In his *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (New York: Pantheon Books for Bollingen Foundation Inc., 1953), Ernst Robert Curtius points out that 'in ancient Greece there is hardly any idea of the sacredness of the book' (p. 304). Homer and Hesiod are pre-literate and 'Pindar and the tragedians are the first to conceive of memory as a written record' (p. 304). Curtius further explains why the idea of the "erudite poet" (*doctus poeta* among the Romans) (p. 305) only entered Greek culture in the Hellenistic period. It was during the Augustan period that book culture became the basis of the new kind of encyclopedism such as Cicero propagated which was represented by Virgil and the other Roman poets. St. Augustine, a teacher of grammar and rhetoric himself, took it for granted that the Christian student of Scripture would avail himself of the new encyclopaedic learning made available by the new Augustan libraries and schools. The *translatio studii* or transmission of traditional pagan learning was mainly accomplished by the uniting of the ideals of *doctus poeta* and *doctus orator* to the functions of scriptural exegesis and preaching.

Robert Hollander in *Allegory in Dante's Commedia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), using the work of Henri de Lubac (*Exégèse Médiévale: Les Quatre Sens De L'Ecriture*, 4 vols., Paris: Editions Montaigne, 1959-1964), shows how Dante became heir to this entire tradition of multi-level exegesis. He does not concern himself with the role of the poet as *doctus orator*, but this major current is carried abundantly in the manuals of instruction for a Christian prince, which were exceedingly popular and influential.

It is worth mentioning another work which is of great relevance to the student of Dante as well as to the history of eloquence. I refer to Rosalie L. Colie's *Paradoxa Epidemica: The Renaissance Tradition of Paradox* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966). The tradition of paradox from ancient through mediaeval and renaissance times called for the utmost erudition and virtuosity from the *doctus orator*. Dante's *Divina Commedia* is the central Christian paradox of the happy fall on which Dante lavishes the same scope of learning and exegesis as the Fathers had done. The great paradoxes in this tradition are, of course, familiar in Erasmus' *The Praise of Folly*, and Rabelais' *Gargantua*, to both of which and to many others, she devotes attention. John Donne's *Biathanatos* as a defence of suicide for Christians is only one of his paradoxes defended with great learning.

Since Homer was not a *doctus poeta* but a pre-literate bard, he could not, if only for this reason, have occupied the place of Virgil in the *Divina Commedia*. The student will be grateful to Eric Havelock for his definitive study of pre-literate encyclopaedism of the Homeric Age (*Preface to Plato*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963.) It was a training designed to encode the wisdom and experience of the entire community but it was directed toward a training of practical perceptions in affairs of daily life and had no relevance to literary or scriptural problems, so the eminence of Homer for Dante is only equalled by his irrelevance. There are, of course, other reasons why Dante chose Virgil to be his guide.

Perhaps the most expeditious way of illustrating the powerful continuity of the Ciceronian concept of eloquent wisdom is simply to point to the long tradition of statesmen's manuals. Many of these are cited by L. K. Born in his useful introduction to his translation of Erasmus'
Education of a Christian Prince: ‘That there is a continuous line of succession at least from the time of Isocrates with his Ad Nicoclem to the twentieth century is beyond question.’

Unfortunately, Born has not seen that the Ciceronian-Augustine concept of the doctus orator is what really gives consistency to the tradition. Thus Plato and Aristotle, on whom he fruitlessly dwells, have really no place in the central discussion, while Machiavelli is consciously antipodal to the tradition. No better evidence both of Machiavelli’s full knowledge of the Ciceronian tradition and his deliberate flouting of it could be found than in the Contre-Machiavel of Gentillet (trans. by Simon Patericke, London, 1577), who sets forth the traditional princely ideal of education based on morality and eloquent wisdom. The Machiavellians despised civic or public eloquence and favored the cryptic or curt style which M. W. Croll has studied for us. Thus, the stylistic disputes of Ramus and Nashe are based on the most radical opposition of views.

The treatises which Woodward published under the title Vittorino da Feltre and other Humanist Educators (Cambridge, 1921) all contribute to the picture of the Ciceronian ideal of eloquence. Vittorino and the other successors of Petrarch are patristic to a man. The Fathers certify their Ciceronianism and usually modify it considerably: ‘The purely imitative treatment of Ciceró was not the aim of Barzizza and of the scholars whom he typifies, such as Zabarella, Vergerio, and Vittorino. In the widest sense, these men set before themselves the reconciliation of the ancient learning with the Christian life, thought and polity of their own day; they had no dream of a dead reproduction of the past.’

Nothing is more indicative of the patristic sympathies of Vittorino than his aversion to dialectics except as an incidental preparation for rhetoric (p. 60). Likewise Aeneas Sylvius warns us to ‘behave of logicians who waste time and ingenuity in verbal subtleties, in whose hands Logic is a thing not of living use but of intellectual death. You will remember that Cicero reproached Sextus Pompey for too great devotion to Geometry, and affirmed that far too much time was spent in his day upon Civil Law and Dialectic ... which withdraws our energies from fruitful activity, is unworthy of the true Citizen.’ (Ibid., p. 153)

This concept of the completely rounded citizen, the versatile and encyclopaedic individual, which all historians have agreed is the Renaissance ideal, is nothing if not Cicero’s ideal orator: ‘To sum up what I have endeavoured to set forth. That high standard of education to which I referred at the outset is only to be reached by one who has seen many things and read much. Poet, Orator, Historian, and the rest, all must be studied, each must contribute a share. Our learning thus becomes full, ready, varied and elegant, available for action or for discourse in all subjects. But to enable us to make effectual use of what we know we must add to our knowledge the power of expression.’ (d’Arezzo, ibid., p. 132)

Like Roger Bacon, Aeneas Sylvius puts moral philosophy over mathematics and the physical sciences in the formation of the ideal prince: ‘There is a danger lest in our interest in natural, or external, objects we find but a lower place for those weightier things which concern character and action.’ (Ibid., p. 156)

Approaching the question of how rhetoric could have become such a dominant interest of the sixteenth century, it is necessary to consider the fact that the Ciceronian ideal necessarily gave first place in education to the means of achieving eloquence. For eloquence was indispensable to the administrator and the prince. We have seen that this concept of learning was cherished throughout the Middle Ages because it had been baptized by St. Augustine and grafted into the main stem of patristic culture. Thus the sixteenth century was far from hav-
ing rediscovered the Ciceronian concept, although the new commercial developments greatly enlarged the scope of its application. L. K. Born’s statement concerning the concept of the perfect prince in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is really applicable to the entire Middle Ages and to the Renaissance, as well: ‘In the political thought of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the central figure about which the whole revolves is the prince. This emphasises the personal view toward rulership, which is characteristic of the period. Furthermore, in accordance with the mediaeval attitude, the writers of these centuries considered the real in terms of the ideal, and were interested in nothing less than in the pattern of the perfect prince.’

Machiavelli and Castiglione are at the end of a long line of writers. However, Machiavelli still awaits the historical scholarship which is necessary to put him in his true perspective. Most writers have recognized that his Satanocracy or his violent fission of nature and grace, in which he is at one with Luther and Calvin, is thoroughly Christian. That is, Machiavelli, like Hobbes, Swift, or Mandeville, cannot be explained except in terms of Christian culture. There is nothing pagan about his scepticism concerning human nature. He rather looked on nature as shut off from grace and as shut in upon itself, and abandoned to the interplay of its own distorted forces. Within this dying order, however, Machiavelli envisaged the ideal prince as a man devoted to political action, impressing his character upon the flux of events, and living solely for the commonwealth which alone is the expression of the integral laws of our now fallen nature. There is much of the Old Testament attitude in Machiavelli – the attitude of trust in the prince as one who cooperates with God to bring good out of evil, having regard to the passionate and blind violence of men. Whether Machiavelli finally confined political action with mere political technique and made of the latter an end in itself is not a question which can be easily determined. It is only necessary to insist that Machiavelli is anti-Ciceronian, and consciously so. He has no place for eloquence in his education since he has no trust in men’s capacity to be persuaded to follow right reason, or any reason. The state must compel man to espouse a useful life free from the anarchy of the passions, and for this purpose eloquence is useless.

It is certainly not on these lines that the characters of Prince Hal and Hamlet were developed. Castiglione, however, cannot be regarded as the ‘source’ of Hamlet’s character, since the concepts of Castiglione were universally current in his century. One might as justly say that Castiglione was the source of Sir Philip Sidney. On the other hand, Castiglione would certainly not have had the enormous vogue he did in the sixteenth century had he not been the spokesman for a large party. Hoby compares Cicero and Castiglione at some length, saying, among other things: ‘Cicero an excellent Oratour, in three bookes of an Oratour unto his brother, fashioneth such a one as never was, nor yet is like to be: Castilio an excellent Courtier, in three bookes of a Courtier unto his deare friend, fashioneth such a one as is hard to find ...’ (p. 3). Castiglione himself says: ‘I am content, to err with Plato, Xenophon, and M. Tullius ... in imagination of a perfect commune weale, and of a perfect king, and of a perfect Oratour ...’

It is perfectly natural, therefore, that Elyot should have devoted two thirds of his Governor to discussing the virtues that became a gentleman who had authority in the commonwealth. It is equally natural that an educational system which arose in the sixteenth century to provide members for a governing class should be primarily concerned with ‘character’ or the achievement of the social and political virtues. It is pointless to rehearse Elyot’s familiar
insistence on the need for eloquence and his encyclopaedic program for the attaining of this traditional ideal. It is perhaps less commonly recognized how thoroughly Elyot envisaged that ideal in the light of the patristic tradition, as seen, for example, in his enthusiasm for *The Institution of a Christian Prince* of Erasmus (Everyman, p. 48). Finally, in Elyot's wake, the long series of manuals for intending statesmen, mostly written by schoolmasters, the professional rhetoricians of the day, need only be referred to in order to focus the great influence of the rhetorical tradition.\(^{11}\)

The first of 2 articles from a chapter in *From Cicero to Joyce*, soon to be published by McGraw-Hill.

Notes


2 See Patricie's translation, ed. 1608, pp. 1; 12-13; 34; 189-190; 240-242; 309; 366.

3 L. K. Born (op. cit.) offers no insights into these matters, and does not consider Rabelais' *Gargantua*, both a blow at the dialecticians and a defense of the Ciceronian concept of princely education. More's *Utopia* really belongs in the same tradition quite as much as Elyot's *Governour*, Castiglione's *Courtier*, Ascham's *Scholemaster*, or Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. In this connection, almost the whole of Ruth Kelso's *Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbania: University of Illinois Press, 1929, reprinted Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964) is relevant to a perspective of the Ciceronian tradition.

Born, however, in tracing the history of the princely manuals, unconsciously attests to the integrity of the encyclopaedic tradition. Isidore of Seville and Alcuin contributed to this literature (pp. 102-104). Peter Damian and John of Salisbury were notable representatives (pp. 109-114). And the *De Eruditione Filiorum Nobilium* of Vincent of Beauvais is a classic instance (ed. by A. Steiner, Cambridge, Mass., 1938).

4 W. H. Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre*, Cambridge, 1921, p. 10. See also pp. 21; 27; 67; 185 for the fact that Vittorino's position was patristic. Woodward's failure to see the patristic tradition at work in these humanists is easily excusable when it is considered that, forty years later, many specialists in the field are still oblivious of it. Leonardo d'Arezzo, defining true learning and eloquence strikes at the dialecticians: 'True learning, I say: not a mere acquaintance with that vulgar, threadbare jargon which satisfies those who devote themselves to theology, viz., the knowledge of realities - Facts and Principles - united to a perfect familiarity with Letters and the art of expression. Now this combination we find in

*Lactantius, in Augustine, or in Jerome; ...* (ibid., pp. 123-124.) The Fathers are the types of the *doctus orator*, the statesmen of Cicero.

5 Samuel Daniel's summing up of the ways in which the increasing commercialization of society enhanced the educational avenues to power, is excellent: 'A time not of that virilitie as the former, but more subtle, and let out into wider motions ... A time wherein began a greater improvement of the soveraigntie, and more came to be effected by wit then the sword: Equal and just encounters, of State and State in forces, and of Prince and Prince in sufficiencie. The opening of a new world, which strangely altered the manner of this ... by the induction of infinite Treasure, and opened a wider way to corruption, whereby Princes got much without their swords. ... Leidger Ambassadors first employed abroad for intelligences, Common Banks erected, to return and furnish moneys for these businesses. Besides strange alterations in the State Ecclesiasticall: religion brought forth to bee an Actor in the *greatest Designs of Ambition and Faction.*' (The *Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel*. Edited, with memorial introduction and a glossarial index embracing notes and illustrations. By the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart. London: Aylesbury, 1895-96. Vol. 4, p. 77) It was in this world that scholars and schoolmasters came to assume the functions of civil prudence. Ruth Kelso points out that in the sixteenth century: 'Of all professions, then, the fittest for gentlemen and those aspiring to become gentlemen was the law.' (op. cit., p. 51) This was basically Ciceronian. The difficulties encountered in extending the Ciceronian ideal of the learned statesman to the feudal aristocracy are evident in many arguments urged against those who held that studies are effeminate. See Elyot's *Governour* (London: J. M. Dent & Co.; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1907. Everyman ed.


8 See H. Butterfield's *The Statecraft of Machiavelli*, London, 1940.

9 The obvious parallels between Hamlet and Castiglione have been indicated by W. B. D. Henderson in 'A Note on Castiglione and English Literature,' in the Everyman edition of Hoby's translation. (London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1928, pp. xi-xiv) Ascham highly approved Castiglione (*Scholemaster*, ed. Mayor, p. 119). In *The Advancement of Learning* Bacon significantly conjoints the concept of the ideal courtier to that of prince and orator: 'But as Cicero, when he setteth down an idea of a perfect orator, doth not mean that every pleader should be such; and likewise, when a prince or a courtier hath been described by such as have handled those subjects, the mould hath used to be made according to the perfection of the art ...' (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., London: J. M. Dent & Co., 1915. Edited by G. W. Kitchin, p. 203)

One of the most emphatic testimonies to the recognition of the function of the prince in uniting wisdom and eloquence is the *Papyrus Geminus*, published at Cambridge in 1522 as *Eleatis Hermathena seu de eloquentia victoria*, an entertainment in which Eloquence, Wisdom's child, with the help of Caesar, Cicero, and Servius Sulpicius, pleading in the Elysian fields for the release of her mother Wisdom, long kept in bondage by her enemies, nobles, women, sophists, and lawyers, wins a truce. Eloquence brings Wisdom to England where she is welcomed by Henry VIII and admired by the people. Henry, quite as much as James I, was a scholar-prince.

10 Everyman, p. 13. Cicero's basic insistence that the orator be a versatile or encyclopedic amateur blended into Castiglione's major condition for the Courtier that he 'eschue as much as a man may, and as a sharpe and dangerous rocke, too much curiousnesse and affectation and (to speake

a new word) to use in everything a certain disgracing to cover art withall, and seem whatsoever he doth and saith, to doe it without paine, and (as it were) not minding it' (p. 46). The habits of understatement and of easy nonchalance about one's attainments were incorporated in the gentlemanly code of the sixteenth century, thanks to Cicero. See Hamlet's

I'll be your foil, Laertes. In mine ignorance Your skill shall, like a star 't the darkest night Stick fiery off indeed. (V, ii, 255-257.)

Compare Hamlet's speech to the players with Castiglione pp. 56-57. Compare his jests with p. 58. Compare his cautious fearfulness in accusing Claudius with p. 171. It is part of the civil prudence of an ideal prince. It is also noteworthy that the full rhetorical doctrine of decorum enters the sphere of courtly manners, so that rhetorical and social decorum are identical: "... we have given the Courtier a knowledge in so many things, that hee may well varie his conversation, and frame himselfe according to the inclination of them he accompanyth himselfe withall ...' (p. 121).

It was conceived that one function of the aristocratic governor was to maintain civil obedience by gaining the good will of the lower classes to the upper.' Kelso, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

11 Ruth Kelso deals with these, pp. 118 ff. Lyly's *Euphues* is, of course, prominent in the list. She doesn't include Brinsley's *Ludus Literarius*, whose advice on theme writing is pointed up with reference to the Ciceronian ends of education: 'The principal end of making Theams, I take to be this, to furnish schollers with all store of the choicest matter, that they may thereby learn to understand, speak or write of any ordinary theame, Morale or Political, such as usually fall into discourse amongst men and in practice of life; and especially concerning virtues and vices' (Campagnac's reprint, London, 1917, p. 172).