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Johannes Scheffer on the *imitatio veterum*

IIRO KAJANTO

During the seventeenth century, Latin still dominated as the *lingua erudita*, the language of scholarship, philosophy, and science, especially in countries whose native languages were little known elsewhere. As I have remarked in an earlier study, Spinoza, for example, whose native language may have been Portuguese but who was also fluent in Dutch, wrote almost exclusively in Latin, whereas his contemporaries Descartes and Hobbes, a Frenchman and an Englishman, used their native languages along with Latin.¹

The Latin used and taught in the seventeenth century usually goes by the name Neo-Latin.² It was a creation of the humanists, who had made an attempt to revive the ancient purity of Latin by imitating the usage of the best Roman authors, *auctores probati*. The language was purged from the grosser solecisms and barbarisms of medieval Latin. But except for what might be called luxury use, chiefly in oratory, and for a number of enthusiastic "Ciceronians", ridiculed by Erasmus in his *Ciceronianus*, Neo-Latin was never genuinely classical. For one thing, although classical Latin morphology had survived with little change even in

¹ Kajanto, *Aspects of Spinoza's Latinity*, *Arctos* 13 (1979) 49-83.

² For the general character of Neo-Latin, see J. IJsewijn, *Companion to Neo-Latin Studies I*, 2nd Edition, 1990, 27-38.

medieval Latin, and its orthography, excepting some persistent misspellings,³ had been restored to classical standards, its vocabulary included a large number of unclassical words or old words which had acquired new meanings.

In regard to syntax and style, the situation was more complex. The scientific study of Latin syntax was still undeveloped and the rules given in normative grammars were scanty, imprecise and sometimes confusing.⁴ Syntax had to some extent to be learnt by ear, by reading the classical authors and by trying to imitate their usage. Obviously there were considerable differences between one writer and another in the ability to recapture the niceties of classical syntax.

Things were somewhat better with regard to style. The Roman rhetors gave any number of rules concerning tropes and figures and composition, which the great contemporary textbooks repeated. But here, too, imitating the style of the ancient masters was of great importance.

In the teaching of Latin, it was accordingly crucial to see which authors were well suited for *imitatio*, and for what reasons. The present paper is concerned with the relevant recommendations of a well-known and influential classical scholar, Johannes Scheffer (Latinized Schefferus). His *De stylo* was originally published in 1653 and reprinted several times. I have used the edition which was printed in Jena in 1678 together with his *Gymnasium styli* and Johannes Boecler's shorter treatise *De comparanda Latinae linguae facultate*.

Scheffer was born in 1621 in Strasbourg, where he also received his primary education.⁵ But as was usual in this age, he studied in several other universities, especially at Leiden, which was then a leading university in classical scholarship.⁶ Of his teachers he especially mentions Boecler, only ten years his senior, who had instructed him in Latin in the *Gymnasium* and later at the university of Strasbourg.⁷

³ Such as *-ci-* for *-ti-*, e.g. *nuncius*.

⁴ E.g. G.J. Vossius, *Latina grammatica... in usum scholarum adornata*, Amsterdam 1648, describes what we know as the accusative and infinitive construction thus: *Post verbum finitum sequitur fere infinitivus habens ante se accusativum, qui resolvitur per nominativum, et conjunctionem quod, vel ut* (62). The complicated syntax of *ut* confuses *ut causale* and *ut consecutivum* (90-91), etc.

⁵ Scheffer composed an autobiography in the early 1670s. The work, *Ioannis Schefferi Argentoratensis Vita*, was first published in 1915, *Uppsala universitets årsskrift* 1915, Band 2, 5-35.

⁶ Scheffer, *Vita* 13; 15-16.

⁷ Scheffer, *Vita* 14.

In 1648, Queen Christina invited Scheffer to Uppsala, where he stayed to the end of his life in 1679. A typical polymath, Scheffer produced important works not only in classical studies but also in Swedish history and ethnography.⁸ His best-remembered works today may be *Lapponia*, 1672, which has been translated into several languages, and *Svecia literata*, posthumously published in 1680.

Scheffer's *De stylo* bears the unmistakable imprint of humanist writing. The pages are packed with classical quotations. Like almost everything in humanism, Scheffer's stylistic doctrine originates from antiquity, especially from Cicero and Quintilian.

The treatise begins by defining *stylus* and explicating its etymology, the customary method in learned works of the time. Scheffer defines style as the ability to express one's ideas clearly and fluently.⁹ There are individual differences in style. Thus a young man expresses himself differently from an old man, etc.¹⁰ In the formal respect, style is divided into *gravis*, *humilis* and *medius*, which are well-known from rhetoric, and according to the subject matter into *poeticus*, *historicus*, *philosophicus*, and *oratorius*.¹¹

Scheffer characterizes each of these five styles with obligatory classical references. His explications have, however, some relevance to contemporary uses of Latin. He is emphatic on the subject of keeping the styles of different literary genres separate. Following Quintilian and Cicero, he describes the poetic style as *in verbis liber...in figuris licentiosus, totus ad ostentationem comparatus*,¹² citing as examples composite words like *flammiger* and *horrifer*, and figurative use of words like *cretata ambitio*,¹³ "white-dressed seeking of office".

Scheffer does not seem to have always correctly understood his sources. Quoting Gellius, he records as poetical the words *inlatebrare* in Claudius Quadrigarius, and

⁸ See E. Wrangler, *Sveriges litterära förbindelser med Holland särdeles under 1600-talet*, 1897, 164-77; St. Lindroth, *Svensk lärdomshistoria 2. Stormaktstiden (1675-1699)* 206-12.

⁹ Scheffer, *De stylo* 4: *est in facili celeritate quadam exprimendi ea scripto, quae decenter sunt excogitata*.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 9-10.

¹¹ *Ibid.* 12-13.

¹² *Ibid.* 14-15.

¹³ *Pers.* 5,177.

lutescere and *opulescere* in Furius Antias, a poet from ca. 100 B.C.¹⁴ Though Gellius qualifies *inlatebrare* as poetic, according to him it was not, however, *absurdum* or *asperum*. On the other hand, Gellius did not himself comment upon the two last-named words. In fact, he polemized against Caesellius Vindex, a grammarian, who had found fault with these as well as with a few other similar coinages.¹⁵ Scheffer further observes that Julius Paulus had commented upon *triseclisenex*, *dulcissiloquus* (incorrect for *dulcioreloquus*) and *multigrumis* in Nonius. It is not clear what Scheffer meant by Nonius. These words were not found in Nonius Marcellus. They were in fact copied from the *Alcestis* of Laevius Melissus, a poet of the first century B.C., and it was Gellius who branded them as *nimum poetica, ex prosae orationis usu alieniora*.¹⁶ Iulius Paulus, an obscure poet,¹⁷ was only mentioned as Gellius' interlocutor. But in the seventeenth century, scholarship had not yet attained present-day accuracy.

Scheffer particularly condemns the use of the poetical words of the type of *triseclisenex*, which abound in late authors, Apuleius, Symmachus, Sidonius, Cassiodorus, etc., and which may captivate *imperitam juventutem*. This attitude to Late Latin coinages is characteristically humanist.

The definition of historical style¹⁸ is derived from passages lifted from Quintilian and Cicero:

Stylus historicus verbis utitur minus anxie quaesitis, figuras adhibet remotiores quidem, non tamen licentiosas,¹⁹ in oratione tota inest fusum quid, ac tractum, et aequabile.²⁰

Scheffer also quotes Lucian, who advises the use of common but respectable words and figures which are free from affectation.²¹ Scheffer illustrates the difference between the poetic and the historical style by quoting from Livy and

¹⁴ Gell. 17,2,3 and 18,11,3-4.

¹⁵ Gell. 18,11,1-2.

¹⁶ Gell. 19,7,12-16.

¹⁷ RE X (1919) 690.

¹⁸ Scheffer, *De stylo* 15.

¹⁹ Cf. Quint. 10,1,31 *verbis remotioribus et liberioribus narrandi taedium vitat*.

²⁰ Cf. Cic. de orat. 2,64 *fusum atque tractum et cum lenitate quadam profluens*.

²¹ *Quomodo historia conscribenda sit* 44.

Virgil two passages meaning "to fall dying from a horse" and "to thrust a sword through the body", respectively.²²

The discussion of the *stylus philosophicus*²³ has some significance in that it is the nearest approach to Latin as *lingua erudita* in the whole treatise. Otherwise Scheffer ignored the peculiar needs of learned Latin, especially in scientific writings.²⁴ But considering that his stylistic doctrine was wholly derived from antiquity, this was probably unavoidable.

Scheffer makes a point of the fact that the philosophical style avoids excessive rhetoric. He mainly leant upon Seneca, who in some of his *Epistulae morales* maintained that in philosophical discourse it is the subject that matters, not its stylistic form.²⁵ Scheffer quotes Seneca's advice to Lucilius: *quaere, quid scribas, non quemadmodum*.²⁶ But he seems to have made Seneca's aversion to an elaborate style in philosophy even more radical than it actually was. He opened the discussion on the philosophical style by quoting Seneca's Epistle 100, in which Seneca defended Papirius Fabianus, whose seemingly negligent style Lucilius had blamed. Scheffer may have quoted from memory. The quotation consists of two separate passages in Seneca, with omissions and changes.²⁷ The end of the quotation inverts Seneca's meaning. Seneca's *Sed totum corpus* (scil., of Fabianus) *videris quam sit comptum; honestum est* appears in Scheffer as *Sed totum corpus videris; quamvis sit incomptum, honestum est*. According to Scheffer, Fabianus' philosophical writings may have been unpolished but still possess distinction, while Seneca praised them both on account of their polish and distinction. It is not possible to tell whether the change is attributable to Scheffer or to a faulty edition of Seneca's *Moral Letters*.

²² Liv. 2,20,3 (the quotation is somewhat incorrect) and Verg. Aen. 11,668-69; Liv. 1,25,12 and Verg. Aen. 2,552-53.

²³ Scheffer, *De stylo* 16-18.

²⁴ Cf. M. Benner and E. Tengström, *On the Interpretation of Learned Neo-Latin* (*Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia* 39), 1977.

²⁵ Cf. epist. 75,1-7, e.g. 4: *Multum tamen operae impendi verbis non oportet... quod sentimus loquamur, quod loquimur sentiamus...* 5: *Non delectent verba nostra, sed prosint*. But this professed nonchalance did not prevent Seneca from giving considerable attention to rhetorical style!

²⁶ Epist. 115,1.

²⁷ Epist. 110,5 and 8.

Scheffer further cites Chrysippus for the philosophers' disparagement of *minutas Rhetorum praeceptiunculas* and for their occasional solecisms, which are a shame to others,²⁸ Philostratus for Apollonius of Tyana's ironical comment upon Dion's overly rhetorical discourse,²⁹ and Quintilian for the simplicity of the philosophical style.³⁰ Scheffer exemplified the difference between the poetical, oratorical and philosophical styles by quoting from Cicero poetical and oratorical equivalents for a philosopher's simple *irascor*.³¹ The discussion ends with Cicero's evaluation of the philosophical genre as *aequabile, temperatum, quietum*.³²

The treatment of the *stylus oratorius* is brief and composed of quotations from Cicero and Quintilian.³³ We may notice that Scheffer appreciates it more than he does the poetical style. Both are distinguished from the historical and philosophical style by the adoption of less common words and expressions and by the more extensive use of the resources of rhetoric. But while the poetic style is said to be *totus ad ostentationem* ("showing off") *factus*,³⁴ the oratorical style *totus factus est ad majestatem, vim, et efficaciam*. But this cannot imply that Scheffer looked askance at poetry as such. What he meant was probably the use of poetic language in prose.

In a textbook, it is essential to show the means of mastering the different styles. According to Scheffer, three things are necessary: *Natura*, the individual natural disposition, which is a gift of God; *Ars*, which denotes the rules handed down by the ancient grammarians and rhetors; *exercitatio*, for which we are ourselves responsible.³⁵ The rest of the treatise is concerned with exercise.

²⁸ Quoted by Plutarch, Stoic. repugn. 28 (1047B); cf. SVF 2, 298.

²⁹ Vita Apollonii 5,40.

³⁰ Quint. 11,1,33. Scheffer's quotation contains a mistake: instead of Quintilian's *maximeque ex affectibus* he has *maxime affectibus*, which does not, however, change the meaning.

³¹ A verse from Homer in Latin translation describing Achilles' rage, in Tusc. 3,18; a verse from Caecilius, quoted in Pro Caelio 38; for oratorical expression, *excandescio iracundia*, from Cicero's Correspondence which I have been unable to trace.

³² Cic. off. 1,3.

³³ Scheffer, De stylo 18-19.

³⁴ This idea of the poetical style is, however, a loan from Quint. 10,1,28: *Meminerimus... poeticam ostentationi comparatam*.

³⁵ Scheffer, De stylo 20.

It is here that Scheffer deals with the doctrine of *imitatio*. The humanists had learned to know it from Horace and especially from Quintilian.³⁶ It had been revived by the inaugurator of humanism, Petrarch.³⁷ Since then, *imitatio* was a main tenet of humanism, albeit with considerable disagreement concerning the mode and extent of imitation.

Scheffer defines exercise as:

*styli ad praecepta artis, et exempla veterum, per omne argumenti genus, crebra diligensque accommodatio*³⁸

He does not, however, favour servile imitation. Of the two components of exercise, rules are more important than *exempla*. Following Quintilian's caution with regard to *imitatio*, he argues that we should first select from *exempla aliorum* what is necessary, but after that swim *absque cortice*. Nevertheless, he attaches great importance to *imitatio veterum*.³⁹

Scheffer divides the exercise for acquiring a good mastery of Latin into five parts: *Lectio*, *Auscultatio* or listening to Latin texts being read aloud, *Judicium* or assessing the Latin authors, *excerpendi studium* or making notes from books perused, and *diligentia scribendi*. He admits, though, that many scholars omit *auscultatio* and *excerptio*.⁴⁰

Reading is even more necessary today than it was in antiquity for the obvious reason that Latin is no longer a living language. Scheffer distinguishes two types

³⁶ Hor. ars 268-69: *vos exemplaria Graeca / nocturna versate manu, versate diurna*, was often repeated. It was, however, Quint. 10,2: *De imitatione*, which gave the best exposition of the ancient theory of imitation, for which see E.N. Tigerstedt, *The Problem of Progress in Literature in Classical Antiquity*, in: P. Demetz & T. Greene & L. Nelson Jr., *The Disciplines of Criticism*, 1968, 604sqq.

³⁷ H. Gmelin, *Das Prinzip der Imitation in den romanischen Literaturen der Renaissance I* (1932) 118-25; A. Buck, *Italienische Dichtungslehren vom Mittelalter bis zum Ausgang der Renaissance*, 1952, 55-67; F. Ulivi, *L'imitazione della poetica del rinascimento*, 1959, 12.15; cf. Kajanto, *Poggio Bracciolini and Classicism*, 1987, 19-27.

³⁸ Scheffer, *De stylo* 21.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 22-23.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 24-25.

of reading, *legere rerum caussa, aut verborum*.⁴¹ In the first case, it does not matter even if the authors have written *barbare...ut Historici, Philosophi, Theologi superiorum temporum*, by which he probably means medieval writers. He is, however, now concerned with reading in order to acquire proficiency in Latin. This reading is in turn divided into *simplex*, which means gaining *sermonis...opes copiamque*, and into *imitatio* proper, the modelling of one's style upon classical authors.

In the former respect, the Latin authors are distributed into several groups suited to different stages, from beginners to more advanced students.⁴² Scheffer admits that grammarians are not unanimous as to the authors recommended. For his part, he recommends for beginners first Terence, then the Fables of Phaedrus, Cicero's *Ad familiares*, Ovid's *Tristia* and *Ex Ponto*, Plautus, and Varro's *De re rustica*. But I shall omit discussing his lists of set books any further.

In Scheffer's work, just as in other similar treatises, we may observe that little attention was given to the needs of a modern world for new words and expressions. Scheffer's lists of authors recommended for learning to discourse *pure et Latine*⁴³ do not contain any Neo-Latin author, not even Erasmus. To include post-classical authors in the canon of *auctores probati* would have done violence to the very idea of humanism, the return *ad fontes*. But because Latin was still the main language of learning, scientists, and many scholars, too, were very much on their own concerning *copia verborum*. They had to obtain the terms of their particular subject from other similar works. Hence there was great variety in the quality of learned Latin. Some treatises abound in new coinages and even scholastic words, which the humanists had banished from acceptable Latinity, while others, especially the writers in humanist disciplines, made an attempt at some kind of classical purity.

It is in the next chapter, *De lectione ad imitationem*, that Scheffer takes this central idea of humanist Latin for a more detailed discussion. He records three

⁴¹ Ibid. 28-29.

⁴² Ibid. 32-39.

⁴³ Scheffer took this definition from Cic. de orat. 1,144: the first requirement of good Latinity was *ut pure et Latine loquamur*. Scheffer explains these terms thus: *Porro illud pure maxime in verbis est, si e.g. nil obsolete proferamus; Latine in compositione, si illa inter se jungantur, quae conjungi solent a bonis Latinisque auctoribus.*

different attitudes to *imitatio*.⁴⁴ Many famous humanists and scholars have maintained that one should abstain from imitating the style of any particular author. He mentions Politian, Erasmus, and Lipsius as champions of this view, and also cites the relevant ideas of the ancients: in Cicero's *De oratore*, Caesar, C. Aurelius Cotta and C. Scribonius Curio are recorded as orators who relied only upon their own nature.⁴⁵

Scheffer, however, does not subscribe to this attitude. Although he does not countenance the position of extreme Ciceronians, such as Bembo, Longolius,⁴⁶ and Joachim Camerarius, *qui ne latum quidem unguem a vocabulis sententiisque Tullianis recedendum dicitur*, he proposes that we should imitate one good author, but supply from others what is wanting in him.⁴⁷

The principal authors selected as models should not only be intrinsically excellent but, as far as possible, conform to each one's *ingenium*, *studia* and *institutum*.⁴⁸ Here *ingenium* means the idiosyncracies of a writer, and the two latter words his particular subject and theme. Quoting Quintilian,⁴⁹ Scheffer argues that if one tries to imitate an uncongenial author, especially Cicero even if he is foreign to the imitator's particular talent, the results are unfelicitous. He cites as an ancient example Plato's alleged failure to discourse in a sublime style.⁵⁰

But it is equally, and even more important to select as a model an author who accords with *studia et institutum*. Scheffer distinguishes two main subjects, *politicum* and *scholasticum*, the world of learning.⁵¹ Although Cicero is a good model for both, he will recommend Livy and Curtius for the former, Pliny the Elder and Younger as well as Caesar for the latter.

⁴⁴ Scheffer, *De stylo* 39-40.

⁴⁵ Cic. *de orat.* 1,98: *Atque esse tamen multos videmus, qui neminem imitentur et suapte natura, quod velint, sine cuiusquam similitudine consequantur.*

⁴⁶ The champion of Ciceronianism, Nosoponus, in Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*, was modelled upon Longolius or Christoph de Longueil.

⁴⁷ Scheffer, *De stylo* 40-43.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 43-46.

⁴⁹ Quint. 10,2,19.

⁵⁰ Here Scheffer refers to the verdict of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Epist. ad Pomp.* 761.

⁵¹ Scheffer, *De stylo* 48-52.

It is a measure of the authority of Cicero even in the seventeenth century that Scheffer had to justify his refusal to propose Cicero *in exemplum omnibus*. He argues that Ciceronian eloquence is not always appropriate in different times and circumstances, citing in support Tacitus' argument in *Dialogus*.⁵² Political discourse requires a lucid, natural, and impressive style. For the *genus politicum*, he accordingly recommended Livy and Curtius as models political writers should imitate.

In this age, the position of Livy as the foremost Roman historian was already called in question. His place was being taken by Tacitus.⁵³ It was especially Justus Lipsius who raised Tacitus to esteem, putting Sallust after him and Livy in third place.⁵⁴ Although he acknowledges many good points in Livy, he maintains that Livy is also *supinus* (languid), *frigidus* (tedious) and ταυτόλογος. Scheffer does not endorse Lipsius' adverse judgement, which in his opinion no one in his senses would accept. He cites Quintilian's well-known praises of Livy's style, its *lactea ubertas*.⁵⁵ Quoting his teacher Boecler, he eulogizes Livy as a storehouse of political wisdom.⁵⁶

The pre-eminence accorded to Curtius as a political writer may seem odd today, having reduced him to a second or third rate position and characterizing him as an uncritical historian. But in an age which appreciated rhetorical skill more than a real grasp of history, Curtius' elaborate and vivid style was greatly admired. Erasmus praised his lucidity and polish in a passage quoted by Scheffer. Even Lipsius, though placing Curtius after Tacitus, Sallust, and Livy, found words to extol his style. If he had shortcomings, they were attributable to his monotonous

⁵² Dial. 19,2. In this age, the dialogue was not yet attributed to Tacitus. Scheffer refers to the author as *auctor de caussis corruptae Eloquentiae*.

⁵³ See J.H. Whitfield, *Livy > Tacitus*, in: *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 1500-1700*, ed. by R.R. Bolgar, 1976, 281-93. According to the author, 285, Tacitus began to shed his long-standing inferior position only after the 1530s.

⁵⁴ Lipsius, *Politicorum sive civilis doctrinae libri sex*, Antverpiae 1610, 17-18.

⁵⁵ Quint. 10,1,32 and 101.

⁵⁶ *Livium si omnis politicae promptuarium credideris, a vero nil alienum putabis*, in Boecler's *Diss. II de Eloquentia Politica*, which I have not been able to consult.

subject matter.⁵⁷ Boecler devoted several pages to his encomium.⁵⁸ In this country, Enevaldus Svenonius, in his encyclopaedia of humanist learning, raises Curtius above all the other Roman historians, especially Tacitus, whose language he finds fault with. *Unus Curtius noster... coeteros historiae scriptores, ut puritate et lepore provocat, ita acumine et perspicuitate vincit.*⁵⁹ Svenonius was an unoriginal compiler, who took his information about the Roman authors from other scholars, but this of course further enhances the significance of his eulogies of Curtius.⁶⁰

Scheffer's justification for recommending Livy and Curtius as models of political discourse is characteristic of the age:

Conjunxi autem istos duos, quia duplices politici: alii, qui in Regno versantur, alii, qui in Republica. Illis Curtius accomodator, quia cultior, quia brevior et argutior: his Livius, quia prolixior.

In a republic, one has to deal with the people, who have a limited understanding and hence prefer lengthy discourses, as Scheffer argues by quoting an apposite passage from Tacitus' *Dialogus*.⁶¹ But surely this implies that the discourses had to be conducted in vernacular? Uneducated people did not know Latin. Scheffer does not, however, even by a word advert to this. His treatise *De stylo* was *ex professo* concerned only with Latin. Again, Curtius is suitable in a kingdom where a few great and experienced men wield power. They appreciate *cultus* and have a need of *subtilitas*.⁶² Scheffer, living and teaching in arch-royalist Sweden, shared the aristocratic prejudices against the inerudite common people.⁶³

⁵⁷ Lipsius 18: *Quod si varium magis argumentum habuisset, fallor, aut variae Prudentiae eximium magis specimen praeuisset. Sed Alexander, quid nisi bella?*

⁵⁸ Boecler, *De comp. Lat.* 1. facult. 30-33.

⁵⁹ Svenonius, *Gymnasium capiendae humanae rationis*, Aboae 1662, 157-60.

⁶⁰ Thus he includes in the passage on Curtius a long quotation from Puteanus (Erycius van der Putten).

⁶¹ *Dial.* 19,2.

⁶² Similarly, Lipsius 18: *Sequuntur scriptores duo, velut propriij Principum, et assidue iis in manu sinuque habendi.* One is Curtius, and the other is Caesar.

⁶³ In a dissertation supervised by Scheffer, the privileged position of the nobility was vigorously upheld. Moreover, Scheffer took a hand in the education of noblemen's sons and wrote a special textbook for this purpose, *De generosi nobilisque informatione literaria*, 1678; see Kajanto, *Humanism in a Christian Society II*, 1990, 104. 107 n. 50.

Discussing the models to be imitated by *scholastici*, Scheffer explains that Caesar is suitable for teachers because of the simplicity, propriety, and lucidity of his style, whereas those who wish to dispute with others will profit from imitating the language of both the Plinys, which is marked by *vis, pondus, argutiae et frequentia sententiarum*.

We should, however, remember what Scheffer had earlier written about the philosophical style. Although Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis historia* and Pliny the Younger's *Epistulae* might be recommendable models, in practice greater latitude was allowed in the choice and even disregard of *exempla veterum*.

* * *

Scheffer's treatise on style, like many other similar works originating from the seventeenth century, reveals certain limitations which are characteristic of Neo-Latin and humanism in general. These limitations spelt its demise in the immediate future, though with some time lag in less advanced and more peripheric countries. There was little attempt to develop Latin to meet the requirements of the ever more developing world. It was the same classics which were presented as models to be assiduously perused, excerpted, and imitated. Words and turns of phrase had to be learnt from them. The preoccupation with style, which to a great extent influenced the evaluation of the classical authors, was falling out of tune with an age increasingly informed with the spirit of the Scientific Revolution. In fact, during the Age of the Enlightenment, rhetoric was discredited to such an extent that it never recovered.⁶⁴ Further, like the humanist writings in general, the discourse was larded with quotations from and references to the ancient writers. Modern scholars were cited only when they corroborated the ideas of the ancient masters.

⁶⁴ Cf. G. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, 1980, 240-1. In this country, the Professor of Eloquence for most of the seventeenth century, H. Hassel, held rhetoric in low esteem. He maintained that the *praecepta rhetorica* inherited from the Greeks and Romans were no longer appropriate to modern life. In a memorandum concerning education, he assailed previous teaching of rhetoric and proposed that eloquence should be taught only as far as it was useful to various offices and to general life, see Kajanto, *Porthan and Classical Scholarship*, 1984, 27.