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Machiavelli: un uso sovversivo della tradizione classica

a cura di
Monica Centanni e Peppe Nanni

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+39 041 257 14 61

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Sommario

7 *Machiavelli, gli Antichi e noi. Editoriale*
Monica Centanni e Peppe Nanni

Testi

23 *Cantimori e Machiavelli*
Delio Cantimori, con una Nota introduttiva di Monica Centanni e Silvia De Laude

25 *Cantimori e Machiavelli. Nota introduttiva alla riedizione dei saggi: Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism (1937) e Retorica e politica nell'Umanesimo italiano (1937; 1992)*
Monica Centanni e Silvia De Laude

35 *Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism*
Delio Cantimori, translated by Frances Yates

63 *Retorica e politica nell'Umanesimo italiano*
Delio Cantimori

97 *Machiavelli lettore di Lucrezio*
Sergio Bertelli, con una Nota introduttiva di Monica Centanni

99 *Una scoperta di Sergio Bertelli: Machiavelli lettore di Lucrezio. Nota introduttiva alla riedizione dei due saggi sul Vat. Ross. 844 (Bertelli 1961; Bertelli 1964)*
Monica Centanni

109 *Noterelle machiavelliane: un codice di Lucrezio e Terenzio*
Sergio Bertelli

121 *Ancora su Machiavelli e Lucrezio*
Sergio Bertelli

Saggi

143 *Machiavelli, l'umanesimo e l'amore politico*
Guido Cappelli

167 *Tucidide e Machiavelli*
Luciano Canfora

187 *Machiavelli e i suoi lettori novecenteschi*
Luciano Canfora

197 *Il giudizio di Machiavelli su Scipione l'Africano: la fine di un mito repubblicano?*
Enrico Fenzi

217 *Machiavelli di fronte al testo antico (Livio, Cicerone, Platone)*
Riccardo Fubini

229 *"Cattivi maestri": Machiavelli e i classici*
Peppe Nanni

Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism

"Journal of the Warburg Institute", Vol. 1, No. 2 (October 1937), 83-102

Delio Cantimori, translated by Frances Yates

I. The Humanistic Background of Machiavelli and Guicciardini

The development of Italian Humanism, from the close of the fourteenth, all through the fifteenth and up to the middle of the sixteenth century, ran parallel to a process of political transformation which affected the public life and civil organization of the Italian States. The last flashes of the life of the communes gave place to the signories, and these in turn were superseded by the political, social, and spiritual subjection to Spain which marked the consolidation and end of the principalities[1]. The humanists, in the character of political theorists searching for the ideal state and the perfect ruler, of jurists, historians, panegyrists, or orators pleading for one side or another, often turned their attention to contemporary events which they praised, condemned, observed, and interpreted.

This political preoccupation of humanists culminates in the work of Machiavelli and Guicciardini who, however, by their very greatness and the precision of their thought, rise superior to the humanism in which they are rooted. If the Machiavellian conception of the autonomy of politics goes beyond the motives which are generally called "humanist", and if Machiavelli's moral seriousness might oblige us to place him almost in opposition to the world of the *letterati* and *pedanti* who cultivated the beautiful form[2], it is impossible to separate from the humanist tradition the Florentine secretary's aspiration towards Italian unity and national renewal by means of a return to Roman civil virtue; again, his pragmatic conception of political life and of history no less than his distinction between "Virtue" and "Fortune" are of purely humanist type[3]. The same is true of Guicciardini whose impulses as a historian, and whose ideas on

political life, are deeply rooted in the Florentine humanists' preoccupation with the grand and the sublime in human passions[4].

Until recently the attention of historians has been so fixed upon Machiavelli and Guicciardini that they have neglected the political thought of the lesser humanists, relegating all their eloquent imaginings, their learned constructions, their impassioned pleadings to that world of useless, if high-sounding, words, of abstract affirmation and unpractical idealism, which goes under the name of "rhetoric". They dismissed as rhetorical the stoic pathos which revived in the last tyrannicides and in the many treatises on the theme *De optimo principe*; the patriotic eloquence, rich in memories of ancient Rome and of the free commune, which continued from Cola da Rienzo's movement up to the late apologians of the princely houses, in praise of whom it is said that they thought always and only of the well-being of Italy[5].

The rejection of this type of rhetoric[6] is expressive of a political realism eager to face actual events and their specific problems and averse to ideologies. It is true that from this point of view no amount of research, however rich in results and in new interpretations of detail, can shake the negative judgment upon the ethico-political worth of humanism[7]; for even if the oratory of the humanists corresponded to exigencies profoundly felt in the society of the time, or in particular groups of that society[8], it remained merely an expression of aspirations and desires, and never passed from the stage of nostalgia to that of deliberate planning. They confined themselves to moral generalizations[9]. On the other hand it must be remembered that the political thinkers, Machiavelli and Guicciardini, in comparison with whom the humanists are judged, are themselves steeped in humanism, in its illusions, its eloquence, and its "romantic" preoccupations[10]. This makes it imperative to study humanistic "rhetoric" not only in contrast to realistic politics, but as one of the sources from which politics were nourished.

Both trends are easily discovered among the antecedents of Machiavelli's *Prince*: it will suffice to mention here Pier Candido Decembrio who understood the heroic force of a leader such as Filippo Maria Visconti, accustomed to "anteponere statum dominatus sui saluti corporis et animae"; or a man such as Carlo Malatesta, enemy of the humanists, whom

he called actors, and author of a few pages of political advice drawn up for Giovanni Maria Visconti. These pages are not the work of a literary theorist, concerned with an idealized prince, but consist of clearly drawn up precepts immediately applicable to a particular state and addressed by the governor of Milan to the city and its duke with the idea of being of real use[11]. On the other hand, there is the widespread appeal of the politico-nationalist themes of the Petrarchan type, the propaganda for a noble but vague ideal of peace and union among the Italian states, the insistence on the value of Ciceronian eloquence and the rhetorical celebration of the spiritual renewal of Italy[12].

We shall continue to understand by politics the realistic politics of Machiavelli as defined by his interpreters and commentators, from De Sanctis to Burn, Ercole, Chabod, Russo[13] – that is, politics founded upon the experience of facts and upon theoretical reflexion on political events. By rhetoric we shall not understand merely the art of oratory, as defined, for example, by Pico della Mirandola in his famous epistle to Ermolao Barbaro; that is to say, the art of persuasion at all costs, by all kinds of meretricious literary devices and by appeal to the emotions, in order to obtain a practical result[14]; but we shall include in this word a faith sincere, though still somewhat ingenuous and crude, in virtue, in passion, in dignity – ideals which are open to many different interpretations – in short, aesthetico-moral ideology. The fact that public opinion and the able political leaders of the Humanist and Renaissance period attached so much importance to elegance in speech, to the use of pure Latin and the Latinized periods of Italian, to a general but exalted knowledge of maxims, of examples of perfect princes and perfect republics, to the patriotic and religious ideal of the return to Roman civilization – all elements of "rhetoric" – shows us the political importance of such "rhetoric". An enquiry of a general character into this subject cannot be contained within the limits of an article; we must confine ourselves to the analysis of one particular case which, on account of the greatness of one of the personages in the background – Machiavelli – and the moral seriousness of the other persons concerned, may be regarded as typical for the process by which the "rhetoric" and literature of the humanist tradition becomes political action in pursuit of an idea.

II. The conversations of the *Orti Oricellari*

The facts of experience which furnished the material for the reflexions of Machiavelli were found above all in the history of northern Italy and of Cesare Borgia; but the setting in which he expounded his problems and conclusions was Florence, rich in philosophical and literary tradition. It was natural enough that in the study of Machiavelli's surroundings more attention should have been paid to his political friends – the great Guicciardini, Vettori, Soderini – than to the philosophers and men of letters whom he used to meet in the *Orti Oricellari*. Yet the discussions which were held there can give us a vivid and complete impression of all the interests with which these men were preoccupied, and supply a useful illustration of the connection between political consciousness as personified in Machiavelli, and the literary and rhetorical tradition of the humanists.

All Machiavelli's biographers and commentators have made mention of the conversations in the *Orti Oricellari*, but, as it happens, in a rather hasty fashion and solely in reference to external events; or if they dwell upon them at all, it is in order to examine the extent to which Machiavelli was implicated – whether deeply, slightly, or not at all – in the plot of 1522 against the Medici[15]. Russo alone, amongst the moderns, has taken account of the setting of the *Orti Oricellari* in his commentary upon the *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*. In analysing the tenth chapter of the first book in which Machiavelli discusses the fame of Caesar, Russo points to the controversy between Poggio Bracciolini, defender of the civil fame and *virtù* of Scipio, and Guarino Veronese, champion of Caesar's greatness. He observes that Machiavelli, in adopting Bracciolini's view, probably painted Caesar in still darker colours, influenced as he was by the temper of his young friends of the *Orti Oricellari* who were *piagnoni* and republicans, and by all the literature against tyrants which, from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries onwards, had had a wide vogue. Certainly the vivid style savours here and there, and particularly in the final description, of literature[16].

The meetings of the *Orti Oricellari* bring to a close a long tradition in Florence of literary and political conversations. This tradition begins with the talks upon moral, philosophical, and political themes recorded in the *Paradiso degli Alberti* and with the debates upon the relative merits of the

active and the contemplative life collected in Landino's *Disputationes Camaldulenses*[17]. It remains as it were suspended and resolved in the philosophical discussions of Ficino's *Platonic Academy*, although even the arguments of Ficino and Giovmanni Pico on remote problems of pure philosophy might be said to contain political implications; and it finally reappears in a livelier and more insistent form towards the end of Florence's independent life as a literary and religious centre, in the decades which precede the Sack of Rome and the fall of the last Florentine republic[18]. The names of some of those who frequented the *Orti Oricellari* are known, and in some cases we know also their lives; it is recorded in a general way that the discussions dealt with politics and literature; that Machiavelli there read aloud the chapter on conspiracies in his *Deche*; that the meetings were attended by Trissino who introduced discussions upon the Italian language; by a pupil of Ficino's, Francesco Diacceto, who discoursed there on love; by the poet Luigi Alamanni, the writer Antonio Brucioli, and other young men who planned in 1522 a final and unsuccessful republican conspiracy against the Medici[19]. One also learns that Machiavelli dedicated his *Arte della Guerra* and the *Discorsi* to some of the principal members of the *Orti*, which he also made the scene of the dialogues on the *Arte della Guerra*. But nothing more precise is known of the content of the political, moral, and philosophical arguments; only the discussions on language introduced by Trissino[20] are recorded, which seem to have inspired the founding of the *Accademia della Crusca*. Yet the presence there of Machiavelli is enough, as Russo's observations have shown, to make us think how interesting it would be to have some more exact knowledge of these conversations.

Now, a source exists from which precise information may be obtained: the dialogues written and published in exile by Antonio Brucioli, who took part in these conversations[21]. The attention of students has never, so far as we know, been turned to these dialogues, probably because the main interest presented by their writer does not concern his earlier Florentine activity, nor his life immediately after his exile, but rather centres upon his religious and heretical propensities which began with his Italian translation of, and his quasi-Protestant commentary on, Pagnini's *Bible*[22]. For students of the political life of Florence, Brucioli loses all interest after his flight from that city following the failure of the conspiracy in which he had taken part; and on his return to Florence during the final republican

attempt he appears to be isolated among the *piagnoni* who regarded him with suspicion and aversion on account of his "Lutheran" ideas. On the other hand, for students of the Reformation movement in Italy, his non-religious activity presents no particular interest[23]. Yet even in the first edition of his *Dialoghi* the reader notices the accents of a particular situation, although the speakers have fictitious Greek and Roman names: and in the second edition there actually appear the names of the members of the *Orti Oricellari* – Rucellai, Trissino, Machiavelli himself, Alamanni, with whom Brucioli had kept in contact in exile, and others. Even though these dialogues, which are imagined to take place in Venice, Pesaro, Urbino and other meeting places of the Florentine exiles, may not inform us of the exact opinions of the various speakers – which would not, indeed, present more than an interest of curiosity, since we have the works of the most important of them – they do depict at closer quarters the atmosphere of the *Orti Oricellari* and its preoccupations. The knowledge, however scanty, that we have of Brucioli's personality, the fact that he was continually associated with Alamanni, and the type of argument which he offers in his *Dialoghi*, all combine to indicate the value and interest of this source[24].

III. Antonio Brucioli's *Dialogues*

In order to show the connexion of Brucioli's dialogues with the Florentine tradition and at the same time determine the limits of their usefulness for establishing the contact of humanist 'rhetoric' with political interest – limits due to the particular shade of Brucioli's religious opinion – we shall start with the dialogue on Letters and Arms, which by its very theme strikes the key-note of our problem[25]. The dialogue revives the old contrast between the active life, especially political and military, and the contemplative life, including the function of literature in preserving the record of great undertakings which would otherwise be forgotten; this contrast had aroused a particularly keen interest in Florence from the first decades of the fifteenth century[26] and was now more poignant than ever. To the argument of Letters, Arms at one point replies as follows:

> When great deeds are in themselves wonderful and worthy of praise, even though they are unrecorded they are not for that reason less laudable, outstanding, and memorable; and if the noble deed remains without a

> witness, it is yet sufficient that it should be known to thine own conscience and to God[27].

Here we see the humanistic passion for "great deeds", but it is no longer directed towards the desire for glory and a reputation with posterity: the approval of conscience is enough. This is not a common motive in humanism, not even in the Savonarolesque atmosphere of the Florentine *piagnoni*, as is shown in the case of Boscoli, for whom "conscience" was not enough[28]. We can therefore make use of the political, moral, and philosophical conversations in Brucioli's *Dialoghi* but not of those on religious subjects.

The themes of the first book of Brucioli's *Dialoghi* are typical of the traditional Florentine discussions between Platonists and Stoics[29]. The mixture of realism and ideology which prevails in the treatment of these themes may best be demonstrated if we start by describing a number of strictly "literary" motifs contained chiefly in the dialogues on Friendship and Anger, and in some of the political dialogues. Against this background of literary τὸποι, we shall set the realistic decisions derived from them, as they affect the organization of communal life, especially the distribution of property and the training of the militia.

The dialogue on friendship contains already in the first edition the names Jacopo and Luigi, that is Jacopo da Diacceto, one of the plotters against the Medici who was arrested and condemned, and Luigi Alamanni, not the poet, but the soldier, who was also involved in the conspiracy and condemned to death[30]. The dialogue is a kind of memorial to the lost friends. The praises of friendship, hyperbolic in style, are put into the mouth of Cosimo Rucellai, who rises to this poetic vision:

> And for my part I firmly believe that if a man should ascend up into Heaven and survey the nature of the Universe and the beauty of the stars, this glorious sight would not make him happy if he had no friend to whom he might communicate it; but that it would fill his heart with gladness if there were with him someone to whom he could speak of it in friendly fashion...[31].

Then, following the Platonic model, he continues with a dissertation upon true friends, those who are joined by love of virtue, and false friends who are so from pleasure or utility.

Ficino's Platonic movement had softened down all the traditional political problems of Florentine humanism into philosophical problems of a general character. Thus, the revaluation of 'anger' which was so important to Bruni and Palmieri, and to Florentine humanism in general, and which was taken up again by Landino[32] is here less strongly marked, being veiled by rational and moral preoccupations which probably also reveal the influence of tendencies associated with the *piagnoni*[33]. In the dialogue on anger, which depicts that emotion in all the gloomy colours of a moral treatise in the Stoic and Senecan manner, Brucioli causes this question to be put to one of the speakers:

> Some people (as you probably know) have wished us to think that anger is a useful and natural thing.

To which it is replied:

> It is not our business to search out what others have thought, but if we are speaking of that kind of anger which proceeds from right and reason, which is perhaps the kind which they mean, this is not anger, but a certain impulse towards justice[34].

The representative of Florentine tradition insists that "Nevertheless Aristotle said that anger was a necessity, for nothing could be achieved unless it filled the soul and set the spirit afire; but that it was well to use it not as a Duke but as a Knight. The reply is:

> It may seem a bold thing to contradict such a man, such a wonderful student of nature, nevertheless in this matter I am not in agreement with him....

For anger, which causes one to reason falsely, carries one beyond the prearranged limit, as happens when, in an assault, over-enthusiastic soldiers do not listen to the order to halt. Brucioli concludes with the alternative that the passion which achieves great things either follows reason, in which case it cannot be called anger, or does not follow it, in

which case it is harmful and to be avoided and condemned. So for him "fortitude"is not concerned solely with fighting (constancy in resisting the enemy in warfare) but includes constancy in all the virtues against all the vices; and this generalization is justified by an express reference to the Stoics[35].

The majority of the political dialogues keep even more within the traditional views: the laws of the republic should be laid down by a philosopher, that is, by a "lover of wisdom", and all the citizens should also be of this nature. For this wisdom "teaches us for our own good to know ourselves, which is a most difficult thing..."[36]. Here and there are allusions to Florentine life[37]. But on the whole the text does not deviate from the general catalogue of duties "towards God, towards father, mother, oneself, ones country, one's friends and relations, pilgrims and beggars"[38]; nor from the purely humanistic search as to "how by the best laws and institutions man may become good"[39]. The laws of Solon[40] are recalled, and the Medici compared to Thrasibulus and Dionysius.

According to the dialogue *On the prince* there are two types of a true government by princes: "when the prince rules in accordance with the laws and remains subject to them, and when he has absolute but hereditary power", and this kind of monarchy is secure "because the prince rules the kingdom in accordance with the custom which has been handed on to him from his ancestors"[41]. The prince should fear God and be adorned with all the virtues; for "a king is nothing else but the guide and reformer of his people". At one point one of the speakers, on hearing the catalogue of all the virtues which a prince ought to possess, makes the comment:

> You are speaking of things very difficult to obtain

to which the principal speaker replies:

> Yet not of impossible ones; for it would all follow easily if the Prince would actually be as he wishes to appear[42].

This moral optimism is the strongest of the humanist traits in Brucioli's thought and it probably corresponds to the ideas of the *Orti Oricellari* all

the more since Platonism was there directly represented and Brucioli's conception of the best prince is founded on this reasoning:

> The prince in truth is nothing but the physician of the Republic. And as not all parts of the soul are of the same value, but some command whilst others obey, and those which command are the best, so the Prince is the summit of the people...[43].

Purely literary, also, is his conception of the military chief, for whose training

> it is of no small assistance to read history and the tales of deeds done by other captains in ancient and modern times, endeavouring,

says Duke Francesco Maria da Feltre to his son Guidobaldo[44],

> to imitate them in all their most perfect operations: for it is virtue and prudence which finally gain dominion over all things, although fortune may have much power.

The picture of the tyrant is also the traditional one; he is wicked and unhappy, and therefore, at bottom, a wretched man who deludes himself in thinking that he possesses power, fame, and wealth, all of which he is destined to lose, and which, moreover, do not constitute the true good. Yet within this setting of conventional ideals of a somewhat vague and Utopian type, we shall find that particular problems are worked out which have a direct political bearing.

IV. The Distribution of Property

In the dialogue *On the republic,* Brucioli sets out to investigate "what are the best republics and how they are constituted", but he at once specifies this question in a realistic sense:

> I mean those which have really existed or could exist, not those impossible ones which someone has imagined after the pattern of the fables of poets, by stressing the uniformity of nature rather than the variety of the souls of men[45].

Brucioli insists that his projects can materialize

> and some (perhaps wishing to show off in words the severity of their Philosophy) have planned communities of stolid friars and of thoughtless nuns rather than a well-composed Republic, after the manner of those Poets who praise the Golden Age, yet not one of them, if it really existed, would care to live on those acorns which they describe so poetically. And if I am to say what I think of it, I am of an entirely opposite opinion[46].

The arguments against communism of the Platonic type are long and meticulous and seem to bear witness to a strong levelling tendency amongst these young men: the principal speaker (who in the second edition is Trissino) admits, in substance, the principle of the equal distribution of wealth, yet shows himself opposed to communism, for "what is common to all inspires little zeal". To which one of the secondary interlocutors, who in the second edition is Machiavelli himself, adds:

> This does not appear to be in keeping with reason in the natural sense of the word inasmuch as one should always be more ready to accept the universal than the particular.

This draws the reply:

> I do not propose to discuss now whether or not it is reasonable: that must be reserved for another occasion. But I desire that we should speak from experience, which is often the mother of knowledge. We see every day that when there are many people attending to one thing in which many participate, one thinks that another is doing what is necessary, and so they all leave off work. This occurs in the service of great persons. Where there are many to minister to one, he is often worse served than if he had fewer about him, for one waits until the other does it, and is afraid of doing more than the other.

The principal interlocutor then takes as an example the communal property of women, which is naturally rejected as a source of confusion, disorder, and other evils; the common property of goods, on the other hand, is still insisted upon, until the principal speaker fastens upon a sort of functional conception of private property which should conciliate both common and private ownership:

> for land ought to be private property in the sense of belonging to its lord, but common property in so far as the exchange or sale of its produce is concerned.

From this there would follow two advantages, one that everyone would take care to work his field well and look after his own possessions, knowing them to be his own; the other that the goods would be

> common for the use of all, in accordance with the proverb which says that things which are owned amongst friends belong to them all; and thus it is clear that it is better that things should be privately owned, yet used for the common good, than communally owned altogether.

In this way, by arguments meant to appeal to common sense and to a sober view of human nature, prefaced by polemical assertions upon the worth of experience as opposed to the deceits of theory, the other questions are solved: whether wealth ought to be equally distributed (which is rejected on general lines, but with the restriction that private wealth ought not to exceed a certain level), what class ought to be entrusted with the government of the country, the rich, the moderately well-off, or the poor (the second of these being defined as a class of landed property owners, well established and able to dedicate themselves to the business of government, but excluding merchants), and so on; the whole being modelled upon Plato with an admixture of Aristotelian elements[47]. And to this is added the description of an ideal city which the principal speaker had seen (in the second edition Trissino reports the account of a friend) "in Matthien, one of the five islands of the Moluccas, whither I sailed with Migellano (*sic*) four years ago"[48].

V. The Training of the Militia

In the introduction to the first edition of the dialogue *Della Republica*[49], a certain Phalerio speaks in praise of trade as the one activity which is really useful to the republic, that is, to the citizen state, to the community of free men (landed proprietors, merchants, etc., of medium wealth); and against him argues Carmene who maintains that an army is a necessity in a well-organized state. Carmene's arguments are borrowed from Plato's *Politeia*, and have their origin in the traditional reasoning.

> A republic will be in a much better position for making war on its neighbours when necessary, or for defending its liberty, when its army consists of its own citizens rather than of foreigners hired for money[50].

The opponent of military life observes:

> You will never make me believe (whatever you may say) that war is not a great and most pernicious evil, caused by the savagery of human appetite, whilst peace is a sovereign good, a divine blessing bestowed upon us by heaven.

To which Carmene replies:

> Yes, when war is waged from the lust for blood and the slaughter of men, or from the greed of power and wealth, or in a word, from malice and not in order to save the liberty[51] of the republic and preserve its best laws...

What appears here, at the beginning of the dialogue, to be a theory of the just and defensive war, the fruit of the Florentine traditional admiration for the army and the soldier's life – a tradition which from the beginning of the century was toned down and rendered more idealistic in character by the study of Plato – shows itself later on as a nostalgia for the constitution of the commune: at one point the existence of an army is justified by the observation that "the boundaries of the contado must be greatly extended" in order that provision may be made for the material sustenance of the citizens. That the army ought not to be mercenary is shown by the example of the Late Empire, and the fate of the Carthaginians after the first Punic War[52]. Again this argument, though apparently founded on empirical fact, is at the same time justified by abstract Platonic speculations:

> Do you not hold with the other philosophers that the soul is nobler than the body, and more necessary to life than it is? – I do hold that. – Then a well-regulated militia, such as a civil society can raise and maintain and increase, is much more necessary to a republic than trade or any other section of its life, for it can exist without these, just as a man can live and can be called good without one of his smaller members but not without his soul[53].

Naturally one cannot use the soul of another, and consequently one must use one's own army as one uses one's own soul – quite apart from all practical considerations, such as the greater confidence which can be felt in soldiers who are defending their city and their country.

Thus, be it even in a primitive and crude form, the men of the *Orti Oricellari* used to discuss questions concerning the relations between politics and ethics, with the endeavour always to subordinate the former to the latter. That is to say they aimed at finding a principle which would ensure the supremacy of *morale*, reason, the highest human qualities, over politics, such as the reality of events had taught them to see them and such as Machiavelli was later on to theorize on them. The most popular solution of these investigations into the philosophy of politics, as it appears in Brucioli, was strictly conservative, directed towards the restoration of communal administration, with its insistent search for justice. But at present we are less interested in the solution presented by one of the participants in the discussions of the *Orti* than in the method by which he sought to find an approach to it – a method which was typically humanist and which stood in close relationship to the other problem treated with so much insistence in the *Orti Oricellari:* that of language.

VI. The Teaching of Language

The importance which humanism attached to education and to the training of the child is well known: and Brucioli shares this extraordinary faith in the possibilities of education and educational methods[54]. It is less in the dialogue expressly devoted to the *Education of Children* – where he repeats the traditional Platonic ideas on education of a Spartan character, conducive to sobriety, obedience, and bravery in war, as well as the characteristics of liberal Renaissance education as a whole – than in the dialogue on the laws of the republic, that Brucioli displays his belief in the political value of education. He proposes in fact that children

> instead of those foolish games on which they are nowadays intent and which are of no practical importance, should be made by law to exercise themselves in those which are useful training for soldiers, teaching them through feigned battles to excel in real ones, and should also be made to have childish laws and judges amongst themselves who should impose childish penalties upon law-breakers... and then, learning either privately in

houses with their tutors or in public colleges (which seems to be much the better way), they should be made zealous for the highest disciplines of most holy Philosophy... And only those disciplines are worthy of being called the best for the training of youth which are needed for the government of the Republic[55].

This belief in the political importance of education results in a characteristically humanist postulate. All education for both civil and political life culminates for Brucioli in the teaching and learning of the classical tongues – of Greek and Latin.

> But in order that the republic should flourish and maintain itself in safety and strength, it is necessary that its citizens should be learned and wise, virtuous, reasonable, well-educated, and by their good actions acceptable unto God. And as a proof that this is the true utility of the Republic, observe what the Romans used to do and in what manner their sons were brought up, who between the fifteenth and twentieth years became skilled in the Latin and Greek languages and later in all liberal disciplines, after they had acquired which they were sent into the army, and thus were formed those great and wise men, memorable for all time, such as the Camilli, the Fabii, the Scipios, the Pauli, the Catos, and many others adorned with all kinds of knowledge. And this is the great and chief reason why they were able to extend their rule to the four corners of the earth. This have I said so that we may realize that sacred letters and the best kind of instruction cannot be comprehended, nor can perfect citizens be formed, without the aid of similar schools, for *languages are like a sheath within which lies hidden the sword of the Spirit, that is to say the word of God, or like an ark or a shrine within which is kept and preserved that noblest vase of gold ; they are like chalices in which we carry about with us the life-giving drink which we receive from the divine spirit*...[56].

With this importance assigned to language, which is conceived of not merely as a means of expression and as a "sign of our operations"[57], but as the vehicle of the spirit and the essence of wisdom, the interest in the Italian and Florentine language and its power of expression appears in a new light.

Humanism has always attached great importance to the problem of elegant expression and correct language. As we have seen in the attitude of Pico[58] and as can easily be demonstrated from Brucioli's own text[59], the defect of oratory and rhetoric as an art of persuasion was readily admitted. The taste for eloquence and for pompous expression was a manifestation of the strong emotional repercussions which these imaginative men associated with the spectacle of political events and military enterprises, the rise and disappearance of hopes in which they all shared to some extent, such as that in the pacification and unification of Italy through the ideal of Ancient Rome. But already – as a contemporary of theirs and one of the most famous representatives of humanism bears witness – eloquence was no longer allowed full play. In political assemblies, in the presence of princes or of the people, it was necessary to speak in the vulgar tongue; in the tribunal more attention was paid to the cogency of the argument than to the speaker's art: eloquence remained only as an act of demonstration, as a kind of display. So Pier Paolo Vergerio the elder tells us[60].

This eloquence "of parade" might sometimes have a substratum of feeling, an emotional impulse, as is shown in the many tirades and polemics over the granting of Roman citizenship to Longolio[61] which have remained famous not only because they attracted Erasmus' attention, but because of the passion which informs them, the excitement and strong feeling with which the disputants contend in the name of the coveted revival of ancient Rome. There might, then, at certain times and in certain places, be assigned to rhetorical eloquence of this kind the task of arousing those fierce and generous sentiments which would stir the civic spirit and might give new life to the political and civil ideas of Rome[62]. But on the whole, humanist oratory remained an oratory "of parade", of ceremony, and it had little political importance apart from its use for publicity and propaganda.

More interesting, therefore, is the use made of rhetoric in the sense of an art of precise expression, of "stylistics". Not the rhetoric of Lazzaro Bonamico or of Gasparino Barzizza or of invectives modelled on the Verrine orations: but that which is to be found in the *Elegantie* of Valla which derived from a different impulse, neither sentimental nor aesthetic: from the desire of understanding and of making oneself understood without ambiguity, without being involved in traditional prejudices,

without allowing oneself to be deflected by oratorical magnificence, nor by the tortuosities of philosophical terminology. Valla's attempt at renovating and purifying the Latin language derived from the belief that there was upon it the mark of the divine will. He had tried to meet the need for clear speaking, precise definition, careful weighing of the full meaning of words – the need, in short, of renewing thought through language. In order to do this he had drawn from theology and jurisprudence a formula which was primarily philological and grammatical.

This appealed to the young men of the *Orti Oricellari* who had been trained in Florentine philosophy. Still keeping to the humanist illusions on the political importance of educational ideas, of an abstract 'virtue' and its various abstract personifications, still hoping to make true by means of these concepts their political ideal of return to the old Florentine communal organization which was based on the middle-classes and the land-owners, they devoted to their own Florentine and Italian tongues the same care and attention which Valla had dedicated to Latin, and with the same end in view[63].

VII. Language and Arms as Political Instruments

The question of language, of 'rhetoric', no longer Latin but Italian, is now seen to be analogous to the question of military service and the profession of arms. After the pronouncement which we quoted on the importance of the study of Greek and Latin for the moulding of the citizen, Brucioli makes one of his speakers raise the objection that all citizens of the ideal republic would not possess the means to have their sons taught languages for such a long time:

> Not everyone can thus lightly forgo the help of his sons' labour, and raise them in literary leisure.

To which the principal speaker replies:

> Do not imagine that I would wish schools like those which had hitherto existed to be established in the Republic, schools in which children waste more than twenty years in learning Donato or committing to memory Alessandro's most tedious verses, without growing wiser in any respect: happily, our age is beginning to see in what way languages and other

> subjects ought to be learnt: and in my opinion it would be sufficient for the youths to spend not more than one or two hours a day in school[64].

Brucioli, and probably the other young men of the *Orti Oricellari* circle, thus intended to diffuse as widely as possible the study of languages and those subjects of learning which would teach and develop the civic virtues; they also aimed at improving educational methods and making them more accessible, so that no citizen need allege poverty as the reason for debarring his sons from instruction, which they wished to be made public. From this it was an easy step to the discussion of the value for this purpose of the Italian and the Florentine tongues: the nature of such discussions is not apparent from Brucioli's dialogues, which are set in an atmosphere of abstract philosophy, but we can gather something of it from a remark made by Gelli, a member of the people's party and in his youth an eager visitor of the *Orti Oricellari*:

> I have heard it said that M. Constantino Lascari, that Greek whom the moderns hold in such high esteem, used to say at table in the Rucellai gardens in the presence of many gentlemen of whom some, perhaps, are yet living, that he. thought Boccaccio inferior to none of the Greek writers in eloquence and style, and held his hundred tales to be as good as any hundred productions of his own poets[65].

The object was, then, to see whether the Italian or the Florentine language was capable of the same fluency and eloquence, the same precision of speech, the same potentialities of rhetorical expression as the Greek, to establish Florentine speech as "most apt for the expression of all philosophical conceits ... and as good as the Latin, or even the Greek tongue, about which they make so much ado"[66]. This aim of language-teaching was similar to that which underlay the training of young citizens in the use of arms, namely, to find a means of educating more and more sections of the people in virtue and thus to give the greatest possible force to the 'Republic', that is, to the State.

Machiavelli was to give another interpretation of his faith in the militia and in the Italian arms[67]; but the young men who disputed at the *Orti Oricellari* about politics and literature, language and the state, were seeking rather to infuse a sense of the moral life and of social necessities

into literature and into humanism because they conceived of both as educative forces, vital not only for a select group of citizens through the medium of the classical tongues – but for the people whom, through the use of their own language, they wished to interest in their ideal of a public life guided by virtue. And just as their exaltation of military service, which the Florentine bourgeoisie had long abandoned, was based upon their nostalgia for the robust age of the free and autonomous commune, governed by citizens capable of taking the field to defend it, so the interest in languages concealed a nostalgia for the great period of Tuscan literature. The reason for the decay of the Florentine language was the same as that for the decay of arms and of communal liberty:

> Our people having devoted themselves to trade and not to literature and the other arts which have always flourished here, they became backward and almost entirely lost the skill and art in the use of our language which the three whom we have mentioned above possessed:[68] and the first of those who began in Florence to revive that skill, both in speech and in writing, were those same men of letters who used to go to the Rucellai gardens. Some of these intelligent men, Cosimo Rucellai, Luigi Alamanni, Zanobi Buondelmonte, Francesco Guidetti, and others, who often in their dealings with Cosimo found themselves in the garden in the presence of those older men, began to make the above-mentioned observations, after which the language regained the esteem which you now see it to possess[69].

It was thus the same aspiration, the same political exigency, which both through arms and through language tended towards a return to the beginnings, to a reconstitution of communal life within a vague adumbration of Italian unity. In the minds of these young men, who were seriously and passionately interested in philosophical and political problems, full of that moral enthusiasm for "virtue" so characteristic of humanism[70], the "rhetorical" style, which "makes the best things more beautiful and suppresses the others"[71], became one with that most political of instruments, arms. Rhetoric and politics were for the humanists – and we have here studied the Florentine humanist atmosphere which was the most realistic and the most susceptible of lively political passions – one and the same thing since both were founded upon ethics. And from these political passions, this ethical and educational enthusiasm, the Florentine humanists and literati returned, towards the sunset of

Humanism, to 'rhetorical' problems – literary, philological, linguistic – but always with a political preoccupation.

The project of achieving the civil and political education of the people by means of the translation of philosophical and literary works was no less illusory than that of realizing their own political ideas through the institution of a popular militia. The vagueness of their thought escaped these young men, in so far as a language cannot be renewed unless its spiritual content is renewed: and the individualism and intellectualism of Humanism showed itself afterwards in the theoretical elaboration of questions of language – from which there sprang, amongst other things, a revival of Florentine particularism[72] – and in the cold technicalities of linguistic and philological dispute. Nevertheless the illusion which these young men entertained as to the importance of bringing over "rhetoric" from Latin and Greek into Italian, and as to the political function, the possibility and the practical usefulness of such a task, has proved itself less great than the analogous and parallel illusion as to the possible return to the principle of a militia and its consequences. For whilst the latter was soon dissipated by the facts, the language question which was posed in the *Orti Oricellari* had a wide response at the time and has for long since accompanied the history of Italian political and social aspirations, which it is not our business here to expound in detail. Our aim has been simply to demonstrate, by means of a particular case and with material part of which has not hitherto been utilized, how there is no schism in Italian humanism between 'rhetoric' and 'literature' on the one hand and 'politics' on the other, but that politics draw their sap from literature which in turn they fertilize.

Note

1. On this period see F. Ercole, *Dal Comune al Principato, Saggi sulla Storia del Diritto Pubblico del Rinascimento italiano*, Florence, 1929; the chapter *L'Italia della Rinascenza* in G. Volpe, *Il Medioevo*, Rome, 1926, 495-533; G. Volpe, *La Rinascenza in Italia e le sue origini*, in *Momenti di Storia Italiana*, Florence, 1925, 95-128.

2. Cf. F. De Sanctis, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, Bari, 1925, vol. I, 415. See also F. Alderisio, *Machiavelli* (Turin, 1930), and Toffanin in his two books, *Che cosa fu l'Umanesimo*, Florence, 1929; *Storia dell'Umanesimo,* Naples, 1933.

3. Croce, *Teoria e Storia della Storiografia*, second ed., Bari, 1920, 212 ff.; except for the acute and profound psychological analysis of the character of the *Prince*, the same interpretation of the pragmatico humanist character of Machiavelli's history is to be found in the fine essay by F. Chabod, *Del "Principe"di N. Machiavelli*, Milan-Rome-Naples, 1926.

4. H. Baron, *La Rinascita dell'Etica Statale Romana nell'Umanesimo Fiorentino del Quattrocento*, in "Civiltà Moderna", VII, 1935, 48-49.

5 See for example Gerolamo Falletti's oration on the death of Ippolito d'Este, where it is said of the Este family: "nullum genus, quod italo nomini maiora beneficia dederit; nulli homines, qui acrioribus studiis libertatem defenderint, ac legibus institutisque custodierint. Estenses, inquam, exstiterunt, qui rem militarem obsoletam in Italia ... cum virtute, tum etiam disciplina revocarunt. Estenses Italiam, ut externum iugum excuterent, seque in libertatem vindicaret, partim rationibus et consiliis, partim etiam potestate coegerunt" (*Orationes* XII, Venice, 1558, 21, r. v.). Here are all the themes of Italian political propaganda of the time: regret at the diminished strength of the army, the conception of "Italian liberty", that is, the independence of the Italian potentates from foreign hegemonies; the glory of the "Italian name", and so on.

6. For the most recent studies running counter to this view, see F. Battaglia, *Lineamenti di Storia delle Dottrine Politiche, con appendici bibliografiche*, Rome, 1936, 118 ff.

7. G. Gentile, *Giordano Bruno e il Pensiero del Rinascimento*, Florence, 1925, 18; Croce, *Teoria e Storia della Storiografia*, *op. cit.*, 209.

8. As Baron has well shown in the above-mentioned study with regard to Ciceronian civil ethics and the Florentine bourgeoisie of the first half of the fifteenth century; and as P. Gothein has shown with regard to Venice in his *Francesco Barbaro*, Berlin, 1932.

9. The theme is always that of the theoretical and ideal treatment of certain well-defined political and social exigencies (communal life and aristocratic republicanism at Florence and Venice respectively) which are transposed to a philosophico-moral plane. In order to establish the value of such a position it would be necessary to investigate the complexities of psychology and personal history, which is extremely risky. Naturally no one doubts the moral seriousness of people like Palmieri and Barbaro; but history has shown the ineffectiveness of their political ideas. For the subject of political propaganda based on an appeal to public opinion sympathetic to the idea of Italian unity, mention must be made of the articles by N. Valeri, who has shown (*L'Insegnamento di Gian Galeazzo Visconti e i "Consigli al Principe"* di C. Malatesta, in "Bollettino Storico Bibliografico Subalpino", XXXVI, I934, 468 ff.) how the protection accorded by Gian Galeazzo to poets and literary men was connected with his policy, for he found it expedient to attach his own actions "to a great though necessarily vague programme for the re-vindication of Italian and Roman glories, republican and imperial, consoling the misery of the oppressed and tormented Italians with the Messianic expectation of some kind of liberating 'Veltro'" (allusion to Dante, *Inf.*, I, 105), Valeri also notes how, notwithstanding the fact that such Petrarchan themes were now unfruitful and weak like all obsolete things, yet "the diffusion of such praises, assisted by the relations of the court humanists – such as Antonio Loschi and Pasquino Capelli, the duke's secretary – with the humanists of the principal cities, helped him to capture the favour and

respect of the cultured Italian classes". See also Valeri's *Lo Stato Visconteo alla morte di Gian Galeazzo*, in "Nuova Rivista Storica", XIX, 1935.

10. As expressed and interpreted by A. von Martin, *Soziologie der Renaissance*, Stuttgart, 1932, 72 ff.

11. See Valeri's articles, already quoted, and, for a general notice, the article on *Signorie e Principati*, by G. Falco in the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, Vol. XXXI, 759, where reference is made to the *Vita Philippi Mariae Vicecomitis*"by Decembrio. For Decembrio see F. Gabotto, *L'attività politica di P. C. Decembrio e la sua attività letteraria,* in "Giornale Ligustico", XX, 1893; here can be observed the political basis of much humanist polemic, such as the quarrel between Decembrio and Guarino over Carmagnola; but it remains on the level of the most obvious propaganda.

12. For this it will be sufficient to refer to the studies by Toffanin mentioned above (p. 83, note 2). Toffanin's two works illustrate the utility of researches such as the present, for though the importance and seriousness of rhetoric, of the oratorical tradition, is there admitted, he does not discriminate between those themes of Ciceronian eloquence which had some real, acknowledged connection with the needs and problems of the time, and those which were conventional and "rhetorical" in the bad sense of the word. The merit of Toffanin lies in having brought out the vitality of the nationalist and Petrarchan side of humanist tradition, the beginnings of which were traced by Burdach in his wellknown studies. There is a vivacious critique of the humanist ideal of the Petrarchan type by G. Ferrari, *Corso sugli Scrittori Politici Italiani*, 2nd ed., Milan, 1929 (the first Italian edition was in 1862), especially 121 ff.

13. As well as the works already quoted, see F. Ercole, *La Politica di N. Machiavelli*, Rome,1926; *Da Carlo VIII a Carlo V*, Florence, 1932; L. Russo in his *Prolegomena* to his edition of the *Principe* (Florence, 1931). To Russo, and especially to his commentary on Chapter XV of the *Principe*, I am indebted for the conception of Machiavelli's opposition to humanist tractates, and his conception of virtue (see especially notes 7-8 on p. 117 and 38 on p. 120, where, however, I cannot agree with Russo's identification of the humanist ideal of virtue with that of the Middle Ages).

14. *Opera*, Basilea, 1601, 352; for the analysis and interpretation of this letter see Toffanin, *Storia dell'Umanesimo*, 230 ff. Pico's attitude in contrasting philosophical truth with the artificiality and bombast of the orators is analogous to that of Machiavelli who contrasts effectual truth with the "something which seems like virtue" of the humanists (*Principe*, Chapter XV, towards the end); Toffanin's analysis, although not differentiated, is useful here to our enquiry. For Pico's moral, political, and religious views see A. Corsano, *II Pensiero Religioso Italiano dall'Umanesimo al Giurisdizionalismo*, Bari, 1937, 51, 53.

15. See G. Capponi, *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze*, Florence, I875, Vol. III, Book V, chapter VI, I56 f.; O. Tommasini, *La Vita e gli Scritti di N. Machiavelli nella loro Relazione col Machiavellismo*, Turin-Rome, 1883-1911, Vol. II, 90, 259, 351; P. Villari, *N. Machiavelli e i suoi tempi*, Milan, Hoepli, 1927, Vol. II, 278 f., 358, where a further bibliography will be found.

16. L. Russo, *Antologia Machiavellica*, Florence, 1931, 202-203, notes 33-34; 205, note 71.

17. See *II Paradiso degli Alberti. Ritrovi e Ragionamenti del 1389, romanzo di Giovannid a Prato...* edited by A. Wesselofski, Bologna, 1867, Vol. I, 48, 52, 69, 83.

Wesselofski's observations are often interesting, as when he notices the connection between humanism and the Italian bourgeoisie, which was later examined by writers like Volpe (see p. 83, note 1); but they are often rather questionable, as, for instance, the following: "Italian politics were born at the same time as Italian erudition". On the *Disputationes Camaldulenses* of Landino see G. Mancini, *Vita di Leon Battista Alberti*, 2nd ed. 1911, 443 ; and V. Benetti-Brunelli, *Il Rinnovamento della Politica nel Pensiero del Secolo X V in Italia*, Turin-Milan-Florence-Rome, 1927, where a full exposition of it is given in relation to the political thought of G. B. Alberti; and, finally, see the quotation from Landino in B. Kieszkowski, *Studi sul Platonismo del Rinascimento in Italia*, Florence, 1936, 40, which proves the political interests of the early Florentine reunions and discussions which led the way to the formation of the *Academia Platonica*. (*De vera nobilitate liber*, Ms. Cors. 433 (36, E-5), f. 3b-4b.

18. On the political implications of problems of "pure" philosophy, see A. Corsano, *op. cit*. For the political interests in the *Orti Oricellari* see the works already cited, and M. Heitzman, *Studja nad Akademja Platonska we Florencji*, Krakow, 1933, 5 ff.; see also Della Torre's *Storia dell'Accademia Platonica*, Florence, 1902, 742. There is a valuable testimony to the political interests of the *Orti Oricellari* (which is noteworthy in other ways also) in a short chapter in Pietro Crinito's *De Honesta Disciplina* which is a kind of little encyclopaedia of humanist commonplaces (Lyons, 1559). Crinito was amongst those who attended the lessons of Jacopo da Diacceto, called the " Pagonazzo,"the pupil and successor of Marsilio Ficino, and he was a pupil of Poliziano's (L. Ferri, *L' Accademia Platonica di Firenze le sue Vicende*, in "Nuova Antologia", I891, series III, Vol. XXXIV, 235); what he says is worth quoting here in full, for it also serves to fix a date for the introducing of politics in the conversations of the *Orti Oricellari* which is generally placed towards the second half of the second decade of the sixteenth century, whereas the presence of Crinito, who died probably about 1505, shows that they must have begun much earlier. "In hortis Oricellariis, cum nuper aliquot egregie docti homines convenissent, ubi de honestis literis optimisque disciplinis saepe et copiose agitur, forte incidit mentio de veterum institutis, de regenda civitate ac de Venetum clarissimo atque summo imperio". A lively discussion then arose. "Ibidem senex quidam in officiis rei publicee homo accuratus et prudens, Volo, inquit, vobis de Venetum imperio perelegantem referre apologum quem a Francisco olim Barbaro audivi; qui nostra aetate magna vir eloquentia et consilio fuit". The fable must be that of the gourd and the pine tree, and Barbaro must have recounted it to Filippo Maria Visconti at their meeting in January, 1444 (P. Gothein, *Francesco Barbaro*, Berlin, 1932, 259-260; Gothein does not know of Crinito's anecdote about his hero): the gourd had grown enormously, ripened by the summer sun, and had climbed right up to the top of the pine tree, stifling it with its leaves and tendrils. It thought that it had got the better of the tree. But the pine said: "Ego hic multos hiemes, calores, aestus, variasque calamitates pervici, et adhuc integra consisto; tu ad primos rigores minus audaciae habebis, cum et folia concident et viror omnis aberit. Sic et in Italia", Barbaro concluded "permulte quidem sunt cucurbitae quae pinum aggredi magnopere conantur; sed habent tamen plus animi quam roboris. Quo circa brevi exarescunt aut decidunt". (Book II, chap. XIIII, 40). Already, therefore, there existed in the *Orti Oricellari* a cult of admiration for the political constitution of Venice, which later became more and more evident amongst Florentine political writers, and which isnaturally to be found in Brucioli, who took refuge in Venice.

19. See, in addition to the historians cited on p. 87, note I, who all speak of the *Orti Oricellari* in connection with the conspiracy, F. Perrens, *Histoire de Florence depuis*

la domination des Médicis jusqu'à la chute de la République (1434-1531), III, Paris, 1890, 84 ff.; and C. Guasti, *Documenti sulla congiura contro Giulio de' Medici*, etc., in "Giornale Storico degli Archivi Toscani", III, 1859. In one of these documents (letter from Zanobi Buondelmonte and L. Alamanni to G. B. della Palla) there is a list of books which gives an idea of the reading of these humanists (p. 201).

20. B. Morsolin, *Giangiorgio Trissino*, Vicenza, 1878, 72-73; G. B. Gelli, *Opere*, Florence, 1855, 293, 305, 310. See p. 100, note 2.

21. *Dialogi della morale filosofia*, issued at Venice in 1526 in Folio, in 1537-1538 in Quarto; in five books. The most important from our point of view is the first book; the others treat of natural philosophy: the sky, the stars, comets, echo, the five senses, etc. The first edition contains only the first book; the other four were added in the second edition. I have quoted from the editions of 1526 and 1537-1538. Another book by Brucioli entitled *Della Republica* is mentioned by scholars, but I have not been able to trace it. I am inclined to think that it is the same as the dialogue which we mention later on. H. Hauvette, *Luigi Alamanni, Sa vie et son oeuvre*, Paris, 1903, 19, observes that these dialogues have not much philosophical and literary value; but that they present a certain interest because in the second edition the frequenters of the *Orti Oricellari* appear: this is of no small importance, in view of the value of those conversations, in which Machiavelli took part, and the little that is known about them. The examination of the works of Brucioli, together with the indications offered by Crinito, show us that politics held an important place in these conversations from the beginning, together with philosophy and literature (or, more exactly, the problem of language), which contradicts Hauvette's statement that politics only penetrated gradually into the conversations "a la faveur de l'histoire romaine, grace a Machiavel, et seulement aux approches de l'annee 1520".

22. See Benrath, in "Rivista Cristiana", 1879; E. Comba, *I nostri Protestanti*, II, Florence, 1897, Chap. IV, I17 ff., where a further bibliography is given.

23. And for both of them his early Florentine period is important only for his political activity, not for his work as a writer which has never been taken into account as a document for the history of the culture of this period – a period which, marking as it does the transition from the full flower of humanism to the weariness which overtook it after the sack of Rome and of Florence, presents a particular interest.

24. For the contacts with Alamanni, see Hauvette, *op. cit.*, 85, 156, etc.

25. Book V, Dial. IV. This is the only case in which we use a dialogue not contained in the first edition.

26. H. Baron, *La Rinascita dell'Etica Statale Romana*, 34.

27. Compare Alamanni's *Orazione al popolo fiorentino sopra la militar disciplina* (Alamanni, *Versi e Prose*, Florence, 1859, II, 447; for the occasion of this *Orazione* see C. Roth, *L'Ultima Repubblica Fiorentina* Italian translation, Florence, I929, 116). From the first, Alamanni used classical records: "Let Athens, Rome, and Sparta speak through me".

28. *Recitazione del Caso di Pietro Paolo Boscoli e di Agostino Capponi scritta da Luca della Robbia,* in "Archivio Storico Italiano", 1842; see D. Cantimori, *Il Caso del Boscoli e la Vita del Rinascimento*, "Giornale Critico della Filosofia Italiana", VIII, I927, 253.

29. The subjects discussed are: *On the state of man* ("the fact that man is endowed with reason requires that he should be born naked and fragile and subject to infirmity, for if these things were withdrawn from him, it would follow that either he would become God and not man, or that he would be deprived of reason and become irrational; therefore – unless man were to be made something which was not man – wise and provident nature has acted in the best possible way", Ed. 1526, folio IIII r.), *On matrimony, On the government of the family*. (In the 1537 edition this is preceded by a short dialogue on *The duties of the wife*. The dialogue *On the administration of the family* has as speakers Jacopo Nardi, the historian, Zanobi Buondelmonte, Battista della Palla, Jacopo Alamanni.). *On the education and rearing of children*, *On the republic*, *On the law of the republic*, *On the training of the prince*. (In the 1537 edition the title of this dialogue becomes *On the just prince*. In this one may perhaps see an underlying polemical purpose, or at least an intention of detaching himself from Machiavelli, suggested probably rather by the fame of his *Principe* than by personal aversion, for, in this same second edition, Brucioli makes Machiavelli one of the secondary speakers in the two dialogues on the Republic and on Laws). *On the commander of an army*, *On tyranny*, *On virtue*, *On truth*, *On justice*, *On clemency*, *On fortitude*, *On temperance*, *On modesty*, *On anger*, *On liberality*, *On benevolence*, *On friendship*, *On poverty*, *On quiet*, *On desire*, *On human happiness*, *On the brevity of life*, *On exile*, *On human misery*, *On how one ought not to fear death*, *On wisdom and foolishness*, *Example of human life*. (In the second edition there are some changes in the second part, due to the addition of dialogues such as that *On beauty and grace* [speakers Antonfrancesco degli Albizi, Giulia Gonzaga, Mario Viscanto] which alter the politico-moral character of the first edition).

30. Folio CIX v, in the 1526 edition. Of these two personages, the soldier is naturally little known. Concerning the second there is a curious piece of information in the life of Francesco da Diacceto, the philosopher, written by a certain Euphrosynus Lapinius, of whom little is known. In contradiction to the historians who accuse Jacopo da Diacceto of having ingenuously and frivolously revealed the plot against Cardinal Giulio de' Medici, afterwards Leo X, Lapinius says: "Iacobus Iaccetius... cuius admirabile ingenium non solum in bonis literis gravioribusque disciplinis eluxit, verum etiam animus nunquam perterritus, in ipsoque capitis periculo altissimus adeo constans confirmatusque fuit, ut antequam ipse ob aliena scelera... securi a lictore percuteretur, elegiacis versis iisque elegantissimis mortem suam prosecutus, ingenii sui monumenta reliquit" (*F. Diaccetii Opera*, Basileae, 1563, *Vita*, pages unnumbered). These verses by "Diaccettino", as he was called, were published by P. Piccolomini (who notes that Diaccettino owed to Giulio de' Medici a lectureship in Florence) in the "Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana", XXXIX, 327-334; and by Tommasini, *op. cit.*, II, 1087, who finds therein nothing save Christian piety. The following distich, however, shows evident traces of Florentine Platonism: "Est tamen in nobis mens incorrupta; manetque/ Spiritus: abruptos nesciet illa dies..." The incorruptible mind will not even be aware of death, and God will receive, not the mind but the "Spiritus,"which may be translated as "soul": "Hunc, Pater omnipotens, summis heu respice ab astris/Terrenisque precor substrahe blanditiis..." The invocation to Jesus,Christ is made in the following words, which perhaps recall Savonarola's devotion to the blood of Christ: "Tu quoque demissus cuius per vulnera sanguis/ Remedium nostris attulit vulneribus...."

31. Folio CXI, r.

32. H. Baron, *La Rinascita dell'Etica Statale Romana*, etc., 38. On this subject see also P. Crinitus, *De Honesta Disciplina*, cited above, who comments on a passage in Plato containin the maxim, "Est admodum arduum reperire hominem ingeniosum, qui simul etiam mansuetus, atque modestus sit" (p.10). The dialogue cited is the *De Scientia*, that is the *Theaethetus*, 144 a; cf. *Politeia*, 503 c-d.

33. Cf. *Eutiphron*, 7b, on anger and ignorance. There are but few traces of Savonarola's influence in Brucioli; but the Frate's preaching had its effect in the *Orti Oricellari*. Brucioli's arguments make no appeal to Christian humility, but are all of a rationalist character.

34. Ed. 1537, folio XCVIII v.; ed. I526, Cv. The definition of anger is explicitly borrowed from Aristotle ("And whence does this dreadful pest draw occasion for its evil working which does such harm to the human race? –From an intense desire that those who have offended you shall be punished: although Aristotle defines it as a desire of avoiding pain, nevertheless that definition (when well considered) is not much different from our own."Ed. 1526, XCIX v).

35. Ed. 1526, *Dialogue* XIV, folio XCII, r.
"The Stoics said, speaking of fortitude, that it was the science of knowing what is to be feared and what is not to be feared, both in war and in other actions.
– Wonderful indeed was that definition.
– Yes indeed; but fortitude extends farther than that...." (XCII, v.)

36. Folio XLI, v.

37. Folio XLVI, v., may be a reference to Savonarola.

38. Folio XLVII, r.

39. Folio XLIX, r.

40. Folio XLIX, r. What are here called the laws of Solon are actually an imitation of the style of the Twelve Tables, and of little interest. At the beginning of the dialogue (Folio XXXVIII, v.) Brucioli cites Plato explicitly.

41. Folio LVIII, r.

42. Folio LXVII, r.

43. Folio LXV, r.

44. Folio LXXIII, v.

45. Folio XXI, r.

46. Folio XXII, r.

47. Francesco da Diacceto had already begun a syncretistic work of this kind. See Th. Zwinger's preface to the above-cited edition of Diacceto's works. Whereas the Italian biographer, Benedetto Varchi, in the edition of the *Tre libri d'Amore*, Venice, 1561, 196, praises Diacceto for having known how to combine the contemplative and the active life: "Although a philosopher and one of the Platonic sect, he entered into civil affairs and did not afterwards withdraw himself from them".

48. Folio XXXVII, r.

49. The dialogue *Della Republica* is the fifth in the edition of 1526 and the sixth in the edition of 1537. In this second edition the prologue is altered; for the discussion on merchants and soldiers is substituted a conversation between Messer Bernardo Salviati, Prior of Rome (see Roth, *op. cit.*, 212, 213), Niccolò Machiavelli,

Messer Gianjacopo Leonardi, the military engineer and friend of Guidobaldo della Rovere, and finally, as the principal speaker, Giangiorgio Trissino, famous for his ideas on the Italian and Florentine languages. The discussion takes place at the court and in the garden of the Villa Imperiale, built at Pesaro by Eleonora Gonzaga.

50. Folio XX, r.

51. Folio XIX, r. By liberty is understood "independence", "autonomy" in the face of other states; internal liberty is indicated by the "best laws", in conformity with communal tradition and with the ideas of the *Piagnoni*.

52. Folio LXVI, r. in the edition of 1538.

53. Ed. 1526, folio XX, v. Brucioli is particularly insistent against merchants and wealth, in which he sees the origin of the ruin of that Florentine state of which he and his friends thought with nostalgic longing. "But, without going through other examples, did you not lose your liberty because the wealth of individuals had increased too much, and the number of the poor had grown too great ?..." (Ed. 1537, XXXI, r.; lacking in the 1526 edition, where there is found instead the following invective against merchants: "Our city is full of men like you, and many of them have the government in their hands, although the tyrant, to some extent, takes all upon himself". Folio XIX, r.) A good commentary on these trends of thought, which might appear to be merely moralizing rhetoric but which on the contrary correspond to the reality of the situation in Florence, is provided by the cynical remarks of one of the conspirators – N. Martelli – who posed as belonging to the Medici party in order to save his life. (C. Guasti, *Documenti*, cited on p. 88, note I, 219, 221.)

54. Folio XLII, r., folio XLIII, v.

55. Folio XLIII, v.

56. Folio LIIII, v., r.

57. Folio XIIII, v. Brucioli attaches much importance to the definition of law "to the end that, since all things are to be referred to it, we may not sometimes err through ignorance in speaking, and be unaware of the force of the words with which we are to define law". (Folio XXXIX, r.)

58. Cfr. 86.

59. In the dialogue *Del Giusto Principe*. Folio LXVI, r. in the edition of 1537.

60. *De ingenuis moribus* (Folio XVIII, v.)

61. See D. Gnoli, *Un Giudizio di Lesa Romanità sotto Leone X,* Rome, 1891; V. Cian, *Due Brevi di Leone X in favore di C. Longolio,* "Giornale Storico della lett. Italiana", XIX, 373; Th. Simar, *C. de Longueil, Musée Belge*, XV, n. 1.

62. This mode of uniting philosophical, political, and literary themes in one and the same "rhetoric", that "so highly esteemed rhetoric" as Brucioli calls it (XCI, v.), is evident in a work of late Florentine Platonism, Pompeo della Barba da Pescia's *Discorsi filosofici sopra il platonico e divin sogno di Scipione*, Venezia, 1553.

63. Cfr. the Preface, addressed to Massimiliano Sforza, of the first volume of the *Dialoghi*.

64. Folio LIV, v.

65. G.B. Gelli, *Scritti Scelti*, Milan, 1906, 202; see *Opere*, ed. A. Gelli, 293, where it is said, "the garden of the Rucellai where... you used to stay listening to them talking amongst themselves, with as much reverence and attention as is generally granted to oracles". (Gelli names Bernardo Rucellai, Francesco da Diacceto, Giovanni Carracci, Giovanni Corsi, Piero Martelli, Francesco Vettori and "other men of letters".)

66. Gelli*, Scritti Scelti*, *loc. cit*.

67. Cfr. F. Chabod. *Op. cit.*, 49 ff.

68. The three "crowns", Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio.

69. Gelli, *Opere*, ed. Gelli, Florence, 1855, 310.

70. G. Saitta, *L'Educazione dell'Umanesimo in Italia*, Venice, 1927, 67, 208 ff.

71. L. Alamanni, *Versi e prose*, *ed. cit.*, I, 245 (Satira III).

72. Cf. Machiavelli on the Florentine language (*Opere*, ed. Mazzoni e Casella, Florence, 1929, 770: *Discorso o dialogo intorno alla lingua*) where he writes against Dante's conception of an Italian rather than Florentine tongue. "Some who are less dishonest would have it to be Tuscan; others who are most dishonest call it Italian".

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134 • Machiavelli: un uso sovversivo della tradizione classica

Editoriale
Monica Centanni, Peppe Nanni
Cantimori e Machiavelli
Delio Cantimori, Nota introduttiva di Monica Centanni e Silvia De Laude
Cantimori e Machiavelli. Nota introduttiva alla riedizione dei saggi: Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism (1937) e Retorica e politica nell'Umanesimo italiano (1937; 1992)
Monica Centanni, Silvia De Laude
Rhetoric and Politics in Italian Humanism (October 1937)
Delio Cantimori, translated by Frances Yates
Retorica e politica nell'Umanesimo italiano (1992)
Delio Cantimori
Machiavelli lettore di Lucrezio
Sergio Bertelli, Nota introduttiva di Monica Centanni
Una scoperta di Sergio Bertelli: Machiavelli lettore di Lucrezio. Nota introduttiva alla riedizione dei due saggi sul Vat. Ross. 844 (Bertelli 1961; Bertelli 1964)
Monica Centanni
Noterelle machiavelliane: un codice di Lucrezio e Terenzio (1961)
Sergio Bertelli
Ancora su Machiavelli e Lucrezio (1964)
Sergio Bertelli
Machiavelli, l'umanesimo e l'amore politico
Guido Cappelli
Tucidide e Machiavelli
Luciano Canfora
Machiavelli e i suoi lettori novecenteschi
Luciano Canfora
Il giudizio di Machiavelli su Scipione l'Africano: la fine di un mito repubblicano?
Enrico Fenzi
Machiavelli di fronte al testo antico (Livio, Cicerone, Platone)
Riccardo Fubini
"Cattivi maestri": Machiavelli e i classici
Peppe Nanni