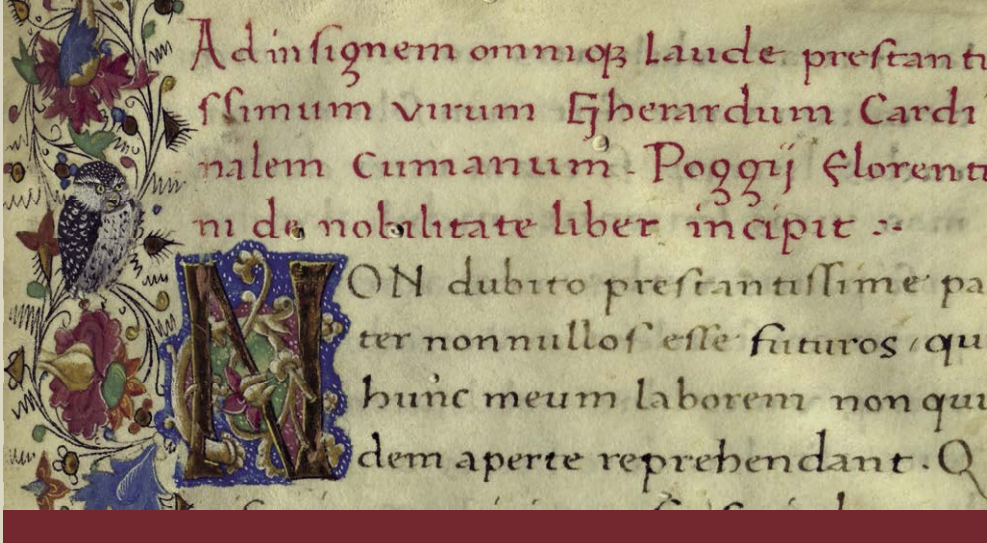


Poggio Bracciolini and the Re(dis)covery of Antiquity: Textual and Material Traditions

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SYMPOSIUM HELD
at Bryn Mawr College on April 8-9 2016

Edited by
Roberta Ricci





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with assistance from
ERIC L. PUMROY

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INTRODUCTION

Roberta Ricci

In April 2016, together with Eric Pumroy and David Cast, I organized an interdisciplinary, two-day symposium at Bryn Mawr College (Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania), dedicated to the Humanist Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) and his exceptionally wide variety of literary activities in and beyond Florence. Distinguished speakers, including our president emerita and Renaissance scholar Nancy Vickers, traveled from the other side of the Atlantic and the West Coast to gather at Bryn Mawr College, highlighting the richly variegated nuances of the intellectual world in early Renaissance Italy and investigating Humanism in its vibrant driving force towards modernity. The title for the symposium *Classicism, Humanism, and Modernity: Poggio Bracciolini and Beyond* is here modified to better represent this collection of essays, which stands on its own and includes, updates, and enriches that collaboration rather than just representing a record of the proceedings of our successful colloquium. The core of this volume lays out a range of exchanges between hugely influential figures in 15th-century Florence, while at the same time focusing on Bracciolini's vibrant contribution to many fields of knowledge in the Western intellectual tradition, spanning across politics and historiography, material and print culture, translation and language acquisition, philology and manuscript studies, calligraphy and paleography. The authors who contributed to this volume naturally worked independently, and yet their essays touch on and interrogate the cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural scholarship of salient and intertwined aspects of early-Renaissance culture.

Poggius Florentinus (1380–1459), as Bracciolini proudly called himself, was an influential intellectual, a pivotal figure in the early history of Humanism, a well-known scholar, and a prolific writer. In David Rundle's words, he was «the most human of humanists» (2005: 1). In 1405, Bracciolini was made *scriptor* in the Papal Curia; in 1410, he became Papal secretary and, finally, in 1453, Chancellor of Florence, after having worked for seven pontiffs during his fifty years in the papal service. He joined the generation of civic humanists that glorified learning (*studium*), literacy (*eloquentia*), and erudition (*eruditio*) as the chief concerns of man,

and held that government was a shared responsibility for all its citizens. Moreover, and to the points of some essays published here, as a young man, Bracciolini had been employed by Coluccio Salutati as a copyist in Florence, and there he had mastered the new art of humanist handwriting. Later, as a book hunter, he found and identified many classical manuscripts, which, moldy and inaccessible, had lain unread for hundreds of years in European libraries. Thanks to Stephen Greenblatt's best seller titled *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (2012 Pulitzer Prize Winner for Nonfiction and 2011 National Book Award for Nonfiction), Poggio Bracciolini, «the greatest book hunter of the Renaissance» (13), has been riding a wave of recent attention in the United States for his discovery of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*.

Within the impact of civic Humanism and the much-debated notion of *florentina libertas*, Massimo Zaggia's *The Encomium of the "Florentina Libertas" Sent by Poggio Bracciolini to Duke Filippo Maria Visconti* offers a new critical edition of Bracciolini's letter, dated 15 September 1438, to Duke Filippo Maria Visconti in Milan, which constitutes an addition to Phyllis Gordan's *Two Renaissance Book Hunters*, 1974, and a development from the Harth edition, 1984–1987. The letter represents «a manifestation of civic pride» in Florence against Milan. Based on the geographical distribution of the eighteen surviving manuscripts of this Latin *epistola* (Florence, Rome, Naples, Venice, Vicenza, Basel, Vienna, Prague, Munich, Berlin, Lüneburg, Dresden) «we can truly say that this letter from September 15, 1438 has done much to spread the legend of Florence in Italy, in Europe, and today, also in America». Along the same lines of political engagement and military power, particularly from the fourteenth-century conflicts between Florence and Milan, Outi Merisalo's essay titled *The Historiae Florentini populi by Poggio Bracciolini. Genesis and Fortune of an Alternative History of Florence* articulates a philological analysis of Bracciolini's final historical work *Historiae Florentini populi*, published posthumously by his son, Jacopo Bracciolini (first printed Latin edition 1715), claiming that it is «not a continuation, nor even a complement, to Leonardo Bruni's (1370–1444) official history of Florence». In a similar philological vein, Bracciolini's scholarly production at large, as well as the international reputation that his dialogues gave to him, is examined by David Rundle in *Poggio Bracciolini's International Reputation and the Significance of Bryn Mawr, MS 48*, in which the author brings to our attention the relevance and Europe-wide fortune of the manuscript housed in the Goodhart Gordan collection at Bryn Mawr College, as well as its *littera antiqua*, scribe, illuminator, and provenience: «Its scribe, known for both his peripatetic lifestyle and his interest in promoting Poggio's works, produced the main part of the codex somewhere in the south of England, and then it left his hands to be illuminated, probably in London, for its intended owner». Rundle ends the essay with two

philological appendices (a description of the manuscript and a collation of the English copies) and begins by asserting that «Poggio Bracciolini was not to everybody's taste». Indeed.

Being known throughout his career for criticizing fellow humanists, scholars, linguists, historians, architects, and so on (Niccolò Niccoli, Biondo Flavio, Leonardo Bruni, and his well-known rival Lorenzo Valla), Bracciolini's argumentative dialogue constitutes a pivotal moment in his intellectual endeavor and clearly demonstrates the endless tone of his invectives and disputes. By keeping in mind his ongoing intellectual and ideological quarrels, the volume includes studies on the humanist's exchanges with two distinguished intellectuals. Stefano Baldassarri's *Poggio Bracciolini and Coluccio Salutati: The Epitaph and the 1405-1406 Letters* articulates a philological examination of Manuscript Magliabechiano VIII.1445, housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence, which contains an epitaph that Poggio Bracciolini wrote for his mentor Coluccio Salutati (Baldassarri, 2012: 96–98): «Most likely, Poggio composed his epitaph right after Salutati's death, when the Florentine government expressed the intention of building a sepulcher for the renowned chancellor in Santa Maria del Fiore». The passage in question concerns the account of the Roman origins of Florence («Videbimus, ecce videbimus [...] originem a Romanis») and thus covers an «extraordinary political import» that brings the debate on civic humanism back to center stage and pinpoints that «the main lesson that Poggio learned from Salutati was his teacher's passion for knowledge». David Marsh's essay *Poggio and Alberti Revisited* explores the tension and conflict that characterize the relationship between Leon Battista Alberti and Bracciolini: from their friendship, as curial secretaries, to the deterioration of their collaboration, as resulted in the 1441 *Certame coronario* during which Bracciolini, as one of the jurors, refused to award the literary prize to Alberti. Marsh reflects specifically upon the use of irony and satire embraced by both writers who were «inspired to critiques of contemporary society by the Greek satirist Lucian». Nevertheless, the two humanists differ greatly in regard to ethical issues concerning the use of allegory, «which Poggio rejected but Alberti embraced».

Bracciolini's contribution to graphical innovation, visual materiality, and the book market is a driving force in the development of a revolutionary paleographical turn. His practice of copying with the old Carolingian script is the particular object of research in three essays with a perspective on the philological discourse within textual scholarship at large (Ricci), on the material evidence within manuscript visuality (Sisis), and on inscriptions in capital letters (Shaw). Roberta Ricci's *Shifting Times, Converging Futures: Technologies of Writing Beyond Poggio Bracciolini* invites us to explore the new textual consciousness that marked the passage to scrupulous editing criteria and modern technologies of writing,

which ultimately emphasizes the historical dimension and the perennial validity of the philological tradition, including the *informatica umanistica*. Bracciolini's figure within the intellectual milieu of this time articulated the foundations of what would become the specialized culture of the technology of writing. Not coincidentally, by reviving, copying, and circulating the *littera antiqua* in the name of clarity and legibility, he enacted a cultural process that led to technical competence as we «rethink textual transmission and textual scholarship in this digital age». Philippa Sissis's *Script as Image: Visual Acuity in the Script of Poggio Bracciolini* examines the dialectic between the graphic substance of writing – image and words, visuality and materiality within the manuscript. The script itself «becomes a medium for the self-presentation of a humanistic consciousness inscribed in the reproduction of the revised texts and thus a visual paratext on the ancient authors». Sissis considers the interest in materiality also in earlier book collectors, noticing that by then «books are often seen only as documents and texts without taking into account their materiality and historicity as objects that have been transmitted over the centuries». Yet, for Humanists manuscripts are valued in their historical and material dimension in light of the notions of modernity and legibility. Finally, Paul Shaw's *Poggio Bracciolini, an Inscription in Terranuova, and the Monument to Carlo Marsuppini* examines in detail the «strangest Renaissance inscription» in the church of S. Maria in Terranuova Bracciolini, a Tuscan town located between Florence and Arezzo. This text shifts from a contemporary Florentine sans serif to a very close recapitulation of the *capitalis monumentalis* of Ancient Rome. In comparing the Terranuova inscription with that carved in the monument to Carlo Marsuppini in S. Croce, Shaw argues that they show Bracciolini's efforts to apply the new script to public settings. The completion of the Marsuppini monument a few months before his death meant that Bracciolini «lived to see the classical Roman capitals he had studied and copied over a half-century earlier finally reappear in public in Florence».

The next two essays bring forward new elements of Bracciolini's intellectual life in reference to his travelling in Italy and around Europe, touching again upon issues of reputation beyond the peninsula, on which Rundle also sheds light. David Cast's *Poge the Florentyn: A Sketch of the Life of Poggio Bracciolini* situates Poggio's works in Europe within the wider historical and intellectual context of that time, with a general account of his life and the *fortuna* of his texts, among all the *Liber Facietiarum* across the centuries, «in the ever-increasing number of the histories of the culture of the Renaissance», to fast-forward to the 20th century and the third millennium (Ernst Walser, Eugenio Garin, P.O. Kristeller, Hans Baron, Nancy Streuver, Rudolf Pfeiffer, Riccardo Fubini). Julia Gaisser's *Poggio and Other Book Hunters* touches upon the crucial activity of book hunting over time from Aulus Gellius (second century CE) to Fran-

cesco Petrarca, Giovanni Boccaccio, and Poggio Bracciolini, including the anonymous discovery of Catullus around 1300 and the three fourteenth-century descendants of the lost manuscript. Bracciolini salvaged and identified numerous forgotten and unknown manuscripts. The essay speaks in detail of the discovery of Quintilian and Lucretius in 1416, just a few months apart from each other.

Last, but definitely not least, the reader may ask a very legitimate question: Why *Due giornate di studio* at Bryn Mawr College on Poggio Bracciolini? Eric Pumroy's contribution titled *Poggio Bracciolini, Phyllis Goodhart Gordan, and the Formation of the Goodhart Collection of Fifteenth-Century Books at Bryn Mawr College* shifts the emphasis to this wide question, by reflecting upon Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordan's *humanitas* and the legacy she left at Bryn Mawr College with her scholarship on Poggio Bracciolini. Gordan (1913–1994) was one of the leading Renaissance scholar of her generation as well as author, translator into English, and editor of Bracciolini's letters in the study titled *Two Renaissance Book Hunters* (Columbia University Press, 1974). This essay draws attention to the research material that she and her father pursued starting from her undergraduate studies at Bryn Mawr College – a collection that «is one of the great renaissance book collections in the US, but the building of it is also an interesting story of the intersection of scholarly, familial, collecting and financial interests in the middle part of the twentieth century».

This forum draws its strength from the richness of its sources and insightfulness of its cross-disciplinarity, featuring contributions by established and emerging scholars who investigate from different perspectives the deep cultural, literary, and paleographical impact Bracciolini's multiple activities had in the centuries to come. Each essay elaborates on interdependent queries spanning across fields and artistic productions of early-modern times in its re(dis)covery and investigation of the classical tradition, where the concept of *humanitas* extends to the manuscripts themselves. I trust that the quality of the chapters, the combination of topics and approaches, as well as of scholars at different stages of their careers, will make this collection a point of reference for the scholarly discourse on Poggio Bracciolini that paves the way for further investigation. I express my sincere gratitude to friends and colleagues at Bryn Mawr College who made the 2016 Symposium possible and successful: enthusiastic and knowledgeable *laureande/i* and the *dottoranda* Justinne Lake-Jedzinak; Nona Smith, Director of Sponsored Research; Provost Mary Osirim for having believed *ab initio* in this project; and Oliva Cardona, our administrative assistant, who profusely worked well beyond the tasks required by the overall project. Not least, I am deeply grateful to all the speakers who accepted my invitation to join us in April 2016 (during the last snowstorm of the season on the East Coast!), to those who contributed to this collection of essays, and to Eric Pumroy (Spe-

cial Collections) and David Cast (History of Art) for the help in organizing this event. Special thanks go to Daniel Armenti for the meticulous, patient, and last minute editing, and to Stefano Baldassarri for his tremendous guidance in the publication of this volume – I am immensely grateful for his guidance. Last but not least, I also thank my family for the unwavering support at every stage. This volume is for all of them: mamma, Emma, Emilio, Harsh, Leah, and Ryan.

The symposium was dedicated to the memory of Renaissance scholar Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordan, Bryn Mawr College alumna, Class of 1935, who died on 24 January 1994. So is this book. She greatly benefitted so many learned societies and institutions (The Renaissance Society of America, The Grolier Club, the New York Public Library, The American Academy in Rome, The American Philological Association, The Yale Libraries Associates, Bryn Mawr College) and her bequest generously supported my study of Poggio Bracciolini at Bryn Mawr College. She is, thus, the reason for this volume.

April 2016–December 2018
Bryn Mawr College

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FLORENCE 1438: THE ENCOMIUM
OF THE *FLORENTINA LIBERTAS* SENT BY POGGIO
BRACCIOLINI TO DUKE FILIPPO MARIA VISCONTI

Ann Mullaney, Massimo Zaggia

ABSTRACT: This article presents the critical editions of two texts: a letter by the Duke of Milan Filippo Maria Visconti (but written on his behalf by Pier Candido Decembrio) sent to Poggio Bracciolini on 28 July 1438; and the response written by Poggio on 15 September. Poggio's letter contains a brief treatise in praise of Florence and of the *Florentina libertas*. The documents illuminate a crucial episode in the history of Italian Humanism. The article opens with the discussion of these two letters in their wider historical and intellectual context: on the one hand, the characteristically Florentine «civic humanism» which constitutes the background of Poggio's positions; on the other, the political and cultural competition between Florence and Milan during the first half of the 15th century.

KEYWORDS: Poggio Bracciolini, letters, Pier Candido Decembrio, Encomium of Florence, civic humanism

1. *Poggio and His Letter of 15 September 1438*

Poggio Bracciolini's life and literary activity extended for nearly 80 years after his birth in 1380¹. One can trace his intellectual journey, his travels, his friendships and enmities through the many letters he wrote. Many is not really saying enough – yet, we still have more than 600 of his letters, all written in Latin. From their first appearance, Poggio's letters were widely diffused through Italy, and in fact, they became a model of humanist writing throughout all of Europe.

What we propose here is a small addition to an anthology of Poggio's letters made by Phyllis Goodhart Gordan, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters*, published in 1974². This letter, dated 15 September 1438, is quite different in content from those exchanged by Poggio and Niccolò Niccoli. As Gordan's title, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters*, suggests, the letters between these two treated a shared eagerness for books, while the letter of September 1438 represented, above all, a manifestation of civic pride.

It is important to point out that Poggio was not born in Florence, but in Terranuova, a small town between Florence and Arezzo, which has since been renamed Terranuova Bracciolini in honor of our humanist. His identification as a Florentine citizen was acquired but deeply felt, and

¹ For Poggio's intellectual biography see Walser, 1914: 184–85; Folts, 1976: 188–93, 245–46. The last documentary discoveries are those of Figliuolo, 2016: 386–88.

² For a more recent study of Poggio's books, see also Fiesoli, 2013.

began when his father took him to study and live in Florence as a boy, since he already showed great promise as a scholar and scribe.

The central theme of the 1438 letter is supreme praise for *Florentina libertas*, Florentine liberty. Poggio's praise is directed above all at the city-state's political system. A system which today we might call moderately democratic, a system completely unlike that of the principalities which were the norm in most areas of the Italian peninsula, and notably in the Duchy of Milan, Florence's most powerful rival.

2. *Towards a Critical Edition of the Letter Dated 15 September 1438*

The history of Poggio's correspondence is a complicated business. Starting in 1432, Poggio himself had taken care to gather together many of his letters into three large collections.

Our particular focus, Poggio's letter of 15 September 1438, is found in the beginning of the eighth book of the second collection, completed in late 1438. Many of his letters, including this one, were also widely disseminated beyond the collections of Poggio's letters and can be found in various miscellaneous collections.

Important editions of Poggio's letters were also produced in the age of printing. The most notable early edition was Heinrich Bebel's compilation of his work, printed in 1538 in Basel. In the mid-nineteenth century, Tommaso Tonelli compiled a comprehensive collection of the letters, and this edition was reprinted anastatically in 1964 by the noted scholar Riccardo Fubini. For her 1974 volume *Two Renaissance Book Hunters*, Phyllis Goodhart Gordan selected an important section of letters – the exchange between Poggio and his friend and mentor Niccolò Niccoli which she edited, annotated thoroughly, and translated into English. Since the publication of *Two Renaissance Book Hunters*, there has been a more definitive collection made of Poggio's letters by Helene Harth, published in three volumes between 1984 and 1987. Today, every discussion regarding one of Poggio's letters must consider Harth's edition.

For this critical edition of the letter of 15 September 1438, I went beyond Harth's edition and examined all eighteen of the surviving manuscripts of the letter. As a result of this work I can present a new critical edition of the original Latin text. The English translation is by Ann Mullaney and is intended to provide an addition to the anthology of Phyllis Goodhart Gordan.

Right away, a question emerges: Does this new Zaggia-Mullaney critical edition offer any meaningful changes from the earlier Harth edition? We can respond immediately: yes, the novelties (or rather the corrections) from the earlier Harth edition are numerous, and in some instances, major. We see the first example at the beginning of Poggio's letter.

In Harth's edition, Poggio's letter is addressed to «Duke Filippo Maria Visconti, called Angelo». But in reality, all the manuscripts say that he is called Anglo, not Angelo. Granted Anglo is not a common name, and one's first impression might be that Anglo is simply a scribe's mistake. In fact, Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan was named Anglo because his family line was regarded as having sprung from Anglus, a mythical king who in turn was a descendent of Ascanius, the son of Aeneas, the Trojan founder of Rome. These sorts of genealogies, which seem whimsical to us, were taken very seriously at that time. The family tree of the Visconti family is found in the *Genealogia Vicecomitum*, an official text transcribed in two manuscripts of the Visconti library (Mulas, *et al.* 2015–2016)³.

In the letter from Visconti to Poggio, we see another error in the salutation. According to the version offered by Harth, Visconti's letter is addressed «To a very erudite man, our very learned friend Poggio». But the manuscripts do not show this clumsy repetition of erudite and learned, «eruditissimo, doctissimo». Rather, the phrase as it appears in all the manuscripts is not «amico nostro doctissimo» but «amico nostro dilectissimo», that is, our dearest friend. Surely most of us have very dear friends who are not very erudite.

It is better to suspend this list of small corrections, because it is likely to be long and tedious. However, we can say, in general, that the corrections from the earlier Harth edition number about forty. Certainly, these are simply small details. But some say that God is in the details, or the devil is in the details; surely, at any rate, philology is in the details. In short, the new critical edition we present today seems, on the whole, a step forward in the philological research on Poggio's works.

3. *Historical Background: Civic Humanism in Florence against Milan*

Before turning to look more closely at the content of Poggio's letter to Visconti, let us examine a bit of the historical background.

During the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, a fierce struggle for supremacy was taking place between the states of Milan and Florence. This was a contest of political and military power, fought in bloody battles, but it was also a contest of artistic and literary power, fought with words.

Milan endeavored to exalt itself as heir to Imperial Rome. One of its most noted apologists was the Duke's secretary, Pier Candido Decem-

³ ms. Lat. 5888 of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and Add. ms. 26814 of the British Library.

brio. In 1436, he wrote a work *In Praise of the City of Milan*. The Duke sponsored translations of classical works that championed princely rule over republicanism, the system embodied by Florence in which the people had a say in the various branches of power.

Florence, for its part, had begun to foster scholars who were also statesmen. Florentines were proud of their intellectuals, like Coluccio Salutati and Leonardo Bruni, and they believed that their republican state fostered a meritocracy. An expression of this republicanism appeared in the first years of the 1400s, through the *Panegyric* or *Praise of the City of Florence* written by Leonardo Bruni (and proposed again in 1434). This work is often cited as an example of what came to be called civic humanism, a term coined by Hans Baron (see Baron, 1966; Baker & Maxson, 2015).

While Bruni's *Praise of the City of Florence* is not explicitly cited by Poggio in his letter to Visconti, it does read as a variation on the theme developed by Bruni. The principle difference between the two texts is the choice of literary genre. Bruni wrote a treatise, a humanist reworking of a form popular in previous centuries, known as a «laus urbis», a tribute to a city. As a treatise, Bruni's *Panegyric* proceeds systematically according to a formal and logical exposition. Poggio's work is instead a private letter and therefore proceeds with greater freedom and informality. This format of a private letter accounts for the relative brevity of Poggio's work (Komorowski, 2012; Hankins, 2017; Baldassarri, 2017).

4. Historical Background: Florence after 1434

Another important difference between Bruni's work and Poggio's letter is that the treatise by Bruni was addressed to a republican city, one that was very proud of its fair and balanced system of government. In 1427, Bruni became chancellor, an office akin to that of prime minister, and shortly thereafter the political situation changed quite drastically. In 1433, a wealthy banker, Cosimo de' Medici, had become so powerful that he was perceived as a threat to other leading families of Florence, particularly the Strozzi and the Albizzi. These rival factions had Cosimo imprisoned and then condemned to exile for ten years. But Cosimo was clever enough to use his money and support to bring about a triumphant return to Florence only a year later. In 1434 just a few months after his bloodless coup, Cosimo succeeded in eliminating his adversaries and effectively took control of Florence without officially modifying the republican structures. For the following 60 years, from 1434 until 1494, the Medici family ruled Florence, although the city still considered itself a republic (Rubinstein, 1997).

This abrupt rupture with republican liberty signaled a trauma for Chancellor Bruni, a trauma which has since been analyzed by many scholars (Field, 1998). Poggio had been raised with the same republican ideals as Bruni, but if he felt any anguish over the Medici coup, he said little about it⁴.

In his letter to Visconti, Poggio gives the impression that he is unaware of any change in Florence's situation, and indeed, his letter does not so much as mention Cosimo de' Medici. After 1434, Poggio seems to have been of two minds about Florentine politics. Although a firm believer in civil liberties, he was sympathetic to Cosimo, who presented himself as a «popolano» – one of the people, in opposition to the aristocratic elites. Cosimo had always cultivated good relationships with the artists and intellectuals of the Tuscan state, and his patronage earned him broad popularity. Under the circumstances, it is not terribly surprising that Poggio maintained a certain sympathy towards the generous banker, nine years his junior.

As Cosimo went about curtailing the freedom of his Florentines, transforming himself into an absolute ruler, if not a tyrant, Poggio remained silent about him. Thus, an historically correct reading of Poggio's letter to Visconti would have to note that the republic championed by him so ardently no longer existed. Poggio's Florence was an ideal city, not the real city of his day.

Poggio's fence-sitting did not represent a mere passing moment. When later he succeeded Leonardo Bruni as chancellor of Florence in 1453 and undertook the continuation of Bruni's *History of Florence*, he deliberately passed over in silence the entire coup by Cosimo. He records other political realities of the year 1434, but not the Medici power grab (Ianziti, 2007).

5. Historical Background: 1438, Attempt at Peace between Milan and Florence

Now let us look at the historical moment surrounding the appearance of this letter. In the summer of 1438, Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, wanted to bring an end to the long period of wars begun by his father and continued by his brother and himself, and thus seemed ready to propose peace with Florence. With reconciliation in mind, he charged his secretary Pier Candido Decembrio with the drafting of a solemn letter in Latin.

⁴ For the Poggio's reticence (or silence) about the Medici's coup see Fubini, 2003: 180, 199-200.

However, Visconti chose to have the letter written neither to a leader of the Signoria, the ruling body of the Florentine Republic, nor to the Chancellor Leonardo Bruni, but instead to a private citizen. And not to a random humanist, but to Poggio, who had been serving as papal secretary and who was on friendly terms with Cosimo de' Medici. Poggio's nineteenth-century biographer, William Shepherd, implies that in writing directly to Poggio, Visconti may have been hoping to make a separate pact with the Medici against Venice (Shepherd, 1837: 328–29).

Visconti's letter, quite astutely, does not speak of political actualities. Instead it begins by addressing a stereotype, a «blason populaire», which held that the Florentines were blind, or short-sighted. This was a well-known saying about the Florentines, one that Boccaccio and others traced to an anecdote in which the Florentines were duped by people from Pisa. Dante also referenced this in his *Inferno*, saying of Florentines that an age-old rumor called them blind (*Inf.* 15.67; Schizzerotto, 2015: 211–214, 220–223, 290, 333, 464). The Visconti Duke writes that he does not want to believe that Florentines are blind, and in fact, that he admires the Florentine people. He asks Poggio what he thinks of this stereotype, and he offers the Florentine humanist his esteem and friendship. Visconti thereby makes an indirect overture for peace between the two city states.

For the record, this attempt at peace was not successful. War between Milan and Florence resumed shortly thereafter, culminating in the famous victory of Florence in the Battle of Anghiari, 29 June 1440.

6. Poggio's Response

In response, Poggio's letter thanks the Duke for his offer of friendship and expresses satisfaction that the Duke does not give credence to the stereotype. He praises Visconti's greatness, but uses the platform to launch an elaborate encomium of the city of Florence and specifically of her republican liberty.

The whole letter is filled with passionate descriptions of freedom, which he portrays as «solida et vera» (solid and real), and «cara et dulcis» (dear and sweet) (§ 26–28). In addition to the republican ideal of liberty, Poggio emphasizes a beneficial effect of having a state ruled by the majority: peace. He makes a simple but strong argument that republics rarely harass anyone with war (§ 20–22).

A third *leitmotiv*, after liberty and peace, is the «studia humanitatis», or humanistic studies. Poggio allows that there are many illustrious and magnificent cities that are known for their learning and culture, but Florence is, in Poggio's opinion, the «magnum Italiae splendorem»,

the great splendor of Italy. His praise of learning is not merely self-congratulatory; he attributes the intellectual achievements of the Florentine humanists to the virtues of a free republic (§ 38). In fact, he goes so far as to ask who would be foolish enough to seek to harm these liberties and risk being despised by everyone (§ 32-33).

This passionate celebration of the splendor of Florence has a limit: it is generic. Poggio does not name names here. He calls attention to achievements in Latin and Greek studies (§ 34), but does not mention any scholars or any of the classical texts they discovered or taught. He alludes to the greatness of Florence but does not give one example of its many masterpieces: Brunelleschi's famous dome which had just been completed, or Ghiberti's beautiful baptistery doors, or the statues of Donatello. Nor does Poggio cite the leading intellectual of his age, his friend Leonardo Bruni, who had much to say about liberty, nor does he mention any of the other humanists of his era such as Niccolò Niccoli, Flavio Biondo, or Leon Battista Alberti.

Perhaps in choosing to remain generic in his praise, Poggio was avoiding taking sides for or against Cosimo de' Medici and his faction. And in adhering to the format of a private letter, his reticence makes stylistic sense. His plea for respect and peace between nations refers back to earlier texts and anticipates the liberation movements of later centuries (Hankins, 1996; Ricciardelli, 2015).

7. The Dissemination of the Manuscripts as a Channel of Propaganda for the City of Florence

As a philologist, I would like to conclude by returning to the eighteen manuscripts. Each of these manuscripts has its own story and cultural significance (how do they differ?). But observe also their current geographical distribution: Florence, Rome, Naples, Venice, Vicenza; and then Basel, Vienna, Prague, Munich, Berlin, Lüneburg and Dresden. Finally, we can truly say that this letter from 15 September 1438 has done much to spread the legend of Florence in Italy, in Europe, and today, also in America⁵.

⁵ I will provide the detailed reconstruction of the textual tradition of the letters, along with the description of each manuscript and the discussion of textual variants, in a forthcoming contribution.

LETTERS

Manuscripts: Collections of Poggio's Letters (I, viii 5 e 6): Florence, Bibl. Riccardiana, ms.S 759 (ff. 158v-162v), 804 (ff. 115r-120r); Vatican City, Bibl. Vaticana, ms. Ottob. lat. 2251 (ff. 91v-95v) – Dresden, Sächsische Landes-, Staats- und Universitätsbibl., ms. C. 110. ab, ff. 151v-156v; Lüneburg, Ratsbücherei, ms. Misc. D. 2° 15 (ff. 75v-78v); Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibl., Clm 5344 (ff. 80r-83r); Paris, Bibl. Nat. de France, ms. Lat. 8576 (ff. 142r-146r); Prague, Národní knihovna České republiky, ms. I.C.3 (ff. 80r-83v) – *Miscellaneous:* Florence, Bibl. Med. Laurenziana, ms. Pl. 90 supp. 36 (ff. 13r-15v); Naples, Bibl. Naz., ms. V.F.18 (ff. 176r-179v); Venice, Bibl. Marciana, ms.S Lat. xi, 59 (=4152; ff. 50r-62v), Lat. xi, 66 (=3967; ff. 17r-24v), Lat. xi, 80 (=3057; f. 375r); Vicenza, Bibl. Bertoliana, ms. 108 (ff. 34r-38v); Vatican City, Bibl. Vaticana, ms. Reg. lat. 1555 (ff. 204r-208r); Basel, Univ. Bibl., ms. A.II.37 (ff. 141v-146r); Berlin, Staatsbibl., ms. Lat. Qu. 782 (ff. 88v-92r); Vienna, Schottenkloster, ms. 214 (ff. 99r-102v).

I

Eruditissimo viro amico nostro dilectissimo Poggio civi Florentino secretario apostolico dux Mediolani.

Ex quorundam nostrorum relatione fidelium intelleximus, eruditissime vir, amice noster dilectissime, saepenumero te quaestum extitisse, Florentinos cives a nonnullis impudenti quadam et satis proterva appellatione caecos dici, eamque probatissimis et optimis viris falso inscripti nominis infamiam a nullo melius quam a dignitate nostra posse deleri. ² De qua laudabili profecto assertione et voluntate tua non mediocrem voluptatem laetitiamque suscepimus, cum nihil a te nisi sincera et recta ratione, nisi prudenti maturoque consilio credamus iudicari. ³ Et profecto ea digna sapientia et virtute tua extimatio videtur esse, quae non minus dignitati nostrae, pro mutua inter nos benivolentia, quam civium illorum claritati videatur consulere.

⁴ Quid enim laudabilius, quid honestius, quam eam nos potissimum impendere operam, ex qua optimorum omnium et imprimis amicorum nostrorum fama revirescat? ⁵ Quid etiam iniquius, quam eos falsis inquinare rumoribus, quorum fides, pietas, integritas, omni denique in re prudentia spectata est? ⁶ Tuam igitur erga illam florentissimam civitatem singularesque concives tuos caritatem, nec minus extimationem dignitatis nostrae commendamus, laudamus, admiramur; et ita nos animatos in futurum pollicemur, ut quotidie magis hoc animo nostro gaudeas.

⁷ Ceterum, ut ad rem ipsam accedamus, non inmerito nobiscum soles indignari tantam apud ullos vanitatis valuisse opinionem, ut Florentinos

cives, non nostra solum, sed cunctorum ferme sententia doctissimos, caecos ausint appellare, quamquam id ex invidia quadam magis quam ulla aut ratione aut veritate putemus contigisse, ut clarissimis viris tantopere nonnulli conentur illudere.⁸ Quis enim adeo omnium rerum ignarus queat reperiri, qui cum urbis illius pulchritudinem, ornatum intueatur, cum civium moderationem prudentiamque intelligat, eos caecos arbitretur, a quibus singula tanta ratione ac diligentia regi soleant, ac non potius se ipsum non oculis modo, sed ingenio captum sentiat?⁹ Nos enim, qui nulla affectione, nulla invidia aut malivolentia ad iudicandum adducimur, tantum abest, ut eos caecos arbitremur, ut omnium prudentissimos ac oculatissimos potius esse fateamur.

¹⁰ Nam ut paulo altius sermonem repetamus, quaenam urbs memoria nostra quibit reperiri, quae prosperis in rebus aequitatem ac moderationem, in adversis fortitudinem Florentino populo parem visa sit praestitisse?¹¹ Non enim privatim dumtaxat huic vel illi civitati beneficia contulit, sed universae simul Italiae tranquillitatem ac pacem impendere conatus est.¹² Cuius rei cum multa ac praeclara extent monumenta, illud vel imprimis admiratione videtur esse dignum,¹³ quippe cum maxima et gravissima bella cum maioribus nostris gessisset hic populus, adeo adversus omnium vires indefessum pugilem pro libertate sua praestitit, ut cunctorum bellorum semper idem finis illi fuerit, tuta Italiae pax et secura tranquillitas, nec umquam cum sociorum suorum iniuria imperium studuerit parare.¹⁴ Qua in re tanta ab illo humanitas pietasque erga nos pupillum adhuc, et statum nostrum malivolorum quorundam suggestione ruentem, ostensa et observata est, ut divini illius beneficii memoriam nulla ex animo nostro exceptura sit oblivio.¹⁵ At vero proximo bello, quod a nobis pro gloria et dignitate solum cum Florentino populo gestum est, quanta ab illo diligentia, auctoritate, consilio, providentia conatibus nostris occursum fuerit, eventus docuit, ut haec unica urbs quasi iure quodam gentium libertatem vendicasse, nec ulla aut inimicitia, aut malivolentia, sed pro gloria nobiscum putetur contendisse.

¹⁶ Nempe si uniuscuiusque officium est patriam tueri et libertatem propriam defendere, quis Florentinos cives accuset aut odio dignos censeat, qui ita se ad reipublicae tutelam contulerunt, ita in hostes fuerunt animati, ut nihil impie, nihil avare, nihil contumeliose credantur egisse?¹⁷ Sed totis Italiae suorumque fortunis pensitatis, odia semper cum armis posuere; nec secus priscae ac Romanae probitatis vestigia imitata, a qua originem duxisse referuntur, illius claritatem videantur aemulasse.¹⁸ Haec nobis profecto non caeci ac hebetis, sed vigilantissimi prudentissimique consilii videntur esse signa, siquidem optimarum rerum notio- nem non vulgi opinione, sed consilio, prudentia, auctoritate metimur.

¹⁹ Illa vero non minori laude putamus celebranda, quae domi et in pace vestra in republica magno in honore semper fuere.²⁰ Semper enim in illa consilii gravitas fuit, integritas, continentia, minima alieni

ambitio, sui diligens custodia, amicorum caritas, profugium omnium bonorum, tum artium liberalium studia, talis denique moderatio, ut nihil potius quam Italiae pacem dare, afflictos tueri, superbos cohibere et fidem omni auro utililitatique anteferre, sanctissimus senatus vester putetur cogitasse.

²¹ Quid de religionis cura et templorum ornatibus referam? ²² In quibus adeo urbs vestra creditur excellere, ut cum nonnullae Italiae urbes una aut alia in re praeclarae habeantur, hac sola maxime non inferiores tantum, sed barbarae quodammodo censeantur esse.

²³ Haec autem cum omnibus nota sint, ad eximiam civitatis vestrae laudem non putamus reticenda, quamquam multa a nobis brevitatis causa consulto omissa sint. ²⁴ Sed haec ipsa recensere visum est, ut omnibus plane notum fiat, non caecos, sed oculatissimos, ut praediximus, huiusmodi fore cives, a quibus non praesentia solum, sed praeterita ac futura considerari solent, et qui ex omnibus, quae ad tranquillitatem ac pacem praecipue conducant, noverint eligere.

²⁵ Tales igitur nos viros non amabimus, non amplectemur, non in deliciis sumus habituri, non supra omnium ingenia videre confitebimur? ²⁶ Nos quidem illos, ut dignum est, omni cura, diligentia, amore prosequemur, quantoque maior ob gloriam contentio belli nobis cum illis fuit, tanto benivolentiae caritas astrictior et fides indissolubilior semper erit, ut nihil tam magnum aut arduum excogitari queat, quod ab eorum fraternitate et benivolentia nos amplius possit avertere, cum antiquior apud nos virtutis honos sit, quam imperii aut divitiarum ulla cupiditas.

²⁷ Quamobrem, eruditissime vir, nihil est quod huiusmodi rumores magnifacias, aut quippiam insipientum voces ad laudem aut vituperationem existimes conferre. ²⁸ Ea demum vera laus est, quae a laudato viro proficisci solet. ²⁹ Unica clementiae et virtutis operatio laudem promeretur, verba autem, si nihil amplius quam bonorum calumniam prae se ferant, contemnenda ac nullius momenti habenda sunt.

³⁰ Nos autem omni cura diligentiaque praestabimus, ut tuam istam de nobis extimationem quam gratissimam nostrae dignitati fuisse intelligas; nec minus, concivium tuorum amicitiam ac fraternitatem amplectentes, totis viribus agemus, ut eorum benefacta in lucem prodeant. ³¹ Ad quorum quidem non laudem solum, sed utilitatem ac protectionem status rerumque suarum, personam, opes, facultates, denique (quo nihil antiquius nobis est) inconcussam fidem pollicemur et omnia ipsis grata offerimus laeto corde, dispositi quaecumque facere, ex quibus honos decusque succedat florentissimae urbi vestrae, cuius solidam ac felicem exoptamus libertatem.

³² Vale, amice noster dilectissime.

³³ Ex Castro nostro Portae Iovis v. Kalendas Augusti Mccccxxxvij^o.
Candidus

II

Illustrissimo principi domino Philippo Mariae Anglo duci Mediolani

Nisi vererer adulatoris nomen, a quo semper abhorruī, praeclarissime ac praestantissime princeps, laudarem pluribus verbis egregiam profecto, qua mecum uteris in scribendo, humanitatem. ² Quid enim humanius, quid benignius fieri aut excogitari potuit, quam tantum ac talem principem, saeculi nostri praecipuum lumen ac decus, in quo prisca illa virtus ac probitas Italorum relucet, ultro scribere ad virum pusillum, ignotum sibi, nullis praesertim litteris provocatum? ³ Et quidem tanto magis haec tua humanitas atque animi aequitas extollenda est, quanto eam excellentiori in dignitate collocatam videmus. ⁴ Sunt qui humiliori in loco constituti, etiam compellati litteris scriptores contemnunt ac rescribere inferioribus dedignantur. ⁵ At vero tua praestans virtus et excellens quaedam animi magnitudo verbis solum meis admonita tantum mihi tribuere dignata est, ut ipsis litteris me collaudare, patriam laudibus extollere et suam erga illius statum et commoda egregiam mentis affectionem scriptis notam esse voluerit, omnibus ad ostendendum, si quis secus sentire videretur, quam sincerus sit erga nos animus tuus, quam promptus ac firmus ad mutuam benivolentiam atque amicitiam conservandam. ⁶ Quod eo mihi fuit iocundius legere, quo plus fidei, roboris atque auctoritatis scripta quam verba solent hominibus afferre.

⁷ Gratum extitit mihi laudari abs te, principe omni laude ornatissimo, cuius iudicium apud omnes magnum pondus habet; ⁸ sed illud multo mihi gratius atque acceptius fuit, animus videlicet, quem ad meam rempublicam ostendisti. ⁹ Nam cum exquisitis verbis Florentinam urbem adeo graviter copioseque laudaris, ut nihil fere amplius ab homine amicissimo dici potuisset, maximum erga eam videris benivolentiae testimonium praeferre. ¹⁰ Adde quod non solum laudes nostras prosequeris elegantissime, sed etiam tuum in nos amorem profiteris, tuerisque nos veluti propria in causa ab eorum vulgo, qui caecos appellant Florentinos. ¹¹ Hoc mihi maximam praestat ac praecipuam voluptatem, quandoquidem has litteras existimo ad me missas tamquam certissimum pignus amoris erga nos tui. ¹² Non enim ad adulandum (quid enim minus egregium principem decet, aut quae in vitio adulationis inesset utilitas?) a te referri ista iudico, sed ad demonstrandum quis sit tuus animus in populum Florentinum. ¹³ Neque enim tam ornate, tam copiose solemus laudare atque extollere verbis eos, a quorum utilitate et commodis mens nostra est alienior. ¹⁴ Itaque ea vere et ex animo a te scripta esse confido, et quod litteris polliceris, ipso opere comprobaturum.

¹⁵ Fuit olim inter maiores tuos et Florentinos cives plurima de gloria et dignitate contentio, quos inter non odio aut crudelitate certatum extitit, sed de praestantia et laude dimicatum. ¹⁶ Factum est id palam post

obitum excellentissimi atque omni laude dignissimi principis patris tui: cum ruente ad bellum et se ipsam, saevo Marte, conficiente Lombardia, Florentini, semota bellorum cura, paci et otio consuluerunt.¹⁷ Et cum ad delendum imperium praeclari tui generis et sanguinis saepius invitarentur, tamen, quia nullis odiis, sed pro libertate tantum sua cum patre tuo concertaverant, securi rerum suarum quievere ab armis, satis sibi esse factum arbitrantur, si procul a belli suspitione libertate sua potirentur.¹⁸ In te autem nedum odium ullum non ostenderunt, sed etiam antiquos discordiarum frutices non opinione, sed pace et foedere excidere voluerunt.¹⁹ Bello quidem, quo Ianuenses subegisti, tu ipse scis nulla conditione impelli potuisse Florentinos, ut tuis adversariis opem ferrent, quamvis multi ad impediendam tuam victoriam hortarentur, plures vero id esse utile iudicarent, tanta erat nobis servandi foederis et pacis potitundae cupido.²⁰ Itaque ipsis, ut aiunt, manibus comprehendere potes, nihil aliud respicere, nihil aliud quaerere nostras cogitationes, quam pacis ac libertatis tutelam.

²¹ Est enim ferme rerum omnium publicarum raro quemquam bello lacessere; provocatae ut plurimum et vi coactae, ad arma descendunt.²² Nam cum respublica multorum arbitrio gubernetur, multitudo autem quietem appetat et tranquillitatem, impulsiva et necessitate potius quam voluntate bella suscipit et aut pro ulciscendis hostibus aut iniuria propulsanda.

²³ Sed accidit fatalis quidam motus temporum, ut arbitror, et maioris cuiusdam principis culpa, qui per nostras calamitates suam potentiam augeri cupiebat, quo non de tuis aut nostris opibus, sed de fide et dignitate certabatur.²⁴ Et cum uterque pacem optaret, tamen eius, quem dixi, opera, bellum pro pace formidantis, concordiam ab utroque appetitam diutius impediunt.²⁵ Secuti sunt deinceps varii dissensionum fluctus inter nos, quibus tamen omnibus satis aperte perspicere licuit nullo tui odio aut malivolentia pugnasse tecum dudum Florentinos, sed tutandae solum causa libertatis, cuius possessionem omni ope defendendam semper viri doctissimi ac sapientissimi censuerunt.²⁶ Quod si quibus cara ac dulcis esse libertas debet, Florentino certe populo decet esse gratissimam, apud quos, obloquantur malivoli atque invidi quantum libet, est solida veraque libertas.

²⁷ Non enim unus aut alter imperat, non optimatum aut nobilium fasces regnat, sed populus aequo iure ascitus ad munera civitatis, quo fit ut summi, infimi, nobiles, ignobiles, divites, egeni communi studio conspirent in causam libertatis proque ea conservanda nullos effugiant sump-tus, nullos labores, nulla discrimina reformident.²⁸ Nihil denique tam durum atque arduum videatur, quod non subeundum ducant, ut gaudeant accepta a patribus libertatis hereditate.²⁹ Omnibus, qui modo eius nomen tueri possunt, idem impetus est, idem ardor, ut salutem patriae defendant.³⁰ Cuius incolumitatem optare, dignitatem tueri, commoda

appetere, pericula amovere et divino et humano iure homines coguntur; huius propugnatores omnium sermone celebrantur, oppugnatores vero omnium gentium memoria damnavit.

³¹ Atqui certus sum te olim nobiscum non ad libertatem delendam, sed pro tuendo honore et dignitate, ut scribis, contendisse. ³² Nam si quis ea esset immanitate, ut laudem sibi quaereret ex nostra oppressione, viam verae laudis ignoraret, et vivus odio mortalium omnium et mortuus execratione dignissimus. ³³ Quis enim non omnium saeculorum oblivioni damnandus esset, qui gentis Etruscae decus, magnum Italiae splendorem, hanc virtutum aemulam libertatem appeteret extinguere? ³⁴ Laudatur bello ac pace virtus Etruriae atque amplitudo omnibus tum Graecis litteris, tum Latinis; emanavit enim eius nomen et gloria ob res magnifice gestas etiam ad exteras nationes. ³⁵ Sed ab eorum gestis et virtute nequaquam Florentini ulla ex parte degeneravere, quin potius partam a suis maioribus nobilitatem et laudem prae ceteris auxerunt.

³⁶ Sunt in Italia plurimae praeclarae urbes atque magnificae, sed nulla videtur nobis neque acumine ingenii, neque doctrina, neque sapientiae studiis, neque civium prudentia, neque moribus, neque ullo virtutis genere praeferenda. ³⁷ Nam si qui virtutem vel humanitatis studiis, vel omnium disciplinarum doctrina, vel agendorum prudentia, vel fide, vel pietate in Italia coluerunt, praecipuum inter eos locum, pace ceterorum dixerim, sibi vendicant Florentini. ³⁸ Haec omnia accepta referimus a sola libertate, cuius diutina possessio ingenia nostra ad virtutis cultum erexit atque excitavit.

³⁹ Quanta igitur laetitia, quanta consolatione, quanta mentis alacritate me affectum tuis litteris putas, cum ipsis oculis cernere videar singularem, quam ad statum nostrae patriae geris, affectionem? ⁴⁰ cum te Florentinos omni diligentia et amore, ut dignum est, prosecuturum scribas, cum pro nostra utilitate et status protectione opes, facultates, personam insuper pollicearis, cum sit nihil futurum, ut verbis utar tuis, quod tuum animum a nostra fraternitate et benivolentia possit avertere, quae talia sunt, ut vota mea tuis verbis exuperari quodammodo videantur? ⁴¹ Adeo igitur consolor verbis istis, tantam tuae oblationes mihi fiduciam praebent, ut procul dubio sperem nos tua opera in diuturna, quod solum cupimus, pace quieturos.

⁴² Etenim simultas ad benivolentiam, dissensio ad concordiam, discordia ad unitatem, bellum ad pacem conversa mihi persuadent nihil iam posse emergere, quod immutare queat tuam sanctissimam voluntatem.

⁴³ Qua in re dabitur a nobis diligentia et sollicitudo, ut tibi et reliquis innotescat nostrum servandae pacis desiderium. ⁴⁴ Hanc quidem bello semper priorem duximus, dummodo procul ab insidiis esse videretur.

⁴⁵ Loquor haec apud te liberius, invitatus tua in scribendo humanitate atque eo in his versor libentius, quo eloquentius a te laudari video Florentinos ob defensam ab eis hactenus libertatem. ⁴⁶ At vero certe ex-

istimo sancte et omni cum fide ac pietate te, quae scribis, effecturum perinde, atque a te dicuntur.

⁴⁷ Etenim si boni principis atque omni laude cumulati, qualem te esse volumus, esse sapientes putant beneficentia et placabilitate honorem et gloriam querere, si malle diligi quam timeri, si potentiam a Deo concessam ad hominum salutem, non ad pernitiem vertere, si odia ad caritatem, hostes ad amicitiam flectere, quemadmodum tu ipse paulo ante praeclaro exemplo docuisti, si quietem et otium tumultui anteferre, certus sum equidem te principem, omnium qui vivant sapientissimum, exquisita ope atque opere enixurum, ut pax diuturna inter nos vigeat; ut nulla tuorum culpa novarum discordiarum aut belli suspicionum causa exoriat; ut aliquando a diutinis bellis, quibus iam diutius quam aequum erat Italia conquassata est, conquiescamus; ut otio et tranquillitate quae semper appetere professus es, per opus tuae prudentiae potiamur; ut, iactis amicitiae inter nos fundamentis, molem supraedifices immobilem atque inconcussam. ⁴⁸ Nos quippe oblitterata omni superiorum memoria bellorum, deposita priorum temporum sollicitudine, praeteritarum rerum oblivione sumpta, curam, mentem, consilia, animum defleximus ad fruendam pacem, nihil aliud quaerentes, nihil aliud appetentes, nisi quod bonorum civium esse debet, ut in libertate nostra cum otio et dignitate vivamus. ⁴⁹ Eandem mentem cum tibi quoque inesse asseveres, compotes voti nos tua reddet prudentia, ut pace mutua communibus incrementis reviviscant Italorum vires et ad priorem gloriam revertantur.

⁵⁰ Quamvis autem minime necessarium videatur hortari tuam excellentiam ad eum vitae cursum, ad quem te video tua sponte adeo incensum, ut hortatore non egeas; tamen caritate patriae ac pacis cupiditate motus te hortor, rogo et per eam fidem, quam mihi tua verba praestant, obsecro atque obtestor, ut pacis animum sumens, eam civitatem, quae tecum olim omnem inimicum animum deposuit, quae tibi aliquando favit, quacum tibi sanctissimum foedus quondam fuit, quae numquam voluntario tecum pugnavit, ornatam, auctam atque amplificatam tua indulgentia velis; ut eos, qui fidem patriae servant, speres tuis quoque rebus futuros esse fideles; utque illos, qui nihil tuorum appetunt, quin potius, libertate salva, praeclarum te atque amplissimum cupiunt, concupita pace, desiderata quiete, exoptato otio frui gaudeas. ⁵¹ Quae cum egeris, acturum vero confido, eam, quam praeclaris principibus propositam scimus, famam et gloriam adipisceris, firmam quidem et nullis saeculis defuturam. ⁵² Ego (tu modo voluntatem meam confirma) tuorum operum et laudis praeconem quendam me futurum esse profiteor. ⁵³ Et quamvis parum ingenio valeam, minus vero eloquentia, tamen doctioribus atque eloquentioribus scribendi occasionem praestabo.

⁵⁴ Vale, princeps inclite, et me in tuorum numerum ascribe.

⁵⁵ In Terra Nova, die xv. Septembris.

I

To a most erudite man, our dearest friend Poggio, Florentine citizen and apostolic secretary, from the Duke of Milan

From the report of certain of our confidants we have understood that, O most erudite man, our dearest friend, many times a complaint has been put to you, that Florentine citizens are named by some, with an impudent and rather brazen designation, blind; and you assert that the infamy of this label falsely attributed to the most esteemed and excellent men can be expunged by no one better than by our authority.² From this assertion and wish of yours, laudable to be sure, we have received no little pleasure and delight, since we believe that nothing is resolved by you without sincere and honest reasoning, without prudent and mature deliberation.³ And surely your evaluation seems to be worthy of wisdom and virtue, which would seem to take into account our authority on behalf of the reciprocal benevolence between us, as much as the renown of those citizens.

⁴ For what is more praiseworthy, what more honest, than to apply ourselves above all to this undertaking from which the reputation of all the best people and especially of our friends may regain its vigor? ⁵ Besides, what is more wicked than to sully with false rumors the faith, the piety, the integrity and lastly, the prudence of those who in every matter are under the eyes of all? ⁶ Therefore, we commend, praise and admire your love toward that most flourishing city and its singular citizens, and your esteem of our worthiness as well, and so we promise to be inspired ourselves in the future, so that each day to a greater extent you may rejoice in our spirit.

⁷ Furthermore, to approach the issue itself, you are indignant with us not without reason that such an opinion of foolishness has prevailed with some, that they dare to call the citizens of Florence blind, who instead are nearly all considered most learned, not only in our estimation but in that of all others, although we think it has happened – that some people try hard to ridicule illustrious men – due to a certain envy rather than to any reason or truth. ⁸ For who could be found so ignorant of all matters, who – looking at the beauty and the trappings of that city, understanding the moderation and the prudence of the citizens, could deem them blind, citizens from whom individual matters are usually governed with such reasonableness and diligence, and not perceive himself as arrested not only in sight but also in judgment? ⁹ For we, who are not led to make judgements by any envy or malice, are so far from the case that we think them blind, that instead we acknowledge them to be the most prudent and sharp-sighted of all.

¹⁰ In order to raise our discourse to a somewhat higher level, what city could be found in our memory that shows itself to have given proof of excellence equal to that given by the Florentine people as to fairness and moderation in times of prosperity, and strength in times of adversity? ¹¹ Indeed this people has not only conferred benefits to this or that city, but has likewise attempted to bestow peace and tranquility on all of Italy. ¹² Although many and very clear reminders of this attempt stand out, one especially seems to be worthy of marvel: ¹³ namely, when this populace was waging the gravest and greatest wars with our ancestors, it brought to bear the forces of all against an indefatigable opponent for the sake of its own liberty, while the goal of all wars was always the same: the safe peace and untroubled tranquility of Italy, nor did it ever strive to obtain supremacy with the exploitation of its allies. ¹⁴ In this matter, on the part of that people, such humanity and piety was observed toward us, who were still children, and toward our state, which went into ruin due to the actions of some men bent on wrongdoing, to the point that no forgetfulness can cancel from our mind the memory of that divine favor. ¹⁵ But yet in the following war, which was conducted against the Florentine people only for our glory and honor, the deeds demonstrated with what diligence, authority, planning, and providence the clash against our operations was conducted on the part of that people, so much so that one could maintain that this city alone as though by right avenged the liberty of the nations and that it took on the battle with us not out of any enmity or malevolence, but for glory.

¹⁶ Of course, if it is the duty of each person to protect his homeland and defend his liberty, who could accuse Florentine citizens, or deem them worthy of hate: those who looked out so for the safety of the republic, who were so passionate against the enemy, that they are believed to have done nothing unjustly, nothing covetously, nothing insolently? ¹⁷ But having weighed all the conditions of Italy and of its peoples, they always laid down their hostilities with their arms; not otherwise were the footprints of ancient Roman virtue imitated: they may be seen to have emulated the renown of that virtue from which they are reported to have taken their origin. ¹⁸ These things certainly seem to us to be signs of an intelligence that is not blind and blunted but most vigilant and most prudent, if indeed we measure the notion of best things not by the opinion of the masses but by intelligence, prudence, authority.

¹⁹ However, we think that those things which were always held in great honor in your republic, in internal politics and in peace, are to be celebrated with no less praise. ²⁰ For in that republic there was always the gravity of deliberation, integrity, restraint, the least desire for others' possessions, diligent safe-guarding of its own possessions, love of friends, a refuge of all good things, moreover studies of the liberal arts, and lastly, such moderation that your most sacred senate is thought to

have meditated nothing other than giving peace to Italy, protecting the afflicted, subduing the haughty, and giving preference to loyalty over all gold or advantage.

²¹ And what might I say concerning the care of religion and of temple ornaments? ²² In these matters your city is believed to excel to such an extent, that although some cities of Italy are held to be outstanding in one or the other, these others are thought to be not only utterly inferior to this unique city, but in a certain way, barbaric.

²³ Moreover, though these things are known to all, we think that for the distinguished praise of your city they are not to be left unsaid, nevertheless, many things have been deliberately omitted for the sake of brevity. ²⁴ But these things indicated it seemed right to enumerate, so that it would be known clearly to all that these sorts of citizens are not blind, but extremely far-sighted, as we said above, those who generally consider not only present events but also past and future and who will understand how to choose from among all these, those that lead chiefly to peace and tranquility.

²⁵ Therefore will we not love such men, will we not embrace them, will we not hold them in delight, will we not confess that we consider them above the talents of all? ²⁶ Certainly we, as is fitting, will treat those men with every care, diligence and love; and as strong as the competition of war was among us in the past, so much tighter will the bond of benevolence be in the future, and the more indissoluble the trust, so that one cannot imagine anything so great or so problematic, that it could turn us away from good will and fraternity with them, since the honor of virtue is more well-established in us than any desire for power or wealth.

²⁷ For which reason, O most erudite man, there is no reason that you should attach importance to these sorts of rumor, or that you should consider granting the voices of the foolish any praise or blame. ²⁸ This lastly is true praise: that which comes forth from a praiseworthy man. ²⁹ Only an act of mercy and virtue deserves praise, but words that display nothing more than false accusations of good people are to be condemned and held of no account.

³⁰ We will also carry through with every care and diligence, so that you will understand how very pleasing this esteem of yours for our authority has been, and also while embracing the friendship and fraternity of your fellow citizens, we will act with all our might so that their good deeds will come to light. ³¹ Indeed not only in praise for them but also for the usefulness and protection of their state and their things, we pledge our person, our wealth, our resources and lastly (as nothing is more well-established in us) our unshaken trust, and we offer all these welcome things with a glad heart, disposed to do whatever might advance the honor and glory of your most flourishing city, whose firm and happy liberty we yearn for.

³² Farewell, dearest friend of ours.

³³ From our Castle of Porta Giovia, 28 July 1438. Candido.

II

To the Most Illustrious Lord Prince Filippo Maria Anglo Visconti,
Duke of Milan

If, most distinguished and most outstanding prince, I did not fear the label of sycophant, which I have always abhorred, surely I would praise with many words the extraordinary civility which you put into practice by writing to me. ² For what could be held or contrived to be more civilized, what more obliging than for such a great prince – exceptional light and honor of our age, in whom that ancient Italian virtue and probity shine forth – to write of his own accord to a small man, unknown to him, especially when unsolicited by letters from him? ³ And indeed this civility of yours, together with your equanimity of spirit, is to be extolled all the more, given that we see it placed in quite a distinguished authority. ⁴ There are those situated more humbly, even those solicited by letters, who show contempt for writers and disdain to write back to inferiors. ⁵ But yet, your outstanding virtue and a certain excellent greatness of spirit prompted by only my words has deigned to bestow so much on me, that by these very letters you want to commend me, to extol my homeland with praises and to make known in writing your singular disposition of mind toward that state and its interests, in order to reveal to all, should anyone appear to perceive otherwise, how sincere your feeling is toward us, how staunch and eager you are to preserve mutual goodwill and friendship. ⁶ And for me this was all the more agreeable to read, in that the written word usually conveys more confidence, strength, and authority than do spoken words.

⁷ It proved pleasing to me to be praised by you, prince most endowed with every merit, whose judgment has great weight in the eyes of all; ⁸ but what was much more pleasing to me and more welcome was the spirit which you openly showed to my republic. ⁹ For when you praised the Florentine city so deeply and eloquently with exquisite words, so that almost nothing further could be said by even the most devoted person, you seem to display the greatest testimony of benevolence toward it. ¹⁰ One should add that not only do you describe our praises in detail most elegantly but you also profess your love for us and, as though it were your own cause, you defend us from the multitude of those who call Florentines blind. ¹¹ This evinces a great and exceptional satisfaction in me, since I consider this letter sent to me as your most certain pledge of love toward us. ¹² Indeed I believe that these words are proposed by

you not for the purpose of adulation (for what befits an eminent prince less, or what advantage could there be in the vice of adulation?), but for the purpose of demonstrating your opinion of the Florentine people.¹³ For we do not usually praise and extol with words so ornately, so lavishly, those whom we perceive as averse to our own advantage and profit.¹⁴ Therefore I am confident these things were truly written by you and from the heart, and that what you promise in the letter will be made good by actual deeds.

¹⁵ There were once many contests of the greatest glory and dignity between your ancestors and the citizens of Florence, vied for between them not with hate and cruelty, but striven for out of superiority and excellence.¹⁶ This was clearly shown after the death of the prince your father, most excellent and most deserving of every praise: when Lombardy was rushing to war and destroying itself with violent fighting, the Florentines, having set aside the penchant for wars, chose peace and tranquility.

¹⁷ And although they were invited rather often to destroy the power of your distinguished house and family, nevertheless, since they had fought with your father not from hate, but only for their own liberty, once assured of this, they laid down arms, reckoning that enough had been done if they could attain their own liberty far from the fear of war.¹⁸ Against you as well, they demonstrated no hate, rather, they wished to eradicate the ancient stems of discord not with conjectures but with peace treaties.

¹⁹ And indeed, from the war in which you subjugated the people of Genoa, you yourself know that under no condition could the Florentines be compelled to bring aid to your adversaries, even though they were urged by many to impede your victory, and the majority believed this could be useful, so strong was the desire in us for observing the treaties and attaining peace.²⁰ Therefore, you can understand by your own hands, as they say, that our deliberations do not look for anything else, they do not seek anything else than the guarding of peace and liberty.²¹ For it is characteristic of almost all republics that they rarely harass anyone with war; that for the most part they resort to arms only after having been provoked and compelled by force.²² For since a republic is governed by the judgment of many, and the majority seek peace and tranquillity, it is clear that the republic undertakes war driven by necessity rather than inclination and also in order to punish their enemies or to redress an offense.

²³ But there occurred a certain circumstance of the times, as I see it, and the fault of a greater prince who wished his own power to be augmented by means of our misfortunes, for which reason fighting took place, not with regard to your wealth or ours but to trust and dignity.

²⁴ And although both sides wished for peace, nonetheless, the actions of that prince whom I mentioned, who dreaded war for peace, for a long while obstructed the harmony sought by both sides.²⁵ After that there followed various waves of dissent among us, yet for everyone it was pos-

sible to observe fairly openly that the Florentines had fought with you previously not out of any hate or malevolence toward you, but only in order to protect their freedom, the possession of which the wisest and most learned men deem should be defended with every resource.²⁶ Because if liberty should be sweet and dear to anyone, certainly it is fitting that it is extremely agreeable to the Florentine people, among whom – let the malevolent and envious object as much as they wish – there is real and lasting liberty.

²⁷ In fact, neither one nor another rules, neither the arrogance of the patricians nor of the aristocrats, but rather the people, admitted by just right to the duties of the state, for which it comes about that the highest, the lowest, the noble, the ignoble, the rich, the destitute, unite with common enthusiasm for the cause of liberty, and for conserving it they eschew no expense, shrink from no pains, no hazards.²⁸ In short, nothing could seem so hard and difficult that they do not consider it possible to endure, so that they may enjoy the liberty inherited from their forefathers.²⁹ In all those who are able now to safeguard its name, there is the same impetus, the same ardor, for defending the prosperity of the homeland.³⁰ Men are driven both by divine and human law to desire its protection, to uphold its dignity, to seek its advantages, to avoid its dangers; those who defend liberty, are celebrated in the discourses of all, while those who oppose it are condemned in the memory of all peoples.

³¹ And yet I am certain that in the past you have contended with us not for the purpose of abolishing freedom, but, as you write, to uphold honor and dignity.³² For if anyone were of such savagery that he would seek glory for himself from our oppression, he would appear to ignore the path of true glory and while living would be utterly worthy of the hate of all mortals, and once dead, of their execration.³³ For what sort of person would not be condemned to oblivion by all generations, what sort of person would seek to extinguish the grandeur of the Tuscans, the great splendor of Italy, this liberty, aspiration of virtues?³⁴ The excellence of Tuscany is praised in war and in peace and its importance in all culture, both Greek and Latin letters; in fact its name and fame have become known even to foreign nations.³⁵ But the Florentines have by no means degenerated in any way with respect to their deeds and virtue, rather they have increased above others the nobility and glory generated by their ancestors.

³⁶ In Italy there are a great many illustrious and magnificent cities, but none seems to us preferable as to sharpness of intelligence, or learning, or the pursuit of culture, or for the good sense of the citizens, or of their habits, or of any sort of virtue.³⁷ For if some in Italy have cultivated virtue either by the study of humanities or by the teaching of all disciplines, or by the wisdom of action, or by faith or piety, the preeminent position among them – I say this with deference to the others – Floren-

tines claim for themselves.³⁸ All these favorable qualities we draw from liberty alone, whose long-lasting possession has elevated and stimulated our minds to the cultivation of virtue.

³⁹ Therefore, imagine with how much joy, how much comfort, how much cheerfulness I have been affected by your letter, when I seem to see with my own eyes the singular affection that you bear for the state of our homeland?⁴⁰ Since you write that you will pursue Florentines with all diligence and love, as is fitting; since for our benefit and for the protection of the state you promise your wealth, your resources, and in addition, your person; since there will be nothing in the future, to use your words, that might turn aside your feelings from fraternity and benevolence toward us, all this to such an extent that in some way my wishes seem to be surpassed by your words.⁴¹ Therefore I am so comforted by these words, your offerings bestow such confidence in me that without a doubt I hope that, thanks to your efforts, we will remain calm in a lasting peace, which is our only desire.

⁴² In fact these transformations: rivalry to benevolence, dissension to concord, divisiveness to unity, war to peace, persuade me that nothing can now arise which would be able to alter your sacrosanct will.⁴³ In this matter diligence and solicitude will be imparted by us so that our desire for conserving peace may be known to you and to others.

⁴⁵ I say these things to you rather freely, invited by your humanity in writing to me, and I linger on these matters all the more freely, the more I see the Florentines praised more eloquently by you on account of the liberty defended by them thus far.⁴⁶ But truly I think that you will surely accomplish justly and with all good faith and piety the things you write and that are said by you.

⁴⁷ And if indeed wise men think it suits a good prince and one deserving of every praise, which we wish you to be, to seek honor and glory with kindness and tolerance, if it is suitable for him to prefer to be loved rather than feared, to turn the power conceded by God to the salvation of men and not to destruction, if to bend hatred to love, enemies to friendship, as you taught me a little while ago with a noble example, to prefer calm and tranquility to tumults; I for my part am certain that a prince like you, who is the wisest of all those who live, will strive with exceptional might and effort, so that lasting peace may reign among us, so that no cause of new discord or suspicion of war might arise through the fault of your people; so that finally we may settle down from the long-lasting wars, with which Italy has been violently shaken for a longer time than was right; so that through the efforts of your good judgment we may enjoy calm and tranquility which you have always professed to desire; so that, with the foundations of friendship established between us, you construct on these a firm and stable edifice.⁴⁸ Certainly with every memory of the wars of our predecessors forgotten, having set aside our

preoccupations of times gone by, having begun the oblivion of matters gone by, we have turned our attention, our mind, our plans, and our spirit to enjoying peace, while seeking nothing else, while desiring nothing else, except what is proper for good citizens, so that we may live our liberty with calm and dignity.⁴⁹ And since you affirm that you are of the same frame of mind, your good judgment will restore us to sharing in this pledge, so that in mutual peace, with advantages in common, the might of Italians may be revived and returned to previous glory.

⁵⁰ However, although it does not seem at all necessary to exhort your excellency to that course of life for which I see you roused of your own free will, to the extent that you do not lack someone to exhort you; still, moved by love for my homeland and by the desire for peace, I exhort you, I beg you by that faith which your words offer me, I beseech and I implore you, taking up a spirit of peace, you wish that, with your indulgence, that city be made more adorned, greater and more magnificent, that city which has set aside that spirit which formerly was hostile to you, which was at one time favorable toward you, which was linked formerly to you by a most sacrosanct pact, which has never fought against you of its own volition; that you place again your hopes on the fact that, in the future, those who maintain faith in their homeland will be faithful to your causes; and that it please you that they enjoy the wished for peace, the desired calm, and the yearned for tranquillity, those who seek nothing of yours, and who, once their liberty is safe, desire nothing other than that you be illustrious and most distinguished.⁵¹ When you have done those things which I am confident you will truly do, you will obtain that which we know to be the objective of illustrious princes: fame and glory which is solid and never lacking through the centuries.⁵² I (you only confirm my conviction) declare I will be a sort of herald of your deeds and praises.⁵³ And although my talent is worth little, and my eloquence even less, nonetheless I will offer to persons more learned and eloquent an occasion for writing.

⁵⁴ Farewell, glorious Prince, and reckon me among your followers.

⁵⁵ Terranuova, 15 September.

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THE *HISTORIAE FLORENTINI POPULI* BY POGGIO BRACCIOLINI. GENESIS AND FORTUNE OF AN ALTERNATIVE HISTORY OF FLORENCE

Otti Merisalo

ABSTRACT: During the last years of his life, Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), former Apostolic Secretary and Chancellor of Florence, was working on a long text that he characterized, in a letter written in 1458, as lacking a well-defined structure. This was most probably his history of the people of Florence (*Historiae Florentini populi*, the title given in Jacopo's dedication copy to Frederick of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino), revised and published posthumously by Poggio's son, Jacopo Bracciolini (1442–1478). Contrary to what is often assumed, Poggio's treatise was not a continuation, nor even a complement, to Leonardo Bruni's (1370–1444) official history of Florence. It concentrates on the most recent history of Florence from the fourteenth-century conflicts between Florence and Milan through Florentine expansion in Tuscany and finally reaching the mid-fifteenth century. This article will study the genesis and fortune of the work in the context of Poggio's literary output and the manuscript evidence from the mid-fifteenth century until the first printed edition of the Latin-language text by G.B. Recanati in 1715.

KEYWORDS: Florence, Italian humanism, manuscript tradition, historiography, Medici

1. *The Genesis of the Historiae Florentini populi*

The last years of Poggio Bracciolini's long life were marked by a reversal of fortune that left him at odds with the Medici regime. After decades of faithful service to Cosimo the Elder (1389–1464), he had been appointed Chancellor of the Republic, a successor to his friend Carlo Marsuppini (1399–1453). Only three years later, in 1456, he was relieved of his duties due to the chaotic state of the Chancellery, the direction of which had proved to exceed his interest and capacities¹.

In the summer of 1458, Poggio alluded to a work he was preparing:

But while many things may be listed as having delayed my writing, one thing has been left unsaid. It has rather long kept me particularly busy, as, the end approaching, I willingly and industriously set out to finish the work that I had begun and for which, as it happens with weaving a web, I had only put the threads in place. It is still lacking a well-defined structure, but I hope to complete it soon. Of course, we are told to revise our text several times before publication in order not to expose ourselves to slanderers. This reason has kept me from attending to other business².

¹ For Poggio and the Medici, see Field, 2017: 284ff; Black, 1985: 170; also see Fubini, 1990: 298.

² All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. Original Latin text: «Sed cum multa recenseantur, a quibus proficisci potuerit scribendi tarditas, una ommissa res

While Poggio is conscious of his time rapidly coming to an end («cum finis iam adesset»), he is doing his utmost to finish the work he had started on. This work is far from complete: he has started weaving («tantummodo sum orsus») a web («tela»), but this work lacks «textura»³. The word «textura» is rare in ancient texts. It occurs seven times in Lucretius and a few times in Plautus, Propertius, Lucan, Seneca minor, Ammianus Marcellinus and Martianus Capella. Its sense ranges from ‘spider’s web’ (Plautus and Seneca) to ‘structure’ (Lucan and Ammianus). Lucretius uses this term for the structure of the universe⁴. In the sense ‘construction, structure’, it may also be found in the Vulgate⁵. Consequently, it seems to refer here to a well-defined, finished structure. Poggio is preoccupied with the reception of the text, throwing in a possible reference to Horace⁶, then mentions his fear of «detractores», no doubt in reference to his recent skirmishes with Valla and his disciples⁷, which stimulates him to refine his text with particular care. He expresses his confidence in managing to finish his task in near future («sed ea brevi, ut spero, perficietur»).

As far as we know, Poggio was not busy with anything else of this importance in the period preceding his death. Consequently, the «opus absolvendum» is most probably the *Historiae Florentini populi*, a history of the Florentine people from the middle of the fourteenth century, with a brief treatment of Antiquity and the Middle Ages⁸.

est, que precipua me occupatum tenuit diutius in scribendo, ut cum finis iam adesset, cupidus ac studiosus incubui ad absolvendum inceptum opus, quod, tanquam in tela accidit, tantummodo sum orsus. Textura adhuc caret; sed ea brevi, ut spero, perficietur. Sepius enim repetere iubemur que scribimus antequam edantur, ne qua detur detractoribus obloquendi occasio. Hec causa extitit que me ab reliquis distraheret curis», Letter to Domenico Capranica, *Ep.* 9.45.7-19, Bracciolini, 1984

³ For metaphorical uses of the more common derivatives of *texere*, see Viljamaa, 2007.

⁴ E.g. Lewis & Short 1879: «s.v. textura»: «A web, texture»: *aranearum*, *Plt. Stich.* 2, 2, 24; *Minervae*, *Prop.* 4 (5), 5, 23; *Sen. Ep.* 20.121.22 («Non vides quam nulli mortalium imitabilis illa aranei textura»); figuratively, ‘a construction, structure’: «quam tenui constet textura (i.e. animi natura)», *Lucr.* 3.209; *Luc.* 9.777 («uincula neruorum et laterum textura»); *Amm.* 23.4.1 («contegitur coriis bubulis virgarumque recenti textura atque limo asperguntur»).

⁵ Jerome, *Vulg. Ex.* 28.8, «ipsaque textura et cuncta operis varietas erit ex auro et hyacintho et purpura coccoque bis tincto et bysso retorta», and 15.

⁶ *Ars poetica* (1863), 386-90: «Siquid tamen olim / scripseris, in Maeci descendat iudicis auris / et patris et nostras, nonumque prematur in annum / membranis intus positis; delere licebit / quod non edideris; nescit uox missa reuerti»; translated by Smart & Buckley: «But if ever you shall write any thing, let it be submitted to the ears of Metius [Tarpa], who is a judge, and your father’s, and mine; and let it be suppressed till the ninth year, your papers being laid up within your own custody. You will have it in your power to blot out what you have not made public: a word once sent abroad can never return».

⁷ For the famous exchange of invectives, see Merisalo, 2006: 67-76.

⁸ Contrary to what is often assumed, Poggio’s treatise was not a continuation, nor even a complement, to Leonardo Bruni’s (1370-1444) official history of Florence. For Poggio’s friendship and somewhat ambivalent attitude to Bruni, see now Field, 2017: 293.

2. Jacopo di Poggio's Edition: The Manuscript Tradition

Poggio's last work has been transmitted in five manuscripts, three of which are datable to the fifteenth century and two to the sixteenth century. Two of the fifteenth-century copies are Florentine luxury manuscripts, and one, maybe the most interesting, is a modest paper manuscript also originating in Florence. Four manuscripts transmit a text which is quite obviously an edition of Poggio's work by his son Jacopo (1442–1478), a talented Latin author, an exquisite humanist scribe and one of the unfortunate members of the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478⁹.

In 1472¹⁰ Jacopo published Poggio's text, entitled *Historiae Florentini populi*¹¹, with a dedicatory letter to his father's old friend, Frederick of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino. In the dedicatory letter, Jacopo gives the following information on the genesis of the text:

Poggio, getting on in years, retiring, as it were, from business, was given leave by the Pope to return from Rome to his native country. In order to enhance the memory of such an eminent city he wrote the first draft of a history of Florence from the first war with John, Archbishop of Milan, until the peace made with Alfonso through the mediation of Pope Nicholas. He left this work incomplete at his death¹².

Jacopo here uses the term «commentarium», emphasizing the incomplete character¹³ of the text left behind by Poggio, «morte preventus».

⁹ For Jacopo's biography, see Merisalo, 2013b: 57–64, and Merisalo, 2013a: 131–36 with inclusive bibliography (in particular Bausi, 2011: 131–32).

¹⁰ The edition may be dated on the basis of the following passage of the dedicatory letter: «And since this year, thanks to your valour, the Volaterrans, a most ancient people of Etruria, who, trusting the difficult mountain ground and the very nature of the site, had rebelled against us, were subjected to our power»; «Cumque hoc anno tua uirtute Volaterrani, antiquissima Etrurie ciuitas, montis asperitate et loci natura freti imperio nostro rebelles sub iugum uenerint», quoted according to Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, ms. lat. Z.392(=1684), f. 4 (see below). Frederick's siege of Volterra took place in 1472.

¹¹ This is the title in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Urb. lat. 491, folio 5r as well as ms. lat. Z. 392 (=1684), folio 4r. In Urb. lat. 491, the title of the preface, however, has the variant «Iacobi Poggii Florentini in historias Florentinas Poggii patris. prohemium» on folio 1r. The title is always in the plural.

¹² «Poggius enim ingrauescente etate tamquam emeritis stipendiis, cum Roma, ubi magna cum laude uixerat, uenia a Pontifice impetrata in patriam reuertisset, ut memorie tante urbis consuleret, inter priuata publicaue negocia commentaria rerum Florentinarum, a primo bello cum Iohanne Mediolanensi Archiepiscopo usque ad pacem cum Alfonso per Nicolaum pontificem factam, morte preuentus reliquit», ms. lat. Z.392 (=1684), f. 3v.

¹³ Lewis & Short, 1879: «s.v. commentarius», «As the title of a book on any subject, but esp. historical, which is only sketched down or written without care», the best-known examples being no doubt Caesar's *Gallic War* (*Commentarii de bello Gallico*). The neuter plural «commentaria» may be interpreted as «commentary-type account»; for a parallel, see e.g. Cicero, *Brutus* 44.164.

Despite his hopes of finishing the *Historiae*, Poggio quite obviously had not succeeded in perfecting his «textura»¹⁴. The same information is provided by the dedicatory letter in Jacopo's vernacular translation of this edition (see below).

Since our father had written in his old age, to the glory and honour of his native country, a history of Florence from the first war with Archbishop John Visconti in 1350 until the peace made with Naples and King Alfonso, and he had left that work incomplete at his death¹⁵.

Frederick's dedication copy, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Urb. lat. 491¹⁶, is a luxury manuscript copied by Gundisalvus Hispanus, who identified himself on f. 163v by the colophon «Deo gratias. G. Hispanus». This was the apostolic protonotary Gundissalvus Fernandez de Heredia (d. 1511). After studies of Canon Law at Pisa in 1473–1474, he was ordained bishop of Barcelona in 1478 and of Tarragona in 1490. He is known to have worked as a member of the team of scribes used by Vespasiano da Bisticci, responsible for producing one manuscript for Frederick of Montefeltro between 1469 and 1474, and two between 1475 and 1482. He was also the scribe for three manuscripts for Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, for four manuscripts for Lorenzo de' Medici, two for Pierfrancesco de' Medici and two for Alfonso, Duke of Calabria, son of King Ferdinand (de la Mare, 1985: 503n31). Jacopo's stylish humanistic hand is also present in the margins of almost every leaf¹⁷. The volume is richly decorated by the Master of the Hamilton Xenophon, who was active between 1460 and 1480, and worked in the workshop of Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico in Florence at least until 1478. The Master also collaborated in the decoration of the celebrated Urbino Bible (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Urb. lat. 1)¹⁸.

The version of the *Historiae Florentini populi* consists of eight books, preceded by Jacopo's dedicatory letter. Jacopo presents remarks on the usefulness of history:

¹⁴ This does not exclude Poggio making his materials available to other scholars, cf. Rubinstein, 1958–1964: 20 and note.

¹⁵ «Auendo adunque nostro padre nella ultima eta, per gloria et honore della patria, scripta una hystoria fiorentina dalla prima guerra auuta collo arcivescouo Giouanni de Bisconti nel McccL.ta : fino alla pace facta a Napoli appresso al Re Alfonso, et quella preuenuto dalla morte lasciata imperfecta», Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Palatino Baldovinetti 62, f. 2v.

¹⁶ Digitized at https://digi.vatlib.it/view/ms.S_Urb.lat.491.

¹⁷ Cf. Michelini Tocci, 1981: 527 and n74 as well as de la Mare, 1985: 503n31.

¹⁸ Garzelli, 1985: 1.157ff. See also Ferretti (2003), who identifies Francesco Rosselli as a collaborator for the decoration of the manuscript.

From this, the great usefulness to mankind of history, [that] most faithful guardian of things, may be gauged, as well as the degree to which those having led most famous lives, are in her debt, since she alone keeps them constantly in our minds. Through the knowledge of history, let us be inspired by the memory of famous deeds to strive after immortality and learn from other people's deeds and individuals' lives [ir] plans, manners, fortune's changes and uncertain outcomes of wars¹⁹.

The text brings to mind Poggio's preface to *De varietate fortunae*. In fact, it parallels Poggio's observations on the function of history.

[History] alone brings into our view the deeds and virtues of famous men so that we may imitate them. Through history, things past are brought again before our eyes and those habitually destroyed by antiquity are brought back as if they were new. It may well be said that nobody would know anything about ancient deeds of excellent men far removed from our own time, if they were not brought to people's attention by works of literature and history²⁰.

Poggio's statement, «Consequently, history must be considered to be of great utility to humans»²¹, corresponds to Jacopo's «the great usefulness to mankind of history»²², whereas «This diligent guardian and faithful memory of things past»²³ corresponds to Jacopo's «[that] most faithful guardian of things»²⁴.

¹⁹ «Hinc quantum utilitatis generi humano historia fidissima rerum custos afferat, quantumque omnes, qui haud in obscuro aetatem egere illi debeant, cum ea sola praesentes nobis illos semper faciat, intelligi potest. Cuius e cognitione clarissimorum facinorum memoria ad immortalitatis studium excitemur, atque ex aliorum operibus et uniuscuiusque uita, consilia, mores, fortunae uarietates, et incertos bellorum euentus cognoscamus», ms. lat. Z.392 (=1684), f. 1v.

²⁰ «hec sola illustrium uirorum facta uirtutesque nostro in conspectu ad imitandum proponit [...] cuius ope preterita representantur nobis et que uetustas solet delere, reddit tanquam recentia. Nullus quippe priscas et ab etate nostra remotas excellentium uirorum gestas res nosset, nisi litterarum monumentis et historie munere in luce hominum uersarentur», Bracciolini, 1993, Proemium 8–13.

²¹ «Magnam igitur utilitatem afferre mortalibus historia censi debet», Bracciolini, 1993, Proemium 4–5.

²² «quantum utilitatis generi humano», see n19 above.

²³ «Hec diligens custos et fida preteritorum memoria», Bracciolini, 1993, Proemium 7–8.

²⁴ «historia fidissima rerum custos», see n19 above. History as «magistra vitae» («life's teacher») is of course one of the central humanist «topoi» going back to Cicero, 1860, *De oratore* 2.36 «Historia uero testis temporum, lux ueritatis, uita memoriae, magistra uiae, nuntia uetustatis, qua uoce alia nisi oratoris immortalitati commendatur?», trans. by Watson, p. 92: «By what other voice, too, than that of the orator, is history, the witness of time, the light of truth, the life of memory, the directress of life, the herald of antiquity, committed to immortality?». For the reality of humanist historiography, see Lanziti, 2011: 10.

The expression «fortune's changes»²⁵ is of course a direct reference to Poggio's treatise. Jacopo, after lamenting the disappearance of great patrons, such as Alfonso of Aragon and Pope Nicholas V, proceeds to a tribute to Frederick as a new great patron of learning and an appropriate dedicatee for the book since he had been a friend of Poggio's²⁶. In view of Jacopo's subsequent anti-Medicean activities and Frederick's role in the Pazzi conspiracy, the dedicatory letter is quite an early sign of Jacopo's political positioning²⁷.

Jacopo outlines his own contribution to Poggio's text as follows: «My main occupation, as soon as my age would permit it, has been to preserve the memory of our state and the memory of many famous men. Thus, I have built up a text out of one divided into eight books and handed it over to posterity to read»²⁸.

In the phrase «omnia in octo digesta libros [...] in unum corpus redigere», the participle «digesta» may be interpreted as referring either to

²⁵ «fortunaе uarietates», see n19 above.

²⁶ «I would not doubt that with the passing of this very holy and wise man [Nicholas V] both Latin and Greek letters could with good reason be said to have perished, unless, after the death of this man, deplored, by all the good people, you had not set out, alone among your contemporaries, to support gifted men with your wealth and tell them, by word and encouragement, to keep faith and not be demoralized. Thus, glorious Prince Frederick, since you are the only one of our age not merely encouraging intellects but also combining military science with eloquence and rhetoric, having progressed in philosophy to a point that it is almost impossible to reach for a man employed in other business, regularly writing texts both at home and at war, so that you seem to ignore nothing, nor should anything be totally new to your mind, I have decided to send you the work of my most excellent father, which contains the recent history of Italy. To whom should I dedicate it rather than a person who was his friend and, being himself a learned man, supports and follows up learned men?»; «Cum quo sanctissimo ac sapientissimo homine [Nicholas V] Latinas simul et Greca litteras perisse merito dicere non dubitarem, nisi tu post supremum illius diem bonis omnibus deflendum unus extitisses, qui prestanti ingenio uiros tuis opibus sustentares dispersosque ac tanti uiri morte pene attonitos tuis uerbis et cohortationibus bene sperare ac bono esse animo iuberet. Itaque, Illustrissime Princeps Federice, cum solus hac nostra etate sis, qui non modo ingenii faeas, uerum etiam ad rei militaris scientiam, eloquentiam, et dicendi copiam addideris, in philosophia tantum profeceris, quantum ocioso homini uix conceditur, assidueque domi, ac militie aliquid scribas, aut legas, historias uero preteritorum temporum ita teneas, ut nihil tibi incognitum esse constet, ne quid omnino nouum animo tuo sit, optimi parentis uigilias quibus proxime etatis per Italiam res geste continentur, ad te mittere decreui. Cui enim illa potius dedicarem, quam ei qui et familiaritate secum iunctus fuit, et doctus ipse doctos colit et obseruat?», ms. lat. Z. 392 (=1684), folios 3-3v. For Frederick's authentic interest in learning, cf. e.g. Rinaldi, 2013: 341-55.

²⁷ For the political implications of Jacopo's literary activities, see Merisalo, 2013b.

²⁸ «Mihi uero, ut primum per etatem licuit, ne nostre rei publice plurimorumque clarorum uiroꝝ memoria deperiret, nihil fuit potius quam omnia in octo digesta libros summa cum diligentia in unum corpus redigere ac legenda posteris tradere», ms. lat. Z. 392 (=1684), folio 3v.

Poggio's original revision or to Jacopo's editorial work. Jacopo's vernacular translation (see below) puts it in clearer terms that Jacopo had not only transformed Poggio's «commentaria» into a homogenous text, but had also been the one to divide the text into eight books:

as soon as [my] age and many occupations would permit me, in order to preserve the memory of our city and the deeds of many excellent men in Italy, I have concentrated on making a continuous narrative of [the text], and after having divided it into eight books with the greatest care, publishing it and giving a copy of it to whomever would wish to be informed²⁹.

Jacopo's edition, including the preface to Frederick, was soon reproduced in a Florentine luxury parchment manuscript, now Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, ms. lat. Z.392 (=1684). The textual hand is an elegant Italic. In the margins and sometimes in the text a near-contemporary hand added corrections, and a reader in the seventeenth or eighteenth century provided some annotations in the margins. Images of *putti* on the first folio are reminiscent of those by Mariano del Buono and his workshop. Mariano worked for Vespasiano da Bisticci between 1470 and 1480³⁰. The coat of arms that is also on the first folio has not yet been identified³¹. The manuscript later belonged to G.B. Recanati (1687-1734), who used it for his 1715 edition (see below). The text of the Marciana manuscript is an exact copy of the Urbino text apart from occasional spelling variants and especially the presence or absence of diphthongs.

The treatise is absent from fifteenth-century Medici collections, which is easily explained by Jacopo's anti-Medicean stance. However, an early sixteenth-century manuscript of the *Historiae* entered the Medici private library in 1568. The manuscript, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. LXV, 40, is on paper, and it was part of the extensive book collection owned by Canon Antonio Petrei (d. 1570)³² that became part of the Medici library in that year. Petrei was a teacher and noted bibliophile who collected autographs of Boccaccio and Petrarch (Morandini,

²⁹ «come prima et per l'eta et per molte occupationi m'è stato licito, achioche la memoria della cicta nostra et le opere di molti prestantissimi huomini per Ytalia non manchassi, a nessuna altra cosa o piu dato opera che a ridurla insieme, et diuisola con somma diligentia in octo libri, mandarla in luce et farne copia a ciascuno desideroso d'intendere», Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Palatino Baldovinetti 62, folio 2v.

³⁰ For Mariano, see Garzelli, 1985, vol. 2, plate 689 (Garzelli, 1985: 1.193): a *Corvinianus*, New York Library, Spencer Collection 27, posterior to 1464.

³¹ They are not Recanati arms, contrary to Valentinelli's supposition (Valentinelli, 1873: 280, *ad* Cod. 314 «membr., saec. XV, a. 293, l. 200 [Z.L., CCCXCII]. P.»).

³² Ex-libris on folio 1: «A[n](onii) petrej can(onici) floren(tini)».

1986: 23). The version transmitted in his copy descends from the Urbino version. The volume is characterized by numerous hands, some of them rather inexperienced; in fact, this volume might have been produced as a series of writing exercises.

The fourth manuscript, now Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, ms. V.G. 34, was written on Italian paper dating from the 1520s–1530s. The writing is in several hands, both Transalpine (one definitely Germanic) and Italian, most of them essentially Gothic hybridae, some *all'antica* cursives. All the marginal hands are Italian (Merisalo, 2013b: 60n18; Merisalo, 2016: 203–04). Just like the Petrei manuscript, this volume might be a school exercise. It belonged to the Farnese library and seems to have been used by cardinal Alessandro Farnese (1520–1589), grandson of Pope Paul III and one of the most powerful political and ecclesiastical figures of the Counter-Reformation³³. In the inventory made at the death of the cardinal in 1589, it figures as number 13 of the books listed for the «Guardarobba del sig. cardinale» in the Palazzo della Cancelleria in Rome. It was number 27 in the inventory of Latin-language manuscripts compiled after the transfer of the Farnese library to Parma in 1653, and it was number 167 in the Rutinelli inventory of 1737 following the final move of the possessions of the extinct Farnese dynasty to Bourbon Naples in 1736³⁴.

While these four manuscripts do not provide substantive information on Jacopo's editorial work, there is a modest, late-fifteenth-century paper manuscript which does. The manuscript, the Palatino Capponiano 64, is now at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence. The library of Marquis Vincenzo Capponi, including an extensive collection of manuscripts collection put together in the eighteenth century by Canon Giovan Vincenzo Capponi, was incorporated into the Palatine library in 1854 (Fava, 1939: 123). Folios 1–88 of the Capponi manuscript contain books 1–4 of the *Historiae Florentini populi*, written in elegant italics. The codicological unit in question is datable to the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century.³⁵ Consequently, it was not produced in Poggio's or Jacopo's lifetime, but was copied from an earlier volume that has not yet been found. The unit is bound together with parts of Leonardo Bruni's *corpus Demosthenicum* and excerpts of a translation into Italian of Petrarch's *De remediis utriusque fortune*.

Poggio's text, devoid of title and Jacopo's preface, is preceded by a very short preface in the first person:

³³ For a concise biography, see Merisalo, 2016: 195–196.

³⁴ For the history, including subsequent inventories, of the Farnese library, see Fossier, 1982: 2.

³⁵ The watermarks most resemble Briquet 3393, Florence 1503–1505.

Following the industrious example of some writers who have described in historical works certain wars or a certain period of time, I have set out to compose a work which would seem to enhance the reputation of our city and the glory of the [present] author [in the eyes of] posterity. I have decided to describe, in eight books, the wars of the Florentine people, both those of defense and those of aggression, over a period of a little more than one hundred years. It is not a history of deeds of little significance, but of such as are fresh in memory and, among events befallen the Italians during the past few centuries, worthy of being preserved in the memory of posterity³⁶.

While the Capponi manuscript only contains books 1–4, the preface explicitly states, 1) that the whole of the text covers the same time period, i.e. 1350–1454, as the text edited by Jacopo, and 2) that the work is divided into eight books. This makes it possible to give another interpretation of Jacopo's formulations «omnia in octo digesta libros summa cum diligentia in unum corpus redigere / diuisola con somma diligentia in octo libri» (see above): «digesta» and «diuiso» would seem to have been the work of Poggio himself.

A detailed comparison of the text of the Capponi manuscript with Jacopo's edition reveals a significant number of differences, including changes in word order, more concision, a different organization of text units, more synthetical and classicizing constructions at sentence and discourse level, and differences in terminology, particularly in the use of more classicizing politico-geographical terms³⁷.

The linguistic and discursive features of the Capponi text make a strong case for identifying Poggio as the author and the folios 1–88v as the copy of an early version of books 1–4 of the *Historiae*. The following passage containing explicit statements in the first person is a particularly important one:

They fought a hard battle laying in vain siege to Terranuova, the village of my birth, and many were wounded, many killed. When going away they passed first to the Aretine, then to the area of Cortona, and afterwards to that of Siena, intending to pillage the country. Then they returned to Pisan territory through the Valdinievole³⁸.

³⁶ «Imitatus quorundam scriptorum industriam qui certa bella aut tempora suis historiis sunt complexi, opus mihi desumpsi quod et urbi nostre nomen, et auctori laudem aliquam uideretur apud posteros allaturum. Paulo namque supra centesimum annum Florentini bella populi tum repulsa tum illata recensere institui que sunt in octo libros digesta, neque uero hystoriam rerum gestarum pondere leuem, sed quae recenti fere memoria constet et digna profecto res si qua apud Ytalos aliqua his seculis fuere que merito posteritatis memorie mandetur», ms. Pal. Capp. 64, f. 1.

³⁷ For details on Jacopo's editorial work, see Merisalo (2007).

³⁸ «Terranouam, natale meum solum, acri certamine frustra oppugnarunt pluribus sauciis, multis interfectis. Abeuntes in Aretinum primo, tum in Cortonensem, postea

In Jacopo's text, this passage has been de-personalized through a complete omission of the reference to Terranuova, and the whole passage is characterized by considerable syntactical concision: «After pillaging the areas of Arezzo, Cortona and Siena they returned to the lands of the Pisans the same way that they had come»³⁹.

3. Jacopo's Vernacular Translation

Jacopo was not content to edit his father's Latin text; he also translated his own edition into the vernacular, complete with the dedication to Frederick of Montefeltro, thus considerably increasing the translation's visibility. While Poggio had been an exclusively Latin-language author, Jacopo had a record of both Latin and vernacular works including a commentary on the *Trionfi* by Petrarch, dedicated to Lorenzo il Magnifico⁴⁰; some of the lives of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*; and Poggio's Latin translation of the *Cyropaedia* of Xenophon⁴¹. Bruni's *Historiae Florentini populi* had already been translated into the vernacular by Donato Acciaiuoli, which shows the newly regained importance of the vernacular in the Florentine municipal context⁴². Jacopo might well have started on the vernacular translation while preparing the edition of the Latin text, since it was already available in 1474. The translation, entitled *Historia/hystoria fiorentina*, was transmitted in Florentine luxury manuscripts such as Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Palatino Baldovinetti 62; Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. II.III.86; and Yale University, Beinecke Library ms. 321, all from the 1470s. In the translation, Jacopo closely follows his own Latin text (Merisalo, 1994). The manuscript Palatino Baldovinetti 62 was written on parchment in 1474 by Francesco di Niccolò di Berto de' Gentiluzzi of San Gimignano⁴³ (active 1460–1503), a specialist of vernacular texts (de la Mare, 1985: 425, 494, and Appendix I, n19). Jacopo seems to have overseen the production of this manuscript, since his hand is present throughout, but particularly in the margins of quires I–XVI containing the *Historia fiorentina*. On folio 1, decorated with the typical Florentine vinestem (*bianchi girari*), flow-

in Senensem agros populabundi transiere. Deinde in territorium Pisanum per uallem Nebule reuersi sunt», ms. Pal. Capp. 64, folio 14.

³⁹ «Aretino, Cortonensi Senensique agro populato in Pisanorum fines qua uenerant uia reuertuntur», ms. lat. Z.392 (=1684).

⁴⁰ For the contents and political context of the commentary, see Bausi, 2011: 105–193, and Merisalo, 2013a.

⁴¹ For Jacopo's translation programme, see Merisalo (2004).

⁴² For Acciaiuoli's translation, see Bessi, 1990: 322ff.

⁴³ «MCCCLXXIII Franciscus me scripsit», f. 150r.

ers, canthara and *putti*, there is a portrait of Jacopo, possibly by Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico, and the arms of the Capponi, at the time still followers of the Medici dynasty⁴⁴. The other two manuscripts mentioned were copied for members of the Strozzi family, who had a long history of conflicts with the Medici⁴⁵. Ms. II.III.86, a luxury parchment manuscript with the Strozzi arms on folio 1, was written by no lesser a scribe than Niccolò di Giampiero Fonzio⁴⁶. The manuscript Beinecke Library 321 was written in Florence in 1475 by the same Niccolò Fonzio, presumably for Girolamo di Carlo Strozzi⁴⁷.

The Beinecke manuscript is very probably the model used for the «*editio princeps*», Jacopo's translation. The work, entitled *Historia florentina*, was printed in Venice by Jacobus Rubeus (Jacques le Rouge) in 1476⁴⁸. As to the patronage of the incunable, Jacopo's anti-Medicean stance, well-developed in 1476, Girolamo di Carlo Strozzi's probable ownership of the manuscript, as well as his record as the sponsor of the edition printed by the very same Rubeus of Bruni's *Historiae Florentini populi* in vernacular translation, would suggest Strozzi as a strong candidate (Michelini Tocchi, 1981: 527n72; de la Mare, 1985: 458). The incunable, which is still present in libraries over the world in a great number of copies⁴⁹, is

⁴⁴ The other texts of the volume are one on the Ciompi rebellion and two 1446 letters by Neri di Gino Capponi. The manuscript might have belonged to Pier Capponi (1447-1496), who was to lead the 1494 rebellion against the Medici. The Capponi connection (cf. the Capponi manuscript above) needs further investigation.

⁴⁵ On the Strozzi-Medici animosity, see e.g. Martines, 2003: 29-35 and *passim*.

⁴⁶ For Fonzio, see de la Mare, 1985: 458 and Appendix I, n19. The manuscript entered the library of the celebrated Florentine scholar Jacopo Gaddi in the seventeenth century, was acquired by Francis Stephen of Lorraine, Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1755, and was subsequently donated by him to the Biblioteca Magliabechiana, now the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence, see Fava, 1939: 37-38.

⁴⁷ For the identification of the scribe, see de la Mare, 1985: 458 and n295; for the patron, de la Mare, 1985: 516, Appendix I, n40A. The manuscript was part of the Strozzi library until at least the nineteenth century and then passed on to Prince Piero Ginori-Conti (1865-1939). For a detailed description, see Shailor (s.d.). A digital copy is at <<https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3592316>> (09/2019). For Strozzi's business dealings with scribes, see Edler De Roover (1952). Meyers (1983) presented a strong case for Beinecke 321 being the model for the incunable. On the one hand, the manuscript presents lengthy discursive marginal notes summarizing the contents (e.g. f. 14v-15) and short marginal titles such as «Alexandro magno» and «Iulio Cesare» on folio 1, of which there is, however, no trace in the incunable. On the other, there are signs in the margins throughout the volume that would seem to correspond to page-breaks of the print (e.g. f. 4). The latter do support Meyers' interpretation (for more details, see Shailor). I have the pleasure of thanking Barbara S. Shailor and the staff of Beinecke Library for letting me examine the original in excellent working conditions in September 2017.

⁴⁸ Hain *13172, Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke (= GW) M34604; revised edition in 1492, Hain 13173; digitized at <<http://daten.digitale-sammlungen.de/~db/0004/bsb00048963/images/>> (09/2019).

⁴⁹ See GW M34604, which lists 164 copies in public institutions.

thus another monument to Jacopo's political contacts shortly before the Pazzi conspiracy.

4. Recanati's Edition of the Latin Text and the Poggio Renaissance

Whereas the vernacular translation was widely available in print by the late fifteenth century, Jacopo's Latin edition was only printed at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in a period that saw a new increase of interest in Poggio Bracciolini's works (Kajanto & Merisalo, 1987: 71). The Poggio renaissance was started by the learned Venetian bibliophile G.B. Recanati (1687-1743), a friend of Apostolo Zeno⁵⁰. He published a printed edition in 1715 based on a manuscript in his own library, now the manuscript Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, lat. Z.392 (=1684). Contrary to the manuscript reading on folio 1, «[...] libros Historiarum populi Florentini», he entitled the edition *Historia Florentina* (Bracciolini, 1715), perhaps inspired by the title of Jacopo's vernacular version. In his 1734 testament Recanati bequeathed his manuscripts to the Marciana. The *Historiae Florentini populi* entered this library in 1735 (Lugato, 1993: 88).

In his preface, Recanati underlines Poggio's considerable merits in discovering Ancient texts: «Thanks to Poggio's diligence, we have approximately 16 Latin authors who would for ever have been covered in dust and dirt, or would have come to light much later»⁵¹. This inspires him to show his gratitude to this «vir meritissimus». He notes that his plans to publish the Florentine history were almost thwarted by unnamed people who argued that Jacopo's vernacular version was quite sufficient: «And I had already been about to edit Poggio's *Historia* when some people started thrusting his son Jacopo's Italian translation at me and dissuading me from my plan»⁵².

However, Recanati persisted in his plan, pointing out that there were very few Florentine histories in Latin and that Jacopo's vernacular version was neither as reliable as the Latin original nor had its gravitas: «nor does Jacopo's Italian version exhibit the same reliability and seriousness

⁵⁰ For Recanati, see Lugato, 1993: 88-96. Recanati's last autograph catalogue contains 319 mss. 103 were sold to another celebrated Venetian bibliophile, Senator Jacopo Soranzo, and the rest went to the Marciana in 1735, see Lugato, 1993: 88. Thanks to Elisabetta Lugato and the rest of the Marciana staff for excellent working conditions in January 2007 and April 2018.

⁵¹ «Poggii diligentia factum esse, ut sexdecim ferme latinos Scriptores haberemus, qui ceteroquin pulvere situque obsiti perpetuo latuissent, vel tardius multo in lucem venissent», Bracciolini, 1715: 1.

⁵² «jamque voti damnatus inibi eram ut Poggianam Historiam ederem, cum Italian Jacobi filii versionem obtrudere mihi quidam caeperunt (et) a proposito detertere», Bracciolini, 1715: 1.

as this [original Latin version] of ours . [...] Nevertheless, the nature of this kind of lucubrations is such that [...] they are always very much inferior to Latin ones»⁵³.

Next, Recanati gives a well-documented life of Poggio (Bracciolini, 1715: I-XXXIX) which paints a very favourable picture of his merits and appreciation by contemporaries. He concludes by stating that he was motivated to publish this edition as an homage to this «eruditissimus vir» (XXXIX).

Recanati's edition soon inspired the *Poggiana* by Jacques Lenfant, published in Amsterdam in 1720. Lenfant relied heavily on Recanati, which Recanati countered with a volume of extremely polemical corrections entitled *Osservazioni critiche* (Recanati, 1721). The first ever printed edition of all of Poggio's *De varietate fortunae*, published in Paris in 1723 by Oliva and Giorgi⁵⁴, represented another important element in rekindling interest in Poggio's works.

5. Conclusion

The history of the transmission of Poggio Bracciolini's last treatise shows the importance of the book historical approach, i.e. a close study of manuscript and printed transmission in their historical and cultural context, for the understanding of the genesis, dissemination and reception of a text. Poggio, set aside by and embittered against the Medici regime, was busy working on a new history of Florence in his last years, but did not manage to complete this extensive text. His text has been partially preserved in one single manuscript. *Historiae Florentini populi* was edited and translated into the vernacular by Poggio's ambitious son Jacopo, who dedicated the Latin treatise to Frederick of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, one of the background figures of the Pazzi conspiracy of 1478. The manuscript and print transmission of Jacopo's vernacular translation, *Historia fiorentina*, shows connection to the Strozzi family, an anti-Medicean Florentine dynasty. Consequently, the early history of Poggio's last treatise can only be understood in the context of the material transmission of the work. While the vernacular print had two runs in the fifteenth century, the Latin version remained in manuscripts until the early eighteenth century, when G.B. Recanati published Jacopo's edition. Recanati's publication seems to have re-kindled interest in and

⁵³ «nec ea ipsa quam Jacobus Italicam edidit, hujus nostrae fidem, (et) gravitatem assequatur [...] veruntamen ea est hujusmodi lucubrationum natura, ut [...] multo tamen infra latina exempla semper consistant», Bracciolini, 1715: 2-3.

⁵⁴ See Kajanto & Merisalo (1987) for the background and philological characteristics of this edition.

appreciation of Poggio's works, since it was soon followed by *Poggiana*, a rather anecdotal biographical work by Lenfant (1720), severely criticized by Recanati, and, more importantly, the first printed edition of Poggio's *De varietate fortunae*, by Oliva and Giorgi, in 1723.

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POGGIO BRACCIOLINI'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BRYN MAWR, MS. 48

David Rundle

ABSTRACT: Poggius Florentinus delighted in his local identity but he also, famously, had an international career, being in attendance at the Council of Constance, being resident in England for four years (1419-1422) and seeking employment at the imperial court. What is less recognized is how he sought for his literary works audiences far beyond his home-city and how some non-Italians were willingly collaborators in this creation of an international reputation. It has not been noticed before how a remarkable witness to this process is now housed in the Special Collections of Bryn Mawr. It, like other manuscripts in the library, reached its present location because of that twenty-century friend of Poggio and alumna of the college, Phyllis Goodhart Gordan. It now has the shelfmark ms. 48 and is a collection of Poggio's dialogues. What has not been recognized is that we can identify both its scribe and its illuminator and, by doing so, shed new light on Poggio's *fortuna* on the far side of Europe, in his one-time home of England.

KEYWORDS: *littera antiqua*, script, Salisbury, Thomas Candour, Caesar Master, illumination, Petrarch, polygraphism, Phyllis Goodhart Gordan

Poggio Bracciolini was not to everybody's taste. Erasmus, for one, had a problem with him – or, at least, he had no qualms about besmirching his name. He did so in a context where, as he himself admitted, some would have considered he was attempting to defend the hardly defensible: the reputation of Lorenzo Valla. The latter had been no friend to Poggio, to an extent that went beyond his characteristic disparaging of things Florentine. The two exchanged extended tirades of the sort in which Poggio engaged too often for the liking of his later supporters. In praising Valla, Erasmus saw it as necessary to become belatedly his second in this ill-tempered duel and berated Poggio for being:

rabula adeo indoctus ut etiam si vacaret obscoenitate tamen indignus esset qui legeretur, adeo autem obscoenus ut etiam si doctissimus fuisset tamen esset a bonis viris reiiciendus¹.

The works Erasmus had in mind, apart from Poggio's foul-mouthed attacks on Valla, were his *Facetiae*, which had gained a Europe-wide readership when circulated in manuscript and then in print². If Poggio's

¹ Erasmus, 1906–1958: 1.409 [*Ep.* 182, ll. 87–89]: «a shyster so unlearned that even if he was free of obscenity, he would be unworthy to be read, and so obscene that even if he had been the most learned, he would have to be shunned by good men» (translation my own).

² On this work's success, see Sozzi, 1982 and Hellinga, 2014; this latter article brings together material from two pieces originally published in 1986 and 1987.

sixteenth-century reputation became associated primarily with his facility at telling scurrilous tales, that was probably not how he imagined he would be remembered. Before he collected his *Facetiae* or embarked on campaigns of invectives, he had molded his literary career primarily through two types of writing. The earliest compositions he circulated were epistles, which were, in turn, jokey, bitchy, self-revelatory, and often moralizing. That same vein of philosophizing is to be found in his forays into the genre of dialogue. He was not the first Quattrocento humanist to construct a text as a fictive conversation – the *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum* of his friend, Leonardo Bruni, was the trailblazer from the century's first years – but he did more closely emulate the style used by Cicero³. His first dialogue, *De avaritia*, appeared in 1428, with two subsequent ones, *De nobilitate* and *De infelicitate principum* both being released to the world in 1440. Eight years later, he used the same structure for a more substantial work, his *De varietate fortunae*, and he returned to the genre again, late in life, when he produced, in 1455, *De miseria humanae conditionis*. It was particularly on the first three of these that his mid-century reputation rested.

Poggio was a prolific author, but only in his later years. *De avaritia* was his first major work and it appeared when he was in his late forties; before he reached middle age, it was for two other reasons that he was celebrated. His earliest achievement was as a writer, not in the sense of composing texts but of copying them: he was central to the enterprise of reforming the presentation of the book which began in Florence at the turn of the fourteenth to the fifteenth century and which resulted in the bookhand we know of as humanist minuscule (or Roman script). Poggio and his colleagues termed the favored style *litterae antiquae*, for it was a conscious effort to review an older aesthetic which they saw as having been suppressed by the success of what they called, as an insult, «gothic». They saw their revision of *mise-en-page* as re-endowing classical texts with their pristine eloquence, just as they believed in their own crusade to 'liberate' disrespected ancient works from their monastic hideouts⁴. It was in this activity that Poggio could also claim credit, having the good fortune to uncover the complete text of Quintilian, some of Cicero's lost speeches, and Lucretius's *De rerum natura*, among others⁵.

³ Bruni's dialogue is edited by Baldassarri, 1994. For the importance of Poggio in the development of the dialogue form, see Marsh, 1980.

⁴ I discuss this (and provide a full bibliography) in Rundle, *The Renaissance Reform of the Book and Britain* (2019), Chapter I.

⁵ The best narrative remains Sabbadini, *Le Scoperte dei codici latini e greci ne' secoli xiv e xv* (1905), esp. pp. 77–84 and *passim*, supplemented by Sabbadini, 1914: 91–93. Poggio's activities can also be traced through Reynolds, *Texts and Transmission* (1983), where he is held in high honor (see, e.g., p. 333).

As this present volume of essays attests, Bryn Mawr has a particular affinity with Poggio. While in the wider community Valla might find more allies, the college provides for his Florentine rival a Pennsylvanian refuge. This is largely thanks to the collecting and studies of one of the college's alumnae, Phyllis Goodhart Gordan (1913–1994). Some might think the character of a propagator of dirty jokes and rude tirades unbecoming for the attentions of a member of a leading ladies' college in the early 1930s but, by her own admission, it was Poggio's place in the history of the classical tradition as the intrepid discoverer of manuscripts that attracted her to him. It resulted in a forty-year project which saw her translate the letters Poggio sent to his friend, the *éminence grise* of Florentine humanism, Niccolò Niccoli – a collection which Poggio himself published as an epistolary in 1436. The title she chose for her edition, *Two Renaissance Book-Hunters*, announces her special interest, though the epistles (and her annotations to them) range much more widely. Her work on the letters placed her, as I have discussed elsewhere, in a tradition of Anglophone admirers which went back to Poggio's own lifetime and continues into the twenty-first century with the work of Stephen Greenblatt⁶. It was not, though, her only engagement with Poggio. She inherited from her father, Howard Lehman Goodhart, what is sometimes called the disease of bibliomania, as well as the resources to indulge it⁷. She inherited her father's library and collected herself both early printed books and manuscripts, with those relating to Poggio being at the heart of her interests. The codices among them include a rare text, Poggio writing at the end of his life (and rather against character) praising the city of Venice, an early copy of *De miseria*, and one manuscript which contains two of his early dialogues⁸. It is with the last of these that this short contribution is concerned.

Ahead of the colloquium from which this collection of essays derives, I arrived early at the college in order to become acquainted with the Goodhart Gordan collection. The intention was to refer to some in my talk; what I did not expect was that one of the volumes would transform what I had to say. Opening what is now ms. 48, I found myself faced with a page where I recognized both the scribe and the illuminator. It was like stumbling across old friends far from their homes. The new evidence that they offered me that late winter's day (Bryn Mawr was white with snow) revises and augments our understanding of the manuscript and,

⁶ Greenblatt, 2011; I discuss Greenblatt's place in a tradition of admirers in *The Rebirth of Renaissance Man? Stephen Greenblatt and other English-speaking Admirers of Poggio Bracciolini* (2013), pp. 336–40.

⁷ On her father's collection, see E.L. Pumroy's chapter in this volume.

⁸ The first is Bryn Mawr's ms. 40, at present being studied by Daniel Crosby; the second is ms. 47.

more widely, adds further testimony to the international success Poggio's works enjoyed in his own lifetime. The purpose of what follows is to present and explicate the new evidence; at the end of this article, there are two appendices, the first providing an updated technical description of the manuscript is presented.

The brief published references to this manuscript all state that it was produced in Italy in the mid-fifteenth century⁹. An Italian origin is an understandable assumption to make, given that the humanist texts it includes are presented in *littera antiqua*, the bookhand that Poggio was integrally involved in designing. It is, however, an assumption that, as I have recently argued elsewhere, understates the contribution of non-Italians in promoting the new aesthetic, both in Italy and elsewhere in Europe¹⁰. In this case, the evidence of the apparent Italianate nature of the script might seem to be corroborated by the illumination which is indebted to the *bianchi girari* which also became a standard feature of humanist codices. In fact, though neither scribe nor artist names themselves, we can reconstruct the identity of both of them, and one was from England while the other worked in that country. In addition, the parchment, while it is thin and smooth as humanists required, is of a yellow hue often found in material of English manufacture – and so the manuscript's place of creation was at the other end of Europe than Poggio's own homeland.

The copyist was one of the earliest Englishmen to master *littera antiqua*. He was identified as Thomas Candour by an acquaintance of Goodhart Gordan, the doyenne of Renaissance palaeographers, A. C. de la Mare, who was the first to reconstruct his scribal work¹¹. Candour received a MA by 1441 and was a bachelor of both laws by the following year – we do not know where he was educated, though, as he may have been of Shropshire birth, Oxford would have been his most local *studium generale*; later in the same decade, he certainly attended the university of Padua where, in December 1446, he gained a doctorate in canon law. It was probably in the north-east of Italy that he first practiced his fully accomplished humanist bookhand. Though his skill was at least equal to that of many professionals, his career was not as a scribe – his copying activities were, at most, a supplement to his income. He spent time, in the late 1440s and early 1450s, in Rome, at the papal curia, though that was not his permanent residence. He was among the hypermobile minority

⁹ See Bibliography to Appendix I.

¹⁰ This is a theme of Rundle, 2019 and, with a wider purview, of Rundle, 2019a.

¹¹ She first discussed him, as «Thomas S», in Bodleian Library, *Duke Humfrey and English Humanism* (1970), Section V, and gave a fuller reconstruction in Bodleian Library, *Manuscripts at Oxford* (1980), no. XXII.2–4. See also Rundle, 2005: 1–25, and id., 2019: 100–05. The outline of his biography is provided by Emden, 1957–1959: vol. 3, pp. 2158–59.

in a world of stay-at-homes, a clerical diplomat who criss-crossed Europe. This makes it difficult often to pinpoint the place of production of his books, though those for which we can reconstruct an early provenance were all for fellow Englishmen.

During his time in Rome, Candour certainly met Poggio, who was then a papal secretary and who mentioned him as a friend in one of his epistles¹². As was implied in the previous paragraph, Candour's facility with *littera antiqua* was not learnt directly from its inventor, and his own practice shows in its remarkable variety some independence from Poggio's 'canonical' style. De la Mare identified three different variants of bookhand that Candour employed, all with equal facility; she termed them «a» to «c», with increasing amounts of humanist influence. I have emphasized elsewhere how this typology, accurate though it is, cannot be mapped onto chronology: it is not the case that Candour's script followed a direction of travel from gothic to humanist, with those examples closest to a full *littera antiqua* appearing later than those less influenced by it.¹³ Rather, akin to his peregrinations between England and other parts of Europe, he effected on the page a movement back and forth between scripts. He was, in short, accomplished in polygraphism¹⁴.

While Candour learned his skill as a humanist scribe before he met its original inventor, there is another way in which their careers were entwined. As I have argued on other occasions, Poggio was keen to develop his reputation beyond Italy¹⁵. In comparison to some of his fellow Florentine scholars, «Poggius Florentinus» was notably well-travelled, venturing not just to Constance but further north into France and thence to England, where he lived for nigh on four years. He was based at the palace of Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, in Southwark, a location – hard by the Clink and the stews – that seems appropriate for this man who delighted in low life as much as high moralizing. Most of his earliest surviving letters to Niccoli (and so in Goodhart Gordan's translation) are from his time in England. They give the impression that he did not enjoy his time north of the Channel, but England had its uses to Poggio¹⁶. One use was that, later in life, he could play on his contacts

¹² He calls him 'vir ornatissimus mihique summa familiarite coniunctus', in a letter to John Stafford, archbishop of Canterbury that Candour himself carried to England: Bracciolini, 1984-1987, vol. 3, *Ep.* 1/3 (see l. 22).

¹³ Rundle, 2019: 104-05. More recent research reinforces and complicates this story further, as I hope to demonstrate in an article in preparation.

¹⁴ On polygraphism (sometimes termed multigraphism), a classic article is Petrucci, *Digrafismo e biletterismo nella storia del libro* (2005).

¹⁵ Rundle, 2005, and, for the wider context, see id., 2011.

¹⁶ A point I discussed in Rundle, 1996, and elucidate further in *England and the Identity of Italian Renaissance Humanism* (in preparation), Ch. I.

there to gain an international audience for his dialogues. For instance, in 1442, he dispatched a copy of his *De infelicitate principum* to a former colleague in the bishop of Winchester's household via another Englishman, the scholarly and ill-fated Adam Moleyns (he was to become bishop of Chichester only, in 1450, to be killed by rebels). In the covering letter, Poggio asked his colleague to have a transcription of the work made for Humfrey, duke of Gloucester, the king's uncle and heir presumptive to the throne who had a reputation among some humanists of being a receptive target for their shots at patronage¹⁷. The humanist patently had a sense of particular English circles as a market for his works that could be exploited.

Poggio's renown was not, however, fabricated by him alone. Candour was one person who actively aided its development, promoting his works in England by his copying activities. Two «collected editions» of Poggio's works in Candour's hand are known, one surviving complete and the other in fragments¹⁸. To these can now be added Bryn Mawr's ms. 48; it has a more limited range of texts than the «collected editions», lacking both *De infelicitate principum* and the Scipio/Caesar controversy in which he was embroiled with Guarino da Verona in 1435. The connection between this manuscript and Candour's other work, revealed by paleography, is reinforced by philological study: collation of the preface to *De avaritia* demonstrates the proximity between Candour's copies¹⁹. At the same time, the paleographical evidence hints at another insight. The script in the Bryn Mawr manuscript is closest to Candour's fullest emulation of *littera antiqua* but, particularly in the first folios, it looks less assured than in most of his productions and has one letter-form (the sharp-necked **g**) which he did not employ in his most accomplished work. This suggests to me that this codex probably predates the others which have been attributed to him. We may, in other words, be looking at a manuscript created within a decade or so of the composition of the latest work presented here, the dialogue *De nobilitate*.

A date of the later 1440s or start of the 1450s would accord with the manuscript's illumination. The borders and initials are attributable to the artist known, thanks to the work of Kathleen Scott, as «the Caesar Master»²⁰. This person's origins are something of a mystery, in as much as the artistic style shows Netherlandish influences, as well as ones from

¹⁷ For the letter, see Weiss, *Humanism in England during the Fifteenth Century* (2016), Appendix, Text C, pp. 304–05.

¹⁸ The complete manuscript is Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Bodl. 915, while the scattered fragments are listed in Rundle, 2005: 17–18.

¹⁹ On this, see Appendix II below.

²⁰ The fundamental work is by K.L. Scott: see *The Mirroure of the World: MS Bodley 283...* (1980), p. 41, and *Later Gothic Manuscripts, 1390–1490* [Survey of manuscripts illu-

the Italian humanist fashions. Though the identification of nationality might be problematic, it is certain that the Caesar Master was at work in England by the later 1440s. In 1447, the artist provided the opening illumination for a manuscript of cosmopolitan character: a sampler of humanist opuscula, it was signed by its scribe, the Paduan Milo da Carraria, stating he was working in London on behalf of the Italian doctor of Greek extraction, Thomas LeFranc²¹. The temporal range of the Master's oeuvre demonstrates a continuing presence in England; they include two manuscripts of Julius Caesar (thus the sobriquet) which are related to the noble collector, John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester, and may have been made at the turn of the 1450s to 1460s²². The Caesar Master's work is distinctive and includes some signature features. One is the manner in which the border is sometimes inhabited by a plump seated owl – and this appears in the opening border of the Bryn Mawr volume (and provides the avatar that appears on each page of the college's present online catalogue of its manuscripts). The Master also often indulges in depicting dense foliage, often in grisaille, and sometimes growing out a gold goblet or low vase²³. The decoration is more restrained in this manuscript, but the opening of Poggio's second dialogue is accompanied by a gold cup sprouting green stems ending in cosmos flowers in two shades of pink.

The conjunction of Candour and the Caesar Master has not, to date, been found in other work, though it is possible that they had acquaintances in common. In particular, there may have been some link between Candour and another collaborator of the Caesar Master's, the aforementioned Milo da Carraria. At least, both scribes produced copies of Poggio's *De infelicitate principum* complete with the covering letter its author had sent to England. The two copies are independent of each other – both would seem to be transcripts of the original – and so it would appear that Milo and Candour had access to the same manuscript²⁴.

That an illuminator was employed to complete the Bryn Mawr volume suggests it was commissioned, an assumption corroborated by the presence of a coat-of-arms in the lower border at the first folio. The heraldry was subsequently in part erased so that all that is clear now is that the field was a single color of azure. It is impossible, then, to be certain who the first owner was intended to be, although there is a

minated in the British Isles, vi] (1996), vol. 2, pp. 277-79; see also Binski and Panayotova, 2005: no. 182; and Alexander, 2009.

²¹ It is now Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 952.

²² This dating is the implication of the discussion at Rundle, 2019: pp. 213-17.

²³ For an example, see Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. lat. 4681, fol. 1, reproduced as Rundle, 2019: plate xii.

²⁴ The two copies appear in Oxford, Bodleian, mss. Rawl. C. 298 (Milo da Carraria) and Bod. 915 (Candour).

temptation to speculate. The cup sprouting flowers may simply be a motif that the Caesar Master enjoyed employing but it is also reminiscent of a feature found repeatedly in the heraldry of the tomb of Humfrey, duke of Gloucester at St Albans, sometimes called the «garden of Adonis»²⁵. Humfrey, as we have already noted, was an intended recipient of one of Poggio's works, the *De infelicitate principum*. He was also presented with a copy of the Scipio/Caesar controversy, given to him by a visiting papal diplomat, Pietro del Monte, in 1440²⁶. In addition, it is highly likely that he owned Poggio's first dialogue, *De avaritia*²⁷.

We must not rush from these facts to assuming that the Bryn Mawr manuscript was once in ducal hands. The first folio demonstrates that cannot be the case: Humfrey sported the English royal arms with a *bordure argent* – in other words, a quartered coat quite unlike that which appears here. The presence of what might be a 'garden of Adonis' may allow another hypothesis. It is not unknown for Humfrey's associates to take over his symbols: his former physician and chancellor, Gilbert Kymer, employed a motto of the duke's, «Mon bien mondain», on a binding he had made in Salisbury, where he was dean from 1449 until his death in 1463²⁸. Might he also have adopted the «garden of Adonis» and so be associated with this manuscript? We certainly know that Kymer had an interest in the works of Poggio: he read a copy of *De avaritia* (one not directly connected to Candour's transcriptions), and he also left his mark in the duke's copy of the Scipio/Caesar controversy²⁹. This is significant for us because that manuscript made for Humfrey appears to have been the source for Candour's copy of its texts. There were other, more pragmatic, reasons which brought the two men into contact: during Kymer's time as dean, the chapter at Salisbury intensified its efforts

²⁵ The main study remains Kendrick, 1946; note, though the skepticism of Petrina concerning the specific identification of the symbol (2004: 345–346). On Humfrey's tomb, see Goodall & Monkton, 2001: 231–55.

²⁶ Cambridge, University Library, ms. Gg.i.34(i), discussed in Rundle, *Two Unnoticed Manuscripts from the Collection of Humfrey, duke of Gloucester: Part I* (1998).

²⁷ There was a copy of the dialogue recorded in the library of King's College, Cambridge in the 1450s, a collection which included some books formerly owned by the duke: see Appendix II, n37.

²⁸ Oxford, Bodleian, ms. Laud. misc. 558, and Oxford, Merton College, ms. 268, for discussion of which see [Bodleian Library exhibition catalogue], *Duke Humfrey's Library and the Divinity School, 1488–1988* (1988), no. 44. On Kymer, see Emden, 1957–1959: 2.1068–69.

²⁹ The copy of *De avaritia* is Oxford, Corpus Christi College, ms. 88, with Kymer's *manicula* at fol. 111. The same *manicula* appears at Cambridge, University Library, ms. Gg.i.34, fol. 84. It can be demonstrated to be Kymer's as it also appears at in Oxford, Bodleian, ms. Bodl. 362, fol. 230, where it is signed «G. K.». For evidence of the textual separation of the Corpus copy of the dialogue from that in Bryn Mawr, see Appendix II.

to have Osmund (d. 1099), the second bishop of the see, canonized, and, in 1452, one of those in Rome to whom they entrusted this business was Thomas Candour³⁰. The context of Candour's relations with Salisbury might also help explain the coat-of-arms. Close scrutiny reveals that on its field azure it once had a charge of a single figure which filled much of the central space and was painted in gold: it may not be irrelevant that the blazon of the diocese is «Azure, the Virgin crowned, holding in her dexter arm the Infant Jesus, in her sinister hand a sceptre, Or».

A Salisbury location for this manuscript would not guarantee that it was made for or owned by Gilbert Kymer. He certainly had the contacts and the wherewithal to be able both to commission this manuscript from a scribe known to have access to Poggio's works, and to have it sent, presumably to London, to have it illuminated by an artist with a growing reputation – but he was not alone among the clergy of the cathedral close in that or in having associations with the duke of Gloucester. There was Nicholas Upton, the cathedral's precentor, who dedicated to Humfrey his *De studio militari* (and was in Rome on the business of St Osmund at the same time as Candour). There was also Andrew Holes, who had spent over a decade at the papal curia, returning to England in 1444 and becoming chancellor of Salisbury in 1445; he was an inveterate book-collector, and parted with one of his manuscripts by offering it to the duke³¹. It also appears that Thomas Candour annotated at least one of Holes's manuscripts and, given that their stays in Italy did not overlap, it was presumably in Salisbury that Candour had sight of it³². Another Salisbury cleric, William Brygon, was closer to Candour in age and so was less associated with Humfrey, becoming a canon of the cathedral in the year of the duke's death, 1447, but was certainly acquainted with the scribe, since manuscripts written by him were in his collection³³. If these individuals could equally be suspects as commissioners of this Poggio codex, another possibility should be entertained: it could have been in-

³⁰ Kymer's significance in the negotiations is made explicit at Malden, 1901: 109-10, 121, 162-63, 173-75, while Candour's use as a proctor in Rome is mentioned at *ibid.*: 99, 100, 105.

³¹ On Holes, see Emden, 1957-1959: 2.949-50, and Harvey, 1991. I intend to shed further light on his book collecting in an article at present in preparation. The manuscript he presented to Humfrey is now Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Urb. lat. 694.

³² Oxford, New College, ms. 265, discussed by A. C. de la Mare in *Manuscripts at Oxford* (1980), no. XXII.4. Interventions attributable to Candour are at fol. 1, 2-5, 6v, 710, 20, 20v, 26v, 45v.

³³ What is known of Brygon's career is summarized by Bodleian Library, *Duke Humfrey and English Humanism* (1970), no. 59, discussing Oxford, New College, ms. 271, one manuscript owned by Brygon and partially written by Candour. Another codex, fully in Candour's hand, and owned by Brygon is London, British Library, ms. Harl. 2471, on which, see Bodleian Library, *Duke Humfrey and English Humanism* (1970), no. 58. For Brygon's other books, see the note at Ker, [1985]: 208.

tended not for a single person but for the library of the cathedral which was increasing in size at this time³⁴. Whether it was for an institutional collection or a particular cleric, the notable implication is that Poggio – later deprecated as an uncouth writer – was being appreciated as a moralist worthy of being read in the vicinity of a cathedral.

The embarrassment of options requires us to stop short of confidently asserting that the Bryn Mawr manuscript was associated with any one of these individuals and, indeed, even a Salisbury provenance can only be considered probable, not definite. If, however, it was kept in that city, that might explain another feature of it. We have concentrated so far on the original construction of the codex, which is dedicated to the dialogues of Poggio, but that main part gained accretions soon after its production. These were added in two stages. First, the blank leaves of the final quire were filled with two letters by Petrarch; then, another quire was appended in order to provide a longer Petrarch epistle and, finally, a paschal table. The script of this last intervention, as well as the rubricated titles to the added items, is similar to that used earlier and is identifiably by Candour; the Petrarch texts are written more cursively but what we appear to have is a specimen of the same scribe writing a cursive script, in a form not found elsewhere in his oeuvre. The implication is that, after the main part of the codex was written and illuminated, the commissioner called on the scribe to expand it with these opuscula.

Candour's whereabouts on his trips back to England are difficult to reconstruct: his diplomatic business would have taken him to Westminster; he may also have been in Oxford (where he may previously have been a student) and acted as a scribe there; he was a clerical pluralist, whose appointments included for a few years a rectory in Norfolk, but he also held two neighboring parishes in the diocese of Salisbury, Pimperne and Tarrant Gunville, in north Dorset, 20 miles southwest of the seat of the see. That he made the additions on brief visits to the cathedral city would fit with the use of a cursive script for speed, and he would also have had access to a prototype there, as Andrew Holes owned a copy of the *Familiars*³⁵. It may also be telling that the first two letters by Petrarch related to medical matters and to doctors – texts which would have held a special interest for Dean Kymer, with his training in medicine.

³⁴ On the library of Salisbury Cathedral, we look forward to the volume on secular cathedrals in the Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues, being edited by Nigel Ramsay and James Willoughby. I thank Dr. Willoughby for his characteristically sage advice on this matter.

³⁵ Oxford, New College, ms. 268, on which see Mann, 1975: pp. 482–83 (no. 246). This was not the only copy in English hands: William Gray, bishop of Ely owned Oxford, Balliol College, ms. 126. At the same time, the first two letters were popularly excerpted and so may not have been copied from a full text of the letters.

Candour's transcription of the final Petrarch text was checked against its prototype by an English reader, who corrected the text in the margin in a hybrida script (it does not appear to be by Kymer himself)³⁶. Textual collation suggests this manuscript was the source for another extant copy of *De avaritia* made in England³⁷. The margins of the book, however, demonstrate that it did not remain long north of the Channel. There are two sets of sixteenth-century annotations, the earlier of the two in brown ink, the later larger and in black, both of which show influence of humanist cursive and which are continental, probably Italian³⁸. Perhaps, then, the volume was one of those whose quiet life in England was disrupted by the Reformation and, at that point, it fled to the mainland of Europe. It seems that neither of these hands is responsible for the word «carolus» written next to the opening title but bearing no relation to its wording, so it may be a residual but unhelpful mark of early-modern ownership.

The fortunes of the volume between the sixteenth century and the twentieth are, at present, irrecoverable. Our next piece of evidence for its perambulations is a pencil note at top center of its front pastedown which reads «Coll. complete | G. Martini». This refers to the Lucchese bibliophile and bookseller, Giuseppe Martini (1870–1944). This manuscript can be identified with an entry of his catalogue of items for sale from 1936; it was bought for \$40 by Phyllis's father³⁹. Her own bookplate, referring to her with her maiden name, is stuck to the pastedown just below the note, but this does not necessarily mean that she took possession of the manuscript before her marriage in 1938. Certainly, the volume was still recorded as in Howard Goodhart's collection in 1943⁴⁰. From him, at some point, it passed to her and was known as her ms. 51; it was among those that she bequeathed to her alma mater.

We have, then, traced the fortunes of this manuscript, as far as is possible at present, from its inception, not in Italy, as previously thought, but, rather, on an island off the European mainland. Its scribe, known for both his peripatetic lifestyle and his interest in promoting Poggio's works, produced the main part of the codex somewhere in the south of England, and then it left his hands to be illuminated, probably in Lon-

³⁶ They appear at fol. 108v, 110v, 111 (between lines), 113 (between lines).

³⁷ Cambridge, University Library, ms. Ffv.12; on this, see Appendix II below.

³⁸ For listing, see Appendix I.

³⁹ I have Dr. W. Stoneman to thank for this information. See his *The Role of Giuseppe Martini in Building the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscript Collections now in North American Libraries* (2017).

⁴⁰ I owe this information to Eric Pumroy, Bryn Mawr's Head of Special Collections, whom I thank for his generous assistance to me both during my brief visit to the College and subsequently as I prepared this article far from the manuscript at its heart.

don, for its intended owner. That owner, possibly in Salisbury, then had some further brief texts added by the scribe. The volume, however, only spent the first century of its life (at most) in the country of its production. It traveled south, to take up residence among other humanist books of more local origin, only in the twentieth century to embark on another journey, yet further afield, across the Atlantic. Of all the work known to have come from Candour's pen, Bryn Mawr ms. 48 best emulates the facility for travel of both scribes and the books they produced.

The new information we have been able to provide highlights an essential characteristic of Poggio's literary career. Before his memory became primarily associated with the *Facetiae*, he was more often characterized as «Poggius philosophus», a moralist worthy to be read in clerical circles. He himself was active in constructing this identity for himself, and he wanted it to be projected across Europe, including (or perhaps particularly) in his former home of England. It was not a reputation he could mold single-handedly and others, like Thomas Candour, were conscious collaborators in the process. Perhaps, indeed, Poggio's identity was more translucent far from his own location than in Italy itself, where it became muddied by quotidian contact with the person himself or by the effects of back-biting from those who wished him ill. If Poggio, for a short period, was master of his own international reputation, through the help of others, that control later slipped. That was, partly, the side-effect of his own decision to publish his *Facetiae* which, in the age of print, traveled more widely and more quickly than any of his dialogues and most of his epistles. In addition, however, it became the case that how he was to be remembered was decided less by his friends and admirers, and more by his enemies, in life and in death.

There is a further conclusion to be drawn from our discussion of this one manuscript, and this takes us beyond Poggio himself, though it remains relevant to how we understand him. Bryn Mawr ms. 48 sets us, I would suggest, a challenge, and not simply because it still holds secrets about its history. It challenges our deep-seated assumptions about the production of humanist manuscripts. Whatever remains tentative about this codex, what is undoubted is that the oft-repeated claim that it is of entirely Italian manufacture is wrong. We may want to dismiss this as a single instance of misattribution and label the book a quaint oddity but that would be, on my submission, to underestimate its significance as an example. While the majority of humanist books were produced in Italy, and while a majority of those were produced by Italians, we know that there were many non-Italians who were also partners in and promoters of the humanist enterprise.⁴¹ Their role remains underestimated because

⁴¹ I express this point in *La Renaissance de la littera antiqua* (2019a).

we tend to assume that a manuscript of humanist works that looks fully humanist must be Italian. As ms. 48 demonstrates, we need to be alert to the possibility that, however Italian-looking a book may be, its creation could have been the responsibility of non-Italians. If we accept this challenge which the volume offers us, we will be able to create a more nuanced, more richly various and, in fine, more cosmopolitan understanding of how humanism achieved its Europe-wide success. That process, which will involve bringing back to life the panoply of characters whose hands shaped these manuscripts – giving them their Renaissance – is surely one which Phyllis Goodhart Gordan, with her acute sense of the value of old books, would heartily appreciate.

APPENDIX I

Description of BRYN MAWR COLLEGE, ms. 48 (*olim* Goodhart Gor-dan MS 51)

Poggio Bracciolini, dialogues; Petrarch, letters England, s. xv^{med}

Material Thin parchment, smooth but at times notably yellow on the hair side, suggestive of it being made in England in Italian style; disposition tends to hair, skin-skin, but can be variable; 214 / 223 x 153 / 158mm. Some flaws to parchment (eg. fol. 35, 61, 73, 96, 100). Folios: 1-115. Pencil foliation written at top right corner (s. xx): 1-114, omitting the last blank folio of which the outer half has been removed.

Collation i⁸ ii¹² iii-iv¹⁰ v⁸ lacking 7th after fol. 46 [production break] vi-viii¹⁰ ix⁸ x¹² xi¹⁰ | xii¹⁰ with 8th a stub, 9th (fol. 115) a half folio, and last a stub stuck to pastedown. Horizontal catchwords placed in bottom margin usually a little right of center within short four curves. Only quire signatures are those added in pencil at bottom right of first recto (s. xx).

Layout Fascicule I: 137 x 90mm; 21 long lines, above top line. Single vertical borders extending to edges and horizontal lines lightly ruled in plummet. Occasional signs of full pricking. Fascicule II: 139 x 82mm; 21 long lines, above top line. Double vertical borders drawn in pen; horizontals not visible. Fascicule III: 146 x 84mm; 23 long lines, above top line. Double left-hand vertical border, single right-hand, all lightly ruled, possibly in ink. The last item is supplied on a vacant unruled leaf.

Script The first and main fascicule is unsigned but written in a *littera antiqua* which is identifiable as that of Thomas Candour. It is changeable, the first recto, for instance, looking less accomplished than the following pages, but most of the features are here to describe this, in de la Mare's nomenclature, as his 'hand c'. There are, however, two distinctive features in this manuscript: first, there is the form of **g** which has a diagonal neck and open bottom bowl; second, Candour here uses fairly often an ampersand, low-set, with small upper bowl sitting to the right of the lower and rising a little above the line. Other notable features include the occasional use of a slanted-backed **a** (fol. 23, l. 20, fol. 50, l. 7) and of a square-backed **G** (fol. 1, l. 2, fol. 9v, l. 9; cf round-backed at fol. 9v, l. 18). Candour also provides a subscript digraph as approach loop (eg fol. 13, l. 16, fol. 22, l. 10); notably, there are occasions of hyper-correction (eg fol. 40v, l. 17 and fol. 50, l. 14). While there is this concession to humanist orthography, there is also gothic 'nichil' (eg fol. 101, l. 4). In terms of punctuation, there is frequent use of *lunulae* (eg fol. 50, ll. 13, 16, 19 and 20).

In terms of mise-en-page, right justification is slightly ragged but some techniques are used to provide it, including (as in other of his manuscripts) the 3-shaped m (eg fol. 22, ll. 8 and 18), and a superscript 'a' over 'q' for 'qua' (fol. 34, l. 18). Candour provides the titles in red.

He also adds two marginal notes in a tiny *littera antiqua*: fol. 30 (Nota. sola virtus producit nobilitatem) and fol. 77v (qualis sit discrentia inter cupiditatem & avaritiam). He adds throughout rubricated marginalia, providing names of classical characters mentioned (fol. 4-5, 13v, 15v, 20-22v, 24r-v, 25v-29, 30, 31-32, 33v, 36, 36v, 55, 61v, 66, 69, 85v, 91, 93v, 94v, 101, 101v).

The following two fascicules are written in a different script, a humanist cursive with some cancelleresca features. The same script, albeit higher-grade, is used for the titles in these fascicules (as in the first, rubricated), and there are enough similarities between those titles and the script of the first fascicule to suggest that we have here a cursive bookhand by Candour himself.

Decoration The miniatures are confined to the first fascicule, are understated and in a style identifiable as that of the Caesar Master. The initials themselves are in gold on a blue background shaped around the shaded *bianchi girari* which twist around the letter. The blue has a pattern of white dots, and the palette also includes light green and pink. They are accompanied by sprays with five-leaved flowers, gold fir-cones and hairy gold triangles, with the branches being drawn thinly in ink. At fol. 1, the spray extends two-thirds of the extent of the margin and provides a perch for a plump owl, in profile, head turned to the reader. In addition, there is a spray the width of the text block below the bottom line, at the center of which there is a coat-of-arms, of which the field is azure, with the rest intentionally removed, with all that remains being three gold dots. There is also a spray in the same position, below the last line of text, at fol. 48, centering on an ornate flower-pot out of which spouts green shoots, red and pink flowers. Three-line initials with short sprays alone appear at fol. 3, 38v, 43v, 50.

Marginalia Apart from Candour, there are three readers who leave their mark. The first chronologically provides a large, thick-set gothic script adds text in margin: fol. 108v, 110v, 111 (between lines), 113 (between lines); this script looks to be of an English reader. The second writes a tiny *manicula*, sometimes very impressionistic, sometimes with double circle as cuff, and a marginalising line with clouds: fol. 5v, 6, 7v, 9v, 10-11, 13, ?15v, 16v, 58-59, 69, 69v, 71, 71v, 72v, 73, 100r-v, ?109v. Finally, a sixteenth-century Italian hand: fol. 3v-4 (running title), 7v-9, 10-12, ?69 (slanted cursive script).

Binding Plain stiffened white leather over pasteboards (s. xx?). At the front pastedown, the circular book-plate of Phyllis Walter Goodhart, below which there is the Bryn Mawr bookplate, with an image of Poggio and a typed note 'From the Library of Phyllis Goodhart Gordan '35'.

2o fo.: in ipsa
 uel maxime [3]
 virtutum [4]

Contents

I

Fol. 1-46: **Poggio Bracciolini**, *De nobilitate*, with paratexts, including **Carlo Marsuppini**, *De nobilitate*.

title: Ad insignem omnique laude prestantissimum virum Gherardum Cardinalem Cumanum Poggij florentini de nobilitate liber incipit.

preface: NON dubito prestantissime pater nonnullos ... [fol. 3] summa familiaritate coniunctos.

title: De nobilitate liber incipit.

text: NAM cum olim ex urbe in patrim secessissem ... [fol. 38] sepius ob [fol. 38^v] fertilitatem piscium laudavit:

title: Epistola poggii florentini ad insignem virum d. Gregorium Corarium sedis apostolice Prothonotarium:-

epistle: Poggius Plurimam. salutem dicit viro insigni gregorio Corario sedis apostolice prothonotario. Optarem mi Gregori amantissime ... [fol. 43^v] moribus conuenire uideatur. Vale & me ut facis ama. Florentie die octauo aprilis 1440: | Finis

title: Caroli arentini [sic] de nobilitate carmen lege feliciter

poem: QVid sit nobilitas scribere liberis ... [fol. 46] Metas nauigijs est male peruium.

The dialogue is presented in P. Bracciolini, *La vera nobilità*, ed. D. Canfora (Rome, 1999) (where a critical edition is said to be in preparation). Poggio's epistle to Correr is printed P. Bracciolini, *Opera omnia*, ed. R. Fubini, 4 vols (1964-69), i, pp. 325-28. Marsuppini's poem is printed in *Carmina illustrium poetarum italarum*, vi (Florence, 1720) pp.282-84. The bottom half of fol. 46 blank and unruled.

fol. 46^v-47^v: blank

fol. 48-102^v: **Poggio Bracciolini**, *De avaritia* (first recension).

title: Ad clarissimum virum Franciscum barbarum Poggij florentini contra auaritiam Incipit.

preface: Qvonia plures mortalium mi Francisce ... [fol. 50] causam & errata etiam deffendenda:-

title: Contra avaritiam Liber Incipit feliciter.

text: CVm cenarent antonius luscus Cincius romanus ... [fol. 102^v] censeo Ita omnes consurrexerunt:- | Finis. | Poggij Florentini contra auaritiam Liber explicit:

Printed in Poggio, *Opera Omnia*, pp.1-31. On the different recensions of this dialogue, see H. Harth, 'Niccolo Niccoli als literarischer Zensor', *Rinascimento*, 2nd ser. vii (1967), pp. 29-53.

All but top seven lines of last verso blank.

II

fol. 103: blank

fol. 103^v-105^v: **Petrarch**, epistle to Giovanni Colonna, 22nd June (year unstated).

title: Epistola francisci petrarce | Ad fratrem Iohannem de colonna podagram familiarem esse diuitibus

epistle: [a]Nilem tibi fabulam sed ex re ... pelle diuitias & uale ad fontem sorgie x^o kal Julias.

Petrarch, *Familiars*, III/13.

fol. 106-107^v: **Petrarch**, epistle to Clement VI, 13th March 1352.

title: Ad Clementem sextum Romanorum pontificem fugiendam medicorum turbam. epistola eiusdem

epistle: [F]Ebris tue nuntius pater beatissime ... [fol. 107^v] eclexiam saluam cupis iijj [...].ijj.

Petrarch, *Familiars*, V/19.

Last verso blank apart from top seven lines, where there is a stain obscuring part of text.

III

fol. 108^r: blank

fol. 108^v-113: **Petrarch**, epistle to an unknown recipient.

title Francisci petrarce poete | Reuocatio amici a periculosis amoribus

epistle: Verba michi nunc metus ac dolor ... [fol. 113] de te metuam vides. Vale caue circumspecte:-

Petrarch, *Familiars*, IX/4.

All but top ten lines of last recto blank.

fol. 113^v: blank

fol. 114: Paschal table

The table is arranged with the 'aureus numerus' horizontally and 'litere dominicales' vertically. Below the table an explanation, in red, running for nine lines: 'Superior tabula ostendit quo mense [*sic*] ... cum litera dominicali bixeti:-'.

Bottom half of folio blank.

fol. 114^v and 115: blank

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APPENDIX II

Collation of the English copies of the preface to Poggio's *De avaritia*

The base text for this transcription is that in Harth, 1967: 47-9, with typing errors silently corrected. It has been collated with the following copies:

- A = Oxford, Bodleian, ms. Bodley 915
- B = Oxford, Balliol College, ms. 127 – dated to 1450 by the scribe, Theoderic Werken, on whom see now Rundle, 2019: 124-42
- C = Oxford, Corpus Christi College, ms. 88 – see note 29 above
- F = Cambridge, University Library, ms. Ff.v.12
- P = Bryn Mawr, Bryn Mawr College, ms. 48
- O = Opera Omnia (Basel, 1538) [reprinted in Bracciolini, 1964-69, ed. Fubini, vol. 1 (1964)]

The collation demonstrates the affinities between Candour's two copies (A, P) but also suggests F descends from P. C and B both stand separate from this small group but each appears to be independent of the other.

Quoniam plures mortalium⁴², mi Francisce, non vivunt sed agunt vitam (hoc enim omnium est, illud perpaucorum) fortunati illi esse videntur et pene felices⁴³, quibus dono immortalis Dei contigit, ut possint dicere se vixisse. Id ego nonnullis nostrae aetatis⁴⁴ viris accidisse puto, qui rebus a se editis, magnam laudem consecuti⁴⁵ sunt & nomen multis seculis duraturum.⁴⁶ Nam & varia scriptorum genera e graecis latina reddiderunt nobis & ipsi sua quaedam conscripserunt summa cum doctrina atque eloquentia, quibus latinae musae plurimum decoris susceperunt atque ornamenti. Quamquidem⁴⁷ rem haud perdifficilem illis fuisse arbitrator & graeca facundia eruditis & omni doctrinarum genere praestantibus. At vero mihi durior quaedam scribendi ratio videtur esse proposita qui neque e graeca lingua ad usum nostrum traducere possum, neque eae⁴⁸ sunt⁴⁹ meae facultates ex quibus aliquid adhuc in publicum ausim promere. Verum cum audaces quandoque fortuna adiuvet temptandum⁵⁰

⁴² mortalium O: mortales

⁴³ et pene felices O *om.*

⁴⁴ nostrae aetatis P: etatis nostre

⁴⁵ consecuti F, P: assecuti

⁴⁶ & nomen...duraturum O *om.*

⁴⁷ Quamquidem O: Quoniam quidem

⁴⁸ eae C, O: hee

⁴⁹ sunt A, B, C, F, P: sint

⁵⁰ temptandum F, O: tentandum

quoque mihi⁵¹ visum est, an ego quicquam possem afferre in communem utilitatem, quo & si non vixisse ut illi, at saltem non inaniter⁵² vixisse dicerer⁵³. Itaque sumpsi onus (nescio an gratum multis) mihi certe iocundum & ut existimo⁵⁴ ceteris non inutile, ut referrem sermonem habitum contra avaritiam, ab iis⁵⁵ quos scio⁵⁶ haud inferiores illis qui habentur viri huius seculi doctissimi, si modo assequi possim⁵⁷, ut ea perinde atque⁵⁸ ab illis⁵⁹ disputata sunt a me litteris mandentur. Atque⁶⁰ hoc eo audientius aggressus sum, quo pauciores ex eis fuere, qui vacarent⁶¹ ad correptionem vitiorum, quae cum sint diversa quae vitam nostram conturbent⁶², id potissime in hanc disceptationem est collatum ex quo scelera omnia &⁶³ maleficia (ut ait Cicero) gignuntur.⁶⁴ Quod si cui forte aut planum nimis⁶⁵ atque humile videbitur⁶⁶ dicendi genus, aut non satis explicata⁶⁷ ratio muneris suscepti, is intelligat primum me delectari⁶⁸ eloquentia, in qua non maior existat intelligendi, quam legendi labor. Deinde advertat, non quantum aut quam eleganter⁶⁹ de eiusmodi⁷⁰ re disseri⁷¹, sed quid ingeniolium meum scribendo consequi potuerit. Satis enim esse⁷² mihi visum est proponere in medium copiolas, quaecunque eae⁷³ sint meas, ex quibus vel queant sumere (si qui forsitan⁷⁴ dignas extimatione aliqua arbitrarentur) vel absolvere aliquid perfectius, qui voluerint emendandi

- 51 quoque mihi P: michi quoque
 52 inaniter A: ignaviter F, P: omnino ignaviter
 53 dicerer B: dicere
 54 existimo A, P: estimo
 55 iis A, B, C, O, P: hiis
 56 scio A, F, P: scis
 57 possim A: potero B: potuere C, F, O, P: potuero
 58 atque: C: que
 59 illis: B: aliis
 60 Atque B, F, P: At qui
 61 vacarent B: vacarunt
 62 conturbent O: conturbant
 63 & C: atqui
 64 gignuntur.: B *om.*
 65 nimis P: minus
 66 videbitur C *om.*
 67 explicata B: explicita
 68 delectari A, F, P: delectari ea
 69 aut quam eleganter A, B, C, F, P, O *om.*
 70 eiusmodi B: huiusmodi O: eiusmodi
 71 disseri F: dissere
 72 esse: O *om.*
 73 eae C, F, O: hee
 74 forsitan P: fortisan

atque ampliora dicendi curam suscipere. Tibi autem, mi⁷⁵ Francisce, viro & amicissimo⁷⁶ mihi & ingenio excellentissimo, cuius labore & industria nostrae linguae⁷⁷ magnum incrementum sumpsere, hoc opusculum tanquam studiorum meorum primitias dicavi, subiiciens illud⁷⁸ exanimi⁷⁹ censurae tuae. Quod si probaris⁸⁰, aede illud, quia fultum tua autoritate, & ab alijs quoque⁸¹ comprobatum iri⁸² confido. Sin vero minus, proijcito in ignem, veluti rem in cuius iactura parum detrimenti sit futurum cum satius sit comprimi⁸³ errata amicorum quam profferri.⁸⁴ Sed ut sententiam rite ferre possis, audias iam quid ii⁸⁵ loquantur inter quos est sermo institutus. Sunt enim quibuscum⁸⁶ tibi⁸⁷ summa dum hic aderas, & periocunda fuit⁸⁸ vitae consuetudo, quos cum audieris colloquentes, etsi non scribentis⁸⁹ at saltem disputantium gratia existimo te non aspernaturum⁹⁰ hoc munusculum, quod suscipias, oro, in tutelam tuam, non tanquam horridus iudex & severus arbiter, sed tanquam disertus atque elegans patronus, qui censeas & agendum⁹¹ tibi illius causam, & errata etiam defendenda.

⁷⁵ mi: B om.

⁷⁶ amicissimo P: amantissimo

⁷⁷ linguae A, P: littere

⁷⁸ subiiciens illud *is the lectio probatoria of a now lost copy mentioned in the 1450s catalogue of King's College, Cambridge: see Clarke, 2002: UC29.147. These words occur only in the first recension; for the significance of this, see Rundle, 1996.*

⁷⁹ exanimi O: eximiae

⁸⁰ probaris B: probaveris

⁸¹ quoque C, F om.

⁸² iri P: rei

⁸³ comprimi C, F: compremi

⁸⁴ profferri A, B, F, P, O: efferri C: afferre.

⁸⁵ ii A, C, F, O: hii

⁸⁶ quibuscum C: quibus

⁸⁷ tibi: C om O: mihi

⁸⁸ fuit C: sint [sic]

⁸⁹ scribentis O: scribentes

⁹⁰ te non aspernaturum P: non aspernaturum te

⁹¹ agendum P: agendam

Figure 1 – Bryn Mawr, ms. 48, fol. 1 – Poggio, *De nobilitate*; scribe: Thomas Candour; artist: 'Caesar Master'.

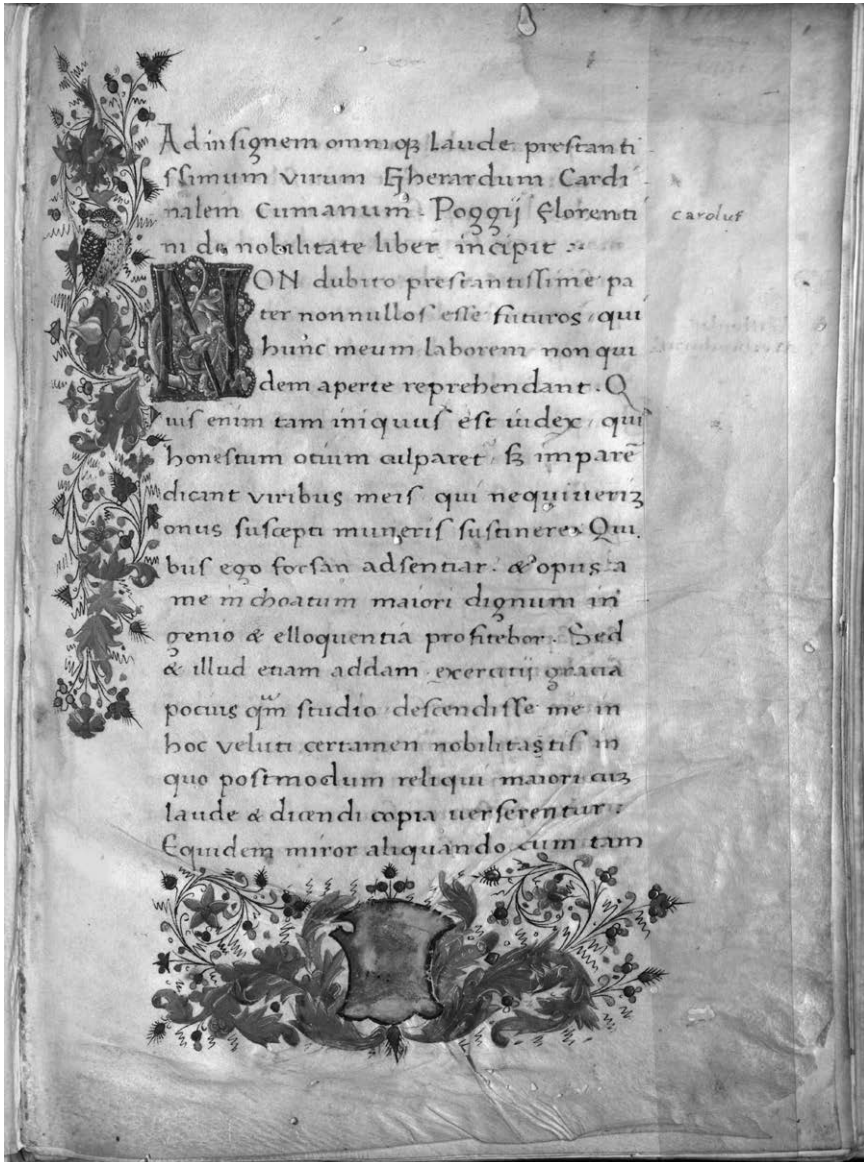


Figure 2 – Bryn Mawr, ms. 48, fol. 38v – showing spray by the ‘Caesar Master’.

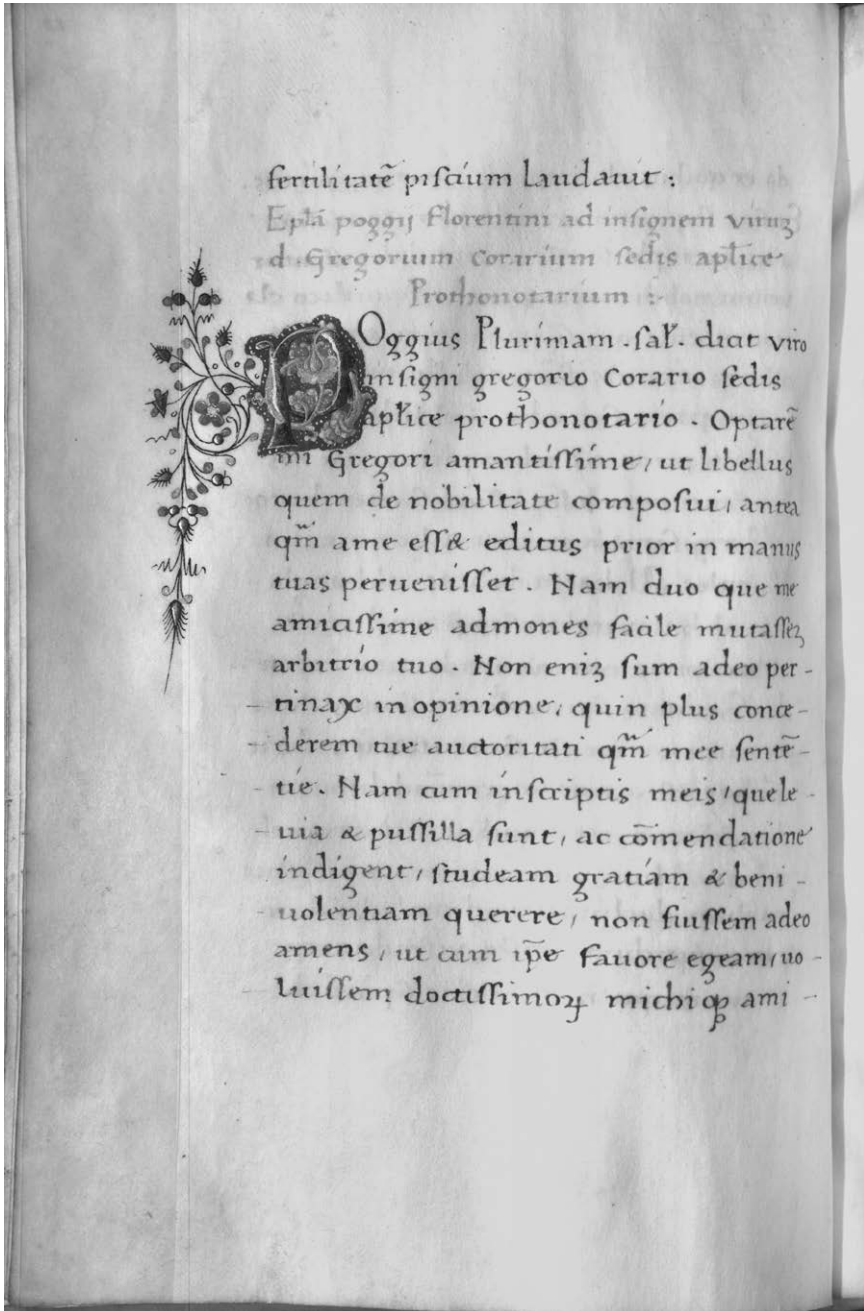


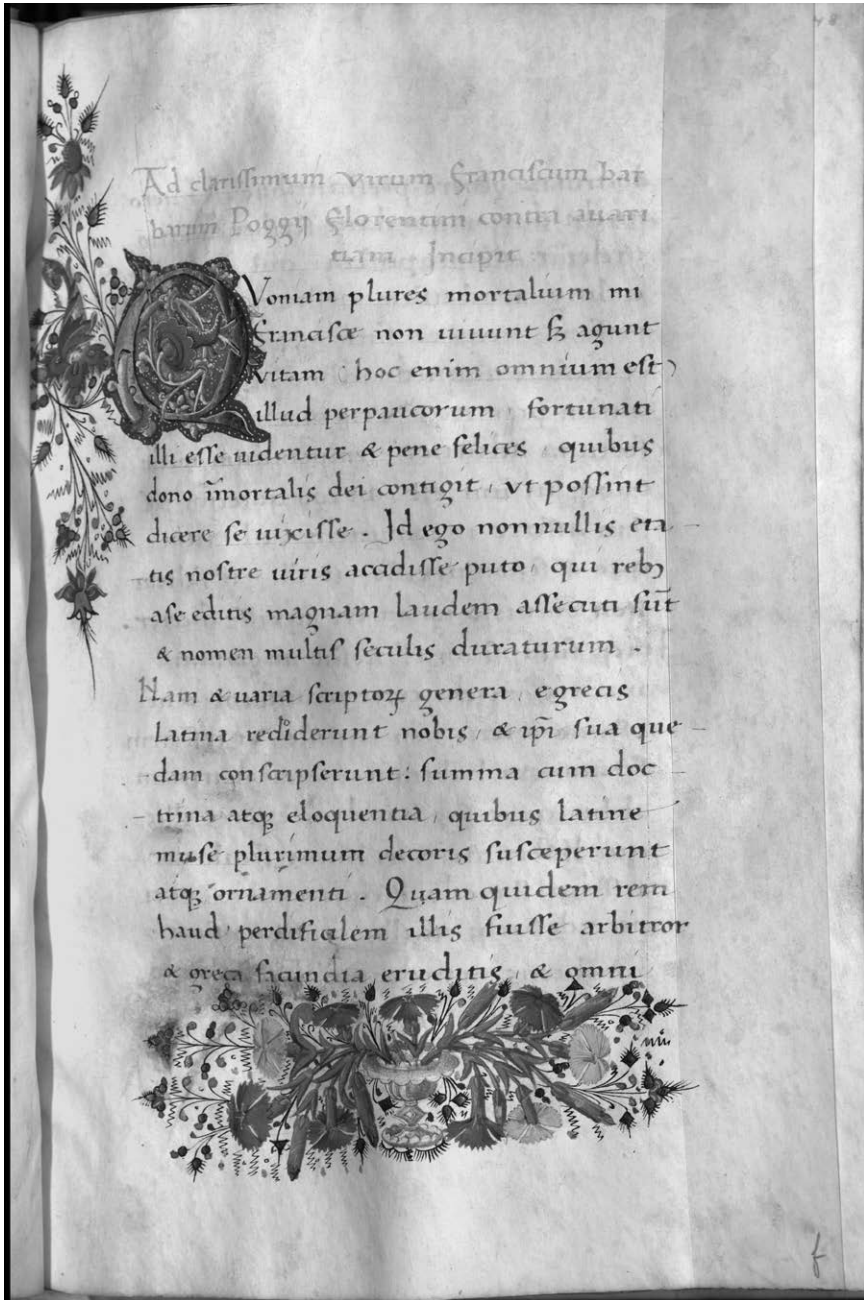
Figure 3 – Bryn Mawr, ms. 48, fol. 48 – Poggio, *De avaritia*.

Figure 4 – Bryn Mawr, ms. 48, fol. 103v – Petrarch, epistle to Giovanni Colonna; scribe: Candour.

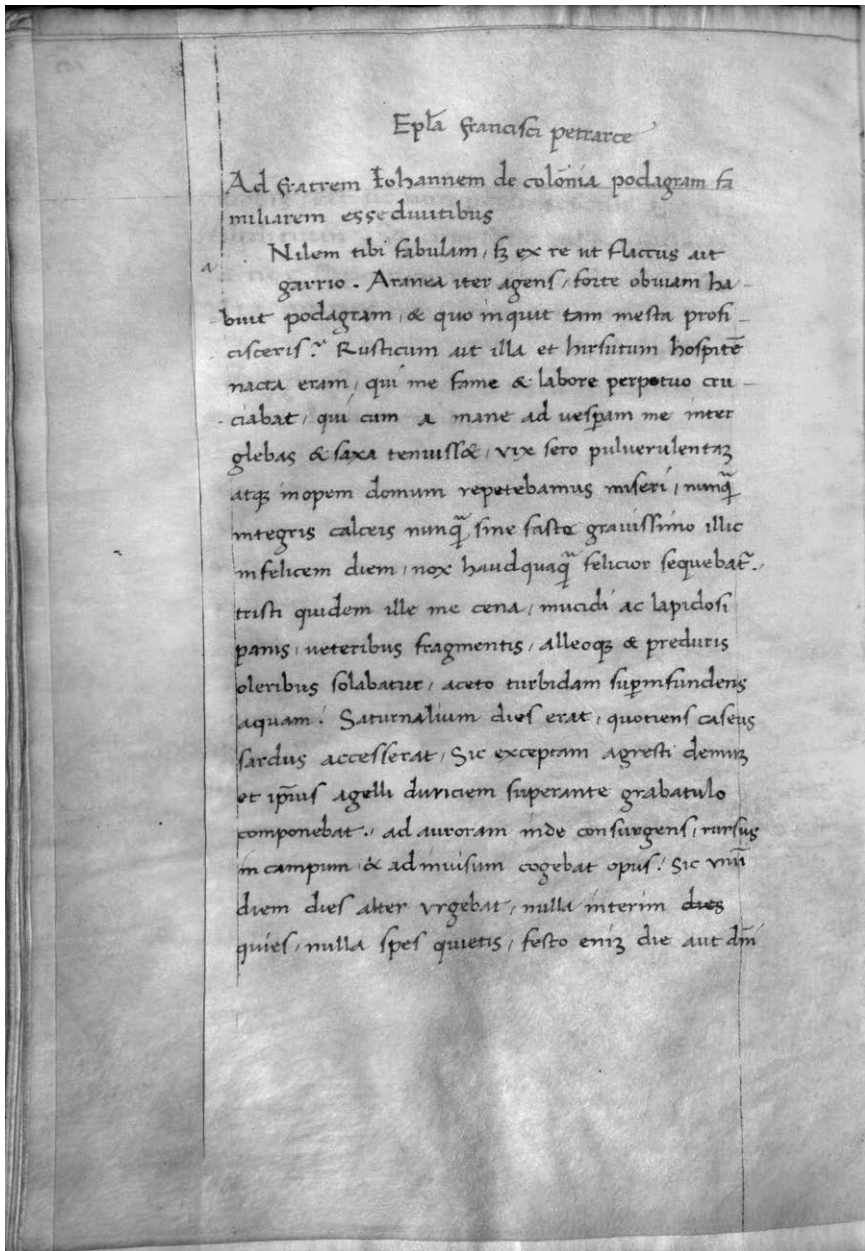


Figure 5 – Bryn Mawr, ms. 48, fol. 108v – showing early marginalia.

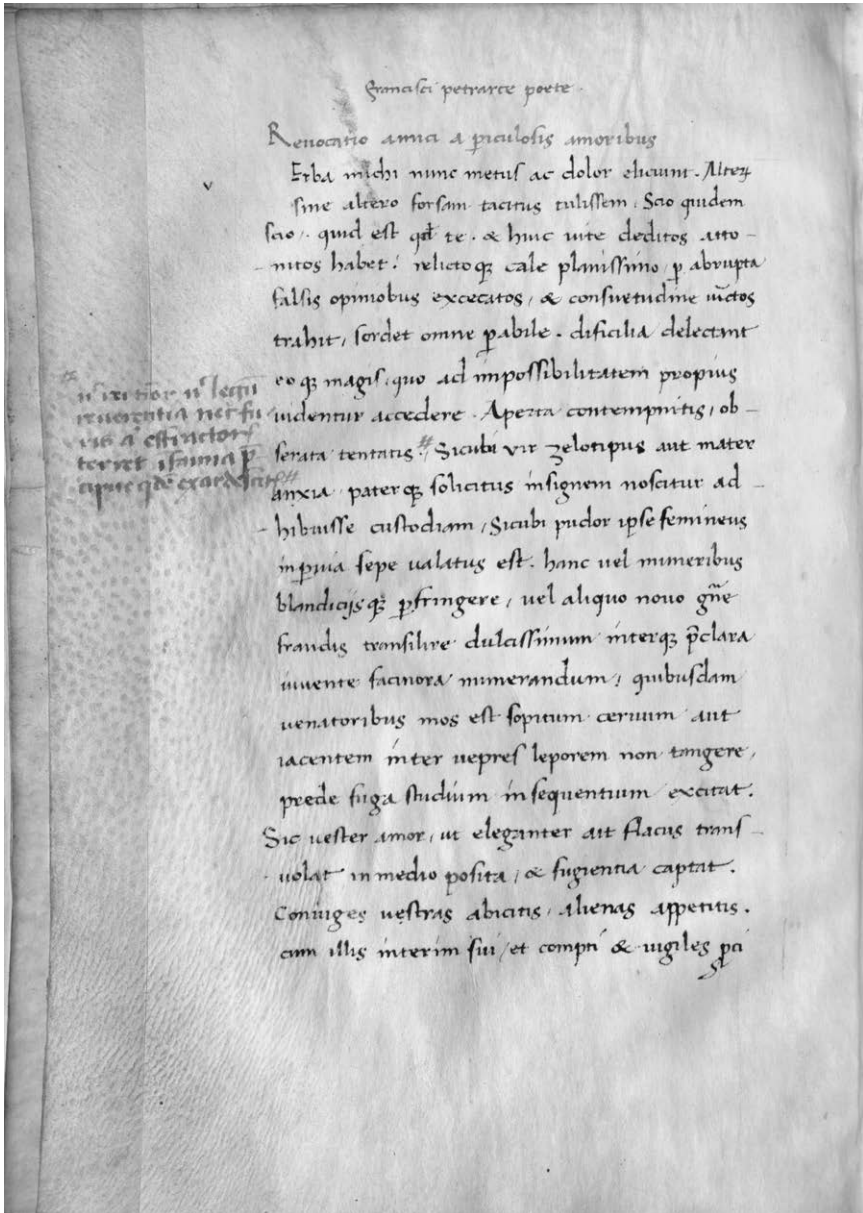


Figure 6 – Bryn Mawr, ms. 48, fol. 114 – Paschal table; scribe: Candour.

114

Aureus numerus

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
9	26	16	9	26	16	2	23	9	2	16	9	26	16	2	26	16	2	23	A
10	27	17	3	27	17	3	24	10	3	17	10	27	17	3	27	10	3	24	B
11	28	18	4	28	11	4	25	11	28	18	11	28	18	4	28	11	4	18	C
12	29	19	5	29	12	5	19	12	29	19	5	29	19	5	22	12	5	19	D
6	30	20	6	23	13	6	20	13	30	20	6	30	13	6	23	13	30	20	E
7	31	14	7	24	14	7	21	14	31	21	7	31	14	7	24	14	31	21	F
8	1	15	8	25	15	1	22	8	1	22	8	25	15	8	25	15	1	22	G

Littere dominicales

Superior tabula ostendit quo mense et qua die fit pascha et temp. duabit. Primo uidentium est. illo anno quo queris pascha. quid currit aureus nūs et qualis sit illo anno littera dominicalis. tūc in ea domo in qua cadunt ducendo p̄meas. tot dieb; illius mensis erit pascha. Videlicet si nūs illius domus ut castelle sit. ruber. tot diebus de mense marci erit pascha. si uero. nūs sit niger tot diebus erit de mense aprili qualis sit nūs. quia omnes castelle nigre sunt aprili. et ruber sunt marcio. Si illo anno currit lxxv. mutat̄ cum littera dominicali lxxvi. :-

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 Oxford, Balliol College, ms. 126
 Oxford, Bodleian, ms. Bodl. 362
 Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Bodl. 915
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POGGIO BRACCIOLINI AND COLUCCIO SALUTATI: THE EPITAPH AND THE 1405-1406 LETTERS

Stefano U. Baldassarri

ABSTRACT: Manuscript Magliabechiano VIII.1445 of the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze seems to be the only witness of an epitaph that Poggio Bracciolini wrote for Coluccio Salutati. Using this concise yet sincere homage to the late chancellor, this essay discusses Poggio's relationship both with him and the other major members of the Florentine humanist circle that started gathering around Salutati in the late fourteenth century. In doing so, it touches on such figures as – among others – Niccolò Niccoli and Leonardo Bruni. In particular, some early texts by Bruni (e.g., the *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum* and his letters to fellow humanists dating from the early fifteenth century) are seen against the backdrop of his relationship with both Poggio and Salutati.

KEYWORDS: Poggio Bracciolini, Leonardo Bruni, Niccolò Niccoli, Coluccio Salutati, Florentine humanism

Manuscript Magliabechiano VIII.1445 of the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze seems to be the only witness of an epitaph that Poggio Bracciolini wrote for Coluccio Salutati and that Francesco Novati published in his edition of the latter's epistles almost a century ago (Salutati, 1911: 4.484). Sometime in the seventeenth century an unidentified hand added this brief text in the blank space left by the previous scribe, who probably wrote in the mid-fifteenth century (see Fig. 1). The epitaph was transcribed after a passage from Salutati's reply to Loschi's *Invectiva in Florentinos*. More precisely, the passage in question (ff. 205r-207v) is the one between 16.4 and 32.25 in my critical edition of this work of Salutati's¹. As suggested by the *incipit* and *explicit* («Videbimus, ecce videbimus [...] originem a Romanis») this section concerns one of the topics that Salutati and his fellow citizens held most dear: the account of the Roman origins of Florence². The extraordinary political import of this subject may be

¹ See Baldassarri, 2012: 96-98, for a description of the manuscript, main related bibliography, and some remarks on the quality of the text of this work by Salutati preserved within. As I wrote on that occasion, the brevity of the passage contained in this exemplar makes it impossible to place it within the *stemma codicum* that I reconstructed. Both Loschi's invective and Salutati's reply have been published (using my critical edition and a facing English translation) in Salutati's *Political Writings* (2014). For an Italian translation of both texts see Baldassarri, 2012: 135-44 (Loschi) and 237-329 (Salutati).

² I discussed this topic in the following essays: *A Tale of Two Cities: Accounts of the Origins of Fiesole and Florence from the Anonymous "Chronica" to Leonardo Bruni* (2007); *Like Fathers like Sons: Theories on the Origins of the City in Late Medieval Florence* (2009); and *Le città possibili: arte e filologia nel dibattito sull'origine di Firenze da Giovanni Villani a Leonardo Bruni* (2011). See also the article by Cabrini, *Coluccio Salutati e gli elogi di Firenze fra Tre e Quattrocento* (2012).

the reason why the unknown seventeenth-century scribe inserted the epitaph attributed to Bracciolini in that specific part of the manuscript. Before commenting on the epitaph, I will briefly describe the only witness preserving it and then publish the text in question.

As I already noted when introducing the edition of Salutati's so-called *Responsiva*³, ms. Magl. VIII.1445 is a thick, miscellaneous paper codex (ff. II + 374 + IV), middle-sized (217 x 150 mm.), with a modern binding in paper and leather. In keeping with the title *Opuscula varia* on its spine, it gathers a number of texts, mostly concerning mythological and rhetorical matters. Assembled in Florence in the mid-fifteenth century, it was likely produced within the Donati family, as argued by Luca Boschetto in a detailed assessment of this manuscript listing all related bibliography (De Robertis, *et al.* 2008: 102-04). Written in humanistic cursive hand by several scribes (especially *A* on ff. 1r-210r and *B* on ff. 211r-256r), this exemplar belonged to the Strozzi library for some time, bearing «730» as its call number. After the death of Alessandro Strozzi in 1784, it was purchased by Pietro Leopoldo, Granduke of Tuscany, together with the rest of that library, eventually entering the Biblioteca Magliabechiana two years later. As already noted by Ullman in his edition of the *De laboribus Herculis* (of which it preserves several excerpts on ff. 162r-199v) (Salutati, 1951: 1.x), a fascicle entirely written by scribe *A* (ff. 162r-207r, originally numbered 1-46) contains sections of several Salutati texts, namely *De nobilitate legum et medicinae* (ff. 202r-203v), *De tyranno* (ff. 204r-205r) and, as said above, the Florentine chancellor's reply to Loschi (ff. 205r-207v). The following formula introduces the excerpt on the origins of Florence (titled *Coluccius contra Luscum vicentinum*): «Luscus cum adversus Florentinos scriberet eis litteris inter alia multa ita ait: Videbimus, ecce videbimus [...]»). At the end of this excerpt is the following inscription by the scribe (*A*, as pointed out above, whose signature is ϕ on f. 151v): «Coluccius autem ipse mortuus est die IIII mai MCCCCVI ut scriptum repperi manu ser Antonii ipsius filii». Right after this inscription comes the epitaph, which – as said above – a much later hand copied in the blank space at the bottom of this folio. As promised, I will now provide the full text of this short homage to Salutati by Poggio, preserving its original spelling throughout⁴:

³ I write «so-called» because the title that Salutati chose for this work is as follows: *Contra maledicum et obiurgatorem qui multa pungenter adversus inclitam civitatem Florentie scripsit*. On this important feature, see my introduction to *La vipera e il giglio*, pp. 17-70, and related p. 55n1.

⁴ Punctuation, instead, is mine as well as the addition of dashes to show the length of each line of this text in the manuscript.

Sepulchrum Colucii Pieri Salutati

Hic opido Stignani bonis parentibus ortus⁵ cum ab ipsa adolescentia / eloquentie et bonarum artium studiis operam dedisset / cancellarius florentinus factus est. Quod officium XL⁶ / ferme annos summa cum integritate ac laude administravit. / Doctorum virorum quasi communis parens, huius precipuo opere / grece littere primum Florentiam commigrarunt, quibus rebus om- / nium civium benevolentiam est consecutus. LXXV etatis / anno excessit e vita, summo civitatis merore. Post obitum / corona laurea donatus est iussu populi in doctrine vir- / tutumque quibus excelluit insigne. Vir fuit etatis sue / optimus ac eloquentissimus, qui sui ingenii multa re- / liquit monumenta laude et gloria digna ad memoriam / posteritatis.

Poggius

Born of good parents in the town of Stignano, having devoted himself to the study of the liberal arts since adolescence, he was made Florentine chancellor. For almost 40 years he held this post with the utmost integrity, receiving the highest praise. Almost a common father to learned men, it was mostly thanks to him that Greek letters first came to Florence. For these reasons he earned the benevolence of all fellow citizens. At the age of 75 he passed from this life, causing the greatest sorrow to the whole city. After his death he was presented with a laurel wreath by public decree as a sign of the learning and the virtues in which he excelled. The best and most eloquent man of his age, he left behind many testimonies to his own genius, worthy of praise and glory, for future generations to remember⁷.

Before commenting on these few lines I find it appropriate to illustrate – though briefly – the relationship between Poggio and his «venerated tutor», as William Shepherd wrote (1837: 6). To this purpose I will re-elaborate some reflections from my introduction to the critical edition (1994) of Leonardo Bruni's *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum*. As is well known, the *Dialogi* are crucial to an understanding of both the main features of the Florentine humanistic movement at that time (namely, between the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries) and the ties between its leading members⁸.

Not surprisingly, Petrarch proves a fundamental figure and a starting point in this case too. For one thing, most scholars credit him with reviving dialogue as a literary genre after centuries of scholastic disputa-

⁵ The word «ortus» is an interlinear addition by the scribe.

⁶ It should read XXX, for Salutati was appointed chancellor on April 19, 1375 and died on May 4, 1406.

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all English translations in this essay are my own.

⁸ For a bibliographic update on this work of Bruni's see Cabrini, 2012. All previous studies until 1994 are listed in Bruni, 1994: 283-90.

tions. Despite bearing several medieval traits, Petrarch's *Secretum* displays that natural exchange of opinions that will become a prominent feature of humanist dialogues⁹. Precisely in the invitation to a free, sincere discussion and the plea for a new, more flexible kind of culture (free from the limitations imposed by medieval scholasticism) lies Petrarch's main teaching in Bruni's *Dialogues*. This fictional debate – as is well known – is divided into two days, with several Florentine scholars (Niccolò Niccoli, Roberto de' Rossi, Coluccio Salutati, and Bruni himself) gathering at Salutati's house first, then at Rossi's the following day. On Day One, Niccoli (whose polemical attitude was notorious) criticizes the so-called Three Crowns of Florence (Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio) for their scarce knowledge of ancient Greek and the Roman classics. In Niccoli's opinion, the three Florentine writers did not break away as much as they should have from what he considers a medieval, scholastic and therefore narrow approach to literary studies. On Day Two, instead, when the same scholars meet again to resume their conversation (with the addition of Pietro di ser Mino to their group), Niccoli reverses his opinion, praising Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio as shining stars of Florence. As Niccoli explains, what he said the day before was just a ruse to irritate Salutati. Far from being disrespectful, Niccoli acknowledges the aged Florentine chancellor as the mentor of a whole new generation of humanists, starting with those involved in this two-day gathering.

Such is, in a nutshell, the plot of Bruni's *Dialogues*, which he dedicated to his fellow humanist and Salutati's pupil Pier Paolo Vergerio from Capodistria (hence the *Histrum* in the full Latin title of this work). I will not go now into the whole debate on the composition and dating of this work that Hans Baron first raised some sixty years ago. I discussed it at length in my 1994 critical edition. I believe to have proved Baron's thesis groundless. Philological evidence shows that the two halves of this text were conceived and composed together. With regard to its date, there is sound reason to claim that it was composed in the second half of 1406, soon after Salutati's death. As for its contents, a lot could be said, of course. We are speaking, after all, of a foundational text of early Italian humanism. I'll limit myself to pointing out a few features that tie in with the topic I am discussing here, that is, the Bracciolini-Salutati relationship.

First, the *Dialogues* reveal how at that time Bruni was still far from holding a strong, precise opinion on the issues raised by Petrarch's writings. Niccoli's famous palinode – generic as it is in its praise of Petrarch

⁹ See the following studies: Marsh, *The Quattrocento Dialogue. Classical Tradition and Humanist Innovation* (1980:16-23); Quillen, *A Tradition Invented: Petrarch, Augustine, and the Language of Humanism* (1992: esp. 202ff.); Fubini, *All'uscita dalla scolastica medievale: Salutati, Bruni e i "Dialogi ad Petrum Histrum"* (1992: esp. 1066). This last essay has also appeared in Fubini, 2001: 75-100.

– attests to this. Only some thirty years later, when writing the *Lives of Dante and Petrarch*, did Bruni reach a clear assessment of Petrarch's role in the rebirth of the *studia humanitatis*. More importantly for us, the very topics discussed in the letters that Italian humanists exchanged at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries show how crucial a precise assessment of Petrarch was for them.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a heated epistolary debate on Petrarch's merits flared up in those very years between Salutati and Poggio. Salutati's two letters to Poggio – drafted between the end of 1405 and March 1406 – shed light on the subjects being discussed at that time within the humanist circle¹⁰. Here is a brief summary of these documents. Epistle XIV.19 opens with Salutati chiding Poggio (who had recently started his career as papal secretary) for showing little prudence in criticizing an unspecified influential figure. In doing so, he uses the same paternalist tone with which he had recently addressed Bruni in another letter: «Haec pro tanto velim fuisse praefatus, quoniam, ut video, nimis hoc maledicendi et invehendi caractere delectaris»¹¹. In both cases the aged chancellor criticizes his former pupils for their rash behavior, warning them lest the ones they attack strike back and foil their promising careers. Salutati thus invites them both to be more respectful of Christian doctrine and not to embrace a misleading, hedonistic lifestyle.

This said, Salutati touches on literature, hinting at a previous letter that Poggio had sent him from Rome¹². In this «longa epistula» (now lost) Poggio contested Salutati's famous comparison of Petrarch with Cicero and Virgil¹³. As is well known, Salutati considered Petrarch superior

¹⁰ See Salutati, 1911: eps. XIV.19 and XIV.22 together with related notes by Novati on pp. 4.127ff. and 4.159ff. For a first hint at the dispute between Salutati and Poggio, see ep. XIV.14, pp. 4.104-05. Modern scholars have given it considerable attention. See Baron, 1955: 159; Baron, 1966: 241 and 254ff.; Seigel, 1968: 86-98; Gravelle, 1981: 195-97; Witt, 1983: 266-71 and 403-05; Fubini, 1990: 27-31 and 229-337; and, above all, Kajanto, 1987: 7-15. See Kajanto's essay for further bibliography.

¹¹ Salutati, 1911: ep. XIV.17, written to Bruni on November 6, 1405. The breach was healed soon, as one can see from the chancellor's letter dated «January 9, 1406» (XIV.21, pp. 4.147-58). However, this episode embarrassed Bruni considerably and for a long time too, as shown by his decision not to include in his epistolary collection a letter to Salutati regarding this argument between them. Written in Viterbo on February 13, 1406 this document was eventually rediscovered and published by Claudio Griggio. See Griggio, 1986: 27-50 (the letter is published on pp. 47-48).

¹² «[...] longa quidem epistola sextodecimo Kal. Septembris, credo, anni praeteriti ex Urbe, scribens de quadam mea epistula» (Salutati, 1911: ep. XIV.19, p. 4.130).

¹³ Salutati, 1911: IV.20, pp. 2.338 and 2.342. R. P. Oliver (1939) believes that Salutati's opinion of Petrarch developed through three distinct phases: first, uncritical praise; second, a more nuanced position; and, finally, that which he articulated in his quarrel with Poggio. In the latter circumstance, Oliver holds, Salutati was afraid that Poggio would eventually regard intellectual research and Christian doctrine as not only different but even mutually exclusive.

to both classical authors for his excellence in writing verse no less than prose. Poggio, as his former teacher informs us, had contested this opinion, believing Petrarch – like all modern men of letters – to be inferior to any great classical author. As one would expect, Salutati’s defense of Petrarch grows into a defense of modern (that is, Christian) culture as a whole against the pagan classics. Remigio Sabbadini (who erroneously dated Bruni’s *Dialogues* to 1401) cited this work as the first example of the quarrel between ancients and moderns, which Salutati and Poggio would take up four years later in their correspondence (Sabbadini, 1922: 49n1). We shall soon return to similarities (and even coincidences) between Bruni’s *Dialogues* on one hand and the Poggio–Salutati exchange on the other. First, though, it is important to note that the Florentine chancellor warns the young papal secretary not to be seduced by an excessive admiration for pagan antiquity, to the point of neglecting praiseworthy moderns. The last two centuries, he writes, have produced geniuses deserving to be put on par with the ancients. Besides, there is noticeable continuity between the latter and «our Petrarch», as Salutati explains:

Et, ut secundum membrum ingrediar, dic, precor, cum tot libros, tot epistolas, tot metra, tot prosas Petrarca noster composuerit atque reliquerit, in quo reprehensibiliter vetustati contradixit vel in his quae scripsit erravit? (Salutati, 1911: ep. XIV.19, p. 4.133).

And, to address the second topic, tell me, I beg you, since our Petrarch has composed and left us so many books, so many epistles, so many verses, so many prose texts, why should he be criticized for going against ancient customs or what did he do wrong in his writings?

From now on in this letter Salutati’s evaluation of Petrarch becomes more generic, focusing as it does on the relationship between scholarship, wisdom, and rhetoric. As he writes: «Duo sunt quibus eruditio patet: sapientia, videlicet, et eloquentia» («Knowledge shines forth in two ways: that is, through wisdom and eloquence», 1911: 4.134). Inevitably, he adds, any Christian is superior to all pagans in doctrine. Yet, the same is true of rhetoric. In this respect, too, the Church Fathers cannot but surpass all Greeks and Latins, for their language reveals the truth. Furthermore, one should not insist too much on Petrarch’s style being inferior to Livy and Sallust’s. It would be just as wrong to extol classical Latin at the expense of Petrarch’s. Language changes with time, so much so that the only true criterion by which to judge it is comparison with common use. Because of all this, Salutati cannot but reiterate his opinion of Petrarch vis-à-vis Cicero and Virgil:

Superant ambo de facundiae dignitate Petrarham; superantur illi a Francisco nostro non simpliciter, sed Cicero versu, Maro vero, ne con-

tendas, obsecro, solutae dictionis ornatu. Sed eruditione peritiaque veritatis modernus hic noster non duobus illis solum, sed plane cunctis Gentilibus antecellit (1911: 4.144).

On the one hand, they both surpass Petrarch for the quality of their eloquence. On the other, they are surpassed by our Francis not as a whole but, more precisely, Cicero with regard to verse, and Virgil (please, do not deny this) with regard to prose. With regard to learning and precise knowledge of truth, however, this modern author of ours is clearly superior not only to these two but to all pagans.

The letter then ends in a humorous tone. As Salutati writes, Poggio had been helped by an unnamed friend to draft his criticism of Petrarch. Although he doesn't say his name, Salutati seems to know full well who this friend and great lover of antiquity is. Various indicators, in my opinion, reveal that this was none other than Niccolò Niccoli. For instance, the following formula by Salutati most likely alludes to Niccoli's notorious reluctance to set pen to paper: «[...] facque quod eum sua, si fieri potest, scriptione vel tua saltem agnoscam». («[...] and please see to it, if at all possible, that I may come to know him from one of his writings or from one of yours», 1911: 4.145).

The second epistle (XIV.22, which Salutati sent Poggio in March 1406) is a sequel to the previous one. Salutati says that he has received several letters from him. Those letters, he adds, are certainly worthy of praise for their style but not so for their contents. Once again Salutati warns Poggio to follow Christian doctrine more carefully and be cautious in sharing news about the papal curia with Niccoli (1911: 4.160). As in epistle XIV.19, after an introductory invitation to a more moderate behavior Salutati moves on to discuss literary topics. Once again, Petrarch's comparison with the classics holds central prominence. More importantly, in this case Salutati must rebut a palinode similar to Niccoli's in the *Dialogues*. His words make it clear that Poggio had sent him an exaggerated retraction of his criticism of Petrarch: «Tu vero praetendis in Petrarchae laudem quod multis possit hystoricis antiquis, poetis, oratoribus et philosophis comparari; quod quam ridiculum sit, tu vides» («To praise Petrarch you even dare say that he may be deemed on par with many ancient historians, poets, orators, and philosophers. You can see for yourself how ridiculous this is», 1911: 4.162).

Salutati suggests to Poggio that he take a more thoughtful stance on this matter. To this end, he puts forth the same thesis – although in shorter format – that he expounded in epistle XIV.19. Finally, Salutati invites Poggio to debate in a more peaceful and restrained fashion, without going to extremes, before concluding with kind words for his former pupils who are now away from Florence (1911: 4.167).

It is clear, I believe, how closely the topics discussed in these two letters from Salutati to Poggio resemble those in the *Dialogues*. What is more, a comparison between those letters and this early work of Bruni's highlights the link joining them¹⁴. Several passages from Salutati's epistles to Poggio share telling similarities with the *Dialogues*, starting with Niccoli's praise of Petrarch on Day Two. Ending the account of his meeting with the Paduan circle of Petrarch scholars, Niccoli says:

Haec cum illi ostendissent, a me contendebant ut, si quem haberem ex omni antiquitate, qui tantis laudibus respondere posset, in medium afferrem; quod si facere nequirem, nec haberem quemquam qui in omni genere aequae profecerit, ut non dubitarem civem meum omnibus doctissimis viris, qui in hunc diem fuissent, anteferre. Nescio quid vobis videatur: ego nunc ferme omnia loca attigi quibus illi causam suam confirmabant. Quae quoniam optima ratione concludi mihi videbantur, illis assensi mihi quae ita esse persuasi (Bruni, 1994: par. 84, p. 271).

When they had shown me this they urged me, if I had any one from all antiquity who could prove a match for such praises, to bring him forward; but if I could not do so, and had no one equally proficient in every genre, I should not hesitate to set my fellow citizen before all the most learned men up to this day. I do not know how it seems to you, but I have now touched upon just about all the points they used to establish Petrarch's cause. Since their arguments struck me as excellent, I agreed with them and persuaded myself that such was the case (Griffiths, *et al.* 1987: 82).

This passage re-elaborates the famous opinion that Salutati repeatedly expressed in his two letters to Poggio, which he summed up in the following rhetorical question: «Quem enim habemus alium, quem iure possimus [antiquis] eruditus anteponeere vel aequare?» («For who else may we consider higher or equal to the learned ancients?») 1911: ep. XIV.22, p. 4.161). In the *Dialogues* (85.2-5) Bruni has Niccoli defiantly ask: «[...] nec audebimus illum suis meritis ornare, praesertim cum hic vir studia humanitatis, quae iam extincta erant, repararit et nobis, quemadmodum discere possemus, viam aperuerit?» (1994: 271-72) («Shall we not venture to honor him for his merits, especially when this man restored humanistic studies, which had been extinguished, and opened the way for us to be able to learn?», Griffiths, *et al.* 1987: 82-83).

Remarkably similar praise of Petrarch can be found (first) in a famous letter from Boccaccio to Jacopo Pizzinga and (later) in the aforementioned epistle XIV.22 that Salutati sent to Poggio. In the latter text we read as follows: «[...] qui [*Petrarch*] primus suo labore, industria, vigilantia

¹⁴ As I already noted in my critical edition; see Bruni, 1994: 50-53.

haec studia paene ad internicionem facta nobis in lucem erexerit et aliis sequi volentibus viam patefecerit¹⁵» («[...] who [Petrarch] with his toil, efforts, and care first brought back to light for us these studies, which were almost extinct, and paved the way for others willing to follow»).

Also, in Bruni's *Dialogues* (85.7-8) Niccoli replies to criticism of Petrarch's *Africa* asking: «Quis est iste tam gravis censor, qui non probet?»¹⁶. This formula echoes a passage from Salutati's epistle XIV.19 to Poggio. Inviting his former pupil not to be too harsh a critic of both Petrarch and modern times in general, Salutati writes: «Pura sit non temporum, sed scientiae concertatio. Haec ad examen et trutinam redigamus. Quod si feceris, crede mihi, non eris aetatis tuae tam iniquus et improbus extimator» («A clear assessment should be made not of the times but of knowledge instead. Let us evaluate and ponder this. If you do this, believe me, you will not be such a biased and harsh critic of your own time», 1911: ep. XIV.19, p. 4.132).

More importantly, in his conclusion of Petrarch's praise in the *Dialogues* (86.7-11) Niccoli subscribes to that famous opinion by Salutati in his two letters to Poggio. Here is what Niccoli says on Day Two of Bruni's work:

Nam quod aiunt, unum Vergilii carmen atque unam Ciceronis epistolam omnibus operibus Petrarchae se anteponere, ego saepe ita converto, ut dicam me orationem Petrarchae omnibus Vergilii epistolis, et carmina eiusdem vatis omnibus Ciceronis carminibus longissime anteferre (1994: 272).

What they say about preferring one poem of Virgil's and one epistle of Cicero's to all the works of Petrarch, I often turn around this way: I say that I far prefer an oration of Petrarch's to all the epistles of Virgil, and the poems of Petrarch to all the poems of Cicero (Griffiths, *et al.* 1987: 83).

Another letter by Salutati dating from the same period – that is, penned between the end of 1405 and the beginning of 1406 – is echoed in the *Dialogues*. At the end of Day One (51.1-4) Salutati invites Niccoli to be more lenient towards his fellow citizens, adding as a general rule that no one can ever be praised by everyone:

Hic Colucius subridens, ut solet: «Quam vellem», inquit, «Nicolae, ut tu civibus tuis amior esses, etsi non me fugit numquam aliquem tanto consensu omnium probatum fuisse, quin adversarium invenerit» (Bruni, 1994: 258).

¹⁵ Salutati, 1911: ep. XIV.22, p. 4.161. For his letter to Jacopo Pizzinga see Boccaccio, 1928: 195. Baron, 1966: 261-69, compares this letter with the passage cited above from Salutati, ep. XIV.22.

¹⁶ Bruni, 1994: 272. In *The Humanism of Leonardo Bruni*, this passage reads as follows: «Who is so severe a critic as not to approve it?» (Griffiths, *et al.* 1987: 83).

Smiling in his usual way, Coluccio replied: «How I should wish, Niccolò, that you were kinder to your fellow citizens; although I realize there was never any one so universally approved that he did not find an opponent» (Griffiths, *et al.* 1987: 75).

In his last letter to Bruni (dated 9 January 1406) Salutati made peace with him after a dispute that had briefly threatened their friendship in November 1405. As if apologizing for the harsh tone he had used with him on previous occasions, the old chancellor wrote as follows:

Semper enim mecum tuum admirabar ingenium et quam perspicaciter cuncta ponderares et animadverteres tacitus commendabam. Noli curare si vel ego vel alius aliquando contra quae dixeris arguamus sententiamusque semperque cum scribis tibi fore persuadeas contradictorem (1911: ep. XIV.21, p. 4.156).

I have always admired your intellect and praised to myself how keenly you pondered and reflected on any subject. Take no concern if either I or anyone else may argue and speak against what you have said. And rest assured that whenever you write you will find an opponent.

In addition to the ones mentioned above, there are other passages from Salutati's writings that Bruni borrowed in his *Dialogues*. A case in point is the praise of Dante in Salutati's *De fato* (III.12) to rebut Cecco d'Ascoli's criticism, which Bruni re-elaborated on Day Two (par. 71) (Bruni, 1994: 266; Salutati, 1985: 195–206, esp. 195–96). Another telling example is Niccoli's antischolastic tirade on Day One, modeled as it is after the famous opening of the *De laboribus Herculis* (Salutati, 1951: 1.3). Moreover, when Salutati celebrates Florence for its beauty at the beginning of the second dialogue (Bruni, 1994: par. 54–55, pp. 259–60) one cannot fail to notice how similar that panegyric is to what the chancellor himself wrote in his point-by-point reply to Loschi (par. 115) (Baldassarri, 2012: 198 [Latin] and 293–94 [Italian translation]). Nor is this the only passage evoking Salutati's lengthy invective in Bruni's *Dialogues*. For instance, when on Day One (par. 41) Niccoli defiantly asks the old chancellor «Quos tu mihi Dantes commemoras? Quos Petrarchas? Quos Boccattios?» (Bruni, 1994: 253) his provocative question not only echoes a famous contrast between Mucius and Crassus in Cicero's *De oratore* (I.23.105) but turns on its head Salutati's proud statement in his reply to the Visconti secretary. There (par. 116) the Florentine chancellor had summed up his city's cultural primacy in the following rhetorical question: «Ubi Dantes? Ubi Petrarchas? Ubi Boccaccius?»¹⁷.

¹⁷ Baldassarri, 2012: 199 (Latin text) and 294 (Italian translation). In his English version Rolf Bagemihl renders this passage as follows: «Where will you find another Dante, another Petrarch, another Boccaccio?» (Salutati, 2014: 311).

As I pointed out in my critical edition of this text, Salutati's epistles XIV.19 and 22 to Poggio are useful in dating the *Dialogues*. More precisely, it is reasonable to consider those two letters the *terminus post quem* for the work that Bruni dedicated to Vergerio. What matters most for the subject at hand is Poggio's striking absence from it. Bruni wanted this at once fictional and exemplary debate to serve as a manifesto of Florentine humanism. Adding Poggio (one of Salutati's closest pupils) to the characters should have been both easy and obvious. Inserting a passing reference to him in the course of the two-day debate would have been just as natural and even less complicated. And yet, Bruni avoided all this.

It is not easy to determine why he did so. Several hypotheses could be raised to explain his decision. It may be argued, for instance, that Bruni composed the *Dialogues* soon after Salutati's death. At that time the dispute that the old chancellor had with Poggio shortly before dying, as attested by his letters discussed above, must have still been fresh (and probably embarrassing) in his pupil's memory. Also, Poggio's remorse must have been considerable on hearing that a father figure to him like Salutati had passed away soon after their dispute over such important cultural and, above all, moral and psychological matters. In all likelihood, that contributed to the tone pervading the most extensive and passionate praise of Salutati ever penned by Poggio. I am referring to the moving letter that he sent Niccoli right after receiving news of their teacher's passing.

Only seven manuscripts preserve in its entirety this letter that Poggio wrote in Rome on 15 May 1406 (that is, eleven days after Salutati's death)¹⁸. Such a limited number of witnesses for a text of this nature may be regarded as further evidence of an issue that its author never managed to solve during his lifetime, thus deciding to remove it from his collection of private letters. I do not want to attempt a psychoanalytical reading, especially knowing the philological issues that make the edition of Poggio's private correspondence (above all from his early life) such a difficult task. I thus prefer to focus on the texts at hand. In doing so, I will begin by noting several similarities – sometimes even coincidences – between Poggio's letter to Niccoli in memory of Salutati and the epitaph he wrote for him. In both texts, for instance, Salutati is called «father» as a token of admiration and affection. Such an epithet is far from unusual in documents like these. As Novati pointed out in a note to his edition of the epitaph, the formula «*Doctorem virorum quasi comunis parens*» («Almost a common father to learned men») is «*Espressione prediletta da Poggio a designar il Nostro*» (Salutati, 1911: 4(2).484n1). We find it in a slightly different form halfway through Poggio's letter to Niccoli, where

¹⁸ For the complete text of this epistle and a list of the manuscripts that preserve it, see Bracciolini, 1984: 219–21.

one reads: «[...] pater communis erat omnium et amator bonorum» («[...] a common father to all and a lover of good men», Bracciolini, 1984: 220, line 24). Also, in the very opening phrase Poggio wrote:

Gravem ac tristem nuntium accepi, mi Nicolae, et qui maximum mihi vulnus infixit, mortem scilicet *patris Colucii*, eloquentissimi omnium et sapientissimi viri, quem ego multis lacrimis prosecutus sum magna cordis acerbitate (1984: 219, lines 1-5, italics mine).

I received woeful and sad news, dear Nicholas, which caused me the greatest sorrow, that is, the death of *father Coluccio*, the most eloquent and wise man of all. I reacted to this news with many tears and great pain in my heart.

Two more times in this same letter Poggio laments the loss of a father figure like Salutati:

Amisimus enim patrem, quem posthac non facile reperiemus. [...] Illud nunc scribam, *me tali amisso patre* magno esse confectum vulnere; quod quidem fortassis esset levius paululum, si eum semel postquam Romam veni, viventem aspicere potuissem.

We lost a father, who will be far from easy for us to find again. [...] I do confess now in writing that the loss of such a father has dealt a great blow to me; it might have been a little lighter had I had the chance of seeing him alive one more time after I came to Rome (1984: 219, lines 12-13 and 32-35, italics mine).

These last words may reveal some guilt on Poggio's part. Yet, as I said above, I prefer to limit myself to a comparison between these two documents. Speaking of which, since discrepancies are no less important than similarities, the main difference regarding the contents of the aforementioned letter and the epitaph (that is, Salutati's merits) is the deceased chancellor's instrumental role in the return of ancient Greek to the Latin world. This reason for praise only appears in the epitaph, where one reads as follows: «Huius precipuo opere grece littere primum Florentiam commigrarunt» («It was mostly thanks to him that Greek letters first came to Florence»). It should be noted that Salutati's praiseworthy efforts to hire Manuel Chrysoloras as teacher of Greek for the University of Florence¹⁹ are not mentioned in any other epitaph edited either by

¹⁹ See the excellent essay by S. Gentile and D. Speranzi, *Coluccio Salutati e Manuele Crisolora* (2010) and the rich bibliography reported therein.

Novati or any other scholar²⁰. Poggio is the only one who gives Salutati credit for this pioneering initiative in an epitaph. Actually, he praises his former teacher for the rediscovery of ancient Greek culture even more than Brunni did when he celebrated Salutati in a well-known letter to his sons dated 15 October 1407:

Quod graecas didici litteras, Colucii est opus; quod latinas non leviter inspexerim, Colucii est opus; quod poetas, quod oratores, quod scriptores ceteros legerim, didicerim, cognorim, Colucii est opus.

My learning Greek literature is thanks to Coluccio; my studying Latin literature not just superficially is thanks to Coluccio; my reading, learning, and coming to know poets, orators, and other writers is thanks to Coluccio²¹.

The seminal importance of Chrysoloras' university courses in Greek language and literature would be widely acknowledged by a host of humanists throughout the fifteenth century, to the point of becoming a cliché²². In the first decade of the Quattrocento, however, it was still far from common. Most likely, Poggio composed his epitaph right after Salutati's death, when the Florentine government expressed the intention of building a sepulcher for the renowned chancellor in Santa Maria del Fiore²³. If so, Poggio was among the first to celebrate Salutati for reviving Greek culture in the Latin world after centuries of oblivion.

I wish to conclude by pointing out that even this last feature of Poggio's praise of Salutati raises something of an issue. Unlike other pupils of the venerable Florentine chancellor, Poggio did not learn Greek from Chrysoloras. This often put him in a less favorable position when compared with colleagues and friends who – like Jacopo Angeli and Brunni – had managed to learn the language so quickly from the Byzantine

²⁰ See De Robertis, *et al.* 2008: 93–113 (section titled *La memoria*), entries 19–29 by S.U. Baldassarri, G. Barbero, L. Boschetto, A. Decaria, G. Tanturli, and S. Zamponi. See also in the same work, pp. 55–62, entries 1–5 by L. Amato and M. Marchiaro in the section titled *Le biografie*; and the essay by C. M. Monti, *Salutati visto da nord: la prospettiva dei cancellieri e maestri viscontei* (2010).

²¹ Brunni, 1741, which I quote from the anastatic reprint with an introduction by J. Hankins vol. 1, p. 45 (ep. II.11).

²² On the image of this Byzantine scholar that humanists developed in the course of the fifteenth century see Maisano and Rollo (2002), in particular the essay by V. Fera, *La leggenda di Crisolora*, pp. 11–18.

²³ See entry 23 by Boschetto, in De Robertis, *et al.* 2008: 101–102. I agree with Boschetto when he writes that most epitaphs made for this sepulcher to be built in honor of Salutati date from the summer and autumn of 1406 (that is, soon after his death). As already pointed out, Salutati died on 4 May 1406. Eventually, the plan that Florentine authorities would pay for the tomb fell through.

teacher. As is well known, both Angeli and Bruni soon started translating ancient Greek texts at Salutati's request. Out of embarrassment and to keep up with an increasing number of humanist competitors, Poggio forced himself to make up for this deficiency many years later. In these unremitting efforts one may notice, once again, the influence of Salutati's example. Salutati reiterated his insatiable desire to learn and engage in disputation with scholars of any age in many of his works²⁴. If one wanted to pinpoint the greatest teaching that Poggio received from Salutati, I believe it would be this one. Even more than the development of humanistic script²⁵ or the erudition of his impressive literary opus – culminating in the history of Florence when he, too, served as chancellor of that city²⁶ – the main lesson that Poggio learned from Salutati was his teacher's passion for knowledge.

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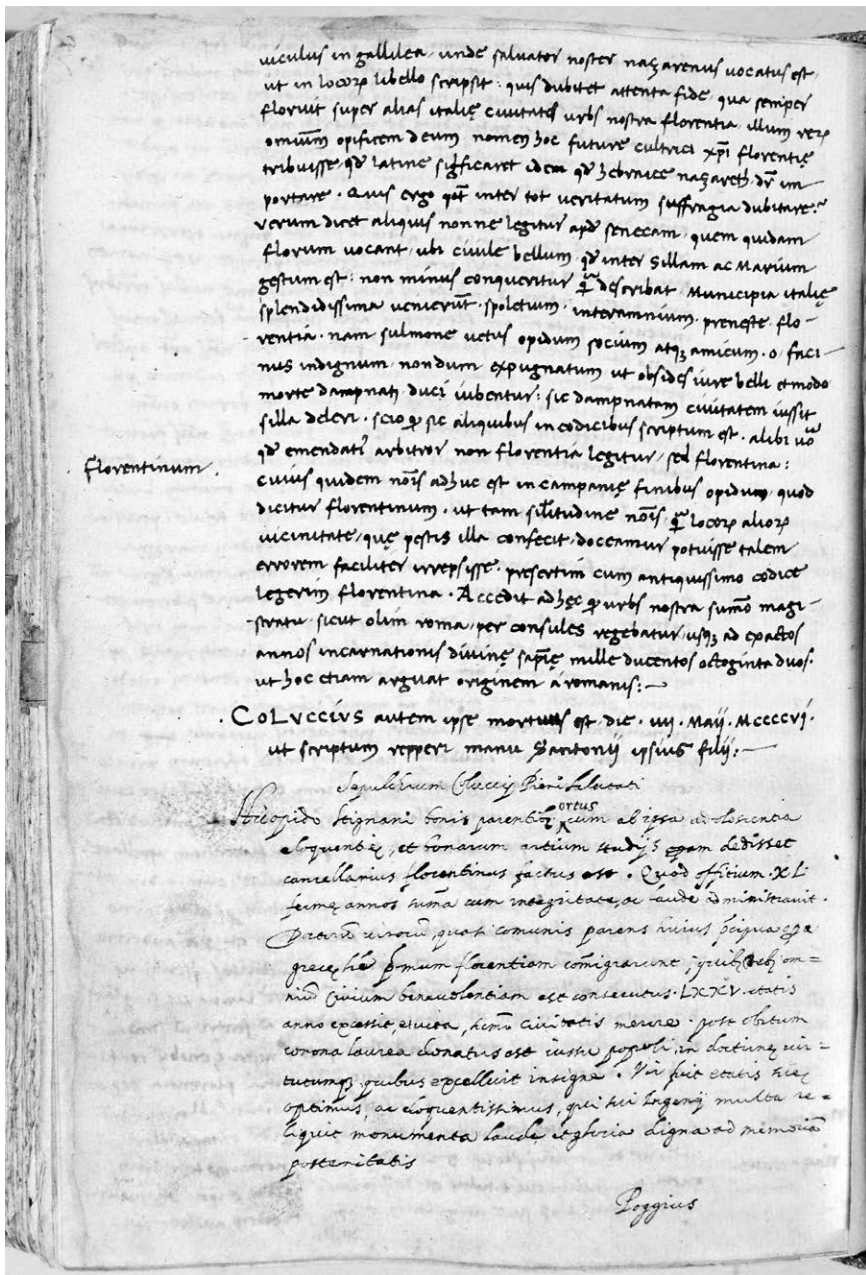
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²⁴ As one can see, for instance, in Salutati's last work (that is, his reply to Loschi, par. 182-83) and in the related letter he sent Pietro Turchi (par. 4) in Baldassarri, 2012: 227 (invective, Latin text), 328-29 (Italian translation), 234 (letter, Latin text), and 370 (Italian translation).

²⁵ On this important and much-debated topic see De Robertis, *et al.* 2008, especially the section titled *Libri e copisti di Coluccio Salutati: un consuntivo* by T. De Robertis and S. Zamponi. To the extensive bibliography reported therein one should add M. Ciccuto, *Poggio "conoscitore" fra codici antichi illustrati* (2007); T. De Robertis, *Salutati tra scrittura gotica e "littera antiqua"* (2010); S. Zamponi, *Iacopo Angeli copista per Salutati* (2008); and R. Ricci, *Umanesimo letterario, riforma grafica: Poggio Bracciolini editore, filologo e copista* (2016).

²⁶ On this last phase of Poggio's life see the section in Cardini and Viti, 2003: 99-124.

Figure 1 – Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, ms. Magl.VIII 1445, f. 207v.



florentinum.

uiculus in galilea unde saluator noster nazarenus uocatus est
 ut in locis libello scriptis. quis dubitet attenda fide qua semper
 floruit super alias italis ciuitates urbs nostra florentia illum uerum
 omnium opificem deum nomen hoc future cultura xpi florentie
 tribuisse qd latine significat idem qd chronice nazareth de un
 portus. cuius ergo qm inter tot ueritatum suffragia dubitare
 verum dicit aliquis nonne legitur apud senecam quem quidam
 florentum uocant ubi ciuile bellum qd inter sillam ac maxium
 gatum est: non minus conuocatus qd describat municipia italie
 splendissima uenerunt. politorium. interminium. præneste flo
 rentia. nam sulmone uetus opidum socium atqz amicium. o faci
 nus indignum nondum expugnatum ut absidit iure belli et modo
 morte dampnata duci iubentur: sic dampnatum ciuitatem iussit
 silla deleri. scio qd sic aliquibus in codicibus scriptum est. alibi uo
 qd emendati arbitri non florentia legitur. sed florentina:
 cuius quidem nois adhuc est in campanie finibus opidum quod
 dicitur florentinum. ut tam similitudine nois qd locis aliis
 uicinitate que postea illa confecit. docentur potuisse talem
 errorem facilius irrepisse. presertim cum antiquissimo codice
 legitur florentina. Accedit ad hoc qd urbs nostra sumo magi
 stratu sicut olim roma per consules regeretur usqz ad octidol
 annos incarnationis diuine supse mille ducentos octoginta duos
 ut hoc etiam arguat originem a romanis:

• COLUCCIVS AUTEM IPSE MORTVVS EST DIC. III. MAII. M. CCCCVI.
 ut scriptum reperit manus Sanctonij ipsius filij.

Epitaphium Coluccij Bracciolini
 Coluccio Bracciolini totis parentibus ^{ortus} cum ab ipsa dilectione
 et legibus, et bonarum artium studio ^{opam} dedit et
 cancellarius florentinus factus est. Quod officium XL
 semis annos roma cum integritate, ac iude ad imitauit.
 Peracta uero, quos communis patris iuris, pignora qd
 grece, hie sumum scientiam conigerunt, quibus ^{om}
 nia ciuium beneuolentiam esse consecutus. LXXV. etatis
 anno exiit, quibus hunc ciuitatis memore. post obitum
 corona laurea donatus esse iussu populi in latine uir
 tuum, quibus excelluit inuigam. In fine uero hie
 optinuit, ac exequa tribuitur, qui hie huius multa re
 liquit monumenta laude et gloria digna ad memoria
 posteritatis

Poggius

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POGGIO AND ALBERTI REVISITED

David Marsh

ABSTRACT: The careers of the Curial secretaries Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) and Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) reveal many parallels. In 1437–1438 the Este court of Ferrara, where Eugenius IV convoked a church council, provided a focal point for their friendship. It was to the Ferrarese canon Francesco Marescalchi that Poggio dedicated Book 1 of his Latin epistles (1436), and Alberti his *Hundred Apologues* (1437). Both men were inspired to critiques of contemporary society by the Greek satirist Lucian, and both indulged in composing brief witticisms that expose human vice: Poggio in his *Facetiae* (*Jests*) and Alberti in his *Apologi* (*Fables*) and *Vita* (*Autobiography*). From Lucian, they also learned to dramatize human foibles on the imagined stage of the *theatrum mundi*, or theater of the world: Poggio in his dialogues, and Alberti in both the *Intercentales* and *Momus*. Despite such literary affinities, their approach to ethical questions differed, especially concerning the validity of allegory, which Poggio rejected but Alberti embraced. As a tribute to his colleague, Alberti dedicated Book 4 of his *Intercentales* to Poggio; he prefaced the work with an ironic Aesopic fable that asserts the superiority of recondite scientific research over commonplace humanistic studies. Eventually, Alberti's status as an outsider in Florence was reflected in the deterioration in his relations with Poggio. The rift was widened in 1441, when Alberti organized the Italian poetic competition called the Certame Coronario that was held in the Florence cathedral on October 22. Poggio was a member of the jury that, to Alberti's chagrin, refused to declare a winner.

KEYWORDS: Aesopic fables, Leon Battista Alberti, Este court in Ferrara, Francesco Filelfo, Lucian of Samosata, *theatrum mundi* (theater of the world), Virgil and allegory.

In his dialogue on the papal Curia, written just months before his death in 1438, Lapo da Castiglionchio included an honor roll of his learned colleagues that mentions both Poggio Bracciolini and Leon Battista Alberti:

Veniam [...] ad [...] Poggium Florentinum, pontificis maximi a secretis, in quo summa inest cum eruditio, tum singularis gravitas salibus multis et urbanitate condita [...] non praetermittam [...] et aequalem meum Baptistam Albertum, cuius ingenium ita laudo ut hac laude cum eo neminem comparem, ita admiror ut magnum mihi nescio quid portendere in posterum videatur. Est enim eiusmodi ut ad quancumque se animo conferat facultatem, in ea facile ac brevi ceteris antecellat (Celenza, 1999: 154–56).

I come to Poggio the Florentine, a papal secretary, who possesses the deepest learning and singular gravity mixed with urbanity and many witty remarks [...] Nor shall I overlook my contemporary Battista Alberti, whose talent I praise so highly that I can compare no one to him; so much do I wonder that he seems to promise something great in future. His talent is such that, in applying himself to any discipline whatsoever, he soon and easily surpasses all others.

Strikingly, it is precisely at this time that we have tangible evidence of the friendship between the two men. An important nexus was provided by the Este court at Ferrara. On 12 October 1437, Poggio wrote a letter (*Epistle V*, 22) to Leonello d'Este in praise of Alberti and his Latin comedy *Philodoxus* (Bracciolini, 1984-1987: 2.260): «Baptista de Albertis, vir singularis ingenii mihi que amicissimus, scripsit fabulam quandam quam *Filodoxeos* appellat [...]» In the same year, Alberti dedicated a second version of his Latin comedy *Philodoxus* to Leonello d'Este, the future marquis of Ferrara (1441-1450). What's more, the two humanists shared the friendship of the Ferrarese canon Francesco Marescalchi. In 1436, Poggio dedicated Book 1 of his correspondence – the letters to Niccolò Niccoli – to Marescalchi, to whom in 1459 he addressed his last extant letter, on the death of Giovanni Aurispa (Bracciolini, 1984-1987: 1.3-4). In 1437, Alberti dedicated his one hundred *Apologi* to the learned canon, who eventually owned some ten codices of Albertian works (Borsi, 2004: 187-188; Gargan, 2002). As Martin McLaughlin has pointed out, it is in his dedications to his Ferrarese friends that Alberti first uses his new tripartite name Leo Baptista Albertus; and the choice of «Leo» may reflect sympathy with Leonello, who shared with Alberti the stigma of an illegitimate birth and an enthusiasm for humanistic studies, particularly the comedies of Terence, whose *Adelphoe* (lines 911-14) offers a model for the sobriquet Lepidus (McLaughlin, 2016: 25-29).

Inevitably, Alberti's status as an outsider in Florence was reflected in the deterioration in his relations with Poggio. When Alberti dedicated Book 4 of his *Intercenales* to his colleague, he prefaced the work with an ironic Aesopic fable. In it, water buffaloes chide a goat for grazing at a dangerous height, but the goat replies that it prefers such lofty fare to the lowly forage that is open to everyone. The rift was widened in 1441, when Alberti organized the Italian poetic competition called the Certame Coronario that was held in the Florence cathedral on October 22. Poggio was a member of the jury that, to Alberti's chagrin, refused to declare a winner (Gorni, 1972; Bertolini, 1993). In later years, it seems that the two men drifted apart (Borsi, 2003: 83). Stung by the failure of the Certame – in which Poggio as a jurist was complicit *ex officio* – Alberti complained in two works. Within days, he wrote an Italian *Protesta* that he circulated anonymously; and sometime later he wrote a Latin apologue, now the preface to Book 8 of the *Intercenales*, in which a crow refuses to judge a singing contest between a frog and a cicada (Gorni, 1972: 167-72; Alberti, 2003a: 530-33; Alberti, 2010: 425).

For both Poggio and Alberti, the Greek satirist Lucian provided an indispensable model for literary invention and social critique. Here too we find a coincidence when we recall that Poggio translated Lucian's *Jupiter confutatus* under the Latin title *Cinicus sive de fato*; and Stefano Pitagala has argued that Alberti's similarly named dinner piece *Cinicus* is

indebted to Poggio's version (Pittaluga, 2007: 382; cf. Marsh, 1983). Pittaluga has also shown how both humanists share a Lucianic penchant for humor, which they call *hilaritas*: witness Poggio's preface to his *Facetiae*, and Alberti's preface to Book 1 of the *Intercenales*, addressed to Paolo dal Pozzo Toscanello (Pittaluga, 2007: 380–81). (A classical antecedent may be seen in Cicero's *Academica* 1.2.8, in which Varro says that he has seasoned his Menippean satires with humor: *in illis veteribus nostris, que Menippum imitati non interpretati quadam hilaritate conspersimus.*) Indeed, just as Lapo praises Poggio for seasoning his works with «many witty sayings» (*multis salibus*), we may note that Alberti offers his readers witty sayings in both his *Apologi (Fables)* and his *Vita (Autobiography)*.

Like Lucian, Poggio and Alberti both insist that we must look beyond the superficial ostentation of human posturing and pomp, and Davide Canfora has observed that they both use the Latin verb «introspicere» to denote the act of looking within the words and deeds of individuals (Bracciolini, 1998: XLIII; Cardini, 1993: 70). What's more, the topos of the «theater of the world» – a recurrent theme in Lucian – was readily adopted by both Poggio and Alberti. Where Riccardo Fubini has demonstrated the centrality of the *theatrum mundi* to Poggio's dialogues, Lucia Cesarini Martinelli has traced Alberti's recurrent allusions to the theater from his comedy *Philodoxus* to his novel *Momus* (Fubini, 1982: 1–92; Cesarini Martinelli, 1989). In a detailed comparison of common themes in Poggio's *De infelicitate principum* (1440) and Alberti's *Momus sive De principe* (1443–1450), Davide Canfora notes that the image of the theater is already found at the end of Lapo's *De curiae commodis*:

Hoc autem est theatrum maximum et amplissimum in quod spectaculum nationes plurimae convenerunt, in quo praeclarum nihil geri potest, quod non iis omnibus innotescat, omnibus laudibus illustretur (Bracciolini, 1998: XXVII–XXVIII).

This is the great and impressive theater on whose stage many nations are gathered, and in which nothing illustrious can be achieved without becoming known to them all and exalted with universal praise.

Indeed, if we compare these two meditations on the pitfalls of power, we find moral animadversions on rulers that exploit the image of the theater. In writing about rulers, Poggio refers to their symbolic appearance in Greek tragedy:

omitto antiquas tragedias principum infelicitatis copiosissimas testes, *Edipodem, Troadem, Atrium, Thiestum, Medeam, Agamemnona* ceterosque permultos, quorum exemplo Greci illi sapientissimi poete infelicitatem quasi familiarem principibus expresserunt [...] (Bracciolini, 1998: 72)

I pass over the ancient tragedies that bear witness to the unhappiness of rulers – *Oedipus*, *Troas*, *Atreus*, *Thyestes*, *Medea*, *Agamemnon* and many others – by whose example those wise Greek poets showed that unhappiness is an intimate companion of rulers [...]

Later, he returns to the simile of the tragic theater: «constat enim vitam principum tragediam quandam esse calamitatum plenam, ex qua multi actus confici possent ad representandam tanquam in theatro eorum infelicitatem» («It is clear that the life of rulers is a sort of tragedy filled with disasters, from which many acts could be composed to represent their unhappiness as if in a theater», Bracciolini, 1998: 90). In the conclusion of the dialogue, Niccoli describes how wise men disdain rulers as masked characters: «Sed sapientes illi [...] tanquam ex superiori loco in quadam specula positi, tum ceteros, tum precipue reges veluti personatos quosdam homines ac ridiculos spernunt ac despiciunt» («But wise men [...] as if placed on high in a lookout, spurn and despise other men, especially kings, as maskers and buffoons», Bracciolini, 1998: 101).

Yet where Poggio employs the topos as a simple metaphor, we find Alberti portraying human (and divine) existence as a sort of allegorical drama, as he comments in this passage in Book 4 of *Momus*:

Itaque haec in theatro. Quae scio videri posse iis qui nostris opusculis legendis delectentur si non admodum, alioquin scurrilia, at nostris ab moribus et scribendi legibus aliena, qui quidem semper et factis et dictis cavimus ne qui minus grave et sanctum adoriremur quam litterarum religio et religionis cultus pateretur. Sed si pensitaris quid conati simus cum totis libellis, tum hoc loco exprimere, intelleges profecto principes voluptati deditos incidere in opprobria longe graviora quam quae recensuimus. Eaque de re nos velim magis secutos initam institutionem iudices quam pristinam studiorum et vitae rationem. Sed plura fortassis diximus quam volebamus, pauciora profecto diximus quam postulaverit res. Verum de his hactenus: ad rem redeo.

All this took place in the theater. I know that, to those who enjoy reading our little books, this circumstance may seem alien to my literary principles, if not positively vulgar, and I have always avoided in word and deed tackling subjects that were less grave and sacred than my literary conscience and piety would allow. But if you think again of what I'm trying to express in all these books, and in this passage specifically, you'll surely realize that princes who are devoted to pleasure commit far more disgraceful acts than any we've recounted. For that reason, I would have you judge me as someone who is following the logic of a given plot rather than some antique standard of life and learning. But perhaps we've said more than we wished, and we've surely said less than the circumstances demanded. Enough of this; I'll get back to the story (Alberti, 2003b: 292–29).

Alberti defends his fiction for its moral teaching, in other words, as a sort of allegory. In his 1437 dedication of *Philodoxus* to Leonello d'Este, he prefaced it with an explicit outline of its allegorical characters (Grund, 2005: 72–75).

This distinguishes him from his colleague Poggio, who in the definitive version of his first published work, the dialogue *De avaritia*, decries the simplistic allegories of the late-classical tradition. In particular, Virgil's description of the Harpies (*Aeneid* 3.212–44), cited by his fellow curialist Bartolomeo Aragazzi da Montepulciano as symbolic of avarice, comes under attack by Antonio Loschi:

Quod autem in Virgilii fabula avaritiae descriptionem voluisti contineri, in quo plurimum verborum effudisti, perridicula atque inepta michi videtur, non tua solum, sed ceterorum quoque curiosa et indigna docto viro interpretatio, qui similibus fabellis aliud preter aurum delectationem quesitum putatis. Nam si eadem in meam sententiam traducere voluero, nullo negotio ostendam avaritiam illis describi non magis quam luxuriam, superbiam, crudelitatem. Itaque contempsi semper hanc insulsam auctoritatis et sapientiae suspitionem, quam nonnulli superstitiosa ambage poetarum fabulis inclusam suspicantur, cum et ipse Seneca etiam dicat hoc esse propositum poetis, ut oblectent aures et fabulas connectant... Quam ob rem istis tuis tanquam tragediis, quas nullo fundamento in avaritiam concitasti, nihil digne respondere potest, nisi te in explicanda perlevi fabella nimis accuratam et verbosam diligentiam attulisse, in qua meo iudicio omnem operam perdidisti (Bracciolini, 1994: 80–81; Garin, 1952: 1129–30).

Now, if you think that Virgil's myth contains a description of avarice, as you so verbosely argue, this laborious and unscholarly interpretation, which you share with others, strikes me as utterly ridiculous and foolish, for you think that similar fables have some purpose besides delighting our ears. If I chose to adapt it to my own way of thinking, I could with little effort show that it applies no more to avarice than to lust, pride, or cruelty. I have always disdained the fatuous fantasies of many who by superstitious distortions imagine that poetic fables embody authority and wisdom. For doesn't Seneca say that the goal of poets is to delight the ear and to string together myths? [...] As a result, one cannot reply to the tragic rants you have unjustifiably stirred up against avarice, except to say that, in interpreting an insubstantial myth, you displayed overly meticulous and verbose care: in my opinion you completely wasted your time.

By contrast, Alberti is fond of employing animals and even plants as ethical symbols. His dinner piece *Fame* features a botanical monster (called Suspicion) that clearly evokes the celebrated Virgilian allegory of *Fama* (Rumor) in *Aeneid* 4.173–90:

Extemplo Libyae magnas it Fama per urbes,
 Fama, malum qua non aliud velocius ullum:
 mobilitate viget virisque acquirit eundo,
 parva metu primo, mox sese attollit in auras
 ingrediturque solo et caput inter nubila condit.
 illam Terra parens ira iniritata deorum extremam,
 ut perhibent, Coeo Enceladoque sororem
 progenuit pedibus celerem et perniciousis alis.
 monstrum horrendum, ingens, cui quot sunt corpore plumae,
 tot vigiles oculi subter (mirabile dictu),
 tot linguae, totidem ora sonant, tot subrigit auris.
 nocte volat caeli medio terraeque per umbram
 stridens, nec dulci declinat lumina somno;
 luce sedet custos aut summi culmine tecti
 turribus aut altis, et magnas territat urbes,
 tam ficti pravique tenax quam nuntia veri.
 haec tum multiplici populos sermone replebat
 gaudens, et pariter facta atque infecta canebat.

Book 4 of Alberti's dinner pieces represents his most notable tribute to Poggio, although not without ironic undertones, as in his dedication of Book 2 to Leonardo Bruni. Two of the dialogues feature Lepidus (Alberti's *alter ego*) and Libripeta, the «book hunter» Niccolò Niccoli – Poggio's good friend and Alberti's nemesis (Ponte, 1972; Marsh, 2007a: 129–30). In *Somnium*, Libripeta emerges from a sewer to tell Lepidus (Alberti) about his underworld adventures, which would inspire Ariosto's episode of Astolfo on the moon. In *Fama*, Libripeta recounts the slaughter of an ox on the steps of a temple – an anecdote that finds a parallel in an episode narrated in Poggio's *De infelicitate principum* (Marsh, 2007b: 43).

The second dialogue in Book 4 of the *Intercenales*, *Corolle*, features Lepidus without Libripeta. In this work, the goddess Praise refuses to grant diadems to ambitious suitors from various fields: a rhetorician, a poet, a rich man, a detractor, and finally Lepidus. (By a strange coincidence, the friendship between Alberti and Poggio would be soured when a jury of curialists refused to award a crown in the poetic contest held in Florence in 1441.) The third dialogue *Cinicus* examines similar ways of life as groups of souls arrive in the world of the afterlife. Here the title character, who is credited with reviving ancient learning, unmasks the hypocrisy of elevated and powerful people – a theme common in Poggio's writings. (The remaining dialogues in Book 4, *Erumna* and *Servus*, feature a more dialectical approach to ethical questions.)

Two essential elements of Albertian satire emerge from these dialogues: a penchant for impersonating contemporaries – the «masked» characters Lepidus and Libripeta – and a predilection for symbolic animals in an

ethical context. By contrast, Poggio prefers to describe figures from history, and his metaphorical theater of the world has no room for animals.

If we turn now in the *Intercenales* to the Albertian prefaces linked to Poggio – those to Book 4 and Book 8 – we find that both feature animals in Aesopic fables filled with conflict and rivalry. In Book 4, a goat reproves a number of water buffaloes for their ignoble sloth; and in Book 8 a crow scoffs at the singing skills of a frog and a cicada. Now, if we recall that Alberti's *Apologi* are dedicated to Poggio's friend Francesco Marescalchi, it is hardly surprising to find animals as the central theme of several works composed by Alberti between 1438 and 1442: besides the *Apologi* and the Poggian prefaces, we find *Canis*, *Musca*, *De equo animante*, and the seven Aesopic fables of Book 10 of the *Intercenales*, which expand Aesop's fables much as *Momus* elaborates themes from Lucian's short dialogues (Alberti, 1984: 15–40). There are further examples. In the 1990s, a dinner piece titled *Simie*, or *Monkeys*, came to light; and the symbolic rings in Alberti's allegory *Anuli* feature as emblems a swarm of flies and a Pegasean horse (Alberti, 2010: 615; Marsh, 2010: 103–09). Alberti's evocation of the animal world often offers a darker picture of reality, as the *Favole* of Leonardo da Vinci would do later. The novel *Momus* begins with the title character filling the world with noxious insects. And Stefano Ugo Baldassarri has recently interpreted Alberti's *Canis* as a parody of the serious funeral oration, for which the humanist model was established by Leonardo Bruni and Poggio Bracciolini – the dedicatees of Alberti's second and fourth books of *Intercenales* (Baldassarri & Boschetto, 2015: 227)!

Let us now examine Alberti's prefaces more closely, beginning with the fable that opens Book 4 of the *Dinner Pieces*:

Bubulas limoso in litore inter palustres herbas proiectas capram quandam, que maceriem vetustissimi cuiusdam scrupeum supra saxum collapsi templi consererat, his verbis admonuisse ferunt: «Yo, quenam te isthuc temeritas, o lasciva, rapuit, ut herboso spreto litore isthec ardua et penitus inuia affectes? An non prestare intelligis dulci et succoso gramine exsaturari, quam aspera continuo rudera et amarum alte caprificum sitiendo carpere? Velim tibi quidem consulas, ut quanto deinceps cum periculo verucas istas ipsas ambias non peniteat». Bubulis aiunt capram huiusmodi verbis respondisse: «He hen! An quidem, gravissima et tristissima mollipes, tu ignara es, ut os ventri, ori pedes operam sedulo suppeditent; mihi autem non bubulus, sed capreus stomachus est. Tibi quidem si que ipsa carpo eo sunt ingrate, quod datum est eadem ut nequeas attingere, mihi tua isthec ulva eo non grata est, quo passim vel desidiossimis omnibus *pecudibus* pateat. Quod si supinam te aliorum pericula sollicitam reddunt, vultures quidem que ab ipso sub stellis ethere exangue aliquod *pervestigant* cadaver, admonuisse decuit: namque illis quam nobis omnis est casus longe periculosior».

Equidem, mi Poggi, hoc ipsum nobis, dum his conscribendis inter-cenalibus occupamur, evenire plane sentio: ut sint *plerique*, qui nostrum ingenium cupiant uberioribus et commodioribus in campis eloquentie ali et depasci, atque iidem, quod difficillimis istis et non illiusmodi inventionibus delectemur, que succo vulgatoris eloquentiae et bonis fortune sint refertiores, vituperant. Quid quidem si capram hanc nostrum audierint, nihil erit quod nos, uti arbitror, reprehendendos ducant; aut enim, si id vitio dabunt, quod nostram nos non invite naturam, spretis reliquis nummularis artibus, sequamur, mathematicos quoque omnes illi, et eos qui astrorum cognition, et eos qui rebus penitus repositis dediti sunt, vitio partier adscribant necesse est. Namque illi quidem, si ab ea spe, qua tam alte animos sublevarunt, ut celorum usque ultimos orbis mente et cogitatione pervadant, ceciderunt, quis non eosdem quanto sint detrimento corruituri perspicit? Nemo tamen eos liberale quippiam sectari inficiatur. At nos rara hec delectant, que inter lautiores cenas ditiorum quam me esse profitear scriptorum, veluti in pulmento subamare interdum herbe, sint non reicienda. Tum etiam in ea re, si nostre iuvant industrie periculum facere, in qua quidem ingenio stadium et studio assiduitas subeat, quid ab huiusmodi varias et rarissimas inventiones promendis sua nos invidia abducat? At enim qui nostra lectitarint, et quibus in rebus quamquam variis versari viderint [...] (Alberti, 2003a: 222-24; Alberti, 2010: 325).

While wallowing in the lowly swamp-grass of a muddy river bank, some buffaloes, they say, saw a she-goat seated on the ruins of an ancient temple which had collapsed atop a rocky crag, and admonished her in these words: «You there, wanton one, what temerity possesses you, that you spurn this verdant bank and attempt that arduous and virtually inaccessible height? Don't you see that it is better to fill yourself with sweet and juicy grass than always to graze thirstily amid jagged ruins, nourished on bitter wild figs? Take care that you don't come to regret your dangerous rambles on such precipices».

The she-goat, they say, replied to the buffaloes in these words: «Ha! Grave, ill-humored, tender-footed beasts! Don't you know that the mouth carefully serves the stomach, and the feet the mouth? I have a goat's stomach, not a cow's. If you disdain what I graze on because you can't reach it, I spurn your swamp-grass because it is everywhere accessible to even the idlest cattle. And if the dangers that others face worry you as a slothful creature, you should more properly have admonished the vultures, who from the highest reaches of heaven go exploring for some lifeless carcass. Their fall is far more dangerous than mine».

Now, the very same thing, dear Poggio, I find happens to me as I engage in writing these *Dinner Pieces*. For many today would have me seek food and sustenance in the easier and more fertile fields of eloquence. And the same people censure me for delighting in difficult pursuits, rather than in those filled with the juice of commonplace eloquence and material reward. But if these critics heed the goat in the fable, I think they will find

no cause to reproach me. If they blame me for choosing to spurn other lucrative arts and for following my natural abilities, then they must also blame the mathematicians and all others who devote themselves to understanding the stars and profoundly recondite subjects. Can't everyone see how ruinously they fail when they fall short of the hope that led them to contemplate the farthest realms of the heavens? Yet no one denies that they pursue a liberal goal.

For myself, I take pleasure in rare subjects which, like piquant herbs in a condiment, should not be excluded from the lavish dinners of writers who I confess are richer than myself. Besides, if I wish to prove my diligence in this field—in which zeal furthers talents, and application zeal—whose envy can distract me from bringing forth diverse and rare inventions like these? For when they read my works and see the variety of their subjects [...] (Alberti, 1987: 65–66).

We find similar remarks in Poggio's dialogue *De infelicitate principum*, in which Niccoli contrasts his friend Poggio's energy in hunting for manuscripts to the sloth and greed of worldly rulers:

Suscepit hic – me intuens – olim diligentiam et laborem peragrande Alamanie librorum perquirendorum gratia, qui in ergastulis apud illos reclusi detinentur in tenebris et carcere ceco [...] Hec cum ab eo fuissent in lucem edita [...] nunquis postea aut princeps aut pontifex vel minimum opere aut auxilii adhibuit ad liberandos preclarissimos illos viros ex ergastulis barbarorum?

In voluptatibus, in rebus nulla laude dignis, in bellis, re pestifera et perniosa hominibus, etatem et pecunias consumunt. In *pervestigandis* vero excellentium virorum monumentis... obtorpescunt atque obdormiunt, vitam *plerique* more *pecorum* agentes (Bracciolini, 1998: 11–12).

Our friend here, he said, looking at me, once devoted diligent efforts to scouring Germany in order to discover books that, chained in prisons, were held in “obscurity and dark dungeons” [Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.734]. But when these had been brought to light, did any prince or pontiff display the least effort in liberating these distinguished authors from the prisons of the barbarians?

They spend their time and money on pleasures, on worthless things, and on wars, that pestilent and pernicious bane of humankind. But in exploring the records of excellent men, they are dumb and doze, generally living like cattle.

The peroration of the work, also spoken by Niccoli, likewise contrasts the noble pursuits of scholars to the ignoble ambitions of princes:

Hi [*sc. privati*], tanquam virtutum sacerdotes, pacis atque otii amici, soli felicem vitam assecuntur. *Posthabitis enim atque abiectis opibus*, imperiis, dignitatibus, *contemptis divitiis*, in excolenda matre virtutum philosophia,

in rerum occultarum *pervestigatione* versati, ad liberalium artium disciplinas et humanitatis studia velut in portum tranquillum confugerunt [...] (Bracciolini, 1998: 59)

Like priests of virtue and friends of peace and leisure, private citizens alone attain the happy life. For rejecting and disdainng riches, power, and advancement, and despising wealth, they live to pursue philosophy – the mother of virtues – and to explore recondite subjects, taking safe haven in the branches of the liberal arts and in the studies of humanity.

The echoes are clear, even if Alberti compares his own studies to mathematics and astronomy, while Poggio asserts the supremacy of the liberal arts. Both men praise the human beings who look higher than grazing beasts in their pursuit of lofty knowledge and virtue.

As we have seen, the debacle of the Certame Coronario in October 1441 moved Alberti to write the Latin fable that serves as the preface to Book 8 of the *Intercenales*. Since Poggio was one of the jurors who failed to award a prize, the piece has some relevance to our story:

Inter cicadam atque ranam summa et diu apud cornicem arbitram huiusmodi fuerat controversia: quenam illarum musica in arte esset preferenda. Nam et cicadam quidem, aiebat rana, queque caneret, eadem uno spiritu canere, nulla didicisse uti varietate, nullos nosse afferre novas canendi modos, nullas mutare conversiones, nullas vocum inflexiones obire; denique fastidio esse hanc assiduam iterationem peracute et constrepentis vocis. Contra autem cicada, quid inter se et loquacem ranam interesset, hoc pacto referebat: «Tibi quidem, cum canis, fauces tument, lingua retunditur oculique pre labore indecentissime exsiliunt. Mihi vox facilis, peraratum pectus, expedita latera omniaque ad dicendum suppeditant; tu neque comicum, neque tragicum, neque lyricum, neque elegum, neque heroicum quidem canis. Atque dum, repugnante Minerva, multa et varia pertentas, frustra musicam dici te affectas. Neque tu quidem quid in quaqua re possis, sed quantum in nulla penitus valeas, inepte ostentas. Ego autem, etsi leve id et tenue sit, quicquid tamen edo apertum clarum et elegans est». Itaque huiusmodi inter se convitio apud cornicem de musice principatu et gloria contendebant, atque ut sententiam proferret exposcebant. Etenim cicada «Dic, dic» canere non desinebat. Rana «O rex» et eiusmodi exquisitissima contra exordiri occiperat. Tandem cum petulce et garrule ille bestioline instarent et quando esset futurum ut pronuntiarent flagitarent, plena cornix voce et quasi alis execrando: «Cras, cras» inquit et avolavit.

Consueveram in istiusmodis apologis, quos prologi loco ad hos intercenalium libellos adiungebam, quid ipse de tota re interpreter, edicere. Id hoc loco non sine causa a me esse pretermittendum statuo. Tantum non preteribo, o invidi: posteritas de nobis quid sentiat, libere iudicabit. Nos demum inter vos garrire desinamus (Alberti, 2003a: 530–532; Alberti, 2010: 425).

With a crow as judge, a cicada and a frog held a weighty and lengthy debate to decide which of them was superior in the art of music. No matter what the cicada sang, the frog said she sang in a monotone: she hadn't learned to employ variety, and she knew nothing of introducing new harmonies, of shifting and modulating, or of inflecting her voice. In short, the incessant repetition of the cicada's shrill and noisy song was cloying. In reply, the cicada contrasted herself to the chattering frog as follows: «When you sing, your throat swells, your tongue flattens, and your eyes bulge out grotesquely with your effort. I have an unforced voice, a furrowed chest, and an ample torso – in short, everything I need for singing. You sing nothing that is purely comic, tragic, lyric, elegiac, or epic. Thus, by trying every varied style without talent, you strive in vain to win the name of musician. Fool, instead of showing skill in any style, you display your incompetence in all. What I sing may be weak and thin, but at least it is clear, distinct, and elegant».

Thus the two insulted each other before the crow, as they contended for supremacy and renown in music, and begged him to pronounce his verdict. The cicada kept singing *dic dic* [«speak, speak»], while the frog began to sing *O rex* [«O king»] and other choice greetings. At length, when the wanton and garrulous little creatures persisted in demanding that the crow set a time for his verdict, the crow seemed to curse them with his wings, crying loudly *cras cras* [«tomorrow, tomorrow»], he flew away.

I used to state my own opinion on each matter in fables like this, which I added as a sort of prologue to these books of dinner pieces. But in this case, I think I should refrain from doing so, not without reason. Yet let me say one thing. Posterity will freely judge my work. So let me cease to chatter in your midst (Alberti, 1987: 149).

With uncharacteristic reticence, Alberti says it is unwise to explicate the fable, perhaps fearing the reaction of his fellow curialists or their Medici patrons. Such a fear of reprisals reminds us of passages in Poggio's dialogues, in which his interlocutors choose not to name contemporaries. (Marsh, 1980: 52-53).

We find a curious intersection of Poggio's *theatrum mundi* and Alberti's Aesopic menagerie in the *Commentationes florentinae de exilio* of Francesco Filelfo (1398-1481). Exiled from Florence in 1434 by Cosimo de' Medici, the vindictive Filelfo composed a literary dialogue in three books, of which Book 2 treats the topic of disgrace, *infamia*. The main speaker is Palla Strozzi, who analyzes the nature of the ethical good, *bonum*, according to Aristotelian categories. His discourse is interrupted by Poggio Bracciolini, portrayed by Filelfo as an ignoramus and glutton. In this passage, Poggio characterizes his two unpublished dialogues, *De nobilitate* and *De infelicitate principum*, as satirizing the interlocutors Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici:

Pallas. Sit sane ut vis, sed quid tandem bovem definis esse?

Poggius. Bos est Laurentius Medices. Num habes quicquam quod huic definitioni obiicias? Aspice Laurentii latera, aspice palearia, incessum consydera. Nonne cum loquitur, mugit? Os vide et linguam e naribus mucum lingentem. Caput cornibus totum insigne est. Ita, mediusfidius, bovem mihi videor aptissime definire esse Laurentium Medicem, ut et lupum Averardum et vulpem Cosmum. Nam et ille fur ac latro, et hic fallax et subdolos.

Pallas. Etiamne in Cosmum tuum, Poggi, cavillaris? Quid si rescierit?

Poggius. At est mihi apud eum fides. Et quo magis mireris quam est nescius sui, libellos duos scripsi, quos nondum aedidi: alterum *De nobilitate*, alterum *De infelicitate principum*, quibus homo ineptus se laudari putat, cum vituperetur ab me maxime, quippe quem et ignobilem esse doceo et infelicem.

Pallas. Assentaris igitur Cosmo?

Poggius. Et quidnam aliud?

Pallas. Sed facis tu quidem iniuste?

Poggius. Minime omnium. Nam homini reddo quod suum est. Deposuit apud me loculos plaerosque assentationum plenos, ea lege ut ipse pro arbitrio uteretur et mihi quoque liceret uti cum vellem.

Palla. How do you define an ox?

Poggio. Lorenzo de' Medici is an ox. Do you have any objection to this definition? Look at Lorenzo's flanks, look at his dewlaps! Consider his gait. Doesn't he bellow when he speaks? See his mouth, and his tongue licking the snot from his nostrils. His head is distinguished by its horns. By Jove, I seem most aptly to define an ox as Lorenzo de' Medici, just as I define a wolf as Averardo, and a fox as Cosimo: for the former is a thief and a bandit, and the latter wily and deceitful.

Palla. So, Poggio, do you mock even your friend Cosimo? What if he finds out?

Poggio. Well, I have his trust. And so that his lack of self-knowledge may surprise you even more, I have written two little books that I have not yet published: one *On Nobility*, and the other *On the Unhappiness of Rulers*. The foolish fellow thinks that they praise him, when in fact I greatly criticize him by showing that he is both ignoble and unhappy.

Palla. Then you flatter Cosimo?

Poggio. What else?

Palla. But you act unjustly.

Poggio. By no means. For I pay the fellow in his own coin. He entrusted me with several strongboxes filled with flatteries, on condition that he himself could use them at will, and that I can too when I wish (Filelfo, 2013: 256–59; cf. Field, 2017: 226).

Thus, Filelfo has metamorphosized Poggio's protagonists in the theater of the world into the Albertian beasts of *Cinicus*.

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SHIFTING TIMES, CONVERGING FUTURES: TECHNOLOGIES OF WRITING BEYOND POGGIO BRACCIOLINI

Roberta Ricci

ABSTRACT: Bracciolini's contribution to visual materiality, graphical innovation, and the book trade is the driving force in the development of a new philological turn. This essay explores the textual consciousness that marked the passage to scrupulous criteria of editing and writing, which ultimately indicates and emphasizes the historical dimension of hermeneutical tradition. With a powerful impact on readership and authorship, Bracciolini stands behind this groundbreaking entanglement, as we rethink textual transmission and modern scholarship in this digital age.

KEYWORDS: Textuality, transmission, origin, philology/digital philology, *littera antiqua*, penmanship

I have my hand and I have my pen.
That's it.
(Robert Palladino)¹

1. *Within Humanism*

Among the remarkable range of topics with which Bracciolini was concerned as a humanist, I will consider his interest in, and contribution to, the *mare magnum* of hermeneutics, primarily, but not solely, for reasons of imitation and restoration. A journey across this terrain of inquiry, where philology and paleography, two giant disciplines, were combined by Bracciolini into a single instrument of research, suggests a new relationship between readership and authorship: one that demands the time-consuming labor essential for commentary practices and philological exegesis (*varia lectio, collatio, editio*). The relevance of his rigorous and diligent effort to record and document primary sources still serves as the reference point for future ramifications of philology in addressing textual problems, while adapting the canonical scholarship to the challenges of the third millennium. That is to say, the humanist endeavor of collecting manuscripts and constructing methodologies with critical attention to the perspective of the language, the scribal process, the annotations and apparatus, including visual images, remains today standard for textual interpretation, including the *variantistica (lectio variorum)*. A focus on genealogy has proven to be an immensely powerful tool in the empirical investigation of the manuscript population in general, and that of Greek and Latin in particular.

¹ Margalit Fox, *Robert Palladino, Master of Calligraphy, is Dead at 83*, «The New York Times», 6, March 2016, p. A 25.

The increased significance of the written word within the *studia humanitatis* undoubtedly becomes the privileged location of understanding the past as well as the vector of truth, within the new philological dimension of the manuscript. At a time when the Greek and Latin cultures had acquired great importance, humanists became occupied and preoccupied with the study of antiquity and saw it as the unquestionable foundation for Western intellectual development within a variety of fields – ethics, history, language, and script. The practices of enhancing manuscript scholarship (*restitutio textus*) and deciphering the evolution of writing systems (*facies graphica*) joined forces to engage with literary history to discover the paths by which ancient texts were transmitted during that time and, indeed, are still being transmitted in our millennium. In fact, the discipline of Manuscripts Studies (in all its branches – calligraphy, paleography, codicology, apparatus, visualization, materiality, transmission) has been shown to be a focal point for methodological considerations within the humanities, providing significant contributions to the study of literary and documentary texts in the classical Greek and Roman world, in the attempt to reconstruct the archetype in its historical complexity and literary essence. For this purpose, in sixteenth-century Italy, early publishers and leading intellectuals worked together to establish and publish the correct text in its official version (*reductio ad unum*), in sharp contrast with the discrepancies found in earlier medieval transmission: such was the case in the collaboration between Pietro Bembo and Aldus Manutius in Venice, in which the roles of the author, editor, and publisher successfully overlapped with innovative learning programs². Bracciolini's figure within the intellectual milieu of this time articulated the foundations of what would become the specialized culture of the technology of writing, of which today the word «processor» is an extension. Not coincidentally, by reviving, copying, and circulating the Carolingian script in the name of clarity and legibility, 15th-century humanism enacted a cultural process that led to technical competence and resourceful expertise.

2. *Beyond Humanism: Post-Human?*

How has this groundbreaking entanglement influenced textual awareness beyond early-modern studies? *Quantum*? How has the traditional

² «This convergence of scholarship and technological innovation had a huge impact on the culture of the early modern period and became the vehicle for the diffusion of new religious ideas developed alongside Biblical philology. The publishing industry has for centuries used philological arguments to promote their products with labels such as “newly corrected, accurately checked against the oldest manuscripts”, “improved” and “purged” used as advertising, establishing a strong and long-lasting partnership with scholars». Pierazzo, 2016: 43.

understanding of a critical edition changed in function and method over time, depending on specific historical sensibilities? More clearly, will philology in this new millennium still embrace a leading role in authoritatively stressing textual practices and genetic reconstruction in the face of more recent, evolving bodies of scholarship? Will we change from the problem of texts or resist doing so? A parallel reading of different approaches and practices gives rise to some considerations.

In general terms, critical editing is a central field in the humanities, spanning nearly all disciplines and subjects. In Europe the discipline bears the distinct label *Editorik* or *Editionswissenschaft* in German and *ecdotica*, *ecdotique* or *ecdotics* in Italian, French, and English respectively. The scope of current trends on textuality, transmission, and recovery has become broader, often starting with preoccupations about the legitimacy of the philological endeavor as a dusty discipline. In 1986, Guglielmo Gorni, in reviewing the *Atti del congresso di Lecce*, titled *La critica del testo. Problemi di metodo ed esperienze di lavoro*, wrote: «La filologia italiana sta bene. È ben insediata nell'insegnamento universitario, anche con varie dizioni più specifiche; ha riviste e cultori in buon numero; collane ancora attive, malgrado i tempi grami; incontri e congressi anche» (1986: 391)³.

Elaborating along the same lines a decade later, in his 1999 polemical article titled «The “New Philology” from the Italian Perspective», Alberto Varvaro asserts that indeed «in Italy it is almost impossible to become a university professor of Romance philology or of Italian literature unless one has done a critical edition», in as much as in Italy for a long time philology was defined as the only textual criticism. Perhaps this credo is still valid today, as evident in Varvaro's clarification:

Everyone attributes to us this preconceived position, yet few try to understand how Italians ever developed this stubborn conviction [...] Aside from the technical work of Pasquali, Barbi, and Contini, if elsewhere textual criticism is felt, as always, very distant from modern culture, in Italy it *is* modern culture (1999: 52).

Indeed the glorious Italian philological schools of thought of the '60s, '70s, and '80s with Ezio Raimondi, Domenico De Robertis, Lanfranco Caretti, Gianfranco Contini, the *stagione pavese* (Dante Isella, Maria Corti, Cesare Segre), along with the school of semiotics (Umberto Eco), set a milestone in textual scholarship and critical editions, whether fol-

³ «Italian Philology is doing well. It is well embraced by university teaching, even with its specific ramifications; despite financial restrictions, it has a good number of peer-reviewed journals, active series, meetings and conferences» (my translation).

lowing the Lachmannian stemmatology or dissenting approaches⁴, which opened the door to contributions by Silvio Avalle, Luigi Poma, Giorgio Petrocchi, Pier Giorgio Ricci, Cesare Bozzetti, Franco Gavazzeni, Pietro Gibellini, Paolo Trovato, Gian Franco Folena, Pier Vincenzo Mengaldo, Alfredo Stussi, Giuseppe Billanovich, Guglielmo Gorni (and the list of distinguished scholars continues).

Additionally, today the relevance of philology not only explicitly concerns textual transmission in a more or less wide range, but interestingly emerges in contrast to the dynamic configurations of new *modi sciendi* branched out from Cultural Studies and Media at large, on the one hand, and from Theory in a comparative way across the globe on the other. Scholars have developed sophisticated frameworks – such as the notion of diaspora, displacement, post-colonial engagement, female agency, and so on – to approach present and past struggles outside national borders through imaginative processes, all under the umbrella of Anglo-Saxon and Continental critical legacies. This structural shift, with further digressions in *fieri*, resonates vigorously within the intellectual community and reflects widespread antagonism between editorial norms that enable scholars to capture and encapsulate the authorial intentionality of the text and theoretical approaches that move beyond textuality and navigate social, cultural, and political queries best matched to the spirit of the time («più intonati allo spirito dei tempi», Giunta, 2016) outside the literary work.

By taking a perfectly timed glance at the debate in academia, in 2016 the laudable graduate students of the University of Toronto called for papers for a conference with the title *Philological Concerns: Textual Criticism Throughout the Centuries*, the proceedings of which are now published by Franco Cesati Editore (Arancibia, *et al.* 2016). The keynote speaker, Paolo Cherchi, put forward the effectiveness of, and yet potential dispute over, philological elaboration in his opening remarks titled *Filologia, sì, ma non troppa*. He points to examples of scholarly editorial practices that require disproportional contributions from distinguished philologists, but produce seemingly small results in spite of their best efforts. His admonition against «una fungaia di edizioni ed edizioncelle che usurpano il titolo di edizioni critiche» («a mushroom bed of editions and short publications that usurp the role of critical editions», Cerchi, 2016: 28) serves as a re-

⁴ See Cerquiglini, «*Éloge de la variante*» (1989). In his vision, manuscripts are no longer simply witnesses to works but witnesses to culture and ought therefore to be studied in their own right. Cerquiglini was deeply influential for theoretical elaborations within the «New» or «Material» Philology, and Genetic Criticism. See Nichols, *The New Philology* (1990). On the Italian front, Contini and Segre did take into account both the diachronic and synchronic stage of the textual tradition in its dynamic evolutionary line. See also Giunta, «La filologia d'autore non andrebbe incoraggiata» (2011).

minder to not lose sight of how perennial questions shift in light of new media development, as in the case of textual philology after the printing age. Along the same lines, Paolo Procaccioli in his contribution to the same volume, titled *Philosophus frequenter, philologus semper distinguit: la grafia tra la difformità della pratica e la tentazione della regola*, reveals his suspicion towards a «bisogno indotto di un testo puro» («need driven for a pure text»), and explains that «[p]uro è solo ciò che non esiste e che non è toccato dalla vita, mentre il testo, al contrario e per nostra fortuna, è un momento di vita e come tale sarebbe sensato pretendere che ne mantenesse le scorie e le incrostazioni» (Procaccioli, 2016: 90)⁵.

3. Digital Transmission

On the plus side, and to further complicate the matter, there is another issue that does not go unnoticed within the philological discourse: the *informatica umanistica* that discusses the changes and the implications brought by computers within the scholarly editing world, with respect to the older print-based workflow. How shall we rethink textual transmission and textual scholarship in this digital age? Considering the increasing significance of new patterns of *collatio* and new standards of digital scholarly editions, distribution with the aid of computer analysis has become a sensitive issue and opens a series of questions about the future of scholarly editions and the role of the editor. Ever since William Pannacker declared digital approaches in the Humanities «the next big thing» at the Modern Language Association (MLA) Convention in 2009, the attractiveness of the field has kept the conversation on an array of methodologies that are vigorously moving forward. Consequently, only one year later, the digital humanities, in Pannacker's opinion, became simply «The Thing. There's no Next about it. And it won't be long until the digital humanities are, quite simply, “the humanities”» (Pannacker, 2011)⁶.

As it turns out, in the internet culture the ongoing discussion on the role covered by technological interventions on genetics may serve as a potential, fertile bridge between the humanities and sciences through

⁵ «Pure is only what does not exist and is untouched by life; while the text, on the contrary and luckily for us, is a moment of life, and as such it would make sense to expect that it maintains all its refuse and crustiness» (my translation).

⁶ Over the past thirty years there has been an evolving and increasing body of digital scholarship on literary texts (and computational literary analysis) and on electronic editorial practices (electronic literature and other forms of born-digital fiction) thanks to volumes such as Bernard, *et al.*, 2006; Siemens & Schreibman, 2008; the MLA's first born-digital anthology, Price & Siemens, 2013; Hall, *et al.*, 2017; Lloret, 2018.

interdisciplinary collaboration between textual scholars, computer scientists, and bio-geneticists. *From Gene Editing to AI, How Will Technology Transform Humanity?* is the title of a recent article that appeared in *The New York Times Magazine* (16 November 2018) that discusses the human mania to edit genetics (Jannot, 2018). While scientists claim that editing genes is now «extraordinarily easy» in laboratories, philologists still face challenges to reach the fidelity of the textual system as a fixed object of study through conscious genealogical editing. We could then interrogatively rephrase the title into the more pertinent query for scholars working in this digital age: how is technology transforming philological procedures and which practices and data are available to critics to take advantage of the remarkable power of a computer?

Due to the long history of the discipline, the tools designed to deconstruct and reconstruct a textual system, and thus expand our cognitive capacity, have shifted considerably over time, along with our *accessus ad auctores*. Experts in digital scholarly editions deal extensively with cross-solutions concerning recent editions developed entirely on the web, including related philological and conservation issues posed by the recent «born digital» literature⁷. In this regard, Peter Shillingsburg's *From Gutenberg to Google: Electronic Representations of Literary Texts* (2006) explores the tension precisely between traditional editorial practices and computational approaches. While Humanism revolutionized the modality of reading with the advent of the printing industry and graphic innovations that became the ancestor of typefaces for printed texts, conversely the end of the age of Gutenberg is now witnessing the expansion of literature beyond the printed page and towards digital media territory, with an unprecedented explosion in methods and theories of scholarly electronic editions (including sounds and images). Even if we increasingly wonder how «revolutionary» the critical representations in the electronic medium may be as compared to their print counterparts or the extent to which the digital humanities are simply and solely a «paradiscipline» (O'Donnell), the rapid feedback of innovative solutions in web design has led digital scholarly editions to work independently from the categories of their paper counterparts (*editoria cartacea*)⁸. Consequently, Maryanne Wolf urges us to become «bitextual», maintaining proficiency in both the print (old) and digital (new) media, overcoming intransigence, distrust, and anxiety that scholars

⁷ See works by Schreibman (2012), Siemens & Schreibman (2004 & 2008), Clement (2016), Burdick, *et al.* (2012), Fitzpatrick (2011), Liu (2013), Moretti (2007), McGann (1983), Boralejo (2013), Flanders (2009), Nowvieskie (2014), Risam (2018), Rockwell, *et al.* (2014), Terras (2016), Underwood & Sellers (2012).

⁸ See Sahle, 2016. About the digital critical apparatus, see Buzzoni, 2016; and Cipolla, 2018.

may experience towards a new notion of literariness⁹. This statement is significant for the purpose of the present study, and time, in regard to manuscript production and distribution. In fact, James Turner in *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities* claims precisely that philology is the «historical» foundation of the modern Humanities, which, therefore, derive from the discipline developed back at the library of Alexandria as textual scholarship, including critical editions, commentaries, and glossaries.

From manuscripts to digital manuscripts, from philology to materiality, from *collatio* to computerized assessments criteria, the author-reader relationship has evolved substantially with new nuances in light of historical transformations. Yet, the poignant articulation of proximity with the aforementioned issues shows how, in the age of «distant reading» (Moretti, 2007) and digital collaboration, humanistic perspective on editorial care survives in various ramifications of today's scholarship. By the same token, humanistic production, in the form of textual analysis and traditional editorial practice, can greatly benefit from emerging computational methods, as in the case of the digitization of Pico della Mirandola's *Conclusiones Nongentae publicae disputandae* at the Virtual Humanities Lab of Brown University, which adheres to the same rigor and richness of traditional scholarship (Riva, 2002).

4. Back to Humanism (with Poggio Bracciolini)

After this digression on the recent expansion of cognitive technologies and the post-human, let us bring Bracciolini back to center stage. The sense of historical awareness within the domain of intellectual practice is the objective to keep in mind, while prudently stepping backwards to the methodological tools of discovery, reproducibility, and transmission developed by the humanists. The dominant claim on the autonomy of language led Poggius Florentinus, as he proudly called himself, to become increasingly aware of editorial emendation and textual identity, understanding philology as a textual theory and practice. He conceived of manuscript transmission as a product of specialized training with

⁹ «Perhaps the “Next Big Thing” will be Algorithmic Criticism, perhaps it will be Distant Reading, perhaps it will be the Geohumanities, or perhaps, and perhaps more likely, it will be some other approach to understanding culture and history we haven't yet realized. But whatever it is, we can almost certainly depend on it having two main features: it will involve computation, and it will involve a commitment to openness and collaboration unheard of in previous generations of scholarship. Because as Pannapacker suggests, by then Digital Humanities will no longer be a special kind of humanities. It will be the humanities» (O'Donnell, 2012).

expertise in reading and writing, in manuscript transmission and material tradition, as the calligraphic experience was taking a new lead under Coluccio Salutati, Bracciolini's employer and mentor. All is discussed at length in works by Petrucci, Witt, Ullman, Casamassima, and Braxton Ross. In giving editorial scrutiny to classical texts, and in accurately transcribing them, he revived, by copying it, a previous script known as the antique minuscule, *littera antiqua*, used from the eighth to the early twelfth centuries during the Carolingian Renaissance in France, with which classical manuscripts were copied; this recovery was in sharp contrast to the obscure Gothic *littera moderna*, which circulated until the thirteenth century. By copying and popularizing a legible script, Bracciolini was able to enhance textual faithfulness and reduce the corruption of manuscript tradition. Thanks to a new interest in graphic experimentation during the Quattrocento, Renaissance scholars could finally recognize many misperceptions of the previous decades made by less philologically skilled and trained copyists. Ms. Strozianus 96, dated to 1402-1403, housed at the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, is a beautiful early example of Bracciolini's hand, and by 1420 a significant number of scribes were copying codices in this round book hand, even if penmanship varied according to geographical areas and professional fields (Zamponi, 2004). Nevertheless, in this heterogeneous experimentation, one factor remained certain: the improvement of writing came from practice over time of an old script at the hand of professional scribes, who began also to sign their products to avoid further corruption. In other words, all these varieties appear to strive towards a new goal: that of a legible script. As illustrated by Pluteo 48.22 and Pluteo 50.31, both with his signature (*Poggius scripsit*), Bracciolini copied the Carolingian script also with a keen appreciation of its visual dimension, as we learn from Philippa Sissis in this volume. The critical significance of this graphic innovation resulted in complex ways of perceiving textual practices not as a stable entity, but as a historical system with which to investigate manuscript tradition and determine its ecdotic status. Thus, the Carolingian lower script had acquired – in the hands of professional copyists and thanks to Bracciolini – a momentum of its own, soon to carry its influence throughout the Italian peninsula and beyond by becoming a few years later the standard Roman type in printed books.

At this historical point, nothing could stop the triumph of the printing press all across Europe with Gutenberg's invention of the movable type in Germany, and with Aldus Manutius (1449-1515), founder of the Aldine Press, in Italy, who designed typefaces in the *rotunda* and in cursive to produce the first scholarly editions of Greek and Latin texts. Printing technologies spread quickly, books began to travel much faster across Europe. For the first time, advanced modes of learning were freshly brought into focus and permanently altered the structure of society,

thanks to a collaboration that channeled the perception of history with rigorous analysis of its transposition criteria in print and script. Humanist original contribution in penmanship led, therefore, to the concept of the standardized edition in the modern sense, the growth of the republic of letters, and a broader learned community.

Today, as the digital endeavor is becoming the new medium for scholarly editions, and humanistic data navigate the online environment, forms of publication acquire a global perspective in the humanities and offer the opportunity to overcome the limitations of print technology. Yet, in the wake of the humanist curriculum, evolving modes of authorship and readership are precisely what we, in the oasis of academia, persist in instilling with vigor into our students, ultimately making them, the first generation of digital natives, empowered citizens. Exactly as distinguished philologists, such as D'Arco Silvio Avalle and Gianfranco Contini, had already claimed cogently back in 1962 in the *Almanacco letterario*¹⁰, Digital Humanities and philology are not antithetic fields of research at all, but rather *il cervello elettronico* becomes the instrument of the other. Consequently, philology continues to endure as a discipline of the future, although technologies of writing will always be changing in new directions. Thus, with Bracciolini, as he was a better reader and a better copyist, let us serve our students with critical engagement and scholarly audacity to cultivate a humanist sense of citizenship and history that will enable them to disseminate knowledge and elicit the production of meanings in the post-humanist and post-human era. And let us also do so by implementing and integrating pioneering resources and digital tools with an openness towards information that can be shared in the internet age, thanks to the myriad of implications these resources provoke within the cultural shift of our time¹¹. All in the footsteps of the great humanist philological studies: with acumen and depth.

¹⁰ See Balestrini, 1962, p. 100: «L'elettronica [...] è già da parecchi anni uno strumento sempre più importante nelle ricerche linguistiche, intese nel senso più vasto e complesso del termine, e cioè la filologia, la critica dei testi, la glottologia, la lessicologia, e gli strumenti di semantica e sintattica più moderni e avanzati». I thank Alessandro Giammei for this reference and discussion of the title.

¹¹ «It could sometimes feel like a balancing act, and we can be tempted, from time to time, to tip that balance in one sense or the other, to abandon the “old” or resist the “new.” In fact, what the Brown colloquium has confirmed is that the most productive attitude is an open, critical, pragmatic, and experimental one which sees “traditional” and “new” forms as cross-fertilizing and reshaping each other in a synergetic way. This has been the inspiration of the Virtual Humanities Lab, since its creation» (Riva, 2017: 11).

Figure 1 – Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Strozianus 96.

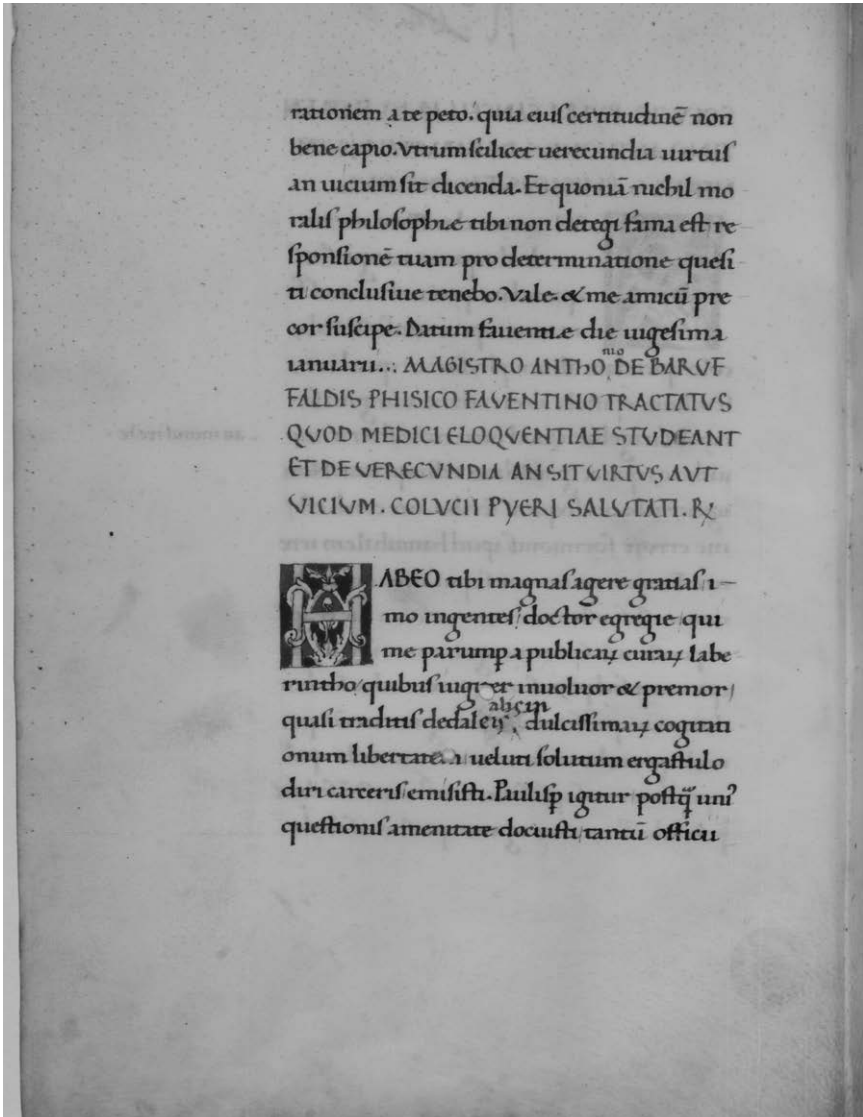


Figure 2 – Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Pluteo 48.22.

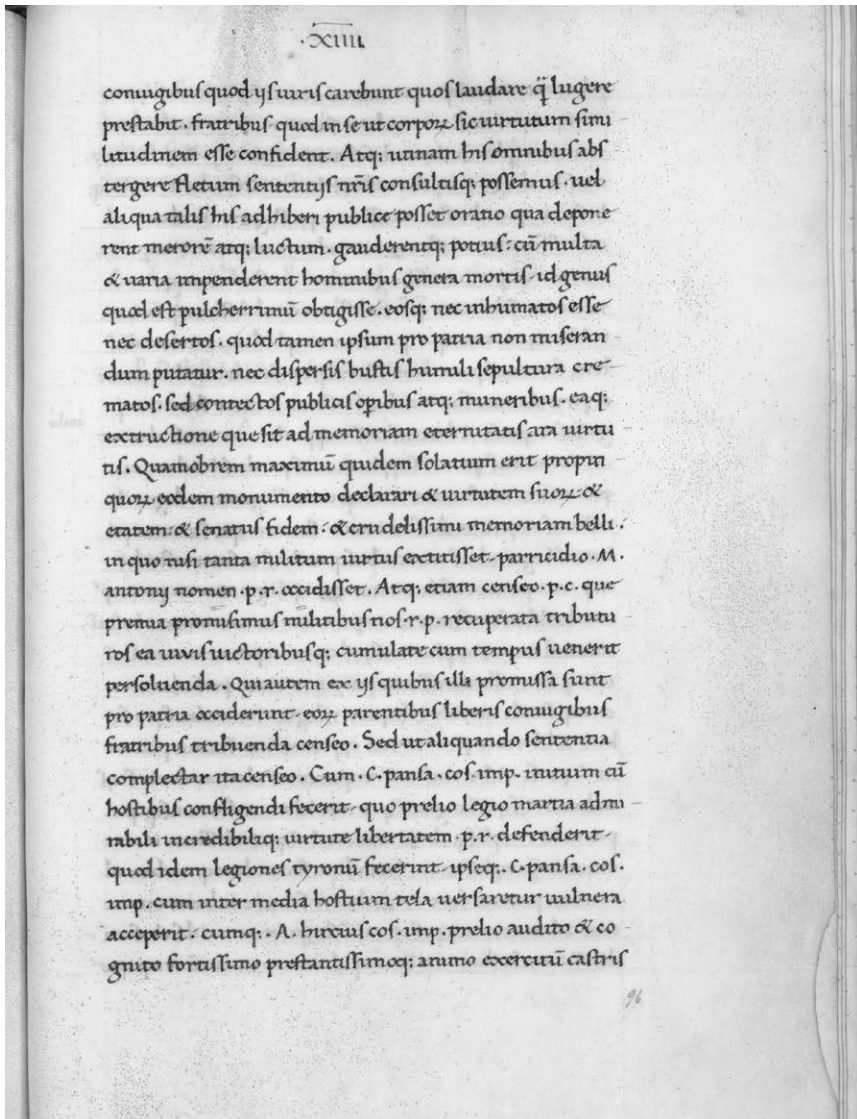
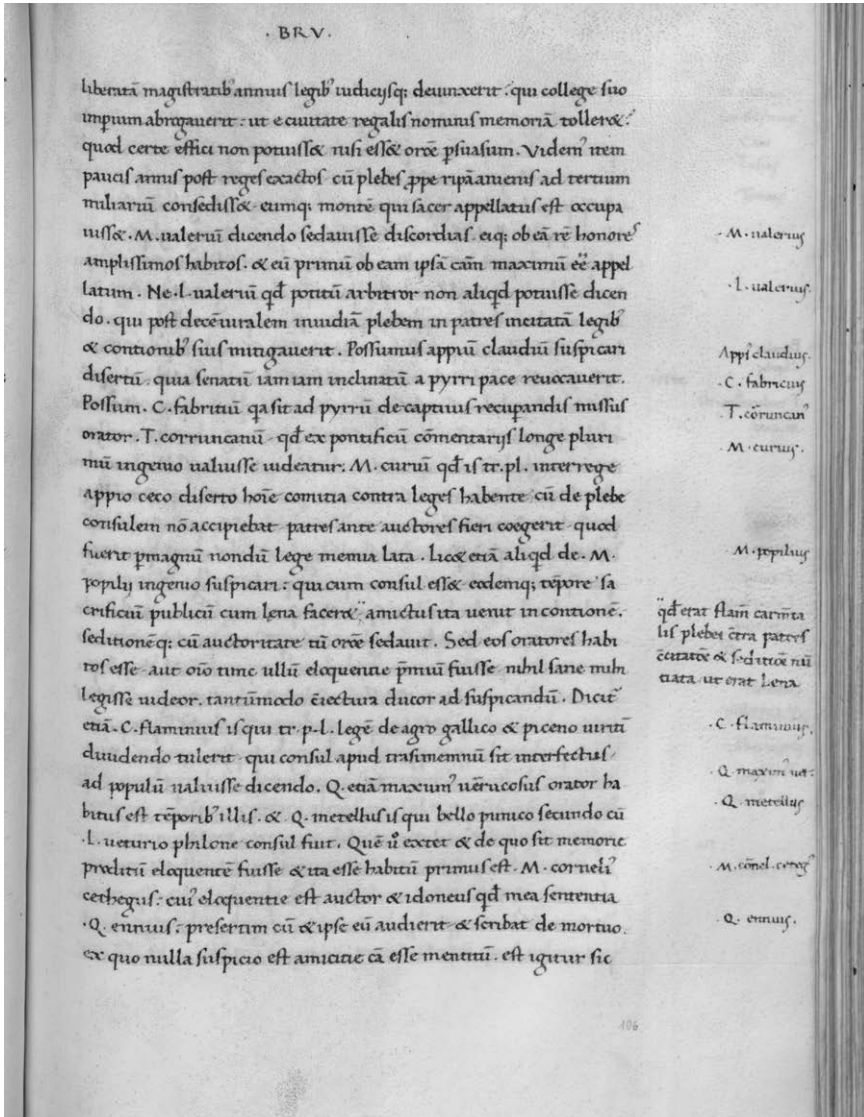


Figure 3 – Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Pluteo 50.31.



Archival Sources and Manuscripts

- Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Strozianus 96
 Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Pluteo 48.22
 Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Pluteo 50.31

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SCRIPT AS IMAGE: VISUAL ACUITY IN THE SCRIPT OF POGGIO BRACCIOLINI*

Philippa Sissis

ABSTRACT: The fact that the graphic substance of writing oscillates between text and image is a potential which writing carries in itself from the very beginning. Every graphic trace on the manuscript page relates to the conventions of time in a way that is determined by the scribe. This becomes particularly tangible when the conventions are deliberately and systematically broken and replaced by new ones on the basis of a concrete concept. By introducing the humanistic minuscule, a script developed on the basis of the historical model of the Carolingian minuscule, Poggio Bracciolini and his mentors and friends Coluccio Salutati and Niccolò Niccoli, created philologically revised copies of the texts of classical authors in what they called *littera antiqua*, the new old script. This paper wants to show how the conscious incorporation of elements of historical manuscripts and their transformation into a specifically humanistic product makes use of the graphical potential of script and *mise-en-page* in order to translate a humanistic discourse into SchriftBild.

KEYWORDS: Littera antiqua, iconicity of script, artifact, rhetoric, visual arts, layout

That means that there is much more to see on a written page than just text.

Das heißt, dass an einer geschriebenen Seite viel mehr zu sehen ist als der Text.
(Gumbert, 1992: 283)

The question of the materiality and visibility of books, beyond the concern with the texts they contain, arises in connection with Poggio Bracciolini's early work. For even before he could make his important manuscript discoveries during the Council of Constance (1414–1418), before he wrote his own literary works (his earliest work *De avaritia* was written between 1428 and 1429), before he followed in the footsteps of his mentor Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406, chancellor 1375–1406) and his friend Leonardo Bruni (1369–1444, chancellor 1427–1444) as chancellor of Florence (1453–1458), he decisively shaped the appearance of the humanist book.

«There was no humanism without books», writes Martin Davies on Italian Renaissance Humanism. He specifies: «[Books] were the prime material on which the movement was founded and the natural medium through which it was transmitted» (Davies, 1996: 47). Especially for the humanists Poggio, Salutati, and Niccoli, all of whom were particularly

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interested in grammar, the work on the book seems to have been, as per philological research tradition, above all work on the text, which they read, studied, corrected and reconstructed (Gombrich, 1976).

But their activity in relation to the manuscript as an object – the book itself – can be described primarily as searching, collecting, copying, and disseminating¹. On the one hand, the manuscript represents the vessel in which the humanists find the text, and which they seek to free from the traces of its transmission by removing elements of its presentation, transmission faults, and other elements that belong to the ancient original. On the other hand, however, they transmit their restored text in the same vessel, because the revised text is finally presented to the public as a manuscript.

The script on the individual pages of the manuscript – developed by these early humanists, using older models and trials of Petrarch and others² – and its interaction with other elements of the *mise-en-page* such as decorated initials, hierarchies of different scripts, and letters or even page margins, become a medium for the self-presentation of a humanistic consciousness inscribed in the reproduction of the revised texts and thus a visual paratext on the ancient authors³.

1. *The Practice of Copying*

The philological work of Poggio Bracciolini in particular is well-known today. The expertise that the Florentine humanist gained in this

¹ To name only some examples, see: Greenblatt, 2011; Stadter, 1984; Flores, 1980.

² Research on the development of the humanistic script and its dissemination has been ever-growing since the first major work by Berthold L. Ullman, *The Origin and Development of Humanistic Script* (1974). Some of the most influential publications are: Ricci, 2016; Black, *et al.* 2016; De Robertis, 2006; Autenrieth & Eigler, 1988; Derolez, 1984; de la Mare, 1973 and 1977.

³ «But this text is rarely presented in an unadorned state, unreinforced and unaccompanied by a certain number of verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations. And although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its "reception" and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book» (Genette, 1997: 1). While the English term «paratext» emphasizes its similar nature to the text, Genette's original French term *seuil* emphasizes the function of a threshold that shapes the reader's access to the text. Especially in the field of art history, and even more in the field of medieval book art, the term is often used in an extended form for non-textual but visual elements that consciously or unconsciously influence the act of reading and understanding the text. The use of the term paratext for the here described concept is more complex and includes other concepts as the iconicity of script and the idea of script as image. On these concepts see Hamburger, 2011 and 2014; Mersmann, 2015; Merveldt, 2008: esp. 191–95. Contrary positions are formulated by Rockenberger & Röcken, 2009. See also Smith & Wilson, 2011.

field was based above all on extensive study: the comparison of different sources and genres, but also of different versions of the same text, led to a conscious critical study of the works of ancient authors in particular. In his philological research Peter Lebrecht Schmidt makes an explicit appeal to Poggio's practice of comparative copying, in which Poggio not only consulted multiple versions of the same text, but also compared them *side by side*, compiling them in a revised version⁴.

While the philological aspect of this practice has had a strong reception, the material evidence of this procedure has so far been largely ignored. The visual effect of juxtaposing different manuscripts is almost obvious. For instance, for the version of Cicero's *De legibus* copied in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. Lat. 3245 (Fig. 1), Poggio compared at least two versions of the text: the ms. San Marco 257 (Fig. 2)⁵, a Carolingian prototype that was written in the Abbey of Corbie in the 9th century and was probably brought to Florence by Poggio himself⁶, and ms. Strozzi 1066 (Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Magliabechiano XXIX, 199), a copy on paper made in the 14th century in a partially cursive Gothic hand that was among Salutati's possessions and probably written especially for him (Fig. 3)⁷.

Visually juxtaposing these two examples while comparing them with Poggio's version makes clear how the manuscripts functioned for him as both prototype texts and prototype *images*. While the Carolingian manuscript San Marco 257 has the clear writing that Poggio adopted for the design of the humanistic minuscule, he did not reproduce the two-column layout or the full-page decoration on fol. 1r (Fig. 4), the decorated initial of fol. 51v or the script hierarchy, which, in addition to the minuscule for the continuous text, uses a script tending towards

⁴ «Konkret dürfte der Bearbeitungsprozess so vorzustellen sein, daß Poggio *F* [*San Marco 257*] kopierte und dabei die zu kopierenden Partien laufend an einer danebenliegenden *p*-Handschrift [*Naz. Magl. XXIX, 199*] kontrollierte, die von dort einleuchtenden Alternativen aber nicht nach *F* übertrug und von dort abschrieb, sondern direkt übernahm oder doch als marginale oder interlineare Varianten vermerkte», Schmidt, 1974: 282–283.

⁵ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. San Marco 257. The codicological details are described by: Ganz, 1990: 62, 154. See also Schmidt, 1974: 121f.

⁶ While Albinia de la Mare dated the manuscript between 1410 and 1415, Poggio rejoined the council of Constance only in 1414. It was only in 1415 that he searched the nearby monastery libraries for old manuscripts. Schmidt thinks that San Marco 257 was brought to Florence from one of the trips between 1415 and 1418. See de la Mare, 1973: 78n15; Schmidt, 1974: 122; Foffano, 1969.

⁷ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze, ms. Magliabechiano XXIX, 199, (Strozzi 1066); see Schmidt, 1974: 238f. Schmidt suspects that the copy for Salutati is based on a corrected copy by Petrarch, which was lost in the copying process; see Schmidt 1974: 244–45. For the very large library of Coluccio Salutati, see De Robertis, *et al.* 2008; Ullman 1963.

a *Capitalis quadrata* for the largest letters on fol. 1r, followed by an uncial script going down one level in the text ordering and a notch smaller in script size, a *Capitalis rustica*, a level further. Poggio's copy uses only a simple *capitalis* for the titles of the individual books. In addition, the manuscript has the single columns similar to the copy from the 15th century. But his copy contrasts with the cursive script used here, or more accurately, the different cursive hands and his minuscule produces a less hurried and calmer *mise-en-page*⁸. The contemporary model Strozzi 1066 is clearly an intermediate copy, shown by the use of partially cursive handwriting, the parallel work of eleven different scribes, and the use of paper, because paper manuscripts in Salutati's circle were basically transitional copies that served as models for more durable and representative copies on parchment⁹.

The version produced by Poggio is thus neither a pure copy of the manuscript's text nor of its script and form. Rather, Poggio actively interpreted the text on multiple levels when producing his revised version. Poggio's method of copying allows us to view the impressive libraries of Salutati and Niccoli that he had access to, not only as collections of texts from multiple historical epochs, but also as collections that document the visual and material aspects of these epochs' manuscript cultures¹⁰.

2. Humanists' Collections – Books, Objects and Visual Interests

The material aspect of the interest in collecting books is already evident in the earliest humanist collections: books, objects, and even contemporary works of art are repeatedly brought together in a single collection (Weiss, 1973: 59ff). Niccolò Niccoli was known for his abundant collection of books and all sorts of ancient objects, as the artist Lorenzo Ghiberti describes:

⁸ In his philological examination of the text, Schmidt assumes that this single column originated from the copy of a text with two columns. See Schmidt, 1974: 239. A detailed description of the manuscript can be found in De Robertis, *et al.* 2008: 308-12.

⁹ For paper manuscripts by Salutati, see Ullman 1963: 146. The letters of Atticus were also copied on paper for Salutati before Poggio reproduced them on parchment.

¹⁰ «Coluccio's library, according to Poggio, was about the size of Niccoli's, which contained over eight hundred volumes. This estimate of the size of Coluccio's collection would seem to be not unreasonable, when we consider that Poggio knew both collections intimately». See Ullman, 1963: 129. Using the works of St. Augustine as an example, Ullman shows that the libraries contained multiple versions of many works: there are fifteen manuscripts in Salutati's collection containing works of St. Augustine; see Ullman 1963: 216. Thus, the page layout of the multiple versions could be compared. See also more recently De Robertis, *et al.* 2008.

Figure 1 – Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. Lat. 3245, Cicero, *De legibus*, 15th century, written by Poggio Bracciolini.

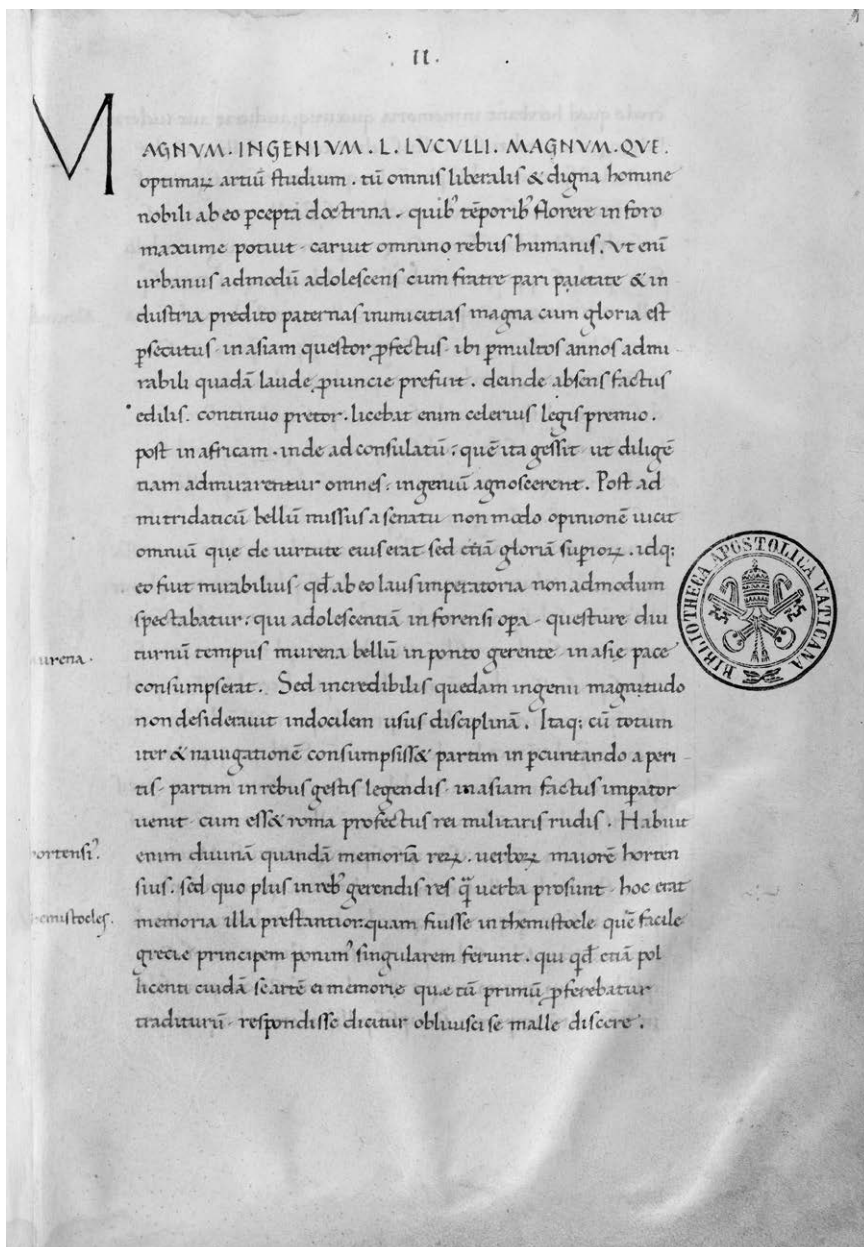


Figure 2 – Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. San Marco 257, Cicero, *De legibus*, 9th century, Corbie.

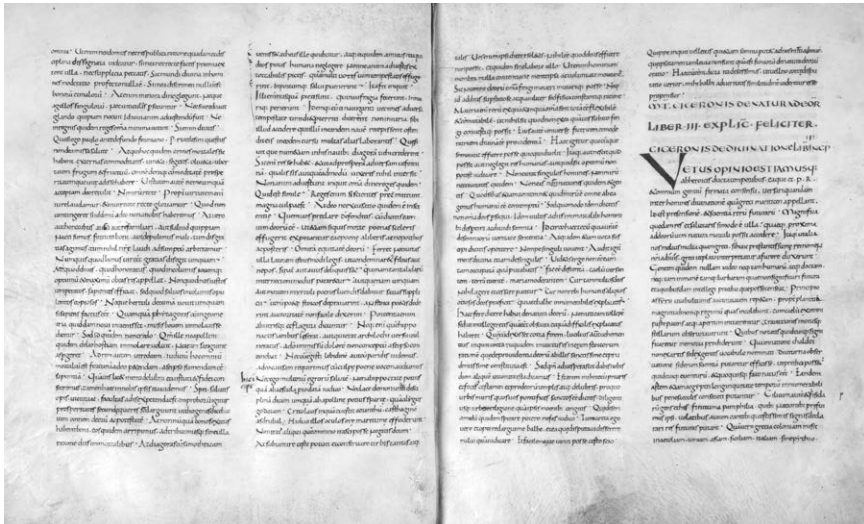


Figure 3 – Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. San Marco 257, fol. 1r, Cicero, *De legibus*, 9th century, Corbie.

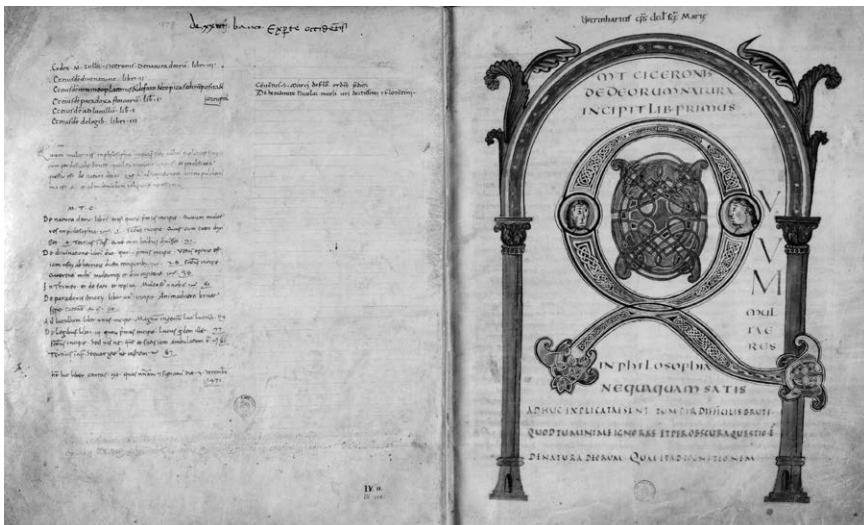
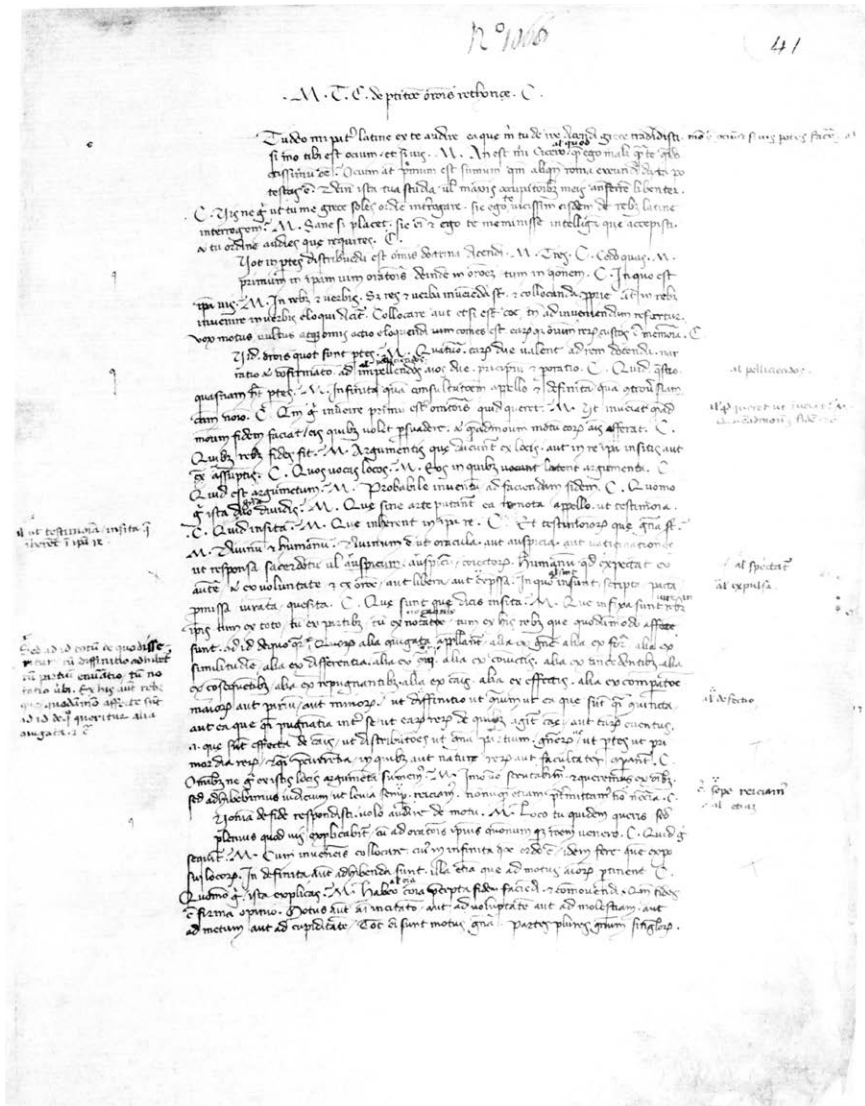


Figure 4 – Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Magliabechiano XXIX, 199 (Strozzi 1066), fol. 41r, in: De Robertis T., Tanturli G., Zamponi S. (eds.) 2008, *Coluccio Salutati e l'invenzione dell'umanesimo*, Mandragora, Firenze: 309, cat. no. 98; Cicero, *De legibus*, 14th century, multiple scribes in gothic hands, partially cursive.



Besides other wonderful things I have had the pleasure of admiring in my lifetime, I would like to mention a wonderfully cut chalcedony that was in the possession of one of our fellow citizens, Niccolò Niccoli. He was a very ambitious man, researcher and collector of innumerable outstanding objects of antiquity, of writings as well as of Latin and Greek books. Among other objects of classical antiquity, he possessed this chalcedony, one of the most perfectly formed pieces I have ever seen [...] ¹¹.

The works collected by Poggio are less well-known, though «they were of sufficient quality to “delight a good artist”»¹², as he proudly claimed. The juxtaposition of these objects – books and ancient artifacts – which are kept and used in the separate spheres of art collections and libraries today, raises the question of the extent to which their natures were not so clearly separated for humanist collectors. While the objects seem to arouse primarily visual interest, books are often seen only as documents and texts without taking into account their materiality and historicity as objects that have been transmitted over the centuries.

The humanists seem at first glance to differentiate in a similar way: Petrarch, in an attempt to relativize the joy of ownership and its proximity to greed (*avaritia*)¹³, makes a distinction between the joy of the ownership of objects and the collection of books. He stresses that «books please inwardly; they speak with us, advise us and join us together with a certain living and penetrating intimacy»¹⁴. The textual content stands above the object that one can possess materially. At the same time, he contradicts himself, as he clearly enjoys the manuscript of Homer’s works sent to him by Nicola Sigero around 1354 – and which he can only possess since the copy was in the Greek original that he could not read:

¹¹ «Fra l’altre egregie cose io vidi mai è uno calcidonio intaglio incauo mirabilmente et quale era nelle mani d’uno nostro cittadino, era il suo nome Nicholaio Nicholi: fu huomo diligentissimo et ne’ nostri tempi fu inuestigatore et cercatore di moltissime et egregie cose antiche sì in scripture sì in uolumi di libri greci et latini, et infra’ l’altre cose antiche aueua questo calcidonio el quale è perfettissimo più che cosa io uedessi mai [...]», cited from Bergdolt, 1988: 32-34.

¹² «[...] effectus sum admodum capitosus [...] habeo cubiculum refertum capitibus marmoreis, inter quae unum est elegans, integrum; alia truncis naribus, sed quae bonum artificem delectent. His et nonnullis signis, quae procuro, ornare volo academiam meam Valdarninam, quo in loco quiescere animus est; si tamen quies aliqua haberi potest in hoc procelloso mari», Bracciolini 1832: 214 (Bk. III, Ep. XVI). Translation cited from Thornton, 1997: 35.

¹³ «Although Petrarch often excused his own desire for books and, to a lesser degree, art as a sacred rather than a secular passion – “I flatter myself that the desire for noble things is not dishonorable”, he wrote to the prior of San Marco, Giovanni dell’Incisa, around 1364 – he could not contain his lust for things», Findlen, 1998: 92.

¹⁴ «[...] libri medullitus delectant, colloquuntur, consulunt et viva quadam nobis atque arguta familiaritate iunguntur», Francesco Petrarca, *Rerum familiarum libri I-VIII*, 157, Fam. III, 18. See also Findlen, 1998: 92.

Alas! Your Homer has no voice for me, or rather I have no ears for him! Yet the mere sight of him rejoices me, and I often embrace him and sighing over him I say: «O great man, how much I wish I could hear you!»¹⁵

The admired object – the book – thus also belongs to Petrarch's collection along with other objects and shares their nature as artifact. It represents a bridge spanning over time to the past in which it was created, and thus, in addition to the information that can be derived from it as a document, it also represents a key to dialogue in its active dimension. For it must be emphasized that the collecting humanists were interacting productively with these early collections from the beginning. The bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci describes Niccoli using daily the ancient objects he collected:

[A]lways dressed in the most beautiful red cloth, which reached to the ground [...] he was the neatest of men [...] at the table he ate from the finest antique dishes [...] his drinking cup was of crystal [...] to see him at the table like this, looking like a figure from the ancient world, was a noble sight indeed (da Bisticci, 1995: 354).

In addition to this way of using the objects to bring antiquity to life, the artifacts were also part of a contemporary production of humanistic knowledge: art objects and manuscripts were seen as historical artifacts at the same time as they were used to produce new contexts. All objects in the collection were part of an active debate on content and materiality: a first example of this type is the *Historia Imperialis* (Fig. 5) by the Veronese Giovanni de Matociis, known as Giovanni Mansionario (d. 1337), begun around 1310. In his history of the Roman emperors, he not only uses the documentary information available to him from Roman coins, he combines the textual part of the historical work with the artifactual presence of the coin portraits by integrating them visually next to the text¹⁶. He thus translates not only the content but also the visual form into a humanistic product. In Petrarch's work as well, this visual side of humanist interest can be seen in the drawings of the busts of the authors he is currently reading. Wolf-Dietrich Löhr sees this insertion of portraits alongside the texts as an attempt to physically visualize the author:

¹⁵ «Homerus tuus apud me mutus, imo vero ego apud illum surdus sum. Gaudeo tamen vel aspectu solo et sepe illum amplexus ac suspirans dico: "O magne vir, quam cupido te audirem!"» Francesco Petrarca, *Rerum familiarum libri XVII-XXIV*, 45-46, Fam. XVIII, 2. Cited with the translation changes by Damen, 2012: 18.

¹⁶ The coins are not presented in a documentary form: instead Mansionario formally adopts the round format with profile portrait and transcription, but translates the ancient *capitalis* into a contemporary form. See Schmitt, 1974: esp. 190.

Once again it becomes apparent that the abstract, immaterial character of the texts is not enough to worship an author, nor is the all-too-objective book. What was researched for is a physical image that can match the affect created by reading¹⁷.

In Petrarch's drawings as well, the artifacts, traditional portrait busts, evoke models even when there is no sculpture, as in the case of the drawing of a bust of Claudianus (Fig. 6)¹⁸.

Within this framework, the books in the humanist collections must also be seen in terms of their artifactual nature, i.e. as handed down historical objects that build a bridge to their authors. At the same time, however, in the process of their reproduction, they are transformed and translated into a modern form that combines historical characteristics with modern elements that can be called humanistic by the initiators of the reproductions. The interest in the visual form of the text in the manuscript also begins with Petrarch, as Otto Pächt has already pointed out¹⁹. His vivid criticism of contemporary scribal practice is often cited:

He complained of «copyists who pride themselves on small, cramped lettering that baffles the eye; by heaping and cramming everything together, [...] [their writing] confuses the spacing and piles up the letters, as though they were riding on the top of one another, so that the scribe himself could scarcely read them, were he to return a little later, while the patron who commissioned the book would really purchase not so much a book, as blindness because of the book» (Petrarch, 1992: 198).

Wayne H. Storey stresses the importance that layout had for the author in his analysis of the interaction between Petrarch's writing and the *mise-en-page* of his texts:

For Petrarch not only was the design of the book a reflection of the edition's intellectual structure, it was also an integral part of its systems of meaning, from the clarity of its script to the unified organization of its knowledge in the text and its apparatus and glosses. It is, as Armando Petrucci has pointed out, Petrarch's preference for the simplicity and clarity

¹⁷ «Nochmal zeigt sich, dass der Verehrung eines Autors der abstrakte, immaterielle Charakter der Texte nicht genügt, genausowenig das allzu gegenständliche Buch. Gesucht ist ein körperliches Bild, dem der beim Lesen entstandene Affekt entgegengebracht werden kann» Löhr, 2011: 22.

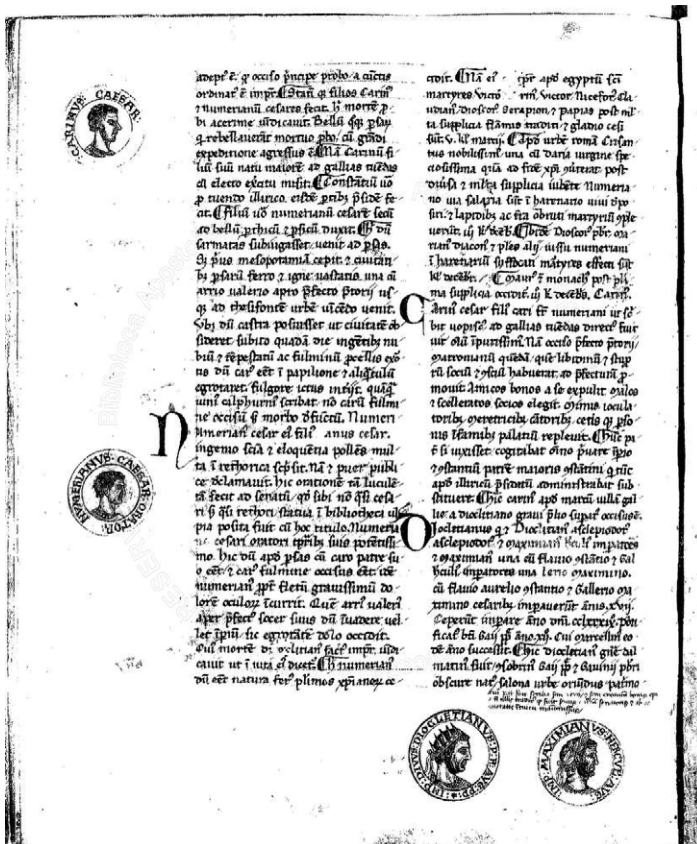
¹⁸ Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. Lat. 8082, fol. 4r.

¹⁹ While Otto Pächt is not the only one who very early on raised the question of the aesthetic dimension of the emergence of the humanistic minuscule – these questions had already arisen in paleography in the 1920s – he is the first art historian to address this phenomenon of writing. See Pächt, 1957: 184–94. For an example of earlier approaches see Lehmann, 1918.

of form that drove him to admire copies of the tenth and eleventh centuries in minuscule Caroline hands and to detest the often calligraphic and illegible minuscule forms of Gothic scripts overburdened by abbreviations and compendia, and tied to Scholastic thought (Storey, 2018: 17)²⁰.

While legibility may be one important point in the development of the humanistic minuscule, the visible demarcation of this scholastic past must surely be considered as one major concern for Salutati, Poggio Bracciolini, and Niccolò Niccoli. They created a humanistic book written in the humanistic minuscule, *littera antiqua*, as they called the historic model. And the layout reflected the ideas of clarity and elegance first formulated by Petrarch (Storey, 2018: 17).

Figure 5 – Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Chig. I VII 259, Giovanni de Matociis, known as Giovanni Mansionario (d. 1337), *Historia Imperialis* (begun around 1310).



²⁰ See also Storey, 1993; and Petrucci, 1967: 66.

Figure 6 – Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, ms. Lat. 8082, Claudius Claudianus, *De raptu Proserpinae libri tres*, fol. 4r.



3. Hamilton 166

The Latin text forms a regular bloc on the manuscript page. Only the added translation of a Greek word stands above the line. The parchment is clear and smooth. The text of Cicero's letter begins with a single decorated initial without further illustration or accentuation; a title page is absent. In the middle of this first page, there is a second letter: «Cicero bruto sal[utem]» (Fig. 7). A simple red capitalization without decoration offset from the rest of the text indicates where the letter begins. The separation of the text bloc from the frame in which the capital is inscribed is not only marked by the end of the text lines. Through embossing or debossing (Fig. 7), the capital is tangibly inscribed into the parchment by a double impression of the ruling. This *rilievo* gives the page a haptic dimension, for the viewer is invited to touch the surface to feel the trace of the ruling, a haptic dimension which functions in contrast to the smooth surface of the parchment itself. This three-dimensional demarcation of the text space accentuates the distance between the regular text lines written in dark ink and the surface of the parchment. On the following pages (Fig. 8), where wide white margins frame the even text blocks of the double pages on both sides, the effect of elegant restraint

produced by the different compositional elements is even more accentuated. In the text blocks, it is the script that functions as a compositional element: the writing lines alternate with an interlinear space as large as the script itself. Moreover, the handwriting is upright without a trace of haste in the act of writing, which stands in contrast to the cursive script in the model used by Poggio (Fig. 9). Within this calm composition, the ascenders and descenders of the different letters introduce rhythmic cuts in the interlinear spaces by giving a vertical movement to the alternation of empty space and writing in the horizontal lines²¹.

The restrained decoration of these first pages continues. On 163 folios, the scribe only integrates 20 decorated initials. And even these are of modest character (Fig. 10): they are colored in red, blue, pale green, and yellow, showing the type of decoration called «bianchi girari» or «vine-scroll decoration» typical of later humanist manuscripts²². These initials may have been based on a model found in a Carolingian manuscript from Salutati's collection: The manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. San Marco 385 (Fig. 11)²³ could be viewed as their direct predecessor, as folio 1v contains an initial whose form and color are at first glance very similar to those found in Hamilton 166. But again, his interpretation is not mechanical. The hypothesis that these initials might have served as a source of inspiration for Poggio that he then turned into his own design is also supported by the fact that he did not imitate the forms and colors of any of the other initials from the same source. For instance, on folio 2v the initial «I» (Fig. 12) appears on a dark red background with small gold ornamentations each consisting of three points. A blue peacock with light-colored vine branches coming out of its beak also appears on the background. Neither this nor other figurative decorations can be found in the manuscript copies made by Poggio²⁴. He also did not adopt the *mise-en-page* divided into two columns, instead opting for a uniform single column. The aesthetic seemed to have been so important to Poggio that he even added filling letters – in particu-

²¹ For example, the vertical lines of the minuscule «d» or «p» and the elegant swing of the «g».

²² For the first art historical observations of the details of the decorated initials see Pächt, 1957: 189–93. More recent studies are: Ceccanti, 1996; Crivello, 2003; Mulas, 2014.

²³ The rectangular cover page that can be seen in the digital version did not belong to the text's 12th-century layout. It was probably added in 1448 when the bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci made other repairs to the manuscript. At this time, the book was already a part of the collection of the San Marco monastery library (see de la Mare, 1992: 188).

²⁴ There are no references to this in the secondary literature either. However, not all manuscripts that fall within the purview of this work could be checked for its possible presence.

lar the letters «o» and «I» – after proofreading the text, thus producing the uniformity of the text block at the expense of linguistic correctness (Ullman, 1974: 129).

In addition to the initials, Poggio uses a *capitalis* that shows some parallels to the display scripts used in Carolingian manuscripts (Bischoff, 1990:146), and very clear parallels to scripts used in ancient inscriptions²⁵ (Fig. 14). This script was used for the titles of books and was always used in combination with a decorated initial. The wide interlinear spaces before and after the titles mark a deviation from the otherwise uniform continuity of the regular text body and are the only element that does so in this copy.

The majority of the manuscript's pages feature uniform text, large unused frame space and simple initials. The letters as well as other elements on the manuscript page, such as ink lines on white parchment surfaces, thus become part of the manuscript's composition. Clarity, uniformity and restraint in the use of decoration define the visual appearance of this copy of Cicero's letters to Atticus, a collection rediscovered by Salutati, whose content and grammar was restored by Poggio.

4. Seeing Written Words

The concrete conceptual nature of Niccoli's and Poggio's interest in the material and visual dimensions of manuscripts becomes clearer when one considers a highly critical remark made by Guarino da Verona in 1412 (Davies, 1986: 61):

Neglecting the other aspects of books as quite superfluous, he [Niccolò Niccoli] expends his interest and acumen on the points (or dots) in the manuscripts. As to the lines, how accurately, how copiously, how elegantly he discusses them. [...] You would think you hear Diodorus or Ptolemy when he discusses with such precision that they should be drawn rather with an iron stylus than with a leaden one. [...] As to the paper, that is the surface, his expertise is not to be dismissed and he displays his eloquence in praising or disapproving of it. What a vacuous way to spend so many years if the final fruit is a discussion of the shape of letters, the colour of paper and the varieties of ink [...]²⁶.

²⁵ Poggio's extensive knowledge of this type of artifacts is evidenced by his study of antique inscriptions, which he documented in a sylloge compiled as early as 1404 during his first trip to Rome. However, as we only have partial copies of this sylloge from two 16th-century manuscripts, it is difficult to make any inferences about the visual interest shown in Poggio's studies in general, and if he studied the antique *Capitalis* in an imitative way in particular.

²⁶ Cited from Gombrich, 1976: 97f.

Figure 11 – Berlin, Staatsbibliothek der Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, ms. Hamilton 166, Cicero, *Ad Atticum*, initial, written by Poggio Bracciolini.



Figure 12 – Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. San Marco 385, Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, fol. 1v.

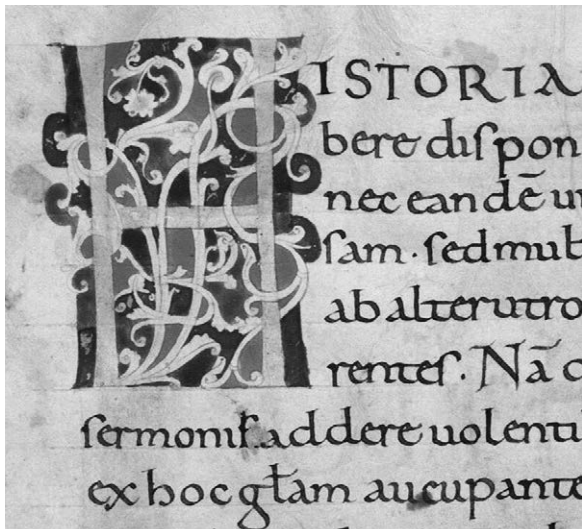


Figure 13 – Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. San Marco 385, Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, fol. 2v.

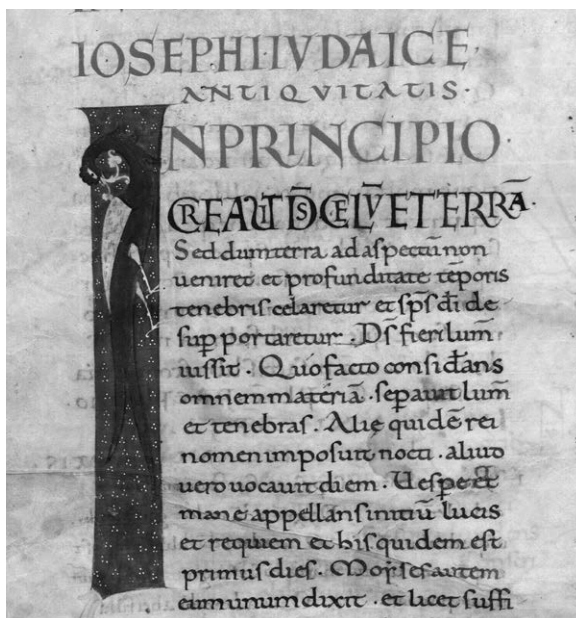
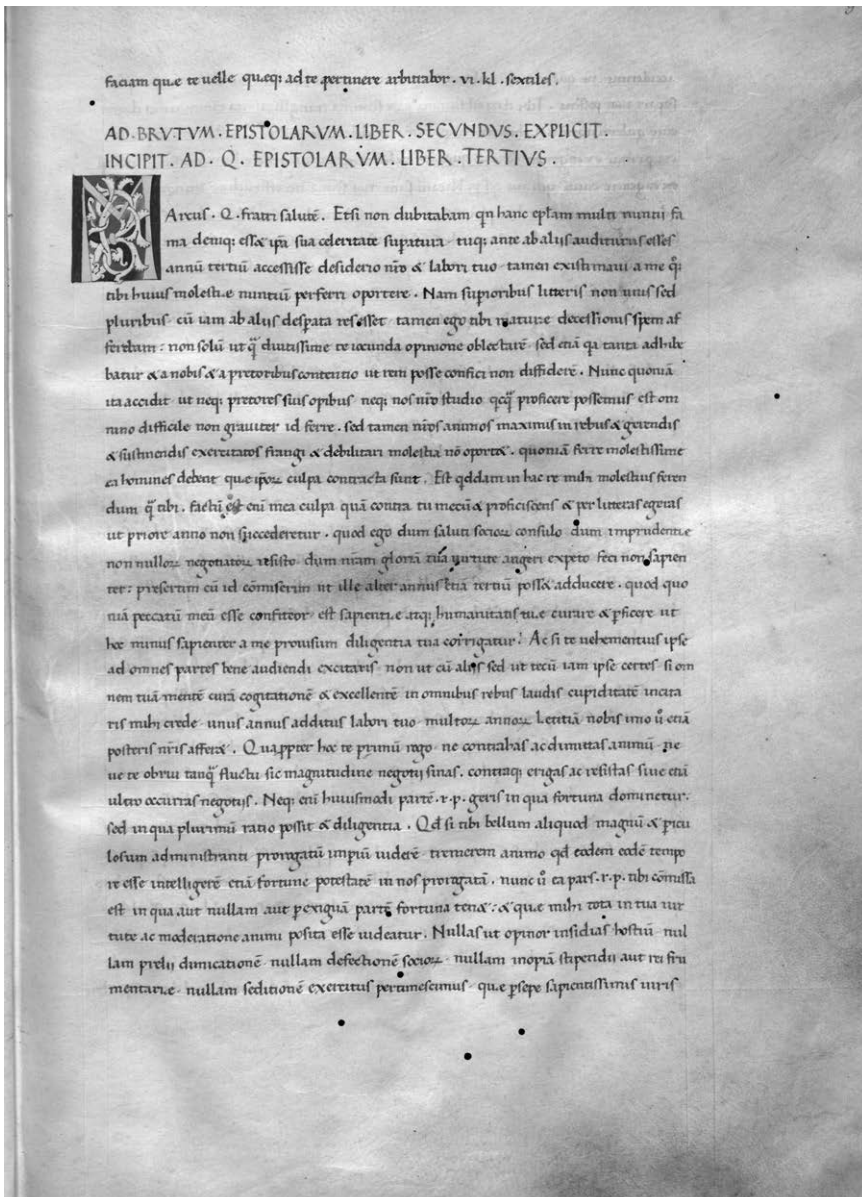


Figure 14 – Berlin, Staatsbibliothek der Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, ms. Hamilton 166, Cicero, *Ad Atticum, capitalis*, written by Poggio Bracciolini.



The material aspects discussed by Guarino are those that appear on the very page of the manuscript. The critical note thus highlights the fact that Niccoli and Poggio reacted with particular acuity to the visual appearance of the materials they were working with.

The references to Diodorus and Ptolemy cited here by Guarino also suggest that the contemporary concern with the production of humanistic copies was not purely a matter of handicraft technique. Rather, Poggio's concept of a humanistic book is based on a multi-layered understanding of book, script, and *mise-en-page*. Coluccio Salutati, chancellor of Florence for 30 years, mentor of Poggio Bracciolini and an important figure among the early Florentine humanists, helped lay the groundwork for material interpretation through the library he made accessible to young humanists, as Poggio remembers in a letter to Niccoli after Salutati's death²⁷, and for the theoretical interpretation of the visual appearance of manuscripts. Salutati apparently based his interest in manuscripts' appearances on a quote by Priscian, a grammarian of late antiquity. A manuscript containing his *Institutio de nomine, pronomine et verbo* is the most ancient manuscript in Salutati's collection, a Carolingian example of the 9th century²⁸. Salutati quotes him²⁹: «The letter is as it were *legitera*, because it shows the path to readers»³⁰.

At first glance this quote reveals a classical understanding of writing as a purely graphic trace of language, prominent throughout the Middle Ages and later. Before Salutati, it was cited by Petrarch, and the chancellor of Florence thus positions himself in the footsteps of his ancestors from antiquity³¹. This definition places an important accent on the legibility of texts, interpreting the letter as the visual trace of the spoken sound. At the same time, however, the path or journey – *iter* – which leads the reader through the book is mentioned.³² As per Quintilian it is the *ductus* that the reader follows on this path through the text, and thus

²⁷ «How can I fail to mention that he was a father shared by all and a friend of good men; all those in whom he perceived some gleam of intellect he not only fired with a zeal for virtue by his words but actually helped them far more with his resources and especially his own books, which he wished to be a cornucopia for other men's use as much as for his own», Letter II, cited from Gordan, 1974: 23.

²⁸ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conventi Soppressi J.10.46. For a detailed description, see De Robertis, *et al.* 2008: 227–29, cat. no. 56.

²⁹ «Years later, moreover, he confided that, around the same time, the study of Priscian's monumental text awakened him – and again he also credited divine influence – to the importance of orthography, initiating his lifelong concern with the reform of spelling», Witt, 2000: 295; with a reference to Ullman's research, see Ullman 1963: 108.

³⁰ «Lettera est quasi *legitera*, quia *legentibus iter praebet*», cited from Amsler, 1989: 225. See also, Petrucci, 1995: 32.

³¹ See Witt, 2000, especially from p. 292 onwards.

³² «*Ductus* is the way by which a work leads someone through itself: that quality in a work's formal patterns which engages an audience and then sets a viewer or auditor or

through the book. While the stylistic *ductus* leads one through the text, Quintilian describes the material counterpart to it, the *litterarum ductus*, which is the line that follows the writer's formalized handwriting (Carruthers, 2010: 195).

For him, both *ducti* lead one through the text, on the textual and the material level. This rhetorical function, which combines the reading of the script with the reading of the text, shows that the material potential of the written, i.e. the visual effect it produces before content is deciphered, can be used as a medium of expression. During the Middle Ages, this potential was increasingly exploited, especially in the context of Christian writing culture. Here, the differentiated representation of the text became unavoidable: the *mise-en-page* of differentiated texts of a different nature within the same book, often on the same page. Holy Scripture on the one hand, and its commentaries, ritual instructions, canonical tables, which clarified the references within Scripture in tabular form on the other, required a more complex use of typography, in addition to the use of different font sizes, fonts, and script colors. Complex systems using tables, glossaries, marginal texts and the like, in order to distinguish among the genres of text, came to be developed (Rouse & Rouse, 1982). This variation of forms and fonts gave the manuscript page a life of its own, which no longer only documented the text, but also depicted it in its relationship to other types of text. Both the basic idea that the Word of God became Scripture, thus giving great significance to the book as a vessel, and the development of varied ordering and illustrative possibilities for the *mise-en-page*, developed the auratic potential of the book and its pages (Martin & Vezin, 1990).

In addition to this symbolic dimension of the book as an object, the manner in which knowledge is ordered within the manuscript becomes increasingly structured³³. The ordering of knowledge in the book was not exclusively textually documented in relation to earlier non-written orders of knowledge, as with mnemonics. Rather, knowledge architectures were created within the space of the codex. The book increasingly became a space of knowledge³⁴. The knowledge inscribed in it was seen as an image of the macrocosm in the microcosm of the codex. Thus, the manuscript's visual design and its script were considered fundamental to

performer in motion within its structures, an experience more like traveling through stages along a route than like perceiving a whole object», Carruthers, 2010: 190.

³³ «Twelfth-century scholarship is characterized by the effort to gather, organize, and harmonize the legacy of the Christian past as it pertained to jurisprudence, theological doctrine, and Scripture», Rouse & Rouse, 1982: 201.

³⁴ On the collecting and the new ordering of knowledge in the codex, see Meier, 2003: plates VIII-X; see also Meier, *et al.* 2002.

the impact of the content on the reader, who was always simultaneously a beholder of its appearance.

Hugo St. Victor, for instance, drawing on the scholastic reading of the 12th century, writes in his *Didascalicon* that wisdom relates to religious illumination: «Sapientia illuminat hominem, ut seipsum agnoscat»³⁵. For Hugo St. Victor wisdom inscribed into the parchment pages of the manuscript makes the material surface itself a source of wisdom. Simply looking at the pages of the manuscript illuminates the reader as if the pages were a mirror³⁶.

Both medieval understandings of what a book is and how it can affect the reader, as well as various aspects from ancient reflections on writing and the presence of the author in his style, are united in the visual concepts of Poggio Bracciolini and Niccolò Niccoli. But could there be a logical formula through which the humanists could translate their literary and rhetorical interests into visual appearance? Michael Baxandall (1971) has very remarkably shown the interconnections between new artistic concepts and *topoi* and ancient literature on rhetoric. And we do not have to go too far to find a model for the humanistic aesthetic concept for manuscript layout, as we will see. In his late work, *Orator*, Cicero describes the elements of good style:

In the range of the same style, some styles are very smart but unornate and deliberately adapted to the unpracticed, the unexperienced. Others with the same soberness seem more pleasing, that is complaisant, vivid and show flashes of very effective ornamentation. Halfway between these two stands the middle and well-balanced style. It does not have the exuberant presence of the last one, nor the flow of words of the first. This middle style neighbors both, not falling out of its frame on one side or the other, a part of both and better if we are searching for trueness, free of either. The oration flows, as one says, in a single stroke, presenting nothing other than sophistication and regularity. It adds a bow to the crest and enriches the whole speech with appropriate decorative expression or idea³⁷.

³⁵ «Wisdom illuminates man so that he may recognize himself», Taylor, 1961: 46. See also Illich, 1993.

³⁶ Although Salutati himself did not quote Hugo St. Victor's arguments, the latter's texts are contained in his collection, and the many annotations evidence an intense reading. Ullman quotes two manuscripts containing texts by Hugo St. Victor in his catalogue: Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Vat. Lat. 678 and Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Pal. Lat. 309. See Ullman, 1963: 180n73 and 194n99, respectively.

³⁷ «In eodemque genere alii callidi, sed impoliti et consulto rudium similes et imperitorum, alii in eadem ieunitate concinniores, id est faceti, florentes etiam et leviter ornati. Est autem quidam interiectus inter hos medius et quasi temperatus nec acumine posteriorum nec fulmine utens superiorum, vicinus amborum, in neutro excellens,

A well-balanced style that does not fall out of its frame, oration in flow, characterized by regularity and appropriate decoration – the rhetorical characteristics of this well-balanced style are translated to the *mise-en-page* of the humanistic manuscript. And Poggio clearly points out his similar interest:

The parchment which I ordered in folio size I want for transcribing the *Verrine Orations* in one volume and likewise in another volume the *Tusculans* and the *De finibus bonorum et malorum*; I want another set for the *Letters to Atticus*. Now reflect on it and see whether this measure will do for these volumes and make sure that it seems to suit to their elegance (Gordan, 1974: 93 [Letter XXXV]).

5. Conclusion

The addressee of the Hamilton 166 was the young Cosimo de' Medici, a friend of Salutati and Niccoli. His humanist interests made him a frequent guest of the humanist circles of Florence. At the same time, however, he remained a representative of his social and political position. The manuscript was not simply supposed to be an interesting work in Cosimo's collection. Rather, it served as a manifesto of Poggio and Niccoli's humanist ideas that was to be displayed in a prestigious and publicly significant collection. The manuscript's colophon makes it clear that Poggio had certainly considered the significance of this function of the copy (Fig. 15): He signed this copy for which he did much more than simply fulfill the function of the scribe. He forged a conceptual bridge between his humanist philological work and an aesthetic that through «*puritas* and «*suavitas*»³⁸ made the purity of grammar that had been restored by the humanists visible in the very appearance of the script. The manuscripts that Poggio produced together with Niccoli deployed the visual appearance of the materials they worked with in order to create a visual manifesto: making works speak to the eyes³⁹.

utriusque particeps vel utriusque, si verum quaerimus, potius expers, isque uno tenore, ut aiunt, in dicendo fluit nihil afferens praeter facilitatem et aequabilitatem aut addit aliquos ut in corona toros omnemque orationem ornamentis modicis verborum sententiarumque distinguit», see Cicero, 2004: 31 (VI.20-22). A translation from the German version by the author is used here as the English translation (Cicero, 1962: 318-21) seems in contradiction with the more recent German one.

³⁸ Traversari, 1968: Vol. 2, Lib. XI, 19. See also Meiss, 1960: 99; and Pfisterer, 2002: 94.

³⁹ This formulation takes up the thesis of Volker Breidecker, who sees in the art of the city of Florence a «visual rhetoric». He thereby takes in the «visibile parlare» of Dante. See Breidecker, 1992: 9.

Figure 15 – Berlin, Staatsbibliothek der Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, ms. Hamilton 166, Cicero, *Ad Atticum*, colophon, written by Poggio Bracciolini.

eadem re agam sepul. hominis familiarissimi & mihi omnibus rebus conameticissim
 per magna res agitur atri. cognoui ego tua stucha in amicof. etiam in re amicof.
 multum potes nos apud plancu uiuare. noui humanitate tua. scio q̄ si amicof. iocun
 das. nemo nos in hac causa plus uiuare potest q̄ tu. & res ista est summa ut debet esse.
 quam cos. de consily sententia decreuerunt. cum & lege & cognoscerent. tamen
 omnia posita putamus in plana tu liberalitate. quem quidem arbitramur cu officij
 tui & r. p. causa decretu. cos. comprobaturu. tum libenter nra causa esse facturū. Ad
 uiuabil igitur mi capto. quod ut facias re uehementer etiā atq; etiā rogo.

M. TVLLII. CICERONIS. EPISTOLARVM. AD. ATTICVM. II.
 BER. XVI. ET. VLTIMVS. EXPLICIT. FELICITER.

SCRIPSIT POGGIUS ANNO DOMINI. MCCCXVIII. A. MVN
 DI. VERO. CREATIONE. VI. MIL. ET. DC. VII.

+.
 .n. l.
 Ph.

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POGGIO BRACCIOLINI, AN INSCRIPTION IN TERRANUOVA, AND THE MONUMENT TO CARLO MARSUPPINI: A THEORY

Paul Shaw

ABSTRACT: The strangest Renaissance inscription is the dedication plaque of Poggio Bracciolini in the church of S. Maria in Terranuova Bracciolini. Over the course of eighteen lines, its letters morph from Florentine sans serif capitals to Imperial Roman capitals. The author theorizes that the gradual change was the result of Poggio Bracciolini coaching an untutored lettercutter in the subtle differences between the two styles of letters. Furthermore, there is a visual link between the letters of the Terranuova inscription and those of the inscription on the monument to Carlo Marsuppini in S. Croce that suggests Poggio played a role in its design.

KEYWORDS: Poggio Braccioini, Carlo Marsuppini, Leonardo Bruni, Renaissance inscriptional lettering

The strangest Renaissance inscription is the dedication plaque of Poggio Bracciolini in the church of S. Maria in Terranuova Bracciolini, a small Tuscan town located between Florence and Arezzo. The lengthy (18 line) text, describes the story of a «certain Roman citizen, needy and in poverty» who, upon complaining to God about his situation, had a series of dreams in which an apparition told him to demolish the altar in a church built by Sixtus II in order to find treasure (Fig. 1). When he did this he discovered two boxes of marble, one of which contained «a small glass vase» which in turn housed extremely precious relics, among them a bone of St. Lawrence. The man brought the relics to Rinuccio da Castiglione (Rinuccio Aretino), a papal secretary and humanist, and asked for help. Rinuccio gave the relics to Poggio who, after helping the man with his poverty, placed them in a new chapel he had built in Terranuova, his birthplace, in 1438¹. The events of the story occurred in 1433, in the fourth year of the pontificate of Eugene IV, according to the text. The inscription gives the date for the deposit of the relics in the chapel (built in 1429) as «anno aetatis meae LVIII» or in the 58th year of his life. Given that Poggio was born in 1380, the deposit is dated to 1438 and the inscription is presumed to have been made the same year².

¹ Poggio bought the country house in 1427 while serving as the principal Papal Secretary to Martin V.

² The chapel and reliquary are mentioned in the Testament Poggius of 19 October 1443. See Walser, 1974: Document 56, p. 362, supra: «Item ultra predicta voluit, [...] dictus testator si ipse hoc vivens non fecerit, quod infra unum annum proxima futurum a die mortis dicti testatoris fiant et fieri debeant in dicte et pro dicta cappella [...] in

The Terranuova inscription is 59 cm (23.25 inches) high by 138 cm (54.33 inches) wide. The text is eighteen lines long, flush left, ragged right, with the last line centered. The letters vary in height from 23 mm to 25 mm depending upon the line³. Word spacing is so tight that it often seems non-existent. The massing is enabled by the liberal use of a variety of Medieval space-saving strategies: ligatures (including a few three-letter combinations), nested letters, overlapping letters, tall letters, abbreviations, and a Z-shaped Tironian *et*. (Fig. 2). Beginning with line 10, *puncti*, a feature of classical inscriptions, are present between most, though not all, words⁴. Light guidelines for the tops and bottoms of letters are visible (e.g. line 11). All of this suggests an inscription struggling to escape the medieval world and enter the ancient one. That sense of transition permeates the letterforms.

What makes the Poggio inscription so odd is that its letters metamorphose over the course of the full eighteen lines from a contemporary Florentine sans serif to a very close recapitulation of the *capitalis monumentalis* of Ancient Rome. I know of no other inscription from the *Quattrocento* (or even any other era or place) that contains letters that shift as these do. While that alone would make the inscription worthy of study, it is the nature of the transformation that is truly as intriguing as the author of the text. B.L. Ullman has called Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) the «inventor» of the *scrittura umanistica* or humanist bookhand c.1402/1403. He has also suggested that Poggio's manuscript majuscules played an important role in the Renaissance revival of Roman capitals. Although his evidence for this claim is not convincing, his idea of Poggio's broader importance is strongly supported by the Terranuova inscription⁵. Manuscripts copied out by Poggio have pen-

Section 7. The inscription has been transcribed by Fubini. See Fubini, 1966: 861 (note) and 863 (transcription). Debra Pincus has called my attention to a discrepancy in the dating of the events described in the text. The text says they occurred in May 1433, yet the fourth year of the pontificate of Eugene IV was 1434. I do not think the discrepancy has any bearing, however, on the making of the plaque. See Rorimer, 1955–1956: 246–51. The lettering on the reliquary has been described as Florentine sans serif of the Donatello school style by Christine Sperling, but is closer to medieval lettering in my view and has little relevance to the capitals of the Terranuova inscription.

³ The overall dimensions come from Sperling, 1985: 166. She says the letters are 2.5 cm high but my measurements indicate the size varies from line to line.

⁴ Tironian notes are a form of shorthand invented by the scribe Marcus Tullius Tiro, secretary to Cicero. The *puncti* are diamonds in lines 10 and 11, but with line 12 they change to dots. Sperling uses the form of *puncti* to separate Florentine inscriptions into Ghibertian and Donatellian schools. However, neither form accurately reflects Roman epigraphic practice that used a triangular *punctus* in various guises. Triangular *puncti* appear in Romanesque and Medieval inscriptions as well as in the works of the bottega of Bernardo Rossellino.

⁵ See Chapter II: The Inventor – Poggio Bracciolini of B.L. Ullman's *The Origin and Development of Humanistic Script* (1960). Ullman (pp. 54, 56, and 63) argues that Poggio's ma-

made letters with minimal or no serifs; and those copied by scribes at his behest often contain initial letters similar to the inscriptional letters found in the sculptural work of Ghiberti, Donatello, Michelozzo, Luca della Robbia and others from 1412 through the 1440s. Ghiberti called his capitals «lettere antiche» but they, and Poggio's initials, were actually indebted to Carolingian and Romanesque capitals rather than anything from Ancient Rome. These letters are marked by thick-to-thin stroke contrast, terminals that are either wedge-shaped or flared, and an absence of serifs. The latter characteristic led Nicolette Gray to dub them Florentine Sans Serif (1960). Such letters play a role in the Terranuova inscription.

In comparing Ancient Roman inscriptions carved in Imperial Roman capitals and Renaissance inscriptions carved in Florentine sans serif capitals, there are six letters whose form is especially significant: E, G, M, N, Q, and R. In this discussion, I am using the influential inscription on Trajan's Column and others in the Trajanic mold as a model for the *capitalis monumentalis* and Luca della Robbia's Cantoria as an exemplar of the Florentine sans serif.

The first line of the Terranuova inscription has Florentine M and R; Imperial E, G, and Q; and an ambivalent N. The M has straight sides, a short vertex and flat apices. Its thick/thin distribution of weight alternates from stroke to stroke. The R has a curved leg (Fig. 3). Both letterforms can be found in Luca della Robbia's Cantoria (1431-1437). The E has horizontal strokes that terminate in brackets or serifs; the G has a seriffed jaw stroke; and the Q has a long, curved tail. The N has three evenly weighted strokes, but the apex is flat. The ambivalence displayed here becomes more pronounced as the inscription progresses with the N and R fully evolving into Imperial forms; the M changing only partially; and the E (and its relatives the F, L, and T) shifting back and forth from a Florentine form to an Imperial one before settling on the latter. The G and Q remain Imperial throughout. By line eighteen the only letter in the alphabet that has not fully shed its Florentine shape is the M that becomes splayed but retains its short vertex (Figs. 4 and 5 top).

The Terranuova inscription (especially lines 12-18) can be described as the first instance of revived Roman Imperial capitals in the Renaissance, predating such well-known claimants for that title as the tomb of Martin V (now dated to the early 1440s); Donatello's signatures (OPVS DONATELLI / FLO) on the statue of Gattamelata (c.1453) in Padua and the statue of Judith and Holofernes (c.1457-1464); the painting of S.

juscules were closely based on Roman inscriptions but Nicolette Gray disagrees, correctly pointing out that they are pen-made and not related to carved letters (Gray, 1986: 122).

Eufemia (1454) by Andrea Mantegna; the *Alphabetum Romanum* of Felice Feliciano (c.1460); the tomb of Cardinal Ludovico d'Albret (d.1465) by Andrea Bregno; and the sepulchre of Giovanni Rucellai in S. Pancrazio (1467) by Leon Battista Alberti⁶ (Fig. 6 bottom).

Although Poggio's Terranuova inscription is unusual, it is not anomalous. Surprisingly, there is an extremely close visual connection between it and the inscription on the monument to Carlo Marsuppini in S. Croce (Fig. 7). All of the Marsuppini letters, with the exception of the K, closely match the «final» ones of the Terranuova inscription in their proportion and key features. The A begins with a flat apex (lines 1–3) but eventually becomes pointed (lines 4–6); the E is narrow with strokes ending in clearly bracketed serifs; the G has an overhang; the M is splayed with a short vertex; the N is Trajanic; the Q has a long, curved tail; the R has a slightly curved diagonal leg; the S struggles to stay upright; and dots are used as *puncti* (though only at the end of lines). There is also a Tironian *et*, though it is the standard 7 form. What principally separates the Marsuppini inscription from Poggio's inscription is the consistency of its serifs, the higher quality of its carving and its airier layout (abetted by a much shorter text of only six lines).

How can the similarities of these two inscriptions, carved two decades apart, be explained? I believe the link is Poggio. He was a friend and humanist colleague of Marsuppini and his successor as chancellor of the Republic of Florence (Martines, 1963). Although he is not mentioned in the literature as being involved in the plans for Marsuppini's monument, I believe that upon returning to Florence from Rome to take up the post of chancellor he took an active role in its epitaph. The authorship of the epitaph is a mystery and the debate between the Martelli and Medici families over it has led to conflicting opinions among contemporary art historians as to the completion date of the monument⁷.

⁶ Dario Covi refers to «perfected» Roman capitals. Covi describes the letters of Donatello's signature as close to classical perfection (1963: 8). The St. James inscription, which reads in full T · PVLIO / T · L · LINO / IIIIII V [obscured] / AV [obscured] / ALB [obscured], was copied, either from an antique votive stone formerly at Monte Buso (CIL, part V, no. 2528) or from Jacopo Bellini's drawing of it. See Jacopo Bellini's *Four Roman Tombs* (c.1450) in Paris, Louvre, Bellini Book of Drawings, fol. 44. The fresco was destroyed in World War II and Mantegna's painted inscription is only known to us from photographs. For a fuller discussion of this debate see Meyer & Shaw, 2008.

⁷ Francesco Aretino (Francesco Griffolini, 1420–c.1465) has been proposed as the author of the epitaph. See Lazzari, 1897: 14n3: «L'epitaffio del Marsuppini fu composto nel 1459 da Francesco Aretino, per incarico dei Medici. Ciò si ricava da una lettera che costui scriveva da Mantova a Piero di Cosimo il 19 luglio del '59 (Archivio di Stato, Firenze, *Archivio mediceo av. il princ. filza XIV*, n. 47. Cfr. Fabroni, *Magni Cosmi Medicei vita Pisa*, 1789), II, 219». Anne Markham Schulz also cites this letter in arguing for a dating of the monument to the summer or later of 1459 (Schulz, 1992: 180–81). However,

I am not suggesting that Poggio wrote the epitaph – though such an act would have mimicked Marsuppini writing the epitaph of Leonardo Bruni, his predecessor as chancellor – but that Poggio was involved in its visual appearance.

There is no indication as to who carved the Terranuova inscription, though the constant mutation of letterforms points to a single individual⁸. I theorize that Poggio, who had carefully studied Roman inscriptions during his tenure as a secretary for the Church and had begun to gather his research into a sylloge towards 1430, wanted the inscription to be cut in true Imperial Roman capitals rather than in the Florentine sans serif that had become popular. The difficulty facing Poggio was how to convey the form of these ancient Roman letters to a Tuscan sculptor or stonemason who had probably never been to Rome.

In the 1420s Poggio successfully taught scribes to write the *scrittura umanistica*, in some cases so well that scholars have mistaken their manuscripts for those copied out by Poggio himself (see Ullman, 1960: 49–51). But, judging from his sylloge, he lacked the drawing skills necessary to accurately render the subtleties of Imperial Roman capitals, something that even stumped Jacopo Bellini⁹. Furthermore, his eyesight was deteriorating after 1425 and that would have made it more difficult to draw precise model letters. Instead, Poggio probably made rudimentary sketches and showed the carver some of the Roman inscriptions he had collected for the garden of his country house in Terranuova. But the carver must not have fully grasped the importance of the details (e.g. serifs) of the letters or lacked ancient Roman models for some of them. For the latter he turned to the Florentine sans serif, especially as found on the recently installed Cantoria in the Duomo. This would explain the M and R.

Poggio must have continually looked in on the carver to gauge his progress and, unhappy with the Florentine sans serif letters, began to coach

the correspondence of Francesco Aretino only indicates that he proposed two epitaphs for Marsuppini (neither of them quoted) to Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, not that the epitaph as carved was his. Tommaso Mozzati challenges Schulz's interpretation of the document: «[...] the text inscribed on the tablet, despite the elegance of the characters, is not centered or uniform, thus suggesting that the letter-cutter was obliged to adapt the epitaph to a space that had been planned for those years» (2007: 118). I disagree with his conclusion. Centering of a text is a decision that would not be affected by the limitations of a predetermined space. Any difficulties in adapting the epitaph to the space would have appeared either horizontally as crowded letters, as in the Bruni monument, or vertically as crowded lines.

⁸ Fubini concluded that the change in lettering indicated that two men carved the inscription (1966: 861). Sperling argued that it was the work of one man, though she mistakenly did so on the grounds that the letters – other than M and R – are *consistent* throughout, which they are not (1985: 168).

⁹ See the sketchbook of Jacopo Bellini in the Louvre (Accession number 401484), dated 1430–1460; Golubew, 1908: plates 43 and 44.

him on the proportions, forms, and features that distinguished classical capitals. Under Poggio's tutelage the letters of the epitaph slowly moved toward being true Imperial Roman capitals in nearly all aspects, including the presence of bracketed serifs. This progress was painful at times as the carver was instructed to fix some letters, and to do so he had to re-carve strokes, thus making them heavier and, in some instances, clumsier (e.g., RELLIQUIAS in line 17). Despite the difficulty of the work, the unknown carver, with Poggio's guidance, managed to achieve the first credible letters in the manner of the *capitalis monumentalis* in the Renaissance.

The close similarity between the letters of the Terranuova and Marsuppini inscriptions cannot be a coincidence. The latter has no other precedent and no successor. Although the monument to Carlo Marsuppini has frequently been compared to the monument to Leonardo Bruni (1449–1452), their inscriptions have not been. The only discussion of either has been by Millard Meiss who praised the Bruni inscription for having letters of «impressive symmetry and balance», a view which I would challenge¹⁰. The Bruni letters are unique among Renaissance inscriptions for their extreme lightness, a feature that gives them an elegance that disguises their Florentine sans serif roots. But individually and en masse they are inferior to their Marsuppini counterparts (Figs. 8 and 5 bottom).

Although there is no documentary evidence of his involvement in the planning of the Marsuppini monument, the letters of the inscription strongly suggest Poggio's influence. As a close friend of Marsuppini as well as his successor as chancellor of Florence, Poggio would have had an interest in seeing the epitaph set out in Ancient Roman capitals as both a fitting testament to Marsuppini's classical erudition and as a worthy – if not superior – companion to the Bruni monument¹¹. He would have

¹⁰ Pages 98–99 of Meiss's essay *Towards a More Comprehensive Renaissance Paleography* (1960) contain his assessment of the Bruni inscription which unfortunately ignores letter- and word-spacing and individual letters such as the P with its large, open bowl and the peculiar G. The P and the triangular *puncti* indicate some classical influence on the carver of the inscription. An interesting aspect of the Bruni inscription that escaped Meiss's notice is the presence not only of horizontal guidelines for the base and top of letters, but also of vertical guidelines for their width.

¹¹ It is surprising that the author of the Marsuppini epitaph is not known. Marsuppini wrote the epitaph for Bruni, his friend and predecessor as Chancellor. It would have made sense for Poggio to have done the same for Marsuppini. This is the text and English translation from Pope-Hennessy, 1996:

SISTE VIDES MAGNUM QVAE SERVANT MARMORA VATEM /
 INGENIO CIVIS NON SATIS ORBIS ERAT /
 QVAE NATVRA POLVS QVAE MOS FERAT OMNIA NOVIT /
 KAROLVS AETATIS GLORIA MAGNA SVAE /
 AVSONIAE 7GRAIAE CRINES NVNC SOLVITE MVSAE /
 OCCIDIT HEV VESTRI FAMA DECVS QVE CHORI /

been able to show the carver of the epitaph the Terranuova inscription as a model¹². With a clear exemplar in mind, an experienced lettercutter (as the Marsuppini *scalpellino* clearly was) would not have needed the close supervision that Poggio exercised with the carver of the Terranuova inscription. Poggio would have been the facilitator of the inscription and its final arbiter.

Who was the carver of the Marsuppini epitaph? Its high quality of execution – the forms are well balanced and consistent, the V-cut is clean and crisp – rules out the anonymous carver of the Terranuova inscription, unless he had matured during the intervening decades. Although Desiderio da Settignano (c. 1430–1464) is acknowledged as the sculptor of the monument, it is unlikely that he had a hand in the inscription. The lettering on other works attributed to him, such as the bust of Olympias, Queen of the Macedonians (c. 1460–1464), is squarely in the Florentine sans serif tradition. Since Settignano had apprenticed with the bottega of Bernardo Rossellino, he may have hired someone from there to do the lettercutting. If so, that carver would have required oversight from Poggio to avoid lapsing into familiar Florentine sans serif forms since those, with the notable exception of the Brunni inscription, were the stock style of the Rossellino workshop well into the mid-1460s¹³.

The completion of the monument to Carlo Marsuppini, a few months before his death, meant that Poggio lived to see the classical Roman capitals he had studied and copied over a half-century earlier finally reappear in public in Florence. It would be more than another decade before they would be surpassed with the completion of Verrocchio's tomb for Piero and Giovanni de' Medici (1472).

Stay and see the marbles which enshrine a great sage, /
 one for whose mind there was not world enough. /
 Carlo, the great glory of his age, /
 knew all that nature, the heavens and human conduct have to tell. /
 O Roman and Greek muses, now unloose your hair /
 Alas, the fame and splendour of your choir is dead. (305)

The text is deliberately not centered, but flush left/rag right with two lines indented to accentuate Marsuppini's name and his fallen status. In the fifth line, the «7» before «GRAIAE» stands for an ampersand, read as «ET».

¹² The only letters in the Marsuppini inscription that deviate significantly from classical models are the K, which is Greek in origin, and M. Other than the K and Tironian *et*, all of the letters in the Marsuppini inscription have close antecedents in the Terranuova inscription.

¹³ See the inscriptions on the tomb of the Beata Villana (1451–1452) in S. Maria Novella and the tomb of the Portuguese Cardinal (1460–1466) in S. Miniato as examples of the distinctive Rossellian version of the Florentine sans serif.

Figure 1 – Poggio inscription in S. Maria (Terranuova Bracciolini). [Ph.: Bronwen Job]



Figure 2 – Left side of Terranuova inscription. [Ph.: Bronwen Job]

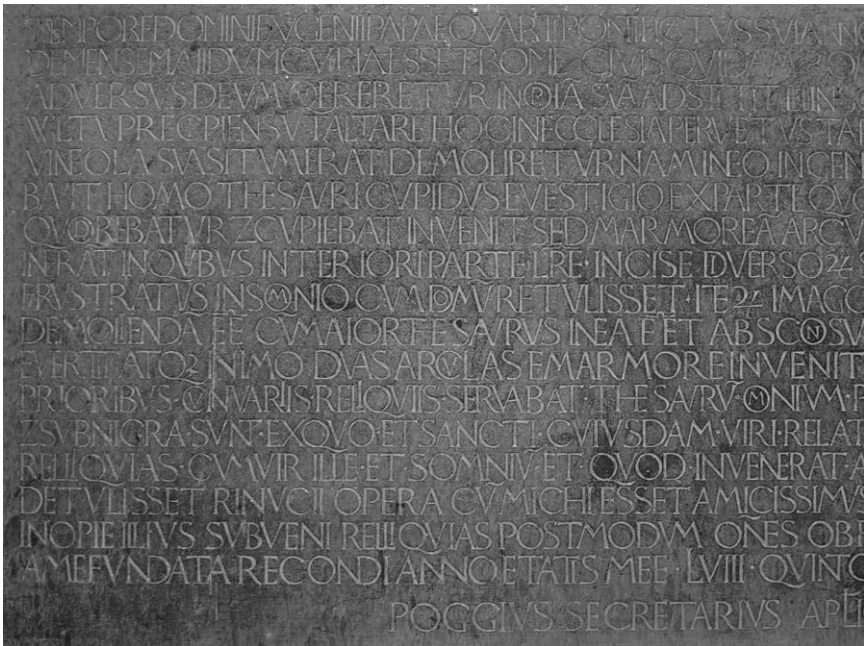


Figure 3 – Detail of Terranuova inscription (lines 1-2). [Ph.: Paul Shaw]



Figure 4 – Detail of Terranuova inscription (lines 9-12). [Ph.: Bronwen Job]



Figure 5 – Letters traced from rubbings of various inscriptions. Top: comparison of Trajan's Column, the Cantoria of Luca della Robbia (1437), and the Terranuova inscription. Bottom: comparison of the Terranuova inscription, the Monument to Carlo Marsuppini (1454–1459), and the Monument to Leonardo Bruni (1449–1452).



Figure 6 – Letters traced from rubbings of various inscriptions. Top: comparison of the Terranuova inscription and the Monument to Carlo Marsuppini. Bottom: comparison of the doors to the Baptistry in Florence by Lorenzo Ghiberti, the Tomb of Martin V (1445), the alphabet of Felice Feliciano (c.1460), and the Tomb of Ludovico d’Albret (d. 1465).



Figure 7 – Detail of inscription on Monument to Carlo Marsuppini by Desiderio Settignano, 1454-1459. [Ph.: Paul Shaw]

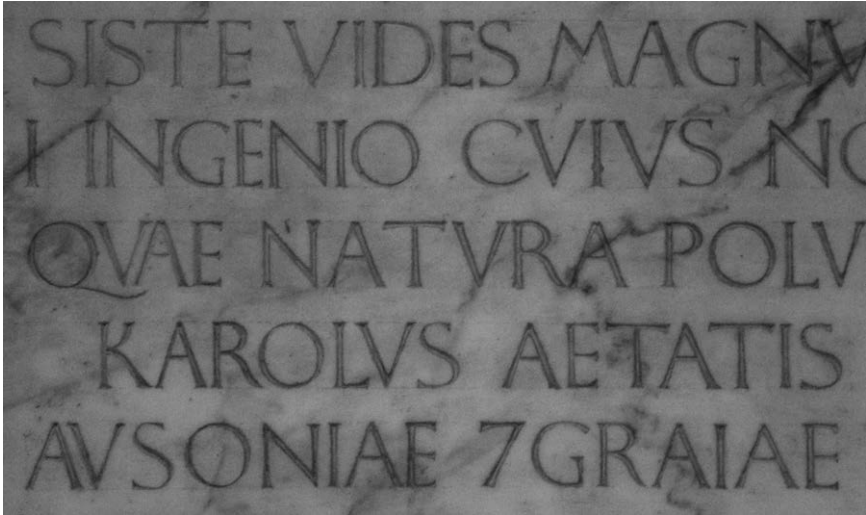


Figure 8 – Detail of inscription on Monument to Leonardo Bruni by the workshop of Bernardo Rossellino, 1449-1452. [Ph.: Paul Shaw]



Addenda

One of the puzzling aspects of the Terranuova inscription when I first encountered it in 2007 was the seemingly shallow carving of the letters. It made rubbing the letters difficult. And for some reason many of my photographs of the letters were in soft focus. On a return visit in 2014 with calligrapher Monica Dengo of Arezzo we discovered that the surface of the inscription was coated with wax from the nearby votive candles. The wax was responsible both for the softness of the outlines of the letters and for the appearance of shallow carving. A third visit in 2015, with Ms. Dengo, Prof. Carlo Fabbri, and several town officials, was intended as an effort to melt the wax and thus reveal the true nature of the letterforms. But a test attempt of a single word in the lower right corner quickly put an end to that idea. Once the wax melted the letters were no longer visible to the naked eye. Before there had been different tones of gray, but now the true dark gray color of the stone, including the incisions, had been revealed. In the dimness of the church, there was insufficient light to make the word visible. However, it was detectable by touch since the original sharp V-cut had been restored. This suggests that the Terranuova inscription may have been originally painted or gilt to make it visible.

Because of worries over the effect of heat on the stone as well as uncertainty over the wisdom of making a visible inscription invisible, we halted our attempt to remove the wax. Since the summer of 2015 I have made several inquiries of conservationists about how to best treat the Terranuova inscription, but since no one has been able to provide a clear recommendation nothing further has been done with it.

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Jacopo Bellini, Four Roman Tombs (c.1450) in Paris, Louvre, Bellini Book of Drawings.

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POGE THE FLORENTYN:
A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF POGGIO BRACCIOLINI

David Cast

ABSTRACT: Thanks to his part in the rediscovery of Lucretius in the Renaissance Poggio Bracciolini has been much in academic news recently. But he was always there as a part of the histories of that moment, in all its twists and turns, as an example of what it was to be a Renaissance humanist in the earlier part of the XVth century. He was born in 1380 and educated first in Arezzo. But he soon moved to Florence to become a notary and from his intellectual contacts there a little after 1403 he became a member of the entourage of Pope Benedict IX to remain all his life a member of the Papal court. But, in true humanist fashion, he was busy always with his writings, taking on a range of general subjects, nobility, the vicissitudes of Fortune and many others. Also, again in true humanist fashion, he was often involved in dispute with other scholars, most notably Lorenzo Valla. Yet, amidst all this activity, he had time to travel throughout Europe, scouring libraries to uncover, as with Lucretius, long neglected texts. But perhaps his most notable achievement was the design of a new script, moving away from the less legible texts of medieval copyists to provide one, far easier to read, that was to become the model in Italy for the first printed books – as it is a model still for publishers. Few scholars of that moment can claim to have had so profound and persistent an influence on the spread of culture in Europe and beyond.

KEYWORDS: Lucretius, Humanism, Renaissance translations, rediscovery of manuscripts, Manutius

Thanks to Stephen Greenblatt and his account of the importance of Lucretius in the Renaissance, Poggio Bracciolini, the re-discoverer of this vital text, has been riding a wave of recent attention¹. But he was always a firm part of the history of Humanism in Florence and Rome in the first half of the fifteenth century, counting among his friends Leonardo Bruni, Niccolò Niccoli, and Coluccio Salutati, and among his enemies – enmity being an inevitable part of the scholarly life – figures like Francesco Filelfo, Lorenzo Valla, and Antonio Beccadelli, author of the shameless collection of poems, the *Hermaphroditus*. The various writings of Poggio, if widely known in his lifetime, were often read in later centuries, above all the *Liber Facietiarum*, a collection of mildly obscene and mildly amusing stories, some of which were included by William Caxton – I take the name “Poge, the Florentyn” from this text – in his edition of Aesop’s Fables, published in London in 1484, as borrowed from a French translation by Julien Macho, which in its turn was taken from a translation into German, put out a few years earlier, by the physician

¹ Greenblatt, 2011: 120–36; and for a recent account of this event, see Palmer, 2014: 233–49. See also Flores, 1980; Deufert, 2017: 85–90.

Heinrich Steinhöwel. According to Giorgio Vasari, writing in 1550, there was a portrait of Poggio by Antonio Pollaiuolo, together with his fellow humanist, Gianozzo Manetti, in Florence in the Guild Hall of the Judges and Notaries. And in the next century he was remembered enough to be included in Paolo Giovio's *Elogia*, published in 1546, with a portrait, later copied by Cristofano dell'Altissimo, that became his standard image, as reproduced in an engraving in the 1730s included by Ludovico Muratori in his vast compilation of the historical writers of Italy².

Yet the story of his subsequent reputation is complex. If the *Liber Facietiarum* was appreciated by some later readers, it was criticized by others and, together with Beccadelli's text, to be included in the list of prohibited books put out in 1559 under the direction of Pope Paul IV³. And in the years immediately after that, Poggio was generally forgotten, though a translation of his dialogue *Contra Hypocritas* was included in a reprint of a volume of writings by Ortuinus Gratius, edited by Edward Brown, published in London in 1690. But in 1715 the Venetian scholar Giovanni Battista Recanati published a new edition of his *Historia Fiorentina*; and in 1723 an edition of the text of the *De varietate fortunae* was put out in Paris and from that moment on he was acknowledged again as a significant figure in the cultural history of the Renaissance. Perhaps here the most notable reference to him was to be found in the last chapter of Edward Gibbon's history of Rome where Gibbon borrowed phrases from the text on Fortune to describe the ruins of Rome and the decline of the Empire, a melancholy picture, Gibbon continued, coming from a long period of distress and anarchy⁴. As he mentioned, Gibbon knew of Poggio from two immediately earlier texts, the *Poggiana, ou La vie, la caractère, les sentences et les bons mots de Pogge Florentin*, a collection of materials by the French Protestant writer Jacques l'Enfant, published in Amsterdam in 1720, and citations in the *Bibliotheca Latina mediae et infimae aetatis* of Johann Fabricius, rector of St. Sebald in Nuremberg, published 1734-1736. The *Poggiana*, as Gibbon noted, was an entertaining work but it was soon recognized to be unreliable in many of its details, or as the Reverend William Shepherd would say to explain his later life of Poggio, so ill-arranged and in many particulars so erroneous, that he

² For the portrait by Pollaiuolo see Wright, 2005: 535; and for the portrait by dell'Altissimo, see Galleria degli Uffizi, 1979: 613; and the engraved portrait from Muratori, 1731: 30.191, most easily accessible in Pittaluga, 2005: xl. It might also be noticed that since the time of Giuseppe Richa, writing in 1757, it has been suggested, without reason, that the figure of Joshua on the façade of Florence Cathedral is a portrait of Poggio, for which see Janson, 1963: 36ff.

³ For an account of the later history of the *Liber Facietiarum*, see Sozzi, *Le Facezie e loro fortuna europea* (1982). See also Pittaluga, 2005.

⁴ For this citation see, with his footnotes, Womersley, 1994: 3.1062.

had been compelled to compose a new life, correcting the mistakes. This new account appeared first in 1802, followed by a second revised edition in 1827 with translations into Italian, German, and French. And it was this biography, together with an entry in Girolamo Tiraboschi's *Storia della letteratura italiana* – he had been one of the first scholars to criticize the *Poggiana* – and an edition of Poggio's letters published in 1825 by Cavaliere Thomas de Tonelli, that were enough to firmly re-establish his fame and importance⁵.

After this Poggio was noted often in the ever-increasing number of the histories of the culture of the Renaissance, in Jules Michelet, in Jacob Burckhardt and in John Addington Symonds, even if he was not always admired⁶. In 1914, he was the subject of a substantial and still authoritative biography by the Swiss scholar, Ernst Walsler, a student both of Burckhardt and the medievalist Clemens Baumker. And most recently, in many of the studies of this period he is there, amidst his enemies and friends, in the writing of Eugenio Garin, P. O. Kristeller, Hans Baron, Nancy Streuver, Rudolf Pfeiffer, Riccardo Fubini, and many others. For two particular achievements he could always be praised. The first was in his role as a great scholar-detective, as Peter Gay put it, re-discovering many Greek and Latin manuscripts, long languishing in the monasteries and abbeys of Europe, as recorded by Remigio Sabbadini in his study of these activities, published in Florence in 1905 (1.77 and 2.191-95). The second was his role in the development of a new humanist script, studied and celebrated in recent years, notably by Stanley Morrison, Albinia de la Mare, James Wardrop, and the American scholar Berthold Louis Ullman⁷.

Much then in the life of Poggio is now familiar in our histories of the Renaissance; but it is helpful to lay out here a general account of his life, full as it was of opportunities and difficulties.

Poggio di Guccio, to give him his family name, was born in 1380 in Terranuova, a small town near Arezzo, that, to honor its famous native son, added his name to its title in 1862. Poggio's father was a notary, or perhaps also a druggist, a «spetiale», his mother, Jacoba Frutti, the daughter also of a notary⁸. The surviving tax records suggest that the family

⁵ Shepherd, *The Life of Poggio Bracciolini* (1802). This edition is now online: <<http://www.elfonspell.com/PoggioLifeCh1.html>>. And for Shepherd himself, see Rundle, 2012: 177-93.

⁶ For a negative comment, to the effect that Poggio and his generation were mere followers of Petrarch, see Voigt, 1859: 410; and Fergusson, 1948: 159-63.

⁷ For these studies see, Morrison, 1972: 264-76; de la Mare, 1963: 1.62-84; Wardrop, 1963: 3; and Ullman, 1960: 21-57.

⁸ I take this account of Poggio's life from Bigi & Petrucci, 1971: 13.640-46. See also, Walsler, 1914; and the comprehensive annotated bibliography by Craig Kallendorf of Poggio's life and works, «Poggio Bracciolini», in Oxford Bibliographies Online: Renaissance and Reformation: <<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0095.xml>> (09/2019).

was financially comfortable but when Poggio was still young his father, fleeing creditors, sold his house and moved to Arezzo. According to a contemporary, Poggio got himself into trouble there but, whatever the case, it was in Arezzo that he was able to attend school to learn Latin and all the elements of formal handwriting. By the end of the century, when he was twenty years old, he moved to Florence where he completed his studies as a notary, soon being received into the guild of judges and notaries, the «Arte dei giudici e notai», all the while supporting himself as a copyist of legal documents. It was then, most importantly, that he met Coluccio Salutati and Leonardo Bruni, the latter whom perhaps he had known also in Arezzo. In 1403, with their support and their recommendations, he moved to Rome and entered the service of Cardinal Landolfo Maramaldo, Bishop of Bari and then, a few months later, again on the recommendation of Salutati, he joined the Chancery of Apostolic Briefs in the curia of Pope Boniface IX as scriptor, as abbreviator, then, rising further in the ranks, as *scriptor penitentiarius* and finally, under Pope Martin V, as *scriptor apostolicus*.

This was the general pattern of his life, even amidst the factionalism then within the Vatican Court where he was attached for many years, serving in all eight successive Popes. Yet he was never fully attracted to the ecclesiastical life, always thinking of himself rather as a Florentine and keeping up contacts with his friends there and in other cities, with fellow humanists like Niccolò Niccoli, Carlo Marsuppini, Ambrogio Traversari and, very usefully, with Tommaso da Sarzana, later Pope Nicholas V, the founder in 1448 of the Vatican Library. All the time he was engaged with the usual humanist activities, writing treatises on a ranges of subjects, *On Greed* (the *Dialogus contra avaritiam*), *On Marriage in Old Age* (*An seni sit uxor ducenda*) – he did indeed finally get married when he was 56 – *On the Unhappiness of Princes* (*De infelicitate principum*), *On the Misery of Life* (*De miseria humanae conditionis*), and many other pieces on major and minor subject. Most significantly he wrote a history of Florence (*Historia populi florentini*) – it was this text Recanati had reprinted – continuing the narrative of Leonardo Bruni, the *Historiae Florentini populi*. And it was at this particular time of his life that he wrote the *Liber Facietiarum*, the text that kept his name familiar even into the nineteenth century, to be seen in the remarks in 1840 of the writer and critic Frédéric de Mercey, who called him a Florentine Voltaire, a jester, full of wisdom, politics and genius, if then later to Ludwig von Pastor – and perhaps this response is not unexpected in a historian of the Papacy – it was clear that much of Poggio's work and doubtless this text, was, as van Pastor said, unfit to be translated⁹.

⁹ For these late comments on the *Facetiae* see de Mercey, 1840: 823; and von Pastor, 1891: 1.29.

But let us return to the particular activities of concern to us here. In 1414 Poggio had accompanied Pope John XXIII to the Council of Constance where it was hoped that the schisms that had disrupted the Papacy for so long – there were also two other papal claimants, Gregory XII and Benedict XIII – could be settled. This was not to be and in 1415 John XXIII was forced to flee Constance for his life, the anti-Popes Gregory XII and Benedict XIII were deposed, to be succeeded two years later in November 1417 by Pope Martin V who was then able to assume the full and unique authority of the papal office. Poggio saw much in Constance that was troubling, above all the burning of the Czech theologian Jan Hus – his letters describing this event have been published separately – but he stayed there after John XXIII left, using the time when the Holy See was vacant to travel and search for classical manuscripts in the nearby monasteries and cathedrals of Switzerland, Germany, and France. This activity was not new for him since earlier in 1407 he had visited libraries in Montecassino and Naples and in 1415, perhaps while on a mission for John XXIII, he had found two texts of Cicero in the Abbey of Cluny, the *Pro Murena* and the *Pro Sexto Roscio*, only partially available before. But in the investigations he was able to make in 1416 and 1417, on four separate expeditions, travelling sometimes with friends, he uncovered an extraordinary number of new texts, waiting to be rescued, as he put it, from the barbarians, so little sensible of their value; the full text of Quintilian, the first books of the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus, the commentary of Asconius Pedianus on five orations of Cicero and another, also ascribed to him though written at a later date, on four of the Verrine orations, the commentary on twelve lines of Virgil by Priscianus, texts by Lactantius and the *De Architectura* of Vitruvius, the full text of the *De re militari* by Vegetius Renuatus and those of many others authors, of Manilius and Silius Italicus and Ammianus Marcellinus and Tertullian, other significant writings of Cicero, the *Silvae* of Statius, a second codex of Quintilian, writings by the grammarian Flavius Caper, by the Byzantine writer Eutyches, by the grammarians Marcus Valerius Probus and Nonius Marcellus. And, of course, to return to where we started, he discovered the full text of Lucretius, probably in the Benedictine monastery in Fulda, a copy of which he sent to Niccolò Niccoli who made a transcription which became the model for many other copies.

This was a remarkable record, the re-discovery of so many classical and post-classical writers, famous and less known. And yet, despite the reputation among humanists that these discoveries brought Poggio, the next years were difficult. At the end of the Council of Constance he returned to his position as Apostolic Secretary to Martin V. But after a year, recognizing that there was little chance of further preferment at the Papal Court, he accepted an invitation from Cardinal Henry Beaufort, Bishop

of Winchester – later Cardinal Beaufort was to be one of the inquisitors of Joan of Arc – and traveled to England, where he remained four years, from 1418 to 1423. He was not happy there; he did not like the climate, perhaps also the food, and certainly the character of the English disappointed him. The nobles, he wrote, think it disgraceful to reside in cities and estimate the degree of a man's nobility merely by the extent of his estates. Above all he missed his friends and the expeditions he made to the libraries in English monasteries were disappointing, the only manuscript of any value he discovered being one of the *Chronicle* of Sigebert of Gembloux, a minor monk of the tenth century. But this failure to discover any new texts led him back to read the Christian Fathers, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Ambrosius, and St. John Chryostomus, an experience that served him well as material for the moral treatises he was to write in the years that followed, reminding him how so much of what he read in later writers depended on what was to be found in those earlier texts.

On his return to Italy, he went back also to his position of secretary under Pope Martin V, noting, as before, the endless political and ecclesiastical battles in and around the Papal court. He also resumed his search for forgotten texts, finding a manuscript with a large part of the text of Petronius and, in 1429 in the library of Montecassino the treatise on aqueducts, *De aquaeductu*, by Frontinus, and the *Matheseos* of Firmicus Maternus, a text already known to Petrarch. His position at the Papal court also allowed him, scrupulously or unscrupulously, to collect manuscripts from scholars passing through. From 1434 onwards he was back in Florence with Pope Eugene IV, being then posted to various other cities, to Bologna and Ferrara, to Florence again and Siena and then back to Rome. It was also at this time, having married his young bride Selvaggia dei Buondelmonti and abandoning his mistress Lucia Panelli and their many illegitimate children, that he purchased a villa in the Valdarno, raising the money necessary by selling a manuscript of Livy that he had transcribed. This country seat he filled with classical sculptures and coins and inscriptions, some of which were praised, as he remarked in one of his letters, by the sculptor Donatello¹⁰. His last years were spent, not always to his liking, as Chancellor of the Florentine Republic, a position he referred once as a public servitude, held under the patronage of Cosimo de' Medici, but one that allowed him leisure enough to edit his correspondence and complete his history of Florence. Less nobly perhaps, this position gave him the time and energy to indulge in new controversies, with such figures as Guarino da Verona, Bartolommeo Facio and, most notably, with Lorenzo Valla. In 1459 he died and was buried in the Church of Santa Croce in Florence.

¹⁰ For a note on the villa in the Valdarno see Rorimer, 1955–1956: 246–51; and Bacci, 1963: 65–87. For the praise Donatello offered a piece of ancient sculpture see Janson, 1963: 101.

About Poggio's establishment of a new script, despite its importance for the subsequent study of the classical texts much less, until recently, has been said; nothing, for example, is noted of this activity by Girolamo Tiraboschi or the Reverend Shepherd. The first scholars to remark upon the significance of this aspect of his work seem to have been Nicola Barone, August Wilmanns and in 1918 the historian Emile Bernheim. But still it was not until a few years later, in the studies of Alfred Hessel and Berthold L. Ullman, that any fuller scholarly attention was given to the development of this script, the so-called *lettera antica*, based on the model of the Carolingian minuscule and then to the ways in which it supplanted the Gothic script, the so-called *lettera moderna*, that had previously been used in the transcription of manuscripts.

Poggio had begun his life in Florence, beyond his notarial duties, as a copyist of manuscripts for Salutati and it was in just such a copy of a text by Salutati, the *De verecundia*, written between 1402 and 1403, that the forms of this script first appeared. There is much we might say of its significance. For if Poggio's recovery of the ancient manuscripts can be seen as his way of rescuing them from the ravages of time, something similar was implicit here, that the beauty and clarity of this new script could also suggest a transcendence, defining forms that existed beyond any particular or specific moment. The reception and diffusion of this script had a clear effect for if in his informal writings Poggio might continue to use the cursive Gothic script in the transmission of classical texts he was able, both from his authority as a scholar and with the patronage of Salutati and Niccoli, to establish the significance of this script for such purposes and train other scholars to work in this new style, however much time and effort it required, who then could take it with them as they moved to other scholarly centers. In time the details of the forms of this script were enriched by the evidence of the letters of the classical inscriptions which were, at that moment, being ever more noted and scrutinized. Here scholars in Venice and Padua were especially important, figures like Felice Feliciano and Fra Giovanni Giocondo, both of whom carefully transcribed and illustrated the inscriptions they recorded, the forms of which, now beyond any correct requirements of epigraphy, became part of a whole new practice of writing. The next step in the development of this script, seen now in another burgeoning medium, appeared in Venice in products of the press of Aldus Manutius who was so concerned to produce a cursive variant of the *lettera antica* which, as a printed script, could stand as a form of writing and legibility, before this time, seen only in the rarest of manuscripts¹¹.

¹¹ For this account of Manutius, see Davies, 1999.

This is the last step in our history. And if Manutius was also much concerned with the development of a printed script to represent Greek writings that he had – here he knew the market for such books was limited to those few in Italy who could read that language – he printed many texts in Latin, and above all, as is now fully recognized, the magnificent text of the *Hypnerotomachia Polyphili*, published in 1499¹². This was written in what could be called the Aldine roman, a script defined now more fully in accord with the demands and ideals of typography than anything seen in the script of manuscripts. We return to where we started; that the last book Aldus printed was a text of Lucretius, edited by the Venetian Andrea Navagero and published in 1515, almost a hundred years after Poggio's discovery of this text in the dusty library of the monastery of Fulda.

We can end with what is, I venture to say, a profound parallel to this history of Poggio and the transformation of a new written script into the world of printed books in which still we live, as we read in Ricci's essay in this volume on «technologies of writing». The Reverend Robert Palladino, who died recently, was a scholar of calligraphy who taught for several years at Reed College in Portland, Oregon. In one of his classes was Steve Jobs who, so the story goes, was fascinated by the care and beauty of the calligraphic forms Palladino demonstrated, so much so that when it came time to decide what script should be used on his new internet devices, it was this script he chose as a model¹³. Poggio/Manutius; Palladino/Jobs. We are the beneficiaries of them all.

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¹² For a recent account of the authorship of this text, see Ariani & Gabriele, 1998: LXIII-XC.

¹³ For Palladino, see most easily his obituary by Margalit Fox, «The New York Times», 6 March 2016: <<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/06/arts/design/rev-rob-ert-palladino-83-scribe-who-shaped-apples-fonts.html>> (09/2019)

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POGGIO AND OTHER BOOK HUNTERS

Julia Haig Gaisser

ABSTRACT: Seeking out rare and precious texts, or book hunting, was a favorite pursuit of the Renaissance humanists, but the activity had been practiced with enthusiasm (and often guile) since antiquity. This paper discusses the phenomenon over time, looking at representative book hunters from Aulus Gellius (second century CE) to Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), who was probably the most famous book hunter of them all. I will consider the discoveries of Catullus, Cicero's *Letters to Atticus*, and Apuleius as well as several of the most famous finds of Poggio himself, emphasizing in each case the circumstances and method of discovery, the importance of the find, and the fate of the discovered book. The paper will close with a brief epilogue on some modern book hunters.

KEYWORDS: book hunting, libraries, Phyllis Gordan, Dante, Boccaccio, Niccoló Niccoli, Cicero, Catullus, Apuleius, Quintilian, Lucretius

Book hunting – by which I mean seeking out rare and precious texts, usually belonging to someone else – is an ancient if not always honorable activity; and it has been enthusiastically practiced since at least the time of the Alexandrian library¹. Then, as the story goes, the Ptolemies stopped every arriving ship, confiscated its books and replaced them with copies. They borrowed the precious official texts of the tragedians from Athens, paying a huge deposit of fifteen talents. But instead of returning the books themselves, they gave back elegant and beautiful copies, forfeiting their deposit and thereby paying the largest library fine in history. The Romans were equally unscrupulous, bringing home whole libraries as war booty from Greece. But book acquisition in antiquity was not always so reprehensible, and we have a few cases where it was carried out by individuals and on a more modest scale.

One of the best examples is found in a story told by the second-century C.E. Roman polymath, Aulus Gellius. Gellius, it seems, had returned from Greece and was strolling around the port at Brundisium when he saw some books for sale, the book rolls tied together like bunches of sticks.

And I eagerly rushed over to them at once. They were all Greek books, full of amazing tales – unheard of things, unbelievable, and the writers were ancient and of no small authority: Aristaeus of Proconnesus, Isigonus of Nicaea, Ctesias and Onesicritus, Philostephanus and Hegesias. But the book rolls themselves were filthy from long neglect. They were in

¹ Galen, *Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics*, XVII (1), pp. 606–07, in *Corpus medicorum Graecorum* (1936) 10.2.1: 79. See also Fraser, 1972: 1.325.

terrible condition and looked dreadful. I went up and asked the price. Attracted by the amazingly and unexpectedly small amount, I bought a large quantity of books for almost nothing, and quickly went through all of them in the next two nights².

Unfortunately, however, Gellius's treasures turned out to be a disappointment, or so he claims. After summarizing their far-fetched and incredible lore in suspiciously enthusiastic detail, he says that he was seized by disgust at such worthless stuff, of no benefit to the «enrichment or profit of life»³.

Gellius's story includes several details that we will see again in the narratives and experiences of later manuscript hunters: the serendipitous discovery, the dilapidation of the books, the excitement of the discoverer, and – sometimes, at least – the disappointing nature of the recovered book. The sequel of the story includes another recurring detail: the loss of the discovered text. Of the authors Gellius found on that second-century bookstall and described as «ancient and of no small authority» only fragments survive today. Their works are known only from Gellius's account and brief quotations in other ancient sources.

In spite of these similarities, however, Renaissance book hunting was a different activity from its ancient counterpart. It was not state sponsored confiscation or acquisition of whole libraries by conquest, and it was only rarely a chance purchase by a lucky traveler; rather, it was a deliberate and focused pursuit carried out by learned individuals (whom we call humanists) or small groups of them, who hoped to add to their store of ancient texts. Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), of course, is the most famous book hunter, but there were many others. In what follows, I will look at several of these humanists and their finds, as well as at Poggio himself, considering in each case the circumstances and method of discovery, the importance of the find, and the fate of the discovered book. I will close with an epilogue on some modern book hunters.

My first example is the anonymous discovery of Catullus. This is one of the most important finds of all, for this great poet seems to have survived the Middle Ages in a single manuscript⁴. He was undoubtedly read in late antiquity because his work made the transition from roll

² «Atque ego avide statim pergo ad libros. Erant autem isti omnes libri Graeci miculorum fabularumque pleni, res inauditae, incredulae, scriptores veteres non parvae auctoritatis: Aristaeus Proconnesius et Isigonus Nicaeensis et Ctesias et Onesicritus et Philostephanus et Hegesias; ipsa autem volumina ex diutino situ squalebant et habitu aspectuque taetro erant. Accessi tamen percontatusque pretium sum et, adductus mira atque insperata vilitate, libros plurimos aere paucio emo eosque omnis duabus proximis noctibus cursim transeo», Gellius 9.4.2-5.

³ «Tenuit nos non idoneae scripturae taedium, nihil ad ornandum iuvandumque usum vitae pertinentis», Gellius 9.4.12.

⁴ See, both with earlier bibliography: Gaisser, 1993: 1-23; and Butrica, 2007.

(probably several rolls) to codex in the fourth century or so, but the last person whom we can definitely name as a reader is Apuleius in the second century. Catullus certainly had readers after that, but no one has any idea how he made his way to the Renaissance. He finally came to light again around 1300, but the newly discovered manuscript, like the book rolls of Gellius's authors, is lost. It probably disappeared soon after its discovery, but fortunately not before it was copied at least once. No one knows who discovered it, or where. Our only evidence is a contemporary epigram by Benvenuto Campesani (d. 1323), which is preserved in two of the lost manuscript's earliest descendants⁵. Benvenuto's epigram commemorates the discovery and identifies the discoverer, but in the form of a riddle that no one yet has managed to solve⁶. Here it is as it appears in the manuscript called G, dated 1375. (The speaker is supposed to be Catullus).

The Verses of Benvenuto Campesani of Vicenza
on the resurrection of Catullus, the poet of Verona.

An exile, I come to my country from distant lands.
A fellow-countryman was the cause of my return –
that is, a man whom France assigned a name from the reeds,
and one who marks the journey of the passing crowd.
With all your might celebrate your Catullus,
whose light had been hidden under a bushel⁷.

The book hunter might have been a notary named Francesco (the phrase «from the reeds», *a calamis*, in the third line can mean «notary», and the reference to a name associated with France could send us to «Francesco»). But only one point is clear: someone from Catullus's home city of Verona discovered the manuscript in «distant lands» and brought it home. But why a riddle in the first place? I speculate (and it is only speculation) that there may have been a good reason to conceal the details of the discovery – which, like many subsequent ones – perhaps was actually theft. If the victim of the putative theft, whether institution or

⁵ The epigram appears in R (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Ottobonianus Lat. 1829) and G (Paris, Bnf, ms. Lat. 14137). See Gaisser, 1993: 18–19.

⁶ For one of the many solutions that have been suggested to the riddle, see Butrica, 2007: 26–28.

⁷ Versus domini Benevenuti de Campexanis de Vicencia de resurrectione Catulli poete Veronensis. // Ad patriam venio longis a finibus exul; / causa mei reditus compatriota fuit, / scilicet a calamis tribuit cui Francia nomen / quique notat turbae praetereuntis iter. / quo licet ingenio vestrum celebrate Catullum, / cuius sub modio clausa papirus erat. (Paris, Bnf, ms. Lat. 14137, fol. 1r.)

individual, was sufficiently powerful, it might have been prudent not to identify the perpetrator.

We have three fourteenth-century descendants of the lost manuscript⁸. The next oldest, dated around 1400, was perhaps transcribed by Poggio himself, as Albinia de la Mare and Douglas Thomson once suggested⁹. Subsequent scholars have questioned the attribution, but in any case, this beautiful manuscript is one of the earliest examples of the humanistic script pioneered by Poggio and others¹⁰.

The person who discovered Catullus will surely remain anonymous, but most Renaissance manuscript hunters are well known. Francesco Petrarca (1304–1374), for example, systematically sought out texts wherever he went and amassed what one scholar has called «the greatest library in Christendom»¹¹. In 1345 he discovered the manuscript of Cicero's *Letters to Atticus* in the Chapter Library of Verona and transcribed it himself¹². It made a huge volume, as he tells a friend in a famous letter. In order to have it always at hand, he propped it against the doorpost of his library, where he tripped over it so often that he badly injured his ankle and developed an infection¹³. (Unfortunately both the offending volume and its original are lost.) Petrarca was not the first modern scholar to study the Verona manuscript, and there were a few other texts of the *Letters to Atticus* north of the Alps, but he was the first to bring the letters to public notice. It was a brilliant discovery, and like Gellius a millennium earlier, he tells of his great eagerness to study his find: «I read most greedily», he says¹⁴. Like Gellius, however, he was sadly disappointed. For when Petrarca studied the letters, he found that Cicero was not the paragon that he and everyone else had thought he was, but only a frail human being – overambitious, small-minded, and often lacking in moral courage. He even wrote him a letter to tell him so: *Epistulae familiares* 24.3, *Ad Marcum Tullium Ciceronem*, subtitled by one editor, «He criticizes his quarrelsome and inconstant nature»¹⁵.

⁸ O, G, R. For G and R see note 5. O is Oxford, Bodleian Library, ms. Canonici Class. Lat. 30.

⁹ Venezia, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. 12.80 (4167). See de la Mare and Thomson, 1973.

¹⁰ A color photograph of the manuscript is shown in the frontispiece of de la Mare, 1973.

¹¹ «In fine la sua crebbe a biblioteca massima della cristianità» Billanovich, 1994: 35. For a concise account of Petrarca's life and book collecting, see, with further bibliography, de la Mare, 1973: 1–6. Also see Reynolds and Wilson, 1991: 128–32.

¹² See especially Reeve, 2011: 248–51.

¹³ Petrarca, *Fam.* 21.10.16–26 (Petrarca, 1933: 4.77–79). For text and English translation see Petrarca, 2017: 2.309–15.

¹⁴ «avidissime perlegi», Petrarca, *Fam.* 24.3 (Petrarca, 1933: 4.225). For text and English translation of the letter, see Petrarca, 2017: 1.435–37.

¹⁵ «Lo riprende della indole sua gareggiosa ed incostante», Petrarca, *Fam.* 24.3 (1892: 5.140).

Petrarca's younger contemporary, Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1374), was also an avid book hunter and collector. For many years, scholars believed that he removed, or as Richard Tarrant says, «liberated», the unique manuscript of Tacitus *Annales* 11-16 from the Abbey of Monte Cassino (Tarrant, 1983: 407-08), along with the most ancient manuscript of Apuleius' *Golden Ass*. Both manuscripts are still extant, bound in a single volume in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana in Florence (Laur. Plut. 68.2). But Boccaccio is innocent on both counts. He used both authors, brilliantly, in his own works, and he even transcribed a manuscript of Apuleius himself, carelessly but beautifully¹⁶. I have argued elsewhere that he can be said to have discovered the *Golden Ass* in the sense that he discovered its literary riches and exploited them in the *Decameron* and other works, but he neither discovered nor removed the ancient manuscript from Monte Cassino; nor did he take the Tacitus (Gaisser, 2008a; Gaisser, 2008b: 93-95). Although he is sometimes still accused of both thefts, he was convincingly exonerated seventy years ago by Cornelia Coulter and fifty years later by Giuseppe Billanovich (Coulter, 1948; Giuseppe Billanovich, 1996).

But Boccaccio did visit Monte Cassino, perhaps in the 1360s, and he described his visit to a younger contemporary, Benvenuto da Imola (d. 1388), who recorded the story in his commentary on Dante¹⁷. The story provided the basis for the mistaken argument that Boccaccio removed the manuscripts of Tacitus and Apuleius from the monastery, but its real interest lies elsewhere. It describes the condition of the library in the fourteenth century and conveys the eagerness and excitement of Boccaccio the book hunter; and it is perhaps even more important for its context and literary relevance at this place in Benvenuto's commentary¹⁸.

By Dante's time, Monte Cassino had fallen into physical and moral disarray¹⁹. Writing around 1320, Dante has the abbey's founder, St. Benedict himself, mourn its present condition and the moral degradation of its monks. In the *Paradiso*, Benedict recalls the ladder crowded with angels that the patriarch Jacob once saw reaching up into highest heaven. He laments:

¹⁶ Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Laur. 54.32. The manuscript is described by Casamassima, 1975: 1.152-54 and plate 36; see also de la Mare, 1973: 26-27 and plate 6g. See also Gaisser, 2008b: 108-10.

¹⁷ For Benvenuto see Paoletti, 1966; Uberti, 1980. The date of Boccaccio's visit to Monte Cassino is unknown; for a good account of the possibilities see Coulter, 1948. Modern scholars are inclined to follow Leccisotti, 1968, who dates it to 1362.

¹⁸ Benvenuto da Imola, 1887. The discussion below draws on Gaisser, 2008b: 93-99.

¹⁹ For the condition of the monastery in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries see Leccisotti, 1974: 71-77.

But no one now would lift his feet from earth
 to climb that ladder, and my Rule is left
 to waste the paper it was written on.
 What once were abbey walls are robbers' dens;
 What once were cowls are sacks of rotten meal²⁰.

Commenting on these verses, Benvenuto remarks that Monte Cassino now «is truly quite deserted and desolate»²¹. He goes on to explain that Dante's Benedict considers his rule a waste of paper «because it takes up space on parchment in vain and unproductively when it is not kept»²². Using the idea of wasted paper as his opening, he begins what was to become the famous story of Boccaccio at Monte Cassino: «And for a clearer understanding of this line, I want to report here a thing my venerable teacher Boccaccio of Certaldo told me in jest»²³.

It seems that Boccaccio had gone to the monastery in hopes of seeing its famous library. When he humbly asked one of the monks to open it for him, he was told roughly that it was already open and directed to a steep staircase – another Jacob's ladder, we might say, recalling the context in Dante. «He climbed up happily», Benvenuto continues:

and found the place of such great treasure without door or key, and as he entered he saw weeds growing through the windows and all the books and tables thick with dust. Marveling, he began to open and turn over one book after another, and he found there many different volumes of ancient and exotic works. From some of them several quaternians had been removed; from others the edges of the pages had been cut away; and thus they were mutilated in many ways. At last, he went away grieving and in tears, regretting that the toil and effort of so many famous intellects had come into the hands of such corrupt and wasteful men. Running into the cloister, he found a monk and asked him why those precious books had been so foully mutilated. He replied that some monks, hoping to make a few *soldi*, would scrape off a quaternian and make cheap psalters to sell to boys, and that they made gospels and breviaries out of the margins to sell to women²⁴.

²⁰ «Ma, per salirla, mo nessun diparte / da terra i piedi, e la regola mia / rimasa è per danno de le carte. / Le mura che solieno esser badia / fatte sono spelonche, e le cocolle / sacca son piene di farina ria», Dante, *Paradiso* 22.73-8 (1995: 484).

²¹ «de rei veritate est valde desertus et desolatus», Benvenuto da Imola, 1887: 5.301.

²² «quia frustra occupat chartas sine fructu cum non servetur», Benvenuto da Imola, 1887: 5.301. The «rule» (*regola*) is the famous rule of St. Benedict that established the Benedictine order.

²³ «Et volo hic ad clariorem intelligentiam huius literae referre illud quod narrabat mihi iocose venerabilis praeceptor meus Boccaccius de Certaldo», Benvenuto da Imola, 1887: 5.301.

²⁴ «Ille laetus ascendens invenit locum tanti thesauri sine ostio vel clavi, ingressusque vidit herbam natam per fenestras, et libros omnes cum bancis coopertis pulvere alto; et mirabundus coepit aperire et volvere nunc istum librum, nunc illum, invenitque ibi multa et varia volumina antiquorum et peregrinorum librorum; ex quorum aliqui-

Benvenuto ends with a sentence that we are probably to understand as Boccaccio's own conclusion to the story: «Now, O scholar, go break your skull to make books!»²⁵ The mocking words explain Benvenuto's otherwise mysterious comment at the beginning that Boccaccio told his story «in jest». The anecdote has a bitter irony that would not have been lost on the old Boccaccio as he told it to his friend²⁶. Boccaccio, like the ancient authors in the library of Monte Cassino, had spent his life studying and writing books that he hoped would last, and in Monte Cassino he could see what such effort amounted to in the end.

Benvenuto's story of Boccaccio in the library neatly complements the lament of Dante's Benedict, for both passages demonstrate the fragility and vulnerability of the written word. As in the case of Benedict's *Rule*, words can be preserved («on paper», as we would say), but not kept or observed. Like the words of Boccaccio's ancient authors, they can be seen as «not worth the paper they are written on», and so destroyed for the sake of what was supposed to preserve them. But in either case they are effectively lost – «through a waste of paper», in Dante's words – *per danno de le carte*. The story has nothing to do with the removal of manuscripts from Monte Cassino and everything to do with the artistic purposes of Benvenuto da Imola in this section of his *Comentum super Dantem*.

But although Boccaccio did not take the Monte Cassino manuscripts to Florence, someone else did. Most modern scholars agree that the culprit was another serious humanist and book collector named Zanobi da Strada, vice-bishop of Monte Cassino from 1355 to 1357 (Billanovich, 1996). In that period he had full control of the monastery. He could take what he liked, and evidently did.

There is more than one way to get possession of an ancient text. Zanobi clearly abstracted and carried away the manuscripts themselves, and I have speculated that the man who discovered Catullus «in distant lands» might have done the same. But texts could also be transcribed *in situ* or borrowed for copying and later returned, as Petrarca, for example,

bus detracti erant aliqui quaterni, ex aliis recisi margines chartarum, et sic multipliciter deformati: tandem miseratus labores et studia tot inclytissimorum ingeniorum devenisse ad manus perditissimorum hominum, dolens et illacrymans recessit; et occurrens in claustro petivit a monacho obvio quare libri illi pretiosissimi essent ita turpiter detruncati. Qui respondit quod aliqui monachi, volentes lucrari duos vel quinque solidos, radebant unum quaternum et faciebant psalteriolos, quos vendebant pueris; et ita de marginibus faciebant evangelia et brevia, quae vendebant mulieribus», Benvenuto da Imola, 1887: 5.302.

²⁵ «Nunc, vir studiose, frange tibi caput pro faciendo libros», Benvenuto da Imola, 1887: 5.302.

²⁶ Boccaccio probably told the story to Benvenuto in 1373–1374, just a year or so before his death. He was lecturing on Dante in Florence in those years, and Benvenuto probably met him then. Cf. Gaisser, 2008b: 96.

did with the manuscript of Cicero's letters. They can even be purchased – openly, as Gellius bought his book rolls in Brundisium, or surreptitiously from venal monks, as sometimes happened in the Renaissance.

Poggio, whom we celebrate in this volume, seems to have employed all these methods, hinting at or describing them openly in letters to his fellow book enthusiasts, especially Niccolò Niccoli (1364–1437)²⁷. The correspondence is easily available, of course, in the elegant annotated translation of Phyllis Gordan, whose work and collection have made this symposium possible (1974b). She called her volume *Two Renaissance Book Hunters* – very appropriately, since Poggio's correspondent Niccoli is as important as Poggio himself. Niccoli, a few years older than Poggio, and far richer – at least to start with – never strayed far from his native Florence, but he was at the very center of the book-hunting effort. Poggio kept him informed of his searches and forwarded either copies or originals of most of his finds, which Niccoli copied and shared with other humanists, although he was often very slow to do so. Niccoli also kept in touch with other book hunters, even providing lists of *desiderata* and their possible locations. He amassed a huge number of books himself and bequeathed them as a public library for the use of other scholars. It would be hard to overstate his importance to humanistic activity in Florence and throughout Italy. As Poggio said in his funeral oration for Niccoli: «I can say that essentially all the books recently discovered by both others and myself [...] have been restored to Latin literature by the urging, prompting, encouragement, and veritable badgering of Niccolò»²⁸.

Poggio discovered dozens of manuscripts during and after that famous church council in Constance from 1414 to 1418. Space allows me to discuss just two of his discoveries: Quintilian and Lucretius.

First Quintilian²⁹. In the summer of 1416, the main business that kept Poggio in Constance was essentially finished, and he set out for the monastery at St. Gall about thirty miles away to look for manuscripts. He was accompanied by two like-minded friends: Cencio Rustici and Bartolomeo Aragazzi³⁰. Both Cencio and Poggio wrote accounts of their visit, Cencio to his teacher and Poggio to the well-known humanist

²⁷ For Poggio see de la Mare, 1973: 62–84; Reynolds and Wilson, 1991: 136–40; Greenblatt, 2011: 14–22. For Niccoli, see especially Ullman and Stadter, 1972; Stadter, 1984; de la Mare, 1973: 44–61; Bianca, 2013.

²⁸ «... possum dicere, omnes libros fere qui noviter tum ab aliis reperti sunt, tum a meipso [...] Nicolai suasu, impulsu, cohortatione, & pene verborum molestia esse literis latinis restitutos», Bracciolini, 1964: 272.

²⁹ For the discovery of Quintilian, see Sabbadini, 1914: 383–95; Winterbottom, 1967.

³⁰ For Cencio, see Bertalot, 1929–1930. For Bartolomeo Aragazzi, see de la Mare, 1973: 62–84.

Guarino Veronese³¹. Interestingly enough, no letter of Poggio's to Niccoli on the discovery survives³². As the friends had hoped, they found the monastery full of books, including several treasures, the most important of which was a complete text of the great Roman rhetorician Quintilian, previously known in Italy only in copies from a mutilated tradition that lacked nearly a third of the text. They found Quintilian and the rest, not in the library, but, as Poggio says: «in a sort of foul and gloomy dungeon at the bottom of one of the towers, where not even men convicted of a capital offense would have been stuck away»³³. The books were kept in conditions very like those Boccaccio described at Monte Cassino sixty years earlier. Here is Cencio (note that he also uses the image of a dungeon):

But when we carefully inspected the tower [...] in which countless books were kept like captives, and the library neglected and infested with dust, worms, soot, and all the things destructive to books, we all burst into tears. [...] In fact, if the library could speak on its own behalf, it would shout aloud, "You men who love the Latin tongue, do not allow me to be utterly destroyed by such neglect; snatch me from this prison, in whose darkness even the great light of books cannot be seen!" There were in that monastery an abbot and monks completely foreign to any knowledge of literature. What barbarity inimical to the Latin tongue! What depraved dregs of humanity!³⁴

³¹ Poggio's letter is found in Gordan, 1974b: 193-96 (Appendix: Letter III, to Guarino Veronese, 16 December 1416); Bracciolini, 1984: 2.153-56. Cencio's letter may be found in Gordan, 1974b: 187-91 (Appendix: Letter I, to Francesco da Fiano [1416]). For the Latin text of Cencio, see Bertalot, 1929-30: 222-25.

³² But he certainly wrote to Niccoli. He says in his letter to Guarino (1974: 195) that he had informed both Leonardo Bruni and Niccoli, and Bruni, writing to congratulate him on the discovery of Quintilian, says: «At our friend Nicolaus' house, I read the letter which you wrote about your last trip and your discovery of some books»; Gordan, 1974b: 191 (Appendix: Letter II). It is clear that we do not have all of Poggio's letters to Niccoli; see Gordan, 1974b: 185-86; Bracciolini, 1984: 1.230 (Appendix 5).

³³ Gordan, 1974b: 195 (Appendix: Letter III). Bracciolini, 1984: 2.155: "in teterimo quodam et obscuro carcere, fundo scilicet unius turris, quo ne capitalis quidem rei damnati retruderentur."

³⁴ Gordan, 1974b: 188-89 (Appendix: Letter I), translation slightly modified. Bertalot, 1929-1930: 223-24: «Sed ubi turrim [...] in qua innumerabiles pene libri utpote captivi detinentur, diligentius vidimus bibliothecamque illam pulvere tineis fuligine ceterisque rebus ad obliterationem librorum pertinentibus obsoletam pollutamque, vehementer collacrimavimus. [...] Hec profecto bibliotheca si pro se ipsa loqueretur, magna voce clamaret: ne sinite, viri lingue latine amantissimi, me per huiusmodi negligentiam funditus deleri; eripite me ab hoc carcere, in cuius tenebris tantum librorum lumen apparere non potest. Erant in monasterio illo abbas monachique ab omni litterarum cognitione alieni. O barbariem latine lingue inimicam, o perditissimam hominum colluvionem».

Poggio pictures the Quintilian manuscript as a human prisoner on the brink of death from mistreatment: «He was sad and dressed in mourning, as people are when doomed to death; his beard was dirty and his hair caked with mud. [...] He seemed to stretch out his hands and beg for the protection of the Roman people»³⁵.

It is not clear which of the three actually discovered the manuscript. Cencio does not mention Quintilian, and there seems to be no account from Bartolomeo. But it was Poggio who took the manuscript back to Constance, and he has always had the credit. Phyllis Gordan called Quintilian «probably Poggio's greatest triumph» (Gordan, 1974b: 268n3). The comment may seem surprising to modern readers, especially in view of his discovery of Lucretius, which we will consider presently. But the ancient rhetoricians – writers on both Latin style and the art of persuasion – were of enormous importance to the humanists, for whom the mastery of elegant Latin was both a passion and a means to political and ecclesiastical advancement³⁶. The humanists had been eagerly studying Quintilian's work for a long time, frustrated by the great gaps in his text. Now they had it all. We can get an idea of their excitement from our earliest notice of the discovery – a letter from Leonardo Bruni to Poggio dated 13 September 1416. At this point, Poggio seems not to have sent the whole text to Florence, but only a list of chapters – enough to let Bruni see the importance of his discovery. «For Quintilian, who used to be mangled and in pieces, will recover all his parts through you. I have seen the headings of the chapters; he is whole, while we used to have only the middle section and that incomplete. O wondrous treasure! O unexpected joy!»³⁷

I noted earlier that one way to get a text was to borrow the manuscript, copy, and return it. That is what seems to have happened in the case of Quintilian. Poggio took it to Constance and transcribed it – in fifty-four days, as he says – and sent his transcription to Florence. His transcription is lost, but one of its many copies preserves the subscription in which he tells of copying the manuscript³⁸. We know

³⁵ Gordan, 1974b: 194-95 (Appendix letter III), translation slightly modified. «Mestus quidem ipse erat ac sordidatus tanquam mortis rei solebant, squalentem barbam gerens, et concretos pulvere crines. [...] Videbatur manus tendere, implorare Quiritum fidem», Bracciolini, 1984: 2.155.

³⁶ For the pursuit of eloquence as a principal goal of Renaissance humanism, see Baker, 2015.

³⁷ Gordan, 1974b: 191-92 (Appendix: Letter II); Bruni, 1741: Part 1, 112 (Book 4, Letter 5): «Quintilianus enim prius lacer atque discerptus cuncta membra sua per te recuperabit. Vidi enim capita librorum, totus est, cum vix nobis media pars, et ea ipsa lacera superesset. O lucrum ingens! O insperatum gaudium!»

³⁸ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Urb. Lat. 327. The subscription begins (fol. 235): «Scripsit Poggius Florentinus hunc librum Constantie diebus LIII sede apostolica vacante» Sabbadini, 1914: 384. Poggio's son Jacopo, who later owned the tran-

that he returned Quintilian to St. Gall, for the manuscript he borrowed is still preserved³⁹.

Much is known about the discovery of Quintilian and the humanists' immediate response, but almost nothing about the discovery of Lucretius some months later⁴⁰. Again, Poggio's letter to Niccoli does not survive. As far as I have been able to determine, the discovery is first mentioned in July 1417 – almost in passing – in a letter to Poggio from the Venetian humanist Francesco Barbaro in which Lucretius appears without comment in a long list of discoveries that Barbaro attributes jointly to Poggio and Bartolomeo Aragazzi⁴¹. Barbaro's offhand reference to Lucretius is in sharp contrast to the general excitement over Quintilian some months earlier; Lucretius, unlike Quintilian, was essentially unknown in Italy, and the magnitude of the discovery would take a few years to register⁴². Poggio made his discovery in the winter of 1416–1417, after his trip to St. Gall and well before Barbaro's letter in July. He did not take the manuscript back to Constance, but left it to be copied *in situ*, as we see from a letter he wrote to Barbaro at the end of 1417 or early in 1418. He says that the Lucretius has been transcribed but not yet brought to him, and the place is far enough away that few travelers come from there. If no one comes soon with the manuscript, he will go after it himself⁴³. Unfortunately, he does not name the distant monastery: modern scholars suggest either Murbach or Fulda⁴⁴.

Poggio clearly did get his manuscript and send it on to Niccoli. But we hear nothing more from him about Lucretius until April 1425, eight years after his discovery, when he writes to ask Niccoli for the manuscript. He asks for it again and again for several years, sounding successively more irritated⁴⁵. In 1429, for example, he tells Niccoli that he has

scription, commented on its influence (Winterbottom, 1967: 340): «a quo tanquam ex equo troiano omnes Quintiliani qui apud nos sunt manarunt». For Iacopo's letter, see especially Rubinstein, 1958.

³⁹ Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, ms. C74a. See Winterbottom, 1967: 340–41. A photograph of the manuscript is shown on the website of the Zürich Zentralbibliothek: <<http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/zbz/C0074a>> (09/2019).

⁴⁰ For an imaginative reconstruction see Greenblatt, 2011: 23–50.

⁴¹ Gordan, 1974b: 196–203 (Appendix: Letter IV); Barbaro, 1743: 1–8.

⁴² For traces of Lucretius in Italy before the fifteenth century see Reynolds, 1983: 221.

⁴³ Gordan, 1974b: 210–13 (Appendix: Letter VIII). «Lucretius mihi nondum reditus est, cum sit scriptus: locus est satis longinquus, neque unde aliqui veniant: itaque exspectabo quoad aliqui accedant qui illum deferant: sin autem nulli venient, non praepnam publica privatis», Clark, 1899: 125.

⁴⁴ On Murbach as a possibility, see Butterfield, 2016: 50n9; on Fulda, see Greenblatt, 2011: 44–45.

⁴⁵ He wrote on 14 April 1425; 12 May 1425; 14 June 1425; 14 September 1426; 13 December 1429; 27 May 1430 (dates from Bracciolini, 1984). Bracciolini, 1984: 1.142, 144, 149, 172, 89, 103; Gordan, 1974b: 88, 89, 92, 110, 154, 160.

now had Lucretius for twelve years, and that he has not yet had a chance to read the poem himself⁴⁶. In 1430 he reminds Niccoli that it has now been fourteen years: «are you going to keep it another ten?»⁴⁷. Poggio finally did get his manuscript back, sometime in the 1430s – no doubt after Niccoli had transcribed it⁴⁸. Poggio's own copy is lost⁴⁹.

Poggio mentions Lucretius in seven of his letters to Niccoli. In six of those letters he pleads for the return of his manuscript, but in the seventh he is interested in something else. Writing in 1427, he discusses a list of books that Niccoli hopes to acquire from Germany. Among them is Lucretius – clearly another Lucretius, not the one that has been sitting in Florence for ten years. He says:

Bartolomeo [...] is making an effort for us to have Lucretius. If he accomplishes it, then we will attempt the rest. For we must not talk about the other books now, lest in seeking many things we provide an opportunity for refusing this one. We must proceed little by little, for they are barbarians and full of suspicion⁵⁰.

In his recent book on the textual history of Lucretius, David Butterfield speculates that Bartolomeo's mission was to go to the German monastery where Poggio had acquired his copy of Lucretius and bring back the original. He suggests that Bartolomeo succeeded and that readings in that manuscript not present in Poggio's found their way into Italian texts of the poet. The manuscript itself, of course, is lost (Butterfield, 2013: 5-45, esp. 41-5).

There is much more to be said about Poggio's Lucretius and his other finds, including the unique manuscript of Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis* from the *Satyricon* (de la Mare, 1965). But I promised an

⁴⁶ «Tenuisti iam Lucretium duodecim annis [...] Cura ut habeam Lucretium, si fieri potest; non enim adhuc potui universum librum legere, cum semper fuerit peregrinus», Bracciolini, 1984: 1.89.

⁴⁷ «Lucretium tenuisti iam per annos XIV [...] Cupio legere Lucretium, at ego privior illius presentia; nunquid etiam illum aliud decennium tenere velis?», Bracciolini, 1984: 1.103.

⁴⁸ Firenze, Biblioteca Laurenziana, ms. 35.30; for a color photograph, see Greenblatt, 2011.

⁴⁹ Poggio had discovered a medieval copy (now lost) of «the most important extant Lucretius manuscript, the Oblongus», Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, ms. Voss. Lat. F. 30) Butterfield, 2016: 50.

⁵⁰ Gordan, 1974b: 113-14, translation slightly modified. «Bartholomeus de Monte Politiano dat operam, ut habeamus Lucretium; id si assequetur, tunc alia aggrediemur. Non enim est nunc de aliis libris tractandum, ne multa petendo daremus occasionem istius denegandi. Paulatim incedendum est, barbari enim sunt et suspitiosi», Bracciolini, 1984: 1.73.

epilogue on some modern book hunters. The Poggio of the tale, of course, is Phyllis Goodhart Gordan, and the role of Niccoli belongs both to her fellow alumnae and to the Friends of the Bryn Mawr College Library, with whom she shared some of her book hunting adventures in occasional publications⁵¹. She started at the age of twelve, visiting the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge in 1925 with her father, Howard Lehman Goodhart. There she greatly admired the earliest edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and a Bible with an illustration of Jonah climbing on a ladder out of the mouth of the whale. Other expeditions followed, including a visit to the Ambrosian Library in Milan in 1933, where she and her father were shown what was left of the fourth-century manuscript of Plautus: the Ambrosian palimpsest. She says that the librarian brought out the pages «on a pie knife» (Gordan, 1939: 2). After her first year in graduate school she embarked on a book hunting expedition with another companion, her Bryn Mawr classmate, Helen Ripley. They were seeking material for Kirsopp Lake's catalogue of Greek manuscripts⁵². The high point of their trip was a week spent studying the famous manuscript collection of Sir Thomas Phillips under the not very watchful eye of his 80-year-old grandson, T. Fitzroy Fenwick. Although everyone had told them that they would never be admitted, they somehow managed it. Mr. Fenwick discouraged visitors by charging them a pound a day to see the collection, but as Phyllis relates: «He refused to charge us anything, because he had never before had two American college girls come to study his Greek manuscripts» (Gordan, 1939: 5). Phyllis Gordan's trip with Helen Ripley was perhaps her greatest expedition, but she never forgot her love of old books and went on to become a great and generous collector herself. We could say of her what Niccolò Niccoli said of himself in his will (I am correcting for gender, of course): «from girlhood she collected her books [...] from everywhere with great industry, effort, and zeal – avoiding no effort and sparing no expense»⁵³.

Both Poggio Bracciolini and Bryn Mawr College have been her beneficiaries.

⁵¹ See Gordan, *Written by the Hand of Poggio* (1934), *Manuscript Hunters* (1939), *Of What Use Are Old Books?* (1973), and *To Hold the Renaissance in Our Hands* (1974).

⁵² Lake, 1934–1939. Lake's daughter, Agnes Kirsopp Lake (later Michels) had been one of Phyllis Gordan's teachers at Bryn Mawr.

⁵³ «libros suos [...] undique magna industria diligentia studio ab adolescentia nullum laborem subterfugiendo nullis impensis parcendo coegit», quoted from Ullman and Stadter, 1972: 89.

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POGGIO BRACCIOLINI, PHYLLIS GOODHART
GORDAN, AND THE FORMATION OF THE GOODHART
COLLECTION OF FIFTEENTH-CENTURY BOOKS AT BRYN
MAWR COLLEGE

Eric L. Pumroy

ABSTRACT: The Poggio Bracciolini conference was dedicated to Bryn Mawr alumna Phyllis Goodhart Gordan (1913–1994) one of the leading Poggio scholars of her generation and the editor of the only major collection of Poggio's letters in English, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters* (Columbia University Press, 1974). Gordan and her father, Howard Lehman Goodhart (1887–1951) were also responsible for building one of the great collections of 15th century printed books in America, most of which is now at Bryn Mawr College. This paper draws upon Goodhart's correspondence with rare book dealers and the extensive notes on his books to survey the strengths of the collection and to examine the process by which he built the collection and worked with rare book dealers in the difficult Depression and World War II years, the period when he acquired most of his books. The paper also considers Goodhart's growing connections with scholars of early printing as his collection and interests grew, in particular the work of Margaret Bingham Stillwell, the editor of *Incunabula in American Libraries* (1940).

KEYWORDS: Phyllis Goodhart Gordan, Howard Lehman Goodhart, book collecting, incunabula

The conference that generated the papers for this volume was dedicated to Phyllis Goodhart Gordan (1913–1994), one of the leading Poggio Bracciolini scholars of her generation and the translator and editor of the only major collection of his letters in English, *Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggio Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974). Gordan's interest in Poggio and Renaissance Humanism began during her undergraduate years at Bryn Mawr in the mid-1930s, and it was in the pursuit of research materials for her advanced undergraduate papers that she and her father, Howard Lehman Goodhart (1884–1951), embarked on acquiring what was to become one of the great medieval and renaissance libraries in the country. By the time of Howard Goodhart's death, the collection numbered roughly 1400 books printed by 1500, known as *Incunabula*. Of these, he donated or bequeathed more than 900 to Bryn Mawr. His daughter kept about 400 to support her work and added more to the total over the course of her lifetime, including a number of printed Poggio's. Between the two of them, they also owned roughly 150 medieval and renaissance manuscripts, and several hundred more sixteenth century printed books. Much of this collection is now at Bryn Mawr College, coming either as part of his bequest in 1951, or as part of her bequest or deposit by her family in

1994. The collection is one of the great renaissance book collections in the US, but the building of it is also an interesting story of the intersection of scholarly, family, collecting and financial interests in the middle part of the twentieth century.

The Goodharts were part of the circle of German Jewish families in New York City that rose to prominence in banking and investment in the late nineteenth century. Stephen Birmingham's book on these families, *Our Crowd*, begins with a view of this society as seen through the eyes of Phyllis's grandmother, Hattie Lehman Goodhart, one of the arbiters of taste and behavior in this circle. 'Granny' Goodhart, as Birmingham referred to her, was a Lehman (Birmingham, 1967: ch. 1, pp. 3-13). The Lehman Brothers investment company was run by her family, and her brother was Herbert Lehman, Franklin Roosevelt's successor as governor of New York. It was into this family that Howard Lehman Goodhart was born in New York City in 1884, the eldest son in the family. He graduated from Yale, joined the family business on Wall Street, and married Marjorie Walter, a 1912 graduate of Bryn Mawr College and the daughter of another prominent New York Jewish merchant family. In 1913 they had their only child, Phyllis; in 1917 he joined the army and served in Europe, and shortly after his return, at the beginning of 1920, his wife died. How the death of Marjorie Walter Goodhart changed the direction of his life is difficult to know, but from this point forward many of his major decisions were made with the future of his daughter and the memory of his wife in mind. He had earned or inherited enough money to be able to retire from full-time work in the investment business at the age of 40 (Bühler, 1959: 218), and had the means to underwrite the building of Bryn Mawr's new theater, named Marjorie Walter Goodhart Hall. When Phyllis enrolled at Bryn Mawr in 1931, he took up regular residence at the Green Hills Farm in Overbrook, a few miles from the College, to be close to her and provide a retreat from campus when she needed it. Shortly after coming to Philadelphia he began doing business with Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, the Philadelphia rare book dealer who played such a critical role in helping to build the collections of the Huntington, Widener, and Folger libraries. Goodhart was not yet a collector of rare books, though, and instead used the Rosenbach Company as a supplier of modern books, especially academic books that Phyllis needed for her classes¹.

We can date the beginning of the Goodhart incunable collection very precisely, thanks to the records of the Rosenbach Company. On Janu-

¹ Rosenbach Company Records, RCo VIIa: Customer Cards for H. L. Goodhart and Phyllis Goodhart, and Sales Book 22: January 1930-April 1933. Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia.

ary 12, 1934 he purchased from Rosenbach the *Historia Fiorentina*, the Italian translation of Poggio Bracciolini's history of Florence, printed in Venice by Jacobus Rubeus in 1476². This was at the beginning of the semester when Phyllis Goodhart wrote her paper on Poggio. As she told the story in her 1972 talk at Bryn Mawr, *Of What Use are Old Books?* she wanted to work with early printings of the writings of Poggio and other humanists, and so she asked her father to acquire copies from the collections at the New York Public Library. In the 1930s, acquiring a copy of a book meant going through the expensive process of producing a photographic copy of every page. He decided that in the long run the money would be better spent purchasing the books she needed outright (Gordan, 1973: 10).

The *Historia Fiorentina* was an isolated book purchase until the spring, and then Goodhart began buying seriously. Between April and July 1934, he purchased 48 incunables either from Rosenbach directly, or from auctions at which Rosenbach was his agent. He bought a mix of books, some landmark works in the history of printing, notably the Nuremberg Chronicle and Peter Schoeffer's mammoth 1470 edition of Jerome's letters. But he also bought humanist texts that would be of interest to his daughter, including the 1476 edition of Leonardo Bruni's *History of Florence*, the companion volume to Poggio's history; Perotti's *Cornucopia*; editions of several classical writers edited by humanist scholars, and a printed version of a Poggio letter to Leonardo Bruni³. In a letter to Rosenbach that summer, Goodhart pointed to this Poggio letter as exactly the kind of book that he was most interested in acquiring. Because it had never been translated and there was little scholarship on it, it is the kind of work that would support doctoral level research. He went on to say that while he would be delighted to have such famous books as the Schoeffer Jerome and the first printing of Dante (offered by Rosenbach, but not purchased), these landmark books were not his major interest, and in fact, buying them would quickly use up the money he had set aside for books.⁴

Goodhart and Rosenbach had an intense but short-lived business relationship, extending from the spring of 1934 to the spring of 1936, during which time Goodhart purchased more than one hundred incunabula at a

² Rosenbach Company Records: Sales Book 23, 1933-1936, p. 1218, January 12, 1934.

³ List of incunables sold to Howard L. Goodhart, 1934. Correspondence with Howard Lehman Goodhart, Rosenbach Company Archives, Series 1, Box 072, folder 41, 1934.

⁴ Howard Goodhart to A. S. W. Rosenbach, July 7, 1934. Correspondence with Howard Lehman Goodhart, Rosenbach Company Archives, Series 1, Bo 072, folder 41, 1934.

total cost of nearly \$50,000. After 1936 Goodhart purchased very little from Rosenbach, perhaps because he found Rosenbach's notoriously high prices unacceptable. In any case, he found a more congenial dealer in the old London firm of Maggs Brothers during a visit to his brother in England during the summer of 1934. The letters from H. Clifford Maggs to Howard Goodhart in August and September of that year show the beginnings of a warm and collaborative relationship between Maggs and the Goodharts. During this summer before her senior year in college, Phyllis Goodhart was a regular visitor to the bookshop, and her purchases and recommendations figure prominently in the correspondence from Maggs to Howard Goodhart. By the end of the summer, the Goodharts had purchased from Maggs two fifteenth century editions of Poggio's translation of Diodorus Siculus from Greek into Latin and a manuscript of his *Oratio in laudem rei publicae venetorum*⁵. Over the following year the volume of correspondence and purchases increased, with offers or responses from Maggs arriving nearly every week.

The correspondence between Goodhart and Maggs is revealing of how Goodhart went about identifying priorities for his collection, as well as how his collecting interests changed over time. During 1934 his collecting was centered around his daughter's interest in Poggio Bracciolini and Italian humanists. On Goodhart's instruction, Maggs identified all of the fifteenth-century texts cited in Shepherd's *Life of Poggio Bracciolini* and forwarded quotes to Goodhart as the works came on the market. In early 1935, for example, Maggs quoted editions of works by Columella and Firmicus, classical authors whose texts were uncovered by Poggio⁶. Goodhart developed his own interests soon enough and developed those collections in a similarly thoughtful way. His first major focus was on the works of Philo Judeaus, including manuscripts and early printed texts in which in which Philo's work was cited. Within a few years, his Philo collection was so comprehensive that it formed the basis of a bibliography of Philo's works that was published as an addendum to Erwin Goodenough's *The Politics of Philo Judaeus, Practice and Theory* (Yale University Press, 1938). He later donated his Philo Judeaus collection to Yale University, his alma mater. Within his incunabula collection, he developed a sub-collection of books printed in Rome. The Rome collection was sufficiently important to him that when the stock market plunged in the summer of 1937 and he had to cut back on his collecting, he told

⁵ Letters from H. Clifford Maggs to Howard Lehman Goodhart, September 21, 1934 and September 29, 1934. Howard Lehman Goodhart Papers, Bryn Mawr College. Binder: Letters from Maggs, 1934-1935.

⁶ H. Clifford Maggs to Howard Lehman Goodhart, November 11, 1934 and March 5, 1935. Howard Lehman Goodhart Papers, Bryn Mawr College. Binder: Letters from Maggs, 1934-1935.

Maggs that he was limiting his buying to books in just two fields: books on Philo and books printed in Rome⁷.

The most important change in his collecting focus came in the late 1930s, prompted by his reading of Hastings Rashdall's *Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*. According to his friend Margaret Stillwell, compiler of *Incunabula in American Libraries* (1940), as soon as he completed the book, he asked Maggs Brothers to send quotes for all of the fifteenth-century editions of the authors mentioned in the book (Stillwell, 1951: 8). As a consequence of this change in focus, a significant part of the collection consists of editions of Patristic writers, particularly Augustine, Jerome, and Boethius, and works of medieval theologians, particularly Thomas Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Jean Gerson. The distinction between the medieval and renaissance books had become formalized by the time he made the decision to donate them to Bryn Mawr in the late 1940s. The books that came to Bryn Mawr were designated as the Marjorie Walter Goodhart Medieval Library in honor of his late wife. Most of the works by Renaissance and classical authors remained with his daughter and she referred to them as the Humanist Library in the 1955 catalogue of the Goodhart incunable collection (Gordan, 1955).

Howard Goodhart was much more than just a collector of books. Margaret Stillwell called him a «scholar-collector» in her talk at the dedication of the Goodhart Medieval Library at Bryn Mawr and noted that he was someone who actually read the books in his collection (Stillwell, 1951: 18). On two occasions he talked with her about undertaking research projects based on his books. In January 1941 he wrote to her about his plans to do a book on Sweynheim and Pannartz, a volume that would contain a bibliography of the books they printed, a study of each volume, where surviving copies could be found, and references to translations of the prefaces and colophons. He also invited her to collaborate on the volume, but she demurred. While willing to help, she explained that this was truly his project since Sweynheim and Pannartz imprints were one of the strengths of his collection⁸. Nothing more seems to have come of this project, but a few years later he wrote to her that he was working on an article, *An Appreciation of English Scholarship before 1500*, that would draw upon his knowledge of early English printing and his collection of fifteenth-century English books.

⁷ Howard Lehman Goodhart to H. Clifford Maggs, July 2, 1937. Maggs Brothers Archive, Folder 1279 GOA-GOP 1934 and Miscellaneous 1935-1936, British Library.

⁸ Howard Lehman Goodhart to Margaret Stillwell, January 27, 1941, and Margaret Stillwell to Howard Lehman Goodhart, January 31, 1941. Margaret Bingham Stillwell Papers, Brown University Library.

As with his Sweynheim and Pannartz work, though, he does not appear to have completed it⁹.

Aside from his own scholarly use of his collection, Goodhart both encouraged and supported scholars who shared his interests. He was especially generous in opening his collections to Bryn Mawr students and faculty members. Classics faculty members Lily Ross Taylor and Berthe Marti both brought their graduate students for a visit to his apartment in the Hotel St. Regis in Manhattan in the spring of 1936 to look at his books and hear him discuss them. He not only invited people to see his books, but he also lent them to scholars who needed them for their research¹⁰. Berthe Marti borrowed all of his fifteenth-century editions of *Pharsalia* for a project she was doing in 1939, and in the same year Bryn Mawr English professor Samuel Chew borrowed a manuscript account of a trip to Jerusalem around 1500, with the intention of translating and editing it for publication¹¹. His generosity was not limited to Bryn Mawr faculty. In 1938 he lent all of his Aenas Silvius books to Leona Gabel, an historian at Smith College¹², who was working on an edition of his works. Independent Renaissance scholar Susan Fowler met regularly with him in the early 1940s when she was working on Gaspare de Verona, and frequently consulted his manuscripts¹³.

One of his longest professional working relationships was with Margaret Stillwell, curator of the Annmary Brown Memorial in Providence, Rhode Island, where she oversaw a substantial collection of fifteenth century printed books. She had also been working on compiling a census of fifteenth century books in the United States since the mid-1920s, with funding from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Bibliographical Society of America. Goodhart made his first report of his books to her in January 1935 when he sent her descriptions of 93 of his books and he sent regular reports to her thereafter. Their relationship quickly moved beyond that of compiler and contributor, as their frequent letters showed him becoming both a patron and friend. The

⁹ Howard Lehman Goodhart to Margaret Stillwell, November 2, 1944. Margaret Bingham Stillwell Papers.

¹⁰ Lily Ross Taylor to Howard Lehman Goodhart, February 3, 1936 and Berthe Marti to Howard Lehman Goodhart, February 29, 1936. Bryn Mawr Binder II, Howard Lehman Goodhart Papers, Bryn Mawr College Library.

¹¹ Berthe Marti to Howard Lehman Goodhart, April 26, 1939 and Samuel Chew to Howard Lehman Goodhart, February 25, 1939. Binder: Bryn Mawr Letters, 1938-1941, Howard Lehman Goodhart Papers, Bryn Mawr College Library.

¹² Howard Lehman Goodhart to Margaret Stillwell, March 5, 1938. Margaret Stillwell Papers, Brown University Library.

¹³ Correspondence between Susan Fowler and Howard Lehman Goodhart, 1943-1945. Folder: Miscellaneous Correspondence, Howard Lehman Goodhart Papers, Bryn Mawr College Library.

funding for the incunable census was unpredictable and often inadequate to hire the assistants that were needed for the final preparation of the book, but in Howard Goodhart she found someone who was willing to step in with contributions to hire assistants so that she could keep the work going forward between grants. Their friendly relationship continued after Stillwell's *Incunabula in American Libraries* appeared in 1940, as they continued to talk regularly about his latest acquisitions, their research projects, and eventually, the future of his collection. In 1948 he wrote to her for advice about his books, for although he had been planning for some time to place them at either Bryn Mawr or the New York Public Library, he had recently been given contrary advice. The library director at Yale had visited him and made a pitch for the books to come to a large research library like Yale's, and a bit more surprisingly, the chair of the English Department at Bryn Mawr had met with him and questioned the college's ability to handle the books. Stillwell responded by expressing her doubts about Bryn Mawr as well and suggested her own library as another option¹⁴.

Within a few months of this exchange of letters, Goodhart had made the decision in favor of Bryn Mawr, undoubtedly influenced by his daughter. The first volumes arrived in early 1949, and more than half of the collection was in place by the time the Marjorie Walter Goodhart Mediaeval Library was dedicated on 1 June 1951, with Margaret Stillwell delivering the keynote address *Incunabula as Couriers of Learning*. Sadly, Howard Goodhart was unable to attend the dedication because of the growing cancer that would take his life a few months later. Goodhart had continued adding to the collection even after he had made the decision to donate it to Bryn Mawr. During 1950, he purchased more than 120 fifteenth-century books, and he added another 20 in 1951. In the introduction to her published catalogue of the Goodhart Collection, *Fifteenth Century Books in the Collection of Howard Lehman Goodhart* (Stamford: Overbrook Press, 1955), Phyllis Goodhart Gordan reported that by the time the transfer of books was completed following her father's death, there were 930 *incunabula* at Bryn Mawr.

Phyllis Gordan kept about 400 of the fifteenth-century books, principally the humanist texts, editions of classical authors, the 19 British incunables, and 25 editions printed by Sweynheim and Pannartz between 1468 and 1475 (Gordan, 1955: Introduction). During her lifetime she added a few books to the collection, including three Poggio Bracciolini works purchased between 1955 and 1961: an edition of the *Facetiae*

¹⁴ Howard Lehman Goodhart to Margaret Stillwell, October 17, 1948 and Margaret Stillwell to Howard Lehman Goodhart, October 20, 1948. Margaret Bingham Stillwell Papers, Brown University Library.

printed by Christopher Valdarfer in Milan in 1484, *De Nobilitate*, printed by G. Leu in Antwerp in 1489, and the first printed collection of his works, issued by Johann Knobloch in Strasbourg in 1510. Like her father, Gordan was generous in allowing scholars to use the manuscripts and early printed books that she kept in her home¹⁵. Following her death in 1994, most of her books came to Bryn Mawr either as a bequest or on loan from her family. In addition to her books, the college also acquired her research notes on Poggio, drafts of her intended volume of Poggio's correspondence with people other than Nicolaus de Niccolis, and an extensive collection of microfilm of Poggio manuscripts. She also left a small bequest to support continued work on Poggio, and it was these funds that provided critical support for the 2016 conference on Poggio at Bryn Mawr College.

Of the books at Bryn Mawr there are 18 of Poggio's works printed before 1600, including 10 of the 26 fifteenth-century books listed in Goff's *Incunabula in American Libraries*, and 4 fifteenth-century manuscripts. In addition, there are 9 eighteenth-century works, including the critical works in the rediscovery of Poggio at the beginning of the century, notably Recanato's *Poggii Historia Florentina* (1715), Lenfant's *Poggiana* (1720), and the Oliva and Giorgi' *Poggii Bracciolini Florentini Historiae de varietate fortunae* (1723). Among the highlights is a manuscript prepared for a member of the Bembo family of Poggio's *Oratio in laudem rei publicae venetorum*, one of two known copies in manuscript form.

In her 1972 talk at Bryn Mawr, *Of What Use Are Old Books?* Phyllis Goodhart Gordan ended her description of the fifteenth-century book collection that her father had assembled and given to the college with the observation that «together they seem to me to join us to an ancient and universal company of scholars» (Gordan, 1973: 27). Howard Goodhart would surely have appreciated this characterization of his book collecting. Throughout his relatively brief years as a book collector, he maintained a focus on building a library that would support research in medieval and renaissance studies, and this was a library that was used for his own research, by his daughter, and by many other scholars, both during his lifetime and since the books came to Bryn Mawr. At the heart of the collection is Poggio Bracciolini, for there would have been no Goodhart Collection without Phyllis Gordan's undergraduate excitement over Renaissance Humanism and Poggio in particular, a scholarly commitment that would endure throughout her lifetime.

¹⁵ See, for example, Monfasani, 1988: 18n71.

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Figure 8 – Detail of inscription on Monument to Leonardo Bruni by the workshop of Bernardo Rossellino, 1449-1452. [Ph.: Paul Shaw]



This collection draws strength from its cross-disciplinarity, featuring contributions by scholars who investigate Bracciolini's contribution to many fields of knowledge in the Western tradition, spanning across politics and historiography, material and print culture, philology and manuscript studies, calligraphy and paleography. The essays touch upon intertwined aspects of early Renaissance in its recovery of the classical tradition where the concept of *humanitas* extends to the manuscript itself.

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“This distinguished collection of essays adds a wealth of scholarly detail to our understanding of the myriad-minded Renaissance humanist Poggio Bracciolini. And, in doing so, it also manages to capture much of the range and flavor of this extraordinary figure: his learning, his passionate interest in antiquity, his civic pride, and his brilliance in calligraphic design, as well as his ceaseless self-promotion, his enmities, his taste for obscenity, and his penchant for moralizing. Poggio's startling energy and the energy of the whole period course through these pages”

Stephen Greenblatt,

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