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# Divided by a Common Language? Being Eloquent and Being Understood in Early Fifteenth-Century Latins

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*Abstract:* The early fifteenth century saw some scholars in Italy promote a new commitment to Ciceronianism. This is often perceived as the start of the revival of Classical "purity", a stepping-stone towards "neo-Latin", but, during their lifetimes, the humanist contribution was to provide one Latin which sat alongside other varieties. This article considers the interactions between those Latins, both within Italy and across the length of Europe, to distant Britain. There was a very practical reason to accept that there was a range of Latinities: the need to be understood; this is reflected in the debate between Flavio Biondo and Leonardo Bruni on the languages of ancient Rome. Likewise, humanist creativity was sometimes dependent on other forms of Latinity: a telling example involves Tito Livio Frulovisi's Vita Henrici Quinti and its debt to a florid Anglo-Latin text, the Vita et Gesta Henrici Quinti. The differences, however, were not solely between humanists and others, as is shown by the contrasts between some humanists' epistolae familiares and their official writings as chancellors: in this regard, Leonardo Bruni's letters to Humfrey, duke of Gloucester, can be compared with those of his counterpart in Genoa, Jacopo Bracelli, to Henry VI of England. Finally, the use in England of humanist ghost-writers, Pietro del Monte and Antonio Beccaria, in the 1430s and 1440s gives a suggestion of how the "new" Latin was perceived far from its homeland.

*Keywords:* Leonardo Bruni; Flavio Biondo; Jacopo Bracelli; Tito Livio Frulovisi; Renaissance humanism.

What did the Romans ever do for northern Europe? Apart, that is, from the aqueducts, the roads, and the wine (they go without saying). Those masters of apophasis and other rhetorical devices, the humanists of Renaissance Italy, would have added to any list: the language. As the papal secretary and historian Flavio Biondo (1392–1463) asserted in 1459, before the Romans invaded, the French, the Germans, the British neither knew nor had seen letters.[2] With Latin came reading and writing. Biondo's sometime colleague at the curia, Lorenzo Valla (1407–57), dilated more copiously on the benefits which flowed from being initiated into the status of *litteratus*: it gave the vanquished tribes the possibility of learning the liberal arts, of living by a legal code, of attaining wisdom, of *in fine* becoming more than barbarians.[3] For Valla, the gift of Latin literacy made those whom he called "our

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[2] Biondo, *Roma triumphans*, 2. We await the critical edition of the work from the Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo; in the meantime, we now have the first volume of the I Tatti Renaissance Library edition: Biondo, *Rome in Triumph*; for discussion, see Muecke & Campanelli (eds) 2017.

[3] I paraphrase a passage from the preface to Book I of Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiae*, still most readily available in Garin, *Prosatori*, 594–600; the whole work has been edited by S. López Moreda, *De linguae Latinae elegantia*, with this passage at vol. 1, 56; on the passage, see Fisher 1993.

forefathers" more than conquerors—they were civilisers. For Biondo, those who were subjected to this rule knew that they were the lucky ones, *beatissimi*.[4] In this vision of the virtues of empire-building, the achievement of the Romans did not lie primarily in their stonework, in the thoroughfares and the waterways which they imprinted on the invaded landscape. More than that, they constructed an expanse of shared communication. It was a world for which the Fall of Babel held no meaning or fear; it had a towering unity which stood unshaken by the wrath of God—until the collapse of the empire and its civilisation.

Humanists like Valla, surveying the imperial ruins, set themselves the task of reviving pristine eloquence. They announced themselves as enemies of barbarians, wherever they were to be found, and this was, they asserted, mainly amongst the inhabitants of those very nations north of the Alps which had benefitted from subjection to ancient Roman rule. Not that those foreigners had the good grace to remain behind the mountain divide: as the pre-eminent Florentine humanist, Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444), famously claimed in his early masterpiece the *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum*, they come over here and pollute our education with their language.

> Quid autem de dialectica, quae una ars ad disputandum pernecessaria est? An ea florens regnum obtinet […]? Minime vero. Nam etiam illa barbaria, quae trans oceanum habitat, in illam impetum fecit. At quae gentes, dii boni? Quorum etiam nomina perhorresco: Farabrich, Buser, Occam, aliique eiusmodi, qui omnes mihi videntur a Rhadamantis cohorte traxisse cognomina. Et […] quid est, inquam, non in dialectica quod non britannicis sophismatibus conturbatum sit?[5]

The three names which made him shudder—Richard Feribrigge, William Buser, and William of Ockham—are all of scholastic logicians, the first and last of whom were from that farthest-flung region of the former empire, Britannia.[6] Bruni's words are testimony to the success of English logic in Italy in his lifetime; the humanists were fighting against such fashionable imports.[7] This was to be a battle over "which Latin", characterised in this passage as "whose Latin". It is a reminder that humanist

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[4] Biondo, *Roma triumphans*, 1.

[5] Bruni, *Dialogi*, 247 (para. 25, ll. 1–10): "What about dialectic which is the one art essential to disputing? Does it possess a flourishing kingdom? Not at all. For that barbarism which lives beyond the ocean has made an attack even on this. And what people are they (good gods!)? All of me shudders even at their names: Feribrigge, Buser, Ockham, and others of the same kind, who all seem to me to have drawn their surnames from the followers of Rhadamantus [judge in Hades]. What part of dialectic, I ask, has not been thrown into confusion by British sophisms?" For the tradition of British-bashing in which this sat, see Garin 1960; Vasoli 1974; and Boitani 2007.

[6] "Buser" was identified by Garin (*Prosatori*, 60) as William Heytesbury, which would make those mentioned a fully English triumvirate (on Heytesbury's popularity in Italy, see Spade 1989). It is, however, a stretch to make the word in the *Dialogi* that name, and more likely it refers to William Buser, who was from Brabant and taught at Paris; on him, see Kneepkens 1982.

[7] On this popularity, see esp. Courtenay 1982.

attempts at reform intervened within a culture where Latin was far from a unitary entity. Lorenzo Valla claimed that, after the fall of Rome, for many centuries no one spoke Latin or even understood it on the page.[8] This, of course, was a gross exaggeration. A language which across the Classical world had apparently persisted with a surprising level of commonality spawned many new local vernaculars, but that process did not presage its death-throes: it survived into the Middle Ages by multiplying. Latins existed in plurality, defined by region, by subject matter, and by diktats of taste.[9] The humanists set their face against such variety and envisaged a programme of linguistic cleansing. But their scholarly lives and their professional careers required that they engage with those who wrote and spoke by criteria other than theirs. The theme of this chapter is what they thought was happening and what they actually did when those encounters occurred.

## I Barbarians at the Curia

The variety of Latins and the presence of vernaculars made some humanists wonder whether the reach of *Latinitas* had ever been as extensive as Valla was to claim. In early 1435, when Pope Eugenius IV (1431–47) and his entourage were housed in Florence, discussion arose amongst the papal secretaries and the chancellor of their host city, the author of the *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum*, Bruni himself. They were each waiting for an audience with the pontiff and (when they were not regaling one another with salacious tales) some—including Bruni—posited that in the streets of ancient Rome jostled together the sounds of two languages, the grammatical Latin of the learned and the idiom of the *plebs*, the Italian of its day.[10] Our earliest source for this debate of 1435 is one of its participants, Flavio Biondo, who held the opposing view to Bruni, the view which eventually won the day: there was only one language used by all classes, albeit with registers and grades of expression.[11] Biondo wrote up a short tract setting out his reasoning, primarily through reference to passages from Cicero, and addressed it as a letter to Bruni, who responded in like form, unpicking the arguments one by one.[12] Bruni's

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[8] Garin, *Prosatori*, 598; Valla, vol. 1, 60.

[9] I have found stimulating the work of Adams (2007), who, against claims of uniformity, gathers detailed evidence of the variety of Latin in the ancient world; but that variety, though manifold, seems small-scale in comparison with that of medieval and Renaissance Latins.

[10] For discussion of this debate, see Tavoni 1984, 3–41; Mazzocco 1993, 13–50; Celenza 2009; and Marcellino & Ammannati 2015; for a recent assessment of ancient perceptions of the variety of spoken Latin, see Müller 2001.

[11] The long-standing edition of Biondo, *De verbis Romanae locutionis*, available in Nogara (ed.), 115–30, and revised by Tavoni (1984, 197–215), has now been superseded by the edition of Delle Donne (2008); see also Raffarin 2015.

[12] Bruni's letter is in his epistolary, VI/10 [Luiso VI/15]. The standard edition remains that of Mehus (1741), recently reprinted as Bruni, *Epistolarum libri VIII*, with a critical introduction by James Hankins. Note that there is also now a French bilingual edition: Leonardo Bruni Aretino, *Lettres*

central assertion was that, given the grammatical complexity of Latin, it was absurd to imagine that the uneducated masses could master it. He mentions two groups as representatives of the uneducated. On the one hand, there are the *nutrices et mulierculae* (contrasted with learned ladies like Cornelia Africana), an allusion to the unliterary "mother tongue" in which nurses and matrons would sing lullabies.[13] On the other, there are the *pistores et lanistae*, the bakers and gladiatorial trainers who were illiterate but still capable of making some sense of an orator's words, just as their equivalents "nowadays" would be able to follow the Latin Mass "because it is by far easier to understand foreign speech than to pronounce it."[14] The selection of these groups is suggestive of the limits of education in Bruni's own city, where there were unusually high literacy rates, if only in the vernacular.[15] What is more, the specific contemporary reference to the hearing of ecclesiastical Latin, combined with the emphasis on comprehension without verbal ability, provide an implicit response to a notable passage in Biondo's tract.

In the process of making his case, Biondo had also drawn a contemporary parallel, one which can remind us what a very real daily issue communication between Latin speakers could be in an international environment like the papal court:

> Magnam in curia Romani pontificis servientium nobis turbam, Gallos Cimbros Teutonos Alamannos Anglicos Britannos Pannoniosque, et diversam penitus ab Italica linguam habentes alios, semper esse videmus, qui, etsi litteras sciunt, adeo tamen rudes et artis grammaticae aliarumque et quamdam ex consuetudine sibi comparaverint latini sermonis litterati practicam, illitterati et penitus idiotae dici possint.[16]

In this sentence Biondo deploys his own skill at rhetoric, with the asyndeton of the national designations, and the accumulation of clauses rising to the semi-

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*familières*, ed. Bernard-Pardelle, in which this letter appears at vol. 2, 148–62. I cite Mehus epistle numbers, followed in square brackets with the epistle numbers assigned by Luiso 1980, and also give the Bernard-Pradelle section and page references.

[13] Bruni, *Ep*. VI/10 [Luiso VI/15], para. 7 (Bernard-Pradelle, vol. 2, 156). There is presumably an allusion here not just to the opening of Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (1.1), but also to that of Dante's *De vulgari eloquentia* (1.1–2), where it is said of the vernacular that is the language of *non tantum viri sed mulieres et parvuli,* which we learn *nutricem imitantes*: see Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*, 2. On Bruni's knowledge of this text, see Mazzocco 1993, 214; for a detailed but wayward discussion of the concept of *materna lingua* / *locutio*, see Bonfiglio 2010; and for an impassioned attack on the modern fetishising of the concept (primarily in the German tradition), Yildiz 2012.

[14] Bruni, *Ep*. VI/10 [Luiso VI/15], para. 2–3 (Bernard-Pradelle, vol. 2, 150–52): "quod longe facilius est intelligere alienum sermonem quam proferre."

[15] Black 2007, 1–42, though his estimates (only for male literacy) seem excessive.

[16] Biondo, *De verbis*, 19–20 [xviii/76] (and see the editor's discussion at xxxix-xlix): "we see that there is always a large crowd of those in service to us at the curia of the Roman pontiff, French, North Germans, Teutons, Rhenish Germans, English, Britons [Bretons?], Hungarians, and others who have a tongue completely different from Italian. These, even though they know letters, are so unpolished in the art of grammar and others, that were they to compare any usual practice of lettered Latin speaking to themselves, they could be said to be illiterate and complete idiots."

alliteration of the final phrase: illiterates and idiots. Those words might involve a conscious Classical allusion, echoing the same combination of nouns quoted by Nonius Marcellus from the satirist Lucilius.[17] At the same time, there is possibly something else happening. While in Classical usage *idiota* signified the ignorant and uneducated, Biondo could not have been unaware of the supplementary usage it had gained, of one who could speak only a local tongue, not Latin.[18] It is in this sense that it was used by Bede, an author praised by some humanists but who, as he himself said, was from *alter orbis*, another world.[19] In contrast to Biondo's later encapsulation of a Classical world knitted together by its shared language, here we have the sense that the fabric has long been stretched so far it is close to unravelling—close but not quite. For Biondo's insult to other nations is far from gratuitous; its purpose is to introduce his point that, for all their barbarisms and solecisms, "yet they understand the meaning of the words which are said by the most learned lettered men in the speeches and talk they make."[20] In the progress of his argument, Biondo's intention is to draw a similarity with those in ancient Rome who were unlearned but still, he argues, could follow a Ciceronian oration. A little like them, the cosmopolitan crowd at the latter-day curia made poor speakers but competent listeners.

Not, it must be said, that their accents or their syntax exempted visitors from the requirements of speechifying before the pope. Their performances met with differing responses. Of one *oltramontano* who is discussed elsewhere in these essays—John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester (1427–70)—it is claimed that his eloquence reduced the humanist pope, Pius II, to tears of joy, but the assertion comes from a partial source, the earl's secretary and fellow Englishman John Free (d. 1464/65).[21] Perhaps more often Italian curialists wept salty drops at hearing "their" language of Latin masticated and massacred in foreign mouths. To give just one example, the ambassador of the duke of Brittany, Guillaume de Domqueur, gave an oration before Sixtus IV on the feast of Pentecost in June 1481: Jacopo Gherardi remembered it as "[non] inepta, quamvis ab externo barbare pronuntiata".[22] This did not mean that it was disparaged by all; Gherardi himself notes that it was commended by hearers for its appropriateness, and someone liked it enough to ensure that it was

[17] Non. 1.38.

[18] I thank Martin McLaughlin for drawing this possibility to my attention; an additional possibility is that Biondo also has in mind the concept of *idiotismus* as mentioned by Quintilian and Donatus, on which see Ferri & Probert 2010.

[19] Bede, *Ep*. to Egbert, PL 154, col. 659c: "idiotas, hoc est, eos qui propriae tantum linguae notitiam habent"; for brief discussion of humanist praise of Bede, see Rundle 2005, 69.

[20] Biondo, De verbis, 20 [xviii/77]: "et tamen orationes sermonesque qui a doctissimis litteratis fiunt quid sibi velint, quas ob res dicantur, intelligent."

[21] Weiss 1935–38; on Tiptoft, see Rundle 2019, 174–227.

[22] *Il Diario Romano*, 55: "[not] inept, though pronounced barbarously by a foreigner"; the incident is noted by Lee (1988, 472), who however misidentifies the author as "an English Carmelite".

printed, presumably soon after delivery.[23] The text demonstrates that the author was attempting to work to humanist expectations of oratory, but clearly Domqueur had not managed similarly to perfect an accepted style of pronunciation. To write fashionably and to speak comprehensibly were two separate tests. The result of the mismatch was that Domqueur did not quite cut a *bella figura* at the curia.

Even to write in a Latin acceptable to the circles of Italian *littérateurs* could be assumed to be a challenge which stretched those of other nations beyond their nature. If we were to take northern European statements about their own eloquence at face value, we would have to conclude that they traced a route south weighed down with a sense of their own inferiority. They were wont to admit their status as barbarians and claim that they had made the journey to Italy in the hope of being taught eloquence where it flourished most. Indeed, for those who were to be pupils of the celebrated educationalist Guarino da Verona (1374–1460)—amongst them the aforementioned John Free—composing such an admission was a required act of submission, akin to an initiation rite into the network which the schoolmaster span about himself.[24] They made these confessions, it should be added, in humanist Latin, giving the lie to any suggestion that they were incorrigible pupils. Their rhetoric, though, left its mark on their successors as Classicising scholars in the following century: the English antiquary John Leland (d. 1552), writing in his own finely wrought humanist style, described how Free's sometime patron William Gray, later bishop of Ely (d. 1478), when studying in Oxford:

> animum ad commigrationem in Italiam, eloquentia linguae utriusque eximia ac bonis florentissimam artibus, totum conuertit. Alpes igitur transgressus, Ferrariam alacer deuenit; et Guarino […] discipulum diligentissimum praeceptori diligentissimo se adiunxit.[25]

Such tales of earlier compatriots setting their hearts on imbibing eloquence in Latin and Greek at its Italian source served for Leland's generation as episodes in a narrative of progress achieved. It is a story which persists in our day, even in the nomenclature of neo-Latin, which acts as a sort of kite-mark of approval for those forms of early modern expression considered appropriately Classical, while overlooking those which continued to wallow in barbarisms. Such a philological approach has its logic—just as histories of science which plot the forward march of knowledge have their own coherence—but my focus here is on considering the moment when the paradigm was shifting. What interests us is not how "better Latin" won the day, but how its early forms interacted with other Latins which were available. In introducing some of the main types of linguistic movement

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[23] Guilelmus de Dumo Quercu, *Sermo de Sancto Spiritu* (Rome, 1481).

[24] On this, see Rundle 2013.

[25] Leland, *De viris illustribus*, 774 (and cf. 772, discussing Robert Flemyng): "[he] turned his whole heart to moving to Italy, where the highest eloquence of both tongues [Latin and Greek] and the good arts were most flourishing. He therefore crossed the Alps and quickly reached Ferrara, and attached himself to Guarino as the most diligent pupil of the most diligent teacher."

between Latins, we will also move between the place which the humanists called their homeland and that very edge of civilisation which made them tremble at its hellish barbarism: Britain.

## II Two Routes to Eloquence

Of the several forms which interaction could take, perhaps the most striking can be represented by the relationship between two biographies, both composed in England in the later 1430s and both of the recent short-lived, warmongering king Henry V (1413–22). One was written by an anonymous Englishman in an indigenous style, the other by a visiting humanist, Tito Livio Frulovisi (fl. 1420s–40s).[26] Until recently it has been assumed that Frulovisi's *Vita Henrici Quinti* was the earlier work, expanded and—it is habitually suggested—degraded by the more verbose *Vita et Gesta Henrici Quinti*. This sits comfortably with conventional assumptions of the sources of creativity in the Quattrocento, Renaissance vitality concocting original works which were then twisted out of shape by those too "medieval" to appreciate them. In the last decade or so, however, it has become accepted that the sequence of the two texts must be the reverse, that the first act of generation was the Anglo-Latin text which Frulovisi then attempted to recast in more humanist guise.[27] Their relationship, then, is suggestive of how humanist productivity could be deeply indebted to the intellectual fruits of "barbarians" alongside whom they lived.

What makes the "non-humanist" Latin of the *Vita et Gesta* more rebarbative to readers of refinement is that it is in a particular style which enjoyed a relatively short-lived fashion in certain English circles. And thank God it was short-lived, the *arbitri elegantiarum* would say. Few would allow the author the indulgence which he begs in his prologue:

> Fateor etenim quod ad meorum tam rudium digitorum tactum Tulliana cithara in consononciam laxari dedignatur, Gregoriani eciam pectinis angelica melodia tam inertis citharedi deliris tractibus, tamque rudi plectro sese in consonam resolvi melodiam nequaquam permittit. Non enim valeo extra fores rethoricae positus peregrinus et advena tantam materiam condigna amicire clamide aut ab angusti pectoris exsiccato fonticulo tam spaciosam derivare abissum. Caritatem igitur ac discrecionem tuam, o lector pie, semotis invidiae furoribus, benigne caritatis faculis accendi precor et opto […].[28]

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[26] Both works were edited by Thomas Hearne in the eighteenth century: the first mentioned, *Vita et Gesta Henrici Quinti*, under the name of Thomas Elmham, an attribution now rejected, so that the author is sometimes identified as "Ps-Elmham"; the second, *Vita Henrici Quinti*, with the title-page naming Frulovisi as Titi Livii Foro-Juliensis. For Frulovisi's career, see Rundle 2004; and the introduction to the edition of one of his plays, *Oratoria*, xi–xxviii.

[27] Rundle 2008; cf. Merisalo 2009.

[28] *Vita et Gesta*, 3: "verily I admit that the Tullian cithara considers it unworthy to settle into harmony at the touch of my so rude digits, and the angelic melody of the Gregorian plectrum in no way allows

The self-identification as *peregrinus et advena* has prompted the supposition that "the author was […] a foreign visitor to England who was influenced by the development of humanist forms in style and Latinity."[29] Such a comment suggests how easy it is to be misled by both the overblown metaphors of this prose—the author is actually using a phrase familiar from the Vulgate in order to claim alien status in the world of rhetoric—and by the allusion to the "Tullian lute". His is an interpretation of Ciceronianism which would have jarred on humanist ears. Moreover, the reference to the "Gregorian plectrum" alerts us to how the author believes the Classical should be blended with more recent traditions. This work sits within a pattern of composition known from other Anglo-Latin texts and especially associated with John Whethamstede, the long-serving abbot of Saint Albans.[30] The *Vita et Gesta* (for which Whethamstede cannot be held responsible) is one piece of evidence that this "florid" style had a following greater than one person or one location in England in the early fifteenth century. It was, of course, to lose to other forms of expression, but, though we may not mourn its passing, it serves to remind us that there was more than one route to literary composition at the time when the *studia humanitatis* was forming its canon.

The relationship between the two texts also allows us to watch a humanist at work transforming prose into his own idiom. Here is one short passage from early in the work, where each author is talking of the aftermath of the revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr, which had been defeated by Henry on his father's behalf:[31]

| *Vita et Gesta Henrici V*, p. 1032 | Frulovisi, *Vita Henrici V*, p. 4 |
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| totam Wallie rebellionem sua virtute penitus exstirpavit et ipsam patriam, cum universis incolis suis, eidem patri suo subjectam restituit excepto ipso Owanno, capitali rebelli, pre timore in loca deserta et latebrosas caveas, absque pugnancium fortitudine fugiente ibidemque vitam inhonorifice finiente | reliqua Wallia in deditionem patris reducta |

itself to be put into harmonious melody with the silly pluckings of so unskilled a cithara-player or with so rude a quill. For I, a foreigner and a stranger from beyond the confines of rhetoric, have not the power to dress such great matter in a worthy mantle or to fill such broad depths from the dried-up tiny well of a narrow breast. Therefore, o pious reader, I beg and entreat that your love and discrimination, setting aside the furies of hatred, be kindled with little torches of kind love."

[29] Curry 2000, 64.

[30] The best published general discussion remains Jacob 1933; repr. in Jacob 1953, 185–206; on Whethamstede, see Howlett 1975. For a rather different reading of Whethamstede, concentrating on his verse, see Carlson 1999; and Carlson 2003.

[31] Other parallel passages are provided and discussed by Rundle 2008, 1118–21.

[32] I have lightly corrected the printed text against the first recension of the work, which survives as Oxford, All Souls College, MS 38 (fol. 3$^{v}$):

cuius filius et heres isti principi Henrico post in regem coronato serviens ei familiaris extitit domestico famulatu.
De hiis Wallie guerris, per multa annorum continuatis curricula, de obsidionibus, conflictibus, frequenti strage, discriminosis incomodis, fortuna et infortuniis, aliisque infinitis in eisdem contingentibus, expavescens calamus pauca ponit, quia ad veram et certam singulorum noticiam non pervenit.

preter Owanum quendam Wallicorum caput, qui propter metum et conscientiam facinoris in deserta loca et antra sine comitibus fugatus vitam inhoneste finivit

eius Owani Henrico postea regi famulatus est filius.
Et hoc de Wallicis bellis satis, quorum ad certam quoque singulorum notitiam non devenerunt.

The most obvious contrast is that Frulovisi's rendering of the events is here—as it is throughout the biography—more succinct, with an overall reduction of the text by two-thirds. On the rare occasions when he does expand the wording, it is in order to insert an established Classical phrase, as when he converts *prae timore* into *propter metum* and adds the Ciceronian *et conscientiam facinoris*.[33] More often Frulovisi wields the equivalent of a red pen, excising rotund circumlocutions from the *Vita et Gesta*, though retaining some of the terms, even when they are of dubious usage. An example of this in the passage just quoted is *famulatus*, used in the *Vita et Gesta* as a noun in the non-Classical sense of "household", while Frulovisi, presumably attempting to avoid such a barbarism, turns it into a past participle of

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*Vita et Gesta*

Through his virtue he completely crushed the entire uprising of Wales and restored his own fatherland, with all its inhabitants, to loyalty to his father
expect Owen himself, the leading rebel, who through dread fled from the strength of the attackers into deserted placed and shadowy caves and there ended his life without honour.
His son and heir served that prince Henry after he was crowned king and lived as a domestic servant.
About these Welsh combats, which ran continually through many years, about the sieges, the conflicts, the frequent slaughter, the dangerous misfortunes, the unfortunate events which happened by fortune, and all the endless other matters touching these, the fearful pen writes few words, because it has not reached true and accurate knowledge of the individual events.

Frulovisi

When the rest of Wales had been brought to obedience to his father

apart from Owen, a certain leader of the Welsh, who through fear and knowledge of his evil deed, fled without companions into deserted places and grottoes, and ended his life dishonourably.
The son of this Owen Henry, when afterwards he was king, had as a domestic servant.
Enough of these Welsh wars, of which they have not arrived at accurate knowledge of the individual events.

[33] The phrase is also used by Tacitus (*e.g. Hist.* 1.25), but we can discount Frulovisi's knowledge of that as it was only in the years when he was writing that the text (released from Montecassino in the previous century) was beginning to circulate in Florence: see Reynolds (ed.) 1983, 407–8.

*famulor*, though that verb was rather more frequent in early Christian than in Classical Latin. At other points he perhaps over-strains to be original: so, for instance, when he reads of Glyn Dŵr hiding in gloomy caves—*caveas*—Frulovisi replaces the noun with *antra*, a term which, in Classical Latin, was much more often found in poetry than prose. This is not to traduce Frulovisi as a poor Latinist, but instead to emphasise the struggle which he faced in making his source his own text. Some medievalisms were simple to replace—like *bellum* for *guerra*—but, just as often, he must have been uncertain about what would be the *mot juste*. Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiae* was not yet available, and it would not, in any case, have helped him with many of his choices. He was, in effect, driving the text towards humanism without a road map and, moreover, with his end-point still under construction. The *studia humanitatis* was in the making.

Nor, we should remember, was humanist Latin so obviously superior that it would gain a quick victory. Frulovisi's *Vita* achieved only a small circulation in England and in Italy, mainly through his own promotion of his work. The *fortuna* of the *Vita et Gesta* was confined to the country of its production, and the number of extant copies of it is also small, but double that of Frulovisi's re-working.[34] This, in part, reflects the localised circulation of texts in manuscript culture, though it is plausible to assume that some had access to both works. Certainly, within the Latin culture of fifteenth-century Europe, there was space for both works to live alongside each other.

## III The Limits of Humanist Latin in the Chancery

If the incident just discussed reveals interaction happening between Latins far from the *soi-disant* fulcrum of humanist endeavours, another form of cohabitation is on display much closer to their centre-point. Our discussion should attend to the issue raised by Biondo's comment quoted above: the problematics of international diplomatic exchange. His *aperçu* concerned spoken Latin at the curia, but there is a greater wealth of evidence if we consider written correspondence. In doing this we shall focus not on the curia itself but on the city in which the papacy was resident when Biondo wrote, the *Florentina urbs* which proclaimed itself the birthplace of the *studia humanitatis*. Our primary interest will be in the man who stood chatting with Biondo outside the pope's bedroom and who took the diametrically opposed position on the issue of the languages of ancient Rome: Leonardo Bruni, chancellor of Florence.[35] Our question will be both how a humanist addressed foreigners, specifically the English (whom elsewhere Bruni had derided), and how far the

[34] I outline the surviving medieval manuscripts of both works at Rundle 2008, 1129–31.

[35] For his time as chancellor, see Viti (ed.) 1990; Viti 1992; and Griffiths 1999.

recipients could have perceived the humanist agenda from the correspondence which they received.[36]

It was a central claim of the humanists that their eloquence could be of public use, that those in power would be wise to summon their persuasive skills to participate in the august occasions of state, and in their more quotidian matters besides. In this proclaimed belief in their own utility, the fifteenth-century Florentine humanists followed their intellectual godfather, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), himself the city's chancellor. Report was that Florence's enemy Giangaleazzo Visconti, duke of Milan, rued that a single epistle written by Salutati for his republic was worth a thousand horse.[37] Though he felt at times stifled by the tradition of his own chancery, he was able to ensure that Classicising rhetoric infiltrated some of its correspondence.[38] Such letters were sent not just within the peninsula but also far beyond the Alps.[39] Here is one *exordium* to a letter sent to Henry IV of England on 18 August 1401:

> Inter alia mortalium vitia, serenissime atque gloriosissime princeps et metuendissime domine, nullum turpius, nullumque detestabilius ingratitudine potest atque perfidia repiri. Nam si ut eloquentie fons diffinit Cicero gratitudo virtus una est non solum maxima sed etiam mater virtutum omnium reliquarum profecto consequeris est ingratitudinem maximum esse vitium ac matrem omnium vitiorum […].[40]

The sententious style and the carefully balanced phrasing, let alone the explicit reference to the "fount of eloquence", announce the epistle's Ciceronian credentials, which Salutati patently thought not inappropriate to be sent to Britons cut off from the whole world. Not all the phrasing, it must be said, is as polished: for instance, "time and expense" is rendered periphrastically as "[non] sine longo temporis tractu magnoque monetarum dispendio". Salutati's Classicising intentions, however, are apparent, and this, as we are about to see, is in notable contrast with the practice of the next generation.

When, nearly forty years later, Leonardo Bruni gathered together his own cor-

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[36] We are considering, of course, the period before the heyday of humanist manuals of letter-writing, on which see Gueudet 2004; Burton 2008; and Henderson 2009; for the first half and middle of the fifteenth century, see Harth 1983; and on one influential early work, see Fantazzi 1991.

[37] Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini, *De Europa*, 221; for earlier versions of this claim, see the editor's footnote at *Epistolario di Coluccio Salutati*, vol. 4.1, 247–78.

[38] On the confrontation of styles, see Petrucci 1972, 93–101; and Witt 1976, esp. 23–41; see also Griggio 1998.

[39] For the international popularity of his letters, including in England, see Witt 1976, 5.

[40] Florence, Archivio di Stato (hereafter ASF), Signori Missive Io Cancelleria, registro 25, fols 51–52, with the Ciceronian tag being from *Planc*. 80: "Amongst the rest of the vices of humans, most serene and glorious prince and most feared lord, nothing can be found which is more shameful and more detestable than ingratitude and faithlessness. For if, as that font of eloquence Cicero defines it, gratitude is the one virtue which is not only the greatest but also the mother of all other virtues, then it certainly follows that ingratitude is the greatest vice and the mother of all vices […]."

respondence to be published in eight books, he chose to open the work with letters which emphasised both his debt to Salutati and the practical application of humanist epistolary style.[41] The first book begins with a group of epistles to the old chancellor from Bruni, then in Rome seeking a curial post which, he narrates, he won through a competition set by the pope to draft a response to a letter of the duc de Berry.[42] We might take it as a heroic tale of how the *studia humanitatis* came to be cherished at the very heart of Christendom, though in truth it is the story of one humanist's success over another scholar, considering that Bruni's rival for the post, Jacopo Angeli da Scarperia, was also an acquaintance of Salutati's and shared his coterie's interests.[43] What is more, the letter in question to the duc de Berry, in the form in which it survives, could not be said to presage a revolution in papal modes of expression: unadorned and clearly expressed, it does not—indeed, could not, given the subject-matter—shy away from non-Classical terms and usages (*schisma*, *scandalum* as "scandal", *invalidus* as "invalid").[44] It may be that it impressed for its argumentative sequence rather than for any rhetorical flourishes. Of course, what survives may not be precisely as Bruni drafted it: he does not include his own version in his epistolary. This is not surprising, given that what he was collecting together was his personal correspondence—his *epistolae familiares*—written in his own name, rather than on behalf of an employer. The personal was by no means private, and the publication of an epistolary augmented the circulation of letters by him which was already occurring.[45] That process of circulation may, at times, have blurred the distinction between the two categories of familiar and official, but a separation was usually present at the point of composition, and that separation was more than merely conceptual.[46] For what is notable is that there is on occasion (though not always) a fissure between how Bruni would write in one of his "own" epistles, designed to imitate Cicero's practice, and what he saw fit to appear in an official missive.

This is best exemplified by providing a brief comparison of two letters addressed to the same person. The recipient in this example is the English royal prince and sometime patron of humanists, Humfrey, duke of Gloucester (1390–1447). The

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[41] On the construction of the epistolary, see Viti 1989 (a revised version appears at Viti 1992, 311–38); and Hankins's introduction to the reprint of Bruni, *Epistolarum libri*; on the development of humanist epistolaries more generally, see Revest 2007.

[42] Bruni, *Ep*. I/1–3 [Luiso, 1/3, 4, and 6] (Bernard-Pradelle, vol. 1, 108–18).

[43] See Weiss 1977, 255–77; and, more recently, e.g. Stok 1998.

[44] The letter was published in Martène & Durand (eds), vol. 8, cols 702–5; it gained something of a circulation in France, e.g. *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys*, vol. 3, 252–4.

[45] On the complexities of the early circulation of the letters, see Hankins 2003–04. On the general point of the public nature of familiar letters, I accept, as emphasised by Harth (1985, 140), that at times, "les frontiers entre les fonctions professionnelles et les intérêts littéraires privés […] étaient […] difficles à définir précisément," but that does not mean that a distinction evaporates; cf. Henderson 2002.

[46] On official letters which circulated within formularies, see Viti 1992, 223–53.

first epistle, written in Bruni's personal capacity as a scholar, has a certain notoriety, since in it he says that he will take on the translation of Aristotle's *Politics* and implies he will dedicate the work to the duke, something which he later denied having promised. The passage in question is typical of the style used in this epistle:

> Traductionem igitur Ethicorum noviter a me editam, legi a te ac tanti principis iudicio comprobari gratissimum est mihi, fructumque ex eo maximi laboris mei videor percepisse. Quod autem flagitas ut Politicorum libros eiusdem philosophi tuo nomine in latinum convertam, quamquam opus est magni laboris multarumque vigilarum, tamen quia tanto principi flagitanti denegare quicquam nefas duco, suscipiam id onus […].[47]

This was most likely sent in 1433, the same year in which the city of Florence, with Bruni as chancellor overseeing its official correspondence, had reason to write to the duke. The situation which required an explanation involved a certain Piero Bartoli *alias* Maii, a merchant masquerading as an official "procurator seu commissarius" of Florence; the missive insists that he has no such authority and urges the duke to act with dispatch.

> Nos igitur his auditis statim scribendum duximus celsitudini vestre fidem vobis indubiam facientes quod pierus prefatus nullam penitus commissionem habet a communitate nostra vel ab aliquo officiali eiusdem communitatis […] celsitudinem vestram rogamus ut velit pro iustitia et pro honore civitatis nostre favores vestros et auxilia prebere […] ut pierus maii antedictus capiatur et arrestentur eius bona […].[48]

The contrast between the two texts is not difficult to detect. To begin with, Bruni in his private capacity writes to "so great a prince" using the *tu* forms, while Bruni the chancellor of the Republic insists on the—more conventional but less Classical—*vester* forms of address to "the highness".[49] Both epistles employ doublets but to different effect, with "opus est magni laboris multarumque vigilarum" compound-

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[47] The letter is not in the Mehus edition, but it is in Luiso, VI/14 [Bernard-Pradelle, VI/11]: "Therefore that the translation of the *Ethics* recently produced by me has been read by you and received approbation by the judgment of so great a prince is most gratifying to me, and I seem to have realised the fruit of that very great labour of mine. As to your entreating that I should render into Latin in your name the books of *Politics* by the same philosopher, although it is a work of great labour and many sleepless nights, yet because I consider it a crime to deny something to such a great prince when they entreat, I will take up that burden […]." It was printed by Sammut 1980, 146–8, but he misdated it to 1434; it is reprinted by Bernard-Pradelle, vol. 2, 128–30, following the date of 12 March 1433 established by Fumagalli 1982, 348. On the context, see Weiss 2013, 74–7; and D. Rundle, *The Identity of Renaissance Humanism and England* (in preparation).

[48] ASF, Signori Missive Io Cancelleria, registro 33, fol. 133$^{r-v}$ (dated 25 November 1433): "We, as soon as we heard these things, undertook to write to your highness giving you unambiguous trust that the aforementioned Piero has no commission in any way from our community or from any official of the same community. We ask your highness, for justice and the honour of our city that you may show us your favour and help so that the said Piero is arrested and his goods seized […]."

[49] On Salutati's earlier abortive attempts to reform such usage, see Witt 1976, 23–8.

ing the sense of an arduous enterprise, while "procurator seu commissarius" or "a communitate nostro vel ab aliquo officiali" acts instead as clarification. Moreover, while Bruni the humanist looks to purge his prose of non-Classical usages, Bruni the chancellor does not blush to employ a verb like "arrestare" or to use "quod" in the medieval sense of the subordinating conjunction "that".

That the letter concerning Piero Bartoli was not some sort of momentary lapse is revealed by others sent to England during Bruni's chancellorship. Four years later, when the Florentine bank of the Alberti went bankrupt, correspondence followed concerning the consequences.[50] The first of these opens in a style approximating more to what we might expect from Bruni's pen:

> Non est nobis incognitum, serenissime rex, quanto favore quantaque humanitate ac benivolentia sublimitas vestra tractaverit dudum ac tractet assidue cives florentinos qui in vestro regno negotiantur, nec est novum sed usitatum cum non modo temporibus nostris sed superioribus etiam etatibus a clare memorie regibus antecessoribus vestris semper nostri cives in illo inclito regno gratiam et caritatem et cumulatos favores ac protectionem eximiam ab illis illustrissimis principibus reportarint […].[51]

The balance of phrasing may not be quite even, but this might appear to herald a move to a Latin somewhat closer to that which Bruni honed in his familiar letters. We might surmise that it was being introduced because of both the gravity of the occasion and the fact that this letter was (*mutatis mutandis*) being sent to a range of affected parties. The style is not, however, consistently sustained, even in such a short epistle. For instance, in this later sentence, the practical subject matter requires phrasing (*muneratio*, *pro iustitiae complemento*) which is legalistic and medieval:

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[50] On the collapse of the bank, see Holmes 1960, esp. 197–8.

[51] I have worked from the copy of the letter in Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale [hereafter BNC], MS Panc. 148, fol. 62$^{r\text{-}v}$ (dated 14 June 1437), which announces itself to be "Transumptum non nullarum Epistolarum ac litterarum per Eloquentissimum Vatem et Cancellarium dignissimum d. Leonardum Aretinum Compilatarum Sub nomine Excelse Comunitatis Florentie": "We are not unaware, most serene king, with how much favour, humanity and kindness you have up to now dealt with and diligently deal with the Florentine citizens who do business in your kingdom, and that this is nothing new but accustomed since not only in our times but also in earlier ages when your royal predecessors of famous memory ruled, our citizens were always shown grace and love and accumulated favours and the greatest protection by those most illustrious princes". On this manuscript, see Viti (ed.) 1990, 341-58; Davies 1990; Viti 1992, 223–53; and Hankins, 1997–, no. 907. In the manuscript this letter does not have an address, but it certainly reached England, as it was copied for Thomas Bekynton into London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 211, fols 88$^{v}$–89, from where it was published in Williams (ed.), *Official Correspondence of Thomas Bekynton*, vol. 1, 248–9.

> Nos igitur dolentes, ut diximus, de casu illius societatis maxime propter damna et incommoda hominum vestri regni qui eidem societati pecunias crediderant sub spe future munerationis ac restitutionis omnia fecimus ac facturi sumus pro iustitie complemento […].

In the following months, the *signoria* was not as good as its word, or so Henry VI (1422–61, 1470–71) claimed when he responded with complaints on behalf of a merchant, William Willey.[52] This time, the chancellor's response was a long letter of justification, of which the following sentence is typical:

> Ad sequestrum vero lanarum ipsarum de quo etiam querela sit dicimus nihil esse factum ab officialibus nostris in hac parte contra iuris formam […].[53]

The Latin here may be simple to understand, but once again it is hardly the graceful Ciceronianism which Bruni mastered in the literary works which carried his name.

It seems, in fact, that it was only after Bruni's death early in 1444 that, for writing to foreign dignitaries, a more fully Classicising style was imported into the Florentine chancery, when Carlo Marsuppini (1399–1453) succeeded to its control. A letter sent on 9 April 1446 to Henry VI encapsulates the balance between continuity and change:

> Si ad alium Regem scriberemus cuius virtutes non satis nobis cognite essent, fortasse longiori principio utendum foret sed cum ad eum litteras demus cuius singularem iustitiam omnes admirantur laudibusque ad celum tollunt quemque sepius nostri mercatores non solum equissimum et iustissimum verum etiam humanissimum benivolumque nostre rei publicae experti sunt indignum profecto foret si in causa honestissima longam orationem haberemus. Videremur et enim aut divine vestre maiestatis iustitie aut regie erga nos benivolentie diffidere […].[54]

The king is still addressed with *vester* forms—this was a tradition of *politesse* too established to be cast aside lightly—but Florence's self-depiction was transformed. Instead of being a *communitas*, in the passage just quoted it is now a *res publica*;

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[52] Williams (ed.), *Official Correspondence of Thomas Bekynton*, vol. 1, 250–54.

[53] Florence, BNC, MS Panc. 148, fols 81–82$^{v}$ (dated 25 October 1438): "Concerning the sequestration of the wool, about which there is dispute, we say that nothing has been done by our officials in this part contrary to the form of the law."

[54] ASF, Signori Missive Io Cancelleria, registro 36, fols 71$^{v}$–72: "If we were writing to another king whose virtues were not sufficiently known to us, perhaps it would be necessary to use a longer opening but since we send letters to him whose singular justice everyone holds in awe and praise it to the heavens and whom our merchants very often have experienced to be not only most fair and just but also most humane and kind to our city, it would indeed be unworthy if we made a long oration in most honest cause. Indeed, we might seem to be diffident about either your divine majesty's justice or your royal kindness towards us."

elsewhere in this letter it is both a *civitas* and (a term reminiscent of Bruni's seminal humanist oration in praise of the city) an *urbs*.

The evidence presented here is not intended to deny that Bruni did, on occasion, put his full-blown Classicising style at the disposal of the *signoria* of the city which employed him.[55] Likewise it should not be taken to imply that there was a simple dichotomy between "non-humanist" and "humanist". As some of the phrasing just quoted suggests, there could be a mixture within one epistle; furthermore, my own impression is that Bruni allowed shifts of style between letters.[56] It is as if there are gear changes of rhetoric as it rises up the incline to the loftiest eloquence, with the author reserving his energy for the steeper challenges. It is likely, in other words, that the highest style was deployed for the weightiest events: matters of war, peace, and death. The official correspondence which Bruni penned for sending to England, however, was never on such issues; as we have seen, the points of discussion were individual miscreants and specific grievances. These were not the sorts of events for which (he appears to have judged) a full Ciceronian Latin need be put on display.

As a consequence, it might seem that if early fifteenth-century English scholars sought to apprise themselves of humanist style, they would have been best advised not to turn to diplomatic correspondence for guidance. This holds true for letters from Florence under Leonardo Bruni's watch, and an investigation of papal missives would provide a similar result. Yet in not all Italian states was a humanist's Classicising impulse so impressively subdued as in these chanceries. Those same English scholars could—and on occasion did—turn elsewhere for inspiration. If they wanted to find a full humanist style deployed in diplomatic correspondence, they could do worse than to peruse the official letters sent from another Italian city: Genoa. There the long-standing chancellor Jacopo Bracelli (1390–1466) had none of Bruni's qualms about deploying his talent at Classicising rhetoric when writing in the name of the doge and his city to distant princes.[57] So, for instance, in the summer of 1435, eager to spread the news of Genoa's defeat of Alfonso the Magnanimous at the Battle of Ponza, Bracelli wrote to Henry VI of England, opening the letter:[58]

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[55] Into this category I would suggest fall, for example, the letters of condolence to Isotta Malatesta published in Viti 1992, 365–78.

[56] A useful sample is provided by the letters concerning military alliances and antagonisms published by Griffiths 1999, 132–81; for a shift of register compare e.g. 149 with 169–70.

[57] On Bracelli, the fundamental work remains Balbi (ed.), *L'epistolario*.

[58] I use the copy at Vatican City, BAV, MS Vat. lat. 5221, fol. 110$^{v}$: "Most illustrious and famous prince. In great matters hot rumours are commonly accustomed to spread, by which a mist clouds minds so that very often they who have done rightly are believed to have acted badly and those who have in fact acted badly are held to have acted piously and rightly. Lest that may happen to us in the matter which we are about to speak, we have decided to make your highness more certain by these letters of those things which recently happened with the king of Aragon so that if anyone by chance struggles by telling bad tales to damage our cause, even though they should know that so

> Illustrissime et clarissime princeps. Solent plerumque in magnis rebus calidi[59] vulgare rumores quibus ea caligo mentibus effunditur ut persepe qui recte egerent inique qui vero inique, sancte et recte se habuisse credantur. Id ne nobis subveniat in re quam dicturi sumus, statuimus celsitudinem vestram his litteris certiorem facere eorum qui nuper cum rege aragonum gesta sunt ut si quis forte male narrando enitatur causam nostram deteriorem facere cum scierit tantum principem tam late mari terraque dominantem tot preclaris viris circumscriptum[60] falli non posse […].

Bracelli is as committed to the polite *vester* form of address as the Florentines, but his idiomatic expression (as in *mari terraque*), and the possibility that his alliterative opening phrasing, *calidi rumores* […] *caligo mentibus effunditur*, includes not one but two references to recently re-found authors is testimony to his determination to provide a Classicising prose in the highest style.[61] It might legitimately be argued that this epistle is a set-piece which was intended for wide circulation, versions being sent to as many rulers as possible, and not just to the king of England.[62] What is striking, however, is that other official products of Bracelli's pen concerning more mundane matters are in a similar style. So, seven years later, addressing Humfrey, duke of Gloucester, in the name of the doge and on behalf of the merchant community based in London, the chancellor has nothing of the understated simplicity preferred by his Florentine counterpart:

> Nemo est civium nostrorum, illustrissime princeps, sive is ab inclito regno illo in patriam redeat, sive de rebus illis ad amicos scribat qui non de virtutibus vestris summa ac maxima cum laude loquatur […].[63]

This letter, incidentally, travelled within England beyond the banks of the Thames, a copy being available to a Yorkshireman when he compiled his own formulary of humanist letters.[64] Over a decade later, and in the context of a bout of English xenophobia, Bracelli had a more delicate assignment in writing to remonstrate with Henry VI, and so opened with eloquent blandishments:

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great a prince, with such a wide sway across land and sea, and so often surrounded by outstanding men, cannot err […]."

[59] MS: cal^l^idi.

[60] MS: circumscipatum.

[61] Did Bracelli have in mind the Plautan "calidum […] mendacium" (*Mostell.* 665)? And, while "caligo […] effunditur" echoes Seneca's phrasing (*QNat.* 4.3.2), is it possible that Bracelli used the noun in its metaphorical sense, aware of the line in Catullus: "caeca mentem caligine […] consitus" (54.207)?

[62] At Florence, BNC, MS Landau Finaly 253, fols 78–80; this letter is recorded as having been addressed to the king of Cyprus.

[63] Sammut 1980, 229 (letter dated 26 March 1442): "There is no one of our citizens, most illustrious prince, either who returns into the homeland from that famous kingdom or who writes about those matters to friends that does not speaks of your virtues with the greatest and highest praise […]."

[64] Cambridge, Jesus College, MS Q.G.15, a collection of humanist epistles, mainly by Poggio Bracciolini; on this, see Rundle 1997, vol. 2, 324–30.

> Si ad memoriam superiorum temporum animum revoceris, serenissime et precellentissime princeps, et seniores nostros inclitum illud regnum frequentare solitos audiamus fuerunt profecto secula in quibus non iusticia modo sed leges insuper ac mores omnisque preclara virtus aulas clarissimorum quondam regni anglie inhabitare videntur ipsaque urbs regia Londinia[65] non tam una civitas quam vere libertatis incorupteque iusticie templum quoddam digne vocari […].[66]

Whatever the situation, Bracelli appears to have perceived as appropriate for all international communication the type of Classicising Latin which had been made fashionable primarily by scholars based in Florence, while in that city—at least in the lifetime of the pre-eminent of those scholars—we have seen that a distinction was drawn between familiar and official letters sent to foreign princes. We should wonder why Bruni was committed to such a differentiation. It might be that his own formative experience in the papal bureaucracy, with its firmly established traditions, may have inculcated into him the importance in official international correspondence of clarity; this could best be served by a pared-down type of expression, with an emphasis on commonly used language and with doublets employed to avoid doubt. He might also have been sensible of the limits to the success of his former mentor, Coluccio Salutati, in reforming Florentine practice. If these considerations did affect his choice, then the contrast between his practice and Bracelli's more insistent commitment to Ciceronian prose would allow a paradoxical hypothesis. As Genoa was less central to the humanist agenda than Florence, perhaps it was precisely its "peripheral" status which allowed it to innovate in areas considered beyond limits in Bruni's city.[67]

We should return to the question which runs through our discussion and consider what Bruni's practice implies about his attitude to his remote recipients: did he think that they lacked the intellectual capacity to savour his best-turned phrases? Were they, for him, the contemporary equivalent of the nurses and bakers whom he disparaged in his debate with Flavio Biondo? Palpably not, given that at least one Englishman (Humfrey, duke of Gloucester) was a recipient of epistles in both styles. It would have been redundant to craft a familiar letter in humanist Latin—let alone follow it up, as Bruni did, by sending to England a copy of his translations from Greek—if he assumed that none at the ducal court would have been capable

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[65] MS: Londiniam.

[66] Florence, BNC, MS Landau Finaly 253, fol. 111 (letter dated 4 June 1456): "If you recall to mind the memory of former times, most serene and most outstanding prince, and we hear our elders who were accustomed to frequent that famous kingdom that there were truly ages when not only solely justice but laws and customs besides every outstanding virtue seemed to dwell in the courts of those who were once most famous in the kingdom of England. The city of London itself seemed worthy to be called not so much a single urban community but the temple of true liberty and uncorrupted virtue."

[67] I use the "scare quotes" because the centre / periphery dichotomy is one which I consider problematic for humanist activity, as I explain briefly in Rundle 2019, 273–81; and at more length in *The Identity of Renaissance Humanism*.

of deciphering it.[68] The distinction which he made when discussing the languages of ancient Rome was one based not on ethnic origin but on class, and on what we would now call cultural capital. Those whom Bruni addressed beyond the peninsula were professional colleagues, if not superiors, as well as being potential patrons for his "private" literary productions. They were barbarians, but at least they were cultured barbarians—our brand of barbarians. Despite Bruni's own track-record as a Briton-basher, his actions suggest that he recognised that physical separation did not necessarily denote cultural distance. This leaves us with the quandary of his choice, and the suggestion just mooted that it was the requirement of diplomatic tradition may not be an entirely satisfactory explanation. After all, as Bruni was capable of reforming the structure of the chancery which he ran, it is plausible that he could equally have been strident in his demands about the standards of Latin used.[69] That he did not had a consequence which was not disadvantageous for him as a scholar. The implication of the use of a range of styles of expression (the differences between them never precisely defined) was that only a proportion of his official letters would stand comparison with his "literary" products. It therefore helped provide some insulation of his consciously crafted "private" persona from his "professional" role as a civil servant. A contrast like that found in the epistles to Humfrey served to highlight the novel elegance of his familiar letters. The prose which he was employed to produce thus became a backdrop against which his personal eloquence could shine. If, then, he did not foment a thoroughgoing humanist revolution in the offices of the Palazzo della Signoria, one reason may have been that he saw that it was to his benefit to differentiate the *negotium* of a chancellor from the *otium* of a newly fashioned Ciceronian scholar.

## IV Humanist Ghost-Writers in mid-Fifteenth-Century England

As a coda to this discussion, we return to England in order briefly to consider the state of diplomatic Latin there. It is usually assumed that the crown's methods of expression remained largely unreformed until the appointment of an Italian, Pietro Carmeliano of Brescia (d. 1527), as a royal secretary by Henry VII (1485–1509).[70] This over-simplifies a history from which I want to extract a single element: the occasional—very occasional—recourse to Italians resident in England for the production of both official letters and orations. I wish here to introduce an example of each.

First, in the summer of 1439, an epistle was sent to Albrecht, king of the Romans,

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[68] The manuscript survives as London, BL, MS Harl. 3426, first noticed by A. C. de la Mare: see Rundle 1997, 415–20.

[69] On the chancery in Bruni's time and the creation of the role of second chancellor in 1437, see Marzi 1910, 187–97.

[70] The still-influential classic statement of this is Hay 1988, first published Oberman & Brady (eds) 1975, 305–67. On Carmeliano and especially his scribal activities, see Rundle 2019, 255–70.

in the name of Henry VI, expressing the crown's opinion on recent events at the Council of Basel. The text reads like a humanist oration, at one point declaiming:

> quid enim hiis temporibus sanctiusque pulcrius, quid humano generi utilius atque comodius in hac presertim faece temporum, in hac tanta rerum turbatione dari aut excogitari potuisset?[71]

Its Classicising credentials are on display not only in its balanced phrasing, rhetorical questions, and repetition (*in hac* […] *in hac*), but also in its choice of *haec faex temporum*, "the dregs of times", a phrase with Patristic origins but more recently used by Leonardo Bruni.[72] If we were to ask how the English royal chancery was able to concoct something so fully in the style fashionable in Italy, it is because they had to hand an Italian, in the person of the papal collector Pietro del Monte (d. 1457), who was himself something of a humanist.[73] In one aspect he was an unsatisfactory ghost-writer, for they are usually expected to keep their identity secret: del Monte could not refrain from boasting in letters back to the curia that this royal missive was his work.

Something similar happened five years later, though this time it was probably not the royal administration who called in outside assistance. The context was the negotiating of a marriage for the young king with Margaret of Anjou. The events—both the discussions before the French king and the raising of financial support through a plea to the Convocation at Canterbury—required set-piece speeches.[74] Two orations survive, and both are attributed to another humanist then resident in England, Antonio Beccaria (d. 1474), secretary like Tito Livio Frulovisi before him to Humfrey, duke of Gloucester.[75] It was not Beccaria's task, however, actually to deliver them: the records show that the diplomat presenting the royal case was an Englishman, Adam Moleyns. It appears that he had turned to Beccaria to draft his speeches for him, a task which required the humanist to construct the appeal to the French king as if he himself were an Englishman:

> Quid existimamus templum illud celeberrimumque paci dicatum romanos olim condidisse nisi ut feroces animos ac continua cede fervidos solo eo nomine ad quietem tranquillitatemque provocarent et aliquando discerent arma deponere qui iam totum fere orbem sanguine cruentaverant? Illi siquidem quod intra exteras nationes gerendum esset abunde animadvertebant at nos, qui non solum vicinitate sed et affinitate mutuaque

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[71] *Deutsche Reichstagsakten*, vol. 14, no. 174 (309–12): "For what could be taken as or considered in these times holier or more beautiful, what more useful and fitting for the human race in these undoubted dregs of times, this ever-so-great disorder of things?"

[72] See Fubini 1992; repr. in Fubini 2001, 75–103, at 99–100.

[73] On del Monte generally, see Haller 1941; Quaglioni 1984; and Pellizzarri 2009, 258–554; for his time in England, see Weiss 2013, 41–6; Rundle 2002; and Rundle 2019, 60–65. I discuss this particular episode more fully in *The Identity of Renaissance Humanism*.

[74] These speeches are now available at Weiss 2013, app., 46–62.

[75] On Beccaria and his time in England, see Weiss 2013, 72–4; and Rundle 2010.

sanguinis coniunctatione devincti sumus, interitum nostrum non cernemus, calamitatem nostram non videbimus, cladem continuam non advertemus?[76]

Bearing in mind what Biondo said about foreign orators, one wonders what Moleyns' pronunciation made of Beccaria's Classicising periods. This is not to say, however, that there were many Italians in the audience watching and waiting for any *lapsus linguae*. That, indeed, is the factor which I wish to emphasise about both this intervention and that of del Monte earlier: Englishmen did deploy the rhetoric promoted by Italian *litterati*, but in both instances their intended audiences for it were other northern Europeans—other barbarians.

This, in conclusion, bears on the issue of cultural distance which I mentioned in the previous section. If some of the new breed of Italian scholars promoted their Latin as "theirs"—as their patrimony from their Roman ancestors—others beyond the peninsula clearly saw no reason that it should be theirs alone. They implicitly disregarded such nationalism, assuming instead that this was a shared inheritance to which all could lay some claim.[77] In their turning to Italians to furnish them with polished prose, there is certainly a recognition of the place where this form of eloquence most flourished; it would be more than a decade before an Englishman himself would compose an oration in the humanist style. At the same time, what is most notable about the examples just provided is that, when this Italian invention was imported, there was no thought given to reserving it for impressing the style's originators. Moreover, they did not consider it necessary to effect a wholescale adoption; it was seen not as the essential replacement but as one extra idiom which could be employed when wanted. What they detected in the humanists' version of Latin was not the future but an alternative, complementary present.

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[76] Weiss 2013, app., 49–50: "Why do we think the Romans once founded that most celebrated temple dedicated to peace unless in order to encourage to quiet and peacefulness by its name alone fierce souls, glowing hot from continual slaughter, and persuade them sometimes to put aside their arms who had already made bloody with gore nearly the whole world? But if they took good notice of what was done amongst foreign nations, should we who are linked not only by proximity but by affinity and mutual blood-ties, not consider our ruin, not see our calamity, not notice our continual slaughter?"

[77] I suggest a parallel, involving the humanist bookhand, *littera antiqua*, at Rundle 2019, 278–9.

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