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Source: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 109, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1989), pp. 175-182

Published by: [American Oriental Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/604423>

Accessed: 30/03/2011 21:07

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SCHOLASTICISM AND HUMANISM IN CLASSICAL ISLAM AND THE CHRISTIAN WEST*

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HISTORY IS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, A SEARCH FOR ORIGINS. It helps us to understand our religious, cultural and intellectual heritage. In so far as we are Christians we know that our religious origins go back to the Jews, that we are Judaeo-Christian; the Bible is there to prove it. In so far as we are Western we know that we are indebted intellectually to the classical antiquity of Greece and Rome. The Great Books of Western Civilization are there to give us the development of that heritage.

The cultured Christian layman is aware of his religious debt to Judaism, and of his intellectual debt to Greco-Roman antiquity; but, generally speaking, he is not aware of any debt to classical Islam. The very idea may cause him to smile indulgently, or to dismiss the suggestion as unworthy of his attention. Others may be aware of some legacy from Islam, but seem to remember that it was Greek, or something else, in origin, and that the West was able, subsequently, to recover the item in question directly from its source.

Thus there is nothing that our historical studies have brought to our attention of a significant legacy of purely Islamic origin. And if a suggestion of such a legacy was made somewhere in our reading, it somehow did not make an impression.

Was there really nothing in the legacy of classical Islam that was purely Islamic and somehow incorporated in Western culture without our being aware of it, for one reason or another? Could it be that all we have from that great civilization are things of little consequence, some words that passed into Western vernaculars, some trivia of no great importance?

This evening, I would like to entertain you with a brief description of some phenomena, whose origins, I believe, can be adequately explained only on purely Islamic-Arabic grounds. Two major intellectual movements, which we have long considered as of exclusively

Western origin, have their roots deep down in Islamic soil. The first movement, appropriately called scholasticism, is that of the school guilds in the Middle Ages; the second is that of humanism in the Italian Renaissance.

These two intellectual movements are still with us today in our systems of higher education. I believe that both had their origins in Islam, because of certain exigencies relative to the Islamic religion and to classical Arabic. The results of my research on humanism in no way oppose the conclusions found in the excellent work of Paul Oskar Kristeller.

Time does not permit the full unfolding of all the essentials of the two developments; these will soon be available in a forthcoming study. I have therefore limited myself this evening to two phenomena for each of the two movements. For the scholastic movement, I shall speak of two aspects of the *doctorate*; and for the movement of humanism, I shall speak of the art of *dictation*, called in Latin, *ars dictaminis*, and of the humanist attitude toward classical language. Each of these phenomena is an essential element, indispensable to the understanding of the intellectual movement to which it belongs. I hope to show how the Islamic doctorate had its influence on Western scholarship, as well as on the Christian religion, creating there a problem still with us today. I also hope to show how certain exigencies relative to classical Arabic have a basic formative connection with the humanism of the Italian Renaissance.

THE ISLAMIC DOCTORATE AND UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP

As you know, the term doctorate comes from the Latin *docere*, meaning to teach; and the term for this academic degree in medieval Latin was *licentia docendi*, "the license to teach." This term is the word for word translation of the original Arabic term, *ijāzat at-tadrīs*. In the classical period of Islam's system of education, these two words were only part of the term; the full term included *wa 'l-iftā'*, meaning, in

* Presidential Address delivered on March 22, 1988, at the Society's 198th Annual Meeting in Chicago.

addition to the license to teach, a "license to issue legal opinions." This license, in classical Islam, was the prerogative of the doctor of the law exclusively. There was no other doctorate in any other field, no license to teach a field, except that of the *religious law*. To obtain a doctorate, one had to study in a *guild school of law*, usually four years for the basic undergraduate course, some ten or more for the graduate.

The doctorate was obtained after an oral examination to determine the originality of the candidate's theses, and to test his ability to defend them against all objections, in disputations set up for the purpose. These disputations were scholarly exercises he had practiced throughout his career as a graduate student of law. With the successful conclusion of his legal studies, the dignity of the doctorate bestowed upon him a triple status: (1) he was recognized as a *faqīh*, i.e., a *master of law*; (2) he was recognized as a *muftī*, i.e., a *professor of legal opinions* solicited by the faithful; and (3) he was recognized as eligible for the teaching post of *mudarris*, i.e., a *doctor* ("teacher") of the law. This triple status later appeared in the guild schools of the Christian West: *faqīh*, *muftī* and *mudarris*, the Latin equivalents of which were *magister*, *professor* and *doctor*. Though these titles came to be used synonymously in both school systems, East then West, in the guild schools of classical Islam they originally pointed each to a distinct function, as indicated.

The doctorate came into existence after the ninth-century Inquisition in Islam. It had not existed before, in Islam or anywhere else. The forces that called it into existence had to do not so much with education as with religion. The guilds of law in Islam, called *madhhabs*, were, before the Inquisition, identified by the name of a city or region: the *madhhab* of the Medinians, the *madhhab* of the Basrians, the *madhhab* of the Iraqians. After the Inquisition, they emerged identified by the name of a person: e.g., the *madhhab* of Shafi'i, the *madhhab* of Ibn Hanbal. They were thus transformed from a loose and informal entity, to an autonomous, exclusivist unit, a professional guild, with rules and regulations to be adhered to by those who wished to become members. The purpose of these guilds was to place, in the hands of the jurists-consults *exclusively*, the machinery to determine orthodoxy in Islam.

This dramatic change in the make-up of the *madhhabs* was brought about by the intrusion of Greek thought upon Islam. To meet the challenge of Greek philosophy, some of whose tenets do violence to monotheistic beliefs, Islam reacted first with a ration-

alistic movement called Mu'tazilism, which attempted to Islamize the intrusive philosophy. This reaction created in turn another reaction: a traditionalist movement whose purpose it was to bring Muslims back to the Prophet's message. Both factions, Traditionalism and Rationalism, declared their respect for reason and revelation. The difference between them was that the Rationalists accepted revelation, but only when corroborated by reason; and the Traditionalists accepted reason, but only as the handmaid of revelation.

Trouble had been brewing for some time before the Inquisition. Toward the end of Islam's second century (the eighth of our era), Shafi'i wrote his famous treatise, the *Risāla*, which the Traditionalists adopted as their manifesto against the Rationalists. It was the first comprehensive work on the methodology of the law, which Shafi'i developed as *the* theology of Islam, a juridical theology, his Traditionalist answer to the philosophical theology of his adversaries, the Mu'tazilism. Thirteen years after the death of Shafi'i, the Inquisition was set afoot under al-Ma'mun, the great patron of the translation movement from Greek to Arabic. The Inquisition turned on the theological question of whether the Koran was the created, or the uncreated, Word of God. Under pain of punishment, in certain cases leading to death, the juridical theologians were being forced to answer that the Koran was not God's co-eternal Word. After fifteen years, during which the philosophical theologians persecuted the juridical theologians, the Inquisition failed, and a new Traditionalist leader emerged, Ibn Hanbal, hero of the passive resistance that broke the back of the Inquisition. Soon afterwards, Shafi'i and Ibn Hanbal were chosen as "patron saints," so to speak, for two of the newly organized professional guilds of law; the names of two other leading jurists-consults were chosen for the two other guilds that survived down to our time.

In contrast with Shi'ite Islam, with Judaism, and with Christianity, the religious system of Sunni Islam was characterized by a high degree of individualism. Sunni Islam had no ecclesiastical hierarchy to determine its orthodoxy. Unlike Christianity, it had no councils or synods. Unlike Judaism, it had no Gaon who ranked as the highest authority. Unlike Shi'ism, it did not refer back to the authority of an Imam. With its professional legal guilds now in place, Sunni Islam professionalized an individualistic and autonomous system with the steps that led to the determination of orthodoxy. I am sure that some of my audience are familiar with these steps; I will presently go over them for those who are not. What we have not so far considered, however, is that the scholarly

system of the magisterial *fatwā-ijmāʿ*, opinion and consensus, is the same scholarly system the West has practised in university scholarship from the Middle Ages down to the present day. This very system found its way to London, in the development of the Inns of Court, four of which have come down to our times: autonomous, professional, and unincorporated guild schools of law, like the guild schools of law of classical Islam. The same system found its way also to the universities of the West, beginning with Italy, France, England and Spain, and later to the United States, when graduate work was introduced from Germany. In other words, the Islamic system of determining orthodoxy in religion was, in its essentials, the medieval Western university system of determining "orthodoxy," so to speak, in scholarship, which has come down to our day.

This scholarly system of determining orthodoxy began with a question which the Muslim layman, called in that capacity *mustaftī*, presented to a juriconsult, called *mufīī*, soliciting from him a response, called *fatwā*, a legal opinion (the religious law of Islam covers civil as well as religious matters). The *mufīī* (professor of legal opinions) took this question, studied it, researched it intensively in the sacred scriptures, in order to find a solution to it. This process of scholarly research was called *ijtihād*, literally, the exertion of one's efforts to the utmost limit. He then gave his response to the soliciting layman. Under no obligation to accept it, the layman could proceed to repeat the process, asking the same question of a number of other juriconsults. He then chose one opinion from among the responses he received. His choice was technically called *taqlīd*. This term had two opposite meanings, according as it was applied to the layman, or to the juriconsult. In the case of the layman, it meant "investing with authority"; in that of the juriconsult, it meant "servile imitation." When the layman chose the opinion (*fatwā*) of a given professor of the law, he "invested it with authority." But if a professor of the law chose the opinion of another professor as his own solution to the layman's question, that choice was considered an act of servile imitation, and eventually the imitating professor lost his reputation, and was no longer considered authoritative. To be considered authoritative, he had to practice original scholarship.

In this process two freedoms were involved: the freedom of the professor to profess his own personal opinions independently of all forces, both within and without the guild in which he was a member; no power could compel him to give a predetermined opinion. The second freedom was that of the layman, who was free to

ask the same question of a number of professors of the law, and to make his own choice from among the answers received. *Orthodoxy thus functioned on two levels*. The chosen opinion was considered orthodox on the first level; the second level of orthodoxy was that of the unanimous consensus of the professors on a given point of law. There being no councils or synods, no organization to declare the existence of such a consensus, no way of counting the yeas and nays of all the professors, unanimous consensus was considered to exist when there was *no known authoritative dissent*. In other words, consensus was determined retroactively, negatively, and provisionally.

These are essential data necessary to make a comparison between the Islamic religious system of determining orthodoxy, and Western scholarship as we have come to know it from the Middle Ages, and as we still practice it in its best tradition in modern times. This tradition includes the academic freedom of the professor to profess his opinions, and the same freedom of the student to learn, and to pass judgment on what he is learning, both of which the Germans have termed *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit*. It also includes the process of university education, with its defense of the doctoral thesis, and the dignity of the academic degree, the doctorate. It further includes our attitude toward the products of scholarship, and toward servile imitation and plagiarism; it includes the initial instance of scholarly orthodoxy bestowed on a scholarly work, and the later instance of unanimous consensus when a given thesis debated over the years, emerges *without authoritative dissenting opinions*. This system of consensus was in fact elaborated in its essentials by the American pragmatist of the past century, Charles S. Peirce, a predecessor of William James.

THE ISLAMIC DOCTORATE AND THE MAGISTERIUM OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

But the influence of the Islamic doctorate extended well beyond the scholarly culture of the university system. Through that very system it modified the millennial magisterium of the Christian Church. Upon reflection this should not be surprising, since education in the Middle Ages was basically a religious function. Historians speak of a secularizing current in the medieval university movement, an atmosphere in which university personnel were torn between two opposing forces. The "secularizing" current issued not from a secular source, but rather from an intrusive foreign source that was religious but highly individualistic, and therefore difficult to accommodate to

a system administered by an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Just as Greek non-theistic thought was an intrusive element in Islam, the individualistic Islamic doctorate, originally created to provide machinery for the Traditionalist determination of Islamic orthodoxy, proved to be an intrusive element in hierarchical Christianity.

In classical Islam the doctorate consisted of two main constituent elements: (1) competence, i.e., knowledge and skill as a scholar of the law; and (2) authority, i.e., the exclusive and autonomous right, the jurisdictional authority, to issue opinions having the value of orthodoxy, an authority known in the Christian Church as the magisterium. In the Christian West the doctorate emerged at first with only its element of competence; understandably so, since the Christian West had its own magisterium, its own religious jurisdictional teaching authority already in place. But it was not long before the doctorate reclaimed its other component, authority; and when it did, the seeds of dissent were sown in Western Civilization. At first restricted, on the one hand, to its component of competence, the doctorate was, on the other hand, extended to all the faculties: theology, medicine, and the literary arts, as well as to law; whereas in Islam it was the prerogative of the field of law alone. But in Christianity its jurisdictional authority in theology soon came back into the picture, claiming its heritage through the professors of theology in the university chairs of sacred theology; and, in doing so, it laid the basis for recurrent dissension among Christians across the centuries, and down to our day.

In Islam the give-and-take of disputation, of argumentation and debate, was vital to the Sunni Islamic process of determining orthodoxy; it was not the mere school exercise that it was at first in the nascent universities of the West. For both systems of education, in classical Islam and the Christian West, the doctorate was the end-product of the school exercise, with this difference, however, that whereas in the Western system the doctorate at first merely meant competence, in Islam it meant also the jurisdictional magisterium. The authentic teaching office of Sunni orthodoxy was in the hands of the professors of the religious law individually, in the legal opinion, on the first level, and in the consensus, on the second. This was not the case in Christianity, where for well over a millennium the jurisdictional magisterium belonged to the bishops in union with the pope.

The doctorate of theology in the University of Paris soon reverted to its original nature. The theologian Godefroid de Fontaines (d. 1306), as pointed out by Father Yves Congar, not considered by any means a

revolutionary, upheld the right of the doctors of theology *not* to follow the episcopal decision, but rather to “determine” (a scholastic term meaning to provide a solution) in those matters belonging to the jurisdiction of the pope; because, said he, “*ea quae condita sunt a papa possunt esse dubia*” (those matters that are established by the pope can be uncertain). There was therefore the prospect of two separate authorities in the Christian West. St. Thomas Aquinas had already recognized this duality of authority and, as pointed out by Father Avery Dulles, had made a distinction between two magisteria: the first he called *magisterium cathedrae pastoralis* or *pontificalis*, the teaching authority of the pastor or pontiff; and the second, *magisterium cathedrae magistralis*, the master’s authority, the authority of the professor of theology. The first was the preeminence of jurisdictional authority; the second, the competence that belongs to a master in a given field of knowledge. The professor’s competence was subordinated to the authority of the pastor. The professorial magisterium, by itself, is in religion without jurisdictional authority, unless adopted by the pastoral magisterium.

But St. Thomas’s distinction did not stop the doctorate from reverting to its original nature. In 1387, as pointed out by Charles Thurot, the Faculty of Theology in Paris assumed the power of passing final judgment on whether a religious doctrine was true or false, orthodox or heretical. The bishop and in the last resort the pope could only exercise judicial and coercive power; they simply applied the punishment. It was necessary to give a theological reason for the condemnation; and this was believed impossible without having recourse to the science of theology. Accordingly, the pope himself could not pass final judgment in matters of dogma. Such was the system applied by Peter of Ailly, in 1387, before Pope Clement VII. In 1439, as pointed out by Yves Congar, at the Council of Basel (the role of the doctors of theology having by now reached its climax), the 34th session of the Council consisted of 300 doctors of theology. Sitting somewhere in that assembly of doctors, there were only seven bishops and 13 priests.

THE ART OF DICTATION

The second part of my talk this evening has to do with humanism. The kind of humanism I have in mind is that same humanism that the eminent scholar, Paul Oskar Kristeller, has specified, in a lecture he gave in 1944 at Brown University, and published in 1945; namely, a specific program of studies called, in

Latin, *studia humanitatis*, and consisting of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history and moral philosophy. For quite some time much controversy was involved with this view of humanism; but to judge by the consensus of scholarship, the opinion of Professor Kristeller has reached the level of consensus. All I can hope to do here is to state that the historical facts from classical Islam fully support the thesis of Kristeller.

It was generally believed that, unlike scholasticism which was a medieval movement, humanism was a modern movement that made a clean break with the past, away from the Middle Ages and especially from the scholastic movement which humanism was supposed to abominate. But scholars, such as Charles Homer Haskins, have shown conclusively that this was not the case; and Kristeller and others have made clear that scholasticism still had its adherents among the humanists, and that the dawn of humanism dates, before Petrarch and Lorenzo Valla, from about the year 1280, in the heart of the Middle Ages. It will presently be seen that this date may be taken back even further to coincide with the dawn of the scholastic movement.

The term *studia humanitatis* was borrowed from Cicero and Gellius and first used by the humanist Coluccio Salutati. Before the term *humanista* was coined on the analogy of *legista*, *canonista*, *artista*, and so on, a humanist was known either by the name of poet, or by that of orator, or by both, and the term humanism was first used in the nineteenth century. As for the antecedents of humanism, Kristeller sees them in three sources: (1) the *ars dictaminis* of Italy, (2) grammar and literature from France, and (3), as of the fifteenth century especially, the influence of Byzantium.

The names "humanism" and "scholasticism" were coined long after the movements they designate had come into existence and fully developed. Scholasticism, the movement of the school guilds just treated, and humanism, the movement of a particular program of studies, two major movements in Western intellectual history, both date from the Middle Ages. It was in the Middle Ages that scholasticism achieved its full development; humanism did not achieve it until the Italian Renaissance, when scholasticism was already on its decline. Long before they became part of Western intellectual history, these two movements were major intellectual movements of defense mobilized to meet the challenge of external forces. We have already seen that the movement of the school guilds was one of defense against an Islamic philosophical system of theology inspired by Greek thought. The

movement of humanism was one of defense against what was perceived as the deterioration of classical Arabic, due to the influence of languages spoken by the conquered peoples.

Islamic literary humanism aimed at preserving the classical language of prose and poetry of the ancient Arabians, as well as of the Koran, and of the Prophetic Traditions; its purpose was to use this language as the vehicle of a literature of poetry and artistic prose. The object was to use classical writings as models to imitate and emulate, to create literature as eloquent as that of the ancient models, and, if possible, to go as far beyond those models as the writers' talents could carry them.

The chronology of the development of these two movements in the Christian West was the reverse of that of classical Islam. In the West, the two movements made their initial appearance in the same period. In Islam, humanism began in the first century (the seventh of our era), and scholasticism followed some two centuries later. The school guilds in Islam had no reason to develop before the Inquisition. On the other hand, humanism began when Muslims became aware of the ever-growing differences between the classical language of the sacred scriptures and the language that developed after they broke out of Arabia. Journeys back to their origins became a scholarly necessity. Scholars went back to record the language of the Arabians, who had never mixed with peoples of other languages, in much the same fashion as the linguistic anthropologists of modern times study languages among the natives of strange cultures. The Arab scholars recorded in notebooks the classical language spoken by the Arabians; they also recorded the pre-Islamic classical poetry they could find among the various tribes, collecting them carefully to be used as evidential examples, clarifying what to them had become the strange and rare words of the Koran and of the Prophetic Traditions.

This movement, whose first concerns were grammar and lexicography, was a philological movement in the full sense of the term. It was a "love of words" and their use in the development of an Arabic literature. This movement was characterized by two traits: (1) the aim for eloquence in speech and literary composition, in emulation of their ancient models; and (2) the use of a method called the method of dictation, a method required by the exigencies of classical Arabic.

The characteristics of classical Arabic *required* dictation, rather than copying the already *written* word. The word had to be *heard* from an authoritative speaker, not merely *seen* already written. For the

written word is lifeless; only the consonants are written. The speaker breathes life into the inert consonants, resurrecting them by *vocalizing as he speaks*. Diacritics are used to differentiate between the letters of the written word; but vowel-signs must also be supplied. And whereas, early on, diacritics came to be supplied in the text, the vowel-signs were not, except for the Koran. One and the same cluster of consonants, fully supplied with diacritics, but devoid of vowel-signs, can produce a plural noun, an infinitive noun, an active verbal sentence, and a passive verbal sentence, all in a three-letter root word, *KTB*:

K^uT^uB = "books"
 K^aT^B = "writing"
 K^aT^aB^a = "he wrote"
 K^uTⁱB^a = "it was written"

The classical Arabic word is thus correctly learned *only* when the person recording it hears it correctly spoken, and records it correctly with its diacritical points and vowel-signs. In his book on *The Art of Dictating and of Taking Dictation*, the twelfth-century Sam^cani gives the following advice to students: the words should be written as pronounced by the dictator (*al-mumlī*); and while the assistant dictator (*al-mustamlī*) repeats the words (for those seated beyond earshot of the dictator), the consonants should be given their diacritical points and their vowel-signs. In another passage, the author justifies this method by telling the student that:

The best method is for the *dictator* to *dictate* to you, and for you to write from his formulation of the words. For if you recite the text to him, you may make mistakes which he may not hear; and if he reads to you, something may distract you from hearing all that he says . . . Ishaq b. ^cIsa b. at-Tabba^c was heard saying, "I no longer put any trust in recitation, since I saw Malik dozing off while someone was reciting to him." (p. 8)

It is with good reason that the name for the elementary school in classical Islam was *maktab*, the place of writing. From the very beginning of education, emphasis was placed on writing from dictation.

The term for dictation was *imlā*². The plural form of this term, *amālī* ("dictations"), came to be used for collections of *florilegia* in the fields of humanistic studies, as well as in the field of the Prophetic Traditions. And when the humanist movement made its appearance in Italy, in the second half of the eleventh century, it did so under a term denoting

dictation: *ars dictaminis*, (*ars dictandi*, *dictamen*, *dictamina*). Modern scholars of this interesting phenomenon, since the work of Wattenbach in the nineteenth century, and down to our times, unaware of the original significance of the term, have given the meaning of composition to the term *ars dictaminis* and its cognates. Dictation could of course be stretched to mean composition; when we dictate a letter to a secretary we are certainly composing. But it seems to me that it would have been simple enough to coin a more pertinent term; say, for instance, *ars compositionis* ("the art of composition"), or better still, *ars epistolaris* ("the epistolary art"). Ernst Curtius, in his *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* says that

in theory the *ars dictaminis* embraced both prose and poetry. The *artes dictandi* commonly begin with this definition, *even when they treat nothing but writing prose letters*. (p. 148)

The fields which the authors of *ars dictaminis* enumerate belong to the program of studies called the *studia humanitatis* and, before that, to the program of studies called in Arabic *ʿulūm al-adab*, i.e., the *studia adabīya*, found in works entitled *al-Amālī*, meaning "dictations," in the plural, as in the plural Latin, *dictamina*.

By a fortunate stroke of luck, authors of *dictamina* works begin by giving a definition of *dictamen*, and the fields which the term stands for, even though they proceed to deal only with the art of letter-writing. An anonymous work on *dictamen* from Orleans, entitled *Ars dictandi aurelianensis*, which scholars of this field date from about 1180, begins with a definition of the "art" and a statement concerning its various kinds:

Quia nobis est propositum tractare de arte dictaminum, primum videndum est quid sit dictamen. (Since it is our plan to treat of the art of dictamen, we must first consider what dictamen is.)

The author then proceeds to define it:

Dictamen sic diffinitur. dictamen est literalis edicio, venustate sermonum egregia, sententiarum coloribus adornata. (Dictamen is defined as follows: dictamen is literary expression, in words of brilliant elegance, and sentences of ornate style.)

The author then goes on to state that there are many kinds of *dictamen*, but that he will confine himself to one kind only, the epistolary:

dictaminis autem plures sunt species. dictamen aliud est metricum, aliud prosaicum. de metrico nihil ad praesens. prosaici vero plures sunt species: oratio, rethorica, epistola. et etiam pretermisus alius de epistola agamus. (Now there are numerous kinds of dictamen. Dictamen is sometimes metrical [poetry], sometimes prose. Nothing will now be said of the poetry. There are, to be sure, numerous kinds of prose dictamen: the prose of elegance, of rhetoric, and of letters. But we will treat epistolary dictamen, and set the others aside.)

Other introductions to the *dictamina* corroborate the statement of Curtius. Dictation was the method peculiar to the classical Arabic scene; in Latin, it was, to my mind, merely borrowed as a designation for its contents as they were found in the Arabic *Amālī* books. In the bibliography of Piero della Vigna (d. 1249), the famous secretary of Frederick II, the monarch who made so much use of Saracen administrative practices, we find a work entitled *Dictamina*. The dawn of humanism in the Italian Renaissance is dated only some three decades after the death of Piero.

THE HUMANIST ATTITUDE TOWARD CLASSICAL LANGUAGE

The phenomenon of dictation is only one of the many phenomena which show the filiation between Arabic and Latin literary humanism. One of these phenomena was the attitude of the two humanisms toward the classical language. This attitude is understandable in the case of humanism in Islam; not so in the case of humanism in the Christian West. In the case of Islam, the Koran and its classical language became one of the principal models to be imitated; in the case of the Christian West the Bible was a model for Piero della Vigna, but certainly not for the humanists of the Italian Renaissance, who after a choice of writers in classical Roman antiquity, turned the greater part of their attention to Cicero.

Humanism is not humanism without the presence of two elements: (1) the *studia adabīya* for Islam, and the *studia humanitatis* for the Christian West; and (2) eloquence, which was the integrating element for the fields of both humanisms. Islam had both of these components: it developed its own studies in *adab*, and it drew its inspiration for eloquence from pre-Islamic poetry and oratory, and from the Koran itself, whose very authenticity as the divine speech of God is the Koran's own description of itself as speech of matchless eloquence. In the Christian West, the subjects of

the *studia humanitatis* are the same as those of Islam; the contents of those subjects, however, were for the most part drawn by the West from the quarries of classical antiquity.

As I see it, the impetus came from Islam for the molds and the type of linguistic vehicle used to express them; but the contents of the molds and the vehicle itself were sought in Western classical antiquity as found preserved mainly in France. Specifically, the disciplines of the *studia humanitatis* are found in Arabic *adab*-humanism; and the humanists who were the professional representatives of these disciplines were, in both humanisms, the same; namely, the tutors, the secretaries of the various departments of government, the boon companions, and so on. Just as significant, the amateur humanists were also the same; especially the lawyers and the notaries. Among the *adab*-humanists, the physicians were prominent amateur humanists, among whom many were prolific authors, not only in medicine and the natural sciences, but also in the disciplines of humanism. In the West, the linguistic vehicle of humanism was classical Latin, not medieval Latin or the vernaculars, just as the vehicle for *adab* was classical Arabic, not the vernaculars. That is why the *Divine Comedy* was not considered a product of humanism. The humanism of the Italian Renaissance adopted classical Latin as the vehicle of eloquence, in preference to medieval Latin. This is what differentiates the humanism of a Piero della Vigna, whose vehicle for eloquence was medieval Latin, and the humanism of a Dante Alighieri, whose vehicle for eloquence was the Italian vernacular of Florence, from the humanism of the Italian Renaissance, which opted for classical Latin. Medieval Latin and the Florentine vernacular had already proven to be capable of high eloquence, in the writings of Piero della Vigna, and especially in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

The question arises, why then did the humanists of the Italian Renaissance insist on eloquence in classical Latin? Why were they not swayed by the strong plea which Dante made for vernacular eloquence in his *De Vulgari Eloquentia*? Why were they insensitive to the eloquence of the *Divine Comedy*, where Dante had so magisterially put his thesis to the test? They even suggested he rewrite that eloquent work of genius in classical Latin.

The only answer I have, for this less than normal attraction toward a language not one's own, is that there must have been an irresistible urge to answer the challenge of classical Arabic with an equally classical language. The feeling must have been an overwhelming one considering the difficulties involved, and the less than perfect results obtained. The challenge, I

believe, was there, and had been lurking in the background since the days of the ninth-century Spaniard Alvaro who complained in his *Indiculus luminosus* ("The Little Letter of Lofty Eloquence") that the talented Christian Mozarab youths of Spain could no longer write a decent letter in Latin, but could do so in classical Arabic—a classical Arabic, he added, that was superior to that of the Arabs themselves! Yes, there is indeed reason to believe that the challenge was there and that the attempt was made to meet it with a language that just had to be classical, the only kind considered adequate to the task.

To sum up:

(1) Historians of Italian Renaissance humanism, cite as its sources Italy's own traditions, especially the *ars dictaminis*; and France, to my mind, was a quarry for materials. Byzantium, considered uninvolved with the origins, is brought later into the picture.

(2) The *ars dictaminis* deals, in practice, with epistolography; it cites other fields of humanism, but does not treat them. Thus it was known to consist of more fields than were being used.

(3) The scholastic and humanistic movement arrived simultaneously on the intellectual scene in Italy, in the second half of the eleventh century, in that influx of new knowledge that Haskins talks about in Italy and Sicily, as well as in Spain. But although their arrival was simultaneous, their development was

not. It was the reverse of that of Islam; and in contrast to Islam, scholasticism was the first to develop fully, while humanism developed only partially, until two centuries later. To my mind, the reason for this delay in development was that it had to wait for the full development of urbanism, the only atmosphere in which it could flourish fully.

(4) Arabic books on humanism, the *Amālī* genre and its cognates, were plentiful in the chanceries and chancery schools of Sicily, where secretaries imbued with the three cultures, Latin, Arabic, and Greek, worked side by side. Arabic books on humanism, authored by philosopher-physicians who were also humanists, came to the two great centers of translation, Monte Cassino in Italy, and Toledo in Spain.

(5) And finally, if, as I have stated, the arrival of the two movements in Italy occurred in the same period, it is because they had both already come into existence and developed in Islam.

Thus if our religious monotheism is Judaeo-Christian, and our intellectual culture is Greco-Roman, what I believe we have yet to realize is that an essential part of our intellectual culture, namely, our university and scholarly culture, is Arabo-Islamic.

My time is drawing to a close. I hope that I have provided you, as promised, with some interesting post-prandial entertainment; if not, then at least with some food for thought. Thank you.