When we speak about Latin comedy, we first and foremost think about the comedies of Plautus and Terentius. Yet we should not forget that in ancient Rome there were other playwrights too. One of those was Naevius, about whom we can say with absolute confidence that he was the first Roman playwright that we know of, who really existed — unlike Livius Andronicus, who was a half-legendary figure. Unfortunately, most of Naevius' works survived only in fragments. We don't know the exact reason why his works disappeared, but it was by no means the poor quality of his writing. I think that the analysis of the texts of other ancient authors, where we come across the fragments of Naevius' works, will help us to understand how Naevius' texts disappeared. This paper is an attempt to present an example of such an analysis.

At the end of Book seven of Varro's *De Lingua Latina* there are two paragraphs, which represent a list of obvious etymologies and contain only the quotations of dramatic works of Naevius. These are very unusual: firstly, comedies and tragedies are quoted together; secondly, the titles of these plays are enumerated in alphabetic order and, moreover, these quotations consist of only one word. So they are not quotations in the proper sense of the word, they are more like markers that show us that a certain word exists in a certain literary work. It is possible that these peculiarities caused the famous scholars Wallace Lindsay and Karl Moeller to assume that these paragraphs might be a part of a certain glossary to Naevius' works. But they have not proved their assumptions. In my opinion, it is possible to find such a proof, if we compare these paragraphs to Book ten of Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*. Thus we discover an astonishing coincidence in their works: these writers quote not only from the same literary work, but they also quote the same line from it. However, the method of quoting as well as the reason for quoting are different in both cases. Varro quotes one word that had attracted his attention (in the quotation discussed it is the word *lingula*); Aulus Gellius quotes the whole line. Whereas Varro quotes the word so as to explain its etymology, Aulus Gellius explains its meaning and its usage in the past. Nevertheless, despite the differences, these quotations have too much in common to suggest that this is an occasional coincidence or that the authors independently quoted the same work. It is highly probable that the
quotations stem from one and the same source. This source can be reconstructed in the following way:

apud Naevium in Aesiona
Ne mihi gerere morem videar lingua, verum lingula
"lingula" gladiolus oblongus in speciem linguae factus.

In this reconstructed text there is information about the meaning of the word lingula and the line from Naevius’s play is quoted as an example.

It seems necessary to explain here why I have excluded the words veteres dixerunt from the reconstructed piece. The reason is that Aulus Gellius uses this formula (veteres dixerunt/dicebant) very frequently in order to present a quotation or to show that the meaning of a certain word was different in the past. I have also excluded from the reconstructed text the formula in tragoedia, because it is not a trait of Aulus Gellius' writing. Usually when he names the title of the work quoted he uses the following formula: in X tragoedia, quae Y inscribitur/inscripta est, with the possible variants cui nomen/titulus est. Probably in the case of the quotation with the formula Naevius in tragoedia the words in tragoedia were an insertion of later times. Moreover, in reconstructing the text I have also excluded the etymology of the quoted word. This is easy to explain, because the etymology of the word lingula is absolutely clear: it is a diminutive noun from the word lingua. And we can say that it was the clearness of the word's etymology that was the main reason why Varro included this word in his list.

Having explained the form of the reconstructed text, I will try to answer the question, what kind of text this was. On one hand, this text could have been the text of Naevius’ play with marginalia. But it is obvious that Aulus Gellius quoted not from the text of the play itself; he must have used a kind of text-mediator. Yet if we have already agreed with the assumption that Varro and Aulus Gellius quoted from the same source, then the reconstructed source cannot be the text of Naevius’ itself. On the other hand, this text could have been a glossary to the works of Naevius. This glossary could have existed by the end of the 1st century B.C., or it could have been written by Varro himself. And if our suggestion is correct, then this glossary might have existed in the 2nd century A.D. as well, because Aulus Gellius had to be able to use it. Therefore we can characterize this glossary in the following way: it was a glossary to all the dramatic works of Naevius; it contained quotations, and explained unusual meanings of the words used in Naevius’ plays.

Returning to the main question of this paper (how did some Naevius’ dramatic works disappear), I reach the following conclusion. If the author of the reconstructed glossary was Varro, then we can say with absolute confidence that Naevius’ works still existed in the 1st
century B.C. and Varro used them in compiling this glossary. But when this glossary appeared, the process of neglecting Naevius' works started, because grammarians began to consult the glossary and not Naevius' writings. If the reconstructed glossary existed before Varro, then a similar process could have started even earlier.

Appendix: The discussed Latin passages

**Varro De Lingua Latina VII, 107-108:** multa apud poetas reliqua esse verba quorum origines possint dicer, non dubito, ut apud Naevium in Aesiona mucro gladii 'lingula' a lingua; in Clastidio 'vitulantes' a Vitula; in Dolo 'caperrata fronte' a caprae fronte; in Demetrio 'persibus' a perite: itaque sub hoc glossema 'callide' subscriptum; in Lampadione 'protinam' a protinus, continuitatem significans; in Nagidone 'clu<ci>datu<s>' suavis, tametsi a magistris accepimus mansuetum; in Romulo 'sponsus' contra sponsum rogatus; in Stigmatia 'praebia' a praebendo, ut sit tutus, quod si<n>t remedia in collo pueris; in Th[eh]chnico 'conficiant' a conficto convenire dictum; in Tarentilla 'pacui dum' a luce illustre; in Tunicularia 'exbo\(s\)as quassant', quae eiciuntur, a graeco verbo dictum ε\(\omicron\)κβο\(\lambda\)ή; in bello Punico 'nec satis sardare' ab serare dictum, id est aperire; hinc etiam ser[a]e, qua remota fores panduntur.

**Gellius Noctes Atticae X 25 3:** De 'lingula', quoniam est minus frequens, admonendum existimo lingulum ueteres dixisse gladiolum oblongum in speciem linguae factum, cuius meminit Naevius in tragoeidia Hesiona. Versum Naevi apposui: sine mi gerere morem uidear lingua, uerum lingula.