

APPENDIX 2

THE DEBATE BETWEEN JEAN DE MONTREUIL, GONTIER COL,
AMBROGIO DEI MIGLI, AND NICOLAS DE CLAMANGES,
OF 1400-1401

The most extensive literary debate in which our Humanists were involved took place in the years 1400 and 1401, at the same time as the Quarrel of the Roman was raging.¹ Jean de Montreuil, Gontier Col, Ambrogio dei Migli, and Nicolas de Clamanges composed the texts still extant and identifiable as part of the dispute. Only the first two are definitely known to have been engaged in the Quarrel of the Roman. We must assume as usual, however, that the audience of the dispute itself was much wider (as we know the audience and the participants of the Quarrel of the Roman to have been much wider than those represented by the extant texts). No doubt the audiences of the two simultaneous debates overlapped to a considerable extent.

The debate has not been studied in detail before,²

¹Ornato, Jean Muret, p. 43 and n. 76; p. 87 and n. 68; pp. 235-36.

²Ornato, *op. cit.*, rejects the analysis presented by Coville, Gontier et Pierre Col, pp. 115 ff.

hence the need for a somewhat fuller treatment here. After a full listing of the documents in the dispute (which I infer from presently published studies, but which is given nowhere else) I intend to prove four main theses concerning the literary activities of those Humanists under consideration, and to draw my evidence mainly from a close study of the documents in this debate.

First, the debate shows that the literary activities of these men were indissolubly linked with their economic activity--their employment, their concern for advancement in their careers. Second, this debate clearly owed its origin to the desire to practice and perfect literary skills, and was, from the outset, at basis a literary exercise. Third, friendships among the Humanists were based upon this need to practice literary composition and pursue literary study. They perceived a certain similarity of interest among themselves, a certain 'solidarity,' which, though it might be severely strained (as it was in this debate), nevertheless overrode their differences and their personal (as opposed to professional) loyalty to their employers.

Fourth, all these factors set certain limits to the disagreement and to the debates, limits within which

disagreements could be sharp, even sharply worded, but without real hostility. These limits, not exceeded by the debate between Gontier and Jean de Montreuil, were exceeded by Ambrogio's intercession. However it is significant that even the hostility evoked by Ambrogio's attack upon Jean did not convince the latter to breach the sense of solidarity among Humanists.

In conclusion, I will point out certain obvious conclusions as to the importance of this debate in clarifying the Quarrel of the Roman.

The Documents in the Debate

In this list the documents are given in chronological order, as far as that can be determined.

Text #1--Letter of Gontier Col to Jean de Montreuil
--not extant. According to Ornato ("L'Umanista Jean Muret," p. 86, n. 65), this is lost. Proofs for its having existed follow:

1. Referred to as libello tuo by Jean de Montreuil (Ornato ed., No. 137, p. 201, l. 3).
2. Implied in Jean de Montreuil's reference to his libellum responsalem in Ornato ed., No. 144, p. 210, l. 11.
3. In Jean de Montreuil's response, it is referred

to as invectionis forma quedam [scil. epistula], l. 6; as epistula quedam seu libellus, ll. 21-22; as libellus, l. 271, etc. See Ornato ed., No. 161, pp. 227, 228, 234.

Though it is lost, the contents can be partially reconstructed from Jean de Montreuil's reply, No. 161 (see Text #4 below).

Text #2--Letter of Jean de Montreuil to Gontier Col, "Quantumcumque negotiis."

Text: edited by Ornato, Epistolario, No. 144, pp. 209-11.

Text #3--Letter of Jean de Montreuil to Gontier Col, "Tametsi materia."

Text: edited by Ornato, No. 137, pp. 201-02.

Text #4--Letter of Jean de Montreuil to Col, "Perplexitate nimis."

Text: edited by Ornato, No. 161, pp. 227-40.

Text #5--Letter of Nicolas de Clamanges to Jean de Montreuil, "Non ferebat."

Text: edited by Alfred Coville, Recherches sur Quelques Ecrivains du XIV et du XV Siècle (Paris: Droz, 1935), pp. 295-97.

Text #6--Letter of Jean de Montreuil to Nicolas de Clamanges, "Pluris sunt."

Text: edited by Ornato, No. 146, pp. 212-13.

Text #7--Letter of Ambrogio dei Migli to Gontier Col, "Si alius."

Text: in Martène and Durand, Amplissima Collectio II, cols. 1456-69.

Text #8--Letter of Gontier Col to Jean de Montreuil, accompanying text of Text #7. Not extant.

Evidence of such a letter having existed:

1. An intimatione referred to by Jean de Montreuil in Text #11 (see below), l. 1.
2. The attribution of Text #10 to Gontier Col by the editor of Clamanges' work (see below) opens the possibility that it should be identified with Text #8 (see below).

Text #9--Nicolas de Clamanges to Jean de Montreuil, "Vidi Joannes."

Text: edited Lydius II, 31-36, Ep. VI.

Text #10--Letter of Nicolas de Clamanges to Ambrogio dei Migli, "Iustum erat," in name of Gontier Col.

Text: edited Lydius II, pp. 33-36, Ep. VII.

Text #11--Letter of Jean de Montreuil to Gontier Col, "De intimatione."

Text: edited Ornato, No. 106, pp. 148-59.

Text #12--Letter of Jean de Montreuil to Ambrogio dei Migli (?), "O Quam."

Text: edited Ornato, No. 109, pp. 163-64.

The recipient of this letter, otherwise anonymous, is tentatively identified as Ambrogio dei Migli by Ornato, Jean Muret, p. 237.

In order to confine my discussion rather strictly to those aspects of this debate which I think are significant for the purpose of clarifying the Quarrel of the Roman, I will have to neglect many interesting and puzzling details. I hope to be able to make a more comprehensive study of the debate at a future time. Some discussion of secondary matters will be unavoidable, of course.

A. The Careers of the Humanists and Their Literary Practices

"Perplexitate nimis" (Text #4) is the only source we have for the contents of Gontier Col's lost libellus, the document which set off the debate. In it, after some introductory material (to which I shall return), Jean de Montreuil divides the contents of Gontier's libellus into four main parts, of which he immediately gives the first:

Allata est michi, iudices, Gontheri nostri illius, meritissimus qui secretariatus regii titulo decoratur, pro parte epistola quedam seu libellus, et si non fallor aut parum prospiciunt oculi, principalia membra quatuor complectens, quorum primo profitetur sepe multumque diuque cogitasse artem et ingenium, ut verum est cura et exercitatione iuvari, et, quod prius Crispus scripserat historicus, ubi intenditur ingenium valere. (ll. 20-26, p. 228)

The first main part of Gontier's letter, then, dealt with Gontier's desire to improve his skill in oratory through practice ("cura et excitatione"). Jean de Montreuil in fact concludes his reply with a discussion of the need for practice and imitation in writing, echoing here the precepts of his mentor, Nicolas de Clamanges, who, as will become evident, oversaw the whole debate.

The subject matter of this "first" part, however, is not carefully distinguished by Jean de Montreuil from that of the second main part. This part is clearly set apart from the first verbally:

Hec illa. Que inficiabitur, iudices, Gontherus, si poterit! Quo ad aliam membri partem, tecum, facundissime Gonthere, sine discrepantia convenio, et tecum sum. (p. 231, ll. 148-50)

In this section Jean refutes Gontier's assertion that Jean is more fortunate in being able to learn eloquence better since he is not encumbered by a family. Jean agrees that he does spend his time in study and loves it. But he does not agree that this is why he surpasses Gontier in eloquence. Gontier wasted the time before his marriage, when he was his own master, and could have accomplished much in study, as Jean in fact continually urged him to do. Finally, Jean enumerates the daily cares and preoccupations of clergy, like himself who, though they have no family, still have an onerous and time-consuming occupation (ll.

149-235).

This section then is merely another part of the argument in section one, which is in fact a lengthy refutation of Gontier Col's claim that his family, and particularly his wife, Marguerite, kept him from study by urging him to devote his time to his work, to be a better provider.

Jean's position on this question is clear:

Sed ad hoc [sc. 'oratorum modernorum (verba sua sunt hec) loco saltem postremo collocari, ll. 29-30] peragendum plurime, ut dicebat, rationes obsistebant, que an vere sint falseve, secretorum coniugalium coexpertis, talium penitus ignarus, discutiendas relinquo. . . . Non audeo tamen te, Marce Tulli, aut te, Luci Crasse, teve Quintiliane, seu vos, ceteri oratores uxorii, causas consimiles aut inquantum maiores pretendisse. . . . (p. 228, ll. 30-36)

The examples of many eloquent men of the ancient world show that one can become eloquent in the midst of great hardships, and especially that eloquence and its pursuit is not compatible with the active life:

Sed forsán thoro torpendo nimis incubuisti, aut cece illi domine fortune, rerum, tu testaris, moderatrici, obnoxius studuisti subservire ac blandiri, que, cum tibi liberalitatis manum porrexit, cecum, ut assolet, reddidit, et contemplativarum rerum facit immemorem et tuimet prorsus oblitum. Plerique, non formides Gonthere, media inter arma et tumultus, librorum multa volumina, ubi alius in studio et pacis tabernaculo dedidiscit et tabuit, ediderunt. Quod si quid possit studium, socia pariter industria, cognoscere non graveris, libros lege. . . . (pp. 238-39, ll. 39-47)

Gontier, then, is just making excuses:

Et tu michi nescio quas, quasi agenda tua non nossem,
tecturas sophisticas omnifarias et inanes anteponis,
. . . . (p. 239, ll. 60-61)

In particular, Gontier is wrong to blame his wife and family:

Cuius gracia a te querit, pudice vir, probissima
coniunx tua (aut talis apud me nulla erit), ut tue
linguam situm domus aliasque communes omnibus
incommoditates, et quas in peccatis excusationes
allegas. . . . (p. 239, ll. 63--6)

Jean adduces the example of Salutati, model of all humanists of the time, with ten children, a beautiful wife, and an active life (ll. 68), and refers to other active men. They do not complain!

To this point, therefore, the arguments in parts one and two of Gontier's letter are clearly the same in reality. Gontier declares that he works at his writing in order "coninuatione assidua futuris posse temporibus oratorum modernorum . . . loco saltem postremo collocari" (p. 228, ll. 29-30)--Jean assures us he is quoting Gontier here. Gontier claims that he is blocked from this goal by various obligations, namely those of family, which Jean does not have. In addition, Gontier must at least imply that his job blocks him also, since many of Jean's examples of active men make no sense otherwise, and since Jean takes pains to enumerate the difficulties not only of the unmarried state

(ll. 206-11), but also on the job of clergyman (ll. 222-35).

The contradiction between literary pursuits and the duties of everyday life are central to the debate between Jean and Gontier, the overall subject matter of which is literary activity. This point is reinforced in the long passage which Jean puts in the mouth of Marguerite Col. The effect of this passage is to further strengthen Jean's contention that family life cannot be used as an excuse for Gontier's not studying. In it, Jean reveals some of the advantages in family life. He shows how Marguerite might be able to complain of Gontier with even more justice.

To reinforce his point that it is Gontier's weaknesses, not his situation, which cause him to neglect the study of eloquence, Jean has Marguerite complain of some of these vices: gambling (p. 229, ll. 80-81); a spendthrift nature (p. 230, ll. 119-21); a tendency to squander money on vain things (pp. 230-31, ll. 120-24); and, in general, a tendency to unjustly blame his problems on his children and wife. Though the entire passage is written to express Jean's, rather than Marguerite's, ideas, the point is clearly that Gontier tends to find excuses and blame others for his own problems.

In addition, however, Jean has Marguerite say some curious things. She complains about Gontier's literary studies and the time he devotes to them; she complains of his friends (and particularly of Jean de Montreuil himself!) who encourage Gontier to do this; and she poses more sharply the contradiction between Gontier's study and his career.

Marguerite claims Gontier is neglecting his job:

At quanto melius commodiusque et simul honestius, ut vobis sapientes amici vestri dicunt, esset, de filia sororesque maritandis, augenda superlectile, generalibus prosequendis necnon thesaurariis, ac vitibus nostris faciendis, quibus annuus, aut nichil est, impendendus est labor, et certe dominis nostris regalibus visendis curare, a quibus nisi qui eos assidue sequuntur, gratis bona non veniunt. (p. 230, ll. 83-89)

She then makes it explicit that she attributes this neglect largely to Gontier's enthusiasm over literary studies:

Attendite, rogo vos, et videte si alii maioris status quam sitis, officarii regii ac ceteri socii vestri omnes, preterquam prepositus ille, qui quod curet aliud nichil habet et sibi soli obnoxius est, studio consimili vacent! O si virum me fore datum esset, caverem summe michi ea qua usui sunt illis anilibus et fantasticis non antepone, quibus, ut videtis, non nisi oblectatio resultat, quin potius illorum sectatores, de more, paupertas comitatur. Contra vero realibus [i.e. from affairs, or business] ex istis, decus, gloria, opulentie et pariter honos manet. Ip. 230, ll. 89-96)

Far from helping to further a career, Marguerite sees only that studies distract Gontier from waiting on his noble employers. As opposed to useful things "ea qua usui sunt,"

literary pursuits bring only delight, and usually poverty as well. They are womanish and fantastic. All his friends would agree, except Jean de Montreuil "prepositus ille," who similarly harms himself.

Marguerite expands briefly upon this contradiction between economic well-being and literary study. Before revealing that she never in fact does call Gontier from his Muses, ". . . Et quod ille corrector ait [i.e. Jean himself, either elsewhere, personally, or as implied in this same letter earlier] . . . quando a Camenis illis, in quibus temporis portionem optimam consumitis et teritis, revocavi?" (p. 230, ll. 111-13). Marguerite concedes that Gontier should be allowed to study on rare occasions, when there is nothing better to do, say, on an embassy:

Non tamen adeo extrema sim, quin, ex quo tantopere his insistere delectat, interdum, sed raro, et cum nil aliud superest agendum, utpote dum in ambassiatibus contigit proficisci, vos possitis immiscere. (p. 230, ll. 98-101)

But what truly troubles Dame Col is her Gontier's fanatical dedication to literary pursuits, and particularly his admiration for his literary mentors.

Sed quod me vehementer angit, nec abs causa recitatur, frequenter aspicio talibus vos insudare enixius et conari quam rei cuicumque, religionem esto cernat, nunc bonum istum dotatarum patronum Laurentium, modoque illum, modo illos, a quibus non res profecto, sed verba queruntur, eos venerando pene ut prophetas, et colendo. (p. 230, ll. 101-06)

What troubles her is: (1) that Gontier does not merely work on literature (studia, l. 98) on the licit, rare occasions, but sweats and strains over it (talibus, l. 102) more than over anything else--viz. his career or family; (2) that the men he follows are not the grandees from whom reward can be expected (cf. ll. 187-89), but Ambrogio dei Migli and Laurent de Premierfait, men who can give Gontier only words, and whom Gontier appears to venerate and worship (no doubt colendo here means "imitate," since that is the only kind of "worship" one literary man might inspire from another) almost as though they were prophets--as though this were his religion!

In order to properly understand the contradiction being posed between literary activity and economic pursuits in this lengthy part of the letter, we must carefully establish the proper context for interpreting this subtle passage put into the mouth of Gontier's wife.

We must proceed carefully, for there is reason to believe (though, unfortunately, it is not quite clear) that Ambrogio based his attack upon Jean de Montreuil to Gontier Col at least partially upon a clever or naive misreading of this very passage. In Text #11, "De intimatione," Jean de Meun says that Ambrogio had tried to use this passage to alienate Gontier from him:

. . . [Q]ui non es veritus, immanissime Cayn [i.e. Ambrogio] . . . iurgium virum inter et uxorem, amicum pariter et amicum alterum de altero optime meritos, suscitare contendens, nostro dulci Gunthero suggerendo quod adversus eum durius infestiusque per me scriptum fuit illa in parte ubi probissimam coniugem loquentem interduco, quam contra me invexeris, quodque sequebatur eam michi secreta coniugalia detexisse, quia nonnulla, que matrimonium conspiciunt, explanabat in littera. (p. 149, ll. 50-58)

Now, there is no passage in Ambrogio's letter to Gontier, "Si alius" (Text #7) in which Ambrogio clearly charges Jean with trying to insert himself between husband and wife.³ Either this charge was made in another letter, now missing, or, it was made orally; or, Jean is simply guessing, since Ambrogio's attack seems to be groundless enough (judging from the extant documents). At any rate, Jean takes pains to clarify just how he intended this passage to be read:

Non enim, bubulce insensate, sequitur: Virgilius Junonem loquentem introducit: ergo Juno loquitur, vel hoc agit: sed quod illa verissimiliter dixisse potuisset a consequentia non abhorret. Verum quia materiam id tangebatur, iocose et gracia rei, que omnium ignara erat, michi carissimam et confidentissimam loqui scriptotenus faciebam, zelans et sitiens coniugum communem benevolentiam atque dilectionem reciprocam, multo plus quam mille milia palponum gnatonorum, sicuti compereris, ac simul litium fabricator et sequester. (p. 149, ll. 61-68)

³There is only one passage in Ambrogio's extant letter "Si alius" (Text #7) with any reference to family at all. Ambrogio accuses Jean de Montreuil of excessive greed for wealth, all the more reprehensible "qui re familiari nimium premeris, qui parentes, conjugem, liberos, fratres, cognatos, affines, necessarios nullos habes." (Ed. Martène and Durand, Amplissima Collectio II, col. 1457C.)

Jean makes clear, first of all, that Marguerite Col is not responsible for any words that he put into her mouth; in his letter Marguerite is a personage, like Juno in the Aeneid; the author is responsible for what is said. This is an elementary point, and Jean castigates Ambrogio's stupidity and ignorance ("bubulce insensate"):

O dolosum ingenium spiritumque malignum, nichil omnino in logicalibus sapientem! Nam quo in modo, quave in figura sequeretur Aristotiles ignoraret, nec correlarium in moralibus admitteretur a Tullio. (p. 149, ll. 58-61)

This road of attack fits well with Jean's general approach to Ambrogio (as elsewhere in this letter), which is to complain that wickedness has made him ignorant and blinded him to reason.

Second, Jean explains how Marguerite Col's speech is to be taken:

sed quod illa verissimiliter dixisse potuisset a consequentia non abhorret. (p. 149, ll. 62-63)

In other words, "That which she might have said truthfully is not inconsistent with what follows." Jean de Montreuil is making it clear that Marguerite did not in fact tell to him the criticisms of Gontier which Jean relates, but that they are far from implausible. Jean had her speak so for the purpose of his letter:

Verum qui materiam id tangebatur, iocose et gracia rei, que omnium ignara erat, michi carissimam et confientissimam loqui scriptotenus faciebam, . . . (p. 149, ll. 64-66)

In jest, and for the sake of the matter [i.e. in the letter], I made her, who was ignorant of all of this, speak to me in writing as one very close and a confidant, because it was relevant to [tangebatur] the subject matter [of the letter].

In his obscure and elliptical way Jean is telling Gontier that: (1) Marguerite Col had not said to him anything of the kind he had put into her mouth in Text #4; (2) it was, however, the sort of thing she might have said, it was plausible; and (3) he did this to further the argument he was making in the letter.

In addition, it is clear from Text #4 that Jean de Montreuil does not hold the views propounded by the personage of Marguerite Col. In each speech Marguerite criticizes Jean for disagreeing with her (cf. above, ll. 89-92, also):

Qui si sic isti vaniloquo [i.e. the ille corrector of l. 111; see above quotation; it can only be Jean de Montreuil], eorum que yconomie sunt penitus ignaro, sui que similibus creditum itis, curas meas iuges et sollicitudines infinitas non pensando, multo melius quiescere michi esset, et meo assidue in lecto dormire. (p. 230, ll. 113-16)

In fact, Jean is Gontier's ally in Marguerite Col's speeches, the one among all his friends who wastes his time similarly with study.

Jean quickly reaffirms his point of view after Marguerite Col's last lines; he agrees with Gontier:

Que ad aliam membri partem, tecum, facundissime
Gonthere, sine discrepantia convenio, et tecum sum.
(p. 231, ll. 149-50)

In the passage that follows Jean describes his tranquil life far from the crowd, his faithful servants, his books:

in quibus, ut non minus vere quam eleganter a te
disseritur, studeo, lego, calamum habituo (que potest
voluptas esse maior?) et, quod omnium michi maximum
est, eorum lectione delectabili, honestissimo consortio
et iuvamine perutili, enitor addiscere eius contrarium
ad quod nonnulli, ut vulgus doctos putat, te divertunt,
negociationi scilicet ac temporalibus ut insudes atque
vaces, non talibus. (pp. 231-32, ll. 156-61)

The way in which his literary activity is useful, then, is that it teaches Jean the opposite of what he put into the mouth of Marguerite Col. Through study he learns not to spend his time on business and temporal affairs. Jean affirms he does indeed obtain wealth, but of another sort:

O si vera est, et ut certe est, Annei sententia, quod
brevisissima per contemptum divitiarum ad divitias via
est! Iam me michi, hoc credito, videor ipsis omnibus
ditiozem, quam vis eorum quisque
rura centeno scindat opima bove,
aut prompturaria eorum plena eructantia ex hoc in
illud. (p. 232, ll. 161-66)

After a somewhat long analysis, therefore, we find that Jean does not assert that literary activity is antagonistic to advancement in a career. The criticism put in the mouth of Gontier's wife is not Jean's viewpoint. In fact he disagrees with it, and in this is in accord with Gontier.

Elsewhere, as we shall see, it is clear that literary activity is precisely a boon to career advancement. But in addition Jean points to the spiritual riches which study inculcates, and affirms that this is their highest "usefulness."

This does not mean, however, that everything Gontier's wife said is to be taken as the opposite of true. Her attack on her husband's surliness and ingratitude, her complaint on the position of women, appear reasonable. Even if we take it that Marguerite speaks, not as herself here, nor as Jean's spokesman, but as the "Flesh" or "sensuality," the "woman in every man" (according to the well-known medieval convention), and therefore is only naturally to be associated with a preoccupation with worldly matters, Gontier, as "Reason" or husband still has certain obligations towards her and his family.

To conclude: Jean de Montreuil firmly rejects Gontier's contention that he is kept from developing himself as an orator by his involvement in his job and by worldly affairs. Jean adduces many examples of famous (classical) orators and writers who thrived in the midst of activity, and adds Salutati as a contemporary example. By putting the same kind of argument as Gontier is making in Marguerite Col's mouth, moreover, he shows even more clearly

that the argument, at base, is wrong, in that it implies the placing of a higher value on the pursuit of wordly goods--an attitude which the study of literature itself shows to be false. Finally, Jean points out (p. 232, ll. 167-86) that Gontier has wasted much time which he might have spent on study, and shows that his own (Jean's) position in life, though somewhat different from that of Gontier, is nonetheless no more advantageous for study, no less burdensome in obligations (pp. 232-33, ll. 187-235).

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Writing under the name of Gontier Col to Ambrogio dei Migli, Nicolas de Clamanges reminds Ambrogio of Jean de Montreuil's past services to him. After speaking of Jean's other favors, he says:

Tantumne de laetheo flumine bibisti ut oblivisci potueris sua meaque instantia atque opera factum esse ut illius Clarissimi Principis famulatum, quo tantopere modo insolescis adipisceris? Cum tu pauper, inops, alienigena, miserabilis potius quam invidiosus, me atque illum, supplici prece, assidua postulatione, incredibilique importunitate, pro aliquo tibi impetrando servitio quotidie obtunderes? Tuaene memoriae tam cito exciderunt tot illius in te officia, tot tui laudes, & commendationes; tot pro te apud quoscumque poterat intercessionem. (Text #10, pp. 33b-34a)

Besides praising other of Ambrogio's putative good qualities, efforts on his behalf involved lauding his literary skills:

Quinimo creber imo assiduus, de te illi sermo erat, quibus te ad caelum laudibus efferebat, quantum tuam eloquentiam (nundum caninam) extolebat: quomodo te in litteris, & styli cultu, supra quam res aut veritas erat exaltabat: quomodo illo suo visceroso ingentique affectu omnia tua in maius augebat quo vel sic tuae indigentiae per aliquam posset promotionem esse consultum. (p. 34a)

In Text #7, "Si alius," to Gontier Col, Ambrogio describes his position in vaunting terms:

Meo namque qualicumque stylo per totum terrarum orbem, quos ipse decreverit, dux Aurelianensis alloquitur, unicus ipse Francorum regis frater, tantus princeps, tamque strenuus & gubernandae reipublicae tam efficax & semper intentus. Meum apud hunc officium est, quo ad possim, operam dare, ut ille suis litteris ornate, efficaciter, & honeste loquatur; res laudabilis plurimum & decora, sed adeo difficilis & operosa, perdocto loquor, ut nequaquam. (Col. 1459A-B)

We get an idea of the kind of "good word" Jean put in for Ambrogio from Text #11:

Ego preterea apud ceteros ad sui commendationem quod potui feci, et si erga ingratisimum parvum est, multiplicatis tamen vicibus, altissimo Aurelianensium duci supplex dixi: 'Assumite hunc fidenter, princeps sapientissime, in vestrum secretarium servitorem, beneque facite ei, ut potestis faciliter; longe enim Vestre Celsitudini obsequii plus quibit impendere una hora quam sumptum afferrat decennio.' (p. 257, ll. 341-47)

Ornato describes this period of history as "une époque, . . . ou la Rhétorique, art de la persuasion, jouait encore un rôle aussi important dans presque toutes les branches de l'activité humaine," "une époque ou l'emploi de scriptor

se confondait avec la fonction de diplomate."⁴ Only in Italy, however, was good style equated with humanist style at this time, however.⁵ Within France Avignon was undoubtedly the most receptive to and enthusiastic for classical style: cardinals (Galeotto di Pietramala, and probably Amadée de Saluces and Guillaume Fillastre) encouraged classical style personally; popes helped Petrarch in his search for classical manuscripts and offered him the post of Papal secretary several times during his life. At the end of the fourteenth century, Gerson and Clamanges were both in Avignon, as were Jean Muret, Giovanni Moccia, Jacques de Nouvion and others.

At Paris, as we saw in Chapter III, the atmosphere was not as favorable. There was considerable opposition to the new humanist style of writing and opposition to literary pursuits in general. This made it all the more vital for humanists such as Gontier Col and Jean de Montreuil to establish contacts and, where possible, friendships, with like-minded men elsewhere, for the sake both of mutual education through correspondence and of solidifying their positions and that of humanist style by aiding

⁴Ornato, Jean Muret, p. 81.

⁵Ibid., p. 152, n. 232.

each other to obtain employment there. I will discuss first the question of literary debates as exercises for the sake of practice, and then the relationship of inter-humanist friendships and liaisons with their need for advancement. In each case, I will begin with the evidence provided by this debate, and supplement it with examples of other instances of these phenomena, drawn largely from the secondary literature.

B. Literary Debate as Exercise for Practice

In 1395 Nicolas de Clamanges had described a philosophy of literary study in which the role both of a teacher and of the study of formal rhetoric were placed second in importance to "studium usum, exercitium assiduam attentam-que lectionem auctorum eloquentium . . ."⁶ In Text #4

Jean de Montreuil repeats the same precepts to Gontier Col:

Quod si quid possit studium, socia pariter industria, cognoscere non graveris, libros lege. . . .
(p. 229, ll. 46-47)

Pretereo . . . quo etiam persepe diligentia ferventi ascondant ingenia, ut profecto quammultis appareant crebrius miracula. (p. 229, ll. 58-60)

Habeo insuper librarum quos enumeras partem potio-rem . . . in quibus ut non minus vere quam eleganter a te disseritur, studeo, lego, calamum habituo. . . . (p. 231, ll. 154-57)

⁶Ed. Lydius, pp. 21A and B.

Jean reminds Gontier that these precepts had also been his:

. . . quis me primum . . . monuit ut studerem? Quis verbo pariter et exemplo indidit occasionem? Gontherus. Quis regis secretariorum indesinenter, quocumque ierit, libros ac specierum diversarum volumina, ne tempus nequiquam tereret, secum tulit? Gontherus. Quis, inquam, insaciabiliter disputare atque loqui que ad eloquentiam pertinerent, voluit? . . . (p. 232, ll. 187-93)

Towards the end of Text #4, Jean also warns Gontier once more that practice is most important:

De ente tuo mobili phisico cum Aristotile contende, quin meo videre, non est tecum; tu, Tritonia Pallas unumquem docuit, quoniam quo domo in mea non habitat, me illa non fecit arte magistrum. Quod si septenniis octogesies septies aut eo plus imitatus sis, ob id tamen rethor non efficiaris aut eloquens, ars nisi precesserit exercitium aut imitatio, libris dato muniaris, pulicibus ut est canis, aut totidem ab arboribus foliis, quot autumpno frigore cadunt.

No natural talent (the gift of Pallas) will suffice without practice (ars, exercitium, imitatio) guided by actual reading of the authors (libris dato muniaris . . .).

If practice involves actual writing, clearly there must exist occasions for writing. What better subject matter for the practice of writing than literary matters themselves? Hence the literary debate. The fact that this debate began as an exercise for practice is easily seen in the documents themselves. Already in the second document, stung by some of Gontier's remarks, Jean de Montreuil writes:

Nollem, siquidem nostra si hec exercitandi causa facta contentio ulterius procederet, Gonthere mi, tali acetero potireris consiliario, . . . (p. 210, ll. 35-37, emphasis added)

In Text #3, Jean announces that his response to Gontier (i.e. No. 161, Text #4) is ready, although its style remains rough in places:

Scribo igitur iam . . . meum fore libello tuo orditum responsale, etsi non undiquaque limatum, pingui mea calcitrante Minerva . . . Si vero tue communicari claritati dignaberis isto modo, scribito et ecce ad te cernes me non sine illo, quamvis, ut predicatur, impexum est, prope fugientem. Vale. (pp. 201-02, ll. 2-7)

That is, Text #4 is not "polished" (limatum, impexum). Although any modern reader is apt to add an "amen" to this statement, Jean probably is only being conventionally modest.

In the long Text #4, "Perplexitate nimis," both beginning and end contain statements which are clearly consistent with the theory that this dispute is mainly for literary practice, and which are difficult to account for otherwise. Jean states, early on:

Prodiit in me, ecce cernitis iudices, invectionis forma quedam, non ex fermento malicie, vetet Deus, sed libidine, sicut reor, calamum agitandi, . . . (pp. 227-28, ll. 6-8, emphasis added)

At the conclusion of the letter Jean writes:

Quare agite, iudices nostri prudentissimi, perspicacissimi, convenientissimi atque probissimi, aut si quid melius dici potest, sic ista decernite, ut illud

eiusdem Comici accedat: Amantium ire reintegratio est amoris; et quasi inter duos germanos contentio de nichilo habita sit, iudicatis. (p. 238, ll. 390-94, emphasis added)

followed by a warm expression of friendship for Gontier. The last words are a plea that nothing in the letter or dispute be taken amiss:

Et sic, vestra cum indulgentia, iudices utique propicii, dulcis mediator noster, ipse Virgilius, nostro finem imponit litigio, enixe vos exorans altissima ut provideat vestre discretionis limpitudo, cum vix soleat disceptatio tantiloque errore carere aut peccato:
Doris amara suam non intermisceat undam. (p. 238, ll. 409-13)

The frequent references to iudices in this letter do not in themselves constitute evidence that this debate is public, since it could be argued that this is merely a Ciceronian convention. Text #2, "Quantumcumque negotiis," however, is largely concerned with the selection of a real iudex for the debate (I shall analyze this aspect of the letter in the sections below). One of these real judges, and probably the one most highly respected, was Nicolas de Clamanges. Text #5, "Non ferebat," is certainly concerned with this dispute, as internal evidence shows.⁷

⁷"Non ferebat" is mainly taken up with thanks to Montreuil for having rendered some favor to Nicolas' brother. In Text #6, "Pluris sunt," Montreuil acknowledges Nicolas' thanks in the singular (ll. 1-9), but remarks on Nicolas' corrections with regard to the debate in the plural, on behalf of both Gontier Col and himself (ll. 10-16). Again,

Nicolas ends this letter, largely concerned with other matters, with a reference to Jean's and Gontier's dispute:

Quid de tua et Gontheri nostri litteratoria controversia sciendum putes, paucis ad Gontherum verbis apperui. (p. 297)

By itself of course this reference could mean either that the dispute was over literary matters (which is certainly true) or is for literary purposes (practice), or both.

Jean's response in Text #6, "Pluris sunt," emphasizes the aspect of linguistic practice:

Quoad eam vero, quam Quintiliani more, ut nos discipulos ad exercitandum commonefacias et lactites, ieiunam vocas, et ambagibus plenam dicis disceptationem inter Gontherum et me editam, petimus ut, qualiscumque est, remittas, poscentes insuper quatinus de quo et quomodo tibi acceptius amodo scribendum fuerit, notifies, nosque, quemadmodum facultas suppetet et quantum ceteris occupationibus nostris ocii dabitur, morigerabimus. (p. 213, ll. 10-16)

No. 146, ll. 6-7, "tum morem atque indolis et pariter ingenii que in puero imminent . . . ," echo "Non ferebat," p. 297, l. 12, "indolis, quique docilis et ingenio aptus michi videtur." Finally, in the final lines of "Non ferebat" Nicolas makes it clear he will speak to Gontier, so Montreuil's response in the plural, for both of them, is explained. The sequence of events and documents here is as follows: (1) All documents of the debate are turned over to Clamanges--Texts #1 through #4; (2) "Non ferebat" is sent to Montreuil; (3) Clamanges addresses remarks or another letter now lost to Gontier Col; (4) Montreuil speaks to Gontier Col, learned from him the contents of this letter or conversation, and responded on behalf of both of them in : (5). Text #6, Ornato ed., No. 146 to Clamanges.

Nicolas has seen the disceptatio between Jean and Gontier, which has been published (editam). Nicolas has found the language and style wanting. Jean says he (Nicolas) has been admonishing and helping them like a Quintilian, urging them to practice (ll. 10-11). Jean and Gontier ask Nicolas to send back their documents with notes on how they may be corrected, and they will strive to correct them, according to their abilities and time. The letter concludes with a request that Nicolas not expect too much of them. Jean acknowledges his slowness in style "patienter feras meam iuxta Minervam pinguiolem . . .," (ll. 30-31), and rather immodestly states that too much is being expected of them "Non enim cuilibet, sed nulli datum est Annei spargere sententias proverbialque Salomonis, aut Pindari pollere ingenio et simul facundiam habere Ciceronis" (p. 213, ll. 38-40).

The unavoidable conclusion--that this literary debate was initiated primarily to provide for the practice in the use of style and language which Nicolas, and after him, Jean and Gontier, thought indispensable for the achievement of eloquence--is thoroughly consistent with other aspects of the literary practice of these humanists. In his detailed study of the chronology of the relationships between these men Ornato notes that their letters are often

so full of conventional topoi that we must presuppose a thorough reediting "for posterity."⁸ Ornato notes that one must read very cautiously in attempting to deduce any historical information from the letters.

Ornato agrees in rejecting Alfred Coville's earlier interpretation of this debate as a real polemic, and calls it a "fiction littéraire, qui ne brisa jamais l'amitié qui liait les deux secrétaires du roi."⁹ However, Ornato means that the debate is "literary" only in the sense that it did not endanger Jean's and Gontier's friendship--that the tone of the letters is exaggerated for literary effect. The passage he quotes, from Text #11, "De intimatione," shows only that Jean considered the dispute 'friendly' (" . . . qui non es veritus . . . hostilem detractionem tuam nostre pridem amice comparare disceptationi," no. 106, p. 149, ll. 51-52).

What about the remaining, and larger, part of the debate--that which involves Ambrogio de Migli? Is this debate genuine? Or is it also a "literary exercise"?

⁸Ornato, Jean Muret, pp. 55-56, Chapter III, pp. 67 ff.; pp. 153-54, and n. 233.

⁹Ibid., p. 84. Coville's earlier analysis is in Gontier et Pierre Col, p. 120.

First of all, Ezio Ornato remains puzzled by the nature of Ambrogio's and Jean de Montreuil's quarrel:

Toute la question mériterait, à notre avis, une étude approfondie. Pour l'instant, il est même impossible de savoir si les deux amis se brouillèrent sérieusement, ou si nous sommes encore une fois en face d'un exercice littéraire. Tout ce que l'on peut dire, c'est que Clamanges semble prendre l'affaire au sérieux.¹⁰

Elsewhere Ornato says that Ambrogio's accusation that Jean had been malicious in putting words into Marguerite Col's mouth¹¹ was " . . . peut-être, origine d'une querelle . . . qui devait s'envenimer par la suite à cause d'une épître, adressée a Gontier Col, dans laquelle Ambrogio exprimait toute l'hostilité qu'il couvait à l'égard du Prévôt de Lille."¹² "Peut-etre," because the cause of Ambrogio's attack is nowhere made explicit.

Ornato is further confused by the seemingly amicable tone of what he takes, plausibly enough, to be the final word in the dispute, Jean's letter "O Quam" (our Text #12). Nothing would ordinarily make anyone hesitate

¹⁰Ornato, Jean Muret, p. 86, n. 63.

¹¹See above. Ornato believes that either oral conversations or another letter make this explicit.

¹²Ornato, Jean Muret, pp. 236-37.

to conclude that this letter is, in fact, the final document in this debate except for the friendly tone, which appears to belie the hostility in the other documents.¹³

He concludes: "Si l'on accepte cette interprétation, même cette polémique, si violente en apparence, se serait terminée elle aussi par une réconciliation."

In a note to this same sentence, Ornato says:

Cela n'exclut nullement que des divergences sérieuses et profondes aient été à l'origine de cette querelle.¹⁴

But how is this not to be excluded?

A solution to this problem is necessary for the purposes of this dissertation. Very different in tone from the clearly friendly debate between Gontier and Jean, the documents concerning Ambrogio's role in the debate bring into question the nature of the friendships and relationships among the Parisian humanists, and indeed among the whole humanist circle. A close study of the second, or "Ambrosian" part of the debate will be invaluable in clarifying these relationships.

¹³As Ornato shows (p. 237) it is addressed to an Ambrogio; there is clear reference to a misunderstanding which has disturbed the relations between Gontier, Jean de Montreuil, and this Ambrogio; the Ambrogio referred to is compared to a Lombard, while Ambrogio dei Migli was from Milan, etc.

¹⁴Ornato, Jean Muret, p. 237, n. 23.

C. The Limits of the Friendships Among
the Humanists

In order to determine Ambrogio dei Migli's place in this debate we must turn back to the first extant document, Jean's letter "Quantumcumque negotiis."

Jean's letter opens in a somewhat confusing way. Jean complains about Gontier's demands. Gontier not only expects a reply, which, as Jean admits, is his right. He is also pressuring Jean to hurry, complaining that Jean has much free time (a topic which Jean responds to in Text #4, as we have seen). According to Jean, this goes beyond his rights as a participant in the dispute:

Age rem tuam, Gonthere, prout libido tua feret! Sine me michi meam conducere, mea sicuti credidero interesse, nec te tu illi immisceas supraquam de tua hoc in actu te sollicitor aut instigo! Quid, ad te, requiro, si non simul esse contendas iudex et pars, meas pertinet scriptiones prestolari? (p. 210, ll. 7-11)

In hurrying Jean, that is, Gontier is acting, not only as a participant (pars) in the dispute, but also as a judge (iudex).¹⁵

Jean accuses Gontier of exceeding his authority in

¹⁵pars here in the sense of "party to a dispute" is well attested in Quintillian. See the citations in Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879; repr. 1969), p. 1306, under pars, II A.

another way:

Cur insuper libellum responsalem meum tantopere arbitris queris mitti? Non hoc est, queso, legibus imperare? Nonne est pro voluptate manuducere velle negocia et autoritati iudicum non deferre? An Aurelianus hec discuntur, ut reus ad actoris libitum sese regat, aut quando et ubi placuerit in ius eat, auffugiat et secedat? (p. 210, ll. 11-15)

Gontier has apparently demanded that Jean send his response (Text #4, "Perplexitate nimis," as we have seen) to judges, arbitris.

So far this much is clear: In this literary dispute, Jean and Gontier are the participants, and others (arbitris) are judges. Each role is clearly defined enough for Jean to take some umbrage at what he regards as Gontier's overstepping the bounds of his role to make some requests or demands of his fellow participant that only a judge ought to make. As we have seen above, one of the judges is Nicolas de Clamanges.

In the next part of the letter Jean de Montreuil says that Gontier has interpreted certain witticisms (sales, l. 22), and in particular a certain passage from Terence, to Jean's detriment. Specifically Gontier holds that Jean has misread the passage from Terence. Jean is angry, and certain that Gontier has done all this under the influence of a third person. The rather lengthy passage must be cited in full, since it is difficult:

Unum vero bilis mea tacere minus potest, quin suspicer coniectura eos sepe numero quos allegas et adversus me falso intelligis sales, fonte ab illo manare et actore qui dixit evomuitque et scelerate interpretatus est per illam negativam sententiam: haud insipide sapis etc., eam te perapposite suo in sensu capiente, me affirmativam que sequitur concludere voluisse. (p. 210, ll. 21-26)

This third party (actor), Jean believes, is clearly trying to stir up enmity between himself and Gontier:

O procacis et impudentis bruti verbum, non erubescens inter iocantes et quos indissolubilis nectit amor, odii fomitem suscitare! (p. 210, ll. 30-32)

He assumes this (among whatever other reasons he may have for doing so) because the invidious interpretation of Jean's words is thoroughly illogical:

Ergo, infert dyaleticus noster iste, grandis et stultus et insulsus. O logicam quam admirabilem et subtilem, in vico Straminum profecto, aut Athenis nullatenus intellectam, de qua nec philosophi, sicut reor, qui de insolubilibus aut exponentibus ad expositas tractaverunt, sunt loquuti! (p. 210, ll. 26-30)

Jean insists that his and Gontier's dispute is not serious (iocantes), that it does not affect their friendship ("quos indissolubilis nectit amor"), and insists that this third party is determined to undermine their relationship:

Ite vos ergo dissidentes, ite ad patronum hunc perpulcrum et pacis mediatorem sectatoremque sincerum et fotorem, et si quid vestrum alter de altero male sentit, eidem vos fidenter submittite, et is actutum, ut cernitis, pro una, binam incendere conabitur vobis rixam. (p. 120, ll. 32-35)

Jean warns Gontier that continued reliance upon this advisor runs the risk of truly embittering their dispute:

Nollem, siquidem nostra si hec exercitandi causa facta contentio ulterius procederet, Gonthere mi, tali acetero potireris consiliario, aut consimilem iugiter haberes interpretem sic sinistre suspicantem de amico, penes quem debet nichil fucatum remanere aut obliquum. (p. 210, ll. 35-39)

Jean continues by suggesting that to interpret his words in the way Gontier has been doing (with the help of his consiliario and interpretem) is thoroughly illogical.

Haud insipide sapis, Laurenti, sensatos si existimes tuis expositionibus huiusmodi atque commentis, et, ut aiunt, textum omnino destruentibus, assentire, nos nisi in eorum numerum redigas unum qui dum asserunt, faciunt aliud, ad Mercurii dei sui instar, decipere vocantis legitime mercari. Maneat potius, inquam, Laurenti, tua presens instructio actores erga suos, non incolas huius regni, doctrine talis expertes omnino nec capaces! (pp. 210-11, ll. 44-50)

Here is the clear implication that Gontier's actor is an Italian. First, he is not a Frenchman, since the latter are not skilled in this deceptive logic (ll. 48-50). Second, he is associated with those who follow the God Mercury, god of business. Italians, particularly Lombards, were noted as businessmen and merchants. Ambrogio dei Migli, we recall, was from Milan, and a cohort of Gontier's at the chancery of the Duc d'Orléans ("an Aurelianus hec

discuntur . . . ?) (l. 14).¹⁶

Finally Jean de Montreuil ends his letter with a strong, if somewhat literary curse against

quisquis Laurentius fuerit, Andreas sive Petrus, grana qui zizanie talia amodo seminaverit inter fratres, aut de Johanne, quem preter istum nemo tante presumptionis macula infecit sive labe, deinceps annotare temptaverit secus quam iustum est. . . . (p. 211, ll. 52-55)

In fact, this whole letter is mainly concerned with attacking the person who is instigating trouble between Gontier and Jean. The person is not a judge of the quarrel; he is called only actor (l. 23; actores, l. 49); "advisor"

¹⁶In Text #11, "De intimatione," Montreuil openly discusses Ambrogio in very similar terms. He tells Ambrogio not to bring his wiles among Frenchmen, who are strangers to them and abhor them. Rather, he should reserve such things for Italians, whom commerce teaches deception:

. . . Que te dementia cepit, aut hos aut illos dolos, machinationes et fraudes impulit detegere, maxime nobis Gallis horum nesciis, quin prorsus ea abhorrentibus ut scopulos? Debuisses nempe, si quid sensus inesset, tuis dumtaxat similibus, talium quidem artificiosissimis, talia reservasse, apud quos hec sententia publice locum habet, aliud in pectore, aliud in lingua promptum habere: dicere unum et aliud facere, et ubi tandem decipere legitime est mercare. De cuiuscemodi Mercurii doctoris tui sententiis . . . (p. 153, ll. 203-11, emphasis added).

(consiliarius, l. 27); "interpreter" (interpretem, l. 38). The references, and the role as instigator of trouble between friends, fit Ambrogio dei Migli too well for any serious doubt to remain that the subject of this letter was the Milanese secretary.

The return attack upon Ambrogio for his onslaught upon Jean de Montreuil is made up of the same basic ideas which Jean appeals to in Text #2. Ambrogio is criticized for violating the principle of friendship, and in fact for being an enemy disguising himself as a friend; and he is attacked for vaunting his rhetorical skills while lacking virtue, without which no man can be called orator.

In Text #9 (Vidi Iohannes), Nicolas de Clamanges writes Jean a consolatory letter on friendship. Ambrogio has exposed himself as a true enemy, who has long only pretended to be a friend:

. . . Ambrosius ex simulato diu amico, apertum tandem in te inimicum professus. . . . (ed. Lydius, 31a)

Nicolas particularly stresses the fact that Gontier (who had no doubt shown him Ambrogio's letter) remains the truest friend to Jean, and hence stresses the lack of rationality behind Ambrogio's sending such a letter to Gontier. Nicolas goes on to explain to Jean that he will be able to draw benefit from this experience, for he will

be better armed against false friends in the future. Finally Nicolas urges Jean not to stop forming friendships, while being cautious in doing so in the future.

This letter is in fact more of a general essay on friendship and a literary consolation than a discussion on the specifics of the quarrel. We may suspect that it is one of those on which Nicolas exercised his editorial skills before publishing it for posterity. Text #10, however, goes into more detail. The only hint in Text #9 which Nicolas gives out as the cause of Ambrogio's behavior is "cupidity":

. . . Sed proculdubio dementia captus, suarumque insanarum cupiditatum furiiis exagitatus adeo mente cecutus erat, adeo passione abreptus, ut ista cuius occurrentia non viderent. . . . (ed. Lydius, p. 31b)

In his second letter Nicolas gives a more specific guess as to the cause of Ambrogio's behavior. He belittles the reason Ambrogio gave in his letter "Si alius":

Nam quam frivola illa sit occasio, quo nescio cum verba quaedam acerbior in te illum protulisse causarum, verba ipsa apertius ostendunt: Nuper inquis me meum negotium serio agentem interpellans, quia non ilico missis omnibus, nugis ipsius responsa ferebam, in verba iniuriosa prosiluit, meque iniuriarum cum iurgio obiecit. (ed. Lydius, p. 34b)

(The reference is to Ambrogio's words in "Si Alius," 1457A.)

Nicolas says that this would never have justified his attack upon Jean even if true. Jean has been kind towards

him, and friends allow disagreements among one another;
Ambrogio should have heard him out (pp. 34b - 35a).

Nicolas believes that Jean's letter to Gontier
(Text #4) was not the real cause of his attack, which had
lain latent much longer (we have seen above how puzzled
even Jean de Montreuil was with Ambrogio's accusations):

Sed tuus aut invidia adversus eum, aut aegritudine
alia turbatus animus, & ipsa sua turbatione non satis
rationi obsequens, nec frenis se moderationis cohibere
praevalens, quod iamdudum in se conceperat atque intra
se clausum aluerat tandem more ulterioris impatiens
parturire voluit, forasque effundere: utque aliquae
specie excusationis suam culpam palliaret, hanc infirmam
occasionem, cum firmiorem habere non posset, tantae
effundendae malignitatis excogitavit. (ed. Lydius,
p. 35a)

In fact, Nicolas says the real reason for Ambrogio's
attack was only to show off his knowledge and eloquence:

Tuam autem scientiam [ut arbitror] ostentare voluisti
qui Ioannem de ignorantia tam amara invectione redar-
guis. . . . Sed tibi forte animos eloquentia tollit.
(ed. Lydius, pp. 35a-b)

Finally, Nicolas points out that Ambrogio's behavior is
incompatible with real wisdom:

Si illam [sc. eloquentia] cum sapientia haberes,
doceret ipsa sapientia non te inde extolli oportere.
Si vero sine sapientia habes, docet te Tullius talem
eloquentiam civitatibus ac rebus publicis esse
pernitiosam. (ed. Lydius, p. 35b)

This being so, Ambrogio cannot vaunt himself wise or elo-
quent. First, wisdom is incompatible with evil behavior.
Second, Ambrogio is no master at eloquence either:

Quomodo autem cum isto folleo pectore, atque malevolo animo sapientiam habere potes: cum scriptum sit: In malevolam animam non intrabit sapientia. Porro cum Philosophi definiant sapientiam, rerum divinarum humanarumque esse notitiam, de qua potes gloriari sapientia, ut aliorum ita exaggeres ignorantiam, qui ipsam satis Gramaticam vix es assecutus? Nam de arte quidem Rhetorica quid aliud quantum ad te attinet dicam, nisi quod facilius si sobrie saperes, tua in illa arte vitia, tuosque errores ab aliis fortassis agnitos, ipse forte posses agnoscere. (ed. Lydius, p. 35b)

Nicolas closes by saying he will not go into a detailed refutation of Ambrogio's charges against Jean. He invites a response by Jean to them himself. He ends on a monitory tone:

Vale, & vide ne illi versus Vergiliani in alium moribus & patria tui similem scripti, te respiciant, tibi que merito possint aptari.

Vane ligus, frustra nimis elate superbis,
Nec quicquam patriae tentasti lubricus artes.
(ed. Lydius, pp. 35b-36a and b)

This letter suggested to Jean de Montreuil much of the argument, and even some of the specific content, of Jean's own response in Text #11 ("De intimatione"). In fact, the latter is probably a direct response to Nicolas' invitation to reply given here, since Text #11 is a response to a communication (intimatio) of Gontier Col, and no other than this letter (written in Gontier's name by Nicolas) survives. In summation, then, a few things should be noted about Nicolas' letter.

First, it is written in Gontier's name, not in

Nicolas' own. We have seen that, according to Text #2, Jean considered the roles of judge and participant in the debate closely enough circumscribed to be able to get annoyed at Gontier for overstepping these bounds. It is clear that certain limits are recognized within which a debate may be carried on without endangering a friendship, and that, according to Jean in Text #2, Ambrogio has overstepped them. Or, as Nicolas puts it:

Quis ignorat in veris amicitiiis maximam patere libertatem loquendi, arguendi, reprehendendi, obiurgandi: magnas quoque saepe intervenire dissentiones, quibus non tollitur amicitia, sed magis perficitur atque integratur. . . . (ed Lydius, p. 35a)

Ambrogio's onslaught, then, put Nicolas in a contradictory position. On the one hand, such a virulent attack was clearly outside the bounds of the literary debate at hand, violated the recognized canons of friendship, and demanded a defense of his friend under attack. On the other hand, the role of judge in a literary dispute appears to have precluded active intervention as a participant. Both Nicolas' earlier letter, "Non ferebat," and Jean's response to him, Text #6, "Pluris sunt," imply this. In them Nicolas makes critical remarks but keeps aloof from the debate himself, though clearly closely informed of every stage of it. And as we have seen from Text #2 Jean reveals that there were iudices for the debate.

Nicolas could, however, solve this contradiction (or come as close to solving it as the special circumstances might allow) by following the course we observe here. His first letter, to Jean de Montreuil alone, does not touch on the matter of the literary debate at all. It is, as we have seen, purely a consolation, a rather sententious and "philosophical" lesson on friendship. It is at least a clear indication that Nicolas recognized Ambrogio's attack was unjust, unworthy of a friend, and that he, Nicolas, sided with Jean. Clearly it was not written in Nicolas' capacity as judge, but in his broader role as Jean's friend.

Nicolas' second letter is a direct response to Ambrogio. In it he deals with some specific matters which Ambrogio had brought into question, and criticizes him as lacking in both sapientia and eloquentia. Such a response would clearly be more appropriate, given the context of a literary debate, from one of the participants. It would be particularly appropriate coming from Gontier Col, since Ambrogio addressed to him his vicious attack on Jean. Again, it would be hard to imagine that Nicolas would not have obtained Gontier's permission to write a letter in his name (and we have no evidence that he did not). Also it seems clear from internal evidence that Jean's "De

intimacione" to Gontier assumes (at least for the purposes of literary fiction) that Gontier has written Text #10, "Iustum erat." Finally, it appears clear that Nicolas de Clamanges was considered the literary mentor of all the group of French humanists, presumably by Ambrogio as well.

For these reasons, I believe, Nicolas wrote Text #10 in Gontier's name, and sought to do so, though it is not impossible that Jean urged him to do it, or that Gontier himself asked Nicolas to. Furthermore, the letter is rather polite (though firm and critical, it bears no resemblance to Jean's venomous response in Text #11). It was probably meant, in summation, to accomplish the following:

1. It allowed for a thorough written rebuke to Ambrogio for overstepping the bounds of friendship, and therefore of literary debate.
2. It permitted Nicolas to satisfy the demands of friendship by coming strongly to the defense of his friend under attack.
3. At the same time it permitted Nicolas to remain ostensibly aloof from the debate itself, as befitted his role as (a) judge of the debate itself--a debate which, it is clear, Ambrogio wanted to join in, and (b) as literary mentor of all the French humanists, or to the humanist circles in Paris, at any rate, including Ambrogio.

In conclusion, therefore, I have established that the limits of friendship among these humanists were the same as the limits of literary debate. Or--to put it another way--this debate, being for the purposes of literary practice, was never meant to involve the participants in real hostility towards one another. All parties recognized that Ambrogio dei Migli's incursion into the debate exceeded the bounds both of friendship and of the debate itself.

It was never the intention, that is, of the humanist participants in this debate (and, I maintain, in others like it) to raise matters which might lead to genuine hostility amongst each other. In fact, as is obvious from Jean's remarks to Gontier in Text #4, the 'debate' was in fact over matters over which there was no real disagreement, or only a temporary and very minor one. The real aim was improvement in literary style.

Two points still remain to be demonstrated. One--the more obvious--that the friendships among humanists were principally occasioned by their mutual interest in improving literary style, and in spreading the use and/or acceptability of the new 'classical' style. That is, the basis for these friendships was the need to pursue literary study. Some examples from the secondary literature, principally from Ornato's study of the relations among humanists, will

supplement the analysis of this debate in demonstrating this point.

The second point to be demonstrated is that, along with the idea of "limits" to the sharpness of literary debate, there is in evidence a broader "limit" of solidarity among all humanists--a limit which Ambrogio, with all his venom, did not transgress. This will be demonstrated through examination of some passages in Text #11, and Text #12.

1. The Literary Basis of Humanists' Friendships.

In his response to Gontier Col's lost libellus Jean reveals that Gontier has attacked him for having signed his name alone to a letter to Jean Muret, in answer to a letter from Muret to both Gontier and Jean.

Supramodum indignatur, stomachaturque et inflatur, ut videtis, is accusator meus, et toto contra me debachatur conatu, . . . quod vice alia, litteris quibusdam Mureti nobis coniunctim transmissis, nomine singulari responsum temeritas mea fecit. (p. 234, ll. 240-48)

Jean responds in several ways. First, while admitting that this was possibly a peccadillo, Jean criticizes Gontier for overstepping the bounds of friendship in the vehemence of his criticism:

O damnum irreparabile, o casum inauditum, o negotium incogitabile, o inexpiabile scandalum! Ha pudor, ha scelus nefasque perpetuo deflendum! . . . data hac et concessa historia omnino, ut scribit, veritati subiacere, num debuit is conquerens, si sobrius esset, ex re tali exclamare intensus aut torqueri? Num debuit amicus sic obiurgando in amicum irrupere gratis et moveri, quin profecto amicitiae indissolubilis lege tenebatur etiam si deliquissem, protinus indulsisse, et omnia in partem interpretatus fuisse meliorem?
(p. 234, ll. 248-58)

Jean says that Muret had come from Avignon to Paris, visited his own and Jean de Montreuil's house, and then did the things which Gontier described in his libellus (what these things were we do not know). But then Jean denies that he has transgressed any "pact" between them:

Sed quod nos inter mutuo interrogationes pactionesve aut pollicitationes quas allegat extiterint proloquute, non plus mente teneo aut recordor quam de puncto quo mea primo admovit ubera michi nutrix. . . . (p. 234, ll. 271-74)

As proof that a pact of the kind alleged by Gontier was unknown to Jean, Jean adduces a sentence verbatim out of the letter he wrote to Muret, a sentence which, in praise of Gontier, could not have been written if Gontier had co-authored the letter.¹⁷

Ornato's summary of what is known about this matter

¹⁷ pp. 234-35, ll. 276-83. The sentence is from Ornato ed., No. 134, ll. 30-34. This passage in Text #4 identifies the recipient of No. 134 as Muret.

of a "pact" is as follows. Between 1396 and 1398 (and probably in 1397), Jean Muret journeyed to Paris. At that time (if not before) strong personal and literary ties were established between the humanist school at Avignon (represented by Muret, but also by Clamanges, Laurent de Premierfait, Galeotto di Pietramala, and doubtless others around the papal court) and that at Paris around the chancelries of the King and the Duc d'Orléans. It could only have been at that time that any "pact" was formed.¹⁸ Concerning this "pact," Ornato writes:

Nous ignorons complètement quelle était la nature de ces 'accords.' On peut supposer cependant que ce furent des pactes d'amitié, par lesquels Jean de Montreuil, Jean Muret, et Gontier Col s'engageaient solennellement à ce que chaque membre du trio participât en toute occasion aux activités des deux autres.
(p. 88, n. 69)

It is significant that Jean's words (cited above, p. 37) do not exclude the possibility of any pact, but only of the kind alleged by Gontier Col (" . . . pollicitationes quas allegat . . ."). Evidently Gontier felt that Jean was answering a letter from Muret to both of them by pretending to respond for them both. Jean cites the sentence in praise of Gontier as evidence that he was answering for

¹⁸ Ornato, Jean Muret, pp. 34; 85-88.

himself alone, since he could not have inserted such a sentence if Gontier were to be supposed to be a co-author of the letter.

Although he himself has been unjustly attacked by Gontier, Jean feels himself vindicated by the arguments he has adduced and feels constrained by the laws of friendship from pursuing the matter further:

Cuius pretextu ad vos me referens interrogo, iudices dignissimi: numquid istec mea rescriptio illam pollicitationem presupponit? Numquid pactiones illas hec verba coarguunt? Sentio quid animo tentetis, iudices: nimis urgeo commoveoque Gontherum meum. Stupet enim, ac penitet, ut cernitis, et tacite sub ruboris indicio satis crimen fatetur vobis sum. Quamobrem amplius non insistam. (p. 235, ll. 286-91)

This passage shows: (1) that we have read the previous passages correctly--for here Jean admits that there were some "pacts" or "promises" made (illam pollicitationem, pactiones illas); (2) Jean feels that this "pact" is still in force, inviolate; and (3) Jean shows by example the attitude one friend should have toward another--a modest one, not quick to pursue a matter even when in the right for the sake of friendship.

From the table of relations among these humanists published by Ornato it may be easily seen that, so far as the extant documents reveal, the concerns which predominate in the correspondence among these men before and up to this

dispute are literary.¹⁹ In fact Jean de Montreuil engaged in several shorter literary debates during this period with Ambrogio, with Laurent de Premierfait, and with Gontier Col, concerning literary matters. These letters to these individuals (which I will analyze in Appendix 3) are the only ones known to be addressed to them from Jean de Montreuil before the period of the Quarrel of the Roman. Although the friendships among these men came to extend to other matters, they clearly began because of common literary interests. Similarly Jean and Nicolas engaged in the debate with Pietramala (and with Laurent) over the relative value of French classical and Latin culture (see Appendix 1)--a debate which Cardinal Pietramala initiated primarily after having been impressed with the level of Clamanges' Latin.

These friendships could be used in an even more direct way, to help spread the influence of classical Latin style. In 1398, Jean de Montreuil (doubtless aided

¹⁹Ornato, Jean Muret, pp. 193-200. This is not to deny that other matters were also discussed among these men. However much other issues--such as the political-religious matters surrounding the Schism which involved all these men in their jobs--obtruded, though, all present evidence indicates that contact among these men began because of common literary interest in classical Latin.

by others at Paris) invited Nicolas de Clamanges to come to the Royal chancery at Paris. Nicolas had been recently relieved of his post at Avignon by the subtraction of obedience to Benedict XIII by the French King (27 July 1398). Ornato's analysis of this offer by Jean specifies succinctly the literary motives clearly behind it:

La soustraction d'obédience, provoquant l'éclatement de la chancellerie pontificale, leur [i.e. to 'certains milieux officielles' in Paris, in the chanceries] offrait une possibilité inespérée, celle d'en attirer à eux les meilleurs talents. C'est là que l'intérêt politique rejoignait celui du mécène, de l'ami ou du disciple littéraire. Sans doute assistons-nous, dans ce cas précis, à une tentative de rehausser le niveau des chancelleries françaises. A une époque où l'emploi de scriptor se confondait avec la fonction de diplomate--à une époque, aussi, où la Rhétorique, art de la persuasion, jouait encore un rôle aussi important dans presque toutes les branches de l'activité humaine--l'on comprend aisément comment un homme tel que Nicolas de Clamanges, dont la renommée était solidement établie, a pu être l'objet de tant de démarches pour qu'il mette son talent au service de l'Etat . . . on l'invitait pour qu'il donnât aux épîtres officielles plus d'éclat et plus d'envolée littéraire.²⁰

In fact, Jean de Montreuil was engaged in agitating within the chancery for acceptance of the new classical style. We learn from another letter of his that he taught young men the ars dictaminis through using the letters of Salutati as models. No doubt, as Ornato points out,

²⁰ Ornato, Jean Muret, p. 81.

Clamanges was regarded by the Parisian humanists as someone who could fulfill this kind of task much better.²¹

The Parisian humanists were acutely conscious of the relative inferiority of Latin studies in France (outside Avignon). This sense of inferiority had played some role in prompting the quarrel between the writers of the French court (notably Ancel Choquart and Jean de Hesdin) and Petrarch thirty years earlier (see Appendix 1 above). It had also occasioned Clamanges' outbursts at Pietramala several years earlier. As we saw, in that debate both Nicolas and Jean de Montreuil defended the Latinity of the

²¹Ornato, Jean Muret, p. 81, n. 47. It should be noted that Clamanges also refused the proffered post for literary reasons, at least in part. He felt that, because of the lesser esteem given to classical studies in Paris and the much lower stylistic level as a result, he would be forced to change his Latin style.

The importance of this remark as an indication of how Nicolas saw his style and his career as indissolubly united is somewhat lessened by the fact that, as Ornato shows, pp. 68-69, this was probably not the main consideration in Clamanges' refusal to go to Paris. Clamanges also had political-religious reasons for not aligning himself too closely with the French court, or with the political position of the University at any rate. Being a much more significant political figure than the secretaries in the Parisian chanceries, political motives frequently had to be of considerable importance to him. It is significant, however, that he would give out this reason--a purely literary one--as a sufficient basis for refusing a position in Paris. For further discussion of these issues, see Chapter V.

University of Paris--without evidence, however.

In fact, in several letters of later date Jean de Montreuil reveals that there was active opposition to the penetration of the new classical standards of Latin in Paris. One of the letters in which Jean de Montreuil reveals this is also concerned with the Quarrel of the Roman--the letter "Auffugienti michi" (ed. Ornato, No. 102). I leave a detailed consideration of this letter to Appendix 3. It should be noted here, however, that the very basis of the friendship between Clamanges and the Parisian humanists becomes clear: It is the spread of, and interest in, the cultivation of classical Latin language and literary studies.²²

The evidence of the literary activity, and of the relations among these humanists during the time preceding and including the present debate, all points to the fact that the most important factors in both the formation and the continuation of the friendships among these humanists were their literary interests, and that these interests came continually to the fore in their subsequent relations.

²²Ornato, Jean Muret, pp. 138-39.

2. The Consciousness of a Distinct Interest,
or "Solidarity," Among These Humanists.

Two points demonstrated earlier in this chapter must be recalled here. First, Jean de Montreuil's repeated professions of friendship and good intentions towards Gontier, together with the fact that their dispute was for purposes of literary exercise before all else, show that their disagreement never went beyond what they all agreed were the proper bounds or limits of literary debate and of friendship. Second, the letters of Nicolas de Clamanges and Jean reveal that Ambrogio's attack upon Jean transgressed the limits both of literary debate and friendship.

However, we will recall that even Nicolas' sternest rebuke to Ambrogio (Text #9, written in the name of Gontier Col) never went so far as to cut off relations. For example, in the passage from this text quoted above Nicolas does not actually call Ambrogio "Vane ligur," etc. He merely warns him lest he be called this. Given Nicolas' somewhat lofty remove from the debate, and the fact that he was writing in the name of Gontier Col--a close friend of Ambrogio's, we must suspect, both from the fact that they worked in the same chancery, and from Jean's letter (Text #2)--the negative fact that he does not cut off relations with Ambrogio is not very convincing. After

all, if anyone really had the reason to "declare war" on Ambrogio, it would be the insulted Jean de Montreuil.

Jean de Montreuil's response to Gontier-Nicolas in Text #11 is indeed a sharp attack upon Ambrogio. What is significant for our purposes however, is that Jean very explicitly stops short of harming Ambrogio in ways that were probably in his power. Jean stops short, too, of cutting off all relations with Ambrogio, of ejecting him from the fellowship of notary-humanists. This is shown even more convincingly in Text #12, the last in our debate. Both of these texts will be examined to demonstrate these points.

Text #11, "De intimatione" to Gontier Col, is largely composed of examples of Ambrogio's treachery. This interesting and (in places) obscure and difficult text requires a much more detailed study than is necessary for our present purposes. However, a brief summary of the points which Jean raises in criticism of Ambrogio should suffice to show that it is a very harsh, bitter attack. In the beginning of the letter Jean reveals how Ambrogio even attacks his beneficent employer, the Duc d'Orléans, behind his back (ll. 1-24). Jean accuses Ambrogio of being irreligious and an "Epicurus," in no position to criticize others about morality (ll. 69 ff.). Jean warns Gontier

that he can expect nothing but betrayal from Ambrogio, as Jean himself has suffered betrayal (ll. 98-111), illustrating this point with the example of an unnamed Italian who aided Ambrogio, and whom the latter attacked upon arriving in France (ll. 112-33). Jean recalls how Ambrogio has stolen a copy of Seneca's letters from a monastic library whose abbot had been kind enough to show Ambrogio and Jean his collection (ll. 154-70). Jean echoes Nicolas' letter in showing that Ambrogio, not possessed of virtue, can be no orator, since he is neither skilled in language nor is he a good man, both qualities needed in oratory (ll. 248-86). Jean gives another example of how brazen Ambrogio is in his false friendship and says that, though Ambrogio had boasted of his ability to aid friends and get them good positions, his own father had to rely upon another knight rather than his son for aid (ll. 317-34). Jean shows that Ambrogio is even denying that Jean and Gontier helped him get his position, crediting instead a knight, Enguerrand de Coucy, now conveniently dead (ll. 335-57).

In the midst of this catalogue of Ambrogio's iniquities Jean remarks that the Duc d'Orléans, Ambrogio's employer, would certainly not retain him did he but know of his actions:

Quod si ad alia quedam verissimo veriora depromendum perrexero, non est quod virtuosissimus princeps lenonem parasitumque viciosissimum, ut parce loquar, suo in servicio degere ultra sinat, quin dehinc expellatur priveturque foras dedecorissime non ambigo, et ubi gravius non puniretur, optime ac feliciter fortunam egisse secum dicat. (p. 152, ll. 174-79)

This sounds like a none-too-subtly concealed threat.

Jean believes it is in his power to get Ambrogio removed from his job and punished by his noble employer. But Jean reveals that, bitter as his resentment of Ambrogio is, he will not go that far to gain revenge:

Ex quo consideranti michi, circumspecte vir, sua hec attemptata, que pauca de multis inserta sunt, ac pernicipiei veteratoris huius fomitem, et quam cum clementi ac mansuetissimo et optimo demoratur principe, formidare incipio, ni procul eum iaciat, ne (quod Deus avertat et prius verberonem cadat) in ipsum ius pessimum confidentie liberrime sue terat. Durum est enim assueta relinquere, et est verum:

Qui semel est luscus, non nisi luscus erit. Quasobres, fidelissime vir, hec ad cautionem Sue Serenitati perducere pro nostri obsequii debito fortasse congrueret, quod tue sit electionis et decreti. (pp. 152-53, ll. 179-89)

Sure that the Duc d'Orléans' punishment would be stern, Jean prefers to leave the decision apparently in Gontier Col's hands. Now, Gontier is not only a co-worker with Ambrogio in the chancery of the Duc D'Orléans, he is also a close friend of Ambrogio's. We recall that Ambrogio's letter of attack against Jean de Montreuil was directed to Gontier, and in it the Milanese secretary gave long and fervent expression to his loyalty and friendship

for Gontier. Again, it is clear from Text #2 that Jean fears Ambrogio has considerable influence upon Gontier. Finally, it must have been known that Nicolas de Clamanges and not Gontier had really written the letter to Ambrogio signed with Gontier's name (although doubtless with Col's permission and agreement); and even that letter does not go beyond a stern criticism, as we have seen, nowhere approaching the venomous attack Jean is engaging in here.

Recalling this, it seems clear that Jean is leaving Ambrogio's fate in the hands of a person much more disposed to be forgiving and generous than Jean himself appears to be.

Jean never goes further in this letter than to dream what he would do were he Ambrogio's employer:

Cuperem profecto . . . et tanto emi vellem, ut carni-
um usu anno perintegro et altero vini item altero privarer,
et meus sineret honos, aut officia non obsessent nec
horrerem tam turpi ac fedissima sentina commaculare
manus, isti tortori credelissimo stipendiis suis solvere.
Ita, crede michi, depexum ornatumque suis redderem
meritis, ut posthac non oblivisceretur, si vita superes-
set, quid sit in eos dicere, qui possunt indicere. Et
ut michi conscia veri mens persagit, qui Deus maleficos
vivere prohibuit, ex omnibus iniquitatibus tuis,
improbissime concinnator, non morabitur: penas dabis.
(pp. 155-56, ll. 287-96)

He continues that, had he known of Ambrogio's true nature before he and Gontier had helped him obtain his good job, he would never had done it; and Ambrogio is now even denying

that Gontier and Jean did help him.²³

All of this does not prevent Jean from stating clearly, at the end of the letter, that he is ready to forgive in Christian wise the man who has so wronged him:

Attamen, ex quo Boethius tantopere morum egritudini hortatur indulgere, culpam remitteremus hominis, sed tempore nullo penam, quamquam nullus sit alius mortalium, tametsi michi peramplius et amplius detraxisset offendissetque intensius, cui non protinus indulgissem, sciens a Salvatore nostro Jhesu patientiam precipue commendatam, et a philosophis pariter, ut Cicero Gayum Cesarem potioribus nesciverit laudibus effere, quam cum eum solere dixit nichil preter iniurias oblivisci. Nec michi placidius quitquam, aut quod tenacius inheserit animo, Therencius docuit, quam cum Demeam, dirum senem, fateri introducit facilitate nichil esse homini melius atque clementia. (pp. 157-58, ll. 358-67)

In fact--and this is even more proof of the purely "literary" nature of Jean's threats against Ambrogio--at the very outset of the letter Jean rebuked Ambrogio for fearing retribution from precisely his noble employer, who, Jean asserts, is a man far above such things:

Et existimas, phy putredo spursissima atque fedissima, quod is honorificus, benignus, dulcis, tractabilis, et, meo iudicio, gratissimus, te vilem, pauperem, mendicum et sui omnino facturam, si quid esses,

²³Ornato, ed., No. 106, ll. 296-301; p. 156; ll. 335-57, p. 157.

interimere, necare vel prodere? Cui dehinc quid commodi resultaret penitus ignoro. (p. 148, ll. 20-24)²⁴

In fact, Jean states that Ambrogio's fears of punishment at the Duke's hands are further proof of his bad character.

Such suspicions are thoroughly unworthy of the Duke:

Ergo ad postremum factor facturam, quamvis flagitio plenissimam, perperam sic extinguit? nichil vero minus estimationi iuste et communi conceptui subiaceret, quam talem virum talia facinora perpetrare, aut eciam in aliquo meditari. Sed, facillime credo, id quia in eum, non dicam in longe maiorem, explere nequitie tue non successit, illorum more qui putant sibi fieri iniuram ultro si quam fecere, insontissimum accusabas. (pp. 148-49, ll. 30-36)

If in fact Ambrogio's fears of retribution at the Duke's hand were groundless (as Jean says), then the whole question of punishment or revenge is raised only in a rhetorical manner in this letter!²⁵

Text #12, Jean's letter "O Quam," has been put forth

²⁴Jean has just accused Ambrogio of slandering his employer, who has treated him, in contrast, very well indeed.

²⁵A more thorough analysis of this letter would show that it contains many elements of a literary exercise as well. This is not to deny that the tone is bitter, much less that Ambrogio has indeed exceeded the bounds of purely literary debate among friends, as shown above. But the bitterness, though genuine, is exaggerated. At any rate Jean's unwillingness to really harm Ambrogio, and the reconciliation of the final document in the debate, would tend to bear out the contention that the tone of "De intimatione" cannot be taken at full face value.

as possibly the final document in this debate by Ezio Ornato.²⁶ The evidence for this tentative identification is convincing, and can be briefly summarized. First, the recipient is compared (in his subtlety) to Lombards--as Ambrogio has been elsewhere in the debate (cf. Text #11, ll. 203-11, and esp. 206-10; see also Text #2, ll. 44-50, and this appendix, above).

More convincingly, the letter clearly deals with what has been a misunderstanding involving the recipient, Gontier Col, and Jean. The oblique references to this misunderstanding are compatible with the events of the debate as we know them (though they probably also refer to the contents of private conversations, or to documents which are not extant). These are, briefly:

1. A reference to some communication (probably in writing, since Gontier is called disertum) from Gontier to the recipient, which the latter has failed to understand (deliberately, Jean hints) (p. 163, ll. 4-8).

2. A reference by Jean to a communication of his to the recipient--a reference which he characterizes as "irrationabilis bilis mee emunctione"--possibly Text #11.

²⁶Ornato, Jean Muret, p. 237.

3. An appeal by Jean that the recipient take whatever Jean has written him in the spirit of friendship, and not interpret it in a hostile manner. (An appeal to an obligation of friendship which Jean refers to frequently elsewhere--cf. Text #4, p. 236, ll. 322-24.)

What is most noteworthy about this letter is the extremely conciliatory tone. Jean clearly wants to patch up matters entirely with Ambrogio! He refers to his own attack upon him (probably Text #11, as noted above) as "irrationabilis bilis mee emunctione"--a denigration of his own writing. Jean asks Ambrogio to take everything he has written, or will write, in the way a friend should take it:

Nunc vero insonti ac nuda mea Johannitate loquar, que longe priusquam Platonis et Zenocratis discipuli sui ingessisses exemplum, irrefragabiliter tenui quidquid amicus agat, etiam si durum sit, pro meliori supponi debere factum esse. Et ob id suppliciter et fraterne posco, precibus si flecteris ullis, ut quidquid hactenus scripsisse, nunc, vel imposterum per me scribi contigerit, amice recipias, et peccatum a nobis ortum corrigas, patris sumendo officium, cui, ut vult Therencius, pro peccato magni filii paululum supplicii sat est patri. (p. 163, ll. 11-19)

In fact, Jean here seems to be willing to take most of the blame for the quarrel upon himself and perhaps upon Gontier too ("peccatum a nobis ortum," l. 17, emphasis added; this would make sense, since the original debate had been between Jean and Gontier). He appears to

criticize Ambrogio only mildly at the beginning of the letter, for misunderstanding (perhaps deliberately) what Gontier had said or (more probably) written him:

Quod si dicentarium et disertum Gontherum nostrum non intelligis . . . vereor ne in illo Longobardorum numero ascribaris, a quibus si aliquid queritur, proprium non, ubi vero quid affertur eis, quodlibet intelligent ydioma. (p. 163, ll. 3-8)

Indeed, Jean praises and elevates Ambrogio's eloquence and abases and dispraises his own efforts:

Nec urgere potes nimis vel monere, pace salva, eum qui tibi in nullo contradicit, quique, nisi ut discat, tecum disceptare non intendit, neque tibi Ciceronis cum Tiberio adversario res agitur. Scio enim quod ubi copiosum tuum et torrens eloquium super siccitatem meam effundere voles, non modo commonebis me, sed stupefactum et seminecem reddes, ut iam verbum posthac nullum. Desine igitur, desine novicii animum sic terrere, et iaculando ioculari, quin potius plano cursu limpidoque stilus peraretur, qui delicatus et suavis me oblectet, et amplius alliciat ad scribendum. (p. 163, ll. 20-28)

. . . ut iam de insipidis et insulsis litteris meis minime fiat sermo . . . (p. 163, ll. 5-6)

We need not take these compliments at face value. They appear, however, to make one conclusion inescapable: Ambrogio dei Migli is reconciled to Jean de Montreuil to the extent that Jean foresees future literary relations with him and--possibly--future literary debates or quarrels. Finally, Jean even tries to put the quarrel which has just ended in the context of a purely literary debate ("nec

urgere potes nimis vel monere . . . cum qui tibi in nullo contradicit, quique, nisi ut discat, tecum disceptare non intendit, . . ." ll. 20-22, quoted above, emphasis added). As we have seen, Texts #2, #9, #10 and #11 exclude the possibility that the whole quarrel with Ambrogio was merely for literary exercise, but, at the same time, Text #11 is far from an all-out attack, and contains elements of mere literary debate (see n. 25, above).

In conclusion, therefore, the quarrel of Ambrogio and Jean de Montreuil reveals that there was a basic solidarity or unity among the humanists in our group which even serious disagreements and personal insults could not shatter. The limits of literary debate for its own sake might be transgressed, but the needs of these humanists for ties and friendships with others who shared their interests in propagating their conception of what constituted good Latin style outweighed, in the end, even rather serious breaches of trust among them.

D. Implications of Conclusions About This Debate for the Study of the Quarrel of the Roman

1. Humanists' Literary Activity Indissolubly Linked with Their Economic Activity.

Jean de Montreuil's defense of Jean de Meun is tied up with his attempts to spread the influence of

classical Latin style in Paris, and to spread the ideal of the pursuit of Latin eloquence in general. Some of the same letters (e.g. Jean's letter No. 102, "Auffugienti michi") in which Jean defends the Roman are also involved with attacks on those who dispraise the new Latin style. This is only natural. For, as we shall see, a defense of eloquent style in general involved a defense of poetry, and therefore of allegory, in general, since the detractors of the one also attack the second. Despite the differences between classical Latin and medieval Christian poetry, therefore--differences which appear much more important to the modern mind than any similarities--the arguments used to attack the one could be turned against the other. Thus, the defense of the Roman became, in significant part, a defense of humanist values.

2. The Humanist Literary Debate Often (As Here) a Literary Exercise at Basis.

The Quarrel of the Roman has never been studied in the context of humanist literary debates. It is important to carefully separate how it is similar to them in some ways, and how in other, important ways, it is very different.

Debates among the humanists in our circle were very largely for the purposes of literary exercise. As in the

debate just analyzed, participants often exaggerated the differences amongst themselves and elevated the tone of acrimony to an extent that--were we not aware of the literary and amicable context in which this is all happening--we would be tempted to misinterpret as truly bitter. As we have seen, this is clearly the case with the differences between Gontier and Jean in this debate. It is probably somewhat true (although less so) with those between Jean and Ambrogio dei Migli, as Texts #11 and #12 show.

This is essentially what Gilbert Ouy says of the Quarrel of the Roman in a recent article.²⁷ Ouy's judgment of this debate as primarily a quarrel among friends, the significance of whose difference has been exaggerated, rests upon his success in assimilating Gerson to the category of "humanist." But here I must disagree, in essence, with Ouy, by making a distinction which he does not make. Gerson is a "humanist" if by that is meant a person actively interested in spreading the acceptability of classical Latin style--and so were many Cardinals at Avignon, perhaps even Benedict XIII himself, and others. He was even like the "humanists" in question in other ways,

²⁷Ouy, "Gerson et l'Angleterre," p. 47.

as Ouy shows--in origin, education, in secretarial activity.²⁸

But Gerson (much less Christine de Pisan, who was as active or more so than Gerson in the Quarrel of the Roman, who fits none of the criteria for "humanist" which Ouy mentions, and whose position in the debate he makes no mention of) was unlike our humanists in one crucial respect. He did not owe his very livelihood, his career, to his pen and his ability to perfect classical Latin style and spread its influence. However "interested" Gerson may have been in the cultivation of classical style (and there is much evidence to show that he was very interested in this), Gerson's position in the Church and as a theologian involved other interests which could and, in the case of the Quarrel of the Roman, I contend, did put him in conflict with the interests of the chancery "humanists," in alliance with Christine. The bulk of his literary activity was not in the imitation or cultivation of literature in a classical style; works which are humanist in this sense are in the small minority in Gerson's production.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 45-46. For a fuller criticism of this article, see Chapter IV.

As I have discussed in Chapter IV, this distinction is both real and vital to understanding the Quarrel of the Roman. Ouy implies that the differences raised by Gerson with Jean de Montreuil et al. about the Roman were exaggerated, somewhat (no doubt) like the differences which appear between Gontier Col and Jean in the debate just analyzed. That is to say, secondary matters raised to appear primary only to those who are ignorant of the context of basic agreement, and at least partially for the purpose of literary debate. A study of the documents of Christine and Gerson, and comparison with earlier and contemporaneous attacks on humanist literary activity on (for example) the study of poetry as inherently dangerous, will show that neither Christine's nor Gerson's criticisms fall within the limits of "humanist" literary debate.

3. The Mutual Interests of Our Humanists and the "Solidarity" or Unity Among Them.

The kind of urbane disagreement evidenced by, say, Gontier and Jean, and even the more acrimonious disagreement with a harmonious conclusion like that of Jean and Ambrogio, is only possible on a basis of a more fundamental unity. This unity of interest was in the spread of classical Latin style and its acceptability and admiration for it, as thoroughly bound up with the advancement

of their careers. Gerson could not possibly have been "interested" in the same way, regardless of how fervently he shared the aim of instilling in the Church (especially in his younger days, ten or more years earlier) a more dynamic attitude to the assimilation of the classical literature, as Ornato puts it.²⁹

4. The Limits to the Hostility in Literary Quarrels Among Humanists Determined by Their More Fundamental Unity of Interest, or "Solidarity."

We must interpret the tone of hostility in the texts by Christine de Pisan and of Gerson in a different manner from that in, say Jean de Montreuil's letter to Gontier (Text #4) or even from his diatribe against Ambrogio dei Migli (Text #11).

A brief example will have to suffice for now to show how it is necessary to do this, not only to show the correctness of the concept of inter-humanist unity or "solidarity," but also to show how the kind of hostility involved in the Quarrel of the Roman is on a very different level than that in the present debate.

In Text #11 Jean de Montreuil attacks Ambrogio for

²⁹Ornato, Jean Muret, pp. 150-51.

being irreligious, while pretending (in Text #7, cols. 1458A-B) to exhort Jean to a more pious life. After calling him "O Epicure delicatissime," "O Aristipe . . . cinicissime" (p. 150, ll. 71-72, 74), Jean reveals that Ambrogio has made, apparently, little secret of his skepticism:

Qui usquequaque, baptismo credo carens, nullum unquam censurę ecclesiasticę sacramentum sumpsisti, adhuc tinibuli fidei penitus ignarus, immo nullam legem te tenere putas, nullam vitam post istam fore censes, nullum infernum ponis, et cum Pithagora ignoras Deum esse, et si sit, nichil mortalia curantem, et demum te ad nichil aliud agendum natum esse anaxagoreus fateris, preterquam ad celum solemque respiciendum. Hec plures pluries, ne in inficias ito, te dicentem audiere, ut sanius sit cum ethnico aut immani barbaro, quam tecum falso putato christicola, conversari quoquo modo aut degere. Nescis, perditę, nescis quam illusorium sit ac ludicrum ab alio expetere quod non prestas, viam volens monstrare cecutiens; et te, exilissime vermis, arriano pessime coram, nobis catholice loqui pretendis aut sentire? (p. 150, ll. 77-89)

and further in this same vein.

Several things must be noted about this passage. First, this attack on Ambrogio's lack of faith is far from being the salient point of the letter. In fact ingratitude, lack of friendship, hypocrisy in general (of which this is more of a special case, another example, than anything else), and an attack on Ambrogio's literary pretensions characterize this letter far better than does this passage.

Second, any possible interpretation of this passage (given the above point, that it is not the major issue

in the letter) must tend to reveal the religious contradictions within the Humanist position.

1. This attack could be greatly exaggerated. In this case, the whole quarrel with Ambrogio would seem a fortiori to be another literary flourish for practice or exercise. We have seen, however, that this can only be relatively true. There was a serious disagreement among all the other humanists (Jean, Nicolas, Gontier) as to the suitability of Ambrogio's personal attack upon Jean, and this attack did fall outside the limits for purely literary debate. Nevertheless, to the extent that it may be, in part, exaggeration, the passage shows how relatively cavalierly and lightly accusations of great seriousness could be hurled as more or less barbed insults, by these humanists. This is very different from, say, Gerson, who takes matters of faith as, literally, affairs of life and death, and who subordinates religious questions to no other matters.

2. These accusations could be true, not exaggerations. In this case, (a) the moral arguments of Ambrogio's in Text #7, cols. 1456-59 are nothing more than a put-on, for literary effect and rhetorical points only. If this is so it might show why men such as Gerson (there were others as well) could be concerned about some humanist literary

practices, and particularly why he might suspect that appeals to the essential "morality" or orthodoxy of reading classical or other allegorical poetry were attempts to cover over some more basic conflict in values; and (b) Ambrogio would be another example of a lack of serious moral intention among humanists.

In any case, this kind of argument by Jean de Montreuil reveals something of why appeals to "morality" by humanists in defense of poetry, however buttressed by authoritative citations, would be viewed skeptically by concerned Churchmen. In any event, the kind of moral criticism Jean raises here is very different from that raised by Gerson and Christine in their texts in the Quarrel of the Roman. To them the possibility of the use of poetry, even if genuinely Christian and moral in spirit (like the Roman), as an ideological danger to faith was a matter which could be secondary to no other. The danger to morals and faith are really the only arguments Gerson and Christine raise about the Roman. As we show in Chapter II we must assume that Gerson and Christine read and understood the allegorical justifications propounded by the defenders of the Roman.