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***Copia* and Historical Note-Taking in an Academic Environment: The Scholarly Manuscripts of the Hungarian Historiographer Péter Révay**

Abstract: This chapter is a case study on the Hungarian historiographer Péter Révay (1568–1622) by discussing his method of note-taking acquired during his years of education. In addition to three volumes of lecture notes from his time spent at the Jesuit college of Vienna, Révay composed a commonplace book with excerpts from his readings about moral topics at the Lutheran gymnasium of Strasbourg. These documents attest that he received a Jesuit education harmonizing a humanist approach to dialectics with a traditional peripatetic curriculum, while his commonplace book from Strasbourg is interpreted through the optics of Johannes Sturm’s pedagogical ideas, focusing on paroemiology and Ciceronian eloquence. The chapter demonstrates that the apparently aleatory structure of the commonplace book derives from the teaching methods of Melchior Junius, Révay’s master. Finally, I argue that Cicero’s moral categories, i.e. *honestum* (righteous) and *utile* (expedient) were fundamental to Révay in his evaluation of historical examples.

1 Introduction: Ciceronian Copiousness and Note-Taking in History

“Political decision is, first of all, a question of choosing the right exemplum, the right proverb adapted to the circumstances” states Florence Buttay in her masterful book about the political allegory of Fortuna (Buttay-Jutier 2008, 373). To be prepared for the caprices of this blind goddess, political leaders must have a wide range of historical models and prudential maxims at their fingertips. The more varied this virtual treasury is, the better it serves its purpose. If some of its elements offer truths which contradict one another, all the better because they

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help statesmen discover the many facets of political reality. For Renaissance political rhetoric, examples and proverbs were contradictory because politics was itself contradictory, and deliberations searched not for apodictic but dialectic truth. Concerning the moral implication and the efficiency of a political decision, examples and precepts did not enable certainty, only a certain degree of probability, yet their methodical accumulation with a circumspect analysis of each political situation was considered to validate their application.¹ To achieve this efficiency in knowledge management, numerous precepts and examples are needed. This quantitative capacity was designated *copia*.

The term originates from Cicero's rhetorical treatises (*De inventione*, 1,1; *De oratore*, III, 31, 125), where orators are encouraged to achieve a copiousness in verbal expression and in subject matter (*verba* and *res*), and where rhetorical exploit is described as a matter of parity between these two kinds of richness: to an opulent factual knowledge belongs an equally rich vocabulary. In the Renaissance, the concept of *copia* was popularized by authors like Rudolphus Agricola (*De formando studio*) and Erasmus (*De duplici copia*), who encouraged students to compose notebooks of excerpts and to index the matter with commonplaces or keywords.² Commonplacing is employed in various disciplines, including the assimilation of political wisdom. Models and exact instructions for this activity are abundant in the early modern literature. It is not difficult to read Justus Lipsius' *Politics* as a collection of classical quotations arranged into thematic groups by the author (Waszink 2004, 49–78 and 152–155, and Tucker 2011, 163–192). In Jean Bodin's famous theoretical work on historiography, the *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, understanding history or employing its lessons in practice appears as a matter of knowledge management. It is not incidental that the French author discusses structuring historical data through commonplacing in his work (Vasoli 1970, Vasoli 1974; Couzinet 1996a; and Couzinet 1996b, 130).

Based on handwritten notebooks, this chapter reconstructs a particular late humanist method for historical note-taking. I will focus on Péter Révay (1568–

1 About politics as a science of the contingent, see Pocock 1975, 3–30 and Najemy 2014, 1131–1164. About the probability of moral arguments in the early modern era, see Franklin 2001. Some emphasize, rather than stressing the uncertainties of political conclusions, that post-Machiavellian political thought praised a systematic accumulation of historical knowledge based on inductive reasoning from historical data. This view of history, linking the experience of the past to practical use, shared similar epistemological premises with Francis Bacon's scientific method focused on regular observation (Almási 2016).

2 About Erasmus' idea of *copia* and its Ciceronian origins, see Cummings 2014. About commonplace books, a large secondary literature is available. See, for instance, Moss 1996; Cevolini 2006; and Cevolini 2016.

1622), a Lutheran nobleman and historiographer from Hungary, who carefully preserved handwritten annotations from his learning years. He studied at schools where copiousness was a central concept in rhetorical training which was also one of the main scholarly gateways to access knowledge of state affairs in the early modern period when politics and statecraft were not yet conceived as autonomous academic disciplines independent from ethics and the study of ancient historians.³ These schools were the Jesuit college of Vienna and the academy of Strasbourg founded by Johannes Sturm, a famous advocate of Ciceronian eloquence.

2 Péter Révay, the Historian of the Hungarian Crown Jewels

Son of the royal master of the doorkeepers, Mihály Révay, Péter was born in the castle of Holíč (today in Slovakia) into a Lutheran family of the Hungarian aristocracy.⁴ After his elementary studies, he and his brother Ferenc enrolled at the Jesuit college of Vienna where he dated his first letter to his father on June 9, 1585. He stayed in the Habsburg capital until 1588. At the end of this year, his name appeared on the list of the newly inaugurated magisters of the academy of Strasbourg, which was more convenient for Révay's religious affiliation. Despite his rapid graduation, he spent three more years at the Lutheran institution. Having returned to Hungary, he participated in several military and diplomatic missions related to the Long Turkish War (1591–1606). Nevertheless, he remained faithful to his literary interest. He shared an admiration for Lipsius with a close friend of his, the mannerist poet János Rimay (c. 1570–1631), and he even wrote a letter to the Flemish thinker on July 27, 1592.

His Lutheran faith never seemed to be a burden to his career, yet the greatest political turmoil of his life became the touchstone of his fidelity to the Austrian house: it was the insurrection led by István Bocskai, elected prince of Hungary and Transylvania between 1605 and 1606. Although Bocskai proclaimed to be the protector of causes Révay could have identified with—religious liberties against the violent Catholic Counter-Reformation and respect of Hungarian constitutional traditions—Révay continued to serve the legitimate monarch. However, in 1607, he became a confidant of Archduke Matthias, the brother of Emperor Rudolph II, King

³ For instance, the emergence of the science of statecraft from the rhetorical and poetical analysis of ancient historiography is duly described through the example of the 16th-17th century history of the German Protestant university of Helmstedt by Klein 2017, 251–272.

⁴ For his biography, see Bónis 1981.

of Hungary. Matthias assumed the delicate task of appeasing the Hungarian states and orders, considering himself to be more competent than his elder brother. The conflict was resolved when the emperor finally renounced the Hungarian throne and Matthias succeeded him in 1608. As a sign of his benevolence, the new king ordered the return of the Holy Crown of Hungary from Prague. Together with its return, Révay was appointed one of the two crown guards (*conservatores coronae*), who oversaw the security of the artifact. Révay was most proud of this title, which he bore until his death.

As an irreplaceable historical relic, the Holy Crown had a specific importance in royal legitimacy, insofar as no other crown could be used at coronations in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁵ Or, at least, that was the tradition advocated by Révay, who made the crown the central theme of his two historical works. Although modern historical research dates the crown to a later period, discussing many problems about its origin, it was evident to Révay that the crown originally belonged to Stephen I, the first Christian ruler of Hungary; hence, its history was linked to the conversion of Hungary.

In his two major works, Révay relates the history of Hungary from the perspective of the Holy Crown. In his earlier *De sacrae coronae regni Hungariae ortu, virtute, victoria, fortuna [...] commentarius* (1613) or, in short, *Commentarius*, he relates the numerous peripeties of its story including transportations and thefts (Révay 1613). Révay argues for a direct correlation between the fate of the realm and the destiny of the Holy Crown, for this latter mediates the benevolent influences of divine Providence and apparently has its own agency as a living being: as long as the dignity of the crown as a sacred object is respected, the prosperity of the community is assured. In this respect, the crown incarnates the legal traditions which must be observed by the ruler. In the *De monarchia et sacra corona Regni Hungariae centuriae septem*, written around 1619–20 and published posthumously in 1659, Révay's text is more of a political history of Hungary (Révay 1659).⁶ Nevertheless, the author still reserves the same mediating role for the diadem, emphasizing also a Protestant point of view of the origins of Hungarian Christianity: to strengthen the idea of Hungarian autonomy within the Habsburg Empire, the book modified the generally accepted legend, according to which the crown was given to Stephen I by Pope Sylvester II, by inventing a Greek origin for the object

⁵ The history of the Holy Crown and the rites of the coronation are thoroughly described in Bak and Pálffy 2020. The early modern ideology regarding the use of the Holy Crown, including Révay's role, is analyzed by Teszelszky 2009; Teszelszky 2010; Teszelszky 2014; and Fundárková and Teszelszky 2016.

⁶ For a recent critical edition, see Révay 2021.

in order to minimize the role of the Latin Church in the Christianization of the Hungarians (Tóth 2014, 127–138, and 2016, 43–56).

Révay's history can also be read as a theoretical work. Some sections of the work remind the reader of the mirrors for princes genre. To emphasize the moral and political lessons of history, the book orients the attention of the reader by means of cursive letters in the main text and of frequent marginalia, highlighting precepts, formed as an adage (*sententia*), or historical events which might serve as examples (*exempla*) to illustrate these precepts in practice in the framework of Révay's specific ideological goal. Researchers have identified many of his inspirations in this field. One of them was Bodin's *Methodus*, which, according to Kees Teszelszky, taught Révay how to coordinate precepts of political wisdom with historical examples both antique and modern (Teszelszky 2009, 217–232; cf. Bartoniak 1975, 398–399). Although Révay never quotes Bodin on the matter of *exempla*, it is a well-established fact that he read both the *Methodus* and the *Six livres de la République*; for instance, his *De Monarchia* assimilated Bodin's numerological considerations, including the idea that every period of five-hundred years induces a cataclysm in an empire. As naïve as Bodin's quasi-mathematical speculations seem to us, it was not at all contradictory to his efforts to use historical empirical data to refute erroneous visions of human history—such as the protestant theory of the four monarchies—and to identify general tendencies (Bartoniak 1975, 396 and 402; Bónis 1981, 68–69; and Tóth 2021b, 162).⁷

As an admirer of Lipsius, Révay could follow the model of the author's *Politics*, which was itself a commonplace collection of political wisdom, as well as his *Monita et exempla politica*.⁸ In the intellectual circle Révay was active in, Antonio Guevara's *Relox de Príncipes* was very popular as well, and since 1610, a part of the grandiose book had been available in Hungarian (Guevara 1610).⁹ Several sentences of Révay's *De Monarchia* come from Guevara, and a few quotations can be identified from Erasmus' *Adagia* and the political commonplace book of the Huguenot theologian Lambert Daneau (*Politicorum aphorismorum silva*, 1583) as

7 For instance, the multiplications of seven and nine are dangerous—many famous people died at the age of 63 and the same interval might separate historical catastrophes—whereas other numbers are benign. See Desan 1987, 100–112.

8 This influence concerns both the transfer of neo-stoic ideas and the stylistic impact of the use of examples and proverbs, see Coron 1976; Bónis 1981, 81–92; Teszelszky 2007; Tóth 2014, 128–131; Tóth 2019; and Tóth 2021a.

9 This translation containing Book II of the original was later extended to the full text of the work: Guevara 1628; Christoph Lackner, a German-speaking magistrate of the West-Hungarian town Sopron, who frequented the same late humanist circles as Révay, published a book with selected adages from the *Relox* in Latin: Lackner 1625. About the presence of the *Relox* in Révay's works, see Tóth 2014, 131–133, and 2021b, 135, 146, and 159–160.

well (Tóth 2021b, 135, 146, 135, 146, and 157–163.). Yet, as appealing as it is to link Révay's process to bookish inspirations, the discussion of his method cannot be limited to the influence of a few authors: using commonplace collections and quoting historical examples were frequent strategies in early modern text production.¹⁰

In this respect, Révay's studies in his formative years have been neglected. An important opportunity has been missed, given the fact that four volumes of annotations have been preserved from Révay's school years in the Archdiocesan Library of Esztergom. Three of them were made during his philosophical studies in Vienna—*Annotationes in universam logicam et mathesim* (486 folios), *Commentaria in octo libros Aristotelis de Physice auscultatione* (453 folios), *Commentaria in libros Aristotelis de Coelo et Mundo* (366 folios)—and the fourth one, a commonplace book, *Annotationes morales historicae* (279 folios), was based on his readings in Strasbourg.¹¹ Their presentation demonstrates how deeply Révay cherished these early documents: he had them bound in white leather and placed his monogram and the year of their making in gilt on the binding. That excerpting was not a scholarly constraint to him is proven by an interesting remark made by Raphael Hrabecius, the minister who delivered his eulogy at his funeral: he mentions a certain notebook entitled *Viridarium* (Pleasure-garden) that Révay worked on his whole life. Unfortunately, this manuscript cannot be found today (Hrabecius 1623, F2r; Bónis 1981, 11–12). Of course, the literature is aware of the subsisting volumes.¹² Furthermore, Tóth's critical edition identifies two instances where the *De Monarchia* quotes this commonplace book of his youth (Révay 2021: II, 144–145 [6.74.6], and II, 284–85 [6.152.2]).¹³ Nevertheless, their systematic analysis is still waiting.

3 *Copia* at the Jesuit College of Vienna

In Vienna, the town of Johannes Cuspinianus and Joachim Vadian, humanism had firm positions in university education. Accordingly, the erudition of Erasmus was welcomed from the outset in Vienna. The poet Johannes Alexander Brassicanus

¹⁰ Cf. with Tóth's conclusion about Révay's use of sentences: Tóth 2021b, 163.

¹¹ Archdiocesan Library, Esztergom (ALE) MS II. 272; II. 224; II. 273; II. 253. (The size of the four manuscripts is 200 x 150 mm. I followed the chronological order of the studies instead of the order of the shelf marks.)

¹² Bónis used his Vienna manuscripts to reconstruct the chronology of Révay's studies: Bónis 1981, 10.

¹³ The second quotation can be found both in the *Annotationes* and in Lambert Daneau's collection.

was appointed professor of rhetoric and jurisprudence at the university, and he openly professed Erasmian views.¹⁴ When Erasmus publicly turned against Luther in his *De libero arbitrio* in 1525, his prestige was strengthened in Catholic Vienna. He was appreciated by humanist priests of the town, including Johann Faber, before religious debates took a turn towards hostility.¹⁵

When Catholicism found itself in a more defensive position, the hope of avoiding a fatal division of the Church with an inner reform faded. It became less and less appropriate for Catholics to refer to Erasmus, yet his imposing philological oeuvre remained essential to many of them. In 1559, his works were put on the *Index*, and his memory was banned. However, even Catholic authorities felt that his contribution to the humanities could not be neglected, and some of them shared a nuanced opinion which condemned the theologian but appreciated the philologist in Erasmus (Salliot 2017). As for the Jesuits, in the beginning, they used *De copia* and *De conscribendis epistolis* to teach proper style at their schools. Even before the Index of 1559, Ignatius of Loyola expressed his doubts concerning Erasmus, but in 1557, his successor, superior general Diego Laínez, still allowed the teachers of the Society in Padua and in Ingolstadt to use his works (Kainulainen 2018, 541–542).¹⁶

Erasmian books were indispensable for teaching *copia*. What Catholics could try was to at least get rid of his name, if not his ideas. It is known that Paolo Manzuzio, the son of the great typographer Aldo, completed a purged edition of the *Adagia* for Catholic readership ([Erasmus] 1575). As for Erasmus' theoretical work about the topic, in 1556, the French Jesuit André des Freux, who worked in Rome beside Ignatius of Loyola, published his versified adaptation of *De duplici copia* in distiches (Des Freux 1556). Like Erasmus' original, the first part of the didactic poem discussed figures and tropes necessary to achieve linguistic richness, whereas the second part presented a dialectical method of describing various topics.

This latter book was also printed in Vienna (Des Freux 1561), where it was used in teaching as late as in the 1580s by an instructor named Joannes Molensis, who was also Révay's teacher of philosophy according to his notes. Born in Antwerp in

14 Gábor Pesti, the Erasmian translator of Aesop's fables in Hungary, contacted him during his stay in Vienna (Gerézdi 1964, 139–140, and Ritoókné Szalay 2002, 169–170).

15 This Erasmian milieu inspired Benedek Komjáti, a Hungarian scholar and a student of Vienna, who translated the epistles of Saint Paul to Hungarian, one of the favorite authors of Erasmus in theology (Gerézdi 1964, 138–139, and Ács 2019, 45–57).

16 Marc Fumaroli (1999, 93) also draws attention to the complicated Jesuit evaluation of Erasmus' works, pointing out that as members of the Republic of Letters, Jesuits could not honestly depreciate all his merits.

1560, he spent his whole Jesuit career at the university of Vienna, where he died in 1613. He graduated as *magister artium* only in the beginning of the 17th century, and he later obtained a doctorate in theology.¹⁷ His name is indicated in a handwritten entry made by a Hungarian student inside a copy of Des Freux's *De copia*, the analysis of which was finished by him in 1583. The successive possessors of the book were István Szuhay (1551–1608), later known as the bishop of Kalocsa, and Demeter Naprágyi (1564–1619), a famous humanist bishop with whom Révay undertook diplomatic missions (Bónis 1981, 19, and Tóth 2021b, 154).¹⁸ Both Szuhay and Naprágyi studied in Vienna and could have been students of Joannes. As for Révay, nothing certain is known about his first years in Vienna, but his education was probably about solidifying oratorical skills, connecting patriotic and rhetorical instruction performed mainly with the help of Cicero's works by Jesuit teachers (Grendler 2019, 15–17). It is not unlikely that he had to study Des Freux's book with Joannes as well.

There is no sign that he had any issues due to his Lutheran affiliation. He even wrote a letter to his father to assure him that he would never abandon the faith of his family (Bónis 1981, 8–9). Whereas Catholic students of Vienna usually concluded sections in their manuscripts by praising the Virgin Mary, Révay consequently used the Protestant formula “*Soli Deo gloria.*”¹⁹ It is true, however, that as a Lutheran, he could not graduate as a master at the university because registration was tied to a public profession of Catholic faith since 1581 (Gall 1965, 17 and 57, and Bónis 1981, 10). That is the reason why he later decided to move on to Strasbourg.

His annotations from his Vienna period are derived from the dictation of the teacher (*dictata*) in the classroom. They cover a typical Jesuit curriculum in philosophy. Providing a traditional exegesis of Aristotle's texts, the curriculum was divided into three main disciplines: logic, physics, and metaphysics. Originally, the curriculum was planned to take three years, though it was not uncommon for it to be reduced to one year due to lack of teaching staff (Grendler 2014, 13, 2016, 23–24, and 2019, 8–9). In this respect, the case of Révay was special: although he

¹⁷ About his life, see Bónis 1981, 10.

¹⁸ The entry which can be read on the verso of leaf 36 is published by Edina Zvara: “Magister Joannes Molensis ultima Feb(ruarii) 1583 finem fecit” (Zvara 2011, 47–71, in particular 65 and 70). The location of the item: Eisenstadt (Austria), Esterházy Library, Zimmer V. mittlere, Kasten 5. Regal 1.

¹⁹ For instance, ALE MS II 272, 447r; MS II 224, 453r; MS II 273, 42v. For the sake of comparison, György Dubovszky, who studied in 1590 in Vienna and later became a canon of Esztergom, said grace to both God and the Virgin after his annotations on *Metaphysics* and *De anima*: ALE MS II 308, 259v: “Laus Deo Ter Op[timo] Mariae Beatissi[m]ae / M[at]ri Virg[ini]” and 368r: “Laus itaque Deo Virginique matri.”

spent only one year with his philosophical studies, the course he accomplished seems to be almost exhaustive. He commenced the study of dialectics with Porphyry's *Isagoge* on January 5, 1587, and he finished it with the *Topica* on July 11, after which he started *Elements* and the *De sphaera mundi*.²⁰ Natural philosophy, commenced on July 27 and finished in June of 1588, included Aristotle's *Physics*, *On Heavens*, *On Generation and Corruption*, and *Meteorology*.²¹ On June 25, 1588, Joannes began commenting on *De anima*, and on September 1 *Metaphysics*, but Révay could study this latter work only for a very short period of time, because he left for Strasbourg in the same year.²² According to his annotations, he was deeply involved in geometrical studies as well, and he copied superb illustrations of logic and of astronomy into his notebook, including not only Porphyrian trees and other charts inherited from medieval scholastics, but also some more uncommon diagrams. Regarding the structure and the content of this course, there are some striking similarities with manuscripts composed by other Hungarian students at Jesuit colleges of Habsburg territories during the same decade: Ferenc Szelepcsényi Pohronc (?–1611), later a canon of Esztergom, and the brothers Martin and Simon Bánovszky studied the same curriculum, but at different institutions. Szelepcsényi Pohronc was enrolled in Vienna where he was taught by Ludovicus Hantsamus,²³ whereas the brothers Bánovszky attended the lessons of Joannes Grasser in Olomouc.²⁴

In all these manuscripts from Vienna and Olomouc, the division into chapters and the figures match with a rather early textbook for dialectics: the *Commentaria in Isagogen Porphyrii, et in omnes libros Aristotelis de dialectica*, also known as the *Louvain commentaries*. First issued in 1535 and regularly reedited in 1547, 1553, and 1568, the textbook was written by a number of authors supervised by Joannes Stan-

20 ALE MS II. 272, 1r: "Annotationes in Universam Logicam tradita à Joanne Molense Sacerdote Societatis Jesu Viennae Austriae 5 Janurij Ao 1587"; 447r: "Finis 11 Mensis Julij / A[nn]o D[omi]ni 1587" (end of the *Topica*); after the *Organon*, the numbering of the pages recommences from the beginning: 1r: "In Mathematicas disciplinas"; and it also recommences at the beginning of the *De sphaera*: 1r: "In sphaeram Ioannis de Sacrobosco commentaria."

21 ALE MS II. 224, 1r: "Commentaria in octos libros Ari[stote]lis de phisica auscultatione tradit a P. Ioanne Molense Societatis Iesu. Vien[n]ae Austriae incipit faeliciter 27 Mensis Julij Anno D[omi]ni 1587"; ALE MS II 273, unnumbered folios: "Meteorologia / Incipit 8 Junij matu[tina] hora octava Anno d[omi]ni 1588."

22 ALE MS II 273, unnumbered folios: "de Anima 25 die Junij hora 8o matutina A. d[omi]ni 1588" and "Commentaria in Metaphysicam Ari[stote]lis Patris Molensis auspiciata 1a die Septemb[ris] hora matutina 8a An[n]o 1588 d[omi]ni."

23 ALE MS II 226a, MS II 274; MS II 226b (1585–87).

24 ALE MS II 227a, 227b, 227c, 227d (1588–89).

nifex at the University of Louvain.²⁵ The book resulted from a rivalry between the university and the Collegium Trilingue, established in 1517 in the same town. Criticizing Aristotelian contents and methods, this new humanist institution challenged traditional curriculum, and the university had to act. Yet instead of entirely rejecting the humanist approach to dialectics, the professors chose a well-balanced eclecticism embracing Peripatetic philosophy and making some concessions to humanist dialectics. Thus, in accordance with Catholic tendencies of the time, the book adopted a moderated realism, excluding radical nominalists, like Ockham. This also fit Jesuit requirements which can be described as predominantly realist as well. On the other hand, the work also referred to humanist sources. The authors criticized Lorenzo Valla, the notorious enemy of Aristotle, for separating ontological and dialectical issues and condemning metaphysics, whereas they attributed more positive values to other humanists, like Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and Rudolphus Agricola, whose *De inventione dialectica* was printed for the first time in Louvain in 1515. Beyond some reproaches, the Louvain commentaries are rather positive with respect to Agricola's work while discussing the first two books of the *Topica*. This implied a more practical and flexible approach of the *loci* of invention that Agricola put in the service of rhetoric persuasion using plausible arguments and copious examples to inductively prove a conclusion in practical domains, such as morality, history, and even politics, rather than in abstract science.²⁶

Always considering this practical goal of dialectic and rhetoric, Agricola did not display much interest in ontological problems, such as the debate about universals between realists and nominalists. Yet, despite the lack of any explicit statement on the question, recent scholarship has demonstrated that Agricola's practical aims tacitly imply an epistemological optimism which postulates that topics in logic must correspond to the diverse aspects of ontological reality. Being himself a realist, Agricola was more compatible with the predominantly realist Catholic scholarship of the early modern period than openly anti-metaphysician authors (Braakhuis 1988 and Nauta 2012).

This pragmatic realism manifests itself in the fact that the Louvain commentaries set an encyclopaedical goal. Still following the guidelines of Aristotle's work, the textbook opened the discussion to various materials. For instance, it paid special attention to the habits (*habitus*) and the faculties of the soul. Aristotle discusses *habitus* as intellectual and moral dispositions or qualities of the soul in *Categories* (7–8), in *De anima* (2.5), in *Metaphysics* (5.20, 1022b12–14), and in the

²⁵ The consulted edition: Stannifex 1553.

²⁶ About Agricola's evaluation in the Louvain commentaries and the conflict with the Collegium Trilingue, see Papy 1999. About Agricola's dialectical and rhetorical thoughts, see Van der Poel 2007, 2015, and 2018.

Nicomachean Ethics (1.13) (Faucher and Roques 2019.) Since the *Organon* already anticipates this matter explained in detail by his later works, the subject of intellectual habits provides an opportunity to establish a taxonomy of human activities, including sciences and arts as well. This classification is illustrated by one of the many diagrams that Révay's teacher borrowed from the Louvain textbook. According to this diagram, intellectual habits can be related to what is always true (*semper verus*), what is always false (*semper falsus*), or what is sometimes true and sometimes false (*aliquando verus*). The first category covers theological and philosophical wisdom, inferior sciences, and the arts, the second one basically corresponds to ignorance, whereas the third one contains uncertain yet no less important phenomena of human intellectual and verbal activity: opinion and suspicion (Stannifex 1553, 84).²⁷ Hence, the dialectic in the Louvain commentaries becomes a propaedeutic not only for all scientific disciplines, but also to all possible sources of rhetorical arguments.

This exigence to integrate a large spectrum of discipline into the dialectic framework can also be illustrated by the presence of a peculiar science in the Louvain commentaries. This discipline is physiognomy, and the Louvain authors refer to Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples to resume its principles for the students (Stannifex 1553, 276–278).²⁸ Observation of facial features thus was considered to be a valid source of arguments about a person's character; hence an operational part of dialectic. Establishing this kind of connection between abstract science and versatile knowledge could make dialectical problems more understandable to students. Sometimes, playful methods are employed in this curriculum as well. For instance, to dwell on mathematics, his professor used not only the usual *De Sphaera Mundi* by Johannes de Sacrobosco but also a commentary written by the Jesuit Christophorus Clavius on the same work (Clavius 1570). This textbook employed classics as mnemotechnical poems to help the students memorize astronomical facts, such as the name of the constellations in the Zodiac, and Révay's teacher dictated these verses to his students, as the manuscript attests.²⁹

To conclude, Révay's Jesuit education in Vienna merged the traditional curriculum with humanism. In the teaching of philosophy, copiousness was key as linguistic and rhetorical training was completed with an encyclopaedical effort which opened the scholastic dialectic towards other disciplines. This education

²⁷ In Révay's manuscript: ALE MS II 272, 139v.

²⁸ "Descriptio signorum, a Iacobo Stapulensi ex Aristotele et Adamantio Physiognomio collecta."

²⁹ Clavius quotes Manilius, *Astronomica*, 1, 263–274 as a mnemonic aid for the constellations of the Zodiac (Clavius 1570, 295); in Révay's manuscript: ALE MS II 272, "In sphaeram Ioannis de Sacrobosco commentaria" 24v (in this section about astrology, the numbering of the folios recommences from f. 1r).

was not incompatible with the requirements which were awaiting Révay in Strasbourg. But the documents from his years spent at the protestant gymnasium already reflect his personal preferences, where the student, still following the guidance of his professors, had a certain degree of freedom to choose the materials in his notes.

4 Ciceronian Commonplaces at the Sturmiian Gymnasium of Strasbourg

After leaving Vienna, Révay arrived at Strasbourg, one of the most important European strongholds of humanist studies on phraseology (paroemiology). The Lutheran gymnasium was founded by Johann Sturm, a disciple of Ramus in 1538, and although it achieved the rank of university only in 1631, its prestige was recognized even earlier.

The elderly Sturm was still alive when Révay enrolled at the school. In his rhetorical works, including the *De imitatione oratoria*, he professed a Christian humanism that presumed an immediate connection between linguistic purity and the purity of Christian doctrine: skill in languages makes possible a deeper understanding of religious teachings. Sturm's views imply that dialectic can achieve an adequate description of the reality of things, while rhetoric, inseparable from this discipline, can appropriately express it. Imitation and excerpting classics into commonplaces were methods that Sturm highly estimated in regard to these goals (Sturm 1574; Spitz and Tinsley 1995; Moss 1996, 147–154; Arnold 2007; and Arnold 2009). His disciples and colleagues at Strasbourg continued this heritage, especially by cultivating lexicography and paroemiology in classical languages. Melchior Iunius, a teacher of rhetoric, discussed *copia*, excerpting, and commonplacing in his textbook (Iunius 1585, 75–97), while Johann Bentz, author of several commentaries on Cicero, composed Greek and Latin treasuries (Bentz 1581; Bentz 1596a; Bentz 1596b) and published a manual in 1588, which listed commonplace headings that his students had to use while preparing excerpts (Bentz 1588). Strasbourg scholars also published several printed commonplace books, including the *Adagia* of Johann Ludwig Hawenreuter (1573). Joseph Lang was a particularly successful disciple of Sturm. His Greek–Latin–German *Adagia* was prefaced by his old master (Langius 1596), and he also published two further collections: *Loci communes sive florilegium* (Langius 1598) and an updated version of Nanus Mirabellius' famous *Polyanthea* (Nanus Mirabellius et al. 1607). To do justice to the prestige of Strasbourg's paroemiology, it is worth evoking the fact that when in 1618 the protestant gymnasium received a rival in the form of a new Jesuit university

founded in the small Alsatian town of Molsheim (Negruzzo 2005; Grendler 2014, 18–20), the Lutherans complained that these Jesuit fathers plagiarized the *Apophthegms* of their late compatriot, Conrad Lycosthenes.³⁰

In the 1580s–1590s, Strasbourg paroemiology inspired Hungarian scholars, namely, János Baranyai Decsi (1560–1601), who studied in Strasbourg between 1588 and 1592 and published a selection of Erasmus' *Adages* with the Hungarian equivalents of the proverbs (Baranyai Decsi 1598), and Albert Szenci Molnár (1574–1634), an important Calvinist poet and the author of the first modern Hungarian-Latin dictionary, who composed a hand-written commonplace book based on the system of headings in Bentz' aforementioned textbook.³¹ Given their scientific production, these two lexicographers must have deliberately chosen the Strasbourg gymnasium as a place which matched their ambitions in literature.

Révay's intention was to study rhetoric and law in Strasbourg. First, his teacher was Sturm, who had to resign in 1589 because of his Calvinism. Then Révay studied under the supervision of Melchior Iunius, who staged orations on antique models with his students. In 1589, Révay played the role of the praetor in a reenactment of Murena's trial based on Cicero (Iunius 1592b, 250–252, 271, and 281–282), and in 1591, Révay delivered a speech about a case of parricide told by Livy (Iunius 1592a: 38–42), and another one to glorify Cicero (Iunius 1592b, 210–230). In an additional oration, he also praised hunting (Iunius 1592b, 10–14); he also wrote a preface to fellow students' orations, in which they had to decide which one of the four cardinal virtues fits a nobleman best (Iunius 1592b, 115–119). In the same year, he defended a legal disputation about loans (*De mutuo*); this one was exceptionally presided over by the professor of law, Paul Graseck (Révay 1591). The impressive list implies that this training was integrated into a practical education devoted to the young nobility, which could recognize its activities (legal administration and sport) in the curriculum (Eckhardt 1944, 9–18; Bónis 1981, 10–11; and Tóth 2021b, 104–105 and 138n–139n).

Regarding his rhetorical education, his praise of Cicero delivered on January 8, 1591, is the most interesting text. The speech discusses Cicero as the paragon of orators: after presenting his biography by Plutarch, it proposes various perspectives to evaluate Cicero's oeuvre. A major part of the oration consists in a topical classification of Cicero's texts. After this thematic analysis, Révay groups the speeches

³⁰ This accusation of plagiarism appears in a satiric work of an author of Strasbourg: Dachtler 1619, 58.

³¹ About Baranyai Decsi's and Szenci Molnár's intellectual surroundings in Strasbourg, see Imre 2009, 28–46. Szenci Molnár's commonplace book with his diary and other documents may be found in Târgu Mureş (Romania), Teleki-Bolyai Library MS To 3619b; see Föörköli 2022.

according to their oratorical and stylistic procedures, including digression and amplification.

In Révay's speech, Cicero's subjects are arranged into four larger groups: philosophy, politics, law, and a mixed section which he calls oratorical commonplaces. Inside these topics, he indicates one or two Ciceronian texts as an example for each commonplace.³² This results in an entire system of headings which might help students read and excerpt the works of the Roman orator. Révay praises this richness of the Ciceronian oeuvre in the following terms:

What shall I say now about the commonplaces, my respected audience? Cicero complains that, in his age, nobody had catalogued [*reperitos*] the orators, who could amplify [*dilatare*] and transform a given reasoning adapted to the needs of the person and the time into a common oration of any kind: he claims that there are most brilliant and almost vivacious sections [in the orations], which contain theses and commonplaces [*Theses et locos communes*]. It can hurt nobody, I think, if they search Cicero's orations for the best rules to invent them [the commonplaces] correctly and wisely, to use them properly and to discuss them copiously [*copiose*], ornately, and eloquently, except those who turn out to be a complete stranger to these orations. There is an excellent commonplace about religion in *Pro Domo sua* and in *De Haruspicum responsis*; about divine providence in the fourth oration against Catilina and in *Pro Milone*; about the power of conscience in *Pro Sexto Roscio* and in *Pro Milone*; about the immortality of soul in *Pro Archia*.³³

This system was not entirely a personal invention of Révay. He was certainly helped by his teachers and their textbooks. Sturm, for instance, included an overview of the whole Ciceronian oeuvre in his *De imitatione oratoria*: in the supplement of this treatise, he published several scholia which discussed Cicero's and Demosthenes' texts according to their subjects, the types of the arguments they used, and their figures of speech (Sturm 1574). Cicero's works were also published in

32 Eckhardt and Bónis noticed the presence of this list of commonplaces in the speech (Eckhardt 1944, 12–13, and Bónis 1981, 11). For the whole system of Ciceronian commonplaces in Révay's oration, see Supplement 1.

33 "Quid de locis nunc communibus ut proferam, expectatis Auditores? Non suo tempore reperitos fuisse Oratores Cicero conqueritur, qui dilatate, & à propria ac definita disputatione hominis & temporis, ad communem uniuersi generis traducere Orationem potuerint: luminosas maximè, & quasi actuosas eas esse partes affirmat, quae Theses & locos communes habe[n]t. Horum & rectè prudenterq[ue] inueniendorum, & decorè adhibendorum & tractandorum copiosè, ornate, oratoriè ratione[m] omnium optimam Ciceronis in Orationibus reperiri, nemo, opinor, inficiabitur; nisi qui in iisdem hospes planè ac peregrinus extiterit. Est locus communis insignis de Religione, pro Domo, & de Haruspicum responsis: de diuina prouidentia in 4. Catil. & pro Milone: de vi conscientiae, pro S. Roscio & Milone: de animae immortalitate pro Archia" (Iunius 1592b, 222).

thoroughly indexed editions in Strasbourg by Sturm and his colleagues.³⁴ In 1581, Cicero's orations were printed in three volumes, containing the emendations and the annotations of the French scholar Denis Lambin. The title page announced that the edition was augmented with "theses or commonplaces" (*thesibus item seu locis communibus*), an expression echoed by Révay in the passage quoted above. Indeed, each volume of the edition ends with an index of contents entitled "Ἀποσημειώσεις" (annotations) which regroups keywords into four or five categories according to the volume: "Philosophicae," "Γνωμολογίαι" (adages), "Historicae," "Grammaticae," and "Rhetoricae" (Cicero 1581). Révay's thematical groups that he suggests for studying Cicero vaguely resemble this division, but the real *theses seu loci communes* promised by the title page of the edition can be found exclusively at the end of the first volume under the title "Index locorum communium."³⁵ This index was adopted and augmented by Melchior Iunius as well, when he published a commentary on Cicero's orations in 1594. In the book, Révay's teacher extracted 21 commonplace themes from Cicero's orations (*Ex. M. Tul. Ciceronis orationibus loci aliquot communes*).³⁶ By the time of its publication, Révay had returned to Hungary. Yet, it is not unlikely that Iunius used similar methods to teach rhetorical invention when Révay was still in Strasbourg. As Révay's surviving handwritten notes suggest, he indeed had access to Iunius' text before its printed edition, as we shall see below.

Révay formed these annotations into a commonplace book in Strasbourg. They fill about 279 folios, each of them corresponding to a specific heading. Révay was aware of the historical tradition of excerpting: at the beginning of the manuscript, he listed classical and modern authors worth emulating while collecting common-

34 That is the case of this volume of Cicero's epistles edited by Sturm: Cicero 1541. In the book, the annotations of the commonplaces are named by the Greek term Ἀποσημειώσεις, like in the edition of Cicero's letters from 1581 (see below).

35 "[D]e fama & existimatione laesa" (*Pro Quintio*); "de accusatoribus falsis & iniquis calumniatoribus coercendis" (*Pro S. Roscio*); "de patricidii ... crimine" (*Pro S. Roscio*), "de officio magistratus" (*In Verrem* 2); "de difficultate & periculo accusandi" (*In Verrem* 3); "de testimoniis" (*Pro M. Fonteio*); "de scripti & sententiae controuersia" (*Pro A. Caecina*); "de iure iuris[que] consultis" (*Pro A. Caecinna*) (Cicero 1581, I, i1r–i5v).

36 The first eight *loci* are the same as Cicero 1581. The rest are the following: "De Animaduersionibus, notationibus & subscptionibus censorijs" (*Pro A. Cluentio*), "De Iurisprudencia" (*Pro L. Muraena*), "De Accusatoru[m] autoritate" (*Pro L. Muraena*), "De Literarum studijs" (*Pro Archia Poeta*), "De Laudis atque gloriae studio" (*Pro Archia Poeta*), "De Religionis studio" (*De Harispicum responsis*), "De Gratitudine" (*Pro Cn. Plancio*), "De optimatum conditione & officio" (*Pro P. Sextio*), "De Adolescentum voluptatibus & erratis" (*Pro M. Caelio*), "De Vindicta priuata & vi repellenda" (*Pro Milone*), "De Ratione vera parandae potentiae" (*Philippica* 1), "De Aetate Magistratus" (*Philippica* 5), "De Animaduersionibus ac poenis" (*Philippica* 8) (Iunius 1594).

places: Joannes Stobaeus, Valerius Maximus, Conrad Lycosthenes, and the author of the *Polyanthea*.³⁷ Despite Révay's involvement in this tradition and his familiarity with well-organized, printed commonplace books, the notebook does not have their well-rounded structure, and there are even some key-words which occur twice. It is true that Révay intended to remediate this redundancy by adding cross-references to the headings. Vague topical groups of headings can be discerned as well, and he also used the simple method proposed by Agricola and Erasmus—that is, organizing keywords into dichotomies, such as vice and virtue.³⁸

Nevertheless, there are a few indications that Révay did systematic work. These above-mentioned moral dichotomies originate from an Aristotelian approach which identified virtue as a middle way between vicious extremities: true generosity (*liberalitas*), for instance, is placed between prodigality (*prodigalitas*) and avarice (*avaritia*). On the very first page, Révay designates the source of ethical erudition: the *Epitome doctrinae moralis*, the textbook of the Strasbourg professor Theophilus (Gottlieb) Golius: "Generosity is a virtue that maintains the middle way in asking for, giving, and receiving money; to know more about the topic, see Theophilus Golius' commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that I received in Strasbourg in 1588, page 1."³⁹ The work discussed Aristotelian ethics in a catechetical form (questions and responses), including virtues and vices. Comparing their order in the textbook with the beginning of Révay's annotations, the similarity is striking.

Révay's thoroughness also manifests in the way he treated Cicero's works in the annotations. The Roman orator is clearly the most quoted antique author in the manuscript, and Révay's indications reveal that he used Sturm's edition of

37 ALE MS II 253, [1v]: "Auctores q[ui] locos comunes scripserunt. / Stobaeus / Conradus Lycosthenes / Valerius Max[imus] / Polyanthea / Vitae Ciceronis et Demosth[enis]" (Authors who wrote commonplace books, etc.). This latter entry might be a reference to Plutarch's biography of the two orators. Révay perhaps had a section in mind where the author makes a short remark about note-taking (*Demosthenes*, 2).

38 For a table of contents, see Supplement 2.

39 ALE MS II 253, 1r: "Liberalitas est virtus quae mediocritatem servat in expetendis, dandis et accipiendis pecunijs, qua de re plura vide in Comentarijs M. Theophili Golij in Ethica Ar[istote]lis ad Nicomachum, a me excepta anno 1588 Argentorati, pagina—I." All the editions listed in VD16 are posterior to 1588. Révay certainly made a mistake noting the page number; for the quotation, see Golius 1597, 147. The author enumerates on the same page the virtues discussed in Book IV of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: "Liberalitas, Magnificentia, Magnanimitas, Modestia circa honores, Mansuetudo, Veritas, Comitas, et Urbanitas." Golius discusses the extremities of each virtue, identified as vices (*vitia*): accordingly, the two extremities of generosity are *profusio/prodigalitas* and *avaritia* (Golius 1597: 153), those of *magnificentia* are *luxus* and *sordes* (Golius 1597, 160), those of *mansuetudo* are *lentitudo* and *iracundia* (Golius 1597, 172), etc.

the orations in three volumes. While searching for quotations, he proceeded according to the prescriptions he gave in his oratorical praise of Cicero, or as it is chronologically more likely, he used his commonplace collection based on Iunius' method to compose the list of Ciceronian topics in his oration. At first glance, the commonplace system of the speech is very different from the table of contents of the annotations. Yet, if we compare the few headings which are similar in the two sources, we cannot unsee the correspondences. In the speech, Révay proposes to discuss the power of conscience (*de vi conscientiae*) with the help of Cicero's *Pro Sexto Roscio Amerino* et *Pro Milone* (Iunius 1592, 222). Accordingly, he put quotations from these two speeches under the heading "Conscientia" of his commonplace book with the *Pro Aulo Cluentio* speech and a letter to Quintus, Cicero's brother:

On behalf of Cluentius: if conscious is the witness of our best counsels throughout our whole lives, we shall live with no fear and in the greatest honor. *Letter to his brother Quintus*: apart from crime and wrongdoing, nothing can trouble a good man. *On behalf of Roscius Amerinus*: do not believe what you often see in fables, that those who have acted impiously and wickedly are persecuted and frightened by furies with burning torches. They are disturbed by their own fraud and their fear; their own wickedness drives them and afflicts them with madness; the remorse of their own soul frightens them, etc. *On behalf of Milo*: the power of conscience is great, and it is in both parts: it does not frighten those who have done nothing wrong, but it does make those who have committed a crime believe that their punishment is right before their eyes.⁴⁰

About earthquakes (*de terrae motu*), Révay refers to the *De Haruspicum responsis*, Cicero's speech about omens (Iunius 1592b, 217), which also figures in the commonplace book.⁴¹ Sometimes, instead of directly referring to Cicero's text, Révay quotes

40 ALE MS II 253, 23r: "Cicero pro Cluentio. Si optimor[um] consilior[um] in omni uita testis conscientia, sine ullo metu summa cum volupta[te] [recte: honestate] vivemus. [Cicero, *Pro Aulo Cluentio*, LVIII, 159.] Et idem ad Q[uintum] Fratrem Ep[istu]la 1. P[rae]ter culpam et peccatum nihil est quod sit viro bono permiscendum. [It is rather a summary than a direct quotation. Révay thought probably on *Epist. ad Quintum fratrum*, 1.1.15–16.] / Idem pro Sexto Roscio Amerino Colum. 33. litt. c. Nolite putare q[ue]m ad modum in fabulis saepenumero videtis, eos, q[ui] aliq[ui]d impie scelerateq[ue] commiserunt, agitari et perterriti furiar[um] taedis ardentibus. Sua quemq[ue] fraus et suus terror maxime vexat, suum quemq[ue] scelus agitat, amentiaq[ue] afficit, suae malae cogitationis conscientiaeq[ue] animi terrent etc. [*Pro Sexto Roscio*, 67] / Cicero Pro Milone Col. 179 litt. a. Arg[entorati] fol. 113. Magna vis est conscientiae, et magna in utraque partem: ut n[e]q[ue] timeant qui nihil commiserint, et poena[m] semp[er] ante oculos versari putent qui peccarint" (*Pro Milone*, XXIII, 61). The number of the folio matches the annotated edition of 1581 (Cicero 1581, III, 113r).

41 "Do not believe what happens in fables, that a god from heaven goes to the assembly of men, lives on earth, and talks to men; on the contrary: he warns people, when he sends fearful events,

a *dictata*, a text dictated by Melchior Iunius, and the *Theses et loci communes Ciceronis*, which was the title of an annotation in the 1581 edition of Cicero's orations, as we have seen. This applies to the heading "Homicidium, Parricidium" in the manuscript,⁴² where he mentions Cicero's *Pro Roscio* in accordance with his speech where he proposed to study the punishment of parricide (*De parricidij poena*) via the same oration (Iunius 1592b, 223). Révay proceeds similarly when he refers to the *Pro Roscio* to discuss false accusations and calumniators both in his speech (*De accusatorum multitudine & improbitate*, Iunius 1592b, 223) and in his commonplace book (*Accusatores, Calumniatores, Obtrektor*).⁴³ Révay must have known the *Pro Roscio* very well: Roscius was accused of murdering his father, and, as we have seen, Révay delivered a speech about a similar topic under Iunius' supervision. Both the *locus* of false accusations and the *locus* of parricide that Révay cites from Iunius' *dictata* and Cicero's commonplaces can be matched with corresponding sections of the index in the edition of 1581 and of Iunius' book from 1594.⁴⁴ It is thus more than likely that the text dictated by the teacher

when thunder strikes, and horrible things are announced by an earthquake," ALE MS II 253, f. 59r: "Cicero in oratio[ne] de Haruspicu[m] Responsis fol. Arg. 258: Non, inq[ui]t, ut in fabulis fieri solet deus aliq[ui]s e caelo coetus ho[m]inum adit, uersatur in terris, loq[ui]tur cum hom[in]ib[us], tum monet h[omi]nes, cum res metuendas mittit, intonatur sonitus, terraemotus nunciantur horribiles" (*De Haruspicum responsis*, XXVIII, 62; cf. Cicero 1581, II, 258v).

42 "See also the text dictated by Iunius from *Theses et loci communes Ciceronis*, where you can find several nice things about this topic from Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Seneca, Cicero, and Demosthenes, and also those provided by himself [Iunius] about the matter on page 11 and 12; see the oration about parricide imitating Cicero's *On behalf Roscius Amerinus*," ALE MS II 253, f. 84r: "Vide etiam dictata d. Iunij de Thesiu[m] et locor[um] communiu[m] Cic[er]onis in orationib[us] tractatione et usu, ubi reperies varias venustas hac de re, ex Platone, Ar[istote]le, Plutarcho, Seneca, C[icer]one, Demosthene et ex ipso etia[m] inre allatas fol. 11o. Et ibidem fol. 12o oratione[m] de parricidio ad imitatione[m] C[icer]onis p[ro] Roscio Amerino."

43 "See in the dictated text, what we have made [?] from the *Theses et loci communes Ciceronis*, the commonplace about false accusers and about the coercion of testimonies—made after the oration *On behalf Roscius Amerinus*," ALE MS II 253, 229r: "Vide in dictatis, q[uae] [unreadable] de Thesiu[m] et locor[um] communium Cice[ro]nis etc., locum co[m]munem de accusatorib[us] falsis et testimonionib[us] coërcendis (depromptum ex oratione p[ro] Roscio Amerino fol. 27 v. 23) folio 6^o."

44 "[D]e parricidii ... crimine ... Locus est in orat. eadem pro. S. Roscio ..." (Cicero 1581, I, i1v–i2r: About the crime of parricide, there is a locus in his oration *On behalf of Roscius*); "de accusatoribus falsis, & iniquis calumniatoribus coërcendis ... Locus est in orat. pro S. Roscio ..." (Cicero 1581, I, i1v: about the false accusers and the unjust coercion of calumniators, there is a locus in *On behalf of Roscius*); "Locus communis de parricidii crimine. Ex Oratione pro Sext. Roscio Amerino" (Iunius 1594, 30: commonplace about the crime of parricide from *Roscio*); "Locus communis de accusatorum falsorum et calumniatorum licentia coërcenda. Ex Oratione Ciceronis pro Sext. Roscio Amerino"

to his students during Révay's studies at the Strasbourg gymnasium was similar to the work he published in print a few years later.

The Ciceronian erudition remained crucial in Révay's works. His *De Monarchia* contains quotations from the same corpus of Cicero's orations as his notebook. Like his commonplaces and his eulogy for the Roman rhetor, his book manifested an interest in Cicero's opinions about prodigious signs, and he did not miss to echo the *Pro Murena* speech as a nice memory of the part he had played in the trial staged in Iunius' class.⁴⁵

During his years in Strasbourg, Cicero was one of Révay's guides to political prudence. Under the title "Historia, Historicus" of his commonplace annotations, he noted several phrases from the Roman orator, including a simple piece of wisdom: "In the *Perfect Orator* [sic!], Cicero claims that ignoring what happened before you were born is equivalent to remaining a child forever."⁴⁶ Knowing history is essential for political activity, as Aristotle says in one of the quotations—"Aristotle writes that past things thoroughly written are most useful for public deliberation"⁴⁷—but the political value of history does not reside solely in its rhetorical potential. Referring also to a Hungarian humanist and senior contemporary, Joannes Sambucus (1531–1584), who must have been a personal and patriotic

ino" (Iunius 1594, 15: commonplace about false accusers and the coercion of calumniators from the oration for *Roscius*).

45 An exclamation about human inconstancy: "Alas, what a slippery road the world offers to [human?] nature" (Cicero, *Pro Coelio*, 41; Révay 2021, I, 374 [3.177]: "Proh quam multas mundus naturae vias lubricas ostendit"). The text evokes a comet as "being always a bad omen" preceding the defeat of Sigismund of Luxembourg by the Ottomans: "cometas semper calamitatum praenuntios fuisse" (Cicero, *De natura deorum*, 2.5.14, and Révay 2021, I, 456 [5.94]). The same topic is present both in the *Annotaciones* (ALE MS II 224, 352r: "Divinatio") and in his praise of Cicero (in the locus "de coeli ardoribus, Cometis, fulminibus" where he recommends the third speech against Catilina: Iunius 1592b, 217). And discussing the risks of an armed crowd during a political rally, Révay quotes the *Pro Murena*: "There is no maritime storm, no Western wind which would cause as much commotion, as many diverse waves, as the perturbations and troubles caused by assemblies—especially armed assemblies" (Révay 2021, II, 264 [6.142.3]: "Nullum fretum, nullus zephyrus, tot motus, tantas tam varias habet agitationes fluctuum, quantas perturbationes et aestus habet ratio comitiorum, potissimum armatorum"; cf. Cicero, *Pro Murena*, 35).

46 ALE MS II 253, 44r: "Cicero in Perfecto Oratore [inserted from above: Col: 368. litt. e] nescire, inquit quid anteq[uam] natus sis acciderit est semper puerum esse" (Cicero, *Orator ad M. Brutum*, 34.120; despite Révay's indication of the page number, I could not identify the edition used by him amongst the Strasbourg editions of Cicero).

47 ALE MS II 253, 44r: "Aristoteles lib. 1. Rh. Cap. 4. Ad publica consilia, diligenter perscriptam rerum gestarum esse scribit perutilem" (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, I, 4, 1–13).

choice for him,⁴⁸ Révay gathered here several quotations which affirm the political uses of history: “The main utility of history resides in the fact that it can make one cautious and wise by the means of the peril of others and without their own peril, and you can use the examples you receive from it for anything you want.”⁴⁹ If this discipline is powerful, it is because it can provide a multitude of examples from the past, more than what a lifetime of experience can do, and it has an advantage over real political action in that it is not dangerous. To prepare an individual against the turmoil of politics, the number and the variety of these examples is key, as Nikolaus Reusner affirms in a treaty about political eloquence, quoted here as well:

History is an eternal treasury of examples and it is like a picture or a theatre of all human life corresponding with every age and time, the main power of which is its capacity to make us farsighted and circumspect in every aspect of life with examples and various decisions and results.⁵⁰

Cicero’s influence is also manifest under a heading called “Honestum” of the notebook. At this *locus*, Révay quotes from the *De officiis* to discuss the relation between honesty and utility (*utile et honestum*):

If the eyes could discern honesty, says Plato, it would stimulate a miraculous love of wisdom in us. See also book 3 of *De Officiis* where the author discusses excellent maxims about how to preserve utility and honesty. He proves for philosophers and orators that honesty must be preferred to usefulness ... Column 524 proposes some examples of the Romans and stories that prefer honesty to utility.⁵¹

48 “The utility, the task, and the subject of history are elegantly described by Joannes Sambucus in his preface to Bonfini,” ALE MS II 253, 44r: “Historiae utilitatem officium atque p[ro]positum describit eleganter Joannes Sambucus in p[rae]fation[em] Bonfinij.” Joannes Sambucus was a physician in the imperial court of Vienna, a humanist, and a collector of manuscripts; for more about him, see Almási and Kiss 2014 as well as Gastgeber and Klecker 2018. He published, amongst other works, the Hungarian history of King Mathias’ Italian historiographer, Antonio Bonfini. Révay could have used one of these two editions: Bonfini 1568 or Bonfini 1581.

49 ALE MS II 253, 44r: “Historiae utilitas p[rae]cipua periculis alior[um] sine periculo suo cautum sapientem[que] fieri, exempla inde capere omnigena [uae] ad usum tuum qualibet in re traducas.” The *Polyanthea*, from which Révay probably took this quotation, attributes it to the *Bibliotheca historica* by Diodorus Siculus (Nanus Mirabellius and Amantius 1574, 368).

50 ALE MS II 253, 44r: “Historia est perpetuus thesaurus exemplorum et pictura ac veluti theatrum totius vitae humanae omnibus mundi aetatibus ac temporibus congruens, cuius ea vis est ut exemplis et varietate consiliorum et eventuum ad omnem vitae usum nos providos et circumspectos efficere possit,” Cf. Reusner 1595, 22v.

51 ALE MS II 253, 358r: “Honestum si oculis cerneretur mirabiles amores, ut ait Plato, excitaret sapientiae. V[ide] Ciceronis lib. 1. Off[iciorum] Col. 465. lit. s. [Cicero, *De officiis*, I, 5, 15] / V[ide]

Révay's reference to Book III of Cicero's work is particularly interesting. According to Stoic teaching, no dishonest deed can be useful, at least in the long term. Affirming the absolute inseparability of righteousness and efficiency in moral and political actions, Cicero discusses contracts, simulation and dissimulation, and truth and lies in politics and in business. A very large section of this part is devoted to keeping promises and vows: can a political decision maker break his word if it is useful for the state? Cicero acknowledges very few cases in which promises are allowed to be broken. A coerced promise, for instance, is no valid excuse for him, and even a pledge given to our enemies must be kept. The only exception is a vow given to an illegitimate enemy, such as pirates; yet one should keep their promises made to a legitimate military opponent.⁵² An honest man keeps his oath, even if given to unfaithful people (*infideli*):

Therefore, those who discuss these problems with more rigor make bold to say that moral wrong is the only evil, while those who treat them with more laxity do not hesitate to call it the supreme evil. Once more, they quote the sentiment: "None have I given, none give I ever to the faithless." It was proper for the poet to say that, because, when he was working out his *Atrous*, he had to make the words fit the character. But if they mean to adopt it as a principle, that a pledge given to the faithless is no pledge, let them look to it that it be not a mere loophole for perjury that they seek (Cicero 1913, 385).⁵³

By the 16th century, these *infideli* had been identified with non-Christian enemies, in particular with the Ottoman invaders. In the *Six livres de la république* (V, 6), Bodin raises the question of contracts and oaths in the context of Muslim-Christian relations, concluding in accordance with Cicero that natural law applies to treaties between parties of different religions. The subject of righteousness and usefulness

etia[m] lib. 3 Off. [inserted from above: 519 lit. b. etc.] Col. 521 lit. d & sequ[entes] qu[in]que Col. Ubi de utilitate et honestate deservanda p[rae]cepta aliqua egregia tractat etc. Honestatem utilitati p[rae]ferendam ... philosophis & raetorib[us] p[ro]bat ... / Et Col. 524 lit. c affert aliquot ex[em]pla Romanor[um] & Historias q[uae] honestum utilitati p[rae]tulerunt."

52 Cicero, *De officiis*, III, 29.106–108 (the distinction between pirates and legitimate military opponents), III, 30.110 (about coerced promises).

53 "Itaque nervosius qui ista disserunt, solum audent malum dicere id, quod turpe sit, qui autem remissius, ii tamen non dubitant summum malum dicere. Nam illud quidem: / Neque dedi neque do infideli cuiquam / idcirco recte a poeta, quia, cum tractaretur *Atrous*, personae serviendum fuit. Sed si hoc sibi sument, nullam esse fidem, quae infideli data sit, videant, ne quaeratur latebra periurio" (Cicero, *De officiis*, III, 29.106). The embedded quotation ("Neque dedi neque do infideli cuiquam") is a fragment from *Atrous*, Lucius Accius' lost tragedy. This passage is quoted and condemned by religious authorities who consider oath-breaking as a sort of blasphemy against God's name, amongst them Calvin (in his commentary on Deut. 10:20: "In nomine eius iurabis": Calvin 1882, 562).

also appears in the *Methodus* as commonplaces which can be employed to excerpt history. He suggests that one should keep a notebook filled with historical *exempla* which are to be marked with the adjectives *honestum* and/or *utile*. If an example of the past corresponds to both categories, then it is both morally acceptable and politically fruitful, and it may be followed by a scrupulous statesman (Melani 2006, 95–96, and 2012, 146–148).

In Strasbourg, Révay probably did not know Bodin yet, but later, one of the *République's* examples could have drawn Révay's attention, though he must have known it from many other sources—namely, the peace treaty that was concluded between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire in the town of Szeged, Southern Hungary in 1444. By signing this treaty, confirmed with his oath taken on the Gospel, King Władysław I (Władysław III as King of Poland) quit the anti-Ottoman league forged between the pope and the Emperor of Byzantium. The papal nuncio, Cardinal Giulio Cesarini, convinced him to attack the Turks anyway. This campaign led to the fatal battle of Varna, where the king died. In protestant historiography, this tragedy was often interpreted as an instance of divine punishment for oath-breaking provoked by Catholic machinations, but even standing on the ground of natural law, failing to comply with a treaty was repulsive to authors like Bodin.⁵⁴ Révay commemorates this event in both of his works. In the *Commentarius*, his description is rather neutral, but in the *De Monarchia*, he manifests his denominational partiality by adding a scandalous detail which emphasizes the sacrilegious nature of the conduct of the Catholics in this matter: according to Révay, Sultan Murad II received a piece of sacred host as a warrant of the treaty from the Christians, and he had it with him when he implored for divine vengeance during the battle (Révay 2021, I, 509–510 [5.31.9]). No other historian of Hungary reports this odd circumstance. Beyond anti-papal allegations, Révay also takes recourse to the Ciceronian vocabulary of *honestum* and *utile* while interpreting the event: “May advisors take care not to give princes advice which is against equity and *honesty*, for such attempts are *fruitless* for those who are counselled and for those who

54 The popularity of the battle in anti-Catholic pamphlets and in jurisprudential arguments on treatises is largely due to a wide-spread epigram, i. e., a fictitious epitaph of King Władysław. The poem is also reproduced by Révay: “Cannae was made famous by the Romans and Varna by me with my fall. Mortals, learn that oaths must not be violated. Had the prelates not commanded me to break the alliance, now the Pannonian region would not bear the yoke of the Scythians [i. e., Turks]” (Romulidae Cannas, ego Varnam clade notavi, / Discite mortales non temerare fidem. / Me nisi pontifices iussissent, rumpere foedus, / Non ferret Scythicum Pannonis ora iugum) (Révay 2021, I, 510 [5.31.13]). It was recently shown that its author was Christophorus Manlius (1546–1575), a poet active in Lausitz (Szentmártoni Szabó 2012, 183–186).

counsel.”⁵⁵ Discussing the king’s death as a divine punishment like many other authors, Révay also echoes the Ciceronian terms: what seems to be useful is not always honest, and what is dishonest is never useful.

In Révay’s work, *utile* and *honestum*, as the basic categories in this Ciceronian branch of “virtue politics” (Hankins 2019, 31–62), reflect a moral engagement which cannot permit any noble goal to justify violent means. Their role is clear in the description of the historical agency of the Holy Crown: the artifact mediates God’s punishment for the abuse of power. For instance, the reign of King Béla I is described as a mixture of useful and dishonest: his rule was rather good, but he seized power in a murderous way, which was unpleasant for the crown. As a divine punishment, his throne collapsed and killed him while he was sitting on it in 1063 (Révay 2021, I, 283 [1.171.2]). Another passage reveals that although the duality of *honestum* and *utile* is a condition *sine qua non* of moral and political success, they are not sufficient: other deliberations (political in the strict sense of the term) are necessary as well. In this section, Révay explains why the alliance offered by King Béla IV to the Cumans did not work despite the ruler’s good will: “Although Béla’s decision seemed to be both honest and useful, it was not fortunate for either of the parties.”⁵⁶ On the other hand, the harmony of righteousness and usefulness is key to the prosperity of the realm: according to Révay, Louis I contributed to the *honest* reputation of the Hungarian and his reign was *useful* for the state. He also knew how to *be of use* in a *righteous* way:

Because his government was not only salutary for the heroism and the good reputation of the Hungarian but also useful for the other countries of the Christian commonwealth, for the king who excelled with his courageous acts, and on whom as by a rope the condition of the realm was depending, was of use not only for his own in a righteous way, but he also ruled over those who resisted the power of the Holy Crown.⁵⁷

The semantic field of *honestum* enables martial “beauty” and glory to be linked to *utile* as well. That happens in a passage where Révay discusses the victorious battle

⁵⁵ “Videant itaque consultores, ne principibus contra aequi, et **honesti** rationes suadeant: nam talia molimina **improsper**e cedunt, et illi, qui paret, et qui consulit” (Révay 2021, I, 510 [5.32.3]; italics in the original, the bold letters are mine).

⁵⁶ “Sed hoc Belae licet honestum et utile videbatur esse consilium, neutri parti felix fuit” (Révay 2021, I, 354 [3.6.7]).

⁵⁷ “Eius quippe gubernatio non solum Hungaricae virtuti, et *nomini honesto* apprime salutaris, sed et reliquis provinciis christiana reipublicae summe *utilis* extiterat, quando rex rebus fortissime gestis insignis, et a cuius salute, velut filo pendeat multorum status regnorum, non solum suis *recte profuit*, sed etiam hostibus imperii Monarchiae Sacrae Coronae praefuit” (Révay 2021, I, 408 [4.16, 5]. The italics are mine).

of Székesfehérvár and the recapture of the castle of Fülek from the Ottomans in 1593, during the Long Turkish War: “at that time, there was another victory, as beautiful and splendid as useful for the Hungarian.”⁵⁸

5 Conclusion: Methodological Remarks

In Strasbourg, Révay was already receptive to Bodin’s methodological recommendations about structuring and evaluating historical data. The Ciceronian approach to oratorical and civic matters, which both characterized Jesuit education and Sturmiian protestant humanism, had prepared him well. In fact, it is more plausible that, contrary to what some researchers have formerly suggested, he did not have to rely on Bodin when he elaborated his approach of coordinating *exempla* of the past and using them to phrase political advice. To conclude, a study of pedagogical procedures implemented in his education and of unprinted sources, such as handwritten commonplace books, might be as fruitful as studying the influence of important classics of the history of ideas, because it reveals how they shaped knowledge, not only in the framework of studies, but also with a long-term effect on one’s mindset.

Studying Révay’s annotations in the mirror of his other academic texts and later literary production facilitates a few methodological observations. Recent contributions about commonplace books and excerpts emphasized the optical layout of early modern annotations. Echoing Ong’s thesis that note-taking in the post-Ramist period had an exceptional capacity to display the relationship between notions and data in a geometrically organized way on the plane of the paper, this approach suggests that the very structure of early modern knowledge management has been externalized in annotations, consequently this inner structure is identical with that of the visible elements of the documents. For example, Élisabeth Décultot, a specialist in Winckelmann’s annotations, qualifies excerpts as “the organisational charts” (*organigramme*) of their owners’ thinking (Décultot 2003, 28), whereas Alberto Cevolini argues that early modern commonplace books are “forgetting machines” because they outsource memory from the human mind to the medium of paper (Cevolini 2016). It is true that some of these evaluations take printed commonplace collections into consideration as well, in which case a clear arrangement of information was key to the usefulness of the book. The structure of privately used manuscripts, however, does not always justify this kind of optimism. Despite

58 “Nam et altera illa non minus pulchra et solennis quam utilis eodem tempore Hungaris contigerat victoria” (Révay 2021, II, 290 [6.154.2]).

the presence of keywords, the principle of their organization does not surrender easily to researchers, but as the example of Révay demonstrates, the reconstruction of the student's pedagogical surroundings and his own interests can help in finding order where there does not seem to be any.

Supplement 1: Cicero's commonplaces in Révay's *Oratio ... de laudibus M. Tul. Ciceronis*

Page	Main subject	Locus	Text recommended
215	Philosophy	"de virtutibus imperatoris" "de corporis & fortunae bonis" "de officiorum finibus" "de amicitia" "de religione" "de patriae charitate" "de fortitudine" "de Gratitude" "de veritate" "de Seueritate" "de Clementia" "de inuidia"	"In Maniliana" "pro domo" "pro Muraena" "pro Plancio" "libr. 4 in Verrem pro Cluentio & Domo" "in Haruspicum responsis & 13. Philip." "4. Catil. & Miloniana" "post reditum in Senatum & ad Quirites, de Prouinciis consularibus" "pro Caelio" "libro 3. & 5. in Verrem" "pro Marcello & Ligario" "pro Cluentio, Plancio, Balbo. 10. & 14. Philip."
216	Politics	"de diuina prouidentia in imperiis constituendis" "miseriae illorum [imperatorum]" "de Magistratum conditione laboriosa" "de salute communi rebus anteponenda priuatis" "de Iudicium officio ac potestate" "de largitionibus vitandis" "de vigilantia & circumspectione" "de Tyrannide fugienda" "de multitudinis inconstantia" "de ratione verae parandae gloriae" "de Nobilium conditione atque officio"	"locus de Haruspicum responsis" "Respub"; "pro domo" "pro Flacco" "pro Sylla" "pro Quintio, Roscio 1 & 4. in Verrem, pro Fonteio, Cluentio, Muraena, Rabirio Posthumo" "2 in Verrem" "pro Plancio" "1. & 2. Philip." "pro Q. Roscio Comaedo, Domo, Plancio" "1. Philipp." "pro S. Roscio, Sextio, Cluentio"

Continued

Page	Main subject	Locus	Text recommended
		“de legatorum priuilegiis”	“primo, in Verrem & de Haruspicum responsis”
		“de Consilij ac sententiae mutatione”	“pro Plancio, Balbo 12. Philipp.”
		“de dissensionum”	“in Repub. causis. 2. Agraria & Haruspicum responsis”
		“de libertate defendenda”	“2 Agraria 4. Catilinaria 3. 4. 8. 10. 13. Philipp.”
		“de mora & procrastinatione vitanda”	“Philipp. 3. 5. 6.”
		“de conuiciis & maledictis aliorum ferendis”	“pro Roscio Comaedo, Muraena, Plancio, de Haruspicum responsis”
		“de domus cuiusque immunitate”	“pro Domo”
217	Physics	“de corporis lineamentis”	“pro Cluentio”
		“de coci natura & victus consuetudine”	“2 Agraria”
		“de rerum naturalium fragilitate”	“11. Philip.”
		“de immoderatis tempestatibus”	“pro Sexto Roscio”
		“de terrae motu”	“in Haruspicum responsis”
		“de coeli ardoribus, Cometis, fulminibus”	“3. Catilinaria”
	Law	“de curatione ac potestate”	“Agraria”
		“de prouinciis Consularibus”	“In Vatiniu[m] & Pisone[m]”
		“de Coloniis”	“pro Balbo”
		“de ambitu”	“p[ro] Muraena”
		“de vi”	“pro Domo, Sestio, Milone”
		“de pecunijs repetu[n]dis”	“pro Rabirio Posthumo & Balbo”
		“de proscriptis”	“lib. 1. in Verre[m] & pro Cluentio”
		“de seruis alienis retentis”	“pro Rabirio”
218		“de ciuium Romanorum pulsation”	“libr. 5 in Verrem”
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...			
222	Oratorial subjects (common-places)	“de Religione”	“pro Domo, & de Haruspicum responsis”
		“de diuina prouidentia”	“in 4. Catil. & pro Milone”
		“de vi conscientiae”	“pro S. Roscio & Milone”
		“de animae immortalitate”	“pro Archia & Milone”
		“de improborum poenis ac supplicij”	“pro Roscio, Catilinaria 1. 4. & 8. Philip.”
		“de rerum humanarum inconstantia & mutatione”	“5. & 11. Philip.”

Continued

Page	Main subject	Locus	Text recommended
		“de gratitudine”	“pro Plancio”
		“de domus cuiusque religione ac sanctitate”	“pro Domo”
		“de Senatus grauitate & constantia”	“in 7. Philip.”
		“de Iudicis sapientis officio”	“pro Cluentio”
		“de seueritate in puniendis delictis”	“Catil. 5. 1. 4. pro Sextio”
		“de Nobilium ingenio & co[n]ditione”	“pro Quintio, S. Roscio, Sextio”
		“de gratitudine”	“pro Plancio”
223		“de lentitudine ac remissione bonorum, sedulitate contra improborum”	“pro Sextio”
		“de poenitentia & erroris agnitione”	“Philip. 2”
		“de ratione emergendi in Repub.”	“pro Sextio & 1. Philip.”
		“de viris popularibus”	“2. Agraria”
		“de periculi & mortis fuga honesta”	“pro Sextio”
		“de πολυπραγμοσυνη”	“10 Philip.”
		“de exilio”	“pro Cecinna 2. Agraria, Sylla, Milone”
		“de Comitiorum inconstantia”	“pro Muraena”
		“de Epicureorum & Stoicorum doctrina”	“ibidem” [Pro Muraena]
		“de Statuis & monumentis benemeritorum”	“9. Philip.”
		“de Iuris ciuilis dignitate & praestantia”	“pro Cecinna & Cluentio”
		“de accusatorum multitudine & improbitate”	“pro S. Roscio”
		“de parricidij poena”	“ibidem” [Pro S. Roscio]
		“de officij & honoribus iuuenum”	“5 & 11. Philip.”
		“de difficultate gerendi Magistratus”	“pro Flacco”
		“de Agriculturae praestantia”	“pro Roscio”
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		“de testimonijs”	“pro Roscio Comoedo, Fonteio, Sylla”
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		“de leuitate certarum nationum”	“pro Flaccio”
		“de conditione hominum nouorum”	“lib. 5. in Verrem”
		“de sententiae mutatione”	“pro Plancio”
		“de bonorum proscriptione”	“pro Quintio”
		“de obtrectatoribus & calumniatoribus”	“pro Plancio”
		“de eloquentia”	“pro Muraena”
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Supplement 2: The table of contents of Révay's commonplace book from Strasbourg

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Ira, Iracundia	331r
Mors	332r
Infernus	333r
Mulier, Faemina, Matrona	334r
Frugalitas	335r
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Magistratus, Princeps	337r
Alea	338r
Somnium	339r
Adulator, Adulatio	340r
Sepultura, Epithafiu[m]	341r
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Avaritia	362r
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Ebrietas
 Aranu[m], Fiscus

365r [sic!]
 366r

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