What's Wrong with Doing History of Renaissance Philosophy?
Rudolph Goclenius and the Canon of Early Modern Philosophy

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Abstract The chapter is divided into two main parts. In the first, I offer some general considerations about the elusive place of Renaissance philosophy within the larger disciplines of philosophy, philosophy of history and history of philosophy. In the second part, I rely on a specific case study – Rudolph Goclenius's dictionaries of philosophy (published in 1613 and 1615) – to emphasize the value and importance of the philosophical production during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As a thinker straddling between two centuries, Goclenius demonstrates how the contribution of seventeenth-century philosophers, with their innovative ideas about language, science and religion, cannot be properly understood without taking into account the philosophical work elaborated during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Rather than perpetuating the image of these two centuries as impoverished and unoriginal in terms of ideas and commitments, Goclenius helps us to have a more historicized and positive consideration of eclectic contaminations among philosophical trends, the influence exercised by the classical tradition, the persistence of scholastic ways of arguing and the decisive impact of philological methods.

1 Introduction

Between 2004 and 2007, Anthony Kenny published a new history of Western philosophy in three volumes (reissued as one volume in 2010). In Volume 3, devoted to early modern thought, 32 out of 331 pages are devoted to the sixteenth century (the fifteenth century, with Renaissance Platonism, Renaissance Aristotelianism and a few pages on Lorenzo Valla and Nicholas of Cusa, had already been dealt with in Volume 2, dedicated to medieval philosophy). The authors examined in Volume 3 are Giordano Bruno, Galileo Galilei and Francis Bacon. Two pages are on Montaigne (117-118), three on Suarez's metaphysics (181-184), three on issues of religious casuistry (247-250) and eight on Machiavelli's *Prince* and More's *Utopia* (273-281). Kenny's survey is certainly better than Bertrand Russell's ("Until the seventeenth century, there was nothing of importance in philosophy. The moral and political anarchy of fifteenth-century Italy was appalling, and gave rise to the doctrines of Machiavelli ") or D. W. Hamlyin's ("It may seem a paradox that a period that saw the flowering of much else – of science, of art and of literature – was a period in which philosophy was at a low ebb. It is nevertheless a fact"). Kenny's *The Rise of Modern Philosophy* remains, however, disappointing, for it ignores all the efforts to legitimate the philosophical production of the Renaissance undertaken in the past by such historians as Eugenio Garin, Charles Schmitt, Brian Copenhaver and Cesare Vasoli. It is nonetheless evidence that Renaissance philosophy continues to have a precarious place in the history of philosophy,

and this for a number of reasons such as the bad publicity that the word and notion of eclecticism has received among philosophers from the seventeenth century on, the allegedly non-philosophical nature of Renaissance humanism, a lingering uneasiness about early modern theories of universal animation and, finally, a certain tendency to regard theological debates from the heretical movements of the fifteenth century to the Reformation and Counter-Reformation as philosophically spurious. For all these reasons, Renaissance philosophy continues to be relegated in a limbo of pseudo-philosophy placed between the genuinely and gloriously philosophical epochs of the Middle Ages and the seventeenth century. The story goes that, in the early modern period, serious philosophy resumed its course with Descartes, Hobbes and Spinoza, after an interlude of literary experiments and slavish imitations of classical authors. Although there may be an element of historical truth in this view (for the seventeenth century was indeed a golden age for philosophy), the problem behind a blasé and patronizing attitude towards Renaissance philosophy boils down – very prosaically – to present issues of monolingualism, nationalism, educational and institutional settings, publishing marketing plans, and, more recently, criteria and strategies through which research funds are allocated to historians and institutions of higher education.

This may sound obvious, but it is fair to say that every age elaborates its own philosophical consideration of the surrounding reality and the major events that shape such reality. Depending, however, on philosophical preferences and tastes, a sort of tacit assumption has established itself among historians of philosophy according to which some ages are more philosophical than others. To cut a long story short, classical antiquity (Plato and Aristotle), scholastic philosophy (from Abelard to William of Ockham), the seventeenth century (Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza and Leibniz) and German idealism (from Kant to Hegel) are seen as authentic philosophical ages. In different ways and with different aims, this view has been perpetuated by both continental and analytical philosophers. It has also been sanctioned by a growing industry of handbooks and companions to philosophy and history of philosophy, which helps reinforce the stereotype that there are in fact serious and less serious periods of philosophy in human history.

To this situation, which is specific to the discipline of history of philosophy (Rorty, Schneewind and Skinner 1984), one should add the question of the narrow and contested space left to the history of Renaissance philosophy within the broader field of Renaissance studies, a field that is still dominated by Burckhardtian prejudices. Burckhardt famously ignored Renaissance philosophy in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860). Censors of Renaissance philosophy can therefore be found both within and without the field of the history of philosophy. The ones from within are often historians of seventeenth-century philosophy and analytically-trained historians of philosophy. The censors from without are historians who are simply uninterested in intellectual history, either for militant reasons (and therefore actively and aggressively uninterested) or because they prefer to devote their energies to investigating various aspects of material history (they are passively uninterested).

Finally, I should at least hint at a general philosophical question – a question pertaining to philosophy of history. This has to do with the uncomfortable relationship which has always characterized the two intellectual activities of philosophy and history. In an article published in 1994, Paola Zambelli noted that "[h]istory of philosophy is now a part of history, no longer a part of philosophy, nor its completion". This is an important point to be borne in mind, which is

relevant for the definition of the history of philosophy as a discipline. In the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, history of Renaissance philosophy emerged from a glorious historiographical past and from a speculative setting that was as glorious. Within the traditions of both German idealism and historicism Renaissance philosophy was indeed a privileged field of both scholarship and inspiration. One should only think of Hegel and Dilthey. In Italy, the shaping of the field of Renaissance philosophy coincided with the activity of Bertrando Spaventa, Francesco De Sanctis, Francesco Fiorentino, Giovanni Gentile and Benedetto Croce. Within this context, the history of Renaissance philosophy was indeed meant to be part and parcel of the philosophical investigation of reality, in some cases even a crucial stage in its very development. Even Ernst Cassirer demonstrated a certain penchant for this speculative tendency in doing history of Renaissance philosophy. His *Individuum und Cosmos* (1927), however, remains one of the most fascinating contributions to the study of Renaissance philosophy.

Today history of Renaissance philosophy has definitely become part of the history of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while philosophical assumptions on the part of the historian of philosophy are seen – and probably rightly so – with suspicion and scepticism. We all should be ready to acknowledge, though, that in this field philosophy of history has often been replaced by practical instructions in historiographical methodology, the subject of many seminars in graduate programmes at university. Historiography is a bland version of philosophy of history and gives hope for method in an area where in fact there is no method. The result of this very recent development is that history of Renaissance philosophy has inadvertently mutated into history of philosophical historiography, and historians are often keen to maintain their allegiances to hoary historiographical traditions. This, however, should not come as too much of a surprise, for, by its very nature, history of philosophy is strongly opinionated and often judgmental.

The bad publicity that Renaissance philosophy is receiving at the moment by a motley crew of historians of early modernity, especially by some of the *seicentisti*, in fact dates back to the Renaissance itself. This cannot be denied, for already at the time, a significant chunk of philosophical production – the so-called scholastic philosophy – was strongly criticized by two main fronts: the humanists (Lorenzo Valla, Desiderius Erasmus, Luis Vives, Thomas More) and a number of vanguard philosophers (Marsilio Ficino, Baldassarre Castiglione, Leone Ebreo, Giordano Bruno, to mention only a few). Both groups shrank from the technicalities of scholastic philosophy. On the other hand, both Neo-Hegelianism and Neo-Kantianism during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries imparted an aura of speculative dogmatism on Renaissance thinkers. This fact has certainly not improved the fortunes of Renaissance philosophy. In a way, sixteenth-century philosophers find themselves in an infelicitous situation, even more so than fifteenth-century philosophers. It must be, I suspect, the proximity of the seventeenth century, for doing history of Renaissance philosophy with one's eyes turned towards the seventeenth century transforms some of the most tantalizing and original philosophers of that period into disquieting hybrids. Girolamo Cardano (1501-1576), Bernardino Telesio (1509-1588), Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) and Francis Bacon (1561-1526), to make a few names, look like spooked centaurs, suddenly caught in the light of a better, more rational century. Sometimes they are reluctantly hosted in accounts of history of philosophy which I would call "history in the optative", that is, *if-only* history. If only Telesio hadn't maintained that everything is sentient in nature; if only

Cardano weren't so prone to astrology and demons; if only Campanella didn't get lost chasing theocratic dreams; if only Bacon hadn't assumed that appetite rules nature, including inanimate nature. If only indeed: we could have had modern physics, algebra, global studies and the scientific revolution already in the sixteenth century! Instead we had to wait for later developments in the seventeenth century to see the longed-for *telos* fulfilled.

We all know that such things as fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are in fact figments of the historiographical imagination. They fit extremely well in long-tested and official periodizations and categories; however, they simply have no ontological consistency apart from being useful conventions. The view of Renaissance philosophy legitimized by august companions and handbooks produced by institutions which are as august is that of a squeezed middle, squeezed between medieval and seventeenth century. Let us instead resort to the anamorphic resources of the imagination and think of a "long" philosophical Renaissance, stretching as it were from Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1033-1109) to Spinoza (1631-1677). The great historian of Renaissance philosophy, Edward Cranz, who managed to combine philosophical ingenuity with historical rigour, argued that towards the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth a momentous "reorientiation" in thinking took place in the major European centres of philosophical investigations (Cranz 2006). This is the path I would like to follow, for here I can see a pattern, emerging from the matrix of scholastic philosophy, with extraordinarily valuable accretions coming from the Latin translations of Avicenna, Averroes and Jewish thinkers and with decisive influences from cutting-edge vernacular thinking.

In this chapter, in order to practise this exercise in anamorphic vision, I will use Rudolph Goclenius's philosophical dictionaries as barometers to test the climate of pre-Cartesian philosophical endeavours in Europe. This decision is certainly open to methodological objections. They concern, firstly, the extent to which Goclenius's dictionaries can be said to be representative of Renaissance philosophy; secondly, whether they transcended the limits imposed by the so-called national styles of thought; and, finally, whether they were in fact prone to individual philosophical preferences. I will address these points briefly in my conclusion.

2 An Entire Library in One Book: Goclenius's *Lexicon philosophicum*

To begin with, I summarily describe the physiognomy of Goclenius's *Lexica*, starting with those traits that we expect to find in them judging from what we know about its author. Rudolph Goclenius (1547-1628), father of another illustrious philosophical Rudolph (1572-1621) better known for his place in the history of magnetic therapies, wrote two seminal dictionaries of philosophy: the *Lexicon philosophicum, quo tanquam clave philosophiae fores aperiuntur* ("Philosophical Lexicon, Which Opens the Doors of Philosophy as if It Were a Key"), published in 1613, and the *Lexicon philosophicum Graecum* ("Greek Philosophical Lexicon"), which came out two years later. After having studied in Erfurt, Marburg and Wittenberg following the Philippist line within the Lutheran fold, he taught physics, logic and ethic at the universities of Kassel and Marburg. He wrote a number of metaphysical writings which clearly reflect the theological debates between Lutherans and Calvinists at the time. His *Analyses in exercitationes aliquot J. C. Scaligeri de subtilitate* (1599) and *Adversaria ad exotericas aliquot Julii Caesari*

Scaligeri acutissimi philosophi exercitationes (1606) testify to the pervasive influence of Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558) in Protestant philosophical circles. When the University of Marburg turned into a Calvinist institution in 1605, Goclenius's sympathies towards Calvinism became more evident.

I will focus on his two dictionaries as philosophical texts that are both rhetorically and theologically savvy: these for me are two very important reasons why this books can be said to be representative of the philosophical climate of the Renaissance. Part of Goclenius's rhetorical awareness lies in his constant attention to the linguistic aspects of the philosophical problems. Goclenius was clearly a philo-Hellenist in his approach to philosophy, so much so that he felt the need to complement his lexicon of philosophical Latin terms with one devoted to the principal Greek concepts. He remained nonetheless a strong advocate of the importance of the Latin tradition – both scholastic and humanist – in Western philosophy. And while he was in principle against the use of barbarisms in philosophy (especially scholastic barbarisms), the painstaking care – almost of an entomological kind – with which he collected, scrutinized and dissected all sorts of inappropriate and incorrect terms reveals in him a passion for the domain of the philosophically inarticulate or the barely articulable, i.e., for those awkward protrusions of clotted meaning (the barbarisms, that is) which especially accrue on the technical terms dividing language from the process of thought. Here it is significant to recall that by 1615 Goclenius had added to the Latin dictionary an appendix entirely devoted to a meticulous analysis of all sorts of inappropriate ways of expressing philosophical concepts in Latin, a "Collection of Words and Phrases that are Obsolete, Less Ordinary, Recently Born, Improper, Impure, Uncouth, including Barbarisms, Solecisms and Slight Solecisms" (*Sylloge vocum et phrasium quarumdam obsoletarum, minus usu receptarum, nuper natarum, ineptarum, lutulentarum, subrusticarum, barmibarbararum, soloecismorum et ὑποσολοίκων*).

One way of shedding further light on the characteristic physiognomy of the work is by looking at the imposing array of sources used by Goclenius and considering in particular the authors whom he refers to with more frequency. At the top, I would put the already mentioned Scaliger, who is cited and quoted in almost every single page. The principal text by Scaliger to be referenced by Goclenius is the *Exotericarum exercitationum liber quintus decimus de subtilitate ad Hieronymum Cardanum* ("The Fifteenth Book of Exoteric Exercises about Cardano's *On Subtlety*", 1557), but other works are also well represented, such as *De causis linguae Latinae* ("The Principles of the Latin Language", 1540), *Poetices libri VII* ("Seven Books of Poetics", 1561) and his dialogues on the pseudo-Aristotelian *De plantis* (1556). Then, on order of frequency, we encounter Jacopo Zabarella (1533-1589), Jakob Schegk (1511-1587) and a large number of Reformed metaphysicians and theologians such as Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560), Girolamo Zanchi (1516-1590), Joachim Mörlin (1514-1571), Amandus Polanus von Polansdorf (1561-1610) and Daniel Tillen (1563-1633). In keeping with the philosophical and theological guidelines of Lutheran and Calvinist debates, Goclenius manifested a clear preference for Scholastic Aristotelianism. For him, this tradition warranted a fundamentally rational understanding of reality. Relying on Amandus Polanus, he stated with confidence that truth was "besides, below and above reason", and reason was perceived "through the intellect, through the senses and through faith", and as a result truth could never be "against reason". After all, it is worth remembering here that Goclenius came up with quite a notable philosophical term:

"ὀντολογία", ontology, understood as the philosophical inquiry about being and its more general properties..

The classics, of course, are well represented in both dictionaries (Plato, Aristotle, Cicero and Seneca), together with the Fathers of the Church (Augustine and Boethius). Diogenes Laertius ("non ignobilis rerum philosophicarum rapsodus") is often mentioned as a reliable source of philosophical information. Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and John Scotus are among the most important sources. The presence of Gabriel Biel (1425-1495) is evidence of Goclenius's attention to the contribution of nominalism and the Ockhamist *via moderna*. Averroes's point of view is frequently consulted. The same is true of Thomas Cajetan (1469-1534) and the Coimbra Commentators. Among the authors with no affiliation to the university system, Scaliger is not the only one to be referred to by Goclenius. We also have Bessarion (1403-1472), Giovanni and Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494 and 1470-1533, respectively) and, above all, Ficino (1433-1499). The latter is a key source of Goclenius's *Lexica* also for the authors he translated and commented upon, first among them Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who is well represented in both dictionaries. Finally, it is worth noting how Goclenius drew profusely on a number of encyclopaedic accounts of Renaissance learning, such as Conrad Gessner's *Bibliotheca universalis* (1545-1549), Theodor Zwinger's *Theatrum vitae humanae* (1565) and Paul Skalić de Lika's *Encyclopedia, seu orbis disciplinarum tam sacrarum quam prophanarum epistemon* ("Encyclopedia or Knowledge of the World of Disciplines, both Sacred and Profane"), published in Basel in 1559.

Like Campanella and Bacon, whom I mentioned earlier, Goclenius is a philosopher who inhabited both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The main reason why I decided to centre my chapter on *Lexicon philosophicum* and *Lexicon philosophicum Graecum* is that they provide – in the shape of a microcosm as it were – a relatively faithful image of what doing philosophy was like during the Renaissance. As Raphael Eglinus (1559-1622), professor of theology at the University of Marburg with strong interests in alchemy, wrote in an elegy appended at the beginning of the Latin *lexicon*, "we don't need shelves any longer; no more thousands books. / This book alone is like a whole library". In using Goclenius's dictionaries as one coherent book of philosophy, I intend to concentrate on four aspects that, while they may give the impression of being philosophically meagre or illegitimate from a post-Cartesian point of view, represent in fact a most original contribution to philosophical inquiry between the thirteenth and sixteenth century. These aspects are: a reassessment of the virtues of eclecticism, which means that the philosophical past – and therefore history – could be used as legitimate matter for philosophical investigations (otherwise said: doing history of philosophy is part of the philosophical exercise); a background ontology based on the idea that substances of different nature are nevertheless able to interact and that life in particular acts as the principal mediator between physical and cognitive reality; a sophisticated understanding of the role played by language in articulating human thought; and, finally, a positive consideration of theology seen as a source of philosophical knowledge, in which the cognitive faculty of the imagination plays a key role. In this respect, I feel entitled to adopt the term with which Johann Wirz, a professor of theology active in Zurich during the 1650s, described Goclenius's endeavour: *theiosophia*. If we consider these four points carefully, they can also be seen as a way of taking *history*, *life*, *language* and *imagination* seriously from a philosophical point of view. Which for me it's another way of stressing the

specific contribution of Renaissance philosophy to the definition of early modern thought.

3 History, Life, language and the Imagination: A précis of Renaissance philosophy

Like many philosophers at the time, Goclenius explained the way in which the human mind understands reality as a result of a continuous adjustment between cognitive, linguistic and natural factors. From a strictly metaphysical point of view, his dictionaries chronicle the emergence of what can be seen as the great conundrum of the modern age: the contested relationship between *res* ("reality"), *ideae* (the underlying template of reality, both in cognitive and operative terms) and a number of devices left to both nature and the human minds to bridge the gap dividing reality from its ideal underpinnings. These devices correspond to a cluster of philosophical notions that denote the human ability to reflect and represent being: *imago* ("appearance"), *species sensibilis* and *species intellegibilis* ("liknesses", both sensible and intelligible), *figura* ("shape"), *repraesentatio* ("representation") and *signum* ("sign"). Goclenius held that *imago* could be understood as either archetype or ectype. He distinguished between σωματικαὶ and πνευματικαὶ images (the latter also termed *species immateriales et intelligibiles*). Ontologically speaking, he regarded *ideae*, *imagines* and *species* as all instances of *formae*, "forms", that is, constitutive principles of both nature and the mind. While *formae mentales* were key in adjusting representations to reality, *formae reales* were further subdivided by Goclenius into forms that governed things from without while remaining separate from them (*formae assistentes*), and forms that shaped things from within, becoming one single entity with them (*formae informantes*). In addition, real forms were also divided into "natural" and "artificial". Among natural forms, "substantial" forms were certainly the more problematic, for they remained the mainstay of scholastic metaphysics despite being increasingly exposed to objections coming from different fronts of the European republic of philosophical letters. They were either "separable" (such as the rational soul) or "inseparable" (celestial or sublunary, the latter further subdivided into inanimate and animate). The rational soul, because of its dependence on the body, was characterized by a limited degree of self-sufficiency (*subsistentia incompleta*).

Goclenius's loyalty to the Aristotelian notion of life as ἐντελέχεια helped accelerate the crisis of the Latin *forma* when this was associated to matters of soul and identity. With his *De immortalitate animae* (1516), Pomponazzi had demonstrated how the Aristotelian ἐντελέχεια remained perilously too intimate with the structure of the body. As is often the case with his *Lexica*, Goclenius smudged the boundaries between Platonism and Aristotelianism adding the Platonic meaning of form to complete the picture of traditional scholastic accounts. In cases like these, Goclenius showed that he was an Aristotelian who leant towards an irenically Thomist interpretation of being, while being eclectically open to Platonism through the mediation of Ficino's philosophy. Forms could therefore be characterized as either *ideae* (i.e., *exemplaria*, patterns "devoid of matter and participating in intelligence") or *imagines*, understood as reflections of ideas "joined to matter", that is, a "σκιαγραφία, sketch and rough outline (*adumbratio et rudis delineatio*), to which colours are yet to be applied (*vivis coloribus nondum adhibitis*)", also described as τύποι, "characters". Judging from the amount of lexicographic attention paid to such lemmas as *ratio*, *idea*, *archeptypus*, *similitudo* and *species*, it seems evident

that in Goclenius's framework the notion of form continued to be the ontological backbone of the whole universe. Another recurrent way used by Goclenius to express the relationship between *res* and *idea* was to assume a correspondence between *esse reale* (or *formale*) and *esse ideale*. The *esse ideale* – said Goclenius while acknowledging that he was using the way of speaking of the "barbarian schoolmen" – was reality in its being fashioned by mental forms, "the being of a thing, as this is in the mind according to the species through which, as in a representational principle (*obiectivum principium*), a thing is known".

In Goclenius's reconstruction of Western metaphysics, the ultimate foundation of the congruity between *esse reale* and *esse ideale* was of a theological nature. The two levels corresponded – and indeed interacted – because they had been originally created by God in such a way that they mirrored each other and to a certain extent allowed forms of mutual dependency and interaction (for, as causal entities, ideas were productive and reproductive entities, besides establishing the link through which knowledge connected to reality). A further consequence coming from this metaphysical setting was Goclenius's belief in a fundamental unity or harmony between the mind and the material universe. Citing Augustine, he defined ideas as *species*, *formae* or *rationes* of an external reality, and in this sense they were "outside" reality (*extra rem*). As such, *ratio* was not *res*. And yet, as Goclenius explained while progressing in the argument, "some likeness (*similitudo*) between ideas and things" needed to be assumed. As in the realm of physical generation, this *similitudo* was either "univocal" or "equivocal" Envisaging concepts in terms of fertile seeds, Goclenius defined ideas as principles of activity (*principia operationis*), in which operations and implementations followed the instructions included in an original pattern (*per modum exemplaris*). This model of causality predicated upon notions of likeness and archetypal productivity secured a level of interaction between the world of ideas and physical reality. In discussing the entry "Reactio", Goclenius confirmed that a world of "spiritual" responses (*in potentia cognoscente*, that is, in the field of knowledge) was running parallel to the material universe organized by networks of physical actions and reactions. It was certainly not by accident that a key notion in Goclenius's dictionaries was the power of being affected (*vis recipiendi*).

However influential in bridging the gaps between reality and appearance, being and activity, Platonism was kept carefully at bay when the issue under scrutiny concerned theological matters. As the creator of both ideas and things, Goclenius's God was no constrained by any pre-existing and extra-mental ideal reality, for, in opposition to the Platonic notion of idea, he unambiguously stated that "nothing outside God is eternal" (*nulla enim res extra Deum est aeterna*). As all things were deemed to be in God beyond any degree and measure (*eminenter*) and as objects of His infinite thinking power (*secundum esse cognitum*), Goclenius looked at God's mind as the boundless repository of all that could be actually thought: "the whole realm of possible things (*tota multitudo rerum possibilium*) is not in nature in actuality (*actu*), but in God's knowledge, for there is no possible thing that God ignores in actuality (*actu*)". In addition, as the creator of physical, intelligible and linguistic objects, and the guarantor that nature, knowledge and language were different expressions of the same reality, God was also the foundation upon which moral certainty rested: "the right judgment of the mind is the judgment of right reason, which is congruent with the eternal and immovable norm in God's mind, as revealed in the Decalogue".

Despite rejecting the most radical assumptions underlying Plato's exemplarism, Goclenius

showed nevertheless a positive disposition towards the "double world" (*duplex mundus*) of the Platonists, and not simply for its disposition to smooth the asperities of Aristotelian naturalism. Although, as already said, Aristotelian scholasticism remained the great argumentative platform of Goclenius's metaphysics (and, unsurprisingly, Zabarella was often cited and quoted), in his *Lexica* the Platonic tradition worked as the speculative glue that could cement theology with ontology. The theologians' distinction between *imago increata* and *imago creata*, for instance, was Platonic in kind. It was yet another way for Goclenius to underline an original congruity between reality and appearance, with the difference that while a divine "image" was "essential and immutable", a created "image" could only be "accidental and mutable". When seen along these lines, it's easy to understand why the theological matters most debated by Goclenius concerned the divinity of Christ, His humanity, the difference between essence and person within the Trinity, the nature of divine presence in the Eucharist, the effect of Grace and the importance of biblical hermeneutics. Considering himself primarily a philosopher, however, he left to contemporary divines the task of discussing with caution (*sobrie disputanda*) the most controversial issues in theology.

For all its philosophical significance, the pivotal juncture created by the many relationships between *idea*, *res*, *verbum* and *imago* has momentous theological reverberations throughout the dictionary. Innumerable entries are organized in such a way that they often end with a significant Christological coda. For instance, in discussing the meaning of *regressus*, that is, the logical procedure from effects to causes and then back from causes to effects, Goclenius found a way of further expanding on how to interpret the body of Christ in the Eucharist. He argued against the "corporeal presence" of Christ in the bread in favour of the Calvinist thesis that the Lord's Supper signified a real participation in a ritual of divine transformation: "Corpus Christi est ubicunque est Ecclesia". The entry "Repraesento" sheds more light on this crucial point. Goclenius explained that the verb "to represent" could be understood in two principal senses: as *significare* in a purely denotative way ("The breaking of bread in the Lord's Supper represents [*repraesentat*] the passion and sacrifice of the body of Christ on the cross") and as *rem praesentem facere*, that is, as a way of re-enacting and reproducing the event in question. The relationship between *idea*, *res*, *verbum* and *imago* was also a crucial issue with respect to the meaning and effectiveness of sacraments and rituals. While discussing the concept of *identica praedicatio* Goclenius used the statement "Hoc est corpus meum" of the Eucharist as an opportunity to discuss the ontological and causal status of religious signs. While Thomas Aquinas had interpreted that which was "hidden under the *species* of bread" as the body of Christ, for the Lutherans, His body was that which was hidden "under the *substantia* of bread".

As already said, a large number of entries in Goclenius's Latin and Greek dictionaries demonstrate a clear willingness on his part to engage with theological issues. Above all, he showed a great deal of exegetical subtlety and philosophical acumen in discussing the power of signs and rituals. In the entry "Relatio", while examining the different meanings of the words *patronus* and *cliens*, he argued that the proposition according to which Christ was "our priest" and "the victim who sacrificed himself for our sins" was to be understood in a spiritual sense. Also, the reason why the devil would be warded off and sick people were healed by invoking the name of Christ did not depend on the name as such, but on the intention with which one invoked Him. Regarding the symbol of the cross, Goclenius quoted John Chrysostom (c. 347-407) to reinforce the thesis

that religious symbols were effective in triggering the inner development of the soul: "One should not simply make the sign of the cross with his finger, but shape the cross mentally with intense faith". Closely related to this point is Goclenius's way of addressing the interplay of *idea* and *res* by relying on the rhetorical tradition. An example of the many rhetorical and theological intertwinements that run through Goclenius's dictionaries is his discussion of the difference between "clarity" (*perspicuitas*) and "certainty" (*certitudo*). While he relied on Cicero's authority to argue that the meaning of the adjective "apparent" (*evidens*, ἐναργές in Greek) was the same as the adjective "clear" (*perspicuum*), he thought, however, that certainty had a different status in theological matters: "many of the foundations of our faith", Goclenius went on to explain, "are not apparent (*evidentia*); they all are, however, said to be certain and stable within us, for certainty (*certitudo*) refers to the infallibility of the believed object (πιστοῦ)". Goclenius defined certainty as the *firmitas*, i.e., the strong urge that led the intellect to adhere to the known object from within; *evidentia*, on the other hand, indicated "the way in which" the truth manifested itself and forced the intellect to give its assent.

Goclenius's discussion of the religious power of symbolical meanings presupposes the ongoing debate among Reformed theologians about the value of sacraments, saints, images and rites, but it is also firmly grounded on both his rhetorical expertise and his appropriation of the Renaissance notion of life (with special attention to the scholastic doctrine of substantial forms and the analogical meanings of life refracted through the prism of Aristotelian metaphysics). It is especially the all-encompassing nature of the question of life in Goclenius's dictionaries that constantly allows notions to migrate from the metaphysical to the physical, from the moral to the political, from the logical to the theological. Indeed, migration of meanings is one of the most riveting experiences that nowadays reader of the Latin and Greek *Lexica* may undergo while perusing the various entries, and this is certainly a tribute to the richness of the philosophical experience of the Renaissance. Trained as a linguist and a rhetorician, Goclenius revealed the extent to which synecdochic and metonymic transfers of meanings could shape one's philosophical inquiries. In doing so, he proved to be a typical product of Renaissance culture, for he showed how philosophy intersected various domains of knowledge and spanned many levels of abstraction. Precisely because he duly recognized and recorded all possible metaphorical, metaleptic and catachrestic shifts every time they occurred while scrutinizing the content of a given concept, almost every entry can be read as a forum in which ontological, epistemological, ethical, political and theological meanings are held together in the most productive of hermeneutic tensions. A telling illustration (*pulchrum exemplum*) of the analogical correspondences among the natural, artificial, ethical and political aspects of reality is the one that, in Goclenius's opinion, brings to the fore the "similarities (*convenientiae*) between physical qualities and human wills":

> just as in the mixts the primary qualities are weakened or as it were blunted, so that another quality may arise or emerge, in the same way, in society, the wills of the individuals are weakened, and from there a common will emerges.

To add further examples, the entry "Recidiva" ("Relapse") prompted Goclenius to expand on various transfers of meaning concerning the domains of medicine and theology ("Transfertur a Scholasticis Theologis ad vitia cum dicitur, Recidiva peccati"), and so did the entries "Facies" and

"Fames".

As a thesaurus of both linguistic and rhetorical wisdom, Goclenius's work marks in quite remarkable terms the conceptual evolution of philosophical Latin during the Long Renaissance, from around mid-twelfth century to mid-seventeenth century. In reflecting a number of dramatic changes in interests, topics and priorities, it epitomizes a characteristic Renaissance way of doing philosophy, that is, philosophy through a dictionary. The Renaissance was a time of intense experimentation in literary genres, and this also applies to philosophy. Dialogues, treatises, essays, commentaries and supercommentaries, plays, letters and poems were often used to convey philosophical arguments and to debate the most urgent issues of the time. Goclenius's dictionaries can be said to be a typical product of Renaissance culture in that literary creativity is an integral part of the speculative exercise. While a modern philosophical eye would consider the stylistic unevenness of his *Lexica* as a sign that he was unable to organize the material in a proper way, creating a sort of philosophical pastiche or cento, or a didactic tool that more or often than not seems to verge on the pedantic and the pedestrian, the diversity and multiplicity of writing practices put to fruition by Goclenius are in fact another attempt to compress a whole library into one book, to repeat Eglinus's phrase. His *Lexica* are systematic and yet sufficiently loose to allow all sorts of digressions and detours (*paululum saltare extra chorum*). It contains discussions about proverbs, responses to specific queries addressed through private letters, grammatical debates about the proper use of terms and even their correct spelling. See, for instance, the discussion about which of the two Latin words *redarguitio* and *redargutio* is the correct one. As demonstrated by the important appendix on philosophical barbarisms at the end of the Greek *Lexicon*, Goclenius was as much a humanist almost as he was a scholastic thinker. He did not refrain, to give some other examples, from referring to Euripides to make a philosophical point or from inserting epigrams while discussing philosophical matters; indeed, we even find an epigram in the middle of a discussion about whether asses *rudunt* or *rudiunt*. Sometimes he also recorded vernacular terms (in German) corresponding to their Latin equivalents. In full agreement with the rhetorical spirit of Renaissance philosophy, copiousness and accumulation should therefore be seen as resources, not limits or defects.

Between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, linguistic *copia* and *congeries* were seen as manifestations of the vital power of nature and inner creativity. As such, they could be used to foster the power of thinking. This was, after all, one of the most significant legacies of Erasmus in philosophy. The transfers of meaning recorded by Goclenius in his dictionaries paralleled the overlapping of semantic exchanges within the domain of life. Goclenius distinguished between three principal meanings of life (*vita*) – physical, political and theological – which intersected with the Aristotelian division into animal (*pecuina seu voluptaria*), civic (*civilis*) and contemplative (*contemplativa*) existence. In a physical sense, "life" meant the natural power to assimilate food (*vis alendi*), to grow (*vis augendi*) and to perform elementary vital and cognitive operations (*motus vitalis* and *sensus*). While in a broader, less technical sense (*improprie*) "life" coincided with the meaning of soul understood as a principle of life (*essentia rei viventis*), in a political sense, *vita* denoted one's way of life: *ratio*, *modus*, *genus agendi seu vivendi*.Referring to Ficino's commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius's *De divinis nominibus*, Goclenius was also willing to mention the Platonists' contribution to the definition of *vita*, seen as a spiritual force pervading the universe in its entirety. It is an important acknowledgment, which once again testifies to the

influence of Ficino's translations while signalling the persistence of Dionysian words and tropes. By the time Goclenius had published his *Lexicon philosophicum* in 1613 and his *Lexicon philosophicum Graecum* in 1615, the Latinization of Dionysius had reached its end, both conceptually and linguistically. Goclenius did not hesitate to acknowledge the presence of this legacy in the philosophical armoury of contemporary theologians, but he added significant scholastic qualifications of a distinctively Reformed kind. It wasn't therefore by chance that Goclenius reported Girolamo Zanchi's definition of life as "the unremitting movement (*agitatio*) of the soul in the body (ἐντελέχεια) through which the body nourishes itself and grows", and, relying on the Bible, he identified this *agitatio* with the life pervading the blood. An Italian Protestant, Zanchi (1516-1590) shared with Goclenius a basically irenic and eclectic position between the Lutheran and Calvinist fronts, especially on matters pertaining to the interpretation of the Eucharist.

4 Conclusion

As a thinker straddling between two centuries, Goclenius shows how seventeenth-century philosophy, with its innovative aspects in the fields of language, science and religion, cannot be properly understood without taking into account the philosophical background of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Rather than looking at these two centuries as an unusually barren and unoriginal age in terms of speculative ideas and commitments, Goclenius helps us embrace a more historicized and positive consideration of such cultural trends as eclecticism, the reception of the classical tradition and the role of philological inquiry. In Goclenius's dictionaries, the eclectic layering that forms the texture of each entry reveals how old traditions interweaved with new ideas. For this reason, as I stated at the beginning of this chapter, Cranz's notion of a Long philosophical Renaissance seems to me a perspective that, from a historical point of view, is much more convincing and stimulating than explaining away the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as philosophically trite and derivative. There are certainly risks in describing the period of time between the twelfth and the seventeenth century as a Long philosophical Renaissance, for in doing so some crucial differences may disappear. However, these differences (such as a more prominent sense of the self, a more nuanced sense of the historicity of human experience, a closer attention to the linguistic conditions of thinking and a growing awareness of the role played by economic factors in shaping the world of human beings) would not be perceived unless they were set against the background of long-term, tectonic shifts in the domain of metaphysical and theological.

If we read Goclenius's lexicographic accomplishments as a book of philosophy, a sinuous but seamless narrative emerges. To cut a very long story short, Goclenius attempted to adjust the Aristotelian ontology in its latest scholastic versions to the principles of Reformed theology via a reinterpretation of Platonic metaphysics. In this chapter, I decided to limit my analysis to a few specific remarks concerning the fields of metaphysics and the practice of writing about philosophy. The more than 1,500 pages of the Latin and Greek *Lexica* make the work too vast in scope for the limited amount of words of this chapter, but my aim was to provide a case study that could testify to the healthy state of Renaissance philosophy. It may sound like a hackneyed

commonplace, but the printing press, the discovery of new worlds and an astounding proliferation of political and religious conflicts had immeasurably expanded, within the space of a century, the boundaries of knowledge. Renaissance philosophy was inextricably related to these technological, anthropological and bellicose developments. It coincided with a momentous linguistic turn in that conflicts, controversies and commerce fostered the emerging of a plural and quarrelling multilingualism. Goclenius's rich and articulate account of contemporary philosophy thus provides historical evidence that there was diffuse awareness of these rapid changes among fifteenth- and sixteenth-century philosophers, which is yet another instance of early modern intellectuals coping with information overload.

I began my chapter by criticizing the limits of the contemporary hand-bookish view of Renaissance philosophy, and I ended up by using a Renaissance dictionary of philosophy to defend the value of Renaissance philosophy in the history of modern thought. This is not a contradiction on my part. The fact is that, for a historian, handbooks are good material to probe the perceptions, preconceptions and expectations of a particular age. A contemporary text-book of history of philosophy speaks volumes about the philosophical concerns of our age. Even more so, a companion to Renaissance philosophy of our time will tell future historians what view of Renaissance thought was predominant among twenty-first-century scholars. For the same reason, therefore, Goclenius's dictionaries can be used now to assess the state of philosophical experience around the 1610s.

Of course, these dictionaries express a particular point of view and cannot be used to represent the totality of philosophical endeavours occurring during the Renaissance. While I look at them as a distillation of Renaissance thought, I am fully aware that this material remains one synthesis of a kind, which can be employed for tentative generalizations only if these are made with a good dose of caution and scepticism. Another important reason why I decided to use Goclenius's dictionaries as reliable specimens of thinking practice is that they provided me with what I earlier called an anamorphic resolution of long-term developments in Western philosophy. Each philosophical notion is there, safely located in its corresponding entry, in the historically conditioned setting of a particular dictionary written between the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. And yet those philosophical notions also cut through centuries, disciplinary fields and the synchronic assessment of foundational notions. This, too, can be safely taken as evidence of Goclenius's historicist and humanist attitude. Together with his reliance on a metaphysics of interactive substances and his speculatively creative use of theological commonplaces, his attitude brought to the fore the philosophical legacy of the Renaissance while highlighting the differences with later centuries.

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