CHAPTER THREE

Renaissance

Craig W. Kallendorf

1   What's in a Name? (Part 1)

The Renaissance is unusual, in that unlike many other periods (e.g., the Baroque), its name can be traced back to one particular individual and his cultural agenda. In the centuries beforehand, annalists and chroniclers wrote universal history in which the flow of time was divided either according to a principle articulated by Jerome, whose commentary on Daniel's prophecy about the statue (Daniel 2:31 ff. and 7:1 ff.) led to a succession of four world monarchies, or to one articulated by Augustine, which relied on six ages (*City of God* 22). The decisive intervention into the system was the birth of Christ, which replaced the darkness of condemnation with the light of salvation. As Theodor Mommsen showed over 60 years ago, this approach was first challenged in a decisive way by Petrarch (1304–74). When he began planning his *De viris illustribus* (On illustrious men) in 1337/8, he intended to "bring together the illustrious men of all countries and of all times" (*Familiares* 8.3), just as the annalists and chroniclers before him had done. Five years later, however, he had decided to restrict his attention to the centuries from the Roman Republic to the first hundred years of the Empire. During the years in which his plans changed, Petrarch had gone to Rome to be crowned poet laureate in a ceremony that was believed to revive one from antiquity, and he had taken the time to think more about what the ruins around him might mean. From this point on, he conceived of the time from the end of the Roman Empire to his own day as an era of darkness: that is, the metaphor had been transferred from a fundamentally religious context, in which light represents revealed truth, to a fundamentally secular one, in which light represents the truth that people create through culture. The light shone brightly in antiquity but was extinguished afterward; now, "when the darkness has been dispersed," those who return to the ancients "can come again in the former pure radiance" (*Africa* 9.456–7). Or, to use the other metaphor that became popular with Petrarch and his descendants, antiquity was in the process of being born again, in a renaissance (Mommsen 1942: 226–42; Ullman 1973).

This process was generally seen in the generations that followed Petrarch to be relatively uncomplicated. In a famous letter to his friend Francesco Vettori (dated December 10, 1513), Niccolò Macchiavelli (1469–1527) describes how, after a difficult day spent amidst the toils and tribulations of daily life, he would return home, retreat into his study, and "step inside the venerable courts of the ancients . . . where I am unashamed to converse with them and to question them about the motives of their actions, and they, out of their human kindness, answer me. . . . I absorb myself into them completely" (Atkinson and Sices 1996: 262–5). Macchiavelli makes two assumptions that are important here. First, the texts of the classical authors offered unimpeded access to their values and their culture: the reader can "become completely part of them." And second, the classics were to be encountered in private, away from the distractions of daily life that keep the reader from a clear vision of the best that human beings once were, and could be again. As with Petrarch, the encounter was moved from the monastic cell to the scholar's study, from a primarily religious to a primarily secular space.

In the following generations this scheme was refined. But it was Petrarch who presented himself as "situated as if at the boundary of two peoples, looking at one and the same time both forward and back" (*Rerum memorandarum* [Memorable matters] 1.2). Antiquity had been reborn.

2   Acceptance

The Renaissance account of its own origins did not go uncontested – the scholastic thought against which the classical revival defined itself did not simply disappear, especially in northern Europe – but it came to prevail in its own day and was accepted with very little criticism for several hundred years afterward. The major historians of the nineteenth century were still emphasizing many of the same themes as Petrarch: *The Renaissance* of Jules Michelet (1798–1874) stressed the revival of classical antiquity, *The Revival of Classical Antiquity* of Georg Voigt (1827–91) makes its emphasis clear in the title, and even the synthesis that suggests that there could have been a Renaissance without the revival of antiquity, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* of Jakob Burckhardt (1818–97), admits that the classics guided the new modern individual to his or her full potential (Burckhardt 1958: 1:175; Coroleu 2004: 3–15). And indeed, the claim that the classics were reborn in the Renaissance still seems to explain many things that happened from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries.

By the middle of the fifteenth century, for example, Italian education at the pre-university level had been taken over by a new kind of teacher, the humanist school-master, who taught grammar, rhetoric, history, poetry, and moral philosophy, drawing on the classics for his texts. In *A Program of Teaching and Learning* (1459), Battista Guarino (1435–1505) tells us which authors his father, the famous teacher Guarino da Verona (1374–1460), taught: Valerius Maximus and Justin in history; Vergil, then Lucan, Statius, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Seneca's tragedies, Plautus, and Terence among the poets; Cicero for rhetoric, with Quintilian as a supporting text; and Cicero,

Aristotle's *Ethics*, and Plato in moral philosophy (Kallendorf 2002: 260–309). Less talented teachers with less talented students might limit the curriculum, which could end up being restricted largely to Cicero in prose and Vergil in poetry, but in theory at least more classical authors were read with greater historical sensitivity in the Renaissance than in the Middle Ages (Waquet 2001: 7–40). What is more, Greek, which had largely disappeared in western Europe during the Middle Ages, was again taught regularly, at least to the best students.

Scholarly and literary activity at the higher levels gave further credence to the claim that antiquity had been revived. During the preceding centuries Cicero's *De oratore* (On the orator), *Orator,* and *Brutus*, the complete text of Quintilian, and Statius' *Sylvae* had for all practical purposes dropped from sight (Reynolds 1983: 102–9, 332–4, 398–9). Humanist scholars set out in conscious pursuit of these and other texts; what they found is chronicled elsewhere in this volume. These discoveries in turn stimulated new literary efforts like the love poetry of Joannes Secundus (1511–36) and the silvas of Angelo Poliziano (1454–94) and Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645).

A similar development might be observed in art and architecture. Roman columns were often incorporated into Romanesque churches that, in spite of what their name suggests, were built with a decidedly unclassical style and proportion. In dialogue with Vitruvius, however, Leon Battista Alberti (1404–72) wrote an influential treatise, *On the Art of Building*, then disseminated a new style that was clearly classical in inspiration, as seen in the Church of San Francesco in Rimini, San Sebastiano and Sant'Andrea in Mantua, and the Rucellai Palace, Santa Maria Novella, and the tribune of Santissima Annunziata in Florence (Grafton 2000: 261–330). To be sure, Mars and Jupiter had not died in the Middle Ages. But on the bell tower of the Florentine cathedral they took medieval form: as a knight and a monk, respectively. When Rosso Fiorentino depicts Mars with Venus in a drawing that appears to have been presented to Francis I, however, and Giulio Romano depicts Jupiter with Olympias in the Palazzo Te in Mantua, the medieval trappings are gone (Bull 2005: 157–9, 370).

This can only have come about because the Renaissance artist was conscious of historical distance in a way that his medieval predecessor was not. In other words, Mars could be seen as a knight only if the artist saw continuity between past and present. Once it became apparent, however, that classical antiquity no longer existed and that a thousand years separated the people of the fourteenth century from it, a conscious effort had to be made to reconstruct what had been lost. As Eugenio Garin has stressed, this can also be done through words: philology provided a tool for the study of language, and through an imaginative reconstruction of the past, the correct meaning of texts could be recovered (Garin 1965: xx–xxii). When Machiavelli spoke with the ancients, he used his philological skill to close the distance between himself and them.

Once this distance had been closed, the humanist scholar or artist could even, if he wanted, return from "the ancient courts of ancient men" with books and objects he had made himself, but present them as genuine. A protégé of Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475–1564), Francisco de Hollanda, for example, notes that the famous statue of *Bacchus* "was a work that Michelangelo had completed a long time ago for the purpose of fooling the Romans and the pope with its antique style" (Barkan 1999: 201–2).

In 1498, approximately two years after Michelangelo had finished his *Bacchus*, the Dominican Annius of Viterbo (1432–1502) published his *Commentaries on Various Authors Discussing Antiquities*. The book purports to be a history of the world in which Annius' commentary connects his sources, some of which are genuine (e.g., Archilochus) and some not (e.g., Metasthenes) (Grafton 1991: 76–103). More outrageous yet was the forgery of Curzio Inghirami (1614–55), who used his position as a member of one of Tuscany's powerful families to perpetrate a scandal that would ultimately attract the attention of the pope. Curzio indulged his country-men's eagerness to have proof of their heritage by forging a host of documents in Latin and Etruscan (the pre-Latin language of north-central Italy) and hiding them in scarith, small containers made of hair and mud. After ''finding'' the scarith, Curzio published the documents in a book, *Fragments of Etruscan Antiquities* (1636) (Rowland 2004). The same philological methods that allowed one scholar to manu-facture nonexistent records from the past allowed others to expose them, with the give-and-take that arose around Renaissance forgeries showing the extent to which the past had indeed come alive again.

   Fake statues and fake histories seem far removed from daily life, and indeed, Petrarch and his immediate followers – even the honest ones – preferred the study to the forum. A number of modern scholars have noted that some later humanists endorsed the active over the contemplative life (e.g., Garin 1965: xix), and when we look at the philosophical dialogues of the period, it appears that there is some truth in this observation. Rudolf Pfeiffer's *History of Classical Scholarship from 1300 to 1850* (1976), however, locates the classical tradition in men like Niccolò Niccoli (1364–1437), Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459), and Lorenzo Valla (1407–57), then in their successors across the Alps – scholars rather than businessmen or politicians. And Gilbert Highet's influential *The Classical Tradition* (1971) is tellingly subtitled *Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature*. Again, we see Machiavelli retreating into his study. The classical tradition had been reborn, but it was a hothouse plant, one that flourished far from the everyday world.

3   Ideological Critique

While the claim that the classics had been reborn in the Renaissance explains a number of important phenomena about the period, it also leaves the modern obser-ver more than a little uneasy. Some classical texts were taught throughout the Middle Ages, and the poetry of Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) and the illustrated manuscripts of the *Ovide moralisé* (Ovid moralized) make it difficult – indeed impossible – still to argue that the classics ever died during the thousand years after the fall of the Roman empire. What is more, a closer look at the so-called rebirth itself raises more ques-tions. For example, let us return once more to Machiavelli in conversation with the ancients. The process as he describes it seems easy and natural enough: he asks them questions and they answer. They, however, were speaking ancient Greek and classical Latin, languages that no one in sixteenth-century Europe learned without a great deal of time and effort. Why does Machiavelli pass over in silence the philological effort

that is necessary to "enter into the courts of ancient men"? What kinds of people can make this effort, and why would they choose to do so, presenting themselves as disinterested scholars in timeless colloquy with the "great truths"? For the remainder of this chapter, I shall query the interests in which a seemingly disinterested metaphor rests, in an attempt to unmask the ideology of rebirth and to incorporate into the discussion what is occluded when we simply accept at face value what Petrarch and his followers wrote about themselves.

Let us begin with the idea that it was Petrarch who first found himself "situated as if at the boundary of two peoples, looking at one and the same time both forward and back." It was indeed Petrarch who attained an international reputation for reviving the cult of antiquity, but he was not the first priest of the new religion. In fact he was preceded by a number of "prehumanists," the most prominent of whom lived and worked in Padua. The founder of this movement was Lovato Lovati (1241–1309), a lawyer whose passion for classical literature led him to a brilliant exposition of the meters in Seneca's tragedies, a role in the rediscovery of lost material from Livy, and a guiding place in the construction of a tomb for Antenor, the mythical founder of the city. Albertino Mussato in turn wrote the first secular tragedy since the fall of the Roman empire, *Ecerinis*, for which a grateful Padua revived an ancient ceremony and gave him a laurel crown for his poetic achievement. Giovanni Mansionario (died 1337), who lived and worked within sight of the chapter library in Verona where the poems of Catullus had been preserved, first established the existence of two Plinys, not one, then wrote a history in whose margins he copied out Roman coins and drew pictures of Roman circuses, demonstrating clear antiquarian interests (Weiss 1973: 16–29).

If the classics had never really died, and if a more modern approach to them had precursors as well, what, exactly, did Petrarch do? One answer might be that he systematized what went before him, using his prodigious intellect in one area of classical studies after another, setting new standards for what could be achieved. A better answer might stress his personal role in popularizing the veneration of antiquity. Almost 150 years ago Jakob Burckhardt argued that the inward development of the individual that characterized the Renaissance ("man became a spiritual *individual*, and recognized himself as such") was accompanied by an outward sign, the passion for being famous (Burckhardt 1958: 1:143–62). This passion had its roots in antiquity – Cicero comes to mind immediately – and Petrarch took great pains to fashion himself into a celebrity: like Cicero he made public his supposedly private letters, carefully reworked to present himself in the best possible light; like Mussato, he, too, arranged to be crowned poet laureate, going so far as to encourage a competition for which city would have the honor of hosting the ceremony; and he even composed a letter to posterity in an effort to have the last word on how he would be viewed after his death (Wilkins 1961: 24–9, 87–8, 252–62). This is an early example of what Stephen Greenblatt would call "self-fashioning," an increased self-consciousness that human identity could be manipulated in a way that tends to efface the difference between life and art (Greenblatt 1980: 1–4). The ascent of Mt. Ventoux that generated one of Petrarch's most famous letters, modern scholarship tells us, may never have taken place (Baron 1966: 196–202), but in a sense it doesn't matter: the letter served as a vehicle for Petrarch to present himself to the

world in a certain way, not as an historical record. In what way did Petrarch want himself to be seen? As the man who revived antiquity, of course. There may be some simplification and exaggeration here, but there would be many more examples to come in which details were glossed over and achievements overstated by those who wanted to be famous.

One of those later examples is provided by Desiderius Erasmus (ca. 1476–1536), who exploited one of the great inventions of the Renaissance, printing, to advance his career and to shape the image he left to later ages. The invention of printing with movable type by Johann Gutenberg (ca. 1398–1468) in the middle of the fifteenth century had an enormous impact on classical scholarship, for hundreds of copies of a text could then be produced in the same amount of time that it had taken medieval scribes to produce one (Eisenstein 1979: 163–302). Erasmus saw quickly the potential of the new medium and traveled to Venice to see his collection of adages through one of the best classical presses of his day, that of Aldus Manutius (ca. 1449–1515). In Erasmus' hands, however, the printed book became an object of self-promotion, with the author regularly breaking lengthy works into smaller parts that could each be dedicated to a different potential patron. Erasmus' own letters were carefully shaped to present his actions and motivations in a favorable light, and second and third editions were meticulously prepared to enhance his reputation as scholar and man of letters (Jardine 1993: 3–26). Printing offered Erasmus a tool that Petrarch did not have, but both men pursued fame as revivers of antiquity.

On a more fundamental level, the idea that the classics were born again in the Renaissance turns out to be problematic in several ways. Petrarch and his followers tended to stress what they wanted to have happen, that the ideas, values, and language of the past were being recreated in the same way in the present. ''Born again,'' however, is a term that is also used by evangelical American Protestants in a different context, where the emphasis is on re-creation as a new creation, fundamentally different from the old one. To what extent, then, does the classical tradition in the Renaissance mark something different from its ancient original?

In the first place, *the* classical tradition is something of a misnomer: classical tradition*s* would be more accurate. For example, one classical tradition associated the empires and kingdoms of the Renaissance with the empires and kingdoms of the classical world from which it was claimed that they descended. The funeral catafalque of Philip II (1527–98) in Seville, for example, contains an inscription taken from the *Aeneid*: *Imperium sine fine dedi* (I have given an empire without end, *Aeneid* 1.279). The message here is clear: the endless empire passed from Rome to Spain, ratified by the reference to Vergil's prophetic vision (Tanner 1993: 204). Ironically Philip's great enemy Elizabeth I of England anchored her power in the same text. As Elissa, she invited comparison to Dido, who was also known by this name; what is more, the famous *Siena Sieve* portrait uses scenes from *Aeneid* 4 to invite the viewer to focus on the role of the monarch, who had to separate out good from evil, as the sieve separated wheat from chaff. At a time when Elizabeth was the subject of an unpopular suit by the Duke d'Alençon, she had to discern the difference between a virtuous love, represented by the non-Vergilian Dido who remained true to her first husband Sychaeus, and a love intertwined with vice, represented by the fallen queen of

Aeneid 4 (Gallagher 1991: 123–40). The problem here is that the governments of antiquity also included nonmonarchical forms, as did the later polities that traced their origins to antiquity. Thus early Renaissance Florence, for example, defined itself in reference to classical republicanism. Under attack by Giangaleazzo Visconti, the tyrant of Milan at the beginning of the fourteenth century, Leonardo Bruni (1370–1444) and his friends crafted an ideology of civic activism that rested in a renewed appreciation of Cicero, the great defender of the dying Roman Republic (Baron 1966: 3–98). Here we have two different classical traditions.

   In philosophy we can find several more. It is sometimes still said that the Middle Ages were Aristotelian and the Renaissance Platonic, but this is a generalization that is rife with exceptions: Platonism had an earlier revival during the Middle Ages, and Aristotelian scholasticism continued strongly into the Renaissance as well. It is true, however, that Plato was more influential in the Renaissance than he had been in the preceding centuries. Only the *Timaeus* and parts of the *Parmenides* had been known in the Middle Ages, but beginning in the Renaissance a number of humanists supplied translations of parts of the corpus, until Marsilio Ficino (1433–99) translated Plato's complete works (1484), then added a commentary (1496). Renaissance philosophy also absorbed the interpretive tradition around Plato, first with Ficino's translation of and commentary on Plotinus' *Enneads* (1492), then with *Against Plato's Slanderer* (1469) of Cardinal Bessarion (ca. 1403–72), which introduced western readers to the Byzantine debates on the relative merits of Plato and Aristotle (Hankins 1990). Platonism resonated through the literature (e.g, *The Courtier* of Baldesar Castiglione [1478–1529]) and art (e.g., the *Birth of Venus* of Sandro Botticelli [1445–1510]) of the Renaissance; the trouble is, so did other ancient philosophies like Stoicism. The major figure here is a Fleming, Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), who edited Seneca's works and developed a modern version of ancient Stoicism. This in turn was passed on to the painter Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), who used Stoic philosophy and allegory in many paintings, including *The Four Philosophers* (Morford 1991). Other philosophical systems made less progress in the Renaissance, but Epicureanism appeared in Lorenzo Valla's *On Pleasure* (1431) (Lorch 1985: 1–211) and skepticism in the essays of Michel Montaigne (1533–92). In philosophy, as in history, there is more than one classical tradition.

   Once it has been decided which classical tradition is to be reborn, other problems presented themselves. To begin with, identifying the remains of the past could be surprisingly difficult, such that mistakes were often made. For example, the humanists of the Renaissance found the style of handwriting they inherited distasteful and, beginning with Petrarch, initiated a reform. Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406), the scholarly chancellor of Florence, called the new style *littera antiqua* (ancient letter), which suggests that in handwriting as well as other areas, the ancient style was being reborn. The problem, however, is that the old manuscripts the humanists were imitating were in fact not ancient, but Carolingian, from the ninth to the twelfth centuries. In other words, in the effort to return to antiquity, the progressive thinkers of the Renaissance accidentally exchanged one set of medieval models for another. What is more, the humanists were drawn to Carolingian manuscripts not only because they were old, but because they contain important texts of many important

classical authors, like Terence, Caesar, and Cicero. This is because Carolingian culture also marks a renaissance, an earlier rebirth of antiquity. Just as we should speak more properly of classical tradition*s*, we should also speak of Renaissance*s*, of which the one initiated by Petrarch is simply the most profound (Ullman 1963: 105–17, 137–44).

Identifying the remains of the past was problematic in other ways as well. Ancient statues, for example, rarely come with name tags. Take the pair of heroic figures with rearing horses that stood on the Quirinal hill in Rome during the Renaissance. They do have an inscription, rendered as "the work of Phidias" and "the work of Praxiteles," which led Petrarch to suggest that they might have been carved by the ancient Greek sculptors with these names. By the middle of the sixteenth century some observers thought that both statues might well represent Alexander and his horse Bucephalus, but by the 1590s other observers were suggesting the man-eating horses of Diomedes that Hercules had tamed. Some 50 years later the consensus settled on the twin horsemen Castor and Pollux, and scholars concluded that, notwithstanding the inscription, the statues had probably not been carved by Phidias and Praxiteles themselves (Bull 2005: 7–8). To put this in Machiavellian terms, a succession of observers were asking questions of the ancients, but sometimes the answers came with the opacity of the sibylline oracle.

Another problem is connected to the fact that the remains of the past are often incomplete: manuscripts like that of Petronius' *Satyricon* are missing pages, and ancient sculpture is almost always broken. At times artists of the Renaissance attempted to restore the fragments of ancient statues, but this was dangerous, since the restoration made permanent an identification that was still open to question and revision. Some statues, like the *Torso Belvedere*, however, were never restored, and they in turn raise other issues. This statue consists of part of a large body, extending from shoulder to knee, which is dramatically rotated at the waist. In its unrestored state it served as a model repeatedly for Michelangelo, beginning with an *Ignudo* in the Sistine Chapel frescoes, then in the recumbent *Day* and the projected *River Gods* for the Medici tombs, then (distantly) with the *Victory* in the Palazzo Vecchio, and finally in two key figures of the *Last Judgment*, the judging Christ and the flayed Bartholomew who is holding his own skin (Barkan 1999: 191–200). This example, along with such depictions of antique-strewn ruins as *The Tempest* of Giovanni Bellini (died 1516), suggests that the Renaissance had developed the capacity to respond to antiquity in its fragmentary state, a civilization that was sufficiently Other at times that it could not, or should not, be completely restored and recreated.

When the remnants of the ancient world needed restoration, the process, again, was not as straightforward as Macchiavelli suggests. This comes through most clearly when the remnants are textual. The process of restoration was philological, but scholars of the Renaissance debated how, exactly, it should proceed. There were two basic ways of restoring a text in the Renaissance: *emendatio ope codicum*, in which sections of textual witnesses were selectively compared; and *emendatio ope ingenii* or *coniecturae*, in which the editor used his talents and knowledge to make conjectures independently of manuscript authority. Conjectural emendation tended to prevail, but there was debate over when and to what extent it should be used. Angelo Poliziano, for example, was the first to develop a procedure for identifying

where manuscripts came from, for dating them and relating them to one another, for citing them clearly and for describing them; he gave primary authority to readings found in the old manuscripts, secondary authority to support that could be gleaned from other ancient writers, and tertiary credence to the sense of the text, which could provide a controlled form of conjectural emendation. Poliziano came close to modern practices in several key areas, but in his day, he was the exception rather than the rule. Other editors made other advances – Desiderius Erasmus, for example, devised the principle of the harder reading (*difficilior lectio*), the idea that more difficult variants were more likely to be correct because scribes were more likely to change an unfamiliar phrase into a familiar one than vice versa (D'Amico 1988: 8–38) – but it is important to note that consensus on how to prepare a text was not reached until the nineteenth century. In other words, the ancients continued to say different things to different people in the Renaissance, depending on the principles being used to recover their words.

Even if this problem had been solved in the Renaissance, it would still have been difficult for antiquity to have been reborn in precisely the same way as it had once arisen. To stay with textual matters, what happened when a writer sat down to recreate antiquity? The process used is generally called ''imitation,'' but as Thomas Greene has persuasively demonstrated, there are several ways in which imitation can unfold. Greene calls the simplest imitative strategy ''reproductive'' or ''sacramental'': it takes place when a later poem follows its classical subtext with religious fidelity, as when Petrarch reproduces the dream of Scipio from Cicero's *De republica* (On the republic) in Books 1 and 2 of his *Africa*. When allusions, echoes, phrases, and images from many authors stand together in a new poem, the imitation is ''eclectic'' or ''exploitative,'' as when Petrarch alludes to Cicero and Horace along with Saint Matthew, Saint Augustine, and Dante in his ''Triumph of Eternity.'' Imitation becomes ''heuristic'' when it distances itself from its subtext at the same time as it advertises its derivation from it: a Petrarchan example would be sonnet 90 from the *Canzoniere*, whose repeated echoes of *Aeneid* 1 are as obvious as the gaps in language, sensibility, and cultural context. Heuristic imitation shades into ''dialectical'' when the text becomes the site of a struggle between two worlds whose conflict cannot be easily resolved, a good example being Petrarch's *Secretum* (Secret), in which the engagement with Augustine's *Confessions* remains unresolved because the classical pursuit of fame is fundamentally incompatible with a Christian value scheme. Ironically, a modern reader at least would probably conclude that the literary quality of the imitation is inversely proportional to its degree of fidelity to its model. In other words, sacramental recopying of great literature is unlikely to produce more great literature (who has read Petrarch's *Africa*?), while the interplay of values in dialectical and heuristic imitation can produce aesthetic excitement of the highest order, as we see when Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* draws from Lucian while at the same time introducing Christian values that are, in the final analysis, incompatible with ancient satire (Greene 1982: 28–53).

The examples of Petrarch's *Secretum* and Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* raise the most fundamental complication to the rebirth of antiquity in the Renaissance: the classical tradition and Christianity are two very different things, and the men and women of

the Renaissance were in no position to cast off the latter in pursuit of a pure revival of the former. Nineteenth-century historians like Burckhardt liked to stress what they saw as the fundamentally secular character of the Renaissance (Burckhardt 1958: 2:444–83), but modern scholarship has reminded us that there were few, if any, real atheists in the fifteenth century. Sometimes, to be sure, reborn antiquity blended seamlessly into Christian values. The catafalque of Philip II with the quotation from the *Aeneid*, for example, also contained another inscription: *His vincimus armis* (we conquer with these arms), which contemporary observers explained as an allusion to the emperor Constantine, who adopted the motto *In hoc signo vinces* (in this sign you will conquer) after he had his famous vision of the cross and set out to unite the empire in Christ (Tanner 1993: 204). Indeed the Escorial, the combination palace, church, crypt, library, monastery, hospital, and alms house that Philip II built for himself, illustrates well this syncretism. The pagan gods share space with Christian images in the library and in the royal reception hall; and on Jacopo da Trezzo's medal struck to commemorate the foundation of the Escorial in 1563, the yoke recalls the scales of justice associated with Augustus' apotheosis while earth's globe is inscribed with the cross. The complex as a whole may well have been designed to evoke Augustus' combined temple-palace on the Palatine, which was known from the description in Suetonius, and the church in the Escorial enshrined the Eucharist, which Spanish courtiers referred to as the "true Palladium of the Hapsburg gens." The complex was dedicated to Saint Lawrence, whose martyrdom by grilling was given its definitive treatment by Prudentius (born 348), for whom the story demonstrates the inextricable intertwining of Christian faith and Roman political sovereignty (Tanner 1993: 162–82).

Examples like this, however, the visual equivalent of sacramental and eclectic imitation, tend to obscure the tensions between two value systems whose interaction is often more heuristic and dialectical. For one thing, viewing antiquity through the prism of Christianity played an important role in determining which classical traditions would be reborn. In his fourth Eclogue, for example, Vergil wrote the following lines:

> Now hath the last age come, foretold by the Sibyl of Cumae;
> Mightily now upriseth a new millennial epoch.
> Justice the maid comes back, and the ancient glory of Saturn;
> New is the seed of man sent down from heavenly places.
> Smile on the new-born Babe, for a new earth greets his appearing;
> Smile, O pure Lucina; the iron age is departing.
> Cometh the age of gold ...
>
> (*Eclogue* 4.4–10) (Royds 1918: 74–83)

Modern classical scholars agree that these lines have nothing to do with Christ, but scholars of the Renaissance were less sure: Cristoforo Landino (1424–98) saw pagan and Christian theology as two parallel streams, but the debate that began in the time of Petrarch about whether certain virtuous pagans could have received a partial Christian revelation was still going on at the end of the fifteenth century (Kallendorf 1999b: 95–124). In any event, the fourth eclogue ensured that Vergil took a central

place in Renaissance education along with Cicero, whose humanistic values were also considered broadly compatible with Christianity. Lucretius, however, whose atomism led to uncomfortable conclusions about the absurdity of religion and the mortality of the soul, remained marginal, as did Petronius, whose characters engage in sexual escapades that the church could hardly condone. In other words, the classical traditions that were clearly incompatible with Christianity were not reborn, but were almost stillborn in the Renaissance.

Indeed Petrarch himself, the father of antiquity's rebirth, actually remained conflicted about what he was doing throughout his career. In *De otio religioso* (On religious leisure) Petrarch uses the familiar opposition between *negotium* (business) and *otium* (leisure) to contrast the peaceful contemplation of the religious life to the endless, and ultimately meaningless, activity of worldly affairs. Addressed to the monks of the Carthusian monastery at Montrieux to which his brother Gherardo belonged, the treatise examines the actions of Aeneas from this perspective and finds them wanting:

> How much more correctly does that heavenly father [say] to us than Aeneas in Virgil [says] to his son, "From me, my son, learn virtue and true labor" [*Aeneid* 12.435]. What virtue, I ask, O son of Anchises? The betrayal of your country . . . ? [S]acrifices carried out with the bloody slaughter of friendly demons? Christ, however, our true father and lord and master and God, teaches through his law not that we learn from him virtues like these, which are not to be imitated, but that we be gentle and humble in heart, which is especially appropriate to a human being. (Petrarca 1975: 1:740)

First a traitor, then a worshipper of false gods, Aeneas is ultimately culpable for not being *pius*, here understood as "gentle and humble in heart" (Kallendorf 1999a: 394–5). In this passage Petrarch found Augustan culture to be different from the Christian culture of his own day, and the "otherness" of antiquity is acknowledged at the same time as its values are called into question.

Sometimes the clash was more dramatic than this. Pomponio Leto (1427–98), for example, was the foremost humanist of fifteenth-century Rome. He and his friends formed a loose-knit Roman Academy, which gathered periodically to eat, drink, and discuss classical texts. One of the scholars in Leto's circle ran afoul of Pope Paul II, who felt an antipathy at very least to certain kinds of ancient poetry if not to classical learning in general. Paul responded by accusing the members of the academy of neopaganism, hostility toward religion, and heresy, with sodomy and republicanism thrown in for good measure, then had them arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. After Sixtus IV became Pope, the academy was reformed as a religious association and its members (including Leto) went on to successful curial careers, but the incident illustrates well the tensions inherent in the Christian humanism of the Renaissance. These tensions emerged again in the Counter-Reformation, when classical texts that were perceived to challenge Christian morality ended up on the Index, the list of books that Catholics could read only in expurgated form, or not at all.

This incident also illustrates the final problem with Machiavelli's account of the rebirth of antiquity, the idea that one retreats from the press of daily life to converse with the ancients. As Leto discovered, one could set up a private club to read Latin poetry, but at the end of the day the members of the club had to return to the world outside. What is more, what was discussed within the club was not ideologically neutral. Reading Latin poetry in the shadow of the republican forum led naturally enough to a yearning for the days when Rome enjoyed the freedoms of a republican political system, and while there is little evidence that this ever got beyond talk in the Roman Academy, Pope Paul II was hardly in a position to forget that his predecessor Eugenius IV had been expelled by the city government of Rome in the name of a revived Roman republic (D'Amico 1983: 91–7). One can yearn for freedom from the constraints of daily life, but as Michel Foucault has so eloquently demonstrated, there is no vantage point outside the systems of power in which people find themselves implicated.

That is not to say, however, that the classical tradition is inherently either conservative or subversive. As we have already seen, Philip II appropriated the imagery of Augustus first in support of his bid to become Holy Roman Emperor, then as a way to project his power in the Escorial complex. With the "discovery" of the "new" world, Europeans projected their power westward in a rewriting of Aeneas' journey from Troy to Rome. But during the same time that Philip was casting himself as a new Augustus, however, the poet Alonso de Ercilla (1533–94) made his bid to become the new Vergil, writing a poem on the Spanish conquest of Chile, *La Araucana*, which is clearly intended to serve as a new *Aeneid*. In this poem the failure of the Spanish invaders to adhere to the ideals they profess is contrasted repeatedly to the virtues of the indigenous inhabitants of South America. In the end Ercilla's subversive tendencies are contained – the author is, after all, a Spaniard – but the Vergilian subtext clearly provides a dissident strain (Kallendorf 2003: 394–414).

Once we begin asking how, consciously or not, Renaissance people appropriated the classics outside the study as well as inside it, we can get a picture of cultural history and its defining metaphors in which seemingly disinterested activities like writing the history of classical scholarship mark interventions into the larger world. It is by no means apparent, for example, why anyone would have invested time and money to learn Latin at a time when it was not anyone's native language. The intuitive answer would be that in some way, the investment should pay off, and this proves to have been the case in the Renaissance. Throughout this period Latin was the one language that every educated person spoke, since it formed the basis for the curriculum in the schools. If, therefore, one wanted a career in the church, or in government, or in education, one had to learn Latin. In addition, Latin served as a class marker: a gentleman, by definition, was someone who had the leisure and resources to learn a difficult second language that did not have the immediate utility that farming or printing or sewing did (Waquet 2001: 173–229).

In the end, then, the classics were reborn in the Renaissance, not as the radical recreation of a tradition that had never completely died, not through a straightforward process of simple reappropriation, and not in isolation from the political, economic, and social events of the world in which they were reinserted, but as a part of the mental equipment of an era, a part of the way in which Renaissance people

made sense of the world around them. This is true even in respect to the most revolutionary event of the day, the ''discovery'' of the ''new'' world. Thus according to Christopher Columbus (1451–1506), there were pearls in the new world, but they were formed just like the ones in the old world, as described by Pliny; and Vasco de Quiroga saw the Indians as characters in Lucian's *Saturnales*, simple and good in their primitive state (Todorov 1984: 17, 197).

4   What's in a Name? (Part 2)

If it has proved worth the effort to interrogate the idea of rebirth as the defining metaphor of the Renaissance and to ask what interests were being occluded in the use of the term, it should be instructive as well to ask briefly what we are doing when we use Petrarch's term today. ''Renaissance'' does reflect the worldview of the people it purports to describe, but not all of them, equally. The idea that culture demands the revival of antiquity began among the rich and powerful, along with the scholars and educators whose livelihood depended on them, and the idea stayed centered there. It certainly drifted down to the masses, in a diluted form, now and again: when Philip II traveled through the Low Countries in an effort to secure the title of Holy Roman Emperor, the classicizing triumphal monuments that were erected along the way were designed to be viewed by everyone (Tanner 1993: 133–9). And when Francesco de' Medici and Joanna of Austria married in 1565, the program ended in a procession of chariots on which the pagan gods who were supposed to be attending the wedding could be seen. Unfortunately the common people were thoroughly confused (Bull 2005: 44), and therein lies the point: even when classical culture drifted down to the masses, it generally failed to form a meaningful part of their lives. So when we use the term ''Renaissance'' today, we are approaching the period with a bias toward the rich and powerful people whose self-understanding rests disproportionately in the metaphor that was chosen by the scholars whose interests were allied with theirs.

There is another possibility. Instead of trying to write a linear cultural history that emphasizes the continuities with the past and fosters the interests of the rich and powerful, we could concentrate on the fissures and gaps that have been raised in the preceding discussion. At its best and most creative, the reborn culture was in dialectical debate with the past, probing and questioning rather than simply reproducing the cultural achievements of antiquity. A strategy like this links *The Praise of Folly* with T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as well as with Lucian's satires. Indeed, as we have seen, the remnants of the past often remained fragmentary, which seems (at least sometimes) not to have bothered their later viewers, a point in turn that links Michelangelo with Picasso. In other words, the culture that Petrarch initiated has links with modernity as well, so that ''early modern'' has emerged in recent years as a term to challenge ''Renaissance'' and the values it projects.

In an essay in a book entitled *Companion to the Classical Tradition*, I am not going to propose that we abandon the latter term in favor of the former one. But I do think that when we use the term ''Renaissance,'' we should do so with an awareness of the issues that are raised when we refer to the same period as ''early modern.'' As we do

this, we should end up with a richer, deeper understanding of the impact of classical antiquity on Petrarch and the people who followed him, until a new metaphor, baroque, was required to signal a new aesthetic sensibility for a new period.

FURTHER READING

Surprisingly there is not a single survey of the classical tradition in the Renaissance that offers full geographical, chronological, and disciplinary coverage; older, more factually based treatments of the Renaissance as part of a larger survey may be found in Highet (1949) and Bolgar (1954), and Grafton (1992) offers an essay similar to this one that covers some of the same ground in a different way. On education, see Grafton and Jardine (1986) and Waquet (2001), with Grendler (1989) and Kallendorf (2002) providing good supplementary material for Italy. The intellectual underpinnings of the study of the classics in the Renaissance can be tracked in Kraye (1996), with the standard history of classical scholarship remaining Pfeiffer (1976). Wilkins (1961) offers a good orientation to Petrarch, and Jardine (1993) to Erasmus. Much has been written about how the texts of Greek and Roman authors were treated by scholars in the Renaissance; D'Amico (1988) and Grafton (1991) offer a good introduction. Reynolds (1983) and Reynolds and Wilson (1991) provide concise information on the transmission of classical authors to the Renaissance, Wilson (1992) offers a good introduction to Greek studies in western Europe, and Kristeller et al. (1960–) offers invaluable catalogues of the commentaries to classical authors written by Renaissance scholars and teachers. Exemplary studies of the impact of individual classical authors in the Renaissance may be found in Gaisser (1993), Hankins (1990), and Kallendorf (1989, 1999b), although the works of the two latter authors are restricted to Italy. For the archaeological evidence, the older study of Weiss (1973) has been updated by Schnapp (1996) and Barkan (1999). Bull (2005) offers an excellent, thought-provoking analysis of the role of classical mythology in Renaissance art. The role of the classics in Renaissance religious thought can be traced through Trinkaus (1970). Grafton (1992) and Lupher (2003) offer useful orientations to the way in which the classics shaped the understanding of the ''new'' world in the ''old.''