

Finally, she had the script before her on the wooden stand. To her astonishment it wasn't the one she thought she had ordered. From the title alone, and the words added in pencil on a card attached to it, she realised that the mistake most probably was providential. It read: "De Gestis Romanorum, original (non-catalogued) script in Latin from the 11th century." Beatrice couldn't help but to gasp for air.

The authenticity of the German and French versions of *Gesta Romanorum* (as opposed to the script in front of Beatrice, bearing the title *De Gestis Romanorum* (The Deeds of the Romans)) had for many years been a bone of contention among scholars, especially regarding which version might have preceded and thus influenced the other. The general consensus was that no matter in what language they had been written, these texts had all been compiled in calligraphic handwriting during the 13th to 14th centuries, eventually appearing in printed editions from the 16th century and onwards. These manuscripts were furthermore regarded as having been pedagogically edited by monks and priests to suit clerical and other educational purposes, such as warning people of the dire consequences of ancient Roman depravity and licentiousness.