Michigan MS 147, the Piccolomini Family, and the Tuscan Trade in Books all’antica

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Fig. 1. Frontispiece, from Satires of Juvenal. Mich. MS 147, f. 1. Special Collections Library, University of Michigan.
This study aims to locate the University of Michigan’s Special Collections Library Manuscript 147, a luxury edition of the complete text of the Satirae of Juvenal and Persius, within conventions of quattrocento Tuscan book illumination and production and to situate the codex within the patronage of the papal Piccolomini family. Working from clues within the manuscript and drawing upon circumstantial evidence, such as the literary output of various Piccolomini family members, their involvement within circles of humanists and booksellers, and the development of a substantial library for the city of Siena, I provide a context for the manuscript and even suggest a possible patron. While I consider Manuscript 147 in relation to quattrocento humanist manuscript collecting, I also touch upon broader issues concerning the patronage, production, and collecting of medieval and early modern luxury manuscripts.

The text of MS 147 is transcribed in a fifteenth-century humanist hand, and the illumination is executed in two different styles, both characteristic of mid-fifteenth-century Tuscan manuscript decoration. The frontispiece, marking the beginning of Juvenal’s first Satire, is the manuscript’s most elaborately decorated folio (fig. 1). The initial of the frontispiece is a large golden S with a black background dotted with golden speckles amid blue and dark purple stalks and coral-like foliage. The page’s margins are embellished by bianchi girare decoration, white stalks or vines here set against a red, blue, and pistachio green background. On the right margin three rabbits are depicted, each with its body or face turned in a different direction, set in a landscape with a white and blue sky and ochre ground. The best evidence of the manuscript’s patron is provided by the arms of the Piccolomini family—three crescents here placed on a purple shell—surrounded by a laurel wreath intertwined with strings of coral and located amidst the bianchi girare in the center of the frontispiece’s lower margin.

The next fourteen initials of the manuscript, corresponding to the beginning of each of Juvenal’s Satires, are adorned with gold leaf accompanied by a bianchi girare style background of white stalks on a red, blue, and green base. Following the Juvenal text are Persius’s six Satires, featuring a slightly different style of illumination. The first page of Persius’s Prologue is dominated by a large N initial comprised of a red, green, white, and blue floral form (fig. 2). Gold leaf encloses the initial containing red and green foliage on a blue background. The margins of this page are decorated by similar red, green, and blue foliage interspersed with golden speckles. The five initials, marking the beginning of each of Persius’s Satires, are similar in style to this first page, some, but not all, with similar marginal decoration (fig. 3).

Popular by the eleventh century, the vegetal bianchi girare decoration was the predominant nonfigural decorative motif for
Fig. 2. Frontispiece, from *Satires of Persius*, Mich. MS 147, f. 94v. Special Collections Library, University of Michigan.
Dispositae pinguevel eum velere lucerne
portantes tubrum; amplexa catinum
cauda natao tum turmer alba sidelia uno
labor move toctus recutita Sabbata palle
Tum nigri ternures ortoq; pectura rupto
nivum grandis guli et cum istro tusa saccros
iner fer ceos instantes corpora; si non
reducetum ter mane captur gustaueris alig
xeris nec inter uariosos centuriones
continuo erasium vider uulseritus ingens
et centum grecos curto centus lucen

Ponitur in bruma soyto et basse tabino
iam me lyra et tetrico unuit sibi petine corde
Mare opus exisueet primordia uocum
A tep mate strepitu sidis intendisse latine
Moxsus uiones agitare toco et pollicie honesto
E guevitse lucesse sines miso nie legus hora
T inter per hibernatis meti mare quia latas ingens
D ant noz aet et multa litus se uille recepitar
L unai portum est opere cognosere euel
Quattrocento humanist manuscript production. Quattrocento scholars conflated this pre-Gothic, Romanesque style with the floral, rounded antique styles of the antique volumes they so highly prized. The popularity of bianchi girare was due, at least in part, to the contrast this decorative motif presented with sharper, Gothic styles of illumination. The fluidity and expansiveness of Renaissance conceptions of the antique are certainly revealed by the fact that bianchi girare was referred to as “all’antica” by contemporary scholars and booksellers. The bianchi girare style became a prevalent motif in Florentine manuscript illumination in the beginning of the quattrocento and spread throughout the Italian peninsula in numerous variations during the century. It enjoyed its greatest popularity between 1435 and 1475 and by the middle of the century had become the signature decorative motif of Florentine humanist manuscripts, developing in tandem with the distinct Florentine humanist script.

Bianchi girare stalks, stems, and flowers are generally painted in green, blue, and pink or red, a color scheme well represented in MS 147’s frontispiece and Juvenal initials. Other contemporary stylistic developments, and not simply the bianchi girare motif, connect Michigan’s manuscript to mid-fifteenth-century Tuscan illumination. By the 1430s and 1440s, for instance, when bianchi girare began to invade the margins of manuscripts, it was often accompanied by putti, birds, or, as in the case of MS 147, rabbits (D’Ancona 1985, 451). About the same time, by the 1440s, coats of arms were placed at the bottom center of the frontispiece or first page of text in the vast majority of manuscripts produced in fifteenth-century Italy (de la Mare 1996). Giordana Canova (1994, 21), in fact, considers Florentine humanist manuscripts “easily distinguished” by the combination of bianchi girare, putti or animals, and coats of arms positioned at the bottom of the page. In sum, the placement and style of the bianchi girare motif and the position of the Piccolomini coat of arms securely place the University of Michigan’s Satirae of Juvenal and Persius in the middle of the fifteenth century, in either Florence or Siena. Armando Petrucci suggests that the manuscript was produced no earlier than 1450 but sometime shortly thereafter, most likely in the late 1450s or early part of the next decade.

The wreathed heraldic crescent of the Piccolomini provides a starting point for an investigation into the identity of the patron of MS 147. Three prominent members of this family suggest themselves as the most likely candidates: Enea Silvio Piccolomini, more familiar as Pope Pius II, and two of his nephews, Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini and Agostino Patrizi Piccolomini. In order to distinguish among these three potential Piccolomini patrons, it will be crucial to examine
the importance of the ancient authors Juvenal and Persius for the family, to consider the family’s collecting practices and their abortive project for a library in Siena Cathedral, and to reconstruct quattrocento purchasing patterns of manuscripts in general. This consideration of the Piccolomini and their book collections will also permit tentative hypotheses regarding the provenance of the book.

Enea Silvio Piccolomini has been famously characterized by Jacob Burckhardt as the exemplary Italian Renaissance humanist. Born poor in 1405 in Corsignano, a small town near Siena that he later rebuilt as Pienza, Enea Silvio was elected pope in 1458 and died in August 1464. Following Piccolomini’s autobiography, *The Commentaries* (*Commentarii*), historians have repeatedly pointed out that Enea Silvio, “wholly possessed of antiquarian enthusiasm” (Burckhardt 1990, 125), advanced rapidly through his study of classical literature and history. As a young man, he held important secretarial positions, serving bishops, cardinals, popes, and even emperors. Enea Silvio was an established diplomat and secretary before he became an important ecclesiastical figure, rising quickly as a trusted secretary and advisor to many leaders, traveling widely throughout Europe, and involved in, and privy to, much political intrigue throughout the continent. Indeed, it was not until 1447, when he was in his forties, that he became a priest. That same year he was made bishop of Trieste, and in 1450 he was named bishop of Siena. Eight years later he was elected pope, taking the name Pius II (Piccolomini 1928, 12).

As courtier-secretary, Enea Silvio wrote numerous treatises on topics as wide-ranging as the care of horses, Homer, German customs, and contemporary politics. He also composed religious hymns, Terentian comedies, and poetry imitating such authors as Ovid and Petrarch. He was one of the most important writers of quattrocento Italy, and his works were already an integral part of humanist libraries shortly after his death. Among Enea Silvio’s many writings, one treatise that can be specifically connected to the *Satirae* of Juvenal and Persius has interesting implications for an investigation of Michigan MS 147. In his 1444 epistle to the German humanist Johannes Eich, *De Curialium Miseriis* (*On the Miseries of Courtiers*), Enea Silvio liberally adapts from classical authors, including Juvenal and Persius, the argument that men desiring to serve as courtiers can only be idiots, “*stultos*” (1.1). This lengthy letter (46 paragraphs in the modern edition) was widely read in the fifteenth and subsequent centuries and was translated into English by Alexander Barclay in the sixteenth century (Barclay 1530).

In *De Curialium Miseriis*, Piccolomini depicts the insufferable conditions of the life of a courtier-scholar and inventories the many difficulties he has to face and the luxuries that he must forgo. Employing rhetoric and tropes common to the tradition
of anticourt literature, Enea Silvio remarks on the poor and crowded sleeping conditions, the lonely days spent without one’s wife or children, the amount of time wasted in idle flattery, and the inedible and irregular meals taken in front of the ruler, whose own feast, unsurprisingly, in no way resembles that of the courtier. Taking this opportunity to complain about the lowly status of the court-scholar, Piccolomini also makes a passionate plea for the study of ancient authors, who, according to the rhetoric of this treatise, are as ignored, mistreated, and unappreciated as the courtiers themselves.

Wilfred Mustard, in preparing the 1928 edition of this epistle, located the sources from which Enea drew as he gathered his complaints. Mustard demonstrated that the future pope had read, or was at least familiar with, a great number of ancient and patristic authors, including Cicero, Terence, Juvenal, Ovid, Valerius Maximus, Plautus, Lucian, Horace, Seneca, and Jerome (Piccolomini 1928, 71–81). In modern scholarship on the epistle, Lucian’s *De mercede conductis* is considered Enea Silvio’s most important source. Keith Sidwell (1991), however, challenges this claim in a recent article, primarily because he thinks it unlikely that Enea Silvio could have seen this text in Latin before his epistle was written in 1444. Sidwell, instead, convincingly proposes that Juvenal’s *Satirae* was the most important ancient source for the future Pope Pius II. In fact, Mustard’s notes show approximately sixty clear references to Juvenal’s *Satirae*, and more subtle references and allusions can be found. None of the other ancient authors, and certainly not Lucian, are cited or adapted nearly as frequently as Juvenal; Cicero is the next most frequently utilized source, quoted or adapted a third as many times as Juvenal.

As might be expected, Enea Silvio inconsistently credits his numerous sources. He often acknowledges Juvenal directly, starting a quotation with “*Hinc Iuvenalis*” (“Here Juvenal”) or “*ut Iuvenalis affirmat*” (“as Juvenal asserts”) (Piccolomini 1928, 43.5, 26.37). In other instances, however, he neglects to mention his source, even when adapting from Juvenal a detail as particular as the types of oil in which both greens and fish were cooked. What Juvenal writes, “this man [the host] drenches his fish with the oil of Venafrum, but the pale cabbage offered here to miserable you will smell of the lantern,” Enea Silvio fashion into his own “oil, whether from lamps or from torches, is used when you are cooking either fish or cabbages.” Whether acknowledged or not, hardly a paragraph goes by in which Piccolomini does not make a reference to Juvenal’s *Satirae*, most often the fifth *Satira*, concerning the entertainment and treatment of courtiers, and the tenth *Satira*, on the vanity of human wishes. Mustard has pointed out that Enea Silvio’s epistle contains references to at least ten of the sixteen *Satirae* in all.

Enea Silvio’s reliance on Juvenal’s *Satirae* demonstrates that he studied this classical author from an early age and likely
had access to a manuscript in 1444. It also makes clear that possessing an illuminated, luxury manuscript like Michigan’s MS 147 would have held great appeal for him and suggests that his library could not be complete without such a manuscript. Based on considerations of style, however, it is unlikely that Michigan’s manuscript was the one Enea Silvio consulted when he composed his epistle to Johannes Eich. It is doubtful that he could have afforded a luxury manuscript decorated with his own coat of arms at such an early date, and the volume bears no evidence of scholarly use in the form of nota bene marks or other marginal notations. It seems more probable that at least one richly illustrated edition of the Satyræ of Juvenal and Persius would have been commissioned for the Piccolomini Library that he (and after his death, his nephews) planned and assembled. It seems likely that the codex in question is such a manuscript, a luxury edition celebrating the family’s wealth, ancient learning, and scholarly adaptation.

While Pius Aeneas is a prime candidate for the Piccolomini manuscript, it would be short-sighted to limit the possibilities to only the family’s most famous son. Two nephews of Pius II, Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini and Agostino Patrizi Piccolomini, demonstrated interests in ancient learning and had the financial means to commission a manuscript like Michigan’s Juvenal and Persius. Both were also involved in building the family library. Yet evidence within the manuscript seems to point more clearly to Agostino rather than Francesco as the book’s owner.9

Francesco Todeschini was the son of Nanni Todeschini and Pius II’s sister, Laodamia Piccolomini. He was officially adopted by Pius II, given the Piccolomini name, and on the death of Pope Pius II became the “chief promoter” of the Piccolomini family, following his uncle’s “predilection for the antique” (Toiacca 1998, 239; also Strnad 1964–1966). Francesco spent his life and career in emulation of his uncle, had hoped to be buried next to him, and even took his uncle’s papal name when he was made Pope Pius III in 1503. Following his uncle’s example, Francesco amassed a collection of manuscripts and antiquities, which he planned to donate to the city of Siena. His most substantial acquisition was the 1463 purchase in Rome of the collection of antiquities belonging to the recently deceased Prospero Colonna, but he purchased other ancient artifacts and commissioned manuscripts of ancient texts throughout his life (Roettgen 1996, 297).

Francesco Todeschini is most famous to art historians today for having commissioned the Piccolomini Library built off the nave in Siena Cathedral. The interior of the library is decorated by Pintoricchio’s fresco cycle celebrating the travels, accomplishments, and learning of his uncle (fig. 4). It was
Fig. 4. Interior view of the Piccolomini Library with frescoes by Pintoricchio and statue of the three Graces. Libreria Piccolomini, Duomo, Siena, Italy. Photo: Scala / Art Resource, NY.
intended to house the writings of Pius II and the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and vernacular manuscript collection acquired by the Piccolomini family, Pius II and Francesco in particular. Inspired by the open libraries constructed by humanist cardinals and popes in Rome and Venice (Toracca 1998, 240; see also Lenzi 1998, 313), Pius III wanted to provide Siena with a comparable library to foster study among its citizens (Dupre dal Poggetto 1984, 121; Roettgen 1996, 297).

Pius III died a mere twenty-six days into his papacy, and his plan for the Piccolomini Library was never fully realized. While the chapel and its mural decorations were finished under the direction of Francesco’s two brothers, Giacomo and Andrea, the majority of the valuable codices seem never to have reached their intended destination (Toracca 1998, 242). No documents, unfortunately, survive relating to the Piccolomini’s manuscripts intended for the library (Roettgen 1996, 297). No inventories of the manuscript collection of Pius III or his uncle have been discovered, and the dispersal of books that took place after Francesco’s death seems to have occurred over time and in more than one city, making the tracking of the codices difficult. Some manuscripts from the Piccolomini collections have been identified in the Vatican Library (Dupre dal Poggetto 1984, 121), and it seems that these codices are among those collected in Rome by the two popes and never made their way to Siena prior to Pius III’s death. Other manuscripts were likely sold in Rome, and still other Piccolomini books that had been kept in Siena, Pienza, and Florence were sold elsewhere. Mauro Lenzi (1998, 313–318) has been able to track the dispersal of some of these manuscripts. A substantial number were endowed to Sant’Andrea della Valle and the Convent of San Silvestro in Rome and were eventually sold to the Vatican Library. Others can be identified among those passed down through the Amalfi branch of the Piccolomini family or sold in the seventeenth century to Fabio Chigi, who later became Pope Alexander VII. Nevertheless, Lenzi acknowledges that the paths of most of the Piccolomini codices are extremely difficult to trace after the beginning of the sixteenth century. The University of Michigan’s Juvenal and Persius seems to be one of the many codices, written by ancient and medieval authors, thought to have once been owned by the Piccolomini family, and now located in manuscript collections throughout Europe and the United States, without a clear record demonstrating how each arrived at its present location.

A short discussion of the decoration of the library itself, notably the frescoes painted by Pintoricchio in the first decade of the sixteenth century, will further illuminate the context for which this manuscript was likely intended and help to refine our search for the manuscript’s patron. Examining this library,
one of the Piccolomini’s most conspicuous family and civic monuments, and its decorative allusions to the conventions of manuscript illumination will highlight the importance of ancient learning and manuscript illumination for the Piccolomini family (see Carli 1960; Settis and Toracca 1998; Acidini 1999).

Decorative conventions associated with humanist manuscript illumination were clearly and consciously invoked in the frescoes adorning the library. The connection between the “jeweled and calligraphic archaic style” (Settis and Toracca 1998, 9) of the decoration and manuscript illumination has been noted, with Cristina Acidini referring to Pintorrichio’s fresco cycle as “mural illumination” (Acidini 1999, 54). The frescoes’ kinship with manuscript illumination is made evident by the bright colors, stalky floral patterns, and decorative surfaces of the library’s ceiling and the borders on the walls between the scenes of Pius II’s life.

Art historians have often invoked the cycle’s Latin inscriptions labeling the important episodes in Pius II’s life and its classicizing architecture as representative of the family’s interest in ancient learning. Yet they frequently see these aspects of the library as being at odds with the more decorative nature of much of the ornamentation within the scenes, separating the scenes, and on the ceiling. Given that this same decorative vocabulary, in the context of humanist manuscript illumination, was thought to be antique in style, this apparent contradiction can be resolved. This decorative language was considered, in the minds of its early modern patrons and viewers, to be as classicizing as the Latin inscriptions and all’antica architecture.

Pintorrichio’s frescoes bring us to a consideration of a second nephew of Pius II, Agostino Patrizi Piccolomini, who, together with Pius III, has been suggested as the architect of the cycle’s program (Toracca 1998, 264–265, 282–283). Like Pius III, Agostino was officially adopted into the Piccolomini family, although he, unlike Pius III, bore no blood relation to Enea Silvio. Agostino’s father, the humanist Francesco Patrizi, had been a friend and political ally of Pius II for years. It was Francesco Patrizi, in fact, who had “proven” that the Piccolomini family had Roman, even senatorial, origins, a claim Pius II emphasized throughout his career (Ugurgieri della Berardenga 1973, 12). His son Agostino served Pope Pius II as scribe and secretary for many years and is said to have recorded Pius’s Commentarii (Ugurgieri della Bernardenga 1973, 12). Thus, like Pius II, Agostino started his career as a secretary to an important church official. He would not become pope, but he served as master of ceremonies at the papal court, an immensely important political position, and became bishop of Pius II’s much loved city, Pienza (Lenzi 1998, 314).

Among Agostino’s most notable writings was a manual,
the *Cerimoniale Romanum*, explaining contemporary customs and social protocol at the courts of Rome. This tract has been proposed as the basis of Pintorrichio’s fresco cycle, together with Pius II’s *Commentarii*. Agostino adapted liberally from ancient literature, his own experience as papal master of ceremonies, and similar texts written by Pius II (Toracca 1998, 264–265). It would come as little surprise if Agostino, writing about social protocol and court customs, might have been interested in the *Satirae* of Juvenal and Persius and their discussions concerning the treatment of clients by hosts, and would have wanted to own a copy. Agostino Patrizzi Piccolomini, as might be expected of a protégé of Pius II, bought hundreds of manuscripts and printed books throughout his life, many of which were eventually sold throughout Europe (Lenzi 1998, 315–316). Numerous codices were given to Francesco Todeschini after Agostino’s death in 1495, and it seems likely that many, if not all, of these books were originally destined for the Piccolomini Library until the dispersal of the collection after the death of Agostino’s cousin, Pius III (Avesani 1964, 33).

While it seems plausible that any of the three Piccolomini family members discussed thus far might have commissioned Michigan’s Juvenal and Persius manuscript, evidence within the manuscript, I will argue, points to Agostino Patrizzi Piccolomini as the patron. The manuscript is comprised of eleven gatherings of ten leaves containing the text of Juvenal and Persius, followed by an additional gathering of two leaves. This last gathering, ruled differently than the previous eleven, is likely to have been inserted at a later date. This bifolium is, for the most part, blank, although some of the space is taken over by later marks of ownership. Here again we see the familiar Piccolomini coat of arms repeated from the frontispiece. The coat of arms is not illuminated; rather it is drawn in with red ink without additional color or decoration. Significantly, whoever added this family emblem also appended an inscription, identifying a specific branch of the Piccolomini family. Above the coat of arms, in a humanist script not found elsewhere in the manuscript, is a motto, in Latin, specifically identified with the Patrizi family: *Patricie, Sit reliqua Ast illi tremat, Sit reliqua Ast illi tremat*. Armando Petrucci suggested that this manuscript might have been owned by one of Pope Pius II’s nephews, and this inscription certainly makes a strong case for Agostino Patrizi Piccolomini.  

Additionally, Rino Avesani has compiled a preliminary list of manuscripts at one time owned or read by Agostino. These manuscripts are in European, primarily Italian, collections and have been identified as once belonging to Agostino because of Patrizi arms, mottos, or his notations and signature. Of the forty codices identified by Avesani, there exists one edition of the *Satirae* of Juvenal and Persius and another codex comprised of
only Juvenal’s Satires (Avesani 1964, 46, 57). Both manuscripts lack illumination but contain scholarly notation in Agostino’s hand. Agostino clearly had an interest in the Satires of Juvenal and Persius, and it is within the realm of possibility that Agostino could have owned a third, more deluxe edition that escaped Avesani’s notice because of its location in an American university collection and the lack of any reference to it in the scholarly literature on humanist manuscript production or the Piccolomini family. The motto of the Patrizi on Michigan’s manuscript corresponds to similar markings made by Agostino in his other codices.

Not knowing when this additional gathering with the motto of the Patrizi was added, we cannot be completely certain that this nephew commissioned the manuscript. The book could have been given to him by Pius II or passed down after the death of either of the Piccolomini popes. Nevertheless, Agostino certainly seems the most viable candidate, especially keeping in mind that the manuscript contains no reference to the Todeschini lambs, which are found on the sculptural decoration above the entrance to Piccolomini’s library and could be expected to accompany Pope Pius III’s commissions (Roettgen 1996, 296).

Conventions of the production and collecting of luxury manuscripts in mid-fifteenth-century Tuscany help to refine further our understanding of the decoration, layout, and patronage of Michigan’s MS 147. While many of the most spectacular quattrocento manuscripts were produced upon receipt of a commission, within the humanist circles of fifteenth-century Italy this was not always the case. Some manuscripts were partially executed before their commission, produced nearly ready-to-buy. It is possible that Michigan’s Juvenal and Persius manuscript might be representative of this class of partially prefabricated deluxe manuscript.

Certain large bookshops in Florence employed permanent workshops. The most famous was that managed by Vespasiano da Bisticci, which produced a considerable number of humanist manuscripts. The specifics of manuscript production in these bookshops are not entirely understood and need to be further studied, possibly in relation to similar workshop practices of printed books. What is known with certainty is that rich and powerful families, like the Piccolomini, bought large numbers of these books for their libraries, and it seems that workshops tailored their practices to meet the needs of these families. It is likely that scribes in these shops copied the texts and illuminators filled in most of the decoration. These artists would often leave empty space on the frontispiece for the coat of arms to be added later (Alexander 1977; Armstrong 1994; de la Mare 1996). The same is the case for important initials, along with decorations in the margins, such as medallions, accounting
Fig. 5. Pintoricchio (Italian, 1454-1513), *Pius II summons an assembly in Mantua for a crusade against the Turks*. Libreria Piccolomini, Duomo, Siena, Italy. Photo: Scala / Art Resource, NY.
for the common blank, undecorated spaces in these positions in manuscripts and early printed books alike. This might explain, too, why the majority of manuscripts produced in Italy around this time have the coats of arms in exactly the same place as in Michigan’s Piccolomini manuscript. It is impossible, in fact, to know whether this artistic convention allowed for flexibility in production and sale or whether the necessity for this flexibility dictated the artistic convention.

Book buyers could also make their purchases through dealers, who would travel in search of customers. Albinia de la Mare (1996, 172 and passim) has pointed to connections between the sale of manuscripts and important political and religious councils of the quattrocento, including one called by Pius II. Hundreds of important scholastic, ecclesiastical, and municipal rulers assembled in Mantua in 1459 when Pope Pius II called a lengthy congress to discuss possible military action against the Turks. Mantua quickly became the best market for the selling and trading of manuscripts, and, not surprisingly, dealers took advantage of this opportunity. Based on the notes of various buyers in Mantua, it seems that Vespasiano da Bisticci took a large number of codices to the congress, many of which, de la Mare (1996, 201–202) suggests, would have been prefabricated and almost ready to sell.

Vespasiano da Bisticci must have known Pius II well as he mentions the pope numerous times in his *Vite* (Vespasiano da Bisticci 1951). Enea Silvio had other documented friendships with booksellers, in particular a German bookseller who waited on him when he suffered from the gout as a cardinal in Rome (Boulting 1908, 232). Many members of the Piccolomini family were present at the Council of Mantua called by the family’s patriarch, and perhaps some of these are among the cardinals and other figures clutching valuable codices portrayed in Pintoricchio’s depiction of this event (fig. 5). Michigan’s Piccolomini manuscript, dated on stylistic grounds to the late 1450s and early 1460s, could have been one of those sold in Mantua to a Piccolomini patron.

The understandable but flawed tendency of art historians to assign patronage to the most famous or powerful member of a family is gradually beginning to be questioned. Studies of patronage in Renaissance Italy have shown that the most powerful person in the family was sometimes less involved with his artistic commission than one might expect. Evelyn Welch (1989), for instance, has demonstrated the unpredictability of the Milanese duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza’s involvement in his own commissions. Many decisions were left to artists, advisors, and other family members. While Pius Aeneas would have been intimately involved in the collecting of ancient texts, he may well have left some decisions to his trusted nephews and secretaries.
Recent scholarship has addressed the importance of kinship and group ties within artistic patronage, a process involving many members of the family who had both personal and collective stakes in artistic commissions and collections, and has fruitfully investigated commissions by various members of the same family, often in emulation of and competition with one another. Manuscripts circulated as gifts, as potent symbolic objects serving as markers of diplomatic and political alliances, both outside the family and among family members, and could serve as a principal arena for the display of wealth, knowledge, and family honor. Michigan’s manuscript, for example, exemplifies a family’s tradition of classical learning and book collecting, a tradition predicated on and fostered by the involvement of many family members.

In the absence of documentary evidence, Agostino Patrizi remains the most likely candidate for the patronage of the University of Michigan’s Juvenal and Persius manuscript. This close examination of the codex, and its first page in particular, has, I hope, shed light on problems surrounding the patronage and production of Tuscan quattrocento humanist manuscripts and the design and construction of the family library following Pius III’s death. Through the patronage of deluxe manuscripts such as Michigan MS 147, members of the Piccolomini family took an active role in preserving Enea Silvio’s legacy of ancient learning.

Appendix: Codicological Description

MS 147
Juvenal et Persius *Satyræ*
Tuscany, probably Florence, 1450–1470
ff. 112, 22.5 cm × 15.3 cm

Binding. Nineteenth-century binding. Title on spine: *Juvenal et Persii Satyrar, Codex Saecl XIV*. The manuscript was produced in the fifteenth century, however. Label on inside of front binding: George Dunn of Woolley Hall near Maidenhead.

Collation. I–XI⁰, XII². The first 11 gatherings are ruled for 21 lines a page of text. The rules are not easily visible. There is no trace of pen or ink, just the grooves indented into the page. All catchwords, located at the bottom of the page and decorated with two dots and a line on all four sides, are regular and in the right place. The final gathering is ruled for 32 lines. There is very little text on these folios, but the lines are quite visible.

Text. The text of the *Satires* of Juvenal and Persius is complete and said to be very close to the Montpellier MS from the tenth century containing both Juvenal and Persius.
Fol. 1 “Semper ego auditor . . .” Juvenal Satire I
Fol. 5 “Ultra Sauromatas fugere . . .” Juvenal Satire II
Fol. 9 “Quamvis digressu veteris . . .” Juvenal Satire III
Fol. 17 “Ecce iterum Crispinus . . .” Juvenal Satire IV
Fol. 20v “Se te propositi nondum . . .” Juvenal Satire V
Fol. 25 “Credo Pudicitiam Saturno . . .” Juvenal Satire VI
Fol. 41 “Et spes et ratio . . .” Juvenal Satire VII
Fol. 46v “Stemmata quid faciunt . . .” Juvenal Satire VIII
Fol. 53v “Scire velim, quare totiens . . .” Juvenal Satire IX
Fol. 57 “Omnibus in terries . . .” Juvenal Satire X
Fol. 66 “Atticus eximie si cenat…” Juvenal Satire XI
Fol. 71 “Natali, Corvine, die . . .” Juvenal Satire XII
Fol. 74 “Exemplo quodcumque malo . . .” Juvenal Satire XIII
Fol. 80 “Plurima sunt, Fuscine, et fama . . .” Juvenal Satire XIV
Fol. 88 “Quis nescit, Volusi . . .” Juvenal Satire XV
Fol. 89v “Quis numerare queat . . .” Juvenal Satire XVI
Fol. 94v “Nec fonte labra prolui . . .” Persius Satire Prologue
Fol. 95 “O curas hominum . . .” Persius Satire I
Fol. 98 “Hunc, Macrine, diem . . .” Persius Satire II
Fol. 100 “Nempe haec assidue . . .” Persius Satire III
Fol. 104 “Vatibus hic mos est . . .” Persius Satire V
Fol. 108v “Admovit iam bruma . . .” Persius Satire VI

There is half a verso of blank space between the two texts after the end of the unfinished Juvenal and the addition of “Deo Gratias.” On folio 29, there is a blank space for three Greek words (line 195 of Satire VI) that were never inserted into the text. The final quire, two folios, was inserted for comments and signatures after the end of the text. On the first recto is the coat of arms of either the Piccolomini or Patrizi family, with the Patrizi motto written on three lines. Hebrew text appears on folios 111v and 112, though some of this has been noticeably erased.

HANDS. The main text consists of a fifteenth-century humanist hand, and the first line of each Satire is generally written in rustic capitals. The claim that the texts of Juvenal and Persius are written in different hands, asserted in the manuscript’s file in the University of Michigan’s Special Collections Library, does not seem to be borne out under scrutiny.

ILLUMINATION. The style of the illumination differs greatly between the texts of the two authors. The most decorated page is the manuscript’s frontispiece, the first page of Juvenal’s first Satire. The first initial, the S of Semper, is blue and deep purple in a stalky or coral decorative pattern on a black background dotted with gold. There is some green and red in what appears to be a flower or blossom motif. There are also three rabbits in
ovals sitting on a brown ground with no background except for blue to suggest the sky. The head and body of the uppermost rabbit is facing forward (right). The middle rabbit’s body is facing forward, but its head is turned backward (left). The bottommost rabbit is reversed 180 degrees from the first, and its body and head are both facing left. Below the text is a large coat of arms of the Piccolomini family, a purple shell surrounded by a laurel wreath decorated with red coral beads. The other illuminated initials in Juvenal’s Satires, corresponding to the first letter of the first fifteen of the sixteen Satires, are gold initials surrounded by bianchi girare style white stalks on red, blue, and green backgrounds.

Persius’s Satires employ a different decorative scheme. The first page of Persius is the most decorated, with floral illumination spilling into the margins of the page. Here there is a white rooty or floral design on blue, green, and red. The illuminated initials, as with Juvenal’s text, denote the different books of the Satires and are comprised of a consistent gold and white floral pattern, with some on blue backgrounds and others on pink backgrounds.

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1. All sixteen of Juvenal’s Satirae are included in this manuscript, though the initial of the last was never illuminated. See the codicological description in the appendix of this paper for more information.

2. The origins of the bianchi girare style date to a few centuries prior to the crystallization of its form in the eleventh century. See Pächt 1957; Alexander 1977, 12–13; D’Ancona 1985a; Alexander 1994b, 15–16.

3. Petrucci’s remarks from 1989 are in the manuscript’s accession file in the University of Michigan’s Special Collections Library.

4. For the classic biographies of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, see Creighton 1902; Boulting 1908; Ady 1913; Battaglia 1936; Ugurgieri della Berardenga 1973; Secchi Tarugi 1991. For his own account, see Piccolomini 1968. For Pienza, see Carli 1967.

5. Evelyn Welch (1989, 372) refers to manuscripts of Enea Silvio Piccolomini’s writings in the library inventory of Cicco Simonetta, an
important humanist at the Milanese court of Galeazzo Maria Sforza, at the time of Simonetta’s death in 1480.

6. For this text, see Piccolomini 1928. For discussions about the text, see Ady 1913, 76–77; Creighton 1902, 65; Sidwell 1991; Iurlaro 2003; Woodhouse 2003.


9. For information on the Patrizi family, and Agostino in particular, see Battaglia 1936; Avesani 1964; Baron 1966, 437; Ugurgieri della Berardenga 1973. Much more has been written about Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini, partly because he became pope for a short time and because he commissioned Pintoricchio’s Piccolomini Library frescoes in Siena Cathedral. On Francesco and his commissions, see Misciattelli 1924; Carli 1960; Roettgen 1996; Settis and Toracca 1998; Acidini 1999.

10. These libraries in Venice include that of Cardinal Bessarion and in Rome Pope Sixtus IV’s Vatican Library, the library of Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere at San Pietro in Vincoli, and the library of Cardinal Riario at Santissimi Apostoli. There are numerous ancient Roman precedents Francesco was very much aware of as well, notably libraries constructed by Augustus, Asinius Pollio, and Lucullus.

11. The manuscripts now displayed in the library, while they were produced in the late fifteenth century, were commissioned by a hospital in Siena and only later transferred to their present location: see Dupre 1972; Dupre dal Poggetto 1984; Alexander 1994a, 28, 121–122; Bollati 1998.

12. The ledger at the University of Michigan’s Special Collections Library states that the manuscript was bought by a University of Michigan faculty member for $1,700 in 1924 without providing any information about where the manuscript was purchased. The nineteenth-century binding of the Juvenal and Persius manuscript bears the mark of “George Dunn of Woolley Hall near Maidenhead.” George Dunn died in 1912, but the records of his estate sale do not mention the Piccolomini manuscript: Dunn 1917.

13. This information comes from the file in the University of Michigan’s Special Collections Library.

14. See Martini 1956; de la Mare 1973; Calkins 1978; D’Ancona
1985b; Guidotti 1985; Rouse 1988; Hindman 1991; Alexander 1994b; Armstrong 1994; de la Mare 1996.

15. See, in particular, Bullard 1994, as well as Gombrich’s (1998) classic study of Medici patronage. There are countless additional studies concerned with the patronage of various Medici members that concentrate too much on glorifying the particular Medici individual but in themselves show the importance of many patrons within one family. See, for example, Ames-Lewis 1984; 1992; Beyer and Boucher 1993; Garfagnini 1994; Kent 2000.

16. For a series of essays addressing neighborhood, religious, family, and other kinship ties and rivalries shaping and driving patronage, see Kent and Simons 1987a, particularly Kent and Simons 1987b and Simons 1987. For a consideration of competition within the same family, see Simons 1994.

Works Cited

Barclay, A. 1530. Here begynneth the eglges of Alexander Barclay, priest, wherefof the first thre conteineth the miseris of courters and courtes, of all Princes in generall, the mattier whereof was translated into Englyshe by the saied Alexander in forme of dialogues, out of a boke named in Latin, Miserie Curialium, compiled by Eneas Silvius poete and oratour, which after was Pope of Rome, and named Pius. London: P. Treveris.


