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TOWARDS THE DIGNIFICATION OF THE VULGAR TONGUES: HUMANISTIC TRANSLATIONS INTO ITALIAN AND SPANISH IN THE RENAISSANCE

What is usually called Italian Quattrocento Humanism, but what, under closer scrutiny, appears to stretch from the second half of the Trecento through the first three quarters of the Quattrocento (roughly, from the central years of Petrarch's Life to Ficion's *Theologia Platonica*), was essentially oriented towards the philological and critical recovery of classical Latin texts first, and towards Latin versions of Greek texts later. During this first and primary phase of Humanism in Italy, a phase which we may properly call Latin Humanism, the problems associated with the dignification of the vulgar – both the drive for it and the resistance against it – manifested themselves in an indigenous original production in Italian, rather than in Italian versions of the ancients. Such Italian humanistic production within the predominantly Latin phase of Humanism in Italy should, however, not be underestimated with regard to the impact it was to exercise on the steady advance in the dignification of the vulgar. This is the linguistic avenue into which some of the great masterpieces of the Quattrocento and the early Cinquecento were naturally to fall. Castiglione, Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Leone Ebreco, Vasari, and a score of other prominent humanists of the High Renaissance – not to speak of Bembo who constitutes a complexity in himself-cannot be properly understood if the question of their adherence to the vulgar is not first elucidated.

For the question of Latin versus the vulgar tongue in humanistic writings, to be sure, is far from being merely a language, or linguistic, problem. Granted that there were important stylistic considerations involved. But above and beyond these, the adoption of Italian in humanistic writing constituted a definite and ideological and speculative bent: it represented, in general terms, a welcome dissociation from slavish classical dependence; it represented, in particular, the emancipation from an essentially regressive cultural ideal; and, most of all, it represented a reorientation of socio-political as well as cultural interests towards

the contemporaneous realities of the peninsula, realities that were of larger scope and of broader impact than the more reduced classicising, often antiquarian, humanistic interests of the Latin humanists.

The dignification of the vulgar in Italy during the Renaissance must thus be traced through a number of distinct of distinct though variously interrelated developments: a virtually uninterrupted literary, and particularly poetic production from anywhere before the times of Petrarch (one may, in fact, go back as far as St. Francis *Laudes creaturarum)*; a humanistic-literary speculative activity in Italian from Alberti onward; and a translation activity from Latin into Italian. Each of these developments started at a distinct point of Italian cultural history, and they became simultaneous only during the last phase of the Renaissance, that is to say, the first half or so of the sixteenth century. The poetic and otherwise literary production in Italian from Petrarch onward lies, evidently, outside the scope of the present exposition. Neither is the humanistic literary-speculative activity in Italian, properly speaking, our concern. With regard to the latter, however, it seems important to emphasize here two point: first, that a small number of surprisingly important humanistic speculative works in the period of the Latin humanists were written, precisely, in Italian; and secondly, that a very peculiar translation activity was indeed taking place closely allied to the aforementioned humanistic trend: in a number of cases the author of a humanistic writing in Latin subsequently translated his own work into Italian. We shall first to the original humanistic writings in the vulgar.

The essential indivisibility between wisdom and Latin – the language understood not merely as a convenient mould into which concepts are being poured, but rather as a cultural notion in which substance and form, contents and expression are inextricably blended – constitutes the cornerstone of the main branch of the humanistic effort in Italy, that of Latin Humanism. But such indivisibility between wisdom and Latin by no means corresponds to all humanistic manifestations in Italy. Renaissance studies have for some time overlooked the existence, or at least the conceptual importance, of a non-Latin Humanism in Italy. Georg Voigt, the father of the modern studies in Renaissance Humanism, in his never sufficiently commended *Die Wiederbelebung des Klassischen Alterthums* (1859) – an earlier and, by twentieth century standards, a

more lasting work than Burckhardt's well-known monograph – strongly de-emphasizes Alberti, and barely mentions the works written in the vernacular. And yet, such minor branch of humanistic activities holds a place of importance among the civic humanists in particular. Vespasiano da Bisticci's Vite, Alberti's *Della famiglia,* Palmieri's *Vita civile,* Bruni's Vite di Dante Petrarca, Filelfo's Commentario sul Canzoniere are some of the outstanding examples of these writings which, on the whole, constitute only a fraction of the total humanistic output of the period.

Bisticci is an early prefiguraton of Vasari, as Alberti is of Leonardo. The *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo* xv (after 1480) enriches our knowledge about the humanists and the humanistic activities of the Quattrocento as Vasari's *Vite*, some generations later, teaches us about the artists. The increased individualism of the Quattrocento in the background of the composition of Bisticci's *Vite* is questionable, however, for there was no little interest in the late Middle Agee either in Rerum memorandarum, in biographical accounts of prominent men and women. The difference lies rather in the more immediate knowledge that Bisticci has of the characters he describes and, furthermore, in the professional awareness he displays in the writing of the biographies: In grande oscurità sono gli ignoranti in questa vita, e molto sono obligati a dotti e periti delle lettere, he tells us in the introduction to the life of Alessandro di Bardi, perchè tutte le cose di che noi abbiamo notizia, l'abbiamo col mezzo loro.[1] It is with the professionalism of an expert that Bisticci speaks to us here, revindicating thus his own place among the humanists. At the same time, however, Bisticci is not exempt of a measure of modesty bordering upon a feeling of inferiority for writing the Vite in Italian. The biographic material is gathered a fin che se alcuno si volesse affaticare a farle latine, egli abbia innanzi il mezzo con il quale egli li possa fare.[2]

The prevalent attitude through the end of the Quattrocento was, to say it with to say it with Toffanin, fare "latina" la fiosofia.[3] Filelfo, who died in 1481 and who, judging from his commentaries on Petrarch's *Canzoni* (and his life of Federico of Urbino), was quite forward looking, still firmly maintains that the

[1] Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo* xv, a cura die Paolo D'Ancona ed Erhard Aeschlimann (Millano 1951) 543
[2] Ibid. 3
[3] G. Toffanin, *Storia dell'Umanesimo* (Bologna 1959) II, 189

vulgar is valid in iis rebus quarum memorian nolumus transferre ad posteros.[4] The vehicle of culture, conceived as mankind's memory, was still Latin.

Battista Fregoso, a minor humanist who gained some distinction in the diffusion of Florenctine Neoplatonism, wrote one of the earliest treatises of love, the *Anteros*, published in 1496. He too chooses to apologize in the dedication for the Italian used in the work. The vulgar of the *Anteros* will only enchance the excellence of the Latin, parendoti vedere gemme orientali splendidissime legate in ferrea corona.[5] The vulgar is here, modestly enough, degraded to the level of an iron crown.

The *Libro della vita civille* of Matteo Palmieri, completed at the latest in 1439, answers civic concerns similar to those that constitute the background of Alberti's *Della famiglia.* Palmieri is not at ease with the language in which he writes either. Latin remains the vehicle par excellence for literary expression: Oggi veggiamo per padre ed ornamento delle lettere essere mandato nel mondo il nostro Leonardo Aretino come slendido lume della eleganzia latina, per rendero agli uomini la dolcezza della latina lingua.[6] And again, Dante's only handicap is the language: Costui [Dante] in ogni parte eccelle qualunque altro volgare, che non si degna assimigliarsi ad esso, perochè fuori della lingua poco si truova drieto ai sommi poeti latini.[7] The justification for Palmieri's own labors in Italian is offered in didactic terms, for the sake of those who are not knowledgeable in Latin:

… ho trovati molti precepti… diligentissimamente scritti da varii autori latini e greci, sono stati lasciati per salute del monde. Questi spesse volte riconsiderando e conoscendogli utilissimi e degni, giudicai seguirne non piccolo frutto alla vita di chi ne potesse avere pur mezzanamente notizia.[8]

Alberti is the one early humanist who showed no shame or inhibition for writing in Italian, probably because he wrote copiously also in Latin. The polyvalent character of Alberti is well known. He is, at one and the same time, art

[4] Ibid. 224
[5] Baptistae C. Fulgosi, *Anteros* (Milano 1496), Dedica
[6] Matteo Palmieri, *Libro della vita civile*, a cura di Felice Battaglia (Bologna 1944) 37
[7] Ibid. 4
[8] Ibid. 3

theorist and humanist with distinct civic interests, Latin humanist and Italian humanist, man of thought and man of action. In the proemium to the Third Book of *Della famiglia*, he unmistakably champions the use of the vulgar in humanistic writings: Ben confesso quella antiqua latina lingua essere copiosa molto e ornatissima, ma non però veggo in che sia la nostre oggi Toscana tanto d'averla in odio, che in essa qualunque benché ottima cosa csritta ci dispiaccia.[9] With remarkable clearsightedness Alberti attacks one of the main fallacies of the Latin humanists who tend to dissociate living praxis from cultural heritage, and affirms the dynamic interrelationship between language and culture: e sia quanto dicono quella antica apresso de tutte le genti piena d'autorità, solo la voranno molto con suo studio e vigilie essere elimate e polita.[10] Italian, for Alberti, is thus a carrier of culture, as is Latin. But the case of Alberti is virtually unique among the humanists till Bembo.

And now to the humanist translations. *Translation* meant ordinarily for the Latin humanists a translation *into* Latin, and composition, a writing *in* Latin. There is no witness less disinterested to such views than Vespasiano da Bisticci who, as if it were against hi s own interests, repeatedly defined the two terms in the above sense. Venne di poi messer Leonardo d'Arezzo, he writes, e rinnovò la lingua latina, e levolla di tanta oscurità in quanta era stata lunghissimo tempo, come si vede e per le sua traduzioni e composizioni... Messer Leonardo fu dei primi che tradusse di greco in latino.[11] The same Bisticci tells us of Giannozzo Manetti, the great translator: [Nicholas v] Avendo condotto a Roma... molti uomini dotti con grandissimi salari, iscrisse a Firenze a messer Giannozzo Manetti che venisse a Roma per tradurre e comporre.[12]

The genetic history of texts originally written in Latin and later translated into Italian by humanists who were the authors of the original works, is a rather imperfectly known area of historical research. Some outstanding cases of this humanistic activity precisely overlap with the work of the Italian humanists we have considered earlier. The reason for the imperfect knowledge we have of some

[9] Leon Battista Alberti, *Opere volgari, vol I: libri della famiglia* – Cena familiaris – Villa, a cura di Cecil Grayson (Bari 1960) 155
[10] Ibid. 155-6
[11] *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo xv* (Bologna 1892-3), III, 251
[12] Ibid. I, 52

of these cases lies in the very nature of these texts and in the manner in which these writings were undertaken. The humanist, as a rule, writes a text, usually a longer treatise, in Latin; then, mainly for reasons of further divulgation of the text in non-humanistic cicrles, he translates his own work into Italian. The translations thus produced are, as far as humanist translations go, atypical.

At times it is quite dubious which of the two versions constitutes the original, whether the Latin or the Italian; at other times, it is not clear if there was an original Latin version at all; in many instances, the identity of the translator remains questionable. Be that as it may – and this is not the place to enter into details of the particular cases – this variety of Italian humanistic production is quantitatively inconspicuous, but nonetheless important, due to the first rank names associated with it. Alberti is once again heading the list. The *Della pittura* was first written in Latin in or around 1439 and subsequently translated into Italian. Ficino's widely acclaimed *Libro dello amore*, which initiated a quasigenre in the late Renaissance, the famous Trattati d'amore, was also first written in Latin and then translated into Italian. This is a unique case in the vast corpus of Ficino's dense speculative work. Mario Equicola, the secretary to Isabella d'Este, is a fortunate case in point. His Neoplatonic treatise on love, the *Libro di natura d'amore*, was first conceived and partially written in Latin in the last years of the Quattrocento. But some twenty years later, in the 1520's, it was rewritten in Italian, and thus published in 1529. The twenty or so years that had elapsed between the Latin and the Italian version, the span of a generation, are, characteristically enough, precisely the period in which the scale tips in favour of the vulgar in Italy. Equicola captures the moment of historical mutation and rides on the crest of the new wave.

From the speculative standpoint of the dignification of the vulgar and of its concomitant, the ideological independence from slavish classicism, Equicola and his friends are at midpoint between the orthodox Latin Humanism of Petrarch and Valla on the one hand, and the Italian Humanism of Machiavelli and Guicciardini and of the translators of the classics into Italian, on the other. Before turning to the latter, we must first briefly review the impact of Neoplatonism on the new humanistic reorientation.

The transition from Latin to Italian in the field of philosophic, speculative, and humanistic writings corresponds, on the speculative level, to a momentary break in the undisputed pre- eminence of Aristotelianism and to the rise of an important Neoplatonic current in the Renaissance. Such Neoplatonic current never attains the influential predominance and the widespread acceptance that Aristotelianism had enjoyed. But the combined influence of its various manifestations – the speculative strength of the theoretical formulations of Ficino and of Leone Ebreo, the breadth of vision of Pico and of Diacceto, the widespread reach of the popularizing treatises and, in particular, of the treatises on love and on beauty – was sufficient to tip the balance in favour of Italian. Several speculative features in Neoplatonic thought may be said to have been instrumental, if only indirectly, in the dignification of the vulgar.

Firstly, the general syncretism of Neoplatonism constitutes a generous and welcoming ground upon which a diversification of cultural interests thrives with ease. When diversified philosophic principles are brought into mutual play, then the variegated cultural and linguistic interests find also a common denominator. Secondly, the particular philosophic preoccupation of Neoplatonism, the concordance of Plato and Aristotle, represented a readily transferable living message to spheres other than the philosophic. The concordance of Plato and Aristotle in the philosophic realm suggested the concordance of other, seemingly antagonistic, cultural conception. In this respect we must not underestimate the fact that many of the leading Neoplatonic philosophers were at the same time also leading humanists. Who can better than Ficino exemplify for us the compound force of metaphysical speculations and humanistic preoccupations? Actually, were both not one and the same thing for our philosopher? Was not the translation of Plato into Latin, done in Valla's best philological-humanistic tradition, at the source of the *Theologia Platonica*? And was Ficino's indefatigably laborious life not crowned by his translation of, and philological work on, Plotinus? Harmonization in the speculative realm then must have suggested a parallel harmonization in the cultural realm.

Thirdly, the Christian component of Neoplatonic philosophy must have, in particular, exercised an impact upon the cultural sphere of the language. The primacy and the centrality of man's soul in the universal hierarchy of beings also

some correspondences on the general cultural, and on the particular humanistic level. If man's soul by its own intellective and affective power is capable of rising to God, are the manifestations of human soul not likewise directed towards God? And are not, therefore, all spiritual manifestations of essentially equal value? The emphasis upon Christianity of Ficinian Neoplatonism must have, once again, played into the hands of a culturally non-discriminating Humanism. Fourthly, the cherished Neoplatonic tenet of the infinitely large – and hence, equal – distance separating the highest or, for that matter, the lowest category from God, plays a vitally important function in cultural matters too. If the highest and the lowest are equidistant from God, why should then Latin Humanism be dissociated from, and considered higher than, Italian Humanism?

There are certainly further avenues of inquiry to be explored with regard to the cultural reverberations of Neoplatonism, but the above will suffice to sustain our present line of inquiry. The combined impact of the Neoplatonic philosophical trends may be shown, as a matter of course, with regards to cultural manifestations of the period other than the dignification of the vulgar. But with regard to the latter, Neoplatonism, though constituting only *one* of the operative trends of the period, is particulary relevant.

We have dealt above with two single categories of Italian Humanism: humanistic works written in Italian, often, as we have seen, not without an apologetic tone, and humanistic works translated from Latin into Italian by their authors. To these categories we must now add at least two further ones which, however, can be mentioned here only in the briefest terms, for they fall outside the scope of the present study: the foremost influence of absolutely first-rank poets who were at the same time among the most important humanists of the third humanistic period – Sannazaro and Poliziano. Both were masters of Latin as they were superior artists of Italian, and both held, though in different cultural spheres, the highest poetic qualifications, and hence enjoyed the highest respect; and lastly, the decisive impact of that prodigy of a man, humanist and philosopher, poet and literary critic, a prefiguration of Malherbe and Dr. Johnson, Cardinal Pietro Bembo. It is not by chance that the final Neoplatonic discourse on love in the famous fourth Book of Castiglione's *Cortegiano* is assigned precisely to him. With an authoritative voice second to none, as well as with a clearsighted common

sense, Bembo dictated the new trend in the evolution of Renaissance culture: conscious creative imitation, careful classicising form, vindication of the Italian. We all know the details of the program expounded in the *Prose della vulgar lingua* (1508-24) and the *De imitatione* (1512). Bembo's cooperation with Aldus Manutius in the editions of the Italians devenus déjà classiques, is of no less importance. The volumes of Dante and Petrarch edited by Bembo are a landmark and a turning point in the dignification of the vulgar in Italy. Next to Vergil, Cicero, and Ovid, now the Italian masters, too, become part and parcel of classical literature. The moment is ripe for the coming of age of Italian Humanism.

The above insistence upon the several parallel avenues through which Neoplatonic thought had influenced the dignification of the vulgar, and the integration, in their turn, of these speculative components into the wider, diversified spectrum of Renaissance cultural developments, seems particularly significant for the viewpoint sustained in this inquiry. The underlying bias of such insistence (and there is always some bias) rests upon a multivalent apprehension of cultural phenomena in general, and of humanistic developments in the Renaissance in particular. As in so many other respects, in this case, too, there is no single point of departure, no single watershed, and no single point of arrival. Humanistic cultural phenomena in the Renaissance coexist in uneasy intolerance first, and in mutual accommodation and tolerance later. Mutations in humanistic cultural phenomena occur by gradual aggregation of elements and by juxtaposition of interrelated trends, none of which is decisive by itself, but each of which constitutes a further step in the direction of the liberalization of the orthodox humanistic ideal. Petrarch, Valla, and Bruni probably would have been horrified reading Bembo's *Prose della vulgar lingua*, and certainly would have declared anathema on what, two generations after Bembo, was to become the highest expression of Italian Humanism: Annibale Caro's beautiful Italian version of the *Aeneis*. But then, initiators of trends often ignore where the wheels that they themselves had set in motion, by their innate impetus, would later on roll to. The fundamentally backward looking classicising trend of Latin Humanism had to measure itself, and to compromise, at a certain moment of its evolution, with a less classicising and more forward looking trend of Italian Humanism. This moment in Italian cultural history comprises the whole Laurentian period and spans roughly

from Ficino to Bembo. Within such evolution, the catalytic influence of speculative Neoplatonism and of its popularizing sequel cannot be overemphasized.

Translation into Italian of classical authors is thus necessarily a late Renaissance phenomenon in Italy. It does not make itself felt before the effects of the Florentine Neoplatonic revival were sufficiently widespread. And even then, it starts not without timidity, acquiring vigour only gradually, and reaching an exceptionally wide range and high quality not before the end of the first third of the Cinquecento, and perhaps, more accurately, towards its middle.

The three very early and important names one must mention regarding the translations into Italian are Cristoforo Landino, Bernardo Pulci (the brother of the more famous Luigi), and Matteo Maria Boiardo. Landino's *Historia naturale di C. Plinio Secondo tradocta di lingua latina in fiorentina* (Venice, 1476) should be considered a pioneering work in the new humanistic cultural orientation. The originality of the translation is only accentuated if one remembers Landino's own *Disputationes camaldulenses*, a showpiece of Latin Humanism. It is telling, in this regard, that Landino was part of the inner circle of the Florentine Neoplatoniste, and that it is precisely out of the ranks of this circle that such pioneering work was first issued.

As to Pulci, he left us a version of Virgil's *Eclogae*. The important poet Boiardo, on the other hand, translated Herodotus and, in the ill-fated year of the French invasions (1494) which was also the year of his death, the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius. But the important Italian translators came only later. They form a veritable group of humanists specialized in translation activities. Next to them, we also find a few practicing literati in the vernacular. Boiardo had been mentioned already; following in his footsteps, we find Alamanni (Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, 1533, and Catullus *Epithalamion*, 1543) and Alessandro Piccolomini (also the *Epithalamion*, 1539, and a partial version of the *Aeneis*, 1540). But they are the exception rather than the rule.

The rule consists of the professional humanists who specialized as translators. Among these the names of Antonio Brucioli (c. 1498-1566), Lodovico Dolce (1508-68), Giovanni Andrea dell' Anguillara (c. 1511- c. 1572), Bernardo Davanzati (1529-1606), and Annibale Caro (1507-66) shine within a host of lesser

stars. Brucioli is best remembered because of his Protestant tribulations and his version into Italian (1532). But he also translated Cicero's *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (1538) and the *Somnium Scipionis* (1539), as well as the *Historia Naturalis* of Plinius the Elder 1543). Dolce, a most prolific humanist translator, has left us Horace's *Ars poetica* (1536), the *Epistolae* and the *Sermones* (1549), Catullus *Epithalamium* (1538), Cicero's *De Oratore* (1547) and the *Orationes* (1562), a complete paraphrase translation of Ovid's *Metamorphose* (1553), the *Ars amatoria* (1561), and a paraphrase translation of the *Aeneis* (1568). Davanzati concentrated on Tacitus *Annales* (1582-1602), and dell Anguillara wrestled with the *Metamorphoses* (I, 1554, and II and III, also in 1554), and with the *Aeneis* (1582), his great and much belaboured work. The latter, however, was overshadowed by Caro's somewhat earlier version of this Latin epic which has, in so many ways, become the true national epic of Italy. The final dramatic moment of exchange between Dido and Aeneas (IV, 479 ff.) beautifully illustrates Caro's superior art:

Or va, che per innanzi/più non ti tegno, e più non ti contrasto./ Va pur, segui l'Italia, acquista i regni/che ti dan l'onde e i venti. Ma se i numi/son pietosi, e se ponno, io spero ancora/ch da venti e da l'onde e da gli scogli/n'avrai degno castigo; e che più volte/chiamerai Dido, che lontana ancora/co neri fuochi suoi ti fia presene:/e, tosto che di morte il freddo gelo/l'anima dal mio corpo avrà disgiunta,/passo non moverai, che l'ombra mia/non ti sia ntorno.[13]

Annibale Caro's *Aeneis* (1581) is a true masterpiece of the Italian Humanism, fittingly crowning the translations into Italian of the Renaissance.

If we turn now to the evolution of Humanism in Spain, a substantially different panorama will present itself. In Spain the development of Latin Humanism and of Spanish Humanism may be said to have taken place almost simultaneously. Early in the fifteenth century we find, side by side with humanistic works in Latin, a steady and important humanistic production in Spanish. Evidently, there was in Spain a degree of vigorous intellectual independence forestalling the overwhelming bondage to classical models. Such a

[13] Virgilio, *Eneide*, transl. Annibal Caro (Novara 1968) 181

situation continued uninterruptedly from the early days of the Marqués de Santillana (1398-1458), one of the first Castilian poets to call attention specifically to the classical and to the Italian models, to the times of Gracián, Quevedo, and Calderón at the end of the Golden Age. Boccaccio's assertion that Hispani semibarbari et efferati homines[14] cannot thus be taken but with a smile. And yet, Boccaccio's misjudgement made history. No less an authoritative historian than Bolgar argues that when we turn from literature to learning, we find that Spanish Humanism never attained to any great distinction.[15] Bolgar's fallacy is twofold: he does not consider Spanish classical learning *in toto*; and he divorces the explicit speculative learning from the implicit learning *within* literature. Neither of the two approaches seems justified.

For a correct evaluation of Latin and Spanish Humanism in Spain, the idiosyncratic historico-cultural position of the Iberian peninsula must from the outset be kept in mind. We can only mention here in the briefest terms a few of the relevant factors that must be taken into consideration within a complexity of problems that have only recently begun to unfold and to be integrated into the vaster historico-cultural panorama of the European, or better, the Mediterranean world of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Firstly, the long-standing European prejudices against the Spanish intellectual contributions to European culture, fundamentally a persistent legacy of French eighteenth-century thought, should be discarded as intellectual arrogance. Secondly, the specifically Burckhardtian approach of measuring European Renaissance by Italian Renaissance patterns (it is not a question of standards), and European Humanism by the Latin Humanism of Italy, has run quicksand with regard to the so-called Northern Renaissance and Christian Humanism, too. The same approach, with regard to Spain, cannot hope to be anything but disastrous. Thirdly, as in Italy Humanism must be considered *within* the larger framework of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance (actually as part of a long drive towards naturalism which can be traced from St. Francis and from Ochmanian nominalism onward), so in Sapin Humanism must be considered *in relation to* Renaissance and *within* the larger framework of what came to e known as Golden Age.

[14] *Lettere*, ed. Corazzini, 363
[15] R.R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (New York 1964) 316

Fourthly, the outstanding importance of Spain as a European catalyst of classical philosophic thought in general, and as a transmission-ground for Aristotelian and Alexandrian Neoplatonic philosophy in particular, only now starts to emerge in its full light and in its encompassing magnitude. Not as if the Arabic, and to lesser extent the Jewish, contributions to philosophy between the tenth and the fifteenth century would have hitherto passed unnoticed. But they have, as a rule, been in sufficiently integrated into the history of ideas of Europe of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Ibn Sina's (Avicenna, 980-1037) *Kitab As-Sifa* (The Book of Recovery), one of the major works of Aristotelian Neoplatonic orientation, had been translated into Latin in the twelfth century already by Avendauth (Ibn-Dawud) and by Dominicus Grundissalinus. Ibn Rusd's (Averroes, 1126-1198) *Tudsir Kitab An-Nafs* came down to us in Michael scottus translation Commentarium magnum in tres libros de anima executed before 1230; and his *Tahafut al-Tahafut,* translated early as Destructio destructionis, was printed by Nifo in 1517. Ibn Gabirol's strongly Neoplatonic *Fons vitae* is fully preserved in a Latin version only. The story of the transmission and of the influence of a single work is characteristic of many others: Ibn-Tufail's (Abubacer, 1105-1185) *Haiy Ibn-Yagzan,* a philosophical-literary treatise on self-education and thus a cherished topic of the Italian Renaissance, came into the hands of Pico della Mirandola in the form of a Latin translation from a Hebrew version of the Arabic original.

Fifthly, the real strength of the late Spanish Middle ages and of at least half of the *Siglo de Oro* lies in the extraordinary cultural tolerance (not always corresponding to social and political tolerance) of the period, in which Mediaeval and Renaissance philosophic, cultural, and literary tendencies thrived side by side. Sixthly and lastly, for Spain, as for the rest of the non-Italian Europe, modern Italian authors were considered also classics, and hence were the object of classicising interest. Thus, a correct re-evaluation of Humanism in Spain must take into account the above outlined, though by no means exhausted, vast panorama and essentially diversified cultural input. To interpret the self integrating multifarious cultural elements as a built-in weakness of the Spanish mind is tantamount to chastising early Latin Humanism in Italy for its single minded orthodox dependency upon classical Rome. Both attitudes are unhistorical. As so

often in historically comparable situations, the strength of one system is the weakness of the other, though both thrive on many common sources.

If we turn now to the translations of the Latin classics (for, with regard to the Greek ones, Spain shows itself at a considerable disadvantage), we shall find the above judgment amply corroborated. If we compare the Italian and the Spain translations of the Latin classics into the respective vernaculars, we shall find that in both quantity and quality the two national humanistic efforts match each other. We shall find also that, in a surprisingly large number of instances, the Spanish translations are considerably anterior to the Italian ones.

The works of Caesar are translated into Spanish by López de Toledo (printed in 1498), while the corresponding Italian version by Ortica della Porta dates from 1512. Cassiodorus *Historia ecclesiastica* is translated by Juan de la Cruz in 1554, while Italian version of the *Dignitate Consulari* executed by Lodovico Dolce appears only some years later. Frontinus *strategemata* is rendered into Spanish by Guillén de avila in 1516, while the Italian version of Lucio dates from 1536. The *Memorabilia* of Valerius Maximus is translated into Spanish by Urries some time in the fifteenth century and printed in 1495, while the Italian version of Bernardino da Lissone was done in the year 1504.

The great Latin historians were particular favorites of Spanish humanistic interests. López de Ayala did partial version of Livy's *Opera* in 1407, while the earliest anonymous translations date from the mid-fifteenth century. Tacitus is solidly represented in the translation of Alamos de Barrientos (1513) with the *Annales*, the *Historiae, Agricola,* and *Germania*. An anonymous Italian translation was made in the year 1544, only, and that by Dati in 1563. Davanzati's important translation, as we have seen above, was prepared at a much later date. The *Opera* of Sallustius was translated into Spanish by Vidal de Noys in 1493, while the Italian version by A. Ortica was written in 1518 only.

The most popular and at the same time most respected Latin authors, apart from Ovid and Horace, are also the object of early attention by the Spanish humanistic translators. The Spanish version of the *Aeneis* by Don Enrique d'Aragón date from 1428. Vergil is, of course, the greatest single Italian favorite and there are dozens of Italian versions up to the year 1587, but the earliest one is dated some fifty years later than the Spanish version by Don Enrique. Lucan's

Pharsalia is known in a fifteenth century anonymous Spanish version, while the Italian translation of Montichiello dates from 1492. Cicero has been heavily treated by the Italian translators. But a number of Cicero's works appeared in Spanish earlier than Italian. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* is known in a first Spanish translation by Enrique de Villena of the year 1434 and in a second one by the great Alfonso de Cartagena of 1456. The first Italian version, on the other hand, is an anonymous one from 1502, and the second was prepared by Antonio Brucioli in 1538. Similarly, the *De officiis* and the *De senctute* have also been translated by Alfonso de Cartagena in 1456, while the corresponding Italian versions by F. Vendranimo date from 1523.

We arrive thus at Seneca, for obvious reasons a very special case in the Spanish classical tradition. There are two early Spanish versions of the *Epistole*, one from 1455 (?) by Pérez de Guzmán, and one from 1456 by Alfonso de Cartagena. Manilio's Italian version was done only in 1492. Several of the tragedies have been translated into Spanish by A. de Vilaragut around 1400, while the complete set of the tragedies appears in Italian almost one hundred years later, in the translation of Evangelista Fossa.

This is ,of course, not the whole story of the Spanish humanistic translations from the classical Latin authors. But it is illustrative of the early and deep interests of Spanish Humanism. The depth of such interests may be ascertained through a number of further considerations.

a) The humanists engaged in the execution of the translations worked, as a matter of course, on various literary and philological levels. We find a whole gamut of style, quality, and translating mode: pedestrian version, literary translations, poetic translations, paraphrase versions, epigrammatic paraphrases, and more. But then, the same variety is discernible in the translations of the Italian humanists too.

b) A distinguishing feature of Humanism in Spain is that several of the translators from Latin are, at the same time, the best literati-poets of their times. In Italy, as we have seen, this was not necessarily the case. Except for Boiardo and Alamanni, the great translators of the Italian Humanism such as Brucioli, Dolce, Caro, dell'Anguillara, and Davanzati were, foremostly, artists of translation, and only incidentally

artists of original works. In Spain, Don Pedro López de Ayala (1332-1407), the most important poet, historian, and prose writer of his generation, is also, as we have seen, the translator of Livy. Juan del Encina (1463?-1529?), one of the most prominent literary personalities of the early Golden Age, translates Virgil's *Eclogae*. Lope de Vega himself el monstruo de la naturaleza, finds time and interest to translate Claudianus *Raptus Proserpinae*.

c) Admittedly, philological studies are not the strongest point of Spanish Humanism. And yet, the philological contributions. The humanist Alfonso de Cartagena, whom we have mentioned several times already, is a friend of Eneas Silvio Piccolomini. He is also the initiator of Hebrew and Biblical studies. Antonio de Nebrijia (or Lebrija, 1441?-1532), after ten years of studies in Italy, writes the first grammar of any European vulgar tongue, the *Gramática sobre la lengua castella* (1492). Cardinal Ximénes de Cisneros is the living spirit behind the *Biblia poliglota complutense*, prepared at the newly founded *humanistic* university of Alcalá and published in 1514-1517.

d) Since modern and even contemporary Italians were considered classics, translations from, and imitations of, Latin authors went hand in hand with translations from, and imitations of, Italian ones: Juan de Mena (1411-1456) imitates Virgil and Lucan, but also Dante and Petrarch; Enrique de Aragón translates the *Aeneis* and the *Divina Comedia*; Garcilaso, the prince of the Spanish Renaisance poets, imitates freely – and magnificently – Vergil and Sannazaro.

e) Our last point concerns the qualitative direction of the translations of the Spanish humanists. Here again, one may trace an evolution distinct from that of the Italian humanists. In Italy, it is the second third of the Cinquecento, that is to say, the end of the great humanistic period, which yields the lasting literary translations of the Italian humanists. In Spain, on the other hand, the quality of the translations is quite independent from any inner evolution of Humanism. Spanish Humanism, *unlike* Italian Humanism, but precisely *like* Latin Humanism in Italy, is born mature. The creative energies that in Italy had been

poured into Latin, were in Spain from the start channelled into the vernacular.

To conclude, the vigorous maturity of Spanish Humanism kept at a steady level till the end of the sixteenth century and beyond. It seems convenient to illustrate this last phase of Spanish Humanism with the story of the translations of the *Dialoghi d'amore*. Leone Ebreo's treatise of love is, next to the works of Ficino and Pico, one of the three main pillars of the Neoplatonic speculation of the Italian Renaissance. The eleven Italian editions following the *edition princeps* of 1535, and the two Latin, six French, one Hebrew, and five Spanish editions of the work speak eloquently of the European diffusion of the *Dialoghi*.

The first Spanish translation is executed by Guedella Yahia and is printed in the year 1568, and then again in 1598. A second translation of the *Dialoghi* by Carlos Montesa followed in 1584 and, in turn, was also reprinted in 1602. After two translations it would seem that the Spanish interest in a highly speculative work would subside. But this is not the case. El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616), the first American-born writer of European reputation, translates the *Dialoghi* for the third time into Spanish,… por aprovechar los años de mi edad y servir a los estudiosos, traduje de italiano en romance castellano los Diálogos de filosofía ...[16] The publishing date of the translation is 1590. But with this, the whole story is not yet unfolded. Faithful to the Spanish brand of Humanism in which the speculative and the literary element are inextricably blended, it is Cervantes himself who champions the *Dialoghi.* In the very prologue to the *Quijote,* he tells us: Si tratáreis de amores, con dos onzas que sepáis de la lengua toscana, toparéis con Leün Herbreco, que os hincha las medidas.[17] Where are now the Hispani semibarbari et efferati of Boccaccio?

To the question on the dignification of the vulgar in humanistic translations in Italy and Spain, implicitly posited in the title of this paper, the answer can now be brief. In Italy, Italian Humanism gradually gained ground reaching a level of recognized stability and dignity some time in the first third, or half, of the

[16] El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Prologo, *Historia general del Perú* (1617), the second part of Comentarios Reales que tratan del origen de los Incas. Obras completas, ed. P. Carmelo Saenz de Santa Maria, S.I., III, Biblioteca de Autores Espanoles v. 134 (Madrid: Real Academia Española 1960) 13

[17] Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, ed. Martßn de Riquer (Barcelona 1968) 23-4

Cinquecento. The translations into Italian from the Latin classics were an important component in this long process of dignification. In Spain, on the other hand, the vulgar tongue needed no dignification. It had been a respected and dignified speculative-intellectual tool as well as a beloved literary medium right from the beginning of the first humanistic translations into Spanish.

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