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The Circulation and Use of Humanist ‘Miscellanies’ in England

At inordinatam istam et confusaneam, quasi silvam aut farraginem
perhiberi, quia non tractim et continenter sed saltuatim scribimus et
vellicatim tantum abest uti doleamus ut etiam titulum non sane alium
quam Miscellaneorum exquisiverimus

Politian, preface to *Miscellaneorum centuria una* (1489)

MISCELLANY n.s. A mass formed out of various kinds

Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755)

You might be forgiven for assuming from the title that this brief article can be an exhaustive survey of everything there is to know on its topic. After all, England is often presented as living beyond the infection zone which submitted to the *studia humanitatis*, at least in its first generations, a land where a couple of princes and only a few more bishops showed any interest in the intellectual novelties being wrought in Italy. It is true that the *Britanni* – *penitus toto orbe divisi* – offered up far fewer young men than the Germans to be educated at the universities of the peninsula and there to succumb to the new literary fashions. It is also the case that the English presence at the papal curia was less substantial than for those nations which were both more populous and physically closer to the epicentre of western Christendom. And, yet, there was an English tradition of engagement with humanism which was so varied and so lively that I cannot attempt to do it justice within the short span of this piece. Instead, I want to provide you with a few vignettes or, rather, *amuse-bouches* to allow you to savour something of the flavours of English humanist interest in the second quarter and the middle of the fifteenth century. *Lege feliciter*.

* * *

The humanists saw themselves living after the shipwreck – the Fall of Rome from which the remnants of civilization had survived like flotsam. Beyond the heyday of the *studia humanitatis* there have been further disjunctures or break-points. In the Italian peninsula itself, the Sack of Rome in 1527 may have been a short-lived and local crisis, but not so the impact of the Napoleonic invasion and the suppression of monasteries at the start of the nineteenth century. For England, its Flood occurred earlier, in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. The Dissolution of the Monasteries of the late 1530s and early 1540s let loose so many manuscripts, some never to be seen again. For early antiquaries of Protestant sympathies, the Dissolution was welcome but its consequences a national shame. Its impact, moreover, was felt beyond the confines of abbeys and convents themselves; the educational colleges established by some religious foundations in Oxford or Cambridge were also closed, and there was, for a moment at least, a threat to the very existence of all colleges in the

universities. Yet, some collections remained notably intact and our discussion begins with one witness to such a survival.

Balliol College, established in the later thirteenth century just beyond the northern walls of Oxford, still boasts a library containing several hundred manuscripts. Many of these came by way of bequests from two alumni made in the 1470s. The first and smaller was from Richard Bole, archdeacon of Ely (d. 1477), followed the next year by that of the ecclesiastic to whom Bole owed his promotion – William Gray, who was bishop of Ely from 1454.¹ The two men had been contemporaries at the College, with Bole probably a few years older, but Gray, nephew to the bishop of Lincoln and born into the gentry, being socially the more eminent. Indeed, possibly because of his family connexions, he was elected the University's Chancellor in 1440 or very early 1441, though he was to hold the position only briefly, for, in 1442, accompanied by Bole (among others), he set off for continental travel which took him to Cologne and then, from 1444, to Padua and to Ferrara. Gray was to remain in the Italian peninsula for nearly a decade, visiting Florence (where he was known to Vespasiano da Bisticci) and settling in Rome where he was the English king's proctor at the curia.² When he did return to the land of his birth, it was with a large quantity of manuscripts in his baggage, an ostentatious demonstration of the acquaintance he had made with humanism.³ Yet, his knowledge of the studia humanitatis was not born ex nihilo when he set foot in the Veneto – the manuscript which I wish to introduce to you was made in England before his departure on his grand tour *avant la lettre*.

The codex in question is formed of two parts, both written by the same scribe.⁴ The second part is interesting enough: it is a copy of ten of the twelve *Panegyrici latini*, the sycophantic orations to late Roman emperors, headed by that of Pliny the Younger addressed to Trajan – a collection which enjoyed no circulation until 1433 when a manuscript in the cathedral library of Mainz was transcribed by the Sicilian humanist Giovanni Aurispa.⁵ In other words, within nine years of their release to the world of Italian literati, the orations were available for transcription in England. We also know how this came to be: one of the early recipients of the text was the Milanese scholar, Pier Candido Decembrio; he spent some years ingratiating himself from afar to England's leading noble, the uncle – and, from 1435, heir presumptive – to Henry VI, Humfrey, duke of Gloucester; part of Decembrio's campaign to promote himself and achieve long-distance patronage was to act as the duke's book-factor, sending to him manuscripts from Italy and, among them, was a copy of the *Panegyrici*.⁶ It must have been despatched in 1439 or 1440, but it did not remain long in Humfrey's ownership. With a magnanimity befitting of a royal prince – or (others might quibble) an insouciance

¹ The best account of both men remains that provided by Mynors 1963, pp. xxiv-xlix, which can be supplemented by the valuable nuggets of information in Harvey 1993; see also Haines 1974.

² Vespasiano 1970-76, i, pp. 307-10; see also de la Mare 1957 and de la Mare 1996.

³ On Gray as a humanist collector, see Schirmer 1963, pp. 109-14; Weiss 2009, pp. 132-48; Bodleian 1970, pp. 24-31.

⁴ Oxford: Balliol College, MS. 315, described by Mynors 1963, pp. 332-33.

⁵ I briefly discuss the re-discovery and fortuna of the *Panegyrici* at Rundle 1998, pp. 150-52.

⁶ It is now Paris: BnF, MS. lat. 7805 on which see de la Mare 1989, pp. 115-18. On Humfrey's relations with Decembrio, see Sammut 1980, pp. 29-53 and 174-215; Saygin 2002, pp. 218-32, and Weiss 2009, pp. 87-95 and its Appendix, pp. 16-32.

unbecoming of a bibliophile – he dispensed with about three hundred of his manuscripts during his own lifetime, in a series of gifts to the University of Oxford between 1435 and 1444.⁷ Among his last and largest donation was the codex of the Panegyrici which he had only recently received.⁸ However, the manuscript's arrival in Oxford was, as we have seen, too late for it to have become the prototype for Gray's copy while it was in the University's ownership. Nevertheless, collation has shown that the transcription made for Gray is certainly copied from Humfrey's manuscript; the conclusion we cannot avoid drawing is that the duke must have made the book available, while it was still in his possession, as a personal favour to the man who was, in the same years, Chancellor of the University.⁹ We might imagine that Gray sent a scribe to Humfrey's palace at Greenwich to copy in situ the orations.

The tale of this second half of our manuscript is itself demonstration of the alacrity with which texts prized by the humanists could travel across Europe and be available for transcribing in England. The first half of the volume is all the more revealing. It provides a cluster of opuscula by several authors. A near-contemporary contents list written in an *anglicana cursive* at the front flyleaf of the manuscript helpfully identifies them (here provided with further explanation below each item):¹⁰

[1] *Ysagogica Aretini*...

Leonardo Bruni, *Isagogicon* (1424/26)¹¹

[2] *Commentarium rerum graecarum* [next word an interlinear addition:] *eiusdem ad splendidissimum equitem angelum*...

Leonardo Bruni, *Commentarium rerum graecarum*, addressed to Angelo Acciaiuoli (1439)

[3] *Lucianus de amicitia*...

Lucianus latinus, *Toxaris*, translated by Giovanni Aurispa (1429/30)¹²

[4] *Aurispa equestris ordinis de contencione presidencie Alexandri hanibalis et scipionis coram Minoye rege inferorum*...

Lucianus latinus, *Dialogus mortuorum XII*, translated by Giovanni Aurispa (1425)

[5] *Triumphus ianuensium adversus regem aragonum*...

Giannozzo Manetti, *Laudatio Ianuensium* (inc.: *Mihi sepius cogitanti ac mecum*) (April / May 1436)¹³

[6] *Leonardus aretinus de origine urbis mantue*...

Leonardo Bruni, *De origine urbis Mantuae* (1418)

[7] *Idem in orationes homeri*...

Homer latinus, *Orationes*, translated by Leonardo Bruni (1422/24)

[8] *Cincius vir romanus ac poeta clarissimus in tradictione sua super tractatu socratis de morte contempnenda*...

Ps-Plato latinus, *Axiochus* translated by Cencio de' Rustici, with preface to Cardinal Giordano Orsini (1436/37)¹⁴

⁷ The indispensable study is Bodleian 1988. For the lists of the majority of the books given, we await the edition in the *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues* which will form Thomson 2015, U01-3; in the meantime, the most accessible edition is Sammut 1980, pp. 60-84.

⁸ It was no. 74 in the gift acknowledged in February 1444.

⁹ *XII Panegyrici* 1964, pp. v-vi.

¹⁰ Oxford: Balliol, MS. 315, fol. 1^v. The list also provides the incipit and folio number for each of the items; those details are not transcribed here. It continues with a listing of the panegyrics.

¹¹ For all of Bruni's works, I follow the datings proposed Hankins 2007-2008.

¹² For the dating of the two Aurispa translations, I have relied on Mattioli, *Luciano e L'umanesimo* 1980, pp. 57-8, who is followed by Marsh 1998, pp. 30-31.

¹³ I follow the dating proposed by Giovanna Petti Balbi in Manetti 1974, p. 12.

[9] *Idem in sermone plutarchi de virtute et vicio...*

Plutarchus latinus, *De virtute et vicio*, translated by Cencio de' Rustici (c. 1428)

As with the *Panegyrici latini*, it is striking how quickly the scribe came to have access to some of the works included here. It is impressive enough that Giannozzo Manetti's oration, composed in the first half of 1436 (probably in the spring), was available in England at most seven years after publication, and likewise Cencio de' Rustici's *Axiochus* translation; it is all the more notable that Bruni's *Commentarium rerum graecarum* should have travelled north in the years immediately following its production. Not only this: as we will see shortly, there is reason to narrow by a further couple of years the lapse of time from composition in Italy to availability at the other end of Europe. Before we do that, however, there is a matter of terminology that deserves some comment: this collection of texts has been described as a 'humanistic miscellany' but that is a term which we are liable to overuse.¹⁵ In English, it has come to signify any collection of texts within a codex but it does carry the implication that the disparate elements were brought together without a rationale; yet, for many of the manuscripts recorded in latter-day catalogues as 'miscellanies', we can indeed detect some sense of order or unity. In this particular case, the rationale might be considered weak and certainly required little forethought: what the copyist did was to transcribe fully and in the order of his prototype the opuscula as they appeared in another manuscript. This was not that common a practice and, however derivative, it provides enough of an organising principle to deny the collection that status of being miscellaneous on a strict definition. Whether his exemplar was also a compilation with a logic to its construction is something we will consider in a moment.

The manuscript whose contents this half of Gray's codex so closely replicates has been identified as now residing in the Biblioteca del Seminario in Padua.¹⁶ It is a small volume in an elegant if somewhat angular *littera antiqua*, with simple but attractive *bianchi girari* initials. How Gray came to be able to have a copy made from it has been a puzzle: it has been assumed that he must have found all the works in another manuscript in Humfrey's collection but, as the volume now in Padua was definitely not owned by the duke, the implication has been that there must have been an intermediate copy.¹⁷ However, textual collation demonstrates that Gray's copy is transcribed directly from this manuscript.¹⁸ That fact is

¹⁴ For the dating of Cencio de' Rustici's two translations, I have followed Bertalot 1975, p. 133.

¹⁵ The phrase is that used by Bodleian 1988, no. 70. The various incarnations of the on-line *Vocabulaire codicologique* include some differences of nuance; Denis Muzerelle's original French listing (1985) proposed a distinction between a miscellany which is 'homogène' or 'hétérogène' which is reflected in the Spanish but not in Marilena Maniaci's 1996 Italian version; all these languages suggest specifying whether it is 'organisé' (where 'la reunion répond à une intention quelconque'). This terminology is by no means standard and in the scholarship of medieval English manuscripts a different distinction reigns, where an anthology, defined as 'a number of items brought together according to some governing principle' is contrasted with the 'more random incorporation' of a miscellany: Boffey 1996, pp. 69-82 at p. 73, and cf. Pearsall 2005, pp. 17-29. This is not how 'anthologie' is defined in the *Vocabulaire*, and there is the added unfortunate detail that its Greek root makes the term the semantic equivalent of *florilegium*. Cf. Beal 2008, pp. 18 and 255.

¹⁶ Padua: Biblioteca del Seminario, MS. 119, on which see Donello 1998, no. 94 [pp. 41 – 2 & pl. civ].

Attention was first drawn to the connexion between the two manuscripts by Peter Thiermann: see Bruni 1993, pp. 52, and the discussion in Bodleian 1988, no. 70.

¹⁷ This is the reconstruction proposed by Bodleian 1988, no. 70; cf. Sammut 1980, pp. 130-31.

¹⁸ See both Thiermann's discussion, as cited above, and my own collation of the preface to the *Axiochus* available in the Appendix to Weiss 2009, pp. 63-66.

corroborated by two pieces of information which have not previously been recognised and which clarify how a scribe sitting in England came to have access to this manuscript. The first reveals a reader and probable owner of the prototype: on several leaves of that manuscript appear marginalia which can be identified as being by the Venetian legal scholar and ecclesiastic, Pietro del Monte (d. 1457).¹⁹ He was, as Vespasiano da Bisticci attested, an avid book-collector; it is only now being recognised how large his collection was and how significant it was to the fifteenth-century development of the Vatican Library.²⁰ What is especially relevant for us is that his career – which saw him educated at Padua, then attend the Council of Basel only to remain loyal to Eugenius IV in whose service he thus progressed – included five years as papal collector in England, arriving in August 1435 and leaving no earlier than late October 1440.²¹ It appears, in other words, that he had this manuscript with him while he was in England and, we can surmise, made it available to William Gray's scribe. There is, however, a helpful complication: as we have already noticed, one of the works in the codex was composed in 1436, another in that year or the following, and a third in 1439 – all, that is, some time after del Monte had established himself in London. The conclusion must be that it was made on the continent and exported to him. The second piece of new information can help us understand how that was possible. To introduce this, we need to consider in a little more detail del Monte's activities in England.²²

To be papal collector was to act as the pontiff's taxman but, in the ecclesiastical politics of the late 1430s, the position could have further political significance and del Monte, with his eye to self-promotion, was keen to take on the role of being the promoter of the pope's cause against the conciliarists at Basel. His hope was that he could secure the English government's continuing loyalty and, to do that, he engaged in both political and cultural diplomacy. He gave speeches before the king and before Parliament; he wrote a tract against the latest assertions of Basel, and he ingratiated himself to key English figures by presenting them with his own humanist writings.²³ To do this, he required both access to appropriate literary resources and scribes to make copies of his works. He himself – during his English years as also in later periods of his life – often acted as his own scribe, for instance producing a manuscript of Lactantius's *Divine Institutes*, a work to which he repeatedly referred in the writings he composed at this time (good evidence, we might note in passing, for how reading far from the fulcrum of the *studia humanitatis* could inform a humanist's scholarship).²⁴ At other times, del Monte had collaborators so that, for instance, when he wanted his own copy of Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, he called on three unnamed colleagues, none of whom attempted to imitate his own humanist cursive and all of whom were probably northern

¹⁹ Padua: Biblioteca del Seminario, MS. 119, fol. 5, 7, 7^v, 8^v, 9, 9^v–12, 13–14, 17^v, 18^v, 19, 20^v, 21, 48, 50^v, 51^v, 56^v, 63, 64^v, 65^v, 68, 69, 70, 85, 87, 87^v, 88^v, 90, 93, 97^v, 98. For del Monte's career, see Haller 1941; Quaglioni 1984; Pellizzarri 2009, pp. 258–554.

²⁰ Vespasiano 1970–76, i, pp. 269–70; Rundle 2001; Rundle 2004; Manfredi 2012.

²¹ The letter of credence provided for him by the English crown is dated 24th October 1440: Bekynton 1872, i, pp. 34–36.

²² On del Monte in England, as well as those works cited above, see Schrimmer 1963, pp. 37–41; Weiss 2009, pp. 41–46 and its Appendix, pp. 33–41; Harvey 1993, pp. 74–77 and *passim*.

²³ Haller 1941, Rundle 2002a, pp. 284 – 305.

²⁴ BAV, MS. Vat. lat. 215, with an image of del Monte's script and the English illumination at Rundle 2001, p. 249. For del Monte's interest in Lactantius, see Rundle 2002a, *passim*.

Europeans.²⁵ Similarly, in his official work, at times he employed local copyists working in the gothic tradition, as when he sent to the continent a transcript of his short anti-conciliarist tract which he composed in 1438.²⁶ We can know this copy was made under his guidance as it includes authorial corrections, and so does another fascicule. The work in this latter case was the oration which the collector had given before Parliament late in 1435; del Monte not only makes changes to the text but he also provides a subscription, showing the copy was intended for ‘reverendissimis dominis meis Sanctissimi domini nostri presidentibus in concilio Basiliensi’.²⁷ What marks out this set of leaves is that they are written in a highly competent humanist script. Moreover, though he does not sign himself, the scribe is identifiable. There are two manuscripts – one of Coluccio Salutati’s *De fato et fortuna* and the other of Giles of Rome’s *De Regimine Principum* – which share not only English illumination but also a spiky *littera antiqua*, whose creator signs himself ‘Petrus Lomer alias de Colorna’.²⁸ The placename probably equates to Kolhorn, a hamlet in North Holland, making Lomer one of those Dutchmen (like Theoderic Werken and, later, Pieter Meghen) who mastered the Italian reform of script and practised it in England – a witness, then, to the cosmopolitan nature of the humanist enterprise.²⁹ Lomer, however, did not simply master a single new style of handwriting; he experimented with its possibilities. The copy of del Monte’s oration he produced is not in precisely the same script as the two literary manuscripts just mentioned: it is in a lower grade of *littera antiqua* but we can be confident in our identification because it shares some features with that script and others with another codex signed by Lomer but written in a different style of humanist bookhand – still angular but less spiky.³⁰ It is this last script which also appears on every page of the ‘miscellany’ which was the prototype for William Gray’s collection.

We know, then, that this prototype was in the hands of Pietro del Monte and that it was produced by a copyist who worked for him, Petrus Lomer. We can take the evidence a little further: the compilation was clearly constructed on the continent, as is shown not only by the contents but also by the humanist style of initials. Both of these elements, indeed, suggest a Florentine origin. We might surmise that Lomer travelled to the city where Eugenius IV was based, presumably during the Council which saw the attempted reunion of the Orthodox and Catholic faiths. We know that a trusted servant of del Monte’s, ‘Petrus Pensauritanus’, sometimes called his *secretarius* and sometimes his *scriba*, was sent to Florence in the spring of 1439; it is not impossible that Lomer acted as the secretary’s assistant and journeyed with him.³¹ Perhaps, also, Lomer had instructions from del Monte to compile a sampler of

²⁵ BAV, MS. Vat. lat. 1953.

²⁶ Berlin: Staatsbibliothek, MS. lat. fol. 806, fol. 295-318^v, a fascicule of its own now bound in a composite volume of papalist works, written in a gothic current cursive, slanted with frequent shading on the long strokes in the French style, but presumably by an English scribe; del Monte’s corrections appear at fol. 295, 295^v, 296^v, 299^v, 300^v, 307, 308^v, 309, 310^v, 311^v, 316, 318^v.

²⁷ Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS. O. 124 sup., fol. 63 – 70^v.

²⁸ Padua: Biblioteca Capitolare, MS. C. 78, and Verona: Biblioteca Capitolare, MS. CCXXXIV (221), with his colophon as quoted at fol. 217 of the latter manuscript.

²⁹ I discuss this tradition of Dutchmen in England in Rundle forthcoming, ch. 4.

³⁰ The manuscript, of Hegesippus, *De Excidio Iudaeorum*, is in private hands; it was sold in the London rooms of Sotheby’s at their 6th July 2010 sale as lot 33. I provide the detailed discussion to corroborate the identification of all these manuscripts as being by Lomer in Rundle forthcoming, ch. 2.

³¹ For the secretary, see Haller 1941, sub indice.

humanist texts. The collection he constructed brings together original works and translations from Greek, as well as spanning a range of genres; in so doing, it gives first place to the acknowledged prince of humanists, Leonardo Bruni, but not to the exclusion of others, and it also provides works – by Manetti and Cencio de' Rustici as well as Bruni – which are so recent as to make the collection voguish. In other words, the range of texts could itself be the logic that drove Lomer's activity – this may not be a miscellaneous assortment but a consciously chosen selection.

The implication of this is that del Monte may have intended to share this manuscript (as he did others) with his hosts, as part of his diplomatic use of cultural products.³² Share it he clearly did, as is shown by the transcription made for William Gray, at some point in the months – probably less than a year – between the exemplar's arrival and del Monte's departure from England in the last months of 1440 when, it would appear, the manuscript left with him; it was later available in France (where del Monte was based from 1442 and 1445) but it also received an Italian binding with an interlace pattern on both boards.³³ It may not have been only the book itself that he shared. There is another notable feature of Gray's manuscript and that is its script – a hybrid, gothic in its aspect but humanist in several of its letter forms. To be more precise, some of its details – like its sharp-necked **g** and its angled ampersand – are reminiscent of the style used by Lomer not in the exemplar but in his manuscripts of *Salutati* and *Giles of Rome*. It may be that what we see on the page in Gray's codex is a hint that its scribe was coached by Petrus Lomer himself.

* * *

We should now shift our attention to a little over a decade later, at a time when William Gray, having completed his educational tourism, was ensconced in Rome where he was the English king's proctor. It would appear that he did not take with him on his travels the manuscript of his we have just described; he most likely left it in the safe-keeping of the fellows of Balliol College. It seems to have been available for others to read in Oxford: in particular, four texts found in Gray's manuscript are reproduced in a pocket-sized volume which has been called another 'humanistic miscellany'.³⁴ Its contents list, integral to the production of the manuscript, can, once again, helpfully introduce us to the items:

[1] *Liber Zenophontis qui dicitur tyrannus.*

Xenophon latinus, Hiero, translated by Leonardo Bruni (1401/03)

[2] *Oracio Nicoclis Regis in subditos.*

Isocrates latinus, Nicocles, translated by Guarino da Verona (1433), here without preface³⁵

[3] *Contentio Alexandri hanibalis Scipionis et Regis henrici quinti.*

Lucianus latinus, *Dialogus mortuorum XII*, translated by Giovanni Aurispa = Balliol, MS. 315, item 4, but with changes

³² For another example, see Weiss 1945.

³³ On the French copies, see Bruni 1993, pp. 51-53.

³⁴ Dublin: Trinity College, MS. 438, discussed at Bodleian 1988, no. 72. For a full description, see Colker 1991, ii, pp. 867-70, to which I provided some supplementary information in Rundle 1997, pp. 348-54. Note, though, that at the time I wrote those comments, I had not seen the Padua manuscript, and for reasons of the chronology I have demonstrated above, Manyngam's volume cannot derive directly from that which del Monte had owned.

³⁵ For the dating of the Isocrates translations, I rely on Gualdo Rosa 1984, pp. 25 (Guarino), 32-33 (Lapo).

[4] *Oraciones Homeri.*

Homer latinus, *Orationes*, translated by Leonardo Bruni (1422/24) = Balliol, MS. 315, item 7

[5] *Albertanus in tribus paruis contentis.*

Three short passages from Albertano da Brescia, two from his *Liber consolationis et consilii* (1246) and one from *De amore et dilectione dei* (1238)³⁶

[6] *Isocratis oracio ad Demonicum.*

Isocrates latinus, *Ad Demonicum*, translated by Lapo da Castiglionchio (1436)

[7] *Isocratis oracio ad Nicoclem.*

Isocrates latinus, *Ad Nicoclem*, translated by Lapo da Castiglionchio (1437)

[8] *Guarinus veronensis de differencia Assentatoris et amici.*

Guarino da Verona, *De assentatoris et amici differentia* (1437?)³⁷

[9] *Socrates de morte contemnenda secundum Cincium romanum.*

Ps-Plato latinus, *Axiochus* translated by Cencio de' Rustici = Balliol, MS. 315, item 8

[10] *Sermo plutarchi de virtute et vicio per Cincium romanum.*

Plutarchus latinus, *De virtute et vitio*, translated by Cencio de' Rustici = Balliol, MS. 315, item 9

Hos libros compilavit Magister Johannes Manyngam Secretarius et scriba alme universitatis Oxonie.

As will be seen, the texts shared with Gray's volume are interspersed with other works, nearly all humanist opuscula; we will discuss their source in a moment. The list also identifies the compiler of the collection: John Manyngam, who was Registrar or scriba of the University at the end of the 1440s and very start of the 1450s.³⁸ The book, however, was not intended for his personal edification, as is made immediately apparent by the coats-of-arms included in the illumination: it was created for presentation to John Tiptoft, earl of Worcester (a title to which this former Oxford student was raised on 16 July 1449, giving a *terminus ante quem non* for this volume).³⁹ Indeed, Manyngam has the preface of de' Rustici's translation of the Ps-Platonic *Axiochus* slightly altered so that it addressed not the original clerical dedicatee but instead the *strenuissimus comes*.

This was not the only moment when Manyngam's engagement with his humanist sources involved having them 'touched up' to accommodate them to their new home. Earlier in the same volume, the Registrar had the ending of Lucian's *Dialogue of the Dead* supplemented so the late English king, Henry V, entered the debate as a new contender for the palm (and, unsurprisingly, becomes the winner).⁴⁰ In another manuscript produced, probably in 1451, under Manyngam's guidance, where the main text is Petrarch's *Secretum*, followed by the *Axiochus*, the preface to the latter work is once more lightly revised to make it relevant to the new recipient – in this case, Reginald Boulders, an Oxford graduate who had recently been appointed bishop of Hereford.⁴¹ As with the codex made for Tiptoft, it would seem that Manyngam saw the production of this manuscript for presentation to a specific person to be part of his duties as the University's scriba, using these cultural gifts as part of the

³⁶ For the dates of Albertano's works, I rely on the studies of Graham on-line.

³⁷ I follow the dating suggested by Guarino 1915-19, ii (1916), p. 262 (ep. 676).

³⁸ On him, see O'Sullivan 1962.

³⁹ The standard biography of him remains Mitchell 1938, and see Weiss 2009, pp. 172-187 and Rundle forthcoming, ch. VI.

⁴⁰ The addition is edited by O'Sullivan 1962, 'pp. 37-39; I discuss it in Rundle 2002b, pp. 30-33.

⁴¹ Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, MS. Peniarth 336A, on which see Rundle 1997, pp. 312-15.

institution's diplomacy. It may, then, be that the works included in each were chosen because they were considered appropriate reading for their intended owner. There does seem to be a coherence to the works chosen for John Tiptoft's perusal: we might bemoan that he selected the less original works from Gray's codex, but the majority of the texts he picked out emphasise the virtues specifically required of a ruler, with the rewards in the after-life for military princes (as depicted in the revised Lucianic text) linking with the final pieces which move the reader's mind to the contemplation of mortality and morality. All of this is couched in humanist eloquence – with the range of rhetoric being a theme of Bruni's Homer orations – except for the passages from the thirteenth-century notary and philosophising author, Albertano da Brescia. Their presence might again offend our sense of order: to our eyes, these short sections are liable to seem 'somewhat isolated among the renaissance texts' and we might be tempted to conclude that their inclusion undermines any integrity the compilation may have, thus making it truly miscellaneous.⁴² Yet, Manyngam was not the only fifteenth-century Englishman who considered Albertano's moralising writings to be an appropriate accompaniment to humanist prose, and the themes of the passages he selected – on the just war, on conscience and on reputation – do fit with the other texts and may have been thought to round out the intellectual core of the collection.⁴³ An interest in contemporary humanism did not mean, for Manyngam, that works written in that style of Latin needed to be insulated from texts in a less modish (or more barbarous) Latin treating of similar themes.

Other compilers were stricter in confining themselves to recent products of the *studia humanitatis* and Manyngam himself was reliant on one such collection for those works not to be found in Gray's manuscript. The other texts – Bruni's popular rendering of Xenophon, the various versions of Isocrates, and Guarino's Plutarchan discussion on flatterers and friends – all appear together in a compilation that survives in three copies.⁴⁴ One of those copies provides a near-contemporary contents list (written in an attempt at a humanist script which contrasts with the gothic of the main body of the book):⁴⁵

- [1] Petrus de Monte de Virtutum et Viciorum differentia
Pietro del Monte, *De vitiorum inter se differentia et comparatione*, dedicated to Humfrey, duke of Gloucester (1438)
- [2] Item invective Leonardi Aretini contra ypocritas
Leonardo Bruni, *In hypocritas* (1417)
- [3] Item Eiusdem liber Zenophontis qui dicitur Tirannus
Xenophon latinus, Hiero, translated by Leonardo Bruni = TCD, MS. 438, item 1
- [4] Item Lapiscastelliunculi comparacio studiorum et Rei militaris

⁴² The quotation is from O'Sullivan 1962, p. 35.

⁴³ Another example of combining Albertano's *Liber consolationis* – in this case, the whole text – with a humanist work, Pietro del Monte's dialogue, *De vitiorum inter se differentia*, occurs in London: Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 354, for a description of which see Rundle 1997, pp. 421-23.

⁴⁴ The three copies are Cambridge: University Library, MS. Ll.i.7, London: Lambeth Palace Library, MS. 341, and Oxford: Bodleian, MS. Auct. F. 5. 26. I describe the last of these and outline the relationship with the other copies at Rundle 1997, pp. 434-41, and discuss the collection in Rundle 2005, pp. 75-78.

⁴⁵ Oxford: Bodleian, MS. Auct. F. 5. 26, p. x.

Lapo da Castiglionchio, *Comparatio studiorum et rei militaris*, dedicated to Humfrey, duke of Gloucester (1437)⁴⁶

- [5] Item Liber Magni Basilij ad iuvenes religiosos
S. Basilius latinus, *De liberalibus studiis*, translated by Leonardo Bruni (1400/03)
- [6] Item Oracio Isocratis ad demonicum de moribus iuvenum
Isocrates latinus, *Ad Demonicum*, translated by Lapo da Castiglionchio = TCD, MS. 438, item 6
- [7] Item Oracio Nicloclis Ad subditos
Isocrates latinus, *Nicocles*, translated by Lapo da Castiglionchio (1437)
- [8] Item Oracio Isocratis ad Nicoclem de Regno
Isocrates latinus, *Ad Nicoclem*, translated by Lapo da Castiglionchio = TCD, MS. 438, item 7
- [9] Item Guarini Veronensis oracio qua Regem instituit in subditos
Isocrates latinus, *Nicocles*, translated by Guarino da Verona = TCD, MS. 438, item 2
- [10] Item Eiusdem Liber de Assentatoris et Amici differentia
Guarino da Verona, *De assentatoris et amici differentia* = TCD, MS. 438, item 8
- [11] Item Expositio quorundam Vocabulorum difficilium huius tocius Libri. LEGE
A vocabulary added by the compiler

This collection has an even stronger sense of conceptual unity than Manyngam's 'miscellany'. A range of genres are sampled in these pages – dialogue, invective, oration, comparison – but with a thread running through the works of moral advice, particularly for princes and, indeed, for one prince in particular. Two of the works here appear with their dedications to Humfrey, duke of Gloucester: the fourth item, the *Comparatio* by the short-lived Florentine humanist, Lapo da Castiglionchio, and the opening piece, a dialogue by a scholar who has already been central to our discussion, Pietro del Monte. In all three of the manuscripts of this compilation, there is a slight error in the title of his *De vitiorum inter se differentia* which allows us to christen the collection the 'Virtue and Vice' sampler.

Duke Humfrey stands, in many tellings of the story of humanist interest in England, as the fons et origo. It is already clear that I believe the tale needs to be revised to acknowledge that witnesses to the innovations in Italy arrived by more than one route. In the case of the 'Virtue and Vice' collection, it does consciously gather together works that reached the University of Oxford via the duke. We know for certain that not only were the works dedicated to him among his gifts to the university, but also the two translations of Bruni and those by Lapo. For the other works, the shipwreck which was the mid-sixteenth century, during which the library of the University was closed and all its manuscripts dispersed, leaves us without definite information.⁴⁷ So, we cannot be certain whether the works of Guarino da Verona reached the ducal library, though an epistle from the humanist teacher was sent to Humfrey and may have been accompanied by a manuscript of his writings.⁴⁸ Similarly, there is no firm evidence that Bruni's invective *In hypocritas* was in the duke's collection and given by him to Oxford but scholarship has assumed that it must have come from Humfrey. This is one element of what I have previously called the lure of magnate attraction – the tendency to relate activities to princely figures at the expense of recognising the involvement of others of lower status.⁴⁹ In the specific instance of the origin of Bruni's invective in the 'Virtue and

⁴⁶ Sammut 1980, p. 26, with dedication printed at pp. 165-67.

⁴⁷ For recent comment on that dispersal, see Rundle 2014, pp. 41-43.

⁴⁸ Sammut 1980, pp. 227-28.

⁴⁹ I use the term in Rundle 2002b.

Vice' sampler, it is certainly plausible that it came from Humfrey – much more so than other cases where the same assumption has applied.

Let me give one example of how magnate attraction can make our compass go awry by brief reference to another manuscript, even though it is not, on any definition, of a miscellaneous character. It is, instead, a copy of Leonardo Bruni's *Epistolae* which was bequeathed to Balliol College not by William Gray himself but by an associate of his whom we have introduced briefly: Gray's fellow Balliol student, Richard Bole, who travelled with his future bishop in Italy but returned to England before him, in 1449.⁵⁰ The volume is dated to that year and is written on parchment of English preparation (but dry-ruled in the Italian fashion) by Theoderic Werken, like Lomer before him one of the Dutch scribes in England who adopted *littera antiqua*.⁵¹ It has been assumed that the manuscript must derive from a copy that would have been in Oxford, given by Humfrey, duke of Gloucester.⁵² This, though, is demonstrably not the case: Humfrey's last gift to the University was acknowledged on 25th February 1444 but the prototype from which Werken worked could only have been made later than that, as it represents the 9-book tradition of Bruni's *Epistolae* which was finalised following the humanist's death on 8th March 1444.⁵³ The manuscript is, indeed, one of the earliest extant dated copies of the 9-book edition. How an exemplar came to sit on Werken's desk, presumably in London where Bole was based after his re-entry to his homeland, is unclear. It may be that they imported a copy with them and then decided to have a more presentable transcription made in England. If so, the exemplar seems not to have been discarded: it appears to have been available for the purposes of correction when a copy of the *Epistolae* was made from Bole's manuscript and bound in Salisbury.⁵⁴

The significance of both this example and that of Petrus Lomer is that it alters and enriches the physical and social geography of the movement of humanist texts within England. The impression often given has been that the arrival of the works was funnelled through the hands of the duke of Gloucester, coming ashore, as it were, at his palace of Greenwich and then moving directly upstream to Oxford, with the flow of texts all but drying up after his death. The implication would be that humanism in England relied on the patronage of a single prince and was not sustainable without it. Even from as highly selective presentation of evidence as has been possible in the space of this article, it should be apparent that something more plural and more active was taking place. The role of papal diplomats in cultural transfer is well attested, but an ambitious cleric like del Monte did not seek out only the high-born; to those among whom he circulated humanist texts can be added William Gray who (as we have seen) was of gentry stock. In other cases, as with Bruni's *Epistolae*, no intervention from a visiting emissary was required to begin the circulation of the text which, instead, was the responsibility of two men of lower status than Gray himself. They, like del Monte, were situated in the city of London, which serves to remind us that humanist works which reached

⁵⁰ Oxford: Balliol College, MS. 310, on which see Bodleian 1970, no. 51. I discuss the significance of Richard Bole in Rundle in preparation.

⁵¹ On Werken, see Mynors 1949-53.

⁵² For an example of this assumption, see Davies 1991, p. 2.

⁵³ On the nine-book version, see Hankins 2007, p. xvi.

⁵⁴ The other manuscript is now Oxford: Bodleian, MS. Laud. misc. 701.

Oxford did not do so solely from Greenwich. It is hardly a surprise that the commercial capital of England should play a role in the movement of these texts but it has proven difficult in the past to pinpoint relevant manuscripts to its ambit. If this slightly shifts our perception, what does remain constant is the role of Oxford as a nodal point. ‘Oxford’ itself had a plural character, with its University collection being separate from each of those held in the various colleges which, again, we might need to separate from those (like Gray’s codex) which were in private hands. Yet, that clustering of elements within a square mile made the university town an entre-pot importing humanist texts from various directions and then exporting them – by the activities of someone like John Manyngam – to individuals in other English locales. From there, these manuscripts – small, portable, highly movable objects – might well wander elsewhere, as did the compilation Manyngam gave to the earl of Worcester: when, towards the end of the 1450s, John Tiptoft went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he left the volume with the monks of the cathedral abbey of Canterbury; we know this because one of the monks of Christ Church copied texts from that book in 1459.⁵⁵ This was not the only link between Canterbury and Oxford: we also know that the ‘Virtue and Vice’ sampler was available in both places. The connexion should not be unexpected, given the presence of a college in Oxford for the monks of Christ Church – one of those monastic foundations which were to die during the Reformation.⁵⁶

If, in fact, we want to look for the circulation of humanist works beyond a fairly confined area of the South-East and central South of England, we would need to turn to another strand of interest. We could, for instance, consider the presence of two copies of a miscellany comprising over a hundred short items, many of them evincing a special interest in the productions of the Paduan university locale in the time of Gasparino Barzizza.⁵⁷ One of those copies is associated traditionally – on the basis of evidence which, if it did once exist, is now lost in the damaged manuscript – with Thomas Bekynton, bishop of Bath and Wells; himself an Oxford graduate, his own humanist interests are well-known and resulted in several humanist texts being held in the library of his Somerset cathedral.⁵⁸ If this takes us to the south-west of England, the exemplar from which it was transcribed suggests another geographical location. This lower-grade volume, constructed on quires of paper encarté with parchment and made on the Continent, seems to have travelled in central England and then moved north to York, where it entered the possession of the city’s most significant abbey of St Mary’s.⁵⁹ It is with this collection of texts that we may also be approaching that subset of miscellanies which are truly miscellaneous – it combines works by Barzizza, Francesco Zabarella, Antonio Loschi, Francesco Barbaro and Pier Paolo Vergerio, as well as Poggio Bracciolini and Leonardo Bruni, with Latin texts by two of Florence’s *tre corone*, Boccaccio and Petrarch, plus letters by Peter of Blois and St Bernard, along with some short classical pieces (several, including the correspondence between St Paul and Seneca, spurious) and a

⁵⁵ The manuscript is London: British Library [hereafter BL], MS. Royal 10. B. ix.

⁵⁶ Pantin 1947-85.

⁵⁷ I consider these manuscripts at Rundle 1997, pp. 80-87.

⁵⁸ BL, MS. Cotton Tib. B. VI. On Bekynton, see Bodleian 1970, p. 15 and no. 27-28 and 83, and Rundle 2005, pp. 71-72.

⁵⁹ BL, MS. Harl. 2268, for a description of which, with comment on its connexion to the Cotton manuscript, see Rundle 1997, pp. 393-414.

couple of contemporary orations in decidedly non-humanist Latin. The difference between this sort of volume and that of John Manyngam, say, is undeniable; this more varied collection has less sense of control exerted by whoever compiled it, and its focus is softened by its non-humanist elements. However, perhaps, as with Manyngam's insertion of passages of Albertano da Brescia, we should consider those inclusions we find incompatible with a satisfying coherence as a challenge to ourselves: they should force us to consider whether our own perceptions of what is acceptable reading to those of humanist leanings are too rigid.

* * *

At the beginning of this essay, we noted the shipwreck that saw the scattering of manuscript collections during post-Medieval disjunctures like England's Dissolution of the Monasteries. Several of the codices discussed here are witnesses to that, far distant from their intended home or returned there only to have travelled in the meantime. This, however, is only one sort of displacement relevant to our discussion. The traditional narrative of the *studia humanitatis* as a phenomenon intended for local Italian audiences which only slowly spread beyond the peninsula and certainly reached England late – that narrative is ripe for a challenge. The manuscripts discussed here demonstrate the speed with which books (those most portable of items) and their texts could traverse the shared civilization that is Christendom. Leaving aside those humanist works composed in Bede's fertile corner of the world (as was del Monte's dialogue), and those which were intended from early in their gestation for an English audience (like Lapo da Castiglionchio's works), we have seen that the *Panegyrici latini* were in England within seven years of their re-discovery; Bruni's *Epistolae* in their final form five years after production; the oration of Manetti in praise of the Genoese four years; Cencio de' Rustici's *Axiochus* the same time or perhaps a year less, and Bruni's *Commentarium rerum graecarum* within probably a year of its composition. The *translatio studiorum humanitatis* could be fleet of foot.

For the conventional narrative, these examples seem out of place, just as the association of 'Renaissance' with 'medieval' works in one compilation is liable to offend too rigid a sense of order. It would be better, though, to embrace such 'displacement' as a challenge to our preconceptions. They can alert us to a need to re-conceptualise, to think less of a diffusion of humanism than of humanism as diffuse – as a set of practices created in and for multiple locales, across Europe, and unavoidably conscious that it would constitute only one of several sets of intellectual stimuli to its audiences.⁶⁰ Being diffuse does not necessarily entail being diluted and certainly does not mean being unappreciated. When humanist texts produced in Italy reached the far ends of Christendom they did not languish unloved and unread. This article has had the opportunity to give only a few instances of the active engagement which some Englishmen demonstrated when encountering the new style. We have only momentarily, with the case of Manyngam's re-fashioning of Aurispa's Lucian, touched upon the tradition of Englishmen and humanist composition. We have concentrated on the theme of this collection, the 'miscellaneous'. To appreciate such activity does require us to consider the terminology we use: if we recognised these manuscripts as being not purely

⁶⁰ I think here of the terminology used by Wakelin 2012.

miscellaneous – hodge-podges assembled with no forethought or rationale – it re-endows their creators with agency. William Gray’s scribe faithfully replicated what he had in front of him, but John Manyngam or the compiler of the ‘Virtue and Vice’ sampler made a conscious selection from what they had available to them and, in so doing, constructed something more than a medley of texts: they were able to look beyond the individual texts and perceive a larger programme; they each had a vision – undoubtedly blurred but also patently far-sighted – of the *studia humanitatis*.

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