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Commentary on: Vivorum Doctorum: Ludovicus Ariostus (Lives of Illustrious Men: Ludovico Ariosto)

**Hippolyto Atestino**: Ippolito d’Este (1479-1520). Ippolito was a member of the Roman Catholic Church from a very early age, becoming the head of an abbacy at the age of six. He proceeded through the ranks of the church to become a cardinal and archbishop of Esztergom, Hungary and Milan. Due to the influence of his sister-in-law, the daughter of Pope Alexander VI, he gained the title of archpresbyter of St. Peter’s. He later became the Bishop of Ferrara, his hometown. He was the patron of the arts, including Ludovico Ariosto until they had a falling-off in 1518 when Ariosto declined to follow him to Hungary.

**Pannoniam**: Pannonia. Pannonia was a province of the Ancient Roman Empire containing the western half of modern Hungary, parts of eastern Austria, and various Balkan countries. Ippolito became an archbishop in Hungary, referred to in Latin as Pannonia.

**Alfonso principe**: Alfonso d’Este (1476-1534). Alfonso d’Este, brother to Ippolito d’Este became the Duke of Ferrara in 1505. He fought in various wars in Italian between the Italian city-states and Papal States. His second wife was Lucrezia Borgia, the daughter of Pope Alexander VI. He was also a patron of the arts and became Ariosto’s patron after he left the service of Ippolito.

**Suppositi**. “The Pretenders” is a comedy by Ariosto composed in 1509. It was composed in prose but a later verse edition was also produced. The plot is one of switched identities and the ensuing confusion. Ariosto used the plays of Plautus and Terence as sources for his writings, specifically Terences’ *Eunuchus* and Plautus’ *Captivi* for *I Suppositi*. The theme of mistaken
identities is a common theme in both authors. In Terence’s *Eunuchus* (The Eunuch), a man pretends to be a eunuch; in Plautus’ *Captivi* (The Captives/ Prisoners) a master and slave switch identities. An English version of this work was used as a basis for Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*. For the Italian version of the play, see this 1551 edition, this 1954 edition or this 1566 English translation.

**Plautinis.** Titus Maccius Plautus (c. 254- 184 BCE). Plautus was a Roman playwright who wrote a number of comedies based on Greek New Comedy. The plots often involved mistaken identity and love affairs. Ariosto based some of his works on Plautus (see above, *Suppositi*).

**Orlandi fabulosi Herois.** *Orlando Furioso* (Enraged Orlando) is a romantic epic by Ariosto which first appeared in 1516 with 40 cantos and in its final published form in 1532 with 46 cantos. Orlando is the Italian version of Roland, and is thus based on the legend of Roland, a knight of Charlemagne who became a legendary figure known from “The Song of Roland” (*La Chanson de Roland*). It also contains features of Arthurian legend. *Orlando Furioso* is a sequel to *Orlando Innamorato* (Orlando in Love) by Matteo Maria Boiardo who first incorporated Arthurian elements with the Carolingian. The basic plot of *Orlando Furioso* is Orlando’s unrequited love for Angelica which drives him to madness. See this English translation. It was dedicated to Ippolito d’Este. This work inspired numerous later works of literature, such as Shakespeare’s *Much Ado about Nothing*, opera, such as Handel’s *Orlando*, and art.

**Boiardo.** Matteo Maria Boiardo (c.1440- 1494). Boiardo adapted works of various ancient authors, such as the *Eclogues* of Vergil. He also composed numerous love poems in Italian. His best known work, *Orlando Innamorato* was published in two parts, the first two books in 1484, the third posthumously, in 1495. *Orlando Innamorato* is a chivalric tale of knights, love and
adventure based on Roland’s (Orlando’s) love for Angelica. Boiardo incorporated elements of English Arthurian legend with Carolingian. See this English translation.

**Pulcio.** Luigi Pulci (1432-1484). Pulci was an Italian poet patronized by the Medici family. He wrote *Morgante*, first published in 1478, the first complete edition published in 1483. *Morgante* is a chivalric, romantic poem based on the legend of Roland, centered on the adventures of a giant named Morgante, the hero of this version, and Orlando. See this English translation.

**Caelii Calcagnini.** Celio Calcagnini (1479-1541). Calcagnini was a humanist and scientist from Ferrara who was in the chancery of Ippolito d’Este. He also served as a soldier, was the chair of Greek and Latin letter at the University of Ferrara, and was a canon of the Ferrara cathedral. As an astronomer, he was known for his work *Quod Caelum Stet, Terra Moveatur* (Because the sky stands still, the earth is moved) c. 1525. He was praised by Ariosto in *Orlando Furioso* (see canto 42).

**Latomi.** Likely Jacobus Latomus (c. 1475-1544). Latomus was a Flemish theologian. Much of his work focused on contesting Martin Luther and the Reformation. He also wrote against Erasmus.