II Oration

However, this was the first that Ramazzini gave at Padua University on 12th December 1700

If there has ever been someone who has openly begun to shake because they find themselves having to speak in this great auditorium of knowledge for the first time, renowned the world over, then I believe it is none other than myself, illustrious listeners, and I can see that those of you sitting here and watching me have already noticed. Indeed, since it is my task to speak in the name of the medical profession I have been summoned to practice publicly, a profession that deserves to be celebrated more than others since it has now grown so much it seems it can not grow any more, and since I have to do this in such a splendid place, before a highly esteemed assembly of professors and scholars, in the city where the sources of eloquence gush forth as far as the Lazio – I admit, my mind goes blank as I find it difficult to see how I could be up to such a great task. If the truth be told, for some time now, before taking my leave of my native Lari, I have been aware of these feelings of ardour in my soul, which I tried to restrain by reminding myself more than once that, as is common practice, before taking my turn to come and speak from this exedra, I would listen to the illustrious professors of this University one by one. Indeed, I believed that in this fashion I would slowly have been able to get used to it, and be able to bear all the eyes and faces staring at me, or at least be able to hide my agitation. However, it was not until afterwards that I realised how silly and as ineffective as nepenthes this idea was to calm my nerves. Indeed, while I was listening to them talk, one after the other, equipped with both the weapons of eloquence and
knowledge, I was greatly discouraged. What would they have all done when they heard me give such a pedantic, mundane speech? Thus, my agitation grew day by day, and I would have much preferred to defend my cause on the Areopagus, where criminal cases were tried in the dark, rather than in the University of Padua, standing before your dazzling knowledge. However, no matter what happens, I have no choice but to run this risk; it is therefore not advisable to tax your politeness further so I shall begin with my subject, which I am so much happier to do as I see that by some strange coincidence, I am here at the very moment that offers the perfect occasion to celebrate the skills of the medical field. I shall therefore start by describing the conclusion and results of this century that is now coming to an end and the examples from Rome will determine the order of the contents of this oration. In Rome there used to be the centuries-old and solemn custom to hold games every hundred years, and these were witnessed by so many people that it seemed as if almost the whole world was present in the city. Indeed, these games were called the “secular games”, introduced during the first year of the Roman Republic by Valerius Publicola after banishing the kings. When it was time for the games, vast numbers of runners from all over would summon the people to watch them, the likes of which had never been seen before. I would be taxing your learned ears, should I describe in great detail what took place during these three days and nights, in the great grandeur of the Roman Empire. However, there is one rite I would like to mention – there was a poem they would sing together in Latin and Greek in the temple of Apollo Palatine, one that was called “secular” to pay thanks to the gods for all their kindness during that century, entrusting them with the eternity of Rome, the Senate and the Roman Empire. Today we still have an exceptional example of such poems in the works of the poet from Venosa for the Augustus games.

The seventeenth century of the Christian era and return of freedom is now drawing to a close, a happier, more glorious century than has ever been seen by the republic of the physicians and might never be seen again – a century in which the skill of teachers and the favour of good fortune fought together to take this profession to the highest honours of glory. If a comparison of what is great with what is small is allowed, just as the Romans used to remember the events and splendour of the past century with their
secular games, bestowing them on the gods in Apollo's temple in a secular poem, in this vast temple of knowledge, where I have been given the task of practicing Apollo's art, I would like to use my secular discourse to remember the great fortunes the medical profession has had in this century; I would like to look at the tools it used, the means it used, that have allowed this field to rise from the ground where it once started, to such heights and achieve such marvels. My discourse shall therefore be one that is befitting to the dignity of the subject, the place and of the grandeur of such a knowledgeable audience.

Going back to my subject of Roman examples, Rome, ruler of the world, that took the borders of its empire so far that at times, under the burden of its own size; it contemplated establishing a limit, almost 500 years after it was founded by Romulus, witnessed its own fate when it was enclosed within the prison of Italy. For centuries they had to fight with peoples, both near and far and at times even had to fight for their hearth, home and altars; at other times, they even had to pay for their freedom with gold. However, after such a lengthy time-span, Roman values erupted, going beyond the borders of Italy and rapidly penetrated the whole world just like a flame. Ever since then, the testimonies of annals and coins have been the source of countless questions, for example it is difficult to believe that in little more than a century, after so many wars, after so many victories, Rome reached the point in which it had no equals and no superiors.

Leaving the famous myths about Apollo and Hygieia to the poets and mythologies, there are important testimonies to prove that Hippocrates was the founder of the medical profession, including his very own maxims that have been preserved until today. Thanks to his brilliance, he was able to lay the outstanding foundations that were solid and destined to last eternally, and upon which he built a huge building but one that he was not able to complete because one lifetime would not have been enough to do so; it would have required one as long as Nestor's. Thanks to the zeal of Galen, a man of great intelligence and skill, this grandiose work was continued with one of such considerable size and magnificence that if his descendents had followed in his footsteps, it would have already been completed and comparable to heaven. However, since the times of Hippocrates and Galen, until almost the last two centuries,
medicine was abandoned, and its original splendour was dimmed considerably by Arabs and Mauritanians. What is more (and it is almost shameful to say so), it has almost forgotten its Latin and Greek and has instead, such barbaric words on its lips that if one were to use them in a quotation, it would be almost legitimate to refuse to stand trial. This is not the place to examine the reasons for such a long-lasting, profound lethargy for it might have been simple destiny so that this century may enjoy the utmost glory - because just like everything else, the arts and sciences also have their seasons when they shine and reach their peak.

The previous century shed a little light on this, liberating medicine from barbarism and squalor considerably, and providing a foretaste of the progress that was still to be made. However, it stopped just before the end, at the very moment it had almost achieved its goal. From its very beginning to its very end, this century has shown extraordinary examples of its power and being so fecund and robust, has also produced many men of great prestige (many of whom came to this illustrious University) and it would require a nomenclátor to compile a complete list. These men, who were educated in the studies of anatomy, thus set about attacking the empire of nature with great alacrity, as if they were making a foray from their camp, and some of them decided to concentrate on the animal kingdom, others on the mineral kingdom and yet others on the plant kingdom. Right at the beginning of the century, with fortune helping them at full sail Aquapendente and Casseri very wisely showed the way by going to the very heart of the animal kingdom which had, until then, been avoided by anatomists who had preferred to remain on the outskirts, with just the occasional skirmish. Thus, by killing countless animals with cruel meticulousness, albeit one that was for the common good, they arrived in a pleasant looking, vast region, where milk flowed and one the venerable ancients had never seen. Here I am referring to the discovery of the lacteal vessels, which we owe to the illustrious Aselli above all, who was the first to identify the galaxy in the microcosm, that is, the true ducts the thinnest part of the chyle flows through, until it reaches the purple sea. Blessed soul, if he had realised that it is thanks to the heart rather than the liver that we have this nectar, and if he had paid greater attention to the naive teachings of the ancients rather than searching for the truth.
Perhaps he was distracted by the novelty of his discovery and such a pleasant sight, and thus allowed his diligence to dwindle, conditioned by the common preconception of those times, that is, that the lacteal humour becomes purple in the liver. Had he realised that if so many tiny streams flow upwards through the mesentery, they have no choice but to flow into a single stream, until they pour the humour they are carrying into a cavity (indeed, is there any kind of river that does not flow down towards the sea, following a fixed path?), he would have also discovered where they end, just as he discovered the origin of lacteal liquids. Thus, he had to share the entire crown of glory destiny had offered him alone, with Pecquet, who went back over his footsteps and went on to identify the chyle receptacle and the thoracic duct that carries the chyle to the subclavian artery, thus completing the study of lacteal liquids amidst the highest praise. Thus, thanks to the lacteal ducts, the names of both these great men were immortalised, even more than those of ancient heroes. Once the movement of chyle and its ducts had come to light, the liver was then exonerated from its function of haematosis, followed by purpura, the mesenteric veins were exonerated from transporting chyle with the production of milk discovered in the mammary glands, and countless futile discussions that had swept the schools until their voices were hoarse were radically banned from the medical forum.

However, just as one propitious event paves the way for one that is even more propitious, the discovery of the lacteal liquids was followed by an even more glorious one, that of the circulation of the blood. As if it were a new, marvellous star in the sky, that discovery blinded everyone, as if it were heralding a great revolution in the republic of physicians. This admirable marvel, one that was new for us for sure, but centuries old for nature (indeed, what is older than the truth, I ask?) was presented to the world by the illustrious Harvey around the sixth lustre of this century, and his name shall remain as long as blood circulates and goes around in a circle from the heart to the arteries, from the arteries to the veins, from the veins to the heart, until it goes back and starts all over again –

Just like the Meander that amuses itself in the Phrygian fields, flowing so deceptively it flows this way and that, going back to where it began to contemplate the waters arriving.
However, it was our landsmen (because everyone should receive the praise they deserve) and to one illustrious man in particular that we have to thank for the oracle of the century, Paolo Sarpi, because it was from him that Harvey obtained a considerable number of documents regarding this famous discovery in Venice and Padua, and it was these he then went on to study once he returned to Britain, publishing them and presenting them to a circle of scholars. However, it was on Italian soil that that Englishman, an artist and outstanding researcher, found this jewel, as if from a rich mine. It was shapeless and hidden beneath rough stone – but he polished it and made it so magnificent that he was able to offer it to the world of scholars as if it were his, as is usual, and as a great man once wrote in his letters ("recent things not yet dealt with? A lot of criticism, little success"), Harvey received hardly any gratitude for this famous, prolific discovery, on the contrary, all he received was insults for having revealed it to the world. So voices from all over, Parisano, Primerose and many more, shouted that this English-born Democritus had gone mad, just like his Abderitists in the past. However, that great man spurned their braying, and would not deign to reply to anybody, entrusting his cause to time, the fairest judge of all, so that in the end, instead of the envy that is nurtured amongst the living but not the ashes, he earned the praise and eternal respect that was rightfully his. Hence, amongst all scholars, philosophers and physicians alike, nothing is more famous than Harvey's name, and nothing is as certain; so much so that one is more certain of blood circulation in the microcosm than one is of the water cycle in the external world, from the rivers to the sea, and from the sea to the springs and rivers.

I wonder what the most famous leaders of the origins of medicine would say if they were to awaken in the Elysian plains and were to be given visible proof, not just irrefutable reasoning of blood circulation. I wonder what they would say about the fictitious family of such power. What would they say about the theories of disease? What would they say about the curious choice of the veins in blood-letting? What would they say about the supposed effectiveness of revulsion when one cuts a vein? What about the cavities that act as recipients and those that distribute, what about the obscurity of countless errors, misled by those who were totally lost by this discovery, and moved like a shining torch? They would
certainly claim that the structure of an animal varies considerably from the one they had formed in their minds, the one they even taught in these very schools, and they would be amazed, overcome with astonishment, just like the Arabs when they entered Pompey's camp and were amazed at how the shadows fell (so different to the ones they were used to seeing in their torrid regions), and which the poet described as follows:

O ye Arabs, entering a world that is unknown and you marvel at the fact that the shadows of the woods do not fall to the left.

As if they were foreigners, they would be sure to wonder why things worked in a manner they found so different and disquieting, one that was contrary to their expectations and they would not believe they had ignored something that was so obvious, almost as if our century today was the very one that Seneca once foresaw and prophesised once he had left moral philosophy which had always had few listeners, and turned to natural matters, writing that the day would come when his descendants would be amazed they had not known something that was so obvious. Thus, coming out of the Cimmerian gloom, after the deepest of nights that was as old as the world, when the star called Harvey rose in the sky, the truth began to dawn, and not as a pale, wavering light, but as one that was clearly visible in the midday glow, the truth about who is in charge of the microcosm, its arrangement, who the dispenser is, who distributes the nourishment; prior to this, the common opinion, but one that was equally deceptive, was that all body parts were nourished by the strength of the ὀξίζιζ and not of the ὀσίζ, by dragging the nutrient and not propelling it. Nevertheless, far be it from me to try and diminish the fame and honour of those who lived before our times; they still deserve to be honoured and considered our fathers, and we owe them a great deal because it is thanks to their studies that we have been able to make the progress we have, thanks to them that we have looked so far, as if we were standing upon the shoulders of giants. Thus, while the blood was leading the dance, the expertise of the more advanced discovered the other humours with complaisance, for example the pancreatic juice, lymph, nervous fluid and all the other fluids in the human body. They also learned that these fluids move in a circle in a kind
of hydraulic equilibrium and here the names to be mentioned are Virsungius, Bartholin, Rudbechius and Willisius.

How many other discoveries has this century witnessed? I shall leave aside the smaller things so that I do not seem to be ignoring the source so I can run after the stream, as they say. Malpighi showed the world the variegated structure of the lungs, as well as the glandular constitution of the liver and spleen; Fracassatus revealed the true origin of the nerves; Warthonus and Stenon the varied and articulated stirps of the glands and their function; Sylvius and Rudbechius discovered the lymphatic vessel valves; Glissonius the salivary ducts; R. Graaff the genital organs and female ovaries; Lowerius the heart structure; Borellus, who can never be praised enough, the structure of the muscles and their movement according to the laws of geometry. Our thanks go to the hands of countless illustrious figures, and if I were to include all their names and works together; in reality, the multitude of the heroes during this magnificent century is so vast, that one oration would not suffice to complete the list. Thus, with these skills, these studies, the multitude of scholars, armed with knives and microscopes, could be seen running here and there through the animal kingdom so that nothing remained so deeply hidden, so deeply buried, that it could not be completely brought to light. In this fashion, compared to the other natural sciences that helped shed considerable light, medicine raised its head and in just one century, made good the damage that had been done over the centuries.

Therefore, far be it from us to pronounce those ancient laments of Cato the elder, who once used to insult the physicians of his time, almost as if censoring them: “It is at their risk that they learn, he said, they do experiments with death and if just one man should die because of a physician, impunity is guaranteed”. It is at the risk of others that we learn, for sure, and we do experiments with death, but the long torture of the animals we kill, studying their entrails and practicing vivisection, makes it possible for us to reveal the truth that is so deeply hidden. I repeat, we experiment with death while the medicine of infusion (another of this century’s important discoveries) injects poison into animals’ veins once they are dead, so we are able to observe which infection has been transmitted to the blood, whether it coagulated in sediment or clots, or if it was dissolved in a black liquid. We transfuse the blood of one
animal into another's and this is how we discovered the way to re­
store youth. What the poets once wrote about Medea is no longer
a myth, having restored Aeson to the full flush of youth by cutting
the jugular and infusing the vital juices through the mouth and
wound. The poet elegantly describes this as follows:

...Medea gripped the sword and cut the old man's throat and once the
old man's blood had gushed forth, filled him with the juices she had
prepared; once Aeson had drunk them or assimilated them through
his injury, his beard and hair turned black, replacing his white hair,
his skinniness disappeared, as did his pallor and gloom.

However, even if there were total impunity for having killed a
man, as those who hate medicine claim, the insanity of those who
place themselves in the hands of vagabonds and charlatans is also
total, since they let themselves be deceived by the frequent visits
and illusions of those who, as Sidonius so rightly said, “are unedu­
cated, highly attentive and kill many of their patients with extreme
politeness”.

And let no Pythagorean throw this “animal slaughter” in our
faces as if it were infamy. In reality, if we kill the animals we have
bred with such care in our homes, fattening them for the benefit
of the culinary art, at times to indulge in revelry, why should we
not be allowed to kill the dogs that are reduced to skin and bones,
offering these victims as a sacrifice to truth? The ancient haruspices
would offer in sacrifice fat, muscular oxen on their altars, adorned
with garlands of flowers, to deceive the masses of the ignorant
with their predictions. We study the entrails of all kinds of animals,
whether they are fat, thin, big, small, in the elephant, the ant, the
mosquito and even in the mite if we so wish but not because we
want to deceive those around us, but because we ourselves have
been deceived; we do it so we can admire the immense knowledge
of our Creator and to thus dispel atheism from the world. Indeed,
should someone from Lucian's circle set foot in an anatomy thea­
tre, he would come out a believer. But what better thing could hu­
man ingeniousness have devised to instil some notion of supreme
divinity on the minds of men than anatomical study? Without the
divine artifice who puts everything together in an admirable web,
synthesis is a game, as it were; analysis is characteristic of hu­
man intelligence. As part of the celebration of the secular games, (founded in honour of the gods), enormous beasts and many pairs of gladiators would be pushed into the arena to fight against each other as entertainment for the Roman people and the one who slit another man’s throat would be met with great applause. Nowadays the games are more peaceful and virtuous and while the entrails of animals are introduced in our theatres, while they are cut open, even if infected, in amazement and surprise the only applause is for the divine architect.

And is it not only right that medicine should reward every species of animal for the benefit it gives? Indeed, are there any animals, birds, reptiles, tiny worms bred on earth, fish, or monsters nourished by the sea that have not been depicted in heavy tomes? On the contrary, even more nobly, the very origins and development of animals, with the daily study of eggs (Acquapendente was the first to do this in the Paduan anatomy theatre, followed by Malpighi in Bologna) have been brought to light with such elegance and skill, so that in this century we have completed the history of animals ab ovo is it were. As far as is possible for human expertise, the medical profession has studied the structure and nature of nearly all living beings in depth; we know them from the inside and the outside, we know how many parts they are made up of, we know their size and reciprocal symmetry, we even know their weight. Indeed, is there anyone who has never heard of the discovery by the illustrious Sanctorius, the first person to introduce statics into medicine, and from this very university?

Once the entire animal kingdom had been studied and made to obey the laws of medicine, other men of equal ingenuity worked to perfect what had been achieved by the diligence of these dissections. Then, with the aim of establishing an accurate, valid theory and practice of disease, extraordinary documents came to light, for example the treatment methods of new physiology and pathology based on blood circulation, new versions of the Hippocratic aphorisms that correspond to the truth, pharmacology and rational surgery, febrile irises, new medical systems and many other books that are destined to immortality.

The bowels of the mineral kingdom were then studied with equal diligence and similar luck, perpetuating the renown of this century. And once again anatomy found material to work on, not
with iron, however, but with fire, the great analyst of all things. Thus, thanks to the art of Vulcan, now the technique of fighting, once the ferociousness of all the fossils and metals had been tamed and repressed, it was the turn of hermetic diligence, learning to make the wildest things harmless, and turning a selection of the most terrible and deadly poisons mixed together into an antidote. It cannot be denied that outstanding men lived in the last century, energetically venturing into every corner of the mineral kingdom with all their strength so they would be able to make their own triumphal chariot, victorious over the minerals rather than defeating them. If the truth be told, the hermetic field has completed this undertaking to the full and, after having analysed nearly every thing nature had hidden in the earth, enriched the medical treasure, ensuring that the things that had previously been defined “stimuli of evil behaviour” were transformed into healthier medicines. Antimony, which has experienced such changes in fortune, and once had such a bad reputation it was condemned by the parliament of Paris and sent into exile (it was later found innocent and recalled, however), now owes its honest life to the work of chemists, and is to be found in its own elegant little jars, alongside the most popular remedies of illustrious pharmacists. What is more, its preparations have such varied uses it can be prescribed as an emetic, a cathartic, a diaphoretic and today even a cosmetic. I ask you, is there one fever, one illness that a physician would try to fight if he were not armed with diaphoretic antimony? And mercury, once the slave of fleeting time, but now in shackles and chains, is ready to be prepared in all kinds of ways and be thrown up and down. Indeed, if we so wish, in the Torricelli barometer (another of this century's famous discoveries, which has stimulated the intelligence of physicians and philosophers alike), it is forced to swing to and fro restlessly, making it a reliable indicator of the pending storms or the good weather to come. I would be very long-winded if I were to name the remedies of Mars, Jupiter and the Sun one by one; anti-hectics, gastric medicines and many more that have been found in the heart of the metals to tame Herculean illnesses, and if I were to list the countless others we toil under with difficulty. However, there is one that I have to name, and that is not only that the virtues of the thermal waters have now been proven more than others, but with the aid of chemistry, we have been able to analyse them so accurately that by
dissolving different minerals in natural water, medicine has been able to equal the teachings of nature herself, to the great benefit of the sick in particular, so that they can see the waters required for their particular illness flowing in their own homes. In truth, for some time nature, mother of all things, had noticed a loss when she saw her sources covered in moss here and there and as good as abandoned; and she wondered in amazement why her curative springs had lost favour while in the past they had been renowned as "the physicians' common aid", as Claudiano praised the waters of Abano. However, once she understood why, she laughed and correctly passed judgement on the hermitic discipline, because that great work had caused her such enjoyment but little fatigue. Just how many outstanding men have immortalised their names in this fashion! For example, Libavio, Drebel, Crollius, van Helmont, Poterius, Tachenius and finally, the illustrious Ettmüller.

With no less success did the botanists devote themselves with great fatigue to the exploration of the grandeur of the plant kingdom. And we do not need to look far for proof of this – just look at the gardens around Padua, which I believe I can rightly call a flourishing colony of nearly all the plants in the world. Indeed, they become green again so easily, it is as if they were in their native land and above all, all the plants here are so well-defended, having been taken from all over the world, whether hot or cold, "allowing us to admire both the foliage and the fruits".

However, today botany adopts a method that is different to that of the past. In the past, the most attention was paid to the appearance and external characteristics of the plants. Indeed, armed with the microscope the eyes can see the parenchyma of the plants, the membranes, filaments, capsules, canaliculi that transport the nutritional lymph in the plant and from the plant to the roots (a circular path already described by the great Hippocrates). However, what is most important is that, on the basis of countless experiments and not on traditional writings, putting the fables of the ancients aside, the virtues of all the plants, shrubs and any kind of aromatic herbs have been analysed in detail, establishing where exactly this virtue is hidden, whether it is stable or volatile, acid or alkaline. Thus, we no longer prepare our remedies with the garbled preparation of plants of any kind, inventing the composition with the greatest ostentation (as Pliny once wrote about "theriac"). On the contrary, honest,
knowledgeable professors use the plants for their simplicity and their natural qualities and in this fashion, slowly but surely the medical profession is returning to Homeric medicine. Seneca said, "Once, medicine consisted in the knowledge of few herbs, used to stop the flow of blood, to gradually heal the wounds". Thus, in the Odyssey, using just the root of the oenopia plant she had been given by the wife of King Tone, Helen prepared that famous antidote against sadness, nepenthes wine, to alleviate all the feelings of grief and sadness of Menelaus and Telemachus, Ulysses' son. They had actually reached the point where those who prescribed their patients with prescriptions that were longer than a palm (at times, writing on the back as well), believed they had written a page of reckoning.

Fortune smiled on this undertaking as well; indeed, how many teachers in this field have toiled this century to find an antifebrile or prepare it using their art? We now have bark from the Peruvian region that is obviously a divine remedy to weaken that infamous breed of fevers. Finally, to make sure this century came to a happy end without any obstacles, a few years ago a new remedy for dysentery was imported in Europe – a root of course, whose admirable properties against the bloody flows of the intestine have been proven in countless experiments, and which the illustrious Leibniz described in great detail in a treatise. I personally would now like to mention the illustrious teachers who have given such honour to botany this century – and this is also fitting to my task. But who should I mention first since they all deserve first place? In this case, far be it from me to want to diminish in any way their prestige and fame. They all toiled for the common good, and they each deserve their own honour. Helvetia will always boast the two brothers Gaspard and Johann Bauhin, Betuwe Paulum Hermanum, Angeln Joannen Raium, Scotland Robert Morison, and Gaul Joseph Pitton de Tournefort. The names we can never praise highly enough here in Italy, however, are Fabio Colonna, the brothers Lelio and Giovanni Battista de Triumphethis, the illustrious, highly-esteemed abbot Felice Viali, custodian of the Padua botanical garden.

Illustrious listeners, we are leaving our descendants a remarkable patrimony and such a splendid store that we may surely hope to preserve the grandeur we have acquired, rather than hoping it grows even more. If we recall all the experiments, all the attempts, even in the smallest things, if we turn the pages of the ephemerides...
of the famous Academy of the Curious of nature or what is described in the pomp and documentation of the conquest of the Empire, the *Acta Lipsiensa, Haffniensi, Britannica, Gallica* and *Italica*, it is not at all presumptuous to claim that we have almost completely conquered the truth, and we have almost totally submitted the three vast kingdoms of nature to the power of medicine. However, one shall always be amazed, and rightly so, at how numerous public gymnasia that distinguish themselves with their traditions, their location and even their religious practices, with a harmony of spirit that is both so great and so implicit, have also had the same objective of making this century immortal. Furthermore, after being surrounded, besieged and assailed with countless machines, and completely attacked by numerous academies that joined arms throughout the whole century, how could nature possibly not have surrendered with her hands tied, tolerating being stripped of her peplum so she is no longer disguised but now visible to our eyes, in all her entirety? In truth, in the guise of Isis she once haughtily rejoiced: “I am the universe and no mortal has ever lifted my veil”. Thus, to make fun of the diligence of researchers and seek greater safety, she hid herself in the smallest things, but even there she was sought and found and her veil was lifted, revealing her in full light.

What still remains to be done? Just one thing. Just as the Romans established the tradition of the secular games to pay thanks for the divine benevolence of their successful undertakings, (and for what remained of Roman freedom and the Latin blood and they withdrew as if in a port of the Tiber in the Adriatic kingdom, what remains to be done is to express our vows “to the illustrious Senate, to the highly serene Prince, for the eternity of the Venetian empire”); indeed, if it lasts in eternity, this illustrious university shall also prosper. I am sure it shall prosper and, with its reputation and fame growing day by day, what it has managed to conquer until now will be even more rightly preserved so that it will be able to distinguish itself from all the others. I ask you, do you know the knowledgeable governors whom the authorities of the illustrious Senate entrusted with its preservation? In the city of Venice, as if it were a lookout, they heed not only her safety but also her grandeur and decorum. And the highly esteemed lords nearest to her, they also wanted to be present as tutelary deities. So close to her heart is the protection of this ancient fortress of Pallas in this city, and
the arsenal of Mars himself in the Adriatic kingdom: one for public safety, the other for public happiness. As if in Vulcan’s forge on Lemnos, it is there that they strive to ensure weapons are continuously forged and Steropes and Bronte increase their strikes,

...screeching in the caverns with
the hardening of the Calibi and in the furnaces the fire gasps.

Here, forging men, a multitude of knowledgeable men are working without respite and a constant but not senseless fatigue is reverberating in the atrium of the school.

"The columns are worn down without respite by incessant lectures". It was only right, even necessary, that this was so. That the grandeur of Venice is not only adorned with weapons, but also with knowledge.

We know from Suetonius that near Padua there once used to be a place where the oracle of Geryon was worshipped and it was here that Tiberius would go, before he became emperor. After throwing gold dice in the fountain of Abano, he received the prophesy for his future ruling. It is not necessary to discover where this mendacious oracle actually existed, since this city has a university that has as many oracles of human and divine reality as it does professors. But this ancient sea of the Republic of letters protects and covers it from the sky, and it knows "no limits of either power or time".