

Humanism and Christian Letters
in Early Modern Iberia (1480-1630)

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Edited by

Barry Taylor and Alejandro Coroleu

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P U B L I S H I N G

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INTRODUCTION

BARRY TAYLOR AND ALEJANDRO COROLEU

A movement based on the recovery, interpretation and imitation of classical texts, humanism has long been recognized as originating in Italy towards the middle of the fourteenth century. From there it spread to the farthest recesses of Europe within a period of a century and a half, influencing almost every facet of Renaissance intellectual life. Even though humanism derived its literary, moral and educational predilections from ancient Greek and Roman models, it was never an inherently secular movement and it soon turned to religious questions. Humanists were of course brought up with Christian beliefs, regarded the Bible as a fundamental text, and many of them were members of the clergy, either regular or secular. They also fully understood the historical and doctrinal significance of the Church Fathers, particularly Augustine, Lactantius and Jerome, translator of the Catholic Bible. While their importance as religious sources was undiminished, biblical and patristic texts came also to be read for their literary value. Renaissance authors who aspired to be *poetae christianissimi* naturally looked to the Latin Fathers who reconciled classical and Christian views of life, and presented them in an elegant manner.

It would, however, be foolish to think that the reception of classical literature and learning in Christian circles in the age of humanism was devoid of frictions and tensions. Nowhere is this truer than in the case of Petrarch (Francesco Petrarca, 1304-74), under whose guidance humanism took an irreversibly Christian direction. Charles G. Nauert has singled out Petrarch's historical importance, "not only for his efforts to rediscover lost works [from Antiquity], but also for his efforts to resolve some of the inner conflicts that Christian classicists had always faced".¹ Indeed, Petrarch was able to blend classical secular notions with traditional Christian concepts. In his *Bucolicum Carmen* he articulated a humanist ideal which brought together notions of constitutional government and

¹ Charles G. Nauert, Jr, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 22.

civic liberty and the transcendent principles of Christianity. Indeed the *Bucolicum Carmen* is revealing of the author's longing for a moral regeneration of Christendom. This is true particularly of eclogues six and seven, those in which Petrarch voiced a call for reform of the church, by fusing the secular and ecclesiastical meaning of "pastoral". Similarly, in his *Secretum*, an imaginary dialogue between himself and Augustine, he expressed his anguish at not being able to turn his back on the ancient pagan writers he revered, for they had been the source of genuine eloquence and genuine moral wisdom.

The call for a return to (classical) sources voiced by Petrarch and early humanists was echoed by later generations of humanists, who turned their hand to biblical studies and began to apply philological methods to the scriptural text. One of the first to do so was Lorenzo Valla (1407-57), who, in his *In Latinam Novi Testamenti interpretationem annotationes* ("Annotations on the Latin translation of the New Testament"), produced a set of notes aiming at emending or clarifying erroneous or unclear passages which had crept into the Vulgate text. Valla's insistence on the need to consult the sources and to refer to the Greek original had far-reaching consequences. On the one hand, it resulted in new translations and interpretations of the scriptural text, which in turn led to conflict with Christian orthodoxy. But it also laid the groundwork for the transformation undergone by biblical studies in the sixteenth century, an evolution best represented by Erasmus of Rotterdam (1465/69-1536). Erasmus's direct link with Valla's philological activity is clear from his decision to publish Valla's annotations on the Gospels in 1505. This was the first step in a career which culminated in Erasmus's first edition of the New Testament of 1516, entitled *Novum Instrumentum*.

Erasmus's interest in the scriptural text went well beyond the task of establishing a correct Greek text of the Gospel. He also regarded the basic precepts of the Scriptures as the only moral values to be observed and as the only true form of knowledge. Erasmus first formulated these ideas (what is known as his *philosophia Christi*) in a book written in 1501, his *Enchiridion militis Christiani* ("The Handbook of a Christian knight"). A guide for the practice of Christian living by a layman, the *Enchiridion* highlights the importance of study of the Bible and the Church Fathers. Patristic literature would, in fact, prove a constant interest for Erasmus throughout his life, and he would edit many of the Church Fathers (Jerome, Cyprian, Chrysostom but, particularly, Origen) or commission editions of key patristic texts from other scholars. Determined to produce a revised text of the whole Augustinian corpus with commentaries but unable to undertake it alone, in 1520 Erasmus invited, for example, Juan

Luis Vives (1492-1540) to edit and annotate the *De civitate Dei*, a text which was included in Augustine's complete works published in Basle in 1529.

As with other parts of Europe, Erasmus's doctrine reached Iberia. With the arrival of the Flemish court of the first Habsburg king of Spain, the future Emperor Charles V, in 1516, Erasmianism was to have a transformative impact on Spanish society. In the early years of Charles's reign the most devoted disciples of Erasmus were men deeply involved with the imperial machine. Particularly receptive to Erasmian ideas was the influential lobby of humanists gathered around the emperor and led by Juan de Valdés and his brother Alfonso, secretary for Latin correspondence at the imperial court and *erasmicior Erasmo*. In addition, in the 1520s many of Erasmus's works—issued chiefly under the imprint of Miguel de Eguía at Alcalá de Henares—were translated into the vernacular, thus contributing to the popularity of his ideas. In 1526 Alfonso Fernández de Madrid, the archdeacon of Alcor, who had undertaken the translation of the *Enchiridion militis Christiani* two years earlier, wrote triumphantly to Erasmus that, whereas formerly the text had been read by the few who were skilled in Latin, “there is now hardly anyone who does not have in hand the Spanish version in the imperial court, in cities, in churches, in monasteries, and even in inns”.² A letter of September 1527 from the humanist Juan Maldonado to Erasmus, praising his impact upon Spaniards (Allen, ep. 1742), evinces the confident enthusiasm which Erasmus's supporters in Spain felt at the time. Ironically, however, even those who called themselves supporters of Erasmus were inadvertently contributing to his unpopularity with the friars. Alfonso Fernández's translation of the *Enchiridion* gave ample ammunition to Franciscans and Dominicans, who were growing increasingly hostile to Erasmus's ideas and words. And, despite his good intentions, at Salamanca the theologian and Benedictine monk Alonso Ruiz de Virués antagonized Erasmus's critics by publishing a sample of the *Colloquia* in translation, which he prefaced with a letter to the Franciscan warden at Alcalá urging him to stop his attacks against Erasmus. He spread further confusion as to the orthodoxy of Erasmus's thought when he sent a copy of his *Collationes septem* to Erasmus, asking for clarification concerning a series of passages in his works. In the end, enthusiasm for Erasmus and for his reformist kind of humanism began to wane in the later 1530s, even though in post-Tridentine Spain the biblical

² *Opus Epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*, ed. Percy S. Allen et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906-58), ep. 1904.

scholarship of Erasmus was still being used, even after many of his other works had been prohibited.

In Portugal King John III, dedicatee of Erasmus's *Lucubrationes aliquot* (1527), encouraged Portuguese students to study abroad and in 1547 recruited foreign teachers to staff the Colégio das Artes at Coimbra. In Iberia Erasmus's message was not, however, only transmitted through court circles. Central to the dissemination of Erasmian ideas was also the University of Alcalá, where copies of Erasmus's *Novum Instrumentum* arrived in late 1516. Inaugurated in 1498 by Cardinal Archbishop Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, the University applied the programme of humanism to its curriculum and to the study of Scripture, even if conservative positions within it ultimately prevailed. As early as 1508 Cisneros himself initiated a great project of biblical scholarship which resulted in the printing between 1514 and 1517 (even though they were not actually published until 1522) of the six volumes of the renowned Complutensian Polyglot Bible, thus called from Complutum, the Latin name of Alcalá de Henares. The foundation of the University had, moreover, its roots in Cisneros's desire for religious reform. The institution became a centre for ecclesiastical education and among its professors and students were the first enthusiastic supporters of Erasmus in Spain. Oddly enough, however, Jiménez de Cisneros did not succeed in fully involving Spain's most renowned biblical scholar, Antonio de Nebrija (1444-1522), in the project for the publication of the Complutensian Polyglot. As early as 1507, Nebrija had sought Cisneros's protection by addressing to him the *Apologia*, in which he defended his right as grammarian to submit the text of Scripture to philological scrutiny. Nebrija had by then already completed a *Quinquagena*, namely a series of annotations to, or short essays on, fifty disputed words in Holy Scripture. Despite these impressive credentials, Nebrija was unable to make the humanistic method palatable to his patron and resigned from the project.

Like his hero Lorenzo Valla, for Nebrija Latin should not only facilitate knowledge of classical Latin writers but of Christian classics written in that language. In this he echoed Petrarch's view—famously epitomized by his own eulogy of Juvencus in the tenth eclogue of the *Bucolicum Carmen*—whereby the ancient tradition of poetry also embraced Christian Latin authors. Accordingly, Nebrija produced editions of, and commentaries on, liturgical hymns, Juvencus, Prudentius and Sedulius. The pedagogical possibilities of Sedulius's adaptation of the Gospels were quickly recognized by local printers. In the preface to his own edition of Sedulius (Valladolid, 1497) the Castilian humanist Diego de Muros praised the Christian poet as “elegans, sublimis, pius, verus et

sanctus” and acknowledged the didactic value of the *Carmen Paschale* for young boys “who should become very familiar with the text already in their childhood”. For his part, the Barcelona lecturer and Erasmian Martín Ivarra wrote a series of annotations to Sedulius’s poem, which, together with Nebrija’s own commentary on the text, were printed by Joan Rosembach in Barcelona in 1515. Both Diego de Muros’s edition and Ivarra’s notes are proof of the use of early Christian writings in the school and university curriculum across Renaissance Europe. As regards Ivarra, his decision to incorporate Sedulius into the educational curriculum at Barcelona seems to go hand in hand with his interest in fifteenth-century practitioners of Christian Latin verse such as Michael Verinus (1469-86). Indeed, from the last two decades of the fifteenth century Verinus’s *Distichorum liber* was widely printed and read in Spain. Similarly, as many as eight editions of the poems of the Carmelite Baptista Mantuanus (1448-1516) were published in Spain between 1515 and 1536. This popularity reflected the fact that fifteenth-century Italian Neo-Latin poets were broadly incorporated into the Spanish educational curriculum in the early years of the sixteenth century.

Alongside the poetic corpus of Christian classics, the homilies written by the Church Fathers and the Bible formed the substance of university studies in the arts faculties throughout Spain. More often than not, these texts were read with the aid of lengthy commentaries. The reading and teaching of biblical and patristic works in the classroom and erudite commentary soon encouraged native imitations, in Latin or in the vernacular. Central to this process was the translation of the biblical text and the corpus of Christian classics into Latin or into the various vernaculars of the Iberian Peninsula. As an example, Fray Luis de León (1527-91)—professor at Salamanca, theologian, and author of a small but exquisite collection of poetry in Spanish—produced eloquent translations of Job and the Psalms into Spanish. For his version of the Psalms Fray Luis chose metrical forms directly inspired by Horace, metres which would be subsequently employed in his own original poems. In doing so, he did not stand alone. Indeed, Benito Arias Montano (1527-98), contemporary of Fray Luis de León at the University of Alcalá, also recast the psalm texts in Horatian metres in his Latin translation of the Psalms published in 1574. He even went one step further and opted for Horatian metres for his own Neo-Latin poetry (the *Humanae salutis monumenta*, 1571, and the *Hymna et saecula*, 1593). Furthermore, Gregorio Hernández de Velasco’s translation of Iacoppo Sannazaro’s *De partu Virginis* in 1554 contributed not only to the dissemination of Sannazaro’s poem among

vernacular readers, but also to its sanction by literary critics as a model worthy of imitation.

The essays offered in this volume examine the influence of Christian Latin literature, whether biblical, patristic, scholastic or humanistic, upon the Latin and vernacular letters of the Iberian Peninsula in the period 1480 to 1630. The contributions have been organized into three thematically coherent groups, dealing with transmission, adaptation, and visual representation. The first section opens with two articles (González Vega and Coroleu) concerned, respectively, with Nebrija's biblical scholarship and with the circulation of devotional works and Christian Latin poets of Antiquity in the late fifteenth century. These are followed by three further essays (Ferrer, Allés and Harris) which attend to the process of translation from Latin into the vernacular. The six articles on adaptation deal with the manner in which fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spanish and Portuguese writers looked to the Bible, the Church Fathers, and medieval and humanistic Christian authors for models and inspiration. Contributors show how, in accord with the practices of Renaissance imitation, writers in Latin or the vernaculars assimilated their sources thoroughly and created from them something personal and new. Essays in this section are concerned with epic poetry (Alves, Miralles-Valsalobre), biblical exegesis (O'Reilly), Neo-Latin and vernacular poetry (Fouto and Francalanci), and stylistic and scholarly issues (Taylor). The last two papers in the book (Andrews and Boyd) extend the study of Christian literature in Spain to the visual arts.

Contrary to most studies on the Iberian literature of the period in which practically no essays are devoted to texts other than in Spanish, this volume successfully accommodates authors writing in Portuguese and Catalan. Likewise, a significant part of the pieces presented here is concerned with literary texts written in Latin. This collection of essays therefore reflects the varieties of relationship between the Peninsular vernaculars and the continuing tradition of Latin letters. Moreover, it shows how the interests and preoccupations of the better-known authors of the Iberian Renaissance were also shared by contemporary figures whose choice of language may have resulted in their exclusion from the canon.

This book has its origin in a colloquium entitled "Latin and Vernacular in Renaissance Spain, IV: The influence of Christian Latin literature" held at University College Cork in April 2009, at which earlier versions of some of the chapters were read as papers. These have been adapted for this volume and supplemented with others in order to offer a wide-ranging, and yet coherent, picture of a complex and challenging topic. We would like to express our gratitude to Professor Terence O'Reilly and Mrs Kay Doyle for their moral and practical support.

PART I:
TRANSMISSION

EX GRAMMATICO RHETOR:
THE BIBLICAL ADVENTURES
AND RHETORICAL MATURITY OF ANTONIO
DE NEBRIJA BETWEEN THE *APOLOGIA*
AND THE *TERTIA QUINQUAGENA*

FELIPE GONZÁLEZ VEGA
(UNIVERSIDAD DEL PAÍS VASCO)

To the memory of José Perona, grammaticus

Nebrija's interest in biblical studies began as an earnest of his student years in Bologna and came to embrace almost his whole intellectual career. When in the eighteenth century Juan Bautista Muñoz published the first eulogy of our author he produced ample reason to consider him "the restorer of exegetical theology after the fatal shipwreck of the sciences in the dark ages". Erasmus included him among the "doctos et eloquentes viros" of Spain who would not figure in the catalogue of obsessive Ciceronians next to two eminent theologians, López de Zúñiga and Carranza.¹

Nebrija's dedication to theological studies left a deep and lasting impression in the prefaces to his works. He dedicates the *Introductiones* of 1495 to Queen Isabella as his last efforts in grammar, determined as he

This study forms part of the programme of activities of the research group "Tradiciones Clásicas" of the Universidad del País Vasco (GIU07-26). I warmly thank Barry Taylor for translating my text into English.

¹ In a document of 1468 he appears as "domino de lebrixa theologo," as we know from the essential biography by Juan Gil Fernández, "Nebrija en el Colegio de los Españoles en Bolonia," *Emerita* 33 (1965): 347-49. *Elogio de Antonio de Lebrija leído en Junta Pública de la Real Academia de la Historia por su académico de número D. Juan Bautista Muñoz el día 11 de julio de 1796, con un prefacio de Alejandro Venegas y en facsímil* (Salamanca: Universidad, 1993), 28-37. Erasmus, *Dialogus Ciceronianus*, ed. P. Mesnard, in *Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, I/2 (Amsterdam: North Holland Publishing, 1971), 690-91.

is to devote the remainder of his days to Holy Scripture (“extremum hunc artis grammaticae laborem meum: quia nobis in animo est ... omne reliquum vitae nostrae tempus in Sacris Litteris consumere”), the knowledge of which is the badge of the highest good.² But this knowledge is not to be separated from his other accumulated studies in medicine and civil law, ordered around his central humanistic idea of “knowledge of language”,

en que esta, no sola mente fundada nuestra religion & republica christiana, mas avn el derecho ciuil & canonico, por el qual los ombres biuen igual mente en esta gran compañía, que llamamos ciudad; la medicina, por la qual se contiene nuestra salud & vida; el conocimiento de todas las artes que dizen de humanidad por que son proprias del ombre en quanto ombre. Y como este sea el primer principio & entrada para todas ellas ...³

² I transcribe the first text from *Introductiones Latinae cum recognitione* (Salamanca, 1495), copy in the Biblioteca Histórica Marqués de Valdecilla, Madrid, I/335, fols [a]5r-v. The preface to the *Iuris Civilis Lexicon* (Salamanca, 1506), ed. José Perona (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2000), 70, gives this classification of the branches of knowledge: “Nam cum sint tria genera bonorum [...]: utilia, quorum fortuna dominatur; iucunda, quibus natura praesidet; honesta, quae sunt in animi nostri potestate, bonorum utilium quae infimum obtinent gradum leges arbitrae sunt, iucundorum quae sunt media medicina est conciliatrix, honestorum, quae sola simpliciter dicuntur bona, sacrae litterae sunt artifices. Itaque post iuris civilis vocabularium, dabimus id quod ad medicinam confert; deinde quod ad utriusque instrumenti multarum rerum earumdemque difficillimarum cognitionem maxime est conducibile et, ne artes homine libero dignas non desgustemus...” [“There are three classes of good, according to Peripatetic tradition: those which are useful, governed by fortune; those which are pleasing, governed by nature; and the honourable, governed by our souls. The useful goods which occupy the lowest rank are governed by laws; the pleasing which occupy the middle ground are counselled by medicine; the honourable, which alone can properly be called goods, are the concern of Holy Scripture. Therefore, after the dictionary of civil law we shall publish one concerning medicine; in order next to contribute with what may be most useful to the explanation of numerous inextricable subjects of both Instruments and, lest we fail to taste the arts worthy of a free man, I shall add five books on the Antiquities of Spain”].

³ *Introductiones latinas contrapuesto el romance al latín (c. 1488)*, ed. M. Á. Esparza and V. Calvo (Münster: Nodus, 1996), p. 5, col. a. For this “saber humanista al servicio de un proyecto enciclopédico” see the late José Perona, “*Latina uocabula ex iure ciuili in uoces Hispanienses interpretata*. II,1 de Elio Antonio de Nebrija,” *Cahiers de Linguistique Hispanique Médiévale* 16 (1991): 189-365. For medicine see *Dictionarium Medicum*, ed. Avelina Carrera de la Red (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2001).

At no point in his intellectual career does Nebrija abandon a philological perspective, the primordial starting point of grammar and rhetoric as the essential foundations of a wide-ranging culture. But this is a hierarchical culture, structured on three classes of good, which ascend from the lowest level of useful goods subject to fortune, to the middle level of pleasurable goods supplied by nature and mediated by medicine, to the highest level of the honourable, the only good which is good in itself and whose architect is Holy Scripture.

Such an orientation in Christian letters is the backbone of a development that is perceptible in Nebrija from the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards: he incorporated the Christian poet Prudentius in the *Suppositum de auctoribus* in the Seville edition of the *Introductiones* (1501) and circa 1502 published in Salamanca his *Enarrationes in Psychomachiam*, with the plain text of Prudentius edited separately. The *Enarrationes* are much influenced by the Aldine *Poetae Christiani Veteres* (Venice, 1501) and derive their edition from it. After these works come the commentary on the *Carmen Paschale* of Sedulius (Logroño, 1510) and an expansion of his Prudentius commentaries (Logroño, 1512). And at the end of his days he writes prologues to a work on preaching (*Compendium totius Sacre Scripture divinum Apiarium nuncupatum*, by the master of the theology Enrique de Hamusco (Alcalá, 1520) and the *Thalichristia* or *Musa Christiana* of Alvar Gómez de Ciudad Real (Alcalá, 1522). I have not included in this list his scriptural writings, which I shall treat in their own right in this essay. I have also thought it most suitable to refer to his more creative and personal works, leaving aside his other tasks as a mere corrector of texts, as in the *Aurea expositio hymnorum* (1501 onwards).⁴

Nebrija's motivation lies in a strategic laicism which seeks to reconcile earthly knowledge with religious faith. Clearly confessing the

⁴ For the history of the Prudentius, see *Aurelii Prudentii Clementis V.C. Libelli cum commento Antonii Nebrissensis*, ed. and tr. Felipe González Vega (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2002), 38-59 and 91-111; for the *Thalichristia* see Felipe González Vega, "De poetica theologia: presencias de alegorismo platónico en la exégesis humanista y una mediación de las *Siluae Morales* de Badio Ascensio (1492)," in *Humanismo y Pervivencia del Mundo Clásico III. Homenaje al profesor Antonio Fontán*, ed. José M^a Maestre, J. Pascual, L. Charlo (Alcañiz and Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Humanísticos, Laberinto and CSIC, 2002), III:2, 799-810. For Hamusco's *Apiarium* see Pedro M. Cátedra, "Nebrija y la predicación," in *Antonio de Nebrija: Edad Media y Renacimiento*, ed. C. Codoñer and J. A. González Iglesias (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1994), 481-90.

iudicium which governs and gives sense to his interpretation of Prudentius's Christian poetry he writes:

Iudicium meum semper fuit synceri atque puri sermonis eos tantum fuisse autores, qui floruerunt intra ducentos annos qui sunt ab aetate Ciceronis ad Antoninum Pium, et ad phrasim eloquentiae faciendam hos tantum esse proponendos imitandosque; caeteros vero, quia plurimum conducunt ad multarum rerum cognitionem, non esse contemnendos atque in primis christianos, qui nos ad religionem erudiunt et magna ex parte facundiam augent.

[It was always my judgment that genuine and perfect Latin was to be found only in authors who shone in the two hundred years from the time of Cicero to that of Antoninus Pius and that only these should be held up for imitation and learning of style; and that the others, however, because they contribute to our knowledge of many subjects, should not be despised, especially the Christians, who instruct us in religion and to a large extent increase our power of expression.]⁵

This beneficial union of language and culture furthers the compatibility of knowledge and religion, between ancient eloquence and ancient and modern Christian values, a conciliation based on language as an historical social institution (the *iudicium meum* implied in *nos*). The philologist's role is directed at the arduous questions of the meaning of Holy Scripture, which are made all the more challenging by their difficulty and the more attractive and appropriate to the professional objectives which he has taken on, so close in many respects to those discussed by his counterpart Lorenzo Valla in the *Elegantiae (praef. IV)* when introducing his explications *de verborum significatione*. What else is this *Tertia Quinquagena* but a treatise on the meaning of words from the comparative perspective of the history of language(s) in the interests of an improved text of Holy Writ?⁶ The same objective underlies the making of his *Rhetorica* (Alcalá, 1515), declared in the prologue dedicated to Cardinal Cisneros:

... sit adeuntibus rem tam arduam quasi opus introductorium. Ad quod faciendum tu me, Pater optime, identidem hortatus es, illa, opinor, ratione

⁵ *Prudentii Libelli cum commento*, 202-03.

⁶ F. Rico, *Nebrija frente a los bárbaros. El canon de gramáticos nefastos en las polémicas del humanismo* (Salamanca: Universidad, 1978), 63, rightly warns of the danger of “abultar la posible cargazón espiritual del biblismo de Nebrija, mejor inserto en una reforma de la cultura que en una reforma de la religión ... pero no se adentró en la *sacra pagina* por devoción—parece—sino por oficio (o *ars*)”.

ductus, ut in hoc pulcherrimo totius orbis Hispani, ne dicam terrarum, gymnasio, eloquentiam cum sapientia iungens, hanc quoque partem inhonoratam non relinques, ad quam exequendam hic meus labor non nihil posset conducere.

[... a sort of introductory study for those who are approaching the subject for the first time. You, best Lordship, have encouraged me to do it, moved, I believe, by this purpose: so that in this University, the most distinguished of the entire Hispanic world, not to say the planet, unifying eloquence with wisdom, you will not leave this subject without honour: to attain it this effort of mine could help in some way.]⁷

Here we see a tempered formulation of the obligatory confluence of rhetorical and theological interests; a substantial argument which Valla defended with vehement dialectic in the preface cited above, defending a history of patristic literature, headed by Jerome, which had set the precious stones of the divine word in the gold and silver mount of eloquence (the metaphor is Augustine's, *Doct.* 2, 40, 60) without sacrificing one type of knowledge to the other. This is the intellectual and literary context in which Nebrija carried out his philological activity. Using the evidence available I shall now attempt an internal and external history of the process that leads from the first *Apologia*, via the *Sacra Lemmata Quinque*, to the varying forms of the *Tertia Quinquagena*.⁸

⁷ *Rhetorica*, ed. and tr. Juan Lorenzo (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2006), 48-49. For Valla, see *Prosatori Latini del Quattrocento*, ed. Eugenio Garin (Torino: Einaudi, 1977), 620: "Ac mea quidem sententia, si quis ad scribendum in theologia accedat, parvi refert an aliquam aliam facultatem afferat an non; nihil enim fere cetera conferunt. At qui ignarus eloquentiae est, hunc indignum prorsus qui de theologia loquatur existimo. Et certe soli eloquentes, quales ii quos enumeravi, columnae ecclesiae sunt ... inter quos mihi Paulus nulla alia re eminere quam eloquentia videtur".

⁸ In order: *Antonii Nebrissensis grammatici apologia cum quibusdam sacrae scripturae locis non vulgariter expositis* (Logroño: Brocar, c. 1507), copy in Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, R/2212; *Sacra lemmata quinque* (Alcalá: Brocar, c. 1513), BNM R/2701⁴; *Tertia Quinquagena* [2nd edn without *apologia*] in full: *Aelii Antonii Nebrissensis ex grammatico rhetoris in complutensi gymnasio atque proinde historici regii in quinquaginta sacrae scripturae locos non vulgariter enarratos. TERTIA QUINQUAGENA* (Alcalá: Brocar, 13 April 1516), BNM R/1347; *Tertia Quinquagena* [3rd edn with *apologia*] in full: *Aelii Antonii Nebrissensis ex grammatico rhetoris in Complutensi Gymnasio atque proinde Historici Regii Apologia earum rerum quae illi obiiciuntur. Eiusdem Antonii Nebrissensis in Quinquaginta Sacrae Scripturae locos non vulgariter enarratos. Tertia Quinquagena. Eiusdem Antonii de digitorum computatione. Cum privilegio. Apud inlytam Garnatam Mense Februario D. XXXV.* (Granada: Sancho de Nebrija, 1535), BNM R/142.

The *Apologia cum quibusdam sacrae scripturae locis non vulgariter expositis* must have been printed by Brocar in Logroño around July 1507. We know its external history well, the trials suffered by Nebrija in order to see his explications of critical passages of Holy Scripture in print. It was his first attempt. In 1503, when Fray Diego de Deza was Inquisitor General, Nebrija was served a writ which for the moment did not go beyond the seizure of these annotations. He found the opportunity to print them in this first apologetic form almost certainly shortly after 17 May 1507, when Deza was replaced as Inquisitor by Cisneros. The *Apologia* is the programmatic introduction to the body of *lemmata* which would constitute the *Prima Quinquagena*, or simply *Quinquagena* if it had been possible to print the first attempt.⁹

Around 1513 the workshop of the faithful Brocar produced an edition containing several of Nebrija's *relectiones*, followed by the individual discussions of biblical words. The whole presents the uniform appearance of a specialized miscellany of aspects needing critical comment: the title which functions as a title page for the collections is *Aelii Antonii Nebrissensis relectio de numeris in qua numerorum errores complures ostendit qui apud auctores leguntur*. The order is: *relectio 7^a de ponderibus* (13 June 1511); *8^a de numeris* (11 June 1512); *9^a de accentu latino* (11 June 1513). The *sacra lemmata* (which the wise don Antonio Odriozola named *Cinco anotaciones a la Sagrada Escritura*) follow, placed in *Tertia Quinquagena* in alphabetical order: "Cynus pro schino"

⁹ The following are specific to *Apologia* [= *prima quinquagena*], but do not appear in the later editions: "Abimelech pro Achimelech" [*Biblica* I, 65-66; I, 105-106-107-108]; "Bersabee urie uxor pro Bethsabe" [I, 587; II, 442]; "Bersabee puteus pro Beersabe" [II, 440; I, 551; II, 441]; "Cyprus quae planta est" [I, 826]; "D. littera pro r. et contra r. pro d.", "F. litteram non debere poni prope h.", "H. nota aspirationis ubi non debere poni", "M. littera otiose adiecta", "Magi an tres et an reges" [independent manuscript edited by C. Gilly, "Otra vez Nebrija, Erasmo, Reuchlin y Cisneros," *Boletín de la Sociedad Castellonense de Cultura* 74 (1998): 257-340 (303-307)], "Praetorium et praetoliolum" [I, 2272]. Note that as his work in progress, Nebrija recognized that he made suppressions and additions, which are merely listed at the end of this *Apologia*, and are either not included in later editions or are terms which although briefly are defined in other lexica (the numeration is that of the *Nebrissensis Biblica*), or deal generally with aspects of historical phonetics which are incompatible with word-structure and are discussed individually under their respective *lemmata*. Its title places the (*Tertia*) *Quinquagena* in the train of the most brilliant and stimulating exegeses produced by humanism, such as the *Miscellaneorum centuria prima* of Poliziano or the *Annotationes centum* of Filippo Beroaldo: see Rico, *Nebrija*, 66.

X; “Sedere ad dextram” XXXIX; “Lustrum” XXIV; “Tibiicines” XLVI; “Digtorum supputatio” [= TQ “Dextera” XV].

In 1516 the work is printed under the title *Tertia Quinquagena*, although it contains only forty-eight lemmata, which will become forty-nine in the edition of 1535 printed by Nebrija’s son Sancho in Granada. Both editions (TQ₁₆ and TQ₃₅) lack chapters XXXVI and XLI. In order not to disrupt the numeration the 1535 edition inserts a new chapter XLIII “Sin pro sed si”, after chapter XLII “Simila et Similago”, but leaves the following “Striatius” as XLIII, the same number it had in 1516. Thus the following chapters have the same lemma and number: “Stibium” XLIII; “Talitha et tabitha” XLV; “Tibiicines” XLVI; “Traducere quid sit in Matthaeo” XLVII; “V. litterae varius usus” XLVIII; “Zelotes pro cananeus” XLIX; “Zona” L.

When Nebrija dies in Alcalá on 2 July 1522 the University makes a notarial record of the inventory of works kept “en vn arca del deposito del maest^o antonio de lebrixa”, given to his son Sebastián on 16 June 1523, to be taken to Granada. Carlos Gilly suspects on good grounds that MS. 19019 of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, is a copy made in this city in the 1520s by a hand close to the family. Gilly had previously drawn attention to these works in the eighteenth-century MS. Ny kgl. Samling 18 2^o of Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Copenhagen: *Apologia, Epistola del Maestro del Lebrixa al Cardenal, In Reuclinum Phorcensem et Erasmus Roterdanum quod de “talita” in Evangelio Marci et de “tabita” in Luca non bene senserunt, de magis observatio*, and the letter *Ad Cardinalem Hispanum* and *Lemmata ex utroque testamento*. The Madrid manuscript copies all these except the *Apologia*. The most interesting work, on account of its openly polemic tone against eminent humanists of the age, is the refutation of readings by Johann Reuchlin and Erasmus, although for our purposes it is important to know that he basically expounds the arguments of chapter XLV, “Talitha et tabitha”. With it is “De magis observatio”, which very likely reproduced the contents of the former chapter of the *Apologia* called “Magis an tres et an reges”, which did not go on to be printed in subsequent editions.¹⁰

¹⁰ The catalogue is published by P. Lemus y Rubio, “El Maestro Elio Antonio de Lebrixa 1441?-1522,” *Revue Hispanique* 22 (1910): 459-508 (482). For Nebrija’s apographs which although unpublished complement this *quinquagena* and contribute to the conceptual universe of the *Nebrissensis Biblica*, see the essential studies of C. Gilly, “Una obra desconocida de Nebrija contra Erasmo y Reuchlin,” in *El erasmismo en España*, ed. M. Revuelta Sañudo and C. Morón Arroyo (Santander: Sociedad Menéndez Pelayo, 1986), 195-218; “Otra vez Nebrija, Erasmo, Reuchlin y Cisneros”. BNM, MS. 19019 was pointed out by P. O.

Although dull and rapid, this summary panorama of external circumstances and textual materiality may suffice as a way into the detail of the ideas and methods used by Nebrija in what is beyond doubt his most mature philological work. Of course, all his prefaces shine in their careful prose and their high and innovative ideas. But in this case the particular rhetoric of the *Apologia* stands head and shoulders above the rest, perhaps because it evinces a greater conceptual rigour and a level of abstraction and method not achieved before.

In no other of his statements of intention—in dedicatory epistles—has Nebrija shown a greater consciousness of the novelty of his method than he does in this *Antonii Nebrissensis grammatici apologia cum quibusdam sacrae scripturae non vulgariter expositis*. Nebrija had absolutely no occasion for another *apologia* or “escusación del objeto” (*Lexicon* 1492), that is to say, a reasoned response on behalf of his exegesis of certain passages of Holy Scripture not according to customary method and manners (to be understood as meaning scholastic theology).¹¹ Nebrija explains the sense of “non vulgariter exponere” in his tract against Reuchlin and Erasmus:

Inter caetera, quae Barachias somniat aut vigilans delirat, duo sunt cuius utriusque mentionem feci in Apologia in qua criminatores meos recriminatus sum et in Tertia quinquagena, in qua locos quinquaginta in sacris litteris non ex vulgi opinione, sed nova quadam ratione et a me primum excogitata, declaravi. Unus est ex evangelio Marci ...

[Among the words about which Barachias either drowns or raves awake, there are precisely two, studied by me in the *Apologia*, where I recriminated with those who condemned me, as in the *Tertia quinquagena*, where I explicated fifty passages on Holy Scripture independently from the established interpretation, but according to a new and original method of my own devising. One is taken from Mark’s Gospel ...]¹²

Kristeller, *Iter IV (Alia itinera II)*, 577. See also C. del Valle Rodríguez, “*Corpus Hebraicum Nebrissense*”. *La obra hebraica de Antonio de Nebrija* (Madrid: Aben Ezra Ediciones, 2000).

¹¹ On Nebrija’s biblical philology in Spain, see *Nebrissensis Biblica*, ed. P. Galindo and L. Ortiz (Madrid: CSIC, 1950). Outstanding studies of the last thirty years are Rico, *Nebrija*, and those of Gilly. See also D. Coles, “Humanism and the Bible in Renaissance Spain and Italy: Antonio de Nebrija (1441-1522),” 2 vols (unpublished dissertation: Yale University, 1983) and J. H. Bentley, *Humanists and Holy Writ. New Testament Scholarship in the Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 70-91 for Nebrija.

¹² Gilly, “Otra vez Nebrija,” 286-87, with a few changes (semivocalic “u” to “v”, a few commas, the order of initial predicatives and the translation of “non ex vulgi opinione sed nova...”).

This “*vulgaris opinio*” refers to the meanings established for the Bible by the professional theologian and the “*vulgariter exponere*” of the title of the apologia is well explained by the “*nova quaedam ratio*”—with which he had highlighted the innovation of the *Introductiones* of 1481—, that is, not according to the logico-scholastic method of the time—however arranging a *dispositio iuxta obiecta*—, but in accordance with grammatical criteria and in stylish prose. His famous personality as “*ex grammatico rhetor*” will appear, as so often, when his protector Cisneros, at the time *protomystes* (cardinal primate), recruits him to teach rhetoric at the new University of Alcalá. Thus in the edition of 1513 he announces himself, without casting off his literary status, as the grammarian turned rhetorician, with the additional title of royal historian (since 1509): “*Aelii Antonii Nebrissensis ex grammatico rhetoris in complutensi gymnasio atque proinde historici regii in quinquaginta sacrae scripturae locos non vulgariter enarratos*”. That is to say, he justifies his scriptural work with the methods of the *studia humanitatis* and protects himself against the attacks of the professional theologians with the immunity given by his membership of the circle of royal trust.

What is surprising about this *Apologia* is its latinity, its convincing and grammatical style, totally alien to the language of contemporary scholastic theology. Structurally it is a speech on classical lines, with *exordium*, *narratio* and *conclusio*, rounded off with a *protestatio* (public confession) before the conclusion. Having organized his battery of arguments out of patristic sources or *auctoritates* (basically Augustine on the sign and the textual criticism of *De doctrina christiana* II-III), Nebrija decides to oppose accusations of heresy regarding the exclusivity of Jerome’s interpretation and restore “*suo autori*” what negligent scribes had corrupted, all this wrapped up in the periphrastic methods of humanistic grammatical commentary: literalist aims and a subjective sieving of sources giving primacy to linguistic precedent and the oldest witnesses.¹³

¹³ “*Idque partim fecimus partim facturi sumus conferendo recentiores codices cum vetustatis adorandae codicibus latinis, qui facile ostendunt quid Hieronymus nobis scriptum reliquerit, si modo consentit aut non discordat ab eo quod in Hebraeis Graecisque voluminibus habetur atque in eo laborare velim ab istis edoceri quod aereoseo genus sit. Nam neque aeticum quid continet neque aeresin sapit neque ex verborum inordinatione potest aeresis sed neque aereoseo ulla suspicio inferri.*” [“This task we have partly already done and partly we have still to do, collating the more recent Latin manuscripts with the venerable ancient ones, which enable us to know what Jerome wrote, and if at least it corresponds or not to the Hebrew and Greek books, and working on this I would like to teach what sort of heresy it is. For their content is not heretical, nor does it inspire

This formal exercise in classical deliberative oratory against scholastic theology might also be a substitute for an indirect but equally challenging censure “del medio de penetración y difusión más común del escolasticismo, el de la predicación, una censura del sermón escolástico en tanto que elaborado según las *artes praedicandi* medievales”.¹⁴

Let us now read the exordium, divided here into two paragraphs. The intertexts are italicized in the text and recorded in the footnotes.

Aelii Antonii Nebrissensis Grammatici Apologia earum rerum quae illi obiiciuntur, quod in quosdam Sacrae Scripturae locos commentationes grammaticas edidit.

Ad perquam Reverendum in Christo Iesu Patrem ac Claementissimum Dominum Do. Fratrem Franciscum Ximenez S.R.E. Cardinalem Hispanum Archiepiscopum Toletanum atque Hispaniarum Mystarchen foeliciter.

[*Exordium*] Nondum satis constitutum habeo, claementissime Pater, utrum bene an potius male sit meritis de me genius meus qui eiusmodi luto praecordia mea finxit, ut nihil cogitarem nisi quod difficile, nihil aggrededer nisi quod arduum esset, nihil denique in vulgus ederem nisi quod mihi negotium facesseret. Quod si omne tempus meum amicorum temporibus accommodarem, si vigilias meas in fabulis ac poetarum figmentis consumerem, *si in legendis aut scribendis historiis bonas horas male collocarem* et, quod poeta inquit, “essent per me omnia protinus alba”, me omnes amarent, laudarent nugisque meis congratularentur. Nunc vero quia *operor cibum qui non perit* atque, ut inquit Hieronymus, “investigo in terris quorum scientia nobis perseveret in coelo” temerarium, sacrilegum falsariumque appellant parumque abest quin impietatis reum peragentes *ex vinculis causam dicere cogant*. Neque enim deerit accusator, ut ait satyricus poeta, qui verum dixerit “hic est”, ut de me iure possit illud ex Ecclesiaste dici “qui addit scientiam addit laborem”, vel illud potius ex Plauto “*ipsa avis sibi parit malum*”. Novimus namque ex turdorum stercore viscum gigni et *fronde virere nova quod non sua seminat arbos*, cuius glutino ipsae aves postea inviscatae capiantur. Quod si propositum legislatoris esse debet bonos ac sapientes viros praemiis afficere, malos vero atque a veritatis via aberrantes poenis coercere, quid agas in ea republica ubi Sacras Litteras corrumpentibus praemia proponuntur atque e diverso depravata restituentibus resarcientibus convulsa, mendosa emaculantibus infamiae nota inuritur an anathematis censura subitur? aut si positionem defendere coneris, mortem indignam oppetere cogaris?

[Defence of the grammarian Elio Antonio de Nebrija before the objections made to him when publishing his grammatical commentaries on

heresy nor it is possible to determine from their arrangement of words any heresy or suspicion of heresy”].

¹⁴ P. M. Catedra, “Nebrija y la predicación,” in *Antonio de Nebrija: Edad Media y Renacimiento*, 129-50 (130).

certain passages of Holy Scripture. To the very Reverend Father in Christ Jesus and very Magnificent Don Fray Francisco Jiménez of the Sacred Roman Church, Cardinal of Spain, Primate Archbishop of Toledo and the Spanish Kingdoms greetings.

I still do not understand clearly, most magnificent Lordship, if I have well or ill deserved this guardian angel of mine who so formed my character that I think only of difficult things, that I take on only the arduous, that I certainly do not present to the public anything that does not cause me trouble. For if I spent all my time on my friends, if I devoted all my waking hours to the myths and inventions of the poets, if “I made ill use of my good hours”, in reading or writing histories, and, as the poet said, “as far as I was concerned, everything would look rosy”, everybody would love me, would praise me and would be delighted with my frivolities. But now, since “I seek the food that does not perish”, and, as Jerome says, “I search on earth for the knowledge which will persevere in heaven”, I am called reckless, sacrilegious and a falsifier, and it would take very little for them to accuse me of impiety and make me defend myself in chains. Nor shall I want for an accuser, as the satirist says, who in fact would have said “he is here”, so that it could fairly be said of me “he who increases knowledge increases grief” in Ecclesiastes, or rather the Plautine “bird which seeks its own ruin”. For we know that from the dung of the blackbird comes mistletoe and that “new leaves grow alien from the tree that grows them”, in whose lime the selfsame birds are caught. And if the intention of the legislator must be to reward good and wise men, but punish the evil and those who turn aside from the path of truth, what can you do in that republic where they offer prizes to those who corrupt Holy Scripture while those who restore the corrupt, those who repair the uprooted, those who purge falsehood are branded with the sign of infamy? Are they besmirched with anathemas? Or if you attempt to defend your position, will you be forced to accept an unworthy death?¹⁵

In the exordium the accumulation of phrases and expressions from classical authors, and to a lesser degree of explicit biblical turns, is so

¹⁵ Cf. *nondum satis constitui* [Cic. Fam. 11, 27, 1] / *omne meum tempus amicorum temporibus transmittendum putavi* [Cic. Pomp. 1] / *poetarum figmenta* [cf. Hier. In Is. 10, 34, 8]; *figmenta poetarum* [Aug. Civ. 2, 8; 4, 17; 6, 7] / *male collocare si bonas voles horas* [Mart. 1, 113, 3] / *per me equidem sint omnia protinus alba* [Pers. 1, 110] / *operator cibum qui non perit* [Io. 6, 27] / *discamus in terris, quorum nobis scientia perseveret in caelo* [Hier. Ep. 53, 10] / *ex vinculis causam dicere cogant* [Caes. Gall. 1, 4, 1] / *accusator erit qui verbum dixerit “hic est”* [Iuv. 1, 161] / *qui addit scientiam addit laborem* [Ecl. 1, 18] / *ipsa sibi avis mortem creat* [Plaut. frag. 47] / *fronde virere nova quod non sua seminat* [Verg. Aen. 6, 206] / *propositum legislatoris esse debet bonos ac sapientes viros praemiis afficere, malos vero atque a veritatis via aberrantes poenis coercere* [Arist. Eth. Nic. 1180a].

great as to place beyond doubt that Nebrija is appropriating classical antiquity and using it as a conceptual category in his discourse. It would be foolish to suppose that Nebrija uses his hard-won latinity merely to subordinate his own thought to a linguistic exercise or to stitch it together with other people's scraps. At the origin of this obsessive emulation of classical Latin (provided we understand "classical" to include the eclecticism with which the humanists modulated their language) lies his strategy, evident in this apologia, of demolishing medieval Latin and the scholasticism inherent in it. The change effected by the humanists in the Latin language is the essential driver for a change in mentality.

To this aim contribute the high number of idioms and turns of phrase. I register most of these in my notes and will discuss the most significant in the body of the text.¹⁶ In the first paragraph Nebrija highlights the lack of understanding and even social danger which impells his activity as a grammarian; to exorcise these he does not hesitate to literally arrogate to himself Jerome's intention, claiming to investigate on earth things which will bring him benefits in heaven. These three Ciceronian expressions (the first with a positive meaning and the other two negative) are remade by Nebrija in a new context of depreciation of unproductive leisure wasted among friends and the reading and writing of fiction, ending with a line from Martial to refer poetically to the ill use of good time.¹⁷ Even the commentator par excellence, Servius, can be raised as a model of

¹⁶ **nondum satis constitutum habeo* [Cic. Fam. 11, 27, 1: "nondum satis constitui molestiae ne plus an voluptatis attulerit mihi Trebatius noster..."]; **genius meus*: in poetry and postclassical prose [Plaut. Aul. 725: "animumque meum geniumque meum"]; **luto praecordia finxit* [Iuv. 14, 33-34: "forsitan haec spernant iuvenes, quibus arte benigna / et meliore luto finxit praecordia Titan..."]; **cogitarem difficile* [Quint. Inst. 10, 7, 17: "namque et difficiliorem cogitationem exprimit et expellit dicendi necessitas"] + *nihil nisi quod arduum* [Cic. Or. 33: "omnino et arduum, Brute, conamur, sed nihil difficile amanti puto"]; **temerarium-sacrilegum-falsarium* [Apul. Met. 11, 21: "qui non sibi quoque seorsum iubente domina, temerarium atque sacrilegum audeat ministerium subire noxamque letalem contrahere"]; the term *falsarius* is recorded on only two occasions, in Cat. Or. frg. 11 and Suet. Tit. 3, 2]; **bonos viros praemiis afficere* [Cic. De or. 1, 247: "quod vero viros bonos iure civili fieri putas, quia legibus et praemia proposita sint virtutibus et supplicia vitii..."].

¹⁷ **tempus amicorum temporibus* [Cic. Div. Caec. 41: "ego... qui omne tempus quod mihi ab amicorum negotiis datur in his studiis laboribusque consumam"] + **fabulis ac poetarum figmentis* [Cic. Tusc. 4, 33, 70: "sed poetas ludere sinamus, quorum fabulis in hoc flagitio versari ipsum Iovem: ad magistros virtutis philosophos veniamus"] + **vigilias consumerem* [Cic. II Verr. 4, 144: "... cuius omnes vigilias in stupris constat adulteriisque esse consumptas"].

writing. Thus “*mortem indignam oppetere*” seems to result from incorporating both concepts as defined by Servius to explain Virgil’s poetic expressions; Nebrija makes them his own by applying them to the contradictions provoked in society by his profession as a grammarian.¹⁸

Let us now read the second paragraph with the beginning of the *narratio*:

An mihi non sit satis in iis que mihi religio credenda proponit *captivare intellectum in obsequium Christi* <2 Cor. 10, 5>, nisi etiam in iis quae mihi sunt explorata, comperta, nota, manifesta ipsaque luce clariora, ipsa veritate veriora, compellar nescire quod scio? Non hallucinans, non opinans, non coniectans sed adamantinis rationibus, irrefragabilibus argumentis, apodicticis demonstrationibus colligens. Quae malum haec servitus est aut quae tam iniqua velut ex arce dominatio, quae te non sinat pietate salva libere quae sentias dicere? Quid dicere? Immo nec intra parietes latitans scribere aut scrobibus immurmurans infodere aut saltem tecum volutans cogitare.

[*Narratio*] At quibus de rebus cogitare? Nempe quibus religio christiana continetur quodque inter iusti et boni viri munera vel praecipuum Psalmographus <1, 2> commemorat: “In lege, inquit, Domini voluntas eius et in lege eius meditabitur die ac nocte”.

[*Confirmatio*] Primum illud meditationis genus in lege Domini esse debere Augustinus praecipit, ut codices habeamus castigatos.

[It is not sufficient for me to “submit my understanding to the obedience of Christ” in the matter of my religious beliefs, unless I find myself obliged to ignore what I know in subjects I have investigated, discovered, known, made known and clearer than the light of day, truer than truth itself? Well, I do not hold forth, I do not hold an opinion, I do not conjecture unless it is with adamantine reasons, irrefutable arguments, demonstrative proofs. What damned slavery is this, or what unjust and tyrannical domination, that does not allow one to say freely and without a lack of religious respect what one thinks? What do I mean “say”? Rather, I am not able either to write hiding myself behind walls or dig mumbling over the grave or at least think and ponder in your company.

So, on what subjects can one think? In truth, what the Christian religion is and what the Psalmist celebrates among the principal duties of the just and good man: “In the law of Yahweh, he says, he puts his will and will meditate on his law day and night”.

Augustine prescribes that the first exercise of thought on the law of the Lord must be that we possess corrected books.]

¹⁸ **mortem indignam oppetere* [Serv. Aen. 6, 163: “indigna morte: miserabili, non congrua eius meritis; vel propter animae etiam extinctionem elementi contrarietate”; Serv. Aen. 1, 96: “ergo dicimus et ‘oppetit’ et ‘mortem oppetit’, sicut et ‘exspirat’ et ‘animam exspirat’”].

The second paragraph begins with the habitual turn in classical prose of questioning the certainty or basis of what follows (*an mihi*, derived from Prop. 1, 6, 13: “an mihi sit tanti doctas cognoscere Athenas”), by which the narrator relativizes and justifies—as the poet submits himself to his beloved—his dedication to theological studies. Thus Nebrija to target his religious beliefs is content to submit his intelligence to Christ. He clearly accepts that faith and religious beliefs are subordinated to theology, except for questions of culture, which unlike matters of faith require demonstration. We are close, albeit with some nuances, to the distinction between *probatio* and *religio* which Valla dissects in the *Elegantiae* (V, 30), when he defines Christian faith as equivalent to a *persuasio* which does not need confirmation:

Fides [sc. quod Christiani dicunt fidem] enim proprie Latine dicitur probatio, ut “facio fidem” per instrumenta, per argumenta, per testes. Religio autem christiana non probatione nititur, sed persuasione, quae praestantior est quam probatio ... quod confutare non potest, non tamen acquiescit. Qui persuasus est, plane acquiescit nec ulteriorem probationem desiderat.

[As “fides” in Latin is properly “proof”, as in “I establish through documents, arguments, and witnesses”. The Christian religion, then, does not rely on proofs but on persuasion which it finds more conclusive than proof [...] one does not trust what cannot be refuted. He who is persuaded trusts openly and does not deed further ratification.]

Nebrija extends and emphasizes all this field of “confirmation” with a display of rare or technical terms, poetical phrases and expressions which reveal his unease and intellectual anxiety in the face of the free investigative exhaustiveness to which he lays claim and the tyranny which enslaves him; a truly conscientious study of the Latin language and display of its rhetorical possibilities, for example the homeoptoton or tripartite rhymed alliteration (*non halucinans, non opinans, non coniectans*), which aid him in his aim to define and distinguish his concept of religion as a cultural rather than a faith object. The beginning of the *narratio* insists on this idea of religion as culture: religion as an activity of thought and reflection (*cogitare*). This too is the sense of his confirmation of the primacy given to the quotation from Augustine prescribing “textual correction” (*codices castigati*).¹⁹

¹⁹ **halucinans*— *scrobis*— *infodere* [technical terms, which even seem to function as poetic words: Col. Rust. 7, 3: “ne fur aut bestia halucinantem pastorem decipiat”, who also uses “scrobis”]; **adamantinis rationibus* [poetic adjective, Lucr. 2, 447: “adamantina saxa”; Hor. Carm. 1, 6, 13: “tunica adamantina”; and in

A rapid survey of the major features of medieval scholasticism will show the importance of what has been said so far. Medieval culture was a public affair governed by the institutional stability of Church and University, and the methodological unity of scholasticism, whose

postclassical prose: Apuleius, Pliny] + *irrefragabilibus argumentis* [specific adjective in Christian Latin, here suited to the tenor of his arguments] + *apodicticis demonstrationibus* [exclusive to Gell. 17, 5, 3, from Greek *apodeiktikós*]; **pietate salva* [poetic word, Sen. Phoen. 380-381: "... nil possum pie / pietate salva facere, quodcumque alteri"; also in Liv. 45, 19, 4: "quae vix salva pietate ei contingere poterant", but always in the order "s. p.", as also in Ov. Met. 15, 109, Sen. Ep. 81, 16, Aus. Ecl. 21, 14, which is different from Seneca tragicus and Nebrija]; **intra parietes latitans scribere* [the participial adjective shows poetic uses, Luc. Phar. 6, 712-713: "non in Tartareo latitantem poscimus antro / adsuetaque diu tenebris", but the image which Nebrija recreates is indebted to Quint. Inst. 1, 2, 1: "hoc igitur potissimum loco tractanda quaestio est, utiliusne sit domi atque intra privatos parietes studentem continere, an frequentiae scholarum et velut publicis praeceptoribus tradere"]; **scrobibus immurmurans infodere* [In the background of the censure which Nebrija suffers is the proverbial anecdote of King Midas punished by Apollo with ass's ears for having judged Pan's music better than his. I understand that "aut scrobibus immurmurans infodere" rewrites two sources: first, the participial adjective and the substantive are from Ovid's hexameters describing Midas's barber whispering his secret into the open grave, Ov. Met. 11, 187-189: "voce refert parva terraeque immurmurat haustae / indiciumque suae vocis tellure regesta / obruit et scrobibus tacitus discedit opertis". Second, he draws the substantive and infinitive from Persius 1, 119-120: "ne muttire nefas? nec clam? nec cum scrobe? nusquam? / Hic tamen infodiam..."; this satire, v. 110: "essent per me omnia protinus alba", had been used explicitly by Nebrija in the previous paragraph. Thus the intertext is not only linguistic or verbal, but also assumes the same satirical density of its source, positioning itself in the ancient succession of those who, conscious of the dangers they assume, demand the freedom of their writings. The independence of thought which Nebrija proclaims by claiming for himself the cultural truth of religious fact finds its radical expression in literary language and rewriting; **tecum volutans cogitare* [the participial adjective and verb are synonymous; their emphatic union is not documented either in Liv. 40, 8, 5: "multa se cum animo volutans inambulavit", nor Sil. Pun. 17, 185: "secum ipse volutans", nor Fronto Ep. 3, 17, 1: "haec mecum anxie volutans...", however, it does occur in Servius's prose paraphrase of Aen. 1, 50: "nam dixerat superius 'haec secum' <37> et modo ait 'volutans', id est cogitans"]. For our humanist the prose of the commentator and commentary takes on as much stylistic value as that of a literary author. In this respect "the commentary can itself become a kind of primary text". See A. Laird, "Juan Luis de la Cerda and the Predicament of the Commentary," in *The Classical Commentary. Histories, Practices, Theory*, ed. Roy K. Gibson and Christina Shuttleworth Kraus (Leiden-Bonn-Köln: Brill, 2002), 171-203 (183).

auctoritates are sacred and profane texts which act as guarantors of a tradition ratified as the patrimony of truth. This strong internal homogeneity ranked the branches of knowledge, with theology as the one undisputable and undisputed discipline which gathered and harmonized its disparate sources according to the criterion of “probability”, but rejected anything subjective or innovative. This affected both history (Vincent de Beauvais) and theology (the *Sententiae* of St Bonaventure), where each with a tradition of cross-referenced texts had priority over personal judgement.²⁰

However, in a deliberative essay like Nebrija’s on critical passages in scripture the authorities are not mere texts but “persons”, where argumentation proceeds from dialogue and the equality of ancient author and humanist, mediated by rational criteria of linguistic and historical comparison. Our humanist’s battle against the medieval system of values can be read in one of the replies to the *obiectum* which riles him:

[*Aliud obiectum*] Sunt tamen complures qui hanc litterarum disquisitionem non multifaciant eamque disputationem de caprina lana esse contendant, novos vero atque ipsis inauditos vocabulorum significatus omnino excludant in illis praecipue locis ubi doctores alios sensus accomodarunt. Sed quaero ab istis an magis credendum sit in hac parte septuaginta, qui eo tempore ex Hebraeo in Graecum sermonem interpretati sunt quo utraque lingua vigeat cuiusque, ut omnes fatentur, erant doctissimi, magis Aquilae, Symmacho, Theodocioni, Luciano martyri, magis Hieronymo trium linguarum viro eruditissimo quam Nicolao, Hugoni, Papias, Mamotrecto reliquisque omnibus neotericis autoribus qui in ea tempora inciderunt in quibus res litteraria Graeca pariter ac Latina dormiebat?

[Nevertheless, many people give no importance to this literary disquisition and claim that this is a Byzantine discussion, rejecting all meanings of words new and unknown to them, principally where experts have given different meanings. But I ask them if more credit should be given in this matter to the translators of the Septuagint, who translated from Hebrew into Greek at a time when both languages were spoken and, as is recognized, were most cultivated in both, more to Aquila, to Symmachus, Theodotion [the biblical translator], to the martyr Lucian, more credit to Jerome, fluent in the three languages than to Nicholas, Uguccio, Papias, the Mamotrect and all the other modern authors who lived in the time when Greek literature slept like the Latin?]²¹

²⁰ See R. Fubini, “Umanesimo e Scolastica. Saggio per una definizione,” *Medioevo e Rinascimento* 18 (2004): 168-171.

²¹ I advanced some of these ideas in “Retórica del comentario literario: un ejemplo desde la *Apología* de Antonio de Nebrija (Logroño: Brocar, 1507),” in