CONCLUSION

A few points will now be stressed regarding which, in my opinion, Shakespearean scholars have gone astray:

The Montecchi (Montagues) seem to have existed as a family during the twelfth century. Throughout the thirteenth century, however, when the foundations of our legend were being laid, the term Montecchi, like the term Cappelletti (Capulets), meant not a family, but a political party or faction, and was so understood by Dante, the first author to mention the Veronese Montecchi and the Cremonese Cappelletti together. Later, as a result of confusion, Benvenuto da Imola had the impression that both the Montecchi and the Cappelletti were families residing at Verona. Francesco da Buti went a step further, originating the idea of enmity between the Montecchi and the Cappelletti. The misunderstandings which arose concerning the Montecchi and the Cappelletti were thus traceable to written sources, and not examples of folklore.

One of the most important and most neglected sources for the Romeo and Juliet legend was Boccaccio, model for all later novellieri. Boccaccio's influence was exerted for plot devices as well as for literary expression, in the most direct manner possible, and not in the roundabout way described by certain Shakespearean scholars, bent on establishing at every stage "lost sources" that allegedly survived in popular tradition. Especially influential in the development of our legend were Boccaccio's Filocolo and Decamerone. On the other hand, the Filostrato, often proposed as an important source for the legend, was probably of little or no influence until it was imitated to some extent by a French author, Adrien Sevin, in 1542. Among the plot devices borrowed by later novellieri directly from Boccaccio may be listed several stories of premature burials, especially the tale of Madonna Catalina and Gentil Carisendi; the account of the corrupt abbot who administered sleeping potions with the greatest of skill, and removed the body of one of his victims by night, with the aid of a companion; the "lovers' ladder incident," which is found again not only in
Bandello, Boaistuau, et cetera, down to Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, but also in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, and reappears in Bandello, to be used once more in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, and repeatedly mentioned in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; and last but not least, the heroine who expires on the body of her lover in the Thisbean tradition.

Masuccio in particular freely acknowledged his indebtedness to Boccaccio. Masuccio's corrupt Augustinian friar plays a role strikingly similar to that of the vicious priest in the *Decamerone* who administers a sleeping potion to Ferondo. Moreover, the restoratives administered by Masuccio's priest to Ganozza recall those employed by Gentil Carisendi's mother on Madonna Catalina. In fact, the very fidelity with which Masuccio followed his master probably led him into the glaring inconsistency of stating in one place that the secret marriage of Mariotto and Ganozza had been most happily consummated, and in another place that Mariotto was a completely frustrated lover, like Boccaccio's Gentil Carisendi. Masuccio may also have read the anonymous tale of *Ippolito e Leonora*. However, H. Hauvette's theory of a close connection between Masuccio and Sermini seems untenable.

Luigi da Porto, in his “Giulietta e Romeo,” made extensive use of Masuccio's Thirty-Third novella. Nevertheless, Da Porto's real starting point may well have been Ovid's stories of Pyramus and Thisbe, and of Pygmalion. Da Porto also certainly read the *Decamerone*, possibly also the anonymous tale of *Ippolito e Leonora*. Usually Da Porto welded his varied materials skillfully. In case of conflict between Masuccio and Ovid, he generally preferred Ovid as his guide, the one important exception being his abandonment of Ovid's gory-mouthed lion which apparently killed Thisbe and the substitution of Masuccio's motif of the premature burial of the heroine. However, Da Porto displayed some originality in the invention of plots and in the creation of characters. He was especially superior to Masuccio in psychological analysis.

Adrien Sevin was an imitator not only of Boccaccio's *Filocolo*, which he translated into French, and of Da Porto's *novella*, but also probably of Boccaccio's *Filostrato*. Sevin's heroine Burglupha at times behaves more like Boccaccio's Griselda than she does like Giulietta. Sevin does not invent, but borrows from Da Porto, the
scene where the heroine attempts to take the same poison as her lover.

Bandello, on the few occasions when he deviated from Da Porto, was likely to follow the path of his friend Clizia, whose influence manifests itself in the favorable treatment of the friar, and in the psychology of the hero and of the heroine. There were also about a dozen minor details regarding which Bandello agreed with Clizia, rather than with Da Porto.

Despite a modern theory to the contrary, the direct influence of Luigi da Porto on Boaistuau was important, especially for the treatment of the character of Frere Laurens. Bandello had omitted all references to improper relations between Fra Lorenzo and Romeo, as well as charges of necromancy and grave robbing made during an embarrassing public trial. Boaistuau restored completely the more sinister churchman depicted by Luigi da Porto. Boaistuau's true originality consists in very trivial details and in his tendency to conventionalize the heroine.

There is no substantial evidence that Groto, in *La Hadriana*, made use of a lost document, nor in particular that he shared with Shakespeare access to a lost source.

Brooke's alleged innovations can all readily be traced to well-known sources.

On at least seven occasions, Shakespeare agrees exclusively with the original *novella* of Luigi da Porto in his treatment of important characters. There are also several such exclusive agreements in Shakespeare's treatment of minor characters.

On the other hand, the evidence is quite unsatisfactory for the "lost sources" too frequently proposed for the versions of the legend by Shakespeare, Struijs, and Lope de Vega, et alii. In fact, it must be admitted that in only one instance do we have adequate proof that any of the authors here studied actually had access to a lost document. That author was Arthur Brooke, who witnessed a missing play on the Romeo and Juliet theme, but manifestly made little or no use of what he saw. The sources of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* thus appear to be almost purely literary, with probably only remote connection with folklore.