino's version, even though he lends Heroldt a Latin manuscript to check his translation against: "Oporino, all'oscuro della copia ficiniana".³² If the circumstances Renello describes about their relationship are true, is it likely that Oporino could have been "all'oscuro della versione ficiniana"? What Renello has established about Oporino and Heroldt and their friendly and collaborative relationship makes Oporino's denial of Dante's authorship more puzzling, not less so. In spite of Renello's extensive ruminations on the subject, the *princeps* editor's reasons for believing the treatise not to be by Dante, if he believes that in good faith, remain more mysterious than ever.

To conclude: it seems important to pinpoint the real and welcome contribution made by Renello to our knowledge and understanding of the textual transmission of the *Monarchia*, and to separate that contribution from the dubious speculative and argumentative material in which it is embedded. Renello has made a valuable start on analyzing the relationship of Heroldt's translation both to the Ficino version on which it is based, and to the text of the *princeps*, showing convincingly that the "manoscritto di controllo" used by Heroldt is very likely to have been the one used by Oporino for his edition. This is certainly a significant finding. But what Renello has quite failed to prove is that the "manoscritto di controllo" belongs in the β family.

passages referred to in the text: Ficino's proemio: images 29–30; Dante's epitaph: image 35; the passage which describes Bernard du Poujet's plan to throw Dante's bones on the fire along with copies of the *Monarchia*: images 23–4. The cross-reference to *Paradiso* is on p. 38; the self-citation at III iii 10 is on p. 140. A digital copy of the work is available online at:

<http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb00039127-5>

³² Renello, "A proposito della *Monarchia*", 153.

Renello's presentation of the evidence about the position of K in the stemma is selective, tendentious, and sometimes plain wrong. His hypothesis about the stemma and the position of the *princeps* in it is not, with all due respect, "meritevole di attenzione", as one scholar has suggested.³³ It has no merit. It should be rejected out of hand.³⁴

Appendix: Chapter breaks in Ficino and Heroldt in Books II and III of the *Monarchia*

Latin	Ficino	Heroldt
Book II		
i	i	Vorrede
ii	ii	Das erste Capitel
iii	iii	Das ij. Cap.
iv	iv	Das dritt Capitel
v	v	Das iiij. Cap.
	vi [=Latin v, 18-26]	Das fünfft Capitel
vi	vii	Das sechßt Capitel
vii	viii	Das vij. Cap.
viii	ix	Das viij. Capitel
ix	x [=Latin ix + x]	Das neündt Capitel
x		Das x. Cap.
xi	xi	Das xj. Capitel

³³ Quaglioni, "Un nuovo testimone", 235.

³⁴ A fuller discussion of some of the issues raised in this article can now be found in the Appendice to the *EN*, published by the Società Dantesca Italiana: *Il ms. London, British Library Add. 6891 della Monarchia*, ed. Prue Shaw (Florence, Le Lettere, 2018).

Book III

i	i	Vorrede
ii	ii	Das erst Cap.
iii	iii	Das ij. Cap.
iv	iv	Das iij. Cap.
v	v	Das iiij. Cap.
vi	vi	Das v. Capitel
vii	vii	[=Latin vi + vii, but vi is omitted from the numbering]
viii	viii	Das vij. Capitel
ix	ix	Das viij. Capitel
x	x [=Latin x + xi]	Das neundte Capittel
xi		[=Latin x + xi; x is omitted from the numbering]
xii	xi	Das xi. Cap.
xiii	xii	Das xij Cap.
xiv	xiii	Das xij Cap.
xv	xiv	Das xiiij. Cap.
xvi	xv	Das xv. Capitel
		[=Latin xvi, 1-11]
		Das xvi. Cap.
		[=Latin xvi, 12-15]
		There is a rubric but no chapter number for the last division.
		[=Latin xvi, 16-18]
		Thus, Latin III xvi becomes three chapters in Heroldt, although it remains only one chapter in Ficino.