

Poggio Bracciolini

Eulogies  
Six Laments for Dead Friends

*edited & translated by*

Jeroen De Keyser & Hester Schadee



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D/2023/15310/002  
NUR 622  
ISSN 2795-9295  
ISBN 978-94-6475-310-3  
DOI 10.54179/2302

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[www.lysapublishers.com](http://www.lysapublishers.com)

Cover illustration: Giuseppe Lazzerini, *Allegoria della Morte*  
Florence, Cimitero degli inglesi

Cover design by Evelien Gillis  
Typeset in Arno by LYSA  
Printed in May 2023 by die Keure

## Table of Contents

<i>Preface</i>	7
<i>Introduction</i>	
1. Biographies	11
2. Genesis and Genre	
a. The Genesis of Poggio's Funerary Oratory	18
b. The Question of Delivery	21
c. Poggio and the Genre of Humanistic Funerary Oratory	24
3. Praising the Dead	
a. Private Virtues	33
b. Public Lives and Letters	41
4. Poggio and the Church Councils	
a. The Council of Constance	53
b. The Council of Basel	62
5. Textual Transmission	
a. Collecting Eulogies	67
b. Individual Transmission	75
c. Manuscripts	81
d. Printed Editions	94
e. Editorial Principles	98
<i>Eulogy for Cardinal Francesco Zabarella</i>	101
<i>Eulogy for Niccolò Niccoli</i>	133
<i>Eulogy for Lorenzo de' Medici</i>	161
<i>Eulogy for Cardinal Niccolò Albergati</i>	187
<i>Eulogy for Leonardo Bruni</i>	217
<i>Eulogy for Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini</i>	247
<i>Bibliography</i>	277
<i>Indices</i>	289



## Preface

This volume contains the first critical edition of the funerary orations of Poggio Bracciolini, alongside their first translation into any language, and a commentary. The absence, until now, of adequate tools to approach Poggio's *Eulogies* is astounding given the importance and fame of both their author and the six men eulogised by him. Poggio, of course, was one of the leading humanists of his generation, and a prominent member of the Florentine circle that assembled at the turn of the fifteenth century around the city's chancellor, Coluccio Salutati. He always remained associated with his adopted homeland – *Florentinus* was his epithet – and as his final office held the chancellorship himself. Yet Poggio spent most of his working life in the service of no fewer than eight (anti-)popes. As an apostolic scribe and, later, secretary, he was among the pioneers of humanism in the papal Curia. Poggio's writings, which document the vicissitudes of his career, constitute crucial evidence for the growth and concerns of the humanist movement. However, they also provide an extremely valuable insider perspective on the political and ecclesiastical affairs of Poggio's day.

This is particularly true for Poggio's funerary orations. In large part biographical, they set forth the characters and careers of six luminaries of the early Quattrocento. Poggio's choice of whom to eulogise reflects his dual affiliation with Florence and the papal see. Three of his subjects are intimately connected with the humanist movement and the Arno city-state: Leonardo Bruni, Niccolò Niccoli, and Lorenzo de' Medici the Elder. Bruni, who also served as chancellor, is perhaps the single humanistic author to take precedence over Poggio as ringleader of the Florentine set. Yet both Bruni and Poggio paid homage to the reclusive Niccoli as their intellectual arbiter. Lorenzo de' Medici was the right hand of his brother Cosimo, who established the Medici hegemony. Like his brother, Lorenzo had enjoyed a humanistic education, and supported Florentine arts and letters through his patronage. The remaining three subjects of Poggio's *Eulogies* are all cardinals of the Church: Francesco Zabarella, Niccolò Albergati, and Giuliano Cesarini. The first of these played a leading role at the Council of Constance, where the Western Schism was resolved. The latter two were key figures

at the Councils of Basel and Ferrara-Florence, as well as fulfilling a long series of ambassadorial and military legations on behalf of popes Martin V and Eugene IV. Significantly, these clerics were, just like the laymen, supporters of humanistic studies.

Poggio was a close personal friend and correspondent of all the protagonists of his orations, with the partial exception of Zabarella, whom he may not have known well prior to Constance. In the funerary eulogies, the deceased men are presented as mirrors, in whose image the living should mould themselves. Poggio thus set out to create and promulgate his version of their reputations, so that these would withstand the test of time. How well Poggio succeeded in this ambition is evident from the afterlife of the humanists, for information regarding whose lives his orations often are our main if not only sources. Cited and recited in scholarship, the Poggian origin of such “facts” – and in a laudatory genre at that – has frequently receded into the distance. Consequently, scholars have unwittingly used his funeral orations, which are certainly of prime importance for the self-fashioning of the early humanist movement, as unmediated historical records. In other instances, scholars have found corroboration in the *Eulogies* for information that ultimately derives from these very texts. This situation is not limited to the Florentine figures. When Albergati was beatified in 1744, the dossier prepared in support of his case included Poggio’s oration among the evidence of his blessedness, its pertinent passages helpfully emphasised through the typesetting.

Poggio’s *Eulogies*, furthermore, are significant as literary products. When Poggio wrote, the humanistic funerary oration was a young genre. Poggio’s first compositions were circulated immediately by himself and others, which is suggestive of the esteem in which they were held. Subsequently, Poggio included these early *Eulogies* in his epistolary, before reissuing them, along with the later ones, as a set. These various transmissions, reflected in numerous extant manuscripts, demonstrate the enduring appeal of Poggio’s obituary rhetoric. His funerary orations contributed to the codification of their genre, which became one of the most prolific of humanistic epideictic oratory.

The present volume makes available in Latin and English six sources that will appeal to the interests of a range of researchers, students, and enthusiasts of Renaissance culture. The Latin text it presents is significantly different from the *textus receptus* that has hitherto been

available to scholars. The old printed versions of the orations were based on arbitrary combinations of widely divergent sources, most of them departing markedly from Poggio's final redaction of his *Eulogies*, which is reflected in this edition. The English translation closely follows the Latin text opposite, while also striving to maintain or reproduce the clarity, elegance, and occasional rhetorical flourish of Poggio's signature style.

The division of labour between the two editors of this volume reflects our different disciplinary backgrounds in Philology and History respectively. The critical edition of the Latin text was prepared by Jeroen De Keyser, who first had the opportunity to explore this textual corpus many years ago during a four-month research fellowship generously awarded by The Warburg Institute. The English translation is the work of Hester Schadee, who also composed the introductory materials, with the exception of the chapter on the transmission of the text. The commentaries on the orations are a shared effort. In any case, we have both read and reread each other's work to the point that this volume truly is the fruit of a joint labour.

However, scholarship is not done alone, or even in twos. We would like to thank the staff at many libraries who facilitated the necessary research on the multitude of manuscript witnesses. We are also extremely grateful to Clémence Revest, Keith Sidwell, and Fabio Della Schiava, who each read the entire manuscript, and with unfailing kindness and generosity provided countless valuable suggestions. Finally, it may be permitted to draw attention to the personal significance that this project had or assumed for us as it progressed. The experience of loss and grief alters one's relationship to funerary oratory. We would therefore like to remember in this place our respective father and mother, René De Keyser and Nora Schadee, who both died too soon.

Hester Schadee  
Jeroen De Keyser





# Introduction

## 1. Biographies

### *a. Poggio Bracciolini*

Gian Francesco di Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459)<sup>1</sup> was born in Terranuova (now named Terranuova Bracciolini in his honour) in the Upper Arno valley, part of the Florentine *contado*. His father, Guccio, was an apothecary; his mother, Iacoba Frutti, the daughter of a notary. The family moved to Arezzo when Poggio was young, and he received his early education there, before transferring briefly to Bologna to study law. By the end of the century Poggio had moved to Florence, where he studied with Giovanni Malpaghini (c. 1346-1417). He matriculated into the guild of judges and notaries in 1402.

During his studies, Poggio supported himself as a scribe, and this may be how he caught the attention of Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406), chancellor of Florence and the leading Italian intellectual of his generation. The oldest extant manuscript (1402-03) copied by Poggio in his developing *all'antica* script, based on the Carolingian minuscule, contains a text by Salutati. Either with Malpaghini or in Salutati's circle of protégés, Poggio met Roberto de' Rossi (1355-1417), Niccolò Niccoli (1364-1437), and Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444).

In 1403, he moved to Rome, where he found employment as secretary to Cardinal Landolfo Maramaldo, Bishop of Bari. A few months later he was appointed apostolic scribe by Pope Boniface IX on the recommendation of Salutati. Poggio held the same position under Innocent VII and Gregory XII, before changing allegiance to the Council of Pisa; he subsequently served Alexander V, elected at Pisa (1409), and his successor John XXIII (1410), who promoted him to apostolic

<sup>1</sup> For Poggio's life, see Walser 1914, Martines 1963, 123-27, 210-14, Petrucci & Bigi 1971, Schadee 2014, Kallendorf 2017b, and Revest 2019, 189-212. Three edited collections devoted to Poggio are Fubini 1982, Ciccutto & al. 2007, and Ricci 2020. Poggio's epistles are cited from Harth's critical edition, while some punctuation choices have been altered and diphthongs introduced. All references to the eulogies are to the paragraphs in the current edition, and to the first letter of the name of the eulogised: A(lbergati), B(runi), C(esarini), L(orenzo) de' Medici, N(iccoli), and Z(abarella).

## 2. Genesis and Genre

Although Poggio's six eulogies in the end came to circulate as a group – often in the company of his oration for Pope Nicholas V – the collection developed in a piecemeal fashion. Moreover, Poggio trialled other modes of circulation for the earlier eulogies before arriving at the sextet. These differences between the orations extend to question of delivery. It should not be assumed that Poggio, at the time of writing, had the same public in mind for each of them, or indeed that he envisaged a live audience at all. Despite the oral form of all but one of the eulogies, there is strong evidence that the majority were not composed to be heard as public speeches; however, it cannot be inferred from this that none was delivered. These issues regarding genesis, circulation, and delivery are addressed in the first two sections of this chapter. The third section casts the net wider, and surveys the origins and conventions of humanistic funerary oratory in order to contextualise Poggio's practice. In the absence of direct Roman examples for imitation, humanistic funeral orations assumed unusual importance for the establishment of genre conventions. Poggio's eulogies were instrumental in defining the canons of obituary oratory, which developed into an exceptionally successful category of humanist rhetoric.

### *a. The Genesis of Poggio's Funerary Oratory*

Poggio's six funerary orations were not from the start conceived as a corpus. This much is intimated by the very dates of their composition. Written in 1417, the eulogy for Francesco Zabarella predates the chronologically following oration, for Niccolò Niccoli (1437), by twenty years. The remaining four orations were composed within five years of each other: for Lorenzo de' Medici (1440), Niccolò Albergati (1443), Leonardo Bruni (1444), and finally Giuliano Cesarini (1445). Moreover, Poggio would have written another oration in this later period to commemorate the humanist Antonio Loschi (c. 1368-1441), had not their mutual friend and curial colleague Cencio de' Rustici claimed this task for himself, without however producing the promised text.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Poggio reports this in a letter to Guarino Veronese, Florence, June 1455 (Harth, vol. 3, *Ep.* VII.18).

The oration for Zabarella is an outlier in other regards as well. First of all, Poggio's own remarks in his epistolary separate Zabarella's eulogy from the rest. He describes the orations for Niccoli, Lorenzo, Bruni, and Albergati – Cesarini was still alive at the time of writing – as representing the “obligation of friendship”, without mentioning Zabarella.<sup>9</sup> And indeed, Poggio's close acquaintance with Zabarella may have been recent, not predating the arrival of both men at the Church Council of Constance (1414-18).<sup>10</sup> By contrast, Poggio was not only a lifelong friend and correspondent of Niccoli and Bruni, and close to both Medici brothers, but he had also known Albergati and Cesarini for over two decades.<sup>11</sup> In a second letter, Poggio admits that he felt no great enthusiasm about eulogising Zabarella, and would have preferred to pay tribute to Manuel Chrysoloras, who also died at Constance, but again had deferred to Cencio.<sup>12</sup> This makes it plausible that Poggio wrote the oration for Zabarella because he was commissioned to do so. In other words, it appears to have been a professional obligation as opposed to a duty to a friend. That fits in with Poggio's publication patterns. The oration for Zabarella predates the period in which he issued writings on a personal title except single letters. This phase began, tentatively, with his dialogue *De avaritia* (*On Avarice*) in 1428, and in earnest from the mid-1430s. However, a copy of Zabarella's eulogy was in the possession of Poggio's correspondent Guarino

<sup>9</sup> To Giovanni Cirignani, Rome, 7 August 1444 (Harth, vol. 2, *Ep.* x.21): “officium amicitiae”. Poggio applies the same term to his orations in N§1 and B§3.

<sup>10</sup> They did, however, have a friend in common in the person of the late Coluccio Salutati, and Zabarella, like Poggio, had been in John XXIII's Curia since 1410. It is therefore likely that they knew each other at least at a distance.

<sup>11</sup> Poggio knew and esteemed Albergati already in 1420, as evidenced in a letter to Niccolò Niccoli from London, dated 13 June 1420 (Harth, vol. 1, *Ep.* 4). He was a correspondent of Cesarini's at least from 1431, but it is likely that Poggio had known him from the moment he rejoined Martin V's Curia after his English sojourn in 1423, since Cesarini was Pope Martin V's personal chaplain (“capellanus noster”) from 1422, and auditor of the Curia from 1424 (Strnad & Walsh 1980). Vespasiano da Bisticci's biographies of Cardinal Cesarini and Pope Nicholas V (*Le vite*, 35-81 and 137-58), erstwhile secretary to Albergati, attest to the close contacts between these church men, Lorenzo de' Medici, Bruni, Poggio, and other humanists while the Curia resided in Florence in the 1430s.

<sup>12</sup> To Guarino Veronese, Florence, June 1455 (Harth, vol. 3, *Ep.* VII.18). In this case, too, Cencio de' Rustici failed to produce an oration. Whether Poggio studied with Chrysoloras, of whom he makes much also in the funeral orations, at Constance or earlier in Florence, is impossible to determine: see Sidwell 2019, 137-42.

### 3. Praising the Dead

The funeral oration is a vehicle for praise: this much is implied by the term “eulogy”. Between exordium and peroration, and besides passages of consolation and lament, Poggio’s eulogies memorialise the qualities and exploits that confer honour on their protagonists, and hold up a mirror to posterity for imitation. They thus provide a template for a good life, not so much instead of, but rather extrapolated from, an individual’s biography. When the orations are read singly, as welcome sources for biographical and personal details regarding their subjects, it is easy to overlook the extent to which the categories underlying Poggio’s praises are, in fact, predetermined. This is not to say that his eulogies are formulaic: Poggio had choices to make regarding both the substance and the arrangement of his representations. Consequently, when the six orations are read side by side as a group, patterns emerge that are at least as indicative of their author’s interests as they are informative about his subjects.

This chapter, therefore, provides a comparative analysis of the six eulogies to explore how they construct laudable lives. This shows that, while there is, as one would expect, substantial repetition in what Poggio hallmarks as the characteristics and achievements of a good man, there are also significant differences between his profiles of the cardinals, the humanists, and the banker. Some of these are individual – for instance, the eulogies of Niccoli and Bruni show that one can be an outstanding humanist in remarkably diverse ways – but some are categorical: what is good in a banker, for example, is not necessarily good in a cardinal. This relativism extends from their personal virtues to the common good for which all six men laboured. In the funerary orations, it is variously identified as the Christian Commonwealth, the City of Florence, and the Republic of Letters.

Humanistic studies were commonly advocated as a path to virtue. In Poggio’s hands, on account of his identification of the common good with the pursuit of letters, they become a path to glory, too. Some of that glory naturally redounds on Poggio, both as author and as peer of the humanists whom he eulogises. While virtue, studies, and glory are, as such, inextricably linked, for convenience the first section of this chapter examines Poggio’s treatment of the private virtues of the deceased, and the second their public lives and letters.

## 5. Textual Transmission

Over the last half-century, scholars have usually read Poggio's six eulogies in the reprint of his *Opera omnia* of 1538 edited by Riccardo Fubini, which is supplemented with reissues of other versions for the works lacking from that *cinquecentina*. None of the six have been published in a critical edition before the current one. The preparation of it has benefitted enormously from the gold mine of information that is John McManamon's *Incipitarium* of some 1170 humanist (funeral) orations, which he compiled while preparing his 1989 monograph on Italian Renaissance funeral oratory.<sup>244</sup> Other resources permitted a significant expansion of McManamon's catalogue:<sup>245</sup> as such, it has been established that at least 120 manuscripts, scattered all over Europe (and a few overseas), half of them in Italy, and most from the second or third quarter of the fifteenth century, contain one or more of Poggio's eulogies. Francesco Zabarella's occurs in 66 manuscripts, Niccolò Niccoli's in 55, Lorenzo de' Medici's in 39, Niccolò Albergati's in 29, Leonardo Bruni's in 37, and Giuliano Cesarini's in 22.<sup>246</sup>

### a. Collecting Eulogies

Upon closer examination, only 11 out of those 120 manuscripts turn out to contain all six eulogies in chronological order:<sup>247</sup> Dijon, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. Ancien fonds 837 [13]; Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, ms. Ashb. 1065 [18; A], and ms. Plut. 90 sup. 33

<sup>244</sup> As he states in his introduction, McManamon posted his catalogue online "to share the data with scholars and all interested persons, especially those who may be considering critical editions of a given oration." We used the most recent version of the catalogue, dated March 2016.

<sup>245</sup> Aside from library catalogues, valuable information could be drawn from the manuscript listings in critical editions of other writings of Poggio's, listed under the Primary Sources in the Bibliography at the end of this volume.

<sup>246</sup> McManamon's *Incipitarium* lists 53 manuscripts for Zabarella (at 227-28), 33 for Niccoli (at 837-38), 30 for Lorenzo (at 944-45), 23 for Albergati (at 351), 29 for Bruni (at 314-15), and 17 for Cesarini (at 925). In 2020, McManamon published an interesting study of the origin and characteristics of the 53 manuscripts of Zabarella known to him, underscoring the text's presence as a rhetorical model for public speaking in numerous miscellanea manuscripts, produced for educational purposes.

<sup>247</sup> For the sake of clarity and retrievability, a serial number referring to the overall listing below has been inserted between square brackets, followed by the *siglum* for those witnesses that have one.

[23; M]; Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, ms. Magl. VIII.1435 [29]; Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ms. Trotti 348 [52; T]; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. Nouv. acq. lat. 1150 [76; B]; Perugia, Biblioteca comunale Augusta, ms. H 78 [78]; Salamanca, Universidad de Salamanca, Biblioteca General Histórica, ms. 64 [82; S]; Schlägl, Stiftsbibliothek, ms. Cpl. 136 [85]; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, ms. Urb. lat. 224 [100; U], and ms. Urb. lat. 1169 [101].

In nine out of eleven cases the funerary sextet is immediately followed by an oration that Poggio wrote to congratulate his old friend Tommaso Parentucelli, who had been elected as Pope Nicholas V on 6 March 1447.<sup>248</sup> On the other hand, no manuscript survives that displays only a first “quartet” or “quintet”. That is to say: while Albergati, Bruni and Cesarini had died in a relatively short time span, in May 1443, March 1444 and July 1445 respectively, there is no indication that the first of these funerals inspired Poggio to publish the collected eulogies he had composed by then. Furthermore, the only two manuscripts containing the sextet *without* the speech for Nicholas can be surmised to have dropped it rather than to descend from a sextet compiled before 1447, since collation indicates that ms. Urb. lat. 1169 [101] depends on ms. Urb. lat. 224 [100; U], which has the septet.<sup>249</sup> That leaves only Perugia ms. H 78 [78], and it seems implausible that we would have one single survivor of a deliberately distributed sextet packaging. Perhaps one might have expected Poggio to collect, at some point, exclusively his funeral orations and to circulate his contribution to the genre, but we have to conclude that his bundling (if, as is likely, Poggio himself was responsible for it) contained at least seven orations. In fact, among those nine witnesses containing the septet, three have even more to offer: in the manuscripts of Dijon [13], the Ambrosiana [52; T], and Schlägl [85], the septet is followed by Poggio’s *Oratio in laudem matrimonii*, which he probably wrote in the spring of 1457.<sup>250</sup> Collation demonstrates that these also have a long series of errors in common, which they share with the Laurenziana’s ms. Ashb. 1065 [18;

<sup>248</sup> A preliminary investigation indicates that the oration for Nicholas V survives in at least 33 manuscripts; half of them contain also one or more members of the sextet.

<sup>249</sup> The same applies to the BML’s ms. Plut. 90 sup. 32 [22], which has the sextet in botched order and also displays the particular errors of U.

<sup>250</sup> See the letter to Galeotto Manfredi (Harth, vol. 3, *Ep.* IX.23) and the discussion in Walser 1914, 309-10 and 547-48.

*Eulogy for Cardinal Francesco Zabarella*

1417

*Oratio habita Constantiae  
in funere cardinalis Florentini*

1. Etsi plurimo luctu doloreque impediō, patres conscripti,<sup>1</sup> quem ex  
optimi praestantissimique viri morte una vobiscum suscipio, tamen  
non doloris tantum mei, quantum officii rationem me habere oportet.<sup>2</sup>  
Celebratur hodierno die funus hominis sanctissimi deque me optime  
5 meriti, cuius gloriae si hoc in loco deessem, vereor ne ingrati nomen  
subirem. Itaque ad publicum munus quod extremum a vobis mortuo  
praestatur, existimavi mihi etiam privatim aliquid honoris esse adicien-  
dum. In quo si vobis minime satisfecero, non quid illius amplitudini,  
quae maxima est, debeatur, sed quid facultas mea dicendo consequi  
10 possit, animum quaeso advertite. 2. Illud enim arbitratus sum, cum  
haec quae in mentem veniunt paucis recensuissem, et satisfacturum me  
desiderio meo, et simul quasi materiam quandam praebiturum reliquis  
maiora quaedam atque ampliora dicendi. Non enim usitato genere  
orationis, non mediocri eloquentia virtus sua contenta est, sed postulat  
15 excellens ingenium, exquisitum atque eximium dicendi genus. Nam per  
immortalis Dei religionem, cuius hic fuit propugnator acerrimus, quis  
nisi singulari ingenio et eloquentia paene divina illius possit in omni  
vita laudes non solum ornare verbis, sed enumeratione complecti?<sup>3</sup>  
3. Multos vidi, multos cognovi ipse aetatis nostrae excellentis viros, qui  
20 praediti essent una quapiam virtute singulari; in quo vero omnes virtu-  
tes omnem vim suam expressissent, praeter hunc cognovi neminem.<sup>4</sup>

4 hodierno die] hodie e · deque me] deoque e 5 gloriae Λ Σ gloriae et dignitati α 6 ad  
Λ Σ ad hoc α in e · vobis] nobis e 7 existimavi] aestimavi e · privatim] privatum e  
8 non quid] nunquid e 10 advertite] avertite P 11 satisfacturum me Λ Σ me satisfactu-  
rum ire α 12 materiam Λ Σ materiam α 13 quaedam Λ Σ om. α · atque ampliora  
quaedam e 15 exquisitum atque] atque exquisitum et e 17 nisi] in U · possit] posset α  
U<sup>ac</sup> 18 ornare] ornate U 19 cognovi ipse P Σ ipse cognovi α Λ · excellentis] excellentes e

<sup>1</sup> The “conscript fathers” addressed by Poggio are the councillors at the Church Council of Constance, where Zabarella died on 26 September 1417. It is likely that Poggio indeed delivered his oration there, as the title indicates, although the date often cited for this event, 27 September, is conventional: see the *Introduction*, section 2b [henceforth abbreviated as *Intro*, 2b etc.].

<sup>2</sup> This thematisation of the act of speaking and the staging of the speech, including the author’s protestations of his feeble powers, is typical of humanist epideictic rhetoric in



*Oration held in Constance  
at the Funeral of the Florentine Cardinal*

1. Even though I am oppressed, conscript fathers,<sup>1</sup> by the great grief and pain that I, along with you, experience from the death of a very good and most preeminent man, still it is meet that I consider not so much my pain as my duty.<sup>2</sup> Today we honour the funeral of an extremely holy man to whom I am much indebted, and if I were missing from his celebration on this occasion, I fear I would incur the reputation of an ingrate. Hence I reckoned that – to the public homage that you offer the deceased as final honour – I should add something personal. If, on this score, I fail to give you satisfaction, please consider not what his standing (which is the greatest) deserves, but what my skill in speaking can attain. 2. Indeed this was my reasoning: that if I reviewed the things that came to mind in a few words I would both comply with my own wish, and at the same time provide as it were material for others to speak with more distinction and at greater length. For his virtue is not content with the usual kind of oratory nor with average eloquence, but rather it demands an exceptional talent and a refined and exalted mode of speech. For by the faith of God immortal! – of which he was the most zealous champion – who could, except with singular talent and almost divine eloquence, not so much glorify the merits of his whole life with words, but merely enumerate them?<sup>3</sup> 3. I have seen many – I have myself known many – outstanding men of our age who were gifted with any one particular virtue; but a man in whom all virtues realised themselves with full force I do not know except for this one.<sup>4</sup> For whether you seek the pursuit of learning and knowledge of all things (which they call wisdom), or whether forethought, kindness, courage, generosi-

this period (Revest 2013, 234-36). Poggio's professions of grief can be viewed as creating an emotional community between the humanist and his audience (Schadee 2023).

<sup>3</sup> A strong contrast to Poggio's later statement that Manuel Chrysoloras would have provided more material for praise than Zabarella, as discussed in *Intro*, 2a. But this reflects the exceptional significance of the Byzantine Chrysoloras – whom Poggio references as bringing Greek studies to Italy in his orations for Niccoli and Bruni: see *Intro*, 3b – rather than detracting from Zabarella.

<sup>4</sup> For Poggio's treatment of the virtues, see *Intro*, 3a.

Nam sive studia doctrinae et omnium scientiam rerum (quam sapientiam vocant), sive prudentiam, humanitatem, fortitudinem, liberalitatem, gravitatem morum quaesieris et vitae integritatem, procul dubio nulum reperietis cum hoc viro (pace aliorum dixerim) ne longo quidem  
 25 intervallo comparandum. Quare a vobis peto, patres conscripti, ut cum pauca de ipsius vita ac moribus prout tempus fert dixerō, tum me de virtutibus suis dicentem benigne, sicut coepistis, attenteque audiatis.

4. Ortus est Franciscus ex Patavio, ut scitis, urbe inter Italas longe  
 30 antiqua et nobili, parentibus honestissimis ac se dignis;<sup>5</sup> quorum diligentia sancte domi enutritus, cum primum per aetatem licuit, sponte sua totum se litteris dedit. Et cum varia essent genera discendi in quibus multa cum laude posset versari, tamen, praeclarissimam atque utilissimam vitae mortalium cum videret iuris scientiam ac legum, omnem  
 35 suam curam ad illas convertit atque in eis ita excellens evasit, ut non solum nostri, sed etiam superioris temporis homines longe anteiret. Nec tamen alia studia neglexit. Nam propter acumen mentis atque ingenii addidit quoque ad legum scientiam et reliquarum artium cognitionem. Adolescentiam tanta modestia composuit, ut in iuvenili aetate  
 40 auctoritatem obtineret senum. Lascivias omnes et blandimenta corporis, quae illa secum fert aetas, adeo est aspernatus, ut perpetuam elegerit servaveritque castitatem; in quo non mortalium, sed caelestium imitatus est naturam. 5. Cum vero ad virilem aetatem pervenisset, existimans non solum sibi natum se esse, sed procreatum quoque ad  
 45 utilitatem caeterorum, palam coepit docere, non tam quaestus gratia, quem semper ille contempsit ac pro nihilo habuit, quam officii et communis utilitatis, quo laborum suorum fructus ad multos perveniret.<sup>6</sup> Igitur ex ipsius schola velut ex uberrimo fonte sapientiae innume-

22 omnium] omnem e 24 nullum] nullam e 27 ac] et e · tum] cum L om. e 32 se totum P 33 praeclarissima atque utilissima e 37 tamen] cum N · tamen alia Λ Σ alia tamen α 38 ad legum scientiam Λ Σ om. α 39 modestia] molestia U<sup>ac</sup> · in om. e 42 mortalium] mortali A 44 se natum e 46 habuit] putavit α · et communis utilitatis Λ Σ om. α

28 Cic. *Cluent.* 8 44 Cic. *Off.* 1.22, *Fin.* 2.45

<sup>5</sup> Zabarella was born 10 August 1360, not in fact in Padua but in Piove di Sacco, a commune in the Paduan territory 20 kilometres south east of the city. Praise of one's birthplace is a common rhetorical topic: see *Intro*, 2c. Zabarella repeatedly used it in his own orations at the university of Padua as well as for the funeral of the city's lord Francesco I da Carrara (1393). His protégé Pier Paolo Vergerio – who was present in

ty, dignity of manners and an irreproachable life, without doubt you will find no one who can be compared (no offense to others) by a long shot with this man. Therefore I ask you, conscript fathers, that you will listen kindly, as you have started, and pay attention while I say a few things pertaining to his life and manners (as time permits) as well as regarding his virtues.

4. As you know Francesco was born in Padua, easily among the oldest and noblest of Italian cities, from parents who were very honourable and worthy of him.<sup>5</sup> Raised at home through their care in a venerable manner, as soon as his age allowed he gave himself of his own accord wholly to letters. And although there were various fields of learning with which he could occupy himself to great acclaim, nevertheless, because he saw that the knowledge of law and of the statutes was highly esteemed and most useful to people's lives, he directed all his effort to those; and he became so accomplished in them that he far surpassed not only men of our own day but those of an earlier time. Yet he did not neglect other studies. For because of the keenness of his mind and disposition he added to the study of the laws also a knowledge of the other arts. He conducted his adolescence with such discretion that at an early age he attained the authority held by old men. He spurned all indulgences and pleasures of the body (which accompany that age) to the extent that he chose and preserved perpetual celibacy; in this regard he followed the nature not of mortals but of heaven-dwellers. 5. However, when he had reached the age of manhood, judging that he was not only born for himself but also begotten to serve others, he began to teach publicly, not so much for the sake of money (which he always scorned and valued at naught) as on account of duty and for the benefit of all, so that that the fruits of his labours would reach many.<sup>6</sup> Thus from his school – as from a plentiful fount of knowl-

Constance and wrote an epistolary portrait of Zabarella after the latter's death – listed an illustrious fatherland as one of three human benefits in his treatise *De ingenuis moribus* (c. 1403), dedicated to Francesco's grandson Ubertino da Carrara.

<sup>6</sup> After graduating in 1385, Zabarella taught canon law in Florence for five years. He returned to Padua in 1390 and taught canon and civic law at the university until 1410. In his Paduan years he also served as archpriest in the cathedral, and frequently acted as ambassador: when Padua fell to Venice, it was Zabarella who handed the city's keys, banner, and seal to the Venetian doge on 3 January 1406. For Zabarella as scholar and teacher, see *Intro*, 3b.

## *Oratio in laudes Leonardi Aretini*

1. Hodiernus, Florentini,<sup>1</sup> dies, atque hic publicus maeror communi voluntate susceptus declarat quanta huius praestantissimi atque omni laude dignissimi viri virtus extiterit et quam cara et grata universae sit civitati, cum videamus omnes magistratus huius urbis, omnium  
5 ordinum consensum, universum populum ad ornandam hanc funeris pompam una mente suis decretis ultro in eandem sententiam convenisse. Nullus est enim qui se civem esse existimarit, qui non suum studium atque operam praestiterit ad cohonestandas exequias hominis optime de republica meriti, et eius, cui parem rara saecula protulerunt.  
10 Magnum quippe hoc et praeclarum testimonium est virtutis et laudis, et mea sententia plurimi aestimandum. Is enim iustus et verus est honor, qui soli virtuti sponte conceditur, et recte factis, non qui aliunde quaeritur aut precibus est aut suffragiis hominum emendicatus. Non  
15 generi, non maioribus, non parentibus Leonardi,<sup>2</sup> non amicis rogantibus hi honores tribuuntur, sed probitati, continentiae, prudentiae, integritati vitae, ut non externo opere quaesitos, sed a sola virtute profectos appareat.<sup>3</sup> 2. Itaque cum caetera vitae commoda nobis quaerenda sunt, tum vero maxime virtutis ratio omni conatu appetenda, cum tanta illius cultoribus tum vivis, tum mortuis sint honoris praemia  
20 constituta. Licet autem satis fructus in ipsa virtute positum videatur, tamen ad laudem quoque confert et posteritatis memoriam ab iis diligere, coli, ornari, praedicari, qui et ipsi in laude vixerunt. Sed mihi pietas praecipue civitatis, tum celebris hoc in ornando funere civium frequentia maxime laudanda esse videtur, qui huius singularis viri memoriam  
25 tam grata significatione benivolentiae prosequantur.<sup>4</sup> Quae res tum spectat ad mortui gloriam singularem, tum vivos excitat ad capessen-

4 omnes *om.* e 8 hominis exequias e 10 et praeclarum hoc e · est *om.* U · virtutis est e  
13 emendicatus] mendicatus e 15 prudentiae, continentiae e 16 quaesitos] quaesitus e  
17 profectos] profectus e 20 fructus virtutis in e · positum] positus e 21 iis] his e

<sup>1</sup> Poggio's address suggests a delivery of this oration at Brunetti's state funeral in Santa Croce in Florence; however, it is most likely a fictitious speech (see *Intro*, 2b).

<sup>2</sup> While living in Florence, Brunetti was known as "Messere Leonardo di Ceccho d'Arezzo, del contado di Firenze", since Arezzo was by then part of the Florentine *contado*. His father, Francesco, is believed to have been a grain merchant.

## *Oration in Praise of Leonardo Bruni*

1. The present day, Florentines,<sup>1</sup> and this public display of grief undertaken with a common will, show what great virtue there was in this extremely outstanding man, worthy of all praise, and how dear and pleasing he was to the whole community. For we see that all the magistrates of this city, all ranks in harmony, and the whole people have agreed – with one mind and by their own spontaneous decision – to pay homage in this funeral procession. For no one who calls himself a citizen will not give his endeavour and efforts to honour the last rites of a man who has performed great service to the state, and whose equal few ages have produced. This is surely a great and splendid testimony to his virtue and glory and, in my opinion, it holds much weight. For right and true is the honour that is freely paid to virtue alone and to good deeds, not that which is sought from others or obtained through begging and wheedling. These honours are granted not to Leonardo's family, his forefathers, or parents,<sup>2</sup> nor because his friends demand it, but to his uprightness, his self-restraint, his prudence, and his impeccable way of life, so that these patently are not requested by external means, but acquired from virtue alone.<sup>3</sup> 2. And thus, while we should seek other boons in life as well, we must most of all pursue the principle of virtue with all might, since the rewards in glory granted to its practitioners, both alive and dead, are so great. Granted, it would seem that the fruit lies in virtue itself, yet still it contributes to someone's glory and recollection by posterity when he is loved, worshipped, honoured, and lauded by those people who themselves have also lived amidst praise. In my opinion, however, first and foremost the respect of the community is exceedingly to be praised, followed by the great throng of citizens honouring this funeral, who are attending to the memory of this exceptional man with such precious expressions of sympathy.<sup>4</sup> This lends a special glory to the dead and exhorts the living to strive for the

<sup>3</sup> For the role of personal virtue vis-à-vis external goods as *topoi* for oratorical praise, see *Intro*, 2c and 3a.

<sup>4</sup> The obsequies are the first stage of the commemorative (re-)fashioning of the deceased, and Poggio's comments on these events with their attendant mourners in several orations, as discussed in *Intro*, 2c.

dum eum vitae cursum, quem propter conspiciant hunc civem tales honores consecutum, ac tam carum reipublicae extitisse.<sup>5</sup>

30 3. Quamvis autem Leonardi virtus nullius externa laudatione egeat ad se ornandam (quippe is sibi vivens laudem peperit immortalem), tamen praestandum est a nobis debitum officium amicitiae nostrae, quae, iam amplius annis quatuor et quadraginta inter nos similium studiorum cursu coepta, semper viguit sanctissime absque ulla querela aut benivolentiae intermissione. Solent quandoque inter amicos dissen-  
35 siones, iurgia et contentiones exoriri, ut intermissio quaedam benivolentiae fieri videatur.<sup>6</sup> Sed nostra semper inviolata permansit animorum coniunctio, quorum amorem nullius umquam dissidii causa distraxit. Et id quidem iure inter nos contigit. Ea namque vera est ac stabilis amicitia, quam optimorum studiorum et bonorum morum simili-  
40 tudo contraxit; quae quoniam mutua benivolentia et officiis fovetur, necesse est ut ea sit firma ac diuturna. Etsi autem ab omnibus doctis et eloquentibus viris hoc munus postuletur, ut famam eius, qui huius saeculi nostri et doctorum omnium fuit maximum ornamentum, celebrem reddere ad posteros debeant, tamen id praecipue a nobis suo quodam  
45 iure videtur exigere ius nostrae amicitiae et voluntatum studiorumque coniunctio,<sup>7</sup> ut in quem vivum summa beneficia contulimus, defuncti quoque memoriam aliquo munere afficiamus.

4. Sed antequam de eo quod proposui dicere aggrediar,<sup>8</sup> paucis mihi queri liceat de communi omnium nostrum conditione, quae mihi in  
50 angusto nimis et in incerto rerum statu videtur esse posita, deque factorum iniuria, quae me omnibus iis privarunt, quos mecum ab in-  
eunte mea adolescentia litterarum studia summa caritate et benivolentia devinxerunt. Nam primo communem doctorum hominum paren-  
tem, Colucium Salutatum, humanissimum ac doctissimum virum, tum  
55 Robertum cognomento Rufum, deinde Nicolaum Nicolum, viros omni litterarum genere et humanitatis studiis praestantes, deinceps omni virtute virum celebrem, Laurentium de Medicis, pluresque alios sum-

29 laudatione] laudationis opera e 30 is] qui e 39 optimorum studiorum] optimarum artium studium e 41 ea] ita e · Etsi autem] Et licet e · et] ac e 43 maximum fuit e 51 iis] his e 52 mea *om.* e 53 hominum] omnium e 54 ac doctissimum *om.* A 56 praestantes] praestantissimos e

<sup>5</sup> On Poggio's frequent use of the "mirror trope" (here and in §30 below), see *Intro*, 2c.

<sup>6</sup> This is what happened between Bruni and his and Poggio's mutual friend Niccoli.

same course of life, on account of which they see that this citizen attained such honours and was so dear to the state.<sup>5</sup>

3. However, even though Leonardo's virtue needs no external eulogy to add lustre (for he procured himself immortal praise when he was alive), I still need to perform the offices owed to our friendship, which has now lasted more than forty-four years between us since we embarked on the same course of studies, and has always flourished unblemished and without any quarrels or pause in goodwill. It is common now and then for disagreements to arise among friends, or disputes or contentions: temporarily, they seem to grow apart.<sup>6</sup> But our spiritual connection always remained unviolated, and our mutual appreciation never diminished on account of any dissent. And rightly so. For a true and stable friendship is founded on a shared interest in the best studies and moral values; when it is then fostered by mutual goodwill and support, it automatically grows firm and long-lasting. And so, while all learned and well-spoken men should see it as their duty to enhance the posthumous fame of this man who was the greatest jewel of our age and among all men of learning, still it seems that the law of our friendship, and our shared interests and ambitions, with some right demands this most of all of me.<sup>7</sup> The memory of him to whom, when he lived, I offered the greatest favours, let me also cultivate now he has died.

4. But before I begin to say what I have in mind about him,<sup>8</sup> permit me briefly to lament the common condition of us all, which seems to me in all too dire and uncertain straits, as well as the inequities of fate, which have deprived me of all those men with whom, from my earliest youth, the study of letters conjoined me in great friendship and goodwill. For first fate took from us the common father of all scholars, Coluccio Salutati, that most cultured and learned man; then Roberto de' Rossi; after that Niccolò Niccoli – outstanding humanists in all genres of literature – and next that man renowned in all virtues,

Several passages in this oration seem to have been written with Niccoli in mind, and are discussed in *Intro*, 3a and 3b.

<sup>7</sup> The actual oration at Bruni's state funeral in Santa Croce was given by Giannozzo Manetti, of behalf of the Florentine Republic (see De Keyser 2021 for a critical edition and analysis of this text). By stating that it is both every learned man's calling to honour Bruni's learning and his personal duty as a friend, Poggio avoids the impression that his eulogy might be perceived as implicit criticism of Manetti's achievement.

<sup>8</sup> For the structuring of this eulogy, see *Intro*, 3b.





# Indices

## *Index codicum*

- BERLIN, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin –  
Preußischer Kulturbesitz  
Lat. fol. 557 (Morbio 403): 82  
Lat. fol. 613: 82  
Lat. fol. 667 (Phillipps 11907): 82  
Lat. qu. 782 (Phillipps 9260): 82
- BOLOGNA, Biblioteca Universitaria  
12, vol. 1, nr. 10: 82, 96  
2948, vol. 36: 82
- BRUSSELS, Koninklijke Bibliotheek  
van België (KBR)  
II.1442: 82
- BUDAPEST,  
Országos Széchényi Könyvtár  
Clmae 292: 82
- CHEMNITZ, Stadtbibliothek  
App. 2282: 82
- COLOGNE, Historisches Archiv  
GB quarto 268: 82
- CORTONA, Biblioteca del Comune di  
Cortona e dell'Accademia Etrusca  
243: 82
- DARMSTADT, Universitäts- und  
Landesbibliothek  
2525: 83
- DIJON, Bibliothèque municipale  
Ancien fonds 837 (491): 67-69, 76, 83
- DRESDEN, Sächsische Landesbibliothek  
– Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek  
C.110<sup>ab</sup>: 70-71, 83
- EICHSTÄTT, Universitätsbibliothek  
Eichstätt-Ingolstadt  
st 218: 25, 83  
st 633: 83, 94, 96  
st 720: 77-78, 83, 98
- FLORENCE,  
Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana  
Ashb. 1065: 67-69, 76, 83, 98  
Plut. 19.8: 83  
Plut. 47.20: 71-72, 83, 98  
Plut. 47.22: 84  
Plut. 90 sup. 32: 68, 84  
Plut. 90 sup. 33: 67-68, 76, 84, 98  
Plut. 90 sup. 34: 71, 84, 98  
Plut. 90 sup. 56: 84  
Strozzi 105: 84
- FLORENCE,  
Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale  
Conv. Sopp. E.VI.2655: 71-72, 84, 98  
Magl. VIII.1421bis: 84  
Magl. VIII.1435: 68, 77, 84  
Magl. XXV.628: 84  
Rinuccini, Filza 18: 84, 96
- FLORENCE, Biblioteca Riccardiana  
784: 85  
813: 71-72, 85  
1206: 77-78, 85, 98
- GOTHA, Forschungsbibliothek  
der Universität Erfurt  
Chart. B 61: 85
- HOLKHAM HALL,  
Library of the Earl of Leicester  
481: 85
- KRAKÓW, Biblioteka Jagiellońska  
42: 71, 85  
2499: 71-72, 85  
Lat. quarto 545: 71, 85
- LIÈGE,  
Bibliothèque du Grand Séminaire  
6.G.6: 85
- LIVERPOOL, Athenaeum Library  
s.n.: 71-72, 85

## LONDON, British Library

Add. 14800: 85

Arundel 70: 85

Harley 2492: 86

Harley 3276: 73, 86

Harley 3716: 86

## LYON, Bibliothèque municipale

168 (100): 86

## MADRID, Biblioteca Nacional de España

11557: 86

## MILAN, Biblioteca Ambrosiana

E 115 sup.: 71, 86

I 28 sup.: 73, 86

L 69 sup.: 86

Trotti 348: 68-69, 76, 86, 98

## MODENA,

Biblioteca Estense Universitaria

γ H.5.45 (Campori 17): 87

## MUNICH, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek

Clm 477: 87

Clm 504: 87

Clm 3590: 87

Clm 6721: 87

Clm 8482: 87

## MUNICH, Universitätsbibliothek der

Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität

Folio 607: 87

Quarto 768: 87

## NAPLES, Biblioteca Nazionale

VI D 2: 87

## NEW HAVEN, Yale University,

Beinecke Library

Osborn a17: 87

## NUREMBERG, Stadtbibliothek

Cent. V, Append. 15: 88, 94

## OLOMOUC, Vědecká Knihovna

M I 159: 88

## OXFORD, Balliol College Library

125: 88

## OXFORD, Bodleian Library

D'Orville 59: 77, 88

## PADUA, Biblioteca Civica

B.P. 796, fasc. 21: 88

B.P. 2042: 88, 95

## PADUA,

Biblioteca del Seminario Vescovile

36: 88

92: 88

692: 88

## PALERMO, Biblioteca Comunale

2 Qq D 71: 88

## PARIS, Bibliothèque nationale de France

lat. 7854: 88-89, 97

lat. 8576: 70-71, 80, 89, 98

Moreau 849: 89

Nouv. acq. lat. 1150: 68, 78, 89, 98

## PERUGIA, Biblioteca comunale Augusta

C 1 (118): 89, 98

H 78 (592): 68, 89, 97

J 100 (706): 77, 89

## PESARO, Biblioteca Oliveriana

44: 89

## RAVENNA,

Istituzione Biblioteca Classense

117: 89

## SALAMANCA,

Universidad de Salamanca,

Biblioteca General Histórica

64: 68-69, 76, 90, 98

## SAN DANIELE DEL FRIULI,

Civica Biblioteca Guarneriana

97: 90

112: 90, 98

## SCHLÄGL, Stiftsbibliothek

Cpl. 136: 68-69, 76, 90

## SEVILLE,

Biblioteca Capitular y Colombina

5-5-19: 90

## SIENA,

Biblioteca comunale degli Intronati

H.VI.26: 90, 98

H.VI.29: 90

H.IX.21: 91

K.V.29: 91

- STUTTGART, Württembergische  
Landesbibliothek  
Hist. fol. 252: 91
- TURIN,  
Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria  
H.III.8: 91
- UDINE, Biblioteca Arcivescovile  
70: 91
- VATICAN CITY,  
Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana  
Chigi I.VI.215: 91  
Ott. lat. 2290: 71, 91  
Ott. lat. 3021: 91  
Patetta 338: 91  
Reg. lat. 1555: 73, 91  
Reg. lat. 1583: 91, 95  
Urb. lat. 224: 68-70, 76-77, 92, 98  
Urb. lat. 1169: 68, 92  
Vat. lat. 1785: 69, 78, 92, 98  
Vat. lat. 2906: 92  
Vat. lat. 3923: 92  
Vat. lat. 6265: 92  
Vat. lat. 6292: 92  
Vat. lat. 13679: 77, 92
- VENICE, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana  
Marc. lat. XI.3 (4351): 92  
Marc. lat. XI.59 (4152): 92  
Marc. lat. XI.80 (3057): 93  
Marc. lat. XI.100 (3938): 93  
Marc. lat. XIV.7 (4319): 93
- VICENZA, Biblioteca civica Bertoliana  
108: 73, 93
- VIENNA,  
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek  
Lat. 3268: 93  
Lat. 3330: 93  
Lat. 5552: 93
- WASHINGTON, D.C.,  
Library of Congress  
Phillips 5819: 93
- WOLFENBÜTTEL,  
Herzog August Bibliothek  
Guelf. 83.25 Aug. 2°: 93
- WROCLAW, Biblioteka Uniwersytecka  
R. 36: 93
- ZÜRICH, Zentralbibliothek  
Car. C 156: 93-94

*Index locorum*

## ARISTOTELES

*Ethica Eudemia*

7.2.50 (1238a17): 122

*Ethica Nicomachea*

1.8 (1098b-1099b): 35-36, 174

4.1-5 (1119b-1226b): 35

*Politica*

4.8 (1294a), 5.1 (1301b): 226

*Rhetorica*

1.5 (1360b): 26

1.9 (1366a-b): 35

## ATHENAEUS

*Deipnosophistae*

11.505d: 130, 272

## AUGUSTINUS, AURELIUS

*De libero arbitrio*

3.48: 122

## BIBLIA SACRA

Matth. 7.17-18: 262

Matth. 10.8: 208

I Cor. 3.19: 192, 270

I Tim. 6.10: 122

Iac. 1.27: 210

## CICERO, MARCUS TULLIUS

*Brutus*

79: 240

*Cato Maior De senectute*

24: 222

31: 106

44: 124

51: 262

91: 118

*De finibus bonorum et malorum*

42.45: 104, 168

2.87-88: 272

3.43: 174

*De inventione*

2.159-64: 33

*De legibus*

1.16: 118

1.17: 116

1.18: 118

*De officiis*

1.17-19: 116

1.22: 104, 168

1.48: 122

1.51: 122

1.68: 122

1.80: 124

2.43: 108, 148

*De oratore*

2.342-44: 26, 37

3.6: 126

3.129: 30, 130, 272

*De republica*

6.13: 30

*Epistulae ad Atticum*

16.7.2: 142

*Epistulae ad familiares*

1.9.12: 196

2.1: 272

*Epistulae ad Quintum fratrem*

1.3: 126

*Laelius De amicitia*

26: 122

98: 108, 148

*Paradoxa Stoicorum*

8: 204

20: 112

49: 150

*Philippicae*

11.34: 112

*Pro Cluentio*

8: 104

146: 118

*Pro Ligario*

34: 106

*Pro Marcello*

25: 272

*Pro Milone*

98: 130, 272

*Tusculanae disputationes*

1.74: 224

5.5: 274

DIOGENES LAËRTIUS  
*Vitae philosophorum*  
6.1.11: 226

ERASMUS, DESIDERIUS  
*Adagia*  
1784: 260

EURIPIDES  
*Orestes*  
735: 122

HERODOTUS  
*Historiae*  
7.44-46: 166

HIERONYMUS, EUSEBIUS  
*Epistulae*  
60.14: 224

HOMERUS  
*Ilias*  
1.249: 106

HORATIUS FLACCUS, QUINTUS  
*Ars poetica*  
361: 29  
*Carmina*  
3.30: 130, 272

ISIDORUS HISPALENSIS  
*Origines*  
2.24.9: 224

ISOCRATES  
*Ad Demonicum*  
61.6: 176

LIVIUS, TITUS  
*Ab Urbe condita*  
28.45: 224

OVIDIUS NASO, PUBLIUS  
*Metamorphoses*  
15.234: 272

PAUSANIAS  
10.18: 130, 272

PLATO  
*Epistulae*  
332c: 38, 150, 172  
358a: 168

*Leges*  
1711c: 196  
858b: 118

*Lysis*  
207c: 122

*Phaedo*  
81a: 224  
*Phaedrus*  
279c: 122

*Timaeus*  
69d: 124

PLINIUS SECUNDUS MAIOR  
*Naturalis historia*  
33.83: 130, 272

PLINIUS SECUNDUS MINOR  
*Epistulae*  
3.7.13: 166

PLUTARCHUS CHAERONENSIS  
*Cato Maior*  
8: 260  
*Moralia*  
65a: 122

QUINTILIANUS, MARCUS FABIUS  
*Institutiones oratoriae*  
2.3: 29  
3.7.2: 25  
3.7.10-18: 26  
6.2.29: 29  
10.1.99: 134

RHETORICA AD HERENNIIUM  
3.6.10: 33  
3.10-15: 26

SALLUSTIUS CRISPUS, GAIUS  
*Bellum Iugurthinum*  
4: 30

*De Catilinae coniuratione*  
52.21: 120, 206, 242

SENECA, LUCIUS ANNAEUS  
*Consolatio ad Marciam*  
10.4: 222

*De brevitare vitae*

1-4: 274

17.1-2: 166

*Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*

54.2: 224

115.3: 178

*Hercules furens*

340-41: 226

SUETONIUS TRANQUILLUS, GAIUS

*Divus Iulius*

6: 25

VALERIUS MAXIMUS

*Facta et dicta memorabilia*

7.2 ext. 1: 108, 148

8.15 ext. 2: 130, 272

9.13 ext. 1: 166

VARRO, MARCUS TERENTIUS

*Res rusticae*

1.1: 222

VERGILIUS MARO, PUBLIUS

*Aeneis*

1.247: 27

XENOPHON ATHENIENSIS

*Memorabilia*

2.1.21-33: 148

2.6.39: 108, 148

8.8.5: 196

*Index nominum*

The locations of the libraries that are listed in the *Index codicum* have not been indexed here. Poggio himself and any editors and printers publishing after 1700 have not been included either.

- Abydus 167  
 Acciaiuoli, Angelo (Bishop of Florence) 109  
 Adimari, Alamanno (Cardinal) 95  
 Alamanni, Andrea 52, 223  
 Albergati, Niccolò (Cardinal) 15-16, 18-19, 21-22, 30-31, 33, 39-44, 51, 53, 61, 64-65, 67, 74, 76-78, 81-93, 96-97, 99, 187-215  
 Albert II of Habsburg (Duke of Austria, King of the Romans) 66, 206-07, 264-65  
 Albizzi family 177  
 Alexander V (Pope) 11, 16, 54, 108, 113, 230-31  
 Alighieri, Dante 236-37  
 Aliotti, Girolamo 148  
 Alps 99  
 Amadeus VIII (Duke of Savoy) *see* Felix V (Pope)  
 Anghiari (Battle of) 239  
 Antenor 27  
 Antisthenes 37  
 Archias 241  
 Archytas of Tarantum 169  
 Aretino, Carlo *see* Marsuppini, Carlo  
 Aretino, Leonardo *see* Bruni, Leonardo  
 Arezzo 11, 16, 27, 144, 218, 224-27  
 Aristotle 26, 35-38, 40, 54, 74, 122, 167, 174-75, 179, 205, 226-27, 236-37  
 Arno 11  
 Arras (Congress of) 15, 206  
 Asia 166-67, 266-69  
 Athenaeus 130, 272  
 Athens 30, 46, 240-41  
 Aucuparius, Thomas *see* Vogler, Thomas  
 Augustine 122  
 Augustinians 14, 51, 136-37  
 Aurispa, Giovanni 34, 50, 142-43, 243  
 Austria 265  
 Avignon 53-54, 108, 112, 231  
 Baden Baden 60, 86-87, 93  
 Balkan 267  
 Baluze, Étienne 97  
 Barbaro, Ermolao 73  
 Barbaro, Francesco 38, 72-73, 90, 115, 169  
 Barbo, Pietro *see* Paul II (Pope)  
 Barzizza, Gasparino 24  
 Basel (Council of) 15, 17, 34, 53, 62-66, 206-07, 260-63  
 Basil of Caesarea 236-37  
 Beaufort, Henry (Bishop of Winchester) 12, 199, 257  
 Benedict XIII (Pope) 54, 108, 112-13, 231  
 Benedict XIV (Pope) 16, 97  
 Bentivoglio, Anton Galeazzo 195  
 Benvenuta di Giovanni di Paganino da Creda 14, 152  
 Benvenuti, Lorenzo 35  
 Bessarion (Cardinal) 149, 264  
 Bianchi da Velate, Francesco 27  
 Bias of Priene 204-05  
 Bisticci, Vespasiano da 19, 169  
 Boccaccio, Giovanni 46, 52, 156-57, 236-37  
 Bohemia 13, 17, 59, 62-63, 254-55, 258-61, 265  
 Boiardo, Feltrino 22, 72  
 Bologna 11, 13, 15-17, 21-22, 48-49, 56, 64, 72-74, 96, 112, 147, 190-95, 198-200, 206-09, 230-31, 254-55  
 Boniface IX (Pope) 11, 54, 228-31  
 Bracciolini, Guccio 11  
 Bracciolini, Jacopo 69-70  
 Brant, Sebastian 94  
 Brognolo, Carlo 21, 75  
 Brunelleschi, Filippo 170  
 Bruni, Donato 16, 232

- Bruni, Leonardo 11-12, 14, 16, 18-22,  
     24, 26-27, 30, 32, 34, 37-38, 40-41,  
     43, 45-52, 60-61, 67-69, 74-75,  
     77-78, 81-93, 97, 99, 103, 135, 139,  
     141-43, 153, 217-45, 254  
 Bruni, Piera 232  
 Brutus, Marcus 151  
 Buda 264-65  
 Bueri, Piccarda 167  
 Bulgaria 249  
 Buondelmonti, Vaggia 12  
 Burgundy 15, 204, 206-07  
 Buzzacarini, Lodovico 23  
 Byzantines 16, 27, 103  
  
 Caesar, Julius 25, 27, 57, 74, 86-87,  
     91-93, 254  
 Camaldoli 14, 144, 168  
 Carrara, Francesco I da 13, 24, 104-05  
 Carrara, Ubertino da 105  
 Carthusians 15, 33, 39, 64, 192-93, 200  
 Castiglione, Branda da (Cardinal) 17,  
     255  
 Cato 150-51, 236-37  
 Cavalcanti, Ginevra di Giovanni 15, 165  
 Cavalcanti, Giovanni 165  
 Cavalcanti, Giovanni Amerigo dei 165  
 Cavalcanti, Guido 165  
 Cento 195  
 Cesarini, Andreuzzo 254  
 Cesarini, Giuliano (Cardinal) 11, 17-19,  
     21-22, 27, 30-31, 33-34, 39-45, 51,  
     53, 62-68, 75-76, 78, 81-84, 86-90,  
     92-94, 97, 99, 149, 209, 238, 247-75  
 Charles VI (King of France) 198-99  
 Charles VII (King of France) 190, 199,  
     206-07  
 Chierico, Francesco d'Antonio del 69  
 Chrysoloras, John 29, 130  
 Chrysoloras, Manuel 16, 18-19, 27,  
     29-30, 45, 49, 51, 103, 130-31,  
     139-41, 222, 228-29  
 Chrysostom, John 147  
 Cicero 24, 26, 30, 33, 37, 50, 73, 104,  
     106-08, 112-13, 116-19, 122-24,  
     126, 130, 140-42, 148, 150-51, 168,  
     174, 196, 204, 222, 224, 236-37,  
     240-41, 262, 272, 274  
  
 Circe 110-11  
 Cirignani, Giovanni 19, 74  
 Cîteaux 69  
 Clement V (Pope) 13, 118  
 Clement VII (Pope) 53, 231  
 Colonna, Oddone *see* Martin V (Pope)  
 Constance (Council of) 12-13, 16,  
     18-19, 22-25, 28-29, 33, 44, 53-64,  
     82, 84-87, 90, 93, 95, 102-03, 105,  
     112-13, 119, 130, 232-33, 255, 260  
 Constantinople 141-42, 228-29  
 Conti, Lucido 95-96, 99  
 Correr, Angelo *see* Gregory XII (Pope)  
 Correr, Antonio 208  
 Correr, Gregorio 82, 86-88, 90  
 Cossa, Baldassare 108, 231  
 Cramoisy, Sébastien 95  
 Creda, Benvenuta di Giovanni di  
     Paganino da 14, 152  
 Curia 12, 14, 16-19, 22, 45-46, 53,  
     55-59, 183, 190, 208-09, 212-13,  
     222, 228-31, 248, 271  
 Czech Republic 62, 260  
  
 Dante Alighieri 236-37  
 Danube 266-67  
 Dardanelles 268  
 Dati, Leonardo 25  
 Decembrio, Pier Candido 90  
 Demosthenes 236  
 Des Prez, Nicolas 94  
 Diogenes Laërtius 69, 226  
 Dion & Dionysius of Syracuse  
     38, 150-51, 172-73  
 Domažlice (Taus) 62-63, 260  
 Donatello 171  
 Donato, Pietro 23  
 Dony d'Attichy, Louis 95  
  
 Edirne (Hadrinapolis) 269  
 Edward III (King of England) 258  
 Elizabeth of Luxembourg 264-66  
 England 12, 15, 17, 19, 57, 190, 196-99,  
     204-07, 256-58  
 Ennius 240-41  
 Erasmus, Desiderius 260  
 Etruria 27, 224-25



- Eugene IV (Pope) 12, 15-17, 22, 44,  
62-66, 83, 89, 182-83, 202-07,  
210-13, 261, 263-65, 270-71
- Euripides 122
- Europe 17, 25, 37, 43, 51, 53, 67,  
138-39, 249-51, 266-69
- Eyb, Albrecht von 83, 94, 96, 99
- Eyb, Johannes von 25
- Facio, Bartolomeo 51
- Felix V (Pope) 65-66, 69, 83, 85, 88,  
90, 92, 261
- Ferentino 202-03
- Ferrara 74
- Ferrara-Florence (Council of) 15, 17,  
65, 202-03, 206-09, 260-61, 264-65
- Filelfo, Francesco 34, 38, 69, 86-87,  
89-90, 92-93, 142-43, 153
- Fillastre, Guillaume (Cardinal) 55, 56,  
58, 60, 113, 119, 124-25
- Fleming, Richard 23, 28
- Florence 4, 11-19, 22, 26-27, 31-32, 34,  
43-47, 50-52, 56, 61, 64-65, 67,  
70-72, 74, 83, 89, 105, 108-09,  
135-37, 140-44, 165, 167, 169, 173,  
199, 202-03, 206-07, 211, 218-22,  
226-33, 236-40, 264-65
- Foschi, Angelotto 83, 87
- Frambotto, Paolo 95
- France 12, 15, 17, 57, 140-41, 190,  
198-99, 202-04, 206-07, 256-57
- Francesco d'Antonio del Chierico 69
- Franciscans 196-97
- Frederick I (Elector of Brandenburg) 62
- Frederick II (Emperor) 239
- Frederick III (Emperor) 83
- Frezzi, Federico (Bishop of Foligno) 25
- Frutti, Iacoba 11
- Fulvius Nobilior, Quintus 241
- Galluzzo (Certosa del) 44, 212
- Garnefelt, Georg 96
- Gaspare da Verona 90
- Genoa 226
- Geri di Nanni di Geri d'Arezzo 232
- Germany 12, 15, 17, 62-66, 77, 140-41,  
206-07, 232-33, 254, 259
- Gerson, Jean 44
- Giovanni di Gherardo da Prato 52
- Giovanni di Lorenzo 138-39
- Giovanni di Michele 194
- Gorgias 30, 236-37
- Goths 46, 238-39
- Gracchi brothers 236-37
- Greeks 15-17, 62, 65, 140-45, 154-55,  
166, 206-07, 228-29, 236-37,  
240-41, 250-51, 264-65
- Gregory IX (Pope) 13
- Gregory XII (Pope) 11, 16, 54, 108,  
112-13, 230-31
- Guarino Veronese 18-20, 22, 25, 27, 38,  
50, 60, 72-74, 86-88, 90, 92-93,  
140-43
- Guarnerio d'Artegna 90
- Habsburg 66, 207, 265
- Hadrinapolis (Edirne) 269
- Hardt, Hermann von der 23, 95, 130
- Hellespont 166, 268-69
- Henry IV (King of England) 258
- Henry V (King of England) 190, 198
- Henry VI (King of England) 256
- Hercules 148-149
- Herennius 26, 33
- Herodotus 166
- Hiero (Tyrant of Syracuse) 41, 49, 236
- Homer 24, 106-07, 111
- Horace 29, 130, 272
- Humfrey of Lancaster (Duke of  
Gloucester) 257
- Hungary 259, 264-67
- Hunyadi, János 265-67
- Hus, Jan 13, 59-62, 255
- Hussites 15, 17, 53, 59-64, 260-61
- Innocent VII (Pope) 11, 16, 46, 54,  
229-31
- Isidore of Seville 224
- Isocrates 33, 176-77
- Italy 11, 13, 15, 24-25, 48-49, 55-58,  
62, 65, 67, 77, 103-05, 113, 125-27,  
138-45, 157, 174-75, 190-91, 196,  
199, 202-03, 228-29

- James (Apostle) 210-11  
 Janissaries 267  
 Jerome 224  
 Jerome of Prague 13, 60-61, 82, 84-85,  
 87, 90, 93  
 Jerusalem 248-49  
 Jesus 43, 48, 147, 248-51  
 Jews 196-97  
 Johannes von Palz 44  
 John of Lancaster (Duke of Bedford)  
 256  
 John the Fearless (Duke of Burgundy)  
 207  
 John XXIII (Pope) 11-14, 16, 19,  
 24, 54-56, 61, 108-09, 112-14,  
 231-33, 255
- Kinckhes, Johann 96  
 Knobloch, Johann 94-96
- Ladislav (King of Naples) 56, 112  
 Laërtius, Diogenes 69  
 Lambertini, Prospero Lorenzo *see*  
 Benedict XIV (Pope)  
 Langres 24  
 László V Postumus (King of Hungary)  
 264-65  
 Lateran (Council of) 196  
 Lazzarini, Giuseppe 4  
 Lignamine, Francesco 90  
 Livy 27, 63, 224-25, 241, 254  
 London 15, 19, 38, 194  
 Loschi, Antonio 18, 37  
 Loschi, Niccolò 89-90  
 Louis I (Duke of Bar, Bishop of  
 Poitiers) 190  
 Louis II (Duke of Anjou) 112  
 Lucretius 140-41
- Mainenti, Scipione 90, 92  
 Malpighini, Giovanni 11, 16  
 Manetti, Giannozzo 22, 35, 51,  
 69, 134-35, 221  
 Manfredi, Galeotto 68  
 Maramaldo, Landolfo (Cardinal) 11  
 Marcellus, Nonius 99, 140-41  
 Marescalchi, Francesco 73-74  
 Mark Antony 236
- Marsili, Luigi 13, 51-52, 136-41, 156-57  
 Marsuppini, Carlo 12, 14-15, 21, 47-49,  
 52, 71-73, 86, 89, 91, 93, 144-47,  
 162-85, 223, 226, 238-39  
 Martin V (Pope) 12-13, 15, 17, 19, 24,  
 57, 62, 64, 190, 198-204, 232, 237,  
 254-59  
 Martínez de Luna y Pérez de Gotor,  
 Pedro *see* Benedict XIII (Pope)  
 Medici, Averardo (Bicci) de' 174  
 Medici, Cosimo de' 12, 14-15, 26, 34,  
 35, 90, 93, 144-46, 156, 162, 165,  
 168, 170-71, 174, 177  
 Medici, Francesco de' 165  
 Medici, Giovanni di Bicci de' 14,  
 167, 170  
 Medici, Lorenzo de' (the Elder) 12,  
 14-15, 18-19, 21-22, 26, 30-31,  
 34-38, 40-43, 50, 52, 67, 71-72,  
 74, 77-78, 81, 91, 94, 96, 98-99,  
 161-85, 220-23, 254  
 Medici, Pierfrancesco de' 165  
 Medici, Vieri di Cambio de' 14  
 Mehmed II (Sultan) 268  
 Meissen 259  
 Migliorati, Cosimo de'  
*see* Innocent VII (Pope)  
 Milan 199, 202-03, 238-39  
 Montanari 254  
 Montefeltro, Federico da  
 (Duke of Urbino) 69  
 Moravia 259  
 Muguet, François 97  
 Mur y Cervellón, Dalmau de  
 (Archbishop of Zaragoza) 74-75  
 Murad II (Sultan) 249, 268  
 Muses 31, 51, 110-11, 134-35, 154-55,  
 158-59, 226-27, 242-43
- Naples 56, 112  
 Nestor 24, 106-07  
 Niccoli, Bartolomeo 136  
 Niccoli, Niccolò 13-16, 18-22, 26,  
 31-32, 34-35, 37-38, 40-41, 45-52,  
 60, 67, 69-74, 77-78, 80-93, 95,  
 98-99, 103, 133-59, 181, 194,  
 220-22, 235, 243, 273

- Nicholas V (Pope) 12, 18-19, 21, 66,  
68, 75, 78, 82-90, 92, 99, 156, 212  
Niš (Battle of) 266  
Nuremberg 65, 96, 206-07
- Odysseus 111  
Orsini, Giordano (Cardinal) 208  
Ottomans 17, 249, 265-71  
Ovid 272  
Oxford 257
- Padua 13, 17, 23-24, 27, 104-05, 109,  
177, 254-55  
Paltz, Johannes von 139  
Parentucelli, Tommaso  
*see* Nicholas V (Pope)  
Paris 14  
Paul II (Pope) 69  
Paulus, Lucius Aemilius 236-37  
Pausanias 130, 272  
Pavia-Siena (Council of) 62  
Perugia 17, 254-55  
Petit, Jean 94  
Petrarca, Francesco 51, 156-57, 226-27,  
236-37  
Petri, Heinrich 94-96, 99  
Petworth, Richard 90  
Philip the Good (Duke of Burgundy)  
206-07  
Phillarges, Peter *see* Alexander V (Pope)  
Piacenza 254-55  
Piccolomini, Enea Silvio  
*see* Pius II (Pope)  
Pierozzi, Antonio (Bishop of Florence)  
44  
Pieve 195  
Piove di Sacco 13, 104  
Pisa (Council of) 11, 54, 56, 108,  
113, 231  
Pius II (Pope) 51, 212, 271  
Pizolpasso, Francesco (Archbishop  
of Milan) 57, 74, 90  
Plato 33, 35, 37-38, 118, 122-25,  
150-51, 168-69, 172-73, 196,  
224, 236-37  
Pliny the Elder 130, 272  
Pliny the Younger 166  
Plutarch 122, 236-37, 260  
Poland 22, 259, 264-65, 268-69  
Poliziano, Angelo 77  
Polybius 236-38  
Pompey 57  
Procopius 46, 237-38  
Prodicus 149  
Ptolemy 48, 146  
Punic War 224-25, 236-38  
Pyrrhus 236  
Pythagoras 48, 147
- Quarata 227  
Quintilian 25-26, 29, 134, 140-41
- Ricci, Niccolò de' 69  
Rimini 230  
Rome 11-15, 17-22, 25-30, 34, 37-38,  
44, 46, 48, 50, 53-57, 63-64, 74-75,  
108-09, 112, 130, 152, 157, 183,  
189, 200-03, 206-07, 210-13, 222,  
225, 228-33, 240-41, 243, 248-54,  
257-59, 263, 265-66, 270-71, 273  
Rome (Council of) 56  
Rossi, Roberto de' 11, 14, 52, 138-39,  
168, 220-22  
Rustici, Cencio de' 18-19, 29, 90, 130  
Rustici, Paolotta di Lorenzo de', 254
- Sallust 30, 120, 206, 242  
Salutati, Coluccio 11, 13-14, 16, 19-20,  
46, 49, 51-52, 137, 140-41, 156-57,  
220-22, 229-30, 233  
Sankt Gallen 29, 60  
Sansovino, Francesco 27  
Savonarola, Michele 119  
Scarperia, Jacopo d'Angelo da 46, 230,  
237  
Scipio Africanus, Publius Cornelius  
74, 86-87, 90-93, 224-25, 240-41  
Segedino 267  
Seneca the Younger 166, 178, 222,  
224, 226, 274  
Sensenschmidt, Johann 96  
Sertorius 236-37

- Siena 22, 191, 210-11  
 Sigismund of Luxembourg (Emperor)  
     17, 56-58, 62, 65-66, 85, 89, 112-13,  
     124, 130, 207, 265  
 Sigonio, Carlo 44  
 Silius Italicus 99, 140-41  
 Socrates 48, 106-09, 147  
 Solon 118-19  
 Sozomeno da Pistoia 156  
 Spain 57  
 Spilimbergo, Giovanni da 90  
 Stoa 35, 37, 151-53, 226-27  
 Strozzi family 177  
 Strozzi, Nanni 89  
 Suetonius 25
- Taus (Domažlice) 62-63, 260  
 Terranuova Bracciolini 11-12, 226  
 Tomacelli, Pietro *see* Boniface IX (Pope)  
 Tommasa di Simone della Fioraia  
     16, 232  
 Tommasi, Pietro 34, 37  
 Transylvania 266  
 Traversari, Ambrogio 14, 50, 69, 142,  
     144-45, 169  
 Trevisan, Ludovico (Archbishop of  
     Florence) 70  
 Troy 27  
 Turks 17, 249, 265-71  
 Tuscany 224-25  
 Uliari, Bartolommeo 109  
 Urban V (Pope) 200  
 Urban VI (Pope) 53
- Valerius Maximus 108, 130, 148,  
     166, 272  
 Valla, Lorenzo 87-88  
 Varna (Battle of) 17, 22, 45, 75, 248-49,  
     265, 268-69  
 Varro, Marcus Terentius 222-23  
 Velate, Francesco Bianchi da 27  
 Venice 105, 169, 177, 199, 202-03,  
     228, 268  
 Vergerio, Pier Paolo 13, 23-24, 58, 95,  
     104, 106, 108, 115, 222, 237  
 Vergil 27  
 Vespasiano da Bisticci 19, 169  
 Villa, Agostino de 72-73  
 Villani, Giovanni 241  
 Visconti, Filippo Maria 91-92, 199  
 Visconti, Gian Galeazzo 239  
 Vogler, Thomas Heinrich 94-96, 99
- Wallachians 266-67  
 Władysław III (King of Poland)  
     264-69, 271  
 Wycliffe, John 59
- Xenophon 41, 49, 108, 148-49,  
     196, 223, 236-37  
 Xerxes (King of Persia) 166-67
- Zabarella, Francesco (Cardinal)  
     11, 13, 18-19, 21-25, 27-30, 33-34,  
     39-44, 51, 53-58, 61, 67, 70-71,  
     74-75, 78, 80-95, 98-99, 101-31  
 Zabarella, Jacopo il Giovane 95  
 Zeno, Jacopo 82  
 Zlatitsa (Battle of) 266