CHAPTER II

THE CAREER OF GASPARINO BARZIZZA UNTIL 1407

For the first forty-seven years of Barzizza's life, until he took up his teaching post at Padua in 1407, we have only scanty evidence of his activities and no record of any literary works, whereas his life at Padua is comparatively well documented. However, some attempt will be made to sketch in this shadowy, earlier period, partly because what little evidence there is for this part of his life has never been fully pieced together, partly because Barzizza's social provenance and interests help to explain his later attractions, as a teacher, for the professional and noble families of the Veneto, and partly because we need to understand the nature of his training in the University of Pavia and his intellectual interests there, since they helped to shape his later work in Padua.

Gasparino was born in 1360 at Barzizza, a small country estate in the Val Gandino near Bergamo.[1] He himself described 'Barzizia' as follows:

proprium nomen oppidi non ignobilis galliae cisalpinae quod in finibus soli pergamensis positum sexdecim milibus passum ab urbe distat, a quo Barziziorum familia ex qua ortus sum dèducta est.[2]

The date of Barzizza's birth used to puzzle historians because it would have made him exceptionally old both as a student and teacher but more recent examination has shown it to be correct.[3] The Barzizza family was old landowning stock on the fringes of the minor nobility, although Gasparino's father, Pietrobono, was perhaps asserting a fictitious heritage when he claimed that the estate had been owned by the family since the age of the Lombards.[4] No doubt Gasparino was realizing the social aspirations of his family when, in the late 1390s, he married into the Bergamasco nobility, taking as a wife Lucrezia Agliardi. The men in the family combined estate management with notarial skill in drafting letters and accounts, demonstrating that functional literacy which characterized the background of so many of the early Italian humanists. It is worth remembering, perhaps, that there was nothing unusual in members of the minor nobility in central and northern Italy following notarial careers.

There is no evidence for Barzizza's early schooling, although it seems likely that he attended the grammar school at Bergamo under a master salaried at public expense and from there he probably followed his father's profession and became a notary.[5] The provision of some business training in his Paduan course on rhetoric

and his work as an apostolic secretary to the council of Constance in 1417 suggest that, at some time, he had received training in the drafting of official documents. There is more concrete evidence of this if we assume that Barzizza was the notary, 'Gasparinus', who wrote some of the signorial documents at the Visconti *curia* during the years 1384 to 1392. 'Gasparinus' appears six times on official letters addressed from the court, both at Pavia and Milan, to the *studium* at Pavia and it is strongly tempting to suppose that this is the clue to Barzizza's activities for those years which have hitherto been a blank. On the face of it it seems convincing that, for four or five years before his *laurea* at Pavia in 1392, Barzizza combined (and paid for) his study of grammar and rhetoric at the University with practical, though related, work at the nearby court of Giangaleazzo Visconti.[6]

Between 1387 and 1392 Barzizza was taught grammar and rhetoric by Giovanni Travesi da Cremona, 'artium et rethorice doctor'. This we know from the fact that Travesi 'presented' Barzizza for his *laurea* in 1392, because the *presentor*, according to the statutes of the College of Doctors of the Arts Faculty (1409), had to be a master under whom the candidate had studied 'for a long time', which was defined as a minimum of three and a maximum of five years. The *laurea* ceremony took place on 13 July 1392 in the presence of the Bishop and the College of Doctors, according to the common practice. On 7 September we find the notary Gasparinus appearing for the last time in a letter of Giangaleazzo to the *studium*.[7]

Shortly after this Barzizza made a visit to Padua where his name appeared on a notarial deed which he witnessed in 1393: 'Mag. Gasparinus filius q.d. Petriboni filii q.d. Bonomi de Barziziis civis Pergami in gramatica et retoricha doctoratus'.[8]

It is not known why he came to Padua, what he did there or how long he stayed, but is is important to note that his connections with the city began at this date and not in 1407. He may have returned home by 21 June 1393 when he and his two older brothers divided up their patrimony between Jacopo and Antonio on the one side and Gasparino on the other.[9] The older brothers, who ran the estates, had involved themselves in local political and territorial feuds, lending their support to the Visconti faction among the Bergamaschi nobles, but this had led to the devastation of the patrimony through war. Guiniforte Barzizza, Gasparino's son, was later to recount this to Filippo Maria Visconti in passionate terms:

Ego ex ea familia ortus, in qua non modo nullus unquam tuae majestatis contemptor inventus est; sed plurimi quidem qui pro tui status instauratione, ac firmamento fortunas praedae, agros depopulationi, domos incendio, arces ruinae, liberos captivitati subjicere, suumque sanguinem effundere, atque ipsam animam exhalare non dubitaverunt.[10]

These political allegiances and family fortunes are probably vital ingredients in that marked predilection for Visconti rule which Barzizza held throughout his life.

By 1396 Barzizza was teaching in the elementary grammar school attached to the cathedral at Bergamo, assisted by a *repetitor*, Tonolo de Triviolo. G. Martellotti

thinks that this school was private, but it may have been partly private and partly public; mainly financed by one of the lay charitable societies in Bergamo with additional subsidies from communal funds.[11] For his teaching programme as a *magister puerorum* the eighteenth-century biographers, Furietti and Argelati, inflamed by their patriotic love of Bergamo and by their zeal for classical learning, assumed that Barzizza introduced a fully-fledged liberal, humanist education which transformed the minds and morals of Bergamo's youth; but there is no evidence for this.[12]

We next hear of Barzizza in Padua, again as a witness to a notarial deed, a donation made on 11 May 1400 by Margharita, the wife of Lazaro, professor of grammar in Padua. Lazaro da Conegliano first appears in notarial records as a professor of grammar in 1376 and thenceforth we find him assisting in public examinations, as a master in the Arts Faculty, as well as running a private elementary school. He was a friend of Giovanni Conversino and, during the 1390s, he taught the children of Francesco Novello da Carrara.[13] It is possible that Barzizza worked for a while as a *repetitor* in his grammar school, but it was probably not for more than a few months since Vergerio, who was also among Conversino's friends, was in Padua in 1400 but did not meet Barzizza then (their first contact was not until 1414).[14] Although, again, there is no firm evidence, G. Martellotti may be right in thinking that, between 1400 and 1403, Barzizza was able to obtain a position in the Visconti court, especially with the contacts he had gained after marrying the noble Lucrezia Agliardi.[15]

Barzizza's teaching career at university began in the academic year of 1403-04, as listed in the *rotulus* of lecturers and salaried officials at the *studium* of Pavia:

Ad lecturam Rethorice, Gramatice et Auctorum
M. Iohannes de Cremona Trivii et Philosophie doctor
Ad lecturam Gramatice et Auctorum
M. Gasparinus de Pergamo doctor Gramatice[16]

He was now an assistant to his old master and in the pay of the commune. In January 1404, the *signore* instructed the commune of Pavia on how they were to tax Barzizza's salary, making allowance for his clothing and maintenance. For the year 1404-05 Barzizza is listed as 'legens Gramaticam' and then for 1405-06 as '(electus) ad lecturam Gramatice, Rethorice et Auctorum'. During this period Travesi, for some reason which is not known, had been absent from Pavia, but he had been missed, for, as a lecturer in the University since 1374, he had earned himself admiration and popularity. In the August of 1406 the communal authorities sent a petition to Giovanni Maria Visconti that Travesi might be recalled, at the behest, it was claimed, of the entire city which revered this 'singulare gramatice sidus'. The appeal was made on the basis of Travesi's merits and long connections with Pavia and there is no reason to suppose that any slight was intended against the younger man, Barzizza. However, in professional terms, the

two men were rivals for the same position and this rivalry soon came to a head, when, in September 1406, Visconti asked the communal council how an *honorarium* could be set up for Travesi and how much salary the latter should receive. By February of 1407 the council came up with the idea that Barzizza would have to leave so that the funds for his salary could be given over to Travesi. A record was kept of this noisy council meeting:–

Item prefati Domini auditis hiis, que isto mane magister Gasparinus de Bergamo dixit, secum abducto illo magistro Iohanne de Cremona trivii philosophieque Doctore, quem aliis prestantiorem fore putant, incepit dicere ipse magister Gasparinus. 'Patienter! Fata me cogunt aliam patriam, alios querere honores etiam et utilitates impulit Comune. Cum conveniat volo recedere, sed non aliter quam licite'.

With the consent of Barzizza, the commune then appointed Travesi to a lectureship for four years, conditional upon signorial approval. The outburst 'Patienter!' suggests that Barzizza was trying to put a stop to rowdy wrangling in the council chamber and that he himself was no party to the dispute. With dignity he resigned himself to leaving. Indeed, since the question of his replacement had existed for several months, he had had time to make alternative arrangements; and this he had done through contacts with certain Venetian nobles.

Various reasons have been put forward why only one master could have held the post in grammar and rhetoric at Pavia and why Travesi was preferred: the loyalty of the commune towards the veteran Travesi; Travesi and his supporters in the council ousted Barzizza; the city's funds were exiguous and Barzizza's departure was purely a financial expedient.[17] All these factors may have come into play, but it is also possible that Barzizza already had the prospects of a teaching position in Venice and an appointment in Padua, prospects which made him amenable to the council's decision.[18] At any rate, on 12 March 1407 the *signore* approved the replacement and announced that Barzizza had sought a licence to go to Venice.[19]

He stayed in Venice as a private tutor to patrician families from March 1407 until the following October, when he took up his post at Padua. It may have been that Barzizza took over the position of Giovanni Conversino who, from 1404 to 1406, held a private school in Venice for aristocratic youths, among whom were Leonardo and Marco Giustiniani and Francesco Barbaro.[20] But it is not quite clear how Barzizza came by his new position; did these Venetian families hear of him through contacts in Pavia and learn that his tenure there was unsure; did Conversino recommend Barzizza whom he had perhaps met through Lazaro da Conegliano; did Paduan friends, whom Barzizza had met during his earlier visits to the city, mention his name to those Venetian families, such as the Trevisan, the Donati, and the Barbaro, who were interested in literary studies and who maintained close contacts with the Paduan *studium*? It is likely that he was already known in Padua, for example to those professors at Pavia in the 1380s and 1390s who subsequently took posts in Padua, such as the logician Antonio Cermisoni, and the physicians

Marsiglio and Daniele da Santa Sofia. Although it is impossible to pin down an exact connection, it is worth remembering that the world of the universities was, in some ways, both closed and open; closed, in that masters, because of their small numbers, were generally known to one another and to students, and open in that there was an easy circuit of exchange between the universities, on the one hand, and between the universities and the grammar schools, both private and communal, on the other.

In Venice, Barzizza was a tutor to the nine-year-old Francesco Barbaro and may have resided in the Casa Barbaro. Late in life, Barbaro was to recall Barzizza's companionable instruction in a letter to Panormita (1451):

Postquam nudius tertius de Martialis coqui facetiis jocose mentionem fecisti, incessit animum cupiditas, ut ita dicam, ferculorum suorum, quae adhuc pueris nobis apud eloquentissimum Gasparinum Bergomensem, hospitem nostrum, in symposio doctorum hominum apposita sunt. Sed illius epulas, quae lepore ac salibus conditae sunt, melius gustarem nunc in senectute, quam tunc per aetatem in pueritia potuissem.[21]

Barbaro's reading of Martial as a child was perhaps exceptional, but so also was the decision of Andrea Giuliano, at twenty-three, to begin elementary lessons in grammar with Barzizza's instruction in Donatus.[22] Because Giuliano and Barbaro happened to record their classes with Barzizza later, these are the only pupils in Venice of whom we have evidence, but there must have been others.

Venice in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, compared with Florence and the signorial courts at the same period, was not a centre of humanist learning. What literary activities there were seem to have been regarded as a 'side-line', as a diversion from politics and trade which did not bring honours and which interested only a few. Given these limitations, however, there was a perceptible change during this period; more noble families were showing an active interest in private schooling in grammar and rhetoric from good masters, perhaps in imitation of courts and chanceries elsewhere, and a greater practical concern was shown towards the need for good Latin in conducting public affairs.[23] Barzizza's own sojourn in the city both illustrated and contributed to this trend, initiating his friendship with those aristocratic families, such as the Dandolo, the Vettori, the Contarini, and others, who were to be patrons of humanism in Padua and the Veneto.

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The biographical facts of Barzizza's career until 1407 have a bearing on his later teaching at Padua in several ways. First, we see how, like many of the early humanists, he came from a background of notaries and business people, taking his training in utilitarian literacy and chancery Latin a stage further, into the realm of literary scholarship. At the same time, he was to make use of his curial experience

in Padua by giving some instruction in the drafting of official letters and by advancing some of his pupils in their careers as secretaries. Secondly, his activities illustrate that easy movement to and fro between the elementary grammar school and the university arts faculty which seemed to characterize a teaching career in letters at that time. In Padua he was to teach at both levels, running a private elementary school as well as lecturing in the university, and some of his pupils left Padua to become themselves *magistri puerorum* at grammar schools in north Italy. Thirdly, we see a kind of protective interest being shown in the better Latin master by lay patrician families, which itself reflects one of the deepest changes brought about by the revival of classical learning. Barzizza's private school in Padua, as in Venice, had a strong aristocratic complexion, not only in terms of its social composition but also in the fact that it presupposed a membership from the leisured classes who were able to enjoy literary learning for its own sake, since the official university curriculum and professional qualifications were given only secondary importance in his course; of first importance was the moral, social, and intellectual improvement of the individual, which could be gained from a deep and wide study of the ancients. The ready acceptance of Barzizza's teaching by this class can be explained partly by the aspirations of the Veneto nobility itself, which recognized, more and more, the social glamour being attached to the practice and patronage of scholarship; and partly by the social and family connections of the Barzizza family. His wife's family, the Agliardi, allied themselves with the most powerful supporters of Visconti rule in Bergamo, the Suardi, one of the four major households in the city, around which were drawn the notable families in the area to form two broad groups; for and against the Visconti.[24] These factional wars were to reverberate in Barzizza's Paduan household; through the support which he had to give to his own relatives who had done badly out of the war; through his familiarity with the Suardi and other Bergamaschi; and through his loyalty to the Visconti which, if one can point to any political theory of Barzizza, led to *apologiae* for one-man rule, elevated by the persuasiveness of classical allusion. In short, from social and political experience, Barzizza breathed the same air as those families whose sons he taught.

Barzizza's visits to Padua in 1393 and 1400 may also have played a part in his later career there. It is hard to imagine that a man of his interests would not have established contacts with the small community of *literati* in the 1390s, led by Giovanni Conversino and including Francesco Zabarella, Zaccaria Trevisan, Vittorino da Feltre, and Guarino da Verona, scholars whom Barzizza was to know well later. By sharing, for a brief spell, the classical interests of this group, Barzizza would have perceived the strong Petrarchan heritage in Padua as well as some of the educational ideas which were emerging from the practice of courtly and private tuition.

Finally, his training in grammar and rhetoric at Pavia and his contacts with humanists in the Visconti court almost certainly shaped his work in Padua. These

influences we must examine in more detail.

(a) *Barzizza's Training at the University of Pavia*

In Pavia, as in Padua, the arts course was given little importance in itself; it provided an introductory, though necessary, training before the student proceeded to the higher and self-contained disciplines of law and medicine. Even if some students, such as Barzizza, never went on to take a degree in law or medicine, the way in which they were expected to approach the arts was, to a large extent, determined by the needs of the two major subjects. In practice, this meant that, because logic was the key to the current methods of teaching and studying law and medicine, logic stood at the head of the liberal arts; other arts were either dependent on it or were neglected by comparison.[25] Music is not known to have been taught and the *ars notaria*, astrology, and grammar were associated with the arts course only on the periphery. Rhetoric was a hurried course in which little attention seems to have been paid to stylistic exercises or strict imitation of the ancients.

As in Padua, the dominance of logic not only tended to diminish the importance of the other arts, but also tended to dictate how those subjects should be taught. This can be seen clearly in the case of grammar which was taught 'speculatively', as well as 'positively' (orthography, ethymology, prosody, and syntax). This was how grammar was taught by Travesi who spent most of the period from 1374 until 1418 in Pavia; significantly, he also taught logic and philosophy.[26] Francesco Maggi de Vigevano, who took Travesi's place for a few months in 1387, was also appointed 'ad lecturam Gramaticae positivae et speculativae Auctorum et Rhetoricae'.[27] The arts were thought to be essentially unified, with logic as a keystone, That the *trivium* was regarded as a cohesive training in the method of disquisition is suggested by the fact that, in their teaching assignments, masters were often expected to span the three subjects, and doctors in the College of Artists were expected to examine in all the arts, which was made easier by the fact that an identical procedure of study and examination was followed for every subject.

To be eligible for examination, the student had to meet three academic requirements.[28] First, during his course, he had to attend lectures and disputations regularly. Secondly, towards the end of his course, he was himself to take part in a disputation, answering one *quaestio generalis* and one *quodlibet* in the presence of all the doctors of the College. Thirdly, the scholar had to give at least ten lectures *in scolis publicis* on some well-known text on his subject. These lectures were to be given on exactly those lines which doctors followed ('prout a Doctoribus legi consueverunt'). To ensure this, the doctors attended the first part of the lecture. In other words, the student had to follow meticulously the lecturing methods of his master which, in turn, adhered to a rigidly uniform pattern. A valid analogy can be made with apprenticeship requirements in a guild. The need for standardized procedure in a teaching and examining body tended, by necessity, to make the

university a bedrock of conservatism.

In his examination, the candidate had to lecture on passages assigned to him (*puncta*), reading first what was written in the text, then dividing it into parts, linking a given passage to its context. Thus the candidate proceeded from one part to the next ('de parte ad partem procedendo'), leaving aside questions and further comments which might arise from the text. When the candidate finished reading, the doctors, beginning with the most junior, put up arguments. Each doctor was allowed two 'contradictions' and, if he wished, could propose one question unrelated to the lecture, but only in the subject being examined. Furthermore, a doctor might discuss some 'good point' at length ('super aliquo bono puncto decurrente'). On the following day, the College gave its *approbatio* or *reprobatio*.

Barzizza's *conventus* on 13 July 1392 was arrived at in exactly this way. After the public examination, which was almost a matter of going through the motions of the real test which had taken place in private, the Bishop, as Chancellor, addressed him thus:

publice in dictis scientiis gramatice et rethorice examinatus fuisti et examinibus ipsis lectiones in punctis vobis assignatis legendo solempniter dubia non pauca indagando subtiliter, oppositis et quesitis respondendo veraciter, sic vos exhibueritis quod ab omnibus ipsis doctoribus aprobatus fuistis ydoneus et sufficiens ad honores et dignitates doctoratus . . . vobis vestris meritis exigentibus cathedram magistralem ascendendi et in ea legendi, docendi, disputandi, questiones terminandi, ceterosque actus doctoreos exercendi et doctorum insignia defferendi in dictis scientiis . . . hic et ubique locorum . . .[29]

A notarial record, written in the vernacular, describes Barzizza's *laurea* ceremony:

Frate Guglielmo etc. concede le laurea in grammatica e rettorica a Gasparino de Barziziis civi pergamensi, presentato stamane all 'esame privato da Giovanni da Travesio di Cremona, dottore in grammatica, rettorica, logica e filosofia, al vicario Enrido Dina, ed esaminato parum hec ante, da Giacomini de Martignonibus, studente in arti e medicina vicerettore, da Arasmino de Curte, Priore del Collegio, e da Marsilio da S. Sofia, Guglielmo da Ponte Curone, Silano Negri, Cirstoforo da Piacenza. Martino da Voghera, Francesco Strazzapatti, Antonio da Gradi, Luchino de Beloculis, Stefano da Seregno . . .[30]

These notarial deeds and *acta graduum*, together with the statutes and what we know of Travesi's interests tell us a good deal about Barzizza's training in Pavia. Like all students, he was obliged to follow his master's teaching very closely and Travesi's teaching of grammar, as we learn from a list of doctoral stipends for 1391, was devoted to logical enquiry, leaving positive grammar to the elementary schools.[31] It seems likely, therefore, that Barzizza was examined, in grammar, on the logical implications of Priscian's terms and definitions, particularly as his examiners, listed above, were experienced and regular examiners in logic, some lecturing on logic and philosophy and some on medicine. Also, he would have been examined on his exposition of the authors, which might have included one of the

two standard texts on rhetoric, the *Ad Herennium* and the *De Inventione*, and this exercise would have been carried out according to the exact method discussed above.

It is worth considering Barzizza's training in Pavia as a reference point for his later teaching in Padua, which departed from some of the traditional methods and developed others. He was to 'drop' speculative grammar and concentrate entirely on positive grammar and the reading of the authors, which together were made to serve as a basis for literary criticism and rhetoric. He was to turn positive grammar into a deeper and more exacting science, while in his exposition of the authors he was to follow the scholastic scheme which he had learned in Pavia. Later we will compare one of Travesi's textual commentaries with Barzizza's to show that, essentially, they followed the same pattern; Barzizza differed from his master in that he paid more attention to historical questions, to textual readings, and to style, but these humanist enquiries were contained within the same scholastic framework.[32] Again, while he recognized the fundamental importance of grammar and rhetoric for the study of further disciplines, his main energies were spent in promoting them as separate and rewarding subjects in themselves.

In order to understand how Barzizza developed this teaching programme, we took into account, in the last chapter, certain intellectual changes in Padua in the second half of the fourteenth century. Here we must observe his debt to the courtly humanism which centred on the Castello Visconteo in Pavia.

(b) *Humanism in the Visconti Court*

Outside the tightly arranged university curriculum in grammar and rhetoric there was a literary movement, centred on the Visconti court, which strove for a freer, deeper, and more creative enquiry into classical literature. The participants were mainly courtiers and chancery officials: Pasquino Capelli, the secretary of Giangaleazzo Visconti until 1398; Antonio Loschi, probably a junior secretary from *c.*1390 to 1396 and then Capelli's successor from 1398 to 1404; Pietro Filargo of Candia, a Franciscan theologian, who was one of Giangaleazzo's close advisers, then successively an ambassador, Bishop of Novara (1389-1402), Archbishop of Milan (1402-05), cardinal and papal legate in Lombardy (1405-09) and, finally, elected as Pope Alexander V; Uberto Decembrio, a secretary to Filargo from 1391 and a chancery official in the Visconti court until his death in 1427; Giovanni Manzini, perhaps a court tutor (we know he taught the son of Capelli); Astolfino Marinoni; Alberto Mainanti and Bartolomeo Jacopo da Genova.[33]

This group of literary-minded civil servants was closely bound together by ties of friendship and shared interests. Their debates, the sources of ideas on which they drew and their public lives can be studied quite separately from the Arts Faculty in the University. Although it was to the schools and universities that Barzizza primarily belonged, there is considerable evidence of his connexions with this early humanist circle. If, as seems likely, Barzizza was the 'Gasparinus' who drafted

signorial dispositions to the *studium* between 1384 and 1392, he would have been in the chancery headed by Pasquino Capelli, whose name appears in similar documents.[34] It is also possible, as we mentioned, that Barzizza served in the Visconti court between 1400 and 1404, after his return from Padua and before his teaching appointment in the University. His later support for Pope Alexander V suggests, by its tone, that it was based on a long acquaintance with Pietro Filargo.[35] More important, however, were his relations with Antonio Loschi, the most influential of the courtly humanists. From 1388 to *c.*1390 Loschi was a *scholaris in artibus* at the University. Though there is no direct evidence that he and Barzizza knew each other or that Loschi was taught by Travesi, we can, from what we know of the nature of the Arts Faculty, assume that both were the case.[36] Moreover, Barzizza would have known Loschi if the two men worked in the *curia*. Loschi was a courtier and chancery official for his entire career and his talents were probably better suited than Barzizza's to celebrate the imperial nature of Visconti grandeur. Barzizza's literary interests, on the other hand, were not applied to political propaganda, but were to take a didactic, academic form. Yet the two had much in common. Both were in the service of the Visconti, though in different ways. Barzizza's family allegiances were to Giangaleazzo and, as a salaried master in the *studium*, he served an institution which came under the active supervision of the *signoria*. Secondly, Barzizza was impressed and influenced by the commentaries of Loschi on eleven of Cicero's orations; the *Inquisitio super XI orationes Ciceronis*, the outcome of *colloquia* in the castle at Pavia between Loschi and other humanists, particularly Astolfino Marinoni.[37] Barzizza was to incorporate the *Inquisitio* into his lectures on the orations at Padua.

The literary activities of these Lombard humanists had three vital mainsprings: the legacy of Petrarch, their contacts with Florentine humanism, and the outstanding library at the Visconti court. In Lombardy, as in Padua, Petrarch's connexions with the local court gave intellectual stimulus to humanists during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. He had been the courtly poet and scholar 'par excellence' who used his classical vision and rhetoric to glorify the ruling house. His republican hopes for Cola di Rienzo having been dashed, he looked to Galeazzo Visconti, for a while, as the most promising regenerative power in Italy.[38] Petrarch's interests were so extreme that subsequent humanists could select from them those particular aspects which served their own standpoints. Thus, for the chancery *literati* in Pavia during the 1390s. Petrarch seemed to set a pattern for their own positions in support of the *signoria.* A more precise literary influence came about when many of Petrarch's books were transferred to Pavia from Padua as a result of the Visconti victories over Padua in 1388 and 1392. These works were studied, copied and annotated by the Lombard humanists. For example, Pasquino Capelli possessed Petrarch's *Epistolae Familiares,* which were annotated by Giovanni Manzini, Marinoni copied the Petrarchan Virgil between 1393 and October 1394.[39] From a passage in Barzizza's *De Orthographia*, we know that he

read Petrarch's *De Viris Illustribus* in the Visconti library and, from a Neapolitan manuscript of the *Periochae Liviane* annotated by Barzizza, there is strong evidence that Petrarch's copy of the work (now lost) came into Barzizza's hands at about the same time.[40]

Petrarch's work was also selected and refined in the Florentine circle of Coluccio Salutati, which provided another impetus for the humanists at Pavia. Salutati corresponded with Capelli, Manzini and, most of all, with Loschi, who, after he left the Veronese chancery, worked in the Florentine chancery under Salutati in the 1380s.[41] The relations between the two men led to further contacts with Florentine humanists, notably Bruni.[42]

Finally, the *literati* in Pavia had access to the invaluable library of the Visconti, one of the largest collections of classical manuscripts in Italy at that time and a physical expression of signorial patronage and the predominant intellectual interests of the courtly officials. Besides the Petrarchan books many texts were collected from centres in North Italy, especially Vercelli, Verona, and Padua.[43]

More important than the sources which inspired these humanists were the attitudes which they assumed from their reading and discussion of classical texts and the forms in which these attitudes were expressed. They shared the belief that the moral content of the ancient texts was a matter of continuing debate and should be examined in the light of their own social and political conditions. This might take the form of using common arguments in antiquity to serve present political propaganda, panegyrics, or invectives. Loschi's polemics against the Florentine Republic are well known, with their subtle use of classical authorities in the defence of signorial rule. It might take the form of a heavy-handed imitation of a classical model, such as Giovanni Manzini's neo-Senecan tragedy on the fall of the Della Scala at the hand of Giangaleazzo. Taking as his theme Fortune and the fragility of human affairs, Manzini presents Visconti stewardship as inaugurating another golden age. The arguments of the ancients and the advantages of their rhetorical art might be exposed to a wider audience through the translation of classical works into the vernacular. Again, ancient debates on moral problems might be simply transposed to deal with contemporary affairs. Thus, we find Pietro Filargo and Bartolomeo Jacopo da Genova discussing the superiority of male to female education and, belonging to the same type of moral enquiry, the *Moralis Philosophie Dialogus* of Uberto Decembrio.[44]

This courtly humanism was various in its form, capable of adaptation and, at times, innovative in its approach towards antiquity. The inquisitive spirit of the humanists is seen in their eager interest in Greek, aroused by the presence in Lombardy, between 1400 and 1403, of the Byzantine master, Manuel Chrysoloras. This urge to examine and use ancient learning from various standpoints, while promoting a little virtuosity and amateurism, with its faults and virtues, also produced a greater and more exact textual scholarship, a search for manuscripts and a more precise copying of works.[45]

The literary movement in the court made no reference to the arts course in the University, but clearly it had a great potential bearing on the latter. The humanists were concerned with the same kind of subject matter which, in the University, would have fallen within the province of the schools of grammar and rhetoric. Though they did not openly challenge, at this stage, the rigid methods and restricted syllabus followed in the Arts Faculty at Pavia, nevertheless, the sum total of their interests contained considerable possibilities for the revision of the traditional curriculum in the schools.

In the first place, the humanists imitated the polished Latin of the best Roman authors and attempted to make it the language of learned intercourse and official communication. Through the efforts of Loschi in particular, the literary changes within the Florentine chancery made themselves felt in Pavia. The striving for elegant diction was thought to require also an examination of such technical questions as correct orthography and script. In other words, their proposals created, implicitly, an alternative stylistic model to that which was currently used in the schools. Moreover, the humanists were a self-conscious group, aware of their own literary ideals, and they felt themselves superior to those whose Latin style was peppered with barbarisms and neologisms. Salutati's correspondence, for example, has many references to writers of the 'avant-garde', compared with those who used the inelegant Latin of the schools. Only a step had to be taken before these stylistic questions were entertained in the schools themselves.

Secondly, the humanists, whether they intended to or not, suggested an important reassessment of those disciplines which were taught in the *trivium*. They attached a deeper value to rhetoric than that implied in the university course. For them, it was an exercise which went beyond the schoolroom; its continual cultivation benefited a man throughout his life and in every profession. Rhetoric was not simply a 'text-book' subject, but an intellectual approach and, if practised well, reflected one's moral disposition. Thus, they recaptured the categories of thought of Cicero and Quintilian, another of whose precepts was that the rhetor needed to be acquainted with all other disciplines, if only in a superficial way.[46] Thus, we find some evidence of courtly discussions on the whole range of disciplines, their interconnectedness as well as the separate purpose of each subject. Loschi, for example, in his preface to his *Inquisitio*, described how scholars around the court loved to argue 'de doctissimorum hominum studiis deque omni genere litterarum' and Uberto Decembrio, in the *De Re Publica*, defined the traditional scheme of the seven liberal arts.[47] This theme of the balance needed between all disciplines is found again and again in the letters and orations of Barzizza and, indeed, was a common one among humanists, who brought back to the fore that ideal of the liberal arts course which had undergone severe practical limitations since antiquity.[48] In denying the primacy to any one discipline, there was an implicit attack on the dominance of logic in the arts course. Each art, of course, assumed a different relation to the others, depending on the special interests of the individual,

but each art also had a method and a function peculiar to itself. Thus, the notion of studying grammar from logical premisses was false.

At another point, the humanists presented a challenge to the traditional syllabus. Aristotle, whose texts were the basis of learning in logic and in moral and natural philosophy, was denied his primacy. In moral philosophy, Cicero and Seneca were elevated and Aristotle, though never abandoned, was made to stand on a par with them. In logic Aristotle was left untouched, but the cumulative effect of humanism was to suggest that truth was arrived at not solely by logic; rhetoric was considered an equally valid channel of moral discussion, concerned with a particular aspect of truth. Eventually, and mainly by another route, the primacy of Aristotle in natural philosophy came to be questioned also.

Humanism at court seems to have influenced some scholars in the University. In the absence of letters and private library inventories, much is left to guesswork, but the interests of students outside their official curriculum probably constituted as much an avenue of change in Pavia as in Padua. Barzizza probably pursued such private interests in the University, along with Loschi and one Marciano da Tortona, for whom Barzizza wrote a funeral oration many years later, in which we are told that:

(Marciano) erat enim cum ceterarum omnium artium doctissimus cum poeticis studiis ac singulari eloquentia in primis preditus que humanitatis studia illum multo gratiorem apud tantum principem admirabilioremque reddebant.[49]

Allowing for the inflated language of the panegyric, there is the suggestion that, in Pavia, there was the opportunity, for those students who were interested, to develop and excel in their literary studies. One might include among these students Barzizza's only known pupil during his teaching career at Pavia, Paolo Maffei da Verona, who was to write a humanist dialogue later and became a friend of Guarino da Verona.[50] Also, surprisingly enough, certain lawyers felt a little of the impact of the humanist revival, even at this time.[51]

Barzizza, therefore, belonged to two intellectual traditions: the tradition of the Arts Faculty, as represented by Travesi, in which the selected ancient texts were studied according to a restricted and rigorous method, dictated by the formal needs of teaching and the prevailing modes of scholastic enquiry; and the early humanist tradition, as represented by the courtly circle at Pavia, in which classical authors were approached with new insights, for different purposes and in a more flexible manner. Owing as much to the one as he did to the other, we will see how Barzizza welded the two together.