

NEGOTIATING MEANING IN HUMANIST POLITICAL DISCOURSE

**Authorial Agency and Organization of Knowledge in Francesco Sansovino
and Scipione Ammirato**

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, **Antonia-Oana Avram**, candidate for the PhD degree in History declare herewith that the present thesis titled is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the interplay between authorial agency, editorial intervention, and the material form of texts by examining the works of two sixteenth-century Italian humanists, Francesco Sansovino and Scipione Ammirato. It asks how meaning in political discourse was negotiated in a world where textual production was collective, shaped by printers, patrons, and institutions, and where rhetorical strategies and methods of organizing knowledge were central to the formation of political thought.

By analyzing their practices of compilation, paratextual intervention, rhetorical adaptation, and organization of knowledge, this study shows how humanists actively fashioned their authorial roles and constructed meaning in a competitive literary market shaped by privileges, censorship, and patronage. Drawing on printed works, manuscript notebooks, contracts, privileges, paratexts, and correspondence, it explores how both humanists navigated the Venetian and Florentine book markets and patronage networks.

The thesis consists of three parts. Part I examines how both Sansovino and Ammirato established and maintained authorial agency through privileges, dedications, and rhetorical strategies, showing how Sansovino emphasized his role as a compiler and editor while Ammirato presented himself as a writer, historian, and political thinker. Part II analyzes methods of organizing knowledge, highlighting Sansovino's use of paratextual frameworks and Ammirato's use and transformation of private commonplace books into public discourse. Part III tied these practices to the audiences, aims, and conditions under which political-historical works were produced and circulated.

The thesis demonstrates, first, that authorial agency in sixteenth-century Italy was not singular but a multitude of roles that humanists strategically performed in multiple textual,

paratextual and material contexts. Second, it shows that practices of compilation, organization, and rhetorical adaptation were constitutive of political thought. Third, it shows how Sansovino and Ammirato exemplify two complementary models of how meaning was negotiated in early modern political thought: one through editorial practices and comparative approach, the other through historical examples and a flexible generic portrayal of the good ruler.

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Sixteenth-century humanists rarely published a book without a dedication, usually addressed to their teachers, patrons, or friends. In the same spirit, through these lines I want to express my gratitude to those whose support, guidance, and generosity have made this thesis possible.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.S.V. – Archivio di Stato di Venezia (Venice State Archive)

BNCF – Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze (National Central Library of Florence)

Cl. – Classe

ERC – European Research Council

Magl. – Magliabecchi (archival fond at the National Central Library of Florence)

INTRODUCTION

My wish would be simply to present it to thee plain and unadorned, without any embellishment of preface or uncountable muster of customary sonnets, epigrams, and eulogies, such as are commonly put at the beginning of books. For I can tell thee, though composing it cost me some labour, I found none greater than the making of this Preface thou art now reading. [...] with a book as dry as a rush, devoid of invention, meagre in style, poor in thoughts, wholly wanting in learning and wisdom, without quotations in the margin or annotations at the end, after the fashion of other books I see, which, though all fables and profanity, are so full of maxims from Aristotle, and Plato, and the whole herd of philosophers, that they fill the readers with amazement and convince them that the authors are men of learning, erudition, and eloquence. And then, when they quote the Holy Scriptures! [...] Of all this there will be nothing in my book, for I have nothing to quote in the margin or to note at the end, and still less do I know what authors I follow in it [...] because I find myself, through my shallowness and want of learning, unequal to supplying them, and because I am by nature shy and careless about hunting for authors to say what I myself can say without them.¹

The above passage comes from a preface to a book printed in Madrid in 1605. With a sharp satirical tone, its author critiques the scholarly conventions of his time, mocking the exhortatory paratexts, pedantic annotations, and ostentatious displays of learning that ornated so many books. By contrast, he presents his work as the opposite of all this. The words belong to Miguel de Cervantes, and the book in question is his magnum opus, *Don Quixote*. Long regarded as one of the first works of modern literature because of its originality, *Don Quixote* was, as Cervantes himself suggested, an exception to the literary culture in which it appeared. That culture, of late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, as Roger Chartier has observed, was characterized by “frequent collaboration between authors, reuse of content that had been used

¹ Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*, trans. John Ormsby (2004), <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/996/pg996-images.html>. (Last accessed at 30.11.2025)

previously, familiar commonplaces, and traditional formulas, along with continual revision and continuation of works that remained open.”² In *The Author’s Hand and the Printer’s Mind*, Chartier argues that Cervantes’s work was not a radical break with its time, but rather a product of it, especially once we consider that “the materiality of the book is inseparable from that of the text.”³ Thus, just as the content of works was often reshaped, reused, or transformed by various actors in different ways, so too was the book as a physical object shaped through the publishing process. Chartier emphasizes that textual production in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had a strong collective dimension, both in the technical processes of printing and in the very methods of composition.⁴ Writing itself often drew on compilation, reuse, and continuation, while book production relied on collaboration among printers, correctors, censors, translators, writers, and patrons.⁵ At the same time, the creation of books also involved a “series of preliminary pieces that expressed the multiple relations implied by the power of the prince, the requirements of patronage, the laws of the market, and the relations between the authors and their readers.”⁶

These textual “porches,” or “thresholds” as Gerard Genette called them, were tools that conveyed the significance attributed to the works and guided the readers through the texts.⁷ In a context where so many actors and factors shaped the creation of a work, in which authors did not write their books even if some intervened in editions of their works, the question that arises is who ultimately gives meaning to it? Chartier draws on Donald McKenzie’s argument that the very multiplicity of interventions in the process of production, whether textual, material, and paratextual, shape the meaning of a work.⁸ But he also takes this idea further stressing that

² Roger Chartier, *The Author’s Hand and the Printer’s Mind* (Polity Press, 2014), viii.

³ Chartier, *The Author’s Hand and the Printer’s Mind*, ix.

⁴ Chartier, *The Author’s Hand and the Printer’s Mind*, viii.

⁵ Chartier, *The Author’s Hand and the Printer’s Mind*, ix.

⁶ Chartier, *The Author’s Hand and the Printer’s Mind*, ix.

⁷ Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁸ Donald F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 12–29.

readers also actively appropriate and transform meaning. All these factors, Chartier argued, contributed to a work's "mobile meaning," an aspect which both bothered and inspired authors.⁹ In this way, and echoing Foucault, Chartier decenters the role of the author and places him among other agents whose functions make the meaning of a work unstable and plural.

Building on the idea that meaning in early modern texts emerges through the mediated and collective nature of textual production, this thesis examines how the interplay between authorial agency, editorial intervention, and the material form of texts shaped how meaning emerged in sixteenth-century political discourse. Focusing on the lives and works of two Italian humanists, Venetian Francesco Sansovino (1521-1583) and Florentine Scipione Ammirato (1531-1601), this thesis highlights that the relationship between the form and content of works was a crucial site of intellectual negotiation. By foregrounding how humanists compiled, organized, and framed knowledge across genres and contexts, this study shows how these textual practices shaped what political texts could do and how they circulated. Rather than separating the "authorial function" from the conditions of production, whether material or the broader political, intellectual, and religious factors, I treat Sansovino and Ammirato as agents who actively shaped and negotiated the meaning of their works through the expression of humanist agency.

Conceptual Frame

Humanist agency is understood here as an umbrella concept that encompasses the dual process through which humanists actively performed and deliberately fashioned themselves to embody different authorial roles; the methods they used to organize knowledge and structure their

⁹ Chartier, *The Author's Hand and the Printer's Mind*, 19.

works; and the ways they adapted their rhetoric to suit different audiences. While partly overlapping, this notion differs from the traditional *studia humanitatis*. Whereas the *studia humanitatis* designates a pedagogical and intellectual program, the concept I propose here refers to the strategic ways in which humanists applied the skills they acquired through their education in practice.

Both Sansovino and Ammirato took on different roles, not just as writers but also as editors, compilers, translators, or printers, and they expressed it through relationships with other actors, such as publishers they negotiated with or patrons, and through their works, either through paratextual interventions or rhetorical strategies. In structuring his works, Sansovino heavily relied on paratextual elements, such as indexes, prefaces, and lists of authorities. These tools, along with his compiling method of selecting, reshaping, and arranging sources, reflected the needs of a literary market where information overflowed but accessibility and practicality were valued, while also allowing him to present himself as a skilled compiler, editor, translator, and publisher. By contrast, Ammirato's works, such as his orations or discourses, followed a rhetorical structure modeled on classical oratory and infused with Aristotelian ideas about history and poetry. It was in his manuscript notebooks, intended for private use, that he alphabetized, systematized, and summarized information from various sources which he then reused and reshaped in his argument-based texts. In both cases, the organization of knowledge was not merely a matter of systematization but was in itself a form of authorial agency.

Equally important, both authors adjusted their rhetorical strategies according to different audiences. Sansovino used paratextual tools not only to guide readers, but also to reframe the same materials differently across works, shifting between ethnographic detail, political analysis, or constitutional evidence according to audience expectations. Ammirato, by contrast, adapted his strategies through the distinction between private and public texts. In

manuscript notebooks with historical information about polities or noble families compiled for his patrons he did not offer encyclopedic or exhaustive descriptions, but rather paraphrased, compressed and simplified the information. In his published *discorsi* and *orazioni*, he further tailored rhetorical devices drawn from classical oratory to address both intellectual peers in the Florentine academies and political patrons, such as the Medici. In both cases, rhetorical adaptation underscored that organizing knowledge was never neutral but deeply connected to how humanists related to literary markets, scholarly traditions, and political demands. Whether through recontextualizing historical examples, as Ammirato did when addressing either local rulers or clergymen, or through culling information under censorship, as happened with the 1582 edition of Sansovino's *Historia Universale dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi*, the content itself was shaped, reframed, and adapted.

By understanding humanist agency in this way, encompassing self-fashioning, strategies for organizing knowledge, and creative adaptation of rhetoric to different audiences, I argue that Sansovino and Ammirato actively shaped how political spaces were constructed, compared, and theorized in their sixteenth-century works. Their works reflected the political, religious, and intellectual contexts in which they operated, as well as their efforts to engage with, negotiate, and sometimes influence those very contexts.

This study highlights how humanists were both consumers and producers of knowledge, actively engaging with existing texts, reusing, and recycling material, and shaping new works in ways that allowed meaning to circulate and transform across contexts. Thus, humanist agency operated on multiple levels simultaneously: it was enacted in public textual practices that projected authority and shaped readers' interpretations, but it was also exercised in private textual work, which enabled experimentation and contributed to the shifting, negotiable meanings of texts. In this sense, humanist agency emerges not as a synonym for

humanist learning, but a way of capturing the choices, negotiations, and interventions through which figures like Sansovino and Ammirato shaped both the form and the content of the works they produced. This framework allows us to see humanists not merely as the heirs to an educational tradition, but as active agents whose textual practices were constitutive of the political meanings their works conveyed.

This thesis brings together intellectual history, book history, and the history of authorship to illuminate the negotiation of meaning in sixteenth-century political discourse. It examines how humanists expressed their authorial roles, how they compiled, organized, and reframed knowledge, how they shaped the form and content of their works, and how they navigated social, political, and intellectual networks. By examining the ways humanists enacted and projected multiple authorial roles, this thesis shows that works were shaped collectively through interventions by multiple agents and individually through the deliberate performance of multiple authorial “personas” by a single humanist. By analyzing paratexts, structure and format of works, rhetorical strategies, and the interplay between private and public textual practices, this thesis displays the dynamic processes through which humanists engaged with, reused, and transformed knowledge. Taken together, these perspectives reveal that meaning in humanist discourse was actively negotiated at the intersection of individual initiative and broader, social, political, and intellectual forces

Literature Review

Authorship, Author-Function, and Social Authorship

Theories of authorship have long challenged the notion of the solitary genius by emphasizing the collective, mediated, and performative dimensions of textual production. In his essay,

“*What Is an Author?*” (1977), Michel Foucault reconceptualized the notion of the author into an authorial function, a discursive role that regulated the circulation, interpretation, and ownership of texts.¹⁰ Gérard Genette’s *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997) offers a systematic analysis of dedications, prefaces, marginal notes, epilogues, and other liminal elements, showing how such tools guide reception and shape meaning.¹¹ Donald McKenzie’s *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (1986) extended this line of thought by demonstrating that meaning is shaped by the physical forms and social processes of textual transmission.¹²

The reinterpretation of authorship in literary theory and cultural studies in the second half of the last century has thus reoriented how scholars speak about the author as a producer of meaning, frequently decentering individual agency in favor of textual, institutional, and readerly processes. While these debates provide important conceptual vocabulary, it is not my aim to engage directly with their philosophical or theoretical implications. What is most useful for this study is a historically grounded understanding of authorship as it operated in early modern textual culture. In the medieval period, an *auctor* both possessed authority and was an authority (*auctoritas*), and early modern humanists continued to draw upon this older framework. When Sansovino or Ammirato used an “authority,” they typically referred not to a modern, individual authorial self, but to a canonical source whose value derived from centuries of interpretative tradition. Yet, at the time they were writing, this inherited model of authority coexisted with the collaborative practices that shaped early modern textual culture.

Drawing from these theoretical interpretations of authorship, historians have further explored the ways in which literary production remained embedded in networks of scribal exchange, patronage, and collaborative practice. Margaret Ezell’s *Social Authorship and the*

¹⁰ Michel Foucault, “What Is An Author?,” in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (Pantheon Books, 1984).

¹¹ Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge University Press, 1997).

¹² Donald McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Advent of Print (1999) challenges the myth of a clean break between manuscript and print cultures, stressing instead that manuscript sociability and shared production persisted long after the spread of print.¹³ David Hall's *Ways of Writing* (2008) also explores how authorship was distributed across scribal, print, and oral practices, showing that texts were often the product of collective interventions rather than of singular genius.¹⁴ Taken together, these studies complicate any triumphalist narrative of the "print revolution," shifting attention to the overlapping scribal, editorial, and performative networks in which early modern works were produced.

My thesis draws on this body of literature but reframes it through the concept of humanist agency. While much of the scholarship on "social authorship" risks reducing the author to a collective entity, I argue for a framework that includes intentional self-fashioning and strategic performance. Both Sansovino and Ammirato are examples that show how sixteenth century humanists presented themselves differently depending on the context: sometimes more like compilers, other times as editors with a critical eye, and at times as political advisors. Their dedications, *avvertimenti*, and editorial choices are not passive signals but tools through which they expressed authority, negotiated with patrons, and embedded works in the broader political-religious landscape of Counter-Reformation Italy. In both cases, authorship emerges not as a fixed identity but as a multitude of roles that can be combined, adjusted, or re-staged depending on the work, the audience, and the context. By conceptualizing this repertoire as humanist agency, I argue that the negotiation of political meaning in sixteenth-century Italy depended not only on what humanists wrote but also on how they performed their authorial roles across the textual, paratextual, and material dimensions of the book.

¹³ Margaret J. Ezell, *Social Authorship and the Advent of Print* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

¹⁴ David Hall, *Ways of Writing: The Practice and Politics of Text-Making in Seventeenth-Century New England* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

In *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (2010), Ann Blair further clarified this dimension of authorial practice.¹⁵ Since manuscript drafts of early modern compilations rarely survive, as often they were just sent to the printers, the main way in which we can observe traces of authorial agency is through the printed editions themselves, especially in the paratexts. Blair demonstrates that compiling, which has long been undervalued and dismissed, has gained considerable significance in the postmodern understanding of authorship. Sansovino's profile fits this description very well. He was a translator, compiler, editor, and publisher and frequently emphasized each of these roles. His authorial agency is most visible in dedications, prefaces, *avvertimenti*, indexes, and privileges. As he often argued, innovation in a work could lie also in its format and method of composition, not just in content, thereby justifying his compilatory works as new contributions. Ammirato, by contrast, sought to be seen, above all, as a writer. In his negotiation with Giunti over the contract for *Istorie Fiorentine*, he makes this explicit, and the way in which he fashions himself as a historian and political thinker is reflected in the main body of his texts rather than in paratext. Although he relied on the help of assistants and used commonplace books, he did not want to be reduced to the status of compiler or editor. For him, real authorial agency in the person of the writer was found in the rhetorical construction of texts, while dedications and other paratextual elements were secondary to that. Taken together, Sansovino and Ammirato exemplify two complementary models that show how authorship in sixteenth-century Italy was not a singular position, but a repertoire of roles, such as compiler, editor, translator, or writer, that humanists strategically emphasized, downplayed, or combined depending on the context.

¹⁵ Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (Yale University Press, 2010).

Early Modern Political Thought

The study of Renaissance and early modern political thought has been profoundly shaped by the linguistic turn in the humanities, and more specifically by the contextualist approach of Quentin Skinner and J.G.A. Pocock. Skinner's *The Foundation of Modern Political Thought* (1978) introduced a method and established a canon, emphasizing that political texts should be seen as rooted in particular rhetorical, institutional, and intellectual contexts, rather than as timeless philosophical monologues.¹⁶ Thus, authors are treated as agents that react to pressures and opportunities within the discursive field around them, and their choices of textual genre, examples, and audience contribute to the overall meaning of the argument.

Many studies have traced the historical development of early modern political thought within this contextualized framework. Nicolai Rubinstein's essay "Italian Political Thought, 1450–1530" in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought* (1991) mapped the repertoires of civic humanism and republican discourse, emphasizing the role of education, historiography, and institutions in shaping political vocabularies.¹⁷ Building on this, Maurizio Viroli's *From Politics to Reason of State* (1992) explores the transformation of political language in early modernity and traces how the concept of "politics" evolved from a civic virtue based tradition rooted in republican ideals to a more instrumental and state-centered rationale known as the "reason of state."¹⁸ This shift reflected broader ideological and moral changes associated with the rise of states ruled by princes and the decline of communal republican ideals. Anthony Grafton's *What Was History?* (2007) complements these accounts by analyzing how humanist

¹⁶ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought. Vol. 1, The Renaissance* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹⁷ Rubinstein Nicolai, "Italian Political Thought, 1450–1530," in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450–1700*, ed. J. H. Burns (Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹⁸ Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics, 1250-1600* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

scholarly practices actively informed political reasoning.¹⁹ His study shows how humanists' methods of comparison, excerpting, and critically engaging with textual authorities reshaped history into a tool for political argument. Grafton's insight that scholarly techniques became instruments for negotiating authority, legitimacy, and utility is essential for my approach. While Rubinstein and Viroli chart how institutions and education transformed the political vocabulary of Italian intellectuals, my analysis does not focus only the conceptual content of these vocabularies but also on the textual contexts in which they acquired or changed meaning. To that extent, Grafton's study of humanist scholarly techniques provides a foundation for my analysis in which I show how excerpting, annotating, and compiling were mobilized within political argument as well as historical scholarship.

While transformations in political language marked the first half of the sixteenth century, the second half saw these shifts develop in pragmatic and prudential modes of counsel. Historians such as Rodolfo de Mattei, in *Il pensiero politico della Controriforma* (1982), examined how Catholic thinkers reframed prudence as an alternative to Machiavelli and Protestant theories of resistance, reconciling the demands of effective government with the moral constraints of Christianity.²⁰ Robert Birely's *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (1990) traced how Tacitist reason of state developed as a response to confessional fracture, dynastic conflict, and the problem of governing composite polities.²¹ Within this historiographical tradition, Ammirato's *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito* (1594) has been recognized as foundational in Counter-Reformation Italian political thought. His *Discorsi*, as well as his *orazioni*, offered examples of prudential action where necessity was always bound by morality and providence. De Mattei

¹⁹ Anthony Grafton, *What Was History?: The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

²⁰ Rodolfo De Mattei, *Il pensiero politico italiano nell'età della Controriforma*, 2 vols. (R. Ricciardi, 1982).

²¹ Robert Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince: Anti-Machiavellianism or Catholic Statecraft in Early Modern Europe* (University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

and Birely situate Ammirato within Catholic prudential responses to Machiavelli, but in my analysis, I take this further by analyzing how through his *orazioni* and the textual strategies he used, he negotiated the balance between moral constraint and political necessity. Whereas these studies have situated Ammirato's work in a broader intellectual environment, focusing almost exclusively on their content, I focus on Ammirato as an agent who shaped his discourse not only through ideas but also through rhetorical strategies and paratextual tools.

By contrast, Francesco Sansovino has received far less attention in this regard. Studies that address his political writings, such as *Concetti politici* (1578) highlight how he adopted and adapted concepts from Machiavelli and Guicciardini. His contribution to political thought has been most often noted in connection with his *Del governo de' regni et delle repubbliche* (1561), for which he has been labeled one of the pioneers of "comparative governance" as a method of analysis. In this work, Sansovino juxtaposed descriptions of the administrative organization, using *discorsi*, headings, and indexes to invite readers to weigh modes of governance and assess virtues and defects. Romain Descendre's *L'État du monde: Giovanni Botero entre raison d'État et géopolitique* (2009) shows how Botero, a contemporary of Ammirato, used systematic comparison of polities to integrate geography, demography, and relations among states in his broader framework of *ragion di stato*.²² Botero's framework for understanding governance and power relations through comparison echoes the one Sansovino put forward in his *Del governo*.

Seen from this angle, Sansovino and Ammirato represent two divergent political stances. Although in Sansovino's eyes the best of governments was the republic, the comparative approach he put forward in his work allowed readers to evaluate *virtù* and *utilità* across regimes, and he maintained his political stance while acknowledging monarchy. On the

²² Romain Descendre, *L'état Du Monde: Giovanni Botero Entre Raison d'État et Géopolitique* (Droz, 2009).

other hand, Ammirato's ideal government embodied in the form of princely rule resonated through all of his works.

Recent scholarship has begun to reevaluate Sansovino's role in political thought by emphasizing the intellectual weight of his editorial and compilatory practices. Davide Suin's *Editoria, storiografia e politica. Il contributo intellettuale di Francesco Sansovino* (2023), positions Sansovino as an antidogmatic *letterato* whose editorial and historiographical methods were inseparable from political reflection. Ammirato, however, has not yet been studied through this lens, and his reputation as a political thinker rests almost exclusively on his Tacitist discourse, with little attention to his textual and scholarly practices.²³ Drawing from Suin's framing of Sansovino as an intellectual whose political ideas are best understood by analyzing his editorial practices, I extend this insight and bring Ammirato into the same analytical frame, showing how both negotiated political meaning in their works through the performance of humanist agency.

History of the Book, Censorship, and Patronage

The study of early modern political texts cannot be separated from the study of their material forms. Since the debates inaugurated by Elizabeth Eisenstein and Adrian Johns, historians of the book have emphasized that print did not automatically confer authority or stability, and that credibility and meaning had to be negotiated in particular contexts of production and reception. As previously mentioned, Roger Chartier has highlighted that collaboration, reuse, and continuation were standard practices in early modern textual production, and that the "hand" of the author could not be separated from the "mind" of the printer. Building on these insights,

²³ Eric W. Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes* (University of Chicago Press, 1973).

my thesis examines how Sansovino and Ammirato treated the instability of print not as a liability but as an opportunity: privileges, dedications, and editorial interventions became means through which they fashioned and performed humanist agency.

Paul Grendler's *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press* (1977) remains an essential work for understanding institutional regimes of patronage and censorship.²⁴ His book shows how the Venetian Senate and the Roman Inquisition together tried to control the press through privileges and licenses, creating a setting where editors and authors constantly adjusted their works to avoid censorship. In another essay, "The Conditions of Enquiry: Printing and Censorship" (1975), Grendler presents different types of agreements that publishers and writers stoke before embarking in the printing process.²⁵ He distinguished between authors who financed their own editions, those who entered profit-sharing partnerships with printers, and those who sold their manuscripts outright. Each of these agreements affected how printers and writers negotiated authorial control over a work and how they could intervene in privileges, dedications, or revisions. Brian Richardson's studies *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy* (1994) and *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (1999) built on this framework and offered a broader Italian perspective.²⁶ His works highlight the roles of correctors, translators, and compilers in shaping texts, which often had the name of a single "author," while also emphasizing how vernacular printing expanded the reach of political and historical works. His studies show how the Giunti press dominated Florentine publishing and how authors navigated their limited agency within such workshops. His analysis of the printing contract that Filippo

²⁴ Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605* (Princeton University Press, 1977).

²⁵ Paul F. Grendler, "The Conditions of Enquiry: Printing and Censorship," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. C. B. Schmitt et al. (Cambridge University Press, 1988).

²⁶ Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600*, Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History (Cambridge University Press, 1994); Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Giunti drafted for Ammirato's *Istorie Fiorentine* (1600) offers a rare insight into Ammirato's relationship with printers, which otherwise remains largely undocumented.

Venice has been one of the most studied sites of early modern print.²⁷ Angela Nuovo's *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance* (2013), Rosa Salzberg's *Ephemeral City* (2014), and Erika Squassina's research on Venetian privileges show how civic regulation and patronage systems sustained a competitive environment in which editors, writers, and printers constantly adjusted their strategies.²⁸ Salzberg, in particular, has shown how cheap print and news circulation were integral to Venice's civic and political culture, while Squassina has emphasized that privileges were not just technical tools, but devices embedded in networks of power and protection. It was within this environment that Sansovino built his career, repeatedly navigating disputes over privileges and inquisitorial interventions. My thesis builds on this literature and explores how Sansovino did not simply comply with privilege regimes but exploited loopholes, repurposed expired protections, and used dedications and prefaces to fashion his authority.

At the same time, scholarship has also emphasized how the print market was shaped by censorship. Paul Grendler's work showed how the Venetian Senate and the Roman Inquisition tried to control the literary market, but more recent studies on the Italian context have complicated this picture. In her *Censorship and Interpretation: The conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (1984), Annabel Patterson has argued that censorship reshaped the meaning of works rather than simply repressing it.²⁹ Her interdisciplinary

²⁷ For broader treatments of censorship and editorial practice, see Mario Infelise, *I libri proibiti* (1999); Paolo Trovato, *Con ogni diligenza corretto* (1991); John Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy* (1991).

²⁸ Angela Nuovo, *The Book Trade in the Italian Renaissance*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Brill, 2015); Rosa Salzberg, *Ephemeral City: Cheap Print and Urban Culture in Renaissance Venice* (Manchester University Press, 2014); Erika Squassina, "The Protection of the Printing Industry in Venice (1560-1580)," *The Golden Compasses* 100, no. 2 (2022): 235–51.

²⁹ Annabel M. Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

approach which combines literary analysis with historical and political context provide a comprehensive understanding of how censorship influenced both the creation and interpretation of texts in the early modern times, emphasizing the resilience and ingenuity of writers. In the Italian context, the studies in Gigliola Fragnito's edited volume *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy* (2011) examine the Roman Catholic Church's efforts to control knowledge during the Counter-Reformation, highlighting the gap between the Church's aim to exert control over all knowledge and actual implementation.³⁰ The essays explore how the Church's policies affected various genres and discipline, noting how often works were printed in disguise to avoid censorship, thus showing how printers and writers adapted to this context.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that early modern Italian print culture was not a neutral medium but a field of negotiation, in which contracts, privileges, and censorship shaped both production and interpretation. My thesis builds on this perspective and shows how Sansovino and Ammirato actively engaged with these aspects. Privileges, licenses, and inquisitorial approvals appear in their books as paratextual markers of authority. Sansovino often used privileges as a means through which he could highlight his authority and position himself in the Venetian printing scene. The Inquisition's intervention in later editions of his *Historia universale del Imperio de Turchi* (1560) forced him to anonymize sources, remove or relocate controversial passages or accounts or include acceptable substitutes. All these structural changes reconfigured the meaning of the work but also heightened Sansovino's editorial intervention in the work. Likewise, Ammirato's *orazioni*, written around the beginning of the Long Turkish War, positioned his advice within approved networks of power,

³⁰ Gigliola Fragnito, *Church, Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

transforming censorship and patronage into resources of authorial agency. These texts also reflected his position among networks of power and patronage.

The Organization of Knowledge

In the last decades, several historians turned their attention to how early modern scholars managed, arranged, and reorganized knowledge. Ann Moss was among the first scholars to underline that printed commonplace books were not just tools for storing knowledge but frameworks that structured the way people thought, read, and wrote. In *Printed Commonplace Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (1996) she explored how humanists classified knowledge under topics, such as virtue, governance, natural philosophy, and how by doing so they imposed an intellectual order that shaped the readers' perception of how knowledge should be categorized.³¹ Often used in Renaissance schools, commonplace books were central to how humanists constructed arguments, speeches, and moral reasoning. By structuring thought into thematic "headings," she argues, these books influenced both scholarship and public discourse.

Ann Blair further developed the line of inquiry on the organization of information. In *Too Much to Know*, she analyzed commonplace books, alongside encyclopedias, florilegia, and reference books to highlight how early modern scholars handled "information overload."³² She has emphasized how reference works transformed private note-taking into public repositories of reusable knowledge, turning the humanist's personal stockpile of notes into consultation-friendly books equipped with indexes and lists of authorities. Storing, sorting, selecting, and

³¹ Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Clarendon Press, 1996).

³² Blair, *Too Much to Know*.

summarizing were, what she called, the “four S’s of text management.”³³ Her study shows how compilers positioned themselves as neutral conveyors of other people’s words, providing stockpiles of notes for readers to adapt into their own orations, letters, and treatises. Reference books, she argues, transformed private note-taking into public repositories of reusable information, equipped with indexes, lists of authorities, and layouts that made them easy to use.

My thesis draws from these insights but shifts the focus from the commonplace and reference books as general tools for organizing knowledge to the ways in which humanists like Sansovino and Ammirato appropriated, reshaped, and negotiated such frameworks. Rather than treating the structure of the works, paratextual elements and indexes as elements that simply facilitate the reading of said works, I show how these became tools through which humanists expressed authorial agency and fashioned their scholarly and civic identities. In Sansovino’s compilations, for instance, the reuse and restructuring of sources blurred the categories of composition, compilation, and translation, while in Ammirato’s notebooks, the difference between private and public handbooks reveals his flexibility in structuring knowledge for different audiences. In this sense, I move beyond Moss’s structural model by emphasizing the political dimensions of knowledge organization. The organization of knowledge was not only a mode of thought but also a site of negotiation among authors, printers, patrons, and readers, with direct implications for sixteenth-century political discourse and the humanist ideal of *vita civile*.

My approach also confirms Blair’s emphasis on the transformation of private notebooks into public repositories of knowledge, while it shifts the focus to how this boundary between private and public was itself negotiated. Ammirato’s manuscript notebooks, such as the

³³ Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 3.

Annotazioni Geografiche and *Notizie Istoriche*, reveal collecting practices suited to private use, whereas the handbooks he prepared for patrons, like *Armi e Notizie* or *Ritratti*, transformed the same material into selective, paraphrased, and rhetorically styled compilations tailored for public consumption. Yet rather than a one-way movement from private to public, these cases show a reciprocal relationship: private notebooks fed public works, but published works also informed how subsequent material was gathered and stored. By tracing this circulation, I show that the public/private divide was not a clear divide but a site of negotiation, where strategies of self-fashioning, patronage, and civic engagement were embedded in the very methods of organizing knowledge.

Angus Vine's *Miscellaneous Order: Manuscript Culture and the Early Modern Organization of Knowledge* (2019) has further argued that compilation and miscellany should not be seen as unoriginal, but as creative intellectual methods that generated works in which knowledge gained new meaning.³⁴ By defining miscellany as a collection of heterogeneous texts such as poems, recipes, accounts, or notes, Vine challenges the assumption that such compilations were chaotic or disordered. Instead, he shows that they possessed a "hidden order," noticeable in their layout, arrangement, and juxtaposition of content, as well as in the collecting and copying practices behind their composition. Paying close attention to materiality, how manuscripts looked, how they were physically organized, Vine demonstrates that miscellanies embodied intentional structures of knowledge, shaped by intellectual, social, and practical concerns. I draw from Vine's re-evaluation of miscellanies and apply it to the Italian humanist context.

Sansovino's compilations and Ammirato's notebooks similarly reveal that what may look like heterogeneous collections, such as histories, genealogies, orations, travel literature

³⁴ Angus Vine, *Miscellaneous Order Manuscript Culture and the Early Modern Organization of Knowledge* (Oxford University Press, 2019).

compilations, were in fact strategically structured. As Vine's analysis on Sir Hugh Plat or Francis Bacon reveals, this order was not always linear or systematic, but thematic, comparative, and rhetorical. In Sansovino's *Dell'istoria universale* and *Del governo*, indexes, lists of contents, and *avvertimenti* guided the reader's movement across disparate materials, transforming miscellany into an apparatus for political comparison. Arranging polities side by side, placing the description of the Papal court just in the middle between republic and principalities, or cross-referencing vice and virtue in the index turned format into argument, aligning textual order with prudential judgment. Similarly, Ammirato's manuscript notebooks embody the very practices of collecting, filing, and paraphrasing that Vine emphasizes, but with an added political dimension, since although they were used as private miscellanies, their content was adapted into public handbooks or orations intended to offer political counsel.

Fiona Lejosne's *Écrire le monde depuis Venise au XVI^e siècle: Giovanni Battista Ramusio et les Navigationi et viaggi* (2021) offers an Italian example of how the structure and form of a compilation are the representation of a political idea.³⁵ She demonstrates how Ramusio's ordering of voyages, prefatory *discorsi*, and textual juxtapositions was not neutral reportage but a mode of theorizing global space and authority. Her analysis underscores that form and layout (what material to include, in what order should they be placed, which voices to frame) shaped readers' perception of the world. Lejosne also argues that travel accounts are not passive reports, but that they were actively constructed to serve certain political, cultural ends. My thesis extends this insight beyond geography into politics: Sansovino's comparative method and Ammirato's transformations of private notes into public orations reveal that the organization of political and historical material functioned in the same way, shaping categories

³⁵ Fiona Lejosne, *Écrire Le Monde Depuis Venise Au XVI^e Siècle. Giovanni Battista Ramusio et Les Navigationi et Viaggi* (Droz, 2021).

of government, counsel, and prudence. Thus, Sansovino and Ammirato use compilation and organization as political tools.

Methodology and Sources

This thesis examines the works of Francesco Sansovino and Scipione Ammirato as case studies in sixteenth-century humanist practices of knowledge production, organization, and political thought. Instead of focusing solely on the content, I analyze the relationship between form and content in their works. In Part I, I explore authorial agency by examining dedications, contracts, and privileges through the lens of book history. I reconstruct the relationships among authors, printers, and patrons, and analyze how these two humanists expressed their authorial roles and fashioned their scholarly identities. In Part II, I analyze the editorial, rhetorical, and organizational methods through which the humanists restructured existing bodies of knowledge into new textual frameworks. For Sansovino, I examine the structure and paratexts of works like *Dell'istoria universale* and *Del governo* to see how these compilations were framed for use. For Ammirato, I analyze the structure and layout of his manuscript *zibaldoni*, demonstrating how his note-taking and classification strategies shaped the arguments later presented in his *discorsi* and *orazioni*. In Part III, integrating insights from intellectual history, I connect these humanist practices to broader political thought. I analyze how Sansovino's works reflect the editorial and intellectual program of Italian academies, especially the idea of civic utility. Regarding Ammirato, I explore how his *orazioni* reveal his portrayal of the 'good ruler,' reflecting his theory of reason of state, while also being tailored to the interests of his patrons.

To conduct this analysis, I use printed editions of their works, including political treatises, ethnographic and genealogical works, orations, and *discorsi*. I also incorporate

manuscript sources where available. For Sansovino, the archival material is limited. Thanks to a recent ERC project mapping the Venetian book market, I could access digitized versions of privileges granted by the Senate and trace the development of Sansovino's literary career and his roles as a translator, editor, compiler, and printer. Besides these, I mainly focus on his printed works. This approach aligns well with the analysis, since, as a compiler and editor, he aimed to present himself actively in those roles. I examine various editions of Sansovino's *Del governo*, his *Dell'istoria universale dell'origine et imperio de' Turchi*, and related compilations like *Cronologia del mondo* (1580) and *L'istoria della Casa Orsina* (1565). These works let me track how he reorganized ethnographic, historical, and political content and employed tools such as indexes and lists of authorities to guide readers. I also reviewed the letters he received from various nobles, which he included in *Del Secretario*.

For Ammirato, I concentrate on his *Orazioni a diversi principi* (1594-1598), the *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito* (1594), and the *Istorie Fiorentine* (1600), texts in which he combined rhetorical strategies with archival research to portray himself as a political thinker and court historiographer. In addition to these printed works, I examine manuscript materials. Ammirato's commonplace books now housed at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, are particularly significant. Notebooks like the *Notizie Istoriche* and *Annotazioni Geografiche* show how he excerpted, organized alphabetically, and categorized knowledge from various sources. I also analyze contracts with printers, dedicatory letters, and correspondence with patrons and church officials to better understand how he negotiated authority over his texts.

Together, these two case studies demonstrate the flexible roles that humanists could perform in late sixteenth-century Italy. By reading Sansovino and Ammirato side-by-side, this thesis does not suggest a direct one-to-one comparison but instead highlights how different contexts, such as the Venetian environment on one hand and the Medici court on the other,

shaped similar concerns about authority and the use of historical knowledge. Moving between manuscript and print, between paratext and main text, and between individual authorial strategies and broader cultural frameworks, the thesis emphasizes the fluid boundaries of authorship and the ways humanists established authority through compilation, reorganization, and rhetorical adaptation.

Structure

Part I examines how the two humanists fashioned their scholarly identities and claimed authorial agency. Here I look at paratextual and epitextual features such as prefaces, dedications, privileges, and correspondence, alongside their negotiations with printers, as indicators of how they sought recognition and authority. Part II examines the ways in which humanists organized and systematized knowledge. For Sansovino, I study the editorial tools of works such as *Dell'istoria universale* and *Del governo*, focusing on indexes, lists of authorities, and thematic structuring. For Ammirato, I analyze his *zibaldoni*, such as the *Notizie Istoriche* and *Annotazioni Geografiche*, together with his published *discorsi* and *orazioni*, to trace how note-taking and classification practices shaped his larger works. Part III explores how these strategies influenced their contributions to political thought. Sansovino's compilations and handbooks, from *Del governo* to *Concetti politici*, positioned him as a popularizer who refined categories of governance through comparison. Ammirato's *Discorsi sopra Tacito* and *Orazioni a diversi principi*, in turn, show how he adapted the language of Tacitist reason of state into flexible rhetorical portraits of the "good ruler." Taken together, these three parts underline that Sansovino and Ammirato approached authorship not only as writers of texts but as compilers, editors, organizers, and rhetoricians who fashioned authority through form as much as through content.

The case studies of Sansovino and Ammirato reveal how humanists enacted their humanist agency across genres and contexts: as compilers, interpreters, editors, and rhetoricians, they used paratexts, privileges, structures, and dedications as active instruments of shaping and enacting authority. Their works illustrate how Renaissance political discourse was produced in dialogue with the forms, practices, and constraints of the book, and how meaning was continuously reshaped by the very media that carried it.

PART I: EXPRESSION OF AUTHORIAL AGENCY

The sixteenth century was a period in which humanists had to navigate a rapidly changing world of textual production. The rise of print, the growth of vernacular literary cultures, and the expansion of formal patronage networks, censorship, and legal regulation all influenced how humanists asserted their expertise and defended their contributions; in other words, these factors shaped how intellectual authority could be claimed and recognized.

This section explores how two humanists working in different settings fashioned, and maintained authorial agency. This concept includes not just legal and formal claims of authorship but also the rhetorical, material, and interpersonal strategies they used to assert control over their works and develop their public intellectual identities. Sansovino's case foregrounds the connection between literary labor and market forces, showing how creativity and authority were negotiated in a context where novelty often meant rearranging, reframing, or recontextualizing existing materials. Ammirato's case highlights how he combined humanist erudition, archival research, and political counsel to maintain an authorial persona that was at once scholarly, civic, and dedicated to patrons. Though they operated in different environments, both humanists faced similar pressures: the need to appear innovative in a constantly growing literary world, the demands of their patrons, and the constraints and opportunities created by print, censorship, and legal regulations.

Taken together, these two cases illustrate the variety of strategies by which humanists asserted control over their texts and intellectual identities. Whether through legal privileges, paratexts such as prefaces and dedications, managing relationships with printers, or presenting their erudition and expertise, this section shows that authorial agency in sixteenth-century Italy was not a fixed trait but a dynamic negotiation among textual, social, and material practices.

Chapter 1 – Sansovino's Authorial Practices

Introduction

In the preface to his *Del governo de i regni et delle republiche cosi antiche come moderne* (1561), Francesco Sansovino offered the readers a glimpse into the process of composing his work. He explained why he wrote it, briefly described the sources he used, and justified his choices in structuring it as he did. In his effort to persuade readers that a work describing different forms of government would be a valuable collection of knowledge, Sansovino also presented himself. He was not only a provider of knowledge, but also someone who gathered information from various sources, translated texts when appropriate, and critically evaluated the material at hand. Unsure whether his self-portrayal as a thorough scholar was convincing enough, Sansovino concluded the preface with a defense:

These things which I have done for your benefit and advantage, you will be pleased to defend against the malicious ones who do not know whether to hate or to bite if you want me to always give you something new every day.³⁶

With this observation, Sansovino condensed the essence of Venetian literary economy in a sentence. He underlined the competitive and novelty-driven nature of the book market and showed awareness of the dual nature of his readership, who acted not only as consumers, but also as evaluators. Seen in this context, it becomes clearer why he considered it important to emphasize his different contributions to this work, especially since, when *Del governo* was published, Sansovino had already been an active figure in the Venetian literary scene for some time.

³⁶ “Queste cose adunque le quali io ho fatte a uosto utile et a pro, ui piacera difendere contra i maligni che non sanno se nonabbare et mordere, se uoi uolete ch’io ui dia alla giornata sempre qualche cosa di nuouo” Francesco Sansovino, *Del Gouerno de i Regni et Delle Republiche Così Antiche Come Moderne Libri XVIII* (Francesco Sansovino, 1561), 4r.

A lawyer by profession, Francesco Sansovino (1521-1583) was one of those sixteenth century polymaths whose intellectual interests ranged from literature and philosophy to medicine, history, and ethnography. Born in Rome, he soon moved with his father, the sculptor Jacopo Tatti (Sansovino), to Venice.³⁷ His studies took him to Padua in 1536, where he became involved with the Accademia degli Infiammati, to Florence in 1541, and Bologna in 1542, where he built a wide network of contacts. A few years later, at his father's insistencies, he went to Rome and held an appointment at the papal court of Julius III. In 1553 he returned to Venice, where, as he recounts in an autobiographical letter to Filippo Magnanini, "devoted himself entirely to the study of those letters which were according to his taste."³⁸ There, he became a member of the Accademia della Fama, also known as Accademia Veneziana, and in 1560 opened his own printing shop. By the end of his life, he was already recognized for several of his works, including *Del governo* (1561, 1567, 1578, 1583), a cosmographical-historical treatise, *Venetia, città nobilissima et singolare, descritta in XIII libri* (1581), a historical-geographical guide, and *Del Secretario* (1564, 1568, 1573, 1578, 1580), a letter-writing manual, all of which reflected Sansovino's versatility as a scholar, as well as his wide array of interests.³⁹ His literary legacy, which he himself outlined towards the end of his life in the letter

³⁷ For detailed biographical portraits see Emanuelle Antonio Cicogna, *Delle Inscrizioni Veneziane. Volume IV* (G. Picotti, 1834), 31–91; Paul F. Grendler, "Francesco Sansovino and Italian Popular History 1560-1600," *Studies in the Renaissance* 16 (1969): 139–80; Adriano Moz, *Francesco Sansovino, a Polygraph in Cinquecento Venice: His Life and Works* (University of North Carolina Press, 1991); Elena Bonora, *Ricerche su Francesco Sansovino: imprenditore, librario e letterato*, Memorie (Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti. Classe di scienze morali, lettere ed arti) (Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1994); Elena Valeri, "Francesco Sansovino," in *Christian-Muslim Relations. A Bibliographical History, Volume 6, Western Europe (1500-1600)*, ed. David Thomas and John Chesworth (Brill, 2014).

³⁸ "Et datomi del tutto allo studio di quelle lettere ch'erano secondo il mio gusto [...]" Francesco Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII* (Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1580), 220.

³⁹ *Del Gouerno de Regni et Delle Republiche Antiche et Moderne Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri XXI* (Heredi di Marchiò Sessa, 1567); *Del Gouerno et Amministratione Di Diuersi Regni et Republiche, Così Antiche Come Moderne Di m. Francesco Sansouino, Libri XXI* (Giovanni Antonio Bertano, 1578); *Del Gouerno et Amministratione Di Diuersi Regni, et Republiche, Così Antiche, Come Moderne, Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri XXII* (Altobello Salicato, 1583); *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri Quattro* (Francesco Rampazetto, 1564); *Del Secretario Ouero Formulario Di Lettere Missiue et Responiue Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri Quattro* (Francesco Sansovino, 1568); *Del Secretario Ouero Formulario Di Lettere Missiue et Responsiue Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri Quattro* (Francesco Sansovino, 1573); *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansovino* (Giacomo Sansovino, 1578); *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII; Venetia Citta Nobilissima et Singolare, Descritta in XIII Libri* (Giacomo Sansovino; Domenico Farri, 1581).

to Magnanini, ranged from literary dialogues and poems, writing manuals and genealogies to chronologies and cosmographies. Although the list is clearly a selection, it is a window into Sansovino's thoughts on his most notable works, especially since he organized them in three categories: compositions (*compositioni*), translations (*traduttioni*), and compilations (*raccolte*).⁴⁰

This autobiographical letter has served as a recurring reference point for modern scholars studying Sansovino's career and literary activity. Recently, the focus has shifted to tracing how Sansovino assumed the roles of editor, translator, and publisher. By examining his involvement in the contemporary literary scene alongside figures such as Pietro Bembo, Pietro Aretino, or Lodovico Dolce, historical-literary scholars have highlighted Sansovino's contribution to debates about codifying vernacular language and genre-specific writing practices.⁴¹ While insightful, these studies offer only a partial grasp on Sansovino's authorial roles as they focus mostly on his literary oeuvres sidestepping his political-historical works. In an effort to complete Sansovino's authorial profile, Davide Suin recently addressed this gap in a monograph that brings together the Venetian humanist's political thought and his editorial activity.⁴² Suin argues that Sansovino's "originality" lies in his editorial practices, and not in the content of his political-historical writing.⁴³ Although a well-informed study in intellectual history that reinforces Sansovino's intellectual contribution and situates it within the broader sixteenth-century political thought, his analysis remains mainly centered on works that have

⁴⁰ "ho finalmente scritto l'opere seguenti, le quali io divido in tre forti di cose, cioe in Compositioni, in Traduttioni, & in Raccolte." Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 220.

⁴¹ See Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600*, Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 140–52; Maria Cristina Panzera, "Francesco Sansovino e l'Umanesimo Veneziano: La Fonte Nascosta Dei Modelli Di Lettere Del Del Secretario," *Italianistica* XLI, no. 2 (2012): 21–50; Zoe Langer, "More Is More: Francesco Sansovino's Editorial Additions as a Form of Authorship on Dante's Commedia (1564)," *Kunsttexte*, no. 2 (2017): 1–24; Luca D'Onghia and Daniele Musto, eds., *Francesco Sansovino Scrittore Del Mondo. Atti Del Convegno Internazionale Di Studi (Pisa, 5-6-7 Dicembre 2018)* (Archilet, 2020).

⁴² Davide Suin, *Editoria, Storiografia e Politica. Il Contributo Intellettuale Di Francesco Sansovino (1521-1583)*, Politikòn Zôon 11 (Aracne, 2023).

⁴³ Suin, *Editoria, Storiografia e Politica*, 11–13.

also gained significant attention from literary scholars. Furthermore, by criticizing modern scholars who looked for “originality” in the content of humanist texts, Suin adopts and extends the notion of originality to the textual elements and editorial practices of the sixteenth century, thus reinforcing a teleological framework of analysis.

While the idea of novelty, as Sansovino’s preface shows, was not foreign to sixteenth-century humanists, it is still questionable whether its meaning was linked to the modern concept of “originality.” Looking at the preface from *Del Goveno* which details that the work was a result of compiling and translating different accounts, leaves open the question of what it meant for Sansovino, and by extension his contemporaries, to produce a “something new.” Was it related to the content or the topic of the work? Or to the style of writing and its format? What roles did a humanist need to perform in order to produce such a work? Additionally, how could a humanist ensure that his contribution in creating a work would be recognized and reinforced?

This chapter focuses on how sixteenth-century humanists established and maintained authorial agency in their works. In the first part of the chapter, I look at how Sansovino established authorial agency in his works. A brief look at Venetian printing privileges will help to trace his relationship with printers, underline how he cemented his profile as an editor, translator, and compiler, and eventually secured a role also as a publisher. Drawing from printing privileges after 1560, in the second part of the chapter I look at how Sansovino tried to maintain and emphasize authorial agency in his works. For that, I analyze the form-content relationship in Sansovino’s works, particularly in his political, historical, cosmographical, and genealogical works. Besides his most popular works, like *Del Governo* or *Del Secretario*, his editions of *Historia Universale dell’ origine et Imperio de’ Turchi*, *Cronologia del Mondo*, or *L’historia di Casa Orsina* are other works that offer insight into how Sansovino shaped his

authorial profile.⁴⁴ Like Sansovino's works on language and letter-writing, these works are examples that show the evolution of sixteenth-century humanists' ideas and textual practices, such as association of history and politics as essential tools for *vita civile*. They also reflect Sansovino's adaptability to a literary market tailored to the politico-religious context of Counter-Reformation Europe. While most of these works were published almost exclusively after 1560, when Sansovino was already known as a translator, editor, and compiler, looking at his authorial evolution before this date is essential in understanding his later editorial and publishing choices. In pursuing this analytical angle, I focus less on the contents of his works, but rather on the paratextual elements, such as dedications, prefaces, annotations, and marginalia, as well as on some correspondence. Looking at these components will not only reveal what are Sansovino authorial contributions, but also what it meant for him to be a good editor, or translator, and what were the values that an editor or a translator should have. In other words, these paratextual elements will show us what was his work ethic. This chapter ultimately underlines that for a sixteenth-century man of letters like Sansovino, authorial agency over a work of scholarship was not limited only to the writer, but could be attained also by printers, editors, and translators, sometimes by acting in all these roles combined.

⁴⁴ Francesco Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima* (Francesco Sansouino et compagni, 1560); *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda* (Francesco Sansouino et compagni, 1560); *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Raccolta Da m. Francesco Sansouino. Libri Tre.* (Francesco Rampazetto, 1564); *Historia Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi* (Stefano Zazzera, 1568); *Historia Vniuersale Dell'origine, et Imperio de' Turchi* (Michele Bonelli, 1573); *Historia Vniuersale Dell'origine, et Imperio de' Turchi. Raccolta, et in Diuersi Luoghi Di Nuouo Ampliata, Da m. Francesco Sansouino; et Riformata in Molte Sue Parti per Ordine Della Santa Inquisitione.* (Altobello Salicato, 1582); *Cronologia Del Mondo Di m. Francesco Sansouino Divisa in Tre Libri.* (Giacomo Sansovino, 1579); *Cronologia Del Mondo Di m. Francesco Sansouino Diuisa in Tre Libri* (Giacomo Sansovino, 1580); *Cronologia Del Mondo, Di m. Francesco Sansouino, Diuisa in Due Libri* (Altobello Salicato, 1582); *La Historia Delle Cose Fatte in Diuersi Tempi Da' Signori Di Casa Orsina* (Nicolò Bevilacqua, 1564); *L'istoria Di Casa Orsina Di Francesco Sansouino Nella Quale Oltre All'origine Sua* (Bernardino, & Filippo Stagnini, 1565).

Establishing Authorial Agency in a World of Printing Privileges

Since 1517, the Venetian Senate had been trying to control the book market through a series of laws which specified that whoever wanted to have their works legally recognized should own a printing license. The main criteria for obtaining it was for the work to be new or unpublished.⁴⁵ The license was granted in the form of a privilege, and it generally stipulated that third parties are forbidden to print, sell, offer for sale, or export the work (or hire others to do so) without the clear permission of the privilege holder.⁴⁶ Holding a printing privilege soon became crucial because it offered the owner exclusive rights over a work. The fact that requests for obtaining a license could come from anyone who owned an unpublished work, was one of the main features that shaped the dynamics of the Venetian book market where printers, writers, and editors strove for producing something new as often as they could.⁴⁷

A recent ERC project on the economic and juridical framework of the European book market showed that the Venetian Senate granted privileges to both authors and publishers.⁴⁸ In a quantitative analysis of sixteenth century printing licenses, Erika Squassina concludes that, while the main goal was to have an exclusive claim over the economic value of a work, privileges had a different significance for an author than for a printer. For the former, it also

⁴⁵ Over the next 20 years the Senate issued several other laws which defined in more details the criteria that a book needed to meet. A law from 1526 stipulated that all works intended for print or selling had to have a printing license. Such a license could only be granted if the work passed the examination of two reviewers who evaluated the morality and textual correctness of the content. In 1533, the Senate intervened again, stating that a work which had been granted a printing license must be published within a year, otherwise the privilege would be revoked. And with a law in 1537, the Venetian authorities brought all these criteria together reaffirming that for obtaining and maintaining printing privileges, a work required novelty and to not have been previously published. In spite of the effort of the authorities, many publishers and bookseller found ways to circumvent these laws as often they re-published works only with small corrections, or they continued their activity without requesting permission from the Senate. The text of the laws can be found in Horatio F. Brown, *The Venetian Printing Press: An Historical Study Based upon Documents for the Most Part Hitherto Unpublished* (John C. Nimmo, 14, King William Street, Strand, 1891), 207–10.

⁴⁶ Squassina, “The Protection of the Printing Industry in Venice (1560-1580),” 240.

⁴⁷ Erika Squassina, ed., *Privilegi Librari Ed Edizioni Privilegiate Nella Repubblica Di Venezia (1527-1565)* (Milano University Press, 2022), 13.

⁴⁸ Details about the project and the publications resulted from it can be found at <https://emobooktrade.unimi.it/>, and the database of privileges at <https://emobooktrade.unimi.it/db/public/frontend/index>.

represented a means of protection and control as they could choose a printing house they trusted and they could supervise the publishing process. For the latter, the privilege also worked as a “special insurance policy against potential losses, in the sense that it gave them the time to distribute the copies without anyone being able to compete with them.”⁴⁹ While this two-category framework for analysis is effective in quantifying privileges, it overlooks the roles of various actors involved in the publishing process. Comparing the privilege database with the catalog of sixteenth-century publications reveals that authors and publishers who received such printing licenses were also translators or editors, sometimes performing all these functions together.⁵⁰ By looking at these actors and at their contributions can help us better understand the many ways ownership and authorial agency could be claimed in sixteenth-century Venice.

It was in this setting of competition for authority that Sansovino launched his literary activity. In the early 1540s he plunged into the flourishing Venetian printing scene by taking a job as a corrector at the Giolito printing house.⁵¹ Gabriele Giolito de' Ferrari (c. 1508-1578) was one of the most famous names on the Venetian book market. After opening in 1541, his business quickly expanded through the Italian peninsula, with stores in Ferrara, Bologna, and Naples.⁵² He specialized in publishing a broad range of vernacular literature, from dialogues, plays, and poetry to histories, treatises, and sermons. By the end of his life, over 900 works came from under his press.⁵³ He was in constant collaboration with other contemporary printers such as Comin da Trino, Bernardo Stagnino, and Vincenzo Valgrisi, and with experts in vernacular literature, such as Lodovico Domenici, Orazio Toscanella, and Alfonso de Ulloa.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Squassina, *Privilegi Librari Ed Edizioni Privilegiate Nella Repubblica Di Venezia (1527-1565)*, 14.

⁵⁰ The census of sixteen-century Italian printed works can be consulted at <https://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/en/web/edit-16> (Last accessed at 30.11.2025)

⁵¹ Cicogna, *Delle Inscrizioni Veneziane. Volume IV*, 34.

⁵² Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605*, 16.

⁵³ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605*, 6.

⁵⁴ On Giolito's activity as a printer see Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605*; Angela Nuovo and Chris Coppens, *I Giolito e la stampa: nell'Italia del XVI secolo* (Librairie Droz, 2005); for details on Sansovino's collaboration with Giolito see Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy*, 140–53;

By working for Giolito, Sansovino also had, and took, the chance to widen his connections on the literary scene.

As early as 1543 Sansovino started his collaboration with Comin da Trino and Vincenzo Valgrisi. Before long, his name appeared on several covers. Although under the pseudonym Jacopo Tatti, he was listed as translator on da Trino's edition of Guillaume Postel's book of Athenian magistrates, and on Valgrisi's edition of Michele Riccio's chronicle of kings, and two years later, with his own name, on Jacques Fontaine's *Della Guerra di Rhodi libri III*.⁵⁵ While the privileges for these works were requested and granted to Valgrisi, with no mention of Sansovino as translator, he was most probably working under a contract.⁵⁶ Though there is little documentary evidence that could attest to the contractual obligations between the printers and writers, as many of them were often simple verbal agreements, there are a few documents which remain to this day that offer clues as to what that entailed.⁵⁷ One option was that the writer and the publisher could agree to share in half the printing expenses and the print run.⁵⁸ Given Sansovino's young age and short experience on the book market, it is unlikely that he

D'Onghia and Musto, *Francesco Sansovino Scrittore Del Mondo. Atti Del Convegno Internazionale Di Studi (Pisa, 5-6-7 Dicembre 2018)*.

⁵⁵ Guillaume Postel, *Libro de Magistrati de Gli Atheniesi. Composto Da Guglielmo Postello Barentonio Francese. Nuouamente Dal Latino Tradotto Nella Nostra Lingua Uolgare Da m. Giouanni Tatti* (Comin de Trino, 1543); Michele Riccio, *Di Michele Riccio Napolitano, De Re Di Francia Libri III. De Re d'Ispagna, Libri III. De Re Di Gierusalem, Lib. I. De Re Di Napoli, et Di Sicilia, Lib. IIII. De Re Di Vngaria, Libri II. Dal Latino, Tradotti in Questa Nostra Lingua Uolgare Da m. Giouanni Tatti Fiorentino* (Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1543); Jacques Fontaine, *Della Guerra Di Rhodi Libri III. Auttore Iacopo Fontano Giurisc. Aggiunta La Discriptione Dell'isola Di Malta Concessa a Cauallieri, Dopo Che Rhodi Fu Preso. Il Modo Del Gouernarsi Con La Bussola in Mare per i Uenti, Di Gio. Quintino. Inoltre Un Commentario Dell'isola Di Rhodi, e Dell'ordine Di Cauallieri de Quella. Tradott'in Uolgare per m. F. Sansouino* (Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1545).

⁵⁶ "Che sia concesso alli heriedi del quondam Luca Antonio Gionta che altri che loro senza permissione sua non possano per anni xv prossimi stampar, né far stampar, né altrove stampate vender così in questa città come in tutte le terre del dominio nostro li libri de [...] Item a Vincenzo libraro dalla insegna di Erasmo per [...] li opuscoli di Michiel Riccio, libro delli magistrati di atheniesi tradoti in volgare tutti," Senato Terra 32, c. 215r; "Supplica humilmente il fidelissimo servitor di vostra serenità Vincenzo Vaugris che havendo lui fatto tradure alcune opere di latino in volgare, le quale opere sono stampate latine in più luoghi, et le sotto scritte cioè le imagine della morte et la medicina dell'anima, Jacobo Fontana de bello Rhodi [...] vostra serenità si degni concederli che per spatio de anni x niuno altro che lui possi imprimere o far imprimere sì in questa città come in tutte le altre terre et luoghi del dominio suo le ditte opere, né in quella altrove impresse vendere," Senato Terra 34, c. 41r in Squassina, *Privilegi Librari Ed Edizioni Privilegiate Nella Repubblica Di Venezia (1527-1565)*, 150, 171.

⁵⁷ Grendler, "The Conditions of Enquiry: Printing and Censorship," 31.

⁵⁸ Grendler, "The Conditions of Enquiry: Printing and Censorship," 31–32.

had the financial resources to launch himself in a printing enterprise with the risk of the work being commercially unsuccessful. Another option was that the printer knew the work would be successful so he would buy the manuscript from the writer.⁵⁹ This could have been an option, as the three works that Sansovino translated were quite popular in their original languages. Yet, as in the previous case, his limited experience as a translator in the vernacular might have made the printers cautious. This was likely one of the reasons why Sansovino chose to translate the works under a pseudonym. By adopting his father's birth name, Sansovino capitalized on the respect and recognition his father had among Venetian circles. A third option could be that the publisher took the risks of publication upon himself and financed the printing of the work from his own resources. While the manuscript would still belong to the writer, the printer was the one who would own all the printed copies of the work. In an agreement like this, the author would receive just several copies of the book.⁶⁰ Since the printer was the supplicant for the privilege which mentioned the translations that Sansovino made, this was, most likely, the type of agreement that they had. Valgrisi, in turn, probably also had agreements of his own with da Trino based on which they would share a part of the costs or profits from the print. Interesting to notice are the dedications attached to Valgrisi's work were written by Sansovino. As a popular form of sponsorship, Sansovino was certainly aware of the financial, but also social, benefits of dedicatory letters, and it is possible that he negotiated with the printers the right to author them.

Besides da Trino and Valgrisi, in the years that followed, Sansovino expanded his collaboration with other printers, like Venturino Ruffinelli, Giovanni Griffio, Bartolomeo Cesano, and Francesco Rampazetto. The documentary evidence of privileges that still exist in the Senate archives reveal that the literary activity in which Sansovino was involved swiftly

⁵⁹ Grendler, "The Conditions of Enquiry: Printing and Censorship," 32.

⁶⁰ Grendler, "The Conditions of Enquiry: Printing and Censorship," 32.

upgraded his roles. Giolito learned of his literary skills and added a “dichiaratione dei luoghi difficili di messer Francesco Sansovino” at the end of the 1545 edition of *Boccaccio’s Ameto, comedia delle nimphe fiorentine*.⁶¹ In 1548, in a petition for a privilege, Giolito requested, among other titles, the permission to publish “the chronicles of England translated by Sansovino.”⁶² While this project never materialized, as it never got printed, it is the first mention that legally credited Sansovino for his contribution as a translator. Since the texts of privileges usually closely followed the text of the request, this small detail becomes significant as it indicates that Giolito acknowledged Sansovino’s role as a translator worthy of mention.⁶³ Less than a year later, Sansovino obtained the first privilege in his name for “the work composed by him *L’edificio del corpo humano*.”⁶⁴ Alongside the lines of Giolito’s case, by phrasing the request in this manner, Sansovino fashioned himself as a “composer.” As he was the owner of the printing license, he had the opportunity to choose a printer to work with. Though there is no documentary evidence, it is possible that, Sansovino and the printer, Comin da Trino, agreed to share the printing expenses, but considering that there were no subsequent editions of this work, it was probably not very financially rewarding.

In the decade that followed, familiar with the legal and financial intricacies of the book market and aware of the perks of having exclusive ownership of a work, Sansovino enhanced

⁶¹ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Ameto, Comedia Delle Nimphe Fiorentine Di Messer Giovanni Boccaccio Da Certaldo. Con La Dichiaratione Dei Luoghi Difficili Di Messer Francesco Sansovino* (Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, 1545).

⁶² “Che per autorità di questo consiglio sia concesso al fidel nostro Gabriele Giolito libraro che altri che lui senza sua permissione per anni x prossimi non possa stampare, né far stampare, né vender in questa nostra città, né in alcun luogo del dominio nostro, né altrove stampate in quelli vendere [...] le croniche d’Inghilterra tradotte per il Sansovino.” Senato Terra 36, c. 67r-v in Squassina, *Privilegi Librari Ed Edizioni Privilegiate Nella Repubblica Di Venezia (1527-1565)*, 200–201.

⁶³ Squassina, “The Protection of the Printing Industry in Venice (1560-1580),” 240; The formulations from previous privileges granted to Valgrisi mention only the author of the original work, and they suggest that the printer was the one who made the translations: “tradotti in vulgari tutti”/“V. V. che havendo lui fatto tradure alcune opere.”

⁶⁴ “Che per autorità di questo consiglio sia concesso al fidel nostro Baldissera Constantino libraro che per anni 10 prossimi alcuno senza permissione sua non possa stampar, né far stampar, né vendere in questa nostra città [...] Et a messer Francesco Sansovino per l’opera da lui composta del edificio del capo humano, in lingua volgare.” Senato Terra 36, c. 197r-v in Squassina, *Privilegi Librari Ed Edizioni Privilegiate Nella Repubblica Di Venezia (1527-1565)*, 210.

his authorial persona as a “composer” and translator. In 1551 he requested licenses for his translations of Justinian’s *L’Institutioni imperiali*, which he entrusted to Bartolomeo Cesano for print, and for Plutarch’s *Vite de gli huomini illustri*, which remained unpublished at the time.⁶⁵ Again, in 1554 he was granted a 10-year privilege for having “composed a dialogue titled *L’avvocato* divided in five books”⁶⁶ The two editions from two different publishers that appeared in the next decade highlight not only the book’s popularity, but also Sansovino’s full ownership over the text.⁶⁷ With the liberty to choose whom to entrust with its print, he could control the place of his work on the book market. *L’avvocato* saw two more editions during the sixteenth century, one in 1566 and one in 1586, and while there is no documentary evidence that Sansovino requested or was granted a renewal of the privilege, it is possible that the printers took advantage of the expired printing license, a strategy that Sansovino himself occasionally used. A good example in that sense is his *L’arte oratoria secondo i modi della lingua volgare*, first published in 1546.⁶⁸ The lack of documents in the Senate archives makes it difficult to establish in whose name the license was issued but considering Sansovino’s financial standing and his new reputation in the mid-1540s, the privilege was most probably requested by the printer, with the author still owning the manuscript. Listed as the first entry under the *compositioni* section in the autobiographical letter to Magnanini, Sansovino clearly

⁶⁵ “Che sia concesso per autorità di questo consiglio a Nadal di Conti veneto che alcun altro che lui senza sua permissione per anni x prossimi non possa stampar, né far stampar in questa nostra città, né in alcun luogo del dominio nostro, né altrove stampate in quelli vender [...] Et il medesimo sia concesso a Francesco Sansovino per l’institutione de Giustinian imperator, et per le vite de Plutarcho dallui tradutte nel volgare.” Senato Terra 38, c. 47r in Squassina, *Privilegi Librari Ed Edizioni Privilegiate Nella Repubblica Di Venezia (1527-1565)*, 229.

⁶⁶ “Havendo il vostro fidelissimo servidore Francesco Sansovino composto un dialogo intitolato *L’avvocato* diviso in cinque libri in materia delle cose del palazzo per cavarne quello utile che si ricerca alla sua mesta fatica, sì come è giusto et conveniente, supplica humilmente la serenità vostra che si degni concederli privilegio che niuno altro possa venderlo, né farlo vender in questa magnifica città, né in nessuno altro luogo del dominio di vostra serenità per anni dieci prossimi futuri,” Senato Terra 39, c. 210v-211r in Squassina, *Privilegi Librari Ed Edizioni Privilegiate Nella Repubblica Di Venezia (1527-1565)*, 256.

⁶⁷ Francesco Sansovino, *L’avvocato Dialogo Diviso in Cinque Libri Ne Quali Breuemente Si Contiene in Materia Delle Cose Del Palazzo Veneto, Quanto Si Legge Nella Seguevole Facciata* (Alessandro Viani, 1554); *L’avvocato Dialogo, Nel Quale Si Discorre Tutta l’auttorità Che Hanno i Magistrati Di Venetia. Con La Pratica Delle Cose Giudiciali Del Palazzo* (Francesco Rampazetto, 1559).

⁶⁸ Francesco Sansovino, *L’arte Oratoria Secondo i Modi Della Lingua Volgare, Di Francesco Sansovino Divisa in Tre Libri* (Giovanni Griffio et fratelli, 1546).

wanted to have his authorial input recognized for this work. He republished *L'arte oratoria* twice, with considerable additions, at his own printing house, fifteen years after the first edition, after the initial privilege probably expired.⁶⁹ In the quest to claim authority over his works, Sansovino did not always play by the book; as the two editions of *L'arte oratoria* show, they were published without a privilege. This was not a unique case since, as early as 1559, the Ufficio degli Esecutori fined Sansovino, “editor of a book of names and families of Venetian nobles,” for not requesting a printing license.⁷⁰ What is worthy of notice in the Senate’s document is that Sansovino was now legally acknowledged also as an editor, alongside a translator, and “composer,” just by the time he was preparing to launch his printing workshop.

Sansovino’s exploitation of printing licenses became a sort of a habit in the early days of his publishing activity. Debuting in 1560, the printing enterprise was initially a partnership with Nicola Tinto di Francesco, whom Sansovino probably knew from his study days in Padua.⁷¹ In the first couple of years, the workshop produced around 50 works, ranging from poems, manuals for letter writing, ethnographic compilations, translations of historical-political works, as well as works on agriculture and medicine; the last ones reflecting rather the interests of Sansovino’s partner who was also the main financier.⁷² Some of these works were first editions, but many were reprints of popular Giolito titles with an expired privilege.⁷³

Trying a similar strategy got Sansovino into a dispute before even officially putting the first work from this printing shop out for circulation. At the end of 1559, the bookseller and

⁶⁹ Francesco Sansovino, *Dell'arte Oratoria Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri Tre. Nella Quale Si Contiene Il Modo Che Si Dee Osseruare Nello Scriuere Ornatamente & Con Eloquenza, Così Nelle Prose Come Ne Versi Volgari. Di Nuouo per Il Medesimo Ampliata Riueduta & Diligentemente Corretta* (Giacomo Sansovino, 1569; 1575).

⁷⁰ A.S.V., *Santo Uffizio* b. 63 in Giuliano Pesenti, “Libri Censurati a Venezia Nei Secoli XVI-XVII,” *La Bibliofilia* 58, no. 1 (1956): 27–28; The work in question is *Dialogo del gentilhuomo vinitiano* for which Sansovino eventually obtained a privilege and had it published in 1566.

⁷¹ Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 63.

⁷² Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 64.

⁷³ Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 71–73.

printer Paolo Gherardo blocked the distribution of Sansovino's folio copies of Francesco Alunno's *La fabrica del mondo*. The reason Gherardo gave was that he had already published three works from Alunno, including this one, in 1556.⁷⁴ Sansovino felt unjustly censored and accused Gherardo of "making himself master against the form of the laws and ruler over the freedom that everyone has and ought to have to print the aforementioned book."⁷⁵ Since the holder of the privilege for this work was the author, who had died in the meantime, it is difficult to assess who was right and wrong in the dispute, especially because further documents are missing. Eventually, the matter was settled in Gherardo's favor, who, at least legally, inherited the authorial rights over the work. This episode shows that Sansovino was eager, when appropriate, to expand the printer's rights at the expense of the author's.

Sansovino's collaboration with Tinto on the printing workshop ceased after a dispute, which was legally settled in 1563.⁷⁶ Most probably due to financial reasons, Sansovino suspended the activity of the workshop at the time, only to resume it five years later.⁷⁷ Though at a slower, and at times discontinuous, publishing pace, "stamperia della luna" continued to operate until Sansovino's death in 1583, also with the help of his son, Giacomo, who often appears listed as printer. While Giacomo might have dealt with the technicalities of the print runs, it was Francesco who wrote the requests for privileges addressed to the Senate and who probably dealt with the distribution of the works.⁷⁸ Owning a printing shop was advantageous because it allowed Sansovino to skip the mediation between writer, editor, and printer. Still, during this time, he continued to collaborate with other printers, particularly with Francesco Rampazetto, and in later years with Altobello Salicato. It was the latter that Giacomo entrusted

⁷⁴ Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 65.

⁷⁵ "Voi [...] havete piacere di tenerne soffocati sì che non possiamo valerci del nostro, facendovi patron contra la forma delle leggi et dominator della libertà che ha ognuno et dee haver di stampare il predetto libro [...] contentandovi solamente con questi mezzi ingiusti di tenerne impediti" A.S.V., *Notarile Atti*, notaio Giovanni Figolin, b. 5593, c. 101, (1 marzo 1560) in Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 65.

⁷⁶ Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 63.

⁷⁷ Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 71.

⁷⁸ Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 70.

to continue publishing his father's works after his death. Salicato was granted the right to print for seven years "all the books that have already been translated, composed, and printed of the aforementioned Francesco Sansovino, both with and without privilege."⁷⁹ The agreement also stipulated that Salicato was not allowed to add or remove anything from the books without Giacomo's explicit approval.⁸⁰ This detail underlines that while the printing rights were transferred to Salicato, Giacomo still held ownership over his father's works. Such a document is a good example of the intricate nature of the book market and the complex ramifications of legal ownership and authority over a work. In this context, it is worth noting that Giacomo granting Salicato permission to print the works both "with or without privilege," raises questions about Sansovino's legal authority and ownership over the books that were not granted a printing license. Looking at which works Salicato published after 1583 shows that, possibly in fear of legal repercussions, he chose only those for which Sansovino had previously secured a license.

Sansovino's fraught relationship with printing privileges highlights the interplay between intellectual ambition, legal regulation, and the competitive nature of the sixteenth-century book market. His occasional disregard of legal requirements, reappropriation of expired licenses, and involvement in public disputes over publication rights reveal several characteristics of the printing privilege system. While they were designed to regulate the market and protect intellectual labor, they were inconsistently enforced and unevenly accessible, allowing room for negotiating and exploiting ownership over a work. Sansovino

⁷⁹ "dà et concede in licentia ad esso Salicato di poter per lo spacio di anni sette prossimi fururi cominciare a dl primo genaio prossimo passato stampar o far stampar tutti li libri che sono stati già per avanti dalla felice memoria del sopradetto quondam messer Francesco Sansovino tradotti, composti et stampati, cosl con privilegia come senza" A.S.V., *Notarile Atti*, notaio Giovanni Figolin, b. 5635, c. 73, (11 Aprile 1584) in Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 67.

⁸⁰ "Si dichiara anco che detto Salicato sia tenuto a stampar li soprascritti libri nel modo altre volte da lui stampati, non potendo levarli o giongerli cosa alcuna senza consentimento del sopradetto lacomo Sansovino, ma volendo detto Sansovino giungerli o levarli cosa alcuna lo possi fare a suo beneplacito, si per honorevolezza paterna come anco per suo proprio interesse" A.S.V., *Notarile Atti*, notaio Giovanni Figolin, b. 5635, c. 73, (11 Aprile 1584) in Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 67–68.

found the loopholes in the system, and his case shows that printing without a license was not uncommon, but even tolerated, in the case of works with expired privileges. Furthermore, he also found other ways in which this could go unnoticed, such as including texts or parts of texts in larger works, such as compendia. For instance, in the editions of *Dell'Historia Universale Dell'Origine et Imperio de Turchi*, from 1564 onward, he included his translations of Jacques Fontaine's *Della Guerra di Rhodi libri III*. Similarly, the account on Athens in *Del Governo*, though listed as belonging to an "autore incerto" is clearly a summary drawn from his translation of Guillaume Postel's *Libro de Magistrati de Gli Atheniesi*.⁸¹ Also, the conflict with Gherardo did not deter Sansovino from using and publishing Alunno's work, as in 1568 he was granted a privilege for *Ortografia delle voci della lingua nostra*, a dictionary of Latin and vernacular terms derived mostly from *Fabrica del Mondo*.⁸² Thus, by re-translating, annotating, and re-assembling passages and texts into "new" works, Sansovino learned some of the tricks of the trade. First, a "new" work was one with a creative character, whether in form or in content. Second, full ownership over a work could be best achieved when the owner of a privilege could be at the same time the editor, translator, "composer," and printer of a work. It was by these principles that Sansovino shaped his profile as a producer of knowledge after 1560.

⁸¹ See chapter 3 for more details on how Sansovino re-used material for his works.

⁸² "Che al fedel nostro Francesco Sansovino sia concesso che niuno altro che egli o chi harrà causa o licentia da lui, non possa in questa, né in altra città, terra o luogo della Signoria nostra stampar, né far stampar, né stampato vender o far vender il suo libro intitolato ortograffia delle voci della lingua volgare, per lo spatio di anni quindici prossimi" Senato Terra 47, c. 44v in Erika Squassina, ed., *Privilegi Librari Ed Edizioni Privilegiate Nella Repubblica Di Venezia (1566-1603)* (Milano University Press, 2024), 88.

Maintaining Authorial Agency: Self-fashioning, Expertise, and Work Ethic

From 1560 onward, Sansovino's literary career was thoroughly shaped by his interest in history. The result was a multitude of works which through contemporary eyes could be divided, to use Jean Bodin's terminology, into histories of different peoples, universal histories, and histories of illustrious individuals.⁸³ With such works, Sansovino tried to appeal to an audience as wide as possible. For example, the increased interest in the ongoing religious conflicts among Christians and with the Ottomans turned "heretics" and the "infidels" into literary *leitmotifs*. Sansovino, like many bookmen of his time, swiftly adapted to these developments and began producing works about the history and organization of the Ottoman Empire. Published first in 1560 in three volumes, *Dell'istoria Universale dell'origine et Imperio del Turchi* was a collection of ethnographic and historical information about the Ottomans. This edition originally lacked a privilege, but by the time he entrusted Rampazetto with a second print in 1564, he was granted one by the Senate. The three more subsequent editions during Sansovino's lifetime attest to the work's popularity. In 1567 he produced, in collaboration with the artist Nicolò Nelli, *Sommario et Alboro delli Principi Othomani*, a broadsheet with a genealogy of the Ottoman sultans accompanied by their portraits and short biographies.⁸⁴ In 1570 Sansovino also published two crusading pamphlets, *Informatione a Soldati Christiani* and *Lettera o vero discorso sopra le Predittioni fatte in diversi tempi da diverse persone illustri*.⁸⁵ Soon after, he also published, in two editions, *Gl'Annali Turcheschi Overo Vite de Principi della Casa Othomana*.

⁸³ Ann Blair, *The Theater of Nature: Jean Bodin and Renaissance Science* (Princeton University Press, 1997), 46.

⁸⁴ Francesco Sansovino, *Sommario et Alboro Delli Principi Othomani, Con Li Loro Veri Ritratti al Naturale Di N. Nelli*, 1567, Art Gallery of South Australia, <https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/tree-of-the-ottoman-sultans/24876/>.

⁸⁵ Francesco Sansovino, *Informatione a Soldati Christiani et a Tutti Coloro Che Sono Su La Pottentissima Armata Della Serenissima Signoria Di Venetia* (Venezia, 1570); Francesco Sansovino, *Lettera o Vero Discorso Di m.*

By capitalizing on the popularity of some works, during this time Sansovino also produced several universal, or general historical works. In 1560, two editions of Pedro Mexía's *Della selva di varia lettione* came from Sansovino's and Nicolò Bevilacqua's presses, both of which were "reprinted and corrected" and "expanded and revised" by Sansovino.⁸⁶ The 11 subsequent editions from six different publishers that were printed during Sansovino's life attest not only to the general popularity of this work, but also to the success of his editorial additions.⁸⁷ Similarly, he also translated Giacomo Filippo da Bergamo's *Sopplimento delle croniche vniuersali del mondo*, published in 1575, and composed *Cronologia del mondo*, published in 1580, obtaining privileges for both.⁸⁸

As some of his works about the Ottomans indicate, Sansovino's interest in history also extended to genealogies. In 1561, Paolo Giordano Orsino, the Duke of Bracciano commissioned Sansovino to write a history of the Orsini.⁸⁹ After three years of research, Sansovino published a first version of *L'istoria della casa Orsina*, followed by a complete edition in 1565. That same year he also wrote *Principi di casa d'Austria*, which he gifted to

Francesco Sansouino *Sopra Le Predittioni Fatte in Diuersi Tempi Da Diuerse Persone Illustri Le Quali Pronosticano La Nostra Futura Felicità, per La Guerra Del Turco Con La Serenissima Republica Di Venetia l'anno 1570* (Venezia, 1570).

⁸⁶ Pedro Mexía, *Della Selua Di Varia Lettione Parti Cinque Nelle Quali Si Contengono Ammaestramenti Dottissimi, et Varij et Diuersi Discorsi Così Appartenenti Alle Scientie, Come Alle Historie de Gli Huomini et Degli Animali. Di Nuouo Ristampate et Corrette* (Francesco Sansovino, 1560); *Della Selva Di Varia Lettione Di Pietro Messia Parti Cinque. Nelle Quali Sono Vtili Cose, Dotti Ammaestramenti, & Varii Discorsi Appartenenti, Così Alle Scientie, Come Alle Historie de Gli Huomini & de Gli Animali. Ampliate, & Di Nuouo Riuedute per Francesco Sansouino* (Nicolò Bevilacqua, 1560).

⁸⁷ For a study on the translations and additions of Italian editions of Mexía's work see Anna Bognolo, "Nel Labirinto Della Selva. La Traduzione Italiana Della Silva de Varia Lección Di Mambrino Roseo Da Fabriano," in *L Prisma Di Proteo. Riscritture, Ricodificazioni, Traduzioni Fra Italia e Spagna (Sec. XVI-XVIII)*, ed. Valentina Nider (Università degli Studi di Trento, 2012).

⁸⁸ "Che a domino Francesco Sansovino dottor sia concesso che altro che egli o chi da lui haverà causa, et licentia non possa, per lo spatio de anni xx prossimi, in questa, né in altra città o luogo del dominio nostro stampar, far stampar, né altrove stampato vender il supplimento delle croniche da lui tradotto di latino in volgare" Senato Terra 50, c. 111v in Squassina, *Privilegi Librari Ed Edizioni Privilegiate Nella Repubblica Di Venezia (1566-1603)*, 147. For *Cronologia del mondo*, the document did not survive in the Senate archives, but the privilege is mentioned on the cover of the edition.

⁸⁹ "Se V.S. non si scorda della proposta che ha fatto nell'animo suo del tessere la Historia di Casa Orsina, ne io mi scordo di far a fare ogni diligentia per trouar qualche cosa a proposito [...]" Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri Quattro*, 101v.

Johanna of Austria upon her marriage with Francesco I de' Medici.⁹⁰ In 1567 he published *Il simulacro di Carlo quinto imperadore*, a political biography in the form of a panegyric which painted the Habsburg monarch as the ideal ruler.⁹¹ And in 1582, he printed, in a separate edition *Della origine et de' fatti delle famiglie illustri d'Italia*, which was initially added in the 1580 edition of *Cronologia del mondo*.⁹²

Just by looking at the titles of these last works it becomes clearer that, while a wider readership might have been interested in the topics, Sansovino's genealogies were composed with a target audience in mind. Though the history of the Orsini is the only work which he wrote on request, the other three genealogies clearly bear political implications that highlight the networks of patronage of which Sansovino was a part. In the dedication to *Principi di casa d'Austria*, Sansovino wrote:

I, who was born a most faithful servant of the Signor Cosimo de' Medici, Duke of Florence and Siena, and who honors the value and lively spirit of his son, Monsignor Ferdinando Cardinal de' Medici, and who am a vassal of the Holy Paolo Giordano Orsino, Duke of Bracciano, my patron and my Augustus, and who finally reveres the Signora Isabella de' Medici, his consort (all three of whom are siblings-in-law of Your Highness), moved by the common joy and by the internal devotion that I bear to the House of Austria, de' Medici, and Orsina⁹³

With this short self-description, Sansovino introduced himself to the new Grand Duchess. The identity by which he recommends himself, and the work to which this dedication was attached, is that of the protégée of the Medici and Orsini families. By presenting her with this work, Sansovino attempted a double strategy: to be recognized for his scholarly pursuits and to hopefully gain the favor of a Habsburg noble.

⁹⁰ Francesco Sansovino, *Principi Di Casa d'Austria Progenitori Della Serenissima Principessa Di Fiorenza et Di Siena* (Francesco Sansovino, 1565).

⁹¹ Francesco Sansovino, *Il Simolacro Di Carlo Quinto Imperadore* (Francesco Franceschini, 1567).

⁹² Francesco Sansovino, *Della Origine et de' Fatti Delle Famiglie Illustri d'Italia* (Altobello Salicato, 1582).

⁹³ Sansovino, *Principi Di Casa d'Austria Progenitori Della Serenissima Principessa Di Fiorenza et Di Siena*, 2r.

Such a self-presentation was not unique to Sansovino. In a world where he was one of the many who gathered knowledge about the Ottomans, composed state descriptions, or printed chronicles, Sansovino needed to make his works stand out. Although printing privileges might have granted him legal authority over his works and recognition of his intellectual contributions, he had to find other ways to earn a reputation as a thorough scholar. As the example mentioned earlier shows, dedicatory letters were one way through which Sansovino could present himself and his ideas. Nearly every one of his other works contains dedications addressed to a range of personalities, from popes, emperors, and dukes to high-ranking officials in public administration, military leaders, ambassadors, and merchants. While the details of Sansovino's relationships with each of these individuals go beyond the scope of this chapter, it is interesting to observe how he presented himself in front of these figures. In the dedication attached to the first volume of *Dell'istoria Universale*, he noted:

But since there have been many writers from various nations, and it is a difficult task to fully understand everything on this subject, I, who have always taken great pleasure in understanding the government, ways, and foundations of that principality, have gathered together as much as I have been able to collect, so that those who read this History may find both enjoyment and benefit in it. Although the deeds of the ancients offer us good lessons for our actions, I believe that those of the moderns, and especially those of the Turks who are right in front of our eyes, should not be overlooked, since from present things we can draw greater benefit than from the things of the past. This history, thus compiled into a single volume, I have deemed to be a worthy gift to offer Your Lordship. I send it to you with all the greatest affection that I can express. And although wars and public quarrels seem more appropriate for young princes, it is by no means unsuitable for honored and prudent elders to read of memorable deeds accomplished by princes. Moreover, I am more than certain that, although you live as a private man, you have a royal spirit for which Francis, the King of France, and Henry, the King of England, esteemed and honored you. [...] And because you are fond of good literature, to which you have always devoted yourself, delighting in the sciences in which you are greatly accomplished, I have sent you this book so that, when you leave aside the weightier matters which you handle, this reading may offer some recreation to your noble mind. [...] Because I am naturally inclined to esteem virtuous men, I could not refrain

from offering all my service to Your Lordship, begging you to firmly believe that I honor and revere you with all my heart.⁹⁴

Here, Sansovino explains why he created the work and why he chose to dedicate it to Bartolomeo Compagni, a Florentine merchant at the English court. Although seemingly two different reasons, he skillfully links them together. He paints Compagni as a man of nobility, intellect, and resourcefulness, and by drawing on the relevance of the topic for the current situation, Sansovino shows how the compilation would be a useful read for him. While clearly rhetorical, this strategy highlights Sansovino's in-depth knowledge of the humanist ethos and its value for contemporary men of letters. With several variations, this rhetorical artifice was a common thread throughout many of his dedications. For instance, the 1564 edition of *Dell'Historia Universale* is dedicated to Eugenio Singlitico, "because the matter it treats is notable and worthy of being understood in our times, and because His Illustrious Lordship delights in a pure and sound judgment," whose "most affectionate servant" Sansovino declares to be.⁹⁵ Similarly, he created *Cronologia del Mondo* "so that great men and others, who dedicate their time to important affairs, may grasp in one moment what has been extensively

⁹⁴ "Ma perche gli scrittori sono stati molti e di varie nationi et difficil cosa è il poter vedere a pieno ogni cosa in questa material, pero io che ho sempre hauuto grandissima contentezza si intender il gouerno, i modi e, il fondamento di quell Principato, ho ridotto insieme quanto per me si è potuto raccorre, accioche coloro che leggeranno la presente Historia, possino hauerne diletto e utile parimente, stimando io che quantunque le cose de gli antichi ne arrechino buoni ammaestramenti nelle nostre operationi rendendone accorti, nondimeno quelle de moderni e specialmente de Turchi che ne uinon su gli occhi, non siano punto per infiniti rispetti da tralasciarsi in dietro, cavando noi delle cose presenti, uie piu maggior frutto, che delle cose passate non facciamo. La quale Historia cosi ridotta in un corpo, ho parimente stimato che sia degno dono da farsi a V. S. laquale io le mando con tutto quell maggiore affetto di cuore che per me si puo. E con tutto che le guerre e i travagli publici si conuenghino e stain bene a Principi giovani, non e pero disdetto a vecchi honorati e pridenti di legger le cose degne di memoria che fanno i Principi, oltre ch'io son piu che certo che se bene voi fete huomo private, havete pero l'animo Regio, per loquale il Re di Francia e il Re di Inghilterra Arrigo e Francesco ui hanno grandemente stimato e Honorato [...] Et come vago delle buone lettere, allequali voi havete sempre dato opera dilettrandoui delle scientie nelle quali valeate assai, ui ho mandato questo libro, accioche partendo ui talhora dale cose piu gravi nelle quali voi discorrete con saldo giudicio, porgiate qualche ricreatione alla mente nobile con questa lettura. [...] ch'io che per natura mi affettioni a gli huomini virtuosi, non offeri ogni mia servitu a V. A. pregandola che le piaccia fermamente credere, ch'io la honoro e la riveriscoo di cuore." Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 2r–3v.

⁹⁵ Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Raccolta Da m. Francesco Sansouino. Libri Tre.*, 2r.

treated over so many centuries by so many writers.”⁹⁶ Sansovino addresses the dedication to Giacomo Boncompagni, leader of the Papal army, “both so that it may gain some recognition under such honored and secure patronage, and so that it may be a perpetual witness that I too, in such a flourishing and abundant age for so many sublime spirits, have not been entirely neglected by Your Excellency, a supporter and benefactor of letters.”⁹⁷

It is interesting to note that, at first glance, the dedications seem to reveal more about their addressees and less about their author. However, by painting these portraits, Sansovino also sketched his own. As the passage from *Dell’historia Universale* dedicatory letter reveals, he did not only present himself as a servant and vassal, but also as an astute man of letters. First, he makes a distinction between a “writer” and a “compiler.” Second, by highlighting his ongoing interest in the Ottoman Empire, actively searching for works on the subject, and acknowledging the vastness of the topic and the variety of sources available, Sansovino emphasizes his expertise on the matter. Third, by explaining how he created the work and why knowledge of this polity’s history is important, he presents himself not only as a thorough compiler, who critically assesses the sources he uses, but also as a learned scholar. Thus, he offers a glimpse into his work ethic and methodology.

Remarkably interconnected, Sansovino used these aspects of his scholarly identity to strengthen his authorial agency over his works, and, in the hope of recognition and protection, he did not limit himself to dedications alone. Correspondence served as another way through which he could present himself and his ideas. The autobiographical letter to Filippo Magnanini is a good example. Written just a few years before his death, Sansovino reflects on his life’s

⁹⁶ “accioche si possa da gli huomini grandi, e altri, a quali il tempo e sarso per i negotii loro importanti, comprendere in un momento quello ch’e stato largamente trattato in tanti secoli da tanti Scrittori.” Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo Di m. Francesco Sansouino Diuisa in Tre Libri*, 2r.

⁹⁷ “Si perche riceua qualche splendore sotto cosi honorato e sicuro patrociniio, e si perche ela sia perpetuo testimonio, ch’anco io in cosi florida e copiosa eta per tanti spiriti eccelsi, e in tempo di Principe fautore e benefattore delle lettere come e la V. Eccellenza, non sia stato [...] del tutto negletto da quella” Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo Di m. Francesco Sansouino Diuisa in Tre Libri*, 2v.

story and emphasizes his multifaceted identity. By detailing his education and intellectual development, listing his works, and mentioning his contributions to each of them, Sansovino portrays himself not only as a translator, compiler, and “composer,” but also as an experienced scholar who embodied all these identities.⁹⁸ While relatively common, such autobiographical letters were not the most popular way through which humanists could show to patrons, or potential patrons, that they are keen thinkers and experienced writers. Accompanied by letters, Sansovino, like many humanists of his time, sent his work to various noblemen, either across Italy or to other European courts. For example, in March 1566, he sent to Marco Mantova Benavides a copy of his *Dialogo del Gentiluomo Venetiano*. The missive that accompanied it noted:

There is no law that could make me put down my pen. I was born to write, but what is worse, is to write badly. I know it, yet I cannot refrain. But it is better to do [something] poorly than to do nothing, because work is far more noble than idleness. And I, who by nature do not know how to sit idle, willingly let myself to be carried away by my will, which leads me, I know not how, into such labyrinths as you see. I sent to Your Excellency, as my teacher and my patron, the present treatise. I will be pleased if you would read it when the time comes, and even more pleased to hear your true and sincere thoughts. And if in this matter I am like the nuns of Genoa, I will always have time, in another edition, to correct the errors, to add the observations you give me, and to bring this subject into a better state than it is now. In this endeavor, I am pleased that at least I have tackled a subject that has never been treated before and is, as far as I believe, new. Now, whatever it may be, I send it to you; and you, as my lord, may gladly accept it.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 219–22.

⁹⁹ “Non ci è ordine ch'io possa metter giù la penna. Son nato per scrivere, ma quello ch'è peggio per male scrivere. Lo conosco et non mi posso astenere. Ma meglio è far male che non far nulla perche molto più nobile è il negozio che l'ozio. et io che per natura non mi so stare con le mani a cintola, volentieri mi lascio traporar dalla volontà, la quale mi conduce et non so come, in così fatti laberinti come ella vede. Mando alla V. Ecc. come a mio precettore et signore il presente trattato. Harò caro ch'essa lo veda quando sarà tempo. Et più caro ancora mi fia l'udire il suo vero et sincero giudizio. Et se bene in questo caso sono come le monache da Genova: sarò sempre a tempo in un'altra impressione, a corregger gli errori, ad aggiugnere i ricordi datimi, et a ridur questa materia a miglior essere ch'ella non si trova al presente. In questa fatica mi compiaccio di questo almeno, ch'io ho messo mano a materia non più trattata et nuova per quello ch'io creda. Ora qualunque ella si sia: glele (così) mando volentieri, et ella come mio signore l'accetti volentieri.” in Cicogna, *Delle Inscrizioni Veneziane. Volume IV*, 90–91.

Through this letter, Sansovino highlights several details about his profile as a *letterato*. Like in dedicatory letters, he presents himself under the patronage of Benavides. However, unlike in dedications, the recognition Sansovino sought was intellectual rather than financial. This is emphasized by his request for feedback on the treatise. Since Benavides was his law teacher in Padua, Sansovino understood the importance his comments would have on the intellectual reception of the work.¹⁰⁰ To that extent, Sansovino highlighted his competence as a scholar. By presenting himself as a passionate writer, motivated by intellectual pursuits, he argued that consistent work and genuine interest in a topic could turn “poor writing” into something valuable. This depiction of *vita activa* disguised in a self-deprecating portrayal contrasts with the pride he took in the novelty of his approach to the topic. Here, Sansovino clearly emphasized that a “new” work does not necessarily qualify the content or subject but can also relate to the format or discursive style. However, in a letter to Aluigi Michiel sent about nine years later, Sansovino declared that he “would write something new, but it would be like pouring water into the sea; besides, it is better to remain silent than to tell tales.”¹⁰¹ This statement made in relation to his continuous work on the “Turkish history” nuances the complex meaning that a “new” work had for him. In a tone similar to that in the preface from the 1561 edition of *Del Governo*, Sansovino subtly critiques the number of publications that get labelled as “new.” By doing so, he indirectly highlights the value he places on proper, accurate (thus source-based) research and writing. When considering that these scholarly principles are a reflection on his work on *Dell’Historia Universale*, which he later categorized under *raccolte*, it becomes clearer that his authorial input is not just that of a mere compiler, but also a historically-minded scholar.

¹⁰⁰ Suin, *Editoria, Storiografia e Politica*, 20.

¹⁰¹ “Scriverei qualche cosa di nuouo: ma sarebbe come un uersar acqua nel mare, oltre ch’è meglio star cheto: ch’andare a rischio di raccontar carote.” in Cicogna, *Delle Inscrizioni Veneziane. Volume IV*, 91.

While examining letters that accompanied works sent as gifts could provide more insight into Sansovino's scholarly network and how he presented himself in front of his patrons, the little archival evidence on Sansovino's sent correspondence makes it challenging to pursue this line of inquiry. Nevertheless, as letter-writing manuals gained prominence during the sixteenth century, many humanists added personal correspondence to serve as examples. Sansovino also included some of his own in *Del Secretario*, increasing in number with each edition, from 21 in the 1565 edition to 56 in the 1580 one. By the last edition, the better part of this selection were letters sent to Sansovino, with only 7 letters signed as sent by him. Carefully curated, this correspondence, spanning from 1552 to 1579 in the final edition, makes *Del Secretario* not only an educational tool for contemporary students and a valuable resource for modern scholars tracing the development of rhetorical models but also a self-fashioning tool through which Sansovino enhanced his multi-faceted identity.¹⁰² It is among these letters that we find, for example, his letter to Magnanini or Benavides' reply to receiving a copy of *Dialogo del Gentilhuomo Venetiano*, who acknowledged Sansovino's intellectual contribution and promised further feedback.¹⁰³

In a similar manner, many of the letters Sansovino included here are filled with recognition for his works. For instance, Chiara di Correggio, to whom he dedicated *Il simulacro di Carlo quinto imperadore*, thanked him for sending the work and the history of the Orsini, and calls him "an excellent, honest writer, of such great judgment."¹⁰⁴ A certain "Bishop of Ma..." [Mantova?] praises a work that Sansovino sent him for the "great doctrine and utility

¹⁰² For a thorough analysis on the the structure and rhetorical strategies from *Del Secretario* that also points to Sansovino's self-presentation see Maria Cristina Panzera, "Dans l'atelier de Francesco Sansovino: Un Éditeur Humaniste Maître de l'art Épistolaire," in *De l'orator Au Secrétaire. Modèles Épistolaires Dans l'Europe de La Renaissance* (Droz, 2018).

¹⁰³ Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 175v–76r.

¹⁰⁴ "persuadendomi di non esserne in tutto indegna, poi che da scrittore tanto eccellente, tanto ueridico, & di tanto giudicio ne uengo fatta meritevole." Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 176v.

that can be drawn from it.”¹⁰⁵ Similarly, the Cardinal of Pisa confesses he read several times the pamphlets about the war against the Ottomans that Sansovino sent. He describes them as “serious and prudent speeches with useful information.”¹⁰⁶ About the same series of works, Sigismund, King of Poland, declared that he “read the pamphlet in the presence of many Lords, and it pleases very much, as one who tells the truth” and asked Sansovino to send also the other pamphlet with the description of the army.¹⁰⁷ These letters that Sansovino chose were not just examples of deliberative, demonstrative, or judicial rhetoric, but also evidence that his works and ideas were appreciated, well-liked, and that they fulfilled the purpose outlined in the dedications and prefaces. Additional correspondence along these lines shows that Sansovino was also financially rewarded for his intellectual efforts.¹⁰⁸

Furthermore, other letters paint Sansovino as a man deeply embedded in the Venetian and wider Italian intellectual scene and book market, showing him engaged with the editorial and technical aspects of publishing. At the same time, these letters underscore the literary authority he cultivated and emphasize the reputation he enjoyed as an editor. For example, Paolo Ragone requested Sansovino to “revise” and “restore” a notebook of *Viaggi*, confident that his intervention would bring honor to the work.¹⁰⁹ The style of the letter, phrased as a kind

¹⁰⁵ “Ho accettato il presente con quell'animo, che ho conosciuto meritare cotal libro, della cui lettione, mercè nell'inestimabile fatica uostra, si potrà facilmente da ogni huomo conoscere, quanto sia grande la dottrina et utilità che ritrar se ne può.” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 105r.

¹⁰⁶ “Io ho riceuto il graue et prudente discorso, et utile informatione, che è piaciuto a V.S. di mandarmi, fatta da lei nel principio della presente guerra contra Turchi, et l'una et l'altra ho letto piu uolte con mia gran sodifatione” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 166v.

¹⁰⁷ “Lo habbiamo fatto leggere in Camera nostra alla presenza di molti Signori. Piace assai, come quello che dice il uero. Et molto piu piacerà quando si metta in essecutione. [...] Ne sarà caro che ci mandiate la descrittione dell'armata, si come ne promettete nella uostra lettera.” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 169r.

¹⁰⁸ See “P. Donato Cesis, Vescovo di Narni a Francesco Sansovino;” “Cardinal Lomellino a il medesimo;” “Papa Pio V a il medesimo;” “Cosimo, Duca di Fiorenza et di Siena a il medesimo;” “Paolo Giordano Orsino, Duca di Bracciano a il medesimo;” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 162r–162v; 164r–164v; 168v–69; 170r–v; 173v–74r.

¹⁰⁹ “Presupponendo che presto habbi a far bisogno al nostro magnifico ... il primo quinterno de i Viaggi, ch'io lasciai a V.S. ne giorni passati, che per sua cortesia mi riducesse in quel stato, et essere che ne la pregai, et ella mi promise con la solita sua liberalità di uoler fare, ho uoluto con queste poche ricche salutarla; et insieme pregarla, a degnarsi per sue, o tre giorni, uoler perder due hore di tempo al giorno, tra il di et la notte, che la mi riformi quel quintero” Francesco Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri Quattro*. (Francesco Rampazetto, 1565), 108v–9r.

reminder, subtly acknowledges Sansovino's busy schedule, highlighting the ongoing demands of his literary activity. By including this letter, Sansovino shows that he was proud to be appreciated and have his editorial services requested. Similarly, a certain "G.M.B." writes to Sansovino about a passage from a book on the origins of Venice, and notes that this could be relevant for the biography that Sansovino promised to write.¹¹⁰ Such letters highlight not only Sansovino's erudition but also his position in intellectual and publishing circles, emphasizing his authority both as an editor and a writer. More interestingly, these letters also reveal his broader working method, linking his editorial and compiling practices in writing historical works.

A great number of missives further highlight Sansovino's working method as a writer of history, particularly in retracing his steps while composing *L'istoria della casa Orsina*. The many letters from members of the Orsini family show that Sansovino was constantly requesting primary sources from local archives. While some, like the Duke of Bracciano, who also commissioned him the work, often sent him short historical accounts, details on coats of arms, or personal correspondence of their ancestors, others offered Sansovino short answers or confessed they had not found information on a certain period of time or about a certain member of the family.¹¹¹ In turn, he also sent them work-in-progress versions of the history for feedback.¹¹² Other letters that Sansovino chose for *Del Secretario* underline the same research process. For instance, while working on translating and completing the *Sopplimento delle*

¹¹⁰ "Leggendo io questi giorni il libro de l'origine di Venetia, uenuto fuori senza nome d'Autore, ancora che si sappia appresso poco chi egli sia, ma stampato per Francesco arcolini nel 1558, io ci ho trouato una cosa, laquale s'io non m'inganno, si potrà tanto bene allergare da uoi nella mia Vita" Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri Quattro.*, 109r–10r.

¹¹¹ Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri Quattro.*, 101v–10r; Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 159r–v; 161v–162r;

¹¹² "Ricevei a questi dì la uostra lettera con li due libri della Historia Orsina, liquali mi furono uermanete gratissimi. [...] Et per quel poco giucidio che ne posso far io, mi piacciono sommamente, parendomi degni della prudentia et del bello ingegno uostro. Et douendosi tener per fermo che gli altri libri, che hauere orditi habbino d'assomigliarsi a questo bel principio, tutti noi altri della casa douiamo ringratiarui, sommamente che ui siate messo a scriuer tutta questa Historia cosi continuata" Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 163r–163v.

croniche vniuersali del mondo, Sansovino contacted Pio Enea Obizzi for sources on the history of his family. Obizzi sent a genealogy of his house and promised to send another document that could be useful on the subject.¹¹³ Sansovino sent a draft of this work also to Alberico I Cybo-Malaspina, Prince of Massa, who promised to read it. The prince also reminded the Venetian humanist to send him a copy of the chronicle in which his house is mentioned and offered to give Sansovino more historical notes about the topic.¹¹⁴ By reaching out to members of various noble families to gather genealogical and historical information, Sansovino was, as we might say today, “working smarter, not harder.” Since the nobles were the ones who chose the accounts or chronicles that Sansovino could use as sources, they had the opportunity to select those that presented themselves and the history of their ancestors in a more favorable light. Therefore, he also avoided the task of selecting and passing judgment on the actions and decisions of past rulers.

An interesting reply regarding the final version of *L'istoria della casa Orsina* came from [Paolo] Giordano Orsino who complained that Sansovino spoke “generally to all members of the house, exhorting them and inspiring them to imitate the value and virtue of our ancestors with their own examples, and did not come to the praises of the particular ones that are alive.”¹¹⁵ Though *L'istoria della casa Orsina* was dedicated to him, the duke of Bracciano was referring here to a second letter, more similar to a preface than a dedication, that Sansovino

¹¹³ “io riceuerò per fauore da lei, che le piaccia di far mentione della mica eccelsa famiglia, nell'aggiunta delle sue Croniche, et quanto alle scritture di che ella mi ricerca per ciò fare, io non so che mandarle altro se non questo libro della genealogia di Casa mia. Et per che a Padoua so d'hauere anco un'altra scrittura che potrebbe fare a proposito, ordinerò che sia mandata a V.S. alla quale tra tanto facendo fine” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 167r.

¹¹⁴ “Il schizzo del suo supplemento delle Croniche sarà da me uisto uolontieri, ma carissimo mi sarebbe stato, che m'hauesse mandato, come altre uolte le ho scritto, copia della Cronica, cioè di quanto tocca della casa mia” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 167v–68r.

¹¹⁵ “Ho letto i due libri dell'Historia Orsina uenuti nouamente in luce dall'honorata penna di V. Sig. et da lei mandatami, i quali se bene mi sono piaciuti, nondimeno non uoglio restar di dirle, 'che mi harino apportato satisfatione molto maggiore, se fussero in alcune cose particolari meno affettati, sì come mi par ancora, che deueua esser la lettera che ella scriue alli Signori Orsini, nella quale per mio giuditio, la doue parla generalmente a tutti della casa, esortandoli et infiammandoli ad imitar il ualore, et uitù delli nostri antichi con li lor medesimi esempii, non uenire alle lodi delle particolari che sono in uita” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 171v.

added. Sansovino's choice to include the duke's letter in *Del Secretario* was not random. While at a first glance the text appears to critique the Venetian's rhetoric and writing style, it also serves as evidence of how Sansovino's political-philosophical ideas on good governance were influenced by his use of historical examples. Since Paolo Giordano Orsino commissioned this work, it comes as no surprise that he wanted to be portrayed as a princely model. However, Sansovino's generic tone in the preface suggests he aimed to make as many members of the Orsini family relate to this history as possible, likely hoping for more rewards and recognition, whether intellectual or financial.

Thus, through these letters, Sansovino consciously strengthened his authorial agency, fashioning himself in multiple ways. He presented himself as a knowledgeable figure with a wide network of acquaintances that was deeply embedded in intellectual circles. While Sansovino could hardly be called an antiquarian, these letters reveal the process behind composing the work and reiterate the importance he placed on using sources, and in the case of genealogies even archival material, as well as the assiduous task of collecting information when writing history. This combination of erudition, editorial skills, and research practices demonstrates how he reinforced his authority as a writer, editor, and compiler. Nowhere is this aspect better emphasized than in the prefaces he attached to his works.

Building on the authority he cultivated through his correspondence and dedicatory letters, Sansovino uses the prefaces to his works as a platform to present himself directly to the readers, emphasizing both his working methods and process, and implicitly, his expertise. A prime example in that sense is the address to the readers from the 1580 edition of *Cronologia del Mondo* in which he noted:

I want to inform you that I have divided this volume into three books, the first of which should be more fittingly titled Chronology, rather than the others, because it succinctly covers the events of the world. [...] The inventor of this

style of writing was Julius Africanus, and after him followed Eusebius of Caesarea, St. Jerome, Prosper of Aquitaine, Cassiodorus, Hermann the Cripple, Palmieri, and among the moderns Nauclerus, Grantius, and others, whose works are still in the hands of learned men. By imitating these, I have brought this present work to completion, useful for the succession of years to those who delight in history and want to spare time. In [writing about] all those years and found variations, I had to be sensible, because I preferred to err with the many, than to be wise only with a few. Therefore, in the first [book] you will find, in order, the events from the Creation up to the year 1579. [...] In the second book you will find an ample Catalogue of Principalities and Republics, both those that have existed and still exist at present. [...] Finally, in the third, you will read about the origins of several illustrious Italian houses. [...] In treating these families, I first traced their origins with authentic documents where I was able to obtain them, [and] where not, I relied on what the historians have written. [...] And if sometimes the successions appear interrupted, it is because of a gap [lit. defect] in the genealogical trees due to negligence or the ravages of time, [but] I have always tried to follow the truth as much as I could. From this labor I still have fifty other houses, on which I continue to work, and that I will soon add to the present ones for publication. [...] I do not want to omit saying that in the second and third books, when writing about the Principalities and [noble] houses, I did not follow any precedence or preeminence whatsoever, but I have placed them as I wrote them, since it is not up to me to pass judgment on this matter. Now, moved by that ardent desire that inflames me to be of service to everyone (though not without grave consequences, since through constant study I have almost lost my eyesight at the age of fifty-five), I have done and continue to do all of these things most willingly, encouraged by several of my patrons and friends. Among whom most worthy of praise is Mons. Luigi Contarini, for this gentleman of lively spirit, erudite and knowledgeable about courts and worldly affairs, has often inspired me by supplying me with various materials. [...] Nor has Messer Giovanni Filippo Magnanini [...] been less fervent, because this truly magnanimous man, of noble intellect, with a great love for letters and a champion of virtue, has favored me with his work and advice. [...] Finally, it remains for me to ask you to forgive my imperfection, to kindly and courteously excuse me rather than accuse me, since from loyal and sincere men, a ready will is more acceptable than a weak and incomplete power.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ “Voglio, o Lettori, avertirvi, che io ho diviso questo volume in tre libri, al primo de quali si convien e molto piu ch'a gli altri il titolo di Cronologia, percioce vi si comprendono soccintamente le cose avvenute nel mondo. [...] Fu inventore di scrivere a questo modo Giulio Africano, e dopo lui seguirono Eusebio Cesariense, San Girolamo, Prospero Aquitano, Cassiodoro, Hermanno Contratto, il Palmieri, e de moderni il Nauclero, il Granzio, e altri, gli scritti de quali vanno tuttavia per le mani de gli huomini dotti. Questi imitando io ho ridotto a fine la presente fatica, utile per la soccessione de gli anni a chi si diletta di Historia con avanzo di tempo. Ne quali anni trovando varieta debbo essere sensato, perche ho voluto piu tosto errar con molti, ch'esser solo savio con pochi. Nel primo adunque troverete con ordine, i soccessi dal principio della creatione fino all'anno 1579 [...] Nel secondo vedrete un'ampio Catalogo de Regni e delle Signorie che sono state e che sono al presente [...] Nel terzo finalmente leggerete l'origini di diverse Case illustri d'Italia [...] trattando nelle famiglie, prima l'origine loro con le scritture autentiche dove ho potuto haverle, dove no mi sono riportato a quanto gli Historici lasciarono scritto [...] Et se alcuna volta le soccessioni sono in terrotte, questo avviene per difetto de gli alberi, i quali o per poca giligenza o per ingiuria del tempo (come tante volte s'e detto) non si hanno vahuti perfetti, seguitando sempre la verita per quanto ho potuto. Della qual fatica mi restano ancora in mano cinquanta altre case, intorno alle quali essercitando mi di continuo, le aggiugnero tosto a queste presenti, senza pero pregiudicio dell'honore di quelle Case ch'io

Reading this, anyone familiar with Sansovino's previous works recognizes that *Crologia del Mondo* was not a wholly new project but rather a synthesis of some of his earlier works, such as *Del Governo* and *Sopplimento delle Croniche Universali*. Yet, the preface is not a mere roadmap through the contents of the work, but another carefully crafted self-portrait. First, Sansovino situates himself and his work within the tradition of universal chronicles. By surveying the authorities who established this "style of writing" and by explicitly claiming to have "imitated" them, he does not simply display his erudition but also emphasizes his humanist education. Since *imitatio* was regarded as the highest form of learned recognition, he reinforces the reliability and legitimacy of his work. Second, he delineates that his contribution lies in his working method and format of the text, not in an innovative style of writing. He emphasizes his working ethos by distinguishing between "authentic documents" and "what historians have written," showing a clear preference for the former. This distinction reveals his awareness of how historical narratives could be ideologically charged and his attempt to achieve objectivity through systematic gathering and arrangement of materials. His explicit statement that he did not impose any hierarchy among principalities or noble families treated in his work further underlines his attempt at taking a neutral stance. Third, Sansovino reinforces his authority by invoking the support of patrons and friends. Just as in dedicatory letters, their recognition and advice function both as a validation of his scholarly work and as evidence of

vado scrivendo, e di queste presenti quanto alla publicatione fatta di loro o prima o poi: essendo tutte nobiliss e chiare. Non voglio pretermetter di dire, che nel secondo e nel terzo, scrivendo de Regni e delle Case, non vo voluto osserva precedenza o preminenza alcuma: ma si come le ho scritte, cosi le ho collocate, non toccando punto a me il far giuditio di questa materia. Ora tutte queste mie viglie, mosso da quel desiderio ardente che mi accende a giovare ad ogniuno (ancora che non mio gravis danno, poi che per lo continuo studio ho quasi perduto il lume de gli occhi in eta di 55 ani) le ho fatte e faccio tuttavia piu che volentieri, esortato da diversi miei Signori e amici, non solamente amorevoli alle cose mie, ma anco desiderosi dello honoe d'altri. Fra quali e degnissimo d'ogni lode Mons. Luigi Contarini che fu del Clarissimo M. Nicolo: perioche questo gentilhuomo di spirito vivace, erudito, e pratico delle Corti e delle cose del mondo, mi ha piu volte infiammato, somministrandomi diverse materie. [...] Ne meno e stato ardente M. Giovanni Filippo Magnanini da Fanano Secretario del Sig. Cornelio Bentivoglio Marchese di Gualtiero, perioche questo huomo veramente magnanimo, e di nobile ingedno, amantissimo delle lettere e fautore della virtu, mi' ha havorito con l'opera e col consiglio. [...] Resta finalmente a pregarvi, che perdonando alla mia imperfettione, vogliate con animo benigno e cortese, piu tosto scusarmi ch'accusarmi, poi che da gli huomini leali e sinceri, s'accetta piu il pronto volere, che il debile e non del tutto compiuto potere." Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo Di m. Francesco Sansouino Diuisa in Tre Libri*, 3v–4r.

the intellectual networks in which he was embedded. Lastly, by mentioning his age and physical impairment he underscores the perseverance, passion, and mature deliberation that come with decades of study, thus further emphasizing his expertise. By acknowledging the imperfection of his work, Sansovino restates the idea that consistent work and interest in a topic could make a work, *his work*, a piece of valuable scholarship. At the same time, he underlines the pressures of time that compilers faced in producing and publishing works.

All these aspects of Sansovino's authorial profile can be identified, with several variations, throughout most of his prefaces, as well as in dedicatory letters and other editorial additions, such as annotations and commentaries. For instance, he frequently mentioned the broad range of sources he read to compose a particular work, thereby emphasizing his erudition.¹¹⁷ Most interesting to observe is how he articulated his stance of neutrality. Vouching for the accuracy of sources without endorsing the positions expressed in them was a common practice among sixteenth-century compilers to which Sansovino adhered.¹¹⁸ Yet, while he

¹¹⁷ "La qual cosa a me non souuene per lettura alcuna che auuenisse gia mai in altro Regno o in altra gente ch'in questa, one empiendomi que sto fatto di maraviglia, divenni tanto curioso di ricercar le cose Turchesche, che havendo io consumato qualche tempo attorno a questa materia, ho finalmente tessuta una nuoua historia delle Vite di quei Principi. [...] Ho anco durato fatica nel veder molti scrittori greci, e Turcheschi, e Latini, e molte note particolari di persone private e pratiche di quei paesi, dalle qualli trahendo quel tanto che mi ha fatto bisogno, ho ridotto a fine il mio intento" Francesco Sansovino, *Gl'Annali Turcheschi Ouero Vite de Principi Della Casa Othomana* (Enea de Alaris, 1573), 3r–3v; "Ma per avertismento della presente Historia ne pare di dover dire, che noi primieramente habbiamo posto insieme tutti gli scrittori che hanno trattato con verita le cose di quello Imperio, percioche la Historia che non e vera, merita d'esser chiamata Favola, e si come la verita diletta gli animi de gli huomini liberi, cosi la bugia gli corrompe, non havendo essi peravventura nelle cose del Mondo quella ferma e salda cognitione che suol derivare dal maneggio della medesima verita." Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda*, 3r; "Et quanto alla fatica che mi nasceua dallo scompiglio delle cose per la lunghezza del tempo nel quale auennero molti fatti eccellenti de Principi Orsini, consumati parte dalla voracita sua, et parte occulti et dispersi, non solamente ne libri Greci et Latini, ma ne' Barbari ancora" Sansovino, *L'istoria Di Casa Orsina Di Francesco Sansouino Nella Quale Oltre All'origine Sua*, 2v.

¹¹⁸ Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (Yale University Press, 2010), 186; "et le cose che seguitano descritte dal Menauino dipendono in gran parte dalla cognitione ch'egli hebbe della scrittura e della legge loro. Costui (per quel che si vede nel suo proemio) stette molti anni a Costantinopoli, et come persona di qualche conto, vide et maneggio le cose di quello Imperio assai minutamente, la onde io giudico che scriuendo, egli habbia potuto affermar molte cose, lequali non si potrebbero cosi facilmente credere a chi non le hauesse vedute." Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 16r–16v; "Bene vi vogliamo avertire, che egli (Giovio) riferisce tutte cose scritte innanzi a suoi tempi, perche se gli puo pienamente credere, non havendo luogo o persona, ove o intorno alla quale egli habbia potuto essercitar le froze della sua arguta eloquenza nella adulatione. Laqual cosa quanto egli habbia osservato nella sua Historia grande, il mondo fino a questa hora ne ha fatto giudicio" Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda*, 71v.

repeatedly emphasized his neutral position vis-à-vis the ideological aspect of the content of his sources, he was quite critical of their literary features. For example, in the preface to *Del Governo*, he declares that while the majority of the accounts included in this work are translations made by others which he minimally adjusted, he had to “entirely retranslate” Contarini’s *Repubblica* as it was “poorly rendered.” He then labeled Contarini as a “man of great learning, but not very careful when it came to the vernacular language.”¹¹⁹ Similarly, in the preface to *Sopplimento delle croniche vniuersali*, Sansovino justified his own translation due to the “many impertinent things had been introduced outside of the Latin.” He also claimed that the many reprints distorted the names in this work and that he “with no small effort restored them to their original purity.”¹²⁰ Through such a critical approach, Sansovino not only emphasized his contribution but also highlighted his expertise as a translator.

Conclusion

The ways in which Sansovino constructed and maintained his authorial agency are varied. Printing privileges gave him the legal means to claim ownership, but it was through dedications, prefaces, and curated correspondence that he asserted himself as a learned, ethical, and resourceful scholar. By entering the Venetian book market, which was governed by privileges and competition, he engaged in a setting where authority was shared among authors,

¹¹⁹ “Viuoglio ancho auertit di questo, che quelle cose che mi son uenute alle mani gia fatte uolgari da altre persone, le ho messe come elle stanno, suor solamente che io le racconciate alquanto, come sarebbe la Republica del Contarini, la quale nel uero hauea bisogno d’esser tutta tradotta di nuouo si è ella stata mal conzia, ma percioche il tempo mi manca, non ho potuto sodisfarmi come io uoleua.” Sansovino, *Del Gouerno de i Regni et Delle Republiche Così Antiche Come Moderne Libri XVIII*, 3v.

¹²⁰ “Et perche fuori del Latino, ui erano per dentro uia state introdotte molte cose impertinenti, leuando et cassando tutto il superchio aggiunti, lo ho largamente ampliato ne luoghi doue a mio giuditio pareua che’l bisogno fosse maggiore. [...] Ne nomi guasti dalle tante impressioni fatte di questo uolume, così sconciamente trattato, la fatica mia non è stata picciola nel restituirli al suo primo candore” Francesco Sansovino, *Sopplimento Delle Croniche Vniuersali Del Mondo Di f. Iacopo Filippo Da Bergamo. Tradotto Nuouamente Da m. Francesco Sansouino* (Francesco Sansovino, 1575), 4r.

printers, editors, and translators. Sansovino's career demonstrates how interconnected these roles were, and how authorial agency was shared, contested, and constantly redefined. By playing on the fluid boundaries between these roles, Sansovino positioned himself not just as a mere transmitter of knowledge but also as an intellectual authority in his own right. Through his prefaces, dedications, and correspondence, he presented himself not simply as a writer but as a thorough scholar who embodies the roles of translator, editor, compiler, and publisher all at once. He emphasized his expertise through systematic source-gathering, critical evaluation of materials, and adherence to humanist principles like *imitatio*, all the while aligning himself with established scholarly traditions. Sansovino cultivates an image of scholarly persistence and *vita civile*, highlighting his extensive research methods, broad intellectual networks, and patron relationships as proof of his authority. Importantly, he redefined what qualified as a "new work," arguing that innovation can lie in format and methodology rather than just in style of writing or content, thereby justifying his compilatory works as innovative scholarly contributions. This self-fashioning strategy allowed him to preserve his authorial agency in a competitive sixteenth-century Venetian book market where many actors could claim authority over a single work.

Finally, Sansovino's conception of authorship cannot be separated from his audience. He was very aware of the two sides of his readership: the supportive patrons and colleagues who could validate his work, and the critics ready to challenge its novelty or value. This tension shaped his focus on producing "new works," whether through compilation, retranslation, or reorganization of material, thereby aligning his authorial agency with his readers' expectations. The methods he used to establish this agency were thus deeply connected to how he engaged with, anticipated, and negotiated with his audiences.

Chapter 2 – Ammirato's Authorial Practices

Introduction

It happens that, up to his hour, I have not been silent on these needs of Christianity, which I have foreseen, and [which] forced me to write an Oration to Sixtus V, Pope of happy memory, [...] I have spoken twice [...] with Your Holiness and twice with his Majesty the Catholic King, once with the Neapolitan Nobility and more and more times I have spoken about it with some Prince: and [I] wrote about it to almost all the Princes of Italy, and to some outside of it

This is what noted the beginning of an oration for Pope Clement VIII. The author, the Florentine humanist Scipione Ammirato, was visibly alarmed and did not hesitate to clarify that his reasons for writing were to show “what preparations had to be made to act against the power of the Turk.”¹²¹ The fact that the oration was published in 1596, one year after Clement VIII's establishment of the Holy League and three years after the outbreak of the Long Turkish War, accounts for the writer's insistence and the urgency on the matter. Just as Ammirato points out, the multiple times he addressed various audiences, several major players sketched the contemporary European political-religious dynamics. The interests of the Papacy, Philip II of Spain, and the local Italian rulers intertwined, yet also converged, and developed through the second half of the 1500s.

This was the setting in which Scipione Ammirato offered counsel through a series of *orazioni* to kings and popes. Although a lawyer by profession, Ammirato (1531-1601) was far

¹²¹ “E avvenga che in questi bisogni della cristianita infino a quest'ora io non sia stato cheto, i quali antiveduti da me mi secerò scrivere una Oratione a Sisto V Pontefiche di felice memoria, mostrando quali doveano esser i preparamenti, che dal canto nostro si haveano a fare contra la potenza del Turco e come che succeduta la guerra, io habbia due volte intorno le occorrenze di essa parlato con la Santita Vostra e due altre con la Maesta del Re Cattolico una alla Nobilita Napoletana e piu e piu volte parlatone con alcun Principe: e scrittone quasi a tutti Principi d'Italia, e ad alcun fuor d'essa; conosco non haver per questo adempito il mio debito, ne sodisfatto al mio deisero e tuttavia haver nell'animo nuovi stimoli e nuove paure, di non haver interamente il mio ufficio fornito,” Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Terza* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1596), 4.

more interested in literature, philosophy, and history. His scholarly, as well as his patronage interests took him all over Italy, from his birthplace in Lecce to places where he crossed paths and collaborated with other humanists such as Pietro Aretino, Girolamo Ruscelli, and Giovanni Botero. From 1569, at Cosimo I's appointment, he became the official historiographer of the Medici court, and soon a member of the *Accademia degli Alterati*, in Florence. In 1595, he became a canon (*canonico*) at the Cathedral of Florence (Duomo). By the end of his life, he was already recognized for two of his significant works, *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito* (1594) and *Istorie Fiorentine* (1600), through which he held a stance as an anti-Machiavellian.¹²² His critique of Machiavelli's claim that religion should be adjusted to the needs of the state echoes many of Ammirato's other works, where Christianity becomes the pillar around which laws should be adapted. Ranging from literary dialogues and poems, genealogical and historical works to political commentaries and attempts to compile cosmographies and chronologies, Ammirato's legacy, like that of any humanist of the sixteenth century, echoes the context in which he was writing, the interests of his patrons, as well as attempts to present himself as a writer with expertise on various topics. Among his works, Ammirato also composed a series of texts titled *orazioni*, of which some reflect these concerns.

Written and published roughly between the mid-1580s and the late 1590s, the orations are variously addressed, as the above quote points out, to the Neapolitan nobles, Pope Sixtus V, Philip II of Spain, Pope Clement VIII, Henry IV of France, or the Venetian nobility.¹²³

¹²² For extended biography on Ammirato see Luciano Scarabelli, ed., *Istorie Fiorentine Di Scipione Ammirato*, vol. Primo (Torino: Cugini Pomba e Comp. Editori, 1853); Umberto Congedo, *La vita e le opere di Scipione Ammirato (notizie e ricerche)* (Trani: V. Vecchi, 1901); Eric W. Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

¹²³ Ammirato also wrote two funerary orations, one for Francesco I de' Medici (1587) and one for Torquato Tasso (1595), which I left out in this analysis because they have little to do with the message that transpires through the orations analysed here. See Scipione Ammirato, *Orazioni a Diversi Principi. Intorno i Preparamenti, Che s'aurebbono a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco. Con vn Dialogo Delle Imprese Del Medesimo. Aggiuntoui Nel Fine Le Lettere, et Orazioni Di Monsignor Bessarione Cardinal Niceno, Scritte a Principi d'Italia* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1598); Scipione Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Terzo* (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1642), 499–516.

These *orazioni* represent Ammirato's advice and call for action to European rulers to solve interstate dissents and unify their forces in the face of an expanding Ottoman Empire. Ammirato composed his orations in a context in which the Ottoman Empire was indeed a pressing matter in an already unstable politico-religious landscape, and, although the image of the Ottomans is not the main subject, analyzing this polity becomes inevitable through the pages of the texts.

Although Ammiato's works have been the subject of many historical studies, as modern scholars recognize him as one of the leading exponents of Tacitism and anti-Machiavellianism in the sixteenth century, the *orazioni* have usually been seen either as indications of his patronage networks or as extensions or summaries of his main political thought expressed in *Discorsi* on Tacitus. Ammirato's *Orazioni* indeed blend into his corpus of works, but shifting the analysis from the content to the process behind composing the texts and looking closer at the form and context alongside the content can reveal the complexities of Renaissance humanist agency.

In this chapter, I focus on the form-content relationship in sixteenth-century humanist texts and how it highlights different types of humanist authorial agency. I concentrate on Ammirato's series of *orazioni* as a case study alongside some of his other works. To pursue this analysis, I undertake several levels of inquiry. Firstly, I look at how Ammirato's relationship with the printers shaped his agency during the process of publishing these texts. A brief look at the printed editions, the contracts with the publishers, part of his correspondence, and some manuscript works reveals how Ammirato tried to establish his authorial agency in the *orazioni*. Secondly, I analyze the other ways he tried to maintain and emphasize his authorial and humanist agency in these texts. I do so by looking at the epitextual and peritextual elements of the *orazioni* and their content, correspondence, and some of his other works. This

analytical angle reveals that Ammirato tried to fashion himself as a multi-faceted intellectual who was simultaneously an experienced and keen political thinker, a historian with a love for archives, a man of letters, and a loyal state servant.

Establishing Authorial Agency: A Historian's Relationship with the Printers

The printing history of the *orazioni* can easily be pieced together through clues Ammirato himself left in the texts.¹²⁴ Although first printed in 1594, Ammirato wrote his first oration to Pope Sixtus V in 1585; by 1596, he already had written six such texts.¹²⁵ By 1598, he composed four more following the same theme and structure: a couple of them added to the compendium *Orazioni a diversi principi*, one for Henry IV of France written shortly after the Spanish-French peace, and lastly a funerary oration for Philip II (addressed in fact to Philip III), these last two also added later in Ammirato's posthumous collected works edited by his heir.¹²⁶ In 1595, a year after the conquest of Győr and following a series of pressing requests that Pope Clement VIII issued to the Venetian, Habsburg, and Spanish ambassadors, Ammirato also wrote an oration to the Venetian nobility.¹²⁷ Yet, this text never came out in print. Ammirato does not

¹²⁴ Congedo mentions a different publication timeline, starting with the oration for Neapolitan nobles. Pettas also mentions that the first oration was the funerary one for Francesco I de' Medici, but he creates the timeline looking only at the printing dates. See Umberto Congedo, *La vita e le opere di Scipione Ammirato (notizie e ricerche)* (Trani: V. Vecchi, 1901), 295; William A. Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence: A Renaissance Printing and Publishing Family: A History of the Florentine Firm and a Catalogue of the Editions* (Oak Knoll Press, 2013).

¹²⁵ "Per lo qual fine, accioche non rimanda alla Maesta Vostra dubbio alcuno di questa verita, sono gia tredici anni passati, che infin dal primo anno del Pontificato di Sisteo Quinto scrissi a quel Pontefice una oratione intorno i preparamenti, che dovean farsi contra la potenza de Turchi," Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Cristianissimo Enrico Quarto Re Di Francia et Di Navarra. Sopo La Pace Fatta Con Spagna* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1598).

¹²⁶ See table of contents in Scipione Ammirato, *Orazioni a Diversi Principi. Intorno i Preparamenti, Che s'aurebbono a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco. Con vn Dialogo Delle Imprese Del Medesimo. Aggiuntoui Nel Fine Le Lettere, et Orazioni Di Monsignor Bessarione Cardinal Niceno, Scritte a Principi d'Italia* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1598) and Scipione Ammirato, *Opuscoli del Signor Scipione Ammirato tomo primo*, ed. Scipione Ammirato il Giovane (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637).

¹²⁷ Rodolfo de Mattei, "Una 'Orazione,' Di Scipione Ammirato Alla Repubblica Di Venezia, Del 1595," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 119, no. 1 (429) (1961): 91.

mention it in either his other orations or in his will of 1596 which lists the forthcoming *Orazioni a diversi principi* collection. The reasons for not handing this text to the printers are unknown but may be related to Ammirato falling ill around the time he wrote the text.¹²⁸ Another explanation could be related to the relationship between Ammirato's patron and the Venetians, because although Ferdinando managed to quiet the conflict caused by the San Stefano militia, the affairs with the Republic were still unstable. Regardless of his motivation, as Rudolfo de Mattei underlines, Ammirato's decision may have had more profound implications that were perhaps known to his heir, who also omitted to include in the oration in the *Opuscoli*, half a century later.¹²⁹

Even if Ammirato's reasons for not printing the text cannot be uncovered, he did point towards his reasons for writing this text, just as he did in the other nine orations on the same topic. Although with variations in argumentation, the message that transpired through the oration for the Venetians was standard for all the other texts in the series: leaders – be they religious or political – must act, first to pacify the religious dissents in Europe, and then to unite their forces to face the rapidly advancing Ottoman armies. The manuscript with the oration for the Venetian nobility is the most direct and untampered source through which historians interested in humanist agency can grasp Ammirato's words in his motivation for writing the text.

However, before unwrapping Ammirato's motives for composing the *orazioni*, we first have to tackle the issue that arises with the orations for the popes, kings, and even the

¹²⁸ “Non è appena passato ancor l'anno, che io da gravissima infermità assalito, fui assai presso a quel fine, alquale tutte l'umane cose corrono” Scipione Ammirato, Lettera al Serenissimo S. Francesco Maria della Rovere, Duca d'Urbino, suo Signore (24 dic. 1597) in *Orazioni a Diversi Principi. Intorno i Preparamenti, Che s'aurebbono a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco. Con vn Dialogo Delle Imprese Del Medesimo. Aggiuntoui Nel Fine Le Lettere, et Orazioni Di Monsignor Bessarione Cardinal Niceno, Scritte a Principi d'Italia* (Firenza: Filippo Giunti, 1598).

¹²⁹ Rodolfo de Mattei, “Una ‘‘Orazione,’’ Di Scipione Ammirato Alla Repubblica Di Venezia, Del 1595,” *Archivio Storico Italiano* 119, no. 1 (429) (1961): 93. He also offers a transcript of the manuscript which can be found in Magl. Cl. XXX, 106, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze.

Neapolitan nobility: they circulated almost exclusively in print, not in manuscript.¹³⁰ Since the printing process involved several stages of alterations, where do Ammirato's words end and where do the editor's begin? The claim of the author's full agency on the text becomes doubtful when the production process involved a copyist, an editor, and a contract between the author and the printers. The duties of editors were manifold. Starting as advisors on what works to print, editors were also in charge of correcting the manuscript version of the text that was about to be printed, as well as of the first version that came out in print. Besides, they had to understand and consult the text to provide indexes, tables of contents, commentaries, or additional notes.¹³¹ With such complex roles, some printers, such as Filippo and Jacopo Giunti, perceived editors as intimidating, since they posed a risk for publishing plain books.¹³² And their printing press was one with which Ammirato collaborated most, alongside Giorgio Marescotti's.

The Giunti were a family of printers, originally from Florence. From Venice to Lyon, Antwerp, Paris, Frankfurt, and Salamanca, the Giunti quickly expanded their bookshops and printing presses throughout the sixteenth century. In Florence, they also acted as the official printing house of the Grand Duke of Tuscany.¹³³ Starting from 1587, the Giunti brothers printed sixteen titles under Ammirato's name; out of those, six were separate orations and one was the collection *Orazioni a diversi principi* (1598), which included the two other orations printed at Giorgio Marescotti's press.¹³⁴ Marescotti was one of the most prolific printers in

¹³⁰ There are a few cases where A send presentation copies, as is the case with Clementina Terza (manuscript BNCF) and some hints he left in his correspondence when he sent copies of his orations to various cardinals (Will mention and analyze this further in the chapter)

¹³¹ Richardson, *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy*, 151.

¹³² Richardson, *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy*, 155.

¹³³ Renato Delfiol et al., eds., *I Giunti tipografi editori di Firenze, 1497-1570* (Giunti Bàrbera, 1978).

¹³⁴ Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione Fatta Nella Morte Di Don Francesco de Medici Gran Duca Di Toscana* (Filippo Giunti, 1587); Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Satissimo et Beatissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII* (Heredi di Iacopo Giunti, 1594); Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Serenissimo e Potentissimo Re Cattolico Suo Signore Filippo Re Di Spagna. Intorno Il Pacificar La Cristianita e Prender Unitamente l'arme Contra Gli Infedeli* (Filippo Giunti, 1594); Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione Scritta Alla Nobilta Napoletana Confortandola Ad*

Florence and one of Giunti's main competitors. From a dedication attached to Ammirato's oration to Henry IV, we learn that Marescotti was a Frenchman who came to Florence in 1553 to work for Torrentino's printing house. On the side, he was also an editor and a bookseller.¹³⁵ In 1570, he bought some of Torrentino's printing equipment and opened his flourishing business.¹³⁶ Ammirato's collaboration with him started as early as 1580, and by the end of the century, seven of his works were published by Marescotti's press.¹³⁷ Although the archival material regarding Ammirato's agreements with the Giunti and Marescotti is sparse, there are a few documents that could help sketch the dynamics between the printer, his workers, and the authors, as well as the mutual expectations in the author-printer relationship and how that affected the authorial agency.

On September 3rd, 1598, Filippo Giunti signed a contract for Ammirato's *Istorie Fiorentine* (1600).¹³⁸ The document stipulated what paper and type (as in printing characters)

Andar Alla Guerra d'Ungheria Contra i Turchi (Heredi di Iacopo Giunti, 1594); *Lettere & Orazioni Di Monsignor Bessarione Cardinal Niceno Scritte a Principi d'Italia* (Filippo Giunti, 1594); Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Terza*; Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione Nella Morte Di Filippo Secondo Re Di Spagna al Potentissimo Re Di Spagna Filippo Terzo, Suo Signore. Detta Filippica Terza* (Filippo Giunti, 1598); Ammirato, *Orazioni a Diversi Principi. Intorno i Preparamenti, Che s'aurebbono a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco. Con vn Dialogo Delle Imprese Del Medesimo. Aggiuntoui Nel Fine Le Lettere, et Orazioni Di Monsignor Bessarione Cardinal Niceno, Scritte a Principi d'Italia*.

¹³⁵ "Combienque des mon ieune age, ie partis de France, quarantecinq ans y a, pour venir en ceste ville, en la quelle i'ay serui iusques a present leurs Altessez Serenissimes, aux quelles aussi ie suis beaucoup oblige pour le bien e graces qu'elles m'ont fait en mon estat de libraire, et imprimeur," Dedicatory letter in Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Cristianissimo Enrico Quarto Re Di Francia et Di Navarra. Sopo La Pace Fatta Con Spagna* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1598).

¹³⁶ For more details on the rise, evolution, and economic issues of Marescotti printing house see Renato Delfiol, "I Marescotti, Librai, Stampatori Ed Editori a Firenze Tra Cinque e Seicento," *Studi Secenteschi* 18 (1977): 146–204; Cesare Tidoli, "Stampa e Corte Nella Firenze Del Tardo Cinquecento: Giorgio Marescotti," *Nuova Rivista Storica* 74, no. 5 (1990): 605–44; Giampiero Guarducci, *Annali dei Marescotti tipografi editori di Firenze: 1563-1613*, Biblioteca di bibliografia italiana (Firenze: L.S. Olschki, 2001).

¹³⁷ Scipione Ammirato, *Delle Famiglie Nobili Neapolitane Parte Prima* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1580); Scipione Ammirato, *Gli opuscoli di Scipione Ammirato: i titoli de quali nell'altra faccia son posti* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1583); Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione Alla Maesta Cattolica Del Potentissimo Re Filippo II Re Di Spagna. Suo Signor Naturale. Detta Filippica Seconda* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1594); Scipione Ammirato, *Della Famiglia de' Paladini Di Lecce* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1595); Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Seconda* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1595); Scipione Ammirato, *Della Famiglia Dell'Antoglietta Di Taranto* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1597); Ammirato, *Orazione al Cristianissimo Enrico Quarto Re Di Francia et Di Navarra. Dopo La Pace Fatta Con Spagna*.

¹³⁸ See Bertoli for an analysis of the printing technique employed by Giunti that also underlines the economic aspects of the printing process in the late 1500s. He also offers a partial transcript of this contract. Richardson and

should be used, the format and pace of the printing; that the author should correct the second proof of the text and compile the index, while the printer reserved the right to address the dedicatory letter to the Grand Duke of Tuscany; that the author would receive 20 unbound copies of the work and was not allowed to add to the work or collaborate with another printer until Giunti sold all his copies. Some of these requirements displeased Ammirato, and the following day, he came up with counterproposals. He refused Giunti's request to compile the index and was offended since, as an author, he is "too tired to compose the works without having to take care of the tables" and considered this task beneath his expertise and dignity.¹³⁹

Although Bertoli finds this confusing and mentions that he agreed to compile manuscript indexes on works written twenty years earlier, this example can merely indicate the flexibility of Ammirato's ethos on what constitutes authorial practices. Bertoli gives as an example a folio from the manuscript version of *Zibaldone di Scipione Ammirato estratto dalle Riformagi*, which contains a partial handwritten index of the names treated in the second part of his work on Neapolitan Families, published by Marescotti in 1580.¹⁴⁰ However, this was not a unique example among Ammirato's works. In one of his notebooks titled *Notizie Storiche*, which contained alphabetically organized information on various polities worldwide, Ammirato compiled short indexes with pagination references for the elements in each section.¹⁴¹ Likewise, a binding of the printed genealogical trees Ammirato created is preceded

Pettas reference this example also relying on Bertoli's text. Gustavo Bertoli, "Organizzazione Del Lavoro Tipografico, Lettura in Piombo e Correzione Nei Preliminari Del Contratto Fra Scipione Ammirato e Filippo Giunti per La Stampa Delle 'Istorie Fiorentine,'" *La Bibliofilia* 97, no. 2 (1995): 163–86; Brian Richardson, *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); William A. Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence: A Renaissance Printing and Publishing Family: A History of the Florentine Firm and a Catalogue of the Editions* (Oak Knoll Press, 2013).

¹³⁹ "Gli autori son pur soverchio stracchi del comporre l'opere senza hauere a badare a tavole talché questa cura si potrà dare ad altra persona," Gustavo Bertoli, "Organizzazione Del Lavoro Tipografico, Lettura in Piombo e Correzione Nei Preliminari Del Contratto Fra Scipione Ammirato e Filippo Giunti per La Stampa Delle 'Istorie Fiorentine,'" *La Bibliofilia* 97, no. 2 (1995): 165.

¹⁴⁰ Gustavo Bertoli, "Organizzazione Del Lavoro Tipografico, Lettura in Piombo e Correzione Nei Preliminari Del Contratto Fra Scipione Ammirato e Filippo Giunti per La Stampa Delle 'Istorie Fiorentine,'" *La Bibliofilia* 97, no. 2 (1995): 165, n.8.

¹⁴¹ Mgl. XXIV 169, BNCF, 40.

by an unfinished handwritten and alphabetically organized table of contents.¹⁴² In his example, which also stands for the other cases, Bertoli seems to overlook that all these works and the indexes that accompanied them were probably not intended for public use. *Zibaldoni* or commonplace books were composite volumes in which humanists gathered quotations, poems, and bits of literary texts and were fairly often used as reference books for future works.¹⁴³ Ammirato probably heavily used this type of codex as a note-taking storage device since he left behind fifteen manuscript *zibaldoni* at his death.¹⁴⁴ A closer look at the structure of *Notizie Storiche* indicates that it was also, most probably, a reference book.¹⁴⁵ The sloppy handwriting of the indexes on the works suggests that they were meant for Ammirato's personal use and ease in compiling and organizing information.

Ammirato felt mistreated in his collaboration with Filippo Giunti even before the contract for *Istorie Fiorentine*. In his correspondence with the secretary Belisario Vinta, Ammirato complained that Filippo Giunti kept delaying the printing process on his *Discorsi on Tacitus*, thus stripping him of his authority on the text.¹⁴⁶ The printing process took two years due to Giunti's treatment of his employees, which made them quit, and Ammirato was eventually charged with reviewing the first print of the work.¹⁴⁷ But what outraged Ammirato the most was Giunti's proposal for the printer to write the dedicatory letter.

Giunti's claim touched a sensitive issue, as the dedicatory letter had a few essential functions. Firstly, it was customary for the author to write the dedicatory letter of the first

¹⁴² Mgl. Cl. XXVI, BNCF, 3.

¹⁴³ Giovanna Murano, "Zibaldoni (Commonplace Books)," *Scriptorium* 67, no. 2 (2013): 394–416.

¹⁴⁴ "Nota Di Libri Consegnati Alla Guardaroba Generale," *Rassegna Pugliese Di Scienze, Lettere Ed Arti* XIV, no. 11 (1898): 344–45.

¹⁴⁵ Umberto Concedo in his *Vita e Opere d'Ammirato* also hinted at this, since this notebook, along with another titles *Annotazioni Geographiche*, seem to be Ammirato's working efforts into compiling the cosmography he always wanted., 268–269

¹⁴⁶ "d'altro canto non pare onesto violentarlo con l'autorita...," ASF, Mediceo, 841, c. 851.

¹⁴⁷ "La revisione de' discorsi va bene; ma il Giunti stampato che hebbe un foglio di essi, è in guisa per la sua piacevolezza stato abbandonato da' ministri dhe l'servano, che l'opera è arrenata...," ASF, Mediceo, 856, c. 178.

edition while he was alive, and secondly, it was a popular way of making money. It was one of the reasons why, in 1587, Francesco Bocchi, a priest, teacher, and editor, sued Giorgio Marescotti for not paying him a sum of 200 scudi accumulated during their almost twenty years of collaboration. Much like Ammirato's complaint about Giunti, Bocchi accused Marescotti of mistreating his employees and thus printing the works without fully correcting them, even though some authors would pay to have their work printed.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, Marescotti, as a printer, felt at a disadvantage when humanists would willingly send their texts for print without offering any money but asking for an income for the dedicatory letter from the printer and the dedicatee. The trial documents reveal several essential details. First, Marescotti always had a corrector, but the authors, who paid to have their works printed, could correct their texts if they wanted to. Secondly, a dedicatory letter cost from 3 to 5 scudi, but the payment of this sum was conditional.¹⁴⁹ If an author wrote a dedicatory letter to the printer as friends, they would not receive any payment.¹⁵⁰ Ammirato was one of the undersigned authors who confirmed these policies in collaboration with Marescotti.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ “[Capitola et provare intende] come gl'autori dell'opere che si stampano alla stamperia di maestro Giorgio alcuna volta volendo per lor piacere e contento rivedere le d. loro opere mentre si stampano o correggerle mai hanno havuto o hanno premio o provisione alcuna per tali correzioni e fatiche atteso che danno sinistro alla stamperia sendo causa che e lavori stanno a dreto anzi danno mancie a garzoni e ministri per essere lassati rivedere e raccomandano le detto loro opere a correttori. Non servendo le loro proprie correzioni per non esser pratici. et così fu et è vero pub. et not. pub. voce et fama. et ita est,” Archivio Arcivescovile di Firenze, CC45, n.15 c.41r.-v., quoted in Gustavo Bertoli, “Autori Ed Editori a Firenze Nella Seconda Metà Del Sedicesimo Secolo: Il ‘Caso’ Marescotti,” *Annali Di Storia Di Firenze* 2 (2011): 95, https://doi.org/10.13128/Annali_Stor_Firen-9837.

¹⁴⁹ Bertoli, “Autori Ed Editori a Firenze Nella Seconda Metà Del Sedicesimo Secolo: Il ‘Caso’ Marescotti,” 79.

¹⁵⁰ “(Sia domandato) se sanno che Maestro giorgio ha sempre tenuto et tiene provisionato per la sua stamperia un correttore per correggiere et vedere quello faccia bisogno; se gl'è vero che molti per farsi conoscere et per esercitarsi vanno alle stamperie e fanno come amici epistole dedicatorie e per tal conto non meritano e non sono paghati facendo per comodo loro; se gl'è vero che un amico facendo a uno stampatore o a un'opera una dedicatoria non merita pagamento; se gl'è vero che de libri nuovi d'autori non famosi ne fanno male quelli che gli stampano a loro spese; se conoscano autori che habbino fatto stampare lor opere o hanno pagato lo stampatore; se gl'è vero che non sanno che ser francesco inducente habbia corretto libri a m.º giorgio tenendo egli del continuo el suo correttore,” Archivio Arcivescovile di Firenze, CC45, n. 15 cc.24r-v, 39r quoted in Gustavo Bertoli, “Autori Ed Editori a Firenze Nella Seconda Metà Del Sedicesimo Secolo: Il ‘Caso’ Marescotti,” *Annali Di Storia Di Firenze* 2 (2011): 96, https://doi.org/10.13128/Annali_Stor_Firen-9837.

¹⁵¹ “Adi 10 di Maggio 1588 In Fiorenza. Noi sottoscritti facciamo fede come la verità è che havendo noi fatto stampare alcune delle nostre compositioni nella stamperia di Giorgio Marescotti ci è convenuto pagar detto Giorgio se non in tutto in parte perché dette composizioni ci sieno stampate ancorche dette opere stampate restassino nelle mani et in bottega sua libere et oltre di questo haviamo più volte usato di dar la mancia a suoi

Ammirato's new requests for printing *Istorie Fiorentine* and the documents from the Marescotti trial highlight several points. In his view, authorial agency should manifest in the main body of the text, as well as in the dedicatory letter, which also served him as a self-fashioning channel in aspiring for patronage. Editing practices such as proofreading and compiling indexes created a hierarchical bridge between authorial and editorial roles. An exception to this seems to be copying practices. Though not discussed in relation to the printers, Ammirato revealed in his correspondence that he employed two young men who helped him write and transcribe his work.¹⁵² To him, the work of copyists did not diminish or interfere with the writer's authorial agency in a text. Ammirato's employment of indexes for personal use, yet his discontent towards compiling them for the printed editions adds a distinction between public and personal use of knowledge. Furthermore, it underlines the fluidity of humanists' editorial practices and the levels of agency they carry; creating a peritext is secondary to composing a body of text, as an author can choose to express his agency both in the peritext and in the main body of text, while the editor is restricted to the peritext.

Filippo Giunti eventually accepted Ammirato's conditions and proceeded with the printing, claiming exclusivity on the print for only two years.¹⁵³ Considering these details, it is possible to argue that the texts of Ammirato's *orazioni*, also printed by the Giunti, reflect his input more than anyone else's. Interesting to note is that only one of Ammirato's single printed

stampatori mentre si stampavano le nostre opere. Et havendo da noi corretto o fatto corregger in tutto o in parte dette nostre compositioni mentre si sono stampate, ci è stato concesso da detto Giorgio et a nostra requisitione et per farci cosa grata, perché più tosto tornava danno et scomodo a lui et a suoi stampatori et correttore che altrimenti perché egli del continuo ha tenuto et tiene un correttore provisionato et pagato con carico con carico di rivedere et correggere tutto quello che si stampa in detta sua stamperia il quale in ogni modo rivedeva et correggeva le nostre compositioni se bene fussino prima state da noi o da altri per noi viste et corrette et questo è l'istessa verità,” Archivio Arcivescovile di Firenze, CC45, n. 15 cc.7r-9r quoted in Gustavo Bertoli, “Autori Ed Editori a Firenze Nella Seconda Metà Del Sedicesimo Secolo: Il ‘Caso’ Marescotti,” *Annali Di Storia Di Firenze* 2 (2011): 99, https://doi.org/10.13128/Annali_Stor_Firen-9837.

¹⁵² “se la Santità sua si disponesse à dargli qualunque piccolo & minutissimo sussidio di pensione, quando non per altro per pagar lo stipendio a due giouani che l'aiutano à scriuer del continuo,” “Lettera to Cardinale San Giorgio”; “Martino Spigliati mi haueua seruito diciasette anni et buona parte della mia Istoria è copiata di man sua,” “Lettera to Giovanni de Medici,” Scipione Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 417; 479.

¹⁵³ Richardson, *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy*, 66–67.

orations at Giunti includes a dedicatory letter. The first edition of the Oration for Sixtus V, also the first text of the series, which Ammirato sent to print, is dedicated to Christina of Lorraine, signed by Filippo Giunti. Besides this, only the collection of *Orazioni* has Ammirato's dedication to Francesco Maria II della Rovere, Duke of Urbino. Based on the clash between Giunti's and Ammirato's requests in their future contracts and the information from the Marescotti trial, it could have been the case that Ammirato paid Giunti to have the separate orations published, while Giunti paid him for the collection from 1598. Furthermore, Ammirato's refusal to let Giunti write the dedication for *Istorie Fiorentine* might indicate that Ammirato may have learned from previous contracts and did not want to let the printer claim neither the financial rewards, nor the agency of a dedicatory letter. It might also indicate that they had a merely professional interaction, given the official positions they both had in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, as the official historiographer, and official printer respectively. This contrasts with a possibly friendly relationship with Marescotti, who wrote the dedicatory letter in Ammirato's *orazione* for Henry IV. Based on its content, Ammirato granted Marescotti the right to address the dedication, knowing his loyalty for the French crown.¹⁵⁴ Nonetheless, this is the only text among those Ammirato printed with Marescotti that had a dedicatory letter not signed by him. Based on the documents of the trial and the testimonies from the authors and the correctors, it is possible to assess that Ammirato had the possibility to amend and check the final corrected versions of his texts published by Marescotti, and so they still reflect his agency as an author.

¹⁵⁴ "De quoy sentant allegresse, non pas moy seulement, qui suis ne François, mais toute l'Italie, voir e toute la Chrestiente ensemble, i ay reputé a mon heur singulier, qu'on aye a publier par le moyen de mon imprimerie ceste orasion, qui en soy contient une telle allegresse. La quelle par l'auteur courtoisement m'a esté octroyée, iceluy non seulement cognoissant, combien ie suis tresaffectionné e tresfidelle vassal de V. M.," Dedication in Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Cristianissimo Enrico Quarto Re Di Francia et Di Navarra. Dopo La Pace Fatta Con Spagna* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1598).

There is, however, another factor that could have had an impact on the texts as they were published. Its results can be seen on the back cover of the Marescotti's edition of the oration for Henry IV. What appears as an honest review of the text, turns out to be an inquisitorial approval for print.¹⁵⁵ Even if this is the only text in Ammirato's oration series that has the Inquisition's approval, it is perhaps the one that needed the most attention since Ammirato was extolling a king who was not a Catholic until four years prior, who was a traditional ally of the Ottoman Empire, and who had just ended a war with the King of Spain, whose praises Ammirato had been singing for about a decade. Although through the other orations his opinion of the Inquisition is a positive one, the printers Ammirato collaborated with had to answer to the institution in publishing the text.¹⁵⁶ Since Marescotti had also published works by Savonarola, it comes as no surprise that his works had to go through content review, whether at the request of the Inquisition or at the printer's caution.¹⁵⁷ On the other hand, Giunti's issues were more bureaucratic in nature. The publishing of Ammirato's *Discorsi* got postponed because of the dissensions between the Inquisitor and the Grand Duke's secretary

¹⁵⁵ "Fra Tomaso Buoninsegni havendo vistola presente orazione del Signor Scipione Ammirato, oltra la bellezza sua: la giudica molto pia cattolica da dare molto contento e molta edificazione, a putti quelli, che la leggeranno onde per ogni rispetto e degna che si mandi alla stampa e c. Io Fra Tomaso sopradetto di propria mano ho sottoscritto. Imprimatur in civitate Florentiae accedente consensu Reverendi Patris Inquisitoris praeposito nomine auctoris, revisoris licentiis Tipografi e antequam vulgetur fiat rescontratio cum copia in Archivio remansa die 30 mensis Iunii 1598," Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Cristianissimo Enrico Quarto Re Di Francia et Di Navarra. Dopo La Pace Fatta Con Spagna* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1598).

¹⁵⁶ "L'ufficio della Santissima Inquisizione," Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebonno a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1594), 13, 16; "della severita della Inquisizione e di molti altri rivi sorgenti da questo gran fiume e quel che sommamente importa [...] Et per conseguente, che converrebbe tirar tanto la corda a quell'inquisizione, che un giorni si spezzera, facendo viver ciascuno in continuo timore e sospetto che non è cosa, che si possa far peggio co' sudditi, che nutrirli in continua paura?", Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione Nella Morte Di Filippo Secondo Re Di Spagna al Potentissimo Re Di Spagna Filippo Terzo, Suo Signore. Detta Filippica Terza* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1598), 14.

¹⁵⁷ Girolamo Savonarola and Tommaso Buoninsegni, *Hieronymi Sauonarolae Ord. Praed. Opus Eximium, Aduersus Diuinatorem Astronomiam, in Confirmationem Confutationis Eiusdem Astronomicae Predictionis, Ioan. Pici Mirandulae Comitit, Ex Italico in Latinum Translatum. Interprete f. Thoma Boninsignio Senensi Eiusdem Ordinis, et Sacrae Theologiae in Academia Florentina Publico Professore. Ab Eodem Scholiis, Adnotationibus, Atque Indice Illustratum. Accedit Eiusdem Interpretis Apologeticus, Aduersus Huius Operis Vituperatores* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1581), <https://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/titolo/CNCE028984>; See Scipione Ammirato, *Della Famiglia Dell'Antoglietta di Taranto* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1597) for the only other of his works with this publisher that has inquisitorial approval on the cover.

which confused Giunti to whom to turn for approval.¹⁵⁸ The delay in publication due to the Inquisitorial approval seems to also been common in the case of the orations, as Ammirato's correspondence reveals that he sent some manuscript copies ahead to a few cardinals.¹⁵⁹

Thus, even with the intricate relationship between printers and authors, and the difficulties of the printing process, Ammirato's *orazioni* reflect his agency. The maintenance of his words and ideas in the bodies of texts is reinforced by him having the possibility to take part in the correction process and the proofreading. Since he acted and wanted to be perceived as an author and not as an editor, his input would rather be found in the main body of the text, than in the peritextual elements, such as indexes or tables of contents.

Maintaining Authorial Agency: Explicit and Implicit Reasons for Writing the *Orazioni*

The lack of dedicatory letters in the printed versions does not diminish Ammirato's agency, especially since often the dedication was integrated between the first lines of the text.¹⁶⁰ Besides, as his impatience with the Inquisitorial approval for publishing shows, he took care

¹⁵⁸ "come hauerebbe à quest' hora veduto in vno de miei discorsi sopra Tacito se con incommodo mio grandissimo & danno dello Stampatore non fusser già due mesi fermati di stampare per la differenza di precedenza nata trà il Reuer. Padre Inquisitore e il Signor Dani," "Lettera al Gran Duca Ferdinando," Scipione Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenza: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 537; Since 1559, when at papal insistencies Cosimo de Medici promulgated the Index of prohibited books in Florence, the Grand Dukes have tried to keep a balance between church and state when it came to printing control. In 1590s, Grand Duke Ferdinando issued an order for Florentine printers, that every book that gets published must first be seen, thus approved, by his secretary Iacopo Dani, thus restricting the role of the inquisitors only on religious matters. William A. Pettas, *The Giunti of Florence: A Renaissance Printing and Publishing Family: A History of the Florentine Firm and a Catalogue of the Editions* (Oak Knoll Press, 2013), 80; Brian Richardson, *Print Culture in Renaissance Italy: The Editor and the Vernacular Text, 1470-1600*, Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 155.

¹⁵⁹ "Se io non verrò à noia à VS. Illustriss. con tante mie orazioni bene andrà, ma io credo che la libererà di questa molestia il Reuer. Padre Inquisitore, il quale solo di tutti gli altri Ministri che hanno cura di rivedere libri, tanto mi trattiene e indugiale cose mie, che frenerò questo ardore di scriuere. [...] Contuttociò io sarei andato più adagio è publicare questa Orazione, se frà l'altre parole che mi vsa Monsignore Illustrissimo San Giorgio, à cui la mandai prima scritta a penna, non vi fosser queste," "Lettera al Cardinal Santa Severina," Scipione Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenza: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 432.

¹⁶⁰ Richardson, *Printing, Writers, and Readers in Renaissance Italy*, 51.

that his texts reached the people for whom they were intended or at least an audience for whom they were significant. A manuscript version of *Clementina terza*, kept in the archives of Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze, seems to confirm both observations. Carefully handwritten, the oration is accompanied by a letter to Christina of Lorraine, the Grand Duchess of Tuscany.¹⁶¹ The text, identical in content and marginal biblical references with its printed version, although with minor layout changes, and the letter that accompanies it indicate that this was probably a presentation copy. The missive noted:

Your Highness having been pleased to read my first and second Clementina, I am sending you to see the third: which was highly praised by the Duke of Ferrara who wanted to send me a letter through his ambassador. The Grand Duke of Tuscany, when he entrusted me to write that oration for the Neapolitan Nobility, as if untying the bonds of my intellect, gave rise to the first reason and origin due to which I have written and continue to write so much. And Your Highness, by providing me with benefit and honor, awakens my intellect more one day than another to greater thoughts and efforts. For this reason, believe me that, when I am speaking about the earthly things, my thoughts live in my heart more vividly and efficiently instead of continually going around, as they can make me deserving of the many graces that I receive from both of your Highnesses; to whom I pray to the Lord God with this affection, that you may have greater perseverance of greetings and an increase in happiness. On March 2, 1596, in Florence.¹⁶²

The letter which fulfills the role and purpose of a dedication, underscores several details on Ammirato's professional networks and how he financially gained through such texts. First, he was under the patronage of the Grand Duke and Duchess of Tuscany, for whom he was sometimes writing on commission. Second, he was sending copies of his orations to his patrons, but also to other aristocrats across Italy. Third, he wanted to present himself as a passionate

¹⁶¹ Magl. Cl. VI, 237, vii-xxxiv.

¹⁶² "Essendosi l'Altezza Vostra compiaciuta in legger la mia prima et seconda Clementina, le mando a veder la terza: la qual lodata sommamente dal Ser.mo Signor Duca di Ferrara, ha voluto deve una sua lettera farmela intendere dal Sig. Ambasciador suo venuto per cio a far questo ufficio fino in casa. Il Ser.mo Gran Duca col commettermi l'orazione alla Nobilta Napoletana, quasi sciogliendo i legami del mio ingegno è scato la prima cagione e origine, che io habbia scritto, et vada tuttavia scrivendo tanto. Et Vostra Altezza procurandomi beneficio e honore va destando il mip intelletto piu un giorno, che un altro a concitti et fatiche maggiori. Creda per questo non viver nil petto mio pensiero piu vivo e piu efficace, parlo intorno queste cose terrene, che l'andar del continuo cercando, come possa rendermi meritevole delle tante grazie, che io ricevo da amendue l'Altezze loro; alle quali preghero intanto dal signore Iddio con quill' affetto, che io posso maggiore perseveranza di saluti e accrescimento di felicità. A 2 di marzo 1596 di Firenze," Magl. Cl. VI, 237, vii-viii.

writer motivated by the financial support and intellectual recognition he was getting. Ammirato's letter could be read also as an element through which he was trying to establish and maintain his agency through and in these orations.

His self-fashioning as a driven, passionate humanist alongside his confession about occasionally writing on commission brings back the question of what were his reasons for composing the *Orazioni*. Whether it is in the beginning or throughout the body of the texts, Ammirato constantly refers back to his reasons for writing. For example, in one of his orations to Philip II, Ammirato wrote:

I have a duty of vassalage, an urge of my conscience, and a lively and certain hope that I could greatly benefit Christianity, which comforts me and pushes me to reason with Your Majesty. [...] And in truth, where there is no implicit or explicit doubt, I add that, even if Your Majesty is a very prudent and wise prince, you leave your health in the hands of the doctor, the law on the knowledge of the lawyers, the arms in the hands of the soldiers, the fortifications on the knowledge of the engineer and your clothes in the hands of the shoemaker, and you relate to them as scientists experienced in their profession, which is easy to believe, but how could I also dare to be believed? Having reached the age of 63, neither day nor night am I allowed to believe I don't read something, and for 25 years I have written stories, which are nothing other than treatises on state governments, narratives of wars and peace, conventions, capitulations, agreements and similar matters, thus with fairness I ask to be given faith in my art [...] because what do I care that I am a poor cleric and do not wear the red or purple cloak, if I can't talk about my art better than this and that great man? Which perhaps must be the reason why a writer of tragedies was not considered arrogant: when asked by the Athenian people to remove a certain sentence from one of his fables, he replied full of noble confidence: Be silent because I compose tragedies to teach you, and not to appease you. Therefore, freeing myself from these suspicions and from these fears, and narrowing my intention as quickly as I can, for several reasons I will endeavor to show Your Majesty that, having to make peace with France, it is necessary to turn arms against the infidels.¹⁶³

¹⁶³ "Obligo di vassallaggio, stimolo di coscienza, e una viva, e certa speranza di poter giovar grandemente alla Cristianita mi confortano e mi spingono a ragionar con Vostra Maesta. [...] Non si fa credibile, che se huomini in gran fortuna collocati e non vostri vassalli per la fama della vostra liberalita, alla vostra volonta inclinano, io che privatissimo huomo e vostro vassalo sono da quella m'allontani e se all'eta, se all'abito e se a costumi si dee alcuna volta dar fede, è piaciuto a Iddio, che tutte queste tre cose militino il mio favore. E in vero dove espresso o tacito sospetto non appare, non è da recar in dubbio la fede di chi che sia perche del senno parlando, cosi soggiungo, che se voi ancorche prudentissimo e savissimo principe siate, nondimeno di vostra salute al medico, della giustizia che far dovete al dottor di leggi, di vostre armi a soldati, di vostre fortificazioni all'ingegnere e di vostri vestimenti

Initially the readers find out that Ammirato wrote the oration because he was a vassal of the Spanish monarch and was offering his advice on future politico-military actions so that the king may act in accordance with the common interests of Christendom. In the other two orations to Philip II, Ammirato reinforces the urgency of addressing the king in such a direct manner, as well as his position as a subject of the king. Even more so, he renews his vassalage in front of Philip III.¹⁶⁴ With several variations, this was a leitmotif through the entire series of *Orazioni*. For example, in the orations for the popes, Ammirato treats Sixtus V and Clement VIII also as political rulers but emphasizes that the reason for writing to them is their religious

al calzolaio e al farto vi rapportate e a quelli come scienziati e sperimentati nel lor mestiere agevolamente si crede, perche non ho da haver ardir io, che alcuna cosa a me debba esser creduta? Il quel all'eta di 63 anni pervenuto, ne giorno ne notte laciato preterire, che alcuna cosa non legga e per lo spazio di 25 anni per iscriver istorie condotto, che altro non sono che trattazioni di governi di stato, narrazioni di guerre e di pace, convenzioni, capitulazioni, accordi e simili materie a buona equita intendo, che nella mia arte mi sia prestata fede [...] perche a me ha a pregiudicare, che io povero cherico sia, e non porti il manto pagonazzo o di porpora, se della mia arte favellando meglio del tale, e cotal grande ne sapro ragionare? [...] “Il che per avventura dovete esser cagione, che non fosse stimato arrogante uno scrittore di tragedie: il quale domandato dal popolo Ateniese, che togliesse via da una delle sue favole una certa sentenza, pieno di nobil confidenza rispose. Tacete perche io compogno tragedie per insegnarui, e non per apparar da voi. Da questi sospetti dunque e da queste paure liberandomi, e in piu breve fascio che io possa la mia intenzion ristignendo, per piu ragioni m'ingegnerò di mostrar a V M che dovendo rappacificarsi con Francia, è tenuta volger l'arme contra dl'infedeli.” Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Serenissimo e Potentissimo Re Cattolico Suo Signore Filippo Re Di Spagna. Intorno Il Pacificar La Cristianita e Prender Unitamente l'arme Contra Gli Infedeli* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1594), 3; 15–16.

¹⁶⁴ “Così in tutti i pericoli che sourastanno alla Cristianita o sudditi, o non sudditi che siamo di Vostra Maesta forza e', che a lei ci rivolgiamo e che conoscendoci da per noi senza il suo aiuto non atti a resistere alla potenza Turchesca, quando ben tutte l'altre forze del Cristianesimo insieme s'unissero, l'aiuto suo invochiamo e opportunamente, o importunamente che sio si faccia, poiche da necessita siamo tirati, non mai dintorno i suoi piedi, o delle sue braccia ci dipartiamo, fin che quello, che da lei si richiede, non otteniamo,” Ammirato, 3–4; “Potentissimo Re e Re e Signor mio naturale per la primiera cosa quindi faccia ella argomento della sua bonta, e della sua mansuetudine, che ancor che costituita in tanta grandezza, in quanta ella e', io umilissimo vassallo e servo suo non habbia temenza di dirle liberamente quello che io intendo. Appresso se nel modo del ragionar, che io tengo con Vostra Maesta non si e' ella avveduta, io esser huomo privo di discorso, e d'intendimento, leggiermente potrebbe esistimare, che in tal modo non le favelleri se per commodo e honor suo, se per servizio e gloria di Dio, e se per lo buono e felice stato della Cristianita non intendessi di ragionarle,” Ammirato, *Orazione Alla Maesta Cattolica Del Potentissimo Re Filippo Il Re Di Spagna. Suo Signor Naturale. Detta Filippica Seconda*, 9–10; “Così mi par che con la M V ragioni potentissimo Re, il sapientissimo padre vostro. Folia sarebbe la mia, se io prosumessi a cotali conforti alcuna cosa aggiugner del mio. Solo di questo supplico humilmente la M V che questo ufficio da me fatto, qual egli si sia, pe piaccia piu tosto ricevere in segno della mia volonta e della mia affezione, che perche io lo stimi degno del suo favore e della sua grazia,” Ammirato, *Orazione Nella Morte Di Filippo Secondo Re Di Spagna al Potentissimo Re Di Spagna Filippo Terzo, Suo Signore. Detta Filippica Terza*, 24.

role and duty to act for the present needs of Christianity.¹⁶⁵ When he addresses the Neapolitan nobles, he urges them to undertake an enterprise for the good of the Christendom, and although from his other works it is clear that he was under the patronage of some of these aristocratic families, in this oration he rather emphasizes their position as vassals to the king of Spain, under whose guidance they should act.¹⁶⁶ Thus, at a first glance, Ammirato's explicit reasons for writing the *Orazioni* are practical and pragmatic, as he is offering help to improve the state of Christendom.

Interesting to notice is the way in which Ammirato constructs the argument around the reason for offering his advice to Philip II. The passage above reveals that, together with his identity as a vassal, Ammirato paints for himself a multi-faceted identity as a specialist in political analysis. First, he underlines his competence in the field by mentioning his years of experience and the variety of works he composed. Second, Ammirato constructs himself as a writer whose work ethics are centered around objective analysis and the search for truth, and

¹⁶⁵ "Io mi sia condotto ad aprir la boca davanti al cospetto della Santita vostra, non perche havendo io a ragionarle di cose profane, o perinenti al commodo e beneficio mio, io tema riprensione o gastigo da lei, ma perche havendole a parlar di cose importantissime e di cui niuna forse è piu necessaria, o piu utile, o piu onorevole al Cristianesimo, forte dubito, che a cosi fatto ragionamento molto non detragga l'humile stato della persona e condizion mia," Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebbono a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1594), 1; "Ma perche l'haver di queste due guerre una sola cioe quella di Turchi ci sarebbe vantaggio e non danno essendo bene haver gli inimici per nimici e gli amici per amici, credesi che se per procaccio del valor vostro, come padre e mediatore, non disponendosi le parti a farlo da se medesimi, seguisse pace fra Cristiani, affinche uniti si havessero a volger contra i Turchi, che la Santita vostra havrebbe fatto un'opera la piu pia, la piu santa, la piu fruttuosa e la piu gloriosa, che da molte centinaia d'anni in qua havesse giammai potuto far pontefice alcuno." Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Satissimo et Beatissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII* (Firenze: Heredi di Iacopo Giunti, 1594), 102–3.

¹⁶⁶ "Che non essendo voi liberi, ma sudditi al potentissimo Re di Spagna, al qual ancor io non altrimenti che voi vassallo non poter di voi disporre a prender bataglia con infedeli. Ma cotal ragionamento a popoli liberi, o a principi non ad altri maggior principi soggetti piu legittimamente dover esser indirito, e per questo vana e inutile esser tutta questa fatica, alla quale io m'accingo. Nondimeno perche io vengo a invitarvi a cosi gloriosa impresa sotto privato nome di ciascun di voi e non publico, senza andar molto vagando tosto mi sono sviluppato da qualunque immaginario e soffistico, non che vero o essenziale contrasto, che in cio mi potesse esser fatto. Anziè tale la cosa, di che si trata, che ubidendo Voi a un Re, il quale non solo in nome e in titoli, ma in vere opere e fattiè cattolico havete a credere, che se egli cio non vi comanda per non gravarvi, a sommo servizio riceverà il veder molto di Voi volontariamente e non comandati apparecchiarsi a espor la vita e l'haver vostro per gloria e esaltazione del nome di Cristo a guerra cosi santa e cosi honorata." Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione Scritta Alla Nobilta Napoletana Confortandola Ad Andar Alla Guerra d'Ungheria Contra i Turchi* (Firenze: Heredi di Iacopo Giunti, 1594), 2r–3v.

not around narratives written on commission. Third, by referring to the ancient tragedies' writer, Ammirato consolidates his profile as an intellectual, who has a humanist education and who uses authentic sources.

Ammirato used these three identities to enhance his authorial agency in the orations and beyond. Accompanied by letters, Ammirato often sent his *orazioni* to various nobles or clergymen across Italy. Like the orations, the letters mention the reasons for writing to that certain person, the reasons for sending them that work, and, sometimes, the reasons he wrote the text. They are filled with praise for the addressee, the certainty that the work will benefit them and, sometimes, the hope for a financial reward. Strikingly, these are the elements which are also usually found in a dedicatory letter.¹⁶⁷ To a certain extent, the lack of printed dedications attached to the published *orazioni* made Ammirato's work more versatile as it allowed him to send them with personalized letters based on the dedicatee's profile. It also allowed him to reiterate, with extra details, the multi-faceted authorial agency he was constructing for himself. This aspect becomes even more interesting when Ammirato's printed correspondence is considered. Around 147 letters, sent or received, are found in the second volume of *Opuscoli*, published in 1637 by Ammirato's former secretary and heir. Cristoforo de Bianco inherited all of Ammirato's published and unpublished literary legacy and notebooks and saw that many of these should be printed out.¹⁶⁸ For someone who had a career as an official historian for about 40 years, who constantly wrote and who kept an extensive archive of his files, the amount of correspondence featured in *Opuscoli* seems suspiciously small. De Bianco's rationale, as the historian Rodolfo de Mattei indicates, was that he chose to print the

¹⁶⁷ Ann Blair, *L'entour du texte la publication du livre savant à la Renaissance*, Conférences Léopold Delisle (Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2021), 65–76; Helen Smith, "Acknowledgements and Dedications," in *Book Parts*, ed. Dennis Duncan and Adam Smyth (Oxford University Press, 2019).

¹⁶⁸ "Il Secondo Testamento Di Scipione Ammirato," *Rassegna Pugliese Di Scienze, Lettere Ed Arti* XIV, no. 11 (1898): 342–44; "Ricevuta Di Scipione Ammirato Il Giovane," *Rassegna Pugliese Di Scienze, Lettere Ed Arti* XIV, no. 11 (1898): 345.

material he considered to be finished or of outstanding value.¹⁶⁹ Since many others of Ammirato's unedited letters can be found in archives, why did de Bianco consider these particular letters notable enough to be included in the published volume or did he make a selection at all? It would be great if we were able to interpret this correspondence as a self-fashioning attempt from Ammirato's side who would have left his heir instructions as to what letters to publish. This just might have been the case as the inventory of books that came into de Bianco's possession also included *Un libro di lettere scritte dall'Ammirato*.¹⁷⁰ The correspondence seems carefully curated as the better part of it emphasizes the extent of Ammirato's networks and his familiarity with various people, how much he was appreciated as a historian and political analyst, as well as his dire need for financial rewards. Since most of these aspects overlap with Ammirato's self-constructed identity in his works, it would make sense that he kept, and then instructed de Bianco to print, those letters that would heighten his authorial profile.

The first feature of Ammirato's authorial agency was expertise. In his view, this meant recognition both for his works and for his years of experience as a historian and writer on political thought. He took pride in his literary legacy and he mentioned it at every opportunity. For instance, in his orations for the Venetians and Henry IV of France he named all those rulers to whom he had written to date, while in his third text for Clement VIII, he lists one by one the orations he had written up to that point.¹⁷¹ Ammirato was not shy to underline how famous his

¹⁶⁹ Rodolfo De Mattei, "Scipione Ammirato «Il Vecchio» e Scipione Ammirato «Il Giovane»," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 119 (1961): 75.

¹⁷⁰ "Ricevuta Di Scipione Ammirato Il Giovane"; "Nota Di Libri Consegnati Alla Guardaroba Generale."

¹⁷¹ "E avvenga che in questi bisogni della cristianita infino a quest'ora io non sia stato cheto, i quali antiveduti da me mi secerò scrivere una Oratione a Sisto V Pontefiche di felice memoria, mostrando quali doveano esser i preparamenti, che dal canto nostro si haveano a fare contra la potenza del Turco e come che succeduta la guerra, io habbia due volte intorno le occorrenze di essa parlato con la Santita Vostra e due altre con la Maesta del Re Cattolico una alla Nobilita Napoletana e piu e piu volte parlatone con alcun Principe: e scrittone quasi a tutti Principi d'Italia, e ad alcun fuor d'essa; conosco non haver per questo adempito il mio debito, ne sodisfatto al mio deisero e tuttavia haver nell'animo nuovi stimoli e nuove paure, di non haver interamente il mio ufficio fornito," Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta*

texts were. In the oration to Henry IV of France, he talks about how popular his oration for Philip II was among Italians and that the king also took care that this oration was reprinted for many people who wanted to see it.¹⁷² The second oration to Clement VIII was, apparently, very popular. Ammirato felt the need to mention in his correspondence with the Cardinal San Giorgio and Christina of Lorraine, that the printer Filippo Giunti sent his oration to his brother Giulio, who was working as a bookseller in Madrid, and then from him the oration got to Philip II, who “did not leave it until [he] had read it cover to cover.”¹⁷³ His correspondence also shows the acknowledgement and feedback Ammirato received on his works. For instance, in response to Ammirato sending his orations, Cardinal Borromeo commended Ammirato’s work for its relevance to current affairs and praised his “prudence, eloquence, erudition and elegance in writing.”¹⁷⁴ That many of these compliments were standard rhetorical practices for a diplomatic answer at the time did not mean that Ammirato’s work was not as described or was not read

Clementina Terza (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1596), 4; “sono già tredici anni passati, che infin dal primo anno del Pontificato di Sisteo Quinto scrissi a quel Pontefice una oratione intorno i preparamenti, che dovean farsi contra la potenza de Turchi. Al qual pensiero quanto giovi, che pace sia tra Principi cristiani, a ciascuno è manifesto. Ho dunque desiderato questa pace, quanto ciascun' altro huomo, che sia in tutta la cristianita e perche fine l'abbia desiderata, credo haverlo dimostrato,” Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Cristianissimo Enrico Quarto Re Di Francia et Di Navarra. Dopo La Pace Fatta Con Spagna* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1598), 3; “Poi che è stato piacer di Dio che, in tanto commovimento di cose quante veggiamo, sia a me convenuto d'aprir la bocca, nè il Santissimo Pontefice, nè il potentissimo Re di Spagna, nè l'Illustrissima et Ecc.ma Nobiltà Napoletana habbiano schifato d'udirmi, porto ferma speranza che nè da voi, Serenissimo Principe et illustrissimi Senatori, nè da niuno altro della preclarissima Nobiltà Veneziana saranno abborite le voci mie”, Rodolfo de Mattei, “Una ‘Orazione,, Di Scipione Ammirato Alla Repubblica Di Venezia, Del 1595,” *Archivio Storico Italiano* 119, no. 1 (429) (1961): 93.

¹⁷² “Et quel Re le lesse la mia oratione: la quale stampata quattro anni sono, fu in modo ancor letta cupidamente da tutti i popoli Italiani, che fu chi hebbe cura d'imprimerla di nuovo, perche sene facesse copia a coloro, i quali havean voglia di vederla,” Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Cristianissimo Enrico Quarto Re Di Francia et Di Navarra. Dopo La Pace Fatta Con Spagna* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1598), 2.

¹⁷³ “non mai la lascio infin che dal capo a pie non l'havesse letta,” ASF, Mediceo, 848, c. 156r; “Et questo è che perduta da me ogni credenza che alla Maestà del Re Cattolico hauessero à peruenir mai più in mana le mie orazioni, poichè il Sig Duca di Sessa, à cui hauea indirizzata la prima per inuiargliela non s'era degnato di rispondermi; è da sentire in che strano modo per altra mano l'abbia riceuuta & lettala tutta ad un fiato. [...] ma forse meglio accortosi gli scriue col secondo dispaccio, che essendo andato da S. Maesta et presentata e l'Orazione, il Re presala in mano et cominciato auidamente à leggerla, stando egli à vedere non la posò mai finche egli non l'ebbe letta tutta, “Lettera al Cardinale San Giorgio,” Scipione Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Fiorenza: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 443-444.

¹⁷⁴ “Con molto mio gusto io hò vista l'orazione che V.S. mi hà mandata con la sua de 12, statami gratissima sì per il soggetto molto à proposito per i tempi nostri, come per la forma con la quale ella l'ha trattato con non minor lume di prudenza, che di eloquenza & d'erudizione & d'eleganza,” “Il Cardinale Bonromeo a Scipione Ammirato,” Scipione Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Fiorenza: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 392.

thoroughly. A letter in which Cardinal San Giorgio confesses to Ammirato that his second oration for Philip II would have been better if he “did not diminish it by showing fear of being a nuisance,” indicates that people read his works and shared their honest impressions.¹⁷⁵ Ammirato’s published letters indicate that he wanted to show as large an audience as possible that his work was achieving its purpose. In 1594, Matteo di Capua, Prince of Conca, replied that Ammirato’s oration was so eloquent it kindled in him the need to act and go to Hungary if Philip II would allow him.¹⁷⁶ Ammirato was probably thrilled to get such feedback since he made copies of the letter and sent it to at least two people.¹⁷⁷

Beyond the recognition of his works, Ammirato thought that he could enhance his competence in the field by emphasizing how long he had acted as a historian. In his oration for Sixtus V he constantly underlined his old age and years spent studying.¹⁷⁸ Much like he did in the oration for Philip II, in 1595 he was revealing to the Duke of Urbino that he had been working as a scholar for 35 years and as an official historiographer for the Medici court for 25.¹⁷⁹ But by underlining his many years of experience, Ammirato was also bringing into foreground a recurrent concern: he was getting old. As stated in the *orazioni* and his correspondence, by the last years of the 1500s, he was in his mid-60s. In theory, the early

¹⁷⁵ "Con la lettera di V. S. hò hauuta la seconda orazione scritta da lei al Re Cattolico co titolo di Filippica feconda, et se bene n'hò preso piacere grade, maggior credo però che sarebbe stato quando non l'hauesse diminuito lei stessa col mostrar timore d'essermi molesta mentre che mi consola & previene i miei desideria," "Il Cardinale San Giorgio a Scipione Ammirato," *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 438.

¹⁷⁶ "Ringrazio V.S. infinitamente dell'orazione, la quale ho letta con molto mio gusto, e tanto che mi ha fatto venir voglia di mandare à supplicar S. M. per licenza di poter passare in Ungheria," "Il Conte Principe di Conca a Scipione Ammirato," *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637); 414.

¹⁷⁷ "Lettera al Cardinale San Giorgio," "Lettera al Duca di Urbino," *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 418-419; 423.

¹⁷⁸ "Da questa sola credenza dunque affidato e non perche io già vecchio d'anni le ragioni di cosa, ove io habbia impiegato lunghissimo studio e poco men che io non tratti della propria arte mia, nella quale a ciascuno si suole e dee porger fede, vengo costretto dal bisogno grande, che sopra al christianesimo e specialmente all'Italia a volerle mostrare, se mi verra fatto, tre cose importantissime a bisogni nostri." Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebonno a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1594), 2.

¹⁷⁹ "Lettera al Duca d'Urbino," *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 448-49.

modern perception of old age was a positive one. Drawing on Plato, Aristotle or Cicero's *De senectute*, mature men had self-control, better judgement, and a practical wisdom that came with experience; thus, they were better suited to serve in political life.¹⁸⁰ In practice, however, the elderly were considered a burden to society, unless they were already wealthy.¹⁸¹ While Ammirato's political advice was mature and well received, he wanted to give the impression that he struggled with the financial recognition of his intellectual pursuits as his constant appeals to the papacy and noblemen for a pension were often left unanswered.¹⁸² Nonetheless, despite the fickle reactions to his endeavors, Ammirato portrayed expertise in a field of study as a positive feature, built up over time with practice and visible in the recognition, both intellectual and financial, of one's work.

The second feature of Ammirato's authorial agency was his work ethic. For him it was centered around objective analysis, which could only be conducted by using historical sources to search for the truth. Although strenuous documentation did not automatically grant or suggest strict objectivity, as Anthony Grafton has pointed out, we should look beyond the question of whether Ammirato conducted unbiased research or not.¹⁸³ He was influenced by a series of external political, religious, and even humanist-commercial factors alongside his own motivations to present himself as an intellectual, so the majority of his works are biased in one way or another. At the same time, he strengthened his profile as a learned man by describing his work ethic. For example, in the *orazione* to Philip II, objective analysis means not writing

¹⁸⁰ Keith Thomas, *Age and Authority in Early Modern England*, British Academy (Oxford University Press, 1976), 207–8; Hannah Marcus, “Knowing Old Age in the Renaissance: Medicine, Poetry, and Spirituality in Ulisse Aldrovandi's Encyclopedia of Old Age,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 84, no. 1 (2023): 51–75.

¹⁸¹ Thomas, *Age and Authority in Early Modern England*, 243–48.

¹⁸² “Lettera al Cardinale San Giorgio”; “E' più d'un anno che il Signor Cardinale San Giorgio mi nutre in speranza d'un poco di pensione,” “Lettera al Duca d'Urbino,” “qual'io mi sia hà vsato questa carità con vn vecchio & povero sacerdote, il quale essendo nell'età di 64 anni, certa cosa è che non hà 64 ducati d'entrata di Chiesa,” “Lettera al Duca d'Urbino”; “Lettera al Cardinal Aldobrandino,” Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo*, 416–18; 448–49; 458–60; In reality, Ammirato's financial struggles were not so pressing; his will underlines that he was relatively wealthy. “Il Secondo Testamento Di Scipione Ammirato.”

¹⁸³ Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Harvard University Press, 1999), 166.

to appease, that is on commission. This contrasts with his self-presentation in other sources, such as the dedicatory letter to Christina of Lorraine, where he explicitly states writing the oration for the Neapolitan nobles at the Grand Duke's request, or the oration for Henry IV, where he claims that he would offer his advice only if it was asked.¹⁸⁴ Although Ammirato often mentioned that he was writing on commission, he earned his income mostly from writing genealogies, rather than political or historical commentaries, and these assignments became fewer and fewer as he was getting older. From the mid-1580s onward, as underlined in the oration for Philip II, he was often writing hoping for recognition, whether it was intellectual or financial. He wraps this idea in a letter to Cardinal Aldobrandino where he underlines that for his work he “does not expect any other reward than that which befits the writers of truth, which is the satisfaction of having done their duty, it will therefore only follow that I am a lover of the truth.”¹⁸⁵ Generally, however, his correspondence conveys that in the case of the *orazioni*, he did not write on commission but he was mainly hoping for a subsidy. Therefore, in his view, writing on request in exchange for money was not necessarily conflicting with objective analysis.

In his claim for objective inquiry, Ammirato makes a clear distinction between the types of sources and their usage. Interesting to note is that in his view, objective historical research was not necessarily divergent with religion, as in the other orations he recurrently declared his

¹⁸⁴ “Et benche da alcuni io fossi stato notato per huomo profuntuoso, che io havessi ostato d'imprendere a consigliar il mio Re senza esserne domandato, ne havendo uficio da poterlo fare, a buoni nondimeno parue, ch'io facessi bene e in quanto a me, n'hebbi e n'ho pace con la coscienza mia,” Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Cristianissimo Enrico Quarto Re Di Francia et Di Navarra. Dopo La Pace Fatta Con Spagna* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1598), 2.

¹⁸⁵ “Della qual'opera ancor che io non debbá aspettare altro premio, che quello che conuiene a scrittori di verità, che è l'appagarsi d'bauer fatto il lor douere, non seguirà perciò che io e per essere amator del vero, et per non esser moderno seruidor di Nostro Signore & del Signore Gio Francesco, e per non sentirmi , merce di Dio, macchiata la coscienza di bruttura alcuna non meriti d'essere in qual- che luogo di grazia appresso V.S. Illustrissima,” “Lettera al Cardinale Aldobrandino,” *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 420–21.

search for truth alongside reinforcing his position as a cleric.¹⁸⁶ For him, religious texts were useful for leading a good life, but historical sources were better for conducting political analyses in perspective.¹⁸⁷ Assuredly, even if this facet is not foregrounded in the orations, Ammirato was a veritable antiquarian. In his letters he mentioned his frequent visits to monasteries' archives where he consulted extensive material. For example, to Ferrante Taverna he confessed that "by bringing beautiful memories out of the darkness [he] can bring light to many things."¹⁸⁸ To the Bishop of Isola he wrote that:

So wound up am I in my curiosity about ancient objects [...] that I pass days on end, from morn till night, covered with the dust and mouse-dung of the monasteries of Tuscany, reading the records of the last seven hundred years, which have furnished me already with so many fascinating bits of knowledge that I have become a veritable storehouse of antiquities! [...] And I will see if it is true that the Florentines, who more than other people, like the ancient Jews, cherish the memories of their predecessors, often turn to me, a foreigner, to trace the origins of their descendants.¹⁸⁹

Here, Ammirato scement his identity as a historian who has a genuine passion for archival research, but he also emphasizes that archival material was the core of a proper analysis; and

¹⁸⁶ "Fra i Cristiani un vecchio Sacerdote, il qual altro non puo perder, che pochi anni di vita, habbia a peritarsi per zelo di vera religione di confortar un Re giusto e clemente a guerra se non altro difensiva e necessarissima contra i Turchi," Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione Alla Maesta Cattolica Del Potentissimo Re Filippo Il Re Di Spagna. Suo Signor Naturale. Detta Filippica Seconda* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1594), 10.

¹⁸⁷ "Come i precetti alla salute nostra appartenenti dalla lezione de' libri sacri o del vecchio, o del nuovo testamento si cavano e quello è il vero fonte, onde s'attigne questa scienza e chi altrove ricorresse, niuna altra cosa farebbe, che volere a sommo studio errare, così prende errore nostabilissimo ciascuno, il quale volendo di guerre, o di pace e in somma di governi di Stati parlare, altrove ricorresse, che ne libri degli Storici, poi che i Filosofi quando di cio ragionano, ancor essi a gli Storici ricorrono: ne quali vedendosi spiegati i pensieri e le sollecitudini de Principi e delle Repubbliche, si scorgono quasi in uno specchio lcidissimo e grandissimo dalla misura delle cose passate visibilmente tutti gli avvenimenti de presenti secoli," Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebonno a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1594), 11–12.

¹⁸⁸ "che non stracco d'hauer veduto due Monasteri di Valombrosa, intendo della visita di quest'anno, che fu il viaggio ch'io feci quando V.S. era in Firenze, oue erano più di 4000 scritte, ne hò vltimamente in due altri vedute più di due mila; ma è in modo temperata la fatica dal diletto incomprendibil ch'io cauo dalle cose che vi ritrouo che scordatomi de miei interessi et d'hauer logoro i panni et l'ossa, mi chiamorricco, quando son povero, gagliardo quando son debole & poco curando manche d'altra, degli honori che mi potessero venir fatti da Principi grandi," "Lettera a Monsig. Ferrante Taverna," Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo*, 490.

¹⁸⁹ "non sò quel che V.S. direbbe o farebbe di me vedendomi per i monasteri Toscani ricoperte di polue & di cacherelli di topi, star i giorni interi da mattina à sera leggendo scritte di secento anni, per la notizia delle quali fono venuto à cognizione di tante cose belle, che come disse il Boccaccio di M. Forese da Rabatta un'armario di antichità mi par esser diuentato & stò à vedere se è vera che i Fiorentini i quali più che altro popolo à guisa degli antichi giudei serbano le memorie de loro predecessori, spesso à me forestiero ricorrono per rinuenire le origini delle loro discendenze," "Lettera a Monsig. Vescovo D'Isola," Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo*, 487; Translation from Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, 148.

that archival research was central to the many genealogies he composed. Although he wrote many of these texts on commission, in his view, this did not interfere with objectivity in research. It was the opposite when it came to his political commentaries, like the *orazioni*, where he repeatedly underlined that he was speaking honestly, unsolicited and that he wrote the texts because of the ongoing importance of the topic. This is where, in theory, Ammirato draws a line between what kinds of texts could be written on commission: composing genealogies on request could be achieved because their narrative was based on facts from historical sources; on the other hand, objective historical facts could be distorted if political analyses and commentaries would be adapted to please a particular ruler. Though he regarded archives as objective proof of the past, these types of sources were not enough for him to put up a good argument. The complexity of Ammirato's works, including his orations, shows that the usage of objective historical information, as well as references to the contemporary context, were auxiliary techniques through which he would strengthen an idea drawn from canonical texts. Thus, in his view, a good work is one in which one uses authentic historical sources, alongside the scholarly sources to which any good humanist appealed.

The third feature of Ammirato's authorial agency was his humanist background. This scholarly facet of his identity is deeply entwined, and sometimes overlaps, both with his self-fashioning as a historian and political thought expert, as well as with his work principles centered around the search for truth and usage of primary sources. For example, in the oration to Clement VIII, he noted that:

This thought [the liberation of the Sepulcher of Christ from the hands of the infidels], which was so often remembered by historians, so often celebrated by orators, so often reproached by poets to the Christians for the power of the enemy, has fallen into disuse due to the change of times and the spread of Christians. And if we do not doubt, to tell the truth, [this thought] is spoken of in our times in the same way that is done of things very distant from our centuries, which retain more a certain image of fabulous tales, than of true reasoning: hearing about the war of Acre and of the passage across the sea, of

the good Godfrey and the princes of Antioch and similar memories, it is no more and no less, than if others were to speak of the war of Troy, and of the passage of the Greeks and of Achilles and of Aeneas and of Ulysses and of those other Greek heroes and captains.¹⁹⁰

Here Ammirato looks at the theme of reclaiming the Holy Places from what today we would call a *longue durée* perspective. By doing so, he critically engages with historical sources assessing their utility and value for current affairs; he talks about how misuse of historical exempla can affect the reactions of the audiences and he also brings into discussion the relevance of narrative themes for the contemporary context.

This passage underlines that Ammirato's humanist education taught him how to read ancient authors, how to write like them, and how to use their works to put up a good argument; it taught him to identify authentic sources and instilled in him the curiosity of finding primary sources. It taught him that these skills required hard work and that emphasizing them would highlight his intellectual efforts. Many of his works, including the *orazioni*, are laced with traces of his erudition. Although the textual strategies through which humanists showed their literary competencies ranged from emulating textual structures, genres, themes, and language to innovatively re-using or reinterpreting them, some of the most frequent were the references, direct and indirect, to the sources used when composing the texts. Ammirato, like many of his fellow humanists, did this in multiple ways: in the margins of the texts and in the main body of the text, either by mentioning the name of the author or the work, or by inserting an unmarked quote or general idea that his contemporaries would be able to pin to a writer or text.

¹⁹⁰ "Questo pensiero tanto rammentato da gli storici, tanto celebrato da gli oratori, tanto a Cristiani rimproverato da poeti la potenza del nemico, per la mutazione de tempi e per la diffusione de Cristiani è venuto in disusanza. Et se non dubiteremo a dire il vero se ne ragiona a tempi nostri in quella guisa, che si fa delle cose molto da secoli nostri lontane, che ritengono piu una certa immagine di favolose novelle, che di verace ragionamento, poi che il sentir dir della guerra d'Aciri e del passaggio d'oltre mare e del buon Goffredo e de princippi d'Antiochia e simili memorie; è non piu ne meno, che se altri della guerra di Troia, e del passaggio de Greci e d'Achille e d'Enea e d'Ulisse e di quegli altri Eroi e capitani Greci si discorresse." *Orazione al Satissimo et Beatissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII*, 105.

In his *orazioni*, especially in those for the popes, he often adds marginal notes with the location of biblical quotes or episodes he refers to in the text.¹⁹¹ Occasionally, he skips the marginalia and just adds the biblical passage in the text, leaving the reader to identify it.¹⁹² He recurrently underlines the use of authentic sources and mentions the works of ancient historians like Caesar, Livy, Tacitus, Tertullian and underlines the importance of using these authors to support his ideas.¹⁹³ Sometimes, as in the passage quoted above, directly referencing historical events hinted that he was familiar with the sources where those narratives were coming from or that he assumed the readers were familiar with them.

Ammirato often used these classical texts for reference in some of his other writings, but sometimes the indicators to what sources were used were different. A look at the final pages of his *Discorsi* reveals a list of “The prints, in which the three most important authors are printed, on whose authority the discourses of this work and others are founded.”¹⁹⁴ It contains nine titles of vernacular translations and recent printings of Tacitus, Livy, Cassius Dio, Caesar, Cicero, Plato, Xenofon, Plutarch. This index, identical in all the three editions of the *Discorsi*, reveals a couple of aspects. First, by flipping through the pages of the *Discorsi*, which are

¹⁹¹ *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Seconda*, 12, 18, 20; *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Terza*, 25–26.

¹⁹² *Orazione al Satissimo et Beatissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII*, 103, 112, 119; *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Seconda*, 12–13.

¹⁹³ “Oda la Maesta Vostra quel, che egli opera, e compiaciasi in questo attentamente d'ascoltarmi; che eccettuata solo la parola di Dio, non puo sicuramente udir della parole di maggior verbo, concetti di maggior autoritam consigli piu fedeli in quelli, che non da me, ma per la bocca mia ascoltera con l'immagine e esempio di Cesare,” *Orazione Alla Maesta Cattolica Del Potentissimo Re Filippo Il Re Di Spagna. Suo Signor Naturale. Detta Filippica Seconda* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1594), 12; “Ma se la presa di Francesco Re di Francia e l'haver acquistato il Ducato di Milano all'Imp. sono opere, che da istorico non meno che Livio chiaro particolarmente all'incredibil vigilanza, all'industria, alle fatiche del corpo e dell'animo del Marchese;” “Non parlo a caso, ne dico queste cose di mio cervello, favellando un eccellentissimo scrittore antico, nel quale a tempi nostri occhi di tutti sono ricolti, perche narrando i fatti degli Imperadori dopo lo stato della mutata Republica di Roma, par che di questi tempi ragioni; favellando dico di certi preparamenti, che si fecero sotto Ottone Imperadore, il quale usciva di Roma per opporsi a Vitellio, il quale consendendo seco dell'imperio veniva di Germania; narra in confusione di chi per tal sentier cammina,” *Orazione Scritta Alla Nobilta Napoletana Confortandola Ad Andar Alla Guerra d'Ungheria Contra i Turchi* (Firenze: Heredi di Iacopo Giunti, 1594), 9r; 11v–12r; “l'anno 95 del Signore reggendo la chiesa di Dio Clemente di quel numeri primo, egli in quell'anno haver con ogni suo sudore, e diligenza cercato d'acquetar lo scisma de Corintii e di sbarbare, come disse Tertulliano,” *Orazione al Satissimo et Beatissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII* (Firenze: Heredi di Iacopo Giunti, 1594), 118.

¹⁹⁴ *Discorsi del signor Scipione Ammirato sopra Cornelio Tacito* (Filippo Giunti, 1594), 583.

brimming with marginal notes with the exact citation for the passage or idea he extracted, one discovers that Ammirato's range of sources went far beyond the texts listed in the index. Second, it restates that the index, as mentioned in the contract negotiations with Giunti, was the work of the editor and idea of the printer to promote recent translations of the sources and to make the text more accessible to the readers.

As the flowing marginal notes in the *Discorsi* also underline, the material to which Ammirato resorted to compose his texts are not limited to religious or ancient sources, and at times he used recent literature. In the *orazione* for Henry IV he praises Petrarch's words as almost holy and inserts a passage from his *Il canzoniere*; later he adds a passage from Torquato Tasso's *Gierusalemme liberata* and adapts its lyrics to the king's situation.¹⁹⁵ In the oration for the Neapolitan nobles he inserts passages from Lodovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*.¹⁹⁶ Ammirato probably thought that these epic poems fit very well with his attempts to awaken a feeling of unity among rulers and nobles and to urge them act against the common enemy. The references to literature that superseded the classical texts are not limited to these cases and also appear beyond the orations. His *Della Segretezza* is loaded with marginal and textual references to authors ranging from Dante, Tasso, Ariosto, Boccaccio, Benedetto dell'Uva and Matteo Villani to Terentius, Hecataeus of Miletus, Demostene, Diogene, Epicurus, and Heraclitus.¹⁹⁷ At a first glance one may wonder how Ammirato incorporated ancient philosophers and geographers, thirteenth-century historians, and fifteenth-sixteenth century poets in a treaty on secrecy? This text underlines that he was structuring his compositions on themes and was using any type of work or author that would fit the topic of his argument.

¹⁹⁵ *Orazione al Cristianissimo Enrico Quarto Re Di Francia et Di Navarra. Dopo La Pace Fatta Con Spagna*, 13, 27.

¹⁹⁶ *Orazione Scritta Alla Nobilta Napoletana Confortandola Ad Andar Alla Guerra d'Ungheria Contra i Turchi*, 8v.

¹⁹⁷ Scipione Ammirato, *Della Segretezza* (Filippo Giunti, 1598), 5–8, 10, 18–20.

Collecting ideas and thoughts from works of different genres did not mean that his works did not belong to particular fields of study. A good example in that sense is his manuscript notebook, *Annotazioni geografiche*, which contains geographical-historical details on peoples, settlements, territories, and relief forms.¹⁹⁸ A quick look through its pages underlines that his most reliable sources of information were still the ancient geographies of Ptolemy, Pliny II, and Strabo, but he also extracted details from contemporary cosmographies, like Sebastian Munster's, or travel literature, like Marco Polo and Giovanni Leone de Medici.¹⁹⁹ He references Flavio Biondo and Paolo Giovio's histories, or Lodovico di Varthema and Alvise Cadamosto; all these sources also pointing to Ammirato's possible familiarity with Ramusio's *Delle Navigationi et Viaggi*, where they are included.²⁰⁰ He also used the histories which served as sources for his political commentaries, like the texts of Tacitus, Polybius, Plato, or Herodotus, as well as other classical works, such as those of Dionysus of Halicarnassus, Quintus Curtius, Rufus, Pomponius Mela and Ammianus Marcellinus.²⁰¹ Likewise, he also found useful geographical details in religious texts, such as the Bible, but also the texts of Jerome, Eusebius of Caesarea, or Flavius Josephus.²⁰² Though this manuscript

¹⁹⁸ Magl. Cl. XIII, 94, BNCF.

¹⁹⁹ "Abadio Isola nel mare d'India di la dal Gange. Questa dicono essere copiosa di miniere d'oro. Tolom. Lib. Vii;" "Secondo Plinio e Tolemeo;" Aegimuro è l'Isola capraia nel mare di Pisa. Strabone lib. 6 et 7 et Plin lib 5. Cap 7;" "Algher è una Città di Sardinia Isola, piccola ma piena di popolo et forte di mura. Gli habitatori sono quasi tutti del regno di Ragona. Seb. Muns.;" "Camul. Provincia sottoposta al gran Cane, della quale ne scrive molte cose M. Polo lib. 1, cap 4-6;" "Agadez nella Lybia, città moderna. Giovan. Lione. Affricano", Magl. Cl. XIII, 94, BNCF; 1v, 5v, 12r, 13r, 47v.

²⁰⁰ "Che quelli di Amalfi furono I primi inventori del Navigare con la Busola della Calamita et cartha Marina, invention veramente non manco bella cche utile. La prima memoria che di questa terra si ritrova è nel 1125 come scrive il Biondo nel lib. 15 delle Historie;" Il Iouio dice nel 13 lib. della Historia de Suoi tempi et in Tauris era Terua anticamente et in altro luogo dice che la fu detta Susa;" "Caicalon città in India perso a Calicuth. [...] vedi Lodovic. Vartemio lib. 6 cap. 1" (47v); "Capo Bianco promontorio in Affrica presso all'Isola Canarie, 770 miglia detto Bianco perche tutto e copero di Rena Bianca il paese d'intorno. Cadamosto lib. 1, cap 35. Soluentia estrema Tolom lib 4, cap 6", Magl. Cl. XIII, 94, BNCF; 72r, 23v, 47v, 49v.

²⁰¹ "Polibio nel vii lib. Dice;" "Atlantica Isola.* sono di polinione che sia la Terra del Vespuccio descritta da Platone nel suo libro detto Atlantico per cosa così antichi ma al suo tempo non si ritrovava;" "Babylonie sono due. Una in Assyria ouero Caldera nella pianura di Sennaar. Città Regale di Caldei. Che secondo si legge nel Genesis, fu nome dalla confusion delle lingue. Molte cose di questa Scrive Herodoto e Curtio, Plinio, Strabone, Pomponio Mela, Tolemeo e altri scrittori assai. L'altra è in Egitto," Magl. Cl. XIII, 94, BNCF; 4r, 26v, 33r.

²⁰² "Edesa città di Mesopotamia di la dal'Eufrate [...] come referisce Eusebio cesariense;" "Egitto, Aegyptus, Regionis d'Africa. Ma plin. Lib. 5, cap. 9 et Pomponio Mela lib. 1 dicono [...] l'Egitto chi fusse Isola si come testifica Iosefo lib. 5, cap. 11 de bel. Iud. Et Egisippo lib. 4, et Plin. Lib. 5, cap. 9, Strab. Lib 17, Tolom. Lib. 4, cap 6, Ammiano Marcellino lib 22." Magl. Cl. XIII, 94, BNCF; 87r, 88r-v.

book of geographical annotations doesn't have a narrative structure, nor an overarching argument, it offers a window into how Ammirato thought and organized information on categories that he, most probably, also used later when composing other works.

These abundant textual references offer probably only a small glimpse into the vastness of the material that he consulted for his works, but they do highlight several aspects about his humanist agency. First, in his view, a reliable source was an authentic source; that is, a source that can be attributed to a figure, a name, an author. As his opinion on religious and historical sources underlines, he makes no clear distinction between objective sources and authentic ones, the two types not being necessarily divergent as long as they were ascribed to an authorial figure. In fact, depending on the type of text he was using the source for, they might have overlapped. Second, the variety of works and authors he used emphasizes that many of his texts were thematically organized. Ammirato used a wide range of authors and sources, regardless of genre or type of discourse, as long as they contained details that would support his ideas; in other words, he operated with categories of knowledge which were then later rearranged for the general purpose of an argument. In the case of the *orazioni*, this translates as his versatility in combining biblical and classical texts alongside contemporary reports or recent histories to construct a 2-in-1 politico-religious analysis and plea to Christian rulers. Third, the diversity of references highlights the fields of knowledge which actively preoccupied Ammirato. A notebook such as *Annotazioni geografiche* is an example of his interest in travel literature and the newly discovered territories, while his treatise on secrecy shows his interest also in poetics and language. Even more, they underline that he was familiar with the latest publications and debates in those fields. He not only quoted the works of some contemporary humanists, he was also acquainted with them. For example, around the mid-1580s, while already a member of the

Accademia degli Alterati, he got involved in a dispute on Italian language between the followers of Tasso and those of Ariosto.²⁰³

Lastly, it is worth noting that Ammirato's usage of sources and textual references to underline his intellectual formation and his education was not an unusual, but rather a standard humanist practice at the time he was writing.²⁰⁴ There are, however, a few reasons that might have pushed him to further accentuate his humanist agency, and they are related to the intellectual context in Florence in the second half of the sixteenth century. Cosimo I's involvement in the academic life of the city led him to issue a set of protective measures that sheltered non-university humanities and encouraged interdisciplinary cooperation. This gave rise to the popularization of Florentine education and language for people outside the Academy, such as artists and craftsmen, who did not have a humanist education, but engaged in humanist practices.²⁰⁵ The new generation in the Florentine Academy incorporated a significant number of "amateur intellectuals" alongside the old social group of "humanists." Uniting intellectuals in academies was a smart move, since the former group disseminated innovations in humanities and were more eager to experiment. Yet, the latter group still regarded the new members as mere craftsmen and outsiders.²⁰⁶ This was the context in the midst of which Ammirato moved to Florence in 1569. A Neapolitan, whose Spanish loyalty might have raised some questions, thus an outsider for whom the climb through the Medicean bureaucracy was not so easily

²⁰³ Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, 146.

²⁰⁴ See, for example, Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature*, Cornell Paperbacks (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990) for a study on ancient texts examples were used as models for action; Martti Koskenniemi, *To the Uttermost Parts of the Earth: Legal Imagination and International Power, 1300-1870* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2021) for a detailed analysis on how jurists re-used and rearranged ideas from classical texts to make their arguments more convincing.

²⁰⁵ See Ann E. Moyer, *The Intellectual World of Sixteenth-Century Florence: Humanists and Culture in the Age of Cosimo I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

²⁰⁶ See Simone Testa, *Italian Academies and Their Networks, 1525-1700: From Local to Global*, Italian and Italian American Studies (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

accessible, Ammirato felt particularly loyal towards the Alterati, and this may be why, even years later, he still strived to prove his intellectual skills in front of his Florentine colleagues.²⁰⁷

Conclusion

The ways in which Ammirato expressed his humanist agency are manifold. His involvement with printers like Giunti and Marescotti reveals a careful negotiation of his authorial control, ensuring that his works retained his intellectual identity, even amidst external editorial influences. The same relationship also emphasizes a distinction between authorial and editorial roles and how they differed in a text: dealing with the arrangement of the text or composing peritext was the task of the editor, while the author dealt with the main body of the work, and only composed those peritextual elements that he valued, such as marginal notes or references. The dedication was, however, a middle ground between these two functions and it was often used both by authors and editors as a self-fashioning channel. Although Ammirato's *orazioni* did not have printed dedications, he was resourceful enough to find other ways in which he could bolster his authorial agency. Either through his correspondence or by inserting elements of a dedicatory letter in the main body of the orations, Ammirato constructed for himself a multi-faceted identity disguised as the implicit reasons for composing the texts. His profile was shaped by his years of experience and work portfolio, his work ethic, and his humanist education; that is the know-how which influenced all the other aspects.

Even if all these elements through which Ammirato was trying to construct his authorial identity and agency would be seen as mere rhetorical strategies, they still indicate the fact that in order to build a reputation as an erudite and writer whose works were read and known, he

²⁰⁷ Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, 116–17.

skillfully had to employ the humanist practices at the time. The traces of his erudition are not limited only to the references to the sources he was using or the texts he resorted to. In many cases, it manifested differently, such as emulating textual structures, genres, themes, and rhetoric strategies, or by re-using material from one work to another. This was also the case with his *orazioni*, which although at a first glance do not resemble a classical oration, they follow the themes of a tradition of writing which had started blooming about a century before and which Ammirato was trying to emulate.

PART II: THE ORGANIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

The world in which Sansovino and Ammirato lived was one where gathering information was not just a scholarly activity but an essential intellectual practice. Humanist teachers encouraged students to stockpile excerpts and examples from a wide variety of works and authorities. Such note-taking practices were anticipatory, often preceding any clear idea of how the collected material might later be used. In this culture, the value of knowledge depended not on what one knew but on how one sorted, stored, and ultimately reused it.

This section examines how two very different figures, one rooted in the Venetian print world and the other working within the Florentine academic milieu, approached the challenge of organizing knowledge. Although Sansovino and Ammirato carried out their literary activity in different institutional and economic settings, wrote for different audiences, and understood their authorial roles in contrasting ways, they faced similar issues in managing, structuring, and reframing knowledge.

Both men created works during a time when the value of a piece depended less on its content and more on the form through which that content was framed. They selected, abridged, reordered, reshaped, and structured material from various sources into other works. Yet, each employed these textual practices differently. Sansovino's case highlights the opportunities presented by print, while Ammirato's illustrates manuscript practices that underpinned humanist writing. Both demonstrate that the organization of information, whether through a printed index, a handwritten list of authorities, or its arrangement in a thematic reference book or rhetorical discourse, was not just a method of writing but a means through which humanists asserted their authorial roles and shaped how a work should be read.

By placing Sansovino and Ammirato side by side, this section illustrates both the diversity and the consistency of sixteenth-century methods of structuring knowledge. Their cases reveal how humanists navigated the tension between the accumulation of information and its presentation. This section also examines what their textual practices tell us about the broader sixteenth-century intellectual milieu, showing that the organization of knowledge was central to how humanists expressed their authority in a world of overflowing information.

Chapter 3 – Sansovino’s Organization of Knowledge

Introduction

This chapter continues exploring the relationship between form and content in sixteenth-century humanist texts but from a different angle: it examines how a humanist such as Sansovino organized and structured his works. In the first part, I analyze the various editions of his *Dell’historia universale dell’origine et imperio de’ Turchi* as a case study to observe how he used paratextual elements, such as indexes, lists of authorities, and commentaries, to organize its content. Besides guiding readers through a variety of ethnographic descriptions and travel accounts, these tools also reshaped the material by framing it into a carefully curated reference work. This analysis highlights that Sansovino’s authorial roles were closely tied to his editorial interventions and thus essential to how he organized knowledge in his works.

In the second part, drawing on Sansovino’s own tripartite classification of his works, I explore the features and boundaries of *compositioni*, *raccolte* and *traduttioni*. By focusing on his *Del governo de’ regni et delle repubbliche antiche e moderne* and his translation of Giacomo Filippo da’ Bergamo’s *Sopplimento delle croniche universali del mondo*, I analyze how he organized and framed these works. By comparing how the structure of these works and *Dell’historia universale* align, I explore what it meant in sixteenth-century humanist terms to “compose” rather than “translate” or “compile,” and how these distinctions reflect different aspects of Sansovino’s authorial agency. Although he formally distinguished between these three categories, the similarities in method and structure across his works reveal a common strategy of selecting, reorganizing, and framing knowledge. This shows how Sansovino asserted authority while negotiating the tension between novelty and reuse.

In the third part I examine how Sansovino reused, reshaped, and repurposed material across his works. By tracing how he redeployed paratexts, reorganized indexes, and adapted the content of various sources for different types of writing, I show how he transformed existing material into works that appeared “new” through structure and method rather than content alone. This analysis reveals the mechanics of his compilatory practices and the strategies through which he asserted authorial agency, highlighting how, for Sansovino, the flexible organization and framing of knowledge were as significant as its acquisition. Taken together, the three parts reveal a coherent editorial vision: Sansovino structured individual works, framed his authorial agency, and strategically recycled content, positioning himself as a learned compiler whose authority rested on method, organization, and the creative use of existing knowledge.

Structure-Content Relationship in Sansovino’s Historical-Ethnographic Works

Dell’historia universale dell’origine et Imperio del Turchi was the first major compilatory work that Sansovino produced, and it is a testament to his editorial skills. The first edition, published in 1560 in three volumes, was followed by four more editions during his lifetime.²⁰⁸

It is worth noting that while the first edition of *Dell’historia Universale* was published at his own press, the subsequent editions were printed by different publishers: Francesco Rampazetto (1564), Stefano Zazzera (1568), Michel Bonelli (1573), and Altobello Salicato (1582). Denis Rhodes has pointed out, however, that Zazzera was likely not the printer of the 1568 edition,

²⁰⁸ Sansovino, *Dell’historia Vniuersale Dell’origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima; Dell’historia Vniuersale Dell’origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda; Dell’historia Vniuersale Dell’origine et Imperio de Turchi Raccolta Da m. Francesco Sansouino. Libri Tre.; Historia Vniuersale Dell’origine et Imperio de Turchi; Historia Vniuersale Dell’origine, et Imperio de’ Turchi; Historia Vniuersale Dell’origine, et Imperio de’ Turchi. Raccolta, et in Diuersi Luoghi Di Nuouo Ampliata, Da m. Francesco Sansouino; et Riformata in Molte Sue Parti per Ordine Della Santa Inquisitione.*

as the capitals and ornaments suggest that it came from Sansovino's own press.²⁰⁹ The fact that he collaborated with other publishers for future editions indicates that his financial situation was not entirely stable, even with the relative success of his printing workshop in the first few years of activity.

Printing was an expensive business, especially since the Senate usually would not grant a privilege unless a print-run was over 400 copies.²¹⁰ This might have been one reason why the 1560 edition of this work did not have a privilege. After Sansovino's partnership with Tinto ended, working with other printers was a way in which he managed the financial aspects of publishing. By the time *Dell'istoria universale* was published, Sansovino had been active in the Venetian book scene for about 15 years. Already known as a translator, editor, and printer, his reputation would have been enough of a business card to secure more advantageous agreements with printers than those for his earlier works. Considering that the 1568 edition came from his own workshop, Sansovino was certainly the owner of the 10-year privilege listed on the 1564 edition. This privilege, as mentioned in Chapter 1, allowed him to choose which printers to work with. Although there are no documents that attest to the agreements Sansovino may have made with these publishers, the costs of printing were likely split in half.²¹¹ In order to maintain editorial authority, Sansovino retained the right to write the dedicatory letter, as each edition included one signed by him, and was probably responsible for editing the text and preparing the indexes and tables of contents. The printer most likely kept and sold at least half of the copies of the work.²¹² Clarifying this issue is relevant because it establishes the extent of

²⁰⁹ "The 1568 edition at Stezano Zazzera – The British Museum Italian S.T.C. (1958) gives the imprint as "S. Zazzera [for F. Sansovino]", but this is the wrong way around: it should read "[F. Sansovino for] S. Zazzera". Stefano Zazzera (or Zaccera), from Monopoli, was not a printer. He is recorded for two books only, the other of which is not in the British Library. The capitals and ornaments show that this book was printed on the press of Francesco Sansovino himself" Dennis E. Rhodes, *Silent Printers: Anonymous Printing at Venice in the Sixteenth Century* (British Library, 1995), 243.

²¹⁰ Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605*, 9.

²¹¹ See chapter 1 for more details on the type of agreements Sansovino might have had with the printers.

²¹² Paul F. Grendler, "The Conditions of Enquiry: Printing and Censorship," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. C. B. Schmitt et al. (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 32–33.

Sansovino's direct involvement in the production of each edition and confirms that paratextual elements, such as indexes, can be attributed to him regardless of where the book was printed.

None of the five editions of *Dell'istoria universale* is identical to the others. With each new edition, Sansovino added, removed, or rearranged the accounts, while including commentaries, annotations, and indexes to guide readers through the hundred pages of text. The paratextual elements provide clues about what sources he compiled and how he organized the material. In the preface to the first volume of the 1560 edition, Sansovino let the readers know that the book was structured in two parts, "the first containing the things relating to the beliefs of the Ottomans, and the second presenting the wars and other operations carried out by their Princes for the growth of that state."²¹³ He continues with a summary of the content of accounts in the order in which he placed them: first, the life of Muhammad, followed by the customs and ceremonies of priests, and a prophecy about the fall of the empire; then, a treatise on people who "live in the servitude of the barbarians," and a discourse on the "order of the Porte," followed by an account of the lives of Ismael and Tamas, kings of Persia and the letter of Pope Pius II to Mehmet who conquered Constantinople.²¹⁴ Similarly, the second volume of the 1560 editions contains "all the illustrious and notable deeds of their [Ottoman] princes, both

²¹³ "dello ordine della presente Historia ui diciamo che nella prima parte si contengono le cose appartenenti alla credenza de Turchi, nella seconda son poste le guerre et l'altre operationi fatte da lor Principi in accrescimento di quello stato" *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 4r.

²¹⁴ "Ma tornando alla prima parte, ui habbiamo dato a leggere la uita di Macometto in compendio tratta dale scritture de gli Arabi pero fatte latine [...] Dietro a questa segue la successione de i Quattro primi Re e piu notabili che con l'armi e con la santimonia finta furono sostenitori acerrimi delle profane leggi del Profeta. Dopo havete ordinatamente posti i costumi prima de sacerdoti et le cerimonie loro ne gli officii et poi dell'altre persone particolari cosi in casa come fuori cosi de nobili come de gli artigiani. Alli quali seguono la Profetia volgata tra Turchi per laquale essi credono che tosto habbia a uenire la rouina dell'imperio loro, e la dichiarazione delle parole d'essa profetia. Havete ancho un trattatello della miseria di coloro che vivono nella servitu de Barbari da douer esser tenuto tanto carro da ciascuno, quanto che lo huomo ama naturalmente la liberta. S'Aggiugne a questo un discorso d'un altro eccelente ingegno nel quale è compreso tutto l'ordine della porta. Ultimamente habbiam posto la uita d'Ismael et di Tamas Re de Persiani data ne dal cortese M. Giorgio Giorgi spirito nobile, et l'Epistola di Papa Pio II mandata a Mahomet Secondo che prese la Citta di Costantinopoli" *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 4r.

in times of peace and war.”²¹⁵ Sansovino gives a brief overview of the accounts he includes but, unlike in the first volume, he focuses mostly on the authors and the credibility of the sources.²¹⁶

These volumes were complementary, and this is evident in the way in which Sansovino thematically arranged his sources. For instance, he divided Teodoro Spandugino’s treatise on the origins and customs of the Ottomans into two parts; the section about the Turks’ customs was added to the first volume, where he grouped treatises on morals and customs related to religion, while the part about their origins was saved for the second volume, which focused on historical discourses about the origins of the Ottomans.²¹⁷ This was not the only editorial intervention he made to adapt the sources with the thematic structure of the work. Similarly, in the first volume, Sansovino removed the entire first part of Benedetto Ramberti’s *Libri tre delle cose de Turchi*, which included an account of a journey from Venice to Constantinople.²¹⁸

In this first edition of *Dell’historia universale*, Sansovino also included Giovanni Antonio Menavino’s *Trattato de’costumi et vita de Turchi*. He preserved its five-book structure

²¹⁵ “giudichiamo parimente che non sia se non bene se vi daremo ancho in questa seconda e ultima parte tutti i fatti illustri e notabili de’loro Principi cosi in tempo di pace come di Guerra avvenuti” *Dell’historia Vniuersale Dell’origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda*, 2r.

²¹⁶ “Et tra gli altri; I Quattro libri d’Andrea Cambini veduti altre volte dal Mondo, ne sono stati accetti, percioche [...] scrisse semplicemente e con verita l’origine e le guerre di quei Principi, ma pero informato da gli huomini pratici della cose di Costantinopoli. [...] Ne piacque parimente il Discorso di Theodoro Spandungo nobile Constantinopolitano, consciosa cosa che noi gli prestiamo sede per molte ragioni [...] la onde vivendo e continouamente praticando con quelle genti, ha potuto in conseguenza toccar quasi non mano le cose che si contengono nella sua Historia, forse in gran parte lette da lui ne gli annali che hanno i Turchi della casa Ottomana. S’aggiugne a questo che M. Emanuello Cantacusino gentilhuomo d’intera sede e honorato, afferma Theodoro essere statio di reuerenda autorita e persona da bene: oltra ch’egli si concorda con tutti coloro che scrissero innanzi e dopo lui di questa material. Ni si dee meno stimare l’informatione di Mons. Paolo Giovio nobile huomo, illustre Historico, e per Lettere celebre in tutte le parti del Mondo, percioche nel sio picciolo trattato scritto semplicemete per instructione di Carlo Quinto, lasciando l’adulationi e i fu chi dell’eloquenza da parte, si vede apertamente ch’egli segue l’opinione de piu.” *Dell’historia Vniuersale Dell’origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda* (Francesco Sansouino et compagni, 1560), 2v–3v.

²¹⁷ “Trattato di Theodoro Spandugino Cantacusino Gentilhuomo Costantinopolitano De costumi de Turchi” *Dell’historia Vniuersale Dell’origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 82; “Discorso di Theodoro Spandugino Cantacusino Gentilhuomo Costantinopolitano Della origine de Principi Turchi” *Dell’historia Vniuersale Dell’origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda*, 44v.

²¹⁸ Stéphane Yerasimos, “De La Collection de Voyages à l’Histoire Universelle. La Historia Universale de Turchi de Francesco Sansovino,” *Turcica* 22 (1988): 34.

in five and added several pamphlets appended to a previous edition of Menavino's treatise.²¹⁹ These included an account of the misery of Christian prisoners, a prophecy of the Christian prisoners against the Ottomans, and an exhortation addressed to Maximilian of Austria, all written by Bartholomeus Georgevits.²²⁰ Furthermore, he included Spandugino's book on the lives of Shah Ismail and Shah Tahmasp, which also details the wars between the Ottomans and the Persians. The first volume concludes with the famous letter from Pope Pius II to Mehmed II. In the second volume, besides the second part of Spandugino's work, Sansovino included Andrea Cambini's treatise on the origins of the Ottomans and Paolo Giovio's description of the customs and manners of the Ottomans. To these, he further added his own translation of Jaccopo Fontano's *Guerra di Rhodi* and a letter from the Secretary of Sigismund Malatesta, which Sansovino said he received in manuscript.²²¹

Although Sansovino mentioned in the preface to the second volume that it was the last part, one year later he published a third volume, which contained "the particular deeds carried out first by the Saracens and then by the Ottoman Princes in many regions of the world up to the present time."²²² This volume is divided into six books, and though it was meant to complete the knowledge presented in the previous volumes, its thematic structure is less obvious. The first book contains an unauthored chronicle of the Saracens from Muhammad's birth until 1553; the second, a short history of the Arabs by Nicolo Zeno; and the third, Luigi Bassano's treatise on the customs of the Turks. In the fourth book, Sansovino added accounts of sieges:

²¹⁹ Yerasimos, "De La Collection de Voyages à l'Histoire Universelle," 33.

²²⁰ "Profetia di Mahometani in lingua Turchesca;" "La miseria de prigion che vivono sotto il Turco;" "Epistola confortatoria contra gl'infedeli, all'Illustrissimo Principe Massimiliano Arciduca d'Austria, di Bartolomeo Giorgieuitis" Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 65v; 69r; 80r.

²²¹ "Ultimamente ui habbiano posto dinanzi a gli occhi una lettera d'un Secretario del Signor Sigismondo Malatesta alter volte Generale di questa Illustrissima e bene instituta Republica, laquale essendone venuta alle manoscritta a penna" Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda*, 3r.

²²² "giudichiamo parimente che non sia se non bene se vi daremo ancho in questa seconda e ultima parte tutti i fatti illustri e notabili de'loro Principi cosi in tempo di pace come di Guerra auenuti" Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda* (Francesco Sansouino et compagni, 1560), 2r; Francesco Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Terza* (Francesco Sansouino et compagni, 1561).

three about the fall of Constantinople, written by Leonardio de Chio, Isidoro Rutheno and Christophe Richier, one on the capture of Castelnuovo, another about the conquest of Negroponte, and a history of the siege of Scutari by Marino Barlezio.²²³ The fifth book consists of an account of Gjergj Skanderbeg's deeds, which, although written by the same Barlezio, Sansovino removed the name of the author.²²⁴ The last book includes Giovio's account of "fatti illustri di Selim" and a report on the capture of Djerba.²²⁵

Although with variations, future editions of *Dell'istoria universale* were primarily grounded in this core set of sources. The 1564 edition is divided into three books, mirroring the structure of the three volumes of the previous edition. The order of the material remained the same, but Sansovino removed Georgievits' exhortation, Ramberti's narrative, and the account on Djerba.²²⁶ Building on this structure, the 1568 edition represented a more ambitious reorganization. Here, Sansovino divided the text into five books and placed Bassano's text alongside Menavino's and Spandugino's accounts, thus regrouping the stories on morals and customs, while removing the life of Muhammad.²²⁷ In 1573, Sansovino reintroduced Muhammad's biography but excluded Pius II's letter, and reorganized the material into a more rigorous chronological order.²²⁸ Finally, in 1582, Sansovino once again excluded the life of Muhammad, alongside the accounts on the siege of Szigetvár and the battle of Lepanto. Nevertheless, he further expanded the collection, inserting his two pamphlets *Informatione a Soldati Christiani* and *Lettera o vero discorso [...] sopra le Predittioni fatte in diversi tempi da diverse persone illustri*, as well as Giovan Pietro Contarini's account of the war of Cyprus.

²²³ Yerasimos, "De La Collection de Voyages à l'Histoire Universelle," 35.

²²⁴ Yerasimos, "De La Collection de Voyages à l'Histoire Universelle," 35.

²²⁵ Yerasimos, "De La Collection de Voyages à l'Histoire Universelle," 35.

²²⁶ Yerasimos, "De La Collection de Voyages à l'Histoire Universelle," 36.

²²⁷ Yerasimos, "De La Collection de Voyages à l'Histoire Universelle," 36.

²²⁸ Yerasimos, "De La Collection de Voyages à l'Histoire Universelle," 37.

Methods of Compiling

The wide variety of sources Sansovino incorporated between the covers of *Dell'istoria universale* is striking. His work, containing both ethnographic and non-ethnographic material brought side by side treatises on customs and religion, accounts of military campaigns and sieges, as well as crusading pamphlets. When seen in its entirety, Sansovino's anthology balanced descriptive and narrative discursive styles, creating an image of the Ottoman Empire that was at the same time cultural, political, military. However, Sansovino's editorial choices were not novel, but rather emulated the features of a branch of the Venetian literary scene, that of travel literature collections.

Sixteenth-century Venice was a central hub for gathering, editing, and publishing travel writing, which was printed in many forms. Many of the accounts that Sansovino included in his work were published on their own, such as Menavino's *Cinque libri della legge, religione, et vita de' Turchi*, Bassano's *Costumi et modi particolari de la vita de' Turchi* or Ramberti's *Delle cose de Turchi. Libri tre*.²²⁹ Some also appeared in collections ranging in size and form from slim, single volumes in octavo that focused on a single area, to multivolume illustrated folios encompassing accounts spanning multiple regions. A popular example from the first half of the 1500s was *Viaggi fatti da Vinetia, alla Tana, in Persia, in India, et in Costantinopoli* (1543), published by Antonio and Paolo Manuzio, which contained six accounts that documented the travel of Venetian merchants and diplomats to the East.²³⁰ Another example, larger in size, was Benedetto Bordone's *Isolario* (1528) which combined ethnography and

²²⁹ Benedetto Ramberti, *Delle Cose de Turchi. Libri Tre* (Bernardino Bindoni, 1541); Luigi Bassano, *I Costumi, et i Modi Particolari de La Vita de Turchi* (Antonio Blado, 1545); Giovanni Antonio Menavino, *I Cinque Libri Della Legge, Religione, et Vita de' Turchi et Della Corte, & d'alcune Guerre Del Gran Turco* (Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1548).

²³⁰ Kathryn Taylor, *Ordering Customs: Ethnographic Thought in Early Modern Venice* (University of Delaware Press, 2023), 24.

cartography. Descriptions of the myths, climate, way of living, and history of all the islands of the world were accompanied by a map of each island described.²³¹ While Sansovino's *Dell'istoria universale* contains similar sources and focuses on roughly the same area as Manuzio's *Viaggi*, some historians have suggested that it rather resembles *isolarii* because of the way he organized and reshaped the material into a new form.²³² Nevertheless, the nearly thousand-page compilation exceeded such publications in scale. In terms of size, it was closer to Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia* or Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Delle Navigationi et viaggi*. Sansovino's work differed from both Münster and Ramusio in terms of theme, as it concentrated only on one polity rather than attempting a universal survey, but it resembled them in structure and paratextual elements, and it particularly aligned with Ramusio's editorial model.

Ramusio's *Delle Navigationi et viaggi*, published between 1550 and 1559, brought under its covers the widest variety, up to that point, of travel accounts and maps, with each of the three volumes focusing on a different area outside Europe. The first tome covered Africa and Asia; the second treated Central Asia, Muscovy, and the Northern Seas, while the third focused exclusively on the Americas.²³³ Although similar in size and focus to Münster's *Cosmographia*, Ramusio's compilation was not just a synthesis of already existing knowledge, but rather a curated anthology of travel accounts. The novelty of *Navigationi et viaggi* lay not only in its variety of sources, but also in the extensive paratext. Dedications, prefaces, and *discorsi* framed the sources and guided readers through the material.²³⁴ It is difficult to assess how many of these elements could be attributed to Ramusio, considering that he did not create

²³¹ Taylor, *Ordering Customs*, 36–37.

²³² Taylor, *Ordering Customs*, 37; Grendler, “Francesco Sansovino and Italian Popular History 1560-1600.”

²³³ Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Primo Volume Delle Nauigationi et Viaggi Nel Qual Si Contiene La Descrittione Dell'Africa, et Del Paese Del Prete Ianni* (Lucantonio Giunta, 1550); Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Terzo Volume Delle Nauigationi et Viaggi Nel Quale Si Contengono Le Nauigationi al Mondo Nuovo* (Lucantonio Giunta, 1556); Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Secondo Volume Delle Nauigationi et Viaggi Nel Quale Si Contengono l'Historia Delle Cose de Tartari, et Diuersi Fatti de Loro Imperatori* (Lucantonio Giunta, 1559).

²³⁴ Lejosne, *Écrire Le Monde Depuis Venise Au XVIe Siècle*, 226.

the indexes and some of the prefaces bear the printer's signature.²³⁵ Nevertheless, Fiona Lejosne has argued that Ramusio's *discorsi* were not simple commentaries, but rather authorial interventions, through which he explained the rationale of the compilation and invited readers to compare the sources systematically.²³⁶ Through critical editing and translation, systematic compilation and organization, Ramusio's editorial method revolutionized the genre of travel literature collections, and it did not take long for his work to become the reference point for future works of this kind. By looking at *Navigazioni et viaggi* and *Dell'istoria universale* side by side, it becomes clear that Sansovino also drew inspiration from how Ramusio structured and framed his material.

Sansovino adopted similar paratextual strategies to assert his authorial presence. In *Dell'istoria universale*, he included dedicatory letters and prefaces, along with several *discorsi* and *avvertimenti*. These brief notices, which precede some of the sources, either summarize the material already presented or provide a short overview of the historical context in which the authors wrote.²³⁷ Compared to Ramusio's extensive *discorsi*, Sansovino's

²³⁵ Lejosne, *Écrire Le Monde Depuis Venise Au XVIe Siècle*, 17.

²³⁶ Lejosne, *Écrire Le Monde Depuis Venise Au XVIe Siècle*, 227.

²³⁷ "Ne pareva necessario che douendosi trattar in questa prima parte le cose della religione anzi superstitione de Turchi: fosse ben fatto che voi primieramente intendeste la natiuita et la dottrina di Maccometo: percioche sopra questa sono finalmente fondati i costumi de predetti popoli: et le cose che seguitano descritte dal Menauno dipendono in gran parte dalla cognitione ch'egli hebbe della scrittura e della legge loro [...]" Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 16r; "Habbiamo in questa nostra Historia vniuersale messo nel primo luogo le cose d'Andrea Cambini, percioch'egli fu il primo tra volgari che cominciasse a scriuer delle cose de Turchi. [...] Alle cose di costui habbiamo voluto che segniti vn discorso di Theodoro della famiglia Spandugina per madre, ma Cantacusino da lato di padre [...] Questo discorso è da noi stato diuiso in due parti. Nella prima trattando egli breuemente la vera origine de gli Ottomani, descriue per via di curiosi e grati particolari [...] Nella seconda partitamente si contengono le cose della Religione, allequali soggiunge poi le leggi et i costumi come membro dipendente dalla Religione et necessario per gouernar i Popoli et i Regni. Ma habbiamo collocato questa Seconda parte nella seconda della nostra Historia come a suo luogo potrete vedere;" "Ora mentre ch'il mondo era in cosi fatta dispositione, et ch'ognuno o ragionando o manneggiando armi si preparaua a vn certo modo a cosi Santa operatione, laqual pareua che s'andasse auindo per mano dell'Imperadore, parse al Gioiua marauiglioso Historico di voler dare anch'egli qualche ricordo in questa materia come Christiano et come pratico delle cose del mondo, la onde scrisse la presente informatione all'Imperadore [...] Egli scrisse nella pura lingua volgare assai corrottamente come quegli che [...] non haueua perfetta cognitione della Toscana. [...] Bene vi vogliamo auertire, che egli riferisce tutte cose scritte innanzi a suoi tempi, perche se gli puo pienamente creder, non hauendo luogo o persona, oue o intorno alla quale egli habbia potuto essercitar le froze della sua arguta eloquenza nella adulatione." Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda*, 43v; 70v.

interventions are fewer and less elaborate. The first edition, where these *discorsi* and *avvertimenti* are signaled with a title, is the most obvious example that Sansovino was trying to emulate Ramusio. (Fig. 1, fig. 2 & fig. 3)

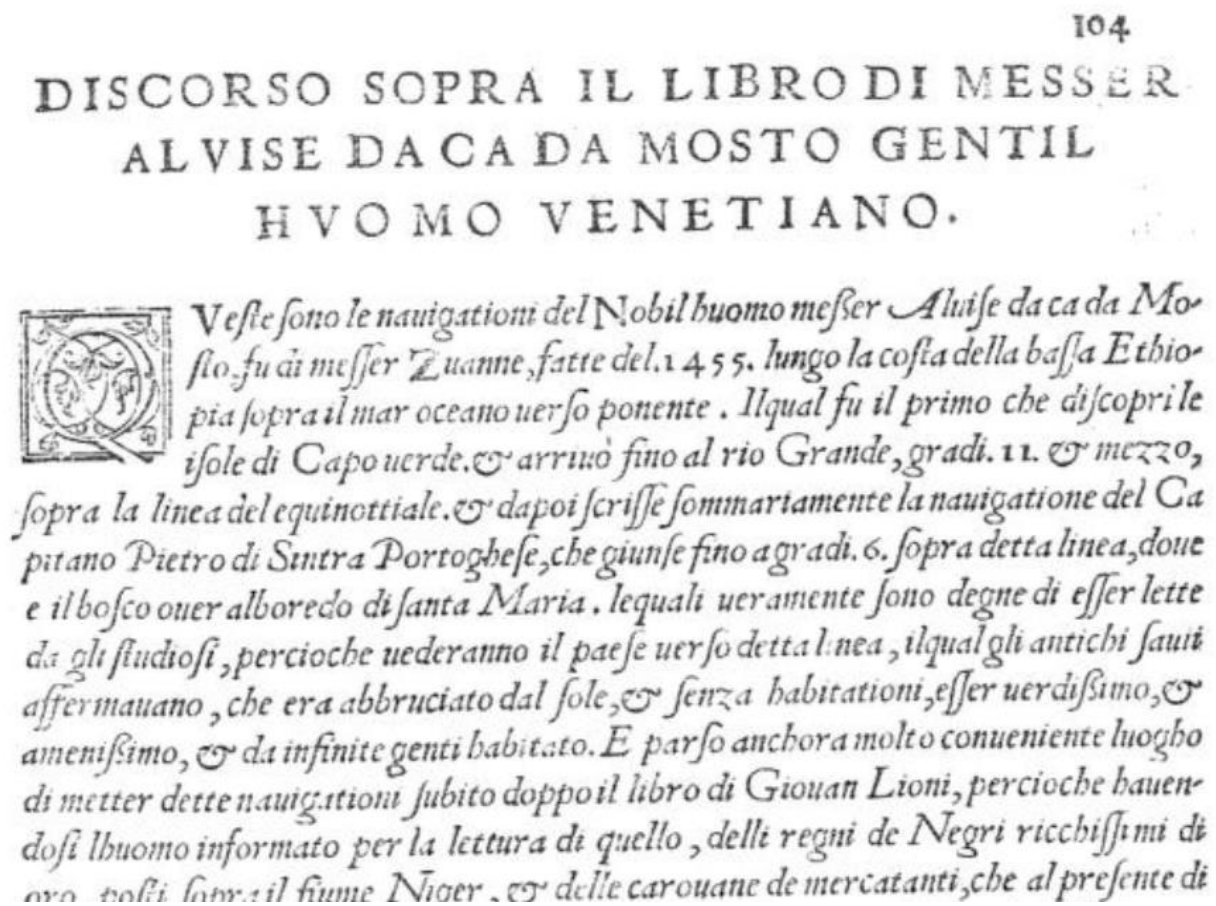


Figure 1: Ramusio, *Primo volume delle nauigationi et viaggi*, 1550, 104r

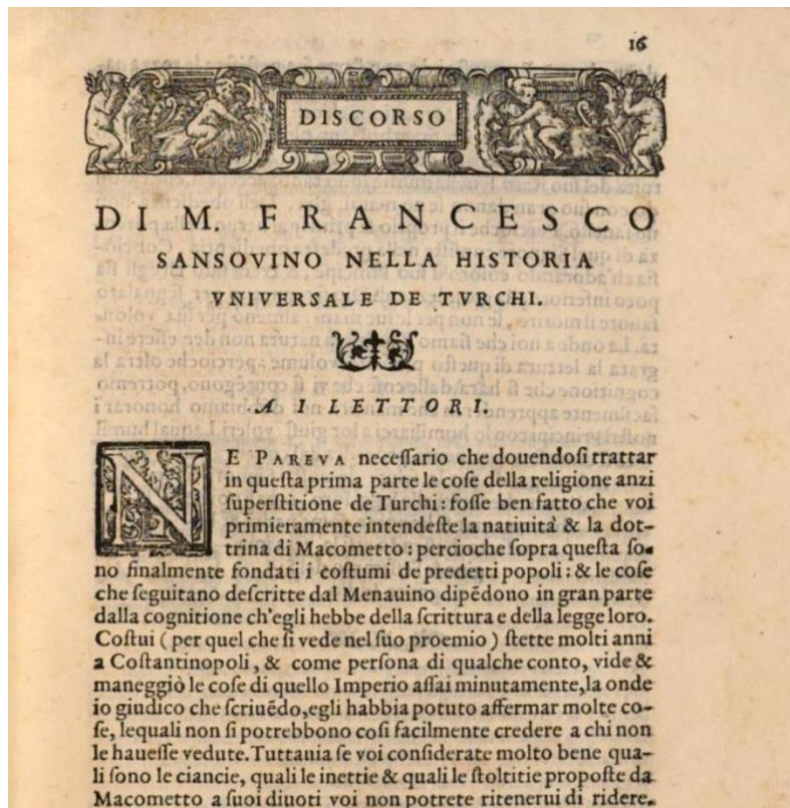


Figure 2: Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 16r

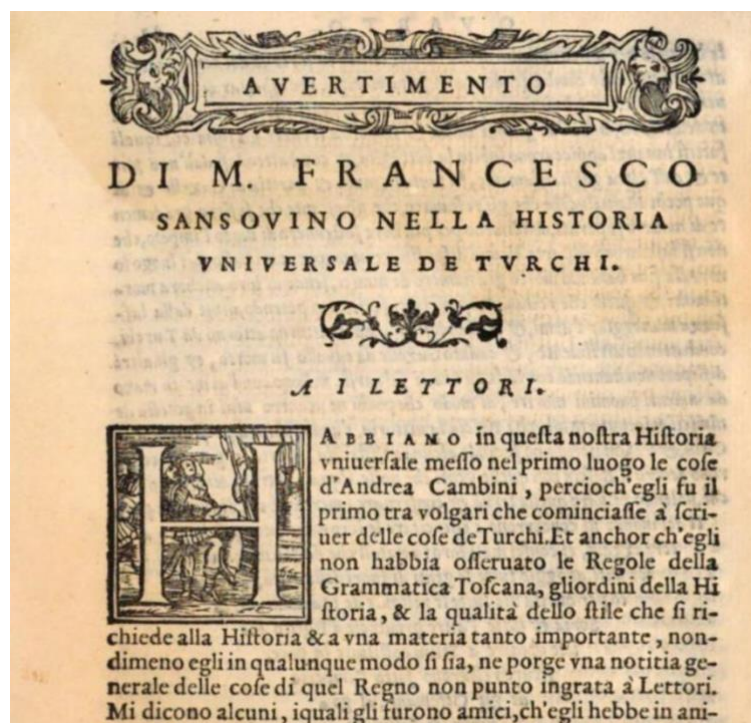


Figure 3: Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda*, 43v

In later editions these textual insertions were either missing or, as in the 1568 one, they are not separate prefaces, but included in the beginning of the accounts, discernible from the text of the source only through small subtitles. (Fig. 4) Yet, important to note is that these *avvertimenti* also functioned as orientation devices: Sansovino provided a brief summary of what has already been presented, so that a reader arriving directly at a given account could still understand its place within the larger structure of the book. Such commentaries highlight that the collection was not meant for continuous, but rather selective reading.

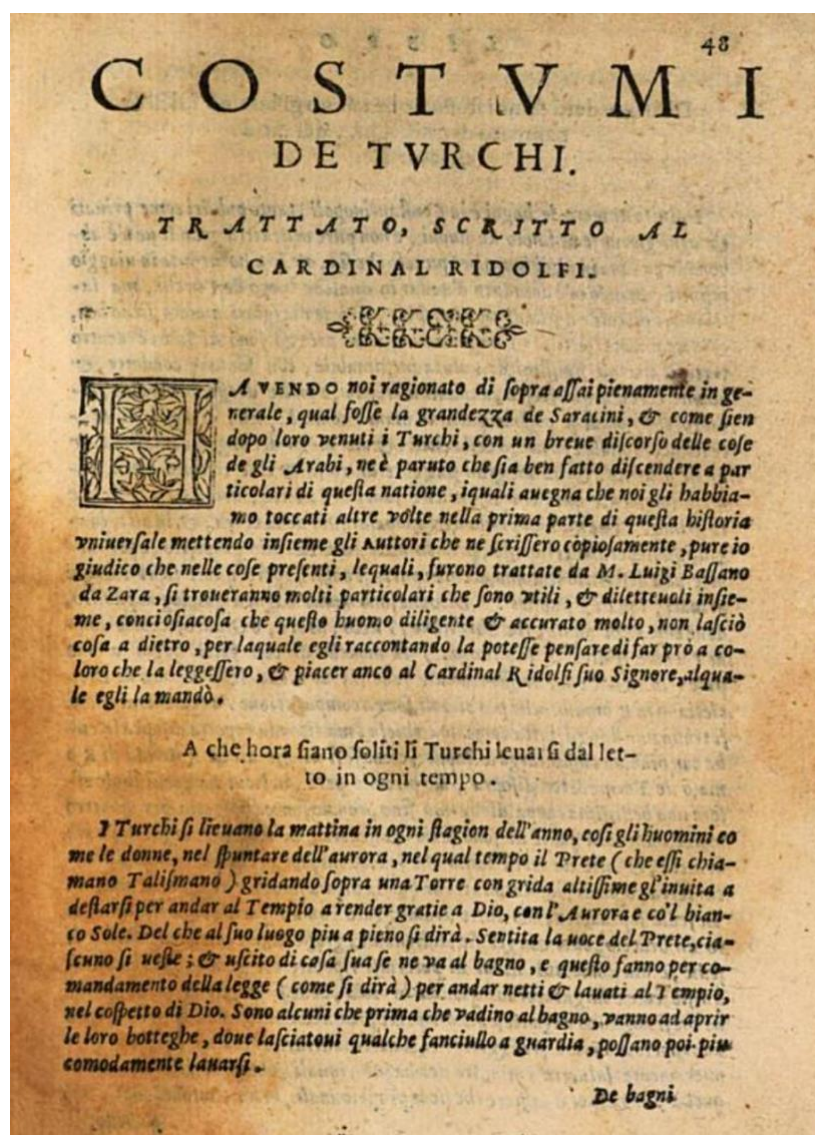


Figure 4: Sansovino, *Historia uniuersale dell'origine et imperio de Turchi*, 48r

Like many works that covered a large amount of material, Sansovino's compilation included a series of finding devices to help readers navigate the text. As advertised on the cover, three of the five editions of *Dell'istoria universale* contained "una tavola di tutte le cose piu notabili dell'opera." The alphabetically organized indexes consist of proper names, titles, and subtitles. In some cases, like in the 1560 edition, Sansovino abridged some of the subtitles, keeping only key words or combining two subsections into one entry. Both the 1560 and 1582 editions have indexes roughly the same length, with seven and nine pages respectively, while the 1573 edition's index spans 25 pages. An interesting note about this "copiosissima tavola" is that Sansovino added entries that do not correspond to any specific sub-heading. For example, in Spandugino's treatise *Delle historie et origine de principi de Turchi*, retitled here as *De costumi de Turchi*, Sansovino included several additional entries not present in the 1560 edition.²³⁸ Since he reproduced this account exactly as printed in other versions, as a continuous narrative without subsections or subtitles, the entries point the readers to the pages where the information can be found.²³⁹ Indexes allowed readers to approach the collection by searching for particular topics and move directly to the relevant section. Seen alongside the *avvertimenti*, they reinforce the idea that Sansovino did not design *Dell'istoria universale* to be read as a continuous narrative but rather as a reference work.

Another paratextual element Sansovino used to assist readers was the inclusion of lists of authorities. These appear in all editions of *Dell'istoria universale* except the one from 1568. Such lists were typically designed to impress and earn respect for a work compiled from many different authorities.²⁴⁰ While this might have been true for the one added in the 1564 edition, in Sansovino's case they also served as useful reference tools because they contained specific

²³⁸ For example, "Audienza data dal Turco et suo modo;" "Dormire de turchi qual sia et in che modo;" "Donne et habito loro: et nell'andar fuori" Sansovino, *Historia Vniuersale Dell'origine, et Imperio de' Turchi*.

²³⁹ For comparison see the structure and layout of the text in Theodoro Spandugino, *I Commentari [...] Dell'origine de' Principi Turchi, et de' Costumi Di Quella Natione* (Lorenzo Torrentino, 1551).

²⁴⁰ Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 133–35.

page numbers. These lists varied across editions. For instance, the 1560 edition's second volume features a list of "The authors who have written about the Turks," whereas the first volume includes one with "The things which are included in this part," which only mentions Menavino and Spandugino.²⁴¹ Some authors, like Georgievits, are still mentioned in titles before their accounts, while others, such as Rambeti, are removed entirely. The 1573 edition lists both titles and authors' names, although several are attributed to "auttore incerto."²⁴² By contrast, in the 1582 edition, Sansovino omits nearly all author names, listing only the titles, except for two instances.²⁴³ While these lists certainly had a rhetorical function, they also had a practical purpose. By supplying page numbers and listing the works and authors in the order in which they appear, Sansovino equipped his work with a list of contents, resembling what we today call a table of contents. Like the *avvertimenti* and the indexes, these lists signaled that *Dell'istoria universale* was not primarily intended for continuous reading, but for selective engagement and consultation.

Stéphane Yerasimos has pointed out that the disappearance of authors' names in later editions gives the impression, to the uninformed reader, that a major part of the collection was written by Sansovino himself.²⁴⁴ However, in the case of the 1582 edition, which was reviewed by the Inquisition, the omission of names may have also been related to the fact that some authors were either questionable or already on the Index. At the same time, as seen in Chapter 1, Sansovino was keen to prove his erudition. His concern with assessing and critically evaluating the "authenticity" of his sources rested on establishing the credibility of the authors.

²⁴¹ "Le cose che si contengono in questa prima parte" Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 8v; "Gli autori che hanno scritto le cose de Turchi sono" Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Seconda*, 4v.

²⁴² "Vita et dotrina di Macometto d'incerto Autore;" "Fatti illustri del Sig. Scanderbegh d'incerto Autore;" "Presa di Negroponte, d'incerto Autore;" "Fatti di Soliman dalla presa di Rodi fin' al 1553. d'incerto;" "Impresa di Selim del Regno di Cipri, d'incerto Autore;" Sansovino, *Historia Vniuersale Dell'origine, et Imperio de' Turchi*, 17v.

²⁴³ "Informatione di Paolo Giouio, delle cose Turchesche;" "Lettera del Sansouino, nella Guerra di Cipro" Sansovino, *Historia Vniuersale Dell'origine, et Imperio de' Turchi. Raccolta, et in Diuersi Luoghi Di Nuouo Ampliata, Da m. Francesco Sansouino; et Riformata in Molte Sue Parti per Ordine Della Santa Inquisitione*, 8v.

²⁴⁴ Yerasimos, "De La Collection de Voyages à l'Histoire Universelle," 36.

Moreover, classifying this book as a *raccolta*, both on the cover and in the autobiographical letter to Magnanini, together with all the aforementioned paratextual elements, reinforce that Sansovino's role in the creation of this work was that of an editor and a learned compiler, rather than an author.

Dell'istoria universale is an example that shows how the format of Sansovino's works is closely linked to his authorial roles. The indexes, lists of contents, and *avvertimenti*, alongside the prefaces and dedications not only sketch his contribution, but also frame the structure of the work. From the perspective of the Venetian book scene, where novelty was a key feature of any notable publication, these paratextual interventions highlight how Sansovino sought to distinguish his works from others; that is, through format and methodology rather than style of writing or content. At the same time, they also show that he was, in fact, attuned and responding to the developments of the contemporary literary scene and market.

Blurred Lines: Compositions, Compilations, and Translations

The paratextual elements are just some of the clues that show how Sansovino was in a continuous dialogue with Ramusio and his work. The three-volume first edition of *Dell'istoria universale* mirrored the format of *Navigazioni et Viaggi*, and while both have approximately the same length, what is striking about Sansovino's work is that it focused on a single polity rather than multiple regions. Yerasimos has even suggested that Sansovino published it as a direct response to Ramusio's partial silence on the Ottoman Empire.²⁴⁵ Nevertheless, since Ramusio's aim was, in his words, to offer "the view of a single world consisting of homogenous regions inhabited by men," a more detailed description of only the Ottoman Empire would have

²⁴⁵ Yerasimos, "De La Collection de Voyages à l'Histoire Universelle," 26.

defeated this purpose.²⁴⁶ Furthermore, as Lejosne observed, Ramusio's paratexts shaped the gathered accounts in an "ideal book-space" where information on various places and peoples could be compared and confronted to establish knowledge.²⁴⁷ Even by echoing all of Ramusio's editorial strategies, it is questionable whether Sansovino intended to offer such a comparative approach, or how far it went. Considering that *Dell'istoria universale* focuses on a single polity, in Sansovino's case comparison could emerge not from juxtaposing knowledge about different regions, but from adding side by side multiple perspectives on the Ottoman world. Readers could thus evaluate how, for instance, one author's description of customs and institutions resonated with another's narrative of a siege or military encounter. In this sense, Sansovino both adopted and adapted Ramusio's editorial methods, producing a layered and comprehensive portrait of a polity.

The way Sansovino applied and expanded this comparative approach is best seen, however, in his *Del governo de' regni et delle repubbliche antiche e moderne*. This work included a series of state descriptions, ranging from the kingdoms of France, Germany, England, Spain, Poland, Turkey, or Persia to the republics of Rome, Ragusa, Lucca, Genoa, or Venice, as well as the ancient republics of Athens and Sparta, and even Utopia. The first edition, published in 1561, contained 18 polities, which increased to 22 by the 1583 edition. As he stated in the preface to the first edition, Sansovino combined old and new knowledge, thus continuing the Aristotelian tradition and the universalizing ambitions found in contemporary works like Münster's *Cosmographia*.²⁴⁸ The details about the process behind

²⁴⁶ "Introduction," in *Navigazioni e Viaggi*, ed. Marica Milanese, vol. 1 (Einaudi, 1978).

²⁴⁷ Lejosne, *Écrire Le Monde Depuis Venise Au XVIe Siècle*, 242.

²⁴⁸ "L'intention mia nel presente uolume è questa, che hauendo Aristotele et molti altri Scrittori, chi per una uia, et chi per un'altra, trattato il modo de' Gouerni de' Principi et delle Repubbliche con uarie maniere differenti l'una dall'altra, ho uoluto ch'io formar una nuoua Politica, mettendola in partica, con descriuer i gouerni a punto come essi stanno, parte uecchi et parte nuoui che uiuono" Francesco Sansovino, *Del Gouerno de' Regni et Delle Repubbliche Così Antiche Come Moderne Libri XVIII* (Francesco Sansovino, 1561), 3r; Justin Stagl, "The Methodising of Travel in the 16th Century: A Tale of Three Cities," *History and Anthropology* 4, no. 2 (1990): 310; Davide Suin, *Editoria, Storiografia e Politica. Il Contributo Intellettuale Di Francesco Sansovino (1521-1583)*, *Politikòn Zòon* 11 (Aracne, 2023), 132.

composing the work, including which authors and sources he used and how he used them, suggest that *Del governo* is a compilation.²⁴⁹

This aspect is reinforced in the lists of contents of the first edition, which indicates the polity and the author of the account, while future editions omit the author's name, only listing the polity and its corresponding page. (Fig. 5 & fig. 6) Similar to *Dell'istoria universale*, the evolution of these content lists also demonstrates that Sansovino not only added material but also reordered it in the second edition. The account of the Papal court, which appears at the beginning of the 1561 edition, is moved to a later position in subsequent editions. (Fig. 6) Although he claimed he did not follow any specific hierarchy in arranging the polities, the visual layout of the lists of contents suggests that this slight reordering was not at all random but had rather symbolic meaning.²⁵⁰ Starting from the second edition, the account of the Papacy marked the shift from kingdoms to republics, thus emphasizing the central role of the church and its position as the mediator and link between polities with different types of government, past and present.

²⁴⁹ "Viuglio ancho auertit di questo, che quelle cose che mi son uenute alle mani gia fatte uolgari da altre persone, le ho messe come elle stanno, suor solamente che io le racconciate alquanto [...] Quanto alle cose d'Inghilterra, io ho preso quel tanto che ne ha scritto il mio honorato M. Giulio Rauiglio Rosso, il quale hauendo come huomo del Signor Francesco da Este, praticato in quella Isola molto tempo, gli parue di metter nella sua Historia de successi auenuti in Inghilterra quelle annotationi che dichiarano i luoghi della sua Historia, de quali io mi son seruito. [...] Intorno poi alla Republica di Athene, i Mahistrati son molti et tratti tutti da diuersi Scrittori, cosi Greci, come Latini ma percioche per dimostrargli pienamente quali erano, bisognaua dichiarar ancho molte parole de gli Scrittori da quali essi son tolti" Sansovino, *Del Gouerno de i Regni et Delle Republiche Così Antiche Come Moderne Libri XVIII*, 3v.

²⁵⁰ Preface, 1561, 3v



LE COSE CHE SI
CONTENGONO IN QUESTO
VOLUME
SONO
I MAGISTRATI
DI

ROMA.	Di Ottaviano Veftrio	Car. 1
FRANCIA.	Di Vincenzo Lupano.	Car. 9
GERMANIA.	Di Thomaso Auths.	Car. 25
INGHILTERRA.	Di Giulio Rauiglio Rosso,	Car. 29
SPAGNA.	Di Alfonso Vlloa.	Car. 40
TVRCO.	Di Theodoro Spandugino,	Car. 44
PERSIA.	Di Paolo Giouio.	Car. 51
TVNISL.	Di Giouanni Lioni.	Car. 54
VENETIA.	Di Gasparo Contarini Card.	Car. 59
ROMA.	Di Lucio Feneftella.	Car. 101
SVIZZERI.	Di Leandro Mutio.	Car. 121
RAGVGI.	Di Francesco Sansouino.	Car. 124
SPARTA.	Di Senofonte Filofofo.	Car. 128
GENOVA.	Di Francesco Sansouino,	Car. 135
ATHENE	Di Autore incerto.	Car. 139
FEZ.	Di Giouanni Lioni.	Car. 156
LVCCA.	Di Francesco Sansouino.	Car. 181
VTOPIA.	Di Tomaso Moro da Londra.	Car. 183

Figure 5: Sansovino, *Del gouerno de i regni et delle republiche cosi antiche come moderne libri XVIII*, 1561

LE COSE CHE SI CONTENGONO
IN QUESTO VOLVME
SONO
I MAGISTRATI
DEL

Regno	di Francia	a car. 1
Regno	della Germania	a car. 18
Regno	d'Inghilterra	a car. 22
Regno	di Spagna	a car. 33
Regno	del Turco	a car. 37
Regno	della Persia	a car. 46
Regno	di Tunisi	a car. 49
Regno	di Fez	a car. 53
Regno	di Polonia	a car. 77
Regno	di Portogallo	a car. 79
Corte	di Roma	a car. 80
Repub.	Romana	a car. 88
Repub.	de gli Svizzeri	a car. 109
Repub.	di Ragugia	a car. 111
Repub.	Spartana	a car. 115
Repub.	Genouese	a car. 123
Repub.	Atheniese	a car. 128
Repub.	Lucchese	a car. 146
Repub.	Vinitiana	a car. 149
Repub.	di Norimberga	a car. 176
Repub.	d'Vtopia	a car. 182

Figure 6: Sansovino, *Del gouerno de regni et delle republiche antiche et moderne* di m. Francesco Sansouino libri XXI, 1567

Since the authors' names are entirely omitted after the first edition, even in the titles of each account, it may appear that Sansovino himself wrote this work. Although the length of each description varied, Sansovino sorted the information and restructured it around how each country organized their constitution and hierarchy of offices.²⁵¹ Some of the most important positions in each state are indicated with headings, but most of the names for each institution are specific to each polity. Sometimes, the continuous flow of text makes it hard to identify other functions or offices, especially since Sansovino jumps back and forth between the details of each. Looking through the text shows that, although irregular, several features appeared in most descriptions, such as the geographical location and size of a state, the territories under the ruler's authority, the population, noblemen, armed forces, and revenues. The inconsistencies and irregularities in elements across accounts decrease with each edition and suggest that Sansovino actively reorganized the information, aiming to create a standardized set of categories for describing each polity. This aspect is visible also in the addition of more items in the alphabetical indexes attached to each edition, which grew from 6 pages in the 1561 edition to 9 pages in 1583.

As with *Dell'istoria universale*, the indexes and the lists of contents acted as tools designed to facilitate selective reading and guide the reader through the text. However, in *Del governo* Sansovino explicitly stated that he wanted to give readers the possibility to “easily discern what is good and what is bad in one polity or another.”²⁵² While Sansovino's work is nowhere near as comprehensive as *Navigazioni et viaggi*, it still echoes Ramusio's approach by creating an “ideal book-space” that enables a comparative reading of the accounts. But, unlike Ramusio, Sansovino did not use paratextual elements, such as the *discorsi*, to frame a selection

²⁵¹ "Oltre a cio qualunque huomo si sia potra con ageuolezza saper quali ordini, quai Magistrati, quali autorita hanno gli officii di tante citta nobili et illustri che son potenti a di nostri per imperio et per grandezza di stato" Sansovino, *Del Gouerno de i Regni et Delle Republiche Cosi Antiche Come Moderne Libri XVIII*, 3r.

²⁵² Sansovino, *Del Gouerno de i Regni et Delle Republiche Cosi Antiche Come Moderne Libri XVIII*, 3v.

of gathered accounts. Instead, to integrate the sources into a single reading grid, he restructured the information.

Modern scholars often consider *Del governo* as Sansovino's most innovative work, as it launched a series of publications called "notitiae rerum publicarum" in the seventeenth century and "statistics" in the eighteenth century.²⁵³ While descriptions of polities were not a new type of work during the sixteenth century, by reorganizing knowledge to emphasize particular constitutional and administrative aspects, and by comparing different forms of government while including both classical and contemporary sources, Sansovino developed a framework for comparison that rested on but went beyond the Aristotelian tradition and Ramusio's comparative perspective.

In the autobiographical letter to Filippo Magnanini, Sansovino categorized *Del Governo* as a *compositio* and *Dell'istoria universale* as a *raccolta*. A closer look at the structure of these two works reveals, however, that both rely on compilation, reorganization, and paratextual framing, which questions the distinction Sansovino made between them. For example, in the dedications and prefaces, he mentions that he carefully selected sources for each work. In *Dell'istoria universale*, he explains that he had to choose from the vast literature those accounts that would best describe the customs, laws, and history of the Ottomans.²⁵⁴ In *Del Governo*, on the other hand, he describes the works from which he extracted what

²⁵³ Stagl, "The Methodising of Travel in the 16th Century," 57; Almut Höfert, "The Order of Things and the Discourse of the Turkish Threat: The Conceptualisation of Islam in the Rise of Occidental Anthropology in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries," in *Between Europe and Islam: Shaping Modernity in a Transcultural Space* (P.I.E.-Peter Lang, 2000), 63.

²⁵⁴ "Ma perche gli scrittori sono stati molti e di varie nationi et difficil cosa è il poter vedere a pieno ogni cosa in questa materia, pero io che ho sempre hauuto grandissima contentezza si intender il gouerno, i modi e, il fondamento di quell Principato, ho ridotto insieme quanto per me si é potuto raccorre, accioche coloro che leggeranno la presente Historia, possano hauerne diletto e utile parimente [...] La quale Historia cosi ridotta in un corpo, ho parimente stimato che sia degno dono da farsi a V. S." Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 2r–3v.

information seemed relevant for his purpose.²⁵⁵ Although both works relied heavily on paratextual tools to guide readers and both show Sansovino's typical method of transforming existing material into accessible formats, in *Del Governo*, he did not merely juxtapose the accounts but reorganized the available knowledge. Thus, by labeling the former work as a *raccolta* and the latter as a *compositiione*, Sansovino aimed to highlight the extent of authorial control over each piece. However, the similar structure and method of composition blur the lines between his works, especially since many of the titles he lists under each category do not fully reflect his authorial contribution.

The fluid boundary between different categories of work becomes especially clear in a work that Sansovino described as a *traduttiione*. In 1574, he obtained a 20-year privilege for his translation of Giacomo Filippo da Bergamo's *Sopplimento delle croniche vniuersali del mondo*.²⁵⁶ A continuation of his previous *Croniche vniuersale*, Bergamo's works offered a universal Christian history from Creation to the author's present time. Both works were widely circulated throughout the sixteenth century, also in Italian translation, and published in multiple editions. By claiming to imitate the genre of chronicles with a tradition dating back to Eusebius of Caesarea, as he noted in the preface, Sansovino aligned himself with that tradition.²⁵⁷ He did not merely retranslate Bergamo's text, but he also extended the narrative, first to 1574, and then, in the second edition, to 1581. This, however, was not a novelty, as previous versions of

²⁵⁵ "Et ui ricordo che se qualche cosa non stessee a punto come io la scriuo, merito scusa et perdono, percioche non ho trouato ogni cosa scritto et quelle che io desideraua di metter in questo corpo [...] Viuoglio ancho auertit di questo, che quelle cose che mi son uenute alle mani gia fatte uolgari da altre persone, le ho messe come elle stanno [...] we have written only what seemed to us to be relevant without going into such a great deal." Sansovino, *Del Gouerno de i Regni et Delle Republiche Così Antiche Come Moderne Libri XVIII*, 3v.

²⁵⁶ "Che a domino Francesco Sansovino dottor sia concesso che altro che egli o chi da lui haverà causa, et licentia non possa, per lo spatio de anni xx prossimi, in questa, né in altra città o luogo del dominio nostro stampar, far stampar, né altrove stampato vender il supplimento delle croniche da lui tradotto di latino in volgare" Senato Terra 50, c. 111v in Squassina, *Privilegi Librari Ed Edizioni Privilegiate Nella Repubblica Di Venezia (1566-1603)*, 147.

²⁵⁷ Sansovino, *Sopplimento Delle Croniche Vniuersali Del Mondo Di f. Iacopo Filippo Da Bergamo. Tradotto Nuouamente Da m. Francesco Sansouino*, 4r.

this work also had additions to the year they were published.²⁵⁸ Yet, Sansovino explicitly titled each “book” as “raccolta, riformata et ampliata,” emphasizing that his work was not just a revised translation, but also an expanded version from previous editions.

Sansovino’s translation of *Sopplimento delle croniche vniuersali del mondo* appeared almost twenty years after the two last Italian editions and shares few structural features with them. As this chronicle was a reference work, Sansovino added several elements that would make selective reading easier. Both the 1575 edition and the 1581 include an alphabetical list of authorities featuring work titles and names of historians whose works were used as sources. Sansovino’s editions are also equipped with indexes of around thirty pages that catalogue names of people and countries. For comparison, previous editions published by Bartolomeo Imperatore in 1553 and by Girolamo Calepino in 1554 also include similar indexes, but a “Sommario di tutti libri” replaced the lists of authorities. In contrast with Sansovino’s versions, the 1550s editions contain illustrations, including bird’s-eye view of cities and Ptolemaic maps.

What distinguishes Sansovino’s editions of *Sopplemento* from previous ones is the *mise-en-page*. The continuous flow of text in Imperatore’s and Calepino’s editions, reminiscent of incunabula, makes it difficult to discern transitions from one section to another, even with marginal notes guiding the reader to specific topics. (Fig. 7 & fig. 8) In contrast, Sansovino’s text is framed almost like a table, with a dual timeline, from Creation and the Christian chronology, positioned on the inner side of the pages and with concise marginal notes along

²⁵⁸ Giacomo Filippo Bergamo, *Supplementum Supplementi Delle Croniche Del Venerando Padre Frate Iacobo Philippo, Dell’Ordine Heremitano Primo Autore Nouamente Reuisto, Vulgarizato, & Historiato, & Con Somma Diligentia Corretto Con La Gionta Vltima Del MDXL Insino al MDLII* (Bartolomeo Imperatore, 1553); Giacomo Filippo Bergamo, *Croniche Vniuersale Del Reuerendo Padre Frate Giacopo Filippo Da Bergamo Heremitano. Cominciando Dal Principio Della Creatione Del Mondo, Fino All’anno Di Tempi Suoi, Con Vtile, & Comodissimo Ordine Nuouamente Raccolte, & Mandate in Luce* (Girolamo Calepino, 1554).

the outer side. (Fig. 9) This layout facilitates selective reading in a way previous editions did not.

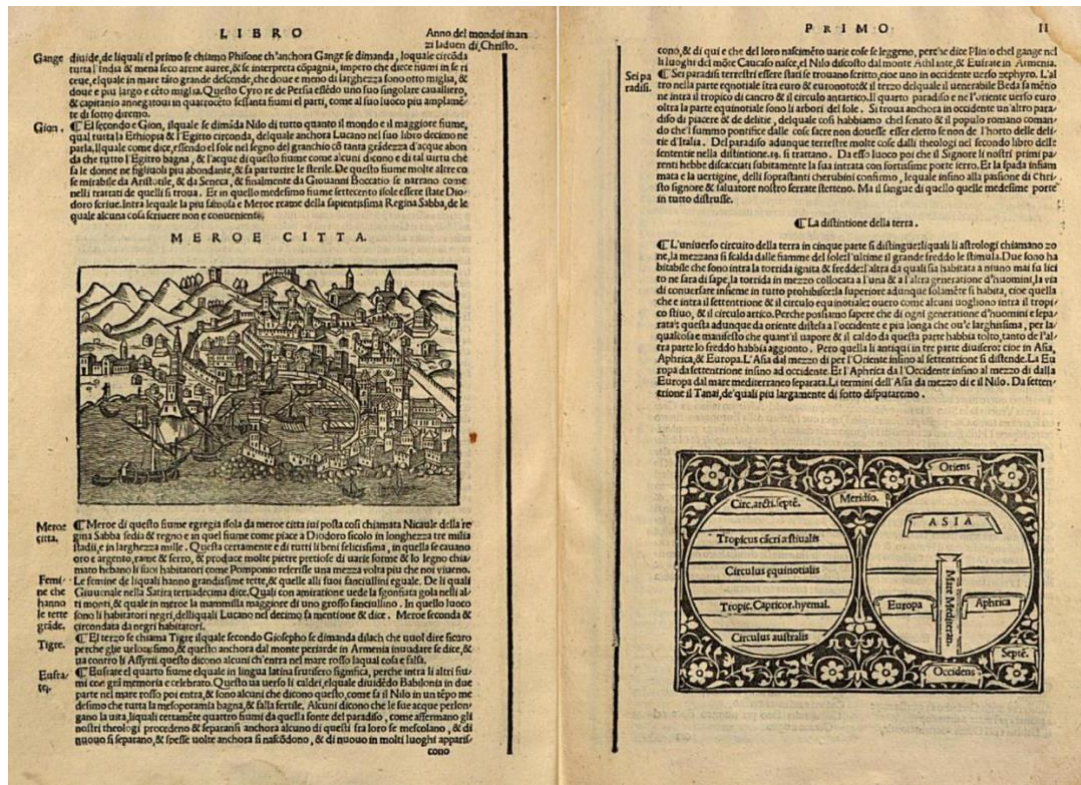


Figure 7: Bergamo, Supplementum Supplementi Delle Croniche, 1553, 10v-11r



Figure 8: Bergamo, Croniche Vniuersale 1554, 91v-92r

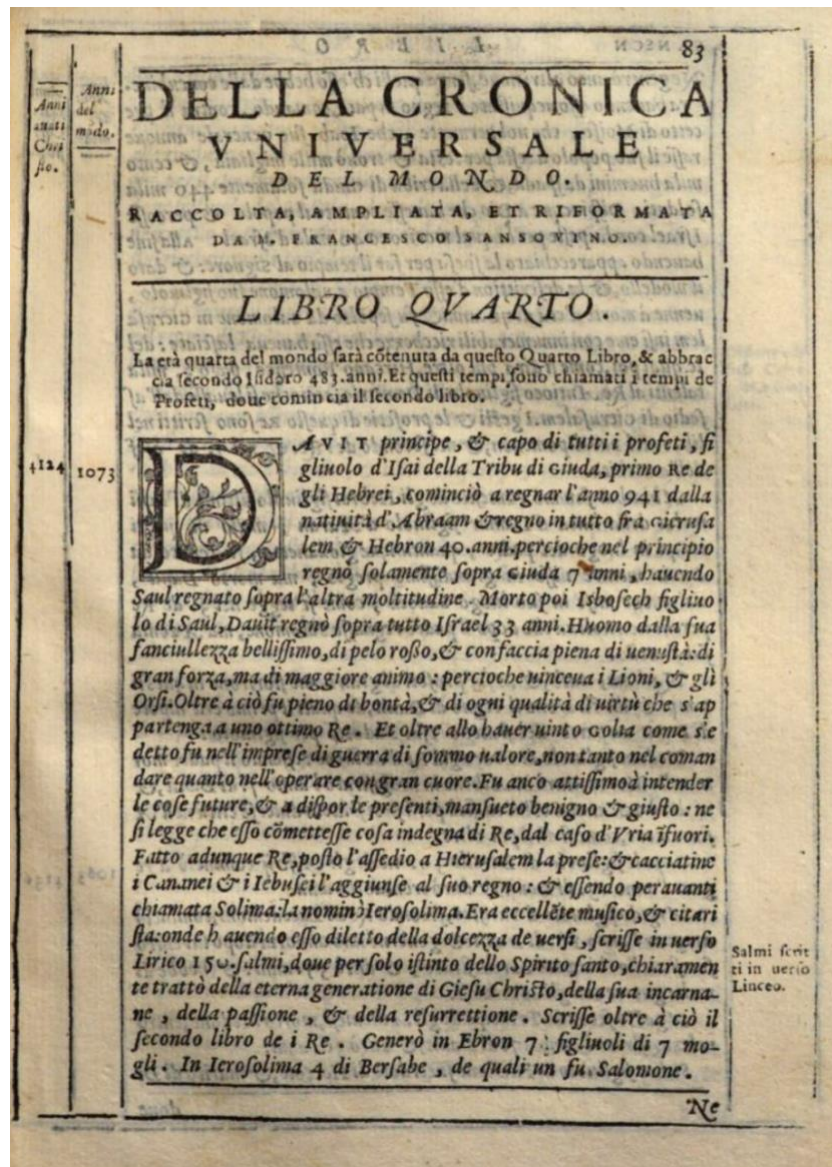


Figure 9: Sansovino, *Sopplimento Delle Croniche Vniuersali Del Mondo*, 1575, 83r

What makes his work go beyond a mere translation of a chronicle is that he appended a *Ritratto delle città d'Italia*. At first glance, it is unclear how well the *Ritratto* fit into the larger logic of the *Sopplimento*, given that it was structured more like an ethnographic and genealogical work, rather than a chronicle. The brief descriptions of Italian cities and their noble families, although not following any chronological or thematic order, are blended into the format of the chronicle. As Sansovino mentioned in the preface, these were some excerpts

from a larger project he was working on, which was completed and published a few years later.²⁵⁹ *Della origine et de' fatti delle famiglie illustri d'Italia* (1582) was a historical chronicle which very much resembled the *Sopplemento* in terms of layout. (Fig. 10)

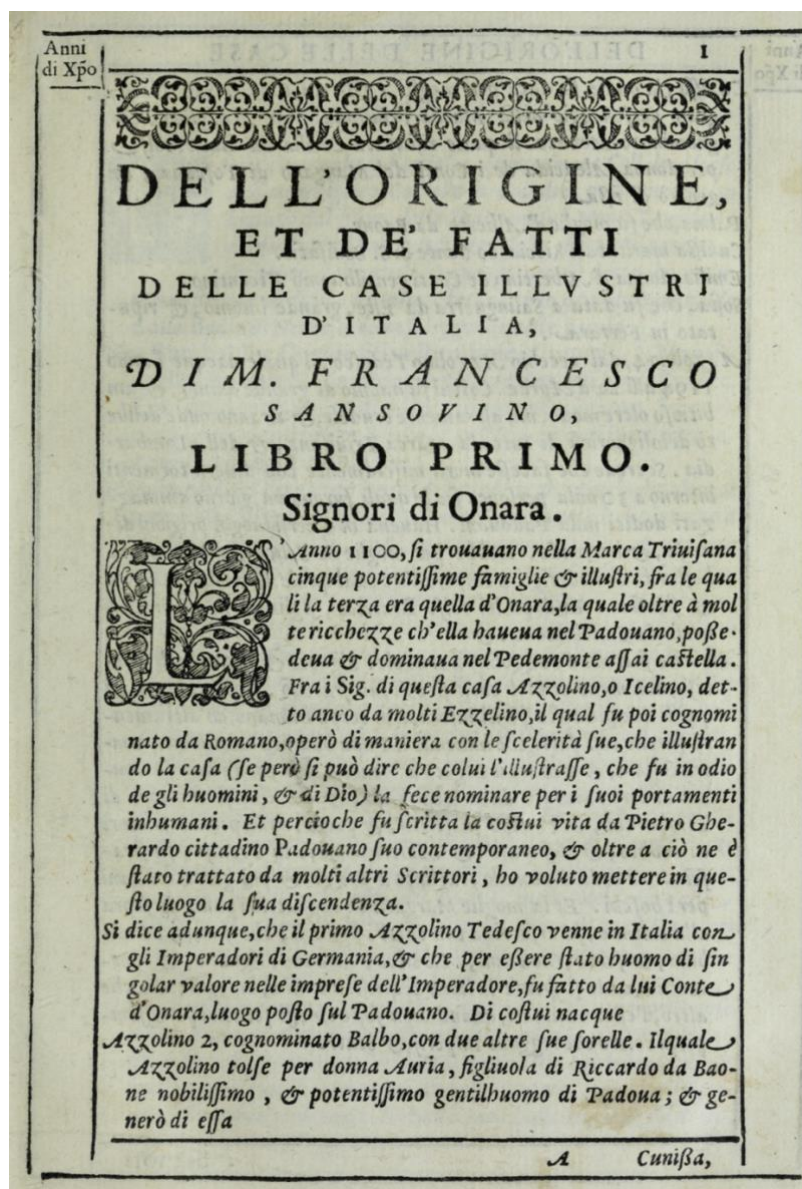


Figure 10: Sansovino, *Della origine et de' fatti delle famiglie illustri d'Italia*, 1575, 1r

²⁵⁹ Sansovino, *Della Origine et de' Fatti Delle Famiglie Illustri d'Italia*.

For this work, Sansovino sorted, selected, and summarized knowledge from a wide variety of authors, in a similar way he did with *Del governo*, and for sure he would have also labeled it as a *compositione*. Sansovino may have included excerpts from this work as additional material to ensure that his translation of Bergamo's chronicle is novel enough to be granted a privilege, yet, in doing so, he also made *Sopplimento delle croniche vniuersali del mondo* more than just a translation. By claiming the title of *traduttore* while simultaneously expanding and reshaping Bergamo's narrative, Sansovino once again asserted his authorial agency through editorial practice.

Sansovino's *Dell'istoria universale*, *Del governo*, and the *Sopplimento* are just some of his works that exemplify his overlapping roles as compiler, editor, translator, and even publisher. Despite his own attempt to categorize them as *raccolta*, *compositione*, and *traduttione*, respectively, the similarities in their structure, paratextual elements, and methods of composition blur these distinctions. By storing, sorting, selecting, and summarizing, Sansovino left traces of his authorial identity in each of these works.²⁶⁰ To that extent, the categories Sansovino used to label his works reflect less the type of works he created and more a rhetorical gesture indicating his desire to align his works with contemporary and recognized textual conventions. The fluid boundary between compilations, compositions, and translations becomes most evident when analyzing how Sansovino reshaped and recycled knowledge across his works.

²⁶⁰ The 4 S's of textual management, Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 3.

Reframing Knowledge: Reuse of Knowledge and New Works

Most of Sansovino's works were published in multiple editions. Whether printed at his own workshop or in collaboration with other publishers, each new version aimed to update the previous ones. As seen in Chapter 1, one of his recurring concerns with the publishing market was the production of "new" works. While openly critical of the public's hunger for novel material, he nevertheless strove to produce works that met this demand. At the same time, the "newness" of textual production carried significant legal implications and was closely linked to the Venetian privilege system.

Sansovino's works show how the length of a printing license affected the extent of his revisions in later editions. For example, with *Dell'istoria universale*, Sansovino had secured a privilege by the time the 1564 Rampazetto edition was printed.²⁶¹ Although the content of his edition and later ones (1568 and 1573) changed as he added new accounts and removed or replaced others, Sansovino reused many of the paratextual elements. The preface from the 1564 edition, in fact, is a copy of the dedicatory letter and the latter part of the preface from the first volume of the 1560 edition, while the preface from the 1573 edition is identical to the 1564 one. Likewise, the small *discorsi* or *avvertimenti* that introduce several accounts in the 1568 and 1573 editions are the same. In the case of the 1582 edition of *Dell'istoria universale*, however, which appeared after the first privilege expired and went through Inquisitorial approval, Sansovino wrote a new dedication and entirely removed the preface and the explanatory notes in between accounts. Similarly, the dedicatory letters and prefaces from each of the two editions of *Gl'Annali Turcheschi Overo Vite de Principi della Casa Othomana* (1571 and 1573), *Sopplimento delle corniche vniuersali* (1575 and 1581), and *Cronologia del Mondo* (1580 and 1582), for which he obtained privileges for 20 years, are also identical. Sansovino's

²⁶¹ On the cover: "Con privilegio per anni X"; Francesco Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Uniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Raccolta Da m. Francesco Sansouino. Libri Tre*. (Francesco Rampazetto, 1564).

reuse of dedications and prefaces across multiple editions of the same work shows that, while these paratextual elements conveyed much about the writer's profile, intentions, and work process, they were not central to how potential readers engaged with or used such works. Although they had an important rhetorical function, they did not serve a significant practical purpose, as did, for instance, the index. As previously outlined in this chapter, with each new edition Sansovino modified in one way or another the indexes attached to his works. While often subsequent editions of the same work had identical dedications, prefaces, or even content, the index was never the same as he either expanded or restructured it. Such is the case, for instance, of the 1573 edition of *Gl'Annali Turcheschi*, in which Sansovino replaced the 1571 index that listed the contents in order of appearance with one structured thematically and alphabetically. By making this change, he altered the way in which readers could consult the work.

Sansovino's publishing activity also shows how, in the sixteenth century, "novelty" was not necessarily a quality that described a work's content or style, but could also refer to its structure, format, or method of writing. As he confessed in the letter to Magnanini, most of the works published after 1550s, are the product of Sansovino's entire devotion "to the study of those letters which were according to my taste."²⁶² As the *compositioni*, *traduttioni*, and *raccolte* highlight his long-standing interest in history, be it a chronicle, chronology, or genealogy, and politics, they also demonstrate Sansovino's scholarly skills, showing the various ways in which he reused knowledge across different works.

Recent scholarship on early-modern organization of knowledge has paid great attention to methods of gathering and managing information. By examining note-taking practices, these studies have mapped methods of reading and writing, drawing attention also to the connection

²⁶² "Et datomi del tutto allo studio di quelle lettere ch'erano secondo il mio gusto," Francesco Sansovino, *Del Secretario*, 220.

between manuscript and print. However, observing how humanists used their notes when writing something else could pose a problem, since many such notebooks are missing from archives. Although Sansovino's printed works exist in multiple copies in libraries across various countries, his manuscript notebooks have not survived. As Ann Blair noted, some humanists, anticipating the preservation of their notes after their death, culled them first.²⁶³ In other cases, manuscript drafts of notes were physically integrated into the manuscript used for printing to save the labor of copying.²⁶⁴ In Sansovino's case, it is unclear what happened to his manuscript notes. While his last testament states that he left most of his possessions to his son, it does not specifically mention anything related to his works.²⁶⁵ Jacopo inherited at least the legal ownership his father's works, since he soon after authorized Altobello Salicato to reprint them.²⁶⁶ However, since many first editions published after 1560 were printed at his own workshop, Sansovino most likely used the manuscript versions for printing. For future editions, he also probably continued to modify that manuscript version by adding, removing, or re-organizing content before reprinting it or sending it to other publishers. Thus, in Sansovino's case, as with those of humanists whose only works that have survived are the printed ones, the best way to understand how he handled the material is to examine the printed editions, including paratexts, as well as the changing contents and modes of presentation of the text.²⁶⁷

On several instances, he explicitly stated how he reused or would reuse sources in other works. As seen above, this was the case with the information from *Ritratto delle città d'Italia*, appended to Bergamo's *Sopplimento delle croniche vniuersali del mondo*, which he later used for *Della origine et de' fatti delle famiglie illustri d'Italia*. Similarly, in the preface to the first

²⁶³ Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 66.

²⁶⁴ Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 173–74.

²⁶⁵ Louis de Mas-Latrie, "Testaments d'artistes Vénitiens. Benoit Bordone, Zuccato, Sansovino, Le Tintoret, Benoit Cagliari, Palma Jeune, Le Fils de Tintoret.," *Bibliothèque de l'école Des Chartes* 30 (1869): 304–6.

²⁶⁶ Bonora, *Ricerche Su Francesco Sansovino*, 67–68.

²⁶⁷ Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 174.

volume of the 1560 edition of *Dell'istoria universale*, he let the readers know that “because the aforementioned life [of Muhammad] is rather long, and it has not been appropriate for us to put it in this place, we have discussed it at length in the section of *Varia lettione*.”²⁶⁸ Sansovino was referring here to his translation of the account, which was printed, with a separate cover page, as an appendix to the Italian edition of Petro Mexia’s work.

More often, looking at the lists of authorities or indexes offers the first clues as to what sources he reused across works. In *Dell'istoria universale*, for instance, he included the entire text of his earlier translation of Jacopo Fontano’s *Guerra di Rhodi*. In *Del Governo*, he also used information from Spandugino’s account for the description of the Ottoman Empire, and included an “anonymous” account for Athens, which was in fact an abridged version of his translation of Guillaume Postel’s *Magistrati Atheniensi*. An interesting example is his *Cronologia del mondo* (1580). A work in three parts, of which Sansovino thought only the first really resembled a chronology, it also contained a catalog of polities of the world and information on the origins of 50 Italian noble houses.²⁶⁹ Though without lists of authorities, *Cronologia* contains an index for each of its three “books.” The first one contains 44 pages of alphabetically listed names and is largely similar to the one from Sansovino’s last edition of *Sopplimento*.²⁷⁰ The index to the second part lists over 100 political entities, among which are included the 22 ones he previously treated in *Del Governo*. Lastly, the list of 50 Italian houses would be found among the 80 entries in *Della origine et de' fatti delle famiglie illustri* which

²⁶⁸ “e perche la predetta vita è alquanto lunghetta, e a noi non è venuto a proposito de metterla in questo luogo, la habbiamo distesamente ragionata nella Selua di Varia lettione, in quella parte che habbiamo aggiunta a quell libro il quale con la gratia di Dio uscira fuori fra pochi giorni.” Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 4r.

²⁶⁹ “Pensai di intitolar l'opera, Cronico, e forse con nome piu proprio, non essendo distinto d'anno in anno come e la Cronologia, ma mi parve poi di far in questa maniera.” Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo Di m. Francesco Sansouino Diuisa in Tre Libri*, 3v.

²⁷⁰ Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo*, 5r–27v; Francesco Sansovino, *Sopplimento Delle Croniche Vniuersali*, 5r–19v.

he published a couple of years later.²⁷¹ By flipping through the pages of *Cronologia* it becomes clear, however, that Sansovino did not just augment and append together his previous works. This may be the case with the first book, which is almost identical to the 1581 edition of *Sopplimento*. However, while for the second part he still included both past and present forms of government, Sansovino presented the chronological succession of rulers rather than describing the administrative functioning of each.

Although even in the prefaces attached to *Cronologia* he never offered more details about his working process other than he examined “various ancient records, papal bulls, imperial privileges, concessions from princes, statutes, public and private histories, and other particular writings, sought the truth precisely with every diligence,” the thematic overlap of the content with some of his other works can help untangle his sources.²⁷² For instance, when presenting the succession of the kings of Spain he might have used, just as in *Del Governo*, Alfonso Ulloa’s work. Similarly, when describing the Orsini house, he probably drew on the extensive history of the house that he published several years earlier. Or, for the succession of “Duchi de Giudei dopo la captiuità” in the second book, he could have used Josephus Flavius’s work, which he mentioned elsewhere to have read, or even the events outlined in *Sopplimento*. Interestingly, while *Cronologia del mondo* appears listed as a *compositione* in the letter to Magnanini, in the dedication attached to it, Sansovino described it as a work

not in the form of a detailed and eloquently written history, but in the form of a brief and concise compendium, so that great men and others, for whom time has been available for their important affairs, may grasp in one moment what has been extensively treated over so many centuries by so many writers.²⁷³

²⁷¹ Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo*, 4v; Sansovino, *Della Origine et de’ Fatti Delle Famiglie Illustri d’Italia*, 6v.

²⁷² “Habbiamo adunque, esaminando diuerse memorie antiche, di bolle Papali, di Priuilegii Imperiali, di concessioni di Principi, di Statuti, di Historie publiche et priuate, et d’altre scritture particolari, ricercata esattamente la uerita con ogni industria.” Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo*, 187r.

²⁷³ “[...] raccolte in tre libri, non per via di historia distessa e scritta con eloquanza, ma per modo di breve e soccinto compendio, accioche si possa da gli huomini grandi, e altri, a quali il tempo e sarso per i negotii loro importanti,

His statement reinforces the idea that a *compositione* is a work that bears much of his editorial input, even if by way of method the work is a compilation, just as *Del Governo*. Through these words dedicated to Iacopo Boncompagni, Sansovino also defines the utilitarian nature of his work. *Cronologia* is thus a prime example of how the format, and not the content, is what makes a work “new.” Purposely created as a reference book, it showcases Sansovino’s skills in re-using and adapting knowledge across different types of works, for different audiences, and in various ways of reading.

Among his literary legacy, his works about the Ottoman empire probably best display his ability to reshape and reuse knowledge in different forms, purposes, and for diverse audiences. After the 1550s, the imminent conflict between Christian powers and the Ottomans that was to culminate with the Battle of Lepanto, created a setting in which people became increasingly interested in the peculiarities of this empire, its organization and administration, and what factors contributed to the growth and expansion of this state. Sansovino capitalized on this and, throughout the 1560s and 1570s, prepared a series of different works touching upon these topics. His most ambitious publication in terms of size remained, as seen above, the thousand-pages *raccolta Dell’historia universale* in its many editions. While the work was intended for a wide audience, its length and detailed descriptions allowed, at best, a selective reading of particular accounts or aspects of the Ottoman practices.

Aware of what some audiences wanted to read, but also of the limited time they could dedicate to this, Sansovino continually collected and reworked information about the Ottoman Empire. He also published, in two editions, *Gl’Annali Turcheschi Overo Vite de Principi della Casa Othomana*, a chronicle of the lives and reigns of the Ottoman Sultans, with a mix of

comprendere in un momento quello ch’è stato largamente trattato in tanti secoli da tanti Scrittori.” Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo*, 2r.

genealogy and ethnography.²⁷⁴ The breadth of sources used for this *compositione*, shows that Sansovino was continually gathering information on the topic. Though he reused some of the material from Giovio, Cambini, Menavino or Pope Pius II which were included in *Dell'istoria universale*, he also extracted details from various *relazioni*, Marin Beçikemi's orations, Augustino Curione's history of the Saracens, or Coriolanus Cippicus's account of Pietro Mocenigo's expedition to the Levant. Though the first edition of *Gl'Annali Turcheschi* was published shortly after Lepanto, Sansovino was probably working on it for several years, especially since in 1567 he produced, in collaboration with the artist Nicolò Nelli, *Sommario et Alboro delli Principi Othomani*.²⁷⁵ A broadsheet with a genealogy of the Ottoman sultans accompanied by their portraits and short biographies, it could be seen as a blueprint for Sansovino's later work.

Prior to Lepanto in 1570 he also published two crusading pamphlets. *Informatione a Soldati Christiani et a Tutti Coloro Che Sono Su La Pottentissima Armata Della Serenissima Signoria di Venetia* was a 20-page booklet containing abridged descriptions of the Ottoman army structure and historical episodes that listed its past defeats.²⁷⁶ Accompanied by illustrations for each type of member from the Ottoman army, the work contains no clues as to what sources Sansovino might have used.²⁷⁷ The pamphlet was clearly intended as a short informative material meant to unite and inspire Christians, but also as a reminder of the human

²⁷⁴ Francesco Sansovino, *Gl'Annali Ouero Le Vite de' Principi et Signori Della Casa Othomana* (Giacomo Sansovino, 1571); Sansovino, *Gl'Annali Turcheschi Ouero Vite de Principi Della Casa Othomana*.

²⁷⁵ Francesco Sansovino, *Sommario et Alboro Delli Principi Othomani, Con Li Loro Veri Ritratti al Naturale Di N. Nelli*, 1567, Art Gallery of South Australia, <https://www.agsa.sa.gov.au/collection-publications/collection/works/tree-of-the-ottoman-sultans/24876/>. (Last accessed at: 22.11.2025)

²⁷⁶ Sansovino, *Informatione a Soldati Christiani et a Tutti Coloro Che Sono Su La Pottentissima Armata Della Serenissima Signoria Di Venetia*.

²⁷⁷ S. might have copied the illustrations from Nicolas de Nicolay's collection. For more details on his use of portraits see Bronwen Wilson, "Reflecting on the Turk in Late Sixteenth-Century Venetian Portrait Books," *Word & Image* 19, nos. 1–2 (2003): 38–43.

nature of the Ottomans and the ephemerality of their power.²⁷⁸ *Lettera o vero discorso sopra le Predittioni fatte in diversi tempi da diverse persone illustri* was a philosophical-historical essay in which Sansovino reflected on the reliability, accuracy, or nature of historical prophecies. The references laced throughout the text reveal that Sansovino appealed to many of the authors and sources he used in previous works. Compared to *Informatione a Soldati Christiani*, this commentary appears to be more complex as it has a narrative structure, an argument. Sansovino did not only extract and compile general details, but rather structured it in the form of a *discorso* throughout which he advocated for the fall of the Ottoman Empire on the basis of three types of arguments: politico-religious, astrological or scientific, and mystic.²⁷⁹ Although this pamphlet is a great example that shows Sansovino's skills in commenting and analyzing, not just editing and compiling sources, he does not mention it in his letter to Magnanini in neither of the three categories of works. Perhaps this was due to the fact that they were not full works, or rather because he considered them as a part of *Dell'istoria universale*, in which they were included in 1582.

Conclusion

By examining Sansovino's editorial practices across *Dell'istoria universale*, *Del governo*, and the *Sopplimento*, it becomes clear that he consistently relied on compilation, reorganization, and paratextual framing in his works. Although each of these works was labeled as a *raccolta*, *compositione*, and *traduttione*, respectively, each one reveals a common method of sorting, reshaping, and reusing material in ways that highlight Sansovino's role as an active mediator

²⁷⁸ For an analysis of the comparative lenses through which S. constructs the image of the Ottomans see Antonia-Oana Avram, "Sixteenth-Century Travel Literature Collectors and the Image of the Ottomans in Humanist Thought: Francesco Sansovino and Richard Hakluyt" (Central European University, 2020), 14–26.

²⁷⁹ For more details on S.'s analysis see Avram, "Sixteenth-Century Travel Literature Collectors and the Image of the Ottomans in Humanist Thought," 65–70.

of knowledge. The indexes, lists of authorities, and *avvertimenti* not only facilitated selective reading but also framed his compilations as authoritative reference works.

By blurring the categories he himself set out, Sansovino's case highlights that sixteenth-century authorial agency was closely tied to editorial work. His works demonstrate that novelty in a work could lie more in how it is structured, contextualized, and how it guides the reader's interaction with the material than in the content itself. This exemplifies how knowledge in Renaissance Venice was shaped not only by what was written but also by its organization. This understanding emphasizes the significance of format and method as sources of intellectual authority, and it prepares the way for understanding how humanist compilers and editors continued to navigate the tension between invention and reuse in their efforts to organize knowledge.

The protean quality of Sansovino's editorial practice is perhaps most evident in the ways in which he reused, reshaped, and repurposed knowledge and sources across his works. What distinguished him was not the novelty of his sources but the flexibility with which he deployed them: a description that served as ethnographic detail in one context could be reframed to support a comparative frame of government, or a narrative of events might be reframed to outline the chronological reference points for the life of a ruler. By tracing how he reused material across his works, we can see more clearly both the mechanics of his compilatory methods and the strategies through which he asserted his authorial agency.

Chapter 4 – Ammirato's Organization of Knowledge

Introduction

In this chapter I focus on how the form-content relationship in sixteenth century humanist texts reveals different methods of organizing knowledge. For that I analyze some of Ammirato's manuscript notebooks, as well some of his published works. To pursue this analysis, I take on two levels of inquiry. First, I look at how Ammirato organized knowledge in his manuscript notebooks. The structural elements of these notebooks reveal that some of them were meant for personal use, such as cosmographical knowledge reference books, and some of them for public consumption, such as the handbooks assembled at the request of his patrons. The function of these commonplace books shows how he adapted their structure and content. It also underlines how he used these books when composing other works and the common elements they share with some of his published works. More importantly, it shows that the link between works intended for private and public uses was generally an overlap of topics.

The second level of inquiry focuses on the methods of structuring information in published works. An essential criterion for this is to first look at how Ammirato might have understood how a text should be written. The themes and ideas he outlined in the first work he presented in front of his colleagues at the Accademia degli Alterati in Florence highlight that he shared with them the Aristotelian view on writing history and the essential role of poetry. This, in turn influenced the composition of his *discorsi*, which reflect Ammirato's take on the use of rhetorical devices. The rhetorical structure of these texts points to the fluid boundary between the roles of the orator, the poet, and the philosopher that the author took on. It also emphasizes a structural similarity between these texts and his series of *orazioni*, which also follow the main elements of classical oratory. Because of this similarity, I further observe how

Ammirato's *orazioni* can also be seen as *discorsi*, if they are placed in the literary tradition of renaissance crusade literature. All in all, this chapter highlights the encompassing nature of the role of the author and its adaptability depending on the concerns of political actors, the economic interests of the press market and the intellectual context in which the humanist found himself.

Compiling Commonplace Books

When looking at Ammirato's texts, one of the first ways in which we can grasp how he organized knowledge is by observing his reference system. As pointed out in Chapter 2, he used a wide range of authors and sources, regardless of genre or type of discourse, as long as they contained information that could support his ideas. The precise manner in which Ammirato references authors, either by minutely indicating the book, chapter, or page from which he extracted the information or by exactly quoting the original text, indicate that he was trying to impress and create respect for a work composed from such a variety of authorities. Furthermore, the nature of this reference system signals that he was using a repository of material created of his own rules and for his own interests.

Initially in the form of pedagogic instructions, and following the medieval practice of compiling *florilegia*, extracting, and transcribing *sententiae* from important authors allowed humanist students to highlight and comment on the key ideas in a work. When reading a book, students were taking it apart and then re-ordering its pieces in other thematic categories or areas of knowledge. Humanist students widened the scope of these note-taking storage devices by also adding precepts or historical examples.²⁸⁰ Specifically built for systematized storage and

²⁸⁰ Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 131.

recycling of knowledge, commonplace books were used as memory aids, and so they became reference books.²⁸¹ Due to their versatile structuring methods, reference books offered compilers a great opportunity for financial gain on the flourishing press market. Though many humanist-educated scholars were familiar with this system of note-taking, printed reference books gained a lot of popularity throughout the sixteenth century also because they catered to those who did not have a humanist education but were engaged in humanist practices. Printed reference books became essential not only for the content they provided, but also for the collecting and sorting methods that the readers adopted and adapted to their works and manuscript notes.²⁸² Thus, from an effective tool for reading and reappropriating authorities, reference books also converted to models on which an author's own work was organized.²⁸³ Ammirato seems to have used heavily this type of codex as a note-taking storage device since, at his death, he left behind around fifteen manuscript commonplace books – *zibaldoni*.²⁸⁴ Though not all the notebooks are titled, the inventory offers a glimpse into some of the topics that interested him. He collected poems, information about cities, details about the Medici family and historical tales about Florence.²⁸⁵

Ammirato's *zibaldoni* kept to this day in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze point not only to his interests, but they can also highlight the structural methods and the type of codices he compiled. Even more, these manuscript handbooks may also reveal how Ammirato used them. An example in that sense is his *Annotazioni Geografiche* which contains geographical-historical details on peoples, settlements, territories, and relief forms.²⁸⁶ As a

²⁸¹ Ann Blair, "Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53 (1992), 541-551; Lina Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press* (University of Toronto Press, 2001).

²⁸² Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 248.

²⁸³ Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 65.

²⁸⁴ "Nota Di Libri Consegnati Alla Guardaroba Generale."

²⁸⁵ "Un altro [zibaldone] supra la famiglia de' Medici [...] Rime di diversi, Un libro di diverse Cose della Citta, Un libro di diverse memorie fiorentine," "Nota Di Libri Consegnati Alla Guardaroba Generale," 345.

²⁸⁶ Magl. Cl. XIII, 94, BNCF.

sixteenth-century intellectual, Ammirato understood geography widely, and he gathered his information from different kinds of sources, such as religious texts, historical geographical descriptions, travelogues, and cosmographies. The topic alludes to a cosmographic handbook, but how he chose to structure it was rather unusual for that type of codex. Alphabetically organized, the notebook contains at least 690 numbered entries only under letter A and seems to be incomplete, as Ammirato stops at letter H. Although alphabetization was the most common system for arranging knowledge in compendia, cosmographies rather followed a spatial (geographical) structure that reflected the cosmographers' ideal of representing the cosmos as a whole. Exceptions existed, as was the case of Ferdinand Columbus's *Cosmographia*, which should have been organized both alphabetically and geographically.²⁸⁷ Despite the fact that Ammirato tried to make his handbook as comprehensive as possible by constantly updating the number of entries with marginal notes, his work was not a cosmography.

The entries in this notebook indicate that he was more historically than geographically oriented; in other words, he was more interested in adding names of historical territories, rivers, or peoples, than in detailing the entries on the newly discovered territories. Ammirato kept a strict alphabetical order, gathered the material in the guise of a brief paraphrase, rather than the typical quotations, and included additional marginal entries only with a reference number and a letter. (Fig. 11)

²⁸⁷ Seth Kimmel, "Early Modern Iberia, Indexed: Hernando Colón's Cosmography," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 82, no. 1 (2021): 1–28.

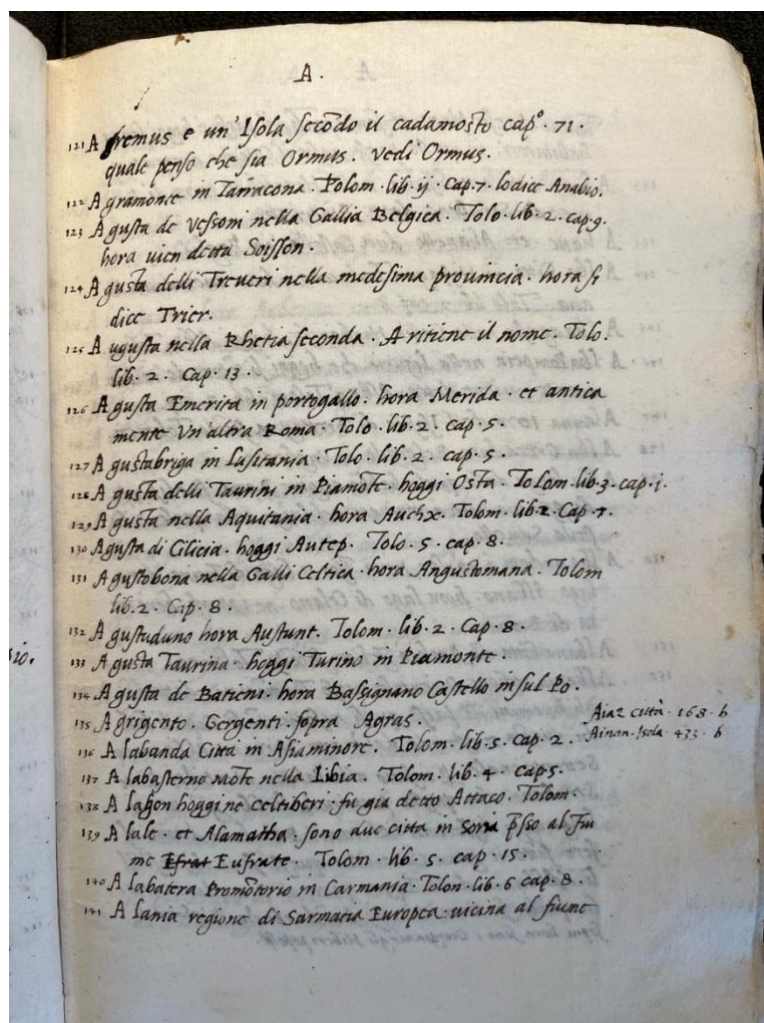


Figure 11: Annotazioni Geografiche, Magl. Cl. XIII, 94, BNCF

By choosing to structure the information in this manner, he gave *Annotazioni Geografiche* the aura of a dictionary. A fairly popular reference genre during the sixteenth century, dictionaries typically contained, but were not limited to, linguistic or encyclopedic information.²⁸⁸ Because it was composed exclusively of toponyms, *Annotazioni Geografiche* could be seen as a dictionary of proper names. Yet, Ammirato's focus on topography and peoples indicate that he rather intended to compile a geographical dictionary. While examples of this sub-genre could be unearthed even in late-antiquity, Ammirato's notebook rather

²⁸⁸ Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 121.

resembles compendia dating back to the second half of the fifteenth century. Some of them, like Boccaccio's *De montibus, silvis, fontibus, lacubus, fluminibus, stagnis seu paludibus, de nominibus maris* or Lilio Zaccaria's *Breue descrittione del mondo* highlight that alphabetically ordering geographical toponyms was not a new practice.²⁸⁹ Even if the first editions were just systematic collections of toponyms from ancient cosmographers, poorly updated and not featuring any contemporary details, both *De montibus* and *Breue descrittione* were reprinted at least twice during the sixteenth century, as well as translated in Italian and augmented with modern placenames.²⁹⁰ As Conrad Gessner argued for his *Onomasticon*, the popularity of dictionaries of toponyms was due to the fact that they offered a shortcut to both contemporary and outdated knowledge about geography and history, and a chance for the compiler to comment on the material in a manner accessible to more users.²⁹¹

There is a possibility that Ammirato owned or at least consulted Boccaccio's or Zaccaria's books or even later geographical dictionaries, such as Ortelius's *Synonymia Geographica*, from which he got inspired.²⁹² *Annotazioni Geografiche* contained alphabetically organized entries concerned with ancient geography and newly discovered places. When considered together, we can observe that, given the type of sources used, some of the listed names are common in all textbooks. Yet, Ammirato did not just copy entries out of other dictionaries but chose names that he probably regarded as relevant. Even in the case

²⁸⁹ Giovanni Boccaccio, *De montibus, silvis, fontibus, lacubus, fluminibus, stagnis seu paludibus, de nominibus maris*. (Wendelin von Speyer, 1473); Zaccaria Lilio, *Orbis Breviarium, Fide Compendio Ordineq[ue] Captv, Ac Memoratv Facillimvm, Felix et Gratus Legito* (Johannes and Gregorius de Gregoriis, de Forlivio, 1505).

²⁹⁰ Giovanni Boccaccio, *Opera Di m. Giouanni Boccaccio, Tradotta Di Lat. in Volgare Da Niccolò Liburnio, Doue per Ordine d'alfabeto Si Tratta Diffusamente de' Monti, Selue, Boschi, Fonti, Laghi, Stagni, Paludi, Golfi, e Mari Dell'vniuerso Mondo. E Delle Lor Cose Memorabili, Come Da Poeti, Cosmografi, Ouero Storici Sono Descritte* (Filippo Giunti, 1598), Zaccaria Lilio, *Breue Descrittione Del Mondo Di Zaccheria Lilio Vicentino, Tradotta per m. Francesco Baldelli. Con l'additione de' Nomi Moderni* (Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari e fratelli, 1551).

²⁹¹ Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 123–24.

²⁹² Abraham Ortelius, *Abrahami Ortelii Antverpiani Synonymia Geographica, Sive Popvlorum, Regionvm, Insularvm, Urbium, Opidorum, Montium, Promontiorum, Silvarum, Pontium, Marium, Sinuum, Lacuum, Paludum, Fluviorum, Fontium, &c. variæ, pro Auctorum traditionibus, sæculorum intervallis, Gentiumque idiomatis & migrationibus, appellationes & nomina*. (Plantinus, 1578).

of overlapping entries, the details are similar, but in a different paraphrase. His system of references is also oscillating between naming the authorial figure in the paraphrased information or adding the name and the precise book and page number at the end of the entry, emulating both Zaccaria, and Ortelius, respectively. Though it does not match the narrative flow of Boccaccio's *De montibus*, the popularity of Zaccaria's *Breue description* or the complexity of Ortelius's *Synonymia Geographica*, *Annotazioni Geografiche* is an interesting showcase of how humanists tried to compile their own reference books, rather than just use popular printed ones. Ammirato might have borrowed collecting and sorting methods from published dictionaries just to have a model for organizing his own reference notes. But if the neat handwriting and the *mise-en-page* details, such as the alphabetical marking on top of the page or the indented alignment of the entries, are included, then Ammirato could have been preparing this book for publication. Still, *Annotazioni Geografiche* was clearly just a work in progress that remained only in manuscript. Even by overlooking the multiple corrections and cross-outs, the many empty pages, or fragmented entries that he probably meant to complete at a later date, Ammirato stopped at the letter H. The marginal additions of toponyms followed by a reference number and letter indicate that he probably had multiple notebooks of this kind, among which he created a cross-reference system. (Fig. 12)

elements, like toponyms, alphabetization, and reference system between *Annotazioni Geografiche* and the works of Boccaccio, Zaccaria, and Ortelius underline that they served as reference books. Finally, because the compilations were used in the same way, the question of whether Ammirato intended *Annotazioni Geografiche* for private use or public consumption becomes insignificant. What is interesting to notice is rather that collecting and sorting methods blur the line between some printed and manuscript reference books.

Other examples of Ammirato's *zibaldoni* are his collections of *notizie*. Whether it was historical details about archbishoprics, information on Europe's ruling dynasties or short biographies of popular characters, he was a keen collector of facts.²⁹³ Particularly interesting are his *Notizie Istoriche*, a commonplace book that contains information on various polities across the world.²⁹⁴ The entries for each polity are alphabetically organized, and each letter is preceded by an inventory of rulers structured in the same way. (Fig. 13) At a first glance, these appear to be alphabetical indexes of the proper names of the characters featured in each example. But a look through the pages reveals that Ammirato described contemporary polities and did not mention any rulers by their name. The index of rulers, then, is not directly related to the rest of the content and it seems quite obsolete as Ammirato mentioned only ancient historical figures, the majority of which he seems to have extracted from Antonio de Guevara's *Aureo libro di Marco Aurelio con l'horologio de principi in tre volumi* (1528).²⁹⁵ De Guevara's work, a (pseudo)historical book of incidents and letters from the life of Marcus Aurelius, was immensely popular at the time and translated in almost every European language.²⁹⁶

²⁹³ *Notizie di vescovadi*, Magl. Cl. XXXVII, 327 bis; *Ritratti chiestimi dal Sig. Don Giovanni de Medici*, Magl. Cl. XXIV, 167, BNCF.

²⁹⁴ Magl. Cl. XXIV 169, BNCF.

²⁹⁵ For example, "Alboino Re di Longobardi. Gue: lib. p[rim]o, c 16"; "Berra Re di Sodoma, Barsa [Birsha] Re di Gomorra, Gue: l[ibro] p[rim]o c30" Magl. XXIV 169, BNCF, 1r, 7r.

²⁹⁶ See Horacio Chiong Rivero, *The Rise of Pseudo-Historical Fiction: Fray Antonio de Guevara's Novelizations* (Peter Lang, 2004).

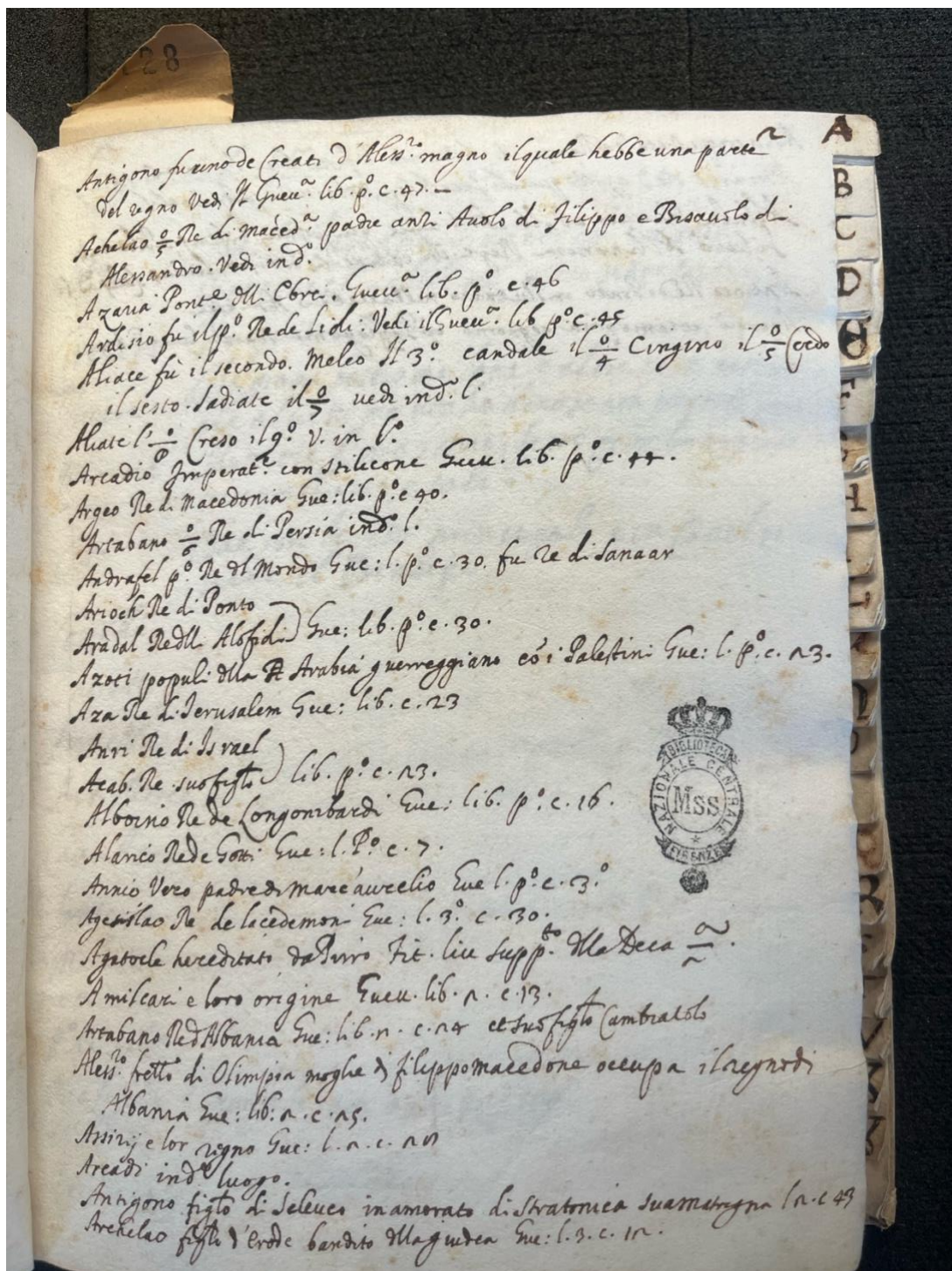


Figure 13: Notizie Istoriche, Magl. Cl. XXIV, 169, BCNF

Ranging from the Duchy of Savoy, the Kingdom of France or Transylvania to America, the Kingdom of Calicut or the Kingdom of Congo, the notebook also contains 72 entries, each

of them describing a polity of the world.²⁹⁷ Although the list is extensive, Ammirato left many empty pages in between some of the entries, which indicate that this was a work in progress. A closer look at the headings of the items reveals something intriguing. Instead of introducing polities by their name, he is describing the territories that are under the rule of “The Duke of Mantova,” “The Catholic King,” “The Prince of Transylvania,” “The Moscovite” or “The Turk.”²⁹⁸ The use of generic name of rulers was not accidental. In the early sixteenth-century, manuals that dealt the systematic reflection on precedence, depicted each polity by “crown;” that is, the abstract entity that held rights and obligations, which may be held by different physical persons over time.²⁹⁹ Ammirato ascribed to this model, but he also departed from the hierarchical order that such manuals offered. Early modern perceptions about how states should be ordered was inherently hierarchical. The social structure of the the *res publica christiana*, tracing back to the Middle Ages, provided an ingrained understanding of the status and place of each ruler on the ladder of royal dignity and dynastic supremacy. The hierarchy of states has been a recurrent interest of Renaissance jurists who debated claims to precedence from the point of view of a legal discipline, *ius praecedentiae*.³⁰⁰ Usually, at the top of these ladders stood the pope, followed by crowned rulers down to dukes.³⁰¹ Ammirato’s alphabetic order, however, is a small but significant distinction indicating his departure from this hierarchic structure.

Most interesting about Ammirato’s *Notizie Istoriche* are the categories he chose to include in each polity description. With a few variants, he usually kept the same structural elements for each polity: *sito, circuito, viveri, miniere, citta, castelli, entrate, spese, fortezze*

²⁹⁷ Magl. XXIV 169, BNCF, 88r, 21r, 99r, 4v, 42v, 43v.

²⁹⁸ “Duca di Mantova”; “Re Cattolico”; “Principe di Transilvania”; “Moscovito”; “Turco,” Magl. XXIV 169, BNCF, 48r, 10v-11r, 99r, 49r, 98r.

²⁹⁹ Quentin Bruneau, “Rethinking International Order in Early Modern Europe: Evidence from Courtly Ceremonial,” *International Organization* 77, no. 4 (2023): 706.

³⁰⁰ Jan Hennings, *Russia and Courtly Europe: Ritual and the Culture of Diplomacy, 1648–1725* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), 19.

³⁰¹ Bruneau, “Rethinking International Order in Early Modern Europe,” 708.

artiglierie, cavalleria, fanteria, militia and/or *militia maritima, numero di sudditi* and sometimes *qualita di sudditi, feudatorii, religione, arcivescovo/vescovadi, autorita*. (Fig. 14) Sometimes, the information written under some of these categories is more detailed than in others. Other times, some are left empty, most probably because he did not have any information about that yet. The sources he used for these categories seem to have been more up-to-date than the ones for the list of rulers. For example, when he is talking about the Ottoman Empire, he describes that the territory extends to Buda, which indicates that he probably consulted some of the most popular sixteenth-century accounts on the conquests and expansion of the Ottomans.³⁰²

³⁰² “Circuito. Il suo Imperio e’ di lunghezza da Buda tre mila dugento miglia e dal Golfo di Persia sine a poco mareo di 4 milla miglio,” Magl. XXIV 169, BNCF, 98r.

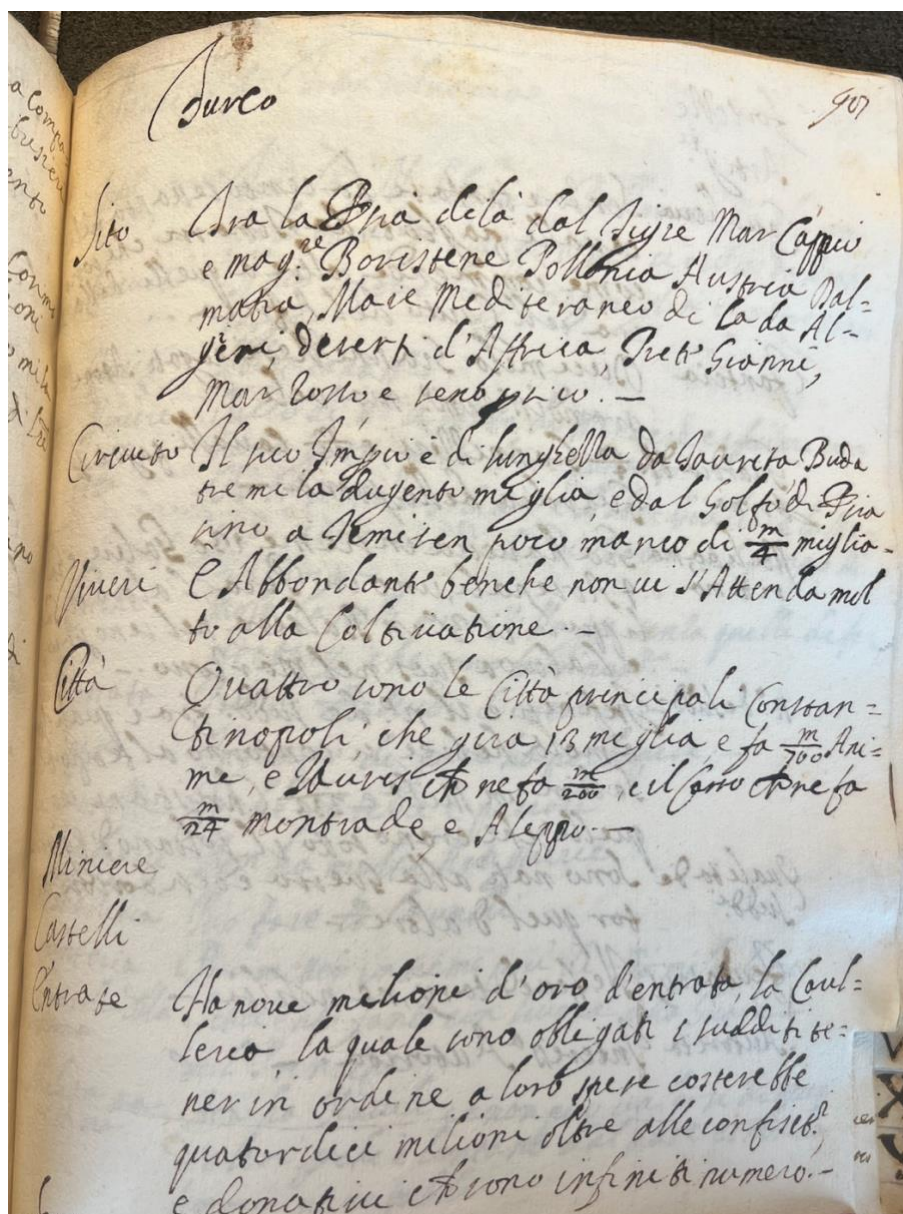


Figure 14: Notizie Istoriche, Magl. Cl. XXIV, 169

Ammirato's systematization of *Notizie Istoriche* highlights several important aspects about how he perceived and understood a political entity. First, it underlines what were the most relevant aspects in a polity for him. Though all these features were common in state descriptions and cosmographies, it is clear that Ammirato made a selection. The order and number of the categories remains the same for every entry even if he sometimes left blank

spaces, but it is unclear if he arranged them hierarchically or by relevance. Second, the fact that he uses the same classification with the exact same number of items for all territories, including the ones that to him lay outside Europe, like the Ottoman Empire or the Kingdom of Calicut, or newly discovered territories, such as the Americas and the Maluku Islands, is a crucial example that he perceived and understood those political geographies through the same mental categories he understood European ones. This aspect proves essential in understanding the framework of Ammirato's political thought.

The structural elements also offer clues into how Ammirato compiled and planned to use *Notizie Istoriche*. Just as *Annotazioni Geografiche*, this book was also alphabetically organized, but Ammirato left the comprehensiveness of the dictionary behind and prioritized the finding devices. The layout of the pages, where the name of the polity and each category are indented, and the alphabetical tabs on the outer edge of the pages show that he wanted to search easily for information. (Fig. 13) In addition, the sloppy handwriting and numerous abbreviations indicate that *Notizie Istoriche* was, most likely, a reference book destined for Ammirato's private use. While he doesn't have any references, the focus on related topics with those in *Annotazioni Geografiche* implies that he might have used, at least partially, the same sources, such as the works of Sebastian Munster, Flavio Biondo or Paolo Giovio. Although *Annotazioni Geografiche* and *Notizie Istoriche* share structural elements, like alphabetization, and focus on largely similar topics, like cosmographical knowledge, they illustrate two different functions for such handbooks. While the former showcases how Ammirato adopted organizing methods and information from other works, that is, how he compiled a commonplace book, the latter reveals how he created a framework on his own rules and how he might adapt knowledge when composing some of his other works, thus, how he created and used a reference book.

From Commonplace Books to Reference Books

Among Ammirato's notebooks kept in BNCF, there is a carefully handwritten manuscript titled *Armi e Notizie*.³⁰³ It contains one-page descriptions of the main ruling houses of Europe and a few extra-European ones, alongside their coats of arms, and is accompanied by a letter addressed to Christina of Lorraine in which Ammirato noted:

For this request that Your Most Serene Highness made to me, I did not find the entire content that I would have wished, which was to add under each family of princes that I treat the revenues, people, cities, and lands that they possess; just mentioning it briefly without going into more detail, but I could not get it the information so quickly. In this way Your Majesty would have been more informed, and I would have adorned this book more beautifully, which, without such ornaments would appear scanty, thin, and poor.³⁰⁴

Written in the beginning of 1595, the missive discloses that Ammirato composed, at the request of his patroness, a compilation of brief informative notes on noble families' ascension to power and their rulers through the years. In other words, he was providing the Grand Duchess with a reference book on contemporary dynasties. The letter also points to his discontent with the complexity of the work. Yet, the knowledge he claimed he was unable to acquire – on what revenues, people, cities and lands the ruling houses poses – partly overlaps with the information gathered in *Notizie Istoriche*. Why then would he not use it as a reference book when compiling this other work on a similar topic?

If taken for granted, his words could indicate that he had not started compiling *Notizie Istoriche* by the time he made the book for the Grand Duchess, but there is no direct indication

³⁰³ Magl. XXVI 1, BNCF.

³⁰⁴ "In questo comandamento fattomi da Vostra Altezza Madama Serenissima io non ho trovato quello intero contento, che havrei voluto, il che era di aggiugner sotto ciascuna famiglia de principi, de quali si tratta le rendite, genti, citta et terre da essi principi possedute, accenandone senza diffondermi in altro, il sol numero brevissimamente, le quale notizie cosi tosto non ho potuto hauere; perche in questo modo et l'Altezza Vostra ne sarebbe restata piu pienamente instrutta; et io havrei adornata et fatta piu bella questa fatica, la quale senza cotali arredi le capitira innanzi scarsa, magra, povera," Magl. XXVI 1, BNCF, 1r.

towards this. If seen as a rhetorical construction, however, Ammirato's confession from the dedicatory letter highlights certain aspects on the nature of this compilation. First, *Armi e notizie* was certainly a presentation copy, one into which Ammirato put a lot of effort and which he clearly tailored to the profile and interests of the audience. For example, in the entry for the house of Castile, he notes:

Your Highness should not be surprised if the Spanish have smoke in their heads, for many of them are from royal families; and such they are known as the Zerda (tr. Fennec or fox); indeed, while the father was alive to the first-born the kingdom belonged, but the good brother took it from his nephews, as has often happened. They have had XVIII kings among Leone and Castile, V among Aragon, Sicily, and Naples, one of Navarre and III of Naples only. Who are all XXVIII kings and reigned from the year 1108 until the year 1555, when the Emperor Charles V inherited all those reigns at the death of his mother, Giovanna.³⁰⁵

Here Ammirato addressed Christina of Lorraine directly, as if he were just speaking to her about all these noblemen. When compared with some of his other historical-genealogical works or when read alongside those sent to his patroness, such as *Clementina terza*, this handbook is striking for its simpler, almost colloquial sentences. The abridged explanations on dynastic dynamics on only 29 ruling houses, indicate that he did not strive for comprehensiveness, but rather to satisfy his audience – an audience who could have been impressed by a lengthy description of the house of Lorraine and who might not be interested in exhaustive lists with numbers of subjects or incomes. Second, in a manner atypical to contemporary reference books authors, Ammirato wanted to leave his imprint on the content precisely because it was meant to be consulted by others. Modern scholars who have paid great attention to the growing market of reference books in the sixteenth century observed that one key characteristic of the authors

³⁰⁵ “Non si maravigli l’Altezza Vostra, se gli Spagnuoli hanno del fumo in capo, perche ni son molti di famiglie reali; et tali sono quelli cognominati della Zerda; anzi ad uno di essi come a primogenitor si apparteneua il reame, il qual essendo molto uiuente il padre, il buon fratello, il tolse a nipoti, come alter uolte con mal esempio e’ auuenuto hanno hauuto XVIII Re tra di Leone e di Castiglia, V tra d’Aragona, di Sicilia e di Napoli, uno di Navarra et III di Napoli solamente che son tutti XXXVIII Re et regnarono dall’anno 1108 infino all’anno 1555, che mori Giovanna madre dell’Imperador Carlo V dalla cui persona passarono tutti che regni nella casa d’Austria, che sono anni 447,” Magl. XXVI 1, BNCF, 2r.

of such handbooks was that they presented themselves as compilers. Their responsibility was accurate reporting of information that others have written, not questioning the material's veracity and neither conveying their own opinions on it.³⁰⁶ Ammirato also gathered factual knowledge from sources when compiling commonplace books like *Annotazioni Geografiche* or *Notizie Istoriche*, but these were designed for personal use. As shown in Chapter 2 above, when it came to his printed works, that is, works that were meant for public consumption, he expressly stressed that he does not wish to be perceived neither as a compiler or an editor, but rather as an author who expresses his own thoughts. *Armi e Notizie* reflects his stance in multiple ways. First, the book contains no table of contents or any finding devices typical for reference books. Second, the content of the handbook mirrors more his versatility as a writer, than his capacity to record factual information. For instance, about the Russian Empire he noted:

For 300 years, none other than the lords of this house who today rule, hold the reins in the hands of the Muscovites. They are more absolute princes than the Turk, and although schismatics they are Christians, but their customs are truly fiercer and more barbarous than the Turks; with all this, if they could be tamed and drawn with the Emperor to take up arms against the Mohammedans, they would cause a great collapse of the Ottoman power.³⁰⁷

Here Ammirato combines historical and ethnographic information with the diplomatic endeavors of the Papacy. This is merely one example among the many entries in this book that shows his ability to combine factual information with his political agenda. In his task of providing the Grand Duchess with an instructive material, he also endorsed his image as an expert historian and political analyst. As a result, Ammirato managed to transform what could have been a simple reference book into a toned-down commentary reminding of what later

³⁰⁶ Blair, *Too Much to Know*, 2–3.

³⁰⁷ “[...] per lo spazio di 300 anni non altri che i signori di questa casa che hoggi dominano, tengono il freno in mano de Moscoviti. sono piu assoluti principi che non e’ il Turco, ma benche scismatici sono cristiani, et di costumi veramente piu fieri et piu barbari de Turchi; con tutto cio se si potessero addomesticare e tirarli con l’Imperadore a prender l’arme contra i Maumettani, darebbono, un gran tracollo alla potenza Ottomanica.” Magl. XXVI 1, BNCF, 18r.

became known as *ad usum delphini*. This was also not the only handbook of this kind that he composed. Initially kept in manuscript, but then published in *Opuscoli*, Ammirato compiled, at Don Giovanni de Medici's request, a series of *ritratti*.³⁰⁸ Much like *Armi e Notizie*, the book consisted of short biographies of various historical figures, ranging from popes, kings, statesmen to historians and poets. Though the manuscript version contains no table of contents, it resembles a dictionary of names because of its alphabetical organization. There are no references, but it is clear that he most probably consulted chronicles, mirror of princes, and even archival documents even if the material is at times very trivial.³⁰⁹ Because of this, the compilation for Giovanni de Medici resembles a reference book more than the handbook for Christina of Lorraine, where the colloquial style of writing and the direct address resembles some of Ammirato's delivered discourses or orations.

The difference between Ammirato's commonplace books is not necessarily one of method or system but rather of exhaustiveness and purpose. To that extent, they can be divided into handbooks meant for personal use, like *Annotazioni Geografiche* and *Notizie Istoriche*, and books intended for public consumption, like *Armi e Notizie* and *Ritratti chestimi dal Sig. Don Giovanni de Medici*. The first category features works that share standard collecting and sorting methods found in reference books. Generally, the information compiled in these texts is extensive and structured for ease of consulting. Yet, *Notizie Istoriche* distinguishes itself from *Annotazioni Geografiche* through Ammirato's rearrangement of knowledge into an innovative organizational system. This feature becomes more visible when looking at how

³⁰⁸ *Ritratti chestimi dal Sig. Don Giovanni de Medici*, Magl. Cl. XXIV, 167; *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo*, 227.

³⁰⁹ For instance, in the entry on King Louis of France, Ammirato notes only that: "he was a man of turbid intelligence and when he became king he had his wife, the daughter of the Duke of Burgundy, strangled with a tassel and took Clemenza, daughter of Charles Martel, as wife." Ammirato, 236.

Ammirato used *Notizie Storiche* to write works that got published. For example, the entry under the “Turco” noted:

Circuito. His empire is three thousand two hundred miles long from Buda and from the Gulf of Persia to the low tide four thousand miles.

Viveri. It is abundant although not much attention is paid to its cultivation. [...]

Entrate. He has nine million gold and income, the cavalry which the subjects are obliged to keep in order at their own expense would cost fourteen million in addition to the confiscation and donations and they are an infinite number. [...]

Cavalleria. Without the Tatars he has one hundred and seventy thousand horses paid by Timarri, in addition to those of Egypt and Africa.

Fanteria. Ten thousand paid Janissaries, a very large number but cowards

Militia/militia maritima. He already had 130 galleys and 4 arsenals, one in Pera, the other in Galippoli, the one in Balsera in the south and the other in the Red Sea.

Numero di sudditi. The number of subjects is infinite, among whom there are many Jews, in the time of Selim there were about a thousand and 333 thousand Christians, without counting those who were under the Sultan of Egypt.

Qualita de sudditi. They were born from war and the pains of those of others [...].³¹⁰

The information encompassed here seems relatively scarce and, to a certain extent, common knowledge about the Ottomans, on whom literature was flourishing throughout the sixteenth century. This may be one of the reasons why Ammirato did not find it necessary to quote an exact source of information. Yet, this schematic description becomes interesting when seen side by side with some of his published works. In the oration for Sixtus V, he describes the Ottoman cavalrymen, the Timariots, as follows:

the marvelous obedience which they show to their ruler, their modest diet, the rarity of fights and quarrels among them, their belief that in dying for their king they die in the service of God, their certain hope of rewards, the absence of gambling among them, the fact that they have regard to no kind of nobility other than that of virtue, the fact that they know few ways of life other than that of warfare, and finally the fact that the art of war constitutes the beginning, the middle, and the end of all their honour, all their wealth, and all their well-being.³¹¹

³¹⁰ Magl. XXIV 169, BNCF, 98r-98v.

³¹¹ Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebonno a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco*, 6–7.

Though without a reference, and in a rephrased and stylized version, the description included in the oration seems to be established on the knowledge Ammirato gathered in *Notizie Istoriche*.

Similarly, he follows the same pattern in the other orations when he is describing the position of power in which the Sultan is, the resources of the King of Spain or the Papacy's lack of armed forces. These examples highlight the essential role that commonplace books like *Notizie Istoriche* had. Due to its systematized nature, Ammirato could re-use knowledge and paraphrase it according to the argument he was putting forward. More importantly, the thematic structure of his notebook allowed him to re-frame information taken out of the original textual context, into a new textual context on a similar theme.

The second category features works that were customized to the profile of the audience. Though also compilations, these handbooks distinguish themselves from Ammirato's manuscript reference books because the information is presented in the guise of a paraphrase, not as a transcription from other authorities. While keeping some of the sorting methods found in encyclopedic reference books, like alphabetization, Ammirato's emphasis in these handbooks falls on commenting the knowledge. He did not aim for comprehensiveness, but for leaving his own imprint on the material. Although he did not want to be perceived as a compiler, by playing with the style of the language, he took *Armi e Notizie* and *Ritratti chestimi dal Sig. Don Giovanni de Medici* beyond the generic boundaries of commonplace books and into the realm of works designed around rhetorical constructions. These were not the only examples of this kind that Ammirato made for his patrons. In 1594 he sent to the Grand Duchess a compilation accompanied by a dedicatory letter in which he wrote:

I have considered it to be my greatest pleasure that Your Highness, of your own free will, has been pleased to have listened to many of my speeches. And what I have much more to say, is that, at the end of the past year, you have wanted a

copy of some of them: and you have then alluded to me by word of mouth that your Most Serene Consort, and my lord, is not far from wanting to test some of the things proposed to me in those speeches.³¹²

As he clearly states, Ammirato was offering his patroness a compendium, keeping in the style of *ad usum delphini* handbooks. Yet, the content of this handbook was considerably different from *Armi e Notizie* or *Ritratti chestimi* because it was filled with his speeches. This is how the first edition of his *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito* came out in print, and although it contained pieces with an overarching argument that followed a narrative line, it was in essence still a compilation.

Lastly, it is worth noting that Ammirato's handbooks, regardless of whether they were intended for personal use or public consumption, create a bridge between manuscript commonplace books and printed works. While many of his published works can be found in manuscript, the connection with the commonplace books is relying solely on an overlap of topics that interested him, such as history, genealogy, or state descriptions and the use and re-use of knowledge on these subjects in his printed texts. Ammirato's reference books, such as *Annotazioni Geografiche* and *Notizie Storiche* highlight that one of the organizational elements was a unifying theme, and as briefly pointed out in Chapter 2 above, he did this in some of his printed works, such as *Della Segretezza*, which is thematically organized. However, the crucial difference between these two types of books is that in the former, the information is structured with the purpose of consulting, while in the latter, it is structured around arguments (or had an overarching argument). Even in the handbooks compiled on request, where he used a stylized language and commented on the information, Ammirato glued together entries that were not part of such an arching argument but were generally elements in the larger topic of "noble

³¹² "[...] a' grandissima gratia mi ho reputato, che l'Altezza Vostra di propria volonta' si sia compiaciuta per piu sere parimente ancor ella d'essere stata ascoltatrice di molti de miei discorsi. Et quel che molto piu ho a recarmi a ventura a capo d'alcun anno passato, si e' l'haver ella voluto copia d'alcuno di essi: e accennatomi poi a bocca, non esser lontano il Serenissimo Consorte suo, e mio signore di voler far prova d'alcuna delle cose sa me in essi discorsi proposta." Ammirato, *Discorsi del signor Scipione Ammirato sopra Cornelio Tacito*, 2r.

families.” An exception was his *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito*, which although it contains hard-headed political analyses, was, in terms of method, a compilation.

Between Oratory and Political Analysis: Structuring Methods in the *Orazioni*

As noted above, Ammirato used, in some cases, knowledge stored in manuscript reference books when composing the texts of the *orazioni*. The essential detail here is that he did not just copy the factual information, but rather paraphrased it to fit his argument. This aspect indicates that the systematization of knowledge from manuscript handbooks did not coincide with the rhetorically-oriented structure of the narrative from printed works. To that extent, what remains to be seen is how Ammirato organized knowledge in his published works. Did he follow the same principle as in his manuscript commonplace books and adopted structural elements from already existing works? In other words, did he borrow rhetorical tropes in order to support his arguments? As such, did he try to shape his texts to a particular genre? Finally, how did the writing strategies that shaped the content alter its meaning? The first step in deciphering all this, is to trace the influence that Florentine intellectual life had on Ammirato’s scholarly development.

In 1571, at the Accademia degli Alterati in Florence, Ammirato was preparing to present in front of his new colleagues a manuscript titled *Il Dedalione o ver del poeta*. Composed in Napoli around 1560s and dedicated to Girolamo Seripando, archbishop of Salerno, this was probably one of the first works Ammirato showed to the Alterati. In the style of a Platonic dialogue, Ammirato addressed a popular question among his contemporaries: which field of philosophy should poetry belong to? His answer was also common: to civil

philosophy.³¹³ If the topic and approach were not unique, why did Ammirato chose this particular dialogue to impress his Florentine colleagues?

By the time he presented it to the Alterati, he had already written and published at least two other works from which he could chose, but *Il Dedalione* was significant in more than one way. It was a work on a topic through which Ammirato could easily position himself among the theorists of the sixteenth century and relate to the Alterati. One of their main concern was to discover the relative position of poetry in relation to other arts and disciplines and constantly compared it with rhetoric, history or philosophy.³¹⁴ Ammirato fostered this approach, as in *Dedalione* he argues against Plato's condemnation of poetry and insists on the usefulness of poetic means to communicate knowledge.³¹⁵ It was also a work through which he could show the complexity of his arguments and his erudition. At first glance, he does this in the customary humanist manner, through the variety of authors and works which he references – ranging from the majority of Plato's works, Aristotle, Dionisius de Areopagite, Ovid or Livy, to Marsilio Ficino, Dante or Lodovico Ariosto – all of which his audience was certainly familiar with.³¹⁶ At a closer look, by thinking in categories of philosophy, Ammirato assigns the performance of the poet to active philosophy, or to be more precise, to its subcategory of civil or political philosophy.³¹⁷ By employing a taxonomy of philosophy, Ammirato highlights his dialectical skills in front of his colleagues. Thus, placing it in the context in which it was delivered, *Il Dedalione* is a work that foregrounds Ammirato's intentions to be an integral part of an intellectual community, with which he shared values, and in which he was seen as an erudite.

³¹³ Bernard Weinberg, *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, Scrittori d'Italia (Laterza, 1970), 477–512.

³¹⁴ Bernard Weinberg, "The Accademia Degli Alterati and Literary Taste from 1570 to 1600," *Italica* 31, no. 4 (1954): 208, <https://doi.org/10.2307/477088>.

³¹⁵ Weinberg, *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, 494–96.

³¹⁶ Weinberg, 684–85, for a transcribed version of the marginal annotations.

³¹⁷ Weinberg, *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, 484–87.

When read between the lines, *Il Dedalione* offers clues about Ammirato's take on argument organization and structure. For instance, he noted that:

I believe that it is the good comforts, the reasons, the arguments, the examples, and other such things by which we dispose the minds of the listeners to our will. [...] Just as a soul is the one that nourishes and increases and moves [...] so the philosopher is the one that contemplates and the one that works, the one that uses rhetoric, logic and poetics, even if in many and different names he goes on distinguishing and separating himself.[...] the philosopher uses the syllogism, the orator the enthymeme, the poet the fable, which fable, because it shares more in delight than other forms of speech, therefore it happens the instrument, but not the companion of the poet, is pleasure.³¹⁸

First, Ammirato distinguishes between the philosopher, the poet, and the orator who, although have different rhetorical tools at their disposal, they share a common task: to convince the audience. Second, the art of persuasion is best achieved, however, not by singularly using syllogism, enthymeme or the fable, but rather by combining these rhetorical devices in different arguments, examples, and reasons. Third, the philosopher has a versatile role, as he can also be an orator or a poet and use their rhetorical tools; but seen the other way, the orator and the poet could also be philosophers and use any reasons, arguments, and examples they need to persuade their audience. Here, Ammirato creates a fluid boundary between the roles of the poet, the orator and the philosopher, and their rhetorical devices.

Ammirato goes against the Platonic division of discourse into form and matter, where syllogisms, enthymeme, examples, and lists are perceived as elements of matter.³¹⁹ Rather, he perceived these rhetorical tools as elements of form as he endorsed Aristotle's different meaning of *imitatio* for poetics and morals, where the former teaches by way of

³¹⁸ "Credo ch'ella sia i buoni conforti, le ragioni, gli argomenti, gli esempi et altre sì fatte cose per le quali disponiamo gli animi degli uditori alle nostre volontà [...] Come un'anima è quella che nutrice e dà l'aumento et il moto e la medesima è quella che dà il sentimento e l'istessa quella che fa il discorso, così l'istesso filosofo è quello che contempla e quello che opera, il medesimo quello che usa la retorica, la logica e la poetica, se ben in più e diversi nomi si va distinguendo e partendo [...] ma il filosofo usa il sillogismo, l'orator l'entimema, il poeta la favola, la qual favola, perchè partecipa più del diletto che non gli altri parlari, quindi avviene che il mezzo o l'istrumento del poeta si è il diletto, ma non già il compagno," Weinberg, 494–99.

³¹⁹ Weinberg, *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, 508.

representation, while the latter by way of narration.³²⁰ The Alterati advocated a similar stance. Documents of some of their discussions where they debate the nature of imitation reveal that in their view, the poet must imitate actions rather than characters, that the poet must know the art of writing history.³²¹ When seen in relation with Ammirato's literary legacy, the interdependence between the roles and tools of the orator, poet, and philosopher can reveal the main principle around which he organized his texts. In this case, examining the structure of his works is observing how he oscillated between playing the part of an orator, a poet, and a philosopher; that is, how he combined their rhetorical devices as elements of form to shape the content of his texts.

Il dedalione was, in a way, Ammirato's entry test among the Alterati. Through the ideas he presented, he proved that he shared their views. Undoubtedly, throughout his time in Florence, the Alterati influenced him in more than one way. Probably the best example in that sense is how Ammirato came to write his famous *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito*. It was Bernardo Davanzzati who first drew Ammirato's attention to Tacitus. In 1583, Davanzzati showed the Alterati his translation of the first book of the *Annals*, and from then they all regularly discussed each book as it came out.³²² Soon after that, Ammirato started writing commentaries on that work, chapter by chapter, which he then read in front of his colleagues at the academy. Many of those *discourses*, as he titled them, came out of the press in the early 1590s.

Officially compiled at the request and interest of the Grand Duke and Duchess, as Ammirato claims in the dedication, *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito* soon became his most famous work. Its popularity and relevance transcended the passing of time, as this book was

³²⁰ Weinberg, *Trattati di poetica e retorica del Cinquecento*, 509.

³²¹ Magl. Cl. IX, 137, BNCF.

³²² Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, 118–21.

not only translated in several other languages soon after the first publication.³²³ Modern scholars have also extensively analyzed the general themes and principles that inform Ammirato's political discourse and still consider this work to be an essential piece in the development of late-Renaissance political thought.³²⁴ The uniqueness of this work comes from Ammirato's ability to situate himself at a crossroads of ideas: he went against Machiavelli and reconciled the role of religion in political affairs; he composed a series of commentaries, in the same manner as *Discourses on Livy*, and chose an author with a fast-growing popularity among northern-European anti-Machiavellian humanists, Tacitus; all the while, he was using this book to revise what he thought was an incomplete definition of *ragion di stato* at the time he was writing.³²⁵ By combining all these intellectual stances, Ammirato also positioned himself in line with the main theoretical preoccupations of the Alterati. Yet, because of the various topics and aims of the discourses, and especially because they were initially meant to be read separately, it is difficult to assign a single coherent argument to the printed version of this book.

This brings in the second step in understanding how Ammirato organized knowledge in his published works; that is, by looking at their structure. For example, when read side by side, his discourses share structural similarities. In one, Ammirato talks about how “There is a useful side in keeping the things of the Turks jealous” (*C'un partito utile per tenere in gelosia le cose de Turchi*).³²⁶ The commentary begins with a narrative of how Tiberius and Germanicus achieved more things in Germany “by prudence than by force of arms.” To highlight the idea,

³²³ The *Discourses* went through four Italian editions before 1599 and two more at the beginning of the next century. They were translated into Latin for the benefit of German readers in 1609 and 1618 and appeared in French Translations twice in 1618 and in 1628, 1623 and 1642.

³²⁴ Congedo, *La vita e le opere di Scipione Ammirato (notizie e ricerche)*; Rodolfo De Mattei, *Il pensiero politico di Scipione Ammirato*, Università di Roma (Giuffrè, 1963); Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*; Kenneth C. Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (University of Chicago Press, 1976); Peter S. Donaldson, *Machiavelli and Mystery of State* (Cambridge University Press, 1989); Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince*.

³²⁵ De Mattei speculates that with these discourses Ammirato was actually trying to write a commentary on Livy as well, as a response to Machiavelli. See De Mattei, *Il pensiero politico di Scipione Ammirato*, 402.

³²⁶ Ammirato, *Discorsi del signor Scipione Ammirato sopra Cornelio Tacito*, 65.

Ammirato continues with references to other ancient examples, such as the relationship between Augustus and the king of the Parthians. Drawing on this last example, he turns to the contemporary context by comparing it with the relationship between the King of Spain and the Ottomans. Then, he provides a short summary of recent history that led to the present context. Finally, he brings in the main point and explains what could happen if a certain decision would be made or not. Though not overindulging in historical examples and references, Ammirato manages, in a little under two pages, to support an argument briefly and concisely.

In another case, his discourse “That one must try to know what the nature of princes and peoples is” (*Che si dee procurar di sapere, qual sia la natura de principi e de popoli*) opens with a general definition of the main “principle” he wants to discuss, instead of an episode from Tacitus.³²⁷ He replaces the detailed historical narrative of the ancient characters with a personal history on how he stumbled upon the topic under consideration, what he read and how he developed his own thoughts on it. Next, he foregrounds the main idea of the discourse. Only then Ammirato references a variety of ancient authors, with Tacitus among them, whose works he uses to support his argument. From this section he switches to the contemporary situation which he details with the help of contemporary authors. To further emphasize the relevance of the argument, he keeps bringing in examples, both ancient and contemporary. Ultimately, he shows that even if Tacitus did not explicitly treat this issue, there are references to its importance. Ammirato leaves this six-page discourse with an open end, in the hope that the audience will ponder upon the difficulty and complexity of its argument.

While these examples do not do justice to the effort Ammirato put into composing tens of commentaries, generally, the discourses follow a similar set of structural elements. The order of these parts is not always the same and not all commentaries have the same sections. Because

³²⁷ Ammirato, *Discorsi del signor Scipione Ammirato sopra Cornelio Tacito*, 153.

of that, the length varies from discourse to discourse. This, in turn, influenced their complexity, and, as these examples show, the type of argument he put forward. As such, Ammirato molded the structure of the discourses based on whether his argument was pragmatic (whether he wanted to demonstrate, with historical examples, the advantages and disadvantages of taking a decision or acting in a certain way) or abstract (whether he wanted to highlight, with theoretical and historical examples, how and why an issue was relevant to the contemporary situation).

A closer look at the structure of the discourses reveals that Ammirato might have, in fact, followed a pattern. The beginning with a quote, a historical episode, or a general idea from Tacitus; followed by a back-story of the episode with an emphasis on the actions of the main character, usually detailed by citing other authors; introducing references to other similar ancient examples, taken either from Tacitus or other sources; and then turning to recent history or to a contemporary situation by comparison with the first example, to finally emphasize the main point or principle of the discourse. All these elements correspond to the arrangement of a classical oration, where the ideal model had six parts, *exhordium*, *narratio*, *divisio*, *confirmatio*, *confutatio*, and *peroratio*. In classical oratory, each of these structural elements had a function that contributed to the overall persuasiveness of a speech.³²⁸ Style was a key-feature of these speeches because they were meant to be displayed, acted out, and appeal to the emotions of the listeners, rather than the intellect.³²⁹ Thus, the structure and form of delivery were more meaningful than the topic since it gave the orator freedom of ornamentation.³³⁰

The parallel between Ammirato's discourses and classical orations comes as no surprise. Even though by the time he was writing, *discorso* was already a commonplace that conveyed a political opinion in preparation for a decision-making process, in the early

³²⁸ Jeanne Fahnestock, "Rhetorical Stylistics," *Language and Literature* 14, no. 3 (2005): 220.

³²⁹ John M. McManamon, *Pierpaolo Vergerio the Elder: The Humanist as Orator* (Tempe, 1996), 23.

³³⁰ Kevin Dunn, *Pretexts of Authority: The Rhetoric of Authorship in the Renaissance Preface* (Stanford University Press, 1994).

sixteenth-century, before the association with Machiavelli's work, it signified "deliberative speech."³³¹ The initial context in which Ammirato delivered these commentaries also enhance this idea. The forum of the Alterati was a good environment where he could display his knowledge as a historian and political analyst, but also convince his colleagues of the relevance of his take on matters of *ragion di stato*. In his concern with the things of the past and with what might occur, Ammirato echoes the Aristotelian distinction between writing history and writing poetry and thus combines the roles of the orator, the philosopher, and the poet by delivering political commentaries in the form of orations.

The fluid boundary between his roles as a writer and the types of texts he wrote, can be seen in the fate of one of his discourses, *Che da progressi del Turco si vede che vuol farsi Signore d'Italia* (From the progress of the Turk we can see that he wants to make himself Lord of Italy). Presented in front of the Alterati, this commentary was added to the manuscript codex, but was eventually not included with the final *discorsi* chosen for publication.³³² Considering that in this discourse Ammirato talks about the Ottoman rise of power, by emphasizing the Sultan's policies on the local populations and the strategical use of local resources, there is no surprise that it did not make it past censorship.³³³ What is most interesting about this discourse is that it is almost identical with entire pages from his oration to Sixtus V.³³⁴ This example highlights several essential aspects. First, when seen in relation to his *orazioni*, it underlines that he most certainly used the same reference books, like *Notizie Istoriche*, when writing his *discorsi*. Second, it supports the idea that he was recycling material in his works and that he

³³¹ Cornel Zwielerlein, *Discorso und Lex Dei: die Entstehung neuer Denkrähen im 16. Jahrhundert und die Wahrnehmung der französischen Religionskriege in Italien und Deutschland* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 32–33; 77.

³³² De Mattei, *Il pensiero politico di Scipione Ammirato*, 408–9.

³³³ Eventually, it got published in 1642 in Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo*, 81–88.

³³⁴ "Che da progressi del Turco si vede che vuol farsi Signore d'Italia" in *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo*, 83–89 almost entirely overlaps with *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebbono a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco*, 3–5; 9–10; 12.

was re-adapting it to texts that, in theory, were assigned to a different genre. Third, the *reuse* of entire parts of text, in which he kept the content as well as the rhetorical form, hint toward the interdependence between the structural elements of his discourses and his orations. While Ammirato's *discorsi* can be read also as orations, not only as political commentaries, because of the rhetorical structural elements, what remains to be seen is whether his *orazioni* can also be read as other types of texts.

Seen in this context, another way to study how Ammirato organized information is to examine the literary tradition to which his *orazioni* belonged and the larger context in which they were composed. The first clue in that direction can be found on the 1594 print of Ammirato's oration to Sixtus V. A look at the cover, shows that his text appeared as an "appendix" to what seem to be the central texts – Cardinal Bessarion's orations. This edition offers a few cues as to why it made sense for Giunti to print Ammirato's and Bessarion's works together. The texts, labelled as orations, resemble each other in several ways. First, the topics and approach to the topics were very similar. Bessarion's texts seem to be crusading pamphlets, but as modern scholars like Margaret Meserve or James Hankins have shown, they hardly fit the traditional crusade rhetoric. These orations contain hard-headed political analysis and scholars see them as prime examples of "humanist crusade literature."³³⁵ Just like the cardinal, Ammirato analyzed the tactics and the intentions of the sultan, the political and economic pressures under which he operated. Yet, unlike Bessarion, he did not question whether or not Christian Europe is prepared to repel the assaults of the Ottomans. In his view this could not be attained until the internal religious dissents were resolved. But once he assumed that would happen, he proposed solutions. What is more, the message that transpired through Ammirato's

³³⁵ James Hankins, "Renaissance Crusaders: Humanist Crusade Literature in the Age of Mehmed II," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 49 (1995): 111–207; Margaret Meserve, "Patronage and Propaganda at the First Paris Press: Guillaume Fichet and the First Edition of Bessarion's 'Orations against the Turks,'" *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 97, no. 4 (2003): 521–88.

oration to Sixtus V, with variations in argument, is common for all the other orations in his series: leaders – be they religious or political – must act, first to pacify the religious dissents in Europe, and then unite their forces to face the rapidly advancing Ottoman armies. Again, just as Bessarion, and other humanist crusade orators for that matter, he directed his texts at popes, kings, and aristocrats.

Second, the structural elements are fairly similar. Even with all the political analysis, Bessarion still adhered to the model of a classical oration, consisting of six parts. Ammirato also “kept in touch with the custom used by orators.”³³⁶ He blended ancient examples, calls to civic action, and attempts to move the listeners in his *orazioni*, and just like Bessarion, he often used the rhetoric of exemplarity to incite and animate the readers to act. On the other hand, Ammirato changed the type of reference together with the person for whom the *orazione* was written, but also with the type of argument. For instance, when he was advising Philip II in the first text, he often referred to the actions of Hannibal and Nero as examples from which the king of Spain could learn; however, when writing to pope Clement VIII, he heavily referenced the Bible. The difference between Ammirato’s and Bessarion’s use of rhetoric of exemplarity lies in the personalization of the examples and it was probably related to the intended reception of the texts.

Third, both Bessarion’s and Ammirato’s texts circulated from the beginning in written form. Margaret Meserve has shown that Bessarion’s orations were not transcripts of official public speeches, nor “official church propaganda,” but rather private missives meant to circulate discreetly among influential people.³³⁷ Yet, soon, the orations were printed under the editorial guidance of Guillaume Fichet who continued to distribute them among people of

³³⁶ “Perche il tener quel costume usitato dagli Oratori,” Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione Nella Morte Di Filippo Secondo Re Di Spagna al Potentissimo Re Di Spagna Filippo Terzo, Suo Signore. Detta Filippica Terza* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1598), 3.

³³⁷ Meserve, “Patronage and Propaganda at the First Paris Press,” 525–26.

power.³³⁸ While the orations were published without the author's knowledge, the text continued to circulate exclusively in written form, as did Ammirato's orations.³³⁹ As seen above in Chapter 2 he often sent presentation copies of his *orazioni* to his patrons, but also to the people to whom he was addressing the composition. While the printed version of the oration for Sixtus V appeared later than Ammirato might have wanted, after 1594, his *orazioni* were printed in several editions by Giunti.³⁴⁰ Regardless of the political goals, he aimed, from the beginning, for his texts to be read, as he noted in the *orazione* for the Neapolitan nobility:

Even if living words are pleasing to the ears and could in an instant move the soul better than written ones, they are at a disadvantage, since the written words can be more easily retained in memory and can be re-read more often for the convenience of the speaker and the listeners.³⁴¹

This explanation, that transpired through his entire series of *orazioni*, highlights why these written orations are characterized by what George Kennedy has labelled "secondary rhetoric."³⁴² The introduction of rhetoric as a school subject in Renaissance also taught humanist students how to apply rhetorical techniques to the writing of a text that would probably not be delivered orally. While the general rules of composition and the structural parts of a classical oratory were kept, the medium of transmission altered how the argument was emphasized. For instance, in a delivered speech, the orator ensured that the audience retained the most important parts of the argument by repetition.³⁴³ When the oration was designed in writing, repetition as a rhetorical device retained its importance, but because, as Ammirato

³³⁸ Meserve, "Patronage and Propaganda at the First Paris Press," 527–28.

³³⁹ Meserve, "Patronage and Propaganda at the First Paris Press," 527.

³⁴⁰ Initially, Ammirato wrote the oration for Sixtus V in 1585-1586 hoping for a reaction from the Papacy. As no response came, he put aside the text until the opportune moment in the aftermath of the conquest of Gyor. For a history of published editions, see chapter 2 above.

³⁴¹ "Perche le parole vive entrate per gli orecchi altrui ancorche in quello instante piu commuovano gli animi nostri, che quelle, che non ricevute per mezzo della scrittura, nondimeno hanno ancor elle da un altro canto disavvantaggio allo scritto ilquale serbandosi piu nella memoria, potendo piu volte, e con meno incommodo del dicitore e degli ascoltanti rileggersi," Ammirato, *Orazione Scritta Alla Nobilta Napoletana Confortandola Ad Andar Alla Guerra d'Ungheria Contra i Turchi*, 2r.

³⁴² George A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 5.

³⁴³ Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, 196–219.

stated, the audience could go back and forth to re-read certain parts, this opened more space for other elements, like the rhetoric of exemplarity or political analysis. While there is no direct correlation between these texts written more than a century apart, the printer's decision to publish Ammirato's and Bessarion's orations together has more to do with the contemporary situation and the urgency of the topic, than the type of text.

Conclusion

The relationship between form and content in sixteenth-century humanist texts is best seen by observing methods of organizing information. The difference between how Ammirato structured his manuscript notebooks is not one of method or system but rather of exhaustiveness and purpose. He compiled cosmographical knowledge in reference books which he generally organized alphabetically. They contain factual information with references to the sources that Ammirato used. In some of these commonplace books, he prioritized a dictionary-like comprehensiveness, while in others he focused more on adding finding devices that would facilitate the use of the book. Because of the sloppy handwriting, many abbreviations, and corrections, such books clearly appear to have been intended for Ammirato's private use. He also compiled handbooks at the request of his patrons which were meant to offer encyclopedia-like knowledge, as he structured them alphabetically and sometimes chronologically. However, the information is presented in a very simplistic manner, in a paraphrased version, rather than a literal transcription from authorial sources. The function of these commonplace books shows how he adapted their structure and content. It also underlines how he used these books when composing other works and the common elements they share with some of his published works. More importantly, it shows that using knowledge stored in reference books when writing a text with an argument did not signify a transfer of

structuring methods. While topics may have been common, because of the general interests of the author, texts written around an argument followed different organizational rules.

Because of the nature of Ammirato's published works, a mere look at their content and form would not offer enough clues as to why he decided to structure them in that way. Understanding the influence that Florentine academic life had on his intellectual development is crucial in grasping how his perception on the role of the writer and how he emulated that. By sharing the Aristotelian view on writing history and the essential role of poetry with his colleagues in the Accademia degli Alterati, Ammirato cemented his view on the roles of a writer. For him, an author should be able to combine, when needed, the roles and rhetorical tools of the orator, the philosopher, and the poet in order to make a better argument. This theoretical argument is very well reflected in Ammirato's *Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito*, where he structured historical and political commentary around the elements of orations. The fragility of this discourse boundary is best reflected in Ammirato's reuse of parts of the *discorsi* in his *orazioni*. The common rhetorical structural elements between these two types of texts raised the question of whether his orations could also be seen as political analyses. Placing the *orazioni* in the temporal frame in which they were written and published reveals that Ammirato tried to emulate the long-standing tradition of Renaissance crusade literature, alongside reflecting his patron's interests. By using rhetorical devices and structural elements specific to oratory, by providing historical and political analysis, and by expressing his concerns with what might occur if the present situations would not change, Ammirato combined the roles and tools of the philosopher, the poet, and the orator. Finally, it is precisely because of the overlap and fluid boundary between these functions that works labelled as *discorso* or *orazione* reflect methods of writing rather than generic textual forms.

PART III: FOR WHOM DO HUMANISTS WRITE? AUDIENCES AND AIMS IN POLITICAL-HISTORICAL WORKS

Works that engaged with history and governance in sixteenth-century Italy were inseparable from the conditions under which they circulated. Whether produced in courts, academies, printing workshops, or private letters, texts discussing the nature and exercise of power were influenced not only by their authors' ideas but also by the expectations, sensitivities, and perspectives of their audiences. More than in any other area of humanist literary production, works touching on government, history, and counsel demanded a careful balancing of purpose and tone. Such works had to serve the public good, satisfy patronage demands, display erudition, and avoid political risks inherent in describing contemporary rulers, states, and conflicts.

This section explores how Sansovino and Ammirato navigated these pressures within overlapping yet distinct cultural, political, and literary environments. Both were part of networks that connected printers, nobles, religious figures, and academies; both addressed similar audiences such as princes, patricians, cardinals, and administrators. Yet the conditions under which they produced and circulated their works influenced their choices differently. By placing each humanist within these contexts, this part asks how political and historical knowledge was made useful, authoritative, and acceptable for circulation.

Sansovino, a professional man of letters embedded in Venice's commercial print market, framed political and historical materials for various audiences: patrician statesmen, princely dedicatees, students, and a broader civic readership envisioned by Venetian academies. His strategic neutrality, focus on public benefit, and reliance on general categories of analysis reveal how a humanist compiler shaped political knowledge that could circulate

widely and adapt to different reading contexts. In his works, the boundaries between political, genealogical, and historical writing were flexible, but the main goal was to organize information into formats that readers could use in civic life.

Ammirato, by contrast, wrote from the position of a court historian and orator. Addressing popes, cardinals, princes, and military leaders, he developed a style of political argument focused on persuasion and action. Through targeted rhetoric, historical examples, and carefully crafted appeals, Ammirato's case shows how political ideas can be tailored to the interests and fears of individual rulers, while also expressing broader principles of legitimacy, prudence, and good governance.

Taken together, these two case studies show how humanists in early modern Italy produced and framed political and historical knowledge in response to the publics and purposes they sought to address. Sansovino and Ammirato worked in different literary settings and the genres of their works only partly overlap. Yet both used history, authority, and literary form to meet the needs and ambitions of the readers they sought to reach. Their writings show that political thought during this period developed not only through abstract treatises but also through the practical negotiation of audiences, aims, and the conditions of circulation that shaped meaning and impact.

Chapter 5 – Between Patrons and Publics: Sansovino’s Politics of Comparison

Introduction

By 1583, Sansovino’s name appeared on over 80 printed works, whether he was listed as a translator, compiler, editor, or publisher. Toward the end of his life, he was leaving behind a vast literary legacy comprising works that took on a variety of generic forms, ranging from rhetoric manuals, dialogues, collections of poems and novels, as well as chronologies, genealogies, and compilations of travel literature or political maxims. His contributions to each of these works varied, and his literary career evolved over the second half of the sixteenth century alongside the authorial roles he performed. These roles were neither uniform nor clearly defined; instead, they became increasingly complex over time. As shown in Chapter 1, a *letterato* like Sansovino could establish and maintain authority over his works in two ways: legally, through the Venetian privilege system, and intellectually, by asserting his contribution to the organization and transmission of knowledge. Privileges granted him ownership and recognition of a work, but due to the competitive nature of the market, Sansovino’s relationship with the Venetian book trade was often fraught. His career illustrates how humanists took on the roles of translator, compiler, and editor, often performing these functions simultaneously. His establishment of his own printing workshop gave him greater autonomy in the publication process and allowed him to consolidate these authorial roles. His career also demonstrates how humanists could creatively reshape existing materials and present their works in ways that could be considered “new” for privilege purposes, while also enhancing their intellectual authority.

Considering the wide range of works he produced and his extensive publishing activity, Paul Grendler labeled Sansovino a “popularizer.” In Grendler’s view, popularizers were humanists who sought to make material understandable to non-specialist readers by shaping it into new frameworks, drawing practical conclusions, or adapting it to the needs of a broader audience.³⁴⁴ In many ways, Sansovino’s literary profile aligns with this model. Many of his works involve reorganizing a broad range of sources into an accessible format, and the paratexts added to them encourage readers to navigate the texts selectively. As seen in Chapter 1 and 3, Sansovino actively structured and reshaped material to guide both private study and civic engagement. Therefore, the structure of his works was not uniform but tailored to their intended purpose. Some were primarily designed as reference tools, suitable for fact-checking and extracting specific information, while others were arranged to promote didactic or selective reading. An essential feature of this approach was his continuous reuse of material across different works. Sansovino often drew from the same sources and bodies of information but restructured the content to fit the format and purpose of each project. This fluidity is also evident in how Sansovino labeled his works as *raccolte*, *traduttioni* or *compositioni*. As I show in Chapter 3, these categories were far from rigid, since he employed similar methods of compilation, translation, and editorial intervention throughout his works. Such practices reinforce that Sansovino’s authorial agency is best seen in how he actively reorganized and reframed knowledge for specific audiences and purposes, rather than in creating entirely new content.

Seen in this context, Sansovino both conforms to and challenges Grendler’s category of the popularizer. His works were indeed designed to make knowledge accessible to broad audiences, but they were also created as tools for civic engagement, aligned with the ideals of

³⁴⁴ Grendler, “Francesco Sansovino and Italian Popular History 1560-1600,” 139.

the *vita civile*.³⁴⁵ By reorganizing historical, political, and rhetorical content into works that served different functions, whether as reference tools, instructional handbooks, or guides for decision-making, he laid the groundwork for a politics of comparison that shaped categories of knowledge and civic judgment.

In this chapter, I analyze how the developments of the Venetian publishing scene and the intellectual agendas of Italian academies shaped both the purpose and structure of Sansovino's work. I focus on how Sansovino positioned himself simultaneously as a professional man of letters, a participant in academic circles, and a civic writer, and how these overlapping roles guided his editorial activity and his position among patrons. I will examine how Sansovino navigated the dual pressures of financial competition and ideological programs, and how this negotiation translated into works that addressed both patrons and broader audiences. Specifically, I explore how the didactic purpose and structure of his works were influenced by the civic ideals of Italian academies, particularly the Accademia Veneziana. Furthermore, I explore how Sansovino framed his literary labor as an act of civic service. By presenting his works as oriented toward public benefit while also addressing the interests of powerful dedicatees, Sansovino developed a dual strategy that allowed him to participate in Venice's civic culture while securing his position within networks of patronage. By contextualizing his rhetorical focus on the "benefit of the public" within the commercial, academic, and political environments of sixteenth-century Italy, I show how his body of work articulates a nuanced balance between civic humanism and personal advancement. Ultimately, in this chapter I treat Sansovino's political-historical works primarily not as contributions to political thought, but as products shaped by his personal interests, the civic uses he imagines, and the audiences he addresses.

³⁴⁵ Grendler, "Francesco Sansovino and Italian Popular History 1560-1600," 143.

“For the Benefit of the Public:” Civic Aims and Editorial Practices

Sansovino consistently aligned his literary activity with the developments of the Venetian publishing scene. Especially around the time he opened his printing workshop, competition over “the next popular work” led him into disputes about printing licenses and, in later years, even about plagiarism.³⁴⁶ His publishing activity indicates a man keenly aware of the commercial value of books and the opportunities to support himself through the printed word. But financial incentives can't fully explain the ambition and scope of his works. Like many Venetian men of letters who also printed, his works were shaped as much by the ideological programs of academic circles as by commercial pressures, especially since in many cases these two spheres overlapped and reinforced each other.

Sansovino became involved in Italian academies during his time in Padua. Alongside Pietro Bembo, Benedetto Varchi, and Pietro Aretino, Sansovino was among the most active members of the Accademia degli Inflammati. Founded in 1540 by Leone Orsini, Bishop of Fréjus, the academy operated for ten years.³⁴⁷ While the intellectual milieu of Paduan universities, marked by a strong Aristotelian tradition, made humanists particularly interested in philosophical and natural questions, from 1542, under Sperone Speroni's leadership, the academy's focus shifted from broad studies across various fields and languages to philosophy

³⁴⁶ “Giuseppe Betussi, states that he found the title of an unpublished work of this author in one of his letters to Cesare Gonzaga. This letter indicates that Betussi was ending a book about “the origin and deeds of the illustrious families of Italy. Moreover, in another letter of 1573 from Padua, dedicated to Pio Enea Obizzi, Betussi affirms that the book was finished and publication imminent. The conclusion of Tiraboschi is that Sansovino used this work to make his won by the same title. The reasons given are the following: Sansovino published his work in 1582, a few years after Betussi's death; Sansovino and Betussi were both correctors in the printing shop of Giolito; and it is not impossible that before dying, Betussi gave his manuscript to Sansovino in order for him to correct it and give it to Giolito for printing; Betussi's manuscript was never found.” Adriano Moz, *Francesco Sansovino, a Polygraph in Cinquecento Venice: His Life and Works* (University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 215.

³⁴⁷ Testa, *Italian Academies and Their Networks, 1525-1700*, 174.

and vernacular literature.³⁴⁸ The direction of the academy's program can be seen reflected in some of Sansovino's early works, such as the manual *La rhetorica* (1543) or *Le lettere [...] sopra le dieci giornate del Decamerone* (1542), a literary commentary in the form of correspondence addressed to various historical and contemporary figures. The translations of Michele Riccio's and Guillaume Postel's book which were published around this time were also probably reflecting the program of the academy.

After returning to Venice, Sansovino became one of the first members of the Accademia Pellegrina, founded in 1549 by Anton Francesco Doni.³⁴⁹ During its early years, Ortensio Lando, with Doni's support, produced an Italian translation of Thomas More's *Utopia*, although it was published without the names of the publisher or the translator.³⁵⁰ Although he was away in Rome serving at the court of Julius III, Sansovino probably stayed in contact with this circle. In the *Sopplimento delle croniche universali* (1575), he described Doni as "witty and inventive moralist, whose style lured men to his philosophy, the purpose of which was to win back evil men from their deeds."³⁵¹ Additionally, Sansovino included Lando's translation of *Utopia* in *Del Governo* (1561). Although he commented on the poor language, saying he had to improve it, Sansovino regarded Lando as "a man of great learning."³⁵² The Accademia

³⁴⁸ Testa, *Italian Academies and Their Networks, 1525-1700*, 14; "Beginning in the 1540s, learning took more authoritarian directions and became less of an exchange between text and reader. There grew up a new concern for laws, definitions, and classifications, and a subsequent constriction of outlook. The literary academies, which were originally established in order to escape the narrowness and lack of concern for humanistic learning of the universities and monastic schools, became as authoritarian and specialized as the institutions which they were designed to supplant." Paul F. Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World, 1530-1560. Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco & Ortensio Lando* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 140.

³⁴⁹ Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World, 1530-1560. Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco & Ortensio Lando*, 58.

³⁵⁰ Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World, 1530-1560. Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco & Ortensio Lando*, 164.

³⁵¹ Sansovino, *Sopplimento Delle Croniche Vniuersali Del Mondo Di f. Iacopo Filippo Da Bergamo. Tradotto Nuouamente Da m. Francesco Sansouino*, 596.

³⁵² "Oltre a cio la Rep. d'Vtopia fu parimente tradotta dalla Latina del Moro da Hortensio Lando, huomo nel uero di molte lettere, ma delle cose della lingua uolgare poco accurato, percioche a lui pareua, scriuendo secondo la sua lingua, d'esser non solamente Thoscano, ma un solenne prosatore, et ancho in quella mi è conuenuto affaticarmi un pezzo" Francesco Sansovino, *Del Gouerno de i Regni et Delle Republiche Così Antiche Come Moderne Libri XVIII* (Francesco Sansovino, 1561), 3v.

Pellegrina, though short-lived, was financially supported by Venetian noblemen, and its goal was, in Doni's words, "to educate young patricians and support the virtuosi."³⁵³ This civic purpose, common to Venetian intellectual life, influenced the programs of many academies, including the one with the greatest impact on Sansovino's literary work.

The Accademia Veneziana, also known as the Accademia della Fama, was founded in 1557 at the initiative of diplomat Federico Badoer. Due to his reputation and extensive network of contacts, the academy provided a great opportunity for *letterati* seeking protection and patronage, such as Sansovino, who became a member in 1558. Documents from the academy show that its activities focused on reading ancient and modern texts, debating certain questions, and discussing what works should be printed.³⁵⁴ Closely connected to Badoer's political activity and public service, the academy was intended to excel through "utility, delight, and great ornament."³⁵⁵ To that extent, the Accademia Veneziana also engaged in external activities, such as public lectures and editorial projects aimed at educating a broader yet specific audience. For example, its public lectures on "matters of states, provinces, and kingdoms" targeted young Venetian patricians. Since they would be the future leaders and administrators of the Republic, such lectures were intended to familiarize them with the latest developments in logic, linguistics, and rhetoric.³⁵⁶ The academy's editorial plan, although serving a similar purpose, was a much more ambitious project. In 1558, the members created a universal catalog listing all the publications they aimed to produce.³⁵⁷ The academy's *Somma* divided the works into various "categories," ranging from theology, metaphysics, canon and civil law to geography, geometry, and medicine, as well as politics, economics, and history.³⁵⁸ The

³⁵³ Grendler, *Critics of the Italian World, 1530-1560*. Anton Francesco Doni, Nicolò Franco & Ortensio Lando, 58.

³⁵⁴ Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 6.

³⁵⁵ Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 6.

³⁵⁶ Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 6.

³⁵⁷ Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 6.

³⁵⁸ Testa, *Italian Academies and Their Networks, 1525-1700*, 97.

encyclopedic aspect of the project was impressive in theory, but the number of works actually printed was far below the original plan, especially since the academy closed under unknown circumstances in 1561.³⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the *Somma*, which was also translated into Latin, circulated throughout Italy and Europe, serving as a reference point for an ambitious editorial project.³⁶⁰

Considering the topic and publication time, several modern scholars have linked Sansovino's *Del governo dei regni et delle repubbliche cosi antiche come moderne* (1561) to the academy's editorial plan. Since works categorized under "geography" and "politics" in *Somma* anticipated reports and descriptions of foreign countries and their political interests, Sansovino's *Del governo*, published shortly after the academy's end, is seen as a continuation of this editorial approach.³⁶¹ While this link seems plausible given his direct association with the academy, Simone Testa questioned it, noting that Sansovino avoided difficult topics such as international relations, state interests, or diplomatic negotiations.³⁶² However, his evasive stance on such subjects may have been an attempt to remain neutral, which, as seen in Chapter 1, he often emphasized in his prefaces when explaining how he organized his material. Even more, when considering other works that Sansovino published from 1560 onward on similar topics, such as the compendium *Dell'Historia Universale*, Pedro Mexia's *Selva di varia lettione*, the translation of Giacomo Filippo da Bergamo's *Sopplimento delle croniche vniuersali del mondo* and his own *Cronologia del mondo*, it becomes clearer that *Del governo* was one part of a larger corpus. Although these works shared common topics such as history and politics, they approached the subject differently and at varying levels, suggesting that *Del*

³⁵⁹ Testa, *Italian Academies and Their Networks, 1525-1700*, 92; Lina Bolzoni argued that, in fact, the collapse of the academy reflected the difficulties faced by the sixteenth-century literati who sought to find a professional position outside the university and separate from the court or the church, Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 19.

³⁶⁰ Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 7.

³⁶¹ Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*; Suin, *Editoria, Storiografia e Politica*.

³⁶² Testa, *Italian Academies and Their Networks, 1525-1700*, 111.

governo might not have been Sansovino's only work that reflected the editorial program envisioned by the academy.

The hypothesis linking Sansovino's *Del Governo*, and possibly some of his other works, with the editorial plans of the Accademia Veneziana gains more weight, especially when considering the academy's editorial goals. As Girolamo Molino wrote in a letter to Bernardo Tasso, the members of the academy aimed

not only to purge these [books] of infinite errors and mistakes, which in truth they do contain, much to the grief of scholars, but to compile them with many useful annotations, discourses, and scholarly notes and, translated from various languages, bring them to light [...] Beyond this, they intend to send forth new works, both by them and by others, never before printed.³⁶³

While this work ethic toward book production was not unique to the Accademia Veneziana, browsing through Sansovino's works shows that they comply with the academy's plan both in terms of topic and editorial ethic. As seen in Chapter 1, in his prefaces he often claimed to have improved not only the language but also to have corrected errors or reorganized information for the reader's benefit. Additionally, the finding devices like indexes and lists of authorities that Sansovino added to each of his books, along with how he organized the information, also reflect the editorial stance of the academy. Furthermore, Sansovino consistently presented his works as oriented toward the "benefit of the public," a benefit that operated on two levels: first, through the pedagogical function of the books' subject matter, and second, through editorial strategies such as additions, modifications, and structural

³⁶³ "[A] giorni passati s'è congregata insieme una nobile compagnia, sotto titolo di Accademia Veneziana, di alcuni dotti, e fioriti ingegni, avendo intenzione di giovare a letterati, e al mondo, col metter le mani così nei libri di Filosofia, come di altre facultà: e non solo purgar quelli degli infiniti errori, e incorrezioni che nel vero portano seco attorno, con molto danno degli studiosi, ma farli insieme con molte utili annotazioni, e discorsi e scolj, e tradotti appresso in diverse lingue, uscire in luce nella più bella stampa, e carta che si sia ancor veduta. Oltra di ciò intendono dar fuori Opere nuove, e non più stampate, sì per loro, come per altre composte" Delle lettere di M. Bernardo Tasso, 3 vols. in 2 (Padua, 1733-51), 2:359-60 in Bolzoni, *The Gallery of Memory*, 8.

interventions that facilitated their use.³⁶⁴ This invocation of the public benefit provided Sansovino with a rhetorical bridge to the civic purpose of the Accademia Veneziana's program, which sought not only to educate but also to cultivate and legitimize bookish practices such as editing, translating, and reorganizing knowledge. However, as mentioned earlier, the civic purpose outlined by Badoer's Academy was common in Venetian intellectual life. While some of Sansovino's works, because of their subject and editorial additions, clearly reflect the academy's intentions, the civic focus of his writing is apparent in most, if not all, of his works after 1560.

Already in the 1550s, Sansovino had argued that the *studia humanitatis* offered the most suitable education for civic life, regardless of the profession one might pursue later. His works consistently reflected an ideal of learning focused not on solitary contemplation but on active participation in the *vita civile*, engaging with public life in a way that included both personal growth and service to the broader community. The personal aspect of this involvement in the *vita civile* becomes clear in a letter to Marco Mantova Benavides, where Sansovino eloquently confessed that:

There is no law that could make me put down my pen. I was born to write, but what is worse, is to write badly. I know it, yet I cannot refrain. But it is better to do [something] poorly than to do nothing, because work is far more noble than idleness. And I, who by nature do not know how to sit idle, willingly let myself to be carried away by my will.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ "Ricordandovi che affaticandoci noi solamente a beneficio comune," Francesco Sansovino, *Dell'istoria Vniuersale Dell'origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima* (Francesco Sansouino et compagni, 1560), 2r; "ella riceua al presente quel premio ch'ella ha molto tempo è meritato, et ch'era desiderato da tutti i buoni per beneficio uniuersale," Sansovino, *Del Gouerno de i Regni et Delle Republiche Così Antiche Come Moderne Libri XVIII*, 4r; "a beneficio comune d'ogniuno," Sansovino, *Sopplimento Delle Croniche Vniuersali Del Mondo*, 2v; "Ora tutte queste mie viglie, mosso da quel desiderio ardente che mi accende a giovare ad ogniuno." Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo Di m. Francesco Sansouino Diuisa in Tre Libri* (Giacomo Sansovino, 1580), 4r.

³⁶⁵ "Non ci è ordine ch'io possa metter giù la penna. Son nato per scrivere, ma quello ch'è peggio per male scrivere. Lo conosco et non mi posso astenere. Ma meglio è far male che non far nulla perche molto più nobile è il negozio che l'ozio. et io che per natura non mi so stare con le mani a cintola, volentieri mi lascio traporar dalla volontà, la quale mi conduce et non so come, in così fatti laberinti come ella vede. Mando alla V. Ecc. come a mio precettore et signore il presente trattato. Harò caro ch'essa lo veda quando sarà tempo. Et più caro ancora mi fia l'udire il suo vero et sincero giudizio. Et se bene in questo caso sono come le monache da Genova: sarò sempre a

This personal commitment to constant literary labor is further reflected in his practice of circulating works and fostering dialogue with readers. In *Del Secretario*, for example, Sansovino included many replies he received from nobles to whom he sent works and from whom he asked for sources, thereby placing his works within networks of recognition and reciprocity.³⁶⁶ As *Del Secretario* was conceived as a manual for educating statesmen, it therefore exemplified the dual civic purpose of his work: it expressed his active involvement in public life while offering practical guidance.³⁶⁷ These gestures show that, for Sansovino, civic engagement was not just an abstract ideal, but a lived practice demonstrated through correspondence, circulation, and ongoing literary activity.

Sansovino's engagement in *vita civile*, both personal and public, finds further expression in his writings, some of which were explicitly designed to educate a particular audience. As Testa notes, the intended purpose of *Del Secretario* can be traced back to, and reflects, the program of Badoer's academy much better than Sansovino's *Del governo*.³⁶⁸ Similarly, the cover of *Concetti politici* (1578) displays what Sansovino reiterated in the preface: that the work would "benefit all those who are concerned with civil government."³⁶⁹ However, not all of his works were directed exclusively at educating men of state as the "benefit of the public" often extended to a wider readership. His *Ortografia della lingua volgare* (1568), for example, a manual laying out the rules for proper writing, was dedicated to

tempo in un'altra impressione, a corregger gli errori, ad aggiugnere i ricordi datimi, et a ridur questa materia a miglior essere ch'ella non si trova al presente. In questa fatica mi compiacchio di questo almeno, ch'io ho messo mano a materia non più trattata et nuova per quello ch'io creda. Ora qualunque ella si sia: glele (così) mando volentieri, et ella come mio signore l'accetti volentieri." in Cicogna, *Delle Inscrizioni Veneziane. Volume IV*, 90–91.

³⁶⁶ See Chapter 1 above for more details on this and how he created an image of himself as an erudite

³⁶⁷ Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri Quattro*, 2r–3r.

³⁶⁸ Testa, *Italian Academies and Their Networks, 1525-1700*, 109–10.

³⁶⁹ "benefitio a tutti coloro che attendono a governi civili" Francesco Sansovino, *Concetti Politici Di m. Francesco Sansouino* (Giovanni Antonio Bertano, 1578), 4v.

his son but intended for students more generally.³⁷⁰ In the *Historia Universale* (1560), Sansovino noted that he was working “only for the common benefit,” without specifying a particular audience, an idea that is later echoed also in the *Sopplimento delle Croniche Vniuersali* (1575).³⁷¹

Even when a work had a more specific audience, it was frequently intended to serve broader interests as well. Sansovino wrote *L’Historia di Casa Orsina* (1565) at Paolo Giordano Orsini’s request, but as he emphasized in the preface it would *also* benefit others.³⁷² Similarly, the *Principi di Casa d’Austria* (1565) which he gifted to Johanna of Austria upon her marriage with Francesco I de Medici, and the *Simolacro di Carlo V* (1567), addressed to Chiara di Correggio, were dedicated, and probably written specifically for these noblewomen, but they also carried a wider public purpose.³⁷³

In this way, Sansovino’s career shows how Venetian men of letters could direct their literary efforts toward civic service by combining textual study, editorial work, and writing to reflect a dual focus: they target both specific audiences, such as patrons or men of state, and a broader public, including students and readers with general civic interests. By focusing on the instruction of citizens, the accessible format of knowledge, and the utility for the common good, Sansovino’s works reflect the same civic goals that underpinned the academies’ public lectures and editorial programs. While Sansovino consistently framed his works as serving the

³⁷⁰ Francesco Sansovino, *Ortografia Delle Voci Della Lingua Nostra o Vero Dittionario Volgare et Latino Nel Quale s’impara a Scriuer Correttamente Ogni Parola Così in Prosa Come in Uerso* (Francesco Sansovino, 1568), 2r–3v.

³⁷¹ “Ricordandovi che affaticandoci noi solamente a beneficio commune” Sansovino, *Dell’historia Vniuersale Dell’origine et Imperio de Turchi Parte Prima*, 4r; “benefitio comune d’ogniuno” Sansovino, *Sopplimento Delle Croniche Vniuersali Del Mondo Di f. Iacopo Filippo Da Bergamo. Tradotto Nuouamente Da m. Francesco Sansouino*, 2v.

³⁷² “Laqual cosa, oltre all’utile ch’ella potra apportare altrui per rispetto di quel che si contiene” Francesco Sansovino, *L’historia Di Casa Orsina Di Francesco Sansouino Nella Quale Oltre All’origine Sua* (Bernardino, & Filippo Stagnini, 1565), 3r–3v.

³⁷³ Francesco Sansovino, *Principi Di Casa d’Austria Progenitori Della Serenissima Principessa Di Fiorenza et Di Siena* (Francesco Sansovino, 1565; Sansovino, *Il Simolacro Di Carlo Quinto Imperadore*).

public benefit, this civic orientation coexisted with personal interests, visible in the way he directed particular works toward patrons and nobles, many of whom were actively engaged in the service of the state. This dual purpose, civic and personal, is especially apparent in his dedications, where the choice of dedicatee reflects both social strategy and political stance.

Juggling Local Politics: Dedications and Patronage

The number of people Sansovino dedicated his work to is striking. Throughout his career, eighty-seven individuals appear as dedicatees, ranging from popes Pius IV and Pius V to Emperor Rudolf II, from dukes such as Guidobaldo II della Rovere and Cosimo de' Medici to high-ranking administrators, like Giacomo Boncompagni and Traiano Marii. Military leaders that defended Venice against the Ottomans, such as Girolamo Zane, Sforza Pallavicino, Antonio Martinengo, are also included, as well as prelates of varying rank and even foreign dignitaries, such as the English noble William Parry and the Polish captain Pietro Zborowski.³⁷⁴ Through these dedications, Sansovino situated himself within a wide network that connected Venice to the broader European political and intellectual circles.

In the dedication to Bianca Capello de' Medici added in *Venetia città nobilissima* (1581), Sansovino described himself as “Tuscan by nature and a Venetian by choice.”³⁷⁵ This self-characterization was more than a personal statement because it clearly outlined the two geographic and political poles toward which he consistently gravitated. Between them, he balanced competing allegiances while seeking visibility and protection in both cities.

³⁷⁴ Valeria Guarna, “Le Dediche Di Francesco Sansovino. Tempi e Forme,” in *Francesco Sansovino Scrittore Del Mondo. Atti Del Convegno Internazionale Di Studi (Pisa, 5-6-7 Dicembre 2018)*, ed. Luca D’Onghia and Daniele Musto (Archilet, 2020), 188.

³⁷⁵ “per sodisfare in un tempo medesimo al doppio obbligo ch’io le tengo, ò come Toscano per natura, poi che dominando ella cotesta fortissimo et potentissima Prouincia, è mia natural Signoria, ò come Veneto per elletione, poi che fra le Venete è nobilissima et eccelsa” Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia Citta Nobilissima et Singolare, Descritta in XIII Libri* (Giacomo Sansovino; Domenico Farri, 1581), 2r.

Particularly prominent among his Florentine dedicatees were members of the Medici family.³⁷⁶ In the fourth volume of Pietro Bembo's *Lettere* (1564), dedicated to Lucrezia Medici, duchess of Ferrara, Sansovino praised the family's long-standing tradition as patrons of the arts. Under their benevolence flourished great figures such as Marsilio Ficino, Angelo Poliziano, and Cristoforo Landino.³⁷⁷ With this reminder, Sansovino made a rhetorical move by asking for their support and positioning himself alongside other illustrious minds. Although the letter from this 1564 edition that I consulted is not dated, several clues suggest that Sansovino likely reused a dedication from the 1560 edition. Since Lucrezia was married to Alfonso II d'Este, it is not surprising that Sansovino associated the Medicis with the Estensi in their support of humanism. However, by 1564, Lucrezia had passed away, and Florence and Ferrara were already embroiled in the precedence controversy. Therefore, it was highly unlikely that Sansovino, who was well aware of the local political situation, would write a new dedication emphasizing such a connection.

Most probably, Sansovino chose to dedicate this work to Lucrezia Medici after her marriage to Alfonso d'Este in 1558, just as he did with other works. For example, in 1565, he composed a history of the *Principi di Casa d'Austria*, dedicating it to Joanna of Austria on the occasion of her marriage to Francesco de' Medici, thereby linking his historical work to a moment of Habsburg–Medici alliance. Later, when Francesco remarried, Sansovino dedicated another work, *Venetia città nobilissima*, to Bianca Capello, Francesco's second wife. Taken

³⁷⁶ For a detailed survey of the Medici dedicatees see Guarna, "Le Dediche Di Francesco Sansovino. Tempi e Forme," 191–92.

³⁷⁷ "solamente per le Illustriss. famiglie Medici et Este la V. Eccellen. si habbia acquistato ogni termine di vera gloria et ogni fermezza di lunga memoria, essendo ella frutto dell'uno, et membro dell'altra, percioché esse risplendono al cospetto de gli huomini come il sole a mortali, nondimeno havendo l'una sostenuto la divinità di Marsilio Ficino, la eloquenza d'Angelo Politiano, et la dolcezza di Christoforo Landino, et l'altra havendo honorato la vivacità del Giraldo, la molta cognitione del Calcagnino, et la chiarissima dottrina del S. Giambattista Pigna, hanno potuto per molti secoli farsi memorabili et eterne, predicando essi non la potenza de lor principi, ma la bellezza de gl'intelletti, la magnificenza de fatti, et la sublimità de pellegrini et magnifici loro pensieri" Pietro Bembo, *Delle lettere [...] a sommi pontefici*, vol. IV, 3v in Guarna, "Le Dediche Di Francesco Sansovino. Tempi e Forme," 191–92.

together, these gestures highlight Sansovino's opportunism, his attentiveness to dynastic shifts and, more importantly, his ability to reposition his scholarship within changing networks of power. This strategic orientation is further evident in his dedication of *Della origine delle famiglie d'Italia* to Rudolf II. By emphasizing that many Italian houses traced their roots to Germanic blood, Sansovino highlighted the historical and genealogical ties between the Habsburgs and prominent Italian families, reinforcing the political and symbolic significance of the imperial dynasty for Italy.³⁷⁸ In doing so, he not only anchored his scholarship in the legitimacy of the empire but also recognized the potential significance of the Habsburgs for his career and networks.

At the same time, the manner in which he presented historical narratives occasionally strained relationships with certain nobles, revealing the delicate balance he maintained between truthful scholarship, civic purpose, and strategic cultivation of patronage. For example, Joseph Scaliger praised *Della origine delle famiglie d'Italia*, but at the same time regretted the insufficiency and malice with which Sansovino spoke of his house.³⁷⁹ Sansovino already preempted such critique in the preface when he noted that many nobles would not be pleased with his works because they

love the vain ornaments of false and pestilential flattery much more than the firm foundations of truth, delight in being painted and portrayed rather with the colors of falsehood by the hand of Aristobulus or Cherilus than with those of truth itself by the brush of Homer or Livy.³⁸⁰

Along the same lines, Paolo Giordano Orsino also complained about the general manner in which Sansovino invited other Orsini nobles to use *L'istoria di Casa Orsina* as a storehouse

³⁷⁸ Sansovino, *Della Origine et de' Fatti Delle Famiglie Illustri d'Italia*, 2r–2v.

³⁷⁹ Cicogna, *Delle Inscrizioni Veneziane. Volume IV*, 69–70; Scaliger was related to the Bordone house through his grandfather, Benedetto Bordone, who later insisted that their family was a scion of the La Scala house of Verona.

³⁸⁰ “Alcuni de quali amando assai piu gli ornamenti vani delle false et pestifere adulationi, che i fermi fondamenti del vero, si diletano di esser dipinti et ritratti, piu tosto con i colori della bugia, dalla mano di Aristobolo, o di Cherilo, che non quelli d'essa verita, dal pennello di Homero, o di Liurio” Sansovino, *Della Origine et de' Fatti Delle Famiglie Illustri d'Italia*, 4r.

of historical exempla.³⁸¹ As mentioned in Chapter 1, his discontent with Sansovino's tone may have stemmed from his sponsoring the work and thus his expectation of being featured more prominently as an example of princely rule. In *Concetti politici*, he even reflected critically on the practice, lamenting how princes often neglected true merit and civic utility in favor of rewarding flatterers and gift-givers.³⁸² This observation demonstrates his keen awareness of the very system on which his literary career depended and of the precarious balance between civic humanism and political pragmatism. These episodes reveal the delicate balance he navigated between truthful scholarship, civic purpose, and the strategic cultivation of patronage. Receiving such feedback also underlines why Sansovino often emphasized a stance of neutrality in several of his works, insisting that he did not write to flatter or judge but merely to present materials faithfully and leave interpretation to the reader.³⁸³

By presenting himself as a neutral compiler, Sansovino could navigate sensitive political and social terrain, balancing the expectations of powerful patrons with his civic and scholarly ideals while maintaining credibility and the broader public benefit of his works. In *Cronologia del mondo*, where he assembled information both on politics and noble families side by side, Sansovino pre-empts possible criticism by stressing that he has not followed any precedence but has arranged the material just in the order in which he wrote it.³⁸⁴ Just as he structured genealogies to avoid offending noblemen, he shaped his political writings so that they may be read without affronting monarchs or patricians, offering frameworks that could be

³⁸¹ Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 171r–72.

³⁸² Donald Bernard Epstein, *Francesco Sansovino (1523-1583) and Venetian Political Thought* (1971), 83.

³⁸³ “noi non habbiamo seruato ordino nel por prima l'una che l'altra, poi che tutte riguardano a un fine, cioe dimostrar a Lettori come si gouernino gli stati presenti.” Sansovino, *Del Gouerno de i Regni et Delle Republiche Così Antiche Come Moderne Libri XVIII*, 3v–4r; “Non voglio pretermetter di dire, che nel secondo e nel terzo, scrivendo de Regni e delle Case, non ho voluto osserva precedenza o preminenza alcuna,” Francesco Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo Di M. Francesco Sansouino Divisa in Tre Libri*. (Giacomo Sansovino, 1579), 4r.

³⁸⁴ “si come le ho scritte, così le ho collocate” Sansovino, *Cronologia Del Mondo Di m. Francesco Sansouino Diuisa in Tre Libri*, 4r.

interpreted by different audiences rather than imposing a single ideological stance. This rhetorical move mirrors the broader strategy that characterizes his political works.

Taken together, these examples show how Sansovino balanced civic and personal aims in his literary production. Dedications connected his works to patrons and noble houses, allowing him to secure visibility and favor, while his insistence on neutrality enabled him to navigate sensitive political and social terrain without compromising his broader civic ideals. Even as he attended to the expectations of powerful elites, his works remained oriented toward the public benefit, arranging genealogical, political, and historical material in ways that could inform and instruct readers. By balancing the interests of both patrons and wider audiences, including statemen and students, Sansovino arranged historical examples in ways that could inform reader's understanding of governance and civic life.

"According to One's Own Judgment and Will:" Political Knowledge and Civic Instruction

The way in which Sansovino balanced public and personal aims by strategically cultivating patronage networks while keeping a neutral stance is evident not only in his genealogical works, but also in his political-historical works. In the dedicatory letter attached to his *Concetti politici* (1578), Sansovino noted that, in composing this work, he used his scholarly expertise:

“[...] not only to observe what the countries, mountains and rivers of the world are, or to have knowledge of embassies, parliaments, maneuvers and treaties, or to understand the ways of armies, ordinances, encampments, stratagems, sieges, captures and victories, but to extract all the juice and marrow from it, reducing it to precepts for the convenience of the nobles, who, being busy, have no time and cannot assiduously turn to history, I have come up with the present book, in which every prince and governor, looking almost as if in a most lucid mirror,

will immediately see those substances which are virtually contained in the high volumes of the most esteemed ancient and modern writers.³⁸⁵

Dedicated to Rudolf II, this work, as Sansovino clarifies, is not just a survey of juxtaposed details. Here he might have indirectly referenced to, and distinguished it from, one of his other works, *Del governo*, in which he added side by side a variety of polities that allowed the readers to discern patterns in institutions, offices, and military organization, and therefore assess the strengths and weaknesses in each polity. The material from *Del governo* highlights administrative order in every form, such as the Ottoman military organization reminiscent of Roman order, the mixed structures of Poland, the civil-military distinctions of Fez and Tunis, and the vigor of English governance. With this work, Sansovino offered his readers a guide for comparative governance, one they may use to analyze political and administrative structures regardless of confessional or geographic boundaries. Nevertheless, Sansovino added, *Concetti politici* went beyond this as it comprised the essence of governance, but it still reflected his particular interest in the management of polities that transpires through *Del governo*.

In the form of a collection of maxims adapted from classical historians and contemporary authors, *Concetti politici* has been labelled as Sansovino's work that best outlines his political thought.³⁸⁶ Although many of the precepts owe their debt Machiavelli or Guiccardini, modern scholars have examined how these thinkers shaped Sansovino's own ideas about the best form of government.³⁸⁷ Yet, as he stated in the preface, he wanted his work to

³⁸⁵ "A questa adunque hauendo applicato lo studio mio non per osseruar solamente, quali siano i paesi, i Monti e i fiumi del mondo o per hauer cognitione dell'Ambasciare, de parlamenti, de maneggi, e de trattati, o per intendere i uiaggi de gli esserciti, l'ordinanze, gli alloggiamenti, i stratagemmi, gli assedii, l'espugnationi e le Vittorie, ma per trarne del tutto il sugo e la midolla, riducendola in precetti per commodo de Grandi, ch'essendo occupati, non hanno tempo e non possono assiduamente uersar attorno alla Historia, mi e uenuto fatto il presente Libro, nel quale guardando ogni Principe e Gouernante, quasi come in lucidissime specchio, uedra incontanente quelle sostanze che si contengono uirtualmente ne gli alti uolumi de li antichi e de i moderni Scrittori piu pregiati." Sansovino, *Concetti Politici Di m. Francesco Sansouino*, 2r–2v.

³⁸⁶ Moz, *Francesco Sansovino, a Polygraph in Cinquecento Venice*, 163–64.

³⁸⁷ Vincent Luciani, "Sansovino's Concetti Politici and Their Debt to Guicciardini," *PMLA* 65, no. 6 (1950): 1181–95; Vincent Luciani, "Sansovino's Concetti Politici and Their Debt to Machiavelli," *PMLA* 67, no. 5 (1952): 823–44.

provide statesmen from both monarchies and republics, as well as noblemen and scholars, an overview of the principles of good governance.³⁸⁸ To this extent, it is worth questioning how Sansovino balanced his own ideas with the preferences of his readership.

By flipping through the pages of *Concetti politici* it becomes clear that Sansovino's preferred form of government was the republic, especially the Venetian type, although he rarely states this openly.³⁸⁹ He praised republics for rewarding merit and distributing authority in the hands of multiple people and admired the values that make a republic well ordered (utility, liberty, harmony, and civic virtue).³⁹⁰ Yet, Sansovino refrained from asserting that republics are universally superior; rather, he treats each form of government as capable of good rule when guided by prudence, law, and the pursuit of public utility.³⁹¹ He presented monarchy not as intrinsically corrupt, but as a legitimate and sometimes optimal form of government (like in France, England and Naples), as long as the prince rules according to reason, surrounds himself with good counselors, and purses the public good rather than private gain.³⁹² The dangers of monarchy, such as dynastic pressures, fiscal burdens, the temptations of war, are framed not as critique but as cautious warnings to any ruler seeking to avoid the "poisonous seeds" inherent in concentrated power.³⁹³ This is where, in Sansovino's view, lies the utmost weakness of princely rule and the major distinction between princely and republican rule: monarchs are more concerned with their particular interests than with the common good of the citizens as a whole.³⁹⁴ Republics, on the other hand, try to create a balance between man's intellect, reason, and physical needs. While this ideal state can almost never be fully reached because of humans'

³⁸⁸ "che questa fattura, qualunque ella si sia habbia ad esser di molto giovamento a gli studiosi," Sansovino, *Concetti Politici Di m. Francesco Sansouino*, 4r.

³⁸⁹ Epstein, *Francesco Sansovino (1523-1583) and Venetian Political Thought*, 71–72.

³⁹⁰ Epstein, *Francesco Sansovino (1523-1583) and Venetian Political Thought*, 96–112.

³⁹¹ Epstein, *Francesco Sansovino (1523-1583) and Venetian Political Thought*, 74.

³⁹² Epstein, *Francesco Sansovino (1523-1583) and Venetian Political Thought*, 73–81.

³⁹³ Epstein, *Francesco Sansovino (1523-1583) and Venetian Political Thought*, 82.

³⁹⁴ Epstein, *Francesco Sansovino (1523-1583) and Venetian Political Thought*, 83.

corruptible nature, republics are the best form of government because they nourish the virtues that can make one approach this ideal state.³⁹⁵

The takeaway from *Concetti politici* is that Sansovino's focus was on the nature of good government, which meant a well-balanced relationship between people and their rulers, whether it was between subjects and the prince, or citizens and republic. While most republics intentionally pursue the common good, there are good and bad examples among all polities of the world, ordained by God to reveal human flaws.³⁹⁶ He reinforces this idea in the preface that these *Concetti* will be useful because they treat

“Human actions, which have almost always been the same in all times and among all men; [...] although [these *concetti*] are somewhat general, will nevertheless shed no little light on the most advantageous solutions in particular, both in public action and in private affairs.”³⁹⁷

Human nature thus becomes the nucleus around which the universality of his political percepts develops. While this aspect carries a theoretical weight, it also had a rhetorical function. As much of his intended audience and many dedicatees were princes or statesmen living under monarchic regimes, his works required an analytical framework that could be applied across political contexts. Sansovino hints towards this when detailing the process of composing the work. He confesses that he assigned a number to each “maxim” and added an index listing them alphabetically, without any thematic heading or title.³⁹⁸ However, while he was advised against it, initially he wanted to organize these *concetti* around “six general heads,

³⁹⁵ Epstein, *Francesco Sansovino (1523-1583) and Venetian Political Thought*, 112.

³⁹⁶ Epstein, *Francesco Sansovino (1523-1583) and Venetian Political Thought*, 98.

³⁹⁷ “sopra l'attioni humane, che quasi sempre sono state le medesime in tutti i tempi e presso a tutti gli huomini e si perche all'operare e al trattar de negotii cosi nel publico come nel privato,” Sansovino, *Concetti Politici Di m. Francesco Sansouino*, 4r.

³⁹⁸ “tuttavia mi disposi a far la presente tavola, come cosa piu risoluta e forse piu facile e breve;” Subtitle of the index notes “Nella quale i nvmeri dinotano non le carte del libro, ma il numero de Concetti che sono in tutto 802.” Sansovino, *Concetti Politici Di m. Francesco Sansouino*, 4v; 5r.

under whom the consultations held in the councils of republics and in the councils of princes by state officials usually fall.”³⁹⁹

Although drawn from Aristotle, the clearest articulation of Sansovino’s categories of power lies in a letter included in *Del segretario* (1580).⁴⁰⁰ Addressed to Luigi Contarini, the son of Nicolo Contarini, it is a follow-up on a previous discussion with the young patrician. Framed rather as a *discorso*, in this missive Sansovino offers a concise summary of all “matters of importance in the management of state” which can be reduced to six heads: law, arms, merit, money, confederations, and customs.⁴⁰¹

Law, the first category, is the foundation of any polity. It is “an invention of men, a gift of God, an ordinance of wisdom, a correction of destructive excess, a constitution of the city, and the banishment of all crimes.”⁴⁰² Laws, in their multitude, concern the sole purpose of preserving the common good. They shape political reasoning, but they must reflect local circumstances of a polity, such as the geography, customs, and the nature of the inhabitants.⁴⁰³ The second head, arms, refers not only to physical weapons, but to all matters related to both war and peace.⁴⁰⁴ By categorizing the various types of war that could be waged, Sansovino warns that before one assesses the nature of war, one must consider the contextual variables of

³⁹⁹ “Et benché mi fosse dal predetto [M. Giorgio Gradenigo] ricordato, che non sarebbe senno bene ch’io gli sopponessi a sei capi generali: sotto a quali sogliono cader le consulte che si fanno ne consigli delle Rep. e ne ridotti de Principi da gli huomini statuali e de quali ne scrisse in Aristotele nella Rhetorica.” Sansovino, *Concetti Politici Di m. Francesco Sansouino*, 4v.

⁴⁰⁰ Sansovino, *Del Segretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 190r–98.

⁴⁰¹ “ch’i capi generali o le cose, sotto alle quali caggiono senz’alcun dubbio tutte le disputationi d’importanza ne maneggi di stato, si riduchino solamente in questi sei, cioè in Legge, in Arme, in Merito, in Danari, in Confederationi, et in Consuetudini.” Sansovino, *Del Segretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 190r.

⁴⁰² “la legge è inuentione de gli huomini, dono di Dio, ordinatione di saui, correttione de gli eccessi uiolenti, compositione della Citta, et scacciamento di tutti i delitti.” Sansovino, *Del Segretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 190v–191r.

⁴⁰³ Sansovino, *Del Segretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 191r–93.

⁴⁰⁴ “Il secondo capo principale è l’Arme, sotto la qual voce si comprende non pure il ferro, ma tutti quegli apparecchi che si ricercano a offesa, o a difesa per gli huomini et per le Citta, pero io uoglio per hora che sotto questa uoce Arme, s’intendino quest’altre due, Guerra et Pace, perche la guerra non si fa senza l’armi et la pace non si fa se non come fine della guerra.” Sansovino, *Del Segretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 194r.

each conflict.⁴⁰⁵ Though third listed, merit is the most important aspect of ruling since, Sansovino emphasizes, “reward and punishment are the two pillars on which every well-ordered Republic stands.”⁴⁰⁶ Money, the fourth category, includes all resources that form the revenues of a state.⁴⁰⁷ By listing “riches, gold, silver, grain, tools, and other useful things for both war and peace,” he draws attention to both the moral and practical uses of wealth, emphasizing that financial prudence is a political virtue.⁴⁰⁸ When analyzing confederations, the next point on the list, Sansovino highlights, one must observe to the nature, duration, and purpose of alliances, listing all kinds of agreements that could be made between different powers.⁴⁰⁹ These particularities will reveal, as in the case of previous categories, the variations in timing and circumstance for each alliance. The final aspect to which one must pay attention when observing matters of state is the customs. This category encompasses the unwritten practices that sustain civic life, such as rituals, festivals, ceremonies, or common habits.⁴¹⁰ Finally, Sansovino highlights the red thread that runs across the whole text and reminds his reader that these categories are not static.⁴¹¹ This attention to circumstance reflects a prudential, contextual understanding of politics, where fixed headings meet variable conditions.

⁴⁰⁵ Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 194r-v.

⁴⁰⁶ “Intorno al terzo capo che sono i meriti, diciamo che questo è importantissimo capo ne gouerni. Et pero non senza cagione fu detto da Sauì che il premio et la pena sono i due piedi co quali camina ogni bene ordinata Rep.” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 195r-v.

⁴⁰⁷ “Il quarto capo saranno i danari, sotto la qual voce noi comprendiamo tutte delle eicchezze, d’oro, d’argento, di biade, d’arnesi et d’altre robe che sono utili così per la guerra come per la pace.” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 196r.

⁴⁰⁸ Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 196r.

⁴⁰⁹ “Sul quinto capo che sara della confederatione, non meno importante de gli altri nell’ccorenze, si considereranno diuerse cose, cioe la natura d’esse, gli effetti ch’elle producono, la durata che elle sogliono hauere, i fini per le quali si fanno,” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 196r-v.

⁴¹⁰ “L’ultimo capo ch’è il senso sara la consuetudine, la quale non è altro che usanza o costume che ha forza di legge (anzi uince la legge) incominciata a caso, et accettata per l’uso et osseuata, non perche sia scritta, o perche habbia pena chi non l’osserua, ma approuata da gli huomini per l’opinione che essi hanno ch’ella sia giusta.” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 196v.

⁴¹¹ “Ma si auertisce che le predette cose che noi diciamo, non sono sempre ne in tutti i luoghi ne in tutti i tempi quelle medesime: percioche si uariano, per altre sei cose che noi chiameremo all’usanza de saui passati, aggiuntioni. Conciosia che la persona, la causa, il luogo, la cosa, il modo et il tempo, fanno spesso cambiar le materie piu all’un modo che all’altro” Sansovino, *Del Secretario Di m. Francesco Sansouino Libri VII*, 198r.

This letter is not only a display of Sansovino's erudition, but it also reveals the didactic core of his political-historical works; that is, to help a young patrician develop his political reasoning. By explaining each of the six categories, he provided an analytical framework. Naturally, as this missive was included in *Del segretario*, its audience was not limited to its addressee. This letter illuminates why Sansovino's political ideas often appear general or noncommittal in his works. By framing political knowledge in universally applicable categories, Sansovino catered to the different ranks, offices, and political culture of his potential audience. If the reader was a prince, his works could offer counsel without offense. If the readers were students or Venetian statemen, the same work would allow for civic instruction without bias. Seen from this point of view, Sansovino's neutral stance is a rhetorical strategy that enabled him to address multiple audiences while preserving the "public benefit" of his texts. His political thought is therefore strongly connected to his authorial self-fashioning, as he presents himself as an erudite mediator of knowledge, capable of guiding readers in political reasoning without imposing a single stance.

Conclusion

In tracing Sansovino's publishing career, his ties to academies, and his dedication strategies, this chapter has shown how a Venetian man of letters could operate at the intersection of commerce, civic culture, and patronage. His involvement with the Accademia Veneziana was particularly influential. The academy's ambitious plan, which emphasized both intellectual pursuits and editorial endeavors, provided an ideological and practical model that Sansovino incorporated into his own works. His paratexts, indices, corrections, and reorganized compilations mirror the academy's editorial ethos, which aimed to improve, clarify, and organize knowledge in a way that served readers engaged in civic life. Moreover, his

dedications show how he positioned his works within changing networks of power while maintaining a civic editorial ethos. By addressing noblemen in positions of power, he gained visibility and protection, while also framing these gestures within a rhetoric of neutrality and service to the public. Even when honoring specific patrons, he presented his works as repositories of exempla and tools for broader civic use. Thus, Sansovino's works had a dual focus. They reflect the impact of academic programs, where texts were created for the "benefit of the public," serving both as educational tools for the elite and wider audiences. At the same time, his dedications reveal how he tailored this civic focus to meet patrons' expectations, balancing institutional authority with personal advancement. In this sense, Sansovino's political-historical works are best understood as deliberately crafted for specific audiences rather than abstract treatises. Their structures, paratexts, and comparative frameworks emerge from Sansovino's constant negotiation between whom he writes for, what he wants his books to do, and how those choices sustain his own position.

Chapter 6 – Rhetoric and Reason of State in Ammirato's Political Imagination

Introduction

Ammirato was a relentless collector of knowledge, and the cosmographic commonplace books explored in Chapter 4 are only a small part that demonstrates this. Among the *zibaldoni* he left in his will, there are five massive folio notebooks, each containing over 500 manuscript pages. Whether small chronologies, letter drafts, sketches of genealogical trees, transcriptions of tables of contents, news pamphlets, or passages from historical chronicles, he jotted down everything he deemed relevant. At first glance, the modern reader might be overwhelmed by the sheer volume of annotations, additions, cross-references, and crossed-out words. Still, Ammirato made sense of every piece of information he recorded. Flipping through the pages of these notebooks reveals that what he meticulously gathered, organized, and drafted was essential for his works. It also becomes evident why he consistently proclaimed his long-standing expertise as a political writer, highlighted his use of historical sources, and emphasized the effort that went into every text he wrote. As noted in Chapter 2, when explaining his rationale for composing a work, Ammirato often referenced his experience as a historian and political thinker to justify both his motivation and authority for writing the text.

Yet, as much as he wanted to present himself as the lonely scholar who dug through sources in monastery archives and who wrote on topics that genuinely concerned him, Ammirato's profile was more than just that of a keen humanist. He was the official historiographer of the Grand Duchy under Medici patronage, a member of the Accademia degli Alterati, well-attuned to the intellectual developments across Italy, and he participated in the Republic of Letters, actively corresponding with nobles and churchmen. As seen in Chapter 2,

these elements, albeit scattered throughout his works and letters, enrich his profile as an actor engaged in the politico-religious and intellectual developments of the late sixteenth century while also providing clues about the unnamed reasons for writing his works and how these reasons influenced his adaptation of rhetoric in certain texts.

In this chapter, I analyze how Ammirato's rhetorical adaptiveness shaped the meaning and impact of his works, particularly regarding his discourse on the Ottoman Empire. I will examine how various influencing factors, including the interests of his patrons, his commitment to promoting his own projects, and the necessity to conform to prevailing literary trends, informed Ammirato's rhetorical choices. I focus on the interplay between his position as a political commentator and his role as a historiographer, exploring how these identities shaped the framing of the Ottoman Empire in his texts. Specifically, I will analyze how Ammirato navigated the competing interests of political actors and how these dynamics influenced the construction of texts intended for a readership that included the very individuals whose interests he sought to accommodate. Furthermore, I explore how Ammirato's engagement with contemporary intellectual developments—particularly within political thought and textual genres—shaped the organization and presentation of knowledge in his works. Ultimately, this analysis provides insights into the motivations behind Ammirato's writings. As he recognized the pressing threats that Christianity faced from the Ottoman forces, he believed in the necessity of inciting Christian princes through oratory that invoked both immediate action and a deeper reflection on their shared faith. By contextualizing his rhetorical strategies within the political and religious landscape of his time, I aim to unravel the layers of meaning present in his *orazioni* and *discorsi*, highlighting the nuanced relationship between rhetoric, content, and historical circumstance. By foregrounding the audiences, uses, and circumstances for which these works were composed, this chapter treats Ammirato's political thought less as a

systematic doctrine and more as a repertoire of ideas that he adapts to persuade particular readers.

Purpose and Form in Ammirato's *Orazioni*

Even though the danger posed to Christianity by the Turkish forces seeks rather a prompt remedy in facts than a slow consolation in words, nevertheless my thought of putting together and publishing, as I have done, some prayers, by which the Christian Princes can be more encouraged to rush together to the defense of the Catholic faith and of the states, which are now being attacked with so much effort and effort by the Emperor of the Turks.⁴¹²

This is how Filippo Giunti justified, in a dedicatory letter to Christina of Lorraine, his decision to publish, in 1594, Ammirato's oration for Sixtus V alongside the translated orations of Cardinal Bessarion. The printer's rationale for putting these texts together seems to have been their relevance to the contemporary situation. Reading the texts, it becomes clear that this was also Ammirato's reason for writing that text to Sixtus V; a reason he later re-stated in each of his *orazioni*. Raising awareness among political rulers about the dangers of the Ottoman advance in Europe and urging them to act for the good of Christendom were recurrent concerns for Ammirato, as he often mentioned them in his other works. However, these issues alone as reasons for writing a series of texts do not provide much insight into why Ammirato chose to write his appeals in the literary form of orations, nor into why he needed to confirm and reaffirm his authorial voice time and again.

⁴¹² “Benche il pericolo soprastante alla cristianita dall'arme Turchesche ricerchi piu tosto sollecito rimedio di fatti, che lento conforto di parole, pur tuttavia non dovera essere stimato al tutto vano e inutile il mio pensiero di mettere insieme e pubblicare, si come ho fatto, alcune orazioni, per le quali i Principi Cristiani possano maggiormente essere inanimati a correre concordamente alla difesa della fede catolica e degli stati, che hora con tanto apparecchio e sforzo dallo Imperatore di Turchi sono assaliti” Filippo Giunti, “Lettera Alla Sereniss. Madama Christina di Loreno, Gran Duchessa di Toscana” in Scipione Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebonno a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1594), 2–3.

While his relationship with Giunti was tense, as seen in Chapter 2 above, the printer's decision to compile the 1594 edition is a window to understanding Ammirato's position and role in late sixteenth-century literary production. Aside from the ongoing popularity of the main subject, Giunti's choice to gather these texts into a single volume may also have been influenced by the association of Ammirato's and Bessarion's texts with the anti-Ottoman crusade literary genre. Despite the fact that Ammirato makes no reference to Bessarion's texts, he was likely familiar with the literature on the topic, and by writing his text as an oration, he was certainly trying to follow a literary trend. Although it was through Giunti's edition that Ammirato's oration was first published, he had composed it a few years earlier, in a slightly different context.

During the 1580s, the activity of Roman orators flourished under papal diplomatic efforts that sought to merge ancient ideals with tangible political aims.⁴¹³ At the same time, the Oratory of Filippo Neri was thriving, and Ammirato, who was a regular attendee, was influenced, and impressed, by the prayers and sermons he listened to there.⁴¹⁴ It was where he probably also met the chief orator in Rome, Maurice Bressieu, whose work, *In solutionem deliaci problematis a candidato Rameae professionis ex Stifelio allatam in auditorio regio aninadversio*, Ammirato edited in 1585.⁴¹⁵ Bressieu also authored and delivered several orations to Sixtus V in 1596.⁴¹⁶ Ammirato may have drawn inspiration from the Frenchman, as he composed an oration to the same pope around the same time. The reasons Ammirato's

⁴¹³ Domenico Caccamo, "La Diplomazia Della Controriforma e La Crociata: Dai Piani Del Possevino Alla 'Lunga Guerra' Di Clemente VIII," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 128, no. 2 (466) (1970): 256.

⁴¹⁴ Chiara Continisio, "Federico Borromeo Lettore Di Scipione Ammirato (Con 17 Lettere)," in *Storia, Rivoluzione e Tradizione. Studi in Onore Di Paolo Pastori*, ed. Sandro Ciurlia (Edizioni del Poligrafico Fiorentino, 2011), 318.

⁴¹⁵ Maurice Bressieu, *In Solutionem Deliaci Problematis a Candidato Rameae Professionis Ex Stifelio Allatam in Auditorio Regio Animadversio* (Adrien Périer, 1585).

⁴¹⁶ Maurice Bressieu, *Oratio, Ad Sixtum V Pont. Opt. Max. Romae in Aula Regum Habita II Die Septemb. MDLXXXVI. Cum Illustrissimus Princeps Franciscus Luxemburgus Dux Pinci, Par Franciae et Utriusque Ordinis Eques Torquatos, Eidem Summo Pontifici Obedientiam Regis Nomine a Quo Legatus Erat, Praestaret* (Bartolomeo Grassi, 1586).

oration remained unpublished at the time are unclear. When seen in the broader context of the patronage-influenced literary market, the text was likely overlooked because Ammirato, as the Medici historiographer, was not tasked with writing it and because it probably did not fully align with papal interests. As he often did when writing genealogies for Italian noble families, he likely wrote the text with the hope of receiving a stipend.

Around the same period, a Venetian diplomat, Filippo Pigafetta, was sent on behalf of the pope to Aleppo, Jerusalem, and Tripoli. Most famous for his travel reports rich in historical, political, and geographical details, Pigafetta also translated, at papal request, Bessarion's orations into Italian for the first time.⁴¹⁷ These texts, as revealed in his dedicatory letter to Ferdinand of Medici, were meant to raise awareness among local political leaders about the dangers of Ottoman expansion.⁴¹⁸ When Giunti took on the task of publishing this translation, he included Ammirato's text, which, though similar in many ways, approached the issue from the opposite perspective. This is likely how the Grand Duke and Duchess of Tuscany became more familiar with Ammirato's thoughts on the matter of the Ottomans. Shortly after, they tasked him with providing support at a propaganda level for the diplomatic efforts of Ferdinand I, who sought to establish the Medici Grand Duchy as the main promoter of the Christian league against the Ottomans.⁴¹⁹ His orations addressed to the Neapolitan nobles, Philip II, Clement VIII, and Henry IV were intended to uphold this idea.

Writing in the early years of the Long Turkish War, Ammirato was not the only one who displayed his rhetorical skills in promoting the formation of a Christian league. Similarly,

⁴¹⁷ Mario Pozzi, *Filippo Pigafetta, Consigliere Del Principe. Vol 1. La Questione Turca* (Biblioteca Civica Bertoliana, 2004).

⁴¹⁸ Filippo Pigafetta's dedicatory letter to Ferdinand of Medici in *Lettere & Orazioni Di Monsignor Bessarione Cardinal Niceno Scritte a Principi d'Italia* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1594), 1r-7v.

⁴¹⁹ "Il Ser.mo Gran Duca col commettermi l'orazione alla Nobilta Napoletana, quasi sciogliendo i legami del mio ingegno è scato la prima cagione e origine, che io habbia scritto, et vada tuttavia scrivendo tanto," Magl. Cl. VI, 237, vii; Marco Barducci, "Dopo Lepanto. Il Turco Negli Scritti Politici Italiani Di Fine Cinquecento, 1571-1607," *Il Pensiero Politico* 41, no. 1 (2008): 35.

between 1594 and 1595, Girolamo Frachetta, the Spanish ambassador at the papal court, was also involved in drafting orations directed to Philip II, as well as to Rudolph II and Sigismund Báthory of Transylvania.⁴²⁰ Published in Rome, these texts gained considerable popularity, being reprinted several times and later compiled in *Libro primo delle orazioni del genere deliberativo*.⁴²¹ In these orations, especially those addressed to Philip II, Frachetta underscored that the King of Spain should provide primary support to the Prince of Transylvania. While intended to commend the mission led by Giovanni de' Medici, who excelled in the defense of Győr, Ammirato reflected Frachetta's stance, as his primary concern centered on urging Philip II to take on the role of the defender of faith, in the name and with the backing of the papacy.

When viewed within the context of the contemporary literary market of crusade oratory, Ammirato and his orations emerge as just one example among many in a broader literary landscape, where multiple competing political actors employed humanists to produce texts on the need for a League of local rulers to deal with the Ottoman expansion. This dynamic underscores how literary trends were often shaped by and tailored to patrons' political and diplomatic interests. Yet, despite this adaptive element, many of these works shared striking similarities in structure, tropes, and arguments, differing only in subtle, nuanced ways. In a sea of skilled rhetoricians and political thinkers addressing the same issues, how can one author truly distinguish himself and his ideas?

Ammirato was an antiquarian who valued the use of sources in constructing an argument. As seen in the previous chapters, he not only often used archival material but also an abundance of religious, ancient, and recent literature when composing his texts. In the case

⁴²⁰ Girolamo Frachetta, *Tre Orationi al Sereniss. et Pietosiss. Sigismondo Battori Principe Di Transilvania, Vallachia, & Moldavia, Conte de' Siculi, & c.* (Girolamo Discepolo, 1596); Girolamo Frachetta, *Oratione Prima al Re Cattolico per Essortare Sua Maestà Ad Aiutare Il Principe Di Transilvania Nella Guerra Contra Il Turco* (Niccolò Muzio, 1597); Girolamo Frachetta, *Il Primo Libro de i Discorsi Di Stato & Di Guerra* (Niccolò Muzio, 1600).

⁴²¹ Barducci, "Dopo Lepanto. Il Turco Negli Scritti Politici Italiani Di Fine Cinquecento, 1571-1607," 38.

of the *orazioni*, Ammirato diligently identifies, in the typical manner of a humanist-educated writer, every biblical quote or episode and the major ancient authors he used in his argument. Yet, he allocates a significant portion of each oration to describing the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, along with its administrative and social structure. While he does not directly reference the sources of this information, his other works and manuscript *zibaldoni* offer clues into some of the sources Ammirato used to construct the image of the Ottoman Empire. By perusing the pages of his *Discorsi*, it becomes clear that Ammirato drew on a wide range of sources about the history of the Ottoman Empire, many of which explore its interactions with other powers. For example, when discussing relations between Venice and the Ottomans, he referred to the histories of Guicciardini, Giovanni Battista Adriani, and Pietro Bembo, as well as to ambassadors' *relazioni*, specifically Marc Antonio Barbaro's account.⁴²² For the relations between the Ottomans and Persians, Ammirato consulted Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi's *Historia della guerra fra Turchi et Persiani*, while for the interaction between the Ottomans and Muscovy, he also used as reference material a history titled "Rainol. Ist. Mosc."⁴²³ In the *orazioni*, Ammirato also allocates space for the latest developments on the war front. Although he does not reference the sources, in his notebooks he filled over a couple dozen pages with transcriptions of what seem to be passages from newsletters, broadsheets, and correspondence with updates from Vienna, Graz, Cracow, or Wallachia.⁴²⁴ The details on the developments of battles, attack tactics, numbers of soldiers and horses, and decisions of military commanders that he jotted down in his copybook correspond with the information he used, in a paraphrased version, when describing the latest encounters of the Ottomans in Hungary and Transylvania

⁴²² Ammirato, *Discorsi del signor Scipione Ammirato sopra Cornelio Tacito*, 43, 198, 350, 405, 464–65.

⁴²³ Ammirato, *Discorsi del signor Scipione Ammirato sopra Cornelio Tacito*, 533, 306.

⁴²⁴ "Da Vienna 16 settembre 1595," "Di Cracovia per ultime lettere," "Di Graz li 6 di settembre 1595," "Da Vienna per lettere di 10 settembre 1595," "Dal Campo de Pollachi in Vallachia superiore di 24 d'ottobre 1595," "Di Cracovia ad 10 di dicembre 1595," "Ad 16 di dicembre 1595 da Vienna," "Lettera d'un gentiluomo polacco segret[tario] del Sig[nore] Canc[elare] scritta a suo fratello a Padova da Cracovia da 22 di dicembre 1595 tradotta di lingua polacca de verbo ad verbum," Magl. Cl. XXV, 667 bis, BNCF.

in the *orazioni*.⁴²⁵ It is difficult to trace where he obtained the information since he identifies each report only by date and location, especially since news about the Long Turkish War circulated in wide networks in various handwritten and printed versions.⁴²⁶ In fact, Ammirato himself was part of this information network, as he was writing to lords and cardinals about the developments on the front. For instance, he informed Cardinal San Giorgio about the conquest of Esztergom, updated Cardinal Borromeo that the Ottomans had reached Buda, and let the Duke of Ferrara know that Don Giovanni de Medici had won at Visegrád.⁴²⁷ He also notified Ferdinand I de Medici of these developments and wrote to Sigismund Báthory that news of his success had reached him.⁴²⁸

These examples demonstrate again that as an author, Ammirato sought distinction not through radical departures in content but through stylistic refinement, erudition, expertise, and the strategic use of historical exempla, aiming to elevate the moral and intellectual authority of his ideas while aligning them closely with the ambitions of his patrons and appealing to the interests of other powerful political actors. As seen in Chapter 2 and as these examples echo, Ammirato's ample epistolary endeavors supported one of his main convictions: that by making rulers aware of the contemporary situation, he could convince them to act. Though he still had to first get Ferdinando and Christina of Lorraine's approval before printing, Ammirato had a

⁴²⁵ *Orazione al Serenissimo e Potentissimo Re Cattolico Suo Signore Filippo Re Di Spagna. Intorno Il Pacificar La Cristianita e Prender Unitamente l'arme Contra Gli Infedeli*, 18; *Orazione Alla Maesta Cattolica Del Potentissimo Re Filippo Il Re Di Spagna. Suo Signor Naturale. Detta Filippica Seconda*, 4; *Orazione al Satissimo et Beatissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII*, 102, 121; *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Seconda*, 3–5; *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Terza*, 6–7, 12–13.

⁴²⁶ News on the war circulated as single-page printed broadsheets or as handwritten newsletters and personal correspondence which were then also printed and incorporated in other types of works, such as histories on specific topics or pamphlets that summarized certain events; Robyn D. Radway, "Brief Notes on the Long War in the Early Modern News Cycle," *Austrian History Yearbook* 50 (April 2019): 24.

⁴²⁷ "Al Cardinale San Giorgio," "Al Duca di Ferrara," Scipione Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 445–46, 450–51; "Scipione Ammirato a Federico Borromeo," Biblioteca Ambrosiana Milano, G 170 inf., n. 147, f. 147 in Chiara Continisio, "Federico Borromeo Lettore Di Scipione Ammirato (Con 17 Lettere)," in *Storia, Rivoluzione e Tradizione. Studi in Onore Di Paolo Pastori*, ed. Sandro Ciurlia (Firenze: Edizioni del Poligrafico Fiorentino, 2011), 336–336.

⁴²⁸ "Al Principe di Transilvania," "Al Serenissimo Don Ferdinando Gran Duca di Toscana," Ammirato, *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo*, 452–53, 480–85.

free hand in writing, as he recurrently underlined that he spoke his mind freely.⁴²⁹ However, even though he was adamant about conducting proper research and had many years of experience as a historian and political thinker, the solutions he proposed in his orations received little support and feedback from others, aside from the Grand Duke of Tuscany. While he devised specific financial plans on how the Papacy could organize the Christian League and offered advice on how the King of Spain could be its best leader, he also pointed to many problems in society which most likely bothered those to whom he addressed the texts.

Politics of Persuasion: Constructing the Good Ruler

In Ammirato's ideal scenario on how Christian powers could defeat the Ottomans, each actor had a specific role. This responsibility was not limited to the pope as the spiritual leader, tasked with financing and overseeing this enterprise, or Philip II as the king with the most subjects under his authority, but also included local rulers and churchmen. For instance, when writing to Borromeo or San Giorgio, Ammirato provided them with relevant texts regarding the current situation and attached copies of his latest orations.⁴³⁰ Thus, he depended on the cardinals to fulfill their roles as influential figures and intermediaries who could present his work to the pope. Conversely, in his letter to Sigismund Báthory, Ammirato praised his role in the conflict

⁴²⁹ “Noi aspettauamo con defiderio il parto dei Discorsi vostri Sopra Cornelio Tacito, perche venendo da voi che hauete con l'intelligenza & litteratura congiunta viuezza di spirito acutezza di giudizio, & essendo stato riuisto dagli Accademici, habbiamo presupposto che habbia da essere singolare perfetto; Siche potete immaginarui con quanto contento l'habbiamo hora riceuuto che voi ce l'hauete inuiato, et dedicatolo ancora al nostro nome, et ben presto cominceremo à farcelo leggere, sperando cauarne vtilità di virtuosi & giusti auuertimenti, & compiacimento, crediamo noi lecito, della propria lode che habbiamo à partecipare, che così salutare libro sia letto et riceuuto con vniuersale approvazione sotto il nome nostro Gradendouelo con molto affetto d'animo, desideriamo ancora a animo, & ce ne ingegneremo di gradiruelo con effetti di vostro honore beneficio, et il Signore Dio vi prosperi. Dalla Magia alli 13 di Dicembre 1594,” “La Gran Duchessa di Toscana a Scipione Ammirato,” Ammirato, 433; See Chapter 2 above for Ammirato's persistence on speaking freely.

⁴³⁰ “Al Signor Cardinale San Giorgio,” “Al Cardinale Borromeo” *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 387–391, 418–19, 427–28, 437; “Scipione Ammirato a Federico Borromeo,” Biblioteca Ambrosiana Milano, G 169 inf., n. 41, c. 80 in Chiara Continisio, “Federico Borromeo Lettore Di Scipione Ammirato (Con 17 Lettere),” in *Storia, Rivoluzione e Tradizione. Studi in Onore Di Paolo Pastori*, ed. Sandro Ciurlia (Firenze: Edizioni del Poligrafico Fiorentino, 2011), 337.

while also highlighting the ongoing threat posed by the Ottomans. He mentions the necessity for an alliance among Christian rulers and reiterates the prince's position as a military leader.⁴³¹ Similarly, Ammirato wrote a letter to Ferdinando de Medici in which he proposed a plan of attack against the Ottomans, in which he, along with the Duke of Mansfelt, would take on prominent roles as military leaders.⁴³² As seen in Chapter 2, Ammirato sent such letters alongside his works, and these often served as dedications. Since the main ideas from the works did not always align with the interests of those he sought to involve in his plan, these “dedicatory” letters enabled him to reshape the rhetoric from the orations concerning the roles he envisioned for each churchman and ruler he addressed.

This strategy had its complications since the role he wanted a ruler to play did not always fully align with the interests of other actors he aimed to involve in his plans. Whether

⁴³¹ “Ha V. Altezza col valore & felicità sua in guisa commosso gli animi di tutti i popoli d'Italia, che come restano tuttauia stupefatti delle continue nouelle de suoi felici auuenimenti, così attendono, si promettono tuttavia d'hauerne à sentire maggiori. Et doue ne primi albori della sua gloria non agguagliandola à niuno de presenti Capitani, andaua ciascuno rammentandosi i fatti di Scanderbech, & con esso solo prosumeauano di compararla, così dopo ch'ella è sempre ita accrescendo; tant' oltre son trapassati, che facendo paragone dell'età di lei, del nimico con cui contende, dell'impresche che ha per le mani, & della felicità co che le succedano, non si sgomentano con quieto, & tranquillo animo d'assomigliarla ad Alessandro. Dicole Serenissimo Principe in parola di verità, che io il quale come Italiano conosco i popoli Italiani non essere à somiglianza de Greci di gran lunga cotanto amplificatori delle cose & comunemente non dico questa nazione, ma questa età istessa non esser vaga d'ingrandimenti il che è tanto più considerabile verso Principe Straniero, non posso se non marauigliarmi che con animo tanto concorde & con tanto fermo siano andati à fondare cotante speranze nella persona vostra. Ond e mi sono dato à credere, & in questa opinion viuio, tutto ciò non senza manifesto & visibil fauore della mano di Dio poter auuenire. Il quale vedendo i peccati de Turchi hauer di molto numero soprauanzati quelli de Christiani, habbia à guisa di nuouo Dauit voluto dar forza & vigore & autorità alla persona vostra, perche vccidendo questo superbo & orgoglioso Golia, tolga via l'obbrobrio d'Israel, & renda l'antico honore & riputazione al nome Christiano. Non è tempo per questa prima volta, nella quale io non cerco altro se non l'adito alla sua seruitù, che io mi distenda in lunghi ragionamenti ma bastandomi di mandarle li alligati versi, più per testificarle in che credenza sia ella appresso i popoli d'Italia, che per altro, non sono fuor di speranza, che con più lunghi discorsi le habbia un giorno, & forse non molto tardi à capitare innanzi, quali confido che dalla sua benignità non saranno meno gratamente riceuuti di quello che gli altri Principi han fatto, & con ogni riuerenza le bacio la real mano. A' 7 d'Ottobre 1595,” *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenza: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 452–53.

⁴³² “Crederei per questo che la guerra s'hauesse à maneggiare in questo modo, chi il Conte di Masfelt assicurato fi de' viueri, et considerato diligentemente il cammino che hà da tenere et quali incomodi potrebbe riceuer dalle piazze che rimanessero adietro guadagnate dal Turco, alleggiando sempre chiuso et ben munito, si auuicinasse con la maggior diligenza che fosse possibile à congiungersi col Transilvano et vnito attendere à fare quello che Iddio et l'occasione gli porgerà innanzi, cercando di corre i nimici il men proueduti che si possa. Crederei per ottimo partito il portare con se numero grande d'armi, picche, archibusi alabarde, et qualche corazza per armar quelli popoli Cristiani che fi ribellassero dal Turco,” “Al Serenissimo Don Ferdinando Gran Duca di Toscana,” *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenza: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 483.

willingly or not, in writing his *orazioni* and dedicatory letters, Ammirato got involved in political matters that went deeper than the urgency of creating a common Christian league. One of the main events that shaped the dynamics between local Italian rulers was the Florence-Ferrara precedence controversy, which started in 1562. At its core, the controversy reflected the clash between Florence's ideals of republican independence and the Este dynasty's deeply rooted chivalric and dynastic authority. The debate revolved around three main themes: the chivalric, the feudal, and the very figure of the prince—each shaped by two fundamentally different political cultures.⁴³³ The papacy became formally involved in 1567, issuing a bull that allowed the duchy to remain in Este hands only if the family produced legitimate heirs. Two years later, through another bull, Pope Pius V elevated Florence to the rank of Grand Duchy. This event fundamentally altered the established order of precedence among Italian states, breeding resentment not only from the Estensi but also from other ducal houses. Even robust diplomatic relationships, such as those with the Duchy of Urbino, grew tense.⁴³⁴ In an attempt to overcome this crisis, in 1570, the heir to the Urbino throne, Francesco Maria II della Rovere, married Lucrezia d'Este—a union whose primary purpose was to produce an heir for the House of Este. The strained relationships with the Este family and the failure of his marriage led Francesco Maria to maintain good relations with the Medicis following his ascension to the throne in 1574.⁴³⁵

Ammirato thought that both the Duke of Urbino and the Duke of Ferrara had relevant roles to play, so he kept both of them attuned to his ideas. A consistent and engaged correspondent, Francesco Maria II della Rovere maintained a close intellectual relationship

⁴³³ For an analysis of the documents around the controversy and a detailed overview of the historical literature dealing with this topic see Richard M. Tristano, "The Precedence Controversy and the Devolution of Ferrara: A Shift in Renaissance Politics," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 48, no. 3 (2017): 681–709.

⁴³⁴ Until that point, the hierarchy of precedence among rulers of the peninsula, after the Pope, was the Doge of Venice, the Duke of Ferrara, the Duke of Florence, the Duke of Urbino and the Duke of Mantua Gianluca Montinaro, *Fra Urbino e Firenze. Politica e Diplomazia Nel Tramonto Dei Della Rovere (1574-1631)* (Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 2009), 38–39.

⁴³⁵ Montinaro, *Fra Urbino e Firenze. Politica e Diplomazia Nel Tramonto Dei Della Rovere (1574-1631)*, 40.

with the Florentine historian. Their correspondence is especially valuable as Ammirato used it to outline the course of his professional life, thus reinforcing his authority and expertise.⁴³⁶ Ammirato believed he could persuade the duke to act by drawing on his military experience. Francesco Maria had fought in the Battle of Lepanto, where he led 2000 troops from the Duchy of Urbino and distinguished himself in battle alongside Don Giovanni d'Austria.⁴³⁷ After observing that the duke had seriously read and appreciated his *discorsi*, Ammirato seized the opportunity to begin sending some of the *orazioni*. Though his efforts to revive the duke's military ambitions ultimately fell short, Francesco Maria della Rovere may have been one of the few who sincerely supported Ammirato's vision. He encouraged the Neapolitans' involvement in the war in Hungary, thus echoing the Florentine's first oration, and stood out as one of the rare individuals who offered material rewards for Ammirato's intellectual efforts. Deeply moved by the duke's generosity, Ammirato dedicated the 1598 collected edition of the *orazioni* to him:

Taking the opportunity provided by the subject of the discourse, I could very well speak with Your Highness about many matters relating to the affairs of the Turks. However, seeing that new difficulties constantly arise, they cause such a holy and necessary enterprise to be abandoned, and fill everyone's soul not only with sorrow and distress, but with a silent despair. And believing, as we must, that all this happens because of our sins, since we, who have humbled ourselves before a most vile enemy, give time for a much stronger one to arise, [we must] greatly praise those princes who, being prevented from engaging in military efforts, devote themselves to the works of peace: maintaining their peoples in tranquility and happiness, honoring the pursuit of good letters, preserving the laws of justice with admirable fairness, and extending—so far as lies within their power—the most holy practice of religion. Among such rulers, Your Highness's name shines brightly.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ "Al Duca d'Urbino," *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo* (Firenze: Amadore Massi e Lorenzo Landi, 1637), 372–74, 447–48, 448–49.

⁴³⁷ "Da questo V. Altezza comprenda, quanto io vò riguardando non diuentarle con le mie spese lettere rincrescieuole, che hauendo confortato la nobiltà Napoletana alla guerra ad Ungheria, et con l'esempio suo mostratole, che senza carico si può militare sotto nome d'auuenturiere, com'ella fece nel tempo della giornata Nauale, non presi ardire di mandargliele" "Al Duca d'Urbino," Ammirato, 423.

⁴³⁸ "Ben potrei io ragionar con V. Alt. per l'opportunita, che ce ne da il soggetto dell'orazioni, di molte cose attinenti a gli affari de'Turchi, se il veder nascer tutto di nuove difficulta, onde impresa si santa e si necessaria, vien tralasciata, non empiesse l'animo di ciascuno non che di dolore e d'affanno, ma di tacita disperazione. Il che

With this letter, Ammirato assigns the Duke of Urbino the role of the “*good ruler*”—not in the traditional sense of a military commander, but as a wise governor. He praises the duke for his ability to maintain peace, to be a good legislator, and to serve as a patron of the arts. At first glance, when read alongside the *orazioni*, where Ammirato typically advocates for princes to take arms against the Ottomans, this portrayal of a good ruler seems contradictory. His rhetoric here is reframed to accommodate the duke’s political stance while still positioning him as a model of princely virtue. Yet, this dedicatory letter underlines a small but significant nuance in Ammirato’s argument: a military defeat of the Ottomans could prove successful for Christian powers only in the form of a League; in a political landscape where individual polities no longer possess the resources or strength to launch independent campaigns against the Ottomans, maintaining the internal order of a state is an attribute of exemplary leadership.

Similar to how he approached the Duke of Urbino, Ammirato sent Alfonso II d’Este, the Duke of Ferrara, a copy of his *discorsi* along with a letter in which he noted:

Not to show Your Highness something that you have already seen and done most excellently in governing your people, but rather to give you the pleasure of seeing, through the image of ancient examples, how much your actions conform with [those of] good Princes and how far you have distanced yourself from the wicked [princes], I send you this gift of my book of Discourses. [...] Meanwhile, I cannot and must not rejoice in our misfortunes, but since it has pleased God, in punishment for our sins, to allow so many calamities to befall Christendom [...] I find consolation in the fact that the time has come when Your Highness may use your resources. Italy, in particular, needs not only your mind, counsel, and foresight, but also the strength of your arms and the valor of your

dovendo credere, che tutto segua per cagione de'nostri peccati, poiche abbattutici a un nimico vilissimo, diam tempo, che ne venga fu un fortissimo, sono da lodar molto que'principi, i quali impediti di potersi impiegare nell'opere militari, attendono a quelle dela pace, mantenendo in quete e felicità i lor popoli, onorando gli studi delle buone lettere, conservando con mirabile equità le leggi della giustizia e ampliando per quanto a lor tocca, il culto santissimo della religione. Tra quali essendo molto chiaro il nome dell'Alt. V.” “Al Serenissimo S. Francesco Maria della Rovere Duca D'Urbino VI,” *Orazioni a Diversi Principi. Intorno i Preparamenti, Che s'aurebbono a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco. Con vn Dialogo Delle Imprese Del Medesimo. Aggiuntoui Nel Fine Le Lettere, et Orazioni Di Monsignor Bessarione Cardinal Niceno, Scritte a Principi d'Italia* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1598).

courageous hand to oppose so powerful an enemy and to save us from so many dangers that threaten our ruin.⁴³⁹

Just as he did with the Duke of Urbino, Ammirato is not offering counsel to Alfonso d'Este but rather portraying him as the very image of the “good ruler.” The book he sends focuses on the principles of good governance and is not primarily concerned with confronting the Ottoman threat. Nonetheless, Ammirato skillfully redirects his rhetoric to address the urgent political context, urging Alfonso d'Este to act. In doing so, he enriches the portrait of the ideal prince by emphasizing not only wisdom and virtue but also military valor as essential qualities of rulership. While he assigned the role of military leader to other princes, like Sigismund Báthory or Francesco I de Medici, Ammirato seemed to genuinely believe in the role that the Duke of Ferrara had to play in this enterprise. In his third oration to Clement VIII, Ammirato dedicates about six pages to convincing the pope that the Duke of Ferrara is singlehandedly the best ruler to lead the armies of a Christian League.⁴⁴⁰ Despite Ammirato's fervent appeals—not only in this speech but also in the two previous orations—the pope remained silent. This lack of response may be explained, at least in the case of the third oration, by the political sensitivity of the matter: Ammirato was intervening in affairs that traced back nearly half a century, involving long-standing disputes and power dynamics between the Papacy and the Duke of Ferrara. Seen through this lens, Ammirato's strategy in *Clementina Terza* becomes clearer: he devotes significant attention to constructing Alfonso's genealogical tree, presenting him as not only a ruler of ancient lineage but one whose legitimacy surpasses that of any other prince in

⁴³⁹ “Non per mostrare à V. Altezza cosa che essa non habbia ottimamente veduta e gouernata nel reggimento de suoi popoli, ma per darle piacere di farle vedere con l'immagine degli antichi esempi quanto ella si sia nelle sue azioni confermata con i buoni Principi, & quanto da rei allontanato le mando à far dono di questo mio libro di Discorsi [...] Intanto io non posso nè debbo rallegrarmi de' nostri mali, ma poiche è piaciuto à Dio per punire i nostri peccati che soprastieno tanti danni alla Cristianità quanto ogni giorno vanno tuttauaia apparendo maggiori; sento consolazione che sia venuto il tempo opportuno che V. Altezza possa spendere la sua moneta, hauendo l'Italia particolarmente bisogno non solo della sua mente, consiglio, et prouidenza, ma della robustezza del suo braccio, et della gagliardezza della man sua valorosa per opporsi à sì potente nimico, et scamparci da tanti pericoli che ci minaccion rouina.” “Al Sig. Duca di Ferrara” *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo*, 440–41.

⁴⁴⁰ *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Terza*, 15–20.

Italy.⁴⁴¹ In doing so, Ammirato makes a deliberate rhetorical move: by blending dynastic legitimacy with princely virtue, he aims to persuade the pope that the Duke of Ferrara is not only worthy of leading a Christian League but also deserving of political precedence.

Ammirato's efforts, however, ultimately proved to be in vain. Just a few years later, toward the end of 1597, the duke died, and his position was claimed by his cousin, Cesare d'Este—an event that reignited tensions with the Papacy, which sought to reclaim the duchy. In this increasingly volatile context, marked by the threat of armed conflict and the involvement of powers such as Spain and Venice, who supported Cesare's claim, the Papacy escalated the situation with excommunication threats.⁴⁴² Likely at the request of the Medici, Ammirato was asked to respond to the pope's intention to occupy Ferrara, an action that would have also affected Ferdinando's goal of keeping the Grand Duchy a major political force in the area. In his *Discorso sopra la guerra che voleva muovere il Papa a Ferrara*, Ammirato counsels caution, urging the pope to reconsider military intervention.⁴⁴³ Drawing heavily on the rhetorical strategies employed in *Clementina Terza*, he again defends the legitimacy of the claims of the Dukes of Ferrara – this time in the person of Cesare – emphasizing that as an Estense, he would be seen as a worthy ruler whose authority was supported by his subjects. Yet, the speed of unfolding events rendered the discourse obsolete before it could influence the outcome, as the pope occupied Ferrara in the beginning of 1598. Although the text was not published at the time, it was later included by Ammirato's heir in the *Opuscoli*, presented as an undated letter addressed to an anonymous “N. N.” and inserted among his correspondence.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴¹ "Il quale è ancora tal Principe, per che nobilta di famiglia, per grandezza di stato, per antiquita d'imperio e per moltitudine d'opere egregie fatte da suoi predecessori e da lui non trovera nessuno in Itali, ne fuori, il qual possa ligittimamente ricusar d'ubbidirlo. Non tema nessuno, che in pareggiarlo con gli altri Principi" Ammirato, 16.

⁴⁴² De Mattei, *Il pensiero politico di Scipione Ammirato*, 502–5.

⁴⁴³ For an annotated transcription of Ammirato's discourse see De Mattei, 513–24.

⁴⁴⁴ *Opuscoli Del Signor Scipione Ammirato Tomo Secondo*, 511–23.

Ammirato's flexibility in adapting the qualities of ideal rulership to fit each case was not limited to Italian courts. Most notable is his shifting portrayal of Henry IV of France, a case that further highlights how his appeals for Christian unity intertwined with the broader diplomatic agenda of the Medici court. "Our saintly faith has two enemies: the heretic and the infidel," Ammirato wrote in his oration to Sixtus V - an idea that echoed through the better part of his orations.⁴⁴⁵ Generally, he argued that while heretics, such as French Protestants, were adversaries, peace with them was a necessary step in order to unify Christianity against the greater threat of the Ottomans. While in the *orazioni* for Philip II and Clement VIII, Henry IV appears as a figure that strengthens the negative portrayal of the Protestants, Ammirato's depiction of the Bourbon king shifted drastically after 1595. Henry IV's absolution changed the politico-diplomatic dynamics between France, Spain, and the Papacy. His rhetoric was most likely influenced by Ferdinando de' Medici's long-standing effort to move away from Spanish influence and cultivate closer ties with France, a goal signaled by his marriage to Christina of Lorraine and strengthened through the important role that Cardinal Alessandro de' Medici played in mediating France's reintegration into Roman Christendom.⁴⁴⁶ With Henry IV now accepted as a legitimate Catholic monarch, Ammirato quickly redirected his appeals toward the French king, urging him through an oration to join the Christian enterprise against the Ottomans. This rhetorical realignment reveals not only Ammirato's adaptability but also how his strategic vision was deeply interwoven with the political interests of the Medici court, further confirming that his ideal Christian League was shaped as much by immediate political realities as by moral or religious convictions.

Ammirato was keenly aware of the political frictions that divided the Italian peninsula. While he sought to navigate these tensions and appeal to as many actors as possible—

⁴⁴⁵ *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebonno a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco*, 13.

⁴⁴⁶ Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800*, 133.

sometimes even adopting a conciliatory stance—his proposals were ultimately grounded in an idealized vision rather than in immediate political realities. As a historian first and foremost, Ammirato relied on the authority of the past, using historical examples as the most compelling means to shape arguments and persuade his readers. His rhetorical flexibility, evident in how he tailored his messages to different audiences, stemmed from opportunism but also from the adaptability of his core ideas. The roles, responsibilities, and solutions he presented in the *orazioni* had a certain universality, allowing them to be reshaped without losing relevance. His portrayal of the "good prince," for instance, is flexible, multifaceted, and adaptable to circumstance. Ammirato's ability to construct and adjust this ideal type showcases his ability to combine the roles of orator, philosopher, and poet. By articulating the attributes of good governance and offering strategic plans to confront the Ottoman threat, he transcends the traditional framework of crusade oratory. What emerges instead is a more complex and analytical discourse—one that reflects both political theory and a deeper engagement with the structures of power and governance in his time.

***Ragion di stato* and the Good Ruler**

From the letters sent to the Dukes of Urbino and Ferrara, Ammirato's "good ruler" has several characteristics. He should be of ancient lineage to be legitimate. He should be a good Christian, a good legislator, a good counselor, and a patron of the arts. By being all these things, he would keep his subjects happy, and he should be loyal, so that when needed, he can venture into military action to protect his state. In these missives, he reiterates an idea of utmost importance to him, which he develops at length in a *discorso* titled "As far as the affairs of the world are concerned, the name of a prince alone matters:"

There is no doubt that states are maintained with real strength, but many times it has been seen that an ounce of reputation is worth more than a thousand pounds of gold, and consequently the name of a prince is worth more than many hundreds of 'armed men in your defense; because those lost people that you have once, you can never make them again; but the opinion that a prince has your protection keeps your friends in faith, scares your enemies from freely harassing you and like spring water nourishes you with perpetual belief that your needs will not be lacking.⁴⁴⁷

By underlining the essential role of a ruler's reputation, Ammirato completes his characterization. Both in this discourse and in some of his *orazioni*, Ammirato draws examples from antique and recent histories to show that this is not merely an idealized portrait, but that, in fact, princes managed to keep their states.⁴⁴⁸ Thus, what emerges is that for him, a "good ruler" is one who is able to use all the resources at his disposal, whether personal or those of the polity, in order to "maintain the state." By focusing on the figure of the ruler and his crucial role in the way in which government is managed, Ammirato was directly engaging in the theoretical discussions about good governance, so popular among contemporary political theorists.

Ammirato was an exponent of Tacitism, a political philosophy trend that emerged as a counter-reaction to Machiavelli's theories about the state, emphasizing the crucial role of religion in politics. Also known as "anti-Machiavellianism," this political thought trend developed by humanists in northern Europe made its way to Italy, where it became particularly

⁴⁴⁷ "Non è dubbio veruno, che gli stati si mantengono con vere forze, ma molte volte si è veduto valer piu un'oncia di riputazione che mille libre d'oro, e per conseguente piu operare il nome d'un principe, che molte centinaia d'huomini armati in tua difesa; perche quelle genti perdute che l'habbi una volta, non puoi rifarle piu; ma la oppinione che un principe habbia la tua protezione, mantiene gli amici tuoi in fede, spaventa i nimici, che liberamente non ti molestino e come acqua sorgente ti nutrice di perpetua credenza, che ne tuoi bisogni non habbia a mancarti" Ammirato, *Discorsi del signor Scipione Ammirato sopra Cornelio Tacito*, 196.

⁴⁴⁸ "Non voleva, non vuole, ne vorra la divina misericordia, se a me è lecito dalle cose passate le future andar antivedendo, che l'inclita casa d'Austria da lui [Imp. Carlo V] mantenuta e custodita [...] E in vero qual piu bel segno se ne pote vedere di quel dello stato di Milano: il quale, dall'Imp. Carlo V contra le forze de Francesi in piu volte agramente combatuto, allor solo ne divenne pacifico possessore, o valoroso e gagliardo mantentore, che spenta la successione Sforzesca ne potè come i pontefoco sanno de benefici, con la pienza" *Orazione al Serenissimo e Potentissimo Re Cattolico Suo Signore Filippo Re Di Spagna. Intorno Il Pacificar La Cristianita e Prender Unitamente l'arme Contra Gli Infedeli* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1594), 7–8; "Duca di Guisa che sono anni 37 ha mantenuto l'Italia in continua pace e riposo, non volendo ne ella stessa per qualunque ragione occupar altrui un minimo castelletto" *Orazione Alla Maesta Cattolica Del Potentissimo Re Filippo Il Re Di Spagna. Suo Signor Naturale. Detta Filippica Seconda* (Firenze: Giorgio Marescotti, 1594), 16.

intriguing to Catholic intellectuals who sought to elaborate a morally acceptable theory through which a ruler can maintain his power.⁴⁴⁹ This was the intellectual landscape in which Ammirato was delivering his commentaries on Tacitus to his colleagues at the Accademia degli Alterati, in which Justus Lipsius was writing his *Politicorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex* (1589), and it was also the context that inspired Giovanni Botero to write his *Ragion di stato*. In the dedicatory letter of the first edition published in 1589, Botero wrote that when he accompanied Cardinal Borromeo in his travels, he heard about *ragion di stato* everywhere.⁴⁵⁰ Published in 1589, Botero's work served as a theoretical alternative to the legal doctrine of the state formulated by Jean Bodin in *Six livres de la Republique*. A synthesis of the Florentine political tradition of the sixteenth century and Catholic thought of the Counter-Reformation, Botero's reason of state unfolds as a series of prudential techniques that rulers should employ with the dual objectives of acquiring and conserving the strength of a state.⁴⁵¹

More like a program that explains how a prince could successfully govern his people and how this can be done more efficiently by using moral methods, Botero's work gained rapid popularity. Still, his work, and probably also that of Lipsius, displeased some humanists, such as Ammirato, who felt that "although we always say that such and such a thing is done for reason of state, it is not well understood what one truly and properly means with the name of reason of state."⁴⁵² Invoking this as one of the motives for which he decided to gather and publish his *discorsi* in a single volume, Ammirato addresses this concern and writes that:

⁴⁴⁹ Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought*, 101–56.

⁴⁵⁰ "Questi anni adietro, per diuerse occorenze, parte mie, parte de gli amici, e de' Padroni, mi è conuenuto far varii viaggi, e praticare, piu di quello che io haurei voluto, nelle Cori di Re, e di Prencipi grandi, hor di qua, hor di la da' monti: Doue, tra l'altre cose da me osservate, mi ha recato somma merauiglia il sentire tutto il di mentouare Ragione di Stato, et in cotal materia citare hora Nicolo Machiavelli, hora Cornelio Tacito" Giovanni Botero, *Della Ragion Di Stato: Libri Dieci* (Vinetia: I Gioliti, 1589), 1v–1r.

⁴⁵¹ "Introduction" to Giovanni Botero, *Botero: The Reason of State*, ed. Robert Bireley, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), xiv–xxxv.

⁴⁵² "Parendomi che come che tutto di habbiamo in bocca, la tale, e tal cosa farsi per ragione di stato, non bene intendersi quel che veramente e propriamente con detto tal nome di ragione di stato si uoglia di notare" *Discorsi del signor Scipione Ammirato sopra Cornelio Tacito* (Firenze: Filippo Giunti, 1594), 228.

Reason of state is nothing other than a contravention of ordinary reason out of respect for public benefit, or rather out of respect for a greater and more universal reason. And if someone were to say to me: then is something a reason of state only when it is a contravention of ordinary law for the sake of a greater and more universal reason? I would respond that I did not speak without reason about the other types of reason—natural, civil, of war, and of nations—but to show that all rules are made according to one of these laws.⁴⁵³

Though seemingly ambiguous, Ammirato's reason of state emerges as the final step in how he envisions order in the realm of moral and political life. According to him, there are multiple reasons by which life is ordered, each operating within its own inviolable boundaries. The law of nature (*legge di natura*), which asserts that everyone is indiscriminately equal, is limited by civil law (*ragion civile*), which introduces privacy and negotiations. The reason of war (*ragion della spada*) restricts both the law of nature and civil law by legitimizing everything acquired by the sword. The law of nations (*ragion delle genti*) constrains natural, civil, and military reason altogether by establishing international agreements. Finally, the reason of state becomes the "political reason," which corrects and integrates the other reasons as required by the social order.⁴⁵⁴ This partition is essential in understanding that, for Ammirato, *ragion di stato* meant, in fact, "right rule" exercised by a "good ruler." Nonetheless, as seen in his letters, the existence of a "good prince" was only one of the elements, or rather the binding agent.

Ammirato's principles of good government could be summarized as follows: no state can exist without law; no support for that law is possible without a sovereign power; a sovereign power cannot exist without an army; in order to have an army, there must be wealth; in order to have wealth, there must be subjects; subjects are loyal only if there is justice, and justice cannot be achieved without law. However, his perspective on "what makes a polity great" was

⁴⁵³ "Ragione di stato altro non essere che contravvenzione di ragione ordinaria per rispetto di publico beneficio, ovvero per rispetto di maggiore e piu universal ragione: e se alcun mi dicesse, dunque una cosa non è mai ragion di stato, se non è contravvenzione di legge ordinaria per rispetto di maggiore, e piu universale ragione? Rispondo non haver io senza ragione parlato dell'altre ragioni naturale, civile, di guerra e delle genti, se non per mostrare che tutte le disposizioni si fanno per alcuna di queste leggi" Ammirato, 231.

⁴⁵⁴ Ammirato, *Discorsi del signor Scipione Ammirato sopra Cornelio Tacito*, 228–31.

not novel. In fact, it draws on Machiavelli's political ethics and strongly resembles the principles of good government found in Ottoman political philosophy, known as the "Circle of Equity" or "Circle of Justice."⁴⁵⁵ This concept, originally developed by Ibn Khaldun, was later reworked by Persian intellectuals in political tracts in the late fifteenth century and also echoed in Machiavelli's thoughts in *The Prince*.⁴⁵⁶ The similarity between the ideas in these works indicates an overlap in the sources used by writers and suggests that similar social transformations were occurring in both Europe and the Middle East, which needed similar political changes.⁴⁵⁷ While Ammirato certainly drew inspiration from Machiavelli, it is worth noting that the prevalence of this principle of good governance throughout the sixteenth century, both in Italian political thought and in the development of the Ottoman Empire, highlighted a shared mental framework of constitutive elements of a well-functioning polity that transcended religious boundaries.⁴⁵⁸

Seen within this tradition of thought, it becomes clear that while Ammirato aimed to distinguish himself from other political thought writers, he was, in fact, engaged in a continuous dialogue with them. Although he critiqued Machiavelli's ideas, he adopted and adapted them into a new theoretical political framework. Similarly, Ammirato not only provided a clear definition of reason of state, but he also directly engaged with and heavily drew from Botero's work, even though Ammirato does not mention him by name. Despite modern historians'

⁴⁵⁵ Lucette Valensi, *The Birth of the Despot: Venice and the Sublime Porte* (Cornell University Press, 1993), 82.

⁴⁵⁶ Linda T. Darling, "Political Change and Political Discourse in the Early Modern Mediterranean World," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XXXVIII, no. 4 (2008): 511; James Winston Morris, "An Arab Machiavelli? Rhetoric, Philosophy and Politics in Ibn Khaldun's Critique of Sufism," *Harvard Middle Eastern and Islamic Review* 8 (2009): 242–91; Humera Naz, "Political Thoughts of Ibn Khaldun and Machiavelli: A Comparative Study in a Historical Perspective," *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 52, no. 2 (2013): 25–37.

⁴⁵⁷ Darling, "Political Change and Political Discourse in the Early Modern Mediterranean World," 508.

⁴⁵⁸ For more details on how Ammirato used Machiavelli's ideas and methods see Eric W. Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries, 1527-1800: A History of Florence and the Florentines in the Age of the Grand Dukes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 122–25; and Kenneth C. Schellhase, *Tacitus in Renaissance Political Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 144–45; For a detailed analysis on how Ottomans envisioned legal and social order see Heather Ferguson, *The Proper Order of Things: Language, Power, and Law in Ottoman Administrative Discourses* (Stanford University Press, 2018).

assertions, there are no documents confirming that Ammirato and Botero knew each other or corresponded.⁴⁵⁹ It is possible that they met during Cardinal Borromeo's travels through Florence and again later in Rome. Nevertheless, the Florentine was certainly familiar with the Jesuit's work, which was also largely inspired by the tradition of Machiavellianism. In particular, Ammirato's ideal-type prince shared many similarities with Botero's, defining a ruler with prudence, valor, and temperance. Both humanists agree that these qualities in a ruler are insufficient to "maintain" a state, but rather that the people must also possess some of these qualities.⁴⁶⁰

Just as he was not the only one advocating for a Christian league against Ottoman expansion, he was also just one among many political thinkers of his time. His ideas echo those of other sixteenth century political writers, like Machiavelli and Botero, but ultimately, the way in which Ammirato envisioned "reason of state" and how good governance can be exercised effectively was deeply influenced by the political landscape in which he found himself, and the interests of his patron. Presented extensively in his *discorsi*, his vision of "good governance" provides also the theoretical framework essential for understanding how he arguments the strategic advice from the *orazioni*,

Categories of Power: *Loci Communes* and the Political Animal

One of Ammirato's main concerns, especially in the *orazioni*, was what resources are necessary for a state to be powerful. The answers he gives are simple: money (resources), men (subjects), and arms (military discipline) – all resources that a good ruler should be capable of managing,

⁴⁵⁹ Bireley, *The Counter-Reformation Prince*, 47.

⁴⁶⁰ Botero, *Botero: The Reason of State*, 7–8.

guiding, and organizing.⁴⁶¹ To support his arguments and demonstrate why these are essential elements and how they can be managed effectively by a ruler, Ammirato employs a set of rhetorical strategies tailored to the addressee of the oration or the type of argument he was advancing. For instance, advice for direct war or preparations for a possible armed conflict was supported by ideas ranging from historical or religious texts and “mirror of princes” literature to reason of state theories and just war premises, all skillfully merged into a coherent text in which Ammirato used rhetorical strategies such as exhortation, analogy, historical exemplarity, genealogical tracing, and natural inclinations.

While in the *discorsi* the examples from ancient and contemporary situations are meant to uphold the main argument of the speech, in the case of the *orazioni*, Ammirato’s examples are designed to incite and animate the readers, the rulers, to act; thus, he adapts them for the audience. For example, the type of references he makes changes along with the person for whom the *Orazione* was written, as well as the type of argument. When he is advising Philip II in the first text, he often refers to the actions of Hannibal and Nero as examples from which the king of Spain could learn; however, when writing to Pope Clement VIII, Ammirato heavily references the Bible.⁴⁶²

⁴⁶¹ “Et havendo io gia detto della copia de denari, del numero delle genti e della disciplina militare, potrei poco men che dire senza aggiugnere altro d'havere appieno dimostrato quanta sia la facilita, che essi hanno d'opprimerci” *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebonno a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco*, 6; “Et pero non si maravigli la S V Beatissimo Padre se parlando di dinari, di genti, e d'armi, che sono i capi piu principali, in non ordinari bisogni a non ordinari prouedimenti son rifuggito; Dietro la traccia de quali seguitando dico, che dovendo ogni nostro studio impiegardi perche le cose habbiano felice effetto, necessario sara che si venga a gli esercizi bellici, leggendosi che Iddio lascio in pie molti de nimici d'Israel; perche coloro, che non sapeano guerreggiare co'Cananei, apparassero a combattere” *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Seconda*, 18; “Et perche di genti, di danari, d'arme e d'altre circostanze militari s'è altra volta discorso; ne si fa dubbio, che la guerra s'habbia a fare, perche non facendosi da noi, ci sarebbe con maggior danno fatta da altri, in due capi consistera per questa volta tutto il mio ragionamento in che modo secondo la ragion militare io stimi che s'habbia far a la guerra, cio è se si ha da affrettare o ritardare e di qual capitano havremmo bisogno per essa” *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Terza*, 4-5.

⁴⁶² Ammirato, *Orazione al Serenissimo e Potentissimo Re Cattolico Suo Signore Filippo Re Di Spagna. Intorno Il Pacificar La Cristianita e Prender Unitamente l'arme Contra Gli Infedeli*, 7-9; Ammirato, *Orazione al Satissimo et Beatissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII*, 12-13.

One of the most common ways of using examples typical of crusade oratory, prevalent in the anti-Ottoman discourse, which Ammirato also employs, is the shame-praising rhetoric. For instance, in a lengthy explanation to Philip III regarding how a ruler can maintain a balanced and stable polity, he emphasizes the need to prevent the introduction of new religions that could be destabilizing.⁴⁶³ He argues that the introduction of Christianity in the Roman Empire was a unifying factor and is worthwhile to emulate this example. However, he also presents the Ottoman Empire as a model. He praises how the multi-religious policy of the Ottoman sultan made his empire prosperous and the people happy and obedient, but he warns that accepting multiple confessions may bring earthly riches, yet it would cause one to lose all sense of divine matters.⁴⁶⁴ Thus, the case of the Ottoman Empire serves as an example of how a multi-confessional polity could thrive.

In the *orazione* for Sixtus V, Ammirato tries to convince the pope on how to solve the “decaying and corrupt customs of our religion” and achieve a state where it could address all external issues that arise.⁴⁶⁵ Building on parallels to Roman military greatness, Ammirato proposes a “seminar of children” who should be recruited from a young age, taught by clerics, and also trained in the military arts. The best of them should hold powerful positions or become functionaries and receive patronage from noblemen. In this way, these soldiers would be completely loyal.⁴⁶⁶ Ammirato provides several historical examples where such armies succeeded, such as in Ancient Egypt. However, taken out of context, the description of this training system seems oddly familiar and contemporary. In fact, this is what Ammirato alludes to: how the Ottoman Janissary troops operate. He praises the customs, ethics, loyalty, and

⁴⁶³ Ammirato, *Orazione al Serenissimo e Potentissimo Re Cattolico Suo Signore Filippo Re Di Spagna. Intorno Il Pacificar La Cristianita e Prender Unitamente l'arme Contra Gli Infedeli*, 13.

⁴⁶⁴ Ammirato, *Orazione al Serenissimo e Potentissimo Re Cattolico Suo Signore Filippo Re Di Spagna. Intorno Il Pacificar La Cristianita e Prender Unitamente l'arme Contra Gli Infedeli*, 13-14.

⁴⁶⁵ Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebonno a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco*, 20.

⁴⁶⁶ Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Sisto Quinto. Intorno i Preparamenti Che Havrebonno a Farsi Contra La Potenza Del Turco*, 20.

discipline of the Janissaries and considers them worthy of imitation. But how could he convince the Pope to act when he is using as a positive example the same people against whom he is promoting a crusade? His argument makes more sense when we understand the example of the Janissary institution as a successful organizational system for an army. And, as Ammirato himself pointed out, the Ottomans are the only contemporary example where this type of army is functioning.

Another example in that sense is the way he constructs the profile of a successful ruler. In one of the *orazioni* for Clement VIII, Ammirato tells Sinan Pasha's story: how he was entrusted to lead the Persian wars, how he was exiled for speaking his mind, and then given a second chance.⁴⁶⁷ In Ammirato's words, he becomes a "captain in truth in terms of age, authority, and experience; if not the greatest, then one among those who have been heard of in our times, not only in Europe but also in the universe."⁴⁶⁸ In another text, though, Ammirato called him the "most stubborn and cruel enemy of the Christian name, among all the followers of Muhammad."⁴⁶⁹ This description is meant to contrast with that of Sigismund Báthory, who, being younger and less experienced, but more courageous and full of military valor, managed to defeat the armies led by Sinan Pasha.⁴⁷⁰ At first, Ammirato's mirroring portraits are, on one hand, intended to emphasize Sigismund Báthory's greatness as a military leader. They also highlight the general characteristics of a successful, though not necessarily good, ruler.

All these examples restate how important it was, in Ammirato's view, to understand the customs of other nations. An aspect that transpires throughout all his work is most evident in his use of examples, whether historical or modern. The power that customs hold over the

⁴⁶⁷ Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Seconda*, 20.

⁴⁶⁸ Ammirato, *Orazione al Beatissimo et Santissimo Padre et Signor Nostro Clemente VIII. Detta Clementina Seconda*.

⁴⁶⁹ de Mattei, "Una "Orazione,, Di Scipione Ammirato Alla Repubblica Di Venezia, Del 1595," 97.

⁴⁷⁰ de Mattei, "Una "Orazione,, Di Scipione Ammirato Alla Repubblica Di Venezia, Del 1595," 98-100.

structure and performance of a society also reflects Ammirato's main criticism of the Ottoman Empire. His issues with this polity are the cultural and social practices developed under Islam, not Islam as a monotheistic religion used by the Sultan as a binding agent for society and as an impetus that drove the fidelity of the subjects. Thus, in his view, the general mechanisms by which religion operated as a connecting and uniting structure in that empire could easily benefit Christendom if adapted accordingly. Ammirato's complaints about the cultural barbarity of the Ottomans are often overshadowed by his Aristotelian worldview, in which the Sultan is a "political animal"; thus, he is civilized and capable of maintaining political order.

Ammirato's pragmatic view of political structures becomes even clearer when considered alongside the way he organized and systematized knowledge in his *Notizie Istoriche*. As seen in Chapter 4, his categorization of information about various states reveals not only the aspects he considered most relevant in a polity – such as population, military capacity, and resources – but also his perception of all polities through the same analytical categories. This method closely resembles the way Giovanni Botero presents cosmographic information in his *Relationi Universali*. By examining both *Notizie Istoriche* and *Relazioni Universali*, it seems that Ammirato either copied information directly from Botero's work or that they both relied on the same sources. The similarities extend beyond the exact data, such as the number of horses, soldiers, and subjects, to include the structural categories employed to describe the polities. However, Ammirato has a more schematic approach, as he breaks down the information into paraphrased versions and more detailed categories. Given that he was compiling this information in a notebook, it makes sense that he would not retain the narrative style found in Botero's work. Although he does not provide entries for all the polities mentioned in *Relazioni Universali*, he also includes some states absent from Botero's accounts. In some cases, the language used is nearly identical, suggesting that Ammirato may have summarized or paraphrased from Botero. However, an intriguing difference arises in their vocabulary of

authority. Ammirato deliberately avoids the term “despotic,” which is central to Botero's descriptions of certain polities. For instance, Botero characterizes England as having a *governo despotico*, whereas Ammirato simply notes *autorità assoluta*.⁴⁷¹ Similarly, regarding Muscovy and the Ottomans, Botero refers to a “despotic rule,” while Ammirato describes *più assoluta autorità* or *interissima autorità*.⁴⁷² Even in discussing Philip II of Spain, Ammirato mentions that the king holds “autorità assoluta nello maggior parte de’ suoi stati.”⁴⁷³ This indicates that Ammirato aimed for a more neutral, perhaps more analytical language, avoiding moralized typologies in favor of a taxonomy grounded in degrees of authority. His consistent application of the same categories to label both Christian and non-Christian polities underscores that he employed a framework of political understanding that could be universally applied.

Conclusion

Ammirato’s political-historical writings are best understood by considering the audience he for which they were intended. Whether addressing popes, princes, cardinals, or local rulers, he consistently tailored his arguments to align with their political sensitivities, expectations, and strategic needs. In his analysis of European polities, Ammirato integrates the Ottoman Empire into his conceptualization of the “reason of state,” a principle that stresses the importance for rulers to prioritize the stability and security of their states over personal or factional interests. He positions the Ottomans not just as a hostile force but as a central player in the geographical and political landscape, prompting European powers to reevaluate their strategies and alliances. The organization of information in his extensive notebooks significantly influences this framework, as the meticulous organization of knowledge allows him to synthesize various

⁴⁷¹ Botero, *Della Ragion Di Stato: Libri Dieci*, 15; Magl. XXIV 169, BNCF, 36r.

⁴⁷² Botero, *Della Ragion Di Stato: Libri Dieci*, 36; 118; Magl. XXIV 169, BNCF, 49r; 98v.

⁴⁷³ Botero, *Della Ragion Di Stato: Libri Dieci*, 133; Magl. XXIV 169, BNCF, 11r.

historical accounts, political treatises, and contemporary events. His writings, whether published or in manuscript, emphasize that historical knowledge and rhetorical strategy are inseparable. What appear as contradictions or inconsistencies in his political advice do not indicate misinformation or a lack of expertise but instead reflect the rhetorical flexibility necessary to adapt his counsel to different audiences and situations.

Viewed this way, Ammirato appears less as a theorist of Tacitist reason of state and more as a humanist whose authority stems from his ability to adapt erudition to political circumstance. Thus, his *orazioni* and his *discorsi* demonstrate how political knowledge in late sixteenth-century Italy was produced and transmitted: through texts designed and shaped by the expectations of specific audiences. His political arguments cannot be separated from the papal diplomacy he supported, the Medici interests he served, or the broader Christian league he aimed to promote. Consequently, Ammirato's case highlights that, at that time, political-historical texts were inseparable from the aims they served and the audiences they addressed.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have explored how sixteenth-century humanists engaged in processes of textual production and how these practices shaped the framing of their political-historical writings. By analyzing how Francesco Sansovino and Scipione Ammirato expressed humanist agency through authorial strategies, methods of organizing knowledge, and rhetorical adaptation, I have shown how political ideas were not merely conveyed but also reshaped through the very contexts in which texts were created, framed, and circulated. The two humanists analyzed in this thesis offer two distinct, yet complementary, case studies that illustrate this process.

Sansovino appears as an editor-compiler who treated format as argument. His strategic use of privileges, dedications, and organizational tools demonstrates how novelty in a work could be claimed not only through content but also through structure. His involvement in the Venetian literary scene, especially how he navigated the privilege system, shows how legal constraints and paratextual tools could establish both ownership and intellectual authority in a competitive book market. These aspects are also reflected in how he reused, reorganized, and reshaped material across works that belonged to different genres, but to which he assigned a civic utility.

By contrast, Ammirato mostly expresses his authorial agency within the body of the text where classical rhetoric meets Counter-Reformation political thought. His orations and *discorsi* frame the role of the author as a writer, who is also a historian and political counselor. He also engaged in practices typically associated with editorial work, but only in organizing material meant for private use. His manuscript *zibaldoni* and reference books show that he gathered, paraphrased, and organized information that he later used in his works. Ammirato

clearly distinguished what belonged to the author's voice from what could be delegated to editors or assistants. However, this stance only applied to his works intended for publication, or more precisely, works structured around an argument. His case is a fitting example of how sixteenth-century humanists distinguished clearly delineated a hierarchy of authorial roles in a work.

Placed side by side, these figures exemplify two ways in which humanist agency was expressed in Italy during the second half of the sixteenth century. Both, however, use the same strategies that reflect the three levels of analysis in this thesis: self-representation, which reflects the authorial roles they claimed and the audiences they addressed; organization of knowledge, which indicates how they excerpted and paraphrased information and structured their works; and rhetorical adaptation, which demonstrates how dedicatory letters, textual genres, and historical examples are tailored to serve patrons, address censure, or appeal to specific audiences. The meaning of their works is negotiated at the intersection of these three levels.

Throughout the three parts of this thesis, I have illustrated how these models unfolded in specific cases. Authorial agency, explored in Part I, appeared both as a practical and intellectual problem. Sansovino used the Venetian system of printing privileges to gain recognition, but he also expressed his authorial presence through prefaces, dedications, and correspondence. His self-presentation as translator, compiler, editor, and later as printer shows the flexibility with which humanists navigated a market that valued novelty but often blurred the boundaries of ownership. Ammirato, as the official historiographer of the Medici court, was deeply embedded in Florentine patronage networks and often wrote on request. He also collaborated mainly with Filippo Giunti, who was also the official publisher of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and with whom he did not seem to have the best relationship. Seen in this

context, Ammirato strengthened his authorial persona by emphasizing his many years of experience as a historian, his efforts to conduct archival research, and his moral duty as a Christian political thinker. In both cases, authorship was not a fixed function, but one that could be established and claimed against the interventions of printers, the expectations of patrons, and the reader's expectations.

The organization of knowledge, analyzed in Part II, underscored how Sansovino and Ammirato turned the act of compilation into a display of intellectual authority. Sansovino structured his works both thematically, like *Historia Universale* or *Del Governo*, but also on genres, like *Sopplemento* or *Cronologia del mondo*. To each of these he added indexes, tables of contents, and lists of authorities which served as reference tools and allowed readers to engage selectively with vast bodies of material. The ways in which he reused and reshaped material blur the boundary between the three categories in which he organized his works, showing that the labels he used, *compositioni*, *raccolte*, and *traduttioni*, reflect the extent of his agency over the content of the work, rather than the methods he used to structure and organize the knowledge. Ammirato's *zibaldoni* and manuscript handbooks revealed a parallel but distinct trajectory. He systematized information alphabetically and thematically in reference book that he then used when composing his *discorsi* and *orazioni*. In the case of the manuscript handbooks created for patrons, he adapted these methods, focusing not on encyclopedic overviews but on paraphrased summaries to better suit their interests. Both humanists showcase how sixteenth-century scholarship was not only about preserving knowledge but also about framing it for use, whether for civic instruction, political reflection, or extending patronage networks.

Part III tied these practices to the audiences, aims, and conditions under which political-historical works were produced and circulated. Sansovino's politics of comparison, in which

forms of government were not ranked, but allowed readers to critically assess them becomes a pedagogic tool for both rulers and citizens. He believed that history served civic purposes best when it was presented in a neutral stance, as a set of examples that allowed readers to discern the strengths and weaknesses of each case. This civic rhetoric shows how he balanced the expectations of patrons with the broader purposes of civic instruction, shaping political knowledge that could serve both particular and wider audiences. Ammirato's writings, by contrast, foreground the role of audiences and circumstances in framing political arguments. His *discorsi* and *orazioni* on the Ottoman threat and the Christian league adapt a repertoire of ideas on reason of state and the "good ruler" to the particular interests of popes and princes, embedding his political thought in the diplomatic and confessional politics of the Medici court. Taken together, these analyses show that Sansovino and Ammirato engaged in a politics of knowledge. Their works did not merely transmit information but actively reframed it to serve civic, religious, and political aims. Both Sansovino and Ammirato were preoccupied with the same question: what makes a polity great? Their answers differed in form but were similar in argument. For them, if historical accounts were gathered correctly, organized, and transmitted, they could serve both civic education and political reflection.

Through its findings, this thesis contributes to two broader claims. First, early modern authorship is best understood as an intentionally constructed function. Authorial roles are not negotiated by the "social relationships/society," but by the humanist (as a writer, editor, compiler) acting through social and material frameworks. Second, the mobile meaning of works is an aspect that humanists have purposefully worked on. Both Sansovino and Ammirato designed texts which they deliberately adapted to various audiences, whether through dedications, correspondence, or rhetorical artifices.

This dissertation, however, has limitations. Archival material on Sansovino's literary activity is limited and mostly consists of printing privileges stored in the Senate archives, with very few personal documents preserved. Ammirato's notebooks kept at Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Firenze offer a great insight behind the working process of a sixteenth century historian, but the relationship between his manuscript notes and his printed texts can usually be traced only through thematic overlap rather than precise drafts or explicit cross-reference. Yet, these constraints do not undermine this study; rather, they sharpen the methodological approach. Where manuscript evidence is fragmentary, paratexts become not merely supplementary but central sources for reconstructing authorial agency. Where intentions cannot be directly verified, the uses, formats, and structures of the texts themselves reveal the practical aims behind them. More importantly, the uneven survival of sources echoes the dynamics this thesis addresses.

Working with two authors whose surviving materials differs so noticeably highlights the fact that analyzing humanist agency depends on the kinds of evidence for each case. Sansovino's agency is grounded in politics of comparison and editorial method, while Ammirato's in rhetorical adaptation and manuscript scholarship. That two such distinct forms of authorial agency could coexist is indicative of the intellectual landscape of sixteenth-century Italy. By working through the divergent traces, they left behind, the dissertation demonstrates how humanists produced, organized, and strategically reshaped political-historical knowledge in ways that reflected their aims, audiences, and circumstances in which they wrote.

Finally, this thesis emphasizes the role of humanists as both consumers and producers of knowledge. They moved between courts, academies, and printshops, and they were students, as well as readers and note-takers. They read, excerpted, and reorganized material, they drafted notebooks and paratexts, and through these practices they shaped the circulation, form and

meaning of knowledge. But they were also the creators of works that reflected all these factors, as well as their own interests. Future work might extend this approach to other humanists or *letterati* involved in humanist practices who oscillated between manuscript and press, further illuminating how early modern political and historical knowledge took shape through acts of compilation, organization, and rhetorical design.

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