The Renaissance of *littera antiqua*: a cosmopolitan enterprise[1]

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(Seyssel: Champ Vallon, 1919), pp. 97-111]

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In addressing the theme of humanism and the challenge of Europe, I want to respond with my own challenge. We have inherited assumptions about humanism that imagine it as an entity moulded in the furnace of Italy and then exported to other parts of Europe, but I suggest we should question that approach: let us consider instead how embedded a wider Europe was in the very formation of the humanist agenda. I will focus on one central element of that agenda, briefly delineating how it achieved its victory in the Quattrocento through the complicity and collaboration of characters from north of the Alps. The evidence presented here should (I propose) encourage us to rethink our fundamental concept of 'diffusion', recognising that, at best, it concentrates attention on only one part of the success-story that is humanism's international acceptance.

The programme of intellectual reform that was promoted in the first years of the fifteenth century as the *studia humanitatis* was pre-eminently Latinate and pre-eminently textual. Scholars like the new programme's leading exponent, Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444), might couch their prose in terms of a fictive conversation — as in the *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum* — or provide the pretence of it being the record of an oral performance — as in his oration, the *Laudatio Florentinae Urbis* — but the success of their classicising eloquence required the presentation of words on parchment.[2] Learning from the ancient authors who were their heroes, they appreciated that it was the circulation of their writings that would ensure that their fame would be more than ephemeral or local. As Horace had boasted *exegi monumentum aere perennius*, so they too wanted to deserve a legacy that was not momentary but monumental.[3] The primacy of the written text required that they considered not just how they wrought their sentences but also how they were to look upon the page.

In an ostentatious rejection of prevailing standards, they eschewed the scripts they demeaned as 'modern' and turned to earlier styles as prototypes for emulation. As with so much of the agenda of the *studia humanitatis*, the experiments were encouraged by Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406), with the person who takes most credit for designing the new bookhand being

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[1] I would like to thank the editors of this collection and, in particular, Clémence Revest, for their encouragement, patience and, in fine, their *humanitas*. With the increasing number of manuscripts available free to view on-line, it has been decided not to include images of single pages with the printed text; instead, the reader is encouraged, for those manuscripts which are in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, to look, where possible, at the whole volume by visiting the Digital Vatican Library: https://digi.vatlib.it/

[2] Both texts, as well as a reconstruction of his biography, are available in Leonardo Bruni, *Opere letterarie e politiche,* ed. P. Viti (Turin, 1996).

[3] Horace, *Odes*, III.30.

his protégé and Bruni's friend, Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1457).[4] Though Poggio showed interested in the inscriptions on Roman monuments, it was not the ancient epigraphical style they attempted to revive for their texts — a return to alphabets written entirely in majuscules would have been beyond the horizon of expectations of themselves and their readers. Instead, they turned to late specimens of an earlier reform of script, that which we term caroline minuscule, so called because of its promotion by the court of the first Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne. This was, to the humanists, the *littera antiqua*, whose resurrection they set about achieving. Their reform was not solely of letter-forms but of mise-en-page generally. The prevailing format of large volumes in which two columns could sit within a frame of commentary in a smaller script was not for them: long lines without interruption and with clean borders to avoid distraction was their preference. Their intention was to create an appearance for the text which befitted their classicising style. They wanted, in short, to make the page eloquent.[5]

It is with the scribal element of their agenda that this article is concerned, and the first point we should note is the humanists' terminology for the scripts they rejected. They described them not only as 'modern' but also as 'teutonic' or 'gothic' — and this last insult has stuck; it is the accepted usage for describing the system of scripts that gained their maturity in the early thirteenth century and dominated for the following two hundred years or more.[6] By adopting these terms, the humanists were suggesting that those scripts were the work of barbarians, whose vicious habits had been imported onto Italian soil. There is an obvious and significant irony to this: in replacing what they declared was northern barbarism, Poggio and his friends turned to examples of a script the origins of which lay closer to Aachen or to Corbie than to anywhere in Italy. The historical insight was not available for them to appreciate this; what they had before them were Italian witnesses to the intellectual success of that reform. They were, then, re-making Florence as a home for *littera antiqua*; their intention was to endow it with a new local identity.

Their initiative has undoubtedly succeeded in the long term: humanist *littera antiqua* is generally considered to be an Italian phenomenon, with its premier place of production being Poggio's city. There is a certain truth to both parts of that statement. We might refine it by noting that some scribes in Florence did not commit themselves solely to Poggio's *littera antiqua* but developed a style indebted to the humanist cursive which had been designed concurrently with Poggio's innovations by his colleague, Niccolò Niccoli (1364-1437).[7] The apogee of that style was to be achieved after the mid-point of the century and, in the creation of italic, another city on the other side of northern Italy had a leading role: it was in Padua that Bartolomeo Sanvito (1433-1511) and others experimented and confected this new cursive bookhand.[8] In what follows, my comments concentrate on *littera antiqua* — and,

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[4] The classic narrative remains B. L. Ullman, *The Origin and Development of Humanistic Script* (Rome, 1960); for a recent overview, see S. Zamponi, 'La scrittura umanistica', *Archiv für Diplomatik*, l (2004), pp. 476-504.

[5] I discuss the points in this paragraph at greater length in D. Rundle, *The Renaissance Reform of the Book and Britain* (Cambridge, forthcoming), ch. I. See also P. Sissis, 'SchriftBild – Entwurf einer humanistischen Ästhetik? Die Handschrift Hamilton 166 von Poggio Bracciolini', *Kunsttexte*, iii (2014), online at: https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/handle/18452/8324 [last accessed 23 May 2018].

[6] S. Rizzo, *Il Lessico filologico degli umanisti* (Rome, 1973), pp. 114-116.

[7] On the importance of Niccoli, see not only de la Mare, *Handwriting*, pp. 44-61 but also T. De Robertis, 'Nuovi autografi di Niccolò Niccoli (con una proposta di revisione dei tempi e dei modi del suo contributo alla riforma grafica umanistica)', *Scrittura e civiltà*, xiv (1990), pp. 105-121.

[8] A. C. de la Mare and L. Nuvoloni, *Bartolomeo Sanvito. The Life & Work of a Renaissance Scribe* (sl, 2009).

indeed, if our discussion was of humanist cursive or of italic, the tale would be interestingly different from the one we are about to unfold. There is a contrast to which I will return at the end of this article.

There is another fact which we should emphasise: though Leonardo Bruni celebrated Florence as welcoming foreigners into its teeming streets, in terms of scribes of *littera antiqua* who found employment there, it operated something closer to a closed shop.[9] There is a limitation to our evidence: the majority of manuscripts lack revelatory colophons stating who produced them. In her seminal listing of 108 Florentine humanist scribes from across the Quattrocento, A. C. de la Mare was able to attribute an impressive number of unsigned manuscripts to known copyists, and was able, using archival records, to propose names for some others, but still 32 remained anonymous and three others are known only by their initials.[10] Of the remaining seventy-three, there are some for whom their origins are unstated but the overall proportions within the group are clear. Florence was certainly welcoming to those who came from its subject cities, with copyists hailing from Pistoia, from Arezzo, from San Gimignano (for instance), but those who announced themselves as being from beyond the confines of the Florentine state constituted no more than a fifth of the total number of scribes.

This is not to suggest that the leaders of the humanist movement wanted to keep their new bookhand as some sort of trade secret. In the 1420s, Poggio Bracciolini himself trained others in the art. In a letter to his friend, Niccolò Niccoli, Poggio mentions two:

> Hic scriptor meus, quem summo labore litteras antiquas edocui, Neapolitanus est. Hoc cum scribo, putato eum hominem esse spurcissimum et turpissimum vite … Itaque egre huius nequitiam fero, sed tamen omnia ferre proposui quoad hoc opus orationum particularium conficiat, quod etiam dubito, an perficiat, ita est levis, inconstans ac fastidiosus. Sed habeo alium gallicum qui parum novit; hoc utar.[11]

Poggio's words ooze disdain for a southern Italian, even though he could write *littera antiqua*; the Frenchman is described as knowing nothing at that point, but Poggio later praises him for the expertise he achieved.[12] Indeed, this 'good French scribe' became so good that his script can be hard to distinguish from his master's.[13] The irony, then, is that part of his success was his ability to efface his origins from what appeared on the page (we do not even have his full name).[14]

We should remember that, when Poggio was dealing with the lowlife Neapolitan and the promising Frenchman, he was based in Rome — a milieu, as we are about to see, very different from his home city. For Florence, de la Mare's listing includes no-one from further

[9] Leonardo Bruni, *Laudatio Florentinae urbis*, ed. S. U. Baldassarri (Florence, 2000), eg p. 34 (ll. 8-11).

[10] A. C. de la Mare, 'New Research on Humanistic Scribes in Florence' in A. Garzelli ed., *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento 1440-1525*, 2 vols ([Florence], 1985), i, pp. 393-600.

[11] Poggio Bracciolini, *Lettere*, ed. H. Harth, 3 vols (Florence, 1984-87), i, ep. 57 (18 August 1425), p. 156 (ll. 35-43).

[12] Poggio, *Lettere*, ed. Harth, i, ep. 36 (6 Jan. 1431), p. 97 (ll. 47-49), the reference to 'unus qui melius scribit' being to this scribe.

[13] For discussion, see A. C. de la Mare, *Handwriting of the Italian Humanists*, i (Oxford, 1973), pp. 82-84.

[14] De la Mare's reconstruction at *Handwriting*, p. 82 suggests that he may be identifiable as 'Francia', a scribe active in Florence, but he does not appear in her later listing in 'New Research'.

south than Umbria (which provided a leading scribe, Dominicus Cassii de Narnia).[15] The listing also suggests that if a humanist scribe was to be non-Florentine, they were at least as likely to be non-Italian as from elsewhere in the peninsula: seven were Italians from beyond Tuscany, but eight were from other parts of Europe.[16] The non-Italians can be presented in a table by national designation:

German	5
Netherlandish	1
French	1
Spanish	1
TOTAL	**8 out of 73 scribes (11%)**

The detail that sits behind these figures allows for some alteration. For instance, de la Mare included Theodericus Goch (who self-identified as 'alamanus'), as he worked for the Florentine bookseller, Vespasiano da Bisticci, in the third quarter of the century, but, as she says, his script is at most 'semi-gothic', employing a northern European cursive combined with some use of humanist capitals.[17] We might wish to exclude him, but also to consider whether when 'Martinus Berardi' signs himself 'de Balneo S. Marie', he is announcing his hometown as Marienbad in Bohemia; if so, he is unparalleled as an ultramontnae who mastered writing a humanist cursive in Florence.[18]

I note these uncertainties because we should be conscious of the limitations of our knowledge at present. We tend to assume that, if a manuscript is humanist in style, it is the product of Italian hands. For a book that was made in Florence, this is most likely true, though, as we have just seen, even there a one-in-ten chance existed that it was by a non-Italian. Moreover, in this proportion of ultramontane humanist scribes, it is apparent that Florence was abnormal: the role of non-Italians was more significant in some other locations. This is apparent from an analysis of another important list of humanist scribes, that compiled by Albert Derolez and including 406 copyists named in manuscripts made in Italy and which (in the main) record the date or place of production.[19] The basic data from such an analysis can be presented in a table[20]:

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[15] On whom, see de la Mare, 'New Research', pp. 433, 491-92.

[16] In addition to Dominicus Cassii, the non-Tuscan Italians in de la Mare's list include two from the Romagna (assuming Dominicus Christophori Brasichiellensis is from Brisighella; the other is Nicolaus Marchesinus from Faenza), two from Emilia (Giovanmarco Cinico of Parma and Sigismondo de' Sigismondi from Carpi), one from Le Marche (Fra Girolamo da Matelica) and one from Venice (Jacobus Macarius; perhaps Vivaldus Conti Vivaldi should be added as a second from the Veneto).

[17] De la Mare, 'New Research', pp. 538-539. Theodericus calls himself 'alamanus' in Cesena: Biblioteca Malatestiana, MS. Piana 3.146, where he also describes himself as 'gelrensis', suggesting that he came from Goch, near Geldern, close to the present-day German/Netherlands border. As de la Mare notes, this scribe is 'quite distinct' from Theodericus theutonicus de Erfordia who signed Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana [hereafter BAV], MS. Urb. lat. 220, writing in a gothic cursive with strong hybrida influence but some humanist elements (eg tall final **s**).

[18] De la Mare, 'New Research', pp. 461 and 512.

[19] A. Derolez, *Codicologie des manuscrits en écriture humanistique sur parchemin*, 2 vols (Turnhout, 1984), i, pp. 124-63.

[20] This table has appeared in D. Rundle, 'Humanism across Europe: the structures of contacts' in id. ed., *Humanism in Fifteenth-Century Europe* (Oxford, 2011) pp. 307-335 at pp. 319-20.

German	35	50%
Netherlandish	19	27%
French	7	10%
Spanish	3	4.25%
Greek	2	3%
Bohemian, Dalmatian and Scottish	1 each	4.25% in all
Unidentified	1	1.5%
TOTAL	**70**	**out of 406 scribes (17.25%)**

Such Italy-wide figures naturally mask regional variation, with Rome being particularly cosmopolitan. Elisabetta Caldelli has drawn attention to this feature of the papal city.[21] The remit she set herself was to discuss all scribes — not just humanist ones — who announced their identities in manuscripts which were definitely produced in Rome. She noted how eye-catching the figures are: over half of that scribal community was non-Italian. Caldelli did not sub-divide by type of script, and we might assume that the majority of the foreigners were committed to the habits of their upbringing, leaving humanist fashions to the locals. However, further analysis shows that, on the contrary, of those scribes who practised *littera antiqua*, exactly half were non-Italians:[22]

	All scribes	Scribes of *littera antiqua*
German	26	7
Low Countries	17	8
French	15	4
Spanish	3	1
Scottish	2	1
Bohemian	2	
TOTAL	**65 out of 126 scribes (51.5%)**	**21 out of 42 scribes (50%)**

We can note in passing how Rome bears witness to a more general phenomenon: the international diaspora of copyists from the Low Countries (by which we designate those areas roughly equivalent to latter-day Belgium and the Netherlands) was more substantial than might be expected from the small size of the area.[23] The disproportion is substantially increased by concentrating solely on humanist scribes, while that of both the German-speaking lands and of France decreases. As always, these figures need to be used with caution, as they involve only named scribes and so, for instance, Poggio's 'good French

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[21] E. Caldelli, *Copisti a Roma nel Quattrocento* (Rome, 2006). See also ead., 'Vlessentop e gli altri: copisti a Roma nella prima metà del sec. XV' in C. Tristano et al. ed., *I Luoghi dello scrivere da Francesco Petrarca agli albori dell'età moderna* (Spoleto, 2006), pp. 243-76, as well as, in the same volume, P. Cherubini, 'Scritture e scriventi a Roma nel secolo XV: gruppi sociali, presenze nazionali e livelli di alfabetizzazione', pp. 277-312; P. Radicotti, 'L'Apprendimento grafico dei copisti stranieri nell'Italia di età umanistica' in M. D'Agostino and P. Degni ed., *Alethes Philia. Studi in onore di Giancarlo Prato*, 2 vols (Spoleto, 2010), ii, pp. 549-74, and N. Giovè Marchioli, '*Scriptores* stranieri in Italia nel Quattrocento. Note di lettura e qualche riflessione' in M. D'Agostino e P. Degni ed., *Alethes Philia. Studi in onore di Giancarlo Prato*, 2 vols (Spoleto, 2010), ii, pp. 435-60.

[22] This table provides slightly different conclusions from Caldelli's own, mainly because she arranges the people by presently existing countries, while they are organised here by late-medieval geographical areas.

[23] On them, see also E. Overgaauw, 'Les copistes vus par eux-mêmes: l'exemple des copistes néerlandais en Italie' in M.-C. Hubert et al. ed., *Le Statut du Scripteur au Moyen Age* (Paris, 2000), pp. 325-32.

scribe' is not included in this data-set. Even taking that into account, however, both the significance of the Low Countries and the overall percentage of foreign scribes who promoted humanist practice are striking.

Rome was unusual, in a manner which was similar but opposite to Florence. Looking south from Tuscany, the situation could seem decidedly odd. In a well-known passage in his biography of Nicholas V (b. 1397; reigned 1447-1455), Vespasiano da Bisticci (himself, as we have seen, an employer of foreign scribes) described the curiosity of his household:

> I famigli aveva al suo servigio, non aveva ignuno taliano, tutti erano o tedeschi o franciosi. Sendo un dì domandato perchè non teneva taliani, rispose, perchè gli hanno l'animo troppo grande, et tuttavia vorebono andare piú alti, e 'l francioso o il tedesco, a ogni esercitio che tu lo metti, pure che egli abia il suo bisogno, istà contento, et non vuole andare più alto si sia, et metilo a che vile exercitio tu vogli, chè sono fedelissimi.[24]

Into the papal mouth is placed a backhanded compliment to these *stranieri*, who lacked the sense of self-worth that made Italians unsuitable for service. Vespasiano was, of course, talking of Nicholas's *familia* in general, not specifically about scribes, whose work was less 'vile' than that required of other servants. In those copyists' work, we may see some sign of the faithfulness Vespasiano mentioned: the humanist inclinations of those foreigners capable of adopting the new style of script may, in fact, have been reined in by Nicholas's own predilections.

One of these scribes used his colophons to announce he was an 'Alamanus' called Johannes Lamperti de Rodenberg; he was from the archdiocese of Mainz.[25] He produced for the pope a copy of Thucydides in the new Latin version, with a note added by the translator, Lorenzo Valla, praising the scribe's work.[26] With such credentials, we might imagine the manuscript constitutes 'un perfetto esemplare di libro umanistico', and it is certainly written in an accomplished *littera antiqua* but there are two details which qualify that claim.[27] First, the script often places the letters in each word very close to each other, eschewing the clear separation that was a hallmark of the humanist style. Likewise, while the humanist aesthetic expected a page to be presented in long lines, this manuscript employs a bicolumnar layout that was frequently employed in gothic (and in protogothic) practice. This is seen in other manuscripts made for Nicholas V, and seems to reflect his personal preferences.[28] It was certainly not the case that this was the only style which Johannes Lamperti knew how to write; in earlier manuscripts, he writes a *littera antiqua* in long lines and with more generous

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[24] Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Le Vite*, ed. A. Greco, 2 vols (Florence, 1970), i, p. 49. For discussion, see E. Caldelli, 'Copisti alla corte di Niccolò V' in F. Bonatti and A. Manfredi ed., *Niccolò V nel sesto centenario della nascita* [Studi e Testi, cccxcvii] (Città del Vaticano, 2000), pp. 71-102 at pp. 80-82.

[25] Caldelli, *Copisti*, pp. 118-19 lists the manuscripts signed by him and notes some that can be attributed to him; to the latter category can be added Oxford: Magdalen College, MS. lat. 37 (fol. 1-2) and BAV, MSS. Vat. lat. 500 (fol. 1-28) and 526, the latter two made for Nicholas V [A. Manfredi, *I codici di Niccolò V* [Studi e Testi, ccclix] (Città del Vaticano, 1994), no. 140 and 447]. At the same time, the attribution of BAV, MS.Vat. lat. 314, fol. 198-214ᵛ should be rejected: in my opinion, it is the work of the second scribe of MS. Vat. lat. 500.

[26] BAV, MS. Vat. lat. 1801, discussed and reproduced by M. Chambers, *Valla's Translation of Thucydides in Vat. lat. 1801* [Studi e Testi, cdxlv] (Città del Vaticano, 2008). In the translator's colophon (fol. 184), Valla mentions Johannes 'qui eum [sc. librum] tam egregie scripsit'.

[27] Caldelli, 'Copisti', p. 91.

[28] See Caldelli, 'Copisti' and, on his library more generally, Manfredi, *Codici di Niccolò V*.

space between the letters.[29] In other words, it was under his Italian master than he moved away from some elements of the humanist aesthetic. We can also add that some of his earlier work was produced in Florence, during the years of the papal curia's residence there. He is, in other words, another foreign scribe who can be added to the list of those working in Poggio's home city.[30]

The career of Johannes Lamperti exemplifies a couple of key points. First, if Vespasiano's description of Nicholas V's xenophilia was intended to suggest that the pope was responsible for the introduction of non-Italians into the humanist scribal community, it would certainly mislead us. That pontificate may have overlapped with the heyday of foreign humanist scribes milling around the papal curia but it certainly did not create the phenomenon of their presence. The first datable piece of work from Lamperti's career most likely coincided with the initiative of Nicholas's predecessor, Eugenius IV, which was intended to outmanoeuvre the increasingly recalcitrant Council of Basel: the alternative Council, planned to re-unite the Christian churches which met first at Ferrara and then at Florence.[31] These events may well have played their part in increasing the ultramontane engagement in the humanist agenda but — as other evidence in this article demonstrates — they did not initiate the role of foreign scribes in its homeland.[32] Moreover (and this provides the second point to which Lamperti stands witness), these foreigners were by no means liminal to the enterprise. That Lorenzo Valla who, on other occasions, could chauvinistically depict the revival of letters as a project of Italian cultural imperialism, was willing to praise Lamperti suggested how accepted and embedded a role these *barbari* could have in this 'civilising' process.[33]

Another example that reinforces the significance of foreign scribes involves a young Scot, George of Kynninmonth.[34] He travelled south soon after graduating from St Andrews in 1450, and in Italy soon learnt the humanist style — or, rather, he perfected two styles of *littera antiqua*, one which follows the habits established by Poggio, with the letters thick-set and there being fairly few ligatures, while the other is much thinner and combines some sharps turns of the pen with rounded feet to some letters. He was patently in demand for his ability. He was based in the household of Nicholas V's half-brother, Cardinal Filippo Calandrini, but also provided texts for others, including Malatesta Novello, signore of Cesena.[35] Moreover, in 1462, he was, in effect, promoted, being given a position in the *familia* of Pius II, only to die a few days later. He could have been, at most, thirty years old.

George's accomplishments were not confined to his scripts. An example of this involves his work for Malatesta Novello, where he took over the transcribing of Valla's translation of Herodotus from another immigrant, Johannes Hornsen 'Monasteriensis'.[36] In contrast to the

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[29] Examples of this include Oxford: Magdalen College, MSS lat. 59 and 76 (this latter signed, and with two varieties of script).

[30] He is not mentioned in de la Mare's list of scribes in her 'New Research'.

[31] This is Oxford: Magdalen College, MS. lat. 37, fol. 1-2; for discussion, see R. Hanna and D. Rundle, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Manuscripts of Magdalen College, Oxford* (Oxford, in preparation).

[32] For the cultural significance of the Council, see P. Viti ed., *Firenze e il concilio del 1439*, 2 vols (Florence, 1994).

[33] I discuss Valla's chauvinism in D. Rundle, 'Divided by a Common Language? Being eloquent versus being understood in fifteenth-century Latin' in O. Margolis and G. Barrett ed., *Latinity in the Post-Classical World* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

[34] This paragraph and the next summarise part of Rundle, *Renaissance Reform*, ch. III.

[35] The manuscript for Malatesta Novello is Cesena: Biblioteca Malatestiana, MS. S.XIV.1.

[36] On Hornsen, see Caldelli, *Copisti*, pp. 117-118, and Derolez, *Codicologie*, i, p. 144 (no. 217).

German Hornsen, he also adds marginalia, including several in Greek, demonstrating that his appreciation of other elements of the humanist agenda.[37] More significant than this is the recent identification by Daniela Gionta of George as the scribe, writing in a humanist cursive, of a well-known manuscript which is the earliest surviving humanist silloge of inscriptions found on ancient Roman buildings.[38] We do not need to assume that he was the collection's compiler — credit for that should probably go to Poggio himself — but that he had access to the silloge and was responsible for transcribing it suggests how integrally this Scotsman was implicated in some of the pursuits that were central to the humanists' revival of classical learning.

The scribal practices of both George of Kynninmonth and Johannes Lamperti serve to highlight another issue. Both, as we have seen, were capable not only of mastering the humanist style but also of introducing to it some variation. More than that, though, they were adept at adapting what they had adopted. We might see some of these alterations of detail as simply idiosyncratic, the expression of a personal preference. Into this category we could place Lamperti's style of abbreviation for '-rum' suffix which opens with a variant majuscule **R** written and minim height and — this is what makes it unusual — slanting sharply to the right.[39] At the same time, there is another category of adaptation, exemplified on some of the pages written by George of Kynninmonth. He was comfortable with enclosing the text within wide, open borders but, at times, he could not resist using that space for some *jeux d'esprit*, elongating the ascenders of the top line and the descenders at the bottom, sometimes allowing them to sprout flowers.[40] Such playful additions were not a personal affectation: they are well-known in northern European manuscripts and it would appear that he is nodding to his origins by using them. George was by no means the only humanist scribe to deploy these extenders; they are common enough that we might think that, though there were not licensed by the work of Poggio, they had become accepted practice in *littera antiqua*. Yet, that this is the case suggests how, in details like these, humanist habits were being infected or inflected by imports introduced by foreign hands. If we have been blind to them, that is because they became so integral that the multiple influences on the page — its hybridity, if you will — hides before our eyes.[41]

We might think of such details as exotic adornments but we could not dismiss alien scribes active in Rome as that; they were fundamental to the propagation of humanist script. We might wonder whether their numbers are exaggerated by their propensity to give their name: is it that someone far from their home was more likely to announce their origins than a local? It is possible that a larger proportion of unsigned codices were by Italians than foreigners, though it must be said that the habit of providing a colophon seems to have been more

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[37] Cesena: Biblioteca Malatestiana, MS. S. XIV.1, fol. fol. 55ᵛ, 59, 144, 144ᵛ, 148, 151, 157ᵛ, 161, 164ᵛ, 168ᵛ, 170ᵛ-171, 172ᵛ, 176, 177, 182ᵛ, 184ᵛ, 188ᵛ-189ᵛ, 193ᵛ, 208, 216, 218ᵛ, 222-23, 225ᵛ-226, 228, 231, 232, 235, 244ᵛ, 248ᵛ, 252ᵛ, 262, 264ᵛ, 265ᵛ

[38] BAV, MS. Vat. lat. 9152, discussed by D. Gionta, 'Per la storia della silloge epigrafica attribuita a Poggio Bracciolini', *Studi medievali e umanistici*, x-xi (2010-11), pp. 83-128; I thank Prof.ssa Gionta for the discussions we have had about this manuscript and its scribe.

[39] For example, Oxford: Magdalen College, MS. 76, fol. 245 (l. 4 etc), 267 (last line).

[40] For examples, see BAV, MS. Vat. lat. 1744, fol. 45, 46, 65 and 257ᵛ-258.

[41] I acknowledge here the influence of P. Burke, *Hybrid Renaissance. Culture, Language, Architecture* (Budapest, 2016), though, as is implicit below, I would suggest our vocabulary for the range of interactions that formed the Renaissance cannot be reduced solely to the cluster of concepts signified by 'hybridity'.

prevalent in Italy than elsewhere.[42] What is more, the list of non-Italian humanist scribes active in Italy can be augmented by some who certainly did not insert their names in their work.[43] In these circumstances, it is unwise to assume — as we too often do — that, when there is no evidence for the identity of its scribe, an Italian must have been responsible for a humanist manuscript made in Rome. In every case, we should appreciate that it is equally likely that it was made by a foreign-born scribe. What is more, as there are some manuscripts which are not readily localisable, we should also ask ourselves in those cases whether the impression that this is an entirely Italian product is misleading. In short, we must be continually alert to the possibility of a foreign contribution.

We could, however, ask ourselves whether foreign collaborators in the humanist enterprise have any significance beyond their numbers. In terms of the success of *littera antiqua* within Italy, their role was substantial and, as we have just seen, their interventions might subtly shift the script itself. This, though, stops short of allowing us to place any of the northern European scribes we have mentioned thus far among those whose work was primarily definitive of the humanist reform of the book. In Florence itself, it is undeniable that the first movers of the reform were from the local area; that, though, is not to say the same was the case everywhere.

To trace this, it is worth starting from the edge of Europe and work back towards what we see as its Renaissance centre. In the humanists' mental geography, the term barbarian was especially suitable for those who sat at the very edge of the civilised world, in the British Isles. Yet, even in England, the humanist agenda had some penetration, with the first humanist scribes active there in the second half of the 1430s.[44] One of those was, as we might expect, an Italian: Tito Livio Frulovisi, who was of Ferrarese origin but had lived in Venice before crossing the continent. At the same time, another was a Dutchman, Petrus Lomer, and his first work in London is datable to late 1435, a little before Frulovisi was in the country, so that the accolade of being the first humanist scribe active in England goes to this northern European — testimony to how, in its international reach, humanist script was cosmopolitan even at this early stage.[45] Lomer is also of interest for being able (like George of Kynninmonth) to write at least two versions of *littera antiqua*. One style which was rather angular is known from both his early and his latest work.[46] In between those productions, he perfected a second style which was more flowing in a manner which betrays the influence of Frulovisi. Indeed, in one manuscript made in England, we see them at work alongside each other.[47] Lomer, in other words, did not need Frulovisi to teach him the rudiments of the humanist reforms but he could adapt his writing in response to a new stimulus encountered at

[42] A. Derolez, 'Pourquoi les copistes signaient-ils leurs manuscrits?' in E. Condello and G. De Gregorio ed., *Scribi e Colofoni. Le sottoscrizioni di copisti dalle origini all'avvento della stampa* (Spoleto, 1995), pp. 37-56.

[43] For some English examples, including Thomas Candour, see Rundle, *Renaissance Reform*, ch. III.

[44] The example that follows summarises the discussion in Rundle, *Renaissance Reform*, ch. I, where full citations are provided.

[45] Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS. O. 124 sup.

[46] It is seen in both Padua: Biblioteca del Seminario, MS. 119 (which is datable to the later 1430s: D. Rundle, 'The Circulation and Use of Humanist 'Miscellanies' in England', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Moyen Âge*, ccxxviii (2016), pp. 85-99) and in a later manuscript now in private hands, for images of which see the Schoenberg Institute's Openn site, with the shelfmark LJS 237: http://openn.library.upenn.edu/Data/0001/html/ljs237.html [last accessed 13 June 2018].

[47] Verona: Biblioteca Capitolare, MS. CCXXXIV (221).

the other end of Europe from where those reforms began. We might also add that Lomer himself appears to have influenced at least one Englishman in his writing habits.[48]

We can take this tale further because we can identify the origin of Frulovisi's own distinctive style of bookhand, with its propensity for arched letters, and long ascenders and descenders. It has been noticed that the style is close to that of a masterful scribe active in Venice who is known as Michele Salvatico. Frulovisi turned to Salvatico when, a couple of years before his departure to England, he wanted a dedication copy of his dialogue, *De re publica*, made for presentation to Leonello d'Este, future marchese of Ferrara.[49] This is suggestive of Frulovisi's recognition of Salvatico as *il miglior fabbro*, who (we can hypothesise) taught Frulovisi his *littera antiqua*. This is not the only person who fell under Salvatico's influence: his style proved highly influential in Venice in the first half of the fifteenth century. What makes this all the more notable is that Salvatico reveals his origins in one colophon, describing himself as 'Michael de Salvaticis Alemanus ... Incliti senatus Venetorum notarius'.[50] From other evidence, we can specify his birthplace more precisely as Freising in Bavaria. Thus, we have a German, employed in Venice, moulding a style of *littera antiqua* that influenced not only his notarial colleagues in that city but also a humanist from Ferrara who, in turn, shaped the practice of a Dutch humanist scribe active in England, who, in turn, taught the rudiments of his skill to at least one of the locals. On my submission, this is a case-study in the cosmopolitan nature of the humanist enterprise.

Patently, the metaphor of 'diffusion' cannot capture the interactions and collaborations that were essential not just to the adoption of the humanists' favoured style of textual presentation but also to its construction in some cities of the Italian peninsula. Of course, we can isolate the Renaissance of *littera antiqua* as a single element of the humanist agenda and point to others whose progress was closer to a diffusion model — and that is an important insight: what we describe as humanism did not travel as a single, integrated package but was a composite of related but autonomous practices, each of which followed its own itinerary. I would add, however, that, if we move from scribal activities to textual ones, a grand narrative of slow movement out from the Italian centre still understates the role played by 'peripheral' locales. For instance, we have mentioned often Poggio Bracciolini, whose fame in part lies in his construction of the new bookhand but also, in part, in his 'liberating' classical manuscripts from their barbarian captors while at the Council of Constance. His time at Constance was immediately followed by a journey further north, to England, where he was resident for nearly four years, returning to Italy only in 1423. That period beyond the Channel is often described as an 'exile', because of the slighting comments about his hosts Poggio himself made in letters sent back to Florence.[51] We might want to remember that the main purpose of those epistles was to persuade his correspondent, Niccolò Niccoli, that he remained his loyal friend, who would much prefer to be in his company than at the other end

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[48] I refer to the scribe of Oxford: Balliol College, MS. 315, on whom see Rundle, 'Circulation' and id., *Renaissance Reform*, ch. II.
[49] Reggio Emilia: Biblioteca Panizzi, MS. Turri F. 92.
[50] BAV, MS. Chig. D. VI 97.
[51] I discuss Poggio's English 'exile' (the term is Ernst Walser's in his *Poggius Florentinus* of 1914) in D. Rundle, 'On the difference between Virtue and Weiss: humanist texts in England during the fifteenth century' in D. Dunn ed., *Courts, Counties and the Capital in the Later Middle Ages* (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1996), pp. 181-203, and return to the issue in my forthcoming *England and the Identity of Italian Renaissance Humanism*.

of Europe. At the same time, it is undeniable that Poggio profited intellectually from his time in England. The reading of the Church Fathers that he undertook there was later to inform the dialogues which he composed, and those compositions were then sent from Italy to England by Poggio, to be read by his former colleagues. England, in other words, did not serve Poggio solely as a rhetorical 'other' — the distant place he would rather not be — but also as both a source of stimulating reading that informed his writings and a location of audiences for those works. The example of Poggio could be parallelled with others, all of whose careers would serve to demonstrate that Italian humanism gained its identity and achieved its success through multiple forms of trans-European engagement.

Among the habits that formed the *studia humanitatis* in its first decades, then, the fortunes of *littera antiqua* were pre-eminently cosmopolitan but not alone in being so. Indeed, as was mentioned at the beginning of this article, the international nature of this specific script contrasts even with others adopted by humanists. The style of cursive promoted by Poggio's friend, Niccolò Niccoli, appears to have been more insulated against foreign adoption than the bookhand which was the canonical form of humanist presentation. There were, undoubtedly, ultramontane scribes who adopted humanist cursive: we mentioned Martinus Berardi as a possible case above; better-known is Theoderic Buckinck, from Münster, who was often used by George of Trebizond (1395-1486) as a copyist in the late 1440s and 1450s.[52] The contrast between the relatively small numbers who chose to use the cursive in comparison with those who perfected a *littera antiqua* should make us wonder why this was the case. It seems to me the answer lies in the origins of this 'new' script, in its revival of a pre-gothic aesthetic. Humanists like Poggio might have considered their achievement a resurrection of a style used locally but others across Europe could recognise its origins in late caroline minuscule which they were able to see in manuscripts in their own countries. In other words, what these foreigners saw when they had a text in *littera antiqua* in front of them was not something peculiarly Italian but, rather, a presentation that spoke of a common heritage to which they were equally heirs. The script was intended to encode a specific intellectual agenda but others could decode it as evidence of a shared tradition.

Humanist cursive which, instead, was effectively a new creation could not have struck visiting scribes with a similar sense of familiarity. Thus, when Bartolomeo Sanvito and his colleagues, in mid-century Padua, refined that cursive into an elegant, flowing bookhand its subsequent international success was largely as a result of its being seen as a new Italian invention. Even in the first decades of the sixteenth century when it was becoming internationally adopted, it retained its scent of the Mediterranean, reflected in the name it was given: italic. Little could those northern Europeans who delighted in this style have realised that its inventors in the Veneto were themselves working within a tradition of humanist script which was informed not only by habits of cursive writing but also by local variations of *littera antiqua* — variations which owed much to the influential practices of Michael Salvaticus, 'alemanus'. The scripts of Italian humanism could rarely avoid bearing the finger-prints of foreign collaborators, promoters and creators.

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[52] J. Monsfasani, *George of Trebizond* (Leiden, 1976), p. 165 and id., *Collectanea Trapezuntiana* (Binghamton NY, 1984), pp. 85-86; Caldelli, *Copisti*, pp. 142-43.