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**HORACE AND THE END OF
RENAISSANCE HUMANISM IN ITALY:
QUARRELS, RELIGIOUS CORRECTNESS,
NATIONALISM, AND ACADEMIC PROTECTIONISM**

BERNARD FRISCHER

—Per Paolo Pezzolo, Egregio Umanista

Let me begin with some striking statistics and a story. In the good Renaissance year of 1451, the number of professors at the renowned University of Bologna, the alma mater of universities, was 44; the number of students is estimated to have been 10,000. They came from all over Europe, as did many of the professors. Two centuries later, in the academic year 1676–77, the number of professors had swollen to 161, but the student body had shrunk to some 60 souls! Even worse, of the 161 professors, only 12 actually offered courses, though the others, of course, continued to draw their salary.¹ Of the professors, over 90% were from Bologna and its environs; only three were non-Italians. A similar tale of woe could be told about Bologna's rival, the University of Padua.² How did things get so out of kilter? The story I mentioned will help us to approach this very complex question.

¹ See Minelli 1987.16–19.

This study is an abridgement of a longer study about the Cologno-Riccoboni quarrel that I am presently finishing. Full documentation of points made in this article will be found in the longer study; here, because of space limitations, I have been able to give the reader just a few of the more important bibliographical indications.

² Cf. Rossetti 1983².51.

First a bit of background. Antonio Riccoboni, a native of Rovigo who lived from 1541 to 1599, was the professor of Greek and Latin at the University of Padua. He was recognized as the dominant Italian humanist of the day and was on good terms with most of the leading lights of northern Italy in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. He was, for example, quite friendly with Galileo, and indeed was the first Padua professor to correspond with the young and virtually unknown mathematician when he was still living in Pisa in the late 1580s. Riccoboni helped recruit Galileo for Padua in 1592.

The story I want to tell happened the year before, in the summer of 1591. July and August should have been a time when the fifty-year-old Riccoboni relaxed at the end of a hard academic year that had ended with a major disappointment. He had been passed over for the vacant and more prestigious professorship of Moral Philosophy, a post he wanted to add to his chair in Classics, as his teacher and predecessor Francesco Robortello had done thirty years earlier. Instead of selecting Riccoboni, the regents of the university decided to hire an obscure Bergamasco priest and schoolmaster, Nicolò Cologno.

From mid-July to the end of August Padua is usually muggy and mosquito-ridden—not a place to be doing serious work, if you can avoid it. From his many surviving unpublished letters, we know that Riccoboni usually spent the dog days at his country house outside Rovigo. However, this summer Riccoboni had to remain in the city to defend his world against the human and natural forces that suddenly seemed on the verge of destroying it.

The Jesuits were causing trouble in Padua, threatening to open their so-called “Counter-University” with offerings in direct competition with Riccoboni’s own poorly-attended classes. Tempers were short, and the students were divided between supporters and opponents of the Jesuits’ scheme, which was motivated by their desire to remedy the University’s alleged tolerance of heresy.

In early July, some noble Venetian university students had run through the town covered only by sheets. They entered the Jesuit College, where, letting the sheets fall, they insulted all present. Riccoboni had to start organizing a defense of his discipline against the Jesuits, which was to bear fruit the next November when the University formally agreed to ask the Venetian Senate to prohibit the Jesuits from offering courses in Padua.

What was at stake for a professor like Riccoboni was nothing less than his position and livelihood. University appointments usually were for

four years, with a two-year extension at the option of the University. Tenure as we know it did not exist. Renewal of contracts depended upon a teacher’s satisfactory performance of his duties and sufficient student demand for his classes. The Jesuits planned to offer courses in grammar and rhetoric—Riccoboni’s field. If successful—and they almost always were, because unlike the public schools they did not charge fees—the Jesuits might well provoke the Venetian Senate into not renewing Riccoboni’s contract, or at least into reducing his salary, which at 650 florins was quite handsome for a humanist.

Just to make matters worse, an earthquake rocked northern Italy in mid-July. Everyday life was disrupted for days, as people moved outdoors until they were sure the worst had passed. Nerves already frayed by the rising heat and academic tensions in the city were set on edge.

Most on Riccoboni’s mind that July, however, was a more pressing and gnawing problem affecting his professional standing at Padua and elsewhere: how best to respond to the brutally sarcastic attack against his views on Horace’s *Ars Poetica* published in May or June by his new nemesis, the priest Cologno.

It is not surprising that Riccoboni and Cologno would project their many-faceted rivalry onto the seemingly unlikely text of the great Roman poet’s work on the art of poetry: the poem was a canonical text in the curricula of both religious and lay schools. That Cologno invested a great deal of emotion in his interpretation of the poem can be seen from this typical passage, dripping with vitriol, in which he attacks Riccoboni: “You, on the other hand, who think that Horace has written nothing here that is coherent and logical, but like a madman babbled things that are disconnected, scattered, and incoherent. . . . You, you, Riccoboni, are mad, not Horace!”³ No wonder Riccoboni was spending the summer in Padua trying to frame an effective response so that he did not become a laughing-stock. He had an ulterior motive, too: by defeating Cologno in a very boisterous and public battle of the books, Riccoboni could not only discredit the man who had won the professorship he coveted, he could also embarrass him into resigning his position, thus giving Riccoboni a second shot at it.

The next academic year brought Riccoboni the victories he sought: the Senate prohibited the Jesuits from opening a university in Padua. Cologno suffered an embarrassing loss in his debate with Riccoboni about

³ Cologno 1591a.27.

Horace, and things went downhill from there. The next disaster occurred at the very visible public ceremony of his inaugural lecture: he was shouted down by his students and was unable to finish.⁴ After such an inauspicious beginning, it is hardly surprising that Cologno left town at the end of the '91-'92 academic year never to return. But Riccoboni's victories were illusory and costly. In the end, he did not get the appointment to the chair of Ethics—Cologno's post went to another priest, Giovanni Belloni, in 1594. Nor could Riccoboni keep the Jesuits out of Padua indefinitely: with the help of Padua's Bishop, Alvisè Cornaro, they finally succeeded in founding their school in 1596.⁵

But after his triumphal year 1591–92, Riccoboni's greatest disappointment was his first. On March 13 of 1593, the Rector of the university, Pietro Alzano, was fatally stabbed in the face in broad daylight on the streets of Padua. Alzano had been Riccoboni's chief ally in the fight against the Jesuits. Like all university rectors in this aristocratic age, Alzano was a student. Surviving police reports tell us that, not unexpectedly, the prime suspects were the Jesuits, whose Padua enterprise Alzano and Riccoboni had so effectively blocked. Political assassination was just the kind of thing people associated with the Jesuits in this period. The Babington Plot, in which English Catholics recruited and controlled by Jesuits tried to assassinate Queen Elizabeth, is perhaps the best known example. It was foiled by the great English spy master, Sir Francis Walsingham, just a few years earlier in 1586.⁶ Besides the Jesuits, there were other suspects in the Alzano case who were of even greater interest to Riccoboni. First, there was the College of German students, which Riccoboni served as academic advisor. The Germans were angry with Alzano because he had violated the tradition which said that the rectorship should alternate between an Italian student one year and a Transalpine the next. Alzano had gotten himself elected to two successive terms, despite the Germans' official protest to the Doge. So, the Germans certainly had a motive every bit as strong as the Jesuits to murder Alzano. The last suspect was Alessandro d'Este, who just five years later was to be named a cardinal at the tender age of 29. In 1593, he was finishing his studies in Padua, in the course of which he had become Riccoboni's disciple and patron. Este's motive is not known but must have

⁴ See Cologno 1591b.[i–ii].

⁵ See Simeoni 1968.846.

⁶ See Nicholl 1992.147–68.

been personal. Despite their best efforts, the police could prove nothing and—because (as the records tell us) all the suspects were considered too powerful to prosecute—the case was dropped. It remains a mystery to this day.⁷

The statistics I began with and this story about Antonio Riccoboni bring up all the themes I want to explore in this paper: quarreling by humanists and the threats to late humanism caused by the related phenomena of academic protectionism, nationalism, and what might be called “religious correctness.” I will argue that, if it makes sense at all to speak of the end of Italian Renaissance humanism (and I think it does), then it is something that happened when humanism in Italy succumbed to these threats.

The “End of the Renaissance”—at first this might appear to be a rather depressing or even a rebarbative topic. Worse, it is controversial, presuming, as it does, that we know what we mean by the term “Renaissance”; that we know when the Renaissance began; that we think it worthwhile to take so seriously the periodization of history, which is after all just a convention or a convenience. Benedetto Croce indeed said the following about precisely this question of when the Renaissance ended: “[history] must know how to refrain from getting involved in fruitless questions.”⁸ Many historians follow his advice. Instead of addressing the issue of why and when the Renaissance ended in Italy, they speak positively of its “migration” to other countries, to quote a section title of a standard reference work on the subject.⁹ However, why did the Renaissance have to migrate from Italy; why could it not simply stay happily at home, as so many brilliant Italians have preferred to do throughout the centuries? Do we really have a triumphant process of “migration,” or a tragic one of what might better be termed “exile” or even “suicide”? And with the right methodology, can we not make this question fruitful instead of fruitless?

Inevitably, we need to define some terms. Kristeller's definitions are as good and unobjectionable as any I have seen. The Italian Renaissance, he tells us, is simply “the historical period that extends roughly from 1300 to 1600 A.D. . . . that has been conventionally designated by that name.” *Humanism* means the pursuit of the “*studia humanitatis* . . . a

⁷ See Rossetti 1979.

⁸ Croce 1970.31.

⁹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 19 (1972) 126.

well-defined cycle of teaching subjects listed as grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy, all of them to be based on the reading of the classical Greek and Latin authors.”¹⁰ Humanists come in two stripes, Kristeller goes on to tell us: first, there is the teacher variety, staffing positions in the schools and universities. Then there is the professional class of chancellors and secretaries, who could read and write and do so with some sense of style and decorum.¹¹ Of the two varieties, the professionals were more important in the early phases of the Renaissance, when a humanist like Coluccio Salutati, the Chancellor of Florence, was active. On the other hand, as humanism matured and the sheer number of published texts and commentaries required a specialist’s full-time attention, university professors like the Bolognese humanist Carlo Sigonio came to enjoy star status, and so it is the humanist-teachers who most interest us when we consider the end of humanism in Italy. Indeed, as Grendler has shown, the term *umanista* came to apply only to the professors by the end of the sixteenth century.¹² The two professorships with the most prestige in northern Italy were undoubtedly those at the universities of Padua and Bologna. It is these on which we will focus in this paper.

By quoting Croce, I do not wish to give the impression that no one has tackled this question before. In fact, Jacob Burckhardt did so in his classic book, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.¹³ For Burckhardt, the humanists were themselves to blame for their decline and fall. They were a quarrelsome lot and, “not satisfied with refuting, they sought to annihilate an opponent.” Their debates quickly degenerated into name-calling, and the public, at first fascinated, next grew to feel that each side was right about the sins of the other. Finally, they grew tiresome and, worst of all, boring. The end of humanism was at hand.¹⁴

Burckhardt’s thesis is simple and colorful—especially as fleshed out by anecdotes such as Battista Mantovano’s inclusion of the humanists among the seven mythical monsters, or his characterization of them as men

who hunt for popularity like cranes rummaging for food.¹⁵ Yet (perhaps because I am myself a quarrelsome humanist), I find the explanation too vague and idealistic. Burckhardt treats a socio-economic question of the rise and fall of the humanist class as if it were simply a matter of changing literary taste. Moreover, he has caught the wrong culprit: as the humanists themselves recognized, their quarrelsomeness was the cause, not of their fall, but of their vitality. As Antonio Riccoboni put it in 1591: “quarrels between scholars of literature generally disentangle knotty points in the writings of the ancients. They also shed light on obscure matters, unravel complications, and explain thorny issues. Finally, they open up concealed matters, bringing to light what would otherwise lie in the darkest gloom.”¹⁶

A case in point is the very quarrel to which Riccoboni was referring—his debate against Nicolò Cologno ventilating the problem of whether Horace’s *Ars Poetica* has a structure. In the four decades preceding the Cologno–Riccoboni debate, scholars had first explicitly addressed this problem of the poem’s structure, which, all agreed, suffered by comparison with Aristotle’s *Poetics*, a text whose structure was itself the subject of lively debate.¹⁷ By the 1560s, two solutions had been proposed, neither demonstrated in any detail and neither very satisfactory: the *Ars Poetica* was neither a collection of unrelated precepts nor a technical treatise, but something in between: a loosely written letter, very informal in tone, content, and structure. The alternative solution was that the *Ars Poetica* was so confusedly written that it deserved neither its title nor much respect from modern students of poetics; rather it resembled the very monster that Horace condemns at the beginning of the poem. The first view is associated with scholars active in northern Italy, such as Francisco Robortello, Jason De Nores, Marc–Antoine Muret, Henri Estienne, and Denys Lambin. The second position was taken by Julius–Caesar Scaliger in his influential *Poetices libri septem*.¹⁸

The text that started the controversy of 1591, Cologno’s *Methodus* of 1587, must be interpreted against this background. Explicitly responding to attacks on the claim of the *Ars Poetica* to be considered a technical treatise, Cologno thought that he had found the key to unlock the problem:

¹⁰ Kristeller 1990.2–3.

¹¹ Kristeller 1990.5.

¹² Grendler 1981.

¹³ For a brief survey of later work on the end of the Renaissance in Italy see Cochrane 1970.11–18, and add Schmitt 1982.313–17.

¹⁴ Cf. Burckhardt 1944.139–45 (originally published in 1860); the quotation is from p. 139. For the reception of Burckhardt’s monumental study, see Hay 1982.

¹⁵ Cf. Burckhardt 1944.141.

¹⁶ Cf. Riccoboni 1591b.4.

¹⁷ Here I am thinking of the debate between Robortello and Madius about how to divide the *Poetics* into sections and how to correctly label those sections; see Madius 1550.18–25.

¹⁸ For details, see Frischer 1991.4–7, with Appendix I for the key texts.

plot, or *fabula*, called the “soul” of poetry by Aristotle in the *Poetics*.¹⁹ According to Cologno, there are four kinds of plot—epic, tragedy, comedy, satyr drama—and, since these are all treated in the *Ars Poetica*, the poem has a plan in the sense that it exhaustively treats its topic, poetics. Thus, for Cologno, the earlier sixteenth-century solutions should be decisively rejected, since the *Ars Poetica* is neither a loosely written letter nor may its claims to being a technical treatise be lightly dismissed.

Four years after publishing the *Methodus*, Cologno accepted the post of professor of Moral Philosophy at Padua as successor of the recently deceased Jason De Nores, who died at the end of December, 1590.²⁰ Before the 1591–92 academic year began in November, Antonio Riccoboni published his first attack on the theory of his new colleague, the *Dissensio*. The points at issue in the quarrel were numerous, and I will discuss them in a separate study. We may briefly note here that, for Riccoboni, the main problems were that Cologno did not define what he meant by “plan”; that the number of genres in the poem and in ancient literature exceeded four; that Horace does not, in any case, treat the epic genre in a separate section, as he does tragedy, comedy, and satyr drama; and that the *Ars Poetica* is not a technical treatise on the model of Aristotle’s *Poetics* but simply a friendly letter that Horace sent to the Pisones. To clinch this last point, Riccoboni showed how the poem would have to be rewritten, if it were to have a “plan” in the technical sense of the word.

Though the Riccoboni–Cologno debate yielded at least as much smoke and heat as light, the disputants did sketch out three theoretical answers to the problem that have become perennial in *Ars Poetica* scholarship: (1) that the poem has no clear structure, but need not have one because it is not a formal treatise but merely an informal letter (Riccoboni’s position); (2) that the poem can be given a structure through massive transpositions of lines to restore an original order supposedly lost through scribal error (Cologno’s misunderstanding of Riccoboni’s position); and (3) that the *Ars Poetica*, for all its superficial confusion, has an implicit structural principle which, once revealed, lends the poem more coherence and unity than are apparent on a first reading (Cologno’s position).

Of these three positions, the most interesting for our purposes is the second, for it suggests how growing nationalist sentiments were starting

¹⁹ *Poet.* 1450a39–50b1: “So plot is the origin and as it were the soul of tragedy, and the characters are secondary” (translated by R. Janko 1987).

²⁰ On De Nores see Budd 1927.

to cloud scholars’ minds. Riccoboni did not actually propose to heal a supposedly corrupt text through transposition; rather, he tried to reconstruct the technical treatise that served as Horace’s source. Cologno was not the only scholar to mischaracterize Riccoboni’s position: in fact, most of the handful of scholars who ever had occasion to summarize Riccoboni’s views have been equally inaccurate.²¹ Later scholars undoubtedly went astray because of haste or carelessness, but in Cologno’s case the error was intentional. He tried to tar Riccoboni with the brush of a philological heresy particularly loathed in Italy—the kind of massive rearrangement of the lines of a *textus receptus* that late sixteenth-century scholars associated with Joseph Scaliger and his 1577 edition of Propertius, Tibullus, and Catullus.²² How the conservative Italians felt about Scaliger’s work can be seen in the following remark by Riccoboni’s friend, Roberto Tizzi.²³ In his *Locorum controversorum libri decem* of 1583, Tizzi attacked Scaliger no fewer than twelve times. A typical instance occurs in Liber VII, cap. xvi (whose heading is, “A certain old reading of Tibullus, which was forced to change its position by Joseph Scaliger, restored to its original location”). There Tizzi wrote:

If I tried to protect those three famous poets from all the stain with which Joseph Scaliger has recently covered them . . . that would be the same as wishing to carry off the dung heap of Augeas. This labor would indeed be Herculean, for there are many things in their works which that man—inspired by what evil demon I do not know—has changed for the worse, boldly and blindly mixing heaven and earth.²⁴

²¹ Most influential has undoubtedly been Peerlkamp 1845.228–29, but see also Dorighello 1774.vol. 3, pp. 10–12; Antibon 1888.48–52.

²² On which see Grafton 1983.177–79 and Gaisser 1993.178–92; neither Grafton nor Gaisser mentions Tizzi’s critique of Scaliger. On Scaliger (1540–1609) see also the short but perceptive treatment in Pfeiffer 1976.113–19.

²³ Pfeiffer 1976.119 says that “neither Italy nor France showed real understanding of Scaliger’s genius or much enthusiasm for its creations,” but provides no details. The bald statement is truer of Italy than of France, where Scaliger’s work was documentably well regarded by some leading scholars.

²⁴ Tizzi 1583.186. On Tizzi (1551–1609) see A. Fabronio, *Historiae Academiae Pisanae*, vol. 2 (Pisa 1792) 443–47; S. Mazzetti, *Repertorio di tutti professori antichi e moderni della famosa università . . . di Bologna* (Bologna 1847) 304 (nr. 2979).

Scaliger was not amused. In 1586, using the pseudonym Yvo Villiomarus (which did not fool Tizzi, who in his next publication called his adversary Villioscaliger),²⁵ Scaliger published his *In locos controversos Roberti Titii animadversorum liber* (Paris, Mamert Patisson, 1586). Scaliger's entire book constitutes a blistering personal attack against Tizzi. A sampling of Scaliger's chapter headings will give a fair taste of the tone he adopted: "*Titii hallucinatio*" (p. 8); "*Titii calumnia*" (p. 14); "*Titii ἀγνωμοσύνη et plagium*" (p. 16); "*Infelix iudicium Titii et hallucinatio*" (p. 17); "*Titii mira ἀλογιζία*" (p. 18); "*Error Titii et barbarismus*" (p. 26); "*Imperitia sermonis Graeci mira in Titio*" (p. 31); "*Locus Lucretii a Titio corruptus*" (p. 35); etc. At pp. 145–46, Scaliger replies to Tizzi's attack on his transpositions in the 1577 edition of the love poets. This reply has a unique heading: "*Incivilitas Titii.*" Scaliger's feelings have clearly been hurt, and his counterattack poses as a defense of the honor of "Transalpine" scholars against the clannish Italians, because "it pains you (scil., Italians) that Transalpine men teach you things you did not know. And what you do not know, you call 'error.'" As a result, Tizzi directed his rebuttal against "a certain Yvo Villiomarus, *Italici nominis calumniatorem,*" as his title put it.²⁶ Scaliger's anti-Italian feelings were not simply the result of scholarly attacks. He apparently also thought that Venetian agents had once tried to assassinate him and his father at Paris.²⁷

Thus, by misreading Riccoboni's work on the *Ars Poetica* as *Textkritik*, as opposed to *Quellenkritik*, Cologno was implicitly accusing his adversary of guilt by association with a Transalpine scholar held in low esteem in Italy. The irony is that one of Scaliger's greatest Italian foes was none other than Antonio Riccoboni, because Riccoboni had helped uncover documents showing that Scaliger's family was not noble but plebeian.²⁸ Scaliger in turn detested Riccoboni, calling him *porcus Riccobonus*.²⁹ Cologno's gambit must have been quite galling to his opponent.

Four centuries later, the problem debated by Riccoboni and Cologno has not yet been solved, but not for lack of trying. In fact, since 1591

²⁵ Tizzi 1589.224.

²⁶ Scaliger 1586.145: *Dolet vobis homines Transalpinos vos docere, quae nesciebatis. quicquid autem ignoratis, hoc a vobis error vocatur.* For the rebuttal, see Tizzi 1589.

²⁷ Cf. *Scaligeriana sive excerpta ex ore Josephi Scaligeri per F.P.P.P.* (Geneva 1666) 313.

²⁸ See Billanovich 1968.

²⁹ Cf. Scaliger's letter to Ioannis Caselius dated Leyden, August 18, 1607 in Scaliger 1627.573.

practically no decade has gone by without a major new attempt to find a way out of the labyrinthine maze of Horace's poem.³⁰ Like Fermat's Theorem in math, this is the kind of problem whose very difficulty keeps the humanities alive by posing a challenge that bright young minds find irresistible. To return to our topic of the end of the Renaissance, the important point to note is that the quarrel initiated by Riccoboni and Cologno has never again been hosted on Italian soil. Thus, it was not the presence of quarrelling in Italy that brought about the end of the Renaissance; rather its absence marked the shift of humanism to other venues.

To see what happened to humanism to Italy at the end of the period defined by Kristeller, I would suggest that we will make progress beyond Burckhardt by applying the method of the case-study recently used by Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine in their provocative book, *From Humanism to the Humanities*.³¹ In doing so, we could hardly do better than look closely at the career of Antonio Riccoboni, whose death in 1599 so conveniently coincides with the end of this great era. And after laying Riccoboni to rest, we need to look at his succession. In particular, we will want to delve into why neither Padua in 1600 nor Bologna in 1596 succeeded in efforts to recruit to Italy the greatest living humanist, Justus Lipsius.

Born in Rovigo in 1541 to middle class parents, Antonio Riccoboni studied Greek and Latin in Padua and Venice with the leading Veneto humanists of the mid-sixteenth century.³² Returning by 1558 to Rovigo, Riccoboni was enrolled in the College of Notaries. In 1562, he was hired to be a teacher in the local public school. Soon, his prestige was so high that he became a member of the town council of Rovigo and was given the task of revising the town's statutes.³³

Riccoboni taught school in Rovigo for nine years, until 1571. During the early part of this period, he became a member of the *Accademia degli Addormentati*, an institution founded in 1553 that provided him with much-needed intellectual stimulation.³⁴ Far from being merely meeting places for antiquarian and scientific discussion and debate as such acade-

³⁰ For a survey of work on the poem's structure from 1957–1987, see Doblhofer 1992.129–31. I plan to publish a survey of structural work on the poem from the Renaissance to the 1990s.

³¹ Grafton and Jardine 1986.

³² Tomasinus 1644.109–12.

³³ For Riccoboni's revision of the town statutes, see Nicolio 1578.139.

³⁴ See Malavasi 1972c.47.

mies were to become in later centuries, the *accademie* of mid–sixteenth–century Italy were central (and, often, secret) cultural organizations promoting religious reform and in some cases even Protestantism.³⁵

Such was the case with the Accademia degli Addormentati (which, by the way, means the Academy of Sleepyheads). It was closed in 1562 by order of the Venetian podestà, Giacomo Foscarini.³⁶ At the same time, its members were investigated by the Inquisition on charges of heresy.³⁷ These investigations dragged on for several years, uncovering evidence of Anabaptism and Calvinism in the Accademia as well as trafficking in prohibited books in several Veneto cities.³⁸ This is not unusual: the Veneto had, from the first, been a center of the diffusion of Protestant ideas in Italy.³⁹ In this instance, the result was not only the suppression of the academy but the disruption of the lives of its members, some of whom fled to the Protestant north or to more tolerant Padua.⁴⁰ At least one, Girolamo Biscaccia, was ultimately sentenced to death.⁴¹ Riccoboni was himself arrested, and the records of his hearings with the chief inquisitor and the bishop of Rovigo survive in the archive of the town Curia. From these, we can see that Riccoboni was a Protestant, denying the validity of the Eucharist, the cult of the saints, and the authority of the pope.⁴² In the end, Riccoboni agreed to abjure his heresies and return to the Church.

These sad events in out-of-the-way Rovigo were by no means isolated but symptomatic of a larger pattern of religious fanaticism and persecution in Italy and elsewhere associated with the reign of Pope Pius V.

³⁵ On the *accademie* in general, cf. Maylender 1926; Yates 1983; LaRusso 1983.44. For the *accademie* in Venice and the Veneto, see the literature cited by Malavasi 1972c.48 n. 6; Benzoni 1977 (cf. pp. 113–15 on heterodox academies, including the Accademia degli Addormentati at Rovigo).

³⁶ See Canton 1972–73.18–19.

³⁷ Malavasi 1972c.55.

³⁸ Malavasi 1972a.7; 1972c.50–53. Veneto Anabaptism generally was the subject of a study by Stella 1967. For Rovigo, in particular, see Malavasi 1972b.5–24.

³⁹ See Cochrane 1988.134–41; Stella 1967.

⁴⁰ Padua, though part of the Veneto, where the Inquisition found the civil authorities generally cooperative, had a strong economic incentive for a policy of religious tolerance: the presence of many German students (many of them Lutheran). It has been estimated that between 1550–1599 over 6,000 Germans studied at Padua, which became notorious as a city of heretics. See Simeoni 1968.809–54.

⁴¹ Malavasi 1972c.54–56; Marchi 1969.168–218.

⁴² Cf. Archivio della Curia of Rovigo, in the series *Cause Criminali, 1561–64: Abiurationes secretae facte de anno 1564: Antonii Riccoboni, Hyeronomi Biscaccii et Ioannis Baptistae Minadoii*.

In the Veneto alone, 82 heretics were sentenced to death by the Inquisition during the pontificate of Pius, which lasted from just 1566 to 1572.⁴³ It is understandable why this episode would have left a bitter, anti-clerical taste in Riccoboni's mouth.

While in Rovigo, Riccoboni published two scholarly works that showed impressive learning for a man in his twenties: the first, a solid introductory work on rhetoric based on a synthesis of ideas found in Cicero;⁴⁴ the second, a tome about the ancient historians, complete with a large collection of the fragments of the Roman historians.⁴⁵

These achievements and the growing reputation they brought Riccoboni prepared the way for his unexpected move to Padua once the heresy trials had ended. Here he began in 1571 what was to be a brilliant university career. First, he quickly earned his degree in canon and civil law, which he received in February of 1571.⁴⁶ When the distinguished classicist Marc-Antoine Muret turned down Padua's offer of a professorship in Humanity (i.e., Greek and Roman literature), the position was offered to Riccoboni in May of 1571.⁴⁷ This rather surprising turn of events was due not only to his scholarly credentials but also, as he tells us himself, to the help of a friend, the Venetian Lorenzo Massa. Massa was well placed to work behind the scenes on Riccoboni's behalf: he was employed by the Riformatori (or, what we would call the regents) of the university.⁴⁸

At Padua, Riccoboni taught courses on Greek and Roman rhetoric, poetics, and oratory. Riccoboni was quite prolific as a writer and has many books, tracts, and orations to his credit.⁴⁹ He is undoubtedly best remembered for offering (long before Umberto Eco!) the first reconstruction of the lost second book of Aristotle's *Poetics* and for his successful attack in 1583 on the authenticity of Cicero's *Consolatio*. A text of this hitherto lost work had just been published earlier that year. Riccoboni's old

⁴³ See Iserloh et al. 1975.601.

⁴⁴ Riccoboni 1567.

⁴⁵ Riccoboni 1568. Riccoboni's work was well enough known and respected to be reprinted in the second volume of Perna 1579.

⁴⁶ See Canton 1972–73.35.

⁴⁷ For the history of the chairs in *litterae humaniores* at Padua in the sixteenth century, see Tomasius 1644.340–43.

⁴⁸ See Riccoboni 1598.fol.53v. For Riccoboni's friendship with Massa cf. Canton 1972–73.35–38, and on Massa see Malavasi 1977.73 n. 30.

⁴⁹ An accurate and full bibliography is lacking; for a partial list of titles, see Canton 1972–73.50 n. 128.

teacher, Carlo Sigonio, rushed into print with the first commentary, which was based on the assumption that the text was ancient. Scholars all over Europe watched as Riccoboni and Sigonio fought to establish whether the work was really ancient or (as Riccoboni tried to prove) a modern forgery. Once again, Riccoboni's friendship with Lorenzo Massa was decisive: Massa was able to trace the anonymously edited text back to Sigonio, thus making it extremely likely that Sigonio had forged it.⁵⁰

After the *Consolatio* affair had ended with total victory, Riccoboni shifted his attention to rhetoric and poetic theory, on which he was to concentrate for the remaining decade and a half of his life. His quarrel with Nicolò Cologno about the problem of the structure of Horace's *Ars Poetica* has already been mentioned and falls into the middle of this period. Although it concerned a different problem, the quarrel with Cologno was very much a reprise of the earlier debate with Sigonio, for Riccoboni once again played his characteristic role of critic against a dogmatic rival. In both debates, Riccoboni had the last word and emerged the victor.

In the last decades of his life, Riccoboni was held in high esteem by the regents and by the university and community at large, receiving many honors and privileges. He died after a brief illness on July 27, 1599, nearly sixty years old.

For the purposes of our topic, there are two questions that the career of Riccoboni raises that are of interest for our understanding of late Italian humanism. First, what was the impact of the Inquisition on Riccoboni's intellectual development? And, second, why did Riccoboni work so hard to oppose Cologno's appointment as professor of Ethics at Padua in 1591? As we will see, these two questions are closely related.

It would take a large and sensitive psychological study to do justice to the impact on someone like the young Riccoboni of a terrible ordeal like an Inquisition trial followed by humiliating public penance. Here I would just make three points.

First, after abjuring his heresy, Riccoboni never again got into trouble with the Inquisition. His behavior, then, always gave outward signs of conformity to Catholic orthodoxy. On the other hand, we do find equal—but—opposite indications that Riccoboni still felt himself to be a dissident. For example, in 1583 Riccoboni wrote a commentary on St. Paul's Letter to

⁵⁰ McCuaig 1989.291–344 gives an excellent account of the Riccoboni–Sigonio quarrel about the *Consolatio*.

the Romans, which he dedicated to his old friend, Lorenzo Massa. This letter is the touchstone of the religious controversies of the sixteenth century. It was in fact Luther's and Calvin's commentaries on *Romans* that marked the beginning of the Reformation.⁵¹ In his book, Riccoboni explicitly followed Jacopo Sadoletto's commentary of 1535. Sadoletto was the Catholic bishop of Carpentras, but his commentary was severely criticized by the Dominican theologians of the Sorbonne when it appeared and was rejected as heterodox by the Council of Trent.⁵² We have two manuscripts of Riccoboni's commentary (one in Venice, the other in Rovigo), but its author wisely never allowed it to be published: doing so would only have gotten him into more trouble with the Inquisition.⁵³ Likewise, Riccoboni was known to ignore the Index by buying banned Protestant books. His Venetian bookseller, Pietro Longo, was caught by the Holy Office and drowned in the lagoon in January of 1588.⁵⁴ Riccoboni was not himself punished: it was apparently one thing for a public bookseller to traffic in heretical works and quite another for a scholar to read them in the privacy of his study.

Probably the greatest impact of the Inquisition on Riccoboni was not that it forced him into the uncomfortable and rather hypocritical position of outwardly conforming to an orthodoxy that he secretly questioned. Rather, it was that it encouraged him to search for a space where he could give free play to his naturally creative and critical spirit. In the repressive culture of his day, this space could not perforce be found in the area of those juicy but forbidden dinner conversation topics—religion and politics. Instead, I would suggest, Riccoboni found an asylum in the safer, purely academic problems of rhetorical and poetic theory.⁵⁵ Neither Church nor

⁵¹ See Pfeiffer 1976.90; Parker 1986.

⁵² Cf. Douglas 1959.93.

⁵³ Cf. Rovigo, Accademia dei Concordi ms. *Antonii Riccoboni in Epistolam Di. Pauli ad Romanos Commentarius quo universa ars rhetorica ecclesiastica a Spiritu Sancto profecta in hac una Epistola ex doctrina Aristotelii explicatur . . . Ad Clarissimum Virum a Secretis Serenissimae Reipublicae Venetae Laurentium Massam* (Padua, no date); Biblioteca Marciana Mss. Latini, Cl. I, nr. 71, shelf-mark 2158. Riccoboni cites Sadoletto's commentary with approval at, e.g., foll. 51r, 62r, 101v of the (unnumbered) Rovigo ms.

⁵⁴ See Grendler 1989.186–89.

⁵⁵ For an analogous case, cf. Francesco Patrizi, who spent the last years of his life working in the safe area of military science after his great philosophical work, *Nova de universis philosophia* (Ferrara 1591) was placed on the Index; see Firpo 1970. Grendler 1977.286–93, downplaying the impact of the Inquisition on Italian intellectual life, correctly observes

State evidently very much cared what one thought about such matters, and so Riccoboni found these subjects congenial as he got older and wiser. Here, too, he found himself attracted to heretical ideas, but now it was no longer necessary to keep these ideas to himself. In his poetic thought, for example, Riccoboni was one of the few late sixteenth-century Italians to express admiration for the work of the heretic Ludovico Castelvetro, and he was unique in adopting Castelvetro's purely hedonistic view of poetry. Castelvetro's idea that poetry's goal is to give pleasure and not moral instruction was out of tune with the Counter-Reformation spirit of the age.⁵⁶ This was the time when the nudes of Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* had to be clothed by Daniele da Volterra in 1565; and when Veronese got into trouble with the Inquisition a few years later for painting jesters and buffoons in his *Last Supper* for the monastery of Ss. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice.⁵⁷ After the Council of Trent, Catholic art was supposed to be edifying, not merely enjoyable.⁵⁸

This naturally takes us to the second question of why Riccoboni was so angered at being passed over for the chair of Ethics in favor of the priest, Cologno. First of all, there is the point that in this period we know that Ethics had much greater prestige than Humanity. To Riccoboni, however, more was at stake than mere prestige. Cologno's appointment must have represented the same kind of threat to academic freedom within the university that the Jesuits were mounting from without. I began this paper by alluding to the greatest controversy of 1591: the attempt by the Jesuits to open their anti-university in Padua to stamp out heresy at the public university. The regents seem to have responded to the Jesuit challenge in part by changing their appointment policy to pre-empt the Jesuits in the prestigious and sensitive field of Ethics. The deliberations of the regents do not survive, but the facts speak for themselves. The appointment of Cologno was unprecedented and almost inexplicable. Before Cologno, every holder of the chair of Ethics in the sixteenth century had been a layperson and a

that "the censors found nothing objectionable in works of classical scholarship, history, law, literary criticism, logic, mathematics, medicine, philology, and rhetoric. Scholars carried on their study of these disciplines with little interference . . ." (288). However, I agree with Firpo in seeing the impact of the Inquisition reflected both in its ability to repel scholars like Riccoboni from subjects like Biblical exegesis and, at the same time, to attract them to the safer subjects listed by Grendler.

⁵⁶ Cf. Toffanin 1920.135–40; Budd 1927.425–27.

⁵⁷ See Chastel 1984.188–227.

⁵⁸ See, in general, Dejob 1884.

distinguished intellectual. Starting with Cologno in 1591, every holder of the chair for at least the next sixty years was a religious. Such a development is indeed compatible with the post-Tridentine trend for priests to assume university teaching positions in order to promote Counter-Reformation values.⁵⁹ Such a change of policy would also explain the otherwise puzzling fact that Riccoboni lost the appointment to Cologno. Cologno was completely obscure. He had published only one book before his appointment, and that was the book on Horace's poetics, not on Aristotle's ethics. And, as we have seen, it was not a very good book. Cologno had never taught at a university but had spent his career teaching twelve-year-olds catechism and the rudiments of Latin and Greek grammar. Moreover, he was about 70 years old in 1591 and so his dismal record to date could hardly be excused by his promise for bigger and better things. Besides his clerical status and his close links with the family of Padua's bishop (who also served as grand chancellor of the university), what else could the aged priest put forward in support of his candidacy?

Riccoboni, on the other hand, had a European reputation. As early as 1587 we know that Riccoboni was giving private lessons on book one of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The fruit of these private lessons was Riccoboni's huge commentary on the text, which was finished in 1596 and published in Germany after Riccoboni's death.⁶⁰ Unfortunately for Riccoboni, part of his reputation included suspicions of heresy, as word of his trial in Rovigo three decades earlier seeped out and spread as far north as Leyden (with some inevitable garbling along the way).⁶¹ Could Padua afford to place a former heretic into—of all things—the professorship of Ethics, and could it do so just in the year in which the Jesuits were mounting their campaign against the university as a hotbed of heresy? It is not

⁵⁹ For the holders of the chair of Ethics at Padua, see Tomasinus 1644.322–24. On the Church's keen interest in the universities generally in the period after the Council of Trent, see Willaert 1966.226–28.

⁶⁰ Riccoboni 1610.

⁶¹ Cf. Scaliger's long, rambling letter about the Tizzi affair to Ianus Dousa, dated Leyden, May 19, 1594 in Scaliger 1627.53–57. Behind Tizzi, Scaliger saw the hand of those "who thought they could hurt my family and my reputation" (p. 53). Later in the letter Scaliger supplies more detail about who he is thinking of: "who will be pleased [scil. with Tizzi's attack on me] except the man who, writing to him from Venice, dictated to him the tale about the ladder-maker; who, when he will start to get hungry, will hire himself out to the Inquisition, so that he creates danger for the virtuous, and so that he may seek a living from informing." We know from his other writings that Scaliger thought that Riccoboni was that man.

surprising that the regents preferred to be “safe, not sorry” by appointing Cologno, whose credentials for orthodoxy were impeccable. However, it is clear that a university caving in to “religious correctness” by preferring a candidate like Cologno to one like Riccoboni was a university in deep trouble.

The situation only got worse after Riccoboni’s death in August of 1599. To replace him, we know that the regents first tried to hire the leading humanist at a northern European Catholic university, Justus Lipsius, but he did not accept their offer. Instead, the university had to settle for Paolo Beni, an ex-papal secretary who was actually a Jesuit living in Padua when the Jesuit battle against the university started to break out in 1590.⁶² Because of misconduct, Beni was dismissed from the order in 1593, but he remained in the priesthood. He went to Rome where Clement VIII hired him to teach natural philosophy at the university.⁶³ In Rome his piety and eloquence were highly respected and earned him, for example, an invitation to preach a sermon to the pope and cardinals on Ash Wednesday of 1594.⁶⁴ In 1596, he published a treatise on Cardinal Cesare Baronio’s *Annales*, twelve volumes of Church history representing the Catholic response to the Lutheran *Magdeburg Centuries* (the thrust of which was to show that throughout history the papacy had been Satan’s tool). In his work, Beni reveals his views about the pagan authors, which is that they were worthwhile studying because the Church Fathers used them to combat heresy.⁶⁵ In Beni, then, we have a higher-powered version of Cologno: a Counter-Reformation priest, who did not think the Greeks and Romans were worth studying in their own right, as had been the case for Riccoboni and for humanists since the fourteenth century.⁶⁶ For Beni, the ancients were valuable simply as material to be Christianized, even when that meant attributing views to Plato and Aristotle that they never held. Not surprisingly, he vigorously opposed the hedonistic theory of poetry taught by his predecessor, Riccoboni, about whom he had only disparaging things to say.⁶⁷ For

⁶² See Diffley 1988.

⁶³ Diffley 1988.40.

⁶⁴ Diffley 1988.49.

⁶⁵ Diffley 1988.50–51.

⁶⁶ See Garin 1965.14–15. For a fair assessment of Beni’s place in intellectual history see Diffley 1988.244–46.

⁶⁷ See Diffley 1988, passim, especially p. 233. In Beni 1613 we find frequent attacks on Riccoboni, e.g., at pp. 149 and 470.

all his enthusiastic orthodoxy, Beni was a failure as a teacher, attracting, we are told, as few as two or three students to his classes.⁶⁸ His appointment must have made Riccoboni spin in his grave.

The man who might have kept humanism vital in Padua was Justus Lipsius.⁶⁹ Born in 1547, he was not only a prolific and brilliant author of many volumes of classical scholarship, but also the best-selling writer of a book on how to succeed in politics. Why Lipsius turned down Padua in 1600 is not known. Four years earlier, he had rejected another offer from an Italian university, this time from Bologna. Enough documents survive about the Bologna episode to enable us to guess Lipsius’ reasons for avoiding Italy. Born a Catholic, educated by the Jesuits, Lipsius converted to Lutheranism in accepting an appointment in 1572 to the University of Jena. Just two years later he resigned his post, went to Cologne, came back to the Catholic fold and got married. In 1579, he accepted an offer to teach at the newly created Protestant university in Leyden. Not surprisingly, this move caused Lipsius to renounce Catholicism a second time, and he became a Calvinist. By 1591, he had changed his mind yet again, returning a second time to Catholicism and to the Jesuits in Louvain. An even odder fact about Lipsius’ career is that his changes of faith did not just affect his private life: wherever he went, he not only adopted the religion of the kingdom but actively polemicized on its behalf.⁷⁰

For a long time Lipsius’ religious schizophrenia remained an inexplicable and bizarre facet of an otherwise rational and impressive intellect. New research has cleared up the mystery: Lipsius was a member of the Family of Love, a sect founded by the Dutchman Hendrik Niclaes in the mid-sixteenth century, which spread underground as far away as England and Spain. The essence of the Familist doctrine was that all existing religion represents the triumph of evil over good, the flesh over the spirit, and the Antichrist over Christ. Through enlightenment, a few chosen souls could begin a process of renewal and reunification of mankind under the spiritual leadership of Hendrik Niclaes, whose initials—H. N.—supposedly had a mystical significance, standing for *homo novus*, the “new man.” Familists were taught to practice outward conformity to the religion of their community while meeting secretly to read and interpret the Bible. Meanwhile, they

⁶⁸ Papadopoli 1726.350–51; Diffley 1988.94–95.

⁶⁹ On Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) see Pfeiffer 1976.124–26.

⁷⁰ See Nisard 1852.1–148; Grafton 1987.

were to work for religious tolerance within their community. Lipsius' strange religious record makes perfect sense in view of his membership in the Family of Love. His true feelings about religion were revealed in a letter to a friend in 1592: *religio, religio, quam multos inducis vano quodam fuce* ("Religion, oh religion! How many people do you seduce with your bogus deceit!").⁷¹

We do not know with certainty why Lipsius decided not to move to Padua in 1600, nor why he had turned down an earlier offer from Bologna in 1596. The official reason given to the authorities in Bologna was that Lipsius' application to his king for permission to leave Louvain was denied.⁷² Another reason may well have been Lipsius' fear of serving at the Pope's university, where he would be under the close scrutiny of the Inquisition. This fear would not have been idle. Cardinal Ascanio Colonna wrote to Lipsius in 1596, urging him to accept the Bologna offer. The Cardinal pointed out that he had shown his good will toward Lipsius by intervening on his behalf with the Inquisition at Louvain and would continue to support him in Bologna. To a man with Lipsius' secret religious life, such words may well have sounded more threatening than reassuring.⁷³ Finally, nationalism may also have played a role. In 1609, the Bolognese aristocrat Ludovico Beccadelli, writing to Christopher Dupuy in Paris, explained Lipsius' decision as follows: "The city councilors, who oversee the university, tried some years ago to hire Lipsius, to whom they offered not only a good salary but also generous travel expenses; but after saying he would come, he changed his mind because of some indisposition, his age, or even the fact that his wife did not want to leave her homeland." Lipsius may well have put words into his wife's mouth that should more truthfully have come from his own, since we know that he felt that some Italian scholars were prejudiced against him.⁷⁴

At any rate, the official reason Lipsius gave the Bolognesi was good enough. This brings me to my final point. The spread of Renaissance

⁷¹ See Hamilton 1981.1–39 for the doctrines and history of Familism and pp. 96–102 for Lipsius' connection with the sect. For the quotation from Lipsius' letter (to Abraham Ortelius) see p. 101.

⁷² See Costa 1907.57.

⁷³ For the letter see Costa 1907.56.

⁷⁴ Beccadelli's explanation is found in a letter he wrote to Christofarus Puteanus, dated Rome, 25 May 1609 (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Collection Dupuy MS 705, foll. 163r–164r). On Lipsius' feelings about Italian scholars see Nisard 1852.134.

humanism was very much dependent on and facilitated by the free exchange of ideas and scholars, as Kristeller and Pfeiffer, among others, have noted.⁷⁵ The flow of ideas was staunch, as we have seen, by such religious protectionism as the Index and the Inquisition. The free exchange of students and scholars was no less affected by what might be called "academic protectionism." This is a phenomenon that has hardly been studied.⁷⁶ We know that by the end of the fifteenth century, Italian states such as the Kingdom of Sicily, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, and the Venetian Republic forced their citizens to study at the public university. This they did by refusing to recognize degrees earned elsewhere. They also required their citizens to apply for permission to teach at a university outside the boundaries of the state. Such permission was often refused. Like all forms of protectionism, academic protectionism started out as a distinct economic advantage to the states practicing it: professorial salaries could be kept low, as foreign offers did not have to be countered; economies of scale could be achieved as the universities could count on the enrollment of a steady number of domestic students, no matter whether the instruction offered was at a high or a low level of quality. As time went on, however, spreading protectionism boomeranged against the public universities of Italy and became a major factor contributing to the dismal enrollment statistics at Bologna that I cited at the beginning of this paper. The situation of the Italian universities was made worse by competition from the new Protestant universities (like Leyden) in northern Europe and, in the Catholic countries, by the new Jesuit schools.⁷⁷ So, as more and more states forced their students to study at home and as the number of universities increased, the number of potential students recruitable by the proud old public universities of Italy dwindled.

The hindrances to the free flow of scholars did not help. The chair of Humanity at Bologna illustrates the problem. After Lipsius was denied permission to leave Louvain, the regents in Bologna offered the position to Roberto Tizzi. Tizzi was a Florentine who had earned a minor reputation as a textual critic through his quarrel with Scaliger in the 1580s. As we have seen, their debate soon degenerated into a mudslinging contest pitting Ital-

⁷⁵ Kristeller 1990.18; Pfeiffer 1976.61–66; cf. also, e.g., Schmitt 1982.299.

⁷⁶ See Marongiu 1962; Marrara 1981.

⁷⁷ The spread of religious (and especially Jesuit) education, and the corresponding decline of public schools, has been treated by Huppert 1984.104–29 for France and Grendler 1989.363–99 for Italy.

ian scholars against their Transalpine foes—a professorial version of the kind of pernicious nationalist conflict we glimpsed in the Alzano murder case. At any rate, once settled in Bologna, Tizzi turned out to be quite happy with his position at the Papal university, but his service there depended on the sufferance of his ruler, the Grand Duke of Tuscany. In 1606, the Collegio Romano in Rome succeeded in hiring Baldassare Ansidei, who, though a citizen of the Papal States, was teaching Humanity at Pisa. Grand Duke Ferdinand of Tuscany was not amused by the loss of Pisa's humanist, and he retaliated against the Pope by forcing Tizzi to abandon his professorship at Bologna so that he could replace Ansidei at Pisa. The Bolognesi immediately set to work to find a new humanist, once again hoping to attract a prestigious scholar from northern Europe. Lipsius was now dead. The other superstars of the time were both Protestants: Joseph Scaliger and the Huguenot pastor's son, Isaac Casaubon.⁷⁸ It was, of course, impossible to hire one of them for the Pope's university.

The sad part is that some Italians recognized what had happened to humanism and understood at least the superficial cause of the problem—their inability to recruit the best minds in the world for top university posts. Once again the letter written in 1609 by Ludovico Beccadelli to Christopher Dupuy is of interest. In the letter, Beccadelli asks Dupuy's help in finding a suitable candidate for the empty chair in Bologna:

For some time now the chair of Humanity in Bologna, my home town, has been vacant. This is owing to the lack of good candidates, since in Italy in this profession we have only very mediocre men. I would like to ask you that if you know of anyone who might be good for the post, and if he would be inclined to accept an offer, that you so inform me. The position is most prestigious and once was made famous by Beroaldi, Amasei, Robortelli, and Sigonio. However, for some time now there has not been a professor to compare with them. . . . So if by chance there is in Paris or some other city in France some student of Scaliger or Casaubon who would not turn down the post, I am certain that he would be well treated. Just

⁷⁸ On Casaubon (1559–1614), see Pfeiffer 1976.121–23.

make certain that he is better than average and capable of returning the chair to its earlier reputation . . .⁷⁹

The idea was that, if Bologna could not hire a great humanist because he was Protestant, at least it could get one of his French (i.e., Catholic) students. Scaliger's leading students were all Dutch Protestants.⁸⁰ Although Casaubon was in Paris as *Lecteur du Roi* from 1599 to 1610, he never had a teaching position at the university or in the *College de France*.⁸¹ So, for all the best will and lucrative offers in the world, no such ideal candidate could be found. After Tizzi's forced departure, the illustrious chair of Humanity at Bologna remained vacant for thirteen years.

If the decay of humanism was painfully apparent to the Italians themselves, then it was also plainly recognized by foreigners. At the height of sixteenth-century Italian humanism, Joannes Caselius (1533–1613) had come down to Italy from Germany to study with great scholars like Sigonio at Bologna and Vettori in Florence. When his friend, Valens Acidalius (1567–1595), visited Italy at the end of the century, he sent Caselius the following depressing account of the state of humanistic studies: “if you ask me now about Italy, I frankly answer that in the middle of Italy I do not see Italy. If you ask likewise about humanist studies, I state boldly that they are better and more properly pursued in any village of Germany than in this land which is the very temple of the Muses, nor can I learn more here than in the Transalpine air.”⁸² With such reports getting back to Germany and other northern countries, it is hardly surprising that parents started doubting the wisdom of sending their sons to school at the distant and expensive Italian universities, especially now that there were plenty of new options closer to home. It is also probably not going too far to sniff nascent nationalist sentiments in Acidalius' Transalpine air: the proud Germans were only too happy to discover that their local *Schulmeister* was better qualified than a Padua professor! Thus a downward spiral had begun from which it took centuries to recover.

To recapitulate then: in 1610, at the end of Renaissance, a Counter-Reformation ideologue occupied the chair of Humanity in Padua, and, worse still, the chair at Bologna existed for some years only on paper.

⁷⁹ For the letter, cf. n. 74 above.

⁸⁰ For the students of Scaliger, see Von Wilamowitz 1982.67–69; Pfeiffer 1976.119.

⁸¹ See Pfeiffer 1976.120.

⁸² Cited by Costa 1907.63 n. 1.

Humanism at these northern Italian universities was killed off by a complex array of forces that could all be gathered together under the heading of "particularism." If the Renaissance and its impressive intellectual accomplishments were nourished by the universal values of reason, the dignity of humanity, and the study of human cultural history as an end in itself; then particularism represented the opposite: the erection of barriers between peoples, beliefs, and the present and a past no longer worthy of study for its own sake. Little wonder, then, that Horatian studies were neglected at Padua for centuries after Riccoboni's death. For the next major contribution, we have to await the publication of Francesco Dorighello's three-volume edition and commentary in 1774.⁸³ In the meantime, not just Horatian studies, but humanism itself petered out in seventeenth-century Italy with the rise of antiquarianism and the fall of textual and literary criticism.⁸⁴

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⁸³ Dorighello 1774. On Dorighello (1731–1815) see *Nouvelle Biographie Générale* 14 (Paris 1855) cols. 623–24.

⁸⁴ For a sketch of classics in Seicento Padua see Nardo 1990.139–53; a corresponding history is, so far as I know, lacking for Bologna. It is interesting to note a similar decline of humanistic studies at the University of Alcalá; see Pellistrandi 1990.125: "One thing is definitely clear: after 1568 the university of Alcalá rapidly cut its ties with its humanist roots. . . . The students following courses of study in rhetoric . . . were only two in 1618 as opposed to 102 in 1568."

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