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NUM, NONNE AND SIMON FINET IN DOLET’S ORATIONES:
SOME TEXTUAL QUESTIONS REVISITED

We are grateful to Professor Jacques Chomarat for his recent critiques and suggestions for improvement with regard to our edition of Etienne Dolet’s Orationes.1 The purpose of this present note is to bring further scrutiny to bear on two specific issues developed in his article in Humanistica Lovaniensia, namely Dolet’s alleged confusion as to the differentiation between num and nonne in Latin, and the question (related to the first issue through M. Chomarat’s analyses) of whether Simon Finet, purported author of some of the prefatory material to the Orationes, actually existed.2 Each of these matters is important in its own right. The first has to do with a proper appreciation of the quality of Dolet’s Latinity, while the second (over and above the question of simple historical accuracy) involves the rhetorical strategies by which Dolet prepared his speeches for publication, and thereby negotiated the transfer from spoken to printed eloquence.

M. Chomarat’s argumentation may be summarized as follows: modern grammars formulate the difference between num and nonne, when introducing a direct question, thus: num calls for a negative response, nonne for a positive one. This “rule” is not to be found per se in the writings of the ancient grammarians, but seems to have emerged at some point

2 Jacques Chomarat, “L’emploi de num et nonne dans les Orationes Duæ in Tholosam d’Etienne Dolet,” Humanistica Lovaniensia XLIV (1995), 202-206. See also his informative and detailed review in Vivarium XXXII (1994), 125-130. It is on p. 126 of this review that M. Chomarat first expounds his hypothesis that “ce Finetius n’a sans doute jamais existé, c’est un masque de Dolet, une invention qui lui donne plus de liberté.” It is also in this review (p. 128) that M. Chomarat first intimates his notion that Dolet confuses num with nonne and vice versa. (It will be remembered that the volume opens with an epistle from Finet in which he states that, given Dolet’s refusal to allow such a remarkable text to be published, he had taken matters into his own hands, and done the public a favor by seeing it through the presses himself, but without Dolet’s knowledge or approval.)
between the mid-eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth centuries (p. 206, n.10). Thus, not knowing it to be a rule, "les humanistes ne la respectent pas, sinon par hasard, ce qui n’est pas sans faire naître parfois des problèmes d’interprétation. C’est le cas des Orationes duae in Tholosam ..." (p. 202). M. Chomarat proceeds to analyze a number of passages from the Orationes, arguing as a result of his analyses that Dolet erroneously and haphazardly construes the use of num and nonne. This then becomes the basis of his criticism of Dolet’s understanding of Classical usage:

... il est plus difficile qu’on ne croirait d’être ciceronien. Il ne suffit pas de proclamer son admiration ni d’imiter un style; il faudrait respecter les mêmes usages que le maître en matière de langue; mais pour cela il faudrait les connaître. [...] Toutefois sans les formuler certains humanistes ont pu, consciemment ou non, les respecter.

(p. 206)

M. Chomarat’s concludes that this alleged confusion on Dolet’s part means that “son ciceronianisme [...] n’est pas pur.”3 While there are indeed un-Ciceronian elements in Dolet’s Latin,4 we do not consider his usage of num and nonne to constitute one of them. It is therefore both the premises and the conclusions of M. Chomarat’s article that we seek to address, and to challenge, here.

It is hardly surprising that the “rule” concerning num and nonne is not to be found in the ancient grammarians, since the evidence shows that matters were nowhere near as black and white as M. Chomarat is obliged to paint them in order to make his case. The fact is that num was used, in all periods of ancient Latin and in a variety of genres, in a far more differentiated way than the 19th century “rule” suggests. That this is so emerges convincingly from D. R. Shackleton Bailey’s article, “Num in direct questions: a rule restated,”5 the essence of which is summed up in the author’s conviction that misunderstanding over the use of num

must be put down to the old rough-and-ready classroom dogma that ‘num expects the answer “No”.’ Exceptions to its letter are frequent in comedy and less rare in classical writing than grammarians and lexicographers suggest. [...] If we want the old rule to work in every case we must remodel it somewhat as follows: ‘num implies that the idea of a negative answer is present in the mind of the questioner.’

(p. 121)

3 Vivarium review (see our note 2 above) p. 128.
4 See our edition of the Orationes, note 17.10, p. 194, for example, and specially M. Chomarat’s Vivarium review, p. 128.
5 The Classical Quarterly, n.s., III (1953), 120-125.
Mr Shackleton Bailey then identifies and illustrates four different cases for the use of *num*:

1. *Anxiety*: the speaker knows that the answer to his question is likely to be “Yes,” but is reluctant to acknowledge it;
2. *Surprise*: this may be of a wide variety of degrees;
3. *Irony*: the speaker derides, in one way or another, the fact that the answer is likely to be “Yes,” even though the respondent might prefer to say “No”;
4. *Challenge*: this is the case that corresponds to the 19th-century “rule,” namely a rhetorical question to which “a negative answer is not so much expected as demanded” (p. 123).

The article concludes with the citation and analysis of numerous examples, ranging from Plautus and Terence to Propertius, Ovid, Seneca, Statius, Martial, Pliny, Catullus, Virgil and — most notably, for our purposes — Cicero, all of which substantiate the author’s argument: the use of *num* in questions where an affirmative answer is expected is far from unorthodox.

With Mr Shackleton Bailey’s crucial distinction in mind — that what drives the use of *num* in Classical literature is less the expectation of a negative response, than the mindset of the speaker — let us now turn to Dolet’s usage. It is our purpose to demonstrate that, since things are not always as absolute as M. Chomarat suggests, the bulk of his criticism in regard to Dolet’s use of *num* and *nonne* does not withstand scrutiny. Indeed, in all five cases discussed by M. Chomarat in his attempt to prove that Dolet uses *num* erroneously, the orator’s practice can be shown to correspond to one or other of the first three categories defined by Mr Shackleton Bailey, and thereby to constitute correct, classical Latin usage.

Thus, in a text such as the first quoted by M. Chomarat,7 where there can be no doubt as to the expectation of an affirmative answer, we may

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6 It is worth noting that the findings of this article have been adopted in such standard grammars as J. B. Hofmann and A. Szantyr, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik* (Munich, 1965), vol. 2, p. 463. See also the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P. Giare *et al.* (Oxford, 1982), p. 1201, s.v. *num*, where a distinction is made between two uses of *num* in direct questions: on the one hand, *num* introducing questions where the possibility of a negative answer is present in the questioner’s mind through anxiety, caution, incredulity etc., and on the other hand, the use of *num* in rhetorical questions, where a negative answer is demanded.

ascribe Dolet’s use of *num* to his sense of surprise that his opponents might be so ignorant, or so foolhardy, or so mendacious, as to answer “No.” M. Chomarat introduces his discussion of this text thus: “Voici un premier exemple où Dolet emploie *Num* pour introduire une question qui appelle pourtant une réponse manifestement affirmative,” (p. 202), and comments, by way of justification of his own translation, “L’idée d’une inadvertance, ou d’une négligence, est écartée si l’on considère le caractère élevé du style et surtout quand on rencontre d’autres exemples du même emploi de *Num*...?” (p. 203): but the fact is that, in spite of M. Chomarat’s “pourtant,” and his intimation that further evidence of Dolet’s erroneous understanding is readily at hand, the use of *num* is perfectly orthodox here. The point is made all the clearer if we compare M. Chomarat’s translation to ours, where we (translating *num*) and he (positing *nonne*) have come up with versions that differ only at the level of stylistic register. The real difference lies not in the expectation of an all too predictable answer, but in the speaker’s frame of mind as he asks the question.

Much the same may be said of the passage in the prefatory epistle, attributed in the text to Simon Finet but (as M. Chomarat has argued) perhaps written by Dolet himself.⁸ here again, the expected answer is obviously “Yes,” and we can justify the *num*, for example, with some underlying thought along the lines of “and who could possibly disagree?” or “and who would uphold the contrary?” Since this example has its part to play in his hypothesis that Finet never existed, we shall however return to this aspect of M. Chomarat’s critique in the latter section of this note.

Similar considerations apply when we consider a further pair of examples discussed by M. Chomarat. The first is from *Oratio I*, 6.25-29:

> “... *num* deorum immortalium et hominum consensu singularem comprobandum uideatur, ut Gallus Gallum, Italus Italum, Hispanus Hispanum, patriae studio et insita ab incunabulis chantate incensus prosequisque...

⁸ “*Num unum ex omnibus nostri temporis Doletum esse mecum censes, cuius commentationes et summis laudibus et iucundissime docti sint excepturi*?” (Liminary letter, *2r.21). Cf. M. Chomarat’s translation: “N’est-il pas vrai que, comme moi, tu estimes que Dolet est celui de tous nos contemporains dont les doctes accueilleront les travaux avec les plus grands éloges, avec le plus grand plaisir et de gratitude?” (p. 204), and ours: “Ne penses-tu pas avec moi que Dolet soit le seul de tous les auteurs de notre temps dont les doctes vont accueillir les travaux écrits avec les plus grandes louanges, le plus grand plaisir et la plus grande reconnaissance?” (p. 124).
diligat?” M. Chomarat predicates his translation on the assertion that the verb uideri here must be taken to mean “être évident,” but we find no compelling reason to do so. M. Chomarat seems to insist that we take uideatur for “it is obvious” because he takes num for nonne, that is, as a conjunction governing a rhetorical question to which a positive answer is demanded. But, once again, the use of num here can be argued as being perfectly correct, since it serves to introduce a question where the possibility of a negative answer is present in the speaker’s mind: with incredulous amazement, Dolet wonders whether his adversary might ever assert that gods and men would fail to approve of the mutual love he is talking about, and answers, “But no, of course not, one could never assert such a thing.” The line taken by M. Chomarat is certainly not impossible; but seeing no necessity to accept his assertions, we find no reason to amend our translation.

Similarly at Oratio II, 45.26-29: “Quam impudentiam maledictumque qui uterimimile aut ratum haberi debere sustinet, num hoc simul & impudenter, & falsa assere uideatur? Martis euentum non esse communem?”,10 M. Chomarat comments, “Num a clairement ici le sens usuel de nonne en latin classique; de plus, il faut prendre le verbe videri dans l’acceptation non pas de ‘sembler,’ mais d’’être évident’ ” (p. 203). Once again, we do not see that this passage requires that it be interpreted as a rhetorical question, although we do not reject the possibility. We conclude that, as to uideri in the sense of “it is obvious...”, the case is not impossible, but neither is it mandatory, and that with regard to the num here, Dolet’s expected answer, clearly in conformity with established Classical usage, can be taken as an example of Mr Shackleton Bailey’s category of “surprise,” along the lines of an incredulous, “Yes, such a position would be scandalous, and I can’t believe such a person could exist.” 11

9 M. Chomarat translates: “N’est-il pas évident que le jugement unanime des dieux immortels et des hommes doit approuver que, brûlant de zèle pour sa patrie et d’une affection enracinée depuis le berceau, chaque Français aime les Français, chaque Italien les Italiens, chaque Espagnol les Espagnols?” (p. 203): cf. our translation, “... comment ne semblerait-il pas ratifié par l’accord spécifique des dieux immortels aussi bien que des hommes, que le Français aime un autre Français, l’Italien un autre Italien, l’Espagnol un autre Espagnol, tous brûlant de l’amour de la patrie et de l’affection réciproque qui sont innés en eux depuis le berceau?” (p. 134).

10 The text is slightly misquoted by M. Chomarat. He offers in partial translation: “N’est-il pas évident qu’en disant cela cet homme proférerait un mensonge et un mensonge éhonté?” (p. 203); the topic is the reputation of Francis I after the disgrace of Pavia.

11 We note that in his Vivarium review (see our note 2 above), M. Chomarat had offered the following translation of this passage:
More problematic, and more debatable, is the passage beginning at *Oratio I*, 15.3-9, where Dolet wonderingly asks how it is possible that the students who are so admired in Orléans and Poitiers can be so demonized in Toulouse:


We should note that it is useful to consider at this point, in tandem with this text, the passage immediately following it (one not cited by M. Chomarat, although flagged by him as “à prendre dans la même acceptation” [p. 204]):

Comment croire que le temps et la venue d’un âge plus avancé puissent faire en sorte que l’ardeur de notre jeunesse se refroidisse? que nous renonctions à notre joie de vivre? que nous ne trouvions notre repos que dans le comportement vertueux? Admettons qu’ils nous imaginent sains d’esprit à Orléans, et qu’ils nous déclarent stables et modérés à Poitiers: si l’on admet cela, comment pourra-t-il paraître vraisemblable que ce ne soit qu’à Toulouse que nous ne devions, grâce à l’âge, devenir encore plus stables, encore plus modérés? (pp. 140-141)
Num illic plura primae aetatis facinora edere, iuuentutis calor intemperantiaque stimulat? num hic singularia uirtutis documenta dare, & constantia & confirmati tempore subinde hortantur? (Oratio I, 15.9-12)\textsuperscript{13}

These questions form the introduction to Dolet’s indignant observation, itself phrased in the form of a question, that while the French student association is not banned in Orléans and Poitiers, it is proscribed in Toulouse:

A quo tamen, aut propter aetatis leuitatem, aut propter inanem aliquid vitae dissolutoris opinionem, nostrae sodalitatis statum illic conuulsum, illic labefactatum, sublatumue auditum est? (Oratio I, 15.12-15)\textsuperscript{14}

Here, it is evident that M. Chomarat’s understanding of the num sentences is different from ours. He translates as if Dolet were formulating a series of rhetorical questions calling for a positive response, stressing the notion that young people become wiser as they get older. According to such an interpretation, Dolet argues that it is illogical, and therefore scandalous, that the French student association be banned in Toulouse, while it is allowed to exist in Orléans and Poitiers, where the French students are younger and thus more prone to sedition. Our interpretation, however, seeks to translate the questions as expressing Dolet’s incredulity and outrage (Mr Shackleton Bailey’s second category) over the difference in attitude toward the French student association shown by the Orléans and Poitiers authorities on the one hand, and by the Toulouse authorities on the other. In our view, Dolet is not so much arguing that students become wiser as they become older (and hence that the position of the Toulouse authorities is absurd). Rather, his argument is that — in the context of the observation that students will always be students — the attitude of the Toulouse authorities is less generous than that of their counterparts in Orléans and Poitiers. In fact, such an attitude is inhuman, as he then goes in to say in so many words:

\textsuperscript{13} Cf. our translation: “Est-ce là-bas que l’ardeur et le manque de modération de l’adolescence nous poussent à commettre un grand nombre d’erreurs de jeunesse? Est-ce seulement ici que la fermeté de caractère et une conscience morale constamment renforcée par l’expérience nous engagent à fournir de singulières preuves de vertu?” (p. 141).

\textsuperscript{14} Cf. our translation: “Et pourtant, qui a jamais entendu dire qu’à cause de la frivolidité de la jeunesse, ou à cause de quelque vaine idée que nous menons une vie trop dissolue, l’existence de notre association a été ébranlée là-bas, détruite là-bas, poursuivie en justice là-bas?” (p. 141).
Sed qua sunt Aurelii Pictonesque ingenii suavitate, quo amore, qua in omnes benuolentia, sodalitatis nostrae religionem intuentur: Tholosae autem ut morosi sunt, & ad omnem utiae comitatem inepti, ut humanitate uacui, ut calumniae, quam aequitatis studiosiose, ipsam certe quidem illam, ut dirum aliquod monstrum portentumque execrantur. (Oratio I, 15.22-28)

Thus, while we readily acknowledge the possibility of M. Chomarat’s interpretation of this passage, and the excellence of his translation, we maintain the validity of our own approach, and we reject the argument that our version is impossible on the grounds that Dolet uses num in the wrong way.

Having discussed the five passages considered by M. Chomarat, let us now turn to the two remaining passages (essential to the issue at hand, although not reviewed by him) in which Dolet uses num in the speeches. Here, we find num introducing a rhetorical question to which the requisite answer is indubitably in the negative (in conformity with Mr Shackleton Bailey’s fourth category, and the “classroom dogma” invoked earlier).

These two passages present, in our view, additional important textual evidence that Dolet’s use of num is wholly congruent with Classical usage, and further undermine M. Chomarat’s contention that Dolet confuses the use of num and nonne in rhetorical questions. The passage at Oratio II, 46.19-27, in which Dolet sarcastically asks whether his


16 Cf. our translation: “Mais comme les Orléanais et les Poitevins ont le caractère doux, avec quel amour, avec combien de bonne volonté envers tous ils considèrent la nature sacrée de notre association! Quant aux Toulousains, en revanche, comme ils sont d’humeur maussade, comme ils sont maladroits en matière d’aménités sociales, et dépourvus de toute bonté humaine! Comme ils ont plus d’enthousiasme pour la calomnie que pour la justice, qu’ils vont jusqu’à maudire même, comme si c’était quelque chose de bizarre et de funeste, ou quelque pratique monstrueuse!” (p. 141).

17 “Num hic tibi illud in mentem uenit? quoties oblata Vasconibus a Gallis facultas, quoties opta optio, ut excitatum inter nos tumultum, ut crebras nostras turbas, Gallus cum Vascone pugna singulari sedaret? Num occurrit? quoties Gallus manum cum Vascone conserere animose expetuit? quoties et contrario Vasco timide recusavit? Num in memoria redigis, quam saepe Vasconem Gallus, quam raro, aut nunquam, Vasco Gallum domuit?” Cf. our version: “Ne te vient-il pas à l’esprit de te demander combien de fois les Français ont offert aux Gascons le choix de permettre à un seul Français de terminer, en combat individuel avec un Gascon, les désordres provoqués entre nous, ou nos nombreuses disputes? Ne te vient-il pas à la mémoire combien de fois un Français a courageusement essayé d’en venir aux mains avec un Gascon? combien de fois, au contraire, un Gascon a lâchement refusé? Ne te rappelles-tu pas combien de fois un Français a maîtrisé un Gascon, ou bien les rares occasions — si jamais il y en a eu! — où un Gascon a maîtrisé un Français?” (p. 165).
adversary, Pinache, can recall a single instance in which the Gascons prevailed, individually or collectively, over the French, clearly calls for answers in the negative: “Do you ever think about these embarrassing truths? No, of course you don’t!” Here, we indeed have a rhetorical question, to which a negative answer is virtually forced from the addressee, and Dolet’s rhetorical skills, as he seeks to discredit Pinache, are put to full use in such a passage (we note the artfully balanced cola, and the challenge both to his adversary’s memoria and to his intellectual honesty from the accumulation of a series of questions to which the only possible answer must be a dismissive and derisive “No!”). This is even more the case in the other passage in question — one of the speeches’ most triumphant moments, which eye-witness testimony informs us was greeted with such applause and laughter that Dolet could scarcely be heard:


Such a veritable torrent of rhetorical effects can clearly be seen to be anchored in an initial num — governing the verb-form diffiteare: “can you possibly deny...?” — to which the only imaginable answer must then be a resounding, “No, you cannot deny this to be so.” The presence of these passages must then be taken to attest, not to Dolet’s...

18 An exchange of correspondence was published, along with some poetry, in the same volume as the speeches: Stephani Doleti Orationes Duae in Tholosam. Eiusdem Epistolatarum libri II. Eiusdem Carminum libri II. Ad eundem Epistolatarum amicorum liber (Lyon: S. Gryphe [?], 1534): see letter from Arnould Le Perron to Dolet, in Ep. amicorum, pp. 153-156.

confusion in such matters, but to the fidelity and accuracy of his adherence to Classical norms.

Let us now follow M. Chomarat’s lead as he inquires whether there is a corresponding “substitution” of nonne for num in the Orationes. In answer to his own question, “Y a-t-il en sens inverse des emplois de nonne pour introduire une question appelant une réponse négative?” (p. 205), he argues — although not without qualification — that there is indeed one such case, thereby explicitly buttressing his case for both Dolet’s systematic confusion and, implicitly, for the non-existence of Finet. We remain unconvinced with regard to his argumentation on this point. Nonne is used four times in the Orationes, all on the same page; turning on the hapless Pinache, Dolet imagines how France herself might speak to him, and then asks:

Haec si tecum Gallia loquatur, nonne exsanguis atque aestuans, repente in illam inuolabis, nonne cum fractis quibusdam, ac inanibus minis loquenti insurges? nonne effrenato tuo & praecipiti furore instabis? nonne sine uultus constantia, sine colore, sine uoce, tanta tibi exprobrantem opprimes? Simile nihil ages: at tuae turpitudinis recordatione uictus, & beneficiorum, quae in te a Gallia profecta sunt, memoria territus silebis… (Oratio II, 42.17-25)

M. Chomarat, wedded to his conviction that Dolet uses num for nonne, is persuaded that we now have the reverse case before us, and proposes the following translation:

Si la France venait à te parler ainsi, te précipiteras-tu soudain sur elle, blâme et plein de rage? Te dresseras-tu devant elle, tandis qu’elle te parle, avec des menaces impuissantes et vaines? Chercheras-tu à l’intimider pendant qu’elle t’adresse de si graves reproches et que tu n’as ni fermeté sur le visage ni couleur ni voix? Tu ne feras rien de tel; au contraire, vaincu par le remords de ta conduite passée et atterré par le souvenir des bienfaits qui te sont venus de la France, tu garderas le silence. (pp. 205-206)

Under this interpretation, the expected answer is clearly, “No, you will not,” and that is indeed how Dolet answers his own question. For M. Chomarat, this demonstrates the totality of Dolet’s confusion: he uses num, when the answer should be “Yes,” and he uses nonne, when the answer should be “No.” But the logic of his version is based on two assumptions, neither of which we grant: (i) that we assume error on Dolet’s part here, and take this nonne as standing for the num that calls for a negative, and (ii) that we should do this because Dolet’s confusion
is systematic and consistent. We thus prefer to retain our original version.\(^{20}\)

We believe Dolet’s strategy to be both sound and clear in this passage. In light of the fact that *nonne*, correctly used, prepares the audience for an affirmative answer, his contempt for Pinache emerges all the more witheringly when the audience, at the very point at which it is ready to hear, “Yes, you are insane enough to do these things,” hears, “No! on the contrary, you will be shamed into silence, and you will do none of these things.” Such a deliberate rhetorical strategy, involving the structuring of a false expectation on the audience’s part, seems to be totally in keeping with Dolet’s repeated condemnation of Pinache on the grounds that he is *inconstans*,\(^{21}\) and it is therefore in this perspective that we have translated the passage in question:

Suppose que ce soit la France qui te parle ainsi: ne vas-tu pas te pré-cipiter tout de suite sur elle, livide et bouillant de démence? ne vas-tu pas te dresser contre elle avec quelques faibles menaces creuses? ne vas-tu pas insister, avec ta frénésie débridée et aveugle? Celle qui te fait tant de reproches, ne vas-tu pas, sans pouvoir préserver la fermeté et la couleur de ton visage et le ton soutenu de ta voix, chercher à l’étouffer? Mais non! tu ne feras rien de tout cela! Accablé par le souvenir de ton infamie, et épouvanté par le souvenir des bienfaits que la France t’a prodigués, tu te tairas. (p. 162)

Having thus contemptuously dismissed his own hypothesis as to Pinache’s dependability or predictability, Dolet’s condemnation of his adversary’s irresolution is seen to be all the stronger. Any implication of inconstancy and/or inconsistency goes directly to the heart of the condemnation of Pinache as both an orator and a human being. The intentional use of *nonne* here is essential to Dolet’s rhetorical strategy as he seeks to have his audience associate itself with his own view of Pinache as *inconstans*.

\(^{20}\) We hasten to point out that M. Chomarat does not exclude our version categorically (any more than we his), even though he finds it “sans être absolument impossible […] tout de même fort compliquée” (p. 205).

\(^{21}\) The *Orationes* are full of references to Dolet’s appreciation of the personal quality of constancy, frequently indistinguishable from the rhetorical value of consistency. See, for example, *Oration II*, 64.24-29:

> Hoc inter constantem & inconstantem, hoc inter prudentem, & ignarum, hoc inter aequum iudicem, & calumniatorem interest, quod hic omnia detorquet, recte dicta calumniatur, innocentissimoque cuique inuidiam periculumque intendit. Constans autem & prudentia praeditus, innocentem de reis eximiat…

It will be remembered that Cicero considers an argument to be inadmissible when it is *inconstans*: *De inv.* 1.93.
Since M. Chomarat relies on what he considers to be Dolet’s confusion of *num* and *nonne* to support his hypothesis that Simon Finet never existed, let us now turn to that question. It will be remembered that the opening section of the *Orations* consists of (i) a letter, “Symon Finetius, Claudio Cotteraeo S.”, (ii) a second letter, “Chrysogonus Hammonius Archagato, Critoni S.”, (iii) a poem by Guillaume Scève addressed to Dolet, (iv) an “Ad Lectorem,” explaining that although he uses the words interchangeably, Dolet knows there is a difference between the “Aquitani” and the “Vascones,” and (v) “Simonis Finetii in utranque Doleti orationem Argumentum” (for clarification of some of these references, see our Notes, pp.187-191). Citing from the first of these liminary texts (see our note 8 above), M. Chomarat remarks:

> L’emploi de *num* est le même que dans les *Orations*. Il n’y a rien à en conclure, mais peut-être ce recours répété à l’interrogation oratoire […] est-il caractéristique d’un tour d’esprit et de style. On peut y voir un argument de plus en faveur d’une hypothèse formulée ailleurs [sc. in M. Chomarat’s *Vivarium* review: see our note 2 above]: ce Symon Finetius n’aurait jamais existé, ce serait une ruse de Dolet pour dissimuler le fait qu’il édite lui-même ces *Orations* qui lui avaient valu tant d’inimités et que, peut-être, il avait promis aux autorités toulousaines de ne pas publier? (pp. 204-205)

The first thing we need to say here is that M. Chomarat may well be perfectly correct in his hypothesis. The second, however, is that — as we have seen — the use of *num* in this passage is not always “le même que dans les *Orations,*” a fact that weakens its evidentiary value, over and above the ill-founded thesis of systematically erroneous usage on Dolet’s part. And thirdly, we know of no document supporting the idea that Dolet had ever promised not to publish his speeches: explicitly to the contrary, several of his letters written between the delivery of the second speech (late 1533-early 1534) and his arrival in Lyon (c. August 1st, 1534), after his banishment from Toulouse, are replete with threats of future vengeance and self-justification, once he can find a way of bringing out the speeches and the other material he is currently busy preparing for publication.22

22 See, for example, Dolet’s letter to Jean de Boyssoné, dated June 8 (1534), composed soon after his departure from Toulouse:

> … perficiamque immortalibus scriptorum meorum monimentis, ut Tholosam tetram, crudelem, nefarium, barbarum, literis infensam, a musis aversam, bonorum laudi duram, atque inimicam […] mei testimonii fide secula omnia sibi in posterum inducant, & semper praedicent. […] Ego, ut cum maxime, & ualeo,
It is of course difficult to prove that someone never existed. Let us therefore look at what evidence there is (one way or the other), scanty though it be, and try to evaluate its worth. It would appear that we have only Dolet’s writing to which to turn. Apart from the *Orationes*, we find Finet addressed in two letters and mentioned in a third, and also the subject of one of the poems. In the first of these letters (*Ep. liber II*, pp. 140-141; Longeon, no. 10), which appears to date from late March 1533, and is written from Toulouse, Dolet complains of his friend’s readiness to take offense for little or no reason, assures him of his own devotion, and expresses confidence in the durability of their friendship. Nothing specific or personal emerges in the letter, other than Dolet’s generosity of spirit in comparison to his friend’s touchiness (those familiar with Dolet’s biography will surely be thinking of the pot calling the kettle black at this point!), and while it is easy to see why Dolet would have wanted to portray himself in such a mildly flattering light, it is harder to imagine why he would have felt the need to invent a correspondent in order to do so.

The second letter to Finet is more substantive (*Ep. liber I*, pp. 117-119; Longeon, no.40). Writing from Toulouse in mid-May (1534), Dolet refers to their mutual unhappiness over a journey (back to “France”) that Finet is about to undertake, since they have been so close. He then refers to the unfortunate circumstances which have kept him, and continue to keep him, in Toulouse, “Tholosae quid me tandem teneat, quod te coniectura ducat, habere te arbitror. Non nostrae hic morae ilicium est urbis huius barbaries, asperitas, calumniae, sempiternumque in doctos odium” (p. 118). But then Dolet turns to his future plans, and the tone changes from invective to a dynamic, energetic, and detailed work-plan which is worth quoting:

literis operam do: utranque meam orationem augeo, & perpolio, ut quam celer-\rime lucubrationes meas in apertum proferam. (*Ep. liber II*, pp. 120-121)

Dolet’s letters are collected and annotated in C. Longeon, *Etienne Dolet, Correspondance: Répertoire analytique et chronologique suivi du texte de ses lettres latines* (Geneva, 1982); see no. 42 and pp. 138-139 for the letter to Boyssoné.

23 The letter begins, “Etiam nunc vide o iniuriae memoriam quam diligenter serues, amicitiae quam negligenter custodias,” and continues in the same vein.

24 We are of course making every allowance for the fact that the letters were published some time after they were written (assuming they were ever written as such, or ever sent: Cicero casts a long shadow!), and that the originals may have undergone a goodly amount of editing, given Dolet’s aspirations for his first publication. But faced with the choice between undocumented speculation and the texts as we have them, we feel we must at least start with the latter.
That Dolet should once more seek to portray himself in such a vigorous and self-promoting manner will surprise no-one, but here again one can wonder why he would want to create an imaginary recipient for such a letter, when he is writing similar things to correspondents of whose existence there is no question (see for example Longeon, nos. 34-45). And in a letter destined to show the depths of his animosity, and the ultimate triumph of his writings, one can wonder what purpose might be served by inventing an imaginary journey by a non-existent friend, a topic which is developed at some length even though it has little to do with Dolet’s future authorial activities. On the other hand, the real departure of a real friend could well be the occasion of a letter in which Dolet discusses his own future plans to leave Toulouse.

Finally, in this perspective, we may turn to a letter from Dolet to Jacques Bording, (Ep. liber II, pp. 139-140; Longeon, no. 41), presumably written immediately after the one just discussed, which begins as follows:

*Quod te scire magnopere uellem, post meas ad te literas, nihil hic plane gestum est. Sed proficiscent ad te Symoni Finetiocommuni amico nostro non potui nihil dare, ut in re etiam parum necessaria diligentiam affectare me cognosceres, & te sic demum obligarem, binis ut a me acceptis litteris, unis tuis mihi ad omnia respondendum tua magni referre existimares.* (p. 139)

It is indeed difficult to see why Dolet would need to tell a real friend that this letter was being delivered to him by a fictitious friend as he embarked on a pretended journey. Rather than ponder such a puzzle, or try to figure what advantage Dolet might have had in engaging in such an elaborate deception (and in drawing Bording into it), it seems to make better sense to conclude that the letter simply means what it says.

As mentioned, Finet is also the dedicatee of a poem published in the same volume as the *Orationes*, from which we quote the following typical stanzas, from the beginning, the middle and the end:

> At pp. 181-183: interestingly, but inexplicably, the poem is omitted from Dolet’s later *Carminum Libri Quatuor* (Lyon: S. Gryphe, 1538).
Non nos voluptas, vita vel impia
   Non nos vel indignum studium, aut scelus
Coniunxit, hanc iucundus usus,
   Usus amicitiam creavit.
... / ...
Vitae timebo perniciem tuae,
   Vitae timebis perniciem meae,
Nil charius tete ipso habebo,
   Charius atque nihil me habebis.
... / ...
Divos rogabo te erigi honoribus
   Divos rogabis me erigi honoribus,
Supplex uterque poscet, aevum
   Nestoris assequi utrunque posse.

It will readily be apparent that, doubtless because it is a poem, this text is even more dependent on conventional Humanist expressions of mutual friendship, and lacking in specific personal allusions, than the letters we have just considered. This does not suffice, however, to prove insincerity or fictitiousness of feeling, or to prove its dedicatee’s existence or non-existence. The poem must thus be added to the small number of references we have already considered, and can only serve to further stimulate our curiosity as to why, if Finet never existed, Dolet felt it necessary to invent him for such a variety of purposes and to praise him in such a variety of styles.26

Since the explicit evidence is so inconclusive, we wondered whether there was any implicit evidence, any “fingerprints” as it were, that we might turn to, in order to establish — or to disprove — Finet’s existence. In order to test M. Chomarat’s belief that authorship of the prefatory letter might be ascertained by the comparison of certain stylistic elements common to both the letter and the speeches, it therefore seemed justifiable to compare the use of the clausulae in the Oraciones and the prefatory texts as a case in point: extensive similarity might suggest, to

26 There is an approximate stylistic echo between the parallelisms of the poem’s middle and final stanzas, quoted above, and certain remarks in the letters to Finet, for example (from no. 10), “De quo certiorem me ut facias, sic te uhementer rogo, ut nihil uhementius: aut enim te amare pergam, aut me igni grauiissimo liberabis, mea in te benevolentia, qua quis ardentius?” (pp. 140-141), or (from no. 40), “Mutuo te amore aut proxime, aut aequo potius, atque tu me, chare sum semper complexus” (p. 117). Other than noting this similarity, which might suggest an element of stylistic consistency in Dolet’s portrayal of Finet, we are reluctant to grant it further importance, however.
some degree, the possibility of common authorship, whereas a great deal of difference might argue, although in an equally non-probative manner, against such a notion. As a sampling, we thus analyzed one sentence-ending per page of the Orationes, for a total of seventy-two: twenty in Oratio I, and fifty-two in Oratio II. Among these, we discerned thirty-five (10 in the first speech, 25 in the second) terminating in a standard clausula, i.e., approximately fifty percent of those analyzed. In Finet’s letter (which we analyzed in full) we find ten sentences which end with a clausula (as opposed to twelve that do not), and in the letter of Chrysogonus Hammonius (also analyzed in full), two sentences ending in a clausula as opposed to eight that do not. We hesitate to comment on what such statistics might mean, other than to observe that they surely demonstrate the seriousness with which the author(s) undertook the use of clausulae in the practice of Ciceronian imitation. It is also perhaps worth noting that, at least as far as the Orationes are concerned, Dolet, no doubt with Erasmus’s banter in mind, avoids the infamous “esse uideatur” (which is of the “paeon primus-spondee” category, itself rare in the speeches), thereby shielding himself from Erasmus’s condemnation of a superficial level of imitation. But for these statistics to possess real evidentiary value, we would ultimately need to possess a great deal more information. In order to produce secure results as the basis for a hypothesis on the authorship of the Finet letter, we would need to analyze all of the prefatory material and both of the Orationes by means of the statistical method of internal comparison. Moreover, we would need to know more about contemporary practice in Dolet’s time: is the use of classical (or Ciceronian) clausulae a common feature of prefatory epistles and correspondence in general, or is it more a particularity of the Ciceronians, for example? (Certainly, Erasmus’s criticism, referred to above, alerts us to what he, at least, considered a pernicious and wide-spread abuse of this aspect of Ciceronian imitation.)

27 Namely, in Oratio I, 4 double spondee; 1 double cretic; 1 spondee-double trochee; 3 cretic-double trochee; 1 cretic-paeon primus. In Oratio II, we noted 2 spondee-double trochee; 1 cretic-paeon primus; 2 cretic-double trochee; 9 double spondee; 9 spondee-cretic; 1 cretic-spondee; 1 paeon primus-spondee. We were guided in our investigation by Louis Nougaret, Traité de métrique classique (Paris, 3ème éd., 1963), chap. VI.

28 Namely, 6 double spondee; 1 double cretic; 1 cretic-double spondee; 1 cretic-double trochee; 1 cretic-paeon primus.

29 Namely, 2 spondee-cretic.

30 In his Ciceronianus of 1528, Erasmus had written:
Such inquiry is however not possible within the limits of the present study, and we must therefore conclude that none of these statistics, as they currently stand, suffices to point us in any sure direction with regard to patterns of usage justifying attribution of authorship with regard to Finet’s letter.

In his discussion of the *Orationes*, E. V. Telle clearly indicates his belief that the prefatory letter is nothing but “mise en scène et décors,” and in reference to Finet, whose existence he does not seem to question, notes, “Nous ne retrouverons plus Finet dans l’œuvre de Dolet ou ailleurs, que je sache.”

C. Longeon, on the other hand, in his edition of Dolet’s letters, notes, “Nous ne savons à peu près rien de Simon Finet, sinon ce qu’en dit Bunel (Epistolae, passim) et Dolet [...] il était vraisemblablement son condisciple à l’Université de Toulouse, et l’ami de Bording et de Bunel. On sait qu’il accompagna Dolet à Lyon et qu’il lui servit d’alibi pour la publication de ses *Orationes*.” It will be remembered that Pierre Bunel, who was from Toulouse, had replaced Dolet as embassy secretary in Venice when Lazare de Baïf took over as French ambassador from Dolet’s friend and patron Jean de Langeac in 1529. The reference to his *Epistolae* is tantalizing, since it suggests the possibility of a third-party verification of Finet’s existence. We have however scrutinized two editions of Bunel’s letters, to almost no avail: in spite of Longeon’s “passim,” we find nothing by way of incontrovertible evidence for our present inquiry. But we do find two passages

Optimo iure Quintilianus irridet quosdam, qui se germanos Ciceronis haberi volebant, quod aliquoties his uocibus absolverunt clausulam ‘esse uideatur,’ propter ea quod ea semel atque iterum Ciceronis forsitan exicit, si periodum longiore ambitu circumduxissent, quod in initii præsertim nonnunquam fécit ille.

(D. Erasmus, *Dialogus, cui titulus Ciceronianus, sive De optimo genero dicendi*, ed. A, Gambaro (Brescia, 1965), p. 86, line 1160-p. 88, line 1166.) The reference to Quintilian is no doubt to such texts as *De inst. orat.* X.2.17-18.


Longeon cites *Petri Bunelli galli praeeceptoris & Pauli Manutii itali discipuli, Epistolae ciceroniano stylo scriptae, Aliorum gallorum pariter et italorum Epistolae eodem stylo scriptae, Anno M.D.LXXXI* (s.l. [Geneva: H. Estienne; v. preface to Henry III]): we have consulted the copy in the Beinecke Library, Yale Univ. (shelf no. 1975 1692). Bunel’s share of this collection is also to be found in his *Familiares aliquot Epistolae, in adolescentulum Ciceronis studiosorum gratiam* (Paris: Ch. Estienne, 1551): this is the edition of Bunel cited by Telle (p. 458). We have consulted the copy in the Beinecke Library, Yale Univ. (shelf no. Hfb 22 109).
which are, to say the least, mouth-watering, both from letters addressed to Bunel’s friend, the Italian humanist and Ciceronian Aemilio Perrotti. (Whether these correspond to the passages Longeon had in mind, we cannot know.) In the first of these (p. 33 in the ed. of 1551, p. 24 in the 1581 ed.), we read, “De simulatione quod ego scripseram, ad Simonem non pertinebat: quem, virum bonum, & amicum minime fucatum cognovi: aut, si aliter est, mihi plane imposuit.” Is this a reference to the alleged circumstances under which the Orationes appeared? Unfortunately, nothing in the rest of the letter provides any elucidation in this regard, and nothing in the other letters addressed to Perrotti seems to clarify what Bunel had in mind with his “scripseram.” The letter is written “Venetiis,” but undated: since the volume contains other letters from Venice, some dated from as early as 1529, others dated as late as 1541, we can draw no clear inferences on that account. The other passage to catch our eye, this time from a letter s.l.n.d., reads as follows: “Allatae sunt a discernu tuo ad Oratorem literae, fore ut successor mitteretur, ipse in Galliam rediret. Quis in tanta rerum aulicarum inconstantia constantiam retinere posset, praesertim si ab illis pendeat? […] Quod si non discesserit Orator, neque cur, neque ubi in Italian consistam, udeo” (p. 76 [1551], p. 66 [1581]). Is the “Orator” (privileged with an upper-case “O” in the 1551 text, but reduced to lower-case in 1581) Dolet, whose return to “France” had indeed been announced as the first step toward his eventual return to Padua? Once again, Bunel’s letter is undated, but this time we may assume it to have been written from Lyon, since he tells his correspondent a few lines later, “… cum Lugdunum veneris, facile ex aulicis, quid de re ista constitutum erit, intelliges.” Does the reference to the “res aulicae” refer to some aspect of Sébastien Gryphe’s unhappiness that Dolet had, more than likely, produced the volume of his Orationes, poems and letters on Gryphe’s presses, but perhaps without permission, and certainly without acknowledgement? Is “Orator” capitalized in 1551, five years after Dolet’s death, because it is obvious who is meant

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34 See for example J. A. Odone’s letter, written from Strasbourg in 1535, to Gilbert Cousin (Opera Gilberti Cognati, Basel: 1562, vol. I, pp. 313-315), in which undeveloped reference is made to Gryphius’s unwillingness to allow Dolet to use his presses to produce this volume. Nowhere in Dolet’s volume does it actually state that it came from the presses of Gryphius, although it is a reasonable thing to suppose. For more on the actual provenance of the volume, see our edition, Appendice I, and the discussion in R. Copley Christie’s still authoritative Etienne Dolet, The Martyr of the Renaissance (new edition, London, 1899), pp. 223-228.
(although perhaps still too dangerous to name him explicitly), whereas by 1581 it no longer matters? Such notions are not wholly implausible, and the texts cited may well refer to Finet, or to Dolet and the circumstances governing the publication of the speeches, but they cannot be adduced with certainty.

Nothing we have discussed above actually proves the existence of Simon Finet. But there is a body of evidence to suggest he did exist, and we have no evidence to show he did not. Our position thus remains the same as that detailed in our edition of the _Orationes_:\(^{35}\) for reasons of publicity, possibly of prudence, and in keeping with a number of prevalent Humanist conventions,\(^{36}\) Dolet choreographed the publication of his _Orationes_, poems and letters by pretending that Simon Finet had brought them out without his permission and against his will. We need go no farther than the letters already referred to, or than the one addressed to Bording in April 1534,\(^{37}\) to know that the tale of Finet’s “theft” is no more than a white lie. Nothing was more certain in Dolet’s mind, from the moment of his imprisonment in March 1534 — an incarceration directly occasioned by his speeches — than the exact shape and content of the _monimenta_, the printed words, by which he would justify himself before posterity. The volume that appeared in Lyon in October 1534 was, under no circumstances, a purloined text snatched from him without his knowledge and consent. Did Dolet actually write the prefatory material himself (with the exception of the poem by G. Scève)? We cannot tell. M. Chomarat’s conclusions about the use of _num_ in the prefatory letter must be judged as without firm standing in the question of authorial attribution. And even if

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36 See also Appendix I of our edition (pp. 216-219), where we explore the implications of the fact that an almost identical set of circumstances is said to have presided over the 1535 publication in Lyon of his fellow-Ciceronian and friend Ortensio Lando (or Landi)’s _Forcianae Quaestiones_. As we note, the fact that Lando’s text was published after Dolet’s does not necessarily prove that Lando was the imitator: given the tightness of the Ciceronian circles in Lyon, it is entirely possible that Dolet became acquainted with Lando’s manuscript soon after his arrival from Toulouse, and decided to incorporate the “fiction” of the stolen text and its unwilling author into his own publication. We will probably never know the whole story.
37 _Ep. liber I_, pp. 98-101; no. 36 in Longeon’s _Correspondance_. Bording, he writes, must wait some time longer for the extract from the speeches which had been promised him, since Dolet is preoccupied with a major, and very specific, task: “Quam tibi dudum orationem promiseram, quae proxime in Pinacium inuectus sum, nihil est, quod expectes, neutrum enim antea leges, quam typis excusam, cum nostris carminum epistolariumque libris, nec tu me ideo parum seruatae fidei insimilabis” (p. 101).
Dolet did write it, would that mean that Finet never existed? Hardly. Did he exist, or did Dolet invent him? On both scores, we find that the best verdict must remain, in the prudent terminology of Scottish law, "non proven."

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