



# The Chronology of Leonardo Bruni's Later Works (1437-1443)

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THE DATES OF LEONARDO BRUNI'S LATER WORKS (1437-1443)

In the preface to Leonardo Bruni's *Historiarum Florentini populi libri XII*, written probably in 1416, Bruni gives an account of his motivations in beginning so arduous a task as writing the history of his adopted city. Among other motives, he mentions the duty of scholars to celebrate the deeds of their own time in a Latin prose whose clarity and elegance will guarantee their survival into later times.

Atque utinam superioris aetatis homines, utcumque eruditi atque disertis, scribere potius sui quisque temporis facta quam praeterire taciti maluissent. Erat enim doctorum, ni fallor, vel praecipuum munus ut suam quisque aetatem celebrando oblivioni et fato praeripere ac immortalitati consecrare niterentur. Sed puto alia aliis tacendi causa fuit; quosdam enim labore deterritos, quosdam facultate destitutos, ad alia potius scribendi genera quam ad historiam animum appulisse. Nam libellum quidem aut epistolam, si paulo coneris, faciliter transigas. Historiam vero, in qua tot simul rerum longa et continuata ratio sit habenda causaeque factorum omnium singulatim explicandae et de quacumque re iudicium in medio proferendum, eam quidem velut infinita mole calamum obruente tam profiteri periculosum est quam praestare difficile. Ita, dum quisque vel quieti suae indulget vel existimationi consulit, publica utilitas neglecta est et praestantissimorum virorum rerumque maximarum memoria paene oblitterata.<sup>1</sup>

Bruni goes on to remark that he has decided to investigate ‘non aetatis meae solum, verum etiam supra, quantum haberi memoria potest, repetitam huius civitatis historiam’. But the emphasis in the preface is clearly on contemporary events. Bruni indeed begins his preface by stating that his original inspiration for undertaking the history was the greatness of the actions the Florentine People had performed, first its internal and regional struggles in remote time, but much more its recent struggles as a great power in its own right against Giangaleazzo of Milan (1390-1402) and Ladislas of Naples (1406-1414). Even beyond Italy the People caused kings and vast armies to cross the Alps from France and Germany (1390, 1401). But Florence’s greatest achievement was her conquest of Pisa (1406), which Bruni compared to Rome’s defeat of Carthage. We know in fact from a letter that Bruni wrote to Niccolò Niccoli in 1406 that it was the conquest of Pisa that gave Bruni the idea that his *Laudatio Florentine urbis* of 1403/4 might be turned into a history.<sup>2</sup>

Over two decades later, Bruni turned to writing his *Memoirs (De temporibus suis)* and once again he laid emphasis on the duty of learned men to record the events of their own times and complained that previous generations had neglected this duty. Thus he was going to try ‘to produce for future generations what I have required of others, so that if perchance there are those who want to read it, knowledge of our times will not be lacking.’

Qui per Italiam homines excelluerint aetate mea et quae conditio rerum quaeve studiorum ratio fuerit, libuit in hoc libello discursu brevi colligere. Hoc enim temporibus debere videor meis, ut eorum, qualiacumque tandem fuerint, per me in posteros tradatur notitia. Quod utinam fecissent homines superiorum aetatum qui aliquam scribendi peritiam habuere; non in tantis profecto tenebris ignorantiae versaremur. Mihi quidem Ciceronis Demosthenisque

tempora multo magis nota videntur quam illa quae fuerunt iam annis sexaginta. Tanta illi clarissimi viri aetatibus suis lumina infuderunt ut, etiam post tam longa decursa tempora, quasi ante oculos positae discernantur. At enim quae postea secuta sunt saecula, mirabilis premit occultitque inscitia.

[...] Vellem ceteris quoque libuisset idem efficere, quo suae quisque aetatis cognitionem ac memoriam nobis quam celebrem reliquisset. Sed puto nulli voluntatem, plurimis vero facultatem defuisse scribendi. Litterae quidem, nisi sint illustres atque disertae, claritatem rebus afferre non possunt neque memoriam earum in longum extendere. Nos igitur quod ab aliis desideramus, id exhibere posteris conaturi sumus, ut si qui forte legere curabunt, nostrorum temporum non desit cognitio.<sup>3</sup>

Why was Bruni compelled to repeat in his *Memoirs* the promise made in the preface to the *History* so many years before? The reason, it may be argued, was that when Bruni began writing the *Memoirs*, sometime between 1437 and 1439, his *History of the Florentine People*, though by then swollen to eight books, had still not reached the period of his own lifetime.<sup>4</sup> As promised in the preface of 1416, he had covered (in Book I) the early history of Florence from its Roman origins down to 1250 AD, when the Florentine *popolo* ‘capessere gubernacula rerum ac tueri libertatem perrexit civitatemque totam omnemque eius statum populari arbitrio continere’. Once the chief protagonist of his *History* – the Florentine People itself – appeared on the scene, the pace of narration slowed down drastically. In Books II-VIII Bruni covered only 128 years of Florentine history, about 18 years per book, reaching the beginning of the year 1378. On this showing, at least three more books would be required to deal with the last sixty years of the Republic’s history, and these years were in some ways the most difficult of all to chronicle.

In fact, by the late 1430s the chancellor of Florence was faced with two different kinds of obstacles that stood in the way of bringing the *History* down to his own times, quite apart from his advanced age.<sup>5</sup> The first was that he could no longer rely for most of his material on the vernacular chronicle of Giovanni, Matteo and Filippo Villani, which went down only to 1366, as he had for books II through VIII.73.<sup>6</sup> For the two decades from 1366 to 1386 another vernacular chronicle, that of Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, provided useful information, but for the period after 1366 there was no single source in the vernacular or in Latin that could be easily reshaped to suit Bruni's purposes. Soon his narrative would advance into the period of living memory, and it is evident that Bruni was searching widely for other narrative materials preserved by his contemporaries, including Goro Dati, Giovanni Morelli, the Minerbetti chronicler, the Anonimo Fiorentino and possibly others as well. For the Ciompi revolt of 1378 he clearly used the chronicle of Alamanno Acciaiuoli which existed in many copies and could easily have been brought to his attention by Alamanno's descendant, Angelo Acciaiuoli.<sup>7</sup> These sources solved some of his problems, but not all. None of them provided sufficient materials for that comprehensive picture of political dynamics, both internal and external, which it was one of Bruni's aims as an historian to provide.<sup>8</sup> Bruni wanted to present a history of Florence from the sovereign perspective of Florence's government, and none of his narrative sources was able to provide that perspective over a sustained period. Even Goro Dati's *Istorie* (written after 1409), the text that comes closest to Bruni's history in aims and method, was only intermittently able to convey a grasp of the wider political situation at home and abroad.

The second obstacle Bruni faced was that on 1 December 1427 he had reluctantly accepted the post of Chancellor of Florence, and was now in charge of a

department of state. His new position required him not only to oversee the public and diplomatic correspondence of the Signoria of Florence, but also to supervise the drawings for offices (as chancellor of the *Tratte*) and to keep the minutes of the consultative assemblies held in the Palazzo Vecchio. To be sure, this new post eventually turned into into a marvelous boon for an official historiographer. Bruni was now sitting in the middle of an archive and had ready access to the registers containing the Florentine state correspondence (the *Missive*, whose composition was his chief responsibility as chancellor), reports of ambassadors (*Legazioni e commissarie*), copies of treaties (*Capitoli*), financial records, legislative acts and minutes of Florentine consultative assemblies (the *Consulte e pratiche*). Between June of 1439 and November of 1441, Bruni served three terms on the Ten of War (*Dieci di Balìa*), the powerful war commission charged with conducting the republic's military affairs. He thus gained access to the secret documents of that key magistracy precisely at the time when he was writing the last books of the *History* and the *Memoirs*. It is clear that as time went on, and especially from the beginning of Book IX, Bruni made increasingly wide use of this documentation, much of it composed by his mentor and predecessor as chancellor, Coluccio Salutati, whose distinctive hand he would have seen frequently in the registers. Thus Bruni became the first historian in the Western tradition to compose a history based extensively on sources in government archives.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, by 1437, ten years after accepting the post of chancellor, Bruni must have felt that the prospects were bleak for keeping the promise he had made to his readers in 1416 to write the *contemporary* history of Florence. He had published books I-VI of the *History*, at the latest, by April 1429, when it is mentioned as already in circulation by Bartolomeo Capra; in fact those books were probably published

already by April 1428, just a few months after Bruni became chancellor. Since we know he had finished Book IV shortly after 1421, the likelihood is that most of the work for Books V-VI had been finished before Bruni became chancellor. Perhaps he had even begun Books VII and VIII. We do not know when Books VII and VIII were written, except that they must have been completed before 6 February 1439, when Books VII-IX were presented to the Signoria in a public ceremony.<sup>10</sup> But a survey of Bruni's literary output from the beginning of his career down to 1437 shows that the crushing burden of duties in the Florentine chancery must have severely inhibited his ability to continue his literary work, above all the two great projects begun during his period of literary retirement, the *History of Florence* and the retranslation of Aristotle's moral philosophy.<sup>11</sup>

#### FIRST PERIOD: FLORENCE AND THE CURIAL YEARS (1400-1415)<sup>12</sup>

St. Basil's letter, *Ad adolescentes* (1400/03)

Xenophon, *Hiero* (1401/3), *Apology* (1407)

Early Plato translations, *Phaedo*, *Crito*, *Apology*, *Gorgias* (1404-1409)

*Laudatio florentine urbis* (1404)

*Dialogi ad Petrum Histrum* (1404-5)

*Oratio in funere Othonis* (1405)

Seven speeches of Demosthenes and Aeschines (1406-1412)

Five lives from Plutarch (1405-1412)

*Oratio Heliogabali* (1408)

*Epistula ad magnum principem imperatorem* (1413)

*Cicero novus* (1413)

#### SECOND PERIOD: LITERARY RETIREMENT IN FLORENCE (1415-1427)<sup>13</sup>

*History of the Florentine People*, Books I-VI (1416-28)

Aristotle's *Ethics* in 10 books (finished 1416/17, dedicated 1417/20)  
*Oratio in hypocritas* (1417)  
*Oratio pro se ipso ad praesides* (1417/31)  
*De origine Mantuae* (27 May 1418)<sup>14</sup>  
 Aristotle's *Economics*, with Bruni's commentary (1420)  
 Begins work on the *Politics*?  
*De militia* (published 14 December 1421)  
 "Corpus Demosthenicum" assembled (after 1421)  
*De primo bello punico libri III* (published before 31 January 1422)<sup>15</sup>  
 Homer, *Orationes tres ex Iliade* (1422/24)<sup>16</sup>  
*De studiis et literis* (1422/26)  
*Invectiva in nebulonem maledicum* (1424)  
*Phaedrus* fragment (1424)  
 Second versions of the *Crito* and *Apology* of Plato (spring 1424/June 1427)  
*Isagogicon moralis disciplinae* (December 1424/Summer 1426)<sup>17</sup>  
*De interpretatione recta* (1424/26?)

### THIRD PERIOD: EARLY CHANCERY YEARS (1 XII 1427 - 27 X 1437)

Plato, *Epistulae* (dedication: 1 December 1427/ 26 August 1434).  
*Oratio in funere Nanni Strozzae* (late 1427/ June 1428)<sup>18</sup>  
*Vita Aristotelis* (1430)<sup>19</sup>  
 Unpolished draft of Aristotle's *Politics* (early 1436)  
 A speech from Plato's *Symposium* = *Ep.* VII.1 (1435?)  
*Vite di Dante e del Petrarca* (May 1436)  
*Fabula Tancredi* (15 January 1437)  
*Novella di Antioco* (15 January 1437)  
 Draft of Books VII-VIII of the *History*? (before February 1439)

The above chart shows that Bruni's literary output, at least by his own Herculean standards, shrank to a relative trickle in his first ten years in the Florentine chancery. In particular, he seems to have done almost nothing in the early 1430s, the



tumultuous years of the Lucca war, the revolt of Volterra, and the exile and restoration of the Medici. He published a series of short and fragmentary works: a translation of twelve letters by (pseudo-) Plato; a funeral oration for Nanni Strozzi (which was in any case primarily a propaganda vehicle for the Signoria and so less a literary than an official work); a life of Aristotle heavily dependent on his earlier Aristotle studies; a short fragment from Plato's *Symposium*; vernacular lives of Dante and Petrarch; a Latin translation of Boccaccio's Tancredi tale (*Decameron* IV.1); and a novella in Italian. He finished, but did not publish, a draft of his translation of Aristotle's *Politics* (see below), and he may have been working on Books VII-VIII of the *History of the Florentine People* as well.

This was a far cry from the major projects he had undertaken and finished in the dozen or so years of literary retirement he had enjoyed following his exit from papal service during the Council of Constance. The strikingly original work he had produced in the 1420s in educational theory, social theory and the theory of translation also came to a halt. The decline in his productivity seems to have been primarily caused by the burdens of office, as his letters reveal. For example, in the letter presenting the *Fabula Tancredi* and the *Novella di Seleuco e Antioco* to Bindaccio Ricasoli Bruni apologizes for the difficulties he has had finding time to finish even these minor squibs: 'tempora quedam occupatissima intervenerunt'.<sup>20</sup> Even more vividly, in the preface to Plato's *Letters*, probably completed shortly after his appointment as chancellor, he describes his difficulties writing amid the cacaphony and chaos of the Palazzo Vecchio:

Inter clamosos strepitus negotiorumque procellas, quibus florentina palatia quasi Euripus quidam sursum deorsumque assidue aestuant, cum singula

modo non dicta sed verba etiam interrumperentur, tamen, ut potui, latinas effeci Platonis *Epistulas*.<sup>21</sup>

But in the later 1430s, things evidently began to improve for Bruni. The times remained turbulent as ever and there continued to be wars and rumors of war. But Bruni's own workload as chancellor began to lighten. In September 1435 Bruni was relieved of the office of Chancellor of the *Tratte*, and in October of 1437 the number of *missive* for which he was responsible was cut in half when the new office of Second Chancellor was created. The Second Chancellor now became responsible for the *negotia privatorum* and correspondence within Florentine territory; Bruni continued as First Chancellor to compose Florence's correspondence with foreign powers and to supervise her ambassadorial relations.<sup>22</sup> It has been argued that these changes were made by the Mediceans in order to take politically sensitive business out of Bruni's hands, as his connections to the previous regime had made him politically suspect.<sup>23</sup> But this is hardly plausible, given that Bruni immediately began to hold major offices of state, including the Dodici Buonuomini and the Ten of War. It would have been quite impossible for Bruni to hold such offices, in a period when magistrates were chosen *a mano*, unless he enjoyed the full confidence of the Medici regime. In any case it seems implausible that persons worried about Bruni's loyalty would take the lesser responsibilities out of his hands and leave him only with the more important ones. It is much more likely that Bruni petitioned to be relieved of the petty but time-consuming bureaucratic tasks associated with the office of the *Tratte* and the second chancellery in order to spend more time on his literary projects and in order to be freer to hold public office. By 1436 he had been a Florentine citizen for 20 years, and was now eligible for the first time to hold high offices of state.<sup>24</sup>

The latter in fact was the most obvious result of his new freedom: he began to hold major offices of state, and with much greater frequency. Beginning with a largely ceremonial role as a counselor and consul of the Guild of Judges and Notaries, he gradually advanced to the most important magistracies in the state.

#### BRUNI'S PUBLIC SERVICE IN FLORENCE<sup>25</sup>

January–March 1411	Three months service as chancellor <sup>26</sup>
<i>27 June 1416</i>	<i>Bruni becomes a citizen of Florence</i>
May–September 1426	Ambassador to Martin V. <sup>27</sup>
1 December 1427	Bruni becomes chancellor (elected 27 November 1427)
May-August 1429	Counselor of the Arte di Giudici e Notai
January–April 1431	Counselor of the Arte di Giudici e Notai
September–December 1431	Consul of the Arte di Giudici e Notai
September–December 1435	Consul of the Arte of the Giudici e Notai
<i>September 1435</i>	<i>Bruni relieved of service as Chancellor of the Tratte<sup>28</sup></i>
May-August 1437	Counselor of the Arte di Giudici e Notai
June-September 1437	Dodici Buonuomini
<i>27 October 1437</i>	<i>Second chancery established</i>
January 1438	Syndic of the Six on Commerce
January-April 1438	Consul of the Arte di Giudici e Notai
September-December 1439	Consul of the Arte di Giudici e Notai
June-November 1439	Ten of War
June-November 1440	Ten of War
January 1441	Consul of the Arte di Giudici e Notai
May 1441	Eight on Security
June-November 1441	Ten of War
February 1442	Syndic of the Podestà
May-December 1442	Approbator Statutorum
September-December 1442	Consul of the Arte di Giudici e Notai
September-October 1443	Elected Prior for the Quarter of Santa Croce
January-March 1444	Consul of the Arte di Giudici e Notai

But an equally important result of Bruni's new-found freedom from bureaucratic burdens was the remarkable burst of literary activity that crowned the end of his career from 1437 onwards and continued almost to his death on 8 March 1444. In the rest of this article I shall try to chronicle this *florida aetas* of the elderly chancellor.

1. Translation of the *Politics*. After dedicating his translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to Martin V (1418/20) and completing his version of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Economics* (1420), it would have been natural for Bruni to turn immediately to the third part of the Aristotelian trilogy on moral philosophy, the *Politics*. In fact the *De militia* of 1422 discloses Bruni's thorough study of *Politics*, Book II,<sup>29</sup> and the *De recta interpretatione* of 1424/26 includes passages from Book IV and VII of the *Politics* in Latin translation.<sup>30</sup> These Latin passages remained substantially unaltered when Bruni published his *Politics* translation over a decade later, which suggests that Bruni had drafted at least some parts of the translation already in the 1420s.<sup>31</sup>

a. *De recta interpretatione*, quotations from *Politics*, Books VII and VI<sup>32</sup>

'Videmus', inquit, 'homines acquirere et tueri non virtutes externis bonis, sed externa virtutibus, ipsaque beata vita – sive in gaudio postea est, sive in virtute, sive in ambobus – magis existit moribus et intellectu in excessum ornatis, mediocria vero externa possidentibus quam his qui externorum plura possident quam opus sit, moribus vero intelligentiaque deficient'. Et alio loco de magistratu, qui custodie reorum presit, sic inquit: 'Contingit vero, ut boni quidem viri maxime hunc magistratum devitent, pravis autem nequaquam tutum sit illum committere, cum ipsi potius indigeant custodia et carcere quam alios debeant custodire.'

*Politics*, Book 7.1.3, 1323a-b, tr. Bruni (ed. Strasbourg 1469)

... cernentes quia *homines acquirunt et conservant non virtutes externis bonis, sed externa virtutibus, ipsaque beata vita – sive in gaudio posita est, sive in virtute, sive in ambobus – magis existit moribus et intellectu in excessum ornatis, mediocria vero externa possidentibus quam hiis qui in externis plura possident quam opus sit et in illis deficiunt.* [...]

*Politics*, Book 6.5.7, 1322a, 22-25, tr. Bruni (ed. Strasbourg 1469)

*Contingitque in eo, ut viri boni maxime vitent hoc officium, pravos autem nequaquam tutum sit ei preficere, cum ipsi potius indigeant custodia et carcere quam alios debeant custodire.*

b. *De recta interpretatione*, from *Politics*, Book IV<sup>33</sup>

Aristoteles ergo in libro Politicorum quarto docet solere potentes ac magnos in civitate homines simulare interdum quedam ac dolose pretextere ad multitudinem populi excludendam a rerum publicarum gubernatione. Esse vero illa, in quibus ista simulatione utuntur, quinque numero: contiones, magistratus, iudicia, armaturam, exercitationem. Pena enim magna constituta adversus divites, nisi contioni intersint, nisi magistratus gerant, nisi in iudicio cognoscant nisi arma possideant, nisi ad bellicos usus exercentur; per huiusmodi penam ad ista faciendam divites compellunt; at pauperibus nullam in his rebus penam constituunt, quasi parentes eorum tenuitati. Hec enim pretextitur causa; sed re vera hoc agunt quo illi, impunitate permissa, a gubernatione rei publice se disiungant. Pena siquidem remota, nec exercere se ad bellicos usus multitudo curabit nec arma possidere volet, cum liceat per legem impune illis carere, nec magistratum geret pauper, si id putabit damnosum, cum sit in eius arbitrio gerere vel non gerere. Onus quoque iudicandi sepe vitabit, si nequeat compelli, ac tempus rebus suis libentius impendet quam publicis consiliis. Atque ita fit, ut tenuiores quidem homines sub pretextu ac velamento remissionis penarum sensim ac latenter a re publica excludantur, apud divites autem et opulentos remaneant administratio et arma

et peritia preliandi. Ex quibus potentiores facti quoddammodo tenuiores dominantur.

*Politics*, Book 4.10.6, 1297a, tr. Bruni (ed. Strassbourg 1469)

Sunt autem illa circa que simulant ac fallaciter pretextunt ad populum quinque numero: *concio*, *magistratus*, *iudicia*, *armatura*, *exercitatio*. Circa concionem quidem licere omnibus adesse, sed *pena* apposita divitibus si non assunt vel solis vel maiore quam multitudini. Circa magistratus autem non licet hiis qui censum habent magnum renunciare magistratui, pauperibus autem licere. Circa iudicia vero penam esse divitibus nisi iudicent, pauperibus autem impunitatem, aut illis magna, hiis parvam penam, ut est in Caronde legibus. Quibusdam vero locis omnibus licet descriptis in concionibus iudiciisque adesse, quod si descripti sint et non exerceant, in penas incidunt permagnas, ut metu pene vitent descriptionem, et per non descriptionem neque iudicia neque conciones exerceant. Eodem modo circa arma et circa gymnasia legibus statuunt. Pauperibus enim licet non habere arma, divitibus autem pena constituta est nisi habeant. Et si gymnasio se non exerceant pauperes, nulla pena est, divitibus autem est pena, ut alii metu pene se exercere compellantur; alii, quia nullam formident penam, non faciant. Hec igitur paucorum potencie sunt machinamenta.

This last passage from the *De recta interpretatione* paraphrases rather than translates the *Politics*, but it is clear that Bruni has already worked enough on the text to achieve an excellent understanding of this difficult passage, far superior to that of the medieval translator William of Moerbeke (whom he criticizes), and that Bruni has already settled upon appropriate terminology to render the names of Greek political institutions. But between 1424/6 and 1434 we hear nothing more about Bruni's study of the *Politics*.

On 12 March [1434] Bruni, responding to encouragement from Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, agreed to undertake a translation of the *Politics*, but in view of Bruni's deep involvement in the work in the early 1420s, it seems likely that a translation was already in progress. So much is suggested by a letter Bruni wrote to Filelfo late in 1435.<sup>34</sup> In the 1434 letter to Humphrey, Bruni warned the duke that the *Politics* would take a long time to complete, given the difficulty of the work. This comment, however, likely reflects more the obstacles Bruni faced getting literary work done while chancellor than the amount of work remaining to be done on the translation itself.<sup>35</sup>

It is much more difficult to say precisely when Bruni finished, polished and published his translation of the *Politics*, as the evidence seems to conflict on this point.<sup>36</sup> Our earliest notice that Bruni has finished the translation is from May 1436. In the *Proemio* of his *Vita di Dante e del Petrarca* Bruni writes 'Avendo in questi giorni posto fine a una opera assai lunga, mi venne appetito di volere, per ristoro dello affaticato ingegno, leggere alcuna cosa vulgare'.<sup>37</sup> Several early manuscripts of the *Lives* carry an anonymous but contemporary gloss on this passage: 'Quella opera che Messer Lionardo dice havere posto fine fu la Politicha d'Aristotile, la quale ad istanza del fratello del Re d'Inghilterra traslatò di grecho in latino'.<sup>38</sup> Since Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Redi 143, f. 76r, from which this gloss is taken, as well as other manuscripts of the *Vite* also gives us a date of composition for the *Vite di Dante e del Petrarca* ('... facta per detto messer Lionardo l'anno MCCCCXXXVI del mese di maggio'), this would put the completion of at least a draft of the *Politics* version early in 1436, before the composition of the *Vite*.

We next hear of the *Politics* translation in two letters of 1 March 1437,<sup>39</sup> both addressed by Bruni to the humanist and papal secretary Flavio Biondo, who was in

Bologna with the papal curia. Bruni is writing to enlist Biondo's help in presenting the completed work to Pope Eugenius IV.<sup>40</sup> In the second (extra-canonical) letter, Bruni declares he has finished translating the work and is going to publish it (*edetur*) before the end of Lent, i.e., on 27 March (Easter falling on 31 March that year). He has labored more than three years ('super triennium') on the work and for some time he has been under pressure to publish it from the many people who are eager to read it. He has not published it previously because the incredible difficulty of the text has made him spend more time on it in order to get everything right.<sup>41</sup> He asks Biondo to show the *praefatio* to him, if Biondo thinks that the pope will approve of it, but in any case to read him the first letter, i.e. *Ep.* VIII.1 M, which Bruni addressed to Biondo but intended for the pope's ears.<sup>42</sup> The latter was in effect a *laudatio* of the political wisdom of Aristotle, designed to win Eugenius' approval for the dedication.

This letter suggests that what Bruni finished in early 1436 before composing the *Vita di Dante e del Petrarca* was a draft, and that he had spent a further year polishing the translation despite pleas from interested persons to publish the work. The letter does not, as previous scholarship insists, entitle us to date to 1434 (or, with Fumagalli, 1433<sup>43</sup>) the beginning of Bruni's Latin translation. Bruni could easily mean one of the following: (a) that he spent more than three years total of work on it during the previous two decades, or (b) that the work of polishing his earlier draft for publication began in earnest more than three years ago. Bruni was proud of being asked for a Latin translation of the *Politics* by the brother of the King of England and, as the leading promoter of humanistic studies of his time, he preferred readers to believe that men of power and position came to humane studies of their own accord and need. He would have had every motive to keep dark the work on the *Politics* he had done before the arrival of Humphrey's request in 1434. And in fact someone in



England, probably Bruni's friend Gerardo Landriano, must have advised Duke Humphrey that his request to Bruni to translate the *Politics* would meet with a favorable response. If Landriano knew that Bruni had already done considerable work on the *Politics* it would explain why the duke was emboldened to ask for such a gift.<sup>44</sup>

The letter also shows that by 1 March 1437, Bruni had written the *Praemissio quaedam ad evidentiam novae translationis Politicorum Aristotelis*, which is called a *praefatio* in some MSS.<sup>45</sup> The word *praefatio* might also conceivably refer to another prefatory text handed down with Bruni's *Politics* translation, variously called *Epistola super translatione Politicorum Aristotelis* or *Praefatio ad Eugenium papam IV in libros Politicorum Aristotelis*.<sup>46</sup> But the latter identification is unlikely. First of all, Bruni's letter to Biondo (X.10 M) shows that Bruni was somewhat apprehensive about showing Eugene the preface. It is difficult to understand what might have offended Eugenius in the *Epistola*, while on the other hand the *Praemissio* reasserts Bruni's controversial views about the incompetence of the medieval translator of the *Ethics* and *Politics*, views that had led to a series of attacks on Bruni's version that lasted for decades throughout Italy, particularly at the Dominican studium at Bologna; Bruni might well have worried that Eugenius would be reluctant to take Bruni's side in the controversy.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, in his letter of reply to Bruni's letters of 1 March, Biondo describes the great success he had had in presenting the two texts, *Ep. VIII.1* and the 'Politicorum Aristotelis praefatio', to the pope; after reading the first, 'secunda, quae est breviscula, in spem praefationis erectus [Eugenius], ad eam properari voluit'. The *Praemissio* is considerably shorter than the *Epistola*, no more than a folio in most MSS, and so is a better candidate for the description *breviuscula*. Finally, Biondo ends by reporting Eugene's praise of Bruni:

ad me conversus, magnas tibi gratias ... coepit agere, te amari, te praedicari dignum, cuius excellens ingenium singularisque eloquentia saeculum ornat, et multa tandem praetiosissima nobis ad manum reddit prompta, quae superiorum sive negligentia sive ignorantia aut involucris absconsa, aut silicibus abstrusa, aut spinis vepribusque proposuerat excerptenda.

This seems much more like a response to Bruni's critique in the *Praemissio* of the rebarbative quality of the medieval translations than it does a reaction to the *Epistola*. Furthermore, Biondo's letter tells Bruni of the pope's enthusiasm for the idea of translating Greek philosophy ('ipsam Graecae philosophiae medullam') and hints to Bruni that efforts on his part to reconcile the gentile philosophers with Christian doctrine will be welcome ('nostros fortassis aliquando superstitiosos cum gentilium philosophis in gratiam redire facies').<sup>48</sup> This is precisely what Bruni (always a canny politician) does in the *Epistola*, which was presumably presented to Eugenius at some later date.

The *Praemissio* provides one important piece of evidence relevant to the dating of the *Politics*. In the *Praemissio* Bruni says that his motive for translating the *Politics* was the same as had induced him to translate the *Ethics* eighteen years previously.<sup>49</sup> As it happens, we have some information about the date of Bruni's *Ethics* version, though it is not easy to interpret. Bruni seems to have published a draft at least of the *Ethics* in 1416 (or between 25 March 1416 and 24 March 1417 Florentine style), and further polished the work in late 1417. He dedicated it to Martin V sometime between 11 November 1417, when the latter was elected pope, and September 1420, when Martin left Florence for Rome. This would give us a date for the *Praemissio* somewhere between 1434 and the end of 1435. The date of 1416 for the published draft of Bruni's *Ethics* version is known from a colophon found in several MSS, while *Epp.* IV.10 L and IV.11 L seem to show that Bruni was still

polishing the work in late 1417, if Luiso's conjectural dates can be trusted.<sup>50</sup> It is also possible that Bruni's figure of 'decem et octo annis' means eighteen years after the polished work was republished with a dedication to Martin V and not eighteen years after the initial publication of the work at the Council of Constance in 1416/17. In this case we would have a date for the *Praemissio* of late 1435/38, which is more in line with our other evidence.

In any case, a month after Bruni had put out feelers to Eugenius IV, on 8 June 1437, he wrote again to Flavio Biondo. The pope had invited him to come to Bologna to present the *Politics* to him personally, and Bruni had asked leave of the Signoria to come during the Easter holidays, but ill health had prevented him from making the trip.<sup>51</sup> Did Bruni repent of his decision to offer the work to the pope, realizing the criticism he would receive for breaking his promise to dedicate the work to Duke Humphrey? Did he in fact dedicate the work to Eugenius in March of 1437, or was the dedication delayed? Did he now wish to delay the dedication to Eugenius until a copy could be delivered to his original patron, Duke Humphrey?

The latter hypothesis would be consistent with the next notices of the *Politics* in Bruni's correspondence, from December 1437. The first of these notices comes in a letter of 8 December 1437 (VII.7, ed. Mehus II, 95-6), in which Bruni informs the chancellor of Siena, Barnaba, that his translation of the *Politics* is completely finished and polished: 'De *Politicorum* libris quod quaeris, sunt illi quidem absoluti ac penitus expoliti'. An extra-canonical letter to Matteolo Matteoli of Perugia that must come from around the same time, first published in 1983 by Lucia Gualdo Rosa, says that the *Politics* has been finished and polished for some time ('iam pridem'), but 'nondum tamen edidi, propterea quod excellentissimo principi, cuius rogatu laborem hunc assumpsi, editionem primam reservo.' From this letter we seem to learn that,

despite Bruni's earlier promise to publish the book at the end of March 1437, the *Politics* still has not been published, pending presentation of the first *editio* to Duke Humphrey of Gloucester.<sup>52</sup>

A few days later (13 December 1437) Bruni wrote yet another long letter on the *Politics* translation (VII.16 L) which has been the subject of much controversy. He is responding to a letter of 16 August from Duke Humphrey's secretary, Tito Livio Frulovisi, who has complained that the Duke's promised *volumen* of the *Politics* has not yet arrived. We know from letters of Pier Candido Decembrio that the rumor had reached Duke Humphrey that the *Politics*, whose dedication had been promised to him in 1434, was now being offered to the pope.<sup>53</sup> Bruni in his reply to Frulovisi apologizes for taking so long to answer his letter, saying that the latter's epistles from London took a long time to be forwarded to Arezzo, where he, Bruni, had come to escape plague in Florence. He says that he had long ago offered the book and showed it to the merchants, the Borromei, who were to convey it to London, but they had advised him to hold on to it, since the wars in Flanders made it impossible to deliver. At the time of writing, the book was still 'penes me, praestolans eorum postulationi'. He had not asked for or received any money for the book, and would not do so unless the book should miscarry. In that event he would ask for money as he did not think he should have to have it copied and conveyed more than once at his own expense.<sup>54</sup>

Taking the three letters together, we can hypothesize that the *Politics* had still not been published at the end of 1437, and that Bruni was waiting for the first copy to be delivered to Duke Humphrey before dedicating it officially to the pope and distributing it to other important figures. This is in effect what Bruni, somewhat disingenuously, claimed to have done when he was later reproached, early in 1440, for having broken his promise to Duke Humphrey in dedicating the *Politics* to

Eugenius.<sup>55</sup> Bruni's reply to his accuser, his old friend Francesco Pizolpasso, now Archbishop of Milan, stated that he had promised only to translate the work for Humphrey and to send him a copy, not to dedicate it to him. He had in fact kept all his promises and had sent the duke the first copy of the work. Duke Humphrey himself had never asked for the dedication. Bruni was not under the impression that the duke wanted the dedication; it wasn't his own habit to buy and sell his literary work, and he had in fact with great liberality sent Duke Humphrey a copy at his own expense.<sup>56</sup>

When Bruni put his correspondence in order around 1440, around the same time as his letter to Pizolpasso, he displaced the letter (VIII.1 M) he had written to Biondo on 1 March 1437 so that it stood first in Book VIII, just after the letter to Frulovisi (VII.9 M), as though to give the impression that the offer of the *Politics* to Eugenius had been subsequent to fulfilling his promise to Duke Humphrey. If Bruni did delay the formal dedication of the *Politics* to November 1438, after the duke had received his copy,<sup>57</sup> he may have felt that this slight deceit was thereby justified, since he had in fact seen to it that Duke Humphrey had received the first copy, if not the dedication, of the work. If the official publication and dedication of the book was in fact delayed to late in 1438, it would explain why a number of manuscripts carry 1438 as a date of composition. At least four early codices give the 1438 date ('Leonardus Aretinus traduxit anno salutis Christianae MCCCCXXXVIII').<sup>58</sup> Moreover, Bruni's correspondence shows that only after November 1438 did Bruni began to distribute the work to important personages such as the Signori of Siena (24 November 1438) and King Alfonso of Aragon (late 1438 – early 1439); it is difficult to imagine that he would have waited for two years after dedicating the work to Eugenius to send it to the rest of his important readers.<sup>59</sup>

2. The *Memoirs* (*De temporibus suis*). The *terminus ante quem* of the *Memoirs* may be deduced from internal evidence, as Hans Baron already saw in 1928.<sup>60</sup> The latest events mentioned in it are datable to the end of July 1440, and it is significant that Bruni mentions proudly his first two terms on the Ten of War, which fell in June-November 1439 and June-November 1440, but gives not the slightest hint that he also served a third term, beginning in June 1441. This shows that the *Memoirs* must have been completed between August 1440 and June of 1441. But when did Bruni begin writing them? We are given a clue by the large amount of overlap between the events narrated in *Memoirs*, caps. 4-22, and those treated in the *History*, Book 9.26-90, covering the years 1382-88.<sup>61</sup> A ready explanation for this overlap suggests itself if the supposition made at the beginning of this article is correct: that Bruni began the *Memoirs* in the later 1430s because his *History* had still not reached his own lifetime and he was afraid that he might die without having left the record he had promised of his own time. We may suppose that Bruni had finished Books VII and VIII and was aware of the obstacles that lay ahead of him, particularly the need to control an ever-widening source base. The idea of composing a *commentarius*, which Bruni understood to signify a rapid narrative that covered events more compendiously than a full historical narrative, would have appealed to him as a kind of short-cut.<sup>62</sup> The *Memoirs* are about the length of a single book of Bruni's *History*, but while a book of his *History* covered, on average, about 18 years, Bruni was able to cover the full span of his boyhood and adult life, about sixty years, in the *Memoirs*.

So it is reasonable to suppose that Bruni began composing the *Memoirs* before writing Book IX of the *History*, but (presumably) after finishing Books VII and VIII. The likeliest moment for him to have begun his *Memoirs* was in 1437-38, after he had finished his great translation of the *Politics*. Then came an interruption. For reasons

we can only guess at, Bruni decided to publish Books VII-IX of the *History* as a unit, presenting them to the Signoria at a public ceremony on 6 February 1439. The copying was done in a great hurry, as is indicated by the fact that each book was copied by a different scribe.<sup>63</sup> It is probably significant that this ceremony took place in the weeks when the Council of Union was transferring itself from Ferrara to Florence; it occurred in fact between the arrival of Pope Eugene and his cardinals on 28 January and the arrival of the Patriarch of Constantinople on 12 February.<sup>64</sup> Part of Bruni's usefulness to the Signoria was his intimate knowledge of and close relations with the papal curia. Bruni was eager to secure a renewal of his tax privilege and an extension of it to his descendants (his son Donato was 26 years old in February 1439) and probably thought that his stock would be at its highest in the Palazzo Vecchio at a moment when the Pope was in Florence, when his knowledge of Greek was about to become a precious commodity, and when he had just presented three more books of official history to the Signoria.

In Book IX of the *Histories* Bruni presented a much fuller version of the events of 1382-88; and the perspective is Florentine, unlike the account in the *Memoirs*, where the genre dictated an Aretine perspective for those years. There are occasional words and phrases that recall the briefer treatment of the *Memoirs*, but nothing that would prove *textualiter* the priority of the *Memoirs* over Book IX of *History* (or vice versa).

3. *The Florentine Constitution* (Peri\ th=j tw=n Flwrenti/nwn politei/aj). The arrival of the Council, with all the interest it aroused in things Greek, must have diverted Bruni once again from contemporary history back to his old interests in ancient history and political theory. Bruni himself remarks in the *Memoirs* (105) on the

presence of ‘multique cum imperatore proceres secularesque insignes viri ac litterarum, non sacrarum modo, verum etiam gentilium bene periti.’ It seems that Bruni had particularly fruitful interaction with a Greek scholar named Gemistos, later known as Pletho, who during the Council lived around the corner from Bruni in the *case dei Peruzi*.<sup>65</sup> We know that the best manuscript of Bruni’s treatise in Greek on *The Polity of the Florentines*, which took its analytic categories from Aristotle’s *Politics*, was owned by Pletho and contains annotations in his hand. It is usually dated to 1439, and must have been composed before Pletho left Florence in August of 1439.<sup>66</sup>

4. *Commentary on Greek History*. Bruni’s other known work from the year 1439,<sup>67</sup> the *Commentaria rerum graecarum*, an historical compendium based on Xenophon’s *Hellenica*, also has a close connection with Pletho.<sup>68</sup> Sebastiano Gentile has noted that Pletho’s own historical compendium, *E Diodoro et Plutarcho de rebus post pugnam ad Mantineam gestis*, is in effect a continuation of Bruni’s *Commentaria*; Bruni’s text ends with the battle of Mantinea in 362 BC where Pletho’s begins. The two texts, indeed, were published together by Joachim Camerarius in 1546 as a useful summary of fourth-century BC Greek history.<sup>69</sup>

5. *History of the Florentine People*, Books X-XII. When Bruni returned to his *Memoirs*, after the departure of the Greeks and after two terms on the Ten of War, he must have been confident that his narrative of the great Milanese War of 1390-1402, which ultimately came to fill Books X-XII of the *History*, was well in hand. That is the only really plausible explanation for why Bruni chose to omit in his *Memoirs* an account of that conflict, which he regarded as the greatest in Florentine history and of



which he was himself a living witness. In fact the entire contents of Books X and XI are summarized in half a paragraph (21) of the *Memoirs*, and there is only slightly more overlap with Book XII. The relationship between the *Memoirs* and the text of Book XII is a revealing one, and we shall return to it in a moment. But it is a reasonable inference that by the time Bruni had finished his *Memoirs*, sometime between August 1440 and June 1441, he had at least a draft of Books X-XII.

Book XII offers the only three close textual correspondences between the *Memoirs* and the *History*. The second of the three in order, a passage where Bruni describes the plague of 1401, does not tell us very much.

*Memoirs*, 27:

Iam millesimus quadringentesimus erat annus et pestis signa quaedam terrere inceperant, quae paulo post Florentiae desaeviit cum incredibili strage cuiusque sexus atque aetatis. Unicum *huius* mali remedium in fuga repertum est. Fugerunt itaque cives populariter, Bononiam plurimi demigrantes, et tamen in vacua desertaque urbe supra triginta hominum milia pestis absumpsit.

*History* 12.7:

Pestis signa quaedam ab initio huius anni terrere homines inceperant, quae mox per aestatem plurimum desaevivit cum incredibili strage cuiusque sexus atque aetatis. Unicum *eius* mali remedium in fuga repertum est. Fugerunt itaque cives populariter, Bononiam plurimi demigrantes, et tamen in vacua desertaque urbe supra triginta hominum millia pestis absumpsit.

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3 eius *L*] huius *ABP* 5 adsumpsit *B*

The third of the correspondences gives us somewhat more information.

*Memoirs*, 28:

Eius interitu turbata sunt omnia apud hostes, cum et filios reliquisset parvulos et militiae duces statim inter se de potentia certantes ruinam principum machinarentur. Ita mirabiliter conversa re, qui prius terrebant, metuere coeperunt; et quibus desperata videbantur omnia, in tuto consistere ac plurimum fidere.

*History* 12.47:

Ex illius confestim morte tanta rerum conversio secuta est, ut qui prius vix ullam salutis spem reliquam habebant, hi maxime confiderent; qui autem se vicisse putabant, omnem spem amitterent resistendi.

Here the version of the *History*, as befits the last line of the work, is far more polished and elegant than that of the *Memoirs*, both rhythmically and in terms of word-choice and in the balancing of cola and commata. The rather unclassical use of *fidere* in an absolute sense, without complement, has been corrected to *confidere*. One can imagine Bruni polishing the sentences in the *Memoirs* to achieve the elegance of this last sentence of his *History*, but the reverse process, making a sow's ear out of a silk purse as it were, is much harder to imagine.

This would seem to tell against the hypothesis that Books X-XII of the *History* were finished before the *Memoirs*, but the first of the three correspondences between the latter work and Book XII provides a clue towards solving the conundrum. It should first, however, be noted that the surviving textual evidence for Books IX-XII reveals that these later books received a further polishing at some stage after Bruni permitted the first copies to be made.<sup>70</sup> As it happens, one of the places where the

presence of a second redaction is visible occurs precisely in the first of the passages where the *Memoirs* and Book XII closely correspond:

*Memoirs*, 23:

*Per haec ipsa tempora mirabilis accidit populorum motus; omnis quippe multitudo vestes induit albas et piaculis quibusdam factis, incredibili devotionis fervore longa dealbatorum agmina ad vicinas urbes commeabant, pacem ac misericordiam clamore supplicii deprecantia: prorsus miranda res et incredibile negotium. Peregrinatio erat fere dierum decem; cibus vero ut plurimum panis et aqua. Nulli per urbes alio vestitu conspiciebantur. Accessus vero in aliena oppida, etiam parum antea pacatorum, liberi fuerunt. Nemo per id tempus dolo fallere tentavit, nemo advenarum oppressus; tacitae quaedam induciae cum hostibus fuere. Duravitque is motus fere menses duos, cum et proficiscerentur populi in alienas urbes et alii in suas adventarent. Mira hospitalitas ubique et benigna susceptio. Unde vero initium coeperit obscurum est. Ex Alpibus certe in Cisalpinam Galliam descendisse ferebatur mirabilique discursu populos apprehendisse. Florentiam primi omnium Lucenses populariter advenere. Quibus conspectis, tantus confestim ardor consecutus est ut etiam illi ipsi qui antea rem auditam deriserant, primi omnium suorum civium vestes mutarent et quasi deo correpti motu simili vagarentur. Florentini, quadrifariam partito populo, duae ex his partes innumerabili multitudine virorum, mulierum, puerorum Arretium petiere; reliquae vero partes ad alia loca profectae sunt. Quocumque perveniebant albatorum agmina, eorum locorum incolae exemplo simili movebantur. Ita ex Gallia in Etruriam, ex Etruria in Umbriam, ex Umbria in Sabinos et Picentes et Marsos ceterasque subinde gentes progressa commotio, ad extremas Italiae oras pervenit, nullos in populos non pervagata.*

*History* 12.1-2. The first redaction is in *P, A (ante corr.)*; the final redaction is indicated by *BL, A (post corr.)*. As this suggests, some (though not all) of the revisions made to the first redaction are visible as erasures in *A*.<sup>71</sup>

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*Inter bellorum vel iam coeptorum vel imminentium curas, nova protinus res et ante id tempus inaudita per universam Italiam contigit.* Omnis quippe multitudo *populi quae ubique erat* vestes induit albas et piaculis quibusdam factis incredibili devotionis ardore longa dealbatorum agmina ad vicinas urbes 5] *commeabant*, pacem ac misericordiam clamore supplici deprecantia – prorsus miranda res et incredibile negotium! Peregrinatio erat fere dierum decem; cibus vero ut plurimum panis et aqua. Nulli per urbes alio vestitu conspiciebantur. Accessus vero in aliena oppida, etiam parum antea pacatorum, liberi fuerunt. Nemo per id tempus dolo fallere tentavit; nemo 10] *advenarum oppressus*. Tacitae quaedam indutiae cum hostibus fuere. Duravitque is motus fere mensis duos, cum et proficiscerentur populi in alienas urbes et alii in suas adventarent. Mira hospitalitas ubique et benigna susceptio. Unde vero initium ceperit, obscurum est. Ex Alpibus certe in Cisalpinam Galliam descendisse ferebatur *mirabilique discursu populos* 15] *apprehendisse*. Florentiam primi omnium Lucenses populariter advenere. Quibus conspectis tantus confestim *devotionis ardor* consecutus est, ut etiam illi ipsi qui antea rem auditam *maxime* deriserant, primi omnium suorum civium vestes mutarent et, quasi Deo correpti, motu simili vagarentur. Florentini, quadrifariam partito populo, duae ex his partes innumerabili 20] *multitudine virorum, mulierum puerorum Arretium petiere*; reliquae vero partes ad alia loca profectae sunt. Quocumque perveniebant albatorum agmina, eorum locorum incolae exemplo simili movebantur. Ita ex Gallia in Etruriam, ex Etruria in Umbriam, ex Umbria in Sabinos et Picentes progressa commotio, ad extremas Italiae oras pervenit, nullos in populos non pervagata.

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1-2: *Inter bellorum ... contigit*] Per haec ipsa tempora mirabilis factus est populorum motus *P, A ante corr.* 3 *populi quae ubique erat om. P* 4 *ardore] fervore P, L ante corr.?* 14 *mirabiliter homines P* 16 *devotionis om. A* 17 *maxime om. A* 20 *puerorumque P* 23-24 *et Marsas ceterasque subinde gentes add. ABP post Picentes*

As the variants show, the text of the *Memoirs* is very close to that of the first redaction of the *History*, and that Bruni further polished Book XII at some point subsequent to publishing the *Memoirs*. *P*, a manuscript copied by Bruni's disciple Giannozzo Manetti, preserves elements of the earliest redaction, and some variants of this redaction are visible beneath the corrections to *A*, which was later adjusted to conform with the final version. One can easily imagine that Bruni gave an unpolished copy of the last books of his *History* to Manetti, who acted in some respects as Bruni's literary executor.<sup>72</sup> This fits with the hypothesis that Bruni had a draft of Books X-XII before publishing the *Memoirs*, but later further polished the last books before publishing them officially in 1442. The likeliest time for this final polish to have been applied was in the fall of 1441 and 1442, after Bruni had completed work on another major project, the *Gothic War*. In any case the whole work was ready to be translated in 1442<sup>73</sup> and Bruni himself, in a speech quoted by Vespasiano da Bisticci and dateable to early January 1443 (modern style), declares that he has written «le storie sua», i.e., the history of Florence, «infino alla guerra di Galeazo Bisconti», i.e., to Book XII.<sup>74</sup>

6. *Gothic War* (*De bello italico adversus Gothos libri IV*). The first indication in Bruni's correspondence that he had composed this historical *commentarius* or summary based on Procopius' *Gothic War* comes in a letter to Cyriac of Ancona, dated 31 August 1441. In it Bruni writes 'Scripsi *noviter* libros quattuor de bello italico quod Belisarius et Narses Justiniani duces adversum Gothos gessere.' The work must have been composed rapidly, as we know from another, later letter to Giovanni Tortelli. This letter, dated by Luiso to 1442, was written by Bruni after Tortelli had left the Council of Florence to study theology in Bologna; according to

the detailed study of the latter's career by Mariangela Regoliosi, Tortelli left Florence sometime in the first half of 1441.<sup>75</sup> It is probable, however, that Bruni delayed publication of the work, because on 17 October 1442, in a letter to Alfonso of Aragon, he remarks that he published his *Gothic War* six months before Alfonso captured Naples, using a *ruse de guerre* similar to one used by Belisarius a thousand years previously.<sup>76</sup> Since Alfonso captured Naples on 2 June 1442, this would mean Bruni gave the work to the *cartolai* for circulation around December of 1441.

The dedication to Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini may also date from late in 1441, since it is mentioned in the letter to Tortelli but not in the earlier one to Cyriac. If so, a likely motive suggests itself for the dedication, for it was already known late in 1441 that Cesarini would accompany the crusading forces that were to set out from the Balkans in exchange for the submission of the Greek church at the Council of Florence. It makes sense that Cesarini, whose role was to persuade Latin Christians to defend the Greeks against the Ottomans, would find useful arguments in Bruni's *Gothic War*, which describes how the Greeks, a thousand years before, had expelled the barbarians from Italy and restored Roman rule.

7. *Oratio coram Alphonso Aragonum rege*. After Alfonso of Aragon conquered Naples on 2 June 1442, it became inevitable that he would in due course bring all of the Regno under his control. When Alfonso's rival René of Anjou fled north to Florence in early July, the Florentine signoria, as was customary on such occasions, wrote a letter to Alfonso to congratulate him; this was undoubtedly composed by Bruni and a copy of the *missive* is preserved in two codices.<sup>77</sup> Alfonso then set about mopping up the opposition in the Regno and by November had conquered all but four small towns at the northern and southern extremities of his kingdom.<sup>78</sup> He began to

send out letters announcing that he would celebrate his triumph in Roman style on 26 February 1443.

Florence had a large merchant community in Naples, and whatever its sentimental attachment to the old Angevin and Guelf cause, prudence dictated that a delegation be sent to attend the triumph and celebrate Alfonso's famous victory. The post of ambassador to Alfonso, however, proved a difficult one to fill, either because of loyalty to the Angevin cause or, more likely, because of the crushing expense of attending a royal triumph. On two occasions in November 1442 the Signoria imposed a large fine of 500 gold florins on the entire Otto di Guardia which would be lifted only on condition that the ambassador, Bernardo Giugni, a member of the Otto, would set out for Naples.<sup>79</sup> On the second occasion, 22 November, Giuliano di Nicola Davanzati, the most prominent member of the Otto, was chosen as a second ambassador. Finally, on Monday, 26 November, the two ambassadors, rather remarkably, were threatened with the death penalty if they did not set out for Naples on the following Saturday, 1 December, for Naples.<sup>80</sup> It was on this occasion that Bruni must have composed the short oration *Oratio coram Alphonso Aragonum rege per dominum Julianum de Davanzatis habita*. The work is preserved in eight Latin manuscripts and there are thirteen manuscripts of the Italian translation. One of the Latin manuscripts (Piacenza, Biblioteca Comunale, MS Landi 1, f. 70r) carries a date of composition of 1 December 1442, the date Davanzati and Guigni set out for Naples.<sup>81</sup>

8. *Risposta agli ambasciatori del re d'Aragona*. Bruni's last known work also has a Neapolitan context. In November 1443<sup>82</sup> ambassadors came to Florence from the new Aragonese king of Naples to request that Florence break its alliance with

Francesco Sforza, then a condottiere in the employ of Venice and Florence, and align itself with Alfonso of Aragon instead. This was an important public occasion that took place in the great audience chamber of the Palazzo Vecchio and was attended by a large number of leading citizens in addition to the Priors and the Colleges. Bruni was called upon to make the reply for the Signori. Bruni gracefully acknowledged the great respect of the Florentine state for King Alfonso and its ardent desire to serve him. But it had made promises to Sforza, and if it were shameful for a private individual to break promises, it was utterly disgraceful and ruinous for a whole people, after solemn deliberation, to go back on its word; therefore the Florentines would respectfully have to decline his request.<sup>83</sup>

Bruni's eloquence on this occasion was much admired by his Florentine audience, but if they had read his *History of the Florentine People*, they would have found some of his words strangely familiar. For in Book VII of that work, under the year 1351, Bruni describes a precisely similar situation where the Pisans are called upon by the tyrannical archbishop of Milan, Giovanni Visconti, to break their peace treaty with the Florentines and make war against them in alliance with himself. The Pisan reply is given by Franceschino Gambacurta, a quondam client of the Visconti but a man who, according to Bruni, puts country ahead of private loyalties. Gambacurta makes an argument very similar to that used by Bruni in 1443, citing the same authorities and using almost the same words.<sup>84</sup> For example:

*History*, 7.73:

In gubernanda republica honoris curam magis habendam esse quam utilitatis omnes fatentur. Ut enim magna est civitatis dignitas magnaue maiestas, ita et fidem et gravitatem inesse maximam decet. Itaque multa in privatis hominibus toleramus, et inconstantiae avaritiaeque ac sordidis quaestibus veniam



impartimur quae in civitate nullo modo forent toleranda. Splendor enim et fides et gravitas in civitatibus elucere debent. Nam unius aut alterius aut paucorum quorundam improbitas hominum forsitan vitari nequit. Ut vero totus populus deliberatione publica deiceret, ac fidem promissaque consulto infringat, nimis foret detestandum. Contra honorem igitur ac dignitatem civitatis nostrae hanc postulationem esse constat; quam etsi magnae utilitates sequerentur, tamen concedere nullo modo debemus.

*Risposta:*

Questa nostra materia è tanto più grave quanto in essa si tratta della osservantia d'uno popolo, però che s'egli è sozza cosa et dishonesta a uno huomo particolare rompere la fede et mancare delle promesse, quanto è da stimare essere più sozza cosa et dishonesta se uno popolo et una città facessi tal mancamento; et se privatim è scelerata cosa et nefaria mancare di sua fede, quanto sarebbe più scelerata et nefaria mancare di sua fede, quanto sarebbe più scelerata et nefaria cosa mancare publice, cioè per deliberatione pubblica di una città.

As Book VII of Bruni's History was published early in 1439, some of his audience may well have been aware of the sources of Bruni's eloquence in 1443, answering the Aragonese ambassadors. For these members of his audience, his vernacular speech would have been a powerful example of the utility of history for contemporary statesmen and diplomats. As an example of how humanistic studies could provide vernacular orators with prudence and eloquence in key situations, it could hardly be bettered.

The results of the present study may be summarized in the following table:

## FOURTH PERIOD: FINAL CHANCERY YEARS (1437-1443)

Before May 1436	Draft of the <i>Politics</i> finished
1 March 1437	Polished draft of the <i>Politics</i> ready for publication; <i>Praemissio quaedam ad evidentiam novae translationis Politicorum</i> written
Spring-Summer 1437?	Copy of <i>Politics</i> prepared for Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester; delivery not effected till Summer 1438
1437/38?	<i>Memoirs</i> begun (§§1-21)
Second half of 1438	<i>Politics</i> published with dedication to Eugenius IV
1438/39?	<i>Florentine History</i> , Book 9 written
6 February 1439	<i>Florentine History</i> , Books 7-9 presented to Signoria
1439/40	A fragment of Aristophanes' <i>Plutus</i> , lines 1-270 <sup>85</sup>
Early 1439	Peri\ th=j tw=n Flwrenti/nwn politei/aj
Before 25 December 1439	<i>Commentaria rerum graecarum</i>
First half of 1440	<i>Familiar Letters</i> in eight books published. <sup>86</sup>
Spring – Summer 1440?	Draft of Books 10-12 of the <i>History</i>
August 1440 – June 1441	<i>Memoirs</i> finished (§§22-118)
Before 31 August 1441	<i>De bello italico adversus Gothos libri IV</i> finished
December 1441	<i>De bello italico adversus Gothos</i> published
Fall 1441- 28 Sept 1442	<i>History</i> Books 10-12 polished and published
1 December 1442	<i>Oratio coram Alphonso Aragonum rege</i>
November 1443	<i>Risposta agli ambasciadori del Re d'Aragona</i>

## APPENDIX

Text of the *stantiamentum* authorizing payment for a translation of Bruni's *History of the Florentine People*. From ASF, Signori e collegi, Deliberazioni in forza di ordinaria autorità 58, f. 35v, dated 28 September 1442. See above, p. 000, n. 59.

Stantiamentum pro scribendo opus domini Leonardi.

Magnifici et potentes domini domini priores artium et uexillifer iustitie populi et communis Florentie una cum eorum collegiis in sufficientibus numeris congregatis seruatis seruandis et obtempo partito inter eos per triginta quattuor fabas nigras deliberauerunt et stantiauerunt quod: 5

Camerarius et prouisor camere armorum palatii florentini tam presentis quam futuri possint teneantur et debeant hinc ad unum annum proxime futurum de pecunia dicte camere ab eorum manibus peruenta et seu per venienda donec soluere et paghare uni scriptori qui nominabitur a nobili viro domino Leonardo Francisci Bruni, dignissimo cancellario comunis Florentie, usque in quantitatem florenorum 10 sexaginta auri et seu illud minus quod dicet dictus dominus Leonardus et eo modo et forma prout et sicut dicto domino Leonardo videbitur et placebit, pro translatando laudabile opus factum et compositum per dictum dominum Leonardum dummodo dictus talis scriptor teneatur et debeat per ydoneum fidem satisdare penes dictum camerarium et seu prouisorem de perficiendo et translatando dictum opus infra 15 dictum tempus, alias de restituendo quantitatem per eum receptam.

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1 Stantiamentum – Leonardi *in marg.* 7-8 et eo modo – traslatando *in marg.*:

videlicet quolibet mense ratam dicte quantitatis pro scribendo *canc.*

## [NOTES TO HANKINS ARTICLE]

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<sup>1</sup> LEONARDO BRUNI, *History of the Florentine People – Memoirs*, ed. and tr. James Hankins, 3 vols., Cambridge (Massachusetts) 2001-2007, I, 4.

<sup>2</sup> In 1406 Niccolò Niccoli requested that he add the conquest of Pisa to the *Laudatio*, to which Bruni replied that the subject required too much elaboration. «Quare historia opus est, et si sapiunt cives tui, docto alicui demandabunt». See *Leonardi Arretini Epistolarum libri VIII*, recensente Laurentio Mehus (1743), ristampa anastatica con introduzione di J. HANKINS, 2 vols., Roma 2007, I, 36 [*Ep.* II.4]. In subsequent citations of the letters, references to the ordering of Mehus's edition are followed by 'M', while 'L' indicates the order established by F. P. LUISO in his *Studi su l'epistolario di Leonardo Bruni*, ed. L. Gualdo Rosa, Roma 1980.

<sup>3</sup> BRUNI, *History*, III, 300-302 (caps. 1-2).

<sup>4</sup> See G. IANZITI, *Storiographia e contemporaneità: a proposito del «Rerum suo tempore gestarum commentarius» di Leonardo Bruni*, «Rinascimento», ser. 2, 30 (1990), 3-28, at 7-8.

<sup>5</sup> That it was Bruni's intention to continue the *History* past the date where it in fact ends, with the death of Giangaleazzo Visconti in 1402, is stated by Poggio in his funeral oration for Bruni: 'Non autem quod proposuerat, ad extremum deduxit. Nam cum constitueret ad haec nostra tempora usque historiam prosequi, bella solummodo, quae cum priori Duce Mediolani gessimus, conscripsit, reliqua perficere conantem mors interrupit.' See POGGIO BRACCIOLINI, *Opera omnia*, ed. R. Fubini, Torino 1966, II, 669.

<sup>6</sup> The paragraph numbers for each book of the *History* and the *Memoirs* cited here and elsewhere follow those of my edition. For Bruni's dependence on the Villani and Stefani chronicles, see the notes to my edition.

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<sup>7</sup> For the sources used by Bruni in Books IX-XII of the *History*, see the ‘Notes to the Translation’ in my edition, III, 411-431. Angelo Acciaiuoli served with Bruni during his last term on the Ten of War and was the dedicatee of his *Commentaria rerum graecarum* (1439): see below, 000.

<sup>8</sup> On Bruni’s aims as an historian see J. HANKINS, *A Mirror for Statesmen: Leonardo Bruni’s «History of the Florentine People»*, forthcoming in «The Historical Journal».

<sup>9</sup> See, again, the documentation cited in the ‘Notes to the Translation’ in my edition, III, 411-431, and the Preface to volume III, xv-xxi.

<sup>10</sup> J. HANKINS, *Notes on the Composition and Textual Tradition of Leonardo Bruni’s «Historiarum Florentini populi libri XII»*, in *Classica et Beneventana: Essays presented to Virginia Brown on the Occasion of her Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Frank T. Coulson, in the series «Textes et études du moyen âge», Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming.

<sup>11</sup> According to Poggio, Bruni left the Florentine chancery after a short time, when first appointed to that post in 1411, because it was too much work and because the papal curia offered better emolument (‘Nam tum novi exercitii difficultas, tum maioris spes emolumentum eum coegerunt ut, abdicato officio, ad prioris exercitii vitam rediret’): see Poggio’s funeral oration in Bruni’s *Epistolae*, ed. Mehus, I, CXXI. When he accepted the office a second time, Poggio wrote to him to in shock, wondering at his decision to take on ‘servitus honesta’ when he was already rich, famous and respected. Poggio assumes that the office will diminish gravely his opportunities for literary studies: see POGGIO BRACCIOLINI, *Lettere*, ed. H. Harth, Firenze 1984, I, 80-80. Bruni himself claims in letters to Marco Dandolo, Guarino, and Feltrino Boiardo (all dated to 1428 by Luiso) that it was against his will that he abandoned the tranquillity of his studies and was thrust into the tempests of public life; see his

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*Epistolae*, V.7 M = V.4 L: ‘Enimvero scias volo, neminem unquam tanta cupiditate honorem appetisse, quanta ego cupiditate hoc ipsum munus evitare atque reiicere nixus sum’; V.8 M = V.5 L: ‘Rem [i.e. his new office] tamen scito molestissimam et contra quod optarem michi contigisse’; and X.7 M = V.6 L: ‘negotium pergrande ac nimium paene rationibus vitae illius quam ego michi delegeram sit impositum’. See LUIISO, *Studi*, 109-110 for commentary and dating.

<sup>12</sup> For the dates see J. HANKINS, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, 2 vols., Leiden 1990, II, 367-78; ID., *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, Roma 2003-2004, I, 23-29 (for the *Epistula*); for the date of the *Cicero novus*, see the forthcoming vol. 2 of ID., *Repertorium Brunianum: A Critical Guide to the Writings of Leonardo Bruni*. Vol. 1 was published in the series *Fonti per la storia dell’Italia medievale*, Subsidia 5, Roma 1997.

<sup>13</sup> For the dates see *Repertorium*, vol. 2, forthcoming; HANKINS, *Notes on the Composition* (for the *History*); LEONARDO BRUNI, *Humanistisch-philosophische Schriften, mit einer Chronologie seiner Werke und Briefe*, ed. H. Baron, Leipzig 1928.

<sup>14</sup> First published by Mehus as an extra-canonical letter (X.25) and also treated as a letter by Luiso (IV.13), though the work was in fact an independent letter-treatise and is handed down as such in the manuscript tradition.

<sup>15</sup> G. IANZITI, *Between Livy and Polybius: Leonardo Bruni on the First Punic War*, «Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome», 51-52 (2006/2007), 173-197, at 173.

<sup>16</sup> P. THIERMANN, *Die «Orationes Homeri» des Leonardo Bruni Aretino: kritische Edition der lateinischen und kastilianischen Übersetzung mit Prolegomena und Kommentar*, Leiden 1993.

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<sup>17</sup> H. BARON, *The Date of Leonardo Bruni's Isagogicon moralis disciplinae and the Recovery of the Eudemean Ethics*, «Italian Studies» 1 (1971), 64-74. Baron's *post quem*, the arrival of Aristotle's *Eudemean Ethics* in Florence (December 1424), is sound, but his argument for an *ante quem* of May 1426 is flawed by his (and Luiso's) assumption that Bruni's vague reference to his contributions to Aristotelian moral philosophy in *Ep. IV.20 M = IV.26 L* must refer to the *Isagogicon* ('Haec ego fundamenta [studiorum Aristotelis meorum] cum in adolescentia jecerim, quis juste admiretur, si nunc aliquid a me exaedificatum sit?'). There is in fact no reason why Bruni might not be talking about his translations of the *Ethics* and *Economics*. On the other hand, a letter to Bruni published by the present writer shows that Bruni had circulated the *Isagogicon* by the summer of 1426, providing a more secure *ante quem*. See J. HANKINS, *Addenda to Book X of Luiso's Studi su l'Epistolario di Leonardo Bruni*, in *Censimento dei codici dell'Epistolario di Leonardo Bruni*, a cura di Lucia GUALDO ROSA, 2 vols., Roma 1991-2004, II, 352-424 at 371-72.

<sup>18</sup> HANKINS, *Humanism and Platonism*, I, 58-59.

<sup>19</sup> The likeliest date for the dedication of this life was during 17-30 January 1430, when the dedicatee, Cardinal Niccolò Albergati, was in Florence to negotiate a peace treaty; in a letter of 13 April 1430 (*Ep. VI.2 M = VI.2 L*), Bruni acknowledges Albergati's letter of thanks for the dedication.

<sup>20</sup> N. MARCELLI, *La «Novella di Seleuco e Antioco»: introduzione, testo e commento*, «Interpres» 22 (2003), 129.

<sup>21</sup> LEONARDO BRUNI, *Sulla perfetta traduzione*, ed. P. Viti, Naples 2004, 269.

<sup>22</sup> F. P. LUISO, *Riforma della cancelleria fiorentina nel 1437*, «Archivio storico italiano» 5<sup>th</sup> ser., 21 (1898), 132-142. Bruni's offer to present his translation of Aristotle's *Politics* to the pope in March 1437 (see below) might well have been seen



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by contemporaries as a step towards returning to the papal curia, a post which was better paid, involved less work and had higher prestige. Contemporaries would remember that Bruni had left the Florentine chancery for the papal curia before, in 1411, for precisely these reasons (see note 11, above).

<sup>23</sup> R. M. ZACCARIA, *Il Bruni cancelliere e le istituzioni della Repubblica*, in *Leonardo Bruni cancelliere della Repubblica di Firenze, Convegno di Studi (Firenze, 27-29 ottobre 1987)*, ed. P. Viti, Firenze 1990, 97-116.

<sup>24</sup> See R. FUBINI, *La rivendicazione di Firenze della sovranità statale di Firenze e il contributo delle «Historiae» di Leonardo Bruni*, in *Leonardo Bruni cancelliere*, 34: Fubini suggests that the second chancellery was founded in order to enable Bruni to hold high offices, and that Pope Eugene IV's presence in Florence required Bruni's presence in the regime to act as an intermediary between Florence and the papal curia.

<sup>25</sup> L. MARTINES, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists*, Princeton 1963, 165-176. For Bruni's presence on the Dodici Buonomini, in addition to the references given by Martines, see Florence, Archivio di Stato (hereafter ASF), Consulte e Pratiche 51, f. 104v, 110v, 111r, 112v, 116r. For Bruni's service as consigliere and consolo of the Arte di Giudici e Notai, see ASF, Arte di Giudici e Notai (Libro della Coppa) vol. 26, ff. 25r, 26r, 27r, 27v, 28r, 28v, 71r, 72r, 75r, and *ibid.* vol. 135, f. 74r; (the last reference kindly supplied by Jonathan Davies). All dates are modern style.

<sup>26</sup> C. R. SCHUPFER, *Il Bruni cancelliere nel 1411*, in *Leonardo Bruni Cancelliere*, 117-131.

<sup>27</sup> ASF, Legazioni e Commissarie, 7, ff. 51r-53v. The report from Bruni's legation was published by C. MONZANI in «Archivio Storico Italiano», n.s., 5.2 (1857), 31-34.

<sup>28</sup> ZACCARIA, *Il Bruni cancelliere*, 110-111.

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<sup>29</sup> J. HANKINS, *Civic Knighthood in the Early Renaissance: Leonardo Bruni's «De militia»*, forthcoming in «Renaissance Quarterly».

<sup>30</sup> Bruni shows a familiarity with the *Politics* as early as 1413, when he uses the Aristotelian classification of constitutions to describe the Florentine constitution for the Emperor Sigismund in the *Epistola ad Magnae principem imperatorem*. See my *Humanism and Platonism*, 23-29, which also raises some doubts as to whether this treatise is actually by Bruni.

<sup>31</sup> I find unpersuasive Paolo Viti's suggestion that Bruni consulted his own *De recta interpretatione* for these two passages when he turned in the mid-1430s to translating the *Politics*; see BRUNI, *Sulla perfetta traduzione*, 183. All the other ancient philosophical texts cited by Bruni in the *De recta interpretatione* were of works translated by Bruni since 1416 and the quotations in each case match closely the texts of in Bruni's versions.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 102-4.

<sup>34</sup> In *Ep.* VI.11 M = VI.16 L, Bruni tells Filelfo that after the latter's departure from Florence in December of 1434, he took up once more the translation of the *Politics* that he had begun long before: 'Tempus autem quodcunque nobis ab officio supersit, libenter ad studia referimus litterarum. Aggressi nempe sumus post discessum tuum Aristotelis Politicorum libros *perficere*, quos, ut scis, *traducere iam pridem coeperamus*. In his nunc versatur plurimum cura et cogitatio nostra' (emphasis added).

<sup>35</sup> 'In quo si mora quaedam intercesserit, difficultati susceptae rei imputare debebis', cited from the text given in A. SAMMUT, *Unfredo duca di Gloucester e gli umanisti italiani*, Padova 1980, 147.

<sup>36</sup> For the three stages *absolvere*, (*ex*)*polire*, *edere*, see *Ep.* IV.13 M = IV.11 L: ‘Nam Aristotelis Ethica quae traducere coeperam, nuper *absolvi*. Ea cum *expolire* nunc cupiam’, etc. and below, 000 and note 41.

<sup>37</sup> LEONARDO BRUNI, *Opere letterarie e politiche*, ed. P. Viti, Torino 1996, 537.

<sup>38</sup> See Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (hereafter BLF), 90 sup. 131 (A. M. Bandini, *Catalogus codicum latinorum Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae*, 5 vols., Firenze 1774-78, V, 403); BLF, Redi 143, f. 65v (from the 1430s or 40s); Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 2330, f. 37v (Luiso, *Studi*, 139n) and Ricc. 2278, f. 70r. I find unpersuasive Paolo Viti’s assertion (BRUNI, *Opere*, 537) that the *opera assai lunga* referred to was ‘sicuramente’ Bruni’s translation of Plato’s *Speech of Alcibiades* from the *Symposium*, sent in the form of a letter to Cosimo de’ Medici (*Ep.* VII.1 M = VII.1 L), and numbering only four pages in Mehus’ edition. The date of 1436 for the *Vita di Dante e del Petrarca* is found in BLF, Plut. 42, 17 (Bandini, *Catalogus*, V, 186); BLF, Plut. 90 sup. 131 (ibid. V, 403); BLF, Plut. 90 sup. 138 (ibid. 408).

<sup>39</sup> *Ep.* VIII.1 M = VIII.3 L, ed. Mehus II, 103-106, and X.10 M = VIII.4 L, ed. Mehus II, 180-181.

<sup>40</sup> For the date of these letters see V. ZACCARIA, *Pier Candido Decembrio e Leonardo Bruni*, «Studi medievali» 8 (1967), 504-54 at 514-20; E. FUMAGALLI, review of Luiso’s *Studi* in «Aevum» 15.2 (1982), 343-51 at 347-48; L. GUALDO ROSA, *Una nuova lettera del Bruni sulla sua traduzione della «Politica» di Aristotele*, «Rinascimento», ser. 2, 23 (1983), 113-24 at 120; and SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, 8. An incorrect date of 1 March 1438 is given by LUISO, *Studi*, 134-39, who was followed by Baron in BRUNI, *Schriften*, 175-76. See also H. BARON’s review of Luiso’s *Studi* in «Speculum» 56.4 (1981), 835.

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<sup>41</sup> ‘Ego super triennium in horum librorum traductionem laboravi conterens singula verba atque sententias. Non enim haec est narratio aut historia in qua nichil sit praeter significationem rei gestae, sed est disciplina magna et accurata, in qua si paululum modo aberraveris, omnia paene confunduntur. Itaque incredibili diligentia opus est ad fidelitatem traductionis. Et haec fit michi causa retinendi hos libros diutius in manibus, atque multi iampridem flagitant et avidae expectant ut libri edantur. Quod tunc tandem fiet a me, prius quam finis sit huius quadragesimae. Simul enim ac librum in secreto ad dominum nostrum papam ostenderis, sub eius nomine edetur.’

<sup>42</sup> ‘Insuper praefationem illam Beatitudini Suae ostendes, ita tamen, si placituram existimabis. Sed epistolam, quam ad te scribo, nullo modo praetermittas, quin ostendas atque cures, ut sibi legatur’.

<sup>43</sup> FUMAGALLI, cit., 348), maintains that this letter (VI.14 L, dated 12 March), must have been written in 1433 on the grounds that in another letter of 1 March 1437 to Biondo, Bruni claimed to have worked on the translation ‘super triennium’.

Fumagalli’s argument is only valid (a) if we assume that Bruni did not begin to translate the *Politics* until asked to do so by Humphrey, and (b) if we believe Bruni remembered in 1437 exactly the date of his earlier letter to Humphrey and wanted to be extremely precise about dates. Neither assumption is likely to be correct.

<sup>44</sup> SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, 8, 146-148. It is also possible that, although Bruni ultimately turned down the offer of a post in England offered to him by Duke Humphrey, at some earlier point the unstable political situation in Florence in 1433/34 had led him to explore, via Gerardo Landriano, the feasibility of a temporary move from Florence.

<sup>45</sup> The *Praemissio* (*inc.* Inter moralis discipline precepta) also in certain authoritative MSS carries the title *Praefatio in libros Politicorum* according to Baron’s apparatus: these MSS include Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (hereafter BAV),

Pal. lat. 1029, owned by Bruni's student Giannozzo Manetti, and Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (hereafter BNCF), Conv. soppr. C 7, 2677.

<sup>46</sup> BRUNI, *Schriften*, 70-73 (*inc.* 'Libros Politicorum multis a me vigiliis').

<sup>47</sup> See J. HANKINS, *The Ethics Controversy*, in *Humanism and Platonism*, 193-239.

<sup>48</sup> *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio*, ed. B. Nogara, Roma 1927, 93-94; also in LUIZO, *Studi*, 181-82.

<sup>49</sup> BRUNI, *Schriften*, 73, reprinted in BRUNI, *Sulla perfetta traduzione*, 280:

'Convertendi autem interpretandique mihi causa fuit eadem illa, quae iam decem et octo annis <ante> ad conversionem *Ethicorum* induxit'.

<sup>50</sup> 'Explicit liber decimus et ultimus *Ethicorum* Aristotelis. Leonardus Aretinus latinus fecit qui antea non erunt MCCCCXVI feliciter', found in BAV, Vat. lat. 3001; BLF, Plut. 89 sup. 53; BNCF, Conv. soppr. C 7, 2677 (see LUIZO, *Studi*, 88). Reims, Bibliothèque Municipale 893 also carries a date of 1416: 'Nova translacio *Ethicorum* Aristotilis edita Florentie per Leonardum de Arecio anno millimo (!) CCCCXVI stante concilio generali Constantie' (*Catalogue général des manuscrits des Bibliothèques Publiques des Départements*, Octavo series, 65 vols., Paris 1886-1990, XXXVII, 208). Since a month is not specified, it is possible that these colophons might follow Florentine style of dating and therefore refer to a date as late as 24 March 1417. In *Ep.* IV.12 M, dated 26 September [1417], Bruni tells Niccolò Niccoli to prepare himself to recopy the *Ethics* translation *ex integro* and in *Ep.* IV.13 M he says 'Nam Aristotelis *Ethica*, quae traducere coeperam, nuper absolvi. Ea cum expolire nunc cupiam,' etc. (Luiso, *Studi*, 88n.). The dedication to Martin must have been made at least after his election as pope (11 November 1417) but more probably occurred during his residence in Florence (February 1419 - September 1420), when

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Bruni was one of his familiars, as is shown by his memoirs, *De temporibus suis*, in BRUNI, *History*, ed. Hankins, III, 357-63, caps. 68-71.

<sup>51</sup> *Ep.* VIII.5 M = X.11 L (ed. Mehus II, 181-2): ‘Non permisit valetudo mea, ut venire potuerim, quemadmodum statutum fuerit a me. Nam per illos dies celebres et festivos, cum impetravissem licentiam veniendi ab istis Dominis meis respectu literarum Domini nostri, subito distinationibus quibusdam frigoris ita vexari coeptus sum, ut vix consistere super me possem. Dixeram hoc Gerardino [Fulginati], ut ad te referret meo nomine; quod si fecit, superfluae sunt hae litterae. Nunc autem, quia spes sublata est adventus nostri, expectabo, nisi tu aliud monebis. Vale. Die VIII Junii 1437.

Recommenda Domino nostro me, et excusationem meam facias. Iterum vale.’

<sup>52</sup> GUALDO ROSA, *Una nuova lettera*, 124.

<sup>53</sup> ZACCARIA, *Pier Candido Decembrio*, 514-20; SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, 9-14.

<sup>54</sup> *Ep.* VII.9 M = VII.16 L.

<sup>55</sup> The following sentence from Bruni’s letter of March 1434 (SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, 149) leaves no doubt that Bruni did indeed promise to translate the book in Humphrey’s name: ‘Quod autem flagitas ut Politicorum libros eiusdem philosophi tuo nomine in latinum convertam, quamquam opus est magni laboris multarumque vigiliarum, tamen quia tanto principi flagitanti denegare quicquam nefas duco, suspiciam id onus eosque libros, quam primum absoluti fuerint, transmittere curabo.’ What Bruni himself understood this promise to mean, whether in his mind it really amounted to a promise to dedicate the work formally to Humphrey, is harder to say. The passage quoted in the next note suggests that Bruni regarded dedicating books in return for a monetary reward as beneath him and incompatible with the nature of liberal studies.

<sup>56</sup> *Ep.* VIII.6 M = VIII.13 L: Equidem cuncta que promiseram duci Cloucestriae cumulatissime persolvi. ... Scripsit ad me dudum Cloucestriae dux se libros

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Ethicorum per me traductos vidisse . . . , proinde hortatus est me ut pro communi utilitate libros quoque Politicorum eodem modo in latinum transferrem. Hoc illi tandem promisi, sed etiam adimplevi primumque volumen eius operis insigniter ornatum ad illum per manus Borromaeorum, qui Londiniis negotiantur, transmisi ac praesentari illi domino feci. Ubi est ergo defectus fidei meae? Ubi frustratio promissorum? Postulavit, inquam, ut pro communi utilitate illos transferrem: ut vero sibi, ut ita dixerim, titulum libri adscriberem, nec ipse **petivit**, nec ego unquam promisi. Nam si promississem, observassem; nichil enim michi facilius erat. Sed ego illa gloriola delectari tantum principem non putavi, praesertim cum ipse non peteret, et me aucupari gratiam per huiusmodi scriptiones nolebam videri. . . . At enim ipse nunquam studia mea vendiditavi neque mercaturam librorum unquam feci; uno volumine simul omnes, statim atque illos absolvi, Cloucestriae duci liberalissime transmisi’.

<sup>57</sup> See the Bruni’s letter to Humphrey of 1 November [1438] in SAMMUT, *Unfredo*, 148-151, where Bruni says he is glad to hear that Humphrey’s copy of the *Politics* has arrived and that he has been absolved of his promise to send the work.

<sup>58</sup> LUIISO, *Studi*, 138n.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 135, 138, 139, 141, 149, 181-83.

<sup>60</sup> Baron in BRUNI, *Schriften*, 177: ‘nach 1440’. Carmine DI PIERRO, the editor of the *RIS* edition (vol. XIX, parte III, Bologna 1926, 403-469, at 407), stated roundly that the composition of the *History* preceded that of the *Memoirs*. Later, Hans BARON’s dating became more nuanced: in *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny*, 2 vols., Princeton 1955, II, 510, 630, he placed the composition of Books X-XII of the *History* after the composition of the *Memoirs*; the latter he dated to the second half of

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1440 and the first half of 1441. IANZITI, *Storiographia e contemporaneità*, 6, proposed the following chronology: ‘1) stesura definitiva dei libri VII, VIII, IX delle *Historiae florentini populi*, prima del 6 febbraio 1439; 2) stesura del *Rerum suo tempore gestarum commentarius*, tra la seconda metà del 1440 e la prima metà del 1441; 3) stesura degli ultimi tre libri delle *Historiae*, 1442-1444.’

<sup>61</sup> Bruni thus excludes the Ciompi tumult and its aftermath (1378-82), of which he was not an eyewitness, and the events leading up to the Milanese War (1388-90), which was the subject of Books IX-XII.

<sup>62</sup> For Bruni’s conception of the genre of the *commentarius*, see *Memoirs*, caps. 107, 114, and the discussion in IANZITI, *Between Livy and Polybius*, 177-179; ID., *Storiografia e contemporaneità*, passim.

<sup>63</sup> A. GARZELLI, *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento: un primo censimento*, 2 vols., Firenze 1985, I, 483-84, 499 (note of A. C. de la Mare).

<sup>64</sup> The documents are published in HANKINS, *Notes on the Composition*.

<sup>65</sup> Bruni lived in the via Anguillara, and shared a wall with the Peruzzi complex. See ASF, Carte Stroziane, Ser. II, 9 (Ricordi di Giovanni Lucha da Panzano), f. 38v, dated 9 October 1427: ‘Richordo come insino a di iii d’ottobre 1427 io Lucha comperai una chasa posta nel popolo di santo Pulinari di Firenze posta nella via del anghuillaia che da primo via, lo sechondo 2 1/3 messer Lionardo di Francesco Bruni e 1/4 ser Nicholo di Giovanni di Simone Biffoli’ [etc.]. That the Greeks were housed in the ‘case de’ Peruzzi’ during the Council is known from ASF, Carte di Corredo 65, f. 22r: ‘Nota chome addi xv di detto mese, proposto baldassarre bonsi, entrò in firenze el serenissimo principe e signore constantino paleologho inperadore di gonstantinopoli con grande quantita di baroni e gram maestri et per lo papa se gli mando contro insino alla chiesa di san gallo, dou’era posato tutta la corte che ui si



trouo, sette cardinali tra gli altri gram prelati u'erano, et per la signoria se gli mando contro con tutti i degni ufici della citta insino alla porta a san gallo, e simile per molti altri cittadini de' principali fu alloggiato nelle case de' peruzi.' The latter document is published in full in HANKINS, *Notes on the Composition*.

<sup>66</sup> A. MOULAKIS, *Leonardo Bruni's Constitution of Florence*, «Rinascimento» 2<sup>nd</sup> ser, 26 (1986), 141-90.

<sup>67</sup> For the date, see Baron in BRUNI, *Schriften*, 144, who cites *Ep.* VIII.3 M = VIII.3 L, dated 25 December 1439, a letter in which Bruni sends Giacomo Foscari a copy of the work he has recently composed.

<sup>68</sup> Edited by A. CORTÉS HERRERO, *Studia Aretina: Leonardo Bruni Aretino, «Commentaria rerum graecarum»: texto crítico y traducción*, Universitat de Barcelona, Col·leció de Tesis Doctorals Microfotixades núm. 1929, Barcelona 1993. On the context, see HANKINS, *Humanism and Platonism*, I, 261-63.

<sup>69</sup> MARSILIO FICINO, *Lettere*, vol. 1, ed. S. Gentile, Florence 1990, XIX.

<sup>70</sup> For discussion of the two redactions, see HANKINS, *Notes on the Composition*.

<sup>71</sup> Plates in HANKINS, *Notes on the Composition*. For the witnesses *ABLP* see the 'Note on the Text' in my edition of the *History*.

<sup>72</sup> It was Manetti for example who edited Book IX of Bruni's letters; see L. GUALDO ROSA, *Censimento dei codici dell'Epistolario di Leonardo Bruni*, 2 vols., Roma 1993-2004, I, X-XI.

<sup>73</sup> R. FUBINI, *Note preliminari sugli Historiarum Florentini populi libri XII di Leonardo Bruni*, in ID., *Storiografia dell'umanesimo in Italia da Leonardo Bruni ad Annio da Viterbo*, Roma 2000, 93-130, esp. 113, n. 70. Fubini quotes from a document the full text of which is given in the Appendix.

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<sup>74</sup> VESPASIANO DA BISTICCI, *Le vite*, ed. A. Greco, 2 vols., Firenze 1970, I, 476. The speech of Bruni which Vespasiano quotes followed debates in the Signoria about allowing Eugenius IV to leave Florence; those debates occurred on 6-7 January 1443, according to F.-T. PERRENS, *Histoire de Florence depuis la domination des Médicis jusqu'à la chute de la République*, Paris 1888, I, 100.

<sup>75</sup> *Ep.* IX.9 M = IX.10 L, dated by Luiso to Florence 1442, ed. Mehus, II, 155-57: 'scias me post discessum tuum IV libros *De bello italico adversus Gothos* scripsisse.' For the date of Tortelli's departure from Florence see M. REGOLIOSI, *Nuove ricerche intorno a Giovanni Tortelli*, «Italia medioevale e umanistica» 12 (1969), 130-196 at 164.

<sup>76</sup> *Ep.* IX.13 M, ed. Mehus II, 165-66: 'Nam libri illi sex mensibus ante editi a me fuerunt, quam tu urbem illam coepisti, multique iam illos non legerant modo, verum etiam transcripserant'. Bruni's letters says that he had planned to send him the *Gothic War* while Alfonso was besieging Naples in order to show him how the ancient generals captured Naples, 'sed retardavit me respectus quidam, quod veritus sum ne aliquos offenderem, si viam et occultum aditum quodammodo monstrarem ad urbem capiendam.' Bruni is presumably referring here to Pope Eugenius and the pro-Angevin party in Florence. For the claim that Alfonso borrowed Belisarius' tactic of a surprise attack through the aquaduct see A. RYDER, *Alfonso the Magnanimous, King of Aragon, Naples and Sicily, 1396-1458*, Oxford 1990, 244-45.

<sup>77</sup> It is not preserved in the Archivio di Stato of Florence, whose registers of *missive* are missing the years 1437-1444, the later years of Bruni's chancellorship. But BNCF, MS Panciatichi 148, f. 187r, preserves the letter (*inc.* Hac die recepimus litteras Celsitudinis Vestrae), as does BLF, Plut. 90 sup. 34, f. 268r.

<sup>78</sup> RYDER, *Alfonso*, 248. It is not clear on what basis P. Viti in BRUNI, *Opere*, 843, states that Alfonso's conquest of the Kingdom of Naples occurred on 14 August 1442.

<sup>79</sup> ASF, Signori e collegi, Deliberazioni in forza di ordinaria autorità 59, ff. 7v, 14v.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 17v (26 xi 42). [*in marg.*] 'Quod horatores teneantur ire per totam diem sabati proxime futuri sub pena capitis'. [*Text.*] 'Prefati domini priores ut supra absque eorum collegiis seruatis etc. deliberauerunt quod sub pena capitis dictus Julianus Niccholai de Dauanzatis et Bernardum Filippi de Giugnis ciues florentini horatores eletti ad regem Aragone debeant per totam diem sabati proxime futuri cepisse iter ad dictum regem et exiuisse extra civitatem Florentie pro dicto itinere, et quod fiant bulletini rectoribus civitatis florentie si erit expediens si qua predicta fecerint'. A deliberation on the same evening (f. 18r) threatens the death penalty against anyone who reveals anything of the embarrassing episode.

<sup>81</sup> Text in BRUNI, *Opere*, 844-847; for the manuscripts see J. HANKINS, *Repertorium Brunianum: A Critical Guide to the Writings of Leonardo Bruni*, vol. 1: *Handlist of Manuscripts*, Roma 1997, ad indices; for the Piacenza MS see 155, no. 2115.

<sup>82</sup> Paolo Viti on at least two occasions has dated this work to June 1443, but without giving any evidence for that date. See *Su una 'diligenza' di Leonardo Bruni: Storia di un presunto neologismo quattrocentesco e di altri errori moderni*, «Interpres» 12 (1992), 270, and BRUNI, *Opere*, 851. In the absence of any argument for that date, however, one must prefer the evidence of the manuscripts, and at least two manuscripts, BNCF, Conv. soppr. C 1, 1746, f. 90v, and Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 4083, f. 33r, there is found the following rubric: 'Oratione fatta per lo eccellentissimo poeta Messer Lionardo Aretino nel palagio de' signori nella Sala del Consiglio, essendovi grandissimo numero di principali cittadini, in luogo di risposta agli imbasciadori del Re d'Araona a quali domandavano si levassi il sussidio

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davamo allo illustre conte Francesco Sforza, che allora era Capitano generale della legha <che> havevamo con i Venetiani, e fu di Novembre CCCCXLIII'. A date of November 1443 is also found in BAV, Vat. lat. 4824, ff. CIXr-CXIIv. For the manuscripts, see J. HANKINS, *Repertorium Brunianum*, ad indices; the original is possibly ASF, Signori, Dieci di Balìa, Otto di Practica, Legaz. e Commiss., Missive e Responsive 3, ff. 1-4 (undated).

<sup>83</sup> The *Risposta* is in BRUNI, *Opere*, 853-61, under the title *Orazione agli ambasciadori del re d'Aragona*.

<sup>84</sup> BRUNI, *History*, ed. Hankins, II, 346-352 (7.71-75); BRUNI, *Opere*, 856.

<sup>85</sup> REGOLIOSI, *Nuove ricerche*, 163-164.

<sup>86</sup> HANKINS, *Humanism and Platonism*, 63-98.