

## Antonio Buonvisi and Florens Wilson : a European friendship

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The Luccan banker Antonio Buonvisi is widely known as one of Thomas More's most intimate friends and his name is dotted through the official records of Henry VIII's reign, yet we have little information about the man. His acquaintance with the Scottish humanist Florens Wilson, both in London and Lyons, does bring him into a sharper focus as well as providing, in Wilson's Latin verses in his honour, a literary memorial to go with the remarkable letter that More sent him from the Tower. While he has been described as the patron of London's 'ultra-Catholics', the evidence suggests that – in the 1530s at least – he retained some sympathy with those drawn to an Erasmian reform of the Church.

**Key-words:** London - Lyons - Lucca - Erasmianism - 'tranquillitas'.

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Le banquier de Lucques est largement connu en tant qu'un des amis les plus intimes de Thomas More, et son nom revient dans les documents officiels du règne d'Henri VIII. Toutefois nous disposons de peu d'informations sur lui. Ses rapports avec l'humaniste écossais Florens Wilson, aussi bien à Londres qu'à Lyon, nous permettent de mieux le cerner, et fournissent en même temps, par les vers latins en son honneur, un mémorial littéraire qui accompagne la lettre remarquable que More lui a envoyée depuis la Tour de Londres. Alors qu'il a été décrit comme le patron des « ultra-catholiques » de Londres, les témoignages suggèrent, qu'au moins dans les années 1530, il a manifesté quelque sympathie pour ceux attirés par une réforme érasmienne de l'Eglise.

**Mots-clés :** Londres - Lyon - Lucca - Erasmianisme - 'tranquillitas'.

In the autumn of 1526, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September to be exact, Sir George Lawson, Builder of the King's Works, wrote to Thomas Cromwell, then heavily engaged in the management of Wolsey's affairs, and ended on a domestic note not too common in state archives, 'Ask my gossip Bonvice to write to Mr Florens to see that my son George be kept continually at school.'<sup>1</sup> Sir George assumes a degree of intimacy with his 'gossip', the Luccan banker Antonio Buonvisi, and his wishes are to be conveyed to Florens Wilson (Florentius Volusenus), a Scottish humanist, who has charge of the younger George in Paris.

Buonvisi is, of course, well-known to friends of Thomas More: for one thing, there is the remarkable declaration of friendship that More sent him from his prison in the Tower in which he called himself 'almost this fourtie yeares, not a geaste, but a continuall nurslynge [*non hospitem, sed alumnum*] in maister Bonvice house'<sup>2</sup> It is scarcely surprising, then, as Nicholas Harpsfield reports, that 'Sir Thomas More was wont to call [Antonie Bonvice] the apple of his eye.'<sup>3</sup>

The 'fourtie yeares' in More's letter would seem to suggest that their friendship reached back to the closing years of the fifteenth-century, but this is out of the question. The most reliable guide to Antonio Buonvisi's age is the will that he drew up in Louvain in 1553 and there he claims that he will complete his sixty-sixth year on the following 26<sup>th</sup> December, and that places his birth in 1487<sup>4</sup> He is

<sup>1</sup>J.S. Brewer et al. *Letters and Papers...of the Reign of Henry VIII* (London 1862-1920; hereafter LP) IV(3), app.84.

<sup>2</sup>Rogers, *Correspondence*, no 217, pp.559-63; for the nuances of this letter, and an accurate translation, see Elizabeth McCutcheon, "'The apple of my eye': Thomas More to Antonio Bonvisi", *Moreana* XVIII, 71-71 (1981), 37-56.

<sup>3</sup>*The life and death of Sir Thomas Moore, knight*, ed E.V. Hitchcock (EETS, London 1932) p.138. On Buonvisi's purchase of Crosby Hall from More, see R.J. Schoeck in *Notes and Queries* 197 (1952), 178-79.

<sup>4</sup>I am relying here on *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*; the Oxford DNB entry suggests that it took place in London between 1470-75, which seems more than improbable.

thus almost a decade younger than More. Such evidence as survives indicates that he was born at Lucca, the son of Benedetto di Lorenzo Buonvisi, and it is unlikely that he was posted to the London branch of the family bank before 1505. While More's reference to forty years may be an affectionate exaggeration, it probably points to an association with Antonio's cousins, Lorenzo and Niccolò, who had been in London since the early 1490s.

The family played a prominent, even dominant, role in the affairs of Lucca – Antonio's brother Martino was elected as *Gonfaloniere* in 1525 at the age of thirty-six – and the modern visitor to the city can still view the Palazzo Buonvisi, though existing buildings postdate the *seicento*. Interestingly enough, the family tombs were sited in the church of S. Frediano, home to a community of Canons Regular of the Lateran which would play a critical role in the religious crisis that erupted in the 1540s. Antonio is usually described as a merchant, a label that could be attached to anyone who made money rather than receiving rents or fees, and which fits with the *Italus mercator* who exposes the arrogant theologian in More's 'Letter to Dorp'. But in modern terms 'banker' (or 'merchant banker') would be more accurate since his activities depended on capital deriving from the Buonvisi family banking business, based in Lucca but with branches in Naples, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Lyons, Paris, Antwerp, and Nuremberg, as well as London.<sup>6</sup>

Such a network of associated branches had highly developed systems of communication to advise of political as well as commercial developments; consequently Antonio's life was devoted not only to the transfer of capital but also, as we shall see, to the transfer of information.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> CW 15, p.50

<sup>6</sup> G. Mansi, *I Patrizi di Lucca. Le antiche famiglie lucchesi ed i loro stemmi* (Lucca 1996) pp.118-28

<sup>7</sup> On the development of *scarselle* or courier services see Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit* (London 2002) pp.25-29; in the 1420s a letter from Florence to London was expected to arrive in under thirty days.

Of his wealth there can be no doubt: More emphasises that in 'The Letter to Dorp', 'I recently dined with a certain Italian merchant as learned as he is rich (and he certainly is rich).'<sup>8</sup> Like other Italian financiers in London he was particularly involved with the trade in woollen cloth, and part of his wealth came from the introduction of new spinning methods into the Devonshire cloth trade.<sup>9</sup> This was an aspect of the English economy that no foreigner could miss, and Erasmus celebrated it in his 'De laudibus Britanniae',

Foeta viris, foecunda feris, foecunda metallis,  
Ne gloriè quod ambiens largas opes  
Porrigit Oceanus, neu quod nec amicus ulla  
Caelum nec aura dulcius spirat plaga.  
Serus in occiduas mihi Phoebus conditur undas,  
Sororque nocteis blanda ducit lucidas.  
Possem ego laudati contemnere vellera Betis:  
Ubi villus albis mollior bidentibus?

('I am teeming with men, abundant with game, abounding in metals - not to boast of the copious riches proffered by the surrounding ocean or of friendlier skies and balmy breezes than in any other region. For me Phoebus vanishes late under the western waves and his charming sister brings on bright nights. I could scorn the fleeces of much-praised Baetica; where do the white sheep have softer wool than mine?')<sup>10</sup>

There is an obvious reminiscence of this in the encomium of Britain which Florens Wilson recites to two exiles from Lucca some forty years later on the hillside of Fourvières above Lyons,

<sup>8</sup> See n.5 above

<sup>9</sup> So in DNB

<sup>10</sup> CWE 85 32-33, lines 15-22

Hac se vestit Arabs, et cui rigat arva quotannis  
 Nilus, ab excelso delapsus vertice montis:  
 Qui Libyam longo tractu diffindit adustam.  
 Utitur hac pariter veteris gens culta Damasci,  
 Et Cylicum pubes, Cydno perfusa nitenti:  
 Se tegit hac Thracum genus, et quicumque tyrannum  
 Agnoscunt Scythicae faecis, cui dudum orientis  
 Imperium nostri discordia contulit orbis.

(The Arab clothes himself with [wool], and the dweller of the Nile that yearly flows down from the mountain heights and waters the fields, dividing with a long sweep the scorching soil of Libya. The polished race of old Damascus makes equal use of it, and the Cilician youth that bathes in the sparkling Cydnus. With it the Thracian covers himself, and all who recognise the tyrant of the dregs of Scythia on whom, for a time, our discord has bestowed the empire of the East.)<sup>11</sup>

Wilson's poem goes on to urge the necessity of a crusade to oppose the Ottoman threat – something of a humanist commonplace – but the identification of wool with English prosperity would have been axiomatic to any Tuscan with a commercial background. As Richard Marius observed, there is a certain irony in the fact that Buonvisi, who is identified by More as one of the earliest admirers of *Utopia*, was professionally involved with just the sort of people, 'the nobility and gentry, yes, and even a good many abbots', who resort to enclosure to boost their profits.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to his transactions in woollen cloth, Buonvisi acted as the importer of luxury items, jewels for instance, which he supplied to Wolsey and other members of the governing elite. These contacts, together with the resources of the Buonvisi banking houses across Europe, made him an invaluable agent for the government in the transfer of funds and the collection of intelligence.

<sup>11</sup> *De animi tranquillitate* (S. Gryphius, Lyons 1543) pp.316-17

<sup>12</sup> Marius, *Thomas More* (1984; London 1985) pp.156-57; *Utopia*, ed George M. Logan et al. (Cambridge 1995) p.62/63; on his admiration for *Utopia* see Rogers, Correspondence, no. 34.

When in 1524 Louise of Savoy sent her *maître d'hôtel*, Jean-Joachim de Passano, to London in order to initiate secret peace discussions, his cover was to stay as a guest in Buonvisi's house.<sup>13</sup> In 1533, when a degree of anxiety developed over papal approval of Cranmer's nomination as archbishop of Canterbury, Cromwell was authorised to pay £1000 in anticipation of the blocked annates due from the see in order to sweeten the atmosphere, and this was transferred to William Benet in Rome by Buonvisi. There were many services which he could provide for the government, services which continued after the critical year of 1535, and this must explain how he contrived to maintain his position in London until his final departure for exile in 1548.

Among the references to him that survive, a fair proportion show him in the role of benefactor or patron: indeed, Elizabeth McCutcheon has argued that the dominant conceit of an unpaid debt which governs More's letter from the Tower may allude to assistance given to More by the Buonvisi family at an early stage in his career.<sup>14</sup> It is not difficult to see how the two friends could build on a natural affinity: erudite and witty, they shared a subversive (and on occasion anti-clerical) sense of humour, yet combined this with a serious concern about reanimation of the Church.<sup>15</sup> Their subversive or 'Erasmian' humour was designed to expose clerical abuses but not to endanger the basic structures of the ecclesiastical order, and one can imagine that Buonvisi shared More's anxiety over the rise of dissent and misreading, 'in these dayes in whyche men by theyr owne defaute mysseconstre and take harme of the very scrypture of god.'<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Peter Gwyn, *The King's Cardinal* (London 1990) p.386

<sup>14</sup> McCutcheon (see note 2 above) p.40

<sup>15</sup> The obvious examples are CW 15 50-54 and Harpsfield, *Life of More* (ed E.V. Hitchcock, London 1932) 138-40; of a more serious character is the discussion on the social danger of heresy reported by Reginald Pole, for which see R.W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (1935; Harmondsworth 1963) pp.186-87.

<sup>16</sup> *Confutation of Tyndale*, CW 8:1, 179

Buonvisi's status as an eminent foreigner, enjoying close links with those in power, meant that he had a surprising degree of independence. One can detect this in his gestures of support for More and Fisher during their imprisonment, when he sent them meat, wine and – for More – a 'camlet' coat.<sup>17</sup> Up until his departure for exile and, indeed, afterwards, he functioned as 'the "patron and second father" to London's ultra-Catholics', a marked shift for a man who had earlier counted among his friends Thomas Cromwell, Thomas Starkey and many other advocates of the Henrician church, but as Susan Brigden remarks, 'he had to choose.'<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, a glance at his relations with Florens Wilson suggests that this choice may have been more nuanced than that may seem to imply.

Wilson had been born at Elgin in the early years of the century and must have been among the earliest of the graduates from the newly-founded King's College at Aberdeen. The only hint we have of his age is a reference to him by the great Swiss naturalist Conrad Gesner who had met him in Lyons in 1540 and describes him then as *iuvenilis*, i.e. under forty; if he was old enough to have charge of the younger George Lawson at Paris in 1526 this would suggest a birth date around 1504.<sup>19</sup> At Aberdeen he was under the tutelage of Erasmus' former Paris acquaintance, Hector Boece, and clearly he benefited from the humanistic slant of the syllabus there.<sup>20</sup> Just how he entered English circles is not clear, but if he were in charge of the younger George Lawson's schooling in 1526 he may well have had

<sup>17</sup> According to the OED this would probably have been made of angora wool, a costly garment at any period.

<sup>18</sup> Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford 1989; 1991) pp.420-21.

<sup>19</sup> Gesner, *Bibliotheca Universalis* (Zurich: C. Froshoverus, 1548), p.245.

<sup>20</sup> '[Aberdeen] fut le boulevard de la Renaissance en Écosse, et elle resta même après le triomphe de la Réforme protestante en 1560, le courageux mais impuissant champion de la Réforme évangélique, telle qu'Érasme l'avait définie...', J.-B. Coissac, *Les Universités d'Écosse, 1410-1560* (Paris 1915), p.133; in 1528 Boece could assure Erasmus that 'the college of Aberdeen is yours, and devoted to your writings before all others', Allen, *Erasmii Epistolae*, VII 399-400 (Ep 1996).

Thomas Wynter, Wolsey's son, under his care as well.<sup>21</sup> Certainly this was the case by 1528 when Wilson shared that responsibility with Thomas Lupset. Indeed, all his English connections grow out of this entry into Wolsey's sphere of influence, and since Wynter's household served as a stopping-off point for English diplomats passing through France he had the opportunity to meet a number of important figures, among them Reginald Pole and the fast-rising Stephen Gardiner.

The first letter we have from his own hand is addressed to Thomas Cromwell from Richmond: dated 1st October 1528, it reveals that he has just crossed from Paris with John Clerk, bishop of Bath and Wells, in the entourage of Cardinal Campeggio. Wilson sends greetings to Antonio Buonvisi and to Vincent Casale, expressing the hope that the latter would not get on too well with his English 'lest with his eloquence and his other gifts he ingratiate himself too much with that girl of mine (*puellae isti meae*), the daughter of Mrs Lawson.'<sup>22</sup>

Wilson had, in other words, arrived on the scene just as the royal marriage crisis began to take off, and it is due to his role as a minor player in the complex Anglo-French negotiations which ensued that we have some picture of his movements between 1526 and 1536. As Wolsey's power waned, it was to Cromwell and to Stephen Gardiner that his clients looked: writing to Cromwell from Paris on 20 September 1529, Wilson refers cautiously to painful rumours about his patron and in addition, as if to show what he could do, gives news about Turkish movements in Hungary and the growing alliance against the Emperor in Italy. He concludes with greetings to Buonvisi.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Writing to Wolsey in September, John Tayler mentions that Wynter is staying in Paris with a Scot, 'a kind and a very gentle person, and well learned', but the establishment sounds a bit too grand for Wilson's status, LP IV(2) 2545. Wynter's exact age is elusive, but he seems to have been born c.1510; by 1529 his income was in the area of £2700 *per annum*, thanks to paternal benevolence (Gwyn, p.301).

<sup>22</sup> LP IV(2) 4807; Vincent Casale had been acting with his cousin Gregory as English agent at the papal court, see *ibid* 4596.

<sup>23</sup> LP IV(3), 5946; Wolsey surrendered the great seal on 19 October.

Over the next six years Wilson continued to be based in Paris, a city he found highly congenial, though Wynter's establishment was eventually dissolved.<sup>24</sup> This gave him the opportunity to be useful in a variety of ways, conveying messages, purchasing books, and reporting religious developments, most notably the controversy prompted by Gerard Roussel's 1533 Lenten sermons before Marguerite of Navarre at the Louvre, details of which were passed to him by Guillaume du Bellay.<sup>25</sup> On another occasion we find him seeking out a suitable theological reader for Wolsey's new foundation at Oxford, Cardinal's College.<sup>26</sup>

But central to his pursuit of patronage were the two books that he published from the press of Ludovicus Cyaneus, the *Enarratio psalmi quintidecimi* (1531) and the *Enarratio in psalmum 50* (1532) - interestingly enough the two psalms that Giovanni Pico della Mirandola had urged should be on the lips of every Christian.<sup>27</sup> In them Wilson shows himself to be a competent expositor of the scriptures in the humanist mode, prepared to modify the received text of Jerome's Gallican Psalter as well as displaying a basic grasp of Hebrew. And against the background of the establishment of the *lecteurs royaux* - and the hostile response of conservative theologians - such a display was itself a strong declaration of alignment.<sup>28</sup> At the

<sup>24</sup> In February 1532 Wynter writes to Cromwell, reporting the kindness of Gardiner, and expressing concern at the cost of provisions in Italy where he is going, 'Our friend Florentius (i.e. Wilson) will make speed for Italy, and come to us shortly if his funds prove sufficient' (LP V, app.27, p.771). In July 1533 funds are being sent to him at Venice through Antonio Buonvisi (LP VI, 841).

<sup>25</sup> BL Cotton MS Caligula E.II.178, dated 25th April 1531, summarised in LP V 212.

<sup>26</sup> LP IV(3) app.234, dated 9th April 1529; John Major may have been a candidate.

<sup>27</sup> 'In psalmum XV commentarius', *Opera omnia* (Basle: S. Henricpetri, 1601), p.221

<sup>28</sup> Typical of humanist reaction are the verses, 'Ad Christianissimum Francorum Regem Franciscum, pro collegio Trilingui Lutetiae Erecto', Gilbert Ducher, *Epigrammaton libri duo* (Lyons: S. Gryphius, 1538) pp.77-78. Ducher would become a friend of Wilson in Lyons.

same time, however, he adopts a moderate stance, attacking excessive reliance on external works but insisting at the same time on the necessity for the inner sacrifice of a contrite heart. Here he closely follows the argument elaborated by Erasmus in his clash with Luther over freedom of the will.<sup>29</sup> But in view of our present concerns it is the dedicatory letters that have a particular interest, the one on Psalm 15 being addressed to the Cardinal of Lorraine and that on Psalm 50 to Stephen Gardiner, the newly consecrated bishop of Winchester.

From the first dedication we learn that Wilson owed his introduction to the Cardinal to Sir Francis Bryan and Guillaume du Bellay, Seigneur de Langey, both heavily engaged as ambassadors in the diplomatic manoeuvres surrounding the 'divorce'. In fact it is probable that the dedication was written during the visit by Bryan and Edward Fox to Paris in July 1531; it sounds like the hurried response to an opportunity, devoid of personal feeling.

By contrast, the letter addressed to Gardiner is particularly interesting for the light it throws on Wilson's relations with England. Gardiner had been nominated to Winchester in September of 1531, but at the end of the year he was despatched to France as ambassador, apparently to prevent a Franco-Scots marriage alliance. How far Wilson knew of this one can only guess, but he goes to some trouble to make soothing noises. If he has failed to visit his English friends and patrons as often as he might, this is the result of his affection for France, 'Multis de causis... mihi Gallia placet.'

Moreover, there is the University of Paris, the most celebrated in the world both for its scholars and the variety of its teaching. Yet he is mindful of the generous support he has received from the English: though he comes from a nation with which they have traditionally been at war - 'vtinam aliquando Christus pacis princeps aboleat' - they have treated him with great humanity.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Enarratio in psalmum nobis 50* pp.27-31; cf Erasmus, *De libero arbitrio* in CWE 76 57, 75; *Hyperaspistes* II, *ibid.*, 439.

<sup>30</sup> In 1543, saddened by the renewed hostilities between the two kingdoms, he could only conclude that such wars would only cease when the two were

The quality of English public life is singled out for praise (the careful student of Tudor politics may be startled to read that no one owes their advancement to malpractice – ‘malis artibus emergit nemo’) and King Henry’s wisdom is honoured in his selection of councillors. As one of many possible examples Wilson offers the figure of Thomas More, *Cancellarius magnus* or guardian of the laws (\_\_\_\_\_), ‘a man, God knows, of outstanding qualities in both literary achievement and integrity.

Of him I can say briefly but most truly, that (as was said of Porcius Cato) he is a man to whom no one dare address an improper request.<sup>31</sup> Wilson, indeed, goes on in the text of his exposition to quote More’s lines on the mutability of worldly attractions, ‘Paraenesis ad virtutem veram’, ‘Alas, whatever in this miserable world attracts miserable man withers at once and and dies like the spring rose.’<sup>32</sup> Sadly, all this effort to gratify the English fell on stony ground: Gardiner was back in England by late February of 1532, just in time for the submission to Henry of the *Supplication against the Ordinaries*.

The effort to defend the Church’s liberties against the encroachment of the Commons yoked More and Gardiner together in a common cause, and at a cost. By May Gardiner was exiled from the court, and More resigned the Chancellorship in the wake of the submission of the clergy on May 16th. The rather minor question remains, did Wilson ever meet More? We have no evidence, but the friendship with Buonvisi at least makes it a possibility.

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united in one (*De animi tranquillitate*, Lyons: S.Gryphius; hereafter DAT) pp.7-8. In 1532 a marriage between James V and the Princess Mary would be a way forward, rather than entering on a French alliance.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Et ut plurimos alios sileam, Cancellarium magnum...habet ipsum Thomam Morum, qualem deus bone, sive literas, sive integritatem spectes, virum? De hoc ut breviter, ita verissime dixero, hunc eum esse (quod de Porcio Catone dictum est) a quo rem improbam petere nemo audet.’ *In psalmum 50 enarratio* (Paris: L. Cyaneus 1532), p.4. The reference is presumably to the elder Cato.

<sup>32</sup> *Latin Poems*, CW 3 part II, no.68; *In psalmum 50*, p.24.

For Wilson, as for many, the year 1535 was to prove of critical importance. At some point, probably at the close of 1534, he produced another book, the *Scholia seu commentariorum epitome in Scipionis Somnium*, the only one of his works to be printed in England, by Robert Redman, though with no date apart from the dedication to Gregory Cromwell, ‘Londinj Calendis Decembribus’, i.e. the 5th of December.

The *Scholia*, Wilson’s only purely philosophical work, is a highly competent exposition of the allegorical fragment which survives from book VI of Cicero’s *De Republica*, described by Wilson as an *Enchiridion*, or handbook, of universal philosophy.<sup>33</sup> As such it was far above the head of its youthful dedicatee: only months after the publication Gregory’s tutor, Henry Dowes, reported to his father that his wit, ‘nott beinge of that hasty sorte that by and by do bringe forth their frute, doth dailie growe to a more docilitie and apte redines to receyve that that shalbe shewyd him.’<sup>34</sup> But of course the motive behind the dedication was not pedagogical – if Gardiner was no longer royal secretary, it was Cromwell who had replaced him.

The evidence suggests that Wilson was in Scotland early in 1535, but he was back in London in time for the high drama of the summer. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June Andrew, servant to Antonio Buonvisi, gave a deposition in the Tower before Thomas Lee, Henry Polstede and John ap Rice that some twelve days before he had heard Wilson report at dinner in his master’s house the news of bishop Fisher’s cardinalate, information that he had gleaned at the house of the French ambassador Charles de Soliers, Sieur de Morette.<sup>35</sup> The first Carthusians were executed on 19<sup>th</sup> June; Fisher followed them three days later, and More died on 6th July.

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<sup>33</sup> *Scholia in Scipionis Somnium*

<sup>34</sup> Dowes to Cromwell, 30th April 1535, in Sir Henry Ellis, *Original Letters*, 3<sup>rd</sup> series (London 1846), p.341. It is, in fact an ideal primer for graduate students in Renaissance studies; the only copy to survive is in the Bodleian Library.

<sup>35</sup> *LP* VIII. 856. 43.

There is no indication of what Wilson made of these events. Conceivably he shared the view of his friend Thomas Starkey, a representative figure of moderate reform (it was Starkey who uttered the strikingly Erasmian formula, 'Heretyks be not in al thyngys heretyks'). Fisher must have been known to him through personal acquaintance: not only does he cite him approvingly in the *De animi tranquillitate* on the subject of the certainty of grace, but he even refers to a conversation in which Fisher had expressed his amazement that Lutherans, for all that they were heretics, were outstanding at scriptural exegesis.<sup>36</sup> His final judgement of Fisher in 1543 strikes a cautious note: he was, he concludes, 'a man most learned in theological studies and a perfect example of virtue, had he not stubbornly offered resistance to a magistrate, even one who – as most people seem to think – was favourably disposed towards him.'<sup>37</sup> No doubt Fisher's identification with Imperial interests would trouble a Francophile like Wilson, but there can be no doubt of the personal respect underlying his assessment.

It is all the more interesting, then, that Wilson was in close contact with Buonvisi during this tense period, possibly even a guest in his house. Thomas F. Mayer in his admirable study of Starkey tells us that he 'calmly spent the summer writing his *Exhortation [to Unite and Obedience]*, taking breaks strolling in Antonio Bonvisi's garden.'<sup>38</sup> Just how calm he was is not certain. But he did walk there in the company of Florens Wilson to discuss future plans. Wilson wished to find some convenient spot to pursue his studies, and Starkey suggested Carpentras where – together with Reginald Pole – he had been a guest of Jacopo Sadoletto in 1532.<sup>39</sup> Wilson seems to have wasted no time in getting back to France with a view to travelling on to Italy, though his movements once he arrives there

<sup>36</sup> Certainty. DAT p.384; Lutherans, p.345. Between 1529 and 1532 Wilson had held the living of Speldhurst, in Fisher's diocese of Rochester.

<sup>37</sup> 'Rossensis Britannus Antistes. vir in theologicis studiis doctissimus, & si non magistratui illius etiam studioso (ut plerisque placere video) contumacius restitisset, virtutis exemplar absolutum.' DAT p.345.

<sup>38</sup> *Thomas Starkey and the Commonweal* (Cambridge 1989) p.216.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. pp.171, 179

become rather mysterious. From the information he gave Jacopo Sadoletto after his arrival in Carpentras it would seem that he set out for Rome in the entourage of Jean du Bellay, bishop of Paris, who had been raised to the cardinalate in the same consistory as Fisher, and who was despatched in July to revive French influence at the court of the new Pope, Paul III. By mid-July du Bellay was in Lyons where he was delayed some days by illness, finally arriving in Rome at the end of the month, having travelled at breakneck speed.<sup>40</sup> Wilson, as he would tell Sadoletto, was shed on the way, probably at Avignon, another victim of illness. Presumably he was uncertain about what to do next, but it is a surprise to find him writing to Cromwell on 19<sup>th</sup> September from Chaumont. The letter recommends the anonymous bearer, 'ane honest man weill lerned and favoreth good letters and because he haith writings to the kynges grace out of Rome he desireth me to adresse him to yor<sup>e</sup> M[aiestershippe].' Wilson goes on to mention Sir John Borthwick, 'the wiche was laity in England' (he is a figure we shall meet again), who has defended Henry in the presence of Francis I, the Cardinal of Lorraine, the 'greate maister' and others, 'whereof the frenche kyng appereth weill contentit.' It would seem, then, that Wilson had returned northwards, perhaps to visit the Guise seat of Joinville and renew contact with Lorraine, but his intention now is to set off for Italy, 'to se an if I can wyn my leiving in a universite.'<sup>41</sup>

Wilson, as he confessed later to Starkey, was unsure about what to do and spent some time in Lyons at Buonvisi's house. Indeed, it seems likely that Buonvisi was already there in person; he was certainly there by the late autumn. Then, having made the decision to continue his journey to Italy, Wilson had reached Avignon when he heard that Sadoletto was searching for a master for the Carpentras school. His arrival at the bishop's residence, late in the evening of 3<sup>rd</sup>

<sup>40</sup> V.-L. Bourrilly, 'Le Cardinal Jean du Bellay en Italie (Juin 1535-Mars 1536)', *Revue des Études rabelaisiennes*, V (1907) pp.20-27.

<sup>41</sup> Public Records Office, SP1/96 (LP IX, 395). It would be more convenient to date the letter in 1536, but Cromwell was a baron by that time, and Wilson would have been aware of his title.

November, is vividly described by Sadoleto in a letter to his nephew Paolo,

It was already dark and I was absorbed in my reading when a visitor was announced. What sort of a man, I enquired. One in a gown, was the reply. So, at my order, he was shown in. I asked what he wanted, coming at such an hour, since I was anxious to be rid of him and return to my studies. But his reply was so well-phrased and so modest that I was drawn to speak further and learn more about him. So I closed my book and began to fire questions: where did he come from, what studies had he followed, what brought him to these parts? I am a Scot, he replied. From that furthest-flung nation of the earth? [*Ex ultimane, inquam, orbis terrae natione?*] Exactly. In that case where did you learn the humanities? I asked him this because his speech was that of a cultivated man. I have studied philosophy in my own country, he informed me, continuing my education at Paris. There I was tutor to the Cardinal of York's nephew.<sup>42</sup>

The bishop at once seized his opportunity and Wilson was appointed to the post at seventy crowns *per annum*. When he writes to Starkey from Buonvisi's house at Lyons just three weeks later it is to report on his new role in a slightly bemused way; he is at Buonvisi's house again, this time to buy books and supplies for the school at Buonvisi's expense. Teaching does not seem to arouse his enthusiasm, but with a tone of mock solemnity he assures his friend that for some years he will give himself to philosophy, 'procul turbis, procul ambitu, procul denique curis omnibus' – 'unless fortune snatches me violently away.' Sending greetings to Cromwell, to Edward Fox, and to Gardiner, Wilson ends with a impromptu addition, 'Antonio Buonvisi, when he saw this letter, chided me that I had not sent greetings to you in his name'; he makes good the

<sup>42</sup> *Sadoleto epistolae*, ed. V. Alexander (Rome 1760), pars II, tom.III. 316. No mention here of that trip to Chaumont, nor – for that matter – in the letter to Starkey of his travelling with Jean du Bellay.

omission, and for a moment we are aware of the figure leaning over his shoulder.<sup>43</sup>

Buonvisi had arrived in Lyons some time in the autumn of 1535, and seems to have remained there for some considerable time, apart from a possible journey into Italy. He was certainly there in July 1538 when the outgoing English ambassador to the French court, Dr Thomas Thirleby, advised his successor Edmund Bonner to go straight after his arrival in Lyons to visit Buonvisi, with the added recommendation, 'he is a good money maker.'<sup>44</sup> During this period Buonvisi sends back to Cromwell a series of despatches on the Italian political scene, notably the crisis over Milan prompted by the death of Francesco Sforza and the Emperor Charles's designs on the Duchy.<sup>45</sup> Writing from Lyons on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1536, he includes 'some news from a friend at Rome that may concern the king of England'; then, on the 7<sup>th</sup> March, he writes again, expressing his gratitude to Cromwell for procuring for him the thanks of the king.<sup>46</sup> All this is happening barely seven months after the execution of More. Now, as many historians have lamented, Harpsfield omitted from his *Life of More* Buonvisi's observations on the contrasted characters of More and Cromwell, 'whereof there is nowe no place to talke'.<sup>47</sup> This is where they could be very revealing. We have a picture of Buonvisi as More's chosen friend, sending comforts to the Tower and receiving that remarkable letter, and from an earlier date we have that discussion between them over papal authority reported by Pole.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, in 1533 Buonvisi seems to have been sending money to the Observant Friars Peto and Elstow during their exile in Antwerp.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup> British Library, Cotton MS. Nero B.VI.20 (LP IX. 867)

<sup>44</sup> LP XIII(1), 1512.

<sup>45</sup> See LP X, 273, 368, 437, 442, 713, 795; in addition 205, 369, 632 and 714 include material by him or are in his hand.

<sup>46</sup> LP X, 369, 437.

<sup>47</sup> *Life*, p.138; as John Guy remarks, '[Harpsfield] deserved his sentence of fifteen years in the Fleet prison if only for this omission.' *Thomas More* (London 2000), p.213.

<sup>48</sup> See n.15 above.

All this supports the received idea of Buonvisi as “the patron and second father” to London’s ultra-Catholics’: this may have been his stance by the time he went into exile in 1548. but what might be called the professionalism of his conduct in 1536 suggests that we need to be wary of such partisan labels. Certainly the danger of labels is clearly illustrated by Wilson’s *Commentatio Theologica*, the work that announced his arrival in the humanist circles of Lyons.

Maybe Wilson was not cut out to be a schoolmaster: by June 1536 – just eight months after his appointment in Carpentras - he was back in Paris, and sent what seems to be his last letter to Cromwell on the 20<sup>th</sup>. In it he reports that he has completed a short apology for Henry and will bring it with him ‘to be secured by your protection against Mr Vannes factor, and the false priest who deceived me.’<sup>50</sup> At much the same time Sadoletto wrote a plea on his behalf to Lorraine, reminding the cardinal of his earlier support of Wilson’s studies in Paris.<sup>51</sup> At least Wilson seems to have parted on good terms with Sadoletto, and the bishop (he became a cardinal in December) would remain a source of guidance in later years. Yet Wilson was clearly restless. Just what he got up to is not clear except that by late 1537 he seems to be settled in Lyons which, as far as one can tell, would be his home for the remainder of his life. There is the strong possibility that he visited Italy, and more specifically Buonvisi’s Lucca, during this period, but it is also worth noting that Sadoletto was in correspondence with the lyonnais printer Sebastian Gryphius and in July, stirred by reading Aonio Paleario’s poem, *De immortalitate animorum*, sent him a proposal for a volume that would combine classical eloquence with religious force. This expresses exactly the intention behind such a work as the *Commentatio Theologica*, and since Wilson resurfaces in Lyons as a member of Gryphius’ circle,

<sup>49</sup> LP VI, 1324; Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, p.212

<sup>50</sup> LP X, 1169: at issue may be his living of Speldhurst. Apart from a list of bondholders owing up to 20th June 1537 (ibid. 1171) this is his last appearance in English records.

<sup>51</sup> Sadoletto, *Opera Omnia* (Verona 1737), I, 143-44: frustratingly, only the year is given.

Sadoletto may have been instrumental in establishing this contact.<sup>52</sup>

The first sign of his new identity is a set of verses, in fact a paraphrase of Psalm 120, addressed to him by Gilbert Ducher in his *Epigrammaton*, published in 1538 by Gryphius.<sup>53</sup> The majority of Ducher’s verses refer to his immediate circle of friends, a brilliant group centred around the printing house of Gryphius and the Collège de la Trinité: as Jean-Claude Margolin remarks, Gryphius’ *officina* was ‘le centre le plus actif de l’activité intellectuelle lyonnaise’, and among those whose names appear in the volume are Salmon Macrin, Charles de Sainte-Marthe, Maurice and Guillaume Scève, Rabelais, and Sebastian Castellio. The group’s wider interests are suggested by verses in honour of Erasmus, Melanchthon, Marguerite of Navarre, and Guillaume Budé. Indeed, Wilson seems to have infiltrated a highly sympathetic ambience.<sup>54</sup> A key factor here must have been the religious atmosphere in Lyons: the city was well-removed from the attentions of the Paris theologians, and with its international contacts it was more hospitable to private eclecticism and less concerned with confessional identity. It was a mode of religious accommodation which, for better or worse, is frequently characterised as ‘Erasmian’, and Gryphius’ press was the major source of Erasmus for France. The situation would change, of course, and in 1561 Wilson’s friend Barthélémy Aneau, then Principal of the Collège de la Trinité, would

<sup>52</sup> A. Péricaud, *Florent Wilson, Guillaume Postel et Louis Castelvetro* (Lyons 1850) p.1, states that he was appointed professor of philosophy at Lyons on the recommendation of Lorraine and as a result of Sadoletto’s influence: if so, then this must have been at the Collège de la Trinité. Lorraine became archbishop of Lyons in 1536, and this may have had some influence on Wilson’s departure from Carpentras.

<sup>53</sup> *Gilberti Ducheri... Epigrammaton libri duo* (Lyons: S. Gryphius 1538), p.50.

<sup>54</sup> Margolin in ‘Le Cercle Humaniste Lyonnais d’après l’édition des *Epigrammata* (1537) de Jean Visagier’, in *Actes du Colloque sur l’Humanisme Lyonnais au XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Grenoble 1974) p.153. For his work as proof-reader see H. Baudrier, *Bibliographie Lyonnaise* (13 vols, Lyons-Paris 1895-1950), VIII, 123 -24. The most recent account of Wilson in Lyons is in Hans R. Guggisberg, *Sebastian Castellio* (Aldershot, 2003).

be dragged from his study and lynched as a suspected Lutheran.<sup>55</sup> But by that time Wilson himself was probably dead.

It is not the intention here to look closely at the three works he produced in Lyons, but certain secondary issues are of interest. For one thing, all three are dedicated to citizens of Lucca – there at least one can detect the hand of Buonvisi. The *Commentatio quaedam theologica* appeared in 1539 and the dedicatee is a ‘Francesco Tur.’, almost certainly a Turretini, a member of another prominent Luccan banking dynasty.<sup>56</sup> In his letter to Francesco, Wilson reveals that he has published this unusual and elegant sequence of prayers at the urging of Panage Hocedius, secretary to the Cardinal of Lorraine, and of Sir John Borthwick, ‘regiae custodiae praefectus’ (in fact he was *enseigne* of Francis I’s Scots Guards). The book also had the strong approval of Stephen Gardiner, by then returned to moderate favour and ambassador to the French court, and of his nephew and secretary Germain Gardiner. Under inspection this turns out to be an intriguing list of names. Hocedius had had personal links with Erasmus in Louvain, and in 1543 he would become bishop of Toul. Borthwick, a fellow Scot, was an uninhibited supporter of Cromwell’s reforms in England – we have already heard of his defence of Henry before the French court. In 1540, a year after the publication of the *Commentatio*, a process was instituted against him in Scotland *in absentia*, based on twelve counts; among them charges that he ‘persuaded the people that the heresies of England, or most of them, are good and just’, that he advocated the seizure of church lands by the Crown, and that he possessed books by Oecolampadius and Melanchthon, ‘with divers treatises of Erasmus and other condemned heretics.’ The sentence was confiscation of goods, the burning of his likeness, and of himself if caught.<sup>57</sup> The Gardiners, of course, took a

different line. In 1544 Germain, the author of a tract against John Frith, was executed at Tyburn together with John Lark, More’s former parish priest at Chelsea, in the aftermath of the so-called Prebendaries Plot against Cranmer.<sup>58</sup> His uncle would spend the reign of Edward VI in prison for his resistance to radical change. What we can detect in Wilson’s dedication, then, is a community of friends bound by a shared affective piety and a stance that can, in short hand, be called Erasmian. But it is a community on the point of disintegration, broken up by the pressures of confessional conflict. To this one can add that Starkey, at the time of his death in 1538, had been under suspicion of involvement in the Exeter conspiracy.<sup>59</sup> Things had begun to unravel for him too.

The *Commentatio quaedam theologica* is an intriguing work which has been sadly neglected, probably because of its rarity.<sup>60</sup> It deserves some mention here as a devotional manual which attracted such a varied group of readers, and the second edition printed at Basle by Hieronymus Curio in 1544 is further evidence of its appeal. It takes the form of a sequence of prayers, densely interwoven with scriptural allusions, and presented as prose verses (‘in aphorismos dissecta’) comparable to the psalms. The language, as one might expect from the humanist context in which it originates, adopts an elevated classical register, as in the titles given to the Father: ‘O exuperantissime mundi conditor: O immensi olympi sempiternae regnator’ (pp.8); ‘Tu summus ille rerum coriphaeus’ (p.14); ‘Tu totum nutu tremefacis olympum. Tu fera terribili iacularis fulmina

<sup>55</sup> In his translation of Alciati (*Emblemes d’Alciat*, Lyons: G. Roville 1549) Aneau acknowledges ‘l’advis consentant de M. Florent Volusen.’

<sup>56</sup> M. Berengo, *Nobili e mercanti nella Lucca del Cinquecento* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Torino 1999), p.237 and *passim*.

<sup>57</sup> *LP* XV, 714; he was not caught and in the 1550s surfaced in John Knox’s congregation in Geneva.

<sup>58</sup> It looks as if he was condemned for secret meetings with Pole in Paris during 1537, Glyn Redworth, *In Defence of the Church Catholic: The Life of Stephen Gardiner* (Oxford 1990), pp.204-05; another Paris associate of Wilson, John Beckenshawe [Bekinsale], was indicted but pardoned, *LP* XIX (1), 444 (6), 610 (62).

<sup>59</sup> Mayer, *Thomas Starkey*, pp.275, 283.

<sup>60</sup> There are copies in the National Library of Scotland and in the Manchester University Library; one of the second edition (Basle: H. Curio, 1544) is preserved at Paris in the Bibliothèque Nationale. The neglect extends to Neo-Latin devotional writing as a whole.

dextra' (p.22); 'Tu summus Jupiter' (p.51).<sup>61</sup> It is not surprising, on the one occasion when he directly refers to Erasmus, that Wilson – however extensive his debt in theological terms – cannot but express some regret that Erasmus had not aimed at a purer latinity, 'et paulo accuratior fuisset in Romani sermonis puritate.'<sup>62</sup> But it is important to recognise that this is not pedantry but a concern with the persuasive force of language, what Wilson refers to as *impetus orationis*, that power to inflame the heart of the reader which is so painfully lacking in the writings of his scholastic contemporaries, the *recentiores*.<sup>63</sup> So it is fitting that this high style is balanced by Wilson's effort to stir an affective response in the reader – as he asserts in the dedication, 'that man can scarcely be corrupt whose mind is frequently filled with generous thoughts and sentiments.' What is more, he manages to keep off inflammatory issues, as for instance when he refers to the eucharist, 'that round and white manna which feeds and sustains us while we wander in this trackless and thirsty land:' the spiritual benefit is asserted but no attempt is made to define the manner of the divine presence.<sup>64</sup> In this sense the *Commentatio* is a consciously irenical work.

Ann Moss has observed how, 'As the horizon of Latin shifts, so does the theological perspective, from intellectual abstraction to a Christ-centred humanism, humanist in its idiom, human in its focus on man's affective relationship with God through Christ.'<sup>65</sup> This matches well with Wilson's focus on the Cross as the ground of all true peace of mind, a theme which he develops in the long ode at the conclusion of the *De animi tranquillitate*, 'Quid vos, o superi boni.' The essence is present in the *Commentatio*,

Sed et mihi quoque servator, cum in crucem tuam intueor, sub primum aspectum horror es, ignominia es, et dolorum acervus,

<sup>61</sup> References are to the Gryphus edition (1539).

<sup>62</sup> *De animi tranquillitate*, p.344; in stylistic terms Wilson aligns himself with the French humanism of Guillaume Budé.

<sup>63</sup> 'Siquaudo illis sacra tractantur, nullae sunt flammae, nullus impetus orationis, quo incendatur ad rerum amorem lector.' *Ibid.* p.343.

<sup>64</sup> *Commentatio Theologica* (1539), p.94.

<sup>65</sup> *Renaissance Truth and the Latin Language Turn* (Oxford 2003), p.175.

res (ut apparet) cum ea, quam quaero felicitate, ex diametro pugnantes.

At cum mysterium expendo, et nucleum nuce fracta, ut valeo, contrecto, decus es, et deliciae: sed quas impertire non soles, nisi ijs, qui omne suum studium in hanc crucis meditationem contulerunt.

Hi exugunt mel de petra, oleumque de saxo durissimo: Hi hauriunt aquas in gaudio de fontibus servatoris: hi renuunt aliunde, quam ex te, consolationemmittere. (p.95)

[But when I look on your cross, O saviour, at the first glance you are to me horror, shame, a multitude of sorrows; wholly repugnant, it appears, to all that I seek from happiness.

However, when I ponder the mystery and am able to grasp the kernel of the broken nut, you are splendour, glory and delight: this you do not allow easily, except to those who focus all their endeavour on meditation of this cross.

These suck honey from the rock, and oil from the hardest stone: these joyfully drink water from the fountains of the saviour, refusing any consolation which does not have its source in you.]

Wilson concludes his dedicatory letter to Francesco Turretini with greetings to 'tota familia Bonvisiana' and to Bernardino Cioni: this intimacy with Lucchese probably reflects a familiarity with the city itself.<sup>66</sup> Clearly Antonio's patronage had opened new worlds to him. No doubt it is a mere coincidence, but it is suggestive to find that in 1538 the most important of Lucca's confraternities, the Compagnia della Croce, had as its prior a Giovanni Buonvisi and as its vice-prior a Frediano Cioni.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> As Francesco observes in the *De animi tranquillitate* (p.10), Wilson has many friends in Italy.

<sup>67</sup> Berengo. *Nobili e Mercanti*, p.359.

The *De animi tranquillitate dialogus* is Wilson's major work, probably the fruit of reflection but published with an eye on a particular moment.<sup>68</sup> We have already seen Francesco Turretini as the dedicatee of the *Commentatio*; another Luccan, Francesco Michele, is not only dedicatee of the *De tranquillitate* but appears as one of the interlocutors in the dialogue. The interesting point is that he, 'Francesco Micheli, figlio di Bonaventura', is listed together with 'Regolo Turretini, padre di Francesco', as belonging to the intimate circle of the prior of San Frediano in Lucca, Pietro Martyre Vermigli.<sup>69</sup> The dialogue is set on the hill of Fourvières, overlooking Lyons, where Michele has a garden. The discussion is provoked by Wilson's mournful appearance: asked to explain this, he mentions two items of news, firstly the outbreak of hostilities between the Scots and the English – in fact the Solway Moss campaign of August 1542 – and then the startling report of the flight of Vermigli, together with Paolo Lacizi and Bernardino Ochino to Zurich, a journey prompted, as Wilson discreetly puts it, by their rejection of the status of the bishop of Rome ('Romani antistitis dignitatem') and certain received religious doctrines. Many of Vermigli's supporters fled, among them Francesco Michele. Consequently, the dialogue gains in dramatic force when it is set against this fraught background; composed within weeks of the flight (the weather in the dialogue sounds autumnal), the exchanges carry unusual conviction, even if Florentius does do most of the talking.

The opening section of the book turns over the issue of human suffering and moral autonomy, adopting an eclectic position which favours Aristotle but betrays an enthusiasm for Plotinus. At the same time, Florentius is critical of theologians who try to mix religion and peripatetic philosophy; while moral wisdom can guide us towards the

<sup>68</sup> Besides the Gryphius edition I have come across five others. Leiden: W. Christiani, 1637; Leiden: A. Tongerloo, 1644; Edinburgh, 1707; Edinburgh, 1751; Frankfurt/Leipzig, 1760. There is an Italian adaptation by O. Lombardelli (Sienna: L. Bonetti, 1574).

<sup>69</sup> A Pascal, 'Da Lucca a Ginevra', *Rivista Storica Italiana* XLIX (1932), 153; see now also P. McNair, *Peter Martyr in Italy* (Cambridge 1966), p.236.

good, human fulfilment depends on the imperceptible action of grace. This becomes the general argument conveyed in the dream allegory which is the frame for the most important part of the book: Florentius describes a dream that had been prompted by a conversation, years before at Elgin, on the opening of Horace's first satire, 'How is it, Maecenas, that no one is satisfied with his lot?' First we see a splendid temple, presided over by Democritus, author of \_\_\_\_\_, *On tranquillity of mind*; the temple is adorned by eight columns marked with inscriptions of moral counsel – sound, but for the most part rather bland, 'It is shameful and vain to seek rest in outward things.' This temple stands for pagan wisdom, the uttermost that human wisdom can attain. However, the dreamer is not satisfied, and prompted by grace (a point that Wilson strongly emphasises) he falls on his knees in prayer, to be rewarded with the sight of a second temple which surpasses the first in all respects. The custodian here is St Paul, the guide to true tranquillity, and none can approach unless drawn by grace. Inscribed over the entrance are words from Psalm 83, the psalm of Erasmus' *De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia*, 'Happy are those who dwell in your house', while the two columns which flank it bear the inscriptions, 'Know thyself' and 'Know thy God'; finally, St Paul points to figure of the crucified Christ on the frieze above. This is the true point of rest from all human yearning – even as he wakes, the dreamer is enthralled with joy.

There is probably a good deal of intertextual reference at work under the surface here: for one thing, the juxtaposition of Democritus and Paul evokes the discussion of *euthymia* in Budé's *De transitu Hellenismi ad Christianismum* (1535), as does the treatment of the cross as a sanctuary of rest. And from there it is a short step to Calvin's 1539 *Institutiones*. Then the Augustinian search for rest had been invoked by Erasmus on at least two occasions, firstly in his exposition of Psalm 4,<sup>70</sup> and more pertinently in the *De Concordia* where his discussion of tranquillity refers to all those irrelevant tomes

<sup>70</sup> 'Only man's mind can never find rest in this life, because it has not yet obtained that supreme good which alone can fulfil the longings of mankind.' CWE 63:261; ASD V-2 264:306-08.

of the ancients, 'de summo bono, de bonorum finibus, deque de animi tranquillitate, quam Graeci vocant \_\_\_\_\_.'<sup>71</sup> Tranquillity comes from knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, and it can only be found within the Church. That final emphasis has to be set beside Erasmus' highly subjective view of church membership, a matter of inner disposition rather than doctrinal adherence. This gives a certain resonance to Florentius' exchanges with Francesco, the refugee from persecution in Lucca. The most coherent reading of Wilson's argument would seem to suggest that he is striving for a genuine compromise, one that can reconcile the vivid sense of God's mercy which was the most appealing (and rhetorical) aspect of Luther's teaching with ecclesial tradition, understood in a very Erasmus-like sense as the consensus of outstanding teachers over the centuries.<sup>72</sup> So it is fitting that the book ends with Florentius falling back on a divinity of the affections and chanting to the lyra da braccio his ode on true tranquillity.

Wilson makes conventionally humble noises about his competence in verse, but a number of his poems are incorporated in the text of the *De animi tranquillitate*. One of his compositions has a special place in the present discussion, the verses which he wrote in honour of his long-standing patron and friend, Antonio Buonvisi. Apart from More's extraordinary letter from the Tower it is, so far as I know, the only other literary tribute to this remarkable man.

Dum totam erraret forte incommitata per urbem  
 Virtus, nec laudum praemia juncta forent,  
 Hospitium multos et supplex saepe rogavit:  
 Qui daret hospitium non tamen ullus erat.  
 Adfuit haud multo post Laus, (res mira) repente

<sup>71</sup> ASD V-3 281:805-06.

<sup>72</sup> 'Iam et Ecclesiae, hoc est, tot praestantium in omni sapientiae genere virorum, summus de Christiano dogmate consensus, iam inde ab eius exordio in hunc usque diem non parum hic obtinere debet momenti.' *De animi tranquillitate*, p.373. Cf 'the sentence of the auncient interpretarys of Chrystys doctrine &...the consent and custume of the Church, usyd from the begynnyng unto thys day.' Thomas Starkey, in S.J. Herrtage (ed), *Starkey's Life and Letters* (London 1878; New York 1975), p.lii.

Laudis in amplexus urbs furibunda ruit.  
 Non secus illa tamen quam dudum exclusa manebat,  
 Atque iterum in solum est ire coacta nemus.  
 Verum ubi Laus dominam Virtutem sensit abesse,  
 Ad dominam ingrata rursus ab urbe venit.  
 Utraque post rediens Bonvisi tendit ad aedes:  
 Hic Virtus, pulsa Laude, recepta fuit.  
 Nam fraudem ille timens blanda sub fronte, recede  
 Laus (ait) hinc, studiis insidiosa bonis.  
 Illa refert, frustra me, Antoni excludere curas,  
 Quandoquidem Virtus hic generosa manet.  
 Consequor invitam dominam quocunque mearit,  
 Nec nisi Virtuti sum bene fida comes.

(When Virtue was wandering through the city, unattended and unrewarded, she sought entertainment of many, but none would give it. Not long after, Praise unexpectedly arrived on the scene; the frenzied city – wonderful to relate – rushed to embrace her with praise. Virtue, as before, remained shut out and was forced once more to seek a lonely grove. But when Praise noted the absence of her mistress, Virtue, she came back to her from the ungrateful city, and both proceed on their return to the house of Buonvisi. Here Virtue was admitted, Praise turned away; for he, fearing deceit behind a flattering countenance, says, 'Praise, begone, threat to honest pursuits.' 'In vain, Antony,' she replies, 'do you try to exclude me, seeing that noble Virtue stays here. I follow my mistress against her will wherever she goes; to Virtue alone am I a trustworthy companion.' *De animi tranquillitate* p.229)

Basically, that is it. Apart from the *Latine Grammatices Epitome*, the *De animi tranquillitate* is his last published work. He makes one more recorded appearance, delivering the annual oration at Lyons on the feast of St Thomas, an event to mark the installation of new magistrates.<sup>73</sup> On this occasion he is described a professeur de droit; certainly law was a less contentious field. There is just one letter to

<sup>73</sup> A. Bleton, *Les Oraisons Doctorales de Saint Thomas* (Lyons 1891) p.41.

Sadoletto, recently discovered by John Durkan in the Vatican Archives, which is dated 21st July 1546. It is sent in reply to one from the cardinal which was advising Wilson as he planned to visit Britain and it coincides with the debate on justification at Trent, which had opened on 21st June. By the following January the 'evangelical' position had been unequivocally condemned. So it is no surprise that the letter conveys the anxiety of a moderate: he had wished, he revealed, to ask Sadoletto about controverted issues, 'especially as there among them [i.e. the Reformers] doctrines which are not wholly displeasing to me.'<sup>74</sup> But such frankness would be open to misconstruction, so he is silent. 'Truly, I promise that to the very end you will never hear that your Florentius has used anything but moderation in all controversy, for so my temper and upbringing, as well as your counsel, have always directed me.' He was, one could say, speaking for a generation overtaken by events. Buisson has him die in 1557 though without any firm evidence.<sup>75</sup> If so, then he predeceased Antonio Buonvisi by two years. One thing does seem certain, that he died in the Rhône valley. Péricaud reports that as late as 1830 a plaque bearing the epitaph written by his friend and fellow Scot, George Buchanan, could be seen on a house in Sainte-Colombe-lès-Vienne.

Hic musis, Volusene, jaces carissime, ripam  
Ad Rhodani, terra quam procul a patria?  
Hoc meruit virtus tua, tellus quae foret altrix  
Virtutum, ut cineres conderet illa tuos.<sup>76</sup>

[Here you lie, Volusenus, dear to the Muses, on the banks of the Rhône, how distant a site from your homeland? This your virtue merits, that the earth which would be nurse to the Muses should cover your ashes.]

<sup>74</sup> '...praesertim cum in eorum doctrina quaedam insint, quae mihi non usquequaque displicerint.' Vatican Library, Barb. lat. 6509, f. 27 verso.

<sup>75</sup> F. Buisson, *Sébastien Castellion: sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris 1892), I, 36.

<sup>76</sup> Buchanan, *Epigrammata*. II. XII. *Opera omnia* (Edinburgh 1715), II. 82.

## L'attitude de VITORIA à l'égard des Indiens

Maurice BARBIER

Maurice Barbier est politologue. Il a publié notamment Francisco de Vitoria, *Leçons sur les Indiens et sur le droit de guerre*, Genève, Droz, 1966 et *Leçons sur le pouvoir politique*, Paris.

Dans cet article, l'auteur s'intéresse au regard que le théologien Francisco de Vitoria porte sur la colonisation espagnole. Il s'appuie sur des extraits de la *Leçon sur la tempérance* et de la *Leçon sur les Indiens* pour mettre en lumière les interrogations de Vitoria sur les modalités de la présence espagnole en Amérique et sur la légitimité de cette domination. Pour Vitoria, les Indiens sont des hommes comme les autres qui ne manquent pas de ressemblances avec les Européens. Il convient donc de ne pas leur causer de préjudice et de leur apporter des bienfaits matériels et humains en les détournant des sacrifices humains et de l'anthropophagie et en les amenant au christianisme. L'auteur propose ensuite la traduction inédite d'un fragment de la *Leçon sur la tempérance* où Vitoria se demande s'il est permis de faire la guerre aux Indiens sous prétexte qu'ils se livrent à l'anthropophagie et aux sacrifices humains.

**Mots-clés : Amérique - colonisation - Indiens - Espagne - Nouveau Monde - Europe chrétienne**

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In this article, the author analyses the views of the theologian Francisco de Vitoria on Spanish colonization. He bases his study on extracts from the *De Temperantia* and from the *De Indis*, in order to bring to light Vitoria's questions and doubts on the different aspects of the Spanish presence in America and on the lawfulness of this domination. For Vitoria, the Indians were human beings just like any others, and were not lacking in many resemblances to Europeans. It was therefore appropriate not to inflict on them any harms, and to bring them both material and human benefits, while turning them away from human sacrifices and from cannibalism, and introducing them to Christianity. The author then proposes an hitherto