

# Renaissance and Reformation

## Renaissance et Réforme



## Introduction

Myron McShane

Volume 45, numéro 3, été 2022

'Hi cursus fecere novos...' Studies in Latin Humanism  
'Hi cursus fecere novos...' Études sur l'humanisme latin

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1099724ar>  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i3.40406>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (imprimé)  
2293-7374 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer ce document

McShane, M. (2022). Introduction. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 45(3), 9–16. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v45i3.40406>

© Myron McShane, 2023



Ce document est protégé par la loi sur le droit d'auteur. L'utilisation des services d'Érudit (y compris la reproduction) est assujettie à sa politique d'utilisation que vous pouvez consulter en ligne.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/fr/usagers/politique-dutilisation/>

éerudit

Cet article est diffusé et préservé par Érudit.

Érudit est un consortium interuniversitaire sans but lucratif composé de l'Université de Montréal, l'Université Laval et l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Il a pour mission la promotion et la valorisation de la recherche.

<https://www.erudit.org/fr/>

# Introduction

MYRON MCSHANE

Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies

Nearly one hundred attendees from fourteen countries registered for the inaugural conference of the Canadian Association of Neo-Latin Studies/ Association canadienne d'études néo-latines (CANLS-ACENL). The event was hosted virtually by the Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies (CRRS) at the University of Toronto on 12 February 2021.<sup>1</sup> Beyond attendance, the CANLS-ACENL, which aims to be a national, bilingual, and multidisciplinary learned society that welcomes international representation and disseminates its proceedings, met five principal objectives of the conference steering committee. First, we quite literally had participants from across the country—from Victoria to St. John's. Second, as befits a national Canadian learned society, we secured a robust group of presenters in both official languages. Third, as is appropriate for the language of the *Respublica litterarum*, we welcomed an international cohort of Neo-Latinists: presenters and session chairs from France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. Fourth, our meeting featured scholars from a wide variety of disciplines; in addition to Canada's traditional strengths in classics and history, Neo-Latinists from the disciplines of English, French, Italian, and translation studies shared their papers. Fifth, as you see before you, we now have select proceedings from the conference. Before I give a concise summary of the seven articles in this special issue, I will very briefly place the efforts of this society within the broader context of contemporary Neo-Latin studies. Finally, I will conclude with acknowledgements to the many people who assisted in making this event happen.

Today, it is commonplace to remark upon the ever-increasing scholarly interest in the study of Neo-Latin. Whether one conservatively demarcates the discipline between 1350 and 1700, or broadens its range from 800 to the present, one cannot doubt that the field has significantly raised its profile in recent years. In the past decade alone, we have seen the appearance of an encyclopaedia, a handbook, a guide, a major series of anthologies, and even a podcast devoted to

1. For the conference program, see <https://crrs.ca/neo-latines>.

the subject,<sup>2</sup> and thanks to the assiduity of bibliographers, it is possible to remain current with respect to the annual profusion of scholarship in the field.<sup>3</sup> The founding of associations for the study of Neo-Latin, whether they be national or international in scope, has also provided a fresh impetus for the advancement of the discipline.<sup>4</sup> It is widely agreed that the foundation of the International Association of Neo-Latin Studies (IANLS) in Amsterdam in 1973 helped mark the beginning of a new era in the field.<sup>5</sup>

Regarding Canadian contributions to Neo-Latin studies, scholars have rightly highlighted the importance of two major publications of international stature: *The Collected Works of Erasmus* (CWE) and the *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum* (CTC).<sup>6</sup> In terms of research centres, the importance of the University of Toronto's Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies to the field has been well-documented.<sup>7</sup> However, one major research centre that has yet to receive its due in the history of Canadian Neo-Latin studies is the now defunct Centre d'études de la Renaissance at the Université de Sherbrooke.<sup>8</sup> In terms of individual scholarly achievement in the discipline, attention has been drawn to pioneering Canadian scholars such as W. Leonard Grant and his classic study, *Neo-Latin Literature and the Pastoral*.<sup>9</sup> Other groundbreaking scholars, however, such as Carol Kidwell (née Maddison), have yet to be fully

2. See, respectively, Ford, Bloemendal, and Fantazzi, *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*; Knight and Tilg, *Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*; Moul, *Guide to Neo-Latin Literature*; Manuwald et al., *Bloomsbury Neo-Latin Series*; and Van Dijk, *Neo-Latin Podcast*.

3. See Barton et al., "Neo-Latin: Literature."

4. See Verbeke, "Neo-Latin Societies."

5. Notably, the triannual meeting of the IANLS took place in Canada in 1988. See Dalzell, Fantazzi, and Schoeck, *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Torontonensis*.

6. The CWE at the University of Toronto Press has completed more than three-quarters of its ambitious project (sixty-six of eighty-six projected volumes) and will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary in 2024. On the CWE, see Crane, "Forty Years"; and Estes, "Englishing Erasmus." The CTC has recently celebrated its sixtieth anniversary and is now published by the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto. For information on current volumes, see its official website: <https://catalogustranslationum.org>. On the CTC, see Hankins, "Neo-Latin Philology," 559.

7. See Estes, *First Forty Years*.

8. The Centre d'études de la Renaissance was founded by Jesús Martínez de Bujanda in 1968 and closed in 1998. A collection of papers related to the Centre are housed at the Université de Sherbrooke. Their press, Publications du Centre de la Renaissance, was a pioneering Neo-Latin series in Quebec.

9. See Hankins, "Neo-Latin Philology," 554.

acknowledged.<sup>10</sup> The present-day contributions of Canadian Neo-Latin scholars are too numerous to mention, but a representative idea of their contributions can be gleaned from their participation in sixteen volumes of the I Tatti Renaissance Library (ITRL) series.<sup>11</sup> Finally, the rich and largely unexplored field of Neo-Latin works written in or about colonial Canada should not be overlooked.<sup>12</sup>

With regard to the articles in this special issue, virtually all represent a unified subject: Neo-Latin poetry. Most of the papers are concerned with various poetic genres written in Renaissance Italy and France over the course of nearly a century and a half (1419–1567). These range from epic and didactic poetry to epigrams. The sole exception is an article dedicated to the quintessential Renaissance art of translation; this contribution on the Quattrocento Neo-Latin influence on French translators of Plato appropriately provides a bridge between the four preceding articles on Italian humanist poetry and the two succeeding ones on their French counterparts.

Kyle Gervais begins this collection by discussing the relationship between two Renaissance continuations of Virgil's *Aeneid*. He analyzes the well-known *Supplement* by Maffeo Vegio as a response to Pier Candido Decembrio's earlier and much shorter *Supplement*. Gervais argues that Decembrio's alleged fragment is actually a complete work that displaces Aeneas with Turnus, while Vegio's poetic reply re-establishes the primacy of Virgil's hero. An appendix provides an edition and translation of Decembrio's heretofore largely inaccessible *Supplement*. Gervais's work augments the tradition of Canadian classicists exploring the vast reception of Virgil.<sup>13</sup> Anna Chisena follows with

10. See Maddison, *Marcantonio Flaminio*. In contrast to the many European émigré scholars who have enriched Canadian Neo-Latin studies, Maddison reversed the trend by moving from the University of New Brunswick to ultimately become a dean at the American University in Paris. As Carol Kidwell, she later wrote book-length studies on four major Neo-Latin poets: Pietro Bembo, Michael Marullus, Giovanni Pontano, and Jacopo Sannazaro.

11. The following Canadian or Canadian-based scholars have edited two volumes for the ITRL series: Virginia Brown, Charles Fantazzi, Elaine Fantham, John N. Grant, Luke Roman, and Maude Vanhaelen. William R. Bowen, Anthony D'Elia, M. Michèle Mulcahey, Myron McShane, and Mark Young have all contributed to single volumes. For more information, see the ITRL's online catalogue at Harvard University Press: <https://www.hup.harvard.edu/collection.php?cpk=1145>.

12. Jean-François Cottier has directed two special issues of *Tangence* on Neo-Latin writers in New France. See Cottier, "À la recherche d'un signe oublié"; and "Nova Gallia."

13. See Braund and Torlone, *Virgil and His Translators*.

an article on a didactic poem by the Italian humanist Basinio da Parma, a member of Sigismondo Malatesta's court at Rimini. Chisena shows that Basinio's *Astronomica* is not an imitation of classical models by Aratus and Hyginus. Rather, through an analysis of Greek glosses in one of Basinio's autograph manuscripts, she demonstrates that the Italian poet's actual source is a work by the Stoic philosopher Cleomedes. Chisena's illustration of the intertwined nature of Greek and Neo-Latin recalls the Québécois scholar Guy Lavoie's groundbreaking work on Guillaume Budé's letters written in Greek.<sup>14</sup>

Matteo Soranzo's offering escorts us into the sixteenth century with an analysis of Giovanni Aurelio Augurello's *Chrysopoeia*. As a complement to Chisena's work, Soranzo's study of Augurello's didactic poem demonstrates how the Italian humanist uses non-literary medieval sources to craft his work on alchemy. He argues that Augurello is a genuine pioneer who overcame the earlier humanist disdain for the art of gold-making to compose elegant hexameters that improve upon their medieval sources. Luke Roman's paper is a sustained reflection on the Roman poetics of place that investigates the *Coryciana* (1524), mainly a collection of epigrams in honour of the humanist Johann Goritz, also known as Corycius, a curial official who served six popes. Roman studies how Neo-Latin poets in the Eternal City viewed Corycius's column chapel in Sant'Agostino and his villa near Trajan's Forum as ultimately surpassing the achievements of antiquity. In particular, he explores the ways in which multiple media come together to create new places and concludes by illustrating how the printer also played a significant role in the collection.

After our sojourn in Renaissance Italy, Charles Le Blanc's article contemplates the question of the Renaissance translation of Plato. After supplying a wide-ranging overview of the translation of Plato in the Quattrocento, he examines the paradox of two French translations of the *Phaedo* by Jean de Luxembourg and Louis Le Roy. In the case of Luxembourg's version, which remains in manuscript, the translation is from Ficino's Latin into French, whereas Le Roy, who knows Greek well, strangely follows Luxembourg's Gallicizing of Ficino's Latin. Le Blanc concludes by viewing translation as an act of reading that vies with commentary in the hermeneutical act of understanding philosophical texts.

John Nassichuk analyzes a long polemical work in dactylic hexameters on the Wars of Religion by the Celestine monk Claude Boudan. This long-neglected

14. For Lavoie's unheralded tour de force of erudition, see Budé, *Correspondance*, ed. Lavoie.

poem, also still in manuscript, describes harrowing events in the years leading up to the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. His study shows how Boudan skillfully weaves his severe verse against the Huguenots by employing techniques from a wide range of classical and Renaissance Neo-Latin poets. This poem adds a fresh Neo-Latin literary angle to the more familiar description of the brutal French civil war by vernacular authors such as Ronsard. We then conclude, fittingly, with an Italian poet who emigrated to France, thereby linking the two countries treated in this special issue. Virginie Leroux examines the epigrams of Benedetto Tagliacarne, also known as Théocrène. While certain Neo-Latin poets of Clément Marot's generation, such as Salmon Macrin, have received considerable scholarly attention, Théocrène's poetic output has so far been overlooked. This oversight is particularly unfortunate, as Théocrène's epigrams contribute significantly to the mythology of the reign of Francis I and shape its court events and celebrations. Among the many subjects treated, Leroux shows how Théocrène arranges for the alleged discovery of the tomb of Laure de Noves, Petrarch's muse, to enhance Franco-Italian relations.

I would like to acknowledge the generous contributions of many people in the founding of the CANLS-ACENL, from which the essays in this special issue originated. The idea of a bilingual Canadian Neo-Latin society was inspired by my attendance more than a decade ago at a joint session of the Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies and the Canadian Society for the Study of Rhetoric (CSSR) at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in Fredericton. The existence of the CSSR prompted me to think that an analogous organization could be established for Neo-Latin studies in this country. I would like to thank Claude La Charité for introducing me to the work of the CSSR and organizing the joint session with his customary aplomb. It is notable that the first president of the CSSR, Judith Rice Henderson, is herself a distinguished Canadian Neo-Latinist.<sup>15</sup>

Ideas do not get transformed into reality without tangible and meaningful support. Above all, I would like to thank Anne Graham. She gave her unstinting encouragement and tireless assistance to my efforts to found the CANLS-ACENL while I was working on another project under her direction in association with Memorial University. I remain in her debt. An organization does not get off the ground without the presence of a steering committee. Fortunately, five scholars took on this role to assist me. First, I am grateful to Luke Roman.

15. See Henderson, *Unfolding of Words*.

He was the first Neo-Latin scholar I approached about the creation of this society, and he gratifyingly responded with enthusiasm. As did Matteo Soranzo. Beyond their papers here, both of these scholars of the quintessential Italian humanist, Giovanni Pontano, also suggested additional presenters for our inaugural conference. François Rouget generously offered his advice on the planning of an in-person conference, and Paul Cohen provided initial advice on the governance of the society and crucial assistance in securing institutional support for our meeting. More important still, Paul urged adopting the eventual virtual format of the conference when the pandemic made an in-person version untenable. Last but not least, I am indebted to John Nassichuk, the co-editor of this volume. In addition to introducing me to Neo-Latin in Renaissance France nearly twenty years ago, John has been closely involved with every aspect of both the conference and this special issue. He is also responsible for the title derived from the tenth eclogue of Baptista Mantuanus's *Adulescentia*.

In addition to being the keynote speaker at our conference, Marc Laureys, president of the International Society of Neo-Latin Studies, provided timely encouragement for the society in its initial stages. At a serendipitous meeting in Arezzo, Charles Le Blanc supplied the same. We would also like to thank heretofore unmentioned participants in the conference who are not represented in this special issue: Zelda Bravo, Hélène Cazes, Agnes Juhasz-Ormsby, and Sebastian Stefanits. In addition, we wish to acknowledge Susanna De Beer and Sébastien Drouin, who graciously agreed to chair sessions at our inaugural meeting. Quite simply, the conference would never have happened without the support of the CRRS at the University of Toronto. We are keen to acknowledge Ethan Matt Kavaler, the director of the CRRS, for agreeing to host the conference, as well as the dedicated support of his assistant, Natalie Oeltjen. Finally, we thank William Bowen for inviting us to publish the select proceedings in *Renaissance and Reformation* as well as Megan Armstrong for overseeing the special issue.

Nine years ago, it was boldly declared that “we live in a golden age of Neo-Latin Studies.”<sup>16</sup> Appropriately enough, this sanguine perspective was written in a Festschrift honouring the Canadian Neo-Latinist Charles Fantazzi. Now that the groundwork for the CANLS-ACENL has been established, it is hoped that

16. Hankins, “Charles Fantazzi,” 43.

Canadian Neo-Latin scholars will continue to add lustre to this association in the coming years.

### Works Cited

- Barton, William M., Clementina Marsico, Florian Schaffenrath, Simon Smets, Lav Šubarić, and Isabella Walser-Bürgler. "Neo-Latin: Literature." *The Year's Work in Modern Language Studies* 82, no. 1 (2022): 13–42. <https://doi.org/10.1163/22224297-08201002>.
- Braund, Susanna, and Zara Martirosova Torlone, eds. *Virgil and His Translators*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198810810.001.0001>.
- Budé, Guillaume. *Correspondance, Tome 1: Les lettres grecques—adjectis paucis e latinis*. Edited by Guy Lavoie. Sherbrooke, QC: Centre d'études de la Renaissance, Université de Sherbrooke, 1977.
- Cottier, Jean-François, ed. "À la recherche d'un signe oublié: Le patrimoine latin du Québec et sa culture classique." Special issue, *Tangence* 92 (Winter 2010).
- Cottier, Jean-François, ed. "Nova Gallia: Recherches sur les écrits latins de Nouvelle-France." Special issue, *Tangence* 99 (Summer 2012).
- Crane, Mark. "Forty Years of the *Collected Works of Erasmus*." *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme* 37, no. 4 (2014): 71–79. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v37i4.22640>.
- Dalzell, Alexander, Charles Fantazzi, and R. J. Schoeck, eds. *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Torontonensis: Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies, Toronto 8 August to 13 August 1988*. Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991.
- Estes, James M. "The Englishing of Erasmus: The Genesis and Progress of the Correspondence Volumes of the *Collected Works of Erasmus*." In *Neo-Latin and the Humanities: Essays in Honour of Charles E. Fantazzi*, edited by Luc Dietz, Timothy Kircher, and Jonathan Reid, 143–56. Toronto: Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2014.
- Estes, James M. *The First Forty Years: A Brief History of the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1964–2004*. Toronto: Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2004.
- Ford, Philip, Jan Bloemendal, and Charles Fantazzi, eds. *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*. 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2014.



- Hankins, James. "Charles Fantazzi and the Study of Neo-Latin Literature." In *Neo-Latin and the Humanities: Essays in Honour of Charles E. Fantazzi*, edited by Luc Dietz, Timothy Kircher, and Jonathan Reid, 33–45. Toronto: Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2014.
- Hankins, James. "Neo-Latin Philology in North America during the Twentieth Century." In *Humanism and Platonism in the Italian Renaissance*, 551–72. Vol. 1. Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 2003.
- Henderson, Judith Rice, ed. *The Unfolding of Words: Commentary in the Age of Erasmus*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442695962>.
- Knight, Sarah, and Stefan Tilg, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxford-hb/9780199948178.001.0001>.
- Maddison, Carol. *Marcantonio Flaminio: Poet, Humanist and Reformer*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965.
- Manuwald, Gesine, Stephen Harrison, William M. Barton, and Bobby Xinyue, eds. *Bloomsbury Neo-Latin Series: Early Modern Texts and Anthologies*. London: Bloomsbury, 2020–.
- Moul, Victoria, ed. *A Guide to Neo-Latin Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139248914>.
- Van Dijk, Sharon. *The Neo-Latin Podcast from the SNLS*. Centre for the Study of the Renaissance. <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/snls/podcast>.
- Verbeke, Demmy. "Neo-Latin Societies." In *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, edited by Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal, and Charles Fantazzi, 1118. Vol. 2. Leiden: Brill, 2014.