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THE HUMANIST MOVEMENT in recent decades has witnessed a veritable renaissance of scholarly interest. At the forefront of scholarly activity stands the impressive and growing I Tatti Renaissance Library, a series that makes humanist texts available to a wider audience than ever before. While the I Tatti series has focused on original Latin writings, the changing place of vernacular texts within the humanist movement also has not escaped scholarly notice. Scholars have established the importance of vernacular culture to Lorenzo the Magnificent and his circle in later fifteenth-century Florence in particular, as well as the complex and shifting ways that Neo-Latinists viewed the vernacular as a vehicle for expression throughout the quattrocento.¹ What has received less attention, however, are the men and women who participated on the fringes of the humanist movement—their social backgrounds, the depth of their learning, and their con-

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1. For recent studies on humanism and the vernacular, see Rossella Bessi, *Umanesimo Volgare: Studi di Letteratura fra Tre e Quattrocento* (Florence, 2004); Pompeo Giannantonio, *Cristoforo Landino e l'Umanesimo Volgare* (Naples, 1971); Giuliano Tanturli, "Umanesimo Civile, Umanesimo Volgare: I Sonetti di Coluccio Salutati," in *Firenze alla Vigilia del Rinascimento: Antonio Pucci e i suoi contemporanei; Atti del Convegno di Montreal, 22–23 Ottobre 2004*, ed. Maria Bendinelli Predelli (Montreal, 2006), 333–78; Mirko Tavoni, "Lorenzo Valla e il volgare," *Medioevo e Umanesimo* 59 (1986): 199–216; and Alison Cornish, *Vernacular Translation in Dante's Italy: Illiterate Literature* (Cambridge, 2011).

nections to more learned humanist writers. This article focuses on a sliver of these individuals, the evidence for their humanist interests coming primarily from vernacular texts copied during the second half of the fifteenth century. In terms of chronology, the article largely upholds the traditional view that the vernacular enjoyed a resurgence of interest in Florence after the mid-fifteenth century. However, the article challenges two other prevalent assumptions about the humanist movement in Florence, particularly the use of composition in Latin as the *sine qua non* for Florentine humanists and the lack of socioeconomic diversity among their backgrounds.

The literary output in Latin of Renaissance humanists—as classified in linguistic terms by Ronald Witt (Latin style), terms of subject by Paul Oskar Kristeller (history, poetry, grammar, rhetoric, and ethics), and content by Eugenio Garin (philology and historicism)—was but a tiny fraction of the cultural activity of the humanist movement.² More broadly, the humanist movement incorporated a number of social and cultural activities that emerged in the “discursive field” created around the classical studies of the most prolific humanists.³ Within this field, humanists during the fifteenth century encompassed a range of abilities and interests: the majority of humanists were men and women who could read Latin but who struggled to write it (and who were thus more comfortable in the vernacular than in Latin), while some individuals were altogether ignorant of the Latin tongue. Despite their modest learning, the surviving evidence for their involvement in the humanist movement is bountiful, while their activities as translators, readers, and speakers—to say nothing of their application of their learning in social and political settings—suggest their importance.⁴ Two particularly striking ways that people engaged in humanist studies were by translating classical and humanist texts into the vernacular and by reading or copying these vernacular texts. In fact, if numbers are the primary consideration, these readers and translators provide a good sense of the typical humanist, at least in fifteenth-century Florence: a person who read and studied classical or original humanist

2. These three leading conceptions of humanism are found in Ronald G. Witt, *In the Footsteps of the Ancients: The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden, 2000); Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, ed. Michael Mooney (New York, 1979); Eugenio Garin, *Italian Humanism: Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance* (Westport, CT, 1975).

3. For “discursive field” and a similar definition of the humanist movement, see Kenneth Gouwens, “Perceiving the Past: Humanism after the ‘Cognitive Turn,’” *American Historical Review* 103, no. 1 (February 1998): 80, and more generally 67–74 and 80–82. Gouwens places more of an emphasis on the incorporation of material remains into the humanist movement, whereas I place more emphasis on the humanists’ focus on spoken over literary eloquence. For a broader discussion of these points, see my *The Humanist World of Renaissance Florence* (forthcoming from Cambridge University Press).

4. For a fuller discussion of these points, see Maxson, *The Humanist*.

texts, in Latin or the vernacular, with the presumable aim of cultivating spoken eloquence.⁵ By including these figures, the conception of the humanist movement becomes far less exclusive, populated not only by exceptional figures like Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti, or Cristoforo Landino but also by members from the vague masses illiterate in Latin, men and women who were enmeshed in different parts of Florentine society and who used their humanist learning toward fairly precise ends. In short, the humanist movement included hyperlearned men at one end, barely literate readers of vernacular translations at the other, and everybody in between. The translators of Latin works into the vernacular provide one window onto this mass in the middle.

Translation was a key aspect of the Italian Renaissance, and knowledge of Greek has long been held up to distinguish Renaissance humanism from previous intellectual movements.⁶ Well-known humanists used their language skills to introduce new classical texts or reintroduce old ones in new, more eloquent versions. Alongside this work by the best and brightest fifteenth-century humanists, an equally impressive number of vernacular translations were made of these same books (via the Latin translation), humanist compositions, and classical books. At times these vernacular translators were also well versed in Greek and Latin. For example, Donato Acciaiuoli was a brilliant Greek and Latin scholar who overcame the exile of his close relatives Palla di Nofri Strozzi, Felice Brancacci, and Agnolo Acciaiuoli to rise to prominent political status in Lorenzo the Magnificent's Florence.⁷ Acciaiuoli's political prominence and learned reputation earned him the commission, in the 1470s, to translate Leonardo Bruni's official history of Florence into the vernacular on behalf of the Florentine government.⁸ Recent

5. For an alternative view, see James Hankins, "The Popularization of Humanism in the Fifteenth Century: The Writings of Leonardo Bruni in Latin and the Vernacular," in *Language and Cultural Change: Aspects of the Study and Use of Language in the Later Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Lodi Nauta (Leuven, 2006), 133.

6. Studies of Latin translations of Greek texts from the period have increased over the past several decades. A sampling of recent studies includes Christopher S. Celenza, "Parallel Lives: Plutarch's Lives, Lapo da Castiglione the Younger (1405–1438) and the Art of Italian Renaissance Translation," *Illinois Classical Studies* 22 (1997): 121–55; Paul Botley, *Latin Translation in the Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Leonardo Bruni, Giannozzo Manetti, and Erasmus* (Cambridge, 2004); Marianne Pade, *The Reception of Plutarch's Lives in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Copenhagen, 2007); Brian Jeffrey Maxson, "Kings and Tyrants: Leonardo Bruni's *Hiero* in Early Renaissance Florence," *Renaissance Studies* 24 (2010): 188–206.

7. On the life of Donato Acciaiuoli, see Margery Ganz, "The Humanist as Citizen: Donato di Neri Acciaiuoli, 1428–1478" (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1979).

8. Brian Jeffrey Maxson, "Establishing Independence: Leonardo Bruni's *History of the Florentine People* and Ritual in Fifteenth-Century Florence," in *Foundation, Dedication and Consecration in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Maarten Delbeke and Minou Schraven (Leiden, 2012), 94.

historians have rightly viewed this act as an attempt to enhance the accessibility of Bruni's popular work.⁹ The translation seems to have been a success since Acciaiuoli's version was printed four times before Bruni's Latin version finally hit the presses in the early seventeenth century.¹⁰ Acciaiuoli was one kind of translator, a man who combined his economic and political prominence in Florence with a learned reputation paralleled by few of his contemporaries. But there were other types of humanist translators.

Frequently, vernacular translators were far less learned than Donato Acciaiuoli. They are figures unknown or little known to recent historians, even as they often enjoyed prominent social and political positions in Florence. Two good examples are the translators of Leonardo Bruni's Latin version of St. Basil's Greek *Letter to the Youth*. One of Bruni's first works after he began learning Greek under Manuel Chrysoloras, the *Letter to the Youth* defends the study of secular, classical texts. Bruni translated the work at the behest of his friend, the Florentine chancellor Coluccio Salutati, who was the primary mover behind Chrysoloras's hire. Salutati yearned to harvest the first tangible fruits of Chrysoloras's instruction, and thus Salutati asked the gifted Bruni to translate St. Basil's short text, in order to use the book's content to defend the *studia humanitatis*. Bruni complied, Salutati cited the book in a treatise defending the new learning, and Bruni turned his hand to other texts, first, Xenophon's *Hiero* and then other works.¹¹ Bruni's translation of St. Basil was enormously popular, in part because of the book's pertinent subject matter defending the liberal arts against detractors and in part because of the ease in reading or copying such a short book. Today, the work exists in hundreds of manuscripts, and, thanks to the work of James Hankins, it is possible to identify the scribes and onetime owners of several manuscripts.¹² All but two of the surviving copies are in Latin, but the two vernacular editions, each translated by a different Florentine patrician (probably at some point in the latter half of the quattrocento), provide an interesting snapshot of the types of people interested in vernacular versions of humanist works. The first version was made by one Antonio Ridolfi, almost certainly Antonio di Lorenzo Ridolfi.¹³ The second version was done by

9. Hankins, "Popularization of Humanism," 141–43; cf. Maxson, "Establishing Independence," 94.

10. Hankins, "Popularization of Humanism," 141.

11. Maxson, "Kings and Tyrants," 188–89.

12. James Hankins, *Repertorium Brunianum: A Critical Guide to the Writings of Leonardo Bruni* (Rome, 1997), 254–55.

13. Antonio Ridolfi, trans., *La Orazione di San Basilio Magno*, ed. Pietro Stromboli (Florence, 1889), 2.

Giovanni Cocchi-Donati and dedicated to his friend Giovanni di Pierfrancesco Sernigi.¹⁴

Antonio di Lorenzo Ridolfi was the earlier of the two translators.¹⁵ Ridolfi's powerful social and political position is revealed through his almost unparalleled ubiquity as a Florentine diplomat, a career that suggests that the Medici valued him for his loyalty to the family. The Florentines sent Ridolfi repeatedly to conflict zones at times of Medici crisis: when the Spanish pope Calixtus III rose to the papal throne, Ridolfi was among the city's congratulatory diplomats in 1455; when French ambitions threatened the regime, Ridolfi was sent to the French satellite Genoa in early 1462; when a crisis over control of Rimini threatened the Italian League in the late 1460s, Ridolfi was one of the diplomats sent to reach a settlement.¹⁶ Supposedly, Antonio Ridolfi even sucked the wound on Lorenzo de' Medici's neck after he was stabbed in the Pazzi Conspiracy of 1478, in order to extract any potential poison.¹⁷ Ridolfi was also not bashful about showing off his power and wealth. Deep in the Oltrarno quarter of Florence, south of the Pitti Palace and just off the Piazza di San Felice, Antonio Ridolfi's renovated palace from the 1450s still stands.¹⁸ Antonio Ridolfi was a key man in Florentine politics during the mid-fifteenth century, but was he a humanist?¹⁹ By the standards of Latin style, the answer is unequivocally no: there are no original Latin works

14. Ibid., 10. The index found in Hankins, *Repertorium*, 255, only lists one Italian translation, but Hankins lists both translations in the finding guide itself; see Hankins, *Repertorium*, 60. The manuscripts are in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence, Magliabechiana, XXIV, 1 and XXXIX, 89.

15. Ridolfi, *La Orazione*, 2.

16. On these missions, see Cesare Guasti, *Due legazioni al Sommo Pontefice per il Comune di Firenze presedute da Sant' Antonino Arcivescovo* (Florence, 1857), 3–11; for Genoa in 1462, see Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Signori, Legazioni e Commissarie, 15, 61r–63r; for the Italian League, see Paula C. Clarke, *The Soderini and the Medici: Power and Patronage in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (Oxford, 1991).

17. Lauro Martines, *April Blood: Florence and the Plot against the Medici* (Oxford, 2003), 118.

18. Brenda Preyer, "Non Solo Facciate: Dentro i Palazzi Pazzi, Lenzi e Ridolfi Guidi," *Opus incertum* 2 (2008): 9, with a floor plan of the palace on 13 and picture of the exterior on 15.

19. A bigger issue than the space for this article allows is the question, "Was he an 'amateur' humanist?" Nearly fifty years ago Lauro Martines problematized the dichotomy of "amateur" and "professional," arguing that an economic distinction made little sense for discussing Renaissance humanists. Nevertheless, Martines retained these categories in his work but changed their meaning to one associated with the degree of skill in humanist letters; see Lauro Martines, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists* (Princeton, NJ, 1963), 12–13. Martines's move makes sense, but it requires a change in language to avoid the baggage of the words "professional" and "amateur." Because these larger issues would detract from the focus of this article on the placement of vernacular translators and readers into the humanist movement, the terms "amateur" and "professional" have been avoided in favor of the single all-encompassing term, "humanist," which is intended to incorporate all people involved to one degree or another in the humanist movement. For more on these issues, see Maxson, *The Humanist*.

that survive from Ridolfi's pen, in a good or a bad style, and thus a conception of the humanist movement restricted to individuals composing works in Latin has no place for him.

Yet, Antonio Ridolfi knew Latin, was interested in humanist letters, and sought to be viewed as part of the humanist movement. Ridolfi's diplomatic career points to his mastery of Latin, and a systematic search through the Florentine archives would undoubtedly bring forth diplomatic letters in Latin composed by Ridolfi, probably in Ridolfi's own hand.²⁰ Antonio Ridolfi inherited his learned interests from his father, Lorenzo. Lorenzo had been a ubiquitous Florentine diplomat at the end of the fourteenth and beginning of the fifteenth centuries. He was a friend and correspondent of Coluccio Salutati and has left first-hand evidence of his humanist studies in a surviving notebook.²¹ Antonio picked up where his father left off. Learned connections, like those of his father to Coluccio Salutati, are few for Antonio, but he did bring Piero Cennini—a copyist and editor of the first texts printed in Florence in late 1471—along as a secretary on a diplomatic mission in 1469.²² While in Naples, Cennini made a Latin copy of Antonio Panormita's *Words and Deeds of King Alfonso* explicitly for Antonio Ridolfi.²³

The evidence from Ridolfi's own pen also suggests his involvement in the humanist movement. Ridolfi translated Bruni's version of St. Basil at an unknown date, but certainly no earlier than midcentury. He also appears to have created an Italian version of part of the classical biographical miscellany the *Scriptores historiae augustae*.²⁴ A larger collection of these imperial biographies was translated by Ridolfi's contemporary Jacopo Bracciolini, who was himself a prolific translator before his execution for involvement in the Pazzi Conspiracy of 1478.²⁵ Ridolfi's selection of biographies from this classical work was done for Battista Serristori, a man who lived in the same quarter as the Ridolfi (but in a different parish) and whose kinsmen also seem to have shared Battista's hu-

20. A collection of some of Ridolfi's diplomatic papers, e.g., exists in Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Signori, Dieci di Balìa, Otto di Pratica, Legazioni e Commissarie, Missive, Responsive, 77.

21. Lawrin Armstrong, *Usury and Public Debt in Early Renaissance Florence: Lorenzo Ridolfi on the Monte Comune* (Toronto, 2003), 25–26 and 107–8.

22. Girolamo Mancini, "Il Bel S. Giovanni e le Feste Patronali di Firenze Descritte nel 1475 da Piero Cennini," *Rivista d'Arte* 6 (1909): 204–8 and 212–13.

23. Manuscript listed in B. L. Ullman, *The Origin and Development of Humanistic Script* (Rome, 1960), 124; cf. Mancini, "Il Bel S. Giovanni," 213.

24. Vatican City, Chig. M VI 136, not seen but listed in Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Iter Italicum* (Leiden, 1967), 2:489.

25. Cesare Vasoli, "Jacopo Bracciolini," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (DBI), vol. 13 (1971), http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/iacopo-bracciolini_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29.

manist interests: Carlo di Antonio Silvestro Serristori was invited along with several prominent Florentines to discuss humanist matters at the home of Franco Sacchetti, as recorded by another participant, Vespasiano da' Bisticci.²⁶ The intellectual interests of Ridolfi and these other men clearly point to the same authors and subjects that interested Leonardo Bruni or Donato Acciaiuoli. Yet, Ridolfi's literary production was as a vernacular translator, while Battista and Carlo Serristori do not seem to have written much at all. All these men differed in their degree of skill and undoubtedly the depths of their interests in humanism, but they all, nevertheless, played a role in the humanist movement.

The second translator of Bruni's book came from a lower rung on the Florentine social ladder. Giovanni Cocchi-Donati came from a family that had collectively ridden the Medici coattails to political prominence. Already wealthy by 1427, Giovanni's grandfather, Niccolò, was a key figure in the political coup that revoked the exile of Cosimo de' Medici in 1434. The family was handsomely rewarded in terms of social and political standing in Florence: by 1449 Niccolò's widowed son, the doctor of laws Donato, married a daughter from the ancient and powerful Guicciardini family.²⁷ By 1451, Donato was sent to Pope Nicholas V to negotiate support for the Florentines' military struggle against Venice and Naples, as well as papal consent to tax the Florentine clergy to help pay for the war effort.²⁸ It was one of Donato's sons, Giovanni, who translated Bruni's version of St. Basil into Italian.²⁹

Like Antonio Ridolfi, Giovanni Cocchi-Donati has left additional evidence for his involvement in the humanist movement. Marsilio Ficino wrote at least two Latin letters to him. In one letter Ficino urged Cocchi-Donati to imitate Plato and Christ by turning the other cheek to enemies: "Thus by remaining unmoved by an enemy, we conquer him"; in the other letter, Ficino reciprocated Giovanni's gift of fruit by sending a copy of his comments on peace, comments he had

26. Arnaldo della Torre, *Storia dell'Accademia Platonica di Firenze* (Florence, 1902), 402. Della Torre records that he was unable to identify the "Carlo d'Antonio di Silvestro" described as attending the discussions held at Franco Sacchetti's villa. However, the online version of the Florentine *Tratte* suggests that this man was Carlo d'Antonio di Silvestro Serristori. See Maxson, *The Humanist*. See also David Herlihy, R. Burr Litchfield, Anthony Molho, and Roberto Barducci, eds., *Florentine Renaissance Resources, Online Tratte of Office Holders, 1282-1532*, machine readable data file (Providence, RI, 2002).

27. Martines, *Social World*, 72; cf. Lauro Martines, *Lawyers and Statecraft in Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, NJ, 1968), 493.

28. Martines, *Lawyers*, 254-58.

29. The learned interests of several Cocchi-Donati men are discussed in L. Miglio, "Donato Cocchi Donati," *DBI*, vol. 26 (1982), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/donato-cocchi-donati_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/donato-cocchi-donati_(Dizionario-Biografico)/), and "Antonio Cocchi Donati," *DBI*, vol. 26 (1982), http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-cocchi-donati_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/.

already sent to the pope and king of Naples.³⁰ Beyond his relationship with Ficino, Giovanni's speech to exhort penitence during holy week survives in at least four copies.³¹ Also like Ridolfi, Giovanni chose to dedicate his translation of Bruni's version of St. Basil to a somewhat obscure Florentine compatriot. This dedicatee, Giovanni di Pierfrancesco Sernigi, came from one of the least powerful Florentine patrician families. Like the Cocchi-Donati they rose to prominence late, but unlike them the Sernigi never seem to have risen to even middling standing among the city's most powerful families.³² The relationship between the two Giovannis is at present unclear: they were not neighbors, but familial or economic bonds between the two men have yet to be ruled out.³³ Born in 1453, Giovanni Sernigi was drawn for his first position among the priors at age six, when his name was actually pulled from the bags twice (once in April and once in October). Over the next several decades Sernigi's name was drawn several other times, but age, financial, or political restrictions prevented him from fulfilling all but one position among the Sixteen Standard Bearers in 1488.³⁴

Ultimately, Giovanni di Pierfrancesco Sernigi was clearly interested in humanist studies, even if it is unclear whether he had even rudimentary Latin. Whatever the specific reason for his dedication, through it, Giovanni Cocchi-Donati incorporated Giovanni Sernigi into the humanist movement, a gesture Sernigi undoubtedly appreciated: after all, why dedicate a translation of a humanist work to somebody without humanist interests? If eloquent composition in Latin is taken as the *sine qua non* for humanists, then Sernigi widely misses the mark. Giovanni Cocchi-Donati, for that matter, undoubtedly fell far short of most humanists' standards for Latin style. Yet, such men were clearly interested in the *studia humanitatis*. They produced little original scholarship, especially in Latin, but without them and others like them, the studies of humanist writers more familiar to scholars would have been insular, esoteric discussions, rather than the cultural movement that humanism quickly became. Certainly, the Italian versions of Bruni's translation of St. Basil enjoyed only limited circulation in the fifteenth

30. Marsilio Ficino, *Opera Omnia* (Basel, 1565), 1:821 and 823, "Sic enim facillime & ipsi permanemus indomiti, hosteque domamus"; cf. Miglio, "Antonio."

31. Miglio, "Antonio."

32. The Sernigi are listed in Dale Kent's construction of the Florentine patriciate but not Anthony Molho's. Kent also provides the year 1390 as the Sernigi's first prior. See Dale Kent, "The Florentine Reggimento in the Fifteenth Century," *Renaissance Quarterly* 28 (1975): 631 and 635; Anthony Molho, *Marriage Alliance in Late Medieval Florence* (Cambridge, MA, 1994), 402.

33. Kent, "The Florentine," 635, has the *gonfalon* for the Sernigi family, while the fifteenth-century Palazzo Cocchi-Donati still exists on the Piazza di Santa Croce.

34. Herlihy et al., *Florentine Renaissance Resources*; search for "Sernigi" under surnam1. Include "guilds" and "births" in the search.

century, but other works were more widely read in the vernacular, particularly after the mid-fifteenth century. The great humanist's *On the Punic War*, for example, survives in at least 120 manuscripts written in the vernacular.³⁵ Italian versions of Bruni's *On the Origin of Mantua* and *On the Gothic War* were also popular, surviving in forty-three and thirty copies, respectively.³⁶ A sampling of the men linked to surviving Latin and Italian copies of *On the Origin of Mantua* and *On the Gothic War* offers further evidence for the vast size of the humanist movement and the wide range of backgrounds and abilities possessed by humanists.

Bruni's *On the Origin of Mantua* and *On the Gothic War* were written around twenty-five years apart and at very different points in Bruni's career. In early 1418 Bruni sent a letter to Gianfrancesco Gonzaga describing the Etruscan origins of Mantua. The letter circulated widely, and modern scholars tend to situate it among Bruni's historical writings.³⁷ Not surprisingly, the work recycled much of its material from the first book of Bruni's *History of the Florentine People*, finished a little over a year previously in 1416.³⁸ Bruni wrote the work at Gonzaga's request during a period of literary leisure in Florence.³⁹ In fact, he may have been using the little work to seek patronage at the court of Mantua. Just weeks before he wrote to Gonzaga, Bruni complained bitterly about the hostile environment in Florence caused by Niccolò Niccoli and Ambrogio Traversari. Just months later, Bruni secured employment in the papal curia under Pope Martin V, a move suggesting that the humanist was looking for a patron in 1418.⁴⁰ It would not have been the only time Bruni used his literary skills toward professional or political ends—a few years earlier in 1411 Bruni had dedicated his translation of Plato's *Gorgias* to try to regain favor with Pope John XXIII in an attempt to return to the papal curia.⁴¹

35. Hankins, "Popularization of Humanism," 141; for the copyists and owners of this text, see Maxson, *The Humanist*.

36. Hankins, "Popularization of Humanism," 144. For other examples, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, "Latin and Vernacular in Fourteenth and Fifteenth-Century Italy," in *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (Rome, 1996), 4:353–55.

37. Angelo Mazzocco, "Dante, Bruni and the Issue of the Origin of Mantua," *Modern Language Notes* 127 (2012): S257–S258; cf. Gary Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy: Leonardo Bruni and the Uses of the Past* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 107–8.

38. Ianziti, *Writing*, 100–101 and 108.

39. On the request, see Mazzocco, "Dante, Bruni," S257; cf. Ianziti, *Writing*, 108; for the literary leisure, see Paolo Viti, *Leonardo Bruni e Firenze: Studi sulle lettere pubbliche e private* (Rome, 1992), 368; and Griffiths, Hankins, and Thompson, *The Humanism*, 35–37.

40. Viti, *Leonardo Bruni*, 368.

41. James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (Leiden, 1990), 1:53.

Bruni finished his *On the Gothic War* in the second half of 1441—nearly a quarter century after he sought Mantuan patronage and after years of service as the powerful chancellor of Florence. Initially, the work was dedicated to Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini to facilitate Cesarini's crusading efforts in the east.⁴² The dedication was short-lived, however, and in October 1442 Bruni rededicated the work to King Alfonso of Aragon. According to Bruni, the book told of the ancient military leader Belisarius's conquest of Naples and how Belisarius had used, centuries earlier, the same method employed by Alfonso to take the city. More broadly, the dedication fit into a complicated diplomatic juggling act in which the Florentines congratulated King Alfonso on his recent conquest of Naples, even as they had just recently housed Alfonso's defeated antagonist, René of Anjou, and continued to host René's ally Pope Eugenius IV within their city walls.⁴³ From the first, Bruni struggled to defend his *On the Gothic War* as his own original historical production and not—as his detractors claimed—a shameless plagiarism of his primary source, the Greek historian Procopius. Nevertheless, the work was popular in Latin shortly after its composition and then in Italian versions by the second half of the fifteenth century. Only after the translation and the widespread reintroduction of Procopius into Western Europe in the mid-sixteenth century, when Paolo Giovio condemned Bruni's work, did the popularity of Bruni's work begin to wane before it slipped into historical oblivion.⁴⁴

At least three different vernacular versions exist of Bruni's two texts: one version of *On the Origin of Mantua* and two distinct versions of *On the Gothic War*. Despite the popularity of his or her work, the translator of *On the Origin of Mantua* unfortunately remains anonymous.⁴⁵ By contrast, the men behind the vernacular versions of *On the Gothic War* are both known—the Sieneese Ludovico Petroni and the Florentine Bernardo Nuti. Petroni's work proved more successful over the long term: it was the translated version published eventually in 1526.⁴⁶ During the later fifteenth century, the Florentine Bernardo Nuti's version was far more popular in the manuscript tradition: of the surviving Italian copies of *On the Gothic War*, twenty are copies of Nuti's version, versus four any-

42. James Hankins, "The Dates of Leonardo Bruni's Later Works, 1437–1443," *Studi medievali e umanistici* 5–6 (2007–8): 44.

43. Brian Jeffrey Maxson, "The Many Shades of Praise: Politics and Panegyrics in Fifteenth-Century Florence," in *Rhetorik in Mittelalter und Renaissance: Konzepte—Praxis—Diversität*, ed. Georg Strack and Julia Knödler (Munich, 2011), 401–10, esp. 408–9.

44. On this fascinating tale, see Ianziti, *Writing*, 278–89.

45. No translator is mentioned in any of the manuscript descriptions of the work found in Hankins, *Repertorium* (manuscripts listed at 256).

46. Ianziti, *Writing*, 287.

mous copies and six attributed to Petroni.⁴⁷ Bernardo Nuti is again suggestive of the social and learned variety of Florentine humanists. Nuti worked in the Florentine chancery in the latter half of the fifteenth century.⁴⁸ Additionally, he received Latin poems from the notable poet Cristoforo Landino, was a friend of Marsilio Ficino, and was also included in a list of humanists who probably borrowed books from Poggio Bracciolini.⁴⁹ Nuti had good Latin, but he was not particularly interested in creating original texts—a single panegyric to Lorenzo the Magnificent survives from his pen. Moreover, despite Nuti's secure position in the humanist movement, he came from a family noted for neither wealth nor status.⁵⁰ In fact, Anthony Molho did not list the Nuti family as among the lineages that composed the Florentine patriciate.⁵¹ Not only did the humanist movement include people with questionable language skills, but the participation of men like Nuti, Sernigi, and the Cocchi-Donati suggest that humanism also appealed to individuals outside Florence's elite groups.

A sampling of the owners and copyists of Bruni's *On the Gothic War* and *On the Origin of Mantua* also suggest the variety of social and political backgrounds as well as learned abilities possessed by Florentine humanists. Piero de' Medici owned a Latin copy of *On the Gothic War* made by a "Messer Marco," a scribe who worked for Vespasiano da' Bisticci.⁵² Additionally, Piero's distant relatives Lorenzo and Pierfrancesco de' Medici owned a Latin manuscript containing *On the Origin of Mantua* copied by Antonio di Mario, a prolific transcriber of classical and humanist texts in the 1420s, '30s, '40s, and '50s.⁵³ The association of mem-

47. Hankins, *Repertorium*. Keeping the manuscript numbering used by Hankins, nos. 30, 686, 1048, and 1216 are anonymous; 416, 466, 510, 667, 685, 850, 995, 913, 1014, 1542, 1544, 1689, 1711, 1884, 1062, 2374, 2419, 2519, 2897, and 3040 are attributed to Bernardo Nuti; and 1199, 1518, 2494, 2518, 2562, and 2564 are attributed to Ludovico Petroni. I have assumed that the translation attributed to "Vanni Nuti" in manuscript 3040 is in fact by Bernardo Nuti. On Nuti, see also Maxson, *The Humanist*.

48. Robert Black, *Benedetto Accolti and the Florentine Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1985), 170–71; cf. Alison Brown, *Bartolomeo Scala, 1430–1497, Chancellor of Florence: The Humanist as Bureaucrat* (Princeton, NJ, 1979), 187.

49. Black, *Benedetto Accolti*, 168; Concetto Marchesi, *Bartolomeo della Fonte* (Catania, 1900), 16–17; Cristoforo Landino, *Poems*, trans. Mary P. Chatfield (Cambridge, 2008), 21–22, 62–65, 230–33, 240–41, 256–57, 329, 337, 370, 371, and 373. The poem to "Lisa" on 266–71 (374nn) may also be a eulogy to Bernardo's sister.

50. Marchesi, *Bartolomeo della Fonte*, 15.

51. Molho, *Marriage Alliance*, 372; Nuti did serve as a prior in 1473 and a member of the Twelve Good Men in 1474. See Herlihy et al., *Florentine Renaissance Resources*; search for "Nuti" under surname1—the relevant man is Bernardo di Francesco; cf. Marchesi, *Bartolomeo della Fonte*, 15–16.

52. Hankins, *Repertorium*, 42; Albinia de la Mare, "New Research on Humanistic Scribes in Florence," in *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento, 1440–1525*, ed. Annarosa Garzelli (Florence, 1985), 1:435–36 and 512–13.

53. Hankins, *Repertorium*, 40; de la Mare, "New Research," 425 and 482–84.

bers of the Medici family with the humanist movement is not noteworthy, but Piero, Lorenzo, and Pierfrancesco de' Medici were joined by other more surprising figures, even among owners and copyists of the Latin versions of these texts. For example, Antonio di messer Giovanni owned a Latin copy of *On the Gothic War*.⁵⁴ Antonio di messer Giovanni was most likely Antonio di messer Giovanni Canigiani, a man from a high-status family in Florence.⁵⁵ Canigiani almost certainly owned a manuscript containing copies of Bruni's *On the Punic War*, St. Basil's *Letter to the Youth*, Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, and others.⁵⁶ The poet Cristoforo Landino dedicated to Antonio di messer Giovanni Canigiani a Latin poem describing the republican origins of Florence and the city's happiness under Cosimo de' Medici.⁵⁷ Landino also featured Canigiani in other Latin works, including his *Commentary on Dante* and his *Camaldulensian Disputations*.⁵⁸ In the *Camaldulensian Disputations*, in fact, Landino described Antonio Canigiani as among the "most learned men" (*viros litteratissimos*) in terms of both eloquence and philosophical knowledge.⁵⁹ Marsilio Ficino dedicated several works to Antonio, including the *Book on Pleasure* (*Liber de voluptate*), a book inspired by discussions in the summer of 1457 at the villa of Antonio's father, Giovanni—whom Ficino described as a "lover of philosophers"—at Campoli.⁶⁰

Piero and his son Antonio da Filicaia were two other individuals connected to Bruni's books; they owned and transcribed a vernacular copy of *On the Origin of Mantua* by the mid-1470s. The da Filicaia family was further from the center of Florentine power than Antonio Canigiani. According to Anthony Molho, the da

54. Hankins, *Repertorium*, 226.

55. The Online Tratte (Herlihy et al., *Florentine Renaissance Resources* www.stg.brown.edu/projects/tratte/) reveals seventy-six individuals with the first name Antonio and the second name Giovanni. Search for "Antonio" under name1 and "Giovanni" under name2, set limit to 1,000 records, and include births. The title of "messer" was earned through a knighthood or a legal or theological doctorate and, thus, was not common. Unfortunately, the Online Tratte does not include titles with its names. I have located two people with the names "Antonio di messer Giovanni" in other sources. In Giuseppe Aiazzi, ed., *Ricordi Storici di Filippo di Cino Rinuccini dal 1282 al 1460 colla Continuazione di Alamanno e Neri, suoi Figli, Fino al 1560* (Florence, 1840), 137, it is recorded that "Messer Antonio di messer Giovanni Canigiani entered Florence after being knighted by the new King of France Charles VIII." Robert Black refers to a "Maestro Antonio di Messer Giovanni Roselli d'Arezzo who taught at the Florentine Studio" (*Education and Society in Florentine Tuscany: Teachers, Pupils and Schools, c. 1250–1500* [Leiden, 2007], 408). Black refers to him teaching in 1430, which has led me to favor Canigiani, who was prominent later in the fifteenth century and thus more contemporaneous with many of the other owners of manuscripts.

56. Hankins, *Repertorium*, 226.

57. Landino, *Poems*, 144–55 and 352–54.

58. *Ibid.*, 352.

59. Della Torre, *Storia*, 551.

60. *Ibid.*, 519–23.

Filicaia family enjoyed only moderate sociopolitical standing and wealth in Florence during the fifteenth century.⁶¹ Nevertheless, within a fifteenth-century miscellany at least two generations of da Filicaia men left evidence for their involvement in the humanist movement. By December 1476 Piero da Filicaia had already copied dozens of short vernacular works into the manuscript: vernacular letters of Petrarch and Bruni, including Bruni's *On the Origin of Mantua* as well as numerous vernacular speeches by Stefano Porcari, Nello Martini, Giannozzo Manetti, and others. Piero's son Antonio picked up where his father left off, adding more vernacular speeches and biographies by Bruni as well as letters by classical and more recent authors before signing the book in January 1478 (modern dating style). From that point in the manuscript, over the next twenty years Antonio added vernacular translations of numerous classical works, including excerpts or whole treatises by Aristotle, Hermes Trismegistus, Cicero, Livy, and Boethius.⁶² Father and son da Filicaia, in short, participated in the humanist movement through study in the vernacular, even though their social standing and educational background placed them far outside the traditional hallowed halls of the humanists.

It would be an oversimplification, however, to equate a person's social status with his preferred language for humanist texts. Ser Grifo, a notary, sold his manuscript containing a Latin copy of *On the Origin of Mantua* to Ser Ludovico de Pisa for five ducats.⁶³ Ser Grifo can probably be identified as Ser Griso Griselli, a Florentine notary during the second half of the quattrocento. Griso came from humble origins—far more modest than even the da Filicaia. His father was the wine-making descendent of a Florentine immigrant. Griso's mother, Bartolomea del Grigia, likewise came from outside the Florentine patriciate.⁶⁴ Griso became a successful notary and held numerous governmental positions in that role. He succeeded in raising his family's profile in Florence, as evidenced by his marriage to Filippa di Paolo Lotti, from a powerful family at the center of the Florentine patriciate. In addition, Griso associated with prominent Florentine humanists such as Giannozzo Manetti and Donato Acciaiuoli, especially in Griso's youth.⁶⁵

61. Molho, *Marriage Alliance*, 368 and 386.

62. I have not seen this manuscript, but a detailed description of its contents is available at Giuseppe Mazzatinti, *Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale*, Inventari dei manoscritti delle biblioteche d'Italia 8 (Forlì, 1898), 28–32.

63. Hankins, *Repertorium*, 144.

64. From Vanna Arrighi, "Griso Griselli," in *DBI*, vol. 59 (2003), [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/griso-griselli_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/griso-griselli_(Dizionario-Biografico)); Molho, *Marriage Alliance*, 369 and 387, where the family is not listed.

65. Arrighi, "Griso"; on the Lotti family, see Molho, *Marriage Alliance*, 371.

Just as men of modest social origins owned Latin books, men fluent in Latin at times preferred vernacular translations of humanist texts. For example, Agnolo Manetti, son of Giannozzo Manetti, made a vernacular copy of *On the Origin of Mantua*.⁶⁶ Agnolo enjoyed economic, political, and intellectual success during his brief life (1432–79). Throughout the 1450s and 1460s he strengthened his family’s mercantile connections in the Kingdom of Naples. In 1464 he entered the Florentine Signoria as a prior—an office his illustrious father had been unable to attain—and then served as diplomat to France from 1476 to 1477.⁶⁷ Moreover, Agnolo was well versed in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and was working with his father as a scribe and corrector already by the 1450s. In 1473 he dedicated his father’s Latin translation of Aristotle’s ethical works to Federico da’ Montefeltro. Despite Agnolo’s deep learning, he does not seem to have penned an original work in Latin.⁶⁸ Moreover, he copied a vernacular version of Bruni’s *On the Origin of Mantua*, rather than one in the original Latin.

Including these translators, dedicatees, owners, and copyists within the learned culture of the fifteenth century enables scholars to conceive of the humanist movement as encompassing a range of interests and abilities in both Latin and the vernacular. Certainly a man like Giovanni Sernigi has left nothing in terms of original or even banal ideas for intellectual historians to ponder and contextualize, but he and similar men and women were important for other reasons. By roughly the mid-fifteenth century humanism had begun to dominate classrooms, political halls, artwork, and even street performances. This spread makes no sense if the humanist movement is considered primarily through the lens of a handful of authors producing original compositions in Latin. Poliziano, Scala, and the other well-known Latin writers have long set a bar against which other humanists have been measured, but others with far less learning hired them, paid for their pens, and read their books. In short, the humanist movement included a range of intellectual abilities and depth of learned pursuits. It focused on the application of learning in practical situations, whether political, religious, social, or economic; it was concentrated among Florentine patricians, but it also stretched in significant numbers as far down the social ladder as the surviving

66. Hankins, *Repertorium*, 60.

67. Simone Foà, “Angelo Manetti,” in *DBI*, vol. 68 (2007), http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/angelo-manetti_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/; Martines, *April Blood*, 57.

68. Foà, “Angelo Manetti.” Foà writes that Agnolo did add a dedication to his father’s translation. Moreover, Vespasiano da Bisticci’s life of Agnolo reports that Agnolo wrote things in his youth. See Vespasiano da’ Bisticci, *Renaissance Princes, Popes, and Prelates*, trans. William George and Emily Waters (New York, 1963), 305. However, nothing beyond the dedication, some transcriptions, textual emendations, and a handful of letters apparently survives.

evidence allows. While very few humanists composed original works in any language, many more translated or commented on the works of others, and most simply read and studied classical texts in Latin, the vernacular, or both. It is only through studying the rest of the humanists—the people who read humanist and classical books, who packed the rooms where humanist orations were delivered, and who applied humanist rhetorical teachings in practical situations—that historians can restore agency to the audience for humanist works and properly assess its contribution both to the forms of the humanist movement and its stunning success in Europe across the centuries.

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