

Neville, however, remains elusive. If he did pursue those early ambitions, suggested in the dedicatory letter of his *Oedipus* translation, ‘to bestow [his] travaile in matters of farre greater weyght and importaunce’, then we have no record. To date, there are no collections of letters (just two survive), no personal papers besides his will, and no manuscripts. His last published work seems to have been the *Lachrymae*. Perhaps his creativity had exhausted itself, or he found other interests. Perhaps he missed his footing within the courtly networks of patronage and influence. Certainly, further research will be needed to determine his place in the wider field of Tudor intellectual endeavour.

Neville as Historian

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De furoribus and *Norvicus*

De furoribus and *Norvicus* had the same purpose, which was, in Neville’s own words, ‘to give an account of the acts and achievements of the citizens of Norwich’.²⁹ In producing that account Neville’s guide was not solely the commissioner of the two works, his patron, the Norwich-born Matthew Parker, but also the man whom his university friend Thomas Drant described as Neville’s ‘highest ideal’,³⁰ the embodiment of eloquence itself, Cicero. Cicero was not just the acknowledged master of Latin eloquence; he had also outlined in his *Brutus* how history should be written.³¹ History should be truthful and impartial, chronological and geographical; it should describe the causes, plans, execution and outcomes of great events, and catalogue the moral qualities of the individuals involved in those events as well as their failings. The architecture of Neville’s histories could be said to match Cicero’s guidance in general terms. However, it is clear from even a cursory reading of *De furoribus* in particular that Neville failed to observe Cicero’s strictures on truth and objectivity, in spite of his grandiose claim that he was ‘reinstating the truth in its entirety’.³² And Neville departed from Cicero in other ways too, perhaps most prominently in his inclusion of one of the genres of medieval historiography, the civic chronicle. Nevertheless, considered as Neo-Latin prose literature, both *De furoribus* and *Norvicus* are permeated with the chief characteristic of Drant’s ‘highest ideal’, Cicero’s rhetorical style.

²⁹ *De furoribus*, p. 3.

³⁰ *Norvicus*, sig. Yr.

³¹ Patrick Baker, ‘Writing History in Cicero’s Shadow’, in *Antikes erzählen: Narrative Transformationen von Antike in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, ed. Anna Heinze, Albert Schirmermeister and Julia Weitbrecht (Berlin, 2013), pp. 75–90.

³² *Norvicus*, p. 1. By the middle and early sixteenth century many Ciceronians had chosen not to take such a slavish approach to their master. See Terence Tunberg, ‘Approaching Neo-Latin Prose as Literature’, in *A Guide to Neo-Latin Literature*, ed. Victoria Moul (Cambridge, 2017), p. 245.

However richly endowed Neville undoubtedly was both as a rhetorician and as a stylist in Neo-Latin, his reluctance to undertake Matthew Parker's commission is palpable. As he complained in his preface to the reader in *Norvicus*, he would have preferred to have set sail for the Antipodes in a sieve rather than engage in such a fruitless and trifling exercise.³³ One of the reasons for this reluctance appears to have been that he was writing local history, a genre that failed to engage the educated elite.³⁴ Although *De furoribus* involved national politics, Neville's account focused on Norwich, despite his being well aware that the events on Mousehold were only part of a much wider outbreak.³⁵ As for *Norvicus*, it was an urban history on the lines of John Hooker alias Vowell's *Description of the cittie of Excester* (1575), although prefaced by a chorography of Britain. Thomas Drant wished that Neville had not had to write about such a 'humble town' as Norwich and its 'provincial ways'.³⁶ He should have taken up a theme worthy of 'Jove-like Caesar' rather than demeaning himself by writing about a tanner such as Robert Kett, his fellow 'catchers of mice' and their 'camp full of lice'.³⁷ As someone of gentry status with an education from both university and the Inns of Court, Neville would no doubt have foreseen such criticism. His pre-emptive response was to dignify his work by writing in the international language of civilised scholarship or, to use his own words, by eschewing 'the grosenes of our owne Countrey language' in favour of a 'hyghe lofty Latinists stile'.³⁸ To achieve this style Neville's used all his considerable rhetorical gifts, not only to grace his prose and to achieve 'a congruence of sound' but also to instruct, persuade and delight.³⁹

Neville's eulogy of Parker in *Norvicus* is a particularly fine example of those rhetorical gifts. What it also displays is the correlation the sixteenth-century historiographer made between character and virtue. As has been pointed out, the Renaissance reader assessed individual character not as a complex mixture of various traits but as an illustration of virtue.⁴⁰ For Neville, Parker's virtue was so illustrious that his appointment as Archbishop succeeded in 'flooding with light' the 'thick darkness' that had shrouded the country

33 *Norvicus*, sigs. Y2r–Y2v.

34 Local to many would have suggested 'common'. As George Puttenham, in his *The Arte of English Poesie*, expressed it, 'the deeds of common men are not fit for literature in any form' (quoted in Brian Vickers, 'Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance', *New Literary History* 14 (1983), p. 520).

35 *De furoribus*, p. 35. For the extent of the outbreaks see especially Amanda Jones, 'Commotion Time: The English Risings of 1549' (PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2003).

36 *Norvicus*, sig. Yv.

37 *De furoribus*, sig. a3v.

38 Alexander Neville, *The Lamentable Tragedie of Oedipus* (London, 1563), sig. a8r.

39 Tunberg, 'Approaching Neo-Latin Prose as Literature', p. 247. Neville's sentence structure and prose rhythms require further investigation so that a proper assessment can be made of how closely they follow Cicero.

40 Vickers, 'Epideictic and Epic in the Renaissance', p. 522.

during the previous reign.⁴¹ In such passages, Neville's muse 'dazzled every eye', at least according to Drant.⁴² Even so, the 'high, lofty Latinists stile' could not hide the difficulties Neville experienced in writing about such 'lowly' subjects. He admitted in his civic chronicle that he had chosen not to include the names of those in local government who were below the status of mayor or sheriff lest he might offend those readers who had 'more refined sensibilities'.⁴³ Even his decision to include the names of mayors and sheriffs, he suspected, might be considered 'too lowly and unimportant'.⁴⁴ Neville's attitude was in marked contrast to John Hooker's, whose *Discription of the cittie of Excester* was published in the same year as Neville's histories. Hooker was so minded to describe in detail the workings and personnel of Exeter's local government that he committed himself to writing another book that would enumerate the duties of every single officer. Finally published in 1584, *A pamphlet of the offices and duties of everie particular sworne officer of the cittie of Excester* even featured the humble Bull-Ring Keeper. The difference in attitude on the part of the two men can be explained not just by their different social status (although educated abroad Hooker was not of gentry stock) but also by the fact that Hooker was Exeter's Chamberlain.

Neville's Sources

The sources of Neville's histories, particularly *Norvicus*, have not been examined as thoroughly as they might have been. Those few scholars who have mentioned *Norvicus* at all claim that Neville based his work exclusively on the *Historia Anglicana* by the Norwich Benedictine monk Bartholomew Cotton.⁴⁵ Imitation was, of course, to be expected. As Jean Bodin (1530–96) argued, history did not require original research, merely the rewriting of earlier authorities.⁴⁶ However, Neville's dependence on Cotton was not as slavish as has been suggested.

Neville began his history of Norwich with a description of Britain, though he omitted Scotland (except for its islands), Wales (except for Anglesey) and Ireland. He made it

⁴¹ *Norvicus*, p. 184.

⁴² *De furoribus*, sig. a3v.

⁴³ *Norvicus*, p. 207.

⁴⁴ *Norvicus*, p. 207.

⁴⁵ May McKisack, *Medieval History in the Tudor Age* (Oxford, 1971), p. 48. McKisack suggests that the manuscript Neville used was probably the one now in the Cottonian Collection in the British Library (Nero C.V), in which traces of red chalk, Parker's favourite method of marking texts, can still be seen.

⁴⁶ Jean Bodin, *A Method for the Easy Comprehension of History*, ed. Beatrice Reynolds (New York, 1945), p. 76. Bodin's *Method* was 'strikingly popular' at Cambridge University in the years after Neville's matriculation, so may have struck a chord. See Daniel Woolf, 'Historical Writing in Britain from the Late Middle Ages to the Eve of Enlightenment', in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, vol. 3: 1400–1800, ed. Jose Rabasa, Masayuki Soto, Edoardo Tortarolo and Daniel Woolf (Oxford, 2012), pp. 479–80.

clear that he did not intend to write an exact account of the history of Britain, since there were already many 'accurate and detailed accounts'. What he wished to do was to paint a picture in general terms so that Norwich could be put properly in context and its splendour enhanced. Like Camden, who consulted 'all Greeke and Latine authors which have once made mention of Britaine',⁴⁷ Neville used an impressive array of classical sources including Caesar, Tacitus, Suetonius, Lucan and Pliny. He also used British writers, among them Bede, William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, along with near-contemporaries, such as John Leland, Humphrey Llwyd and Sir John Prise.

Much of Neville's account of Britain's early history is based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae* (possibly mediated through Cotton), just as Robert Ricart had done a century earlier for his history of Bristol. He may also have used Gildas' *De excidio*, which was a familiar text at Lambeth Palace since John Joscelyn had published a new edition in 1568.⁴⁸ So we learn that Brutus the Trojan, Aeneas' great-grandson, arrived in Britain after the fall of Troy in around 1000 BC and proceeded to found London or New Troy. From Brutus kings such as Lud, Lear and Arthur were descended. Like Joscelyn, Neville attacked Polydore Vergil's criticism of Geoffrey's foundation myth, claiming that Polydore had been guilty of an *argumentum ex silentio*, an 'argument from silence'. For Neville, the fact that such commentators as Gildas and Bede made no mention of Brutus was not proof that Brutus had not existed.

After having dismissed the 'contemptible', 'corrupt' and 'untrustworthy' Polydore, Neville focused on Caesar's invasion, the best-documented event in the early history of Britain. Here he departed from Cotton in that he had his own argument to advance, which was that the invasion was a failure. For Neville, Caesar was put to flight and left nothing but 'an enduring memory of that disgrace'. He embroidered this account of British triumphs by including Geoffrey's invented story of Brennus and Belinus, two brothers who were said to have led successful campaigns against the Romans in Gaul and then went on to sack Rome.

Neville then proceeded to describe England county by county, closely following Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*. There followed a biographical register of the bishops of Norwich arranged chronologically, clearly drawn from Cotton. Neville's sensitivity towards the institution of episcopacy is a major feature of *Norvicus*. It reflects the purposes of the group of scholars Parker had gathered round him at Lambeth whose task it was to link the reformed Church created by the Elizabethan Settlement with the Church that

47 William Camden, *Britain, or A chorographical description of the most flourishing kingdoms, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the islands adioyning* (London, 1610), p. 4.

48 Benedict Scott Robinson, 'Darke Speech: Matthew Parker and the Reforming of History', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29 (1998), p. 1065. Although Neville did not name him, Joscelyn was one of the 'educated men' who surrounded the Archbishop at Lambeth, 'editing' the books that were published in Parker's name. The reference to 'educated men' appears in Neville's eulogy to Parker.

had existed before the coming of Augustine, and to defend episcopacy from the attacks of those who wished to move the Church closer to the Genevan model. To write a history of the bishopric while yet countering criticisms such as those made by Drant that he was composing 'a tale of mitres, stoles and patriarchal croziers',⁴⁹ Neville had to perform a delicate balancing act. So, although he attacked the pre-Reformation bishops as 'impious', 'cruel', 'greedy' and 'uneducated', the 'church's floor-sweepings', he also made it clear that episcopacy was to be respected and that many bishops had sterling qualities that were worth recording.⁵⁰ When dealing with the post-Conquest bishops, Neville naturally highlighted the career of Herbert de Losinga, the founder of Norwich Cathedral Priory. Here he transcribed a long passage from William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, a work that was in Parker's library.⁵¹ Herbert's simony was emphasised but Herbert was also, according to Neville, 'a highly educated man' who 'fulfilled his episcopal duties in exemplary fashion'.⁵² As for his successors, Neville again followed Cotton up until Cotton's final entry on Bishop John Salmon (1299–1325). It is unclear what source or sources Neville used after this date, but he had two centuries left to cover.

When dealing with Bishop Scarning's episcopate Neville included a detailed account of the famous riot in 1272 between the city and the monks of the Cathedral Priory, a 'dire and deathly calamity', as he described it. He wished to show that civil disorder was an unmitigated evil. At the same time he deprecated the fact that the monks were able to avoid responsibility for the violence by appealing to the Pope, so saving themselves from the flames of justice that consumed those they had fought against. As for the sources that Neville used for his account of the riot, he clearly relied heavily on Cotton. However, there are some features that do not appear in Cotton. For example, Neville identified Hugh of Bromholme as the keeper of the inn that was sacked by the monks' servants. Nowhere does this name appear in Cotton, or in the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, or in any of the chronicle accounts. However, it does appear in the *Liber Albus*, also called the *Liber Cartarum* or the *Liber Pergamenus*.⁵³ This suggests that Neville had access to at least some of Norwich's city records, though he did not necessarily need to visit the city to view them

49 *Norvicus*, sig. Yr.

50 *Norvicus*, pp. 118–19.

51 Parker's manuscripts included Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Nennius' *Historia Brittonum*, Henry of Huntington's *Historia Anglorum*, Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britanniae* and Ralph Higden's *Polychronicon*. There were also eighty printed histories. All this material enabled Parker's research team at Lambeth to give the Roman Catholic accounts of the early British Church the required Protestant spin. See Bruce Dickins, 'The Making of the Parker Library', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 6 (1972), pp. 19–34.

52 *Norvicus*, pp. 128, 134.

53 NRO, NCR Case 17b, Book called *Liber Albus* referred to as *Liber Cartarum* and *Liber Pergamenus*, 1426, fols. 127–30.

since they could very well have been borrowed or copies of extracts supplied. The information in the *Liber Albus* was itself based on what the scribe who wrote the account called 'a certain ancient roll', which, sadly, no longer exists.⁵⁴

There are some surprising omissions in Neville's account of the pre-Reformation bishops of Norwich. He failed to mention the trial by Bishop Alnwick of those heroes of the proto-Reformation, the Lollards, even though it is possible that the manuscript record of the famous Norwich Lollard trials had already been deposited at Westminster.⁵⁵ And he mentioned Gladman's rebellion, which involved a violent attack on the Cathedral in yet another dispute over opposing jurisdictions, only in passing. Instead, he chose to emphasise the anticlericalism that such disputes provoked, which caused the minds of laymen to 'fester with hatred and hostility', or so he claimed.

In the case of *De furoribus* Neville's main source was Nicholas Sotherton's brief unpublished history.⁵⁶ Not only did Neville follow Sotherton's overarching narrative of the events of the stirrs fairly closely, he also copied some of the detail; for example, Sotherton's description of the famous tree, or Oak of Reformation, which the commotioners 'bordid to stand on uppon';⁵⁷ his measurement of the extent of Mousehold Heath ('more then six myles over');⁵⁸ the claim that the commotioners employed priests merely to have 'a fayre shew';⁵⁹ and even the obscure Mousehold Heath place-name, 'Sturthyll' (Sturt Hill),⁶⁰ no doubt a legacy of the story of the boy saint William of Norwich, whose maternal uncle, Godwin Sturt, was one of those who accused the Jews of William's murder on Mousehold in 1144. Where Neville deviated from Sotherton was in his description of the battle of Dussindale, where he enhanced Sotherton by providing more tactical detail.⁶¹ It is possible that Neville's source was Ambrose Dudley, an eye-witness, who we know provided Sir John Smythe with information on the battle for his research on weaponry.⁶²

Besides Sotherton, Neville also had Parker's recollections, which presumably included far more than his sermon on Mousehold and his dramatic escape from the city. Whatever sources he used, as well as condemning the commotioners he attempted to explain their motives. Besides opposition to enclosures there was, according to Neville, widespread

54 Blomefield, vol. 3, p. 61, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol3/pp60-76>.

55 Norman Tanner, 'Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428–31', Camden Society, 4th series, vol. 20 (London, 1977), p. 5.

56 Sotherton's history is now in the British Library, Harleian Manuscript 176, fols. 251r–259r.

57 Sotherton, p. 83.

58 Sotherton, p. 81.

59 Sotherton, p. 82.

60 Sotherton, p. 93.

61 Alexander Hodgkins, 'Reconstructing Rebellion: Digital Terrain Analysis of the Battle of Dussindale (1549)', *Internet Archaeology* 38 (2005), <https://doi.org/10.11141/ia.38.3>.

62 Matthew Champion, 'Kett's Rebellion 1549: A Dussindale Eyewitness', *Norfolk Archaeology* 42 (2001), pp. 642–5.

disgust at the parade of wealth on the part of the gentry. They were proud, arrogant and greedy, 'sunk in a swirling ocean of immoral delights'.⁶³ As has been pointed out, such language was essentially evangelical.⁶⁴ It echoed the views of clerics like Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, who attacked the avarice of the gentry in a famous sermon delivered at court during Lent in 1549. Accused of being a 'seditious fellow', Latimer responded that Christ himself was noted to be a stirrer up of the people against the emperor and expressed himself content to be called seditious.⁶⁵ Bernardino Ochino, who had been brought to London by Archbishop Cranmer to promote the work of Reformation, used similar language in his *Dialogus Regis et Populi*, where he wrote of the injuries wrought on 'the poore comens' by the 'extorcious gentylmen'.⁶⁶ And Cranmer, in a sermon delivered at St Paul's in July 1549, accused the gentry of being inspired by sheer greed when they fenced common land that had been left for the benefit of the peasantry.⁶⁷ But Neville, like those who had used the rhetoric of commonwealth in the 1540s, did not expect the poor to turn on their masters. They had to accept their lot and wait patiently for better things.

Neville was particularly concerned to defend the city's chief officers from the accusations levelled by Sir John Cheke in *The Hurt of Sedicion*, first published in 1549 with a second edition in 1569. Cheke compared Norwich unfavourably with Exeter, which had withstood a long siege with exemplary fortitude. Norwich's citizenry, by contrast, obeyed Kett 'for feare' and even 'for love', and behaved 'so traitorously' to the King's army under the Marquis of Northampton that the soldiers suffered more from the townsmen than from the commotioners.⁶⁸ Neville excused the vacillations of Norwich's civic leaders by claiming that they were prevented from taking up arms because they did not have the King's permission, which, in his words, rendered them 'powerless to form any plan'. It is an argument that few would have taken seriously. No doubt aware of the weakness of his argument he also blamed the lack of detail in the letters and 'brief notes' Parker had provided him, which were the accounts of 'certain Norwich citizens'. Even though they were 'sketchy' and 'unadorned' he had to follow the information they contained as well as he could, otherwise the historical truth would not be served and his promise to Parker not to depart from the information they contained would have been broken.⁶⁹

63 *De furoribus*, p. 15.

64 Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions* (London, 2016), p. 87.

65 Andy Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 107–8.

66 Philip McNaire, 'Ochino on Sedition: An Italian Dialogue of the Sixteenth Century', *Italian Studies* 15 (1960), p. 45.

67 Torrance Kirby, 'Synne and Sedition: Peter Martyr Vermigli's Sermon Concernynge the Tyme of Rebellion in the Parker Library', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 39 (2008), pp. 431–2.

68 Sir John Cheke, *The hurt of sedition, how grievous it is to a common welth* (London, 1569), sigs. f2–f3.

69 *Ad Walliae*, sig. Br.

Neville's *Nomina Praetorum*

If civic chronicles are defined as chronological listings of the chief office-holders in civic administration with notes of what were considered important events during their time in office,⁷⁰ Neville's *Nomina Praetorum* is a conventional example of what was essentially a medieval genre. The events he recorded – rebellion, extremes of weather, battles, royal births and deaths – were altogether formulaic. His only departure from the norm was the inclusion of the names of the bishops of Norwich Diocese. This was a deliberate challenge to those who dismissed episcopacy as popish, and signalled Neville's concern to bolster one of the main intentions of those who designed the Religious Settlement of 1559–63, the adoption of popish ecclesiastical institutions for godly purposes.⁷¹

The most likely source for Neville's *Nomina Praetorum* was Hall's national chronicle, published in 1548. Hall's Chronicle begins in 1399 with the reign of Henry IV, exactly where Neville chose to begin. Under the year 1435 Neville followed Hall in his note on the death of the Duke of Bedford, 'a man equally distinguished for his praise of peace and his prowess in battle' or, in Hall's words, 'as pollitique in peace as hardy in war'.⁷² Under the year 1453 Neville recorded that 'the technique of printing was invented in Germany, that most excellent of all crafts, by the great benefit of which the disciplines of the noble arts have proliferated across virtually the entire globe' or, in Hall's words, 'in which season the craft of printing was first invented in the city of Mens in Germanie, to the great furtheraunce of all persons desiring knowledge or thirsting for litterature'.⁷³ Again, in the first year of the reign of Henry VII Neville recorded that 'a new and previously unknown disease (known as the sweating sickness) spread throughout the whole of England. It was a virulent illness that killed more people than could be counted.' More pithily, Hall noted that 'a new kynde of sickness came sodenly through the whole region'.⁷⁴ Any differences between Hall and Neville tend to be minor ones.

Besides Hall's Chronicle, Neville also used the *Great London Chronicle*. For the year 1407 Neville noted that there was such an intense period of cold that everything was frozen solid with ice for fifteen weeks. The compiler of the *Great Chronicle* recorded that 'the grete Froste in England [...] dured more thane XV wekes'.⁷⁵ For 1479 Neville chose to write of 'the destruction brought by the plague to the citizens of Norwich, for it carried off

70 Alan Dyer, 'English Town Chronicles', *Local Historian* 12 (1977), p. 285.

71 Diarmaid MacCulloch, *All Things Made New: Writings on the Reformation* (London, 2016), p. 263.

72 Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle: Containing the History of England during the Reign of Henry the Fourth and the Succeeding Monarchs to the End of the Reign of Henry the Eighth* (London, 1809), p. 178.

73 *Hall's Chronicle*, p. 236.

74 *Hall's Chronicle*, p. 425.

75 Arthur H. Thomas and Isobel D. Thornley, eds., *The Great Chronicle of London*, facsim. repr. of 1938 edn (Gloucester, 1983), p. 87.

an incredible number of people'. The *Great Chronicle* recorded 'a huge mortalyte & deth of people [...] to the grete mynysshynge of the people of all manner of agys'.⁷⁶

Neville probably received his lists of the names of Norwich's mayors and sheriffs from a locally produced civic chronicle. Although Alan Dyer omitted Norwich from his list of those towns that were known to have produced chronicles,⁷⁷ two such chronicles survive amongst the Tanner Manuscripts, one ending in 1696 and one in 1648.⁷⁸ Besides these examples at least five other chronicles were written in Norwich between around 1526 and 1620.⁷⁹ There is little resemblance between these chronicles and the *Nomina Praetorum*, however. Why Neville failed to exploit the information that was readily available in the chronicles that had been produced in the city is difficult to explain. Possibly, he considered that what had been recorded was too trivial to warrant inclusion. So why did Neville choose to include such a 'lowly' chronicle at all? One possibility is that he was able to convince himself that he was writing a *cursus honorum*, the sequential order of public offices held by aspiring politicians in republican Rome, since the patterns of progression in local government from common councillor to sheriff, alderman and mayor paralleled the pattern of advancement through elected offices in the ancient world. It seems unlikely, however, that he would have been totally convinced of the parallel. As sceptical friends like Thomas Drant were quick to remind him, he was writing about a 'humble town's provincial ways' and not of the glories of ancient Rome.

Neville's Histories: Afterlife

Given the dramatic events it described, it might have been expected that *De furoribus* in its original handsomely produced format would have enjoyed dozens of reprintings in the decades after its first appearance, but, strangely, that was not the case. The only possible explanation is that Parker had decided to print far more copies than was usual, the result being that the market was flooded. However, it did have an afterlife as a readily available source, though after 1615 not in its original Latin form. In 1577 Holinshed's *Chronicles*, also printed by Bynneman, contained a long account of the stirs based partly on Grafton's Chronicle of 1568 and the English editions of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments* of 1563,

⁷⁶ *Great Chronicle*, p. 226.

⁷⁷ Dyer, 'English Town Chronicles', p. 287.

⁷⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Tanner MS 396, fol. 17, Catalogue of the Mayors and Sheriffs of the City of Norwich to the Year 1696, with a few notes of remarkable events; Tanner MS 397, fol. 187b, Catalogue of Mayors and Sheriffs of the City of Norwich to the year 1648.

⁷⁹ NRO NCR Case 17b, Book called the Mayor's Book, containing lists of Bailiffs, Mayors and Sheriffs, pp. 1–23; NRO MC 1026/18c2, 802x3, Norwich Chronicle of Mayors and Sheriffs, 1403–1608; NRO NCR Case 8c/1, Roll of Names of Sergeants, Provosts, Bailiffs, Mayors and Sheriffs; NRO COL/8/91, List of Bailiffs, Mayors and Sheriffs of Norwich to 1737; Richard Woods, *Norfolkes furies, or a view of Ketts campe* (London, 1615), sigs. L1r–L4r.

1570 and 1576, but mainly on *De furoribus*, though the author also included some new material on its beginnings, the rebels' treatment of Sir Roger Wodehouse and on the episode involving the hanging of an Italian mercenary.⁸⁰ Then, unexpectedly, in 1582 Bynneman, in conjunction with the bookseller Ralph Newbery, decided to reprint *De furoribus* in a different format with the new title *Kettus*, along with Christopher Ocland's poem, *Anglorum Praelia* [The Battles of the English]. Some months afterwards the Privy Council guaranteed a wider readership for *Kettus* by directing that it be taught in schools, *propter orationis elegantiam*,⁸¹ a decision that may have been influenced by the presence on the Privy Council of Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, who had taken part in the campaign against Kett in 1549.

In 1615 the publication of Richard Woods' English translation, *Norfolkes furies, or a view of Ketts campe*, with a second edition in 1623,⁸² marked an important milestone in that Neville's Latin originals, both *Kettus* and *De furoribus*, were subsequently ignored. Sir John Hayward, in his *The Life and Raigne of King Edward the Sixth* (London, 1630), used Woods' translation, adding some characteristically lively character sketches.⁸³ During the following century there were several re-visittings of Woods' translation. The first was the anonymous *History of the city of Norwich ... to which is added, Norfolk's furies: or, a view of Kett's camp*, published in 1718. Its Norwich imprint and the fact that the account of the events of 1549 followed a new history of the city suggest that interest in Kett was, by this time, predominantly local. Ten years later *Norfolk's furies: or, a view of Kett's camp* (Norwich, 1728) was reissued, though this time without a history of Norwich. Then, in the mid-eighteenth century, there came the results of Francis Blomefield's landmark research on Norwich and Norfolk, which included the fullest of the accounts of the stirs thus far. Although much was a reworking of Woods, there was also significant additional material taken from the Norwich city archives combined with some *ad hominem* comments about the 'unfit' Marquis of Northampton, a man 'more acquainted with the witty than the warlike'.⁸⁴ Subsequently, Blomefield and Woods dominated the historiography of the stirs until they were joined by Frederic William Russell's exhaustive account, *Kett's Rebellion in Norfolk*, which appeared in 1859.⁸⁵

Although *Norvicus* was overshadowed by *De furoribus*, so much so that it was not included in the *Anglorum Praelia* of 1582, it was not totally ignored. We know that William Lambarde used *Norvicus* as one of the sources for his projected history of Britain, since

80 Ian Archer, 'Social Order and Disorder', in *The Oxford Handbook of Holinshed's Chronicles*, ed. Paulina Kewes, Ian Archer and Felicity Heal (Oxford, 2013), p. 404.

81 Christopher Ocland, *Anglorum Praelia* (London, 1582), sig. A2.

82 Richard Woods, *Norfolke furies and their foyle: under Kett, their accursed captaine* (London, 1623).

83 Sir John Hayward, *The Life and Raigne of King Edward the Sixth* (London, 1630), pp. 65–78.

84 Blomefield, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/topographical-hist-norfolk/vol3/pp220-265>.

85 For a detailed account of *De furoribus*' afterlife up until the present see Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions*, pp. 208–64.

his annotations survive in a copy in the British Library.⁸⁶ Moreover, in 1578, to celebrate the Queen's visit to Norwich, the pageants that were produced by Thomas Churchyard, Bernard Garter and Henry Goldingham featured a young man who acted the role of King Gurguntus, 'sometime king of England, which builded the castell of Norwich, called Blanch Flowre, and laid the foundation of the citie'.⁸⁷ Both Gurguntus and Blanchflower are, of course, echoes of *Norvicus*. Camden, in the chapter on Norfolk in his *Britannia*, paid Neville a handsome compliment, interestingly conflating *Norvicus* and *De furoribus*:

why should I stand long upon these things, when as Alexander Neville, a Gentleman well borne and very learned hath notably described all these matters, together with the story of their Bishops, the orderly succession of their Magistrates, and the furious outrage of that most villainous Rebell Ket against this City:⁸⁸

John Norden had clearly read *Norvicus*. In the description of Westminster in his *Speculum Britanniae* (1593) he queried Neville's claim that the Archbishops of Canterbury resided at Westminster before moving to Lambeth.⁸⁹ Francis Godwin used Neville's biographical gazetteer of Norwich bishops to compile his *Catalogue of the bishops of England* (1601).⁹⁰ Sir Henry Spelman, in the short essay he wrote on Norfolk for John Speed's *Theatre of the empire of Great Britaine*, mentioned Neville twice. He disagreed with Neville that Norwich was settled at the time of the Britons and Saxons, asserting that it was 'not of marke' before the Danes, but quoted with approval Neville's opinion that the city was ranked above all the cities of England except London.⁹¹ Fulke Robartes, the possible author of 'A Description of the Famous Citie of Norwich', which appeared in the second edition of Woods' *Norfolke furies*, acknowledged Neville as the man who 'trased' the city's history 'to the first stone and originall'.⁹² Like Spelman, the distinguished lawyer Sir Edward Coke was minded to acknowledge the truth of Neville's statement that Norwich was 'preferred before all the Cities in England except London'.⁹³ In 1718, the anonymous author of *The history of the city of Norwich, containing a description of that city ... to which is added, Norfolk's Furies: or, a view of Kett's camp*, acknowledged Neville in his own account of the

86 British Library, General Reference Collection, C95. c.20.

87 Holinshed, 1587: vol. 6, pp. 1287–8, <http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed>.

88 Camden, *Britain*, p. 475.

89 Elizabeth Goldring, Faith Eales, Elizabeth Clarke and Jayne Elisabeth Archer, eds., *John Nichols' The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I*, vol. 5 (Oxford, 2014), p. 135.

90 D. J. Stewart, 'Notes on Norwich Cathedral', *Archaeological Journal* xxxii (1875), p. 25 n. 6.

91 John Speed, *The theatre of the empire of Great Britaine* (London, 1612).

92 Richard Woods, *Norfolke Furies and their foyle: under Kett, their accursed captaine* (London, 1623), sig. L2.

93 Edward Coke, *The Fourth Part of the Laws of England* (London, 1644), p. 256.

foundation of the city. The Norfolk antiquary Thornhaugh Gurdon (1663–1733), when discussing the origins of Norwich, included Neville's comment that the city had risen out of the ruins of the capital of the Iceni, *Venta Icenorum*.⁹⁴ William Nicolson (1655–1727), who compiled a comprehensive bibliography of material on English history, mentioned *Norvicus* but made no assessment of it.⁹⁵ In 1711, John Strype, Parker's first biographer, listed *Norvicus* as one of his sources.⁹⁶ Around the same time John Kirkpatrick, the Norwich antiquary, reproduced Neville's foundation myth in his unpublished 'Annals of Norwich'.⁹⁷ If anyone either read or referred to *Norvicus* after Kirkpatrick, the experience went unrecorded. Neville's history failed to receive a single mention in the most recent history of the city, published in two volumes in 2004.⁹⁸

For contemporary historians, both Neville's histories have obvious weaknesses; *De furoribus* is clearly derivative while *Norvicus* contains little factual information and omits completely important events, such as the Lollard trials of 1428–31. However, what has not been fully appreciated is the stylistic quality of these works. Yet this is their most significant feature, especially for those interested in Neo-Latin literature.⁹⁹ Through these new translations it is hoped that readers will agree that, as a masterclass in the use of rhetoric and of the writing of Neo-Latin prose, Neville's work deserves to be rescued from the condescension of history. But the histories are not only a literary masterclass. They also provide evidence of how social status affected the writing of history in the early modern period, of how rhetoric coloured historical judgement and of how such qualities of style and rhetoric could be used to guarantee, in the case of Matthew Parker, the memorialisation of power and reputation.

Neville in Translation

Philip Wilson and Ingrid Walton

Translating Renaissance Latin

Alexander Neville chose to write in Latin and thereby identified both himself and his intended audience as what we would now call humanist intellectuals – practitioners of eloquence, scholars and those who were influential at court and in politics. The world,

94 Thornhaugh Gurdon, *An Essay on the Antiquity of the Castel [sic] of Norwich* (Norwich, 1728) p. 6.

95 William Nicholson, *The English Historical Library* (London, 1696) p. 50.

96 John Strype, *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker* (London, 1711), p. 207.

97 NRO RO MC 500/18, 78 X 7, John Kirkpatrick's *Annals of Norwich*, p. 171.

98 Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson, eds., *Medieval Norwich and Norwich Since 1550* (London, 2004).

99 Neville does not appear in the list of Neo-Latin writers in Moul's *Guide to Neo-Latin Literature*, pp. xvii–xxvii.