CHAPTER I

THE FOUNDATIONS OF PADUAN HUMANISM

Before Barzizza's teaching of grammar and rhetoric is discussed in detail, it is necessary to know the resources on which he was able to draw during his early career in Lombardy (see Chapter II) and when he came as a teacher to Padua. It was in Padua that his teaching flourished, partly because of his personal qualities as a teacher, but partly, also, on account of developments in Padua and the Veneto during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: developments in the schools, in courtly culture, and in informal scholarship. I shall attempt in the following pages to outline what these developments were.

In the first part the main features of literary teaching in Padua between *c.*1200 and *c.*1360 will be described. In both the elementary schools and in the university arts course the common characteristic of that teaching was the subordination of grammar and rhetoric to other needs, either to the needs of civic professions or, in the university, to the needs of law and medicine. Grammar and rhetoric were seen almost entirely as elementary or ancillary disciplines, never as literary courses in their own right. However, gradual changes in the fourteenth century, gaining momentum after *c.*1360, allowed greater scope in the teaching of these subjects, in the university course at least, making possible a widely based course in literary studies for their own sake, freed from the rather narrow dependence on other demands. In the second part of the chapter I shall attempt to deal with those changes in the period from *c.*1360 until 1406, the year in which Padua came under Venetian rule.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOLS AND THE UNIVERSITY *c.*1200–*c.*1360

(a) *Literacy and Civic Demands*

Urban changes in the Veneto from the late twelfth century onwards greatly altered the nature of primary education. Commercial expansion, the emergence of larger political units, and the need for more elaborate administrative and judicial expertise in civic government not only necessitated more grammar schools to train professional people, but also determined, to a large extent, the kind of instruction which these schools were to provide. From the late thirteenth century the number of grammar schools steadily increased. At first they were private enterprises in the

hands of a master, generally a layman, who received fees from parents. During the fourteenth and well into the fifteenth centuries, we find that, in addition to these private schools, many towns in north-east Italy were induced by social and economic reasons to invest in a communal school, paying a master from public funds. These arrangements existed in Treviso and in the Trevigiana towns of Oderzo, Asolo, Conegliano, and Ceneda; in Verona, Torri, Vicenza, and Rovigo; and further north in Belluno, Capodistria, Udine, Cividale del Friuli, and San Daniele del Friuli.[1] In the more prosperous cities of Venice and Padua, where professional families could afford fees, the only grammar schools were the private ones until the middle of the fifteenth century; and of these there were many. It has been calculated that in Venice between 1300 and 1450 there were between forty and fifty masters holding schools at any given time, and in Padua, with about one fifth of Venice's population, there were probably about ten grammar schools at any one time.[2]

These preparatory schools were regarded as fitting objects of communal patriotism, of the private benefactions of citizens, or of the almsgiving of guilds and corporations. For example, several confraternities or *scuole* in Treviso employed masters such as Feltro, a doctor of grammar and rhetoric, who was paid by the Scuola di San Liberale to teach in a house of twenty-five poor scholars.[3] In Padua during the fourteenth century, several *collegia* for poor scholars were founded, one by the rather successful notary and professor of grammar, Lazaro Malrotondi da Conegliano, who in his last years became friendly with Barzizza. In his will of 1400 Lazaro stated that, were he to die without sons, he would found a college for as many scholars as could be fed and clothed from his patrimony, 'usque quo pervenerint ad tempora pubertatis, hoc est ad quartum decimum annum et non ultra'.[4]

The purpose of these grammar schools was to take boys from the age of about seven to fourteen up to the threshold of a professional training: notarial work, a good position in one of the guilds, or a course in the university leading to a legal or medical degree. These close, practical links between the grammar schools and the lay professions steadily affected the fortunes of the older ecclesiastical schools. The two centuries after *c.*1150 saw the church schools in Padua slide from a position of dominance over primary education to one of marginal importance. The clerical *magistri* were probably not felt to be sufficiently in tune with the daily affairs of business, whereas the lay schools clearly shaped grammar and rhetoric towards business techniques, especially letter-writing and the rudimentary principles of 'paper-work'. By the mid-fourteenth century, lay grammar schools in Padua seem to have taken over almost entirely from church schools and we may assume that, in most cases, even prospective clerics attended the same classes as young prospective business men. Some elementary teaching may have continued in the mendicant and monastic houses. A library inventory of 1396-97 for the Franciscan convent of St Antony contained some of the basic texts for elementary teaching: two copies of

the *Derivationes* of Hugutius, one Priscian, the *Elementarium Doctrinae Rudimentum* of Papias, the *De Inventione* of Cicero, and the *Ad Herennium*.[5] The Austin Friars of the Arena possessed one copy of Giovanni Balbi's *Catholicon*.[6] However, these inventories do not prove the existence of grammar schools. Indeed, the convents may have co-operated with the urban authorities in lending library facilities or in providing accommodation for schools run by lay masters with whom they had special contact.[7] In the thirteenth century the cathedral school, for its part, had ceased to give elementary instruction and, with the founding of the *studium generale* in the 1200s, the liberal arts course had been taken out of its hands.[8]

The ecclesiastical corporations, therefore, seem to have used the lay schools at elementary and university levels. The grammar schools had virtually become a lay monopoly since they served so well the needs of lay professions. This subordination to civic needs also showed itself in the activities of the schoolmasters, as well as in the form and emphasis which they gave to their instruction.

It was common for the *grammaticus* to be also a 'part-time' notary or associated in some way with civic administration. This was not only to help him make ends meet but also because the occupations which he straddled were thought to be naturally allied. Paduan masters of *grammatica* (which usually meant rhetoric also) frequently attached themselves as notaries to one of the city chanceries. In the bishop's chancery we find, for example, Master Arsegnino in the early decades of the thirteenth century, Master Domenico in the 1260s and, in the later fourteenth century, Lazaro da Conegliano. Other *grammatici* can be found in the *officium sigilli*, the judicial office of the Palazzo Communale: the famous Rolandino was a notary there, certainly throughout the 1230s and probably for much longer; his pupil, the same Domenico, worked there for a time in the 1260s; long service, from *c.*1361 to 1397, was given by Carletto Galmarelli da Villatora. The Carraresi lords also employed *grammatici* as their secretaries, such as Bono da Lucca and Giovanni Conversino da Ravenna.[9]

Besides spending some of his time in notarial business, a *grammaticus* was sometimes appointed by the commune or the *signore* to act as an ambassador or help conduct great affairs of the city, since he was considered the most *letterato* of the chancery officials. Thus, in Treviso communal masters were, by their very office, eligible for any of the judicial or administrative magistracies in the March, being denoted, on that account, *homines legales literati*.[10] Giovanni da Spilimbergo twice served as ambassador for Belluno between 1401 and 1413.[11] The most renowned masters were sometimes accorded formal public recognition. For instance, Rolandino had a tomb built for him in Padua, and Pietro da Muglio, at a civic ceremony in 1365, was given a prominent position next to the *signore*, Francesco da Carrara, in front of the Palazzo del Signore.[12]

The *grammatici*, therefore, played, and were expected to play, an active part in public affairs and, correspondingly, they taught the literary arts in accordance with

the needs of the businessman, the notary, and the lawyer. This was most clearly the case, at least, in the period from *c.*1200 to *c.*1340 when the *dictamen* schools were at their height in Padua and Bologna. These schools taught the art of rhetoric – written and, to a much lesser extent, spoken Latin according to formal rules – in a way that would serve the practical needs of law, administration, and commerce. Although their teaching was far from uniform, as several modern studies have shown, the *dictatores* had at least one didactic principle in common; the trimming down of literary instruction to what they thought was strictly necessary for prospective notaries and lawyers.[13] This trimming down was effected in several ways. First, only a bare minimum of classical Latin literature was read and taught compared with the impressively wide range of authors studied in the fifteenth-century humanist schools. Secondly, those branches of the *ars rhetorica* which most closely served professional needs were given prominence, namely epistolary composition and the drafting of every kind of official document. The art of letter-writing was often equated, in treatises on the subject, with the whole *ars rhetorica* so central was the place it held. Oratory, on the other hand, that branch of rhetoric which occupied the ancients more, was much less valued by the *dictatores*.[14] Moreover, they often summarized the classical manuals on rhetoric–the *De Inventione* of Cicero and the *Ad Herennium*–in order to give the student the essential points, so that he need not read the text for himself. The *Candelabrum* of Bene da Firenze, for example, was designed to enable the student to acquaint himself quickly with the main classifications of the *Ad Herennium*. Alternatively, the classical manuals were made easier through vernacular translations, such as the widely used translation of the *Ad Herennium* by Guidotto da Bologna and Bono Giamboni in the mid-thirteenth century. Also, we find short treatises in the *volgare* on the art of rhetoric and numerous examples of vernacular letters drafted on the classical frame.[15]

What becomes clear from looking at those thirteenth and early fourteenth-century masters of the *ars dictandi* was that they did not appear to be interested in the niceties of classical Latin style–though they did have a sense of adapting style to purpose–nor in making their pupils read at first hand the classical authors who dealt with the art of rhetoric. Rather, the object seems to have been to ensure that the bare bones of the art were grasped so that the student could formulate letters and construct speeches according to some general specifications.

This is an over-simplified summary of the *dictamen* schools and is made with the later achievements of the humanist masters in mind, but it will help us to assess Barzizza's teaching. It is also a view of the *dictatores* which is based almost entirely on evidence taken from Bologna. However, it is not unlikely that the Paduan schools of rhetoric followed those of Bologna, at least until the early fourteenth century. The evidence for Padua is slight for this period but what there is does suggest this. In 1226 or 1227 the new *studium* in Padua invited the celebrated Bolognese *dictator*, Boncompagno da Signa, to read publicly his *Rhetorica Antiqua*,

an honour which surely showed the approval of the Paduan masters for Boncompagno's teaching. One of Boncompagno's pupils and admirers, Rolandino, shaped the teaching of rhetoric in Padua during the middle decades of the century, leaving his pupils to continue and further his work for another generation. Moreover, it would be surprising if Padua had departed from the Bolognese model in this area when, in almost all other respects, it followed the practices of its parent body until at least the early fourteenth century.

(b) *Grammar, Rhetoric, and University Studies*

If the elementary schools in the Veneto were the products of civic needs then so too was the University of Padua which was regarded as essentially a training ground for civil and canon lawyers and, to a lesser extent, for medical doctors. A degree in law or medicine was almost always the goal of the Paduan student and, consequently, the liberal arts were in various ways used as auxiliary or preparatory disciplines; the arts course was a necessary stage to be passed before students went on to study the higher disciplines.[16] Not surprisingly, therefore, the importance given to a particular subject in the arts course depended on its usefulness to law and medicine and in this respect the university records indicate that what was most expected from a student with a degree in arts was that he should have reached a satisfactory standard in logic and the three branches of philosophy. Most of the arts course, which generally lasted between three and five years, was taken up with the study of these subjects. Natural philosophy was clearly related to medicine. Moral philosophy and metaphysics most usefully exercised the student's speculative powers. Logic retained its place in the medieval curriculum as the tool for all further disciplines; the syllogistic method was used for studying and being examined in philosophy, medicine, and law.

Compared with logic and philosophy, grammar and rhetoric were skimped at university, partly because they were not of such immediate relevance to medicine and law and partly, one may suppose, because the university authorities judged that they had been covered more or less adequately in the grammar schools so that a student's knowledge needed only to be 'rounded-off' at university. Also, the pressures on the students of time, expenses, and 'careerism' may have led to the devaluing of grammar and rhetoric in the same way as they forced music, arithmetic, and geometry out of the statutory arts course altogether.[17]

The university masters of grammar and rhetoric appear to have been closely linked with the elementary schoolmasters, indeed, the same man sometimes combined both functions. No distinction was made between the two in the signorial decree of 1338 or 1339 (confirming a decree of 1259) which laid down that masters of grammar would enjoy immunities and exemptions from personal exactions and dues.[18] The frequent references to *magistri puerorum* in the university notarial records suggest that they may be affiliated in some way to the university arts faculty, a recognition, perhaps, by the university of the part played

by the elementary masters in preparing the ground for the arts course.

What grammar was studied at university seems to have been narrowly based. The branch of grammar which comprised a study of ancient Latin literature, the *studia litterarum*, seems to have been neglected. Which texts were to be read for the *studia litterarum* were never specified in the statutes of the university, which probably left this matter purposely to the taste of the individual master. But before the second half of the fourteenth century there is no evidence in Padua of *grammatici* covering a wide range of authors or thoroughly expounding even a few. In theory, this undefined course allowed a master a large degree of free choice in regard to the texts he used and the method he adopted for expounding them. Later, we shall see how Barzizza was quick to realize the possibilities which this opened to him.

For the teaching of grammar in Padua until Barzizza's time there is virtually no evidence, as Dr Siraisi also found in her study of the *studium* up to 1360: 'no grammatical work written by any Paduan master between 1200 and 1350 seems to have survived, and no documents mentioning the names of required texts have so far turned up'. Since the universities in Italy followed very similar courses, one can fairly safely assume that, as in Bologna, Priscian's *Institutiones Grammaticae* was studied, either as the *Maior* (Books 1-16) or as the *Minor* (Books 17-18).[19] There is also some slight evidence to suggest that, as in Pavia in the late fourteenth century, Priscian was studied speculatively or from the point of view of the logic of language.[20] The library inventory of a Paduan professor of grammar, Benvenuto di Castellano, who lectured in *c.*1370, included Kilwardby's commentary on the *Minor* and another anonymous scholastic commentary on the *Maior*.[21] Also, professors of grammar were sometimes praised for their proficiency in logic, which they may have taught, as we gather from an epitaph (1342) for Bendedio Lemniacensis and a description of Pietro da Muglio by one of his pupils.[22] Of course, the lack of evidence for the teaching of grammar may in itself be an indication of the comparatively minor place which the subject seems to have held in the *studium* during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and, if so, this may help to explain the impact which Barzizza's teaching was to make, particularly that part of his teaching which defined grammar as a critical study of the ancient authors.

LITERARY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

During the course of the fourteenth century, especially in the second half, certain gradual changes can be observed which gave an increasingly wide scope to the university teaching of grammar and rhetoric. They helped to make rhetoric less strictly tied to the requirements of the legal and administrative professions and grammar freer of the influence of logic, giving to both subjects a higher standing in the university. In 1400 grammar and rhetoric could be studied for their own sake to a much greater extent than had been the case a century earlier. These changes were

brought about by two broad currents which converged in the early fifteenth century: first, developments, both institutional and intellectual, in the *studium* as a whole; secondly, influences on literary teaching in the arts faculty from intellectual forces in Padua which lay outside the university. We will consider each in turn.

The developments within the *studium* during the fourteenth century can be best summarized, perhaps, as the rise of the University of Arts and Medicine *vis-à-vis* the University of Jurists. Over the whole period, from *c.*1200 to *c.*1400, the University of Arts and Medicine rose from almost complete subjection to the University of Jurists to a point at which it had gained an independent footing and, perhaps, had become the strongest arts faculty among the Italian *studia*. This evolution, to a large extent, made possible the introduction of changes in the teaching approach to grammar and rhetoric. It opened the way for humanism to be established in the university.

From the foundation of the *studium* until 1399, the *Universitas Artistarum et Medicorum* was under the administration and, to a large degree, the control of the *Universitas Juristarum*, which had the greater number of students, who were also, as a general rule, older than the Artists. Thus, the statutes of the Paduan Jurists in 1331 and the revised statutes of 1360 applied also to the Artists. In this, again, Padua was following the practice at Bologna. It was not until 1399, with the university reforms of Francesco da Carrara, that the Artists were freed from this dependence on the Jurists for their corporate regulations.[23] These reforms amounted to a formal recognition of demands from among the Artists themselves, who, for more than a century, had been moving towards independence. We find earlier, for example, signs of a corporate self-consciousness among the Artists, such as the literary occasions which they organized. In 1262 the Artists invited Rolandino to read publicly his *Cronica*. Like the earlier reading of Boncompagno's new work to the Jurists, Rolandino's reading was held in a church and surrounded by the same ceremonial forms.[24] The similarities are striking and at least tacit rivalry with the lawyers cannot be ruled out. The occasion demonstrated the Artists, as a group, supporting a literary enterprise, a chronicle of Padua for the years 1200 to 1262, which they felt came specially within their province. Such collective recognition of a literary work was seen again in 1315, when Albertino Mussato was solemnly crowned as poet, a ceremony which was almost certainly organized by the arts faculty.[25] Later in the century, the Paduan Artists again thought it fitting to honour officially, as a body, the most renowned *litteratus* of the day, Petrarch. At his death in 1374 his friend, the Austin friar Bonaventura da Perage, gave a funeral oration at Arquà in the presence of the rectors of the University, the students in arts and the *signore,* Francesco da Carrara.[26]

The self-consciousness of the arts faculty, which these occasions reflected and advanced, was deepened and made permanent, most of all, by another development within the Artists' University: the emergence in the fourteenth century of strong and renowned medical studies. The physicians had always been the senior Artists,

but the intellectual advances which they made, especially in the school of Pietro d'Abano in the early fourteenth century and in the schools of the Dondi family in the middle of the century, were to establish medicine as a powerful 'higher' discipline on equal terms with the Law Faculty. The rising reputation of the Paduan medical school probably carried the rest of the Arts Faculty with it.[27]

A third development within the *studium* as a whole affected the teaching of grammar and rhetoric more particularly. This was the change in the position of the *ars notaria*. Until well into the fourteenth century, as we saw earlier, notarial instruction came within the province of the schools of rhetoric. However, the emergence of a distinct notarial profession, reflecting, in turn, an increase in their work, demanded a more specialized training than could be covered by the *dictatores*. The art of epistolary composition did not embrace the whole range of official documents which needed to be drawn up; and the mastery of a complicated legal terminology, which the notary required, entailed a necessary alliance with the Law Faculty. Thus, by the middle years of the century, we find that the *ars notaria* had become a discipline in its own right, attached to the Law rather than to the Arts Faculty. From the statutes of 1331 we learn that there was a standard textbook on the subject, the *Summa* of Rolandino Passagieri, which all university booksellers (*stacionarii*) were obliged to stock. The first known master of notariate appears in 1341.[28]

Cumulatively, all these developments within the arts faculty either helped to shape the teaching of grammar and rhetoric or opened up further possibilities. The emergence of a specialized course in *ars notaria* gradually helped to correct the balance in the teaching of rhetoric which had been biased by the *dictatores* too much towards the needs of the notary. By the second half of the fourteenth century, rhetoric had been freed from the overriding need to teach the art of drafting official letters and documents. Certainly, the *dictamen* tradition and epistolary composition continued in the humanist schools, but it was balanced by the theory and practice of oratory and a new and painstaking attention to style. With medicine in the vanguard, the whole arts faculty rose in reputation and became more and more independent from the Jurists. As Dr Siraisi has suggested, this may well have helped the cause of classical studies. Once medicine had become the equal of law, the teaching of rhetoric no longer needed to be shaped principally to the needs of lawyers; the door was now opened for literary masters to provide 'a broad foundation of culture for lawyers and physicians alike'. Finally, the sponsorship by the Arts Faculty of 'creative' works of literature showed that, as a corporation, it valued highly literary pursuits which lay outside the formal curriculum. That there was a demand for literary pursuits is shown by developments in Padua outside the University; by changes in the private schools, by the impact of Petrarchan humanism and by learning in the Carrarese court. These developments, too, helped to give a wider and more advanced base for the teaching of grammar and rhetoric.

(a) *The Emergence of Humanist Private Schools in the Later Fourteenth Century*

The private schools in Padua, by their nature, could be media for educational change. Though subject to those social and commercial demands which we saw earlier, the absence of both communal regulations for teaching and ecclesiastical supervision gave to individual masters a considerable leeway in the practical organization of their schools and in the shaping of the syllabus.[29] These 'free' schools included the elementary grammar schools and the private households of university masters who, while also teaching elementary pupils, sometimes accommodated university students and instructed them over and above their formal curriculum. It was indeed from these institutions, under the direction of a talented master, that the far-reaching educational advances were made in the early Renaissance. These advances we will consider more fully when we examine Barzizza's household school and its influence on the more famous humanist schools of Vittorino da Feltre and Guarino da Verona, but the main directions of their changes can be found earlier, in some Paduan schools of the *trecento*, and, indeed, there was a direct continuity. In general terms, these changes took two forms: the remoulding of traditional institutional arrangements for teaching and, secondly, the expanding and renewing of the common syllabus of studies.

The most common practical arrangement adopted by *magistri liberi* at all levels, was the taking in of boarding students, mainly in order to pay the rent from private fees. Boys were sent from home, sometimes only for a few months, because of plague or war or because parents, who could afford to, wished to send their sons to a good master. Often, the master was a relative, compatriot, or family friend, and private arrangements were easily made. Thus we will find several Bergamaschi in the school of their compatriot, Barzizza. No doubt, the parents also assumed that the boy would be disciplined in his work and influenced for the good, under a watchful eye. This practice existed throughout university life also and professors similarly accommodated pupils to augment a public salary from boarding fees or from extra tuition.

Both the strength and weakness of this system was the close, unremitting contact between master and pupil. At worst, it merely satisfied a master's selfishness. Court records and literary references combine in giving the impression that physical maltreatment was not uncommon and, though perhaps these accounts were groundless or exaggerated, they indicate parental fears and perhaps the marred reputation which the schoolmaster's profession had earned itself. In most cases, boarding seems to have been a business contract which was strictly followed out. In a few cases (of great influence), the private school was regarded by the master as an opportunity to educate the boy according to his special disposition and to turn the institution to a moral purpose, based on the twin principles of Christian devotion and classical didactic theory. In fourteenth-century Padua, there were two outstanding schools of this nature, governed by Pietro da Muglio and Giovanni Conversino.

The high esteem in which Pietro was held by contemporaries derived from the moral direction of his teaching no less than from his classical learning. Salutati described his old master as 'unicuique virtutis specimen' and Pietro's intensely personal moulding of the school in Padua (*c.*1360-69) impressed Boccaccio.[30] By Petrarch he was regarded almost as a model teacher, presumably conforming closely to the latter's own ideal of Christian-classical pedagogy.[31] We do not know the details of Pietro's teaching and cannot therefore measure the grounds of his high reputation, except that he seems to have given much attention to classical or late antique moral philosophy, as in his lectures on the *De Quattuor Virtutibus* of the Pseudo-Seneca.

More evidence survives for the schools of Giovanni Conversino, who had himself been a boarder in Pietro's Paduan school.[32] Conversino set up a boarding school in Conegliano (1371-73), Padua (1392-1404), and in Venice (1404-06), and the evidence from all three suggests a consistency in teaching principles, which could be termed Christian humanism. First, he was concerned to reform disciplinary methods in school. Towards the end of his life, in his autobiographical work (*Rationarium Vite*), he recalled bitterly how, at ten years old, he had been a boarder under two cruel *ludi magistri* in Bologna. The various descriptions of his own teaching experiences show how he had consciously attempted to correct this moral deficiency in teaching others by constant reference to traditional Christian piety. Like Petrarch, whom he admired intensely, Conversino had a deep veneration for the Early Fathers, which we find explicitly in his work *Ad Augustinum philosophum de Christi conceptu*, in his frequent allusions to St Jerome and in his tour of Christian monuments in Rome in 1378 or 1379. He also maintained close relations with his uncle, Tommaso, who became Minister General of the Franciscans in 1367 and cardinal in 1387.

Like Petrarch again, he combined Christian piety with study and exposition of Stoic ethical principles, with a view to reformulating those priorities and values which were necessary for good living. At Belluno (*c.*1374-79) he composed his *De Fato* and, probably in the same period, his *De Miseria Humane Vite*, both of which treated common Stoic themes. More directly he applied the notions of that moral philosophy to the daily round of the household school. Again and again, he portrays his schools as the institutional embodiments of the classical ideal of the community of dining and debate from which springs benevolence and amity and in which all are literally educated. 'Vivere' was interpreted according to Cicero and Quintilian as 'convivere', an expression of 'humanitas' coupled with the notions of 'jocunditas', 'commoditas', 'tranquillitas', 'sodalitas' and the rest, the ideal setting in which intimacy or 'familiaritas' was bound.

What makes Conversino an important educator in the history of Paduan humanism was, first, his attempt to model his school on this ideal and to render it also a forum for debate, to which his own friends were invited from outside. Secondly, he related educational method to morality at large. He made the home,

the 'res familiaris', central to education in the school, which was, indeed, an extension of the 'familia', and underpinning this relationship was the need for a proper education of women in the domestic arts and good, simple morals. His awareness of both the good and harmful influences which parents could exercise on their children shows an appreciation of education in its widest and deepest senses. He re-examined thoroughly every aspect of educational method, leaning heavily on classical didactic principles, the Pythagorean instructions which characterized humanist education later: for example, the importance for the master of not amassing too much material for teaching and for the pupil of choosing from books the best parts, 'as a bee from flowers', and revising, in the evening, what one learnt in the day. Most important of all, perhaps, was Conversino's realization of the power which a master could exercise over pupils in the 'familia' of the school, a relationship of love and mutual development, not simply of monetary dealings. Among his own pupils in Padua were some of the prominent figures of the Paduan humanist circle of the early fifteenth century; Guarino da Verona, Pietro Marcello, Vittorino da Feltre, Ognibene della Scola, Vergerio, and others. It was Ognibene who felt that a master could be regarded by pupils with even greater reverence than their parents:

imo vereor quoque ne magistri ipsi in venerationibus preponendi sint parentibus; tribuunt enim genitores ipsi natis vitam atque esse, communia quidem omnibus animantibus: magistri vero disciplinas, mores atque bene esse, precipua quidem hominis.[33]

An active concern with educational methods and principles was striking in late fourteenth-century Padua. This was partly because private masters who were influenced by the revival of antiquity and Petrarchan ideals naturally examined those aspects of ancient literature which had a direct bearing on their own professions and partly because of various educational traditions which came together in Padua. Besides 'free' schools or private households, and the teaching within the *studium*, there was a distinctive courtly tradition of education in the household of the Carraresi lords. An anonymous chronicle of the mid-fourteenth century describes the education of the Carrara heir, Francesco Novello:

El qual nobelissimo zovene (Frencesco), come ave iiii ani, fuo sottoposto a la hobedientia de un maistro, el qual fuo un Simon di Maceri da Parma, el qual fuo versificator et nobile de gramaticha, el qual insegno al dito Francescho Novelo a lezer et scriver e anche a ditar nobelmente letere.[34]

Simone went on to instruct Francesco in the arts of war and gymnastics so that, by the age of seven, he was able to participate in a tournament at Padua in 1366, and he also trained him in swimming and hunting. Under another master, Michel Rosso, he learnt German, French, and Provençal, in addition to his Latin. Finally, we are told that five gentlemen, whose duties were not specified, remained constantly in his company, in order to inculcate in him the affable ways of courtesy. This

training was fairly representative of that in the Italian courts in general.[35]

Princely tuition pointed to the importance of breadth of studies, educating pupils physically, morally (in the manners befitting a gentleman), and intellectually. Designed for a leisured aristocracy, the programme had a comprehensiveness and flexibility removed from the rigidly narrow demands of the bourgeois professions. In two respects, it resembled the idea of university education. The traditional arts course and the higher subjects, if followed out completely, constituted a training of the all-rounder, intellectually versatile. Furthermore, as a juridical body, the university considered the moral welfare of its members, as well as their intellectual progress. The pedagogic reforms of the humanist schools, besides the inspiration of Christian-classical education, also drew on these various strands of educational practice and ideals: the private schools, courtly training and the ideal of the liberal arts course. Thus, the famous treatise of Pier Paolo Vergerio, *De Ingenuis Moribus et Liberalibus Studiis*, composed in the 1390s for another Carrarese princeling, Ubertino, bears the mark of the court and the university.[36] The passages on physical training and moral development belong firmly to the same tradition as the tuition of Francesco Novello, but a new, distinctly 'academic' content is introduced. Vergerio advises Ubertino to attend to the 'liberal studies' in turn: the *trivium* and *quadrivium* are discussed, though Ubertino is not expected to study the 'three great professional disciplines', law, medicine, and theology. Vergerio gives what will become a common humanist view of the liberal arts, first, by discussing subjects which were then unknown, or only partly taught in the formal university course: history, moral philosophy, poetry and music. The humanists were to advocate the full restoration of the liberal arts course, as they thought it had been, when bequeathed by antiquity. Secondly, Vergerio insists that, though a liberal education does not require a grasp of every subject, nevertheless, 'we cannot rightly understand one subject, unless we can perceive its relation to the rest'.[37] An awareness of how disciplines are interconnected by their common relation to philosophy was to be a fundamental tenet of Barzizza's school. These early Paduan humanists followed Cicero and Quintilian in their emphasis on grammar and rhetoric as the basic arts which opened the way to this all-roundedness and, in so doing, they accorded these subjects a status which they had never really enjoyed before. That a syllabus of studies was able to support this theoretical view of grammar and rhetoric was due largely to humanist advances made outside the schools, providing a fresh reservoir which could be channelled into a teaching curriculum.

(b) *The Impact of Petrarchan Humanism in Padua*

Both in the early and in the later fourteenth century literary studies in the arts faculty were influenced by humanist advances outside the schools. The relationship between the Paduan 'pre-humanists' and the arts faculty has been examined by Dr Siraisi (pp 43-57). A greater impetus to the study of grammar and rhetoric was

given by Petrarch, whose enthusiasm for classical letters suggested new methods of study and new teaching possibilities.

The Petrarchan heritage in Padua was a special one. Petrarch's connections with Padua date back to 1349, when Iacopo da Carrara gave him a canonry. From 1361 until his death in 1374, Petrarch's time was almost completely shared between Venice, Padua, and his country retreat in Arquà. It was Padua that was to be particularly associated with Petrarch's memory for about twenty years after his death, partly through his relations with the Carrarese house, partly through his disciples and partly through his library. His relations with Francesco 'Il Vecchio' da Carrara went beyond the usual ties between a scholar and patron. In 1368 Francesco endowed him with the Arquà estate. Moreover, Francesco showed more than a passing interest in Petrarch's writings on antiquity, commissioning Lombardo della Seta to copy the *De Viris Illustribus*, and these 'Lives', of Roman heroes provided the subject matter for the decoration of the great hall of the Carrarese Palazzo, executed by the northern followers of Giotto. Esteem seems to have been reciprocal, for in his will of 1370 Petrarch bequeathed to Francesco his treasured painted panel of the Madonna by Giotto.[38] These examples show why Petrarch and the Carrara house became associated in the minds of Paduan humanists in the 1390s. The patronage of literary pursuits had set an example which the Venetian authorities probably felt compelled to rival later and it had indirectly heightened the dignity of *studia litterarum* in the eyes of the University.

It is difficult to imagine the extent to which Petrarch fired the humanists of his own and the succeeding generation. This immediate influence partly derived from the fact that the Paduan friends guarded Petrarch's library after his death. Besides containing exemplars of Petrarch's own works, this was 'the most remarkable collection of books formed since classical times'.[39] On this account Padua became an important centre for early humanists. Scholars either came personally to transcribe works or an over-worked *scriptorium* did it for them. By the end of the century, however, the bulk of the library was dispersed. Between 1379 and 1388 it was partially sold, although it seems likely that Francesco da Carrara kept the lion's share for himself until his son was forced to give up most of the family treasures to the Visconti, when the Padovano was invaded in 1388. Even after that date, however, some works remained in Padua; for example, the autographs which later passed to the Bembo family and the *De Civitate Dei*, which probably went to the Augustinians of the Eremitani. Individual items returned to Padua by sale or chance, but the bulk went to the Visconti library at Pavia, where the collection played an important part in Lombard humanism and, probably, in the early part of Barzizza's career.

The model of Petrarch's life and work gradually affected the teaching of literary studies in the University. He had set a standard. He had shown that the *studia humanitatis* could not only be studied for their own sake, but could consume a lifetime of scholarship. By relating classical learning to the moral improvement and

inward state of the individual, he had expanded literary studies into a way of life and a philosophical expression. His scholarship was driven by an emotional and imaginative, as well as an intellectual commitment to know antiquity in all its aspects: its history, geography, monuments, no less than its literature. Among his Paduan followers this impetus produced a transformed approach to grammar and rhetoric. First, it produced the beginnings of a critical method in textual scholarship. The custodians of Petrarch's own works set about copying and editing several manuscripts–revising, amending, completing–an undertaking which presupposed a good deal of interpretation. Attempts were also made to give a reasonable interpretation of the meaning and to distinguish the authenticity of classical works. When we examine Barzizza's *Commentary on the Epistles of Seneca*, we will see how much he drew on earlier Paduan attempts to disentangle the knottiest problems. In order to clarify textual references, a painstakingly accurate knowledge of ancient history and other classical writings was realized as necessary. From Padua, Pietro da Muglio wrote to Petrarch with a set of precise questions about the ancient city of Durachium or Dyrachium: who was the founder; what did the name signify; did it have another name; who changed the name and why? Pietro had asked, we are told, because he had students interested in these finer points, which both amazed and delighted Petrarch, who proceeded to answer the queries point by point.[40]

This meticulous study of an original text, to which pupils were expected to refer continually, produced a gradual change in the schoolroom approach to ancient 'authorities'. They were regarded less and less as quarries of moral *dicta* to be hacked out in order to load an argument or give weight to a letter. Unlike the treatment of the classics in the *dictamen* schools, whereby authors were used for another purpose, now they were studied more on their own terms. Again, although summaries of rhetorical textbooks were still produced, they were not intended to be taken as substitutes for the original. Moreover, the traditional standard texts began to be studied with fresh eyes, with deeper understanding and wider learning. The influence of Petrarchan humanism assured the decline of teaching rhetorical principles at second hand, through Italian translations, and contributed towards the 'Latinization' of the middle and upper orders of the laity in the Veneto towns.[41] It contributed also to a revaluing of the approach to the whole art of rhetoric.

We saw that the *dictamen* schools of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries fell far short of a complete revival of classical rhetoric partly by their heavy emphasis on one branch of rhetoric, letter-writing, at the expense of oratory. This seems to have affected the study of law, which neglected forensic oratory, a fact which the early humanists bemoaned. Legal studies have declined since antiquity, Petrarch tells us, as a result of the separation of law and rhetoric; the two must be rejoined.[42] Vergerio complained of the more general decline of oratory in public life.[43] Barzizza and his followers answered these complaints in their attempt to bring classical oratory to the centre of university life and to relate it to other

university disciplines, especially law.

Secondly, the humanists revitalized the art of letter-writing. The business letter was given more polish in style and elegance. The familiar letter, also, was transformed by Petrarch and his correspondents. Petrarch's epistolary collection answered perfectly his innate sociability and volubility and suggested to his correspondents a sense of involvement in a shared enterprise. The epistle was made to express again those philosophical notions underlying Cicero's *Letters to Atticus*, which were used as a model; notions of friendship, sodality, 'humanitas'. The letter became the vehicle of a moral philosophy.

It would be wrong, however, to give the impression that humanism brought sweeping changes in the Paduan schools of the late *trecento*. It appealed to only a few masters. The rest continued to cater for a mainly utilitarian literacy, involving no new view of antiquity. But the humanists, such as Pietro da Muglio, Conversino, and Vergerio, set the pace in the *studium*. They attempted to translate the erudition of Petrarch and Salutati into terms of formal teaching in the schools, thereby registering the new perceptions of the antique world. One might set humanist teaching against conventional grammatical instruction in the same way that one can compare the advances of humanist historiography, such as Leonardo Bruni's, with the medieval tradition of Florentine chronicles: the one owed much to the other and, indeed, could not have surfaced without the long and deep undercurrent, but the whole spirit and orientation were different.

(c) *Courtly Learning in Padua*

So far, we have considered positive intellectual developments and educational trends in order to set Barzizza's humanist school firmly in a tradition of Paduan humanism. There were, however, changes in the intellectual life of Padua which exercised a negative and indirect effect on the nature and impact of his teaching. The second half of the fourteenth century saw a lively literary activity in the Paduan court. The defeat of the Carraresi lords by Venice in the years 1404-1406 brought this to an abrupt end. This literary activity in court had included both Latin, humanistic writings and works for entertainment in the *volgare*, the one providing a stimulus for the other, but the truncation of courtly life in Padua meant that the city never saw that ample courtly culture enjoyed by those lordships which remained intact during the fifteenth century, notably in Mantua and Ferrara. It also brought to an end a freer, more creative humanism, as well as removing political power from the city and, with it, the direct pressures for humanists to involve themselves in political writings and propaganda. Thereafter, humanism was to be almost exclusively centred on the University or the household schools, giving to the movement in Padua a peculiarly didactic and 'academic' character. Furthermore, the absence of a court contributed to that decline in the use of *volgare* writings, further ensuring a strong Latin literary culture in Padua for most of the fifteenth century.

Dependence on the Carraresi shaped the work of courtly *literati*. First, we find eulogies of princely rule in general and the Carrara dynasty in particular among the works of Petrarch, Conversino, and Vergerio.[44] Secondly, the needs of courtly entertainment stimulated literary creativeness in both Latin and the more relaxed vernacular. *Volgare* versifying seems to have been a popular pastime among the literary-minded familiars of the Carrarese court, such as Nicoletto d'Alessio, Zenone da Pistoia, Simone Mazeri da Parma, Giovanni de'Dondi, and Petrarch himself.[45] The same kind of easy interchange between Latin and *volgare* poetry can be seen, in the same period, in the Este court in Ferrara and among certain aristocratic circles in Venice.[46] There are examples of verses which were sung or given as accompaniments to music and, perhaps, dancing. Giovanni Conversino composed *volgare* verses, put them to music himself and then sang.[47] It was from Giovanni Conversino that Vittorino da Feltre learnt music in the 1390s and Sabbadini believes that Vittorino set some of his vernacular poetry to music, including perhaps, his love poetry: 'multos edidit versus de laudibus amantium non latina solum verum etiam etrusca'.[48] Earlier, Petrarch may also have helped in the music-making at the Paduan court, playing, perhaps, the 'good lute' which he left in his will to Tommaso Bombasi of Ferrara, the actor and musician. Works in Latin, too, were written in order to divert, such as Conversino's *Dolosi astus Narratio* (1396) and his *Violate Pudicicie Narratio*, while his *Rationarium Vite* (1400) combined bucolic themes with witty passages on local idiosyncrasies in Veneto towns and on his personal vicissitudes–the stuff of good story telling.

With the demise of the Carrarese *signoria* in 1406, there was no longer a court in Padua to make demands on the creative imaginations of *literati* and the troubadour strains appear to have died out. Literary activity in Padua in the early *quattrocento*, largely under the influence of Barzizza, became characterized by the drier, meticulous learning of the schools and the dominance of Latin scholarship.

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The rise of the Paduan arts faculty, the influence of the revival of antiquity on the schools and the collapse of a courtly culture helped to place the university teaching of grammar and rhetoric on a more elevated level and to shape its content. From being closely allied to professional exigencies, these subjects were transformed into a widely based course in literary studies for their own sake. This was reflected in the term *studia humanitatis*, which was gradually coming into use in the late fourteenth century, and in the changing status of teachers, who, from being 'part-time' notaries or closely connected with legal studies, were expected, by the early fifteenth century, to be 'full-time' masters of the humanities. This was, perhaps, partly a self-conscious change.[49] Petrarch's avowed distaste for lucrative careers was to become a common stance among *quattrocento* humanists. It was probably no coincidence that the humanist masters, Barzizza, Vittorino, Guarino da Verona, and

their followers, were free from other occupations. The term *umanista*, which was coined in the universities in the early sixteenth century, represented a profession in itself and, like all new terms, described an existing practice.[50] When classical texts were given a new importance in themselves, the expositors of those texts correspondingly gained a more important footing in the university. Moreover, the professor of grammar and rhetoric probably had a freedom enjoyed by no other university master: only a few texts had to be taught according to the statutes. Beyond these he had an almost unlimited range and choice. It was Gasparino Barzizza who was the first to realize the full possibilities of this and to consolidate and further the intellectual changes within the *studium* which we have outlined.