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Edited by

Philip Ford (†), Jan Bloemendal and Charles Fantazzi

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Johann Ramming

Neo-Latin: Character and Development



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CHAPTER TWO

NEO-LATIN: CHARACTER AND DEVELOPMENT*

Johann Rammingner

INTRODUCTION

Definition of Neo-Latin

The word *Neo-Latin* is both a chronological and a stylistic term.¹ Chronologically it designates the phase of Latin which came after mediaeval Latin ('Mittellatein/Neulatein' in German). It thus came into being as a concomitant of Renaissance humanism, which may be said to begin in Italy with Petrarch. The reorientation of Latin, which will be discussed in the following, took some time to make itself felt—most of the phenomena mentioned here will belong to the fifteenth and later centuries. Originally a cultural phenomenon of the Italian Peninsula, Neo-Latin spread together with humanism to

other countries from the end of the fifteenth century onwards, arriving in the Scandinavian countries together with the Reformation. Stylistically Neo-Latin is usually understood as the attempt to write Latin as it was written by the 'best' authors of antiquity; as such it started out in what we might call *belles lettres*, i.e., letters, treatises, and orations (not always clearly distinct genres), historical works, and poetry. Attempts to apply the new stylistic ideals to Latin in other genres (theology, law, public administration) initially met with limited success. Thus, early modern Latin (which in the following in its entirety will be called Neo-Latin) is a language encompassing many layers and strong contradictions. The following shall sketch contemporary conceptualisations of the intended reorientation of Latin and its limits, and discuss the major developments of Neo-Latin during the period under purview. The chapter will focus on the linguistic aspects of language change; larger factors, such as the sociological and intellectual developments within early modern history which laid the basis for the changes described here, remain outside the scope of this chapter.²

A Manifesto of Neo-Latin by Flavio Biondo

Neo-Latin writings can be understood as the result of complex negotiations between the author and the reader.³ Not only their contents, but also their linguistic vesture was determined

* I am grateful to Minna Skafte Jensen and Marianne Pade for reading this chapter and suggesting improvements.

¹ The following definition expands those by Jozef Ijsewijn, *Companion to Neo-Latin Studies. Part I: History and Diffusion of Neo-Latin Literature*, 2nd ed. (Louvain: Peeters, 1990) Supplementa Humanistica Lovaniensia, 5, p. v; Walther Ludwig, 'Die neuzeitliche lateinische Literatur seit der Renaissance', in *Einleitung in die lateinische Philologie*, ed. by Fritz Graf (Stuttgart – Leipzig: Saur, 1997), pp. 323–356 esp. pp. 324, 334; Hans Helander, 'Neo-latin Studies. Significance and Prospects. SO Debate', *Symbolae Osloenses*, 76 (2001), 5–44 (pp. 5–39 on language), pp. 44–102 comments by Julia Gaisser, Yasmin Haskell, Heinz Hofmann (pp. 50–51 on orthography, pp. 55–56 about Latin/vernaculars), Gerlinde Huber-Rebenich, Craig Kallendorf (pp. 64–65 on social construction of Neo-Latin texts), Walther Ludwig (pp. 69–71 on extent of knowledge of Neo-Latin), Ann Moss (p. 74 on Neo-Latin and the European vernaculars), Minna Skafte Jensen, Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, Francesco Tateo (pp. 82–84 on chronological considerations), Helander's reply (p. 86 about Latin/vernaculars, pp. 89–90 on orthography), important bibliography, esp. pp. 5–7. It should be noted that the Italian term *neolatino* denotes the Romance languages.

² See, e.g., Ann Moss, *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

³ Kallendorf in Helander, 'Neo-latin Studies', p. 64.

by what author and readers hoped to achieve with and gain from a work. The Latin writers of Italian humanism were highly self-reflective and very much aware that social parameters influenced their language. One of the most comprehensive statements of what writing in Latin meant in a post-mediaeval society was formulated by Flavio Biondo in his *Historiarum ab inclinatione Romanorum libri* (History from the Decline of the Romans), at the point when his work had arrived at the description of contemporary events.⁴ Biondo focused on the language of contemporary Latin historiography; his considerations, however, generally expressed the humanist perspective on the language they write in. The passage can be paraphrased as follows:

1. For the writing of good Latin (*Latinitas*), elegance (*elegantia*) in composition and an appropriate style (*dignitas*) are paramount. Words should be used in their correct (i.e., original) meaning (*proprietas*). The task of the modern writer is to write elegant Latin, even when forced to use barbaric, uncustomary and outright inept expressions—counteracting a deterioration of Latin, in which hardly anybody had written elegantly or even properly in the last thousand years.

2. An unmediated recourse to the Latin of antiquity is not possible, as social and political realities in Italy have changed since then. The use of classical descriptive models leads to absurdities if they no longer correspond to actual circumstances (Biondo highlights the differences in warfare).

3. Hence the quandary of the Neo-Latin writer: it is largely inexpedient to preserve the ways of expression of the old authors. If, however, one wants to write elegantly, theirs is the only way to write. A modern readership, having again become accustomed to the eloquence and splendour of classical writing, rightly expects the same from a modern work. Either one writes in a classical idiom and appears ridiculously obscure, or one is a fanatic of the modern world and appears silly and ignorant of antiquity.

According to Biondo the following factors concerning the relationship between *res* and *verba* can be taken into account in writing (Neo-) Latin:

1. Some words are still used with the meaning they had in ancient Latin. These are unproblematic.

2. In some cases the meaning has changed (*imperator*, general to emperor; *dux*, leader to duke); this can lead to equivocal phrases which annoy the reader because they leave him in doubt.

3. Sometimes the *res* is the same, but the designation has changed (modern *balista* for the weapon known in antiquity as *scorpio*); the author will be obliged to give an explanation. If a misuse (*abusus*) of a thousand years has supplanted the proper use (*usus*), the author will be forced to continue what has become the norm, even if it is to be considered erroneous. The well-established authority of the Roman Church needs to be respected when dealing with traditional terminology. Modern naming customs and designations of political institutions are two instances where later tradition may override correct Latinity.

4. If one is writing about hitherto unknown things, one can just use the modern designations, even though new words can ruin the turn of phrase, provoking the disgust and annoyance of the reader. Circumlocution is one way to avoid new words; however, it can easily become unintelligible (as Biondo demonstrates with a fifty-plus words paraphrase of *bombarda*). The use of modern language in the description of

⁴ Biondo, *Hist.* 3, 1. The passage is discussed in depth by Martin L. McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation in the Italian Renaissance. The Theory and Practice of Literary Imitation in Italy from Dante to Bembo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 143f. Here and in the following Neo-Latin authors are quoted with the sigla used in Johann Ramming, *Neulateinische Wortliste. Ein Wörterbuch des Lateinischen von Petrarca bis 1700* (2003–), www.neulatein.de, ancient Latin authors with those used by the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. Unless noted otherwise, all translations are by the author. Neo-Latin words quoted without examples can be found in Ramming, *Neulateinische Wortliste*.

modern objects can in itself be pleasing, where the reader can favourably compare modern achievements with antiquity. The cannon, for instance, is such a marvellous invention that the reader will pardon the modern designation *bombarda*.

The common preconditions for writing Neo-Latin therefore are two: firstly, developments of Latin since classical times—which are considered corrupt and barbarous (this became more irrelevant with time)—should be avoided. Instead one should employ an idiom that imitated classical diction (restoration). Secondly, a new world needed new words (innovation). The joker in this seemingly straightforward strategy was the assertion that ‘usage’ (*usus*) would override all other concerns. Readers of Biondo were no doubt reminded of Horace’s constantly quoted assertion that *usus* was the ‘decisive rule and speaking norm’ in the reality of an ever-changing language (‘quem penes arbitrium est et ius et norma loquendi’, *Ars* 72).⁵

Humanists formulated this reorientation of the language mostly as a semantic and lexical challenge, although the rupture regarding syntax was if anything even more thorough.

RESTORATION

Neo-Latin and Classical Latin

The reorientation of Latin towards classical Latin was much influenced by the rediscovery of ancient texts: the reception of their contents was accompanied by the reception of distinguishing lexical features. The discovery of Cicero’s letters to Atticus (by Petrarch in 1345), Plautus (twelve plays discovered by Nicholas of Cusa in 1428), and Catullus (discovered in 1300, but earliest manuscripts surviving only from the late Trecento) afforded the humanists models for a variety of registers of literary and colloquial Latin.⁶ The word *vernaculus* entered

Neo-Latin from Cicero’s *Brutus* (rediscovered in 1421) via Biondo and Bruni;⁷ *merenda*, a word belonging to mediaeval Latin and the *volgare*, could be used by Valla in a colloquial letter, because he had read it in one of the new-found comedies of Plautus.⁸ The excavation of rare lexical features could lead to an eclecticism not all humanists found acceptable; the preference for an exotic word like *ferruminare* (to seal, caulk) on the part of humanists like Ermolao Barbaro or Poliziano led to the charge of admitting ‘monster-words’ (‘portenta verborum’, Lucio Fosforo to Poliziano, *Ep.* 3, 14) by those *ferruminales*. Poliziano jumps at the accusation to highlight his position on some general aspects of the reacquisition of the Latin of the ancients:

What they call monster-words, I really do not know; probably by monsters they mean those words which they themselves now hear or understand for the first time. For I have neither brought into the world words ‘not heard by the Romans in days of yore’, nor do I use any but the most acclaimed authors. However, I do not belong to those who let the Latin language lie largely barren, because everybody is afraid of using words unknown to the others. In fact, things have gone so far that we can’t even use the language of the great authors safely, since it might not be well known to everybody, and we prefer to use barbarian instead of Roman expressions.⁹

Thus, the ‘restoration’ of Latin followed clearly defined lines. Obviously, the reading public

⁵ See Silvia Rizzo, *Ricerche sul latino umanistico*, I, (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2002) *Storia e letteratura. Raccolta di studi e testi*, 213, pp. 65–68.

⁶ Silvia Rizzo, ‘I Latini dell’umanesimo’, in *Il latino nell’età dell’umanesimo. Atti del Convegno Mantova, 26–27 ottobre 2001*, ed. by Giorgio Bernardi Perini (Florence: Olschki, 2004), pp. 51–95, esp. pp. 61f.

⁷ Johann Ramminger, ‘Humanists and the Vernacular. Creating the Terminology for a Bilingual Universe’, in *Latin and the Vernaculars in Early Modern Europe. Contributions from the Conference ‘Texts & Contexts IV, The Role of Latin in Early Modern Europe’*, Hosted by the University of Aarhus; Sandbjerg, 17–20.5.2007, ed. by Trine Arlund Hass and Johann Ramminger, *Renaissanceforum*, 6 (2010), 1–22.

⁸ Rizzo, ‘I Latini del Umanesimo’, pp. 62f.

⁹ Poliziano, *Ep.* 3, 15, 2: ‘Portenta igitur verborum quae vocent isti, fateor, ignoro, nisi si portenta credunt quae ipsi nova nunc primum vocabula vel audiunt vel intellegunt. Nam ego nec verba ulla pepererim “cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis”, nec ullos habeo nisi receptissimos auctores. Non tamen ex eorum sum numero qui cessare Latine linguam magna ex parte patiuntur, dum quisque illa reformidat quae vulgo hactenus ignorata sunt, siquidem eo res rediit ut ne magnorum quidem auctorum lingua tuto loquamur, quoniam vulgo minus innotuerit, itaque barbaris uti malimus quam Romanis vocibus.’

is just as important for Poliziano as it was for Biondo half a century earlier; but he refuses to let his style be dictated by the preferences of the ignorant masses (i.e., humanists who had criticized his style) who would rather have Latin stand still and use 'barbarian' expressions, a common codeword for 'mediaeval' Latin (and an intentional misunderstanding of his critics' position). He feels that his Latin is legitimised by the fact that the authors he draws upon are not arbitrarily chosen, but those 'of highest acclaim' within the republic of letters—a definition which allowed for his own eclectic Latin as well as Bembo's Ciceronianism or the less distinctive style of others.

Already Bruni in his *De interpretatione recta* (On Correct Translation, 1424/26) had proposed a canon of Latin authors, amongst which Cicero (for elegant prose), Plautus (for everyday speech) and Virgil took pride of place. From Petrarch onward, the writer Cicero had probably generated the most enthusiasm, and the gradual recovery of his works influenced not only the content of humanist writing, it also stimulated the development of Latin itself.

Imitation of Cicero was the guiding principle of the teaching of Latin, as attested by the recommendations in the influential humanist schoolbook, the *Rudimenta grammatices* (Latin for Beginners) of Niccolò Perotti (first printed 1473, countless reprints and locally adapted versions):

Whom should young people strive to imitate first and foremost? Marcus Cicero. He excelled in every rhetorical genre, him alone should teachers read, his works alone should be studied and imitated by schoolboys, who should drink in his words and phrases and even—if possible—steal whole passages from his letters and insert them in their own. Nourished on his spirit as on milk they will become true imitators of Cicero.¹⁰

¹⁰ Transl. Marianne Pade, 'Intertextuality as a Stylistic Device in Niccolò Perotti's Dedicatory Letters. With an Edition of Perotti's Letter to Jacopo Schioppo', *Renæssanceforum* 7 (2011), 121–146, esp. p. 122. Perotti, *Rud.* 1119: 'Quis maxime proponendus est quem studeant adolescentes imitari? Marcus Cicero. Hic in omni dicendi genere omnium optimus fuit, hunc solum praeceptores legant, hunc discipuli imitentur, nec modo uerba eius hauriant, sed etiam clausulas, quin etiam partes ipsas epistolarum

Beyond the realm of school teaching, the case for Ciceronianism is made, for example, in a letter by Giorgio Valagussa to a high functionary at the Milanese court, Giovanni Antonio Girardi, from 1464:

Not rarely, my dear Giovannantonio, when we discussed literary studies, we found those laughable who—although bypassing Cicero's writings—nevertheless hoped to acquire a well rounded, elegant and ornate style. I always knew that you were far from this error and that, with your keen intellect, you believe him to be the sole prince of eloquence, who can easily inspire dignity of style, richness of expression and every distinction.¹¹

In consequence of the attention bestowed on Cicero, a large number of words which occur only once in Cicero and are otherwise absent from written classical Latin, enjoyed a large circulation in early modern Latin and thus skew Neo-Latin towards innovation even in the very attempt at linguistic conservatism: *animaduersor*, *appendicula*, *breuiloquens*, *breuiloquentia*, *commotiuncula*, *condecentia*, *consuasor*, *deletrix*, *despicatio*, *hypodidascalus*, *labecula*, etc. Ciceronianism reached its zenith in the early sixteenth century with writers such as Pietro Bembo and Mario Nizolio, whose *Thesaurus Ciceronianus* (1535), a dictionary based exclusively on Cicero's works, served widely as a manual for writing Ciceronian Latin, and incidentally helped to perpetuate words as 'Ciceronian' which in reality were later scribal errors (for example, *incommodatio*).¹²

interdum furentur et suis inserant. Ita enim fiet ut suco Ciceronis quasi lacte nutriti ueri illius imitatores euadant.'

¹¹ Valagussa, *Preface to the Elegantiae Ciceronianae* [before 1464], ed. Gianvito Resta, *Giorgio Valagussa umanista del quattrocento* (Padua: Editrice Antenore, 1964) *Miscellanea erudita*, 13, p. 39: 'Cum saepiuscule, Iohannantonio mi suauissime, de studiis humanitatis verba una fecerimus, ridiculi nobis nonnulli videbantur qui, posthabitis Ciceronis operibus, sperant se tamen omnem dicendi elegantiam scribendique ornatum vindicare posse. Ab errore quorum te longe alienum semper esse coniectavi, cum hunc auctorem unicum eloquentiae principem tuo acutissimo ingenio eum esse ducis, unde omnis orationis dignitas, omnis dicendi copia, omnis ornatus facile fluere possit.'

¹² The early editions bear the title *Observationes in M. T. Ciceronem*. The better known title *Thesaurus Ciceronianus* is first used in the 1550s.

At the height of Ciceronianism, Bembo, in his *Rerum Venetarum historiae libri XII* (History of Venice, published posthumously 1551), purified his Latin in a way which Biondo had found impossible; the (exaggerated) critique by Justus Lipsius in a letter from 1609 notes especially the transfer of ancient social realities to the present day, which leads to obscurity, such as calling the Venetian senate *patres conscripti* and counting the years not from the birth of Christ, but *ab Vrbe condita* (from the foundation of the city; furthermore, the *Vrbs* being not Rome, but Venice). When Bembo replaced *fides* (faith) with the classical *persuasio* (belief, opinion), for Lipsius stylistic consideration had transgressed what was doctrinally permissible.¹³

The enthusiasm for Ciceronian style led to a rigid definition of 'good' Latin and was easily ridiculed by adherents of a more flexible use of the norms of classical Latin, most famously by Erasmus in the satirical dialogue *Ciceronianus* (1528). Later, in the middle of the sixteenth century, Vincenzo Borghini formulated the rejection of Ciceronianism in his *De imitatione commentariolum* (Short Treatise on Imitation) thus:

I entirely disapprove of those writers who are unrealistically scrupulous or—actually—rather pedantic [*putidiusculi*] [...] who hold that whatever was not said by Cicero has to be avoided.¹⁴

The employment of the Ciceronian hapax *putidiusculus* in a passage which decries the excesses of Ciceronianism is of course the type of rarified wordplay humanists were fond of. Still, even if Bembo's style is an outlier, the imitation of specific classical authors simply belonged to the core of Neo-Latin, and Ciceronianism was preceded by Apuleianism (a tendency to excavate words and phrases from the second-century writer Apuleius, which was popular in the 1480s amongst humanists such as Ermolao Barbaro, Poliziano, and the elder Beroaldo, the

great commentator of Apuleius's *Golden Ass*)¹⁵ and followed by Tacitism.

Rejection of Mediaeval Latin

Mediaeval Latin was seen by humanists mostly as a product of ignorance and incompetence. In his *De politia literaria* (*On Elegant Writing*, c. 1462), Angelo Decembrio put the following words into the mouth of the famous humanist teacher Guarino:

Thus because of the wide spread of the bonds of blind ignorance sometimes the meaning of words is understood quite differently from or as the opposite of its real meaning, sometimes words are used which are quite unheard of amongst our forbears [...] [there follows a series of abstract nouns ending in *-itas*, a hallmark of mediaeval Scholastic terminology] as well as some embarrassing diminutives, effeminate words like *ingeniolium* [modest ability], *studiolum* [modest effort], *modulus* [small measure].¹⁶

This passage identifies what humanists saw as the core of mediaeval Latin: the development of new meanings and the shift in meaning (Decembrio mentions the confusion between *crimen/culpa/peccatum*—accusation/guilt/sin), the—entirely unclassical—vocabulary of Scholastic philosophy, and other neologisms. Implicitly this passage also gives a rough timeframe: vocabulary from patristic authors usually (with some notable exceptions like Ermolao Barbaro) remains unexplored and is lumped together with later developments (*ingeniolium* is first attested in Jerome). The other two 'embarrassing' examples unwittingly illustrate the difficulties of the humanist language-purification project: *studiolum* appeared to be mediaeval (it is found in the twelfth-century dictionary of Hugutio), but is in reality

¹³ The letter is Lipsius, *Ep. chilias* 2, 57 to Janus Dousa; see Ulery in Bembo, *History of Venice*, I, pp. xviii–xx.

¹⁴ Borghini, *Imit.*, p. 1541: 'minime assentior quibusdam plus aequo religiosis, immo—ut verius dicam—putidiusculis, qui omnia quae a Cicerone dicta non sunt [...] fugienda esse [...] sibi certe persuaserunt.'

¹⁵ Julia Haig Gaisser, *The Fortunes of Apuleius and the 'Golden Ass'* (Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 168f., 202f.

¹⁶ Decembrio, *Pol.* 3, 27, 97: 'Sic igitur passim effusus temeritatis et ignorantiae carceribus partim sermonum significationes alienae longeque contrariae pro suis ipsorum accipi solent, partim et inaudita maioribus nostris vocabula supponuntur, ut spiritualitas, maioritas, minoritas, identitas et superioritas cum inferioritate, naturalitas cum ingeniositate; ac diminutiva quaedam turpia muliebrique vocabula ut ingeniolium, studiolum, modulus.'

already used in the second century AD by Marcus Aurelius in Fronto's epistolary (which was unknown to humanists); *modulus* is a perfectly ordinary classical word, though with a notable mediaeval *fortuna*.

If mediaeval Latin thus was not always as easily recognized as humanists would have wished, a major area of attack stood out: Scholastic philosophy, which had as its core text Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, intertwined with Aristotelian philosophy, which had been integrated into mediaeval thought via Latin translations of Arabic renderings of the Greek writings of Aristotle. The result of this circuitous reception process were texts which—due to choice of words as well as syntax—conveyed remarkably little of what humanists praised as the elegance of the originals. Since translation from the Greek after 1400 rapidly developed into an important area of humanist (i.e., Neo-Latin) writing, the mediaeval Aristotle was a perfect target throughout the Quattrocento, beginning with Leonardo Bruni's preface to his translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1417) and his *De interpretatione recta*. Even though from a purely aesthetic point of view humanist criticism was difficult to fault, the advocates of the contrary point of view were not prepared to cede the field, because—as Pico della Mirandola asserted in a famous controversy with Ermolao Barbaro about the relative importance of style versus content in philosophical writings (1485)—adequately expressed content was more important than elegant presentation. The coherent system of 'mediaeval' philosophical terminology was not easily replaced, to wit, the fact that even Ermolao Barbaro, a translator of Aristotelian writings of note, in his university teaching used the mediaeval translations. A renewed attack on the terminological apparatus of Scholastic philosophy was led in 1504 by the Roman cardinal Paolo Cortesi who wrote a commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard 'in a more splendid style' ('*illustrioribus litteris*'),¹⁷ so as to

render the beauty of the Greek philosophical writings in equivalent Latin. According to Erasmus the traditional terminology could lead to a sleep deeper than that from drunkenness (the *somnus theologicus*)¹⁸ and was inconducive to a religious life.¹⁹ Despite these attacks, as late as 1562 Sophianus in his new translations for the Juntine Aristotle retained the traditional vocabulary which was at the core of Aristotelian philosophy and which 'from the beginning' had been used in teaching, even though he considered it 'horrid and hardly Latin'.²⁰

Of course philosophy was not the only area where Latin had developed further since antiquity, and the intended rollback of the current *usus* was not necessarily more effective in other areas. A case in point is *benedicere* which in the Quattrocento nearly exclusively meant 'to hallow' and was a *terminus technicus* of ecclesiastical ritual. Perotti in the *Cornu copiae* (see below) insisted on the classical 'to praise' as the only meaning, even though this was hardly more than historical. In this as in many other cases the *usus* prevailed: when Perotti (who was Bishop of Siponto, though without theological training) preached at religious functions,

litteris hoc scribendi genus aggrediantur ('I wanted to call upon the philosophers with a literary education to undertake this kind of writing in a richer and more splendid style'). The title of the second edition mentioned the 'Roman style' of the work: 'Pauli Cortesii Protonotarii Apostolici in quatuor Libros Sententiarum argutae Romanoque eloquio disputationes' (Paris, 1513).

¹⁸ According to Erasmus, *Ep.* 64, this had happened to a philosopher who, while pondering the *instantia*, *quidditates* and *formalitates*, fell into a sleep lasting for forty-seven years.

¹⁹ Erasmus, *Nov. test. Paracl.*, pp. 146–147: 'Neque enim ob id, opinor, quisquam sibi Christianus esse videatur, si spinosa molestaque verborum perplexitate de instantibus, de relationibus, de quidditatibus ac formalitatibus disputet' ('nobody will, I believe, appear to himself a Christian, if he can with thorny and cumbersome obscurity discuss the *instantia*, *relationes*, *quidditates* and *formalitates*').

²⁰ 'Horrida parumque Latina', quoted from F. Edward Cranz, 'Editions of the Latin Aristotle Accompanied by the Commentaries of Averroes', in *Philosophy and Humanism. Renaissance Essays in Honour to Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. by Edward P. Mahoney (Leiden: Brill, 1976), pp. 116–128, esp. p. 127.

¹⁷ Cortesi, *In sent.*, fol. xlv: 'Ammonere enim Philosophos et humaniores volumus: vt vberius et illustrioribus

he himself used *benedicere* in the usual sense everybody understood and expected.

Development of Humanist Lexicography

Despite their enthusiasm for classical literature, humanists (besides their own collections of excerpts, the so-called commonplace books) for a long time depended on mediaeval language aids—with all the stylistic uncertainties this entailed—i.e., mediaeval schoolbooks and the huge dictionary-encyclopedias (Hugutio, Balbi, Papias, Johannes de Janua). It was only in the second half of the fifteenth century that lexicographic works more adapted to the new stylistic ideals were developed. The *Elegantiae linguae Latinae* (Elegant Latin) of Lorenzo Valla were the first to discuss classical usage and to lay down rules for correct Latin in cases where either confusion ruled or mediaeval Latin had developed away from the classical norm. Valla was shortly followed by Giovanni Tortelli's *De orthographia dictionum e Graecis tractarum* (The Orthography of Words Derived from the Greek), which focused on a subset of Latin (although his definition of Greek derivation was considerably larger than that of modern linguistics). The advent of printing radically changed the speed of diffusion and reach of humanist ideals. Significantly enough, both Valla and Tortelli were printed soon and often, while the mediaeval encyclopedias found a much-reduced market (Hugutio was not printed at all). Among the next generation of humanists it is Niccolò Perotti whose adeptness in handling the new medium stands out. His *Rudimenta grammatices*, the first major humanist schoolbook, relied exclusively on print for its distribution—and for its spectacular success. The same holds true for his *Cornu copiae linguae Latinae* (Horn of Plenty of the Latin Language, first printed posthumously 1489), a vast documentation of Latin in a free-ranging form. Eclectic writings such as Beroaldo's *Annotationes centum* (A Hundred Notes, 1488) and Poliziano's *Miscellanea* (Mixed Observations, 1489) had quantitatively less of an impact on the development of Latin; the latter on account of its

methodological clarity became exemplary for subsequent philological writing.

Orthography

The reversion to classical, etymologically or prosodically correct spelling was the central principle of humanist orthographical reform. The endeavour to establish the correct use of the diphthong *ae* (especially at the end of a word, where it was syntactically important) started with Salutati already in the 1370s, followed by Poggio. The first to write a tract about the diphthong was Guarino (c. 1415). Still, the correct use of the diphthong was slow to establish itself, and individual writers varied considerably.²¹ The restitution of classical *mihi* and *nihil* for mediaeval *mihi* and *nichil* and other forms was the subject of sometimes acrimonious discussions between Salutati and Poggio (1406).²² Later Bruni intervened,²³ and the matter was still undecided when Enea Silvio Piccolomini wrote his long letter *De educatione recta* (Correct Child-Rearing) in 1450.²⁴ As late as 1528 the question needed to be mentioned by one of the interlocutors in Erasmus's *De pronuntiatione recta* (Correct Pronunciation). In practice forms both with *c* and *ch* coexisted for a long time.²⁵

It was not easy to ascertain which orthographical traits actually were pre-mediaeval (humanist notions of palaeography were rather hazy), and Salutati based his introduction of the *e caudata* for *ae* on the example of manuscripts from the twelfth century. Ancient grammarians were an alternative resource; thus Alamanno Rinuccini admonished a correspondent that *littera* was not to be spelled in the mediaeval way as *lictera*, but according to Priscian with

²¹ Marianne Pade, 'La forza del destinatario', *Studi umanistici piceni*, 26 (2006), pp. 11–21.

²² Salutati, *Ep.* 14, 22.

²³ Bruni, *Ep.* 8, 2 p. 107.

²⁴ Piccolomini, *Ep.* 40 II, p. 103ff.

²⁵ Cf. Kazimierz Kumaniecki (ed.), *Antibarbarorum liber*, in Erasmus, *Opera omnia* I, 1 (Amsterdam 1969), p. 25 (introduction); and D. Martin Luthers *Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (WA) 57 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1939), p. xxxix (app. crit.)

either *t* or *tt*, depending on the etymology.²⁶ It was Poliziano who in his *Miscellanea* showed that in ancient monuments (inscriptions as well as manuscripts from antiquity) the name of the Roman poet Virgil had been spelt *Verg-*, not *Virg-* (both spellings persist to this day in modern vernaculars).²⁷

By the second half of the fifteenth century the reform of orthography and pronunciation was no longer restricted to humanist circles. In 1483, in his sermon before the pope and the cardinals on Pentecost, Andreas Brentius, a member of the *familia* of Cardinal Balue, chose not a theological, but a philological message concerning the Holy Ghost; 'he taught' the audience 'that one ought not to say *paraclitus*, but *paracletus*',²⁸ thus reversing a change which can be traced in Latin to the shortening of the penultimate syllable in late antiquity and to the parallel Greek phenomenon of *itazismus*; the form with *cli* had been pervasive in mediaeval Latin. The Latin orthography of Greek words was not seldom influenced by Byzantine pronunciation brought to the West by Greek emigrés (e.g., *erotimata* for Greek *erotēmata*).²⁹

The (perceived) etymology had been used as an important factor already by Salutati. Later, it pained Filelfo that Duke Federico da Montefeltro habitually omitted the *r* in his name (i.e., *Freder-*), not only in his letters, but also in inscriptions, which presumably reached a wider public. The reason for Filelfo's objection was the German etymology of the name, *Frieden + reich* (rich in peace), which the duke—understand-

ably enough—had chosen to ignore.³⁰ The supposed derivation of *ceterum* from Greek *καὶ ἕτερος*, which had been proposed by both Tortelli and Perotti, led to a widely held preference of the spelling *caet-* over *cet-*.

Some humanists did (try to) employ consistent orthography in some cases: no diphthong *ae* in Valla, conjunction *cum* spelt as *quum*, enclitic *-que* separated by Perotti. Still, humanists were nothing if not pragmatic in their approach to orthography and—as has been shown with Perotti—adapted themselves to their readership (e.g., by adopting a more traditional way when writing a letter to a conservative recipient).³¹ Generally, attempts to reform or standardise orthography met with limited success,³² dependent as they were not only on the writer or copyist, but later also on the typesetter, who (especially in the early period of printing with a limited amount of types available) might use the letters at hand rather than what was spelt in his exemplar. Moreover, the use of abbreviations for prepositions such as *com-/con-* or *pr(a)e-* and *m/n* at the end of a syllable could make orthographical decisions between allomorphs unnecessary. Latin was in any case vastly more standardised than the contemporary vernaculars.³³ Thus humanists did not necessarily deem lack of consistency a grave problem. Bartolommeo della Scala just could not see 'what the fuss was all about' regarding the oscillation between *Verg-* and *Virgilius*,³⁴ and a writer like Pierpaolo Vergerio felt that *orthographia* was not worth the trouble, since 'nobody nowadays praises or criticises Cicero or Virgil or any other writer

²⁶ Rinuccini, *Ep.* 14, p. 35: 'Litterarum quoque nomen cum *c* posthac nunquam scripseris; nam, ut Priscianus inquit, per simplex *t* siue per duplex *t* scribi debet, prout uarie illius nominis ethimologia sumi potest' ('Henceforth do not write the word *littera* with a *c* [i.e., *lictera*]; according to Priscian [*Inst.* 1, 2, 3] it is to be written with *t* or *tt*, depending on what one believes the etymology to be').

²⁷ Poliziano, *Misc.* 77.

²⁸ Gherardi, *Diar.*, p. 118: 'Sequenti die, sacra consueta in eadem basilica sunt celebrata, operante Balue Andegavensi, Andreas Brentius, Neapolitani cardinalis contubernalis oravit; docuit non "Paraclitum" sed "Paracletum" dici debere.'

²⁹ Letter of Niccolò Volpe to Tortelli from 1448, in Guarino, *Ep.* III, p. 535. Cf. also the lemma *erotima* in Tortelli, *orth.*

³⁰ Letter to Federico from 1474 (in Filelfo, *Vita Federici*, p. 406): 'Quae igitur ratio te adducit, ut, quasi te ipsum ignorans, qui nihil usque malueris quam discere, ex prima syllaba *r* litteram subtrahas, Federicum semper non modo scribens in epistolis tuis omnibus, sed in lapidibus quoque incidens?'

³¹ Pade, 'La forza del destinatario'.

³² Helander, 'Neo-latin Studies'.

³³ Ramming, *Neulateinische Wortliste* has no orthographical variant for 88 percent of the lemmata.

³⁴ Letter to Poliziano from 1493 (Scala, *Script. Var.*, p. 171): 'Quid tandem flagitij est si hoc uel illo potius modo pronuncies?' ('Really, what is the problem if we pronounce it this way or that?')

from antiquity for their orthography'; therefore he was content to express himself clearly and left all those achievements 'which perish like the paper they are written on' to others.³⁵

Syntax

Neo-Latin syntax has so far received little detailed study; anecdotal evidence would suggest that it underwent a change hardly less radical than semantics. The change may even have been more pervasive, insofar as it manifests itself also in genres (like doctrinal writing) which resisted lexical change. Renaissance grammatical theory was characterised by the break with its (highly developed) mediaeval predecessor; the logical consequence, a return to ancient grammarians, proved, however, not to be viable. Unfortunately, as ancient grammatical writings became accessible again, they showed themselves to be contradictory and at times obviously erroneous; if writers of Neo-Latin wanted to improve their syntax, they had to deduce rules from the texts directly. The first to achieve this was Lorenzo Valla who in his *Elegantiae linguae Latinae* illustrated correct Latin usage with examples from Roman authors.³⁶ Theory of syntax in humanist grammatical manuals (the most influential was Perotti's *Rudimenta grammatices*) was in the main concerned with verbal syntax. But also in areas where humanists (or ancient grammarians) did not formulate general rules, Neo-Latin writers were capable of deducing correctly the rules governing sophisticated syntactical phenomena (such as the sequence of tenses in

subordinate clauses).³⁷ Still, humanists hardly regarded such rules as obligatory, but also used syntactical features, such as the subjunctive, for stylistic and semantic nuances in ways for which there was little classical precedent.³⁸

INNOVATION

Neologisms

In the following I shall distinguish between neologisms of form and of sense.³⁹ Neologisms of sense usually happen by semantic expansion, where a word aggregates old and new meanings. The mechanics of semantic expansion in Neo-Latin have recently been analysed for *humanitas*.⁴⁰ The word is extensively used by Cicero as well as other writers of the classical period,⁴¹ and many uses continue into or reappear in Neo-Latin (the mediaeval *fortuna* of *humanitas* has not been investigated comprehensively). From Petrarch onwards *humanitas* becomes the expression for a norm of societal conduct (benevolence, goodwill, generosity, sometimes as translation of Greek *philanthropia*); from Salutati onwards it periphrastically indicates the person who conforms (or is expected to conform) to this norm, the education or knowledge such a person is expected to possess, and the field of study needed to acquire it (the *studia humanitatis*), first generally, then specifically the relevant subjects in school or university. Lexicographically, most of these usages had absolutely no classical precedent; still (and contrary to Biondo's expectation that innovations ruined the style

³⁵ Vergerio mai., *Ep.* 29, p. 43: 'Officium vero aut pulchre scribendi aut recte facile aliis linquo. Nam quid in eo genere laudis contendam, quae sit cum cartis peritura? Nemo enim nunc aut Ciceronem aut Virgilium aut ullum prorsus antiquorum de ortografia vel laudat vel reprehendit'; cf. McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation*, p. 101.

³⁶ W. Keith Percival, 'Grammar and Rhetoric in the Renaissance', in *Renaissance Eloquence. Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric*, ed. by James J. Murphy (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1983), repr. in Percival, *Studies*, no. II; and Percival, 'Renaissance Grammar', in *Renaissance Humanism. Foundations, Forms, and Legacy*, vol. 3, *Humanism and the Disciplines*, ed. by Albert Rabil, Jr. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988), repr. in Percival, *Studies*, no. III.

³⁷ Camilla P. Horster, 'Computational Linguistics and Neo-Latin Syntax. Researching the Sequence of Tenses in Humanist Latin'. Paper at the 15th conference of IANLS, 5–11 August 2012, Münster.

³⁸ Camilla P. Horster, 'Perotti's Use of the Subjunctive. Semantic Ornamentation in the Latin *Genus Sublime*', *Renaissanceforum*, 7 (2011), 147–162.

³⁹ Hans Helander, *Neo-Latin Literature in Sweden in the Period 1620–1720* (Uppsala: Uppsala UP, 2004) *Studia Latina Upsaliensia*, 29, p. 175.

⁴⁰ Marianne Pade, 'humanitas' in Johann Ramminger, *Neulateinische Wortliste. Ein Wörterbuch des Lateinischen von Petrarca bis 1700*, www.neulatein.de/words/2/016422.htm.

⁴¹ Wilhelm Ehlers, 'humanitas' in *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1900–), vol. VI, 3, cc. 3075, 5–3083, 56.

and annoyed the reader) the extent of their use shows that semantic innovations could become part of the normal Neo-Latin lexicon of elegant communication.

Just as it is for us not always obvious why some words, but not others, had their classical meaning restored, i.e., were 'delivered' of the meanings they had aggregated in postclassical Latin, semantic innovations can appear haphazard. Though as a rule semantic duplication was avoided, one of the most spectacular neologisms of sense in Italian Neo-Latin, *traducere*, *traductio*, etc. (literally, 'to lead across', translate, translation) is a nearly exact semantic replica of *transfere*, *interpretari* and others. *Traducere* had been used for 'to translate' in an isolated instance already in the eleventh century but had failed to establish itself; in humanist Latin we encounter it suddenly and fully developed in Leonardo Bruni's discussion of translation where he uses both the verb and the noun *traductio*, in *Ep.* 1, 1 (probably dating from 1403/04). Bruni continues to use the newly coined expression; Guarino Veronese seems to be the first to adopt it in 1414 in the preface to his translation of one of Plutarch's *Lives*. It is only after the appearance of Bruni's controversial translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in 1416/17 that the expression is picked up widely by other humanists in Florence and elsewhere. It remains current throughout the century and beyond, and was one of a limited number of neologisms of sense catalogued (with caution) in Perotti's *Cornu copiae*.⁴² The fact that (some) humanists, such as Perotti, were aware of its semantic novelty had no impact on the widespread acceptance of the word, which also entered Romance languages where it remains widely used to this day.

Printing had a considerable impact on the possibilities of dissemination of innovations in

Neo-Latin. A case in point is *suaviloquus*. The word occurred once in Martianus Capella, but so far not a single instance has come to light in either mediaeval or Neo-Latin before the middle of the fifteenth century. Valla, in a discussion of the relative merits of *suaviloquus* and *suaviloquens*, concluded that the former most probably was not a classical word. The situation only changed when some thirty years later Niccolò Perotti insisted that the word without doubt had a classical pedigree and claimed to know several examples (without giving one). Although Perotti in all likelihood was fibbing in a veiled attempt to criticise and surpass Valla, the word immediately became an enormous success. Already a year after Perotti's *Cornu copiae* was published (1489), the most eminent poets of the time picked it up, first Battista Mantovano, then Giangiovio Pontano, and another, Michele Marullo, used it in his supplement to Lucretius, thus transporting it back into antiquity. Even though it remained in use preponderantly in poetry, it was also received by prose writers, amongst them Erasmus. The insufficiency of the evidence from antiquity remained unnoticed or was disregarded.

Neologisms of form are usually connected with change in general: in his *De linguae latinae usu et praestantia libri tres* (About Latin Usage and Its Excellence, Rome, 1574) Uberto Foglietta (1518–1581) gives the following rule:

There are, I believe, two kinds of things which need new designations: those which were entirely unknown to the ancients, and those which they used and which were essentially the same, although they had—not in their core characteristics, but in some external aspects—an appearance at variance with or different from the one they have nowadays.⁴³

Expansion of knowledge, technological advance, contact with foreign cultures, and

⁴² Johann Ramming, 'Half of (which?) Latin. The Lemmata of Perotti's *Cornu copiae*', in Niccolò Perotti. *The Languages of Humanism and Politics. Contributions from the conference 'Un umanista romano del secondo Quattrocento. Niccolò Perotti', held at the Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo and the Danish Academy in Rome, 4–5 June 2009*, ed. by Marianne Pade and Camilla Plesner Horster, *Renæssanceforum*, 7 (2011), 163–180, esp. p. 173f.

⁴³ Folietta, *Lat.*, p. 103: 'Rerum igitur quibus nova sint imponenda nomina duo esse genera dico, alterum earum quae re et usu omninoque veteribus erant ignota; alterum earum quarum usum habebant veteres quidem quarumque essentia apud illos erat, quamvis eadem forma quadam non illa quidem quae rebus ut sint, dat, sed extrinsecus adveniente variarent diversaeque a nostris essent', with extensive examples.

doctrinal change (Reformation and Counter-Reformation) all contributed. In modern lexicographic research, neologisms of form in connection with innovations have received more attention; neologisms of sense in these areas are less visible, but by no means absent (*torcular*, wine press to printing press). The controversies connected with the religious conflicts of the sixteenth century, as well as polemics in general, were especially fertile grounds for lexical innovation. The polemical potential of neologisms appears compressed into one sentence written by Erasmus in 1528 to Pirckheimer: 'Wherever Lutheranism reigns, the letters perish!'⁴⁴ The accusation was unjustified, as we know, but formulated cunningly: *Luteranismus* is a neologism reducing the new religion to a heresy by followers of one man (from *Loyolismus* to *Zwinglianismus* this was a productive model of pejorative word formation in confessional strife), and the wordplay *Luter-/liter-* expressed the perceived opposition between the Letters and Protestantism cleverly. Generally, innovation follows a guideline which was formulated by Edmund Campion in the chapter 'On imitating Cicero in one's choice of words' in his *Tractatus de imitatione Rhetorica* (Rhetorical Imitation) of 1577 in the following way: 'I do not accept any word he [i.e., Cicero] would not have found acceptable; as such I admit many he has not used, but surely would have used if needed.'⁴⁵ The question of which neologism to admit thus was not only a lexicographical, but also a stylistic one: new words had to conform to established lexical patterns.⁴⁶ An example are the large number of new formations in *-ista* (supporter or advocate of), not seldom with a pejorative meaning (amongst which *humanista* takes pride of place),⁴⁷ which follow a classical model of word

formation apparent in words like *sophista* and *psalmista*, loan words from Greek *-istês*.

Greek

The Calabrian Leontius Pilatus held the first chair of Greek at the Florentine *Studio* in the 1360s, but the Neo-Latin history of Greek effectively began with Manuel Chrysoloras's teaching there at the very end of the century. Humanists used their newly learned competence first for translation. The question arose, how much Greek could be tolerated in Latin translations. This became also an important part of the humanists' view of the worth of mediaeval translations of Aristotle where the readers had been used to Greek words, whether they understood them or not. A case in point is the word *eutrapelia* (lively wit). The word had been used by Aristotle, and been retained in the mediaeval Latin translations; consequently it occurs frequently in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. Leonardo Bruni prefaced his translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1416/17) with what has been termed 'a manifesto of humanism against medieval translation in general';⁴⁸ there he says: 'I have recently decided to render the *Ethics* of Aristotle in Latin, not because they had not been translated before, but because they had been translated as if rendered in a barbarian language rather than in Latin.'⁴⁹ A controversy ensued in which Bruni defended his choices of translation with verve and with—from a philological point of view—unassailable logic:

The Greeks say *eutrapelia* for what we call *wit*. Aristotle defines this as a virtue regarding pleasant conversation. That is why I translated this word as *comitas*. He [Bruni's adversary Alonso of Cartagena] does not approve, but maintains that as in Greek, also in Latin *eutrapelia* should

⁴⁴ Erasmus, *Ep.* 1977 (1528): 'Vbicunque regnat Luteranismus, ibi litterarum est interitus.'

⁴⁵ Campion, *Imit.*, p. 364 ('Quomodo in verbis sit imitandus Cicero'): 'Verbum recipio nullum quod non ille recepisset: multa autem admitto quae ille non protulerit, prolaturus sine dubio, si tulisset occasio.'

⁴⁶ Helander, 'Neo-latin Studies', p. 33.

⁴⁷ Johann Ramming, 'Nur ein Humanist... Einige neue Beispiele für humanista im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert', in *ALBVM AMICORVM. Festschrift til Karsten Friis-Jensen i anledning af hans 60 års fødselsdag / Studies in Honour of*

Karsten Friis-Jensen on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday, ed. by Marianne Pade a.o., *Renaissanceforum*, 3 (2007).

⁴⁸ Alexander Birkenmajer, 'Der Streit des Alonso von Cartagena mit Leonardo Bruni Aretino', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters*, 20.5 (1922), 129–246, esp. p. 130.

⁴⁹ Bruni, *Praef. Aristoteles eth. Nicom.*, p. 157 (1417): 'Aristotelis Ethicorum libros Latinos facere nuper institui, non quia prius traducti non essent, sed quia sic traducti erant, ut barbari magis quam Latini effecti uiderentur.'

be retained. I ask him whether he knows Greek? I don't, says he, but I am convinced that *eutrapelia* means something different from *comitas*.⁵⁰

The unstated reason for Alonso's opposition was probably philosophical rather than stylistic: the Greek word was a well-defined term of Aristotelian and Thomistic philosophy, credentials which the Latin replacement lacked. His counterstatement conceded the stylistic superiority of the new Latin without being prepared to abandon earlier texts:

One should not so forge something new as to utterly overturn the old. We can more than rejoice if we add something to earlier efforts; but it seems contrary to reason to add with the intent to destroy completely what was written correctly.⁵¹

Alonso's reply sounds rather hapless and whining, but is in reality a sharp and extremely well-placed jab at Bruni's position; it contains a reference to the most famous translator of Christian antiquity, Jerome, who—as Alonso claims implicitly—was on his side in the controversy: Jerome had defended his translation of the Bible with the same words: 'I do not forge something new just to repudiate the old.'⁵² Even amongst humanists, Bruni's was not an uncontroversial position. Guarino was prepared to retain Greek words in his translations if Latin equivalents were not available (*monarchia*, *democratia*), citing Quintilian who had admitted this procedure amongst the ancients.⁵³

⁵⁰ Bruni, *Ep.* 8, 2 (10, 24, II, p. 207 M.) (1438): 'Eutrapelian graeci dicunt, quam nos appellamus comitatem. Hanc Aristoteles virtutem esse vult circa conversationem jocundam. Ego igitur id verbum transferens comitatem dixi. Ille non probat, sed ut est in graeco, sic etiam in latino dicendum eutrapelian contendit. Quaero, num graece sciat? Non scio, inquit, sed opinor aliud significare eutrapelian quam comitatem.'

⁵¹ Alonso de Cartagena, *Eth.*, p. 165: 'nec enim sic noua cudere decet, ut uetera funditus euertamus. Abunde enim gratulandum est, si antiquis laboribus aliquid adiciamus: sed sic addere uelle, ut ex toto dirimantur recte conscripta, alienum a ratione uidetur.'

⁵² *Prefatio Hieronymi in Librum Josue Ben Nun*, PL 28 c. 463A: 'me non in reprehensionem veterum noua cudere.'

⁵³ Guarino, *Ep.* 2, 5 (from Constantinople, c. 1405) with references to Quint., *Inst.* 12, 1, 1, Hor., *Ars* 56–57, and Quint., *Inst.* 1, 5, 8: 'Praeterea cur, si "pro parte virili"

Guarino's was the position which prevailed amongst writers of Latin in general. It was a widely held belief that Latin was in some way derived from Greek, and the cultural hegemony of Greece in the Latin culture of the late Republic and the Augustan Age had been emphasised by contemporaries: 'because the Greeks taught the Latins their letters; hence it was the custom to give those arts the Greek name which they had drawn from a Greek source.'⁵⁴ Hence Greek retained its status as a prestige language, and, with the knowledge of Greek rapidly expanding, it became customary to intersperse Latin writing with Greek, because, as Guarino stated, Greek expressions contributed 'a welcome variation'⁵⁵ (and made use of a stylistic device often found, for example, in Cicero's letters).

Greek as a source for Neo-Latin word formation has only received sporadic attention so far; the following observations are preliminary. Generally, what has been said above about Latin neologisms is also valid here: words new in Latin have to conform to known patterns of (in this case Greek) word formation. Initially, the widely read translations (especially of Plutarch's *Lives*) contributed significantly to the enlargement of the Latin vocabulary. For example, in the sixteenth century it became *en vogue* to call the town scribe or chancellor, especially in the German areas, *archigrammateus*.⁵⁶ This can be traced back to the Bolognese humanist Filippo Beroaldo, who had explained the term in his widely read commentary on Apuleius's *Golden Ass* (1500); Beroaldo, in his turn, had found it in Guarino's translation of Plutarch's *Life of Eumenes*, where Guarino had retained the Greek word and added an explanation:

"patrium ditare sermonem" et aliunde aliqua simul ferre si possum "inuidear?", praesertim cum id ex ipso Quintiliano in oratoriae artis institutione licere compererim, qui "et concessis quoque graecis", inquit, "utimur verbis, ubi nostra desint." See McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation*, p. 117.

⁵⁴ Polenton, *Catinia*, p. 43 (1419): 'quod latinos greci literas primum docuerunt, quo illud observatum est, quod artes istas, sicuti greco de fonte haurirent, ita nomine greco vocarent.'

⁵⁵ Guarino, *Ep.* 2* (1407): 'gratioris aliquid varietatis aspergunt.'

⁵⁶ Documentation in Ramminger, *Neulateinische Wortliste*, s.v.

'Archigrammateus, idest princeps scribarum' (a., i.e. first secretary). Such Greek words could be spelt either in Latin or in Greek, depending, in the case of printed texts, on the willingness of the typesetter just as much as upon the writer's actual knowledge of Greek.

Already in the sixteenth century the reception of Greek words into Latin became uncoupled from the process of translation, and countless Greek words entered the Neo-Latin lexicon, spelt in Latin or Greek indifferently, such as *astorgia* (e.g., Latin in Calvin, Greek in Luther), *ataxia*, *cacodoxia*, *cardiognostes* (from the Greek text of the *Acts of the Apostles*), *cretizo*, *despoticus*, *deuterologia*, *didactrum*, *diglossus*, *docimasia*, *epitomice*, *ethelothrescia*, *grammatophorus*, *hypopheta*, *lecanomantia*.

Furthermore we have a number of neologisms which are written in Latin as well as in Greek exclusively in Latin texts and, as far as we know, do not occur in Greek texts read by humanists at all. Such words are *archityranus* (Latin in Hutten and others, Greek in Erasmus's letters), many compounds with *-mantia* (*astragalo-*, *botano-*, *capnio-*, *catoptro-*, *cero-*, *clero-*, *coscino-*, *crystallo-*, *dactylo-*, *libano-*, with the Greek forms ending in *-teia* or *-tia*), *-latria* (*daemon-*, *hagio-*, *icono-*, *lipsano-*), *-doulia* (*hagio-*, *icono-*, *idolo-*), *botanologia* (in Greek in a book title, probably to give a taste of the splendour of the content), *cacographia* (an invention of Erasmus, spelt by him both in Latin and in Greek), *Capniomastix* ('an assailant of Reuchlin', who had translated his name into the Greek *Capnion*), *diabologus* (a calque on *theologus*, a short-lived invention of Reuchlin picked up by friends and foes alike), *disusiasta*, *epicurizo*, *euthymetria*, *hagiomastix*, and many more. Occasionally Latin neologisms can be spelt in Greek, such as *Ciceronianus* (by Melanchthon) and *Gallizo* (by a correspondent of Aldus Manutius).

The combination of Latin and Greek elements was frowned upon. Thus Lorenzo Valla has a field day with the word *filocaptus* (captured by love) used by Antonio da Rho:

This is not a noun formed by the learned, but by people entirely devoid of education: *philos* does not mean 'love', but 'friend' or 'lover', and

this in Greek, which can only awkwardly be combined with a Latin noun; therefore some criticise *monoculus* [one-eyed], preferring *unoculus*. By the way, why did you use the letter 'f', when the word is to be written with 'p': *philocaptus*?⁵⁷

The combination of Latin and Greek elements into one word does occur, if rarely; examples are *monolittera* (consisting of one letter), *monoprincipans* (ruling alone), *morbilogus* (book about an illness), *philotenebra* (lover of darkness, formed by the Greek cardinal Bessarion), *terrelogia* (geology). These, though, do not occur in the most *recherché* forms of Neo-Latin writing.

Finally, here belongs the phenomenon of loanformation, i.e., the formation of Latin words by translating the parts of a Greek compound, such as *obscurilunium* (from *σκοτομήνη*), or *argentangina* (from *ἀργυράγχη*). Doubtlessly further research will bring more examples to light.

Latin and the Vernacular

There is one particular source which contributes a significant number of what we (though not necessarily the humanists themselves) consider neologisms: the vernacular. Humanists inherited from the Middle Ages the notion that, just as the present day society accommodated two languages, so also the Roman society of antiquity had been diglossic, although then as now not everyone was bilingual and the two languages had very different status.⁵⁸ For Petrarch, the *volgare* of his *Canzoniere* was one and the same language as the one used for his Latin writings, albeit in a different genre, and he took it for granted that the same unity had existed in antiquity.⁵⁹ The question of

⁵⁷ Valla *In Raud.*, p. 257: 'Non est nomen hoc a doctis, sed ab indoctissimis fictum: philos enim non "amorem", sed "amicum" significat sive "amatorem", et hoc Grece, cum quo nomine dure Latinum coniungitur: unde quidam reprehendunt monoculum, volentes dici unoculum. Sed cur in littera f posuisti, cum per p scribendum esset, sic: philocaptus?'

⁵⁸ Rizzo, *Ricerche* I.

⁵⁹ Michele Feo, 'Petrarca', in *Enciclopedia Virgiliana* (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1984–1991), IV, pp. 53–78, esp. p. 58; Rizzo, *Ricerche* I, p. 59.

the existence of a vernacular in classical antiquity—and in consequence of the status of the present day *volgare* as opposed to Latin—gained in importance with the ever increasing Rome-centric nationalism of Italian humanists. Since dialectal variation was rarely ever discussed in classical literature,⁶⁰ humanists had little material to go upon. This situation improved with the discovery in 1421 of a manuscript of Cicero's *Brutus* in the chapter library of Lodi near Milan. Now one could read the episode concerning the excellence of the dialect of the inhabitants of Rome within a spectrum of dialectal variations of Latin in the empire (170–172). This passage not only introduced the word *vernaculus* as an alternative designation of the *volgare* (which survives in some modern languages, such as English), it also fueled a long discussion about the possibility of bilingualism in ancient Rome and about the *volgare* as descended either from Latin or from a hypothetical ancient *volgare*. This discussion had—irrespective of the position taken by the individual humanists—important consequences for the development of all registers of Neo-Latin, because it legitimised the Italian *volgare* as a source for Latin words. Within the highest registers of Neo-Latin it can be observed that words remodelled from the *volgare* were especially frequent in fields with a high degree of innovation, such as military technology (obviously useful for historiography). A certain amount of words were sanctioned by reception into lexicographical works such as Niccolò Perotti's *Cornu copiae*. Words from the *volgare* differed in one significant respect from the neologisms described so far: they did not necessarily follow the rules of Latin word formation. Thus the *aspergulum* (holy-water sprinkler)—described by Perotti as 'new, but quite elegant'—is a retroformation of the vernacular *aspergolo*, in competition with the older *aspergillum* preferred by subsequent

Latin dictionaries.⁶¹ Italian and other vernaculars appeared in Latin garb in macaronic poetry and prose, which—according to its main representative, Teofilo Folengo—was named after *macaroni*, a kind of food which is 'rough, crude, and rustic; therefore macaronics should contain nothing but greasiness, crudity and big, ugly words';⁶² this was a type of language game which took delight in the comic effect achieved by fitting vernacular words with Latin inflections; it was, however, not intended as a more durable enrichment of either language.

Leaving aside the elegant Latin of literary texts, humanist theories about the language continuum between the Italian vernaculars and Latin were in accordance with the reality of the Latin of many nonliterary texts such as inventories, testaments, contracts, diaries, and administrative letters not meant for the public. Here, where function trumped form and the reaction of the cultured public was not a consideration, words from the *volgare* like *materacium* (mattress, ital. *materazzo*), *pauonatus* (violet, ital. *pavonazzo*), *abozatus* (designed, from ital. *abbozzo*) were by no means unusual. But the *volgare* did not remain unaffected by Latin either; in some texts the language is switched between paragraphs or Latin phrases are inserted into a vernacular context, at other times the vernacular exhibits a noticeably Latinized syntax and lexicon.⁶³ Humanists changed

⁶¹ Perotti, *Cornucopiae* 12, 84: 'nouum quidem, sed non inelegans uocabulum.' The example is taken from Jean-Louis Charlet, 'Le *volgare* chez Valla et la signification du Cornu Copiae', in *Lorenzo Valla e la riforma della lingua e della logica: le radici dell'Europa. Atti del convegno del Comitato Nazionale VI centenario della nascita di Lorenzo Valla. Prato, 4–7 giugno 2008*, ed. by Mariangela Regoliosi (Florence: Edizione Polistampa, 2010), I, pp. 299–319, esp. pp. 312f.

⁶² Folengo, *Praef. Tusc.* III, p.284: 'qui macarones sunt quoddam pulmentum farina, caseo, botaro compaginatū, grossum, rude et rusticanum; ideo macaronices nil nisi grassedinem, ruditatem et vocabulazzos debet in se continere.' Translation by Ann E. Mullaney, <http://www.folengo.com/1521%20Apologetica%20Oct%2022%202012.pdf> (visited on 20/08/2013), with modifications.

⁶³ An example of a text using both Latin and Italian is the testament of Franceschino da Cesena (1489), where the inventory of his books is in Latin, the rest in Italian, with interspersed Latin phrases. See Antonio Domeniconi, 'Un inventario relativo a un custode della Biblioteca Malatestiana. Frate Franceschino da Cesena (1489)', *Studi*

⁶⁰ The evidence is discussed by Rolandi Ferri and Philomen Probert, 'Roman Authors on Colloquial Language', in *Colloquial and Literary Latin*, ed. by Eleanor Dickey and Anna Chahoud (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 12–41.

with virtuosity between different registers of Latin as required, and the vast reservoir of *volgare*-Latin hardly ever permeated the spheres of a more refined style. Poetry seems to be even more impervious to words of vernacular origin than prose; this may be due to more rigid stylistic conventions, though words from the *volgare* could be employed for special stylistic effects.⁶⁴

Other European vernaculars also supplied Latin with necessary words; the *Acts* of the English Parliament (which are mostly written in Latin until the middle of the sixteenth century) brim over with words like *adjornare* (adjourn) and *billa* (bill); the German *burggravius* and the Frisian *grietmannus* are two randomly chosen examples from other vernaculars; for ease of use semantic duplication was not avoided (*landsmannus*, fellow countryman = *compatriota*).

The spreading of new words often was a multilateral phenomenon in which Neo-Latin was just one of the European languages interacting with one another. This can be easily seen in the linguistic stimuli provided by new or increasing contact with the New World or Islamic and Eastern culture. Words which are now commonplace in many European languages, like *porcellana*, *nicotiana*, *caphe*, *iughurta* (yoghurt), etc., have a Latin *fortuna* in conjunction with their spread through the European vernaculars.

On the fringe of Neo-Latin we find words from the indigenous languages of the New World.⁶⁵ The challenge of a world which Latin could hardly describe is excellently expressed in the school dialogues written by Francisco Cervantes de Salazar in Mexico in 1554: the more knowledgeable interlocutor of a dialogue

describes the fruits at the market as 'frisoles, aguacates, guaiavae, mamei, zapotes, camotes, gicamae, cacomitae', and the other answers: 'words unheard of, and fruits never seen' ('Inaudita nomina, ut nunquam visi fructus!'); when a further list of wares elicits a bewildered 'strange words!' ('peregrina vocabula!'), the first interlocutor rejoins: 'As are ours to them' ('Ut nostra ipsis').⁶⁶ Here Latin has reached the limits of its descriptive capacity. A Mesoamerican audience will probably be able to connect the words with native vegetables, but the interlocutors within the dialogue express the point of view of the Latinate reader elsewhere: when neither the *res* nor the *verba* can be integrated into a known semantic universe, the strategies Biondo had suggested for coping with innovation have reached their limits. Early in the sixteenth century Peter Martyr had in his *De orbe novo* (The New World) explained the potato (*batata*) as an 'edible root similar to radish, carrot, parsnip, turnip, and rape',⁶⁷ thus offering a descriptive circumlocution which the reader to whom the vegetable was unknown might conceivably have found useful. But confronted with the sheer number of new things, even circumlocution, the failsafe fallback strategy, could not produce meaningful results any longer. The clash of cultures which could only affirm their mutual incomprehension was not to be resolved by monolingual verbal strategies alone; even Neo-Latin—long used to integrate vernacular semantic units into a global context—could not always cope with the semantic divide opened up by the contact with the foreign worlds in the East and West.

FURTHER READING

Helander, Hans, 'Neo-latin Studies. Significance and Prospects. SO Debate', *Symbolae Osloenses* 76 (2001), 5–44 (pp. 5–39 on language), pp. 44–102 comments by Julia Gaisser, Yasmin Haskell, Heinz Hofmann (pp. 50–51 on orthography, pp. 55–56 about Latin/vernaculars),

romagnoli, 16 (1965), 171–189. In general see Giuseppe Patota, 'Latino e volgare, latino nel volgare', in *Il latino nell'età dell'Umanesimo. Atti del Convegno di Mantova, 26–27 ottobre 2001*, ed. by Giorgio Bernardi Perini (Florence: Olschki, 2004), pp. 109–166.

⁶⁴ Johann Ramminger, 'Marulus as a Neo-Latin Writer', *Colloquia Maruliana*, 20 (2011), 123–138, esp. pp. 137f.

⁶⁵ See Andrew Laird, 'Latin in Cuauhtémoc's Shadow. Humanism and the Politics of Language in Mexico after the Conquest', in *Latinity and Alterity in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Yasmin Haskell and Joanita Ruys (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 169–200.

⁶⁶ The example is taken from Cervantes Salazarus, *Dial.*, pp. 140–142.

⁶⁷ Petrus Martyr, *Orb. Nov.* 7, 2, 29: 'Sunt batatae radices comestibiles, uti apud nos raphani, caryotae, pastinacae, napi et rapae.'

- Gerlinde Huber-Rebenich, Craig Kallendorf (pp. 64–65 on social construction of Neo-Latin texts), Walther Ludwig (pp. 69–71 on extent of knowledge of Neo-Latin), Ann Moss (p. 74 on Neo-Latin and the European vernaculars), Minna Skafte Jensen, Karen Skovgaard-Petersen, Francesco Tateo (pp. 82–84 on chronological considerations), Helander's reply (p. 86 about Latin/vernaculars, pp. 89–90 on orthography), important bibliography. The entire dossier ranges pp. 5–102.
- Leeds, John, 'Against the Vernacular. Ciceronian Formalism and the Problem of the Individual', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language. Historicism and Anachronism: Essays in Reception and Influence* 46.1 (2004), 107–148.
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