

The Duty of Memory: the Contradictions in Conrad Celtis' *Oratio* (1492)

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In his award-winning article of 2003, Franz Posset contrasts two lines of continuity linking the Lutheran Reformation with the German past.¹ He places Bernd Moeller's cryptic assertion (1959), "No Humanism, no Reformation" in apposition to Johannes Schilling's slogan (1997), "No monasticism, no Reformation." In Posset's view, both lines of cultural continuity convey some truth, but he points to the fact that the relations between these factors have not yet been fully investigated. Among those humanist antecedents to the Lutheran moment, but now from a "discontinuist" perspective, is the inaugural address delivered by Conrad Celtis to the Faculty of the University of Ingolstadt: his *Oratio in Gymnasio Ingelstadio publice recitata* of 1492.² The type of humanist stance found in this address tends to weaken the notion of humanist continuity, for it had no future in Germany insofar as Luther's intellectual and ethical references do not belong to, nor stem from, Celtis's aesthetic, neo-Latin world.³ The break with Roman ecclesial authority would soon discredit the subservient practice of *imitatio* imposed by Celtis and by the first generation of German humanists imbued with the Italian tradition. David Friedrich Strauss, the nineteenth century Burckhardtian historian who conferred the title "Erz-Humanist" on Conrad Celtis in 1858, wrote that these first humanist scholars, fascinated by Italy, naively "tried to fit togas on German patricians and build marble forums in Gothic cities."⁴ Outside universities, there were no authorities wishing to accredit the New Learning and convert it into a professional advantage. Nor did the Imperial Court count for much as Celtis's career amply shows. Except perhaps for Vienna and Nuremberg, there were in Germany no equivalents to the large urban centers of France or Italy. This factor alone imposed limits upon the development of cultural diversification.

* I am greatly indebted to the two editors for their careful linguistic amendment of this text.

¹ "Polyglot Humanism in Germany circa 1520 as Luther's Milieu and Matrix" in *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* XXVII.1 (2003), pp. 5-33, recipient of the 2004 Natalie Zemon Davis Prize.

² Chunradus/Konrad/Conrad CELTIS/CELTES Protucius, the Latinization and Hellenization of Konrad BICKEL. We find so many variations on Celtis' name because his books appear at the very beginning of the printing press era, and because, except for the *Amores* of 1502 (illustrated by Albrecht Dürer and funded by his friend and sponsor from Nuremberg, the art collector Sebald Schreyer), Celtis never supervised the printing of his own writings, or of the manuscripts he was editing (no emendations are associated with any of them). Each printer therefore applied the custom of the workshop.

³ Neither does Erasmus'; they both addressed the religious crisis.

⁴ Quoted by Lewis W. Spitz, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963, p. 3.

The New Learning had to be christened and refounded by Erasmus and Melanchthon to become acceptable; only then could it provide grounds for a strong German identity. This non-alignment between Celtis's humanism and the Lutheran order to follow may be defined in terms of the status and uses of memory.⁵ There is of course a difference in style: "figures like Peter Luder and Conrad Celtis, with their secular goals and irregular lifestyles, do not reflect a humanism which was directly concerned with Church reform" writes Nauert.⁶

Regarding the text itself, this carefully written neo-Latin work fills fourteen-and-a-half pages in the modern (bilingual) version edited by Leonard Forster.⁷ It must have

⁵ I express my thanks here to the colleagues and experts who double-checked some of my bibliographical information, among them Barbara Sher Tinsley (Los Gatos, California), disciple and friend of Lewis Spitz, and Johan Hanselaer (Ghent, Belgium), head of the BIO.BIBLIO.DATA online trilingual database. I have looked through the catalogue of the Herzog August Bibliothek (Wolfenbüttel) and the *Geschichtsquellen des deutschen Mittelalters* (Bavarian Academy of Science, updated 2006), plus the catalogues of the universities of Augburg, Munich and Göttingen. My search for post-Spitz sources has covered four internet encyclopaedia entries about Celtis (most stemming from Wilhelm Bautz and Joseph Sauer), the Neo-Latin Bibliography (U.K.), and the RES COGITANS (Italy) corpus, among other standard sources. G. M. Müller's *Die "Germania Generalis"* (...), Tübingen 2001, and Jörg Robert's *Konrad Celtis und das Projekt der Deutschen Dichtung* (...), Tübingen, 2003, are clearly out of bounds for this topic; the proceedings of the interdisciplinary symposium on *Konrad Celtis and Nürnberg*, Wiesbaden, 2004, are not focused enough. This leaves us with K.B. Krebs's *Negotiatio Germaniae: Tacitus Germania und Aenea Silvio Piccolomini, Giannantonio Campano* (...), Göttingen 2005, which deals mainly with the emergence, circulation and printings of Tacitus' text. It is quite clear from my inquiry that, taken in the absolute or comparatively to other Renaissance figures of his time, there is a very low level of interest in Conrad Celtis in general and in his doctrine as a cultural reformer in particular.

⁶ Charles Nauert Jr, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*, Cambridge, (U.K.): Cambridge University Press, p. 143. Same judgment by James Overfield in "Germany": "In temperament, they varied from the free-spirited Celtis, who lectured to students while inebriated, wrote decidedly erotic poems and died of syphilis at the age of forty-nine (...)", cf. Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, *The Renaissance in national context*, Cambridge (U.K.): Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 104. Lewis Spitz remarks with humour that "As a university professor, he was the dean's despair, for he dismissed classes for weeks at a time while he went to visit a friend and missed many a lecture while he went off to taste the new wine. May sweet liberty remain mine! He exclaimed." Cf. *Konrad Celtis, the German Arch-Humanist*, Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge University Press, 1957, p. 82.

⁷ *Selections from Conrad Celtis 1459-1508*, ed. with translation and commentary by Leonard Forster, pp. 36-65. The neo-Latin of this edition is taken from Hans Rupprich's for the *Bibliotheca scriptorum recentisque aevorum, saec. XV-XVI*, Leipzig: Teubner, 1932, as amended in the reprint of his *Humanismus und Renaissance in den deutschen Städten und an den Universitäten*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964. The sentence numbering (sometimes two sentences together) used here follows the 1932 edition. It is a subdivision system which differs from that of the internet text found at <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/celtis.oratio.html> . Joachim Gruber also produced a nearly identical bilingual edition of the *Oratio* (University of Munich Press, 1997 and 2001) of which the neo-Latin can be consulted at <http://www.klassphil.uni-muenchen.de/~gruber/ingolsta.html>. Another English translation by Lewis Spitz can be found in Lewis W. Spitz, ed., *The Northern Renaissance*, Engelwood Cliffs (N.J.): Prentice-Hall, 1972, pp. 15-27. The Forster edition is the most recent one carrying the marginal annotations of the 1492 first printing by Ratdolt. As usual, Conrad Celtis did not supervise the production of the book which was left with a large number of typographical mistakes, amended by Rupprich and Forster.

taken Celtis about an hour to read it to the audience of professors and students, joined by a few municipal dignitaries, in the *aula* of the University, on the afternoon of Friday, August the 31st. The address soon after was made available in print through a local publisher,⁸ and gained in fame, not only during the sixteenth century on account of its patriotic stand, but later with such thinkers as Fichte, who was impressed by its “prophetic” overtones.⁹

The construction of the theme-line imitates the spiral movement of Polybius’ ascending turns of virtue, alternating between the general considerations on true knowledge and noble virtue and the nine moments of imperative injunctions, the entire speech growing in intensity and urgency. The neo-pagans of the pre-Reformation age have correctly understood Polybius’ image of time as anhistoric, hence reversible. The glorious past can be partly revived through recognition of its absolute transcendence and through imitation.¹⁰

If we consider the *captatio benevolentiae*, we see that it is written in the first person and that it is focused on languages as the key to a substantial identity. The speaker is identified in the second line as “ego, homo germanus.”

To make sure he stands on authentic ground, Celtis measures the loss of knowledge against the fourth and most primitive layer of time, when the mysterious fountain-head¹¹ of virtue was flowing with the specific geniuses of their common native

⁸ *Conradi Celtis Protucij Panegyricus ad Duces Bavariae, Oratio in Gymnasio Ingelstadio publice recitata cum Carminibus ad Orationem pertinentibus* (of which the *Ode* to his young Polish friend Sigismundus Fusilius, detailing what a philosopher should study) which came out just a few weeks after the event. Celtis had already left Ingolstadt. Such a composite book called an “omnibus publication” by Lewis W. Spitz, was common practice for Conrad Celtis and for other wandering professors (*privat docent*) of rhetoric and poetics who just dropped their current manuscripts with some money at a local printer’s workshop and moved to another town. If the printer thought that he could make money by selling such sloppy documents to students, he would publish them without corrections. Cf. Lewis W. Spitz, *Conrad Celtis the German Arch-Humanist*, pp. 98-99 *pass.* Forster notes that this book was among “the less successful productions of the famous Ratdolt press”. Cf. *Selections from Conrad Celtis*, p. 64. Two years before, when Celtis spent some time in Venice, the same German Erhard Ratdolt was there, as the first printer established since 1476, teaching the Italians typographical composition and producing elaborate editions ornamented with coloured woodblock illustrations in the fields of astronomy, mathematics and liturgy. Celtis was studying with the chief librarian of San Marco, Marcantonio Cocchi Sabellico (ca. 1436-1506), a great condemner of the barbarian Gothic people, and a former member of Pomponio Laeto’s Roman Academy, together with Callimachus and Platina. Sabellico’s ironic remarks persisted and enraged Celtis. But the latter stayed in Venice because he needed to study the manuscripts Bessarion had given to the library of San Marco: 482 in Greek and 264 in Latin. This Greek fund, the largest of the Latin world, was so important that a special Venetian Greek Academy had been organized for scholars. Celtis was to teach Greek in Germany. Cf. Johannes Irmscher, “La nouvelle latinité et la connaissance du grec” in Tibor Klaniczay, Eva Kushner, André Stegman, eds., *L’avènement de l’esprit nouveau*, pp. 117-125.

⁹ Ten editions (alone or in a collection of texts) between 1520 and 1600.

¹⁰ This cyclical view contrasts with the Christian conception of time as an oriented vector moving forward on a linear axis where all moments are unique and cannot be reiterated except analogically.

¹¹ § 17; the metaphor of the *fons-lacuna* recurs in § 81.

Germany.¹² These are things to be remembered.¹³ The first verb of the text is about remembrance; the quest for forgotten origins governs the whole discourse, exemplifying the similarity between this rhetorical inquiry and the logic of archaic myth—hence the decisive importance of the theme of nativism.¹⁴ Without it, the *Oratio* would be just another exercise in Italianate vanity.

The operations of memory are crucial when tradition is defined through the metaphor of *fons-lacuna*. The fountainhead is one simple, saturated, and normative origin. It is invested with full ontological weight and therefore possesses the capacity to provide both foundation and meaning to human beings, as well as to doctrine. By contrast, the lapses (in effect always plural) pertain to the present state of consciousness collectively and individually in pointing to the imperfections associated with all things derivative and subordinate. The postulate of this traditional view is that study and talent cannot achieve total recovery of the sacred source of knowledge because we cannot return to the *priscum aevum*, the ultimate layer of time, which is incommensurate with the human soul. Such a doctrine is acquainted with Plato's Cave (but without the philosopher's critical reasoning). The necessary return to the origin can reach no further than the second layer of time.

Therefore, whatever the state of civilization, each human being has a memorial duty to repossess as much as can be attained from the sacred past.¹⁵ It follows that *imitatio* is by definition a repetition with a deficit. Memory remains asymptotic and deprived of autonomy. As Nauert remarks, "this historical-mindedness, this sensitivity to what texts, historical records, and even single words had meant originally, is the basis for the radically new way in which Renaissance humanists interpreted classical authors, even authors well known to the Middle Ages, such as Aristotle, or Cicero or St Augustine."¹⁶ The modes of imitation promoted by Celtis in the *Oratio* are of the passive type wherein receptivity becomes the absolute virtue, the precondition of empowerment.¹⁷ Transmission should not interfere with content. Regarding his own role, Celtis coveted the profile of a *vates*. This was a masculine word he had encountered in Plautus, Cicero, Lucretius and Pliny, which became feminine in Virgil and Horace. It has a mystic connotation: philosopher, in the sense of prophet, sage, and inspired orator.

I should have deemed it in no way remarkable, distinguished fathers and excellent young men, that I, a German and a fellow-countryman of yours, should be able to address you in Latin, if those former geniuses of our

¹² Si prisca illa nostrae Germaniae florent; it returns as *prisca theologia*, *prisca philosophia*, etc. in the exact pregnant sense it holds in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *De hominis dignitate*.

¹³ Memorantur.

¹⁴ On nativism, cf. Manfred P. Fleischer, *The Harvest of Humanism in Central Europe*, St. Louis: Concordia, 1992, pp. 35-36.

¹⁵ The pagan character in the divine nature of the soul which can unite with God instead of being an irreducible separate and free creature, as is the case in Judeo-Christian thought.

¹⁶ Charles G. Nauert Jr, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*, pp.20-21.

¹⁷ According to Jean-Claude Margolin's criteria, in his interesting preface to *Philosophies de la Renaissance*, Orléans: Paradigme, 1998, pp.8-9.

native Germany were still flourishing and if that age had returned in which it is said that our ambassadors spoke Greek in preference to Latin.

This “I” or *ego* position wears a variety of masks as the semi-autobiographical narrative unfolds in the manner of a drama. The auctorial speaker will abandon his sense of identity in order to investigate a few possibilities before “deciding” who he is and who he ought to be. The language is ample, vivid, and musical in an Isocratic balanced sense, and sometimes mannerist in the style of the young Tacitus. Celtis, the skilful lecturer, is most certainly aware that the majority of the audience would “loose” him between the first subjunctive pluperfect and his excuses for not addressing them in Greek, as Germans did in the noble ancient times. We must therefore assume that he wished the most “gothic” among them to experience exclusion as part of the felt quality of cultural backwardness.

But since, through the iniquity of the ages and the changes in the times, not only amongst you but even in Italy, the mother and ancient parent of literature, all the brilliance of letters has at length faded and died and all freeborn studies have been put to flight and overthrown by barbarous upheavals, I do not feel confident, in view of the sluggishness of my intellect and the paucity of my powers, that I can address you adequately in Latin.

To explain the misfortune of their slow fall into oblivion, Celtis invokes the iniquity of the ages and the change in times: historical time does not build, it erases civilization, and dissolves references to the liberal arts, until the brilliance of letters fades and dies in all countries, Italy included, due to mounting barbaric upheavals and the degradation of laws.

For I am confident that you will readily pardon me if you reflect that a manikin born as some say in the midst of barbarians and drunkards cannot be expected to speak with that sobriety which is required by your most attentive ears and the place marked out for me in oratory and poetry at the public expense by George our illustrious prince and by your distinguished selves who are sharers in all his counsels.

Now come the clichés of the *Respublica litteraria* attacked by the barbarians, along with the dichotomy of *copia verborum* - *paucitas verborum* configuring the interior and exterior of eloquence. The abundance of words allows for a precise and clear grasp of the thing. Right from the onset of the cognitive process, the same *copia* introduces beauty in the art of thinking. Such an aesthetic, one in which discourse creates and organizes the symbolic space in a multidimensional, free and flexible way, will disappear with modern epistemology under the strict rules of conceptual objectivity. For Celtis, as for Erasmus, the search for truth does not obey the subject-object pattern of control. Style is a varying signature for Renaissance thinkers. It carries its own type of truth, as does *virtù*.

After the description of the menacing obscurity of oblivion there follows the first of nine circles of injunctions (“*cohortarer*”) intended to convert the auditors to virtue and to the study of the liberal arts, which are the only source of true glory, immortal

fame, and happiness in this short life of ours.¹⁸ The oration includes both dualist advice for the soul and the admonitions of stoicism (“*patientia et tranquillitate preferre*”¹⁹).²⁰

We then find the correlative task of transmission: what is the use of all this knowledge and sublime intelligence if we cannot transmit it to posterity? There are actions to be taken in order to correct gaps, decadence, and dishonour. For although the cycles of history are fatal and insensitive to prayers (as they are in the eyes of Polybius and Machiavelli), yet the duty of memory remains with its obligation to humanize the beast. Barbarity shows a shameful lack of courage. Celtis insists upon this, that oblivion can and should be reversed, adding now that it is the collective duty of these young Germans—a debt to the virtue and courage of their ancestors. From a rhetorical standpoint, there is no literal repetition. Each injunction widens the circle in a dramatic pedagogical variation, integrating ever new descriptions of German horrors to be cured.

Beginning with the fourth injunction, the Polybian bias makes its entry: noble men (in addition to the young men addressed in the three prior injunctions), must emulate the nobles of ancient Rome and surpass them as they themselves have imitated and surpassed the noble Greeks!²¹

After that, the text builds a plurality of similar contrasts between the repulsive barbarity (*foeda barbaries*) among the young Germans, on the one hand, and the elegance, honour, and glory deserved by the Hebrew, Greek and Latin authors, on the other hand. Now the civilized groups, including the Italian humanists, become those “who ascribe to us drunkenness, cruelty, savagery and every other vice bordering on bestiality and excess.”²² In the course of the fifth circle of injunction, the emotional call to shame is condensed into a rhetorical amplification figure: “Pudeat,”²³ “Pudeat, pudeat, nationi nostrae!”²⁴ This brings the depiction of the Germans to its most pejorative point.

Suddenly, a new and positive force appears on the scene, namely the noble Germans of old who terrified the Romans²⁵, the *prisci Germani* as described by Tacitus in his *Germania* (*Cornelii Taciti de origine et situ Germanorum*).²⁶ Though Celtis does not name or quote Tacitus literally, one realizes that all the tribes’ names used by

¹⁸ § 5-6.

¹⁹ § 10.

²⁰ “(...) si cogitationes nostras posteritate mandare nequiverimus?”, §23.

²¹ “Aemulamini, nobiles viri, priscam nobilitatem romanam quae accepto Graecorum imperis ita omnem sapientiam et eloquentiam eorum junxerunt, ut dubium sit an aequasse aut superasse Graecam inventionem et doctrinae suppellectilem videantur». cf. § 28.

²² § 30-31.

²³ § 37.

²⁴ § 38 and § 42.

²⁵ § 45.

²⁶ 56-118 A.D. This short lecture written the same year as his *Agricola* (the heroic biography of his father-in-law) is an extreme example of the “worldly” genre. It is understood that Tacitus never visited Germany. He composed this and read it aloud to an audience. There were more than one manuscript. It is said that it first resurfaced north of the Alps as a gift from Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini to his employer, Emperor Frederick III in 1457 or 1458. In 1472, Ratdolt, Manutius’ predecessor in Venice, printed the first modern version.

Celtis up to this point are borrowed from Tacitus' short, erudite relation, itself based on memory (Tacitus relied on Pliny the Elder's *Bellorum Germaniae libri viginti*, now lost). Celtis' reference to "Us, the Germans" now identifies himself and the whole audience inclusively with the German tribes as depicted by the young Tacitus: illiterate, simple in their taste and means, physically strong and fearless in war. This is exactly the "disgusting" image of the Barbarian beyond emendation with whom the *Oratio* had opened. How could they become models for the new Germany? But if *verbum* has priority over *res*, then by virtue of their literary status, Celtis might try to rehabilitate the ancient German tribes as having a separate origin derived from their classical context.

This follows from the paradigm of legitimation by descent, as can be observed by the self-renaming of the Lusitanians, the Pannonians, and the Sarmatians, for example.²⁷ Pointedly, Tacitus insists on the indigenous character of the Germans attached to their lands, with their particular dialects, physical types, and unique customs. In his words, "the Germans themselves I should regard as aboriginal, and not mixed at all with other races through immigration or intercourse,"²⁸ or again, "for my own part, I agree with those who think that the tribes of Germany are free from all taint of intermarriages with foreign nations, and that they appear as a distinct, unmixed race, like none but themselves, hence, too, the same physical peculiarities throughout so vast a population."²⁹ The German humanists' nativism is assisted by this authoritative ancient voice at a time when they sought to assert their difference.

But such a manoeuvre clearly amounts to sophism. The brutish, illiterate German tribes located beyond the Rhine and Danube cannot fulfill the hyper-culturalist conditions set by Celtis himself as the *fons* for German identity. It is quite amusing to see a *Bummel Professor* praise the State of Nature. Are they "your noble but forgotten identity"? Their origin cannot be considered autonomous compared to the Romans, for they are merely a sophisticated Tacitean construction in late classical Latin. If *verbum* is to supersede *res*, these Germans are, in a sense, a figment of a Roman mind: indeed, Tacitus' reading of yet another Roman's writings (Pliny the Elder), created for the pleasure of a Roman urban audience.

The abstractly defined *Latinitas* he claims as his cultural roots, provided it can be separated from *Romanitas*,³⁰ makes him a cosmopolitan citizen of the *Respublica litteraria*, but not a member of the German nation, because the concept of the modern

²⁷ Cf. Peter Burke, "The Uses of Italy", in Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich, eds., *The Renaissance in National Context*, p.16

²⁸ Moses Hadas, ed., *The Complete Works of Tacitus*, transl. Church and Brodrigg, New York: The Modern Library, *Germania* II.1; "Ipsos Germanos indigenas crediderim minimeque aliarum gentium adventibus et hospitibus mixtos (...)." Tacite, *Vie d'Agricola et La Germanie*, trans. Perret, Introduction et notes Anne-Marie Ozanam, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002, p.91.

²⁹ Cf. Moses Hadas, ed., *The Complete Works of Tacitus*, p. 710: "Ipse eorum opinionibus accedo, qui Germaniae populos nullis aliis aliarum nationum conubiis infectos propriam et sinceram et tantum sui similem gentem extitisse arbitrantur"; cf. Tacite, *Vie d'Agricola et La Germanie*, IV.1, p. 94.

³⁰ Hajo Holborn, discussing the cases of Hutten and Reuchlin, considers that *Humanitas* and *Romanitas* were not yet completely separated in 1515. Cf. his introduction to his translation of the *Letters of Obscure Men*, New York: Torchbooks, 1964, p.vii.

nation does not bind together the European network of cultural *nobiles*; it has the opposite effect of proffering a sense of belonging to all social groups and orders attached to a prescribed political territory, one generally defined by a common language. It is clear that Celtis paved the way for the cosmopolitan Erasmus and not for the German Luther.

Celtis, nevertheless, takes rhetorical advantage of these shifting perspectives, for in the paragraphs to follow, he paints the Italians themselves as the real threat to humanist studies:

But from the South, we are oppressed by a sort of distinguished slavery, and, under the impulse of greed, that old and accursed aid to the acquirement of comfort and luxury, new commercial ventures are continually established, by which our country is drained of its wonderful natural wealth while we pay to others what we need for ourselves³¹.

Finally, he urges that the authentic (cultural) heirs to the great Roman Empire³² must be the German people. The *Translatio studii* from Italy to the Holy Roman Empire is thereby justified, according to the strategy of Celtis' address. The remaining lines of the *Oratio* are devoted to a final group within deemed brutish and disgraceful, namely the purveyors of scholasticism.

It was the first time that the university had a lecture read by a poet laureate, crowned five years earlier by Emperor Frederick III, the first time this title was awarded to a German³³. But it did not mean automatic preferment in the competition for a lower position. This fact tells us how little weight Frederick's favour yielded³⁴. His uncompromising commitment to pure classical rhetoric and grammar were already established since he had published another omnibus book in Ingolstadt, in the spring of 1492. It contained three short works intended as textbooks and money-raisers for the summer course he was teaching at the time. They were the *Epitoma in utramque Ciceronis rhetoricam* (dedicated to Emperor Maximilian I who was to remember this free lance agent in 1497), an *Arte memorativa nova*, and his *Modo epistolandi utilissimo*³⁵.

The pragmatic goal pursued by Celtis, through his *Oratio*, was to obtain an extension of his position as lecturer (which he had held during the preceding half a

³¹ *Egregia servitus*, § 47.

³² *Romani reliquias Imperii*, § 48.

³³ On April the 18th 1487, in Nuremberg; on this occasion, Frederick had also handed Celtis a doctoral degree (without registration, courses or thesis). This overruling intervention in academic affairs weakened Celtis position in the five universities where he had sought more or less openly some kind of appointment. He was largely perceived as a promoter of the corrupt Italian culture and as an agent of the Imperial power trying to curb academic privileges.

³⁴ Especially during the period of 1490-1495 when he and his court had been expelled from Vienna by Matthias Corvinus' army.

³⁵ Printed by Johann Kachelofen's workshop, dated March the 28th, 1492, during spring term. It was usual for teachers to circulate some technical method to help students learn by rote, as was required in both scholastic and humanist schools. Celtis's mnemonic procedures are close to the general practice of the period, except that the rules for memorizing rely on the first visual impression left by letters rather than words.

year), but his academic aim was to use this podium to define and promote a major reform of the university program tantamount to the dissolution and replacement of the entire scholastic tradition.³⁶ Principal among his purposes was to praise the New Learning he had acquired first in Rudolph Agricola's humanist circle in Heidelberg (1484) and, secondly, during his travels to Italy (1487-1488) and to Poland (1489-1491).³⁷ Ostensibly, there is nothing actually new in his depiction and proposal apart from his radical tone and accomplished Ciceronian style. But we find here a clear call for a new definition and assertion of German identity in cultural, political, and even military terms, polemically linked to those sections of the address in which he verbalizes, in strong terms, his sense of a shared feeling of frustration and anger on the part of Northern scholars who had been humiliated as barbarians in Italian academies, universities, and libraries.

In that regard, Celtis's reform plan might, in truth, be called revolutionary. It is not so much an incremental step toward Reformation as it is an unsuccessful attempt to import a new corpus of learning, new languages, new ethical attitudes, and a new aesthetic ideal, all based on a radical shift of memory set out in three steps, with their three correlative forms of national identity. These three new imperatives with their inaugurating principles may be summarized as follows:

1. Humanity and civilization are not bestowed at birth; they must be earned. While the *vulgus* remain attached to physical pleasures, the *nobiles* must take the path of the *humaniora* and work hard toward that perfection which is prefigured in the accomplishments of antiquity. There the fervent scholar in poetry, law, philosophy, and literature finds something other than useful skills; he finds the knowledge that leads to virtue and happiness. Minimal to that accomplishment is an elegant command of the classical *Romanitas*, one which can, in exceptional cases, be extended to *trilinguitas*. Such a discipline requires a value judgment about the *bona vita* which brings the full

³⁶ Celtis' *Oratio* takes its place in a sequence of such calls to educational reform as Peter Luder's own Inaugural *Oratio* at the University of Heidelberg (1456), Rudolph Agricola's *On a Plan for Studies* (1484) and Johannes Landsberger's *Dialogue on and against the Poetical arts* (1492), etc.

³⁷ In Cracow, Celtis was reunited with a prestigious and sulphurous Italian humanist whom he had worked with during the previous year at the Roman Academy of humanists presided by Pomponio Laeto and often visited by Platina: Callimachus Experiens (Filippo Buonaccorsi). Between 1468 and 1496, Callimachus lived mainly in Poland with frequent but discreet visits to Rome. The entire academy was held by the Curia to be pagan and Callimachus had been expelled from the Papal estates as the worst member of them all by Pope Paul II Barbo. A brilliant and witty free thinker, completely infatuated with the antique doctrines of civic virtue, glory and immortality, the Italian had been well accepted at the old King Kazimierz IV Jagellon's court and soon named co-preceptor with the mediaeval historian Jan Długosz of the three princes (who were to reign in sequence). This known pagan even managed to act as Bishop Gregorz z Sanoka's biographer. Upon Celtis' arrival, they organised together the Sodalitas Vistulana where "pure" classical philology and rhetoric attracted an elite of clerics, merchants and young aristocrats, as well as part of the faculty of the Jagellonian University. This rare case of a pre-Erasman harmonious integration of Old and New Learning impressed Celtis. It provides us with a point of comparison to measure correctly the clash at Ingolstadt and elsewhere in Germany. On Callimachus and Celtis, cf. Janusz Pelc, *Europejskość i Polskość literatury naszego renesansu*, Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1984, pp. 80-88.

person closer to Cicero, Ovid, and Apuleius than to his barbarian compatriots. The acculturation following from such a study of the Romans expresses a desire for conformity, for membership among the denizens of that cultural Golden Age, “in illo tempore,” those mythological times. This traveling backwards in the direction of origins is a search for palingenesis, an exact remodelling of the self in the image of remote ancestors—a very particular form of collective and individual nostalgia. A prerequisite to this recovery of identity is the submission of the self to an external principle of organization. There are many variations on the Platonic/neo-Platonic forms of *anamnesis* or recovery of the self through cultural recollection. This regression to the pure founding origin leads to the fountain-head of meaning; therefore memory is the key to meaning. A second prerequisite which we have met is the pagan belief in the reversibility of time.

2. *Romanitas* as a form of identity must be split into two distinct types of belonging:

a) The first pertains to the geographical Romans of the Latium, those, who, in the fifteenth century, went digging in the Tiber and in their gardens for statues, vases, ruins of temples, coins, etc., which they then took into their houses or placed in their surroundings, as though the whole of Roman antiquity was exclusively their own. But from this *Romanitas* the Germans of 1480 were by definition excluded; it had to be rejected as the basis for their own recovered identity.

b) The second pertains to the universality of the high, abstract *Latinitas*, a combination of rhetoric, poetics, and eloquence which any good scholar should recognize as normative in the *respublica litteraria*. It was a non-territorial concept, yet it represented a very select and cosmopolitan club. This *Latinitas* epitomises the best of what humanity is capable,³⁸ and sets the limits of the *recte Latine dicere*. But it cannot be equated with, nor converted into a nation.

3. Finally, from the inside of this new classical perspective, the German scholar must likewise retrace his own national origins, for within the Latin corpus is to be found the legitimating record of the noblest German roots. Tacitus' *Germania* must provide the fountain-head of the restored *Germanitas*. Through this restorative process, the German “nation” (Swiss, Dutch, Alsatian, Austrian, Flemish, Saxon, Frisian, etc.) might then surpass and replace the Italian nation as heir to the classical world, for if the young Germans resurrect the classical past and take seriously the duty of memory, Vienna should soon be the new Rome, according to the principle of the *translatio studii*. In these matters, it is a subtle challenge to distinguish that which follows natural law from that which is the result of human will. Celtis's *Oratio* alternates between the two readings without making a choice.

³⁸ On the passive imitation and the aristocratic segregation in humanist poetry, cf, Jozef IJsewijn, “La poésie latine humaniste: le principe de l'imitation” in Tibor Klaniczay, Eva Kushner, André Stegman, eds., *Histoire comparée des littératures de langues européennes, L'époque de la Renaissance 1. L'avènement de l'esprit nouveau* (1400-1480), Budapest: Akademiai Kiadó, pp. 499-507.

In this programme of cultural and historical memory, Greek and Hebrew have somehow disappeared as compulsory references; all efforts were to be concentrated on restoring Latin literature. According to the humanists' timeless paradigm, mediaeval memory, with its own founding myths both learned and popular, had to be dismantled and purged by a new memorial construct telling these young Germans that they were not who they thought they were, as if they had been orphaned at birth. The new memory does not add to or compose with the former; it must occupy the full space of consciousness. It is thus within the Italian humanist ideal, strictly classical and pagan, that Celtis tried to secure new ground for a separate German identity. Tacitus's *Germania*, meanwhile, presented itself as a providential source of autonomous origins that his generation was seeking, regardless of the fact that it defined their German forefathers through Roman eyes. This obstacle required circumvention, for within Celtis' doctrine of the primacy of language as the all-encompassing milieu—one that shapes the mind normatively and formally—a Latin portrait of the Germans cannot escape Roman reference, whether symbolic or material, and Celtis does not manage to provide a clear method for transcending his own ambivalence.

The unfolding of the *Oratio* shows a twist of memory loaded with contradictions that Celtis either did not notice or was powerless to solve. His text presents the last phase of the brilliant Italianate model that Guicciardini and Machiavelli would soon declare extinct in Italy as well.

Within the generations of Peter Luder and Rudolph Agricola, up to the Reuchlin controversy, the humanist ideal of those who went south to study was the Italianate neo-pagan *restitutio* of classical languages and literature treated as ends in themselves, not as tools for reading the Bible. One epistemological problem arises from the fact that the classical heritage was dealt with as a whole, including its strong hedonist lines, in a manner that more or less disregards Christianity. This ideal, which included the reconquering of political authority, could not be implemented globally in the Empire. It had to be broken down by later generations.

Celtis's address builds the repossession of the German people's dignity entirely on memory: remembering one's collective lost nobility in the distant past; understanding the beastly state of the present caused by a fall into barbarian language, itself a symptom of oblivion; and rediscovering adequate memorial relationships to different layers of time. These are the keys to success in the movement of regression back to the transcendent founding traditions—the only source of true meaning. As with all classical thought, the movement of time is entropic. There are four layers in the past and they do not all deserve to be saved. They are:

1. The layer of the present and near past which needs to be maligned, accused, and condemned so that the proposed change will be seen in the light of urgency. This is because the University itself had become a shamefully degraded milieu of mock-knowledge, beyond self-emendation, in which all traces of classical languages had been forgotten. The beast had taken over. But there are problems. Were not the primitive German tribes described in the *Germania*, albeit with some awe and

admiration, nevertheless as uneducated, illiterate, quarrelsome, cruel, brutal, and “wild” as the young Germans of Ingolstadt whom Celtis paints as monsters? What exactly is one of the first sketches of the “noble savage” doing in the humanist context? Such a negative human figure cannot be transmuted into a positive reference unless the cult of scholarship is abandoned.

2. The mediaeval period, which he calls a dark age, should qualify as entirely negative, being an era of linguistic corruption and the cradle of scholastic culture. Paradoxically, in the years following, Celtis would remain active in the pursuit of Mediaeval “Gothic” documents; indeed, “the attempt to establish the respectability of the German Middle Ages was the chief stimulus to Celtis’ search for manuscripts.”³⁹ In his quest to provide a linear and continuous memory for the German people, he tried to connect certain mediaeval threads to select ancient traditions as conveyed by the mannerist Tacitean discourse. In this endeavour, he made the three most important finds of the century, which he treated as of equal importance. First, in 1501, he found, in Worms, a map of the military roads of the Roman Empire ca. 395, copied in Switzerland during the thirteenth century; this precious document was given to his friend, the antiquarian Konrad Peutinger. In that same year, he published Hroswitha von Gandersheim’s plays which he was suspected to have forged, even though her tenth-century Ottonian Latin was far outside his strict linguistic canon. Finally, he found and published, in 1507, Ligurinus’ *Gesta Friderici*, a twelfth century epic chronicle in ten books dealing with the times of Frederick Barbarossa, for which he was again accused of forgery, despite his rapid disclaimer of the paternity of such low Latin.⁴⁰ Yet from a humanist standpoint, the Germans should be ashamed (“pudeat!”) of this blurred mediaeval “dialect.” The two layers could not be thought to belong to the same cultural world; they are neither continuous nor cumulative.

3. The third layer of historical time corresponds to the radiant, semi-sacred classical era, the full perfection of the *fons* metaphor. Therein resides the saturated meaning, the full reference, the absolute in taste and beauty, all of which is to be reconstituted, contemplated, and imitated. Celtis himself, who wished to be remembered as the German Horace, conceded that he was inferior to his model (which is quite accurate). It could not be otherwise since, by nature, historical time degrades and blurs the picture, erasing parts of the original meaning. Oblivion corresponds to the growing *lacunae*. There is no new element in Celtis’ doctrine of the Golden Age. The cultivation of the *bonae litterae* is the only means capable of reversing some of the loss. But even under optimal conditions, the memory relation between the hollow present and the full

³⁹ Lewis W. Spitz, *Conrad Celtis*, p.96.

⁴⁰ According to Spitz, *ibid.* p. 98, Celtis was guilty of two other crimes: in 1492, just after the Ingolstadt Oration delivery, he borrowed and never returned the Hroswitha manuscripts he had found in the Abbey of Sankt Emmeran (not even mentioned in his edition) and he lost the Ligurinus manuscript which he had again borrowed, this time from the Cistercian monastery of Ebrach. It reminds us of Willibald Pirckheimer’s letter to Celtis ordering him to return his copy of Homer (borrowed when Celtis stayed at his house) which he seems not to have seen again (p.84).

referential past operates under the sign of a deficit. No invention (in the modern sense of “deliberate production of some novelty”) can ever fill this gap. *Memoria* as content is here understood as an archival treasure, while *Memoria* as a procedure is the privileged way to reconquer the word (*verbum*), thus reshaping the thing (*res*) and, indirectly, the self. All the normative powers are located in tradition, not in the human mind or will.

The Golden Age is not understood as a resource put at the disposal of humanists to solve the problems of their own lives (even if it is easy to show that it also works as such). Memory here does not bring the past down to us along the axis of time. On the contrary, the mind has to travel back across time toward the classical layer and try to repossess the best approximation of the accomplished virtues of the Ancients. This expressionist, non-reflective anthropology is fully regulated by external principles and directly opposed to the modern image of self-determination, while, at the same time, it is estranged from the mediaeval Christian image of free creatures responsible for their salvation.

4. The fourth layer of time in the *Oratio* stands as a secret invisible zone where the divine source is located. It corresponds to what Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico, followed by Celtis and many others, qualify as *pristinus* or *priscus*, a hermetic category referring to the primordial, the pure, authentic origin.⁴¹ It has connotations similar to the category of *Urzeit*. We cannot access this founding layer, nor is it intelligible to us. But it commands inexorably the unfolding of time.

The entire dynamic of Celtis’ address depends on the capacity to slow down or reverse the progressive loss of memory generated by the passage of time. At this juncture, Polybius comes to his aid.⁴² In book VI of his *Histories*, he advances a new philosophy of history while reflecting upon the Greek general defeated by the Romans. His new conviction was that Roman history had, at that moment, come to be identified with world history, and thus he formulated a law of evolution according to which all states must lose momentum and strength after a measured lapse in dominance. His country, Greece, had irresistibly fallen into decadence, and the Romans, having learned from the Greeks, were marching to the zenith in obedience to this necessity. Each of the great powers thus covers a cycle in the determined spiral movement of *anacyclosis*.

What Polybius saw from the standpoint of the vanquished, Celtis (and several others) considered from the standpoint of Germany, by analogy with Rome, as the new

⁴¹ Which Ficino relates to some neo-Platonic underlying connection to the One while Pico believes it comes down to us from the Cabala.

⁴² Ca. 210-ca.125 B.C., born in Arcadia in a military family and himself general of the Achaean League, diplomat and political theorist. He was taken into custody as hostage to Rome where he stayed for seventeen years, studying the merits and organisation of the city and following the war operations directly from the first Punic War (268) to the fall of Carthage (146), the period corresponding to the rise of the Roman supremacy. We still have 39 of the 40 books of his *Histories*. He was very popular in Italy during the early Renaissance, and influenced the Florentine school, especially Machiavelli who borrowed his law of *anacyclosis*.

rising power. In ancient times, Rome learned from the Greeks and, in time, replaced them. They became masters of the world. Similarly, time has now come to challenge the Italians who have fallen into decadence and corruption. The Germans should be prepared to resist, by arms if necessary, in order to take the cultural leadership of the Western world. Time has come: the old virtue is migrating north. Celtis therefore exhorts the “young Germans,” as well as the “Germans” at large, to educate and prepare themselves to lead the world into civilization, since it is their historical destiny. This constitutes the main assertion of the second part of the *Oratio*, which calls upon his own peoples to emancipate themselves from the arrogance of the Italians: as the Romans to the Greeks, first copy them, then surpass them.

It is particularly interesting to see how an ordinary, uncritical mind, filled with a self-appointed sense of mission and great enthusiasm, can, nevertheless, fail to convince others to adopt his humanist scheme and thereby change the course of things. Celtis fell victim to the elitist and heteronomous character of his reform program.⁴³

The literary style of Celtis’ dramatic address sounds free and complex, illustrating the strict Ciceronian rules of eloquence borrowed from *De inventione rhetorica* and from (what we now know as Cornificius’) *Ad Herennium*. At the same time, it followed closely the many clichés of the well established genre of the *Antibarbaros* with the usual attacks on scholastic teaching by the linguists and translators of the Italian academies since Petrarch. This classical Latin, as codified in Lorenzo Valla’s *Elegantiae linguae latinae* and further analyzed in Niccolò Perotti’s *Rudimenta grammatices* (the war of the grammars had just started), seemed an almost foreign language even to the faculty, as much for the poetic metaphors as for the humanist accent and strategies of rhetoric where the audience expected rational demonstrations in a cumulative theoretical discourse culminating in a strong conclusion.

But, in the address, as we have seen, there was none of this syllogistic, discursive logic. Through its exemplary performance, it aimed at discrediting scholastic Latin directly in the face of those who revered philosophy and theology—a counter-

⁴³ In contrast with his contemporaries Agricola and Reuchlin, Lefèvre d’Étaples and Giovanni Pico, etc., Celtis’s writings and ideas are today remembered by experts only, especially by scholars of German neo-Latin Renaissance poetry. There is no modern edition of his complete works, whether in neo-Latin, German or other languages. No monograph focusing on his general career and writings came out after Lewis W. Spitz’s *Conrad Celtis. The German Arch-Humanist* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press) of half century ago (no reprints). Hans Rupprich’s studies on Celtis all appeared in the framework of some general methodical surveys among which 1. the University of Ingolstadt in a systematic study of all German Universities (*Humanismus und Renaissance in den deutschen Städten*, Band 2, ed. Hans Rupprich, Leipzig: Teubner, 1935, reprinted in Darmstadt by Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft in 1964), and 2. Celtis’ correspondence, as editor of vol. III of *Humanistenbriefe*, published in 4 vols. between 1923 and 1940 (Beck, Munich). No doubt, the best documented, most thorough, and critical study on Celtis’ cultural, philosophical and religious ideas remains Lewis W. Spitz’s chapter V of *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1963, published four years after his thesis on Celtis; cf. the introduction pp.1-19 and pp. 80-109.

productive behaviour, “not to say tactless”⁴⁴. Even Spitz gets impatient: “Humanists since Petrarch had substituted the loose style of the antique, free, suggestive, phrase for the traditional rigidly syllogistic structure. The *Oratio* as well makes a studied effort, and a successful one, to avoid any logical structure or ordered reasoning⁴⁵”. It is a fact that *Ratio* as the human universal faculty to argue with concepts and conclude in truth is not mentioned in the *Oratio*.

The emotional connotations are very loud: strength, despair, contempt, anger, hope, urgency of action, the call to wage cultural war, denouncement, suffering, disgust, etc. Celtis set the scene of a trial where, without naming Aristotle, Albertus Magnus or Aquinas, the accused was the university culture, globally considered.

As for substance, it claims to promote and defend the new philosophy and the New Learning in a scholastic university, which, although only twenty years old, shared the mediaeval structure with the faculty of arts ancillary to the study of theology or law. This means that there was no curricular teaching of literary rhetoric, poetics or eloquence whether at Ingolstadt, or in any of the other thirteen German universities⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Lewis W. Spitz, *Conrad Celtis*, p.22.

⁴⁵ *Conrad Celtis*, p. 25.

⁴⁶ The most prestigious (Cologne and Heidelberg) were openly adverse to the new humanist teaching, while Tübingen and Ingolstadt had to accept such teaching imposed and paid directly by the ruling prince. Elsewhere, the traveling instructors (the *privat docent*, as opposed to the *ordinarius*) in *humaniora*, with their uneven skills, sought permission from universities to give private unsalaried lessons to students, who in turn paid them what they could and bought their handbooks. Celtis had tried this last modus with little success before and after his trip to Italy, Poland, Bohemia and Hungary of 1487-1491. The two first chairs in humanist studies to be incorporated into the regular programme of studies from the beginning and paid by the institutions were created at Wittenberg in 1502 and at Frankfurt on the Oder in 1506. Cf. Charles G. Nauert Jr, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe*, “ Conflict over educational reform”, pp. 127-130. The domination of the New Learning in some universities starts from 1515 (pp.130-131). Therefore the picture presented by Hans Rupprich about the situation at Ingolstadt between 1492 and 1495 is definitely too favourable to the New Learning. We read that right after the unhappy outcome of his *Oratio*, Celtis had left the city (no mention of the plague outburst) for Regensburg where he spent the winter as Rector of the Domschule (cathedral school). Again according to Rupprich, Celtis returns to Ingolstadt in 1494 to take Riedner’s position as *ordinarius* and teach at the Faculty of Arts until 1497 when Emperor Maximilian calls him to Vienna: “In May of 1494, he was hired for the position of “*ordinarius in studio humanitatis*” vacated by Riedner’s death or departure. In the absence of his friends Johann Kaufmann and Sixtus Tucher, Georg Zingel and Hieronymus von Croaria took their places. Moreover, he finds there the theologian and influential mathematician Andreas Stiborius from Pleiskirchen (d. 1515), together with his beloved disciple, the philosopher and mathematician Johann Stabius from Hueb (d. 1522), learned and cultured humanist, witty and genially creative. This shows how, at Ingolstadt, the two main trends or currents of the Renaissance, i.e. the literary/philological/philosophical, on the one hand, and the mathematical/astronomical disciplines, on the other hand, did coexist and interact.”, Hans Rupprich, *Humanismus und Renaissance in den deutschen Städten und an den Universitäten* [Leipzig: Teubner, 1935], Band 2, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964, pp.41-42 (my transl.). Though he had easy access to the archives of the University of Ingolstadt, Rupprich mistakenly presents Celtis’ second hiring of 1494 as in quality of *ordinarius*. In fact, neither Riedner’s position, nor his when he succeeded to Riedner as instructor in rhetoric and poetics were actual faculty positions. As we have seen, both of them were lecturers with limited term contracts, paid by the Duke of Bavaria’s personal funds transiting through the University Treasury, a real improvement compared to the status of a *privat docent* but

This does not imply that there was none at all, but rather that the rhetoric taught in the *Trivium* corresponded to a minor set of practical/technical procedures to be learnt by heart and applied, just like the old *Ars dictaminis* for letter writing. They were treated as tools, not as arts.

At the time of the inaugural address though, Celtis benefited from a surprising amount of tolerance if we compare with the way the Dominican Johannes Eck was to conduct his interrogation sessions with Luther and obtain his condemnation, just twenty-seven years later, in the walls of the same Ingolstadt University, by that time transformed into the German center of the Counter-Reformation. Celtis' avowed purpose was not to continue or extend a parallel program of classical studies in rhetoric, poetics and eloquence within the university curriculum. It was a pressing call for a cultural revolution. It was not his own invention, but a generic summary, an epitome, of what he had read about and heard in the Italian academies⁴⁷. In the reform he so vehemently promoted, poetics, classical rhetoric, grammar, comparative history of cultures and eloquence constitute the new program instead of the old metaphysics, logics and morals. According to his plan, the New Learning must occupy all the space and the old "pseudo-learning" must exit immediately.

In the cisalpine high Renaissance, the restoration of civic virtue aroused interest in a mutual recognition within the "Tullian cult". This pagan view, borrowed directly from republican Rome and indirectly through them from the rhetorical tradition of the Greeks, is incompatible with the internalized and private ideal of Christian virtue commanding modesty, forgiveness, sacrifice, gentleness, and guilt⁴⁸. Supported by rhetoric, it provided the elements of a secular identity, individual and collective.

In the address, Celtis does not mention Christianity except for one sentence where he shows indignation at the fact that greater Germany should tolerate one people's heretical values—namely those of the Czech Hussites—especially when they were celebrated in local barbarian dialects. Heresy is disgraceful and should be resisted, not because it departs from theological truth, but because it is degraded into the vernacular which, like all vernacular languages, is excluded from the sacred triangle of the *Trilinguitas*. But, at the same time, in calling for a return to classical culture, Celtis uses the framework of a religious conversion: the elevated aesthetic values are compared to grace while the beastly eructations of scholastic mistakes and makeshifts are associated with vice and sin. He repeats that it is the duty of Germans to abandon this sinful barbaric lifestyle which justifies the contempt of their neighbours.

completely distinct from the regular staff. It makes a difference concerning the reception of New Learning at Ingolstadt.

⁴⁷ In 1487-1488, with Marcus Antonius Sabellicus and Aldus Manutius in Venice; with Guarino Guarini da Verona in Ferrara; with Filippo Beroaldo in Bologna; with Marsiglio Ficino, in Florence; with Pomponius Laetus, Calimachus Experiens and Platina in Rome.

⁴⁸ Machiavelli provided the first analysis of this notional conflict; cf. *Discorsi* II.2. In the address, Celtis does not share the monist doctrine of many Italians on virtue; rather he chose a neo-Platonist dualism, also Italian, which opposes the soul's desires to the body impulses as humanity to animality. Cf. Danièle Letocha, "Fortune et infortunes de la virtù" in Marie-France Wagner et Pierre-Louis Vaillancourt, dir., *De la grâce et des vertus*, Paris/Montréal: L'Harmattan, 1998, pp.59-74.

The voluntarist strategy of his discourse calls for the participatory rescue of all German universities—Ingolstadt and the others—from their current state of damnation.

No record survives of a condemnation of the *Oratio* on religious grounds. Rector Johannes Kaufmann (who had read a draft) did not ask for changes nor threaten to cancel the ceremony. Neither was there any official answer or public comment about Celtis' pagan stance a posteriori. It seems that such an audience just could not take Italian neo-paganism as a fact. The attendants probably took it as another amusing poetic licence, a loose metaphor designed to whet their imaginations while slighting their academic boorishness.

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