Latinity: Rhetoric and Anxiety after Antiquity

Graham Barrett and Oren Margolis
University of Lincoln and University of East Anglia[1]

Abstract: This introduction sets the scene for six essays devoted to the study of the discourse of Latin. Despite the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century, Latin remained the dominant code of communication in European society for a millennium. And yet in the minds of many of its most prolific users and commentators, it has experienced a continuous cycle of existential crises. After multiple reappraisals and re-fashionings of Latinity in the early and high Middle Ages, the self-conscious definition of language and its relationship to culture which arose in fourteenth-century Italy led to the bestowal of the much-controverted title of "renaissance" on the ensuing age. But, with respect to Latinity, was (and is) this label a distinction without a difference? Not only in the Quattrocento, but also in earlier and later eras, cultivating "good Latin", however this was defined, and indeed *being seen* to cultivate it were matters of the utmost importance, an inexhaustible wellspring of sociocultural capital. Our object here is to study the language of the language itself: the value attributed to Latin, its standing vis-à-vis other languages, the qualities linked with it, and the issues in which it was implicated. Our remit is Latinity after Antiquity, and the six essays which follow range from late antique North Africa to nineteenth-century Hungary.

Keywords: Latinity; sociocultural history; Renaissance humanism; John Tiptoft; Gregory of Tours.

> By what right, then, O you Goths, marching forth from your confines, do you not merely take over the territories of the Latins (I speak of liberal studies), but even dare to assault the City of Latinity itself, mistress of all that is?
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> Erasmus, *Antibarbari* (*ca.* 1495/1520)[2]

I Introduction: Scenes of Renaissance Latin

In late January 1460, John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester (1427–70), wrote a letter to the University of Oxford from Padua, where he was studying law. By this point in his career, Tiptoft had already delivered a speech in Rome so beautiful that it reportedly brought tears of unashamed joy to the eyes of no less a judge than Pope Pius II. Since then, he had charmed the discriminating Florentine bookdealer Vespasiano da Bisticci, and become a central figure in—patron, even, of—a humanist coterie made up of the students of famed educator Guarino of Verona, through

[1] Correspondence addresses: gbarrett@lincoln.ac.uk and o.margolis@uea.ac.uk. All translations are our own.

[2] Erasmus, *Antibarbari*, 71, "Quo tandem iure, o vos Gothi, e vestris egressi limitibus, non modo Latinorum provincias occupatis (disciplinas loquor liberales) verum etiam ipsam urbem rerum dominam Latinitatem audetis incessere?"; cf. Thompson (ed.) 1978, 45.

whose school in Ferrara he himself had passed.[3] The letter written to his *alma mater* announced the gift of a number of books by ancient authors, and, despite his insistence that it was already to him "as another Athens", the text reads like a prospective mission statement:

> If you continually devote effort to the reading of these [books of Classical Latin literature], I am sure, you will restore the standing of the Latin language, now lost, in which the ancient Britons—our forebears—flourished, and you will abound very much in the knowledge of very many tools for forging a happy life. And likewise you would easily come to join those men from whose most august company, as and when the occasion might require, our most serene and awesome king appoints such orators [i.e. ambassadors] as—once they have come before the Italians, the princes of all eloquence—may be seen to possess a not altogether uncultured manner of speaking.[4]

The scholars of Oxford welcomed this letter, as might be expected in response to a potential benefactor volunteering himself for the role. Borrowing his words to repeat back to him, they praised the fame which Tiptoft's surpassing excellence had brought both him and their University amongst the Italians, those princes of all eloquence, as well as the gods, and they extolled how one distinguished by military success could be made even more renowned via learning and eloquence.[5] They also expressed their hope, sadly to remain unrealised, that he would fill the shoes of the University's late, great patron Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, who too had taken an unusual interest (for a medieval aristocrat) in the Arts curriculum.

There could scarcely be a finer expression of the values and benefits associated with Latin eloquence during the Renaissance than what is found in this exchange of letters: Tiptoft's earnest commitment to a revival of society through a revival of literature (though by "ancient Britons" he likely meant Bede and Alcuin), combined with his pragmatic appreciation of the opportunities for political and social advancement to which this learning could lead; Oxford's championing of

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[3] Mitchell 1938; Kohl 2004; 2015; the account of Pope Pius II's tears is found in John Free's dedication to Tiptoft of his translation of Synesius of Cyrene, *Laus calvitii*, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodl. 80, fols 5r–8r; see Weiss 1935–38; Rundle 2019, 174–227.

[4] John Tiptoft, letter of 26 January 1460, in Tait 1920, 571–2, "Quorum profecto lectioni si iugiter impendatis operam, amisse Latine lingue dignitatem, qua prisci Britanni, maiores nostri, floruerunt, recuperabitis et plurimarum rerum noticia ad beatam vitam instituendam plurimum abundabitis. Perindeque in eos viros facile evasuri essetis de quorum gravissimo coetu, quotiens rerum oportunitas exigeret, serenissimus ac metuendissimus Rex noster tales delegat oratores quales, postea quam ad Ytalos, omnis eloquentie principes, accesserunt, non infimum dicendi genus optinere videantur", punctuation revised for clarity (cf. Rundle 2019, 177–8); that "the Italians" are the implied agent of "may be seen" is clarified by the response of the Oxford scholars cited in the following note.

[5] University of Oxford, letter of 1 April 1460, in Anstey (ed.) 1898, no. 239 (vol. 2, 354–5): "verum et si nostrapte propius tuam Pataviam accesserimus, rem hanc ita digessimus, quod non solum apud Italos, quos omnis eloquencie principes ais, virtutis tue fama percrebuit, imo nostra per te et tua insimul gloria processerunt"; see Wakelin 2007, 171–2.

letters for lay statesmen, in a departure from its original purpose of educating clerics, and implicit openness to curriculum reform according to the exigencies of patronage. By holding up Italians as the universal standard for this culture, both correspondents take part in a national self-abasement—England on its knees before Italy—leading to the lionisation of Tiptoft, who has evidently overcome his native deficiency and now proposes to mark out the way for his compatriots. So too may there be an acting out of the revival of Antiquity itself: learned and worldly Englishmen playing at being *penitus toto divisos orbe Britannos*, the Britons of Virgil's first *Eclogue* (l. 67), "utterly sequestered from the whole world", soon to be joined by the dispossessed exiles of Arcadia. Certainly when Tiptoft returned to England at last in 1461, he had hoped to bring Italian humanists back home with him.[6]

Yet what good did Latin eloquence really do him? Tiptoft knew of what he spoke: he had fashioned for himself a great career as a statesman, and he credited this eloquence for it. The aforementioned Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421–98), bookdealer to the stars—both political and intellectual—of fifteenth-century Florence, thought likewise; to him Tiptoft, once returned to England, "was one of the leaders in ruling the country, on account of being *litterato* and a man of the utmost discretion."[7] But he himself could not write Latin, and elsewhere in his compendium of *Lives* of illustrious contemporaries he expressed a rather different opinion of the utility of Latin in public life—speaking not of England, but of Florence, supposedly the very home of eloquence. When Joan Margarit i Pau, bishop of Girona, came to Florence in 1461 on an important diplomatic mission for the king of Aragón, Vespasiano advised him to bin his prepared speech to the *Signoria* and speak in the Tuscan vernacular instead of Latin, for otherwise no one would understand him.[8] Giannozzo Manetti, the Florentine humanist and statesman, one of Vespasiano's heroes particularly on account of his Latin eloquence, quite clearly delivered the oration on his embassy to Venice—a high point of his diplomatic career—in Italian.[9] And yet Vespasiano also recalls an unnamed Florentine *gonfaloniere* (probably Luca Pitti, the builder of the famous palazzo of that name) shaming his city by his inability to reply *ex tempore* in Latin to a Neapolitan embassy.[10] When he turned to writing in the late 1480s, he insisted that his *Lives* were merely materials with which a proper author could in future fashion Latin ones.[11] Such a stance, with the understandings of Latin and vernacular which it took as read, would soon appear deeply old-fashioned.

At the height of the Quattrocento, mastery of Latin could be presented as the

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[6] Weiss 1957.

[7] Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le vite*, vol. 1, 418, "era de' principali del governo, per essere litterato, et uomo di grandissima prudentia."

[8] Vespasiano, *Vite*, vol. 1, 215.

[9] Vespasiano, *Vite*, vol. 1, 504–5, vol. 2, 560–61; Albanese & Figliuolo (eds) 2014, 38–40.

[10] Vespasiano, *Vite*, vol. 2, 15–7.

[11] Vespasiano, *Vite*, vol. 1, 34.

balm for all worldly ages. Beyond the bounds of Italy and far from those Italian princes of eloquence, its effects could still be felt. At Hesdin in Picardy, George Neville, archbishop of York (ca. 1432–76), deployed his Latin as a diplomatic weapon, using his noted ability to improvise in that language as a means of English national assertion. Before the duke of Burgundy and other VIPs, he offered an oration "in Latin, very elegant", and was commended for it; he did not condescend to speak French, even though the duke could not respond in like fashion.[12] While Neville's fluent Latin would likely not have met the standards of his more *avant garde* Italian humanist contemporaries, it unquestionably made a better impression than an imperial ambassador's rash decision to address the duke in High German: a disaster of an attempted power play so ill-judged and incomprehensible that it could not succeed.[13] Still at Hesdin, and now before Louis XI of France, Neville delivered a brief Latin speech impromptu, "and the king praised his way of speaking."[14] But the picture which Vespasiano presented was more ambiguous, and if we return to Tiptoft's letter to Oxford, what mattered was chiefly how the ambassadors to Italy should be seen (*videantur*). Therein lies the clue that we are dealing with a concern less for essence than for effect: a patina of culture, of seeming and pretence, to be displayed before a qualified audience, or an audience said to be so, all with skin in the game—Latin eloquence serving mainly, simply, and perhaps only to signal that one was the right type of person to the right type of people.

Tiptoft's Italian education clung to him, though in the end not quite as he had hoped or expected. He acted as High Treasurer and Lord High Constable in England, and served as the king's deputy in Ireland, but when Edward IV fell in 1470, so did he. His Lancastrian enemies charged him with "having invented some particular laws which he had brought back from Italy", and condemned him to death. As he was led through London to the Tower, the mob, baying for his blood, assailed him for having instituted "a law against the people": "the law of Padua", to be precise, "where he had been at university".[15] So says not only Vespasiano, but also an English vernacular chronicle of the day.[16] It was the university experience, not the humanistic one, which mattered: in the eyes of the populace, quite far from cladding Tiptoft in the raiment of the *litterato*, Italy had instilled in him

[12] Georges Chastellain, *Chroniques*, vol. 4, 373–4, "le dit évesque […] commença à paire une oration devant le duc, en latin, moult élegante"; Hicks 2004; 2008.

[13] Chastellain, *Chroniques*, vol. 4, 423–5.

[14] Chastellain, *Chroniques*, vol. 4, 385, "L'évesque anglois fit une petite proposition devant luy, en latin, impourveuement […]. Sy le prit moult en gré le roy, et loua son parler."

[15] Vespasiano, *Vite*, vol. 1, 419, "di gran parte fu la cagione de la sua morte, l'avere egli innovate certe legge che l'aveva recate d'Italia […] gli aveva fatta una legge ch'era contro al popolo, che si chiamava la legge di Padova […] nel passare, tutti gridavano che morisse, per che gli aveva fatta la legge di Padova, dov'egli era istato a Studio."

[16] "Warkworth's Chronicle," 97.

an altogether foreign addiction to summary justice.[17] He lost his head with three strokes, for the Trinity.

II Latinity: the Sociocultural Capital of a Language

Latin has not always functioned as a prestige language, and, even when it has, this has often played out in contested or complicated ways. According to Cicero, its development as a language of culture was still recent, especially as compared with Greek, which had reached full maturity and boasted famous orators when kings still ruled at Rome; in the *Brutus*, he charted the history of eloquence in both languages through the parallel, but not contemporary, lives of masters of the rhetorical art.[18] Even when Latin had matured, and Rome's empire encompassed the Mediterranean, the empire of its language remained limited. "For if anyone reckons that a less glorious reward is to be attained from Greek poetry than from Latin," declared Cicero in defence of the poet Archias, accused of gaining Roman citizenship by illegal means, "he is tragically misguided, for the simple reason that Greek is read in nearly all nations, whereas Latin is confined by its own narrow boundaries."[19] This anxiety of relative status animates a vignette from Plutarch's biography of Cicero, where the great orator's declamation in Greek moves Apollonius to lament Greece's loss to Italy of its last surviving glory: its culture.[20] Ironically so, since everyone involved—protagonists and author—takes for granted a Greek definition of eloquence. Cicero, after all, had crossed the wine-dark sea to perfect his oratory at the source, while Apollonius knew no Latin. The boast put in the mouth of Brutus was premature: "the one thing in which we were conquered by conquered Greece has been seized from them, or at least shared between us and them."[21] For in Antiquity, Rome may have conquered Greece, but Latin never conquered Greek, even as the Romans generally, and Cicero especially, annexed it into their own heritage.[22]

By the time Petrarch rediscovered the text of the *Pro Archia* at Liège in 1333, times had changed.[23] If there is any period when the cultural prestige of Latin—as distinct from its orthography and myriad other evolving linguistic features—was at its most uncontested, it is the Middle Ages in Western Europe. The declining

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[17] Rundle 2013.

[18] Cic. *Brut*. 39; Berg 2019; cf. Fantham 2011, 243–64.

[19] Cic. *Arch*. 23 (10), "Nam si quis minorem gloriae fructum putat ex Graecis versibus percipi quam ex Latinis, vehementer errat: propterea quod Graeca leguntur in omnibus fere gentibus, Latina suis finibus, exiguis sane, continentur"; cf. Adams 2003.

[20] Plut. *Vit*. Cic. 4.4–7; Swain 1990, 131–6; Howley 2014, 187–90.

[21] Cic. *Brut*. 253–4, "quo enim uno vincebamur a victa Graecia, id aut ereptum illis est aut certe nobis cum illis communicatum"; cf. Habinek 1998, 15–68, 94–8.

[22] Farrell 2001, 1–27; Feeney 2016, esp. 215–7.

[23] Reeve 1996, 20–22; Keyser 2013, 292–3.

accessibility of education at schools of grammar and rhetoric (though not necessarily of literacy in all its many registers and forms), the instability of alternative written languages (even when and where they were more widely spoken), and the expansive social and moral standing of the Church and its authorised texts (however much they periodically became battlegrounds) combined to make these the Latin centuries, roughly from the fifth to the fourteenth.[24] Latin was the language of both the Bible and the Philosopher (Aristotle, in translation). Medieval Western Europe might not quite have been united by a common language, but no other language and its literature, whatever the development of the vernaculars, had the same claim to universal prestige, standing, authority as Latin enjoyed, even as its use became ever more marginalised in the Greek East.[25] So far, so uncontroversial. Yet probably no age of any language has been as universally deplored as medieval Latin—by everyone, from its own practitioners through its most eminent scholars down to its students, willing or unwilling, in the present day.[26]

For Renaissance humanists, the men of letters who launched the most sustained and punishing salvos on the Latin world into which they had been born and in which they were educated, language was the touchstone for a cultural revival rooted in eloquence, which promised political and religious renewal for societies affected by it.[27] These scholars asked themselves not "What language?", for Petrarch in effect decided that right at the beginning, but "What Latin?" Should one seek to express oneself like Cicero, or in a manner worthy of Cicero? This first question remained urgent in the age of Erasmus, when there were still many leading scholars who could look back regretfully on what they saw as the outdated primary education through which they had suffered.[28] Humanists succeeded in overthrowing what they defined as medieval Latin, at least in the secular sphere, but despite a widespread commitment to a general Ciceronianism they had not yet settled on a single shared alternative by the time that other question, of the pre-eminence of Latin, began to re-emerge. For scholars of the late Quattrocento, whose interests ranged from the new philology to Neoplatonic philosophy, Greek was the way forward, while Italians began to formalise a canon and a canonical *volgar lingua*, even as the Word of God, in the hands of Martin Luther, William

[24] Curtius 2013, 17–35; Tombeur 1997; Everett 2009; Dinkova-Bruun 2011.

[25] Ziolkowski 1996; Silvano 2019.

[26] Lanham 1975; Sidwell 2015.

[27] Celenza 2005; Baker 2015.

[28] McLaughlin 1995; DellaNeva (ed.) 2007; cf. Rawski 1995, esp. 119–23; Tunberg 2004. The printer Aldus Manutius is one leading humanist from a more provincial background who lamented his early schooling, in the preface to his Latin grammar (1501): see Aldus Manutius, *Humanism*, 198–200; the *locus classicus* of Ciceronian controversies is Erasmus, *Ciceronianus* (1528), but he also acknowledged the recent triumph of the humanist reform of Latin education in *De conscribendis epistolis* (1522), 285, "Ubi nunc in scholis auditur Michahel Modista, ubi glossa Iacobi, ubi citatur Catholicon, Brachylogus, aut Mammaetrectus, quos olim ceu rarum thesarum, aureis literis descriptos habebant monachorum bibliothecae?"

Tyndale, and their disciples, became the foundation for other national literatures.[29] In each one of these cases, attitude to language is an index of a broader cultural complex, and indeed by the nineteenth century, the humanists had themselves been dismissed, or at least diminished, precisely on account of their use of Latin. Rising for the defence, Jacob Burckhardt mocked "modern writers" who saw the work of the humanists as derivative and inhibiting the healthier "native impulses" of vernacular culture, considered to be the true expression of national genius.[30] "The worst that can be said", he claimed of the whole movement, "is that it was anti-popular, that through it Europe became for the first time sharply divided into the cultivated and uncultivated classes." But though the *paterfamilias* of cultural history accepted the revival of Antiquity as a necessary facet of the Renaissance, he nonetheless adjudged "the amount of independence which the national spirit maintained" in Latin literature to be "very small".[31] From the age of Cicero to Romantic nationalism, the Latin language had effected a *volte-face*: far from being a self-consciously second-tier local tongue, its problem now was that it belonged to all nations, and so to none.

What is at stake in all these eras is *Latinitas*. Latinity, as we may render it, carries a range of different meanings. The sense most familiar to historians comes from linguistic and philological research, in which it is often used as a shorthand for the morphology, syntax, and other stylistic and lexical individualities of a particular writer, corpus of texts, or period more broadly: the Latinity of what we used to call the Golden versus the Silver Age, for example, of Plautus or the Vulgate, Cassiodorus or Lorenzo Valla.[32] In Classical usage, *Latinitas* could denote Latin as a language *sensu stricto*, as properly used and in contradistinction to Greek. Macrobius remarked on Virgil's predilection for giving his works Greek titles, observing that the form of *Aeneïs* was "alien to the structure of Latinity".[33] In Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages, it could still refer to the same, or to specific manifestations of Latin such as the prose of Jerome's translation of the Bible.[34] And evolving out of this, it came also to designate the speech of the Western as opposed to the Eastern Church, shading into an idea of Latin Christendom.[35] In a more restricted sense, Cicero used it, in a letter to Atticus, for the package of

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[29] See esp. Celenza 2017, 313–400; Bluhm 1965; Mazzacurati 1984; Besch 2000; Stewart 2002; Crystal 2010.

[30] Burckhardt 1860; trans. Middlemore 1990, 136–7.

[31] Burckhardt 1860; trans. Middlemore 1990, 120–21.

[32] For the classic (and decidedly subjective) stylistic definitions of the Golden and Silver Ages, see Teuffel 1870; trans. Wagner 1873; Crutwell 1877; and e.g. Plater & White 1926; Vidén 1984; Camporeale 2013; Fontaine (ed.) 2015, 98 (A3), "Non ut scholis explodam Plauti ethnicam Latinitatem, sed ut illi coniugam entheam pietatem."

[33] Mac. *Sat*. 5.17.20, "a regula Latinitatis aliena" (cf. 1.6.70, 1.17.7, 5.21.7, 6.6.2, 6.9.12); Serv. *Aen*. 2.471; Glare (ed.) 2012, s.v. "Latinitas," 1.

[34] See e.g. Blaise 1962, s.v. "Latinitas"; Latham (ed.) 1975–2013, s.v. "Latinitas," 1.

[35] See e.g. Blaise 1975, s.v. "Latinitas"; Latham (ed.) 1975–2013, s.v. "Latinitas," 2.

rights which came with the Latin franchise (a usage later emulated by Suetonius), while to the same correspondent he defended his controversial view on the correct spelling of Piraeus by appealing to Terence over Caecilius Statius, "for he is a poor writer [or authority: *auctor*] of Latinity."[36] Implicit in these varied connotations is a definable set of features constituting what Latin is and should be, together with a marked tendency to distinguish its users from others.[37] Our interest is in these characteristics and their consequences.

III Parallel Latinities: Competing Definitions, Convergence and Divergence

For an explicit statement of Latinity so construed, readers and writers from the first century BC onward could look to the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, a manual of style so widely disseminated and consulted that it came to be attributed to Cicero himself. We find, amidst a comprehensive treatment of *elegantia* (style), the following definition and explication:

> Style is what causes every single point to be uttered cleanly and plainly. This is subdivided under [the headings of] Latinity and exposition. Latinity is what preserves clean expression, purged of every defect. The defects in expression which make it less Latin can be of two [types]: solecism and barbarism.[38]

Yet, as an answer to the question of "What is Latinity?", this passage raises a series of further questions proper to the field of historical enquiry. If Latinity is defined by expressing oneself cleanly and plainly, who defines this clean and plain expression? If Latinity is identified as an absence of defects, who identifies these defective expressions? Indeed, if the essence of Latin lies in its opposition to solecism and barbarism, who polices its border fences against them, or even sallies forth into enemy territory? Could a defect such as barbarism ever have purely linguistic connotations, or is Latinity, on the surface the definition of a language, at heart the demarcation of a culture? These contingencies are palpable in the competing definitions of Latinity current even in Antiquity.[39] Cicero himself saw it as merely a prerequisite for good style, which properly consisted in *ornatus* (rhetorical

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[36] Cic. *Att*. 14.12.1; Suet. *Div*. *Aug*. 47.1; Cic. *Att*. 7.3.10, "malus enim auctor Latinitatis est"; and see Du Cange 1884–87, s.v. "Latinitas," 2.

[37] Lausberg 1998, 220–40; Bloomer 2017.

[38] *Rhet*. *Her*. 4.12.17, "Elegantia est, quae facit, ut locus unus quisque pure et aperte dici videatur. Haec tribuitur in Latinitatem et explanationem. Latinitas est, quae sermonem purum conservat, ab omni vitio remotum. Vitia in sermone, quo minus is Latinus sit, duo possunt esse: soloecismus et barbarismus."

[39] Bloomer 1997, 1–17; Vainio 1999, 86–7; Desbordes 2007, 91–105; Clackson 2015, 317–21; cf. Celenza 2009, 227–8.

"elaboration").[40] His contemporary the great polymath Varro counted four elements of *Latinitas* in a passage transmitted by the later grammarians Diomedes and Charisius: the essential and arbitrary nature of the language, its technical organisation, in continual struggle with its customary usage, and the example of the ancients—as Diomedes summarised, it was "the practice of speaking without flaw according to the Roman tongue".[41] The focus is less on oratory in the world, more on the relationship of language to the world, but the field so described still lies somewhere between grammar and rhetoric, amongst basic tensions between the individual speaker and the community, identity, and history of speakers, the classroom circumscription and the social evolution of Latin.[42]

The bishop, historian, and hagiographer Gregory of Tours (d. 594) can illustrate for us the distinction between Latinity understood as Latin usage or discourse and Latinity understood as the discourse of Latin usage. It is a longstanding commonplace of the prefaces to Latin prose works for the writer to profess inadequacy to the task of composition and expression.[43] Gregory makes just such a profession in the opening of his *Histories* of early Merovingian Gaul, but does so against the background of a remarkable evocation of ruin, conjured through a parade of antitheses:

> Declining, and in fact dying out, as is the culture of liberal letters in the cities of Gaul—since a great many things keep happening, whether good or evil, and the barbarity of the nations keeps raging, the fury of kings keeps being incited, churches keep being assailed by heretics, defended by Catholics, the faith of Christ keeps being inflamed in very many, cooled in a great many, likewise those churches keep being either enriched by the devoted or despoiled by the faithless; and there cannot be found any grammarian skilled in the dialectical art to depict these things, whether with the pen of prose or in metrical verse—very many keep on groaning so often, saying, "Alas for our days, since the study of letters has passed away from us, nor is a rhetorician to be found amongst the peoples who can publicise the deeds of the present on the page."[44]

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[40] Cic. *de Orat*. 3.37; Cic. *Orat*. 79; Garcea 2012, 49–113; Cicero, *Cicero and Brutus*, trans. Kaster 2020, 13–4, 23–6.

[41] Diom. 439.15–30, "incorrupte loquendi observatio secundum Romanam linguam"; Char. 62.14–63.9B; Siebenborn 1976, esp. 85–116, 151–4; cf. Kaster 1988, 15–31, 270–72.

[42] Chahoud 2016, 27–31; Zetzel 2018, 49–56, 83–8, 181–2; Spencer 2019, esp. 42–67, 96–128.

[43] Janson 1964, 124–41; Strunk 1970, 52–3, 74–6; Curtius 2013, 83–5, 159–62.

[44] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, preface, "Decedente atque immo potius pereunte ab urbibus Gallicanis liberalium cultura litterarum, cum nonnullae res gererentur vel rectae vel inprobae, ac feretas gentium desaeviret, regum furor acueretur, eclesiae inpugnarentur ab hereticis, a catholicis tegerentur, ferveret Christi fides in plurimis, tepisceret in nonnullis, ipsae quoque eclesiae vel ditarentur a devotis vel nudarentur a perfides, nec repperire possit quisquam peritus dialectica in arte grammaticus, qui haec aut stilo prosaico aut metrico depingeret versu: ingemescebant saepius plerique, dicentes, 'Vae diebus nostris, quia periit studium litterarum a nobis, nec reperitur rethor in populis, qui gesta praesentia promulgare possit in paginis'"; cf. Thorpe (trans.) 1974, 63; Heinzelmann 2001, 101–4, 119–27, 146–52.

Literary Latin is in decay, as both the foundations of the Classical *paideia*, the urban schools of grammar and rhetoric, and its highest expression in poetry are nowhere to be found.[45] Or so Gregory claims, through the *vox populi*.[46] What cautions against taking him at his word is that he then cites this state of affairs as justification for his own authorial undertaking:

> And indeed, considering continually that these things and similar things too are said, for the remembrance of those past to reach the notice of those to come, I though of uncultured utterance have nevertheless been unable to draw such a veil over either the battles of the infamous or the life of the rightly living; and encouraged in particular by these stimuli, namely that I have frequently been surprised at our people saying, "Few understand a rhetorician philosophising, but many a rustic man speaking."[47]

Laments for the decline of Latin are a constant feature of its literature in Late Antiquity (and beyond), tempting one to write a history in their image of cyclical death and renewal.[48] Taken as a genre, however, these laments reveal not so much or not only the history of Latin, in the sense of its change over time as a language, but rather its enduring sociocultural capital, as a rhetorical instrument for authors to employ in situating themselves. Ironically, such passages are often amongst the most elaborate and involved in the text, and Gregory is no exception in this regard.[49] And before criticising his own poor style, he has neutralised it within a context of general deterioration, indeed valorised it by looking to popular comprehension. Not only is his Latin all there is, but it is also, happily, the best suited to being widely understood.[50]

No doubt if we rigorously process the language used by Gregory through the canons of Classical literature, it will qualify as late Latin, consciously and unconsciously evolving, though there is a danger of reconstructing the text from its manuscript transmission to fit a preconception of the author derived from his literary pose.[51] This anxious humility is called into question too by other statements which he makes about language. Gregory is decidedly critical of the Merovingian king Chilperic (561–84), whose policies included a reform of the alphabet and improvements to the supposedly defunct urban schools, but whose own efforts at verse, emulating the fifth-century poet Sedulius, sadly "agree with no metrical

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[45] Marrou 1964 [1956], 452–65; Riché 1976, 177–210; Mathisen 2005.

[46] Bourgain 2000, 263–5.

[47] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, preface, "Ista etenim atque et his similia iugiter intuens dici, pro commemoratione praeteritorum, ut notitiam adtingerint venientum, etsi incultu effatu, nequivi tamen obtegere vel certamena flagitiosorum vel vitam recte viventium; et praesertim his inlicitus [illectus] stimulis, quod a nostris fari plerumque miratus sum, quia, 'Philosophantem rethorem intellegunt pauci, loquentem rusticum multi.'"

[48] Mathisen 1988.

[49] Berschin 1988, 297–303.

[50] Banniard 1992, 50–52; Herman 1999; Lake (ed.) 2013, 96–7.

[51] Bonnet 1890, 22–91; Bourgain 2016; cf. Lapidge 2009.

system at all".[52] Imitative, and not even successfully so, these benighted poems come in for more abuse in the denunciation which Gregory offers of his *bête noire* after he was safely dead:

> He used to claim that no one was more skilled than he. He composed two books, as if having Sedulius in mind—but their broken verses can grind to a halt on no feet; and in them, since he did not understand, he put short syllables for long and set long ones for short—and other brief works, whether hymns or masses, which are by no reckoning acceptable.[53]

Surprisingly for one who declared himself uncultured, the grounds for criticism are technical, in faults of prosody, as well as aesthetic, in an overall failure to meet the literary standard of a proper Latin poet.[54] The same contradiction is present in two further remarks which Gregory makes on this theme in the *Histories*. Referring to his own hagiographical writings on Saint Martin of Tours, he protests that "I though of rustic speech have nevertheless not permitted myself to keep secret what I either have seen myself or know from the reports of the faithful"; however, confronted in his own cell by an impostor holy man with a collection of false relics, he cuttingly observes of his antagonist that "with him too, indeed, it was rustic speech, and the range of that tongue was foul and obscene, but nor did coherent speech come forth from him."[55] Taken together, his criticisms of both himself and his unwelcome intruder span the grey zone between register and accent or inflection, demonstrating a concern for correctness of speech and pronunciation belying his professed lack of cultivation.[56]

From these judgements emerges a self-confident author, who assumes the authority to narrate, interpret, and define his times all while alleging his own modesty.[57] Where Gregory first presents himself as an uneducated man writing bad Latin in default of anyone more qualified, he becomes in the course of the *Histories* an arbiter of good Latin. Where earlier his simple manner of expression is a guarantee of comprehension, later on the contemptibly plain speech of a rogue peasant is a cause of incomprehension. At the end of his narrative, Gregory summarises his

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[52] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 5.44, "nulla paenitus metricae conveniunt ratione"; Springer 1988, 129–30.

[53] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 6.46, "Nullumque sibi adserebat esse prudentiorem. Conficitque duos libros, quasi Sidulium meditatus, quorum versiculi debilis nullis pedibus subsistere possunt, in quibus, dum non intellegebat, pro longis sillabas breves posuit et pro breves longas statuebat, et alia opuscula vel ymnus sive missas, quae nulla ratione suscipi possunt"; Wood 1993; Halsall 2002; Mico 2009.

[54] Norberg 1954, 31–40, 52–3, 70; Kindermann 2002.

[55] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 5.6, "Et licet sermone rustico, tamen celare passus non sum, quae aut ipse vidi aut a fidelibus relata cognovi", 9.6, "Erat enim ei et sermo rusticus et ipsius linguae latitudo turpis atque obscoena; sed nec de eo sermo rationabilis procedebat."

[56] Müller 2001, 73–7; cf. Ferri & Probert 2010; Denecker 2019.

[57] Goffart 1988, 155–7, 194–9.

works and makes a plea to his episcopal successors that even if they should have a better education than his own they should not tamper with or compromise his writings, even if "our Martianus [Capella] has tutored you in the seven disciplines", even "if you have been so well trained in all these that to you our pen is rustic".[58] He allows just one exception: "But if anything in these [books] has pleased you, I do not rule out that you rewrite them in verse, so long as our work is unharmed."[59] While a writer of real literary pretension who knew and worked confidently with a range of poetry, Gregory casts himself equally as inadequate, merely a placeholder for some future true *auteur*, imagining in the preface to his hagiographical *Glory of the Confessors* the scathing critique of the educated:

> But I fear that, when I have begun to write, because I am without rhetorical letters and grammatical art, it may be said to me by the lettered: "You rustic and uneducated man, why do you reckon that your name is to be counted amongst the writers? Do you suppose that this work is to be accepted by the experts, when capacity for the art does not help you, nor does any knowledge of literature support you? And you have no useful basis in literature, you who do not know how to recognise nouns; too often you substitute feminine for masculine, neuter for feminine, and masculine for neuter. Besides this, you frequently do not put those prepositions which the authority of distinguished arbiters has laid down to be observed in the appropriate place; for indeed, you put accusatives in place of ablatives and, conversely, ablatives in place of accusatives."[60]

In response, he presents the poor quality of his writings as a golden opportunity for someone to versify them, and even corresponded with Venantius Fortunatus about the possibility; it is a contradiction of Gregory that this supposedly simple crafter of crude sentences was in fact a major patron of the itinerant poet-panegyrist and dedicatee of his collected poems.[61]

The root of this complex attitude toward simple expression is the tradition of *sermo humilis* canonised in the image of the New Testament.[62] As Gregory asked himself, "Why do I fear my rusticity, when the Lord our Redeemer and God selected

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[58] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.31, "Martianus noster septem disciplinis erudiit", "si in his omnibus ita fueris exercitatus, ut tibi stilus noster sit rusticus."

[59] Gregory of Tours, *Historiae*, 10.31, "Sed si tibi in his quiddam placuerit, salvo opere nostro, te scribere versu non abnuo"; cf. Mortensen 1995, 265–6; Bourgain 2016, 186–8.

[60] Gregory of Tours, *Gloria confessorum*, preface, "Sed timeo, ne, cum scribere coepero, quia sum sine litteris rethoricis et arte grammatica, dicaturque mihi a litteratis: 'O rustice et idiota, ut quid nomen tuum inter scriptores indi aestimas? Ut opus hoc a peritis accipi putas, cui ingenium artis non subpeditat, nec ulla litterarum scientia subministrat? Qui nullum argumentum utile in litteris habes, qui nomina discernere nescis; saepius pro masculinis feminea, pro femineis neutra, et pro neutra masculina conmutas; qui ipsas quoque praepositiones, quas nobilium dictatorum observari sanxit auctoritas, loco debito plerumque non locas. Nam ablativis accusativa et rursum accusativis ablativa praeponis'"; cf. Shanzer 2005.

[61] Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita sancti Martini*, app. 1, 491–3; Venantius Fortunatus, *Poems*, preface; Roberts 2016; cf. Westra 1991.

[62] Auerbach 1993, 27–66; Carozzi 2007.

not orators but fishermen, not philosophers but rustics, to demolish the emptiness of worldly wisdom?"[63] The worth of writing came from the subject, not the style, and *sermo rusticus* was a sign of devotion.[64] As the aristocracy of the Roman Empire had begun to convert to Christianity during the fourth century, however, this aesthetic came increasingly into conflict with their Classical literary training.[65] One response on the broad spectrum of positions taken was to "elevate" Christian literature, whether in mad Virgilian versifications of the Gospels or, more readably, a new genre of epic poetry of martyrdom and salvation.[66] This is in line with what Gregory hopes for his homespun tales, and yet stylistic "elevation" remained an ambivalent undertaking as late antique believers were still coming to terms with education and eloquence.[67] Augustine himself, while arguing for the utility of the Classical curriculum as a hermeneutic resource for Christian understanding, had remained wary of pagan poetry even as he was sensitive to the poetry present in Scripture; in a characteristic equivocation, he suggested that to enhance the Latin Bible with the metres and prose rhythms of the original might bring out its music at the expense of accuracy.[68] Gregory has much the same stance, allowing for an upgrade to the higher form of verse, or perhaps rhythmical prose, but otherwise desiring strict maintenance of his text—something that failed to happen, in the case of his *Histories* especially.[69] Another response to the anxiety of humble speech was simply to insist on it, not only its righteousness but also its utility for general comprehension. In these terms, Gregory begins his collection of miracles of Saint Martin by dilating on his lack of apprenticeship in literature and the certain criticisms to come in consequence, only for his mother to interrupt in support:

> "And do you not know that, with us, because of the level of understanding of the peoples, the way you are capable of speaking is held to be much clearer? Do not hesitate, therefore, and do not stop undertaking these things, for it will be criminal of you if you leave them in silence."[70]

Whether grounded in real linguistic conditions or not, there is a definite awareness here of the potential for literary Latin to be inaccessible, which he confronts

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[63] Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi*, preface, "Sed quid timeo rusticitatem meam, cum Dominus Redemptor et Deus noster ad distruendam mundanae sapientiae vanitatem non oratores sed piscatores, nec philosophos sed rusticos praeelegit?"; Bambeck 1983.

[64] Beumann 1972; Breukelaar 1994, 311–37.

[65] Markus 1974; Salzman 2002, 209–11; Gasti 2020, 17–34.

[66] Roberts 1985; Pollmann 2017, 37–75.

[67] Gemeinhardt 2007, 165–394; Gemeinhardt 2018.

[68] Augustine, *De doctrina Christiana*, 4.113–7; Oberhelman 1988; cf. Müller 2015.

[69] Jungblut 1977; Reimitz 2015, 127–65; Reimitz 2016.

[70] Gregory of Tours, *De virtutibus sancti Martini episcopi*, 1, preface, "'Et nescis, quia nobiscum propter intellegentiam populorum magis, sicut tu loqui potens es, habetur praeclarum? Itaque ne dubites et haec agere non desistas, quia crimen tibi erit, si ea tacueris'"; Auerbach 2003, 92–5.

with a self-conscious effort to be understood by "the peoples", a new audience for a new mode of virtuous prose.[71]

The constant tension in the authorial persona of Gregory between literary inadequacy and self-confidence reflects the innate contradiction of Christian Latin, built on the Classical foundations which it rejected yet retained and repurposed. His discourse of Latin usage—his Latinity—exemplifies the "rhetoric of paradox" which features prominently in early Christian theology and philosophy.[72] Playing with contradictory categories, Gregory claims both good and bad Latin, embodied in his ambivalence about *rusticitas*: his own rustic Latin is good, in imitation of the Apostles, yet he knows bad rustic Latin when he hears it. The same is true of poetry: he himself does not write it, but he is a critic, a connoisseur, even a commissioner of it. The posture recalls Jerome and his famous account of standing trial for Ciceronianism in a dream, where he signalled that he was rejecting the Classics from a position of knowledge rather than ignorance, explicitly name-checking Cicero and Plautus as his literary favourites and, more subtly, using the elaborate rhetorical devices which he claimed to shun.[73] Gregory negotiates this difficult balance between Classical inheritance and Christian present with his own twofold stance, at once self-promoting and negating, identifying both good and bad Latin in himself and others by straddling fundamentally contradictory values: Classical (literary sophistication) and Christian (spiritual humility). In other words, the testimony which Gregory offers about Latin may or may not be evidence of the state of the language in linguistic terms, but it is evidence of the rhetoric of the language. If there was real decline in Classical literary standards as he claimed, and if some degree of conscious "vertical communication" was needed to reach the uneducated via "lower" registers of expression, then language and rhetoric were converging; at other times they will have been diverging.[74] These are the parallel Latinities of usage and the discourse of usage, and Gregory speaks more clearly to the latter, the sociocultural capital of the language. Latin, whatever its linguistic vicissitudes, provided him with an instrument for authorial self-definition or self-fashioning, to establish his unique fitness to be the chronicler and interpreter of his age.

IV In the Shadow of Rome: Latinity after Antiquity

In recent decades, there has been a vast output of books, popular and academic, about the Latin language. Tore Janson, Nicholas Ostler, Jürgen Leonhardt, and Nicola Gardini all celebrate its vitality and recommend its study to current and future students.[75] Something of an explanation may be found in a broader societal

[71] Hen 1995, 25–9; Hilty 2014, 17–8.
[72] Cameron 1991, 155–88.
[73] Jerome, *Ep*. 22.30; Hagendahl 1958, 109–11.
[74] Banniard 2005, cf. Prisco 1999.
[75] Janson 2004; Ostler 2007; Leonhardt 2013; Gardini 2016.

concern about the fate of education in the liberal arts, or the traditional *lycée* (*liceo*, *Gymnasium*). Interestingly, it is the period after the heyday of the humanists—after the end of Latin's effective monopoly—which has been the subject of the most important work on the language's continued cultural eminence. Françoise Waquet focussed on the history of the French education system: her study of the role of Latin within it explored what the language meant over the period from the first humanist grammar schools of the sixteenth century until almost the present, and why, if creativity or even competence did not always result, it so long retained a stranglehold over the schooling of the young.[76] Her conclusion, however, that it was about *habitus* more than learning, about signalling distinction and opening the door to power, would have garnered a curt nod from a member of the later Roman élite, and was prefigured by Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, who saw like forces at work beneath the successful propaganda campaigns of the leading schoolmasters of the Renaissance.[77] They too sought to address present-day concerns, namely the justifications (to them unsatisfying) given for liberal education.[78] The Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Neo-Latin Studies, which sponsored the conference from which most of the essays collected here originate, was established in 2011 to explore the role of Latin as a "European language" in the early modern period—an apparent force for unity. But Latin was also used to subvert unity, and the Institute's numerous projects track the language's infinite ability to distinguish and even divide on grounds of nationality, religion, gender, and class.[79]

Since the late 1980s there has been a parallel proliferation of studies of the social and cultural uses of Latin language and literacy in the Middle Ages.[80] The negotiation of complex multilingualisms has come to be an area of special interest, while the series *Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy* has filled a gap in the literature, on the interrelationship of writing, speech, and gesture, with consistently broad coverage embracing northern, central, and eastern Europe.[81] The foundations of education in Latin have been the object of similarly rich study, while questions of Latinity are also now beginning to be asked, though mainly answered via Latin discourse rather than the discourse of Latin.[82] In public debate, certainly, something cultural (in the sense of a cultural good) remains at stake. Our collection of essays builds on that insight, at the same time offering a wider and more comparative set of observations on Latinity to complement recent interest in neo-Latin, one of the fastest-growing subjects in the humanities, especially in the Low Countries and

[76] Waquet 1998; trans. Howe 2001.
[77] Heather 1996; Grafton & Jardine 1986.
[78] See Hankins 2017; Stover 2017.
[79] See http://neolatin.lbg.ac.at/tags/research.
[80] Briggs 2000; Clackson & Horrocks 2007, 265–304; Melve 2003; McKitterick 2021.
[81] See esp. Mostert 2012; Garrison et al. (eds) 2013.
[82] See e.g. Witt 2000; Black 2001; Bremmer & Dekker (eds) 2010; Witt 2012; cf. Mazzio 2009; Haskell & Ruys (eds) 2010; Stephenson & Thornbury (eds) 2016.

the Austro-German and Italian spheres, and in the last decade in Britain.[83] The establishment of the *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* and the *I Tatti Renaissance Library* has surely buoyed activity in the field, but also lends urgency to the contextual questions which our contributors raise.[84]

Six Essays on Rhetoric and Anxiety

The six essays published in this special thematic section of *Eranos* are devoted to the study of Latinity after Antiquity: the discourse of Latin—its social and cultural functions and conceptions. Despite the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, Latin remained the dominant code of communication in European society for a millennium, or more; the heritage of the language is universality.[85] And yet in the minds of many of its most prolific users and commentators, it has experienced a continuous cycle of existential crises. After multiple reappraisals and re-fashionings of Latinity in the early and high Middle Ages, the self-conscious definition of language and its relationship to culture which arose in fourteenth-century Italy led to the bestowal of the much-controverted title of "renaissance" on the ensuing age. But, with respect to Latinity, was (and is) this label a distinction without a difference?[86] Not only in the Quattrocento, but also in earlier and later eras, cultivating "good Latin", however this was defined, and indeed *being seen* to cultivate it were matters of the utmost importance, an inexhaustible wellspring of sociocultural capital. This discourse around and about Latin, the rhetoric and anxiety of Latinity, is one of constant functions and conceptions communicated in changing forms. Our object here is not literary, linguistic, or philological enquiry, but to study the language of the language itself: the value attributed to Latin, its standing vis-à-vis other languages, the qualities linked with it, and the issues in which it was implicated.[87] Our remit, in the broadest terms, is the world of Latin after the Roman Empire, and the six essays which follow here range from late antique North Africa to nineteenth-century Hungary.

Throughout its history, Latin has been one option in a series of multilingual environments. In his essay, **Jonathan Conant** queries the audiences and meanings associated with its use in early Islamic North Africa, as seen in coinage issued by new Arab governors, correspondence with Christians across the sea, and other local contexts. As a language it has similarly had a multiplicity of registers since its first surviving examples, and in this context, identifying and canonising what constituted "good Latin" was a constant process, but a particular concern amongst grammarians, rhetoricians, and educators during the high Middle Ages. Two contributors to this collection disrupt progressive notions of medieval-to-Renaissance

[83] See esp. Knight & Tilg (eds) 2015; Moul (ed.) 2017.
[84] Celenza 2004, esp. 151–6.
[85] Deproost 2005.
[86] Webb 1994, 97–9.
[87] Watson 2012.

Latinity: **Benoît Grévin**, by treating the *ars dictaminis*, often understood as a peculiarly medieval rhetorical letter-writing practice, on its own terms as a complete Latin literary culture, and **David Rundle**, by considering the multiple Latins at play in fifteenth-century Europe, even in the hands of the same fifteenth-century Europeans. But the "rebirth" of Classical culture in the Renaissance can blind us to the novelty of many of the uses of Latin which characterise its functions and its literatures in the early modern world. Turning on its head the type of the superfluously educated "learned lady", a commonplace of Renaissance scholarship, and encouraging a re-evaluation of gendered conceptions of Latin education more generally, **Anna Clark** explores the sustained, pragmatic, and unexceptional use of Latin by a woman whose humanistic exploits were exceptional in another field. **Paul Gwynne** meanwhile shows how educational imperatives, literary imitation, and radically different values combined—and not without tension—in the transformation of the Jesuits in India and Japan into the joint successors of Aeneas and Ignatius Loyola. And more than any other language, post-Classical Latin is also an inheritance of a package of imperial concepts, transmitting—whatever its contemporary esteem or appraisal—a complex of mythological, political, even moral ideologies. In a deliberately outlying essay looking back on the issues raised by the others, **Lav Šubarić** traces how this inheritance played out, unpredictably, in Hungary, the southern and eastern portion of the Habsburg Empire, where Latinity, as the embodiment of an older, class-based idea of nationhood, found itself in the crosshairs in an age of growing modern linguistic and ethnic nationalisms.

Overall, these essays reveal anxiety to be a constant of Latinity, with rare exceptions: provocatively, during the high Middle Ages in Western Europe. Yet it manifested differently in each society and social context, from the origins of the literary language as a poor cousin to the older and more prestigious Greek in the late Roman Republic, by way of an involved and often self-conscious negotiation of both real and artificial registers in Late Antiquity, to new, albeit familiar connotations in the early modern and modern epochs of imperialism and nationalism. At the same time, such anxiety was as much rhetorical as real, in that concern for Latinity could stand for an ongoing sociocultural significance alongside, or independently of, the state of spoken or written Latin as such. To explore the situations of this anxiety and this rhetoric is our aim: to seek out what makes Latin all but unique as a language, valued as a source of social and cultural capital since men and women began to look back on the age of Cicero not only as a source of literary exemplars, but also as representative of a past world to recreate or reimagine in the present. From each perspective of these essays, spanning more than a millennium, "the Classical period" resided in the past, even as (*immo*, because) it was the source for definitions of culture and ideas of empire; in the full sense of the term, these essays all deal with "the post-Classical world".[88] When Petrarch and his followers

[88] See Goldberg 2007.

demarcated their own ages of darkness or recovery from the Antiquity which they admired by referring to the quality of their respective Latins, they may or may not have been stating a linguistic fact, but they were participating in a lasting rhetorical tradition.[89] The paradox of the constant decline of Latin is its constant function as a tool of self-definition: as writers continued to define themselves with respect to bad Latin, however understood, good Latin—or rather "good Latin"—retained its social and cultural capital.

The words of Erasmus are our beginning and our end. Rome is an eternal presence in the post-Classical history of Latinity: at times the place itself, at times the legacy of its republican or imperial eras, at times its perceived political or religious legitimacy. Humanists recognised this connection clearly. "For indeed, the Roman empire is wherever the Roman tongue has dominion," wrote Lorenzo Valla; its singularity expressed its superiority, distinguishing it not only from Greek with its diversity of dialects, but also making it both a force for and a representation of unity.[90] In the *Antibarbari*, meanwhile, a dialogue written in defence of the *studia humanitatis*, Latinity was to Erasmus's understanding of civilisation what Rome had been to her Empire. "By what right, then," demanded the Prince of Humanists, consciously recalling Cicero's sensational censure of Catiline and the outrages which that disappointed consular candidate had perpetrated against the City and its Republic, do the Goths irrupt so brazenly into "the territories of the Latins"?[91] These Goths, to Erasmus, are the unreformed masters of the medieval curriculum; these territories, to him, the liberal arts. *Horribile dictu*, barbarians brutalise "the City of Latinity itself, mistress of all that is". And behind these words in turn is Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: the prophecy of royal Helenus to Aeneas of a greater successor to Troy, made greatest of all by "one born of Iulus's blood".[92] In the great golden chain of tradition, control of Latinity is tantamount to war for Caesar's inheritance, the humanists to centurions fighting for their capital and its conquests. Rome could be sacked, Rome could even fall, but it was ever the Eternal City to the guardians and gatekeepers of its language. As Antonio de Nebrija wrote in the prologue to his *Grammar of the Castilian Language*, printed in the fateful year of 1492, "Language has always been the companion of empire, and followed it such that they began, grew, and flourished together, and later fell together," yet his primer not only picked up that fallen mantle of Rome to the exaltation of his own nation, but endowed to his compatriots a point of entry for mastering Latin more rapidly and thoroughly than ever before.[93]

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[89] Mommsen 1942; Celenza 2005.

[90] Lorenzo Valla, *Elegantiae linguae Latinae*, 4 [a3v], "Ibi nanque Romanum imperium est, ubicunque Romana lingua dominatur"; preface, in Garin (ed.) 1952, 594–600; Fisher 1993; cf. Henderson 2001.

[91] Erasmus, *Antibarbari*, 71; Cic. *Cat*. 1.1.

[92] Ov. *Met*. 15.447–8, "dominam rerum de sanguine natus Iuli / efficiet."

[93] Armillas-Tiseyra 2016, 202–5; Asensio 1960.

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