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ITALIAN ACADEMIES OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

EDITED BY
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The Earlier 'Academies' in Italy*

DAVID S. CHAMBERS

'Academia' was already a vogue word in Italy during the fifteenth century, but it was used in a variety of ways: at least seven have recently been distinguished by James Hankins, from Florentine sources alone.¹ If it is difficult to find any institution much resembling the sixteenth-century academies which are the subject of the present book, there were some genuine if tenuous links and antecedents. What follows is a brief review of these, and of some uncertainties which remain.

One problem that arises is the association of the word 'academy' with Plato. The original Grove of Academe in Athens, called after the local hero Hecademus, was where Plato supposedly lived, studied and died, according to Diogenes Laertius, a Latin version of whose biography of Plato was completed by Ambrogio Traversari in 1433.² But the 'Academy' which continued as a educational institution in Athens until Justinian's time had not been exclusively concerned with the propagation and interpretation of Plato's works, particularly not during the middle period from 267 to 78 BC, when the Second or 'New' Academy, thanks initially to Arcesilaus, moved in the direction of scepticism.³ Moreover, if it became a by-word for high intellectual standards, and free debate or dialogue, it was not the only prestigious prototype of this sort. Therefore although some allusion to Plato must always have been implicit in the word 'academia' or its derivatives, the allusion could be a fairly faint one. The filter, the writer most responsible for the revival of the term and notion 'academy' in the fifteenth century, was almost certainly Cicero.

Cicero referred to 'our academy' to characterize his own open-mindedness in philosophical debate,⁴ but in the same context points out that the Academy in Athens was not his only model.⁵ The allusion to Plato may be slightly more direct when he uses the word for a definite location, i.e. his private villa, where lessons in rhetoric were given in the upper part called 'Lyceum' and learned debates held below in the 'Academia', which was decorated with a figure of Minerva and

* The starting point for this introductory article was Frances Yates's essay 'The Italian Academies' in the second volume of her collected essays, *Renaissance and Reform: The Italian Contribution*, London etc. 1993, pp. 6–29. I am also grateful to Wouter Bracke, Jill Kraye, Elizabeth McGrath, Nicolai Rubinstein, Joe Trapp and Nicholas Webb.

¹ J. Hankins, 'The Myth of the Platonic Academy of Florence', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 44, 1991, pp. 429–75, esp. pp. 433–5.

² Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, III.41, London, 1925, pp. 312–13. On the translation, dedicated—the fact may be not without significance—to Cosimo de' Medici, see M. Gigante, 'Ambrogio Traversari interprete di Diogene Laerzio' in *Ambrogio Traversari nel VI centenario della nascita*, ed. G. C. Garfagnini, Florence, 1988, pp. 367–459, esp. pp. 375–400.

³ See A. H. Armstrong, *An Introduction to Ancient Philosophy*, 3rd edn repr., London, 1984, pp. 67, 139–40; P. O. Kristeller, *Greek Philosophers of the Hellenistic Age*, New York, 1993, pp. 51–9, who quotes Diogenes Laertius, IV.28, IV.33, on Arcesilaus.

⁴ Cicero, *De officiis*, III.iv.20, London, 1913, pp. 288–9: 'Nobis autem nostra Academia magnam licentiam dat, ut quodcumque maxime probabile occurrat, id nostro iure liceat defendere'.

⁵ Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, II.3.9, London, 1927, p. 154: 'Itaque mihi semper Peripateticorum Academiaeque consuetudo de omnibus rebus in contrarias partes disserendi... placuit...'

other appropriate statuary.⁶ On the other hand, there is also the nuance of scepticism which the word conveys in his *Academica*, as it does in St Augustine's *Contra academicos*, texts certainly familiar to Petrarch and to Coluccio Salutati and other early Renaissance luminaries.⁷

If in a rather loose sense 'academia' could be used, even in antiquity, to refer to places of higher learning,⁸ it is not perhaps surprising that it was used in the fifteenth century, in much the same way as 'gymnasium' was used, simply as a fashionable synonym for 'studium', i.e. a university,⁹ or for a private humanist school.¹⁰ And just as Cicero used the word to mean his villa, so too did Renaissance villa-owners with libraries and intellectual pretensions; as early as October 1427 Poggio Bracciolini was applying it to his house in the Val d'Arno.¹¹

What did Lapo da Castiglionchio mean, in his dialogue of 1438 in praise of the Roman Curia (which was at Ferrara, for the Council to discuss reunion with the Greek Church) when he wrote that with so many learned Greeks around him, he felt he was back in the ancient Academy or Lyceum?¹² If his remark seems to confirm that it was thanks to the Greek scholars at the Council, which moved to Florence early in 1439, and with the Neoplatonist Gemistos Plethon among those visiting Greeks, that the idea of new 'academies' gained such currency, Lapo avoids an exclusive reference to Plato's original 'academy'. The point is rather that 'academia' was becoming a favoured word to describe a coterie dominated by one or two charismatic individuals, mainly interested in the literature and ideas of the ancient world. In his funeral oration for Leonardo Bruni in 1444, Poggio recalled Coluccio Salutati's Florentine circle in the late fourteenth century as an 'academia'.¹³ Likewise, in 1457, when reminiscing about his early days in the papal curia (presumably meaning the years of the Schism when, from 1403 onwards, as an apostolic scriptor he served successive popes of the Roman line, rather than his later period in the curia, 1423–53) Poggio designated his former friends and contemporaries there as 'Epicureans' and 'Peripatetics' and declared that the senior figures with whom he was on very intimate terms constituted an 'academy'.¹⁴

⁶ Ibid.; see also Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, I.9, ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, I, Cambridge, 1965, no. 5, pp. 114–15.

⁷ Charles B. Schmitt, *Cicero Scepticus: A Study of the Influence of the 'Academica' in the Renaissance*, The Hague, 1972, esp. pp. 45–9.

⁸ Servius Sulpicius writing to Cicero describes the Academia in Athens as a gymnasium: 'Nos in nobilissimo orbis terrarum gymnasio Academiae delegimus...': Cicero, *Ad familiares*, IV.xii, London, 1927, I, p. 304.

⁹ Michele Savonarola, referring to the number of theologians at St Anthony in Padua, c. 1446, wrote: 'Nam locus is studentium est Academia': *De laudibus Patavii*, ed. R. Segarizzi in L. Muratori, *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, n.s., XV, Città di Castello, 1902, p. 10; references to the Studium at Florence, moved in 1473 to Pisa, as an 'academia' are quoted by Hankins, 'The Myth' (n. 1 above), p. 434 n. 15.

¹⁰ R. G. Mercer, *The Teaching of Gasparino Barzizza*, London, 1979, p. 106; Hankins, 'The Myth' (n. 1 above), p. 434 n. 16.

¹¹ 'Academiam meam valdarninam', quoted from a letter to Niccolò Niccoli in A. Della Torre, *Storia dell'Accademia Platonica di Firenze*, Florence, 1902, p. 539.

¹² R. Scholz, 'Eine humanistische Schilderung der Kurie aus dem Jahre 1438', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 16, 1914, p. 131: 'Quorum tamen sunt quidam eorum regem sequuti ita eruditi homines, ita suis disciplinis omnibus ornati... in achademia illa veteri ac licio versari videor'.

¹³ Hankins, 'The Myth' (n. 1 above), p. 434 n. 17.

¹⁴ Poggio Bracciolini, *Lettere*, ed. Helene Harth, III, Florence, 1987, no. 19, pp. 467–8: 'Educatus sum ab adolescentia in romana curia, in qua tum Epicuri, tum Peripateticorum disciplina in usu esse consuevit, quorum alter in voluptate, alteri etiam in rebus externis summum bonum collocaverunt... Antiquiores illi ex priori

It would seem, then, that exclusive reference to Plato was never intended by users of the word 'academia'. In spite of this, it has been widely accepted that the first 'new Academy'—forerunner of so many others—was an institution in Florence inspired by Plato's academy and the study of his works, and sponsored from about 1460 by Cosimo de' Medici, acting upon Gemistos Plethon's much earlier suggestion and making use of Marsilio Ficino's ready services.

This 'Platonic Academy' was dismissed as fictitious by Gustavo Uzielli a century ago, and its rehabilitation in 1902 by Arnaldo Della Torre, in his monumental if over-discursive book which uses the name for its title, received a further douche of scepticism from Giuseppe Zippel in a long review article.¹⁵ Nevertheless, James Hankins has recently gone over the ground again with greater thoroughness, and done a major demolition job. He may even have gone too far in assailing Della Torre's great work, packed as it is with textual evidence about the ancestry and early existence of academies in Italy. Della Torre did not state quite so baldly what Hankins has implied, though it is true that he assumes the separate existence of a 'Platonic' Academy presided over by Marsilio Ficino.¹⁶ Hankins argues that the construction of this Florentine 'Platonic Academy' has depended on a very few textual sources which have been misinterpreted. They are principally Ficino's preface to his translation of Plotinus (1490–92), and his somewhat ambiguous letter to Cosimo de' Medici in 1462. In the preface he wrote that Cosimo had derived the idea of founding an academy from Plethon in 1439,¹⁷ but leaves unexplained why it was so long before he did anything about it, finally commissioning Ficino to begin his Latin translations. In the letter dated 4 September 1462, Ficino refers to the 'academy' which Cosimo had prepared for him in the countryside there,¹⁸ which is taken to refer to a rustic house which Cosimo gave to Ficino so that he could live nearby when the Medici were in their villa. Since Ficino did not receive the deed of the house at Careggi until April 1463, half a year later than the letter, Hankins argues that this property was not being alluded to as the intended seat of an academy, unless perhaps as a whimsical echo of Cicero's (and Poggio's) use of the word for a country villa. In fact it seems quite reasonable to suppose that both the Medici residence at Careggi and the house nearby in which Ficino stayed, whether as guest or owner, could already have been the scene of 'academic' events;¹⁹ moreover, Ficino might possibly have already enjoyed a grace-and-favour use of the house in spite of the fact that he received the title deeds only in 1463, though this is not the same thing as saying that it became the special premises of a 'Platonic' Academy with Ficino standing in as the *alter ego* of Plato himself.

nostra academia, quibus cum magno usu et vite iocunditate coniunctus eram, me omnes in alium, ut dicitur, orbem precessere.' The same passage is cited by Fumaroli in his essay in this book, n. 16.

¹⁵ Della Torre, *Storia* (n. 11 above), reviewed in *Archivio storico italiano*, ser. V, 30, 1902, pp. 425–48.

¹⁶ Hankins, 'The Myth' (n. 1 above), and, more specifically, Hankins, 'Cosimo de' Medici and the "Platonic Academy"', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 53, 1990, pp. 144–62. A. Field, *The Origins of the Platonic Academy of Florence*, Princeton, 1988, is rather less revisionist.

¹⁷ Hankins, 'Cosimo de' Medici' (n. 16 above), p. 160: '...inde academiam quandam alta mente conceperit, hanc oportuno primum tempore pariturus.'

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: '... Academiam quam nobis in agro Caregio parasti...'

¹⁹ Field, *The Origins* (n. 16 above), p. 200, keeps a traditional foothold by supposing that Cosimo established the Academy at his own villa. For one symposium held there later see below, n. 30.

Ficino himself used 'academia' to mean a variety of things. In 1473, writing to Lorenzo de' Medici, he employed it to refer to the Studium of Florence, then transferred to Pisa.²⁰ He also used it figuratively, as Hankins argues in interpreting the letter of 1462 and, even more strongly, in a letter to Bernardo Rucellai in 1483. Hankins has suggested that Ficino may have meant Bernardo to understand by the word the corpus of Platonic scholarship which he was compiling,²¹ but perhaps it is more plausible to believe that he meant by the 'academy' and 'library' the physical location in which he worked. In any event there is no reason to take Ficino's activities and utterances, whether in retreat at Careggi or in Florence, his lectures at the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli or his other involvements in teaching, as evidence of his referring to a formally constituted early Florentine 'Platonic academy'.²² On the other hand, as Hankins has shown, Ficino sometimes used the word in a general way when referring to his own teaching courses—in which there was no exclusive emphasis on Plato's works; nevertheless, when he compiled a list of his intellectual friends ('amicorum nostrorum catalogus')²³ in 1491–2, he did not choose to entitle it (as might have been expected) the membership list of an 'academy'.

All that seems clear is that Ficino, Cristoforo Landino, the youthful Angelo Poliziano and others in the 1470s did share the idea that they were participants in a common enterprise of learned divulgation, Latin and vernacular, centred in Florence, and whatever Cosimo de' Medici (whose memory had to be revered) may have done in the past, his grandson Lorenzo was an active member in the present. It was not—formally speaking—an academy, but it conjured up a vision of both Plato's Academy and the Lyceum of the Peripatetics: a reinforced version of the idea expressed by Lapo da Castiglionchio in 1438.

Also significant are the various references to an 'academia' in Florence in the later 1450s and 1460s dominated by Johannes Argyropoulos. Although these references have been taken to mean a group in the Studium, they may be more loosely intended to label certain teachers and their associates, extramural as well as internal to the university. The letter of Donato Acciaiuoli of 27 June 1461, replying to Francesco Filelfo's request for information about Argyropoulos and—sounding a new Ciceronian echo—'the band of the Florentine Academy' ('chorus Achademie Florentine')²⁴ is perhaps the most telling of these examples; and thanks to Argyropoulos, Donato Acciaiuoli wrote in 1463, many young Florentines were so well informed about Aristotelian and Platonic teaching that they seemed to have been 'brought up in the Academy', which emphasizes that more than one school and branch of thought was intended by the word.²⁵ In fact

²⁰ Hankins, 'The Myth' (n. 1 above), p. 435. On the Studium see A. Verde, *Lo Studio fiorentino 1473–1503*, 4 vols, Florence, 1973–85.

²¹ Hankins, 'Cosimo de' Medici' (n. 16 above), p. 153: '... nostra haec sive academia sive bibliotheca Latinum Platonem graeco semine iamdiu conceptum parturit quotidie.' Hankins translates the passage as 'this Academy or library of ours, is to give birth within days to a Latin Plato, long ago conceived with Greek seed', but it might be rendered: 'this Academy or library of ours, long ago conceived, is every day bringing the Latin Plato to life'.

²² Hankins, 'The Myth' (n. 1 above), pp. 435, 445.

²³ Hankins, 'The Myth' (n. 1 above), pp. 442–4.

²⁴ Della Torre, *Storia* (n. 11 above), pp. 395–6. Nicolai Rubinstein kindly pointed out that this phrase is probably a borrowing from the 'chorus philosophorum' in Cicero, *De finibus*, I.8.26, London, 1914, p. 28; a comparable usage is in Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, XIV.8.1 (n. 6 above), VI, no. 362, p. 17.

²⁵ Cited from other printed sources by Field, *The Origins* (n. 16 above), pp. 107–8.

Zippel argued convincingly in his review article of 1902²⁶ that the 'academia' of Lorenzo's lifetime was really the continuation and to some extent the transformation of the 'chorus achademiae' led by Argyropoulos. Although Argyropoulos lectured only on Aristotle in the Studium, he would have had no choice but to do so, and meanwhile he had done much to stimulate interest in Plato among Florentines.

It certainly seems contrived to separate entirely the 'academic' allusions to (mainly) a circle of teachers employed in the Studium in the 1450s and early 1460s from those uttered a few years later by Ficino or by his friend Cristoforo Landino, given that they too spent part of their professional lives as teachers in the Studium.²⁷ Landino used terms figuratively and rather imprecisely in the preface to his *De vera nobilitate* with its encomium of the Medici family, being careful not to suggest it was just the intellectual vitality of Plato's Academy that had come to Florence, but also that of the Lyceum, not to mention the stoic Portico (Stoa) and the schools of Paris as well.²⁸ Similarly, in his speech to the Signoria when he presented his commentary on Dante, Landino refers to the precepts on government of both Plato ('father of the academic family') and Aristotle.²⁹ The implication is that the 'academic family' of Florence was an amorphous body, whose members might simply assemble from time to time to share and exchange ideas. An example of such an *ad hoc* meeting is the debate at Careggi in 1473, featuring Ficino and Lorenzo on the subject whether happiness is a product of will or intellect.³⁰ Another example is Landino's fictitious debate at Camaldoli concerning immortality, involving Lorenzo and other Florentine intellectuals including Ficino, 'the prince among Platonists of our day',³¹ or in Florence at the symposium-like banquet Lorenzo de' Medici supposedly held to entertain a Greek visitor and many distinguished Florentines on the occasion (in about 1475) of Landino's discourse on nobility, quoted above. There was more evocation of Plato in the 1470s and 1480s than in the 1450s and 1460s—symbolized by Girolamo Rossi's presenting Lorenzo with a bust of Plato supposedly from the ruins of the Academy at Athens³²—and the word 'academia' was ever more frequently invoked, but this does not mean that there was a *Platonic* or indeed any other sort of institutionalized academy in Florence.

But too much attention has always been paid to Medicean Florence in the pre-history of academies, and it is not my intention here to extend this treatment.

²⁶ As cited above, n. 15, pp. 445–6.

²⁷ Maylender, IV, p. 331; cf. Hankins, 'The Myth' (n. 1 above), p. 434 n. 15. For Ficino's appearance on the payroll see J. Davies, 'Marsilio Ficino: Lecturer at the Studio fiorentino', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 45, 1992, pp. 785–90.

²⁸ C. Landino, *De vera nobilitate*, ed. M. Lentzen, Geneva, 1970, p. 35: 'Tanta erat optimorum ingeniorum atque eruditorum vis totque eadem de re tamque variae opinioniones, tanta denique subtilitate disputatae, ut intra magnificos illos lares non modo Academiam Lyceumque ac postremum Porticum ipsam Athenis migrasse, sed omnem Parisiensem scholam illuc convenisse putares.' The passage is noted by F. Yates, *The French Academies of the Sixteenth Century*, London, 1947, p. 2 n. 5.

²⁹ M. Lentzen, *Reden Cristoforo Landinos*, Munich, 1974, p. 40: '...el divino Platone, primo genitore della academica famiglia, et el principe de' Peripatetici Aristotele'.

³⁰ Jill Kraye, 'Moral Philosophy' in *Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. C. B. Schmitt et al., Cambridge, 1988, p. 352.

³¹ *Disputationes Camaldulenses*, ed. P. Lohse, Florence, 1980, p. 9: 'virum nostra tempestate inter Platonicos facile principem'.

³² Della Torre, *Storia* (n. 11 above), p. 640.

Even allowing for the Council in Florence in 1439, with the Greek presence strengthening that special notion of 'academia' as a sodality of scholars with shared interests who set store upon regular meetings and contacts with one another, the most significant figure was not Plethon, even if he dazzled Cosimo de' Medici, but Bessarion (1402–72). Already a cardinal, Bessarion returned in December 1440 to the papal court at Florence, moving with it to Rome in 1443, and his household there subsequently became the earliest prototype of a semi-institutionalized private 'academy'. This was acknowledged by Scipione Bargagli when he wrote the first history of the Italian academies over a century later,³³ and also by Maylender,³⁴ and even by Della Torre in a massively long footnote.³⁵

Unfortunately, there is only sparse evidence about Bessarion's so-called 'academy', except for the fact that scholars in his circle undoubtedly gave their *sodalitas* such a label. The unfinished biography by his secretary, Niccolò Perotti, might have filled this gap in our knowledge had it survived, for Perotti—who was himself a leading light—names Theodore Gaza as the figurehead ('Bessarionae Academiae princeps');³⁶ and other members are listed in Perotti's commentary on Statius' *Silvae* including Lorenzo Valla (who died in 1457), Pomponio Leto and Bartolomeo Sacchi, better known as Platina, whose own testimony survives in his brief *Panegyric* of Bessarion. Some of Platina's material for this may have been derived from Perotti's unfinished biography;³⁷ unlike Perotti, Platina does not actually employ the word 'academy', but he makes clear that the cardinal presided over a remarkable establishment.³⁸ The names he provides of those most notable in Greek and Latin studies, theology, philosophy and medicine, included Perotti, Theodore Gaza, Giovanni Gatti, Valerio da Viterbo and Andronico Callisto; others (unnamed) according to Platina were distinguished in law and mathematics.³⁹ Platina, who did not arrive in Rome until the early 1460s, was maybe only describing Bessarion's later period in residence there: indeed, among other obscurities about the Greek cardinal's 'academic' entourage is the question of its discontinuity during his long absences as legate to Bologna in 1450–55, and to Germany in 1460–61. The refutation of George of Trebizond's interpretation of Plato was probably a joint enterprise of Bessarion's circle, expressed in the book *In calumniatorem Platonis* (1469),⁴⁰ which aimed to reconcile Plato and Aristotle, or at least to establish that the

³³ S. Bargagli, *Discorso delle lodi delle Accademie*, 1569, repr. in *La prima parte dell'imprese*, Venice, 1589, pp. 531–2.

³⁴ Maylender, IV, p. 331.

³⁵ Della Torre, *Storia* (n. 11 above), pp. 11–15.

³⁶ N. Perotti, *Cornucopiae*, Venice, 1513, p. 1034, cited by J. Monfasani, 'Platina, Capranica, and Perotti: Bessarion's Eulogists and the Date of his Birth' in *Bartolomeo Sacchi il Platina*, Atti del Convegno, 1981, ed. A. Campana and P. Medioli Masotti, Padua, 1986, pp. 97–136 (98). Since the present essay was written a valuable study has been published by C. Bianca, 'Roma e l'accademia bessarionea' in *Bessarione e l'umanesimo*, Catalogo della mostra, Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, ed. G. Fiaccadori et al., Naples, 1994, pp. 119–27, which brings together much information. The question, however, whether Bessarion's entourage and its learned activities constituted a genuine 'academy' is not really discussed.

³⁷ Monfasani, 'Platina, Capranica and Perotti' (n. 36 above), esp. p. 99.

³⁸ Bartolomeo Platina, *Panegyricus... Bessarionis* in Migne, *Patrologia graeca*, CLXI, cols cv–cxvi; col. cxv: '...suos non religione tantum et moribus ad bene vivendum instituit, verum etiam litteratura, eruditione, doctrina ita imbuuit ut idem quemadmodum cernimus, multi et quidem docti tanquam ex equo Troiano... continue prodeant...'.
³⁹ Ibid.: 'sunt enim in ejus contubernio qui pontificum ac civile jus quique mathematica optime tenent'.

⁴⁰ L. Labowsky in *DBI*, s.v. *Bessarione*.

former provided a better foundation in some respects for Christian theology. But Bessarion was above all a patristic scholar and had wide interests, not only in Platonic studies. These interests justified his keeping what was rather more than simply an open house for scholars, and his scriptorium may have perhaps anticipated in some respects the publishing programmes of later academies; the connection of one of his associates, Giovan Andrea Bussi, with the first German printers to work in Italy, may point in the same direction.⁴¹

In the mid-1460s some of those associated with Bessarion, and erudite members of other cardinals' households including Platina, formed around that charismatic pedagogue Pomponio Leto (1427–98) the notorious 'Roman Academy', which was persecuted in 1468–9 by Pope Paul II. How this initiative or secession began is obscure, as is the whole question of separate or overlapping identities of the two quasi-academies in Rome. Leto and his friends clearly shared among themselves a greater interest in Roman than in Greek antiquity—Leto himself did not know Greek, even if Platina and some of the others did—and specialized in collecting inscriptions as well as practising Latin composition. But little is clear about the proceedings of their 'sect' ('una certa secta'), as one Milanese ambassador called it,⁴² except that there was a bizarre if not salacious side to its activities. Whether there was also an element of republican subversiveness and anti-Christianity seems less likely; but another ambassador reported that these 'docti gioveni, poeti e filosofi' had chosen for themselves 'una vita achademica et epicurea',⁴³ commenting that they rejected the immortality of the soul and took 'nome strani' instead of Christian names. So far as is known, therefore, there were no Platonic echoes in this 'academy'—and there is no evidence that its members discussed philosophical problems at all. It was probably a taint of sceptical levity in their attitudes which made them so unacceptable to the suspicious Venetian pope. But had they gone too far in non-conformity or contempt for Christian doctrine and institutions, it is hard to see why cardinals, including Bessarion, interceded for some of them. The most suspect as a 'conspirator', Filippo Buonaccorsi, called Callimachus, fled to Poland (where he founded the *sodalitas litterarum Vistulana*); and another who avoided persecution through absence, Paolo Marsi, wrote in Seville a collection of poems, among them lamentations addressed to fellow escapees, 'the Academicians residing at Venice' ('ad Academicos Venetias incolentes') and to his 'Academic brothers imprisoned at Rome' ('ad fratres Academicos Romae captivos').⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid., see also M. D. Feld, 'Sweynheym and Pannartz. Cardinal Bessarion, Neoplatonism, Renaissance Humanism and Two Early Printers', *Harvard Library Bulletin*, 30, 1982, pp. 282–335, and subsequent articles, *ibid.*, 33, 1985, pp. 341–77; 34, pp. 294–332; 36, 1988, pp. 1–91.

⁴² Agostino de' Rossi to Galeazzo Maria Sforza, 28 February 1468; the letter is in L. von Pastor, *Storia dei Papi*, revised Italian edn by A. Mercati, II, Rome, 1961, pp. 741–2. For more recent discussion see R. J. Palermio, 'The Roman Academy, the Catacombs and the Conspiracy of 1468', *Archivum historiae pontificiae*, 18, 1980, pp. 117–55; J. F. D'Amico, 'The Roman Academies' in his *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome*, Baltimore and London, 1983, pp. 89–111. Some further bibliography, particularly on Leto and his associates, is cited by M. Fumaroli in his essay in this volume, n. 19.

⁴³ Pastor, *Storia dei Papi* (n. 42 above), II, p. 475: letter of Johannes Blanchus to Galeazzo Maria Sforza, 29 February 1468.

⁴⁴ *Bembice*, XVI, XIX (the collection was so titled in honour of Marsi's patron, Bernardo Bembo, Venetian ambassador at Seville in 1468–9) quoted in A. Della Torre, *Paolo Marsi da Pescina: Contributo alla storia dell'Accademia Pomponiana*, Rocca S. Casciano, 1903, pp. 144–7.

Under Sixtus IV (1471–84), Leto, Platina and others were rehabilitated, and the restored Roman Academy⁴⁵ was given a slightly more Christian veneer; but the emphasis was still Roman and antiquarian, with Latin verse composition and inscription collecting, and Pomponio Leto long remaining the figurehead, or ‘prince of the literary sodality’ as he is called by the diarist Jacopo Gherardi.⁴⁶ This Jacopo (ex-secretary of Cardinal Jacopo Ammannati) provides the only known account of a session of the *sodalitas*, a meeting near Pomponio Leto’s house on the Esquiline hill to celebrate the ‘birthday’ of Rome, on 20 April 1483. The event included an oration and a banquet in a nearby church, a reading of the charter allegedly granted by the Emperor Frederick III (solicited presumably by Pomponio Leto during his recent travels beyond the Alps) and verses recited by erudite youths.⁴⁷ What else the *sodalitas* did has still to be established; there were certainly initiatives in book production taken by some of its members,⁴⁸ and it is interesting that the need was expressed to distinguish between the Academy and the Studium Urbis even if many of the same humanist scholars were associated with both bodies. One of them, Paolo Pompilio (c. 1455–93), in an invective against Giovanni Sulpizio Verulano, insisted that the word ‘academia’ should be used with precision, and applied to a fixed location, and not used as though it were synonymous with ‘gymnasium’.⁴⁹

Was there, meanwhile, also a Neapolitan Academy? That such a thing had originally been devised in the 1440s by Panormita (Antonio Beccadelli, 1394–1471) for King Alfonso I, who ruled 1442–58, seems dubious. Even Maylender, who is often credulous, rejected the notion that this was the first of the proto-academies.⁵⁰ The word ‘academy’ is used in 1447 in a letter from Francesco Martorell, chief secretary of the royal chancery, to Panormita, telling him that the king had shown great enthusiasm when they discussed his founding an academy and that Panormita should pursue the matter further.⁵¹ What was envisaged is not clear, but the reality probably did not amount to more than *ad*

⁴⁵ On the revived Academy of the later 1470s onwards see now Wouter Bracke, ‘*Fare la Epistola*’ nella Roma del Quattrocento, Rome, 1992, in which the author provides text and commentary of previously unstudied letters in MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. lat. 1982, ff. 24^r–50^v.

⁴⁶ E. Carusi, *Il diario romano di Jacopo Gherardi di Volterra* in L. Muratori, *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, n.s. XXIII, 3, Città di Castello, 1904, p. 98: ‘princeps sodalitatit litterarie’.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 117, quoted by Bracke, ‘*Fare la Epistola*’ (n. 45 above), p. 12 n. 5.

⁴⁸ Bracke, ‘*Fare la Epistola*’ (n. 45 above), p. 13; Maria Grazia Blasio, ‘Lo “Studium Urbis” e la produzione romana a stampa: i corsi di retorica, latino e greco’ in *Un pontificato ed una città: Sisto IV (1471–1484)*, Atti del Convegno, 1984, ed. M. Miglio and others, Vatican City, 1986, pp. 481–501.

⁴⁹ ‘At etiam palam cum profiteris in gymnasio: quod tu ineptissime academiam appellas iniquis: & vos praefecti academiae ista patimini? Academia fuit platonis & Isocratis: qui teste praxiphane platonis hospes ibi poeticam docuit. Est autem loci nomen, & loca non moventur. Fuit & Academia Ciceronis in Italia non longe ab averno lacu: Alibi academiam legisse non memini...’: *Framea Pompilii contra defensionem Sulpitianam*, Rome, Stephan Planck, c. 1482 (IGI 7980; IERS 745, reference given from the copy bound in MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ottob. lat. 1982, f. 15^v). I am most grateful to Wouter Bracke for this reference, and for a very helpful discussion. On Pompilio see Bracke, ‘*Fare la Epistola*’ (n. 45 above); also M. Chiabò, ‘Paolo Pompilio professore dello “Studium Urbis”’ in Miglio *et al.*, ed., *Un pontificato* (n. 48 above), pp. 503–14. On the ‘Studium Urbis’ see also D. S. Chambers, ‘Studium Urbis and gabella studii. The University of Rome in the Fifteenth Century’ in *Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance*, ed. C. H. Clough, Manchester, 1976, pp. 68–110; Egmont Lee, ‘Humanists and the “Studium Urbis”, 1473–1484’ in *Umanesimo a Roma nel Quattrocento*, Atti del Convegno, 1981, ed. P. Brezzi and M. De Panizza Lorch, New York, 1984, pp. 127–46.

⁵⁰ Maylender, IV, pp. 328–90.

⁵¹ MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 3372, f. 109^r, cited in J. H. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples*, Princeton, 1987, p. 94.

hoc readings, debates and orations in the presence of the king,⁵² and the implication that it was something more is probably owing to Giovanni 'Jovianus' Pontano (1426–1503)⁵³ and his friends who wanted to provide some ancestry and continuity for Pontano's own 'academy' in his retirement in the 1490s. Even Pontano expressed reservations, declaring in his *De prudentia* that the gatherings at Panormita's house beside the 'Porticus Antoniana' in Naples, or in summer at his seaside villa, had not really amounted to either a 'lyceum' or an 'academy'.⁵⁴

Pontano's 'academy' does not emerge very clearly beyond the references to it as the setting of his own dialogues, one of which, the *Antonius*, is taken as a main source for this supposed continuity with an academy organized by Panormita, and refers to the principle that members came to listen and participate in the sessions or meetings; Panormita's own role being more to stimulate them than to pontificate as a teacher.⁵⁵ Whether or not this was true, Pontano's own practice seems to have been quite the opposite, and the academicians had to be good listeners to himself; about fifteen disciples are said to have comprised the audience when he read aloud another dialogue, the *Urania*.⁵⁶ Likewise, in the *Actius* (1499)—so titled in honour of Sannazaro, whose academic nickname was 'Actius Syncerus'—the members of the Academy, many of whom are named, are depicted strolling towards the city engaged in a discussion on the decline of religion and morality.

Such was the fame of Pontano, cherished and amplified throughout Italy by a network of friends and disciples who outlived him, that the diffusion of his model of an academy was probably the most fertile of all the antecedents. Pontano had allegedly called regular meetings, favoured personal nicknames for members, fostered use of the vernacular (particularly for poetry) as well as Latin, and broadened the scope far beyond classical philology, imitative literature and epigraphy. The breadth of interest is stressed in a letter to Crisostomo Colonna written in 1498 (but revised as late as 1505) by the physician and polymath Antonio de' Ferrari (1444–1517), called 'Galateo' from Galatona, near Lecce, who himself wrote on an extraordinary variety of subjects and later presided over a species of academy of his own in Apulia. Galateo's letter begins with consolatory sentiments on the death in 1498 of Pontano's son Lucio and emphasizes that Pontano could still count on progeny and immortality through his writings and his disciples; it goes on to list members of the 'old Academy'

⁵² Concerning Alfonso's taste for such intellectual diversions, followed by refreshments and lighter entertainment, see the oration by Adamo di Montalto quoted by Bentley, *Politics* (n. 51 above), p. 57.

⁵³ On Pontano see bibliography in Fumaroli's essay, n. 18, also E. Percopo, *Vita di Giovanni Pontano*, Naples, 1938 (repr. from *Archivio storico per le provincie napoletane*, 61, 1936, pp. 116–250), esp. pp. 106–35. Some interesting observations are made by D. Marsh, 'Giovanni Pontano and the Academic Gathering' in *The Quattrocento Dialogue*, Cambridge, Mass., 1980; see also C. Kidwell, *Pontano, Poet and Prime Minister*, London, 1991, for English translations of passages from Pontano's dialogues.

⁵⁴ G. Pontano, *De prudentia*, preface, in *Opera*, I, Venice, 1518, misquoted by Maylender, IV, p. 329: 'ne Lyceum tamen appellaremus, tanti viri, memoria nos deterruit, quodque etsi nequaquam in Academia'.

⁵⁵ *Antonius* in G. Pontano, *Opera*, II, Venice, 1518, f. 68r: 'Et porticum ipsam nosse, & Antonium videre cupio, audio enim pomeridianis horis illuc conventum haberi literatorum hominum. Ipsum autem Antonium quamquam multa dicunt, plura tamen sciscitari quam docere solitum... Auditores vero ipsos magis voluptatis cuiusdam eorum quae a se dicantur plenos domum dimittere quam certos rerum earum quae in quaestione versentur...'

⁵⁶ Cf. Girolamo Borgia: 'Calendis februarii 1501 Pontanus legere coepit suam *Uraniam* in sua Achademia, cui lectioni fere semper quindecim generosi et eruditissimi viri affuerunt': MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 5175, f. 1r, quoted in Percopo, *Vita* (n. 53 above), p. 119.

(those who represented continuity with Panormita's circle) and the 'new Academy', in which Galateo placed himself at the end of a string of names ('si isti vestrae novae neapolitanae Academiae placet').⁵⁷ One of those named by Galateo was Pietro Summonte (1463–1526), and it is he ('Summontius... librorum Pontani censor et cultor') who played the major role of heralding Pontano's posthumous fame. Summonte was subsequent head of the Academy, a correspondent and friend of other *eruditi* throughout Italy, and, above all, the editor of Pontano's writings; three of the dialogues had already appeared in print by 1507,⁵⁸ and the rest of his works poured steadily from the press. Summonte's own accounts of Pontano's life and possibly of the Academy were lost,⁵⁹ but even so his contribution was immense; in a sense, he was moreover the pioneer who extended the scope of an academy to include discussion of the visual arts, with his well-known letter to Marcantonio Michiel concerning the artists of Naples.⁶⁰ Much more needs to be known about the later history of the Academia Pontaniana; since it flourished under the French and then the Spanish occupation of the kingdom, perhaps it is also the first example of what Frances Yates suggested as a political explanation for the appeal of academies: 'a refuge from the confusion, later developing into foreign tyranny.'⁶¹

Meanwhile, even before Pomponio Leto's death in 1498, there had been other initiatives in Rome, such as the household 'academy' of Alessandro and Paolo Cortesi,⁶² which, as described by Vincenzo Calmeta (d. 1508), introduced recitations of vernacular poetry singing and musical performances into its proceedings.⁶³ Cortesi's sort of 'academy' in Rome was followed by others sponsored by similarly hospitable *eruditi* of the papal curia. These included the *orti letterari* or villa academies—surely of Ciceronian inspiration—of Pontano's friend Angelo Colocci, a polymath who had one house on the slopes of the Pincio and also acquired Pomponio Leto's house on the Esquiline, and of the Luxemburger Johannes Gorlitz ('Coricius'), whose villa was near the Forum of Trajan.⁶⁴ These meeting places were nostalgically recalled by Jacopo Sadoletto in

⁵⁷ A. de' Ferrariis, *Epistolae*, ed. A. Altamura, Lecce, 1959, letter to Crisostomo Colonna, pp. 101–3; on the dating see also P. N. Nemola, *Catalogo delle opere di Antonio de' Ferrariis (Galateo)*, Lecce, 1982, pp. 102–4. On Galateo see also Pèrcopo, *Vita* (n. 53 above), pp. 111, 115; E. Savino, *Un curioso poligrafo del quattrocento*, Bari, 1941.

⁵⁸ Pèrcopo, *Vita* (n. 53 above), p. 113; N. Mancinelli, *Pietro Summonte, umanista napoletano*, Rome, 1923, pp. 42–4.

⁵⁹ Mancinelli, *Pietro Summonte* (n. 58 above), pp. 74–5.

⁶⁰ C. von Fabriczy, 'Summontes Brief an M. A. Michiel', *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 30, 1907, pp. 143–68, discussed by Mancinelli, *Pietro Summonte* (n. 58 above), pp. 80–1.

⁶¹ F. Yates, 'The Italian Academies' (see n.* above), pp. 14–15.

⁶² E.g. letter of Alessandro Cortesi, 31 December 1488: 'ho visso in casa mia honoratamente, et è stata et è una achademia di letterati': F. Pintor, *Da lettere inedite di due fratelli umanistici (Alessandro e Paolo Cortesi)*, Perugia, 1907, p. 29. On Alessandro see also Alison Brown, 'Between Curial Rome and Convivial Florence: Literary Patronage in the 1480s', *Renaissance Studies*, 2, 1988, pp. 208–21, reprinted in her *The Medici in Florence*, Perth (WA), 1992, pp. 247–62.

⁶³ *Vita* of Serafino Aquilano in Vincenzo Calmeta, *Prose e lettere*, ed. C. Grayson, Bologna, 1959, pp. 63–4: 'Fioriva medesimamente in Roma a quel tempo la nostra Academia in casa di Paulo Cortese... non casa di corteggiano ma officina di eloquenza e recettaculo d'ogni inclita virtù se poteva chiamare. Concorrevano ivi ogni giorno gran multitudin de elevati ingegni... Erano de' poeti vulgari in grandissimo pregio li ardori de lo Areтино... Serafino adunque... de frequentare questa Accademia prese deliberazione... con l'armonia di sua musica e con l'arguzia di suoi stramoti spese volte li ardui certami di quelli altri letterati interpellava.'

⁶⁴ D'Amico, *Renaissance Humanism* (n. 42 above), pp. 107–9; Federico Ubalchini, *Vita di Mons. Angelo Colocci*, ed. V. Fanelli, Vatican City, 1964, esp. pp. 66–7. For Gorlitz see J. Ijsewijn, 'Poetry in a Renaissance

a letter written at Carpentras in 1529;⁶⁵ he too had possessed a villa on the Quirinal and had joined in the competitive round of cerebral fun.⁶⁶ Various names follow of regular participants, including the younger Filippo Beroaldo, Girolamo Vida, Tommaso Inghirami, Pietro Bembo, Baldasar Castiglione, and a unidentified Antonio nicknamed 'Computista'. Some of the same personalities linked these initiatives in early sixteenth-century Rome with the traditions of Pontano's Academy in Naples, while the notion of *orti letterarie* found further expression in Florence; although the gatherings in the gardens of the Rucellai were not, apparently, called an academy, discussions ranged over many subjects besides the republican ideas for which they are best remembered.⁶⁷

At the same time—although Serafino denied that the goings-on in Paolo Cortesi's household were like the elite entertainment at princely courts—there were some echoes in the Urbino scenario Castiglione devised for his *Cortegiano* or in the entourage of Isabella d'Este in Mantua. In the early 1520s, when Isabella presided as the mother (no longer wife) of the Mantuan ruler, and her literary coterie was dominated by Mario Equicola and Giangiacomo Calandra, Paolo Giovio referred to it in letters to Equicola as the 'Accademia', or more specifically, the 'Accademia de Santo Pietro'. The use of St Peter's name does not seem very pertinent; whether it was regularly used, or was just Giovio's joke on a single occasion, is not clear (Luzio's explanation that the cathedral of Mantua, dedicated to St Peter, is near the Gonzaga palace, seems hardly witty enough; possibly Giovio meant to allude jocularly to Pietro Aretino, who had first visited Mantua in 1523).⁶⁸ Although Giovio was in some ways a source of inspiration to the sixteenth-century academies, not least in his exposition and diffusion of *imprese*,⁶⁹ he did not always refer to contemporary academies very seriously. Another 'academy' which seems to have been almost wholly a fantasy of Giovio's was that supposedly founded by the *condottiere* Bartolomeo d'Alviano at Pordenone in 1508–9, which Giovio alleged had attracted an intellectual galaxy including Girolamo Fracastoro and Andrea Navagero.⁷⁰

At all events, it is clear that the word 'academia' was being further stretched—sometimes trivialized—as a stock description for elite social gatherings, at which miscellaneous literary discussions and games were held, in private houses, villas and gardens, in the early decades of the sixteenth century. The name might even be applied years after the events giving rise to it, as seems to have been the case with Giangiorgio Trissino's villa establishment at Cricoli,

Garden: The *Coryciana* in *Latin Poetry and the Classical Tradition, Essays in Medieval and Renaissance Literature*, ed. P. Godman and O. Murray, Oxford–Warburg Studies, Oxford, 1990, pp. 211–31.

⁶⁵ Ubaldini, *Vita* (n. 64 above), pp. 67–75.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 68: 'ubi post familiares epulas, non tam cupedia multa conditas, quam multis salibus, aut poemata recitabantur, aut orationes pronunciabantur, cum maxima omnium nostrum, qui audiebamus, voluptate'.

⁶⁷ See Felix Gilbert, 'Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari: A Study on the Origin of Modern Political Thought', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 12, 1949, pp. 99–131, esp. pp. 114–20.

⁶⁸ P. Giovio, *Opera*, I: *Lettere 1514–44*, ed. G. Ferrero, Rome, 1956, pp. 96, 110 (nos 11, 25) to Equicola, 2 May [1522], [?] April 1524; mentioned in A. Luzio and R. Renier, 'La cultura e le relazioni letterarie di Isabella d'Este Gonzaga', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, 33, 1899, pp. 48–9.

⁶⁹ See the essay by R. Ciardi in this volume.

⁷⁰ A. Battistella, 'Pordenone e i d'Alviano', *Memorie storiche forogiuliesi*, 60, 1913, esp. pp. 273–74; P. Pieri, in *DBI*, II, p. 591, cites Battistella but misses his point.

near Vicenza; Cricoli in fact became, after Trissino's death, a superior educational establishment under the direction of Bernardino Partenio.⁷¹

In Venice, meanwhile, fashionable talk about an academy seems to have been rather late in arriving, even if a few of the 'academicians' of Pomponio Leto's circle had fled there in 1468, and some of the local *litterati*, such as Marcantonio Sabellico and Pietro Bembo, were friends of later 'academicians' in Naples and Rome. It did so eventually in the guise of the so-called 'New Academy' of Aldus Manutius, himself a former associate of the Roman Academy and a correspondent of Pontano, who in 1502 had sent him the text of his dialogue *Urania*. Like the Academy of Ficino, Aldus's 'New Academy' has recently occasioned doubt.⁷² Aldus refers to his Academy in no less than eight colophons and prefaces, as for instance in the preface to his edition of Euripides' *Tragedies* in which he claims that every month he sent out at least a thousand volumes 'ex Academia nostra',⁷³ but it is difficult to see this usage as more than a stylish description of his *officina*. The discovery of the supposed rules of the society in Greek, laying down that only Greek should be spoken on peril of fines which would be used to defray the expense of banquets, and providing the pseudo-Greek nicknames of a number of nominal academicians, most of them Aldus's employees or proof-correctors,⁷⁴ does not prove very much, except that it expressed a playful in-house fantasy. Probably the most that can be said is that Aldus, knowing how desirable a supportive association of scholars who enjoyed each other's company was for his business, sometimes hoped to find an institutional way of realising this, perhaps in the entourage of the Emperor Maximilian or of Pope Leo X.⁷⁵

Meanwhile there was a quite different tradition which may have contributed, rather more than did the make-believe of Aldus Manutius, to academies in which Venetians later participated, particularly in Padua and other *terraferma* cities. This derived from the young patrician clubs or companies of the hose (*compagnie della calza*) in Venice. Maylender, indeed, listed them as though they really were proto-academies. Certainly such groups were much more institutionalized than the *festevole brigade* of Florence and elsewhere which Della Torre included among early antecedents. Already flourishing in the later fifteenth century, the *compagnie della calza* did not pretend to be learned societies, but were nevertheless *sodalitates* which assumed whimsical titles for themselves, drew up rules of membership, elected a temporary *principe* and professed some serious moral purposes—all laid down in formally drafted statutes—in addition to the wearing of coloured stockings and holding of banquets.⁷⁶ For instance, from 1512 onwards the Zardinieri, the Ortolani, the Valorosi, the Trionfanti and others, were

⁷¹ B. Morsolin, *Giangiorgio Trissino*, Vicenza, 1878, esp. pp. 232–8.

⁷² M. J. C. Lowry, 'The "New Academy" of Aldus Manutius: A Renaissance Dream', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 58, 1976, pp. 378–420. In *The World of Aldus Manutius*, Oxford, 1979, p. 213 n. 76, Lowry abated the polemical tone of his article, but did not retract all of its suggestions.

⁷³ *Aldo Manuzio editore*, ed. G. Orlandi, 2 vols, Milan, 1975, I, p. 74, and *passim*; Lowry, *World of Aldus* (n. 72 above), pp. 196–7.

⁷⁴ A. Firmin-Didot, *Alde Manuce et l'hellénisme à Venise*, Paris, 1875, pp. 435–40.

⁷⁵ Lowry, *World of Aldus* (n. 72 above), pp. 199–207.

⁷⁶ L. Venturi, 'Le Compagnie della Calza: sec. XV–XVI', *Nuovo archivio veneto*, n.s., 17, 1909, pp. 140–233; also published as a book (repr. 1983). The statutes of the Modesti (1487) on pp. 196–200 are partly translated in B. Pullan and D. S. Chambers, *Venice: A Documentary History, 1450–1530*, Oxford, 1992, pp. 377–9.

occasional sponsors and producers of musical and theatrical performances, usually in the carnival season.⁷⁷ Something analogous seems to have arisen in Rome in the 1530s, with Claudio Tolomei's so-called *Virtuosi*, a *sodalitas* which seems to have fluctuated (according to two rare references recording its existence) between frivolity and serious intellectual pursuits; one writer records that during carnival they elected a weekly 'king' and gave performances in his honour at a banquet;⁷⁸ but another writer, three years later, suggests that they aspired to knowledge on a quite encyclopaedic scale.⁷⁹

Networks of literary associates and friends, informal groupings—often short-lived—located in a particular city, villa, palace or household: these seem to provide the commonest pattern or model promoting use of the word 'academia' from the late fifteenth century. Already in the early 1530s Pietro Aretino wrote with a degree of irony about their proliferation: he told Duke Federico Gonzaga that he was surprised that an academy, for exchanging the latest jokes, had not been founded at Mantua as in other places (so much for Giovio's reference to Isabella d'Este's 'Academy of St Peter').⁸⁰ Bearing in mind the *Virtuosi* in Rome, and, slightly earlier, in 1525–7, the *Intronati* ('thunderstruck') of Siena, with their trilingual, encyclopaedic programme, and their officials including a presiding *archintronato*, *consiglieri*, *censori* and others—whose importance, even allowing for Scipione Bargagli's Sienese prejudice, has been reaffirmed recently⁸¹—a final turning-point seems to have come with the *Infiammati*, founded in Padua in June 1540.⁸² The *Infiammati*, who drew upon the former circle of Pietro Bembo (who had left Padua the previous year) and the luminaries of the Paduan Studium, as well as having a link with the dissolved *Intronati* in the persons of Alessandro Piccolomini and the Sozzini brothers, had a formal constitution, including an elected president or *principe* (Piccolomini was the first), twice-weekly meetings, a wide syllabus of lectures with emphasis upon the use of Italian, and also the avowed intention of editing and publishing their members' works. Was the Florentine, Benedetto Varchi, as one of its principal organizers, the essential link? He had known about the *Virtuosi*⁸³ and played a key part in the slightly later foundation in Florence of the *Umidi* (superseding the *Infiammati*, whose flames had soon ceased to flicker in Padua, although they were rekindled a few years

⁷⁷ G. Padoan, 'La commedia rinascimentale a Venezia' in *Storia della civiltà veneta*, ed. G. Arnaldi and M. Pastore Stocchi, Vicenza, 1981, esp. pp. 394–421.

⁷⁸ Annibal Caro to Benedetto Varchi, Rome, 10 March 1538: 'Il Giuoco de la Virtù crebbe tanto che diventò reame, e questo carnevale vi si son fatte gran cose, perché ogni settimana sedeva un re, che a l'ultimo avea da fare una cena, in fine de la quale ogn'uno era comandato a presentarlo d'una stravaganza e d'una composizione a proposito d'essa...': Annibal Caro, *Lettere familiari*, ed. A. Greco, I, Florence, 1957, p. 69; cited by Richard S. Samuels, 'Benedetto Varchi, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 29, 1976, pp. 599–633 (607 n. 32).

⁷⁹ Luca Contile to Sigismondo d'Este, Rome, 18 July 1541: '...vo per ordinario ogni giorno in casa di Mons. Tolomei dove frequento l'Accademia della virtù, la quale oltra che sia ricca di tutte le lingue, possiede anche tutte le scienze... che bell'udire il suono di tanta unita sapienza!': Caro, *Lettere* (n. 78 above), I, p. 69 n. 5, quoted from L. Contile, *Lettere*, I, Venice, 1564, pp. 16–17.

⁸⁰ P. Aretino, *Tutte le opere*, ed. F. Flora, Verona, 1960, no. 24, p. 34: 'mi maraviglio che anche costì non nasca qualche accademia di ciarlamanti nuovi, come a Modena e a Brescia non pure a Siena, facendosi lettore il cavalier Mainoldo, pecora gioiellata.' See also n. 68 above.

⁸¹ Samuels, 'Varchi...and the Origins' (n. 78 above), pp. 608–10.

⁸² *Ibid.*, *passim*; A. Daniele, 'Sperone Speroni, Bernardino Tomitani e l'Accademia degli Infiammati di Padova' in *Sperone Speroni*, ed. G. Folena, *Filologia veneta*, 2, Padua, 1989, pp. 1–53.

⁸³ See n. 78 above.

later). And was it more than a coincidence that the 'Academy' of Pontano's successors was finally closed down at just this time (1542)?

For more than a century the word 'academia' had been used flexibly to mean a variety of things, some definite, some indefinite, and it is often difficult to sift the grain from the chaff in this pre-della Cruscan period: both Plato, as the original Academician, and Florence have to be put in their places, Rome and Naples kept in focus within a web-like structure of development which is tied inextricably to personalities. 'O Academiam volaticam!', as Cicero exclaimed, 'modo huc, modo illuc'.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, XIII.25 (n. 6 above), V, no. 333, pp. 228-9.