I Laying the Foundations

1 Introduction

> Oltre dunque al fenomeno storico che siamo soliti indicare con tale termine, e talora sovrapponendosi o intrecciandosi a quello, talora, al contrario, prescindendone del tutto, programmaticamente o meno, si parla oggi d'"umanesimo civile", d'"umanesimo politico", d'"umanesimo integrale", d'"umanesimo solidale", d'"umanesimo fraterno", d'"umanesimo marxista", d'"umanesimo ateo", d'"umanesimo esistenzialistico", d'"umanesimo antropocentrico", d'"umanesimo teocentrico", d'"umanesimo nuovo", d'"umanesimo moderno", d'"umanesimo cristiano", d'"umanesimo reale", d'"umanesimo critico", d'"umanesimo ecologico", d'"umanesimo planetario", d'"umanesimo evoluzionistico", d'"umanesimo digitale", d'"umanesimo interculturale", d'"umanesimo secolare", d'"umanesimo rigenerato" e persino d'"umanesimo fascista", d'"umanesimo nazista", e d'"umanesimo alla conquista del *business*."[1]

The *enumeratio* – or even *accumulatio* on this occasion – is a very effective figure of speech, as Miraglia knows well. It is sufficient to take a quick look at all the aforementioned labels, in which *humanism* constitutes the first element to understand how pervasive this word is in today's thought and, consequently, world. And, what is more, that list is anything but exhaustive. For what about concepts like *antihumanism*, *posthumanism* and *transhumanism*, for instance? They affect art and philosophy, but also science fiction, computer games and other fields. And in addition to *humanism*, the root *human-* is used to coin several other words and relative concepts which are crucial to the twenty-first century and to these years in particular. While I am writing these pages, Ukraine, Israel and other countries are theatres of wars which utterly disregard those *humanitarian* principles that international treaties usually invoke and that should impede certain atrocities instead of leading to the phenomenon of *dehumanisation*. And any reader who, like myself, likes to start reading a book from its acknowledgements section will have noticed that I am a supporter of what can be broadly speaking defined as *humanistic education* (also known as person-centered education) – although this label might sound a bit old-fashioned today. Needless to say, by *humanistic education* I do not mean that sort of teaching which is imparted – almost all over the world – in the faculties of *Humanities*, but I refer to the kind of education which is centred on each and every student and on establishing an intimate, profound and, why not?, *humane* relationship with them.

Clearly, all these words and concepts did not come out of the blue. No doubt the term humanism is immediately associated with Renaissance, but the Renaissance humanism of fourteenth–sixteenth centuries is only an intermediate step – however crucial it was – in the long history of Western *human*-related society

1 Miraglia 2019, 13–16 (with notes 3 to 27 with bibliographical references to all these expressions).

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and culture. Alongside and after it comes, to remain in the field of *human*-related concepts and epochs, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries German *Neuhumanismus*, which aimed at restoring the cultural splendour of the Renaissance by paying special attention to classical philology and the study of antiquity. And in the early twentieth century, again in Germany, Werner Jaeger became the herald of the so-called Third Humanism, yet again a cultural movement which was oriented towards classical antiquity.[2] The other concepts mentioned above came later in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Yet the label 'Renaissance humanism' did not come out of the blue either, and numerous studies have long shown that this cultural revolution which followed the Middle Ages is named after the Latin word *humanitas* as it was conceived of by Cicero.[3] But this also means that all the concepts which I have mentioned so far ultimately derive from an ideal which was born at the beginning of the first century BCE. So what happened to *humanitas* during the fourteen centuries which separate Cicero from the Renaissance humanism? As we shall see, the major part of the history of *humanitas* has yet to be investigated, and this book will try to throw some light on part of it, focusing on the pagan authors from the late first to the late fourth century CE.

The choice of this span of time is not only due to the paucity of studies devoted to *humanitas* across these centuries and therefore asks for some clarification, especially because periodisations always imply some degree of artificiality, and depend on various aspects: literature, politics, history, evolution of ideas and semantics of words, for instance, do not necessarily run in parallel, and this is a problem for a study which is around a word, *humanitas*, whose polysemy is influenced by both the historical, socio-political contexts and the different genres of texts – mainly literary – in which it is employed. Add to this the fact that scholarly trends, often related to national traditions, have proposed different periodisations for Latin literature, which on the one hand confirm the artificiality of such partitions and, on the other, make it more difficult to establish firm starting and arrival points for scholarly works which span several authors belonging to different ages.

The starting point of this research is represented by the Trajanic age, because, after being eclipsed by other value concepts during the Neronian and, even more, the Flavian age, under the Emperor Trajan *humanitas* first reacquired

2 On all these and other forms of humanisms cf. especially Toussaint 2008; Sola 2016. A brief but useful survey is provided by Giacomelli/Givone 2019.

3 Cf. below, pp. 61–62.

socio-political predominance, as emerges in particular from Pliny the Younger's oeuvre. In light of this, it would be less proper to start either earlier with the Flavian or later with the age of Hadrian, that is, after 69 or 117 CE respectively, according to two watersheds that have found ample consensus among historians of Latin literature.[4]

Likewise, also the chronological point of arrival has not been chosen by chance. To begin with, *humanitas* saw a new, the last pagan, revival during the reign of Theodosius and, what is more, by showcasing several analogies with its use during the age of Trajan. This appears as less surprising if one considers that students of both ancient history and literature have acknowledged that Roman *Weltanschauung*, or, in English, worldview, changed radically at the turn of the fifth century.[5] Symbolically, this sort of revolution is marked by the Visigoths' Sack of Rome on 24 August 410 CE,[6] which both pagans and Christians considered the beginning of a new era in which Rome could no longer be the *caput mundi* guarantor of political as well as ideological unity.[7] But at the same time, the reign of Theodosius and, in the literary field, the figure of Symmachus are representative of the last epoch for which it can make sense to distinguish between Christian and pagan Latin literature.[8] For if on the one hand it is true that, as Cameron observes, pagans and Christians, until the age of Symmachus at least, shared the same classical culture, since "it was the only culture there was",[9] on the other

4 Cf. B. Gibson 2005, 69–70. On the Trajanic age as a possible watershed in the history of Latin literature cf. also below, p. 81.

5 Cf. *e.g.* the recent Gasti 2020, 19. Cf. also Schanz 1959^2, 6, for whom at the turn of the fifth century there is a radical change in the Christian spirit (*des christlichen Geistes*) thanks to Augustine.

6 Cf. Brown 1971, 112: "In 410, the Visigothic king, Alaric, sacked Rome. It is fashionable to regard these barbarian invasions are inevitable. Contemporaries, however, did not enjoy the detachment and the hindsight of the modern historian." Cf. also Conte 1994, 625; Drake 2016^2, 1; Gasti 2020, 17; Gassman 2020, 175–176; Berger/Fontaine/Schmidt 2020a, 2.

7 Cf. Brown 1971, 120: "The myth of Rome that was to haunt medieval and Renaissance men – *Roma aeterna*, Rome conceived of as the natural climax of civilization, destined to continue forever – was not created by the men of the classical Roman empire: it was a direct legacy of the heady patriotism of the late fourth-century Latin world." Cf. in fact Gassman 2020, 15 (with reference to late-fourth-century authors, both Christian and pagan): "Rome still stood at the centre of their imaginative universe."

8 Cf. for example the recent Berger/Fontaine/Schmidt 2020a and Berger/Fontaine/Schmidt 2020b, the former devoted to pagan, the latter to Christian literature during the reign of Theodosius. Cf. also Schanz 1959^2, 127 (with reference to Symmachus): "Dass das Heidentum reif für den Untergang war, zeigt diese an Gedanken so arme, nur in Phrasengeklingel sich ergehende Briefsammlung, der eine christliche Literatur gegenübertrat, reich an gärenden Ideen."

9 Cameron 2011, 398. Cf. also Marrou 1948, 120–122; 137; Berger/Fontaine/Schmidt 2020a, 7–8. Brown 1971, 32 puts it in different terms: "It is not surprising, therefore, that pagans and Christi-

hand it is no less true that the religious creed – whether pagan or Christian – of each and every Latin author until that time shines through and/or influences their works, when it is not their kernel.[10] By contrast, "the fifth century witnessed the definitive adoption of secular learning by Christianity", and this could only happen because the religious dispute was won and pagan literature could no longer be a menace.[11] But at the same time, this also implies that from the fifth century onwards at least a Christian substratum is usually to be taken for granted in any Latin literary text.

Against this background, *humanitas* overall emerges in the pagan Latin literature from the second to the fourth century as a multifaceted concept which aims to defend the essence of being Roman from external threats, mainly coming from Christians and barbarians, by evoking – more or less explicitly – Rome's glorious republican, and therefore pagan, splendour.

In the case of Christian authors, instead, although we already possess some studies devoted to *humanitas* in the works of Lactantius, Ambrose, Ennodius and others,[12] a deep and extensive research is still a desideratum. Yet from the very little I have so far looked into, I have the impression that such a study might reveal interesting aspects and rhetorical strategies on Christian authors' part too. Moreover, as Marrou put it:

> Pour pouvoir être chrétien, il faut d'abord être un *homme*, assez mûr sur le plan proprement *humain* pour pouvoir poser un act de foi et des acts *moraux* (c'est un fait, historiquement et ethnographiquement constaté: le christianisme exige un minimum de *civilisation*). (my emphases)[13]

'Human being', 'humane', 'moral' and 'civilization': since this book will show that all these concepts, which have always been crucial in Western culture, are at the core of the idea of *humanitas* in pagan authors, we can be sure that also a book on *humanitas* in Christian authors would be rewarding.

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ans fought so virulently throughout the fourth century as to whether literature or Christianity was the true paideia, the true education: for both sides expected to be saved by education." For a state of research and further bibliography cf. Gassman 2020, 4–5.

10 Cf. Brown 1971, *passim*.

11 Markus 1974,1.

12 Cf. *e.g.* Sellmair 1948; Hiltbrunner 1994a, 737–747 (on Christian authors); Høgel 2015, 85–97; Mollea 2022b.

13 Marrou 1948, 134.

1.1 *Humanitas*: State of Research

Probably because its modern derivatives, as we have just seen, play an important role in today's society, the debate over Latin *humanitas* is more alive than ever in contemporary scholarship.[14] The main general points of discussion concerning this value concept will be addressed in detail in the following sections of this introduction, but since they all originated throughout the course of the numerous studies around *humanitas* in the twentieth century, it will be useful to retrace briefly the history of scholarship on this concept of value.[15]

We have just observed that in the modern age the word *humanitas* was very productive in Germany, where it led to the *Neuhumanismus* and Third Humanism; it will therefore come as unsurprising that the first studies on Latin *humanitas* also come from the German world. A good starting point is provided by Schneidewin, whose book yet moves from the modern idea of humanity (*Humanität* in German) rather than from Latin *humanitas*, and whose main weakness, as Mayer already stressed, lies in the very fact of overlapping *Humanität* and *humanitas*.[16] Thus, we read therein that humanity corresponds to the worldview and moral programme of the elite of Roman society from the Scipionic Circle until Cicero's day, and that Cicero's work represents the fundamental mirror of ancient humanity.[17] According to Schneidewin, *Humanität* has no Greek forerunner nor it is influenced by any particular philosophical school. The features of, and topics which will be central to, the twentieth-century discussion of Roman *humanitas* are already there: an inward or outward perspective – from a modern idea to the ancient materialisation of it or, conversely, from the ancient words to their profound meanings and implications –; the origins of this idea – Greek or Roman and the possible role of mediation played by the Scipionic Circle –; the prominence of Cicero and, by more or less explicit implication, the limited relevance of later Roman authors; the relationship between *humanitas*, liberal studies, culture and civilization, and a possible elitist conception of this concept of

14 Prost 2006; Stroh 2008; Romano 2014; Høgel 2015; Vesperini 2015; Sola 2016; Miraglia 2019 are the most recent contributions in this field to take the cue from, or refer to, the importance of modern derivatives of *humanitas*.

15 It is worth stressing that I am not going to look at all the studies on *humanitas* in this summary, as some works which are particularly relevant for the authors whom I focus on in this book will be dealt with in the proper section(s). Likewise, further details about the studies by most of the authors who are cited in this summary will emerge throughout the course of the present book.

16 Schneidewin 1897; Mayer 1951, 1.

17 Schneidewin 1897, 445 and 18 respectively.

value.[18] Most of Schneidewin's ideas were endorsed by Reitzenstein, the main difference between the two lying in the fact that the latter believed that Panaetius and, consequently, Stoic philosophy developed a conception of human being which was fundamental to the birth of the idea of *humanitas*.[19]

Around those same years in France Boissier devoted a couple of articles to the notion of *humanitas* and stressed that while the noun takes on meanings which tend to be very different from one another, yet one sole notion unites them: they all originate from the relationships among men.[20] Moreover, Boissier highlighted that several other value concepts come into contact with *humanitas,* and that in the case of Cicero in particular, the pairing of *humanitas* with other abstract nouns helps us understand its meaning.[21] Also of relevance is that Boissier identified *humanitas* with a cult of literature which results in social usefulness.[22] But perhaps most importantly, we owe to both Boissier and Reitzenstein the notion that the socio-cultural and political importance of the concept *humanitas* began to decline with the Augustan age. This has been taken as a postulate since, and, apart from very few exceptions, still jeopardises studies on *humanitas*.[23]

18 As words like civilization, culture and liberal studies recur often in this book, some clarifications on what I mean by them are in order straight away. I am well aware of the discussions words like culture and civilization have raised since the nineteenth century, especially in the anthropological and archeological fields. For reasons of length, however, I am not going to look into studies such as Tylor's, Malinowski's, Spengler's and Geertz's, to name but a few. The reader in search of details about their theories can after all easily find accurate summaries in any good handbook of (cultural) anthropology. Yet when I use the term culture in this book, I broadly mean to indicate what Tylor expressed back in 1871, that is: "the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor 1871, 1). Although Tylor regards culture and civilization as synonyms, by civilization I indicate what the entry in the *Oxford English Dictionary* displays in section 3 a, that is, "the state or condition of being civilized; human cultural, social, and intellectual development when considered to be advanced and progressive in nature." On civilization in antiquity cf. *e.g.* Blundell 1986; Scherr 2023, 4–7, 10 and *passim* (with up-to-date bibliography). Lastly, by liberal arts / liberal studies I by and large follow Cicero's definition at *De oratore* 3.127: *has artis, quibus liberales doctrinae atque ingenuae continerentur, geometriam, musicam, litterarum cognitionem et poetarum atque illa, quae de naturis rerum, quae de hominum moribus, quae de rebus publicis dicerentur* ("the arts which are the basis for liberal education (mathematics, music, the study of literature and poetry), or the doctrines on the nature of the universe, human behavior, and the affairs of state", trans. May/Wisse 2001, adapted), on which cf. more in detail below, pp. 55–56.

19 Cf. Reitzenstein 1907.

20 Cf. Boissier 1906, 765.

21 Cf. Boissier 1906, 763.

22 Cf. Boissier 1907, 115.

23 Cf. *e.g.* Høgel 2015.

With the work of Immisch *humanitas* was for the first time closely linked to Greek φιλανθρωπία: unlike his former colleagues, Immisch believed in fact that *humanitas* was the Latin translation of the Greek word.[24] Lorenz's study on φιλανθρωπία, on which we will focus in greater detail later, by and large agrees on this point, although it also highlights differences between the Greek and the Latin word.[25]

In 1928 Zucker's attempt might have broaden the horizons of the studies on *humanitas* by focusing on later ages: he was in fact the first to spotlight the importance of *humanitas* in Pliny the Younger, but only as far as *Ep.* 8.24 is concerned.[26] Yet his attempt long remained a drop in the ocean.

A broadening in this field of studies took place one year later, not in terms of chronology, but in terms of the relationship between *humanitas* and other value concepts. Following in Reitzenstein's footsteps and therefore reiterating the ideas that the Greeks did not have any single word which was analogous to *humanitas* and that only Panaetius' conception of man led to the overlapping of the ideas of *Bildung* (education) and *Milde* (clemency) in the word *humanitas*, in 1929 Harder added that another Latin concept, that of *clementia*, was a forerunner of *humanitas*. Moreover, he maintained that Cicero's understanding of *humanitas* was influenced by Rome's foreign policy.[27]

Despite the numerous contributions that have dealt with it over the last 120 years, all the issues concerning the relationship of *humanitas* with Greek culture have not yet found answers on which all scholars agree – and probably will never do. It is therefore unsurprising that a couple of years after Harder's paper, in the introduction to his study on Erasmus' *humanitas*, Pfeiffer denied any connections between this Latin term and the Greek ἄνθρωπος as well as the influence of any philosophical strand of thought on it. By contrast, he accepted the idea that *humanitas* subsumed the Greek notions of παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία and, what is more relevant, he stressed the role of *humanitas* in softening rigidity and severity in the ethical as well as in the judicial sphere.[28]

In the late thirties of the twentieth century Nybakken put an end to the German monopoly – apart from the early case of Boissier – over studies on Roman *humanitas*. He too agreed that *humanitas* was fostered in the Scipionic Circle and

24 Cf. Immisch 1911, 6.

25 Cf. Lorenz 1914, on which more below, pp. 27–31.

26 Cf. Zucker 1928.

27 Cf. Harder 1929 and also Harder 1934. On the relationship between *humanitas* and *clementia* cf. below, pp. 38–40.

28 Cf. Pfeiffer 1931, 3. The notion that *humanitas* has to do with law is already in Reitzenstein 1907, 24 n. 3 and Harder 1929, 301–302; 1934, 65–66.

that was "most adequately expressed in literary form by Cicero."[29] He also added that *humanitas* subsumes both the ideas of humanism and humanitarianism, and rests largely on Greek philosophy. What is more, Nybakken reiterated Boissier's and Reitzenstein's idea of the loss of importance of *humanitas* after the republican age by peremptorily stating that *humanitas* "dropped after Cicero's death and not revived until the Renaissance and later humanistic periods."[30]

In the decade which followed, studies by Klingner and, above all, Prete stressed the importance of *humanus* and *humanitas* in the comedies by Plautus and, even more, Terence, thereby strengthening the relationship of this *Wertbegriff* with the Scipionic Circle and, consequently, the Greek world and the playwright Menander in particular.[31] In short, the 'new', more lenient and benevolent conception of man that emerges from Terence finds its roots in Terence's Greek model Menander. It is therefore clear that in this context *humanitas* was mainly conceived as φιλανθρωπία.

During those same years, Pohlenz suggested in passing that *humanitas* was to be taken as the sum of the Greek concepts of παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία, and something analogous can be found in Snell, who also stressed the influence of Stoic philosophy on the development of this Roman concept of value.[32] Unfortunately this claim, whose implications were in my view potentially decisive, was long neglected by scholarship on *humanitas*, at least until Stroh reformulated it in a more articulated way.[33] In the case of Snell, Mayer even went as far as to claim that he wanted to show that his thesis was wrong.[34]

As we have seen, until the late forties of the past century studies on *humanitas* focused mainly on Cicero and, to a lesser degree, on Terence. Something unusual, not to say revolutionary, might have happened in 1948, when Sellmair published a book titled *Humanitas Christiana*. Yet, when one reads it, one finds out that the noun *humanitas* itself does not play any relevant role, with the title only indicating a study on the humane attitude by some Christian authors.[35]

Eventually, in 1949, studies on *humanitas* did broaden their horizons. The article on Cicero and Varro by Riposati, following Gellius' 13.17, also acknowledged

29 Nybakken 1939, 396.
30 Nybakken 1939, 396.
31 Cf. Prete 1944; Klingner 1947; Prete 1948.
32 Pohlenz 1947, 451; Snell 1953^2, 249–255.
33 Stroh 2008. It is nonetheless to stress that Stroh too is still neglected or underestimated: more below, p. 14.
34 Mayer 1951, 5.
35 Cf. Sellmair 1948.

some importance to Varro,[36] whereas in the same year Büchner dealt with Cornelius Nepos' *Life of Atticus*, which he regarded as utterly guided by the idea *humanitas*.[37] Büchner also stressed the connection between *humanitas* and *pietas* in this biography and reached the conclusion that while the former concerns the relationship of a learned person with any other man, the latter implies kinship.[38]

The return to Cicero was marked by Mayer's impressive work, a dissertation which took into account all of the Ciceronian instances of *humanus* and *humanitas*.[39] The analysis is by and large divided into three parts: the first one looks at *humanitas* in private contexts, the second at its use in public and political situations, while the third investigates the occurrences which pertain to the cultural and philosophical sphere. Quite expectedly, the analysis also highlights the relationship between *humanitas* and other important concepts, such as *clementia*, *doctrina*, *lenitas*, *liberalitas*, *mansuetudo*, *urbanitas*, etc.

An important novelty in the studies on *humanitas* dates to 1960, when Honig looked in depth at the meanings of this word in the judicial sphere and, more in detail, in the legislation of the late Empire, when, according to him, laws became milder, more humane than before.[40] He paid special attention to the *Theodosian Code* and was the first to show the importance of this *Wertbegriff* after the political crisis of the third century CE.[41]

One year later, the already mentioned Büchner returned on *humanus* and *humanitas*, and stressed for example that these two words, when *emphatisch gebraucht*, always take on positive connotations.[42] Furthermore, he observed that the noun *humanitas* appeared only in the first century BCE because the notion of abstraction itself came after the idea of concreteness, that the value is typically Roman – he too believed that it originated in the Scipionic Circle – and that it is *etwas Unphilosophisches*.[43] Eventually, Büchner reiterated the notion that the importance of *humanitas* began to decline in the Augustan age and denied that we can find a *Bildungstheorie* based on the idea of *humanitas* in later Latin authors.[44]

36 Cf. Riposati 1949.

37 Cf. Büchner 1949, 102–103.

38 Cf. Büchner 1949, 107 and 112. On the important discussion of the relation between *humanitas* and *doctrina* as it emerges at *Life of Atticus* 4, cf. below, pp. 62–63.

39 Mayer 1951.

40 For the sake of honesty, some importance to the concept of *humanitas* in Roman law had already been attributed at least by Guarneri Citati 1927, s.v. *humanitas* and Schulz 1934, 130, but theirs are not studies explicitly devoted to this value concept in the legal sphere.

41 Cf. Honig 1950. For further details cf. below, p. 215.

42 Büchner 1961, 637.

43 Büchner 1961, 638 and 640.

44 Büchner 1961, 643 and 645.

In contrast with Büchner's recent claim, which explicitly underestimated the role of *humanitas* in Pliny the Younger's work, in 1961–1962 Bolisani devoted the first in-depth study to his *humanitas* and highlighted its importance in Pliny's worldview.[45] Notwithstanding, Bolisani did not succeed in establishing the crucial role of this author in the history of *humanitas* once and for all, as will become clearer in the section on Pliny.[46]

In 1963 the entry on *humanitas* in Hellegouarc'h's *Le vocabulaire latin des relations et des partis politiques sous la république* clarified the importance of this value concept in the political life of the late republic,[47] while joint attention to Cicero and the judicial sphere is what characterised J. Schneider's dissertation in 1964.[48] In the first part of his work, he investigated the relationship between *humanitas* and law in the scopes of slavery (*seruitus*), kinship (*cognatio*) and friendship (*amicitia*) as it emerges from Cicero's oeuvre. In the second half he first turned to the same relationship as it materialises between citizens in private law, and then looked at public law, both in foreign and domestic policies.

If we exclude Plautus, Terence, Cicero and, to a lesser degree, Cornelius Nepos, we do not find specific analyses of the concept of *humanitas* in other authors until 1967. Curiously enough, in this same year two important studies on authors of the first century CE appeared, those by Lipps and Rieks. Lipps investigated the idea of human being and humanity as it emerges from the works of Seneca, Lucan, Persius, Petronius, Curtius Rufus and Velleius Paterculus. His analysis took into account not only the instances of *humanus* and *humanitas*, but also those of *homo*.[49] The same approach and methodology characterised the work by Rieks, but the authors he analysed are at times different from those investigated by Lipps. Rieks did look at *homo*, *humanus* and *humanitas* in Velleius Paterculus, Seneca, Petronius, Lucan and Persius, but also added Vitruvius, Ovid, Manilius, Valerius Maximus, Phaedrus, Statius and Pliny the Younger.[50] Despite their efforts and results, they did not succeed completely in dismantling the prejudice according to which after Cicero there was no true cultural and socio-political programmes based on *humanitas*.

Another important step in the history of the studies on *humanitas* is represented by the entry in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, written by Schadewaldt in 1973. As is typical of the contributions in *ANRW*, Schadewaldt's too

45 Cf. Bolisani 1961–62.
46 Cf. below, pp. 83–115.
47 Cf. Hellegouarc'h 1963, 267–271.
48 Cf. J. Schneider 1964.
49 Cf. Lipps 1967.
50 Cf. Rieks 1967.

provided a state of research, but also offered new insights into this word, which was famously regarded as "schillernd wie ein Chamäleon".[51] *Humanitas* is ultimately conceived as what can be found in the human beings and belongs to them, but also what identifies their imperfections and, as a consequence, tolerance and compassion of a human being towards their fellows.[52] Furthermore, *humanitas* stands to indicate the fulfilment of true human being through encyclopedic learning (or *studia humanitatis*).[53] Importantly, Schadewaldt highlighted that this is not an absolute value concept, but its meanings and implications depend on the historical and social situations in which it is used.[54]

In the same 1973 Jocelyn wrote an article that should have downsized the relevance of *humanitas* in Terence's oeuvre, as it showed that the famous line 77 of the *Heautontimoroumenos* (*homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto*) had in fact little to do with the nobility of the concept as it emerges in first-century BCE Latin literature.[55] Yet this contribution has not been as influential as it would deserve.[56]

The often cited Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 13.17 was first analysed in depth only in 1986 thanks to a contribution by Kaster, which I will deal with in the subchapter on Gellius;[57] while in 1993 Veyne stressed the role played by *humanitas* in defining Romanness and, consequently, non-Romanness and barbarity.[58] This inevitably leads to the complex discourse concerning Roman imperialism, as is made more explicit in a contribution by S. Braund.[59] In cases such as these, texts like Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* 1.1 and Tacitus' *Agricola* 21, whose importance was often underestimated in previous studies, become crucial, as we will see in greater detail in due course.[60]

In 1994 then, Hiltbrunner wrote the entry on *humanitas* in the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, but the title itself – *Humanitas* (φιλανθρωπία) – reveals that *humanitas* is mainly understood in terms of the Greek φιλανθρωπία and – the author maintained – only with the appearance of the phrase *studia humanitatis* in Cicero it began to include the meaning of παιδεία, a meaning that it retained seldom.[61] On the other hand, however, Hiltbrunner was the first to actually broaden the chronological limits traditionally imposed to studies on *humanitas*:

51 Schadewaldt 1973, 44.
52 Cf. Schadewaldt 1973, 44.
53 Cf. Schadewaldt 1973, 45 and 60.
54 Cf. Schadewaldt 1973, 47 and 49.
55 Cf. Jocelyn 1973. Cf. also below, pp. 47–50.
56 Cf. below, p. 47.
57 Cf. Kaster 1986 and below, pp. 169–173.
58 Cf. Veyne 1993.
59 Cf. S. Braund 1997.
60 Cf. below, pp. 64; 118–124.
61 Cf. Hiltbrunner 1994a, 729–730.

his entry goes so far as to touch upon Drepanius (*Pan. Lat.* 2.20),[62] including Fronto, Gellius, legal texts from the second and third centuries CE as well as several Christian authors.[63] Yet the length of a dictionary entry prevented him from investigating the role of *humanitas* within each and every single author in depth, and when it comes to the imperial age from the first century, his focus is rather on Christian than on pagan authors.

The new millennium was inaugurated by a monograph by Bauman in which *humanitas* is connected with the aim of pinpointing the presence of the notion of human rights in ancient Roman society.[64] But a few years later the horizons of *humanitas* studies are further broadened by a contribution in which Maróti shifted the focus from literary to epigraphic texts and showed that the term *humanitas* can also be used to refer to, and actually mean, subsistence.[65]

As I have already suggested, Stroh's 2008 article is in my view decisive, as it eventually explained the way the Greek concepts of παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία are intertwined in Roman, Ciceronian *humanitas*. Because of its importance, I am going to deal with it in greater detail in another section of this introduction. For the moment, however, I should like to stress that it has often been utterly neglected in recent scholarship on *humanitas* – a great shame![66]

Two important studies appeared in 2015. Høgel's monograph looked in particular at the argumentative use of the concept of the humane from the origins up to the Renaissance, but neglected most of the Latin literature between the late first century CE and the fourteenth century in the belief that "in the centuries after Seneca and Pliny, various other writers use the humane, but few with any argumentative purpose or clear agenda".[67] Vesperini was instead the first to analyse *humanitas* from a pure anthropological perspective, and the conclusion he reached seems to confirm the thesis according to which *humanitas* indicates the human being's capacity to be social – ultimately something which has to do with φιλανθρωπία – and this is not provided by nature but by education (παιδεία).[68]

In the years which followed other studies on *humanitas* have appeared, but in some cases they did not add much to the picture, while on other occasions

62 Hiltbrunner 1994a, 733. On Drepanius cf. below, pp. 295; 300–301.

63 Cf. Hiltbrunner 1994a, 734 (on Fronto and Gellius), 735–737 (on legal texts), 737–747 (on Christian authors).

64 Cf. Bauman 2000.

65 Cf. Maróti 2002–2003.

66 Cf. Stroh 2008, and below, p. 16. Elice 2017, 264 only quotes Stroh 2008 with regard to the role of the Scipionic Circle in founding the idea of *humanitas*; Høgel 2015 and Vesperini 2015 seem to ignore him altogether.

67 Høgel 2015, 83.

68 Cf. Vesperini 2015.

their focus was on singular authors and will therefore be discussed in the relevant sections of this book.

Some points should have emerged clearly from this summary of the history of *humanitas* over the past 120 years or so. To begin with, some crucial issues are still open and discussed, as is the case of the Greek or Roman origins of *humanitas*, or of the meanings of *humanitas* and the way they are interconnected. To these, I would add the relationship between *humanus* and *humanitas*, which, by implication of its immediate opposites *inhumanus* and *inhumanitas*, also leads to the way *humanitas* relates to other concepts of value, a topic which, as we have seen, has naturally attracted scholars' attention, but on which there is still much to say. Finally and crucially, whatever the viewpoint from which it has been looked at – educational programme, human rights, idea of the humane or other – the imperial age from the late first century has mostly been disregarded in studies explicitly devoted to *humanitas*. As I hope this book shows, expanding the analysis of *humanus* and *humanitas* on imperial authors and therefore gaining an ampler picture also helps us address and throw new light on all the aforementioned issues.

1.2 *Humanitas*: The (Impossible?) Search for a Definition

The first issue I want to focus on concerns the definition of *humanitas*. This is a problematic word onto which modern scholars often project their own understanding of what 'human' and 'educated' might mean – just think of Schneidewin's pioneering study in the late nineteenth century.[69] In addition, many studies have been criticised for their 'tired repetitiveness'.[70] As we have seen, it is also difficult to find firm points of reference in the existing scholarship, both in terms of methodology and concrete results. A (too) strict approach, which is epitomised in dictionary entries, has led to the division of *humanitas* into different clusters of meanings – it is sufficient to recall that Hiltbrunner's entry in the *Reallexikon* right from the title regards *humanitas* as an equivalent of φιλανθρωπία.[71] The partition I find more convenient despite Balbo's objection of oversimplification[72] can be found in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* entry, and distinguishes three main semantic areas: 1) human nature or character; 2) the quality distinguishing civilized men from savages or

69 Cf. above, p. 7.

70 Narducci 1981, 179.

71 Cf. above, pp. 13–14.

72 Balbo 2012, 67 does not go too much into detail, but stresses that in this partition the semantic complexity of *humanitas* is "dumbed down" as the entry "sticks to generalities."

beasts, civilization, culture; 3) humane character, kindness, human feeling.[73] While it lacks the higher degree of detail found in the *TLL* or *L&S*,[74] the *OLD* approach has the merit of following in the footsteps of a native speaker of Latin, Aulus Gellius, who was the first to raise the problem of defining *humanitas* in the second century CE.[75] On the basis of this or analogous categorisations, many studies have sought to fix the exact meaning of *humanitas* on case-by-case criteria, often focusing on a single author.[76] Yet, as I have already hinted, in 1947 Pohlenz suggested in passing that *humanitas* was to be taken as the sum of those definitions which form points 2 and 3 of the *OLD* entry, and which Gellius, resorting to Greek values, referred to as παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία respectively.[77] The potential implications of this statement were long neglected or underestimated, until Stroh reformulated this principle, arguing that the idea of φιλανθρωπία originated from that of παιδεία: in short, being benevolent towards other fellow human beings is (or can be) a consequence of being learned, and education is ultimately useless unless it contributes to moral improvement.[78] As I will suggest in this book, a possible solution to understanding the intricate nature of *humanitas* should take the cue from, and expand on, Pohlenz's and Stroh's intuitions.

Veyne sums up what has induced *humanitas*-scholarship to try to pigeonhole occurrences of this word: "The reader can rest assured that I am as leery as he or she of the word *humanitas*. The term is both vague and laudatory."[79] What has always disturbed scholars, whether or not they declare it, is the same aspect which has always fascinated them, the polysemy of *humanitas*, which easily re-

73 For an overview of the other dictionary-styled entries on *humanitas* cf. S. Braund 1997, 16–18; Balbo 2012, 65–69.

74 The *TLL* entry (6.3.3075.5–3083.56) distinguishes between a general and an emphatic meaning of *humanitas*. The general meaning is in turn divided into human nature (for example as opposed to divine nature: 3075.29–3076.47), idea of man (3076.48–59), mankind (3076.60–3077.7) and also includes instances in which *humanitas* is used as a synonym of the adjective *humanus* (3077.8–19). The emphatic meaning refers instead to those occurrences in which *humanitas* characterises what is worthy of man: on these occasions *humanitas* is linked to other concepts of value like *prudentia* (3077.29–36), *dignitas*, *honestas* (3077.75–3078.6), *elegantia* (3078.7–28), *comitas*, *clementia*, *benignitas* (3079.1–3082.18), *hospitalitas* (3082.19–55), *munificentia* and *largitas* (3082.56–76) but also *eruditio*, *doctrina* and *urbanitas* (3078.32–84). *L&S*'s entry is very close to the *TLL*'s.

75 On *humanitas* in Gellius cf. below, pp. 158–174.

76 Without aiming at (impossible) completeness, I think of works such as Mayer 1951; Lipps 1967; Rieks 1967 or Schadewaldt 1973, on which cf. above, pp. 11–13. Further examples will emerge in the next chapters.

77 Pohlenz 1947, 451. Cf. also Snell 1953^2, 249–255; J. Schneider 1964, 120; Boyancé 1970b, 6.

78 Stroh 2008.

79 Veyne 1993, 342.

sults in vagueness and ambiguity. As a result, many scholars have felt the need to 'overcome' the vagueness of the word by forcing it into rigid meanings, which are themselves ideologically charged. Yet, as I will show, such a strategy leads to results that are inconclusive, for the vagueness of *humanitas* cannot simply be resolved and several Latin authors themselves purposely exploited the polysemy of this word.

Let me return to the *OLD* entry and imagine putting it under a microscope which can zoom either in or out. When we magnify our subject, which is what scholars usually do, it will be clear that *humanitas* is about being human and possessing the qualities which make human beings worthy of being called so, qualities which can be acquired through education and lead to the (modern) ideas of culture and civilization. What such an education and culture consist in is likely to depend on the historical period and socio-political condition, or else on the subjectivity of any single person, but one might think of literature, the so-called liberal arts in general, religion, law, and possibly many others.[80] Moreover, there is a further aspect of *humanitas*, that which relates to kindness, and which can materialise in hospitality, generosity, clemency, or, more simply, sympathy towards 'the other', whether a foreigner, enemy, or a lower-, equal- or higher-ranking person.

Yet we should also zoom out and avoid considering those three main meanings as compartmentalised. What emerges is that this strikingly broad spectrum of meanings originates from one and the same word. And if this is obviously not unique to this term, my objective is to attempt to understand how and to what extent these meanings relate to one another, and to show that it is much more proper as well as more effective to consider that these various meanings can often be simultaneously present in occurrences of the word *humanitas*. Zooming out is to take distance from the case-by-case perspective and adopt the work-by-work or author-by-author approach. This does not simply mean focusing on single authors only – there would be nothing new in this respect – but rather to understand whether and when there is a logic behind the use of *humanitas* in a given work, and whether such a use responds to a specific purpose, or produces certain effects. This change of tack turns out to be crucial, for it reveals the rhetorical strategies which underpin most authors' use of this word. More precisely, the main result of this approach is to show that the authors under investigation tend to use the word *humanitas* to unite as well as to differentiate between categories of people, as might be implicitly suggested by the second *OLD* definition of

80 On the understanding of civilization and culture throughout the course of this book cf. above, p. 8. n.18.

humanitas ('the quality distinguishing civilized man from savages'), especially if we bear in mind that the Roman upper classes usually regarded themselves as the true men. It is important to remark straight away that these categories are not fixed, but depend on the situation, the cultural climate, and the specific aims of the writer.

1.3 Studying *Humanitas* in the Imperial Age

The need to investigate *humanitas* as a nexus of interrelated connotations that concern important cultural-political discourses seems to me to pertain especially to the main pagan authors of the imperial period. As I will make clear later on, these authors inevitably had to engage with the previous history of *humanitas* and the rhetorical, historical and, above all, political and ideological connotations the word had acquired. Indeed, as the second chapter of this book will show, by the end of the first century CE the history of *humanitas* had already gone through different stages – from the heyday in the Ciceronian age to a gradual downfall, both in terms of quantity and polysemy of the occurrences, which began under Augustus and (provisionally) ended with Domitian's death in 96 CE. To some degree, therefore, studies such as those by Boissier, Reitzenstein and Nybakken hit the mark when highlighting the socio-political and cultural loss of importance of *humanitas* after the end of the republican age.[81] Yet the main problem of their contributions is that they did not look beyond the Augustan or the Neronian, Flavian ages at the latest, when, as figures too show, the frequency of the use of the noun *humanitas* increased again.[82] In fact, the pattern of ups and downs continued in the ages which followed, so that a Theodosian author like Symmachus made use of a kind of *humanitas* which carried with it the multi-layered history of its various uses until the late fourth century CE. Furthermore, since I have already explained why the Theodosian age marks the endpoint of this research,[83] and because it bears some resemblance to the Trajanic age, especially as a consequence of Theodosius' admiration for Trajan,[84] it will come as unsurprising that Pliny the Younger is the first while Symmachus is the last author I focus on. And after all, as some scholars have ar-

81 Cf. above, pp. 8–10.

82 On the frequency of *humanitas* from the republican age up to the late fourth century CE cf. below, pp. 41–44.

83 Cf. above, pp. 5–6.

84 Cf. below, pp. 224–226.

gued and this book should show further, in many respects (style and socio-political function above all) Symmachus relates very closely to Pliny the Younger.[85]

The benefits to this analysis are numerous and span socio-political, judicial, historical and educational fields. In works which have explicit socio-political aims, such as Pliny's *Panegyricus* and *Letters*, Ausonius' *Gratiarum actio* or Symmachus' oeuvre, the use of *humanitas*, especially as it seems to replace another concept of value like *clementia*, is likely to express a willingness to mark discontinuity between past and present political climates. If we then consider that *humanitas* is often understood by Pliny and Symmachus as Ciceronian, and as associated with late republican Rome, the message may even imply that their age is (or should be) more inclined to guarantee freedoms, as more associated with republican values than the previous one(s).[86] In different ways, attitudes towards *humanitas* in historians such as Tacitus, Ammianus, or the 'minor' historians of the fourth century reflect these changes of values. On other occasions, for example Apuleius' *Apologia* and *Metamorphoses*, Eumenius' *Oratio pro instaurandis scholis* and, to a lesser degree, some declamations, *humanitas* was instead perceived as an excellent weapon of persuasion in oratorical contexts, again following in Cicero's footsteps, especially in his *Pro Archia*. Moreover, a learned man like Gellius tried to restore, through the concept of *humanitas*, what he regarded as the best educational system in opposition to the grammarians' widespread but low-quality teaching. Finally, Firmicus Maternus and the author of the *Asclepius* display their own, singular understandings of *humanitas*, which are in tune with the particular genres of their works as well as by their being in close relationship with Greek models.

In the following sections of this introduction, after adding some methodological remarks, I shall first deal with the ancient texts which discussed the meanings of *humanitas* and influenced the twentieth-century compartmentalising approach to this concept of value. These texts bring into play the Greek concepts of παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία, whose connotations I will briefly explore. I will then discuss the origins of *humanitas*. Finally, I will outline the structure of the main part of the book.

85 Cf. below, pp. 314–315.

86 On the general attempt to recover republican values during the Trajanic age and in Pliny the Younger in particular cf. Gowing 2005, 121–122, where crucial is Pliny's expression *libertas reddita* of *Pan.* 58.3.

1.4 Some Methodological Remarks

I have been emphasising that the term *humanitas* is characterised by consistent polysemy, which is exploited differently according to authors, works, and contexts. It is my contention that any investigation of this multifaceted concept should work outwards, having the occurrences of the term *humanitas* itself as a starting point and exploring its significance in context. Once separated off from its context and studied in isolation, *humanitas* can mean anything and nothing. Most recent studies on *humanitas* agree with this methodological principle; however some, and especially earlier ones, do not.[87] We can therefore encounter studies on *humanitas* in authors who did not use, and often could not have used the word *humanitas* in the works which have come down to us. Such is the case, for example, in contributions studying the *humanitas* of some poets who wrote hexameters:[88] the sequence of two long syllables followed by one short and then another long syllable (*hūmānĭtās*) simply does not fit any hexametric verse. *Humanus* does fit the hexameter, but, as I shall clarify below, it can hardly be seen as an exact equivalent of *humanitas*. It is therefore impossible to understand the connotations authors who did not use the word *humanitas* would have given to this word. I by no means want to disregard these studies altogether: I simply want to say that they cannot play a key role in an analysis of Roman *humanitas*. Accordingly, this book deals with prose authors only.

Some comment on translation. In the course of this book, I consider a great many Latin texts in their literary, cultural and political contexts, some of which are of considerable length. To make it easier for readers who are little or not at all skilled in Classical languages to follow the discourse, I have provided all Greek and Latin texts with English translations, but because of the evident problems of conveying the multiple, ever-transforming meanings of *humanitas* without paraphrasing at length, or misleading my readers with inadequate single synonyms, I have most of the times left the word *humanitas* untranslated. These problems are exacerbated when in many cases *humanitas* is paired with other value concepts or other terms whose meanings are in turn influenced by their being associated with *humanitas*. I give here just one example. In the case of Eumenius' panegyric, discussed in Chapter 6, we encounter the pairing of *humanitas* and *uirtus*. Taken

87 Recent studies working outwards include Prost 2006; Stroh 2008; Oniga 2009; Balbo 2012; Høgel 2015; Vesperini 2015; Elice 2017; Boldrer 2021. Others will be mentioned in the next chapters. Büchner 1958; in part Lipps 1967, cf. *e.g.* 99–100; Rieks 1967 – cf. in particular 24; Nussbaum 1971; Girotti 2017 and others work instead inwards, moving from a questionable, pre-conceived idea of *humanitas*.

88 Cf. *e.g.* Büchner 1958 and Nussbaum 1971 on Horace's; Lipps 1967, 70–121 on Lucan's and Persius'; or Rieks 1967, 39; 50; 217 on Ovid's, Manilius' and Statius' *humanitas*.

alone, *uirtus* is no less polysemic than *humanitas*, but the context and the pairing with *humanitas* make clear that *uirtus* exalts the emperor's military prowess, while *humanitas* underscores his care for education and culture. The one value concept clarifies the other, and vice versa. On occasions such as this I have sometimes left untranslated also the Latin words which are paired with *humanitas*.

In order to understand the meaning of *humanitas* in context, analysing the words with which it is paired or to which it is opposed is often necessary. Yet some clarification is in order, especially because Høgel claims: "Many studies have [. . .] tried to derive the meaning of *humanitas* by searching for its relationship to other virtues. This is a difficult procedure and threatens to make nothing but a list of partially equivalent positive virtues."[89] While I agree that the presence of *humanitas* within lists of value concepts is usually of little help in terms of our understanding, this is often not the case when *humanitas* is paired with one single word (or two at most). To simply disregard the cases of pairing would be to ignore one major feature of the Latin language, its propensity to resort to synonymic dittologies: in order to convey a given idea as clearly as possible, two potentially synonymous, or, better, quasi-synonymous terms are paired together. This practice becomes particularly significant and helpful when the meaning of one of the two words, or both, would be ambiguous if taken alone: the passages from Gellius and Nonius quoted below make it clear that this is the case with *humanitas*, and that its ambiguity was already perceived by native Latin speakers.[90]

1.5 *Humanitas*: Ideological Components and Other Issues

As the initial state of research should have made clear, the question of the origins of *humanitas* is complicated and long-debated. To recap. Scholars disagree on what is to be seen as the first appearance of this value concept in Latin texts: do we need to stick to the very occurrences of the word *humanitas* or can instances of *humanus* express the same meaning as the noun? Closely related to this is a second question: is *humanitas* a typically Roman ideal or was it imported from Greece? I have already expressed my opinion on both these questions elsewhere,[91] but will reiterate them and, especially as far as the first one is concerned, starting from the subsection on Terence (2.1), this book will bring new evidence in favour of the substantial independence of the noun from the adjective.

89 Høgel 2015, 39.
90 Cf. below, pp. 24–25.
91 Cf. Mollea 2018b and Mollea 2023b.

1.5.1 *Humanus* and *Homo*

Humanus was originally a purely relational adjective that was coined to mean *hominis-hominum* / 'of man-men', but at some point developed an evaluative dimension and came to indicate what was worthy of the 'true' man, or, more etymologically, what was 'worthier' of man. I said more etymologically because evidence shows that it is rather in its comparative and superlative forms that the adjective *humanus* reveals its evaluative dimension. And, as Pultrová's very recent studies on comparatives in Latin show, there is a very tight connection between the gradability of an adjective and its capacity to give birth to abstract nouns.[92] As a result, we perceive that the abstract *humanitas*, which ultimately epitomises the qualities which make man worthy of being so called, is also rendered through comparatives and superlatives of *humanus* – which are employed only occasionally by the way – but rarely, and in particular contexts, by its positive form.

A fortiori, therefore, this book will not investigate the noun *homo*, and this is not due to the arguments put forward by modern linguistics.[93] For Giustiniani's following words would provide a satisfying objection against those theories: "Although modern linguists may question whether Latin *ŏ* can change into *ū*, both terms have been regarded as related to one another since antiquity, which is what matters here."[94] Yet while I do admit that *homo* and *humanus* / *humanitas* are linked to each other, those same antique sources invoked by Giustiniani also warn us against exceeding in drawing this parallelism. Cf. for example Pliny the Elder:

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92 Cf. Pultrová 2019 and Pultrová 2022.

93 As we have seen (cf. above, pp. 12–13), some previous studies on *humanitas* also deal with the occurrences of *homo*. Needless to say, the distance from *humanitas* would increase further and, at any event, it is difficult to imagine that a word like 'man' could usually carry ideological and ethical components. Furthermore, despite the intuitive connection of *humanus* / *humanitas* with *homo* (cf. *e.g.* Val. Max. 5.1. *praef.*, accepting Badius' conjecture *homine* – on which I am sceptical – instead of *numine*, or Ter. *Haut.* 77; further examples in Elice 2017, 287) the problem of their relationship is complicated further by the passage from *ŏ* of *hŏmo* to *ū* of *hūmanus*, which glottologists have yet to explain: cf. Ernout/Meillet 2001[4], 298; De Vaan 2008, 288; it is methodologically unsustainable to claim that we should accept the derivation of *humanus* from *homo* on the grounds that it is attested in ancient sources, as proposed by Walde/Hofmann 1938, 663–664, who then added: "erklärungsbedürftig ist lediglich (!) das ū." But the easiest explanation is that ancient sources – cf. Maltby 1991, s.v. *homo* for a complete list of these sources – produced a case of false etymology. Isidore of Seville (*Orig.* 10.116) inverts the reasoning and makes *homo* derive from *humanitas*, but the glottological problem does not change. I will return to this issue in the sub-chapters on Pliny and Gellius.

94 Giustiniani 1985, 167.

> Nec ignoro ingrati ac segnis animi existimari posse merito si obiter atque in transcursu ad hunc modum dicatur terra omnium terrarum alumna eadem et parens, numine deum electa quae caelum ipsum clarius faceret, sparsa congregaret imperia ritusque molliret et tot populorum discordes ferasque linguas sermonis commercio contraheret ad colloquia et humanitatem homini daret, breuiterque una cunctarum gentium in tot orbe patria fieret. (*HN* 3.39)

> I am well aware that I may with justice be considered ungrateful and lazy if I describe in this casual and cursory manner a land which is at once the nursling and the mother of all other lands, chosen by the providence of the gods to make heaven itself more glorious, to unite scattered empires, to make manners gentle, to draw together in converse by community of languages the jarring and uncouth tongues of so many nations, to give humankind civilization (*humanitatem homini*) and in a word to become throughout the world the single fatherland of all the races. (trans. S. Braund 1997)

The land which is said to give humankind civilization (*humanitatem homini*) is the Italian peninsula, and while this passage, whose imperialistic tone is undeniable,[95] may also be used to counter the texts in which Greece is regarded as the dispenser of *humanitas* – although of course one might object that Rome inherited this role from Greece –[96] what I want to stress is that Pliny makes it clear that being man is something utterly different from possessing *humanitas*. Rather, what he implies is that man, in order to become worthy of being so called, needs to acquire *humanitas*, but this cannot be taken for granted.

An opposition between *homo* and *humanitas* can also be found in one of the 'founders' of *humanitas*, Varro, who at *De lingua Latina* 8.31 observes: *quod aliud homini, aliud humanitati satis est; quoduis sitienti homini poculum idoneum, humanitati <ni>si bellum parum*, "for one thing is enough for man (*homini*), and quite another thing satisfies human refinement (*humanitati*): any cup at all is satisfactory to a man (*homini*) parched with thirst, but any cup is inferior to the demands of refinement (*humanitati*) unless it is artistically beautiful" (trans. Kent 1938, slightly adapted). A striking difference emerges here: like all other animals, man only has survival needs, whereas *humanitas* has greater demands, like that of beauty for instance. And as with the previous Plinian instance, here again it is clear that there is no automatic shift from *homo* to *humanitas*. Quite on the contrary, as Leonardis puts it: "la natura degli *humani* contempla qualcosa in più rispetto a quella dei semplici *homines*, dai quali i primi si differenzierebbero in quanto «raffinati», ovvero dotati di *humanitas*."[97]

95 Cf. S. Braund 1997, 23.

96 Cf. S. Braund 1997, 23. More on this passage and its relationship with the idea of civilization in Scherr 2023, 325–334.

97 Leonardis 2018, 526.

And in a famous passage of his *De republica* on which we will return later on, Cicero's Scipio firmly states that "only those who are skilled in the specifically human arts are worthy of the name of men" (*appellari ceteros homines, esse solos eos, qui essent politi propriis humanitatis artibus*, trans. Rudd 1998, slightly adapted).[98] He therefore makes explicit the relationship between *homo* and *humanitas*, but at the same time also reinforces the idea that the human being is not intrinsically, ontologically worthy of being so called: this happens only when common man possesses those arts that are appropriate for him. By contrast, those men who do not possess or share *humanitas*, whether they are noblemen, humble people or barbarians, threaten to return Rome to a barbarian, pre-civilized past.[99]

In the light of the above, the occurrences of *homo* will not be at the core of this research, although it is obvious that this noun crops up from time to time.

1.5.2 Greek or Latin *Humanitas*?

As for the issue concerning the origins of *humanitas*, before looking at it in detail, it is necessary to return to the core meanings and nuances conveyed by the word *humanitas*, starting from the ancient debate around it.

The first definition of *humanitas* is provided in the second century CE by Aulus Gellius at *Noctes Atticae* 13.17.1:

> Qui uerba Latina fecerunt quique his probe usi sunt, humanitatem non id esse uoluerunt, quod uolgus existimat quodque a Graecis φιλανθρωπία dicitur et significat dexteritatem quandam beniuolentiamque erga omnis homines promiscam, sed humanitatem appellauerunt id propemodum quod Graeci παιδείαν uocant, nos eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artis dicimus.
>
> Those who have spoken Latin and have used the language correctly do not give to the word *humanitas* the meaning which it is commonly thought to have, namely, what the Greeks call φιλανθρωπία, signifying a kind of friendly spirit and good-feeling towards all men without distinction; but they gave to *humanitas* about the force of the Greek παιδεία; that is, what we call *eruditionem institutionemque in bonas artes*, or 'education and training in the liberal arts.' (trans. Rolfe 1927)

To explain *humanitas*, Gellius brings into play the two Greek concepts of παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία. For the sake of clarity, he then gives other possible synonyms of these Greek concepts, defining φιλανθρωπία as *dexteritas* and *beniuolentia*, and

98 Cic. *Rep.* 1.28. Cf. below, pp. 49–50.
99 Cf. Gildenhard 2010, 211.

παιδεία as *eruditio* and *institutio in bonas artis*. He also expresses his own personal opinion on the meaning of the term: according to him, παιδεία is the correct meaning of *humanitas* while φιλανθρωπία is the wrong one. Gellius' preference can be explained in relation with the aims and the specific cultural context of his work, as we will see in detail in the Gellius section (4.2). More importantly, this statement signals that both senses of the word *humanitas* were attested in the literature of the time. Further and most precious confirmation comes from the later grammarian Nonius (fourth century CE), who nuances Gellius' definition at *De compendiosa doctrina* 1.255 (pp. 73–74 Lindsay):

> Humanitatem non solum, uti nunc consuetudine persuasum est, de beniuolentia, dexteritate quoque et comitate ueteres dicenda putauerunt, quam Graeci φιλανθρωπίαν uocant; sed honestorum studiorum et artium adpetitum, quod nulli animantium generi absque hominibus concessa sit. Varro Rerum humanarum [lib.] I Praxiteles, qui propter artificium egregium nemini est paululum modo humanior<i> ignotus.
>
> The ancients believed that, unlike what custom has now convinced us of, *humanitas* was not only to be invoked to indicate a kind of friendly spirit and kindness, namely what the Greeks call φιλανθρωπία. In contrast, it also indicated the desire of noble studies and noble arts, which were only conceded to man among all animal species. Varro, in the first book of his *Human Antiquities*, says: "Praxiteles, who, because of his surpassing art, is unknown to no one of any liberal culture (*humaniori*)."

The example taken from Varro's *Rerum humanarum libri*,[100] the same which we also read at *Noctes Atticae* 13.17.3, confirms that Nonius is following Gellius closely. However, the addition of *comitas* to the Latin equivalents of φιλανθρωπία, the absence of the terms παιδεία, *eruditio*, and *institutio*, and their replacement with *honestorum studiorum et artium adpetitum* guarantees that in this passage at least Nonius is not to be regarded as a pedestrian epitomator of Gellius. This consideration becomes all the more important when we consider that, unlike his predecessor, Nonius does not express a preference for one meaning of the word *humanitas* over the other. As a consequence, it is legitimate to state that Nonius attests even more firmly than Gellius the co-existence of the two meanings of *humanitas*. At the same time, both authors make clear that their considerations are not to be taken as grounded in, or exclusively pertinent to, the historical period in which they were writing. The presence of a fragment by Varro testifies to their campaign towards an ideally atemporal dimension of the Latin language, which is clearly in contrast with how language actually evolved, and which aimed at exalting the last authors of the republican or those of the Augustan age. As far as vocabulary is concerned, therefore, all later authors should employ the words in

100 Varro *Fr.* 1 Mirsch.

the same way and with the same meaning as their unrivaled predecessors. Gellius' criticism of his contemporaries who misused the term *humanitas* is based on this assumption.

Once it is established that φιλανθρωπία and παιδεία are the meanings that Roman men of learning gave to the word *humanitas*, I hope to show that Gellius' and, above all, Nonius' statements stand up to scrutiny, at least partly. For φιλανθρωπία and παιδεία are the two main components of the word *humanitas* that will be the object of discussion. However, it is important to emphasise again that there is sometimes, not to say often, a fine line between the two, so much so that the ideas of φιλανθρωπία and παιδεία can even overlap in Latin occurrences of *humanitas*. As I have already hinted, this principle of multi-layering, which is in my view crucial to our understanding of Roman *humanitas*, and consequently, of the Roman worldview, is less well established in scholarship. Stroh is unusual in explaining the process through which φιλανθρωπία and παιδεία are connected to one another:

> Iam uidemus igitur ex aliqua parte quomodo illae duae notiones φιλανθρωπίας et παιδείας ortae interque se commixtae sint. Atque initio humanitas non est illa quidem, si stricte interpretamur, eadem atque φιλανθρωπία, i.e. amor hominum et mansuetudo, sed magis communis natura humana, quam cum homo in altero esse sentit, a crudelitate auocatur, ad mansuetudinem misericordiamque commouetur. Postea per metonymiam quandam nomen humanitatis ipsam uirtutem declarat, quae plerumque mansuetudo aut clementia est, interdum etiam urbanitas et facilitas morum. Sed quia illa urbanitas litteris potissimum augeatur, ipsae quoque litterae uel artes, quibus παιδεία constat, humanitatis nomine dici possunt.[101]

Stroh spotlights well the two lines along which this process develops: from a chronological standpoint, the φιλανθρωπία meaning of *humanitas* precedes the παιδεία meaning; from a logical standpoint, the παιδεία meaning enhances φιλανθρωπία. In other words, if it is true that occurrences of *humanitas* (roughly) standing for φιλανθρωπία predate the first instances of *humanitas* meaning παιδεία, it is also true that, from Cicero onwards at least, education, liberal arts, and literature can be seen as (*the*) prerequisites for gaining access to the ideal of φιλανθρωπία. By the same token, this might also imply that to be a learned man is not necessarily to possess *humanitas*, for learning and education are not to be seen as ends in themselves. Therefore, the equation between possessing *humanitas* and being well-educated is only valid as long as education leads to a morally impeccable behaviour towards other fellow human beings. In the light of all this, it should not be difficult

101 Stroh 2008, 551–552.

to figure out that instances of *humanitas* in which the philanthropic meaning is predominant can also carry the educational component in the background.

At this point, the recurrent recourse to two different Greek concepts to express just one Roman value will have suggested that *humanitas* has no perfect equivalent in Greek. This in turn may already lead to the conclusion that *humanitas* so conceived was born and found its cultural premises in Rome. Although this is ultimately my belief, the solution to this issue is not so straightforward, and requires further analysis. For first, I would like to look briefly at the Greek use of φιλανθρωπία and παιδεία. I do not intend to provide a detailed analysis of the occurrences of these two concepts in Greek texts: in the case of φιλανθρωπία we already possess such studies; in the case of παιδεία, although several scholars have dealt with this concept, a thorough investigation of the instances of the word itself is to my knowledge still a *desideratum*, and it is beyond the scope of this book. I shall therefore limit myself to a summary whose aim is to provide sufficient background to address the problem of the origins of *humanitas*.

1.5.2.1 Φιλανθρωπία

Gellius'[102] and Nonius' conception of φιλανθρωπία as *beniuolentia* as well as Festugière's authoritative definition of this term as "a general disposition to benevolence and to act well towards men" ultimately find their roots in the pseudo-Platonic *Definitions*: Φιλανθρωπία ἕξις εὐάγωγος ἤθους πρὸς ἀνθρώπου φιλίαν· ἕξις εὐεργετικὴ ἀνθρώπων· χάριτος σχέσις· μνήμη μετ'εὐεργεσίας (412e: "the easy-going character state of being friendly to people; the state of being helpful to people; the trait of gratefulness; memory, together with helpfulness", trans. Hutchinson 1997).[103] As is typical of compilatory works of this kind, abundance of quasi-synonyms serves the purpose of clarifying the word under investigation and its contexts of application. Even beyond this definition, the etymology of the word is clear: it combines the root of the verb φιλέω ('to love') with ἄνθρωπος ('man / human being'), thereby meaning 'benevolence towards men'.[104] But if in the wake of derivatives of φιλανθρωπία in modern languages we are likely to take for granted that such a behaviour or attitude is not only displayed *towards* men but also *by* men, this is not true of the first attested instances of φιλανθρωπία in ancient Greek. As Lorenz probably showed for first, these date back to fifth-century Athens, and are to be found in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* 11 and 28 (φιλανθρώπου δὲ παύεσθαι τρόπου, "to stop his habit of

102 In tracing the history of φιλανθρωπία I mainly follow De Romilly 2011[2]. A rich bibliography on this topic can be found in Sulek 2010, 386. Cf. also Bettini 2019, 92–94.

103 Festugière 1949, 301.

104 Cf. Chantraine 1968 s.v. ἄνθρωπος.

favouring mankind", and τοιαῦτ'ἐπηύρου τοῦ φιλανθρώπου τρόπου "such is your reward for your habit of favouring mankind", trans. Collard 2008), and in Aristophanes' *Peace* 392–394 (ὦ φιλανθρωπότατε καὶ μεγαλοδωρότατε δαιμόνων, "O God most generous towards men").[105] In both cases gods are said to be φιλάνθρωποι towards humans, and, as De Romilly puts it, "il s'agit donc d'un acte de générosité venu du dehors aider l'espèce humaine; et ceci restera la valeur originelle du terme."[106] In fact, as she goes on to explain (45–46), analogous uses of the word can be found in Xenophon and Plato, which also means that this concept acquired a philosophical dimension.[107] In Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* then, φιλανθρωπία is also acknowledged to be an art which helps the human race, as is the case of agriculture (15.4: Νῦν τοίνυν, ἔφη, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ τὴν φιλανθρωπίαν ταύτης τῆς τέχνης ἀκούσῃ, "Now therefore, Socrates – he said – also listen to the philanthropy of this art").[108]

At some point – although it is not clear how and when – φιλανθρωπία mainly came to characterise relationships among human beings, thereby losing its divine component. Xenophon and Plato testify to this shift in meaning, which is embodied in the figure of Socrates at *Memorabilia* 1.2.60 and *Euthyphro* 3d. By resorting to a comparison between these two occurrences, Lorenz endeavoured to explain the shift from gods to men as possessors of φιλανθρωπία on the grounds that the Athenian philosopher would be the perfect 'intermediary' between the two categories.[109] More specifically, Lorenz argues that at *Euthyphro* 3d Socrates is playfully pretending to be acting like a god when attributing a divine virtue like φιλανθρωπία to himself: ἐγὼ δὲ φοβοῦμαι μὴ ὑπὸ φιλανθρωπίας δοκῶ αὐτοῖς ὅτιπερ ἔχω ἐκκεχυμένως παντὶ ἀνδρὶ λέγειν, οὐ μόνον ἄνευ μισθοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ προστιθεὶς ἂν ἡδέως εἴ τίς μου ἐθέλει ἀκούειν ("I'm afraid that my liking for people makes them think that I pour

105 Lorenz 1914, 9. More in-depth discussion of these occurrences in Sulek 2010, 387–389. Cf. also Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 273–274, who also has a point in claiming that the idea of φιλανθρωπία can already be found in Homer. Consider for instance *Il.* 6. 12–15: Ἄξυλον δ' ἄρ' ἔπεφνε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης / Τευθρανίδην, ὃς ἔναιεν ἐϋκτιμένῃ ἐν Ἀρίσβῃ / ἀφνειὸς βιότοιο, φίλος δ' ἦν ἀνθρώποισι. / πάντας γὰρ φιλέεσκεν ὁδῷ ἔπι οἰκία ναίων ("Diomedes then slew Axylos / Teuthninides from the walled town Arisbe. / A rich man and kindly, he befriended all who passed his manor by the road", trans. Fitzgerald 1974). Cf. also Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 543.

106 De Romilly 2011[2], 45. Cf. also Nikolaïdis 1980, 351: "The first basic difference between philanthropía and humanitas is that, whereas the former is connected with the gods right from the beginning, the latter is never associated with the Divine". On the relationship between *humanitas* and the Divine (or *diuinitas*), cf. below, pp. 85; 323; 328; 336.

107 Xen. *Mem.* 4.3; Plato *Symp.* 189d and *Leg.* 713d. Cf. also Lorenz 1914, 10–11; Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 543. On φιλανθρωπία in Plato cf. also Hiltbrunner 1994a, 715; Sulek 2010, 390–392.

108 Cf. Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 281.

109 Lorenz 1914, 14.

out to anybody anything I have to say, not only without charging a fee but even glad to reward anyone who is willing to listen", trans. Grube 1974).[110] This reading is corroborated by Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 1.2.60, where Socrates is said to be δημοτικός ('friend of the populace') καὶ φιλάνθρωπος for roughly the same reasons as in Plato's *Euthyphro* (which would also suggest that this was a topos among Socrates' pupils). De Romilly endorsed Lorenz's thesis and Sulek has brought new arguments in support of it, claiming that "*philanthrôpía* [. . .] maintains its close association with divinity in *Euthyphro*, in terms of distinguishing the nature of Socrates' relationship with his *daemon* or divine sign from that of Euthyphro."[111] Nevertheless, like Tromp de Ruiter, I am hesitant to embrace Lorenz's interpretation that Socrates' words allude to a comparison between himself and gods.[112] First, expressed in these terms, such an allusion would hardly be grasped. Secondly, even if in a couple of previous instances φιλανθρωπία pertains to gods, this is not sufficient to conclude that it was conceived as the prerogative of divine entities only. On the other hand, Sulek's argument, however convincing in principle, is too vague. That said, I do not deny the pivotal role of Socrates, who really is the first man said to possess φιλανθρωπία in the Greek works which have come down to us, but I would not push the reasoning further.

Regardless of the persuasiveness of Lorenz's reasoning, from Plato and Xenophon down to the fourth century BCE, φιλανθρωπία often refers to a human attitude, or, better, a human virtue which has to be displayed towards other men to concretise itself, especially in Athenian society.[113] At the beginning, it maintains its noblest and most exclusive meaning, and also applies to politics. Judges, laws and, *a fortiori*, sovereigns must be guided by φιλανθρωπία.[114] In this respect, Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Isocrates' *Panegyricus* are cases in point.[115] As a consequence, it comes as no surprise that we find it at times linked with ἔλεος ('clemency').[116] For his part, Aristotle sets himself in Xenophon's footsteps, and regards φιλανθρωπία as

110 Lorenz 1914, 14.

111 De Romilly 2011², 46–47; Sulek 2010, 392. Cf. De Romilly 2011², 47: "on voit par ce rapprochement comment on pouvait user d'une exagération souriante et délibérée pour comparer un acte de générosité à la bonté divine."

112 Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 275.

113 Lorenz 1914, 25; 29; Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 288–290; De Romilly 2011², 48. See De Romilly 2011², 97–112 for more on the idea of *douceur* in Athens.

114 Cf. Lorenz 1914, 15–21; Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 544. Some references can also be found in De Romilly 2011², 49 nn. 4, 5 and 6; Sulek 2010, 393. Cf. also Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 284; Hiltbrunner 1994a, 716.

115 Cf. Lorenz 1914, 15–16; Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 277–281; Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 544; Sulek 2010, 392–393.

116 Cf. Lorenz 1914, 22; Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 286.

'an innate characteristic of a person or thing that causes them to be attracted to human beings'.[117] But it is also the case that in the cultural milieu of the Sophistic as well as in a figure like Isocrates some scholars have seen glimpses of the influence of education, that is, of παιδεία, on φιλανθρωπία or a philanthropic attitude,[118] despite the fact that the two terms themselves are not found next to each other, and often just one or even neither of them is mentioned. In this respect, a relevant example they provided is by the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus of Soli (third century BCE – Chrysippus' words are referred by Diogenes Laertius at 2.70): ἄμεινον ἔφη ἐπαιτεῖν ἢ ἀπαίδευτον εἶναι· οἱ μὲν γὰρ χρημάτων, οἱ δ' ἀνθρωπισμοῦ δέονται ("It is better to be a beggar than to be uneducated: the former lacks wealth, the latter lacks humanity"). The general message seems in effect to be clear; φιλανθρωπία, however, is replaced by the rare ἀνθρωπισμός, whose relationship to ἄνθρωπος is evident, but that lacks the fundamental component of φιλέω.

Moreover, φιλανθρωπία becomes one of the values of everyday life which characterise the 'honest man'.[119] On the other hand, its diffusion as well as its applicability to different aspects of life also account for the weakening of its meaning in the period which followed, when φιλάνθρωπος said of a speech meant little more than 'pleasant',[120] and φιλανθρωπία also came to indicate 'kindness', as in Menander, or even 'hospitality'.[121] In the third century BCE then, φιλανθρωπία also stands for private generosity.[122] Furthermore, φιλανθρωπία began to be expressed more in words than in deeds, as is the case with Philip II of Macedon in Demosthenes' *De corona* 231.[123] Still later, in inscriptions, in Polybius' work as well as in the Roman age in general, φιλανθρωπία becomes more and more clichéd, and generally pertains to the diplomatic world.[124] As an alternative, it could indicate 'salary' or 'compensation', or even 'benefits'.[125] Needless to say, this was the main trend, but instances of the word maintaining its original meaning

117 Sulek 2010, 394. On φιλανθρωπία in Aristotle cf. also Lorenz 1914, 37–39; Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 544–545.

118 Cf. Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 544.

119 De Romilly 2011[2], 50.

120 De Romilly 2011[2], 50. Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 544 highlight the stress on the educational component of a λόγος which is regarded as φιλάνθρωπος.

121 Sulek 2010, 394 on Menander; Lorenz 1914, 32; De Romilly 2011[2], 230 on hospitality. On the weakening of the meaning of φιλανθρωπία cf. also Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 291–292.

122 Sulek 2010, 395.

123 Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 291; De Romilly 2011[2], 50; Sulek 2010, 393. Cf. also Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 291 on Isocrates 15.133.

124 Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 292–294; Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 545; Hiltbrunner 1994a, 725 – on Polybius; De Romilly 2011[2], 51.

125 Cf. Lorenz 1914, 35; Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 288–289; Sulek 2010, 395.

and momentum can also be found beyond the fourth century BCE,[126] for example in the already mentioned Menander, in Philo of Alexandria's Περὶ φιλανθρωπίας or in Plutarch's work.[127] According to De Romilly, Plutarch even ends up identifying the broader idea of what she calls *douceur* (of which φιλανθρωπία is one crucial component) with the idea of civilization itself, which is in turn regarded as the prerogative of Greece.[128] Among Christians, φιλανθρωπία is at times considered a quality of Jesus Christ.[129]

1.5.2.2 Παιδεία

In linguistic terms, παιδεία is a verbal noun which derives from παιδεύω ('bring up a child', 'train and teach', 'educate' according to *LSJ*) and therefore stands for 'education', 'formation', but also for what education produces, 'culture'.[130] As I have mentioned, a thorough analysis of the instances of this word in ancient Greek literature has to my knowledge not yet been undertaken, and Jaeger's authoritative statement at the beginning of his masterpiece *Paideia* warns scholars against undertaking it:

> It would seem obvious for us to use the history of the word *paideia* as a clue to the origins of Greek culture. But we cannot do so, since the word does not occur before the fifth century. That is of course merely an accident of transmission. If new sources were discovered, we might well find evidence of its occurrence at an earlier date. But even then we should be none the wiser; for the earliest examples of its use show that at the beginning of the fifth century it still had the narrow meaning of 'child-rearing' and practically nothing of its later, higher sense.[131]

Havelock's definition of the Homeric works as a 'tribal encyclopedia', that is, as a tribal, circular, comprehensive παιδεία, is in tune with this argument.[132] Because of the numerous descriptions and prescriptions of events and rituals belonging to the everyday life of Homeric society, Havelock, through the lens of Plato, therefore views the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as founding texts not only of Greek culture, but also of Greek education. Yet without the term παιδεία, 'culture', being mentioned

126 Sulek 2010, 395.

127 On φιλανθρωπία in Menander cf. Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 545; De Romilly 2011[2], 202–203, according to whom in the Greek playwright φιλανθρωπία takes on a meaning very close to Latin *humanitas*; on Philo cf. Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 294–295; Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 545–546; Hiltbrunner 1994a, 723; on Plutarch Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 295–300; Hügli/Kipfer 1989, 545–546.

128 De Romilly 2011[2], 305.

129 Tromp de Ruiter 1931, 301–302: cf. *Act. Ap.* 27.3; *Ep. Tit*. 3.4; Origenes *Comm. in Johan.* 1.20.121.

130 Cf. Chantraine 1974 s.v. παῖς.

131 Jaeger 1946[3], 4.

132 Havelock 1963, 66; *passim*.

throughout, these two works would not play any role in a history of the word παιδεία.

Indeed, the first instance of παιδεία is to be found in an elegy by Theognis (2.1305–1310), and Jaeger's statement above turns out to be even optimistic on closer inspection, for παιδεία simply means 'boyhood' on this occasion. However, we encounter the idea of 'child rearing' in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes* (467 BCE) when in his opening speech Eteocles also praises Thebes for accepting the toil of bringing up its children (ll. 17–18: ἢ γὰρ νέους ἔρποντας εὐμενεῖ πέδῳ, / ἄπαντα πανδοκοῦσα παιδείας ὅτλον, "when you came to her as new children, and on her kindly soil she bred you to found homes [. . .] for our present need", trans. Collard 2008), as well as in Thucydides' comparison of the different upbringings of Athenians and Spartans (2.39.1: καὶ ἐν ταῖς παιδείαις οἱ μὲν ἐπιπόνῳ ἀσκήσει εὐθὺς νέοι ὄντες τὸ ἀνδρεῖον μετέρχονται, ἡμεῖς δὲ ἀνειμένως διαιτώμενοι οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἐπὶ τοὺς ἰσοπαλεῖς κινδύνους χωροῦμεν, "In education also they follow an arduous regime, training for manliness right from childhood, whereas we have a relaxed lifestyle but are still just as ready as they to go out and face our equivalent dangers", trans. Hammond 2009). To be sure, Jaeger was right in claiming that these instances display a 'weaker', 'less noble' meaning of παιδεία, but he probably underestimated the fact that the foundation of Plato's (and others') nobler idea of this word lies in these very first occurrences. Compare Plato's juvenile dialogue *Crito*, in which Socrates has the Laws of Athens ask him several, mainly rhetorical, questions, one of which is: Ἀλλὰ [scil. μέμφῃ] τοῖς περὶ τὴν τοῦ γενομένου τροφήν τε καὶ παιδείαν ἐν ᾗ καὶ σὺ ἐπαιδεύθης; ἢ οὐ καλῶς προσέταττον ἡμῶν οἱ ἐπὶ τούτῳ τεταγμένοι νόμοι, παραγγέλλοντες τῷ πατρὶ τῷ σῷ σε ἐν μουσικῇ καὶ γυμναστικῇ παιδεύειν; (50d: "[do you find anything to criticize] in those of us concerned with the nurture of babies and the education that you too received? Were those assigned to that subject not right to instruct your father to educate you in the arts and in physical culture?", trans. Grube 1974). The meaning of this occurrence of παιδεία is ultimately analogous to the Aeschylean and Thucydidean ones, the only difference lying in the addition of τροφή, 'food', which allows Plato to distinguish between 'physical' and 'spiritual' forms of nourishment, τροφή and παιδεία respectively. Yet Plato employed this term at least 135 other times across his work – only the fifth-century CE theologian Theodoretus of Cyrus seems to have used it more often – and in such a way as to expand its original meaning. In the *Republic* for instance, Plato investigates it in detail, seeks to define what its components are, and claims: Τίς οὖν ἡ παιδεία; ἢ χαλεπὸν εὑρεῖν βελτίω τῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ πολλοῦ χρόνου ηὑρημένης; ἔστιν δέ που ἡ μὲν ἐπὶ σώμασι γυμναστική, ἡ δ' ἐπὶ ψυχῇ μουσική (376e: "What will their education be? Or is it hard to find anything better than that which has developed over a long period – physical training for bodies and music and poetry for the soul?", trans. Grube/

Reeve 1974). Παιδεία has therefore come to include both gymnastics and the arts of the Muses – *mens sana in corpore sano,* as Juvenal 10.356 would later paraphrase it. But there is more: to know the arts of the Muses is to possess what we call culture. In other words, Plato bridged the gulf between what Jaeger called the narrow and the higher meanings of this word. Jaeger himself stressed this fundamental role played by Plato, and also added that Plato had been the first to 'theorise' a concept which ends up covering "the artist's act of plastic formation as well as the guiding pattern present to his imagination, the *idea* or *typos*."[133] Yet Plato was not alone. Along with him, the Sophists, Isocrates and Xenophon established the conception of παιδεία as ideal perfection of mind and body, which mainly resulted from "a genuine intellectual and spiritual culture",[134] and which was destined to express one of the main features of Hellenism in the centuries which followed.

During one later period and cultural climate in particular, the role of παιδεία was again crucial: this is the so-called Second Sophistic of the second century CE, a cultural movement which also influenced the works and thought of Apuleius, Gellius and Fronto, and is therefore of special relevance to this book. One of the main exponents of this movement, Dio Chrysostom, provides a twofold definition of παιδεία in his fourth discourse *On Kingship*. Worried by Diogenes the Cynic's questions, Alexander the Great, the second protagonist of this dialogue, asks the philosopher who imparts the art of kingship. Diogenes replies that only Zeus can teach this art, and the discussion seamlessly shifts to education (29–33). There are two kinds of education (διττή ἐστιν ἡ παιδεία), says the philosopher: one comes from Heaven, the other is human (ἡ μέν τις δαιμόνιος, ἡ δὲ ἀνθρωπίνη). Most people believe that the latter is the true education, and that it consists in reading and knowing as much literature as possible (καὶ νομίζουσι τὸν πλεῖστα γράμματα εἰδότα [. . .] καὶ πλείστοις ἐντυγχάνοντα βιβλίοις, τοῦτον σοφώτατον καὶ μάλιστα πεπαιδευμένον). Yet this kind of education does not prevent people from being disreputable men. By contrast, the second form of education, which is called not only παιδεία, but also ἀνδρεία or μεγαλοφροσύνη, originates from Zeus and makes men noble and brave. Those who possess this second, true and complete παιδεία, concludes the philosopher, can easily acquire the first one. The true παιδεία thus combines cultural and moral components (although the idea of φιλανθρωπία remains distant), but, compared with Stroh's explanation of *humanitas* above, the logic is significantly inverted: the moral qualities can be complemented by literature and culture in general, but it is not a 'humanistic' education which can favour the development of morality.

133 Jaeger 1946^3, xxiii.
134 Jaeger 1946^3, 286.

Nor is παιδεία less important to the thought of the second major exponent of the Second Sophistic, Aelius Aristides. If the term itself already appears 31 times in Dio's oeuvre, it appears, excluding spurious works, as many as 38 times in Aelius Aristides'. I shall return to this figure in the next section. For the moment, I limit myself to anticipating that his particularity lies in the fact that he paired παιδεία with φιλανθρωπία, thereby combining the two main values upon which *humanitas* was based.

1.6 The Origins of *Humanitas*

Now that we have reached a better understanding of the meanings and nuances of the two Greek concepts that Gellius and Nonius associated with *humanitas*, we can address the problem of the origins of this value term. Ancient sources agree in acknowledging that *humanitas* was born in Greece, more precisely in Athens.[135] Cicero reiterates this several times, for example in *Ad Quintum fratrem* 1.1.27 and in *Pro Flacco* 62. In congratulating his brother, recently appointed as propraetor of Asia, Cicero both stresses the honour of governing such a prestigious province and gives him some advice on how to carry out his duties:

> Quod si te sors Afris aut Hispanis aut Gallis praefecisset, immanibus ac barbaris nationibus, tamen esset humanitatis tuae consulere eorum commodis et utilitati salutique seruire; cum uero ei generi hominum [*scil.* Graecorum] praesimus non modo in quo ipsa sit sed etiam a quo ad alios peruenisse putetur humanitas, certe iis eam potissimum tribuere debemus a quibus accepimus. (*QFr.* 1.1.27)[136]

> If the luck of the draw had sent you to govern savage, barbarous tribes in Africa or Spain or Gaul, you would still as a civilized man (*humanitatis tuae*) be bound to think of their interests and devote yourself to their needs and welfare. But we are governing a civilized race, in fact the race from which civilization (*humanitas*) is believed to have passed to others, and assuredly we ought to give its benefits above all to those from whom we have received it. (trans. Shackleton Bailey 2002)

While here Cicero is rather vague in regarding all Greeks as 'founders' of *humanitas*, in the oration he pronounced in 59 BCE in defence of Lucius Valerius Flaccus, who was charged *de repetundis*, this merit is restricted to the Athenians: *Adsunt*

135 Cf. S. Braund 1997, 21–22. Cf. also Edelstein 1967, 132; Scherr 2023, 2 and n. 7, 81–85, 270–290 (with relevant bibliography) on Athens as birthplace of civilization.

136 Cf. J. Schneider 1964, 97: "O. Flemming sieht in ihm [scil. im Begriff *humanitas*] die zentrale Mitte des gesamten Briefes." Flemming's assertion is on page 62 (J. Schneider on n. 54). On this passage cf. also Scherr 2023, 303–305.

Athenienses, unde humanitas, doctrina, religio, fruges, iura, leges ortae atque in omnis terras distributae putantur ("Here present are men from Athens, where men think *humanitas*, learning, religion, grain, rights, and laws were born, and whence they were spread through all the earth", trans. Lord 1953).[137]

More than a century and a half later, Pliny the Younger wrote to his friend Maximus a letter which, as scholarship has pointed out, closely echoes *Ad Quintum fratrem* 1.1, not least in its use of *humanitas*.[138] Like Cicero's brother, Maximus too was sent to govern the province of Achaia, probably as *corrector* (a special commissioner, appointed from the time of Trajan onward, to supervise the finances of a *libera ciuitas*):

> Cogita te missum in prouinciam Achaiam, illam ueram et meram Graeciam, in qua primum humanitas litterae, etiam fruges inuentae esse creduntur; missum ad ordinandum statum liberarum ciuitatum, id est ad homines maxime homines, ad liberos maxime liberos, qui ius a natura datum uirtute meritis amicitia, foedere denique et religione tenuerunt. (*Ep.* 8.24.2)

> Bear in mind that you have been dispatched to the province of Achaia, which is the true and genuine Greece in which *humanitas*, literature, and agriculture too are believed to have been first invented. Remember that you have been sent to order the condition of free states, dispatched in other words to men who are men in the highest sense, to free citizens, free in the highest sense, who have maintained the rights which nature bestowed on them by virtue of their excellence, merits, political friendships, treaty, and finally religious devotion. (trans. Walsh 2006)

I will deal further with this letter in the Pliny section. For the moment, we need to take note of the fact that the agreement of Cicero, Pliny, and also, implicitly, Gellius on the Greek origins of *humanitas* has not been sufficient to persuade much modern scholarship. Why? The answer is rather simple: investigations of *humanitas* reveal that the Greeks did not have any single word which could cover the polysemy of this Latin term. Or, if we wish to push this reasoning one step further, the absence of a noun with all these characteristics would reveal the lack

137 Cf. also Cic. *Sen.* 1; *Leg.* 2.36. *Pro Flacco* 62 might in part echo Isocrates' *Panegyricus* 47–50, where the invention of philosophy and eloquence, and their educative impact, are attributed to the Athenians. In fact: Τοσοῦτον δ' ἀπολέλοιπεν ἡ πόλις ἡμῶν περὶ τὸ φρονεῖν καὶ λέγειν τοὺς ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους, ὥσθ' οἱ ταύτης μαθηταὶ τῶν ἄλλων διδάσκαλοι γεγόνασιν, καὶ τὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων ὄνομα πεποίηκεν μηκέτι τοῦ γένους, ἀλλὰ τῆς διανοίας δοκεῖν εἶναι, καὶ μᾶλλον Ἕλληνας καλεῖσθαι τοὺς τῆς παιδεύσεως τῆς ἡμετέρας ἢ τοὺς τῆς κοινῆς φύσεως μετέχοντας (50: "And so far has our city distanced the rest of mankind in thought and in speech that her pupils have become the teachers of the rest of the world; and she has brought it about that the name 'Hellenes' suggests no longer a race but an intelligence, and that the title 'Hellenes' is applied rather to those who share our culture than to those who share a common blood.", trans. Norlin 1928).
138 Cf. above all Zucker 1928.

of a single, albeit composed, concept in Greek mentality and worldview.[139] I ultimately agree with this conclusion, but it is my conviction that the issue deserves further attention.

We might approach this problem differently: because Gellius mentions both παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία, two values which are apparently distant from one another, and because there is abundant evidence that these two ideas co-exist in *humanitas*, to look for pairings of these two words in Greek texts goes some way towards verifying if the Greeks perceived any close relationship between παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία. I sum up here the results of this investigation:[140] if we exclude the literature of the Byzantine age, παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία only appear together three times, once in a fragment of Diodorus Siculus which has come down to us thanks to Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus' *De uirtutibus et uitiis* (tenth century CE) and twice in orations by Aelius Aristides (3.382 and 29.33 Lenz/Behr). The occurrence at Diodorus 37.8.2 (= Const. Exc. 2(1), p. 317 = Posidon. *Fr.* 215 Theiler) concerns one of Sempronius Asellio's advisors, who, also thanks to his παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία, played a key role in helping the probable governor of Sicily of 96 BCE to restore the ruined island. Yet this passage involves doubts about authorship and periods of composition, which makes any argument concerning it highly speculative.[141] By contrast, the case of Aelius Aristides might be of special relevance, for he lived and wrote in the second century CE in the Second Sophistic, of which he was perhaps the most important exponent. Chapter 4, which looks at the figures of Gellius and Apuleius in particular, explores the key role played by Latin *humanitas* within that cultural milieu, and it would be tempting to consider Aelius Aristides' simultaneous use of παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία as an attempt to translate *humanitas* (back?) into Greek.

Is it possible to explain, if not reconcile, these inconsistencies, that is, the fact that many Latin authors speak of a Greek *humanitas* despite the fact that an exact Greek equivalent of this term does not exist? Let us return to the Latin texts above. Of all the Ciceronian and Plinian passages which explicitly regard *humanitas* as a Greek invention, *Pro Flacco* 62 is perhaps the most useful for understanding what is meant by *humanitas* in this context. In the list of the Greek inventions, *humanitas* takes pride of place, followed by education/learning (*doctrina*), religion (*religio*), agriculture (*fruges*), and laws (*iura, leges*). This is not due to the fact that *humanitas* is more important than the other elements of the series;

139 Cf. Nikolaïdis 1980, 354.

140 For more details cf. Mollea 2018b.

141 In addition to the problems posed by the fact that we face a case of indirect tradition, Theiler attributed this fragment to the Stoic philosopher Posidonius, but in previous editions of Posidonius Edelstein/Kidd and Jacoby had not. More on this in Mollea 2018b, 150.

rather, it is because *humanitas* can encompass all of them. Yet the notion that it is potentially all-encompassing implies a certain degree of ambiguity, an ambiguity which is nevertheless limited, when necessary, by the authors' habit of pairing *humanitas* with more specific, less ambiguous terms. We will see throughout the course of this study that most, not to say all, of the elements that Cicero names at *Pro Flacco* 62 appear elsewhere in conjunction with *humanitas*, in order to help the reader understand case by case the nuances that this word takes on in a particular passage. Accordingly, in this Ciceronian oration the simultaneous presence of so many elements clearly has rhetorical ends – this figure of speech is called *enumeratio* – but more importantly for my point, it indicates that *humanitas* is to be understood in its broadest and highest senses of 'civilization' and 'human culture', which are the results as well as the sum of education, religion, and so on. This idea of civilization, Cicero says, was born in Greece, and this has been a widely held belief in Western society since. On the other hand, however, I cannot think of any ancient Greek word which could render this Ciceronian instance (and idea) of *humanitas* as civilization, while we might easily find Greek words that can translate the other items of the above list.

In the light of this, I would suggest that the problem can be resolved as follows: by claiming that *humanitas* was born in Greece, Cicero and Pliny refer to those elements of Greek, or more precisely, of Athenian origin which, taken together, express the notion of human civilization. It is telling that the Greeks themselves would not have any single word to express this concept. Evidently, they – and the Athenians in particular – did not feel the need to elaborate such a concept formally: that their society was the acme of human realisation, whether in social, cultural or political terms, was simply a given to them. And also a given must have been the fact that the (combination of the) ideals of παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία played a crucial role in defining the features of their perfect model of human society. Conversely, by presenting *humanitas* as a Greek invention, it looks as though Latin authors also sought to legitimise and ennoble what was in fact their own great contribution to humankind. Yet when we look at other occurrences of *humanitas* and realise that παιδεία and φιλανθρωπία are ultimately the main, or simply the most common and the most apparent, components of *humanitas* and that, unlike what occurs in Greek culture, they are inevitably connected with one another, the distance between the Roman and Greek mentality increases further. Briefly, it is legitimate to consider the Greeks as the inventors of the elements which constitute the idea of *humanitas*, but the Romans were the first to

combine these elements, to regard them as interwoven, and to call the sum of them by just one name.[142]

1.7 *Humanitas* and Other Value Concepts

As we have just seen and will become clearer in the course of this book, the study of this concept of value often calls into play other *Wertbegriffe* or abstract concepts, to which are in turn devoted specific studies. In addition to the habit of Latin authors of juxtaposing other nouns to *humanitas* to define better the nuances it takes on occurrence by occurrence, there are in particular two abstract concepts whose history is inevitably linked to that of *humanitas*: *clementia* and *superbia*. The former can at times be seen as a partial synonym, or, better, as a hyponym, of *humanitas* and establishes an important dialectical relationship with it, whereas the latter is rather to be regarded as one of its opposites.[143] As both of them will crop us often throughout this study, it can be useful to provide some remarks straight away.

1.7.1 *Clementia*

A clear and bibliographically updated synthesis of the history of *clementia* from its first occurrences until the end of the first century CE has very recently been provided by Della Calce, from which I draw heavily in what follows.[144] Like the case of *humanitas*, *clementia* too has raised some questions on which scholars are not yet in agreement. One, in particular, concerns the so called *clementia Caesaris*, that is, the role of the term *clementia* with the figure of Julius Caesar. We will return on this issue in a while. For the moment, it is worth stressing that the first instances of words coined on the root of *clementia*, like *clemens* or *(in)clementer*, appeared in the works of Plautus, while the noun itself was first used by Terence (*Ad.* 861). Its first occurrences broadly indicate the idea of mildness, also applying to hills or weather conditions. Yet this meaning was not exclusive: as Malaspina

142 Cf. Schneider 1964, 120 with reference to Cicero, *QFr.* 1.1: "Geist, Politik und Recht [. . .] stellen eine unauflösbare Einheit dar. Wir haben also hier, wo das griechische Element im humanitas-Begriff so stark in Erscheinung tritt, es trotzdem mit einer genuin römischen Vorstellung zu tun."

143 On *humanitas* as hyponym of *clementia* cf. Harder 1934, 64–74; Hellegouarc'h 1963, 268; Lipps 1967, 43 and 60; Rieks 1967, 70–79 and Mineo 2006, 73.

144 Cf. Della Calce 2023, 19–21.

has shown, in Plautus some instances of the adjective and adverb are also related with the idea of politeness.[145] Furthermore, in the years which followed, *clementia* also took on an ethical-political dimension, which gradually became prevalent, so much so that "the invocation and celebration of the emperor's *clementia* became increasingly forthright, indeed blunt, as the first century [*scil*. CE] progressed"[146]: it is in this very respect that its relationship with *humanitas* becomes in my view crucial, especially from the late first century CE onwards. Regardless of the reasons for which Cicero often attributed the noun *clementia* to Julius Caesar, while Caesar himself was very careful in using it, it is evident that it became an imperial virtue right from Augustus, since it appears – alongside *uirtus*, *iustitia* and *pietas* – in the famous *clipeus aureus* the Senate dedicated to him in 27 BCE. The step from being considered an imperial to a tyrannical value was a short one, and the gap was involuntarily bridged by Seneca. When he devoted to Nero his treatise *De clementia* he could not know that what he regarded as a noble virtue would end up being associated with the name of an emperor who was far from showing himself as clement, especially in the last period of his reign. The result was therefore that the term *clementia* was looked at with suspicion after the Neronian age, so much so that Statius needed to reinvent it in the *Thebaid*. Instead of using *clementia* to refer to forgiveness, Statius conferred a more general philanthropical dimension upon it, which came to indicate a value through which to help the oppressed.[147] Yet, Domitian too turned out to be remembered as a tyrant in Roman cultural memory, and right from the time of his successor Trajan. It therefore comes as unsurprising that an author of the Trajanic age like Pliny recovered a value concept which on the one hand implied the idea of philanthropy as in Statius's understanding of *clementia*, but on the other hand was likely to remind people of the ideal, or, perhaps better, idealised years of the late Roman republic, when Cicero had used *humanitas* as a value concept that could reinforce Roman society in a time of crisis also because it theoretically transcended social class distinctions and privileges.[148] Likewise, we shall observe that something analogous happened towards the end of the fourth century CE, when *clementia*, after a sort of revival, ended up being used as an honorific title, whereas *humanitas* was once again considered as a possible binding value within

145 Cf. *Epid.* 205; *Merc.* 952; *Mil.* 695; 1098; 1252; *Poen.* 1323; 1373; *Pseud.* 27; *Rud.* 114; 734; *Stich.* 531; *Trin.* 827; *Truc.* 273; 604–605; on which Malaspina 2009, 42 states that they refer to the "sfera del vivere quotidiano, dei rapporti interpersonali e di quella che oggi chiameremmo 'buona educazione'".

146 Dowling 2006, 181. Cf. also Braund 2009, 32.

147 Cf. Burgess 1972, 345–348; Bessone 2011, 23–24; Della Calce 2023, 21.

148 On Cicero's *humanitas* cf. below, pp. 52–62; on Pliny's pp. 83–115.

Roman society, although rather as a prerogative of the pagan senatorial class, as emerges from the writings of Symmachus.[149] In sum, we can conclude that the rhetorical and political dialectic between *clementia* and *humanitas* characterised quite a few periods between the first century BCE and at least the fourth century CE, as we will see in greater detail in the course of this book.

1.7.1.1 The Dialectic *Humanitas – Clementia* from a Computational Linguistic Perspective

What I called above a pattern of ups and downs in relation to the frequency of the use of the word *humanitas* throughout the ages clearly applies to *clementia* as well.[150] To appreciate better the proportion of the dialectic relation between these two words, a tool which permits a comparison of their frequencies at one and the same time or within single works or authors would be of most valuable. Unfortunately, as far as I know, such a tool for Latin language does not exist yet. Gardner's *Frequency Dictionary of Classical Latin Words* is useless in this respect, whereas very recently Spinelli has published *The Diachronic Frequency of Latin Words. A Computational Dictionary*, which promises to be much useful, but whose first volume is to my regret limited to letter A.[151] Digital databases of Latin corpora either do not allow this kind of research or their corpora of Latin texts do not (permit us to) match the corpus and the period of time I consider throughout this research. This is the case, for instance, with *Perseus*, the *Packard Humanities Institute (PHI) Latin Texts*, *Corpus Corporum* and others whose use is no doubt of help, but not *per se* sufficient to lead to exhaustive results. Yet it is my contention that some attempts, albeit partial, can be made, and, although their results will undoubtedly be improvable, they nonetheless contribute to sketching a picture of the situation.

First of all, it is necessary to distinguish between the frequency of a word based on the total number of different words (*types*) a given text is made of, and the frequency of a word based on the total number of words, regardless of possible repetitions (*tokens*). To give an example, take the famous *O tempora! O mores!*: there are three types (*o*, *tempora* and *mores*), but four tokens (*o* appears twice). Thus, *o* constitutes 50% of the tokens of the phrase, but only 33% of the types: percentages aside, in the first case the relevance of *o* is very high, as it appears twice as much as the other elements (whose percentage of appearance is in fact 25% each); by contrast, when we speak in terms of types, 33% is also the fre-

149 Cf. below, pp. 273–315.
150 Cf. above, p. 18.
151 Cf. Gardner 1970 and Spinelli 2022.

quency of appearance of *tempora* and *mores*, and therefore the relevance of *o* is almost negligible.

If we worked on *types*, because of the inflected nature of Latin and of this research itself, some words should be excluded from the calculation as semantically irrelevant – *e.g.* connectives, forms of the verb *esse* that appear in perfect passive, passive periphrastic, active periphrastic, numbers, pronouns etc. On the other hand, however, this kind of selection implies a high level of arbitrariness if not conducted carefully, and, as far as I know, the digital tools we can benefit from do not guarantee such accuracy. It follows that we can work on quite a safe ground only as long as we look at the relationship between the frequency of *humanitas* and *clementia* in terms of *tokens*. For all the limitations this research can have, it nonetheless offers some results from a comparative perspective.[152]

I take advantage of some corpora offered by *Perseus* that I consider relevant to this research, and report in the two charts on pages 42–43 the frequency of *humanitas* and *clementia* as if each of the corpora were composed of 10,000 tokens. The first chart does not take into account Seneca's *ad Polybium* and *De clementia*, since, as the second chart reveals, the presence of *clementia* therein is so high that the differences among all the other corpora become difficult to be perceived graphically.

It is clear that, during the late republican age, *humanitas* largely prevails over *clementia*, whereas in the Augustan age the trend is inverted. In Valerius Maximus' *Facta et dicta memorabilia*, that is, during the age of Tiberius, the two broadly run in parallel, although one single text is not that relevant statistically. In the case of Seneca, *clementia* overrides *humanitas* by far in the *Consolatio ad Polybium* and in the *De clementia*, but things change in his latest works. During most part of the Flavian age *clementia* returns to prevail, but in Quintilian *humanitas* appears again more often. In the authors of the Trajanic era, *humanitas* prevails in Pliny the Younger and Tacitus' *Agricola* and *Germania*, but in the *Historiae* and *Annales* there is only *clementia*, and quite often. From Apuleius onwards then, *humanitas* takes the lead and *clementia* sometimes appears very rarely or does not appear at all.

152 Further improvement to this research might come from the application of the so called Zipf's law (and its offshoots), a formula that explains in mathematical terms the distribution of words in a given corpus, assigning a precise ranking to each and every word within that corpus. Yet on the one hand I think that the simple comparison of frequencies I show here is already telling in terms of explaining graphically the dialectic between *humanitas* and *clementia* over time, and, on the other hand, I am not sure the tools we possess would make feasible and reliable the application of the Zipf's law to the present research in the light of the ample chronological spectrum and, at the same time, comparative approach to Latin texts it requires. For an overview of Zipf's law and other possible computational linguistic models as well as of the possible explanations to the validity of the law cf. at least Piantadosi 2014.

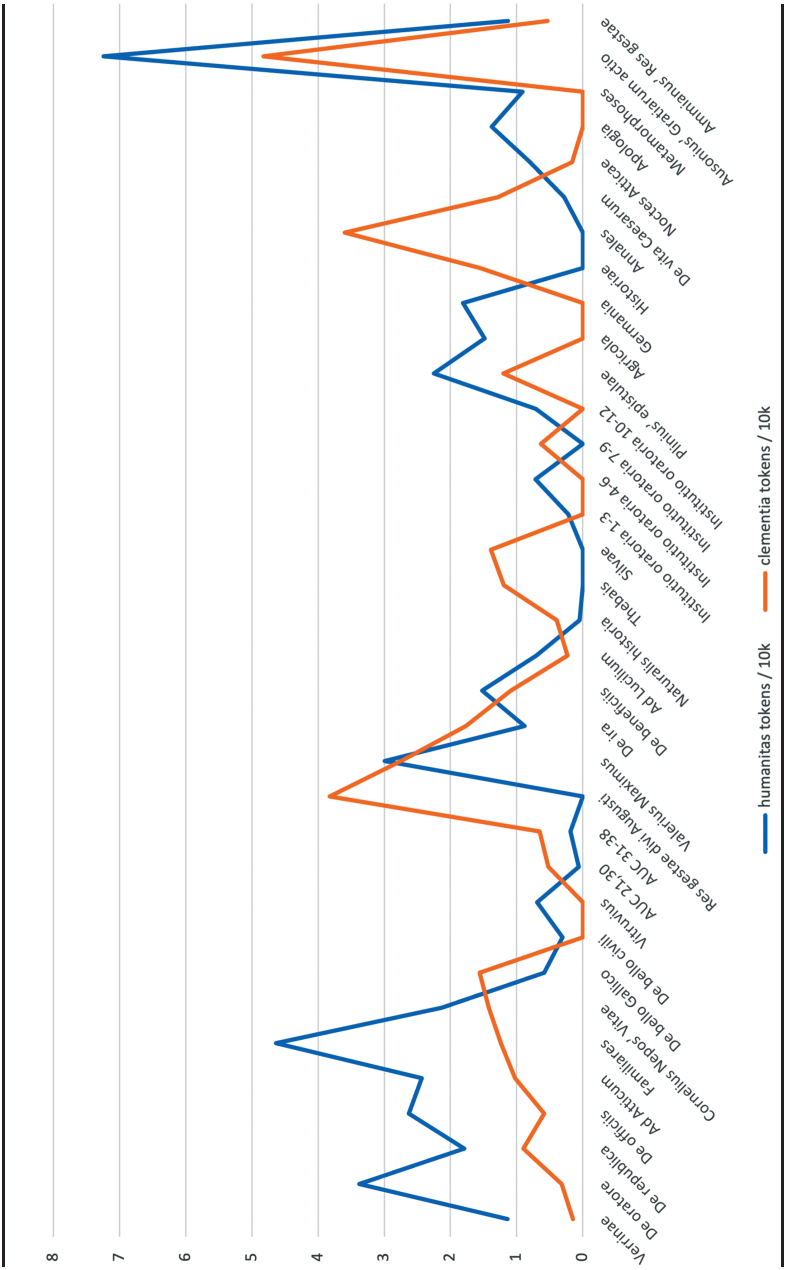

Table 1: *Humanitas* vs. *clementia* (without *ad Polybium* and *De clementia*).

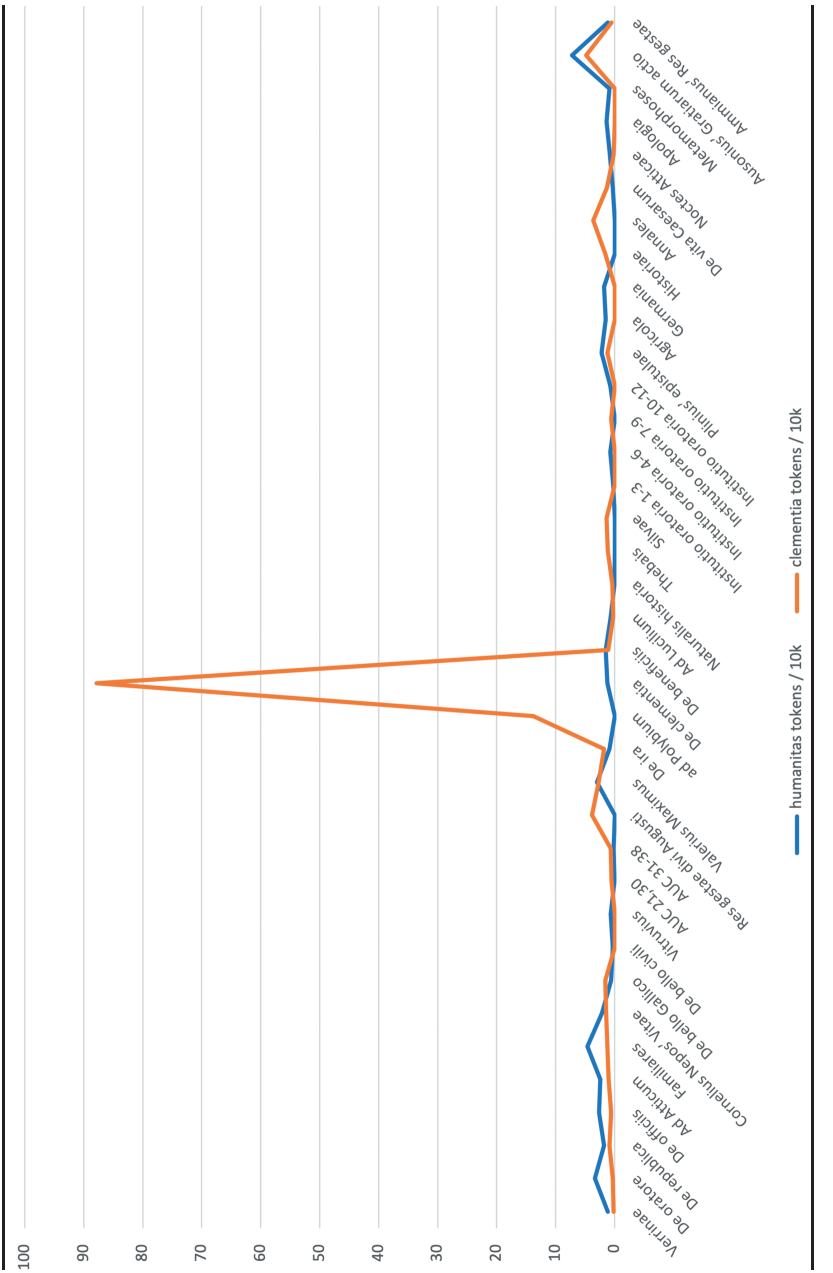

Table 2: *Humanitas* vs. *clementia*.

These are the data, but they are partial and, at any event, only tell a tiny part of the story. As we know, words change frequency, meanings and contexts of use for many reasons – and this can be explained rather in terms of sociolinguistics than computational linguistics. I have already anticipated that in the case in question it is likely to be due to sociopolitical reasons, and the development of this book should make this clearer.

1.7.2 *Superbia* (and *Inhumanitas*)

While the fact that there was some relationship between *humanitas* and *clementia* has long been acknowledged, this is not the case with *superbia*. It is sufficient to stress that in Baraz's recent monograph on *superbia* and other words that can be used to express the idea of pride in Latin the word *humanitas* does not appear at all.[153] Yet, it is some authors themselves who explicitly oppose *humanitas* to *superbia*, the first one probably being Phaedrus. The beginning of 3.16, a fable whose protagonists are a cicada and an owl, reads in fact: *Humanitati qui se non accommodat / plerumque poenas oppetit superbiae* ("Those who do not conform to *humanitas*, mostly pay the penalty of their haughtiness"), where it is worth noting in passing that Phaedrus' iambic senarius offers the unusual opportunity to meet the noun *humanitas* in poetry.[154] As for the relationship between *humanitas* and *superbia*, Rieks rightly stressed that the one is opposed to the other, but did not push his analysis further and later scholars of *humanitas* seem to have ignored it altogether.[155]

Some time later, Seneca expressed the opposition between *humanitas* and *superbia* in perhaps even clearer terms. In *Ep.* 88, a letter which is decisive to understand Seneca's role in the history of *humanitas*, as will be made clear later, on paragraph 30 we read: *Humanitas uetat superbum esse aduersus socios, uetat amarum* ("*Humanitas* is the quality which stops one being arrogant towards one's fellows, or being acrimonious", trans. Campbell 1969).[156]

But it is probably thanks to Pliny the Younger that we can best understand why these two abstract concepts are opposed to each other. At *Pan.* 3.4, yet again a passage which will be necessary to investigate further in the relevant section on Pliny's *humanitas*, the just nominated consul claims: *Non enim periculum est, ne,*

153 Cf. Baraz 2020.

154 Cf. Rieks 1967, 85.

155 Cf. Rieks 1967, 85. Høgel 2015, 74 for one mentions Phaedrus 3.16.1–2, but does not pay any attention to the relationship between *humanitas* and *superbia* therein.

156 On Seneca's *Ep.* 88 cf. below, p. 68.

cum loquar de humanitate, exprobrari sibi superbiam credat ("There is no danger that in my references to his *humanitas* he will see a reproach for arrogance", trans. Radice 1975).[157] The person Pliny is talking about is clearly emperor Trajan, and this is the deciding factor. If we think about the etymologies of the words *humanitas* and *superbia* in fact, we will realise that the contrast is absolutely logical and, on the other hand, that in this passage *humanitas* probably takes on a meaning most in keeping with its etymology. Indeed, *superbia* derives from *super* ('above', 'in higher position') and thus refers to that feeling of superiority which leads some people to look down on others – it may be worth mentioning in passing that the gods, whose dwelling is on the highest mountain in the world, Mount Olympus, are often called *Superi* in Latin.[158] In contrast, *humanitas* derives – via *homo*? – from *humus* ('earth', 'ground'), to characterise the worldly, earthly nature of man and what is typical of him.[159] Accordingly, although it might seem obvious for an emperor to be characterised by *superbia*, the greatness of Trajan in Pliny's view lies in the fact that he is instead guided by *humanitas*.[160]

Thus *superbia* stands out as *humanitas*' main opposite, especially during the imperial age on which I focus in this book. Indeed, the closest etymological opposite of *humanitas* is *inhumanitas*, but its destiny is curious: after appearing ten times in Cicero, twice in Seneca the Elder's *Controuersiae* and three times in Seneca the Younger, it completely disappears in the pagan authors I investigate here.[161] By contrast, Christian authors continue to use *inhumanitas* ceaselessly. Things differ instead when it comes to *inhumanus*, which can be found in Ps.-Quintilian's declamations as well as in Martial, Apuleius, Gellius et al., although its occurrences are not that many. Yet, as I have already hinted, the history of *humanus* and that of *humanitas* do not and cannot run utterly in parallel, and the same seems to apply to *inhumanus* and *inhumanitas*.[162]

157 On this passage cf. below, pp. 87–88.

158 Cf. Ernout/Meillet 2001[4] s.v. *super*; De Vaan 2008, 601.

159 Cf. Meillet 1921, 275 and 279–280; Walde/Hofmann 1938, s.v. *humanus*; De Vaan 2008, 288. Compare also *Pan.* 24.5: *te ad sidera tollit humus ista communis et confusa principis uestigia* ("you are lifted to the heavens by the very ground we all tread, where your imperial footsteps are mingled with our own", trans. Radice 1975). On the problems concerning the relationship between *homo* and *humanus* cf. above, pp. 22–24.

160 For further details cf. below, pp. 88–89.

161 Yet Tiberius Claudius Donatus (late fourth–early fifth century CE) employs *inhumanitas* several times in his *Interpretationes Vergilianae*.

162 Cf. above, p. 22.