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SUMMARY: In this letter of 29 July 1577 dedicating his *Rhetor* to Bartholomew Clerke (1537?-1590), Gabriel Harvey speaks of Clerke's 1571 translation of *The Courtier*, and of the 'commendation and public endorsement' given to that translation by 'two most noble and magnificent lords, Oxford and Buckhurst, perfect courtiers of unsurpassed excellence'. Harvey's letter is accompanied in the prefatory material by a letter from Clerke dated 1 September 1577, acknowledging the dedication. The English translation given below from Harvey's Latin is by Mark Reynolds, whose translation of the full text of Harvey's *Rhetor* can be found at <http://comp.uark.edu/~mreynold/rhetengn.html>.

Gabriel Harvey sends greetings to Bartholomew Clerke, most illustrious Professor, Jurist, and Orator.

Most distinguished Clerke, my *Ciceronian* was recently published in the name of William Lewin, an excellent man, a very good friend, and, both in my opinion and in the judgment of others, an almost peerless Ciceronian. Soon I will put in print my *Rhetor*, a rather rough and unkempt *Rhetor*, I admit, but a *Rhetor* nevertheless (for so have I decided to entitle it). And I can find no one to whom I might better dedicate this *Rhetor* than to Bartholomew Clerke, a superior and clearly most rhetorical rhetor (not to mention all the other ornaments of talent and learning). Indeed there came to mind many Cantabrigians, and several Oxonians who had done splendid service in the cause of eloquence, and whose memory certainly afforded me the greatest pleasure. But do you want me to say frankly to you what I am often in the habit of saying here to my friends, and am able to say with honesty to everyone? I ask by your kind leave that I may.

I remember that Bartholomew Clerke, when he was University Professor of Rhetoric here, 13 or 14 years ago I believe it was, performed the task to which he was assigned with such glory and honor to his name that he seemed to have been created by nature, polished by art, and perfected by experience for that role. Then from a scholar he became a courtier, and translated into Latin from the Italian *The Courtier* of that most elegant writer Castiglione. (This was truly a work fit for a queen, and dedicated to our most revered monarch, or I should say heroine.) So eloquent and precise was his rendering that he is not now obliged to wait for praise from Harvey, the most insignificant of rhetors, but was long ago received with remarkable favor, and honored with a certain signal commendation and public endorsement by two most noble and magnificent lords, Oxford and Buckhurst, perfect courtiers of unsurpassed excellence, even compared to that singular ideal of Castiglione's, as well as by two most learned and eloquent gentlemen, Caius and Byng. Next he visited France, and there he was received with great honor by certain of the most celebrated and flourishing universities, and by virtue not only of his proficiency in law, but of his eloquence as well, he was extolled with remarkable praise and even offered prestigious and lucrative academic positions. Afterward he returned home, about five years ago, and immediately came back to Cambridge, like a pious son to a dotting mother, where he lectured and debated and, amid a huge throng from the whole

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University, was admitted into the College of Doctors of Civil Law. Nothing more rhetorical could be imagined than he.

How reluctant I would be to say these things about you in your presence, and yet in the company of others I would gladly say even more. I say nothing of *The Faithful Subject*, composed in a very short time, to be sure, but, it seemed to me, with great artistry. I am silent about the rest of your achievements. For it would be a long task to linger over every individual detail, and I prefer here to seem to myself too stingy with my praises, than to seem to you too lavish. What more can I say? If my *Ciceronian* was aptly dedicated to my Lewin (and it was, I think, most aptly dedicated to that most Ciceronian gentleman), it is clear that the *Rhetor* is not so much suited, as owed to Clerke, since he is a man who is clearly in every respect--in Nature, Art, and Practice--a rhetor, and is shielded and protected on all sides by my instruments, as though by the armor of eloquence.

But I ask you, will you then say, "Is this the distinction you are making between me and your friend Lewin, that I am this half-educated rhetor whom you are fashioning and he a perfect Ciceronian? Is this the way you treat me, Harvey? Is this what your highly complimentary preface is leading up to in the end?"

How can this possibly be my intention, excellent Clerke, unless by honoring you with praise for a single attainment I should wish to rob you of many more praises of which you are equally deserving, and to ruin the wine, as it were, by adding water to it, as the wily Odysseus did in Homer? But there is really no reason why I should greatly fear your secret thoughts, for your kind civility has not only been experienced by me personally (I must in fact confess it), but is also conspicuous enough to all. Especially since you yourself are so willing to share your praises with other men of outstanding quality, and since he who attributes a single virtue to you, and a perfect one, non only does not deny you the rest, but in a certain way tacitly ascribes to you either all, or surely a great many of them.

I have defined a Ciceronian as one who not only has been decorated with the ornaments of eloquence, but has been abundantly furnished with almost all the arts of Marcus Tullius and the other illustrious orators, and with their scholarship, knowledge of many various subjects, choicest virtues, and remarkable prestige for culture and refinement of every kind. My Ciceronian is in fact almost identical to Cicero's orator. On the other hand, for our present purposes I am calling a rhetor one who, with Nature as a guide and Experience, a kind of second nature, as a companion, has achieved such a mastery of all the rules and principles and precepts of oratory that he can speak and write ornately and copiously, and excels in that art which is identified by the distinctive name of rhetoric and is counted among the seven. To the Ciceronian to be sure I have assigned a knowledge of an almost infinite number of various arts and subjects; the rhetor I confine within the proper limits of a single discipline. And when a perfect knowledge of this field has been attained by one who was in the beginning fit for speaking, and then devotes himself to practice, I feel that he should be called a rhetor, and indeed an excellent rhetor. And this must be thought the proper and genuine meaning of the word, though I am not

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unaware that occasionally it is used with a broader meaning and at times encompasses other arts.

This then will be the sum of the matter. When I was about to publish the *Ciceronian*, our Lewin came to mind, whose close friendship I had always regarded as one of the finest gifts of fortune, and who some years before had carefully described to me Cicero's orator (that is, as I interpret it, a Ciceronian), and seemed himself at the time an almost perfect Ciceronian (Why am I to call him an orator? A Ciceronian and an orator are one and the same thing). Moreover, when I was a little later planning to publish the *Rhetor*, at once there came to mind Clerke, as if appearing to me before my very eyes. He is to be sure not only a rhetor (for you too are without question a Ciceronian, and, as I wrote in my salutation, an orator), but he is nevertheless an exceptional rhetor, and an almost peerless master of the art of speaking. And if I win his approval for this *Rhetor* of mine, as I recently did that of Lewin for my *Ciceronian* (a thing which by Jove I little doubt, at least as regards the subject matter), I am not greatly concerned about the judgments or prejudgments of others. As for those whom you in that elegant letter to Buckhurst cleverly branded with the name Nizolistas, believe me, so little do they intimidate me, that if any such should come running up with their Nizolii and thesauri, I think they should almost be regarded as little tykes in the first grade just learning their ABCs. Farewell, and add Gabriel Harvey to the list of those who are most devoted to your welfare and most protective of your honor.

Sent from Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, July 29, 1577..