

CANON AND ARCHIVE IN HUMANIST LATIN



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Early Modern Latin, the variant of Latin in use between c. 1350 and 1700, has often been dismissed as a mechanical copy of its model, the Latin of ancient Rome. However, Early Modern Latin writers did not embrace the Latin of all periods of antiquity equally, even though many of them were familiar with other kinds of Latin than the ones they themselves favoured. I shall argue that, given the knowledge we see in many influential writers of this period of the diachronic variations of Latin, the relationship between the Latin actually used by individual writers and communities and the strata of Latin available to them may fruitfully be described in the terminology of A. Assmann as the relationship between linguistic canon and archive. I shall show this with examples from fifteenth-century Latin texts written in Italy. My point of departure will be Niccolò Perotti's work on the Latin language, the Cornu copiae (1470s).

Language change: canon and archive

Over time, any language becomes a repository of obsolete words, forgotten meanings, constructions no longer in use, and forms of discourse shaped by former periods that are now awkward. Language change and traditions of discourse have been studied by linguists and literary historians, and described with a huge variety of methods. In Aleida Assmann's famous article on "Canon and Archive", her discussion in the section on "The Dynamics of Cultural Memory between Remembering and Forgetting" does not include language as one of the core areas of active cultural memory.¹ Even so, I shall argue here that Assmann's concept of cultural archive and canon may prove useful in describing some of the characteristics of humanist Latin, the variety of Latin cultivated by Italian humanists from the end of the fourteenth century. Assmann writes about how cultural memory creates a connection between the past, the present and the future:

In recalling, iterating, reading, commenting, criticizing, discussing what was deposited in the remote or recent past, humans participate in extended horizons of meaning-production [...] As the Internet creates a framework for communication across wide distances in space,

¹ Assmann 2008, 100.

cultural memory creates a framework for communication across the abyss of time.²

Assmann stresses that in order to be able to remember, we also have to forget that which it is not necessary, convenient or pleasant to remember. She distinguishes between two forms of forgetting, an active and a passive:

Active forgetting is implied in intentional acts such as trashing and destroying [...] The passive form of cultural forgetting is related to non-intentional acts such as losing, hiding, dispersing, neglecting, abandoning, or leaving something behind.³

With passive cultural forgetting, objects are not materially destroyed, they simply fall out of use. Assmann compares these two modes of cultural memory to different rooms in a museum. Prestigious objects are carefully selected and arranged in representative rooms to catch the attention and to make a lasting impression, but there are also rooms full of objects kept in store. Actively circulated memory that keeps the past present is referred to as “canon”; passively stored memory that simply preserves the past is called “archive”.⁴ The selection process that leads to some objects being put on display (canon) and others forgotten in storerooms (archive) often implies value judgments. Therefore changes of values will often influence the contents of the canon; and “elements of the canon can also recede into the archive, while elements of the archive may be recovered and reclaimed for the canon”.⁵

Early Modern Latin

Early Modern Latin holds a special place among the European languages of the period. On the one hand, the Latin text production of Early Modern Europe (also called Neo-Latin) is by far the largest corpus in a single European language before the nineteenth century; on the other, it is the least researched.⁶ The reasons for this are manifold. One is that Early Modern Latin had no native speakers and has therefore been regarded as a dead language, incapable of change. Another is that many of its users held up ancient Latin as a standard to emulate and described the imitation of ancient Latin as central to language acquisition and use – wherefore Early Modern Latin has often been (erroneously) dismissed as a mechanical copy of its model.

² Assmann 2008, 97.

³ Assmann 2008, 97–98.

⁴ Assmann 2008, 98.

⁵ Assmann 2008, 104.

⁶ On the special status of Early Modern Latin, see Hankins 2001, Waquet 2002 and Ramminger 2014.

Whereas ancient Latin may be said to constitute the norm for Early Modern users of Latin with regard to vocabulary, syntax and forms of discourse, individual users and speech communities did not embrace the Latin from all periods of antiquity equally, nor did they adopt the same forms of discourse.⁷ Even so, many users were familiar with other kinds of Latin than the ones they themselves would actively use or advocate, from reading or because they worked in an environment with different norms. It is for instance well known how humanists who otherwise wrote in a very classicizing idiom could effortlessly switch to a different kind of Latin with regard to both vocabulary and syntax – and even orthography – if so required, for instance in the execution of the duties of public administration.⁸

In light of the knowledge that we see in many influential Early Modern users of Latin of the diachronic variations of Latin and the familiarity with various registers, one may describe the relationship between the Latin actually used by individual writers and communities and the strata of Latin available to them as a relationship between linguistic canon and archive. In the following, I shall discuss this with regard to both language descriptions and choice of vocabulary. We shall see both how some parts of the Latin lexicon are put on display, or canonized, for instance in humanist works on how to write good Latin, while others are placed in archives, through acts both of active and of passive forgetting (see above the paragraph on Language change: canon and archive).

Language and values

Within the vast corpus of Early Modern Latin, I shall concentrate on the lexicon of fifteenth-century Latin as written by Italian humanist writers who aimed to express themselves in a language that had “the fragrance of proper Latin”.⁹ The development of the classicizing variant of Latin that is often called humanist Latin was a central part of the humanist movement, the *studia humanitatis*, as may be seen from the huge corpus of writings on Latin produced during this period.¹⁰ The humanists’ project – the recovering of classical Latinity – was described in glowing metaphors that show how much the memory of ancient Rome, of its glory and its values, was vested in the

⁷ Ramminger 2014, Knight & Tilg 2015, 1.

⁸ Cp. Pade 2006a.

⁹ I have borrowed the expression from a letter written in 1452 by the Nestor of humanist education, Guarino Veronese, to his son. Guarino deplors that in his youth, before the return of “good letters” to Italy, his writing did not have “the fragrance of proper Latin”; he had used “vocabula quoque nonnulla latini sermonis proprietatem minime redolentia”, GVARINO *ep* 862. When possible, I refer to Neo-Latin texts with the sigla used by Johann Ramminger in the *NLW*, where also the standard editions used in this article are listed.

¹⁰ See Baker 2015, Celenza 2005, Moss 2003, and Rizzo 1986, 1988, 1996, 2002, 2002.

Latin language – in, that is, the right variety of Latin.¹¹ The preface to the first book of Lorenzo Valla’s *Elegantie lingue latine* is a good example of this. Addressing his fellow citizens – anybody interested in the *studia humanitatis* – Valla asks:

Quousque tandem, Quirites [...] urbem vestram, non dico domicilium imperii, sed parentem litterarum a Gallis esse captam patiemini?

How long, citizens, will you endure that your city – and I don’t mean the seat of the Empire but the parent of letters – is held captive by the Gauls? VALLA *eleg 1, praef 35*.

“Quousque tandem” recalls the speech Cicero made when Rome was threatened by the populist Catiline – and Cicero saved the day. Now, once more, Rome is in danger: Valla stresses the need to “reconquer” their native city (that is, classical Latinity) from the Gauls (that is, from French medieval grammars). The image refers to the catastrophe that befell Rome in the fourth century BC when, for a period, the Gauls held Rome. Afterwards it was rebuilt by Camillus, the republican hero who was honoured as the second founder of Rome. Only a new Camillus could now restore the true glory of Rome, its language.

We have another example of the connection made between the recovery of classical Latinity and a return of the values of ancient Rome in the letter I referred to above (see note 9). Here Guarino Veronese rejoices at the flowering of the *studia humanitatis* he has witnessed in his lifetime: of liberal education, the study of Greek and Latin letters:

Sensim augescens humanitas veteres, ut serpens novus, exuvias deponens pristinum vigorem reparabat, qui in hanc perdurans aetatem romana portendere saecula videtur

Like a new-born serpent, slowly growing and shedding its old skin, humanitas, humanist culture, recovered its old vigour; having survived until today, it seems to portend a new Roman Age, GVARINO *ep 862*.

This passage is found in a context where Guarino is specifically celebrating the effects of the return of Greek studies to Italy due to the teaching of the Byzantine scholar and diplomat, Manuel Chrysoloras.¹² It is in itself significant that Guarino so emphatically links the progress of Latin culture, by which he also implies the active mastery of “good” Latin, to the study of

¹¹ On interpretations of the humanists’ project as the “restoration” of classical Latinity, see Charlet 2009 and 2016.

¹² For the renewal of Greek studies in Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Weiss 1977, Maisano & Rollo 2002, and Pade 2007, I, 66–97. On Chrysoloras, see Maltese & Cortassa 2002, 7–46.

Greek. However, what interests me here is that the flowering of humanist culture portended a “new Roman Age”. The expression “aetas romana” is not especially common in ancient Latin, and I believe that to many of Guarino’s readers it would call to mind a famous anecdote in Valerius Maximus’ *Memorable Deeds and Sayings*.¹³ Valerius was a popular school author at the time, and Guarino is known to have lectured on him, so there can be no doubt that Guarino knew the anecdote and that he could expect readers to recognize the allusion.¹⁴

The story concerns Gaius Atilius Regulus (cos. 257 BC) who defeated the Carthaginian navy during the First Punic War. He came from the same family as the Marcus Atilius Regulus who – according to some sources – chose to be tortured to death by the Carthaginians rather than go back on his word.¹⁵ Gaius Atilius Regulus was celebrating one victory after another in Africa against the Carthaginians and had had his command extended when he heard that the overseer of his modest farm in Italy had died. He begged the Senate to replace him as commander so that he could provide for his family on the farm. The Senate instead decided that Atilius’ family should be provided for from public funds. Valerius concludes that every Roman Age will be proud of his example (“virtutis Atilianae exemplum, quo omnis aetas Romana gloriabitur”, VAL. MAX. 1,1,14). By his allusion to Atilius, Guarino implies that the recovery of classical Latinity he has witnessed during his lifetime – the fact the people can now use a language that has “the fragrance of proper Latin” – will entail the return of the values of the “Roman Age”.

These two examples show that choice of (the right variant of) language was far more than a question of aesthetics; it entailed cultural choices too. Humanist Latin, the variety of Latin that was based on a thorough mastery of the idiom of ancient Latin, was an inalienable part of the humanist movement and bearer of its cultural values. Latin, but *nota bene* the right variety of Latin, became a *lieu de mémoire*, a “site of memory”. This concept was popularized by the French historian, Pierre Nora, who defined it as “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community”.¹⁶ For humanist writers such as Valla and Guarino, good Latin was an important element of the memorial heritage of ancient Rome, evoking both the political grandeur of Empire and its cultural achievements. As we saw with Guarino’s allusion to Valerius Maximus, words could

¹³ ThLL I c.1137, 63–65.

¹⁴ Crab & De Keyser 2013.

¹⁵ Cf. VAL. MAX. 1,1,14.

¹⁶ Cp. Nora, P. et al. 1993–1997. I quote from the preface to the English edition in Nora & Kritzman 1996–1998, I, p. xvii.

actually place moral *exempla* before the reader/listener, thus inherently pointing to an ethical standard. Language is inherently instrumental in constructing a specific cultural identity, and fifteenth-century humanists were consciously (re)creating the language of their ideal cultural community. In other words, if language can be “a symbolic element of the memorial heritage” (so Nora) of a community, it is part of that community’s cultural memory, and it is important what is remembered and what forgotten. It was therefore essential for the humanists’ project to create the right linguistic canon and to relegate that which did not belong there to the archive through either active or passive forgetting (see above, Language change: canon and archive)

In what follows, I shall view the usage prescribed by influential theoreticians of humanist Latin such as Lorenzo Valla and Niccolò Perotti as a canon. In a series of case studies, I shall ask (1) which layers of Latin does the canon comprise? (2) Which layers of Latin are excluded from the canon? (3) Does the exclusion happen by way of “active forgetting”, for instance criticism of a specific usage, or through apparently “passive forgetting”? And (4) what are the criteria used to decide whether a word, or a specific use of a word, should be excluded from or included in the canon, and whether it is allowed to rise from archive to canon?

My point of departure will be Niccolò Perotti’s work on the Latin language, the *Cornu copiae*, but I shall also discuss Lorenzo Valla’s *Elegantie linguae latinae*.¹⁷ Valla had been Perotti’s teacher, but even though the latter often mentioned Valla with respect, he often disagreed with him in the *Cornu copiae*.¹⁸ Though different in scope and format, both these works are intended as guides for contemporary readers to the writing of good Latin, and I shall compare their precepts – the canon they aim to establish – with contemporary usage.

Which Latin? Insisting on the canon

Benedico, laudo, bene loquor; a quo benedicus et benedicentia

Benedico, “I laud”, “I speak well”; from it are derived benedicus and benedicentia (Perotti *copiae* 3,453).¹⁹

¹⁷ There is a growing scholarly interests in Perotti’s *Cornu copiae*. For a recent bibliographical overview, see Charlet 2011, 28–40. The literature on Valla’s *Elegantie* and his influence is vast; I shall here just refer to the two fundamental volumes, Besomi & Regoliosi 1986 and Regoliosi 2010.

¹⁸ See Stok 1993.

¹⁹ All quotations from the *Cornu copiae* are from Perotti 1989–2001. The full text of the edition is now available on the website of the *Repertorium pomponianum*: http://www.repertoriumpomponianum.it/textus/perotti_cornu_copiae.htm.

This entry on the word *benedico* from Niccolò Perotti's *Cornu copiae* shows the author's grasp of the semantic development of Latin. In form a commentary on Martial (the *Liber spectaculorum* and first book of the Epigrams), but in reality a huge lexicon of Latin language and culture, the *Cornu copiae* contains entries/lemmata on about 23,000 words which Perotti defines as belonging to "Latin".²⁰ While Perotti decidedly privileges the Latin of earlier periods both in his choice of lemmata and in his explanations of them, the Latinity of other periods is present in the work as well, as we shall see later. However, in his explanation of *benedico*, Perotti gives us the meaning of the word only in classical Latin.

Perotti called his work *Horn of Plenty* (*Cornu copiae*) or *Observations on the Latin Language* (*Commentarii linguae latinae, ccopiae* proh. rubric) and "a treasure-chamber of the most valuable and recondite knowledge within all fields of learning" (*ccopiae* proh 6). Perotti maintained that the work was useful, even necessary, for men of almost any profession, including scholars, physicians, philosophers, theologians, peasants and architects; they would acquire from it not just an encyclopedic knowledge of the ancient world and classical Latin, but also, one assumes, language skills that would help them in the contemporary world.²¹ Besides being a "treasure-chamber" of knowledge about classical Latinity, the *Cornu copiae* was also a handbook for modern-day Latin language users. As such it became extremely popular, and was printed at least thirty-six times up until the 1530s, with layout, paratexts and indices that increasingly facilitated its use as a lexicon of Latin. It was replaced in this role by Robert Estienne's 1536 alphabetical Latin dictionary.²²

How does this square with Perotti's entry on *benedico*? No fifteenth-century writer would be faulted for using the word to say "I laud" or "I praise", but most people at the time would have been utterly familiar with another meaning that the word had acquired after the classical period, namely "to bless"; and they would be well acquainted with another noun derived from

²⁰ For this statistic, see Ramming 2011, 167.

²¹ "Certe non liber mihi, sed thesaurus quidam uisus est optimarum in omni genere rerum, ac reconditarum. Hinc grammatici, hinc rhetores, hinc Poetae, hinc Dialectici, hinc earum artium, quas liberales uocant studiosi, hinc medici, hinc philosophi, hinc ciuilis ac pontificii iuris antistites, hinc rei militaris periti, hinc agricolae, hinc pictores, hinc architecti, hinc fabri omnes atque opifices multa et pene infinita haurire possunt eorum studiis necessaria, et ita necessaria ut affirmare ausim plurima eos, nisi haec legerint, ad ipsorum disciplinas artes que maxime pertinentia ignoraturos, ne dicam in multis ut nunc faciunt permansuros erroribus, quos si haec legent aliquando recognoscent, et hoc opus non unius Poetae, sed omnium latinorum autorum commentarios iure optimo dici posse intelligent", *ccopiae* proh 6. For a discussion of the passage, see Pade 2012, 26–27.

²² See Milde 1982; Pade 2014c and forthcoming^b.

it, namely *benedictio* (blessing). Perotti nowhere mentions this meaning of *benedico*, and there is no entry on *benedictio* in the *Cornu copiae*, although the word is exceedingly common in Early Modern Latin. The reason for this omission is obviously stylistic. Perotti explained the use of *auctores*, of the best authors, but would not include 1,300 years of ecclesiastical usage in his canon of good Latin – in spite of the fact that he hoped to have theologians among his readers (see above and note 21). He was, however, perfectly able to change register, and we find *benedicere* and *benedictio* (to bless, blessing) in Perotti’s own works when he writes as the high-ranking curial official he also was, rather than as the *avant-garde* humanist.²³ We have an example in a sermon delivered before the pope and the cardinals in 1460:

A te uero, Pontifex Maxime, (sc. requiro) benedictionem [...] qua in celos ascensus benedixit discipulos suos [...] Ita te benedicat deus, Summe Pontifex [...]

From you, Holy Father, I desire a blessing [...] such as the one with which (Christ) blessed his disciples when he ascended to heaven [...] Thus God may bless you, Holy Father [...].²⁴

When Perotti takes up his pen as humanist, it is a different matter. In a letter to Baptista de Brennis, Perotti, student and admirer of Lorenzo Valla, talks about the polemic between Valla and Poggio Bracciolini, gloating over Poggio’s shortcomings:

Miseret me conditionis tue, Poggii, pudet senectutis tue, qui cum aliquam anteacta etate benedicendi laudem consecutus esses eam omnem in senectute amisisti

I pity the state you are in, Poggio, your age is shameful, you – who in former times were praised for speaking well – you cannot claim that in your dotage, *ep ed. Cessi* p. 82, a. 1453.

Here Perotti uses *benedico* in the sense recorded in the passage of the *Cornu copiae* mentioned above: “*Benedico, laudo, bene loquor*” (*Benedico*, I praise, I speak well, *ccopiae* 3,453).

Lorenzo Valla’s *Elegantie lingue latine* is another enormously influential fifteenth-century handbook on the Latin language. Compiled in the 1440s, it may be described as a manual on advanced idiomatic Latin.²⁵ It is structured in chapters on semantic and syntactic issues, rather than lexicographic entries.

²³ For Perotti’s life, see Charlet 1997 and D’Alessandro 2015.

²⁴ The paragraphs on *benedico* are based on Ramminger 2011, 171–172, who also transcribed Perotti’s sermon. Ramminger mentions Perotti’s entry on *praedico* as another instance where he determinedly ignores the common contemporary meaning of the word, i.e. “to preach”, cp. *ibid.* p. 172.

²⁵ Cp. Jensen 1995, 64.

In a chapter on words ending in *-cus*, Valla also mentions *benedico* and *benedicus*:

benedicus autem non inveni, quia nec benedico invenitur, licet eo Priscianus utatur et hoc tempore utamur more Graecorum, quorum auctoritate dedimus huic verbo accusativum praeter naturam suam, quum postulet dativum, sicut maledico, quod et ipsum nunc ad imitationem Graecorum habet etiam aliquando accusativum. De Benedico unius vocis loquor, non duarum, nam tunc et aliud significat et aliter regit.

but I didn't find *benedicus*, i.e. friendly, because *benedico* does not exist either, albeit Priscian uses it and we also use it today in the Greek way. On their authority we make it govern the accusative, against its nature, since it demands the dative, like *maledico*. Now that also sometimes takes the accusative in imitation of the Greeks. I speak of *benedico* in one word, not in two, for that means something different and is constructed differently, VALLA-L *eleg* 1,12.

Valla here makes a distinction that Perotti did not, namely between *benedico* in one word and in two. He denies the existence of *benedico* – in good writers of Latin, we must understand – as one word, though he acknowledges that that usage (the one Perotti does not even deign to mention, where *benedico* means “to bless”) is common in his day, even, moreover, governing the accusative. The meanings Perotti listed in his entry are for *bene dico* in two words, governing the dative.

In his own writings, Valla uses *benedico* both ways, but when it is one word and governs the accusative, it is always in a Christian context, for instance in his work on the text of the New Testament, and not just when he quotes the Vulgate, but also when he suggests alternative translations of the Greek: “et complexus eos impositisque super ipsos manibus benedixit illos” (and he embraced them when he had placed his hands above them, he blessed them, VALLA-L *coll* p.84, a. 1440). We have another example in his *Historia Ferdinandi regis*, when he describes a bishop giving his blessing to a bride (“advenit Sancius episcopus Palentinus ducens sponsam [...] Eam benedicens [...]”), VALLA-L *gesta* 3,9,1). When Valla uses *bene dico* in two words, it means either “to speak well”, “to be eloquent” or, with the dative, “to praise”, as for instance in “bene dicite Domino, omnes angeli eius” (praise the Lord, all his angels, VALLA-L *recip* 44,2, a quotation from *Psalms* 102,20).

So both Valla and Perotti firmly insist on the classical use of *benedico* when they write about good Latin – even though both were fully aware of the meaning the word and its derivatives had acquired in ecclesiastical Latin, and used it that way when writing in contexts where that would be fitting and required. Their way of dealing with the post-classical meaning of the word in

their theoretical works, however, may be described as strategies of what Assmann calls active and passive forgetting: Valla criticizes it fiercely (active), whereas Perotti simply ignores it (passive).²⁶

From archive to canon

Ab animaduerto uero fit animaduersio, quod modo attentionem, modo punctionem significat, et animaduersor, punitor. Apuleius: Exponam breuiter quod animaduersor meus fecit

From animaduerto, “I observe” comes animaduersio, which sometimes means attention, sometimes punishment, and animaduersor, one who punishes. Apuleius: I shall briefly relate what my punisher did, PEROTTI *ccopiae* 3,335.

In this entry on *animaduerto* and some of its derivatives, there are two surprising elements. The first is Perotti’s explanation of *animaduersor* as “one who punishes”; the second is the quotation from Apuleius which he uses to illustrate this. In the *apparatus fontium* of the modern edition of the *Cornu copiae*, the Apuleius quotation is listed as “Apul.? fr. inc. 74”, meaning that this is one of the many instances where Perotti seemingly quotes Apuleius; but we cannot identify the quotations in any of the works by Apuleius we possess today.²⁷ Another reason this is odd is that according to the ThLL the only occurrence of the word in ancient Latin is in Cicero, where it means an “observer”.²⁸

The question is why Perotti here renders *animaduersor* with *punitor*? Apart from the passage in Cicero, I have found two occurrences of the word (if a conjecture by De Coninck is correct) in the fifth-century ecclesiastical writer Iulianus Aeclanensis: one instance where the word still means “observer”,²⁹ and another where it seems to mean “corrector”.³⁰ But this is scant evidence, and Perotti would of course not have known De Coninck’s conjecture.

²⁶ Asmann 2008, 97–98.

²⁷ The question of the many unidentified quotations from classical authors in the *Cornu copiae* has been discussed for decades; there is an overview of the literature on this question in Charlet 2011, 32–33. On the fragments of Apuleius in the *Cornu copiae*, see Prete 1988.

²⁸ CIC. *off.* 1,146 “si acres ac diligentes esse volumus animadversores[que] vitiorum”.

²⁹ IULIAN. *in Am.* I 5 l.320 “Diu me, inquit, quasi absentem et quae gereritis penitus non uidentem, nequiquam estis experti: . . . nunc iam in regionem tuam sacrilegiis inquinatam is animaduersor ingrediar...”

³⁰ IULIAN. *epit. in psalm.* XI 121 “Decretum, inquit, quod animaduersoris [*coniecit* De Coninck] iustitia promulgauit, ita probum et colatum est ut argentum, quod admixtione uilioris materiae ignis admotione purgatur, et ita sincerum redditur ut etiam probum uocetur, quo uilitatis contumelia ab eius aestimatione pellatur”.

My guess is that we must look at one of the important factors in the development of fifteenth-century humanist Latin culture, namely the huge number of Latin translations from the Greek that were produced from the very beginning of the century.³¹ These translations not only made hitherto unknown Greek texts available to a Latin readership, they also contributed to the development of Early Modern Latin at a time when translators were struggling to render Greek concepts in a satisfying Latin garb.³² Guarino Guarini of Verona (1374–1460), with whom Perotti may have studied in his youth, was one of the most prolific of the fifteenth-century humanist translators.³³ He dedicated much of his philological work to the study of Plutarch, translating all in all thirteen of his *Parallel Lives*. In 1414 he translated the *Life of Dion* and dedicated it to Francesco Barbaro, the Venetian patrician who was one of his favourite pupils and himself a translator of Plutarch.³⁴ Guarino's translation is extant in thirty-seven manuscripts, and it was continuously printed from 1470 and onwards in editions of the Latin translations of Plutarch's *Lives*.³⁵

In the *Dion*, Guarino translates the Greek *κολαστήρ* (chastizer, punisher) with *animaduersor*: “iuravit Dionis quidem ultorem et acerbissimum Heraclidis animaduersorem fore” (he swore that he would revenge Dion and become the most furious punisher of Heraclides, *Dion* 49.7).³⁶ Would Perotti have known Guarino's translation? I think it is highly likely. It was, as I mentioned above, available in many copies and printed editions. Moreover, in the *Cornu copiae*, Perotti actually quotes Iacopo Angeli da Scarperia's translation of *Brutus*, the other half of the Plutarchan pair, and the two translations often circulated together.³⁷ Moreover, in his famous letter to Guarneri (1470), Perotti discusses the *editio princeps*, so he may well have owned a copy himself.³⁸

If Perotti came to explain *animaduersor* with *punitor* because of the passage in the *Dion*, he may well have accepted *animaduersor* with this meaning because of Guarino's authority. We find it with the same meaning

³¹ See Pade 2016 and 2018a-b.

³² For translation as a source for neologisms in Early Modern Latin, see Pade 2014b.

³³ For the possibility that Perotti studied with Guarino at Ferrara, see Charlet 1997, 601, Stok 2006 and d'Alessandro 2015.

³⁴ For Guarino's translations from Plutarch, see Pade 2007, I, chapters 3.16–18, 4.1, 4, and 5, and 6. For the translation of *Dion*, see Pade 2011 and 2013.

³⁵ The *editio princeps* is Plutarchus, [1470].

³⁶ For a discussion of Guarino's Latin lexicon in the translation, see Pade 2013.

³⁷ See the *apparatus fontium* to *ccopiae* 71.4. Perotti also quotes Giovanni Tortelli's translations of *Romulus* (*ccopiae* 64.5), *Demetrius* (*ccopiae* 6,240), *Numa* (*ccopiae* 1,375)

³⁸ For the letter to Guarneri, see Monfasani 1988. Modern edition of the letter in Charlet 2003, who also lists some of Plutarch's *Lives* among the sources of the letter.

in later Latin vernacular dictionaries,³⁹ but *animaduersor* with the meaning “observer” also becomes common.⁴⁰ We cannot know if Perotti was aware that *animaduersor* meaning “punisher” was not classical, but he certainly endorsed it and was instrumental in securing its place in the Early Modern Latin canon.

Another word that was extremely rare in ancient Latin, but used by Guarino and after that incorporated as a lemma in the *Cornu copiae* is *f(o)edifragus*, “league-breaking”, which Guarino uses to translate ἔκσπονδος in the *comparatio* between Dio and Brutus (*comp.* 5.2). In ancient Latin the adjective is attested in Cicero (*off.* 1,30 and *rep. frg. inc.* 7, the latter of course not known to Guarino), and after that in Gellius and in a few late Latin writers (GELL. 19,7,5, MART. CAP. 9,912 and SIDON. *epist.* 6,6,1). It then becomes fairly common in medieval Latin. Perotti explains *foedifragus* with *ruptor foederis* (*ccopiae* 14,3), but by then it was already fairly common in humanist Latin; it was widely used also in the sixteenth century.

We see a similar trajectory with the adjective *inculpandus*, “not to blame”, from the verb *inculpo*, which Guarino used to translate the Greek ἀμεμπτος “blameless”: “In re igitur bellica Diona inculpandum fuisse imperatorem liquet” (In matters of warfare, it is clear that Dion could not be faulted as a general, *comp.* 3.1). The verb *inculpo* is very rare in ancient Latin and not attested before Porphyrio, who used it in his commentary on Horace’s *Satires* (late second or early third century AD). After that the verb and derivatives from it become frequent in medieval Latin. Even so it is used in texts that purport to be written in humanist Latin, like Valla’s Latin translation of Thucydides: “Lacedaemonii [...] Agidem uahementer inculpabant, quod [...]” (The Spartans [...] strongly blamed Agis, because [...]” 5,62), in the opposite sense, “to blame”.) Again, Perotti registers the word in the meaning used by Guarino:

nam sicut omnis culpa priuatio inculpatum facit, Inculpatus autem
instar est absolutae uirtutis

just as the absence of all blame makes one blameless, so the blameless
is the image of absolute perfection, *ccopiae* 1,59

Unintended canonization?

As the *apparatus fontium* of the modern edition of the *Cornu copiae* shows, Perotti relied heavily on the great medieval dictionaries such as Hugutio and Papias. In spite of this, very few of his lemmata are not found in ancient Latin;

³⁹ Cp. Pedersen 1510 “animaduersor, reffserman”; and KILLIAAN *etym* p.536 “STRAFFER. animaduersor. punitor”.

⁴⁰ See Pade 2010.

in fact, as Johann Ramminger once calculated, using all *prae-composita* as a sample, only six per cent of Perotti's lemmata must be attributed to medieval Latin and/or Neo-Latin.⁴¹ I shall return later to some examples of Perotti's attitude to contemporary Latin coinages, but in view of his *damnatio memoriae* of the non-classical meaning of *benedico*, it is hardly likely that he would embrace medieval neologisms of form or sense as belonging to good Latin. It is therefore interesting that in a passage on *vitium* ("fault", "vice", "error", "offence") and its derivatives, we come across the lemma *uituperium*: "Et uituperium. Cicero: 'Vel etiam a uitio dictum uituperium'" (And *uituperium*. Cicero: Or else *vituperium* is derived from *vitium*, "vice", *ccopiae* 3,144). As was the case with the Apuleius quotation in the explanation of *animaduersor*, the *apparatus fontium* of the modern edition points to a problem with the quotation from Cicero. It says "Cic. *fin.* 3,40 uar.", thus indicating that Perotti's quotation does not correspond to the text of our editions of the *De finibus*, nor indeed to anything recorded in their apparatus. They read "vel etiam a vitio dictum vituperari": that is, the very word the passage should attest is not there.⁴² It is, in fact, almost non-existent in ancient Latin: according to the archive of the ThLL, *uituperium* is attested only twice in fifth- to sixth-century texts.⁴³ It is, however, found in medieval dictionaries (Hugutio and modern dictionaries), meaning "insult", "slander" or "offence".

The reason why Perotti accepted the word as good Latin – and gave it an impeccable pedigree – was probably the fact that by the time he compiled the *Cornu copiae*, it had been in use in humanist Latin for many years. Again, my first example is Guarino's translation of the *Dion*. He renders the description of the bodily violence suffered by Dionysius' wife, ὕβρις, as follows: "mulieris corpus grauibus et iniquissimis affecere uituperiis, ob quae sibi necem sponte consciuit" (They, *i.e.* the people of Syracuse, inflicted terrible and outrageous bodily harm on the woman, and in consequence she put an end to her own life, 3.2).

⁴¹ Ramminger 2011, 167.

⁴² In the *apparatus fontium* to his edition of Idung's *Dialogus duorum monachorum*, Huygens mentions *vituperium* as a variant reading to *vituperari* in both Cic. *fin.* 3,40 and *leg.* 3,23. Cp. Huygens 1972, 101. I have, however, not been able to identify any manuscript with that reading. It is not mentioned in the *apparatus criticus* of modern standard editions of the work, and I have controlled the passage in the *De finibus* in the editions [Köln], [ca. 1470]: ISTC ic00564000 and Moguntiae (=Mainz): Scheffer 1520, and the passages of both *De finibus* and *De legibus* in the edition of Bologna: Benedictus Hectoris, 1494, ISTC ic00571000 – and all read *vituperari*.

⁴³ In the *Historia Apollonii regis Tyri*, A32 (which was, admittedly, very popular at the time), and in a letter of Spanish Bishop Iustus Urgellitanus, edited in Migne 67, cc.961–2.

In his polemic against Antonio da Rho, the *Raudensiane note* (1433/49), Valla doubts the existence of *vituperium* – in good Latin, that is. In his work on rhetorical imitation, Antonio had quoted Cicero saying: “Similiter laus et vituperia” (praise and *vituperia* are the same, *i.e. antinomes*), and Valla comments: “‘Vituperia’ ostende quis dicat” (*Vituperium*, show me who uses that, VALLA-L *in Raud* 33). In spite of this, *vituperium* as antinome to *laus* became very common in humanist Latin, and Valla himself later uses it in his translation of Thucydides to express “slander” or “offence”: “tum uero ipse quo maiore iniuria affectus sum: eo magis uituperio [...]” (then I, who have been more wronged, have more reason to vilify, *i.e. democracy*, 6,89).

From Perotti, *vituperium* also makes its way into other Early Modern Latin dictionaries, along with the attribution to Cicero. In his 1502 *Dictionarium latinum*, Ambrogio Calepio makes ample use of the *Cornu copiae*, as also the entry on *vituperium* shows: “Vituperium idem quod uituperatio. Ci. Vel etiam a uitio dictum uituperium”.⁴⁴ Calepio’s *Dictionarium*, mostly known as *Calepinus*, was reprinted a number of times, thereby helping to propagate the Ciceronian pedigree of the word, but it did not make it into Robert Estienne’s magisterial *Latinae linguae Thesaurus*.⁴⁵

Accepting lexical change

New coinages

In spite of their emphasis on classical Latin, both the *Elegantie* and the *Cornu copiae* contain entries on words so far attested only in post-medieval Latin texts.⁴⁶ Both works also sometimes consciously accept semantic expansions of classical Latin.

We find an example of such an intervention in the passage where Perotti discusses the word *aspergulum*: a case where Perotti accepts an Italian word in Latinized form. He says:

Quidam etiam iuniores aspergulum usurpant, nouum quidem, sed non inelegans uocabulum: significat autem instrumentum quo nos sacris aquis solemus aspergere,

Some more recent writers use the word *aspergulum*, *aspergill*. It is new, but in no way clumsy. It signifies the instrument we use to sprinkle holy water, *ccopiae* 84,1.

We find the word *aspergulum* in later dictionaries, for instance in *Calepinus*, but he and others omit to mention that the word comes from the vernacular

⁴⁴ Calepinus 1502. On Calepio’s use of the *Cornu copiae*, see Stok 2002.

⁴⁵ Estienne 1536, lemma *vitupero* with sublemmata.

⁴⁶ See Pade 2006b.

aspergolo.⁴⁷ I have here quoted the text of the modern edition that reproduces the text of the dedication copy, cod. Urb.lat. 301 of the Vatican Library. However, the early printed editions of the work – of which three are recorded in the critical apparatus of the modern edition – all substitute *aspergillum* for *aspergulum*. That had in the meanwhile become the normal Latin word for the instrument, and of course the one from which the English “aspergillum” is derived.

Semantic expansion

Another aspect of the changes Latin underwent during this period is the semantic expansion of some ancient Latin words: old words being given new meanings. A famous example of this is the case of *traducere*. In ancient Latin the word means “to lead, bring, carry across”, “to transport”, “to spend”, etc. Then in 1404, in a famous letter on translation, Leonardo Bruni used the verb metaphorically to describe his own translation process. He continued to use it, and the new meaning quickly caught on, not only in Latin, to the extent that today in the Romance languages the words for “to translate” stem from *traducere*.⁴⁸ By the time Perotti compiled the *Cornu copiae*, *traducere* for “to translate” was already well established. Contrary to what we saw with *benedicere*, Perotti acknowledges this new usage, though somewhat hesitantly:

Traduco [...] Aliquando transfero, ut hoc loco, “*tractata est Getulis*”, hoc est, translata ad Getulos. Unde etiam traducere librum ex una lingua in aliam quidam dicunt, hoc est interpretari.

Traduco [...] sometimes means lead over, transfer, as in this passage “it was lead over to the Getuli”, that is transferred to the Getuli. Hence some say “to lead a book over” from one language into another, that is “to translate”, *ccopiae* 4,76.

Even if Perotti may have had reservations about the new usage, he did thus accept it in his canon, and he himself regularly uses *traducere* in its new meaning.

The last entry I want to discuss here is very short and concerns a sublemma of *publicus*, namely *Res Publica*, which Perotti explains with *res populi* (*copiae* 2,782).

In ancient Latin, *res publica* means “common good”, “commonwealth”, “the affairs of the state” or even “the state” – but what does *res populi* mean? One very common meaning is “the affairs/ achievements of the (Roman) people” (cp. LIV. 1,1), but that is obviously not what Perotti intends here.

⁴⁷ On the acceptance of both Valla and Perotti of influence from the vernacular in Latin, see Charlet 2010.

⁴⁸ For this, see Ramminger 2015–16.

Cicero juxtaposes *res publica* with *res populi* in his *The State (De re publica)*, named after Plato's *Politeia*. In the rather fragmented book one, the commonwealth is defined as *res populi*, "the people's case", but, *nota bene*, an assembly of the people gathered with respect for justice and for the common good:

Est igitur, inquit Africanus, *res publica res populi*, *populus autem non omnis hominum coetus quoquo modo congregatus, sed coetus multitudinis iuris consensu et utilitatis communione sociatus* (CIC. *rep.* 1,39).

Shortly afterwards, Cicero opposes *res populi* to monarchy, however just the ruler may be:

Itaque si Cyrus ille Perses iustissimus fuit sapientissimusque rex, tamen mihi *populi res* – ea enim est, ut dixi antea, *publica* – non maxime expetenda fuisse illa videtur, cum regeretur unius nutu ac modo

Therefore, even if Cyrus was a most righteous and wise king of the Persians, it does not seem to me that the people's case, the *res populi* – which, as I said, is also the *res publica* – was much promoted, when it depended on the beck and nod of one individual, *rep.* 1,43

The *res populi* cannot exist when there is rule by one.

In book three of *The State*, Laelius mentions the state of Athens under the Thirty, that is, the oligarchic government which was installed in Athens after its defeat in the Peloponnesian War in 404 BC. Then, Laelius says, there was no real commonwealth, *respublica*, because there was no *res populi*:

quae enim fuit tum Atheniensium *res*, cum post magnum illud Peloponnesiacum bellum triginta viri illi urbi iniustissime praefuerunt? num aut vetus gloria civitatis aut species praeclara oppidi [...] aut admiranda opera Phidiae aut Piraeus ille magnificus *rem publicam* efficiebat? Minime vero, Laelius, quoniam quidem *populi res* non erat.

For what was the state of Athens, when after the great Peloponnesian war, the city was subjected to the most unjust rule of the Thirty? Did the old glory of that city, the famous sight of it [...] the admirable works of Phidias or the magnificent harbour of Piraeus, did all that constitute it a *res publica*? Laelius. Not in the least, because it was not a *res populi*, *rep.* 3,44

In this passage we have *res populi* opposed to oligarchy. In the three passages, we first see *res populi* defined as "an assembly of the people gathered with respect for justice and for the common good", then as something that cannot thrive under monarchy, however just and wise, and lastly as something absent under oligarchical rule. Like Plato and Aristotle, Cicero operates with a system of constitutions divided into rule by one, rule by a few, and rule by

many; it appears that *res populi* was one of the expressions he used when talking about constitutions in which the people had a say.⁴⁹

The problem is of course that Cicero's *The State* was not known during the Middle Ages and in the Renaissance. So how can all this have a bearing on Perotti's definition *res publica*? The *index auctorum* in volume eight of the modern edition of the *Cornu copiae* shows that the works of Augustine, not least *The City of God (De civitate dei)*, was frequently quoted by Perotti. He was definitely familiar with the chapter in book two in which Augustine discusses Cicero's definition of the *res publica*, as he quotes it just before the *res publica* lemma (*ccopiae* 2,781).⁵⁰ Augustine admittedly says that there can be a *res populi* under any just government, which is not quite what we find in Cicero's *The State*, but he also quotes the passage where the *res populi* is defined as "an assembly of the people gathered with respect for justice and for the common good".⁵¹

The term *res publica* is important in the history of fifteenth-century political thinking, as it is in translation studies. As the American Renaissance scholar, James Hankins, was able to show, on the basis of his examination of thousands of passages in ancient Latin where the word occurs, it could be used of a "free state" as opposed to a tyranny, but, in contrast to what we have been accustomed to think, a *respublica* is not the antithesis of a monarchical state; and the term *respublica* was never used in antiquity to signify the Roman Republic, that is, the period after the kings and before Augustus.⁵²

Cicero did not have one specific term for "popular government", or, when talking about Greek political systems, for "democracy".⁵³ When in the thirteenth century scholars such as Robert Grosseteste and William of Moerbeke translated the political works of Aristotle into Latin, they consistently transliterated the technical terms, thus using terms like *oligarchia*, *timocratia* and *democratia*. The vast corpus of scholastic commentaries that grew up around these translations partly repeated the transliterated terms and partly developed a fairly stable terminology in which "democracy" was rendered *status popularis*.⁵⁴ When Leonardo Bruni retranslated the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1416/17), he maintained the scholastic terminology for the Greek constitutions, even though he rendered the two works in humanist Latin.⁵⁵ However, in his hugely popular commentary on

⁴⁹ For this, see Pade, forthcoming^a.

⁵⁰ Augustine discusses the definitions of *res publica* – *res populi* in *civ.* 2,21 and 19,21.

⁵¹ Cp. "esse rem publicam, id est rem populi, cum bene ac iuste geritur sive ab uno rege sive a paucis optimatibus sive ab universo populo", *civ.* 2,21.

⁵² Hankins 2005, 2010, 2014, 2016.

⁵³ Cp. Pade forthcoming^a.

⁵⁴ See Pade 2017.

⁵⁵ See Hankins 2003.

the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Economics*, Bruni wrote that “in republica quidem plures imperant”, in a *respublica* many govern. As James Hankins has shown, this is the first time ever that “res publica” is used not for “state” in general, but specifically for “popular government” – a meaning the word never had in ancient Latin. When in the 1430s Bruni translated Aristotle’s *Politics*, he used *res publica* for “good popular government”.⁵⁶ From this technical context, the semantic expansion of the term spread to other contexts, and *res publica* was increasingly used by translators of Greek historical works for “democracy”. One of them was Perotti, who, in his 1454 translation of Polybius, repeatedly renders Greek *democratia* with *respublica*; whereas Valla, for his part, renders “democracy” with the more traditional *status popularis* in his almost contemporary translation of Thucydides. Perotti’s acceptance of the new meaning of *res publica* is also seen in the *Cornu copiae*, in which *res publica* is implicitly something different from monarchy in several passages, for instance, “item oratores legati dicuntur, quod principis aut rei publicae mandata peragant” (orators are also called legates, because they carry out what they have been ordered either by a prince or a *respublica*, *ccopiae* 10,56).

It seems that Perotti in his lemma on *res publica* endorses the semantic expansion of the term that had taken place due to Bruni’s lexical initiative. He thereby helped ensure that *res publica* – “non-monarchical state” – became part of good Latin, that it was included in the canon. It was in this meaning that the word entered the modern vernaculars. It was taken up by Machiavelli who has – mistakenly – been credited as the first to use *repubblica* in the modern sense of the word.⁵⁷

Conclusion

To return to my initial questions about the layers of Latin included in the canon of humanist Latin in relation to the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, of remembering and forgetting, the analysis of Perotti’s lemmata and Valla’s treatment of the same words does reveal an interesting pattern. It is hardly surprising that ancient Latin words are included in the canon, but as we saw with *benedicere*, later semantic developments may not be, especially if they are medieval. Perotti did not deign to mention that the word could mean “to bless”, whereas Valla stated that it did not exist: in other words, Valla’s criterion for rejecting *benedicere* meaning “to bless” was that we do not find it in ancient Latin (Priscian, from the sixth century, does not count).

Perotti accepts a number of rare late Latin words like *animadvorsor*, *foedifragus* and *inculpandus*. He may have known them from Guarino’s

⁵⁶ Hankins 2014, 83–84.

⁵⁷ Pade 2018, 336–338.

translation of Plutarch's *Dion*, which meant that they were, so to speak, already taken up by a major humanist Latin writer. In the case of *animadversor*, Perotti claims that it had been used already by Apuleius, and although this is probably a falsification, the Apuleius quotation added respectability. Whatever the cause, *animadversor*, with the non-classical meaning of "punisher", became part of the Early Modern Latin canon, as did *foedifragus*.

Perotti has very few lemmata from medieval Latin. The one instance I examined here, *vituperium*, may, again, have been made palatable to Perotti because it had been used by Guarino. As we saw with *animadversor*, the word is given an acceptable pedigree by a quotation from an ancient author, in this case Cicero; but whether or not Perotti had a Cicero text with the word *vituperium*, we cannot decide. Valla, for his part, doubted the existence of the word in good Latin.

Apparently Perotti's judgment with regard to older strata of Latin when he compiled the *Cornu copiae* was influenced by the usage of other humanist writers, but his criteria for including a word in his canon, or rejecting it, are not explicitly stated. That was not the case with contemporary developments. Perotti accepted the import from the vernacular of *aspergulum*, because it was not clumsy, and he acknowledged the semantic change in *traducere* that had taken place during the fifteenth century. If we compare that development with that of *benedicere*, the reason for Perotti's acknowledgment – even if given grudgingly – may have been that this new meaning of *traducere* had been coined in humanist Latin, by Bruni. With regard to *res publica*, Perotti must surely have been aware that his explanation of it with *res populi* hardly covered the spectrum of meaning the word had in ancient Latin. One can only guess, but I find it likely that Perotti here, by going back to Cicero via Augustine, created a legend for the new meaning of *res publica* which he himself accepted.

We also saw that Valla and Perotti obeyed their own precepts and wrote in "canonized" Latin, embracing new developments, but avoiding usages that had been relegated, whether through active criticism or passive ignoring, to the archive. Their mastery of Latin, however, was such that when the subject or their audience required it, they would effortlessly switch register and use other layers of Latin. All in all, the canon they worked to create was far from being a mechanical copy of that of ancient Latin. Both Valla and Perotti acknowledged that Latin was subject to change, and even endorsed many developments – if only the result was elegant.

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