

or not. On the other hand, the outsider may impose punishments upon the citizens more justly and independently than a citizen might. And as the death and blood of the condemned leaves its stain upon the judge, this too seems harder to bear in a free and equal city if the citizen has imposed such a penalty on a fellow citizen. Finally the outsider will be more afraid than the citizen of the investigation of his conduct if he violates the law. For all these reasons, they thought it better to have punishments imposed by outsiders.

It would be appropriate next to speak of the laws of the city, but this part demands a long investigation. For the present we shall say merely this: that the city uses the Roman law, and was indeed a Roman colony. For Sulla the dictator established this colony, with the best Roman stock, with the result that we have the same laws as the mother-city, except for such changes as have been brought about by time.

Since the constitution is a mixed one, as we have said, it is correct to describe it as having some tendencies toward democracy, and some toward aristocracy. One of the democratic tendencies is for the magisterial terms of office to be so short. The highest office—that of the Nine—is no more than two months; some of the senators serve three, others four months. The designation of short terms of office for magistrates is a democratic feature, and tends toward equality. Democratic, too, is the fact that we so highly honor and protect our freedom in word and deed, as the very purpose and objective of the whole constitution. Electing our magistrates by lot and not according to any property assessment is another democratic characteristic.

On the other hand, there are many features which show an aristocratic tendency. The system of preliminary discussion, and the impossibility of bringing a matter before the people until it has first been formulated, and the requirement that the people may not change the text, but must accept or reject it as a whole, seems to me most aristocratic.

This city too has experienced, as I believe other cities have also, various transformations from time to time, sometimes in favor of the many, sometimes in favor of the aristocrats. When, formerly, the people used to march forth under arms and fight its own battles, and (because the city was overflowing with population) could overwhelm almost all the neighboring cities, power in the city was in the multitude, and accordingly the people had the advantage, so that it was able to disenfranchise almost all the well-born. With the passage of time, warfare came to be carried out instead by hired foreigners, and then it seemed that political power should no longer be in the multitude, but in the hands of the aristocrats and the wealthy, because they contributed so much to the community, and had counsel to offer in the place of arms. Thus, as the power of the people gradually dissolved, the constitution became established in the form which it now possesses.

T H R E E

The New History

1: Introduction

Bruni and History

In his ideal program of studies, Bruni put history in the first place after divinity and moral philosophy. History, he said, was a subject that should not be neglected by any serious student.¹

Among his contemporaries, Bruni's reputation rested above all upon his work as an historian. An official act of the city of Florence granted to him and his descendants the unusual privilege of exemption from taxation for his services, not as chancellor, but as historian:

Considering what eternal fame and glory have been conferred on peoples and cities by literary talents and the splendor and brilliance of histories, the Priors of the Guilds and the Standard-Bearer of Justice of the People and Commune of Florence, observing also the famous works of the talented and distinguished Leonardo Bruni, who is engaged in writing a *History of the Florentine People* and has already composed, in an elegant style, nine books of this work, which he has presented to the Florentine government, and observing further the scholarship by which the said Leonardo has honored the city of Florence in other areas, and bearing in mind his multifarious works, and desirous of remunerating the aforesaid Leonardo, his sons and descendants by such a recompense as will make him who labored for the eternal fame of

this city realize how grateful its people are ... [the mechanisms of the exemption are then specified].²

He was honored by a tomb in Santa Croce, where the book resting upon his marble effigy reminds the visitor that he was the author of the *History of the Florentine People*.³

Bruni's reputation as an historian suffered greatly, however, at the hands of nineteenth-century critics, first from their prejudice against humanistic historiography in general, secondly from the absence of modern editions of Bruni's work in particular, and finally from the assumption that several of his historical works were merely translations.

The prejudice goes back to Burckhardt who maintained that the spirit of humanism, however beneficial in other areas, was injurious to history:

A superficial comparison of the histories of this period with the earlier chronicles, especially with the works so full of life, color, and brilliancy as those of the Villani, will lead us loudly to deplore the change. How insipid and conventional appear by their side the best of the humanists, and particularly their immediate and most famous successors among the historians of Florence, Leonardo Aretino and Poggio!⁴

The crushing opinion of such an authority was enough to discourage any challenge for a long time.⁵ A half century after Burckhardt, the opinion remained the same. The standard history of modern historiography, by Eduard Fueter, contains in the judgment of a recent critic, a "grotesque" undervaluation of Bruni's ability and importance.⁶

The History of the Florentine People

There was no modern, critical edition of Bruni's principal historical work to serve as the basis of a more positive appreciation until 1914, when the *History of the Florentine People*, edited by Emilio Santini,⁷ appeared in the new Muratori series. Santini had already published a detailed analysis of this *History*, book by book.⁸ Unlike Burckhardt, who had not attempted more than a superficial comparison, Santini compared Bruni's account with that of the chroniclers in particular instances. His conclusion was the opposite of Burckhardt's. The chroniclers, he found, were unable to see beneath the surface of events, and "only Bruni revealed the secret manoeuvres of the time."⁹ Santini summarized the results of his analysis as follows:

The careful examination of the whole first book, of the internal history of Florence in the latter half of the thirteenth century, of external events as well in the first decade of the next century and of the period

1350-1353, and finally the analysis of the last three books forced me to the conclusion that, for accuracy of research, for critical acumen and for impartiality of judgment, Leonardo Bruni was the first of the erudite historians who, far from being the slavish imitator of the classics, had continued and developed, under the influence of the latter, the tradition of the chroniclers who went before him, thus becoming a reliable and true historian.¹⁰

Taking note of Santini's analysis of Bruni's methods of research, B. L. Ullman confirmed that they "put Bruni in an entirely new light as an historian."¹¹

The *Florentine History* came in for additional appreciative analysis in the pages of Hans Baron's *Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (1955),¹² though more for its republican ideology than for its historical method. Bruni's work as an historian has been the subject of more recent analysis by Donald Wilcox and by Nancy Struener.¹³ Finally, substantial sections of the *History* have become available in the English translation of René Watkins.¹⁴ The twentieth century may be said to have vindicated Bruni's reputation as an historian.

The vindication has rested, however, on examination of the *Florentine History*, while Bruni's other historical works have for the most part remained unstudied. Santini devoted a few pages to them, but only to insist on the sharp difference between them and the *Florentine History*. The *New Cicero*, the *Punic War*, the commentary on the *Hellenica*, and the *Gothic War* were derived from Greek authors: Plutarch, Polybius, Xenophon and Procopius, respectively. Because, according to Santini, Bruni was content to follow his one authority in each case without attempting to present a fresh reconstruction of events on the strength of other sources, these works should not be classified as "historical works," but rather, if not indeed as translations, as "free abridgments" (*riduzioni libere*) of their Greek originals.¹⁵

The New Cicero

In 1980, the *New Cicero* became the focus of a new appraisal of Bruni's merit as an historian. In an article published in the *English Historical Review*,¹⁶ Edmund Fryde argued that Bruni's development as an historian was a gradual one, and that the *Cicero*, written in the course of the first year after his return to Florence in 1415—the same year that saw the completion of the first book of the *History of the Florentine People*—was a critical turning-point in that development. Before the *Cicero*, Bruni had translated several of Plutarch's *Lives*; Santini believed the *Cicero* to be essentially the

same despite the author's preface, that is, not much more than a translation.¹⁷ Hans Baron thought that the first two-thirds of the Cicero followed Plutarch so closely that they were not worth republishing, and confined his interest to the last third in which Bruni had attempted an intellectual biography to supplement the factual story that was presumably Plutarch's.¹⁸

In the preface Bruni admits that his original aim had been no more than a translation of Plutarch, but that, becoming dissatisfied with the way the Greek author had presented Cicero, he had resolved to offer a "new" Cicero. "We have therefore . . . started out on a different principle . . . with a more mature appreciation and fuller information," but "we do so not as a translator, but in accordance with our own judgment and purpose."

Did the *New Cicero* in fact justify the claims of its author? Fryde points to Bruni's use of sources other than Plutarch, especially Sallust, and Cicero's own speeches. Comparing Bruni's account with Plutarch's, Fryde has been able to point out many instances where Bruni's is superior, for example, the analysis of the conspiracy of Catiline, of Cicero's proconsulate in Cilicia, of Cicero's reasons for joining Pompey, and the story of Cicero's last year. Thanks, therefore, to this new analysis of the first two-thirds of the text, we may add the *New Cicero* to the evidence in favor of Bruni's claim to be a true historian.

Fryde is not satisfied, however, with rehabilitating the first two-thirds; he feels he must deny the significance attached by Baron to the last third. But the attempt to show the connection between Cicero the statesman and Cicero the scholar was surely significant, however much it may in this instance have owed to Plutarch. It provided Bruni with his model of what Baron has called a "civic humanist," and the passage in which Bruni describes that ideal offers the best opportunity for understanding the meaning of that term.

Below we present, besides the preface, two passages from the body of the *New Cicero*, the first on Cicero's victory over the promoters of the Agrarian Law, and the second on the ideal of the scholar-statesman. We append the corresponding paragraphs from Plutarch's *Life of Cicero*, so that the reader may see how Bruni transformed Plutarch into what was indeed a fresh interpretation of Cicero's life. What Plutarch had to say of Cicero in retirement Bruni rearranged in order to present his ideal of the scholar-statesman.

The Preface to the History of the Florentine People

The preface to the *Florentine History* gave Bruni the opportunity to express his concept of the historian's task more fully. Anybody can write letters or little essays, he says, but history calls for the explanation of the causes

of events and an expression of the historian's judgment on every action. He was nearly put off, he says, by the prospect of the enormous labor involved—a remark that indicates that his model was Livy's *History of Rome*, for that work opens with the same foreboding.

The value of history lies in the fact that it can teach us that "wisdom, by which we may sift the achievements and counsels of many ages, so that you easily learn what to follow and what to avoid, and [can] stimulate us to virtue by accounts of the glory of great men." Thus we are presented with the conception of history as a combination of objective analysis and of moral philosophy.

At this stage of his career—1418 has been suggested as the date of composition of the preface¹⁹—Bruni evidently saw no contradiction between wisdom and patriotism. The opening lines make it clear that the climax of the whole work was to be the glorious position attained by the Florentine state in his own time. In fact, he was able to get no further than the conclusion of the war against the duke of Milan, which came to an end with the latter's death in 1402. Bruni died before being able to fulfill his promise to describe the conquest of Pisa in 1406 or the war against King Ladislas of Naples. The analogy that he makes in the preface, however, between the Roman conquest of Carthage and the Florentine conquest of Pisa, is worth noting. It enabled Bruni to put the contemporary Florentine achievement into a grand historical perspective. The subjection of her ancient rival gave Florence access to the sea and laid the basis for a territorial state that eventually included most of Tuscany—the city-state of Lucca being the only important unit not within the Florentine dominion. But if the analogy with Rome was valid, who could doubt that the future held the promise of a greater Florentine empire?

Bruni's emphasis on the duty of each generation to record its achievements for the benefit of posterity and the space devoted to contemporary history in the *History of the Florentine People* did not mean, though, that he would not take an interest in the history of earlier periods or of other peoples.

The First Punic War

The First Punic War belongs to about the same period in Bruni's life as the preface to his *Florentine History*, but whereas the latter emphasizes contemporary history, the preface to the former attempts to justify writing the history of the distant past. A good deal of ink has been spilled in the debate whether this work should be regarded as an historical work of Bruni's or as a translation of Polybius. In the preface to *The First Punic War* Bruni goes out of his way to deny that the work is a mere translation, claiming that

he has drawn on many sources besides Polybius. Nevertheless, even such an admirer of Bruni as Hans Baron has described the *Punic War* as "essentially an adaptation of Polybius."²⁰ The truth of the matter could only be settled by a close comparison of Bruni's text with that of Polybius, and this has been done by Beatrice Reynolds.²¹ She found many differences—some of them evidently introduced by Bruni to make the Romans look better. Moreover, she found sizable borrowings from authors other than Polybius, including Strabo, Thucydides and Plutarch. Beyond the literary sources he could not go in an age before the development of such auxiliary sciences as archaeology and epigraphy.

What the critics have missed is that Bruni was not pretending to be able to reconstruct early history in the way that he sought to construct recent Florentine history. In the case of the latter, he could and did resort to documents in the archives. Such non-literary sources were not available to him for anything but recent history. It was, he insisted, the duty of learned men in every age to put the records of their own time into literary form for the benefit of posterity. Livy had done that, and if his books on the period of the First Punic War had survived, Bruni says that "there would be no need of any new work." This remark throws a curious light on Bruni's conception of the historian's task. If taken seriously, it implies that construction of history from the sources—what we consider to be the real business of the historian—was to be expected only of the contemporary historian. For earlier periods, one read the histories that had been written at the time, with discrimination, to be sure, but without pretending to make an independent reconstruction of the story.

The justification for writing the *Punic War* was that the only adequate accounts were in Greek and thus inaccessible to most of Bruni's fellow citizens. He wanted them to see how Roman greatness had developed from the defeat of Carthage, because they might then rise to the challenge of what he thought was their own destiny after the conquest of Pisa. We might call his *Punic War* an essay in interpretation rather than a "history" in the full sense of the word. Indeed, Bruni's own term for it is "commentary." And, as he wrote in a letter to a friend:

Commentaries differ a great deal from history. The latter is more ample and thorough; the former more contracted and less fully spelled out. Even Livy, in reporting the deeds of Romulus, of Hostilius and of Tarquin, those early kings of the Romans, does not proceed year by year, but gives us a summary. Polybius does the same, and he is in fact the tested author whose authority we have followed.²²

On the Origin of Mantua²³

The little treatise on the origin of Mantua is another example of Bruni's interest in ancient history at this time (May 1418). It opens with the statement that references to the origin of Mantua may be found in Livy, in Pliny the Younger and in Vergil, and that these ancient authorities make it clear that Mantua had been founded by the Etruscans. Dante, on the other hand, is criticized for his ignorance of Mantua's Etruscan origins, and for recounting the myth that its founder was born of a virgin. "For a virgin cannot give birth to anything." Vergil had referred to her more appropriately as a mother. What he said was rather prolix, but it had to be remembered that he was a poet, and the license allowed to poets did not extend to history. Thus we see Bruni in this treatise, as in the first book of the *Florentine History*, making use of ancient sources in order to separate history from mythology.

The Etruscanism expressed in the treatise *On the Origin of Mantua*, and which occupies such an important place in the first book of the *Florentine History*, was not a case of antiquarianism. Since Bruni identified contemporary Tuscans with the ancient Etruscans, praise of the latter had its patriotic value. There was no need for Tuscans to be overawed by Rome. Mantua had been founded by them three hundred years before the foundation of Rome,²⁴ and four hundred and fifty years before that of Milan. Accordingly, addressing the duke of Mantua, he concludes the treatise,

It should cause you no grief, noble duke of Mantua, that your city was founded by the Tuscans. For there was no people in all Italy before the Roman dominion that was more powerful in war, or greater in wealth, or more glorious in the arts of peace.²⁵

From the Etruscans, indeed, the Romans had taken their letters, their religious rites and their political symbols.

What therefore can be nobler in peace or war than the name of Etruria, if you take the antiquity and long-standing glory of this people into account? Moreover, this same people is today not exactly the most backward in Italy! On the contrary, for the splendor of its towns, the greatness of its talents, its wealth and power, I can say without prejudice that it is inferior to no other people in Italy.²⁶

In the three writings we have been considering, the *Preface to the Florentine History* (probably 1418), the *First Punic War* (1418 or 1419), and the *Origin of Mantua* (1418), history was expected to promote patriotic pride. The wisdom that could be gained from history was the lesson that empire on the Roman model was part of the Florentine destiny. In an extraordinary passage in

The mood is different from what it had been twenty years earlier, when his subject had been the foundation of the Roman empire, or the rise of Florence. Now, as in the *Commentary on the Hellenica*, the subject was the decline and fall of a civilization. Reflecting on this, Bruni is moved to remark on the historian's task:

It is indeed the business of history to make a literary record of the times whether they are prosperous or adverse, and so, though one prefers better times, one must write about whatever happened.

Here Bruni has anticipated the famous words used by von Ranke to define the business of the historian, to set down the story exactly as it happened. It is perhaps significant that this insistence upon objectivity should be found in a preface where the reference is always to "history." Bruni thinks of himself here in the company of Xenophon and Livy, and the term "commentary" is used only with reference to Procopius.

As for the value to be gained from the study of history, it is no longer, as it had been when he embarked upon the *History of Florence*, to make manifest an imperial destiny, but "to make us wiser and more modest," for "those who have read how the empires of the greatest kings and republics have been corrupted understand how foolish it is to boast and claim glory for things about which nobody can know whether they will last until evening."

2: The New Cicero (*Cicero novus*)

Preface

[TEXT: *Schriften*, pp. 113-14.]

At a leisured moment recently, when I wanted something to read, I was offered a little book of Plutarch in translation, in which the life of Cicero was said to be included. Although I had often read this before, attentively and accurately in Greek, when I began to page through it to see what it was like in Latin, I became aware right away (for the errors were quite obvious) that the good man who translated it lacked the learning for the task, for he had fallen into many errors, partly out of ignorance of Greek, partly for lack of the talent to render appropriately and elegantly enough the things that he had got right.

And so I felt sad for Cicero and was myself indignant that our literature should be so mute about the very man who had assiduously undertaken, alone, to see to it that it should not be mute. Accordingly I took it on as my duty to try to repair this shortcoming in the Latin language. I ordered the Greek volume right away, and began a new translation from scratch. At first the work seemed to be proceeding clearly enough. Soon, however, as I went on and was taking everything into account that is necessary for a careful translation, I found that even the true Plutarch did not satisfy my expectations. He leaves many things out that are very pertinent to the portrait of that great man. Other things he tells in a way that seemed to serve rather his comparative purpose (by which he aims to give Demosthenes the edge) than the end of impartial judgment.

Accordingly, setting both Plutarch and his translator aside, and after reading what has been written on Cicero whether by Latin or Greek authors, we have started from scratch to describe his life and character and deeds, with a more mature appreciation and fuller information. We do so not as a translator, but in accordance with our own judgment and purpose. Nothing, however, has been rashly added to the story—only what we could vouch for in each case and are capable of asserting with certain proof.

You, Niccolò, our censor and judge, will read this *New Cicero* with care, and if you do not think it unworthy, will have a copy made for others, too, to read.¹ At the same time we urge and call upon all who have the native talent to write with greater elegance and better evidence on these matters. Let each put his best effort into a competition to honor the parent and prince of our literature. For our literature is indebted to no one more than to him who passed it on to us, and for me the glory of Cicero is so great that I earnestly hope to be surpassed by the many others who will write about him. Farewell.

Cicero's Victory Over the Promoters of the Agrarian Law

[TEXT: MS Plut. 52,10, fols. 7r-8r, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence.]

And so he was made consul, along with Gaius Antonius, the son of Marcus Antonius the orator. This was that glorious consulship on account of which Cicero was the first Roman to be called father of his country—an appellation that the Roman emperors later usurped. But this great honor was conferred on Cicero when the city was still free, and not by some adulator or other, but by the recommendation of Marcus Carus.

What first drew attention to Cicero was the energy he displayed in get-

ting the Agrarian Law repealed. For, up to this point in the consulship, the Catilinarian conspiracy had not yet come to light. Yet certain other great disturbances of the commonwealth were in preparation. The sons of those who had been proscribed by Sulla were now demanding that their right to public office should be restored—a demand that was not unjust, but that was being put forward at the wrong time—, and the tribunes of the plebs for this and other purposes had promulgated a law creating a Council of Ten with authority to take appropriate action. To them was given power by law to divide all the public land there was in Italy, Syria and Asia [i.e., the Roman province of that name], to make levies, to reduce taxes, and to send men into exile. It was not only the common people [the *plebs*] who were stimulated by the hope of a new deal through this law; certain men were basing big plans upon it, and first among these was the consul, Gaius Antonius, who hoped that if the law were carried out, he might easily gain a place on the Council of Ten. He also gave the impression that he was not unwilling to hear talk of conspiracy, given the magnitude of the financial reward.

When therefore Cicero turned to confront this threat to the republic, he decided to begin by diverting his colleague from what he had hoped to get out of a new deal, and to vindicate both himself and the republic. He renounced the governorship of Gaul that had been offered him without the asking, and he arranged that Macedonia should be given to Antonius. After having thus sanitized his colleague's ambitions, and having harnessed these to his own cause, he could now attack the movement as a whole from a stronger position. When the tribunes of the *plebs* who had promoted the law were called before the senate, he subjected them to such a crushing defeat that they sat silent and did not dare to offer any response. But when the same tribunes shortly afterward accused him before the people, and summoned him before an assembly after stirring up the passions of the multitude, this did not frighten him any the more. In the company of the senators he went down into the assembly. There the power of his eloquence was clearly shown. By the weighty speech he delivered, he so altered the minds of his hearers that the *plebs* themselves abandoned their self-interested course and repealed the law, deserting its authors altogether. In this way the Agrarian Law (first introduced by Tiberius Gracchus, and subsequently agitated for by raving tribunes with serious confrontations almost every year) that was drawing senators and *plebs* into endless conflict, was easily laid to rest by Cicero's prudence and eloquence.

The Ideal of the Scholar-Statesman

[TEXT: MS. Plut. 52, 10, fols. 23v-25r, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence.]

Back in Rome, he found that there was no longer any place for him in the courts or in the senate, because all decisions were now in the hands of one man, and so he returned to his studies and to letters, thinking that he might at least be of use to his fellow citizens in this way, now that no other was any longer open to him. During most of this period, in fact, he stayed on his estates, and did not go to the city except for the purpose of paying his respects to Caesar or speaking on behalf of some citizen, as in the case of Marcus Marcellus, on whose behalf he persuaded Caesar to grant rehabilitation, for which Cicero expressed thanks in the name of the senate; and in the cases of Quintus Ligarius and of King Dejotarus of Galatia, whom he defended before an angry and victorious Caesar. Otherwise, all his time was spent either in discussions with his friends or in reading and writing.

The man was really born to be useful to other men, either in the public sphere or in learning. As in the public sphere he served his country as consul and countless persons as orator, so in learning and letters he truly served not only his fellow citizens but in fact all who use the Latin language. He seemed to be the very light of education and of wisdom.

It was he who first treated philosophy in Latin; this was a subject hitherto unknown to our literature. It had almost been alien to the Roman manner of speech. Many learned men thought it was a subject that could neither be written nor discussed in Latin. He added many words to the native language, which made it possible to express the findings and controversies of the philosophers more clearly and easily. It was he who uncovered and bequeathed the principles and art of oratory before any other Latins, and more learnedly than any of the Greeks. It was he who joined eloquence, which is the mistress of men's minds, to the power of the Roman dominion. Accordingly he should not be called just Father of his Country, but the father of our speech and letters. If you read his books and works, you would never think he had the leisure for a public career. On the other hand, if you consider his deeds, his controversies, his occupations, his battles, in both the public and the private area, you would think he could have had no time left for reading or writing. So he is in my opinion the only man to have fulfilled both these great and difficult accomplishments: when he was active in the republic that was mistress of the world, he wrote more than the philosophers living at leisure and engaged in study; on the other hand, when

he was mostly occupied in study and in the writing of books, he got more business done than those who are involved in no literary endeavor.

The reason for this I think was, first, his greatness of character, which could be described as almost godlike; second, his habitual vigilance and skill; and third, that he brought to public affairs a familiarity with every branch of knowledge and school of learning. And so he was able to draw on this same store of philosophy both for the practical measures to be taken in governing the republic and for the propositions to be used in writing and in teaching others. Liberally educated from his youth, and particularly trained in public speaking, he was able to put his thoughts into writing effortlessly. On the strength of such character, such natural gifts, and such knowledge and education, he was able to write a large number of works between boyhood and the end of his life, and had planned many more when an untimely death snatched him away.

Plutarch on Cicero and the Agrarian Law

[TEXT: Translated by Rex Warner, in *The Fall of the Roman Republic* (Penguin, 1972) pp. 322-23.]

Cariline's designs were to remain hidden for some time from the general mass of the population, but Cicero was faced with considerable preliminary difficulties as soon as he took up his office. In the first place those people who were disqualified by the laws of Sulla from holding office (and they represented a large and powerful section of the population) now began to put themselves forward and to address public meetings, making many attacks on the tyranny of Sulla. What they said was true enough and perfectly justified, but this was neither a necessary nor a proper time for disturbing the government. In the second place the tribunes were proposing laws which had the same end in view. The proposal was that a commission of ten men should be appointed; these ten should have unlimited powers and be given the right to sell the public land anywhere in Italy, in Syria, and in the new territories recently conquered by Pompey; they should be allowed to bring to trial whomever they wished, to send people into exile, to found new cities, to draw money from the treasury, to raise and pay for as many troops as they wanted. Not unnaturally this law was supported by a number of eminent people and particularly by Cicero's colleague Antonius, who counted upon being one of the ten. But what most alarmed the nobility was that Antonius was suspected of knowing all about Cariline's conspiracy and, because of his enormous debts, looking favorably on it.

Cicero's first task was to render these fears groundless. He arranged that the province of Macedonia should be allotted to Antonius, while he himself declined the province of Gaul, which was offered to him. By doing this favor to Antonius he secured his object of making him, like a hired actor, always take the minor part, leaving to Cicero himself the chief role in the defense of their country. And now that Antonius was under control and had become easy to manage, Cicero proceeded with all the more confidence to deal with the other subversive elements. In the senate he made a carefully argued attack on the proposed law which proved so effective that not even the sponsors of the law could find anything to say in reply. Then, when they made a second attempt to get it passed and, after careful preparation, summoned the consuls to appear before the people, Cicero, without showing the slightest fear, led the way, telling the senate to follow him, and not only got the law rejected but so overpowered the tribunes by the force of his eloquence that he made them abandon the rest of the measures which they were contemplating.

Indeed Cicero, more than anyone, made the Romans see how great is the charm which eloquence confers on what is good, how invincible justice is if it is well expressed in words, and how the good and efficient statesman should always in his actions prefer what is right to what will win popularity, and in his words should express the public interest in a manner that will please rather than prove offensive.

Plutarch on Cicero in Retirement

[TEXT: Translated by Rex Warner, in *The Fall of the Roman Republic* (Penguin, 1972) pp. 351-52.]

It is said too that when Quintus Ligarius was being prosecuted as one of Caesar's enemies and Cicero was defending him, Caesar said to his friends: "Why should we not hear a speech from Cicero after all this time? As for Ligarius, we have long known him to be guilty and an enemy." But when Cicero began to speak his words were incredibly moving; and as his speech proceeded, ranging in the most wonderfully charming language from one emotion to another, the colour came and went on Caesar's face and it was evident that every passion of his soul was being stirred. And finally, when the orator touched on the battle at Pharsalus, Caesar was so deeply affected that his whole body shook and the papers that he was holding dropped from his hand. So he was, as it were, overpowered and acquitted Ligarius. After this, when the government had been changed to a monarchy, Cicero

retired from public life and gave up his time to those of the young men who wanted to study philosophy. It was chiefly because of his association with these young men, who came from the best and most powerful families, that he once again exercised a great influence in the state. He occupied himself also in writing and translating philosophical dialogues and in rendering into Latin the various terms used in logic and in natural science. It was he, they say, who first, or principally, provided Latin names for "phantasia," "synkathesis," "epoche," and "katalipsis," and also for "atomon," "ameres," "kenon," and other such technical words, which he managed to make intelligible and familiar either by using metaphors or by finding new and appropriate terms for them. He found much pleasure too in exercising his facility for writing poetry. It is said, indeed, that when he set his mind to it, he would compose 500 lines of verse in a night.

At this period of his life he spent most of his time at his country estate in Tusculum. He used to write to his friends that he was living the life of a Laertes—this remark being either one of his usual jokes or else prompted by his ambition and his desire to take part in public affairs which made him dissatisfied with the state of things as they were. He went down to Rome rarely and only to pay his respects to Caesar, and he took the leading part among those who used to propose honors for him and were always trying to find new terms of praise for Caesar himself or for his achievements. For example, there is the remark he made about Pompey's statues. These had been thrown down and removed, but Caesar ordered them to be set up again. When this had been done, Cicero said that by his generous action Caesar had not only set up Pompey's statues but had firmly fixed and established his own.

3: Preface to the History of the Florentine People

[TEXT: *Historiae Florentini Populi*, ed. Santini, pp. 3-4.]

I have been debating for a long time—with the verdict favoring one side as often as the other—whether I should try to write a book about the deeds of the people of Florence: their foreign and domestic struggles, and their notable achievements in peace and war. On the one hand I was impressed by the magnitude of the resources that enabled this people, after coping successfully, first with civil and other conflicts among themselves, and then

against their neighbors, now in our own time, with greatly increased power, to stand up to the powerful duke of Milan and to the bellicose King Ladislas in a fashion that caused all Italy, from the Alps to Apulia, to tremble under the clash of arms, and also brought in kings and great armies from across the Alps out of France and Germany. On top of these events came the capture of Pisa which, whether because its spirit is so different, or because it was a rival power, or because of the outcome of the war, I think I could rightly call a second Carthage. The siege and final conquest, fought with equal obstinacy by victors and vanquished, includes deeds that are so worthy of memory that they appear in no way inferior to the greatest deeds of the ancients that we read about.

Such things seemed to me worthy of record and of a book, and I thought a knowledge of them would be of great profit to the public as well as to the private citizen. For if men of more advanced age are held to be wiser by virtue of their having seen more of life, how much more will history, if we read it right, be able to furnish us that wisdom, by which we may sift the achievements and counsels of many ages (so that you easily learn what to follow and what to avoid), and to stimulate us to virtue by accounts of the glory of great men?

On the other hand I was put off by the enormous labor, by the obscure or interrupted record of dates and names, whose harshness makes it hard to introduce any kind of stylistic elegance, and by many other difficulties. Finally, however, after thinking over these problems a great deal and for a long time, I have come to this conclusion: to regard any rationalization for writing as preferable to dull silence.

I have therefore set about writing this, not unaware of my own limitations nor unmindful of what a burden I was assuming. But I hope that God will assist me in what I have undertaken, and that, since I am engaged in a good cause, he will see that it turns out well, or if my powers are not sufficient for the task I have ventured upon, that he will nevertheless look with favor upon the endeavor and effort. Would that they of an earlier age, whatever their education or fluency, had written down what had happened in their own times instead of remaining silent. For it is in my opinion a first duty of learned persons at least to make known their own age and so try to rescue it from oblivion and fate and consecrate it to immortality. I think there were various reasons for their silence: that for fear of the labor involved in some cases, or for lack of ability in others, they turned their minds to other kinds of writing instead of to history. For if you try a little, you can easily complete a little booklet or letter. But history, in which such a long and continuous account must be kept of so many things at the same time, and the causes of every action must be explained, and in the course

of which a judgment must be rendered on every matter, is a subject on which, since its almost infinite bulk threatens to crush one's pen, it is as risky to embark as it is difficult to succeed. Thus, because each man gave himself up to his own peace and quiet, or remained silent out of regard for his reputation, the public utility was neglected, and the memory of eminent men and of important things has been almost obliterated.

I have, however, decided to recall the history of this city not only in my own times, but in earlier ones as far as the record permits. A knowledge of it must, however, involve the rest of Italy, for nothing worth recalling has occurred in Italy for a long time in which some of this people were not participants. To explain why embassies were sent or received, moreover, considerable notice will have to be taken of other peoples. But before coming to the times that are our proper concern, I wanted—following the path of those who have written about the beginnings and origin of this city, but rejecting common and fabulous interpretations—to offer what I believe to be the most accurate account, so that the whole subsequent story may be more intelligible.

4: Preface to the First Punic War

[TEXT: A Latin text is printed in *Schriften*, pp. 122–23. This translation is based on Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana MS 65,16, collated with Laurenziana Conv. Soppr. MS 283 and the text in Baron. Baron assigns the date of 1421.]

I am afraid that some may think that I am going too far into ancient history if I venture to write a commentary on the First Punic War and to bring back to light in this age of ours a memory of those events so long forgotten, especially because there are so many recent events, of which a fuller record has survived, which apparently could be put into literary form with merit and praise. But I had quite a different view of the matter. I thought that the more ancient a thing was—and so also that much closer to extinction—the more it needed renovation, just as frugal householders have been accustomed to do in the old parts of their dwelling. I don't deny that there are some more recent matters that can be written about with merit; and I don't criticize anyone who has gained praise for such work. But what now is the complaint against me, if I find the antique, like old wine, more to my taste? I

will readily admit that Oropheus was not driven, as the poets report, to go to the underworld for love of Eurydice by a desire any stronger than mine to go to the ends of the earth if there is any hope of getting an idea of those outstanding ancient men, whom, since I cannot see them with my eyes, as the next best thing I willingly embrace in my mind and imagination.¹ It is their deeds, in which the honor and the glory of our country is enshrined, that I wish to make known to all as much as I can. This was what moved me to write this commentary.

To make the report of this war more complete, I shall list the writers and authorities from the very cradle,² so to speak. I hope that this will make my own account seem more credible. The First Punic War has been described by many writers, both Latin and Greek. The foremost authority was Fabius Pictor, a very early writer of the Roman nobility. At about the same time, Philinus of Carthage³ wrote about the same war in Greek. Since both of these were favorable to their respective countries and moved by a spirit of partisanship, they are considered to have gone somewhat too far, if not with respect to the order of events, at least with respect to its causes and justification. Philinus was followed by Polybius of Megalopolis, the founder of the annals. Fabius was followed by many Latin writers, but the most famous was Livy of Padua, the father of Roman history. If his books survived, there would be no need of any new work. But since this part of his work has perished, and there would be almost no description of this war among us Latins, I was moved, for the glory of our forefathers, lest the splendid and magnificent record of their deeds should perish, to compose this commentary on the war for the common good, drawing as well as I could on a careful reading of Polybius and other Greek writers. I have taken care not to include anything that could not be supported by reference to my predecessors, while not drawing like a translator on one alone, but on many, and weighting them in accordance with my own best judgment.

The duration of this war was twenty-four years. It was the first in which the Romans ventured outside Italy with an army. And the first in which they used a fleet—indeed, the first time that they fought on the sea.