

# Renaissance Humanism and the Papal Curia



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Lapo da Castiglionchio the Younger's  
*De curiae commodis*

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Christopher S. Celenza

*Ann Arbor*

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*For Louis S. and Nancy Celenza, in gratitude*



## Preface and Acknowledgments

This study began life as a Duke University dissertation in the History Department, where I intended to write on the fate of the pre-Socratic tradition in the Renaissance. In the course of research into this field in the Vatican Library, I happened, through the suggestion of Prof. David Wright, on something only very tangentially related to that field (if at all), the unedited will of Cardinal Giordano Orsini. Through studying Orsini and his sociocultural environment I came upon Lapo, whom Orsini patronized, and Lapo's prose *capolavoro*, the *De curiae commodis*. Even though it was unrelated to my primary field of interest, I decided to devote time to studying the work and its author. I was originally naive enough to think it was a project I could complete on the side. Time proved otherwise and it eventually seemed prudent to change dissertation topics, even as I have continued research into my original area of interest.

My hopes for this work are twofold. First, I hope that it broadens, if only modestly, the evolving and growing canon of Italian Renaissance Neo-Latin literature, whose vitality and interest Paul Oskar Kristeller and many others have signaled. If one considers Italian Renaissance studies from the perspective of the availability of primary sources (especially Latin ones), my sense is that the discipline is now approximately where classics was at the turn of the twentieth century: many important authors have been edited once, many have not, few are translated into more than one language, and the large majority of secondary but nonetheless interesting figures (like Lapo) perforce receive only cursory consideration. No series for Renaissance authors have reached the levels of popularity and completeness of the Loeb, Teubner, or Belles lettres series in classics or the Patrologia Latina and Patrologia Graeca and the Corpus Christianorum (and its Continuatio medievalis) in patristics and medieval studies. This lack of availability of basic sources makes it hard to profit from welcome theoretical developments in other disciplines. It is difficult to write

about the sociology of Renaissance intellectuals, for example, without having fairly complete and easy access to the majority of their extant writings.

Second, I hope that my introductory monographic discussion of Lapo and his cultural environment contributes in some degree to our understanding of the inner workings of Renaissance humanism during what was one of its most interesting phases. Lapo's liminal status is of primary importance here, I think. He was a talented and highly qualified humanist who before his death could not break into the inner circles of important patron/client relationships. Instead of looking at the world of early- to mid-Quattrocento humanism from the inside, we see it from the perspective of an outsider who desperately wanted to break in.

This study has benefited greatly from the time, energy, and patience of many. I thank especially Profs. Ronald G. Witt and Francis Newton of Duke University, Prof. John M. Headley of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Prof. John Monfasani of the State University of New York at Albany, all of whom, through careful readings and rereadings, improved this work considerably. I owe extra thanks to Professors Monfasani and Witt for their generous support and mentoring throughout my undergraduate and graduate career. What I have learned, I owe to them. I also thank Profs. Walther Ludwig and Dieter Harlfinger of the University of Hamburg; both made many sagacious contributions to this work. They also helped guide me through a second, related graduate career in the study of the transmission of ancient texts. *Die Forschung geht immer weiter!* Prof. Riccardo Fubini of the University of Florence has been kind to share conversations on Lapo with me on a number of occasions. The two readers for this press offered a number of extremely helpful suggestions and criticisms, without which this would be a much poorer work. Thanks also to Marcello Simonetta, for timely suggestions. Even a modest project such as this could never have been completed without the *Iter Italicum* of Paul Oskar Kristeller. I pay tribute to that great work and thank Professor Kristeller for kindly responding to my inquiries and providing encouragement for this and other projects. I thank also the staffs of all of the European libraries in which I worked gathering manuscript information on Lapo, especially those of the Biblioteca Nazionale and the Biblioteca Riccardiana in Florence and the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana in Vatican City. Thanks to my parents, Louis S. and Nancy Celenza, to whom I dedicate this work, and to my sister,



Mary-Frances. And thanks to my wife, Anna Harwell Celenza, for everything.

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## Abbreviations

Works other than those listed here are cited in full the first time they occur in the book and thereafter by short author-title abbreviations for which full publication information can easily be found in the bibliography. Classical texts are cited according to either the most recent Oxford Classical Text edition or the most recent Teubner edition. Their titles are abbreviated according to the abbreviations in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3d ed., ed. S. Hornblower and A. Spawforth (Oxford, 1996), xxix–liv.

BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BN	Biblioteca Nazionale, Bibliothèque Nationale
Bresslau	H. Bresslau. <i>Handbuch der Urkundenlehre für Deutschland und Italien</i> . 3d ed. 2 vols. Berlin, 1958.
Celenza, “Parallel Lives”	C.S. Celenza. “‘Parallel Lives’: Plutarch’s <i>Lives</i> , Lapo da Castiglionchio the Younger (1405–1438), and the Art of Italian Renaissance Translation.” <i>Illinois Classical Studies</i> 22 (1997): 121–55.
CHRP	<i>The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy</i> . Ed. C.B. Schmitt and Q. Skinner. Cambridge, New York, 1988.
D’Amico	J. D’Amico. <i>Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome: Humanists and Churchmen on the Eve of the Reformation</i> . Baltimore and London, 1983.
Fubini	R. Fubini. “Castiglionchio, Lapo da, detto il Giovane.” <i>Dizionario biografico degli Italiani</i> 22 (1979): 44–51.

- Hoffman W. von Hoffman. *Forschungen zur Geschichte der kurialen Behörden vom Schisma bis zur Reformation*. 2 vols. Rome, 1914.
- Iter* P.O. Kristeller. *Iter Italicum: A Finding List of Uncatalogued or Incompletely Catalogued Humanistic Manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and Other Libraries*. 6 vols. Leiden and London, 1963–95.
- Luiso F.P. Luiso. “Studi su l’epistolario e le traduzioni di Lapo da Castiglionchio iuniore.” *Studi italiani di filologia classica* 8 (1899): 205–99.
- Müllner, *Reden* K. Müllner. *Reden und Briefe italienischer Humanisten*. Vienna, 1899. Reprint, with an introduction by H.B. Gerl, Munich, 1970.
- O MS Vatican City, BAV Ottob. Lat. 1677
- Par. Lat. 11,388 MS Paris BN Lat. 11,388